



AGENCY:	City Council
MEETING DATE:	3/13/2017
DEPARTMENT:	CDD
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 POLICIES REQUIRING SPECIFIC PLAN(S) 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 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. Prior to that time, GP funded all City staff and consultant costs associated with preparation of the Mill Site Specific Plan and related studies and documents because they had submitted an application to the City to rezone the Mill Site.

At present, there are a number of local businesses who would like to relocate on the Mill Site. The current zoning, coupled with the Local Coastal Program (LCP) requirement that a Specific Plan be prepared prior to rezoning the site, impedes 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 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 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 proceeding with an LCP amendment to eliminate the requirement for a Specific Plan (by revising Coastal General Plan Policies LU-7.1 and LU-7.2).

This agenda item is brought forward to receive Council direction on two topics:

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

At the February 6, 2017 workshop, the City Council and Planning Commission provided preliminary feedback regarding the guiding principles for reuse of the Mill Site as defined in the previous Specific Plan process, as follows:

- 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 – concur (will be the subject of a City Council workshop in late March or early April).

The City Council and the Planning Commission indicated that the LCP Amendment/rezoning should be responsive to the critique and suggested changes that the California Coastal Commission provided on the Specific Plan (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 Specific Plan’s horizon of 30 years is too long. Councilmembers noted current limitations on the City’s water supply will likely necessitate a smaller development footprint. Additional direction from the Council and Planning Commission on these items will be sought in the context of a community planning process.

#### **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 City Council and Planning Commission work session, the benefits and challenges associated with adoption and implementation of a Specific Plan for rezoning the Mill Site were discussed.

1. Benefits of a Specific Plan include:

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

2. Challenges of proceeding with the Specific Plan include:

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

City Council and the Planning Commission agreed that the best course of action is to proceed with preparation of an LCP Amendment to revise Policy LU-7.1 and LU-7.2 so that a Specific Plan would not be required to rezone Timber Resources Industrial zoned property on the Mill Site. Coastal Commission staff has indicated that this LCP amendment would be processed as a minor amendment.

Council discussed the following considerations of the LCP only approach:

- a. A community planning process should be undertaken to retool the Land Use Map, policies and regulations in the draft Specific Plan into an LCP amendment.

- b. The City would submit the LCP amendment to the Coastal Commission without completing an EIR as the Coastal Commission will perform its own environmental review process (which is the “functional equivalent” of an EIR). The City would need to provide many background studies both to inform its planning process and to satisfy the Coastal Commission’s need for technical information for their environmental review. These studies are estimated to cost about \$150,000. Staff expects that background studies would include: traffic, tsunami, sea-level rise, water/wastewater, and geotechnical.
- c. Council expressed concern 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, a revised set of Mill Site rezoning policies for the Coastal General Plan has been drafted (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 *that addresses at least one-fourth of the Mill Site*. 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 Fort Bragg’s LCP.

**Discussion Point:** Discuss 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?

## 2. Community planning process for Mill Site rezoning

The City, community and Georgia-Pacific have invested many years into preparation of the draft Specific Plan. The staff report for the February 6, 2017 meeting included a summary of the many 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 policies need to be refreshed and possibly revised with further community input and a supplemental public planning process.

Staff recommends that the City Council consider a planning process that would include multiple techniques to get the community involved in the process and obtain community input from as many members of the community as possible. The approach could include the following:

1. Conduct a two-day open house, one day at Town Hall and one day at CV Starr Center. One workshop could happen on a weekday and one on a 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 could include tables set up for small group exercises as follows:
    - i. Review and comment on the guiding principles for the reuse of the site;
    - ii. Develop a land use map and potential development amount; and
    - iii. Review and comment on key development policies from the Specific Plan for the LCP amendment with meetings scheduled throughout the day and evening.
  - c. The open house could also include a number of large poster boards which would allow participants to visualize, understand and dialogue about the Mill Site reuse (some of the poster boards could be translated into Spanish). 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.
2. Conduct a Mill Site reuse survey on Survey Monkey (in both English and Spanish). 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 online survey like this. The survey could be run for a few weeks to ensure the greatest level of participation.
3. Joint City Council and Planning Commission workshops. At the workshops, staff would summarize and present the results from the community-based planning process described above. The workshops 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 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, though there is limited funding available and awards are likely to be in the \$50,000 range. 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 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 2017, including:

- 1) March - August: Initial and ongoing meetings with regulatory and consulting agencies, including: Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo, Department of 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 Commission's CEQA document.
- 2) April- May: Engage our community, hold open house, small workshops and implement survey.
- 3) May - August: City Council/Planning Commission workshops on Mill Site Reuse LCP Amendment
- 4) July - August: Present draft to Coastal Commission and obtain preliminary feedback
- 5) August - October: Prepare and finalize Mill Site Reuse LCP amendment

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

2019: Coastal Commission action on LCP Amendment.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Coastal Commission input on draft Mill Site Specific Plan
2. Track changes for Policy 7.1 and 7.2
3. Letter from Bob Merrill regarding LCP Amendment

**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

**City Clerk's Office Use Only**

Agency Action      ☐ Approved      ☐ Denied      ☐ Approved as Amended

Resolution No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Ordinance No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Moved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

Vote: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Deferred/Continued to meeting of: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Referred to: \_\_\_\_\_