



AGENCY: City Council
MEETING DATE: 10/16/2017
DEPARTMENT: CDD
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AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TITLE:
RECEIVE REPORT SUMMARIZING COMMUNITY INPUT FROM THE MILL SITE REUSE PUBLIC WORKSHOPS, OPEN HOUSES, SURVEY AND MEETING WITH COASTAL COMMISSION STAFF, AND PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF

ISSUE:

The Georgia Pacific lumber mill closed in 2002. The City of Fort Bragg, the community, and the property owner, Georgia Pacific (GP) engaged in a collaborative process to prepare a Specific Plan for the rezoning and eventual redevelopment of the property for other uses but the planning process stopped in 2012, when GP withdrew its Specific Plan application.

On February 6, 2017, City Council and the Planning Commission held a joint meeting to discuss how to move forward with rezoning and planning for the reuse of the Mill Site. The City Council and the Planning Commission supported a two-step process as follows: (1) processing a Local Coastal Program (LCP) amendment to eliminate the requirement that a Specific Plan be prepared to rezone property on the Mill Site (by revising Coastal General Plan Policies LU-7.1 and LU-7.2) and (2) processing an LCP amendment to rezone the Mill Site .

Also at the February 6, 2017 workshop, the City Council and Planning Commission reviewed and partially affirmed the “guiding principles” for reuse of the Mill Site that were defined in the previous Specific Plan process as follows:

1. Extend the City street grid onto the site	concur
2. Retain public view corridors to the ocean	concur
3. Create new job opportunities on the Mill Site	concur
4. Establish a coastal park with a multi-use trail and other park amenities	completed
5. Extend of the downtown commercial district onto the Mill Site	needs further discussion
6. Establish zoning for residential uses in the Northern District; zoning to extend the Central Business District, visitor serving uses, and compact mixed use residential development in the Central District; and zoning for job-generating uses such as light industrial, education, and office space in the Southern District	needs further discussion
7. Establish an “Urban Reserve” to preserve an area of the site for a future Specific Plan process and to allow future residents/City Council the opportunity to shape redevelopment of a portion of the site	concur
8. Implement sustainable practices in conjunction with future development on the Mill Site, such as low impact development, green building, storm water	concur

catchment, etc.	
9. Incorporate “smart growth” practices such as compact design, mixed-use development, and higher density residential development adjacent to the City’s central business district	concur
10. Incorporate high quality design criteria for all development on the Mill Site	concur
11. Allow for daylighting of culverted Maple Creek	concur

The City Council and the Planning Commission indicated that the LCP amendment for the rezoning of the Mill Site should be responsive to the critique and suggested changes that the California Coastal Commission provided on the Specific Plan. City Council and the Planning Commission also provided preliminary feedback that the amount of development and the size of the plan area should both be reduced. While a specific development time horizon was not selected, Council and the Commission indicated that the 30-year horizon of the Specific Plan is too long. Councilmembers noted that limitations of the City’s water supply would likely necessitate a reduced buildout scenario.

On March 23, 2017, City Council concurred with staff’s recommendation that the Mill Site reuse planning process as follows:

1. The City held two all day open houses with six mini-workshops on September 16th and 21st.
 - a. The City held an all-day open house with three mini workshops at the CV Starr Center on September 16, 2017 with about 60+ participants and an all-day open house with three mini workshops at Town Hall on September 21, 2017 with 80+ participants. During the open house, participants reviewed a number of large poster boards which allowed folks to visualize, understand and discuss the Mill Site reuse (Attachment 1). Workshop participants asked many questions and many interesting discussions ensued. Participants also provided non-verbal feedback on the poster boards by voting by dot and by attaching sticky notes with comments.
 - b. During the mini-workshops, participants were encouraged to develop their preferred land use maps and to participate in all of the open house activities.
2. Conduct a Mill Site reuse survey on Survey Monkey (in both English and Spanish).
 - a. The survey was started on September 20, 2017 and ran through October 10, 2017. The survey was completed by 954 persons.

