



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Planning Commission

SUBJECT: GPT25-002 – General Plan
Text Amendment to Amend
Policy IP2.11

DATE: August 22, 2025

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission on August 13, 2025, voted 9-0-0 to recommend that the City Council:

Adopt a resolution, as modified by staff, to approve a City-initiated General Plan Text Amendment to amend Policy IP-2.11 of the Envision San José 2040 General Plan to allow for convening either an advisory group, such as the Planning Commission, or the original Envision San José 2040 General Plan Task Force, for the General Plan Four Year Review process; and other related minor text revisions.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

Approval of the General Plan Text Amendment would allow the convening of a Taskforce or an advisory group, such as the Planning Commission, for the General Plan Four Year Review process.

If the City Council denies the proposed City-initiated General Plan Amendment, no text changes will take place, and the reconvened General Plan 2040 Task Force can be the only selection for the Four-Year Review process.

BACKGROUND

On August 13, 2025, the Planning Commission held a public hearing for the proposed City-initiated General Plan Amendment. Commissioner Oliverio made a motion to approve staff's recommendation with one additional revision. Commissioner Bhandal seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0-0.

ANALYSIS

For a complete analysis, please see the Attachment - Planning Commission Staff Report from May 13, 2025.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

If the proposed resolution is approved by the City Council, the General Plan Text Amendment shall take effect immediately following approval of the resolution.

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A notice for the Planning Commission and City Council hearing was posted on the San José Post website on July 25, 2025. The staff report is also posted on the City's website. Staff has been available to respond to questions from the public.

Additionally, after the Planning Commission staff report was posted, staff received sixteen letters from advocacy groups, neighborhood organizations, and residents opposing a permanent shift from the General Plan Task Force to the Planning Commission, emphasizing that the Commission's role should be limited to the current cycle to preserve broad community representation in future reviews. The proposed changes from staff, and as recommended for approval by Council, clarifies that the Council may choose to reconvene the Task Force or an advisory group in future Four Year reviews.

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the August 26, 2025 City Council meeting.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT

On August 13, 2025, the Planning Commission held a public hearing of the proposed City-initiated General Plan Text Amendment (Amendment).

Staff Presentation

Principal Planner Ruth Cueto delivered a staff presentation outlining the background and details of the proposed Text Amendment, along with the outreach strategy. She noted that in response to public concerns that the wording implied the Planning Commission would automatically serve as the advisory body in future instances, and staff recommended adding the phrase “a task force”, in addition to an advisory group, to Policy IP-2.11.

Public Hearing

Three members of the public spoke on the proposed General Plan Text Amendment.

Juan Estrada, a member of the General Plan 2040 Task Force, opposed replacing the diverse, broad-based, cross-sector Task Force with an advisory group and urged it to be a one-time exception. He suggested a policy change to allow the Task Force to delegate its role to an advisory group and called for reconvening the group, noting many Task Force members were unaware of the proposal.

Alex Shoor of Catalyze Silicon Valley emphasized the need for a more pro-housing General Plan, regardless of whether it is reviewed by the Task Force or the Planning Commission. He welcomed proposed inclusive community engagement practices in the Outreach Plan, such as providing children’s activities at meetings, and highlighted the City’s bench of 22 nonprofits available for outreach, encouraging its use. He also urged focusing on underrepresented communities who are often excluded from decision-making, noting Catalyze SV’s readiness to assist.

Manuel Salazar, representing SV@Home, supported the proposed Amendment citing this Four-Year Review’s narrower scope and shorter timeline. He noted the Commission’s expertise, citywide representation, and ability to maintain transparency, while emphasizing the need for robust, targeted outreach to historically marginalized communities.

Planning Commission Discussion

Commissioner Young welcomed the staff-proposed revision to IP-2.11 and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to review the General Plan. He assured the public that the Planning Commission represents diverse interests and will seriously consider community input. He also expressed support for restoring virtual public participation in Planning Commission meetings and urged city leadership to address the related security concerns.

