



MILPITAS PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

August 27, 2025

PROJECT:	Study Session on Gateway-Main Street Sense of Place Plan
RECOMMENDATION:	Receive an overview of the work completed thus far for the Gateway-Main Street Sense of Place Plan and provide comments.
PROJECT LOCATION:	Main Street, between Weller Lane to Great Mall Parkway
<i>Addresses and Assessor's Parcel Number (APN):</i>	
<i>Area of City:</i>	
PEOPLE:	
<i>Project Applicant:</i>	City of Milpitas
<i>Consultant(s):</i>	Toole Design Group (TDG)
<i>Project Planner:</i>	Lillian VanHua, AICP, Principal Planner
LAND USE:	
<i>General Plan Designation:</i>	Multiple
<i>Zoning District:</i>	
ENVIRONMENTAL:	The project involves only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the City has not approved, adopted, or funded and does not require the preparation of an EIR or negative declaration but does require consideration of environmental factors pursuant to Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15262.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City kicked off the Gateway-Main Street Sense of Place Plan in December 2024. The Sense of Place Plan will be a new chapter that identifies the needed streetscape and transportation improvements along Main Street within the Gateway-Main Street Specific Plan. An update to the Milpitas Gateway-Main Street Specific Plan is underway; the project was initiated in late 2021 and is estimated to be completed by the end of 2025. The Plan will also create a Basic Infrastructure Plan (BIP) that details each type of improvement, assigns a priority, and establishes a plan-specific development impact fee to fund the improvements in the BIP. The goal of the project is to revitalize and transform Main Street into a complete neighborhood with infrastructure and amenities to support high-density, mixed-use development along the corridor.

The report provides a background of the overall project and details the work completed thus far. The consultant (Toole Design Group) has prepared high-level preliminary concepts of a reimagined Main Street and staff is seeking comments from the Planning Commission. A similar study session with the City Council will be held in October. The draft Gateway-Main Street Sense

of Place Plan will be brought to the Planning Commission and City Council for consideration for adoption in summer 2026.

BACKGROUND

The Milpitas Gateway-Main Street Specific Plan (Plan) was originally adopted as the Midtown Specific Plan by the Milpitas City Council in March 2002 to maximize land uses, transportation and economic opportunities along the City's historic Main Street and energize and catalyze mixed-use, transit-oriented development in this area, also known as the "heart" of Milpitas. At present, the Plan provides for development of up to 2,328 new dwelling units, supporting retail, and new office and employment uses at key locations. Development activity in recent years has been mixed, and includes approval and construction of 1,200 units of multifamily housing, reinvestment in the adjacent Great Mall, and the extension of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Light Rail Transit (LRT) line. Recent successful multifamily residential developments, which promoted the vision and goals of the Plan, are concentrated in the southern end of the Plan area south of Curtis Avenue. Originally encompassing 942 acres of land, Plan boundaries were amended in 2010 to remove parcels of land in the southern end of the Plan area and prioritize areas in greater need of reinvestment.

Since adoption of the current Plan in 2002, little of the development potential has been realized, and the City believes several vacant and underutilized sites have the potential for additional catalytic development and investment, especially along Main Street and Calaveras Boulevard. Obstacles to redevelopment in Midtown include haphazard parcel sizes and dimensions, disparate property ownership, and lack of a cohesive identity. Other challenges include gaps in the transportation network (i.e., weak connection to Calaveras Boulevard to the north and disconnected cul-de-sacs) and shortage of recreational opportunities to complement existing creeks and trails in the Plan area.

An update to the Milpitas Gateway-Main Street Specific Plan is underway; the project was initiated in late 2021 and is estimated to be completed by the end of 2025. The public review draft of the Gateway-Main Street Specific Plan was released on April 17, 2025.

The revitalization of Main Street is also one of the City's 2020 Economic Development Strategy key goals and priorities. To support these efforts, the Milpitas City Council created an Ad Hoc Main Street Revitalization Subcommittee to lead and direct City staff in implementing this new vision and strategy for the revitalization of historic Main Street. The City is also supporting the newly formed Milpitas Historic Downtown Business Association. Additionally, the City is currently collaborating with Main Street property owners to facilitate storefront improvements along Main Street through the Storefront Improvement Grant Program.

To meet the San Francisco Bay Area long-range goals of reduced greenhouse gas emissions and more affordable housing for all, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has been offering funding and technical assistance to local jurisdictions through its Priority Development Area Planning Program (PDA) since 2007. On February 23, 2023, City staff applied for and received \$600,000 in PDA grant funding to prepare the Milpitas Gateway-Main Street Sense of Place Plan. The City allocated this funding as part of the 2025-2029 Capital Improvement Program¹.

