

# **Sand City 2050 General Plan Engagement Plan**

Prepared for the City of Sand City

June 2026

Prepared by  
**EMC Planning Group**



**SAND CITY 2050 GENERAL PLAN  
ENGAGEMENT PLAN  
CITY OF SAND CITY**

**PREPARED FOR**

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## 1.1 Purpose

The 2050 General Plan Community Engagement Plan (Engagement Plan) summarizes the strategies and process the City of Sand City will follow to engage the public and other stakeholders in the preparation of the Sand City 2050 General Plan Update.

Engaging the community in the planning process and incorporating feedback is essential to ensuring the Sand City General Plan addresses the requirements of state law, reflects the priorities of the community, and ensures that the strategies for achieving goals set forth in the General Plan are feasible, equitable, and can be implemented with support from the community. The Engagement Plan is intended to ensure that outreach is conducted in a deliberative manner. The Engagement Plan is a living document and is expected to be revisited, augmented, or modified during the General Plan update process.

## 1.2 Previous Outreach Conducted

Several outreach activities have occurred in Sand City over the last few years for different planning initiatives in the City. The following summarizes these planning efforts and key takeaways from the outreach conducted.

### **Vibrancy Plan (2019)**

Community engagement conducted as part of the Sand City Vibrancy Plan included formation of a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of property owners, artists, residents, and City representatives; community workshops; outreach at local events such as the West End Celebration; and questionnaires distributed to gather public input. The community workshops included interactive activities designed to solicit detailed feedback on the future of the West End District. Participants reviewed existing conditions and precedent imagery, identified opportunities and constraints on maps, discussed desired land uses and development character, and prioritized potential improvements using facilitated exercises and dot-voting activities. These exercises allowed participants to identify preferred streetscape improvements, building types, public spaces, and economic development opportunities for the district. Key themes from community feedback included a desire to enhance walkability and streetscape improvements, support arts and creative

businesses, encourage vibrant mixed-use development, improve parking and circulation, and preserve the district’s unique artistic identity while accommodating thoughtful growth and investment.

## **Sustainable Transportation Plan (2021)**

Community engagement conducted as part of the Sand City Sustainable Transportation Plan included public meetings, coordination with regional agency stakeholders, and a community survey to gather input on transportation needs and priorities. Stakeholder coordination involved consultation with local and regional partners to discuss existing transportation conditions, mobility challenges, and opportunities to improve connectivity within Sand City and to surrounding communities. These efforts engaged residents, business owners, and other stakeholders in identifying mobility priorities. Key themes from community feedback included improving pedestrian and bicycle safety, enhancing connectivity within Sand City and to regional destinations, and expanding transportation options to reduce reliance on automobile travel.

## **West End Parking Plan (2023)**

The City conducted outreach through public meetings and presentations to the City Council, where project recommendations were presented and public comment was invited. In addition, the environmental review document for the plan was released for a 30-day public review period, during which materials were made available online and in hard copy at City Hall and the public library for community review and input.

Public feedback gathered through these efforts informed the development of strategies to address parking demand in the West End District. Key themes included the need to improve the availability and management of public parking to support the district’s evolving mix of uses—such as arts, entertainment, restaurants, and residential development—while ensuring parking solutions support continued economic activity and visitor access in the area.

## **6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element Update (2023-2031) (2024)**

Preparation of the Sand City 6th Cycle Housing Element (2023–2031) included a comprehensive community engagement process designed to gather input on housing needs, constraints, and opportunities. Outreach activities included public workshops and community meetings, coordination with local stakeholders, and a community survey distributed to collect feedback from residents and property owners. The workshops provided opportunities for participants to learn about the Housing Element update process, review housing needs and Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) requirements, and discuss potential housing strategies and suitable locations for housing development.

Survey responses and workshop discussions indicated that while many respondents expressed interest in living in Sand City, barriers such as limited housing supply, lack of diverse housing types, and housing affordability constrain opportunities to do so. Participants expressed interest in a broader mix of housing options, including townhomes, apartments, accessory dwelling units, live/work units, and senior housing. Additional feedback highlighted the importance of housing affordability, access to parks and the beach, proximity to employment, and the City’s vibrant arts community as factors that attract people to Sand City. These themes informed Housing Element programs focused on expanding housing supply, supporting diverse housing types, and encouraging housing development in appropriate locations.

## **Multi-Use Recreation Trail (Ongoing)**

The City conducted outreach to inform the planning and design of the Sand City Multi-Use Recreation Trail through coordination with public agencies, engagement with local businesses, community events, and an online public survey. Outreach materials and survey information were shared through the City’s website and newsletter and distributed at community events, including the Sand City Birthday BBQ, Night Market 831, and the West End Celebration.

