

City Council Staff Report

August 28, 2003
Planning Department

SUBJECT: Draft General Plan Update Issues Report Review

PURPOSE: To receive Council direction regarding the issues to be addressed during the General Plan Update process and other update matters relating to neighborhood meetings.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Council take the following actions:

1. Adopt the Draft General Plan Update Issues Report, dated August 28, 2003, subject to the inclusion of issues raised in Attachments 1 and 2 and any potential additional issues desired to be included by the Council.
2. Adopt Community Outreach Meeting Format Option 3 as the method for conducting the upcoming Community meetings.
3. Adopt Community Outreach Meeting Area Option 1 as the method of defining the upcoming Community meeting areas.
4. Direct staff to exclude the following items from the current General Plan Update review process:
 - Housing Element
 - Downtown Specific Plan area matters
 - Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan area matters
 - Happy Valley Specific Plan area matters
 - North Sycamore Specific Plan matters
 - Bernal Property Phases I and I Specific Plan area matters

SUMMARY

On April 15, 2003, the City Council directed staff to begin the process of updating the Pleasanton General Plan. The first step in the process is the identification of potential update issues to be addressed. This step was initiated in May when staff prepared and circulated an issues questionnaire to all members of the nine City commissions and committees as well as to the Council. After written responses were received, a series of commission and committee meetings (as well as the Chamber of Commerce and the Pleasanton Downtown Association) were then held during late June, July, and early August to generate additional discussion and public input. The cumulative results of this effort were then compiled by staff into the attached Draft General Plan Update Issues Report for review by the Council and Planning Commission and possible adoption by the Council at the upcoming meeting.

The second step in the Update process will consist of a series of community meetings to receive input on the potential resolution of the various issues. Staff will also be requesting input from the Council and Planning Commission on August 28 regarding the format of the community meetings.

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the following staff report is to present the Draft General Plan Update Issues Report for review by the Council and Planning Commission. Not every issue is expected to be identified at this stage in the process, but, hopefully, a substantial overview of matters of importance to the community now exists for moving forward. As the Update process continues, there will be ample additional opportunities for new issues to also be presented. The value of this first step, however, is to focus on the process of review, analysis, and resolution of issues and then, as the process proceeds, to ensure that no issues are overlooked.

The planning process adopted by the Council for updating the General Plan calls for the identification issues to occur first. This first step was initiated in May through the "General Plan Update Issues Questionnaire." The Questionnaire was prepared by the Planning staff and distributed to the Council, various City commission and committee members, and numerous staff members. The Questionnaire listed all of the General Plan elements, along with a brief summary of each. Since most of the Questionnaire participants have been involved in community activities for a number of years, comments were requested on all elements of the Plan, not only for the individual commissioner's area of responsibility.

The Questionnaire was forwarded to all members of the
City Council
Planning Commission
Housing Commission
Parks and Recreation Commission
Civic Arts Commission
Human Services Commission
Youth Commission
Library Commission
Economic Vitality Committee
Energy Committee

A good overall response to the Questionnaire was ultimately received. Individual commission and committee public meetings were then held in late June through mid-August to discuss and provide additional input relevant to the area of responsibility of each group. All input received through the Questionnaire and commission/committee meetings was then compiled by staff into the Draft General Plan Update Issues Report. Similar meetings have also been held by the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce (Attachment 2) and the Pleasanton Downtown Association (PDA).

The next task in the planning process calls for the Council to finalize the Update Issues Report at the August 28 joint workshop. This is scheduled to be followed by a series of community meetings in September and October to receive public input on the community desires for resolving various issues. The Update Planning Process Timeline (Attachment 1) is provided at the end of this report for your information.

Also, in an effort to provide additional general plan background information for the City Council and Planning Commission, staff has enclosed a copy of the State General Plan Guidelines document (Attachment 5). This provides a wealth of technical information that will be helpful to you as the planning process moves forward.

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to suggesting actual issues to be addressed during the General Plan Update, several of the commissions and committees have also provided related recommendations that they asked to be passed along to the Council. These include of the following:

Housing Commission – The Housing Commission recommends that the General Plan Update not include the recently updated Housing Element. However, if any significant changes to the Element are to be considered, then the Commission would like to be included in the discussion.

Planning Commission – The Planning Commission also recommends that the General Plan Update not include the updated Housing Element, and that neighboring County residents be included in the Update process since some important decisions will impact them.

Parks and Recreation Commission and Civic Arts Commission – Both Commissions (as well as the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce) recommend that the City utilize broad geographical areas of the City for conducting the upcoming community meetings, similar to those used in the 1996 General Plan Update (this idea is discussed later in this staff report).

