

Southeast Area Specific Plan Community Advisory Committee Meeting #5 Summary

October 29, 2014



The fifth meeting of the Southeast Area Specific Plan Committee Advisory Committee (Committee) took place on October 29, 2014 at the Best Western Golden Sails Hotel Seafarer Room, 6285 E Pacific Coast Highway. The meeting took place from 6:30 to 9:00 pm and was open to the public, who were also invited to attend.

The [Agenda](#) and [Presentation](#) are available on the City website.

Project Team Members in Attendance:

PlaceWorks–Lead Consultant

Wendy Grant- Project Manager

Karen Gulley

Cecilia Kim

Katz and Associates

Lewis Michaelson

Cityworks Design

Lisa Padilla

Fehr & Peers

Jason Pack

Strategic Economics

Sujata Srivastava

City Staff–Development Services

Angela Reynolds, Deputy Director

Craig Chalfant, Planner

Brant Birkeland, Planner

Committee Members in Attendance:

Raymond Lin

Commercial Property Owner

Kristi Fischer

Homeowner Association - Del Lago

Stephen Bello

Homeowner Association - Marina Pacifica

Bill Thomas

Homeowner Association – Alamitos Heights Improvement Association

Elizabeth Lambe

Community Organization - Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust

Mary Parsell

Agency - El Dorado Audubon Society

Laura Lindgren

Community Member at Large

Charles Durnin

Community Member at Large

Luz Quinnell

Agency – Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority

Gregory Gill

Commercial Property Owner

Karissa Selvester

Agency - Long Beach Transit

Pat Towner

Homeowner Association – UPENA

Edward Kutik

Community Member at Large

Steve McCord

Homeowner Association - Belmont Shore Mobile Estates Park

B. Thomas Mayes

Community Organization - Long Beach Marian Boat Owners Association

David Salazar

Agency – CSULB

Not present:

Rod Astarabadi

Commercial Property Owner

John McKeown

Commercial Property Owner

Peter Zak

Commercial Property Owner

Randy Blanchard

Commercial Property Owner

Linda Taira

Agency - Cal Trans

Southeast Area Specific Plan Community Advisory Committee Meeting #5 Summary

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Approximately 30 community members in addition to the CAC attended the meeting.

Introduction

Lewis Michaelson, from Katz, kicked off the meeting with an overview of the items that would be covered in the evening's presentation and purpose of tonight's meeting.

Wendy Grant, from PlaceWorks, followed up with a recap of the vision for SEADIP and an overview of the pillars of sustainability, which are a key component of the development of the plan.

Development Feasibility, Side Design, and Mobility

Members of the consultant team gave presentations regarding development feasibility, site design considerations, and mobility. Sujata Srivastava, from Strategic Economics, provided a brief summary of previous market assessment findings and explained the relationship between land value, development feasibility, and community benefits. Lisa Padilla, from Cityworks Design, provided a summary of comments from previous meetings and workshops and presented four development scenarios (conceptual diagrams) to further discussion on site design. Jason Pack, from Fehr & Peers provided a summary of mobility considerations and presented potential street configurations for streets in the SEADIP project area. The Committee was asked to engage in a discussion following each presentation. The following bullets summarize the comments from the Committee for each topic.

Development Feasibility

- Graph data sources are conceptual except for the residual land value of residential development by building type (from Menlo Park, CA), which was used as an example to illustrate the relationship between development profit and value. Each neighborhood will be different.
- Financially viability needs to consider the context of the greater market area.
- Floor-Area-Ratio (FAR) aspect from previous SEADIP seems low compared to other retail development; consider local regulations and coastal regulations.
- Do the amenities and social benefits related to development include benefits to the City, such as tax revenues? The emphasis is on community benefits and the City plays a role in providing these social and economic benefits.
- Transactional data indicates that land value does not necessarily reflect development potential.
- The financial feasibility of a project is based on current market values, which is not determined by the city. Generally, lower land values are more feasible for development than high land values. Land values may change based on planned uses but the community can guide the plan to decide what is best for the project area.

