



REPORT TO DESIGN COMMISSION City of Sacramento

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915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2671

STAFF REPORT
April 18, 2007

To: Members of the Design Commission

Subject: 2030 General Plan - Preferred Land Use Alternative (LR07-004)

Location/Council District: Citywide

Recommendation: Receive and provide input.

Contact: Erik de Kok, Associate Planner, 808-2022; Tom Pace, Long Range Planning Manager, 808-6848

Applicant: Not applicable

Owner: Not applicable

Summary: On March 20, 2007, the City Council directed Long Range Planning staff to proceed with the preparation of a Draft Preferred Land Use Alternative for the 2030 General Plan, based on input received during the City Leadership Workshop in February 20 and staff's Recommended Preferred Growth Concept that was presented to Council on March 20. Staff is seeking the input of the Commission on the draft land use diagram and proposed land use and urban form designations, and will forward comments to the City Council for further consideration.


Background Information: To date, staff has collected base data and produced the Technical Background Report, Planning Issues Report, and Vision and Guiding Principles documents. The current phase of work is identification of a Preferred Land Use Alternative. Attachment 1 contains additional background information.

Public/Neighborhood Outreach and Comments: Staff has conducted extensive public outreach, including stakeholder interviews, workshops with the City Council and various Boards and Commissions, two rounds of Town Hall Forums throughout the city, public opinion polling, and a City Leadership Workshop. Feedback from this outreach was used to inform the preparation of the Draft Preferred Land Use Diagram.

Environmental Considerations: There are no environmental considerations associated with this report. (Not a project under Section 21065 of CEQA and CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 (b)(4)). Staff will begin the environmental review process for the new General Plan once the City Council has accepted a Preferred Land Use

Alternative and directed staff to proceed with preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Policy Considerations: This report is consistent with both the City’s overall Strategic Plan goal and the General Plan vision of becoming “The Most Livable City in America”. The Preferred Land Use Alternative is consistent with the Smart Growth Principles adopted by Council in 2001, the Preferred Blueprint adopted for the region by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) in 2004, and the Vision and Guiding Principles adopted by Council in 2005.

Respectfully submitted by: 
ERIK DE KOK
Associate Planner

Recommendation Approved:


JIM McDONALD
Senior Planner

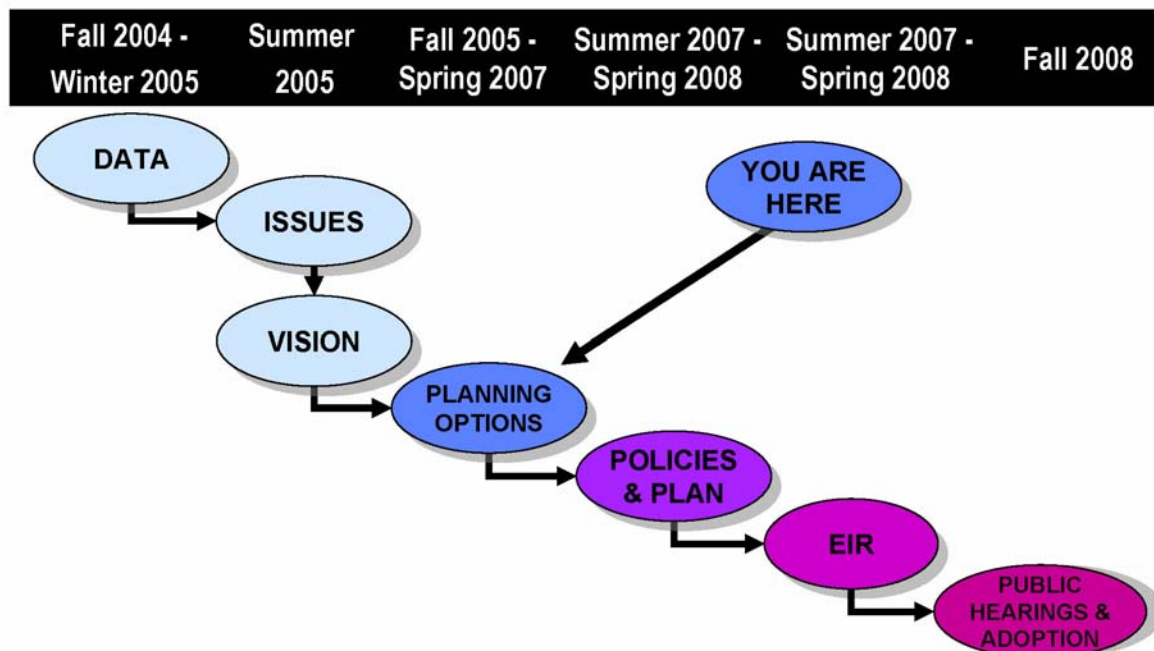

THOMAS S. PACE
Long Range Planning Manager

Attachments:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Attachment 1 | Background |
| Exhibit 1A | Areas of Change Map |
| Exhibit 1B | Recommended Preferred Growth Concept Map |
| Attachment 2 | Draft Preferred Land Use Alternative |
| Exhibit 2A | Draft Land Use Designations |
| Exhibit 2B | Draft Preferred Land Use Diagram |

