



# City of Santa Barbara

## Planning Division

### PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

September 25, 2008

#### CALL TO ORDER:

Chair George C. Myers called the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M.

#### ROLL CALL:

##### **Present:**

Chair George C. Myers

Vice-Chair Stella Larson

Commissioners Bruce Bartlett, Charmaine Jacobs, John Jostes, Addison S. Thompson and Harwood A. White, Jr.

#### STAFF PRESENT:

Bettie Weiss, City Planner

John Ledbetter, Principal Planner

Danny Kato, Senior Planner

N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney

Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner

Bill Ferguson, Water Resources Supervisor

Steve Foley, Supervising Transportation Planner

Barbara Shelton, Project Planner/Environmental Analyst

Peggy Burbank, Project Planner

Irma Unzueta, Project Planner

Beatrice Gularte, Project Planner

Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

#### **I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:**

- A. Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda.

Chair Myers opened the public hearing at 1:30 P.M. and, with no one wishing to speak, closed the hearing.



**II. DISCUSSION ITEM:**

**ACTUAL TIME: 1:31 P.M.**

**PLAN SANTA BARBARA (PLANSB) GENERAL PLAN FRAMEWORK: DRAFT POLICY PREFERENCES**

- A. **Staff Presentation** – Staff will provide an overview of the draft general plan framework and recommended policies and alternatives as well as expected outcome of Phase III of the *PlanSB* process. *Completed September 10, 2008.*
- B. **Comments from Board and Committee Members** – Board and Committee members who have been active in *PlanSB* will have an opportunity to provide input on policy considerations relevant to their charge.  
*Completed September 10, 2008.*
- C. **Public Hearing** – It is expected that a significant part of the first meeting date, Wednesday, September 10, will be to receive input from the community. This will be an opportunity for organizations and the general public to provide input on all the policy issues. *Hearing held on September 10, 2008.*
- D. **Planning Commission Discussion and Recommendation on:**
1. General Plan Framework
  2. Draft Policy Preferences Document (Exhibit A)
    - a. Sustainability Framework
    - b. General Plan Elements
      - i. Land Use and Growth Management
      - ii. Economy and Fiscal Health
      - iii. Environmental Resources
      - iv. Housing
      - v. Community Design and Historic Resources
      - vi. Circulation
      - vii. Public Services and Safety
  3. Alternatives to be included in the EIR
  4. Confirm components and direction of the upcoming *PlanSB* Phase III activities
  5. Choose Representatives to attend and work with Ordinance Committee on the *PlanSB* Interim Zoning and Design Ordinance.  
*Commissioners Bruce Bartlett and Charmaine Jacobs were appointed on September 18, 2008.*

Case Planner: John Ledbetter, Principal Planner; Barbara Shelton, Project Planner/  
Environmental Analyst



Email: jledbetter@SantaBarbaraCA.gov; bshelton@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

John Ledbetter, Principal Planner, gave the Staff presentation with updates on where the meeting left off from September 11, 2008, and was joined by Barbara Shelton, Environmental Analyst.

Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney, provided an update on the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) compliance challenges with the Housing Element and listed six criteria that must be met. Land Use Policy LG2, as written, can pass some of the criteria, but presents potential issues with others. Stated that combining LG2 with LG1 could meet more of the criteria for compliance with the State's Housing and Community Development (HCD) requirements.

Staff answered Planning Commission questions about defining a resource, such as sewer capacity, schools, water availability or transportation capacity; limiting housing growth based on not being able to make the findings caused by resource constraints; and the difficulty in getting an extension from the HCD in order to develop and adopt the Land Use element prior the Housing element.

Commissioner's comments:

1. One Commissioner recalled a prior request made in January for the identification of resource limitations and build-out, and comments made in April prioritizing housing ahead of commercial.
2. Remained concerned that city will have to increase sewage treatment capacity, change transportation thresholds, and develop new water resources in order to meet the RHNA allocation number.
3. One Commissioner wanted to make sure that measurable resources were considered when addressing the RHNA allocation.
4. One Commissioner reminded the Commission that the proposed matrix for housing and non-residential components looks at the number of units irrespective of unit sizes.
5. Measure E has worked on regulating commercial development. Residential growth management could be looked at with similar limitations.
6. Encouraged Staff to look at the Camden Report used by Cottage Hospital.
7. One Commissioner asked Staff for clarification on whether the desalination plant counted as a dependable water supply or just as backup.
8. Commissioners asked if the EIR will take into consideration the economic vitality of the community and if the revenue factor will be considered when square footage is increased/decreased.

Staff responded that the EIR process will assist in defining the project before defining the process. Resource constraints will be identified during the process.



