

City of Oakland General Plan Update: Principles, Issues, and Potential Framework

1. *Introduction*

This memorandum outlines a potential framework for the City of Oakland’s upcoming General Plan Update. It is intended as a guide for the General Plan Update process, shaped by the City’s commitment to intentionally integrate principles of fairness and justice into all City policies, so that identity – such as race, ethnicity, gender, age disability, sexual orientation or expression – has no detrimental effect on the key distribution of resources, opportunities and outcomes for the City of Oakland’s communities.

This memorandum does not constitute a final nor rigid blueprint for the General Plan Update process. Rather, it could be used, as appropriate, to inform the General Plan Update process and in the development of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the General Plan Update services; however, the memorandum does not preemptively obligate any particular course of action and other practices and approaches may emerge over the course of the Update process for consideration and implementation.

As described in Section 1.3, this memorandum outlines a potential General Plan Update process that responds to the results from a total of 37 interviews conducted in fall of 2020 for this process, as well as through the professional experience of the project consultants. It also considers the practical, legal, and logistical requirements of the General Plan Update process.

1.1 **MEMORANDUM CONTENTS**

This memorandum contains a total of 13 sections:

- Section 1 is this introduction.
- Section 2 acknowledges historic inequities in Oakland planning.
- Section 3 outlines the basic legal parameters for a General Plan.
- Section 4 summarizes other projects that have occurred recently in Oakland and that can provide examples for the project process and important project data.
- Section 5 provides examples of similar General Plan projects from other American cities committed to racial inclusion and equity.
- Section 6 synthesizes comments from City Council members, the Mayor, City staff and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).
- Section 7 outlines potential key themes for the General Plan Update.
- Section 8 outlines key principles to be followed in both the General Plan Update process and in the final products.

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- Section 9 outlines key issues and considerations regarding the planning process.
- Section 10 discusses key content issues that need to be addressed in each General Plan Element.
- Section 11 proposes major phases for the General Plan Update process.
- Section 12 outlines public engagement issues and methods for the General Plan Update process.
- Section 13 discusses General Plan Update project management considerations.

1.2 MEMORANDUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This memorandum was developed under a Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Technical and Staffing Assistance contract. It was completed prior to the initiation of any component of the Oakland General Plan Update, including the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) by the City of Oakland. The authors of this memorandum are precluded from participating in any aspect of the competitive process for hiring a team to help prepare the Oakland General Plan Update.

This memorandum synthesizes the results of interviews conducted in fall of 2020 with: staff from City departments and other local government agencies, each of the eight City Councilmembers (in some instances comments were given through Council staff on behalf of the Councilmember), the City Administrator, the Mayor, and representatives from 41 community-based organizations (CBOs). Interviews with City Council members or their staff, the City Administrator and the Mayor were conducted individually, whereas other interviews were conducted in groups. The interviews sought to identify key issues that need to be addressed in the General Plan Update and to develop strategies for equitable, meaningful participation. The interview process was managed by the following City staff members, who developed introductory materials and interview questions, and facilitated group discussion:

- Christina Ferracane, AICP, Planner IV, City of Oakland; General Plan Update Framework Project Manager
- Diana Perez-Domencich, Planner II, City of Oakland, General Plan Update Framework Project Staff

This memorandum was prepared by PlaceWorks, a planning consulting company, whose staff members attended the interviews and took anonymized notes on each. PlaceWorks staff included:

- David Early, Senior Advisor
- Greg Goodfellow, Senior Associate
- Eric Panzer, Associate

PlaceWorks received compensation of \$65,000 under a grant given to the City of Oakland by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

The interviews were conducted over an 18-week period from July 8 to November 10, 2020. All interviews began with an introduction to the General Plan Update process and current Oakland General Plan, followed by discussions based on the following guiding questions:

- What are the key issues to be addressed in the General Plan Update?
- Who should be involved?
- How can we involve and empower participants?

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- What General Plan Elements should be changed, added, or deleted?
- How should other City departments and functions be involved?
- How should phasing of the General Plan Update process be addressed in order meet required deadlines and maintain consistency between Elements?

This memorandum is also based on the professional expertise of PlaceWorks, which is one of California’s leading professional firms in General Plan preparation, having prepared or assisted on over 95 General Plans across the State in the past 40 years. David Early, PlaceWorks’s project lead, has worked on over 40 General Plans. He also teaches UC Davis Extension’s class on General Plan preparation and is the author of *The General Plan in California*, a “how to” guide outlining the steps to prepare or update a General Plan. PlaceWorks is also familiar with Oakland, having worked on a variety of planning and urban design projects across numerous Oakland neighborhoods. PlaceWorks has a strong commitment to equity and anti-racism work in planning, having, for example, co-authored the *SB 1000 Toolkit* that provides guidance on how to prepare an Environmental Justice Element for a General Plan.

1.3 PARTICIPATING CITY DEPARTMENTS, PARTNER AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

As previously noted, this memorandum is based in part on results of group interviews held with representatives from City departments, local agencies, and 41 CBOs, who represent a larger group of constituents and advocates who will participate in the General Plan Update process itself.

The following City offices and departments were represented at group interviews:

- Mayor’s Office
- City Council
- City Administrator’s Office
- City Attorney’s Office
- Department of Public Works
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Planning and Building
- Department of Race and Equity
- Department of Housing and Community Development
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Economic and Workforce Development

An interview was also held with the Interdepartmental Inclusive Community Engagement Working Group (staff from Departments throughout the City working on community engagement).

Staff from the following local agencies that work in Oakland also participated in the group interviews conducted with City staff members:

- Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART)
- AC Transit
- Association of Bay Area Governments / Metropolitan Transportation Commission (ABAG/MTC)

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- Alameda County Department of Public Health

The following CBOs participated in the interviews:

- Acta Non Verba
- Asian Health Services
- Othering and Belonging Institute, UC Berkeley
- EastSide Arts Alliance
- East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC)
- Latino Chamber of Commerce
- Higher Ground Neighborhood Development Corporation
- 350 Bay Area
- Confederated Villages of Lisjan
- Walk Oakland Bike Oakland
- Communities for a Better Environment
- Just Cities
- Oakland Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce
- Designing Justice and Designing Spaces
- Montclair Neighborhood Council
- East Oakland Building Healthy Communities
- Urban Strategies Council
- InAdvance
- PolicyLink
- Oakland Heritage Alliance
- Roots Community Health Center
- Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation
- Black Cultural Zone Community Development Corporation
- East Bay Asian Youth Center
- Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce
- West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project
- Business Improvement District Alliance
- Mandela Partners
- David Brower Ronald Dellums Institute for Sustainable Policy Studies
- Native American Health Center, Inc.
- Pathways to Equity
- East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO)
- Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation
- The Unity Council
- Asian Pacific Environmental Network
- Oakland Firesafe Council
- Piedmont Pines Neighborhood Association

1.4 COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

This memorandum was compiled over the last four months of 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic was at a high point and, therefore, informed many of the discussions surrounding planning in Oakland. Interviewees had grave concerns about the extent to which COVID-19 was draining public resources and community energy, about its effects on community engagement, and about its effects on needed planning outcomes.

As 2020 drew to a close, COVID-19's lasting effects remained unclear. On the one hand, there are indications that COVID-19 vaccines will become widely available in the first four to six months of 2021, which could allow some activities to return to their pre-COVID-19 levels. This is particularly important to consider in light of a long-term process like the General Plan Update, in which the process itself will extend for several years beyond 2021, and where the overall planning horizon is 20 years.

On the other hand, COVID-19 may continue to have extensive impacts on the actual General Plan Update process, even as vaccines are distributed. There could be significant issues with vaccine availability,

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acceptance and effectiveness, which could affect how individuals and communities are able to engage with the General Plan Update process. Moreover, some aspects of our pre-COVID-19 lives might not return even after the pandemic itself subsides, since some behaviors and lifestyle choices may have already changed permanently before the General Plan's completion.

For these reasons, this memorandum takes account of COVID-19 and its effects by making recommendations for both policies and processes that reflect COVID-19 conditions. At the same time, it also recommends post-COVID-19 policies and processes with assumptions that at least the immediate effects of the pandemic will dissipate over the course of the General Plan Update process and over the life of the updated General Plan itself.

2. Acknowledging the Past

Before work on the General Plan Update can begin, the City must acknowledge the detrimental impacts that past governmental and planning practices have had on Oakland's residents and communities. Many of these impacts are rooted in the history of planning and growth policies. Acknowledging the burden of past practices on the Oakland of today will help direct the General Plan Update toward equity and community trust. This is an opportunity to begin the work to eliminate the root causes of inequity, to undo the harms of the past, and to integrate the principle of fairness into today's planning policies.

The following are only a sample of the development, growth and planning policies that have had lasting equity impacts on Oakland, its residents, and its communities.

2.1 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN OAKLAND

Prior to the arrival of Spanish missionaries in the 1760s, the entire Bay Area was home for several thousand years to the many tribes of the Ohlone indigenous group, including the Muwekma and Chochenyo in the East Bay. Oakland was founded on unceded land of the Chochenyo-speaking Ohlone.¹

In what is now Oakland and surrounding areas, Ohlone peoples were forced into labor camps at missions and baptized into the Catholic faith. By the late 1840s, many other Ohlone had been forced into remote reservations or killed, leaving less than 1,000 Ohlone remaining by the 1850's. During and after this time, Oakland expanded and urbanized at the further expense of Ohlone sacred sites, tribal cultural preservation, and tribal political status. Due to lack of formal federal recognition of some tribal groups by the Office of Federal Acknowledgment, contemporary Ohlone such as the Muwekma have no protected land base, and no secure places on which to practice their traditions. Tribes have advocated for decades, in some cases successfully, for legal representation in political and planning efforts.

There are also new Indigenous populations living in East Oakland who migrated to the U.S. due to climate change impacts and political issues in their traditional lands in southern Mexico and Central America. The largest population in Oakland consists of Mayans, who are Mam speaking people mostly from Guatemala and Honduras.

The City of Oakland's current General Plan neither sufficiently recognizes nor addresses Oakland's legacy of colonialism and injustice towards native peoples nor recognizes their contemporary presence in the City. The current General Plan was also developed without targeted outreach to the tribal members on whose ancestral land the City was built.

Oakland will benefit from a General Plan update that recognizes impacts to Indigenous culture and responds directly to input from tribes and tribal advocates. This effort will require coordinating with both

¹ University of California, Berkeley, Centers for Educational Justice and Community Engagement, Berkeley Sits on Ohlone Land, <https://cejce.berkeley.edu/ohloneland>, accessed November 28, 2020.

federally recognized and unrecognized tribes, as well as groups advocating for the interests of Native peoples and the development of tribal land trusts.

2.2 REDLINING

The uneven social geography of Oakland can be traced to early exclusionary laws and a race-based real estate market. Threats to Chinese and Japanese equality began with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which, paired with local laws, suspended Chinese immigration and entrenched anti-Asian sentiment.² In the 1930s, Oakland adopted the practices of the Federal Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) to kick-start homeownership following the Great Depression. The HOLC was intended to help refinance mortgages at risk of default. It sought to guide real estate investment by producing maps of cities showing areas of “good” and “bad” investment. Neighborhoods were graded according to a series of “detrimental” influences—including the presence of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and People of Color (BIPOC).³ Ultimately, neighborhoods receiving the lowest grades were colored red on HOLC maps. As a result, poorly graded areas with BIPOC or immigrant residents, such as West Oakland and large portions of East Oakland, were deemed “redlined.”

The federal government refused to guarantee loans made in these “redlined” neighborhoods. Residents of West Oakland and East Oakland were denied access to credit, resulting in a cycle of disinvestment and poverty. As communities in these areas of Oakland were excluded from the cycle of wealth building initiated by homeownership, desegregation milestones, such as the passage of *Brown v Board of Education* and increased suburban access enabled by the creation of the federal interstate and highway system, contributed to wealthier white residents relocating to suburban areas in the phenomenon known as “white flight.” This action resulted in further economic inequality and geographic disparity between white people and BIPOC. “Redlined” areas of HOLC’s original Oakland maps are consistent with present day maps of disadvantaged communities in the City. Areas populated primarily by BIPOC, low-income and rent-burdened households conform to the areas deemed too “detrimental” for investment nearly a century ago.

2.3 “URBAN RENEWAL”

BIPOC residents of Oakland faced an additional barrier to social justice immediately following federal redlining practices. In the years following World War II, local redevelopment agencies, including Oakland’s, began the process of “urban renewal” to maximize post-war investment. Private properties in neighborhoods deemed “blighted” were seized via eminent domain, demolished, and replaced with higher income housing and new drivers of growth. Waves of “slum clearance” were justified by an

² Lazard, Dorothy, 2018, Oakland Public Library Blogs, Oakland Grown, A Brief History of Oakland's Madison Square, <https://oaklandlibrary.org/blogs/from-main-library/brief-history-oaklands-madison-square>, accessed December 17, 2020.

³ BIPOC is a term that represents many varied identities. It highlights the particular disparities among Black and Indigenous communities, but also acknowledges the disparities that exist in other communities, including Asian, Latinx, refugee, immigrant and other communities of color. In studying disparities and how to overcome them, it is important to disaggregate data by each unique identity, even within the Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latinx, refugee, immigrant, and other communities of color.

unproven belief that renewal would boost economic development and public health. For example, nearly all West Oakland, its residents already struggling, was declared “blighted” by the Oakland Planning Commission and underwent forced redevelopment. Similarly, construction of the I-880 freeway, the construction of BART in the 1960s and 1970s, combined with the development of Laney College and other government buildings, contributed to the displacement of approximately 10,000 residents in and around Chinatown.⁴ In sum, tens of thousands of BIPOC residents were displaced through renewal projects and the construction of governmental buildings, BART and freeways.

2.4 FREEWAY CONSTRUCTION AND DIESEL-TRUCK TRAFFIC

New highway infrastructure—designed to drive property values up—compounded the injustices of redlining and urban renewal in Oakland. Segments of the MacArthur Maze, deemed vital to many residents by the City, fractured economic and housing opportunities for others. Construction of Interstates 880, 980, and 580, the exact routes of which were selected by the Oakland City Council, resulted in the demolition of 6,600 to 9,700 housing units in West Oakland between 1960 and 1966, and the subsequent displacement of over 10,000 mostly BIPOC residents. These roadways bisected fragile communities and acted as barriers to the increasing opportunities of Downtown Oakland. Displaced African American and Latino families relocated to historically disinvested areas in East Oakland, such as the Elmhurst district and Fruitvale neighborhood.

Asian communities had similar experiences with freeway construction. Construction of the I-880 in Oakland forced the relocation the Buddhist Church of Oakland, a critical symbol of spiritual identity. I-880 continues to impact safety, public health, and quality of life in Chinatown.⁵

Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration also banned all trucks weighing over 4.5 tons from I-580 when it was built in 1963. Port and freight-related traffic was forced onto I-880, resulting in significant air quality impacts to the flatlands neighborhoods already struggling with disinvestment. Today, the life expectancy of individuals who grow up near the I-880 freeway in Oakland is seven years less than people who grow up near the I-580 in the more affluent Oakland hills. Interstate 580 is the only interstate freeway in the nation that is not open to freight-related trucks.

In addition to these localized impacts on communities, the construction of the federal interstate and state highway systems enabled suburban access and growth, which contributed, along with other factors, to the “white flight” phenomenon that resulted in further economic inequality and geographic disparity between white people and BIPOC.

⁴ Lazard, Dorothy, 2018, Oakland Public Library Blogs, Oakland Grown, A Brief History of Oakland's Madison Square, <https://oaklandlibrary.org/blogs/from-main-library/brief-history-oaklands-madison-square>, accessed December 17, 2020.

⁵ City of Oakland, 2004, “Revive Chinatown”: Community Transportation Plan, page 6.

2.5 EXCLUSIONARY ZONING AND OTHER ZONING PRACTICES

Numerous zoning practices have been used by cities throughout the US to perpetuate discriminatory practices. Although zoning is based on the concept of uniform treatment within, across and among zoning districts, this concept has been frequently undercut by the issuance of variances, conditional use permits, exceptions and special permits disproportionately within BIPOC and low-income communities.⁶

Racist land use policies have isolated BIPOC communities from wealthier, single-family neighborhoods. Key among these is exclusionary zoning, a tool used to prevent high-density and/or multi-family development in proximity to wealthy or overrepresented areas. Common exclusionary zoning standards, such as large minimum lot sizes, single unit per lot requirements, and minimum square footage requirements, prevent low-income households from benefiting from high-quality community resources, education, and infrastructure in well-invested neighborhoods.

Exclusionary zoning may appear to be a race-neutral policy that does not explicitly discriminate based on race, but its impact limits the economic mobility of BIPOC. In Oakland the current distribution of housing types correlates to race, income, and public health. Areas zoned for high-density/urban-residential uses are primarily located in the flatlands of the City—next to freeways and industrial areas and in historically redlined areas—while low-density, detached and hillside residential land use corresponds to areas of high investment, above Interstate 580 and along and above Highway 13.

The General Plan Update process provides an opportunity for policy makers to acknowledge the existing deficiencies of City zoning, to assess inequities inherent in land use policy, and to work toward a more even distribution of housing types and economic opportunities in the City.

2.6 DISPLACEMENT

The City of Oakland is losing BIPOC residents. In West Oakland, all but six census tracts saw a decline in the Black population of between 66% and 25% from 2005 to 2015. Every census tract except three in East Oakland saw the same rate of decline.⁷ The City of Oakland lost 33,502 Black residents citywide from 2005 to 2015, a 24% decline.⁸ Moreover, the lack of housing affordability in Oakland has resulted in a citywide rate of cost-burdened households (those devoting more than 30% of income to housing) of 54.6 %, which is spread disproportionately across racial groups. Only 42% of White residents are cost burdened, as compared to 62.5% of Black residents and 58.1% of Latinx residents.⁹ BIPOC communities are bearing the brunt of displacement in Oakland as the supply of housing—particularly affordable housing—lags behind

⁶ See, for example, National Academy of Public Administration, 2003, “Addressing Community Concerns: How Env. Justice Relates to Land Use Planning & Zoning,” <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-02/documents/napa-land-use-zoning-63003.pdf>.

⁷ PolicyLink and the City of Oakland, 2015, A Roadmap Toward Equity: Housing Solutions for Oakland, California, Page 69.

⁸ PolicyLink and the City of Oakland, 2015, A Roadmap Toward Equity: Housing Solutions for Oakland, California, Page 7.

⁹ PolicyLink, 2017, Oakland’s Displacement Crisis: As Told by the Numbers, page 2.

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the demands of two decades of rapid economic growth. This problem is compounded by declining income for lower-income earners and salary increases for the higher-income earners.

According to U.C. Berkeley’s Urban Displacement Project (UDP), which conducts data-driven research with funding from MTC and ABAG, the entire area of Oakland west of Lake Merritt and south of Interstate 580 falls into one of three “Displacement Typologies” based on a series of census tract data:

1. At Risk of Gentrification
2. Early/Ongoing Gentrification
3. Advanced Gentrification

Nearly all of far West Oakland, south the Emeryville border and west of Peralta Street, is in a state of “Advanced Gentrification,” having nearly fully gentrified between 1990 and 2000. It is now composed of moderate- to high-income census tracts. The average home value is \$501,000, representing a 140.5% increase from 2000 to 2018. The population is 34% White, 28.8% Black and 24.4% Latinx. Inaccessibility to the area for low-income households has solidified, while rent increases remain a “Risk Factor” for ongoing gentrification.¹⁰

Chinatown is an example of a community “At Risk of Gentrification.” It is composed of low- or mixed-income tracts that did not gentrify from 2000-2018. However, signs of pressure are evident in surrounding area, where rent increases were greater than regional median between 2012 and 2018.¹¹

Census data in far East Oakland reveals a different pattern of potential displacement that is driven by income level. These are low- or mixed-income communities with rates of BIPOC generally above 90%.¹² All have been identified as Low Income/Susceptible to Displacement by UDP.

Contrasting West and East Oakland are areas of the City above Interstate 580. The displacement typologies of the Oakland hills shift to the following:

1. Stable Moderate/Mixed Income
2. At Risk of Becoming Exclusive
3. Becoming Exclusive

These tracts are defined by moderate- to high-income households and/or housing affordability restricted to these households, as well as marginal changes in housing costs. In the case of “Becoming Exclusive” areas, a rapid increase in housing costs is combined with an “absolute loss” of low-income households between 2010 and 2018.¹³

¹⁰ Urban Displacement Project, Gentrification and Displacement mapping tool, <https://www.urbandisplacement.org/san-francisco/gentrification-and-displacement>, accessed December 17, 2020.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

2.7 BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

BIPOC, low-income, and non-English speaking peoples, the elderly, youth, and those who are physically, sensorially, or developmentally disabled—all communities whose perspectives should contribute in defining policy and planning in Oakland—have long faced barriers to participating in the public process. There is a history in Oakland—as in many other cities—of community input that is skewed to those whose interests are already overleveraged in government. This lack of balanced input and engagement is due to structural racism as well as to outreach programs that have failed to consider the many barriers to participation by disadvantaged communities, which include the specialized learning curve of planning, the resources required to sustain prolonged involvement, language barriers, accessibility to events and programs, the “digital divide” that results from lack of access to computers and the internet, and the collective trauma and distrust resulting from experiences with a government that has marginalized the needs of non-whites.

The result is a feedback loop in which typically white, educated residents, property owners, developers, and large business interests, who can comfortably and easily participate in the planning process disproportionately influence the results of that process. The concerns of disadvantaged groups are, therefore, underrepresented in adopted policy.

The challenge of the current General Plan Update will be to make a concerted focus on soliciting and integrating the input of underrepresented groups so that all residents of Oakland have a sense of “ownership” of adopted policy, and future broad participation in the planning process is encouraged.

3. Basic Parameters of a General Plan

According to the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR), the General Plan is “more than the legal underpinning for land use decisions; it is a vision about how a community will grow, reflecting community priorities and values while shaping the future.”¹⁴ This section contains a broad outline of the requirements for a General Plan under California law, including a discussion of required “elements,” optional elements, and the planning horizon.

3.1 REQUIRED ELEMENTS

California Government Code section 65302 mandates that all General Plans (with some exceptions highlighted below) address the following policy areas; however, the law does not require that each of the following “Elements” must be organized into individual chapters. Rather, it suggests that General Plan organization should consider local context.

- **Land Use.** The Land Use Element is intended to promote the community’s vision for growth via equitable and accessible distribution of different land uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and open space.
 - In Oakland, the current Land Use Element is contained in the **Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE)**, adopted in 1998.
 - The **Estuary Policy Plan (EPP)** establishes the General Plan land use policies for lands between Interstate 880 and the Oakland waterfront. The EPP was adopted as part of the LUTE in 1999.
- **Circulation.** This is a strategy for addressing infrastructure needs for the circulation of people, goods, energy, water, sewage, storm drainage, and communications. By statute, the Circulation Element must correlate directly with the Land Use Element.
 - In Oakland, the current Circulation Element is also contained in the **Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE)**, adopted in 1998.
 - The 1999 **Estuary Policy Plan (EPP)** also establishes circulation policies for areas between Interstate 880 and the Oakland waterfront.
 - The 2019 **Oakland Bike Plan** and 2017 **Pedestrian Plan** were also adopted as components of the LUTE.
- **Housing.** This element implements the declaration of State law that the availability of housing is a matter of vital statewide importance. It is more specific and directive than other elements, with detailed guidance and reviews. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (referred to in this memorandum as “State HCD” to distinguish it from the City department with the same name) must review and certify the Housing Element, while jurisdictions submit annual progress reports. In Oakland (and most major cities), the Housing Element must be revised and submitted to State HCD for review on an eight-year cycle.

¹⁴ State of California, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, 2017 General Plan Guidelines, page 1.

