



**REPORT DATE:** February 23, 2009

**TO:** Planning Commission Chair and Members

**FROM:** Steve Chase, Planning and Environmental Services Director

**CONTACT:** Anne Wells, Advance Planning Manager

**SUBJECT:** General Plan Amendment Work Program Schedule

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

Receive and file this work program schedule update and provide scheduling feedback to staff accordingly.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Following the adoption of the General Plan on October 2, 2006, the City Council conducted a series of public meetings and hearings to receive input on challenges to the functional implementation of the General Plan from the perspectives of staff, the public-at-large, land owners, developers, special interest groups, as well as other public agencies. What emerged after five months of review was an extensive administrative record filled with diverse policy considerations.

In March 2007, the City Council in consideration of the input it had received, directed staff to prepare a work program and seek budget authority and funds for reopening and refining the General Plan. In July 2007, the City Council authorized the work program that is the subject of this staff report, including processing paths for five interrelated components or tracks, as follows:

- Track 1 – City Initiated Proposed Amendments to Housing Element;
- Track 2 – City Initiated Proposed Minor Amendments to General Plan;
- Track 3 – City Initiated Proposed Substantive Amendments to General Plan;
- Track 4 – Project Related Proposed Amendments to General Plan; and
- Track 5 – Proposed Sphere of Influence.

The work program chart and schedule is provided in Attachment 1 and includes both past and present public meetings/hearings. It is suggested that the chart be placed next to this staff report to assist in the review of the following track-by-track schedule update.

**Track 1 – City Initiated Proposed Amendments to Housing Element**

In March 2007, the City received official notice from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) that the Housing Element had not been certified. State officials believe that it did not comply with statutory requirements of the California Government Code.

With the technical assistance of the housing specialty firm, Baird + Driscoll, the City hosted public workshops in 2007 and identified further optional housing strategies in an attempt to address the HCD concerns. Key housing issues were addressed by the Planning Commission and the City Council in 2008. As part of the outcome of the key issues meeting with the City Council, the City retained Economic & Planning Systems for the preparation of a pro forma/economic feasibility analysis of affordable housing inclusionary rates.

Next steps include a reconciliation of the Housing Element, beyond the key issues, with the Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan 2007–2014 adopted by the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments last June. The City has until August 2009 to comply with this statutory requirement. The proposed amendments and related environmental document will be presented to the Planning Commission for adoption recommendation on three dates as follows:

- June 1 (Special Meeting)
- June 8 (Regular Meeting)
- June 22 (Regular Meeting)

**Track 2 – City Initiated Proposed Minor Amendments to General Plan**

In June 2008 following Planning Commission recommendation for adoption, the City Council approved 46 amendments, out of a pool of 76 amendments originally initiated for study and deliberation. One of the amendments was made in the area of building intensity standards or three dimensional controls on the footprint, size and height of structures. Staff originally recommended the deletion of building intensity standards from the General Plan, reserving such controls for the Zoning Ordinance. However, in the course of study, staff learned of statutory provisions that require General Plans to address building intensity standards. As such, concern shifted to the standards themselves and whether they were appropriate to accomplish the objectives of the Land Use Element. Upon further study, staff urged the City Council to refer the reconsideration of building intensity standards to the Planning Commission and Design Review Board for an analysis of ranges. The City Council agreed with that recommendation and, subsequently, three public workshops were jointly conducted by those bodies between August and October 2008. Consensus recommendations came forth from that process and they will be presented to the Planning Commission for adoption recommendation tonight. Staff refers to this remnant effort as Track 2.5.

### **Track 3 – City Initiated Proposed Substantive Amendments to General Plan**

It was acknowledged from the beginning of the work program that a subset of the City initiated proposed amendments would require further environmental assessment, most likely in the form of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to the Final EIR prepared for the General Plan in 2006. Those items that originally fell into this subset were further evaluated in second-cut public hearings of the City Council in January 2008. The purpose of that process was to further screen and reduce the number of proposed amendments that the City was willing to study and analyze in the Supplemental EIR. More over, ten of the originally proposed amendments in Track 2 were found to require more substantive study and/or full environmental assessment. Upon staff's recommendation, the City Council authorized that they be shifted to Track 3. In sum total, 34 proposed amendments are currently under study in Track 3.