Economic Vitality Committee – The Committee recommends that the City utilize Internet systems to involve the community in the Update process, and educate the community regarding the purpose of general plans by developing a web page on the City's web site (the latter request has since been completed by staff).

DRAFT GENERAL PLAN UPDATE ISSUES REPORT

The Draft General Plan Update Issues Report (Attachment 4) presents all of the Update issues raised to date by the various City commissions and committees, public, and staff. Each issue is listed under the title of the General Plan element to which it relates. Comments are coded so as to distinguish between those received by way of the: (1) Questionnaire, (2) commission/committee meetings, and (3) staff. As noted above, the list of issues to be addressed is expected to be flexible and remain open throughout the Update process. However, the combination of issues contained in the Draft Report creates a solid base from which to begin the upcoming issues resolution phase.

The Council and Planning Commission are encouraged to carefully review and discuss the Issues Report and add any additional ones that may have been overlooked. The Council is also requested to include the issues (Attachment 3) received from Ms. Karen Sweet, Executive Officer of the Alameda County Resource Conservation District in the Issues Report. Following further public input, Council and Planning Commission discussion, and potential modification at the workshop, staff recommends that the Council adopt the Issues Report.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMUNITY MEETINGS

While reviewing the various items contained in the Issues Report, it would also be helpful for Council and Commission members to be thinking about the format of the upcoming community meetings to be conducted by the Planning Commission, and how to define the community outreach areas. Staff would appreciate feedback in this regard at the upcoming workshop.

Community Meeting Format Options

A variety of Planning Commission/community meeting format options exist for possible consideration. Three options are outlined below which range from a formal public hearing environment to a less formal subgroup discussion setting. Option 1 is similar to the conduct of Planning Commission public hearings, Option 2 is similar to the manner in which the recent Bernal Property town meetings were led by a professional facilitator, and Option 3 calls for the audience to be divided into subgroups to provide input similar to the 1996 General Plan Update neighborhood meetings. The purpose of the community meetings is to receive community input on the General Plan issues, potential solutions, and alternatives that are important to consider. No Planning Commission action is required at the meetings.

Option 1 – The Planning Commission would be seated in its normal arrangement, and the Chair would conduct the meeting. Staff would provide a brief background report on the primary issues that were identified in the Issues Report. Members of the audience would then come forward one by one and provide input regarding any General Plan-related issues of importance to them. Comments would be recorded by staff in report form.

Option 2 – The meeting would be led by a professional facilitator, and Planning Commission members would be seated with the audience. Staff would provide a background report regarding the issues. Members of the audience would then come forward one by one and provide input in a “Phil Donahue Show” manner. Comments would be recorded by a professional recorder on large sheets of paper and by staff in report form.

Option 3 – The meeting would be introduced by the Planning Commission Chair, and the remaining Planning Commission members would be seated with the audience. Staff would provide a background report and divide the audience into discussion groups of 8-15 participants. Each group would be facilitated by a Planning Commission member, and one member of the group would be asked to record comments on a flip-chart. Group member comments would be given in a round-table manner. This would ensure that everyone has a clear opportunity to speak instead of possibly having one or two individuals dominate discussions. The entire audience would then reassemble, and each group recorder would present the flip-chart comments for the entire audience to hear. The meeting would be adjourned by the Planning Commission Chair, and staff would record the comments in report form.

Community Outreach Areas

At its August 13, 2003 meeting, the Planning Commission reviewed the Preliminary Draft General Plan Update Issues Report and discussed the community outreach meeting process. During the course of discussion, the Commission requested that staff provide several neighborhood outreach area boundary options for consideration at the upcoming Council/Commission workshop.

Upon review of the various issues identified to date, it appears that four geographical areas of the City have received the greatest amount of community attention. These include the: (1) lower hillside area west of Foothill Road; (2) north Pleasanton business park area; (3) East Side area; and (4) the Kottinger Hills/Lund Ranch II/Happy Valley area. In an effort to create meaningful centers of focus for the upcoming neighborhood meetings, staff feels it would be useful to divide the City into four geographically balanced outreach areas based around these (Option 1).

Coincidentally, these four areas are located in the southern, western, northern, and eastern quadrants of the City, thus creating a relative balance for common interest area discussion. Notification would also be more effective by splitting the City up into smaller components in this way and it would be easier for citizens to attend and provide thoughtful feedback in a smaller setting. More specifically, staff recommends that the outreach meeting areas be divided up as follows:

Southern Outreach Area – East of I-680, south of Bernal Avenue, and south of Vineyard Avenue.

