



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date: 6/3/2024
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Location: Zoom.us/join – ID# 858 7073 1001 and
City Council Chambers
751 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

A. Call To Order

Chair Jennifer Schindler called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Jennifer Schindler (Chair), Katie Behroozi (left the meeting at approximately 9 p.m.), Linh Dan Do, Katie Ferrick, Misha Silin, Ross Silverstein

Absent: Andrew Ehrich (Vice Chair)

Staff: Calvin Chan, Senior Planner; Deanna Chow, Community Development Director; Matt Pruter, Associate Planner; Tom Smith, Principal Planner; Mariam Sleiman, City Attorney Associate

C. Reports and Announcements

Community Development Director Deanna Chow said the City Council at its June 11, 2024 meeting would introduce the 2024-2025 fiscal year budget with potential adoption at its June 25, 2024 meeting. She said on June 11 the Council would also consider the proposed community amenity for the bonus level project at 1005 O'Brien Drive.

Chair Schindler reported she attended a housing workshop session on May 31, 2024 hosted by the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County. She said they looked at a range of ways that housing element policies would be implemented in cities across the County, and she would share the document related to that with staff, the Planning Commissioners, and as an attachment to the minutes for tonight's meeting if applicable.

D. Public Comment

- Brian Schmidt, Director of Menlo Spark, introduced himself and Menlo Spark's mission to help Menlo Park achieve its goal of climate neutrality by 2030 noting the City's Reach Code was a Menlo Spark's priority.

E. Consent Calendar

- E1. Approval of minutes from the April 29, 2024 Planning Commission meeting (Attachment)
- E2. Approval of minutes from the May 6, 2024 Planning Commission meeting (Attachment)

Chair Schindler opened the item for public comment and closed it as no persons requested to speak.

ACTION: Motion and second (Ferrick/Silverstein) to approve the consent calendar consisting of the minutes for the April 29 and May 6, 2024 Planning Commission meetings; passes 6-0 with Commissioner Ehrich absent.

F. Public Hearing

- F1. Receive an overview and provide feedback on the revised draft General Plan Environmental Justice and Safety Elements. (Staff Report #24-028-PC)
Not a CEQA project.

Senior Planner Calvin Chan introduced the project team that included staff members Deanna Chow, Community Development Director, Tom Smith, Principal Planner, Matt Pruter, Associate Planner, Mariam Sleiman, City Attorney's Office, from M-Group Asher Kohn, Senior Planner and Geoff Bradley, President, from Climate Resilient Communities Cade Cannedy, Director of Programs and Violet Saena, Executive Director, and from ChangeLab Solutions Erik Calloway, Managing Director.

Planner Chan said staff's recommendation and the purpose of the study session was to review the Environmental Justice (EJ) and Safety Elements and their regulatory context, introduce the EJ Implementation Guide, and revisit community outreach. He highlighted major milestones in development of the two elements noting tonight's second study session with the Planning Commission followed by a second study session with the City Council on June 18, 2024. He said staff's tentative plan was to bring the elements forward for adoption in the fall 2024 timeframe.

Planner Chan said the City Council in 2021 committed to development of the EJ Element to advance equity and protect human health. He said the three main goals that guided the City's entire Housing Element Update project were balanced community, affordability, and social justice. He said the purpose of the EJ Element was to identify and address current and potential future public health risk and environmental justice concerns and to generally foster the wellbeing of Menlo Park residents living in Underserved Communities. He said environmental justice meant that everyone should have equal protection and advantages when it came to the environment around them. He said it also meant that people should have an opportunity to be meaningfully involved in the decisions that affect their communities and their lives.

Planner Chan said that in Menlo Park and in many other areas throughout the state and beyond, areas with higher concentrations of low income households were generally more likely to be exposed to pollution and environmental hazards. He said individuals in those areas generally experienced higher rates of poor health outcomes. He said the City followed the California Office of Planning and Research's guidelines for the preparation of environmental justice elements, which recommended a thorough screening analysis coupled with a very comprehensive community outreach and engagement process. He said through this process the City identified two Underserved Communities: the Belle Haven and the Bayfront neighborhoods, generally the portion of Menlo Park located north of US Highway 101 and within City Council District 1. He said both those neighborhoods had a combination of economic health and environmental burdens and were disproportionately more Hispanic and black demographically than the rest of the community and whose households had been historically underrepresented in the planning process and generally in civic processes as well.

Planner Chan said the purpose of the Safety Element was to identify how to reduce potential risks of injury, property damage and economic and social disruptions from natural and humanmade hazards. He said the City Council adopted the Safety Element in 2013 and a number of laws had since been enacted that required safety elements to address climate change including adaptation and resiliency, wildfire hazards and risk, and also to identify residential developments that lacked two or more emergency evacuation routes. He said the Safety Element's one overarching goal was to assure a safe community within the primary topic areas of general safety, geologic and seismic safety, and public safety and emergency response.

Planner Chan said from the joint City Council and Planning Commission study session on June 20, 2023 five themes emerged, which were to modify certain statements about EJ context, make adjustments to the refinement framework matrix, continue performing and implementing robust outreach, think critically about funding needs and sources, and consider actions with short-term results to demonstrate and communicate progress.

Planner Chan said under modify certain statements about EJ context that "Underserved Communities" (Menlo Park preferred term) was intended to be the same as "Disadvantaged Communities" (state defined term). He said the framework of the matrix was adjusted in accordance with Planning Commission and City Council guidance and then populated with a number of different draft EJ Element goals, policies and programs that stemmed from an extensive prior outreach process.

Planner Chan said the project team received input from different City departments about how proposed policies and programs intersected with ongoing City work. He said Climate Resilient Communities (CRC) engaged with community members to further refine draft policies and programs through the community lens. He said the draft revised EJ Element presented an updated organization and refinement of the different goals, policies, and programs as well as action items in the EJ Element document and in a separate and complementary Implementation Guide document.

Cade Cannedy, CRC, addressed the direction received to continue performing and implementing robust outreach. He said they continued community outreach using the "meet people where they were" approach, and that included outreach and tabling at the Love Our Earth Festival in East Palo Alto. He said they reconvened the Climate Change Community Team in Belle Haven, which had met monthly since the project began in March 2022. He said they held two workshops, one of which was a Spanish language community workshop with 33 attendees and another English language community workshop with 48 attendees. He said outreach and engagement was done at the Housing Resource Fair on May 11, 2024. He said to date more than 1800 people at some point had participated in the engagement process for the EJ Element and that included eight workshops in Belle Haven with residents directly, more than 420 people who participated in a survey of the community, and the Belle Haven Climate Change Community Team that was executing projects that the team and residents directed. He said they also conducted outreach via email, flyers, social media, CRC's newsletter and various list serves and networks across their partner organizations.

Mr. Cannedy said the workshops in early May were geared toward prioritization explicitly. He said from the robust community engagement done through 2022 and 2023 close to 130 programs were identified. He said taking into consideration staff capacity and City Council resources they spoke with the community about what things were pressing and what might wait a little longer to arrive at community consensus on what needed to happen now. He said the top priorities identified in the

May workshops were Goal 5 – providing safe, sanitary and stable homes, Goal 4 – reducing pollution, exposure and improving air quality, and Goal 2-promoting access to high quality and affordable food. He said other key takeaways were the existence of massive disparities between the Belle Haven neighborhood and communities south of US Highway 101, and lack of accountability with residents expressing frustration and distrust of the EJ Element process.

Mr. Cannedy said four recommendations came from the public outreach and engagement and those were:

1. Increase opportunities for accountability through strict reporting requirements on EJ Element Programs and Policies.
2. Ensure “Safe, Sanitary and Stable Housing” was used in Goal 5 language and throughout the document, replacing “Safe and Sanitary Homes.”
3. Strengthen program and policy language throughout the EJ Element for example by changing “encourage” to “ensure” or “could” to “should/shall.”
4. Part 1 of 4: Elevate Anti-Displacement Actions in the EJ Element and accelerate timelines for creating and implementing interim steps as soon as possible. (He said that looked like: Revise Action Item 7.J.3 and move into EJ Element as Goal 5 program for legal counsel for tenants facing eviction.)

Part 2 of 4: Modify Program 5.G – Ensure that the City’s Anti-Displacement Strategy (Housing Element Program H2.E) support households and neighborhoods in Underserved Communities to include more prescriptive language to take the policies in the Housing Element a step further in terms of specificity and actionability.

Planner Chan referred to the June 2023 study session and the feedback theme to think critically about funding needs and resources. He said both Table EJ-8 and the Implementation Guide (Appendix EJ-E) included a list of potential funding sources. He said staff added columns to also identify enhancements and specific sites, and whether something might be eligible for funding through the City’s Community Amenities Fund.

