



**Half Moon Bay General Plan and LCP Update
General Plan Advisory Committee Meeting #13**

Temporary Venue: Train Depot, 110 Higgins Canyon Road, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019
November 17, 2016 | 6:30pm

Meeting Notes

Materials for this meeting can be found at www.planhmb.org/general-plan-library.html.

Project Overview: Project Status and Schedule

- Reviewed notification and agenda availability and format:
 - Notification for this session was similar to previous sessions and included: Half Moon Bay ENews (multiple notifications), Plan Half Moon Bay email (multiple notifications), Next Door website posting, press notification, www.planHMB.org project web page, and announcements at a City Council session.
 - Agenda Availability: Posted electronically November 11, 2016 on City of Half Moon Bay web page calendar and www.planHMB.org; and posted hard copy November 14, 2016 at City Hall.
 - The Plan Half Moon Bay email list has increased from 564 to 689 points of contact since April 2016.

- Reviewed schedule and project status

- Reviewed City Council update from November 15, 2016:
 - Project Status: Council received an update regarding work products and schedule. No action was requested for this part of the update which included the following information:
 - 2016 Work Products – Existing Conditions Report Addendum and Supplemental Information; Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment; First Public Draft Local Coastal Land Use Plan with Policy Comparison Summary; First Public Draft General Plan Elements (three had been posted, two were forthcoming as of November 15, 2016)
 - Timeline – An aggressive work plan has the potential to bring the draft planning and environmental review documents to City Council by the end of 2017
 - GPAC: City Council received updates relevant to the GPAC on three topics and continued the item to a future meeting. The updates included the following:
 - Land Use – Informed City Council that GPAC members have expressed interest in considering land use choices outside the Downtown Core Area. Council reaffirmed their past direction as intended to limit discussions about new development to the Core Area, as well as policy considerations for land use outside the Core Area, not related to development.

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- Membership – GPAC has two vacancies at present: one At-Large Member and one At-Large Alternate Member. Current GPAC composition is 12 members with 2 alternates. A quorum is 9 members.
- Work Plan – Four to five more meetings are tentatively scheduled for GPAC input on the draft planning documents with a planned transition from GPAC to the Planning Commission.
- Grants: City Council receive updates about the three grants associated with this project. No action was requested for this update.
- Budget: City Council reviewed and approved an amendment to the planning consultant’s contract.

Staff will keep the GPAC informed about Council’s direction after their next update in early 2017.

Draft General Plan Elements:

The presentation included a brief overview of the three recently posted First Public Draft General Plan Elements: Conservation and Open Space, Safety, and Noise. General Plan Elements including key policy questions for the GPAC and community members to consider as they review the documents:

Conservation and Open Space Element:

- Highlights of Topics Covered:
 - Water
 - Energy
 - Local Urban Forest
 - Air Quality
 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions
 - Waste – Management and Reduction
- Key Policy Choices
 - Open Space and Conservation Land Use Designations:
 - Parks
 - Open Space for Conservation and Hazard Protection Designation(s)
 - Urban Reserve
 - Open Space Acquisition Priorities and Strategies
 - Climate Action Planning: Encourage or Mandate?
 - Solar, Dual plumbing for graywater, EV Charging Stations

Safety Element:

- Highlights of Topics Covered:
 - Companion to the LCLUP 2.5 Coastal Hazards
 - Integrates the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan:
 - City Council adopted 11-15-16
 - Community Resiliency
 - Hazardous Materials

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- Half Moon Bay Landfill Update: At the October 13, 2016 GPAC session, members expressed concerns about the status of the Half Moon Bay Landfill. Staff provided the following update at the November session: A description of the Half Moon Bay Landfill is provided in the First Public Draft Safety Element. San Mateo County owns, operates and monitors this closed facility. City staff identified the landfill as an asset that may be of particular interest to the County in their Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment known as SeaChange; and County staff agreed. The County will soon release sea level rise vulnerability assessment for thirty assets located throughout San Mateo County, including the SAM plant and the Half Moon Bay Landfill. Additional assets include a section of the California Coastal Trail in Half Moon Bay and Mirada Road in the unincorporated portion of Miramar. City staff also understand that the County will be hiring a consultant to further assess options for securing the landfill – including a clean removal. It is early in the process and there will be more information to come. There is draft policy in the Safety Element to support and encourage our County colleagues in their endeavor.

Noise Element:

- Highlights of Topics Covered:
 - Noise Standards
 - Interior
 - Exterior
 - Noise Evaluations for New Land Uses
 - Receptors
 - Generators – Leq – hourly measure
 - CNEL – More sensitive to nighttime noise
 - Thresholds of Significance for CEQA purposes
 - Vibration
- Key Policy Choices
 - Soundwalls – when are they acceptable?
 - Between properties
 - Along roadways
 - Remodels – Encourage or mandate?
 - Insulation and/or new windows
 - Align with State energy conservation requirements in the Building Ordinance
 - Sensitive uses:
 - Interior – 45 dBA
 - Exterior – 60 dBA

GPAC Clarifying Questions, Public Comment and GPAC Discussion:

To support the GPAC’s discussion, a handout was provided to GPAC members and attendees with highlights of policies and maps for discussion. The handout is posted on the www.PlanHMB.org project site along with other materials for the November 17, 2016 session.

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The GPAC discussion incorporated public comment. The following questions, comments and discussion points were made throughout the remainder of the GPAC session following the staff presentation:

- A GPAC member requested clarification about the noise measurements and the contour map; specifically whether or not sound from ocean waves was included in the City's noise profile. *Staff Response: Staff noted that based on the noise contour map it did not appear that this was part of the measurement, specifically because this sound is desirable and thus generally not considered to be noise, which pertains to unwanted sound.*
- A GPAC member asked for clarification regarding the first two implementing policies for open space in the draft Conservation and Open Space Element. Both policies pertain to open space acquisition. *Staff Response: The first policy (4-I.1) broadly addresses the potential for the City to study and develop a strategy for acquisition including prioritization and funding. The second draft policy (4-I.2) suggests that lands in the Open Space Reserve land use designation may be priority for acquisition.* After the staff explanation, GPAC members discussed that they believe that there should be many other considerations included in prioritization of open space acquisition opportunities.
- A GPAC member asked about an earlier draft Open Space Element (never adopted) which includes more information and inventories of open space areas and if that level of detail should be included now or in implementation later. *Staff Response: The intention for this Conservation and Open Space Element is to address the range of the subject matter at the policy level and to direct future studies and actions as future implementation measures.*
- A GPAC member asked about the land areas that are already under permanent conservation easements. How shall they be considered in the General Plan? For example, these include the easement parallel and west of Railroad Avenue (Residential Medium), a site within the Pacific Ridge development (PUD), and a large portion of the Guerro PUD (Residential Medium). A GPAC member provided clarification that in the case of the lands adjacent to Railroad Avenue, the City owns the property and the Coastside Land Trust holds a conservation easement. A GPAC member asked what the land use designations of the three example areas are (note in parentheses above) and if they can be changed to match the actual condition as open space areas and that the protected open space land uses should be labeled and otherwise demarcated for what they are. *Staff Response: Staff noted that these are good examples for the GPAC to consider with respect to establishing and applying a new land use designation for open space that does not include provisions for future development.*
- A GPAC member expressed that with respect to the Greenbelt Stream Corridor land use designation and the draft policy for expanding the application of that category to additional areas that it would be preferable to apply it to the map now while the plans are being updated and not to hold it back as a future action. Later in the meeting, additional discussion of the topic took place including the following:
 - The GPAC should discuss expanding application of the the designation if conditions exist in the field;
 - If the conditions are present, why not map them if there are significant?;

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- An example is between the western side of the Casa Del Mar neighborhood to the mouth of Pilarcitos Creek where there is a riparian corridor;
- Half Moon Bay is built on seasonal wetlands; so there is channelization – some have riparian vegetation and some do not – including an areas with willow, which is a key species for riparian areas;
- What about the arroyo through Wavecrest and what about the golf course?;
- We need more information – some riparian areas are known and some need more study;
- If willows are present, is the area assumed to be riparian?
- Concern about manmade ditches with intermittent streams that could change in the future – these are not as significant;
- Has Half Moon Bay conducted a complete study of its drainages?;
- Once a drainage is named or classified (e.g. as riparian), it will need to be appropriately maintained and this has important implications.

Staff Responses: Staff explained that it may be difficult in this timeframe to assess each drainage in order map riparian areas; however, additional biological assessment will be forthcoming for the plan updates and staff will look into options for this. Staff will bring this topic back to the GPAC and will add buffers to the overall discussion. Staff also noted that some of the City's drainages have been studied, including those that have been subject to streambed alteration agreements and those covered in a recent master plan.

