

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

DATE: NOVEMBER 8, 1999

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON THE GENERAL PLAN, LAND USE ELEMENT UPDATE AND ZONING CODE REVISION PROJECT

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: This report updates the City Council on activities and events on the General Plan Land Use Element Update, and Zoning Code Revision projects and related activities that have occurred since May 1999.

BACKGROUND: In June 1998, the City Council approved a multi-year planning program and budget, which included revising the Zoning Code, preparing a five-year update of the Land Use Element of the General Plan, and revising the Housing, Safety and Noise Elements of the General Plan. In December 1998, the City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into a contract with RTKL Associates and a team of subconsultants to revise the Zoning Code and update the Land Use Element. The Council also authorized a contract with Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG) to plan and implement a community outreach program.

STATUS REPORT

Planning Commission workshop – On May 12th, the Planning Commission held a workshop to discuss what has been accomplished in implementing the General Plan Land Use Element and what the Commission and staff have learned in the process. Commissioners, staff, and the consultant team developed a list of the issues and opportunities to consider as the planning process for the General Plan Land Use Element update and Zoning Code Revision gets underway (see Attachment 1). The RTKL consultant team, participation consultants - Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG), and

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city staff that are working to undertake these planning projects were introduced to the Commission.

Summer Kick-off Festival – On Saturday, June 26th, the City sponsored a summer festival in the City Hall courtyard. After a brief welcome and introductions by the Mayor, City Manager and Planning Manager, participants were invited to visit five stations around the courtyard to talk with city staff and consultants. The stations were organized around the following issues: How Pasadena... Looks, Lives, Plays & Celebrates, Moves, and Grows & Prospers. Each station featured several ways for the participants to give their input, including interactive displays, conversations with staff and consultants, and comment cards for written feedback. A synopsis of the comments received from the approximately 100 participants is attached as Attachment 2.

In general, the festival participants appreciated the traditional qualities of Pasadena and wanted to preserve these features. They supported authentic, high quality, new development that is not generic or “cookie cutter.” Participants were not anti-development, but would like to see new development, especially housing, that was in keeping with Pasadena’s unique character. Traffic and density were two common issues. East Colorado Boulevard and Northwest Pasadena were identified as areas needing more city attention.

The festival also marked the debut of the Story Bus. This is a City ARTS bus, decorated on the outside with photographs of Pasadena taken as an eighth-grade project at Polytechnic School. On the inside, the bus features an exhibit that invites comments about what needs to be accomplished in city plans. The Story Bus will be a mobile stage for conversations in the Pasadena community about planning and transportation issues.

Mayor’s Picnic - The Mayor and Council’s Fourth of July Weekend Picnic was on Saturday, July 3rd at Brookside Park. Several City departments had booths or other attractions—a cherry picker, a fire engine, the Story Bus. Approximately 50 people visited the Story Bus, some to talk, some to read or write comments, some to honk the horn. The event gave city staff some ideas about how to make the Bus more effective as a center for conversations about planning.

Sign Ordinance Workshop – On July 14th the Planning Commission and the Design Commission held a joint public meeting to hear a brief presentation from Urban Design Studio, sign ordinance consultant, and city staff, and to discuss sign issues and opportunities with the community. Approximately 35 community members attended the meeting, representing downtown business associations, the Chamber of Commerce, the Black Business Association, and interested residents. The discussion included size of signs, billboards, sandwich signs, signs on vending machines, temporary signs and enforcement of the sign ordinance.

Zoning Ordinance Interviews – On July 26th staff and the Zoning Ordinance consultant conducted an all-day series of small group interviews with architects, attorneys,

developers, contractors, and neighborhood leaders about the existing Zoning Ordinance. Approximately 30 stakeholders participated in the interviews. Some of the issues raised included: parking credits program, nonconforming provisions, perception that variances are too easy to obtain, grading/hillside development, and the need for simplifying the Zoning Code.

Mobility Element – In August, Public Works and Planning staff agreed that the most efficient way to undertake the Five-Year Update of the Mobility Element was to have it be done concurrently and under the same contract with the update of the Land Use Element, Zoning Code Revision and the Central District Specific Plan. The consultant team lead by RTKL, with sub-consultants Kaku Associates (transportation planners) are working with city staff to develop a scope of work that meets the city's needs. Following review by the Transportation Advisory Commission, it is anticipated that the City Council will be asked to amend the RTKL contract to add the Mobility Element in late November or early December.

Planning Commission Subcommittee – In September, the three member Planning Commission subcommittee on the Land Use Element update and Zoning Code Revision was expanded to include representatives from the Transportation Advisory Commission and the Community Development committee. This subcommittee meets approximately twice each month to discuss the work program, public participation events and technical data from the consultants.

Downtown Partnership – On September 30th, the Planning Manager made a presentation to the Downtown Pasadena Partnership. This group is comprised of the executive boards of the Old Pasadena, South Lake and Playhouse Business Associations, and the Civic Center Implementation Task Force. They meet bi-monthly to coordinate efforts and to discuss downtown issues.

