



GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Miriam Warne Community Building/Chamber of Commerce
14491 Beach Boulevard, Suite A
Westminster, CA 92683
March 21, 2016
6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair TA called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Vincent Agor, Don Anderson, Sergio Contreras, Lupe Fisher, Richard Jolly, Khanh Nguyen, Patricia Robbins, Tri Ta, Diana Williams

ABSENT: Gloria Constas, Gilbert Cruz, Owen Eames, April Erazo, Mimi Lozano, Gia Ly, Lisa Manzo, Sandra McClure, Tyler Nichols, Helen Ortega, Jamison Power, Laura Sottile Rose, Syed Shah

SALUTE TO FLAG: GPAC Member Robbins led the assembly in the Salute to the Flag.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 1, 2016

There was no action taken on the minutes due to lack of a quorum.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

Project Update

Associate Principal Grant shared with the group that this meeting would be the second to last meeting for the GPAC. She also stated, this meeting would be the last interactive meeting and the information gathered will be used for the draft in the next four weeks. The summary should come back to the GPAC before going out to the larger community at the open house; and, public hearings are tentatively scheduled for the summer. She explained, at this meeting the group will walk through some example of ideas of what staff has been studying, but the bulk of time will be spent defining the General Plan Goals and Objectives.

Neighborhood Enhancement

Senior Associate Tropiano spoke about community design, corridors, gateways and key centers. She then spoke about neighborhoods since the GPAC has stated previously that Westminster neighborhoods are important. She shared how neighborhoods and neighborhood enhancement will be used in the General Plan.

Senior Associate Tropiano presented a definition of neighborhood enhancement, based on the GPAC's direction which includes preserving existing neighborhoods and keeping them well maintained, clean, and safe; preserving property values and promoting pride of ownership. She provided an example of this from a resident who sent in pictures of the Fourth of July block party held in their neighborhood. She stated, they take a lot of "pride of place" and we want to make sure that we capture that in the General Plan.

Senior Associate Tropiano presented the Goals and policies for neighborhood enhancement. Examples given for goals included: adequate supply of housing and upgrade to homes. To implement these goals there are complementary policies including investing in resources for housing stock and allocating State and Federal funds for low-income households.

Senior Associate Tropiano presented some different alternatives for the GPAC to consider. "*Keep America Beautiful*" is a national organization encouraging local affiliates to invest in their communities. They empower residents and neighborhood organizations to work together and tackle lots of different issue like graffiti and littering. The participants adopt a half-mile segment in the City and use a sliding scale fee schedule, responsive to the specifics of each City, in order to encourage organizations to participate. They mark the segment to recognize the City and the organization. She described some of the associated costs and stated they would love to partner with Westminster. She added, Six hundred communities across the County have participated.

One of the ways people responded best to the General Plan update was through signage. Senior Associate Tropiano provided an example of a Commission called the Neighborhood Beautification Commission. They are appointed by the City Council and they meet once a month. Another example of a trailer was shown which bridges the gap between the community members who want to preserve the neighborhood and the resources needed for it. She explained, the trailer can be reserved and it can be used for neighborhood beautification processes; the City manages the reservation system and the drop off and pick up of the trailer. The program has been well received in the community.

Senior Associate Tropiano offered an example from the City of Palm Springs; which elevated the importance of neighborhood preservation by creating an Office of Neighborhood Involvement. They have 40 recognized, identified neighborhoods and preserving their character is important to the City. They use neighborhood definitions as a marketing tool. Each neighborhood is of varying size; there is no minimum size required. There are citywide events that the City facilitates, but it really is the neighborhood itself that initiates efforts.

General Plan Priorities and Objectives Exercise

Chief Economist Gunnells provided a definition of economic development. The first goal of economic development is to improve the quality of life; expanding the local tax base helps to pay for some of the items that provide a quality of life. The goal of the meeting

tonight is to create a list of priority objectives to move forward. The focus should be on specifics that the City will accomplish in the next several years to make the goals happen. After going over resource and cost information the GPAC will then be asked to prioritize and define the highest priority objectives. Once the priorities have been established, the City can re-engage the community to determine how new funding could be created. He reminded the group that when it comes to funding the priorities, there are limited options for funding such as the City's General Fund or grants; however, a special district could be created to accomplish projects.

