



**CITY OF BIGGS
PLANNING STAFF REPORT**



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TO: Honorable Mayor and
Members of the City Council

DATE: October 17, 2011

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FILE: General Plan Update
Element Review
Study Session #3

SUBJECT: General Plan Update Project: Element Review Study Session #3 (Land Use)

SUMMARY

This report summarizes the direction and intent of the third and final scheduled study session meeting with the City Council to review the administrative draft elements of the City of Biggs' General Plan Update project. This report and presentation to be presented at the study session will present for discussion the following pieces of information:

1. Key policy issues on the Land Use Element that warrant early input and direction from the City Council; and,
2. Presentation of the Circulation Diagram.

Following Council direction on the key policy issues for each element, staff and the project team will continue work to complete and finalize the draft policy document. This will include bringing forth to the City Council for review the full and final General Plan policy document and the initiation of a discussion on strategies for initiating the environmental impact report (EIR) portion of the project.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

During the past two years, the City of Biggs and the General Plan policy team have engaged in various activities to support the continued development of the General Plan document. Beginning in 2009, a series of public workshops were held in January and March to engage the public and identify issues of importance to the project. Residents were asked to provide feedback related to the future growth of the City and to provide specific input on issues related to growth and development. At those meetings, participants were asked to engage in a public polling effort whereby respondents provided input via electronic voting technology on issues such as growth, development density and intensity, visual and aesthetic issues and public services. Following the two initial public outreach efforts, two meetings were held with the City Council to refine and select a land use alternative to be used as the basis for the plan. Meetings were held in May and June of 2009 for this purpose with the outcome being that the City Council provided direction to staff and the Plan update team on a preferred land use alternative.

In addition to the meetings of early 2009, City staff and the project team held interviews with the members of the City Council and with various businesses and City residents to solicit input on specific topic areas and to identify issues of importance and concern. The information gathered as part of the public outreach effort, along with the inclusion of new State mandated information and input from City staff, has been used to create the draft elements to be reviewed as part of this meeting series.

Meeting Format:

Staff suggests that the Council review the Land Use element and provide feedback and input on key policy issues as necessary and desirable for the element. Staff believes that the receipt of early input on key policy issues will help the project team to better ensure that the public draft document accurately and effectively expresses the vision of the Council for the subject matter being discussed. Additionally, early Council input on the Plan will help to ensure that the Plan does not overreach or depart in a direction that could result in the unnecessary expenditure of time or budget.

Public noticing for this study session meeting has been undertaken through advertisement of the meeting in the local newspaper and the posting of meeting notices at City Hall and on the General Plan project update website. The meeting is intended to provide an opportunity for the City Council to ask questions of project staff about the content of the element; to provide a forum for the Council to collectively debate issues of importance in an informal setting; and, to provide the Council with the opportunity to direct changes to the content and direction of the materials being reviewed. This meeting has been advertised as a public meeting open to the public but it is not been anticipated by staff that the time allocated for the meeting is to receive public input. The intent of the meeting is to allow time for the Council to ask questions, seek information and provide input to staff on the Plan elements. Formal public hearings will be scheduled as part of the Plan approval process whereby public testimony will be formally received.

Staff suggests an approach to the meeting that utilizes consensus voting to provide direction on issues where a unanimous opinion of the Council is not present. Staff will receive the direction of the Council, and, where the direction is provided via unanimous consent or by a consensus majority vote, project staff will incorporate the item into the draft Plan as directed.

Policy Considerations –By Chapter / Element:

Land Use Element:

The Land Use Element is one of the seven mandated elements of the General Plan and is often perceived as the central core of the entire General Plan document. The Element contains the primary graphical expression of the City's planned growth vision, the Land Use Diagram, along with the related goals, objectives and actions that serve to assist the City in implementing and realizing the overall vision of the General Plan. The element provides primary direction relative to the intended density and intensity of land uses and establishes the basic framework and vision for the growth of the City both within the horizon of the Plan and beyond. The element is structured consistent with the layout of all of the Plan elements but has additional descriptive and explanatory information concerning historic and future growth need, land use density and intensity and land use vision. Of particular importance to the Land Use Element are the descriptions and definitions of land use density and intensity shown on the Land Use diagram. Section I of the Element provides a basic overview of the State Planning law related to the Land Use Element and provides introductory and supportive details concerning the existing land use setting, demographic trends and land use data. Consistent with the layout of the balance of the

Plan document, Section II provides an overview of key issues and opportunities presented relative to the use of land in and around the City. Section III serves as the core of the element by providing and explaining the vision and intent of the land use designations utilized on the Land Use Diagram and presents the graphical depiction of the City's vision for growth on the Land Use Diagram. The land use related goals, policies and actions of the element are presented in Section IV. Goals, policies and actions for the use of land and the intended form and function of existing and future land uses are key to the contents of this Section. The final section of the Element presents information on the Special Planning Areas described in the text of the Element and outlined in the document. This section provides the user of the Plan with a more complete description of the vision and intent of the City for land use within a focused area and identifies at a basic level some of the potential constraints to the use of land and realization of the planning vision for the area.

The primary additions that have been made to the Land Use Element beyond what is included in the City's current General Plan include a heightened level of focus on planning beyond the City's existing City Limits and Sphere of Influence Area; the addition of numerous new land use designations and descriptions to assist in the realization of the City vision for the implementation of the Land Use Diagram; and, the placement of a heightened level of importance on looking for new opportunities for non-residential and employment generating land use options. The goals, policies and actions section of the document retains the core group of land use policies from the 1998 General Plan while providing additional policy direction related to economic development, revitalization and reuse of properties in the existing City limits and engagement of a regional level in dialogues and efforts affecting the City and region.

The project team is specifically seeking Council direction and input on the following items in this element:

- Appropriateness of the Element Vision statement (refer to top of Page LU-1);
- Appropriateness and adequacy of the land use designations, descriptions and density and intensity standards (refer to text beginning on Page LU-13 ;
- Amended Goals, Policies and Actions in Section IV (refer to text beginning on Page LU-20,
- Modifications, deletion and additions made to the text of the Special Planning Area in Section V (refer to text beginning on Page LU-27).

Presentation of the General Plan Circulation Diagram:

In addition to the presentation of the Land Use Element, staff is forwarding the Circulation Diagram to the City Council for review. At the General Plan study session of July 18th, the City Council reviewed and provided direction on the contents of the Circulation Element text. However, at the time of that meeting, the City was in the process of changing direction in the City Engineering department and the project team was not able to have the Circulation Diagram reviewed by the new City Engineer. Following the hiring of the new City Engineer, staff has engaged in a dialogue about the Circulation Diagram and is now ready to submit such to the Council for review. The City Engineer has reviewed the document and is in agreement on its contents and depiction of the future circulation and transportation system in support of the Element text.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council review and discuss the draft Land Use Element and Circulation Diagram and provide feedback and direction to the project team on how to modify the element to best reflect the vision of the City Council.

Attachments:

1. Land Use Element Text (provided electronically)
2. Copy of the draft Circulation Diagram (provided electronically)