Additionally, City staff presented a truncated form of the workshop at a Fort Bragg Rotary Club meeting, a Chamber of Commerce mixer and at a Coastal Mendocino Association of Realtors meeting. Approximately 220 people attended the Mill Site Reuse workshops. Staff prepared a summary analysis of all workshop input (Attachment 2).

On September 21st, the Mill Site Reuse Community Survey was opened to accept responses from the community. English and Spanish language versions of the survey were available with identical questions. The survey was designed to minimize survey bias by randomizing the multiple choice questions and it was designed to be as inclusive as possible by allowing people to provide open-ended responses to a number of questions. As of October 10, 2017, the survey had 954 responses. A summary analysis of all 954 survey responses and an analysis of the 546 Fort Bragg resident responses is presented in Attachment 3.

On October 6th, City staff met with Coastal Commission staffers Bob Merrill and Cristin Kenyon to: 1) discuss the reuse and rezoning process; 2) identify required studies for the LCP amendment process;

3) share initial results from the workshops and surveys; and 4) obtain Coastal Commission staff feedback regarding the planning process to date and the various land use alternatives.

ANALYSIS:

For the complete analysis of the survey responses and workshop input, please see Attachments 2 and 3. To view Land Use Plan Alternatives 1 through 3, please see Attachments 4 through 6.

The major themes that emerged from the workshops and survey are summarized below. The themes that emerged from the community process are informational, not definitive. City Council and the Planning Commission are encouraged to delve into this input, engage in dialogue with members of the community, and further develop/refine the Mill Site Reuse themes. There is quite a bit of information in the attached materials. The Council and the Commission should take the time to fully digest and process this information, prior to providing preliminary direction to staff. Preliminary direction may be provided tonight or at a future Council/Commission meeting.

1. Vision

From a review of the survey results and the workshop input, overall the community is supportive of the following combined vision statement for reuse of the Mill Site:

Over the next 20 years, reuse of the Mill Site should help support Fort Bragg as a working town with a diversified economy and good jobs, and a sustainable community with open space and parks. New development on the Mill Site should enhance Fort Bragg's role as an economic and cultural center for the Mendocino Coast.

This preliminary draft vision statement reflects the support from a majority of those participating in the open houses and survey for a vibrant mix of jobs, housing and open-space on the Mill Site. Interestingly, the recent public input did not place high value on using the Mill Site to make Fort Bragg more of a tourist destination or to preserve the community's small town character, which diverges from community input received during the 2012 planning process. Additional refinement of the vision statement can occur as the planning process evolves.

2. Land Use: Open Space

On average, community members who participated in the workshops and the survey want to retain about 42 percent of the site as open space and parks. This is less than the amount of open space identified in all three draft Land Use Plans.

Survey respondents prioritized four open space uses that were identified through previous community workshops and City Council meetings as follows:

1. The Maple Creek and Alder Creek Park (creek daylighting) project was selected as the top priority by 27 percent of all respondents;
2. 25 percent of respondents selected a downtown square as the top priority;
3. 22 percent selected a neighborhood park with playing fields; and
4. 19 percent chose a public event site/fair grounds as the top priority.

Among Fort Bragg residents, the Downtown Square and Maple and Alder Creek Park were equal priorities at 25 percent each.

Coastal Commission staff expressed general satisfaction with the extent of open space illustrated in all three draft Land Use Plan alternatives. They supported the addition of an open space connection between the forested area along Highway 1, Ponds 1 through 4 and the west end of the Mill Pond.

Based on this input, the City Council and Planning Commission might consider adding a Downtown Square and/or neighborhood park with playing fields in the final Land Use Plan. A fairground could be accommodated within the Urban Reserve. The Maple Creek/Alder Creek Park is already identified in all three Land Use Alternatives.

