

**SPECIAL PINOLE CITY COUNCIL & GENERAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE  
JOINT GENERAL PLAN WORKSHOP  
MINUTES  
February 9, 2010**

**1. CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Special Pinole City Council / General Plan Steering Committee General Plan Workshop were held in the Alex Clark Room located in the Public Safety Building, 880 Tennent Avenue, Pinole, California. Mayor Long called the meeting to order at 5:40 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

Debbie Long, Mayor  
Roy Swearingen, Mayor Pro Tem  
Tim Banelos, Council Member  
Peter Murray, Council Member arrived at 5:50 P.M.

Virginia Fujita, Council Member was absent.

**GENERAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE (PLANNING COMMISSIONERS) PRESENT**

David Kurrent, Chair  
Patty McGoldrick, Vice Chair  
Maureen Toms, Member  
Tom Brooks, Member  
John Bender, Member  
Norma Martinez-Rubin, Member

Paul Sekins, Council Member was absent.

**STAFF PRESENT**

Winston Rhodes, Planning Manager  
Michelle Fitzer, Assistant to the City Manager  
Erin Hupp, Assistant City Attorney  
Patricia Athenour, City Clerk  
Christina Ratcliffe, PMC Consultant  
Scott Davidson, PMC Consultant

The agenda was posted on Friday, January 8, 2010 at 10:00 AM. All legally required notice was provided.

**3. STUDY SESSION**

Winston Rhodes, Planning Manager, opened the presentation with an overview of the Three Corridor Specific Plan and introduced PMC consultant Scott Davidson.

Scott Davidson presented the Three Corridor Specific Plan PowerPoint slides and entered the presentation documents/handout materials into the record. He identified “community character” as an important policy issue along with circulation. Stimulating the local economy is a critical Specific Plan objective, as well address the other eleven objectives outlined in the document. Several grant application opportunities are available including \$2.2 million dollars from MTC for the Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) program with applications due in April 2010.

He mentioned that TLC grant program and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) designated Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are intended to congregate new development near existing services and transportation infrastructure to in part encourage less auto use. The Specific Plan has been written to enable the City to competitively pursue these types of funding opportunities upon adoption and support a variety of transportation modes.

The community outreach process and the extensive review by the Steering Committee was discussed, and the policy relationship between the General Plan, and the Specific Plan for the three corridors was described.

Davidson summarized the three main substantive policy areas: Economic Development, Design and Circulation & Parking. Davidson advised the committee that the main advantage to San Pablo Avenue corridor was as the framework for future infill projects. He said that the circulation, parking and bike lanes mentioned in the Specific Plan required further study in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The record reflected the arrival of Council Member Murray at 5:50 P.M.

Davidson discussed the criteria for priority projects, and identified sixteen “opportunity sites” in Pinole mentioned within the Draft Specific Plan; eight on San Pablo Avenue, five on Pinole Valley and three on Appian. Opportunity sites are defined as catalyst sites, contain an anchor, are vacant or underutilized and are prime candidates for economic development.

Planning Manager Rhodes referenced the recently received Housing & Community Development (HCD) comment letter on the Draft Housing Element which may require further land use changes to satisfy the ABAG determined Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) numbers that the City must plan for.

Planning Commissioner Martinez-Rubin asked staff what was considered “in the near term” with regard to priority projects.

Mr. Davidson said that was not defined. He said the life of a plan is expected to be approximately twenty years.

Council Member Murray asked staff if there had been consideration that the Redevelopment Agency might not always be available as a tool that far in the future. Staff said that was considered and they were looking at ways to encourage private development with Redevelopment Agency participation.

#### Development Standards for Building Height and Design

Davidson summarized design controls in the Special Plan. He said there were relaxed standards regarding floor area ratios to provide flexibility, but great emphasis on design

guidelines outlining varied and well articulated wall planes, rooflines and building form to reduce overall massing and protect existing development that could be affected by taller future buildings.

Reference was made to tables 6.3 and 6.4 in the handout material. The maximum height limits were 50 feet or four stories in the Old Town, Mixed Use and Service Sub-Areas of the Draft Specific Plan, while the setbacks varied by area. Special design controls were drafted to assume no looming structures overshadowed existing single family homes and control height at the street fact to require additional setback at front with four stories.

Planning Chair Kurrent commented that Orinda was considering raising their height limits, according to a recent newspaper article.

Mayor Long said she was not a proponent four story building heights and believed that the buildings should step back starting with the third story. She raised an issue about solar access impacts to neighboring buildings associated with allowing taller building near existing development, and said this was in potential conflict with the Sustainability Element.

Mr. Davidson responded that solar access would have to be limited to roof top collectors. He said that the review would be done on a case by case basis and the Specific Plan would include development regulations to protect solar access.

Mayor Pro Tem Swearingen commented that the location and topography and adjacent structures would need to be considered before allowing four stories; that was defined as a maximum.

