



December 18, 2006

**Steering Committee
Members:**

Timothy J. Banuelos

Thomas Brooks

John Chapin

Debbie Long

Steven McFarland

Paul Sekins

Maureen Toms

**Notice of Preparation
Of a Draft Environmental Impact Report regarding the
City of Pinole General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Fee Studies**

The City of Pinole is undertaking the first comprehensive update of the Pinole General Plan since 1995, and will be the lead agency for preparation of a program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the General Plan Update.

We need to know your views regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. If you work for a public agency, your comments should address the scope and content of environmental information that is germane to the agency's statutory responsibilities, as required by Section 15082(b) of the State Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A summary of the project and potential environmental effects proposed for analysis is provided below.

Written comments can be submitted at any time during the notice period which begins December 18 and ends at 5:30 PM on January 16, 2007. Letters should be directed to:

City of Pinole General Plan Update
Attn: Elizabeth Dunn, EIR Task Manager
2131 Pear Street
Pinole, CA 94564
(or e-mail to info@pinolegeneralplan.com)

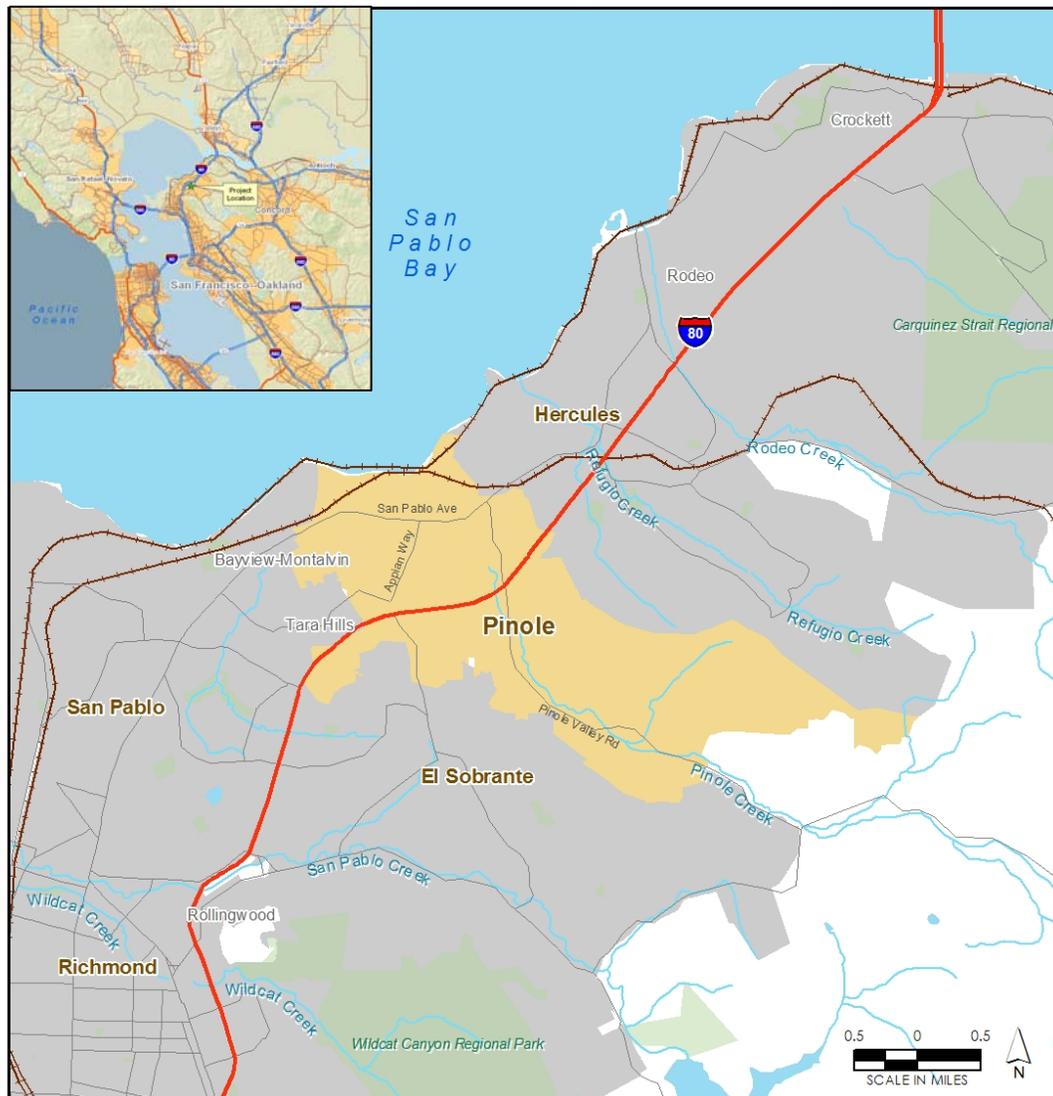
In addition, oral comments will be accepted at two public/agency meetings:

- Daytime Meeting: 2:00 PM on January 10, 2007 at Pinole City Hall Council Chambers, 2131 Pear Street, Pinole (Targeted for Public Agency Staff)
- Nighttime Meeting: 6:00 PM on January 10, 2007 at Pinole City Hall Council Chambers, 2131 Pear Street, Pinole

It is not necessary to comment more than once. All comments will be considered during preparation of the EIR and the General Plan update. Please call the City of Pinole Planning Department at (510) 724-9014 and ask for Elizabeth Dunn if you have questions.

