



CITY OF IONE CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT



FOR THE MEETING OF: MAY 5, 2009

DATE: MAY 1, 2009

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL,
AND PLANNING COMMISSION**

**FROM: CHRISTOPHER JORDAN, AICP, CITY PLANNER
DANIEL HAMILTON, AICP, GENERAL PLAN PROJECT MANAGER**

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE – DRAFT GENERAL PLAN REVIEW

STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the City Council and Planning Commission:

1. Receive staff’s presentation on the following Elements: Conservation and Open Space, Noise and Safety, Economic Development, Public Facilities, and Housing;
2. Open the public hearing and take public comment;
3. Close the public hearing; and
4. Provide direction to staff, if necessary.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

General Plan Services Impact Fees; Loans from various other funds

BACKGROUND:

In March 2008, the Council directed staff to conduct a comprehensive update to the City’s General Plan. The General Plan is the City’s overarching policy document, or blueprint,

TYPE OF ITEM: <input type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Departmental <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	City Council for the City of Ione Upon motion of Council Member Seconded by Council Member And carried _____ by those members present, The Council hereby adopts the recommended action contained in this report.
PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL: Council Order No. _____ Meeting of: _____	Dated: _____ Janice Traverso, City Clerk By: _____

for creating a thriving, well-balanced, and sustainable community. All future development and actions of the City must be consistent with the General Plan. General Plans typically have a 20-30 year life span. The City's existing General Plan was first adopted in 1982 and portions were updated in 1989, 1991, 1992, 2003, and 2005. Given the number of changes that have happened in the community since 1982 the City needs to update the plan now in order to keep it current.

A lot has happened since the General Plan Update was initiated by the Council. The following list summarizes some of the key milestones and tasks completed to date:

- Establishing a General Plan Executive Committee made up of two Council members (Andrea Bonham and Lee Ard), two Planning Commissioners (Joe Wylie and Mike McDermed), and two Parks Commissioners (Rosemary Johnson and Fraser West). The Executive Committee met twice a month between August 2008 and April 2009 to provide direction to staff on the process of the project and to ensure that the August 2009 deadline established by the Council is achieved (Note: The August deadline is also important as it is the deadline for certification of the City's new Housing Element under State law). Since January 2009, the Committee has been reviewing two administrative draft elements, or chapters, every two weeks. Their comments have been incorporated into the draft General Plan being presented this evening.
- Creating a project website (www.ionegeneralplan.com) for people to learn about the project and stay involved.
- Conducting three public workshops at Evalynn Bishop Hall at Howard Park. The workshops provided the public with an introduction to the General Plan process and were a forum for the public to express their ideas and concerns about the future of Ione.
- Conducting a public survey aimed at gathering resident input and views outside of the workshop setting. The surveys were mailed out as part of the September sewer bill and were available for pickup at a number of locations throughout town (Curves, Claypool's, etc). Over 230 responses were received.
- A series of Planning Commission meetings on December 9 and December 15, 2008, where the Planning Commission discussed the three base land use alternatives and a fourth alternative prepared by staff and based upon comments at the November 19 public workshop. The Commission ultimately recommended an alternative to the City Council as the draft preferred Land Use Plan.
- A City Council meeting on January 6, 2009 to discuss the draft preferred Land Use Plan. The Council received the Planning Commission recommendation and took public comment. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Council directed staff on a preferred Land Use Plan to use as the basis for the preparation of the balance of the General Plan and for the initiation of the draft General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

- A policy workshop with the City Council and Planning Commission on February 19, 2009 to discuss circulation issues and policies for the draft General Plan. The Council and Commission ultimately directed staff on a new series of level of service standards and other circulation policies. These standards were used to complete the initial transportation analysis of the draft Land Use Plan in late February.
- At a second circulation policy discussion on April 7, 2009, the Council directed staff to modify the draft circulation policy based upon the initial traffic model results.
- On April 21, 2009, the City rolled out the draft General Plan.

The focus of this City Council/Planning Commission workshop is to review five of the seven elements (or chapters) the draft General Plan. Staff will present an overview of each element and some of the critical issues they address. The Council and Planning Commission should take public comment, and then provide staff with direction to modify the policies or programs in the draft as necessary. Additionally, as part of the overview, staff will identify any recommended changes to the policies or programs based upon legal review and initial environmental review.

