



ORANGE GENERAL PLAN GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORKSHOP #2 March 10, 2005

Summary

The second meeting of the Orange General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Room "C" of Orange City Hall. All members and alternates were present. A representative of the City Attorney's office provided GPAC members with basic information concerning the Brown Act, and reminded the GPAC that members (including alternates) and meetings are subject to Brown Act restrictions regarding public accessibility of meetings, posted agendas, and serial meetings.

Following a brief period of questions and answers, Sam Gennawey of Cotton/Bridges/Associates invited GPAC members and alternates to introduce themselves, and provided an overview of the following meeting objectives:

1. Preview the overall General Plan process and provide Phase I update (East Orange)
2. Document the GPAC's expectations of the General Plan process
3. Record community values by discussing the City's strengths and weaknesses
4. Review, confirm, and expand on issues to be addressed within the General Plan
5. Begin developing a vision of ideal conditions for Orange's future
6. Receive community input.

GENERAL PLAN PROCESS OVERVIEW AND PHASE I UPDATE

Mr. Gennawey gave a brief overview of State law requirements for General Plans, required content of General Plans, and the City's objectives in completing a General Plan update at this time. Anna Pehoushek (City of Orange) and John Bridges (Cotton/Bridges/Associates) provided GPAC members with a brief update regarding the status of Phase I of the General Plan update, which addresses preparation of an Integrated General Plan that combines the General Plan for the current City of Orange with the plans being prepared by the Irvine Company for East Orange. The Integrated General Plan and East Orange project are currently being evaluated pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and City Council hearings are anticipated to begin in summer 2005.

Several GPAC members requested further clarification regarding the scope of their work related to the East Orange project. Mr. Gennawey stated that the GPAC's charge is to address the comprehensive update of the General Plan for the entire City, and that information regarding East Orange would be folded into the update as that project is approved. GPAC members also requested a map that clearly identifies the boundaries of the City, the East Orange project, and the City's Sphere of Influence.



DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THE GENERAL PLAN PROCESS

Sam Gennaway from CBA led a discussion among GPAC members to establish ideal conditions to work toward during the update process. The following desired outcomes were provided by the GPAC:

- Desire to see the legislative body be responsive to the General Plan.
- Adhere to the General Plan – don't amend it to respond to every development project.
- The General Plan should be realistic.
- We should work toward creating a distinct community that is different from our surroundings – maintaining the "Orangeness" of where we live is important.
- Let's make sure our work is meaningful and our decisions are effective.
- Develop a well-balanced and inclusive plan that considers business and economic development, in addition to where we live and play.
- Look at underutilized areas and achieve the best uses within them.
- The General Plan needs to reflect this group's consensus.
- The planning team should accurately reflect our input.
- City and School District relations should be addressed, along with the impacts of development on schools.
- We should establish a minimum lot size of 6,000 – 7,000 sf.
- Let's give this plan some teeth (e.g. require park land improvements rather than in-lieu park fees)
- The values and opinions of youth should be considered.
- Livability should be enhanced and we should establish unique neighborhood identities. Neighborhood parks can contribute.
- Ensure balance. There are opportunities here for a wide variety of people.
- Greenbelts, trees and their contribution to a living style should be recognized.
- Balance the spending of parks and other fees geographically throughout the City.
- Maintain and improve quality of life – everyone wants it.
- Park definitions and functions should be better defined (community, neighborhood, etc.).
- We need to preserve our priorities through a vision – regardless of funds availability.
- Service retail and jobs should be planned for adjacent to residential areas.
- Let's ensure there are practical ways to achieve the vision.
- Identify safe places to build homes, and avoid unsafe areas (slides, environmentally contaminated areas, etc.).



- Define growth limitations.
- Involve assistance from the City's Economic Development staff.
- Address how we regenerate and remodel areas.
- Transportation (internal, external, autos, bikes, pedestrians and other modes).
- Create appropriate environments for all stages of life (e.g. What kind of City do seniors want?)
- Get an active senior living project in town.
- Plan for persons with disabilities.

These outcomes serve as criteria by which to measure a successful General Plan update program.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Sam Gennaway then led a discussion among GPAC members to establish a baseline of facts and perceptions. Through the use of "brainstorming," the GPAC was asked to document the internal strengths and weaknesses of Orange. The following comments were provided by the GPAC:

Strengths:

- Natural trail systems (Santiago Ck., Tustin Ranch) and good trail mobility.
- Residents care about and love Orange.
- The integrity of Old Towne. This is one of the main draws for the City, and is one of the most recognized historic areas in California.
- An active City Council.
- Access to The Block and other retail stores.
- A good geographic location and access.
- The El Modena neighborhood – Pedestrian activity and service retail.
- Many diverse and functioning neighborhoods – supporting a variety of lifestyles.
- A large and diverse non-profit network.
- A strong Chamber of Commerce.
- Invested citizens who express community pride and passion.
- Youth sports and activities. Orange is a family-friendly community.
- Good wilderness access on the east side of the City.
- Low crime rates and proactive public services that keep us safe.
- Good variety of retail opportunities.



- The finest medical facilities anywhere.
- Chapman University and Santiago College.
- A strong school district.
- Annual street fair provides outside revenue.
- Tree lightings and other community traditions.
- Neighborhood churches.
- Equestrian access, and the Orange Park Acres equestrian community.
- Antique shopping in Old Towne.
- A balanced budget and good fiscal conditions.

