



CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

City Hall
2729 Prospect Park Drive, Rancho Cordova

Tuesday, June 26, 2007

5:30 p.m. - Work Session
American River Community Room - North

AGENDA

WORK SESSION

Call to Order

Roll Call: Council Members Cooley, Skoglund, McGarvey, Budge and Mayor Sander

Work Session Item

1. **Subject:** Folsom Boulevard Work Session on Specific Plan Form Based Code and Streetscape Enhancements Phase II Projects
Recommendation: The Council:
 - a) Review Draft Form Based Code for the Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan and provide comments and direction to staff.
 - b) Consider and provide comments on staff's strategy for selecting Phase II improvements for the Folsom Boulevard Streetscape Enhancements Project.**Result of Recommended Action:** Council comments on the Form Based Code provisions will allow staff to finalize the Draft Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan. Council comments on the selection process for Phase II improvements of the Folsom Boulevard Streetscape Enhancements Project will allow staff to proceed with identifying second round improvement projects for Folsom Boulevard. No formal action is requested.
Staff Report: Paul Junker and Loreli Cappel, Planning Department and Cyrus Abhar, Public Works Department
Advances Goals: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9
Fosters Strong Neighborhoods

Oral Communications

2. Public Comment

At a work session or special meeting, citizens wishing to address the Council for any matter on the agenda may do so at the time the matter is discussed. Note, under the provisions of the California Government Code, the City Council is prohibited from discussing or taking action on any unagendized item.

ADJOURNMENT

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk's Office at (916) 851-8720 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

CERTIFICATION OF AGENDA POSTING

City Clerk's Certificate of Posting of Agenda

I, Anna Olea-Moger, City Clerk for the City of Rancho Cordova, declare that the foregoing agenda for the June 26, 2007 Special Meeting of the Rancho Cordova City Council was posted on June 21, 2007 at the office of the City of Rancho Cordova, 2729 Prospect Park Drive, Rancho Cordova, California, 95670 and was available for public review at that location. The agenda is also available on the city web site at www.cityofranhocordova.org.

Signed this 21st day of June 2007 at Rancho Cordova, California.


Anna Olea-Moger, CMC, City Clerk

MEMORANDUM



DATE: June 26, 2007

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Paul Junker, Planning Director
Cyrus Abhar, Public Works Director
Loreli Cappel, Folsom Blvd. SP Project Manager

SUBJECT: FOLSOM BOULEVARD SPECIFIC PLAN WORK SESSION

RECOMMENDATION

1. Review Draft Form Based Code for the Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan and provide comments and direction to staff.
2. Consider and provide comments on staff's strategy for selecting Phase II improvements for the Folsom Boulevard Streetscape Enhancements Project.

BACKGROUND

To date, the Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan project team (PMC, Leland Consulting, Urbsworks, Fehr & Peers Associates, Bay Area Economics, and Applied Development Economics) has been hard at work on the following milestone tasks:

- Market analysis
- Development strategy
- Outreach (community, stakeholders, development community, Council sub-committee, staff working group)
- Creation of programmed "pulse points" development scenarios.
- Rezone Process (Resulting in an interim Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan)
- Project Application Review for planning area projects
- Ongoing coordination with the General Plan, Redevelopment, Streetscape MP and Transit MP Projects

The purpose of this meeting is to update City Council on the Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan project, and request Council comment on the Specific Plan's Form Based Code provisions. Council comments will allow staff to move forward with completion of the Draft Specific Plan. Council comments will also be requested on the selection process for Phase II improvements of the Folsom Boulevard Streetscape Enhancements Project to allow staff to proceed with identifying second round improvement projects for Folsom Boulevard. No formal action is requested or anticipated.

PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan

The Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan components are underway, and their brief status is as follows:

- *Planning Area Existing Conditions* – Data is compiled and projections for future growth are underway.
- *Land Use and Development* – Since the rezone process, the Folsom Boulevard SP Rezone document has been put to the test. Based on staff experience, this section is being modified to resolve any implementation issues that have arisen since its adoption last November.
- *Public Improvements and Design Guidelines* – Once the Mobility section is complete, final recommendations will be made for updating components of the Streetscape Master Plan that are critical and relevant to the Specific Plan Area.
- *Mobility* – Our transportation team has evaluated the Boulevard's existing conditions and provided feedback on past planning documents and project deliverables. Based on the City's up-to-date PLACES modeling data, the team will proceed to work with Public Works to explore potential street configurations and consider modifications to the Folsom Boulevard standard street section at key locations.
- *Infrastructure & Public facilities* – Based upon Rancho Cordova's 2007 I-PLACES Land Use Model projections for future growth (per the rezone land use densities), utility providers are determining whether it is feasible to provide public services to provide for the area upon buildout.
- *Plan Implementation* – A working toolbox of development incentives, priority projects, policies, and programs is underway. As project public improvements are recommended, they are added to the redevelopment agency's list of future planned improvements, then prioritized and funding sources identified for finalization of the implementation plan.

