



CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION
JOINT STUDY SESSION AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: JANUARY 28, 2014

ITEM NUMBER:

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE – LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

DATE: JANUARY 21, 2014

FROM: DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPT.

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BACKGROUND

The General Plan update process was initiated in June 2012. The City entered into a contract with MIG-Hogle-Ireland (former Hogle-Ireland Inc.) for the General Plan Update and Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR). On March 19, 2013, City Council directed staff to start a public engagement program referred to as “Great Reach” with public workshops and public engagement programs instead of a General Plan Advisory Committee. Since May 15, 2013, nine workshops and six road shows were held throughout the City. Land use issues were conceptually discussed at several of outreach sessions; however only one community exercise (held August 21, 2013) focused specifically on Land Use Alternatives.

Staff is requesting input from the City Council and Planning Commission on desired land use alternatives for seven (7) specific focus areas of the City. Based on direction received at this joint study session, further analysis of the land use alternatives will be conducted to quantify the traffic generation associated the various alternatives and compare that to the anticipated traffic generation associated with the existing General Plan land use designations.

For a complete list of all the workshops and the summaries please refer to the following link at the webpage:

<http://www.costamesaca.gov/index.aspx?page=1592>

August 21, 2013 Workshop

This workshop included a visual preference survey, and a question and answer session. The workshop’s purpose was to build on prior exercises at workshops in June and July, and to obtain input and receive comments regarding residential densities and land use types.

A visual preference survey was conducted using a PowerPoint presentation. Every attendee received a remote control device (clicker) they could use to vote for a particular land use preference for eight different nodes throughout Costa Mesa. The three land use choices were residential, commercial, and mixed use. The results of the voting were shown live for each land use node. The attendees also participated in a discussion related to density followed by questions and answers section. All comments were written on flip charts and the summary is included as Attachment 3.

Study Sessions

Following the workshops and road shows, two study sessions were scheduled related to the Vision Statements and Land Use Alternatives.

January 14, 2014 Study Session

This study session focused on six draft vision statements crafted from 12 original statements presented at the September 12, 2013 workshop and public comments received during the three visioning workshops. The final drafts based on public input and City Council and Planning Commission comments will be presented to the Planning Commission for review and approval along with the other draft General Plan sections.

January 28, 2014 Study Session

The focus of this study session is to discuss land use alternatives based on direction received from the City Council at the earlier meetings in 2013 and to establish the basis for the environmental analysis required for the General Plan Update. It should be noted that all single family residential neighborhoods are excluded from potential changes to their general plan land use designation. Major regional commercial areas north of the 405 freeway and along Harbor Boulevard (i.e., auto dealerships) and industrial parks in the northern part of the City with exception of a few areas in proximity to South Coast Collection (SOCO) and the 55-freeway were also not included in the focus areas and no General Plan land use changes are proposed in those areas. No land use changes are anticipated for more than 85 percent of the City as can show in Attachment 2 – No Change Map.

As noted in the March 19, 2013, City Council meeting, the strategy behind targeted land use changes is to identify specific areas that allows the City to maximize development potential such as the Westside urban plan areas, motel nodes and focused commercial land uses located along Harbor Boulevard, and Newport Boulevard. To address desired land use changes along Harbor and Newport Boulevard, staff recommended Node Overlays and for the Westside urban plan areas, consolidation of the three existing urban plans and potential boundary changes were discussed. The following includes a general discussion of Node Overlay Zones and the existing Urban Plans.

“Node Overlay Zone” for Motel Properties

Unlike a mixed-use overlay that covers a large geographic area, a “Node Overlay Zone” would target specific parcels. The “nodes” would consist of motel properties and adjacent lots that together result in a logical development block. The proposed nodes have been very narrowly drawn and together accounting for only 47 acres of infill development opportunities (Attachment 1 and 2 - Area C).

The node overlay will provide potential for other type of development such as high-density residential development without changing the existing base General Plan designation. The node overlay zone will promote development flexibility by allowing intensification of uses, subject to pre-defined trip budgets, density limitations, height limits, and development standards.

Westside Urban Plans

The project area for the Westside Urban Plans is generally bounded by Wilson Street (north), Harbor Boulevard and Superior Boulevard (east), and the City's corporate limits (west/south). The Westside contains approximately 1,788 acres, or 2.8 square miles of land area. There are three Urban Plans encompassing the Westside: 19 West, Mesa West Bluffs, and Mesa West Residential.

Adopted in 2006 as development incentive plans, the Westside Urban Plans established a mechanism for major private market reinvestment and revitalization. The overlay zone promoted mixed-use development, live/work development, and residential condominiums without a General Plan amendment or zone change. High density residential developments are only allowed in areas with high density residential land use designation and areas where live/work developments are permitted. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for mixed use and live/work development can go up to 1.25.

Proposed Land Use Alternatives

The General Plan Land Use Element and associated Land Use Map identifies the location and intensities of permitted land uses for each parcel in the City and is one of the most important components of the General Plan. As part of the General Plan Update, the City explored land use alternatives for key areas throughout the city where transformations or enhancement of existing uses is expected or desired over the next 20 years. The land use alternatives identified different approaches to development for the key areas by considering various intensities and alternative land use designations. The alternatives presented in this report are intended for review and discussion by the City Council, Planning Commission and to facilitate public discussion of possible changes to the Land Use Map for the General Plan Update.

