

**City of Pinole General
Plan Update
Steering Committee**

Memo

To: General Plan Update Steering Committee;

CC: Elizabeth Dunn, AICP, City Planner

From: Christina Ratcliffe, AICP, PMC General Plan Update Manager

Date: May 21, 2007

Re: Public Workshop Progress Report for the Pinole General Plan Update Program

BACKGROUND

This is the first of several updates to the Steering Committee on the first public workshop for the General Plan Update.

The first public workshop was held on May 10, 2007 to “Kickoff” the General Plan Update Process and to obtain public input on the Community Character Element. This element sets the tone for all other elements and will influence the future physical form of the community.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report (and subsequent check-in reports) is to:

- Provide a status report on this project
- Confirm that Staff and Steering Committee are headed in the right direction in terms of process, tasks, products and schedule.

DISCUSSION

In addition to the General Plan Update website, 4,500 newsletters were sent out to Pinole households, announcing the General Plan Update Process. The newsletter also contained important information regarding Community Character and Public Workshops. Two Email blasts were sent to 35 different Community Based Organization Contacts promoting the workshop. The email blasts also included the Newsletter and the links to the online survey on Community Character. The online survey solicited feedback from residents on the future physical form and character of Pinole. Printed surveys were also sent to the Senior Center to enable people without

computer access to voice their opinions. Surveys were also handed out to the 28 Workshop participants to get their input.

Participants were welcomed and asked to sign in with their name, contact information and whether they would like to be informed about future General Plan Updates.

PINOLE PUBLIC WORKSHOP METHODOLOGY

The workshop process was based on the Technology of Participation® (TOP) methodology where individual contributions bring out larger, informative patterns. The TOP methodology encourages, enables participants to work together, and builds on participant commitment thereby ensuring effective action.

By asking questions that are designed to bring out certain responses, the participants are made to have an **Objective, Reflective, Interpretive and Decisional (ORID)** approach.

Participant responses were collected on cards and posted on Sticky Wall Fabric where they were repositioned based on participant consensus.

PINOLE PUBLIC WORKSHOP PROCESS

A brief presentation on Pinole General Plan Update, focusing on the Community Character Element was given and Ground Rules were posted to enable effective participation and to ensure that every voice is heard.

Following the presentation, the following Participatory Question was asked to enable participants to share their thoughts:

“WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU ARE ON VACATION?”

The responses were posted on Sticky Wall fabric and started the conversation among the workshop participants. People offered interesting insight on what a vacation means to them. Most participants viewed Pinole as a base from where they can engage in several activities or visit places. Some of them were not concerned about the place as their focus was on relaxation.

Following this question, the audience was counted off and divided into smaller groups of 6-7 people. Participants were asked to note down their responses on cards for the following Visioning Questions:

- 1) WHAT DO YOU TREASURE ABOUT PINOLE?**
- 2) WHAT DO WANT TO ENHANCE IN PINOLE?**
- 3) WHAT DO YOU WANT TO FIX IN PINOLE?**

The purpose of this visioning process was to gather as many ideas and as much relevant information from participants as possible. This process also enabled

facilitators and staff to get an understanding of what the Community means to the residents.

Participant responses were posted on sticky walls and Clusters were developed based on pairs that clearly go together. The clusters were given a 3-5 word name or title that answers the workshop questions and a qualitative indication or consensus of what brings the community together was developed.

PINOLE PUBLIC WORKSHOP SUMMARY

As anticipated, the comments represented a wide-ranging spectrum of opinions regarding Pinole's character. Some people were very specific in their ideas while others had a broader conceptual perspective. The following summary groups the comments based on the Community Systems Approach. Systems within a community function and inter-relate in health or unproductive ways to either promote or inhibit sustainability. Government services seek to provide residents with clean water, energy supplies, transportation systems, health, safety and more. Other community systems serve such needs as physical health, economic security, or education. Each sub-system interacts and impacts others in positive and negative ways. Ultimately, our goal is to enhance each community system that supports each community need and ensure that they interact in a mutually enforcing manner. Sustainability can be achieved when each system is working in an optimal state, enabling a community to restore itself and thrive into the future.

The comments themselves have been organized using the Systems Approach in Appendix A. Many of the comments received were relevant to more than one category and this overlap is reflected in the summary below.

The public workshop on May 10th was about community values - **what does the community value about Pinole, and what areas need improvement?** These values can be expanded in the Community Character Element. When it comes to policy development, we can look to areas of improvement and whole system dynamics in order to propose policies that will seek to achieve the goals of the community - **What will enable a thriving and lasting community, self-reliant and inclusive of each member of the community?**

PINOLE PUBLIC WORKSHOP THEMES

The following are some common themes¹ that were identified from participant responses during the visioning process.

A Connected Place

- Promoting connections between neighborhoods, parks, trails, downtown core, and commercial district. Sense of place - reconnecting people to place – tell the story of Pinole through design, architecture, art, etc.
- Aesthetics are important – sense of place, historic character, small, semi-rural feel.

Community and Safety

- Fostering systems that take care of residents' needs so they will stay in Pinole (seniors, youth, education, medical care, and relates to jobs)
- Enhance senior and youth interaction and provision of services, medical services, schools, arts.

Environmental Stewardship

- The provision of parks, trails, and open space is clearly important, including enhancing the Bay interface and the Creek corridor. This will involve stewardship in order to maintain and enhance these natural amenities.
- The natural environment is important to the community – they want to see it enhanced. They want quiet, natural settings to enjoy – trails, parks, views, open space. The Bay and Creek are important focal areas.

Economic Opportunity and Security

- Economic systems are important – local business, small business, and quality restaurants – no chains.
- Promote local businesses run by local residents. Providing the economic security needed to afford living in Pinole, as well as maintaining the local character.

¹ These theme titles are borrowed from other cities, like Seattle and San Luis Obispo

Social Equity

- Underlying theme related to providing for all of Pinole's residents. Relates to jobs, housing, access to nature, education, business opportunities, taxes, transportation, services, etc.

CONCLUSION

Pinole is a community with several cherished qualities. It is a small community, with a small town feel and aesthetic appeal. Many services exist for residents, including youth and seniors. Several natural amenities make the city an enjoyable place to live and recreate. However, these treasured qualities are in jeopardy of being lost due to large commercial development, lower priority being placed on the natural environment, lack of economic development focused on small and local businesses, and a lack of focus on promoting social systems such as medical care and education. In order to sustain the existing characteristics that make Pinole a desirable place to live, and in fact enhance these cherished features in order to make the city thrive, a focus on sustainability is suggested.

While the first public meeting was focused on the Community Character Element, several themes can be pulled out that address sustainability more broadly. A broader discussion of sustainability would include additional themes, for example climate change, biodiversity, and resource use (energy, water, materials). Therefore, this discussion is incomplete. However, it is the beginning of the discussion and these themes can be used as a base upon which to build guiding principles and areas of focus for the General Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

A: Pinole Public Workshop – Participant Responses & Themes