



AGENDA MEMO

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING DATE: JULY 23, 2009

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ITEM DESCRIPTION: DIR-35033 - APPLICANT/OWNER: CITY OF LAS VEGAS

**** CONDITIONS ****

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: NO RECOMMENDATION

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**** STAFF REPORT ****

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a progress report by the Planning & Development Department regarding the development of walkable community plans, as discussed at the March 23rd 2009 Joint City Council and Planning commission workshop.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by P&D, Fire, Bldg., etc and Property Sales</i>	
03/23/09	At the Joint City Council and Planning Commission Workshop, walkable community plans were discussed as contributing to the implementation of the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan, and also assist with sustainability goals and improving the quality of life of residents.
<i>Neighborhood Meeting</i>	
N/A	Neighborhood meetings have not yet been held. The initial public input session for the Meadows Land and Village Square plans will tentatively be held in August 2009.

ANALYSIS

The development of walkable community plans was first discussed at the Joint City Council and Planning Commission Workshop, held on 23 March, 2009. At the meeting, Planning & Development Department staff provided information regarding the American Planning Associations Great Neighborhoods award program, and described the qualities and characteristics of great neighborhoods. It was noted that the quality of neighborhoods is a vital factor in defining the character of a city, and that residents and visitors alike form impressions of a city based on the appearance of its neighborhoods. To that end, staff is initiating a series of walkable community plans as a means to facilitate walking and biking within neighborhoods, and to encourage reinvestment and neighborhood pride.

General Information Walkable Community Plans

Walkable community plans are plan documents that focus on improving walkability within a defined neighborhood area. The study area will generally be limited to a half-mile radius, which is equivalent to a 10-minute walk for most pedestrians.

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The goals of walkable community plans are as follows:

- Improve pedestrian access to the needs of daily life, which include grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, schools, parks;
- Reduce traffic congestion by encouraging walking or cycling for local trips;
- Enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety and comfort, through the provision of a complete sidewalk network, shaded sidewalks, defined bicycle lanes, and improved pedestrian crosswalks; and
- Identify and promote needed amenities for the neighborhood that will reduce the need for trips outside of the neighborhood.

Neighborhoods to be Studied

A total of six neighborhoods have been identified for study by the Planning & Development Department. The areas were selected by doing a GIS (Geographic Information Systems) query, evaluating neighborhoods by the proximity of residences to neighborhood commercial areas and recreational amenities. The areas that have been selected for study are as follows:

- Meadows Lane (between Valley View Boulevard and Decatur Boulevard)
- Village Square (intersection of Sahara Avenue and Ft. Apache Road)
- Eastern (intersection of Eastern Avenue/Charleston Boulevard/Fremont Street)
- Buffalo (between Cheyenne Avenue and Smoke Ranch Road)
- West Side (intersection of Owens Avenue and H Street)
- Rancho (intersection of Rancho Drive and Craig Road)

Walkable Community Plan Contents

Each walkable community plan document will define the study area, provide existing conditions, and propose a list of improvements to the neighborhood. Specifically, the plans will cover the following items:

- Introduction, including study area boundaries, background, and history of the neighborhood;
- Existing conditions review, including a study of the existing sidewalk network, bicycle paths, transit stops and shelters, and neighborhood amenities and recreation areas.
- Analysis of proposed improvements, including improvements and additions to the sidewalk network, street trees and other streetscape enhancements to improve pedestrian comfort and safety, crosswalk improvements, addition of bicycle lanes, and removal of any impediments to pedestrian accessibility.
- An implementation plan, listing all action items and possible funding sources.

Walkable Community Plan Development and Adoption Process

The process for the development of each walkable community plan is intended to follow the steps below:

- Preparation of background information and study of existing conditions by Planning & Development staff, including consultation with other departments.
- Public input sessions with neighborhood property owners, business owners, and any associations within the study area to discuss existing conditions and identify improvements that will improve walkability;

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- Development of a draft plan by Planning & Development staff, with internal review by other departments;
- Second public input session to review the draft plan document and receive comments;
- Planning Commission input and review of the draft document, and recommendations to City Council;
- City Council review and adoption of the walkable community plan; and
- Implementation of the walkable community plan.

Timeframe for Development of Walkable Community Plans

It is intended that the Planning & Development Department will produce two walkable community plans for adoption each year. The initial schedule is as follows:

Year: 2009

- Meadows Lane
- Village Square

Year 2010

- West Side
- Eastern

Year 2011

- Buffalo
- Rancho

After the adoption of the first group of walkable community plans, additional areas will be selected for study. The timeframe for the development of the plans may be modified depending on the initiation of any capital projects or private developments that may be proposed for the area.

Progress to Date

The first two areas selected for study are the Meadows Lane area, located in the vicinity of the Meadows Mall, and the Village Square area, centered on the intersection of Sahara Avenue and Ft. Apache Road. The initial research and study of existing conditions has been completed for both neighborhoods, and the first public input meeting will be scheduled in August 2009. Additional updates on the development of the plan documents will be given to Planning Commission as work progresses.

NOTICES MAILED

NEWSPAPER ONLY

APPROVALS

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PROTESTS

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