



REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION City of Sacramento

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STAFF REPORT
April 9, 2009

Members of the Planning Commission:

Subject: 2030 General Plan Implementation Programs Status Report

Location/Council District: Citywide/All

Recommendation: Review and Comment

Contact: Jim McDonald AICP, Senior Planner 808-5723

Summary:

Staff is providing an overview of 2030 General Plan Implementation Programs for Planning Commission review and comments. No formal action is required.

The main focus of this report is to review the Planning Department's responsibilities for first year implementation of the 2030 General Plan. During the next year we will set up a process to coordinate other departments' implementation and report progress on the coordination effort in our first annual report in January, 2010. At that time, an overall work program for all departments will be presented for 2010. Planning staff will also provide outreach to other departments, outside agencies and the general public about our ongoing General Plan efforts. Lastly, staff has already initiated a number of implementation efforts ranging from rezonings and zoning code updates, to benchmarking and CIP coordination.

Background Information:

On March 3, 2009 the City Council voted unanimously to approve the 2030 General Plan (General Plan). This action included several policy and land use modifications that occurred after the November 13th, 2008 Planning Commission recommendation of approval. These items, which are detailed in Attachment 1, include:

- Climate Change
- SB 375 Policy
- Expansion of the Central Business District designation
- Storage of Hazardous Materials
- Minor Land Use Modifications
- Minor Changes to Mobility Element

The General Plan goes into effect on April 2, 2009. From that point forward, new development shall be subject to polices and standards identified in the General Plan. Development consistent with the 2030 General Plan will receive a number of streamlining benefits as identified in Attachment 3.

Implementation Programs

Many of the implementing codes, ordinances, policies and master plans that implemented the 1988 General Plan are out of date and do not reflect the urban and sustainable policies of the new General Plan. The new General Plan contains an implementation chapter that identifies over 100 implementation measures that apply to departments and programs citywide. These implementation measures are expected to develop over time, and have been tagged within the General Plan for timing in years 2009-11, 2012-15 and 2016-30. Some measures will occur annually or are ongoing and may not have a specified implementation date.

The 2030 General Plan is action-oriented and will be carried out through key implementation measures, including:

- Updating the Zoning Ordinance and other development review guidelines
- Rezoning key Opportunity Areas consistent with the Land Use and Urban Form Map
- Development of City-wide Urban Design Guidelines
- Comprehensively updating the Infill Strategy
- Promoting energy efficiency (i.e., reducing carbon footprint)
- Updating Community Plans
- Expanding the Shovel Ready Program
- Linking City budgeting and CIP to the General Plan
- Providing adequate infrastructure to promote infill
- Reporting on implementation of the General Plan and Master Plan/Strategies
- Developing and reporting the Livability Index

Planning staff has already begun preparing implementation measures for the new General Plan, with an initial focus on key rezones, zoning code updates and shovel ready site planning. Additionally, other City departments have already begun various implementation efforts, ranging from master plan updates and development impact fee updates, to shovel ready site certification and land use inventories. A summary list of these efforts is identified in Attachment 2.

Prioritization

Beyond the initial key implementation measures, the City will need to identify a process for prioritizing and reporting future years' implementation. Staff will develop an inter-departmental GP Implementation Committee [GPIC] to review the first round of implementation measures and determine which shall be addressed first. This will be especially important given current budget constraints and market conditions.

Outreach and Coordination

Public Information and Education on Implementation

Planning staff will help build public support for implementation through various outreach efforts, including: website updates, Area Leadership announcements, and ongoing public workshops. Staff has already begun this effort, including presentations to: Urban Design Alliance (UDI), Women's Transportation Seminar (WTS) and California Redevelopment Association.

Outreach efforts will include both general overviews of the broader effort to implement the General Plan, as well as specific outreach efforts for individual implementation measures (e.g. rezonings, community plan updates, and updates to department master plans).

Inter-Departmental Coordination

Planning staff has already begun to meet with affected departments on a regular basis to assist in master plan updates and coordinated CIP spending. The 2030 General Plan will help to align department master plans to ensure that we are planning and financing infrastructure collectively and efficiently to promote infill development in key areas.

Inter-governmental Coordination

Planning staff will also conduct outreach to other government agencies. Recent outreach efforts include the Capitol Area Development Authority (CADA), Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) Sacramento State, and Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). Again, these outreach efforts will speak to both broad overviews of our efforts as well as specific implementation measures as needed.

