Minutes – City Planning Commission

1,887th Meeting

6:00 P.M. June 23, 2005
COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL
3900 MAIN STREET

MINUTES APPROVED AS PRESENTED AT THE JANUARY 19, 2006 MEETING

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Agnew, Comer, Densmore, Leonard, Maloney, Norton, Sebelia

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Brown, Kurani, Singletary,

STAFF PRESENT: Gutierrez, Planning Director
Aaron, Principal Planner
Jenkins, Principal Planner
Milosevic, Associate Planner
Smith, Deputy City Attorney
Andrade, Stenographer

THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED:

Chair Leonard reconvened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

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16. PLANNING CASE P04-0178: Planning Commission review of the General Plan 2025 Program and related Final Program Environmental Impact Report (SCH NO. 2004021108). The General Plan 2025 Program consists of the following components: 1) the City of Riverside General Plan 2025; 2) the comprehensive revision of the City of Riverside Zoning Code (Title 19 of the Municipal Code) and the rezoning of properties to reflect new zone names; 3) the comprehensive revision of the City of Riverside Subdivision Code (Title 18 of the Municipal Code); 4) the Citywide Design Guidelines; and 5) the Implementation Plan. 3

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H. PUBLIC HEARING - 6:00 p.m.

16. PLANNING CASE P04-0178: Planning Commission review of the General Plan 2025 Program and related Final Program Environmental Impact Report (SCH NO. 2004021108). The General Plan 2025 Program consists of the following components: 1) the City of Riverside General Plan 2025; 2) the comprehensive revision of the City of Riverside Zoning Code (Title 19 of the Municipal Code) and the rezoning of properties to reflect new zone names; 3) the comprehensive revision of the City of Riverside Subdivision Code (Title 18 of the Municipal Code); 4) the Citywide Design Guidelines; and 5) the Implementation Plan.

Subdivision Code

Chair Leonard opened the public hearing on the Subdivision Code. He announced that they would not be discussing the Zoning Code this evening, as there were several commissioners absent.

There was no one present wishing to speak on the Subdivision Code, the Public hearing was closed.

Chair Leonard called the commissioner's attention to exhibit 4, Subdivision Final Report and noted that there were some recommended changes.

Diane Jenkins, Senior Planner, presented the recommended changes to the Subdivision Code. She clarified to the Commission that a paved access of 20 feet is proposed for private streets with or without off street parking and that 24 feet is proposed for public streets. She also indicated that their request to add development standards for street and trails in the Subdivision Code is recommended to be added as an implementation tool.

The meeting was interrupted due to an emergency, City Hall was evacuated and the meeting reconvened at 6:30 p.m.

Chair Leonard said that the Commission had received number of pages with regard to Public Works' standard drawings for construction. He was one of the members who brought up the notion of having the street sections included as it always helps when describing streets. He said it would be helpful to have just the street sections in the Subdivision Code. He also added that there is a lot of information on trail standards that did not belong in the Subdivision Code, but asked why there was only one standard included.

Ms. Jenkins stated that this was the only standard staff had at this time.

Commissioner Norton noted that trails and linkages were included in Article I of the Subdivision Code and asked what role did the Walkable Communities Study play in this section and whether it should be included in other Articles of the Code. She emphasized on the importance of having these studies included in the Code given the amount of time and effort the Task Force put into them.

Ms. Jenkins replied that most of what she has seen in the Walkable Communities Task Force report would mostly show up in the General Plan document and the Implementation Plan. Staff, however, will review both documents in light of the Study and make adjustments where necessary for clarity.

Ken Gutierrez, Planning Director, agreed and stated that as part of the Implementation Plan, he anticipated coming back with amendments to reflect other documents including Go Riverside, Walkable Communities, etc. The changes will be made upon further study and detail.

He also commented on including the street sections into the Subdivision Code. He thought it was a good idea to have everything in one place but was concerned about giving those street sections the force of an Ordinance. He pointed out that even a relatively benign change to update the plans would need a Code Amendment. He would like to include these as an appendix to Title 18 as a resolution rather than an Ordinance.

Chair Leonard agreed so long as when they see a descriptive in one section, they have a visual in another.

Ms. Jenkins continued with her review of the proposed changes to the Subdivision Code.

Chair Leonard spoke with regard to the implementation of trails and making sure that trails are constructed. He understood that Planning staff was looking at this on a case by cases basis and that a Trails Coordinator would be hired to look at this in a broader context. He also understood that Commissioner Brown was probing how this Code could reflect that effort and asked staff for any suggestions.

