

**CITY OF IONE
CITY COUNCIL
STAFF REPORT**



FOR THE MEETING OF: MAY 19, 2009

DATE: MAY 15, 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: Circulation and Land Use;
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, 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

TYPE OF ITEM:

- Consent
- Departmental
- Public Hearing
- 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: _____

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.
- On May 5, 2009, the City Council and Planning Commission conducted a joint study session of the Conservation and Open Space, Noise and Safety, Economic Development, Public Facilities, and Housing Elements of the draft General Plan.

The focus of this City Council/Planning Commission workshop is to review the last two 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:

Land Use

Element Overview

The Land Use Element provides the central framework for the General Plan and serves as a compass to guide planners, developers, landowners, the general public, and decision makers on the desired pattern of development in Ione. It describes both existing and future land use activity, the latter of which has been designed to achieve the City's long-range goals for physical development. This Element also identifies the distribution, location, and intensity of all land uses types throughout the City. Text, maps, and diagrams establish the blueprint for future land uses within the City and describe how these uses are integrated with the other General Plan elements and policies.

One of the most critical concepts established in the Land Use Element is a series of 10 Policy Areas for major opportunity areas of the City. These include new development sites such as Ringer Ranch and Q Ranch, as well as the Downtown. The intent of establishing Policy Areas for these 10 areas is to provide specific policies and direction for how the City envisions the areas evolving over the life of the General Plan. These specific policies

work together with the universal policies throughout the Plan. For instance, Conservation and Open Space policy CO-9.1 (and subsequent actions) calls for the establishment of a City-wide standard for dedication of open space for development projects. Concurrent language in the policy discussion for Q Ranch (LU-1.13) provides specific direction for where open space should be located as part of the project. Further, for purposes of environmental analysis under the pending Environmental Impact Report, each Policy Area (other than Downtown) has an assigned development potential as described below (Table 3-1, page 3-23):

**TABLE 3-1:
POLICY AREA DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL***

Policy Area	Acres (Estimate)	Dwelling Units	Commercial- Office Sq. Ft.	Commercial- Retail Sq. Ft.	Industrial Sq. Ft.	Average Residential Density
Castle Oaks Gateway	52	210	See Commercial- Retail	70,000 (retail & office total)	0	5.0 for RL; 12.0 for RM; 20.0 for RH
Downtown	75	--	--	--	--	--
Industrial Park	348	--	2,012,472	1,439,658	6,137,604	--
Old Stockton	190	119	--	0	0	1.0
Preston Reuse	17	25	760,000	--	0	5.0
Q Ranch	439	500	--	0	0	1.0 – 2.0,
Ringer Ranch	139	670	See Commercial- Retail	50,000 (retail & office total)	0	5.0
Silva	105	552	See Commercial- Retail	20,000 (retail & office total)	0	5.0
124 Corridor	247	1,176 RL 326 RH	--	0	0	5.0 for RL; 20.0 for RH
Triangle	990	0	2,450,000	610,000	4,170,000	--

* Note: This table represents maximum development potential for each Policy Area. Each Policy Area may have all of the development listed in the row corresponding to the Policy Area.

Land Use Map Corrections and Recommended Adjustments

The General Plan Land Use Map (Figure 3-2) on page 3-9 of the Land Use Element, as well as some of the subsequent figures in the Land Use Element, contained a number of errors. Significant areas of the City were designated Public Services (PS) where they should have been designed Low Density Residential (RL). Attachment A is a corrected version of the Land Use Map. The Council and Planning Commission should replace the version in their draft General Plan with this updated map.

As part of the legal review of the draft General Plan, a number of concerns have been raised by the City Attorney with regard to how some of the Policy Areas described the flexibility of future land use planning and the intended fluid nature of land use boundaries

within those Policy Areas. Specifically, the concerns dealt with the Q Ranch, Old Stockton Road, and Industrial Park Policy Areas. In all three cases, staff had recommended that specific boundaries for the different land use categories be shown on the Land Use Map, but that language within the Policy Area discussion describe that the exact boundary be determined through future land use planning. The legal concern is that once a line is drawn on the Land Use Map it is set in stone and cannot move unless the map is formally amended by the Council. This had not been staff's intent.

To address this concern, staff is recommending that for the Q Ranch, Old Stockton Road, and the Industrial Park Policy Areas:

1. The Land Use Map be modified so that each Policy Areas is designated as 'Special Planning Area';
2. That a "Conceptual Land Use Plan" be developed for each Policy Area based upon the previous designations; and
3. That the Policy Area discussion for the policy areas be updated to reflect these changes and describe the roll of the "Conceptual Land Use Plans."

