



March 31, 2010

Via E-Mail & Hand Delivery

Stephanie De Wolfe, Deputy Director Planning  
General Plan Update Advisory Committee  
100 N. Garfield Ave. Room S228  
Pasadena, CA 91109

Re: General Plan Update Draft Outreach Summary Report: Policy Recommendations

Dear Staff and Committee Members:

The board of directors of the West Pasadena Residents' Association (WPRA) has reviewed the General Plan Update Draft Outreach Summary Report, and makes the following policy recommendations based on the community comments contained in the report:

Follow the Rules: Pasadena should follow its own planning rules as set forth in the zoning code and specific plans. There should be a higher standard for granting variances. Hearing officers should have less discretion to grant variances from the zoning code.

Full Disclosure: State affordable housing density bonuses should be disclosed in Pasadena's zoning code so that businesses and residents know exactly how much future density will be permitted on development sites. Density bonuses should be disclosed for each project. All specific plan areas should reflect total counts, not just Fair Oaks/Orange Grove.

Preserve Affordable Housing: Pasadena is experiencing a net loss of affordable units as older garden apartments and bungalow courts are torn down and replaced with high-density projects with fewer affordable units. Pasadena should preserve and protect its existing stock of affordable units.

Design Standards: The General Plan should incorporate the new design standards recently adopted for multi-family and commercial areas outside specific plan areas to be applicable to all specific plan areas as well.

De-emphasized Streets: The General Plan Mobility Element should maintain the concept of De-emphasized Streets. Any new street classification system proposed by the Department of

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Transportation should include an analogous "neighborhood friendly" classification that is consistent with the goal of reducing traffic on neighborhood streets.

Traffic Impacts and Mitigation: The summary report accurately captures overwhelming community concern about increased traffic in Pasadena. Many residents are concerned that the City's current EIR process does not adequately measure projected traffic impacts of proposed development projects and that proposed mitigation measures are not effective in reducing new car trips generated. During the General Plan update process, the City should consider adopting citywide standards for acceptable Levels of Service (LOS) at key intersections and street segments. The City also should question the assumptions underlying so-called "soft" traffic mitigation measures such as transit kiosks and TDMs. The General Plan Mobility Element should contain specific goals and objectives for acceptable levels of traffic in Pasadena. These goals should be set after the City conducts an Environmental and Infrastructure Capacity Analysis, as discussed below.

Future Growth: The upcoming General Plan update process should start by addressing the basic issues of how much future growth Pasadena can accommodate and what level of resources will be required to support future growth. The City should undertake an Environmental and Infrastructure Capacity Analysis that examines Pasadena's current and projected capacity in the following areas: streets; water; sewers; waste and sanitation; and electricity. Pasadena should consider adopting a policy requiring new development to have a net-zero impact. Environmental sustainability is an important complementary theme in the outreach summary report; environmental impacts of recent development also undergird the discussion of Development Density and Traffic.

Citizen Input: The General Plan should lay out a new process so that the general public and the Design Commission are brought into the process sooner to ensure they have appropriate input. The current process, in too many cases, essentially nullifies desired and/or necessary changes, as the projects are too far advanced and often only minor or superficial modifications can be implemented

The WPRA asks that these policy recommendations be included in the updated General Plan and Zoning Code.

Sincerely,

Audrey O'Kelley, President

cc: Steve Madison  
Takako Suzuki