Western Outreach Area – West of I-680.

Northern Outreach Area – (clockwise) East of I-680, south of I-580, west of Santa Rita Road, north of West Las Positas Boulevard, east of Hopyard Road, and north of Stoneridge Drive.

Eastern Outreach Area – North of the Southern Outreach Area, east of the Western Outreach Area, and south of the Northern Outreach Area.

Additional community outreach meeting area options that the Council and Commission may wish to consider include the following:

Option 2 – Outreach areas could be limited in overall size to the actual geographical areas and immediate surrounding developed areas that received the greatest amount of community attention as discussed above. This would once again include: (1) lower hillside area west of Foothill Road; (2) north Pleasanton business park area; (3) East Side area; and (4) Kottinger Hills/Lund Ranch II/Happy Valley area.

Option 3 – This option is similar to Option 2 except that it would additionally include homes and businesses beyond the identified outreach areas that would be directly impacted by traffic pattern changes created by potential future development within the outreach areas. For example, residents and businesses located along Stoneridge Drive and West Las Positas Boulevard would be included in the East Side outreach area due to the potential impacts that development and transportation improvements could have with regard to cross-town traffic.

In addition to the “community outreach meetings,” the General Plan Update process calls for a second round of commission and committee meetings to receive input regarding the potential resolution of issues, and alternatives to be considered. Further meetings with the Chamber of Commerce, PDA, business park management groups and possibly other community groups will

also be scheduled to obtain similar input. This step in the Update process will conclude with a joint workshop meeting between the Council and Planning Commission to receive final input and to adopt a conceptual issues resolution and alternatives report.

MATTERS TO POTENTIALLY BE EXCLUDED FROM THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Staff recently has evaluated the nature and extent to which the issues raised in the Issues Report pertain to recent General Plan and specific plan studies. The purpose of this effort was to help determine if there is a need to repeat the work in these areas during the General Plan Update or if conditions have remained such that this will not be necessary. The studies considered by staff included the Housing Element update, Downtown Specific Plan, Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan, Happy Valley Specific Plan, North Sycamore Specific Plan, Bernal Property Phase I and II Specific Plans, and the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan. Background information and recommendations pertaining to each of these studies are presented below.

Housing Element – The Council adopted the recent Housing Element update on April 15, 2003. This was the result of a two year effort headed by the Housing Element Update Task Force. Certification of the Element was granted by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) on April 3, 2003. Any future substantive changes to the Element will require State recertification.

A variety of important issues are raised regarding housing in the Issues Report. Many of these were also the focus of discussion during the recent Housing Element update process. As a result of the housing update, a series of amendments to other General Plan elements (e.g., Land Use) will be required during the General Plan Update to ensure that the new housing policies and programs are implemented.

Since the Housing Element was recently updated by the City and certified by the State, and since it addresses the issues raised in the Issues Report, the Housing Commission, Planning Commission and staff recommend that further review of the Element be excluded from the General Plan Update. Instead, the Housing Element policy and program requirements should be melded into the other elements of the Plan as appropriate to ensure they are properly implemented.

Downtown Specific Plan – The Downtown Specific Plan was adopted by the Council in March 2003. It covers 308-acres and includes the old commercial and residential neighborhoods of the City. Nearly all of the Specific Plan area is presently developed. No new substantive issues were raised in the Issues Report regarding the Specific Plan area. Staff therefore recommends that this area be excluded from the General Plan Update.

Vineyard Avenue Corridor Specific Plan - This plan was adopted in June 1999. It covers 384 acres and includes housing, open space, vineyards, a community park, an elementary school and a realignment of Vineyard Avenue. Most of the plan area is presently undeveloped. However, the realigned Vineyard Avenue is now under construction and most of the developable land either has City or School District approval for future development projects. Development agreements cover most of the area to be developed as well.

No new substantive issues regarding the Vineyard Corridor were raised in the Issues Report. However, staff feels that it would now be appropriate to update the General Plan Land Use Map to reflect the approved Vineyard Corridor Specific Plan land uses. In light of the above discussion, staff recommends that this area be excluded from the General Plan Update, with the exception of updating the General Plan Land Use Map consistent with the Specific Plan.

Happy Valley Specific Plan – This plan was adopted in June 1998. It covers 860 acres and includes large lot rural housing, open space, and City golf course. 540 acres were annexed to the City in August 2002, and the remainder is unincorporated. In addition to the golf course, future City approvals have been granted for 34 new homes around the course and 12 new homes on the adjacent TTK property. The 157-acre Spotorno property is the only remaining land in the plan area where significant development and a critical section of the Bypass Road are proposed by the plan to be developed.

