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A P P E A R A N C E S:

Los Gatos Planning Commissioners:
Matthew Hudes, Chair
Melanie Hanssen, Vice Chair
Mary Badame
Kendra Burch
Kathryn Janoff
Reza Tavana

Town Manager: Laurel Prevetti

Community Development Director: Joel Paulson

Town Attorney: Robert Schultz

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LOS GATOS PLANNING COMMISSION 7/10/2019
Item #6, Draft General Plan Vision
Statement and Guiding Principles

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P R O C E E D I N G S :

CHAIR HUDES: Now we move to Item 6, and Item 6 is to consider the Draft General Plan Vision Statement and Guiding Principles with the hope to forward a recommendation to the Town Council concerning the Draft General Plan Vision Statement and Guiding Principles.

Ms. Armer, I understand you'll be giving the report this evening.

JENNIFER ARMER: Yes, good evening, again. This item in front of you is draft language for a General Plan Vision Statement and Guiding Principles developed by the General Plan Update Advisory Committee, the GPAC, and provided to you for your review, consideration, and recommendation to Town Council.

The concludes Staff's presentation, but we'd be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIR HUDES: Thank you. Vice Chair Hanssen.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: I didn't have a question for Ms. Armer, but since I'm the Chair of the GPAC I wanted to say a few things about what we're considering for background. Would that be okay?

CHAIR HUDES: Sure.

1 COMMISSIONER HANSSEN: Unless other Commissioners
2 have questions of Staff. No, okay.

3 I just wanted to talk a little bit about the
4 process that we went through in considering the Vision
5 Statement and the Guiding Principles.

6 First of all, the Town Council created Guiding
7 Principles for the General Plan update process and we have
8 been looking at those throughout.

9 Secondly, the Staff and the consultants have done
10 a number of community outreach activities that go to what
11 are the things that you want the Town to do in the next 20
12 years, and so we've had the benefit of all the input. And
13 when we sat down to draft the Vision Statement we actually
14 had the vision statements of probably eight or nine
15 jurisdictions, so we were able to take a look at what kind
16 of things were out there and did that sound like us, and so
17 when we actually sat down to write the Vision Statement—
18 Commissioner Burch is also on the GPAC as well as
19 Commissioner Janoff, and she's our Vice Chair—actually it
20 was Commissioner Burch that kind of took some of those
21 concepts and put (inaudible) together of what the Vision
22 Statement would look like. Then we considered some of the
23 other ones that are out there and we literally crafted the
24 whole thing with the benefit of all of that input. What we
25

1 were trying to do is keep it very high-level. The vision
2 statements of general plans are generally high-level, so if
3 you think something is missing it's probably because we had
4 an overarching statement and there will be some other part
5 of the General Plan that will have more details on that.

6 So once we had wordsmithed that, and I think we
7 spent two full meetings on that, we went to the Guiding
8 Principles, and the Guiding Principles, the decision that
9 was made right at the beginning of the meeting was that we
10 would take the Guiding Principles from the Town, because it
11 was adopted by the Town Council, and then add onto that
12 because it was missing a few of the concepts that we
13 wanted, so we didn't have to spend as much time on the
14 Guiding Principles because we had the benefit of the Vision
15 Statement.

16 I would also say one last thing, that there are
17 two Council members plus us three Planning Commissioners on
18 the GPAC, so I feel like it was vetted fairly carefully,
19 and we also have in addition to the five of us seven
20 members of the GPAC, including members of the community.

21 Not to say that you couldn't recommend changes,
22 that's fine, but that's the process that we went through to
23 get to this.
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25

CHAIR HUDES: Commissioner Janoff.

1 COMMISSIONER JANOFF: Thank you, and thank you,
2 Commissioner Hanssen for your leadership on the GPAC.

3 I'd just like to add that we crafted the Vision
4 Statement and the Guiding Principles understanding that
5 they will guide us at the beginning and they guide us
6 through the process of developing a General Plan, and then
7 at the end we have the opportunity to loop back in case we
8 look at the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles and
9 determine that they need a little bit of tweaking. So, we
10 didn't try to make them perfect; we tried to make sure that
11 they were broad, useful, reflective of the 20-year period
12 we were looking at and knowing we could go back to tweak
13 them if we needed to as we neared the end of the process,
14 so with that, we appreciate your input.

