



PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

STAFF REPORT

TO: PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: Gloria Humble, Senior Planner

DEPARTMENT: Planning and
Community Environment

AGENDA DATE: February 10, 2010

SUBJECT: Recommendation to the City Council to incorporate the preliminary Draft East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way Concept Plan (Attachment A) into the Draft Comprehensive Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) recommend to the City Council incorporation of the preliminary *Draft East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way Concept Plan* (Attachment A) into the *Draft Comprehensive Plan*.

BACKGROUND

The City Council's adopted *Comprehensive Plan* update work program includes the development of *Concept Plans* for future land use and development within two areas of the City, the East Meadow Circle/ Fabian Way area and the California Avenue/Fry's area.

During 2009, staff and consultants collaborated with community members to conduct the "East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way Area Study." Through stakeholder meetings and community workshops, study participants identified five main issues, alternative solutions for each issue, and finally a Preferred Alternative for each issue. Earlier this year staff generated the attached report, which reflects the results of the area study.

DISCUSSION

The East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way area was chosen for study because of land use changes that have taken place in the area since 1990. Of specific concern were changes from industrial to residential and the key objectives of the study were:

1. Evaluate the potential and desirability for additional housing development.
2. Retain service commercial and light industrial uses.

3. Provide amenities and services for residents and employees including bike/pedestrian connections.

The *East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way Concept Plan* presented for PTC review reflects the input of staff, the consultants for the *Comprehensive Plan* update, stakeholders and participants of the 2009 study Community Workshops. Also in the report are staff's comments about the proposed concepts and potential changes to *Comprehensive Plan* land use designations and policies associated with the concepts.

Following is a summary of the report - excerpted from the "Executive Summary" within the report:

The *Draft Concept Plan* comprises five concepts for future land use and development within the East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way area - referred to in this report as, "Preferred Alternatives."

Preferred Alternative I envisions a revitalized business park in the East Meadow Circle area, with new amenities such as a shared parking garage and open space or bike path improvements. Proposed *Comprehensive Plan* policy amendments include 1) an increase (possibly a tiered increase) to the allowable development intensity—to encourage replacement of aging buildings 2) a policy for requiring or encouraging amenities commensurate with the increase in intensity, and 3) guidelines for ensuring a successful transition between new development and existing single-family neighborhoods.

Preferred Alternative II envisions retail stores that are a balance of auto-oriented and pedestrian friendly development - possibly with a grocery store as the anchor - on the north side of Charleston Road, south of San Antonio Road. Proposed *Comprehensive Plan* land use and policy amendments would include: 1) change designation from LI to CS and, 2) increase the allowable development intensity for projects that implement the concept i.e., projects that consolidate existing parcels and provide retail such as a grocery store.

Preferred Alternative III envisions a pedestrian friendly corridor of mixed uses on both sides of Charleston Road. Proposed *Comprehensive Plan* land use and policy amendments are:

Block A: Change designation from LI to CN to encourage mixed use redevelopment with neighborhood-serving amenities on the ground floors and up to 35 residential units on the upper floors.

Block B: 1) Change use designation from LI to CN and 2) increase the allowable development intensity for projects that implement the concept i.e. projects of mixed use that have retail and neighborhood-serving amenities on the ground floor and offices on the upper floors.

Block C: Retain the LI designation.

Preferred Alternative IV envisions a bike/pedestrian path within the Adobe Creek right-of-way.

Preferred Alternative V envisions a bike/pedestrian overpass across Highway 101 to provide improved access to the Baylands - funded primarily by grant money.

This review by the PTC is the initial phase of the *East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way Concept Plan*'s evaluation. The goal of this phase of review is to select future land uses for the area and types of development that will be further analyzed in the DEIR for the update process in order to determine the viability of any proposed changes.

Concurrent with this review, staff is working with the PTC reviewing the existing goals, policies, and programs in the *Comprehensive Plan*. Existing or new goals, policies, and programs related to both *Concept Plans* will be addressed as "Phase 2" items and reviewed more extensively after the City Council refers a *Concept Plan* for each area for incorporation within the *Draft Comprehensive Plan* analysis. The referred *Concept Plans* will be used to help establish criteria and direction for those "Phase 2" items. Review of the existing *Comprehensive Plan* land use definitions will also occur during the "Phase 2" process - after the Council has referred the *Concept Plans* for further review.

The attached report provides the PTC with an initial framework for evaluation of potential land use changes and *Comprehensive Plan* policies related to three subareas within the East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way study area, as well as improvements to the areas's bike/pedestrian network; it is not intended to dictate or constrain the PTC's recommendation to Council regarding the study area. The PTC may make modifications to the concepts for the subareas or augment them with additional recommendations. Based on the PTC recommendations, the attached report will be modified and forwarded to the City Council.

Alternatives:

As the attached report indicates, there are several areas for which staff and the consultant team considered multiple options for addressing an issue. These include:

1. **Open space requirement for redevelopment at increased intensity in the East Meadow Circle Subarea:** Although the Preferred Alternative illustration shows a small park, the PTC may wish to consider other ideas e.g., a linear park, an open space area at the foot of a possible future bike/pedestrian overpass to the Baylands, or any other improvements to the existing bike/pedestrian circulation plan.
2. **Tiered increase to allowable development intensity in the East Meadow Circle Subarea:** It will be important to give thorough consideration to the nexus between allowing development at an increased intensity and requiring the provision of amenities—to ensure an incentive to reinvest. The PTC may wish to consider a tiered approach to an increase to the development intensity in order to provide a way of assuring that the required amenities are commensurate with the increase. For example, a limited increase may be allowed without any requirement whereas a more significant increase may require some participation in a program to provide amenities.

3. **Building heights:** Several of the Preferred Alternatives include policy changes to increase the allowable floor area and to allow three-story buildings where current regulations would not permit them. Three-story buildings can accommodate more square footage on a smaller foot print—allowing more opportunity for landscaping, surface parking, shuttle turnarounds, etc. Flood zone requirements and construction requirements for high-tech R&D firms may require that a three-story building be more than thirty-five feet high.
4. **Increase to the allowable development intensity on Block B of the Charleston Road Subarea:** The Preferred Alternative proposes mixed use that comprises retail and office on this block and the illustration shows this development at a development intensity that is currently allowed only for mixed use projects that include a housing component. The PTC may wish to consider allowing both types of mixed use to be at the higher intensity.
5. **Retention of gas station on Block B of the Charleston Road Subarea:** The Preferred Alternative suggests consideration of a policy to encourage retention of the gas station on Block B. The PTC may wish to consider allowing a combination of a gas station and convenience store to accomplish this. (The code does not currently allow a convenience store on a gas station site).
6. **Changes to definitions for land use designations and new policy considerations:** Attachment B outlines current land use designation definitions as defined in the existing *Comprehensive Plan*. Although the definitions for land use designations will be reviewed as “Phase II items” in the PTC’s review of policies and programs, the PTC may recommend changes to the definitions - as part of this review - to better reflect or restrict development anticipated under specific land uses. For example, the PTC may recommend that the Service Commercial land use designation in the entire East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way study area or in one or more of the subareas be revised to restrict or disallow office development in order to ensure retention of viable and needed service commercial uses.

Use of the East Meadow Circle Subarea as a public school site: Some participants of the study thought that this area would be appropriate for a new school. While a *Comprehensive Plan* land use designation may allow a school as use, the City has no direct role in development planning for schools. Also, there is no nexus between the type of development proposed (non-residential) and the need for school capacity. Through the *Comprehensive Plan* review process, the City will work with the School District to determine the capacity needs of the district and, if possible, potential approaches to identifying future school sites.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The action recommended by staff is a component of a multi-year process to review and update of the City’s *Comprehensive Plan* policies. Should the proposed *Concept Plan* be adopted as part of the updated *Comprehensive Plan*, implications would include a restriction on residential development in certain land use designations or specific areas, a restriction on office use in certain land use designations or specific areas, and an increase to development intensity in certain land use designations or specific areas. These policy changes would likely result in an increase of commercial land uses such as light industrial in the East Meadow Circle area, an

increase in office and retail in the Charleston Road area, and an increase in retail in the East of San Antonio area.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

There is no environmental review of the proposed preliminary *Draft Concept Plan* required at this time. This step is the development of a preliminary area plan that will be incorporated in the *Draft Comprehensive Plan* that will be analyzed in the *Comprehensive Plan DEIR*. Subsequently, the PTC will review the DEIR and *Draft Comprehensive Plan* and make a recommendation on both to the City Council.

NEXT STEPS

1. City Council review of the PTC’s recommendation—Spring 2010
2. City Council referral of a Concept Plan for incorporation in the *Draft Comprehensive Plan* and evaluation in the *Environmental Impact Report*—Spring 2010
3. PTC review of the *Draft Environmental Impact Report*—2011
4. PTC review of the *Final Environmental Impact Report* and *Draft Comprehensive Plan* and recommendation to the City Council—2012
5. City Council review of the PTC recommendation and action—2012

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. *Draft East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way Concept Plan*
- B. Current land use designation definitions from the existing *Comprehensive Plan*

COURTESY COPIES:

East Meadow Email List

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