



Memorandum

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS

FROM: WINSTON RHODES, AICP, PLANNING MANAGER

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF CHAPTERS 1-4 OF THE DRAFT SPECIFIC PLAN FOR SAN PABLO AVENUE, APPIAN WAY, AND PINOLE VALLEY ROAD

DATE: February 23, 2009

BACKGROUND

A specific plan can be thought of as a hybrid-planning document, which combines the policy statements typically contained in a general plan with the development standards typically contained within a zoning ordinance. Specific plans are a mechanism to achieve a logical and orderly development pattern as well as to coordinate the provision of infrastructure and encourage economic development.

Government Code Section 65450 provides the statutory authority for cities to prepare specific plans to help implement the General Plan within a particular part of the community. Government Code Section 65451 sets forth the contents requirements of specific plans. Specific plans are required to include text and a diagram or diagrams describing the following in detail:

- Distribution, location, and extent of land uses, including open space, within the area covered by the plan;
- Proposed distribution and location of facilities and infrastructure including transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, and energy to be located within the plan area needed to support the land uses described in the plan;
- Standards and criteria by which development will proceed and, where applicable, standards for conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources; and
- A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out the plan.

Specific plans must also include a statement describing the relationship between the specific plan and the General Plan.

The draft Specific Plan was forwarded to the Planning Commission on January 23, 2009, prior to the January 26, 2009 meeting. At that time an overview of the document was provided. In order to

facilitate a thorough review of the draft Specific Plan by the Steering Committee and members of the public, initial discussion of the draft document is scheduled to occur in three parts: 1) tonight, 2) on March 9, 2009, and 3) on March 23, 2009. This is the first of these three Steering Committee initial discussions to review the document, provide feedback, and initiate adjustments based on the feedback received.

DISCUSSION

Chapter 1 and 2

The draft Specific Plan preparation was initiated in October 2007. Chapter 1 provides the background information to describe the plan's purpose, explain how it is organized, and how it relates to the General Plan. Chapter 2 describes the prior steps in the preparation process, the Specific Plan's vision that emerged during the initial public outreach phase of the project. It is important that this information accurately describe the steps in the process that have brought us to this point. It is equally important that the vision articulated is one that is understandable and reflects the views of key stakeholders that are affected by the plan.

Initial feedback received from staff and the public on the draft document is that it is exceedingly long and the information needs to be condensed or streamlined to encourage its usefulness. While the information contained in Chapters 1 and 2 is important and needs to be included in some form within the Specific Plan, the Steering Committee may wish to consider how the same information can be conveyed in a more succinct manner. In addition, the Steering Committee may have some thoughts on how some of this material could be communicated in other ways (e.g., an appendix on the outreach and document review process) consolidated within other chapters as goals (e.g., the urban design principles) to avoid redundancy. Specific guidance on this topic from the Steering Committee would be especially useful to help ensure the document provides information in a clear and efficient manner for future users.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 provides information on existing conditions. The Steering Committee should carefully consider the accuracy and the appropriate level of detail needed. Keep in mind that the EIR for the project will also have extensive information on the existing conditions. Certain existing condition information rapidly changes (e.g., fiscal conditions) and might be better suited for inclusion within an appendix or background document rather than included in the final Specific Plan. In addition, some of the existing condition information is currently restated elsewhere in the draft plan and may make sense to be consolidated by topic.

The most extensive discussion within this Chapter concerns opportunities and constraints for each of the three Specific Plan corridors. Feedback on the Section 3.7 content will be helpful in framing the policy direction in Chapters 5 –8. The Steering Committee should consider the usefulness of placing the information here rather than elsewhere in the document. The Steering Committee may want further explanation or clarification of terms used in the opportunities and constraints maps to provide a clearer understanding of what the maps describe and are intended to communicate. The level of detail is another issue where feedback would be helpful.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 relates to the economic strategy of the Specific Plan based on analysis provided by Bay Area Economics. It is important that the Steering Committee recognize the nature of economic cycles and that the difficult current economic conditions will change during the implementation of the plan. This Chapter identifies opportunity or catalyst sites to stimulate revitalization throughout the corridors. The intent of this Chapter is to provide sufficient information to clearly convey what the City desires and encourage development or redevelopment of the opportunity sites over time. Feedback on the range of planned land uses for each of the opportunity sites and the level of information provided will be important since these sites will receive close attention in the City's ongoing economic development efforts. A brief comparison of existing and proposed land use designations is attached to assist with review of this Chapter.

Section 4.5 currently provides no quantified information on the development potential of the Specific Plan due to a high degree of land use variability at this point in the Specific Plan preparation process. More specific quantified information will be provided but requires more feedback on the opportunity sites as well as the draft land use information in Chapter 6. The Specific Plan will need to include dwelling unit potential estimates and square footage estimates for different non-residential land uses so that a jobs/housing analysis can be prepared and analyzed in the Program EIR. Feedback on where in the draft document you want this information to appear would be helpful. In addition, the Steering Committee may want to consider getting this information included for each opportunity sites as well as the Specific Plan and General Plan Update as a whole. This quantified development potential information will help communicate the anticipated results of the Specific Plan, provide greater certainty for future developers, and help streamline future development review by staff and decision makers.

RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS

Staff recommends that the Commission acting as the Steering Committee receive public testimony on the contents of the draft Specific Plan, review draft Chapters 1-4 page by page, and provide feedback and direction to staff on desired changes. Chapters 5-6 are scheduled for discussion on March 9, 2009 and Chapters 7-11 are scheduled for discussion March 23, 2009. April 13, 2009 is available if further time is needed to complete the preliminary review of the draft Specific Plan and receive further public input.

ATTACHMENT

Opportunity Site Existing and Proposed Land Use Comparison

