

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: September 16, 2002

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AND IMPLEMENTATION

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the City Council review and receive the following report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Over the past three years, over 100 different outreach meetings have been held involving several hundred participants. Meeting formats have ranged from small group meetings with property owners or technical experts to large community meetings with 100 – 150 attendees.

BACKGROUND:

At the City Council meeting of August 5th during discussion on the General Plan update and implementation activities, the Council requested information about the outreach activities for these planning efforts. Attachment 1 summarizes the number and the different type of meetings that have been held for each component of the project.

The seventh guiding principle of the General Plan is "Community participation will be a permanent part of achieving a greater city." Community comments help to identify issues, prioritize values, refine technical analysis, and evaluate various proposals. The diversity of comments provides insight in determining the best options for staff to recommend to the Council. The participation process for the update and implementation of the General Plan has included opportunities ranging from a Saturday morning festival in the City Hall courtyard to community meetings to public hearings, along with a variety of other meetings.

Variety of Input

Planning documents are strongest when they have benefited from the input of a variety of different stakeholders. City staff has solicited input from business and property owners, as well as neighborhood representatives; renters, as well as homeowners; as

well as technical experts. Meetings are held at different times – evenings and weekends – to accommodate people with different work schedules. Staff schedules meetings throughout the City, including schools and libraries to be more convenient for attendees. And whenever possible, staff attends regularly scheduled meetings of business or neighborhood groups, rather than always having them attend city-sponsored meetings.

Types of Meetings

When receiving public input, staff uses a variety of types of meetings to reach as many interested people as possible. The first event that kicked off the process was a “Planning For The 21st Century Kick-Off Festival.” This event was held in the City Hall courtyard in June of 1999. Rather than asking participants to comment on the Zoning Code, Land Use Element or Central District Specific Plan, they were asked to provide input on a variety of issues, such as design, and mobility.

At the Kick-Off festival, the story bus was unveiled. This is an ARTS bus, decorated with photographs of Pasadena residents, which has the seats removed to hold maps and displays about the planning process. The bus is driven to community events and available for community members to board the bus, view the exhibits, talk with city staff, and provide input about planning projects. This provides input from people who may not typically come out to planning meetings. The bus was used at events in Jackie Robinson Park, citywide picnics at Brookside Park, and at neighborhood association picnics.

In conjunction with the story bus, staff and consultants also developed an interactive computer program called “Where do you work, live or play in Pasadena?” This allowed a community member to approach a large city map and identify the location of their home or workplace and then receive a personalized computer printout of all the City planning projects or development projects within a quarter mile radius of their location. The printout would give a brief summary of the project and a name and number of a city staff person to call for additional information. This information would allow the community member to find out what projects are underway and how to get involved in the process. This program was used at several picnics and neighborhood events, including the Arroyo Seco festival.

Smaller focus group meetings have been used for several of the planning projects. The zoning code revision process began with a series of small meetings in the summer of 1999 with people who use the zoning code. Attendees included architects, contractors, developers, land use attorneys, realtors, and homeowner association representatives. These zoning code users provided detailed input on the parts of the code that should be changed or simplified. The draft Safety Element has been reviewed by a group of experts, including seismologists from Caltech.

Focus group meetings have also been used in the preparation of the Central District Specific Plan. In the Spring of 2000, seven small group meetings were scheduled that

focused on different geographic areas of the downtown – South Lake, Civic Center, Old Pasadena, Playhouse, Arroyo Parkway, and two meetings on the residential areas in and around the Central District. These meetings were attended by property owners and business owners, as well as residents and provided input on the positive and negative changes that have occurred in their districts. Staff is currently conducting small group meetings in the Central District to discuss the heights, setbacks, and floor area ratios that will be in the Draft Plan.

Similar to small group meetings, staff and consultants have also conducted one-on-one interviews with stakeholders on different aspects of the plans. These interviews can be conducted at a convenient time for the interview subject and can provide more candid information from the subject than a larger meeting. As an example, in the Historic Preservation Ordinance process interviews were conducted with City officials, and members of the architectural and preservation community to identify their concerns about the current ordinance.

Prior to taking issues or draft plans to Commissions, they are reviewed and discussed by a joint subcommittee. The subcommittee consists of two Planning Commissioners, two Transportation Advisory Commissioners, and two members of the Community Development Committee. The joint subcommittee also advises staff on community outreach activities. The subcommittee members also regularly update their respective Commissions on the status of the different plans. The subcommittee has met since February of 1999 on an average of once a month and currently meets the first Tuesday of each month. To date, over 45 meetings of this group have taken place.

The Housing Element used a task force as a tool to achieve community input. The Housing 2000 group was comprised of about 20 housing advocates, realtors, housing developers, neighborhood leaders and members of the Planning Commission and Community Development Committee. The group met five times to discuss housing and affordable housing issues.

Traditional, large community meetings have also been used by the different planning projects. The Central District Specific Plan process included 3 large Forum meetings where approximately 100-125 people attended to listen to information about the Plan and provide and discuss their comments. Often, the group will break out into small group discussions for a part of the meeting. The Mobility Element has used several series of large group meetings in four different parts of the City.