Copies of the draft General Plan were provided to City Council and Planning Commission at the April 21 meeting. A limited number of copies will be available to the public at the meeting. Copies are available for review at City Hall and the Ione Library, as well as on the project website at www.ionegeneralplan.com. Hard copies may be purchased from the City.

ANALYSIS:

Conservation and Open Space

Topics included in this Element include agriculture, air quality, flooding, land reclamation, land use, minerals, recreation, scenic resources, soil conservation, trails system, water supply, and wildlife. The Element is framed to provide a vision for conserving open space and agricultural lands in the Planning Area, and enhance both the open space and recreational areas of the community through improvements to parks. Included are policies to create a trails system throughout Ione, preserve creeks and wetland areas, protect environmentally sensitive areas and biological resources, and protect water quality.

Noise and Safety

This Element addresses issues related to noise and safety in the community. Noise, for purposes of this General Plan, is considered any unwanted sound that interferes with an individual's ability to perform a task or enjoy an activity. While there are sounds that are considered desirable, this Element is intended to address unwanted sounds that impact the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Removing or reducing significant sources of noise will improve quality of life for Ione's residents, employees, and visitors.

Safety is an important aspect in ensuring the general well being of City residents, and it encompasses the prevention of and response to damages caused by manmade and natural

occurring hazards. Ione currently faces a range of safety issues including flooding, wildfires, hazardous materials, geologic and traffic hazards, and crime. The City's prevention of and response to these issues will determine its success in maintaining and attracting residents, businesses, and tourists.

Economic Development

Topics included in this Element include provision of jobs, creation of tax revenues, and provision of goods and services to the local population. The Element provides a vision for new business development and high wage jobs in key economic sectors, such as mining and industry. Included are policies to improve the viability of retail, office, and industrial uses in the community; continue to improve the downtown in order to create an economically diverse and financially successful district; use Redevelopment and other financial tools to enhance economic development; increase the number of visitors to Ione; and enhance entertainment options for residents.

Public Facilities

This Element focuses on the provision, design and maintenance of adequate public facilities and local services. The intent of the Element is to ensure that infrastructure systems are constructed in advance of residential development; water, sewer, and other utility services are coordinated to ensure adequate capacity and service levels; storm drainage facilities are designed to prevent drainage issues; that educational opportunities for Ione's residents are coordinated and provided, including public schools, higher learning facilities, and libraries; and ensuring that overall public facilities and services are provided in a way that promotes healthy and safe conditions for the residents.

Housing

The Housing Element addresses housing development, rehabilitation, and conservation. It sets forth actions that the City will undertake to assist residents to maintain their homes and to help ensure that there is an adequate supply of safe, affordable housing for existing and future residents. Some of the major objectives of the Element are:

- Provision of housing for all income ranges;
- Removing regulatory barriers to housing choices and development;
- Meet the requirements of the State HCD;
- Provide for sufficient special needs housing in the community; and
- Ensuring implementing programs (zoning, fees, etc) are updated to reflect needs.

It is important to note that this Element is substantially different than the others, mostly due to the need to meet requirements of the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). This is the State agency that has to approve the Housing Element. Formatting and organization of the document has to be coordinated consistent with both the rest of the Plan and the needs of HCD. Therefore, this Element is really broken into two sections – the Element in Chapter 9 and Appendix B, Housing Needs Assessment.

Staff has already submitted a copy of this draft of the Element to HCD for their initial review, as required by law. HCD may require changes in their review, so the version that is presented in July and August as part of the adoption process may be different..

FISCAL IMPACT:

The costs of completing the General Plan Update are being financed through the General Plan Services Impact Fee and loans from various other funds. The project remains on schedule and on budget.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Development of the General Plan is a City-led effort; however, staff from Amador County, AWA, and Caltrans have participated in the public workshops to date. Additional participation from other agencies is anticipated as the General Plan document is completed and the draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is available for public review. Staff has also sent out the necessary interagency and tribal notification letters as required by law.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Adoption of the General Plan will require preparation of a full EIR. The draft EIR is being prepared and it will be released to the public for comment at the completion of these policy workshops. Therefore, because formal adoption is not being completed at this time (rather, just direction to staff to proceed), no environmental review is necessary.

NEXT STEPS:

The next steps in the General Plan Update process are as follows:

- Policy discussion at joint City Council/Planning Commission meetings – May 19
- Draft EIR available for public review – Early June
- Planning Commission review of the Draft General Plan and Draft and Final EIR – July
- City Council review of the Draft General Plan and Draft and Final EIR, adoption of the General Plan, certification of the EIR – August