

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45

**MINUTES OF THE  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
PINOLE PLANNING COMMISSION and  
PLANNING COMMISSION ACTING AS THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE  
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS**

January 26, 2009

<b>PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING</b>
--------------------------------------------

**A. CALL TO ORDER:** 7:00 P.M.

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND ROLL CALL:**

Commissioners Present: Banuelos, Bender, Brooks, Kurrent, McGoldrick,  
Sekins, and Chairperson Toms

Commissioners Absent: None

**Staff Present:** Belinda Espinosa, City Manager  
Community Development Director, Mary Roberts  
Planning Manager, Winston Rhodes  
Associate Planner, Anne Hersch

Consultants Present: Scott Davidson, PMC  
Christina Ratcliffe, PMC

**C. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:**

There were no citizens to be heard.

**D. CONSENT CALENDAR:**

1. Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2009 Planning Commission Meeting

**MOTION** to adopt the Consent Calendar, as shown.

**MOTION: Sekins                      SECONDED: Banuelos                      APPROVED: 7-0**

**E. OLD BUSINESS:** None

1 **F. PUBLIC HEARINGS:** None

2  
3 **PLANNING COMMISSION ACTING AS THE STEERING COMMITTEE**  
4 **FOR THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS**  
5

6  
7 **G. NEW BUSINESS:**

8  
9 **1. OVERVIEW PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DRAFT SPECIFIC PLANS FOR**  
10 **SAN PABLO AVENUE, APPIAN WAY AND PINOLE VALLEY ROAD**  
11

12 Christina Ratcliffe, PMC, advised how the Specific Plan, General Plan, the Zoning  
13 Ordinance, Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the program Environmental Impact  
14 Report (EIR) all worked together.  
15

16 Ms. Ratcliffe described the background of the process which had initially started in  
17 2006, when research, City tours, stakeholder meetings, staff interviews and when  
18 community workshops had been held throughout 2007 and for the Specific Plan in  
19 2008. The community input from that process had formed the General Plan, which  
20 she described as an over arching policy document for Pinole, with policies and  
21 goals. She explained that the Specific Plan was for San Pablo Avenue, Appian Way  
22 and Pinole Valley Road and is a policy document as well as a regulatory tool to  
23 allow the City's Redevelopment Agency (RDA) to focus its efforts.  
24

25 Ms. Ratcliffe explained that the Zoning Ordinance, the General Plan and the  
26 Specific Plan would all have to be internally consistent with each other. The policies  
27 in the General Plan were reflective in the Specific Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.  
28 The Climate Action Plan was a way to incorporate greenhouse gas emissions  
29 policies that would be incorporated into the General Plan and the program EIR. She  
30 added that the environmental review was concurrent with the documents. All  
31 documents were proceeding together. After the EIR had been adopted, the plans  
32 and the EIR would all be adopted together.  
33

34 Ms. Ratcliffe noted that PMC had been chosen by the City in late 2006 to prepare  
35 the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance updates with a program EIR. She  
36 described the public outreach that had been conducted as part of that process and  
37 explained that in 2007 the City had directed PMC to suspend work on the General  
38 Plan Update to prepare a Specific Plan for San Pablo Avenue, Appian Way and  
39 Pinole Valley Road. More public outreach and workshops had been conducted as  
40 part of the Specific Plan. A market analysis had been prepared by Bay Area  
41 Economics (BAE), workshops had been held, feedback had been solicited from the  
42 community, staff and stakeholders and the document had been revised. The  
43 Specific Plan in its current form had been submitted to the Planning  
44 Commission/Steering Committee and the process had continued.  
45

1  
2 Ms. Ratcliffe stated that at staff's direction, the General Plan Update, Zoning  
3 Ordinance and Climate Action Plan were all proceeding. She referred to the many  
4 changes and challenges in the last two years which had affected the process, with a  
5 new City Council and an almost complete turnover of City staff, and with the San  
6 Pablo and Pinole Valley Avenue corridors having been designated Priority  
7 Development Areas (PDAs) by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)  
8 and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). In addition, the national  
9 and local economy had changed, there could be school closures within the West  
10 County Unified School District, and transit services might be altered. She explained  
11 that the General Plan had been designed to guide future development through  
12 those types of changes.  
13