Project Name: City of Pinole General Plan Update

Project Location: The City of Pinole General Plan addresses the incorporated area of Pinole, California.



Source: ESRI, 2006.

Project Description:

The proposed project consists of the adoption of an updated General Plan as well as an update to the Zoning Ordinance for the City of Pinole. California law requires all local jurisdictions in the State to maintain a current general plan with goals and policies to guide land use and development. The current version of the Pinole General Plan was adopted in 1995, although some sections (known as elements) have been updated since then. (A copy can be found on the City’s website at www.ci.pinole.ca.us.)

In 2006, the Pinole City Council stated its desire to undertake a comprehensive update of the Plan and Zoning Ordinance and in mid-2006 determined that a Steering Committee, comprised of the members of the Planning Commission, would prepare the Plan and build public support. Concurrently, City staff and consultants have been charged with preparing an EIR.

It is anticipated that the revision process now underway will result in adoption of a new General Plan in mid-2008 to provide policy guidance related to land use, transportation, public services, and related issues such as noise, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, and housing over the next twenty years. The General Plan Update will reflect the changing conditions in the City since the various Elements were first prepared, and integrate the elements into a coordinated whole. The General Plan Update is expected to reflect existing land use designations and development policy, with an emphasis being on the effective implementation of the existing goals of the City. These may include mechanisms to encourage higher intensity use of vacant and underutilized land near transit, and in the City's redevelopment areas. Design considerations, economic development, growth management, conservation, and public utilities and services also will be integrated into the overall planning framework update. The City's intent is to incorporate environmental factors into the Plan.

A Zoning Ordinance Update and a Review of Grading and Subdivision Ordinance are also underway by City staff and consultants. The Zoning Code amendments will address the following:

- Ensure zoning provisions are consistent with the current and planned amendments to the General Plan.
- Update zoning district allowed use provisions and development standards as necessary and appropriate.
- Incorporate permit processing information consistent with law and current practices.
- Create a Form Based Code for San Pablo Avenue, Appian Way, and a portion of Pinole Valley Road.
- Reorganize zoning regulations to be more user friendly, and consistent with other Municipal Code Sections.
- Ensure that zoning provisions are in compliance with applicable provisions of State and Federal laws.

In addition to a Plan Update and an update to the Zoning Ordinance, the City will conduct the following studies to evaluate modifications in the current fee structures:

- Development Impact Fees
- User Fees
- Low-Income Housing Fees

The following General Plan Elements would be updated or modified to develop a preferred General Plan Update:

- Land Use and Economic Development Element
- Housing Element
- Transportation and Circulation Element
- Open Space and Environmental Protection Element
- Health and Safety Element (including Air and Noise)
- Growth Management Element
- Community Services and Facilities Element (including water)
- Community Character Element (Green Building and Design provisions proposed)

Potential Environmental Effects:

The proposed project may have environmental impacts, and the EIR will assess the project's potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects on the following:

- Aesthetics, including visual character, scenic views, light and glare;
- Air Quality, including the regional air quality plan, violations of existing air quality standards, air pollutants, and odors;
- Biological Resources, including special status (e.g. rare and endangered) plant and animal species, riparian habitats and other sensitive natural communities, wetlands, wildlife movement and nursery sites, related local policies or ordinances, and adopted plans;
- Cultural Resources, including historic, archaeological and paleontological resources;
- Geology, Soils & Mineral Resources, including potential risks associated with earthquakes and landslides, soil erosion, issues associated with unstable sites, expansive soils, or septic systems, and conflicts with mineral resource recovery;
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials, including potential safety hazards, exposure to hazardous materials, emergency response plans, safety hazards with public or private airports, and risks involving wildland fires;
- Hydrology & Water Quality, including water quality and runoff, waste discharge requirements, groundwater quality/recharge, drainage, flooding and inundation;
- Land Use & Planning, including existing plans and policies in effect within the City's incorporated and the adjacent unincorporated areas that provide environmental protection measures;
- Noise, including vibration and exposure of people to excessive noise levels;
- Population & Housing, including growth inducement, employment-generated housing demand, affordable and workforce housing, and displacement of existing housing;
- Public Services, including, but not limited to, fire, sheriff, schools, and open space;
- Recreation, including existing and future parks and recreational facilities;
- Transportation, including local, commuter, and tourist traffic, parking, safety and emergency access, alternative modes of transportation (transit, air, water, pedestrian, bicycle); and
- Utilities & Service Systems, including Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements, water, wastewater and reclaimed water, drainage facilities, and solid waste facilities and regulations.

Agency representatives, members of the public, and other interested parties are encouraged to provide comments on these and any other environmental issues that should be explored in the draft EIR.