Site Design - General

- South America aerial tramway is an example that should be considered.
- The concept of parking with residential above or more where there are large parking lots should be considered.
- Marina parking lot is well-used and is needed for all the events.
- Diagram of Site Design should show double-headed arrows as they all relate to each other and influence each other.
- Wetlands needs to be improved and traffic needs to be solved but if we do nothing that gives incentives to landowners we won't see any improvement in SEADIP.

Southeast Area Specific Plan

Community Advisory Committee Meeting #5 Summary

October 29, 2014



Site Design – Development Scenarios

The consultant team provided an overview of four hypothetical design scenarios for a fictional site in SEADIP. The scenarios were created as a tool to illustrate the opportunities, constraints and tradeoffs of different site designs and mixes of uses (parking, access, massing, landscaping, views, etc). Following are some of the comments and input provided by the CAC related to each concept:

- Discussion on Scenario 1 (Retail only)
 - Does not maximize the placemaking potential of the area, another shopping center, same type of retail that is currently here.
 - Committee supported internalized parking, screened from PCH.
 - Parking location should be internal but avoid aesthetics similar to that of Carson Center/Cerritos Mall (latter is an example of what not to do).
 - Is underground parking feasible from an engineering perspective? Based on Marina Pacifica experience, the water table is 7 feet down and water needs to be pumped out continuously. While it is expensive to build subterranean parking (\$40 - 45K per parking space) it technically can be done. Financially, it would not be feasible to do underground parking if there is minimal development above it.
- Discussion on Scenario 2 (Retail + Residential)
 - Residential units shown in this scenario are assumed to be ownership units per the findings of Strategic Economics market assessment.
 - Coastal Commission generally wants visitor-serving uses, access to the coast, and preservation of coastal environment – tricky to balance addition of new residential.
 - Existing residences are not grandfathered but legal through permits (not non-conforming). The consultant team will discuss the proposed plan with Coastal commission.
 - Question how much we comply with coastal vs. what things city thinks are important and may need to approach Coastal Commission to consider changing.
 - Committee against gated communities, pedestrian access through communities critical.
 - Gated communities still need to provide pedestrian access even though vehicular access is restricted.
 - Sea level rise is being addressed for this project.
 - A berm built up above ground level with semi-underground parking should be considered to help address sea-level rise issues.
- Discussion on Scenario 3 (Retail/Residential/Hotel)
 - Downtown LB currently has its own parking structure overlooking ocean but it not very full. We'd be foolish to give a parking structure view along the oceanfront or wetlands.
 - Project should be designed so visitors and residents get priority of views (internal parking, wrap, or underground parking).
 - Many cities are decreasing parking to discourage vehicle trips. How would this affect our scenarios? We will get to that later in the presentation (Fehr & Peers to address).
- Discussion on Scenario 4 (Retail/Residential/Hotel)
 - Clarification that we may have variations of all scenarios throughout SEADIP.
 - This scenario seems to have the greatest future potential to support both wetlands and bay activity.
 - Downtown has grown in density whereas this area should not be that dense. In the context of all of Long Beach, this area should be more natural and coastal and distinctive from downtown.
 - We should look at the whole city so that density is in downtown and SEADIP is a different area especially considering constrains with water, marina, and wetlands.
 - The height projections in this scenario are just for planning purposes. They could be planned for lesser height or mixture of different heights.

Southeast Area Specific Plan

Community Advisory Committee Meeting #5 Summary

October 29, 2014



- Has there been a market assessment to show demand for retail and other uses? Yes, there was demand for all of the uses included in these scenarios.
- General Discussion
 - These are great. The Anaheim packing district is a good example of the type of use and scale we want to see here.
 - Concepts presented for PCH encapsulate what we want and I think it can make a big difference here
 - The idea of adequate buffers to mitigate light, noise for wetlands so this seems like a good low impact use but it may also harm the wildlife if there are a lot of people and animals wandering the edge
 - Like the immediate change for PCH, are there funding opportunities for those improvements? There are a variety of grants for infrastructure, city capital improvements programs, developer based revenues are typical.

Mobility

Fehr & Peers presented an overview of possible street sections for the project area and also tables that showed how, in general terms, the scenarios would affect traffic in the SEADIP area.

