



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REPORT

MEETING DATE: 7/30/2020
ITEM: 1
DESK ITEM

DATE: July 30, 2020
TO: General Plan Update Advisory Committee
FROM: Joel Paulson, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: Review and Discussion of Pandemic Response, Environmental Justice, and Racial and Social Justice in the General Plan.

REMARKS:

Attachment 6 contains comments from the Los Gatos Community Health and Senior Services Commission.

Attachment 7 contains written comments received after the completion of the Addendum Report.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment previously received with July 30, 2020 Staff Report:

1. General Plan Vision and Guiding Principles
2. Summary Document Prepared by Mintier Harnish
3. Letter from the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health
4. Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL) Article, "What a Southerner Learned about Housing Discrimination in the San Francisco Bay Area"

Attachment previously received with July 30, 2020 Addendum Report:

5. Committee Member Comments

Attachments received with this Desk Item Report:

6. Comments from the Community Health and Senior Services Commission
7. Public Comments Received before 11:00 a.m., Thursday, July 30, 2020

PREPARED BY: JENNIFER ARMER, AICP
Senior Planner

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Memorandum

To: General Plan Update Advisory Committee 2040

From: LG Community Health and Senior Services Commission (CHSSC)

Subject: Public Comments on Item #1, Review and Discussion of Racial and Social Justice in the General Plan, July 30, 2020 GPAC Meeting

Date: July 29, 2020

On June 19, 2020, Los Gatos launched a dedicated webpage outlining our communities shared values of diversity and inclusivity. The new webpage, *Becoming an Inclusive Community*, clearly states our commitment to diversity and our strong stand against racial inequality and injustice. At the same time, the town recognizes that there is still work to do reach the goal of *Becoming an Inclusive Community*.

As members of the Los Gatos Commission on Health and Senior Services, we have been very active in the effort to ensure that all the members of our community feel valued, safe, respected, and secure. As a result of that experience, we would like to offer our perspective on the goals, policies, and actions that the town should pursue in order to reach its overarching goal of inclusivity.

Goals, Policies and Actions

Goals:

Los Gatos convenes and supports regional partners to advance racial equity.

Los Gatos meaningfully engages communities of color.

Los Gatos hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce.

Los Gatos creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations for all races.

Los Gatos' resource allocation advances racial equity.

Strategy

Focus on eliminating racial disparities in social well-being.

Advance the conversation about race.

Enact institutional changes.

Review resource allocations.

Develop metrics to measure progress.

Implementation

Create success indicators, progress measures and behavior impacts.

Involve a diverse group of Los Gatos staff and community members.

Dedicate sufficient resources for action completion.

Provide a sufficient level of authority to complete action.

Establish accountability through community participation.

Create a model for continuous learning and improvement.

From: Kareem Syed
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:19 PM
To: GP2040 <GP2040@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Public Comment

As we have seen an uptick in the number of incidents of People of Color in the community being intimidated or harassed we would like to see more visibility in tracking such incidents and clarity on how and what the LG PD can do in order to help mitigate the situation. Especially in regards to threats being made over social media.

In addition we would like to see an increase city funds being used more for community education and enrichment verses law enforcement which would aid in public safety efforts.

From: Alice A Miano
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:31 PM
To: GP2040 <GP2040@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Council meeting tomorrow evening

Hello.

I would like to attend tomorrow's Town Council meeting. As a member of the Los Gatos Anti-Racism Coalition, two items I would like to see discussed are efforts to provide affordable housing and improved community policing to our Town.

We need affordable housing that brings greater diversity to our Town while providing a home for low-income, seniors, teachers, and others who may work in town but can't afford to live here. The current plan I have seen would provide just four small homes for teachers to *rent*. As an educator myself for over 35 years, I can tell you that teachers, like everyone else, want to *own* a home, not rent. The effort currently proposed is minuscule at best.

