

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Attention: Laura C. Kuhn, City Manager

FROM: Maureen T. Carson, Director of Community Development

**SUBJECT: SELECTION OF THE PREFERRED LAND USE ALTERNATIVE FOR
CONSIDERATION IN THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

DISCUSSION:

The City Council held three General Plan Update study sessions in October. At these meetings, the Council considered the land use recommendations from the General Plan Update Steering Committee. The preferred land use alternative is needed to initiate the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan Update. The City Council needs to confirm the preferred land use alternative, provide direction on land use changes proposed as “clean up” items, and provide further direction some specific issues discussed at the study sessions. This direction will provide the basis for the Preferred Land Use Alternative.

Council Direction for Focus Areas

A summary of the Council’s direction for the Focus Areas is contained in Attachment A. The Focus Areas are 26 individual sites throughout the City that have been considered for alternative land uses. The City Council reviewed these sites and reached a majority consensus on the preferred land use alternative for each of the sites. Attachment A graphically shows each of the parcels and confirms the land use chosen by the City Council for the Preferred Land Use Alternative.

Proposed Land Use “Clean Up” Items

Staff has identified 13 properties where the existing General Plan land use does not reflect the existing development. These proposed “clean up” changes are identified in Attachment B. Letters were sent to all of the property owners regarding the proposed changes and there have been no objections. The proposed changes will not impact the continued use of the property with the current density of development. Staff requests that the Council review Attachment B and provide direction for including these changes in the Preferred Land Use Alternative.

Housing Mix Policy and High Density Residential Sites

The City Council raised concerns about having too many high density residential sites in the East of Leisure Town area as compared to the rest of the City. Staff was requested to provide additional information about this issue. Attachment C is a map of the City that shows existing vacant apartment sites, proposed sites for apartments and proposed sites for mixed use/apartments. The map indicates that most of the vacant apartment sites are in new master planned growth areas. There are also several new infill sites identified for mixed use/apartments. The sites are fairly dispersed throughout the City; however, the new growth areas provide the greatest opportunity for new sites.

The number of sites for higher density uses is driven by existing General Plan Policies which state:

Policy 2.5-G 2: Provide a citywide housing mix of approximately 60 percent single-family detached; 20 percent single-family with zero-lot lines, duplexes, triplexes, mobile homes and townhouses; and 20 percent garden apartments and condominiums. To achieve this approximate housing mix citywide, new development areas must contain a larger component of certain housing types as specified in Policy 2.5-I 3.

Policy 2.5-I 3: In the Alamo Place Policy Plan and the Hawkins, Fry and Vanden Specific Plans, development areas require a housing unit mix of 55 percent single family, 25 percent moderate density and 20 percent high density.

The Steering Committee previously indicated their support for the City to continue the existing housing mix policies stated above. The housing mix policies allow for a wide choice of housing options for future residents. They also serve to help meet the City’s Housing Element requirements. In regards to the specific location of apartment sites, staff proposes that policies be incorporated in the General Plan that identify standards that would encourage apartments to be designed where the sites do not directly interface with single family residential. Ideally, apartments would adjoin major roads and non-residential uses.

Planning for apartments is also influenced by State Housing Element laws. The adopted Housing Element, which was certified by the State in 2010, undergoes a rigorous State review every five or so years. The City must document that there are available sites zoned as high density within the City limits, with available infrastructure within the timeframe of the Housing Element to meet the mandated number of housing units at a variety of income levels. The current housing unit requirements and affordability requirements are:

2007 – 2014 City of Vacaville Housing Need

Income Category	Very Low Income (0 to 50% of Median Income)	Low Income (51 to 80% of Median Income)	Moderate Income (81 to 120% of Median income)	Above Moderate Income (Over 120% of Median income)
2011 Income Limits (4-person household)	Below \$40,750	Below \$64,200	Below \$97,800	Above \$97,800
Housing Need 2,901 total units	754	468	515	1,164

The City must prove that the above housing unit number and affordability can be achieved within the current Housing Element cycle (through 2014). Because sites within the Northeast Growth Area will not be viable sites until infrastructure is built to serve the area, the State will not allow the City to count these planned units to meet the current housing element cycle. So while it may be desirable to have some sites in the Northeast area, they will not count towards meeting near-

term requirements. It is important that the sites identified for nearer-term growth, such as the Brighton Landing site, include apartment sites for this reason.

The next Housing Element is due for revision and State review in 2014. Depending upon the subsequent deadlines dictated by the State, staff expects that there will be three to five new Housing Elements reviewed during the timeframe of the new General Plan. The City is now under even more pressure now that Redevelopment monies for affordable housing may be eliminated. In addition, with the implementation of Senate Bill 375, which links transportation funds to sustainable growth land use policies and housing, the City's eligibility for certain infrastructure and transportation funds is tied to having a certified Housing Element. While the City has the option to reconsider the location of apartment sites, at this time and under the current State mandates, it is recommended that the City continue the past policy regarding a mix of housing in new growth areas and include the three sites identified for the East of Leisure Town Road Area.

