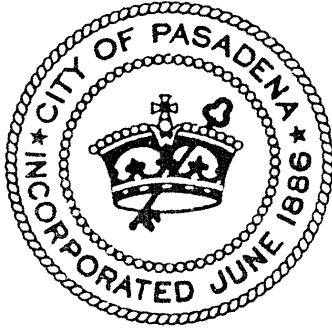




Agenda Report

April 29, 2013

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Planning & Community Development Department

SUBJECT: UPDATE OF THE GENERAL PLAN LAND USE AND MOBILITY ELEMENTS

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council direct staff to analyze the environmental impact of the following components of the General Plan Land Use and Mobility Elements:

- A. Development Caps (Attachment A.1)
- B. Changes to the Guiding Principles (Attachment A.2)
- C. General Plan Land Use Diagram (Attachment A.3)

BACKGROUND:

On April 22, 2013 the City Council received an Agenda Report with additional information and revised recommendations on the General Plan. The City Council approved staff's recommendation, without any changes, for five items (New Policy Topic Areas, Land Use Element Policy Outline, Updated Mobility Element Objectives, Mobility Supporting Initiatives Goals and Objectives, and Proposed Specific Plan Boundaries) and deferred the remaining items (Guiding Principles, the General Plan Land Use Diagram, and the Development Caps) to April 29.

ANALYSIS:

The following section provides additional information in response to questions and comments from the Mayor and City Council members at the April 22nd City Council meeting.

Vision:

The vision for this update to the General Plan Land Use and Mobility Elements starts with the idea of preserving and protecting residential neighborhoods, historic districts and open space. The Community has a strong desire to preserve and build upon Pasadena's strong sense of place and great neighborhoods. While preserving these aspects, the Plan proposes to target growth into the Central District, Transit Villages, and Neighborhood Villages in order to create a diverse housing stock, improve job opportunities, and create exciting districts where people can live, work, and shop. An important aspect of this vision is the ability to circulate amongst and in between these

targeted areas without cars; instead people will be able to circulate by walking, biking, and taking transit. Tied to each of these aspects of the vision is the idea that Pasadena will be an economically healthy and vital city.

Development Caps:

One of the tools the General Plan uses to manage development is through the development caps. Prior to the adoption of the 1994 General Plan, the City's growth management program regulated the pace of development through an annual limit on residential units and commercial square feet. The 1994 General Plan created a new system that set a cap on development but allowed these caps to be adjusted on a five year basis.

The Council's deliberation of the development caps includes two elements: How the caps are adjusted and the amount of the cap for each planning area. On April 22, staff recommended changing the process by which the caps can be adjusted. The proposed process would be similar to that of a General Plan Text Amendment. Staff would provide an annual monitoring report to the Council and Planning Commission. If, for instance, the allocation of a Specific Plan's cap was nearly used up, the Council or Commission could initiate a study to amend the caps. This could happen no more than once a year.

The proposed set of caps for each planning area was the result of a thorough, multi-step process which included technical analysis and community input. In working with the community through an iterative mapping process, staff was able to use land use models to determine the maximum build-out capacity given the proposed land uses and maximum FARs. In order to determine whether these maximum build-out numbers were appropriate, staff looked at historic trends, regional forecasts, the relationship between jobs and housing, fiscal effects, and computer-generated estimates of population, number of employees, number of school age children, the number of new residents and employees within ¼ mile of a Gold Line station, vehicle miles traveled per capita, and water and energy use per capita. In addition to these quantitative figures, staff also reviewed these development caps to ensure that they addressed the community's vision, best practices, and environmental objectives.

The community first saw the proposed total residential unit and commercial square footage caps in the June 2010 workshops, newsletter, and survey of alternatives. The following year, at another set of workshops in June, the community and Council reviewed a concept map and development forecasts. In this most recent set of meetings, which started in October 2012, the advisory bodies (including the Planning Commission, Transportation Advisory Commission, and the General Plan Update Advisory Committee) and the community have had the opportunity to provide input on the amount of residential and commercial development. Staff believes that the proposed development caps represent a balance of multiple qualitative and quantitative inputs.

It is the long term practice of the City to withdraw commercial square footage or residential units from a specific plan's cap only after a project is issued a building permit. The City Council could maintain this method or modify this practice by establishing a new policy in the Land Use Element which withdraws a project's allocation at approval of a planning entitlement. The benefit of moving up the timeline to planning entitlement is that it gives developers additional certainty. However, this could create a circumstance where projects that have received their planning entitlement continue to hold on to their allocation despite the fact that they are not moving forward. Because these projects can continue to extend their entitlements for years, viable projects could be kept from moving forward. This would also cause the caps to be reached sooner.

