

Agenda Report

January 25, 2016

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Planning & Community Development Department

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDED STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENT THE GENERAL PLAN

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council endorse the recommended process of updating the Zoning Code and Zoning Map, revise existing specific plans, and update the Citywide Design Guidelines based on the General Plan Implementation Strategy, as discussed below.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In August 2015, the City Council adopted a complete update of the Land Use and Mobility Elements of the General Plan resulting in perhaps the most comprehensive update and reorganization of its General Plan to date. This update represents the culmination of years of outreach, research and analysis and sets forth a blueprint for the future development of the City. State law requires consistency between a City's General Plan and its Zoning Code and the City must now focus its attention on aligning existing development regulations and guidelines with the vision, goals and policies set forth in the newly adopted General Plan. Specifically, this report sets forth a process to:

- Prepare the required document for environmental clearance;
- Update the Zoning Code and Zoning Map;
- Update each Specific Plan; and
- Establish Citywide Design Guidelines.

While there are a number of approaches that could be utilized to complete these implementation tasks, staff focused on three options. These three strategies ranged from conducting minor revisions to the existing specific plans and creating zoning districts that would be applicable citywide in a 3 year timeframe to comprehensively re-visioning and updating each specific plan and creating tailored zoning districts for each plan area within 6 years.

The recommended strategy balances costs, resources and the overall time needed to effectively implement the goals and policies of the General Plan. This strategy would ensure that subsequent development and land uses are consistent with the General Plan by establishing new zoning districts that would implement the Land Use Diagram of the Land Use Element. The recommended strategy would also include development regulations tailored to each specific plan area, and establish new Citywide Design Guidelines. This work program would be expected to be completed within four years.

BACKGROUND:

2015 General Plan Update (GPU)

On August 18, 2015 the City Council adopted a complete update of the Land Use and Mobility Elements of the General Plan and eliminated six optional elements (Public Facilities, Social Development, Cultural and Recreational, Economic Development and Employment, Historic and Cultural, and Scenic Highways). The 2015 GPU also includes new and revised policies, and a new Land Use Diagram that includes:

- Land use designations and density/FAR levels for all parcels in the City, including the specific plan areas;
- Revised specific plan boundaries;
- The elimination of the West Gateway Specific Plan and the creation of a new specific plan for Lamanda Park; and
- New development capacities that establish maximum residential and commercial growth for each specific plan area.

The adoption of the 2015 GPU was the culmination of a comprehensive public outreach process that created a community-based vision for the future of Pasadena, one which will shape development of the City for the next 20 years. The community outreach process of the GPU consisted of over 100 events where residents, business owners, neighborhood associations, and non-profit advocacy groups were able to express their vision for the future of Pasadena and over 70,000 General Plan Community Surveys were distributed to all Pasadena households and businesses requesting input. The 2015 GPU represents a collaborative, community-based vision for how the City of Pasadena should grow through 2035.

Implementation of the General Plan

The GPU included an Implementation Program with varying types of actions that would be used to implement the goals and policies of the new Land Use and Mobility Elements. This report focuses on implementation programs managed by the Planning and Community Development Department, but, because land use and transportation are intimately connected, an overview of the implementation of the Mobility Element is also provided.

Mobility Element

The Department of Transportation (DOT) has been working on a number of programs to implement the Mobility Element. In addition to applying the new transportation analysis guidelines adopted by the City Council in December 2014 to all new development, DOT staff has begun to implement the following initiatives identified in the Mobility Element Update:

- Transportation Impact Fee Update – Staff has developed a project list and cost estimates for the bicycle, pedestrian and transit infrastructure to be included in the revised fee. A Nexus Study to develop new developments “fair share” for the needed infrastructure will be prepared and presented to the community and City Council in spring 2016.
- Bicycle Transportation Plan – Funding for the implementation of the top priority bicycle infrastructure projects identified in the plan have been included in the proposed Capital Improvement Plan budget.
- Short Range Transit Plan – Funding for the purchase of new Pasadena Transit and Dial-a-Ride vehicles identified in the plan have been included in the proposed Capital Improvement Plan budget.
- New Street Design Guidelines – Work has begun on the development of Form and Context Based Street Design Guidelines. Draft guidelines will be presented to the Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) and the community in summer 2016.

Implementation Programs in Process

The Planning & Community Development Department has been working on a number of programs to implement the General Plan including:

- Removing References to Development Capacities in Specific Plans: Updating specific plans to eliminate references to development capacities, deferring to the new General Plan Land Use Element development capacities (in process, anticipated completion date: February 2016).
- Revising Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Regulations: A Zoning Code amendment will be completed to create more effective regulations applicable to the TOD areas located within the City (in process, anticipated completion date: April 2016).
- Establishing A Climate Action Plan: The City will develop and adopt a Climate Action Plan that monitors the impacts of climate change and provides strategies and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change (in process, anticipated completion date: December 2016).