Staff Training/Education

Staff has already begun training for staff to better understand and implement the General Plan. The trainings to date have included basic General Plan overview, tracking General Plan land use and zoning in Accela (permit software system), and review of previously adopted codes, ordinances and policies that implement the General Plan. The training sessions have been provided not only to planning staff, but other City departments as well.

Reporting and Benchmarking

The 2030 General Plan will be evaluated annually to determine whether or not benchmarks for success are being achieved. The periodic evaluations will provide an opportunity for City departments to identify how their respective master plans are being implemented.

As part of our annual report on the General Plan, staff will also prepare a report on the Livability Index. This effort will identify how well the General Plan is working based on changes in key indicators of smart growth and sustainability. Examples of these indicators include: vehicle miles travelled per household, energy consumption per household and housing affordability.

The Planning Commission is expected to play a key role in reviewing the annual report and results of the Livability Index analysis prior to City Council reviews. The Planning Commission will also provide development project review consistent with the policies of the new General Plan. Staff will provide periodic training session for the Commission, similar to what will be provided to City staff.

The 2030 General Plan will be revisited and updated on a 5 year cycle to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Modifications will be made to adjust and adapt to changes in City needs, development trends and market conditions.


Staff will return to the Planning Commission periodically with additional updates and status reports on the implementation of the General Plan, as well as seek feedback as individual programs are brought forward for adoption.

Environmental Considerations:

Review and comment on the 2030 General Plan implementation programs is not considered a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 21065 of CEQA and CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 (b)(4).

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”. This report is also consistent with the Smart Growth Principles adopted by the City Council in 2001, the Preferred Blueprint adopted for the region by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) in 2004, and the General Plan Vision and Guiding Principles adopted by the City Council in 2005.

Respectfully submitted by: 
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Senior Planner

Recommendation Approved:


Tom Pace
Long Range Planning Manager

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Council Directed Changes to the 2030 General Plan**Attachment 1**

1) Climate Change. Several comments made at the November 13th Planning Commission meeting asserted the policies addressing climate change did not fully obligate the City to meet its climate change goals. Staff has developed language for the General Plan that is more binding, and therefore, demonstrates the City's commitment to addressing climate change.

Staff also revised the EIR to change the determination of the Plan's contribution to the cumulative impact of climate change to be significant and unavoidable. However, additional concerns were raised at the December 2, 2008, public hearing by the Attorney General regarding the policies and programs identified by staff to mitigate the climate change impacts of the General Plan. At the direction of the Council, staff worked with the Attorney General staff and the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District staff to identify additional mitigation policies and mitigation measures to further address climate change, including the removal of hortatory language and a stronger commitment to complete a Climate Action Plan (CAP) as soon as possible. In the resolution approving the 2030 General Plan Council added language that committed the City to completing a CAP by July 1, 2011 and Green Building and Residential Energy Conservation Ordinance (RECO) by July 1, 2012.

2) Senate Bill 375

In 2008, the State of California adopted Senate Bill 375, known as "the Anti-Sprawl Bill". This legislation requires each metropolitan planning organization to include a Sustainable Communities Strategy in its regional transportation plan or an Alternative Planning Strategy for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, aligning planning for transportation and housing needs, and creating incentives for the implementation of the strategies. Staff is proposing a new goal and policies be added to the 2030 General Plan's Land Use section to provide for coordination with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) in preparing its regional transportation plan. The goal and policies are also intended to support the City's efforts to facilitate and streamline the development of residential mixed-use projects and priority transportation projects that are consistent with SB 375.

3) Central Business District Boundaries. The draft 2030 General Plan included a Central Business District (CBD) boundary that was expanded from "N" Street to "Q" Street, and Interstate 5 to 15th Street. The Planning Commission recommended limiting the extension of the CBD to the area east of 7th Street. The City Council, however, adopted the CBD boundary as originally proposed, as well as the addition of the following language:

"The City shall support a mixed use, vibrant Central Business District by encouraging innovative mixed-use development resulting in development consistent with Sacramento's commitment to environmental sustainability."

