

General Plan Advisory Committee

Meeting #5

June 25, 2019

SUMMARY

Introduction

On Tuesday, June 25th, 2019 the City convened the fifth meeting of the General Plan Advisory Committee. The purposes of the meeting were to conduct a dialogue and work session about opportunity areas and possible transitions between land uses in Commerce and to discuss community outreach opportunities to validate vision, values and new land uses. The group spoke around a table with an aerial map of Commerce displaying assets and opportunities. Esmeralda García recapped the previous meetings and work to date, then began the dialogue on opportunity areas for new land uses and their connections.

Additionally, the meeting underlined the next community engagement event, a booth at the July 4th celebration, and determined the respective goals and objectives for the next GPAC meeting. Also, the next GPAC meeting was scheduled tentatively for July 30th and a two-hour team charrette on July 31st to map and detail potential housing areas.

The following is a summary of the Committee's discussion.

Previous Meetings/Work Recap

- The Green Zones Group was not able to get to a consensus on zoning, So, there is a need to plan for land use transitions and connections throughout Commerce; that planning is up to our team now.

Areas for Opportunity (Mapping Work Session)

Miscellaneous:

- Are there opportunities for different or new land uses in any section of Commerce? For example, expand housing land uses by converting existing industrial?
- Brownfields: four mentioned and identified on map.
- Veteran's Park needs multi-family and light industrial uses. This neighborhood has a strong lack of connection with the rest of Commerce. It needs to connect via bike lane along southern boundary and access into southeastern vacant lot. "The pocket" of vacant land should be rezoned to connect the two neighborhoods of Veteran's Park; possibly more housing?
- Around the Metro stop, there should be condos, both market rate and affordable and primarily for people who work outside of Commerce.
- Motels: like Whittier, possibly a 20-year amortization. Remove language from code and make legally nonconforming?
- Market study needed to understand the true needs, from an economist's perspective, especially around Washington and Telegraph. Grocery and housing are priorities.
 - Sprouts, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods 360 suggested for supermarkets.

Connections:

- Garfield and Edison need improvement as connectors.
- Transitions/Circulation improvements needed through residential and industrial areas— example, bikeways.
 - A bikeway could provide safe access for residents and commuters to travel through Commerce.
 - A north-south pedestrian and bike way should connect Veteran's to the rest of Commerce. The railyard may be an obstacle.
 - Possible solution: a pedestrian and bike bridge, like that in Whittier, over the major street (Whittier Blvd).
- Connection needed at Bristol and Trigs – potentially future Harbor Freight.
- No more "drive-thru arterials" with fast-food restaurants along the main corridors.
- Resource for safer connections between major intersections and neighborhoods: Livability Initiative – Mobility Element, Early Action Plans, Community Benefits Program.

Gateways:

- Washington needs beautification just like what Atlantic has (and keep it going on Atlantic). For example, more street trees; using more tree canopies as a traffic calming device would improve Atlantic. Better connection needs to be made between the groups/orgs that provide trees to the City and the neighborhoods in the most need.
- Mix Master: a very dangerous gateway. Bike and ped access is nearly impossible; one East Yards member was hit last year.
 - Signage for pedestrians and bikers would be key improvement for this gateway.
- Businesses/shops east of Mix Master: relocate to somewhere else? Residents nearby cannot sleep, and accidents are common—safety and noise issues.

Buffers:

- The western side of the ABC neighborhood needs street trees and buffers – a sound wall on the side of the railyard.
 - Possibly relocate the residents to a more appropriate location for residential land use – these residents have given the impression that half would be for relocation and half would be against.
- Sheila and Washington streets need an improved buffer. S Sheila is calmer than N Sheila.
- Citadel: needs workforce housing and retail as its buffer. Multi-modal access from Metrolink and rail and creative parking should be designed.
- The community at Jardin and Strong is concerned about multistory development—specifically, how it might affect buffer zone around Atlantic.

Community Engagement

The next opportunity to engage with the community about the General Plan Update was determined to be the July 4th booth in Rosewood Park. Then, strategic, targeted replications would be coordinated after this event to engage each neighborhood and major stakeholder group.

Action Items/Next Steps

- The next community workshop will be held on Thursday July 4th. Goals for this intercept will be to obtain feedback for land use opportunities as well as the vision and values pieces of the plan.
- The following are upcoming topics for the GPAC:
 - July 30th's meeting will address the results of the workshop.
 - July 31st the group will map potential housing areas and land use alternatives during a 2-hour charrette.

The team reminded the committee members that the next meeting will take place on July 30th, 2019 at 6:00 p.m.