

**BELLEVUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PLAN
AD-HOC CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

SAM PIPES CONFERENCE ROOM
678 W. 18TH STREET
MERCED, CALIFORNIA

THURSDAY
JUNE 12, 2014

(A) CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairperson LOPES called the meeting to order at 1:41 p.m.

(B) ROLL CALL

Present: Committee Members:

Susan Gerhardt
Melbourne Gwin, Jr.
Dan Holmes
Sharon Hunt Dicker
Bill Hvidt
Lee Kolligian
Walt Lopes
Carole McCoy
Jeff Pennington
Steve Simmons
Bill Spriggs
Greg Thompson

Absent: Committee Members:

Jerry Callister (excused)
Richard Kirby (unexcused)
Justi Smith (unexcused)
Steve Tinetti (unexcused)
Ken Robbins (excused)
Diana Westmoreland Pedrozo (excused)

Staff Present:

Bill King, Principal Planner
David Gonzalves, Director of
Development Services

Consultants Present:

Lisa Wise

(C) APPROVE MINUTES OF AUGUST 15, 2013

M/S HOLMES-GWIN and carried by unanimous voice vote (six absent), to approve the Minutes of August 15, 2013, as submitted.

(D) ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

There were no oral communications.

(E) PLANNING PROCESS / NEXT STEPS

Development Services Director GONZALVES gave an overview of the context of his direction to prepare a unique, fiscally sustainable, and flexible plan, and the challenge to balance a variety of interests including input from the advisory committee, General Plan, development community, Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo), general community at-large, and environmental review considerations. Mr. GONZALVES highlighted the desired plan outcomes of the members of the advisory Committee, emphasizing how the draft community plan addresses them (these are listed in Chapter 2 of the draft plan). Mr. GONZALVES thanked the Committee for their work in crafting the plan.

Consultant WISE provided an overview of the plan, and used a powerpoint presentation to guide it. She described the process to develop the plan over the last 2 years, which included eight advisory committee meetings, two community workshops, and stakeholder meetings. She described the role of the plan as an important step in the land use entitlement process. She presented the guiding principles, foundational elements, and visioning elements of the plan, many of which tie back to the Committee Members desired plan outcomes discussed by Mr. GONZALVES.

(F) OVERVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF DRAFT PLAN

MS. WISE presented the key aspects of the plan as they appeared in the chapters of the plan, including Urban Design and Visioning, Mobility, Recreation and Open Space, Community Character, Public Facilities, and Urban Expansion. During this presentation, members of the Committee and audience commented or asked questions, including:

Committee Member THOMPSON inquired whether that large green space to the north is designated open space and located in the inundation area of Lake Yosemite. Ms. WISE replied yes and that it is consistent with the City's General Plan.

A Committee Member asked about scenic corridors and Ms. WISE responded that Bellevue Road is already designated a scenic corridor in the City's General Plan, and that the designation means that features along the corridor, including signs, street lights, landscaping, and pedestrian access are designed to enhance the aesthetic quality of the corridor. Principal Planner KING noted that Lake Road also has this designation in the General Plan.

Committee Member DICKER inquired about the ratio of open space to development in the plan. Mr. KING stated that the plan meets the City's service standard of acres per dwelling units (population), and in addition, includes approximately 50-acres of open space lands notably the area in the inundation area, but that this area is presently privately owned, and that any future public use in the area is uncertain.

Committee Member KOLLIGIAN noted that with Bellevue Road being a regional roadway, that regional uses would accompany it. Ms. WISE noted the plan provides for a major commercial facility on the corner of G Street and Bellevue Road, and that this is something the Committee expressed their support for. Mayor THURSTON noted that there is language in the plan that retail is not permitted on two arterials and is a conflict. Mr. KING noted that that statement is adopted General Plan policy, but that it includes the possibility for commercial to be placed at the corner of two arterials such as G Street and Bellevue Road, and therefore the inclusion of commercial at this corner is consistent with current General Plan policy. Committee Member KOLLIGIAN noted that several Committee Members expressed concern about the urban village concept, and that for regional uses it has not been a success, and that the plan should allow for regional uses at this corner. Ms. WISE noted that the urban village concept was modified to fit the vision of the *Bellevue Community Plan* (BCP), and that the *Bellevue Community Plan* (BCP) supports commercial location at two arterials. Committee Member KOLLIGIAN noted that the narrative about the gateway should explain in greater detail the flexibility and importance of that area in terms of presentation. With regard to presentation, he suggested that the plan could be flexible to allow up to 5-stories in the gateway area. Ms. WISE noted that the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) allows building heights to five stories, and that in the gateway design area (Bellevue Road and G Street) that 3-stories would be permitted on both sides of Bellevue Road. She further stated that to increase the building heights at this site would require reduced intensities elsewhere, and that the

proposed expansion areas in the Research and Development and TOD areas will already require additional California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review if and when development in response to the market is proposed there. Mr. GONZALVES pointed out the draft plan does not prevent future entitlement applications and related City Council actions to amend the plan at a later date.

Mayor THURSTON asked how the City would permit commercial development at the corner of G Street and Bellevue Road while protecting the viability of retail within the Neighborhood Centers and TOD portions of the plan area, as described on page 89 of the draft plan. Mr. KING noted the intent of the plan was to balance the need of commercial with the anticipated population. The plan provides for both locally serving neighborhood commercial, but also enables regional type commercial. The language on page 89 is intended to assure that the regional sector does not absorb the market that should be served in the other areas of the plan in order to meet the goals of the plan to provide a mix of uses near dwellings and all forms of mobility. Ms. WISE noted that market studies could be performed later at time of development. Mr. GONZALVES noted that those decisions would be made by policy makers and that the word “only” should be changed to “need to consider” to align with the intent of the section. Ms. WISE noted that on page 97, the plan describes the Major neighborhood center. She emphasized the intent of the section on page 89, that the center developed at G Street and Bellevue Road isn’t so large that it precludes the formation of neighborhood centers in other areas of the plan area, notably along the transit corridor. Committee Member THOMPSON noted that future changes to the plan during its implementation may occur through the General Plan Amendment (GPA) process. Ms. WISE noted that the *Bellevue Community Plan* (BCP) includes adequate description and policy to provide for a major commercial use at G Street and Bellevue Road without a future GPA, however.

Committee Member HOLMES stated his concern that if Hillcrest Road is extended from the existing Rural Residential to Foothill Drive it will become a raceway and dump traffic onto the narrow roads that exist in the Rural Residential area. Ms. WISE and some Committee Members suggested the use of design features such as traffic calming and street off-sets to protect the character of those existing neighborhoods. Committee Member KOLLIGIAN suggested that a general statement be crafted to apply to other similar areas of the plan, using the Hillcrest Road area as an example. Committee Member THOMPSON suggested general language such as, “In consideration of existing Rural Residential neighborhoods, the use of design features such as traffic calming, street off-sets design should be utilized to minimize traffic impacts in order to protect and enhance those areas.” Ms. WISE concluded the

presentation with a discussion of urban expansion, and then opened the discussion up for more comments and a vote.

Committee Member MCCOY asked about the sewer system. Mr. GONZALVES noted that master plans would be prepared for sewer and water infrastructure, and that the community plan is not the place to plan for those utilities. Committee Member GWIN noted the importance of managing the City's water resources. Ms. WISE noted that the BCP aligns with the amount of new uses and overall intensity already contemplated in the City's General Plan and current state law requires new development over a certain size to show access to water supplies. Committee Member KOLLIGIAN inquired as to whether or not another committee is looking at the ability of the City's wastewater treatment plant to service anticipated growth. Mr. GONZALVES noted there is no committee but that a sewer master plan is being crafted. Committee Member HOLMES emphasized the work needed to address the collection component of the City's sewer system and the importance for work on the sewer master plan to be completed soon after the BCP.

Mayor THURSTON noted the need to provide for potential retail sites in Merced, but that General Plan Policy L-2.7 in Technical Appendix (page C-41) includes language that limits the ability for this to occur, and is concerned that if the BCP is adopted, then that policy becomes law, not a guide. Ms. WISE noted Policy L-2.7 is current city policy, and that the BCP is written to be consistent with it, and noted that the Committee could recommend a policy change. Committee Member HOLMES commented that the Committee said it would be OK for the intersection of G Street and Bellevue Road to be a high-quality retail space, because of its unique quality as a gateway, but did not say take every arterial-arterial intersection and make it commercial.

Mr. LAKIREDDY commented that the language in the Executive Summary of the plan states the BCP is written to be consistent with the Urban Village Concept, but if the intent in the BCP is to move away from that, then that needs to be spelled out very clearly. Ms. WISE noted that the BCP is not trying to replicate the urban village design you see in the Bellevue Ranch Development, and that the BCP intent can be clearer about being unique and flexible and would not result in an urban village pattern that looks like Bellevue Ranch, yet is still consistent with the General Plan. Mr. KING noted that the draft BCP attempted to address the concerns of the Committee concerning the urban village, and takes a step forward by getting rid of the structured model or image of the amounts and location of land uses, while retaining the principles which allows potential retail sites to float throughout the BCP

area; these principles include the placement of land uses in a manner that maximizes choice of mobility. He noted the benefit of this approach resulted in a 20% reduction in forecasted traffic within the plan area, which translates to reduced roadway infrastructure costs and an enhanced living environment. Ms. WISE commented that a more flexible way of referring to the urban village without the rigid model, is to describe it as a complete neighborhood.

Committee Member HVDIT asked what the purpose of the plan will be. He asked, adoption by whom and for what purpose? Mr. GONZALVES stated that after adoption of the General Plan, the Council requested the BCP to be drafted, and, in order for any of the area to be annexed, the community plan needs to be in place. Committee Member DICKER commented that the plan, if annexed, removes the ability for the University Community to develop at the same time. Mr. GONZALVES said that it creates a free market and does not dictate the market. Infrastructure plans will strongly influence the market, but the plan does not. Rather, the plan creates opportunities and options.

In reply to a question by Committee Member HVIDT, Mr. KING noted that all of the BCP plan area is located outside the City Limits. If the plan is adopted, property owners could then seek annexation. Mr. KING noted that the BCP does not dictate the shape or location of annexation; it does describe different possibilities. Mr. LAKIREDDY noted that the possibility of urban growth adjacent to UCM and the city limits could also happen concurrently.

Mr. HERR, a recent property owner within the BCP area near Paulson Road (extended) and Bellevue Road, expressed his interest to improve his home and concern about the impact that widening Bellevue Road would have on his property. Ms. WISE noted that the rights-of-way, would be 200-feet at the greatest. Mr. KING stated that the widening is not so big as to impact the house, and that there is language in the BCP identifying the need to establish a plan line for Bellevue Road to minimize improvement costs and impacts to existing homes.

Committee Member KOLLIGIAN stated that he would not be comfortable with participating in a vote today until he could see the changes discussed at today's meeting. His concern is that the language in the Executive Summary is presented in such a way as supporting the urban village that does not allow for exceptions and rubber stamps the old way of looking at things. Committee Member DICKER agrees and supported updating the language in the BCP to reflect its unique way of looking at the urban village, without attacking the concept. Simply remove the words urban

village and use descriptive words in its place. Mr. KING noted that page A-21 of the draft BCP describes that unique view.

Mr. LAKIREDDY expressed his skepticism that the market demand would be as high as depicted in the intensity of buildings. Ms. WISE stated that the dwelling unit count and anticipated employees is consistent overall with those of the General Plan for this area. Mr. GONZALVES noted that an objective of the planning process for the BCP was that it would be consistent with General Plan, but that wouldn't preclude future actions to build upon the BCP and consider more intense uses along with the required environmental and market studies.

Committee Member KOLLIGIAN stated that the Gateway District described on page 89 (it is actually on page 88) does not mention retail at all. Mr. KING clarified that the language about the Gateway District on page 88 refers to UC Merced's Gateway District located on the east side next to Lake Road, and not to the BCP Gateway District on to the west side next to G Street. Committee Member KOLLIGIAN stated that there is nothing in the draft plan that talks about retail at Bellevue and G Street. Ms. WISE noted that on page 97 there is a discussion of a *Major Neighborhood Center* at the corner of Bellevue Road and G Street, and also listed in Table 9 on page 104. Committee Member KOLLIGIAN expressed concerns about the qualifiers that are put on this use. Committee Member DICKER commented that this is similar to the language about the Lake Road view sheds. Mr. KING noted that language there was modified to affect development with the BCP and not to properties east of the plan area.

Ms. WISE asked if the Committee wanted to vote on the matter, or to see the revised changes at the next meeting. Committee Member SPRIGGS commented that what he is hearing is for the revisions to be made prior to a vote. Mayor THURSTON asked if the minutes to the meetings would be included in the plan; Mr. KING replied, yes, and that they are located in Appendix F.

M/S HOLMES-MCCOY and carried by unanimous voice vote (six absent), for Staff and the consultant to amend the draft plan to address the comments received during the meeting and bring the amended plan back to the Committee as soon as possible. Ms. WISE requested written comments from the public and Committee to be submitted and all agreed to submit these by the end of June, and she also reviewed the changes to be made.

(G) COLLECTION OF FORM 700 FROM COMMITTEE

Since the final Committee meeting date was deferred, the 700 Forms will need to be collected at the next Committee meeting.

(H) ADJOURNMENT TO AN UNDETERMINED THURSDAY IN AUGUST 2014, OR SEPTEMBER 2014, AT 1:30 P.M.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, CHAIRPERSON SPRIGGS ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 3:30 P.M. TO AN UNDETERMINED BELLEVUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PLAN AD-HOC CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ON A THURSDAY IN AUGUST 2014, OR SEPTEMBER 2014, AT 1:30 P.M.

BY:



BILL KING
COMMITTEE SECRETARY

APPROVED:



BILL SPRIGGS, CHAIRPERSON
BELLEVUE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PLAN
AD-HOC CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE