

County of Santa Clara
Department of Planning and Development



101649

DATE: June 18, 2020
TO: Housing, Land Use, Environment, and Transportation Committee (HLUET)
FROM: Sylvia Gallegos, Deputy County Executive
Jacqueline R. Onciano, Director, Dept. of Planning and Development
SUBJECT: Stanford Community Plan Update

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive report from the Office of the County Executive and the Department of Planning and Development relating to a proposed scope of work for updates to the Stanford University Community Plan.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

Preparation of the proposed updates to the Stanford Community Plan, including a Municipal Services Study and an evaluation of the affordability of graduate student housing, is estimated to cost up to \$500,000. The Department is finalizing evaluation of the additional costs and consultant services necessary to support the SCP Update.

CONTRACT HISTORY

On April 17, 2018, the Board approved an agreement with Metropolitan Planning Group (M-Group) for planning/land use review consultant services relating to Stanford University's proposed General Use Permit (GUP), including updates to the Stanford University Community Plan (SCP), through June 30, 2019. The Board approved amendments on December 18, 2018, August 27, 2019, December 17, 2019, and most recently April 7, 2020 to facilitate the processing of SCP amendments. For detailed contract history, please refer to linked Legislative File 100735.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

At the direction of the Board of Supervisors at its February 11, 2020 meeting (linked Legislative File 100343, Referral by Supervisors Simitian and Chavez), and as the first phase of planned work to update the County General Plan, the Administration is proposing updates

to the SCP. The Board adopted the SCP in 2000, and most recently amended it in 2015. Updates to the SCP had been proposed by the Administration and considered by the Board in tandem with the proposed adoption of a new GUP for Stanford in fall 2019. Stanford University withdrew the GUP application on November 1, 2019, and the SCP updates were not adopted by the Board.

The February 11, 2020 Referral to the Administration recommended the Administration move forward with specified items related to implementation and updates to the SCP and 1985 Land Use Agreement. The Board directed staff to consider the following areas within the SCP update:

- Relocation of the “possible future school site” designation;
- Extension of the Academic Growth Boundary for 99 years, subject to the four-fifths vote required to modify; and
- Other changes suggested by staff, including policies based on graduate student housing affordability, municipal services, and childcare.

This report summarizes the scope of work the Administration has prepared for the SCP update, including the proposed community outreach and stakeholder engagement strategy, and the expected timeline to complete the proposed updates.

Scope of Work for Community Plan Updates

The SCP is a component of, and supplement to, the Santa Clara County General Plan as it applies policies specific to Stanford lands in unincorporated Santa Clara County.

The primary purpose of the SCP is to guide future use and development of Stanford lands in a manner that incorporates key General Plan principles of compact urban development, open space protection, and resource conservation. The SCP, as does the General Plan, has several elements including the following:

- Growth and Development
- Land Use
- Housing
- Circulation
- Open Space
- Resource Conservation
- Health and Safety

The SCP is also consistent with and furthers the implementation of associated planning instruments, such as the 1985 Land Use Policy Agreement among Stanford University, City of Palo Alto, and the County. As part of its work on updating the SCP, the Administration will also be reviewing the 1985 Land Use Policy Agreement.

The Administration recommends that the SCP be updated and incorporate the elements summarized in the table below.

Table 1 – Proposed Approach to SCP Update

Item	Proposed Approach
Academic Growth Boundary (AGB)	Extend Academic Growth Boundary (AGB) for 99 years, subject to the four-fifths vote required to modify (Board referral).
Potential Future Public School Site	Move the location of the designated future school site. (Board referral).
Ratio of Academic Space to Housing	Currently, the Linkage Policy language relies on the General Use Permit to determine the linkage standards between the ratio of academic space to housing units constructed. Add explicit policy language about the desired ratio of academic space to housing.
Construction of Housing	<p>During the GUP Application process, a potential displacement issue was revealed whereby Stanford purchases new construction and existing housing in surrounding communities resulting in a reduction of available housing units in the market.</p> <p>Require construction of housing by Stanford, rather than conversion of new or existing housing units in surrounding communities, to achieve the ratio of academic space to housing.</p>
Graduate Student Housing	During the GUP Application process, graduate students voiced concerns of housing affordability. Incorporate appropriate policies regarding graduate student housing, as recommended by the Graduate Student Housing Affordability Study that is proposed to be conducted in this scope of work.
Traffic and Daily Trips	Retain the “no net new commute trips” standard and add non-peak and total daily trips as standards to provide a comprehensive approach to traffic congestion, energy consumption, and air pollution.
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	The Office of Planning and Research (OPR) updated the existing methods for evaluating transportation impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act, to include VMT. Add policy regarding Vehicle Miles Traveled.
Complete Streets	Add policy language regarding Complete Streets requiring streets to be planned and operated to enable safe and comfortable travel for all users. Include policies promoting Green Infrastructure.
Alternative Forms of Transportation	Consider other forms of traffic/transportation (bike, pedestrians, public transit, use of scooters) in policies.
Historic Resources	Add policy regarding impacts to historic resources, further clarifying the approach to preservation of historic resources, including the resource and site context.
Incorporate General Plan Health Element Policies	Add background information and policies regarding Social and Emotional Health as well as Climate Change and Adaptation.

