MEETING SUMMARY

Date: December 6, 2012  Project Name: O‘ahu 2035: General Plan Update
Time: 6:30 to 8:30 pm  Recorded by: Corlyn Orr
Location: Mililani Middle School Cafeteria
Subject: Community Briefing #2
Attendees: See attached
Reference: Community Briefing #2 PowerPoint Presentation

Introductions

The purpose of the second community meeting for the O‘ahu 2035 General Plan Update was to present the Public Review Draft, and solicit comments and questions. This was the second briefing in a series of three (the first was at McKinley High School, December 4, 2012; the third will be held in Kāne‘ohe, January 14, 2013).

Jiro Sumada, Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) Acting Director, convened the meeting at about 6:40 pm. He began with opening remarks, thanked the group for their attendance and participation, and then introduced Scott Ezer.

Presentation

Scott Ezer, principal with Helber Hastert & Fee, Planners (HHF), provided a presentation that included: an overview of the project status and information gathering efforts to date; a summary of the community survey and written comments received; highlights of the major revisions proposed in the Public Review Draft; and instructions for submitting written comments on the Public Review Draft.

As part of the presentation, a third community briefing tentatively scheduled for January 14, 2013 at Castle High School was announced. A final notice would be emailed/published once the meeting venue is confirmed.

Comments and Discussion

Following the presentation, the floor was opened to comments and questions. Comments and questions from the discussion are summarized as follows.

- Prefer that population distribution guidelines be expressed as actual numbers, instead of percentages because the percentages do not account for the carrying capacity of each region. Wai‘anae cannot afford to take any more people. Current population trends are putting pressure on rural and suburban regions least capable of absorbing the additional population, and negatively impacting these regions (e.g., water resources are not available to support the population, existing infrastructure systems lack capacity to accommodate the growth). Need to be increasing density in areas designated for growth.

In response, it was noted that Wai‘anae is a unique situation because DHHL owns a large amount of land, and the City does not have jurisdiction over DHHL-owned lands. No changes are being proposed to the current population distribution guidelines (refer to Public Review
Draft, Chapter I, Objective B, Policy 4). It may be possible to document the projected regional population numbers that correspond with the percentages in the final technical report.

- Chapter IV, Objective C, Policy 6 in the Public Review Draft ("Discourage residential development in areas where the topography makes construction difficult or hazardous and where providing and maintaining roads, utilities, and other facilities would be extremely costly or environmentally damaging") should be revised/strengthened to discourage development in areas where existing infrastructure systems do not have capacity to accommodate new development (similar to Policy 4).

- DPP clarified that the Public Review Draft is a first draft being circulated for comment. Comments indicating both likes and dislikes, as well as suggestions for revisions, are being encouraged. Following the public comment period, DPP will review all comments then revise the General Plan and transmit a Final Draft to Planning Commission/City Council for review.

- In response, it was clarified that the purpose of these community meetings is to present a general overview of the Public Review Draft and provide a venue for public discussion/questions about the draft. Verbal comments from the meetings will be recorded, but the meetings are only one venue to submit comments. Written comments will be accepted through April 15, 2013.

- Ability of vacation rental proponents to influence the survey results did not affect DPP's decision to propose a new policy about alternative lodging. DPP clarified that their decision to include the alternative lodging policy is an effort to re-open the policy discussion about vacation rentals. The current enforcement system is not effective, and needs improvement.

- It was clarified that the proposed policy to allow alternative lodging is consistent with the North Shore Sustainable Communities Plan (NSSCP). The NSSSCP states that existing problems with illegal vacation rentals need to be resolved before new units are allowed. It also states the community's desire for a small country inn in Haleiwa.

- The timing of the General Plan review – overlapping with the SCP 5-year reviews – is inevitable. Updating the General Plan and the SCPs is a continual process, with some overlap in the review cycles.

- Revisions in the Public Review Draft are only wordsmithing efforts. Concepts of carrying capacity and concurrency need to be incorporated, and policies are needed to protect agricultural lands inside the urban growth boundaries. O'ahu experienced too much growth too quickly, as evidenced by traffic conditions and the rate that agricultural lands are being urbanized in Central O'ahu and 'Ewa.

- Important to incorporate climate change and sea level rise, and start planning efforts to protect against sea level rise. The extent of changes will be detrimental (e.g., aquifers and fresh water resources will be subject to salt water intrusion; rising water table will weaken building foundations; rainfall levels will decline). Waikīkī will be inundated, and policies still support investing in Waikīkī and other low-lying coastal areas. Also important to consider the changes to mauka areas (e.g., flooding in mauka areas as coastal drainage systems will not be able to drain).
- Cannot go forward with this Plan because it does not address peak oil and the problems caused by population growth. O‘ahu needs to grow biofuels to be prepared for the price of peak oil. Also need to address overpopulation and reinstate population growth controls that were removed from the Public Review Draft (Chapter I). Recall that oral comments submitted during Community Meeting #1 called for keeping the population controls.

- Scope of the General Plan Update does not include developing a "scorecard" (indicators to assess implementation). Scorecard development was part of the last round of the SCP 5-Year reviews. The scorecards are important for the SCPs because the regional plans include specific implementation strategies that can be measured. At issue for the NSSCP 5-Year Review was the lack of available indicators and data sources.

- Chapter 7, Objective D, Policy 3 makes reference to a green belt in ‘Ewa and Central O‘ahu. DPP responded that the greenbelt runs mauka of the H-1 Freeway along Kunia Road, and is comprised of AG lands outside the community growth boundaries.

- It was explained that the reference to electromagnetic radiation sources (Chapter VII, Objective A, Policy 11) generally includes antennae/communication towers and power lines.

- Disagree with proposed changes to remove policies that call for limiting population growth. These statements have been in the General Plan since 1977, and are important principles for an island society with limited resources and a carrying capacity. Only way to be sustainable is to reduce immigration and limit population growth. O‘ahu already has too many people on this island; need to impose a limit on the number of people and control population. Santa Barbara took action by limiting new water system connections.

  In response, it was noted that the Supreme Court ruled local jurisdictions cannot constitutionally limit immigration. New hook ups can be limited based on the availability of natural resources, but the City Council would have to make that determination and push for such a policy.

- Why is there no reference to polluted groundwater resources in Central O‘ahu? In response, it was indicated that the General Plan is a high-level policy document, and is not intended to address specific issues. An appropriate policy statement would address protection of water resources or the importance of providing a safe, high-quality water supply.

Before closing the meeting, Scott thanked everyone for attending, and provided instructions for submitting written comments.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:05 pm.
LIST OF ATTENDEES

Department of Planning and Permitting: Jiro Sumada
Kathy Sokugawa
Randy Hara
Mike Watkins

Helber Hastert & Fee Planners: Scott Ezer
Corlyn Orr
Lori Chun

Community Attendees (15 individuals): Nick Andrade
Don Aweau
Victoria Cannon
Michael Dau
Dr. Kioni Dudley
Karen Loomis
Larry McElheny
Nancy McPherson, DHHL
Dick Poirier, Mililani-Waipio Neighborhood Board #25
Cynthia Rezentes
Gil Riviere
Nicholas Striebick
Alan Suwa, Mililani Mauka Neighborhood Board #35
Melissa Vomvoris
Crystal Young