¹ CIP Project No. 3504, Milpitas Gateway-Main St. Impact Fee Study and Sense of Place Plan

On May 30, 2024, the City released Request for Proposal (RFP) 24-134 to seek expertise in building on these efforts and policies by assisting the City to prepare the Plan. The scope of work includes (1) identifying needed streetscape and transportation improvements along Main Street, (2) creating a Basic Infrastructure Plan that details each type of improvement and assigns a priority, and (3) establishing a plan-specific development impact fee to fund the improvements.

On November 19, 2024, the City Council adopted a resolution to accept the grant award from MTC and approved and authorized the City Manager to execute a two-year Professional Services Agreement with TDG Engineering, Inc., for a Milpitas Gateway-Main Street Sense of Place in an amount not to exceed \$420,000. After project kick off, staff identified the need for additional scope of work items to be added to the contract. On May 20, 2025, City Council approved and authorized the City Manager, or designee, to execute an amendment to the Professional Services Agreement with TDG Engineering, Inc. in the amount of \$71,138 with additional authority to approve changes of up to 10% as required to complete the work, for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$78,250.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

The Project area consists of Main Street, from Weller Lane to Great Mall Parkway, with a focus between Calaveras Boulevard and Curtis Avenue. The goals of the Project include elevating Main Street and the surrounding area as the heart of Milpitas, strengthening Main Street’s identity and sense of place, building on the Gateway-Main Street Specific Plan, complementing future development, and promoting and enhancing local businesses and economic activity. The final project deliverables comprise of a detailed design concept for Main Street ready to move toward construction documentation phases, planning-level cost opinion and phasing plan, streetscape palette and multi-modal treatments for Main Street adaptable to the Specific Plan area, wayfinding and signage program for Main Street, a Basic Infrastructure Plan (BIP) for Main Street, and an impact fee for the new Specific Plan area. As part of the work associated for the impact fee, the subconsultant (BAE Urban Economics) will establish a development scenario, estimate total infrastructure costs, demonstrate a nexus, allocate costs by development type, and recommend implementation actions.

Work Completed Thus Far

The City kicked off the Project in December 2024. Thus far, the consultant prepared an existing conditions report and preliminary designs. The final design, cost estimates and impact fee will be developed in the winter-spring 2026, and final adoption in summer 2026.

The existing conditions report found that there is opportunity to define a new center that matches the City’s aspirations and expected growth. Lower traffic volumes make Main Street ideal for a people-focused redesign that puts pedestrians first. The existing right-of-way (ROW) is wide and underutilized, allowing for generous sidewalks, landscaping, comfortable seating areas, and other amenities. A range of cultural, natural, and civic assets offer a strong foundation for the transformation of Main Street. Lastly, Main Street has the power to be the defining “public spine” of Milpitas’ future center.

On June 5 and 6, 2025, the City held stakeholder workshops with key community members at the Community Center. City staff and the consultant shared key findings from the existing conditions and background review and high-level concepts for a reimagined Main Street. The stakeholder workshops also coincided with an online survey that was open from June 5 through July 7, 2025.

The survey was advertised through lawn signs, sidewalk decals along Main Street, physical flyers, and the City's social media. A total of 77 responses were received.

Overall, there is strong appreciation for local and small businesses, particularly restaurants, which participants felt reflect the cultural and racial diversity of Milpitas and the community around Main Street. The library was frequently noted as a valued community asset, with many praising the smaller-scale, walkable area surrounding it. When asked about the current state of Main Street, a majority (60 percent) described it as "outdated and uninviting," while 33 percent said it was "functional but could use improvement" highlighting a strong desire for upgrades to sidewalks, street furniture, and landscaping. When asked about the future character of Main Street, most respondents said they want it to feel relaxed and nature-focused and playful and family-friendly. In prioritizing future amenities, respondents ranked increased greenery and trees as most important, followed by wider sidewalks and improved lightning.

PUBLIC COMMENT/OUTREACH

On June 5 and 6, 2025, the City held stakeholder workshops with key community members at the Milpitas Community Center. City staff and the consultant shared key findings from the existing conditions and background review and high-level concepts for a reimagined Main Street. The stakeholder workshops also coincided with an online survey that was open from June 5 through July 7, 2025. The survey was advertised through lawn signs, sidewalk decals along Main Street, physical flyers, and the City's social media. A total of 77 responses were received.

The consultant has prepared preliminary high-level concepts for a reimagined Main Street and staff is seeking comments from the Ad Hoc Main Street Subcommittee, Planning Commission, and the City Council at the study sessions. Future engagement includes a second survey in December, as well as a planned pop-up at the City's Tree Lighting Ceremony.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The project involves only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the City has not approved, adopted, or funded and does not require the preparation of an EIR or negative declaration but does require consideration of environmental factors pursuant to Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15262.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission receive staff's presentation and report regarding the Gateway-Main Street Sense of Place Plan and provide comments.



