

STAFF REPORT
Planning Commission Agenda
 December 10, 2013

TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Larry Oetker, Community Development Director
 Alyson Hunter, Senior Planner
DATE: December 4, 2013
SUBJECT: 2013 Annual Report to the City Council

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Commission review the staff report and provide Staff with any additional information to include in the report for the January 15th Council meeting.

INTRODUCTION: Pursuant to Government Code Section 65400, the following is the Annual Report to the City Council. The following discussion items were updated in the City Resolution No. 123-07, dated October 3, 2012. The Council will receive this report at its January 15, 2013 meeting.

DISCUSSION:

1. Progress on Goals from 2012 –

- a) Continue to make the Samoa Specific Plan a priority for the Planning Commission and the Community Development Department. PROGRESS WAS DELAYED ON THE SAMOA SPECIFIC PLAN (SSP) DUE TO A FUNDING SHORTFALL. STAFF HAS BEEN PURSUING NEW SOURCES OF FUNDING AND HAS KEPT THE COMMISSION INFORMED VIA UPDATES. A COASTAL COMMISSION GRANT APPLICATION SPECIFICALLY FOR FUNDING LOCAL COASTAL PLAN (LCP) UPDATES WAS SUBMITTED IN A TIMELY MANNER. STAFF SHOULD HEAR ABOUT THE AWARD IN JANUARY.

AS PART OF THE LARGER LOCAL COASTAL PLAN UPDATE, THE SSP WILL NOW BE ENVELOPED WITHIN A CITY-WIDE UPDATE. THIS DECISION IS BASED PARTLY ON DISCUSSIONS WITH COASTAL COMMISSION STAFF AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF BEING MORE SUCCESSFUL IN COMPETITIVE GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR A CITY-WIDE PROJECT VERSUS A GEOGRAPHIC UPDATE.

THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPTED THE LAST OF THE ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION, NEEDED TO CAUSE THE LAND USE CODE AND GENERAL PLAN TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE COASTAL PORTIONS OF THE CITY ON DECEMBER 4, 2013. THIS WAS THE FIRST STEP IN STREAMLINING THE CITY'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK REGARDING LAND USE IN THE COASTAL ZONE. THE UPDATE TO THE STANDARDS AND POLICIES OF THE CITY'S CERTIFIED LCP IS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY, AS MENTIONED ABOVE.

- b) Initiate the periodic review process on the Land Use Code to further refine this implementation tool of the General Plan. Recent court actions may have an impact on the City's Inclusionary Zoning standards and will require the Commission's review to ensure compatibility with state law and court decisions. THE PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSED THE CURRENT "STALLED SUBDIVISIONS" IN THE CITY AND THE IMPACT THAT INCLUSIONARY ZONING (IZ) HAS ON DEVELOPMENT. THE CITY'S IZ POLICIES AND STANDARDS WILL BE FURTHER ADDRESSED IN THE UPDATE OF THE HOUSING ELEMENT WHICH IS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY. COMPLETION OF THE HOUSING ELEMENT WILL OCCUR IN JUNE.

THE COMMISSION ALSO REVIEWED PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RESIDENTIAL DENSITY AND PARKING STANDARDS IN THE DOWNTOWN AND AMENDMENTS TO STREAMLINE THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT AND CHILD DAY CARE FACILITIES. THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON THESE TWO ITEMS WERE ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON NOVEMBER 6, 2013.

- c) Provide local training for Commissioners. SEVERAL COMMISSIONERS ATTENDED THE CITY'S ETHICS TRAINING EARLIER IN THE YEAR AND HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND SEVERAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION WEBINARS HOSTED AT CITY HALL.
- d) Conduct study sessions on regional planning issues that affect Arcata. OTHER THAN THE ANNUAL CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION ON JUNE 25th AND SOME REVIEW OF HOW TO ADDRESS HISTORIC RESOURCES IN THE CITY, THERE HAVE BEEN NO SUCH REGIONAL PLANNING STUDY SESSIONS.
- e) Make the Land Use Code and General Plan: 2020 effective in the Coastal portions of the City. AS MENTIONED IN ITEM a) ABOVE, THE LAND USE CODE/GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS THAT WENT THROUGH THE COMMISSION THIS YEAR WERE ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL ON DECEMBER 4th. THE AMENDMENTS INCLUDED THE REMOVAL OF THE “:2020” FROM THE TITLE OF THE GENERAL PLAN TO REMOVE ANY CONFUSION ABOUT THE DOCUMENT'S INTENDED LIFESPAN.

2) Goals for 2014: What focus would the Commission like to take in the coming year? Are there any aspects of the Land Use Code or General Plan that the Commission would like to see clarified? Are there community outreach efforts that the Commission would like Staff undertake? ASIDE FROM THE COMPLETION OF THE HOUSING ELEMENT AND THE CONTINUED UPDATE OF THE LCP AS MENTIONED ABOVE, THE PLANNING COMMISSION WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER REVIEW OF THE GENERAL PLAN TO AMEND INCREMENTALLY AS NEEDED.

3) Projects in 2013: The local economy has not yet rebounded in such a way that has resulted in a surge of new projects. The only development projects that came before the Planning Commission in 2013 were City-sponsored projects: the Shirley Blvd and Boyd Rd Annexations and the City's Corp Yard demolition (West End Rd). Approximately half of the Commission meetings in 2013 were cancelled due to lack of projects.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.