

## **WESTSIDE SPECIFIC PLAN STAKEHOLDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **MEETING # 2: FEBRUARY 16, 2021**

#### **MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Brian Bailey, Jack Cline, Juliet Goff, Ming-Shin Kou, Richard Lucas, Marisa Olguin, Andy Perkins, Jeff Sanita, Ben Shanassafer, Doug Williams, Kevin Wilson, Melissa Ybarra, Marlene Ybarra

**GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:** Dan Wall, Manny Garcia, Angela Kimmey, Abigail Mejia

**CONSULTANTS PRESENT:** Ian Dickenson, Bob Paternoster, Lance Lowrey, Zachary Zabel (Phil Burns joined for the last 15 minutes of the meeting)

#### **Introduction:**

The Zoom meeting was called to order at 3:02 PM by Moderator Bob Paternoster. He reviewed the draft minutes of Meeting #1, noting that comments and questions were not attributed to specific Committee members in order to maintain privacy. The Committee expressed a desire to have names attributed to speakers in all subsequent minutes. Bob reported that City staff had agreed to delete from the Committee any member who failed to attend the first two meetings; the updated list of members will be distributed following this meeting and will be posted on the Website without contact information.

#### **Project Goals:**

Lance Lowrey reviewed the six project goals presented at the last meeting, and led the Committee discussion of them.

Ben expressed concern that the goals of diversifying land use and increasing residents appeared to be in conflict with the goal of maintaining Vernon as a center of production. He stated that the project should include a plan for maintaining the City's competitive advantage as a production center.

Doug reflected on how production in Vernon was vastly different 35 or 40 years ago, and stated that it will also be vastly different 35 or 40 years in the future. He suggested that production could actually be increased if the zoning were changed to permit a larger variety of uses and to permit vertical (multi-story) rather than only horizontal growth.

Jack suggested that the six goals be cast in priority order, with maintain center of production first, strengthen City's fiscal position second, and increase residential population third.

Marisa said that the Chamber supports the six goals, but she agrees with Jack's suggestion to reorder them by priority. She noted that the goals are not intended to apply to every location in the Westside, and that "the Committee will craft where diversification will take place."

Brian recommended that "maintain competitive advantage" be changed to "reinvigorate competitive advantage."

Melissa stated that growth in population should be a priority, but it should only occur in limited areas.

Kevin asked why the City isn't considering housing in areas other than the Westside.

Dan replied that the Westside seems best because it is relatively close to transit, it abuts residential uses in Huntington Park to the south and in Los Angeles to the west, and it can accommodate additional residential uses while still preserving heavy industrial uses in most areas of the City.

Richard Lucas noted the validity of Kevin's point, pointing out the traffic, lack of parking, and proximity of rail yards along Santa Fe, all of which are problems for mixed use as well as residential.

Ming-Shin stated that residential uses along Alameda are hard to imagine, given the congestion in the area.

Bob pointed out to Ming-Shin that the diagram which summarizes the baseline studies shows Alameda as industrial, not residential.

Juliet stated that we must try to move the traffic from Santa Fe over to Alameda. She said that she favors placing housing, including housing for retired veterans, in the southern cluster near Huntington Park, but she questions the impact of the proposed expansion of the rail yard near 49<sup>th</sup> Street.

Dan replied that the rail yard is intended primarily as a rail car storage yard, and should have only two moving trains per day.

Kevin questioned the "regional needs" wording in the residential goal, and when Bob explained that it referred to State and regional pressure for every community to accept its share of projected population growth, he suggested that the goal be reworded to list that objective last.

Doug urged that new residential not be low-income like the recent housing development on the eastside.

Bob observed that the discussion was beginning to address the next agenda item, and asked the Committee if they generally agreed with the following goals, reworded and listed in order of priority, as suggested by the Committee:

1. Reinvigorate the City's competitive advantage as a center of production
2. Strengthen and provide long-term stability to the City's fiscal position
3. Increase the residential population in order to increase access to proportionally allocated Federal and State funding, to strengthen the City's governance by providing more voters and candidates for elected office, and to help meet regional housing needs.
4. Diversify and reorient the Westside's land uses to take advantage of changes in the economic landscape of Southern California
5. Increase amenities available to local residents and workers
6. Create a physical environment that is supportive of diversified land uses, welcoming to the larger region, and enhancing to the City's image and identity.

There being no opposition, Bob declared these to be the Committee's recommended project goals.

#### **Baseline Studies Report:**

Ian briefly described the four cluster areas which have been identified by the consultant team for focused study for possible diversification of land use. He noted that a major factor in identifying these areas was the presence of buildings whose style and condition made them most conducive to such reuse.

Brian questioned the inclusion in a cluster of the southeast corner of Vernon and Santa Fe, noting that it is unsuitable for residential use because it is immediately adjacent to a major paper mill and rail line. In response to a question from Ben, Brian stated that the paper mill is likely to remain in the long term and is a major user of electricity.

Ben stated that he believes that Santa Fe is the right place to consider diversification of land use. The entire street can be considered, but he would start first at the northern end.

Kevin agreed that Santa Fe was appropriate for mixed use, but suggested that we also consider Pacific which has less traffic and more opportunities for parking.

Juliet agreed with the potential of Pacific, particularly because of the traffic on Santa Fe.

Ian pointed out that the traffic is not heavy 24 hours a day, and that some types of new uses would be busiest when traffic is lightest.

Manny asked the Committee to consider changes over time, and invited Committee members to call him for an historical perspective.

Kevin noted that Pacific could be viewed as an extension of the Huntington Park commercial center, but Brian pointed out the heavy truck traffic generated by Whole Foods and the proximity of the rail yard.

Jack suggested that the best areas to consider are the far northern end of Santa Fe near the Arts District, and the far southern end of Pacific near residential amenities in Huntington Park. He pointed out that in these locations residential uses would interfere less with existing operators and future high tech production uses.

Ian emphasized that residential is not the only use to be considered for the land use diversification areas and might very well not be appropriate in all of them. He suggested that the City will witness a gradual transition of uses in these areas, probably beginning with forward-looking production uses. Residential uses would probably be further down the line.

**Next Meeting:**

Bob noted that an hour and a half had elapsed without reaching a conclusion on preferred action areas from the Baseline Studies and without any discussion of the Transportation Issues agenda item. He congratulated the Committee on an active and productive discussion and suggested that the Committee reconvene on February 23 at 3 PM to complete the Meeting #2 Agenda. The Committee concurred.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Paternoster, Moderator