



AGENCY: Planning Commission

MEETING DATE: 02/22/2017

PRESENTED BY: M. Jones

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

TITLE:

RECEIVE REPORT AND PROVIDE DIRECTION REGARDING THE MILL SITE PLANNING PROCESS AND MODIFICATIONS TO THE LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM TO REVISE POLICES REQUIRING A SPECIFIC PLAN FOR ZONING CHANGES IN THE TIMBER RESOURCE INDUSTRIAL ZONE

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 develop a Specific Plan for the rezoning and eventual redevelopment of the property for other uses between the closure of the lumber mill in 2002 and 2012. The Mill Site planning process stopped in 2012, when GP withdrew its Specific Plan application, in order to focus its attention on the remediation of the site. Prior to 2012, GP funded all City and consultant costs associated with preparation of the Mill Site Specific Plan and associated studies and documents because they had an application into the City to rezone the Mill Site.

Over the past two years, City staff has been approached by several local businesses who would like to relocate on the Mill Site. The current zoning, coupled with the Local Coastal Program requirement to complete a Specific Plan prior to rezoning the site, has impeded the ability of these local businesses to relocate to the site, thereby depriving the community of needed jobs. Additionally, as the economic recovery continues, other businesses and housing developers may also seek to reuse portions of the Mill Site and likewise be thwarted by the site's current zoning.

On February 6, 2017 City Council and the Planning Commission held a joint meeting on how to move forward with the rezoning and planning for the reuse of the Mill Site. The City Council and the Planning Commission directed staff to prepare a Local Coastal Program Amendment to revise Policies LU-7.1 and LU-7.2, which require a Specific Plan for the rezoning of Timber Resources.

On February 6th 2017, the City Council and Planning Commission provided preliminary feedback with regards to the 2008 guiding principles for reuse of the Mill Site:

- a. Extension of the City street grid onto the site - concur
- b. Retention of views to the ocean - concur
- c. Creation of new job opportunities on the Mill Site - concur
- d. Extension of the downtown commercial district onto the Mill Site – needs further discussion
- e. Establishment of a coastal park with a multi-use trail and other park amenities - concur
- f. 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

- g. Establishment of 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
- h. Implementation of sustainable practices in conjunction with future development on the Mill Site, such as low impact development, green building, storm water catchment, etc. - concur
- i. Incorporation of “smart growth” practices such as compact design, mixed-use development, and higher density residential development adjacent to the City’s central business district - concur
- j. Incorporation of high quality design criteria for all development in the Specific Plan area - concur
- k. Daylighting of culverted Maple Creek – will be the subject of a City Council workshop in March

The City Council and the Planning Commission indicated that the revised plan should be responsive to critique and suggested changes from the California Coastal Commission (see Attachment 1). 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 current horizon of 30 years is too long. Councilmembers noted the recent drought and ongoing pressures on water supply that result from Climate Change will likely necessitate a smaller development foot.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Provide direction on: 1) alternative language for Policies LU-7.1 and LU-7.2 of the Coastal General Plan; and 2) how to structure the community-based planning process to move forward with the rezoning of the Mill Site.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

None

ANALYSIS:

1. The City’s LCP and Specific Plan Requirement

In 2004, after closure of the GP lumber mill, the City Council adopted a General Plan Update which included Policy LU-7.1 and LU-7.2 which require a Specific Plan for the rezoning of Timber Resources Industrial property as follows:

Policy LU-7.1 Changes in Industrial Land Use: Require that any Local Coastal Program (LCP) amendments and rezoning of lands which are designated Timber Resources Industrial be subject to a specific plan process. The portions of a Specific Plan that meet the definition of “Land Use Plan” as defined by Coastal Act Section 30108.5 and “Implementing Actions” as defined by Coastal Act Section 30108.4 shall be submitted to, and effectively certified by, the Coastal Commission as an LCP amendment before those portions of the Specific Plan become effective.

Policy LU-7.2: In order for LCP amendments and rezoning of lands designated Timber Resources Industrial to be considered, a specific plan shall be prepared which addresses, at a minimum, an area approximating one or

more of the subareas as shown on Map LU-4: Specific Plan Areas in the Timber Resources Industrial Land Use Designation. Specific plans shall meet the following minimum criteria:

- a) The specific plan shall make provisions for existing and future infrastructure connections such as roads, utilities, and coastal access to surrounding developed and undeveloped areas.
- b) The specific plan shall contain financing methods to provide infrastructure and public amenities based on a nexus between development exactions being imposed and the development-induced needs being met by those exactions, establish an orderly phasing of development, and include other measures as needed to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the community.
- c) The specific plan, and environmental studies required for that plan, shall be paid for by the applicant who may be repaid by future developers of other portions of the specific plan area on a pro rata basis.
- d) The specific plan shall be consistent with the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

The intent of this policy was to require a comprehensive planning process for the reuse of the GP Mill Site that: 1) discouraged piecemeal development; 2) included a detailed analysis of the cost of City services in order to ensure that future development pays for itself in terms of City services; 3) resulted in a comprehensive infrastructure plan; and 4) established a financing plan for infrastructure and other public services for the plan area.

