



Planning Commission Staff Report

Date: July 25, 2007

Item 6. a.

SUBJECT: General Plan Update – Draft Land Use Element

PURPOSE: Review and consider the Draft Land Use Element; provide comments to staff for any amendments prior to City Council review

I. BACKGROUND

The Draft Land Use Element functions as a guide to planners, the general public and decision makers as to the desired pattern of development for the city at build-out. This Element plays a central role in correlating all land use issues into a set of coherent development policies.

By State law, the Land Use Element is required to designate the proposed general distribution, location and extent of the uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space including agriculture, natural resources, public buildings, and other categories of land use; and to include a statement of standards of population density and building intensity for the various districts.

Some goals, policies and programs in the Draft General Plan Land Use Element are carried forward from the 1996 General Plan; others are based on discussions which have taken place with both the Planning Commission and City Council in multiple Joint Workshops and other meetings since the inception of the General Plan update. The Draft Land Use Element reflects the major theme of the General Plan update which is to move towards a more sustainable community.

The Draft Land Use Element is provided as both a clean and red-lined text (Attachments 1 and 2, respectively) and the Draft Land Use Map (Attachment 3).

II. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE 1996 LAND USE ELEMENT

The text of the Draft General Plan Land Use Element reflects several broad objectives, including:

- The overarching General Plan theme of sustainable development;
- Providing some flexibility in determining the location of the remaining units under the 29,000 unit residential cap;
- Providing additional opportunities for the development of affordable housing; and,

- Contemplating future Specific Plans in the East Pleasanton area and in Hacienda.

Remaining Residential Development Potential: As noted in the Draft General Plan, residential holding capacity or the number of units at build-out is calculated using the mid-point of the density range and the number of acres of the designation remaining. In Specific Plan areas, the adopted plan usually provides a summary or a lot by lot description of the residential development potential. When the 1996 General Plan was adopted, it was assumed based on the holding capacity that at build-out there would be 29,000 residential units. In fact, during the period 1996 through 2006, a majority of projects were approved at lower than the mid-point density, thus leaving additional units to be planned for under the 29,000 cap in the General Plan update.

As part of an upgrade of our land development data system, staff has been consolidating several data bases used to track residential projects from unentitled land, through planning approval and construction. The consolidation of these data bases has revealed some previous double counting of projects, which has reduced the City’s calculation of the total number of existing housing units within the Planning Area, and thus means there are about three hundred additional units that can be planned for under the cap during this General Plan Update. The table following shows the existing and remaining development potential as of January 2004, when the land use discussion first started with the Planning Commission and City Council, and how it has changed as of January 2007.

	As of January 1, 2004	As of January 1, 2007
Existing Dwelling Units	25,246	25,765
Units Under Construction	411	223
Approved Units	780	257
Potential Future Units (no approvals)	878	748
Total Dwelling units at Build-out of the General Plan	27,315	26,993
Residential Units allowed under the Voter-Approved Cap	29,000	29,000
Remaining units to be planned for	1,685	2,007

As can be seen from this table, as of January 1, 2007 there were 2,755 dwelling units remaining under the cap. Of these, 748 units were available under the existing General Plan land use designations, and an additional 2007 units were be available to be planned for under the General Plan Update.

Because the City’s residential land use designations allow a range of densities, the High Density Residential (HDR) designation has no upper limit for density, and each residential site has unique development constraints, it is difficult to calculate with any certainty the exact number of units that will be built on each site. It is important, therefore, that there be some flexibility in the

General Plan Land Use Element for accommodating “surplus” residential units without the need for multiple or serial General Plan amendments. The new Mixed Use land use designation is a way to accommodate these units, as well as to meet the General Plan goals, as described below.

Assisted Living Units: At the last Joint Land Use Joint Workshop in April 2006, the Planning Commission and City Council discussed the issue of whether or not to count assisted living units within the 29,000 unit cap. Previous practice had been to exclude assisted units from the cap. In April 2006, the City Council provided direction to staff that, if the Continuing Life Communities (CLC) project in Staples Ranch is approved, a portion of these units (240 units out of an estimated total of 850) should be counted as housing units towards the cap, based on estimated impacts of this type of development on city services and utilities. The Draft Land Use Element (Attachments 1 and 2) reflects the direction from City Council.