Planner Chan then addressed the feedback theme to consider actions with short-term results to demonstrate and communicate progress. He said both Table EJ-8 and the Implementation Guide (Appendix EJ-E) included lists of ongoing activities, especially Anti-Displacement Strategy, Urban Forest Equity-Developing the Management Plan for Menlo Park, Civic and Community Engagement, and Accountability for City Progress. He said the Implementation Guide (Appendix EJ-E), or Action Guide was a separate, complementary document that adhered closely to EJ goals, policies, and programs as well as the guiding principles of the General Plan but was outside of the General Plan itself. He said the Guide included action items to be pursued by the City to improve environmental justice. He said this dual document approach allowed for more frequent updating of the Implementation Guide (Action Guide) to respond to changes in community needs, funding opportunities, and to strengthen it with ongoing community outreach particularly with Menlo Park’s underserved communities. He said following adoption the Guide would be maintained on the City’s website to help improve accountability and as a communication tool for accountability. He said the Guide would help with reporting and tracking of different actions as they continued to fulfill EJ Element programs and adapt to different new information grounded in community input.

Planner Chan said the policies and programs in the draft Safety Element were revised to include community feedback and in particular Policy S1.35-Disaster Preparedness Planning to include multilingual and multimodal outreach in Underserved Communities, Policy S1.36-Community Preparedness to support countywide preparedness including response and protection services and an added program S1M regarding sea level rise planning to collaborate with other agencies to develop a sea level rise plan as part of a subregional San Francisco Bay Shoreline Resilience Plan.

Planner Chan ended his presentation with some suggested questions to prompt Planning Commission discussion for feedback, which were:

1. Did the project team adequately respond to the June 2023 study session with the revised draft documents?
2. Are the project team's Staff Recommendation's columns appropriate in the EJ Element – Table EJ.8 and Action Guide (Appendix EJ-E)?
3. Do Climate Resilient Communities' recommendations require further refinement?

Commission Clarifying Questions

Chair Schindler referred to the matrix of programs and policies and noted 5.G under the staff recommendation column did not appear to say explicitly to "Keep It" or "Remove It."

Planner Chan said the recommendation was to modify program 5.G but that language was not in the draft EJ Element now and would occur after tonight's feedback and then the City Council's feedback so that all such changes would be made at one time.

Chair Schindler said she thought perhaps as it was already in the Housing Element it might not be needed in the EJ Element. She asked for further context on how the list of programs and policies would become part of the City's planning processes-for example, the capital plans, budget plans, staff and resource allocations.

Ms. Chow said conversations were ongoing about that, noting it had been part of capital improvement plan (CIP) conversations and upcoming budget conversations with the City Council. She said infrastructure projects could be particularly considered as part of the CIP program or potentially a separate planning process depending on what guidance was received from the City Council on funding, She said staff was still working out some of the details noting that funding and implementation were key to ensuring the EJ Element was a success and for accountability with the community.

Chair Schindler said it sounded like the EJ Element's list of programs and policies would go into many different city planning processes potentially. She asked if the four areas of recommendations in the staff report had already been evaluated and incorporated into the EJ Element and the Implementation Guide or if it was work yet to be started.

Planner Chan said those recommendations had not yet been incorporated. He said the future draft in the fall would incorporate those recommendations as well as other feedback.

Chair Schindler asked when the EJ Element was completed whether the summary of the two May outreach sessions would be incorporated as an appendix or potentially as an expansion of the existing appendix.

Planner Chan said they had not thought that far ahead in terms of the final appendix documents, but the summary was certainly part of the record and lived online in the Planning Commission agenda packet, noting that was a great resource and a capture of community feedback.

Chair Schindler said the Implementation Guide would be an appendix and the staff report indicated it would be maintained on the City website where it might be changed. She asked for clarification of what the difference would be between the content that was captured in the EJ Element and the dynamic on the City's website.

Planner Chan said the Implementation Guide as presented was included as an appendix document to the EJ Element in response to feedback received from the Climate Change Community Team that CRC managed. He said there was a strong desire for all the community feedback to be represented and captured as a point in time reference within the preparation of the City's first EJ Element, and why it was there currently. He said looking ahead they were viewing the Implementation Guide as a living document that could respond dynamically to the different funding opportunities, outreach, and needs. He said the idea was it would evolve based on community need while staying true to the community lens of the highest priorities to really benefit underserved communities.

Chair Schindler said it sounded like the content that would live on the City's website was an evolving version of the Implementation Guide and would be the most timely and accurate representation of requests coming in from the community.

Planner Chan said that was true, but it would not be something that staff would be changing on the fly. He said it was intended as a point in time capture of the feedback that had been provided thus far. He said as they needed to make revisions in the future there would be a process for that and opportunities for community involvement.

Chair Schindler referred to the Implementation Guide and said that in the presentation action items were described as things that would be pursued. She asked if these were commitments to implement or being documented so they might be considered for implementation.

Planner Chan said it was a tool they would use to continually evaluate what they were able to do. He noted the three top goals determined from community feedback and using that lens they could look at the different programs and action items to focus on what they could achieve first.

Commissioner Behroozi said this was a more complicated plan from an implementation standpoint than master plans she had seen because it straddled different City functions. She asked who in the City would be looking at this within all the annual processes of work the City did to carry forward these goals and action items to make sure they happened.

Planner Chan referred to the matrix and the Implementation Guide and pointed out a column for responsible parties and supporting actors. He said really it was a combination of everyone's efforts to create the EJ Element in a holistic approach to environmental justice.

Ms. Chow said this was a multi-departmental, multi-faceted effort with crossover in existing work plans and programs that a number of departments already pursued. She said it was not exactly one person, but the community development department would help facilitate the collaboration between the different departments.

Commissioner Silverstein said in the environmental justice report there were a number of scores given to a pollution source or pollutant and those scores were based off the relative index for a census tract as compared to the rest of California. He said he did not see in the report the relative impact that each of those pollutants had on actual safety itself and it seemed like those were being averaged and treated the same. He asked if there was a way for him to understand whether or not pollution coming from any particular hazard (PM25, diesel particulate matter, traffic impact, cleanup sites, groundwater threats) were more or less important for overall community safety.

Mr. Kohn, MGroup, said the first appendix to the EJ Element (EJA) was a table that approached what Commissioner Silverstein was saying. He said on page 10 it described the different pollution burden indicators and went into ozone PM 25 diesel particulate matter. He said the table itself was more of a descriptor than a comparison. He said right above the table there was a link to a website that went into the really detailed methodology of how the state collected information and what the different indicators entailed, and the relative risks involved.

Planner Silverstein said he was trying to think about what actually mattered to the day-to-day safety and health impacts for any given citizen.

Mr. Kohn referred to the work that CRC was doing by getting input from community members as to what issues were affecting them, which was a qualitative way of understanding the issues, and then trying to balance that information with the data from the state.

Erik Calloway, ChangeLab Solutions, said the CalEnviroScreen (<https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen>) was a great tool that provided information that they would not have otherwise. He said they had an ability to understand in a slightly more quantitative way the compounded health risks existing in specific neighborhoods. He said the CalEnviroScreen also spoke to health outcomes in addition to the risks. He said it was very difficult to compare one health risk to another in terms of these environmental justice factors because the type of health outcomes they were speaking of, and the type of risks could not be compared equally. He said the direct connection between a specific concentration of something in a neighborhood and the specific rate of health outcomes in that specific neighborhood was not really feasible from an analysis perspective in terms of the resources being put into preparation of this type of document (element). He said this state data source allowed them to make some analyses knowing that everything that was in there and given the methodology that was put in were risks that had negative health outcomes. He said acknowledging the quantitative information they had and its limits to what it could tell them they then combined that with the qualitative information from the community engagement as to what their experience of health risks were.

Commissioner Silverstein said the Safety Element seemed like it came from an earlier version and looked at safety related to open space and conservation, noise, and natural disasters. He asked why it was not a comprehensive safety element that included all safety factors for residents.

Planner Chan said the Safety Element was last updated in 2013 and revisions to it now focused on new statutory requirements since then. He said some of the other topics of interest that had

emerged lately in relation to safety were technically out of the scope of their Safety Element update. He said they were happy to receive the feedback and would consider it a future date if there was guidance to move forward with that.

Commissioner Silin said in the EJ Element there was reference to Program 7K regarding grants for home repair, but he did not see it listed in the tables.

Planner Chan said he saw the table ended at program 7J and would need to check with colleagues to see what happened to the referenced program. He said if it was a document error they would fix it in the matrix.

Commissioner Silin said in the staff presentation it was noted where policies and programs intersect with current City work and he wanted to confirm that that was shown in the column that talked about in progress. Planner Chan said that was correct.

Commissioner Silin asked if a member of the public was looking at this document and trying to ascertain what the priorities were to be worked on, how would they use the scoring, timelines listed and staff comments about what was in progress to determine that.

Planner Chan said the scoring and different matrices had brought them to this current revised document. He said the extensive community outreach as summarized by Mr. Kennedy would be added noting the top issues that were of the most concern to the residents were providing safe, sanitary and stable homes, reducing pollution exposure and improving air quality and promoting access to high quality and affordable foods (EJ Element goals 5, 4 and 2 respectively). He said he would expect in the future that they would focus on those goals and then the corresponding policies and programs to implement those as a first measure.

Commissioner Silin said there was a plan to have an annual report on progress so that the community could keep the City accountable. He asked what that would look like and in what format and venue it would be delivered.

Planner Chan said he did not have any particular idea of what that format would look like or the venue. He said they were happy to receive feedback for future consideration. He referred back to his comment that the Implementation Guide would be available on the City's website so residents could see what items had been suggested and where they were in terms of status.

Ms. Chow said one reference point could be the annual progress report that would be reviewed both by the Planning Commission and City Council. She said that their EJ Element programs could translate well into a model like the Housing Element Annual Progress Report listing goals, policies, programs, timing, and funding in terms of reporting and annual reporting as well.

Chair Schindler opened public comment.

Public Comment:

- Brian Schmidt, Menlo Spark, spoke in person to support the work that CRC had done, expressed concern with the limited confidence in the City to complete its commitments and suggested language improvements in the document to strengthen it for accountability assurances, and suggested more efforts to incentivize home electrification.

- Pam Jones, Belle Haven, spoke in person. She said Belle Haven had a high rate of displacement and assessing who had been affected by pollution and other things that made the community unhealthy was difficult and suggested comparing the data used with what people in the community expressed as experiencing. She acknowledged the City's efforts to address equity but noted the inequity was a 70 year problem with harm that could not be undone. She said the language in the elements needed to be stronger and suggested replacing "City should" with "City will" or "City must." She expressed concern that the documents were not clearly demonstrating what was happening. She said what would be helpful when the revision was done would be to keep the same format to be able to compare and make sure everything was included. She suggested that items to be refined should be examined by CRC so what the City heard was what the community was saying.
- Jeff Schmidt, in person, Chair, Menlo Park's Environmental Quality Commission, said he was speaking as a resident. He gave kudos to CRC for its outreach and engagement process. He suggested adding a recommendation to the City Council that the City work more extensively with the nonprofit sector to expand funding opportunities to complete commitments.
- Lynne Bramlett spoke virtually and said environmental justice was very important to the community but expressed concern the City had not completed extensive enough updates to the Safety Element and referred to emergency disaster preparedness. She noted issues with soft story buildings primarily in District 3. She said each element of the Housing Element should have an annual progress report.
- Adina Levin spoke virtually and said annual items in the Action Guide should be in the annual budget if they supported priorities. She said it would help the City Council if it were called out how these items aligned with existing priorities to make sure resources would be given to their implementation. She said it would be helpful to identify a person responsible for tracking the implementation and create a digestible dashboard showing progress on different actions on a year by year basis so community members could see what was happening. She said regarding pollution the solutions in the Safety Element were very local but having the City be a more vocal stakeholder in regional public transportation would help reduce pollution from driving. She said working with the fire district on improving safety was a key element in the Safety Element.
- Katherine Dumont spoke virtually and said she supported the idea of putting items that should be considered into the budget for City Council consideration sooner than later. She said she found the appendix cumbersome and supported Ms. Jones' comment to make sure the reporting and the tracking were understandable and legible tied to a resource that someone could contact if they had questions. She said outreach should continue into the community to bring progress because of the accountability concerns the community had. She said her concern was budget and noted she had not heard anything in the budget workshop last week about earmarked funds for implementation of the EJ Element.

Chair Schindler closed public comment.

Chair Schindler recessed the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Chair Schindler reconvened the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Commissioner Behroozi said it was important to have a go-to person for the work as it moved forward especially if they, as she thought they should, converted language from “should” to “must” and “will” as they were making a promise to the community. She said in some comments air conditioning was a greater priority than electrification. She said education about heat pumps and its dual heating and cooling functions and solar panels reducing electrical bills could help. She referred to landlords that might upgrade properties but then would want to recoup the benefits of the upgrades, which could cause displacement and suggested that the anti-displacement policies needed to get going as soon as they could. She referred to the Safety Element and emergency response and suggested as in other communities that they increased awareness of the upstream safety of their streets, sidewalks and systems and integrate the emergency response teams in thinking about that part too instead of just responding to problems that broken systems had created. She said she would like to see them work with the fire district as they were doing in Berkeley to think about safer streets in addition to streets that gave the fire district access and opportunity. She noted roads like Willow Road, which had a great number of accidents and would ultimately provide Belle Haven residents access to the grocery store when it opened, needed attention. She said staff was working on it, but she wanted those elevated. She said she appreciated the comments about soft story buildings that were mostly in District 3 and not District 1 where the focus of the EJ Element was. She suggested incentives noting the expense of retrofitting soft story buildings in addition to affordable housing incentives as it was important this work happened noting the potential for a future big earthquake. She said she appreciated the community outreach that CRC had done and that as a City she hoped they were reading and paying attention to it.

(Commissioner Behroozi left the meeting about 9:00 p.m.)

Commissioner Do complimented the outreach and community engagement, the brief staff report with the focus on the CRC report and its key takeaway recommendations, and the transcription of all the comments which were diverse. She noted attendee workshops where they ranked seven priorities. She said further down pages 50 to 56 in the packet it was unclear to her what was being ranked there and if they were the policies or programs noting that the text was cut off. She wanted to confirm they were seeing what the workshop attendees saw.

Mr. Cannedy said they looked at what folks’ top priorities were among the seven goals and then within each of those goals what were the top priorities of the relative projects and policies associated. He said they had an idea of overall what the priorities were in terms of the goal area and within each of those goals what were the specific things that attracted people’s attention.

Commissioner Do referred to Commissioner Behroozi’s comment about using solar and heat pumps education and potentially integrating that and also meeting people’s need and desire for cooling and AC. She said she wanted to add to that, and it might apply to other topic areas, which was that education was only one piece and directing people towards assistance for such amenities, as she understood there was assistance at certain income levels, was another.

Commissioner Ferrick said that she had been part of the Menlo Spark advisory board for many years, left for a while, and wanted to disclose she once again was on that board. She said when it came to finalization there needed to be a robust number of “shall” statements rather than less accountable terms of directional inspiration and more specific certain items of action that the Council would support, prioritize, and get done. She said not every recommendation could fall under that category so as this worked through the more final stages, she asked that they collectively identify those things within the priority goals that were both really important, impactful, and feasible to do in

the short term.

Commissioner Silverstein noted conversation around the language that they might have in the elements specifically around the terms, “shall, must or the City will.” He asked if those had legal bearing or if it was just signaling to City Council and any decision makers that it was really a priority that was promised.

City Attorney Sleiman said in general the use of the word “shall” carried a bit more legal weight if they were looking at a legal issue. She said in this case this was a policy document that would rest with staff and its interpretation.

Commissioner Silverstein said if the document said the City would do X and it was adopted and the City did not do X were there legal ramifications as a result as opposed to using the language the City “should consider or look into.”

Ms. Sleiman said she would look into it now and respond later.

Commissioner Silverstein said he wanted to echo comments regarding accountability. He said the City was excellent at writing plans but typically when it came to any individual decision it reverted back to the priority of the decision makers whether City Council, Planning Commission or whomever. He said he was interested in enforcement being put into the EJ Element and Implementation Guide to whatever extent they could. He said he supported both documents. He said in the Safety Element under the noise section that leaf blowers were specifically given an exception to the noise ordinance whereas for a variety of reasons the state and different municipalities were trying to move away from gas powered leaf blowers. He questioned that given the noise and pollution impact.

Commissioner Silin said he was a new commissioner and tried to review the notes from the previous City Council and Planning Commission study sessions and the community feedback. He referred to the enactment of SB1000 in 2016, which required that they focus on which communities specifically within Menlo Park were impacted and addressing those communities specifically. He said clearly getting feedback from those communities was critical, He said with the initial survey by Stanford and these documents he got a good idea of what the community members from the impacted communities viewed as important. He said it was important to acknowledge that the EJ Element was meant to address historical wrongs and it was important to address that. He referred to Program 2J.6 and said he was surprised to see the plan to add more trees removed as feedback had been strong for urban forest equity.

Planner Chan said Program 2J.6 was on page 18 of the EJ Implementation Guide. He said the original action item was to plant at least 75 suitable trees in different locations. He said staff’s recommendation was to remove this item as the City was currently undergoing its urban forest management plan or urban forest equity project process. He said a grant application for that was submitted to CalFire recently and as a result there might be more trees than 75 that might be planted through that. He said the intent was to not write something prescriptive that would be superseded by something else more updated and relevant.

Commissioner Silin asked if the CalFire grant was not given if they would be back to square one.

Planner Chan said they would not be as they had a plan in place that identified need. He said they had every intention and hope to receive the grant and to move forward accordingly.

Commissioner Silin referred to question 21.8 regarding access to local retail for the community and that this was implemented by the Housing Element. He said he understood that there was no zoning change that expanded the possibility of micro fulfillment and retail services within District 1. He said in the table in the Implementation Guide it indicated this should be removed as it was done and not needed in the Plan anymore and asked if with the Housing Element some change was made to further increase access to neighborhood serving retail.