Public feedback gathered through these efforts highlighted strong interest in using the trail for walking, biking, and recreation. Key themes included the importance of an attractive trail design with native landscaping and natural materials, the inclusion of amenities such as benches and fitness stations, and the need to prioritize safety features—particularly lighting, clear signage, and safe pedestrian crossings. Overall, input reflected broad community support for the project and a desire for a trail that enhances recreation, connectivity, and the overall experience of the area. Overall, 14 letters of emphatic support have been received from adjacent and surrounding cities, Monterey County, regional planning agencies, special service districts, recreation interests, the military, and State and Federal legislators.

## **Coastal Trail (Ongoing)**

The City conducted outreach for the Sand City Coastal Trail project through community events, tribal consultation, and in-person questionnaires. Outreach included tabling at the West End Celebration in 2024 and 2025, engagement at the October 4, 2024 Night Market, and consultation with tribal representatives. In addition, questionnaires were distributed to gather public input on the proposed trail and related improvements.

Public feedback gathered through these efforts indicated strong support for improving coastal access and expanding recreational opportunities along the shoreline. Key themes included the importance of protecting sensitive coastal habitats while providing safe and accessible public access, enhancing the coastal experience through amenities and viewpoints, and improving connectivity between the City’s commercial areas, neighborhoods, and the coastline. Community input also

emphasized maintaining the natural character of the coastal environment while creating a welcoming destination for residents and visitors.

## 1.3 Engagement Goals

The Engagement Plan is designed to ensure that the Sand City General Plan is informed by a comprehensive and meaningful community engagement process and builds upon previous outreach efforts conducted for the related projects identified above. The process will provide residents, businesses, and community stakeholders with multiple opportunities to participate in shaping the vision, guiding principles, and policy priorities that will direct Sand City's future.

The goal of the engagement process is to foster strong community ownership of the General Plan by ensuring that the perspectives and priorities of Sand City residents are meaningfully incorporated into the plan. Input gathered through this process will help guide policies, programs, and investments that support sustainable growth, community vitality, and equitable development over the next 20-year planning horizon.

## 1.3 Target Stakeholders

The following groups represent target stakeholders for the Sand City General Plan update process, including public agencies, nonprofit organizations, business owners, property owners, and community members. Engaging these stakeholders will help ensure that the planning process reflects a broad range of perspectives and supports informed decision-making.

### Stakeholder Groups

- Residents;
- Business owners (managers and employees);
- Property owners; and
- Arts groups.

### Community/Non-Profit Organizations

- California American Water Company (Cal-Am);
- Fort Ord Regional Trail and Greenway (FORTAG);
- Land Watch;
- Monterey Bay Economic Partnership; and
- The Salvation Army Good Samaritan Day Center.

## **City Advisory and Decision-Making Bodies**

- Sand City Design Review Committee; and
- City Council.

## **City Departments**

- Engineering Department (Harris & Associates);
- Fire Department (City of Monterey);
- Planning Department;
- Police Department; and
- Public Works Department.

## **Other Government Agencies**

- Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG);
- City of Marina;
- City of Del Rey Oaks;
- City of Seaside;
- City of Monterey;
- Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) of Monterey County;
- Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District;
- Monterey County Housing and Community Development;
- Monterey County CDBG Urban County Standing Committee;
- Monterey One Water (M1W);
- Monterey Peninsula Airport District;
- Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District;
- Monterey Peninsula Water Management District;
- Monterey Regional Waste Management District (ReGen Monterey);
- Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST);
- Seaside County Sanitation District; and
- Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC).

## Community Engagement Activities

The following engagement methods represent the City’s approach to supporting the comprehensive update of the Sand City General Plan. These methods are designed to bring together residents, stakeholders, City staff, elected officials, and decision-makers to ensure broad participation and collaborative problem-solving in alignment with the goals and guiding principles of this document.

### 2.1 Project Webpage

As a starting point for conducting extensive outreach, the City established a dedicated Sand City General Plan Update webpage to provide clear and accessible information about the update process and opportunities for public participation. The webpage will include notices, project materials, surveys, meeting announcements, and meeting summaries, ensuring ongoing transparency and access to information throughout the planning process.

Project webpage: <https://sandcity.org/2050gpu/>

If you would like to be added to the public distribution list, please email: [nmcilroy@sandcityca.org](mailto:nmcilroy@sandcityca.org) with the subject “Sand City General Plan Update Outreach”. For more information contact Nick McIlroy at (831)394-3054.

### 2.2 Newsletters, Flyers, and Mailers

The City will utilize a combination of newsletters, flyers, and mailers to inform residents and stakeholders about the Sand City General Plan update and opportunities to participate in the planning process. These materials will provide timely updates on project milestones and notify the community of upcoming workshops, public meetings, informational tabling events, and opportunities to review and comment on draft materials. Distribution through both digital and print formats will help ensure broad awareness of the planning process and encourage participation from a diverse cross-section of the community.

