

Nancy McPeak

From: Dodi Kelleher <dodikelleher@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2020 12:11 PM
To: Ronald Curtis; Alan Teague; Rona Rothenberg; Asheshh Saheba; Teresa Ruiz; Hanson Hom
Cc: Andrew Thomas; Sarah Henry; Nancy McPeak
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments for Planning Board consideration during the 9.28 meeting

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Dear Planning Board Members and Staff,

I am writing to reiterate and expand on my comments made at the September 14th Forum. I am aware that you have a regular Planning Board meeting on 9.28 and it is my hope that you will discuss revising the processes to increase meaningful public input in the Surveys, Forum meetings, and in the General Plan 2040.

I have three recommendations:

- There would be a much more robust and widely disseminated communication and outreach to the public to increase awareness of the Surveys, the Plan draft, and the Forums, including timelines and deadlines. This would include using multiple communication channels. Besides the City of Alameda website, Facebook and other social media, consider mailed postcards, multiple newspaper notices and other methods for those who may not have easy access to technology or are not facile in using it.
- The Surveys and the Plan need to become much more specific in defining terms and detailing proposed actions. I would point you back to Chris Buckley's detailed email representing AAPS. I suggest an iterative process with more than one round of Surveys and Forums. This would allow the public to better understand what is being proposed and give input as the Plan changes and becomes more detailed.
- The Forums themselves could be structured to allow for more interaction with the public and with more discussion with those in attendance.

I recognize that these recommendations would entail more time, some cost, and resources but it is my hope that by ensuring all interested stakeholders are informed and allowed to be party to the planning process in a meaningful way that it will lead to a reasonable community compromise and consensus rather than devolve into the lack of trust and divisiveness that currently seems to surround Measure Z.

Sincerely,
Dolores Kelleher



September 28, 2020

City of Alameda Planning Board
2263 Santa Clara Avenue, room 190
Alameda, CA 94501

Subject: General Plan Update Fall Forums – – Public Input and Survey Issues (Item 7-C on Planning Board’s September 28, 2020 Agenda).

Dear Boardmembers,

The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) would like to reiterate the comments in our September 12, 2020 letter to Planning Board and presented at the September 14, 2020 General Plan public forum concerning public input protocol at the three remaining General Plan public forums.

1. **Change the Planning Board meeting format to provide for more thorough public discussion than allowed under the Planning Board’s usual rules, including the three minute time limit.** A document as important and complex as the General Plan needs more opportunity for in-depth discussion. The usual process found in most other communities is more informal – allowing true back-and-forth discussion between members of the public, staff and Planning Board members. This allows more opportunities for ideas to be further developed and conflicting points of view and ambiguities to be resolved.
2. **Allow oral public comment BEFORE Planning Board discussion.** This has been the standard procedure at Planning Board meetings and allows Planning Board members to consider oral public comments as part of the Planning Board discussion. But at the September 14 public forum, oral public comments were not allowed until after the Planning Board discussion. **Why was this procedure changed?**
3. **Do not limit Planning Board input just to the specific themes, policies and (presumably) actions set forth in each survey.** There may be important related provisions not included in the surveys that Planning Board members and the public may want to comment on. For example, at the September 14 public forum, the Planning Board should probably have been encouraged to comment on the proposed use of floor area ratio, height limits, minimum setbacks and other form-based standards as alternatives to residential density to define maximum allowed residential building intensities.

Related to this, the September 14 staff report had asked the Planning Board to respond only to the following four questions listed in the staff report, which would have tended to discourage Planning Board input on related issues:

- i. Does the Planning Board endorse the inclusion of Theme #1 in the General Plan?
- ii. If yes, does the Planning Board wish to modify or expand the theme in any way?
- iii. Does the Planning Board endorse the policy directions articulated by the policies highlighted in the survey and in this staff report?
- iv. Does the Planning Board wish to modify or revise policies in any way?

Fortunately, at the meeting the Planning Board was not limited to just addressing these four questions and the questions were actually not specifically responded to.

4. **Survey format.** We agree with the September 14 staff report assessment that the survey results may not reflect a full cross-section of the community. Responding to the survey requires computer skills and equipment that many Alameda residents do not have, especially lower income people and older residents. Although challenging, providing the survey in hard copy form to as many of these residents as possible might be helpful.
5. **Announce the cutoff date and time for survey comments to be provided as part of the Planning Board packets for each of the remaining three public forms.** For example, the cutoff date for the first survey was apparently August 31, but this was never announced. As a result, comments submitted after August 31 were not provided the Planning Board at the September 14 forum. **The cut off dates should be sent to both the General Plan email subscribers and posted on the General Plan website.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact me at (510) 523-0411 or cbuckleyAICP@att.net if you would like to discuss these comments.

Sincerely,

Christopher Buckley, Chair
Preservation Action Committee
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

By electronic transmission:

cc: Andrew Thomas and Allen Tai
Mayor and City Council
Historical Advisory Board
AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee