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Overview of the General Plan, Housing Element and Community Engagement Strategy

BACKGROUND

This report is for information only. The City of San Leandro has embarked on an update of its General Plan, including the Housing Element. The existing General Plan was adopted in 2002 and had a horizon year of 2015. The new Plan will be adopted in late 2015 or early 2016, with a horizon year of 2035. The Housing Element will be updated concurrently, but its adoption will be expedited because of State deadlines.

The existing San Leandro General Plan includes seven “elements”, covering the following topics: land use, transportation, housing, open space and conservation, environmental hazards, community design and preservation, and community services and facilities. Each element includes goals, policies, and actions guiding future City decisions on these topics. The Plan also includes a land use map indicating how growth will take place over the next two decades, and roughly 20 other maps expressing the City’s policies on a range of physical development topics.

On March 3, 2014, the City Council approved an Agreement with Placeworks (formerly the Planning Center/DC&E) to complete the General Plan Update, which includes an update of the City’s Housing Element. At the March 3rd meeting, the Council discussed the scope of work and requested the item come back to the Council for further discussion regarding community engagement and key long-range planning issues

Community Engagement Strategy

The project team is committed to engaging and empowering the public in the General Plan Update and achieving broad demographic and geographic representation. Much of the work completed since approval of the Consulting Services Agreement has focused on development of a Community Engagement Strategy. That Strategy includes the following components:

- A project website, www.sanleandro2035.org <<http://www.sanleandro2035.org>>, which includes information about the General Plan Update; copies of documents, presentations, and meeting notes; and a link to “Virtual City Hall,” where participants can share their thoughts on different policy topics.
- Activation of [Virtual City Hall](http://www.sanleandro.org/oth/default.asp) <<http://www.sanleandro.org/oth/default.asp>> throughout the process. The first question which has been asked is “What do you think is the biggest housing challenge facing San Leandro today?” A second question consisting of a multiple choice exercise on preferred housing types in the City was rolled out during the recent Cherry Festival on a City iPad tablet for the general public to use.
- Planning Commission study sessions, to be held roughly once every two months for the duration of the project. Public comment will be included as a part of each meeting. Two study sessions have been held to date, and the next one is scheduled for July 10.
- Study sessions with other City Commissions, such as the Board of Zoning Adjustments, the Recreation and Parks Commission, and the Senior Commission.
- At least four “town hall” meetings (including one on housing issues), to be held at different points during the process.
- Direct outreach to established stakeholder groups representing neighborhoods, homeowners, environmental interests, business interests, the faith-based community, housing, and other interests.
- Maintaining a visible presence at notable City events such as the recent Cherry Festival.
- Production of press releases, meeting notices, postcards and flyers, with information about the project and upcoming meetings. Staff distributed a large number of General Plan Update postcards at the Cherry Festival which highlight the webpage and Virtual City Hall.
- Social media updates on Facebook, San Leandro Next and twitter.
- Tools for non-English speaking residents to engage in the process.

Staff and the consultants have compiled an e-mail data base for project-related communication which will be used to notify the public of upcoming and ongoing opportunities to participate in the process.

Policy Audit

The consulting team has initiated an “audit” of existing planning policies in San Leandro. This will ensure that the updated General Plan incorporates recently prepared plans and initiatives, such as Lit San Leandro, the Next Generation Workplace District Study, and the Downtown Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Strategy. The audit also includes a review of each policy and action in the 2002 General Plan and a determination of whether it should be carried forward, edited, or deleted. The new General Plan will build on the momentum of recent planning initiatives, while seeking new ideas for how San Leandro should grow and change over the next 20 years.

Housing Element

As noted above, the Housing Element update is a part of the General Plan update. Under California law, all cities in the Bay Area must adopt housing elements covering the period 2015 to 2023 by January 31, 2015.

The 2015-2023 Housing Element will include:

- a) an evaluation of the City's existing Housing Element;
- b) a needs assessment;
- c) an evaluation of housing opportunity sites;
- d) a constraints analysis; and
- e) goals, objectives, policies, and actions for the future.

The Housing Element must demonstrate San Leandro's ability to meet the City's "fair share" of the region's housing needs. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) has determined that San Leandro's "fair share" from 2015 to 2023 is 2,287 units, an increase of 40% over the fair share assignment for 2007 to 2014 of 1,630 units. San Leandro's "fair share" assignment is broken down into four income categories and includes 504 very low income households, 270 low income households, 352 moderate income households, and 1,161 above moderate income households. Based on this distribution, roughly one-third of San Leandro's assignment is associated with affordable housing and two-thirds is associated with market rate rental and owner-occupied housing.

The San Leandro Planning Commission convened a study session on the Housing Element Needs Assessment on May 8, 2014. The Needs Assessment uses data from the 2010 Census and 2008-2012 American Community Survey to profile demographic changes in San Leandro and their implications for housing needs.

Additional public meetings on housing topics will take place over the next four months, with a working draft of the Housing Element presented to the City Council in September 2014. As part of the Housing Element Update, the City's housing policies and programs will be updated to better respond to evolving housing needs, real estate market conditions, and available funding sources.

Previous Actions

- On March 3, 2014, the City Council approved a contractual services agreement (CSA) with Planning Center | DC&E (now Placeworks) to prepare the General Plan Update, Housing Element Update and related environmental impact report (EIR) required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- The San Leandro Planning Commission has convened two study sessions on the General Plan Update-one on March 6, and a second on May 8.
- On June 5, 2014, the Board of Zoning Adjustments convened a study session on the General Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A - Communications and Outreach Plan: City of San Leandro General Plan Update (June 2014)

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