

General Plan Policy Community Workshop

Group Notes

Saturday March 12, 2012

Pasadena City College, Circadian Conference Room

TABLE 1: SUSTAINABILITY & OPEN SPACE

Group 1

I. GHG Emissions

- Existing General Plan
 - How is growth addressed?
- Pasadena's leadership role
 - How aggressive should we be? (e.g. 40% by...)
- Need more sales receipts (sales tax) to pay for sustainability measures
- Gas prices will continue to rise
 - How much do we need to drive?

II. Land Use

- How is this update different from 1994 GP?
- Continue the "target development in core..."
- Neighborhood villages – where is there room for growth?
 - Differentiate between "transit villages" and "neighborhood villages"
- People who live in places without access to transit? Parking?
- Creation of "neighborhood village"
 - Not at expense of downtown
- Support mixed use and multi-family residential development but do not compete with downtown
- Playhouse District study
 - If we don't grow, existing vibrant downtown will suffer
- Fire station (services) need priority attention
 - Long-term infrastructure, services
- NW Concerns
 - Connection to Old Pasadena
 - Parking, services
- Central District
 - Increase capacity and parking
- Water, energy usage – increase per capita
 - Lead in efficiency
- Downtown policies need enforcement/implementation
 - Need programs/incentives to encourage sustainable measures/actions

- Thresholds need to be lowered?
- Neighborhoods in Arroyo need discussion on priorities
- Capacities first before growth and efficiencies
- Importance of prioritizing areas of growth
- Neighborhood Village
 - Concentration of services intended for daily needs

III. Building and Site Design

- Downtown infill development
- Reduce cost of infrastructure, maintenance
- More sustainable housing

IV. Economics and Social Equity

- NW Concern
 - Not enough space, services, economic opportunities
- Consequences of growth on cost
 - How do we get more businesses, economic impacts finite
 - Will more residents affect business?
 - Increase business
 - Important to not spread businesses
 - Example: Arroyo Parkway
- Housing as part of sustainable growth/development
 - Reduce gentrification
 - More residents – control price, supply and demand to control gentrification
 - Moderate income levels
 - Gentrification displaces lower income groups

V. Open Space

- NW Concern
 - Need temporary community gardens
- Playhouse District
 - Poor in open space
 - Parks over parking
- Open Space/Conservation Element
 - Adaptive re-use of areas (temporary community gardens, etc.)

Group 2

I. GHG Emissions

- Pasadena as a sustainable city
 - Role as a leader

- How aggressive should we be?
- Are there tradeoffs?
- Define sustainability according to what it is able to do to push this role
- Measure
- Watch city's growth

II. Land Use

- Transit-Oriented Development creates 500 unit developments
 - Example: Westgate (apt. units)
 - Nothing to ensure their urban living experience; long-term occupancy; stakeholders spend more on services
 - Need to equalize/maintain balance of owners and renters
- Targeted development in 1994 – large projects
 - Off track and lost context
- Big massing of projects
- We need compact in-fill development
 - It worked in downtown where people live and work in the same area
 - Doesn't need to be 500-unit projects
- Land use economics is different
 - City needs to rethink how to implement this mechanism
- Minimize distance and maximize choice
- Codes have improved
 - Need sustainable practices

III. Building and Site Design

- 2-story apartments/housing versus 8-story apartment buildings
- Logical evolution means projects need to be in context of place where they occur
- Compact development need not mean 20-story buildings
- Lake/Washington
 - Economically-sound villages

IV. Economics and Social Equity

- Need balance between renters and owners
- Economics place/role in sustainability
- Apartments are full, condos still vacant
 - Both contribute to economy
- Eventually renters will be owners
- Biggest issue is housing in social equity
- Population projections

- How are these factored in?
- City estimates of 2010 populations were lower than the state projections
- Inclusionary housing in effect citywide
- Live-work balance
 - Building more housing & retaining units are needed
 - Broader than Central District
- Need to rethink housing (inclusionary)
 - How to use funds
 - Subsidize
- Approximate cost per unit
 - Cost of fees
- Need housing for all income levels
- Cost and development should be the same for affordable units and market units
- All developers pay the cost of project development regardless of income levels the project is intended for
 - Sustainability means higher costs
 - Technology needs to catch up with sustainable products/practices
 - Balance in policy
 - Long-term benefits versus upfront costs
 - Example: LED lighting, water usage
- Rules need to be re-visited for practical reasons
 - Example: screw-in fluorescent bulbs

V. Open Space

- Parks Fee
 - Fund to purchase new open space & perform maintenance of existing parks

Group 3

I. GHG Emissions

- Air Quality
- Leadership role in sustainability
 - How aggressive do we want to be?
- Cost of environmental measures/management
 - Paid by everyone, upfront cost higher but has long-term benefit and recouped in long-term cost
 - What is the community's value?