Cost estimates were provided for the GPAC's consideration on top priorities:

- ❖ Encourage and enable Westminster Mall to intensify with additional shopping, dining, and entertainment – approximate Cost \$550,000 to \$650,000 to prepare a Specific Plan. This estimate is just the cost to get started, there may be additional cost involved.
- ❖ Redevelop part of Westminster Boulevard to create a walkable mixed-use destination – approximate cost \$10 to \$40 million dollars and \$100,000 to \$500,000 per year for ongoing operations, maintenance, and reserves. It is important to put in financial incentives in place to bring in the type of tenants you want in this area.
- ❖ Redevelop the Civic Center as a walkable mixed-use destination – approximate cost \$10 to \$40 million, capital cost and \$100,000 to \$500,000 per year for ongoing operations, maintenance, and reserves.
- ❖ Attract new businesses that generate new municipal revenues and increase the number of jobs – approximate cost \$1,000 to \$250,000 per year in addition to current budget.
- ❖ Help retail businesses improve their building facades – approximate cost \$10,000 to \$25,000 per business, for 10 to 20 businesses per year, \$175,000 to \$350,000.
- ❖ Promote and facilitate the growth and expansion of existing businesses – \$100,000 to \$250,000 per year in addition to the current budget. The focus in this area would allow for new programs, marketing materials, or training.
- ❖ Clean up less attractive areas of the city where litter, signage, and property maintenance has been identified as a problem – approximate cost \$150,000 to \$250,000 per year.
- ❖ Improve the streetscape along key corridors with landscaping, wide sidewalks, street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, etc.) and pedestrian lighting – approximate cost 1.5 to \$2 million per year in capital cost and \$40,000 to \$75,000 per mile per year for ongoing operations & maintenance and reserves.

- ❖ Require new and refurbished buildings to be attractive and complement their surroundings – approximate cost \$25,000 to \$50,000 for development code amendment.
- ❖ Increase the total amount of open space per person in Westminster – approximate cost \$1.5 to \$2 million per acre, capital cost and \$25,000 to \$50,000 per acre per year for ongoing maintenance and reserves.
- ❖ Host more family-friendly summertime events, like movies in the park, carnivals, and food trucks – approximate cost \$15,000 to \$75,000 per event.
- ❖ Make parks and recreation facilities more sustainable by using native plants and trees – approximate cost \$150,000 to \$420,000 per acre, capital cost and \$2,500 to \$7,000 per year in additional cost for ongoing operations, maintenance, and reserves.
- ❖ Develop a network of an on- and off-street pedestrian, bike, and multipurpose paths and trails (especially along flood control facilities, abandoned railroad tracks, and areas around schools and key destinations) – approximate costs on-street \$45,000 to \$65,000 per mile, off-street bike/pedestrian path \$1.3 to \$1.5 million per mile, and rails-to-trails \$2.8 to \$3.4 million per mile.
- ❖ Reconfigure Westminster Boulevard in the Downtown area as a multipurpose roadway – approximate cost \$1.5 to \$2.1 million per mile, capital cost and \$100,000 per mile per year for ongoing operations, maintenance, and reserves. The approximate figures do not include the cost of land acquisition.
- ❖ Create safe pedestrian crossings (crosswalks with reflective markers, signs, lights, etc.) at park locations – approximate cost \$250,000 per crosswalk, capital cost and \$5,000 per year per crosswalk for ongoing operations, maintenance, and reserves.
- ❖ Install traffic-calming measures in neighborhoods where speeding is a regular problem – approximate cost \$2.5 to \$6 million for a range of measures across a typical neighborhood, capital costs.

Round Table Discussion

At this time the GPAC broke into two groups and discussed which items the City should fund through the formation of a special district. Associate Principal Grant explained an implementation plan will be developed based upon the priorities set by the Committee. She further explained, a special district would create the opportunity of issuing bonds where the property owners are paying a fee each year of the project's financing.

Senior Associate Tropiano asked Committee Members to share the group's choices for the special districts.

Committee Member Anderson stated, for special districts we had:

- Improve the streetscape along key corridors, the landscaping sidewalk, street furniture, and benches.
- Help retail businesses improve their façades.
- Reconfigure Westminster Boulevard in the downtown area.
- Redevelop part of Westminster Boulevard to create walkable/mixed use in the Downtown area. The feeling was this item and the previous item could be combined.
- Develop a network of an off-street pedestrian, bike and multi-purpose paths, similar to what is going on right now on Hoover Street. Steve pointed out that we could make the whole City a special district and link all the paths up throughout the City.

Committee Member Nguyen stated his group had some similarities with the other group. The group felt the bottom three are great projects but based on the costs alone with the million dollar price tag per year on the maintenance costs. So naturally we chose the district for the financing. Regarding traffic calming, we felt it was important but at 2.9 to 6 million for a range of measure, thought the district would be the best to fund it. Regarding improved streetscape, we felt it is important but better to budget for it rather than place in a district. He added, that it should be an ongoing activity, but could wait if the City is in a budget crunch. We had four dots down below, but we didn't think of the cost. He added, after further consideration, we think this can be done at staff level because all you're doing is changing the Development Code amendments for any new development. The item that received the most dots for our group is the park and recreation item. The cost is significant, but we like the idea of sustainability so that the future budget is not burdened for maintenance. With the Westminster Mall, the cost is not significant as it is a one-time cost for a Specific Plan and our group would really like to see improvement at the mall. We would like to see retail businesses improve their buildings. And, then, there is code enforcement, it is great if we can do the program within \$150,000 to \$250,000.

Associate Principal Grant stated, in her group they talked about the neighborhood enhancement in the code enforcement program, not just the code enforcement part. We have been talking about quality of life and the involvement of all these neighborhoods and there is a lot of momentum, energy, and potential for the program. Aesthetics was a big topic for the groups. She shared that the quality of life and image created are a huge step in the right direction. Once you start to improve image, then it starts to attract different businesses to the area and it snowballs.

Senior Associate Tropiano indicated that Placeworks would summarize the two groups' information together from tonight's meeting creating a cohesive response and then would also open this exercise up to those GPAC members that were not able to join us to provide their feedback as well and see where the final priorities of the GPAC end up.

Associate Principal Grant stated that Placeworks may take some of the highest priorities and put out an online survey. What we wanted to do tonight is give all of you the opportunity to give us your last free advice as we begin writing. When we come back and share the General Plan with you it is not the "end all be all" there is still opportunity during

the public comment period for further input. If there is something you think we just didn't hit or we forgot, that's always something you could share and there could be an opportunity to fold it into the General Plan as we are going through hearings. But tonight, this is that time to have your voice heard on the most important issues to you and to the community so we can consider implementation in the General Plan.

Committee Member Williams stated, "I think of revitalization and the General Plan giving us an opportunity to revitalize the tax revenue and revitalize neighborhoods. So I like to hear more about new ideas like building new community partnerships with the neighborhoods, small steps, and then I would like to see efforts to build communication with businesses and so that perhaps other business people can draw new businesses into the community. And I think lastly, I would like to see something that addresses on how that General Plan will not just be put to a shelf or sit or whatever. My background has been dealing with master plans and they typically get put on the shelf and just sit there. I would like to see a plan in place so this won't happen with the General Plan. Perhaps a group that will help springboard immediate things and steps that can be done whether it be looking at money, or taking small steps trying to move it along, keeping the plan alive basically. If there is community involvement it will help keep it alive."

Associate Principal Grant stated, "I think your point to that keeping it alive is something it is a big investment to the community and that is something we are very cognizant of. We have been talking to the City Manager about different ways to do that. At the implementation, I think when you see that packet that's going to be the thing that gets revisited in some way, shape, or form, you know, every so many years. And that it will be fresh."

Committee Member/Mayor Ta stated, "I think Committee Member Williams covered everything."

Committee Member/Mayor Pro Tem Contreras stated, "I agree. I think the fact that we are even doing this is enough to get some sort of inertia to get people thinking and taking a look at it, so I think we are on track."

Committee Member Robbins stated, "I definitely agree we need to do something to revitalize the City to bring in new businesses. Definitely restaurants, I recently went to the packing district and it was neat because it was basically just huge building, but within that building they had a lot of little eclectic foods and desserts; it was unique enough to draw people in. The parking was a pain there, but people were still coming. Even if we could do something like that, sustain and encourage people to come to Westminster instead of going to other places. So, we should be trying to do something to bring people in, even if is in one particular spot, just revitalize and bring people to Westminster."

Associate Principal Grant commented that Committee Member Robbins comments were similar to what Chief Economist Gunnells had said earlier about experienced-based shopping and environments.

Committee Member Agor stated, "Beautify the City. I like the Henderson, Nevada idea for the 20 foot clean-up trailer which can be used by anybody in the City to clean. If people don't have the tools but we bring the trailer, people will clean."