14 Commissioner Kurrent asked for a clarification of a PDA, reported by Scott  
15 Davidson that PDAs were designated by ABAG and MTC. The City had to petition  
16 those agencies for that designation. The program was intended to support transit  
17 use through the creation of transit corridor development along corridors or railroad  
18 hubs. He noted that several cities along San Pablo Avenue had been designated  
19 PDAs. The primary advantage of the PDA designation was to allow the City to be  
20 eligible for a variety of funding sources.  
21

22 Ms. Ratcliffe stated that along with the challenges and changes, the General Plan  
23 Update process had resumed, as had the Zoning Ordinance and the EIR. The  
24 Climate Action Plan had begun and the public draft of the Specific Plan had been  
25 made available for review.  
26

27 Ms. Ratcliffe emphasized the opportunity for the Planning Commission acting as the  
28 Steering Committee to have significant input into guiding the City to the future.  
29 Mr. Davidson spoke to the Specific Plan Overview and advised that the Specific  
30 Plan was a hybrid document that had included policy discussion as well as the  
31 zoning component for the three corridors. He noted that the Specific Plan  
32 document included a great deal of information that would be included in the General  
33 Plan. The document was currently formatted for review.  
34

35 Mr. Davidson noted that in preparing the Specific Plan, it had been structured as an  
36 economic tool to support investment and reinvestment in the City and to generate  
37 as much land use flexibility as possible. The document looked to support neo-  
38 traditional building form and mass where the front of the property contained a  
39 building structure rather than parking area, making the streetscape more interesting  
40 and exciting for pedestrians.  
41

42 Mr. Davidson stated that the Specific Plan proposed to remove the Floor Area Ratio  
43 (FAR) as a limitation on development; had proposed to build to limit lines, and  
44 addressed height limits and parking standards.  
45

1 Mr. Davidson noted the concept of narrowing San Pablo Avenue to two lanes in Old  
2 Town to be able to widen sidewalks and to add bicycle lanes on all three corridors.  
3 The parking in Old Town had been a constant concern and the potential for allowing  
4 greater flexibility in land use created a potential to overburden the existing parking  
5 supply. He stated at some point there would be a need to create structured parking  
6 in Old Town. The Specific Plan supported and encouraged existing shared parking  
7 conditions in Old Town.  
8

9 Mr. Davidson spoke to land use in terms of type of use, building form and building  
10 types; including economic development and circulation. He noted that out of the  
11 discussions related to the Specific Plan and General Plan additional information  
12 would be developed to implement the documents and to evaluate the environmental  
13 effect of the General Plan and the Specific Plan by formulating a set of development  
14 projections to be used to analyze future physical impacts including traffic.  
15

16 Mr. Davidson spoke to the three specific plan corridors and stated that the first two  
17 were PDAs, actively enjoying activity and access to transit as well as multi-modal  
18 use, and the Appian Way corridor close to the Interstate 80 interchange. He pointed  
19 out that portions of both Appian Way and Pinole Valley Road had been included  
20 within the Specific Plan boundaries even though no changes had been proposed to  
21 several areas with respect to land use. In these instances, changes had been  
22 proposed with respect to circulation.  
23

24 Speaking to land use, Mr. Davidson pointed out that all three corridors had been  
25 divided into subareas. He highlighted the Pinole Valley Road corridor, the Old Town  
26 sub area and the Service sub area which extended up to and included the high  
27 school, beyond which the proposed plan continues to show as a single-family  
28 residential area. He explained that while there would be no change to land use  
29 there would be opportunities to include gateway statements and to improve the  
30 circulation in the area. That area had not been part of the original study area but  
31 had arisen from workshop discussions. He did not believe that a change in land use  
32 made sense other than those changes proposed to the circulation patterns.  
33

34 Mr. Davidson referred to tables referring to different frontage types intended to show  
35 by sub area the building form preferred to be supported. He noted that the land use  
36 was set up to identify the building form with a glossary to identify the graphics. He  
37 presented actual photographs of the type of building form supported as well as  
38 slides of the various building forms and types, and explained how each worked.  
39

