

May 25, 2023

Letter to Members: GPAC Meeting #2

2nd Meeting of the Marina General Plan Advisory Committee

Location: Marina Library (Community Room)

Date and Time: Thursday, June 1st 6:00 - 8:00pm

Reminder: Please be on time!

Dear GPAC Members,

We will hold our 2nd General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) meeting on **Thursday, June 1st from 6 pm - 8 pm** at the Marina Library in the Community Room, as we did for the previous meeting.

At this meeting we will focus on a few activities. First, we will provide a summary of the engagement activities that have occurred since GPAC Meeting #1. Second, we will review a summary list of key issues and challenges developed from multiple engagement activities, including the community workshop and the first GPAC meeting. Third, we will review a list of preliminary “guiding principles.” The guiding principles are values and ideas that will form the basis for the General Plan vision. Finally, we will break into two groups to map your ideas for areas where the city should grow and evolve over time and areas that should generally remain the same. At the end of the meeting, we will discuss next steps and how the information from this GPAC meeting will be used for future engagement activities.

In preparation for this meeting, we would like you to do the following:

1. **Review notes from Community Workshop #2.** This workshop was held on May 20th and over 50 residents attended. The notes provide a summary of the comments and ideas expressed at the meeting.
2. **Review the list of key issues.** Come prepared to discuss whether any are missing and whether they adequately capture the range of challenges that the City is facing. This information will be part of a community “survey” and pop-up workshops and will also help us focus our efforts during the General Plan update process.
3. **Review the list of guiding principles.** The guiding principles will be part of the vision statement. They should express the values and ideals of the community and the “big moves” that should occur in the City in the future. These concepts will serve as the basis for goals and policies in the General Plan.
4. **Think about areas for improvement in the City.** At this GPAC meeting, we will conduct a mapping exercise in smaller groups. While we may not cover everything below, please think about the following question.
 - a. What areas of the City are great as they are and should not change?
 - b. What areas should evolve during the time horizon of the General Plan?
 - c. What major transportation improvements are needed and where?
 - d. Where should new housing be located? What type of housing should it be?
 - e. Where should new jobs be located? What types of jobs should they be?

- f. Where should new retail and services be located?
- g. What else can be done to beautify or improve the City?

Our meeting will be packed with lots of opportunities for discussion and interaction so please come prepared with your ideas and suggestions, while remaining respectful of your fellow Committee members.

We are looking forward to embarking on this challenging, yet exciting, journey with you over the next year and a half. Please do not hesitate to contact Alyson Hunter (ahunter@cityofmarina.org) if you have any questions.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you on **June 1st at 6:00 pm.**

- Alyson and the General Plan Team

GPAC #2: What We've Heard, Vision, and Principles

Introduction

Establishing a shared vision and guiding principles for Marina is critical to the success of the General Plan update. In GPAC meeting #2, we will present a summary of what we have heard so far from the Marina community, and then review the Vision and Planning Principles from the existing General Plan, and discuss what should be changed, deleted from, or added to these principles.

In advance of GPAC #2, we ask you to please review the following content, think about the discussion questions, and come ready with your ideas related to the below items:

- 1. Summary of What We've Heard to Date**
 - Community Strengths and What You Love
 - Key Issues and Challenges
 - Potential Strategies / Changes Needed
- 2. Existing General Plan Content**
 - Vision Statement (General Plan Policy 1.17)
 - Goals/Principles (General Plan Policy 1.18)
- 3. Discussion Questions**

Summary of What We've Heard

The following includes issues, challenges, strengths, and potential strategies shared by the Marina community during the first phase of community engagement (stakeholder interviews, workshop #1, GPAC meeting #1, and workshop #2, and youth engagement).

Community Strengths / What You Love

People and Place

- Diversity of races, ethnicities, and cultures
- Residents are friendly, welcoming and inclusive
- Many citizens are active and engaged in civic activities
- Strongly working-class and many middle-income families and retirees
- Lower cost of living compared to many nearby communities
- Family-friendly community, with many families, seniors and youth
- Excellent regional location near to major cities but also distinct from surrounding areas
- Lots of history, especially around Fort Ord

- Off-the-beaten path and not a major tourist destination

Land Use and Design

- Variety of local businesses and restaurants, including many that represent the City's diversity.
- Nice neighborhoods that are distinct and have unique identities
- Small-town feel with low-scale buildings and residents who know one-another
- Lots of opportunities for new development, especially on land owned by the City
- Urban Growth Boundary and Fort Ord open spaces that limit sprawl and outward expansion

Transportation and Mobility

- Easy access to the freeway and areas outside of the city
- A regional airport (which provides opportunities for economic development)
- Very walkable, with lots of sidewalks and easy to get around without a car

Parks, Open Space and Natural Environment

- Access to the beach
- Great park system with many pocket parks
- Lots of open spaces, especially the beach and the former Fort Ord lands
- Many trails within and around the community

Public Facilities and Services

- Relatively low crime rates and good relationships with local police
- Strong veteran community, including a new VA hospital
- Presence of an improving four-year college (CSUMB)
- Some very good public facilities including the library, Teen Center, Montage Wellness Center, and the new pump track

Key Issues and Challenges

People and Place

- Lack of a distinct identity, character, cohesive theme, or unique landmark that sets Marina apart from other adjacent communities.
- Diversity is impacted by changing demographics as new master-planned communities attract households with higher incomes.
- City lacks a consistent visual identity and appears "run down" and "tired."

