



CITY OF CARSON
PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

PUBLIC HEARING: July 23, 2019
SUBJECT: General Plan Update – Carson 2040
APPLICANT: City of Carson
Community Development Department
Planning Division
701 E. Carson Street
Carson, California, 90745
REQUEST: Joint Planning Commission & General Plan Advisory
Committee (GPAC) Workshop on the Alternatives Report
PROPERTY INVOLVED: City-wide

Item 6A

I. TITLE

Carson General Plan Update- Alternatives Report

II. SUMMARY

The General Plan update process has been underway since Fall 2017. In the first phase of the update process, the consultant team produced an Existing Conditions Report that offered a detailed assessment of existing conditions, trends, and opportunities. Topics analyzed in the report included land use and development, community design and character; economic and demographic conditions; circulation; environmental constraints and opportunities; public facilities and services; and environmental justice and public health. The report was developed using inputs from stakeholder interviews, neighborhood and pop-up outreach and City Staff. The Existing Conditions Report was presented to the City Council and Planning Commission on February 13, 2018 and the final report can be found at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5991f4e96a4963f2e46af74d/t/5cabb85dc83025d6b439f7af/1554757740866/Carson2040+ECR+Volume+2+Revised+05032018+compressed.pdf.pdf>.

The second phase of the update process included the development of Vision Statement and Guiding Principles. This was achieved through considerable community outreach. Input from community members and stakeholders was collected through an online survey, community workshops, stakeholder interviews, community and decision-maker meetings, and from the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC). Decision-makers also provided input during a joint City Council-Planning Commission study session. The community input was used to develop the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles, which was refined with input from the GPAC and is presented in this report.

During this, the third phase of the update process, the consultant team produced three land-use alternatives and an Alternatives Report that seeks to achieve the established Vision Statement and Guiding Principles. To develop the three alternatives, potential “opportunity sites”—sites with greatest potential for land use or intensity change over the next 20 years—were identified within the Planning Area, by mapping vacant and underutilized parcels using Los Angeles County Assessor’s data, local knowledge, input from City staff and the community, and focused windshield surveys. The three land-use alternatives were then developed using the mapped opportunity sites and inputs from stakeholders, decision makers and GPAC collected during the second phase.

The proposed land-use alternatives were circulated for public review during Winter/Spring 2019 and public reaction and responses collected through an online survey, neighborhood and pop-up outreach at several City events and a community workshop held May 22, 2019.

This report summarizes the key findings of the Alternatives Report and community input on the three land-use alternatives and seeks Planning Commission & GPAC’s input. Based on input from this meeting, staff and the consultant team will prepare a preferred plan for City Council consideration; the preferred plan may be one of the three alternatives or may be a hybrid of two or three alternatives.

III. BACKGROUND

Purpose

The purpose of this Joint Session is for the GPAC and Planning Commission to jointly discuss the Alternatives Report that was developed following the visioning exercise and community survey. All three alternatives seek to achieve the objectives and vision of the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles. They explore different ways in which different land uses, including office, retail, housing, etc. can be distributed throughout the City. All three alternatives enhance neighborhood connectivity (pedestrian and bicycle networks); create a continuous park/trail along the Dominguez Channel; continue the economic development growth along Carson Street into other parts of the City; create neighborhood-serving retail near California State University Dominguez Hills and in the southern party of the City; preserve existing single-family neighborhoods; retain and expand key industrial uses; and create buffers between residential and industrial land uses. All the four chapters of the Alternatives Report can be found at: <https://www.carson2040.com/reports-and-products>

IV. ANALYSIS

Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

A vision is an aspirational description of what the community would like to be in the future. It is a summary of shared goals to be achieved by the Carson General Plan. It is based on input from the community, developed through stakeholder interviews, community workshops and pop-up outreach, General Plan Advisory Committee meetings, City Council and Planning Commission workshops, and an online community survey.

Vision Statement

Carson in 2040 is a vibrant, diverse, and energetic place that embraces technology, creativity, and innovation. Residents have access to quality jobs, housing, education, services and a fiscally-sound government. Businesses have access to infrastructure, investment, workforce training, and a collaborative environment. The community is filled with thriving neighborhoods and strategically located new development with inviting spaces for working, living, learning, dining, gathering, and recreation.

Guiding Principles

1. Embrace development and technology that fosters an adaptable, modern city.
2. Promote vibrant, safe, and walkable mixed-use districts and neighborhoods and revitalized corridors.
3. Provide a diverse array of housing types to meet the needs of all segments of the community.
4. Support a diversified economy with a range of employment opportunities for all residents, a fiscally-sound local government, and investment in infrastructure.
5. Encourage development of regional-scale destinations, as well as neighborhood-serving retail and amenities.
6. Foster harmony between industrial and residential land uses.
7. Improve public health and sustainability
8. Promote development of a cohesive open space system.
9. Enhance the public realm and promote quality design.
10. Emphasize a diversity of transportation modes and choices.