The concept behind the Conceptual Land Use Plans is to reflect the previous policy direction of the Council and Planning Commission, as well as the overall vision, goals, and policies of the General Plan, but rely on more detailed subsequent land use planning prior to development to ensure implementation consistent with the General Plan. The Conceptual Land Use Plans are intended to provide an illustrative representation of future land uses – not a specific, ridged land use plan. The specific boundaries of land uses will be determined through future project planning. These figures, along with the Policy Area descriptions and Policy Area Development Potential limits, provide direction on the relationship of uses, their general location within the Policy Area, and maximum density and intensity of uses.

Staff has drafted Conceptual Land Use Plans for the Q Ranch, Old Stockton Road, and the Industrial Park Policy Areas. These plans are provided as Attachment B.1 through B.3. If the Council and Planning Commission support this concept, modifications to the text of the Land Use Element will be prepared and included in the next draft of the Plan for Planning Commission consideration in July.

Policy Question #1: Staff recommends that the City Council and Planning Commission direct staff to change the Land Use designation for the Q Ranch, Old Stockton Road, and the Industrial Park Policy Areas to Special Planning Area (SPA), include the Conceptual Land Use Plans for these three areas in the General Plan, and update the text discussion in the Land Use Element accordingly.

An additional consideration for the Council and Planning Commission is the creation of Conceptual Land Use Plans for the other Policy Areas that are already identified as Special Planning Areas. These include Ringer Ranch, Silva, Castle Oaks Gateway, Preston Reuse, and the Triangle. By creating Conceptual Land Use Plans for these areas, the City would be treating all SPA-designated Policy Areas equally. However, there are a number of issues with doing so. Staff has analyzed the potential for each and summarized them in the table below:

Policy Area	Issues
Ringer Ranch	The draft Land Use Plan and corresponding maximum development potential identify the site for new residential and commercial development. The property owner has supported the concepts in the draft plan as being in line with their preliminary plans, but has not provided any conceptual mapping of their own. Not enough is known about the site and the intent of the property owners for staff to complete preliminary land planning beyond what has already been incorporated into the General Plan.
Silva	The property owner has previously asked for an open-ended development potential. For environmental review purposes this is option is not available to the City; some level of detail is necessary in order to determine traffic and air quality impacts and all other Policy Areas have some development potential assigned to them. Per Council direction, the policy language includes residential and commercial/office development opportunities. The property owner has also requested that limited or no specific policy direction regarding development features such as trails, roads, open space, and parks be included. By including this type of information in the General Plan, the City is treating all Policy Areas equally and is ensuring that minimum expectations for development characteristics are being articulated to property owners and developers early in the development design process. Not enough is known about the site and the intent of the property owners for staff to be able to complete preliminary land planning beyond what has already been incorporated into the General Plan.
Castle Oaks Gateway	The site has an existing approved land plan and Development Agreement; however the property owner has expressed a desire to possibly modify this plan. Initial ideas for the revised land plan have been shared with the City. However, the timing of these changes is unknown. Including a Conceptual Land Plan in the General Plan that does not reflect the approved Development Agreement will create legal uncertainty; creating one that does not reflect the potential changes will limit the potential of modifying the approved land plan in the future.

Policy Area	Issues
Preston Reuse	Substantial analysis and policy discussions would need to be completed before any conceptual land plan could be created. The Policy Area includes limited policy direction on maximum development potential, but the exact location of these uses and how existing roadways would be utilized would need to be investigated as part of a transition plan if the property is transferred from the State to the City or private interest. Further, the potential for this transition is unknown. Not enough is known about the site to complete preliminary land planning at this time.
Triangle	The site has complicated characteristics. The property owner's land use request was incorporated into the General Plan by the Council in January; but it did not include substantial detail as to where these uses (other than retail along SR-88) could be located. Maximum development potential was calculated for environmental review purposes and included as policy language in the draft Land Use Element. Not enough is known about the site and the intent of the property owners in order for staff to complete preliminary land planning beyond what has already been incorporated into the General Plan.

Therefore, staff is recommending that the Ringer Ranch, Silva, Castle Oaks Gateway, Preston Reuse, and the Triangle Policy Areas not include Conceptual Land Use Plans.

Policy Question #2: Staff recommends that the City Council and Planning Commission direct staff to not include Conceptual Land Use Plans for the Ringer Ranch, Silva, Castle Oaks Gateway, Preston Reuse, and the Triangle Policy Areas.

