

Pleasanton Council Urged Not to Make East Pleasanton a Dumping Ground for High Density Housing

The Pleasanton City Council offered input on six different specific plan options for East Pleasanton. Among the issues the council was asked to comment on were proposed development outside the urban growth boundary, number of housing units, circulation elements such as the extension of El Charro Road to Stanley Boulevard, potential school site, and whether the development should be required to pay its infrastructure. Staff also wanted to know whether the council wanted to locate a majority of the city's Regional Housing Need Assessment (RHNA) within the area, as well as the mix of single family and multifamily units.

Brian Dolan, director of development, told the council that the city's next housing element update with zoning for RHNA numbers is due by the end of 2014. The goal is to complete the specific plan before that time. When asked, he said the city needs to zone for 797 units for 2014-22 with 111 at 30 units to the acre, 405 units at 23 to 30 units to the acre, and 281 units at above moderate income at any density.

Options for housing in the six plans ranged from 1000 units in option 1 to 2,279 homes in option 6. A task force has been working on concepts for a specific plan for development on 1125 acres on the eastside of the city. About 400 acres is considered to be developable, with 100 acres located outside the urban growth boundary.

Seven hundred acres are part of the lake area, which will be controlled by the Zone 7 Water District once mining operations are completed. All six options include retail, commercial and industrial zoning. A school site has been included at the request of the Pleasanton Unified School District. Housing numbers in the various options are as follows: #1, 1000 units, half of them single family; #2, 1426 units, 355 single family; #3, 1710 units, 486 single family; #4, 1283 units, 641 single family; #5, 1756 units, 1053 single family; and #6, 2279 units, 1477 single family.

Dolan noted that option 1 would accommodate 35% of the RHNA; option 2, 50%; option 3, 60%; option 4, 45%; option 5, 62%; and option 6, 80% and "would (See EASTSIDE, page 5)

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cover a lot of units. It is the worst case scenario."

Mayor Jerry Thorne asked when and if the urban growth boundary (UGB) issue should go to the voters? "Some folks are concerned about violating what the voters supported. If there were a major change in the boundary, it has to go to the voters."

Brian Dolan, director of development, suggested that the council first select a preferred plan.

Councilmember Karla Brown wondered how many acres outside the UGB were being considered for development. She estimated it at about 350 acres, which includes Cope Lake

Dolan said about one hundred acres were being planned for development. He added it doesn't matter whether Cope Lake is inside or outside the UGB; it will always remain open space.

All of the councilmembers agreed that development should pay for all of the infrastructure, and El Charro should be extended prior to development in order to avoid the issue the city faced with the extension of Stoneridge Drive. Once housing was built, residents did not want the extension to go through. A site for a school should be reserved.

Cheryl Cook-Kallio stated that option 1 does not do what is needed, when it comes to zoning for housing. She said she was leaning toward options 4, 5 or 6. Cook-Kallio said the fact the UGB is there should be "kept in mind."

Jerry Pentin said he wanted to see a legal opinion on whether moving the UGB is a minor action or needs to go to a vote of the public. He said that he didn't want the plan to be driven by RHNA numbers. He didn't focus on a specific option, but said

that the worst case scenario should be part of any EIR study. The number of units can always be decreased based on the findings of the EIR.

Brown stated that the goal of the UGB is to limit sprawl. As to a comment by Dolan that the council could determine if the adjustment of the UGB is minor, Brown said that citizens determined they wanted to vote when they established the UBG in 1996. She said given the requirement that development pay for infrastructure, option 1 is likely unfeasible. She would support option 4.

Kathy Narum said she is open to having the public vote on moving the UGB. "We won't know whether that would be necessary until we know what plan we favor." She would eliminate options 2 and 3.

Mayor Throne said that there is not enough information to make a decision on whether to take the UGB to the voters. "Voters were pretty clear about not wanting major development outside the UGB." He favored options 4, 5 and 6.

Thorne added, "I'm sick and tired of RHNA. Voters need to ask every candidate for state office his or her position on RHNA. If they support it, don't vote for them."

Most of the members of the public who spoke live on the eastside. They were upset that so many of the high density units were included in the six options. They pointed out that the eastside already has more high density than other parts of Pleasanton. The density needs to be spread throughout the city, they stated, declaring, "We would hate to see the area used as a dumping ground for high density housing."

Becky Dennis, suggested

that the eastside would not be the best place to zone for high density housing in order to meet the need for affordable housing. Since the developers would likely be required to pay for the infrastructure, they could not afford to build affordable housing. "The best places to meet the demand is in infill sites where the infrastructure is in place," she stated.

Julie Testa pointed out that schools were all over capacity now. Adding population will require more space to house students. She suggested that the city consider building senior housing only on the eastside.

Kay Ayala said the city should slow down its planning effort. There is no need to rush the process. She declared, "This is definitely a RHNA driven plan. That is no way to plan a city."