



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

ITEM NO. 5.1

DATE: March 17, 2026

TO: Chairperson and Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Steve Riley, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Hearing to receive public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Livermore General Plan 2045 and conforming amendments to the Livermore Municipal Code and Livermore Development Code.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Staff recommend the Planning Commission facilitate a public hearing to receive public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan 2045 and conforming amendments to the Livermore Municipal Code and Livermore Development Code. No action is required by the Planning Commission at this meeting. The Planning Commission will review and make recommendations on the General Plan Update and EIR at a future public hearing.

DECISION TYPE

Not Applicable

SUMMARY

The City initiated a comprehensive update to the 2003 General Plan in 2021, culminating in the preparation of the Draft Livermore General Plan 2045, which modernizes goals, policies, actions, and land use designations to reflect State requirements, regional growth forecasts, climate resiliency, and emerging transportation technologies. The update focuses future growth within the Urban Growth Boundary, prioritizing infill development near existing or planned infrastructure and establishing a policy framework that will guide City decision making through 2045. The General Plan 2045 reflects extensive public engagement, including workshops, surveys, stakeholder interviews, and other outreach conducted throughout the planning process.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) has been prepared to evaluate the environmental impacts associated with implementation of the General Plan 2045 and conforming amendments to the Livermore Municipal Code (LMC) and Development Code (LDC) (collectively referred to herein as the Project). A Notice of Availability (NOA) was filed on March 3, 2026, with the State Clearinghouse, the Alameda County Clerk, and distributed to interested parties in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15087 (Attachment 1).

The role of the Planning Commission is to facilitate a public hearing and receive comments on the Draft EIR. No deliberation or recommendation on the merits of the General Plan 2045 or Draft EIR is requested at this time, and no action is required by the Planning Commission at this meeting. The Planning Commission will review and make a recommendation to the City Council on the General Plan 2045 and the related EIR at a future public hearing. The City Council will hold a separate public hearing to make a final decision on certification of the EIR and adoption of the Project.

DISCUSSION

Background

The City launched the General Plan Update in fall 2021 with a series of visioning events to establish community priorities for Livermore's long-term future. Between December 2021 and June 2024, the General Plan team conducted extensive outreach, including community meetings, workshops, pop up events, and online engagement, to identify potential areas of land use change, evaluate land use alternatives, refine the preferred land use scenario, and update draft goals and policies. These efforts, along with supporting technical studies and background reports, informed preparation of the Draft General Plan 2045. Background materials, technical reports, meeting recordings, and other project information are available at <https://imaginelivermore2045.org/>.

Project Description

The General Plan 2045 is a comprehensive update to the City's 2003-2025 General Plan. The General Plan 2045 revises long-range goals, policies, actions, and land use designations to reflect current conditions and community priorities, comply with State and regional requirements, and guide future decision making. The update extends the planning horizon to 2045 and addresses emerging issues such as climate resiliency, transportation technology, and State housing obligations. The plan is organized into an introduction, a community profile, nine topical chapters, an implementation plan, and supporting appendices. These chapters include all State mandated elements, Land Use, Mobility, Open Space and Conservation, Noise, and Safety, along with elements tailored to Livermore's needs, such as Community Identity, Infrastructure, Community Services, and Economic Development. The 2023-2031 Housing Element (previously approved in 2023), is required to follow a separate State-mandated adoption cycle. It is maintained as an independent document and is not included within the compiled General Plan 2045.

Each chapter of the General Plan 2045 provides background information and a structured set of goals, policies, and actions that guide future land use decisions, public investments, and City operations. The Implementation Plan consolidates all actions, identifies responsible departments, and outlines timing consistent with the City's five-year Strategic Plan cycle. The Draft General Plan 2045 is available online at <https://imaginelivermore2045.org/draft-general-plan-2045/>.

Draft Land Use Map and Buildout Projections

The Draft General Plan Land Use Map establishes the allowed uses, densities, and intensities for each parcel in the city and its Planning Area (Attachment 2). Consistent with long standing voter approved initiatives, General Plan 2045 continues to focus growth within the Urban Growth Boundary, emphasizing infill development on vacant or underutilized parcels near existing or planned infrastructure. Buildout

projections for the 2045 horizon year estimate:

- 16,610 additional housing units (total of 49,640 units)
- 43,820 new residents (total population of 131,750)
- 6,110 new jobs (total of 63,330 jobs)

These projections reflect the long-term capacity and a maximum build out scenario of the updated land use map and form the basis for environmental analysis in the Draft EIR.

Conforming Amendments to the Livermore Municipal Code and Development Code

To maintain consistency between the updated General Plan and the City's regulatory framework, staff identified targeted procedural revisions to the Livermore Municipal Code (LMC) and additional regulatory language to be located in the Livermore Development Code (LDC).

Specific amendments to the LDC include:

- Scenic Resources Overlay District: Establishes development and design standards to protect scenic views and enhance community gateways.
- Zoning Amendments: Updates permitted uses, development standards, definitions, and procedures to align with revised General Plan land use designations.

