



City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

September 10, 2008

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair George C. Myers called the meeting to order at 9:37 A.M.

ROLL CALL:

Present:

Chair George C. Myers

Vice-Chair Stella Larson

Commissioners Bruce Bartlett, Charmaine Jacobs (until 5:22 P.M.), John Jostes, Addison S. Thompson and Harwood A. White, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Paul Casey, Community Development Director

Bettie Weiss, City Planner

John Ledbetter, Principal Planner

Danny Kato, Senior Planner

N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney

Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner

Barbara Shelton, Environmental Analyst

Beatriz Gularte, Project Planner

Peggy Burbank, Project Planner

Adam Nares, Planning Technician

Gabriela Feliciano, 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 9:37 A.M. and, with no one wishing to speak, closed the hearing.

II. DISCUSSION ITEM

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

ACTUAL TIME: 9:38 A.M.

Case Planners: John Ledbetter, Principal Planner; Barbara Shelton, Environmental Analyst
Email: jledbetter@SantaBarbaraCA.gov; bshelton@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

A. Staff Presentation

1. Poll Presentation:

John Ledbetter introduced Rick Sklarz, Senior Researcher, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates. Mr. Sklarz gave a presentation of the General Plan Update Survey that was conducted August 20-24, 2008, by telephone (landline and cell phone) with 400 City of Santa Barbara residents.

The Commission had a discussion with Mr. Sklarz and the Plan SB Staff with regard to the poll results.

2. Staff Overview:

Mr. Ledbetter provided an overview of the purpose and need for the General Plan Update process, the key policy drivers, sustainability structure, project description, and general plan framework.

The Commission held the following discussion with the Plan SB Staff:

- Reported that, with regard to dwelling increases, John Romo, Santa Barbara City College President, has stated that the California Coastal Commission (CCC) has forbidden housing for SBCC.
- Commented that community college land may not be available for student housing because they are run through the state government.
- Verified that Plan SB Staff will be in attendance when City Council meets with the School District Board and will mention the potential for partnership in resolving the issue of possible use of school land for open space or meeting housing needs of student population.
- Emphasized that historic resources should not be ignored or isolated from sustainability, but rather include in the introduction of any City document.
- Asked how the 2,800 unit number relates to the CCC prohibition of SBCC future growth. Staff responded that it is an issue that will be discussed in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

- Verified that the General Plan update will need to be reviewed by the CCC because a portion of the City is within the coastal zone.
- Confirmed that the Highway 101 air quality buffer will not be eliminated. The policy remains, although edited to be more of an advisory measure.
- Highlighted that a community resource map would be helpful. It should indicate where those resources are located and what they are in an effort to protect those resources. Staff responded that MEA maps will be provided at the next meeting as part of the goals and policies presentation.
- Concerned with the inability to provide the city with open space and transit, balanced against the need for increase in housing density.

Chair Myers called a recess at 11:14 A.M. and resumed the meeting at 11:21 A.M.

B. Comments from Board and Committee Members – Board and Committee members who have been active in Plan SB had an opportunity to provide input on policy considerations relevant to their charge.

1. Nancy Rapp, Parks & Recreation Director – specific recommendations by the Park & Recreation Commission include: 1) Revise the land use growth management goal to include more specificity to park and recreation facilities. 2) Establish park and open space standards for redevelopment and new development.
2. Lee Moldavor, Vice-Chair Creeks Advisory Committee – public workshop November 2007 devoted to discussion of the overlapping between creeks and water sheds, beaches and water quality, and how they relate to the elements of the general plan; inclusion of key points were submitted to be included in the master environmental review.

C. Public Hearing – Input from the community on all the policy issues.

Chair Myers opened the public hearing at 11:47 A.M.

1. Christy Schuerch, Coalition for Community Wellness – the single most important way to combat chronic disease epidemics is planning a sustainable city that is walkable, bikeable, with easy access to healthy foods, and affordable local housing; the importance of improvements in transit.
2. Gil Barry, Allied Neighborhood Association member – dual density system best way to achieve housing for workforce; current density reduced for more expensive units and raised for affordable projects; amount of density required, and community character and design.

3. Ralph Fertig, President of Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition – how the bicycle fits into Plan SB; bicycle is efficient mode of transportation; advantages in comparison to the automobile; should be promoted and more bike lanes provided.
4. Fermina Murray, Pearl Chase Society Board of Directors – the guiding language to preserve and protect historic and cultural resources, open space and public scenic views should be placed within a separate section: Historical and Cultural Resources Preservation Element.
5. Susan Shank, local resident – concepts of sustainable neighborhood plans and the mobility oriented development area (MODA) not well thought-out; topography, connectivity, and cost need to be considered; automobile will still be needed for multiple tasks in one outing; huge increase in public transit needed.
6. Trish Allen, Suzanne Elledge Planning and Permitting Services – on behalf of Mario Borgatello: EIR analysis should examine what Measure E has achieved in past 20 years; ask if it is appropriate to perpetuate the same restrictions on a parcel-by-parcel basis, what is the criteria that will be used, and how will the criteria be established when its effectiveness is evaluated.
7. Bill Marks, local resident – “smart growth” alternative does not necessarily allow more people to be near their jobs or promote diversity in the city; granny flats valuable, but quantity should be limited in neighborhoods.