- A GPAC member made a general comment about the draft policies and noted that if they are not specific or strong enough they will be too open to interpretation. *Staff Response: Staff noted that the intent of the draft policy language is to broadly cover the range of policy topics and to suggest the intended direction for each; and that it is up to the review process to confirm the scope and degree to which policies are stated in their final form.*
- A community member shared with the group that for the Pacific Ridge development, \$2.8 million was to be collected (\$45,000 for each of the 62 lots to be developed). At the time, \$45,000 was the estimated value for vacant parcels that may be appropriate for acquisition as open space. It is not enough money now because land values have increased. *Staff Response: Staff confirmed the general intent of the funds collected in conjunction with the Pacific Ridge development.*
- A community member expressed that there is room in the Conservation and Open Space Element to strengthen the policies; for example, Policy 4.G-1 regarding the open space system. The community member encouraged the GPAC and staff to improve and expand the narrative and definitions. *Staff Response: Staff agrees that this is a subject for GPAC discussion and direction.*
- A GPAC member brought up Urban Reserve and that this topic needs to be addressed clearly now in these updates. *Staff Response: Staff agrees that this is a worthwhile consideration and that this topic will be part of the next update to City Council.*
- A GPAC member noted that the Local Coastal Land Use Plan and the Conservation and Open Space Element need to meld consistently. *Staff Response: Staff confirms that this is a requirement.*
- Several GPAC members discussed open space acquisition. *Staff Response: Staff encourages the GPAC and community to delve into the draft policy language and*

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implications. The discussion spanned the following topics and includes community member comments and input:

- Who sets the priorities for open space acquisition?;
The GPAC needs to have input on open space priorities;
- One objective of an open space acquisition strategy is to look for multiple funding sources and methods; e.g. designation of priority conservation areas (PCA), reverse auctions, etc.;
- Both policy and procedure should be considered; e.g. if there is an unwilling seller;
- A 2005 voter initiative addressed the use of eminent domain and should be revisited for context;
- Acquisition policy should provide for a range of tools and maintain flexibility to take advantage of different circumstances.
- A GPAC member asked about the open space restoration. Is restoration included in the Conservation and Open Space Element; or it is LCP limited? Or is it related to specific situations; e.g. water)? *Staff Response: Staff is interested in the GPAC's input on this topic and will also review options.*
- The GPAC discussed establishing and applying a new land use designation for open space for conservation. The discussion included the following considerations:
 - What is the purpose/benefit/risk of establishing and applying an open space for conservation land use designation?;
 - "In perpetuity" language is concerning because permanent designations may conflict with future unknown changing conditions and may also cause unforeseen financial consequences associated with maintenance needs;
 - Under what circumstances would private property be included in such a designation?;
 - If land is already in a conservation easement and/or is being dedicated to be open space in perpetuity, would that make it appropriate for the open space for conservation designation?

The GPAC reached consensus to establish a new "Open Space for Conservation" land use designation and to apply it to lands that are legally recorded as permanent open space and not intended for future development. Staff will prepare draft language and maps for the GPAC's confirmation at a future session. GPAC members further specified the following related topics:

- **Consider property taxes**
 - **Consider hold harmless**
 - **Research past lot retirements – where, when, what purpose?**
 - **Consider how and under what circumstances conservation easements could be removed**
 - **Look at other cities and San Mateo County's plans for examples**
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- A GPAC member stated that draft policy 4-G.1 needs to be revised. The reference to "balanced" as it is applied to types of open space uses is not operable for this circumstance. *Staff Response: Staff agrees, the language will be revised for future drafts.*