Planner Smith said as part of the Housing Element process zoning updates were enacted in January 2024 and in District 1 changes occurred primarily on Willow Road. He said there were nodes at Willow Road and Newbridge Road and then Willow Road and Ivy Drive zoned as CMU, which is neighborhood mixed use zoning that emphasized retail, restaurants, community serving, small scale retail and the possibility of combining that with mixed uses through multifamily housing. He said there were existing C2-S zones, and one was a neighborhood shopping center zoning district at Willow Road and Hamilton Avenue. He said those uses were a restaurant and a service station

Commissioner Silin said his understanding of the Housing Element was they were taking sites zoned for commercial and retail use and allowing housing to be built as a mixed use component but had not changed the zoning to allow for more retail than before. He said the action item mentioned retail uses within 1/4 mile of all residences and asked if Willow Road met that requirement.

Planner Smith said the sites had a previous form of zoning that allowed mixed uses. He said the zoning change to those Willow Road sites was to do a little bit more streamlining of the uses and encourage more of that mixed use type environment there. He said he did not know if those sites were particularly within 1/4 mile of all residences within Belle Haven especially for Terminal Avenue and beyond, but the Bayfront zoning also allowed office and residential mixed use, and the life sciences district and those uses also allowed for incorporation of some retail or commercial uses as well. He said some of the areas a bit further removed from Willow Road might be able to access certain types of future uses developed in those areas. He said a lot of the sites in the Belle Haven neighborhood were dedicated to single family residential uses and they wanted to be sensitive to that and acknowledging the challenge of rezoning from that use to a mixed use commercial zone.

Commissioner Silin referred to the Safety Element and said they had received comments about bio safety lab requirements and the staff report indicated that could be added to the list if desired. He asked if that would be added or if staff was looking for direction from the Commission. He noted the report mentioned that they promote public safety things on the ACTMenlo app. He asked how they were promoting the app and the county notification system with residents, so everyone received emergency notifications. He said they had issues with trees falling during storms and losing electric power for long periods of time and asked if there was a plan to mitigate that. He said at least from personal experience they had issues with streets flooding due to blocked storm drains and asked if that was listed somewhere as a priority and if not whether it should be added.

Planner Chan said regarding biosafety levels there was not a program specifically in the Safety Element for that. He said if that was something the Commission wanted staff would report that to the City Council on June 18 and from there revise as directed. He said the ACTMenlo app was managed by the City's Public Works Department. He said there were options to download reports and he believed they had a dashboard online. He said together with the City's public engagement team they could look at ways to elevate those resources. He said regarding fallen trees or storm drain blockage from storms they would take the feedback forward. He said if there was a particular

policy or program that the Commission would want to amend or add to then staff could look into opportunities in the future.

Commissioner Silin referred to the email public comment about the four different levels of biosafety and asked if they currently had labs in the City at all four levels and how applications for such labs were processed.

Planner Chow said he understood there were not any biosafety level 3 or above type businesses.

Chair Schindler said that was her understanding as well from prior discussions at Commission meetings.

Commissioner Silin said he did not have specific suggestions on the Safety Element . He said regarding street flooding he had seen work done to protect storm drains to keep them unclogged along El Camino Real and suggested adding storm drain stoppage prevention as an item to monitor and consider as blockages caused flooding in the street and had done so two years in a row. He said that he did not like to see people lose power for days at a time because of trees falling during storms. He suggested looking into some way to evaluate which trees in the City were at risk. He said he used the ACTMenlo app frequently and it was a great way for people to feel like there was accountability from the City. He said he encouraged increasing use of the app and perhaps to have more policies in place in terms of responding within the app. He said sometimes things were filed that did not get a response for a long time and when it was the response merely indicated it was being looked into and case closed. He said for accountability the submittal should not be closed until it was addressed. He said regarding biosafety that if the City did not have any of the high risk biosafety level labs now that it be understood what the permitting process was for the different levels so Planning Commissioners and City Council could make a decision moving forward.

Commissioner Silin said regarding the EJ Element that he fully supported the recommendations for the Anti-Displacement Strategy. He said community level retail was mentioned frequently by community members and that had not been met at least with what was stated in the Implementation Guide as it said to allow neighborhood serving retail uses within 1/4 mile of residences. He said that would require a more complicated zoning change to be feasible. He said the Plan said staff recommendation was to remove that item as that was accomplished early 2024 but he believed Planner Smith said that it was not accomplished as stated. He said the comment should either be that staff was removing it as it was not possible to accomplish or that it might be more of an explanation of why it could not be done now so Council and Planning Commission could discuss whether it was important, and the community could consider as well. He said he saw the community feedback raised accountability a lot and was looking to the City to put into place things that the community felt were tangible. He noted the top three community priorities and suggested the City focus on what actual things-not just additional studies and programs-might be delivered in a relatively short time frame. He said programs 4D and 4E related to community gardens would be excellent to consider. He said they could focus on making sure there were farmers' markets in District 1 on a regular basis perhaps tied in with community gardens, which seemed like potential quick wins. He said programs for anti-displacement being done via the Housing Element were excellent policies to look at.

Commissioner Silin said he was concerned about accountability. He said comments were made about using stronger language, but he heard also that the list in the Implementation Guide was not a commitment to accomplish all those things. He expressed concern that the action items in the

Implementation Guide might get lost in the multi-departmental, multi-planning processes in the City. He proposed adding columns on the Guide that said either “yes” or “no” as to whether it currently was in the budget and had staffing resources. He said he was concerned with overpromising. He said anti-displacement programs such as rental registry and rent control were desirable but would require a lot of time and effort, and if they were not done that would work against the City. He said the Implementation Plan was great because it had step by step things to be done but encouraged staff to present it so it was easy to understand the priority on the staff and budget level of what could be done and showing what would actually be done short term versus what would be looked into. He said he had heard an interest in having Table 8 in an Excel spreadsheets to allow for sorting and filter use. He referred to a speaker’s comment about understanding the differences between versions and said for the Housing Element they were given a red line version that very clearly showed what had changed from the previous document to the current one. He said on the list of prioritizations in addition to scoring for urgency, impact, effort, and cost to add community priority or something like that based on CRC’s feedback from the community.

Ms. Sleiman said regarding the question about the legal weight of language that she looked into further the Implementation Guide was a policy document and not local law (local laws were in the municipal code that was established by ordinance). She said the Planning Commission was free to recommend staff look into accountability options such as the language.

Commissioner Silverstein asked if there was any difference from a legal perspective in changing the language of the policy document from “should” to “shall” or if it was a recommendation for them internally. He said he was hearing that there was no actual difference between those two words.

Ms. Sleiman said it was not entirely clear and it was up to the Commission and staff to recommend how they wanted it framed. She said again that it was a policy document.

Chair Schindler noted shared appreciation for the community outreach efforts over the last three years and especially with the underserved communities, and that she had learned a lot. She complimented staff’s rigor and the detail that was put into the two tables. She said over the course of the discussion she came to realize that she wanted to think about the two tables as input documents – these were things that would go into budget plans, capital plans and staff allocations. She said she intended in her comments to differentiate between input and output with accountability lying with both of those. She said they needed to convey to the community that they were being heard and that what they had asked for had been captured for accountability. She said accountability on the output side of things was even more important she thought. She said they had talked about going back to the community and telling them which things were happening, when, why, and probably why some things were not happening. She said she liked the idea that the EJ Element or/and maybe the Safety Element might have the same kind of approximately annual update that they were given for the Housing Element. She said she wrote in her notes that they should do that for the community and not just specific to the EJ or Safety Elements or even the Housing Element but to do a General Plan readout. She said listening to the conversation and watching the programs and policies intersect in the documents she saw so much overlap in objectives and accountability. She said in terms of output to the community she thought it important to give regular updates about what was being done across the entire General Plan. She said that might sound like a terrible six-hour public meeting but that was not what she meant rather that they would winnow down to the most important things the community cared about and as they heard tonight there was a process for identifying that. She said tonight’s documentation had important information about what was most urgent or had the highest impact. She said there were multiple mentions about getting things actionable and funded

sooner than later and discussion about how this could potentially feed into the budget process. She said they knew the three top priorities for some of their underserved communities were goals 5, 4 and 2 and they could pick the programs that were either urgent or high impact and say these were the ones we want to be sure get into the budget conversations right now. She said they had that data already. She said she would love somebody to find a way to move that into the capital planning process as well as the budgetary process and potentially even short term resource allocations.