Chair Myers called a recess at 12:30 P.M. and resumed the meeting at 1:24 P.M.

Public Hearing Continued

8. Joseph Rution, Allied Neighborhood Association – new “smart growth” housing development will not build the city out of the housing dilemma; presented a different option: protecting and preserving community character, developing strategies that do not generate growth, turning “living within our resources” into an enforceable proposition.
9. Lisa Plowman, Santa Barbara for All – 7,500 unit growth cap reasonable to allow for 1% growth rate; incentives to reduce market-rate unit sizes, rental housing, and car-share programs for mixed-use projects downtown; creation of Upper State Street parking district; reduce parking in the grid; generation rates for traffic should be reviewed and updated; setback along front property line on a case-by-case basis instead of mandating for all commercial projects; solar as incentive rather than a mandate because expensive; more time should be provided for public to review documents produced by Plan SB staff.

10. Cathy McCammon, League of Women Voters – maintain small-town character, protect views and open space, and relieve congestion; updates resource constraints and true cost of increased density needed; protection of middle-class and lower-income and not price them out; increased use of transit would require major life style changes; the city does not have monies to subsidize truly affordable housing.
11. Connie Hannah, League of Women Voters – against increase in taxes to help pay for additional costs, including resources necessary to construct expensive condominiums; build only affordable units needed for those already working in the city; mixed-use requirements should be changed to make affordability for all levels of workers.
12. Allyson Biskner, Santa Barbara County Trails Council – inclusion of specific language directly related to public trails within the General Plan Update; safe trails require specific care and management beyond that for open space; adopt sustainable urban trail standards and guidelines for specific use; addition of policy mechanisms to acquire trails or easements by willing land donors with incentives for them.
13. Jean Holmes, local resident – “smart growth” is a regional planning model; the city is already built-out; coordinated approach with other entities in the area should be taken; incorporate specific techniques to keep current affordable units and guarantee that new construction will add to that supply; adaptive management approach should be built-in.
14. Maureen Mason, Pearl Chase Society – adopt a cohesive, historical and cultural preservation element separate from other conservation policies and Plan SB.
15. Sheila Lodge, Citizens Planning Association and General Plan Update Committee representative – Measure E should be renewed; objectives needed in addition to overarching goals; protection of scenic public views; supports building height limit to 45 feet; downfall of growth in the community; more affordable employee housing should not be achieved at the cost of further changing the character of the city; consider the issuance of revenue bonds.
16. Fred Sweeney, upper east neighborhood resident – outreach needed to reach silent population that is of mostly diverse cultures; concerned with how upper east has been defined; provide an overlay set of languages to deal with special events that have a day-to-day impact; community character affected by zoning violations, such as illegal hedges; size of parcels in that neighborhood lend themselves to second units; Mission Canyon exiting in case of disaster an issue; walkability a problem; rent-a-bike/electric auto rental options; corner market needed.

17. Judy Orias, local resident – address the need to reduce speeding on neighborhood streets; clarify and better define “community benefit”; clarify H2 whether it is an upzoning of the R-2 zone; it appears H5 requires transit in all areas even those not tied to the transit route and should be corrected; flipping of rentals into condos; under C3 better define “high quality pedestrian crossing”; need for more accessible routes; air monitoring in various parts of the city; parking reduction on commercial zones would affect small businesses; policy to reduce flood plane and updating of flood maps; Mission Creek and Arroyo Creek should have maps updated; challenge of edible gardens.
18. Frank Arredondo, Chumash representative – cultural heritage side of General Plan update process; contacting and addressing concerns of Chumash community as prescribed by law; importance of singling-out the Native American community and creating a liaison for outreach efforts.
19. Mickey Flacks, Co-Chair, Santa Barbara for All – “A Vision for a Sustainable Future”; population growth and social equity; reduce automobile dependency and create walkable transit-oriented community; density does not mean ugly and problematic; agree with sixty-foot height limit; distinctive neighborhood character; form-based zoning.
20. Debbie Cox Bultan, Executive Director, Coastal Housing Coalition –affordable housing for local workforce, not just for those who live here, and efforts to include all economic levels; concern with low range of residential units proposed; supports 60 foot height limit in downtown; incentives for employers willing to provide workforce housing, rather than mandating; consider adding two policies to expedite the project review process: safe harbor provision for second units and set of criteria for residential projects.
21. Paul Hernadi, local resident – three major goals of a sustainable community: living within resources; preserving or enhancing what is precious about Santa Barbara, including social/economic diversity; preserving or enhancing the health, welfare and safety of residents, commuters and visitors alike.
22. Dave Davis, Community Environmental Council – outreach to low income members of the community who have a high stake in the City’s future; comprehensive energy policy.

The following members of the public completed Request to Speak forms but did not speak:

23. Dick Flacks, Santa Barbara County Action Network (SBCAN) – not present, but Mickey Flacks communicated his comments regarding the local housing challenge.
24. Patricia Hiles, local resident – written comments stating desire to keep Santa Barbara small and to not try to get rid of cars.
25. Olivia Uribe, SBCAN – written comments not submitted.

