

Agenda Report

April 28, 2014

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning and Community Development Department
SUBJECT: DRAFT LAND USE AND MOBILITY ELEMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council direct staff to study the environmental impact of the Draft Land Use and Mobility Element Goals and Policies (Attachment A) within the General Plan Environmental Impact Report.

ADVISORY COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Prior to bringing the Draft Land Use and Mobility Element Goals and Policies to the City Council, the following Commissions reviewed the draft policies and offered comments to the City Council:

- Historic Preservation Commission on February 4, 2014,
- Human Services Commission on February 5, 2014,
- Design Commission on February 6, 2014,
- Northwest Commission on February 11, 2014,
- Arts and Culture Commission on February 13, 2014,
- Environmental Advisory Commission on February 18, 2014,
- Transportation Advisory Commission on February 27, 2014,
- Recreation and Parks Commission on March 4, 2014,
- Senior Commission on March 11, 2014, and
- Planning Commission on March 12, 2014.

A copy of the Commissions' comments can be found in Attachment C.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Draft Goals and Policies reflect the direction set by the City Council in April, 2013, including reorganizing the Land Use Element to make it more user friendly. Goals and policies have also been added to the Land Use and Mobility Elements to allow outdated, optional elements (including Public Facilities, Social Development, Cultural and

Recreational, Economic Development and Employment, Historic and Cultural, and Scenic Highways) to be retired. Staff has revised the Draft Goals and Policies based on comments collected at a public workshop on February 1 and the comments from ten commissions. Revisions include strengthening policies on affordable housing, deleting reference to wayfinding, providing flexibility on the City's current corner rounding requirements, clarifying statements on the evolution and maintenance of Pasadena's form and scale, refining statements on contemporary architecture, and reframing a discussion on parking supply.

BACKGROUND:

The two major components to the General Plan Update include the Draft Land Use Diagram (a graphic that demonstrates what uses will be allowed, at what densities, and where) and the Guiding Principles, Goals, and Policies. This report focuses on the latter portion which uses text to describe what the City will look like, how it will function, and how it will achieve this vision.

In April of 2013, the City Council provided staff with direction on the proposed wording of the eight General Plan Guiding Principles, which set the overall direction for the City. In this next phase, staff is seeking input on the Draft Goals and Policies that support these principles.

From New Policy Topic Areas to Goals and Policies:

The General Plan process has been moving from a broader vision - as defined in the Guiding Principles - to more detailed components of the vision. Early in the process staff determined through community feedback that the existing General Plan Land Use and Mobility Elements did not adequately address the following policy topic areas:

- Sustainability, Open Space and Conservation;
- Urban Design, Historic Preservation, and Arts/Culture;
- Mobility; and
- Economic Vitality and Education.

To address these gaps, staff developed New Policy Topics Areas, which the City Council reviewed and provided direction on in April of 2013. This document established the groundwork for the creation of the attached Draft Land Use and Mobility Element Goals and Policies.

The Draft Goals and Policies include three key initiatives:

- Revising the Goals and Policies to reflect community input,
- Improving the Land Use Elements' organization, and
- Retiring six optional elements (chapters) of the General Plan.

REVISING TO REFLECT COMMUNITY AND COMMISSION INPUT:

On February 1, the City hosted a community meeting to receive comments on the Draft Goals and Policies (see Attachment D for community comments). After the community

meeting, ten commissions reviewed the Draft Goals and Policies along with the community comments and offered comments to the City Council (see Attachment C for a copy of the originally published Draft Goals and Policies embedded with comments from the commissions). The commissions provided staff with more than 120 comments. The following is a summary of the major issues raised by the Commissions.

Affordable Housing:

Advocates for affordable housing attended two Planning Commission meetings to request some changes to the draft policies. Staff agrees with some of the changes requested by the advocates and has modified and strengthened some of the draft policies related to affordable housing (see policies 2.1, 21.1, and 21.2 in Attachment A). In some cases the recommendations were too specific for the General Plan, and would be better suited to changes to the Municipal Code. In other cases the concerns presented were already included in the recently adopted Housing Element.

Wayfinding:

The Design and Planning Commissions expressed concern about a policy calling for the expansion of the City's wayfinding system. Their concerns centered around sign clutter and the placement of signs in residential areas. In giving this issue additional thought, staff has come to the conclusion that the issue of wayfinding does not rise to the level of a policy in the Land Use Element and therefore has deleted references to wayfinding programs (see Policies 6.5, 25.12, 33.7, 36.5, and 38.3, in Attachment B).

