



## MINUTES

### SAN MARCOS CREEK SPECIFIC PLAN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

VALLEY OF DISCOVERY ROOM  
CITY HALL, 1 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE  
SAN MARCOS, CALIFORNIA  
**MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2017 - 6:00 PM**

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Steve Kildoo (Chair) called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

**PRESENT:** COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Arnold, Crews, Garcia, Hayes, Hyde, Kildoo, Morelos, Russo, Simmons, Smith, Tilton, Zahl

**ABSENT:** COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Caltabiano, Engert, Harris

**PRESENT:** CITY STAFF: City Manager Griffin, Development Services Director Lynch, Planning Manager Brindley, Sr. Management Analyst Herzog, Office Specialist III Kiss.

**CITY CONSULTANTS:** Michael Baker International (MBI): Dan Wery, Madison Roberts

**OTHERS:** Ash Hayes, Jim Hernandez, Harlan Lowe and four others (unidentified)

#### **1. Welcome - Handouts, Meeting Overview**

Wery: Introduced Madison Roberts from MBI and distributed handouts.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes - July 24, 2017**

**MOTION:** HAYES MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS PRESENTED; SECONDED BY RUSSO AND CARRIED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE.

#### **3. Answers to July 24, 2017 Task Force Questions**

Wery: Provided handout that answers several questions from previous meeting. PowerPoint presentation and updated district draft plan shown. It represents 25% of what's supportable, with 2,300 units approved with current plan. Updated ground floor land use plan shown and new color representations discussed. The 25% (red) would be required Commercial. They want to make it reasonable and flexible with focus on key corners to set the anchors. Purple represents the balance of what could be supportable with 2,300 units, or about 200,000+ s.f. according to their market analysis. They're showing more than 200,000 s.f. because the Eastgate and Promenade projects are already built with commercial space. The purple area would be flexible use, could start off as residential, go retail or restaurant but have the same required commercial design, a tall floor plate typically a minimum of 15 feet that's adaptable space. Grey would be flexible use and design, could be



commercial or residential. The “required” areas would be in the node and outside of that, they’re being flexible. They want adaptable space to let the market dictate and not put restrictions where they may not be necessary.

Tilton: Inquired whether the whole block on Las Posas Road could be retail?

Wery: Replied yes. Discussed Table 7.1, “Allowed Land Uses/Building Functions.” It represents what’s happening in the district. No longer have minor CUP, now it’s DP or CUP.

Tilton: Asked why the restrictions with mixed-use?

Wery: They’re trying to protect the quieter uses, primarily residential, from the noisier. Eating and drinking is allowed in all districts, but there can be complaints with live entertainment. It could be allowed with Major CUP. Pointed out that MBI didn’t change the restrictions; they’re from the current plan.

Lynch: Mentioned as an example, going from Gaslamp District to Marina District.

Wery: Commented it could be allowed, or changed over time. Townhouses wouldn’t be allowed in the core or San Marcos Blvd. They’re trying to preserve the core for most intensive uses.

Zahl: Asked for recreation definition?

Wery: Probably includes live entertainment or dancing. Would have to look at code, but could be an arcade, commercial recreation, indoor laser tag, etc. They’re pointing out subtle differences between districts, it’s not what they’re recommending and could be changed. Hotels would require a CUP. Explained that the pedestrian bridge at McMahr is back on the plan. They thought it was taken out but when the plans went through Engineering and Design and got regulatory permits, it was moved two blocks over between McMahr and Via Vera Cruz. It’s permitted there and could remain; however, they put it back at McMahr because they feel that location is best. It makes for an overall loop and trail system and picks up the whole residential community.

Arnold: Recalled it was moved because of County Water Authority aqueduct alignment.

Hyde: Recalled it was moved because they’re putting a road there and the Army Corp of Engineers fought them about putting it in the middle.

Wery: Pointed out there are plans for pedestrian crossings with the two new bridges at Bent and Via Vera Cruz. They’re evenly spaced, about 1,300 ft. between them. If pedestrian bridge stays at McMahr, it may have to go back through regulatory permits.

Garcia: Inquired if pedestrian cross bridge would be at Restaurant Row or Sears building?

Wery: Stated the mid-block road crossings go to Sears's site and Restaurant Row, and both are still on the plan.

Hayes: Asked for update on the Sears site?