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- Oakland’s current **Housing Element** was adopted in 2014 and is required to be revised and adopted by the end of January 2023.¹⁵
- **Conservation.** This element establishes goals and policies for the retention, enhancement and development of natural resources. It is to be coordinated with the Land Use and Open Space Elements.
 - In Oakland, conservation is covered in the City’s **Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element (OSCAR)**, adopted in 1996.
 - **Open Space.** This element identifies valuable undeveloped areas and creates a long-term plan to preserve them.
 - In Oakland, open space is covered in the City’s **Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element (OSCAR)**, adopted in 1996.
- **Noise.** The Noise Element describes the local noise environment and analyzes current and projected noise levels. It outlines policies and implementation measures to address existing and foreseeable noise problems.
 - Oakland’s **Noise Element** was adopted in 2005.
- **Safety.** A successful Safety Element reduces potential short and long-term risks of death, injuries, property damage, and economic dislocation resulting from fires, floods, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, climate change; as well as local hazards.
 - Oakland’s current **Safety Element** was adopted in 2004 and amended in 2012. Recent State law now requires that the Safety Element be updated whenever the Housing Element is updated, with required adoption currently projected for early 2023.
- **Environmental Justice.** Senate Bill 1000, passed in 2016, requires that cities and towns with disadvantaged communities adopt environmental justice policies or an Environmental Justice Element. These must include objectives and policies to reduce health risks in disadvantaged communities, promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process, and prioritize programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.
 - Under SB 1000, Oakland is required to adopt an **Environmental Justice Element**, either standalone or interwoven with other Elements, at the same time that the Housing and Safety Elements are updated, with required adoption currently projected for early 2023.

3.2 OPTIONAL ELEMENTS

State law allows a jurisdiction to include within its General Plan any other elements as it sees fit. The current Oakland General Plan includes two optional elements that are not required by State law. Section 10 of this memorandum also suggests several other optional stand-alone Elements for possible inclusion in the upcoming General Plan Update, contingent upon funding availability (as described further in Section 13.3).

¹⁵ Note that this date is subject to change depending on work being conducted by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). For an updated schedule visit <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/docs/6th-web-he-duedate.pdf>.

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- **Historic Preservation.** Provides policies and actions to encourage the preservation of older buildings, districts, and other physical features of historic value.
 - The Oakland **Historic Preservation Element** was adopted in 1994.
- **Scenic Highways.** Establishes policies to preserve and enhance attractive roadways traversing the City. It was previously a required element under State law, but that requirement was rescinded in 1984.
 - The Oakland **Scenic Highways Element** was adopted in 1974.

3.3 SPECIFIC PLANS

State law allows jurisdictions to prepare Specific Plans as a means to provide additional, specific guidance for development in a specified area. These documents provide more detail on development in specific portions of the City. Oakland’s adopted Specific Plans are:

- Broadway Valdez District Specific Plan
- Central Estuary Area Plan
- Coliseum Area Specific Plan
- Lake Merritt Station Area Plan
- West Oakland Specific Plan

In addition, the City is currently completing the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan, with adoption expected by the end of 2021.

Treatment of these Specific Plans within the context of the General Plan Update is considered in Section 9.5 of this memorandum.

3.4 TWENTY-YEAR HORIZON

The time frames for effective planning outcomes will vary across issues being addressed within respective Elements.

- As noted above, State law requires updates to the Housing and Safety Elements every 8 years.
- OPR’s General Plan Guidelines states that most jurisdictions have selected 20 years as the “horizon” for their General Plans. This is not an end point, but rather “*provides a general context in which to make shorter-term decisions.*”
- With the 20-year planning horizon in mind, OPR also recommends that General Plans be comprehensively updated every 10 years, with a “rolling” planning horizon that extends for 20 years at each update.

Oakland should implement the 20-year horizon for the current General Plan Update, and plan to update all Elements at least every 10 years, with an 8-year update window for the Housing and Safety Elements.

4. *Recent Example Programs and Projects in Oakland*

In partnership with a broad coalition of BIPOC activists, the City has steadily built a foundation of staff, systems, policies, projects, plans, and programs that will provide support and direction for a General Plan Update founded on community justice and racial equity. This section describes 20 projects and programs already underway or recently completed in Oakland that provide examples, precedents, methodologies and data that can be used in the General Plan Update process.

The General Plan Update process will benefit from consideration of the following efforts in terms of lessons learned, staff insights, and data collected. Many of these projects and programs have also developed innovative and equitable public engagement programs that can serve as models for the General Plan Update process and which informed the engagement methods recommended in Section 12 of this memorandum.

4.1 OAKLAND RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS AND TOOLS

Over the past several years, the City of Oakland has embarked on many important and related efforts to ensure that planning for racial equity and justice is at the foundation of all City efforts. Six such efforts, which represent examples of how to inform all City planning activities as well as many other City efforts, are described below.

4.1.1 OAKLAND DEPARTMENT OF RACE AND EQUITY

The Oakland Department of Race and Equity (DRE) was launched in October 2016 with a mission to create a City where diversity has been maintained, racial disparities have been eliminated and racial equity has been achieved. Per Section 2.29.170 of the Municipal Code, the “City of Oakland will intentionally integrate, on a citywide basis, the principle of “fair and just” in all the City does in order to achieve equitable opportunities for all people and communities.” The DRE reports directly to the City Administrator, who will, per Section 2.29.170.3 of the Municipal Code, “Apply equity and social justice foundational practices to City actions and endeavor to integrate these practices into the City’s: strategic, operational and business plans; management and reporting systems for accountability and performance; and budgets in order to eliminate inequities and create opportunities for all people and communities.”

Developing a General Plan Update consistent with the mission of the DRE and its cross-disciplinary approach, will require a structural change in which equity is built into all elements. City leadership and staff, along with community-based organizations (CBOs), have stressed that existing disparities in indicators such as asthma levels, pedestrian safety and housing habitability are impacted by City policy, from zoning to housing to urban forestry. In order to integrate just practices across City policy, the General Plan team will coordinate with DRE early in the process to develop intentionality, a transparent outreach process that will rebuild community trust, a plan for interdepartmental coordination and a policy

approach that is action-oriented, data driven and analytical and with measurable results in the inclusion and benefit of communities impacted by racial disparities.

4.1.2 RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

The City of Oakland’s Racial Equity Impact Analysis (REIA) is being used throughout the City as a means to assess the racial and equity impacts of any proposed City action or policy. An REIA is required in every staff report that comes to the City Council, and the upcoming City-wide budgeting process will include an REIA as well. An REIA assesses how programs, policies, and procedures impact races differently, in order to identify more equitable approaches.

Many potential legal, policy and service decisions have now been assessed through the lens of racial equity. In 2018, a comprehensive REIA was performed to inform the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan (DOSP) process as well. Prior to development of the Preliminary Draft DOSP, City staff completed a Downtown Oakland Disparity Analysis, documenting racial disparities and organizing them by proposed topic areas of the DOSP and desired future outcomes, measured using equity indicators. The project team then assessed possible equity impacts for each proposed policy and land use option, as well as for all additional recommendations, to inform the Preliminary Draft Plan. One result of these analyses is a detailed Equity Framework within the DOSP that includes a 5-step approach to equity, as well as the identification of cross-topical policies and strategies expected to reduce equity gaps.

Racial Equity Impact Analyses will be performed for both phases of the General Plan Update process and are described in detail in Sections 4 and 11.

4.1.3 EQUITY INDICATORS

Oakland’s Equity Indicators Project (EIP), begun in 2018, is a baseline quantitative framework to understand the impacts of race, measure inequities, and track changes in disparities for different groups over time. This framework is used to guide and inform policies that address these disparities. The EIP began as a joint effort between the Resilient Oakland Office and the Department of Race and Equity.

The EIP assigns Equity Scores to 72 indicators, including 12 for each of the following six themes: Economy, Education, Public Health, Housing, Public Safety, and Neighborhood and Civic Life. The indicators range from Business Ownership to Incarceration to High Speed Internet Access. Indicator scores were created by calculating the ratio between the outcomes for the least and most advantaged racial/ethnic group. These ratios were converted to Equity Scores using an algorithm developed by the City University of New York. Final scores are on a scale from 1 to 100, with 1 representing the highest possible level of inequity. The overarching, “Citywide” equity score was 33.5, “demonstrating substantial room for improvement.”

The EIP advances data driven, transparent decision-making that is required to advance equitable outcomes for disadvantaged communities in Oakland. The EIP is a valuable data source for multiple citywide efforts, with the potential to support General Plan Update existing conditions research, outreach planning and content development. It is an example of a mission-focused equity project completed via cross-departmental coordination and resulting in tools with proven interdepartmental applications.

4.1.4 INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

Oakland solidified its commitment to equitable, meaningful community participation in 2018, with the creation of the Inclusive Public Engagement Planning Guide (Guide) by the Department of Race and Equity. The Guide provides a structure for identifying the desired race and equity outcomes of a public engagement process. It assists in the development of an outreach plan that considers factors such as key stakeholders, major constraints to public involvement, appropriate outreach practices and desired community inputs.

The Guide has proven to be a valuable tool for programming equitable outreach for policy, planning and development projects. It has been used to shape all components of a public engagement strategy, as well to develop a foundation for outreach that is informed by the City's equity goals and then tailored further. The Guide advances the DRE goal to *Promote inclusion and full participation for all residents of the City*.

The Guide was used to structure public participation for the 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan, which solicited input from over 2,000 residents, and was also used in preparation of the Oakland Bike Plan, the 2019 Three-Year Paving Plan, the East Oakland Mobility Action Plan, and the City's current COVID-19 response. It is also informing the current update to the Capital Improvement Program.

4.1.5 RACE AND EQUITY TEAMS

The Oakland Department of Race and Equity (DRE) manages a program whereby all Oakland City departments and service providers are supported in forming individual Race and Equity Teams. Under the direction of DRE, the common goal of the Teams is to transform practices in local government to promote participation by all residents, and end to racial inequity in the community and workplace. Teams are working to develop new standards and practices, increase staff awareness and identify opportunities to improve equity in day-to-day practice in their work environments.

4.1.6 INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP

In 2020, an interdepartmental group of City employees committed to inclusive outreach formed to create systems, procedures, and best practices for community engagement that ensures equitable City services. The work of the Inclusive Engagement Group builds on years of work in Oakland's diverse communities. The goal of the Group is to develop a comprehensive, equity-oriented engagement infrastructure to implement the inclusive outreach and engagement guide created by the Department of Race and Equity in 2017 (see Section 4.1.4). The values of the Group include:

- Overcoming the tendency to recreate existing inequities, designing processes so that participation is as inclusive as possible in any given social context;
- Targeting investments in internal capacity building to ensure meaningful participation from those too often excluded from the decision-making process;
- Fostering greater transparency in how decisions are made and public input is used in decision making to reach our racial equity vision;

- Committing to changing City systems, policies, and procedures to benefit those most impacted by racial disparities.

In order to build capacity among City staff, the Group has focused on, among other tasks, developing a roster of community liaisons across City departments, centralizing current City engagement practices and tools, documenting past engagement efforts and best practices, training and supporting City staff on including engagement practices and implementation, and coordinating with DRE to embed racial equity practices in engagement activities.

4.2 HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The Healthy Development Guidelines (HDG) are a set of health- and equity-related guidelines developed by a group of CBOs intended to ensure that new development improves community health for all residents in Oakland. The HDG address community-identified problems related to development that disproportionately affects low-income communities of BIPOC in Oakland. They are based on the principles of health and equity and are grounded in the understanding that everyone in Oakland deserves the opportunity to lead a healthy, fulfilling, and productive life. The HDG was spearheaded by a team from East Oakland Building Healthy Communities – including Causa Justa: Just Cause, Communities for a Better Environment, East Bay Housing Organizations and HOPE Collaborative. It is an example of community-based plan management and content and focuses on policy change through community ownership. The HDG includes guidelines for developers of new projects to mitigate displacement, support the maintenance of existing affordable housing, develop onsite space for healthy food retail and maintain other standards of community health.

The HDG team was recognized by the Oakland City Council for a successful engagement and capacity building strategy that included a “planning academy” for participants and multiple community surveys.

The coalition that created the HDG continues to meet, with the goal of incorporating the HDG principles into the new Environmental Justice Element.

4.3 2030 EQUITABLE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Oakland’s 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan (ECAP) is introduced as *the City’s roadmap to bring about an equitable transition to a low-carbon economy*. It lays out actions and strategies designed to be *realistic, ambitious, balanced, adaptive and equitable, or structured to maximize benefits and minimize burdens on frontline communities; prevent displacement...and address disparities in resource allocation and local vulnerability*.

The 2030 ECAP was written with the intent that it could be incorporated into the General Plan Update, and it includes Action TLU-1 to “align all planning policies and regulations (including the General Plan Update) with ECAP goals and priorities.” It addresses the specific issues of municipal climate leadership; public health, food, and housing security and the climate crisis; greenhouse gas emissions; climate action

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implementation and reporting; land use and transportation strategies; building materials and waste; adaptation and carbon removal.

The 2030 ECAP exemplifies the value and challenges of integrating principles of environmental justice and facilitating public participation at the scale required for the General Plan Update. The ECAP was shaped by an engagement process lasting two years and coordinated by City staff with an Equity Facilitator consultant team, the latter pioneered by the City to engage frontline and disadvantaged communities. Outreach practices included the creation of a Neighborhood Leadership Cohort of residents from each Council District, an ad hoc Advisory Committee, community workshops, online surveys, Citywide town halls and partnership with UC Berkeley’s Youth-Plan Learn Act Now (Y-PLAN) program to engage high school students.

There are lessons to be learned from the 2030 ECAP about large-scale outreach and sensitivity of residents to transparency. The 13-member ad hoc advisory committee that was initially convened per City Council ordinance was deemed unrepresentative of the community at large by community members. Staff and CBO leadership worked to select and coordinate community and internal leaders; and discovered the need to convene weekly check-ins to discuss conflicts, strategies for presenting information, working with paid consultants and creating “languages” of outreach tailored to various events. The ECAP engagement process highlighted the need for honest conversations about the limitations and timeline of a project or plan. CBOs reviewed draft documents before release to the public to ensure accessibility by lay readers. Ultimately, more than 2,100 Oaklanders weighed in on the ECAP’s development.

CBOs and Oakland leaders have noted that the General Plan Update is an opportunity to codify the actions and strategies outline in the ECAP, either in a dedicated Environmental Justice Element or throughout the General Plan.

4.4 EAST OAKLAND NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE

The East Oakland Neighborhoods Initiative (EONI) is a partnership between the Planning and Building Department and 12 CBOs. It is focused on equitable planning, building resilience, and addressing environmental harms in East Oakland communities historically impacted by environmental pollution, redlining and disinvestment, and thus disproportionately sensitive to the future impacts of climate change.

The EONI is largely based on an extensive community engagement process supported by a large team of partners, including 3 meetings in each of 6 target neighborhoods. Workshops and “Pop-Up” events at existing facilities resulted in a participant pool representative of East Oakland’s population, with over seventy-five percent of attendees identifying as African-American or Latinx, and sixty-four percent with an annual household income of less than \$60,000. The EONI quantifies a series of “Neighborhood Concerns” and “Improvement Priorities” expressed during the engagement process, and outlines a series of “Top Tier Themes.” The EONI then identifies neighborhood-specific projects stemming from both project meetings and existing plans.

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As noted by CBO members, the EONI is representative of the value and challenges of a complex partnership structure, as well as the need to develop strategies to engage “first-time” frontline communities early on. The neighborhood-based outreach and project planning structure of the EONI also make it a valuable reference for local geographies in East Oakland that may inform future outreach or policy development. East Oakland residents who participated in the EONI are potential “ambassadors” for future community engagement in the Coliseum/Rudsdale, Lockwood/Havenscourt, Highland Elmhurst, Melrose, Brookfield Village/Columbia Gardens, Sobrante Park and Stonehurst neighborhoods.

The benefits and challenges of coordinating 12 CBOs during the EONI process provided City staff with new knowledge of community partnerships. Foremost, it became clear that the starting point for determining the most useful partnering strategy is evaluating the desired final product. The type of City deliverable, the assumed level of community input, and the level of “hard” vs “soft” content are best facilitated by different types and scales of partnerships. Partnerships should also be developed to compliment, rather than conflict or overlap with, staff knowledge and structure. As such, internal project staffing and organization should be reviewed carefully before establishing partnership strategies. Similarly, the internal structure, commitment level, project experience and capacity of potential partners should be evaluated. Finally, only partnership agreements with clear expectations regarding roles and responsibilities, timelines, administrative tasks, and submission of deliverables will provide maximum project benefit.

4.5 WEST OAKLAND COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

The West Oakland Community Action Plan (WOCAP) is a community-based plan to increase the resilience of neighborhoods long impacted by inequitable planning and environmental harm.

The 2019 WOCAP was developed by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) in partnership with the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (WOEIP). WOEIP is a resident led environmental justice organization dedicated to achieving healthy homes, jobs and neighborhoods for all residents of West Oakland. The WOCAP process continues today at the actions called out in the adopted plan are implemented by the WOCAP committee.

The process got its start in the early 2000’s, when West Oakland community members rallied to shutter the Red Star Yeast Factory, labeled one of the Bay Area’s worst polluters by the Pacific Institute in 2002. In 2017, the Community Air Protection Program (Assembly Bill 617) was passed, requiring the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to identify communities in which air monitoring and/or air emissions reductions programs are to be implemented. West Oakland was selected as a first-year priority community. In response, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) partnered with the community-based WOEIP to develop the WOCAP.

The resulting WOCAP process, which might serve as one of several models for the General Plan Update process, relied on a collaborative problem-solving model borrowed from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and first suggested by Richard Grow, former EPA Region 9 Project Lead. The process is based on three key components:

- All engagement and decision-making require consensus;

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- The guiding entity—whether planning team, steering committee, etc.—must have 2 co-chairs, including one directly from the community, whether resident or CBO representative. In this way, all agendas are set by the community;
- All engagement requires a neutral facilitator.

Roles and responsibilities in the WOCAP process are formalized in partnering agreements. Founding members of the WOEIP stress that for a project the scale of the General Plan Update, partnership agreements that spell out community and City roles and responsibilities in detail are invaluable. Successful outreach must begin with a large-scale education and orientation process. Much of the success of the WOCAP is based on the consensus-based participation model, which ensures transparency, builds trust and places power in the hands of the community.

4.6 HOWARD TERMINAL COMMUNITY BENEFITS PROCESS

In November 2018, the Oakland Athletics baseball team proposed a plan to build a Major League ballpark at Howard Terminal along with a new waterfront district containing a mixture of housing, offices, restaurants, retail, small businesses, and public gathering spaces on a 55-acre site near Downtown Oakland just west of Jack London Square.

In 2020, the City launched a Howard Terminal Community Benefits process to bring community and business stakeholders together in a process deliberately centered on equity.

The Howard Terminal community benefits process is a new partnership model that might serve as one of several models for obtaining community input into the General Plan Update process. From its inception, the Howard Terminal community benefits process was co-designed by City staff and community partners, with a shared community engagement process purpose of creating a positive/ transparent culture for engagement and affirming a shared vision - identifying an equitable distribution of community benefits throughout the Project's impacted neighborhoods: West Oakland, Old Oakland, Jack London District and Chinatown.

The process is being managed by the City, with a Stakeholder Engagement Lead working with outside consultants, and is centered on a Steering Committee structure. The Steering Committee is composed of residents and other community leaders who were selected by Council Members and community members to represent an area or topic. The Steering Committee relies on work by larger topic cohorts open to all interested parties.

4.7 2019 THREE-YEAR PAVING PLAN

Oakland City Council adopted the 2019 3-Year Paving Plan on May 7, 2019. The plan prioritizes streets to be repaved based on objective citywide data including equity factors, street condition, and traffic safety. The Plan does not include changes based on street-specific constituent complaints.

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The 2019 Paving Plan assigns funds to areas with the most need. These areas were identified using a comprehensive equity analysis based on patterns in service disparities highlighted by the Equity Indicators Project (see Section 4.1.3). In order to focus improvements on historically underserved and challenged communities in Oakland, staff analyzed a series of census data points also used by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to define “Communities of Concern”. This data includes low-income households, rent-burdened households, people with disabilities and people with limited English proficiency, among others. The result is a need-based, rather than politically or constituent motivated Paving Plan.

In early 2019, the Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) presented the proposed paving plan to committees and commissions across the City, including the Measure KK Oversight Committee, the Mayor’s Commission on Persons with Disabilities, and the Bicyclist and Pedestrian Advisory Commission. OakDOT also presented the plan to residents throughout Oakland at eleven community meetings and via an online open house.

OakDOT distributed a plan feedback survey at each meeting. City staff tracked the zip codes of all responders, providing the project team with valuable insight into the correlation between income level and response. Most of the 300 responders thought the proposed plan was fair. However, 30 percent of total responders were from a single high-income zip code and questioned the use of equity metrics in the plan.

Oakland City Councilmembers cite the Paving Plan as an example of resistance to complaint-based planning and placing objective need supported by quality data front and center. Response to the Plan indicates the value of transparency and front-end engagement when planning for equity, as areas of traditionally higher investment confront changes in prioritization.

4.8 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

In 2018, the City of Oakland reinvented its 38 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) via a unique participatory process. The CIP Working Group Team, with participation from Oakland’s Public Works (OPW), Department of Transportation (OakDOT) and Department of Race and Equity (DRE), surveyed community members to solicit input on the relative priority of nine factors that would be used to score proposed capital projects. Using feedback from about 1,400 residents, the team developed a project scoring model that includes new health & safety, economic development, existing conditions and equity factors. The result is a capital improvement project prioritization model that reflects what matters most to community members.

In addition, OPW developed a public capital improvement project proposal submission form that allows residents to submit CIP proposals directly to OPW. An initial release of the form yielded 285 project requests, most of which did not score high enough to meet funding criteria. OPW, in evaluating why these public proposals did not generally score at the required threshold, found that proposers would benefit from greater technical assistance and understanding of the nine-factor scoring system. Furthermore, the City found that while the number of participants was high, the geographic area of Oakland east of 66th Avenue and below I-580 was significantly underrepresented.

In response, OPW and the City of Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) initiated a CIP awareness and technical assistance campaign. An engagement consultant improved program engagement east of 66th Avenue by implementing out on-the-ground outreach and engagement efforts. Community members and leaders were hired to assist with neighborhood canvassing, door hanger surveys in these underrepresented geographic areas, as well assist in the facilitation of virtual focus groups and working sessions with these residents. The consultant also led a technical assistance program for residents developing project ideas. The CIP project requests following this renewed effort yielded about 415 requests, with 15.5 percent of those coming from residents in Deep East Oakland neighborhoods (zip codes 94621, 94603,) and 18.2 coming from East Oakland neighborhoods (zip codes 94606, 94601), for a total of 140 projects from residents in both those areas.

4.9 BELONGING IN OAKLAND: A CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This 2018 cultural plan, a product of the City’s Cultural Affairs Division, offers insight into the cultural priorities and needs of Oakland residents. The Plan is based on a multifaceted in-person and online engagement process that sought to understand the “best things” about Oakland culture, areas of the City that “feel like home,” how culture is celebrated, the most important components of cultural life in the City, and other residents’ thoughts on aspects of City culture.

The guiding vision for the plan is *Equity is the driving force. Cultural is the frame. Belonging is the goal.* “Placemaking,” “Place and Identity,” and the value of a “Civic Commons” are identified in the plan as essential to culture and belonging. Many findings of the study have direct associations with, and may inform, land use, public space, noise, and public works policies. Other components of the Plan offer insights into positive perceptions of neighborhoods and what components of neighborhoods may increase quality of life.

This plan is a valuable reference for a General Plan Update focused on equity. It is a unique “primer” on Oaklanders’ personal values and the City’s commitment to supporting them. It offers potential starting for assessing existing cultural facilities and, potentially, engaging the public on intersections of the physical environment and quality of life.

