

TO: Environmental Sustainability Task Force (ESTF)

FROM: Curtis Banks, Community Development Director  
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DATE: January 12, 2012

SUBJECT: General Plan Land Use and Circulation Element Update  
Proposed Goals and Policies

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### **REQUESTED ACTION/PURPOSE**

Purpose of meeting -- Review the CURRENT Goals, Policies and Programs as revised and updated to reflect the City's current priorities and projects. Document will be discussed formally at February meeting.

Role of ESTF – Review the proposed Goals, Policies and Programs for the updated Land Use and Circulation Element as they pertain to land use and sustainability issues.

### **BACKGROUND**

Consistent with the City Council's adopted Policy Calendar, City staff is updating the Land Use and Circulation Element of the City's General Plan. This is the most complex and far reaching of the Plan's legally required Elements. The General Plan is the guiding document for the future vision of the City. The Foster City General Plan contains seven elements that address issues facing the City, including Land Use and Circulation, Housing, Parks and Open Space, Conservation, Noise, and Safety. The language in these seven elements includes background or narrative language regarding the subject matter, goals, policies and implementing programs.

The Land Use and Circulation Element establishes a pattern for land use and sets out clear standards for the density of population and the intensity of development for each of the proposed land uses, with a direct tie between the timing, amount, type and location of development with the traffic, service and infrastructure demands such development will generate. The Goals, Policies and Programs in the Land Use and Circulation Element guide land use development and traffic patterns within the physical constraints and quality of life ideals of the community. This language in the Land Use and Circulation Element was developed with the 1993 General Plan, and has been amended as necessary.

Since the last comprehensive update of the Element, many of the goals have been reached and policies and programs implemented. Foster City now faces new issues, emerging trends and priorities. The new Goals, Policies and Programs have been crafted to help address these issues, trends and priorities identified through the background reports prepared for the General Plan Update. They are also aimed at addressing changing laws such as regulation of greenhouse gas emissions, and other interests of the City including aging in place, sustainability and economic development.

## **GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

The goals, policies and programs are the language that the City can point to in order to support or refute a proposal. Goals, policies and programs can be defined as follows:

**Goal:** A goal is a general description of the desired end result that the City seeks to create through implementation of its General Plan.

For example, the goals to “Preserve the Quality of the City’s Residential Neighborhoods”<sup>ii</sup> states that Foster City aims for a future with a high quality of life for its residents.

**Policy:** A policy provides more precise directions and guides the actions of staff, developers and policy makers as the City works to achieve its goals.

For example, a policy to implement the goal stated above could be: “Continue to implement a neighborhood preservation program consisting of a code enforcement strategy for all neighborhoods...”<sup>iii</sup> This policy provides the framework for continuing the City’s code enforcement efforts in residential neighborhoods.

**Programs:** A program is a specific activity or strategy the City will undertake to achieve a specified goal.

For example, a program aimed at fulfilling the policy stated above could be: “The City will continue its code enforcement program to ensure that private properties are maintained...”<sup>iii</sup>

The introduction and narrative language of the Land Use and Circulation Element is in the process of being updated. This language will contain certain definitions of terms used in the Goals, Policies and Programs and help illustrate the purposes behind the City’s objectives and implementing actions. It will also provide a background and analysis of City statistics that support the language in the Plan.

## **ORGANIZATION**

The attached matrix includes the Goals, Policies and Programs in the Land Use and Circulation Element organized under Overarching Themes. Organizes the language into a hierarchy with each goal falling into an overarching theme, and each policy and program supporting the goals. In outline form, the hierarchy looks something like this:

- I. OVERARCHING THEME
  - A. Goal
    - i. Policy
    - ii. Policy
      - a. Program

Not every policy has an implementing program, and some policies may have multiple programs. Some policies and programs may overlap and implement multiple goals. Additionally, some topics of interest to the City may not be found in the Land Use and Circulation Element. For example, many of the new policies are related to sustainability and include reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, increased use of alternative modes of transportation and smart growth. There are, however, many additional strategies that could be considered to increase the City's efforts toward becoming more sustainable that will be included in additional City documents including a Climate Action Plan and the update of the Conservation Element of the General Plan. These documents will include additional measures related to energy conservation, greenhouse gas emissions reduction and other resource conservation policies.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The Goals, Policies and Programs are provided for your review. Staff will solicit feedback on discussion on the proposed language at the February meeting.

### **ATTACHEMENTS**

Matrix of Land Use and Circulation Element Goals, Policies and Programs

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<sup>i</sup> City of Foster City. *Land Use and Circulation Element*. General Plan. 1993

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid