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# Memorandum

**TO:** Steering Committee Members

**FROM:** Winston Rhodes, AICP, Planning Manager

**SUBJECT:** Draft General Plan Update Introduction, Summary, Land Use and Economic Development Element

**DATE:** July 27, 2009

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## Background

The Land Use and Economic Development Subcommittee met on July 16, 17, and 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Draft General Plan Update Introduction, Summary, Land Use and Economic Development Chapters. Major issues that were discussed included:

- 1) The order of the General Plan Elements within the document and possibly moving the Community Character to front of the document;
- 2) Treatment of the Corridor Specific Plan effort in the General Plan document including the land use categories, the land use map, and references in the goals, policies, and actions;
- 3) Utilizing broader General Plan land use designations including a Rural Residential category and Low Density category for sensitive sites where development is constrained due to topography, sensitive biological resources, or susceptibility to hazards; and
- 4) The policy direction to provide in the General Plan for the San Pablo Bay Conservation Area in the vicinity of the City's San Pablo Bay coastline where Pinole Creek, Bayfront Park, the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Bay Trail, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the existing recreation vehicle storage property are located.

Attached is a copy of the Draft General Plan Introduction, Summary, and Land Use and Economic Development information. A track changes version (highlighting suggested edits) of this draft information is provided that reflects the input provided during the Land Use and Economic Development Subcommittee meetings.

## Discussion

### Order of Elements

The Land Use and Economic Development Subcommittee mentioned that the order of the chapters should be reconsidered. Specifically, the Subcommittee thought the Community Character Element should be the first element following the General Plan Vision because of how community character encompasses many issues discussed in detail in other elements. The Sustainability Element was also mentioned as an element that could be moved to a different location but there was no consensus. The subcommittee thought the Steering Committee should consider the order of the draft elements further.

### Treatment of Corridor Specific Plan

The treatment of the Corridor Specific Plan for San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way in the Land Use and Economic Development Element was discussed in detail. Below are some of the issues that arose where Steering Committee direction is desired:

- Should the Specific Plan for the corridors be treated as future implementation action or considered as part of the larger planning effort occurring simultaneously with the General Plan Update and anticipated for adoption at the same time;
- How to refer to the Specific Plan for the corridors consistently where it is referenced in the Land Use and Economic Development Chapter;
- How should the Specific Plan be described in the list of the land use designations on pages 3.0-19 through 3.0-21? Should it be described as one land use category or mentioned as an overlay area with sub-areas such as Old Town Sub-Area, Service Sub-Area, Mixed Use Sub-Area, and Residential Sub-Area called out and described in the land use designations?
- Depiction of the Corridor Specific Plan designations on General Plan Land Use Map (Figure 3.3). The Subcommittee thought that the General Plan Land Use Map should cross-reference the Specific Plan rather than showing parcel specific land use designations for corridor areas that are more fully detailed within the Corridor Specific Plan. Depiction of the Specific Plan on the land use map is very important as this Figure will frequently be referred to in the General Plan.

### Land Use Designations

The Subcommittee suggested several important changes to the designations that appear on pages 3.0-19 through 3.0-21 to address future implementation concerns. The major changes are listed below:

- Delete references to building heights and address building height in the Specific Plan and Zoning Ordinance;
- Create a Rural Residential Density designation for extremely sensitive potential development sites with significant biological resources, topographic, hazard and service

delivery constraints with an allowable density range of 0 -0.20 dwelling units per acre (i.e. 1 unit per 5 acres) so there could be very limited development potential;

- Create a Low Density designation for existing and future large lot residential development for sensitive sites with some biological resource, topographic, hazard, and service delivery constraints with an allowable density range of 0.21 – 1.0 dwelling unit per acre so there would be limited development potential;
- Create a Suburban Residential designation for most existing single family residential areas that would have an allowable density of 1.1 to 7.0 dwelling units per acre;
- The need for land use designation terminology consistency between the land use designation within the Corridor Specific Plan and the General Plan Land Use and Economic Development Element.
- Exploring the potential to consolidate the number of land use designation categories and more broadly define land use in the General Plan

### San Pablo Bay Conservation Area

The San Pablo Bay Conservation Area was recognized as a very unique area in need of comprehensive planning. The area includes a variety of uses with competing objectives. These natural and manmade uses include San Pablo Bay, the Pinole coastline, Union Pacific Railroad tracks, the City of Pinole and Hercules shared Water Pollution Control Plant, the City of Pinole Corporation Yard, Bayfront Park, the mouth of Pinole Creek, the planned Bay Trail route and the existing Recreation Vehicle storage property on Tennent Avenue, and the historic Fernandez Mansion.

The area has several important future development considerations including limited auto transportation access, susceptibility to flooding and potential manmade hazards (e.g. oil spills and train accidents), required wastewater treatment plant upgrades, Pinole Creek restoration commitments, and sensitive biological resources. Consequently, the area includes many stakeholders including other government agencies with permitting authority or interests about how the area is planned (e.g. U.S. EPA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA, U.S. Coast Guard, California Department of Fish & Game, California State Lands Commission, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, ABAG, EBRPD, City of Hercules, Union Pacific Railroad, County Flood Control, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Friends of Pinole Creek Watershed, and private land owners in the vicinity). The Subcommittee wanted the Steering Committee to consider how future planning for the planning should proceed. Potential options include:

- 1) Perform detailed comprehensive planning now for the area through the General Plan Update and Zoning Ordinance Update;
- 2) Identify the need for a future planning effort for this special planning area and identify a list of policy objectives that would need to be taken into consideration to guide the future effort;
- 3) Identify the need for further planning in this area and identify prioritized policy objectives to guide future development and resource conservation in this area.

Due to the dynamic nature of the issues affecting the area and uncertainty over the next 20 year planning period, Option 3 may make the most sense. This option could include the objective of preparing a future Specific Plan for the area but would provide prioritized objectives now to guide short-term land use decisions. Steering Committee direction is needed on the desired approach and configuration of the boundaries of this area. It should be noted that the existing City limits extend into San Pablo Bay and abut the shared boundary between Contra Costa County and Marin County and the majority of the area within the City boundaries is submerged.

### Direction Needed

Steering Committee direction is needed at this time on how the Specific Plan for San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way should be treated in the Land Use and Economic Development Chapter. Direction is needed on the General Plan land use designations. Direction is needed on the San Pablo Bay Conservation area land use planning approach and boundaries for this area.

### Attachments

- A. Draft General Plan Update Introduction, Summary, and Land Use and Economic Development Chapters
- B. Draft General Plan Update Introduction, Summary, and Land Use and Economic Development Chapters with edits and modifications based on Land Use and Economic Development Subcommittee feedback