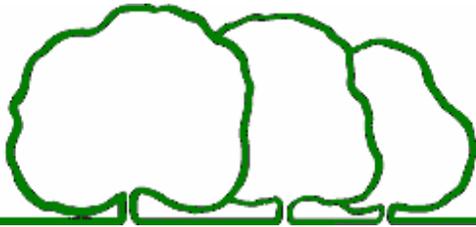




Legislation Text

File #: 16-781, Version: 1



City of Woodland

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Woodland Planning Commission

FROM: Ken Hiatt, Assistant City Manager and Community Development Director
Cindy A. Norris, Principal Planner
Heidi Tschudin, General Plan Project Manager

SUBJECT: Public Comment Meeting on Draft Environmental Impact Report for the 2035 General Plan and Climate Action Plan

DATE: October 20, 2016

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

1. Receive a staff report summarizing the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the 2035 General Plan and Climate Action Plan (CAP); and
2. Provide an opportunity for the public to provide verbal comments on the DEIR (released September 15, 2016 under separate cover).

PURPOSE OF MEETING:

The purpose of the meeting is to receive testimony from any interested party regarding the adequacy of the subject DEIR as an informational tool for making decisions regarding the 2035 General Plan and CAP. Although CEQA does not require a public meeting or hearing to receive verbal comments on Draft EIRs, it is the City's practice to do so.

The state guidelines for determining the adequacy of an EIR state as follows:

An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the

EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure. (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15151)

The CEQA Guidelines require that formal written responses be prepared and made available for relevant comments received on the DEIR, including verbal comments. These responses, plus the DEIR, will comprise the Final EIR for the 2035 General Plan and CAP.

BACKGROUND:

The City began the General Plan update process in early 2013. Here is a brief summary of recent activity:

Jul 8 Release of Public Review Draft 2035 General Plan (excluding Housing Element)

Jul 25 General Plan Steering Committee

Jul 29 Release of Revised Draft Housing Element

Aug 8 Community Open House

Aug 15 General Plan Steering Committee

Aug 24 Joint City Council and Planning Commission Workshop

Sep 15 Release of Draft Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Sep 15 Release of Draft Environmental Impact Report

PUBLIC AND AGENCY COMMENTS:

The DEIR is now available for review and comment through November 3, 2016. The document can be accessed online, or by borrowing or purchasing a printed or electronic copy at the Community Development public counter. **Written comments on the DEIR will be accepted throughout the 45-day public review period which began September 19, 2016 and will end November 3, 2016.** All comments must be received or postmarked by November 3, 2016 to be considered timely. Persons making verbal comments will be identified in the record however no transcription of verbal comments will be provided. Comments must be submitted in writing to be considered in their entirety.

Please direct your comments to:

WoodlandGPDEIRcomments@cityofwoodland.org

[<mailto:WoodlandGPDEIRcomments@cityofwoodland.org>](mailto:WoodlandGPDEIRcomments@cityofwoodland.org)

c/o Cindy A. Norris, Principal Planner

Community Development Department

300 First Street

Woodland, CA 95695

(530) 661-5820

SUMMARY OF THE CEQA PROCESS:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a State law that requires state and local agencies to evaluate and consider the potential adverse physical environmental effects of land use actions and decisions prior to making them. Decisions that would result in environmental impacts may be made but there is an obligation to avoid and minimize impacts where feasible, and disclosure of those impacts is required.

The CEQA Statutes and Guidelines contemplate different levels of analysis for different types of decisions. The level of analysis typically used for planning documents like a general plan is described as “programmatic” which reflects that site-specific and project-specific details for the entire project area are not known, but the

general potential for impact in various topical areas can still be assessed.

The DEIR prepared for the 2035 General Plan and CAP is a programmatic document. Subsequent projects and actions that are consistent with and implement the 2035 General Plan and CAP will be able to “tier from” (rely on) the certified EIR, and additional environmental analysis will be minimized, or in certain instances unnecessary at all or in part.

