

# REPORT

To the Honorable Mayor and City Council  
From the City Manager

May 19, 2008

## INFORMATION ONLY

### SUBJECT

New General Plan Monthly Status Report

### BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a brief summary on the progress of the New General Plan since the last update was provided to you on April 28, 2008. Throughout the first part of May staff and the General Plan consultants held a series of meetings with various affinity groups such as neighborhood representatives, interfaith and youth groups, grass roots environmentalists and an interview with an urban design consultant for the General Plan. Those meetings and a brief summary of their content are presented below:

- *Neighborhood Representatives – April 28:* Met with approximately 20 neighborhood representatives from all over the City, including representatives from the mobile home parks. The participants discussed the community assets of a good neighborhood and the major issues and challenges facing neighborhoods in general. Some wanted to have more of a sense of place, i.e. a place with all the necessary conveniences and that also was connected to the rest of the City. They would like to have more gathering places and participate in neighborhood events. However, the participants acknowledged challenging issues such as flooding along East Bayshore, traffic and congestion, and infrastructure improvements such as better sidewalks and improved utilities. They discussed the need for better public transportation, gathering places for youth, the importance of diversity, and the need for more churches and community spaces.
- *Urban Design – April 28:* Staff met with the urban design consultant for the General Plan. We discussed the important design elements of the City such as street corridors, the City's waterfront, and overall urban design concepts for infill developments. The result of this urban design analysis will be conceptual options that address key design issues of the multi-family districts, commercial districts and important street corridors of the City. Urban Design policies and implementation measures will be formalized and inserted in the New General Plan.

*Human Services Discussion - April 29:* The General Plan consultants met with the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director and the Manager of the Fair Oaks Community Center. They discussed the various resources available for inclusion in the General Plan and considered making Human Services a chapter of a "Quality of Life" Element of the General Plan. This Element would also include culture, childcare, library

services, and other important topics. A human services subcommittee and focus groups will work with the consultants to prepare the document.

- *Interfaith Group – April 29:* Met with six individuals who represented a cross section of the City's interfaith religious groups. They recognized the diverse population of the City and the in-flux of new and younger families, and how these groups are located in different geographical locations in the City. They mentioned the need for after school activities for youth and how it is important for the interfaith groups to work closely with the school districts and Police Department. There is also the need for more community facilities and space to serve the citizens of Redwood City, especially the youth. The interfaith group suggested the establishment of a coalition of churches to work with the different public agencies. Planning Commissioner Seybert also attended this meeting.
- *Grass Root Environmentalists - April 29:* Staff met with about 15 representatives from various environmental groups. There was discussion of the Cargill site. Other environmental issues included the need to better utilize creeks and daylight them, provide better public transit, plant more trees, convert the Hetch Hetchy right-of-way for public use, look at alternative energy uses, construct more trails and bikeways, and consider a level of service (LOS) for pedestrians instead of cars.
- *Adult English As a Second Language (ESL) Class – May 1 and May 7:* The City's Environmental Initiative's Manager led the class in a session that included an open dialogue on what the group liked and disliked about Redwood City, what services were important to them, and suggestions on what to improve. (A similar meeting was held previously on April 14) For example, some wanted more security around schools, the prevention of flooding, and want more water features and safer routes for biking. However, there was a concern about the lack of destinations or tourist spots, healthcare and gangs.
- *Youth Focus Groups – May 1 and May 15:* The City's Environmental Initiative's Manager led a class of middle-school children to inquire what they liked and disliked about Redwood City, a future vision for the City and ways to help with the environment. They suggested more teen centers, activity areas, and places to play sports. They were also concerned about overcrowding, expensive housing, and narrow bike lanes.

There will be no other immediate affinity group meetings as the General Plan consultant will now begin to write technical background reports on the data they have received and what they have heard at the various affinity group meetings. At this time, the intention is to hold future affinity group meetings around the topics of housing, multi-generational needs, and other topics in the summer and fall. In the event of opportunities that present themselves sooner such as the ESL class described above, affinity group meetings may be supplemented and/or replaced by these special efforts. It is possible that instead of holding all of the remaining affinity group meetings, an extra workshop in the second phase ("Wave 2") could be conducted.

In the interim, the City has applied for and received a Pedestrian Safety Assessment Grant to identify opportunities to improve pedestrian safety and walkability, and to showcase

some of the important achievements that Redwood City has already made. A walking audit will be held in late May, followed by an evaluation by the consultants. The findings and recommendations will be included in the New General Plan.

Concurrent with the affinity group meetings, the New General Plan team has been engaged in research and background report preparation. Interviews have been held as noted above and more will occur throughout the remainder of Wave 1 to support the development of background reports. Development of the traffic model is also underway with the hiring of a consultant to help calculate building square footage for the traffic analysis and also the establishment of "Traffic Analysis Zones". Wave 2 will be comprised of the broadest reaching public outreach portion of the process and will include three or more large-scale workshops. In preparation for the Wave 2 outreach, staff will continue to keep the message current by developing an outreach approach appropriate for large community events such as the Stafford Park and Courthouse Square concert series and the North Fair Oaks Festival.

The General Plan Committee also met on May 14. The Committee is made up of three City Council members (Honorable Mayor Foust, and Council members Howard and Pierce) and two Planning Commissioners (Chair Cronin and Planning Commissioner Seybert). The Committee continues to provide valuable insight and direction to staff regarding public outreach and other General Plan work. Some of the Committee members have also attended the affinity group meetings.



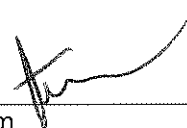
Tom Passanisi  
Principal Planner



Jill Ekas  
Planning Manager



Chu Chang  
Acting Community Development Director



Peter Ingram  
Interim City Manager

**ATTACHMENTS**

None

**RELATED DOCUMENTS IN CITY CLERK'S OFFICE**

None