Weaknesses:

- Parks, parks, parks!
- Affordable or “workforce” housing.
- Strip malls.
- Telephone poles on Tustin Street.
- Plaza Circle circulation.
- Reactive code enforcement.
- Public schools.
- Public transit.
- City groups are sometimes myopic. There’s more to Orange than Old Towne.
- The City is way out of land use “balance”, especially regarding open space. Also, neighborhoods are out of balance.
- General lack of parking.
- Lack of local control over planning and development proposals in adjacent jurisdictions.
- Lack of community benefits from development projects.
- Proximity to freeways.
- Need a stronger Parks Commission.
- Deteriorating industrial areas. Buffers are needed between industrial and residential areas.
- Toxic sites.
- Few or substandard bike lanes.
- Sidewalk and roadway maintenance.



- Traffic is unevenly distributed.
- Our children and grandchildren can't afford to live here.

DOCUMENTING GENERAL PLAN ISSUES

Mr. Gennawey summarized key issues that the General Plan team has identified based on focus groups conducted with City staff, community residents, business representatives, and other stakeholders. Key issues included:

Land Use

- **Affordable housing** – Strong regional demand and need for good design standards.
- **Demographic changes** – Address impacts and take advantage of community diversity.
- **Land use relationships and connections** – Enhance walkability and take advantage of natural amenities and connections (e.g. creeks).
- **Old Towne density** – Some feel higher densities would enhance walkability and reduce the need to drive. Others feel higher densities would change historical character of Old Towne.
- **Overdevelopment** – The character of the City is changing. The City is following the trends established in neighboring jurisdictions, and many residents feel this is out of character.
- **Secondary effects of planning** – Ensure public health and safety are maintained, and foster better social integration and interaction among diverse groups within the City.

Historic Preservation

- **Adaptive Reuse** – Opportunity exists to expand current preservation efforts aimed at adaptive reuse of historic structures.
- **Historic Neighborhoods** – Encourage establishment of more historic neighborhoods, such as Cypress Barrio and the three Eichler tracts.

Circulation

- **Parking** – Provide adequate parking to protect growth and diversity of Old Towne.
- **Safe Routes to Schools** – Develop options and strategies that improve student and driver safety.
- **Traffic and Rail Impacts** – Address anticipated increases in both vehicular and rail traffic over the course of the General Plan.

Resources

- **Environmental Sustainability** – Draw upon best past and current practices to improve sustainability.



- **Need for More Parks** – Address high community demands for more open spaces, and for more active recreational spaces that feature versatile, lighted, multi-use facilities.
- **Recreation Marketing** – Increase resident awareness of parks and recreation offerings within the City.
- **Creek Connections** – Completion of a trail network that links the City’s open spaces is a key component of this General Plan update, and the Santiago Creek trail should be the heart of the network. Review and implement the current Trails Master Plan, and consider reviving rails-to-trails efforts.

Urban Design

- **Human Habitat** – Design the public realm to be principally used by people, and provide great public experiences for everyone.
- **Public Spaces** – The built environment should be a backdrop to public spaces. Focus on creating a better *place*.
- **Neighborhood Identity** – Old Towne’s distinctive identity separates Orange from many other Orange County cities. This General Plan should establish distinctive neighborhood identities for other areas of the City.

Public Safety and Noise

- **Crime** – Continue to develop policies and programs to reduce crime.
- **Noise** – Freeway and train-related noise impacts quality of life.

Economic Development

- **Plaza District** – Orange wishes to attract and retain desired businesses and remain competitive with other Central Business Districts in the region. The Plaza District lacks centralized management.
- **Small Businesses** – Opportunities include providing incentives and easing expansion regulations to encourage attraction and retention of small businesses.

Growth Management

- **City and School District** – Continue to work toward greater collaboration, especially regarding joint use of facilities.
- **Hospital Expansion** – Orange’s hospitals will need to expand and retrofit to meet State seismic requirements.

Mr. Gennaway then asked the GPAC if they knew of significant issues that were missed or should be added. The GPAC offered the following issues for consideration:



- **Airport Compatibility** – Flyovers and landing issues are a concern.
- **Fiscal Responsibility** – The General Plan should include a long range commitment to fiscal responsibility.
- **Parking beyond Old Towne** – Parking is a citywide issue.
- **Equestrian Trails and Areas** – Issues include provision of commercial boarding facilities.
- **Circulation** – Mobility is key. We need to be able to get around. One way streets should be considered.
- **Old Towne Parking** – Is a structure needed?
- **Industrial Lands** – Encourage creative reuse of substandard industrial lands.
- **External Funding Opportunities** - Grant applications should be fully pursued to achieve General Plan goals.
- **Conservation issues** – Conservation policies should address storm water runoff and sustainability.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? – FROM ISSUES TO VISION

Mr. Gennawey concluded the meeting by letting GPAC members know that the planning team would use tonight's input to develop a preliminary draft Vision Statement for consideration by the community at-large, and future refinement by the GPAC at future meetings. Mr. Gennawey also notified GPAC members of the following upcoming community meeting dates, and invited members to attend the meetings:

- March 10, 2005 – Youth Voice Workshop (El Modena Library)
- April 2, 2005 – Virtual Orange Workshop (YWCA Gymnasium)
- April 23, 2005 – Envisioning Change Workshop (Lutheran High School)

GPAC members discussed and agreed that future meetings would begin at 6:30 pm, rather than 7:00 pm. In addition, a flag salute will be added to future GPAC meeting agendas.

