



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 20, 2008

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Winston Rhodes, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Workshop Item No. 1 - Workshop on the proposed draft Brentwood Boulevard Specific Plan, consisting of approximately 436 acres located along the Brentwood Boulevard (State Route 4) corridor from Delta Road on the north to Second Street on the south. The project includes a proposed General Plan Amendment (GPA 08-03) and Rezoning (RZ 08-05) and consideration of a Draft Environmental Impact Report prepared in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act requirements.

Background

The Brentwood Boulevard Specific Plan (BBSP) was initiated to help implement the General Plan and provide more specific land use guidance for future development in the portion of the Brentwood Boulevard corridor north of the City's Downtown area. The BBSP was also prepared in anticipation of the changes resulting from the completion of the Highway 4 Bypass this year and the future relocation of State Highway 4 from Brentwood Boulevard to the Highway 4 Bypass expected to occur within approximately two years. The City recognized the need to plan for the transition along the corridor from a rural regional State highway to a local major arterial roadway serving primarily local rather than regional traffic.

Four community workshops were held from October 2003 to June 2005 to gather public input about area concerns and preferences. In August 2005 a workshop was held to formulate the community vision for the BBSP. The vision was refined and clarified in 2006 in subsequent community meetings and joint City Council / Planning Commission workshops in February and March 2007. The BBSP vision emerged as a Grand Boulevard with distinctive, unique buildings facing the boulevard including comfortable walkways and generous landscaping to provide an active, inviting, and attractive corridor stretching from the planned shared northern boundary with Oakley at Delta Road and the southern connection to the Downtown at Second Street (see page 35 of the draft BBSP). Ten goals were prepared to define the vision and guide future development (see page 36 of the attached Draft BBSP).

The BBSP vision and goals were used to formulate a draft land use map that was discussed at two joint City Council / Planning Commission workshops in February and March 2007 to gather community feedback and refine the land use map based upon the Specific Plan vision and

goals. The Council and Planning Commission expressed general support for the preliminary land use map and decided to refer the Specific Plan land use map to the City Land Use and Development Committee for further consideration. The Land Use and Development Committee reviewed the proposed draft land use map at two meetings in May and June 2007 respectively and endorsed the land use map for study in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The draft plan text and figures were subsequently prepared with input from affected City Departments during 2007 and early 2008 with concurrent preparation of the accompanying draft EIR.

The draft Specific Plan and EIR were released publicly on April 22, 2008 for review and comment and three stakeholder meetings have been held in May to review the Specific Plan and answer questions and concerns from members of the public. The comment period on the draft documents concludes on June 6, 2008. A summary of the issues and concerns raised during the stakeholder meetings is attached. All correspondence received by staff on the draft BBSP since April 22 is also attached for Commission consideration.

The draft BBSP includes ten chapters to satisfy State statutory requirements for specific plan contents. The BBSP provides focused policy direction to support the vision and goals of the BBSP and includes specific development standards to guide future development review within the ten land use categories included within the plan.

This workshop has been scheduled to provide an overview of BBSP contents and provide the opportunity for additional public and Commission input.

Specific Plan Vision, Goals, and Policies

The BBSP vision communicates what the community wants to occur over time within the Specific Plan area. The ten BBSP goals specify how to progress toward the vision. The policies support the goals and provide greater details to help ensure that new development proposals advance the BBSP goals and implement the vision.

Several policy issues have been raised at public meetings that require review and consideration.

Land Use Transitions – Policy 3 includes quantified minimum setbacks between new development and adjacent existing homes. The Planning Commission should consider the appropriate size of setback areas to provide appropriate transitions where new development will abut existing residential areas to adequately protect existing residents and encourage desirable new development and infrastructure improvements within the Specific Plan area.

Distinctive Architecture – Policy 4 includes required features to provide unique architecture oriented towards Brentwood Boulevard along the right-of-way. The Planning Commission should consider requirements along this right-of-way frontage carefully due to the high degree of visibility of these areas. Specifically, building massing, building height, and pedestrian comfort are all factors which will heavily influence the streetscape appearance.

