



**CITY OF LOS ALTOS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
September 15, 2015**

**DISCUSSION CALENDAR**

**Agenda Item # 8**

**SUBJECT:** Authorize staff to develop a process to update the Loyola Corners Neighborhood Center Specific Plan and corresponding Capital Improvement Program project that addresses the planned scope of work

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**BACKGROUND**

In reviewing two recent projects for the Loyola Corners area, the Planning and Transportation Commission determined that the Loyola Corners Neighborhood Center Specific Plan (Specific Plan) may be outdated and needs review. As a result, the Commission formed a subcommittee to discuss the matter and develop recommendations of next steps to update the Specific Plan.

At its August 20, 2015 meeting, the Planning and Transportation Commission discussed the subcommittee's recommendations. The Commission supported the subcommittee's recommendations (6-0, with Commissioner Bodner recused). Attachment 1 shows the Commission's recommendations, which are summarized in the Discussion section below.

**EXISTING POLICY**

Loyola Corners Neighborhood Center Specific Plan, dated November 15, 1990, as amended

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION**

None

**DISCUSSION**

At its August 20, 2015 meeting, the Commission found that the introductory sections of the Specific Plan such as the Background, Purpose of the Plan and the Planning Process remain relevant. However, the Commission found that the following sections of the Specific Plan need attention, as noted:

1. Revisit The Plan (Section IV) and Implementation (Section V) in light of today's economy and the City's philosophy. Specifically, the Commission recommends updating Implementation Section IV—Basic Strategies and Priorities—since Phases IA, IB and II have not been implemented and may no longer be desired by the community or the property owners or the business owners;
2. Change Community Design and Beautification (Section J) to avoid spelling out a “design theme” and developing design guidelines specific to the area using the City's Downtown Design Guidelines as a framework;
3. Clarify the Specific Plan's reference to the CN zoning district in terms of the 30-foot or two-story height limit;
4. Update Circulation (Section D) pending a circulation study for the Loyola Corners area after the Loyola and Fremont bridges are completed;

5. Address Parking (Section E) and Economic Viability (Section F) through the work of a City Council-appointed ad hoc committee comprised of neighborhood residents, business owners, and land owners within the Loyola Corners area, Planning and Transportation Commission and City Council members and staff. As recommended by the Commission, the committee should address an overall economic plan, a parking plan solution, and identify funding sources; and
6. Update Appendix B to the extent possible with the latest sales tax revenue from the shopping centers in and around Loyola Corners.

The City Council may desire an approach that addresses primary concerns such as parking and height, which could potentially limit the duration of a moratorium. If so, then there are a few changes need to be considered, including:

1. Repeal the LC/SPZ zoning district regulations that allow for a reduced parking supply and limit building expansions, and remove the associated Specific Plan language. The CN district parking regulations require standard, City-wide retail, office and residential parking requirements that are greater than required by the LC/SPZ code for retail uses (1/200 square feet versus 1/300 square feet). It should be noted that application of the City's standard parking regulations would limit developments based on the constraints of providing the additional parking supply;
2. Clarify that the height for the CN zoning district for the Loyola Corners area is two stories and 30 feet;
3. Omit the policies for Specific Parcels as many of them have been implemented, or partially implemented, or are impractical; and/or
4. Develop area-specific design guidelines.

The economic and circulation concerns are more technical and will require related professional input and may result in a more lengthy process. Additionally, it would be appropriate to consult with an architect to develop updated design guidelines.

Should the Council desire a more comprehensive update, then it is recommended that the City Council define the project objectives and provide policy direction related to a potential ad hoc subcommittee effort.

The typical process to update a specific plan includes:

1. Work program  
Determine funding, provide early policy direction, identify deadlines or timelines, develop contracts and designate responsibilities

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2. Current context  
Identify existing land uses, environmental conditions, infrastructure and planning area issues
3. Long-term direction  
Identify opportunities, review and determine objectives, policies and implementation measures
4. Adoption and implementation  
Select and adopt the appropriate policies, programs and implementation, and establish a feedback process

Procedurally, Steps 2 through 4 typically involve concurrent public participation, intergovernmental coordination and environmental review.

