



General Plan Update Review Committee

Thursday, January 26, 2012, 3:00 p.m.

Visalia Convention Center
San Joaquin B/C
303 E. Acequia Avenue

Meeting Minutes from Thursday, January 26, 2012

Meeting commenced at 3:00pm.

Committee Members Present: Bob Link (Co-Chair), Larry Segrue (Co-Chair), Bob Brown, Brian Blain, Carl Anderson, Carla Calhoun, Clarise Dilbeck, Craig Van Horn, Darlene Mata, Dirk Holkeboer, Eric Mittlestead, Glenn Morris, Greg Collins, Javier Leon, Jim Robinson, Ken Kugler, Lindsay Mann (filling in for Dena Cochran), Michael Kreps, Mike Knopf, Steven Cullen, Tyson Carroll, Vincent Salinas

Committee Members Absent: Brad Maaske, Carlos Medina, Dena Cochran

Support Staff Present: Brandon Smith, Brian Winter, Chris Young, Doug Damko, Josh McDonnell, Kim Loeb, Michael Olmos, Monty Cox, Nancy Loliva, Paul Scheibel, Ricardo Noguera, Consultant Michael Dyett, Facilitator Michael Ramsey

Public members in attendance: Georgina Valencia, Pamela Lopez, Katherine Singh, Nancy White, Gary Artis, Susan Simon, Richard Garcia, Mary Beatie, William Martin

1. Welcome & Introductions:

Co-Chairperson Bob Link opened the meeting. General Plan Update Review Committee (GPURC) members and support staff were introduced.

2. Public Comment:

Georgina Valencia commented that the subject of historic preservation has not seen a large amount of discussion to date. Ms. Valencia along with a group of citizens have discussed ideas, including the desire for a stand-alone Historic Preservation Element, and tools to encourage historic preservation, for the purpose of government-community relation. Incentive tools such as implementation of the Mills Act, becoming a Certified Local Government should be considered for inclusion in a Historic Preservation Element. Michael Dyett confirmed that Historic Preservation will be discussed under Agenda Item No. 6.

Pamela Lopez requested to speak at Agenda Item No. 6.

3. Accept Minutes from December 15, 2011 Meeting:

A motion and a second were made to approve the minutes. The vote passed.

4. General Plan Update Accomplishments of 2011:

Joshua McDonnell summarized the events and previous efforts that have been taking place in the last calendar year. The work from the last year's meeting has culminated in the release of the Revised Preferred Plan Concept and the Summary Paper of General Plan Policy Revisions.

5. Review / Discuss DRAFT Revised Preferred Plan Concept

a. Preferred Plan Concept Map

b. Phased Growth Boundaries:

6. Review / Discuss Summary Paper of General Plan Policy Revisions

Michael Ramsey noted that Agenda Items 5 and 6 have been combined into one presentation, wherein discussion may be taken up at any time during the presentation. The goal is to take comments and accept a version of the documents that will move forward to the Planning Commission and City Council in a joint session.

Michael Dyett led a discussion on the Revised Preferred Plan Concept and Policy Summary.

Buildout and Growth Rates

The plan would support a going-forward density of 5.3 dwelling units / acre in the new growth areas.

Jim Robinson asked why different growth rates were used for the two different urban boundaries. Michael Dyett explained the 1.8% average annual growth rate is achieved if there is no expansion from the first to second growth boundary.

Revised Preferred Plan Concept

Glenn Morris emphasized a semantic that the footprint of the ultimate growth area utilizes less land per person than the current General Plan, resulting in a smaller geographic footprint.

Focus Areas

Slides were used to illustrate how neighborhoods are “built” in four focus areas of greatest concentration of growth opportunity.

Phasing

Two “tiers” in addition to infill (areas already inside City limits) are proposed for phased growth.

Jim Robinson asked for an example calculation to derive the 80% threshold.

Michael Dyett responded that this would be a good topic to provide as a sidebar in the Land Use Element.

Planned Circulation Network

Any changes to the planned circulation network will come after a traffic modeling session.

Parks, Open Space, and Schools

Large City Parks and Linear Parks have been added as separate categories.

Vincent Salinas asked why Ben Maddox Way was not included as a green street. Michael Dyett replied that Ben Maddox Way will be added as a green street.

Clarise Dilbeck asked for clarification on the school numbers, wherein the numbers from Growth Concept B were agreed upon. Michael Dyett replied that the difference in new schools numbers is due to the inclusion of the pipeline projects.

Glenn Morris requested to discuss revisions to the land use map. Michael Dyett suggested addressing big picture items first and then returning to the map.

