



Great Reach Visioning Workshop City of Costa Mesa July 23, 2013 EVENT SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

As part of the General Plan Update program, the City of Costa Mesa hosted a community visioning workshop on Tuesday, July 23, 2013, initially planned to last from 7:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. on the City Hall front lawn. However, because a large number of attendees wished to comment, at 8:00 P.M. the meeting moved inside to the City's Emergency Operations Center and continued until approximately 9:45 P.M.

In order to increase attendance over previous workshops and allow for family participation, the event was extensively publicized and included a child-oriented activity followed by a movie on City Hall lawn. Approximately 60 to 70 people attended the initial one-hour workshop, and approximately 35 to 40 attended the extended workshop in the Emergency Operations Center.

The workshop's purpose was to build on prior visioning exercises at workshops in May and June, and to obtain input and receive comments from as many members of the public as possible regarding the Vision for Costa Mesa and more specifically, particular issues the community wished to be addressed in the General Plan's updated Land Use and Circulation Elements. Mr. Gary Armstrong, Deputy CEO/Development Services Director and Mr. Rick Zimmer, Director of Planning Services for MIG | Hogle-Ireland (the consultants assisting the City with the updates) moderated the workshop.

The format for the workshop was simple. Following opening remarks by Mr. Armstrong, all attending were invited to make whatever comments they wished, and those comments were written on flip charts.

The following are the comments as they appeared on the flip charts prepared during the workshop (edited for clarity and grammar) and presented in the order the comments were made. The number in the parentheses refers to the number of times the comment was made.

Staff receives comments and varying opinions on a number of subjects and issues related to the General Plan and staff only reports the issues raised at the meetings. Staff is meeting with a broad cross section of stakeholders in the community including residents, land owners, business owners, community groups, builders and developers, and others. All of this information is being compiled and will be provided to the decision makers as we move through the General Plan Update process.

COMMENTS FROM THE 7:00 TO 8:00 P.M. SESSION

Open Space Parks

- Continue planning for open space and recreation (2)
- Need park areas for existing and new residents
- Consider community gardens
- Require parkland dedication for new developments
- Use Banning Ranch as a nature preserve
- Focus on and expand urban agriculture; the City of San Diego has guidelines that can be followed
- Preserve open space (2)
- Keep Fairview Park as natural
- Provide more parks
- Preserve park space
- Preserve the train at Fairview Park (2)
- Preserve Banning Ranch as open space (2)
- Open space in the City is limited
- Preserve land at the end of 19th Street as open space
- Do not consolidate parks
- Provide public gathering spaces in downtown
- College Park fails to meet 2002 park access

Infrastructure Traffic

- Consider impacts to Costa Mesa from the development of Banning Ranch
- Do not allow street widening to serve Banning Ranch
- There is insufficient infrastructure for motels on Gisler and Harbor Boulevard
- Remove the 17th Street extension from the Master Plan of Highways
- Include green streets in the General Plan
- Provide for alternative transportation (bicycles, walking)
- Consider pedestrian safety
- Consider periodic street closures for pedestrians and bikes similar to Ciclavia in Los Angeles
- There is too much traffic
- Bike lanes on Broadway Street are not safe
- Traffic control should be first priority
- 17th and 19th Streets should be designated as two-lane not four-lane roadways

Density

- In-fill development is too high density; problems for schools and traffic
- Affordable housing is needed for the families in the motels
- Minimize high-density developments (3)
- Minimize high-density housing because of incompatibility with adjacent land uses
- Oppose high-density housing, including plan to replace mobile homes on the Westside
- Current parking ratios for high-density housing is too low (2)

- Limit future growth
- No high-density housing (2)
- High-density housing at 1901 Newport Boulevard is not a good example
- If motels on Harbor and Newport are developed as high-density housing, ensure proper distance between them and the adjacent single-family housing
- Density should allow for large family housing
- Proposition 13 caused residential developments to not pay for itself for cities. Thus, more residential density is more cost to the City
- Mobile home parks are at a good density
- High-density and parking on the Eastside are issues
- Do not approve variances to allow high-density housing
- High-density housing is not the right trend for the Westside

