

## Ridgecrest General Plan Update

### Meeting Minutes

August 28, 2007

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM

Ridgecrest City Council Chambers

#### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m.

**Present:** Vice-Chairman Jim Smith, John O’Gara, Chuck Roulund, Ruth Cooper, Eric Kauffman, Jim Fallgatter, Lois Beres, Nellavan Jeglum, Craig Porter, Sharon Paxton, Mike Biddlingmeier, Andy Kilikauskas, Howard Lairé

**Absent:** Chairman Jerry Taylor

**Staff Present:** City Planner Matthew Alexander, Director Public Services Jim McRea, Administrative Secretary Danielle Valentine

#### 2. Minutes

A motion was moved by Eric Kauffman and seconded by Howard Lairé to approve the minutes of 7/24/07 as submitted. Chuck Roulund objected to the approval of minutes.

#### 3. Land Use and Policy Choices

City Planner Matthew Alexander introduced consultants from the Matrix Design Group – Molly Bosley and Rick Rust. They had some prepared background materials for the information of the members.

Planner Alexander noted that included in the handouts for the evenings meeting was a preliminary plan for the Bowman Channel and a final version of the Map Atlas. He indicated that there were two issues outstanding; the first being the existing land use map and that it was his understanding that Rick Rust had spoken with Chuck Roulund with regards the land use table. Planner Alexander asked Member Roulund if he was okay with the table now.

Member Roulund responded that he was not. He explained that he had expected to see no “Vacant Land” on the map on page 4 and had read the minutes from the July meeting reflecting this change.

Member Smith and Member Jeglum agreed with Member Roulund’s comments.

Mr. Rust asked Member Roulund to clarify that he was referring to the vacant land listed in the table on page 3? He understood that as far as City limits this table was correct.

Member Roulund asked if any of the base land was inside the City limits.

Public Services Director Jim McRea responded stating that the line went essentially from Ridgecrest to just north of “the ponds and further explained

using a Land Use Concepts Workshop map which was on display in the Chambers.

Member Smith asked what the purpose of showing vacant land on the base was given that the City had no jurisdiction over it.

Mr. McRea responded that it was shown as sales tax is generated in this portion (demonstrated using map) and any personnel living on the base is counted as census population.

Mr. Rust further explained that the base has a financial impact on the City as far as population figures was concerned. He stated that from his review of the 24<sup>th</sup> July minutes he understood Matrix would try to portray vacant land and indicated that if the State of California was asked how big the City is they would use base land to calculate.

Mr. Roulund stated that his initial concern was that the open space in Ridgecrest shown as 23% was not correct.

Mr. Rust responded stating that open space was calculated from data obtained from BLM.

Mr. Roulund stated that he thought this land would be represented differently.

Mr. Rust explained that at present the planning area was about 6,000 acres of land that is not in government holdship – that is, it is privately owned vacant land. He defined “Vacant Lands” as those not having improvements on them.

Mr. McRea explained that “Open Space” referred to conservation – that is, parks designated as leisure services.

Member John O’Gara asked how Vacant Land was defined.

Mr. McRea explained that if land did not have a water meter or an improvement it is considered vacant land.

Mr. Rust gave further explanation of the definition of vacant land versus open space.

Member Andy Kilikauskas asked if the area around the college was included as vacant land.

Mr. McRea responded stating it was open space as it is a conservation area in the transfer from BLM to the college.

Mr. Roulund asked if someone could calculate the total planning area within the city limits as per the table on page 3. as by his calculation the total was about 200%/.

Mr. Rust explained that the bolded figures were sub-totals and should not be included in the calculations.

Member Jim Fallgatter commented that if the committee members could not figure out how to read the data right now he would conclude it would be more difficult 10 years from now without the experts sitting here giving explanation. He suggested that granularity was needed.

Mr. Rust asked what other items members would like listed.

Mr. Fallgatter responded that definitions should be included so that "any layman can pick this up and read it and make sense of it".

Mr. Roulund made note that the very specific questions as per the minutes of 24<sup>th</sup> July is why are there still numbers from the military included in the pie chart when we are not going to have any influence – for population that's fine – but for the base it is just not relevant.

Member Jeglum noted that the existing planning area shown by the green was incorrect as nothing in NAWs north of Inyokern Rd or north of Ridgecrest Blvd is within the planning area. She stated that she understood it was within City Limits but it could be included in a planning area as anything within that area belonged to the Department of Defense.

Mr. Rust stated that it was a legal requirement to include this area in the General Plan. He explained that every county in the State of California has the same issue however their general plans still have to cover those areas though they might not have a land use designation on them.

Mr. Kilikauskas said he felt that the base land could be left in but subtotals were needed to make a definition.

Mr. Roulund asked that a chart be included below the current one showing existing planning use so as to give a true representation of what is available within the City Limits.

Mr. Rust responded stating that BLM lands are areas the committee may wish to leave in as in a future instance there may be a need to do a swap, trade etc - he believed that taking them out would be a disadvantage to the City.

Mr. Roulund asked that a subset be identified so that he could make sense of it. He stated that the City had much more vacant land than what was represented currently.

Planner Alexander stated that nobody was trying to skew the numbers and noted that the pie chart was entirely accurate. He summarized that there was a misunderstanding at the previous meeting where he believed there was an understanding between he and the members some of the navy land was included in vacant land.

Mr. Roulund said "just give me the pie chart and I'll be quiet!." !!!

Mr. Rust responded stating that he thought there were some misconceptions and that he had needed to address but he obligated to including the pie chart as described by Mr. Roulund.