16 CHAIR HUDES: Commissioner Badame.

17 COMMISSIONER BADAME: I would just like to thank
18 my fellow commissioners and the rest of the Committee that
19 are present tonight for a job well done. This is very well
20 put together, so thank you very much. I'm going to have no
21 problem forwarding a recommendation to Town Council.

22 CHAIR HUDES: Commissioner Burch.

23 COMMISSIONER BURCH: I have one change. I
24 wondered if in the first sentence, for some reason we... I
25 remember a while back this...this is not how it was written,

1 but we have safe first and then welcoming, which every time
2 I read it just feels like we're trying to prove that we're
3 not riddled with crime. Would it be possible to just switch
4 welcoming and safe? Like, "Los Gatos is a welcoming..." Like,
5 it seems weird to be like, "Hey, we're safe. It's okay, you
6 can come here."

7 COMMISSIONER HANSSEN: We're able to make any
8 recommendations, because we're forwarding it on to Council.

9 COMMISSIONER BURCH: Can we just make that one?
10 Thank you so much.

11 COMMISSIONER HANSSEN: I agree with you. I don't
12 remember us putting safe first.

13 COMMISSIONER BURCH: I don't remember that
14 either.

15 COMMISSIONER HANSSEN: I thought we had welcoming
16 first.

17 COMMISSIONER BURCH: So did I.

18 CHAIR HUDES: I just might add that since we're
19 going to be forwarding a recommendation, I don't believe
20 this has to go back to GPAC with this.

21 COMMISSIONER BURCH: Mmm-mm.

22 CHAIR HUDES: So, I would just suggest that your
23 comment or others comments of commissioners we added onto
24 the document that's been presented to us.
25

1 COMMISSIONER BURCH: Okay, yeah.

2 CHAIR HUDES: Commissioner Badame.

3 COMMISSIONER BADAME: Do we even need to put the
4 word safe in there? It almost makes a question. It should
5 just be a given that we don't even need to put the word
6 safe in there. Just a comment.

7 COMMISSIONER BURCH: People were very passionate
8 about the word safe.

9 COMMISSIONER BADAME: All right, we have to have
10 the word safe in there.

11 COMMISSIONER BADAME: Well, there are two things
12 about that, for background. One is we had a quite a lengthy
13 discussion about the welfare safety issue, so that was part
14 of it. And then the other thing that happened is in the
15 first community workshop people were allowed to use three
16 keywords that told them what Los Gatos represented to them,
17 and safe was, I believe, the biggest one, Ms. Armer?

18 JENNIFER ARMER: It was definitely one of the
19 biggest.

20 COMMISSIONER HANSEN: And so because of that,
21 you're right, when you flag safe it maybe says should we be
22 worried about our safety, but I think collectively everyone
23 thought since that was predominantly such a big mention we
24 should just say it.
25

1 COMMISSIONER TAVANA: I think safe is great to
2 have in there, but maybe welcoming, family-oriented, and
3 safe? Maybe safe at the end just to kind of throw it in
4 there, because I do agree that safe is one of the appealing
5 things of our town here, so it would be nice to start off
6 with that, but maybe towards the end.

7 CHAIR HUDES: I did have a comment on two things.
8 One is the historic resources. I believe really strongly in
9 this as a core part of our Town and it's something that
10 really distinguishes it from most of the towns in Northern
11 California, and so I would encourage maybe a little
12 stronger wording. Right now, there's a sentence at the
13 community vitality paragraph. I would suggest either making
14 it its own category, or if it were kept there to make the
15 wording a little bit stronger and maybe something along the
16 lines of, "Preserve and enhance the Town's historic
17 resources and character while guiding the community into
18 the future." I think that's the ongoing asset. I'm not sure
19 what an ongoing asset is; it's not quite clear.

