



City of Culver City

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Chambers
9770 Culver Blvd.
Culver City, CA 90232

Staff Report

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CC - Presentation of UCLA's 2020 Comprehensive Project Student Report for the General Plan Update (GPU).

Meeting Date: September 14, 2020

Contact Person/Dept: Ashley Hefner/CDD

Phone Number: (310) 253-5744

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☐ **Action Item:** ☐ **Attachments:** ☒

Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒ **Date:** N/A

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (09/10/2020), Notify Me - General Plan Update (09/08/2020)

Department Approval: Sol Blumenfeld, Community Development Director (08/21/2020)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council receive a presentation of UCLA's 2020 Comprehensive Project Student Report for the General Plan Update (GPU).

BACKGROUND

Each year, a team of urban planning master's students at UCLA research and analyze planning challenges to produce a high-quality report known as the "Comprehensive Project", with recommendations for action for a client organization. This allows the students to analyze real-world issues, make recommendations that may address the client organizations' needs and gain experience working for a client. At the suggestion of Council Member Lee, in the 2019-2020 academic year, UCLA collaborated with the City of Culver City on topics connected to the City's General Plan Update (GPU). Professor Paavo Monkkonen led the class and is a member of Culver City's General Plan Advisory Committee.

DISCUSSION

The students asked, *"How can Culver City recognize and celebrate its common values and improve life for today and tomorrow?"* Six different topics were selected to explore this question and addressed traffic congestion, complete streets, design of the "transit gateway" around Culver City Station, the Inglewood Oil Field (IOF), community engagement, and housing affordability. The students addressed these topics by analyzing existing conditions and trends and evaluating best practices and case studies. The report recommendations intend to advance the ideals of inclusion, equity, and sustainability and improve the quality of life for Culver City residents and visitors alike.

Report 1. Flattening the Traffic Curve: Infrastructure-Light Solutions (Attachment 2)

To manage the city's increasing traffic congestion and related emissions and support a walkable, bikeable, sustainable, and livable Culver City with improved circulation, the report recommends the City:

- Support an employee-led local transportation management association (TMA) for employers with fewer than 50 employees by providing initial funding and identifying and securing grants. TMAs reduce single-occupancy vehicular trips by offering carpooling programs, employee shuttles, and subsidized transit passes.
- Capture the hidden costs of parking by:
 - Eliminating minimum parking requirements in the Zoning Code or repealing parking requirements in transit priority areas and reducing requirements in all other areas.
 - Increasing meter rates and adopting performance-based pricing (which varies parking rates based on demand) for City-owned parking.
 - Eliminating fee exemptions for parking placards for persons with disabilities to capture lost revenue and discourage placard abuse.
 - Unbundling the cost of parking from renting a commercial or residential building to allow parking cash outs, which tends to decrease car ownership, or the number of automobile trips people make.
- Institute road congestion pricing on major arterials and freeways (though this requires regional collaboration) to ensure traffic speeds are optimal at all times to keep traffic flowing.
- Limit exemptions of congestion charges, while offering rebates to low-income motorists to ensure the approaches are applied equitably.
- Investing the revenue from the above measures into traffic calming projects on nearby neighborhood streets to prevent spillover traffic.

Report 2. Complete Streets for Culver City (Attachment 3)

To ensure Culver City implements complete streets that allow all to use streets safely, efficiently, and comfortably-regardless of the user's age, income, race, and ability-the students recommend the City implement three-phased approaches for Downtown Culver City and Southwest Sepulveda. The students propose a citywide traffic safety campaign for residents and that the General Plan Circulation Element include language supporting complete streets to support the approaches.

