

Requests for consideration from Susan Kirks, highlighted in yellow.

Question with comment for a section highlighted in aqua.

#### **Draft Vision Statement – Page 4**

Petaluma is rooted in the relationship between our people and the land. Our identity evolves from our gratitude for our Miwok heritage, deep agricultural legacy, lively river, and preserved open spaces. We holistically protect our natural landscapes and habitats both within and outside our community. We sustain a resilient ecosystem for humans, wildlife, and the earth. We are caring and connected. We celebrate our differences by fostering relationships and inclusive spaces for the diverse communities that form Petaluma. Our engaged citizenry and local government ensure equity and justice for all residents. We create space for newcomers seeking refuge, a place to call home, and new opportunity. We embrace unique experiences, lift each other up, and move forward together. We invest in each other. We are a community where children thrive, families are supported, and our elders can age respectfully in place. We support our local businesses that provide jobs and services to our city and region. We provide bountiful housing choices, convenient access to healthy local food, and an educational system that builds leaders. We support all residents with accessible city services rooted in dignity. Our work and income build wealth for Petaluma and its people, increasing our self-reliance. We relish in spirited and distinct neighborhoods that enable us to live, work, and play. We enjoy an energetic historic downtown and friendly walkable streets throughout our city. Our parks, bike trails, and walking paths connect people and help keep residents and the earth healthy. It is safe, easy, and enjoyable to travel across town without a car. We are creative. The arts bring meaning, whimsy, innovation, and imagination to our lives. Our community is filled with vibrant colors, textures, materials, and forms. We foster an arts ecosystem to ensure that artists have the resources to create and thrive. We are forward-thinking leaders. We are honest about our challenges, work together to find solutions, craft ambitious plans, and take bold action. We demonstrate through action and collaboration with other cities, communities and our region that equitable, carbon-neutral, regenerative communities and economies are possible. We have adapted to hazards by restoring and leveraging our natural systems, modernizing infrastructure, adjusting patterns of development, and coming together as a community

We are Petaluma.

**Comment/question:** It's surely advisable for the General Plan update sets a course for open space policy and processes, beneficial local and regional relationships to achieve conservation, and supporting becoming aware of the Natural Environment and open and green spaces in the Petaluma Valley within which the City of Petaluma exists. The highlighted part of the Vision statement here is not true and represents a disconnect from reality in Petaluma, especially within the Petaluma City government. Petaluma has not preserved open spaces nor had any government structure to support protecting habitat or the natural environment, except in a very few instances. The shift to transform the Parks and Recreation function in the City to build knowledge, develop and implement policy and practices related

to open space, habitat protection and natural landscapes is long overdue and direly needed. This portion of the Vision statement needs to be connected to the Natural Environment, Biological Resources, Special Status Species, Land Use Planning, and additional information within the General Plan Update to create the path for a reality. Organizations and individuals within Petaluma who have and maintain expertise in these areas, as well as local, regional and state relationships with others should be included in your process in order to serve the greater community, including the Petaluma community of the future, and also transcend politics and City government deficiencies.

**General Observation** - This statement overall is a little heavy on the we, us and our references. It reads like a self-realization workshop brochure. It is over the top. Think about individuals from other areas who may move to Petaluma, to help create a diverse racial and ethnic population, changing the almost 80% white population with more affluence than most communities. I think this statement could be pulled back a little and have suggested removing at least some of the “our” references such as “our residents.” A level of collaboration and planning can exist where your Committee maintains awareness that we are planning to literally create space for future residents while, in the Natural Environment, preserve and enhance open and green spaces that will contribute to quality of life for all, in neighborhoods, in areas, and then throughout the City.

Less of a “we are so great” and “let’s be so together” mentality can free up or shift the focus so the Petaluma of the future can be envisioned in a way that will speak for itself. The reference of demonstrating to the world how Petaluma is such a great leader is truly over the top. Focusing on a vision that considers the future and creates space for Petaluma to grow into this General Plan, in my experience, will remove that white, over-enthusiastic mentality so the work at hand can be interpreted without all the fluff as substantive, sincere and dedicated to realizing the state vision and goals.

“We Are Petaluma” – again is part of that “we, us, our” and “we are so great” mentality that reads like a white self-actualization workshop.

## **General Plan Pillars – Page 5**

**Participatory Decision-Making and Transparency of Government.** The community works and evolves best when all voices are engaged and participate in the decision-making process. The General Plan should reflect the perspectives of Petaluma’s diverse population, ensure opportunities to engage in public dialogue are accessible to all residents, and set the stage for a long-term process to address and solve future challenges with integrity, creativity and collaboration.

## **Guiding Principles – Page 6**

**3. Preserve and enhance Petaluma’s natural environment and surrounding open spaces.**

- a. Protect the natural environment, including wildlife corridors, as the foundation of ecological and human health.
- b. Preserve Petaluma's identity, image, and sense of place that result from its relationship to natural features – the River, Sonoma Mountain, the hills, the creeks, grassland, wetland and marshland.
- c. Preserve views of the hills and Sonoma Mountain.
- d. Maintain the land outside the Urban Growth Boundary for open space, wildlife habitat and movement, agriculture, rural land uses, and protection from hazards.
- e. Expand open spaces within and adjacent to the city.
- f. Ensure the natural and built environment is resilient to flooding, fires, sea level rise, and other natural hazards.
- g. Ensure equitable access to and enjoyment of Petaluma's natural environment.
- h. Advance urban forest management and native plantings.
- i. Increase the urban tree canopy.