CEQA requires analysis of the potential for impact in identified topical areas and to various analytical and legal standards. Since it became law in 1970 an entire industry, lexicon, and set of protocols have emerged to ensure satisfaction of the various legal requirements. The City’s DEIR is in compliance with these requirements and follows what has become a standard format in the industry.

Reviewers with little or no familiarity with CEQA documents may find it helpful to do the following:

- 1) Review the Table of Contents and read Chapter 1 (Introduction)
- 2) Review the Executive Summary
- 3) Follow up on any specific questions by looking at the detailed analysis on Chapter 4
- 4) Review other sections of interest

DEIR PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Proposed Project is adoption of a new general plan and CAP for the City of Woodland. These documents will apply to the incorporated area of the City (totaling 9,619 acres) and land outside of the current City limits but within the Planning Area (totaling 3,162 acres) upon annexation. The 12,781-acre Planning Area is identical to the Urban Limit Line (ULL) established by City of Woodland voters in 2006.

The Draft General Plan is organized into an Introduction and Administration Chapter and a number of “elements.” Each element includes an introduction, background information, and a list of goals and policies. The Draft General Plan Update contains the following Elements:

- Land Use, Community Design, and Historic Preservation Element
- Transportation and Circulation Element
- Economic Development Element
- Public Facilities and Services Element
- Healthy Community Element
- Conservation and Open Space Element
- Safety Element
- Housing Element

The Draft General Plan has a planning horizon of 2035. The Draft General Plan assigns land uses to all 12,781 acres within the planning area. The Plan includes two alternative patterns for growth and development through 2035, identified as the East Alternative and the South Alternative. These alternatives differ as follows:

- The South Alternative assumes more infill growth downtown and in corridors, and more greenfield growth in SP-1B, SP-1C, and SP-3 by 2035.
- The East Alternative assumes less infill growth downtown and in corridors, no greenfield growth in SP-1C, and less greenfield growth in SP-1B and SP-3 in favor of new greenfield growth in SP-2 by 2035.

The alternatives generally share all other growth assumptions including the same growth in the Spring Lake Specific Plan (SLSP), the industrial area, SP-1A, non-residential growth in SP-1B, residential growth in SP-3A, and non-residential growth in SP-3B. With the differences noted above, the two alternatives rely on the same General Plan text, goals, policies, implementation actions, land use designations, exhibits, and figures.

The DEIR analyzes both of these alternatives at an equal level of detail or “equal weight.” The impacts of each alternative are fully evaluated relative to baseline conditions and established significance criteria. The analysis in the DEIR provides information for development of the final General Plan that will be adopted by City Council.

The DEIR is structured to allow adoption of one of these two alternatives, or some variation, so long as the total growth numbers (by 2035) do not exceed 7,000 residential units and approximately 17.0 million square feet of non-residential uses ($\pm 19,000$ jobs), and there are no other substantive inconsistencies with assumptions made in the DEIR.

The Draft CAP presents a strategy for achieving specified reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The Draft CAP identifies GHG targets for the City as follows:

- 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020
- 2.25 MT CO₂e per service population (residents plus jobs) per year by 2035

These targets equate to local GHG reductions of approximately 60,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year (MT CO₂e/yr) by 2020 and 112,000 MT CO₂e/yr by 2035 in order to achieve Woodland’s GHG targets. The CAP is comprised of quantifiable objectives, strategies, and implementation actions for achieving GHG reductions within six focus areas:

- Energy
- Transportation and Land Use
- Urban Forest and Open Space
- Water and Solid Waste
- Public Involvement
- Municipal Operations.

