

Planning Commission Staff Report

February 26, 2014
Item 5.b.

SUBJECT: P14-0002

APPLICANT: City of Pleasanton

PURPOSE: City initiated application to amend Title 19 of the Pleasanton Municipal Code to implement the Climate Action Plan by requiring that new cul-de-sac streets enable through access for pedestrians and bicyclists where feasible

GENERAL PLAN: Climate Action Plan Strategy LU3, Action LU3-6
General Plan Circulation Element Policy 7,
Program 7.3

ZONING: Various

LOCATION: Citywide

EXHIBIT: [A. Proposed Code Amendment](#)

BACKGROUND

The subject application is a City-initiated amendment to the Pleasanton Municipal Code. The purpose of the amendment is to improve transportation efficiency through street design and to encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel, as directed by the Pleasanton Climate Action Plan (CAP), adopted on February 7, 2012, and the circulation element of the General Plan, as follows:

Climate Action Plan

Strategy LU3: Improve transportation efficiency through design improvements.

Action LU3-6: Modify the municipal development codes to require that new projects include pedestrian and bicycle access through cul-de-sacs in new projects, except where prohibited by topography.

Circulation Element of the General Plan

Policy 7: Adhere to City design standards for streets in new developments.

Program 7.3: Design complete streets serving pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities, except where infeasible. Complete streets may include: alternative intersection control where appropriate, requiring bicycle and pedestrian connections from cul-de-sacs to adjacent streets, trails, bicycle paths, and neighborhoods; and incorporating appropriate traffic calming measures.

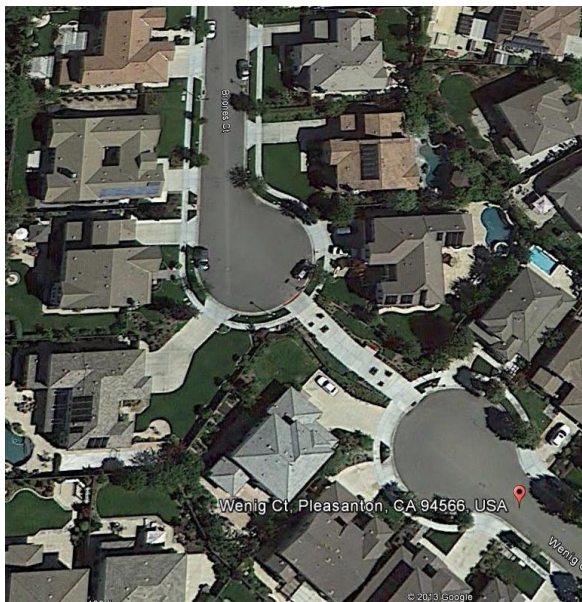
This proposed amendment is supported by the Planning Commission's subcommittee for implementation of the CAP. It would result in modifications to the subdivision regulations as shown in Exhibit A.

DISCUSSION

Most of Pleasanton's neighborhoods were designed to include cul-de-sac streets. There are benefits to a development pattern that incorporates cul-de-sacs, including reduced auto speeds and preclusion of through traffic. However, cul-de-sac streets have been criticized for encouraging auto use, even for short distances. They frequently necessitate longer travel to nearby destinations thereby discouraging pedestrian and bicycle trips. This increases fuel consumption and vehicle emissions and has negative effects on health by reducing walking and cycling rates. These negative impacts can be reduced if cul-de-sacs are designed as through-routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

There are several locations in the city where cul-de-sacs are open at the end. This design maintains the benefits of reduced speeds and traffic on local streets and also enables better options for walking and cycling. Open ended cul-de-sacs that provide short-cuts to schools or parks can significantly reduce motor vehicle trips.

The images below show where two cul-de-sac streets have connected access for pedestrians and cyclists. This example includes adequate right-of-way for emergency vehicle access as well..



Connection of Wenig Ct. and Briones Ct.
Google Earth



The proposed code amendment would require that, where new cul-de-sac streets are planned, pedestrian and bicycle connections be provided to other paths, streets or destinations. There may be situations where such connections are infeasible because of topography, or not practical because there are no nearby paths, streets, or destinations with which to connect. In these cases the Director of Community Development would have the authority to make exceptions.

As indicated in Exhibit A, two chapters in Title 19 (Subdivisions) are proposed for change. The definition of cul-de-sac in Chapter 19.08 would be expanded to enable the extension of pedestrian, bicycle, and emergency vehicle access. Also a subsection would be added to the design standards in Chapter 19.36 requiring such access unless determined infeasible by the Director of Community Development.

OUTREACH AND PUBLIC NOTICE

A notice regarding the proposed code amendment and related Planning Commission public hearing was published in The Valley Times on February 15, 2014.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The adoption of the 2012 Climate Action Plan was part of the project which was described in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report certified by the City Council on January 4, 2012. The proposed amendment to the Pleasanton Municipal Code shown in Exhibit A constitutes implementation of Action LU3-6 of the Climate Action Plan and is therefore consistent with the project as described and analyzed in the certified SEIR. Therefore, no further environmental assessment need be conducted to adopt this code amendment.

CONCLUSION

The proposed text amendment would improve the efficiency of the circulation system by promoting better access for pedestrians and cyclists, thereby reducing auto use and the associated emissions. This modification to the Pleasanton Municipal Code will implement Action LU3-6 of the Climate Action Plan and is consistent with Policy 2 of the Land Use Element of the General Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution recommending approval of P14-0002 to the City Council.

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