Infrastructure - Staff has received many questions about infrastructure improvement timing and right-of-way dedications. Policy 7 describes how infrastructure improvements will proceed. Limited financial resources and the established Development Fee Program used throughout the City have dictated a phased approach driven in large part by future private development activity. The City's 5-year Capital Improvement Program is where public infrastructure improvements are prioritized and scheduled based on funding availability. Property owner action to move forward

with development proposals will dictate how quickly infrastructure upgrades occur as has happened elsewhere in the City.

Parks and Open Space – Staff has received input regarding the provision of parks and the need for flexibility in the configuration and placement of parks near future residences. In addition, feedback has been received about the need to clarify the distinction between parks and different types of open space as referenced in the Specific Plan. Policy 8 summarizes the park requirements of the plan. The Planning Commission should consider the need for further clarification and whether the Land Use Map should be modified to reflect future parks rather than “open space“ on Parcel 235 consistent with other large properties planned for residential use in the draft BBSP.

Land Use Implementation

The draft Specific Plan includes an “Applicability” section similar to the Downtown Specific Plan that describes a variance procedure and what Plan deviations require a Specific Plan Amendment. The Planning Commission should carefully consider this text and the distinctions described in order to provide the appropriate balance between flexibility and certainty during the implementation of the Specific Plan.

The applicability section also describes how pre-existing established uses (i.e. “grand-fathered” uses) are treated in the implementation of plan. Staff has received property owner input that the 60-day period is insufficient to enable property owners to avoid triggering Specific Plan requirements when they wish to maintain current established uses. The Commission should consider whether this timeframe is appropriate or should be extended in order to balance property owner concerns with effective implementation of the Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan includes ten separate land use categories to implement the Specific Plan. The land use categories include use-based requirements and requirements relating to building forms and design. The Specific Plan reflects adopted City Design Guidelines and includes greater development flexibility in mixed use areas to encourage redevelopment and new development over time. The Planning Commission should consider the range of permitted and conditionally permitted uses for each land use category as well as the form-based development standards.

It should be noted that portions of the northern sub-area of the Specific Plan area along Delta Road and the area including most of Sims Road east of Brentwood Boulevard and north of Lone Tree Way are currently outside the City limits. Consequently, annexation of these areas would be required for the Specific Plan to apply to these areas and regulate future development on what is now unincorporated land currently within Contra Costa County’s jurisdictions. The BBSP project includes pre-zoning these areas for future annexation. However, initiation of an annexation application is not currently contemplated by the City as part of this project.

Signage

Signage is a very noticeable component of streetscape design. The Specific Plan includes sign regulations to promote high quality signage that complements building architecture and facilitates effective communication. The BBSP sign regulations supplement the City’s sign ordinance and provide more specific guidance within the Specific Plan area. The Planning Commission should consider the suitability of the sign regulations based on past experience reviewing signs throughout the City and based the extent to which the regulations help achieve the vision and goals of the BBSP.

Circulation Implementation

The Specific Plan includes a circulation implementation chapter to guide future roadway improvements. Arterial and collector roadways with accompanying right-of-way cross-sections are provided to meet the transportation needs of automobile drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians throughout the Specific Plan. Future roadway alignments are approximate locations. Precise alignments will be determined as development occurs. This chapter also communicates future traffic signal and right-of-way needs to property owners and prospective developers. This chapter includes existing and future transit stop information and bicycle routes to help guide placement of transit rider facilities and improve transit and bicycle accessibility over time.

The Planning Commission should consider the draft circulation maps and the connection to existing roadways in established neighborhoods abutting the Specific Plan boundary. There is commonly resistance to extending roadways between new development and established neighborhoods. However, these linkages improve overall circulation within the City by increasing the routes available to the public and improve delivery of emergency police and fire services.