Corner Rounding:

Policy 4.10 includes a substantial addition based on feedback from the Design Commission and Historic Preservation Commission which would allow designers and Commissions the flexibility to design a building that is either setback from the corner or brought directly up to the corner, depending on the surrounding street-building interface and the vision for the area. The Public Works and Transportation Departments have reviewed the policy for compliance with safety concerns and the Americans with Disabilities Act and support the revised policy. The new policy reads, "**Architecture that Enhances.** Locate and design buildings to relate to and frame major public streets, open spaces, and cityscape. New development at intersections should consider any number of corner treatments, and should balance safety and accessibility concerns with the vision of the area and the need for buildings to engage the street and create a distinct urban edge."

Currently the City requires buildings at the corner of two streets to be pushed back from the corner. Architects usually accomplish this by rounding the corner of a building (such as the building at the southwest corner of N. Lake Ave. and E. Walnut St.), clipping off the corner of the building (such as the building at the southeast corner of S. Madison Ave. and E. Colorado Blvd.), or setting the building back (such as the building at the northwest corner of N. Fair Oaks Ave. and E. Green St.). In older areas of the City, the typical pattern is for buildings at the corner of two streets to have a strong corner element that reinforces the intersection. Policy 4.10 would change City policy to allow

designers and commissions to create a building-street interface that is consistent with Pasadena's historic pattern of development.

Evolution or Maintenance of Building Form and Scale:

The Design Commission expressed concern about Goal 6 – Character and Scale of Pasadena, because it calls for maintaining the form, scale, and mass of Pasadena's existing built character. The Commission was concerned that since the Land Use Element's horizon year was 2035, the policies need to allow for the City's character to evolve. In previous community meetings there has been a strong level of concern for changes that may alter Pasadena's character. Staff is recommending a revised Goal 6 which combines these two notions, "A built environment that evolves while maintaining Pasadena's unique sense of place, character, and urban fabric." This goal is supported by Policy 6.1 which requires new development to respect the defining elements of Pasadena's character and history. Goal 7 – Architectural Design and Quality and its subsequent policies have been revised to focus on how the City can evolve over the future by building on Pasadena's distinguishing characteristics.

Contemporary Architecture:

Opinions on the subject of contemporary architecture are diverse within the community and among commissioners. Staff has modified the policies under Goal 7-Architectural Design and Quality to include the following ideas to reflect community and Commission sentiment:

- Continuing the City's design tradition that promotes innovation and creativity,
- Encouraging a diversity of building styles,
- Designing buildings so that they consider their context,
- Ensuring buildings are designed to reflect a long term presence and high quality of design.

At the policy workshop some community members expressed concerns about the original wording of Goal 7 – Architectural Design and Quality, which included the phrase, "tolerance for innovation and creativity including iconic architecture." Some community members were concerned that as the City promotes its culture of innovation, that the architecture should reflect that culture and potential future innovation businesses. The Design Commission expressed concern over policies that limited the location of contemporary architecture, only allowed but did not encourage contemporary architecture, and focused on enhancement without creativity. The Planning Commission, however, recommended a change to Policy 7.5 (see Attachment C) that would limit contemporary architecture to areas that do not compete with existing buildings. Staff has revised the policies to take this input into account. See Goal 7 – Architectural Design and Quality and Policies 7.1 and 7.2 of Attachment A.

Adequate Parking:

Staff has modified Policy 12.3 and Goal 19 – Adequate Parking to take the emphasis off of the term "adequate" which can be hard to define. Instead, these statements now focus on providing a supply of parking that reflects all of the General Plan goals and policies including environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, mobility, etc.

Both the Transportation Advisory Commission and the Planning Commission recommended this change in focus.

Bicycle Education and Safety

At the policy workshop and several commission meetings it was strongly agreed upon that bicycle education and safety should be addressed by crafting a set of policies to specifically address bicycle and driver safety education. There was consensus that riding bicycles on sidewalks should be prohibited in high pedestrian areas.

Subsequently, this policy should consider all abilities, ages, and the availability of bicycle infrastructure. Another suggested policy is related to bicycle education. Policies should be developed to address bicycle education programs and marketing. The education component should also be expanded to include motorists to lessen conflicts with bicyclists on the roadway. Staff has included policies 2.10 and 2.11 to improve safety efforts for all modes. In addition, the Draft Bicycle Transportation Plan identifies strategies and implementation plan for bicycle education and safety programs.

