



General Plan Newsletter #2 – August 2016

What makes Millbrae great and how can the General Plan make Millbrae even better?

The General Plan Update will help the City preserve and enhance the characteristics residents value, address the issues that require change, and capitalize on the favorable conditions unique to Millbrae.

The City kicked off the General Plan with a series of meetings to gather input from residents, businesses, and community leaders on what they value and what improvements could make Millbrae even better. The City has prepared the Phase I Public Input Summary: Issues, Opportunities, and Vision report to synthesize this input and capture the ideas from the community and summarizes the

key findings from research and analysis conducted as part of the General Plan Update effort. The report describes key issues and opportunities that have policy implications as Millbrae considers how to grow and change over the next 25 years. It is organized around four topics: downtown, neighborhoods, circulation, and city identity.

This newsletter summarizes topics covered in the Phase I Public Input Summary: Issues and Opportunities report. To read the full report, visit: www.millbrae2040.com/documents.

See Report Highlights on Pages 2 and 3.

City Prepares Draft Vision and Guiding Principles

Based on public input from the first phase of the General Plan Update and findings from the Existing Conditions Report, the City prepared a draft vision and set of guiding principles. The vision and guiding principles capture the City's key values and ambitions for the future of Millbrae. The vision statement paints a picture of what Millbrae aspires to be 25 years from now. The guiding principles establish how the City will achieve the vision. The vision and guiding principles will guide the General Plan Update process. The vision statement and guiding principles will remain a draft until the City Council adopts the General Plan.

Read the full vision and guiding principles in the Phase I Public Input Summary: Issues, Opportunities, and Vision report at: www.millbrae2040.com/documents.

2040 Vision Statement

In 2040 Millbrae is the gem of the Peninsula, distinguished locally for its strong sense of community and regionally as the Bay Area's premier transit hub. Residents continue to be proud to call Millbrae "home" because of its pristine views of the Bay, attractive residential neighborhoods, distinguished schools, quaint and lively downtown, and active civic life. Millbrae is a regional destination because of its access to transit, vibrancy of El Camino Real, diversity of retail and restaurants, and charming atmosphere. Millbrae exemplifies a healthy and prosperous community.

Guiding Principles

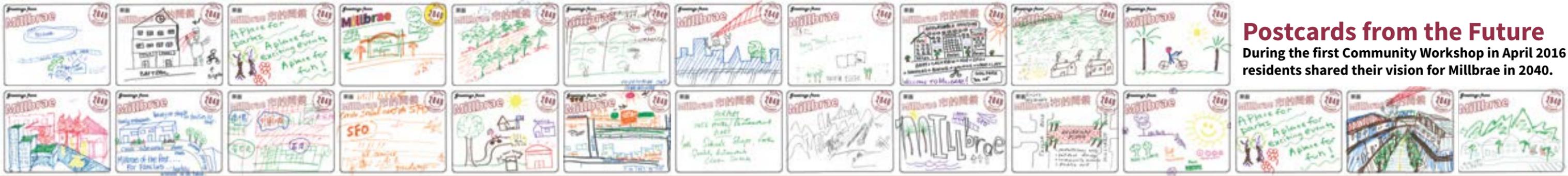
The guiding principles cover the topics of El Camino Real, downtown, the Station Area, neighborhoods, mobility, city identity, sustainability, City services, economic development, and healthy community.



Save the date!
**Joint City Council
and Planning
Commission
Study Session**
Sept. 6 at 6:30 p.m.
Chetcuti Rm.
450 Poplar Ave.
Learn more on page 4

GENERAL PLAN PROCESS:

1. Project Initiation
2. Existing Conditions Report
- 3. Identify Issues and Opportunities and Establish a Vision**
4. Alternative Land Use Analysis
5. PDA Specific Plan
6. Prepare the General Plan Policy Document
7. Environmental Review
8. General Plan and PDA Specific Plan Final Documents and Adoption



Postcards from the Future
 During the first Community Workshop in April 2016 residents shared their vision for Millbrae in 2040.

Phase 1 Public Input Summary: Issues, Opportunities, and Vision Report Highlights



Downtown Millbrae

Downtown is quaint with a pedestrian-friendly scale that makes it walkable. While downtown has many attributes that make it an asset, the City has an opportunity to enhance these assets and strengthen the prominence of downtown.

Many residents and visitors shop and dine in neighboring cities because of the **limited business types downtown**, namely higher-end restaurants and stores. The General Plan Update process will consider ways to cultivate a business mix that better serves the range of resident needs and attracts visitors.

In addition to limited business mix, many residents feel that there is a **parking shortage**. There are no parking regulations downtown to discourage parking in one spot for a long period. While there is adequate parking overall, demand exceeds supply at certain businesses, creating an inconvenience for customers and employees. The General Plan Update process will explore parking strategies.

There is also a need for **investments in downtown public spaces** to draw people to shop, dine, and hang out. In addition to enhancing the downtown streetscape, many residents expressed concern about cleanliness, particularly from cigarette butt litter. The General Plan Update process will consider opportunities to enhance the character of downtown to support businesses, draw visitors, and invoke civic pride.



Neighborhoods

Many residents choose to live in Millbrae because of the relatively affordable housing and diverse neighborhoods. There are many housing types from single family homes on a hill overlooking the San Francisco Bay to condominiums in downtown. The variety of housing types contribute to the city's distinct neighborhoods of Mills Estate, Highlands, Glenview Highlands, Meadows, and Lomita Hills.

