

Southwest Fresno Specific Plan Steering Committee Meeting #5 Summary

The fifth Steering Committee meeting was held on May 4, 2016 (4:30-8:00 pm) in the Cecil C. Hinton Community Center Gym/Community Room at 2385 S Fairview Avenue, Fresno, CA 93706.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Jeff Roberts	Mary Curry	Michaelynn Lewis
Leoncio Vasquez	Ashley Werner	Sylvesta Hall
Esther Cuevas	Debbie Darden	Marina Harutyunyan
Shaneece Childress	Juan Esquivel	Donna Middleton
	Sharon Williams	Jane Carretero

OVERVIEW

The Southwest Specific Plan is a two-year process to plan for change and improvement in Southwest Fresno. The City of Fresno is helping develop the Specific Plan, along with a team of consultants and a Steering Committee comprised of local residents, leaders of community groups, and property and business owners. At the previous Steering Committee meeting on March 1, 2016, Steering Committee members began the discussion and decision-making of what a Preferred Alternative should include. The purpose of this meeting was to continue the discussion of creating a Draft Preferred Alternative and answer unresolved questions from the March 1st Steering Committee meeting. Members of the project team, including City staff and consultants from PlaceWorks, Shared Spaces, PopUp, Centro La Familia Advocacy Services, and Gregory Barfield of Councilmember Baines' office, were also present. The meeting was open to the general public to observe the Steering Committee's deliberations. Bertha Pérez-Sánchez was available as a translator for those with Spanish as their primary language.

WELCOME AND REVIEW OF AGENDA

Lead Facilitator Steve Cancian of Shared Spaces welcomed workshop attendees and asked City staff members, the consultant team, Steering Committee members, and topic group participants to introduce themselves. He reviewed the format and sequence of items listed in the agenda.

PRESENTATION

Bruce Brubaker of consulting firm PlaceWorks gave a recap on the overall planning process and discussions from the previous Steering Committee meetings. He explained that a set of Guiding Principles was created from the previous meetings' discussions and has shaped the draft Preferred Alternative.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND CEREMONIAL PRESENTATION

A community member informed meeting participants that the Trust for Public Lands has a tool to rank parks needs in neighborhoods similar to Southwest Fresno.

A community member mentioned that they don't like the truck traffic traveling to the Foster Farms plant because it brings in dust and odor. Truck traffic should be considered as a community health issue.

Jeff Roberts, Steering Committee member, spoke to inform the committee and the public that the firm he represents, Granville Homes, has an application pending to change the zoning on 13 acres of their land east of Hughes Avenue, between California Avenue and Kearny Boulevard. The zoning is being requested to change from mixed use to single-family housing.

After the public comment, a representative of Council President Paul Caprioglio presented Certificates of Recognition to individual Steering Committee members, City staff, and the consultant team.

REMAINING STEERING COMMITTEE DECISIONS

Supermarket Locations

The Steering Committee discussed as a group the preference for locations of supermarkets in Southwest Fresno. Several members preferred a location close to freeway off-ramps, which would allow more people (including visitors) to support the store. Other members preferred a location further into the neighborhood where it would be more convenient for Southwest Fresno residents to access. A committee member wondered what the term "close" to freeway off-ramps meant, and most agreed that it meant within a mile of the freeway. After this discussion, two members voted for a supermarket location close to the freeway and nine voted for both a supermarket location close to freeway access and another one further into the neighborhood. Some felt the best way to proceed is to locate a supermarket close to the freeway in the near term and encourage a neighborhood-located supermarket in the longer term when the neighborhood is more established.

Approach to Industrial Properties

The Specific Plan provides an opportunity to change the zoning or standards that industrial businesses would need to comply with. It should be noted that even if the zoning changes, existing businesses will be able to remain as a "non-conforming" use, but any expansions would have to adhere to updated standards. The zoning change would apply to future use of the land. The Steering Committee discussion focused on the benefits of industrial jobs and the impacts of industrial uses on nearby residences. City

staff determined that existing businesses on industrial-zoned properties near Fruit and Church Avenues in Southwest Fresno employ approximately 83 to 197 people. Some Committee members noted that some industrial-type business are acceptable as long as they do not negatively impact residences. Other Committee members thought there should not be industrial zoning in the center of the Southwest neighborhood. At the end of discussion, Committee members were still split on this issue, Industrial issues will need to be discussed further to be resolved.

Park and Open Space Standards

The Committee discussed which types of land should be included when determining how much park acreage exists in the Southwest neighborhood. (Note – the City’s General Plan currently sets a standard of 3 acres per 1,000 residents. Pocket Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and Community Parks all count towards this standard. In addition, there is a goal of 5 acres per 1,000 residents in which all City parks are counted, including Regional Parks). Overwhelmingly, Committee members agreed that Hyde Park should not be counted into park acreage, as it is a previously contaminated site located on a landfill. Many Committee members also thought that ponding basins should not be counted in park acreage because they are difficult to access and use, and they are wet during parts of the year. It was pointed out that sometimes public parks are on ponding basin land but up above, at street level, rather than down in the basin. Park and Open Space issues will need to be discussed further to be resolved.

CLOSE/CONFIRMING CALENDAR AND NEXT STEPS

The Committee requested an additional Steering Committee meeting to resolve the remaining issues. The project team noted that this meeting was the last scheduled Steering Committee meeting until the Draft Specific Plan is released for discussion. City staff and the consultants will review the project contract and determine the best way to proceed.

UPDATE: Another Steering Committee meeting has been scheduled for Monday, June 20, 2016 from 4:30 – 8:00 pm in Room 4017 at Fresno City Hall.

The meeting’s materials can be found online at:

<http://www.fresno.gov/Government/DepartmentDirectory/DARM/AdvancedPlanning/CurrentPlans.htm>