



CITY OF IONE PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT



FOR THE MEETING OF: DECEMBER 15, 2008

DATE: DECEMBER 12, 2008

TO: HONORABLE PLANNING COMMISSION

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

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE – PREFERRED LAND USE PLAN –
CONTINUED FROM DECEMBER 9, 2008**

STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

1. Receive staff's presentation
2. Continue the public hearing and take public comment
3. Close the public hearing
4. Identify changes to the draft preferred land use plan; and
5. Provide a recommendation to the City Council to pursue the preferred land use plan and initiate the environmental review of the plan under the California Environmental Quality Act.

BACKGROUND:

On December 9, staff presented an overview of the General Plan Update process, the three land use alternatives discussed at the November 19 public workshop, the Alternative 4 prepared by staff based upon the November 19 comments and further staff analysis of the existing General Plan Land Use Map, a number of property owner requests for inclusion in the draft preferred alternative land plan, and a number of additional issues for consideration. Staff also presented an overview and recommendation for the preferred alignment for the western Ione backbone roadway improvements. The report for this meeting is provided here as Attachment A and the presentation from the meeting is provided as Attachment B. Notes on the public comments provided during the hearing are included as Attachment C.

At the meeting, the Planning Commission asked a number of clarifying questions and took public comment. Ultimately, the Commission decided that more information was needed before a recommendation on the draft Land Use Plan could be made to the City Council. Staff was directed to bring back additional information on four specific topics – 1) locations for high density residential sites; 2) the redesignation of residentially-developed but designated commercial property south of the Downtown; 3) potential for development east of Old Stockton Road, south of the railroad tracks; and 4) request for development of the Silva property along Five Mile Drive.

ANALYSIS:

Locations for High Density Residential

The Alternative 4 draft preferred land plan includes two locations for new high density residential development. One is part of the Gallelli and Sons, LLC pending project called Gold Village at the intersection of Foothill Boulevard and State Route 104, south of Downtown. This site is approximately 5.16 acres in size and is slated for approximately 80 units.

The second site is located along the south side of State Route 124 northeast of the City, between the highway and Sutter Creek. The parcel in question is approximately 10.13 acres and could accommodate approximately 150 units of high density residential. Because of the proximity of this site to existing services and retail opportunities, it is a good candidate for designation as a higher density residential site.

Other opportunities for locating high density housing could include the following sites. Both of these sites have access to existing services, making them good candidates for this designation.

- The property behind Fire Station #2 along Waterman Road. This site is 8.69 acres and could accommodate approximately 130 units.
- A 9.80 acre site at Ringer Ranch across from the entrance to Mule Creek State Prison as illustrated on land use Alternative 1.

Alternatively, all three sites (excluding the Gallelli site because of its pending application status) could be utilized as high density residential, either by designating all of the property or just portions of them. Staff's primary concerns when selecting potential sites for higher density residential development are in choosing sites that are spread throughout the City so that no one neighborhood bears the full burden of providing higher density housing for the entire City. Based upon the public support for Land Use Alternative 2 during the public workshop, staff supports the two sites illustrated in Alternative 4. Staff would also support the two other sites identified as candidate sites.

Redesignation of Residential Areas South of Downtown

During the December 9 meeting, the Planning Commission discussed the issue of changing the designation of areas south of Downtown that are developed with residential uses but identified in the current General Plan for commercial. Attachments D through G illustrate:

- D. Existing General Plan Land Use designations around Downtown
- E. Existing Zoning around Downtown

- F. Existing Land Uses (how the properties are currently developed) around Downtown
- G. Proposed General Plan Designations under Alternative 4 around Downtown

Within each of these four maps is an area identified as “Alternative 4 Parcel Change Area.” This is the area staff is recommending, as illustrated in Attachment G, be redesignated from a commercial category to a residential one. As illustrated in Attachment F, all of the subject properties are currently developed with some sort of residential use or are otherwise vacant. The proposed action would not impact any existing commercial operations.

There are five primary reasons staff is supporting this change. They are:

1. Participants in the public workshops and survey have identified a desire to enhance and redevelop the Downtown area. By concentrating retail space to the Main Street and Jackson Street areas, the City’s efforts, as well as those of partner organizations such as IBCA and Rotary, can be focused on this smaller area. The improvements list for Main Street is long and the City should focus on this list before adding other areas to the Downtown.
2. Based upon the City’s population size today and as the City grows, only so much commercial development will be viable and sustainable. It is better to locate this commercial acreage on sites that are most likely to use the designation, rather than those that for the past 20+ years have not shown a tendency to transition to commercial uses.
3. The City’s development standards for residential uses in commercial zones refer back to residential districts, thereby making the commercial development standards applicable to that property irrelevant. By clarifying in the General Plan (and by extension through Zoning) that the residential uses of the property are permitted by right and the zoning designation is reflective of the inherent development standards, the City has provided better information to property owners on what those development standards actually are.
4. The way the City’s Home Occupation regulations and commercial/residential use regulations work, if an existing residential property were to have a commercial operation locate there, one of the following would apply:
 - a. If the residential use stayed in operation, the commercial use would have to conform to the Home Occupation ordinance (recently adopted), which prohibits most commercial operations where customers come to the establishment. This could be a substantial burden on the success of the commercial operation.; or
 - b. The site would need to be reconfigured such that the residential would be secondary to the commercial operation. This generally means that the residential use would have to be located on the second floor of the building above the commercial operation.
5. Finally, the City’s development standards for commercial uses require wholesale redevelopment of these sites in order to provide the necessary off-street parking. In most cases, because of the size of these lots, the total commercial space on a lot would be limited by the amount of parking that could be accommodated. The only true way to redevelop these sites is to collect multiple properties into a single

ownership, reconfigure the lot lines, and build entire blocks of development at one time. This process is challenging, time consuming, and very costly. Because of the City's limited fiscal resources, the burden would likely be on private development to accomplish this. Given Ione's size and availability of commercially zoned land in other parts of town (plus existing vacancies on Main Street), commercial tenants and developers are more likely to locate outside of this area.

Therefore, staff recommends that the properties outlined in Attachments D-G be redesignated as identified in Alternative 4 and Attachment G.

Potential of Development along Old Stockton Road, South of the Railroad Tracks

At the December 9 meeting, Commissioner Wylie asked about the possibility of developing the property east of Old Stockton Road and south of the railroad tracks. This property had not been identified in Alternatives 1, 2, or 3 for development because it is located within the 100 year floodplain as indicated on the constraints map provided in the December 9 packet. While portions of this area are outside of the floodplain, the proximity of the site to the mining operations to the south would present a number of compatibility issues. This area is also separated from other development areas to the north, so costs of extending urban services may reflect this. For all of these reasons, staff does not support development of this area.

Additional Property Owner Requests

The Planning Commission requested that staff confirm that there are not additional property owner requests for changes in the land use map prior to the December 15 meeting. Staff has met with the Silva family and they have provided the requested provided in Attachment H. (Note, for purposes of consistency, this is now referred to as request F.)

The Silvas are requesting that their property, consisting of four parcels south of Ringer Ranch and west of Castle Oaks on both sides of Five Mile Drive, be designated as Special Planning Area (SPA). This designation would allow for development of the property in a comprehensive fashion through either a Specific Plan or Planned Development Master Plan. The Silvas have requested that the SPA for the property allow for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. Staff supports the designation as development of the property would be a logical extension of the Castle Oaks and Ringer Ranch developments. However, staff would not support the use of the property for industrial development as such uses are better served in the Industrial Park area. Commercial uses should be limited to small, local serving retail, rather than large shopping centers.

Highway 124 Corridor

In addition to the four topics directed by the Planning Commission for further information, staff contacted Caltrans for information regarding access restrictions along Highway 124 northeast of the City. Caltrans confirmed that while there will be special spacing requirements for intersections, there are no other access restrictions in place for this section of highway.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Adoption of the General Plan will require preparation of a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Staff is preparing to initiate this process. However, before work on the EIR can begin, the Planning Commission and Council must identify and direct staff to analyze a preferred land use plan. Therefore, because formal adoption is not being completed at this time (rather, just direction to staff to proceed), no environmental review is necessary.

SUMMARY:

Staff has prepared a draft Preferred Alternative Land Use Plan based upon the input of the public at the November 19 public workshop. Staff has also analyzed a number of other issues and concerns and has provided recommendations to the Planning Commission. The Commission should take public comment, discuss the draft preferred alternative, discuss the issues outlined by staff, and direct changes to the draft preferred alternative and recommend it to the City Council.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that, after public comment, the Planning Commission:

1. Identify Alternative 4 as the base for the Preferred Alternative;
2. Identify the Dokken recommended alternative as the preferred alternative for the western Ione backbone roadway system;
3. Direct staff to include in Alternative 4 any or all of the public requests, including:
 - a. Donna Rollins (already included in Alternative 4);
 - b. Q Ranch (not currently shown in Alternative 4 but supported by staff);
 - c. Howard Properties/Industrial Park (not fully shown in Alternative 4 but supported by staff; Commission should also direct staff to work with the property owner on the configuration of the land uses for compatibility with potential neighboring uses);
 - d. Kreth (not fully shown in Alternative 4 but supported by staff; Commission should also direct staff to work with the property owner on the configuration of the land uses for compatibility with potential neighboring uses);
 - e. David Borgh (not shown in Alternative 4 but supported by staff); and
 - f. Silva (not shown in Alternative 4 but supported by staff).
4. Direct staff to make changes to Alternative 4 based upon the additional issues discussed in the December 9 staff report, including:
 - a. Development along State Route 124 east of the City (currently included in Alternative 4);
 - b. Commercial along State Route 88 (not currently included in Alternative 4);
 - c. Development of the 124/104/88 Triangle (not currently included in Alternative 4);
 - d. Limit the scale of the Downtown (currently included in Alternative 4);
 - e. Identify a portion of the Q Ranch property for Rural Residential development (not currently shows in Alternative 4 but supported by staff; may be discussed and decided as part of the public requests above); and

- f. Identification of a Future Growth Area (currently included in Alternative 4).
5. Formally recommend to the City Council Alternative 4, with any changes discussed above, along with the alignment of the western Ione backbone roadway system, as the Preferred Alternative for the new General Plan.

NEXT STEPS:

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

- City Council review and direction on the preferred land use plan (if the Commission recommends a preferred plan on December 15) – January 6, 2009
- Initiation of the traffic impact analysis and CEQA review (EIR) – January 7
- Drafting of the General Plan Elements (goals, policies, actions) – December-February
- Check-in with Council on the West Ione Roadway Improvement Strategy - February
- Draft EIR available for public review – May
- 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

Review and recommendation of the preferred land plan by the Planning Commission at the December 15 meeting is critical to meeting the August deadline.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Report and attachments from the December 9 Planning Commission meeting
- B. Presentation from the December 9 Planning Commission meeting
- C. Public Hearing Comments from the December 9 Planning Commission meeting
- D. Existing General Plan Land Use Designations Around Downtown
- E. Existing Zoning around Downtown
- F. Existing Land Uses (how the properties are currently developed) around Downtown
- G. Proposed General Plan Designations under Alternative 4 around Downtown
- H. Property Owner Request from the Silva Family