There is a high demand for housing in the Bay Area and **limited housing availability** has caused housing costs to increase significantly. In addition to limited available housing stock, there is little vacant land in Millbrae (only 3.6 acres), which limits opportunities for new housing development. Through the Millbrae Priority Development Area Specific Plan, which is part of the General Plan Update process, the City has an opportunity to plan new housing development in the priority development area (PDA) through redevelopment of existing underutilized land and reuse of existing buildings. The Millbrae PDA includes El Carmino Real, the intermodal station, and downtown.

Residents value the **visual quality** of their neighborhoods, particularly the views of the San Francisco Bay and tree-lined streets. Because of the lack of vacant land available for housing development and the desire to take advantage of the views, many residents are expanding existing homes, typically by adding a second story. Second story additions become an issue for neighbors that experience a loss of Bay views. Many residents also expressed discontent about excessive tree pruning because it alters the character of the neighborhood. Finally, residents are concerned about potholes in their neighborhoods because of safety and aesthetic quality concerns. As part of the General Plan Update process, the City will consider methods for preserving and enhancing visual quality in neighborhoods.



Circulation

Millbrae is the transit hub for the Bay Area. While Millbrae has excellent connectivity, the city is burdened with **traffic congestion** from residents and visitors accessing the intermodal station and regional transportation corridors. Traffic congestion is not only an inconvenience, but also a public safety concern because it contributes to car accidents. The General Plan Update process will analyze traffic calming measures to lower automobile speed.

Many residents do not **walk or cycle** in the city because of safety concerns. As part of the General Plan Update process, the City is preparing an Active Transportation Plan. The purpose of the Active Transportation Plan is to assess the needs of pedestrians and cyclists; identify improvements to infrastructure and programs to support pedestrians and cyclists; and coordinate local actions and regional projects. In addition to the Active Transportation Plan, the General Plan Update process will include complete streets policies to the Circulation Element. Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

The General Plan Update will also consider Millbrae's **trails**: Spur Trail, Crystal Springs Regional Trail, and Bay Trail. Future phases would continue the Spur Trail another 10 to 15 blocks northward to Junipero Serra Park. The Bay Trail is also incomplete around Millbrae and users must use Millbrae Avenue, El Camino Real, or a series of parallel local streets to access the trail. The General Plan Update process will identify gaps in the trail network and outline measures to provide safer and more secure facilities.

Another issue is the need to improve pedestrian **connections**. Many people feel unsafe crossing El Camino Real, which divides the Station Area and eastside residential neighborhoods from downtown and westside residential neighborhoods. The General Plan Update process will explore options to create more connections across El Camino Real between downtown, neighborhoods east of El Camino Real, and the Station Area.



City Identity

Millbrae has many characteristics that set it apart from its neighbors. Millbrae has a warm, small town feel that promotes a sense of safety and community. Residents are actively involved with social clubs, community organizations, and citywide activities and programs. The city draws new residents because of its excellent schools, relatively affordable housing, beautiful views, and regional connectivity.

Despite the many qualities that make Millbrae great, the city lacks a strong identity. The General Plan Update process will consider opportunities to strengthen city identity by establishing a **clear gateway**. Gateways give the first impression that visitors have when entering the city, and they help define how residents feel when returning home.

While Millbrae has a city center, it does not function at its full potential. The City can strengthen the city center for business, entertainment, and social interaction to create an attractive destination and hub of community activity. In comparison, downtown Burlingame has a strong identity that is defined by its availability of high-end restaurants and stores that attract visitors from around the region. During the General Plan Update process, the City will reflect on desirable aspects of other cities.



Debrief on Community Workshop #1

On April 11, 2016, over 65 people attended the first community workshop for the General Plan Update. During the workshop participants learned about the General Plan Update and participated in four interactive exercises. Community members shared their vision for the future of Millbrae for the next 25 years and provided input on what they believe are the city's assets, issues, and opportunities. The input provided at the workshop was used to prepare the Phase I Public Input Summary: Issues, Opportunities, and Vision report.

One of the community workshop exercises was "Postcards from the Future." See photos of the postcards participants made during the community workshop on [pages 2 and 3](#).



Report Documents Millbrae's Existing Conditions

To plan for the future, it is important to understand today's conditions. The City has published the Existing Conditions Report that provides a "snapshot" of current conditions related to a broad range of topics, including demographics and employment, land use, natural and cultural resources, climate change, community design, transportation, economic conditions, public services,

and infrastructure. It also identifies trends in and around the city that influence growth and development. The report is an objective summary of existing conditions and provides decision-makers with a context for making policy decisions.

Read the Existing Conditions Report at: www.millbrae2040.com/documents.

Stay Informed! Get Involved!

A successful General Plan will reflect the community's priorities. We need as many voices contributing to this process as possible. Here are a few easy ways to get involved:

Visit the project website and online forum



The General Plan website (www.millbrae2040.com) is frequently updated with information on the status of the project, announcements of upcoming workshops and meetings, and publication of milestone reports. The website will also include an interactive online forum that will allow community members to provide input at key points throughout the General Plan Update process.

Sign up for the General Plan email list



Visit the General Plan website at www.millbrae2040.com and sign up for our email list. The email list will be used to send out notices about upcoming meetings and community workshops, project milestones, and recently-released public documents.

Attend community workshops



The City will hold a series of community workshops at key points in the General Plan Update process. Workshops will be fully participatory with presentations, small group discussions, and thought-provoking, hands-on exercises.

On Tuesday, Sept. 6 at 6:30 p.m. in the Chetcuti Room, the City Council and Planning Commission will hold a Joint Study Session on the General Plan *draft* vision and guiding principles. The City Council and Planning Commission will also review and discuss the Phase I Public Input Summary: Issues, Opportunities, and Vision report and Existing Conditions Report. Residents and are encouraged to attend and participate in the discussion.

For more information, please contact:
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