

ATTACHMENT 1

General Plan Issues Committee Meeting Summary (amended at the 01/21/10 Meeting)

November 5, 2009

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, Alfredo Velasco

Committee Members Absent: Joyce Wells

Staff Present: Charlie Grimm, Assistant City Manager, Jonathan Brindle, Director of Community Development, Barbara Redlitz, Assistant Planning Director, Jay Petrek, Principal Planner.

Dave Ferguson opened the meeting and provided an overview of the committee meeting held on October 22, 2009.

Jon Brindle gave an introduction to the topics being discussed and provided a format regarding how staff would present the information.

I. Discussion on General Plan Boundaries and Land Use

Jay Petrek, Barbara Redlitz and Jon Brindle gave a presentation on the topic of Escondido's employment lands, SANDAG's Regional Employment Land Inventory, and details on the proposed California High Speed Rail. The presentation revealed that Escondido retains approximately 1,001 acres of Industrial, 1,207 acres of Commercial, and 86 acres of Office designated lands in its General Plan. Compared to surrounding jurisdictions and the region Escondido has the lowest percentage of employment land to residential land, and the lowest employment acres per capita. The city had conducted four employment land analyses over the past several years involving over 3,000 cumulative acres in 8 distinct areas of the community that focused on increasing Escondido's employment land base, resulting in no expansions to the city's industrial land base. Previous consultant studies performed by Keyser Marston focused on providing high quality "campus industrial" to balance existing types of industrial land uses. Various projection alternatives indicated a range of anticipated demand from 0 acres to 375 acres.

Conclusions from the consultant reports indicated several findings: 1) General purpose industrial parks will capture 80% of the demand with high-tech office uses needing less than 20% of the total. 2) Lack of high-quality freeway oriented industrial land will limit Escondido's Campus-style industrial development. 3) Campus-style industrial will remain focused in RB and Carlsbad due to their established community "image." 4) "Big box" warehouse and distribution centers will locate in Riverside County with lower land prices. 5) Escondido's industrial stock is heavily weighted in warehouse & storage uses. 6) Employee density of 7.7 employees per acre in Escondido was low compared to the regional average of 11 and high of 19 employees per acre. 7) Employees living and working in Escondido (17.8%) is less than regional average (23+%). 8) Escondido's absorption of market share had declined. 9) As employee density increases, industrial acreage need decreases.

Efforts to enhance the city's employment acres found that promoting higher development standards in older industrial areas has met resistance from current businesses. Transitioning residential land to employment land has been resisted by area residents. Further, that traffic and community character issues have been raised when expanding employment land.

Previous analyses have determined that the General Plan included adequate or excess retail acreage for buildout needs. Current General Plan policies encourage reinforcing existing commercial acreage, rather than increasing and/or scatterizing acreage throughout the community. Similar to efforts involving expanding retail lands in the past have also been resisted by area residents.

The staff presentation included Keyser Marston's approach to calculating industrial land needs. The methodology involves determining the population size, extrapolating the numbers and types of industrial jobs, calculating the space needs to accommodate those jobs, determining employee densities in the calculated work space, dividing the number of jobs by the employee density to derive the numbers of acres needed. Staff also provided background on the city's efforts to apply for a State Enterprise Zone Designation to further promote business and industry location and expansion. The state denied Escondido's application in early 2009.

Staff provided information on SANDAG's 2009 Employment Land Inventory Findings revealing that: 1) 10,000 acres gross developable employment land exists in the region. 2) Sixty percent (60%) of this acreage is located in five Planning Areas: Otay, Chula Vista, Otay Mesa, Lakeside, Carlsbad. 3) Twenty percent (20%) of the overall acreage is immediately available for development (within 1 year). 4) A significant portion of the employment lands (25-35%) will be devoted for support facilities (roads, walkways, parking, landscaping). Findings of the inventory pertaining to Escondido indicated that the community has a lower share of employees when compared to the population and number of housing units. Also that 52% of the City's available employment land had been absorbed since 2000 and approximately 70 acres remain available.

Information was provided by staff on the California High Speed Train that involves an 800-mile route through the state and includes a rail station in Escondido. The train will be electric-powered and travel at speeds of up to 220 miles per hour on grade-separated tracks. Funding will be through a private/public partnership. The details for the alignment and station in Escondido have not been finalized; two alignments (one along I-15, one extending to the NCTD Transit Station) are being analyzed. The design of the stations follows smart growth principles and sustainable economic growth.

Committee Discussion:

Comments were made by the committee that High Speed Rail, its alignment and station locations need to be included in decisions on establishing new employment lands.

Member Jackson stated that there has been a "disconnect" between the amount of employment land and Escondido's ability to meet job growth that prevents the community from finding appropriate sites for expanding the city's industrial areas. He felt that Keyser Marston did not take into account the types of uses and their size requirements, transportation needs and/or compatibility issues.

Member Praiseau commented that the City needs to consider neighborhoods when looking for areas to site industrial. Focus should be on occupying the Escondido Research Technology Center (ERTC) before expanding into existing residential areas.

Questions were raised regarding the city's overall employee per acre density. It was stated that because Escondido has a large percentage of warehouse and distribution uses, the overall density is low and that land uses directly influence the jobs per acre. Further it would be difficult to expect that these land uses "morph" into other more employee-intensive uses if the trend has been low intensity uses. If businesses are profitable they are not likely to recycle. The committee should plan for the vision but expect that vision to take a long time for fruition.

Committee discussion ensued regarding previous efforts to beautify existing industrial areas by adding more landscaping and increasing setbacks, which was opposed by business owners at the time.

Chairman Ferguson summarized the main issues facing the committee:

- 1) The standards that should be created for new development in an existing area,
- 2) Any new standards that should be established for existing businesses,
- 3) Desirable businesses are keenly aware of their surroundings and will not locate/expand in undesirable areas.

Members discussed the fact that the reasons businesses locate in communities include many non-business factors including the community's quality of life, schools, proximity to community facilities, etc. Discussion ensued regarding whether redevelopment of residential areas and transitioning them to employment areas should be considered.

Member Masson commented that areas adjacent to the City's transportation corridors along I-15 between Highway 78 and Felicia Avenue should be evaluated. Also where Highway 78 terminates at Broadway, the Deer Springs and I-15 interchange should also be studied.

Chairman Ferguson mentioned that areas southwest of ERTC should be evaluated for potential expansion of employment lands.

Consensus was reached that additional employment lands were needed and should be studied in the General Plan Update, including the potential conversion of existing, deteriorated residential areas. The consensus was that no specific target number of acres should be established as a goal; rather, the criteria for evaluating suitability for employment lands should include: 1) the existing environmental conditions; 2) whether the area is blighted; and, 3) the status of the existing infrastructure.

Comments were made that the previous studies were short-sighted because the focus was on large-lot users, whereas Escondido has been known as an "incubator" business location for "start-up" businesses that succeed so well that they eventually grow out of their location and move to other areas (outside Escondido) where similar uses are already clustered. "High-Tech" and "Bio-Tech" are not the only businesses to focus on; the land uses need to be flexible and include office uses, which also have a higher employee per acre ratio. The consensus was that design and development standards should **not be overly inclusive to allow inappropriate uses that do not meet the city's goals, but also not overly restrictive in a manner that impedes flexibility.** ~~be set high but flexibility should be provided regarding the allowable uses. (amended on 01-21-10)~~

The committee felt that there was no need for staff to perform extensive technical studies to substantiate the need for expanding employment lands in the General Plan Update because it is in the community's best interest.

The Committee adjourned for a 15-minute break

After the break the committee discussed commercial policies:

The committee discussed mixed-use in the downtown areas and along major corridors. There was discussion and consensus that mixed-use occurring on the same site, but not necessarily in the same building would be important to ensure compatibility between land uses (i.e. residential and entertainment, etc). Smart Growth areas should be where mixed-use is focused and it should be compact and pedestrian oriented.

Member Stahl commented that the city's infrastructure and quality of life standards need to be considered when developing mixed-use projects so that they don't jeopardize the city's ability to provide adequate service.

II. Discussion on Proposition S

Staff provided a brief background on Proposition S and previous efforts to amend the General Plan by voter approval resulting in two land use amendments.

Chairman Ferguson commented that several committee members have the full spectrum of viewpoints and opinions regarding Proposition S supporting and opposing the measure.

There was lengthy discussion from various committee members on their opinion of Proposition S and how it should be addressed in the current General Plan Update.

ACTION:

Dave Ferguson summarized the points of view pertaining to the committee's discussion of Proposition S and asked for a show of hands on how to address the measure in the update:

- 1) The City should not consider Proposition S as part of the General Plan Update – 5 votes
- 2) The City should consider Proposition S as part of the General Plan Update – 0 votes
- 3) It is too early to decide on this matter at this time; discussion on Proposition S should be deferred to a later meeting of the committee – 6 votes

III. Discussion on Quality of Life Standards

Staff provided an overview of the standards and discussed the areas where the city was meeting the standards or, if not, what sort of deficiencies existed. Staff mentioned that the standards sets the basis for developer fees charged during construction and on-going maintenance, and the standards are factored in the City's Capital Improvement Program to determine priorities.

The Committee had general questions and clarifications regarding the standards and continued further discussion to the next meeting.

The committee decided to reschedule the November 30, 2009 meeting to December 17, 2009.

III. Public Comments

Dave Shibley: Mr. Shibley commented that the city has only four opportunities to amend the General Plan per year per state law and he felt that City Councils have used that opportunity wisely in the past. He cautioned that low density developments occurring in the county surrounding Escondido are limiting the city's ability to make land use changes when annexing territory. He expressed concern that there are too many "widget makers" in our industrial area and we need both flexibility and balance to expand our job base. He opposed Proposition S and felt that it has limited the city's ability to get high quality development because developers do not want to invest in the community. He provided written comments to each committee member.

Jerry Lenhart: Mr. Lenhart expressed support for Proposition S.

Andrea Seevey: Ms. Seevey discussed the City's Quality of Life Standards. She also felt that the city needs to increase code enforcement efforts.