

MEMORANDUM

DATE April 13, 2021
TO Stacy Souza, Community and Economic Development Director
City of Los Banos
FROM Joanna Jansen, Principal
PlaceWorks
SUBJECT General Plan 2040 Stakeholder Meeting 1 Discussion Notes

Discussion notes

Q: Is the current general plan going to be the basis of today's discussion?

R: Yes, there is currently a General Plan in place and the City is required by law to have one. This is basis from which we started the update process. We have made some changes to the Land Use map which we are discussing today.

Q: Is there going to be a vote on these changes? What is purpose of today's meeting?

R: We are gathering input and feedback on these changes. We are not seeking a vote on changes. Ultimately, any changes to the land use map or General Plan will be adopted by the City Council.

Q: At a previous meeting, City had proposed a new area to be part of the City that is different than what was originally shown. Is this going to be shown as part of today's discussion? Also, is this going on YouTube? Is this being recorded?

R: This meeting is not being shown on YouTube nor is it being recorded. This is a focus group meeting with stakeholders. We will post a summary of the meeting on the website of our notes.

Regarding boundary changes, staff first will be analyzing those boundary changes and we will not be discussing those changes today. We will be focusing on discussing just the land use changes for the 2040 General Plan.

Q: How can I get on the mailing list to remain informed of future meetings?

R: You can go to our website at <http://losbanos2040.org> to sign up for our mailing list. You can also email clau@placeworks.com to ask to be added to the mailing list.

Q: I have a lot on J street, believe I have a R-3 lot. As part of your cleanup, are you changing R-3 to R-1, or other changes?

R: On J Street, we are changing to mixed-use to provide people with flexibility, but can also discuss more offline.

Q (in chat): Would a church and daycare be allowed in the Mixed Use District?

R: Churches and daycare centers are allowed within the mixed use designation.

Q: Do areas marked for the SR-152 bypass corridor have a specific LU designation? Additionally, for the area to the east by the junction of Pacheco Road and the bypass, is there a land use designation there too?

R: The bypass designation is intended to preserve undeveloped land and avoid construction that would be a barrier to a future bypass. For the junction area to the east, we are proposing industrial designations to be consistent with uses that are currently located there.

Q: What are appropriate uses for the bypass?

R: It is intended only for the bypass. If there is farming there today, we would want to preserve that as open space. The City would not support construction of structures within the bypass designation. However, note that much of the land in the bypass designation is currently outside of City limits and therefore under the jurisdiction of Merced County.

Comment: Land to the south of the bypass junction is owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Grassland Water District would oppose land use changes or development east of San Luis Canal.

Q: For the Snowgoose project, is the zoning going to change from R-1 to R-3?

R: Staff is proposing to change the land use designation for this project site to High Density Residential.

Q: Is there any information we can find about how many people are relocating to as well as leaving Los Banos?

R: Most of the demographic information used in the General Plan Update comes from projections done by the Merced Council of Governments (MCAG). They have not updated projections since COVID started. Since the General Plan plans for a 20-year timespan, many other long-term factors in addition to COVID will influence events and

conditions, so we do not expect to see drastic changes to these original projections. We have looked at residential and job growth, and our City Council has stressed to us the importance of job growth.

Q: Following up on development in the bypass area – If someone were to farm in that area, then they would be allowed to continue, but if they requested to build a barn or shop, would their request be denied? Or would they be allowed to continue to improve the ground as they deem necessary?

R: Most of the areas designated bypass are outside of the City limit, so the City does not have authority to permit or deny barns and related structures. Right now, we are only aware of one parcel that is within City limits, currently used for farming, and designated bypass. The City would not permit construction of a barn or other structures within any portion of the parcel designated bypass.

Comment: Land along Badger Flat Road is prime farming land and is designated as yellow (residential development). The Central California Irrigation District (CCID) is concerned about the farmers there in the future, who are planning to continue farming. We want to make sure that whatever happens there will not impact the farmers. We want to make sure prior agreements on boundaries remain intact even as City staff changes.

R: The General Plan is looking out to the future to guide development and establish policies and a plan that is intended to be adhered to by staff and elected officials who come after staff changes. The General Plan also includes policies to preserve agricultural land as an important part of our local heritage and local economy.

Comment: CCID is also concerned about the impacts of new development on existing canals. Subdivisions will generate added discharge which could impact drainage capacity of CCID canals. Additionally, City growth will impact groundwater resources with additional demand for pumping and water supply.

R: We will continue to coordinate and communicate with various water and irrigation districts to analyze and understand potential impacts on water supply, water quality, and drainage. The environmental impact report (EIR) on the General Plan is required to look at these issues.

Q: Does the proposed General Plan anticipate the relocation of the airport?

R: The 2030 plan was the first time the City contemplated airport relocation and that is something we are carrying forward into this plan. We are still in the stage of contemplating the relocation of the airport. We imagine the existing airport location

could become an employment park. We are still talking with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA); airport relocation is a very complex and long-term project, but we are still planning on it.

Q: Will the 2040 General Plan identify a new location for the airport or just address relocation in a more general sense?

R: We are addressing it in a more general sense. We will include policies that support relocation. We are planning for the future location to be outside of our planning boundaries. The 2040 General Plan will not identify an alternative airport location.

Q: How many acres of farmland would be lost to development?

R: We have not completed that analysis yet; that is a required part of the EIR on the General Plan, but first we have to arrive at a revised land use map to analyze. The General Plan includes policies to support and preserve agriculture and these will be carried forward. The City Council has expressed the importance of agriculture to the City. We will be discussions potential mitigation tools for the loss of agriculture, looking at examples from other local cities and Merced County.

Q: There is a lot of agriculture outside of the City limits that is designated for residential development on the land use map. Is this a proposed change under the 2040 update?

R: The only changes proposed on this draft of the land use map are within City limits. The City only has control over what is within the City limits. The City does look outside of its limits to study and plan for future growth, so the land use map shows designations outside of City limits. However, any proposed development outside of the City limits would either require annexation to the City or would happen under the jurisdiction of Merced County. The County would consult the City for areas outside the City Limits but within the sphere of influence (SOI).

Comment: It is good to hear the City say there will be agriculture mitigation. In the past, the City Council has been concerned that developers will not work in Los Banos if the City adopts agricultural mitigation requirements. We look forward to continuing this discussion.

Q: Regarding the gray areas in the “panhandle” of the City limits that stretches east along 152, where there is an AmeriGas, have the existing industrial uses extended beyond those parcels, and is that why the City changing those uses to industrial?

R: The designation change is proposed in order to utilize those properties for potential employment-generating uses, and since that is already a pocket of existing industrial uses, we want to be able to utilize that area.



Comment: The existing facilities in that area are very small. Future industrial or job-generating development should be moved to the west side of town. This area is important habitat area and should be preserved.