



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council via City Manager
FROM: Planning Consultant via Community Development Director
DATE: January 14, 2010
For Council Meeting: January 26, 2010

SUBJECT: PC 09-53 (General Plan Update) – Consideration of General Plan Alternatives

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the following actions be considered:

1. That the City Council review, discuss and consider the proposed Land Use, Circulation and Infrastructure Alternatives; and,
2. That the City Council accept the Planning Commission's recommendation and conceptually approve the Preferred Alternatives and the clarified draft Vision, Guiding Principles, Issues and Objectives; and,
3. That the City Council direct the General Plan consultant to proceed with the next steps in the General Plan Program to prepare a draft General Plan and a draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of Twentynine Palms.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

- Request Staff Report (Nelson Miller Presenting)
- Council Questions of Staff
- Open Public Hearing
- Receive Public Testimony
- Close Public Hearing
- Council Discussion
- Motion/Second
- Discussion of Motion
- Call the Question (voice vote)

Attachments

- General Plan Alternatives Presentation.
- Updated Vision, Guiding Principles, Issues and Objective Matrix.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, the City of Twentynine Palms began studying the possibility of updating the City's General Plan. The firm of Rosenow Spevacek Group, Inc. (RSG) conducted several community meetings and a community survey was also circulated to residents to identify issues affecting the City.

Review of Staff Report:

City Manager

City Attorney

City Engineer

Department Head

RSG's community outreach efforts identified the following:

- The General Plan's mission statement embraces the community's vision.
- It is important to preserve natural resources, including:
 - Mesquite hummocks.
 - Wildlife corridors and habitats.
 - Geological features and hillsides.
 - Natural drainage areas (both to preserve their current natural state and because the cost to channelize them exceeds what the community believes would be a prudent investment).
- Limit development in earthquake fault zones.
- Improve development standards and the quality of new development.
- Maintain a rural, small-town feel while increasing retail and entertainment opportunities.
- Establish a buffer between urban development and the National Park, and adjoining communities.

RSG's community outreach efforts also noted the Community's concern with the City's projected population build-out. The community survey noted that 66% of survey respondents indicated they would like to see a build-out population of 75,000 residents or less. According to the Land Use Technical Report prepared for the update, the existing General Plan build-out projection could be up to 116,751 residents, which includes approximately 15,000 residents housed on the Marine Corps Base.

The report on RSG's analysis of the General Plan provided the following conclusions and recommended that a comprehensive update of the General Plan be initiated.

- Better align the policies contained in all of the General Plan's Elements with the community's vision.
- Identify and discuss all of the options that would reduce the projected build-out population.
- Evaluate the commercially designated properties and determine if there are too many commercially designated properties for this market area.
- Review locating multi-family uses adjacent to the downtown and other retail areas so that there is sufficient population in the immediate areas to better support the local businesses, and to promote sustainable development by facilitating walkable communities.
- Conduct the environmental analysis needed for the Housing, Circulation and Recreation Element updates (that are underway).

VISION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

The Guiding Principles are broad community goals that will serve to direct efforts to achieve the General Plan Vision. Community issues have been identified. Desired Community Objectives were developed based on an extensive work program by the GPAC and General Plan Update Team. The Objectives outline policy directions that are envisioned by the City. These were reviewed and conceptually approved at the Joint City Council and Planning Commission Meeting on November 4, 2009.

At the December 1, 2009 and January 13, 2010 Planning Commission Meetings, the Commission discussed Objectives identified for clarification at the Joint Meeting. The General Plan Vision, Guiding Principles, Issues and Objectives Matrix has been updated to reflect the Planning Commission's clarifications (the updated Matrix is attached to the staff report).

PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

Based on the information gathered during the preparation of the General Plan Technical Reports, community outreach and RSG's efforts, the General Plan Update Team has prepared draft Land Use, Circulation and Infrastructure Alternatives for consideration.