Griffin: Indicated nothing formal has been submitted, but did get an inquiry about possible 3-4 story mixed-use to coordinate with Restaurant Row.

Wery: Discussed question 3, park on western edge. It changed with the Engineering Master Plan Permit. It's in floodplain and floodway. A lot of the area is required for mitigation and whole area is dark green or open space, a passive area.

Kildoo: Couldn't recall the Water Plaza?

Wery: Believes it's midpoint between McMahr and Via Vera Cruz and got trimmed back. All the parks are listed in the SP.

Crews: Questioned how wide the park area is at the end and width needed for trails?

Wery: Replied that it varies, narrowest is 25 feet, and flares out to 150-175 feet. Trails are typically 8 feet wide.

Kildoo: City regularly builds 10 feet so rescue vehicles can access.

#### **4. Refined Specific Plan Regulatory Maps**

Simmons: Asked if anything could be done in the triangle area along San Marcos Blvd., outside 100-year floodway?

Wery: Explained the floodplain comes all the way up. There's a small portion of dry land, but it may be converted to wetlands to offset impacts in the creek.

Simmons: Was curious if there's any solution to flooding problem with grade changes to that area?

Wery: Described the floodways. The southern part, crosshatch area west of Bent, is about 1,600 cubic feet per second. It's a matter of speed, depth and width. There is also a little from the north split, the Las Posas tributary.

Lynch: Stated that staff has asked MBI to look into this. Based on that velocity, it needs to be extensively studied, but their impression is any solution would be a 250-foot channel which they're not even recommending, and the best solution is a SR-78 fix.

Wery: Added that the numbers are very rough. They've talked to several of their storm water engineers and their answer is to fix it where the problem is, at SR-78.

Garcia: Commented that last flood was 1859 according to Weather Channel, so they're way overdue. What they showed would cause TX-sized flooding, several feet of water if they build where they shouldn't.

Kildoo: Responded that they've already built there. Asked about culvert improvement rough numbers?

Wery: Indicated they're trying to figure out what could be done in the interim. Wild water goes where it wants to and the tricky part is getting it off of San Marcos Blvd. They can't do catch basins because you'd need a lot and they'd have to connect to something really big to take water away.

Kildoo: Inquired if 1,600 cubic feet per second water flow is what can't go through culvert? Asked if balance comes across San Marcos Blvd?

Wery: Explained the 1,600 c.f. comes through Creek District just west of Bent. There's a total of roughly over 9,000 c.f. per second that stays in channel and goes through creek. The creek is roughly 12-13,000 c.f. and about 3,000 c.f. splits off, and then splits again.

Kildoo: Commented if culvert were improved, it would capture the whole 13,000 c.f. and put it down the creek, and with the culvert it could then get to the lake.

Wery: Agreed, they've figured it out, they've engineered the two new bridges and levees and they know it would work.

Kildoo: Asked if there's a final number on culvert improvement?

Wery: Explained two options. If they could capture water, an open trench could be built off San Marcos Blvd., or series of culverts to convey water. It's an engineering and property issue, but it could be done. To keep a slow and safe rate, and landscape it, an open trench could be about 250 feet wide, costing approximately \$1-\$2 million to build, plus utilities, etc. A box culvert, 40' x 6-8' deep, which you could build right up to, is more expensive, estimate of \$4-6 million just for construction.

Arnold: Asked if a developer presented a solution, would it preclude them from developing the property? Is there anything in SP that says they can't develop in there?

Wery: Replied, no.

Arnold: Asked if can be left flexible and if solved, would the underlying uses be allowed?

Wery: Yes.

Kildoo: Inquired the rough cost to improve culvert to 100-year flood requirement, 13,000 c.f. per second?

Wery: In 2015, the City estimated \$33M in a petition to Army Corp to study that, but he cautioned all the numbers are very rough estimates.

Kildoo: Expressed he was glad the Committee finally has some numbers and options and the culverts could be done.

Wery: Indicated if you could find money to do it, it would free up more land, but includes a lot of work with FEMA. Each block is 2.5 acres. The open ditch is 250 feet wide. It could be made narrower but don't want it too deep or strong because it could be dangerous and would need to be fenced off.

Morelos: Questioned if there's existing utilities?

Wery: Replied there are all sorts of utilities under there. Best fix is keeping it in channel to avoid utility problems.