II. Land Use

- Neighborhood Village
 - Why located at major intersections? High-speed traffic

- Village Concept
 - Do not apply equally throughout the city
 - Example: Central District – concentration of density, services, community
 - Example: Areas north of freeway
- South Lake is a village
 - Minutes from Gold Line Station
- Impact of village on surrounding areas, traffic, noise, visual
 - High concentration of people
 - Example: Del Mar Station
- Assumption on walking distance
 - ¼ mile and/or 5-10 minute walk
- Context of walking distance
 - Different to differing populations
 - Values change over time
- Density also makes places walkable
 - Concentration
 - Quality of walking experience dependent on elements like traffic speed and safety
- Central District needs critical mass to promote walking and housing opportunities close to jobs
- Encourage green businesses to move to Pasadena
 - Definition hazy
 - Focus should be to encourage businesses to be as green as possible
- Central area where people can get information on recycling efforts

III. Building and Site Design

- City's role in high-level developments
 - A market factor and not the city's?

IV. Economics and Social Equity

- Housing is a social equity issue
 - Housing types diverse for all segments of population
- Housing ownership outlook can change over time
 - Change with social norms, economic conditions
- Regardless of ownership status they contribute to economic activities
- Existing housing that can assure working families have access to decent affordable housing
 - Maintain jobs in city, need affordable housing
- Open new businesses and maintain existing ones
 - Fees
 - Change policies to retain businesses
 - Diverse areas of commerce
 - Very difficult to live in Pasadena

- Need support from the city
- Do everything we can for affordable housing
 - Loft on Arroyo Parkway: can city influence property owners to allow various uses and residences
- Affordable to do business in Pasadena
- Incubator/Incentivize small start-up business in city-owned properties
- Funding from private sector
 - City can provide land and space for start-up or new businesses
 - “Green certification” of businesses

V. Open Space

- Economic policy to access more space/land

TABLE 2: URBAN DESIGN, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, & ARTS/CULTURE

Group 1

I. Sense of Place

- Provide/reflect/refer to the Hispanic heritage in cultural architecture
- Modify D (Design buildings so they reflect the unique aspects of Pasadena’s history, culture...) so it does not conflict with A (Create “transit villages” and “neighborhood villages” with a unique identity and distinct character...)
- Identify the various neighborhoods (i.e. Lamanda Park)
- Enhance the existing character
- Create new landmarks including public art, civic monuments...(E) is contradictory with enhance
- Creativity is a core element
- Maintain/enhance
- Creativity also needs to make sense (“context”)
- Preserve and enjoy view sheds
 - Well-crafted and thoughtful design guidelines
 - Form based codes

II. Contextual Design

- Integrate historic resources into A (Design buildings so that they can relate to neighboring structures in terms of setbacks, heights...)
 - The whole area, broaden the scope
- Setbacks are essential to pedestrian activity when setbacks are appropriate
- Setbacks are not the solution
 - Differing standards by site

III. Architectural Excellence

- “Simply proportioned” is not good language and doesn’t lead to good projects
 - Not as prescriptive as setbacks
- Glass box on Orange Grove is not good

IV. Pedestrian Orientation

V. Historic Preservation

- Guiding Principle
 - Satisfactory changes
 - “Enhance” leads to larger development
 - Harmony should be the primary goal

VI. Arts/Culture

- Public art
 - Connect to district, area, beyond the site
 - Art is an element of the physical structure
 - Option of developer to incorporate into development or go into public art fund

Group 2

I. Sense of Place

- Placemaking elements
- Create new can be disastrous
- Enhance existing
- East Pasadena has no historical elements left
 - Should have new development
- Opportunity to make existing places better
 - Reason why people come here
- Transit/neighborhood villages too narrow
- Urban plazas/parks create social environment
- Growth and density
 - Walkability, transit, services
- Broadening definition of sense of place
- Acknowledge deficits of finances
- Take down telephone poles on N-S corridors

II. Contextual Design

- Not to be used as a tool preventing development
 - Focus on transitional scale
- Transitional development abutting areas that are protected

- Allow greater height in commercial areas
- Form based codes won't limit uses
- Building heights based on what form based code says
- Needs context between form, mass, and districts
- Economic restrictions of zoning
- Character-based city not use-based

III. Architectural Excellence

- City's priority should be about context versus choosing a specific style
- Related to historic preservation
 - There will be no variety or contemporary architecture
 - No adaptation
- Architecture and form are location driven
- Pedestrian experience to building/architecture
- Montana project
 - Works well with urban fabric

IV. Pedestrian Orientation

V. Historic Preservation

- Define limitations of what is historic and what is not
- What does it apply to? Neighborhood or building?
- Too limiting, okay to have contemporary building next to historic
 - Too much faux architecture
- Proposed changes to Guiding Principle
 - Harmonized too ambiguous – use respect, etc.
 - More than one way to harmonize

VI. Arts/Culture

Group 3

I. Sense of Place

- Districts and relation to arts and culture
- Identity
 - Do we need to define?
 - What we've been doing hasn't worked
- Identity imposed as opposed to generated?
 - Community and people create the identity not the city
- South Lake

- No identity
- Design form and economic development
- Branding through Pasadena's civic institutions
- Policy doesn't allow building anything to compete or live up to
- African American heritage
 - Museum that is not exclusive, find way to celebrate heritage
- Additional public spaces
- Pedestrian experience of multiple views in different areas
- Shouldn't limit areas that could have density to preserve a view
- Save specific civic views, views from residential areas
 - Not destroying views but moving them
- Preserve views that define city (e.g. City Hall)
- Provide a means for people to enjoy views
 - Access to top of City Hall, like L.A.