40 Mr. Davidson stated that within the section on land use there would be a change to  
41 how the current land use was identified without using tables. There would be a list  
42 of the various types of uses the City might want to entertain within the different  
43 zones with a designation of permitted uses, uses allowed with a use permit, or uses  
44 not permitted.  
45

1 Mr. Davidson spoke to economic development and stated that there were a number  
2 of projects that had been identified as priority projects in the Specific Plan, which  
3 included background information as to market and economic conditions and the  
4 projected future demand. Specific sites suitable for the retention of existing  
5 businesses or pursuing potential development in other parts of the City were  
6 identified as were the various types of economic labels for those projects which had  
7 the potential to develop in the near term, the potential to stimulate other  
8 development, provide diverse housing opportunities, strengthen Old Town as a  
9 vibrant commercial center, take advantage of high traffic areas, and enhance the  
10 PDA objectives of supporting, encouraging and fostering transit, pedestrian and  
11 bicycle travel.  
12

13 Mr. Davidson referred to the opportunity site section within the economic  
14 development strategy to better utilize vacant or underutilized properties. He  
15 presented slides to show several of the potential opportunity sites. That section  
16 would identify land uses for a prototypical type of development. He emphasized  
17 that the examples offered were not intended to be exclusive but an example of what  
18 the City would like to see. Some of the desired uses had also been identified.  
19

20 With respect to circulation, Mr. Davidson noted that there were a number of  
21 opportunities through building siting and landscape treatment of the street to  
22 support and encourage pedestrian and bicycle use. He explained that there had  
23 been a great deal of internal discussions as to the benefit of on-street parking. As to  
24 pedestrian safety, a variety of things had been identified that could be done to  
25 create safe havens at crosswalks or create highly visible crosswalks. The need to  
26 figure out how to make sure traffic was aware of and slowing for pedestrian access  
27 was emphasized.  
28

29 Different streetscapes and roadway right-of-way zones were presented by Mr.  
30 Davidson, who identified the need to explore opportunities to get 10- and 12-foot  
31 sidewalk widths in Old Town to allow outdoor seating and pedestrian circulation. He  
32 stated that every single section of cross-sections of the roadways would include  
33 road lanes 10.5 feet in width to minimize the amount of roadway dedicated to  
34 vehicle use and to provide safe travel lanes. Where possible, the travel lanes would  
35 be narrowed.  
36

37 Mr. Davidson stated that with generous sidewalks there could be landscape and  
38 hardscape forms that would create a recognizable sense of identity, which could be  
39 a common theme through all three corridors. He reported that public comments had  
40 supported the creation of individual identities for each of the three corridors.  
41

42 Mr. Davidson presented a concept for narrowing the San Pablo Avenue right-of-way  
43 as it approached Old Town. All circulation maps would include a graphic showing  
44 the entire corridor and the road cross section of the various stages.  
45

Mr. Davidson stated that the narrowing of San Pablo Avenue would begin at Shale

1 Hill creating an opportunity for a wall that might keep the shale at bay and create the  
2 opportunity for a through connection for pedestrian access.  
3

4 With respect to Old Town at the Tennent and San Pablo Avenue intersections  
5 where there would be two lanes, Mr. Davidson identified the proposed changes in  
6 geometry and the resulting change in traffic flow. He stated that an analysis would  
7 provide more information in the future. He presented before and after photographs  
8 of existing conditions with the proposed changes.  
9

10 Speaking to policy highlights, Mr. Davidson stated that building mass and form were  
11 desired to encourage structures and forms reminiscent of the older buildings in Old  
12 Town, no commercial FAR as a development constraint, increasing maximum  
13 residential densities from a maximum of 25 to 30 and in one case to 50 units per  
14 acre, and preserving existing height limits which currently varied from 30 to 50 feet.  
15