Tilton: Asked if there's a reason cross hatch doesn't include Creekside Drive?

Wery: No, the rough grading for Creekside Drive would be done with Phase 1 improvements.

Tilton: Asked if part of levee?

Wery: It is, but technically the levee is only on the south side at Discovery. Discovery Road would be lower than levee and channelized.

Griffin: Commented on the 250-feet width and asked if they looked at making it wider and shallower so it could be useable green space?

Wery: Indicated yes and most of the time it would be dry. It could be landscaped and some things could be done in there, but couldn't build, although there are 30 buildings/businesses in there now. Not many will give up their business to become a park. TX has had three 100-year storms in last couple years. Flooding is happening more frequently.

Kildoo: Acknowledged that the problem is still there without the Creek plan and it will affect businesses on both sides of San Marcos Blvd. Need to find solutions to benefit the City as a whole.

Wery: The split flows affects land valued at \$315M in assessed value, but it's limited because of floodway.

Kildoo: Is curious if property owners could sue City for not solving the problem?

Smith: Requested more information on the sewer lines that were mentioned at last meeting.

Wery: Described plan to replace a major trunk line on what would be Creekside Drive. It will get bigger and be moved into a better alignment and wouldn't conflict with the future promenade. It's already been upgraded on east side of Via Vera Cruz. It's on City owned property and would come up to Via Vera Cruz, eventually go to McMahr, run north and down San Marcos Blvd. Size varies from 21-42 inches.

Smith: Asked if sewer work is accommodated in what's presented?

Wery: Indicated yes, the Engineering Master Plan from '15 made it all work and the plan fits in here. Discussed park requirements. There needs to be substantial conformance with the Specific Plan. There are parks, paseo's, plaza's and they're trying to preserve as much as possible, but there's no per unit requirement.

Simmons: Inquired if there's a state requirement?

Wery: The state requires a Parks & Open Space element. It's up to each SPA to figure out what's appropriate. There are national standards and maybe recommendations at state level, maybe five acres per 1,000.

Lynch: Stated the City's General Plan goal is five acres per 1,000, but they recognize it won't happen in this area. They'll look at what are appropriate design, location and quantity for this area.

Kildoo: Pointed out that even the original plan probably didn't meet that goal and much of what they thought was going to be park is gone.

Wery: There's still quite a bit of park. It's an urban area so it's different. The McMahr linear park has changed a little and follows aqueduct alignment. Pointed out Town Center Plaza move.

Lynch: Clarified that parks ratios is a city-wide ratio.

Arnold: Asked where Discovery and East Area Commons Park are?

Wery: Pointed out. The original plan had a nice distribution of parks. There were two roundabouts taken out because 70% or more of the traffic left with the retail. Retail is a huge trip generation factor.

Garcia: Asked other option, if they don't put a park there, put a road through?

Wery: It could go straight through. Or, turn it 30-45 degrees, a future channel park. They think keeping the alignment and making the east-west connection is important.

Kildoo: Requested comments/questions from everyone.

Smith: He appreciates the very helpful handouts.

Simmons: Asked if the paseo/public plazas against San Marcos Blvd., would be emergency access but more usable for pedestrians?

Wery: Indicated there would be pavers, full street right-of-way, but not open to traffic, just emergency access, with some type of bollards. There are several small public places in plan.

Simmons: A good example is in front of Urge Restaurant and it's well utilized.

Kildoo: Commented the Committee would like to retain wide sidewalks and outdoor dining.

Wery: Responded that they'll try to widen Via Vera Cruz a little more because it's the core area.

Russo: Asked if any plans to change McMahr Rd. name to Las Posas Rd., south of San Marcos Blvd.?

Kildoo: Sam McMahr was a huge influence in City and was the water district in the early days.

Crews: Asked if the minutes would reflect the flooding numbers?

Wery: Believes they will, although they're very rough numbers.



Tilton: Indicated he's pleased they are planning the forgotten area and is not surprised at the constraint there with the flows. This plan is better than where they started. In view of the TX flooding, he still goes back to government's obligation. There are industrial buildings in the floodplain and he hopes it's apparent the City needs to solve the highway thing and deal with the problem. Its high quality real estate and no one can fix it except the City.

Zahl: Feels the plan is starting to take shape.

Kildoo: Indicated he's pleased with the new plans and level of detail. He feels it's becoming more visible and easier to see outcome.

