



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: December 5, 2012 **REPORT NO. PC-12-120**

ATTENTION: **Planning Commission, Agenda of December 13, 2012**

SUBJECT: Information Item – Status of Community Plan Updates

LOCATION: Citywide

SUMMARY

ISSUE: This is an information item from the Development Services Department (DSD) on the status of the Community Plan Updates currently underway.

BACKGROUND

The City of San Diego adopted a comprehensive update to its General Plan in 2008. The City's 47 Community Plans are an essential and integral component of the General Plan that provides implementation recommendations linked to the General Plan goals and policies. Starting with the Strategic Framework Element, the General Plan provides a Citywide policy foundation for land use decisions. To be consistent with the updated General Plan policies and to ensure that community land use policies are up-to-date, the City has increased the Community Planning program to update community plans Citywide since the adoption of the 2008 General Plan.

Each community plan is a unique reflection of the issues and trends facing the community and includes corresponding strategies to implement achievable community goals. Community plans are intended to be used as a means to maintain or improve quality of life, and to respect the essential character of San Diego's communities. The General Plan update did not change land use or zoning. Community plans represent a significant and vital component of the Land Use Element since they contain more detailed land use designations and site specific policy recommendations than is possible at the Citywide level. The community plans are updated to reflect the community's vision of the future, reflect changes that have taken place since the community plan was last updated, and proactively anticipate community needs in the future.

On December 13, 2012, City staff from the Community Planning program will provide the Planning Commission with an update on the status of the community plan updates currently in

process. Staff will present the Planning Commission with information on each of the community plan update efforts, including key issue areas and lessons learned, upcoming milestones in the plan update process, and a schedule for completion.

DISCUSSION

Role of General and Community Plans

The General Plan reflects Citywide policies and provides a blueprint for guiding growth and development in the City. The General Plan has ten Elements or subject categories. They include: Land Use and Community Planning, Mobility, Urban Design, Economic Prosperity, Public Facilities, Services and Safety, Recreation, Conservation, Historic Preservation, Noise, and Housing. These General Plan Elements are further refined in the community plan update process in accordance with the needs and unique characteristics of each community.

The General Plan contains a menu of standardized land use designations, and provides guidance for community plan preparation. The community plans designate land uses at the parcel level to guide development within a community. The community plans provide a variety of residential densities, site-specific recommendations for mixed-use village sites, policies and land use maps that are detailed enough to provide a foundation for fair and predictable land use planning, as well as establish a mobility network for effectively moving workers and residents. Public Facilities Financing Plans (PFFP) are also updated as part of the community plan update process to assure that public facility demands are adjusted to account for changes in future land use and for updated costs associated with new public facilities which include transportation and park and recreational facilities.

Just prior to the adoption of the General Plan in 2008, two updates were completed – La Jolla and Downtown, and two community plan updates were underway – Ocean Beach and Otay Mesa. Since the adoption of the 2008 General Plan, the following eight community plan updates and one major focused amendment have begun:

- Barrio Logan
- Uptown
- North Park
- Greater Golden Hill
- San Ysidro
- Old Town
- Midway Pacific Highway
- Southeastern
- Grantville Master Plan (focused amendment)

Community Plan Update Schedules and Program Phases

The community plan update work program tasks include six phases: consultant contracting; assessment of existing conditions, including identification of opportunities and constraints; community outreach for land use and community plan development; community review of the draft plan; environmental review; preparation of the PFFP; and public hearings.

In-house City resources are utilized for the development of the zoning implementation program, traffic analysis, mobility planning, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance and the preparation of the PFFP's. While some plan update efforts have outsourced the writing of the community plan, some plan elements are prepared by staff including Conservation, Historic Resources, and Park and Recreation.

A timeline and project schedule for each of the community plan updates is attached (Attachments 1-8) that reflects the plan phases outlined above. Below is a summary of key public review milestones for each of the plan updates:

Community Plan	Draft Community Plan Complete	Community Plan EIR out for Public Review	Community Plan & EIR Final/Public Hearings
Barrio Logan	May 2011	December 2012	April 2013
Otay Mesa	April 2011	April 2013	August 2013
Ocean Beach	January 2013	April 2013	September 2013
Old Town- Midway Pacific Highway	March 2013	June 2014	October 2014
Grantville Master Plan	April 2013	December 2013	April 2014
Southeastern	November 2013	July 2014	November 2014
Uptown-North Park-Greater Golden Hill	January 2014	August 2014	December 2014
San Ysidro	February 2014	September 2014	January 2015

The update for the Uptown, North Park and Greater Golden Hill Community plans is included in one timeline and project schedule. This effort was an attempt to cluster the plan update work program for three communities with overlapping issues and common boundaries. The end result will be the updating of the three separate community plans. The update for the Old Town San Diego and Midway Pacific Highway Corridor Community Plans is also included in one timeline and schedule. This update effort involves work on the two plans simultaneously, with the end result being an update to each of these community plans.

