

ATTACHMENT 5

**CITY OF UNION CITY
MINUTES FOR THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2019 7:00 P.M.
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF CITY HALL
34009 ALVARADO-NILES ROAD
UNION CITY, CA 94587**

1. **ROLL CALL:** Vice Chair Jo Ann Lew;
Commissioner Raymond Gonzales, Jr.; Commissioner Lee Guio;
Commissioner Harpal Mann; Commissioner Jeanelle Banks

STAFF: Carmela Campbell (Economic & Community Development Director);
Farooq Azim (Interim City Engineer); Alex Mog (Deputy City
Attorney); Denisse Anzoategui (Administrative Assistant)

5. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
 - A. **CONTINUED HEARINGS:** None.
 - B. **NEW HEARINGS:**
 1. **Review of the Final Draft of the 2040 General Plan and Associated Environmental Impact Report**

Carmela Campbell, Economic & Community Development Director, and Kari Zajac, Rincon Consultants, presented the staff report.

Commissioner Mann commended Ms. Campbell and her team's tremendous efforts during the span that the process has taken. Commissioner Mann acknowledged public involvement which consisted of sixty-five public meetings and nine elements that the Planning Commission had provided feedback on. Commissioner Mann stated he was pleased that there is mention of climate change and was taken into consideration for the guidelines of new construction and that the issue is addressed.

Commissioner Guio echoed Commissioner Mann's sentiments. Commissioner Guio asked where the future shopping centers would be located specifically in the Station District.

Ms. Campbell replied that while the Station District is not considered the downtown it is referred to as the new town center. Ms. Campbell stated that the Station East area is going to be accommodating some new retail and the new buildings along 11th Street would have activated ground floor uses. Ms. Campbell added that it would be a more robust commercial sector at the Station District as it develops.

Commissioner Guio asked if there would be another Union Landing coming.

Ms. Campbell replied no as there is a great emphasis on maintaining the City's industrial areas and really maximizing the tax generating revenue from those areas.

Commissioner Guio recalled the City's involvement in providing support to the Alvarado Historic District with signage and asked if there was plan to continue.

Ms. Campbell replied that there has been a bit of an issue with the new signage in the Alvarado District, essentially with the new gateway sign there were some unmapped utilities that proposed issues and required a redesign. Ms. Campbell added that the Public Works Department is managing that project. Ms. Campbell assured Commissioner Guio that it is still a priority for the City.

Commissioner Guio recalled that the City had hopes to revitalize the district. Commissioner Guio asked if it was still the City's intention to create that district.

Ms. Campbell replied that it is still a priority for the City. Ms. Campbell added that what the General Plan does is really memorialize the work that has been done and still needs to happen.

Commissioner Guio asked what "new funding mechanisms" meant at Union Landing.

Ms. Campbell replied that it gets to the issue of looking at different types of uses, which would not necessarily result in sales tax such as entertainment uses that bring people to the area.

Commissioner Guio stated that he saw that the EIR contained information that the City had received four responses with one from the State Clearinghouse. Commissioner Guio asked who the State Clearinghouse is and what their role is.

Ms. Zajac replied that as part of the Public Review Process, the EIR is taken to the State Clearinghouse and is then sent out to a list of public agencies that they identify. Ms. Zajac added their letter was a response to the consultant that they had received the Draft Environmental Impact Report and sent it out to the agencies. Ms. Zajac added that they were notified that Caltrans had a specific comment.

Commissioner Banks applauded City Staff for all their hard work. Commissioner Banks recalled the great work they did in reaching out to business members in the Alvarado Historic District when she had a business there.

Commissioner Gonzales stated the EIR notes several significant and unavoidable impacts that will occur because of population growth and demand for housing and jobs. Commissioner Gonzales asked if the Planning Commission would have to be involved in the mitigating those issues or if they would streamline those issues with the State.

Ms. Campbell replied that there are some resource areas within the EIR that were identified as significant and unavoidable. Ms. Campbell recalled a comment earlier about the need to update the Climate Action Plan thus causing it to be considered significant and unavoidable, and when it is updated to include the emission standards it will include mitigation and the impact would update itself.

Alex Mog, Deputy City Attorney, added that some impacts that are unavoidable or can't be mitigated will require the City Council to adopt a statement of overriding consideration in which they make findings that there are impacts but the benefits from the project outweigh the unavoidable impacts.

Commissioner Gonzales asked Ms. Zajac regarding the water demand comment.

Commissioner Gonzales asked what change that would be if there was a decrease in water demand.

Ms. Zajac replied that when the draft EIR was drafted they used some standard rates from the City of Los Angeles, and later received a comment letter from the Water District that asked to use demand rates that they provided to calculate numbers in their urban water management plan. Ms. Zajac added that they worked with ACWD staff directly to revise the water demand for Union City consistent with their demand rate projections.

Commissioner Gonzales replied that it was likely changing front yardage to drought resistant types of plants.

Ms. Zajac agreed and added that their demand numbers were slightly less because they're specific to the area, whereas they were using numbers specific to a different County, which resulted in a decrease in overall water demand.

