



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

DATE ISSUED: July 6, 2006 REPORT NO. PC 06-215

ATTENTION: Planning Commission
Agenda of July 13, 2006

SUBJECT: General Plan Update Workshop – Public Facilities, Services and Safety
Element

REFERENCE: Manager’s Report Nos. 03-019, 03-115, 03-204, 03-205, 03-206, 04-149, 05-038, 05-161
Council Report Nos. 06-025, 06-056
Planning Commission Report Nos. P-03-183, P-03-227, P-03-333, PC-04-220, PC-05-070, PC-05-183, PC-05-261, PC-05-304, PC-06-092, PC-06-149

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION (PC) AT THIS TIME. This report presents a working draft of the proposed Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element (PFSSE) of the General Plan (see Attachment 1). The PFSSE addresses the provision of facilities and services that have a direct influence on the location of land uses. The PFSSE also provides policies for public facility financing and prioritization, and discusses developer and city funding responsibilities.

BACKGROUND

The update of the PFSSE has been guided by the City of Villages strategy and citywide policy direction contained within the General Plan Strategic Framework Element, which was adopted by the City Council on October 22, 2002. The Strategic Framework stated, “The provision of adequate infrastructure and public facilities is the key component for the entire strategy.” (p.37) Recognizing that there were existing unfunded public facilities needs, the Finance Citizen Subcommittee of the Strategic Framework Citizen Committee procured the services of a financial advisor to develop infrastructure financing options. The intent was to incorporate the advisor’s work into a financing strategy for infrastructure improvements in urbanized communities (see Attachment 2). Furthermore, the Strategic Framework Action Plan directed “that a financing strategy be prepared and that new revenue sources be secured to implement key components of the Strategic Framework Element, such as infrastructure improvements and increased village amenities” (p.17).

From June 2003 through June 2004, the Planning Department conducted an existing conditions data collection effort to provide an inventory of existing facilities and land uses (see Attachment 3). This effort has contributed to the development of the draft PFSSE and other General Plan update work. The latest public review draft of the element was released as a part of the July 2005 Draft General Plan. Since then, significant revisions to the content and organization of the draft plan have been made based on Land Use and Housing (LU&H), PC, Community Planners Committee (CPC), the general public, and other stakeholder comments. In addition, staff continues to work closely on edits with contacts in various departments responsible for the public facilities and services addressed in the element.

DISCUSSION

The need to improve existing infrastructure deficiencies in San Diego's older urbanized communities is one of the most pressing and persistent issues faced by the city of San Diego. The city must also ensure that adequate facilities and levels of service are maintained over time throughout the city, and that new growth pays its fair share of costs. The draft General Plan presents a range of policies that address these challenges, and provides specific policy guidance for the provision of facilities and services that are publicly managed, and have a direct influence on the location of land uses. Facilities and services addressed include: Fire-Rescue, Police, Wastewater, Storm Water, Water Infrastructure, Waste Management, Libraries, Schools, Information Infrastructure, Disaster Preparedness, and Seismic Safety. The policies within the PFSSE also apply to transportation and park and recreation facilities and services, with additional guidance found in other elements. In addition, policies calling for greater collaboration with providers of Public Utilities, Regional Facilities, and Healthcare Facilities are included in this element, as they too affect land uses and overall quality of life.

Key financing policies are based upon the acknowledgement that:

- the city is responsible for funding existing facilities deficiencies;
- funding for existing deficiencies will need to come through a diverse funding and management strategy;
- new development is to pay its proportional fair-share of public facilities costs;
- under current development impact fee methodologies, fees collected do not keep pace with escalating facility needs and costs and are intended to only fund a proportional share of new facilities;
- in evaluating new growth, new development is to mitigate its impact and have a positive impact on the facilities of the community in which it is located; communities should have a voice in establishing priorities for public facilities financing; and
- the city needs to have an objective and systematic approach to public facilities prioritization.

