



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

November 20, 2025
Agenda Item No. 3

SUBJECT: General Plan Update: Seeking Input on Refreshed Goals and Policies in the Draft Land Use Element and Safety Element (PA2022-080)

SITE LOCATION: Citywide

APPLICANT: City of Newport Beach

PLANNER: Benjamin M. Zdeba, AICP, Planning Manager
949-644-3253, bzdeba@newportbeachca.gov

ITEM SUMMARY

At its October 9, 2025, meeting, the Planning Commission received draft versions of the updated Land Use and Safety Elements for review and initial guidance. After discussion, Commissioners determined it would be most appropriate to examine the drafts individually and return in November to discuss. The draft Elements have since undergone proofreading and editorial editing, but no substantive changes. Final drafts will be returned, alongside the balance of the updated General Plan, to the Commission for formal consideration in early 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Find this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) and 15060(c)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines because this initial guidance and input from the Planning Commission will not result in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly; and
- 2) Discuss the draft Land Use Element and draft Safety Element and provide any additional guidance or feedback on the goals and policies. Direct staff to forward the input onto the General Plan Advisory Committee for consideration. In early 2026, the refined and finalized drafts will return to the Planning Commission, along with the remainder of the updated General Plan, for review and formal recommendation of approval to the City Council.

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DISCUSSION

Drafts of the Land Use Element and Safety Element were introduced to the Planning Commission at the October 9, 2025, meeting. The full staff report is provided for reference as Attachment A.

After a brief staff presentation and public comments, the Commission determined it would be most appropriate to review individually and return to a meeting in November to provide collective input. At the meeting, Commissioners expressed an interest in 1) the use of the phrase “environmental justice” in the Land Use Element; and 2) understanding which goals and/or policies have been omitted as part of the update.

Environmental Justice

State law mandates that cities and counties incorporate Environmental Justice (or “EJ”) considerations into their planning processes. This requirement stems from Senate Bill (SB) 1000 (2016), which requires local jurisdictions to address EJ in their General Plans. There are two primary approaches to integrating Environmental Justice into the General Plan:

- 1) Jurisdictions may include a standard-alone EJ Element in their General Plan. This Element would focus specifically on identifying and addressing the environmental and public health issues faced by disadvantaged communities. By having a standalone element, jurisdictions can give greater visibility and priority to EJ concerns. This approach should be considered for cities and counties with significant EJ issues that warrant a standalone Element; or
- 2) Alternatively, jurisdictions may integrate EJ considerations throughout the various elements of the General Plan. This approach involves incorporating EJ policies into the goals, policies, and programs of each element, rather than having a separate element dedicated solely to EJ.

Through collaboration with the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) and the General Plan Update Steering Committee (GPUSC), it was determined that the alternative approach of integrating policies into each applicable Element would be best for Newport Beach. As this is a requirement of the State, it is most appropriate to reference EJ by name.

Deleted Policies

Attachment Nos. PC 2 and PC 3 have been prepared by the City’s consultant, Dudek, and are included with this report. Although they may not be completely up to date, they are intended to provide the Commission with an idea as to which policies have been omitted as part of the update. As a note, anything that was removed was generally flagged as no longer being relevant or necessary while others were combined or picked up

elsewhere in the draft. The result is a streamlined General Plan that is more user-friendly for all.

Updates Since October Meeting

As a note, since the introduction of these Elements, they have been proofread and cleaned up for more effective public review. No changes have been made to the contents since the October Commission meeting. These initial draft Elements, alongside others are available online at <https://newporttogether.mysocialpinpoint.com/2050-general-plan-draft-elements> with the opportunity for public review and comment through November 17, 2025. While that deadline will have passed prior to this meeting, if there is a lack of consensus or divergent opinions, Commissioners may still participate as community members through the public review process by contacting staff.

City staff will bring back final refined drafts of the Elements and the remainder of the updated General Plan for formal review and support from the Commission in early 2026.

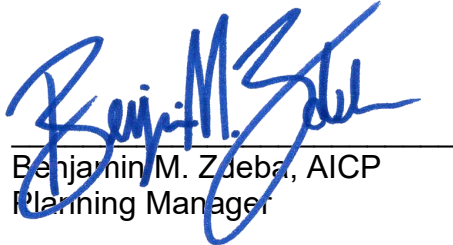
Environmental Review

This action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in a physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

Public Notice

This agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the Planning Commission considers them).

Prepared by:



Benjamin M. Zueba, AICP
Planning Manager

Submitted by:



Jaime Murillo, AICP
Acting Community Development Director

ATTACHMENTS

- PC 1 October 9, 2025, Planning Commission Staff Report
- PC 2 Land Use Element Policy Comparison
- PC 3 Safety Element Policy Comparison