4.10 INDUSTRIAL LANDS STUDY

Preserving Oakland’s industrial economy while mitigating its often-inequitable environmental impacts is key to ensuring a just future for the City. A Councilmember described the legacy of seaport industry in Oakland as having strategic importance and stated that one of their long-term priorities is to protect the City’s blue-collar workforce. However, some local CBOs stress that large portions of job-generating industrial land are located in or adjacent to some of the City’s most at-risk residential areas. Known industrial emitters that provide needed jobs are grandfathered into neighborhoods and often operate without modern permitting requirements.

An Industrial Lands Study by the City's Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWD) is in progress and will provide data to inform industrial land use, safety, economic and environmental policy in Oakland, which can be used as inputs in the General Plan Update. The study documents the quantity and location of industrial lands and assesses the number and types of jobs generated by businesses in those lands. The study provides a better understanding of the geographic locations of industrial uses across Oakland, a starting point for identifying potential hotspots of environmental injustice. The study could support the development of housing, environmental justice and land use policies, as well as rezoning strategies, that maximize Oakland's vital industrial economy in a manner that mitigates past harms.

4.11 HOUSING STRATEGY

The Oakland Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) is currently drafting a Citywide housing strategy described by HCD staff as an action-oriented "blueprint" for housing. The strategy will target:

1. Production: This includes accessing capital funding, attracting capital for deeply affordable housing, and proving housing for the homeless and middle-income families.
2. Preservation: This includes acquiring existing apartments for conversion to affordable units; advancing tenant ownership, and purchasing vacant properties for reactivation and rehabilitation.
3. Protection: This includes developing strategies to support rent control eviction laws, educate the community on tenant rights and create other legal and human support systems.

HCD's citywide housing strategy will differ from a typical Housing Element in that it will be developed specifically to create funding opportunities and accommodate the needs of the lowest income groups. HCD expects there to be connectivity between its strategy document and the Housing Element Update, possibly in the form of Housing Element policies that cross-reference HCD strategies and conclusions. HCD has engaged Stanford University and the University of Pennsylvania on a targeted data collection process. Elmhurst Neighborhood Plan

The Elmhurst Neighborhood Plan is a neighborhood improvement plan completed by the HOPE Collaborative, the same group of community and agency stakeholders that spearheaded the Healthy Development Guidelines (Section 4.2). For the purposes of this memorandum, it serves as one of the models of how local CBOs can engage on local planning issues.

The 2014 Plan outlines short, medium and long-term actions for civic participation, safe streets, beautification and greening and healthy food access. HOPE Collaborative implemented an engagement process founded on partnerships with active transportation, education, urban forestry and other CBOs, who then worked with the project team to promote diverse attendance community meetings and recruit residents to participate in the plan, including mapping and content development.

4.12 RESILIENT OAKLAND PLAYBOOK

The 2016 Resilient Oakland Playbook is a framework of actions for ensuring the City is prepared for the shock of natural or man-made crises, such as earthquakes and climate change. It will provide input to the Safety Element Update and other parts of the General Plan Update addressing resilience, and its process was also a model for ongoing City engagement efforts.

The Playbook recognizes many of the challenges to a resilient Oakland are associated with social injustices. These include mistrust of government, unemployment in the face of new job markets, wealth disparities, crime rates, homelessness, and the lack of affordable housing. The City must also contend with physical and natural challenges such as aging infrastructure, sea level rise, drought, wildfire, and coastal flooding.

Resilience strategies are organized into three themes: 1) Build a More Trustworthy and Responsive Government, 2) Stay Rooted and Thrive in Our Town, and 3) Build a More Vibrant and Connected Oakland. The Playbook targets equitable access to education and jobs, housing security, community safety and vibrant infrastructure. As a result, actions extend beyond physical asset protection and into building community strength, including actions to engage youth engagement, improve the use of equity metrics, develop civic “design labs” and other educational opportunities, promote career success and launch neighborhood-based resilience initiatives.

The Resilient Oakland process also led to the creation of "It Takes a Town," a process guide which includes "Ten Key Principles" for community engagement, which the City's Inclusive Community Engagement Group described in Section 4.1.6 has recommended be used in City engagement processes moving forward.

4.13 OAKLAND BIKE PLAN

The 2019 Oakland Bike Plan was adopted by the City Council as a standalone document and as a General Plan LUTE amendment in 2019. It is unique among active transportation plans in that it relied on an Equity Framework to guide analysis, plan recommendations and community engagement. A result of this framework was a series of partnerships with CBOs to better reach underrepresented Oaklanders, host a larger number of community workshops in trusted environments, reach more people during the outreach process, and help guide feasible and equitable plan recommendations.

A defining goal of the Bike Plan is to ensure that Oaklanders believe the City will build what they ask for. In order to achieve this goal, the Plan calls for the implementation of a series of short-term, high visibility bicycle projects that can be applied throughout “the Town” in coordination with the participating CBOs.

Beyond the short term, the Plan recommends a series of broader programs such as Promote Hometown Efforts, Support the Local Bicycling Economy and Provide Shared Resources. The establishment of these programs, combined with CBO partnerships, has led to more efficient initiation of individual bicycle projects consistent with program goals.

4.14 OAKLAND AT HOME: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING A ROADMAP TOWARDS EQUITY

The 2015 Oakland at Home (Roadmap) was written by a Housing Implementation Cabinet consisting of City staff, elected leadership, housing experts and advocates, and housing developers and volunteers. It includes both data and policies that can be considered for the Housing Element Update and other aspects of the General Plan Update addressing housing affordability.

The Roadmap is based on a data collection and analysis process to identify the required number of homes to protect and build over an eight-year period from 2015, in order to preserve Oakland's racial and economic diversity. The Roadmap calculates that 17,000 affordable homes will need to be protected and 17,000 new homes will need to be created. It then outlines a series of data driven and policy-based strategies to protect those affordability homes and create 17,000 new homes. The Roadmap concludes with a detailed work plan that includes every strategy in the Roadmap, identifying Who is Served, Required Support, City Actions Taken and Lead Partners for each.

4.15 PERMANENT ACCESS TO HOUSING FRAMEWORK

The over 4,000 homeless individuals in Oakland represent approximately 50% of Alameda County's total homeless population, and 70% of these people are African Americans.¹⁶ The 2018 Permanent Access to Housing (PATH) Framework is the City's five-year approach to addressing homelessness in Oakland, which provide an important set of inputs to the Housing Element Update and other aspects of the General Plan Update intended to address homelessness.

PATH was developed to address homelessness using a spectrum of services, identify the scale of investments needed to improve the crisis, align stakeholders on the importance of investing, and highlight the need for increased revenues and advocacy.

PATH includes strategies to:

1. Prevent people from becoming homeless
2. Shelter, rehouse and improve health and safety on the street
3. Create extremely low income and permanent supportive housing units prioritized for households experiencing homelessness.

PATH was informed by a HUD-required *Point in Time Count* of homeless individuals performed by Alameda County. As noted in a December 4, 2019 staff report posted with PATH, the Oakland Human Services Department had a 2019-2020 FY budget of approximately \$30 million through a combination of federal, State, county, City and private funds. Approximately 54% of the total funds (\$18.1 million) were part of the City's ongoing homelessness funding and approximately 46% (\$16.4 million) were one-time funds.

¹⁶ City of Oakland Homeless Count and Survey, 2019, Comprehensive Report, https://everyonehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2019HIRDReport_Oakland_2019-Final.pdf

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5. Example Projects from Elsewhere

Cities across California and the Country are responding to legacies of unjust policy with plans that establish equity as the guiding principle. Minorities in these cities grapple with versions of inaccessible opportunity, public health concerns and economic struggle experienced by Oakland's disadvantaged communities. The following are examples of progress approaches to just and fair planning that may inform the General Plan Update process.

5.1 CHICAGO EQUITY-BASED TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In the City of Chicago, nearly 90% of all Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) projects approved between 2016 and 2019 were concentrated in the overrepresented North and Northwest sides and in the City's downtown. While these areas have benefitted from the resulting economic development and private investment, Black and Latinx communities on the South and West sides have seen little TOD activity and resulting economic boosts. Moreover, the few BIPOC communities targeted by TOD have seen such rapid private development activity that longtime Black and Latinx residents are displaced rather than benefitted.¹⁷

The City adopted its first-ever Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (eTOD) Policy Plan in September 2020. The eTOD Plan is the result of Elevated Chicago, a working group consisting of cross-departmental City and transit agency staff, stakeholders from CBOs and the private sector, philanthropic groups, and regional non-profit and governmental partners. The working group is charged with designing and implementing strategies around Capital and Programs, Systems Change, and Knowledge Sharing.

The eTOD Plan is unique in its core assumption that transit is a community equalizer accessible to all residents. Per Elevated Chicago, equitable TOD will drive a more vibrant, healthy, and resilient community that may be enjoyed by all residents, in particular, low-income communities and BIPOC residents who stand to gain the most from greater prosperity and connectivity.¹⁸

The eTOD Plan was developed to address: 1) the lack of dense and walkable housing and retail development around transit stations in Black communities; and 2) displacement pressure felt by long-time residents. It is in the form of a series of separate workplans for individual transit lines. The workplans assess opportunities and challenges, map assets and liabilities around stations, outline neighborhood priorities, identify planned projects and establish a TOD visions process. The result is a roadmap for

¹⁷ City of Chicago, Mayor's Press Office, September 14, 2020, City of Chicago Releases First-Ever Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Plan, https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mayor/press_room/press_releases/2020/september/EquitableTransitOrientedDevelopmentPlan.html, accessed December 2, 2020.

¹⁸ Elevated Chicago, What are TOD & Equitable TOD?, <https://www.elevatedchicago.org/whats-etod/>, accessed December 2, 2020.

walkable mixed-use neighborhood development around transit and high-capacity bus routes, designed to mitigate the effects of housing segregation, build community wealth, improve climate resilience and ensure the overall health of residents.

5.2 SEATTLE EQUITY AND DISPLACEMENT INITIATIVES

Seattle became a national leader in planning when it made Social Equity one of the four core values of its 1994 Comprehensive Plan. Planners in Seattle have implemented a multi-pronged approach to ensure that new growth is balanced. The City launched its Race and Social Justice Initiative in 2004, and the Initiative's 2019-2021 Strategy calls for *Building an anti-racist network within City government; Transforming the internal government culture of the City toward one rooted in racial justice, humanistic relationships, belonging and wellbeing; Aligning racial justice efforts with local community organizing and strengthening relationships with communities most impacted by structural racism; and Working in relationship with national and regional racial justice leaders from all communities and sectors to advance racial justice*. Consistent with these strategies, Seattle has adopted or implemented the following efforts to prevent displacement and promote equitable growth:

5.2.1 RACIAL EQUITY TOOLKIT

This toolkit lays out a process and a set of questions to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, initiatives, programs, and budget issues to address the impacts on racial equity. The Racial Equity Analysis facilitated by the toolkit was intended to be completed by people with different racial perspectives. It includes six-steps, including Setting Outcomes, Analyzing Data, Involving Stakeholders, Minimizing Harm, Tracking Impacts and Reporting Back.

5.2.2 HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND LIVABILITY AGENDA (HALA)¹⁹

The Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) is a comprehensive approach to create an affordable and livable city. It includes 65 recommendations developed by a stakeholder Advisory Committee in 2015 to create 50,000 homes by 2025, including 20,000 affordable homes. HALA is supported by a City Council Workplan of deliverables and timelines for a series of strategies related to preserving existing housing, streamlining affordable housing development, and protecting low-income renters.

¹⁹ City of Seattle, Housing Affordability and Livability, <https://www.seattle.gov/hala>, accessed December 2, 2020.

5.2.3 MANDATORY HOUSING AFFORDABILITY LEGISLATION²⁰

One recommendation included in HALA was a law requiring new development to include affordable homes or contribute to a City fund for affordable housing. In 2019, this recommendation was implemented, in the form of Seattle’s Mandatory Housing Affordability Legislation (MHA). MHA requirements apply to all development after the City Council approves a rezone that increases maximum height or floor area ratio (FAR) or establishes a different zoning designation. MHA applies to City-initiated legislative rezones and applicant-initiated contract rezones. The legislation was implemented via upzoning and amending the Growth Strategy Element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

5.2.4 EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN²¹

The goal of the Seattle Office of Planning and Community Development’s Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) is to address displacement and the unequal distribution of opportunities to sustain a diverse City. A key component of the EDI was development of Equitable Development Implementation Plan during the City’s Comprehensive Plan Update process.

This 2016 plan stated that the Comprehensive Plan’s 20-year vision for an equitable Seattle will require immediate commitment to equity. As such, the Equitable Development Implementation Plan was developed as a framework to guide equitable decisions, implement equitable development in areas of high displacement risk, and support leadership of marginalized communities. The plan identified 6 common drivers of equity, outlines Citywide strategies to mitigate displacement and increase opportunities, and lays out a series of new race and social equity goals and policies for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. These policies are to be integrated across Comprehensive Plan Elements, as their diversity ranges from Growth Strategy (“Plan for development in urban centers and urban villages in ways that will provide a broad cross-section of Seattle households, including marginalized populations, with better access to services, transit, and educational and employment opportunities”) to Parks (“Develop partnerships with organizations that include race and social justice as fundamental to their operations and business practices”).

5.3 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENTS IN CALIFORNIA

There is a current wave of General Plan Updates that will see cities across the State adopting their first Environmental Justice (EJ) Elements in the next two to four years. However, the following cities with disadvantaged communities have already adopted EJ Elements or integrated policies:

²⁰ City of Seattle, Mandatory Housing Affordability, <https://www.seattle.gov/hala/about/mandatory-housing-affordability-mha>, accessed December 2, 2020.

²¹ City of Seattle, Equitable Development Initiative, <https://www.seattle.gov/hala/about/mandatory-housing-affordability-mha>, accessed December 2, 2020.

5.3.1 CITY OF JURUPA VALLEY

The City of Jurupa Valley, in Riverside County was incorporated in 2011. At that time, the logistics industry was expanding in Riverside, and the County approved a large warehouse project near an existing Latinx neighborhood in what would become the city boundary. Noise, congestion, and air pollution exposure due to truck traffic went unchecked until the Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCA EJ) sued Riverside County, alleging the Project EIR failed to address neighborhood impacts. A settlement was reached with a provision, among others, that the newly incorporated City consider preparation of an EJ Element.

The Jurupa Valley EJ Element was adopted in 2014. It was prepared by a consultant in cooperation with CCA EJ. The CBO was the primary lead for the outreach process and facilitated conversations with community members to gather input on increased involvement in municipal decision-making, the development of land use buffer policies and other topics. CCA EJ also worked with commercial real estate organizations to adjudicate concerns about potential limits to development. The project team relied on CalEnviroScreen to map areas of high pollution burden and vulnerable populations.²²

Although motivated by a lawsuit and developed prior to SB 1000, this City decided to adopt a standalone Environmental Justice Element. The City of Jurupa Valley’s EJ Element includes background on the case that sparked its development, and policies and programs toward five Environmental Justice goals:

1. Open and transparent public process;
2. Meaningful participation in the public process by all members of the community;
3. A reduction in disproportionate environmental burdens affecting low-income and BIPOC populations;
4. Increased mobility and accessibility for all residents;
5. Healthy and affordable housing opportunities for all segments of the community.

5.3.2 CITY OF INGLEWOOD

The City of Inglewood’s EJ Element was adopted in April 2020 and is an example of an EJ Element developed in response to SB 1000 and consistent with OPR guidelines. In the introduction, the City states that “as environmental justice and land use planning are closely related, it is important to consider equity issues when planning for the future growth and development of the City.”²³ The element was conducted by City staff, with the support of a full-time private contract planner. .

The element begins with a thorough overview of current environmental justice planning in California. It lays out formal definitions of “Environmental Justice” and “Disadvantaged Communities”; identifies EJ policies and objectives mandated by SB 1000 and highlights requirements of relevant legislation such as SB 535 and AB 1550. CalEnviroScreen is introduced as the EPA-supported foundation of EJ data and the

²² State of California Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, Healthy Community and Environmental Justice Case Study City of Jurupa Valley Environmental Justice Element, <https://opr.ca.gov/docs/20200624-Update-JurupaValley-case-study.pdf>, accessed November 23, 2020.

²³ City of Inglewood, 2020 Environmental Justice Element, page 2.

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indicators used by the tool to assess pollution burden and population characteristics are listed. The background section ends with two CalEnviroScreen overview maps of the City, including score areas and areas of disadvantaged communities.

Citywide environmental Justice issues are detailed in the element. Data pertaining to ethnicity, linguistics, income level, educational attainment, housing burden and displacement, and sensitive populations; as well as air and noise pollution, are presented in a standalone section. Goals and Policies are then established for the following topics:

1. Meaningful Public Engagement
2. Land Use and the Environment
3. Mobility and Active Living
4. Access to Healthy Food
5. Healthy and Affordable Housing
6. Public Facilities

The City of Inglewood implemented an outreach program consistent of an information page on the City website, a public workshop overview and two focus groups, both conducted in English and Spanish. In addition, informational and booths were set up at the 2019 Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration and the 2019 Earth Day Festival.

The EJ Element was adopted via a CEQA categorical exemption.

5.3.3 CITY OF GARDEN GROVE

The City of Garden Grove is currently updating its EJ, Housing, and Safety Element concurrently. According to the June 23, 2020 City Council Agenda, the Safety, Housing and Environmental Justice Element Updates, including environmental review, were awarded under a single contract with a budget of just over \$500,000.²⁴ The process was initiated in June 2020. It provides a model for a public participation during the pandemic and the use of digital tools to solicit community feedback.

The City of Garden Grove is hosting a webpage dedicated to environmental justice. The webpage is a clearinghouse of text, map, and graphic background information, including a fact sheet, introductions to legislative requirements and interactive CalEnviroScreen maps that allow users to explore risk factors and disadvantaged communities. A map-based survey (the second survey of the process) in Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean and English is designed to assess residents' awareness of EJ issues and priorities. The survey is unique in that incorrect responses to fact-based questions are followed with correct information and additional resources. The participation process thus far has included two online surveys, two virtual neighborhood meetings, and two joint Planning Commission/City Council study sessions. All engagement events and survey links were posted on local news pages such as the *Orange County Breeze*.

²⁴ City of Garden Grove, June 23, 2020 City Council Agenda, https://ggcity.org/cgi-bin/city_council/view_video_novus.cgi?id=512, accessed December 15, 2020.

6. *Synthesis of Interview Comments*

This section synthesizes the common themes that emerged across each of three groups of interviews conducted for this process: with Councilmembers and Mayor, with City and agency staff, and with CBO representatives. Individual items suggested by interviewees are also included in other sections throughout this memorandum.

6.1 COUNCILMEMBERS AND MAYOR

6.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND DISTRICT INEQUITIES

Councilmembers and the Mayor expressed concerns about disparities in the overall quality of life across the City indicated in East and West Oakland as compared to those in North Oakland, Lake Merritt, the Oakland Hills and other more affluent areas. These concerns were expressed as inequalities across the physical and social environment, as exemplified by differences in greenery, safety and services, economic success, land use, and housing opportunities. Councilmembers and the Mayor agree that the manner in which planning has driven these disparities in the past must be addressed, and that the new General Plan must promote a more equitable distribution of resources across the City.

6.1.2 INADEQUATE HOUSING

Councilmembers and the Mayor agreed that a lack of housing, particularly in forms that are affordable to median and lower income residents, is a primary driver of inequity, displacement, environmental injustice, crime, safety, and economic insecurity. Interviewees indicated that a successful Housing Element and General Plan Update will establish data-driven policy to increase the supply of accessible housing in Oakland, including very-low and low income housing, middle income housing, ADA accessible housing, and housing for the homeless and at-risk. Councilmembers and the Mayor agreed that a diverse affordability strategy will be key to mitigating displacement and gentrification.

6.1.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Councilmembers and the Mayor also consistently called out economic development and job creation, particularly for lower income residents, as a key issue for the General Plan Update. They expressed a desire to find ways to attract new employers, to jump start locally-owned and small businesses, to train local residents and ensure local hiring, and to minimize conflicts between economic development and quality of life.

6.1.4 INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION

Councilmembers and the Mayor stated that they supported the idea of using the General Plan Update as a platform to increase coordination and communication between City of Oakland staff. They cited

examples of current barriers to efficient governance due to lack of coordination, including sometimes inconsistent project permitting and slow implementation of multiple plans created by separate departments. Councilmembers and the Mayor agreed that each department acts with good intention and justification, but often these actions are not coordinated across departments. They all agreed that the General Plan Update is an opportunity to enhance coordination among departments to address these issues.

6.1.5 REINVENTING OUTREACH

Councilmembers and the Mayor stated that some of their constituents lack trust in the public process as a result of poor experiences with City bureaucracy in the past. They stated that the General Plan Update should avoid the “box-check” process of community consultation. They believe the General Plan Update process will require a new approach toward outreach based on strategic community engagement and as permitted by COVID-19, grassroots campaigns of door knocking on residences and small businesses. Councilmembers and the Mayor also stated the geographies of Council Districts may be too large and diverse for successful community engagement, and that information and communication must be accessible in multiple languages and to people across a diversity of physical abilities.

6.2 CITY OF OAKLAND STAFF

6.2.1 APPLYING AN EQUITY LENS

There is consensus among City staff that eliminating the root causes of inequity and advancing equitable policies will require viewing all General Plan Update decisions through a lens of equity. All potential strategies, decisions and programs should proceed only after being processed through an equity analysis, and mechanisms are needed to measure the effectiveness of the General Plan Update in terms of racial equity.

6.2.2 SILOS AND STRATEGY

Like Councilmembers and the Mayor, City staff acknowledge that departmental “silos” are barriers to effective policy development and implementation. Staff stressed that these silos may frustrate the development of a citywide vision, ultimately at the core of the General Plan Update. Staff cited examples of this barrier with respect to the current General Plan. Moreover, staff would like to integrate visioning done across departments to create a General Plan that embodies collective values and goals across City staff disciplines. Staff also pointed to successful projects, such as the 2030 ECAP, as the result, in part, of successful coordination between City departments.

6.2.3 ENGAGING THE UNDERREPRESENTED

City staff echoed the theme of building public trust through an equitable and accessible engagement process. Staff believe that the General Plan Update will require reaching out to and supporting disadvantaged communities historically bypassed in the participatory process. This will require building

upon engagement work completed for projects described in Section 4 and as expressed by Councilmembers, the Mayor and CBOs; translating information for accessibility by all of the City's population; investments in staff who have expertise in community engagement; and training for staff who do community engagement in topics including trauma-informed engagement, strategies to engage the hardest to reach, and facilitation to enhance stakeholder interaction among all participants.

6.3 COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

6.3.1 EFFECTIVE OUTREACH

Community-based organizations (CBOs) shared the general belief that strategic, well-managed participation of CBOs and neutral facilitators will be key to successful public engagement. Some CBOs shared their own models for public partnerships and consensus-based decision-making, including the models used for the West Oakland Community Action Plan (Section 4.5) and the Howard Terminal community benefit agreement (Section 4.6). CBOs also stressed the value of reducing the abstract nature of the General Plan with real life examples and resisting jargon. Many stated that groups targeted should be those who have been unrepresented in past City planning processes, as well as specific demographic groups that are most often impacted by disparate outcomes, such as BIPOC, low-income people, young people and non-English speakers.

6.3.2 SUPPORTING THE SUSTAINED INPUT OF PARTICIPANTS

CBO representatives underscored the fact that sustained input from disadvantaged communities during the General Plan Update will be vital to a document that acknowledges and mitigates racial inequities. CBOs are concerned that many in these communities lack the time and resources for involvement in a multi-year process. CBOs discussed the potential value of compensating individuals and groups who perform specific, targeted outreach or engagement activities, noting this could also be a way to build capacity in ongoing civic engagement. CBOs emphasized the need to clearly outline the steps in the planning process, so that community members can understand the best ways and times to provide input, so that community efforts can be focused to avoid "planning fatigue".