Staff is suggesting that the Planning Commission and City Council may wish to re-visit this direction and reconsider whether any of the proposed CLC units, if approved, should count towards the housing cap since assisted living projects have not been considered as residential in the past. Moreover, these 240 units could be made available to other projects to increase their viability and to meet City goals such as providing affordable housing and mixed use development. Hacienda representatives have expressed an interest in developing their proposed Transit Oriented Development (TOD) specific plan with more units than their preliminary “allocation” of 333 units and have indicated that the potential availability of more units would send a positive message to their stakeholders and would expedite their efforts in finalizing their TOD plan. If the Planning Commission has an interest in modifying the recommendation in order to reduce the number of units in the Staples Ranch proposal counted under the cap or to reallocate all of those 240 units to other locations in the City, it should so recommend.

New Land Use Designations: Two new land use designations are proposed as part of the Draft Land Use Element:

- **Mixed Use:** This land use allows any combination of business park, office, retail, research and development, and residential uses in a single building or on a single site, where the uses are integrated and designed as a cohesive project. Higher density residential uses (30 units per acre or more) are encouraged adjacent to BART stations and other areas near transit. It is proposed to be applied to the parcel adjacent to the new BART station at Stoneridge Mall Road, and to Hacienda (except for the existing residential areas of the park which will retain their residential designation). The number and location of residential units would be determined by PUD zoning or by a Specific Plan.

As noted above, the actual number of units under the General Plan can vary from the calculated “holding capacity” if projects are approved at less than the mid-point or assumed density. Land designated as Mixed Use can provide a location for these “excess” residential units. In addition, this designation is appropriate for higher density residential development that will help the City meet its obligation to designate land for our unmet affordable housing need.

- Water Management and Recreation: Staff suggested this designation during the discussion of land use in East Pleasanton in January 2006. This designation is proposed for lakes owned by Zone 7 Water Agency that will be incorporated into the “Chain of Lakes” in East Pleasanton. This designation is consistent with the future of this area as indicated in Zone 7’s Stream Management Master Plan adopted in 2006.

Land Use Map

The Draft Land Use Map shows the distribution of the land use designations described in the Draft Element. A major technical change from the 1996 map is that the map included as Attachment 3 is produced by the City’s Geographic Information System Department and is based on parcel lines. The Draft Map incorporates a number of General Plan Amendments approved during the period from 1996 through 2006, as well as changes being proposed as part of this General Plan update. The map has been modified to reflect existing land use where Specific Plans have been adopted and are being developed. However, undeveloped Specific Plan areas, such as the Staples Ranch are shown as in the 1996 General Plan.

At a Joint Workshop in September 2005, staff presented a list of approximately 50 sites with a potential for a change in land use designation. These sites were brought forward because of an owner’s request, because they were vacant or undergoing a transition in land use, or because they had been previously discussed as sites for higher density housing. These sites were discussed by the Planning Commission and City Council at the following six Joint Workshops. The land use changes being proposed as part of the General Plan Update are described in the following paragraphs. The recommended land use designation for these areas is shown on the Draft Land Use Map (Attachment 3). The location of these areas is shown on Attachment 4.

1. **BART Station at Stoneridge Mall Road**: Changing from Retail/Highway/Service Commercial, etc. to Mixed Use. The designation of the proposed Pleasanton BART Apartments site on Stoneridge Mall Road as Mixed Use is consistent with the development proposal.
2. **Hacienda**: Changing from Business Park to Mixed use (except for those areas designated HDR-High Density Residential on the General Plan which will remain residential). The designation of Hacienda as Mixed Use provides an opportunity for the accommodation of units over and above the 333 units “allocated” to this area in the Preferred Land Use Plan. These additional units would add to the viability of a transit oriented development with affordable housing in this area.
3. **East Bay Regional Park District Land adjacent to Foothill Road (Garms Ranch)**: Changing from Public and Institutional to Parks and Recreation. The proposed redesignation of the East Bay Regional Park District site on Foothill Road is consistent with the District’s plan for park use here.

