



CITY OF CARSON

Legislation Text

File #: 2021-029, Version: 1

Report to Mayor and City Council

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Discussion

SUBJECT:

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AND PRESENTATION OF THE PREFERRED PLAN (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

During the past several months, staff and the City's General Plan consultant, Dyett & Bhatia ("Consultant"), developed three land-use alternatives using the mapped opportunity sites along with input from stakeholders, decision makers and the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC). The three alternatives were also shared with the stakeholders who provided further input on them. Staff and the City's Consultant have incorporated the comments received from the community, stakeholders and decision makers and combined the three alternatives into one Preferred Plan.

During the public participation process for the Preferred Plan, the Planning Division provided a comment period to the community from September 2, 2020 to October 25, 2020. Outreach included direct mail postcards to each Carson commercial and residential address, weekly email blasts to over 3,000 Carson stakeholders, a hotline available in English, Spanish and Tagalog languages, a dedicated email inbox and website, and social media posts to encourage stakeholders to share their comments. Stakeholders were also encouraged to write hard copy letters and place telephone calls to the Planning Division to share their comments.

On December 1, 2020, staff presented the Preferred Plan and shared community input with the City Council. The City Council continued the item to provide opportunity for more City Council discussion on the Preferred Plan and related policies. Once the City Council approves the Preferred Plan, the Consultant will continue the process to complete the General Plan.

II. RECOMMENDATION

TAKE the following actions:

1. **DISCUSS** and **PROVIDE** input on the Preferred Plan and associated policies; AND
2. **PROVIDE** direction to staff to continue the General Plan process including writing the General Plan document and the Environmental Impact Report based on the Preferred Plan.

III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE another action the City Council deems appropriate, consistent with the requirements of the law.

IV. BACKGROUND

The following provides a summary of the issues, staff would like the City Council to consider and provide direction to staff:

1. **Community Benefits.** The General Plan will aim to enhance Carson's amenities to continue to be leader in the South Bay and which will greatly enrich the community for current and future residents and also help the City attract new businesses. One way new developments could provide for new or enhanced amenities is through a density bonus program. For example, the General Plan sets a base density for residential areas in the City. However, if developers prefer to develop at higher densities, they can do so by providing community benefits. Similarly, industrial developments can enjoy a slightly increased FAR beyond the base permitted FAR if they provide community benefits. These community benefits will be developed at a later time; however, some examples could include: contributions toward beautification of public properties, adopt a park or street program, future civic facilities, affordable housing, transportation systems, programs for the arts, etc.
2. **Protection of Sensitive Uses.** Protecting the sensitive uses such as residential areas, schools and parks from traffic, noise, and incompatible uses is an essential part of preserving and creating a great community for Carson residents. City's current standards can be expanded to create additional expanded buffer areas and/or mitigation measures for these sensitive uses.
3. **Strong Economic Base.** Diversification of the City's economic base is perhaps one of the most important aspects of ensuring the City's economic viability and livability in the future. Some of this diversification could come by "rezoning" some properties through

the General Plan. This “rezoning” may create non-conforming uses. These are uses that were permitted with the old zoning; however, they would be prohibited with the new zoning. Usually, cities allow for amortization of non-conforming uses meaning that they allow them to exist for a number of years and then require their removal. However, this method has proved to be difficult to implement in most cases and is not recommended. Another way to address non-conforming uses is to allow them to continue as long as the existing buildings remain on the site. However, if buildings are demolished, the new buildings have to comply with new standards including uses.

- 4. Business Attraction.** As part of City’s economic development policies, the City could consider providing incentives to property owners who bring in uses to speculative buildings (those built with no specific use) that create desirable new jobs and sales tax. Similarly, the City could also consider developing incentives for desired businesses to attract them to the City.
- 5. Enhanced Image.** Enhancing the City’s built environment could further boost the City’s image. The City could consider policies that support beautification of public properties including a Citywide Master Plan of Streets addressing medians, parkways, entry monuments, way finding signs, public art, street furniture, etc. Similarly, policies that encourage or require private properties to improve the appearance of their properties, including maintenance and renovations, could boost the City’s image. In addition, guidelines for new developments could further improve the City’s image including enhanced building façades, screening of parking areas, landscaping, etc.
- 6. Improved Health and Safety.** Continue to build on past success of making Carson one of the safest cities in the South Bay, the City could consider policies to increase the health and safety of the community such as citywide camera systems and other measures. The City could also continue to expand the infrastructure and programs to promote healthy life style for Carson residents promoting the use of parks, walking paths, and public spaces for exercise and fitness.
- 7. New Cultural Facilities.** Building new cultural facilities such as performing arts center, historical museum, gallery spaces, or similar facilities could be attractive for Carson. The General Plan could include policies to conduct feasibility studies for this type of facilities.

8. **Engaging Stake Holders.** Carson is home to major stakeholders such as Cal State University, Dignity Sports Park and also legacy land owners such as Watson Land and Carson Companies as well as the refineries. The General Plan could include policies to explore partnerships that could benefit all parties.
9. **Truck Yards.** Consider whether new truck yards, container yards, storage yards, laydown yards, or similar uses should continue to be permitted in the City and if they are permitted how to construct and operate them in a manner that doesn't diminish the quality of life in the community.
10. **Preserve Commercial areas.** For the past few years Carson has received a great amount of interest from residential developers. In some instances these residential areas are proposed in commercial areas. The General Plan could include policies that new developments would include commercial areas to preserve the City's commercial base.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

None.VI. EXHIBITS

1. City Council Staff Report Dated December 1, 2020 (pgs. 5-8)
2. Preferred Plan Map (pg. 9-16)
3. Preferred Plan Land Use Classifications (pgs.17)
- 1.

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