6.3.3 ADDRESS DISPARITIES PERPETUATED BY CITY POLICIES

Like Councilmembers and the Mayor, many CBO representatives stress the need to rectify the harms of past planning in Oakland. Quality of life and residents' sense of belonging in all areas of the City is dependent on General Plan Update policies that rebalance divisions of justice and opportunity between areas of the City.

6.3.4 CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS

CBOs pointed to the value of retaining General Plan Update consultants with local experience rather than national qualifications. Many stated that having an understanding of Oakland's identity, sense of belonging and ground-level reality should define a successful candidate.

7. Key Themes for the General Plan Update

Quality of life in Oakland depends on enacting and achieving a series of overarching moral and political standards. The future of Oakland as a supportive, safe community for all residents will be determined by how, and the degree to which, the following themes are addressed. The projects and plans described in Section 4 demonstrate that Oakland has already established a path in regard to many of these themes. As the City’s “constitution for growth and conservation,” the updated General Plan will provide an opportunity to build on that work and solidify long-term commitment to the following issues:

7.1 RACIAL EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The past planning decisions outlined in Section 2 are only a sample of policies and actions that have reduced choice, opportunity, and health for today’s BIPOC communities. As evidenced in the following subsections, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and other People of Color are key contributors to Oakland’s identity yet are burdened by inequities and injustices. Exposing and dismantling these inequities is the overarching theme of this planning process.

7.1.1 DISMANTLING RACIAL INEQUITIES

As illustrated in Section 4, the City has implemented individual strategies to dismantle the lingering impacts of redlining, exclusionary zoning, infrastructure development and inaccessible participation. The General Plan Update is an opportunity to aggregate existing research, implement citywide outreach focused on acknowledging past harms and current injustices, and adopt comprehensive policy direction to dismantle racial inequities. Developing equity policies and monitoring mechanisms under the direction of the City’s Department of Race and Equity (DRE), and adopting those policies via an Environmental Justice Element or integration throughout the General Plan, will be key to dismantling the impacts of past policy.

7.1.2 COMPLIANCE WITH STATE LAW

State legislation related to equitable planning and Native American consultation include the following:

- Native American Tribal Consultations during General Plan Updates (SB 18, 2004)
- Land Use Element requirements to identify Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (SB 244, 2011)
- Revised requirements for Land Use Elements to identify Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities based on specified datasets/thresholds (SB 1090, 2012)
- Definition of Tribal Cultural Resources and consultation requirements (AB 52, 2014)
- Establishment of requirement for General Plan Environmental Justice Element or policies (SB 1000, 2016)
- Revisions to the definition of Environmental Justice (AB 1628, 2019)

7.1.3 NATIVE AMERICAN SACRED SITES AND LANDS

As stressed in Section 2, Oakland was developed on unceded Ohlone land. The identities of existing Indigenous populations, whose numbers have been reduced due to forced religious conversion and loss of lands in the 18th and 19th centuries, are dependent on the few remaining sacred sites in and near Oakland. The input of tribal representatives and community groups has been either overlooked or deemed without legal standing in the recent history of land use planning and policy, resulting in the continual loss of cultural sites.

The General Plan Update presents an opportunity to approach Tribal Cultural Resources and Tribal Land through the “lens” of equity described in Section 6.2.1. The General Plan Update should advance the input of local Tribal communities into policies that identify and protect Native American sites and lands, and should also elevate Native American consultation regarding development or infrastructure projects that would affect sacred sites and lands.

Recent State laws, such as SB 18 and AB 52, have established requirements for Native American consultation on General Plans and other major projects. The General Plan Update should follow and go beyond these requirements, by conducting targeted discussions with Native American representatives and reflecting their concerns in terms of policies, sacred sites, and potential land reclamation.

There are several recognized Ohlone tribal leaders who live in Oakland and have been working to preserve sacred sites and cultural traditions. The City is working with the Sogorea Te’ Land Trust to allow for use of a part of Joaquin Miller Park for sacred ceremonial activities and cultural celebrations. Planting Justice, a local CBO, is also working with Sogorea Te’ Land Trust to restore sacred plants and herbal medicine practices in the area. Other local organizations working on Native issues who should be included in the General Plan process include:

- **American Indian Child Resource Center.** American Indian led non-profit focusing on American Indian foster care, mental health, education & cultural protective factors.
- **Native American Health Center.** Non-profit health and community center serving California’s Bay Area Native American Population and other underserved communities.
- **Sogorea Te’ Land Trust.** Urban Indigenous women-led land trust that facilitates the return of Indigenous land to Indigenous people. The Trust is based in Huchiun, in unceded Lisjan territory, now known as Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda, Piedmont, Emeryville and Albany.
- **Intertribal Friendship House.** Oakland-based American Indian community center and social services organization.
- **Sovereign Bodies Institute.** Ohlone territory organization committed to increasing knowledge and understanding of how Indigenous nations and communities are impacted by gender and sexual violence.

7.1.4 RACIAL AND TRIBAL RECONCILIATION AND REPARATIONS

Acknowledging the past harms identified in Section 2 positions the City of Oakland for the next step in reconciliation: repairing the current impacts of past actions.

Reconciliation will require significant historical research, comprehensive analysis of current data from multiple sources, and public engagement across race, economies, and local geographies. Ultimately, success will be in the form of General Plan policies that respond directly to existing inequitable conditions, conditions themselves that are tied to past planning missteps.

Beyond reconciliation, the City might also consider concrete steps that could be taken to mitigate the harm done to BIPOC by past planning actions. Similar actions have been taken in cities such as Asheville, NC; Durham, NC; Evanston, IL; and Providence RI, which have created funding programs in Black and Indigenous neighborhoods to support home ownership, housing affordability, employment, and other programs.²⁵ Although these efforts will not, by themselves, offset the financial injustices suffered by BIPOC, they offer examples of financial commitments specifically intended to partially address economic inequities in local communities.

7.2 COMMUNITY HEALTH

The health of all Oakland residents is both an overarching goal of the City as well as an indicator of inequities and environmental harm. “Community health” is defined by a number of factors that are potential targets of General Plan policy, including access to medical care; access to healthy, fresh food; childhood and adult health and physical fitness; physical activity; incidence of environmentally-related health conditions such as asthma and diabetes; and community mental health. The Oakland Equity Indicators project (Section 4.1.3) includes indicators of the equitable distribution of health quality across race in Oakland. Examples of land-use issues with direct results on community health are the existence of “food deserts” in some areas of East and West Oakland and air pollution caused by high truck traffic and pollutant loads in disadvantaged neighborhoods. In addition, the health impacts of individual development projects on neighborhoods can have cumulative public health impacts.

7.3 SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Like all cities globally, the success of Oakland’s long-term future depends on current strategies for sustainability and resilience. The 2030 ECAP (Section 4.3), Oakland’s roadmap for an equitable transition to a low-carbon economy, is extremely comprehensive. The General Plan Update should build on the ECAP to address the following key issues:

²⁵ “Cities are considering reparations to repay the debt of slavery, but can they?” by Daia Moore, *Boston Globe*, August 3, 2020. Accessed at <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/08/03/metro/cities-want-repay-debt-slavery-can-they/> on December 2, 2020.

7.3.1 GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION

The City's 2030 ECAP already includes significant steps toward reducing greenhouse gases (GHGs), including completion of a comprehensive inventory of current and lifecycle GHG emissions. The General Plan Update should continue to facilitate implementation of the GHG reduction measures included in the ECAP, while also allowing for creation of new strategies if appropriate. The General Plan Update is an opportunity to further implement land use and transportation policies that target GHG reduction, such as high-density housing near transit, reducing car use, decarbonization of buildings and transportation projects, elimination of natural gas in existing development²⁶, and shared energy and energy storage.

7.3.2 CLIMATE CHANGE AND SEA LEVEL RISE

Oakland and the Bay Area are already impacted by climate change. Regional land-use regulations have responded to future sea level rise, although the direct impacts of transportation and business disruptions and property damage have not widely occurred. As noted in the ECAP, sea level rise will likely increase flooding in West Oakland and near the Coliseum—predominantly BIPOC communities—first.

The General Plan Update is an opportunity to develop policies for appropriate ground floor uses in at-risk areas; and explore the transition of allowable land use over a given period of time in a given area.

7.3.3 RESILIENCE

The City of Oakland made a clear commitment to resilience and adaptability by hiring its first Chief Resilience Officer in 2018. The General Plan Update is an opportunity to enhance resilience for all Oakland communities with policies in support of ECAP innovations. For example, the ECAP identifies Action A-1, Fund the Creation and Operation of Resilience Hubs, as key to successful climate adaptation. Resilience hubs are defined as “community serving facilities that support residents year-round and support resource distribution and onsite services before, during, or after a natural hazard event.”²⁷ General Plan policies could further support resilience hubs to protect frontline communities during climate crises, and could also support other resilience approaches such as green infrastructure approaches that mitigate sea-level inundation along with temperature and health impacts, protection of key facilities to ensure community energy resilience, and adaptive reuse of structures to create indoor spaces resilient to climate change.

City action toward the creation of resilient infrastructure is currently underway. According to OPW staff interviewed for this Memorandum, resilience hubs and respite centers are two of the largest groups of CIP project requests in the currently CIP cycle.

²⁶ On December 1, 2020, the Oakland City Council unanimously voted to require all newly-constructed buildings to be all-electric design - use a permanent supply of electricity as the source of energy for all space heating, water heating (including pools and spas), cooking appliances, and clothes drying appliances, and has no natural gas or propane plumbing.

²⁷ City of Oakland, 2030 Equitable Climate Action Plan, page 80.

7.4 COVID-19

COVID-19 has greatly impacted the economy, commute behaviors, jobs, housing access and other quality of life conditions. Current policy and capital priorities have shifted while funding and feasibility for some projects have also been adversely affected. Community feedback collected during public engagement for the General Plan Update may reflect this crisis condition, particularly during the early phases of the General Plan Update, in turn influencing long-range policy development.

In this context, developing comprehensive policy with a 20-year horizon may require establishing separate baseline scenarios that reflect conditions before and during COVID-19, as well as a flexible options that acknowledge we might not know for some years the long-term effects of COVID-19.

Considering COVID-19 to the right degree in new land use, environmental justice, circulation, and safety policies will require interdepartmental coordination, adaptiveness, strategic contributions, and scenario testing—all principles of the General Plan approach outlined in Section 8 of this memorandum.

7.5 IDENTITY: A REGIONAL CENTER AND “THE TOWN”

A number of interviewees for this memorandum spoke about Oakland’s identity over time. They spoke of Oakland’s earliest years as a regional hub that served as the terminus of the transcontinental railroad, periods of public disinvestment and the recent era of growth and rapid change in some areas of the City. People also described “The Town,” a nickname given to Oakland by local residents in the latter part of the 20th century, as a series of small, intimate communities characterized by a neighborly support network for both long-term residents and new arrivals seeking greater opportunity,

There is a sense that those outside of Oakland have recently become aware of what Oaklanders have always known: Oakland is a vibrant, creative, multicultural hub that celebrates its many diverse communities. People spoke of a struggle to maintain a sense of ownership and belonging for The Town as rapid change happens in Oakland, with new large office buildings, high-end residences, destination retail, and the influx of new residents and the displacement of many folks with deep roots in the Oakland community (see more Section 2.6 and Section 7.6 below).

The General Plan Update is an opportunity to explore how Oakland’s identities as regional center and “The Town” can both flourish. There is a desire to ensure that the people of Oakland not only feel a sense of belonging to their Town and to each other but know that Oakland belongs to them, and to all of those who have contributed to its identity get to remain here.

7.6 DISPLACEMENT

Recent economic revitalization in parts of Oakland has resulted in the tension around the City’s identity described above, as well as market speculation and increased values and rents that have priced lower- and middle-income residents out of the City. Significant portions of the community have left Oakland for

other Bay Area cities, while incoming residents have generally been more predominantly white, younger, and wealthier. Gentrification and displacement in Oakland have impacted individuals as well as the City as a whole.

7.6.1 MINIMIZING FUTURE DISPLACEMENT

Oakland residents will benefit from housing policies that respond to current market conditions in order to mitigate future displacement of low-income and very low-income renters. The General Plan Update should consider recent real estate cycles, project development, and rental increase trends to better understand properties at risk of speculation, and to develop policies that will minimize future displacement. This information should be used to inform policy for new thresholds of affordability and renter protections. The Housing Element Update should also discourage demolition of older, rent controlled structures in favor of developing on vacant/underused lots, and should also coordinate with HCD's Housing Strategy to support City acquisition of vacant lots and buildings for affordable housing, cohousing implementation strategies, transitional housing, and other accessible housing options.

7.6.2 SUPPORTING THOSE ALREADY DISPLACED

Developing successful displacement policies will require perspectives from individuals who have already left Oakland or their Oakland neighborhood. The General Plan Update engagement plan should include conversations with former Oaklanders who maintain family, community, spiritual, commercial, or cultural ties with Oakland or their former Oakland neighborhood. Understanding how/why they left, whether and depending on what circumstances they might return, and how displacement has affected their connection with Oakland will be invaluable in advancing the General Plan Update. Several CBO representatives also suggested that the General Plan Update might include policies and actions to specifically address the needs of former Oaklanders who no longer live in the City or those who have been displaced from neighborhoods in Oakland where they wanted to stay but had to relocate to elsewhere within the City.

7.7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Delivering economic security to all Oakland residents will be a defining component of an equity-based General Plan Update. Successful economic development will not be measured with a single, cumulative job generation metric. Instead, policies that support employment opportunities for all Oaklanders should be combined with policies designed to create and retain jobs across all potential employment sectors.

7.7.1 LAND USE AND JOBS

The General Plan Update is an opportunity for the City to reimagine commercial and industrial uses across the City in support of vibrant industries with a range of job opportunities. Green industry businesses such as solar manufacturers, specialty recycling, energy efficiency hubs and manufacturers of sustainable consumer products are accessible to a range of employees, and the supply of land that supports those and other uses should be increased.

7.7.2 JOB RETENTION AND CREATION

The General Plan Update should include economic development policies to retain and create jobs in all sectors in Oakland, with a particular emphasis on jobs for local residents. Small businesses are particularly important in this regard, since they are core to Oakland's economy and cultural and social fabric. As the backbone of employment in the City, the General Plan Update should explore policies that support successful models of job creation for locals and small business growth. Additional strategies to consider include: additional live/work units; potential restrictions on such units to ensure that they are used for business purposes; support for local artists, craftspeople and small producers; additional development of small commercial spaces; and support for employee-owned cooperatives, which have proven to increase production, lower rates of staff turnover, and boost profits and wages. Existing small businesses, live-work units and cooperatives in traditionally disinvested areas of Oakland demonstrate the value of the model to neighborhood economy and health.

7.7.3 INDUSTRIAL LANDS POLICY

As noted by Councilmembers and the Mayor, Oakland's industrial lands are key drivers of the City's economy and are inherent to the City's identity as a major seaport. However, past and current industrial land use planning is responsible for environmental injustices that impact mostly BIPOC residents of the City's disinvested areas. An equity-based General Plan Update must include a citywide industrial land use policy that puts forth a bold vision for investing in clean and green industry, employs Oaklanders, and creates appropriate buffers between industry and residential uses.

A new, bold industrial lands policy should be built upon new data from the Industrial Lands Study recently completed by the EWD (Section 4.10) to inform policy. The study documents the quantity and location of industrial lands and assesses the number and types of jobs generated by businesses in those lands. It will provide a foundation to help evaluate complicated policy decisions involving the compatibility of industry adjacent to housing.

Development of new industrial lands policy will particularly require careful planning of land uses adjacent to the Port of Oakland, as well as support for forward-looking Port/City coordination on projects near the Port. The General Plan Update should address the impacts of port activity, including truck routes, on existing and future residential neighborhoods. Policies should call for mitigating those impacts before project approval and limiting required post-approval actions by the Port.

7.8 CULTURE AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION

Oakland's cultural landscape is diverse, vibrant, and a product of the racial and ethnic mix that the General Plan Update must support. Preserving and nurturing that landscape will require a set of physical, economic, environmental, and justice-related policies. Oakland's cultural identity is a blend of neighborhood identities, public events, private galleries and businesses, educational resources, and community facilities and organizations.

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The General Plan Update will benefit from building off previously identified cultural themes such as the “Civic Commons” developed in *Belonging in Oakland: A Cultural Development Plan* (Section 4.9), in order to support neighborhood identities and cultural development. Engagement should include brainstorming with new cultural organizations such as the Black Cultural Zone, which combines expression, entrepreneurship and recognition of the many cultural landscapes in the City. Ensuring an open and accessible cultural landscape is ultimately consistent with equity, opportunity, and community health.

8. Key Principles for the General Plan Update

This section outlines some of the key principles that could guide development of the General Plan Update. These are principles that guided many of the successful plans and projects outlined in Section 4, and most were identified by Councilmembers and the Mayor, CBOs, and City staff during the outreach sessions performed for this memorandum.

The principles are listed here and further described in the Sections below:

1. Equity and Environmental Justice
2. Transparency
3. Relevance and Clarity
4. Focused Planning Process
5. Flexible and Adaptable Process
6. Strategic Thinking
7. Interdepartmental Coordination
8. Inter-Agency Coordination
9. Important Role of Community-Based Organizations
10. Youth Engagement

8.1 EQUITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

As stated throughout this memorandum, a central guiding principle of the General Plan Update should be to advance the City of Oakland's codified mission to "intentionally integrate, on a citywide basis, the principle of 'fair and just' in all the City does in order to achieve equitable opportunities for all people and communities."²⁸ This means working to eliminate the root causes of inequity, resulting in more effective and equitable City policies, processes and services. This principle will guide all policy, engagement, strategy, and management decisions.

8.2 TRANSPARENCY

Some interviewees indicated that a sense of distrust exists among members of the public in regard to City planning efforts, primarily due to a perception that past City planning processes have been difficult to understand, are not accessible, or have not been clear on how community feedback is integrated into ultimate recommendations.

²⁸ City of Oakland Municipal Code, Section 2.29.170 - Department of Race and Equity.

The General Plan Update offers an opportunity to turn this distrust around by creating a transparent, easy-to-understand and meaningful public process:

- Information regarding the process should be readily available and easy to understand.
- The process should communicate clearly both what it can do and its limitations.
- The process should educate the public about legislation and regulations that restrict local decision making.
- Decision-making should result directly from the process, and it should be possible for members of the public to see how their input was considered.

8.3 RELEVANCE AND CLARITY

Many interviewees for this framework memo described General Plans – and planning in general – as esoteric, abstract, and inaccessible to lay people, and they stated that many stakeholders might assume that the General Plan will have little impact on the lives of everyday Oaklanders. The engagement process will therefore need to show community members the possible relevance of the General Plan, use simple language, avoid jargon, demonstrate that policies and actions translate into physical and community benefits, and include interactive outreach practices that highlight how different approaches to the same policy impact participants differently.

8.4 FOCUSED PLANNING PROCESS

As referenced in Section 3, the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) describes a General Plan as a “*vision about how a community will grow, reflecting community priorities and values while shaping the future.*”²⁹ Thus, a General Plan is a high-level policy document that reflects multiple priorities and is relevant to all areas of municipal regulation. Given this wide-ranging content, it may, therefore, be tempting to try to cover every issue facing the City in the General Plan Update. In other jurisdictions, casting too wide a net has led to unnecessary, unbeneficial slowdowns and has even derailed the process. Thus, a key principle for the Oakland General Plan Update will be to have a focused planning process that establishes levels of focus within the General Plan that specify both the types of issues to be covered and the level of detail for the document. The opportunity to address the broader range of issues for General Plan alignment will exist through subsequent Specific Plan adoptions, Capital Programs, and Budget Adoptions.

8.5 FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTABLE PROCESS

The General Plan Update needs to proceed under the assumption that even a well-organized General Plan must evolve to keep up with current conditions. A comprehensive plan with a 20-year horizon, developed for a dynamic city like Oakland with regional influence and impact must be able to adapt to changing

²⁹ State of California, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, 2017 General Plan Guidelines, page 1.

conditions. The current COVID-19 pandemic is proof that the General Plan Update must be guided by this principle of adaptability, and that social, natural, physical and legal conditions will continually change, altering the context in which a General Plan must respond.

8.6 STRATEGIC THINKING

The General Plan Update will achieve the highest benefit for Oakland’s residents and workers if the planning process is considered from a strategic perspective. Building on this memorandum, the City should initiate the process with a carefully crafted scope of work and approach that recognize how the myriad contributors to the process can best participate and how best to utilize finite resources. The General Plan Update process itself should enable data-driven decisions about programs and policies to address inequities and ensure that people have equitable access to opportunities and services. Reliable metrics can then be used to guide ongoing planning for and with the people of Oakland and make responsive adjustments to the process and the General Plan itself in furtherance of this goal.

8.7 INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION

As noted by the Mayor, Councilmembers and staff, past comprehensive planning and policy documents in Oakland (and in many other cities) have failed to result in coordinated programs and policies among the various City departments. The lack of coordination between City departments can reduce success in implementing new policies and, ultimately, slow the provision of services for the public that were identified in the plans. Interdepartmental coordination should, therefore, be a guiding principle for the General Plan Update.

The City of Oakland has the following Departments:

- City Administrator
- City Attorney
- City Auditor
- City Clerk
- City Council
- Community Police Review Agency
- Employment Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance
- Finance
- Human Resources Management
- Information Technology
- Race and Equity (DRE)
- Transportation (OakDOT)
- Housing and Community Development (HCD)
- Human Services
- Planning and Building
- Public Works
- Public Ethics Commission
- Violence Prevention
- Workplace and Employment Standards
- Parks, Recreation, and Youth Development
- Library
- Economic and Work Force Development
- Police
- Fire

Two suggestions to advance an effective level of coordination and participation include:

creating a Technical Advisory Committee that would meet approximately once per month to track and discuss progress on the General Plan Update. City departments must be engaged in the General Plan Update process to generate policies and priorities, so they will be able to generate their respective work programs in alignment with the General Plan's goals and objectives, as well as benefit as active participants in the General Plan Update process.

8.8 INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

The work of many government entities outside of the City of Oakland has a direct effect on the issues that confront the City as it updates its General Plan. Examples include:

- The Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) and AC Transit, who provide transit service in Oakland.
- The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), which oversees Oakland's public schools.
- The Oakland Housing Authority (OHA), which owns and operates public housing developments within Oakland and distributes funds for both housing development and rent subsidies.
- East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD), which owns and operates regional open spaces in and around Oakland.
- Port of Oakland.
- East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD), which provides water and sewer service in Oakland.
- Alameda County, which has a variety of roles in Oakland, which include (but are not limited to) the following:
 - The Alameda County Department of Public Health currently creates and enforces COVID-19 protocols and has long assisted with planning for healthy communities in Oakland's disenfranchised communities.
 - The Alameda County courts and Sheriff's office, as well as other Alameda County departments, have significant facilities and land holdings in Oakland.
 - The Alameda County Social Services Agency provides resources to enhance quality of life for individuals and families, including homeless and Indigenous people.
- Neighboring jurisdictions whose land use patterns affect Oakland, and who are affected by development in Oakland. These include the cities of Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, Alameda, San Leandro as well as unincorporated Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Furthermore, City of Oakland should coordinate with the two other large cities in the region: San Jose and San Francisco.
- The US Environmental Protection Agency and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, who have both partnered extensively with the City of Oakland on the WOCAP and other planning efforts.
- Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), who protect and enhance San Francisco Bay and encourage the Bay's responsible and productive use for this and future generations.

While these agencies are not under City jurisdiction, they have critical impacts on Oakland's communities and City operations and, therefore, are valuable partners in the preparation of the General Plan. They may be included on a Technical Advisory Committee, and certainly be involved on an as-needed basis as the General Plan Update proceeds.

8.9 IMPORTANT ROLE OF COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBOS)

The Oakland community has a rich history of activism around issues of inequity and social justice, led by many Oakland-based CBOs. It is important to recognize the ongoing role CBOs play in the community's civic engagement. Details regarding possible approaches to CBO participation are described in Section 12 of this memorandum.