- What is one example of one trip?
 - Leaving home is one trip, coming back home is one trip, going to and from store to home is 4 trips.
- When comparing trip differences, what uses did you start with? Is this current existing or with pending proposals? How would you calculate into that pending proposals?
 - This looks at uses currently on the ground. We will look into pending applications in process during the environmental phase
- There are many surrounding streets around SEADIP, are this counted in trips? How does the failure of intersections factor into the numbers show for these trip increases?
 - Scenarios are high level and currently don't include surrounding streets around the entire SEADIP area and intersection analysis. These will come later with land plan.
- We talked about shorter blocks and having additional curb cuts, what is the impact on traffic flow?
 - It could go either way depending on signalization, drive speed, route alternative options, etc. and we will work to make it work for the community
- Why have some signals not been coordinated?
 - Caltrans facilities use a unique system which makes it difficult to interface with city systems for local roads. One option to resolve this is for the city to take over operations and management of PCH.
- Could you also look at Loynes? Also, on Studebaker, why is the bike lane only on one side why not both?
 - Yes, priority would be to minimize conflicts with vehicle at the interchange.
- Adding a right turn lane, these are hardly used. Loynes is built on landfill so grade level is not even. If anything goes on there it needs to be lightweight, like palms.
- The section shown for Marina is a partial segment. It is not for the section along the river.
- What are thoughts on palm trees vs other landscape tree options?
 - Palms don't provide as much shade, but city may prefer because they are existing and generally require less maintenance.
- Palms are already there, part of the ambiance, birds use these palms, especially water birds
- Entry off of Studebaker from freeway is a nightmare now, so how will this be addressed?
 - City has identified improvements for Studebaker and freeway interchange in its mobility element

Southeast Area Specific Plan

Community Advisory Committee Meeting #5 Summary



October 29, 2014

- Recommendations for Shopkeeper, which part are you addressing? What is currently there or more?
 - The current road is presented in this presentation but other variations could exist (within the existing developed area).
- Future plans for Loynes triangle property, isn't this under coastal zone wetlands designation, why is it identified for future development?

Public Comments

- When factoring in PCH and 2nd, the bridge is planned to be replaced as single span bridge. My idea is that there could be a second lower level, not for traffic but a restaurant.
- Coastal does allow for residential uses, coastal act identifies priority uses, a visitor-serving use is high-priority, residential is low-priority. The closer you are to water coastal wants to see marine related uses but could be open to mixed uses. You can get more residential if you take geographic proximity and priority uses into account
- Building next to wetlands is a poor idea and hope that you will eliminate all buildings east of PCH next to wetlands not only because of danger to birds but it will also restrict public access if there are private residences
- Density in Long Beach was determined early on to increase density in downtown long beach high east long beach low this makes this area livable and is a major concern about how high the development is going to go. Would rather see wetlands than have them hidden.
- Can you explain what the barriers for bike lanes are like? (Jason) buffer would be striping to separate bikes from vehicles, cycle track would have a physical barrier such as break away bollards, low curbs. We will explore various options but new techniques are being developed so we will continue to look at these.
- With 6-7 story development, if you are behind this development you don't have any view. Also, traffic discussion on PCH or any other street seems to be happening in a vacuum so it should consider outside impacts.
- Can you clarify the compounding nature of the trip increase % for the scenarios, if there were multiple scenarios the % would multiply? Yes
- 3-5 stories feels tall (comfortable), 7 is really tall and more urban. I do like the idea of shorter blocks. Hotel is great but a hotel that is not used is really useless. My view on traffic is that it is going to go down over time, wetlands is a valuable resource and having the community to see it and connect to it increases the value and should be enhanced to engage with it better than now
- Have you thought about off-site parking opportunities? Also, an example to reference is a development project in Vietnam addressing sea-level rise by using the water based areas to take advantage of boardwalks as interface that makes a thriving community.

Committee members were encouraged to submit any other comments to Brant Birkeland <Brant.Birkeland@longbeach.gov> at the city.

The Los Cerritos Wetlands Conservancy will coordinate with Brant to try to put together another wetlands tour for those that were unable to make it out for the first one.

Next meeting will be on December 10, 2014 to allow consultant team time to review all feedback and to start to develop a land plan for review by the Community Advisory Committee.