Background Reports – The members of the RTKL consultant team have been analyzing existing documents and conditions and are beginning to draft technical reports which provide the background information for use by the Planning Commission, staff and the community to begin making decisions about the revised Zoning Ordinance and the updated Land Use Element. These reports will include:

Economics – Keyser Marston Associates are preparing a market analysis of the Central District. This report will look at the existing demographics and employment statistics in and adjacent to the Central District, and assess the existing residential and non-residential market conditions and development opportunities in the downtown.

Land Use Element – Parsons Harland Bartholomew & Associates are reviewing the existing Land Use Element to identify sections that need to be updated or changed. They are looking for inconsistencies between the Land Use Element and other Elements and for deficiencies in meeting State-mandated requirements. They are working with other city agencies to update the data in the General Plan. They have prepared a digital map of the existing land uses in

the City, which has been compared with maps from Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to check for inconsistencies.

Zoning Ordinance – Consultants, Crawford Multari Clark & Mohr have analyzed the existing Zoning Ordinance and conducted numerous interviews with staff and other users of the Ordinance. They have identified numerous issues to be addressed in the revision of the Ordinance and are beginning to recommend style and formatting principles.

Design Guidelines – RTKL Associates is in the process of consolidating approximately 20 sets of design guidelines for the Central District. They are analyzing the content of these guidelines to work toward updating, eliminating redundancies and inconsistencies. They are developing a unified format for these guidelines which staff will use for guidelines outside the Central District.

Related Activities – The following work program activities are being coordinated with the projects above:

Housing Element – Consultants, Cotton Beland Associates, are drafting a “Needs Assessment” which describes and analyzes the population, household, and housing characteristics of Pasadena as a first step in determining the nature and extent of the City’s housing needs. The next step will be to assess the City’s performance in meeting the goals and objectives set forth in the 1989 Housing Element.

Noise Element – Requests for proposals (RFPs) were mailed to over thirty consultants on October 15th. Following interviews on November 17th, a consultant will be selected by November 23rd.

Safety Element – The current work program provides for an update of this Element to provide consistency with State Law, include new information on disaster preparedness, and incorporate new seismic information.

Revisions to the Cultural Heritage Ordinance – Consultant, Clarion Associates, has prepared a diagnosis which assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the existing ordinance and provides options for revising the ordinance. The Design and Cultural Heritage Commissions held a joint meeting on November 1st to review the diagnosis. The next step will be the preparation of an annotated outline of the revised ordinance. Public review of the outline and diagnostic study will be scheduled before the Planning Commission in December. A preliminary draft ordinance is anticipated before the end of the calendar year.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES / NEXT STEPS

Following a summer of preparing and reviewing technical data, the city staff/consultant team are gearing up for more community events and input in developing recommendations and policy direction on the plans. The Story Bus is being improved and readied to attend neighborhood meetings, festivals, and to just park on the street to educate community members about the planning projects and to obtain input about the planning done so far.

As the technical reports are completed, city staff will consolidate and prepare a Summary Report of all the background information, issues analysis and community input to date. We are calling this the Phase I report. We anticipate that this report will be presented to the Planning Commission within the next two months. This could be a good opportunity for a joint meeting with the Transportation Advisory Commission to discuss land use and mobility issues.

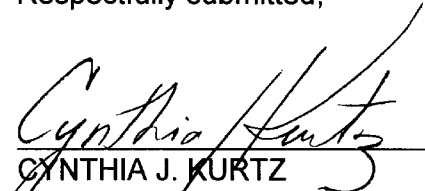
During the next month, improvements to the Story Bus will be completed and the Bus will be scheduled for community events. On Saturday, November 6th, from 8 a.m. – 12:00 noon, the Story Bus will be at the Pasadena Beautiful Day event at Washington Middle School. Technical reports on the Central District, Zoning Ordinance and Land Use Element will be completed, and staff will begin to consolidate these into a summary document for public distribution. Staff will follow up on the Planning Commission's request to plan and schedule a joint meeting with the Transportation Advisory Commission to discuss mobility issues

Attachment 3 is a preliminary project schedule. The Mobility Element scope of work is anticipated to be presented to the Council in December. Once the Mobility Element gets underway, a more detailed project schedule will be presented to the Council.

FISCAL IMPACT: Funds for this project have been budgeted and are in Account #443000-8115.

CONCLUSION: After a successful summer kick-off festival, staff and consultants have been doing behind-the-scenes work incorporating a Mobility Element scope of work and preparing for a renewed period of community events and activities to present technical information and begin discussing the future of the downtown, the revision of the Zoning Ordinance and the Update of the Land Use and Mobility Elements of the General Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

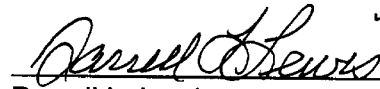

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Attachments:

- 1) May 12, 1999 Workshop Notes
- 2) June 26, 1999 Kickoff Summer Festival Synopsis
- 3) Project Schedule