Issues relating to the plan area have remained substantially the same since 1998 when the plan was adopted. The remaining primary issue regards the construction of the Bypass Road that the Plan calls to be constructed as a high priority. Any potential change to this would require a modification to the plan along with the requisite environmental analysis. In view of the above considerations, staff recommends that the plan area be excluded from the General Plan Update.

North Sycamore Specific Plan – This plan was adopted in June 1992. The plan area covers 135 acres and includes agricultural, residential and office uses. It also includes two sections of the Happy Valley Bypass Road. The section first was constructed from Sunol Boulevard easterly approximately 3,000 feet by Greenbrier Development, and the second section is to be constructed from that point easterly approximately 1,500 feet to the Spotorno property in conjunction with the approved New Cities PUD development. Approximately 60 percent of the plan area has been developed and development of much of the remaining land (New Cities property) has received PUD approval.

Few additional planning issues remain to be resolved for this plan area. Staff therefore recommends that it be excluded from the General Plan Update.

Bernal Property Phase I Specific Plan - The Phase I Plan was approved in August 2000. It covers 198 acres and calls for the development of 581 homes, 750,000 square feet of

commercial office area, parks, open space and an elementary school. Many of the homes are either already constructed or under construction, and the remainder are approved for development. Office area plans have been approved but development has not yet taken place. The Phase I parkland is either constructed or under construction. The Hearst Elementary School was completed two years ago.

Much of the Phase I Plan area development is completed or under construction. Only the office area development is not yet underway, and a development agreement provides entitlements for its development. This is the only area where the City could reconsider the approved land use, but then only with the agreement of the owner. Since no substantial issues regarding this area were raised in the Issues Report, staff recommends that this area be excluded from the General Plan Update.

Bernal Property Phase II Specific Plan – The Phase II Plan area covers 318 acres and was recently dedicated to the City by the developer of the Phase I area for future public use. A draft multi-use specific plan was completed for the site by the Bernal Property Task Force in May 2002. The Council is now reviewing the plan for possible modifications prior to formal processing. Since a plan for this area was recently prepared by a City task force and is now being processed, staff recommends that it be excluded from the General Plan Update.

Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan – This plan was adopted back in October 1989. It covers a total of 293 acres. Approximately half of the plan area has been annexed to the City and developed with housing. The remainder is still unincorporated, undeveloped, and planned for housing, commercial uses, a community park, and the extension of Stoneridge Drive easterly to connect to El Charro Road.

The plan is now almost 14 years old and none of the subsequent proposals for the undeveloped portion of it have moved forward. In addition, the planned extension of Stoneridge Drive presents concerns to many surrounding residents, the main components of the community park remain to be resolved, and the Livermore Airport Protection area was adopted since the time that the Specific Plan was approved. Staff therefore recommends that the remaining undeveloped portion of the plan area be included in the General Plan Update.

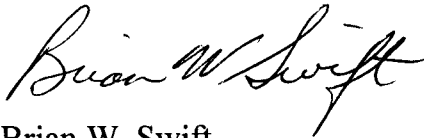
RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Council take the following actions:

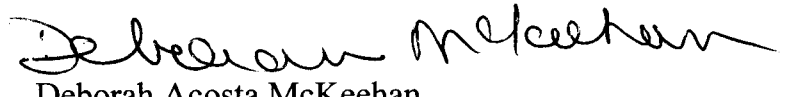
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Respectfully Submitted,



Brian W. Swift
Director of Planning
and Community Development



Deborah Acosta McKeehan
City Manager

- Attachments:
1. Update Planning Process Timeline
 2. Letter dated August 18, 2003 from the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce
 3. Completed Issues Questionnaire dated August 11, 2003 from Karen Sweet
 4. Draft General Plan Update Issues Report dated August 28, 2003
 5. State General Plan Guidelines
 6. Planning Commission staff report dated August 13, 2003



August 18, 2003

Wayne Rasmussen, Principal Planner
City of Pleasanton Planning Department
200 Old Bernal Avenue
Pleasanton, CA 94566

Subject: Preliminary Draft General Plan Update Issues Report

Dear Wayne:

After addressing members of the Planning Commission at their meeting on August 13, 2003, I wanted to follow-up in writing with some additional thoughts and ideas regarding the General Plan Update process. I am hopeful this information will be shared with members of the City Council and Planning Commission during their joint workshop on August 28th.

First of all, the process of updating the General Plan should be done in such a way that the entire community is informed of the issues being discussed. The primary concern the Pleasanton Chamber has with the process as it evolves is that all the issues be shared on an equal basis from one neighborhood to the next. The pros and cons of these issues should be shared in a fair and balanced manner across the entire community.