21 COMMISSIONER BURCH: Could you read it?

22 CHAIR HUDES: Sure. "Preserve and enhance the
23 Town's historic resources and character while guiding the
24 community into the future." So, that was one area.
25

1 The other area goes a little beyond just a
2 wording thing, but it's something that I raised at the two
3 meetings where I did have opportunity for input to this and
4 I find it's really not there and I think it's important,
5 and that is being an innovation center, and so I was going
6 to propose some language on this, because I think that we
7 have a situation where we have some of the most talented
8 people in Northern California in an innovation economy who
9 leave town every day, because we are not doing very much in
10 terms of creating a center for innovation. We don't even
11 have offices that are adequate for VCs; they drive to Sand
12 Hill Road in Menlo Park and that's just an office use. So,
13 when you talk about providing opportunities for some of the
14 young people in the community, why should they have to get
15 on a bus and go somewhere else if it's possible to foster
16 more innovation within town, and so I was going to suggest,
17 again, some broad language, because I know there are some
18 other parts in Land Use where this would come up. But I was
19 going to suggest that we consider putting something in
20 along the lines of "Innovation Community" in addition to
21 the other bullets there that says, "Create the fundamentals
22 for a prominent innovation economy in order to generate
23 opportunities for residents in the Town." I think that
24 could then be used for Land Use and other kinds of
25

1 discussions, and while I know that there was probably
2 discussion about this before to me something important for
3 us to do for the future of the Town is to establish a
4 presence, and it doesn't have to be a repeat of Mountain
5 View or Sand Hill or San Francisco, it can be our own
6 unique combination of things, but I do think that there are
7 things that we can do creatively to create an environment
8 for innovation here for our residents primarily.

9 Commissioner Burch.

10
11 COMMISSIONER BURCH: I'm not going to try to open
12 up a big can of worms here with that, because I completely
13 agree with you, but if that's the case we as a commission,
14 along with other committees, need to get more on board with
15 not fighting every new office building, every new
16 application that comes, because I can tell you right now
17 that is not how the outside community sees us. We are not
18 an innovation community, we are a quieter bedroom
19 community, and so I agree with you. I think we have the
20 opportunity to be a fantastic hub for even larger
21 businesses that want a small touchdown space for commuters
22 and things, but if that is something we are going to write
23 into the General Plan then collectively everybody needs to
24 work a bit on the mindset of what we have when developments
25 come in.

1 CHAIR HUDES: If I can just respond, I agree. I
2 think that we have some talented people in town who could
3 actually work on this as well, and since it's something
4 that we would not say playing catch up, but we have a lot
5 of work to do. I would think that if something like that
6 were in our General Plan it would need to involve a task
7 force or a group of folks who are involved deeply in this
8 innovation community elsewhere in trying to see how we can
9 do more of that in town.
10

11 The point about this to me is that this is at the
12 root of a lot of the issues that we're seeing: the traffic
13 issues, the overcrowding in schools issues. Why do the
14 flags go up because of the impact of new residential
15 developments? Well, I think that if people weren't clogging
16 the streets with these giant buses and getting in their
17 cars and driving elsewhere. This could be if not a complete
18 solution at least a step in the right direction for some of
19 the problems that the Town is facing that might say okay,
20 we could have more offices in town because the right kind
21 of business that was generating opportunities for our town
22 could actually alleviate some of the other problems that we
23 have in Town. Commissioner Janoff.
24

25 COMMISSIONER JANOFF: This is sort of a process
question also. The last sentence of the Vision Statement,

1 "Los Gatos is a dynamic and thriving economy," we had this
2 discussion about innovation and incubators and all those
3 kind of things, and as I recall the GPAC decided that that
4 was a lower-level detail and that we included in the Vision
5 Statement this dynamic and thriving economy which would be
6 an umbrella for that sort of a policy which could become a
7 goal and have teeth in it lower in the...not lower down, but
8 in the details of the General Plan, because there are a lot
9 of ways that that innovation comment could manifest itself
10 and... So, we wanted to keep it a relatively high-level and
11 as a process question. If we were to include a new Guiding
12 Principle of that magnitude and that kind of specificity,
13 I'm not sure that it wouldn't... I mean, I hate to have it go
14 back to GPAC, but it seems like it would be appropriate,
15 because that's sort of not countermanding but it's doing
16 something different from what the GPAC (inaudible).