16 In terms of economic development, Mr. Davidson sought a process of prioritization  
17 of the application of opportunity sites or priority projects, to create jobs, create  
18 economic vitality, and a streamlined review of projects compatible with the Specific  
19 Plan. He noted that one of the advantages of preparing a Specific Plan was to offer  
20 a detailed look at the City's vision of particular properties so that those applications  
21 consistent with that vision might qualify for an exemption or a lesser level of  
22 environmental review; creating a framework where the impacts were prejudged,  
23 streamlining the process. He added that a parking garage in Old Town was an  
24 option. There was also a great deal of support for preserving the existing industrial  
25 uses west of San Pablo Avenue and for recruiting and attracting green industries.  
26

27 In terms of circulation, the narrowing of travel and road lanes had been proposed as  
28 had the narrowing of Appian Way as it came into San Pablo Avenue to slow traffic  
29 and to enhance pedestrian circulation. The narrowing of San Pablo Avenue through  
30 Old Town had also been proposed as had the enhancement of bicycle circulation on  
31 all corridors.  
32

33 Commissioner Kurrent commented that when he had reviewed the document with  
34 respect to substantive issues; land use flexibility, building massing and form, he had  
35 wanted to include a discussion of raising height limits in residential areas. He  
36 suggested that the document would reduce the just approved parking standard for  
37 the Town. With respect to reducing the number of auto lanes on San Pablo  
38 Avenue, he asked what approval was needed from outside agencies such as the  
39 Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA).  
40  
41  
42

43 Mr. Davidson advised that no approval was required although he recognized that  
44 the proposal could be controversial. San Pablo Avenue was currently designated  
45 as a route of regional significance and an alternate route to I-80. He suggested that

1 the diversion in Pinole happened at Appian Way. He stated that they would have to  
2 work very closely with the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee  
3 (WCCTAC) to discuss the limitations. He added that the WCCTAC representative  
4 was aware of the issue. Traffic information would also have to be developed.  
5

6 Commissioner Kurrent asked if the narrowing of lanes would affect bus traffic, and  
7 Mr. Davidson noted that was why an 11-foot travel width would be held on outside  
8 lanes.  
9

10 Commissioner Kurrent commented that the failure of having a left-turn lane at  
11 Tennent Avenue created a de facto single lane and it might not be as big a change  
12 as expected.  
13

14 Mr. Rhodes added with respect to concerns from WCCTAC, CCTA or neighboring  
15 jurisdictions that once the Steering Committee provided direction and the Specific  
16 Plan was in a form to be finalized for study within an EIR, those documents would  
17 be circulated to all those agencies. Prior to that, there had already been meetings  
18 with the new WCCTAC Director to advise of the Specific Plan and the proposals  
19 therein. He emphasized the need for a Steering Committee review prior to  
20 forwarding the plan elsewhere outside of the City.  
21

22 Commissioner Kurrent suggested that the removal of some of the parking on San  
23 Pablo Avenue could be an alternative which could allow some widening of the  
24 street. He suggested diagonal parking or other options that could be explored.  
25

26 Commissioner Sekins noted that Old Town had different parking requirements than  
27 the rest of the City. He asked if the parking would be the same for Pinole Valley  
28 Road and Appian Way.  
29

30 Mr. Davidson stated that the Specific Plan would continue that tradition because  
31 there were actively shared parking arrangements. He stated that there would be a  
32 reduction of the number of spaces in the other two corridors in the Specific Plan for  
33 Pinole Valley Road and the Appian Way corridors.  
34

35 Chair Toms referred to the northern end of San Pablo Avenue and asked about the  
36 transition at the City end from four lanes to two. She suggested that one of the  
37 lanes could be a right turn only to offer a solution although there was no right turn.  
38 She also spoke to Oak Ridge and Shale Hill and stated that two bus stops were  
39 missing from the diagram presented. When considering a narrowing of lanes, she  
40 stated there would be a need for bus bays to allow the buses to get out of the travel  
41 lane.  
42

43 Between Alvarez and Oak Ridge, Chair Toms asked if the transition could be made  
44 at the intersection since that was access to City Hall. She suggested that transition  
45 could be carried with a right lane into Oak Ridge and with one lane traveling

1 through. Speaking to the land use matrix and the need to encourage certain uses  
2 for economic development reasons, she noted the need to identify uses that were  
3 not desired; such as check cashing and Cigarette's Only, which did not have to be  
4 categorized in the service uses but could be identified through other rigorous  
5 entitlement processes to ensure that the uses were a good fit.  
6

7 Commissioner Brooks expressed his appreciation to the participation of the San  
8 Pablo Avenue businesses and stated that their opinion should be weighed heavily  
9 since they would have to live with the results.

