



City Council Agenda Item

City Council Meeting Date: March 19, 2019

TO: Jim Throop, City Manager

FROM: Brian Halvorson, Planning Manager
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SUBJECT: Options Related to Potential Amendments to the 2030 General Plan

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the City Council direct staff on how to proceed with potential amendments to the 2030 General Plan.

Background:

Based on City Council requests in 2017 and 2018 Planning staff has made various brief presentations to the City Council (Attachment 1) on the overall status of the General Plan and what would be needed to make amendments in the future. In those presentations, and in accordance with State law, staff emphasized the importance of public participation and involvement in the General Plan process.

On January 15, 2019, staff presented options to the City Council on how to proceed with potential amendments to the General Plan. Those options included the following:

Option 1

Wait until the Zoning Update was heard at the February 19, 2019, City Council meeting. (The City Council had their first meeting for consideration of the comprehensive zoning update and after discussions continued this item to the May 21, 2019, meeting so that further review and recommendations could be made by the Planning Commission.)

Option 2 (selected by Council)

Discuss the budget as it relates to amending the General Plan. At this time, funds are not allocated in the Biennial Budget Fiscal Years 2017-2019 to allow additional amendments to the General Plan. Aside from the legal requirement of no more than four amendments per year for a General Law city, budget is the primary constraint before moving forward with amendments to the 2030 General Plan.

Option 3

The final option was to hold a workshop to receive input from the public and then present the results to the City Council. At this time, from a financial standpoint, this may be the best place to start in terms of identifying community needs and any revised “visions” the citizens of Lompoc recommend.

The City Council selected Option 2 and staff has provided additional information in this staff report regarding this Option in terms of potential future amendments to the General Plan and budget constraints.

Discussion:

During City Council discussions at past public hearings, specific amendments were not discussed but the following general items have come up from time to time:

- Consider changing certain “shall” statements to “should” statements in various elements;
- Removal of the optional Economic Development Element (with policies integrated into the Land Use Element);
- Determine the feasibility/cost of amending the Land Use Element and/or Circulation Elements (and accompanying maps) incorporating the extension of East Central Avenue.

Shall and Should Statements

Statements in the General Plan including the term “shall” are mandatory or required. This terminology is often based on a statutory or legal obligation to achieve a goal/policy/implementation measure described in the General Plan (perhaps where this is most important is with the Housing Element where provisions are more specific and directive than other elements). In addition, “shall” statements serve as strong language that deters or prevents non-compliance.

On the other hand, “should” statements are not required, but recommended. When amending the General Plan, an analysis is needed to ensure making changes in terminology will not create inconsistencies in the General Plan or non-compliance with statutory requirements.

Removal of the Economic Development Element

In accordance with state law, there are seven mandatory elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and safety.

The City's 2030 General Plan has all of the mandated elements as well as four optional elements: parks/recreation, public services, urban design and economic development. It is not uncommon to address the economic health of a city along with goals/policies that encourage economic growth.

East Central Avenue Extension

Pursuing the East Central Avenue roadway extension (connecting to State Route 246) would be considered a large amendment and supplemental studies (such as a more current traffic study, coordination with SBCAG and a feasibility study) would be required. The first step may be to consider placing this roadway into the 2030 General Plan as previously shown on the City's 1997 General Plan Circulation Element Roadway Designations map (Attachment 2). Staff has reached out to an infrastructure services firm to acquire a broad estimate of cost regarding a feasibility study which if directed by Council, would allow staff to obtain more information related to costs associated with this project.

All of the above potential amendments will need further discussion and input from the community through workshops and supplemental studies. Any amendment must be considered first by the Planning Commission with a recommendation to the City Council. As long as proposed amendments meet all General Plan statutory requirements (such as required elements and contents of each element) based on planning law, amendments to the General Plan are expected and necessary over time.

Environmental Review:

Amendments to the General Plan are subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. Depending on the type and scope of amendments proposed, CEQA review costs vary. For example, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) could easily approach \$50,000-\$100,000 depending on the level and magnitude of the proposed amendments. If only an Addendum to the previously certified EIR is needed, staff estimates this cost at approximately up to \$25,000, again depending on the scope of the amendments proposed. Before a conclusive cost estimate can be made, it is best to first evaluate the extent of the proposed amendments and then proceed with the Request for Proposal process with an environmental consultant.

Fiscal Impact:

At this time, there are no funds allocated in the Biennial Budget to allow additional amendments to the General Plan. Staff could conduct an initial public workshop (if directed by the City Council) this summer to receive preliminary input from the community without the need for additional funding. Following that input, staff could bring this item back to the City Council and further assess how much funding would be needed for the project based on public participation. In addition, the upcoming Biennial Budget Fiscal Years 2019-2021 could incorporate this project if it is a community priority/goal and so directed by the City Council.

Conclusion:

Based on past discussions with the City Council, amendments to the 2030 General Plan are being considered but funding is not available under the current budget. If directed by the City Council, staff could conduct a preliminary public workshop in order to estimate the scope of amendments the community would like to see and then budget those amendments (including required environmental review) into the next scheduled biennial budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Halvorson, Planning Manager

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE CITY COUNCIL:

Jim Throop, City Manager

Attachments: 1) Council Presentation on 2030 General Plan Update
2) 1997 General Plan Roadway Designations (Circulation Element)