Public Facilities and Services Implementation

The draft BBSP includes an inventory of existing and future water, sewer, and storm drain main lines to describe access to existing utilities and help guide future extensions necessitated by new development within the Specific Plan boundary. Similar to future roadways, utility main lines are approximate locations. Precise utility alignments and sizing will be determined in conjunction with site-specific development projects and review of improvement plans prior to construction. The Specific Plan will require additional solid waste, police, and fire services. Prior to any new development, development impact fees required by the City's Development Fee Program will be collected to ensure that services keep pace with future demand.

Infrastructure Improvement Financing and Phasing

The draft BBSP describes planned infrastructure improvements within the Plan boundary based on the latest Capital Improvement Program. In addition, this chapter describes a variety of financing mechanisms that will be utilized to assist with the development of infrastructure improvements over time.

Relationship between the Specific Plan and General Plan

The General Plan currently provides broad policy and land use direction for the portion of the City included within the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan provides policy direction consistent with the City's General Plan as well as specific new development standards to direct future development within the BBSP boundaries. This draft BBSP chapter provides the General plan goals, policies, and actions directly supported by the draft BBSP.

General Plan Amendment

The BBSP project includes amendments to the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the General Plan resulting from proposed land use changes and new planned roadways. The BBSP will also require Land Use Element changes with respect to two Special Planning Areas (SPA A and B) located within the southern subarea of the Specific Plan. These amendments will be

considered in conjunction with the Specific Plan to ensure consistency between the General Plan and Specific Plan when the project is brought before the Planning Commission for action.

Rezoning Request

The BBSP project includes property rezoning to ensure consistency between the proposed Specific Plan and Zoning Ordinance. A Planned Development Zone based on the BBSP land use categories and BBSP development regulations will be brought forward for consideration by the Planning Commission in conjunction with Specific Plan and related General Plan amendments. The rezoning request will also include pre-zoning of properties currently outside the City limits so that annexation consistent with the Specific Plan can be initiated at a later date.

Environmental Review

A draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared and is being circulated as required by the California Environmental Quality Act. The Draft EIR has evaluated impact categories including: Aesthetics; Land Use; Transportation and Circulation; Noise and Vibration; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Historical and Cultural Resources; Hazards; Population, Employment, and Housing; and Public Services and Utilities. The EIR was prepared at a programmatic level to provide overall impact analysis upon build-out of the Specific Plan. It should be noted that environmental impacts described in the draft EIR will occur over many years and further site-specific environmental review for specific development projects will be needed based on specific site conditions. A summary of impacts and mitigation measures has been prepared as part of the Draft EIR. The draft BBSP also includes policies and development regulations intended to reduce potential environmental impacts to less than significant levels. Responses to any comments received on the Draft EIR will be prepared prior to completion of the Final EIR for future Planning Commission consideration. The Planning Commission should review and consider the Draft EIR carefully as part of the Specific Plan review process.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the attached material, consider public testimony, and provide feedback to staff on the contents of the Specific Plan.

Attachments:

1. Brentwood Boulevard Specific Plan Public Draft April 2008 (Hard Copy)
2. Brentwood Boulevard Draft Environmental Impact Report April 2008 (Previously Provided)
3. Summary of draft BBSP May 2008 stakeholder issues and concerns
4. Jeane Wasserman comment letter received April 30, 2008.

Stakeholder Meeting Feedback May 1, 5, and 12, 2008

Northern Subarea Issues/Concerns

- Concern expressed about duplicate utilities on Delta Road at shared Brentwood/Oakley boundary.
- Concern expressed about the length of time a property can be vacant before losing a legal non-conforming “grandfathered” status. A property owner was concerned that the 60-day vacancy period is too short and needed to be lengthened to a minimum of 90-days. The property owner also thought that rules for maintenance of legal non-conforming residential properties should be different than non-residential properties.
- Concern expressed about the timing of future infrastructure improvements in order to prevent a “saw tooth” or irregular infrastructure development pattern characterized by different public improvements within specific portions of the Brentwood Boulevard corridor.
- Storms drain improvements needed north of Lone Tree Way to prevent ongoing seasonal flooding concerns.
- Concern about the Brentwood Boulevard “washboard” road pavement condition north of Lone Tree Way and the need to level the terrain as part of subsequent roadway improvement work.
- Concern about the variance procedure for a specific parcel triggering a Specific Plan/Zoning Amendment
- Concern expressed about avoiding spot zoning and providing compatibility between uses