A summary of the element, by section, is provided below.

Introductory Section

The introduction to the element provides a synopsis of the city's approach to providing public facilities and services since the adoption of the 1979 Progress Guide and General Plan (1979 General Plan). In addition, the introduction describes the local and state legislative framework which influences the city's ability to finance infrastructure, and identifies several key challenges the city has faced in providing and maintaining public facilities and services.

The General Plan update provides a public facilities financing approach oriented to infill development that was not included in the 1979 General Plan. In 1979, the city was divided into three “tiers:” “urbanized,” “planned urbanizing,” and “future urbanizing.” The planned urbanizing areas consisted of newly developing communities where development was required to “pay its own way” through the use of Facilities Benefit Assessments (FBAs), or other financing mechanisms such as Mello-Roos Districts. Growth was encouraged in urbanized communities, with the assumption that General Fund public capital improvement expenditures would be provided in those areas.

Over time, the FBAs were largely successful in providing facilities in the then-developing communities, but the General Fund fell short in meeting urbanized communities needs. In addition, the city’s Development Impact Fee (DIF) program for urbanized communities was not adopted until 1987. As the majority of San Diego’s communities are now primarily “urbanized,” the General Plan must provide a more diverse facilities financing strategy that addresses: existing deficits in communities developed prior to the 1979 General Plan, providing adequate facilities to support infill development, the ongoing need to fund operations and maintenance throughout the city, and other topics.

Public Facilities Financing – Section A

The Strategic Framework Element emphasized a need to address the financing of existing and future public facility needs in order for the City of Villages strategy to succeed. Consistent with the Strategic Framework Citizen Committee Finance Subcommittee direction, this section identifies a menu of options from which a number of possible financing strategies can be implemented in order for the city to meet its responsibility to fund existing deficiencies.

Following the General Plan adoption, a more detailed strategy to identify specific mechanisms for the implementation of various facility types in targeted geographic areas will be prepared. For example, the creation of special districts to fund park improvements and expanded use of redevelopment districts to take advantage of tax increment financing offers potential for addressing some facilities needs. It is also anticipated that there will need to be amendments to the city’s DIF methodology and public facilities financing plans in order to implement Policy PF-A.3 (see key policies below). In addition, DIFs will need to be prepared for additional communities in the future as areas developed as planned urbanizing communities experience infill development that was not accounted for in their FBAs.

Key policies in this section:

- address the need to invest in needed facilities (PF-A.1);
- underscore the need for significant investments in capital improvements through: operational and joint-use efficiencies; enhancing existing funding sources; identifying additional revenues; and strategically prioritizing capital investments (PF-A.2);
- provide direction for the city to maximize the potential benefit of DIFs and FBAs (PF-A.3);
- call for community-level priorities to be identified in community plans and financing plans, in consultation with planning groups (PF-A.3e); and

- provide policy direction to integrate land use and capital facilities planning (PF-A.4).

Public Facilities and Services Prioritization – Section B

This section calls for a formally structured approach to prioritize the financing of public facilities. The aim is to strengthen the relationship between the city’s General Plan and annual Capital Improvements Program as a means to successfully implement the City of Villages strategy and maximize efficiencies in the annual allocation of capital resources.

Key policies in this section:

- seek to optimize resources and maximize efficiencies through strategically allocating resources (PF-B.1–B.2); and
- call for a standard approach to prioritization by facility type wherein appropriate criteria are identified and used to evaluate and prioritize projects. Among the common criteria suggested are health and safety factors, capacity and service level, legal mandates, cost factors, and consistency with plans and community-level priorities identified therein. Through greater citywide coordination, prioritization can be more effectively evaluated and as appropriate, targeted to foster village attributes citywide (PF-B.3).

Evaluation of Growth, Facilities, and Services – Section C

This section is intended to ensure that new development does not adversely affect any community. As the city endeavors to address existing and future needs with DIFs and other capital funding sources, private development will also be responsible for ensuring existing needs are not compounded by a proposed project.