At the request of Council, staff has included Attachment C which lists the development caps as proposed by staff, advisory bodies, and other community organizations that submitted a specific proposal in writing. Staff has also included Attachment D, which summarizes the recommendations of staff and the advisory bodies on all eight components of the General Plan update.

Guiding Principles and Policies:

The proposed eight Guiding Principles define the vision of the City. Staff is recommending some changes to the Guiding Principles. Since April 8, the City Council has focused its deliberations on the second and eighth guiding principles.

Second Guiding Principle:

The Planning Commission, Pasadena Heritage, and staff have offered three specific but differing recommendations for the second guiding principle.

Table 1 – Second Guiding Principle Recommendations

Advisory/Group	Recommendation
Planning Commission Recommendation	Pasadena's historic resources will be preserved. Citywide, new development will be in harmony with and enhance Pasadena's unique character and sense of place. New construction that could affect the integrity of historic resources will adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
Pasadena Heritage Recommendation	Either, the Planning Commission's recommendation Or, "Pasadena's historic resources will be preserved, and change will be harmonized to enhance Pasadena's historic character and environment."
Staff's Recommendation	Pasadena's historic resources will be preserved. Citywide, new development will be in harmony with and enhance Pasadena's unique character and sense of place. New construction that could affect the integrity of historic resources will be compatible with, and differentiated from, the existing resources.

Eighth Guiding Principle:

The City Council has deliberated on a new eighth guiding principle on education for many months. Staff recommends the following language which was proposed on April 22, "Pasadena is committed to public education and a diverse educational system responsive to the broad needs of the community." Staff agrees with this proposal as it offers the key components in which community members have expressed interest – a commitment to public education and recognition of Pasadena's diverse educational system. Attachment B provides a list of the previous proposals and demonstrates how the conversation on this topic progressed.

Changes to the Land Use Diagram:

The Land Use Diagram takes the vision outlined in the Guiding Principles and uses different land use designations to designate the appropriate uses, intensities, and locations for new development. The Council discussed aspects of Land Use Diagram during the April 8 and April 22 City Council meetings.

Additionally, there was considerable public comment regarding the April 8th proposal for North Lake Avenue. A number of residents of the area expressed concern that this would negatively impact the adjacent single family neighborhoods. Some residents went further, citing concerns that mixed-use zoning permitted in some areas of the existing North Lake Specific Plan could, in combination with density bonuses provided under state law (Senate Bill 1818), result in three story buildings adjacent to single family neighborhoods. These residents requested that the City revise the existing mixed-use designation to commercial only.

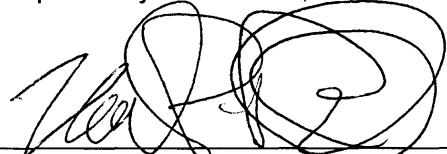
In response to the concerns raised on April 8th, staff has revised its original recommendation so that the Land Use Diagram reflects the existing North Lake Specific Plan. Staff does not recommend making modifications to the existing North Lake Specific Plan outside of the Specific Plan update process which will occur subsequent to the adoption of the General Plan. Nevertheless, in regard to the issue of density bonus, since the adoption of the North Lake Specific Plan in 1997, there have been only six projects in the City wherein the developer has sought state-authorized density bonus, none of which are in the North Lake Specific Plan area. Of these six requests, only one application included height. Staff believes that it is not likely that any such project would be proposed under the existing Specific Plan.

NEXT STEPS:

Once the City Council gives staff the direction on the content to be studied in the General Plan EIR (GP EIR), staff will begin a multi-phase process to complete the EIR and the policy work. The process will include the following steps:

- Pre-scoping meetings in spring/summer of 2013
- Staff and consultants prepare the initial study
- Community provides comments at scoping meetings in the summer/fall of 2013
- Community provides comments on a refined set of policies fall of 2013
- Staff and consultants prepare a Draft EIR
- Community provides comments on the Draft EIR in winter of 2013/2014
- Staff and consultants prepare the Final EIR
- City Council, Planning Commission and Transportation Advisory Commission review and act on Final EIR and General Plan in summer of 2014

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:

A – Staff's Final Recommendations

- A.1 Development Caps
- A.2 Changes to the Guiding Principles
- A.3 General Plan Land Use Diagram

- B – List of Eighth Guiding Principle Proposals
- C – Specific Recommendations on Development Caps
- D – Staff and Advisory Body Recommendations
- E – EIR Road Map