3. Land Use: Jobs and Business

Overall, the recent community input process shows support for new jobs and business on the Mill Site as a majority of participants were concerned about the economy and jobs in Fort Bragg. Survey responses indicated that 36 percent of the Mill Site should be set aside for jobs and businesses. This exceeds the amount of land zoned for employment generating uses in all three draft Land Use Alternatives. Workshop and survey participants also indicated a preference for: an extension of the downtown onto the Mill Site and jobs in high tech, research & development, light industrial, education and health care on the site. There was less support for visitor serving uses, retail, office and heavy industrial. Participants expressed strong opposition to heavy industrial, franchise businesses, and casinos on the site.

Coastal Commission staff expressed two zoning priorities for the site based on the Coastal Act, namely: 1) establishment of visitor serving uses; and 2) identification of specific zoning for coastal dependent uses. The Noyo Center property was discussed as a possible location for specific zoning for a marine research center.

Based on this input, the amount of land that is dedicated to each type of commercial and industrial use in the three Land Use Plan alternatives appears to generally reflect both community and Coastal Commission priorities. The Council and Planning Commission could consider directing staff to:

1. Add a "Marine Research and Education" zoning district to the Land Use Plan. This could replace zoning that currently identifies the Noyo Center property as Open Space. Consideration could be given to expanding the size of this zone into the Urban Reserve; and
2. Reduce the amount of zoning for visitor serving uses.

4. Land Use: Housing

Overall the community input supported new housing on the Mill Site as most see the high cost of housing as a significant concern for our community. Survey respondents indicated that 25 percent of the Mill Site should be set aside for housing. This exceeds the amount of land zoned for housing in all three draft Land Use Alternatives. Workshop and survey participants also indicated a strong preference for affordable housing, small homes, cohousing, multifamily, and mixed use housing. There was less support for single family homes, and opposition to large homes and suburban development.

Coastal Commission staff also expressed support for establishing significant new zoning for housing on the Mill Site, as housing is now a State priority. Commission staff also expressed a preference for lower cost and higher density housing over low density expensive homes.

Based on this input, City Council and the Planning Commission may want to reduce the amount of land that is dedicated to single family homes and increase the amount of the site that could be developed with higher density housing (small homes, multi-family, and co-housing) in the Land Use Plan.

5. Land Use Plan Alternatives

Staff prepared three preliminary draft Land Use Plan alternatives which were derived from the Land Use Plan that was prepared by consultants for the draft 2012 Specific Plan. City Council, Planning Commission and the Coastal Commission all indicated that the draft 2012 Specific Plan would have allowed too much development. Accordingly, all three of the Land Use Plan alternatives reduced the amount of development that could be accommodated. The alternatives have the following features:

1. Alternative 1 - 1/3 (33%) of the 2012 Land Use Plan (Attachment 4). This plan would allow the least amount of development and leave 125 acres for a future planning effort. This alternative would allow a preliminary estimate of up to 210 new residential units, result in a maximum of 1,100 new jobs at build out and provide for up to 240,000 square feet of industrial, office, high-tech hotels and commercial businesses.
2. Alternative 2 - 1/2 (50%) of the 2012 Land Use Plan (Attachment 5). This plan would allow a moderate amount of development and leave 90 acres of the site for a future planning effort. This alternative would allow a preliminary estimate of up to 270 new residential units, result in a maximum of 1,400 new jobs at build out and provide for up to 280,000 square feet of industrial, office, high-tech hotels and commercial businesses.
3. Alternative 3 - 2/3 (66%) of the 2012 Land Use Plan (Attachment 6). This plan would allow the most development and would still leave 70 acres of the site for a future planning effort. This alternative would allow a preliminary estimate of up to 340 new residential units, result in a maximum of 1,700 new jobs at build out and provide for up to 350,000 square feet of industrial, office, high-tech hotels and commercial businesses.