Council Member Murray asked if there should be language in the document to address conflicts between new development and existing development that includes solar power or superceding rights.

Mr. Davidson said that was a public policy issue that the Specific Plan could address.

Mayor Long continued the discussion, stating that there should be language that would identify the reviewing body (i.e. administrative, Planning Commission or Council) to make a determination regarding denying equal use of one's property. She expressed concern that the Specific Plan may be used by an applicant to convey a right to construct three or four stories.

Planning Commissioner Brooks suggested language to facilitate joint efforts, whereby a four-story building would have to provide solar for the adjacent single-family home.

Staff mentioned that the implementation portion of the of the Specific Plan would address these issues. Rhodes said that the Implementation Section has not been prepared and would be reviewed at a later date once the Specific Plan is revised to address comments received thus far.

### Circulation

Davidson explained that the right-of-way was a busy area, shared by many entities and the challenge was how to handle competing objectives in a small area. He referred to the roadway cross section (page 11 of the presentation handout material). He explained there was flexibility

in the median areas and sidewalks, but not within the travel lanes. Inclusion of bike lanes in Old Town is extremely difficult and raised medians in Old Town were not feasible and recommended that a painted median or turn lane would offer greater flexibility for emergency vehicles and access for delivery vehicles. There may be other places within the Specific Plans where raised landscaped medians could work.

### Pedestrian Safety

Davidson said that the Specific Plan contained heavy emphasis for bicycles and public transit. He addressed the benefits of lighted crosswalks, ADA accessibility and pedestrian sidewalk bulb outs. Bulb outs are currently used in Old Town and they may be a beneficial tool in other areas also.

### Parking

Davidson presented the recommendations addressed on Page 13 of the handout material and the chart with parking comparisons between Pinole, Hercules and Benicia. The general consensus of the Steering Committee was that the current parking standards work well and that the Committee wanted to retain discretion to adjust parking requirements on a case by case basis. The recommendation was to set minimum parking standards to insure adequate parking and provide criteria that could be utilized to reduce parking based on site specific conditions.

The analysis was to identify sites that could be developed within the Old Town without overburdening the existing parking areas, and define a specific benchmark level for acceptability and if the demand increases, explore ways to provide additional parking including construction of a parking structure or adding parking in other ways.

The issue of a parking impact fee was raised and it was identified to be addressed in the Specific Plan Implementation Section and in policy language.

In closing, staff identified the aggressive schedule, anticipated to conclude in October 2010. Preparation of the draft EIR was identified as the task currently on the table.

Council and Steering committee comments followed.

Mayor Long directed staff to insure that the in lieu parking fee was realistic and that it should be proportionate to the cost to build a parking structure.

Commissioner Toms raised a question on the timeline/schedule and asked if a Subcommittee of the Steering Committee would be able to review the administrative draft EIR.

Mr. Rhodes indicated that was not the case, but that the Steering Committee would be tasked with review of the public Draft EIR and upcoming draft zoning ordinance.

**Christina Ratcliffe**, PMC, explained that the current EIR timeline provides staff with only two weeks to review the administrative draft EIR.

Discussion followed regarding the goal to meet the schedule set by Council and make sure there was adequate review of the document.

Planning Commissioner Chair Kurrent said he was uncomfortable whether all the discussion would be reflected in the final document and recommended a subcommittee of the Steering Committee should review the EIR. He expressed concern that all earlier comments need to be carried forward into the Specific Plan.

Planning Commissioner Toms commented that it should be only two or three persons to keep it as an administrative draft and from becoming a public document.

Direction: Meyers Nave was to provide a legal opinion regarding review of the administrative draft EIR.

Planning Manager Rhodes suggested that he provide the Steering Committee with the same comments provided to PMC, once compiled.

Council/committee discussion ensued on the timeline and the expectations. They questioned whether the comments had been compiled and expressed concern with lagging behind the schedule and when the Implementation section would be available for review. Mr. Rhodes explained the process for consolidating the minutes and notes and the necessary quality control steps to assure that the document contains all the correct information.

Staff said that the consolidated comments would be available in March for sharing and comments. It was suggested that the Council and the Steering Committee send their comments via email if something had been overlooked.

Acting City Manager Fitzer said that staff was concerned with meeting the objective of meeting the established timeline and still ensuring adequate public input and said they would have all comments provided in a timely manner.

Ms. Ratcliffe clarified that the document remains a “draft” in order to receive comments, and that she needed all substantive comments from the City staff on the Specific Plan by February 23, 2010, in order to remain on schedule.

Mayor Long said that the October 2010 deadline was firm, and must not slip.

#### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

At 7 PM, Mayor Long adjourned the meeting to the next Regular Council / Redevelopment Agency Meeting of February 16, 2010.

Submitted by:

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Patricia Athenour, MMC  
City Clerk

**APPROVED BY COUNCIL:**