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Project No: 24-16899

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Subject: Foster City Parks and Open Space Element and Conservation Elements Update
March Study Session Notes

City Council Study Session #1

Date: March 17, 2025

Councilmember Written Questions

1. **How are these elements being aligned with the other GP elements?**
The project scope includes a review and assessment of alignment across all General Plan elements. We began with a thorough review of relevant City and regional policies and programs to ensure consistency and coordination.
2. **Question on data sources**
A wide variety of sources are being used, including State and local agency data, GIS tools, City-specific assessments, and more.
3. **What specific methods will be used to engage residents that may not be as engaged in civic/govt topics but are personas we want to reach?**
 - *Surveys available at multiple pop-up events, in both written and digital formats*
 - *Pop-ups are designed to engage people at already-occurring events or popular spaces, catching those who do not typically come to workshops or public meetings*
 - *Outreach through City communication channels such as the website and social media*
 - *Mailers could be discussed if the City has the capacity*
 - *Translation services were not originally budgeted, but accommodations can be considered as specific needs arise*
4. **Are there mapped potential or known wildlife corridors, or will that come from this update?**
We are referencing the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project map (commissioned by CDFW and CalTrans). The Element will identify current data gaps and suggest actions to improve data availability in the future.
5. **What are the growth projections used?**
We are using projections from Plan Bay Area 2040, consistent with those used in the Housing Element.

Additional Notes from Council Discussion

- Noted item on the agenda: water conservation challenge
- Wastewater plant expansion: a joint project with the City of San Mateo, designed to support recycled water use for irrigation and landscaping
- Development of guidelines for a water neutrality growth ordinance for new development



- Suggested community engagement partners include Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the senior community
- Community Ambassadors program could serve as a focus group mechanism

Planning Commission Study Session #1

Date: March 20, 2025

Commissioner Questions

1. **Regarding the 30% goal by the State of California to conserve 30% of land and coastal waters by 2030... what percentage does Foster City currently have in this category?**
The 30x30 goal is a statewide initiative and does not assign specific targets to individual jurisdictions. However, Foster City's preserved areas, such as Belmont Slough, would contribute to this broader goal.
 2. **Can the same land be used to meet open space and conservation elements?**
Yes. Lands contributing to the 30x30 effort can also be counted toward the Open Space and Conservation Element goals for providing outdoor recreation. Foster City currently provides 4.45 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, with a target of 5 acres per 1,000 residents. This target will be reassessed in the Parks Master Plan and General Plan Elements.
 3. **How is the levee land looked at? Seems like open space, conservation, recreation and safety.**
Yes, many areas in the city serve multiple purposes. These lands will be assessed for their co-benefits across different Element goals.
 4. **Regarding the Conservation Element... what area does Foster City currently have and what percentage of Foster City does that equal?**
The Conservation Element evaluates the City's natural resources broadly and develops strategies to maintain their quality. Quantitative assessments are in progress.
 5. **How is Foster City doing regarding recycling in relation to the Conservation Element?**
Waste management and recycling goals can be incorporated into the Element if the City desires.
 6. **What is Foster City's water allotment and what percentage of it does the City use?**
We are reviewing multi-year water supply and demand data. A specific response was provided by Sofia.
- 7-9. **Status questions regarding:**
- *Water line from Redwood City/Belmont*
 - *Third 4-million-gallon water storage tank*
 - *Reclaimed water ("purple pipe") infrastructure*
- Responses to these questions were provided by Sofia during the meeting.*
10. **Should we review the 1992 Lagoon Management Plan?**
Yes, this and other adopted City plans are being reviewed for relevant policies and potential alignment with the General Plan update.