Property Owner Requests

Staff has received three property owner requests since the January 2009 City Council meeting where a preferred Land Use Plan was selected by the Council. These requests and staff recommendations are presented below.

Q Ranch

The first request comes from Ciro Toma, owner of the Q Ranch property (Attachment C.1). In the request, the property owner is asking that the development potential for the property be increased from 500 dwelling units to 850 (net increase of 350 units). Part of the request involves reducing the requirement for on-site agricultural land preservation.

Staff has reviewed the request and has determined that the additional 350 dwelling units will likely not create additional impacts to the City's circulation plan beyond those already analyzed under the existing development potential of 500 units. The primary roadway servicing the Q Ranch Policy Area is State Route 104 and staff believes that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional traffic without triggering any new impacts. If the Council and Planning Commission agree with this request, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) will discuss this in more detail.

The additional dwelling units would increase the overall gross density of the Policy Area to 1.97 units per acre, which is just under the maximum of 2.0 units per acre established by the Council in January. The illustrative plan would provide more than 225 acres of parks and open space and, consistent with other policies and actions in the draft General Plan, the open space areas would likely include new recreational opportunities not currently found in Ione, such as trails and other passive recreational opportunities.

As discussed in the request letter and the attached illustrative land plan, the existing agricultural lands are not entirely removed but rather reduced. An agricultural/open space area along the highway is maintained, consistent with the Council's intent for open space views as you enter town from the north-west.

Policy Question #3: Staff recommends that the City Council and Planning Commission direct staff to do the following:

1. Increase the development potential for the Q Ranch Policy Area from 500 units to 850 units;
2. Utilize a revised Conceptual Land Use Plan for Q Ranch similar to that provided by the property owners; and
3. Update the text of the Q Ranch Policy Area for consistency.

Silva Property

The second property owner request is from the Silva family regarding their property along Five Mile Drive (Attachment C.2). At the December Planning Commission and January City Council meetings, the family had requested a Special Planning Area (SPA) designation for their entire property. However, at the January meeting, the City Council directed staff to only designate that portion east of Five Mile Drive as SPA; the balance was to be designated as Agricultural (AG) consistent with the current use (see Figure 1). Further, the portion of the property designated as SPA was established in the draft General Plan as a Policy Area. The description of this Policy Area is included as Policy LU-1.16 on page 3-43 of the draft General Plan. The portion of the Silva property east of Five Mile Drive (the portion that is the Silva Policy Area) is outside the City but within the Sphere of Influence; the portion to the west is outside the Sphere of Influence. The development potential for the existing Policy Area outlined in the draft General Plan is for a maximum of 550 dwelling units and 20,000 square feet of retail/office.

Figure 1 – Silva Property



In the request, the Silva’s are asking that the Council and Planning Commission reconsider designating the portion of the property west of Five Mile Drive as SPA. This would be a significant modification to draft Land Use Map and would create substantial impacts to the timing and budget for completion of the General Plan. If the property is designed as SPA, it indicates that the property will likely be developed within the lifetime of the new General Plan (20-30 years). As such, the General Plan Environmental Impact Report would need to analyze the program-level impacts of this development, primarily from the standpoint of Citywide traffic impacts. Given the size of the property (almost 100 acres), if the same average density is assumed as for the existing SPA (5.0 units per acre), the designation would allow for almost 500 homes. This would be a significant increase for roadway segments around the property and would necessitate additional traffic analysis. Such additional analysis would likely take upwards of three to five weeks to complete and would require a substantial budget augmentation to the project. The delay would mean that the August deadline for adoption of the new plan would not be achieved.

As an alternative, the City could designate the west side of the property as Future Growth Area (FGA). This designation would provide initial policy direct to the property owner that the City is supportive of development of the property, but that development of just that portion would either occur under the next General Plan or could occur at an earlier point in time if the proposed project “creates a significant public benefit for Ione that could not be secured through development of other property” already in the City or the Sphere of Influence (from page 3-28 of the draft Land Use Element). The property to the east would remain SPA and could be brought forward for development whenever the property owner is ready. The application of the FGA designation would not require modification of the existing Silva Policy Area boundary, nor would it require any changes to the development potential or new/revised traffic analysis. As part of the development of the FGA portion by the property owner, a General Plan Amendment would be required in order to establish the property’s development potential, and at that time the environmental analysis would be

completed. The FGA is only a policy statement and does not, in and of itself, allow for development of a property.

Policy Question #4: Staff recommends that the City Council and Planning Commission direct staff to designate the portion of the Silva property west of Five Mile Drive as Future Growth Area.