In terms of policing, our community needs more emphasis on mental health, and I would like to see a share of police funds diverted to mental health professionals. To give one example, I recently viewed a TED talk in which an LGPD officer emphasized the police role of guardianship, yet this officer showed a video clip of a distraught young man being hand-cuffed and hauled away. What the young man really needed, as he wailed that he wanted to die, wasn't jail--it was psychological intervention. Especially for our youth, we need more of a focus on wellness as well as drug prevention and rehabilitation.

Thank you very much,
Ali Miano

Alice A. Miano, Ph.D.
Coordinator, Spanish Language Program
Stanford University
#BlackLivesMatter
Pronombres: ella/la, she/her

From: Jeffrey Suzuki
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 11:37 PM
To: GP2040 <GP2040@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Public Comment Item #1

Hi,

I'm Jeff Suzuki. I am a Los Gatos High School alum and co-founder of the Los Gatos Anti-Racist Coalition. Recent events, both nationwide and within our town, have brought to light the lack of diversity in Los Gatos caused by systematic racism. Exorbitant housing prices prevent many economically disadvantaged people—a significant portion of whom are BIPOC—from finding residence in our community. The few minority families and individuals that can afford to live here feel isolated, and often unwelcomed. A number of former BIPOC Los Gatos residents have come back to the neighborhood during the recent protests to give testimonials articulating why the culture here compelled them to move away.

There are a few options that would promote diversity via housing for Los Gatos that I would like the Town Council to seriously consider. More subsidized housing and/or more rent-controlled properties in Los Gatos would help break down the socioeconomic barrier to living in our town. Cooperative housing is also a very promising method of fostering diversity. In this form of property ownership, tenants democratically govern their own non-profit housing, setting their own rents and electing their own managers and leaders. As someone who has studied and uses economics in his profession, I view housing cooperatives as a powerful and sustainable tool to provide housing to disadvantaged communities.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this message.

Thanks,
Jeff

From: Cynthia Fan
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 2:16 AM
To: GP2040 <GP2040@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Public Comment on Item #1 for 7/30/20 GPAC Special Meeting

General Plan Update Advisory Committee,

Increasing food security and increasing access to healthy, local foods should be part of our town's response both to the pandemic and to addressing environmental justice, racial justice, and social justice.

In the General Plan, please include policies and actions to promote urban agriculture by:

- incentivizing development of community gardens and urban farms
- identifying public land, particularly areas within walking distance of high-density housing, that can be made available to grow food
- collaborating with school districts to allow community gardens on school property
- encouraging edible landscaping and edible gardening for all types of housing and on school campuses

Thank you for the consideration,
Cynthia Fan
Los Gatos resident

From: Kathleen Willey

Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 8:12 AM

To: Planning Comment <PlanningComment@losgatosca.gov>; GP2040 <GP2040@losgatosca.gov>

Subject: Please submit these comments for July 30 General Plan Town meeting at 7pm

Dear Planning Commission and Los Gatos Town Council members, thank you for taking the time to read my comments. Right now on the news we are overwhelmed with information about the current pandemic. "What is the latest on the schools?" " best way to protect ourselves and our loved ones?" "Will there be a vaccine?" etc., I would like to talk about something that is widely talked about in most media outlets.

"How do we prevent the next pandemic?"

What is on your plate matters.

According to the CDC, 3 out of 4 new or emerging infectious diseases in people come from animals.

<https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/basics/zoonotic-diseases.html>

In the 1980s farming became industrialized. Don't be fooled by clever marketing from the meat and dairy industry with ideal images of animals roaming on rolling green hills. 99% of the animals people eat here in the United States are mass produced in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations.(CAFOs) Thousands upon thousands of animals of the same species are packed tightly together, often in massive windowless sheds with barely enough room to turn around. These animals routinely go through perfectly legal mutilations and are routinely fed antibiotics to keep them alive in these horrific and stressful conditions.

