



Planning Commission Staff Report

To: Planning Commission

From: Greg Smith, Associate Planner

Date: June 8, 2011

Subject: Murrieta General Plan 2035 and Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2010111084)

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission adopt the resolution recommending that the City Council certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (SCH#2010111084); and, adopt the Murrieta General Plan 2035.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Application Type: General Plan Amendment (GPA-2009-2841)

Applicant: City of Murrieta

Location: The City of Murrieta is located in southeastern Riverside County, and is comprised of 26,852 acres (41.96 square miles) of which 21,511 acres (33.61 square miles) is located within the City Limits and 5,341 acres (8.34 square miles) is located within the City's Sphere of Influence. Surrounding cities include Menifee to the north, Temecula to the south and east, Wildomar to the west, and unincorporated Riverside County to the north, south, and east.

Description: The General Plan 2035 is a comprehensive update of the 1994 General Plan, which includes an update of existing elements, as well as the addition of two elements. The General Plan 2035 comprises the following State mandated and optional elements: Land Use; Economic Development; Circulation; Healthy Community; Conservation; Recreation and Open Space; Air Quality; Noise; and Safety. The Housing Element is being updated in a separate process. In addition, a Climate Action Plan (CAP) was prepared. The CAP is an implementing action of the General Plan 2035 that describes measures intended to reduce greenhouse emissions within City operations and the community at-large.

BACKGROUND

In 2009, the City Council adopted the City's first Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy which identifies the City's 20 year vision for Murrieta as a diversified business hub for Southwest Riverside County and neighboring North San Diego County. As part of the implementation of that Strategy, the City Council directed staff to commence a comprehensive update of the City's General Plan, with the objective of addressing our economic future by promoting our City as a long term home for technologically-advanced firms and higher educational facilities, including healthcare, medical facilities and services, software companies, engineering companies, medical device companies, biotechnology firms, defense contractors, research and development operations, green-tech, and light manufacturing.

Additionally, the City desired to address the implementation of SB 375 related to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, along with further promotion of the City's Healthy Murrieta program through the creation of a Healthy Community Element. With these objectives, the Murrieta General Plan 2035 officially commenced in August 2009.

Throughout late 2009 and early 2010, a variety of community workshops were conducted related to community vision, land use, and city-wide goals. Additionally, there were focused workshops for key areas in the community where land use changes were planned to implement the economic strategy. The objectives of the strategy, along with the community outreach, resulted in the drafting of the Murrieta General Plan 2035 and Environmental Impact Report.

The Planning Commission has held three public hearings on these documents on March 9, 2011, March 23, 2011 and April 6, 2011.

The first Commission meeting focused on providing a general overview of the draft documents, along with a review of the land use changes proposed in the Focus Areas. The following two meetings discussed the details of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the General Plan Elements, and the background documents, which includes the economic studies for the Economic Development Element, and the Climate Action Plan related to implementing SB 375.

ANALYSIS

Since the April 6, 2011 Commission hearing, a technical review of the General Plan document was conducted, which resulted in text changes to correct grammar and minor clarifying language in the document. Attachment 4 provides an errata document that identifies the proposed changes to the General Plan document.

There are two matters to bring back to the Planning Commission related to the extension of Whitewood Road to Jackson Avenue and the results of the review of the General Plan with the Airport Land Use Commission.

WHITEWOOD ROAD EXTENSION

West of I-15, the City's street pattern has the characteristics of a grid pattern, allowing for alternative north/south and east/west circulation. The future completion of Jefferson Avenue, will allow a parallel alternative to the I-15 from Temecula to Lake Elsinore. East of I-15, in part due to topography, the north/south and east/west connections are limited, thereby, providing for greater reliance on I-215 for north/south access.

Staff proposed the extension of Whitewood Avenue south to Jackson/Ynez in order to provide a similar alternative that Jefferson Avenue provides. The extension of Whitewood Avenue would allow a freeway alternative for more localized traffic between Temecula, Murrieta, and Menifee. These alternatives also provide an alternative to emergency responders.

The Planning Commission requested additional information regarding traffic volumes related to the Circulation Plan with and without the Whitewood Avenue extension. The matter was analyzed and it was determined that there was little to no difference in the traffic model with either scenario. The Whitewood extension is a matter of providing a north/south circulation alternative to the I-215.

AIRPORT LAND USE

The General Plan discusses Airport land use under regional issues in the Land Use Element. Per the California State Aeronautics Act (*Public Utility Code* Sections 21670 et. seq.), the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (RCALUC) has two primary functions: 1) prepare and adopt an airport land use compatibility plan, and 2) review the plans, regulations, and other actions of local agencies and airport operations with the land use compatibility plan.