Downtown Culver City

- Phase I - implement low-cost interventions such as improved and new high visibility crosswalks and scrambles
- Phase II - install class IV bike lanes along Culver and Washington Boulevards and a bus-only lane in both directions of Culver Boulevard
- Phase III - convert westbound vehicular lanes on Culver Boulevard and eastbound vehicular lanes on Washington Boulevard into a pedestrian park with public seating for nearby, local businesses

Southwest Sepulveda

- Phase I - install high visibility crosswalks, painted crosswalks, and a low-cost Class IV bike lane that uses plastic bollards along Sepulveda Boulevard
- Phase II - upgrade the Class IV bike lane with permanent bollards, temporarily close a slip lane (lane at an intersection that allows vehicles to turn without entering the intersection), and use a portion of Westfield Culver City's parking lot for community events
- Phase III - permanently close the slip lane, widen sidewalks, enhance the urban forest, and add a bus-only lane to support bus movement to and from the Culver City Transit Center

Report 3. Urban Design Report: Reimagining the Transit Gateway of Culver City (Attachment 4)

For this study, the "transit gateway" includes the Metro E Line (Expo) Culver City Station and several parcels south of it between Venice, Washington, and Culver Boulevards and the Exposition Corridor. To change how people access the city by optimizing how the parcels are used, better integrating the station into the city, and connecting the transit center with destinations in the city, the students recommend the City:

- Make the site more inclusive by ensuring low-income individuals can access housing, public spaces, and economic opportunities; invite and retain small businesses; and add inclusionary housing for more affordable housing in the city.
- Adopt a comprehensive wayfinding system that also promotes the city's amenities to highlight and refine the city's identity.
- Widen sidewalks, improve road facilities for cyclists and scooters, increase bike and scooter share programs, and improve first and last mile connections to rail and bus transit to ensure the site supports multimodal uses.
- Prioritize pedestrian safety by identifying safe routes from the station to schools, increasing landscaping and lighting on walkways, and improving wayfinding signage for pedestrians.

Report 4. Tapping Out in Culver City: Re-Envisioning the Inglewood Oil Field (Attachment 5)

As the City evaluates the portion of the IOF in its jurisdiction, the students recommend the City:

- Renegotiate with the operator and subsurface rights owners to phase out the legal, nonconforming use.
- Split the site into green space and solar farming (lower-cost remediation), transform it into

urban retail and office space (higher-cost remediation), or include language in the GPU to support future green initiatives and coordinate with Los Angeles County to decommission the entire oil field.

Report 5. Advancing Community Engagement in Culver City (Attachment 6)

To improve public engagement efforts in Culver City, the students recommend the City:

- Allocate resources to build a dedicated community engagement team in the City.
- Establish a citywide Community Outreach Plan that inventories Culver City's neighborhood groups and community stakeholders, develops a standardized approach to outreach and data collection, and advises that City Council members and staff receive appropriate cultural competency training.
- Amend its Municipal Code to require an outreach plan for projects under discretionary review before the first community meeting.
- Hosts official meetings in spaces outside of City Hall beyond virtual platforms when it is safe to do so.
- Improve its relationship with neighborhoods that have been historically marginalized, such as Fox Hills, and include the most disconnected residents. One approach is to continue the "community conversations" the City had with the Fox Hills neighborhood in coordination with the National Institute for Civil Discourse (NICD) Revive Civility and Respect Cities Initiative. The initiative's goal was to improve public engagement between citizens, elected officials, and stakeholders through civil discourse.

Report 6. Toward a Proactive Local Affordable Housing Agenda (Attachment 7)

To help Culver City address its housing crisis, the students recommend the City:

- Develop an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, allow ministerial review for all affordable housing developments to streamline the permitting process, adopt an inclusionary housing policy, and preserve its existing affordable housing stock.
- Increase the number of parcels zoned for medium density residential and relax development standards to allow denser, one-to two-story residential buildings.
- Add more permanent protections to its rent control ordinance, e.g., add anti-harassment measures

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is no fiscal impact associated with the City Council's receipt of this presentation.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 2020-09-14_ATT_Comprehensive Project Reports Introduction
2. 2020-09-14_ATT_Report 1. Flattening the Traffic Curve: Infrastructure-Light Solutions
3. 2020-09-14_ATT_Report 2. Complete Streets for Culver City
4. 2020-09-14_ATT_Report 3. Urban Design Report: Reimagining the Transit Gateway of Culver

City

5. 2020-09-14_ATT_Report 4. Tapping Out in Culver City: Re-Envisioning the Inglewood Oil Field
6. 2020-09-14_ATT_Report 5. Advancing Community Engagement in Culver City
7. 2020-09-14_ATT_Report 6. Toward a Proactive Local Affordable Housing Agenda

MOTION

None.