Commissioner Cantrell thanked staff for quickly addressing community concerns and stressed the need for more inclusive outreach to African-ancestry organizations during the process. He recommended partnering with at least one such organization from the City’s approved list of community consultants, ensuring fair compensation for their work. Staff explained that while they cannot guarantee selection of a specific group, they will

include them in their initial proposal request. Commissioner Cantrell requested to be notified when the requests are sent out to verify the process.

Commissioner Casey confirmed with staff that six publicly-held Planning Commission study sessions are planned, in addition to community events and open houses, and that any topics outside the Council-approved scope would require further Council approval. He addressed concerns about the Commission's suitability, rejecting claims of bias and emphasizing that commissioners are local residents and volunteers with no financial stake, bringing the same level of seriousness and policy analysis as the General Plan Task Force. He also underscored the importance of public input in supporting the Commission's work.

Commissioner Oliverio made a motion to approve staff recommendation with the proposed change and Commissioner Bhandal seconded the motion.

Commissioner Oliverio, drawing on years of experience on the General Plan Task Force, observed that its meetings were often lengthy and repetitive, with some political-appointee members lacking land use expertise. He emphasized that, in contrast, the Planning Commission, being geographically representative, council-appointed, and possessing land use expertise, is well suited to guide this review cycle. He also emphasized on the many opportunities of receiving public input during the process.

Commissioner Oliverio's motion to approve staff recommendation with the proposed revision passed unanimously (9-0-0).

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-008, General Procedure and Policy Making resulting in no changes to the physical environment.

PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.

/s/

CHRIS BURTON

Secretary, Planning Commission

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For questions, please contact Ruth Cueto, Principal Planner, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department at ruth.cueto@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 535-7886.

ATTACHMENT

Planning Commission Staff Report from May 13, 2025



Memorandum

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION**FROM:** Christopher Burton**SUBJECT:** GPT25-002**DATE:** August 13, 2025**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Citywide

Project	City-initiated General Plan Text Amendment
Project Description	City-initiated General Plan Text Amendment to amend Policy IP-2.11 of the Envision San José 2040 General Plan to provide flexibility in the composition of a Task Force and convene an advisory group for each General Plan Four-Year Review process; and other related minor text revisions.
CEQA Clearance	Not a Project, File No. PP17-008, General Procedure & Policy Making resulting in no changes to the physical environment.
Project Planner	Ruth Cueto

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission make a recommendation to the City Council to take the following action:

Adopt a resolution approving a General Plan Text Amendment to amend Policy IP-2.11 of the Envision San José 2040 General Plan to convene an advisory group, such as the Planning Commission, in-lieu of the original Envision San José 2040 General Plan Task Force, for the General Plan Four Year Review process; and other related minor text revisions.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Pursuant to General Plan Policy IP-2.4, the City is required to conduct a review of the General Plan every four years. The purpose of the General Plan Four-Year Review (Four-Year Review) is to evaluate significant changes in the planning context and achievement of key General Plan goals, provide community and stakeholder engagement in reviewing and evaluating the implementation of the General Plan, and recommend any mid-course actions needed to achieve its goals.

The General Plan, through Policy IP-2.11, requires the City to reconvene the Envision San José 2040 Task Force during each Four-Year Review. The Envision San José 2040 Task Force included thirty-seven community members, representing political, business, resident, development, religious, and labor interests, who were appointed by the City Council to guide the General Plan update.

On June 3, 2025, the [City Council approved the scope of work](#) for the 3rd General Plan Four-Year review. In the report presented to Council, staff proposed a new approach to the Task Force that would achieve City Council's direction to streamline the Four-Year Review process provided through the adopted *March Budget Message* and would align with the limited scope of the current effort. The approach is to designate the Planning Commission as the Task Force for the upcoming Four-Year review, an action that would require a General Plan text amendment to Policy IP-2.11

ANALYSIS

The General Plan requires the City to reconvene the Envision General Plan Task Force during each Four-Year Review to provide community and stakeholder engagement in reviewing and evaluating the implementation of the General Plan and recommend any mid-course actions needed to achieve its goals.

From the time of the development of the Envision San José 2040 General Plan in 2008 to the last Four-Year Review in 2019, Task Force membership grew from 37 to 43 members. The last two Four-Year Review processes included a wide variety of topics, including affordable housing and transportation policies and major shifts in job growth areas. In contrast, the current Four-Year Review has a narrower scope, primarily focusing on increasing residential capacity, and operates under a shorter timeline due to the anticipated forthcoming work for the 7th Cycle Housing Element.

To address the current context, staff is proposing to add flexible language in Policy IP-2.11 that would allow the Planning Commission to serve as the Task Force for the upcoming Four-Year Review.

General Plan Policy IP-2.11 currently reads:

IP-2.11 Reconvene the Envision San José 2040 Task Force during each Major Review of the Envision General Plan to provide community and stakeholder engagement in reviewing and evaluating success in the implementation of this General Plan and recommending any mid-course actions needed to achieve its goals.

Staff proposes to amend Policy IP-2.11 by removing the reference to “Reconvene the Envision San José 2040 Task Force” and instead allowing for the convening of “an advisory group, such as the Planning Commission.” This language does not preclude the Council from convening a group made up of original task force members in the future. Exhibit A provides a tracked-changes version of the proposed amendments to the policy. Staff is also proposing amendments to other policies and sections of the General Plan that reference the Envision San José 2040 Task Force, as they relate to Four Year Reviews. The proposed text amendments are listed in Exhibit A.

Staff believes the Planning Commission is well suited for this role as they are familiar with city policymaking, have knowledge on the land use and environmental topics to be discussed, and can provide a diversity of opinion as they are appointed to represent each Council District. They are responsible for making recommendations to the City Council on General Plan Amendments, comprehensive plan updates, and changes to land use and development regulations.

In their capacity as the Four-Year Review “task force,” the Planning Commission would participate in a series of public study sessions focused on each topic identified in the scope of work; the study sessions would provide a forum for stakeholder input and discussion. Staff will present their analysis to the Planning Commission and solicit feedback on the approach and findings, which will help inform staff’s recommendation to City Council.

Community Outreach and Engagement

During the June 3, 2025 City Council meeting, Council directed staff to prepare a comprehensive public outreach program, to provide meaningful opportunities for residents and community stakeholders to share input throughout the Four-Year Review process. Since that time, Planning staff has met with the Office of Racial and Social Equity to solicit feedback and discuss the proposed approach and strategy to community outreach and engagement. The Office of Racial and Social Equity will continue to serve as a technical advising partner while Planning staff refine the strategy. **Exhibit B** outlines the methods staff will employ to solicit feedback on the topics presented during the Four-Year Review, taking into account available staff resources and capacity.

ENVISION SAN JOSÉ 2040 GENERAL PLAN

The proposed General Plan Text Amendment changes are consistent with the following General Plan goal and policies:

Major Strategy #1 - Community Based Planning: Embody the community values and goals articulated through an extensive and meaningful community-based planning process. The City's commitment to effectively engaging representatives of all segments of the San José community in the development and implementation of the Envision San José 2040 General Plan is critical to ensure that the Plan will promote San José's continued growth into a leading world city, while maintaining social equity in its operations.

Major Strategy #12 - Periodic Major Review: Ensure that the Plan addresses the current community context and values and closely monitor the achievement of key Plan goals through a periodic major review of the General Plan and the use of Plan Horizons to phase implementation of the Plan over time. The Envision General Plan establishes a 4-year Major Review cycle, which provides an opportunity for a community stakeholder task force and the City Council to evaluate significant changes in the planning context and the City's achievement of: planned job and Jobs to Employed Resident ratio goals, implementation of the Urban Village concept, environmental indicators, including greenhouse gas reduction, and affordable housing needs.

Goal IP-14 – Citizen Participation and Community Engagement. Provide a range of meaningful opportunities for community engagement throughout the course of Envision General Plan implementation activities.

CE-1.2 Provide a transparent process for public engagement of San José's diverse stakeholders.

CE-1.9 Appoint advisory bodies, task forces, or ad hoc committees as needed to ensure broad perspective. Encourage membership of such groups to reflect community diversity.