Amador Ranch Associates

The third property owner request letter is from Amador Ranch Associates. They are requesting that the Council and Planning Commission reconsider designation of the Mule Town area north of Mule Creek State Prison as Future Growth Area.

The General Plan is a 20-30 year policy document for the community, identifying locations for development and agricultural and open space preservation. The level of development being identified in the new General Plan should be adequate to provide for this planning window. However, given the complexity involved with updating the General Plan and the rapidly changing conditions of market forces, consideration should be provided to delineating additional areas for future growth after new growth opportunities currently being identified have been built out. The intent of the Future Growth Area (FGA) is to identify an area for potential future development at the tail end of the life of the General Plan or within the next General Plan. The FGA designation allows for application(s) for development to be accepted and processed by the City but it does not, in and of itself, approve any specific development.

As identified at the December and January meetings the area most likely to be developed after buildout of the new General Plan is that area north of Mule Creek Prison. This area has the fewest constraints of any of the property to the south, east, or west of the existing City, yet still proximate enough to utilize urban services (e.g., water, sewer). The majority of the property is outside of the 100-year floodplain. The property has not been identified as farmland of significance. The majority of the site is not subject to slopes greater than 30 percent.

The Planning Commission had recommended in December 2008 that the Mule Town area be designated as Future Growth Area. They specifically stated that the General Plan should recognize that development of this area should only be considered after all other areas of the City had been planned for development (e.g., projects have been approved and/or construction is underway) toward the end of the lifespan of the General Plan (20+ years).

While the Council did not direct the inclusion of the FGA in the draft Land Use Plan in January, staff has included specific policy language to support the application of the FGA on specific property, should the Council choose to apply the designation to property either as part of the pending General Plan Update or as part of a subsequent action. The description of the concept of a Future Growth Area is included on page 3-28 and Action LU-1.4.1 and Policy LU-1.5 speak to the FGA.

Policy Question #5: Staff recommends that the City Council and Planning Commission direct staff to add the Planning Commission recommended Future Growth Area back to the draft Land Use Plan.

Circulation

The Circulation Element describes existing and future transportation conditions and systems. The Element establishes goals, policies, and actions that will guide the City's circulation system, including the roadway network and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The text, maps, and diagrams in this Element are the basis for the development of the City's transportation network.

Based on the previous City Council and Planning Commission circulation Level of Service policy discussions on circulation, staff utilized the following direction when completing the Circulation Plan for the General Plan:

- Citywide – allow nothing worse than LOS D, except that if LOS D does not maintain 2-lane roadways, lower the LOS to E;
- For Preston, Main, Church, and Ione Streets – LOS F
- Parkways (Golf Links Drive, WIRIS Segments F, G, H, and I) – LOS D

Attachment D.1 describes the existing average daily traffic counts for the major roadway facilities in the City. Using this information and the draft Land Use Plan, staff projected the future average daily traffic counts (Attachment D.2). Based upon these counts and the LOS policy direction above, staff identified the necessary roadway sizing consistent with the draft Land Use Plan (Attachment D.3). All facilities in the City, with the exception of Highway 124 from the cemetery to Buena Vista and segment G of the West Ione Roadway Improvement Study (WIRIS), would remain as 2-lane roads. The exception segments would need to be constructed or improved to 4-lanes. All of this information will be incorporated into the DEIR.

Staff does not recommend any changes to the Circulation Element at this time.

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:

- Draft EIR available for public review – Early June
- Planning Commission review of the Draft General Plan and Draft and Final EIR – late July
- City Council review of the Draft General Plan and Draft and Final EIR, adoption of the General Plan, certification of the EIR – August

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Corrected and Revised Land Use Map
- B. Conceptual Land Use Plans
 - 1. Q Ranch Policy Area
 - 2. Old Stockton Policy Area
 - 3. Industrial Park Policy Area
- C. Property Owner Requests
 - 1. Q Ranch Property Request
 - 2. Silva Request
 - 3. Amador Ranch Associates
- D. Circulation Diagrams
 - 1. Existing Average Daily Traffic Counts
 - 2. Future Average Daily Traffic Counts
 - 3. Future Roadway Sizing

Attachment A
Corrected and Revised Land Use Map

Attachment B
Conceptual Land Use Plans

1. Q Ranch Policy Area
2. Old Stockton Policy Area
3. Industrial Park Policy Area

Attachment C
Property Owner Requests

1. Q Ranch Property Request
2. Silva Request
3. Amador Ranch Associates

Attachment D
Circulation Diagrams

1. Existing Average Daily Traffic Counts
2. Future Average Daily Traffic Counts
3. Future Roadway Sizing