Mr. Gutierrez stated that he did not have any suggestions now but, again, this is something that staff will revisit in more detail and come back with some changes.

Commissioner Densmore asked if there was a set of principles or guidelines the City had to ensure the appropriate trails were incorporated.

Mr. Gutierrez said that he would ask that staff make a note of this. Staff could develop an executive summary that would apply to subdivisions to provide some guiding philosophies and refer to the appropriate chapters for more details.

MOTION MADE by Commissioner Densmore, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Comer, **TO APPROVE** the Subdivision Code as outlined by staff in the staff report, recommendation 12a through e.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

AYES:	Agnew, Comer, Densmore, Leonard, Maloney, Norton, Sebelia
NOES:	None
DISQUALIFIED:	None
ABSTAINED:	None
ABSENT:	Brown, Kurani, Singletary

Design Guidelines

Ms. Jenkins presented the recommended changes to the Design Guidelines.

Chair Leonard opened the public hearing for anyone wishing to speak on the Design Guidelines.

Kimberly Sparkman, Sparkman's Garage, 5958 Jasmine, thanked the Commission for their time. She was glad to see the Commission support the Industrial designation on both sides of the street from Fremont to Van Buren. She stated she was still a little confused with regard to the decorative block walls as noted in the Design Guidelines. She suggested including a definition for decorative wall and clarification on whether fencing with landscaping is acceptable as a decorative wall.

Yolanda Garland, resident of La Sierra, stated that she has attended many Planning Commission meetings and is in opposition to the proposed General Plan 2025. She added that there is no area in the City that has not been terrorized by the proposed changes. She thanked the Commission for their dedication. She asked those present to log onto talkriverside.com and for any comments on the new ruling by the Supreme Court to log onto grudge.com. She also invited everyone to a meeting on Saturday at the Unitarian Church, 3657 Lemon Street, to discuss how Redevelopment, UCR's Long Range Development Plan, corporatization of local businesses and eminent domain impact the City and neighborhoods.

There was no one else in the audience wishing to speak on the Design Guidelines and the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Densmore asked how public art could be encouraged. He also asked for advise on where to include Mary Humbolt's concerns about not incorporating the Gage Canal into the trail system or at least not the area used for agricultural purposes. He also expressed concern about the comments from residents in the Jurupa area regarding Design Review requirements for property upgrades, such as block walls. He then asked if an advisory provision could be included to meet the applicant or property owner part way.

Mr. Gutierrez responded that the General Plan has a section on the idea of art in public spaces and a list that the decision makers can use to encourage art in public places. There is an Arts and Culture subcommittee that assisted staff in drafting this Element and other groups: the Cultural Trust and Riverside Arts Council that are working on an Implementation Plan for this.

Commissioner Norton inquired whether the Planning Commission would have the option to recommend, encourage or condition something on future projects.

Mr. Gutierrez replied affirmatively.

Chair Leonard asked if this included water features and statuary.

Mr. Gutierrez replied that this was different in that he was referring to art in public places. With regard to water features or landscape features on a particular development site, the Design Guidelines and staff or the Planning Commission can dictate when they are appropriate.

Chair Leonard referred to page 3-13 of the Design Guidelines, referring to entry treatment, and suggested that all projects should be mandated to comply with this section of the Guidelines.

Mr. Gutierrez reminded the Commission that it was difficult to mandate in the Guidelines but that this could be addressed in the Implementation Plan. He continued with the Gage Canal and stated that this was being discussed. The General Plan does speak to the idea of trails and the possibility of using the Gage Canal as a trail but does not mandate it.

Commissioner Densmore asked if the discussions would include individuals who use the Canal for agricultural and recreational purposes.

Mr. Gutierrez replied affirmatively. He continued with the third issue brought up by Commissioner Densmore and stated that he will address the question in general. He proceeded to explain that as new development occurs the intent of the Guidelines is not to build to the lowest common denominator. New buildings will be expected to set higher standards for the rest of the area and to improve the street in front of the project site. He added that each project should be looked at on a case-by-case basis as to the availability of City assistance.

Chair Leonard inquired if the Commission had the prerogative to recommend that the City Council assign capital improvement plan fees as part of their deliberations.

Mr. Gutierrez replied that the Commission could make recommendations to the City Council, whether they belong in the Implementation Plan or a list of additional recommendations certainly was their prerogative.

Commissioner Maloney noted that xeriscape was not discussed much in the Guidelines. He did not see the term defined or goals set. He felt that it should be discussed considering the percentages of turf versus non-turf areas proposed in projects.