The three draft Land Use Alternatives also responded to concerns from the Coastal Commission regarding connecting the riparian area to the Mill Pond area with a swath of open space through the area of Ponds 1 through 4. Further, the plans incorporate the following features:

1. Focus development on the eastern side of the property to promote orderly development;
2. Continue existing streets onto the Mill Site where feasible for connectivity and utilize existing Mill Site streets where feasible to reduce infrastructure requirements;
3. Consider compatibility of adjacent uses between uses on and adjacent to the Mill Site;
4. Minimize the creation of new infrastructure by eliminating single loaded roads, unloaded roads (such as the Coastal Road), and focusing new zoning as close as possible to existing water and sewer lines; and
5. Seek to retain the basic mix of land uses in the 2012 Land Use Plan in order to facilitate the creation of a smart growth land use plan with a mix of housing types, commercial and industrial land uses.

In both the workshops and through the survey, overall the both the entire community and Fort Bragg residents expressed a strong preference for Alternative 1. For the community at large this was followed by a dead heat between Alternatives 2 and 3; however, among Fort Bragg Residents Alternative 3 received more support (31%) than Alternative 1 (26%). Coastal Commission staff did not express a preference for any of the three alternatives. Coastal Commission staff emphasized that the City will need to demonstrate that it has adequate capacity (water, sewer, services) to serve the buildout of the Land Use Plan included in the LCP amendment application. Coastal Commission staff also supported the removal of the coastal road along the western edge of the site.

Based on this input, City Council and the Planning Commission could direct staff to prepare a new preliminary Land Use Plan alternative that represents 40 percent of the 2012 Land Use Plan (half way between Alternative 1 and 2) as a compromise given the level of support for all three Land Use Plan Alternatives.

6. Urban Reserve

The areas on the Mill Site which will not be rezoned for new development through this LCP amendment process would be designated as Urban Reserve and would be left for a future community

planning and LCP update process. Coastal Commission staff indicated that the community based planning process for any future rezoning of the Urban Reserve would need to be articulated as part of the LCP amendment.

7. Land Use and Sustainability Policies and Regulations

Based on input from the workshops, survey and the meeting with Coastal Commission staff, staff has prepared a rough draft of some potential changes that could be made to the Specific Plan's policies and regulations for Land Use and Sustainability. Staff has modified the Land Use Development and Sustainable Design chapters of the Specific Plan using track changes and comments (Attachments 7 & 8). Staff does not anticipate that the City Council, the Planning Commission or the community will delve into these proposed policies and regulations at this meeting. Rather staff has prepared draft revisions to these chapters to determine if this is the level of analysis that the City Council and the Planning Commission would like going forward as you start to review these chapters, or if you would like a more detailed analysis of the purpose, intent, pros and cons and any unintended consequences of each potential policy and regulation. Based on direction provided, staff can prepare for future joint meetings that focus on reuse policies and regulations.

8. Next Steps

There are a number of next steps for the Mill Site LCP amendment process, which will necessitate ongoing meetings and workshops to obtain additional input, collaboration and direction from the City Council, Planning Commission and the community in order to complete the following:

1. Complete a minor LCP amendment to change the policies of the Coastal General Plan that require a Specific Plan for the rezoning of the Mill Site.
2. Prepare a preferred Land Use Plan for the LCP amendment for rezoning of the Mill Site.
3. Revise the 2012 Specific Plan policies and regulations for inclusion in the LCP amendment application. This is a large task and will likely take four or five joint City Council/Planning Commission meetings.
4. Determine the "maximum buildout" scenario for the proposed Land Use Plan based on development regulations (height limits, parking requirements, floor area ratios, lot coverage, open space requirements and setbacks) for each zoning district.
5. Prepare a fiscal analysis to identify the impacts of buildout under the Land Use Plan on the City's fiscal position and to identify phasing policies necessary to ensure that future development results in positive fiscal impacts.
6. Complete required environmental and planning studies for Council and Planning Commission consideration and for the Coastal Commission's environmental review of the LCP amendment. Some reports have already been prepared and will need updating, while others will need to be prepared. Required reports include:
 - a. Buildout analysis;
 - b. Analysis of the City's capacity to serve future development, including: water, sewer, police, fire, emergency medical, schools, dry utilities, public transit, etc.;
 - c. Summary of current lower cost visitor serving facilities, including: room inventory, revenue per available room, occupancy rates, etc.;
 - d. Transportation study, including availability of parking to serve coastal access and the effects of the project on the capacity of Highway 1 and Highway 20 both within and outside of City Limits;