Chair Schindler said on the table of goals, policies, and programs for the EJ Element that she did not have line item specific feedback on the policies and programs. She said she believed that the community members and staff who had been heavily involved in this and taken it from the hundreds alluded to earlier down to the current number were closest to it and in the best position to do it. She said there had not been any programs removed since a year ago and the last time they looked at this there had been some policies removed but that was because they had been consolidated, reflecting the overlap between this element and other elements and accountability across different departments. She asked whether lead departments as accountable departments might also be assigned to policies noting the document had primary and secondary responsibilities for programs. She said she appreciated the community feedback on what environmental justice meant to them. She said regarding the four recommendations that were part of CRC's feedback she was pleased to see that anti-displacement stayed in the EJ matrix. She said the rest of her feedback primarily was related to accountability. She said she did not think they should change the language for any of them to "shall" or "will" until they were above 80% certain they would do it as she thought that would hurt accountability. She said for accountability that they should be clear about what they were going to do and why and provide a clear vision to people that this is the output and what we are going to do. She said Commissioner Behroozi before she left said that when we use the words shall and will that they were making a promise to the community. She said she did not want promises made that they could not keep. She said she wanted a way to convey that they heard the feedback, and the feedback was thoroughly going into all of these different City planning processes, and it was being weighed and prioritized and then have the output be something that people can revisit regularly.

Chair Schindler referred to the Implementation Guide and how it might be updated and its online version. She said for her it was not yet an implementation guide as it only had action items identified for some of the programs and was not comprehensive in terms of an implementation plan. She said it was an additional repository of specific ideas from the community that were like another layer under the programs and was not a commitment to implement and was not exhaustive of all the things they would do to implement. She said she thought it should be called something more descriptive than Implementation Guide.

Chair Schindler said she understood the Safety Element was updated in response to specific legal requirements. She said it would have been interesting to have surveyed the community and asked what the safety needs were and what types of programs would address those similar to the EJ Element process. She said other safety concerns had surfaced through public and commission comments. She said the specific question of biohazard and biosafety levels had come up a number of times for the Planning Commission related to new development and her hypothesis was that zoning was the best place for that oversight. She said in the Safety Element, S1.E, S1.G and S1.J were areas where the biohazard and biosafety issues could be addressed. She said it needed a resolution mechanism and not necessarily in that element but that a process for defining the City's approach should be in the Element.

Commissioner Do said Planner Chan confirmed the four recommendations that CRC made would be

incorporated. She asked about program 5 in table EJ.8 and if that was going to be expanded to include those four recommendations. She said she wanted to confirm that correspondingly action items 5G.1, .2, and .3 would also go back in noting they were shown as removed on pages 25 and 26. She said it should be consistent if they were keeping and elevating anti-displacement in the EJ Element.

Planner Chan said 5G.1 and 5G.2 talked about particular action items and different examples of things that could be done as part of studying the anti-displacement strategy. He said CRC's recommendation was they would modify program 5G to include those examples, so they were in one place but removed here.

Commissioner Do said as Chair Schindler noted the Safety Element did not go through the same robust process as the EJ Element. She said the public commenter Lynn Bramlet had sent a long email. She said she did not know if it made it into this staff report but she believed that the message from Ms. Bramlet included in the staff report from last year might be the same document, which meant the public had access to it. She said the Safety Element had one goal and that was to assure a safe community. She said she did not know staff's capacity to respond to some of Ms. Bramlet's concerns but she agreed with her that safety was a big goal and that it made sense to break it down into components. She said currently the policies were grouped by the source of the threat from wildfires, earthquakes, tsunamis, and floods. She said it would be great to see the Safety Element organized by proactive action almost like the EJ Element in assuring safe, sanitary, and stable housing had proactive actions addressing those. She said she recently had the opportunity to use the ACTMenlo Park app for the first time. She said she went online, entered her comment and a photo, and clicked submit. She said it took her to see Clickfix to create an account. She said if they wanted to remove hurdles for people to contact the City that directly linking to Clickfix would be a simple fix. She noted also at Clickfix she had not seen any options for toggling between language. She said once she got it submitted successfully the response was prompt.

Commissioner Silverstein said regarding accountability and Chair Schindler's comment on the impact of using terms like "must" and her thinking about the differences between an input plan and output plan that really emphasized for him that this was not a document being developed of what will happen. He said for him it was similar to how the City's Transportation Master Plan was not a document on what would happen despite it highlighting 198 different projects as many of those would never happen. He then read a description of what a city's general plan should be. He said in light of that he asked why these very specific nuanced programs needed to be formally attached to the element that they were putting into the City's constitution. He said he loved the policies and goals, the background and surveys, the fact finding, their priorities and vision and what they cared about but asked why that could not be extracted to say that as a result of all of those and the results of all of the information we have now gathered that these were the very nuanced specific things we are going to do, this is what it is going to cost and this who is going to work on it. He said that the very detailed kind of implementation state of this process seemed out of place in a policy document especially one that usually would live on for decades. He asked if it made sense to tie these two together. He asked whether they should have an EJ Element that talked about all of the things they cared about and then based on budgeting, prioritization, and an execution plan that they would determine what the actual details of the things they wanted to accomplish were, promise those, and use the term "must."

Chair Schindler said many of the structures that they went through for the General Plan, including this Element, were designated by the state, by precedent, or by similarity, like element to element.

She said while she appreciated the nuance of the question, which she mentally paraphrased as “why don’t we just stop at policies and not go into programs,” she was comfortable with leaving programs there in the abstract as things we would like to accomplish subject to money, timelines, deadlines, and at least two to three levels of execution that happened beyond that. She said for her and the public she thought that what the policies were not getting at was clarified by the examples of the programs.

Planner Chan recapped the reason for the dual document approach noting that from the June 2023 study session they had a list of 130 plus programs rooted in extensive community feedback about what they wanted to do such as the example of planting 75 trees. He said while not wanting to remove all of those things and wanting to retain the valuable community feedback received, they split it between the EJ Element with programs that were relatively broad and the Implementation Guide or Action Guide, so the valuable community feedback was kept. He said in the future when they implemented programs, they would start from what was rooted in community desire.

Mr. Cannedy said he understood concern about a desire to not over promise but noted the significant eight year planning process for this. He said resources to execute a lot of the programs could be found if the proper will was applied. He said they would be making promises to the community and the possibility existed that they might not fulfill all the promises. He asked if it was better to promise nothing and leave things to continue as they were now or to find opportunities to own both the wins and the losses. He said the California Attorney General had issued guidance around best practices pertaining to SB1000 implementation and recommended strong guidance in the language and specificity wherever possible. He said it was easier to agree at a high level of abstraction and get consensus on broad themes and policies. He said at the next level though when the breakwaters emerged was where the most valuable insight might be obtained. He said that was also the place in the specificity where the community’s expertise and living experience really shone as they had first had knowledge about streets on which cars speed, streets not safe for biking, and dilapidate houses housing people. He said it was no small amount of work to make sure such extensive information was not lost as that represented the return on the City’s investment in the outreach and engagement process throughout.

Commissioner Silverstein said to clarify his prior statement that he did not in any way want to get rid of all of the specific programs. He said at both the level of the Implementation Guide and the EJ Element his thought was to extract those two separately in parallel to say: “These are our policies. This is our guiding vision. This is our mission where we are going and then separately with all of the community feedback and everything that this was how we plan to do it.” He said those were two separate things. He said in terms of funding and how they actually would get this done he thought that some more work or thought was needed to determine the very formal accountability when it came to some of the goals. He referred to the Transportation Master Plan, which he saw as a beautiful theoretical plan but every individual decision about implementing from it involved a budgeting, staff resources and community response discussion so things took a long time and ultimately it was a political vote or conversation on a one-off basis. He said the plans they wrote held no teeth within their political process nor within the community. He asked how they could determine the reality of what they actually would be able to do focusing on the EJ Element programs.

Commissioner Silin said the concern they seemed to be sharing especially with the EJ Element was accountability messaging. He said with the Housing Element they were careful in what they said they would do as it would be reviewed by the state. He suggested they do the same with the EJ Element and be more concerned with the outcomes happening. He said they wanted the community

to feel heard. He said at the program level they needed to be transparent and state what things would be done and what things might not be done. He said they knew the top three categories the community most cared about and that would be the focus of the programs. He said that list would indicate what was being committed to with timelines, what ones were being taken seriously and would be pursued. He said for the Implementation Plan it would be even further specified that these were the ones moving to implementation and that meant they had pretty high confidence they would be funded. He said the proposed Implementation Plan was not representative of what would be implemented but how they would implement things if they had all the resources. He said to Commissioner Silverstein's point they did not want to just stop at the policy level and leave it there, nor take all the policies and expand into programs, and then expand each one into implementation. He said they wanted a middle ground where they were transparent with the public to respond that they had heard everything about what was wanted, here were the things the City was committed to seriously looking into, and these things would be implemented. He said the annual updates would keep the City accountable with the public as residents would hear about the programs, they thought were important and what the status update was. He said he would suggest another annual or semiannual exercise where they showed the public the wish list from the last time, what things had moved into programs, what would be implemented and give the community a chance perhaps to reprioritize, provide comment or add new things for an evolving and continuous feedback loop.

