

MEMORANDUM

DATE March 18, 2021
TO Hollister General Plan Advisory Committee
FROM David Early and Carey Stone
SUBJECT Policy Issues Public Input for March 23 GPAC Meeting

In preparation for the GPAC meeting on March 23, this memorandum summarizes the public input from the Tuesday, March 9, 2021 and Wednesday, March 10, 2021 General Plan Policy Options Workshops for the following topics:

- Parks and Recreation
- New School Funding
- Farmland Mitigation
- Sensitive Habitats
- Heritage Trees
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Coordination with Local Tribes
- Environmental Justice

The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) will be reviewing these policy topics and other items at a series of five meetings. As part of the meeting packet for each meeting, PlaceWorks will release a summary of the public feedback relevant to the meeting topics to be discussed at each individual meeting.

Additional information regarding the policy topics and options is contained in the *General Plan Policy Issues Memorandum* which can be reviewed at www.Hollister2040.org.

The GPAC meeting dates and topics are as follows:

- » March 23, 2021
 - Parks and Recreation
 - New School Funding
 - Farmland Mitigation

- Sensitive Habitats
 - Heritage Trees
 - Historic and Cultural Resources
 - Coordination with Local Tribes
 - Environmental Justice
- » March 30, 2021
- Economic Development
 - Retail Leakage
 - Job Creation
 - Tourism
 - Industrial Uses
 - Airport
 - Cannabis
 - Circulation
 - Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School
 - Level of Service
 - Roundabouts
 - Inclusionary Housing
- » April 6, 2021
- Growth Management
 - Special Planning Areas
 - Residential Land Use Designations
- » April 13, 2021: Arts and Culture
- » April 27, 2021
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
 - Natural Hazards
 - Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS

Approximately 16 people attended the first workshops, and 20 attended the second one. Each workshop included three rounds of small group discussion with three to five small groups per round of discussion. Participants pre-registered for the top three topics they wanted to discuss. Table 1 identifies the topics discussed by the small groups.

TABLE 1 POLICY OPTIONS SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION TOPICS

Small Group Policy Topics	March 9 Workshop (# of Small Groups)	March 9 Workshop (# of Small Groups)
Arts and Culture	1	1
Environmental Justice/Climate Change	1	1
Farmland Mitigation/ Sensitive Habitats/Heritage Trees	1	1
Growth Management	2	1
Housing	2	1
Parks/New School Funding	2	2
Retail Leakage/Job Creation/Tourism	2	2
Special Planning Areas	1	1
Circulation	1	1

Source: PlaceWorks, 2021.

PARKS AND RECREATION

- Support for expanding the park standard from 4 acres of park space per 1,000 persons to 5 acres of park space per 1,000 persons.
- Vista Park Hill needs to be revitalized to increase community space, improve safety, and make the park more usable.
- San Benito River Trail should be created into a County Park.
- Brigantino Park should not be improved until there is safe bicycle and pedestrian access.
- The City should monetize the parks to host traveling sports teams which could help fund public services.
- City parks should have picnic and barbeque areas.
- City parks should be more family friendly.

NEW SCHOOL FUNDING

- Group members generally supported the concepts of enhanced funding for school construction, through bonds, grants and voluntary payment of additional developer fees.

- Other comments regarding school funding:
 - There should be a precondition for future development to adequately fund public services.
 - Need to undertake a funding gap study analysis to understand the funding shortfall.
 - The City and County should consult with the school districts before potential projects are approved.
 - The community should not be responsible for the school funding shortfall caused by new development.
 - Explore other ways to help fund schools, such as grants.
- Other comments on schools:
 - Class size is important to educational success.
 - School facilities should be more accessible to the community.
 - Students should have access to new technology and have pathways to higher education and workforce opportunities.

FARMLAND MITIGATION

- General support for establishing an agricultural mitigation program.
- Broad support for a minimum mitigation ratio of 1:1. Many supported a 2:1 mitigation ratio, while others suggested that Hollister should align with San Benito County's agricultural mitigation requirement of 1:1.
- Support for City serving as the agricultural land mitigation program enforcement agency and assigning management responsibility to a conservation organization.
- Developers should have options on how to mitigate impacts to agricultural land.
- Look at how San Benito County implements its agricultural mitigation program and model the City's program after that.
- Participants varied on what type of agricultural land should be required to be mitigated.
- If land has good soil but no water, it may not be viable farmland for protecting.

SENSITIVE HABITATS

- It is important to preserve natural species and habitats.
- Developers should have options on how to mitigate impacts and protect sensitive habitats.

- Concerned about establishing a buffer that would prohibit development within all designated Critical Habitat areas.
- Any protected habitat should continue to be functioning and viable.
- Consider establishing habitat mitigation banks to preserve critical habitat.
- Prohibiting development within areas identified by a qualified biologist should be the minimum level of protection.

HERITAGE TREES

- General support for policies to protect and preserve heritage trees.
- Allow removal of heritage trees if they are damaging property or a threat to human health and safety.
- Additional comment suggesting planting additional trees in the downtown.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Workshop participants did not discuss policy options for this topic.

COORDINATION WITH LOCAL TRIBES

Workshop participants did not discuss policy options for this topic.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- Some participants voiced support for a stand alone Environmental Justice Element while others supported sprinkling environmental justice topics throughout the General Plan.
- Providing affordable housing is an environmental justice priority.
- Environmental justice topics would help improve the entire community.
- Ensure there is sufficient City staff capacity to implement these policies and actions.
- All policy options are necessary; need to determine which policies should be prioritized.