



CITY OF VACAVILLE GENERAL PLAN
STEERING COMMITTEE

City Council Chambers, Vacaville City Hall
650 Merchant Street, Vacaville

July 21, 2011
6:00 p.m.

Vacaville General Plan Update
Meeting #9:
Policy Issues
Meeting Summary

Committee Member Attendance

Chairman Joe Niccoli
Vice-Chair Pamela Greaves
Frank Crim - Absent
Brett Johnson
Dawn La Bar
Shannon Nadasdy - Absent
Denise Suihkonen
Steve Wilkins
James Woolsey

Staff in Attendance

Community Development Director Maureen Carson
City Planner Fred Buderl
Senior Planner Tyra Hays
Acting Assistant Director Steve Sawyer
Park Planner Hew Hesterman
Community Services Director Kerry Walker
Public Works Director Rod Moresco
Assistant Director of Utilities Royce Cunningham
Senior Civil Engineer Steve Sawyer
Associate Civil Engineer Ozzie Hilton
Joanna Jansen, DC&E
Tanya Sundberg, DC&E

1. Roll Call:
2. Communications: None
3. Approval of Meeting Summary – April 14, 2011
Committee Member Crim moved, Vice-Chair Greaves seconded. Motion approved 9-0
4. Business from the Floor:

Peter Blicher related information regarding an economic summit which voted to pursue a study with the goal of reducing developer impact fees that could have bearing on what will be discussed later.

5. Status Update of the General Plan Process and Land Use Alternatives

Joanna Jansen, DC&E provided a brief overview of the process and the three land use alternatives that were approved by the City Council. The traffic, infrastructure and public services workbook should be completed and published in late August, and will be discussed as part of three meetings.

Community Development Director Carson provided a quick update, and reviewed the outreach that has occurred with other agencies and community groups when introducing the three alternatives and options. Once the alternatives are available for public review, there will be outreach to other responsible agencies.

6. Overview of the Process to Development Policies and Actions

Next policy development tasks: 1. Workshop on Saturday August 20th. 2. Draft preliminary goals, policies, and actions. 3. Steering committee meeting to review draft goals, policies, and actions. 4. Incorporate final policy options into draft General Plan.

7. Steering Committee Discussion on Policy Issues

a. Agricultural Buffer

1995 master water agreement with SID establishes 500 foot -buffer between agricultural lands and residential uses.

Development more than 1,000 ft east of Leisure Town Road requires an amendment to the master water agreement.

Amendment may consider expansion or contraction of buffer and appropriate uses within the buffer.

The master water agreement states that expansion of the Urban Service Area Boundary must consider expansion of the width of the agricultural buffer.

Development within the Northeast Area could require an additional agricultural buffer.

Public Comment:

Tom Phillippi, PEI, spoke on behalf of the Jepson Estates landowners. He provided illustrations for three options for the location of the 500 ft. agricultural buffer and the type of uses that could occur in the buffer. He answered questions from the Committee, adding that the property owners own property on both sides of the buffer alternatives and no farm land would be affected. He also reviewed how detention basins could be utilized.

Community Development Director Carson reviewed the Cities Urban Growth Boundary that goes up to the PG&E lines. She clarified that they don't anticipate having jurisdiction of that area until after 2028.

Ms. Jansen reviewed the buffer in the three different alternatives, adding that their discussion needs to consider the following:

How wide should the buffer be?

What uses should be allowed within the buffer?

Should a buffer be required adjacent to non-residential uses?

Where should the agricultural buffer be located; inside the urban service area? In the agricultural service area? Or straddling both?

Jim Gilliam, representing JLM Ranch, reviewed the area he represents, adding that a residential use is appropriate. He noted concern about placing agricultural next to the rural residential.

Public Comments:

- Potential issue of the growth boundary encumbering land.
- 600 feet is not an adequate buffer.
- Consider the legal ramifications of detention basins.
- Parks and open space should be accessible to people.
- Concern about locating detention basins east of the power lines, potential of kids riding dirt bikes in the area.
- Provide some type of access for maintenance.
- Existing uses in the area, such as farm animals may not be compatible with new residences.

Committee Member Comments:

- Consider providing passive open space.
- Provide a buffer adjacent to non-residential urban uses.
- 500 feet would be an acceptable width for an ag buffer.
- Provide landscaping within the buffer, but not paths that would encourage people to walk there.
- Be observant of the cost for maintenance of linear parks.
- Concern about creating parks that aren't really parks.

7:30 break

b. Policy Plans-Infrastructure Constraints and Permitted Use

- Inadequate infrastructure limits development in the Interchange Business Park, Golden Hill Business Park and Vaca Valley Business Park policy plans.
- Some commercial, manufacturing, and industrial uses allowed in the business park policy plans require sewer capacity beyond what is available.
- Some sewer capacity is allocated to users who will likely not use it, thus "stranding" capacity.
- Development within these policy plans will also require traffic mitigation due to Level Of Service deficiencies on Vaca Valley Parkway.

Public Comment Opened:

- Maintain the uses that are allowed in the Vaca Valley Business Park.
- Infrastructure should be available to accommodate hotels and restaurants.
- Membership organizations generate less traffic.
- Provide outreach to policy plan land owners and ensure they understand what changes may occur with their property.
- Concerns with allocated sewer capacity and how do we reimburse current rate payers.

Committee Member Comments:

- Improvements to the infrastructure should consider long range development.
- Sewer rights should not be a commodity for a land owner, but should be controlled by the City.
- If capacity is not being used in one area, it should be able to be reallocated in other areas.
- Having adequate capacity could be used to entice businesses to Vacaville.
- Receive a commitment from a user before building up capacity so we don't have capacity that won't be used.
- Provide flexibility.

c. Parks – Acquisition and Maintenance

A sustainable park system must properly fund three carefully balanced components:

1. Land - Right amount, location, and type
2. Development – Quality design, satisfying recreational needs, and providing safe environments
3. Maintenance – Maintaining original design quality

Vacaville's basic design requirements include:

- Utilization of the site's natural beauty including terrain features, creeks, mature trees, view sheds, etc.
- Provide for the recreation needs of the community.
- Provide a safe environment, meet safety and accessibility standards, and utilize durable materials.
- Design must be cost-effective to maintain.

Basic park maintenance costs include:

- Regular mowing and care of turf, trees, and shrubs.
- Clean up of trash, vandalism, and graffiti.
- Repair and periodic replacement of equipment, irrigation, paved surfaces, etc.
- Utilities – water (subsidized at 24%) and electricity

Cost per acre can vary greatly depending on access, design, development intensity, plant materials, detail, etc.

Three questions to consider

- Should the City continue to aspire to provide the current park standards?
- Should new development be required to provide the current park standards to the new residents?
- Should the City ask its residents to implement a citywide Landscape Maintenance Assessment District to more fairly fund park maintenance?

Public Comment:

- Jepson Ranch land owner's proposal provides park land.
- Parks can provide incentives and are great amenities to potential home buyers.
- Increase the amount of park space and improve access.
- Parks are more expensive to maintain than open space.
- Park overlays should not be eliminated from school property sites.
- Look at ways to provide parks and open space to areas where they are not currently available.

Committee Member Comments:

- Parks are an amenity that attracts people to our community.
- Should not reduce the standards just because we aren't currently meeting it.
- Use caution when creating bike/running paths so they do not provide areas where people can hang out.
- Be proactive in finding organizations to assist with graffiti removal
- Utilize fee for service.
- How we fund or create a citywide maintenance district may change as a result of how the State addresses redevelopment.
- Consider utilizing the Quimby Act

d. Level of Service for Traffic

- Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative measure of the flow of traffic.
- LOS is rated A through F, from best to worst.
- Transportation Element of existing General Plan establishes a goal to main a LOS C, but allows for LOS D LOS E and LOS F under specific circumstances.
- LOS standards have implications for new development

Public Comments:

- LOS C is not an adequate standard.
- Standards should be raised rather than lowered.
- ITE standards should be utilized.
- Traffic is a large irritation to citizens.
- Development can be restricted by the high cost of infrastructure.

- LOS C is not economically feasible.
- LOS D is standard for most communities.
- The community is paying for improvements that will never occur.
- If uses are placed close together, citizens don't have to travel as far.
- Consider different LOS depending on the street and its usage.
- Development is being restricted in the community because of our current fees.

Committee Member Comments:

- Be realistic and don't set standards that cannot be met.
- Development east of Leisure Town Road will impact other parts of the community.
- Important to maintain a benchmark standard so that they don't continue to drop in the future.
- In some areas, the LOS could be lowered and still be acceptable.
- Utilize roundabouts.
- Be flexible to allow different standards for different road types.
- Provide bike lanes where possible.

9:55 break

e. Other issues:

John Thompson spoke on behalf of the Vacaville Unified School District. He requested that they continue to promote the downtown and provide mixed urban uses in that area. He added that we need to consider how the General Plan can promote the principles that are in the Opportunity Hill Master Plan.

Peter Blicher requested that the interests of existing residents and business owners are what should be addressed in the General Plan. We need to consider if we want Vacaville to be an urban or suburb-type city. He noted concern about the number of variances for development standards that are granted.

f. Correlation Between General Plan and Zoning Code

Ms. Carson reviewed the issue of zoning at the higher density with the option of lowering the density at the time of development. To reverse policies for in-fill could cause issue with neighborhoods, and compatibility with neighborhoods. She clarified that they are asking for direction on whether to continue the current policy of having base density apply to infill project which would respect existing neighborhoods and uphold expectations.

Public Comment:

- The housing density is already too dense. If you want a denser zoning, create that zoning.
- There are assumptions made for infrastructure planning based on the zoning.

Committee Member Comments:

- Provide examples of how other communities handle this situation.

9. Ms. Jansen reviewed the schedule of upcoming workshops and meetings.

Adjourn 10:40.