



AGENDA MEMO - PLANNING

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING DATE: OCTOBER 11, 2011

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING

ITEM DESCRIPTION: APPLICANT/OWNER: CITY OF LAS VEGAS

**** STAFF RECOMMENDATION(S) ****

<i>CASE NUMBER</i>	<i>RECOMMENDATION</i>	<i>REQUIRED FOR APPROVAL</i>
DIR-41972	Staff recommends APPROVAL	

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**** STAFF REPORT ****

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a presentation of the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan final draft. Policies within the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan direct the City to review existing neighborhoods for opportunities to include design elements such as street furniture, landscaping, and pavement treatments to promote walkability. The Sahara West Walkable Community Plan (from here on out, referred to as the ‘Plan’) focuses on the neighborhood within a half-mile radius of the intersection of Sahara Avenue and Fort Apache Road. The Plan serves as a guiding document designed to offer walkable components to enhance existing community amenities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by P&D, Fire, Bldg., etc</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, assist with sustainability goals as well as improving the quality of life of residents.
07/23/09	The Department of Planning provided an update (DIR-35033) on the development of walkable community plans, outlining the six areas of the city to be targeted for such plans, to the Planning Commission.
12/03/09	The Department of Planning provided an update (DIR-35929) regarding the development of walkable community and corridor plans, including a summary of the initial public meeting, to the Planning Commission.

<i>Neighborhood Meeting</i>	
08/20/09	A neighborhood meeting was held at the M.J. Christensen Elementary School, 9001 Mariner Cove Drive at 6:00 PM. The focus of the meeting was the discussion of the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan. Approximately ten members of the public were present at this meeting.
03/06/10	The Department of Planning hosted an informational table to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan at the Regional Transportation Commission’s Transportation Fair at the Meadows Mall, 4701 Meadows Lane.
04/08/10	The Department of Planning attended the Peccole Ranch Community Association meeting to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan, 9501 Red Hills Road.
04/09/10	The Department of Planning hosted an information table to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan at the entry to the Albertsons Grocery Store, 2550 South Fort Apache Road.

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04/21/10	The Department of Planning attended the Canyon Gate Home Owners Association meeting to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan, 8831 West Sahara Avenue.
04/21/10	The Department of Planning attended the Section 7 Community Association meeting to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan, 2001 Canyon Gate Drive.
04/23/10	The Department of Planning hosted an information table to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan at the entry to the Sahara West Public Library, 9600 West Sahara Avenue.
04/27/10	The Department of Planning attended the West Sahara Community Association meeting to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan, 8685 West Sahara Avenue, Suite 280.
05/13/10	The Department of Planning attended the Residence at Canyon Gate Home Owners Association meeting to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan, 2200 South Fort Apache Road.
07/06/10	The Department of Planning attended the Baycliff Creeks Home Owners Association meeting to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan, 9600 West Sahara Avenue.
09/09/10	The Department of Planning attended the Residence at Canyon Gate Home Owners Association meeting to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan, 2200 South Fort Apache Road.
10/16/10	The Department of Planning attended the Peccole Ranch Community Association meeting to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan, 9501 Red Hills Road.
11/03/10	The Department of Planning attended the Baycliff Creeks Home Owners Association meeting to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan, 9600 West Sahara Avenue.
11/23/10	The Department of Planning attended the West Sahara Community Association meeting to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan, 8685 West Sahara Avenue, Suite 280.
12/11/10	The Department of Planning hosted an informational table to discuss the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan at The Lakes Festival of Lights event, located at the intersection of Lake East and Lake Sahara Drives.
07/26/11	A neighborhood meeting was held at the Peccole Ranch Community Center, 9501 Red Hills Road at 6:00 PM. The focus of the meeting was the presentation of the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan final draft. Approximately 25 members of the public were present at this meeting.
08/30/11	A neighborhood meeting was held at the Clarence Piggott Elementary School, 9601 Red Hills Road at 6:00 PM. The focus of the meeting was the presentation of the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan final draft. A total of 11 members of the public were present at this meeting.

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ANALYSIS

The city of Las Vegas has recognized the needs for walkable communities and has been taking the appropriate steps to foster their development. Several policies within the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan direct the City to review existing neighborhoods for opportunities to promote walkability. In the fall of 2009, the Department of Planning held an open house meeting with community members to survey the community interest in the development of a walkable community plan and to find out what the public wanted addressed in such a plan.

Comments received from this open house focused on the following issues:

- Completing the sidewalk network within the neighborhood;
- Placing additional crosswalks along Fort Apaca Road while making existing community crossings safer;
- Providing reductions in travel lanes to reduce vehicle speeds through the community;
- The need for additional shade trees;
- The need for shaded bus shelters; and
- The desire to remove of obstacles from sidewalks.