Central Subarea Issues/Concerns

- What will be the effect of the Specific Plan on road, sidewalk, and utility improvements outside the Specific Plan boundaries?
- How will road right-of-way width be obtained by the City?
- Code enforcement attention needed to address accumulation of trash and debris illegally dumped on vacant property east of Brentwood Boulevard between Hanson Lane and Homecoming Way.

Southern Subarea Issues/Concerns

- Residential Growth Management Plan applicability to the Specific Plan
- Applicability of the City's General Plan residential mid-range policy to future residential areas within the draft Specific Plan
- Ability to blend multiple Specific Plan residential designation densities on a development site
- Ability to blend residential housing types, sizes, and densities on a particular site
- Amount of City documents cross-referenced in Specific Plan
- Consistency between required Municipal Code findings for variances from development standards and findings included within the Specific Plan
- Concern that the land use and development standards are too restrictive
- Concern about how existing buildings will be affected by right-of-way needs.
- How are future "floating" future park sites different than designated park sites and why are there differences
- Clarify difference between "open space" and "active park use"
- Desire to see a citywide standard for alley and/or lane design to serve rear loaded garages
- Concern that draft plan's "intentions" need more clarification to avoid misunderstandings in the future
- When will the Redevelopment Agency have sufficient bonding capacity to help fund Specific Plan infrastructure improvements?
- Is the Grand Boulevard vision probable on a 4-lane roadway with a center median?
- Will speed limits be reduced and what are they likely to be?
- Where does a Grand Boulevard exist? What are some examples?
- Further investigate retail viability as envisioned by the Specific Plan

- Include more images or sketches to illustrate Specific Plan concepts or standards for document reviewers
- Are useable 2-story commercial buildings practical and feasible?
- Where is the commercial hub location(s) in the Specific Plan area

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April 29, 2008

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Dear Mr. Rhodes,

This letter is in response to the Draft Brentwood Boulevard Specific Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report that I received.

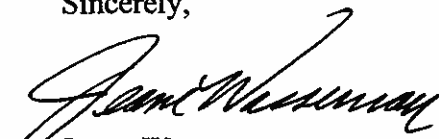
I have been a resident of Brentwood, on Homecoming Way, for ten years now. The backyard of my property is adjacent to the vacant parcel, identified as #150 on the map. Having enjoyed the open space behind my house for the past ten years, I have some concerns and opinions of what happens in the development of parcel #150. In no particular order, they are:

- Looking at the map, it appears that this parcel will be a combination of residence and a park. I am opposed to apartment/condo style housing behind my house.
- Whatever development takes place, I would hope that a retaining wall will be put in place, so as to separate the new development from the existing housing tract.
- I would like to have a space of 30 to 35 feet between the residents' yards and the new development.
- I really hope that there will be no tall structures, blocking our view of Mt. Diablo and the awesome sunsets that I often view from my back yard.

Having lived in Brentwood for ten years, my girls and I have seen so many changes. I feel that the City of Brentwood has taken responsibility, with the growth, to ensure that the new development and redevelopment projects are in the best interest of the people of Brentwood. I do hope the City remembers its heritage and keeps enough agriculture land for our farmers. Having access to the fresh fruits and vegetables reinforces that I live in part of California's agriculture land and gives me the "small-town" feel that I love so much, even though Brentwood has doubled in population since I moved here.

I have confidence that the City of Brentwood will do its due diligence with the planning and redevelopment of Brentwood Boulevard and its surrounding areas. Thank you for reading my letter and taking my concerns and opinions into consideration.

Sincerely,


Jeane Wasserman