Mr. Fallgatter commented that there was still a school shown on the map as incorrect.

Mr. Rust responded stating "this was another difficulty with the minutes".

There was further discussion regarding which school needed to be removed from the map and further debate about the classification of the VIEWEG School.

Eric Kauffman made comment – “we just spent 20 minutes discussing how the green area isn’t important and now we are spending another 20 minutes talking about things in the green area”.

John O’Gara suggested that the process be simplified to where comment/feedback is made and the meeting move forward.

Mr. O’Gara had a further suggestion on the land use map. He noted that the BLM and utilities/infrastructure have similar shading and asked that the map be made a little easier to read in that regard.

Mr. Rust obligated to making the change noting that Matrix would endeavor to use a light blue for BLM and keep utilities as the darker grey.

Mr. Kilikauskas noted that the planning area finished at County Line Road and said he felt it should be extended into San Bernadino County because it is an area of influence for the City.

Mr. McRea stated that this is not where staff thought it should be.

Mr. Rust commented that Mr. McRea had made a good point. The Map Atlas was supposed to represent a snap shot in time. He indicated that planning area was a topic Matrix had wanted to discuss. He explained that planning area didn’t indicate that the City would annex property nor serve it, it means wanting to have some influence on it.

Planner Alexander moved the discussion onto Biological Resources asking Mr. Rust and Ms. Boswell if they had any comments.

Mr. Rust explained that data had been obtained from Fish and Game.

Mr. O’Gara said the data was incorrect.

There was debate about the accuracy of the date which resulted in Mr. Rust asking Mr. O’Gara for the navy data and Mr. O’Gara promising to provide it.

Mr. O’Gara made comment that he thought Fish and Game would tell the City to presume presence and preclude by study. He further stated that developers needed to know that they had an obligation to disprove existence and that upon first glance the Map would be misleading in that regard.

There was further discussion about what should and should not be included in the Map Atlas and how misleading figures could be mis-used.

Planner Alexander asked members to give direction to the consultants noting that clearly they could not conduct the sort of survey being talked about.

Mr. Rust offered to put a caveat on the map indicating that studies had not been done.

Mr. O’Gara responded stating it would be incorrect to say studies had not been done explaining that there had been lots of reports in the City proper and the County proper. He recommended the consultants do due diligence. Mr. O’Gara went on to say that he felt developers should be informed that there was a burden on them to disprove existence.

Mr. Kilikauskas concurred and summarized stating that the map is misleading and showed a much more urbanized area than what

Mr. Roulund asked Planner Alexander if it would be beneficial if members gave their updates separately.

Mr. O'Gara stated that he thought it would be a better use of everyone's time if comments were provided individually according to areas of responsibility.

Mr. Rust asked if all were agreeable to taking endangered species off and leaving data at the habitat level.

Mr. O'Gara responded stating that would still not provide the information people needed.

Mr. O'Gara agreed to removing endangered species at Mr. Rust's suggestion that he include a caveat.

Mr. Rust summarized stating that the general plan is useful for some information but also required acknowledgement that it could not be used as an all-encompassing document citing a biological study as a cost-prohibitive inclusion.

Mr. Rust went on to say "I believe what has been settled is that you are going to mark up some points for revision, endangered species can be taken off this map and we can also note for your information that we do have some updates to come in terms of noise contours – when the ACUS is released we will have a better idea of how this might sort out. Hopefully we will have that final ACUS before you get your final Map Atlas."

Planner Alexander then handed over to the consultants for discussion on Land Use Concepts. Mr. Rust introduced an exercise handing out "homework" for members and labeled it "Policy Choices". He explained that the worksheet was a series of topics and broad questions designed to "get you started". He referred back to initial workshops where 8 land use topics had been identified as key drivers. He asked members to rate these 8 items noting all were important but indicating that Matrix needed an indication from the group on how each topic ranked within the group. The items for consideration were:

- Infill
- Edge Treatment
- Parks/Greenway
- Commercial/Employment
- Compactness
- Density
- Planned Unit Development
- Military Compatibility

Member Jeglum asked for a definition of compactness?

Mr. Rust explained that compactness referred to your "footprint" on the world – the area to include in the urban part of Ridgecrest.

Mr. Roulund asked for a definition of Planned Unit Development?

Mr. Rust explained this referred to a large planned development (Heritage Village was given an example).

Mr. O'Gara asked for clarification of the difference between edge treatment and density.

Cards indicating ranking for each of the 8 items were collected from each committee member.

Mr. Rust provided results of the different alternatives that came out of the groups from an earlier workshop – listing them in order of ranking.

#### Group 1

- Inward Western Edge
- Low density infill
- Use of Navy land
- Mixed density on the Southern Edge
- Compact urban core
- Greenway linear park system

#### Group 2

- Rural edge
- Medium density infill
- Mixed use infill
- Expansion to west and southeast
- Planned Unit Development included
- Employment growth off Bowman Road

#### Group 3

- Employment core on Western Edge
- No rural edge
- Low density Southern edge
- Mixed use in core
- Planned Unit Development included

#### Group 4

- No rural edge
- Low density infill
- Scattered infill inside built area
- Scattered recreational features
- Neighborhood commercial in new neighborhoods

#### Group 5

- Rural edge on west and southeast corner
- Medium/high density infill
- New parks in south side of community
- Employment growth off China Lake Blvd
- Capitalize growth near Highway 395

**4. GPAC Subcommittee Reports**

None.

**5. Public Comments**

None.

**6. GPAC Member Comments**

No further comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.