At the February 6, 2017 Joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting, Councilmembers and Commissioners discussed the benefits and challenges associated with adoption and implementation of a Specific Plan for rezoning the Mill Site

1. Benefits of a Specific Plan include:

- a. Detailed set of policies and regulations to ensure that new development conforms with a community's vision and "sense of place";
- b. Detailed planning of infrastructure requirements; and
- c. The possibility of certifying a Program Environmental Impact Review (EIR) to streamline the processing of future development projects by reducing future California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analyses.

2. Challenges of proceeding with the Specific Plan approach include:

- a. The time, cost, and staff resources required to prepare the plan and the required EIR for adoption. Conservatively the Specific Plan adoption process and LCP amendment process would take 4+ years and cost around \$500,000.
- b. The uncertainty and difficulty of defining a project for an environmental document, given water storage constraints on new development.
- c. The plan will eventually become obsolete and/or limit flexibility to respond to opportunities necessitating a costly update.

City Council and the Planning Commission directed staff to proceed with preparation of an LCP Amendment to revise Policy LU-7.1 and LU-7.2, so that a Specific Plan is no longer required to rezone Timber Resources Industrial zoned property. Council identified the following considerations of the LCP only approach:

- a. The City Council and the Planning Commission can conduct joint community workshops and rework the Land Use Map, policies, and regulations in the draft Specific Plan into a Local Coastal Plan (LCP) amendment.
- b. As an applicant to the Coastal Commission, the City Council can submit the LCP amendment without completing an EIR. However, the City would still have to provide many background studies, which would cost an estimated \$150,000 (staff estimates that the following background studies would be required: traffic, tsunami, sea-level rise, water/wastewater, and geotechnical).

- c. Council also expressed concerns about the influence that the Coastal Commission could play in shaping the final zoning and land use policies for the site through the LCP process.

Based on Council direction, staff drafted a revised set of Mill Site rezoning policies for the Coastal General Plan (see Attachment 2 to view the track changes version of each policy) as follows:

Policy LU-7.1: Changes in Industrial Land Use. Require that any Local Coastal Program (LCP) amendments and rezoning of lands which are designated Timber Resources Industrial: 1) be subject to a comprehensive planning process; and 2) be submitted to, and effectively certified by, the Coastal Commission as an LCP amendment.

Policy LU-7.2: Comprehensive Planning Process Required. LCP amendments that propose to rezone lands designated Timber Resources Industrial must be developed through a comprehensive community-based planning process. Community participation shall be solicited throughout the planning process in accordance with established City practices and CLUDC requirements. The LCP amendment should:

- a) Identify new land use classifications, development policies, and standards;
- b) Identify potential connections for future transportation and utility infrastructure and public improvements;
- c) Map new zoning and transportation facilities; and
- d) Be consistent with the all policies of the Coastal Act and the Fort Bragg's LCP.

Discussion Point: Discuss and understand the proposed revisions of policies LU-7.1 and LU-7.2 of the Coastal General Plan. Do the proposed policies provide the right balance of structure and flexibility? Is there anything missing? Is there too much detail?

Staff will prepare an LCP amendment based on the direction provided by the Planning Commission and City Council.

2. Mill Site Planning Process

The City, Community, and Georgia-Pacific have invested many years and significant hours into the development of the draft Specific Plan. Attachment 3 summarizes the myriad of meetings that have been held on this topic over the past ten years. The draft Specific Plan has many well-articulated policies that will ensure that new development on the Mill Site conforms to the City Council/Planning Commission and community vision and goals for the site. However, given the passage of time since it was drafted, the documents need to be refreshed and revised, through further community input and a supplemental public planning process.

It is important to have a planning process which provides for effective and comprehensive involvement of the community in the redrafting of the Specific Plan into a comprehensive LCP amendment. In the past a community planning process would typically involve a large meeting with a presentation and then break out groups to grapple with a few specific issues and reporting back to the larger group. This type of process does not take advantage of new understandings about the importance of including opportunities for informed participation that suits people who may be uncomfortable in or intimidated by groups discussion. It also does not take advantage of new technologies that enable a much wider outreach and involvement of the public through web-based survey tools for example.