Zoning Code, Specific Plan and Design Guidelines

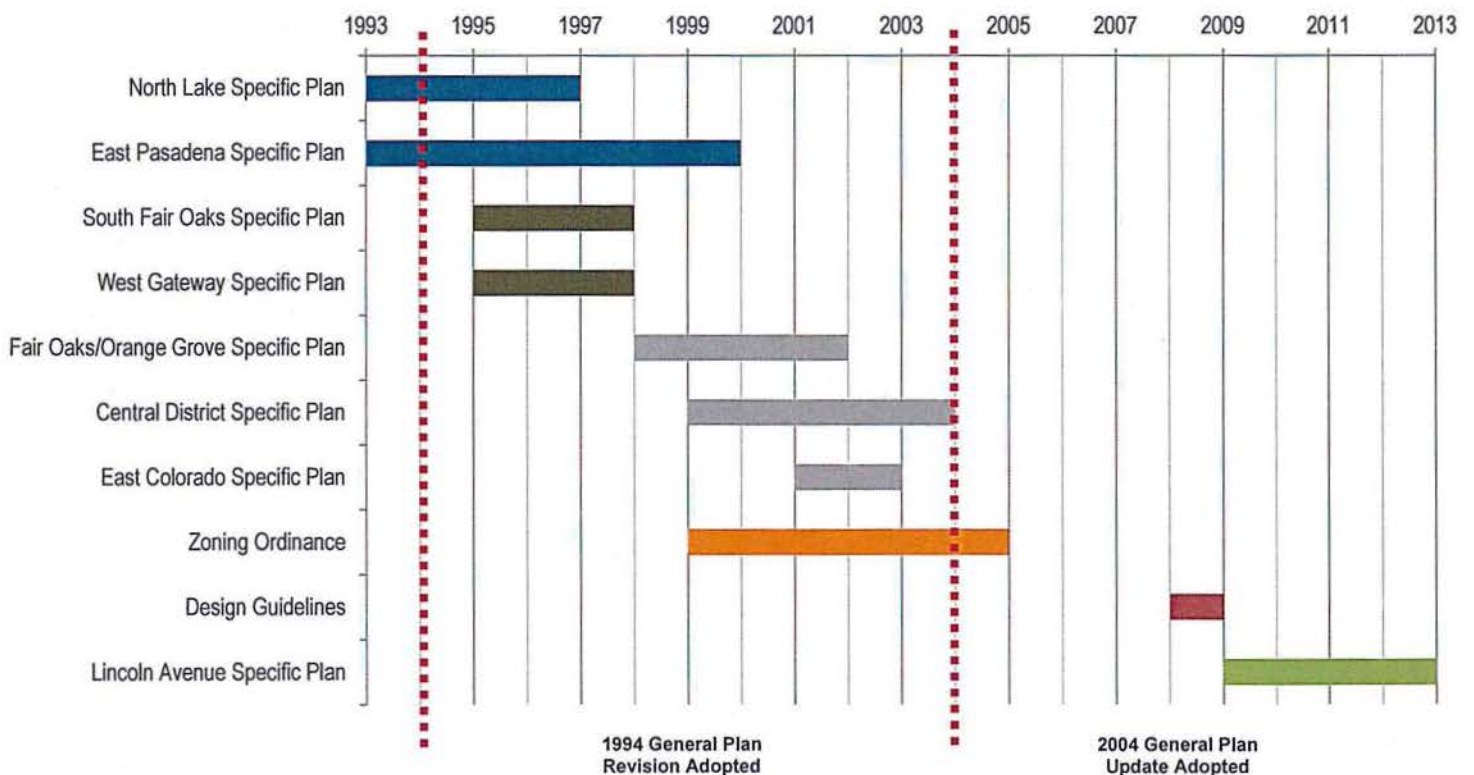
In addition to the above, staff will now begin work on the following Implementation Program items:

- Specific Plans: Eliminate one specific plan, create one new specific plan, and update remaining specific plans: The City will review and update all specific plans, and explore the use of form-based code zoning principles, where appropriate, to ensure consistency with the updated General Plan.
- Zoning: Update Zoning Code and Zoning Map. The Zoning Code and Zoning Map will be updated to ensure consistency with the General Plan and specific plans.
- Design Guidelines: Develop, update and consolidate Citywide Design Guidelines into a single document.

Implementation of the 1994 General Plan

The last time the City’s General Plan went through a similar update was over 20 years ago in the early 1990s and the City spent approximately 11 years to complete the process to update the zoning ordinance, establish seven specific plans, and create design guidelines. The following graph illustrates the adoption timeline for the original seven specific plans, the zoning ordinance, and the design guidelines. The graph also includes the timeline for the design guidelines and the Lincoln Avenue Specific Plan, which were adopted after the 2004 GPU.