Mr. Vincent responded to the Commission's questions about exploring remaining options to address the RHNA appeal for reallocation of numbers and stated that SBCAG is moving forward with submitting the final allocation to the Department of Housing and Community Development. He also read passages from the "Building Blocks for Effective Housing Elements" that addressed government constraints and land use controls.

Staff commented on studying dual density relative to unit size, a range of density incentives for affordable housing and changing variable density standards based on square footage. Staff also stated that resource use and growth will be explored in the EIR. Unit sizes will be considered in square footage instead of bedroom count, as well as economics.

Bill Ferguson, Water Resources Supervisor, provided an update on the desalination plant and the State water project; the water supply plan including desalination; and the water budget.

Barbara Shelton, Environmental Analyst, gave the Staff presentation on the preliminary EIR project and alternatives, followed by Mr. Ledbetter, who covered the *PlanSB* Phase III activities.

Chair Myers opened the public hearing at 2:57 P.M.

Connie Hannah, League of Women Voters (LWV), commented on supporting much of the proposed General Plan policies but remains concerned about living within our resource while managing growth. Also concerned with the State superceding local planning with RHNA allocation.

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 3:02 P.M.

Staff answered additional Planning Commission questions about the EIR's intent to look at a range of alternative policies by focusing on all the input from the workshops. Responded to an inquiry of the page 2 chart of non-residential development assumptions regarding the amount of Measure E square footage. Staff stated that the minor additions figure was based on average yearly historic growth; demolition reconstruction figure came from historic and potential build-out; and the Sphere of Influence number came from the annexation policy update that was done a few years ago.

Staff also responded to the Commission's questions about resolving the discrepancy between the project description looking at 2020 and 2030 by waiting for the outcome in decisions over LG1 and LG2; correcting imbalances in residential growth while addressing the RHNA allocations required over various time periods; and explained how the Commission's suggestions were reflected in the alternative policy scenarios. Staff also discussed the policies considered in the EIR Policy Alternatives and stated that more work was needed in fleshing out policy alternatives to evaluate. A solution was offered in showing LG2 and planning for additional growth of 2,000 dwelling units for the year 2020



and allowing up to 4, 500 added dwelling units if interim monitoring demonstrates adequate resources and community conditions.

One Commissioner clarified his intentions with both LG1 and LG2 in trying to establish a ceiling on non-residential growth and a floor on residential growth based upon available resources. He also asked for trigger points to evaluate what has been done and tying them to RHNA numbers. Another Commissioner stated that one primary aspect of this project is looking at our current resources, so a checkpoint is needed far before receiving the next RHNA number.

Mr. Vincent responded to Ms. Weiss comments regarding RHNA allocations and resource limitations by stating that the language accommodates RHNA. He responded to the Commission's question on the next steps by identifying them as: 1) a new recognition on the part of the city that both non-residential and residential uses require our resources; 2) incorporate adaptive management tools that look at the build-out as it occurs and addresses the build-out as it begins to use up finite resources; and 3) when the threshold of resources are reached, there is some limitation on the development of residential housing.

As the threshold for resources are met, one Commissioner suggested looking at commercial as the first relief valve before shutting off the residential. Another Commissioner looked at varied calculations in trying to balance the relationship between commercial square feet and dwelling units.

Ms. Weiss responded to one Commissioner's concern about the economic vitality of the community and having a sustainable economy as part of the General Plan by stating that several policies in the existing Land Use Element came out of the last General Plan Update. Ms. Shelton added that the EIR focus is on physical environmental impacts; a separate consultant study will focus on economic issues and is intended to work concurrently with the EIR to address economic issues.

Discussion was held regarding how TEDR square footage could be considered in the total amount of square footage of future growth.

**STRAW POLL:**

Agree that LG becomes three parts: A) Policy on use of the limited resources in favor of residential over non-residential units; B) Non-residential program of 1.5 million with specific findings; and C) Housing broken into two segments of a) the period of 2009-2020, and b) the period of 2020-2030, accommodating the total HCD/RHNA requirements.

Ayes: 6 Noes: 1 (White) Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

Commissioner's Larson and White have never supported RHNA numbers and feel that it is an inappropriate use of State power; hope that the RHNA number could be reduced. Ms. Larson prefers to look at something that offers more simplicity in the policy alternatives. Ms. Jacobs feels that the RHNA should not drive our general plan; can accommodate, but not drive it.



One Commissioner asked that the discussion take into consideration the suggestions made by the Santa Barbara Regional Chamber of Commerce addressing commercial needs.