Committee Member Jolly stated, "We need to concentrate on the communication to the residents and the businesses because I do not think we are getting the word out well enough. We've put up some signs and we have some community members interested, but we draw the community out for this and I don't know how to draw them out. We have to figure out how to get the community interested. Also, I think we need to educate the people on code enforcement. I know the parking control created a big stir but it was needed. As an example, I have a neighbor next door his house is a joke, the weeds in the backyard are as tall as I am but I don't know who to go to about it. The yard is rat infested, but you have to call the vector control and they are a county thing. We need to know where to go for City things and I don't think the residents know where to go. There are a lot of things that we need to concentrate on and we are doing it. I love the beautification of the City and plans for a downtown area. Currently, if I was a businessman looking for a place to relocate, I would not relocate anywhere near Westminster Boulevard as it is a dump. I don't know what we can do about it but I hope this is a starting point."

Associate Principal Grant commented that an FAQ sheet might be helpful for the community.

Committee Member Fisher stated, "I will agree with the two gentlemen about the 'Keep America Beautiful' that's a program that I hadn't heard of but because of the involvement of the community I think that would kind of go with what you were saying because it requires community involvement to do the projects to keep your neighborhood clean. Then you have more communication and maybe that would help spread some information about what we need to learn about the dos and don'ts. And the other thing that we didn't go over too much but I think that someone kind of clarified it for me there was the infrastructure of the City. I think that it, it really is, it should be a top priority but I suppose it, as we get into some of the projects that we talked about, that will be part of the project of whichever one it is. Hopefully that the infrastructure will be part of what is redeveloped. Because we need to do our infrastructure, like every City in the US."

Committee Member Nguyen stated, we need to rebrand our City as it is dated. Look at Westminster Mall, who wants to go to there? It's kind of like the old Huntington Beach Mall which transformed to Bella Terra and is now taking all our customers and money. The General Plan is a start, it is like a blueprint that will help the developers invest in our City. It will make the developer more comfortable to do business with overlay zones and they are able to get loans and do improvements in our City. The General Plan will also attract business; that is our economic engine. And, by beautifying and getting the word out, revitalizing, attracting families and tourists to the City. If we can make a destination place out of Bolsa and the Westminster Mall, we will be halfway to our goal. So, we are doing what we need to do in order to help the City. Let's get this General Plan done.

Committee Member Anderson stated, "In my opinion it all gets down to looks, appearance, image of the community and Westminster has a lot of assets. It's got a great location, great weather. It's got access to all of Southern California. It's got Little Saigon, Westminster Mall, and Westminster Center. There is a lot going for the community but there needs to be, from the top down, a recognition that Westminster can be a lot more than it is and the people here, again, in my opinion, I think most of the residents would get behind a program to improve the community, but they have to be told what needs to be done and I think that's why we have some of our residents who do nothing to maintain their property and we have others who do maintain their property. But if a program would be put together as part of General Plan and working in concert with the General Plan you put a program together of community improvement from the top down from the City Council, staff, down to the Commissions, Committees to the residents that people will get behind it and adopt it. There's a lot of ways to do it, to get a community involved. "Keep Austin Beautiful," it needs to be put in there, "Keep Westminster Beautiful," and make improvements there. Again, a lot of potential. My wife and I have lived here since 1973. We have added on to our home three times. I don't think we have much more room to add. We believe in the community, we are sticking around. We are not going anywhere. It would be great one day that we could all take a look at Westminster Boulevard and the other, the areas. It has been pointed out that some of our areas are not attractive but they could be. There's no reason they can't be."

Associate Principal Grant stated, "Thank you all this has been extremely helpful tonight. Thank you for always being dedicated and committed to this so that we get good information. Responsiveness on the emails was helpful because that got us to this point faster. Now we what we do is take all this and we put it in the planning/writing machine. You will get from us at the next meeting that consolidated document with maps, the goals, the policies and hopefully you will be able to see all these ideas translated into some of these goals and policies that we are putting together. And by all means if we missed it you should let us know because you spent a lot of time in helping out. That is the end of our meeting unless anybody has anything else to add."

Committee Member Fisher stated, "I do. I just thought of it when we were making comments, I think we need to focus more on the weather that we have here because the weather is something that really keeps people. I know it keeps me here. Really focus on it or maybe come up with a little phrase."

Associate Principal Grant stated it is in our vision statement. "It is a nice climate to live in because it allows you to be outside and have more access to things that you wouldn't otherwise if you were different climate." "Alright, everybody give each other a high-five. Thank you."

ADJOURN:

There being on further business to come before the General Plan Advisory Committee, Chair Ta adjourned the meeting at 8:22 p.m. to a date to be determined.