On May 12, 2011 the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission reviewed the Murrieta General Plan 2035 and determined that with the addition of the following policies, the ALUC could find General Plan 2035 and the proposed land uses conditionally consistent with the Airport Land Use Plan.

LU-25.10 Submit tentative tract maps and parcel maps to the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission for consistency review. This is applicable to properties designated as Rural Residential and Single-Family Residential in the General Plan and that are located within Compatibility Zones C and D in the French Valley Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

LU-25.11 Submit commercial development and places of assembly to the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission for consistency review with the applicable average and single-acre population intensity limits in the French Valley Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for properties within Compatibility Zones B1, C, and D.

LU-25.12 Require new development that is 10 acres or larger in area to incorporate open space area in compliance with the Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Section 4.2.4 and in compliance with the applicable Compatibility Zones requirements in the French Valley Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

ALUC staff also requested that text in the draft General Plan be corrected to reflect that the 55 CNEL contour for the French Valley Airport encroaches slightly into the eastern part of the City of Murrieta, along the west side of Winchester Road.

COMMENTS

A number of letters were received commenting on the Draft EIR. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that EIR comments be addressed and included in the Final EIR (Attachment 6). Letters were also received commenting on the General Plan document, though there is no requirement to provide a written response to the letters, these letters have been addressed and are included in Attachment 7. Some comments prompted a change to the text, which is addressed in the response letter and is also reflected in the General Plan errata (Attachment 4) and the Final EIR.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

The City of Murrieta is the Lead Agency under *CEQA* and is responsible for preparing the Program EIR for the Murrieta General Plan 2035 (State Clearinghouse No. 20100111084). This Program EIR has been prepared in conformance with *CEQA* (*California Public Resources Code* [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.); *CEQA Guidelines* (*California Code of Regulations* [CCR], Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.); and the rules, regulations, and procedures for implementation of *CEQA*, as adopted by the City of Murrieta. The principal *CEQA Guidelines* sections governing content of this document are Sections 15120 through 15132 (Contents of Environmental Impact Reports), and Section 15168 (Program EIR).

The City has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to address significant impacts that were identified; including Traffic and Circulation, Air Quality, Noise, and Parks and Recreation. A Statement of Overriding Considerations will be required to address those impacts that cannot be mitigated to a level of insignificance.

The DEIR is also being prepared with the intent that future development may tier from the *CEQA* document and the proposed mitigation, unless it is determined that any future proposed project presents significant impacts not considered and/or mitigated by this EIR. Tiering involves the use of a previous, and usually more complete, analysis that allows a proposed project to comply with *CEQA* regulations because the previous analysis addressed issues that could impact the proposed project.

A Notice of Availability (NOA)/Notice of Completion (NOC) were issued on February 7, 2011, and the 45-day review period ended on March 24, 2011. At the end of the 45-day review period, comments and responses to those comments were incorporated into the document for the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR).

The EIR evaluates the impacts associated with the proposed General Plan 2035, providing detailed environmental analysis of the existing conditions, project impacts, recommended mitigation measures, and unavoidable adverse impacts for certain environmental topic areas. Mitigation measures are incorporated into the General Plan 2035 document in the form of goals and policies, along with the Mitigation Monitoring Report Program (MMRP) that is part of the EIR.

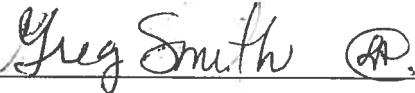

IMPLEMENTATION

The General Plan is the City's policy document identifying the City's objectives and goals for the next 20 years. With the adoption of the General Plan, there will be a subsequent work program to implement its objectives. Such actions will include zone changes, Development Code Amendments, and other programs to implement the goals and objectives of the Murrieta General Plan 2035.

NOTICING

The project was noticed in accordance with Section 16.76 of the Development Code with a display notice in *The Californian* and *Press Enterprise* newspapers for a minimum of 10 days prior to the hearing, and the posting of notices at City Hall as well as the main Fire Station, Police Department and Library. Notices were also mailed to property owners and the surrounding property owners for parcels included in the focus areas where land use changes are proposed.



<p>Prepared by:</p> <p></p> <hr/> <p>Greg Smith Associate Planner</p>	<p>Reviewed by:</p> <p></p> <hr/> <p>Cynthia S. Kinser City Planner</p>
--	---

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Resolution
2. Statement of Facts and Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations
3. Draft General Plan 2035 (Previously distributed)
4. General Plan 2035 (errata)
5. Draft Environmental Impact Report, including Climate Action Plan (Previously distributed)
6. Final Environmental Impact Report, includes Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program, Comments and Responses to Draft Environmental Impact Report
7. General Plan Comments and Responses

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

DRAFT RESOLUTION

ATTACHMENT 1

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

RESOLUTION NO. 2011 –

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION

OF THE CITY OF MURRIETA RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL CERTIFICATION

OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR GENERAL PLAN UPDATE 2035

AND ADOPTION OF THE MURRIETA GENERAL PLAN UPDATE 2035

WHEREAS, the City of Murrieta initiated a comprehensive update of its General Plan, and a General Plan Update and Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) have been prepared to guide the future of the City by describing the goals and policies regarding land use, community design, transportation/mobility, economic development, air quality, noise, and public facilities and services; and

WHEREAS, along with these goals and policies are implementation actions geared towards carrying out these goals and policies; and

WHEREAS, the General Plan 2035 is a citywide document that is an integrated, internally consistent statement of the official land use policy for the City of Murrieta; and

WHEREAS, the program EIR prepared for the project provides a description of potential environmental impacts of the proposed General Plan 2035 and recommends mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less than significant level, where feasible; and

WHEREAS, a Notice of Preparation for the draft EIR was circulated to the public, responsible agencies, and other interested persons for their review and comment from November 19, 2010 to December 21, 2010, as required by CEQA; and

WHEREAS, the draft EIR was prepared in accordance with applicable law, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code of Regulations section 21000 et seq., and the CEQA guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq., and the draft EIR and General Plan Update were circulated to the public, responsible agencies, and other interested persons for their review and comment from February 7, 2011 to March 24, 2011, as required by CEQA; and

WHEREAS, written comments and oral testimony were received on the draft EIR during the 45-day review period including those given at the public hearings before the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, as part of the General Plan update and the environmental review process, the City has also prepared a Climate Action Plan, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5, which provides a framework for greenhouse gas emissions reductions for the City, which is included as Appendix P to the EIR; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2011, March 23, 2011, April 6, 2011 and June 8, 2011, the Planning Commission held duly noticed public hearings, and has considered all written and oral reports of staff and public testimony on the matter, and such other matter as are reflected in the record of this matter; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Murrieta Municipal Code section 16.58.060, the Planning Commission is required to make written recommendation to the City Council whether to approve, approve in modified form, or deny proposed general plan amendments based upon findings set forth in section 16.58.080,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Planning Commission of the City of Murrieta makes the following specific findings based on the evidence as follows:

1. The Proposed General Plan ensures and maintains internal consistency with all of the objectives, polices, general land uses, programs and actions of all elements of the general plan.

FACTS: The General Plan 2035 is a comprehensive update of the 1994 General Plan, which includes an update of existing elements, as well as the addition of two elements. The General Plan 2035 comprises the following State mandated and optional elements: Land Use, Economic Development; Circulation; Healthy Community; conservation; Recreations and Open Space; Air Quality; Noise; and Safety.

Major components of the General Plan 2035 include:

- Update of existing conditions, with year 2009 serving as the baseline year.
- Update of General Plan development projections to the year 2035. Projections for population, residential, and non-residential development have been updated for the projected horizon year.
- Additions, deletions, or modifications to the 1994 General Plan goals, policies, and implementation.
- Update the Land use Element with reorganized and new land use designations
- Amendment of the remaining General Plan Elements to reflect current conditions and account for development projections to year 2035.

Development of the General Plan 2035 was a multi-year process and involved extensive public participation in the form of public workshops, surveys and public hearings. Based upon the public participation ten community priorities were established which guided the development of the goals and policies of the General Plan 2035.

The General Plan 2035 anticipates that most of the growth within the City will occur within four areas. The anticipated growth in residential and non-residential uses over year 2009 conditions is:

*Addition of 3,346 dwelling units

*Addition of 21,156,784 square feet of non-residential uses

Although the General Plan 2035 focuses growth with the Focus Areas, it is anticipated that additional growth would occur within the City outside of these areas. Citywide growth, including the Focus Areas, is anticipated as follows:

*Addition of 10,734 dwelling units

*Addition of 36,210,757 square feet of non-residential uses

The growth of the City of Murrieta has largely been driven by residential development. The 2035 General Plan seeks to direct investment toward building a strong economic

base. The emphasis of the General Plan 2035 is economic development and it is based on the City's Comprehensive Development Strategy which sets forth a 20 year vision that Murrieta will become a diversified business hub for Southwest Riverside County and North San Diego County. The General Plan update aligns City policy with this emphasis on economic development and strongly links this emphasis with policies which promote sustainability and developing healthy communities.