Mr. Calloway said regarding accountability and implementation that a level of detail beyond policy was needed in a general plan, and that it had to say something about how it would achieve what was said at a policy level. He said beyond that that there was flexibility in terms of what level of detail was included. He said such a plan was a long time plan and you wanted to structure it to say what you were trying to achieve but to allow for decisions to be made over that time as to how you would achieve those as changes happened. He said opportunities and resources could not be predicted entirely over the timeline horizon of the plan's implementation, so some level of flexibility was helpful to be able to make decisions over time. He said for the EJ Element specifically given the objectives and what the community had said that some level of not just specificity but force of language around certain things was important to address historical harms and the concerns and issues raised through significant community outreach. He said it made a difference if they said, "we shall achieve this outcome" or "we shall take this approach to get there" or "we shall prioritize." He said it did not mean they were going to be successful in the implementation, but it meant they were committing to trying to achieve desired outcomes in some particular way. He said in a similar way there were things in a capital improvement plan they used to implement the general plan. He said the general plan did not necessarily state this was how the capital improvement plan would be used to build the streets that would implement the established transportation goals and policies but they could try to articulate some of that more specifically in the EJ Element for example or in an implementation plan because there was specific concern about not achieving those things. He said annually when budget was discussed make sure the priorities articulated in the EJ Element were considered. He suggested thinking through as a municipality the ways they could ensure they would use the community outreach that they put into the EJ Element as input in the decision making processes. He said they needed to establish those processes and practices across departments and at elected official and staff level because it applied in many different ways.

Commissioner Silin said he felt fine with stronger language for the policies. He said with the programs he thought that they could use strong language as long as they were willing to commit to those programs. He said he would suggest that they reduce the list of programs to ones that the City was very willing to pursue even if there were no specific details about when or how. He said perhaps another program could be added to the actual implementation of the element because some have

commented that they needed someone accountable for working with these other departments and making sure things were prioritized. He said perhaps they could make a strong commitment that these were the programs they strongly cared about, and they committed to and produce a plan to strongly make sure they were considered. He said regarding the Safety Element there was the ACTMenlo app and the SMC alert system. He said in terms of making sure people were using these he thought that the SMC alert was most important.

G. Informational Items

G1. Future Planning Commission Meeting Schedule

- Regular Meeting: June 24, 2024

Ms. Chow said the June 24 agenda was not confirmed but they anticipated a single family home, reconstruction of a service station on Willow Road and another general plan topic associated with modifications to the level of service policy in their traffic impact analyses.

- Regular Meeting: July 8, 2024

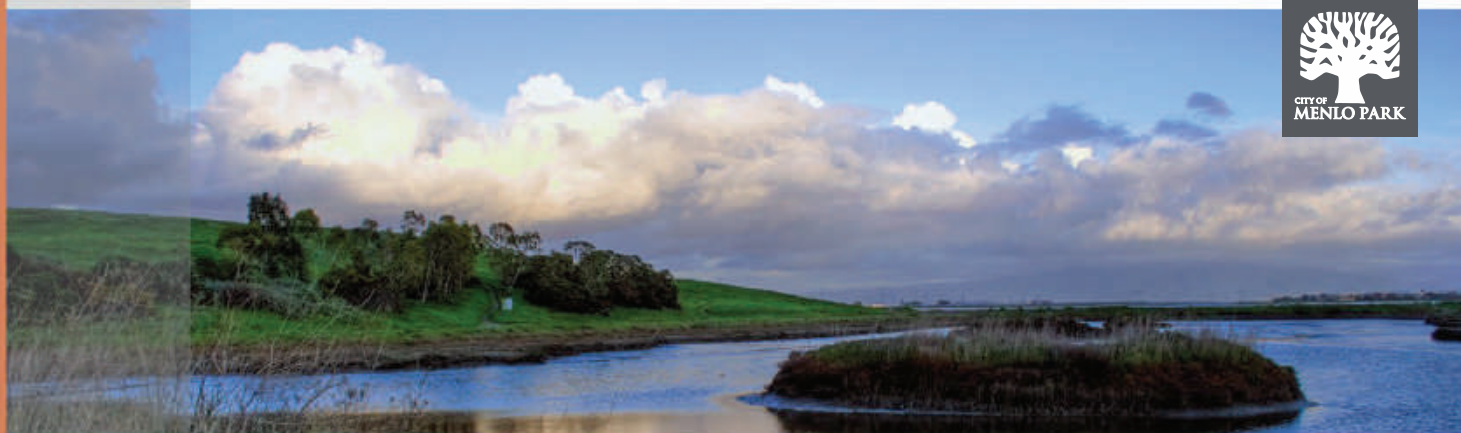
H. Adjournment

Chair Schindler adjourned the meeting at 10:37 p.m.

Staff Liaison: Deanna Chow, Community Development Director

Recording Secretary: Brenda Bennett

Approved by the Planning Commission on June 24, 2024



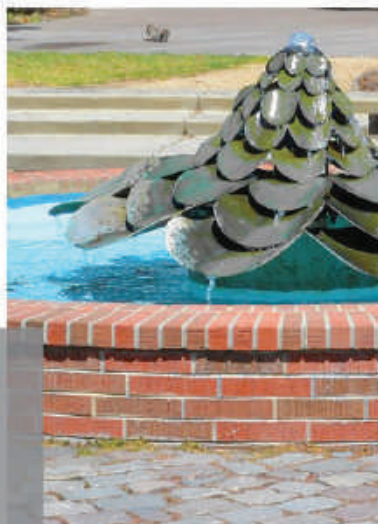
GENERAL PLAN ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SAFETY ELEMENTS STUDY SESSION

Planning Commission - June 3, 2024



STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND STUDY SESSION PURPOSE

- **Review** the Environmental Justice (EJ) and Safety Elements and their regulatory context
- **Introduce** the Environmental Justice Element Implementation Guide
- **Revisit** community outreach completed including recent workshops
- **Receive** feedback from the Planning Commission regarding revised documents
- **Receive** community feedback





MAJOR MILESTONES

- **Community Meetings**
February 9, 2023 (English) and February 10, 2023 (Spanish)
- **Study Session with Planning Commission & City Council**
June 20, 2023
- **Housing Element certified by State of California**
March 20, 2024
- **Community Workshops**
May 2, 2024 (Spanish) and May 9, 2024 (English)
- Tonight!** ■ **Planning Commission Study Session**
June 3, 2024
- **City Council Study Session**
June 18, 2024 (English, with Spanish translation/interpretation)
- **Adoption of Elements**
Fall 2024 (Tentative)



GENERAL PLAN BACKGROUND

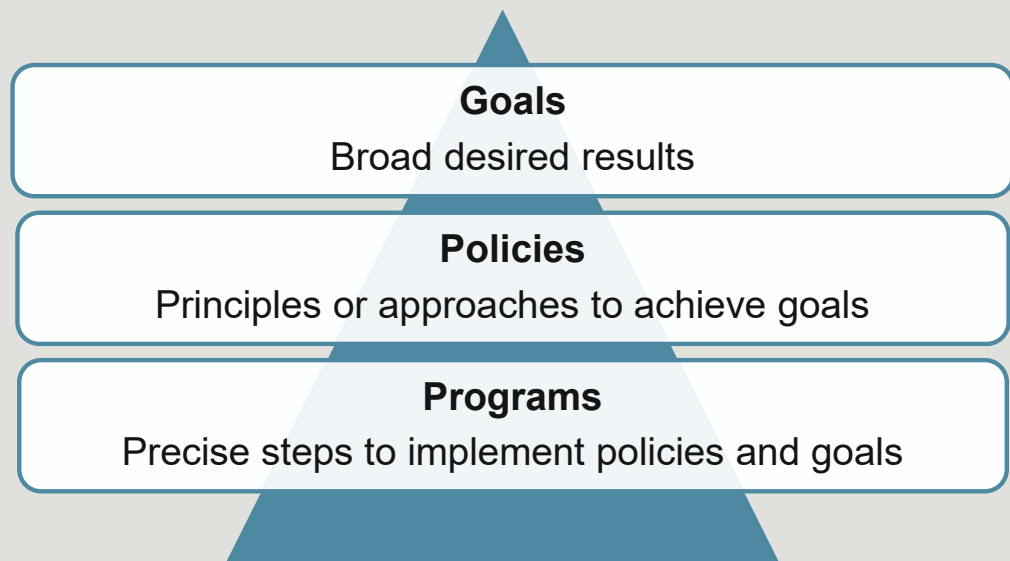
GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS



The General Plan guides planning decisions across the community

** Housing Element Update Project component*

IMPLEMENTING GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS





OVERVIEW: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT

EJ ELEMENT OVERVIEW

- City is preparing **Menlo Park's first EJ Element**
- EJ means that **everyone** should have equal protection and advantages when it comes to the **environment** around them
- EJ also means that people should be **meaningfully involved in the decisions** that affect their community



Menlo Park Neighborhoods

- Allied Arts - Stanford Park
- Bayfront
- Belle Haven
- Central Menlo
- Downtown
- El Camino Real Corridor
- Felton Gables
- Linfield Oaks
- Park Forest - Spruce - San Antonio
- Sharon Heights
- South of Seminary - Vintage Oaks
- Stanford Hills
- Suburban Park - Lorelei Manor - Flood Triangle
- The Willows
- VA Medical District
- West Menlo
- City Boundary