A very effective way of receiving input is to attend meetings that are convened by other groups. In the Central District Specific Plan process, staff have attended and presented information at meetings of the Old Pasadena, South Lake, and Playhouse business associations, as well as joint meetings attended by members of all three groups. Staff has also attended meetings of the Civic Center Implementation Task Force. In the Noise Element process, staff has attended meetings of a variety of neighborhood associations or the Boards of the associations. Staff has also attended Council District meetings to present information and receive input on draft plans.

All of the plans are reviewed by one or more Commissions before the City Council hearings. These can be informational presentations, workshops or public hearings. There have also been several joint meetings and workshops with groups of Commissions on several of the Plans. The Design and Planning Commissions held joint meetings to discuss the proposed changes to the sign ordinance. The Planning Commission and Transportation Advisory Commission met jointly five times to discuss the Land Use and Mobility Elements. On two occasions, these joint meetings also included the Community Development Committee. The Design and Cultural Heritage Commissions have jointly met to review the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Notification

City staff has used a variety of methods to notify stakeholders about upcoming events. These methods include: mailed flyers or postcards, neighborhood association president bi-monthly deliveries, advertisements or legal notices in the newspapers, press releases, neighborhood newsletters, e-mails, business association notification, phone calls, In-Focus articles, announcements on the City's web page, and announcements on KPAS. Flyers and copies of draft plans are available at the Central and branch libraries.

Because the General Plan Elements and the Zoning Code are citywide plans, it is not always practical to do mailed notices, so staff relies more heavily on advertising and the neighborhood associations. With a more focused issue, like the sign ordinance, or a smaller geographic area, like the Central District, key stakeholders can be identified and contacted by phone or e-mail about an upcoming meeting.

Attendance at meetings varied widely throughout the different planning processes. At the 25 meetings held on the Mobility Element in different quadrants of the City, attendance ranged from 2 attendees to over 150 attendees to discuss different aspects of transportation. Small group and focus group meetings usually have anywhere from 3 to 12 attendees to facilitate easy interaction among the attendees.

Issues Raised at Community Meetings

Through the community participation process, there are different goals for input. At the first meetings on a Plan, the goal is to ensure that we identify all the issues. Staff may ask questions such as "What do you like or dislike about signs in Pasadena?" At subsequent meetings, the purpose is to ensure that the emerging plans reflect and address the key issues that have been raised. The theme of these meetings might be "Have we heard you correctly?" It is important to note that the City sometimes receives input that is conflicting or that does not fit in with the other city goals, therefore some participants perceive that the plans do not respond to their comments. Staff's objective is to achieve a professional recommendation that has community consensus on the Plans that are presented to the Commissions and Council.

Upcoming Outreach

For the Central District Specific Plan, staff will continue to receive community input on the key concepts in the plan throughout September and October. Small group meetings are being conducted with groups of 3-10 stakeholders. Staff have met with representatives of Pasadena Heritage, PRIDE, Council Field Representatives, and are scheduling meetings with members of the Playhouse District, Old Pasadena, and South Lake business associations. Staff has also presented a brief overview of the projects at two Council District meetings – District 6 on August 27 and District 2 on August 29.

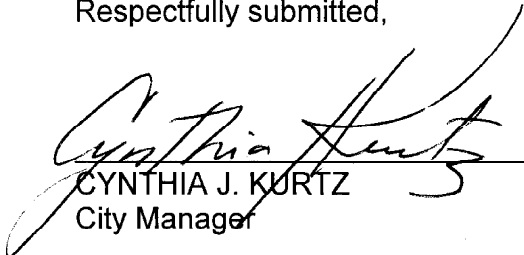
On Tuesday, October 1st from 4-9 p.m. at the Pasadena Conference Center, staff and consultants are planning an Open House, where interested people can come in at any time to review and talk with staff and consultants about the draft Central District Specific Plan Framework. Notices of the meeting will be mailed to all Central District property owners, neighborhood leaders citywide, and business owners, and advertised in the Pasadena Star News.

In October, a special edition of In-Focus on the General Plan update and implementation will be mailed to all Pasadena households. Articles will explain how the General Plan is being updated and how Specific Plans, Zoning Code update, Design Guidelines, and Historic Preservation Ordinance implement the seven guiding principles of the General Plan. Contact information for city staff managing the different projects will be provided for citizens to get more information.

In addition, the plans will go through review by various commissions over the next two months. The Design, Cultural Heritage, and Planning Commissions, as well as the Community Development Committee will review the Central District Specific Plan in October.

After the Council has conceptually approved the Land Use and Mobility Elements, Central District Specific Plan Framework, and the Zoning Code Revisions, an Environmental Impact Report process will begin. That process will provide many additional opportunities for community involvement, as the impacts of these plans are analyzed.

Respectfully submitted,





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Attachment 1: Summary Table of Meetings Held