II. Contextual Design

- Transitions should be respected and aesthetically accommodating
- Setbacks increases pedestrian activity (e.g. Arroyo Parkway)

III. Architectural Excellence

- Celebrate past and present architecture while thinking about future architecture
- Diversity is essential
- Can't be too specific on the type of architecture allowed in the city

IV. Pedestrian Orientation

V. Historic Preservation

- Need to allow for adaptability
- Original guideline is better, new text is too narrow
 - Creates more confusion
- Need to distinguish what's to be preserved

VI. Arts/Culture

TABLE 4: EDUCATION, ECONOMIC VITALITY, & OTHER FACTORS

Group 1

I. Education

- How do we relate education to land use?
- Work with PUSD on shared facilities (playgrounds)

- Expressed concerns on liability
- Make areas safe for children, especially streets
- Safe alternative routes to get to school (public and private)
- Accountability/mixing of funds
- The city and schools are working well together
- Education as a new Guiding Principle
 - Examples: Arcadia, Fullerton, Santa Ana
- Level of equality in partnership
- City can facilitate traffic issues e.g. bicycle sharing program
- Address higher education in General Plan
 - Help them expand
- Public schools are suffering
- Policies should focus on PUSD but address the full spectrum
- PUSD covers a larger geographic area than Pasadena: the City should work with other cities

II. Economic Vitality

- Agree with statement A (Support existing businesses)
 - Capitalize on assets from statement E (Strengthen Pasadena's retail sector)
 - Transportation system supports growth
- Create "cultural market" in NW area (more economic development)
- Focus on other areas as well, e.g. East Pasadena
- Expressed concerns for property value
- Walnut area – Do we want diversity of uses?
 - Fiscal considerations for the city
 - Don't zone out uses that generate revenue
 - Already serving the purpose
 - There are other businesses competing for land in that area
 - Restaurant and retail bring in most money
- Too many nail salons
- Provide incentives for more research and development spaces
- Streamline the permitting process

III. Other Factors

- Workforce housing to foster economic vitality

Group 2

I. Education

- More money for public schools
- Joint use of facilities (fields)
- Education as social equity
- Make education an 8th Guiding Principle and General Plan Element
- Support Caltech expansion

- Focus only on PUSD
- Good public education attracts new residents to the city
- Connect schools and students to downtown
- Concentrate student housing near schools
- Science museums
- Reserving field spaces is difficult
- Tutorial programs
- Additional educational resources outside school
- Address both public and private schools in policies
- Promote social equity in education
- Joint use of school facilities – more coherent
- Housing as part of education
- Having the 8th Guiding Principle would help focus funding for education

II. Economic Vitality

- Supporting existing businesses (A)
 - Target growth in downtown area?
- Support because density is efficient (infrastructure, resources)
- Spread services around the city
 - East Pasadena & East Colorado
- East Pasadena Specific Plan
 - TOD doesn't work
- Encourage development along the Gold Line especially Fillmore Station
- More “depth” on corridors
- Neighborhood-serving and regional-serving services aren't the same
- Park-once system (podium/structure)
- TOD parking regulations restrict the number of parking spaces
- No parking in TOD areas

III. Other Factors

Group 3

I. Education

- New master plan for PCC
- Integrate the planning process
- Support school-to-career programs that help students apply academic knowledge to the workplace (B-5)
 - More job training programs
- Guiding Principle on education should be inclusive
- Potential financial benefits for joint facilities
- School sites should operate as community centers
- Integrate neighborhoods with school programs (e.g. field trips)

- Take into account funding first

II. Economic Vitality

- Support existing businesses (A)
 - Target growth in downtown?
- Need compact infill development
 - Younger generation wants this lifestyle
- Concentrate growth around transit nodes – East Pasadena
- Strengthen Pasadena’s retail sector (E)
 - Protect single-family residential neighborhoods
- What are the concerns for development in East Pasadena?
 - Traffic, single-family residential
- Downtown L.A. growth will inspire other areas
- Growth should be responsive to the context of place
- Stopping growth in one location won’t make it happen somewhere else
- Focus on quality of life first; the rest will follow
- New growth should be “auto hostile”
- Connect to nodes through pedestrian corridor
- How do we address affordable housing and natural resources? (e.g. water usage)
- Support existing businesses (A) and provide incentives and assistance to spin-off businesses from existing institutions (D-2) in conflict? (e.g. Sierra Madre)
- Social equity in economic policies
- Coordinate with business community, educational organizations to help attract new businesses (B-1)
 - Define (E) businesses

III. Other Factors