

CITY OF SAN DIMAS PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regularly Scheduled Meeting
Wednesday, February 16, 2005 at 7:30 p.m.
245 East Bonita Avenue, Council Chambers

Present

Chairman Ash Dhingra
Commissioner Emmett Badar
Commissioner David Bratt
Commissioner Howard Levreau
Commissioner Jim Schoonover
Director of Community Development Larry Stevens
Planning Manager Craig Hensley
City Attorney Ken Brown

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dhingra called the regular meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 7:37 p.m. and Commissioner Levreau led the flag salute.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of Minutes for February 2, 2005.

Commissioner Levreau stated there was a correction on the February 2, 2005 minutes. On the motion for Resolution PC-1310 he voted in the negative so the wording should be changed to say the motion passed 4-1 (Levreau no).

MOTION: Moved by Badar, seconded by Bratt to approve the Consent Calendar as corrected. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. Revised Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR);
General Plan Amendment 03-03 – To amend the General Plan land use designation from Industrial to Commercial and to amend various goals, objectives and policies set forth in the General Plan;
Municipal Code Text Amendment 03-04 – To revise Specific Plan No. 24 including development plan, development standards, plan review and disposition and related Sections to allow commercial development.

Staff report presented by *Director of Community Development Larry Stevens*, who stated the Planning Commission heard this matter in October of 2004, but based on information learned after that hearing, particularly as to some traffic study issues, it was determined necessary to make modifications to the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). In conjunction with that action, the General Plan Amendment and Municipal Code Text Amendment are also being brought back for consideration.

Before the Commission tonight is the revised Final EIR; the General Plan Amendment to change the land use designation from industrial to commercial and supportive policies for that change; and the Municipal Code Text Amendment revising the existing Specific Plan No. 24 to accommodate commercial development.

The EIR now consists of six documents as outlined on page six of the staff report. He stated the project and exhibits are essentially the same as presented at the previous hearing and described the proposed uses. He stated in addition to the action items being presented, there will be a Precise Plan Review which will be for the final site plan and architectural review of the project. The Development Plan Review Board will hear the Precise Plan Review at their meeting of February 24, 2005. Once they complete their review, this could tentatively come before the Commission at the March 16, 2005 meeting with the intent of bringing the entire package to the City Council on March 22, 2005. The Precise Plan Review does not require a formal notice so there will be no mailing to surrounding property owners, but the public hearing at the Council meeting will be noticed.

In the EIR there are several topic areas which have been analyzed. Many will have less than significant impacts and mitigation measures have been identified where applicable. There are two areas where the impacts will be significant and unavoidable. The first relates to air quality and in three sub-categories there will be significant impacts: construction activity emissions, operational emissions consisting of traffic going to and from the project, and cumulative air impacts. In this air basin there isn't a project of this size that would be able to avoid having these types of impacts and there are no mitigations available that would allow you to reduce these to a level of insignificance. Once you have a project of a certain size you have a significant and unavoidable determination on air quality issues.

Director Stevens stated in regards to traffic there were three primary changes as it relates to circulation. He stated after the Commission's previous action a comment that was received indicated there was concern about the clearance time in the traffic analysis. After review it was determined the model failed to include this clearance time in the analysis. When the model was corrected, some of the results changed so it was decided to revise the traffic study and recirculate the document again.

Also, when they conducted this most recent analysis, they became aware there was a newer version of the Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) Manual than what was previously used. This is the recognized professional organization that provides documentation and most traffic studies use this as a base document to calculate trip generation rates. In the 7th Edition there is a newly created land-use category that specifically addresses Costco-style warehouse buildings, so they were able to use more specific data. An effect of using this specific analysis is that there was some reduction in the total project traffic, but there was a greater impact on Saturday so it created some additional impacts on

intersections not previously identified. There were additional significant impacts in the revised traffic analysis using the 7th Edition ITE standards at:

- Lone Hill and Gladstone occurring weekday p.m.
- Lone Hill and Arrow occurring Saturday mid-day
- Arrow/Southbound 57 off-ramp occurring Saturday mid-day
- Arrow/Northbound 57 off-ramp occurring weekday p.m.

Only one intersection was affected by the change that wasn't previously impacted in some manner and implementation of mitigation measures are infeasible at that location. There is only a certain level of mitigation that can be done at an intersection no matter what time of day or what triggers the impact, so even though there are additional impacts identified, the mitigations remain the same at the previously identified intersections.

Director Stevens stated there is a significant and unavoidable impact on traffic and transportation. Previously there was an impact on Lone Hill and Arrow that couldn't be mitigated, and now the changes at Arrow/Southbound 57 off-ramp have created impacts that cannot be mitigated. There are other intersections which are impacted but they were previously disclosed and there are proposed mitigation measures to address the impacts. They are also not able to guarantee the implementation of all mitigation measures because several intersections are located outside of the City's boundaries. They intend to work with the City of Glendora to implement the mitigations, but since they can't guarantee that, they are disclosing that in the document.