Land Use and Design

- No Downtown and limited meeting/gathering places that could be a source of community pride and location for public events.
- Relatively weak economy that limits ability to attract jobs, especially high-paying jobs.
- Lack of higher end restaurants and stores needed to support City's residents.
- Increasing housing costs are impacting the diversity of residents and change Marina's identity as a working-class community.
- Lack of a variety of housing options, in particular, housing to serve workers, veterans, low-income households, and middle-income households.

Transportation and Mobility

- Limited physical and psychological connections between northern and southern parts of the city.
- Streets can be unsafe for walking and biking and the area lacks good regional transit service; it is "auto centric"
- Traffic congestion in parts of the City at certain times of the day

Parks, Open Space and Natural Environment

- Limited fiscal revenues to improve parks, streets, and community services.
- More access to the beach and open spaces is needed to enhance the quality of life.
- Lack greenery/landscaping in neighborhoods and commercial areas.
- Future threats from climate change including coastal erosion, wildfires, and loss of habitat.

Public Facilities and Services

- Limited resources for youth and seniors needed to support aging in place and to entice youth to stay in the community.
- Large scale development implemented in a way that does not benefit current residents and creates a physically separated community.
- Concern about lack of water resources needed to support existing and new residents.
- Lack of influence in regional planning that has led to environmental justice issues such as the Cal-Am desalination plan and regional waste facilities located in/near Marina.

Major Strategies / Changes Needed

People and Place

- Balance new development with Marina’s unique small-town charm and its adjacent sensitive natural areas.
- Preserve the diversity of Marina’s people and maintain the ability to live in the City regardless of income or stage in life.
- Consider the diversity of races, ethnicities, and cultures in future decision-making, and ensure that all types of residents are engaged in key projects and efforts.
- Enhance the visual appearance and identity of Marina through a branding campaign, improved landscaping on public streets, gateway signage and building revitalization.

Land Use and Design

- Create a real Downtown and/or town center(s) with public places for community gathering.
- Expand the number and diversity of thriving local businesses and entertainment options.
- Revitalize and redevelop underutilized land in Central Marina with diverse mix of uses.
- Develop Cypress Knolls in a way that meets the community’s vision for public places, retail, and workforce/affordable housing.
- Attract new jobs and businesses to provide middle-income living wage jobs that will encourage youth and CSUMB students to stay.
- Enhance the diversity of housing types, including mixed use, rowhouse, “missing middle” and multifamily development, in order to maximize quality housing for middle-income and workforce households.

Transportation and Mobility

- Create a more physically and psychologically connected community from north to south, including more north-south roadways.
- Create streets that are safe for youth and seniors, with an emphasis on traffic calming.

Parks, Open Space and Natural Environment

- Take more advantage of the wonderful natural resources to attract visitors and expand economic development opportunities.
- Protect the City against future hazards, with a focus on coastal erosion, flooding, and wildfires.

- Protect and expand open spaces, including better access to the beach and Fort Ord lands from neighborhoods within the City.

Public Facilities and Services

- Capitalize on the airport, expand Joby, and seek to attract other innovative manufacturing and engineering companies.
- Capitalize on the proximity of MBEST and CSUMB to provide jobs related to science and technology.
- Solidify the City as a family and senior-friendly community, especially through more indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities and childcare.

Existing General Plan Content

The adopted General Plan (last comprehensively adopted in 2000, amended at various times since then) contains the following vision statement intended to express the community's intended outcome:

"Marina desires to grow and mature, along with its image, from a small town, primarily bedroom community, to become a small city which is diversified, vibrant and mostly self-sufficient. The City can and will accomplish this by achieving both the necessary level and diversity of jobs, economic activity, public services, housing, and civic life (including culture and recreation), and parks and open space."

In addition to the vision, the General Plan contains 17 planning principles which broadly describe the objectives that should guide implementation and future decision-making:

1. Housing within the means of households of all economic levels, ages and lifestyles, and, therefore, a diversified and integrated housing supply in which new residential development emphasizes a mix of housing types and lot sizes at the neighborhood level.
2. Community development which avoids or minimizes to the greatest extent possible the consumption or degradation of nonrenewable natural resources including natural habitats, water, energy, and prime agricultural land.
3. A city within which the majority of the residences, businesses and community facilities are served by frequent, cost-effective transit.
4. A balance of jobs and housing that provides the greatest possible opportunity both to live and work in Marina.
5. A city designed for and attractive to pedestrians, in which most of the housing, shops, businesses, and community facilities are within easy walking distance of each other.
6. A balanced land use/transportation system which minimizes traffic congestion, noise, excessive energy consumption, and air pollution.