10  
11 In response to the Chair and recognizing audience members, Mr. Rhodes  
12 suggested that this might be a good time to allow the members of the public to  
13 speak to the Specific Plan. He noted that the public had only had the document  
14 available on line for a few days.  
15

16 NOREEN BULLER, Pinole, referred to the proposal to narrow San Pablo Avenue  
17 and was shocked that the suggestion had come so far. She emphasized that San  
18 Pablo Avenue was a main artery through Pinole that connected to Hercules. With  
19 the improvements to the downtown, she suggested that Pinole Valley Road and  
20 Tennent Avenue would experience an increase in traffic which she suggested would  
21 not be the best thing to do given the current traffic circulation. She questioned how  
22 emergency vehicles would be able to travel through a narrowed roadway. She also  
23 spoke to the potential increase of single-family residential units to 50 units to the  
24 acre, and asked about the parcel referenced.  
25

26 JOHN TRANTON, Hercules, echoed the concerns expressed with respect to a  
27 narrowed roadway. He suggested that Pinole could grow more by increasing jobs  
28 and by increasing the San Pablo Avenue thoroughfare. He did not agree with  
29 constraining that roadway. He suggested that a bike path could be created along  
30 San Pablo Avenue along with parking in the interior. He commented that in the  
31 future with a potential medical corridor the opportunities for the San Pablo Avenue  
32 Corridor would be tremendous. He did not support constraining that area as a  
33 result. He suggested there was a similar opportunity on Appian Way for an old  
34 shopping center site, the Doctor's Hospital site and an old medical building, which  
35 could all be redeveloped.  
36

37 Mr. Tranton reiterated that he did not support constraining the throughput which he  
38 suggested would eliminate the opportunity for more patrons. He suggested that  
39 there were other areas in Pinole to place such improvements, while not constraining  
40 and restricting redevelopment opportunities. He noted that Pinole was one of the  
41 few cities in the Bay Area with the funds, skilled professionals and community willing  
42 to create jobs and activity. He did not support a narrowing of streets.  
43

44 IRMA RUPORT, 1131 Marionola Way, Pinole, spoke to the potential narrowing of  
45 Appian Way. As a resident of Marionola Way which was heavily trafficked, she

1 stated a narrowing of Appian Way would be negative and she did not believe it  
2 would work.

3  
4 Mr. Davidson concurred that the narrowing of San Pablo Avenue would be  
5 controversial. He stated that where the potential for high density development had  
6 been identified was basically the underutilized properties located adjacent to  
7 Madrone Avenue on San Pablo Avenue opposite Sunnyview Drive.

8  
9 Mr. Rhodes stated it was important for the public to know that the project was in its  
10 early stages and nothing had been determined at this point. The Steering  
11 Committee would consider the document in much more detail in February. Before  
12 any action, an EIR would be prepared and it would be many months before anything  
13 was adopted. He emphasized the many opportunities for the identification of issues  
14 and comments.

15  
16 Chair Toms asked how alternatives would be addressed in the continuing process  
17 of the preparation of the Specific Plan and the EIR, such as an alternative to the  
18 narrowing of the roadway.

19  
20 Mr. Rhodes stated that when considering the alternatives, a preferred alternative  
21 would be identified with a range of other alternatives developed so that the EIR  
22 could provide information to the Steering Committee so that the Committee could  
23 make an informed recommendation to the City Council. He added that alternatives  
24 would be considered in the EIR in order to provide more information in the process.

25  
26 Ms. Ratcliffe explained that they were trying to be as complete and thorough as  
27 possible in describing the options although she emphasized that the document was  
28 in draft form at this point.

29  
30 TERESA STOTT, 2390 San Pablo Avenue, Pinole, representing the Bear Claw  
31 Bakery, spoke to traffic and asked if that traffic was slowed coming through Old  
32 Town where the economic vitality would be generated. She noted that the roadway  
33 was currently a thoroughfare along San Pablo Avenue with customers traveling  
34 from Hercules, from work, or coming from the Farmers Market on Saturdays. If that  
35 was diminished in Old Town, she asked where the economic vitality would be  
36 generated to allow businesses to flourish in that setting.

