

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**General Plan Issues Committee**  
**(Amended and approved on 1/27/10)**

**Meeting Summary**

January 7, 2010

City Hall Mitchell Room

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

**Committee Members Present:** David Ferguson, Chairman, Linda Bailey, Maria Bowman, Elmer Cameron, Thora Guthrie, Jon Hudson, Terry Jackson, Steve Kildoo, John Masson, Rick Paul, Lisa Prazeau, Lucas Ross, Pam Stahl, Joyce Wells

**Committee Members Absent:** Alfredo Velasco

**Staff Present:** Clay Phillips, City Manager; Charlie Grimm, Assistant City Manager; Jonathan Brindle, Director of Community Development; Barbara Redlitz, Assistant Planning Director; Ed Domingue, Director of Public Works; Laura Mitchell, City Librarian; Robin Bettin, Assistant Director of Community Services, Bill Martin, Principal Planner; Jay Petrek, Principal Planner.

**1. Opening Comments**

Chairman Ferguson provided introductory comments

**2. Review of December 17, 2009 Meeting Summary**

Member Masson provided a correction to the December 17, 2009 meeting minutes clarifying that he made the motion recommending amending the Circulation Quality of Life instead of Member Paul.

**3. Summary of Committee Recommendations**

Jon Brindle provided an overview of the committee's agenda and requested that the Committee move directly to Agenda Item 4a to complete their discussion on the Quality of Life Standards before discussing Agenda Item 3 (Summary of Committee Recommendations).

**4. Discussion on General Plan Topics**

**a. Quality of Life Standards**

**i. Parks**

Jay Petrek summarized the Park Quality of Life Standards presentation from the previous meeting held on December 17, 2009 recapping the Committee's recommendation to include an urban park standard. Robin Bettin clarified how the Master Plan counts joint use school playground areas towards satisfying municipal park acreage. At the December 17<sup>th</sup> Committee Member Paul requested to continue discussion .pertaining to joint use public facilities, as well as open space in private developments. Staff evaluated the current General Plan policy regarding the joint use of park facilities and recommended incorporating new language to work with School Districts to expand availability and maximize joint use opportunities when negotiating city / school improvements.

*Park Policy Consideration:*

Incorporate new language to work with School Districts to expand availability and maximize joint use opportunities when negotiating city / school improvements

**ACTION:**

Motion by Member Masson, second by Member Bailey to endorse staff Park Policy considerations. Vote: unanimous; (Member Velasco, Absent).

Another policy pertaining to private open space was recommended for including that would encourage clustering open space within private development into functional areas, and/or connect private open space with public facilities to maximize recreational opportunities. Staff discussed the open space areas approved for the Paramount, Venue, and City Square projects in the downtown area and that clustering open space (rather than establishing small fragmented areas that might total the same square footage) as well as connecting private open space areas to public areas would increase their functionality.

Committee discussion ensued. Member Prazeau asked whether private development can rely on public open space to satisfy their on-site requirement. Staff responded in the negative. Member Masson indicated a preference for flexibility to allow creativity. Members Jackson and Bailey felt that private open space should be handled as a design issue and not a General Plan Policy citing existing opportunities for including such measures in the Downtown Specific Plan and Areas Plans.

*Park Policy Consideration:*

Incorporate policy language encouraging clustering open space within private development into functional areas, and/or connect private open space with public facilities to maximize recreational opportunities.

**ACTION:**

Motion by Member Jackson, second by Member Kildoo to reference the proposed language in Specific Plan and or Zoning Design Guidelines rather than the General Plan. Vote: unanimous; (Member Velasco, Absent).

**ii. Air Quality**

Staff discussed the current Air Quality Standard and challenges for the City to comply with state and federal standards dealing with a large air basin that extends beyond the General Plan boundary. Specifically, pollution generated in areas throughout southern California has a bearing on the City's ability to meet the current standard. The proposed modification would link compliance to locally feasible measures developed in a Climate Action Plan coordinated with the General Plan Update that addresses reductions in Green House Gas / CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents.

Member Masson asked whether the proposed amendment would provide more flexibility in meeting the standard. Staff responded in the affirmative. Member Cameron asked what problem the proposed language would solve. Staff explained that the emphasis would be on air quality measures we can control. Member Stahl questioned whether the City would still be subject to state and federal air quality regulations. Staff responded in the affirmative. Member Prazeau felt that the amendment would contradict the Committee's previous action to reduce Circulation Level of Service allowing more congestion on certain streets. Member Ross responded that there was a difference between how the City was impacted by poor air quality beyond our borders and what the City was doing locally to comply with regulations.

*Air Quality QOL Consideration:*

Incorporate language that addresses compliance with regional Green House Gas / CO2 equivalents consistent with AB 32 and SB 375 rather than attempting to address State and Federal standards dealing with a large air basin that extends beyond the General Plan boundaries. Such measures would be developed in a future Climate Action Plan coordinated with the General Plan Update and is anticipated to address:

- accommodating facilities for alternative fuel vehicles
- facilitating transit
- promoting local agriculture
- maintaining and updating the city's traffic signal synchronization plan

**ACTION:**

Motion by Member Paul, second by Member Bailey to concur with the intent of the amendment but to review final language before endorsing. Vote: Unanimous; (Member Velasco, absent)

**iii. Libraries**

Laura Mitchell, City Librarian discussed the need to amend the current Quality of Life standards in light of new technology and changing trends. She discussed a community poll that was taken several years ago that indicated people's preference for a larger main library rather than multiple smaller branches. Laura commented that this was the main reason for recommending deleting any General Plan reference to driving distances to the library because most people live in the community within 15 minutes driving time; placing branch libraries in remote areas of the community would not be efficient. Member Stahl asked whether the library fees took into account multiple branches. Staff indicated that they did not. Member Prazeau questioned what kind of Quality of Live Standard related to computer usage staff had in mind. Laura responded that the length of time required to access a computer might be an appropriate gauge. Additionally, library square footage to accommodate group study and computer terminals would need to be factored.

Member Hudson asked about the possibility of storing some library material off-site that is not checked out as frequently and making it available upon request, also freeing up space in the library for group study. Laura indicated that might address short-term and long-term needs. Member Wells asked if the foot traffic in the library was expected to decline in light of being able to electronically access library information from offsite. Laura indicated she expected foot traffic to remain steady because the biggest demand is to check out material, use library computers, and attend library programs. Member Cameron noted that young people are increasingly using the facility. Members Paul and Bailey indicated support for a "wait time" standard and integrating joint use operations with school libraries.

*Library QOL Consideration:*

Modify current QOL language based on:

- Technological changes in information access & delivery.
- Trends in patronage, staffing and space needs.

*Library Policy Consideration:*

- Eliminate policies referencing driving distances to libraries to determine branch facilities.
- Maintain flexibility for satisfying space needs with a combination of branch libraries and/or a main facility.

**ACTION:**

Motion by Hudson, second by Bailey to endorse staff recommendation, in addition to consider joint use with school and other public / private partnerships to maximize programs. Vote: Unanimous; (Member Velasco, Absent).

**iv. Economic Prosperity**

Charlie Grimm discussed the importance of supplementing the Quality of Life Standard with a separate Economic Element that would help the City's competitiveness by including policies that promote economic diversity and provide direction regarding the future economic growth of the community. Member Ross mentioned how the current standard calls for increasing per capita income when in reality there are no guarantees that employees earning high salaries will live in the city. Chairman Ferguson asked whether policies would lead toward encouraging or discouraging certain uses in certain areas. Charlie responded that the Escondido Research Technology Center (ERTC) is an example where certain uses were discouraged or prohibited in an effort to attract higher quality uses, employ a larger employee population, and pay higher wages. Member Wells commented that the City needs to improve its relationship with the Chamber of Commerce and foster more public / private partnerships. Member PrazEAU expressed concern regarding past land use decisions, and commented that incentives provided to businesses need to be structured to ensure the City and residents are benefiting.

Member Bowman asked whether policies would be included that eliminate obsolete businesses south of the existing police facility. Member Jackson expressed support for an Economic Element in the General Plan. He stated that prosperity starts with ~~first~~ **primary** sector **and** white collar jobs, and that retail and residential uses are a response. Land use decisions are key factors. The City needs large areas to designate for employment centers, not small interspersed sites. Sufficient infrastructure is a key and must be included in the component for overall success. He mentioned that it may be appropriate to measure success by jobs per capita rather than median income. Member Masson discussed overlays and their possibility for their continued use in the plan. Chairman Ferguson commented that the Economic Element should provide direction rather than direct. Goals, guidelines and incentives should be included rather than dictating direction. Member Kildoo commented that once land values appreciate in an area the owners of less desirable uses will realize that relocating to another area (or perhaps out of town) will be more lucrative than staying in the same location.

*Economic Prosperity Quality of Life Consideration*

Supplement Economic QOL Standard with a separate comprehensive Economic Element in the General Plan to:

- Provide direction concerning future economic growth of the community.
- Direct the community's future economic growth and performance.
- Define an economic strategy necessary to ensure competitiveness within the region.

**ACTION:**

Motion by Jackson, second by Kildoo to endorse staff recommendation. Vote: Unanimous; (Member Velasco, Absent).

The Committee adjourned for a 15-minute break.

### **3. Summary of Committee Recommendations**

The Committee reconvened and Chairman Ferguson discussed his edits to the Summary.

#### **ACTION:**

Motion by Bailey, second by Masson to accept changes and summary of recommendations.  
Vote: Unanimous; (Member Velasco, Absent).

### **4. Discussion on General Plan Topics**

#### **d. Proposition "S"**

Chairman Ferguson commented that there were several members of the public that had been attending Committee meetings since its formation in hopes of hearing the discussion on Proposition "S". There appeared enough time to discuss this issue and he asked the Committee if Proposition "S" could be discussed at this juncture or to wait until the Committee considered its remaining issues. The Committee's consensus was to commence discussing Proposition "S." Before garnering formal input, Chairman Ferguson asked the Committee to take several "straw votes" to gauge consensus on certain options:

- 1) Place Proposition "S" alongside the General Plan on the ballot allowing voters to decide on each separately.
- 2) Include a provision in the General Plan reaffirming Proposition "S" on the ballot.
- 3) Include a provision to delete Proposition "S" from the General Plan.
- 4) Do not place an item on the ballot pertaining to Proposition "S".

The consensus was for the fourth option. Member Hudson expressed his support for the first option because it would allow residents to have a choice in the matter. Member Jackson felt that Proposition "S" is a procedure and by placing the General Plan on the ballot the procedure would be followed as written. Member Cameron felt that if people like the new General Plan they will support it; Proposition "S" should ~~retain~~ remain in the Plan for anyone who wants the change the new plan. Further discussion ensued.

#### **ACTION:**

Motion by Prazeau, second by Bailey recommending not placing an item on the ballot pertaining to Proposition "S". Vote: Unanimous; (Member Velasco, Absent).

#### **b. Circulation and Mobility Needs**

Staff summarized the recommendation and discussions it had with the North County Transit District regarding their plans to extend rail service from the existing transit station to Westfield Shopping Town. The recommendation to include the analysis of the NCTD rail extension in the General Plan EIR for the current update was because there was sufficient information pertaining to the alignment and street crossings. Impacts associated with station locations, noise, grading and street crossings can be assumed with adequate certainty on a General Plan level, and the route has already been mentioned in SANDAG's Regional Transportation Plan.

Members Jackson and Kildoo expressed their support for the recommendation that delineating the rail extension in the General Plan will also provide support for development around future stations that would benefit from transit. Member Ross indicated support for mall customers using alternative transportation. Chairman Ferguson indicated the need to install transportation infrastructure. Member Bailey commented that the recommendation fits in with many other General Plan goals.

*General Plan Transportation Consideration:*

- Study rail extension to Westfield's to coordinate with Regional Transportation Plan.
- Supplement Circulation Element policies to incorporate rail & bus rapid transit facilities and associated station amenities along the route and at Westfield.

**ACTION:**

Motion by Paul, second by Wells to endorse staff recommendation. Vote: Unanimous; (Member Velasco, Absent).

Staff summarized the recommendation not to include the California High Speed Rail analysis in the General Plan EIR. The basis for the recommendation was because the rail line is fairly uncertain with regard to the alignment and station location. Impacts associated with station location, noise, grading and street crossings cannot be assumed with adequate certainty on a General Plan level, and the requirement to analyze the various options would dramatically increase the EIR costs. The recommendation would provide policy direction to continue working with the Rail Authority and monitoring their efforts. General Plan policy language would also be included guiding development around transit stations by promoting the city as a destination for employment and entertainment rather than parking facilities.

Members asked questions about the timeframe for completing the Rail Authority's analysis to select an alignment. Staff indicated the timeframes are somewhat fluid and rely upon their own parameters for alignment, analysis, and further discussions with the City. Staff has conferred with the Rail Authority on the City's preference to link the NCTD and High Speed Rail stations. The Rail Authority has indicated difficulty in veering off the I-15 alignment, but is still including an alternative alignment through Escondido that would directly link with the NCTD station. Should the High Speed Rail Station be installed along I-15 its location has not been identified. Member Prazeau expressed support for addressing the High Speed Rail improvements at a more policy level at this time. Member Stahl supported a rail stop in downtown. Member Paul felt that there should be more direction in the General Plan as to where the alignment and stations should be located.

Chairman Ferguson recommended that the second consideration be amended to:

Do not make "land use decisions" at this time in anticipate of future alignment or station locations, rather than "land use changes"

*General Plan Transportation Consideration:*

- Include language calling for monitoring and coordinating rail efforts; refine General Plan polices to identify appropriate land uses around transit stations that promote Escondido as a destination for employment and entertainment rather than for development of large-scale parking facilities.
- Do not make land use decisions at this time in anticipation of future alignment or station locations.

**ACTION:**

Motion by Bailey, second by Kildoo to endorse amended recommendation. Vote: 13:1 (Paul, no citing that there should be more direction in the General Plan as to where the alignment and station should be located; (Member Velasco, Absent).

Chairman Ferguson noted that the next Committee Meeting is scheduled on January 21, 2010.

**III. Public Comments**

Barbara Benedict: Ms. Benedict stated that her comments at the December 17, 2009 meeting were too vague regarding her support for expanding reclaimed water to facilitate agricultural and bio-tech uses as well as comments regarding joint-use of school facilities after-hours as an effective use of public resources. She wanted to clarify that her comments should include that the efforts must be legal. She also felt that the city needs to work very closely with the High Speed Rail Authority to ensure their improvements meet our needs.

The meeting concluded at 9:15 p.m.