
City of Merced
MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 8, 2007
TO: General Plan Update Citizens Advisory Committee
FROM: Kim Hudson, Quad-Knopf
Kim Espinosa, Planning Manager
SUBJECT: Summary of the General Plan Update Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
#3--July 19, 2007

Staff/Consultants Present: Kim Espinosa, Kim Hudson, Greg Abramson

Committee Members Present: Dave Tucker (City Engineer), Michael Belluomini (MUHSD), Robert Lindsay (MID), Alexander Hall (Parks & Community Services), Dave Gonsalves (County Planning), Rich Green (MCAG), Janet Young (UC Merced), Frank Quintero (Redevelopment/Economic Development), Ken Testa (Merced City Schools), Stan Mollart (McSwain Schools), Ken Mitten (Fire Chief), & Steve Wang (Deputy City Attorney)

Meeting initiated at 10:05 a.m.

Kim Hudson (Quad Knopf) gave a brief overview of the General Plan process to date.

Greg Abramson (Quad Knopf) discussed the Draft Land Use map, and answered questions from the Committee.

Issues discussed by the Committee:

Area 8 (Mission Lakes):

- Residential development could pose a threat to the Merced Airport.
- School district cannot locate any school facilities within the area due to the airport. The result would be excessive commuting time for students.
- Area is split between 2 school districts-Weaver & McSwain.
- Should be designated industrial.

Area 12 (Castle Farms):

- There is currently no good access for this area to either Highway 99 or downtown.
- Castle Airport is influencing this area, but there would be areas where schools could locate outside of the Airport Influence Zones, but a portion might be included in Atwater School District.

Sewer service:

- Probably a line down Cardella and Thornton, serving Castle Farms and Area 11.
- Cardella trunk could replace the need for a trunk to serve UC Community on east side (through Area 4A) down to Gerard line
- Interim basis--can serve Cardella line uses on Bellvue trunk.
- R Street trunk line has some extra capacity.
- South side--Plans to upgrade Gerard trunk; Possible new Mission Ave trunk line.

Circulation:

- North-south access is poor.
- Major intersection problems at Highway 59 and Olive.
- Atwater Expressway will help, but there is no money set aside for this project.
- County is concerned about impacts on county roads and highways.
- Infrastructure improvement costs would be significant.

Merced Irrigation District:

- District is concerned about the designation of the Merced Lateral (on north side of North Bear Creek Drive)-it is currently designated "Open Space." District preference would be for a residential use, so as to facilitate placing lateral underground. OS designation may lead adjacent landowners to believe it is a public amenity, and oppose undergrounding.
- City staff does not believe it is designated OS, but will research.

Agriculture:

- Planning and environmental documents need to address agricultural uses and mitigation for development of ag land.
- Area 8 contains prime ag soils.
- Mitigation through impact fees should be considered.
- Need to coordinate with County ag. Policies, under development with County General Plan Update.
- Need to spur discussions with other cities and county on ag. policy.

Schools:

- What kind of long-range planning have school districts been doing?
- There is a School Master Plan, but it is outdated.
- Some sites, such as Fahrens Park (between R St. and Hwy. 59) have been waiting for years for a school to be built.
- Other possible school sites:
 - At end of R St.
 - North of Bellevue
 - Cardella and G St.
- Standards: One elementary school for each square mile.
 One high school for every 9,000 houses.

TAC future actions:

- When does TAC start reviewing policies?

- City staff provided policy summary. TAC to review policies in September.

Redevelopment:

- Potential industrial developers indicate Area 11 North is undesirable due to poor access to the south. Should be business park/shopping center.
- Document needs to address jobs/housing balance.
- Area 8 should be industrial.

San Joaquin Valley Blueprint process: Many goals may be contradictory.

Fire protection:

- Standard response distance is 1-1.5 miles.
- Fire Department has a plan for provision of services.
- May want to develop policies regarding City/County communication and cooperation.

Policy review:

Kim Espinosa handed out copies of a summary of current General Plan policies. The Committee agreed that it was important to have a meeting where the policies were discussed in detail. It was determined that such a meeting will take place in September.