After this initial contact with community members, staff began the process of area data collection, identification of neighborhood social issues, physical data collection, physical characteristics that constitute the community, as well as the identification of the community goals. As these steps were completed staff met with community members during the spring of 2010 and performed nine outreach sessions at community association meetings, the public library and at the grocery store within the plan area. These meetings provided community members with updates on the plan status and allowed direct interaction between the residents and the Department of Planning.

A second set of contact was initiated with the community in the fall of 2010, with another five community association meetings and events attended. These meetings helped guide the development of the draft plan. As the final draft plan was completed, two final community-wide public open house meetings were held by the Department of Planning to address any remaining comments or concerns expressed by the community. Community feedback was instrumental in refining the plan document to accurately address the needs of the community.

The Sahara West Walkable Community Plan document is divided into four main sections. They are:

- Introduction
- Sahara West Walkable Community Plan
- Implementation
- Appendix

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Introduction:

This portion of the plan identifies walkable communities, their importance within our city, and the benefits of living in a walkable environment. Support for walkable communities, as discussed in the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan, the Unified Development Code, the Community Design Element, the Resolution in Support of Governmental Action to Reduce Global Warming Pollution (R-57-2006) and the Resolution Adopting a Sustainable Energy Strategy for the City of Las Vegas (R-50-2008) are discussed within this portion of the plan, as is the methodology as to how the Sahara West Plan area was selected. Examples of walkable community types are provided, indicating the wide range of forms, settings, locations and types of environments pedestrian-oriented development occurs in.

Sahara West Walkable Community Plan:

The Sahara West Walkable Community Plan portion of the document inventories the community and identifies opportunities and constraints towards creating a walkable community plan. This portion of the plan is further broken down into several subsections detailing Community Amenities, Community Design, Complete Streets and Community Input and Support. Demographics of the community are examined, while a detailed explanation of the public hearing and meeting process leading up to the development of the Plan document are discussed in the Community Input and Support section.

A full inventory of the Community Amenities is provided, detailing the shopping centers within the Plan area, walking distances between residential and retail destinations and a breakdown of the number of businesses, religious facilities, schools and recreation facilities are located within the Plan area. One of the issues noted is that the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan area contains a high concentration of retail and office uses and a diverse mixture of single and multi-family residential housing options, yet provides no public recreation facilities.

Elements that address the look and circulation throughout the Plan area are discussed in the Community Design portion of the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan document. These elements include the connectivity within the Plan area, incorporating an analyses on the connectivity ratio for the Plan area, pedestrian street crossings, crosswalks, mid-block crossings, pedestrian obstacles, curb cuts and safe routes to schools. Each discussion provides examples, locations, maps or photographs within the plan area that have or need these connectivity elements and explains how improvements could be made to achieve better connections. Other community design elements discussed include the availability, locations and types of transit stops within the community, the impacts of landscape upon community design and the importance of shade and a comprehensive tree canopy as a method to promote and support walkability.

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The Complete Streets portion of this Plan section examines the major roadways within the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan document, providing an inventory of existing roadways, their widths, amenities and pedestrian facilities, as well as suggested improvements to those streets that would create a more walkable environment. These suggestions address Sahara Avenue, Fort Apache Road, Lake North Drive, Mariner Cove Drive, Grand Canyon Drive, Preakness Pass and Crystal Water Way and carry a wide-range of proposed implementations including additional sidewalks, shade trees, crossings, bike lanes and vehicle lane width reductions.

Plan Implementation:

The Plan Implementation portion of the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan document outlines recommendations that will permit for greater walkability within the Plan area. The funding sources to implement the recommendations may include, but are not limited to, special improvement districts, federal grants or piecemeal as new development occurs. Based on the input received from public meetings, a total of 44 recommendations are made, ranging from community design, connectivity, transit stop, landscaping and roadway improvements. These recommendations are based on the analysis, inventory and observations that were recorded and discussed in the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan section of the Plan document.

Appendix:

The Appendix contains a development check list that was designed to ensure that any new development within the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan area contains the pedestrian-oriented features found in the Unified Development Code. The inclusion of this checklist is meant to highlight required features within the Unified Development Code as items which are key to promoting walkability.

SUMMARY

The Department of Planning has worked to engage residents within the Sahara West Walkable Community Plan area before, during and after the development of the draft Plan document. The components found within the Plan are those which were highlighted by the community members as issues, concerns or areas in need of improvement. Funding for the Plan document may include Federal Grants, Special Improvement Districts or piecemeal as new development occurs; however, no permanent or secure source has been identified. The Plan serves as a guiding document designed to offer walkable components to enhance existing community amenities and fulfils Recommendation #2 of the Las Vegas 2020 Master Plan and meets the Community Design Element strategy of creating opportunities for nodes or districts with identifying amenities that foster community ownership and enhance unique characteristics.

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NOTICES MAILED NEWSPAPER ONLY

APPROVALS 0

PROTESTS 0