<https://sentientmedia.org/u-s-farmed-animals-live-on-factory-farms/>

In fact 80% of the worlds antibiotics are fed to farm animals which is leading to dangerous antibiotic resistant diseases.

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/09/are-antibiotics-turning-livestock-superbug-factories>

We have to wake up - factory farms are breeding grounds for pandemics. In the past 50 years, a host of infectious diseases have spread rapidly after jumping from animals to humans. The HIV/Aids crisis of the 1980s originated from great apes, the 2004-07 avian flu pandemic came from birds, and pigs gave us the swine flu pandemic in 2009. More recently, it was discovered SARS came from bats, via civets, while bats also gave us Ebola.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-51237225?fbclid=IwAR3Oo5ZYeyxQ0QcJwzr0kZtMJSOdihl8KIAfd0BhLrcfOXoK6LZ0MhdI7g>

Dr. Greger, a respected physician and international infectious disease expert, predicted this pandemic in his informative speech in 2008.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Se9yqWNIG8A>

Also alarming, as our world is becoming more and more populated and the demand for animal protein grows, we are destroying natural habitats and our rainforests to make room for livestock. Already 56 million acres of land are used to feed farmed animals, while only 4 million acres produce plants for direct human consumption. It takes 20 times less land to feed someone on a plant based diet than it does to feed meat eaters. It is not possible to feed an estimated 10 billion people by 2050 a meat heavy diet. Our planet simply does not have the space.

[animal-agriculture-is-destroying-tropical-forests](https://www.peta.org/animal-agriculture-is-destroying-tropical-forests)

In conclusion, eating meat is no longer a “personal choice” when it clearly affects every single one of us. We need to encourage people to move away from animal products. We need education in our schools. We need to start removing animal products from school lunch menus. We need to support legislation that aims to try and end factory farming.

<https://www.ecowatch.com/factory-farming-ban-booker-warren-2645970076.html>

Please, let’s make this wonderful town of Los Gatos an example of how to pave the way to a safer and more sustainable future.

Thank you.

Kathleen Willey

From: Kinsey Lee
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 8:35 AM
To: GP2040 <GP2040@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Public comment item #1

To Whom it May Concern:

Hello, my name is Kinsey Lee. I am a Los Gatos High School alum and co-founder of the Los Gatos Anti-Racist Coalition. Recent events, both nationwide and within our town, have brought to light the lack of diversity in Los Gatos caused by systematic racism. Exorbitant housing prices prevent many economically disadvantaged people—a significant portion of whom are BIPOC—from finding residence in our community. The few minority families and individuals that can afford to live here feel isolated, and often unwelcomed. A number of former BIPOC Los Gatos residents have come back to the neighborhood during the recent protests to give testimonials articulating why the culture here compelled them to move away.

There are a few options that would promote diversity via housing for Los Gatos that I would like the Town Council to seriously consider. More subsidized housing and/or more rent controlled properties in Los Gatos would help break down the socioeconomic barrier to living in our town. Cooperative housing is also a very promising method of fostering diversity. In this form of property ownership, tenants democratically govern their own non-profit housing.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on these potential strategies for improving housing policies. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this message.

Sincerely,

Kinsey Lee

From: Kira Barsten
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 9:28 AM
To: GP2040 <GP2040@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Public Comment item #1

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for making the time to address critical and overlooked issues related to racial, social, and environmental justice in Los Gatos. I have a few comments I would like to provide:

1) Los Gatos is not exempt from the lasting effects of redlining and racism in housing. We need to prioritize affordable housing to combat economic segregation, and to make Los Gatos a more livable place for more folks.

2) While LGMSPD has a limited history of police violence and misconduct, I still do not believe that the millions of dollars we are funneling into the PD are the most effective way to spend taxpayer dollars. I would like to see a reallocation of funds to support community mental health specialists, employment programs, and so on. Actions such as these will allow us to build a stronger and more inclusive community, and to pursue racial and social justice.

