

DATE: February 14, 2024

TO: Orange County Planning Commission

FROM: OC Development Services /Planning

SUBJECT: Initiation of Comprehensive General Plan Update (GPA 24-01)

PROPOSAL: Staff is requesting authorization to initiate a Comprehensive General Plan Update to revise all elements of the County General Plan

ZONING/GENERAL PLAN: N/A

LOCATION: Unincorporated Areas of Orange County

APPLICANT: OC Development Services/Planning

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RECOMMENDED ACTION:

OC Development Services/Planning recommends the Planning Commission:

- a. Receive staff report and public testimony.
- b. Authorize staff to initiate Comprehensive General Plan Update (GPA 24-01) to revise all elements of the County General Plan.

BACKGROUND:

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 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. Pursuant to GC Section 65040.5(a), the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) is required to notify cities and counties with general plans that have not been revised within the last eight years. The County has not conducted a comprehensive update to the GP since 2005. Consequently, OPR has notified

the County that its GP is in need of review to ensure the policies and objectives remain current. Court decisions have determined that local jurisdictions have an implied duty to keep their general plans current.

DISCUSSION:

The Board of Supervisors approved Contract MA-080-21011313 with De Novo Planning Group for the Comprehensive GP Update through May 25, 2026. 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.

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.

The GP Update also includes an environmental analysis and subsequent preparation of the appropriate California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Document. 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.

OC Development Services/Planning staff are currently updating select elements of the GP, such as the Housing Element to meet compliance with State Law. Ongoing revisions will be submitted to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors for consideration separate of the GP Update.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

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. The approval of this item does not commit the County to a definite course of action in regard to a project since the action being authorized is initiation of the 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.

Submitted by:

Concurred by:



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