FORM BASED CODE REVIEW AND COUNCIL DIRECTION

Staff will provide the Council with an understanding of how the Form Based Code provisions in the Specific Plan will work, including the process for reviewing projects and the criteria that will be considered in project reviews. This presentation will include the following general discussion points:

- Introduction: What direction is staff seeking from City Council?
 - Staff will request Council concurrence or direction on key issues during the presentation
- Brief overview of Form Based Codes - *Informational*
 - What is a Form Based Code?
 - Why the Form Based Code Tool?
 - What have Form Based Codes done for others?
 - What can it do for Rancho Cordova & Folsom Boulevard?
- How we got here – Review the basis for the Form Based Code (FBC) provisions
 - Big ideas for Folsom Boulevard
 - Pruning back the retail
 - Prototype buildings/development concepts for each Pulse Point

- The big three urban design objectives—connections, urban frontage, neighborhood transitions
- The Rezoning Effort—slides showing Coloma “before” and “after”
- New Mixed-Use Zones (Allowing a Greater Diversity of Housing Types)
- Informational - provide the Council with background and basis for the Form Based Code planning effort
- FBC Options for Rancho Cordova
 - How and where will Form Based Codes apply on Folsom Boulevard
 - Discuss recommendations of City’s senior staff and Council Subcommittee
 - Staff will request Council concurrence on how and where Form Based Code will be applied
- What will our Form Based Code look like? A walk through the Form-based Code using sample pulse point(s)
 - The Regulating Plan and Development Standards Table
 - Street Typology and Street Sections
 - How connectivity is achieved over time
 - Staff will seek Council comment and request Council concurrence that the Code addresses the correct features and issues
- Proposed 2 Track Development Review Process
 - Staff will discuss a project review process that can be either expedited or flexible, depending on the applicant’s goals
 - Staff will request Council concurrence on the 2 track review process

FOLSOM BOULEVARD STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS PROJECT PHASE II

Public Works staff is currently in the process of selecting an engineering consultant for Phase II of the Folsom Boulevard Streetscape Enhancements project. The selected consultant will assist the City in identifying and evaluating design alternatives that include various elements of the Draft Folsom Boulevard & Mather Field Road Streetscape Enhancement Master Plan. This effort will produce a preferred alternative for the Phase II project that incorporates the concepts and overall vision of the Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) from interested firms is currently being advertised. Staff expects to bring a recommendation for award of this contract to the City Council in September.

NEXT STEPS

Identification of Phase II improvements for Folsom Boulevard streetscape enhancement

- Pending Council concurrence, staff will proceed with the identification of Phase II Improvements of the Folsom Boulevard Streetscape Enhancements

Finalization of all Specific Plan components for fall adoption

- Pending Council direction and concurrence, staff anticipates proceeding with completion, final review and adoption of the Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan.

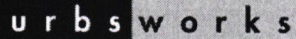
RESULT OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Council comments on the Form Based Code provisions will allow staff to finalize the Draft Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan. Council comments on the selection process for Phase II

improvements of the Folsom Boulevard Streetscape Enhancements Project will allow staff to proceed with identifying second round improvement projects for Folsom Boulevard. No formal action is requested or anticipated.

ATTACHMENT

1. A Primer on Form-Based Codes – this Memorandum is intended to provide a fundamental understanding of form based codes, to develop a foundation which the study session presentation will build upon.



MEMO

Date: 18 June 2007
 RE: Folsom Boulevard Specific Plan: Form-based Code
 To: Loreli Cappel, PMC
 From: Marcy McInelly, Urbsworks, Inc

Tel: 503.827.4155, Fax: 503.827.3641

A Primer on Form-Based Codes

INTRODUCTION: One of the implementation tools of the Folsom Boulevard Specific Area Plan will be a Form-Based Code. The Form-Based Code will replace the current development standards and allowed land uses for the area. A Form-Based Code is a development code that provides the developer/applicant greater flexibility in permitted land uses in exchange for more stringent regulations controlling urban form. These types of codes support mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly and transit oriented development more effectively than conventional codes do because they provide greater guidance on how buildings are expected to face the street, adjacent residential neighborhoods and open spaces. Form-Based Codes are becoming increasingly attractive to municipalities that want greater control over how buildings look and feel. Cities that have adopted Form-Based Codes include Bend and Portland in Oregon; Petaluma, Pleasant Hill, Palo Alto and Hercules in California.