Figure 1 – Implementation of the 1994 General Plan (General Adoption Timeline)



It is anticipated that updating the specific plans this time around would occur more quickly because the general vision of the specific plans has already been established through the extensive GPU outreach process. Building on the refined vision, principles, and policies established in the new General Plan, the City would focus on its implementation by updating the specific plans and zoning to achieve that vision.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

The recommended strategy would: (1) create new zoning districts to correspond to each new Land Use Designation identified in the Land Use Diagram of the Land Element as needed; (2) revise and update each specific plan's policies, development standards, and zoning; and (3) consolidate existing and develop citywide design guidelines. This work program would be expected to be completed within four years. Although the GPU included an extensive community outreach component to create the vision for future development within the City, it is important that this implementation program include a focused community outreach effort to ensure consistency with the City's established vision for growth. The recommended strategy is described in greater detail below.

New Zoning Districts

The City's Zoning would be amended to achieve consistency with the adopted land use designations identified by the GPU Land Use Diagram. New zoning districts (i.e., allowable uses and development standards) for each of the new Land Use Designations created as part of the GPU would be established. Each Land Use designation established by the General Plan Land Use Map may have a series of zoning districts that would achieve the required consistency. These new zoning districts would specify the allowed uses, minimum lot size, height, setbacks, FAR, dwelling unit density, parking, etc., as appropriate. In addition, the City will explore the use of form-based zoning principles in the creation of the new zones. These zones can then be used to update the Zoning Code and Map to ensure that new development and land uses are consistent with the new General Plan.

Specific Plan Amendments

The Specific Plan amendment process would amend all of the existing specific plans by updating the goals, policies and regulations to implement the new vision established by the 2015 General Plan Update. In addition, new zoning districts would be established within each Specific Plan as may be needed. In recognition of the varied development patterns within the City, new zoning districts and development standards would be tailored to each individual specific plan area. For example, a Medium Mixed Use Zoning District located in the South Fair Oaks Specific Plan area may have a different set of development standards than a Medium Mixed Use Zoning District in the East Pasadena Specific Plan area. Zoning regulations would therefore be differentiated across Specific Plans in order to address the unique circumstances and/or to accomplish a particular goal, such as preserving neighborhood character, encouraging pedestrian activity, or focusing greater densities and heights adjacent to transit stations.

As part of this strategy, it is anticipated that form-based building typologies would be utilized to address building facades, form, and massing of buildings as they relate to the public realm. The new zones would draw upon these building typologies in implementing appropriate development standards while specific plan subareas would have further customized development standards incorporating form-based principles.

Finally, the specific plan boundaries would be adjusted to reflect the new Land Use Element and Diagram. Important to note that under this strategy, the focus would be to implement the General Plan and not necessarily re-vision existing specific plans. Since the overall work program is to be completed within four years, this strategy assumes that all eight specific plans would be reviewed and amended almost simultaneously.

Citywide Design Guidelines

As part of this strategy, new Citywide Design Guidelines would be created to implement the General Plan and establish a clear and common understanding of the City's design expectations. Design guidelines from all existing Specific Plans would be consolidated into one document, replacing and supplementing individual specific plan design guidelines. The anticipated result would be a clearly articulated design framework for new development in the City of Pasadena consistent with GPU.

Community Outreach

This implementation strategy would continue to engage the community but in a more focused manner. Extensive community outreach was conducted as part of the GPU, which focused on creating a vision for the future of Pasadena. The outreach strategy envisioned for this effort would build upon the work that was already done under the GPU process. Moving forward, the outreach would focus on specific plan details that reinforce Pasadena's Guiding Principles and implements the refined vision that was established in the new General Plan. The new General Plan also established the framework in which to update the Zoning Code and Map, specific plans, and design guidelines. The process would engage the community at various stages of the work program, ensuring that the timeline and budget are not compromised.

Environmental Analysis

The recommended strategy anticipates that geographically grouped Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) can be prepared for multiple specific plans, depending on the scope of changes proposed for each specific plan. It is anticipated that three EIRs would be prepared as part of this scope of work. If individual EIRs are required, additional time and or resources may be required.

Expenditures

Under this assumption, the overall work program is estimated to cost approximately \$7.3 million. The majority of the expenses would be covered by the awarded grant funds and the General Plan Maintenance Fee revenues. For more information on estimated expenditures and revenue refer to the *Fiscal Impact* section of this report.

Overall, the recommended strategy attempts to strike a balance between accomplishing the goals and policies of the General Plan and achieving the desired work program in the most expeditious manner. It builds upon the work done during the GPU process and focuses its attention on the details of each specific plan area where change is necessary in order to bring them into conformance with the new General Plan.

