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ORANGE COUNTY
Public Works
MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 8, 2024

TO: Foothill/Trabuco Specific Plan Review Board

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SUBJECT: Plan OC - General Plan Update Project Briefing (GPA 24-01)

APPLICANT: County of Orange

RECOMMENDATION

By motion find that:

1. The Advisory Committee received the proposed project memorandum.

SUMMARY

The General Plan (GP) serves as the legal basis for all local land use decisions and is the vision for how the County of Orange (County) will evolve, reflecting the values and priorities of its communities. California state law requires that local jurisdictions update their general plans periodically. The goals of the GP Update are as follows: (1) examine GP goals, objectives, and policies to ensure that a high quality of life is maintained as the community matures and evolves; (2) incorporate changes required by state law; (3) update language to reflect current plans and projects; and (4) reformat the document to be user-friendly.

BACKGROUND

The County is required by California Government Code (GC) Section 65300 to have a legally adequate GP, which addresses both unincorporated areas and the entire County. The County's GP consists of seven required elements: Land Use, Transportation, Resources, Recreation, Noise, Safety and Housing. The County's GP also includes two optional elements: Public Services and Facilities and Growth Management. The County has not conducted a comprehensive update to the GP since 2005 and local jurisdictions have an implied duty to keep their general plans current.

DISCUSSION

The GP Update will include the following components: (1) data collection, special studies, and technical analysis; (2) community outreach; (3) preparation of draft updates to the GP Elements; and (4) presentation of a final draft at public hearings. In addition, the GP Update process also offers the opportunity to engage the community, discuss the County's long-term vision, and fully update, analyze, and evaluate each element of the GP. A comprehensive update of the County's GP will ensure the County's GP remains legally adequate while creating a blueprint to serve the needs of the community.

The Board of Supervisors approved a contract with De Novo Planning Group for the Comprehensive GP Update. The Planning Commission authorized staff to initiate this Comprehensive GP Update to revise all elements of the County General Plan in February 2024. Approximately 44,000 door-to-door mailers were mailed to all residents in Unincorporated Orange County in late February 2024 to kick off this effort. The mailer included information on accessing the first online public survey and contact information for the project. In addition, a dedicated website has been created for the GP update: <https://planoc.generalplan.org>

The General Plan Update process is expected to last approximately two and a half years. Public survey, public workshops, key stakeholder presentations, and online engagement activities will occur through 2024. Development of policies, the General Plan, and environmental analysis with subsequent preparation of an environmental document will commence in 2025 through 2026. Public hearings with Planning Commission and adoption by the Board of Supervisors is anticipated in Winter 2026.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

This action is not a project within the meaning of CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 and is therefore not subject to CEQA, since it does not have the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. This item does not commit the County to a definite course of action in regard to a project since the action is a Comprehensive GP Update, as required by law. This proposed activity is therefore not subject to CEQA. Any future action connected to this approval that constitutes a project will be reviewed in compliance with CEQA.