



CITY OF CARSON

Legislation Text

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Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, August 20, 2019

Discussion

SUBJECT:

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AND PRESENTATION OF THE ALTERNATIVES REPORT (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

The effort to update the 2004 General Plan began in Fall of 2017. This update, Carson 2040, includes five phases (<https://www.carson2040.com/>). Two phases have been completed and the third phase, consideration of the three Land Use Alternatives (Alternatives), will be completed with City Council's consideration of this item. The fourth phase will be preparation of the Preferred Land Use Plan based on the first three phases and additional input from City Council, Planning Commission, General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), the community, property owners, and staff. During this phase, specific land uses will be assigned for each parcel with specific densities (units per acre) for residential development and specific intensities (floor area ratio) for commercial and industrial developments. Density and intensity is what shapes the future built environment of the City. The final phase will include preparation of the General Plan document and the Environmental Impact Report. During this phase, the goals and policies of the General Plan will be developed, which will set the frame work for the future development of the City. After the adoption of the General Plan in late 2020, the process to update the City's zoning code will be initiated to establish development standards including but not limited to building setbacks and height, landscaping and parking requirements, and signage standards.

In the first phase, the consultant team produced an Existing Conditions Report that offered a detailed assessment of existing conditions, trends, and opportunities in the City. The report was developed using input from stakeholder interviews including Council members, neighborhood and pop-up outreach, and City staff. On February 13, 2018 the consultant team shared the Existing Conditions Report at a joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting.

In the second phase of the update process the consultant team assisted in developing the City's Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, Exhibit No.1. This effort was completed through extensive community outreach. Input was collected through an online survey, community workshops, stakeholder interviews, and GPAC meetings. Decision-makers also provided input during a joint City Council-Planning Commission study session. The Vision

Statement and Guiding Principles are summarized in the Alternatives Report, Exhibit No. 2, which is the focus of this report.

During the current phase of the update process (third phase), the consultant team produced the Alternatives and an Alternatives Report based on the previously established Vision Statement and Guiding Principles. To develop the Alternatives, potential “opportunity sites” with greatest potential for land use change or intensification over the next 20 years were identified within the Planning Area. This was accomplished by mapping vacant and underutilized parcels using Los Angeles County Assessor’s data, local knowledge, input from City staff and the community, and focused windshield surveys. The Alternatives were then developed using the mapped opportunity sites along with input from stakeholders, decision makers and the GPAC. It should be noted that these Alternatives are concepts only and will be subject to further refinements. As revised, it will provide the basis for establishing the Preferred Land Use Plan, which the General Plan will be based on.

The proposed land-use alternatives were circulated for public review during Winter/Spring of 2019 and public reaction and responses were collected through an online survey, neighborhood and pop-up outreach at several City events, a community workshop held May 22, 2019 and a joint Planning Commission and GPAC meeting held on July 23, 2019. This report summarizes the key findings of the Alternatives Report on the three land-use alternatives and seeks City Council input.

One of the Planning Commissioners observed that all three alternatives resulted in essentially the same number of units and jobs and suggested consideration of a fourth Alternative. Staff proposes to modify one of the alternatives instead of creating a new one. The Core Alternative is the most flexible alternative that can be modified as it contains large parcels of vacant land adjacent to the freeway. It already provides for up to 10 story buildings; however, this level of intensity could be added to the vacant parcels adjacent to the freeway with a potential for large scale developments. If the City Council desires, the General Plan could allow buildings over 10 stories to capture the economic value of being adjacent to the freeways in select locations. This additional height maybe allowed if projects meet certain criteria such as outstanding design and amenities, economic benefits to the City such as tax revenues, jobs, etc. (Exhibit 3).

II. RECOMMENDATION

- 1. DISCUSS AND PROVIDE INPUT** on the three Land Use Alternatives; AND
- 2. PROVIDE DIRECTION** on the modifications to the Core Alternative.

III. ALTERNATIVES

None.

IV. BACKGROUND

All three Land Use Alternatives (Alternatives) seek to achieve the objectives and vision of the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles. They explore different ways in which different

land uses can be distributed throughout the City. All three Alternatives enhance neighborhood connectivity (pedestrian and bicycle networks), create a continuous park/trail along the Dominguez Channel, continue the economic development growth along Carson Street into other parts of the City, create neighborhood-serving retail near California State University Dominguez Hills and in the southern portion of the City, preserve existing single-family neighborhoods, retain and expand key industrial uses, and create buffers between residential and industrial land uses.

Alternatives

Alternatives explore different ways in which various land uses, including office, retail, housing, industrial, and open space, could be distributed throughout the City of Carson. They are designed to present a range of choices that would allow for community input and evaluation of the impacts associated with different land use decisions. This analysis is a tool to identify and quantify areas in Carson where future development is most likely to occur throughout the General Plan Horizon (through the year 2040).

Alternative 1: Core

The Core Alternative seeks to concentrate new development in a central area in the City resulting in a vibrant, connected core area with a diverse mix of uses. Streetscape, pedestrian, and bicycle-way improvements will be focused in this core area to promote active, walkable environments, with easy access to stores, services, parks, and other public uses. Additional development would take place in select focus areas outside of this core.