Alternatives

Alternatives explore different ways in which various land uses, including office, retail, housing, industrial, and open space, could be distributed throughout the City of Carson. They are designed to present a range of choices that would allow for community input and evaluation of the impacts associated with different land use decisions. This analysis is a tool to identify and quantify areas in Carson where future development is most likely to occur throughout the General Plan Horizon (through the year 2040). The alternatives maps can be found at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5991f4e96a4963f2e46af74d/t/5cae8b5753450a7224e8a218/1554942827385/Carson2040+All+Alternatives.pdf>

Alternative 1: Core

The Core Alternative seeks to concentrate new development in a central area in the city, expanding on the success of recent development along Carson Street. New development would be concentrated in approximately a 1.5 mile radius from Carson Street and Avalon Boulevard, resulting in a vibrant, connected core area with a diverse mix of uses. Streetscape, pedestrian, and bicycle-way improvements will be focused in this core area to promote active, walkable environments, with easy access to stores, services, parks, and other public uses. Additional development would take place in select focus areas outside of this core.

The mixed-use pattern of new development along Carson Street is envisioned to expand along the portion of the corridor between I-110 and Wilmington Avenue. A density increase overlay is proposed on the blocks north and south of Carson Street to provide additional housing that reflects a density more similar to a “downtown.” Avalon Boulevard would connect the inner core area to key large-scale development opportunities along I-405, including the 157-acre District at South Bay project as well as the South Bay Pavilion.

Alternative 2: Centers

Alternative 2 focuses on multimodal development throughout the City. While each node or center will contain a different mix of uses, depending on location and available opportunity sites, each will contain various housing, employment, and commercial uses in a walkable, higher-density pattern. These centers will not only accommodate new projected growth in the community, but they will also act as focus areas for the surrounding neighborhoods, providing stores and services to existing neighborhoods that lack them and an improved pedestrian-scale public realm with cafes, restaurants, and public gathering places. The radius around each node is approximately one-half mile, or a ten-minute walking distance, in order to keep development walkable.

Carson Street redevelopment is still envisioned to expand, though concentrated around the intersections of Carson and Main Street, and Carson Street and Avalon Boulevard, and at densities somewhat lower than envisioned in the Core Alternative. Additional centers are proposed in the vicinity of Main Street and Del Amo Boulevard, which complements development of the District at South Bay and takes advantage of proximity to major highways. The South Bay Pavilion is another center, which provides retail and visitor commercial (i.e. hotels, entertainment) uses close to the major thoroughfares and transitions into mixed-use, office, and industrial flex uses further from the highway. In another center, industrial flex and intensification of underutilized industrial parcels create an employment-centered mixed-use area in proximity to the Del Amo Blue Line Station. Other centers provide more housing and commercial uses near California State University Dominguez Hills and in the southern portion of the city around Main Street and Sepulveda Boulevard.

The Centers are connected via arterial streets redeveloped as greenways that improve mobility and provide a consistent, welcoming image for the City. Additional density is also proposed in the City's industrial areas. While some of the opportunity sites identified in the Centers Alternative are similar to the Core Alternative, they are proposed at different densities and with different uses.

Alternative 3: Corridors

The Corridor Alternative clusters redevelopment around major thoroughfares throughout the City, with an increased focus on corridors with the greatest development opportunities. Development of a mix of uses along these corridors is integrated with updated streetscapes and linkages between neighborhoods. The overall scale and density of development would vary somewhat throughout the City; however, overall the density of development would be lower than in the Core or Centers alternatives and is more evenly spread throughout the City. Generally, mixed-use development is proposed along major streets, with supporting retail, housing, office, and employment uses around the periphery of the mixed-use areas. Main Street, Figueroa Street, and Broadway are revitalized from nearly the southern border to the northern border of the City. The Carson Street redevelopment is extended from the City's western border to Wilmington Avenue, with some additional commercial redevelopment envisioned along Carson Street in the Lincoln Village neighborhood. Additional development is proposed along Alameda Street, Sepulveda Boulevard, Del Amo Boulevard, and Avalon Boulevard.

Defining features of this alternative are greenway connectors. Arterial streets would be redeveloped as multi-modal boulevards with tree canopies, linear parks, medians, and/or trails running parallel to the street. The Dominguez Channel would become a "green spine" of a connected open space system. The boulevards are envisioned as "complete streets" that incorporate landscaping, bikeways, pedestrian safety improvements, and other measures that foster a strong image and identity for the City, while also addressing the ease of traveling throughout the City, in turn spurring revitalization.

Comparison of Alternatives

The alternatives are designed to model a range of growth scenarios. Residential and non-residential land uses vary by corridor depending on the alternative. This variation in land uses would result in varying population, housing, jobs, and non-residential square footages by alternative in 2040.

The Core Alternative has the least amount of housing and population growth, and the Centers Alternative the highest, although the difference in total housing and population between the alternatives is modest. The alternatives differ more greatly in the amount of non-residential growth and resultant jobs. All alternatives would result in large increases in retail jobs, although the Corridors Alternative has the least growth in this sector. The Core Alternative shows the largest growth in office jobs and the smallest growth in industrial jobs. The Core Alternative, which also has the lowest population growth, results in the largest growth in overall jobs. The Core Alternative proposes the most office use of the three alternatives and the least amount of multi-family development. The Centers Alternative proposes the most industrial land use of the three alternatives, and it has the largest expected population growth, leading to the highest average City service costs among the alternatives.