8.10 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The 20-year horizon for the General Plan means that today's teenagers will be in their thirties at the close of the General Plan planning horizon, and children, teens and young adults are already important parts of the community. Therefore, it is important to have teen and twenty-something involvement in the planning process, so as to create a General Plan that reflects the needs and viewpoints of the emerging generation. Ideas for achieving youth engagement are included in Section 12.9.

9. Planning Process Considerations

While Sections 7 and 8 looked at the key theme and principles for inclusion in the General Plan, this section addresses specific planning process issues that need to be addressed as the General Plan is updated.

9.1 WORKING WITH THE EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

As noted in Section 3.1, State law does not require that all General Plan “Elements” be organized in any particular way. Rather, the State says that the overall General Plan design should consider the political, socioeconomic, cultural, historical, and physical diversity of a city or county. Policy and public impact will be influenced by how the General Plan is organized.

As described in Section 3, Oakland’s existing General Plan consists of six primary components: 1] Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE); 2] Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element (OSCAR); 3] Housing Element; 4] Noise Element; 5] Safety Element; and 6] Historic Preservation Element, along with several other related and subsidiary documents. This memorandum recommends for the moment maintaining this basic structure, since it is well-known in the City already and there is no need to reinvent a new structure. Each of these elements will be updated, information from subsidiary and related documents will be inserted, and some new elements will be added.

More information on each element is included in Section 10.

9.2 PROJECT PHASING

A comprehensive General Plan Update for a City the size of Oakland is a complex task that would normally take three to four years. Yet State law mandates that three elements (Housing, Safety and Environmental Justice) must be completed sooner with required adoption currently projected for early 2023.

For this reason, this memorandum suggests two phases for the overall General Plan Update process:

- **Phase I** will include preparation of a General Plan Vision; an internal Strategic Plan; a general Land Use and Open Space Framework; the Housing, Safety and Environmental Justice Elements; associated Zoning Code updates; and CEQA review.
- **Phase II** will include the Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE) and Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation (OSCAR) Updates; and potentially an update to the Noise Element and the development of the optional Economic Development and Infrastructure and Facilities Elements (if stand-alone Elements are not created, then the topics shall be incorporated into other Elements); and associated Zoning Code updates; and CEQA review.

Both of these phases, along with work that should be completed prior to commencing Phase I, are described in detail in Section 11.

9.3 INTERWOVEN VS. STAND-ALONE SPECIAL ELEMENTS

There are several special topics that have been included in other communities' General Plans in recent years, including environmental justice, sustainability, and community health. In some cases, these topics are covered in special stand-alone elements, while other communities have chosen to "interweave" these topics into other General Plan elements. This memorandum suggests a hybrid approach for the Oakland General Plan Update where topics are noted separately or integrally depending on their nature and the plan's ultimate recommendations.

In general, the City's overarching emphasis on environmental justice, sustainability, and community health suggests that policies regarding these issues should be interwoven throughout all parts of the General Plan to ensure that each General Plan Element considers these issues, and to show their interrelationships. Sustainability and community health, as examples, should be thematically present across the Plan.

In order to further highlight the importance of sustainability and community health, the General Plan Update might incorporate approaches, such as the following, to draw attention to these issues:

- All goals, policies and actions that pertain to sustainability or community health could be marked with a special symbol; or
- Sustainability and community health could also be covered in summary appendices that reiterate all related goals, policies, and actions in the updated General Plan.

Since State law requires that the Environmental Justice (EJ) Element be adopted as soon as January 2023, this memorandum suggests that it be prepared as a stand-alone element. More information on the EJ Element is included in Section 10.4.

9.4 INCORPORATING EXISTING GENERAL PLAN LEVEL DOCUMENTS

9.4.1 ECAP

As noted in Section 4.3, the 2030 ECAP was written with the intent to be incorporated into the General Plan Update. The ECAP could be retained as a standalone document and adopted as part of the General Plan. This would require that it be updated to reflect work on other elements, and that it be referenced in other updated elements. In either case, the ECAP could be included in the EIR for one of the two phases of the General Plan Update process, which would confer the status of a "qualified" Climate Action Plan on the ECAP and therefore provide the City the ability to build off of it in future CEQA documents.

9.4.2 BIKE AND WALK PLANS

The 2019 Oakland Bike Plan and 2017 Pedestrian Plan have been adopted as addenda to the General Plan LUTE. Both plans should be updated as part of Phase II and referenced in the new LUTE. However, they should also be maintained as standalone elements.

9.4.3 ESTUARY POLICY PLAN

The Estuary Policy Plan was adopted as an amendment to the LUTE in 1999. The land use, open space and connectivity concepts in the EPP should be updated and moved into the LUTE. The EPP itself should be rescinded.

9.4.4 SCENIC HIGHWAYS ELEMENT

The Scenic Highways Element was adopted in 1974. Most of the policies in this 46-year-old optional element are no longer relevant, and the resources required to update the element would be better applied to critical components of the program.

9.5 SPECIFIC PLANS

Oakland's existing Specific Plans were adopted in 2014 and 2015 relatively recently and generally reflect the results of extensive outreach to local communities. Most of them provide a valuable policy framework for areas with unique challenges and opportunities. These plans are resources that will provide a starting point for developing General Plan policies in each covered area.

Assuming that many of the relevant concepts underlying the existing Specific Plans are retained as part of the General Plan Update, there are precise ways that the Specific Plans could be treated for this purpose:

- The Specific Plans could be retained, but their policies and land-use designations would be modified to be consistent with the General Plan Update. In this case, the Specific Plans would remain in effect, but their land-use maps would be altered to match the citywide land-use map prepared for the new LUTE.
- The concepts underlying each Specific Plan could be reviewed and edited as appropriate, and all relevant information, including land-use designations, would be incorporated into the General Plan Update. In this case, the individual Specific Plans could be rescinded, even though many of their planning concepts and details would be carried forward in the General Plan Update.

In the first case, the Specific Plans to be retained may require amendments, which would occur when a revised LUTE is adopted as part of Phase II, as described in Section 11.3.1. In the second scenario, the Specific Plans would be rescinded when the new LUTE is adopted.

9.6 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX AND FOLLOW-UP

Defining and achieving a successful General Plan Update was discussed during the outreach process for this memorandum. Some of the interviewees expressed the existence of ineffective policy and action-tracking procedures in planning documents, and the need to improve the City's and planning partners' accountability and transparency. Others stressed this need is especially urgent for defining the success of equity, and that the General Plan should include deliberate milestones to measure progress and create accountability.

In addition to completing State-required implementation actions, such as annual reporting, the General Plan Update will benefit from a meaningful, measurable implementation matrix that outlines the following for all actions in the Plan:

- **Responsible Party.** The City department or staff team responsible for completing individual projects and achieving goals should be identified.
- **Projected Cost.** The estimated cost of implementing each action to establish resources needed.
- **Schedule and/or Priority.** The timing of all actions as they relate to other actions will be required to develop an ensure that the General Plan is implemented in full and efficiently.
- **Monitoring Plan.** The implementation matrix should identify the parties responsible for monitoring progress to ensure that actions are accomplished under the parameters identified above.

After completion of the General Plan Update, it will be critical that the City and other organizations—public, community-based and private—implement the actions in this matrix, which might be supported by creating an interdepartmental and inter-agency working committee, dedicating staff to implementation, and publishing an annual progress report.

9.7 SUCCESS INDICATORS

In addition to the need for an Implementation Matrix, many interviewees also suggested that the General Plan Update should document desired, measurable outcomes, and that monitoring of these outcomes through specified metrics or “indicators” should be an action called out in the General Plan. The City has already laid the foundation for such monitoring through its Equity Indicators project and Racial Equity Impact Analysis.

As a part of the General Plan Update, the City could set goals for specific existing indicators, and establish new indicators and goals as well. After adoption of the Update, the City could commit to monitoring progress on these indicators on a regular schedule, perhaps once every two years. Examples of similar

indicator programs in other General Plans can be found in the Ontario General Plan³⁰ and the Marin County General Plan,³¹ to name just two.

It is important to point out that monitoring progress toward the achievement of specific indicator goals can be time-consuming and costly. Programs like the ones in Ontario and Marin have not been consistently implemented over time due to lack of resources. If the City of Oakland embarks on an indicators program, it should ensure that there are easily achievable means to measure each indicator over time, and that adequate staff and financial resources are identified to follow through on measurement.

9.8 CEQA REVIEW

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that all discretionary actions undertaken by a public agency be reviewed to determine whether the action will have a substantial impact on the environment, and if so, what those impacts will be. A public agency carrying out such an action, such as a General Plan Update, proceeds through a three-tiered process to determine the application of CEQA. First, the public agency must determine whether the proposed activity is subject to CEQA at all. Second, assuming CEQA is found to apply, the agency must decide whether the activity qualifies for one of the many exemptions that excuse activities otherwise covered from CEQA's environmental review. Finally, assuming no applicable exemption, the agency must undertake environmental review of the activity, which culminates in the adoption of either a Negative Declaration or Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Each of the two key project phases referenced in Section 9.2 and described in more detail in Section 11 are subject to CEQA and will require environmental review, as detailed below.

- **Phase I.** The City anticipates that adoption of the Safety Element as a stand-alone document would be categorically exempt from CEQA. Other cities have also used an exemption to process Housing Elements. However, the Housing Element is likely to commit the City to re-designating parcels for new housing uses, which may not qualify for an exemption and may require analysis through an EIR. The City prepared an EIR for its 2007-2014 Housing Element and prepared a CEQA addendum for its 2015-2023 Housing Element. The level of environmental review required for this cycle's Housing Element, as well as the Environmental Justice Element, will depend on the scope of the land use changes proposed. At this time, the City anticipates that a full EIR will be prepared to evaluate the environmental impacts of the Phase I project.
- **Phase II.** In Phase II, the entire Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE) and Zoning Code, along with several other General Plan Elements, will be updated. The reclassification of land uses and the citywide update to the land use map will likely require analysis through an EIR. This document will likely be able to tier-off of the EIR prepared in Phase I, and may take the form of an EIR Addendum or a Supplemental EIR.

³⁰ City of Ontario, The Ontario Plan webpage, <https://www.ontarioplan.org/policy-plan/>.

³¹ County of Marin, Marin Countywide Plan webpage, https://www.marincounty.org/-/media/files/departments/cd/planning/currentplanning/publications/county-wide-plan/cwp_2015_update.pdf.

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Both environmental review processes should align with the following principles:

- Each environmental review document should be developed to streamline future permitting and design-review, with robust mitigation measures that become conditions of approval for those projects in specific areas.
- Each environmental review document should be prepared in a process that is seamlessly integrated with the overall planning process with a robust and equitable community input process.

10. Key Issues for Each Element

The Mayor, Councilmembers, City staff, , and the CBO representatives identified issues to be addressed in each element of the General Plan Update process, as described below. Every one of these elements should be prepared following the public engagement principles outlined in Section 8 of this memorandum.

10.1 VISION

Although State law does not require a General Plan to articulate a concrete vision, most modern General Plans (including Oakland’s current plan) articulate a vision that serves as a guide for all components of the General Plan.

The 1998 LUTE outlines a “Vision for Oakland” consisting of the following components:³²

- Achieving a dynamic economy that taps into Oakland's economic potential
- Clean and attractive neighborhoods rich in character and diversity
- A diverse and vibrant downtown and waterfront; and
- An efficient transportation system that serves the needs of all its citizens.

Some of the components of the above vision are fully or partially relevant to the likely vision for the General Plan Update. However, this and other adopted elements, developed over the course of four decades, are guided by topical visions that are not aligned with an overarching vision. The vision statements of these current elements should be inventoried and assessed for relevancy, to see if and how they can be integrated in the new General Plan vision.

Once the existing vision statements are assessed, one of the first tasks for the General Plan Update should be to articulate a new vision for inclusion in the General Plan Update. This vision should, as a starting point, capture all the key issues already identified in this memorandum, with equity and justice at its core. The new vision should be developed using the public engagement process that will underlie the entire General Plan Update process, as detailed in Section 12.

10.2 STRATEGIC PLAN

As suggested by some members of City leadership, the General Plan Update process could begin with formulation of a Strategic Plan that would function as a work plan to guide preparation of the General Plan Update, laying out departmental roles and establishing measures for actions throughout the update process. This Strategic Plan, while not required by State Law, could help operationalize internal City processes to ensure that all City General Plan Update actions are coordinated. Furthermore, it would help

³² City of Oakland, 1998 Land Use and Transportation Element, Preamble, page 5.

set the stage for coordinating implementation of the General Plan across departments once the plan has been adopted, so the General Plan can truly serve as a guiding document for all City actions.

10.3 LAND USE AND OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK

Since the LUTE and OSCAR will not be updated until Phase II of the General Plan Update process, it will be important to set an overall framework for land use, open space and development to establish a context for the Phase I work on the Housing, Safety and Environmental Justice Elements. This Land Use Framework should build off the existing LUTE and OSCAR, and define both similarities and differences from the current LUTE and OSCAR that are expected in the Update and that are described throughout this memorandum. It should express overall land use policy statements and include a generalized “bubble” map of potential land use areas. It should not attempt to get into parcel-specific or even district-level land use planning; those efforts should be retained for the LUTE update itself.

10.4 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT

The fact that State law now requires Oakland to adopt an Environmental Justice (EJ) Element aligns with the City’s vision to integrate principles of fairness and justice and undo the root causes of racism that can be addressed through planning policies, programs and projects. This section highlights key issues for the Environmental Justice Element.

As has been stressed, it is assumed that achieving environmental justice and racial equity, reducing health disparities in disadvantaged communities, engaging the underrepresented and prioritizing the needs of disadvantaged communities will guide the General Plan Update. Policy decisions will be assessed through an equity “lens” and measures of success. City staff has stressed that achieving equity will require community transparency, complete actions and accountability.

SB 1000 requires an Environmental Justice Element to cover the following topics:

- Identification of disadvantaged communities within the General Plan area.
- Identification of objectives and policies to reduce exposure to pollution, including improved air quality in disadvantaged communities.
- Identify objectives and policies to promote public facilities in disadvantaged communities.
- Identify objectives and policies to promote food access in disadvantaged communities.
- Identify objectives and policies to promote safe and sanitary homes in disadvantaged communities.
- Identify objectives and policies to promote physical activity in disadvantaged communities.
- Identify objectives and policies to reduce any unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities not otherwise addressed above.
- Identify objectives and policies to promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process in disadvantaged communities.

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Identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities. A comprehensive Environmental Justice Element for Oakland will also likely include policy related to the following:

- **Exclusionary Zoning.** Permit more housing variety across all of Oakland.
- **Equitable Granting of Exceptions, Variances, and Conditional Use Permits (CUPs).** Evaluate the granting of exceptions, variances, and CUPs to identify which areas have more incompatible uses due to discretionary authority that has deemed “less desirable” uses OK for some neighborhoods and not others.
- **Address Ongoing Impact of Redlining.** Address the existing “Mason-Dixon” line of Interstate 580, which separates the “flatlands” and the “hills” into two areas with disparate quality of life.
- **Open Spaces and Tree Canopy Cover.** Support for increased safe, accessible open spaces and tree canopy cover in underrepresented areas of East and West Oakland.
- **Displacement and Gentrification.** Facilitate growth without displacement.
- **Community Wealth Building.** Reduce economic inequities by targeting growth to build wealth in communities harmed by disinvestment, segregation and generational denial of opportunity.
- **Food Access.** Fill “gaps” in healthy food access in areas of East and West Oakland.
- **Individual Development Projects.** Provide support for assessing the environmental justice impacts of new development.
- **Homelessness.** Policy and actions to provide ongoing support for, and address root causes of, the majority BIPOC homeless crisis in the City.
- **Improving Public Health.** Connect environmental justice with tangible health issues such as respiratory illness, cancer and stroke including addressing the current concentration of residential areas along freeways and adjacency to industrial uses and the seaport.
- **Industrial Lands Assessment and Mitigation.** Based on an assessment of industrial land and goods movement (and related industrial lands strategy to be completed as part of the LUTE update), identify the externalities of industrial activities (i.e., pollution) and develop policies to reduce impacts, such as buffers, overlay zones, and performance standards.
- **Mobile sources of pollution.** Develop innovative solutions to the transport of goods in diesel-trucks that is a key contributor to health disparities resulting in respiratory illness, cancer and stroke that disproportionately affect the low income and communities of BIPOC in the “flatlands.”
- **Equitable Services.** Bring street/sidewalk and parks maintenance, tree canopies, trash collection and other services in disadvantaged neighborhoods up to par with others, and acknowledge that areas of higher need require additional services to maintain equitable levels of habitability.

Housing issues may also be addressed in the EJ Element but since the Housing Element will be prepared simultaneously, discussion of housing issues is included in the Housing Element section of this memorandum. State law allows the City either to prepare a stand-alone EJ Element or to interweave required EJ policies throughout the other sections of the General Plan. Under some circumstances, it might be preferable to interweave these policies since that approach can clearly show the interrelationships among all planning policies and EJ concerns. In this case, however, the likely timing for the project (described in Section 13.5) will require that the EJ Element be prepared as a stand-alone document, since it is required to be prepared on a specific timeline, with other parts of the General Plan likely to follow in subsequent years.

The EJ Element should also suggest approaches to the other General Plan elements that will be prepared in subsequent years, and the other elements prepared at a later time should also refer back to the EJ Element to show how the various elements interact and support the City's EJ goals.

Since the EJ Element will cover a wide range of issues and concerns, it might also be given a more comprehensive name, such as the "Environmental Justice and Health Element" as has been suggested by City staff.

10.5 LAND USE

Oakland's State-required Land Use Element is currently combined with the Circulation Element in the 1998 Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE). This memorandum assumes that this structure combining two required elements will be retained, although key land use and circulation issues are described separately in this section and the next.

10.5.1 LEVEL OF DETAIL

As a part of the General Plan Update process, the City will need to revisit the parcel-specific land use regulations for every parcel in Oakland. The updated Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE) should include parcel-specific data to develop a detailed land-use classification map at the parcel level. A successful, Citywide land-use map will result from analyses of individual, underutilized and underperforming parcels, followed by potential reclassifications to new, better performing and more context-appropriate uses. This parcel-specific LUTE map will be implemented through a corresponding Zoning map.

The General Plan Update process will ultimately result in citywide, parcel-specific land-use regulations that will require a thorough assessment of the factors that have impeded specific parcels from planned utilization. Reclassifications and policy changes that will facilitate overcoming barriers will also be completed. In the case of the Oakland General Plan Update, this will also require accounting for equity and social justice measures. Completing a parcel specific land use update will require new parcel-level datasets.

10.5.2 FORM AND ACTIVITY

Staff have discussed developing a "hybrid" Land Use Element that is organized by physical form in addition to the traditional activity designations found in most General Plans. In a form-based approach, maps and policies would be developed to:

- Address community structure, form and character based on principles of "place-keeping" among diverse communities;
- Designate growth areas and open space;
- Describe planned changes in individual neighborhoods, districts and corridors.

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Under this approach, the City’s land use classifications would directly inform each parcel’s eventual zoning. The land-use map would provide illustrations to summarize form and character intentions, in addition to desired activities and ways to address potentially conflicting uses.

10.5.3 POTENTIAL “PLANNING AREAS”

The LUTE Update may be expedited if it addresses the City in several separate “planning areas,” and then combines the results of these separate efforts into a single LUTE. This would allow stakeholders to engage more specifically in the areas where they live and work, and it would also lessen the breadth of information to be digested in any specific phase of the planning process. However, it will also be important to bring together communities across disparate demographics and geographic areas to come to the table together to discuss their local planning issues.

Possible planning areas that would achieve both goals described above could be as follows:

- Area 1- West Oakland/Downtown (Waterfront to I-580)
- Area 2- North Oakland (I-580 to North Oakland Hills)
- Area 3- Central Oakland (Estuary Waterfront to Central Oakland Hills)
- Area 4- East Oakland (Airport to East Oakland Hills)

These four potential planning areas would be configured to encompass the entire City boundary, and portions of the Oakland hills, flatlands and waterfront would be included in each of the planning areas, aiming to ensure that these distinct communities come to the table together to discuss their local planning issues. However, it may still be useful to further subdivide these planning areas to delve deeper into issues that are unique to a specific geography, such as wildfire safety hazards in the Oakland hills and sea-level rise in Oakland’s waterfront and flatlands. Additionally, as noted in other sections of this Memo, it will be important to target supplemental engagement efforts in under-represented geographies and communities.

10.5.4 KEY LAND USE ISSUES

A comprehensive Land Use Element for Oakland will likely include policy related to the following issues, with additional housing issues covered in Section 10.7 of this memorandum:

- **Industrial Land Use.** Establish a coherent, citywide industrial land use policy.
 - Assess the quantity, location and job generation rate of existing industrial land supply.
 - Minimize incompatibilities between residences and industry.
- **Reduction in Areas Designated Solely for Single-Family Housing.** Reversing the legacy of exclusionary zoning through reclassifications from exclusively single-family use to designations that allow for both single-family, “missing middle,” and multi-family housing.
- **Shift the Focus from “Showcase” Areas.** Shift current land- use classifications focus from “showcase districts” to “15-minute neighborhoods” (also known as “complete neighborhoods”), in which residents can access their basic, day-to-day needs within a 15-minute walk of their homes.

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- **Respect of Indigenous Land.** Support for placing Indigenous land and sacred sites back into the hands of tribal groups where feasible, through land trusts and other means.
- **Infill around BART Stations and Major Bus Corridors.** Continue to focus new infill development around BART and Bus Rapid Transit stations and along major bus corridors, while broadening this strategy to include all parts of the City including more affluent neighborhoods.
- **Urban Open Space.** Provision of new open space areas in East and West Oakland.

10.6 TRANSPORTATION

Staff, elected officials, and CBO interviewees identified the followed issues to be addressed in Oakland’s Circulation Element Update, which is proposed to continue to be included in an updated Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE).

10.6.1 GOALS

In 2016, the City of Oakland’s newly-created Department of Transportation (OakDOT) published its Strategic Plan, which laid out new goals, new ideas, and new strategies for serving the people of Oakland.

- Equitable Jobs and Housing;
- Holistic Community Safety;
- Vibrant Sustainable Infrastructure; and
- Responsive and Trustworthy Government.

As noted in the Plan, *“While all four [goals] are critical to the success of OakDOT, equity both begins the plan and serves as the lens through which all chapters have been written. Equity is key not just to transportation access and affordability, but to every aspect of city life, including the retention of long-time residents in neighborhoods citywide; the development of affordable housing; and the distribution of key city services to our city’s most vulnerable users, including students, the elderly and the disabled”.*

10.6.2 FOCUS ON TRANSIT

- **Key Bus Corridors.** Build on the experience of implementing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on International Boulevard to develop policy in support of enhanced transit along key bus corridors in the City, including boarder islands, improved modular shelters, ADA-compliant access, while also encouraging infill development on these same corridors.
- **BART 2nd Crossing.** Land Use and circulation policy will need to address the planned New Transbay Rail Crossing connecting Oakland and San Francisco. Design and construction packages for the project are expected by 2028.
- **BART Infill Stations.** BART has identified three possible “infill” stations in Oakland as part of its vision plan. The General Plan Update may consider these future stations at San Antonio/Brooklyn Basin, Melrose and Elmhurst.

10.6.3 BIKES AND PEDESTRIANS

Those interviewed confirmed that transportation policy should support active transportation that is both accessible by all residents and increases accessibility to community resources.

- **Accessibility.** Incorporate ADA needs from the beginning of programs.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades.** Review and improve safety conditions and ADA accessibility in bike lanes and sidewalks.
- **Access to Resources.** Support local, non-auto routes to community facilities, transit stations, grocery stores and other facilities.
- **Equitable.** Focus resources on areas that have been underserved in the past, where the data shows disparities in safety and quality of life related to transportation infrastructure.