7. A city that helps avoid sprawl in the region by making efficient use of lands designated for community development purposes.
8. A city physically and visually distinguishable from the other communities of the Monterey Bay region, with a sense of place and identity in which residents can take pride.
9. A diversified and sound economic base that will permit the delivery of high-quality public services to city residents and businesses.
10. A community responsive to the housing and transportation needs of Monterey County.
11. One or more centers which bring together commercial, civic, cultural, and recreational uses and serve as a focus for community life.
12. A physically and socially cohesive community in which existing and future land uses, transportation facilities, and open spaces are well integrated.
13. Ample opportunities for outdoor recreation for all residents, both within their immediate neighborhoods, elsewhere in the city, and in the immediate environs.
14. Development which maintains continuity with the city's history and is responsive to the climate and the natural and scenic features of the local and regional setting, including the city's strategic position as the Monterey Peninsula's scenic entry.
15. Attractive, distinctive residential neighborhoods and commercial districts that contribute to the overall vitality, image, and identity of the city.
16. Prevention of threats to life and property from flooding, slope failure, and seismic activity.
17. Equitable distribution of responsibilities and benefits between existing and future residents and businesses.

Discussion Questions

The following discussion questions will help the GPAC think about how to review and provide comments on the above information.

1. Are these all of the City's strengths?
2. Are these the right issues? Are we missing anything? Should anything be removed?
3. Do the "changes needed" reflect your understanding of the community's ideas? What additional changes are needed?
4. Do the existing General Plan "vision" and "principles" reflect Marina today? What should be added, removed or modified?



GPAC Meeting #1

Summary Notes

Meeting Date: April 4, 2023, 6 pm - 8 pm

Attendees:

- City Staff/Consultants: Guido Persicone, Alyson Hunter, Matt Raimi
- GPAC Members Absent: Daniel Munoz and Manjeet Dhillon
- GPAC Members Present: Wesley Haye, Catina Smith, Cindy Burnham, Grace Silva-Santella, Gilia Baron, Richard Zhang, Maya Morrow, Sheila Baker, Mia Nyugen

Overview

On April 4, 2023, the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) held its first meeting. The purpose of the meeting was as follows:

- Initiate the General Plan Advisory Committee.
- Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the General Plan Advisory Committee.
- Provide background information on General Plans and other planning documents.
- Provide an overview of the General Plan Update, including the schedule and engagement plan.
- Brainstorm on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The following is a summary of the GPAC's comments and feedback by topic.

Engagement

The General Plan team provided an overview of the Engagement Plan. The following are the GPAC's comments:

- Coordinate engagement with the Sea Haven community. Hold a workshop in their community room and they have a newsletter to announce meetings.
- Hand out information at the Friends of Marina Library meetings. The meetings occur two times per month.
- Reach youth by holding meetings and pop-up workshops at the Teen Center. A "vision board" at the Teen Center was suggested.
- Reach out to the Principals at the schools to set up meetings with students.
- Outreach through HOAs, churches, the Veterans Center, and the Montage Wellness Center.

Strengths

The GPAC was asked to brainstorm on the strengths and unique aspects of Marina. The following is a summary of the comments.

- Diversity of residents
- Geographic diversity
- Easy access to goods and services

- The airport (however, there are also potential issues of noise from growth)
- Lots of quality small businesses
- It's a working class community
- Good police and law enforcement
- Access to nature – the ocean and lots of open spaces in the former Fort Ord
- Great ethnic restaurants
- Lower cost of living
- The community is very walkable and people walk around a lot
- It has a “small town” feel
- Sense of community
- The bike trails through and near the City are extensive
- Strong veterans community
- The VA clinic is new and draws people from the greater area
- The Teen Center and skate park
- There is a lot of history with Fort Ord
- Equestrian center
- Montage Wellness Center
- Great weather
- Strong non-profit organizations are active in the City
- The Urban Growth Boundary
- The city is completing the Downtown Plan
- There are not a lot of impacts from natural disasters
- Strong infrastructure
- Fast access to highway 101

Weaknesses/Threats

The GPAC was asked to brainstorm on the weaknesses, threats and issues that the City is facing now and in the future. The following is a summary of the comments.

- The desalination plant (and the process of approval) is an issue
- Bad connectivity between the north and south parts of the city
- Traffic is a big issue, especially on Imjin Parkway
- The City is growing faster than the infrastructure can be built to support the growth
- There is a drop in the youth population
- Gateways/entryways are needed to help enhance identity
- The SURF BRT is an issue
- Marina has little power over regional decisions
- The community is “auto centric” and this creates pedestrian safety and mobility issues, especially for handicapped residents/visitors
- Hard to attract new businesses
- City needs “character” and “identity”
- The visual appearance of the city should be more attractive
- There are odors from the landfill
- No artistic community exists
- Need a central meeting/gathering space; there is no center of the community (like a Downtown)

Next Steps

The next meeting (GPAC #2) will be held on Thursday, June 1st, from 6-8 pm at the same location (in-person).