Ms. Jenkins agreed that xeriscape is not discussed much in the Design Guidelines. It is a mandate in the Zoning Code to do water efficient landscaping and should be discussed more.

Commissioner Maloney felt that more of what is being done in the high and low desert with regard to landscaping with minimal usage of water should also be done in Riverside. He added that Section IV, page 10, item C, of the Commercial and Mixed-Use Design Guidelines section, needs to be corrected, as it encourages the use of vines on walls in industrial areas, instead of encouraging them in commercial and mixed use areas. Also, the use of the word “wall” throughout the Guidelines needs to be clarified to refer to building walls or perimeter walls.

Ms. Jenkins agreed.

Commissioner Maloney also addressed planters in parking lots and indicated that this section was not clear as to the number of planters and kind of planters, diamond versus long narrow, that are required. His preference would be to use the diamond planters because the long narrow planters do not work. On a similar note, he noted that where 6” x 6” concrete curbs are required, 12” strip next to the finger planters are being used.

Ms. Jenkins stated that these were all good suggestions and thanked Commissioner Maloney.

Commissioner Agnew stated that he dealt with many Design Guidelines in various cities and that the Guidelines developed by staff really encourage quality design. They are not absolutely specific so that it does not dictate certain things but it does give the design professional a significant amount of ability to use innovative design. He felt that some of the issues brought up by Commissioner Maloney could be handled in the Implementation Plan and was encouraging to know that the City will be a much nicer place as it is developed through these Guidelines.

Commissioner Maloney suggested that the City might want to look at the use of porous concrete, which eliminates the water runoff onto the street. He explained that with this material the water simply percolates back down into the soil through the porous concrete. He noted that this is becoming common practice in other cities and that Riverside should start taking the lead on this as well.

Commissioner Agnew agreed and said that the Commission should incorporate things like this in the Implementation Plan.

Chair Leonard referred back to the walls and fences, under item 1. He pointed out that there was a definition for decorative masonry block. He asked staff if there was any way to tighten the definition and be more specific so that people know exactly what is being referred to.

Another term in the provision that concerned him was "visible from the public". This is very clear on commercial developments and on corner residential lots but what about developments in the middle of a block visible from the public but ultimately to be developed on each side. Would this provision still apply?

Ms. Jenkins explained that because these were guidelines, staff would prefer to leave this as written. Ultimately, it will be left up to staff and the Commission to make the necessary determinations on a case-by-case basis.

Chair Leonard asked for clarification of item 9, pedestrian walkways which require a trellis for pedestrian access.

Ms. Jenkins said that this came out of a discussion with the Planning Commission. This would be the situation where you have a pedestrian walkway possibly in an apartment project where the pedestrian walkway is next to the driveway within the project and it is difficult to tell the two apart. This is a way to delineate the two and give that pedestrian a sense of security between the driveway and walkway areas. Perhaps staff did not do a good job describing it in the staff report but can tighten up that wording a little better.

Chair Leonard agreed and noted that staff should also recommend encouraging a trellis at fast food drive-thru restaurants instead of the hard canopy.

Ms. Jenkins responded that she would verify that such guidelines are included for drive thru restaurants.

Chair Leonard said that item 12, which included language to promote parking lots that are split, was important to him. He wondered whether stronger language rather than encourage could be used and asked staff to look into it.

MOTION MADE by Commissioner Comer, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Densmore, **TO APPROVE** the Design Guidelines with changes as outlined by staff in the staff report, and taking into

consideration the comments made by the Commission tonight to try and incorporate as much of those as possible.

MOTION CARRIED unanimously.

AYES:	Agnew, Comer, Densmore, Leonard, Maloney, Norton, Sebelia
NOES:	None
DISQUALIFIED:	None
ABSTAINED:	None
ABSENT:	Brown, Kurani, Singletary

Commissioner Norton said that a tremendous amount of thoughts are being placed on paper with regard the Implementation Plan. She asked if staff was somehow tracking these ideas, she was afraid that something could be missed that is very pertinent.

Ms. Jenkins said she would go through the minutes and put together a list of the suggestions for their review when the Commission deliberates on the Implementation Plan.

Chair Leonard announced that the next meeting would be June 30, 2005. The hearing will be entirely about the Zoning Code. Public testimony will be taken at the beginning of the hearing. He expected that the Zoning Code would take at least two meetings.

I. ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment to the June 30, 2005 meeting at 9:00 a.m. in the Art Pick Council Chambers.