Bicycle Program

Proposed Policy 2.9 of the Mobility Element addresses bicycle programs in general such as a bike share program and the need for bicycle parking. Bicycle programs such as bike share which is becoming a regional priority should be addressed as a separate policy. At the various meetings it was communicated to staff that more bicycle programs are needed to support and encourage bicycling. The policy should also include the opportunities for open street events, such as cicLAvia. Staff has revised Policy 2.9 to be specific to bicycle parking and created Policy 2.10 to address bicycle programs which include bike share and open streets concepts.

IMPROVING THE LAND USE ELEMENT'S ORGANIZATION:

In April of 2013, the City Council directed staff to reorganize the Land Use Element in a way that would make it easier to use and reduce repetition of policies. According to that direction the Draft Land Use Element will be organized into the following sections.

1. Guiding Principles,
2. Land Use Diagram,
3. Citywide Goals and Policies,
4. Goals and Policies for Land Use Categories,
5. Goals and Policies for Community Places,
6. Citywide Design Principles (Existing),
7. Implementation Program (Draft to be released in summer of 2014), and
8. Glossary (Draft to be released in summer of 2014).

RETIRING OPTIONAL ELEMENTS:

Staff recommends that all of the City's optional elements be retired, except for the Green Space, Recreation, and Parks Element (approved in 2007). Staff has reviewed the policies within these elements, identified policies related to land use and mobility, and moved them to the appropriate elements. The policies have also been edited to

ensure that they reflect the comments received from the community and to match the format of the Land Use and Mobility Elements.

Over time, the substance of many of the policies has been included in the eight remaining elements or other City documents (e.g. the Economic Development Strategic Plan). Many members of the community are unaware of the optional elements. In most cases these elements have not kept up with this community's values, new issues, and best practices. Staff has not received any negative feedback from commissions or community members about retiring these elements.

The City has seven optional elements including:

- Cultural and Recreational (Adopted 1983),
- Economic Development and Employment (Adopted 1984),
- Green Space, Recreation and Parks (Adopted 2007)
- Historical/Cultural (Adopted 1975),
- Public Facilities (Adopted 1975),
- Scenic Highways (Adopted 1975), and
- Social Development (Adopted 1976).

NEXT STEPS:

Once the City Council provides direction on the Goals and Policies, staff will prepare a glossary of terms, some illustrations, and an implementation program. In the summer of 2014, staff will release the Draft EIR along with a complete Draft of the Land Use and Mobility Element, including an implementation program, glossary, and graphics. In the summer, the community and commissions will have another opportunity to review these documents. Once the comment period closes, staff will revise the Draft Goals and Policies, the Draft Land Use Diagram and the Draft EIR. Staff will then bring forward to the City Council, through the Planning Commission and Transportation Advisory Commission a Final EIR and final set of recommendations on the Land Use and Mobility Elements – including the Diagram, Goals and Policies, and Implementation Plan.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The Draft Goals and Policies are supportive of the City Council's Strategic Planning Goals of maintaining fiscal responsibility and stability (see policy 15.1), enhancing public facilities and infrastructure (see policy 1.7), increasing conservation and environmental sustainability (see policies 10.1 through 10.18), improving mobility (see the Mobility Element), and supporting the local economy (see policies 11.1 through 15.1).

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

An environmental impact report (EIR) will be prepared for the update to the Land Use and Mobility Element. The EIR will analyze the impacts of the Draft Land Use and Mobility Goals and Policies. The action before the City Council is whether to modify any of the attached goals or policies prior to completing the EIR analysis.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action and it will not have any indirect or support cost requirements. The City Council has separately approved a contract with The Planning Center / DC&E for environmental services related to the General Plan which covers the cost of assisting in the preparation and analyzing the environmental impact of the Draft Goals and Policies.

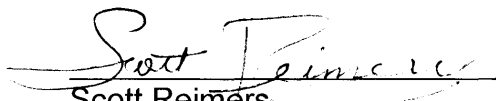
Respectfully submitted,




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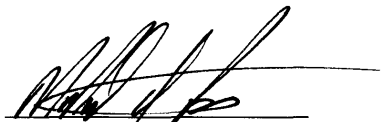


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Attachments: (4)

Attachment A – Draft Land Use and Mobility Element Goals and Policies:

Revised Based on Comments Received

Attachment B – Draft Land Use and Mobility Element Goals and Policies:

Revised Based on Comments Received (Track Changes Version)

Attachment C – Draft Land Use and Mobility Element Goals and Policies:

Commission Comments on Original Draft

Attachment D – Community Comments