Tilton: Question on Map C.

Wery: They updated minimum/maximum height plan. Existing plan has two categories, 2-5 and 3-6 stories, a minimum 2 & 3 and maximum 5 & 6. It's very flexible, except for the bookends. Not sure people will go to six stories due to type of construction required.

Kildoo: Asked the max height for steel studs/framing?

Simmons: Indicated it's typically three-four.

Tilton: Asked the range of housing units?

Wery: Ground floor area staying out of floodway, is about 900,000 s.f., or 1,000 s.f. per DU, or 900 units. Three stories would be roughly 2,700. Could start as residential and convert later. It's maybe around 3,000 units, but depends on type of units.

Simmons: Added there would be common area, hallway and facilities.

Lynch: From CEQA standpoint, commercial generated a lot more traffic than residential; they're still looking at those numbers from a public process entitlement standpoint, but she envisions a little less than Dan's figure.

Wery: He's confident they could figure 2,300. Every building would be at that level.

Tilton: Commented that in light of current CEQA permissions, can it be modified to keep the number of housing units within that scope?

Wery: He thinks it fits now. Explained limit from CEQA was based on traffic. The plan is clear to monitor traffic and adjust accordingly. The numbers came out of CEQA analysis. They intend to live within that and don't want to open EIR.

Tilton: He suspects they'll hear about traffic and parking at the workshop.

Arnold: Expressed that they'll need to be prepared to talk about traffic and proposed solutions.

Kildoo: Expect there should be a slide showing original CEQA approval vs. revised plan.

Wery: Pointed out the road network will be improved and people will have options. Two new bridges, plus Discovery will connect to Barham and Twin Oaks Valley Rd.

Simmons: When project is built, the neighborhoods above will have places to shop which should result in less San Marcos Blvd. traffic.

Tilton: Asked staff's opinion regarding density?

Lynch: Commented that she looks at it from a General Plan perspective. It meets today's expectation. There's a demand for housing and the world around this area is changing.

Brindley: Agreed. During GP Update process, staff looked at regional concepts as far as trying to locate housing densities along transportation corridors and freeways. The plan is consistent with that.

Crews: She believes schools will be an issue, although density hasn't changed and they've been aware of the plan for many years.

Lynch: Commented the housing density is in line with the plan and traffic generation is reduced.

Zahl: Schools in that area are all impacted. Adding 2,300 new residences might result in 1,200 kids with no where to put them. They'll need a new school. Double Peak is almost full.

Crews: Hopefully they've been planning for some time.

Griffin: The people who will raise issues regarding traffic will raise school issues also. They won't care what's on the plan. The City is working with the school board to help them plan. It doesn't matter if it's within the General Plan; if it's new residential it will be a challenge.

Simmons: Suggested it will come down to mitigation. They'll have to offer up some mitigation, once identified what it takes. Maybe expand Discovery into a larger campus or a new facility? School district must identify the problem and fix it. Developers will have to determine if they can pay the fee and go forward with project.

Zahl: Commented they'd need a school somewhere close by. Asked where and how many acres?

Simmons: Suggested 50-70 acres for a high school.

Kildoo: Commented the water district must constantly be on alert. School district has had the plan since 2007, so it's not a surprise to them. Everything won't pop up immediately. It may take 20 years and that needs to be said to the public.

Simmons: Added that a lot of what is built in the plan is age-restricted and doesn't have a school impact. It will evolve slowly.

Kildoo: Pointed out that high density, mixed-use, has way less children than suburban. It's a more difficult place to raise a child.

Zahl: He feels Millenial's like more urban.

## **5. Preview of Tuesday, September 19, 2017 Public Workshop**

Arnold: Suggested starting off that the point of the project is public safety. They want to create an asset and do a wonderful plan alongside it but the bottom line is they're spending a lot to protect properties.

Kildoo: Agreed that's a valid point. Channelization was the core of the project.

Wery: Displayed draft PowerPoint for workshop. They'll be bringing the public up to speed on what's happening and why. They plan on creating four stations staffed with a couple Committee members who can answer questions, show plans, offer a survey, then a group Q&A.

Hayes: Asked if people can complete survey via a website?

Wery: That's an option.

Hayes: Inquired if each station would be the same?



Wery: They'd start off with several topics, show what's changing and staying the same. Discuss key issues, traffic, density, infrastructure, schools, open space and parks. People would rotate through stations.