The objectives for the General Plan 2035 include:

- Providing new goals and policies to address future development and growth within the City.
- Providing comprehensive and concise land use designations that better reflect the land use vision for the City.
- Focus policy direction on economic development and establishing the City as a diversified and strong economic base.
- Provide goals and policies to address the connections between health and the physical, social and economic environment.
- Incorporate sustainability goals and policies to balance current demands with future demands as they pertain to the environment, economy, and social equity.

The above described objectives are reflective of the community's concerns, issues, and priorities as express through the public participation process.

Each element of the General Plan has been reviewed by City staff, the General Plan Consultant and the Planning Commission for internal consistency and has been determined to be internally consistent.

2. The Proposed General Plan would not be detrimental to the public convenience, health, safety, or general welfare of the City.

FACTS: The General Plan 2035 will promote the health, safety and welfare of the City though the listed goals and policies included within each Element. A Program Environmental Impact Report has been prepared for the project and provides a description of potential environmental impacts of the proposed General Plan 2035 and recommends mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less than significant level, where feasible. After implementation of General Plan 2035 goals and policies and the recommended mitigation measures, most of the significant or potentially significant impacts associated with implementation of the proposed General Plan 2035 would be reduced to a less than significant level. Impacts in the areas of Traffic and Circulation, Air Quality, Noise and Park and Recreation Facilities could not be feasibly mitigated and would result in a significant unavoidable impacts associated with implementation of the proposed General Plan 2035. These identified unavoidable impacts would occur, however, under the existing General Plan as well.

3. The Proposed General Plan is in compliance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

FACTS: A Program Environmental Impact Report has been prepared for the project that provides a description of potential environmental impacts of the proposed General Plan and

recommends mitigation measures to reduce impacts to less than significant levels, where feasible.

A Notice of Preparation for the EIR was circulated to the public, responsible agencies, and other interested persons for their review and comment from November 19, 2010 to December 21, 2010, as required by law.

The draft EIR and General Plan Update 2035 were circulated to the public, responsible agencies, and other interested persons for their review and comment from February 7, 2011 to March 24, 2011, in accordance with applicable law, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq., and the CEQA Guidelines, 14 California Code of Regulations section 15000 et seq., and other applicable laws and regulations.

The program EIR for the General Plan 2035 addresses all related environmental concerns in compliance with CEQA, including but limited to the following:

- Executive summary
- Introduction and Purpose
- Project Description
- Cumulative Impact Analysis
- Environmental Analysis including: Land Use; Population, Employment and Housing; Aesthetics; Traffic and Circulation; Air Quality; Hazardous Materials; Water Supply; Wastewater; Fire Protection; Police Protection; School Facilities; Parks and Recreation Facilities; Solid Waste; Electricity and Natural Gas; Cultural Resources; Biological Resources; Agricultural Resources and Mineral Resources.
- Alternatives to the Proposed Action
- Growth Inducing Impacts of the Proposed Action
- References, including organizations and individuals contacted concerning EIR
- Mitigation Monitoring Program
- Comments and Responses from affected agencies
- Appendices

Written comments and oral testimony were received on the draft EIR during the 45-day review period including those given at the public hearings before the Planning Commission. Written responses to comments were prepared in accordance with CEQA in order to address comments submitted on the draft EIR and are included in the final EIR.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that based on the written information provided, the public comments received and the findings stated above, the Planning Commission recommends that the City Council:

1. Certify the Final Environmental Impact Report Murrieta General Plan (SCH NO. 2010111084),
2. Adopt the Mitigation, Monitoring and Reporting Program (“MMRP”),
3. Adopt the Statement of Facts and Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations,
4. Adopt the Climate Action Plan included as Appendix P to the EIR,

5. Adopt General Plan 2035 as presented to the Planning Commission at the final hearing on June 8, 2011, and
6. Direct staff to prepare and bring forth a proposed General Plan implementation plan for approval, including all actions necessary to ensure consistency between General Plan 2035 and the City's zoning as required by State law.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED this 8th day of June, 2011.

Planning Commission Chairperson

ATTEST:

Cynthia S. Kinser, City Planner

I, Cynthia S. Kinser, City Planner, City of Murrieta, California, do hereby certify under penalty of perjury that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the Planning Commission on the 8th day of June, 2011, by the following roll call vote:

MOTION MADE BY COMMISSIONER _____

SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER _____

AYES: _____

NOES: _____

ABSENT: _____

ABSTAIN: _____