Commissioner Larson stated that the EIR should include and define community priorities and community benefits; changed her straw vote to a 'No'. Commissioner Jacobs also changed her vote from a 'Aye' to an 'No' vote; believes the city needs to accommodate the RHNA requirements, but the General Plan should not need to state the exact number of units.

**REVISED STRAW POLL:**

Agree that LG becomes three parts: A) Policy on use of the limited resources in favor of residential over non-residential units; B) Non-residential program of 1.5 million with specific findings; and C) Housing broken into two segments of a) the period of 2009-2020, and b) the period of 2020-2030, accommodating the total HCD/RHNA requirements.

Ayes: 4 Noes: 3 (Jacobs, Larson, and White) Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

Mr. Vincent clarified confusion over the chart and LG2. The no project alternative was meant to indicate keeping existing policies and meets the RHNA. The introduction of a residential number limitation in the policy alternatives is what challenges RHNA.

Commissioner Thompson stated that while he agreed with Commissioner White, a protest vote against the State would not accomplish anything.

Ms. Weiss reviewed the non-residential development assumptions and how the 1 million square feet figure equated to 400,000 square feet for a 20 year period over what has been on the books for pending projects, some that may expire. One Commissioner added that the commission still had discretion over approval of the 400,000 that was pending.

The Commission grappled with the quandary of addressing RHNA numbers, preservation of Measure E square footage, planning for future development, and defining the EIR scope of analysis. One Commissioner was concerned with the bi-product of saleable development credits that have resulted from the current policy that has allowed for the density transfer rights of residual commercial space when replaced by a mixed-use project. Another Commissioner was concerned that increases in commercial square footage would result in increases to RHNA numbers. One Commissioner added that there is an economic hit to the city if only residential units are annexed due to the cost of services for residential being higher than for commercial; commercial generates income. Staff assisted the Commission in isolating considerations to be made.

The consensus of the Commission was to develop a new policy to eliminate the reallocation of non-used, non-residential square footage transfer of development rights (TEDR's).



**Phase III Work Program Tasks:**

It was suggested that the Planning Commission Subcommittee review the changes made and recommendations to City Council. However, one Commissioner felt that the Commission was not ready to move forward given the absence of maps and more detail; did not want to delegate to the subcommittee with comments.

Commissioner Jostes read aloud and submitted two objectives for Land Use and Growth Management and asked that they be integrated into the Policy Preferences Report.

The Commission remained concerned with where they are in the process, but acknowledged that they are 99% there. One Commissioner added that with the Upper State Street Study, a model process had been developed that showed where policies would be applied. The *PlanSB* process has discussed hot zones (Downtown, Milpas, De la Vina, Funk Zone, Coast Village Road, the Mesa, etc.) and wondered why we do not yet have maps. Staff responded that maps were prepared in the Development Trends Report. A Land Use Map update will be forthcoming.

Commissioner's comments:

1. The consensus of the Commission felt that the full Commission's should review any changes and the diagrams accompanying the policy report before comments go to City Council and to ensure that the Commission's comments are clear. Does not feel that it is ready for City Council.
2. Two Commissioners felt that we need to move forward so that we can begin the EIR and that it will provide many of the answers that the Commission is grappling with. Two Commissioners remained concerned over moving onto an EIR without having a clear project definition and also in not having maps done for the community hot spots.
3. One Commissioner felt the Land Use Element and the Map need to be done at a point in the process that it will have an effect on the product. One Commissioner felt that Flood Control Maps and MODA need to be included.
4. One Commissioner acknowledged the evolution that has occurred with the Policies Preference Document. Most Commissioners felt that sufficient time had been spent on the document and that they were ready to move on to the next step.
5. The Commission liked the objectives presented by Commissioner Jostes but felt that they are more appropriate for the Adaptive Management Program.
6. One Commissioner suggested that the Upper State Street Study should serve as a model for the other hot spot areas. Another Commissioner voiced concern for not having more neighborhood participation from the hot spot areas.

Ms. Weiss stated that State Street Study's level of work resources were not available for all the hot spots; Upper State Street Study utilized five staff and a consultant and took over a year. The General Land Use Map will be developed next year, but not as detailed as the Upper State Street Study.



**MOTION: Bartlett/Jacobs**

Continue meeting to the next available date in November.

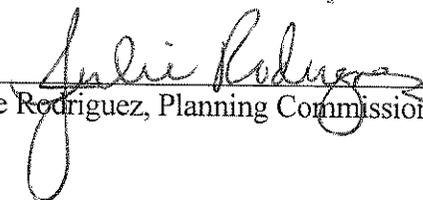
This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 6 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Myers adjourned the meeting at 5:35 P.M.

Submitted by,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