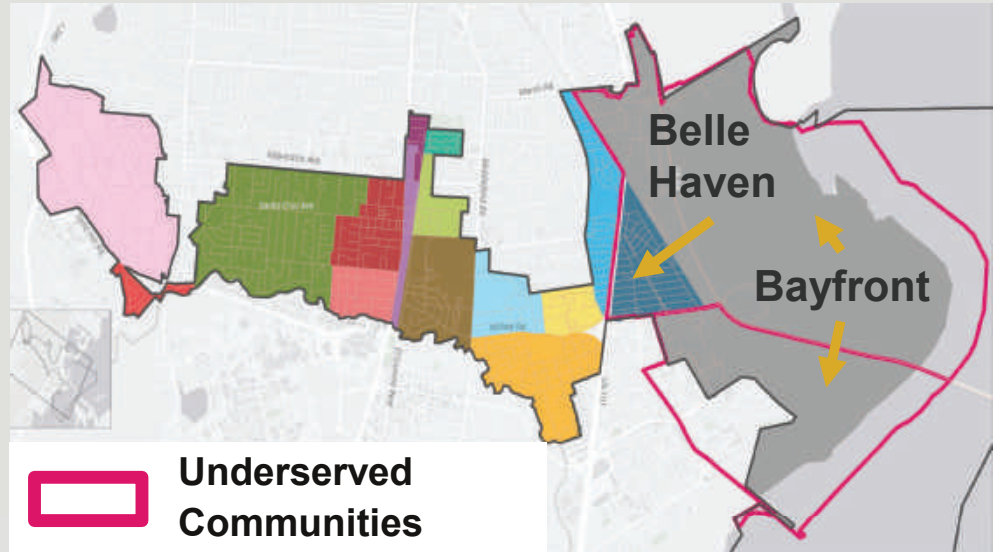


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EJ ELEMENT OVERVIEW



Identify and focus on Underserved Communities



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT OVERVIEW



1. Address unique and compounded health risks.



2. Reduce pollution exposure and eliminate environmental inequities.



3. Equitably provide appropriate public facilities to individuals and communities.



4. Promote access to affordable healthy and high-quality foods.



5. Provide safe and sanitary homes for all residents.



6. Encourage physical activity and active transportation.



7. Create equitable civic and community engagement.

**EJ Element Goals align with State-required topic areas*




OVERVIEW: SAFETY ELEMENT



SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE

- Purpose: Identify and appraise risks and provide high-level strategies for mitigating them and ensuring wellness of the community, city services, and infrastructure
- Last update: 2013
- Current update: Focused on addressing new State-required topics
 - Climate change adaptation and resiliency
 - Wildfire hazards and risks
 - Identify residential developments lacking 2 or more emergency evacuation routes
- Consistent with:
 - San Mateo County Multijurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2021)
 - City's 2030 Climate Action Plan (CAP)
 - San Mateo County's 2015 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)



JUNE 2023 STUDY SESSION TO TODAY'S STUDY SESSION



JUNE 20, 2023 STUDY SESSION


- Joint Planning Commission and City Council Study Session
- Provided an overview of elements and regulatory context
- Presented a refinement framework to make community feedback actionable



JUNE 3 AND JUNE 18, 2024 STUDY SESSIONS



- Present revised draft EJ and Safety Elements
- Describe community input received
- Seek feedback that revised elements are reflective of prior feedback
- *After study sessions, project team will make additional refinements, as needed, before returning to Planning Commission and City Council for adoption later in 2024 (tentative)*



REVISED DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT



REVISED DRAFT EJ ELEMENT

- A** Modify certain statements about EJ context
- B** Make adjustments to the refinement framework matrix
- C** Continue performing and implementing robust outreach
- D** Think critically about funding needs and sources
- E** Consider actions with short-term results to demonstrate and communicate progress

REVISED DRAFT EJ ELEMENT

A. Modify certain statements about EJ context

- “Underserved Communities” (Menlo Park preferred term) is intended to be the same as “Disadvantaged Communities” (State-defined term)

REVISED DRAFT EJ ELEMENT

B. Make adjustments to the refinement framework matrix

- The matrix is a tool to:
 - Inform decisions about where to prioritize time, money, and resources
 - Define realistic/achievable timelines for implementation
- The matrix is presented in Table EJ-8 of the EJ Element
 - Lists goals, policies, and programs for the Element
 - Note: Blue columns remain; grey columns to be removed

DESCRIPTION							IMPLEMENTATION			PRIORITIZATION				TIME FRAME		ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION					
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	
Policy / Program ID	Policy / Program Text	Classification	Primary Program Theme	Secondary Program Theme(s)	In Progress?	Prior Program ID	Lead Dept.	Supporting Departmental, Directorial, and/or Partner(s)	Funding Source(s)	Urgency	Impact	Effort	Cost	Combine if Same	Start: 0-3 Years Medium: 3-6 Years Long: 6+ Years	Start: 0-3 Years Medium: 3-6 Years Long: 6+ Years	Infrastructure Enhancement Focus	Site Specific Program	Community Assets Fund Eligibility	Staff Recommendation	
										1 = Low 2 = Medium 3 = High	1 = Low 2 = Medium 3 = High	1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low								19

REVISED DRAFT EJ ELEMENT

- Matrix was updated to note where desired policies/programs already intersect with the City's work.
- CRC directly interacted with community members and enhanced draft policies and programs describing the community's EJ needs
- Focus of community-desired programs was refined so programs would align with each other
- Updated organization in EJ Element and separate Implementation Guide (Appendix EJ-E)

DESCRIPTION							IMPLEMENTATION			PRIORITIZATION				TIME FRAME		ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION				
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Policy / Program ID	Policy / Program Text	Classification	Primary Program Theme	Secondary Program Theme(s)	In Progress?	Prior Program ID	Lead Dept.	Supporting Departmental, Directorial, and/or Partner(s)	Funding Source(s)	Urgency	Impact	Effort	Cost	Combine if Same	Start: 0-3 Years Medium: 3-6 Years Long: 6+ Years	Start: 0-3 Years Medium: 3-6 Years Long: 6+ Years	Infrastructure Enhancement Focus	Site Specific Program	Community Assets Fund Eligibility	Staff Recommendation
										1 = Low 2 = Medium 3 = High	1 = Low 2 = Medium 3 = High	1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low							

C. Continue performing and implementing robust outreach

- Project team continued community outreach & engagement
- “Meet people where they are” approach
 - April 13: Love Our Earth
 - April 18: CCCT meeting (20 attendees)
 - May 2: Spanish language community workshop (33 attendees)
 - May 9: English language community workshop (48 attendees)
 - May 11: Housing Resource Fair
- Emails, flyers, social media, etc.

C. Continue performing and implementing robust outreach

- Top priorities as identified in May 2 and May 9 Workshops

Providing safe, sanitary, and stable homes

Goal 5

Reducing pollution exposure and improving air quality

Goal 4

Promoting access to high quality and affordable food

Goal 2

C. Continue performing and implementing robust outreach

- CRC outreach summary report for Spring 2024 events (Attachment L)
- **Key Take-Aways:**
 1. *The top priorities of Belle Haven residents are safe, sanitary and stable housing and access to healthy and affordable food*
 2. *There are massive disparities between the Belle Haven neighborhood and communities south of US-101*
 3. *Accountability remains a top concern for residents*

▪ **Recommendations:**

1. *Increase opportunities for accountability through strict reporting requirements on EJ Element Programs and Policies*
2. *Ensure "Safe, Sanitary, and Stable Housing" is used in Goal 5 language and throughout the document, replacing "Safe and Sanitary Homes"*
3. *Strengthen program and policy language throughout the EJ Element, for example by changing encourage to ensure or could to should/shall*
4. *Elevate Anti-Displacement Actions into the Environmental Justice Element, accelerate timelines for creation and implement interim steps as soon as possible.*

Recommendation 4, Part 1

Revise Action Item 7.J.3 and move into EJ Element as Goal 5 program:

As part of an anti-displacement program and to ensure stable housing, support increasing access to legal counsel for tenants facing eviction ~~by~~ ~~conducting~~ community outreach, education, and engagement to ensure renters are aware of this resource. Include progress reports on usage annually.

