



AGENCY:	Planning Commission
MEETING DATE:	2/14/2018
DEPARTMENT:	CDD
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## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

### **TITLE:**

**RECEIVE REPORT AND PROVIDE DIRECTION REGARDING MILL SITE DESIGN POLICIES**

### **ISSUE:**

Over the coming year, the Planning Commission, City Council and the Community will expand understanding and provide direction regarding which portions of the Specific Plan should be retained and rolled into the Major LCP Amendment and which should be discarded. Land Use regulations are complicated as they seek to shape and mold private sector development within the constraints of law. This is achieved through three primary tools:

1. Land Use Zoning, which defines the uses that are permitted within a zoning district and the location of that zoning district (this is a map);
2. Land Use Policies, which are broadly written and interpreted by City Staff and the Planning Commission to define and describe development outcomes and conditions (this is the General Plan); and
3. Land Use Regulations, which are narrowly written and include strictly applicable requirements for the development of any Land Use (The Zoning Ordinance).

The Mill Site Reuse LCP Amendment will include changes to all three of these components of the Local Coastal Program. There is no specific order in which the City should pursue revising these documents for the LCP Amendment; however, it is generally helpful to start from the big picture (vision, policy) and narrow our focus (regulation) as we move through this process. Additionally it is sometimes hard to understand the big picture without getting into the details, thus the Commission should feel comfortable bringing up any issue or question they may have at any time and staff will figure out how to address it in the planning process and how to include final direction regarding the issue or question in the LCP Amendment. It is also helpful to address key issues of concern first before moving on to the more mundane. Based on community comments at workshops and in the community survey, four key issues came to the fore: the amount of development, the design of development, the level of sustainability/open space, and the need for jobs and housing.

At the Planning Commission's January and February meetings, we began to explore the sustainability policies and guidelines and open space policies. In this staff report, we will focus on design guidelines.

The purpose of this Planning Commission workshop is to provide general direction regarding the appropriate emphasis and focus of the modified Design Guidelines (which came out of the Specific plan process) for the reuse of the site.

### **BACKGROUND:**

There have been numerous public meetings, including Planning Commission and City Council meetings, regarding the development of the Mill Site LCP Amendment. **Attachment 1** includes a summary of the full background of the amendment process.

### **ANALYSIS:**

The Design Guidelines provide a basis for assessing and requiring good design quality through the Design Review Permit process. The Design Guidelines address site design, architecture and design details of new development. They complement the development requirements found in the Coastal Land Use and Development Code. Where the standards in the CLUDC are requirements and must be met, Design Guidelines are expectations (results) that must be addressed but may be achieved in numerous ways. The purpose of Design Guidelines is to ensure that new buildings, and additions and alterations to existing buildings, are compatible on a city, neighborhood, and block level, have an engaging pedestrian orientation, and are designed to reflect the use of the structure. Are the basis for City staff and the Planning Commission to consider a Design Review Permit by providing the design elements that are preferred in new development. The Design Guidelines are also used by property owners and architects to understand the design issues that should be addressed.

In 2012, staff removed most of the design review requirements and recommendations from the Specific Plan and integrated them into the City's Citywide Design Guidelines. The design review guidelines for the Mill Site were placed in the City's Citywide Design Guidelines because this is the book the City uses when reviewing project designs everywhere within the City.

In 2012, the consultant's vision was that the Mill Site would have more stringent and proscriptive design requirements than the rest of Fort Bragg. When reviewing the Guiding Principles of Mill Site development in 2017, the Council and Commission reaffirmed the importance of incorporating high quality design criteria for all development on the Mill Site. The Design Guidelines would be the primary tool to enact this Guiding Principle.

Staff will begin the process of revision of the Design Guidelines with community, Commission and Council direction. As the Design Guidelines have four chapters, it is helpful to start the process on a small scale to get a sense of City Council and Planning Commission direction before taking on the entire document. Therefore, staff has included the Commercial District chapter of the Citywide Design Guidelines with the additions proposed in 2012 as **Attachment 2**. The Commission is encouraged to review the Commercial District standards and provide general direction to staff regarding four primary questions:

- 1. Consider the trade-off between proscriptive design requirements and feasibility/flexibility. If the City mandates proscriptive design, this will likely increase the cost of construction, affect affordability and reduce flexibility. It may result in a "sameness" of design on the Mill Site. Alternatively, by providing proscriptive design requirements the Design Guidelines might improve the overall quality of design on the Mill Site.**

For example, the un-adopted Design Guideline which were revised in 2012 through the Specific Planning process, included on page 2-18 a new table that has very specific ideas about building materials. While certainly everyone would agree that the materials under the encouraged category are desirable for Mill Site projects, some of the materials under the discouraged category could also be beautiful.

