



PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

STAFF REPORT

DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2014

TO: TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

FROM: DAVID REYES, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF
PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE - DRAFT GOALS AND POLICIES

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Transportation Advisory Commission provide comments to the City Council on Draft Land Use and Mobility Elements (Attachment A).

BACKGROUND:

The two major components to the General Plan Update include the Draft Land Use Diagram (a graphic that demonstrates what uses will be allowed, at what densities, and where) and the guiding principles, goal, and policies. This report focuses on the latter portion which uses text to describe what the City will look like, how it will function, and how it will achieve this vision.

The City Council in April of 2013 provided staff with direction on the proposed wording of the eight General Plan Guiding Principles, which set the overall direction for the City. In this next phase of the project, staff is seeking additional input on the draft goals and policies that support these principles.

From New Policy Topic Areas to Goals and Policies:

The General Plan process has been moving from a broader vision - as defined in the guiding principles - to more detailed components of the vision. In September of 2010, staff hosted a workshop in which the community provided input on the Guiding Principles. In the fall of 2012, the Department of Transportation held a separate series of workshops to get feedback on transportation issues. From these meetings and previous outreach meetings, staff determined that the existing General Plan Land Use and Mobility Elements had some gaps related to the following topic areas:

- Sustainability, Open Space and Conservation;
- Urban Design, Historic Preservation, and Arts/Culture;
- Mobility; and
- Economic Vitality and Education.

In March of 2012, the City hosted a workshop centered on these topic areas. Staff presented the New Policy Topic Areas (Attachment B) for the community's consideration and comment. This document provided statements that responded to previous community comments and set the groundwork for the creation of a formal policy document. The community provided additional input on the New Policy Topic Areas in the fall of 2012. In April of 2013, the City Council reviewed the New Policy Topic Areas and directed staff to study their impact in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). On February 1, the City hosted a community meeting to receive comments on the Draft Land Use and Mobility Element Goals and Policies, see Attachment C.

Existing General Plan:

The Existing General Plan is divided into 13 chapters, or elements, some adopted as recently as 2014 while others were adopted as far back as 1975. The City has adopted the following elements which are required by State law:

- Land Use (Adopted 2004),
- Mobility (Adopted 2004),
- Noise (Adopted 2002),
- Safety (Adopted 2002),
- Housing (Estimated Adoption in 2014), and
- Open Space and Conservation (Adopted 2012).

The City has adopted the following optional elements:

- Public Facilities (Adopted 1975),
- Historical/Cultural (Adopted 1975),
- Cultural and Recreational (Adopted 1983),
- Economic Development and Employment (Adopted 1984),
- Social Development (Adopted 1976),
- Green Space, Recreation and Parks (Adopted 2007), and
- Scenic Highways (Adopted 1975).

Throughout the General Plan Update process, staff has found that many members of the community were unaware of the optional elements. In addition, all but the Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element have not been recently updated and therefore in some cases have not kept up with this community's values, new issues and best practices.

Staff has reviewed the policies within these elements, identified policies related to land use and mobility, and moved them to the appropriate element in order to retire these elements. The policies have also been edited to ensure that they reflect the comments received from the community and to match the format of the Land Use and Mobility Elements.

Land Use Element Organization:

The existing Land Use Element is organized in a hierarchical fashion, with each of the seven existing guiding principles being supported by a set of objectives and policies. This format creates significant overlap between objectives and can make finding information difficult. In April of 2013, the City Council directed staff to reorganize the Land Use Element in a way that would make it easier to use and reduce repetition of policies. The Land Use Element will be organized into five sections as described below.