The mixed-use pattern of new development along Carson Street is envisioned to expand along the portion of the corridor between I-110 and Wilmington Avenue. A density increase overlay is proposed on the blocks north and south of Carson Street to provide additional housing that reflects a density more similar to a “downtown.” Avalon Boulevard would connect the inner core area to key large-scale development opportunities along I-405, including the 157-acre District at South Bay project, the South Bay Pavilion, Dignity Sports Complex, as well as the proposed Carol Kimmelman Foundation Athletic and Academic Campus.

Alternative 2: Centers

Alternative 2 focuses on development of several centers throughout the City. While each node or center will contain a different mix of uses, depending on location and available opportunity sites, each will contain various housing, employment, and commercial uses in a walkable, higher-density pattern. These centers will not only accommodate new projected growth in the community, but they will also act as focus areas for the surrounding neighborhoods, attracting stores and services to existing neighborhoods that lack them and an improved pedestrian-scale public realm with cafes, restaurants, and public gathering places. The radius around each node is approximately one-half mile, or a ten-minute walking distance, to keep each center walkable.

Carson Street redevelopment is still envisioned to expand, though concentrated around the intersections of Carson and Main Street, and Carson Street and Avalon Boulevard, and at

densities somewhat lower than envisioned in the Core Alternative. Additional centers are proposed in the vicinity of Main Street and Del Amo Boulevard, which complements development of the District at South Bay and takes advantage of proximity to major highways. The South Bay Pavilion is another center, which provides retail and visitor commercial uses close to the major thoroughfares and transitions into mixed-use, office, and industrial flex uses further from the highway. In another center, industrial flex and intensification of underutilized industrial parcels create an employment-centered mixed-use area in proximity to the Del Amo Blue Line Station. Other centers provide more housing and commercial uses near California State University Dominguez Hills and in the southern portion of the City around Main Street and Sepulveda Boulevard.

Alternative 3: Corridors

The Corridor Alternative clusters redevelopment around major thoroughfares throughout the City, with an increased focus on corridors with the greatest development opportunities. Development of a mix of uses along these corridors is integrated with updated streetscapes and linkages between neighborhoods. The overall scale and density of development would vary somewhat throughout the City; however, overall the density of development would be lower than in the Core or Centers Alternatives and is more evenly spread throughout the City. Generally, mixed-use development is proposed along major streets, with supporting retail, housing, office, and employment uses around the periphery of the mixed-use areas. Main Street, Figueroa Street, and Broadway are the focus of development from nearly the southern border to the northern border of the City. The Carson Street redevelopment is extended from the City's western border to Wilmington Avenue, with some additional commercial redevelopment envisioned along Carson Street in the Lincoln Village neighborhood. Additional development is proposed along Alameda Street, Sepulveda Boulevard, Del Amo Boulevard, and Avalon Boulevard.

Comparison of Alternatives

The Alternatives are designed to model a range of growth scenarios. Residential and non-residential land uses vary by corridor depending on the alternative. This variation in land uses would result in varying population, housing, jobs, and non-residential square footages by alternative in 2040.

The Core Alternative has the least amount of housing and population growth, and the Centers Alternative the highest, although the difference in total housing and population between the Alternatives is modest. The Alternatives differ more greatly in the amount of non-residential growth and resultant jobs. All Alternatives would result in large increases in retail jobs, although the Corridors Alternative has the least growth in this sector. The Core Alternative shows the largest growth in office jobs and the smallest growth in industrial jobs. The Core Alternative, which also has the lowest population growth, results in the largest growth in overall jobs. The Core Alternative proposes the most office use of the three Alternatives and the least amount of multi-family development. The Centers Alternative proposes the most industrial land use of the three Alternatives, and it has the largest expected population growth, leading to the highest average City service costs among the Alternatives.

Conclusions

The Core Alternative is more net fiscally positive than the other buildout alternatives. This can be attributed to more building area dedicated to office and retail use, which increase business license tax revenue as well as sales and property tax revenue. It is important to remember that shifting real estate markets and changes in the economy as a whole could alter this fiscal analysis. It is envisioned that attributes from each Alternative will ultimately find their way into a hybrid selection as each offer development opportunities that will enhance the City over the General Plan Horizon (through the year 2040). Staff would like to obtain City Council's input into the Alternatives selection process.

Community Outreach Summary

The proposed Alternatives were circulated for public review during Winter/Spring 2019 and public reaction and responses collected through an online survey, neighborhood and pop-up outreach at several City events, a community workshop held May 22, 2019 and a joint Planning Commission and GPAC meeting held on July 23, 2019.

Planning Commission Comments

On July 23, 2019 the Planning Commission and the GPAC held a joint meeting during which time the following comments from the participants were collected:

- More economic development investment programs should be considered to help make the Alternatives concepts a reality;
- All three alternatives result in essentially the same number of units and jobs and a fourth Alternative should be proposed;
- Consideration should be given to having wider sidewalks and parkways for safe pedestrian access and making improvements to the transportation corridors, especially those for pedestrian and biking activities;
- Include considerations in the General Plan to revitalize the east side of Carson Street;
- Add more entertainment designated areas to the Land Use Plan; and
- Encourage alternative parking designs other than surface parking to maximize use of land.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

VI. EXHIBITS

1. City's Vision Statement and Guiding Principles (Under Separate Cover, <https://www.carson2040.com/reports-and-products>) (pgs. 6-11)
2. Alternatives Report (Under Separate Cover, <https://www.carson2040.com/reports-and-products>) (pgs. 12-87)
3. Modifications to the Core Alternative (pg. 88)

1.

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