### **PUBLIC CONTACT**

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public.

### **FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT**

Costs related to utilizing consultants to fulfill the roles of project management as well as specialty services (economic, traffic, architecture) will be estimated once the scope of the project is determined. The Specific Plan update could range in cost from \$75,000 to \$150,000.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

None

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Authorize staff to develop a process to update the Loyola Corners Neighborhood Center Specific Plan and corresponding Capital Improvement Program project that addresses the planned scope of work

### **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Modify the scope of the Loyola Corners Neighborhood Center Specific Plan update
2. Repeal the Specific Plan and rely on the City's CN zoning regulations, design controls and design review findings
3. Do not modify the Loyola Corners Neighborhood Center Specific Plan

Prepared by: David Kornfield, Planning Services Manager  
Marcia Somers, City Manager

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Loyola Corners Specific Plan Planning and Transportation Commission Recommendations, dated August 20, 2015
2. Minutes of the August 20, 2015 Planning and Transportation Commission meeting

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The Planning and Transportation Commission recommendation about the Loyola Corners Specific Plan.

A Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) subcommittee thoroughly reviewed the 1990 Loyola Corners Specific Plan (LCSP). After the subcommittee presented its findings to the entire commission, the Planning and Transportation Commission voted unanimously (6-0-1), with Commissioner Bodner recused, to make the following recommendation to the Los Altos City Council.

It is clear conditions have changed over the past 25 years, therefore the PTC recommends certain sections of the LCSP need updating. In general, the LCSP sections - ***I Background, II Purpose of the plan, and III The Planning Process*** - are still as accurate today as they were in 1990. However, during the past 25 years, implementation of the plan has not occurred. Therefore, the LCSP sections - ***IV The Plan and V Implementation*** need revisiting in light of today's economic reality and City philosophy. Specifically, the PTC recommends updating Section ***IV. A Basic Strategies and Priorities*** since phase IA, IB, and II have not been completed and may no longer be desired by the community or the property and business owners.

Other categories of section ***IV The Plan*** are still relevant (***B. Land Use, C. Protection of Adjacent Residential Neighborhoods, D. Circulation, E. Parking, F. Economic Viability, G. Expansion, H. Policies for Specific Parcels, I. Utilities, and J. Community Design and Beautification***). However, the details within each category need updating to address current conditions. Especially, ***items D. Circulation, E. Parking, and F. Economic Viability***. The PTC does not agree with the assertion in ***J. Community Design and Beautification*** that a "design theme" should not be spelled out. Rather, this section should give general guidance for design elements for new development, much like the Downtown Design Guidelines.

The PTC recommends the reference to the CN zone (page 11) "***4) 30 foot or two-story height limit***" be clarified as the words are confusing given the move to form based zoning elsewhere in the City. Should it be one or both? Clarifying this issue is important as it affects the mass, bulk, and intensity permitted for new development. A decision on this matter requires other parts of the LCSP to be modified as there is a number of references about a second story rather than development above the ground floor.

For ***D. Circulation***, the PTC recommends this section be updated once the Loyola Corners Traffic Circulation study planned for Spring 2016 is complete, when both bridges are finished, to have an accurate traffic scenario for Loyola Corners.

For Item ***E. Parking and F. Economic Viability***, the PTC recommends the City Council appoint a work group composed of neighborhood residents, business owners, land owners within Loyola Corners, and an appropriate combination of staff, PTC, and City Council members that specifically addresses the overall economic plan and a plan for a parking solution, including funding sources. Also, ***Appendix B*** needs updating to the extent possible with the latest sales tax revenue from the four shopping areas around Loyola Corners.

