

**Meeting Notes from the  
General Plan Update Presentation to the Ceres Lions Club  
February 24, 2016**

In attendance representing the City:

Toby Wells, City Manager  
Tom Westbrook, Director of Community Development

Ceres Lions Club Members – 60+ in attendance

Mr. Westbrook provided a PowerPoint Presentation on the City's General Plan Update Process. During the presentation, Tom also noted that the City is working towards a new design for the Mitchell/Service Interchange ("Diverging Diamond"), which would assist City residents and travelers the ability for an easier way to access Highway 99 at Service Road; this would also provide economic development opportunities for areas west of Highway 99 and south of Service Road.

Mr. Westbrook noted that the first Community Workshop for the General Plan Update was held on January 28, 2016 at 6:00 PM at the Ceres Community Center. He noted that a sign-up sheet was being sent around the room for those who may be interested in receiving e-mail updates regarding the General Plan Update process.

Following the presentation, the group was asked if they had any questions or initial input regarding the General Plan Process. Topics/concerns raised included:

- Will the new Service/Mitchell interchange alleviate Mitchell Road and Hatch Road as a truck route?
  - When complete, the Service/Mitchell interchange will help alleviate some of the truck traffic on those roadways. However, the ultimate solution to reducing truck traffic on these roadways is the connection of Faith Home Road to Claus Road across the Tuolumne River. Stanislaus County has recently released an RFP to initiate that process.
- What is the proposed eastern boundary of the General Plan Study Area?
  - Washington Road is the eastern boundary.
- When the survey is mailed out to residents what will be limit?
  - The survey will be mailed to postal code areas that cover the current City limits. There may be some instances that someone who lives in close proximity to the City limits will receive the survey.
- The General Plan is for 20 Years? Is there a 10 Year Update or what milestones are added to track the process and its effectiveness?
  - The Policy document is looking at a period of 20 years for planning purposes. There will be goals and objectives included in the General Plan and those could be considered the milestones so to speak.

- When will the Mitchell Road be overlaid as the roadway is currently in rough shape?
  - The portion of Mitchell Road from Whitmore Avenue south to Service Road will be repaved this spring. That project was to happen in the fall of 2015; however, cold weather moved in and delayed the completion of that construction work.
- What is the status of the Walmart Lawsuit and will they be contributing to cost of the Service/Mitchell interchange?
  - The Mitchell Ranch Lawsuit is currently awaiting a decision from the 5<sup>th</sup> District Appellate Court in Fresno. Staff anticipates that it may be summer of 2016 before a decision of the lawsuit is reached. As to Walmart's contribution to the cost of the interchange; they, along with any new residential, commercial and industrial project in Ceres are required to pay Public Facility Fees for the new development. A portion of these fees goes toward transportation and it's these funds that the City will use to contribute to the Service/Mitchell interchange.
- In your opinion, what is the area of Ceres that will likely develop over the next 5-years?
  - The area that has the greatest potential is the commercial area at Service/Mitchell Road. Especially, if the Mitchell Ranch Lawsuit is resolved in summer of 2016, there is likely to be a push to develop new commercial projects in that area.
- Why does the City remove older ADA Ramps that are in some areas of town when other areas of town don't have any ADA ramps at all? An example is Fowler Road.
  - Typically, these are done when there are Federal dollars used in a construction project such as an overlay to a road. Federal law requires that if construction money is used, then that facility must meet ADA requirements. In some instances there may be older ADA ramps in place that don't meet new standards and when that circumstance happens, the ramps must be replaced.
- How will Ag land conversion be addressed in the new General Plan?
  - At this point in the process, agricultural land conversion and protection haven't been discussed. That said, in 2012 Stanislaus LAFCO adopted a policy that requires 1 to 1 ag mitigation, which says that if you annex 1 acre of land, then 1 acre of land at the same soil classification and type must be permanently preserved in Stanislaus County.
- Will the General Plan update discuss how the time to process building permits be expedited?
  - Most likely it won't. However, in 2014 the City converted to a new Building Permit software called Accela. That software allows any customers to log in on-line to check the status of their building permit. Additionally, staff is working towards being able to issue some building permits on-line, which would mean that a customer doesn't even need to come to City Hall, and that's about as expedited as it can get.
- Will the General Plan Update address the Annexation of unincorporated pockets within the City limits? (Islands)
  - The City of Ceres was considering a few island annexations prior to the recession. However, the projects were put on hold, as the City was trying to figure out how to maintain essential City services. While some of those areas have limited sewer and

water services, they lack surface infrastructure such as curb, gutter, sidewalk and matching roadways. It would be expensive for the City to annex those areas without some type of assistance from the County or some other funding source.

- When will Service Road be expanded and will it have a median?
  - In the current General Plan, Service Road is classified as an Expressway, which is not likely to change with the update. Most likely, Service Road will not be expanded until after or concurrent with the Service/Mitchell interchange. Whenever Service Road is widened, it will have a median from Crows Landing Road in the west to State Route 99 in the east.
- When the new update to the General Plan is complete, who will ensure that milestones are met or have accountability if they are not?
  - The City Council will hold staff accountable, to ensure the goals and policies of the General Plan Update are met by the way of the implementation measures that are included to support the Plan's goals and policies.