General Comments and Discussion Themes

- **Energy Conservation:**
 - PG&E was noted as a barrier due to slow timelines and additional upgrade requirements
 - Consideration of microgrids and local resilience solutions
- **Parks and Recreation:**
 - Parks serve as regional attractors, despite originally being designed for neighborhood use



- Foster City lacks school properties that often double as parkland in other communities—suggested revisiting the original Master Plan to address this
- Consider offering differentiated amenities by park to enhance citywide access
- Suggestion to explore corporate sponsorships for park enhancements
- **Conservation and Sustainability:**
 - Levee provides protection for Foster City, but adjacent jurisdictions without levees may pose risks—need to evaluate cross-jurisdictional implications
 - Discussion of compliance with solar energy mandates
 - Identified barriers include state mandates on water usage, plant types, and lawn restrictions, which may require community education and support for smooth transitions
- **Visioning and Long-Term Planning (10–20 years):**
 - Optimism for tech breakthroughs in energy and water, with Foster City well-positioned to benefit
 - Ongoing tension between growth pressures and sustainability goals
 - Parks and open space goals should focus on access, shade, biodiversity (e.g., increasing tree cover and species diversity), and use efficiency
 - Specific interest in enhancing the lagoon’s ecological function and recreational use
 - Pilot community garden program opening April 1, with potential for expansion
- **Notable Park and Land Use Concerns:**
 - Bridgeview Park noted for low perceived use—suggested alternative uses
 - Sunfitch Park identified as lacking shade
 - Lagoon-front properties noted as underutilized or blighted—suggested open space improvements as revitalization strategy
 - Preservation and enhancement of lagoon areas are key priorities, especially given commercial and recreational access

**Citizen's Sustainability Advisory Committee (CSAC)
Questions and Comments for Study Session #1 Presentation
April 9, 2025**

Questions:

Q: The project seems to focus on Air Quality and Water Quality, but what about light pollution, which can disrupt birds and wildlife? A more visible night sky can aid wildlife.

A: It's currently not in the project plan.

Comments

What issues regarding conservation and sustainability are most important to the future of Foster City?

- Electrification and decarbonization
- Climate change

- Leo Ryan Park used to have to look more beautiful, natural, wild, and attract many butterflies –natural habitat is lost
- Concern about the use of pesticides
- More butterflies, more natural things, and more trees
- In comparison to the City of Portland, which looks much more green and natural
- Foster City should become a green city
- The new Foster City School was an example of no trees, no green spaces
- Unfortunately, the soil in Foster City is not amenable to trees and cannot take root because of the salt water and the water table
- Finding trees that can grow in Foster City is a challenge, other than Palm Trees, which provide no shade
- Better understanding of our environment to see what plants and trees can work in Foster City - the shelf life of trees in Foster City is much shorter
- We lost trees in Catamaran Park due to rot
- Increase the walkability around the City and make it safer and more appealing to walk instead of driving
- With rewilding, what does it mean if something is already developed? Can it be changed to a wildlife or a natural habitat or something – like the Lucky's store that recently left Foster City (Understanding that it's private property)

What barriers to improving conservation and sustainability currently exist?

- Responsibility for improving the City's natural habitat – residents need more connection to the City
- A leaky pipe at Catamaran Park was left unreported – the City needs to advertise Foster City Access more
- Financial constraints to making improvements

What do you imagine conservation and sustainability will look like in Foster City over the next 10 to 20 years?

- Would like to get back to the original vision that Fosters had.
- Urging more green spaces on private land
- More solar
- Regional connectivity will help us in the future

What issues regarding parks and open space are the most important to the future of Foster City?

- Increasing accessibility to the Parks and open spaces
- That's good, enhancing accessibility.



- Is there a Park Square footage per resident goal we can aim for?
- Urging private landowners to convert unused concrete spaces into green spaces
- We need more natural flowers in the City, but it can increase water usage

What barriers to improving parks and open space currently exist?

- Again, financial constraints
- Apathy and no consequences to the problems facing the City, like Climate Change

How do you imagine parks and open spaces will look in Foster City over the next 10 to 20 years?

- More plants, more butterflies
- Fining people who litter or don't recycle
- Placement of all three garbage bins (Trash, Recycling, and Compost) in the parks with instructions on how to recycle and why
- Updating the Parks for accessibility