Traffic Impacts

The three land use alternatives were converted into the format necessary for incorporation in the regional Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) travel demand model 2040 future scenario. A model run was conducted for existing conditions, future baseline, and each alternative. The purpose of this process was to evaluate and describe the overall traffic effects of each land use alternative. A much more detailed evaluation of transportation impacts will be conducted when a preferred land use alternative for the General Plan is identified. That evaluation will form the basis for the transportation chapter of the General Plan EIR.

The Core Alternative focuses almost all the growth on the area on both sides of the I-405 freeway between the I-110 freeway and the I-405 ramps on Carson Street. The Centers Alternative focuses growth on six centers throughout the City. The Centers overlap with the growth area in the Core Alternative as well as including centers around Main and Victoria Streets, Santa Fe Avenue and Del Amo Boulevard, and Main Street and Sepulveda Boulevard. The Corridors Alternative directs growth around the following five corridors in the City: Main Street, Avalon Boulevard, Del Amo Boulevard, Carson Street, and Sepulveda Boulevard.

The preliminary Level of Service (LOS) analysis and volume forecasts show substantial overlap for many of the future potential areas of congestion for all three alternatives. Changes in land use and travel patterns to/from freeways that provide regional access help explain these similarities. Some of the primary differences between scenarios include:

- Core: Areas of potential congestion most closely focused in core areas of change near I-405 and extending north of I-405 on Main Street.
- Centers: This alternative shows increases in volumes in other areas such as the eastern segment of Del Amo Boulevard, western segments of Sepulveda Boulevard, and Main Street further north.
- Corridors: This alternative shows additional increases in volumes in the northeastern area of the City and the central section of Del Amo Boulevard.

Once a future land use plan is selected, additional transportation improvements will be developed and analyzed along with land use changes. These changes will include improvements targeted at enhancing connectivity for all modes of transportation and mitigating areas of congestion in the network.

Fiscal Impacts

This section compares the fiscal impacts to the City's General Fund from development resulting under the three alternatives. The City's current budget is used as the basis for calculating revenues to the General Fund and City service costs likely to be incurred by the new development proposed in each buildout alternative.

Revenues were estimated using the City's current tax categories and rates. Third-party sources were used to estimate revenue from utilities usage, average daily rate for hotels, and other revenue sources on a per square foot basis. HR&A, the economic sub-consultant, made assumptions regarding the delivery rate of each land use in the alternatives. Turnover and price appreciation models were used to estimate property tax revenue over time to account for California's Proposition 13, which limits increases in property taxes. The turnover and appreciation

rates were determined by HR&A after conducting a survey of property sales in the City over the last ten years as documented by CoStar. The analysis assumes continuation of current economic circumstances. The analysis also assumes continuation of all current taxes and tax rates, tax calculation methods, and current levels of municipal services.

City revenues vary by land use. The major municipal revenue categories include property tax, utility users' tax, sales tax, business license tax, and transient occupancy tax. City service costs also vary by land use. City service costs are calculated on a "resident-equivalent" basis and in general, the more time a building occupant spends in the City, the more costs they incur.

Each buildout alternative has a different land use profile with different amounts of each land use. All three buildout alternatives yield a net positive impact on the General Fund. The Corridors Alternative proposes the least amount of new building area which results in it having the lowest revenues to the General Fund. The Centers Alternative has the largest proportion of multi-family uses and the largest expected population growth, leading to smallest net impact to the General Fund. The Core Alternative has the higher service costs than the Corridors Alternative, but revenues from sales taxes and business licenses taxes offset these costs, to result in the largest net impact of all three alternatives.

Community Outreach Summary

Community input was obtained through an online survey that was distributed digitally to over 3,000 people. Survey responses were also collected at several community events. 90% of survey respondents were residents, 47% have lived in Carson for over 20 years and majority (44.4%) ranged in age from 45-54 years. The General community consensus is a preference for Alternative 2: Centers (40.5%) followed by Alternative 3: Corridors (27.78%), Alternative 1: Core (23.02) and a combination of two or more (8.73%). Full summary report can be found at:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5991f4e96a4963f2e46af74d/t/5d30d92c45ab97001fbbf44/1563482418657/Summary+Report+on+the+Alternatives+Workshop.pdf>

V. CONCLUSIONS

The Core Alternatives is more net fiscally positive than the other buildout alternatives. This can be attributed to more building area dedicated to office and retail use, which increase business license tax revenue as well as sales and property tax revenue. It is important to remember that shifting real estate markets and changes in the economy as a whole could alter this fiscal analysis.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The consultant team will produce a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and presented to the Planning Commission at a later date.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Commission & GPAC:

- **DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION** for the Preferred Alternative Plan development

Prepared by: Alvie Betancourt, Planning Manager