Item	Proposed Approach
Municipal Services Study	Contract with a consultant to prepare a Municipal Services Study that would inform SCP policies that define appropriate and adequate service levels for the Stanford community in the unincorporated county.
Childcare Study	Conduct a Childcare Study through a consultant and incorporate appropriate policies.
Graduate Student Housing Affordability Study	Conduct a Graduate Student Housing Study through a consultant and incorporate appropriate policies.
Post-COVID-19 University Operations	Work with the University to determine any post-COVID-19 changes and needs, relating to resiliency and sustainability as a university.
Design Guidelines/Principles	Develop appropriate design guidelines and/or principles with special focus on areas near historic resources and adjacent to off-campus neighborhoods, based on context-based principles and defined guidelines and standards.

Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach Strategies

The Administration recommends the existing Community Resources Group (CRG) serve as the advisory body to the County throughout the SCP update process. The CRG was formed through Board approval during the 2000 GUP to advise staff on Stanford-related matters. It includes representatives from various stakeholder groups including neighboring cities. The SCP update (“Update”) was discussed with the CRG at its June 4, 2020 meeting.

The Administration also plans to conduct outreach with surrounding jurisdictions and stakeholder groups that provided input during the GUP Application and EIR process. This includes environmental, neighborhood, student, and union organizations as identified in Attachment 1. Community engagement will include the creation of a website for the Update with a notification sign-up option, community outreach meetings, and notifications to stakeholders and interested parties through mailings, newspaper noticing, social media postings, and email lists.

In accordance with the County’s Health Order, the Administration will use online tools including webinars and video conferencing to conduct community outreach and explore methods to provide computer stations to individuals needing internet access to allow participation in the outreach process. The Update website will also receive input by email.

On May 29, 2020, the Administration met with Stanford University representatives to discuss the proposed updates and receive feedback, and will continue to engage with Stanford University representatives, incorporating regular meetings, throughout the Update process.

Timeline

The Administration estimates that the Stanford Community Plan Update will take approximately 18 to 24 months to complete, with a target completion date of fall 2022. The proposed tentative schedule incorporates updates that may warrant the preparation of an Environmental Document. The Administration proposes to provide updates to the HLUET

Committee and the Planning Commission during the process, including discussion of the draft SCP amendments, proposed to be completed in fall 2020/winter 2021.

Next Steps

The Administration is in the process of seeking an updated scope of work to include additional services associated with the Municipal Services Study, Childcare Study, and Graduate Student Housing Affordability Study that would inform the SCP update process, and will return to the Board with the service agreements and funding associated with these studies. The Administration will conduct initial community outreach with stakeholders in late summer 2020.

CHILD IMPACT

The recommended action will have a positive impact on children and youth as the proposed updates would include a Childcare Study and would recommend policies based on that study.

SENIOR IMPACT

The recommended action could have a positive impact on seniors as the proposed updates would involve a Municipal Services Study, which may include senior services.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The recommended action will have a positive sustainability implications as the proposed updates would involve open space conservation, green infrastructure, low-impact development, automobile trip reductions, and alternative modes of transportation.

BACKGROUND

Stanford lands within unincorporated Santa Clara County, also considered the Stanford University Community Plan Area, are subject to policies in the SCP. The development within the Stanford Community Plan Area is currently regulated under the 2000 General Use Permit. For more information on the SCP and GUP, visit <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/dpd/Programs/Stanford/Pages/Stanford.aspx>.

In November 2016, Stanford University submitted a General Use Permit application requesting 3,500,000 net new square feet of academic development and student housing, 550 net new faculty/staff housing units, 40,000 square feet of trip-reducing facilities, and 50,000 square feet of temporary construction space. The County published a draft EIR and proceeded with recommendations to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors regarding the application. However, Stanford withdrew the GUP application on November 1, 2019.

As part of the application review, several public hearings were held. Issues discussed at these public hearings are related to the SCP. These issues were publicly discussed, and the County

received comments from the public, the Board, and the University. Consequently, County staff made recommendations to the Board concerning the SCP. These recommendations can now be incorporated into this new effort. With the withdrawal of the GUP application, the County can conduct additional research to address the issues raised during the public hearings, including a Municipal Services Study, a Childcare Study, and a Graduate Student Housing Affordability Study. It is appropriate to move forward with a County-initiated update to the SCP and it represents the first phase of planned work to update the overall County General Plan. The Department is in the process of pre-planning for other General Plan and Housing Element updates.

Other Planning Collaborations

The County is also participating in a housing collaborative with other cities in the region to address the housing crisis and has several efforts underway for promoting affordable housing development within the region.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION

If the HLUET Committee does not accept the report, the Administration will revise the report as directed by HLUET.

STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL

The Departments request no follow-up steps from the Clerk of the Board.

LINKS:

- Linked To: 100735 : 100735
- Linked To: 100343 : 100343

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment 1 - Project Stakeholders for SCP Update (PDF)