## 2.3 Questionnaires/Surveys

Questionnaires and/or online surveys will be utilized to gather input from residents, business owners, and other stakeholders throughout the Sand City General Plan update process. These tools will provide an accessible and convenient way for community members to share their perspectives on key topics such as community priorities, land use, housing, mobility, economic development, and quality of life. Surveys may be distributed through the project webpage, City newsletters, and outreach events to encourage broad participation. Feedback collected through these questionnaires will help inform the development of goals, policies, and strategies included in the General Plan.

## 2.4 Community Events and Pop-Up Outreach

The City will leverage existing community events to conduct in-person outreach at events such as the Sand City Night Market, the Annual West End Celebration, and other pop-up events to engage residents, business owners, and community members in the General Plan update process. These events provide opportunities to reach a broad cross-section of the community in informal and accessible settings. Project team members will host informational tables where attendees can learn about the General Plan update, review project materials, participate in interactive activities, and provide feedback. Conducting outreach at established community events will help increase awareness of the planning process and encourage participation from individuals who may not otherwise attend formal meetings or workshops.

## 2.5 Sand City Economic Vitality Workshop

The City will hold an Economic Vitality Workshop for businesses and the local community at the new Marriott hotel, focused on moving Sand City forward. Staff will canvas the local business community and distribute postcards with the meeting date on them and QR codes to a survey for businesses to complete.

## 2.6 City Council Workshops

City Council workshops will provide an interactive forum for residents and decision-makers to participate in visioning and planning exercises, such as mapping activities and facilitated small-group discussions. These workshops will allow participants to identify community priorities, review draft concepts, and provide input to help guide strategies and policy development for the General Plan.

### **Workshop #1: Community Visioning Session**

A three-hour facilitated workshop will be held with the City Council and public to establish a shared vision and policy direction for the General Plan Update. The purpose of this session is to identify

the community's long-term vision for Sand City and determine how that vision should be reflected in the General Plan. The workshop will:

- Provide stakeholders with the opportunity to review the City's most recently adopted plans and discuss how they should inform the General Plan vision and direction;
- Review and refine the draft guiding principles developed from these plans and community input;
- Consolidate community and stakeholder feedback to guide the development of the General Plan alternatives; and
- Ensure that the General Plan update and resulting land use alternatives are consistent with Sand City's unique character and existing land use patterns, particularly given the City's small geographic size (0.5 square miles including the coastal zone, and 0.165 square miles excluding the coastal zone).

## **Workshop #2: Review and Refine Proposed Alternatives, Policies, and Implementation Strategies**

A follow-up workshop will be held with the City Council and public to review the proposed guiding principles, land use alternatives, policy recommendations, and implementation strategies. This workshop will:

- Present the draft vision statement, guiding principles, and policy framework developed from Workshop 1 and subsequent public engagement activities;
- Review draft land use alternatives and associated policy options, including potential implications for infrastructure, transportation, housing, and economic development;
- Provide an opportunity for City Council and the public to give feedback on the draft materials prior to preparation of the Public Review Draft General Plan; and
- Identify any final refinements needed to ensure the General Plan aligns with community priorities, statutory requirements, and the City's long-term development goals.

## **2.7 Public Hearings**

Formal public hearings before the City Council will provide structured opportunities for the public to review and comment on the draft Sand City General Plan. These sessions ensure that community input is incorporated into the formal decision-making process leading up to plan adoption.

## Tentative Engagement Schedule

Table 1, *Tentative Engagement Schedule*, presents a tentative schedule for implementing the engagement activities identified in *Section 2.0, Community Engagement Activities*, of this Engagement Plan. This schedule is tentative and subject to change as the planning process evolves.

**Table 1**      **Tentative Engagement Schedule**

Engagement Activity	Timeframe
Project Kick-Off Mailer & Questionnaire	July 2026
City Newsletters	October 2026 January 2027 April 2027
Community Survey and Canvassing	July - August 2026
Sand City Night Market Informational Tabling Event	July 2026 August 2026
Workshop #1: Community Visioning Session – Guiding Principles	August 2026
Sand City Economic Vitality Workshop	September 2026
West End Celebration Informational Tabling Event	August 22, 2026
Workshop #2: Review and Refine Proposed Alternatives, Policies, and Implementation Strategies	October 2026
CEQA Notice of Preparation	TBD
Public Review Draft General Plan Mailer	May 2027
Public Review Draft General Plan City Council Hearing	June 2027
Final Draft General Plan City Council Hearing	September 2027

Note: The information contained in this table is subject to change.