Attachment 1 Background

Since 2004, a great deal of work has been completed for the 2030 General Plan in terms of gathering background data and information, obtaining public input, defining our Vision and Guiding Principles, and mapping out some options for the future growth and development of the city. An outline of the process to date, as well as future tasks, is shown below:



At this time, staff is bringing forward a Draft Preferred Land Use Alternative for review and comment by the City's leadership groups, based on input received during the City Leadership Workshop on February 20, as well as direction provided by Council regarding staff's Recommended Preferred Growth Concept on March 20.

The following provides some background on how staff arrived at the Draft Preferred Land Use Alternative.

Consistency with SACOG Blueprint and City Smart Growth Principles

The 2030 General Plan is being developed under the direction of Council based on several existing City and regional policies:

- The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Blueprint Project, which was completed in 2004; and
- The City's Smart Growth Principles, adopted by Council in 2001.

Under the Blueprint's Preferred Scenario, the general consensus of policy makers and citizens was a preference for a different pattern of growth to accommodate nearly one

million new people expected to reside in the region by 2030. The Blueprint strategy identified a need to accommodate significant growth within the borders of existing cities and their immediate adjacent areas, rather than continuing sprawl outwards into agricultural lands and open spaces in our six-county region.

Technical Background Report

As part of the first phase of the General Plan process, staff gathered a large volume of technical background data on existing conditions within the City. The results of this were documented in the Technical Background Report (TBR), which was accepted by Council in November 2005. Part of the background data gathering process included a population growth forecast, which concluded that over 200,000 additional residents and approximately 140,000 additional jobs are likely to be added to the city by 2030.

Growth Areas / Areas of Change

In planning to accommodate the significant growth forecast for the city, staff and consultants first identified which areas might grow and change, and which areas in the community would remain relatively unchanged (see Exhibit A, Areas of Change Map). Both technical data and public input helped shape that analysis. Public input received during the first round of Town Hall Forums in 2005 assisted staff in defining the opportunities and constraints that exist in the many different neighborhoods and districts throughout the city and its adjacent areas. The Technical Background Report and Planning Issues Report also contributed valuable information to the land use analysis.

Staff identified three basic types of “Opportunity Areas” that could accommodate significant growth or change by 2030. These include:

- *Greenfields*: New growth areas that currently contain little or no development (e.g. Natomas Joint Vision Study Area, and Delta Shores) that are adjacent to the city’s edges.
- *Major Infill Areas*: Areas with the most potential for new infill development or reuse and intensification based on their location, function and potential market demands (e.g. Railyards, Richards Boulevard, and Downtown).
- *Underutilized and Reclaimed Lands*: Areas throughout the city in which there are large tracts of vacant, underutilized or reclaimed land (e.g. the East Area), or areas with high concentrations of parcels likely to be redeveloped (e.g. many of the city’s older commercial corridors).

Draft Growth Scenarios

In early 2006, staff produced several Draft Growth Scenarios which depicted different configurations of key opportunity areas that could accommodate the projected growth through 2030. The scenarios are summarized as follows:

- Scenario 1: The city continues to build out under the existing General Plan designations and policies, as modified by numerous amendments since 1988. This Scenario would not accommodate projected growth identified in the Technical Background Report, and would not be fully consistent with the Blueprint Recommendations, Vision and Guiding Principles, or the City’s Smart Growth Principles.

- Scenario 2: Projected growth would be accommodated in both Major Infill Areas and some New Growth Areas, resulting in a more compact footprint than Scenario 3.
- Scenario 3: Projected growth would be accommodated in Major Infill Areas but even more so in all the New Growth Areas identified, resulting in a significantly larger urban footprint than Scenario 2.

Scenarios 2 and 3 were both based on the SACOG Blueprint Recommendations, the Vision and Guiding Principles, and the City's Smart Growth Principles, which guided staff's analysis of vacant and underutilized lands and opportunity areas. The scenarios were also influenced by public input received in the first round of Town Hall Forums in 2005.

The scenarios were presented for public review during the second phase of Town Hall Forums in May/June of 2006. Staff and consultants then reviewed community input, as well as input received from the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and various stakeholders. A Fatal Flaw Workshop for City staff was held in October 2006. The outcomes of the Fatal Flaw Workshop, which identified issues and implications associated with the land use scenarios, were included in a Technical Memo that was completed in January 2007. Along with the Technical Memo, a series of White Papers on the major Opportunity Areas were reviewed by the GPAC, TAC and Policy Team. Preliminary conclusions were included within the White Papers, and were brought forward into the City Leadership Workshop in February 2007.

