VISION AND SUMMARY

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VISION AND SUMMARY

GUIDING VISION

Sustainability and Stewardship

Community Tapestry

Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Health

The goals, policies and actions of this General Plan are collectively intended to achieve this community vision and guide future decisions related to land use and development. This General Plan ensures that every important land use decision will be scrutinized and assessed for its potential to affect the quality of life and the environment we live in.

Many issues will become apparent during the implementation of this General Plan. Some can be foreseen now, while others are less clear and will need to be dealt with as part of the ongoing process of implementing the plan. For example, our efforts to address climate change currently focus on minimizing our contribution to greenhouse gases. As science continues to contribute more to the knowledge about the impacts of climate change, we will need to address impacts that are relevant to Pinole, which may include changes in the level of the Bay, water supplies or energy needs.

In this situation, as in others that may arise, Pinole must respond to change and to internal and external factors in proactive ways, identifying issues before they become crises and developing innovative ways to respond on its own and in cooperation with other local and regional governmental agencies. As a result, this General Plan presents a policy framework that can and should be adjusted or adapted as needed over time.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

A community is defined as an entity that exhibits similar behavior patterns among groups of individuals. These patterns create interaction within local organizations and social activities that meet the social and economic requirement of a population. Concepts such as quality of life, small-town character, neighborhood and community take on a psychological definition consisting of shared norms or attitudes expressed through individuals' identification with a specific area or interest such as religion, ethnicity or income.

Physical characteristics such as landmarks, gateways, entryways, streets, buildings, and parks and open space are expressions of physical and natural features that also shape the community's character. The image of a community is not static — it will change as the community grows or changes.

The built environment, the surrounding natural environment, and the perceptions and experiences of residents and visitors increase the relevance of a community's character. Individual neighborhood settings also hold an important image that when grouped together produce a unified identity for the community as a whole. Careful planning can provide direction and guidance for development, the results of which will preserve community identity while planning for growth.

The Community Character Element of the General Plan is best defined as an element that will preserve, enhance and strengthen Pinole's feel of "sense of place" and unique identity. This element intends to incorporate that feel in existing facilities, buildings and features as well as in

new growth and development in Pinole, to influence the future physical form of the community by guiding the quality and character of future development, and to protect the existing natural and built environment that define Pinole's character. It also expresses a vision for the future where sustainable development and land use practices provide for the needs of existing residents and businesses while preserving choices for future generations.[1]

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The Growth Management Element establishes policies to direct growth within Pinole and indicates how the City intends to participate in regional land use and transportation planning efforts. The Growth Management Element includes level of service standards and performance standards for traffic and the provision of public services (e.g., fire, police, parks, sanitary sewer facilities, water and flood control) in order to ensure that public facilities are provided to accommodate growth consistent with adopted standards. By adopting and implementing this element, the City of Pinole establishes a comprehensive, long-range program that will match the demands for public facilities and services generated by new development or redevelopment with plans, capital improvement programs and development mitigation programs to ensure facilities are provided at an appropriate time and level to serve new development. Specifically, the Growth Management Element seeks to:

1. Attain a new level of mutually beneficial communication and coordinated planning between Pinole and its neighboring jurisdictions, other public agencies and regional agencies.

2. Provide community facilities, commercial services and amenities easily accessible to and from residential neighborhoods.

3. Support further development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

4. Provide a safe, attractive and efficient circulation system that ensures convenient access to all residential, business and recreational areas by various modes of transportation.

5. Encourage future growth to locate along the primary travel corridors through the community and in areas that are or can easily be served by transit.

6. Guide future growth so that at "buildout" the community remains an attractive, uncrowded and pleasant place to live and work.

[1] Sustainable development practices refer to the use of architectural and planning methods that address the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Specific examples include the use of solar panels for energy conservation, placing jobs near housing to reduce vehicle trips, and infill development in urban areas to reduce the consumption of agricultural land. Policies related to sustainability are identified with a symbol.

LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Pinole is a bedroom community with small-town character and modern amenities. The small-town character that makes Pinole a desirable place to live and visit is rooted in Pinole's Old Town area, where most major civic facilities are located, and established residential neighborhoods. More modern services can be found in development projects such as the Kaiser Medical Office Building and redeveloped Pinole Valley Shopping Center. Established neighborhoods and new development are linked together by community greenways, paths, roads and park facilities. Regional shopping centers located adjacent to Interstate 80 attract visitors from throughout western Contra Costa County and make Pinole an accessible and attractive place for people to work, shop and conduct business. The goals, policies and actions in the Land Use Element are intended to maintain Pinole's historic roots and small-town character, while providing the framework for the city to grow as a dynamic place with a balanced mix of land uses and a strong sense of identity that complements historic patterns and trends.

It is anticipated that Pinole will have minimal growth in the future. This growth will likely be modification of uses and infill development. Pinole does not anticipate expanding its Sphere of Influence (SOI) or annexing any land into the city in the foreseeable future. As required by Measure C and Measure J, the General Plan will address how future growth will impact community services and facilities in the Growth Management Element (Chapter 4), Community Services and Facilities Element (Chapter 8) and Circulation Element (Chapter 7).

The Land Use and Economic Development Element provides goals, policies and actions that achieve the following objectives:

1. Concentrate new development on Pinole's primary transportation corridors. By growing inward and along corridors that can accommodate transit, bicycles and pedestrians, the General Plan seeks to build on the city's historic land use patterns and improve the standard of living through the provision of additional high-quality services and shopping. The General Plan also looks to provide a logical and convenient interface between land uses to minimize the vehicular travel distances between residences, employment, services, shopping and recreational spaces.

2. Support economic development to improve the jobs/housing balance, attract catalyst businesses and ensure an economically sustainable community.

3. Protect ridgelines, community buffers, the San Pablo Bay shoreline, creeks, waterways and other environmental resources.

4. Retain and preserve existing businesses, particularly those which provide job opportunities and living wages for residents of Pinole.

5. Preserve open space by concentrating development densities and creating opportunities for urban agricultural areas. Urban agricultural areas provide opportunities for community gardening and specialty crop production. Preserved private open space and urban agriculture areas could also create opportunities for recreation and education.

6. Guide waterfront development to include enhanced public access, increased public recreational uses, Bay Trail connections, reuse of the RV Park property, and available area for the wastewater treatment plant expansion and Pinole Creek restoration.

HOUSING

This element is being prepared separately, but will be incorporated into the final General Plan.

CIRCULATION

Traffic congestion and other circulation constraints are major considerations in determining appropriate land uses and responding to future conditions that will affect the quality of life in Pinole. The Circulation Element provides data concerning existing and future conditions as a factual basis for community goals, policies and actions for existing and proposed roadway improvements and other transportation needs.

Pinole's Circulation Element addresses such issues as regional traffic congestion, traffic impacts on neighborhoods, public transit, trails and parking. More than other elements, the Circulation and Land Use elements act in concert to help achieve a vision of sustainability for the city. This element expresses a vision for the future where diverse transportation options, in conjunction with thoughtful development, provide for the needs of residents and businesses.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The Community Services and Facilities Element is an optional element under state law but is included in Pinole's General Plan to address important issues related to how new development under this General Plan will affect the City's ability to provide adequate community services and facilities. This element concerns the public infrastructure and facilities that support community functions and allow for the growth of the community. Operational and programmatic issues are considered, but this chapter is primarily concerned with the provision of capital facilities.

The primary tools for implementing the Community Services and Facilities Element are infrastructure and facilities master plans (i.e., water, wastewater, storm drainage, parks) and the five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Specifically, this element addresses the following service and facility topics:

- Civic/Community
- Police
- Fire
- Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreational
- Water
- Wastewater
- Stormwater
- Solid Waste and Recycling

- Community Health
- Education
- Roads
- Energy and Communication

This General Plan aims to build partnerships between the City and other public agencies that provide services to the City of Pinole.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Health and Safety Element seeks to recognize and remedy both present and anticipated concerns about the ongoing well-being of the city's residents, workforce and visitors. The goals, policies and actions identify viable solutions to minimize the potential risk of death, injuries, property damage, and economic hardship and social displacement resulting from fires, floods, earthquakes, landslides and other hazards. Additionally, this element addresses safety and hazards related to surface and groundwater contamination, the potential release of hazardous materials into the community, and general issues related to health care and police and fire protection services. By identifying these hazards and the appropriate abatement provisions, the Health and Safety Element will effectively reduce the potential for loss of life, property damage, and economic and social disruption from catastrophic events.

