

Brentwood adopts updated General Plan

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By Kyle Szymanski

The Brentwood City Council this week unanimously approved the General Plan, a document that is expected to steer development decisions related to land use, community design, transportation, public services and resource conservation for the next 15 to 20 years.

"While it's difficult to balance the many moving parts and sometimes conflicting desires of the community, the updated [General Plan](#) does a wonderful job of balancing responsible growth, careful consideration of usable agriculture, and our safety needs, while being fiscally sound and sustainable," said resident Carissa Pillow, a member of the 12-person working group of council members, commissioners and residents who spent over a year crafting the document.

The template breaks down key components of the city's future, including housing, growth management, fiscal sustainability, economic development and community design.

The [General Plan](#) includes guiding principles for city leaders to follow in the future, including the need to protect the city's family-oriented lifestyle, attract high-paying jobs and provide high-quality housing options.

The city's last General Plan was adopted in 1993, although certain elements of the plan have since been updated. State law dictates each city's General Plan be updated periodically to fit the needs and wants of the community.

The new version, formally presented at Tuesday's meeting, prompted a few East County residents to express concerns about development on the city's rich agricultural core and expansion of the urban limit line, which is a boundary marking the outer limit where development may occur.

One area of concern is the land north of Balfour Road and west of city limits, which the plan suggests could feature residential homes on large lots.

"When you spread out too much and bring too many people together, you lose the sense of community," said resident Cheryl Christian.

Vice Mayor Joel Bryant and City Councilman Steve Barr, who were part of the General Plan working group, said it wasn't the committee's intent to take away agricultural land and reminded the audience the urban limit line can't be extended until a ballot initiative is passed.

"We can have conversations about future growth for the next 20 years, but the reality is the people who live here are the voice that make that decision," Bryant said.

The plan also plots an ideal spot for an eBART station and/or a park-and-ride facility as well as commercial development on land south of Lone Tree Way and west of Shady Willow Lane.

Outside of development, the General Plan calls for the city to maintain an adequate number of police officers and to explore creating a city fire department or joint powers authority with neighboring jurisdictions if fire service levels decrease or decline.

On the economic front, the document indicates the city should try to attract a diverse range of companies, including those in the health care, medical device manufacturing, solar, energy-based and clean-tech industries. The city is also advised to work with community groups to support local events and look for land to build a multi-use park to attract regional events such as rodeos, carnivals and festivals.

The city should also maintain the character of downtown and continue to make financial plans over a 10-year horizon to ensure its fiscal health, according to the plan.

The various goals, policies and actions described in the General Plan are in various stages of completion, according to Community Development Director Casey McCann.

"We will work earnestly to make sure this plan is actually implemented," McCann said. "There is still a lot of work that needs to be done as directed by the council through this plan."