Community Outreach Strategy

The focal point of the community plan update process is the community outreach strategy. The elements of the strategy include:

- Regular Community Advisory or Committee Meetings
- Periodic Public or Community workshops
- Major Issue or Design Charrettes
- Focus group meetings
- Walk Audits
- Surveys
- Project Website
- Information brochure / newsletters
- Media participation

Advisory Committee Meeting Topics are typically phased and cover the following:

- Phase 1 - Existing Policies, Existing Conditions, Technical Studies
- Phase 2 - Values and Vision, Focused Issues, Land Use Alternatives, Plan/Elements Development
- Phase 3 - Draft Community Plan, Draft Facilities Financing Plan, Draft Zoning, Draft Environmental Document

Community Plans and their policies and programs are based on public input and focus on land use, mobility, conservation, urban design and the phasing of public infrastructure and services with growth. The goals and policies contained in the community plans are based on the community's priorities. Throughout the plan update process staff makes adjustments to schedule and project milestones that address each community's unique and evolving concerns and needs.

Lessons Learned

The preparation of a community plan is an iterative process. Each subsequent community plan update effort builds on lessons learned from the previous effort. To improve the timeliness and cost effectiveness of the update process, staff is looking at changes to the plan update preparation process, consultant timelines, and overall work program.

There are aspects of the plan update process that have taken longer than anticipated. These include consultant contracting, compilation of existing conditions data, traffic modeling and resolving complex technical studies and CEQA issues in order to complete the accompanying environmental analysis.

Consultant teams are hired by the City to work under Planning staff's direction on the preparation of technical studies that support the plan update effort. They also provide outside expertise that does not exist in-house, such as in the area of Urban Design. Consultant selection and contract approval has been a lengthy process, which includes Mayoral or City Council approval. So far, the average estimate for completing the contract process and proceeding with work under the contract is one year.

Another phase of the work program is the preparation of existing conditions data. Determining existing conditions provides baseline information that describes the condition of the community and is essential in providing direction for the plan update effort. A compilation of the quantitative and qualitative data collected for the existing condition is analyzed and organized to indicate opportunities and challenges and to determine preliminary issues that should be considered in subsequent steps of the plan update process. Staff has learned that completing all the existing conditions analysis prior to starting the community outreach phase is helpful to move the process along. This includes traffic modeling of the existing conditions and adopted plan, which has taken more time than expected. Having all the analysis prepared early enables the community to understand issues and get right to work.

Community plan updates require CEQA review. Planning staff coordinates CEQA review between the EIR consultants, DSD's Environmental Analysis Section (EAS), and all reviewing disciplines. The CEQA process takes an average of ten months, and cannot begin without traffic

analysis, technical reports, and a final draft of the community plan has been prepared. A draft Public Facilities Financing Plan must also be available with the public review of the EIR. Involving the EIR consultants and DSD's EAS staff early in the process has helped to identify critical environmental issues that may influence plan policies. It has also helped to establish the expectations for CEQA analyses, including traffic forecasting, that are tailored to the needs of the community and the end result of the community plan.

Based on these and other lessons learned, there are recommended changes in the preparation of future plan updates. Some changes are being implemented, while others will be considered as the City continues to refine the model for community plan preparation. They include:

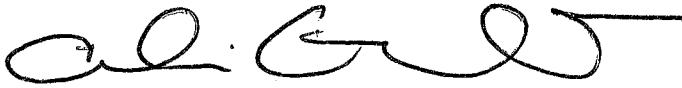
- Address the contracting process to allow the Mayor or Department Director to approve certain planning related contracts to increase the dollar amount for professional planning and technical services contracts needing City Council approval. This would help to reduce the contract processing time.
- Hire a single consultant team with all needed technical expertise or with the ability to sub-contract instead of separate contracts for various technical disciplines for expertise that City staff does not have. This would reduce the time need to process, interview, and select for multiple consultant contracts.
- Have City staff draft the community plan elements, rather than hiring a consultant, with the possible exception of Urban Design and specific technical aspects that City staff may not have the expertise needed to prepare.
- Establish a core community plan update team to focus staff resources and expertise. Have the team work on fewer community plan updates at a single time. This would help to reduce the amount of time needed to prepare a community plan update.
- Complete the existing conditions analysis prior to starting the community outreach phase. This would enable the community to understand issues and get right to work. This includes traffic modeling of the existing plan, which has taken more time than expected.
- Work internally to streamline traffic modeling and traffic analysis processes. This could include increasing the traffic modeling capacity, so traffic modeling could occur concurrently rather than sequentially. Due to current capacity, there is a queue of updates waiting to begin the modeling process. Modeling is an iterative process and requires dedicated staff familiar with the complexities associated with land use inputs, calibration, model runs, and analysis.
- Establish the expectations for travel forecasting and CEQA that are tailored to the needs of the community and the end result of the community plan. For example, is the end result of the community plan to minimize lengthy discretionary review at the individual project level or to implement a development program which will guide more development through a ministerial permit process?

- Work through community planning groups instead of establishing separate stakeholders groups.

Conclusion:

Community plans shape the future of the community, guiding future growth, protecting neighborhood character, creating new economic opportunity, and enhancing the quality of life for those who live, work, visit and invest in the area. Staff welcomes the opportunity to provide the Planning Commission with an update on the Community Planning work program, and receive input on it progress.

Respectfully submitted,



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BROUGHTON/CGD

Attachments:

1. Status and Timeline for Ocean Beach Community Plan Update
2. Status and Timeline for Otay Mesa Community Plan Update
3. Status and Timeline for Barrio Logan Community Plan Update
4. Status and Timeline for Uptown-North Park-Greater Golden Hill Community Plan Update
5. Status and Timeline for San Ysidro Community Plan Update
6. Status and Timeline for Old Town- Midway Pacific Highway Community Plan Update
7. Status and Timeline for Southeastern Community Plan Update
8. Status and Timeline for Grantville Master Plan