

Agenda Report

March 8, 2010

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning & Development Department
RE: Draft General Plan Outreach Summary Report

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is presented for information only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Attached is the Draft General Plan Outreach Summary Report. This report is the culmination of nine months of community outreach and will be used to provide direction and framework for the General Plan update. The report organizes more than 6,000 community comments into a manageable format that reflects the thoughts of the community, including the agreements and disagreements that were heard. Full documentation of all comments is provided in the Appendix to the report. Following a 45-day public review period, the final document will be presented to City Council for adoption in early May.

BACKGROUND:

In early 2009, the City began the process of updating four elements of the General Plan – Land Use, Mobility, Open Space and Conservation. For the Land Use and Mobility Elements, it is the beginning of the first significant update since the controversial growth management initiative and resulting landmark General Plan update of 1994. Facing many of the same questions about growth and density, public participation was set forth as the first priority of the update.

In an effort to reach as many people as possible, City staff and the General Plan Update Advisory Committee (GPUAC) designed a nine-month outreach program that lasted through November 2009. The program included numerous opportunities for staff and GPUAC members to hear first hand from the community about their vision and concerns for the future. A description of the full outreach program is included in the Draft Outreach Report.

The Outreach Summary Report attempts to organize the more than 6,000 comments into a manageable format that accurately reflects the thoughts of the community as expressed at the various outreach events, including the agreements and disagreements that were heard. In addition, the Appendix to the Outreach Summary Report includes full documentation of the outreach program and the comments recorded in each session.

Dominant & Complementary Themes

There were several topic areas, or dominant themes, that were heard more frequently and more passionately than others. For example, community members spoke at length about the characteristics that make Pasadena a special place. This is one area where there was little disagreement. When asked to rank several characteristics in priority, most participants agreed that it is a combination of inseparable factors that make Pasadena unique. The characteristics most cited as the contributing factors include: small town feel; great neighborhoods; historic architecture; trees and the beautiful natural setting; the prevalence of arts, culture, and entertainment; and the diversity of people, businesses and neighborhoods.

While there was agreement on the importance of community character there were several areas of significant conflict. For example, one of the greatest concerns voiced was the potential impacts of growth and density of future development. Opinions on how to approach the issue were diverse including those who want to see limited or no growth, those who want to see future growth and density only if appropriately managed, and those who generally support increased growth and density.

Discussions about architecture and design also generated conflict, as did the topic of traffic. Many participants felt strongly that new buildings should be designed within the context of the city's historic character, while others supported more modern architectural styles. Similarly, while most participants saw increasing traffic as a significant concern, others saw traffic as a not unwelcome sign of economic success and prosperity.

Other dominant themes included transit, open space and parks, and economic development.

A second set of topics, or complementary themes, were heard not as frequently or at the same level of intensity as the dominant themes. Nonetheless, they were important concerns and strongly relate to the dominant themes. Those topics include environmental sustainability, historic preservation, trees, parking, walking and biking, community disparities, and places for youth.

Each of the dominant and complementary themes is outlined in the executive summary and more fully described in the body of the report.

Community Feedback

Before finalizing the report, the GPUAC is seeking feedback from the community. The report is based entirely on the comments heard throughout the nine-month process and every effort was made to incorporate the variety of perspectives heard while keeping the document to a manageable length. The intent is that this document shares the thoughts and opinions of the community in a manner that tells a story about the kind of the community Pasadena wants to be in the future. In an effort to verify that the document accomplished this task, the Draft Outreach Summary Report is being circulated for public review through Sunday, April 18.

In addition to being distributed to each of the City's advisory commissions, the report is available on the City's webpage and hard copies are available at all City libraries and community centers. Information about the availability of the report has been included in the *Pasadena In Focus* newsletter, posted on the City's webpage, e-mailed to the General Plan Update subscriber list (over 700 people), sent to every organization who participated in the process to date, and distributed to the press via press releases. Comments can be submitted in writing over the Internet or sent directly to the Permit Center.

Finally, the GPUAC will hold a special public hearing on March 31, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. The public is invited to attend and comment on the draft report.

The final report will be presented to City Council for adoption in early May.

Next Steps

Following Council adoption of the Outreach Summary Report, staff will work with the GPUAC, Planning Commission and Transportation Advisory Commission on the development and evaluation of land use and mobility alternatives in response to concerns raised by the report. A second community outreach program will begin in the fall to review the environmental, land use, fiscal and economic impacts of a series of alternatives. The preferred alternatives will then be translated into draft language for the updated elements.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

Updating the General Plan is a strategic objective under the City Council goal to improve mobility and accessibility throughout the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

No environmental analysis is required at this stage.

FISCAL IMPACT:

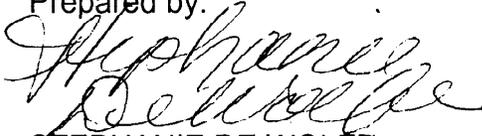
Funds for implementation of updates to the General Plan are included in the Planning & Development Department budget.

Respectfully submitted,



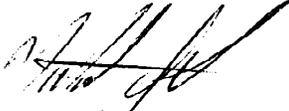
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