Recommendation 4 Part 2 – *Modify Program 5.G:*

Ensure that City's Anti-Displacement Strategy (Housing Element Program H2.E) supports households and neighborhoods in Underserved Communities. This will include studying, at a minimum, the following:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Rental inventory of all homes | • Community and tenant opportunity to purchase* | • Just Cause Eviction protections regardless of tenant duration* |
| • Updated or expanded rent control laws | • Revised BMR guidelines allowing for deeper subsidies* | • Strengthened tenant harassment ordinances* |
| • Rent increase mitigations, such as longer noticing requirements | • Relocation assistance for tenants* | • An examination of opportunities to limit additional fees passed to tenants like laundry, parking, and utility costs |
- * Similar language included in Housing Element

D. Think critically about funding needs and sources

- Both Table EJ-8 and the Implementation Guide (Appendix EJ-E) include list of potential funding sources
- Additional considerations regarding program/action focus is also listed:
 - Infrastructure Enhancements
 - Specific Sites
 - Potentially eligible for funding through Community Amenities Fund

E. Consider actions with short-term results to demonstrate and communicate progress

- Both Table EJ-8 and the Implementation Guide (Appendix EJ-E) include list of ongoing activities, especially:
 - **Anti-Displacement Strategy**
 - **Urban Forest Equity: Developing the Management Plan for Menlo Park**
 - **Civic and Community Engagement**
- Progress on these activities were detailed at May 2 and May 9 community workshops
- Accountability for City progress is a recurring theme of community feedback
 - Implementation Guide (Action Guide) is a tool to improve accountability



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE (ACTION GUIDE)



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The Implementation Guide (Action Guide) is a separate, complementary, document that adheres closely to EJ goals, policies, and programs and the General Plan Guiding Principles—lies outside of the General Plan itself

Includes action items to be pursued by the City to improve environmental justice

Dual-document approach allows for more frequent updating of Implementation Guide (Action Guide) to respond to changes in:

- *Community Needs*
- *Funding Opportunities*
- *Ongoing Community Outreach, particularly from Menlo Park's Underserved Communities*

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

- Following adoption, the Implementation Guide (Action Guide) will be maintained on the City’s website to improve accountability by being more adaptable and responsive to community needs and opportunities
- Improves accountability by easing reporting and tracking of actions that will fulfill EJ Element programs, adapting to new information but grounded in community input

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Table 2: Revised Environmental Justice Element Organization

Environmental Justice Element Document	Implementation Guide (Complementary Document)
Goals: Broad actions Menlo Park will pursue to work toward environmental justice.	-
Policies: Focused principles to guide decision-making that Menlo Park is adopting in order to achieve goals.	-
Programs: Precise steps that Menlo Park will take in furtherance of policies and goals.	Action Items: Specific tasks related to the Environmental Justice programs that Menlo Park will pursue to improve environmental justice in response to changing community needs, funding opportunities, and ongoing community outreach.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

- Each action item is organized under an EJ Element program, intended to provide additional details and community-based feedback to City staff on desirable methods to fulfill the EJ programs
- The majority of action items were developed from outreach in Menlo Park's Underserved Communities
- Note: Green columns remain; grey columns to be removed

DESCRIPTION						IMPLEMENTATION			PRIORITY					TIME FRAME		ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEM INFORMATION			
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Action Item ID	Action Item Text	Primary Action Item Theme	Secondary Action Item Theme(s)	In Progress?	Prior Action Item Program ID	Lead Department	Responsible Department(s), Division(s), and/or Partner(s)	Funding Source(s)	Urgency	Impact	Effort	Cost	Complexity Score	Initiation	Completion	Infrastructure Enhancement Focus	Site Specific Program	Community Awareness Fund Eligibility	Staff Recommendation
									1 = Low 2 = Medium 3 = High	1 = Low 2 = Medium 3 = High	1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low		Short: 0-3 Years Medium: 3-6 Years Long: 6+ Years	Short: 0-3 Years Medium: 3-6 Years Long: 6+ Years				

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

- Example:** Program 7.A: Promote and evaluate capacity-building efforts to educate and involve traditionally underrepresented populations, including Underserved Communities, in the public decision-making process.

DESCRIPTION						IMPLEMENTATION			PRIORITY					TIME FRAME		ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION				
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Policy / Program ID	Policy / Program Text	Class: Theme	Primary Program Theme	Secondary Program Theme(s)	In Progress?	Prior Program ID	Lead Dept.	Responsible Department(s), Division(s), and/or Partner(s)	Funding Source(s)	Urgency	Impact	Effort	Cost	Complexity Score	Initiation	Completion	Infrastructure Enhancement Focus	Site Specific Program	Community Awareness Fund Eligibility	Staff Recommendation
7.A	Promote and evaluate capacity-building efforts to educate and involve traditionally underrepresented populations, including Underserved Communities, in the public decision-making process.	Program	Outreach	-	-	7.A	City Manager's Office	Sales Haven Action	General Fund	3	5	5	5	12	Short Term	Ongoing from initiation	no	no	no	Keep in the plan.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

DESCRIPTION					IMPLEMENTATION				PRIORITY				Time Frame		ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEM CATEGORICAL				
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
Action Item ID	Action Item Text	Primary Action Item Theme	Secondary Action Item Theme	Is Program?	Price Action Item (Program) ID	Lead Department	Supporting Department(s), (Initiative), and/or Partner(s)	Funding Source(s)	1 = Low 2 = Medium 3 = High	Impact 1 = Low 2 = Medium 3 = High	Effort 1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Cost 1 = High 2 = Medium 3 = Low	Complexity Score	Initiation: Short: 0-3 Years Medium: 3-6 Years Long: 6+ Years	Completion: Short: 0-3 Years Medium: 3-6 Years Long: 6+ Years	Workforce Placement Focus	Site Specific Program	Community/ American Fund Eligibility	Staff Recommendation
The following action items implement Program 7.A. Process and evaluate capacity building efforts to educate and involve traditionally underserved populations and those in underserved communities in the public decision-making process.																			
7.A.1	Partner with community-based organizations that have relationships, trust and cultural competency with target communities to outreach on local initiatives and issues and allow them the use of space in the Belle Haven Community Campus at no cost.	Outreach	-	-	7.B	City Manager's Office	Belle Haven Action	General Fund	3	3	3	3	12	Short Term	Ongoing from initiation	No	No	No	Keep
7.A.2	Use culturally appropriate approaches to public participation and involvement in a partnership with community based organization.	Outreach	-	-	7.C	City Manager's Office	Belle Haven Action	General Fund	3	3	2	3	11	Short Term	Ongoing from initiation	No	No	No	Keep
7.A.3	Deploy educational workshops for City staff to enhance understanding social justice and housing needs pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Outreach	-	-	7.D	City Manager's Office	Belle Haven Action	General Fund	3	3	2	3	11	Short Term	Ongoing from initiation	No	No	No	Keep
7.A.4	Provide training for decision makers, City staff, applicants and public on social justice issues that affect community members.	Outreach	-	-	7.E	City Manager's Office	-	General Fund	3	3	2	3	11	Short Term	Ongoing from initiation	No	No	No	Keep

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

▪ **Example:** The following action items implement Program 7.A:

- **7.A.1:** Partner with community-based organizations that have relationships, trust and cultural competency with target communities to outreach on local initiatives and issues and allow them the use of space in the Belle Haven Community Campus at no cost.
- **7.A.2:** Use culturally appropriate approaches to public participation and involvement in a partnership with community based organization.
- **7.A.3:** Deploy educational workshops for City staff to enhance understanding social injustice and housing needs pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **7.A.4:** Provide training for decision makers, City staff, applicants, and public on social justice issues that affect community members.



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The following action items implement Program 7.A: Promote and evaluate capacity-building efforts to educate and involve traditionally underrepresented populations and those in Underserved Communities, in the public decision-making process.

Action Item
7.A.1

Partner with community-based organizations that have relationships, trust, and cultural competency with target communities to outreach on local initiatives and issues and allow them the use of space in the Belle Haven Community Campus at no cost

Lead Department: City Manager's Office

Supporting: Belle Haven Action

Funding Sources: General Fund

Time Frame: Short-Term Initiation, Ongoing from Initiation



REVISED DRAFT SAFETY ELEMENT





REVISED DRAFT SAFETY ELEMENT



Policies/ programs revised to include community feedback

- Revised Policy S1.35 – **Disaster Preparedness Planning**
 - Multilingual and multimodal outreach in Underserved Communities
- Revised Policy S1.36 – **Community Preparedness**
 - Support countywide preparedness, response and protection services
- New Program S1.M – **Sea Level Rise Planning**
 - Collaborate with other agencies to develop a sea level rise plan as part of a subregional San Francisco Bay shoreline resiliency plan
- No changes to Open Space/Conservation and Noise Elements

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STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND STUDY SESSION PURPOSE



- **Review** the Environmental Justice (EJ) and Safety Elements and their regulatory context
- **Introduce** the Environmental Justice Element Implementation Guide
- **Revisit** community outreach completed including recent workshops
- **Receive** feedback from the Planning Commission regarding revised documents
- **Receive** community feedback



EJ AND SAFETY ELEMENTS STUDY SESSION FEEDBACK PROMPTS



Did the project team adequately respond to the June 2023 Study Session with these Revised Draft documents?

Are the project team's "Staff Recommendation" columns appropriate?

EJ Element and Implementation Guide

Do Climate Resilient Communities' recommendations require further refinement?

Staff may make additional refinements to elements and documents

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NEXT STEPS



- Feedback at tonight's Study Session will be provided at City Council Study Session on June 18
- Project Team will revise Environmental Justice and Safety Elements
- Adoption hearings (tentatively fall 2024)

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THANK YOU