37  
38 Ms. Stott also asked what would happen to the existing businesses since the  
39 proposal would be the third major construction project the businesses had lived  
40 through along San Pablo Avenue. She emphasized that past developments had  
41 greatly impacted those businesses. She asked if that would be addressed in the  
42 planning process.

43  
44 IVETTE RICCO, Pinole, stated that the document under discussion was not  
45 available to the audience. She asked if copies of the plan could be presented to

1 allow a detailed review, particularly for those merchants along San Pablo Avenue  
2 who had not been able to attend the public workshops. She wanted the merchants  
3 to have a voice in the planning as well. She reiterated her request for a document  
4 to allow a detailed review and conversation so that alternatives could be discussed,  
5 suggestions made and feedback provided.  
6

7 CONNIE TORRETTA, 2466 La Canada Court, Pinole, a business owner along San  
8 Pablo Avenue in downtown Pinole, strongly opposed the narrowing of the roadway  
9 to two lanes. With respect to economic growth, she noted that more people would  
10 be expected in the area. With that, she was aware of many plans for the property  
11 between The Antlers parking lot encompassing Blackies, where the RDA had  
12 already approached the owner of a particular piece of property. She understood  
13 that high density development was expected in that area. She commented that  
14 there had been a previous effort to narrow the roadway that had not been  
15 successful.  
16

17 Chair Toms asked if copies of the documents had been made available to the  
18 Merchants Association or to members of the public.  
19

20 Mr. Rhodes reported that the entire document was available on line at the General  
21 Plan Update website, and hard copies were available at the Library and at the front  
22 counter of City Hall. Electronic copies were available on CD. He expressed a  
23 willingness to provide the Merchants Association with a copy to allow a detailed  
24 review by the different merchants. He stated that anyone who wanted hard copies  
25 of specific pages could be provided with that information. He referred to the colored  
26 photos in the document and commented that in an effort to save costs, electronic  
27 versions had been provided as much as possible.  
28

29 Chair Toms explained that there was a request that the EIR address impacts during  
30 the construction period.  
31

32 Ms. Ratcliffe referred to upcoming work with respect to the General Plan Update,  
33 the Specific Plan, the Zoning Ordinance revision, the Climate Action Plan and the  
34 EIR. With respect to the General Plan, she reported that the administrative draft  
35 elements were approximately 50 percent complete. There was a need to update  
36 that material given that there had been a number of changes that occurred since  
37 2006 and 2007. There was also a need to update existing conditions related to the  
38 Pinole Valley Shopping Center, Kaiser and the like. She stated that the City had  
39 requested a completion of the General Plan Update and all the documents by the  
40 end of 2009. In addition, a Sustainability Element had been added at the Planning  
41 Commission and community's request, that element would be incorporated  
42 throughout the General Plan to define and identify what sustainability was for Pinole.  
43  
44

45 A Climate Action Plan had also been added in response to the State Attorney

1 General who had indicated that cities needed to address greenhouse gas emissions  
2 in their General Plan Update through a CAP, to be incorporated into the General  
3 Plan and EIR.  
4

5 Commissioner Kurrent suggested that the Sustainability Element and the Climate  
6 Action Plan appeared to be addressing the same issues, although Ms. Ratcliffe  
7 explained that the Sustainability Element related to a community with a sustainable  
8 economy, environment and equity issues to be sustainable for the future. The CAP  
9 was something that had come out of the requirements of the State for jurisdictions  
10 to specifically address greenhouse gas emissions and to reduce them in a narrow  
11 focus. The policies and goals in the CAP would be incorporated into the General  
12 Plan policies and goals as well as the EIR. Part of that would involve a greenhouse  
13 gas audit and a baseline audit that was in progress.  
14

15 Ms. Ratcliffe advised that discussion issues to come up in the General Plan Update  
16 include the availability of active recreational land. In addition, Duncan Canyon  
17 would be an issue, as would affordable housing, ABAG regional housing needs  
18 allocation numbers, and shoreline access. She reported that there had been a  
19 desire expressed at the public workshops for access to the creek and to the Bay.  
20