Community Character

- Preserve the neighborhood and people in the Westside
- Local motels on Harbor Boulevard contribute to high crime and use too many resources
- Rolling Hills Mobile Home Park at Newport Boulevard and Ford Road provides good affordable housing for seniors
- Future single-family homes should be low density and have private yards
- Minimize City indebtedness for future residents
- Need for senior housing near/on Harbor Boulevard due to dense commercial uses and transportation
- General Plan should have a Library Element
- Increase City library services
- Senior and disabled residents should be kept safe
- Provide shelters for the homeless
- Incorporate Banning Ranch into General Plan even though the property is not in the City
- City has a live and let live philosophy. Do not add new restrictions, such as limiting parked cars on front lawns
- Preserve the Westside as it is
- Maintain Westside mix of income groups
- Westside provides a variety of housing for seniors, all income households, especially the working class (2)
- There is no one size fits all on the Westside
- Plan for a City (not County) library (2)
- Costa Mesa is suburban development not urban development. Keep it that way.
- Add more character to housing developments to keep them unique
- Bring back downtown area, with mom and pop stores
- Provide public gathering spaces in downtown
- Too many variances are being approved for new development – makes General Plan and development Code policies meaningless
- Orange Circle in Orange is a good concept for Downtown
- Pay more attention to arts and culture
- Westside diversity (age, income, race, culture) should be preserved
- Look for quality development not quantity development
- Preserve the uniqueness of Costa Mesa – small town ambience

Business/Industry

- Continuing reduction of middle class jobs and manufacturing is a problem
- Costa Mesa has healthy commerce
- Growth and prosperity need to be controlled
- 18th Street industrial zones provide jobs, services to boats and beach-style garment industry

General Plan process, issues

- There should be more workshops on visioning for the General Plan (2)
- City needs more General Plan land use meetings than just one
- There needs to be more involvement in creative planning for the workshops

COMMENTS FROM THE 8:00 TO 9:45 P.M.

Open Space Parks

- Current limited open space does not allow for increased density (2)
- Open space on the far west side is a real gem

Infrastructure Traffic

- Density is a problem without adequate parking
- Newport Boulevard divides the town; it is an artery to beach, not to Costa Mesa
- Need more walkable community with less dependence on automobile
- Harbor and Newport are primary access to/from Hoag Hospital. More congestion limits response time
- Level of Service at many intersections is currently below D. Do not allow F or lower
- Pass-through traffic to Newport Beach on 17th, Harbor, and Newport is a Caltrans issue
- Lowering Level of Service traffic standards allows developers to get by without mitigation/improvements to fix intersections

Density

- Do not allow the density to be too high
- Density is a problem without adequate parking
- City is already built out. New density cannot solve existing traffic issues.
- Limit high rise development to north of I-405
- Market desire for lower-density housing
- Market progression for residents – apartment to condo to townhouse to single-family home

Community Character

- Need more walkable community with less dependence on automobile
- Quality of life is important
- “Pride” is an issue in rental versus ownership residential
- Consider family issues for apartments – where do they go for recreation, schools, etc.
- Review infill policies

- Maintain current standards
- Preserve unique community (2)
- Preserve and incubate for surf-action sports businesses (2)
- General Plan is a 30-year plan. Requires 2-3 years or more to prepare. Goals and policies need to reflect community desires
- Retain suburban feel
- Well-planned projects can solve many of the issues/concerns
- Combine smaller properties to allow enough space for good planning/design
- Can the City provide incentives to improve motels?
- Need quality manufactured housing
- Reduce ability to re-use mobile home parks
- Perhaps include a mobile home park zone
- Land use decisions should be made by two-thirds vote of electorate
- The culture of Costa Mesa is important
- City should not buy “loser” properties – poor financial decision
- Historic preservation is desired
- A downtown is important
- Westside is a good example of the eclectic nature of Costa Mesa
- There is an impact on stopping development completely. Impact comes from market forces, prices, etc.

Business/Industry

- Balance commercial, industrial, residential uses
- Businesses should thrive, but not at cost of degradation of the community

General Plan process, issues

- General Plan is a 30-year plan. Requires 2-3 years or more to prepare. Goals and policies need to reflect community desires
- How does the information from these workshops become incorporated into the City Council decisions?
- Desire for more emphasis in workshops on land use
- City needs to review and confirm the email/notification list being used for the workshops
- City should note that the general direction of community input has been consistent
- The City’s website should include a record of these workshops
- The General Plan map on the website is poor quality
- What is the level of specificity that goes into the General Plan?
- Need to discuss issues, constraints, opportunities – reality of level of change and rate of change
- Do residents desire a priority level for issues?
- People desire to be heard. How do they get their comments to the City Council?