4) Removal of Hazardous Materials Policy. Staff had originally recommended that a policy be added to the 2030 General Plan to address hazardous materials facilities. The Planning Commission felt that the proposed language is similar to policies that already exists in city and state regulations, and is redundant and poses the risk of being misinterpreted as an additional layer of review. The proposed language was removed from the public comment matrix. Based on direction from Council at subsequent meetings, the following policy language was added to the 2030 General Plan:

“Risks from Hazardous Materials Facilities. ~~The~~ When appropriate in light of the City’s responsibilities regarding permitting, the City shall review proposed facilities that would produce or store hazardous materials, gas, natural gas, or other fuels to identify, and provide feasible mitigation, for any significant risks. The review shall consider, at a minimum, the following: presence of seismic or geologic hazards; presence of hazardous materials; proximity to residential development and areas in which substantial concentrations of people would occur; and nature and level of risk and hazard associated with the proposed project.”

This modified language was satisfactory to those who spoke both for and against the original language.

5) Land Use Modifications

Since the November Planning Commission meeting, staff modified the Land Use and Urban Design Diagram for several parts of the City. Council directed staff to change the land use near the corner of 65th Street and Fruitridge Road from Traditional Neighborhood Low Density to Suburban Corridor to encourage commercial development on the site. The Delta Shores development was approved by Council on January 13, 2009. Therefore, the land use for this area was changed based on the plans approved by Council. Also, several minor administrative changes were made to fix inconsistencies with existing planning documents.

6) Mobility Element Modifications

Minor changes were made to the Mobility Element to reflect Council direction on several Special Study Segments. In addition, technical changes were made to the street classification and number of lane diagrams based on results of the study segment analysis and to correct errors.

Current Implementation Efforts

Attachment 2

Planning & Development Services Departments

Phase 1 Rezoning (July 2009)

Phase 1 Zoning Code Update (June 2009)

Identification of Tier 1 Infill Sites – Specific/Area Plans (In Progress)

- Arden/Cal Expo
- 65th Street/University Village Financing Plan and Ramona Area Specific Plan
- Florin Corridor Plan
- Downtown Development Strategy
- River District Specific Plan
- Central City Urban Design Guidelines

Northeast Line SPD Amendment (In Progress)

CEQA checklist update (In Progress)

Housing Element Implementation

- Reasonable Accommodation Ordinance (July 2009)
- Universal Design Ordinance (In Progress)
- Multi-Family Design Principles Update (July 2009)
- Housing Trust Fund Update (September 2009)

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) General Plan Consistency Finding (May 2009)

Climate Action Plan (CAP) (Scope, Schedule and Budget Preparation In Progress)

Public Benefit to Exceed FAR Ordinance (July 2009)

Other City Departments

Parks Master Plan Re-Adoption (Parks)

Shovel Ready Sites Certification (Economic Development)

Utilities Impact Fees (Utilities)

Transportation Development Impact Fees (Transportation)

Water Conservation – various efforts (Utilities)

Sustainability Master Plan – implementation (General Services)

2030 General Plan: Development Streamlining Summary**Attachment 3****Flexible/Mixed Land Use**

Streamlined review of urban projects (e.g., 18th and L, 14th and H, 19th and Broadway, and Township 9)

Recognize Urban Development Standards

Directs changes to City standards to allow urban development to occur, including: increased lot coverage, reduced parking, taller buildings in urban areas etc.

Broad Range of Densities/Intensities

Increased development opportunities are identified in areas of change, including corridors, light rail station areas and urban centers.

Streamlined Review

Changes in standards, uses and densities will allow more development to occur with little or no land use entitlements (if consistent with the plan)

Community Form/Design Identified

Will provide initial direction for urban design and direct that the City pursue citywide design review. This would help place the emphasis on the review of design rather than land use.

Internal Consistency

There are currently inconsistencies between the General Plan, community plans and the zoning code. These issues and inconsistencies would be resolved through incorporation of community plans into the General Plan (and using one map) and zoning map and code fixes through implementation of the General Plan.

Ease of Update

The General Plan will be kept current and relevant through annual reports to Council and regularly scheduled updated on 5 year cycles.

Implementation Plan

There is a an implementation component of the plan that will direct changes to codes, ordinances, guidelines and master plans to facilitate urban development consistent with the 2030 General Plan, thereby reducing entitlements and application processing time for future development.

Initial CEQA Clearance

The EIR for the 2030 General Plan will provide an initial CEQA clearance for consistent projects. Large projects may have additional CEQA requirements, but will be able to tier off the 2030 General Plan EIR, which will result in reduced development costs and processing time.