21 With respect to the Zoning Ordinance Update, Ms. Ratcliffe stated that the kick off  
22 meeting with City staff was in mid-January. PMC was working on an entirely new  
23 document rather than preparing an update. She added that any concerns with the  
24 current document should be brought to staff's attention.  
25

26 Referring to the Climate Action Plan and the EIR, Ms. Ratcliffe stated that the CAP  
27 would support the sustainability focus of the General Plan. The State Attorney  
28 General wanted the CAP to be incorporated into the General Plan and the EIR. The  
29 program EIR would cover the General Plan Update, Specific Plan, Climate Action  
30 Plan and Zoning Ordinance and would be designed to be developed concurrently  
31 with all those documents.  
32

33 Ms. Ratcliffe emphasized the concurrent development of multiple complex planning  
34 documents and the desire to complete all those documents by the end of the year.  
35 An aggressive schedule had been proposed which would require strategic  
36 organization and effort on everyone's part with clear communication among all. She  
37 presented a schedule for the review of draft documents and reemphasized the  
38 complex nature of the process.  
39

40 Mr. Rhodes stated it was rare that a community would attempt to produce all those  
41 documents at the same time. He stated that during the review process if the  
42 Steering Committee or the community did not feel it had enough time to go through  
43 the documents that should be clearly communicated.  
44

45 Mr. Rhodes emphasized that the process had been ongoing since 2006 and the

1 work would have to be done well as well expeditiously. He stated that the schedule  
2 is in draft form and could change based on feedback received. He emphasized that  
3 there would be more than one meeting per month of the Planning Commission for  
4 much of the year and the long-range planning load would be very heavy in 2009.  
5

6 Chair Toms asked about the estimate of where a Draft EIR would be on the  
7 schedule.  
8

9 Mr. Rhodes referred to the memo passed out by PMC on the last page which laid  
10 out the range of months for each of the major planning products.  
11

12 Ms. Ratcliffe emphasized the opportunities for the public to attend community  
13 meetings, the dates and times of which would be posted on the website and where  
14 the Planning Manager could be contacted or a letter sent to the Steering  
15 Committee. She added that an e-mail could also be presented on the website.  
16

17 Commissioner Brooks emphasized the importance of community input and stated  
18 that input would be needed as soon as possible to be able to complete the work in a  
19 timely manner and avoid conflicts and concerns if people waited until the end of the  
20 process to communicate.  
21

22 Commissioner Sekins thanked Mr. Davidson and Ms. Ratcliffe for the schedule and  
23 for the information. He also thanked staff for the work and stated that if everyone  
24 did their job and the public got involved the work could be completed by the end of  
25 the year.  
26

27 Ms. Torretta referred to the methods of contact and explained that many people did  
28 not have a computer or a TV. She emphasized that there had to be something  
29 more to get all the community involved.  
30

31 Chair Toms suggested that those who were not on the City Manager's e-mail list to  
32 get weekly updates should give their e-mail to staff to be able to get that information.  
33

34 Ms. Torretta asked for an article in the newspaper, and Mr. Rhodes explained that  
35 he had spoken to the local reporter from the Contra Costa Times to get more  
36 information out to the public. He emphasized that any time a member of the public  
37 wanted more information he would be available by phone or would be willing to  
38 meet to discuss how the proposal would affect that person's specific property. City  
39 staff would be meeting with as many property owners as possible to get the word  
40 out.  
41

42  
43 Ms. Ratcliffe stated that with the first workshops in 2006 and 2007, posters had  
44 been placed at City Hall, the Library, the Post Office, the Senior Center, the Youth  
45 Center and several other places in town. As soon as the meeting dates had been

1 verified those posters would again be placed throughout the City. If any member of  
2 the community had a preferred place for that information, she asked that to be  
3 communicated.

4  
5 Commissioner Kurrent recommended that an insert be made available to the public  
6 to identify the salient points for the three corridors included in the Specific Plan.  
7

8 Commissioner McGoldrick noted her understanding that residents had received a  
9 card to identify the dates of the workshops.