1. *Guiding Principles:* The Guiding Principles function as the foundation for the goals and policies of the Land Use Element. Throughout the outreach process, there has been consistent support for the Principles. An eighth guiding principle has been added on the subject of education. Significant changes were also made to the second guiding principle to strengthen its support of historic preservation.
2. *Land Use Diagram:* The Land Use Diagram is a graphic demonstration of what uses will be allowed, at what intensity, and where. This section of the Land Use Element provides information on how development density and intensity is calculated. It also defines the categories on the Land Use Diagram, providing a general vision for the development of each designation. The Zoning Code would provide further direction on which uses would be permitted or prohibited.
3. *Citywide Goals and Policies:* This section includes policies that relate to all uses no matter their location in the City. This includes goals regarding growth, the mix of land uses, compatibility, urban form and placemaking, sense of place, architectural design and quality, historic preservation, arts and culture, a sustainable environment, a sustainable economy, community services, education, the correlation of land use and mobility, parking, and public involvement and participation.
4. *Goals and Policies for Land Use Categories:* This section provides goals and policies specific to each land use category. For instance, in relation to residential neighborhoods, this section includes policies specific to character, design, scale, streetscapes, second units, garages and accessory structures, and maintenance.
5. *Goals and Policies for Community Places:* This final section provides goal and policies specific to distinct community places. The distinct community places include the eight specific plan areas (Central District, East Colorado, East Pasadena, Fair Oaks and Orange Grove, Lincoln Avenue, North Lake, South Fair Oaks, and West Gateway), Washington and Allen, and the Northwest. For each of these community places, the Land Use Element provides a direction or vision and some policies that are specific to that area.

Policy Structure:

Staff has revised the wording and formatting of some existing policies to ensure consistency with the State Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) General Plan Guidelines and best practices. According to OPR, a policy is a specific statement indicating a commitment of a community. The clearer and less ambiguous the statement is, the more helpful it is. Some of the changes to the existing policies include:

- Starting every policy with an action verb (e.g., encourage, authorize, limit, etc.),
- Providing further clarification to define terms and clarify a course of action,

- Removing policies that have already been implemented or rewriting the policy in the present tense to indicate the need for ongoing implementation, and
- Rewriting policies that function as an implementation strategy.

Mobility Element Objectives and Policies

The Draft Mobility Element Policies were developed around two basic tenets – a commitment to retain the mature urban environment within Pasadena and a commitment to provide adequately sized and connected facilities for non-auto modes of travel. This is a departure from the regional norm of a supply-driven needs approach that defaults to expanding street capacity to accommodate estimated auto needs.

The update of the Mobility Element Pasadena is also addressing a mandate from the State of California to include Complete Street policies and guidelines to meet the mobility needs of all transportation network users. The Draft Mobility Element Policies also reflect a theme to make Pasadena more walkable and bike friendly in support of the City's adopted sustainability goals.

Mobility Element Objectives

- Create a Supportive Climate for Economic Viability
 - Mobility strategies to improve economic and neighborhood vitality
- Enhance Livability
 - Guidelines for greater equity, community health and safety
- Encourage Walking, Biking, Transit, and other Alternatives to Motor Vehicles
 - Strategies to encourage non-auto travel
 - Protection of residential neighborhoods

Mobility Element Policy Themes:

- Complete Streets: Streets should accommodate all users such as pedestrians, bicyclist, public transit, skateboarders and scooters.
- Streets should reflect individual neighborhood character and needs, and support healthy activities such as walking and bicycling.
- Street designs should manage vehicle speeds to provide a more comfortable environment for bicyclist and pedestrians.

NEXT STEPS:

For the policy component, the staff will be meeting with various commissions and the City Council in February and March to receive comments on the Draft Land Use and Mobility Element Goals and Policies. Following this, staff will also be adding to the Land Use Element an implementation program, a glossary and images. A revised version of the draft policies will be released with the Draft EIR in spring of 2014. After the release of these documents, staff will solicit feedback on these documents at workshops and commission meetings. After receiving these comments, staff will make the appropriate changes and release the "Final EIR" and staff's proposed Land Use and Mobility Elements.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

No environmental review is required at this time. The Commission is not making a final recommendation on the General Plan Update. The Commission is providing comment to staff on a draft document. An environmental impact report will be prepared to review the impact of the proposed General Plan Update.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Attachments:

- Attachment A: Draft Land Use and Mobility Elements
- Attachment B: New Policy Topic Areas
- Attachment C: Community Comments
- Attachment D: Scenic Highways Element