10.6.4 MINIMIZE VEHICLE USE AND IMPACTS

A large circulation issue that the General Plan Update will need to address is reducing vehicle use in the City.

- **Lessen overall vehicle miles traveled (VMT).** The general update should reflect the State’s recent identification of VMT as the measure of significant transportation impacts in CEQA, per SB 743. The update will benefit from VMT reduction as a guiding, equitable transportation objective that will reduce the impact of vehicle emissions on disadvantaged communities.
- **Freeway Removal and Roadway Narrowing.** Develop policies and actions to allow for the repurposing of excess portions of roadway rights-of-way for bike, pedestrian, and transit use, and consider the removal of Interstate 980 between Interstates 580 and 880.
- **Equitable Micro-mobility.** Equitable and accessible shared/electric/autonomous vehicle programs should be encouraged throughout the City. Issues such as even distribution of services across neighborhoods and potential impacts of shared sidewalk bike racks to disabled persons must be considered.
- **Through Traffic.** Due to its location near infrastructure, Oakland receives regional through-traffic that does not leave from or arrive at the City. The General Plan should assess common throughway routes and how this traffic impacts communities differently.

10.6.5 GOODS MOVEMENT

The General Plan Update will need to consider a variety of issues related to goods movement, including:

- **Trucks on I-580 and I-880.** As noted in Section 2.5, Interstate 580 is not open to freight-related trucks, resulting in heavy truck traffic on I-880 and health impacts to mostly BIPOC communities in the flatlands. The General Plan Update will need to address this issue at the local level, for example through “green buffers” between I-880 and adjacent residences and possibly by advocating for opening I-580 to truck traffic, with mitigations in place to not exacerbate the freeway’s already-uneven impacts on the flatlands-side of I-580.

- **Local Truck Impacts.** Local residents have concerns about goods movement and related truck traffic in various parts of the City, for example, diesel truck traffic within West Oakland and in the waterfront areas of East Oakland neighborhoods.
- **Hazardous Material Transport.** The General Plan Update should consider policies to safely regulate hauling of hazardous materials through Oakland, both on roadways and by rail, sea, and air.
- **Curb Management.** The large number of trucks now making deliveries throughout Oakland (along with pick-up and drop-off for ride hailing companies) requires new strategies to manage the use of curb areas on public streets.

10.7 HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element content is highly prescribed by State law and is required to be adopted on a relatively short timeframe, currently projected to be by the end of January 2023. Thus, this memorandum provides more detail on the Housing Element than on other required General Plan Elements.

Housing Element requirements are built on the jurisdictions' obligation to demonstrate its ability to meet existing and anticipated housing needs. Much of Oakland's work for its previous Housing Elements can be carried forward; however, new State laws as well as changing needs in Oakland, will require the City to carefully review and update the Housing Element.

The Housing Element update process will allow Oakland to comprehensively plan for the development of housing via general policies and identification of specific area and sites throughout the City. This process and the resulting documentation will expedite future processing, identify and potentially rezone housing sites, and help reduce uncertainty and risk for homebuilders and affordable housing providers, thereby expanding capacity and leading to greater housing production.

As part of the Housing Element update, Oakland must identify ways to reduce regulatory, physical, and environmental constraints to the production of housing and identify a sufficient developable land to accommodate its assigned housing growth, known as its Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). Public engagement will be required to obtain input, allay concerns, and identify solutions from the local community. This process will allow residents to participate in the planning effort and contribute ideas for new housing projects.

The City's RHNA for this Housing Element is expected to be significant, requiring substantial land use reclassifications. The current draft allocation from ABAG, which will be finalized in mid-2021, shows a total of 27,286 units³³ (see Section 10.7.2), as compared to 14,765 units in the 2014-2021 Housing Element cycle.

The Housing Element is a policy foundation for expanding housing production coupled with a strong implementation plan that includes specific quantified objectives and programs with some mandates for

³³ https://abag.ca.gov/sites/default/files/abag_draft_rhna_methodology_release_december2020.pdf/. Accessed December 28, 2020.

execution in the first part of the planning period (e.g., within the first three years for any rezoning needed to accommodate the RHNA, Section 65583(c)(1)(A) and 65583.2(c) of Government Code). Given that Oakland’s Housing Element is planned to occur early in the overall General Plan Update process, this timing should work well to address necessary land use adjustments during updates to the LUTE, and any subsequent rezoning or specific plan processes.

The Housing Element update is an opportunity for the City to review policies and zoning related to issues such as homelessness and supportive services, as well as innovative housing solutions such as cooperative housing, small and shared units, land trusts, non-profit or public acquisition of existing housing, and transitional housing, among others.

10.7.1 STATE REVIEW AND TIMELINES

State law and the California Department of Housing and Community Development (State HCD) set the requirements and timeline for the preparation of local Housing Elements. All Housing Elements are reviewed and certified by HCD for compliance with State law. Oakland’s Housing Element update will be based, in part, on RHNA allocations that are anticipated to be finalized in early 2021, and will need to be completed on a State-mandated schedule, with the required adoption date currently projected for January 2023.

New State Legislation Pertaining to Housing Elements

Since the completion of Oakland’s most recent 2015–2023 Housing Element, a number of new State laws have come into force which will affect Oakland’s Housing Element update. These laws and associated recommendations are summarized below.

2017 REVISIONS TO REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATIONS AND FAIR HOUSING (AB 686; AB 1771; SB 828; AB 2238, 2018)

Legislation Summary

These laws require changes to how regional councils of governments (COG) plan for and calculate the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). These changes affect the objectives, methods, unit distribution, and appeals process for RHNA efforts. Additionally, AB 686 especially will require the City to examine its zoning and policies to ensure they are actively promoting economic opportunity and diversity.

Among other changes, AB 1771 would require RHNA plans to:

- Include objectives to avoid displacement, affirmatively further fair housing, and give low-income households greater access to high-opportunity areas.
- Maintain consistency between plan actions and the objectives above.
- Consider overcrowding and number of households that are spending a disproportionate amount of their income on housing costs.

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- Provide additional data, information, and notices to the public, local governments, and State HCD throughout RHNA development.
- Account for loss of housing due to emergencies/disasters.
- Be subject to a revised appeals process that features greater transparency and provides more opportunity for other jurisdictions and third parties to weigh in on the appeal.

AB 686 requires City housing policies and zoning to:

- Take meaningful actions to address significant disparities in housing needs and access to opportunity.
- Replace segregated living patterns with integrated, balanced living patterns.
- Transform racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity.
- Foster and maintain compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws.

Among other changes, SB 828 would reform the RHNA process in the following ways:

- Prohibit previous underproduction of housing units or stable population levels from serving as justification to lower a jurisdiction's share of regional housing needs.
- Require provision and consideration of data regarding overcrowding, rates of growth in housing costs and income, and housing cost burden for households.
- Empower HCD to make methodology adjustments based on a region's existing and projected households.
- Allow opportunities/constraints to consider lands designated for agricultural preservation.

AB 2238 primarily seeks to ensure that localities that suffer devastating housing losses due to wildfire or other disasters are not unfairly penalized during the RHNA process (i.e., expected to rapidly make up for those losses). The bill requires COGs to consider such losses in their RHNA calculations.

Recommendations

AB 1771, AB 2238, and SB 828 do not directly impose specific requirements for the content of General Plans outside the Housing Element; but, future RHNA processes may result in dramatic changes to regional housing policies and Oakland's share of regional housing needs. This could in turn trigger the need to substantially revise the City's Housing Element during the upcoming update, as well as changes to the City's planned land uses and zoning.

As noted above, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) has released a draft RHNA methodology that would allocate 27,286 units to Oakland, in the following income categories:

- Very Low Income: 6,880
- Low Income: 3,962
- Moderate Income: 4,584 units

- Above Moderate Income: 11,860 units³⁴

This represents a large increase across all income categories when compared to the 2015-2023 RHNA Cycle, in which Oakland received a total allocation of 14,765 units.³⁵

In order to meet the requirements of AB 686, the City will need to update its Housing Element to ensure it addresses a number of items, including:

- A summary of fair housing issues;
- An assessment of fair housing enforcement and outreach capacity;
- An analysis of data, integration and segregation patterns and trends, racially or ethnic concentrated areas of poverty, disparities in access to opportunity, disproportionate housing needs, and displacement risk; and
- An assessment of factors that contribute to fair housing issues.

It is likely that to comply with AB 686, the City will need to examine zoning and policy changes that could promote the creation of affordable units (potentially including Accessory Dwelling Units [ADUs] and “missing middle” housing) in areas of Oakland that feature high degrees of economic and educational opportunity, but low economic diversity, and which may not have recently seen significant levels of new housing development.

2017 Regional Housing Needs Allocation Reporting and Enforcement Bills (AB 879, SB 35, AB 72, and AB 1397, 2017)

Legislation Summary

These laws contain provisions to strengthen the enforcement powers of State HCD. All of these State bills require local agencies to report additional information to State HCD each year; and AB 72 in particular provides State HCD with tools to continuously enforce compliance with State housing laws, rather than only every five years during the adoption of an updated Housing Element. Furthermore, these laws give State HCD the power to require local jurisdictions to propose new, more suitable sites for lower-income housing development, instead of continuously recycling previous Housing Element sites that have proven improbable candidates for needed housing development. The increased authority granted to State HCD through this legislation is intended to spur local governments to thoroughly implement their General Plans—particularly Housing Element policies that encourage affordable, accessible housing in compliance with State law.

³⁴ https://abag.ca.gov/sites/default/files/abag_draft_rhna_methodology_release_december2020.pdf/. Accessed December 28, 2020.

³⁵ Regional Housing Need Plan San Francisco Bay Area 2015-2023, page 21. Available at https://abag.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2015-23_rhna_plan.pdf.

Recommendations

AB 879, SB 35, AB 72, and AB 1397 do not directly impose specific requirements for the content of General Plans outside of the Housing Element; but pertain to State HCD enforcement of Housing Element/RHNA requirements. To meet these requirements, the City should carefully examine the areas and sites it has previously identified as offering opportunities for housing to ensure that zoning, economic conditions, and other circumstances will promote their development with housing during the period covered by the Housing Element.

With respect to AB 1397 specifically, it will be challenging to continue to count sites that have been in previous Housing Element inventories. Sites will be assumed to be inappropriate for lower-income housing if they are vacant sites counted in two or more previous Housing Elements or are non-vacant sites counted in one previous Housing Element. However, such sites may be permitted if the Housing Element includes a program to rezone the sites within three years to allow by right any development with at least 20 percent set aside for lower-income units.

Housing Element Requirements Regarding Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing (AB 139, 2019)

Legislation Summary

AB 139 requires local jurisdictions to ensure that their Housing Elements analyze and plan for the need for emergency shelter and transitional housing, including for homeless families; and changes the methodology by which local agencies must assess these needs. This State bill also requires local jurisdictions apply the same operational and development standards to emergency shelters that they would apply to other uses, with specific exceptions outlined within the bill. Finally, the bill requires the consideration of the effectiveness of local plans and policies in addressing the need for emergency shelter and transitional housing.

Recommendations

This State statute pertains to the preparation of Housing Elements and the development application and approval process. Since the Housing Element is being prepared in parallel with the Oakland General Plan Update, this bill would not explicitly impose requirements on Oakland's General Plan Update. However, given that the General Plan Land Use and Housing Element updates will be occurring in parallel or directly subsequent phases, and that accommodating transitional housing and emergency shelter will need to be part of land use considerations, it is recommended that addressing these issues be integrated into the update of the Land Use and Transportation Element.

Required Housing Element Plans and Incentives for Affordable Accessory Dwelling Units (AB 671, 2019)

Legislation Summary

AB 671 requires local jurisdictions to include in their future Housing Elements incentives and plans for the development of ADUs that are affordable to households with lower and moderate incomes; it also directs State HCD to create supportive documentation to assist local jurisdictions with this effort.

Recommendations

Although this new statute pertains to the preparation of Housing Elements and the Oakland General Plan Land Use Update would be separate from its Housing Element update, the City may wish to incorporate General Plan policies or actions to support the development of affordable ADUs.

Housing Element Compliance / Budget Trailer Bill (AB 101, 2019)

Legislation Summary

Budget trailer bills contain implementation measures for various aspects of the State's annual budget, but often also include other tangentially related provisions. In 2019, AB 101 was a budget trailer bill that contained numerous provisions relating to funding for local planning activities and affordable housing, as well as strict new requirements and penalties for jurisdictions whose Housing Elements are not in compliance. AB 101 establishes new planning grant programs for State funds, with local jurisdictions designated to receive anywhere from \$65,000 to over \$1,000,000 (based on population) for planning efforts—including efforts to comply with revised Housing Element Requirements and RHNA goals. Additionally, AB 101 established new fines from \$10,000 to \$600,000 per month for jurisdictions who do not adopt compliant Housing Elements and who remain out of compliance through multiple enforcement steps. Jurisdictions which remain out of compliance for more than six months may be subject not only to fees but to having a Housing Element written for and imposed upon them by a court-appointed agent. This in turn would obligate the non-compliant jurisdiction to adopt zoning consistent with that Housing Element, and subsequently approve projects which conform to that zoning.

Recommendations

AB 101 does not contain explicit requirements applicable to Oakland's General Plan Update but would affect the City's development and eventual adoption of a compliant updated Housing Element, and it also creates a one-time funding stream to support housing planning efforts. Based on its population, the City of Oakland has received an AB 101 grant of \$750,000 for planning efforts, including the acceleration of housing production and development of the Housing Element based on the 6th cycle RHNA goals, which the City plans to devote to the General Plan and Housing Element updates. Additionally, to avoid the potential penalties outlined in AB 101, it is recommended that Oakland work to expeditiously develop and adopt a compliant Housing Element and strive to meet other requirements imposed by statute or by State HCD.

10.7.2 CRITICAL LOCAL HOUSING ISSUES

In addition to fulfilling the legal requirements outlined above, the City should consider the following critical local issues as it prepares the new Housing Element.

- **More Housing Sites.** The City’s quantity of appropriately zoned sites needed to accommodate the ABAG-estimated RHNA for this Housing Element, calculated at 27,286 units, is critically low. Given the need to house all residents equitably; as well as new enforcement and monitoring powers afforded State HCD by AB 879, SB 35, AB 72, and AB 1397 (Section 10.7.2), it will be critical for the City to ensure that an adequate number of sites are made available to housing of all types.
- **Affordable Housing in ALL Parts of Oakland.** Oakland’s current land use classification map contains significant areas of single-family housing. These areas should be assessed for partial upzoning to higher density residential classifications. Not only would this result in compliance with AB 686 (Section 10.7.2), but it would also be a vital component of achieving racial equity and reversing the legacy of exclusionary zoning in the City.
- **Renter Protections.** The Housing Element should consider policies to protect low-income renters and multi-generational households, as well as the “culture of habitability,” understanding that household may include many people sharing space in a very small unit.
- **Cooperative Housing.** Housing residents of Oakland at all income levels, demographics, ethnicities, and household structures will require policies that support diverse cooperative housing across the City. Cohousing, land trusts and allowances for multigenerational residents are examples of housing practices that will support Oakland’s diversity as well accommodate housing requirements.
- **Homelessness.** AB 139 (Section 10.7.2) requires local jurisdictions to ensure that their Housing Elements plan for the need for emergency shelter and transitional housing, including for homeless families. It is critical that the Housing Element address housing for the over 4,000 homeless and at-risk individuals in Oakland via support for wrap around services, transitional housing and other housing support services.
- **Streamlining Permit Processes.** The City is currently performing an objective, form-based standards update of housing and mixed-use design review standards. This will result in compliance with SB 35 and related housing approval streamlining legislation. It is critical that the City continue to streamline the housing project approval process as part of Housing Element implementation.

10.8 SAFETY ELEMENT

The current Safety Element was adopted in 2004 and amended in 2012. Some individuals interviewed in the preparation of this memorandum expressed concern whether Oakland is fully prepared for a major hazard such as a wildfire or earthquake, and the potential inequitable impacts of short- and long-term hazards. Recent wildfires and awareness of industrial land use impacts have brought these issues to the forefront of the Update process. This section provides overall guidance for the update to the Safety Element.

Oakland is currently in the process of updating its FEMA-approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), which should be completed in mid-2021. This will be a comprehensive document on which the Safety Element Update can be built. It will include hazards analyses, mitigation and adaptation strategies, and implementation procedures. The LHMP should be used to strengthen current Safety Element topics such as:

10.8.1 WILDFIRE

Wildfire is an increasing danger to Oakland residents, and should be reflected in Safety Element goals, policies, and actions. The City Council adopted a resolution prioritizing fire safety in the City, an action that supports the need to interweave fire safety policy throughout the General Plan Update. The development of land use, circulation, housing, open space, recreation, and other policy should all consider fire safety.

Specific wildfire issues suggested by the Oakland Firesafe Council and other interested parties include:

- **Recognition of Risk.** The Safety Element will benefit from a statement recognizing increased wildfire danger to Oakland residents. The statement should include past and present wildfire statistics.
- **Evacuation.** Objectives and policies for effective evacuation routes in wildfire-prone areas and the identification of subdivisions in the High Fire Hazard Severity Zone without the required two means of egress (AB 2911).
- **Respite Centers.** The Safety Element should lay the foundation for identifying respite and evacuation centers that could be made available in the event of a wildfire or other natural disaster.
- **Demographics in Wildfire Areas.** There are high numbers of senior citizens in the Oakland hills. Their special needs should be considered in terms of both evacuation and respite centers.
- **Wildfire Smoke.** Smoke from wildfires – even those quite distant from Oakland – is increasingly a public health issue in all parts of the City.
- **Vegetation Management.** Update should be coordinated with the City’s Vegetation Management Plan that is currently underway, providing direction for both public and private parcels. Policies for regular vegetation management will reduce fire fuels, including dead and dying trees.
- **Post Fire Recovery.** Support assessing level of damage and providing post fire infrastructure, community, and economic recovery efforts.
- **Building and Retrofit Requirements.** Develop policies requiring use of FEMA-approved fire-proof and ember resistant construction materials and techniques in wildfire-prone areas.
- **Defensible Space.** Policies for the development of community defensible space guidelines for edges of neighborhoods in wildfire-prone areas.
- **Regional Cooperation.** Encourage mutual aid, research sharing, fire safety strategies and defensibility strategies between Oakland and agencies region wide.

10.8.2 TOXIC AND HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

The current Safety Element includes a Hazardous Materials section that includes a general assessment of sources and sites, with policies to minimize human risk, reduce public exposure to air contaminants and prevent accidents.

The General Plan Update is an opportunity to reverse the inequities of exposure to toxins in Oakland. As discussed throughout this memorandum, industry and transportation infrastructure have disproportionately impacted BIPOC communities. Individual toxic sites, the City's many brownfields and housing with deferred maintenance also impact the health of low-income communities. Key issues include:

- **Existing Toxics Exposures.** McClymonds High School in West Oakland was closed in February 2020 due levels of cancer-causing trichlorethylene (TCE) surrounding the campus, which were deemed high enough to vaporize into the school's air. High levels of lead have been found around the school before. Although initial testing found there was no TCE in indoor or outdoor air, TCE was found in vapors above the campus groundwater and a storm drain. Fortunately, on March 19, 2020, the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) determined there is no significant risk from TCE to students and staff on the premises. The school is now cleared to reopen once the COVID-19 pandemic passes. Still, the presence of TCE, closure of the school and required DTSC testing highlighted the risk of toxins to sensitive populations and areas.

The events at McClymonds High School underscore the need for the City to understand existing toxics exposure at sites throughout the City, and particularly in neighborhoods with lower incomes and inhabited by BIPOC. The Safety Element Update should be grounded on a thorough examination of existing hazards, with information gleaned from both public agency records as well as local community members.

- **Brownfields.** Oakland has been awarded millions of dollars in US EPA grants to assess and clean-up brownfields in the past 20 years, mostly in BIPOC areas. Recent brownfield sites assessed and cleaned-up are located in the Coliseum area, West Oakland and Foothill Seminary. The Safety Element should catalog these brownfield sites and their clean up status, and should include concrete plans for further clean up actions.
- **Toxic Exposure in Residences.** Many homes in Oakland's aging housing stock, particularly in lower income areas where renovations have either not occurred or are substandard, are likely to contain lead-based paint, asbestos and other toxic materials. These conditions put adults and children at risk of lead poisoning and asbestosis, which can result in lifelong detrimental health impacts. For many low-income families, the only housing option is to move into substandard housing with this and other structural, environmental, and hazards. The Safety Element should attempt to document the breadth of this issue and propose means to address it.

10.8.3 SEISMIC RISK

Seismic risk is a legally required topic of Safety Elements. Given the high seismic potential of the Bay Area's regional, the Safety Element should address earthquake and related risk comprehensively. This includes risks associated with surface rupture, ground shaking, and ground failure; tsunami, seiche and dam failure; subsidence and liquefaction; and other seismic events. The potential for each type of seismic risk should be described and mapped with current data.

The Safety Element should be updated to include new or revised earthquake evacuation routes, minimum rights of way widths and required clearances around major structures, and peak load water supply requirements.

10.8.4 FLOODING

Flooding is also a required Safety Element topic. All flood risks in Oakland should be identified and illustrated. Safety Element content should include, but is not limited to, maps and descriptions of Flood Hazard Zones, FEMA flood insurance maps, areas at risk of dam failure, areas subject to inundation due to infrastructure failure, and historic flood information. Existing and planned development in flood hazard areas should be identified and mapped.

Goals, policies, and objectives developed should be included in the Safety Element to minimize future flood risk to new development, mitigate flood hazards to new development in flood hazard zones, maintain the integrity of essential facilities, and coordinate public agencies for flood protection and response.

10.8.5 CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

Climate change adaptation and resiliency strategies comprise another component of Safety Elements that is required by law. The Safety Element should include a climate change vulnerability assessment that identifies all risks that climate change poses to Oakland. Per OPR, the contents of this assessment may be available from multiple sources, including the results of U.C. Berkeley's Cal-Adapt tool; the California Adaptation Planning Guide; assessment of local assets, resources and populations sensitive to climate change; and historical data on natural hazards and events.³⁶

The Safety Element should include a set of adaptation and resilience policies based on the results of the vulnerability assessment. Policies should be developed to minimize climate change impacts associated with new land uses; prohibit the location of essential facilities in at-risk areas; provide for the development of needed infrastructure; and identify, wherever feasible, natural infrastructure that may be used in adaptation projects.

³⁶ State of California, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 2017 General Plan Guidelines, page 144.

10.8.6 DROUGHT

Responding to the longer, more extreme periods of drought experienced in the past three decades is a City priority, established in the Resilient Oakland Playbook (see Section 4.13). The Safety Element is an opportunity to present the science and patterns of recent drought cycles, describe the various safety risks associated with drought, and develop policies to mitigate the impacts of extreme heat on sensitive populations, City service provision, resource availability, and trees and greenspaces.

10.9 OSCAR ELEMENT

The update to Oakland's Open Space, Conservation and Recreation (OSCAR) Element will need to address the following key issues:

- **Lack of Quality Open Space.** Lack of access to safe open spaces has been identified as detrimental to public health and quality of life in areas of East and West Oakland. The OSCAR update should coordinate with the City Land Use Element update to increase the number of neighborhood parks in underserved communities throughout Oakland. It should also address issues of park quality and maintenance throughout the City.
- **Park and Open Space Access.** Data available from the Trust for Public Land shows that many Oaklanders live more than a 10-minute walk from the nearest park or open space, and most of these people are (not surprisingly) living in neighborhoods with lower incomes and high concentrations of BIPOC. The OSCAR Update should document this issue, contain strategies to address it, and identify specific lands that could be developed for park or open space use.
- **Urban Forest.** Increased tree cover in open space and developed areas is a step toward reversing environmental injustices in Oakland's BIPOC areas. Trees absorb carbon dioxide and trap particulate matter. The updated OSCAR should support an expanded tree planting strategy that considers areas with low air quality and tree species best suited to air filtration.
- **Habitat Management.** Growth and development in Oakland, particularly in the hills and along the waterfront, has prompted concerns about loss of wildlife habitat areas in the City. Updated conservation policy should assess current and future areas of habitat loss and develop policy to mitigate those losses.