3) I strongly support the inclusion of environmental justice considerations into the General Plan. Working with the farmer's market to accept SNAP/EBT would be one huge step towards food justice -- markets in Santa Cruz currently do this. It is an unfortunate reality that many folks do not have access to fresh and healthy foods. I also would urge you to expedite the adoption of a free community shuttle to help folks get around Los Gatos, and to support the expansion of VTA services. Accessing Los Gatos without a car is currently quite difficult. A key and currently missing part of the Town as a whole, and something that could potentially be included in the General Plan update, is an updated sustainability ACTION plan, which could and should emphasize environmental justice.

I have heard too many stories over the past few months from neighbors and friends of color that feel unwelcome and unwanted in Los Gatos. This is unacceptable. This is not an issue we can address by making a few statements -- the Town needs to actively combat this issue, and weave justice into its planning for the future.

Best,
Kira Barsten
Current Resident
she/her/hers

From: Barsten, Sierra
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 10:03 AM
To: GP2040 <GP2040@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Public Comment: Item #1

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing a space for people to express their concerns and needs regarding racial, social, and environmental justice in Los Gatos. I hope that these issues, of which Los Gatos is a byproduct, will be addressed in the ways necessary to finally bring equity to our community. I have a few comments I would like to provide:

- 1) Los Gatos is not exempt from the lasting effects of redlining and racism in housing. We must prioritize affordable housing to combat economic segregation, and to make Los Gatos a more livable place for demographics outside of our white/affluent majority.
- 2) While LGMSPD has a limited history of police violence and misconduct, this is undoubtedly related to the racial demographics of Los Gatos. The millions of dollars we are funneling into the PD are by no means the most effective way to spend taxpayer dollars. I would like to see a reallocation of funds to support community mental health specialists, employment programs, and so on. Actions such as these will allow us to build a stronger and more inclusive community, and to pursue racial and social justice.
- 3) I strongly support the inclusion of environmental justice considerations into the General Plan. Working with the farmer's market to accept SNAP/EBT would be one huge step towards food justice -- markets in Santa Cruz currently do this. It is an unfortunate reality that many folks do not have access to fresh and healthy foods.
- 4) I also would urge you to expedite the adoption of a free community shuttle to help folks get around Los Gatos, and to support the expansion of VTA services. Accessing Los Gatos without a car is currently quite difficult. A key and currently missing part of the Town as a whole, and something that could potentially be included in the General Plan update, is an updated sustainability ACTION plan, which could and should emphasize environmental justice.

Over the past few months, I have heard too many stories from neighbors and friends of color that feel unwelcome and unwanted in Los Gatos. This is unacceptable. This is not an issue we can address by making a few statements -- the Town needs to actively combat this issue, and weave justice into its planning for the future.

Kind regards,

Sierra Barsten (she/her)
Los Gatos Resident

From: Sandrine Chaumette
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 10:40 AM
To: GP2040 <GP2040@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Public comment item #1

Allocate a portion of police department budget to fund a community service officer (non-weapon carrying) with a background in social work and non-violent de-escalation to respond and investigate lower priority calls (including senior wellness checks, C.A.R.E., mental health, and drugs and alcohol).

Train and implement cultural competency programs in policing.

Sandrine M. Chaumette

From: Lisa Wade
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 11:00 AM
To: GP2040 <GP2040@losgatosca.gov>
Subject: Public Comment #1

I would like to voice my support for racial, social, and environmental justice in the General Plan. I would like to see Los Gatos become a more inclusive and diverse community with more affordable housing. I would like to see police reform everywhere including in Los Gatos. I would like to see specific action items for environmental justice to make sure those in our communities who are most vulnerable to climate catastrophe will be protected. I would also like to see many more environmental programs in this town and would like them included in the General Plan to help mitigate the worst-case scenarios.

Thank you!

Lisa Wade
Los Gatos, Ca 95032

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