For example, a circulation issue in one area of the city may have direct impacts on other areas, and those impacts (both positive and negative) need to be addressed throughout the neighborhood meeting process. In that regard, neighborhood meetings (as described in the staff report) should be "geographically balanced and take a broad-brush, comprehensive overview of planning impacts" throughout the region (using words from the staff report under Option #2).

The Pleasanton Chamber is looking forward to having a workshop with you and members of the Planning Commission and City Council to discuss the Issues Report and items that are of primary concern to the business community. I will contact you at the appropriate time to schedule such a workshop. In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter, please let me know.

Sincerely,

David Bouchard, President/CEO
Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce
846-5858, ext. 204
david@pleasanton.org

ATTACHMENT - 3

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PLEASANTON GENERAL PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Land Use (commercial, industrial, residential, and institutional development; jobs/housing balance; residential growth management; land use intensity; potential Land Use Map changes, neighborhoods and other land areas of special interest; citizen input on planning matters.**

The Right to Farm Ordinance may need review to ensure maximum flexibility for farmers/ranchers/nurserymen the ability to do business. The General Plan should recognize and encourage improvements in agricultural technology (eg hydroponic growing in hot houses, improved irrigation systems), expanding niche farming and related activities by acknowledging the need for planning flexibility.

Land use inside the perimeter of the City should be consistent with the County's land use programs/policies in order to provide for economic opportunities. An agricultural advisory group may be useful to the City. The Alameda County Agricultural Advisory Committee is empowered to assist cities.

2. **Circulation (local traffic, regional traffic, traffic management such as signals and intersections, traffic calming, cut-through traffic, BART, Park and Ride, Wheels bus service, transportation systems management, parking, trails)**

Ensure that agricultural businesses (farms, ranches, nurseries) can be lawfully accessed by commercial trucks that are truck and trailer. There must be access from freeways and major roads to these business sites. Access may be needed only seasonally.

Public trails on private lands must be purchased, contracted or easements purchased, along with liability assurance that will provide incentives to the land owners.

3. **Housing (type, density, size, condition, affordability, regional needs, special needs, vacant sites, constraints, opportunities)**

4. **Public Safety (geologic hazards, seismic hazards, flooding, hazardous materials, fire safety, police safety, emergency operations)**

The City may want to consider plans for the fire danger when previously grazed lands become fire fuel next to urban areas.

5. **Public Facilities (water, waste water, solid waste, schools, library facilities, other community facilities, human services, recreation, arts)**

As technology and public acceptance improve, develop plans for recycled water use on small agricultural plots inside the City should entrepreneurs become interested. In addition, a larger market may develop over time for export of recycled water from the City to other agricultural users. The Vision 2010 Ag Water Task Force experts can be helpful on this topic.

6. **Conservation and Open Space (wildlife, plant life, soils, ground water, sand and gravel, agriculture, open space, historic resources)**

A healthy working landscape must be regionally planned, and integrated among jurisdictions. Grazing agriculture will predominate the region. The City's General Plan should be consistent with the County's. The City may want to foster innovative agricultural activities: neighborhood gardens, school gardens, school lunch program purchase Bay Area-grown produce that foster community sustainability, food education and accountability, resource management; celebrate the local agricultural heritage/families; and others.

7. **Noise (vehicular traffic, trains, BART, Livermore Airport, commercial activities, residential activities.**

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8. **Air Quality (pollutant sources, sensitive receptors, specific pollutants)**
Were farming to continue in or near the City, there may be air quality issues – depending upon soils, technology and weather. The General Plan may want to recognize this feature and go beyond the Right to Farm Ordinance to ensure that farming can occur with reasonable air quality management measures.
9. **Community Character (architecture, landscaping, street trees, City entries, sound walls, public buildings and grounds)**
Pleasanton's heritage is agricultural. Although the Alameda County Fair celebrates the county's ag heritage, the City could do so also – celebrate long time family farmers/ranchers, ag history at Farmers Markets and city events, etc.
10. **Economic and Fiscal (community economic condition, City fiscal condition, City financing at General Plan buildout, balanced budget)**
11. **Sub-Regional Planning in the Tri-Valley Area (transportation, water, waste water, water quality, open space, agriculture, visual resources, air quality, economic development)**
12. **Energy (gas, electric and solar energy, environmental impacts, public education on technology and programs, renewable energy, regulations)**
13. **Other**

Name: __Karen Sweet

Designation/Title: Executive Officer, Alameda County Resource Conservation District