Chair Myers closed the public hearing at 3:55 P.M.

Chair Myers called a recess at 3:56 P.M. and resumed the meeting at 4:17 P.M.

D. Planning Commission Initial Discussion on:

1. General Plan Framework

- The framework is on the right track and it is acceptable.
- Augment the Trends and Challenges section of the Report with numbers from Development Trends Report and RHNA numbers as more compelling argument for policy change.
- Question whether water and sewer services are sufficient.
- Reference and reframe the Conditions, Trends and Issues (CTI) executive summary with its five topics and integrate into the next report.
- Be explicit as to what the principles imply; indicate that future development must be prioritized. Cannot say “yes” to every project.
- Circulation section of the report needs to be expanded to include “connectivity” in its title; provide the connectivity for non-vehicular linkages.
- Need to really communicate what the priority community benefits are.
- Discussion of policy drivers needs to be expanded.
- Apply ecological principals in the sustainability context.
- With regard to mapping, Use the Upper State Street study as an example to build upon graphically and form a policy standpoint.
- Consider how the Airport and unincorporated areas will be addressed.
- Must own the jobs/housing imbalance problem as a community. May not be able to solve it. Question how the daytime population should be dealt with – regional transportation?
- Adaptive Management needs to apply to residential and non-residential growth compared to sustainability principles.
- Objectives paragraph between goals and policies should be incorporated as indicators for successful policy implementation.
- Specific timeframes for monitoring; for example, start in five years and conclude in seven.
- Criteria for adaptive management upfront will simplify EIR process, which is currently too exhaustive and expensive.
- Structure policy for more refined development that uses less resources.

- Historic Resources should be of high priority and belong in the sustainability principles.
- Historical and Cultural Resources should be a main heading with its own elements in the introduction.
- Take the dilemma head-on of sustaining resources for future generations versus the historic way of doing things, such as not wanting to give up the use of vehicles.
- Consider another way to measure building height restrictions next to historic structures; for example, within a quarter mile, rather than “adjacent to” historic structures.
- With regard to mapping, consider extending the MODA to the Mesa, beyond Santa Barbara City College to the intersection where the commercial begins.
- Include the waterfront and Funk Zone in the MODA.
- Include all schools on the map, including private schools, especially with regard to safe routes to schools.
- Under the Sustainability Principles section, include looking at alternative energy both municipal and private (non-petroleum based).
- Regarding adaptive management component: what will be on the score card?
- The City should continue to promote a County Blueprint as all counties in California, except Santa Barbara, have created one for their county.
- Organize future drafts by goals, objectives and program or policy implementation.
- Regional cooperation needed with communities in which commuters live.
- Need an early warning system for adaptive management plan.
- Earl Warren Showgrounds, which is a significant parcel of land, should be addressed.
- Upper State Street Study – build on process in updating elements.
- Need connectivity overlay.
- What about unincorporated islands – do policies relate to them?
- Consider how much the City could afford for water; it should be seen as a commodity rather than a resource.
- Document should adapt to new technologies.

- Priority system needed similar to how LEED does its analysis on projects; measurable ways for applicants to know what is being asked of them and not just what the city does not allow.
 - Form Base Zoning analysis would allow a view block-by-block of what could be emulated versus what should be avoided.
 - Creatively fund wishes; without funding mechanisms, goals will not happen.
 - Local groups need to have “round table” discussions.
 - Need to be sensitive to Adaptive Management “trigger points.”
 - Regarding impacts of growth; identify unintended consequences and correct them.
 - Sustainability principals could use more polishing (e.g., social equity and expansion of defining paragraphs); their implementation within the elements is very important.
 - Adaptive management is an excellent concept and needs further study.
 - Proposed goals may be costly, but should still set as goals; otherwise we will never attain them.
 - Growth of the middle class and the way that class gets represented in the framework is important.
 - Sustainability principles need polishing.
 - Some of the sustainability issues need more, e.g. social equity. How they get translated into the elements and implemented is important.
 - Need another look at the report before signing off on it.
2. General Plan Elements
Discussion continued to September 11, 2008.
3. Alternatives to be included in the EIR
Discussion continued to September 11, 2008.
4. Confirm components and direction of the upcoming Plan SB Phase III activities
Discussion continued to September 11, 2008.
5. Choose Representatives to attend and work with Ordinance Committee on the Plan SB Interim Zoning and Design Ordinance

Discussion continued to September 11, 2008.

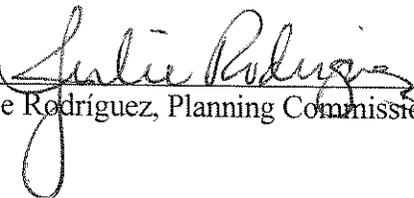
Mr. Ledbetter, Principal Planner, reviewed the agenda for the Thursday, September 11, meeting.

III. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Myers adjourned the meeting at 5:26 P.M. to the September 11, 2008, meeting at 1:00 P.M.

Prepared by Gabriela Feliciano, Commission Secretary

Submitted by,



Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary