

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Item type: Consent Calendar Regular Agenda Public Hearing
 Correspondence/Pending Legislation

To: City Council and/or;
 Successor Agency to Former Cotati Community Redevelopment Agency and/or;
 City Council Acting as Housing Successor to Former Cotati Community Redevelopment Agency

Subject: Draft General Plan Update Review

Date: April 24, 2013

Written by: Vicki Parker, Community Development Director

Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council review the goals, objectives, policies and actions in the draft Update and provide direction to staff as to whether: 1) any additions or modifications should be made; and 2) the land use map is consistent with the City’s vision for growth.

Background

Update of the City’s General Plan began in spring of 2011. The process thus far has resulted in completion and adoption of the Housing Element, completion of a background report which captures existing conditions within the City and a significant number of public visioning and goal setting meetings. The public process has consisted of: four Visioning workshops held between March and May 2011 to receive public and stakeholder input, a series of fourteen meetings with the Planning Commission held from July 2011 through February 2012 to identify priorities and issues for the Update and two open houses held in November 2013 to present the public with a summary of the work completed to date.

At each of the Planning Commission meetings, the Commission was presented with a summary of the public input received on each General Plan topic during the earliest visioning workshops. The Planning Commission considered this public input, and provided additional input and guidance regarding each General Plan topic. A summary of the priorities and issues identified through the Visioning process and Planning Commission meetings is provided as Attachment 1.

Analysis/Discussion

To aid the Council in review of the Draft, please note that each General Plan Element contains a series of goals, objectives, policies and action items. The goals, objectives, policies and action items provide guidance to the City on how to direct change, manage growth, and manage

resources over the life of the General Plan. The following provides a description of each and explains the relationship of each:

- ◆ A **goal** is a description of a general desired result that the City seeks to create through the Implementation of the General Plan Update.
- ◆ An **objective** further refines a goal and provides additional specificity on how a goal may be achieved by the General Plan. Each goal may have one or more objectives.
- ◆ A **policy** is a specific statement that guides decision-making as the City works to achieve its goals and objectives. The General Plan's policies set out the standards that will be used by City staff, the Design Review Committee, the Planning Commission, and City Council in review of land development projects, resource protection activities, infrastructure improvements, and other City actions. Policies are on-going and generally require no specific action on behalf of the City.
- ◆ An **action** is an implementation measure, procedure, technique or specific program to be undertaken by the City to help achieve a specified goal or implement an adopted policy. The City must take additional steps to implement each action item in the General Plan. An action item is something that can and will be completed.

A complete draft of the updated General Plan is included as Attachment 2. The following descriptions provide summaries of the major policy direction and objectives of each of the draft Elements:

CIRCULATION

Addresses mobility and traffic, with a focus on creating a circulation network that serves all users, a safe route to Thomas Page Academy, eliminating gaps/connectivity issues in the bicycle and pedestrian network, and circulation improvements that address safety issues.

COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS

Encourages steps to make Cotati a more vibrant and healthy place to live and work, including increased access to health care and health education, fresh and local foods, community events, and recreation activities. Many community health & wellness issues are also addressed in the Open Space & Recreation, Circulation, and Land Use & Design Elements.

COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES

Ensures that the City is planning for police and fire protection, schools, infrastructure, libraries, and water and sewer services and that new growth does not exceed the City's ability to provide services. Issues such as a clean water supply, reuse and recycling program availability, and increased coordination between the City and Cotati/Rohnert Park Unified School District and Sonoma State University are addressed.

CONSERVATION

Provides measures to protect and improve the City's natural setting and habitat, air quality, biological resources, water supply, and scenic resources. Protecting unique and

sensitive habitats, including the Laguna de Santa Rosa and Cotati Creek, minimizing conflict between new development and special-status species, protecting surface water quality, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing energy-efficiency, and protecting important historic and cultural resources are addressed

NOISE

Establishes standards and policies to protect the community from the harmful and annoying effects of exposure to excessive noise levels and addresses compatibility of uses.

OPEN SPACE

Addresses protection and enhancement of natural resources, scenic resources, and provision of a quality park and recreation network. Encourages public access to open space and natural resources and continued open space in the Sphere of Influence and Urban Growth Boundary as well as urban open space opportunities.

SAFETY

Addresses hazards such as fires, flooding, and geologic hazards. Emergency and disaster preparedness, including the preparation of an emergency response plan and coordination with local and regional disaster management and safety agencies is addressed. Reducing risks to human life and property related to flooding, earthquakes, hazardous materials, and other hazards is addressed for both new and existing development.

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Establishes goals and programs to enhance the local economy, support existing and new businesses, and promote the creation of local jobs. Attracting a more diverse business base, including tourism and green oriented businesses, streamlining permitting and assistance to businesses, and supporting local arts and cultural activities are among key issues addressed.

LAND USE AND DESIGN

Establishes a land use pattern that will enhance Cotati's small-town character, encourage sustainable and environmentally sensitive land use, and provide adequate space to support desired economic and housing growth. Growth opportunities are focused on in-fill and logical extensions of existing development. Residential, commercial, industrial, mixed use, public facilities, open space, recreation, and other land uses are addressed.

Financial Considerations

None. The consultant contract for the entire scope of work was approved in 2011. No amendments or change orders are proposed or anticipated.

Environmental Issues

A full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is being completed with the General Plan Update and all potential impacts will be fully analyzed. This action to provide staff with direction does not have the potential to result in a significant adverse environmental effect and is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Attachments:

1. Priorities and Issues Summary
2. Draft General Plan Update (dated April 9, 2013)