General Plan Advisory Committee's (GPAC) Recommendations

After reviewing the proposed General Plan Land Use, Circulation, and Infrastructure Alternatives, the GPAC recommended the following:

1. Maintain the existing Land Use Plan.
2. Expand the existing Mesquite Dunes Overlay to include the additional mapped Mesquite Dune areas as shown in the Open Space Technical Report.
3. Create an overlay designation with additional restrictions for potential wildlife corridors focused on grading, roads, and fencing with limited pad sizes.
4. Provide a policy allow clustering.
5. Develop a sewer system in phases starting with the Downtown area.
6. Develop a mechanism for a circulation plan for Section 19. Section 19 is the square mile located between Two Mile Road and Amboy Road, between Mesquite Springs Road and Morongo Road which was subdivided without any dedicated roads.

Planning Commission's Recommendations

The Planning Commission reviewed, discussed and considered the proposed Land Use, Circulation and Infrastructure Alternatives at their January 5, 2010 and Special January 13, 2010 Commission Meetings and considered the GPAC's recommendation and community input provided from the Community Workshop conducted in conjunction with the January 5, 2010 Meeting. The Commission recommended conceptual approval of the following proposed overlays and potential new designations:

Overlays

1. Mesquite Dunes
2. Proposed Wildlife Corridors
3. Joshua Tree National Park Buffer
4. Hillsides
5. Fault Hazards
6. FEMA 100-Year Floodplain
7. Indian Cove/Mesquite Drainage Area

Potential New Designations

1. Potential Commercial Node at the northwest corner of Twentynine Palms Highway and Encelia Avenue.
2. Potential Tourist Commercial Node at Twentynine Palms Highway and Lear Avenue (east of Lear Avenue).

Circulation

The Planning Commission conceptually approved the proposed modifications to the City's Circulation Plan with minor adjustments, as shown on the attached presentation exhibits.

Sewage Disposal

The Planning Commission conceptually approved studying the possibility of developing a community-wide sewer plant to be developed in phases, primarily to serve Downtown or possibly developing a regional wastewater package treatment plant to serve Downtown.

General Plan Build-Out

The Planning Commission further clarified the City's intent to develop a General Plan that would include policies to allow quality development to be constructed in the City, as opposed to developing a General Plan that would limit the City's General Plan build-out projection to a specific number.

January 5, 2010 Community Workshop

A Community Workshop was held on January 5, 2010, as a component of the Planning Commission meeting. The proposed Land Use, Circulation and Infrastructure Alternatives were presented to the community for review. A comment card was distributed to workshop participants to provide feedback regarding the proposed Alternatives. Workshop participants generally agreed with the proposed Alternatives, particularly with the proposed land use changes. The results of the comment card survey were presented to the Planning Commission at their January 5, 2010 regular meeting and January 13, 2010 Special meeting.

Alternatives

The proposed alternatives are presented for consideration in a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which has been provided to the City Council and will be further discussed at the Council meeting on January 26, 2010.

Land Use Overlays and Potential New Designations

Land Use Alternatives were prepared for consideration. The Alternatives included overlay designations and lower and higher intensity alternatives. The Planning Commission's recommendations regarding the Land Use Alternatives are shown in the attached Alternatives Presentation.

Circulation

The City's Circulation Plan was recently updated in 2008; however additional modifications are suggested for consideration that may allow the City to develop a safe circulation network while minimizing construction cost and expanding vehicular access to more residents.

Infrastructure

Circulation, drainage and waste water disposal are significant infrastructure areas that have definite implications for development and protection of natural resources and may involve significant resources to construct these improvements.

CONCLUSIONS

The Land Use, Circulation, and Infrastructure Alternatives are intended to identify potential alternatives to address the identified objectives and better align the policies of the General Plan with the vision expressed by the community. The recommended alternatives are being presented to the City Council for review and consideration. Approved draft alternatives will form the basis of a new draft General Plan and Environmental Impact Report for consideration.

The next step in the General Plan Update will be the preparation of a Draft General Plan and a Draft Environmental Impact Report. Another Community Workshop and workshops with the

Planning Commission and City Council will be held during the public review period of the draft documents which are anticipated in the Summer of 2010.

FISCAL IMPACT

None at this time.