

REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2020

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: NATHAN HAMBURGER, CITY MANAGER

BY: RAMIRO ADEVA, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION FOR ESTABLISHING PLANNING PRINCIPLES AND A CITIZENS ADVISORY GROUP (CAG) FOR THE AGOURA VILLAGE SPECIFIC PLAN (AVSP) UPDATE

On August 12, 2020, the City Council approved a consultant services agreement with RRM Design Group for the preparation of the Agoura Village Specific Plan (AVSP) update. Since then, the project team, comprised of City staff and consultants, has gathered information, reviewed questions and comments from previous public workshops, and considered prior consultant analyses in order to determine the points of focus for the AVSP update.

The next two steps in the process include:

1. Establishment of a list of "Planning Principles" to serve as a guiding framework and basis for discussions and considerations in updating the AVSP, and
2. Establishment of a Citizens Advisory Group (CAG), as an appointed ad-hoc committee of the City Council, responsible for providing input and guidance throughout the AVSP update process. Furthermore, the CAG's role will be to ensure consistency with the Planning Principles as a foundation for updating the AVSP.

A list of fourteen (14) suggested Planning Principles is included as Attachment 1. Approval of a final list is critical to maintaining a focused and guided process, where the primary goals and objectives are clearly and uniformly understood, and ensures the resulting plan update is reflective of those areas of most concern for the Agoura Hills community.

A second, but equally important task is to establish the purpose, size, and appointment procedures for the formation of a Citizens Advisory Group (CAG). The role of the CAG will be to consider information, provide input and feedback, work collaboratively with other members, while always striving for consensus during the update process. Attachment 2 is an overview of proposed details regarding the CAG. Staff is also seeking direction on the size and make-up of the CAG. Currently, the CAG is being proposed as a board

consisting of six (6) citizens or business owners from within the City of Agoura Hills, one (1) member from the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County, proximate to Cornell Road and Malibou Lake, the Planning Commission Chair or his/her designee, and the two Councilmembers serving on the Land Use/Economic Development Committee (LUEDC). It is strongly recommended that the CAG maintain an odd number of voting members to ensure a quorum exists should the need for a vote arise. With this in mind, staff is suggesting the one member from outside the City limits, in unincorporated Los Angeles County, be considered an ex-officio member, with the same allowances to participate and provide input, but with no voting authority. Therefore, if approved as proposed, the CAG would be comprised of ten (10) members, with nine (9) of them being voting members.

Additionally, on November 2, 2020, the Land Use/Economic Development Committee (LUEDC), consisting of Councilmember Northrup and Councilmember Anstead, discussed this item and provided helpful feedback to staff.

The following list is not exhaustive, but outlines some of the many points discussed by the LUEDC:

- In an effort to streamline the appointment process of the CAG, request the City Council consider authorizing the LUEDC to do a first review of all the submitted applications following the close date of the application period, with the goal of providing the Council with a recommended list of CAG members for the City Council to consider and approve at the December 16, 2020, City Council meeting.
- Assurance that the update effort will consider the expected long-term impacts of the COVID pandemic on office-space demand.
- The need to revisit and/or restate the “vision” of the AVSP. Definition should clearly highlight and include reference to key terms such as “pedestrian-friendly,” “bike-friendly,” “connectivity,” and “supportive of Active Transportation.”
- Defining/Clarifying “commercial” uses to include not only retail and office, but light industrial as well.
- Revisit the balance of residential versus commercial uses.
- Specific focus and/or consideration of fire-safety and evacuation.
- Establishing “Finish Grade” as the base from which building heights are measured as opposed to “Natural Grade.”
- No monolithic buildings. Be mindful of building articulations with a specific focus on preserving and maintaining view-sheds.