SUMMARY OF DEIR ANALYSIS:

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City and its consultants, AECOM and Dyett and Bhatia, have prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) which analyzes the potential adverse environmental impacts associated with implementation of the 2035 General Plan and the CAP described above. A Final EIR (Response to Comments) will be prepared following public review and comment. The City will consider this information when deliberating the project. Following certification of the Final EIR, the City will take action to adopt the 2035 General Plan and CAP.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures in the DEIR take the form of new or revised Draft General Plan policies and implementation actions. Many simply clarify the intent of a measure or provide more details to increase the effectiveness of the measure. A summary of some of the more notable mitigation measures (MMs) is provided below. For a complete list of mitigation measures please refer to Chapter 2 (Executive Summary) of the DEIR.

MM 4.1-4 identifies new policies to addresses impacts related to light and glare including preservation of the night sky.

MM 4.2-1 modifies Policy 2.A.3 (Agricultural Mitigation) to require mitigation land to be of the same or equal quality as that being converted and to require it be located close to the ULL.

MM 4.2-3 adds a new policy requiring a 300-foot buffer at the ULL edge when possible which may be landscaped and may include public right of way.

MM 4.3-3a modifies Policy 7.F.3 (Protect Sensitive Receptors) to expand the definition of a sensitive receptor and add buffers recommended by the California Air Resources Board.

MM 4.3-3c identifies a new implementation actions addressing requirements for health risk assessments and/or buffers to sensitive receptors related to exposure to Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs).

MM 4.4-1a identifies a new implementation action related to procedures for biological resource surveys and mitigation.

MM 4.5-1a identifies a new implementation action to ensure effective implementation of the CAP consistent and promote project streamlining pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5.

MM 4.6-1b, c, and d, 4.6-2, and 4.7-4 identify new implementation actions detailing protocols for specified cultural resource assessments.

MM 4.11-1 identifies a new implementation action related to construction noise.

MM 4.11-2b identifies three new policies related to controls for noise including one that discourages noise walls.

MM 4.13-1c modifies the Policy 3.A.4 (Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled [VMT]) to substitute the identified 30 VMT per capita performance threshold in favor of a ten percent (10%) reduction in VMT per capita or per service population. Which would result in equivalent mitigation, is more similar to thresholds being used elsewhere, and is more similar to statewide thresholds being considered pursuant to recent state legislation. This MM also identifies a new implementation action that requires reevaluation of this policy after the statewide thresholds are adopted.

Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

In the DEIR the following impacts are identified as "significant and unavoidable" (SU) meaning there are no feasible mitigation measures available to mitigate the impact to an acceptable (less than significant) level or there are identified measures that would reduce the impact but not to an acceptable level.

4.1 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

IMPACT 4.1-3 Substantially Degrade the Existing Visual Character or Quality of the Site and its Surroundings.

IMPACT 4.1-4 Create a New Source of Substantial Light or Glare Which Would Adversely Affect Day or Nighttime Views in the Area.

4.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

IMPACT 4.2-1 Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as Shown on the Maps Prepared Pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to Non-Agricultural Use.

IMPACT 4.2-3 Involve Other Changes in the Existing Environment that, Due to Their Location or Nature, Could Result in Conversion of Farmland, to Non-Agricultural Use

4.3 AIR QUALITY

IMPACT 4.3-1 Generation of Short-Term Construction-Related Emissions of Criteria Air Pollutants and Precursors.

IMPACT 4.3-2 Generation of Long-Term Operational Emissions of Criteria Air Pollutants and Precursors.

IMPACT 4.3-3 Expose Sensitive Receptors to Substantial Pollutant Concentrations (Stationary Sources).

4.6 CULTURAL RESOURCES

IMPACT 4.6-1 Cause a Substantial Adverse Change in the Significance of Archaeological or Historical Resources as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.

IMPACT 4.6-2 Disturb Human Remains, including those Interred Outside of Formal Cemeteries.

4.9 HYDROLOGY, FLOODING, AND WATER QUALITY

IMPACT 4.9-7 Expose People or Structures to a Significant Risk of Loss, Injury or Death Involving Flooding.

