

Meeting Notes from the
General Plan Update Presentation to the Ceres Soroptimist
January 6, 2016

In attendance representing the City:

Tom Westbrook, Director of Community Development
Marjorie Blom, Planning Consultant

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 will be held on January 28, 2016 at 6:00 PM, in 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.

Commenter #1 The City should have places available close to the freeway to encourage development (e.g. Amazon). Believes it would be important to include young people in the process (Youth Commission, Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H, FFA, S Club). As a pediatrician, she noted that the Valley has the highest heart disease; therefore, she suggested that the City include more walking trails and provide bathrooms at parks, so that people can stay longer, and to have safe places to walk, including at workplaces. She also described the re-use of an airport in Hawaii which allowed community groups to maintain the vegetation, thus approving the area and allowing for a place for exercising.

Mr. Westbrook noted that a strategy to increase health benefits can be through the built environment.

Commenter #2 The City should continue to draw new businesses/roof tops so that people can shop locally, rather than Turlock or Modesto.

Mr. Westbrook explained that in order to compete with Turlock/Modesto, the City's population must be 50K according to demographic trends for retail developments. When the City reaches that population threshold, the area west of 99 and with the development of the Mitchell/Service interchange, may be suited for more regional commercial opportunities.

Commenter #3 Noted concerns regarding landscaping areas off Eastgate Boulevard in need of attention, and she thought there was to be a park in the area.

Mr. Westbrook said that the City would be considering the adoption of a Master Parks & Recreation Plan on January 25th. The adoption of that Master Plan will allow the City Council to prioritize where funding for parks development will be placed and direct staff to proceed accordingly.

Commenter #4 She noted that the Ceres School District has a good working relationship with the City. She agreed with the comments regarding encouraging our youths to stay engaged and also to have the ability for jobs in Ceres.

Mr. Westbrook agreed and said the City met with School District representatives during the Stakeholder interviews and the City and School District have had a great working relationship for many years.

Commenter #5 Asked if the Parks Master Plan was available on the City's website.

Mr. Westbrook said he would check and send Tammy the link. Tom also provided the City's General Plan Update website.

Commenter #6 Asked if there could be more restaurants with banquet facilities or facilities developed that could host banquets.

Mr. Westbrook responded that it is likely that restaurant development near the Mitchell/Service Intersection is the most likely location for facilities of those types. Further, the City has talked to prospective developers in the past that we looking to development not only banquet facilities but meeting halls and reception locations.