Commissioner Gonzales asked that in terms of Economic Development, with the limited developable land resources, if the City will have the ability to create more businesses and job opportunities over the next 20 years.

Ms. Campbell replied that it is a goal in the Economic Development Element to intensify Industrial and Commercial areas, and how we can make better use of existing nonresidential lands. Ms. Campbell added that the City will not be mandating that the sites develop, but if they do, there's guidance out there. Ms. Campbell added that when a building becomes antiquated, it can't be used, then when it gets rebuilt it'll be denser and will create more jobs and more businesses can be accommodated there.

Commissioner Gonzales asked about a contingency plan if retail starts to slow down and e-commerce takes off negatively affecting our retail. Commissioner Gonzales asked if there was enough of a buffer provided to be able to move and adjust over the next twenty years.

Ms. Campbell replied that there is an implementation program specific to Union Landing and the timeframe for the implementation program is five years. Ms. Campbell added that within the next few years we're going to be starting an update to the zoning for Union Landing to be competitive in the marketplace.

Commissioner Gonzales described the importance of increasing pedestrian accessibility in Union Landing that would increase revenue sales.

Ms. Campbell agreed. Ms. Campbell added that Union Landing must be looked at differently because when it was designed it was very auto centric, and now the mindset is that anything that benefits one property owner it benefits everybody because they're coming to Union Landing. Ms. Campbell acknowledged Sywest's improvements and concept of placemaking and their job of creating a Plaza in front of the theatre, along with safety features, and amenities for pedestrians.

Commissioner Gonzales thanked Ms. Campbell and staff for putting together all that work and energy as it had been a long process.

Ms. Campbell replied that it had been about five years. Ms. Campbell added that there were some slowdowns. Ms. Campbell referenced the land use alternatives process, which took longer than anticipated, and the need for more outreach to try to get it right. Ms. Campbell

stated it was important to go over each element individually and had the document been written quickly it would not have had the same impact and been so reflective of the Community vision.

Vice Chairperson Lew thanked Ms. Campbell for the leadership demonstrated and the document brought forward. Vice Chairperson Lew also thanked the Consultants and the public for making it a stellar document. Vice Chairperson Lew stated she had a comment on Page 8, number 63, having to do with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory committee, the word citizen should be removed, and the title should be changed from Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee to Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Vice Chairperson Lew asked if it would still apply as the City Council had already signed a resolution earlier this year. Ms. Campbell assured Vice Chairperson Lew that it will be corrected and will work with the Council to get that changed through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan update. Vice Chairperson Lew opened the public comment.

Liz Ames, 33045 Palmetto Drive, Union City, CA, voiced her concerns about the significant impacts mentioned and specifically referenced the greenhouse gas impacts being irreversible. Ms. Ames added that if we have significant impacts and can't mitigate what is being proposed then the City is not focusing on the right projects. Ms. Ames referenced the need for jobs and added that intensifying warehouse uses provides low wage jobs and expressed concern over truck traffic. Ms. Ames stated we should get away from warehousing and that these are the types of issues the City should be addressing in our General Plan. She also referenced Union Landing and the fact that big box retail is going out of business. Ms. Ames suggested hotels as a potential use in Union Landing to add more jobs and less housing. Ms. Ames stated the City has done a great job building housing and referenced the job/housing imbalance. Ms. Ames referenced super commuters driving through the City and stated that transportation is the main cause of greenhouse gases. Ms. Ames referenced the East-West Connector project, Decoto Road and Whipple Road and expressed concern regarding the cut-through traffic from super-commuters. She also referenced the Gateway site and indicated that people do not walk to BART if more than ½ mile away. Ms. Ames stated the City has been doing the same thing, which is focusing on housing and not job centers. Ms. Ames also stated she was concerned about the development occurring at the Station District, like the Dialysis Center, that brings in no revenue. Ms. Ames indicated the City shouldn't focus on a roadway and housing and should focus on creating a downtown and jobs. Ms. Ames indicated that the City has limited resources and limited time and has not been able to bring in revenue because housing and building infrastructure is a drain on resources. Ames questioned why the City is in trouble in the 11th year of an economic expansion and attributed this to the City doing the same things it has done in the past.

Eva Kamakea, 35007 Lilac Loop, Union City, CA, stated she recently attended a meeting from the County Transportation Commission which addressed transportation from East 14th Street to Ohlone College. Ms. Kamakea asked the Commission to think about seamless transportation around the Bay Area. Ms. Kamakea suggested the City look into bringing in headhunters and to arm them with good incentives to bring in companies that will provide jobs for residents. Ms. Kamakea stated she would like the City to focus on bringing in companies that would bring office space and R&D, which are tax providers. Ms. Kamakea stated she would like to see more jobs in Union City.

Vice Chairperson Lew closed the public comment.

Commissioner Guio moved that the Planning Commission recommend and adopt the resolutions recommending to the City Council certification of the Environmental Impact Report and adoption of the 2040 General Plan.

Commissioner Mann seconded the motion.

AYES 5 (Banks, Gonzales, Guio, Lew, Mann)

NOES 0

ABSTAIN 0

ABSENT 0