

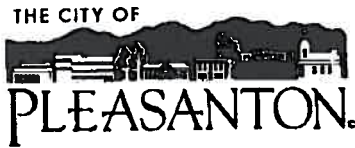
Date: October 26, 2011

To: Planning Commissioners

Subject: Ad Hoc Downtown Specific Plan/Design Guidelines Task Force

At its October 18, 2011 meeting, the City Council approved a process for coordinating participation on an ad hoc Task Force to review the Downtown Specific Plan and Design Guidelines as they relate to historic preservation and the development review process. The Task Force will consist of seven members, comprised of two members from the Planning Commission and five Pleasanton residents. Additional information on the Task Force is presented in detail in the City Council agenda report, attached as Exhibit A.

The Planning Commission is now being asked to select two of its members to serve on this Task Force. Appointments to the Task Force will be ratified at the December 6, 2011 City Council meeting, with the approximately seven-month process projected to start in January 2012 and completed by July 2012.



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

October 18, 2011
Community Development
Planning Division

TITLE: APPROVE A PROCESS FOR COORDINATING PARTICIPATION ON AN AD HOC TASK FORCE TO REVIEW THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN AND DESIGN GUIDELINES AS THEY RELATE TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

SUMMARY

The City Council is being asked to consider and approve a process for coordinating participation on an ad hoc Task Force to revisit selected sections of the Downtown Specific Plan and associated Downtown Design Guidelines. This Task Force will review the current plan and guidelines and make recommendations to help clarify City policy on historic preservation and development review processes in the Historic Downtown area.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the formation of a seven-member ad hoc Task Force comprised of two members from the Planning Commission and five Pleasanton residents to carry out the task as set forth in this report. Planning Commission representatives will be selected from its body's membership. The Pleasanton residents will be selected through the City's normal application and selection process, whereby the mayor and each City Council member make one selection to the Task Force.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The process is proposed to be led by City staff. The only anticipated expenses are approximately \$4,000 in overtime costs for non-management Planning staff to attend evening meetings.

BACKGROUND

Both advocates of historic preservation in the Downtown, and property owners wishing to pursue development in the Downtown area have been unhappy with the process of reviewing development proposals in Pleasanton's Historic Downtown. Current policies in the Downtown Specific Plan (adopted in March 2002) have been interpreted in different ways by different people, and the process for review has been questioned by both applicants and opponents of various projects. Establishment of the two Downtown interest groups, the Pleasanton Heritage Association and the Pleasanton Improvement Association, has intensified this dialogue. On March 9, 2011, the Planning Commission voted to recommend that the City Council include a re-evaluation of the Downtown Historic Preservation policies, guidelines, and processes. On May 3, 2011, the Council adopted this recommendation as a Council Priority. While most of the controversy has surrounded residential proposals, the same issues are likely to occur in the commercial portion of Downtown.

PUBLIC PROCESS

In recent years, the City Council has developed a model for using ad hoc committees to achieve desired outcomes; most recent examples are the Housing Element Update Task Force and the Hacienda Design Guidelines Task Force. This model of City and public collaboration has served well to address the issue in a timely manner while allowing for a participatory community process.

Task Force Composition

Staff is recommending that the City Council approve the formation of a seven-member ad hoc Task Force comprised of two members from the Planning Commission and five Pleasanton residents to carry out the task as set forth in this report. The Planning Commission representatives will be selected from its membership. The Pleasanton residents will be selected through the City's normal application and selection process, whereby the mayor and each City Council member make one selection to the Task Force. It is important to note the inclusion of residents on this Task Force; staff suggests that these five appointees represent a mix of Downtown residents, development community members, the Pleasanton Heritage Association, the Downtown Improvement Association, and the Pleasanton Downtown Association.

Coordination of the Task Force will be directed by Community Development Department Director, Brian Dolan, with assistance from Planning staff as necessary.

Task Force Focus

The Task Force's discussions will be focused on a few key topics: clarification of potentially conflicting policies and programs in the current Downtown Specific Plan; exploration of urban design policies versus historic-preservation-based policies; revisiting the need for a program to establish a National Register Historic District in the Downtown; consistency of policies and process with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), agreement on key definitions such as "demolition;" appropriate use of the State of California criteria for the California Register of Historic Resources; and adoption of a clear process for project review.

Schedule

It is projected by City staff that this process can be started in January 2012 and completed by July 2012, with monthly meetings of the Task Force with additional meetings scheduled if needed. Appointments to the Task Force will be ratified at the December 6, 2011 City Council meeting. With the Council's approval of this process, advertising for the five resident representatives will begin immediately: October 18, 2011 through November 18, 2011.

Staff anticipates approximately six public meetings from January 2012 to June 2012. In addition, the process is intended to include one meeting before the Planning Commission before the draft is brought to the City Council for consideration in July 2012. In general, the public process should assure adequate opportunity for community involvement, input and support given the representation on the Task Force.

Budget

The process is proposed to be led by City staff. Expenses will be limited to approximately \$4,000 in overtime costs for non-management staff to attend evening meetings. Should additional professional services involving expertise related to historic preservation be necessary, staff will identify the appropriate scope and process a contract through adopted City procedures.

Role and Responsibilities

As articulated for the aforementioned Task Force initiatives, to assure a successful and timely process it is important to define the role of the Task Force prior to the start of the process to ensure City expectations are being adequately addressed. To that end, staff has identified the Task Force's role and responsibilities as follows:

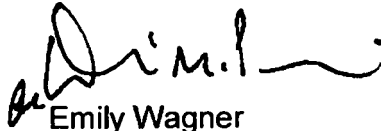
- ***Be informed, collaborative, and solution-oriented.*** Be committed to attending meetings, reading staff information, and being prepared to balance individual and minority interested for the overall good of the Downtown and benefit to the community.
- ***Provide a forum for community discussion.*** Actively engage the community in a constructive dialogue around Downtown historic preservation issues and possible strategies, and assist in educating the community on Downtown matters. Be open to comment and various view points.
- ***Provide input on draft products.*** Review and provide input on information presented throughout the process, including potential revisions to the Downtown Specific Plan and Design Guidelines.
- ***Provide recommendations as requested by City staff.*** Provide recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council to ensure they receive guidance prior to making the policy decision needed to adopt any potential changes to the Downtown Specific Plan and Design Guidelines.

Submitted by:



Brian Dolan
Director of Community
Development

Fiscal Review



Emily Wagner
Director of Finance

Approved by:



Nelson Fialho
City Manager

Attachment: Excerpt from Council Priorities.

QUALITY OF LIFE Cont'd	
Parks, Open Space and Public Lands	
Pleasanton Ridgeland Access -- Acquisition of Additional Open Space Land	This project ensures that various open space opportunities are assessed and recommendations provided to Council regarding acquisition and cost.
Alamo Canal Trail Extension	With project partners, design and possibly construct the trail gap closure under I-580 to eliminate the trail gap on the Alamo/Iron horse trails. (Dependent upon financial and staffing resources from project partners).
Parks, Open Space and Public Lands (Continued)	
Tri-Valley Conservancy Partnerships	Explore working with the Tri-Valley Conservancy or similar entities to use transfer of development rights and conservation easements to preserve open space.
Iron Horse Trail (permanent alignment)	Construction of Iron Horse Trail, from Santa Rita Road to BART Station -- EBRPD has secured grant funding for construction phase. This project will require coordination City staff.
Valley Avenue Pedestrian Pathway	This project involves relocating the existing pedestrian pathway from the south side of the existing drainage channel to the north side along Valley Avenue between Sunol Boulevard and the Alameda County Transportation Corridor. An eight foot wide asphalt trail will be placed along Valley Avenue with modifications to the existing landscape. The project includes removal of the existing path and installation of fencing along portions of the new trail.
Bernal Property Observation Deck & Detention Pond	The Bernal Bridge Mitigation Pond was constructed in 2008. This project will develop an approximately 16'x16' observation deck for use by the general public to view the flora and fauna on and around the mitigation pond. The deck will include amenities such as benches, an overhead shade structure, trash receptacles and signage. The project includes construction of a modest "spur" trail, to connect the observation deck to the existing Manly Murphy Kane Trail.
Staples Ranch Neighborhood Park	Construction of a 5 acre neighborhood park located along Stoneridge that includes; vehicular parking, restroom, pedestrian circulation, pedestrian plaza, picnic tables, shade structure, two lighted tennis courts, and a stormwater detention area. The Parks and Recreation Commission approved the Staples Ranch Neighborhood Master Plan design.
QUALITY OF LIFE Cont'd	
Downtown	
Pursue Historic Preservation Guidelines	Complete process to implement revised historic preservation guidelines for Downtown.
Downtown Specific Plan Implementation and Outreach	Conduct various community workshops to outreach with the community about established specific plan guidelines and objectives, collect input and determine whether changes are necessary through an amended Specific Plan process. Consider additional economic strategies for the downtown.
Downtown (Continued)	
Lions Wayside and Delucci Park Redevelopment	Design two parks consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Trails Plan. The renovation will compliment the new Firehouse Arts Center
Encourage Downtown Mixed Use	In the Downtown, encourage mixed-use development which incorporates higher density and affordable residential units consistent with the Downtown Specific Plan, and the historic character of the City.
Downtown Public Art Plan	Continue to Implement the Downtown Public Art Plan.
Downtown Hospitality Zone	Work closely with the Pleasanton Downtown Association, Pleasanton Police Department and others key stakeholders to evaluate the creation of a planned Hospitality District for the Downtown area.
Recruiting and Retaining Retail Downtown	Work closely with the City of Pleasanton's Economic Development Department, Economic Vitality Committee and other key stakeholders to develop and encourage more retail Downtown.
Public Parking	Work to increase public parking by working with others toward assessment districts and future City of Pleasanton improvements.