



# City of Culver City

## Staff Report

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**File #:** 24-634, **Version:** 1

**Item #:** A-2.

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**CC - ACTION ITEM:** (1) Update on the Draft General Plan; and (2) Discussion and Comments as Appropriate.

**Meeting Date:** February 26, 2024

**Contact Person/Dept.:** Troy Evangelho/Planning and Development Department

**Phone Number:** (310) 253-5744

**Fiscal Impact:** Yes  No

**General Fund:** Yes  No

**Attachments:** Yes  No

**Public Notification:** Social Media (2/1/2024, 2/8/2024, 2/19/2024), GovDelivery Bulletin (2/2/2024, 2/20/2024), (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (02/20/2024)

**Department Approval:** Mark Muenzer, Planning and Development Director (2/16/2024)

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the City Council review and discuss the Draft General Plan (“Plan”) and provide feedback as appropriate.

### **BACKGROUND**

The General Plan Update was initiated in 2019 and is planned for completion in 2024. The process began with a study of existing conditions to identify issues and opportunities to be addressed by the Plan. An extensive community outreach and visioning program resulted in the project’s Vision, Values, and Guiding Principles document that was used to direct development of the Plan.

Policy frameworks for each plan topic were developed based on the vision and values and were made available for public review and presented to the General Plan Advisory Committee, Planning Commission, and City Council for feedback. Between 2021 and 2023, the policy frameworks were further refined and developed into the final 12 draft Plan elements. The project’s overall timeline was significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as numerous staff vacancies.

The Public Draft General Plan was released to the community in September 2023 for a 60-day public review period. The Plan was available online and physically in locations throughout the city, and an

online comment form was open to receive feedback. During the review period, the General Plan team conducted three hybrid in-person and virtual open houses, and an additional all-virtual open house to hear community feedback and answer questions about the Plan. The feedback gathered from the online form and the open houses was recorded, and each comment will receive a response and be posted on the project website in March 2024. A summary of the Public Draft outreach community input is available for review on the project website, [www.pictureculvercity.com](http://www.pictureculvercity.com) <<http://www.pictureculvercity.com>>.

## **GENERAL PLAN SUMMARY**

**The Land Use and Community Design Element** sets forth the proposed distribution and location of different land uses, as well as community intentions for urban form and design. Much of the discussion and engagement throughout the planning process has involved this element and the Draft Land Use Map, which propose significant changes to the City's land use regulations.

Major policies and programs include:

- Introduction of residential and mixed uses in all commercial and industrial areas to create walkable mixed-use centers, particularly in areas with transit access.
- Adoption of objective design standards for development and updates to the Mixed-Use Ordinance for local density bonuses (in progress).
- Increased multi-family residential unit densities to meet the City's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) allocation and introduction of commercial and industrial Floor Area Ratios (FARs) to guide building mass.
- Promote a network of mixed-use corridors to accommodate a diverse range of businesses by requiring active frontages, encouraging parcel aggregation, requiring new applications to foster pedestrian and bike connections, and concentrating neighborhood-serving commercial uses into mixed-use activity centers.
- Residential neighborhoods will continue to provide a variety of housing types and forms and allow neighborhood supportive uses that sustain the needs of residents such as: supporting diverse housing types, allowing limited neighborhood-supportive retail and services in residential neighborhoods on collector streets, requiring new development to be compatible and well-integrated with existing residential neighborhoods, encouraging compatible uses such as school and parks, and linking existing residential neighborhoods by providing pedestrian and bicycle connections.
- Supporting walkable development by supporting low parking ratios, reviewing development standards that prevent development on small sites, and supporting housing development on small mixed-use lots.
- Designation of special study areas to identify areas of the city that have unique opportunities or constraints, implemented through specific plans, comprehensive plans, Zoning Code updates, and other land use regulations. The specific study areas include Fox Hills, Hayden Tract, Inglewood Oil Field, Baldwin Hills, and Ballona Creek.

