



# MILPITAS

## *General Plan Update*

### **MEMORANDUM**

**June 7, 2017**

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TO: Milpitas General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)

FROM: Ben Ritchie, De Novo Planning Group

SUBJECT: General Plan Advisory Committee Meeting #3  
(Conservation and Open Space)

DATE: June 21, 2017

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### **INTRODUCTION**

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The June 21<sup>st</sup> GPAC meeting will focus on the topics of Conservation and Open Space. This memo provides a brief overview of these two General Plan topics, summarizes public input received to date on the topics of conservation and open space, identifies required reading materials for the next meeting, and identifies issues to consider prior to the next GPAC meeting.

The next GPAC meeting will provide the group with an opportunity to discuss these General Plan topics, and identify key issues to address, and potential policy solutions.

Both the Conservation and Open Space Elements are State-required elements of the General Plan, and both of these topics are addressed in the City's existing General Plan.

The existing General Plan combines Conservation and Open Space into a single element. This is a very common approach in General Plan organization, and will likely be carried forward into the updated General Plan.

Milpitas is planning to include a stand-alone Air Quality and Energy Element in the updated General Plan. These topics are often addressed in the Conservation Element, but given their prominence and importance, the City may elect to prepare a stand-alone Air Quality and Energy Element. As such, these conservation-related topics will not be a primary focus of discussion during the June 21<sup>st</sup> meeting (they are scheduled for discussion during the July 19<sup>th</sup> GPAC meeting).

As part of the visioning process that occurred in September through November of last year, residents and stakeholders were asked to identify their vision and priorities for the city's future, as well as challenges and opportunities associated with the General Plan Update. The City's scenic areas and open spaces were cited as key assets that need to be protected and enhanced. The need to preserve and protect historic assets, parks and open spaces, while expanding opportunities for additional recreational facilities, parks and trails, was cited as one of the key visions for the future of Milpitas. Additionally, during the mapping

activities conducted during the visioning workshops, most participants indicated that the hillside areas within the City's Sphere of Influence (to the east) should be preserved and protected from future development.

### **CONSERVATION ELEMENT OVERVIEW**

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State law requires the General Plan to include a Conservation Element, which addresses the conservation and utilization of natural resources, including natural habitats, riparian corridors, special status species, and soils/hillsides. This element also addresses the topics of energy conservation, air quality, water quality, and the preservation of cultural and historical resources. As noted above, the City will likely prepare a stand-alone Air Quality and Energy Element. As such, the conservation-related topics for discussion at the June 21<sup>st</sup> GPAC meeting will focus on:

- Natural habitats, including wetlands, waterways, riparian habitat, and special-status species habitat;
- Viewsheds and scenic resources
- Cultural and historical resources
- Water quality (in terms of habitat and water quality, not drinking water supplies)

### **OPEN SPACE ELEMENT**

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State law requires a General Plan to address open space issues, including the recognition of open space as a valuable resource for its own sake, the coordination of local policies with state and regional policies, and the use of open space to preserve environmentally sensitive natural areas and habitat. State Government Code Section 65560 defines open space lands as being essentially unimproved and devoted to the preservation of natural resources, managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, or public health and safety.

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

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Prior to the meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup>, please read the following items:

- Existing Conditions Report Chapter 5.0 (Conservation and Natural Resources)
- Current City of Milpitas General Plan Open Space and Environmental Conservation Element (Chapter 4)

The above-referenced Existing Conditions Report chapter is included in your meeting materials.

The current Milpitas General Plan Document is available online at:

<http://www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov/planning-documents/general-plan/>

## POTENTIAL GPAC DISCUSSION TOPICS

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- What are your initial thoughts after reading the existing General Plan Open Space and Environmental Conservation Element?
  - Does it address the full range of issues that are important to you?
  - Do you disagree with any of the policy approaches?
  - Are there specific issues or topics that should be addressed differently?
- What roll can existing and emerging technology play in Milpitas' future sustainability plans?
- Given that Milpitas is a mostly built-out city, what strategies should the City pursue to protect existing open space areas, and also increase the amount of open space in the City?
  - Creating standards that facilitate clustered development that allows for private development to provide quasi-public open spaces?
  - Providing open space through design (i.e. green roofs)?
  - Utilizing and rehabilitating reclaimed areas (i.e. streets and alleyways)?
  - Should the City establish different private open space requirements for different development types (ie., different standards for apartment complexes, mixed use projects, downtown projects, and suburban residential subdivisions)?
  - Should a development project that is in close proximity to an existing open space resource have reduced requirements to provide on-site open space?
- Are there opportunities for creek and drainage restoration and enhancement?
- Should the City establish standards that facilitate and encourage urban farming and small-scale agricultural activities?
- How can the City establish and consolidate large areas of land that may be suitable for sports parks, ball fields, etc.?
- Does the City have adequate linkages between existing parks and trails, and how might these linkages be improved?

## WORK EXERCISE

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After reading the memo and reading materials identified above, please consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss:

### **Conservation:**

1. In developing a goal and policy framework to address Conservation, what top issues or actions should the City prioritize?
2. In reviewing the existing General Plan goals, policies, and strategies related to Conservation:
  - a. Which existing General Plan goals, policies, and strategies best address the concerns you identified?
  - b. Which priorities are not addressed in the existing General Plan?
3. What additional input do you have that the GPAC should consider and discuss?

### **Open Space:**

1. In developing a goal and policy framework to address Open Space, what top issues or actions should the City prioritize?
2. In reviewing the existing General Plan goals, policies, and strategies related to noise:
  - a. Which existing General Plan goals, policies, and strategies best address the concerns you identified?
  - b. Which priorities are not addressed in the existing General Plan?
3. What additional input do you have that the GPAC should consider and discuss?