18 CHAIR HUDES: My understanding is that the
19 Planning Commission is meant to review the work of the GPAC
20 and provide input to the Council, and the Council will take
21 all of that and sort that out.

22 COMMISSIONER JANOFF: And that's why I say it's a
23 process question.

24 CHAIR HUDES: And kind of in response to the
25 point about the dynamic economy, yes, but unless we say

1 that we're doing something on innovation I don't see it
2 really being a part of the plan. It could very well be a
3 giant Home Depot or it could be more retail, or it could be
4 a medical office, it could be a lot of things. This is a
5 departure, I think, from some of the history in the Town,
6 but it's not a departure for the people in the Town is my
7 point. We're not trying to do something that's alien to the
8 folks in Town. We have created in Town some of the most
9 dynamic businesses that got started here and then left, and
10 over the years there are just a number of them in the tech
11 community that started here in Town, and so I just think
12 that it would be important in the General Plan to recognize
13 the role of innovation that the Town has played and can
14 play into the future.

16 COMMISSIONER HANSSEN: I have a suggestion, and
17 it's all going to be a recommendation to the Town Council,
18 but I agree with what Commissioner Burch said. I don't know
19 if the Town is quite ready for that, but on the other hand
20 when you think about community vitality, which is one of
21 the Guiding Principles. We all have discussed it and we all
22 know that retail in downtown as we know it isn't going to
23 be anything like it is today in 20 years, and there are
24 going to be other changes in the business economy, so I
25 think your thoughts about the innovation we should put it

1 under the idea of community vitality as a path to growth
2 and development and the future of the Town and see if it
3 makes sense to Council. I wouldn't create it as a separate
4 Guiding Principle because we were trying to keep the number
5 of Guiding Principles limited, but I think it's a core part
6 of community vitality going forward, because like downtown
7 in 20 years isn't going to be in the form it's in.

8 CHAIR HUDES: Yeah, and I would just respond I am
9 not trying to shape the structure or format of the document
10 at all, I was just pointing out that I think that the
11 document as it is now has a little bit of a void with
12 regard to the need to really create an innovation ecosystem
13 here.

14 COMMISSIONER HANSEN: Agree.

15 CHAIR HUDES: Further comments on the document?
16 Commissioner Burch.

17 COMMISSIONER BURCH: Sorry, it's not a comment
18 on the document. Just wanted to know from the Chair of the
19 GPAC, following the approval of this is there going to be
20 some kind of like an agenda or line item of what we're
21 trying to hit through the next few meetings or what our
22 priorities are? I know this took a little while to get
23 through.

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1 COMMISSIONER HANSSEN: You didn't come to our
2 last meeting.

3 COMMISSIONER BURCH: I know. Was that on there,
4 because I don't think it's televised; I haven't watched it.

5 COMMISSIONER HANSSEN: I don't think it is
6 either. (Inaudible) but we spent the last meeting and we're
7 going to be spending next week's meeting on very high level
8 ideas of land use, the Land Use Element, which we did not
9 go through in the 2010 General Plan Update, because it was
10 a limited update, so this will be the first time we've
11 talked about it in I guess 20 years. Like are the Land Use
12 designations we have right now appropriate? Are they going
13 to help us build for the future? Would it be possible to
14 create an innovation center given the way we have
15 architected it, if we're saying 50% land use coverage and
16 this amount of height, so that's the kind of stuff that we
17 started talking about and we're going to talk about more in
18 our next meeting, and probably a couple more meetings after
19 that. And please get more details of the process.