Revised Jepson Ranch Land Use Plan

Subsequent to the Council's October study sessions, staff and the Jepson Ranch landowners' representative met to discuss the Council's direction and public input. As a result of these discussions, minor modifications have been proposed by the landowners' group for the East of Leisure Town Road Growth Area and more significant changes are proposed for the Northeast Growth area. They have prepared two modified land use alternative proposals, attached as Attachments C and D. Both include revisions to the Northeast Growth Area to reflect the Council's direction regarding high density sites, but also include changes not previously discussed by the Council. The additional changes include revisions to land uses in the Northeast area to reduce the amount of Highway Commercial lands with an intended goal to reduce the potential traffic impacts identified for Buildout of the new General Plan. The two alternate plans differ in that one of the alternatives removes the high density residential sites from East of Leisure Town Road. Because these changes were not previously reviewed by the Steering Committee and the City Council, staff requests that the Council review the proposed changes on November 8 and provide specific direction keeping in mind that the housing mix issue could pose future problems with Housing Element requirements.

Council Direction for the East of Leisure Town Road Growth Area

At their October 20 study session, the City Council generally supported a revised Alternative C dated October 20, 2011, proposed by the Jepson Ranch owners group. The Council was also supportive of the Steering Committee recommendations. Based upon a review of the landowners' revised alternatives, there are two outstanding issues for these areas.

The first issue is regarding apartment sites. Shifting all of the sites to the Northeast area poses a concern for children living several miles away from the schools in the Dixon Unified School District, which serves all residences east of Meridian Road. Ideally, there would be a mix of housing choices in the new growth area including apartments which would be along the Jepson Parkway, a major transportation corridor with bus transit stops. Council's final direction is requested regarding the three proposed apartment sites East of Leisure Town Road.

The second issue is concerning Neighborhood Commercial sites. Two neighborhood commercial sites are shown at one intersection in this growth area, at Hawkins Road and Leisure Town Road. The Steering Committee recommended limiting such sites to one corner of an intersection. The landowners each prefer to retain the possibility of a commercial site. The growth area would also be able to provide some space for non-retail development at these sites, such as professional office uses often found in neighborhood areas, though lands are not

specifically identified for this land use. The City Council could identify this location as a suitable intersection at which to provide both neighborhood serving retail, support services, and other non-residential uses on these two corners. As an example, professional and medical offices, churches and day care centers could be appropriate neighborhood serving uses as an alternative to a traditional neighborhood center typically anchored by a grocery store. Policy could potentially be incorporated into the General Plan to address the need to avoid over-supply of food stores and prevent future underutilized shopping centers.

Council Direction for the Northeast Growth Area

The property owners' revised land plan submitted after the Council's last study session, includes a decreased amount of Highway Commercial lands and places some properties at the Midway/Interstate 80 interchange in an Urban Reserve designation. Council input is requested in regards to the revised land plan.

In addition, staff and the Jepson Ranch landowner's representative have discussed the concerns regarding potential traffic impacts and agree that a preliminary traffic analysis would be a useful tool to determine the potential traffic impacts resulting from the land use changes to Alternative C. Staff and the General Plan consultants believe it is appropriate to allow for no more than 30 days to have a focused traffic analysis prepared for this new adjusted land use plan prior to initiating the traffic study for the Draft Environmental Impact Report. The benefit from this iterative study is that there will be information available up front for the Jepson Ranch landowners and the broader community as to whether the revised alternative and the proposed roundabouts might lessen the traffic impacts identified in the Alternatives Workbook Analysis. Reduced impacts could potentially lessen the need for full improvements to the Meridian and Midway Road/ Interstate-80 interchanges that will serve the Northeast Growth area and potentially lessen impacts in other parts of the City. This information will also be useful for the Steering Committee, as the General Plan Update moves into the policy discussion, which will include reviewing the traffic level of service policy. The cost of this separate study will be borne by the Jepson Estates' group.

REQUESTED COUNCIL DIRECTION:

Staff requests that the Council provide their final direction for the land uses in the Focus Areas, the Clean Up Sites, and the East of Leisure Town Growth and the Northeast Growth Areas. At the December 13 meeting, a visual representation of the final citywide Preferred Land Use Alternative will be presented to the Council for their review, based on the Council's November 8 direction. It should be noted that this will be a formality and no additional changes would be expected at that time unless directed by the City Council.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The General Plan Update is funded with an inter-fund loan from non-General Fund sources, approved by the City Council in 2010. At the conclusion of the General Plan Update, a development related fee will be established to recover the costs of the update from the property owners that benefit from the update.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests that the City Council confirm the Preferred Land Use Alternative for consideration in the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan Update.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A – City Council Direction Regarding Focus Sites
- B – General Plan Map Clean Up Sites
- C – Map of Existing/Vacant and Proposed Apartment Sites
- D – Revised Jepson Estates Land Use Plans (prepared by Phillippi Engineering)
- E – Correspondence from Solano County