The focus areas for the proposed land use alternatives are based on their individual development potential and existing land uses, and the boundaries were established based on proximity to sensitive uses. For each of the focus areas a description of the intent of the land use district is provided in Attachment 1 - Land Use Alternatives. The focus areas are further described in a series of maps (see Attachment 2 – Maps) that include the existing land use, existing General Plan designations, and proposed alternative designations, along with likely build out information. A brief summary of the land use alternatives for each focus area is provided as follows:

- **No Change Areas**

This pertains to more than 85 percent of the City where no land use changes are proposed. Please refer to Attachment 2 “No Change Map” for the areas unaffected by this General Plan update.

- **Area A – North Costa Mesa Regional Commercial**

This area includes South Coast Collection and neighboring properties bounded by Sunflower Avenue, Harbor Boulevard, and South Coast Drive. Two alternatives are proposed for this area as follows:

- Alternative 1 allow the expansion of the regional commercial designation all the way to Harbor Boulevard
- Alternative 2 allow the expansion of the regional commercial designation to only the area occupied by South Orange Collection (SOCO).

- **Area B – North Costa Mesa Mixed Use**

This area includes two blocks of business parks at MacArthur Avenue and Hyland Avenue and Sunflower and Harbor Boulevard. Two alternatives are proposed for this area to allow mixed use development as follows:

- Alternative 1 allows 60 du/acre and 1.50 FAR
- Alternative 2 allows 40 du/acre and 1.0 FAR.

- **Area C – Harbor Boulevard Mixed Use**

This area includes commercial nodes along Harbor Boulevard containing motel properties and neighboring commercial uses. One of the nodes along Newport Boulevard includes an apartment complex and two mobile home parks. Two land use alternatives are proposed for the node areas as follows:

- Alternative 1 allows 60 du/acre and 1.50 FAR
- Alternative 2 allows 40 du/acre and 1.0 FAR.

- **Area D – Newport Boulevard Mixed Use**

This area includes properties on the east side of Newport Boulevard between Mesa Drive and Walnut Street bounded by Elden Avenue on the east. Elden Avenue is the boundary between medium density and low density residential land uses. Three land use alternatives are proposed for this area as follows:

- Alternative 1 allows 40 du/acre and 0.75 FAR
- Alternative 2 allows 40 du/acre and 0.50 FAR
- Alternative 3 allows 30 du/acre and 0.50 FAR

- **Area E – Westside Mixed Use and Overlay**

This area includes residential, commercial and industrial properties within the urban plan overlay areas. Three land use alternatives are proposed for this area as follows:

- Alternative 1 - an option to allow mixed use and residential development with higher intensities throughout, allowing limited new commercial and industrial uses and calls for some existing industrial uses to be amortized out

- Alternative 2 - a similar option to the existing urban plans with the exception of allowing 30 du/acre throughout for live/work and residential development
- Alternative 3 - a similar option to the existing urban plans with the exception of allowing 20 du/acre throughout for live/work and residential development.

- **Area F – SOBECA**

This area contains commercial properties bounded by Baker Street and State Hwy 73 and the boundary is consistent with the SOBECA overlay district. There has been no proposal for residential development in this area; however, given the proximity to specialty retail, this may be a desirable residential and mixed use location. Three alternatives are proposed to spur development and allow for more intensity in this area as follows:

- Alternative 1 allows 50 du/acre and 0.75 FAR
- Alternative 2 allows 40 du/acre and 0.50 FAR
- Alternative 3 allows 30 du/acre and 0.50 FAR

- **Area G – Airport Business Park Residential Overlay**

This area is at the periphery of the industrial park land uses in proximity of John Wayne Airport. The boundaries were established based on allowable residential development areas that were not subject to excessive noise contours or hazard zones of the airport. A project is currently in process for residential development at the southerly parcel of the Area. The Alternative for Area G would allow 60 du/acre.

The full study area descriptions and related maps are included as Attachments 1 and 2.

Each focus area has been studied for land use opportunities that promote desirable uses. The boundaries were established with the intent to minimize impacts to existing low density residential, large commercial and industrial properties. The alternatives include a variety of residential and commercial intensities most of the focus areas to encourage discussion and provide a range of options for consideration.

Preferred Land Use Alternative

Staff is seeking input from City Council and the Planning Commission on preferred land use alternatives for each focus area. Input regarding alternatives that are no longer being considered or modification to the proposed alternatives will inform the next step in the process. Traffic generation figures will be determined for those alternatives still under consideration. Once these parameters are agreed upon a trip generation comparison will be developed that would consider vehicular traffic generation for each of the alternatives and the existing General Plan land use designations.

Next Steps

The preferred land use alternatives and associated traffic generation comparisons will be brought back to the City Council and Planning Commission for a final recommendation on the land use alternatives that will be further developed in the Draft General Plan Land Use Element. A date for that joint session will be determined later, once the traffic generation numbers are available.

Attachments: [1 – Land Use Alternatives](#)
[2 – Maps](#)
[3 – Workshop Summary](#)

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