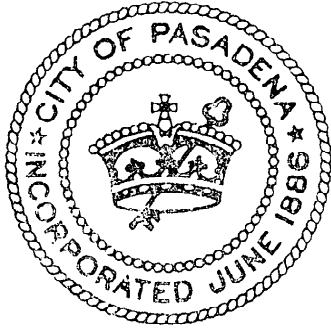




Agenda Report

May 17, 2010

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Planning and Development Department
SUBJECT: Final General Plan Outreach Summary Report

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council accept the Final General Plan Outreach Summary Report and Appendix as documentation of Phase I of the community participation process and as the foundation from which the next phase of the General Plan Update will proceed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The attached Final General Plan Outreach Summary 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 outreach program, guided by the General Plan Update Advisory Committee (GPUAC), included a variety of outreach tools that provided multiple opportunities for a broad cross-section of the community to share their concerns and vision for the future of the City. The report organizes more than 6,000 comments and summarizes the thoughts of the community including agreements and disagreements on a variety of topics. The draft report was finalized following a 45-day public review and comment period. It was unanimously approved by the members present at the April 29, 2010, General Plan Update Advisory Committee.

BACKGROUND:

In early 2009, the City began the process of updating the Land Use and Mobility elements of the General Plan. For these two important elements, it is 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, a nine-month outreach program was designed to include more than 100 events 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. In addition, the

Appendix of the report includes a full documentation of the outreach program and the comments recorded in each session.

Community Vision

There were several topic areas 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. Many also noted the idea that despite the fact that the City has a small-town feel, they can still find everything they need right here.

While there was agreement on the importance of community character there were several areas of significant conflict, including how to manage community character in the future. For example, one of the greatest concerns 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 independent 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, trees, and economic development.

A second set of topics were heard not as frequently or at the same level of intensity, but were nonetheless important concerns to the community. Those topics include environmental sustainability, adequacy of parking, the attractiveness of walking and biking throughout the City, geographic and economic disparities within the community, and affordable housing.

Some of the issues raised during the outreach program were not subjects that can be adequately addressed through the General Plan Update process. Those concerns are also summarized in the report including the quality of the public school system, government responsiveness, programming for youth, improvements to city services, financial support for arts and culture, and homeless services.

Community Review & Comment

The draft Outreach Summary Report was presented to the City Council in March and was followed by a 45-day public review period. During that time, the draft report was presented to many of the City's advisory commissions and the GPUAC held a special hearing to receive comments on the report. The draft report and appendix were available for viewing on the City website, at the Pasadena Permit center, and at all city libraries and community centers.

Information about the availability of the report was 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. In addition to the public hearings, comments were submitted on the City's webpage, via e-mail, and via the postal service.

Overall, the community offered favorable reviews of the draft report. Most stated that the report accurately reflected what they heard from the community during the outreach process, but took the opportunity to restate some of their greatest concerns. The largest number of comments focused on development density, parks, and open space. In both cases, the comments reiterated already documented concerns regarding dissatisfaction with the design and scale of recent developments in the Central District and the need for more parks and open space.

Suggestions for new content were few, and included the suggestions that accessibility for people with disabilities should be included as a priority and that smaller multi-family residential projects should be preserved.

Finally, several comments suggested changing the position or emphasis of some topics. It was suggested that historic preservation and trees should be listed among the most frequently heard themes. It was also suggested that the importance of arts and culture with regard to the economy should have greater emphasis, as should the importance of natural open space, and the concerns of residents of Northwest Pasadena. Most of the community comments were incorporated into the final report.

Next Steps

Following Council acceptance 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. Although guided by community desires, the alternatives will also take into consideration land use and mobility impacts, environmental regulations, fiscal and economic impacts.

A second community outreach program will begin in the fall to ask the community to participate in balancing the trade-offs between various 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:

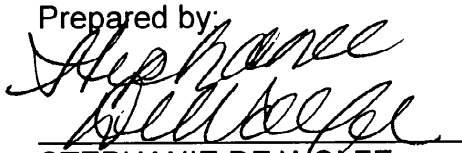
Funds for implementation of updates to the General Plan are included in the Planning and Development Department budget.

Respectfully submitted,



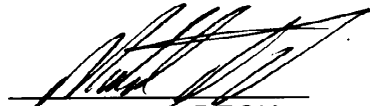
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Attachments: Final Outreach Summary Report