



PRIORITIZING GENERAL PLAN TOPICS/ISSUES

A General Plan is not only a long term vision for a community, but also a specific policy guide covering a variety of topics and issues. Some of the topics in a General Plan are mandated by state law (such as the requirements related to housing, noise or public safety), but most come directly from local knowledge and understanding of the community and being able to anticipate what might not be an issue today, but is out there on the horizon and will need to be addressed during the life of the plan: for example, the impacts of an aging population, managing parking or traffic, ensuring a safe and secure water supply, improving emergency response, expanding cultural and arts programs, or having the right mix of land uses and regulations to support a vital local economy.

As part of the update of the Mill Valley General Plan, General Plan “Working Groups” have been created around three major topic headings: Natural Environment, Community Vitality and Land Use and Mobility. The role of the three Working Groups is to delve into the details of selected topics, examine available information, draw on members’ knowledge and experience in the community and use those resources to formulate policy and program recommendations that are consistent with established community values and related General Plan “goals”. Within the overall 18-month General Plan update timeline (January 2012 through June 2013) the Working Groups will have approximately 6 months (May through October 2012) to complete their work and make their final recommendations to the General Plan Advisory Committee. As such, not every single topic or issue can receive the same level of analysis and consideration as others that are determined to be “priorities”.

The General Plan Advisory Committee is responsible for determining the topic/issue priorities for each of the three Working Groups. In effect, the determination of priorities will establish the scope of work for each Working Group over the course of the next 6 months. For those topics not identified as priorities, but still considered necessary to be included in the updated General Plan, staff will coordinate with the Working Groups and the General Plan Advisory Committee to insure that those topics get covered and incorporated into the General Plan, as directed. That may mean that existing policies and programs may be adequate and can be incorporated into the new General Plan by reference (for example, this may be the case with certain emergency response plans or the recently updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan); or that staff take on the responsibility to cover certain issues; or it may be necessary to bring in a consultant; or the GPAC may decide to set up an *ad hoc* sub-committee to address the issue; or the 1989 General Plan may address the issue adequately and that policy or program can be continued in the updated General Plan.

To facilitate the prioritization process, staff has compiled the attached matrix of topics/issues based on a variety of input, including from our virtual town hall meeting website, MV2040.org. The topics/issues are identified for each Working Group under broad headings (“Local Economy”, “Land Use”, “Public Safety”, etc.). To further expand

on each topic/issue, there are “examples” to facilitate thinking and discussion about what the scope of a given issue or topic should include. In the course of its discussion on priorities, the GPAC may decide that some of the proposed topics/issues may be dropped from the list, others may be added; or that “examples” need to be added or deleted. The matrix also identifies which of the seven mandatory General Plan elements would be satisfied by addressing that particular issue.

For purposes of the April 25 meeting, the GPAC can use the matrix to define the topic/issue priorities – i.e., those areas where the Working Groups will focus most of their time and attention to develop policy and program language within the established overall timeframe of the General Plan update. The GPAC discussion will occur while the Working Groups are electing a Chair and Vice-Chair and going through the introductory information that the GPAC received last week. During the last hour of the meeting on the 25th, the GPAC and Working Groups will reconvene together to further discuss and refine the priorities.

COMMUNITY VITALITY

Topic/Issue	Examples	GP Element
Local Economy		
Economic Development	Local serving v. regional business; formula business; local employment; commercial design guidelines; parking management; public/private partnerships	Land Use
Other		
Public Facilities and Services		
Annexation	Additional parcels into MV city limits requiring city services—water, sewer; Sphere of Influence and service capacity	Land Use
Service capacity and maintenance	water, sewer, and public facilities	Land Use
City/School Collaboration	Joint partnerships, facilities, programs and maintenance	Land Use
Other		
Place Making, Character and Building Community		
Public Art	Public/private locations; funding; process	N/A
Historic Preservation	Identification and protection of historic resources	Land Use; Conservation
Public Resource Management	Partnerships and collaboration (schools, non profits, government entities); consolidated or shared services and facilities; public finance (fees, local taxes)	Land Use
Recreation Programs and Facility Needs	Gathering spaces, parks, and other public facilities (bike racks, benches, restrooms); library programs; sports; parks & recreation programs	Land Use; Open Space

COMMUNITY VITALITY

Topic/Issue	Examples	GP Element
Place Making, Character and Building Community (continued)		
Sustainable Development	Green building; energy efficiency; recycling; urban forestry	Land Use; Conservation
Healthy Communities	Complete streets; SLPs; demographic and income diversity; local food sources	Land Use; Circulation; Conservation
Other		

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Topic/Issue	Examples	GP Element
Habitat, Resources & Conservation		
Creeks & Critical habitat	Public access; habitat restoration; bank stabilization; water quality	Conservation
Flooding & Sea Level Rise	Bay Front and Upper Richardson Bay; flood control; adaptation	Conservation; Safety
Natural Resources: Management & Conservation	Water, sewer and open space; maintenance and future acquisition; Protection of specific parcels; Zero waste	Conservation; Open Space
Other		
Public Safety		
Hazards & Natural emergencies (fire, earthquake)	Prevention, education, preparedness	Safety
Noise	Identification of sensitive receptors and mitigation	Noise
Air Quality/Climate Change	Green house gas reduction strategies (alternative transportation; green buildings; land use/transportation link; waste; water; climate friendly food; adaptation and offsets)	Land Use; Circulation; Conservation; Open Space
Other		

*Note: Sustainability is incorporated in various aspects above, including resource conservation/management and air quality.

LAND USE & MOBILITY

Topic/Issue	Examples	GP Element
Land Use		
Land Use	Residential, commercial and other land use designations; mixed use opportunities; density ranges	Land Use
Housing	Review previous element and RHNA numbers; Assessment of community housing needs and all requirements of State Housing Law	Housing
Other		
Mobility		
Regional Transportation	Complete streets; regional transportation connections and system coordination	Circulation
Roadway System and Traffic Standards	Roadway design standards and capacity; congestion management; safety; intersections/bottlenecks	Circulation
Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation	Network connections (Safe routes to School, parks, library, community center)	Circulation; Open Space
Transit	Local shuttle; connections with regional system; accessibility; facilities	Circulation; Land Use
Parking	Identification of parking needs and demands; enforcement; commercial and residential; commuter; schools	Circulation; Land Use
Other		