The following table identifies materials that are encouraged, acceptable and discouraged for use on a building's façade:

Encouraged	Acceptable	Discouraged
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horizontal and vertical redwood or solid wood siding</li> <li>• Shingle siding</li> <li>• Smooth stucco, hand troweled stucco</li> <li>• Fiber cement or other imitation wood siding with an authentic appearance</li> <li>• Other like materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imitation or real brick and rock with authentic appearance, wrapped corners and true material scale</li> <li>• Board and batten</li> <li>• Formed concrete</li> <li>• Steel</li> <li>• Glass block</li> <li>• Corrugated metal</li> <li>• Other like materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T1-11 or other low quality wood siding</li> <li>• Textured/rough stucco</li> <li>• Corrugated fiberglass</li> <li>• Concrete block</li> <li>• Ceramic tile</li> <li>• Slump rock</li> <li>• Highly tinted, reflective or opaque glass</li> <li>• Silver aluminum window and door frames</li> <li>• Other like materials</li> </ul>

Please review Chapter 2 and determine if overall you feel that the additions to the Design Guidelines (*in orange italics*) are generally useful and helpful or are they over reaching and proscriptive?

**2. Consider the Mill Site's relationship with established development elsewhere in the City. Requiring more stringent Design Guidelines on the Mill Site may encourage or concentrate development elsewhere in the City where the standards are more relaxed.**

Land values are often greater the closer the property is to the ocean. If the City adopts strict Design Guidelines on the Mill Site, future developers may find it less expensive and less onerous to develop property elsewhere in town, thereby slowing the growth of the Mill Site. If the Commission feels that encouraging and incentivizing development on the Mill Site is a priority, it should consider less strict Design Guidelines.

**3. How should the Design Guidelines prioritize site design (i.e. orientation, circulation, usable open space, landscaping, etc.) versus architectural design (i.e. massing, visual interest, building materials, signage, etc.)?**

As presently written, the draft 2012 Design Guidelines includes fairly prescriptive standards relating to both site design and architectural design. Site design standards require placement of landscape buffers, screening between uses, vehicular and pedestrian circulation policies and limitations on building placement, for example. While these policies ensure attractive and accommodating development, they can greatly limit the options property owners have for designing their projects. Additionally, requiring projects to dedicate large percentages of their land area to site amenities or buffers can restrict higher density development, which is a cornerstone of smart growth.

Architectural standards focus on building attributes like roof types, window placement, architectural details, materials and colors. High quality architectural requirements, such as requiring development match the traditional styles of historical Fort Bragg, can help development look specific to our area, as opposed to template designs that could be built in any town.

Site design and architectural standards work in tandem to raise the overall quality of development. However, some development patterns can make one more important than the other. For example, the City's Central Business District consists of properties with a high percentage of lot coverage. This pulls buildings all the way to the sidewalk, in some instances, and allows buildings to be side-by-side. Imposing high standards for landscaping, buffers between uses and open space would prohibit a development pattern like we see in the Central Business District today. The importance of buildings in

dense areas is greater than of site design, and placing an emphasis on architectural design may be more appropriate.

On the other hand, the City's General Commercial District requires buildings be set further apart and has more requirements for site design. This is appropriate in districts that mix commercial and residential uses, or are adjacent to residential neighborhoods. In these cases, site design may be a greater priority than architectural design.

The Commission should consider the importance of both site design standards and architectural standards for the Mill Site's commercial zoning districts, and what balance is most appropriate.

- 4. Should certain zoning districts, use types, or locations have more or less stringent Design Guidelines than others? For example, development within a certain distance from open space (i.e. the Coastal Trail or other future parks) could be subject to higher design standards than uses adjacent to or near existing development.**

The 2012 draft Design Guidelines segregate design requirements by zoning district. The Commission could consider gradating the complexity and specificity of requirements based on distance from the Coastal Trail or other future parks. This approach could be applied if the Commission feels that the location of development has a greater impact on the need for high quality design than does the use or zoning district.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

1. Provide Direction to Staff regarding the following:
  - a. Provide general direction regarding the appropriate emphasis and focus of the modified Design Guidelines (which came out of the Specific plan process) for the reuse of the site.

#### **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:**

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. Prepare a preferred Land Use Plan for the LCP amendment for rezoning of the Mill Site.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Reuse Plan Background
2. Design Guidelines - Chapter 2

**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