- e. Impact of sea level rise/bluff vulnerability on future development under the proposed Land Use Plan;
 - f. Impact of the Mill Site buildout on climate change;
 - g. Tsunami study;
 - h. Botanical and wetland study update for preferred Land Use Plan for non-paved areas of the site; and
 - i. Visual Analysis of Land Use Plan and analysis of how the Citywide Design Guidelines would be revised and implemented on site to reduce visual impacts.
7. Continue consultation process with the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo and, where feasible, incorporate agreed upon policy language and Land Use Plan modifications into the project.
 8. Prepare the complete LCP Amendment application, which would incorporate: 1) all new land use designations into the City's Zoning Map; 2) all policies related to the Mill Site reuse into the Coastal General Plan; and 3) all new regulations into the Coastal Land Use and Development Code. Coastal Commission staff indicated that a stand-alone document for the rezoning of the Mill Site is not preferred as it would make it more difficult for Coastal Commissioners to understand how the new zoning, policies and regulations align with and are supported by existing policies and regulations in the Coastal General Plan and Coastal Land Use and Development Code.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Receive Report Summarizing Community Input from the Mill Site Reuse Public Workshops, Open Houses, Survey and the meeting with Coastal Commission Staff; and
2. Provide Direction to Staff.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

None.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City was awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$50,000 to start this process. Additionally, the Coastal Commission awarded an additional \$110,000 for this LCP amendment. Additional funds may be needed given the extensive list of studies that the Coastal Commission has requested.

As City Council and the Planning Commission further refine a final Land Use Plan, staff will prepare a preliminary fiscal analysis to identify if the overall Mill Site Reuse will have a net positive fiscal impact on Fort Bragg. This will be an interactive process.

CONSISTENCY:

The City's 2014 Economic Development Strategy specifically includes rezoning and the eventual reuse of the Mill Site as a high priority project. The project must comply with the City's Coastal General Plan in order to be certified by the Coastal Commission. This may require modification of one or more policies of the Coastal General Plan prior to submittal of an LCP amendment.

IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:

A number of activities are envisioned for the remainder of 2017 and 2018, including:

- Hold additional joint workshops to refine the Land Use Plan, Mill Site policies and regulations.
- Update resource studies for submittal of the LCP amendment.
- Hold public hearings on LCP amendment and submit the LCP amendment to Coastal Commission.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Mill Site Reuse Workshop Poster Boards
2. Mill Site Reuse Workshop Report
3. Mill Site Reuse Survey Analysis
4. Land Use Plan Alternative 1
5. Land Use Plan Alternative 2
6. Land Use Plan Alternative 3
7. Revised Land Use Development chapter of Mill Site Specific Plan
8. Revised Sustainable Design chapter of Mill Site Specific Plan

NOTIFICATION:

1. Georgia Pacific Site Plan Notify Me Subscriber List
2. Georgia Pacific Site Remediation Notify Me Subscriber List
3. Downtown Businesses Notify Me Subscriber List
4. Affordable Housing Notify Me Subscriber List
5. Economic Development Notify Me Subscriber List
6. Community Development Notify Me Subscriber List
7. Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Tribal Chairman Mike Knight & THPO Misty Meadlin
8. Coastal Commission staff, Cristin Kenyon & Bob Merrill
9. CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife staff, Angela Liebenberg