



TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA: Special Joint City Council/Planning Commission Study Session
DATE: December 17, 2019
ITEM #: F.1.
SUBJECT: Joint Study Session of the City Council and Planning Commission
Concerning the Proposed Comprehensive Zoning Code Update

Recommendation for Action: Staff recommends that the City Council and Planning Commission: 1) receive a staff report and presentation; 2) offer questions, comments, and observations; and 3) provide feedback on discussion topics

Staff Contact:

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Fiscal Impact:

On May 21, 2019, the City Council of the City of Woodland approved Resolution No. 7283 authorizing the City Manager to submit a grant application to the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) SB 2 Planning Grants Program. SB 2 (2017) was part of a 15 bill housing package that was aimed at addressing the state's housing shortage and high cost of housing. The City of Woodland was successful in securing a State Planning Grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development in the amount of \$310,000. Following an RFP process the firm of Lisa Wise Consulting (LWC) was selected. On August 20, 2019 Council authorized a contract with LWC in the amount of \$358,610.

Report in Brief:

The purpose for the joint study session will be for the City Council and Planning Commission to receive a report and presentation concerning the Comprehensive Zoning Code Update process that will include an analysis of the existing Zoning Ordinance and Interim Zoning Ordinance, and suggested recommendations to achieve a more effective regulatory tool to encourage the type of development desired consistent with the 2035 General Plan. The assessment, based upon detailed technical review, site assessments, as well as stakeholder interviews, provides suggestions concerning code organization and usability, zoning districts, use regulations, development standards, development review and approval process, and compliance with state and federal law. After the report and presentation, the City Council and Planning Commission will be asked to provide feedback on discussion topics that will assist in drafting the code update.

The goal of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance update will be to facilitate new desired development through the provision of clear and understandable standards, guidelines, and procedures. An updated development review process will assist staff and decision makers to allow qualified development with expedited review, thereby helping to reduce the front-end design/development costs particularly for new housing projects.

Background:

Following the May 16, 2017 approval of the 2035 General Plan, the City Council approved the Interim Zoning Ordinance on May 1, 2018. The Interim Zoning Ordinance was approved as an urgency Ordinance in order to address significant areas of inconsistency between the 2035 General Plan and the existing Zoning Code.

Interim Zoning Ordinance targeted specific land use districts, primarily along corridors, but did not address all areas in the current code. The Interim Ordinance has allowed the City to test new standards and guidelines, including an updated use table and development review process, which has utilized a staff level minor

conditional use review.

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Over the last three years the State has approved a number of new laws that are intended to streamline and facilitate housing. A total of 18 bills were passed in 2019 alone. In addition, the State has released new housing needs allocation numbers (RHNA). Woodland will need to zone or designate land to accommodate the regional housing allocation by 2021.

The intended purpose for the project is to update the City's Zoning Code to address recent legislation, to accelerate housing production and streamline approval of housing development, and to prepare a code that utilizes best practices to facilitate livability, sustainability, increased density, and multi-modal access. As stated in the recommendations memo; *"A well designed city that incorporates appropriate development standards into its regulations will directly elevate the quality of life and appearance of the community, attract investment, an increase communal pride."*

Discussion:

Upon initiation of the contract with LWC, Staff held a kick off meeting and tour with the consultant team. Additionally, LWC has conducted a detailed technical and site analysis of Woodland. Further, over a period of two days, the team conducted interviews with 31 individuals identified as stakeholders who conduct business and/or development in Woodland in order to gain insight regarding concerns or constraints they may have experienced with zoning.

Presentation and Review:

The consultant team from Lisa Wise Consultants (LWC) and Staff will lead a joint study session with the City Council and Planning Commission. A copy of the presentation slides accompanied by the Recommendations Memo prepared by LWC are attached to this report. Review and input from the Planning Commission and City Council will be critical in helping to identify the proper direction to take on issues that are critical to the drafting of the Zoning Ordinance update.

Power Point Slide Deck

The slides provide a presentation overview including a graphic site analysis and summary of key discussion topics as well as a summary of the Memo and Outline discussed below.

Zoning Code Recommendations Memo

The Memo will highlight General Plan policy direction, assess strengths and weaknesses of the of the existing Zoning Ordinance and Interim Zoning Ordinance, and present ideas for the Code Update. The memo will also provide recommendations for appropriate zoning approaches, including form-based, performance based, incentive based, and use based.

The assessment, informed by detailed technical review, site assessments, as well as stakeholder interviews, provides preliminary recommendations concerning code organization and usability, zoning districts, use regulations, development standards, development review and approval process, and compliance with state and

federal law.

The memo discusses the balance required between certainty and flexibility as stated in Section 5 Development Review and Approval:

“Generally, prospective developers value three central qualities in any administrative code: 1) certainty in the requirements and structure of the review process, 2) built-in flexibility to adjust development standards to the needs of individual projects, and 3) opportunities to request relief from requirements that constitute a substantial burden”.

Project Time Frame

The Comprehensive Code Update process anticipates final code adoption by August of 2020. The Public Review Draft Zoning Code and Revised Zoning Map are proposed to be released mid-May 2020. Public hearings on the draft will be scheduled in June and July of 2020.

Public Noticing

A display ad providing notice of, and inviting the public to attend the Joint Study Session was posted in the Daily Democrat on Saturday, December 14, 2019.

The process will build upon the extensive public outreach and input received during the recent General Plan update process in 2017 and adoption of the Interim Zoning Ordinance in 2018. Additional public outreach will be incorporated into the process as appropriate including stakeholder interviews, study sessions and public hearings. Notice regarding meetings will be posted on the Comprehensive Zoning Code update web page: <https://www.cityofwoodland.org/1165/Comprehensive-Zoning-Update>

Conclusion:

Staff recommends that the City Council and Planning Commission: 1) receive a staff report and presentation; 2) offer questions, comments, and observations; and 3) provide feedback on discussion topics

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Paul Navazio
City Manager

Attachments:

1. Comprehensive Zoning Power Point
2. Recommendations Memo