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- A GPAC member noted that Table 4-1: Conservation and Open space Topics Covered in Other Plan Elements should indicate that biological resources are linked to the Local Coastal Land Use Plan, Section 2.2 Land Use. *Staff Response: Staff agrees, the table will be revised for future drafts.*
- A GPAC member noted that with respect to the last paragraph on page 4-3, it is correct to have acquisition strategy for lands not already secured as open space; but for those already secured (e.g. through easements), they should just be designated because they do not need to be acquired. *Staff Response: Staff agrees, the language will be revised for future drafts.*
- It would be helpful to include the Land Use Diagram in the Conservation and Open Space Element because the element refers to so many land use designations. *Staff Response: Staff agrees and will look toward adding either the Land Use Diagram in whole, or a map that highlights the categories most relevant to conservation and open space.*
- A GPAC member suggested that it would be best to avoid proper names for the various programs and topics for a number of reasons, including that they may change over time; e.g. One Water and Build it Green. *Staff Response: Staff appreciates the comment and will look at this over the full range of the plan updates. In some cases, proper names may be important to retain, in others not.*
- With respect to the local urban forest, the topic needs to connect to the Visual Resources section of the Local Coastal Implementation Plan (Title 18 of the City's Municipal Code). *Staff Response: Staff will review the language and revise as applicable, specifically with respect to*
- A GPAC member made suggestions for the emergency preparedness and response section of the Safety Element: add mobile cell towers as a means for maintaining communication in the event of significant emergency; address the potential need to shelter animals. *Staff Response: Staff agrees that both of these topics can be added to the element.*
- A GPAC member requested that a reference to the Local Coastal Land Use Plan be added to the Safety Element and specifically in Policy 6.I-1 Development in Hazardous Areas. *Staff Response: Staff agrees that a reference to the Local Coastal Land Use Plan can be added.*
- A GPAC member brought up the topic of erosion generally, noting that bluff erosion is not the only type of coastal erosion to be considered by the Local Coastal Land Use Plan and that instead; all types of erosion are within the scope of the Coastal Act. *Staff Response: Staff will review the various distinctions and ensure that erosion is fully described with respect to the various types, and furthermore, that it is addressed in the correct portions of the plan updates.*
- A GPAC member noticed an inconsistency between a reference to both the California Building Code and the International Building Code (policy 6-I.4). *Staff Response: Staff noted the error. Future drafts will correctly refer to the California Building Code.*
- A GPAC member supported draft policy 6.I-47 Community relationships which acknowledges that Half Moon Bay is an inclusive community. *Staff Response: Staff agrees with the feedback.*
- A GPAC member asked if general plans have visual elements. *Staff Response: Staff explained that for this case, visual resources are addressed in Section 2.4 Coastal Resources of the Local Coastal Land Use Plan. Staff noted that in other cities,*

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especially those outside the Coastal Zone, general plans may have community design and historic resource elements as optional elements to address the visual environment. It was also noted that other aspects of the plans have bearing on visual resources, such as the local urban forest section of the Conservation and Open Space Element.

At this point in the session, the GPAC determined that there was not enough time to begin commenting on the Noise Element and that they would like it brought back to the next session. For the remainder of the session, community members and the GPAC discussed GPAC procedures as follows:

- A community member expressed concern about the overall process; especially with regards to ensuring that the GPAC's direction is specifically abided by and followed through the process. *Staff Response: Staff noted that the following measures are being taken to ensure continuity of the GPAC's input include the public orientation of the note taking; recording the sessions; and the planned comment and response summary similar to other tracking documents that have been requested by the public and GPAC. Staff also noted that for the one significant item of consensus discussed that evening (establishment and application of a new Open Space for Conservation land use designation) that the facilitation of the discussion and acknowledgement of consensus was very deliberately documented. Staff suggested another means of ensuring accurate reflection of the GPAC's direction would be to have the committee formally approve their meeting summary notes. GPAC members agreed that this would be a good addition to their process.*
- A community member asked about how future drafts of the documents will be formatted to indicate changes from the previous version. The community member also noted that it would not necessary to prepare this like the policy comparison summary document prepared for the first public draft Local Coastal Land Use Plan. *Staff Response: Staff noted that they are fully aware of the need to do this, are interested in suggestions, and will determine an appropriate method when they prepare to revise the draft documents.*
- The GPAC and staff discussed preparation for future sessions. GPAC members indicated that they would like larger maps and like having background documents in advance. They noted that they handout provided at the session was very helpful. *Staff Response: Staff appreciated this input and also suggested that it would be very helpful if the GPAC members could submit key topics to staff in advance of future sessions so that staff could prepare reference documents and scope for the facilitated discussion.* Everyone agreed that these measures should be achievable now that the documents are out well in advance of the sessions going forward.

Next Steps in the Process:

GPAC sessions are planned as follows:

- December 15, 2016 - Thursday: Noise and Circulation
- January 11, 2017 Wednesday: Tentative
- January 26, 2017 Thursday: Tentative

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Staff noted that they will return to City Council at an upcoming meeting, most likely in January, to conclude discussions and receive direction on topics presented at Council's November 15, 2016 session.

Attendance

GPAC Members

James Benjamin
Jo Chamberlain
Hugh Doherty
Jan Gray
Greg Jamison
Cameron Jeffs
Diane Johnson
Ed Love (Alternate at Large)
Dan McMillan
Sara Polgar

City Staff

John Doughty, Community Development Director
Jill Ekas, Senior Management Analyst
Bridget Jett, Planning Analyst