10.10 NOISE ELEMENT

The Noise Element update will require updated technical information about current and projected noise levels in Oakland, including noise from roadways, rail operations, industrial facilities and other statutory noise sources. Identifying the degree to which unsafe and nuisance noise levels impact communities differently will support policy that seeks to reverse existing environmental inequities in the City.

10.11 HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT

The City's existing Historic Preservation Element is an optional Element adopted in 1994. Through policies and actions, this Element seeks to "use historic preservation to foster economic vitality and quality of life" and to "prevent unnecessary destruction of properties of special historical, cultural, and aesthetic value." The Historic Preservation Element is accompanied by a valuable inventory of historic resources called the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey (OCHS). The OCHS rated the historic value of every visible building in Oakland and also helped designate historic "Areas of Primary Interest" (APIs) and historic "Areas of Secondary Interest" (ASIs) in Oakland. However, the Element's definition of APIs and ASIs is not aligned with the State's definition of historic resources, so the City lacks a functional structure to respond to State legislation. Furthermore, as noted by City staff, the guidance for development within these historic areas is, to some extent, based on subjective standards that can be challenging to implement.

The OCHS current inventory of historic and cultural resources was last completed in the late 1990s, with some additional research in some of the Specific Plan Areas and a few other areas since then. Many additional resources could be uncovered through an updated survey of Oakland properties that have not reached the minimum age to qualify (50 years) or through research into important historic and cultural connections. Due to the need for a new comprehensive survey that also better aligns with State and Federal guidelines, the Historic Preservation Element will require a significant overhaul.

However, due to limited resources (in terms of money, staffing and preparation time) for the overall General Plan Update, and given the need to prioritize State-mandated Elements, updating the Historic Preservation Element may need to be considered as an optional task in Phase II or deferred to a later phase, as additional resources are identified.

Nevertheless, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act, potential environmental impacts of the updated General Plan policies to cultural and historic resources will need to be analyzed. Furthermore, preserving and promoting cultural spaces is an integral part of resiliency, environmental justice, housing, economic opportunity and other General Plan topics, and so will be important to flesh out in the development of the other State-mandated Elements.

10.12 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITY

Although not required by State law, the City could consider preparation of an Economic Development Element as part of the General Plan Update. Such an element would complement the Economic Development Strategy adopted by the City three years ago, which offers short-term actions for City staff and establishes specific, measurable targets to track and evaluate the success of the City's Economic Development Department. An Economic Development General Plan Element would establish the City's vision for economic development and policies as to how that vision will be achieved and would be implemented through updates to the Economic Development Strategy roughly every five years.

An Economic Development Element would go beyond the traditional land use issues of land supply and permit processing and could address the following issues:

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- **Green and Clean Industries.** An Economic Development Element would be an opportunity to advance Oakland’s traditional industrial workforce toward green industry. Policies that support manufacturing, services, energy and other operations that minimize impacts on the environment would provide jobs for which an array of skillsets are required and reduce land use conflicts. Examples include manufacturing of biodegradable products, provision of non-toxic services and solar cell manufacturing.
- **Maker Spaces and Custom Manufacturing.** Policies in support of so-called “maker spaces” –or accessible spaces designed to facilitate hands-on activities, development of ideas, creative learning and education—would stimulate Oakland’s overall economic vitality and increase contributions to economic development across racial boundaries. Similarly, custom manufacturing is an opportunity for small operations to initiate the manufacturing process on the path toward economic viability.
- **Measuring Economic Impacts to Existing Businesses and Residents.** An Economic Development Element would be an opportunity to both support new economic vibrancy and gauge potential impacts of new business and rapid economic development, to existing businesses and residents.
- **Economic Opportunity and Wealth Building.** BIPOC have historically been excluded from the opportunities for accumulation of generational wealth and thus, statistically have less economic opportunity, on the whole, than the white population. The Economic Development Element should include policies and actions that specifically address this disparity.

The items listed above could also be covered in a part of the LUTE, which today already contains some economic development policies. However, this memorandum recommends a separate Economic Development Element to center issues of equitable economic opportunity in the overall General Plan.

10.13 INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

Although not required by State law, the City could consider preparation of an Infrastructure and Facilities Element as part of the General Plan Update. Per OPR General Plan Guidelines, the Circulation Element is a “strategy addressing infrastructure needs for the circulation of people, goods, energy, water, sewage, storm drainage, and communications.”³⁷ State law requires that many types of infrastructure be covered in the Circulation Element, although this requirement is not fully fulfilled in the current LUTE. Moreover, multiple City staff and elected officials noted in their interviews a disconnect between the City’s Planning function and the capital improvement programming conducted by Public Works.

A new Infrastructure and Facilities Element covering, water, sewage, storm drainage, communications and public buildings and coordinated with other General Plan elements would improve coordination between city departments and provide quality services to residents more efficiently. At a minimum, it would address the following:

- **CIP Coordination.** A key component of this general plan element would be to coordinate planning functions with the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) decision-making process. Public

³⁷ State of California, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, 2017 General Plan Guidelines, page 71.

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Works staff stated they rarely consult the General Plan during CIP development, or at any other time. Until recent development of the community project proposal system described in Section 4.11, capital project requests typically came directly from department staff. A new Infrastructure and Facilities Element would provide policy direction for capital improvements, resulting from input from Public Works staff. The element would be the definitive reference for prioritizing types and distribution of equitable capital improvement across the City.

- **Internet Connectivity.** Those interviewed agree that broadband internet connection is vital to daily life in a modern city. The location of towers and physical infrastructure in Oakland has resulted in poor connectivity in areas of East and West Oakland. The impacts of this infrastructure gap are highlighted by COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders, with students and employees relying on strong connections to perform. A potential new Infrastructure and Facilities Element could include policy direction for evenly distributed broadband service, among other traditional infrastructure systems.
- **Existing and Future Needs.** A potential new Infrastructure and Facilities Element would be an opportunity to identify and assess existing and future needs of Oakland’s growing population and of future proposed development, consistent with the LUTE, Housing and other General Plan Element Updates.

The items listed above could also be covered in a part of the LUTE (Circulation Element). However, this memorandum recommends a separate Element.

10.14 ZONING UPDATE

State law requires that zoning be consistent with the General Plan; the General Plan prevails in cases of inconsistencies. For this reason, the Zoning Code should be updated to conform to the updated LUTE, and likely to the updated Housing, Safety and Environmental Justice Elements. Moreover, City staff is already aware of a number of places where the Zoning Code already requires updates, which needs to be addressed as well.

10.14.1 ZONING UPDATE PHASING

This memorandum foresees three rounds of updates to the Zoning Code:

- City staff believes that several Zoning Code amendments need to be made immediately. These are called out in the “Pre-Phase I” steps in Section 11.1 of this memorandum.
- At the end of Phase I, additional Zoning Code amendments will be needed to implement the Housing, Safety and Environmental Justice Elements.
- The entire Zoning Code should be updated after the completion of the LUTE Update in Phase II of the project. This is the time when all land use changes will be set, and a comprehensive Zoning Code amendment will be in order.

10.14.2 ALTERNATIVE ZONING FRAMEWORKS

City staff has expressed interest in incorporating “form-based” components in the Zoning Code update. A form-based approach focuses on regulating physical form, use, building placement, size, bulk and street frontage.

The advantage of a form-based code is that its regulatory approach typically results in more desirable built forms that are tied to precedents and patterns in the community than may occur under a traditional use-based code. A form-based code may be particularly appropriate in portions of Oakland where significant new development is expected. However, some communities have found that form-based codes are more difficult to implement in already built-out areas, since many existing buildings deviate from the forms prescribed by the code and it can be difficult to determine how to make new projects conform. Therefore, the City should carefully consider where and how to implement form-based vs. traditional regulatory approaches in updating the Zoning Code.

Another potential advantage of a hybrid zoning approach that maintains some regulations on activities but also incorporates form-based elements toward allowing a greater array of uses as long as the developments associated with those uses respect the physical character of the community.

11. Project Phases

This section proposes a preparatory phase and two main phases for the General Plan Update. The Phases are explained in detail in this section and in summary are:

- **Pre-Phase I, which** includes steps necessary to launch the General Plan Update process, such as branding, solicitation of consultant teams and ongoing coordination with stakeholders: Furthermore, the City will begin efforts to make minor updates to the Zoning Code to address State law and long-standing community needs.
- **Phase I, which** includes preparation of a General Plan Vision; internal Strategic Plan; a general Land Use and Open Space Framework; the Housing, Safety and Environmental Justice Elements; associated Zoning Code updates; and CEQA review: State law mandates that final adoption of these Elements occur by January 2023.
- **Phase II, which** includes the Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE) and Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation (OSCAR) Updates; and potentially an update to the Noise Element, the Historic Preservation Element and the development of the optional Economic Development & Opportunities and Infrastructure & Facilities Elements (if stand-alone Elements are not created, the topics shall be incorporated into other Elements); and associated Zoning Code updates; and CEQA review: The Phase I process, including the Land Use and Open Space Framework, will help inform the components of Phase II. Phase II is anticipated to be completed by July 2025 to meet regional planning requirements.

11.1 PRE-PHASE I TASKS

11.1.1 ADDITIONAL DEPARTMENT COORDINATION

The interview process for this memorandum engaged staff members from multiple City departments. The interviews highlighted many opportunities for coordination among City departments, both during and after the General Plan Update, that will benefit City operations and residents.

With this in mind, City departments should continue to communicate and coordinate throughout the General Plan Update process. Contributions by numerous staff members will solidify the future General Plan as an operational document that supports a single, citywide vision.

Before Phase I begins, City Planning staff should work to develop a system for on-going interdepartmental coordination throughout the Update process. The process might include the following components:

- Departmental feedback on this memorandum.
- Protocols for interdepartmental and interagency coordination regarding the General Plan Update, including possible formation of a Technical Advisory Committee consisting of staff from City

departments and other government agencies that would meet regularly to review the work and guide and monitor implementation after adoption.

- Development of an interdepartmental community engagement plan that leverages and enhances existing relationships with the community, shares information between City projects and departments, provides consistent messaging, and builds on the best of the City's existing inclusive engagement strategies while building new capacities.

11.1.2 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The General Plan Update will be accomplished with the help of consultants; therefore, the City will need to develop and release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultant assistance before Phase I begins.

The RFP and ultimate contract should allow the City to renew the Phase I contract(s) with the same consultants to move forward into Phase II, but it should also allow for the City to instead choose to issue a new RFP for Phase II.

More information on consultant selection is included in Section 13.2.

11.1.3 BRANDING

Comprehensive General Plan Updates are often branded with a logo and tagline consistent with the vision for the update. A successful branding program will support public awareness and engagement throughout the process. Additionally, it will provide visual consistency across the many public materials developed as part of the update. Project branding should begin even before Phase I. As discussed further in Section 12.7, branding should have the goal of making the Update feel accessible to the general public, particularly underrepresented communities.

11.1.4 SB 18 CONSULTATION

As required by State law, the City should initiate consultation with recognized Native American tribes. This should occur prior to the beginning of Phase I so as to ensure that tribes can be involved in a timely fashion in all portions of the General Plan Update.

11.1.5 MINOR ZONING UPDATES

Before Phase I of the General Plan Update is complete, the City will move forward with at least the following two existing efforts to make minor updates to the Zoning Code:

- Objective Design Standards, certain residential development project streamlining, updates to noticing standards to address State Law (SB 330) and City Resolution No. 87579. (To be completed with consultant assistance using SB 2 funds under a contract that is separate from the General Plan Update.)
- Minor Industrial zoning regulation modifications to accelerate addressing health impact concerns from adjacent communities. (To be completed by City staff.)

11.2 PHASE I

The major components of Phase I, some of which must be completed to meet State mandates that currently require final adoption in January 2023, are outlined below.

11.2.1 PROJECT PRINCIPLES AND VISION STATEMENT

At the outset of Phase I, it will be important to solidify project principles to guide the General Plan Update process (initial principles are outlined in Section 8 of this memorandum), as well establish a vision that will serve as a foundation for the General Plan Update.

11.2.2 STRATEGIC PLAN

As described in Section 10.2, the Strategic Plan would provide a foundation for interdepartmental coordination during the General Plan Update process. Like the Vision Statement, the Strategic Plan would be developed at the outset of Phase I.

11.2.3 CEQA COMMENCEMENT

The CEQA review process outlined in Section 9.8 should commence at the outset of Phase I of the General Plan Update. Required CEQA components such as existing conditions and regulatory reporting can be completed during early project stages.

11.2.4 OVERALL FRAMEWORK PLAN

The land use and open space framework described in Section 10.3 should be completed before commencing work on specific elements to be completed in Phase I. This would identify policy relationships between land use and all other elements and will help organize the update process by identifying what element updates rely on other updates for completion.

11.2.5 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT

The new Environmental Justice Element will be completed in Phase I. As detailed in Section 10.4, environmental justice is linked to nearly all other General Plan policy areas.

11.2.6 HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element, detailed in Section 10.7, will be updated in Phase I, and will commit the City to land use reclassifications that will need to be reflected in the updated land use map and zoning update to be completed primarily in Phase II. Some near-term land use changes could be included in the set of minor zoning amendments to be completed in Phase I (see Section 11.2.8).

11.2.7 SAFETY ELEMENT

The Safety Element, detailed in Section 10.8, will be updated in Phase I. Potential implications for land use and other policies should be identified and recorded during the update process.

11.2.8 PHASE I ZONING AMENDMENTS

At the close of Phase I, the City should consider a limited set of Zoning Code changes to initiate near-term implementation of the Housing Element, and updates to some of the City's industrial development regulations to increase environmental protections for nearby residents. These Zoning Code changes should be limited, with the knowledge that additional changes will occur at the end of Phase II.

11.2.9 CEQA ASSESSMENT

A CEQA assessment will be performed for all components of Phase I as described in Section 9.8.

11.2.10 RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

An REIA, as described in Section 4.1.2, will be performed for all components of Phase I.

11.3 PHASE II

The major components of Phase II are outlined below. Phase II will begin after completion of Phase I, most likely in early 2023. It would be expected to take two to three years to complete.

11.3.1 LUTE

The Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE) Update will be the primary task of Phase II. Decisions about level of detail, form-based content, and separate planning areas (Section 10.3) should be considered prior to the bulk of the update process. The Framework developed in Phase I, as well as the completed Housing, Environmental Justice, and Safety Element Updates, should directly inform the LUTE update.

The LUTE Update will also include completing all necessary amendments to the Specific Plans, which would be adopted in parallel with the LUTE Update.

11.3.2 OSCAR

The Open Space, Conservation and Recreation (OSCAR) Element, detailed in Section 10.9, will also be updated in Phase II. The update should be coordinated with the LUTE update.

11.3.3 NOISE ELEMENT (OPTIONAL)

The Noise Element, described in detail in Section 10.10, may be updated in Phase II.

11.3.4 HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT (OPTIONAL)

The Historic Preservation Element, described in detail in Section 10.10, may be updated in Phase II. If a comprehensive update is not possible in Phase II, historic and cultural resources will still need to be addressed in the other Elements.

11.3.5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITY ELEMENT (OPTIONAL)

A new optional Economic Development and Opportunity Element, detailed in Section 10.12, may be created in Phase II. If a stand-alone Element is not created; the topics would be incorporated in other Elements.

11.3.6 INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES ELEMENT (OPTIONAL)

A new optional Infrastructure and Facilities Element, detailed in Section 10.13, may be created in Phase II. If a stand-alone Element is not created; the topics would be incorporated in other Elements.

11.3.7 IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX AND MONITORING PLAN

The close of Phase II should include preparation of the Implementation Matrix described in Section 9.6, which would create a work program to implement the General Plan Update, including identification of responsible parties, the projected cost, and the schedule and/or priority for each action. The Matrix should also include a monitoring plan to ensure General Plan implementation.

11.3.8 ZONING CODE UPDATE

The LUTE update will likely involve citywide land use reclassifications, resulting in a need for Zoning Code updates in many areas of the City. The Phase II zoning update should also include recently updated regional Priority Development Areas (PDA), as is an ABAG/MTC requirement, and it will also need to consider the Oakland Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan to ensure compliance with heights limits, noise contours, and use restrictions.

11.3.9 RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

An REIA, as described in Section 4.1.2, will be performed for all components of Phase II.

11.3.10 CEQA ASSESSMENT

A CEQA assessment will be performed for all components of Phase II as described in Section 9.8.

12. *Public Engagement Issues and Methods*

This section discusses a series of engagement issues and methods relevant to the General Plan Update, relying heavily on input from interviews with key community stakeholders and on experiences in recent City of Oakland projects.

Ultimately, all aspects of the General Plan Update will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and approved by the City Council, as required by State law. Since this is the case, the public engagement suggestions listed in this section are intended to ensure that the process leading up to Planning Commission and City Council action is as inclusive and reflective of community concerns as possible. In addition to the considerations detailed below, the public engagement process should be based on the process points outlined in Section 9 of this memorandum.

12.1 COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

As noted in Section 1.5, the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on the General Plan Update process cannot be predicted. Since the General Plan Update project will last for several years and a vaccine is being administered, it is possible that the pandemic's overall effects on this project will be minimal and much public engagement can occur in person. Conversely, it is also possible that the virus variant infections may outpace vaccine administration rendering them less efficacious than hoped and/or that people's behaviors will have changed considerably despite a vaccine, so the Update process will need to be largely virtual. This section, therefore, summarizes both in-person and virtual engagement methods.

Regardless, approaches for communication and outreach from the pandemic will facilitate creative engagement processes that include campaigns to ensure accessibility. Existing planning projects during the COVID-19 crisis have benefited from increased participation and open discussion throughout the Bay Area.

12.2 AUDIENCE AND GOALS

The public engagement issues and methods described in this memorandum are based on the lessons learned and methods described for other recent Oakland projects and other jurisdictions discussed in Sections 4 and 5, the General Plan Update public engagement program will focus on methods and strategies that will encourage meaningful, on-going involvement by BIPOC, the under-resourced, people

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living with disabilities and underserved areas within Oakland, and other marginalized segments of the community.

For public engagement, it is helpful to understand the various types of engagement that may occur throughout a planning process, associated goals, tools/activities and techniques. To that end, the *City of Oakland’s Inclusive Community Engagement Guide* (2020) includes the following Public Engagement Matrix:

Public Engagement Matrix- City of Oakland’s Inclusive Community Engagement Guide (2020)

	Goal of Participation	Tools/Activities	Inclusive Engagement Techniques	Indicators/Evaluation
IN	Educate the public about the rationale for the project or decisions, how it fits with City goals and policies; issues being considered; areas of choice or where public input is needed	Fact Sheets Brochures; Websites and social media; Open Houses; Exhibits/displays (in public areas); Newsletters (mailed/online); Newspaper articles and radio ads	Translation of all key documents and webpage sections; Interpretation at events; Alternative methods of outreach; Collect identity profile info from participants.	Attendance; Website/social media hits Public comment/feedback; Circulation of print material; News article comments Radio - compare the number of calls and website hits during the advertising period to a similar time where no advertising occurred
C	Gather information and ask for advice from community to better inform the City’s work Message to the public: We will keep everyone informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	Focus groups; Surveys, interviews and questionnaires; Public meetings; Door to door Workshops and working sessions; Deliberative polling; Internet (interactive techniques)	Translation of all key documents; Interpretation at events Provision of childcare; Culturally appropriate food; Individual meetings with community leaders; Seek opportunities for contact at regular community events/ locations rather than separate “town hall” meetings; Collect identity profile info from participants	Quality of information from focus groups, surveys, interviews, questionnaires - online and door to door; Attendance and participation at workshops and in polls; Internet/social media response/comments
C	Create a partnership with the public (key stakeholder groups) to work along with the City in identifying problems, generating solutions, getting reactions to recommendations and proposed direction Message to the public: Will work with the public to ensure that their concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and show how public input influenced the decision.	Citizen Advisory Committee/Liaison Groups/trusted advocates; Visioning; Consensus building; Participatory decision-making Workshops	Translation of all key documents; Interpretation at events; Provision of childcare; Culturally appropriate food; Individual meetings with community leaders on their “turf” on their time Collect identity profile info from participants	Veracity of Committees/ Liaison Group processes; Clarity of shared vision; Level of consensus outcomes; Adherence to participatory decision-making models; Participating in workshops

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resources in the Update process. Those CBOs should have demonstrable relationships in communities impacted by racial disparities in Oakland, including but not limited to: West Oakland, East Oakland (San Antonio / Fruitvale), Deep East Oakland (Coliseum / Eastmont / Elmhurst), and Chinatown/Eastlake. In addition, the CBOs should have experience in outreach for planning processes, a racial equity program track record and the organizational capacity to manage the administrative and fiscal obligations of working under the umbrella of a prime consultant and potentially subcontracting with other CBOs.

These CBOs could be involved in all aspects of the Update process as their respective capacity allows, including:

- Diverse, multilingual, and culturally targeted outreach, particularly to underserved communities.
- Building relationships and trust among community.
- Data assembly, particularly to ensure that background data reflects o local communities needs and priorities.
- Review of technical analyses.
- Policy development.

The CBO roles, deliverables and responsibilities as part of a consultant team will have to be clearly articulated in the overall scope of the consultant work for the project.

The CBO(s) operating directly under the prime consultant team may function as an essential community engagement liaise(s) subcontracting with additional CBOs or neighborhood outreach leaders. These additional CBOs should complement the prime community engagement organization(s) to increase access and penetration in underserved communities. Most CBOs have dedicated programs or communication channels that they use for regular outreach and capacity-building. The Update process should leverage these resources and collaborate with a host of CBOs to get the word out about the process and solicit engagement and input.

12.3.2 STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee consisting of 15 to 25 members of the public could assist City in providing guidance through the General Plan Update process.

Members of the Steering Committee should have the expertise, experience, and “on the ground” awareness of Oakland so that their collective contributions cover a broad range of Oakland’s opportunities, ethnic and racial constituents across the City’s locations and physical landscapes. A diverse Steering Committee will be vital to a successful General Plan Update with racial equity as its vision.

12.4 TRAININGS AND TOURS

The public engagement process could include a series of trainings for City staff, consultants and Steering Committee members. These could be formulated as collaborative sessions where all participants learn from each other with an emphasis on the importance allowing local residents to “tell their own stories.”

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- **Shared Understanding of Oakland Planning History.** The
- **Shared Understanding of the Means and Methods of Planning.** The General Plan Update engagement process will reach a diverse audience and cover a spectrum of planning topics. Numerous individuals interviewed for this framework have suggested that the outreach process could begin with an educational overview of planning issues and the General Plan. This Planning “Institute” would provide an introduction to the forthcoming update process and lead-in to future engagement. An example program is in place in the City of Baltimore.³⁸ It should be noted that the City of Oakland does not have such a program in place nor is their currently resources to support such a Program. However, various CBOs over time have created documents outlining a baseline of information and shared understanding, such as Urban Habitat’s *How Did We Get Here?* graphic narrative, (New Orleans) Familiar with place and means and methods of planning.
- **Race and Equity Trainings.** As part of the education component of public engagement, several interviewees suggested that the City could provide Race and Equity Trainings (currently available to City staff) to consultants and the Steering Committee members. The engagement process will require an awareness and understanding of racial equity issues, as well as communication with diverse races and ethnicities.
- **Neighborhood Tours.** It may be valuable for the community engagement process to include neighborhood tours (joining existing tours and/or potentially creating new tours) to help participants understand “on the ground” conditions in Oakland, and particularly in under-resourced neighborhoods.³⁹ It will be particularly important for City staff, consultant team and Steering Committee members working on the project to take these tours.