It was noted previously that Willow and Gladstone Elementary Schools will be impacted. Again, they are proposing mitigation measures but since they are located outside of the City's jurisdiction, they cannot guarantee their implementation. He then outlined the proposed twelve mitigation measures for traffic that the Commission took action on previously.

Director Stevens stated the Final EIR contains nine letters that were received during the last comment period and the response from the consultants. There have been no changes to the previous comments made on the thirty-six letters received. When they take this item to the City Council, they will present a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the two items with unavoidable impacts. As mentioned earlier, they will also be considering a General Plan Amendment to change the use from Industrial to Commercial, along with modifying Goal Statement L-5 and adding a series of supportive objectives and policies.

He stated they are also processing a Municipal Code Text Amendment but there have been no changes to that due to the traffic analysis. They are proposing three subareas now instead of the previous eight. The development standards will remain the same for properties located on the north side of Gladstone and east of the railroad tracks. The other areas have all been merged into one area for the Costco project. He then went over the list of allowed uses, conditional uses and prohibited uses. There are also a series of special limitations which would guarantee where the big box and pad development will be, and they are creating architectural guidelines and a site plan similar to the exhibits shown tonight.

Tonight the Commission should conduct the public hearing and hear all testimony. The Precise Plan will come forward sometime in the next two meetings and will focus primarily on the overall Costco master plan. The pad buildings will come back as more information becomes available on them. The consultants on the project, Wendy Lockwood from ESA, Joel Falter and Brian Marchetti from Katz Okitsu, along with Peter Clement from Costco, are available if the Commission has any questions.

Commissioner Levreau stated he wanted to clarify that with the revised EIR and the proposed mitigation measures, that any increased traffic from Costco will not have a significant impact on school traffic because the increases are on Saturday or during evening hours.

Director Stevens stated generally that is correct. As noted in the presentation there are mitigation measures proposed for Willow and Gladstone Elementary schools. While the impacts were identified as insignificant, they still intended to mitigate these impacts and that's where those measures came from. The Commission will recall that part of the response to comments dealt with comments raised by representatives of Shull Elementary School who felt that the project will create impacts on them. When this was discussed at the public hearing in October, the issues identified were already existing issues and would not be exacerbated by the Costco project. It was suggested the appropriate remedy was to work through the normal process with the City/School Ad Hoc Committee and the Traffic Safety Committee.

Since October, the Traffic Safety Committee has analyzed several measures suggested at the public hearing, i.e., flashing yellow lights, protected left turn arrow, adding a crossing guard, and other issues that come up at all school sites. The Traffic Safety Committee recently concluded that under present conditions none of the improvements sought by the parents and school met warrants, though they did make a recommendation to consider flashing speed limit signs in the area based on existing traffic issues. It was his understanding that the Committee's decision is in the process of being appealed to the City Council. He wanted to mention that as background, that all of the school issues are on the table and staff has not changed their position as it relates to Shull School but that they are not ignoring it either.

Chairman Dhingra opened the meeting for public hearing. Addressing the Commission were:

David Chantarangsu, Assistant Director of Planning, City of Glendora, who stated they are not opposed to the project but as they have stated in the past they have a number of concerns regarding the traffic estimates and the cumulative impact analysis in the EIR. The City of Glendora believes they have exhausted all avenues to have a more appropriate traffic analysis prepared. Since the last hearing the number of trips the project is estimated to generate has been reduced by approximately 5,000 trips. They believe it is an inappropriate reduction and that the previous EIR has more appropriate numbers. They also felt the Gold Line should not have been omitted for analysis in the EIR. He stated that Director Stevens made a comment that the Specific Plan would allow a movie theater, and if one were developed, it would create more impacts than are contained in the current EIR and it would need to be revised. He requested the Commission continue this item and direct staff to work further with the City of Glendora to come up with traffic figures they can agree on in light of their proposed project at

Valley Center and Gladstone. He then introduced Steve Green, their traffic engineer, and formally requested a copy of the tape of tonight's proceedings.

Steven Greene, Transportation Group Leader, Riverside office, LSA Associates, stated they have been retained by the City of Glendora to prepare the traffic impact analysis for the Diamond Ridge Marketplace project on Gladstone and Valley Center. In a written statement on file in the Planning Department, he stated that it is necessary for them to consider the traffic generated by the Costco project, just as they need to consider the traffic from the Diamond Ridge project. He felt that because these two projects would be the biggest traffic generators in the area, it was important to use the same methodology to calculate traffic so that they were consistent. He felt it was more appropriate to use the fitted curve equation as opposed to the average rate which was used by the Costco project and explained the difference between the two methodologies. He also had concerns about the internal trip capture figures. The Trip Generation Table in Appendix A of the Revision II Recirculated Transportation/Traffic Section of the Draft EIR states it has applied the ITE methodology for calculating internal trip capture. However, the worksheets used to carry out the calculations have not been included in the appendix and it appears the methodology has not been correctly applied in the trip generation table. Using their calculations he felt there were times where figures for the Costco, gas station and shopping center combined could be less than the number generated by the Costco alone, or even create a negative number. Thus, this supported their view that the methodology used should be the fitted curve analysis.

