



Planning Commission Staff Report

May 11, 2011

Item 6.a

SUBJECT: PGPA-17

APPLICANT: City of Pleasanton

PURPOSE: Scoping Session and Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Housing Element Update

EXHIBITS: A. Notice of Preparation

BACKGROUND

The City of Pleasanton is in the process of updating its General Plan Housing Element. The update will consist of identifying sufficient land for rezoning to a multifamily land use designation to accommodate the City's share of the regional housing need, and updating the background material and Goals, Policies and Programs from the 2003 Housing Element. The City's deadline for submitting a draft Housing Element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development is August 16, 2011, with adoption of the Housing Element and land use changes anticipated by the end of 2011. The Housing Element Task Force now has a list of potential housing sites for rezoning and has reviewed a draft of the Goals, Policies and Programs. This provides sufficient information to start the environmental analysis.

CEQA PROCESS

The update of the City's General Plan Housing Element is a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and it has been determined that this project will require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report. The purpose of the Scoping Session is to determine the scope and content of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this project. The environmental review process and approximate schedule for completion is as follows:

1. Determine the need for an Environmental Impact Report – April 2011
2. Distribute the Notice of Preparation of an EIR to Agencies and Interested Parties – Comment period: May 2 through May 31, 2011
3. Hold a Public EIR Scoping Session – May 11, 2011
4. Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) – To be completed late-July 2011
5. Allow for Public Comment on the DEIR – late July through beginning September 2011
6. Prepare a Final EIR (FEIR) – To be completed October, 2011

7. Hold Public Hearings to Consider Certification of the FEIR – November/December 2011

Scoping

Attached is the Notice of Preparation which was sent to Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and e-mailed to interested parties. It is anticipated that the EIR will address the following impacts: Aesthetic/Visuals; Agricultural Land; Air Quality; Archaeological/Historical; Economic; Fire Hazard; Flooding/Drainage; Geologic/Seismic; Jobs/Housing Balance; Minerals; Noise; Public Services; Schools; Sewer Capacity; Soil Erosion; Solid Waste; Toxic/Hazardous; Traffic/Circulation; Vegetation; Water Quality; Water Supply; Wetland/Riparian; Wildlife; Growth Inducing; Incompatible Land Use; Cumulative Effects; Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases.

The purpose of the Scoping Session is to provide an opportunity for the Planning Commission and the public to comment on the content and analysis to be provided in the Environmental Impact Report.

EIR Preparation

Due to the deadline for completion of this project, the EIR consultant (Environmental Science Associates, ESA) has already started work on the EIR analysis and background information. However, any comments received at the Scoping Session and during the comment period (through May 31, 2011) can be addressed in the Draft EIR.

The EIR serves several functions:

- The EIR satisfies the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act for the project's environmental review. The EIR is the informational document that identifies the environmental impacts of the proposal, the mitigation measures for these impacts, and the impacts that cannot be mitigated and are therefore unavoidable.
- As an informational document, the EIR does not formulate recommendations on the proposal, e.g. approval, conditional approval or denial.
- Once finished, the Draft EIR will be circulated for public comment for 45 days. Comments received from the general public and from the applicable federal, state, and local agencies will be addressed in the "Response to Comments" section of the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR). The FEIR will then be forwarded to the Planning Commission for review. The City Council will determine whether to certify the FEIR as complete according to CEQA requirements.

Alternatives

According to State law, an EIR shall describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. The "no project" alternative is also required to be evaluated. In this case, the "no project" alternative would be the continuation of existing Goals, Policies and Programs for housing, and the identification of no additional sites for multifamily housing.

Project alternatives are anticipated to include alternatives which select a subset of the sites shown in Attachment 1 of Exhibit A, increases or decreases in density on those sites, and an alternative reflecting partial completion of the City's circulation plan at build-out.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this item was published in The Valley Times. In addition, the City sent notification to responsible and trustee agencies, nearby cities, the Pleasanton Unified School District, and others, as well as about 420 interested parties who have provided e-mail addresses during the Housing Element update process.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission open the public hearing and provide feedback as appropriate on the scope and content of the Environmental Impact Report on the Housing Element Update.

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