CITY OF MILPITAS

Planning Commission

MEETING MINUTES

7:00pm

JUNE 11, 2025

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS,
455 E CALAVERAS BLVD, MILPITAS, CA
and
via TELECONFERENCE (Zoom Webinar)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gupta called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Gupta led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Recording Secretary Medina called the roll.

PRESENT: Chair Gupta, Vice Chair Caulkins, Albana, and Awasthi.

ABSENT: Galang, Kong, and Medina-Ashby.

STAFF: Jay Lee, Christopher Creech, Holly Pearson, Kristina Phung, Jennifer Murillo (consultant), and Elizabeth Medina.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST/CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTION DECLARATION

Assistant City Attorney Christopher Creech asked if any member of the commission had any personal or financial conflict of interest related to any of the items on the agenda, and there were none.

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING AGENDA

By motion, approve the meeting agenda for June 11, 2025.

Motion/Second Albana/Awasthi

Motion carried by a vote of AYES: 4 NOES: 0

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING AGENDA

By motion, approve the meeting minutes for March 26, 2025.

Motion/Second Caulkins/Gupta

Motion carried by a vote of AYES: 4 NOES: 0

By motion, approve the meeting minutes for April 9, 2025.

Motion/Second Caulkins/Albana

Motion carried by a vote of AYES: 4 NOES: 0

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice Chair Caulkins expressed appreciation to staff, planning, and building teams for their hard work despite recent turnover and heavy workloads. Multiple commissioners voiced agreement and gratitude for the staff's dedication and contributions to the city.

Planning Director Lee announced that the June 25th Planning Commission meeting is canceled due to a lack of public hearing items, with the next meeting scheduled for August 13th following the city's July recess. He also provided an update on the Gateway Main Street Specific Plan, noting that the public draft was released and remains available online, with the comment period closing on June 1st; feedback will be incorporated before the plan returns to the Planning Commission and City Council for recommendation and adoption. In addition, the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report draft has been released, with its public comment period open until July

24th, after which staff will work with consultants to prepare responses to all comments received.

PUBLIC FORUM

Chair Gupta invited members of the public to address the commission, and there were none.

PUBLIC HEARING

IX-1 GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT (GP25-0001), ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT and ZONING MAP AMENDMENT ZA25-0001) – Citywide: City-initiated amendments to the General Plan Land Use Element, Zoning Ordinance, and Zoning Map to adopt a comprehensive update to the City's Zoning Ordinance (currently Title XI, Chapter 10 of the Milpitas Municipal Code); and to adopt minor changes to the General Plan Land Use Element text and the Zoning Map for consistency with the proposed Zoning Ordinance update.

(29:08) Project Manager Holly Pearson and Jenn Murillo (consultant w/ LWC) addressed commissioners' clarifying questions on various topics.

- **Zoning & Land Use:** No conversion of commercial/industrial land to residential; only overlay zone updates.
- **ADUs:** New regulations effective 30 days after Council's second reading; projects already deemed complete may proceed under previous code upon request.
- **Interactive Tools:** City provides an online GIS zoning map and "Build Business" tool to identify allowable uses by address.
- **Comparison to Other Cities:** Milpitas' zoning incorporates best practices while tailoring standards to local needs, especially around parking and land use flexibility.
- **Revitalization of Deteriorating Centers:** New ordinance reduces permit barriers, updates parking and signage requirements, and streamlines approvals to encourage reinvestment.
- **Water Infrastructure:** General Plan EIR already accounts for water supply/distribution needs; coordination with Public Works ensures upgrades as needed, with potential development impact fees applied for new infrastructure.
- **Security Standards:** No direct zoning requirements, but security is addressed in project reviews with police input and conditions of approval; indirect standards include fencing, lighting, and design. Existing businesses are generally grandfathered unless major renovations occur.

Motion to close the Public Forum.

Motion/Second Caulkins/Awasthi

Motion carried by a vote of AYES: 4 NOES: 0

Recommendation: Staff recommends that the Planning Commission consider and adopt Resolution No. 25-007 recommending that the City Council approve General Plan Amendment GP25-0001 and Zoning Text and Zoning Map Amendment ZA25-0001 to comprehensively update the Zoning Ordinance and to achieve consistency between the General Plan Land Use Element, Zoning Ordinance, and Zoning Map.

Motion/Second Caulkins/Albana

Motion carried by a vote of AYES: 4 NOES: 0

NEW BUSINESS

NO ITEMS.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Gupta adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm

Motion/Second Caulkins/Albana

Motion carried by a vote of AYES: 4 NOES: 0

Meeting Minutes submitted by
Planning Commission Secretary Elizabeth Medina

DRAFT