20
21 JENNIFER ARMER: Well, I think you covered kind
22 of the next step pretty well. Basically, the next steps for
23 the alternatives analysis is getting some guidance from
24 GPAC as to what alternatives should be included in the
25 alternatives report. The report, the kind of draft report,

1 then comes back to GPAC for discussion. It then goes to the
2 public. We'll have public outreach, then it goes back to
3 GPAC, and then it will go to Planning Commission and
4 Council with a recommendation for a preferred alternative.
5 So, there's a very long process for that part too, but it's
6 a very important part of then developing alternatives that
7 then are considered in the environmental review.

8 The other point that I wanted to touch back on is
9 what was just being discussed about potentially including
10 the innovation into the Community Vitality Guiding
11 Principle; I just wanted to make sure I understood that.
12 Would that be something like in the second sentence of
13 Community Vitality, having it be, "Foster the economic
14 vitality and innovation in all of Los Gatos business
15 locations"?

17 CHAIR HUDES: I have some other language that I
18 had suggested. I don't know...

19 JENNIFER ARMER: Well, for discussion, when you
20 get to the point of making a motion.

21 CHAIR HUDES: Yeah. Actually, I was thinking that
22 there have been numerous comments that have been made here
23 about wording and things like that and I'm wondering if
24 it's possible to just forward a recommendation on this as
25

1 it stands with the additional comments from the Planning
2 Commission.

3 JENNIFER ARMER: The Town Council will receive
4 verbatim minutes, so they will hear your discussion. If
5 there are specific changes to the Draft Vision Statement
6 and Guiding Principles that there is a consensus from the
7 Planning Commission to recommend, then that would also be
8 included in the Staff Report. Otherwise we would be taking
9 forward what was recommended by the GPAC with a
10 recommendation from Planning Commission.
11

12 CHAIR HUDES: Okay, but there were some specific
13 things that were mentioned about wording that Commissioner
14 Tavana and others had. Have you captured those at this
15 point? Because they could get buried in a verbatim tape,
16 especially a session this long.

17 JENNIFER ARMER: Absolutely. We would be looking
18 for a motion with a second and a vote with those specific
19 changes. What I have so far primarily is moving the word
20 "safe" to be the third item in that first sentence, and
21 then there was discussion and different ideas about
22 including the concept of innovation and innovation center
23 and innovation community in here somewhere, but I haven't
24 heard a specific consensus on how to do that.
25

1 SALLY ZARNOWITZ: And there was change to the
2 language about historic resources.

3 CHAIR HUDES: Correct.

4 COMMISSIONER HANSSEN: Yup. I was making a
5 recommendation that we include Matthew's language under
6 Community Vitality versus having it as a standalone.

7 JENNIFER ARMER: So, it would be added in
8 addition to the three sentences that are already there?

9 COMMISSIONER HANSSEN: Yeah, which might make it
10 too long, but I think that was my recommendation about the
11 best place to put it, so if the rest of the commissioners
12 thought that would be an okay way to move forward we could
13 make a motion.
14

15 CHAIR HUDES: Okay, would somebody like to make
16 the motion?

17 COMMISSIONER HANSSEN: Is it okay for me to make
18 the...

19 CHAIR HUDES: Of course.

20 COMMISSIONER HANSSEN: Okay. I'd like to make a
21 motion that we forward a recommendation on the Vision
22 Statement and the Guiding Principles to the Town Council
23 with the changes that we just discussed, including moving
24 "safe" to the third point about the community that we are
25 in the first sentence, including the changes in the History

1 Resources section of the Community Vitality, and adding the
2 language about the innovation center that was suggested by
3 Chair Hudes as part of Community Vitality.

4 CHAIR HUDES: Commissioner Burch.

5 COMMISSIONER BURCH: I'll second.

6 CHAIR HUDES: Further discussion? Commissioner
7 Badame, did you have a point earlier that I might have
8 missed? I can't remember.

9 COMMISSIONER BADAME: No, I'm good with
10 everything. I'll be supporting the motion. Thank you for
11 checking.

12 CHAIR HUDES: Okay, very good. So, I'll call the
13 question. All in favor? Opposed? Passed unanimously. Thank
14 you.
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