CE-1.10 Educate the community about City issues and provide avenues for influencing its decisions, including but not limited to serving on boards, commissions, committees, task forces, or participating in the land use and development review process.

Analysis: The proposed amendments would provide flexibility, allowing the Planning Commission to serve as an advisory body on the General Plan Four-Year Review, while at the same time providing a transparent process for public engagement. Study session agendas will be posted at least seven days in advance. The meetings will be open to the public, accessible via Zoom and the City's YouTube channel, and held at City Hall in a central location. Staff is currently working on providing live, multilingual captioning for these and all other Planning Commission meetings. As noted in Exhibit B, staff is proposing four in-person open house events, as well as in-person/virtual focus group meetings with housing advocates, labor groups and others. Therefore, the proposed amendments to Policy IP-2.11 and other minor text changes conform to the above-mentioned General Plan goal and policies.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

Not a Project, File No. PP17-008, General Procedure & Policy Making resulting in no changes to the physical environment.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Staff followed Council Policy 6-30: Public Outreach Policy in order to inform the public of the proposed project. The staff report was posted on the City's website. Staff has been available to respond to questions from the public.

Project Manager: Ruth Cueto

Approved by: /s/ Manira Sandhir, for Christopher Burton, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Director

Please click on the title of each exhibit to view the document:

Attachments:	
<u>Exhibit A:</u>	<u>Draft General Plan Amendments resolution</u>
<u>Exhibit B:</u>	<u>Outreach Plan</u>

Proposed Changes (these will be converted into the Exhibit A after review is complete)

Location	Existing	Updated
General Plan Chapter 1 Page 25	Major Strategy #12 - Periodic Major Review Ensure that the Plan addresses the current community context and values and closely monitor the achievement of key Plan goals through a periodic major review of the General Plan and the use of Plan Horizons to phase implementation of the Plan over time. The Plan provides a road map for the development of new Urban Village areas and gives highest priority to the location of new housing growth in the Downtown, connecting transit corridors, BART station area, and North San José. The Envision General Plan establishes a 4-year Major Review cycle, which provides an opportunity for a community stakeholder task force and the City Council to evaluate significant changes in the planning context and the City's achievement of:	Major Strategy #12 - Periodic Major Review Ensure that the Plan addresses the current community context and values and closely monitor the achievement of key Plan goals through a periodic major review of the General Plan and the use of Plan Horizons to phase implementation of the Plan over time. The Plan provides a road map for the development of new Urban Village areas and gives highest priority to the location of new housing growth in the Downtown, connecting transit corridors, BART station area, and North San José. The Envision General Plan establishes a 4-year Major Review cycle, which provides an opportunity for a community stakeholder task force or advisory group, and the City Council to evaluate significant changes in the planning context and the City's achievement of:
General Plan Chapter 7 page 7	IP-2.5 During each Major Review of the Envision General Plan evaluate input provided by the reconvened Task Force and achievement of the following key General Plan goals to inform the City Council's decision, regarding needed changes, or to increase the number of residential units available for non-specific Urban Village areas:	IP-2.5 During each Major Review of the Envision General Plan evaluate input provided by the reconvened Task Force or advisory group pursuant to Policy IP-2.11, and achievement of the following key General Plan goals to inform the City Council's decision, regarding needed changes, or to increase the number of residential units available for non-specific Urban Village areas:
General Plan Chapter 7 page 7	IP-2.11 Reconvene the Envision San José 2040 Task Force during each Major Review of the Envision General Plan to provide community and stakeholder engagement in reviewing and evaluating success in the implementation of this General Plan and recommending any mid-course actions needed to achieve its goals.	IP-2.11 Reconvene the Envision San José 2040 Task Force During each Major Review of the Envision General Plan convene an advisory group, such as the Planning Commission, that provides a public forum for community and stakeholder engagement in reviewing and evaluating success in the implementation of this General Plan and recommending any mid-course actions needed to achieve its goals.

GPT25-002

Click on the title to view document.

[Correspondence received AFTER 8/6/2025](#)