Key Policy Edits

Michael Dyett began from the Summary Paper of Policy Discussions page 10, as the discussion on St. Johns River options and Water will come later.

Infill / Growth Management

Jim Robinson favored infill in the City limits as opposed to an opportunity zone. Glenn Morris added that the boundaries seen illogical as it leaves out large undeveloped

areas, and that it should be applied on a parcel-by-parcel bases. Michael Dyett suggested changing the policy to an infill opportunity program.

Michael Dyett responded to Darlene Mata's question that a higher density or mixed use is not a prerequisite for infill incentives.

Jim Robinson suggested loosening the definition of infill areas, but did not favor going to City limits. Glen Morris suggested number of years in City limits as an incentive.

Brian Blain commented with regard to the greenbelts / open space preservation. Of the entire perimeter, only a small portion is threatened to abut other urban development. There may be adverse side effects created by these buffers, such as the creation of non-farmed vacant lots (i.e. wastelands) where the City can never build if it decides later to grow beyond the greenbelt.

Michael Dyett suggested that the greenbelts should be placed in certain locations and should be voluntary.

Brain Blain has concerns with the proposed policy regarding promoting continuance of farming in the city limits, and that the activity of farming is not intended to have adverse impacts on locating residential development. Michael Dyett suggested changing the term facilitate to allow.

Bob Brown and Carla Calhoun asked about a policy regarding community gardens.

Michael Dyett noted that there is a policy in a different section of the document.

Neighborhood Commercial Policy

Michael Dyett asked for the Committee's input on a definition of the size of grocery stores.

Glenn Morris said clarity was achieved in the size of the development, but that continuing trends may dictate a change in the threshold grocery store size.

Bob Link favored defining a grocery store size that is in relation to the center.

Pamela Lopez endorsed a square footage limit, and asked for land use compatibility. Ms.

Lopez also noted some areas where Neighborhood Commercial centers are less than one mile apart, and that the proposed minimum Floor Area Ratio may preclude some centers from achieving parking capacity. In responding to Bob Link about the desired criteria for grocery stores, Ms. Lopez preferred that the size of the market area define the size of the anchor.

Michael Ramsey asked for more input from those working in the industry.

Michael Dyett and Michael Ramsey suggested that a fixed number provides guidance, and that it can be changed / amended in the future.

Harvey May suggested that a policy shouldn't be written so that it fits one property. A neighborhood center which is sized appropriately should have a respectively-sized grocery store. Sizes of the center should be regulated, not the size of the store.

Steve Peck suggested that the site will be driven by the anchor who considers the site.

Glenn Morris suggested there should be an alternate zoning to accommodate larger-sized grocery stores.

Greg Collins is supportive of a maximum size in tow with the purpose and intent of the Neighborhood Commercial zone, and supportive of reinstating a one-mile separation since it works. Bob Brown agreed.

Glenn Morris questioned how to implement spacing for a particular use such as grocery stores.

Larry Segrue supported having a size limitation for grocery stores and distance separation.

Michael Ramsey suggested a policy that allows either having a smaller anchor and ancillary uses, or allowing a single larger tenant.

Jim Robinson supported using site sizes to guide the size of anchor tenants.

Michael Dyett recommended a policy with a maximum site size, with options for maximum store size and spacing.

Michael Ramsey took hand votes on those who supported defining a maximum grocery store size of 35,000 sq. ft. and those who supported a maximum site size. A majority of members supported using site size limitations.

Michael Ramsey then asked if the recommended site sizes as shown on the land use map are supportable. Members asked to clarify the sizes of Neighborhood Centers being proposed as shown on the map. Michael Dyett agreed to bring the item back for discussion at the next meeting.

Michael Dyett clarified that for existing neighborhood centers that exceed the site size limitation, alterations would be supported.

Bob Link spoke in favor of using distance spacing. Michael Dyett took a poll from the Committee, and the committee supported reinstating a policy on center spacing and not use spacing.

Michael Knopf requested that that convenience centers / corner stores be considered separately.

Michael Dyett stated that map utilizes roughly one-mile spacing (half-mile walking distance) going forward.

Other Land Use Topics

Michael Dyett affirmed that the HPAC has contributed policy comments that will be incorporated into the General Plan.

East Downtown

Michael Kreps had concerns that the draft policies did not offer enough specific incentives for locating at challenged sites.

Josh McDonnell stated that staff will work together with downtown representatives on creating policies.

Transportation

Discretionary land uses that may reasonably result in significant traffic impacts will require a traffic impact study.

Conservation

Jim Robinson asked if different turf / grass types should be discussed at this point. Michael Dyett added verbiage on very low drought tolerant planting.