10  
11 Ms. Ratcliffe referred to the newsletter that had been mailed during the first  
12 workshops. She stated that there were two more newsletters due out and the  
13 information to be covered in those newsletters to every resident and business in  
14 Pinole would be updated.

15  
16 Ms. Ricco suggested that the problem was that many business owners were non-  
17 residents who were not able to get the information that was made available to  
18 residents. She suggested that the Chamber of Commerce invite Mr. Rhodes to hold  
19 a meeting to be coordinated with the local merchants to allow a session specific to  
20 their questions and to their needs, to be promoted and communicated to the  
21 business community overall to allow the ability to speak to some of the issues. She  
22 stated that the business community was not always aware of what was going on.  
23 She expressed a desire to meet with Mr. Rhodes to set a date during a lunch time  
24 when the business community was available to be able to discuss some of the  
25 issues.  
26

27 Mr. Rhodes stated that one meeting with each of the major documents would be  
28 important. With the ongoing process, he stated it was not a situation where the  
29 public could read one document and understand the process since the documents  
30 would evolve. He supported the dialogue recommended by Ms. Ricco and stated  
31 that the input from the Specific Plan would affect the General Plan Update and the  
32 Zoning Ordinance Update. He suggested that the Chamber might want to take a  
33 position on behalf of its members. He expressed a willingness to work with the  
34 Chamber and Ms. Ricco to bring information to that group.  
35

36 Commissioner Banuelos suggested that the posting of notices might be better  
37 placed at a site closer to the business owners themselves.  
38

39 Ms. Ratcliffe added that several businesses in the shopping centers had allowed the  
40 posters to be placed on their premises.  
41

42 Chair Toms suggested that downtown eateries might be a good place to allow a  
43 perusal of the document and where notices of meetings could also be posted.  
44

45 Mr. Rhodes added that staff would work with the Chamber and others to help get

1 the word out. He noted that it might help to have a card table at the Farmer's  
2 Market where an excerpt of the document might be available for review. He sought  
3 suggestions for ways to better inform the public.  
4

5 Commissioner Brooks suggested that the description of the General Plan and what  
6 it meant to the future of the City and its range should also be emphasized in writing  
7 for the benefit of the public.  
8

9 Ms. Ratcliffe stated that she would be happy to make available in hard copy on the  
10 website frequently asked questions of the General Plan and the Specific Plan, what  
11 the General Plan was with comments pulled from the workshops of what the  
12 community wanted the General Plan to be.  
13

14 Commissioner Kurrent commented that there did not seem to be much favor  
15 towards a narrowing of San Pablo Avenue and he suggested that might not be  
16 supported by the community. As a result, he sought alternatives to that proposal.  
17 He also spoke to the very high density locations and cited other cities with  
18 successful high density development, such as near the El Cerrito BART Station. He  
19 noted that there was some degree of separation from the surrounding community in  
20 those cases. Where the very high density was proposed, he could foresee impacts  
21 to the surrounding housing such as the loss of solar opportunities. He was also not  
22 in support of reduced parking. As such, he did not support very high density housing  
23 and suggested that the plan would have to be revised as a result.  
24

25 **H. CITY PLANNER'S/COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:**  
26

27 Mr. Rhodes stated that the Commission's request for a schedule of meetings in  
28 2009 would have to wait until February given the need to firm up the schedule for  
29 the Specific Plan and associated updates.  
30

31 Mr. Rhodes added that several members of the Planning Commission/Steering  
32 Committee would have expired terms in a few months. If a member did not want to  
33 reapply, he asked that they inform staff as soon as possible to be able to fill the  
34 future vacancy and to be able to provide as much information as possible to  
35 potential new candidates.  
36

37 **I. COMMUNICATIONS:**  
38

39 There were no communications.  
40

41 **J. NEXT MEETING: Regular Meeting, February 23, 2009**  
42

43 Chair Toms verified that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)  
44 scoping session scheduled for February 17 was primarily for outside agencies  
45 although Planning Commissioners were welcome to attend.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9

**K. ADJOURNMENT: 8:45 P.M.**

Transcribed by:

Anita L. Tucci-Smith  
Transcriber