4. **Applied Biosystems campus on Sunol Boulevard:** Changing from General and Limited Industrial to Business Park. The proposed redesignation of the Applied Biosystems site to Business Park is consistent with the high quality, campus-like development on the property.
5. **Property owned by San Francisco Water District and various other owners:** The 1996 General Plan Land Use Map showed a large “tail” of property south of Happy Valley Road, west of I-680, and extending down almost to the community of Sunol designated as Parks and Recreation. Most of this property is outside the Urban Growth Boundary, except for two parcels just south of Happy Valley Road. Most of this property is owned by the San Francisco Water District; however, there are privately-owned parcels in this area also designated Parks and Recreation. This designation is meant to be limited to public parks. Therefore staff is recommending changing the land use designation for most of the area to Open Space -- Agriculture and Grazing. This designation reflects the use of the land and generally allows for one residence on a legal lot. Two parcels directly south of Happy Valley Road (owned by Mr. Roman) which are within the Urban Growth Boundary are recommended for redesignation to Greater Happy Valley Low Density Residential. This designation, created as part of the Happy Valley Specific Plan, allows one dwelling unit per two gross acres, with one unit per one-and-one-half gross acres when developed in conjunction with major open space land or agriculture/open space easement dedication. These parcels total about 9 acres. Although much of the east side of the Roman property is steeply sloped and forms a berm adjacent to the freeway, the parcels include two flatter areas that may be suitable for limited residential development.
6. **East Pleasanton Specific Plan Area:** Changing from Sand and Gravel Harvesting, General and Limited Industrial, Parks and Recreation, and Public and Institutional to Future Specific Plan Area with Business Park, General and Limited Industrial, Mixed Use, High Density Residential, Park and Recreation, and Public and Institutional as potential uses. This area includes over 1,000 acres of land reclaimed from sand and gravel harvesting (owned by Kiewit and Hanson) and lakes now owned by Zone 7 Water Agency. It is proposed that the lakes be designated as Water Management and Recreation, consistent with Zone 7’s Stream Management Master Plan, and that the future use of the whole area be determined by a Specific Plan.

Changes to the Draft Land Use Element

The proposed changes to the background text of the Draft Land Use Element are indicated in the red-line version in Attachment 2. These changes include:

- General editing, updating, and reorganizing of background material from the 1996 General Plan.
- Adding a paragraph on how the concept of sustainability relates to land use.

- Updating existing conditions sections dealing with Residential Neighborhoods, Industrial Commercial and Office Development, Community Facilities and Open Space areas. Some portions of the Community Facilities and Open Space sections are removed because a more detailed discussion is found in the Draft Public Facilities and Community Programs Element and the Draft Conservation and Open Space Element.
- Under Areas of Special Interest, sections on the Pleasanton Ridglands, South Pleasanton, the Vineyard Avenue Corridor, Downtown, Staples Ranch, East Pleasanton, and Hacienda Business Park have been updated or added.
- A new section describing existing and future Specific Plans has been added.
- Several subjects have been grouped under the heading of Growth Management: the City's Urban Growth Boundary; the Residential Cap; the Growth Management Program; Holding Capacity; the Relationship of Jobs and Housing; and Annexation.
- A new Land Use Concepts section is added which describes smart growth, mixed use, and transit oriented development and how those concepts are woven into the Draft Land Use Element.
- The General Plan Land Uses section has been updated, and several paragraphs on p. 2-22 were moved to the policy section of the document. The Happy Valley Low Density Residential designation was added. Other paragraphs which repeated information about build-out of commercial properties were deleted. A description of Mixed Use was added. A description of Business Park uses was added, and a new Water Management and Recreation designation was added under the Open Space category.