Tyson Carroll asked about the possibility of using storm water retention basins for passive recreation areas. Kim Loeb replied that this would be appropriate on a case-by-case basis. Michael Dyett referenced a number of policies regarding shared use of basins.

Bob Link asked that further discussion take place with Vince Elizondo on dual-use basins.

Greg Collins noted that revised policies on dual-use basins may provide an opportunity for Engineering and Parks Departments to work together in designing facilities. Michael Dyett will add a policy regarding integrating a Parks Master Plan with a Storm Drain Master Plan.

Parks

Darlene Mata questioned if fee credits will be given to pocket parks that will be developed. Michael Dyett suggested that “allow” may fit the intent of the policy better than “develop”.

A new policy on Community Gardens has been added.

Noise

Noise performance standards suggested by Bob Brown are integrated into the Policy Revision document.

Options for North of St. Johns River

Four options for the General Plan to address urban development north of St. Johns River were presented:

1. Designate the area as Urban Reserve on the Land Use Diagram,
2. Add a Post-2030 Planning Policy (included as policy in Summary Paper),
3. Include as development option in EIR,
4. Mid-term development be permitted (not recommended)

Glenn Morris supported thinking long-term, and asked if other areas besides north of St. Johns River should be considered for post-2030 growth. Michael Dyett replied that the St. Johns River area doesn't have to be limited and "other areas" could be included in the policy.

Carla Calhoun asked if option #3 be considered in tandem with option #2.

Bob Link supported including a clause for "other areas".

Brian Blain asked how the Plan would address unwanted County development in the area.

Michael Dyett suggested pursuing a memorandum of understanding with the County.

Greg Collins suggested promoting land use designations for large-lot agricultural land uses.

Josh McDonnell replied that Policies LU-P-13 and 14 incorporate this.

Michael Dyett confirmed that the Committee is comfortable with proceeding with options #2 and #3.

Urban Water Management

Kim Loeb explained the concept of groundwater overdraft.

Glenn Morris asked if it is possible to isolate the proportion of overdraft is the City responsible for.

Brian Blain stated a greater emphasis on water conservation will go farther on effective water management.

Michael Dyett looked for confirmation from the GPURC if all major issues have been covered and the document with changes can proceed to City Council.

Michael Knopf expressed concern with the 80% buildout and UDB lines applied on the map, and suggested these issues be continued for discussion. Many parcels are divided by the boundary, which divide logical development areas and create master-planning and infrastructure phasing challenges. Desire of certain land owners' willingness to development sooner than the UGB allows is also a concern. Many neighborhoods could not be completed when divided by urban boundary lines. Community infrastructure would go through areas outside the boundary to serve areas inside the boundary. The growth management policy LU-P-3 may not work without the infill development as envisioned.

Michael Dyett offered solutions in the use of master-planning independent of the phasing limitations, or to allow for adjustments within ownership that is under unified control.

Michael Knopf stated that there may not be enough developable areas to create two tiers, and that the tiers may not work because they are too compact and do not offer the same flexibility as before.

Greg Collins stated a fundamental issue driving this General Plan is infill – does the GPURC hope for infill, promote infill, or not be concerned. What kind of stance the Plan will take on infill, and how it will drive greenfield land consumption. Growth management should be pressurized using near term to have infill. Michael Dyett responded that a three-tier system that utilizes City limits as one tier could be considered and that the infill incentives could still be discussed.

Michael Dyett suggested the possibility to continue dialogue on this subject to allow for City Council and Planning Commission input.

Greg Collins suggested creating a graphic illustration of how the trigger mechanisms might work.

Darlene Mata noted and several Committee members nodded in agreement that the topic of growth rates has been previously discussed.

Glenn Morris favored looking further at the map to identify areas or parcels that are more suitable for the first phase of development, and questioned how and when some land use changes were made on the map. One more meeting should take place focusing on the map.

Michael Ramsey stated that the infill incentive policies could be another item for the next agenda.

Darlene Mata requested that the pipeline map reflect a true number of existing vacant lots.

Josh McDonnell summarized the returning topics for the next meeting:

- Infill Opportunity Zone, change to a program
- Urban Agriculture Buffer policy language
- Additional Downtown Policies
- Historic Preservation Policies
- Reviewing the Urban Boundaries and the triggers for expanding

7. Tentative 2012 General Plan Update Schedule

A memorandum was distributed to the Committee with future meeting dates, but no discussion was taken on the item.

8. Further Comments / Discussion from Committee Members

Bob Link recommended reconvening on February 16th at 3pm to discuss the outstanding issues. No meeting will occur on February 9th.

9. Staff News and Updates

No staff news was given.

10. Adjourn.

Motion to adjourn to February 16th at 3:00pm, made and seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.