This element combines the noise, water and air quality analysis required by the State to be included in the Health and Safety Element and guides land use patterns in a way that minimizes the exposure of city residents to excessive natural and man-made hazards. The goal of the element's noise section is to identify the major sources of noise in the city and discuss the City's role in ensuring comfortable and safe noise levels throughout the community.

This element addresses air quality issues by establishing a framework for working with other communities in the region and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) to improve air quality in the Bay Area. The element's air quality section underscores the effects on air quality brought about by land use patterns and the resulting transportation behavior. The goals, policies and actions outlined in this element focus on improving air quality through embracing regional coordination, "smart growth" land use concepts, transportation demand management, energy conservation, encouraging cleaner industries and vehicles, and public education.

This element also addresses water quality issues. The element describes local efforts to satisfy the federal Clean Water Act and describes efforts to require on-site stormwater treatment in conjunction with new development to satisfy ongoing Regional Water Quality Control Board permit requirements.

Finally, this element addresses the significance of health care accessibility and affordability in Pinole. This element will outline health care that serves various sectors of the population, as well as the types of health care facilities that serve Pinole. In addition, attention will be given to initiatives that the City or related agencies have begun or are in the process of developing to increase accessibility to health care for the entire population.

By addressing all the components mentioned above, the City can maintain high levels of service while implementing necessary programs and capital improvements to ensure the community's well-being.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE

The Natural Resources and Open Space Element, a legally required element, is included in this General Plan to address and establish policies addressing the issues of natural resource conservation and open space preservation within the city limits. Pinole's natural resources and open spaces are some of the city's greatest assets. They serve to strengthen community identity, create a sense of place, and enhance Pinole's quality of life. This element addresses resource conservation concerns within Pinole, including enhancement of the environment through resource conservation and preservation of biological resources. Policies addressing water and energy conservation are included in the Community Services and Facilities Element. This element identifies the need to protect and preserve existing open space and natural recreational areas, as well as the need to maintain those areas and create additional open space and natural recreation areas for the enjoyment of residents and the protection of the environment. Of particular importance to the Pinole community are the preservation and enhancement of the Pinole Creek and Watershed, access and use of the shoreline along San Pablo Bay, protection of the ridgelines around Pinole and the addition of a portion of the Bay Trail in Pinole. The goals, policies and actions in this element will foster the preservation of Pinole's many valuable natural resources, including wildlife, habitat, water resources, soils and mineral resources.

SUSTAINABILITY

The role of local governments is becoming increasingly important in combating climate change through setting policies for future community actions. The Pinole General Plan incorporates sustainable policies and programs throughout all elements of the plan. The Sustainability Element creates a framework within which the City will link these elements and identify programs to implement sustainable policies and practices to improve the quality of life and public health, increase energy efficiency and reduce waste by utilizing more sustainable and compact development patterns, encourage alternative forms of transportation, and establish programs to minimize the waste stream and improve water quality.

Pinole places high value on civic and economic self-sufficiency and maintaining a mix of housing options to allow Pinole seniors to "age in place" without leaving their community and support system, and to allow Pinole's youth to remain in the community as they start families.

The Sustainability Element supports land use patterns and programs that will enhance opportunities to improve ecological conditions, enhance the local economy and provide equal job, housing, education, recreation and transportation opportunities. The Sustainability Element is also the General Plan chapter that most allows Pinole to address local climate change issues by setting goals and policies to guide Pinole's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, encourage renewable energy sources, expand local use of green technology, and

educate Pinole's residents on how they can live fully while preserving Pinole for future generations.

Below is a visual representation of the concept of sustainability in Pinole. The overarching themes of fiscal health, community tapestry and environmental stewardship shape the goals, policies and actions in this element, as well as the General Plan.