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Strategic Planning

Memo

To: Mayor Ira and Members of the City Council
From: Rosanne Foust, Council Liaison for the General Plan Update
Tom Passanisi, Principal Planner *TOP.*
Date: November 30, 2004
Re: Update on the General Plan Process

Background

As you know, Planning Staff has been working on the General Plan update since early this year. The General Plan is the visionary document for the City and describes policies and programs necessary to achieve that vision. The existing General Plan was last updated in 1990, and does not meet many of the State's current requirements.

I would like to update the City Council on our progress on this important project and describe what work still needs to be completed.

Neighborhood Meetings

We began the General Plan update process with a kick-off meeting with the Planning Commission on January 13, 2004, and since then have held five neighborhood meetings. (Another one is scheduled for December 14).

The purpose of the public meetings was to stimulate discussion and get the public to think about a future vision for the City, by asking questions such as:

- What do you like about Redwood City? What are the community's assets?
- What do you think needs improvement and/or what are the City's biggest challenges?
- What do you think Redwood City needs that it currently doesn't have, e.g. improvements to the El Camino or Downtown?

Public Participation has ranged from 10 citizens to approximately 40 at each meeting. (In order to make it more convenient, we even provided free child care and also as an incentive provided discount certificates for Parks, Recreation, and Community Services programs).

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All the meeting notes and comments are on the City's web site under General Plan - Public meetings and Workshops.

The meetings were held in the following neighborhoods:

January 13: Planning Commission general kick off meeting at City Hall
February 18: Friendly Acres Neighborhood (Taft School)
April 6: Roosevelt Neighborhood (Community Activity Building)
May 18: Redwood Shores (Sandpiper Community Center)
June 29: Farm Hill Neighborhood (Peninsula Covenant Church)
October 5: Centennial/Edgewood Park (Redwood High School)
December 14: Palm Park/Woodside Plaza (Redwood City YMCA)

Upon completion of the neighborhood meetings, staff plans to sort through all the comments and glean certain themes and ideas for a vision statement that will be forwarded to the Planning Commission and ultimately to the City Council.

Technical Updates

At the same time staff has been holding the neighborhood meetings, we have also been writing the technical background reports for some of the required elements (e.g. Land Use, Infrastructure, Open Space, etc.). These background documents are necessary to provide the context and information needed to help shape the goals and implementation measures. The State also requires certain technical information within each of these elements that we are currently gathering.

Optional Elements

Staff has also met and has been working closely with various Committees to write "optional" elements¹. These elements include the Economic Development Element, Historic Resources Element, and the Cultural Resources Element. Staff also plans to incorporate by reference the recently completed Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department Strategic Plan. There is also some interest to update the City's Human Services Element.

Next Steps:

Upon completion of the neighborhood meetings, staff will review all the input and create the draft vision for the General Plan. At the same time we will be completing the technical writing of the document. We hope to have a draft General Plan document before the City Council by mid summer. A tentative schedule is presented below.

January, 2005: Complete neighborhood outreach and draft vision

¹ There are seven required elements of the General Plan: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open-Space, Noise, and Safety. The State provides flexibility for Cities to write other optional elements that uniquely address subjects of particular concern.

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January, 2005 - May, 2005: Write elements and technical reports
April, 2005: Planning Commission reviews first draft
May, 2005: Staff revises Elements as necessary
June, 2005: Planning Commission holds public hearing makes
recommendation to City Council
July - August, 2005: City Council holds public hearing and adopts General
Plan.

In the end we hope to have a "user friendly", thorough, and interesting
General Plan that reflects the values of the community. Please feel free to
contact us if you have any questions. Thank you.