



GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Miriam Warne Community Building/Chamber of Commerce
14491 Beach Boulevard, Suite A
Westminster, CA 92683
June 1, 2015
6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Ta called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Don Anderson, Gloria Constas, Sergio Contreras, Gilbert Cruz, Owen Eames, April Erazo, Lupe Fisher, Richard Jolly, Mimi Lozano, Gia Ly, Lisa Manzo, Sandra McClure, Khanh Nguyen, Tyler Nichols, Helen Ortega, Jamison Power, Patricia Robbins, Laura Sottile Rose, Syed Shah, Tri Ta, Diana Williams

PRESENT: Don Anderson, Sergio Contreras (arrived at 6:51 p.m.) Gilbert Cruz, Owen Eames, April Erazo, Lupe Fisher, Richard Jolly, Mimi Lozano, Sandra McClure, Khanh Nguyen, Tyler Nichols, Helen Ortega, Laura Sottile Rose (arrived at 6:41 p.m.) Syed Shah, Tri Ta, Diana Williams

ABSENT: Gloria Constas, Gia Ly, Lisa Manzo, Jamison Power, Patricia Robbins, Laura Sottile Rose

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chair Ta opened public comments.

Roger Fierce commented on the proposed vision statement noting that there is not "vision" and that it looks like a travel brochure. He referenced the mention of a "Downtown", noting that the City does not have one. He addressed prior incentives to build and noted the need for a new dream and long-term plan for modernizing the City. He made suggestions for improvement and provided a written copy of his statement.

Rodney Cline noted there is a misalignment of certain land-uses in the City in terms of commercial and residential zones.

Chair Ta closed public comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 9, 2015

Planning Manager Art Bashmakian reported that due to some technical issues, there are no minutes to approve, at this time.

REGULAR BUSINESS:

- Current General Plan Contents

Planning Manager Art Bashmakian introduced the items to be considered at this time noting that staff has received feedback from the Committee and that staff and the City Consultant will provide a summary of what has been presented and discussed, to date. He provided an overview of tonight's topics of discussion. He addressed the crux of the General Plan and reported that for the next few meetings, focus will be on land use.

Associate Principal, Wendy Grant, Place Works, addressed the current General Plan and elements of the plan.

- Proposed General Plan Outline and Topic Areas

She provided information on the proposed General Plan outline and topic areas, EIR and implementation program, required resources, opportunities for realistic implementation, Land-Use Element requirements, planning areas, issues related to community design, neighborhood preservation, key gateways and economic development.

Discussion followed regarding impacts of Caltrans projects.

Associate Principal, Wendy Grant, Place Works, reported the circulation will be one of the elements to be discussed in the future.

Planning Manager Bashmakian stated that staff is in communication with Caltrans and OCTA regarding widening of the freeway and how that might affect City properties.

Associate Principal, Wendy Grant, Place Works, addressed the Housing element, mobility and transportation, relationships between land-use and transportation planning, parks and recreation, safety and maintenance of facilities, programming, public services, facilities and natural resources and conservation and public health and safety.

- Existing Conditions vs. Current Plan (How did City grow over past 30 years?)

Associate Principal, Wendy Grant, Place Works, stated that they would like the Committee's feedback throughout the process.

Discussion followed regarding promoting activities in the City and ensuring that the City is seen in a positive light in the media, possible implementation actions, and the importance of noting there are things that can be done now, including improving the appearance of the City.

Ensuing discussion pertained to having Code Enforcement focus on the appearance of the community, encouraging people to maintain their properties, researching how other cities deal with the matter, educating the public, the possibility of implementing a public relations program and offering positive incentives.

Associate Principal, Wendy Grant, Place Works, commented on demonstrating that there is momentum in the community.

Members of the Committee confirmed that staff is on the right track in terms of the City's vision statement and General Plan.

Amanda Tropiano, Place Works, Senior Associate, compared the existing Land Use map with the current General Plan map and addressed the differences between each. At the request of a Committee Member she commented on deviations that contribute to the differences between the existing Land Use map and the current General Plan map and addressed properties that are non-conforming and inconsistent with the vision. She addressed existing versus current GP projections.

It was noted that some variances may be just classification differences.

Amanda Tropiano, Place Works, Senior Associate, noted that the City is built out relative to residential areas and addressed opportunity areas in terms of the long-term vision.

Associate Principal, Wendy Grant, Place Works, addressed the community's interest in preserving and enhancing neighborhoods and noted that therefore, opportunities exist along the corridors.

- Insights from Staff: What's working/not working

Planning Manager Bashmakian thanked the Committee for its work. He addressed a brief history of development throughout the City and reported that in specific areas in the City, there was a vision to expand commercial areas. He addressed the Beach Boulevard corridor and noted that zoning must be consistent with the land-use map. He reported inconsistencies between the General Plan and zoning, over the years. He added that in the current effort, mixed-use will allow for residential and commercial and, there will be unique zoning designations for that use with accompanying development standards. He stressed the importance of addressing those issues so that the City moves forward with the participation of property owners.

Planning Manager Bashmakian commented on the importance of generating development standards along with zoning changes, to avoid haphazard development. In response to an inquiry from a Committee Member, Planning Manager Bashmakian addressed the concept of legal, non-conforming properties.

Discussion followed regarding results of the elimination of redevelopment agencies, opportunities for giving incentives to developers, changes in property ownership, activities related to the upcoming bus tour and the need for flexibility to respond to the market. Ensuing discussion pertained to the importance of ownership but also being able to provide a product that has flexibility in terms of developing apartments or condominiums.

Planning Manager Bashmakian provided information regarding the Housing element and noted that since it was updated not long ago, there will be no changes to it. He added that the element mainly addresses accommodating affordability.

- Existing and Proposed Land Use Categories

Amanda Tropiano, Place Works, Senior Associate, addressed general current plan areas to be preserved and areas where changes could be considered.

Discussion followed regarding planned developments, mobile home parks, ensuring that what is being done now, will be successful and the discretionary process to convert properties.

- Overview of Proposed Land Use Changes

Associate Principal, Wendy Grant, Place Works, stated that a more detailed discussion of proposed land use changes will occur in the near future and deferred to Ms. Tropiano.

Amanda Tropiano, Place Works, Senior Associate, asked the Committee to consider what has and has not worked, over the years and if the individual visions for the different development planning areas should be maintained or changed. She addressed opportunity areas on which to focus including the Northwest District, Westminster Boulevard/Downtown Corridor, the Civic Center, Urban Industrial, and Little Saigon. Additionally, she provided the vision and the range of uses that may be suitable for each.

Discussion followed regarding the mall, mixed-use categories, Floor Area Ration (FAR), setting a maximum FAR, density, and preserving open spaces. It was noted that most of the Civic Center area is owned by the City.

Each opportunity area was illustrated in terms of the Current General Plan, the Proposed General Plan and the Proposed General Plan Context. She urged Members of the Committee to review the information, carefully, and join in the upcoming bus tour.

Discussion followed regarding offering incentives, prioritizing projects, opportunities for mixings, developing ideas for the Downtown area, researching areas with successful downtowns such as the City of Long Beach and understanding land values.

Ensuing discussion followed regarding things to consider relative to the corridors including the possibility of developing design guidelines and other opportunities for public comment.

Associate Principal, Wendy Grant, Place Works, explained the differences between Master Plans and Specific Plans.

- Next Steps – Land Use Planning and Topic Area Discussions