Recommended Preferred Growth Concept

The preliminary conclusions on the major opportunity areas received strong support at the City Leadership Workshop on February 20. Staff moved those forward as the Recommended Preferred Growth Concept diagram (Exhibit B) presented to the City Council on March 20, at which time the City Council directed staff to proceed with preparation of the Draft Preferred Land Use Alternative that is now being presented for review and input.

Exhibit 1A
Areas of Change Map

[NOTE TO COMMISSIONERS –

Long Range Planning staff will be sending all Exhibits for this staff report under separate cover in 11 x 17 color format. We apologize in advance for the inconvenience]

Exhibit 1B
Recommended Preferred Growth Concept Diagram

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Attachment 2 Draft Preferred Land Use Alternative

As described in Attachment 1, the Draft Preferred Alternative is the culmination of several years' worth of work in identifying a vision for the future of the city, and analyzing existing conditions and major issues that need to be addressed in planning for the future.

The Draft Preferred Land Use Alternative consists of a matrix depicting the Draft Land Use Designations (Exhibit C), which are shown graphically on the Draft Land Use Diagram (Exhibit D). Together, these will form the basis of the Land Use portion of the new General Plan to guide the growth and development of the City for the next several decades through 2030.

Draft Land Use Designations

The Draft Land Use Designations (Exhibit C) represent a new approach for the City of Sacramento in that it provides a synthesis of both the use and form that planned development will take in the future. Each designation contains a range of uses, densities, and a description and specifications regarding the form for the designation. The idea is to designate places throughout the city that are integrated with each other, and that result in complete neighborhoods, and places where people gather, work, shop, and recreate.

There are four key development categories under which the designations are grouped: 1.) Neighborhoods, 2.) Centers, 3.) Corridors, and 4.) Other Districts. These categories are primarily organized by form, but within each category a range of designations are specified to allow for differences in context and scale, based both on current conditions as well as projected trends and needs for the future.

1.) Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods can be defined by their social and demographic composition, historic period, land use, or physical form and patterns. The Neighborhood category encompasses those areas of Sacramento that primarily provide environments for living. These areas may, and frequently do, include other uses such as schools, parks, community centers, and local-serving commercial centers, but the predominant use is residential. While Sacramento's residential neighborhoods are quite diverse, there are four basic designations that are differentiated by their physical form according to context:

- Rural Residential
- Sub-Urban
- Traditional
- Urban

For Sub-Urban, Traditional and Urban Neighborhoods, there is also a distinction between Low-, Medium- and High-Density, to reflect differences in density and intensity of uses between different geographic contexts.

Each of these neighborhood types are defined by unique physical characteristics, including the form and character of buildings; patterns created by streets, blocks, and building placement; and the circulation and open space systems. For example, it is easy to see the differences between a Rural Neighborhood, such as Robla in North Sacramento which is characterized by low-density, large-lot residential development, and an Urban Neighborhood, such as Midtown Sacramento, where single family homes, condos, and apartments are compactly intermixed within walking distance of employment, shopping, and entertainment.

It is important to note that Sacramento has many mature, well-established residential neighborhoods where the form and character is not expected to change significantly. Traditional Neighborhoods such as Curtis Park are expected to maintain the existing mix of pre-WWII homes with infill occurring only in vacant or underutilized areas, such as Curtis Park Village northeast of Sacramento Community College.

In contrast, certain neighborhoods, such as Lemon Hill and Strawberry Manor, are anticipated to evolve from their current form into neighborhoods with a greater mix of housing choices and services. An example of this type of transformation can already be seen in Del Paso Heights where the Del Paso Nuevo housing project is in the process of transforming an underutilized area into a vibrant neighborhood complete with new housing, a commercial/community services center, and access to transit.

2.) Centers

Centers are places of focused activity that the city's neighborhoods metaphorically revolve around. They are areas where the synergy created by an aggregation of uses transform an area into a recognizable destination; one that typically consists of some combination of employment, services, retail and/or entertainment and high density housing.

Sacramento will have a number of Centers that range in size and intensity based on context:

- Suburban Center
- Traditional Center
- Regional Center
- Urban Center
- Sub-Regional Center
- Central Business District
- Employment Center-Low Rise
- Employment Center-Mid Rise

Some Centers have a single narrow focus, such as neighborhood-serving retail, while other centers include a complex and diverse mix of uses and activities, such as the Central Business District (CBD) in downtown Sacramento. The defining elements of a center can be characterized as a physically compact pattern of development that includes a concentration of complementary uses and a distinct identity.