12.5 LANGUAGE ACCESS

To ensure maximum community participation, it will be necessary to conduct outreach and engagement for the General Plan Update in a variety of languages, particularly since significant segments of Oakland’s population speak languages other than English.

Under the City’s Equal Access to Services Ordinance (EASO) and Language Access Plan, the City identifies “Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons,” who are individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English, as well as “LEP Language Groups,” which are comprised of at least 1,000 LEP Persons in the City who speak a shared language other than English. The EASO requires the City to provide services in all languages spoken by and LEP Language Group.

Currently, the two languages qualifying under the EASO are Spanish and Chinese. At a minimum, the General Plan Update process should provide language access in these two languages. Other languages might also be considered for specific events or efforts in specific communities; these include Vietnamese,

³⁸ <https://planning.baltimoreCity.gov/planning-academy>

³⁹ For example, Communities for a Better Environment, an Oakland-based organization, leads “Toxic Tours”, including one in East Oakland, with the goal of raising public awareness of the low-income communities of BIPOC that are most directly impacted by multiple sources of toxics and pollution. <http://www.cbecal.org/get-involved/toxic-tours/>

Tagalog (spoken in the Philippines), Korean, Amharic (spoken in Ethiopia), and Mam (spoken by Mayans from southern Mexico and Guatemala).

12.6 BRANDING, OUTREACH AND AWARENESS PROGRAMS

While the engagement program described in this memorandum goes beyond simple outreach and publicity, the first step of any successful program is to make the community aware of the project. Therefore, the General Plan Update process must include robust outreach and awareness efforts to “get the word out” about the process and its importance.

A first step in the awareness campaign will be project branding, which will give the process a recognizable and memorable “look” and image. Branding should include a project name, slogan, color palette, typography, and graphics that feel appropriate for and accessible to the Oakland community.

Once branding is established, then information about the Update and related events and opportunities should be distributed citywide with the assistance of a variety of CBOs. Examples of basic information distribution strategies include:

- Physical mailers to all residents of Oakland or through EBMUD bills.
- Phone calls and/or door-to-door outreach to specific targeted populations.
- Prominent branding and notice on City website homepage.
- Online “network” connecting City webpage to CBO and community groups websites.
- Online and print notices in Oakland news media, including East Bay Times, East Bay Express, and neighborhood/district mailers.
- Radio and television advertising.
- Press releases.
- Facebook and other social media “blasts.”
- Materials handed out at community events.
- Posters at businesses and community gathering places.
- Using CBOs and residents as trusted ambassadors to share the information at meetings, social events, religious institutions, newsletters, and online.

12.7 ENGAGEMENT METHODS

The General Plan Update should go beyond the basic methods employed on many public projects to utilize a host of engagement methods to allow participation by all Oaklanders with particular attention paid towards communities who have been generally excluded from the planning process, such as BIPOC and the poor. To address the engagement needs of all sectors of the community, a broad variety of methods must be employed, both in-person and online.

Each of the outreach methods described in this section can and should be used to support every task in the General Plan Update process. Staff and facilitators will need to select among the methods described

below (and other methods that may be suggested) at each juncture, with an eye toward specific populations to be involved, the content to be covered, and budget and time constraints.

12.7.1 DOOR-TO-DOOR ENGAGEMENT

As described in Section 4.8, the successful CIP outreach campaign led by the OPW included hard copy surveys hung on doorknobs throughout East Oakland. Door-to-door outreach is more labor-intensive than other types of outreach, but it provides personalized project accessibility and improved levels of community interaction, especially in underserved areas. On-the-ground engagement can complement online or survey-based tools in reaching residents those tools may miss. Moreover, the qualitative and experiential input collected via door-to-door outreach can be collated and shared anonymously in other outreach programs to spark discussions and new feedback. As proven by the CIP outreach program, distributing materials and surveys house-to-house can also be a valuable strategy for collecting feedback in a targeted area.

12.7.2 TOOLKIT FOR INCLUSIONARY PLANNING

As part of the City of Oakland's inaugural Cultural Strategist in Government program in 2019-20, the Planning and Building Department worked with Chelsea Burton to pursue the theme of developing data-gathering activities that could be part of a "Toolkit for Inclusionary Planning." The Toolkit proposes several potential engagement strategies that could be employed for the General Plan Update, including Sidewalk Listening, a Photo Scavenger Hunt, a Noticing Tour, and "Re-Picture," which shows a potential future improvement in a photo displayed where it is proposed to occur.

12.7.3 SURVEYS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Statistically based surveys can be used to garner quantitative data regarding public opinion and can represent a valuable outreach opportunity for an engagement effort of the scale of the General Plan Update. Surveys are also adaptable and scalable. Nonetheless, surveys should also be used with caution, for several reasons: they can provide overly generalized information; respondents may give answers without being fully informed; and the fact that statistically-based surveys are generally given to small numbers of randomly selected people can seem exclusionary.

Surveys with open participation can also be employed and have the advantage of allowing for inclusive participation by all interested parties. However, they do not provide statistically valid results, so their conclusions can sometimes be misinterpreted.

Focus groups are small, facilitated discussions about a target topic. Participants are typically limited to those with a direct stake in the topic, whose input may shape associated policy direction. The focus group is a valuable tool for collecting more detailed, potentially well-informed input than that solicited at a community workshop or from a community-wide survey. Focus group participants should be selected carefully and with full transparency to avoid the perception of exclusivity.

12.7.4 STRATEGIC PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The General Plan Update process will require participation by the broad public. Residents have intimate awareness of neighborhoods and resources, and valuable experience living in, working in, and getting around all parts of Oakland. Engaging a broad cross-section of residents representing all parts of the City, ethnicities, and income levels will ultimately support the development of a General Plan centered on racial equity.

Several CBOs liked the approach of setting a goal for the total number of participants in the General Plan Update process. Most importantly, the City should track the demographics of participants, and work to ensure that proportional representation of historically underrepresented groups matches or exceeds the proportions of those groups in the population as a whole. These issues of representation should be considered at both the citywide and individual neighborhood levels.

As noted earlier in the memorandum, the challenge of the current General Plan Update will be to make concerted efforts to focus on soliciting and integrating the input of underrepresented groups that are impacted by disparities to address/eliminate those disparities, working towards a City of Oakland where everyone can thrive.

12.7.5 MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

There are opportunities to engage the public on different topics and in different neighborhoods, using a variety of interactive strategies. Participants are typically divided into small groups for facilitated discussion and exercises, which creates more comfortable conditions for people to share their thoughts than in a large group. As noted earlier, COVID-19 will dictate the plausibility of indoor workshops for this update process, but either way small groups may occur. Facilitators should receive training in eliciting feedback from participants who might otherwise be less engaged.

Overreliance on workshops during a long-term project may also result in planning fatigue. In addition, newcomers to the planning process, non-English speakers, and others may be intimidated by these spaces, whereas established, more advantaged participants would continue to participate. To reduce fatigue and encourage participation from all Oaklanders, then meetings and workshops should be held, wherever possible, as part of existing events, activities, and meetings that residents are already likely to attend. They should also be well-coordinated with other City engagement activities to reduce conflict and duplication.

Resources should be provided at all workshops to ensure equitable community participation. While workshops should be held in the evening or on weekends to allow working community members to attend, these timeslots can conflict with childcare and mealtimes in many households. The City should provide onsite childcare options for workshop participants, and these should be noticed clearly in the event awareness process. In addition, water, and a healthy snack option should be made available to all workshop participants and attending children. Finally, language should not be a barrier to workshop participation. Interpretation services tailored to workshop location should be provided so that all participants can fully contribute to workshop outcomes.

Facilitators of workshops would benefit from the trainings described in Section 12.4.

12.7.6 POP-UPS

Pop-up events are smaller, often outdoor events designed for a two-way flow of information between a facilitator and the public. The value of these events is that they occur in trusted, familiar contexts, which increases the comfort level of participants and the quality of feedback. For example, a pop-up event targeting residents of Fruitvale could be held at a local community center, church active in the neighborhood, or community grocery store parking lot. It might also be held at an existing community event, such as the Black Joy Parade or the Dia de los Muertos Festival. Pop-up events targeting homeless people have been held in homeless encampments and at free meal sites.

These events are typically small scale with visuals, maps and/or handheld surveys that simply and quickly convey concepts and allow easy and fun but still useful community input. Like workshops, pop-ups are face-to-face events that may be restricted due to COVID-19.

In order to successfully use pop-ups as a strategy, process leaders first need to “map” and list ongoing and one-time events happening within the community, develop a strategy as to which events to attend, and make early contact with event organizers to arrange for participation.

12.7.7 ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Engaging the public online is an opportunity for broad input but may also prevent access by the communities the General Plan Update is intended to serve. There are multiple strategies for soliciting community input online, but they should be selected carefully to reach the intended audiences and paired with outreach and access plans to ensure that all interested individuals are able to access them.

12.7.7.1 ONLINE TOOLS

These are opportunities to interact with the community online throughout the planning process. It is important to consider who is using them and how, and which are best suited to the specific issue or part of the planning process.

- **Project Website.** A successful project website will both provide an introductory starting point for new viewers and ensure that active General Plan Update participants are kept abreast of upcoming events, project milestones, publicly released deliverables, and future engagement opportunities. The website should include the following at a minimum:
 - **Project Overview.** This should include a short introduction to the California General Plan, a summary of the current Oakland General Plan and breakdown of the General Plan Update project, including Elements to updated and added, zoning code updates, and CEQA review. The Vision and Principles of the project should be articulated clearly.
 - **Upcoming Meetings, Events and Engagement Opportunities.** A calendar of public events should be maintained and updated on the website. Each event should be “clickable” to provide agendas and supporting documents in advance. The time, location, and transit accessibility of all meeting should be identified clearly.

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- **Online Surveys.** There are multiple digital survey platforms and formats that can be embedded in a project website. These facilitate the creation of traditional surveys, spatial map surveys, and interactive question-by-question responses. It's important to remember that voluntary surveys of any type, including online, do not constitute statistically reliable or representative data, since respondents are self-selected.
- **Other Online activities.** Many General Plan Update websites contain activities such as interactive and exploratory mapping tools, land use visualizations, and opportunities to browse historical information.
- **Online Forums.** Links to online forums, including instructions and codes of conduct, should be provided via the website homepage. All forums should be moderated by City staff to ensure civil discourse.
- **Background documents.** The website should provide access to a comprehensive yet relevant set of background documents. Examples include existing conditions and current needs assessments, relevant City documents, and topical maps and reports. These documents should be updated to reflect stages of the Update process.

Although the items listed above can all be embedded on the project website, the City should also publicize links to individual items and activities separately so that people who are not familiar with the website can also access them.

- **Virtual Meetings.** Virtual meetings, utilizing can include features such as break-out rooms, screen sharing, and translation services, can serve most of the purposes of the traditional meeting, particularly when paired with other digital tools that allow participants to respond to polls or share their thoughts on virtual “sticky notes.” People who may not speak up in person may be willing to share in a chat. It has also shown to increase feedback and commenting, and – with the exception of technological barriers – is easier for many people to access than an in-person meeting, which may require childcare, transportation, and additional time. People can also call in with their phone if they do not have a computer or internet access.
- **Social Media.** Social media platforms are all potential outreach tools. Cities are increasingly collecting responses to specific questions on Twitter and Facebook and hosting interactive Facebook Town Halls and Google Hangouts. Social media platforms should be selected to target specific populations whose participation is desired. For example, younger people may be more likely to use Instagram, Snapchat, or TikTok, while Black people have a higher per capita usage of Twitter than does the white population.⁴⁰
- **Voting Tools.** There are multiple platforms for online voting. These are simple ways to gauge community response to policies, visuals, and brainstorming ideas. For in-person meetings, if those are convened over the course of the planning process, then there are interactive voting tools that also allow real time audience canvassing, such as a PowerPoint plug-in that generates vote tallies on-screen at meetings.

⁴⁰ Feminista Jones, “Is Twitter the underground railroad of activism?” Published in Salon, July 17, 2013. Referenced at https://www.salon.com/2013/07/17/how_twitter_fuels_black_activism/ on December 28, 2020.

12.7.7.2 THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

All online engagement needs to consider the “digital divide,” which leads to poor people and the elderly often having more limited access to and capability with computers and smart phones. With this in mind, online engagement tools should be easy to use and they should work on a variety of platforms with particular emphasis on smart phones and other handheld devices, which are more commonly accessible to people with low incomes than are computers.

Online tools should also only be one part of the engagement strategy even if COVID-19 restrictions continue throughout the duration of the planning process. Any processes undertaken online should have parallel in-person processes available to non-users of computers and smart phones; such processes might include paper surveys or in-person meetings.

The Oakland Public Library could also play a role in lessening the digital divide, since it provides internet access for many people, as well as assistance in using it. Staffers working on the General Plan Update could even work with the Library to include links to the project website or specific online activities on the start screen of library browsers.

12.7.8 GAMIFICATION

Consistent with the principles of using accessible language during the engagement process, some CBO members highlighted the potential of using game-based outreach exercises during the engagement process. Suggestions included developing a “SimCity”-type platform for Oakland, creating models using blocks of different sizes to develop land use alternatives, and creating simple board games to illustrate the results of a certain investment into a certain community or area in order to demonstrate the short-term benefits of City investment. For example, MTC and ABAG created a game called “Mayor of Bayville” to involve the public in Plan Bay Area 2050, a planning process identifying strategies to make the Bay Area more affordable, connected, diverse, healthy, and vibrant for all.⁴¹ This is a strategy to engage new people in the process, including young people.

These games have value to increase accessibility; however, they may also require considerable resources to develop and demand training of facilitators to maximize their benefits.

12.8 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

As noted in Section 8.10, engaging youth is a proposed principle of this update process, and engaging young people will require specific outreach strategies.

Some have suggested organizing “youth only” workshops and events, in order to stimulate open discussions. Other events could be hosted in partnership with established organizations such as UC Berkeley’s Y-PLAN, which engages kids and young adults in project-based civic learning experiences.

⁴¹ <https://www.planbayarea.org/news/news-story/are-you-ready-be-leader-be-mayor-bayville>

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UNICEF’s Child Friendly City Initiative has a set of guiding principles for child-friendly cities, including equity, inclusion, and public participation. A youth outreach strategy for the General Plan Update would benefit from adherence to this initiative.

Others believe that current political and social conditions in Oakland offer ideal opportunities for youth involvement. Cultural events, protests, public art, and major development projects could all be catalysts for discussions among young people about future goals for their city. The Oakland Youth Commission can be leveraged to help develop the plan to reach Oakland’s youth.

Finally, local schools, including OUSD public schools, charter schools, and private schools should also become partners on the General Plan process. The General Plan Update team could work with local educators to develop class or course modules that could be used online or in the classroom to engage students at a variety of grade levels in the General Plan Update.

13. Project Management Considerations

This section describes project management issues that should be considered in scoping for the General Plan Update.

13.1 CITY STAFFING

The General Plan Update process will be supported by a team of City staff members across a range of positions. The principle of interdepartmental coordination suggests a project team from various City departments, contributing various amounts of time to various efforts.

- **Staffing Levels.** Staff will work on the update at differing rates of full-time equivalency (FTE), depending on contributions and expertise. The following staff roles and FTEs would be appropriate:
 - Four to Five full-time dedicated staff members (two managers for different aspects of the project and three staff of different levels to assist) from the Planning Bureau to manage the project. In addition, there will need to be about 50%-time assistance from four other planners for participation in public workshops, pop-ups, and other types of community engagement.
 - GIS Staff will be needed for all the mapping information and analysis.
 - A Public Service Representative to help with scheduling, outreach, and communication from the City side and to coordinate with the consultant.
 - 10% to 25% time from several managers in the Planning Bureau to guide the work of the dedicated staff members.
 - Participation of other key departments, including City Administrator's Office, Transportation, Housing and Community Development, and Public Works.
 - Further assistance at lower staffing percentage levels from other departments, including Fire; Police; Parks, Recreation and Youth Development; Economic and Workforce Development; and Human Services.
 - At least one full-time staff person from Race and Equity, as described below.

These staffing levels would cover management and coordination, process formulation and preliminary work on most content. This memorandum assumes that outside consultants would facilitate meetings and create most final content, but they would work in concert with the City staff members listed above so as to minimize consultant time on administrative and coordination tasks.

Needed staff time will be unevenly distributed, meaning that staff assigned to the project will sometimes need to dedicate full days or weeks to the project over certain periods, while they may have little or no work on the project for a day, a week, or more at other times. Management should therefore ensure that assigned staff who are not full-time on the project have other duties, but these duties should be flexible to allow the General Plan Update to be prioritized when necessary.

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- **Department of Race and Equity Team Involvement.** It will be beneficial to closely coordinate the General Plan Update with the work of the City’s Department of Race and Equity (DRE) to ensure that the themes of equity and fairness are incorporated at every step of the process.
- **Interdepartmental Public Engagement Staff.** A team of public engagement staff working in a variety of City departments has recently begun to meet on a bi-weekly basis to and coordinate their work and develop improved engagement infrastructure. The General Plan Update should be a subject for discussion and input at these meetings, or (if necessary) at special meetings of this group, and staff should be assigned to support this interdepartmental collaboration as it advises on the General Plan engagement program.

The City should expect that this level of staff resources will continue to be needed after the General Plan Update process is finished to continue work on ongoing Plan implementation.

13.2 CONSULTANT ASSISTANCE

The City will be hiring a consultant team to assist with portions of the General Plan Update, particularly for technical expertise, document writing and production, and facilitation. The General Plan is a significant effort and a consultant team will be able to supplement the amount of resources dedicated to this work. For these reasons, it is important to have both a robust staff team to manage and work on the General Plan Update (as described in Section 13.1), as well as a strong consultant team to assist staff.

13.2.1 STRUCTURE OF THE CONSULTANT TEAM

There are different consultant team models that could be used by the City to hire and manage consultants for the General Plan Update. The City’s preferred option for the consultant team structure for the General Plan Update is to have a comprehensive team led by an individual or company serving as the prime consultant, who would be experienced in California comprehensive planning, General Plan management, community outreach, and CEQA. The prime consultant would be supported by a group of subconsultants with different areas of expertise, including community-based organization(s) and/or non-profit(s), particularly to strengthen the community engagement process.

Other models, such as having separate contracts with entities that have different types of expertise, require significantly more staff oversight and cross-discipline coordination, which does not work well for efficiency, management, or staffing resources.

13.2.2 CONSULTANT QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The consultant team should not be hired based solely on general and comprehensive planning expertise, even at the national level. Rather, the most appropriate consultant teams will include local experience and local community connections to the project as well as established General Plan Update capacity. Many of the interviewees in this preparatory stage stated that an understanding of Oakland’s identity, sense of belonging, and ground-level reality will be vital. The following characteristics should be considered in any consultant hiring:

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- **Commitment to Equity and Fairness.** All members of the consultant team should have a demonstrated, historical commitment to equity and fairness. This includes experience developing policy toward racial equity, completing projects in underrepresented areas, performing outreach to disadvantaged and immigrant populations, and implementing technical skills related to equity impact analysis, SB 1000 mapping, and other environmental justice indicators.
- **Local Presence and Familiarity.** Interviewees consistently expressed the need for General Plan Update consultants who are intimately familiar with Oakland. The City already has local hiring mandates for outside contractors, which provide guidance on the minimum amount of local presence needed for an appropriate consultant team. However, these requirements do not necessarily mean that primary members of a consultant team would be familiar with Oakland. Thus, the City should ensure that the key members from selected consultant firms have considerable experience in Oakland and its planning issues.
- **Innovation.** This General Plan Update will require new ideas, strategies, and challenges. The consultant team should have a history of innovative policy and engagement approaches and bring ideas for fresh innovation to the table early on.
- **Collaboration.** The proposed project principles identified in Section 8 include interdepartmental coordination, adaptiveness to evolving conditions, and a strategic and transparent approach. These and other guiding principles, combined with a General Plan Update committed to racial equity, will require a consultant that is innovative, flexible and open to collaboration.
- **Technical Expertise.** The General Plan Update will require many different types of expertise in City planning, General Plan law, State of California regulations, and technical, cultural and economic, areas such as: transportation, public safety, climate change, development, and scientific data analysis (such as public health and air emissions data) to name but a few. Several CBO interviewees astutely pointed out that focusing on technical expertise only in consultant hiring can result in a consultant team with little understanding of local conditions or Oakland’s commitment to equity and fairness. Thus, technical expertise and experience cannot be the only consultant selection criterion for the General Plan Update.

13.3 BUDGET

The exact budget for the General Plan Update will be based on a specific Scope of Work and the amount of funding available. The City of Oakland anticipates having approximately \$5 million available in grant and City funds to kick off the project.

The current budget estimate, with a 5 to 10 percent contingency, for accomplishing a complete and comprehensive General Plan Update, including community engagement, environmental review and zoning updates associated with all the Elements mentioned in this Memorandum, is approximately \$7 to 8 million.

This existing fund gap means that the City will need to focus initial efforts on the statutorily mandated Elements and among those, prioritize the Elements with statutory deadlines – the Safety Element, Housing Element and Environmental Justice Elements or policies, which constitute Phase I as described further in Section 11 of this Memorandum. As a baseline, Phase II includes the remaining statutorily

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required Elements – the Land Use and Transportation Element, the Open Space, Conservation & Recreation Element and the Noise Element, as further described in Section 11 of this Memorandum.

The budget estimate, with contingency, for Phase I is \$2.5 to 2.75 million. The baseline budget estimate for Phase II, with contingency, is \$2.5 to 2.75 million. The additional optional Elements – the Historic Preservation Element, a new Economic Development and Opportunity Element, and a new stand-alone Infrastructure and Facilities Element would be expected to add an additional \$2 to 2.5 million to the overall budget.

These budget estimates make the following assumptions:

- This budget is for a consultant team’s work toward the General Plan Update only. It does not include City staff time to manage the project.
- The above amount includes a 5-10 percent contingency, given the high-level of complexity of a multi-year effort for a Citywide planning process covering a broad range of topics.
- The early zoning updates prior to completion of Phase I will be conducted by staff and/or separately funded.
- The optional items – the stand-alone Economic Development & Opportunity and Infrastructure and Facilities Elements, an updated Historic Preservation Element, would proceed contingent on availability of additional funding.

13.4 PROJECT SCHEDULE

This section shows a potential schedule for the General Plan Update, spanning over a total of four years from January 2021 to July 2025.

PRE-PHASE I ACTIVITIES: JANUARY 2021 TO JUNE 2021

- **Request for Proposals and Consultant Hiring:** January to June 2021.
- **Project Branding:** February to April 2021
- **Local Hazard Mitigation Plan:** Adoption anticipated June 2021
- **Minor Zoning Amendments:** March to October 2021 (process projected to extend into Phase I)

PHASE I: JULY 2021 TO JANUARY 2023

The schedule for this phase is based on the current deadline for adoption of a Housing Element, which is January 2023. This deadline is subject to change through the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process overseen by ABAG.

- **Strategic Plan:** July to September 2021
- **Vision Statement:** July to September 2021
- **Land Use Framework Plan:** October to December 2021.
- **Draft Environmental Justice Element, Housing and Safety Element Updates:** October 2021 to October 2022.

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- **CEQA Analysis:** October 2021 to October 2022.
- **Zoning Code Update:** June 2022 to January 2023
- **Review and Adoption of Environmental Justice, Housing and Safety Elements:** November 2022 to January 2023.

PHASE II: JANUARY 2023 TO JULY 2025

- **Draft LUTE and OSCAR (as well as potentially- Noise, Historic Preservation, Economic Development & Opportunity, and Infrastructure & Facilities Elements):** January 2023 to December 2024
- **Draft Zoning Code Update:** December 2023 to December 2024
- **CEQA Analysis:** December 2023 to December 2024
- **Final LUTE, OSCAR and Other Element Adoption:** January to July 2025