Key policies in this section:

- require development proposals to fully address impacts to public facilities and services (PF-C.1);
- require residential projects that necessitate a community plan amendment to provide a physical improvement that benefits the affected community planning area (PF-C.3);
- support the establishment of a centralized development monitoring system (PF-C.5); and
- call for up-to-date public facilities financing plans to guide the provision of public facilities (PF-C.6).

Fire-Rescue – Section D

The Fire-Rescue revisions include guidelines for Emergency Medical Services, as well as a new standard for evaluating the impact of new development on Fire-Rescue services and facilities. The new standard examines yearly emergency incident volume and requires analysis to determine the need for additional response units and related capital improvements as necessary when there is an excess of 1,500 responses annually for a unit.

Storm Water Infrastructure – Section G

Storm Water was previously discussed in a paragraph under the Wastewater section of the July 2005 Draft General Plan. It has been further developed as a new section to distinguish the storm water conveyance system and its facility and service demands from those of the city's wastewater services.

Water Infrastructure – Section H

Water issues were previously addressed in the context of watershed management and conservation. A new section was added to the PFSSE to address water supply and infrastructure.

Public Utilities – Section M

This new section acknowledges the need to work closely with all regional public utility providers in the planning and provision of their services and facilities. The need to coordinate with public utilities and encourage their investments in potential village areas is also included.

Regional Facilities – Section N

The city has a number of facilities serving regional needs which directly affect land use decisions and quality of life. This new section emphasizes the need for the city to play an active leadership role in planning and implementing regional facility and infrastructure investments.

Healthcare Services and Facilities – Section O

Although not under city of San Diego authority, healthcare services and facilities are essential to protect and improve health, safety, and quality of life for all residents. This new section discusses the need to participate with healthcare providers in siting (of facilities and services) decisions, and to the extent possible, to integrate those decisions with the city's growth strategy.

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE AND PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS

The LU&H Committee and the PC have played significant roles in the General Plan update process over the past three years. At a joint workshop on March 9, 2005, both bodies provided important policy development direction on major topics including the use of development impact fees, establishing new permit findings, community plan amendment processing, and establishing development thresholds.

The LU&H Committee and the PC provided additional comments on the complete draft PFSSE during workshops held on July 14, 2005, and July 27, 2005, respectively. In addition, at the General Plan Update workshop held by the LU&H Committee on May 17, 2006, committee members stressed the importance of providing public facilities to support growth, warned that the City of Villages strategy cannot be successful without financing for infrastructure, and commented that we have a responsibility to plan for adequate facilities for future residents.

The following table identifies a comprehensive listing of dates and topics addressed at LU&H and PC meetings on the General Plan since February 2003. Direction received at the workshops described below has been incorporated into the draft General Plan.

DATE	FORUM	TOPIC
2-12-03	LU&H	Approved the General Plan Work Program including tasks to: incorporate and refine the Strategic Framework Element and citywide community plan policies into the General Plan, draft additional policies to address citywide issues, and format the document to be more reader-and web-friendly.
7-30-03	LU&H	Action to prepare a Master Environmental Assessment to provide an inventory of existing facilities and land uses in community planning areas.
10-22-03	LU&H, PC	Workshop covered the new General Plan format, public outreach strategy, existing conditions data collection, draft Mobility Element policies, and draft community plan amendment/update policies.
11-18-04	PC	Workshop on Land Use Element issues including community plan format, initiation and amendment criteria, and proposed land use designations.
3-9-05	LU&H, PC	Workshop on six major policy areas including: collocation of housing and employment uses, alternative methods of providing parks and recreation areas, solutions to community facilities deficits, General Plan and zoning consistency issues, the role of the General Plan in simplifying the community plan update process, and guidance to be provided by the General Plan regarding future plan amendments.
3-10-05	PC	Workshop on the Economic Prosperity Element.
4-20-05	LU&H	Public review of the Discussion Draft General Plan was initiated.
7-14-05	PC	Workshop covering the entire July 2005 Draft General Plan. Planning Commissioners had extensive comments. Commentary on the Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element was reviewed and mostly incorporated in edits to the element.
7-27-05	LU&H	Workshop to review and comment on the July 2005 Draft General Plan.
9-22-05	PC	Previous PC and LU&H workshop comments were documented along with the Planning Department's suggested course of action-See Report No. PC-05-261. http://www.sandiego.gov/planning-commission/pcreports/pc261gp.pdf
10-13-05	PC	Presented a revised outline for the General Plan.

