REPORT TO COUNCIL 58
City of Sacramento

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Staff Report
December 12, 2006

Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

Title: General Plan Update Status Report

Location/Council District: Citywide/All

Recommendation: Review General Plan Update status and comment on: 1) major trade-offs associated with future growth options; 2) public opinion survey; 3) Regional Master Plan Forum; 4) City Leadership Workshop; and 5) the Vision & Guiding Principles summary.

Contact: Desmond Parrington, Interim Senior Planner, 808-5044; Thomas S. Pace, Interim Long Range Planning Manager, 808-6848

Presenters: Thomas S. Pace and Bill Ziebron, President, EIP Associates, 325-4800

Department: Planning

Division: Long-Range Planning

Organization No: 4912

Description/Analysis

Issue: This report provides an update on the status of the General Plan Update and reports on the following topics:

- An executive summary of "fatal flaws" and trade-offs associated with future growth options for the General Plan;
- Status of the public opinion survey including major topics to be addressed in the survey;
- Update on the Regional Master Plan Forum with surrounding jurisdictions and partner agencies in January 2007;
- Overview of the upcoming City Leadership Workshop to be held on February 20, 2007; and
- Presentation of a one-page Vision & Guiding Principles summary handout.

The status of each of these issues is presented in the Background section (Attachment 1). In addition, Planning staff will return on January 23, 2007 to provide reports back to Council on the following items: 1) Community Plan strategy; 2) Public Opinion Survey Results; 3) Eastern Study Area Analysis; 4)

strategy; 2) Public Opinion Survey Results; 3) Eastern Study Area Analysis; 4) 2007-2008 Outreach Strategy; and 5) Overview of project status and potential budget implications.

Policy Considerations: This report is consistent with both the City's overall Strategic Plan Goals and the General Plan vision of becoming the most livable city in America.

Commission/Committee Action: The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) provided direct input to staff and the consultants on the fatal flaw analysis at their meeting on September 25, 2006. That information has been included in the Fatal Flaw Workshop Executive Summary and in the full report. The GPAC was briefed on the City Leadership Workshop and Regional Master Plan Forum on August 29th and supported staff recommendations on those events. Staff also informed the GPAC of the Vision & Guiding Principles Summary at its October 23rd meeting. This report was also presented to the Planning Commission at their meeting on December 7th. Commission comments will be presented orally to Council on December 12th.

Environmental Considerations: There are no environmental considerations associated with this report. (Not a project under Section 21065 of CEQA and CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 (b)(4)).

Rationale for Recommendation: As a follow-up to the August 29th Council hearing, staff is providing an informational update on the: 1) fatal flaw workshop; 2) public opinion survey; 3) Regional Master Plan Forum; and 4) City Leadership Workshop and is seeking input on the summary of the adopted Vision & Guiding Principles.

Financial Considerations: None.

Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD): No goods or services are being purchased under this report.

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Thomas S. Pace, Interim Manager
Long Range Planning

Approved by: _____
Carol Shearly, Director
Planning Department

Approved by: _____
Robert G. Overstreet II
Strategic Projects Executive

Recommendation Approved:

_____
for RAY KERRIDGE
City Manager

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Attachment 1
Background

General Plan Growth Scenarios – Trade-Offs & Implications

City staff, including department directors and staff, as well as the General Plan consultant team analyzed the trade-offs and implications associated with a range of different growth options in a two-day workshop. The options explored included: 1) a continuation of our existing General Plan; 2) a new approach emphasizing infill and redevelopment with more mixed-use; and 3) a new concept that included multiple town/regional centers and a balance between infill and new greenfield development, with slightly less height and less mixed use. The latter two ideas were based upon the City's own smart growth principles and the SACOG Blueprint plan.

Based on a draft analysis, the consultants have identified the major implications associated with two of the growth options. These are presented in Attachment 2. The final results will be presented at the City Leadership Workshop on February 20th.

Public Opinion Survey

In order to get input on the public's values and the trade-offs that they are willing to support, the City will be conducting a citywide public opinion survey for the General Plan. The 15-minute random telephone survey of 1,500 residents will be conducted in early and mid-December and will address a variety of important values and issues related to the General Plan. The survey will be scientifically accurate and will be representative of the City's population with at least 150 representatives from each community plan area. The survey is designed to confirm public values and attitudes about major General Plan topics such as sustainability, mobility, growth, jobs, housing, parks, density, urban form, infrastructure and service needs as well as the costs and implications associated with these.

The City has hired the firm of Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM) from Portland, Oregon to conduct the public opinion survey for the General Plan. DHM has extensive experience with scientifically valid public opinion surveys for community planning projects throughout the United States, including public opinion surveys for the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the City of Portland, Contra Costa County, and the Idaho Transportation Department.

Regional Master Plan Forum

The Regional Master Plan Forum has been scheduled for late January 2007. The forum will include elected officials and management staff from neighboring jurisdictions as well as directors and staff from agencies that work with or serve the City such as Caltrans, Regional Transit, SMUD, school districts, etc. The forum will define major

issues, discuss current work, identify a process to resolve remaining issues, confirm a willingness to work on regional issues, and to celebrate successes. The results of the Regional Master Plan Forum will be presented to Council at the City Leadership Workshop.

City Leadership Workshop

The City Leadership Workshop has been scheduled for Tuesday, February 20th from 6 to 9 pm at the Library Galleria (828 I Street) in Downtown. The workshop will include all City boards and commission members as well as City department directors, charter officers and the Mayor and City Council. It will be an interactive workshop focused on the trade-offs, and implications associated with the choices for our future. The workshop will include a presentation of the public opinion survey results, the final results of the land use scenario analysis, visual simulations of the scenarios for different parts of the City in 2030 as well as interactive exercises. Staff will present a range of growth scenarios and a staff recommended preferred alternative for discussion and consideration. The goal of the workshop is to give City decision makers and participants an understanding of the implications associated with future growth choices and an opportunity to provide direction on a preferred alternative.

Vision & Guiding Principles Summary

On November 22, 2005, Council adopted the General Plan Vision & Guiding Principles, an illustrated eight-page color document. The attached summary (refer to Attachment 3) is being provided to Council as a convenient reference to the adopted Vision & Guiding Principles. The summary includes the vision that Sacramento will be the most livable City in America and the guiding principles that emphasize vibrant centers, energized corridors, transportation choices, safe neighborhoods and sustainable development.

Attachment 2
Fatal Flaw Workshop Executive Summary

The City of Sacramento is considering three land use scenarios to accommodate the City's projected growth of 200,000 residents and 140,000 employees by 2030. Scenario 1 represents the City's existing General Plan, while Scenarios 2 and 3 depict more compact forms of development consistent with the Smart Growth principles in SACOG's Regional Blueprint Project and the Vision and Guiding Principles adopted by the Sacramento City Council. The purpose of this memorandum is to compare the implications of Scenarios 2 and 3 only.

The analysis reveals that neither scenario has significantly greater community benefit or less overall impact. Yet important differences exist and each technical topic should be considered in combination with other topics as a means to understand key trade-offs among the issues. With further review and discussion, the preferred scenario ultimately selected by the City Council may be a combination of elements from both scenarios.

In summary, Scenario 3 provides a wider diversity of housing choices than Scenario 2 but will also have higher infrastructure and maintenance costs. Infrastructure costs associated with providing interior drainage for flood protection in the Natomas Joint Vision Area will be greater in Scenario 3, while the challenges of providing infill development will exist for both scenarios, but will likely be greater for Scenario 2.

From the environmental standpoint, Scenario 2 will protect more biological habitat and will have a greater air quality benefit due to less vehicle miles traveled, but more residents may be exposed to toxic air contaminants under Scenario 2. These and other considerations are discussed below.

- Scenario 2 retains the Natomas Joint Vision Area (NJVA) as an urban reserve, meaning development would not occur until after 2030, in contrast with Scenario 3 which provides for near-term mixed-use development including single-family housing. The lack of single family detached housing capacity in NJVA in Scenario 2 needs to be off-set by opportunities for comparable development in other areas of the City. Conversion of other non-residential land use categories will be required for such housing. The transfer of single family capacity from the NJVA to higher density multi-family units elsewhere in the City may not be supportable in the market place, as potential residents may choose to locate outside of the City in other communities providing this housing product.

- While Scenario 3 provides for development of four sub-regional centers at lesser densities than the two provided by Scenario 2, the distribution provides opportunities for more jobs to be in closer proximity to residents, reducing vehicle commute distances, energy consumption, and air pollution.

- The higher densities of Scenario 2 may result in greater changes of community character and incompatibilities of adjoining uses, particularly where targeted

growth areas are adjacent to lower density neighborhoods. Tall buildings along the City's commercial corridors could be incompatible where adjoining uses are single family housing. The lower densities of Scenario 3 reduce these impacts. As an option, buildings in the corridors could be required to be vertically setback when adjoining lower density developments.

- Scenario 2 results in greater localized traffic volumes and reduced levels of service at key intersections. These impacts are offset by locating residents closer to their jobs, services, and commerce, which reduce overall vehicle trips, their length, air pollution, gasoline consumption, and noise. Traffic congestion encourages the use of other modes of mobility, thereby increasing transit ridership and pedestrian trips in Scenario 2. Transit ridership is likely higher under Scenario 2 due to a higher proportion of the housing units near existing transit stations and along commercial corridors served by existing transit routes. Increased pedestrian activity contributes to a more active streetscape. Planning with Regional Transit improves the opportunity for increased transit use.

- Accommodation of development in the NJVA under Scenario 3 results in potential loss of agricultural land, critical habitat, and open space, and necessitates modification of the existing Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) or preparation of a new HCP. Such processes are lengthy and complex, and require close coordination among local, state and federal agencies, as well as special interest groups. Scenario 3 provides opportunities for the development of new recreational, cultural and environmental educational facilities, as well as over 26,000 dwelling units to meet regional housing needs. A more detailed study is needed to determine if the NJVA can accommodate the required additional conservation lands, the proposed new urban development, and other recreation and cultural amenities.

- The threat of flooding from levee failure is perhaps the most critical issue facing the City of Sacramento and the entire Central Valley. Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) and the City are moving forward with a plan to ultimately provide 200-year level of flood protection for the entire City. Either Scenario 2 or 3 place additional residents, dwelling units, and jobs within areas protected by levees. Overall accessibility, which is important for emergency vehicle access, is superior in the Natomas area, in comparison to some of the more densely developed areas of the City where more population tends to be concentrated in Scenario 2. However, under Scenario 3, the infrastructure costs associated with providing interior drainage for new development in the Natomas Joint Vision Area would likely be higher than other areas of the City.

- A more compact, higher density form of development within a smaller geographic area in Scenario 2 places more residents living within one-quarter mile of an existing recreational facility. Development of parks and recreational facilities in "greenfield" sites and in urbanized areas will also be different under Scenarios 2 and 3. Finding appropriate sites for these facilities may be easier in new growth areas, such as Natomas Joint Vision Area and Delta Shores. However, finding

appropriate sites in infill areas will be more challenging due to less available land in areas such as downtown. Different types of parks and recreational facilities will need to be considered including urban plazas, rooftop gardens, indoor recreation facilities, and mini parks.

- Recently published guidelines from the California Air Resources Board recommend against siting sensitive land uses within 500 feet of freeways and high-traffic roads. Studies show an increase in adverse health effects the closer sensitive uses are located to such roadways, especially within 300 feet. Adequate planning for increased densities in close proximity to freeways presents a challenge to the City under both scenarios, but more people are within 300 feet of a freeway under Scenario 2 due to increased densities and a greater concentration of residents within the Central Business District (CBD).

Attachment 3

Vision & Guiding Principles Summary

General Plan Vision: Sacramento will be the most livable City in America

Vibrant Downtown & Town Centers
-creating great places that include jobs, housing, culture, entertainment and shopping
-designing a beautiful skyline
-increasing job opportunities outside the City Center

Energized Commercial Corridors
-redesigning car-oriented areas into people-friendly places with new housing, shopping and better public services
-creating attractive gathering places in each community

Expanded Transportation Choices
-giving priority to the movement of people
-increased public investment in alternatives to traffic congestion
-building a walkable community with convenient and comfortable public transit

Safe and Livable Neighborhoods
-designing streets and homes with good visibility and security
-providing adequate protection from flood, fire and natural disasters
-increasing housing choice with a full range of unit types, prices and locations
-ensuring convenient access to neighborhood services and amenities (parks, schools, shopping)

Sustainable Development
-ensuring permanent open space and conserving farmland for future generations
-increasing access to our rivers and natural resources
-protecting our architectural and cultural heritage
-designing communities and buildings that save energy and reduce pollution
-improving public health through planning and development strategies