4.10 LAND USE PLANNING, POPULATION, AND HOUSING

IMPACT 4.10-2 Conflict with Any Applicable Land Use Plan, Policy, or Regulation of an Agency with Jurisdiction over the Project (Including, but not Limited to the General Plan, Specific Plan, Local Coastal Program, or Zoning Ordinance) Adopted for the Purpose of Avoiding or Mitigating an Environmental Effect

IMPACT 4.10-3 Impacts Related to Inducing Population Growth.

4.11 NOISE AND VIBRATION

IMPACT 4.11-1 Exposure of Noise-Sensitive Land Uses to Short-Term (Construction).

IMPACT 4.11-2 Exposure to or Generation of Long-Term Noise Levels.

IMPACT 4.11-3 Exposure to or Generation of Vibration.

CUMULATIVE IMPACT AREAS

Aesthetics and Visual Resources
Agriculture and Forestry Resources
Air Quality
Cultural Resources
Hydrology and Water Quality
Land Use Planning, Population, and Housing
Noise and Vibration
Utilities and Service Systems

GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES

Alternatives

The DEIR contains a full description and analysis of the General Plan alternatives considered by the City. Initially the City considered four scenarios:

- Scenario 1, High Infill, No New Greenfield Development
- Scenario 2, Moderate Infill, New Greenfield Growth in South and East
- Scenario 3, Moderate Infill, New Greenfield Growth in South and North
- Scenario 4, Moderate Infill, New Greenfield Growth in South

Infill includes development in Downtown, corridors, Spring Lake Specific Plan and industrial areas. Scenarios 1 and 3 were subsequently rejected for reasons outlined in DEIR Chapter 5 (page 5-6 and 5-7). Scenarios 2 and 4 were retained as viable alternatives. They were modified as described in the DEIR and renamed the East Alternative (Scenario 2) and the South Alternative (Scenario 4).

- East Alternative, Moderate Infill, New Greenfield Growth in South (SP-1A), North, and East
- South Alternative, High Infill, New Greenfield Growth in South (SP-1A, B, and C), and North

There is no Preferred Plan identified in the DEIR. Both the East and South Alternatives are analyzed in equal level of detail throughout Chapter 4. Implementation of the proposed CAP is assumed as a part of each of the equal-weight alternatives.

In addition, the required No Project Alternative is analyzed at a comparative level of detail in Chapter 5. The No Project Alternative assumes continued implementation of the 2002 General Plan and the Preliminary 2020 CAP both of which are currently in effect.

A summary of the comparative environmental impacts of the three analyzed alternatives is provided in Table 5-24 on page 5-63. CEQA requires that the environmentally superior alternative be identified for consideration by the decision-makers. The DEIR identifies the No Project Alternative as environmentally superior of the three alternative. The DEIR identifies the South Alternative as environmentally superior between the two remaining alternatives because it would result in less impact overall as compared to the East Alternative.

NEXT STEPS:

After three plus years of analysis, meetings, hearings, workshops, and deliberation, the process to adopt a new General Plan for the City is nearing its end. The following steps remain:

- January 2017 Release Final EIR and Proposed Revisions to 2035 General Plan and CAP

- February Planning Commission Hearings
- March City Council Hearings

It is anticipated that the Planning Commission and City Council will each conduct two meetings to deliberate and act on the final EIR, 2035 General Plan, and CAP. The first meeting of both bodies will focus on the staff presentation, questions, testimony, and possibly discussion. The second meeting of both bodies will focus on deliberations and action. The Planning Commission will take action in the form of recommendations to the City Council. The City Council may be asked to bifurcate their final action into an initial intent motion, with final action at a subsequent third hearing in order to allow staff time to formulate the required approval package and findings of fact.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Receive a staff report summarizing the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the 2035 General Plan and Climate Action Plan (CAP); and
2. Provide an opportunity for the public to provide verbal comments on the DEIR (released September 15, 2016 under separate cover).

ATTACHMENT:

Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the 2035 General Plan and 2035 Climate Action Plan - available at the following link:

<http://web.cityofwoodland.org/gov/depts/cd/divisions/planning/generalplan/2035/documents.asp>