Analysis of Other Strategies Considered

Staff analyzed two other strategies to update the Specific Plans: (A) A Streamlined Update Strategy and (B) A Phased Update Strategy. These alternative strategies both develop Citywide Zoning Districts and Design Guidelines in the same manner as the recommended strategy but differ significantly in scope, timing, and cost of the Specific Plan Updates.

The Streamlined Update applies the citywide zoning districts uniformly across all Specific Plans. More refined zones for the Specific Plan Areas would not be created. Specific Plan policies would be updated to bring it into conformance with the General Plan. This strategy is the most expeditious, occurring over three years, with focused community outreach. It is also the most cost effective plan with estimated expenditures of \$5.6 million. This approach assumes that a supplemental EIR or single EIR would suffice for all specific plan areas.

The Phased Update Strategy would update the Specific Plans in a similar manner as the recommended strategy but would occur over two phases across six years. The Phased strategy would also re-vision the Specific Plans as necessary to establish new policies, direction and goals, and include more expansive outreach. This approach would require the City to prioritize four Specific Plans for update as part of the first phase, with the remaining four Specific Plans left for the second phase. Each Phase would take three years to complete. The estimated expenditures for this work program would be \$8.2 million, largely because this strategy assumes an individual EIR would be prepared for each Specific Plan due to the comprehensive nature of the updates.

Conclusion of the two strategies analyzed

Ultimately, both of these strategies would achieve consistency between existing zoning and the new Land Use Diagram, but do not effectively balance the needs of accomplishing the goals and policies of the General Plan with achieving the desired work program in the most expeditious manner. The Streamlined Update Strategy would implement the General Plan the quickest, within three years. However it would include only minor revisions to the existing specific plans (i.e., plan boundary adjustments and removal of outdated text), and most importantly, would not establish development regulations tailored to each specific plan, but instead rely upon generic zoning classifications across the City. In contrast, the Phased Update Strategy would provide the community with the opportunity to revise the existing specific plans, further tailoring and individualizing existing development standards for each plan. However, it would take the longest, approximately six years to complete, and may reflect a work program that is duplicative of the visioning that occurred during the General Plan Update

outreach process. In addition, it would require that the City prioritize which Specific Plans should be updated first.

Next Steps

Based on the direction provided by City Council, staff will prepare multiple Requests for Proposal (RFP) to solicit a number of qualified consultants to both manage tasks and prepare documents associated with this work program. It is envisioned that separate RFPs would be developed for each of the following tasks: 1) environmental documentation; 2) specific plan updates; 3) form-based code building typologies; and 4) design guidelines.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

In accordance with Section 15061 (b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment are subject to CEQA. Establishing an implementation process for the implementation of the General Plan will not have a significant effect on the environment because the action will not result in or lead to a physical change in Pasadena. Therefore, no additional environmental review is needed at this time.

FISCAL IMPACT:

As part of the effort to acquire funding for this work program, in July 2014, the Department applied to the Metro Transit-Oriented Development Planning Grant Program for a grant in the amount of approximately \$1.9 million. On January 14, 2015, the City of Pasadena was awarded \$1.5 million in grant funding. The grant would be used for: 1) an amendment to six existing specific plans located within half mile radius of a Metro Gold Line station, 2) a focused update of the Zoning Code to align with the updated specific plans, 3) consolidate and update the citywide design guidelines, and 4) associated environmental analysis. On March 23, 2015, the City Council authorized the City Manager to execute a grant agreement with Metro.

In March 2014, the Department applied to the Strategic Growth Council Sustainable (SGC) Communities Planning Grant for a grant in the amount of \$500,000 in grant funding. In July 2014, the City was awarded \$491,770 in grant funding. Approximately \$400,000 of the grant would be used for the development of citywide zoning districts incorporating form based code principles. The grant also includes an environmental justice component requiring public outreach and a work program that has direct benefits to underserved community in the City. On April 21, 2015 the contract was executed.

The recommended strategy is expected to cost an estimated \$7.3 million. Approximately \$1.9 million would be funded by the two grants awarded. The remaining balance of \$5.4 million would come from a combination of General Plan Maintenance Fee and the Building Fund revenues. Annually, as part of the preparation of the operating budget the funding allocation would be developed and presented as part of the Planning & Community Development Department's recommended operating budget.

However, there is no immediate fiscal impact as a result of this action. This action will provide further direction to the Planning & Community Development Department on how to best implement the 2015 General Plan Update.

Respectfully submitted,



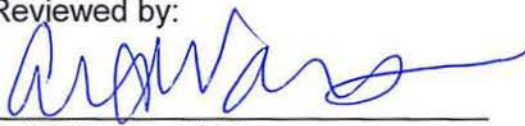
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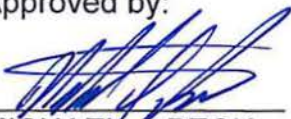
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