DATE	FORUM	TOPIC
12-1-05	PC	Director's report briefed Planning Commissioners on the General Plan work in progress, including interaction with CPC.
2-1-06	LU&H	Briefing on General Plan update program.
3-1-06	LU&H	General Plan workshop. Presented revised Land Use and Urban Design elements; received input on key policies in progress. Identified major changes to July 2005 Draft General Plan.
3-16-06	PC	General Plan workshop. Presented revised Land Use and Urban Design elements; presented excerpts from the draft PFSSE, Economic Prosperity, and Recreation elements, received input on key policies in progress. Identified major changes to July 2005 Draft General Plan.
5-17-06	LU&H	General Plan workshop. Presented revised Land Use and Community Planning, Mobility, Urban Design, Conservation, Historic Preservation, and Noise elements; received input on key policies in progress. Although PFSSE was not part of the workshop agenda, committee members and public comment emphasized the importance of public facilities to the overall General Plan effort.
6-15-06	PC	General Plan workshop. PC provided input on working drafts of the introductory sections and the Land Use and Community Planning, Mobility, Urban Design, Conservation, Historic Preservation, Noise, and Recreation elements.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

Public outreach has taken place through a series of public forums; mass e-mail distributions; workshops, presentations and meetings; and planning group communications including working sessions with the CPC and the CPC General Plan subcommittee.

Public Forums

A series of forums entitled "From Controversy to Solutions" was developed to provide opportunities for panel-based discussions on topics specific to general plan goals and policies. The forum on public facilities: "Mission Impossible? Balancing Public Facilities Needs and the Demand for More Housing," was held on September 16, 2004. The public was invited to the forum which was televised, and often repeated, on City TV24. A City Council member, a former City Manager, and other community leaders participated as panelists. The goal of each forum was to provide a public venue to discuss a variety of differing points of view and to assist staff in policy development.

Workshops and Meetings

In addition to the formal workshops with PC and LU&H described above, presentations and stakeholder meetings were held on specific topic areas with public agencies, professional organizations, community activists, the general public, and other city staff. Due to the broad range of public facilities and services covered in the PFSSE, coordination with a number of city departments has been critical for effective policy development. Staff continues to work closely with these contacts, including public utility providers, as the element is refined.

Community Planners Committee (CPC)

The CPC initially discussed the July 2005 Draft General Plan at their meeting of August 23, 2005. Since then, the CPC formed a General Plan subcommittee to undertake a detailed, element-by-element review of the draft document. This subcommittee presented recommendations on element edits to the full CPC at each of the CPC meetings held in October 2005 through February 2006, and on April 25, 2006. This subcommittee initially discussed the July 2005 Draft PFSSE on January 9, 2006, and again on April 18, 2006 to review edits based on the initial input. CPC's recommendations, and staff's responses, are documented in Attachment 4.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy S. Bragado
Acting Program Manager
City Planning and Community Investment

William Anderson, FAICP
Director
City Planning and Community Investment

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- Attachments:
1. Draft PFSEE
 2. Memo dated June 11, 2002 from Robert McGill, Strategic Framework Citizen Subcommittee Chair
 3. Existing Conditions Data Collection Fact Sheet
 4. CPC Recommendations – Public Facilities, Services and Safety Element