



STAFF REPORT – CITY COUNCIL MEETING

April 05, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: David Loya, Director of Community Development

PREPARER: David Loya, Director of Community Development

DATE: March 29, 2023

TITLE: **Provide Direction to the Planning Commission Regarding the Timeline for the Strategic Infill Redevelopment Program.**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends:

- 1) The full Council provide direction to staff and the Planning Commission regarding the timeline for producing a public review draft of, and recommendation for, the General Plan update; and
- 2) The Council members that are not otherwise conflicted provide direction to staff and the Planning Commission regarding the timeline for producing a public review draft of, and recommendation for, the Gateway Area Plan Element and its associated Form-Based Code.

INTRODUCTION:

The sitting members of the Council directed staff at their March 1 meeting to redirect the efforts to develop the Form-Based Code (Code) away from the scheduled public engagement events that were planned in the scope approved in January 2023, (and have been drawing few new residents to the process), and to focus on the preparation of a draft of the Code for public review as soon as possible. The sitting members further directed the Planning Commission to provide a recommendation on the Gateway element of the General Plan along with the non-Gateway General Plan updates and new Code by July of 2023. This is consistent with timelines established in 2022 and shared with the Council in 2022, January 2023, and discussed most recently by the Council during on March 1, 2023. Because only those Councilmember who are eligible to participate in the Gateway element discussion were part of the most recent review of the timeline, some members of the public, and a Planning Commissioner, have raised procedural concerns about the Council's direction. This item is to review milestones established to meet this timeline and to reconsider or ratify the Council's direction from the March 1, 2023, meeting.

DISCUSSION:

The Planning Commission, Committees, and public are currently evaluating the various

elements of the General Plan. The City’s consultant is working on the draft Form-Based Code associated with the Gateway Area Plan for review by the Planning Commission in June. The major milestones leading to adoption based on the current direction from the Council include:

- 1) Release of all draft work product (June 2023);
- 2) Initial Recommendation from Planning Commission (July 11, 2023);
- 3) Draft EIR release (summer 2023);
- 4) Council review and direction (summer 2023);
- 5) Continued public engagement on draft work product (summer-fall 2023);
- 6) EIR Certification (early 2024);
- 7) Adoption of General Plan and associated codes (early 2024 after EIR).

Engagement Timeline

To meet the first two milestones, the Commission has established a timeline (Table 1) and a framework for its deliberations. The timeline establishes the Elements and Gateway topics that will be addressed by the Commission. The timeline may be updated periodically to reflect changes in progress or priorities. While this timeline addresses upcoming meetings, the schedule outlining the Commission’s prior review is located at <https://www.cityofarcata.org/940/Ongoing-Community-Outreach>. The Planning Commission is currently reviewing each General Plan Elements and will review the Form-Based Code in June.

Gateway Specific Concern	General Plan Element	Date
Form Based Code		1/4/2023
Fire and police service and adequate staffing/equipment		1/24/2023
	Land Use	3/27/2023
Sea Level rise		3/28/2023
Lack of multi-modal infrastructure	Infrastructure, Circulation	4/11/2023
Infrastructure Impacts	(Gateway Mobility Chapter)	4/11/2023
Construction impacts		4/11/2023
Permitting, Community Benefits	Land Use	4/22/2023
Height and Shading, Views	Infrastructure, Public Safety	4/25/2023
Fiscal Impacts		4/25/2023
Ownership Opportunities	Historic Preservation	5/9/2023
Gentrification/Housing Affordability		5/9/2023
Impacts on Creamery District/building	Health, Design	5/23/2023
Effect on businesses		5/23/2023
	"Bike Rack" issues	6/13/2023
	"Bike Rack" issues	6/27/2023

Grant Update

The General Plan update is largely funded by grants that have completion deadlines at the end of 2023 and funds are almost fully expended for all grant sources. The grant agencies require an adopted work product to be submitted by the end of the grant term. The outstanding grants include the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation, SB2, and Local Early Action

Planning grants.

The Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) grant deadline is January 31, 2024. The City has already received a 12-month extension (original grant term expiring January 31, 2023). The deadline may be further extended in unique circumstances. Staff are working with Department of Conservation (Department) staff to seek further extension. The Department staff are reviewing the possibility of accepting Council endorsement of a draft Plan to meet grant deadlines, recognizing the EIR may not be completed. The SALC grant is \$250,000.

The SB2 and Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) grant deadline for funds expenditures and reimbursements is December 31, 2023. The City has already received an 18-month extension (original expenditure deadline June 30, 2022). The grant closeout deadline is June 30, 2024, and it cannot be extended. The State Housing and Community Development (HCD) requires an adopted work product to be submitted by the end of the grant term. Missing the grant deadline would require repayment totaling \$225,000.

Both HCD and the Strategic Growth Council have lauded the City's efforts and the planning work we are doing. This work has resulted in recognition in several ways. For example, the City was invited to speak on a panel at the joint hearing of the Senate Housing Committee and the Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee in February of 2023 led by Senator Scott Wiener and Assembly Member Buffy Wicks. The City was invited to this event on the recommendation of HCD Housing Policy team due to their experience with our implementation of these grants.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA):

This is just an update and is not a project pursuant to CEQA. The General Plan updates, including the Gateway Area Plan, and the proposed form-based code, are being analyzed through a Program Environmental Impact Report. The General Plan updates will be able to be adopted once the Environmental Impact Report is completed.

BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact of this update is negligible. The impact of the overall planning work is evaluated in the approval reports.