The following proposed changes to the Goals, Policies and Programs in the Draft Land Use Element are shown in Attachment 1 and Attachment 2:

- Deleting the "to" at the beginning of all goals within this Element.
- Adding Policies 1 and 2 along with related programs to allow development consistent with the General Plan Land Use Map and to evaluate land use changes as they relate to overall city welfare. The latter policy and Program 2.1 is the result of a Planning Commission discussion at the time the Draft Community Character Element of the General Plan was being reviewed.
- Adding a Special Interest Areas section. Also adding Policies 3 and 4 along with related programs to develop specific plans for undeveloped or underutilized areas of Pleasanton with the potential to change, and to implement specific plans along with relevant rezoning.
- Adding a Residential section, clarifying Policy 5 (former Policy 1) as well as its Program 5.1, and also deleting Program 1.3 to grant a development density bonus for public amenities. The substance of Program 1.3 which is related to project amenities required to develop above the mid-point of a density range is now more fully discussed in new Policy 8, second bullet.

- Expanding Policy 6 (former Policy 2) to develop new housing near transportation hubs or local-serving commercial. Also revising Program 6.1 to also encourage affordable housing.
- Adding new Policies 7 and 8 along with related programs to provide flexibility in residential development standards and for guidance determining residential density. These policies and programs were formerly part of the background section (see p.2-22), but are now more clearly identified as development policies.
- In the Industrial, Commercial and Office section: deleting former Programs 3.1, 3.2, and 3.5, while adding new Programs 9.1 – 9.3 and 9.5, and revising Program 9.4 (former Program 3.4) to implement the *Downtown Specific Plan* and rezonings, as well as preparing a new Civic Center Master Plan and encouraging mixed-use and residential development in the Downtown. Program 9.5 calls for drafting of a right-to-business ordinance that would function similarly to a “right-to-farm” ordinance in that it would provide notice to residents in and around the Downtown that Downtown activities and businesses may occasionally create some traffic, parking, noise, odor, or other inconveniences that may be expected as part of Downtown living.
- Under Policy 11 (former Policy 5), deleting former Program 5.2 while adding Program 11.2 to ensure a project’s economic viability.
- Under Policy 12 (former Policy 6), deleting former Program 6.1, revising Program 12.3, and adding Program 12.5 to promote business that mitigates negative impacts.
- Changing the Bay Area Rapid Transit section to Mixed-Use and adding Policy 13 to encourage mixed-use development, while revising Policy 14 (former Policy 7) and its programs that encourage mixed-use development around the existing and future Pleasanton BART stations.
- Deleting the Community Facilities section including former Policies 8 and 9 as well as their programs as these have been moved to the Public Facilities and Community Programs Element.
- Under Open Space, revising Policy 15 (former Policy 10) and its program to preserve open space, including open space lands under the new water management and recreation designation. Also adding Policy 16 and its program to preserve agricultural land in the ridgeland.
- Adding Program 18.6 under Policy 18 (former Policy 11) to consider future changes to the Urban Growth Boundary when new land uses are considered for the former sand and gravel quarry areas. The material for this program was taken from the background section.
- Under Policy 19 (former Policy 14), deleting and revising programs so as to prepare a Growth Management Report when needed, instead of annually. The changes proposed for the Growth Management Program reflect the City Council’s discussion of this subject at the Joint Workshop in November 2005 and the Planning Commission’s discussion of the Draft Energy Element.
- Updating Program 20.1 under Policy 20 (former Policy 15).
- Under Policy 22 (former Policy 17) deleting Program 17.1.

- Adding a new section on Sustainability, including new Goal 3 and Policies 23 to 25 and their programs to integrate energy efficiency into land use planning, to integrate land use and transportation planning, and to consider energy use in new policies and development. Policy 23 and associated programs were originally drafted by the Pleasanton Energy Committee as part of the Draft Energy Element.
- Under Citizen Participation, revising Policy 26 (former Policy 18) and its programs that encourage citizen participation. Under Policy 27 (former Policy 19), adding a program to prepare an annual review of the General Plan.

III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Review and consider the Draft Land Use Element (Attachment 1, Attachment 2, Attachment 3); provide comments to staff prior to City Council review.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Land Use Element (clean copy)
2. Draft Land Use Element (underline and strikeout)
3. Draft Land Use Map
4. Map showing location of land use change areas.

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