Kildoo: Committee members will be assigned stations.

Lynch: Committee will begin sitting at the Dias, which gives the community a chance to see who they are.

Group continued to discuss.

Lynch: Some groups like hearing the same thing, others want to break into smaller groups.

Hayes: She believes there's a big advantage to everyone hearing the same message.

Kildoo: He'd rather not use the timer, doesn't want it to be like a hearing, but will do if needed.

Wery: Discussed draft survey topics and possible app for completing it.

Arnold: Asked what kind of feedback they're looking for?

Wery: What they think of the changes, whether they're appropriate. A lot of it is being informative and bringing them along.

Kildoo: They'll hear about what we're considering changing and find out what they think of that.

Hayes: Suggested not leaving it so open.

Hyde: Commented that he's been blasted by people regarding the increase in residential and reduction in commercial.

Kildoo: The flexibility is there to add retail if market supports it. The City doesn't need empty retail buildings that can't make a living.

Crews: Residents need to understand its being designed so it can be converted.

Lynch: Added that it's not the intent to increase residential beyond what's entitled.

Arnold: Inquired what they'll say about traffic and density?



Crews: Suggested adding "flow" to traffic.

Kildoo: Reminded group at some point the plan will go to Planning Commission and City Council.

Crews: Suggested adding why flexible space and residential is necessary.

Arnold: Suggested adding public safety and flood protection.

Kildoo: The plan would be very gradual, over the course of 15-20 years. By then, the schools will hopefully catch up and San Marcos Blvd. will see some improvement.

Simmons: Pointed out the plan has been approved for 10 years and there's two projects, one approved and one built. This will be about 30 projects.

Kildoo: Commented the Committee will be there to convey rationale answers.

Wery: Visual renderings and plans will be provided.

Hyde: The first two developments were affordable housing and that has scared people. Residents don't want all affordable.

Garcia: Agreed, they want to see condos.

Lynch: Commented that people were initially excited about the commercial center and one of the best selling points is the flex space. City doesn't want empty commercial, when the market is there it can convert. Residential is needed to support commercial, you can't have one economically without the other.

Group continued to discuss.

Hayes: Commented that someone will ask the cost.

Zahl: Replied that it's not being funded by City.

Kildoo: Responded that it's unknown, in '07 it was a billion dollar project and now it's larger.

## **6. Outreach and Engagement Update**

Kildoo: Asked about future dates?



Lynch: City Council is 11/14/17.

Kildoo: That would give time for October meeting.

Wery: Indicated they'll wrap it up then and talk about preliminary recommendations to present in November.

Kildoo: Asked if it would go to Planning Commission in December?

Wery: Replied no, it would take a few months after November Council presentation. They're looking at a Draft Amendment in spring 2018.

## **7. Next Steps**

Lynch: Announced the workshop date is 9/19/17, a regular 10/23/17 meeting, and then it may be a December meeting after November Council presentation.

Simmons: Suggested the Committee show up early for workshop.

Kildoo: Recommended they arrive by 5:30 PM on 9/19.

## **8. Public Input**

Jim Hernandez: Reminded Committee to pay attention to uses, eating with live entertainment. The major CUP is a crusher. Suggested loosening up completely, require DP or permitted use. Entertainment is a big category and staff will go crazy.

Harlan Lowe: Asked if the plan is in reverse? He thought most everyone wanted to build up and look at creek?

Wery: Indicated they decided to let market dictate. Minimum of two-story along creek level and can go up to five. More people could live along creek.

Lowe: Asked if the pedestrian access at end of McMahr is intended to be utilized by property owners?

Wery: Explained that it's more likely to be driveways, not roads, wide with enhanced pavers, private/semi-public and maybe some benches.

Hayes: Mentioned San Elijo Hills gave a road to Boys & Girls Club to auction the naming rights as a fundraiser. Suggested doing that here, offer for sale?



Kildoo: Stated he'd like to find a way to honor Jim Eubanks, perhaps a Eubanks Street? Jim started the effort and was the driving force.

## **9. Adjournment/Next Meeting**

Kildoo: Adjourned meeting at 8:07 pm. Next meeting is a public workshop: September 19, 2017.

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Steve Kildoo, San Marcos Creek  
Specific Plan Oversight Committee Chair

ATTEST:

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Lisa Kiss  
Office Specialist III