Frequently asked questions

What is Form-Based Code and how does it differ from conventional codes?

A form-based code is one that is based primarily on “form”—urban form, including the relationship of buildings to each other, to streets and to open space, rather than based primarily on land use.

A BRIEF COMPARISON OF CONVENTIONAL CODES AND FORM-BASED CODES

URBAN FORM GENERATING CHARACTERISTICS	
CONVENTIONAL CODES	FORM-BASED CODES
• Extensive listing of permitted, prohibited and conditional uses by zone. Many land uses in conventional codes lists are outdated and do not reflect the nature of contemporary employment models or dwelling types • Often disallow a mix of uses • Prohibit adaptability of buildings to other uses over time • On zoning maps, land use designations typically begin and end at the center of the street or Right of Way	• Consider the building “walls” that frame the Right of Way (often referred to as the “public realm”) as one of the primary determinants of form • Regulating plan zone designations typically transition at the back of the lot • The same or similar development standards typically apply to both sides of the street • Land uses allow a much broader range of uses within a zone or subarea; also allow a greater mix of uses • Many uses are allowed if they meet performance standards

GRAPHICS AND PROCESS CHARACTERISTICS	
CONVENTIONAL CODES	FORM-BASED CODES
• Development standards are not illustrated and in many conventional codes the built result of the development standards is not fully understood and/or has never been tested or modeled • Abstract, hard to understand development standards such as FAR (Floor Area Ratio) are used to measure development capacity on site but do not provide a very clear picture of development that results • Zoning map, land use designations and development standards are the primary tools of the conventional code	• Greater use of graphics to explain community goals and desired urban form to applicants, neighborhood groups and administrators • A Regulating Plan replaces the conventional code zoning map and land use designations; development standards are keyed to the Regulating Plan • Development standards and expected building form is illustrated in plans, sections, 3-D models and/or axonometrics, and photos • Other innovative tools are used by some form-based codes such as Building Types, which codify historic and/or desirable building types. Codes that use this tool include NorthWest Crossing in Bend, Oregon and City of Ventura, California

What are the advantages of Form-Based Codes?

- Form-based codes are better at illustrating community plans and vision
- Building and street design is coordinated
- Urban form is more predictable
- A more gradual transition between adjacent areas with different development intensities is easier to achieve—such as the transition from a mixed-use transit oriented center and an existing single dwelling neighborhood or natural areas
- Can specify the tapering of height, bulk, massing and lot coverage of buildings toward residential and/or natural edges
- High density development is more carefully designed, attractive and compatible

What are the pitfalls of Form-Based Codes?

- Cities must consider what approving bodies will administer the code and whether current review processes and review bodies will be adequate; rarely is a form-based code able to be administered without some modification
- Some cities have legal restrictions against using illustrations to set development standards; in these cases the illustrations are used to augment text and numerical standards but are not legally binding

What is a Hybrid Code?

The code proposed for the Fuller Road Station Area Plan is a hybrid code.

- One that incorporates the form-based code approach toward form, but uses the provisions, processes and standards from the current code
- Often take the form of a chapter within the code, similar to a special district or an overlay
- Hybrid codes cross reference other sections of the existing code for development standards such as parking dimensions or landscaping standards
- Hybrid codes are more integrated—not stand alone codes. Some “pure” form-based codes that have been adopted are stand alone codes and because of unresolved administration issues, they are optional for applicants; not mandatory

What are some Form-Based and Hybrid Code fatal flaws?

- When allowed land uses are too complex and don't allow a mix of uses
- When there is an unresolvable difference between the development capacity allowed by existing zoning and future urban form goals. This is a particular problem with form-based and hybrid codes applied to infill areas
- When there is an unresolvable difference between the existing development standards and future urban form goals
- The vision and plan process must precede the making of a form-based or hybrid code

Possible determinants of urban form for Folsom Boulevard Specific Area Plan: Form-Based or Hybrid Code issues to consider

- Street width to height ratio
- How buildings face the street
- Sun exposure and shading of important urban areas—streets and open spaces
- Development capacity set by existing zoning
- What is actually buildable when existing development standards, parking requirements, lot size, etc, are all added up
- Development feasibility and economics, especially for development and building types that are desired. In other words, how to make it easy to build mixed-use buildings such as residential over retail.
- Step backs or other form shaping that doesn't create construction difficulty
- The overall capacity of the area and its ability to accommodate projected development
- Transition between areas, especially the transition of more dense and intensely developed areas to residential areas, such as the transition of the mixed-use development area to the existing residential areas to the north and south