- Consider alternatives and options to reallocation of housing units. Discuss ways to handle and/or incorporate a methodology that prevents developments that are “first-in” from absorbing all the allowable housing units in a particular zone, thereby preventing other developers/parcels within the same planning zone from having an opportunity to include housing units in their proposed site designs.
- Further define what is meant by “public amenities” as currently included in the specific plan in relation to Density Bonus considerations granted by the AVSP.
- Recognizing the need to work collaboratively with developers currently processing entitlements, create and/or consider a program that incentivizes and encourages consideration from developers with existing applications to make modifications to their current site designs that are more in line with the anticipated vision(s) of an updated specific plan.
- Conformance to goals outlined in the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.
- The need of the CAG to be mindful of legal and/or economic constraints applicable to proposed changes.
- Clearly define “consensus” in the context of establishing procedural goals of the CAG. Should include an understanding that most often “consensus” is reached when parties compromise and collaborate. Recognition that oftentimes 100% agreement is not achieved, but consensus is when a common understanding is reached and progress is able to be made.
- The need to have detailed minutes following each CAG meeting that includes, among other things, a summary of key feedback from all members, and proposed action items.

The attached draft of Planning Principles and CAG Purpose and Procedures incorporates these comments from the LUEDC.

Although this update will be completed in the near-term, it is worth noting that it is being prepared with long-term objectives in mind. Having an update that is relevant and adaptable to ever-changing market conditions, transportation patterns and trends, climate change impacts, and viable land-use layouts is a challenging, yet realistic goal of achieving a successful AVSP update.

Thus, finalizing a list of Planning Principles and formation of the CAG are the next important steps in the AVSP update process.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff respectfully requests the City Council direct staff to:

- (1) Approve the Draft Planning Principles along with any desired modifications made by the City Council, and
- (2) Discuss and provide direction on the Draft Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) Purpose and Procedures, size and make-up of the CAG, and the CAG appointment process.

Attachments:

1. Draft Planning Principles for the Agoura Village Specific Plan Update
2. Draft Purpose and Procedures for the formation of an ad-hoc committee known as the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG)

DRAFT Planning Principles
Agoura Village Specific Plan Update
 November 10, 2020

	Planning Principle	Reason	Supporting Documents
1	<p>Revisit the existing vision of the AVSP to ensure it includes, among other things, primary goals of being pedestrian-friendly, bike-friendly, supportive of active transportation and alternate modes of transport, mindful of climate change impacts, COVID impacts, energy efficiency building standards, fire resiliency, and a village-concept that is connected with complimentary land uses.</p>	<p>Defining and/or clarifying the "vision" sets clear expectations for processing any and all proposed updates to the plan.</p>	
2	<p>Use the Vision and the updated market demand study for the Agoura Village Specific Plan to guide the AVSP update process.</p>	<p>Market Demand Studies show changes in market demand. The current AVSP land use mix is not aligned for current and/or anticipated future demands; however the AVSP vision and village character as a place where the community can/will gather are still viable with the appropriate mix of uses. Specifically, office-space demand should be analyzed to account for the affects of the COVID pandemic on the current and future need of that land use.</p>	
3	<p>AVSP vision identifies commercial as primary and residential as secondary. With new Market demand and Economic trends, consider adjusting the overall amount of commercial and residential allowed to create a viable mixed use plan.</p>	<p>New updated market demand studies and real estate development trends show that the current AVSP land use mix is no longer in alignment with the commercial and residential markets. The AVSP allocates too much development density to commercial uses (retail/office/light industrial) and does not allocate enough housing relative to current and future demand.</p>	
4	<p>Consider allowing mixed-use redevelopment of certain existing commercial properties, and/or relocating certain land uses and development density from the south side of Agoura Road to the north side to fulfill the vision of AVSP.</p>	<p>AVSP Zones between Agoura Road and Roadside allow commercial (retail/restaurant/office/miscellaneous services) and some residential uses. With changes in market demand, high vacancies and owner interest, and concerns surrounding potential environmental constraints on the south side of Agoura Road, redeveloping and/or relocating certain land uses and densities from some of these properties with a revised mix of residential and commercial could solve multiple challenges.</p>	

DRAFT Planning Principles
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	Planning Principle	Reason	Supporting Documents
5	Coordinate with the City's 6th Cycle Housing Element Update and ensure that AVSP provides the opportunity for the City to meet its Regional Housing Need Allocation established by the Department of HCD.	Per Kosmont analysis, multi-family apts/condos have the highest value and strongest market demand, which allows the City to meet its affordable housing goals with inclusionary requirements.	
6	Ensure that the AVSP is consistent with and enables implementation of the City/County Fire and Emergency Evacuation Plan.	Recent fires and concerns related to fire safety and evacuation plans.	
7	Clarify how building height is measured and amend the AVSP to follow the City zoning regulation regarding building height being measured from finished grade, instead of natural grade.	There has been continuous challenges with the way AVSP measures building heights. AVSP uses "natural grade" as the starting point whereas the City zoning code uses "finished grade". Clarifications are necessary to avoid confusion and disagreements, using the City zoning code definition would clarify matters greatly. Clarify and describe subterranean parking methodology in the AVSPU.	
8	Reconsider allowable building heights along Agoura Rd. and Kanan Rd. frontages to maximize and/or preserve viewsheds to the surrounding hills and open space.	Resolve concerns about building character of Agoura Village along Agoura Rd. and Kanan Rd. Prevent construction of monolithic buildings.	
9	Eliminate or provide clarification on the "bonus density" in the residential category in all zones.	Reconsider if the AVSP Density Bonus is still desired. If the density bonus is continued, then clarification is needed of what amount of public amenities would be considered to be above and beyond normal development and define how much would be necessary to meet the expected threshold.	
10	Consider allocating specific number of housing units per parcel, as opposed to per zone.	Ensure intended distribution of housing stock throughout the village, and to protect against "housing grabs" wherein developers that are "first-in" grab 100% of the housing unit allowance, leaving no stock available for other developments within the same zone.	

DRAFT Planning Principles
Agoura Village Specific Plan Update
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	Planning Principle	Reason	Supporting Documents
11	Ensure that the AVSP supports Active Transportation and prioritizes appropriate circulation and connectivity consistent with the General Plan.	Lower density and constructing mixed-use development reduces the number of vehicle trips and vehicle trip length. The project should offer multiple access points to evenly distribute traffic on adjacent roadway facilities to maintain acceptable intersection and roadway operations, connectivity, and support the village vision in Agoura Hills.	City of Agoura Hills, General Plan (2010)
12	Collaborate with existing development applicants to accommodate these principles to the extent feasible. Consider incentive options to encourage developers to modify current plans to align with the updated AVSP.	Continue communicating with current applicants to coordinate/align proposed developments with the AVSP update.	
13	Incorporate clear and specific signage and lighting standards within the AVSP update.	Sections need updating. Consider how lighting standards on the private property dovetail with those in the public ROW. Revise signage/branding to be consistent with the vision for place-making, visitors and toursim.	
14	Consistency with Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP)	In order to achieve greenhouse gas emission reduction targets by the 2030 and 2045 compliance dates, construction for existing sites with potential for redevelopment, and all new development construction must conform to th City's current and future policies in line with the approved CAAP.	Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

AGOURA VILLAGE SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE

CITIZENS ADVISORY GROUP PURPOSE AND PROCEDURES

OVERVIEW OF THE CITIZENS ADVISORY GROUP

PURPOSE

The Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) will work under the direction of City Council to provide input and guidance to the Agoura Village Specific Plan Update (AVSPU) planning team (City and consultants) using the Planning Principles established for the AVSPU, along with an understanding and consideration of any economic and legal constraints and consequences applicable to proposed changes. The CAG will work with staff and consultants throughout the AVSPU process and develop recommendations to the City Council.

TERM

The Citizens Advisory Group is an ad-hoc committee appointed by the City Council. “Ad-Hoc” means it is a limited-term committee and will cease upon determination by City Council. Participation by members is voluntary and temporary.

SELECTION

Individuals interested in being a CAG member will be required to complete an application. Following the close of the application period, applications will first be reviewed by the Land Use Economic Development Committee (LUEDC). The LUEDC will then present a recommended list of CAG members to be considered and approved at a General Meeting of the City Council.

STANDARDS OF DECORUM

The Citizens Advisory Group members are expected to participate with the spirit of cooperation and an open mind. This includes respecting the value of a facilitated discussion including speaking one at a time, respecting the time of others to be heard, and actively listening and learning from all members.

Advisory Group members are expected to treat differences of opinion as a strength and respect all opinions discussed during meetings. No person attending an Advisory Group meeting shall intentionally disturb or distract from the conduct of the meeting.

The Advisory Group meetings shall be led by a facilitator. Individuals intentionally distracting from the meeting agenda or recognized person speaking shall be reminded to stop causing the disturbance or interfere with the conduct of the meeting. If the individual continues to be a disturbance to the meeting progress, the facilitator may make a formal request to the City Council, to permanently remove and/or replace that individual(s) from further participation in the Advisory Group.

MAKE UP OF ADVISORY GROUP

The Advisory Group is made up of no more than six (6) citizens or business owners from within the City of Agoura Hills, one (1) member from the unincorporated area of LA County proximate to Cornell Road and Malibou Lake, the Planning Commission Chair or his/her designee, and the two (2) Council members on the Land Use Economic Development Committee. In order to ensure a quorum exists should the need for a vote arise, the one (1) member from unincorporated LA County would be considered an ex-officio member, allowing for active participation in all discussions, but with no voting authority. Therefore, the Council-appointed ad hoc committee would consist of ten (10) members, with only nine (9) voting members.

ROLES OF MEMBERS

The Advisory Group will not be asked to formally vote on issues or items. Rather, CAG will be asked to consider information, provide input, listen to other members, and strive to find “consensus.”

If fundamental disagreements exist between Advisory Group members on central issues, then the complete range of perspectives will be presented to the City Council for further consideration.

For purposes of the Advisory Group, consensus is not defined as 100 percent agreement on all issues, but rather requires that all members understand that most often “consensus” is a result of compromise and collaboration. Furthermore, although 100% agreement may not always be achieved, a common understanding can be reached so the process can continue to move forward.

MEETINGS

SCHEDULING

The Advisory Group will meet between January 2021 to July 2021. It is anticipated that the Advisory Group will meet approximately four (4) times. Additional meetings may be scheduled at the direction of City Staff or Council dependent on the project schedule.

Citizens Advisory Group Schedule
January 2021
March 2021
May 2021
July 2021

DATE/TIME/LOCATION

The Advisory Group shall meet on the scheduled dates at times most convenient to a majority of CAG members, staff and consultant. Meetings may be conducted virtually via Zoom or in person, COVID restrictions permitting, at a location to be determined and as available.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is expected at every Advisory Group meeting. If a member cannot attend a meeting, that member should inform the designated CAG facilitator 24-hours prior to the meeting.

FACILITATION

City staff or consultants will facilitate the meetings. The facilitator may intervene to keep the discussion moving, to conclude an item or topic, or to encourage equitable participation.

To respect all members' time, each meeting will focus on a specific topic related to the Agoura Village Specific Plan Update. When topics, ideas, or concerns that are not directly related to the AVSP come up during a meeting, Staff or consultant will note the thought for further consideration and follow-up outside of the CAG.

MINUTES

Notes will be taken at each meeting by staff or consultants. At the end of each meeting, Staff or consultants will review the notes with the group to confirm major themes, key take-aways, determine whether anything is missing, and summarize proposed action items. Differences of opinion on major issues will be noted providing the key feedback of all members. Meetings will be documented with meeting notes. These will be working notes, not verbatim minutes, and will be included in the Advisory Group's Administrative Record.