Director Stevens asked if the comments made relative to trip generation fitted curve analysis are included in the January 31st letter, because as he understood it the information presented this evening regarding internal trip capture was not included in that letter.

Steven Green, LSA Associates, thought it was included in the January 31st letter under Item Number 2, section 6C or 6D.

Director Stevens asked if he added more detail tonight.

Steven Green, LSA Associates, felt his comments had been covered in the letter.

Wayne Mauthe, 734 Amelia, stated his primary concern is that people will use Amelia as a shortcut to the project rather than taking Lone Hill. Amelia is a residential neighborhood which includes Shull Elementary School and any additional traffic would be a problem. He suggested closing the existing at-grade railroad crossing at Gladstone and create cul-de-sacs which would eliminate shortcuts and the at-grade crossing. The rail agencies would assist with the cost if such a measure were taken.

Director Stevens stated Mr. Mauthe submitted a letter during the comment period and it is Number 7 in the packet.

Tom McCoy, 922 W. 5th Street, was concerned about relocation for residents on the project site and asked if the proposed groundbreaking was still scheduled for July of 2005.

Director Stevens stated there have been some delays in the project and the schedule has been adjusted. The best scenario would have construction starting at the end of this year, early next year. Costco will proceed aggressively once they receive approvals but it was premature to discuss a schedule at this time. If the project is approved, there will be time to work with the property owners to address relocation needs.

Peter Clement, Costco, 17300 Red Hill Avenue, Irvine, reiterated comments made by Director Stevens in regards to scheduling. Right now they are looking at opening in Spring of 2006. He felt the staff's presentation was accurate and thorough

There being no further comments, the public hearing was closed.

Director Stevens stated he would like to respond to a few of the comments made. Responses to Mr. Mauthe's comments are included in the Response to Comments document and if he has further questions, staff would be happy to speak with him. He stated staff continues to disagree with the City of Glendora on the inclusion of the Gold Line in the analysis. It has been clearly indicated why they disagree with that and why it should not be considered in the cumulative projects analysis. Staff has consulted with legal counsel and feel they have met the requirements. There was a comment made about a theater as a conditional use, and they clearly understand that if there are pad or other development proposals that come forward that have different traffic generation characteristics, then those would trigger additional environmental analysis which will be undertaken at that time.

Director Stevens asked the City's traffic consultant to summarize for the record responses on the differences relative to trip generation rate calculation, the fitted curve issue and internal capture rate bases that were included in the analysis so there can be an understanding of the analysis that was done. Staff feels an appropriate traffic analysis has been done.

Chairman Dhingra re-opened the public hearing. Addressing the Commission was:

Brian Marchetti, Katz Okitsu, stated their trip generation analyses are fairly complex, including internal trip capture when someone leaves the Costco and goes to another use on the site before leaving the center entirely. It also includes pass-by trips, which is someone coming home, they use the Costco, and then continue on their way home. Their calculations are consistent with the Institute of Traffic Engineers, and is the industry standard they use. A gross trip generation versus a net trip generation can have quite a bit of difference in the figures; however, the analysis is entirely within the guidelines of ITE. He stated ITE doesn't mandate using average rate or fitted curves, it is up to the user. Average rates are based on many studies across the country so standard deviation doesn't come into play, the rates are as accurate as the curve based on so many sites surveyed across the country. He stated they stand by the use of those rates, which are consistent with studies done in the area for major corridors and shopping center uses. In regards to the internal trip capture, they calculate that based on their interpretation of the ITE methodology. The ITE average for those types of trips are 28-41%. Their rate is approximately 35% so they are within the statistical average that ITE has seen at other sites.

Commissioner Levreau asked if regardless of which methodology was used, would the conclusion be different if the other method was used.

Brian Marchetti, Katz Okitsu, stated they have analyzed the difference, but it doesn't change their conclusion and they stand by their analysis.

There being no further comments, the public hearing was closed.

MOTION: Moved by Levreau, seconded by Bratt to direct staff to prepare resolutions recommending the City Council approve the Revised FEIR, General Plan Amendment 03-03 and Municipal Code Text Amendment 03-04. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

Director Stevens staff will prepare those resolutions to come back to the Commission on the Consent Calendar on March 2nd.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

3. Director of Community Development

Director Stevens stated at a recent meeting the Commission reviewed changes to the Municipal Code regarding side yard setbacks on corner lots. When the item went to the City Council they made some amendments to the language. He will provide the Commission with a copy of the adopted Council resolution.

He stated the League of California Cities conference was being held in Pasadena in April this year, and if anyone was interested in attending, they should let staff know.

He stated an appeal has been filed by Councilmember John Ebiner on DPRB Case No. 04-68, the 10,000 square foot house that was on the Commission agenda last meeting.

4. Members of the Audience

No communications were made.

5. Planning Commission

No communications were made.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Dhingra adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m. to the regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for March 2, 2005 at 7:30 p.m.

Ash Dhingra, Chairman
San Dimas Planning Commission

ATTEST:

Craig Hensley
Planning Manager

Approved: