

RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

Board Memorandum

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

DATE: SEPTEMBER 23, 2019

ITEM NO: 10

SUBJECT: **NORTHSIDE SPECIFIC PLAN AND RELATED PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT REPORT – PROJECT UPDATE**

ISSUE:

Receive and file an update on the status of the Northside Specific Plan and related Program Environmental Impact Report.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Public Utilities receive and file an update on the status of the Northside Specific Plan and related Program Environmental Impact Report.

BACKGROUND:

On April 28, 2015, the Community & Economic Development Department (CEDD) staff provided the City Council with a summary of the status and history of City-owned properties within the Northside Neighborhood. The City Council (Council) directed staff to pursue a specific plan for the Northside Neighborhood. The Council also directed staff to engage the public as part of the Northside Specific Plan (Specific Plan) effort. The following reflects key dates of the project:

1. June – November 2017 – Public outreach including workshops, meet the planner events, and informational booths were conducted.
2. October 2017 – A status update was provided to the Board of Public Utilities (Board), and the Board held a workshop to review and comment on three (3) land use concepts.
3. February 2018 – Land use concept for the Specific Plan was evaluated by the economic development sub-consultant consolidating community input, discussions with City staff, and existing Council policies. The “Consolidated Concept” was subsequently refined based on feedback from the project’s economic development consultant.
4. June 2018 – A Draft Framework Plan and Draft Land Use Concept was presented at a community workshop.
5. August 2018 – A joint meeting of the Board and City Council was held to review the Draft Framework Plan and Draft Land Use Concept for feedback and direction (Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION:

Based on comments received from the general public, the Board, and City Council the project team began a detailed analysis of the Consolidated Concept and prepared a Draft Land Use Plan (Attachment 2) for

the Specific Plan. The Draft Land Use Plan has served as the basis for environmental analysis and project team discussions.

Environmental Impact Report

On March 29, 2019, the City published a Notice of Preparation (NOP) (Attachment 3) of a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR), and released an Initial Study (IS) (Attachment 4), which includes a detailed project description and an Initial Land Use Plan. The City held a DPEIR Scoping Meeting at the Springbrook Clubhouse in the Northside neighborhood on April 17, 2019. Approximately 25 members of the public attended the meeting and the City received approximately 20 responses to the NOP.

The environmental consultant has been developing sections of the DPEIR based on information currently available. Several sections of the DPEIR require the completion of traffic models, that are scheduled for completion in early fall 2019. Traffic modeling will analyze four (4) different build-out scenarios that reflect the flexibility of the Draft Land Use Plan, including the potential closure of Orange Avenue north of Center Street.

The City has also notified Native American tribes of the DPEIR, and received requests for consultation. Consultation is expected to begin in September 2019.

Land Use Plan

The project team reevaluated the project description and land use plan after receiving NOP comments. Changes were made in response to comments received. A comment letter from the City of Colton (Attachment 5) requested that the plan keep light industrial zoning for properties in Colton, and suggested applying Colton's Residential Overlay (RO) zone. Colton's RO zone would allow the industrial properties to be developed with residential projects of up to 30 dwelling units per acre. The Draft Land Use Plan was modified as suggested for properties in Colton, except for the Public Utilities Pellissier Ranch property.

The plan also retained a March 15, 2018 suggestion from the City of Colton to rezone property on the west of Riverside Avenue (aka, Main Street) from light industrial to commercial (Attachment 6). Much of Pellissier Ranch would have a base land use of light industrial, which would allow for a broader range of uses, and would discourage logistic warehousing. The base zone would encourage office campuses, high-tech manufacturing, and research uses, where employees benefit from a close proximity to quality housing, retail, and open space amenities.

The Draft Land Use Plan also proposes rezoning some industrial properties to multi-family residential. Concerns related to these changes had led to the inclusion of a Transition Zone Overlay (TZO) in the initial Land Use Plan released with the NOP and IS. Transition zoning is used where there is a desire to limit impacts on existing businesses and property values and when the real estate market can implement future changes consistent with a community vision. A TZO would exist "on top of" a base zone (e.g., the multi-family residential), which allows for existing legal uses to continue to operate without being deemed "non-conforming", and allows for the properties to continue be developed in a manner similar to the current zoning. The TZO zone would be removed when a property is developed according to its base zone.

The current Draft Land Use Plan proposes the TZO for Pellissier Ranch and properties abutting the north and west sides of Ab Brown Sports Complex. The initial Land Use Plan released with the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and IS had also included the TZO on properties in Colton not controlled by the City of Riverside, but that land use plan was amended to address Colton's NOP comments, as discussed above. TZO properties in the City of Riverside would have a base land use of medium or high-density residential. Pellissier Ranch is proposed with a high-density residential base land use on the west, adjacent to the Santa Ana River, and a new light industrial base land use on the east.

On July 11, 2019, the project team met with Colton's Development Services Director and Traffic Engineering staff to review the land use changes, the concerns in Colton's comment letter, and potential alignment of new roads within the Colton area. Colton staff was receptive of the changes and overall direction.

Northside Specific Plan Document

An outline of the Specific Plan has been prepared and administrative drafts of each chapter reviewed by staff. City staff will start receiving revised chapters of the Specific Plan in September 2019.

Project Schedule

The project team is working to complete the Draft Specific Plan and DPEIR by December 2019 for public review in January 2020. Depending on comments received, the Specific Plan process would include public hearings in April 2020, with Riverside's City Council reviewing the final documents in July 2020, and Colton's City Council reviewing the plan in August 2020.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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Attachments:

1. Joint City Council and RPU Board hearing, August 22, 2018
2. Revised Draft Land Use Plan – Current Working Document
3. Notice of Preparation (NOP) of Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR)
4. Initial Study (IS)
5. Colton NOP Comment Letter – April 25, 2019
6. Mayor of Colton Letter – March 15, 2018
7. Presentation