



Legislation Text

File #: TMP-0003, **Version:** 1

Comprehensive Plan Status Update-Proposed Strategic Redevelopment Planning Initiative

From:

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Summary:

At the April 21, 2014 City Council Work Session, the Planning and Development Department gave the Council a briefing on an alternative work program in lieu of preparing a significant update to the comprehensive plan. It was presented that the \$150,000 currently earmarked for the Comprehensive Plan update could be “repurposed” to complete what would be a more limited, strategic and action-oriented program with a focus on the Economic Opportunity Zones, infill strategies, zoning code amendments, and re-evaluation of Banning Lewis Ranch. The Council requested that staff come back with a more detailed work program and how these projects would be achieved. Some Councilors also expressed a strong desire to evaluate and update the Banning Lewis Ranch master plan.

Staff’s proposed alternative can be themed into three basic categories: (1) adoption of a redevelopment/infill policy and alignment of City Code with the policy; (2) Economic Opportunity Zones implementation; and (3) evaluation and possible update to the Banning Lewis Ranch master plan.

REDEVELOPMENT/INFILL

It is important to note that this initiative is consistent with Council’s stated strategic objective of “Encourage infill and develop job creation with a priority on Economic Opportunity Zones and Downtown through City Code and Ordinances.” It is also consistent with the current Comprehensive Plan land use strategies:

“Objective LU 4: Encourage Infill and Redevelopment

Encourage infill and redevelopment projects that are in character and context with existing, surrounding development. Infill and redevelopment projects in existing neighborhoods make good use of the City’s infrastructure. If properly designed, these projects can serve an important role in achieving quality, mixed-use and redevelopment projects. In some instances, sensitively designed, high quality infill can help stabilize and revitalize existing older neighborhoods”.
Specific Policies and strategies under this objective include the following:

“Policy LU 401: Encourage Appropriate Uses and Designs for Redevelopment and Infill Projects

Strategy LU 401a: Identify Infill and Redevelopment Opportunities and Target Public Investments

Strategy LU 401b: Provide Incentives to Foster Private Reinvestment”

Strategy LU 401c: Establish Design Guidelines and a Review Process that Support Infill and Redevelopment

Strategy LU 401d: Adopt Zoning Standards and Apply Building Codes that Support Infill and Redevelopment”

To accomplish this initiative staff will:

1. Form a redevelopment/infill steering committee to assist staff with various tasks outlined below.
2. Evaluate and update the current draft infill white paper.
3. Present the infill white paper to the City Planning Commission and City Council for adoption.
4. Prepare and present to the City Planning Commission and City Council a redevelopment/infill policy, which could be incorporated into the existing Comprehensive Plan. (This could be achieved as an amendment to the Land Use Chapter or creation of a new chapter.)
5. Prepare code amendments to align development standards/processes with the redevelopment/infill policy.
6. Present code amendments to the City Planning Commission and City Council for adoption.
7. As part of the research, analysis and formulation of policy and code amendments, staff will likely consider factors such as property values and trends, underutilized/vacant properties, barriers to infill and redevelopment, transit, land use compatibility, among several others.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ZONES

The North Nevada and South Academy Economic Opportunity Zones action plans provide number of recommendations, most of which are not directly related to land use or zoning. However, the Planning and Development Department will likely play a significant role in many of them. The North Nevada EOZ action plan states two recommendations specific to zoning:

“City Council and City Planning should develop "interim" land use codes for the EOZ. Desired completion date is September 30, 2014.

City Council and City Planning should develop EOZ regulations that influence desirable uses and design features. As most of the information required will be from the third-party consultant's report, the desired completion date is June 30, 2015.”

In order to accomplish these recommendations, staff will:

1. Form a steering committee to assist staff with various tasks outlined below.
2. Evaluate current land use and zoning of the area.
3. Draft and present to the City Planning Commission and City Council area specific zoning and development standards. These may be in a form of a form-based code, overlay district or some other form and zoning district. The decision on how to best establish the development standards will be made with the steering committee.

Although the action plan recommends the development [and assumed adoption] of interim regulations, staff will evaluate whether or not in the time it would take to develop interim regulations if permanent regulations could be developed instead.

BANNING LEWIS RANCH MASTER PLAN

Evaluating and potentially updating the Banning Lewis Ranch Master Plan (BLR) will take significant time and effort. To accurately determine appropriate balances between land uses (i.e. SFR-MFR-commercial-industrial-parks/open space), a city-wide comprehensive analysis of existing and future land uses, and development patterns should be completed. Master planning a large area like BLR (which encompasses about 20% of the City) without considering growth and redevelopment throughout the entire City would be short-sided and may result in unrealistic expectations of how much growth should occur in BLR. There are a number of tools available to obtain a complete picture. One that is commonly used and widely accepted is GIS-based software called CommunityViz. This GIS-based analytical software is used to model and analyze various land use scenarios and how those land uses will affect growth, densities, and transportation, among other things.

The City currently does not have this software or staff which is trained to operate the software. However, CommunityViz was co-developed by a land use consulting firm Placeways, LLC, which is located in Boulder. Placeways is currently assisting PPACG with regional land use assumptions as they pertain to transportation planning. Staff suggests that as part of the Banning Lewis Ranch master plan review, Placeways, or a firm with similar software capabilities, could be retained to perform land use modeling and assist the City in determining appropriate land uses in BLR. In addition to land use modeling, a portion of the \$150,000 could be used to retain a temporary staff position or a consultant to prepare the master plan document.

It should be noted that properties within the Banning Lewis Ranch master plan area are “hard-zoned”. This means that even though the City may adopt a new master plan, the properties could be developed as they are currently zoned. In other words, adoption of a new master plan by the City will not change the zoning. To immediately implement the new master plan, the City would need to re-zone the properties that make-up BLR. Staff believes that a new master plan would be best implemented by developers who seek development of the properties. The rezoning would need to be consistent with the master plan. Rezoning without identifying development boundaries and projects would be difficult given the large size of BLR because zoning establishes “hard lines” on a zoning map, which may not accurately reflect the exact location of development sites and properties. The exact location of uses is typically unknown until design of a project commences.

It should also be noted that a significantly different master plan, particular density and intensity of the uses, may have an impact on financial obligations and may necessitate a subsequent amendment to the shared obligation study and agreement.

Previous Council Action:

Not applicable

Background:

Not applicable

Financial Implications:

If updating the BLR master plan is a high priority of the Council, a portion of the \$150,000 could be used to retain a consulting firm(s), such as Placeways, LLC, to assist with land use scenario modeling, mapping and drafting an updated BLR master plan.

The infill policy, code amendments and North Nevada EOZ development standards could be completed in-house by existing Planning and Development Department staff. Graphic illustrators or architects would likely need to be retained to assist staff with graphic illustrations. Shifting this project to “in-house” will also translate into some additional staffing obligations for other Departments including IT/GIS and Communications staff.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

The City Planning Commission provided a letter to the City Council expressing its opinion. The letter is attached. The infill/redevelopment white paper and policy, code amendments, BLR master plan, North Nevada EOZ zoning and development standards, and any other zoning or land use-related deliverables would be first reviewed by the City Planning Commission prior to review and action by the City Council.

Stakeholder Process:

At this point, these initiatives have not been formally discussed with any stakeholder groups or associations. However, as described above, staff intends to form stakeholder steering committees to assist with these initiatives.

Alternatives:

Not applicable

Proposed Motion:

Not applicable

Not applicable