Relationship to Future Development Review

The General Plan does not approve or entitle any specific development. Instead, it establishes policy framework that will guide future discretionary decisions by City staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. All subsequent development proposals will undergo separate project level review and must demonstrate consistency with the General Plan 2045 and applicable zoning regulations.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines, Section 15378(a), the City has prepared a Draft EIR to address the potential environmental effects associated with the Project. The Project has a long-term planning horizon of 2045. Permitting, planning, and development actions under the Project would be related geographically and as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions for implementation. Therefore, the Draft EIR was prepared as a Program EIR, pursuant to Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines.

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) of this Draft EIR was circulated for a 30-day public review period beginning March 7, 2023, to solicit comments regarding the scope and content of the environmental analysis to be prepared for the proposed General Plan 2045. The NOP was distributed to responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and interested organizations and individuals pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082. The NOP was posted on the Project's website and made available for public review. Additionally, a public scoping meeting was held on March 21, 2023, to accept public input on environmental topics to be analyzed in the EIR and approaches to the impact analyses. During this time, the City received comment letters from a variety of State agencies and one member of the public, which were incorporated where appropriate into the analysis within the Draft EIR.

Summary of Environmental Significance Determinations

The Draft EIR evaluates the environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Project, analyzing eighteen environmental topic areas consistent with CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A comprehensive summary of the Project's environmental significance determinations and mitigation measures, as applicable, is provided in the Draft EIR's Executive Summary (see Attachment 1 for a link to the Draft EIR).

Less Than Significant Impacts

The Draft EIR concludes that, with implementation of General Plan 2045 goals, policies, and actions, impacts in the following twelve topic areas would be less than significant:

- Aesthetics
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Population and Housing
- Public Services, Parks, and Recreation
- Transportation
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

Potentially Significant Impacts Reduced to Less Than Significant with Mitigation

With incorporation of feasible mitigation measures, the Project's impacts on the following topic areas would be reduced to a less than significant level with mitigation, as provided in the Draft EIR (see Attachment 1 for a link to the Draft EIR):

- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources

Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

The Draft EIR also identifies impacts that cannot be fully mitigated to a less than significant level at the programmatic level. Although General Plan policies and actions would lessen these impacts, they would remain significant and unavoidable in the following areas:

- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Mineral Resources
- Noise

In each of these topic areas, the Draft EIR provides the required justification for the impact determination by evaluating potential mitigation approaches and demonstrating, based on substantial evidence, that no feasible mitigation measures exist that would avoid or substantially lessen the significant impacts,

resulting in impacts that remain significant and unavoidable at the programmatic General Plan level.

When a project has significant and unavoidable impacts, a Statement of Overriding Considerations must be adopted at the time the Final EIR is certified as part of General Plan adoption, not at the Draft EIR stage. The Statement of Overriding Considerations would identify how the economic, legal, social, technological, and/or other benefits of the proposed Project could outweigh the potential adverse environmental effects. Examples of these benefits might be providing affordable housing, supporting local businesses, or providing local jobs for residents. The requirements for a Statement of Overriding Considerations are established in CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 and in Public Resources Code Section 21081.

Project Alternatives

The Draft EIR evaluates a reasonable range of alternatives intended to reduce the Project's significant environmental impacts while still achieving most of the Project objectives. Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6, the Draft EIR analyzes two alternatives in detail:

- No Project Alternative: Assumes continued implementation of the existing General Plan.
- Reduced Industrial and Concentrated Residential Alternative: Redesignates certain undeveloped areas currently identified as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or MRZ-2 to non-development land use categories to reduce the potential conversion of agricultural and mineral resources. This alternative would accommodate the same number of housing units and the same population growth as the Project, meaning the total buildout would remain the same. However, by concentrating residential development in fewer areas, this alternative would result in reduced industrial development and fewer associated jobs.

The Reduced Industrial and Concentrated Residential Alternative is identified as the Environmentally Superior Alternative, as CEQA prohibits designating the Project itself for that role.

In addition to the two alternatives analyzed in detail, the Draft EIR also considers other alternatives that were evaluated but rejected from further study, with the EIR documenting the rationale, such as infeasibility, inability to meet most Project objectives, or failure to meaningfully reduce significant impacts, consistent with CEQA requirements.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Draft EIR is available for review on the Project's website at: <https://imaginelivermore2045.org/>. Printed copies are also available for public review during normal business hours at the City of Livermore City Hall and Civic Center Library located at 1052 S. Livermore Avenue and 1188 S. Livermore Avenue, respectively.

The 45-day review and public comment period for the Draft EIR began on March 3, 2026, and ends on April 24, 2026. The City will receive verbal comments at the Planning Commission meeting at 7:00 pm on March 17, 2026. Written comments (mail or email) must be received by 5:00 p.m. on April 24, 2026. Please include the name, phone number, and address of a contact person in your public comment. Please submit your comments by mail or e-mail to:

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NEXT STEPS

Following the closing of the public review period, staff and the consultant team will compile all comments and prepare the Final EIR, including the comment letters received and responses. The General Plan 2045 and Final EIR will return to the Planning Commission at a future public hearing for a recommendation to the City Council. The City Council will then hold a separate public hearing to consider EIR certification and adoption of the Project.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend the Planning Commission facilitate a public hearing to receive public comments regarding the Draft EIR for the General Plan 2045 and conforming amendments to the Livermore Municipal Code and Livermore Development Code.

ATTACHMENTS

1. [Notice of Availability with link to Draft EIR](#)
2. [Draft General Plan Land Use Map](#)

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