The section below provides a short summary of the remainder of the Draft General Plan, including the introduction and highlighting major policies and discussion from each of the other eleven elements. The full document is available for review online at [www.pictureculvercity.com](http://www.pictureculvercity.com) <<http://www.pictureculvercity.com>>.

1. **The Introduction** summarizes the General Plan, guiding principles, equity framework, and history and demographics of the city, as well as the community outreach and visioning process.
2. **The Equity, Community Health, and Environmental Justice Element** identifies SB 1000 disadvantaged communities in the city and sets goals and policies to address compounded health risks. Major policies and programs include:
  - Implementing a Health in All Policies approach for all City departments to consider health equity and environmental justice when making policies.
  - Reduction of pollution exposure by monitoring and mitigating air pollution, coordination of truck routes with neighboring jurisdictions, and limitations on certain sensitive land uses near sources of heavy pollutants.
  - Increasing housing security by incentivizing landlords to rent to tenants using rental subsidies, creating a grant program to ensure affordable housing is maintained to high standards, and partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions to promote strategies to address housing displacement.
3. **The Governance and Leadership Element** aims to increase governmental transparency, broaden outreach and engagement, and center equity in local decision-making. Major policies and programs include:
  - Increasing transparency of the City government by improving readability and accessibility on the City website and other outreach materials, proactively gathering public feedback, and studying the creation of a public-facing scorecard platform to track performance targets across City departments.
  - Increasing community engagement and outreach, consulting and collaborating with underrepresented groups, and increasing equity-centered decision making across City departments.
  - Improving technology access with an open data platform, providing multiple ways for community members to participate in public meetings, and expanding digital infrastructure.
4. **The Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy Element** discusses how the City can reimagine its investments and partnerships with the arts, culture, and the creative economy, and innovate in civic issues. Major policies and programs include:
  - Maintaining affordable work and living spaces for the city's creative sector, including development of a creative facilities inventory, needs assessment, and master plan.
  - Recognition of the creative sector's importance to Culver City's economy.
  - Prioritizing equity in the arts and expanding access to cultural programming.
5. **The Parks, Recreation, and Public Facilities Element** aims to preserve, expand, and improve parks and open spaces, encourage healthy lifestyles, and maintain and upgrade public facilities. Major policies and programs include:
  - New parks, including a study to improve Ballona Creek and create new parks along the creek, development of new parks and parkettes in areas in need of park space, and increasing green space, landscaping, and passive recreational uses on City-owned property.
  - Equitable access, striving for all city residents to have parks, open spaces, or joint use facilities within a 10-minute walk from their home.
  - Updating, improving, and maintaining park facilities, amenities, and community programming.
6. **The Economic Development Element** addresses sustainable economic development,

community benefits to be provided by new development, a balanced housing supply, and equitable opportunity for wealth creation. Major policies and programs include:

- Maintaining a balanced “business ecosystem” that fosters diversity in the types and scales of businesses and employers, making sure that large employer campuses contribute to active street life, and attracting small businesses to the city.
- Ensuring that new development provides benefits to the community while reducing barriers to development with clear guidelines for options and requirements with a new community benefit framework.
- Expanding economic opportunity for city residents and building up the unique identities of the city’s existing retail clusters.

**7. The Infrastructure Element** addresses the equitable distribution and resiliency of water and energy infrastructure. Major policies and programs include:

- Conducting an assessment and creating a plan for the risks of increased storm intensity and keeping development standards updated to incentivize and mandate stormwater guidelines and hardscape permeability.
- Creating new development standards for rainwater capture, and studying standards for greywater capture, treatment, and reuse.

**8. The Mobility Element** sets policies to create and bolster a transportation system that improves all transportation options, including transit, cyclists, and pedestrians. Major policies and programs include:

- Creating a regionally cohesive network of active transportation routes and prioritizing multimodal projects to implement the Bike and Pedestrian Action Plan (BPAP).
- Expanding transit and active mobility options and increasing access to transit by removing first/last mile barriers and improving the street experience for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Discouraging non-local auto travel on smaller local streets with the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP), reducing speeds and volumes.

**9. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Element** addresses environmental, social equity, and economic impacts from climate change. Major policies and programs include:

- Establishing a greenhouse gas reduction strategy and maximum emissions threshold to meet or exceed state targets.
- Studying ordinances or mandates for reducing natural gas usage, including the possibility for new buildings to be built with all-electric energy sources, conversion of existing natural gas systems to electric, and streamlining the permitting process for solar energy generation.
- Increasing accessibility and availability of electric vehicle chargers.

**10. The Conservation and Open Space Element** addresses the stewardship and conservation of cultural and natural resources. Major policies and programs include:

- Improving and expanding habitats for threatened and endangered species, coordinating with regional partners to manage wildlife and biological resources, and educate residents about minimizing interactions with wild animals.
- Planting and maintaining mature trees for carbon sequestration, reducing the use of non-native plant species, and increasing the prevalence of native species for biodiversity and reduced pesticide use.
- Improving Ballona Creek’s efficacy as a flood control channel and restoring its native ecology.

**11. The Safety Element** evaluates and mitigates the risk of climate change and associated natural hazards. Major policies and programs include:

- Increasing the city’s hazard resilience with planning and preparation for natural hazards,

addressing infrastructure vulnerabilities and ensuring that City facilities and services can avoid disruptions in emergency situations.

- Identifying heat island priority areas for increasing the tree canopy and use of cool roofs and pavement, and maintaining cooling and warming centers throughout the city to be open when needed.
- Study the establishment of a central resilience office to better integrate City services and coordinate emergency response.

**12. The Noise Element** identifies and evaluates noise in the community from a range of sources like highways, arterial streets, rail, aviation, and industrial plants. Major policies and programs include:

- Adoption of a citywide noise ordinance and regular evaluation of municipal noise regulations for effectiveness and creating development standards to reduce construction noise.
- Reducing noise from mobile sources including cars, aircraft, and the Metro through various means such as vehicle electrification and improvements to building shell noise reduction standards.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION - MEETING SUMMARY**

The Draft General Plan and Zoning Code Framework were presented to Planning Commission at their regular meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024. During their discussion of the Draft General Plan, the Commission noted the necessity of transformative change to encourage housing production.

A majority of the Planning Commission agreed to make a recommendation to increase the base density of the Mixed Use Corridor 1 land use designation, which is currently proposed at 35 dwelling units per acre. The Commission did not recommend a specific increased dwelling unit/acre number.

The Commission also noted an inconsistency in the portion of the Inglewood Oil Field within the City's boundaries, which is proposed to maintain a General Plan Open Space land use designation and a Single-Family zoning classification. A majority of members recommended that the City Council make the General Plan land use designation and the zoning classification consistent.

The Commission also discussed proposed building height limits presented in the Draft Zoning Code Framework development standards. The Framework does not propose increasing building height limits beyond 56 feet; however, the Draft General Plan and previously certified Housing Element do include policies to study the potential of increased building height limits to potentially accommodate additional housing density and open spaces. The Commission supported prioritizing a study of the height limit.

## **NEXT STEPS**

City staff and the consultant project team are preparing responses to the comments received on the Public Draft General Plan and a response to all community comments will be posted on the project website in March 2024. The project team is also preparing the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) which will analyze the impacts of the General Plan Update and its implementation through the Zoning

Code Update. The EIR is anticipated to be released for public review in March 2024.

Staff anticipates holding final Planning Commission and City Council adoption hearings for the General Plan Update beginning in July 2024, with Zoning Code Update hearings to follow in September 2024. The City must adopt the General Plan and Zoning Code Update by October 15, 2024 in order to remain in compliance with the previously approved Housing Element.

### **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

There are no fiscal impacts associated with discussion of the Draft General Plan.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None.

### **MOTIONS**

That the City Council:

Receive and discuss the Draft General Plan and provide feedback to staff.