City Council and the Planning Commission could consider an alternative approach that would include a multiplicity of techniques to get the community involved in the process and obtain community input from as many members of the community as possible. The alternative approach could include one or

more of the following techniques:

1. Oversight of the planning process by the Mill Site Ad Hoc Committee. The committee would provide ongoing direction regarding the planning process and materials.
2. The process would begin with a two-day open house, one day at Town Hall and one day at the CV Starr Center. One workshop on a weekday and one on the weekend to maximize opportunities for participation. The open house would accommodate the active participation of people who prefer one-on-one and small workshop formats and those who have busy schedules. The open house could consist of:
 - a. Access to staff to answer questions all day long on the full range of topics with regard to the Mill Site rezoning.
 - b. Small workshops organized at intervals throughout the two days of the open house. The small workshops would include four tables set up for small group exercises which would include: 1) review and comment on the guiding principles for the reuse of the site; 2) develop a land use map and potential development amount; and 3) review and comment on key development policies from the Specific Plan for the LCP amendment. The meetings could be scheduled as follows
 - i. 9:00-10:30 AM
 - ii. 12:00-1:30 PM
 - iii. 3:30 – 5:00 PM
 - iv. 6:00 – 7:30 PM
 - c. The open house would also include a number of large poster boards which would allow participants to visualize, understand, and dialogue about the Mill Site reuse. Participants would be able to provide feedback on the poster boards by attaching sticky notes with comments and voting by dot. The poster boards would:
 - i. List the 2012 City Council's guiding principles for the reuse of the site;
 - ii. Illustrate potential mill site land use maps and the corresponding number of new housing units and new jobs for rezoning scenarios that allow for 25%, 50%, and 75% of the development allowed in the 2012 Specific Plan;
 - iii. include key policies from the Specific Plan for review, comment, and amendment
 - d. Participants would be invited to vote and attach comments throughout the day on all of the poster boards, including those developed by the public through the small workshops.
3. A Mill Site reuse survey using an on-line service would allow more public participation in the process. The survey could include an opportunity to provide feedback on the top land use maps, guiding principles, and key policies that would guide development. The survey would allow for further input from the wider community of Fort Bragg that does not typically participate in planning processes. Staff anticipates a very significant amount of participation from an on-line survey like this. The survey could be run for a couple of weeks to ensure the greatest level of participation.
4. Joint City Council and Planning Commission workshop. At this workshop, staff would summarize and present the results from the community-based planning process described above. This workshop would focus on City Council and Planning commission's vision and

direction for the reuse of the Mill Site, and would likely include further refinement to the guiding principles, the land use map, and the key policies that regulate development on the site.

Discussion Point: How should the community-based planning process proceed?

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City was awarded a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$50,000 to start this process. The grant funds will become available in March of 2017. Additionally, the Coastal Commission will likely release a round of grant funding later this year for Local Coastal Plan (LCP) amendments, which the rezoning of the Mill Site will require. The City could apply for up to \$200,000 from this funding source. If awarded, these funds would help to cover staff time and consultant costs associated with preparation of an LCP amendment and background studies.

CONSISTENCY:

The City's 2014 Economic Development Strategy specifically included 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 2017, including:

- 1) March - April: Submit LCP Amendment revising Policy LU 7.1 & LU 7.2 of the Coastal General Plan
- 2) March - August: Initial and ongoing meetings with regulatory and consulting agencies, including: Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo, Fish and Wildlife, Coastal Commission, Caltrans and others. Identify resources studies that will need to be completed and issues that will need to be explored in the Coastal Commissions CEQA document.
- 3) April: Engage our community, hold open house, small workshops, and implement survey
- 4) May or June: City Council/Planning Commission joint workshop on Mill Site Reuse LCP Amendment
- 5) Summer: Present to Coastal Commission and obtain preliminary feedback
- 6) July - October: Develop Mill Site Reuse LCP amendment
- 7) September: Develop and submit LCP Amendment application

2018: Update resource studies for submittal of the LCP Amendment. Hold public hearings on LCP Amendment and submit the Local Coastal Program Amendment to the Coastal Commission.

2019: Coastal Commission Action on Local Coastal Program Amendment.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Coastal Commission input on Mill Site Specific Plan
2. LCP Policy LU-7.1 & LU-7.2 Revisions
3. Mill Site Reuse Community Planning Process to Date
4. Glossary