For Item **J. *Community Design and Beautification***, the PTC recommends using the Downtown Design Guidelines as a framework for developing design guidelines specific to Loyola Corners.

The PTC applauds the original members who created the LCSP for their work and the intent of the LCSP document. However, time is of the essence with respect to action and implementation. The PTC recommends city staff present the Commission's recommendations regarding updating the LCSP, along with staffs review and input to the City Council in September 2015.

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING AND  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS, HELD ON  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2015, BEGINNING AT 7:00 P.M. AT LOS ALTOS CITY  
HALL, ONE NORTH SAN ANTONIO ROAD, LOS ALTOS,  
CALIFORNIA**

**ESTABLISH QUORUM**

PRESENT: Chair McTIGHE Vice-Chair LORELL, Commissioners BAER, BODNER,  
BRESSACK, MOISON and JUNAID  
STAFF: Senior Planner DAHL, Assistant Planner GALLEGOS and City Attorney  
HOUSTON

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

Resident and owner Abby Ahrens of 1 Main Street noted that the hotel planned to only serve the public from 4-10 p.m.

Property owner Gregg Bunker stated that he is working on a new design and wanted to request a study session before the Planning and Transportation Commission for 999 Fremont Avenue.

**ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION/ACTION**

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

1. **Planning and Transportation Commission Minutes**  
Approve the minutes of the August 6, 2015 regular meeting.

MOTION by Commissioner BRESSACK, seconded by Commissioner BAER, to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2015 regular meeting as amended to clarify public comments for the hotel use permit modification.

THE MOTION PASSED BY A 6/0/1 VOTE, WITH COMMISSIONER MOISON ABSTAINED.

**DISCUSSION**

Commissioner BODNER recused herself for agenda item #2 because she owns property within Loyola Corners.

2. **Loyola Corners Subcommittee Report**  
Recommendation to the City Council to consider a Loyola Corners Specific Plan update process.

Senior Planner DAHL presented the staff report, noting staff recommendations for the Planning and Transportation Commission to consider.

Chair McTIGHE presented the subcommittee findings and recommendations which included:

- Circulation, parking and economic viability should be updated;
- Height limit requirements conflict;

- Language should be consistent;
- Focus should be on height limit, not stories; and
- A new circulation plan should be completed after the Loyola Drive bridge is done.

Chair McTIGHE noted that this would be a City Council agenda item in September and opened the meeting for public comment.

Residents Andrew Pejack, Tom Ferry, Katherine Wurzburg, Steve Wurzburg, Stephen More, Henry More, and Abby Ahrens provided the following comments: keep the two-story height limit that was part of the original intent of the Loyola Corners Specific Plan; design guidelines should be specific to Loyola Corners; existing businesses should be preserved; A Street should be two-way; there is too much density with three-story development and it should not be allowed; and projects need to be financially viable.

Loyola Corners property owner Gregg Bunker stated that the Specific Plan allows for three-story buildings and it is important to allow this moving forward.

The Commission discussed the subcommittee findings and recommendations and provided the following input: discussion should stay focused on process and overarching the recommendations; should try and interpret the Loyola Corners Specific Plan, not add additional requirements; should remove obsolete elements of the plan and clarify, but not add new layers to it; combine both proposals in the recommendation to City Council; and update the specific plan, rather than repeal it.

MOTION by Chair McTIGHE, seconded by Commissioner JUNAID, to approve Proposal 1 as amended. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (6/0).

## **COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS**

Chair McTIGHE reported on the July 21, 2015 City Council meeting. Commissioner JUNAID reported that this was her last meeting due to her no longer living in Los Altos.

## **POTENTIAL FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

A majority of the Commissioners wanted to add future agenda items including architectural judgement regarding bulk and mass, have the Commission do more agenda items related to traffic issues, and consideration of pervious paving in the shoulder paving policy.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair McTIGHE adjourned the meeting at 8:35 P.M.

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Zachary Dahl, AICP  
Senior Planner