

MEMORANDUM

March 23, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor Blackburn and Members of the City Council
From: Carlsbad Tomorrow: Citizens Committee on Growth Management
Via: Eric Lardy, City Planner
Re: **Recommendations related to quality of life and city operations raised during the Carlsbad Tomorrow Committee process**

In March 2022, the City Council established the Carlsbad Tomorrow: Growth Management Citizens Committee with the mission to “...promote balanced consideration of a range of perspectives on issues affecting the future growth and quality of life in Carlsbad and to identify the key elements of a new plan to manage growth in Carlsbad in a way that maintains an excellent quality of life while also complying with state law.”

This memorandum identifies the committee’s recommendations to the City Council on important topics that affect Carlsbad’s quality-of-life but are not recommended to be included as standards in a growth management program (Attachment A).

Background

In 1986 the Carlsbad City Council passed a growth management ordinance and the Carlsbad Voters passed Proposition E, which affirmed the growth management program and established caps on the number of housing units that could be built in Carlsbad. A key component of the program is that public facilities are required to be provided concurrent with and funded by development. The program also included provisions that created a moratorium on development if the standards were not met. This program was successfully implemented for approximately 30 years.

Recent changes to state law have resulted in changes to some of the original requirements of the program, specifically that the dwelling unit caps and moratorium provisions are no longer enforceable. In 2017 the California Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 166, known as the No Net Loss Law, which requires local jurisdictions to ensure that their Housing Element inventories can accommodate, at all times throughout the planning period, their remaining unmet share of the regional housing need. In 2019, the legislature passed SB 330, the Housing Crisis Act of 2019, which prohibits local jurisdictions from imposing moratoriums on housing development and using residential housing caps or other limits to regulate the number of housing units built within a jurisdiction. The City Council passed resolutions that suspended portions of the growth management program in 2020 and 2021.

Community Services Branch

Community Development Department

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Discussion

Considering these changes in state law and required actions, a City Council goal for fiscal year 2021-2022 was to “engage the community through a citizens committee to create a new plan to manage growth in Carlsbad in a way that maintains an excellent quality of life.” The City Council approved a charter for the Growth Management Plan Advisory Committee on Sept. 28, 2021. The committee is comprised of 19 primary and 19 alternate members; 9 of which are selected by the boards and commissions that advise the city on a variety of related topics. The remaining 10 members and alternates represent the four City Council districts and the city at-large.

The charter for the committee states that, “The committee’s work will conclude with a committee-supported report recommending to the City Council the key elements of what should be included in a new plan to manage growth and achieve an excellent quality of life while maintaining compliance with state law.”

The City Council formed the committee on March 8, 2022. During the committee’s conversations and deliberations through a series of 15 meetings from March 2022 to April 2023, the committee decided on recommendations for new standards that would be included in a “plan to manage growth” (provided in a separate report to the City Council). The committee also identified topics that are of importance to Carlsbad’s quality of life but are not recommended to be included as standards in a growth management plan (Attachment A). The committee recommends that the City Council consider these quality-of-life topics in decisions that affect the future of Carlsbad.

Next Steps

City staff will continue to implement the [FY 2022-23 Operating Budget, Strategic Digital Transformation Investment Program, and Capital Improvement Program](#), Future Operational Plans, and any other plans and programs adopted by the City Council. City Staff will also implement any additional direction received.

Attachments: A. Quality of Life Statements

cc: Scott Chadwick, City Manager
Cindie McMahon, City Attorney
Ron Kemp, Senior Assistant City Attorney

QUALITY OF LIFE STATEMENTS

The committee recommends the City Council consider the following statements on topics that are not directly associated with a growth management standard but are tied to the quality of life within the city.

ARTS AND CULTURE (PROPOSED)

- ▶ The arts are fundamentally intertwined with the City of Carlsbad's quality of life as they give the city a defining character and create a sense of place through aesthetics and culturally enriching programs and events for all residents. A culturally thriving community is directly related to economic growth; hence, the arts should be given higher priority by the City Council in the Strategic Plan and Operating Budget.
 - ▶ For more information about the committee's discussion on arts and culture, see the committee's minutes for meetings held on Nov. 30, 2022, and Jan. 26, 2023. Additionally, the [City of Carlsbad Arts & Culture Master Plan](#) and the [City of Carlsbad Library & Cultural Arts programs and services](#) have information on existing programs.
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CARLSBAD ENERGY ADVISORY GROUP

- ▶ The committee recommends a group of 5-7 citizens charged with providing the Mayor and City Council with an annual summary of all energy-related activities impacting the city's residents and businesses. Topics include but are not limited to:
 - Electric commodity providers
 - Energy reliability and safety
 - SDG&E Undergrounding programs
 - Carlsbad's peaker-style power plant operations
 - Renewable energy production (new solar installations, quantity of energy produced, new technological advancements)
 - Feasibility of microgrids
 - Battery storage
 - ▶ See the committee's minutes for meeting held on Feb. 23, 2023.
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FEES

- ▶ The committee recommends the city evaluate all public facility impact fees on a regular basis and update as needed. See the committee's minutes for meeting held on Dec. 15, 2022.
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HOMELESSNESS

- ▶ Homelessness is an important issue that impacts the quality of life for the residents of Carlsbad and should remain a priority for the City Council in the Strategic Plan and Operating Budget. The committee recognizes the complex challenges of addressing the impacts of homelessness and supports the continued efforts of the city's Homeless Outreach Team and affordable housing programs, as well as the [Homelessness Action Plan](#).
 - ▶ See the committee's minutes for the meeting held on Oct. 12, 2022.
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OPEN SPACE

- ▶ The committee has made a recommendation to modify the existing Growth Management Open Space Standard (provided in a separate report).
 - ▶ Additionally, the committee recommends that the City Council add the topic of open space to the purview of the Parks & Recreation Commission to address open space needs throughout the city, address potential open space deficits and evaluate opportunities to acquire more open space.
 - ▶ See the committee's minutes for meetings held on Sept. 22, 2022, Jan. 11, 2023, and Feb. 23, 2023.
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PROPOSITION H

- ▶ During committee deliberation it was discussed that Proposition H, as implemented by [Carlsbad Municipal Code Chapter 1.24](#), has not been updated since it was passed by voters in the 1980s and it may be time to consider a ballot measure increasing the expenditure limit due to increased project costs and indexing it to something like the Consumer Price Index so it can increase over time.
 - ▶ Additionally, the committee recommended the city set aside funding for public safety capital improvement projects, such as fire stations, and specify in a future ballot measure that certain types of projects don't require voter approval to exceed the spending limit.
 - ▶ See the committee's minutes for meetings held on Oct. 12, 2022, and Jan. 26, 2023.
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SENIORS / AGING COMMUNITY

- ▶ The quality of life and needs of Carlsbad's senior community and aging population is important. The committee recognizes and supports the city's continued efforts to ensure the needs of seniors are met, such as through the [City of Carlsbad Age-Friendly Action Plan](#), [City of Carlsbad Parks & Recreation Department senior programs and Senior Center](#) and the [City of Carlsbad Senior Commission](#).
 - ▶ Carlsbad's senior community and aging population should remain a priority for the City Council in the Strategic Plan and Operating Budget.
 - ▶ See the committee's minutes for the meeting held on Oct. 12, 2022.
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TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

- ▶ The committee has made a recommendation to retain the existing Growth Management Circulation (Mobility) Standard (provided in a separate report).
- ▶ Additionally, on Jan. 26, 2023, the committee by consensus recommended that a statement be added to this quality-of-life document to recommend that the city:
 - Utilize the [Sustainable Mobility Plan](#) and Multimodal Transportation Impact Fee to implement future multimodal transportation projects that provide the greatest benefit to the community;
 - Review of current facilities,
 - Relationship between existing traffic operations, changing commute patterns, regional traffic volume growth, traffic safety and new disruptive trends in mobility technologies, and
 - Development of standards and a fee structure for private development to provide a fair share to partially fund the buildout of the city's multimodal transportation network.
 - Require new development to conduct intersection Level of Service and Multimodal Level-of-Service analysis to determine direct project impacts in accordance with the city's Local Mobility Analysis Guidelines.
 - Update the Multimodal Transportation Impact Fee and include Local Mobility Assessment with Level of Service for all modes.
 - Improve traffic signal synchronization to improve vehicle mobility and reduce the potential environmental impacts from vehicle emissions related to the stop-and-go and idling at intersections.
- ▶ See the committee's minutes for meetings held on July 28, 2022, Aug. 25, 2022, Dec. 15, 2022, and Jan. 26, 2023.