A Draft Supplemental EIR was prepared by Jones & Stokes and released on January 29, 2009 for a 45-day public comment period. A public meeting is scheduled for the evening of February 25, 2009 at 6:00p.m. in the City Council Chambers to receive oral and written public comments on the adequacy of the Draft Supplemental EIR.

At the close of the public comment period (March 16, 2009), staff and consultant will prepare response to comments and make related revisions to the environmental document. The Planning Commission will consider the Draft Final Supplemental EIR and the Track 3 General Plan Amendments for certification/adoption recommendations on the following three dates:

- June 22 (Regular Meeting)
- June 29 (Special Meeting)
- July 27 (Regular Meeting)

### **Track 4 – Project Related Proposed Amendments to General Plan**

To date, fifteen requests for the initiation of proposed amendments (Track 4) have been filed by land owners and project developers. Track 4 amendments are attached to specific projects and are at the request of and responsibility of the individual applicant. Track 4 is relevant in the sense that some of the requested amendments overlap with City-initiated amendments. Tonight's discussion is regarding the City-sponsored General Plan Amendment Work Program schedule; therefore, no further discussion regarding Track 4 is necessary.

### **Track 5 – Proposed Sphere of Influence**

In September and October 2007, the City Council conducted a final set of public meetings and gave direction on the content of a proposed Sphere of Influence. A Sphere represents the probable future service area of a city. The Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) has complete jurisdiction on the setting of a Sphere, rather than the City.

Outreach to property owners and public service providers in the proposed Sphere areas were conducted during 2008. Accordingly, an application to LAFCo was submitted and it is expected that the matter will be heard by the LAFCo Board on March 5, 2009.

The General Plan and its Final EIR studied each of these proposed Sphere areas and assigned land use designations that matched on-the-ground conditions (e.g. no changes to land use patterns).


It is anticipated that the LAFCo Executive Officer will determine that sufficient General Plan work and environmental review has been conducted by the City for purposes of establishing a Sphere. Staff respects that understanding could change as due diligence review is conducted over the next few weeks. Should that understanding hold, the balance of the Sphere adoption efforts will not require an amendment of the General Plan and no meetings of the Planning Commission will be necessary.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This staff report is an opportunity to comprehensively review the General Plan Amendment Work Program schedule. In summary, Track 2 is complete. All that remains for Track 2.5 (Building Intensity Standards) is to conduct the adoption recommendation hearing that is scheduled for this evening. Track 5 (Sphere of Influence) is anticipated to come before the LAFCo Board in March for decision-making and does not require Planning Commission input as a General Plan Amendment is not required.

The major efforts that remain are to complete the Track 1 Housing Element Amendments for HCD certification and the consideration of the Track 3 (Substantive Revisions) amendments. Five total meetings of the Planning Commission are schedule to allow for deliberation of the Track 1 and Track 3 amendments. The meetings are clustered together for continuity purposes.

Submitted By:

  
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Anne Wells  
Advance Planning Manager

Approved By:

  
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Patricia S. Miller  
Planning Commission Secretary

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

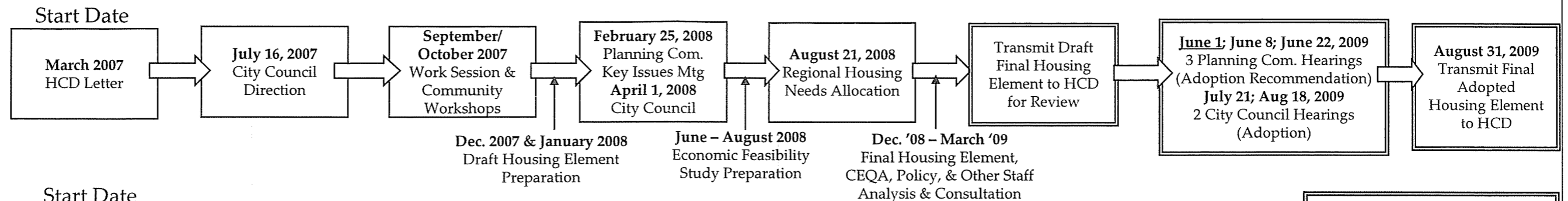
1. General Plan Amendment Work Program Chart

**Attachment 1**

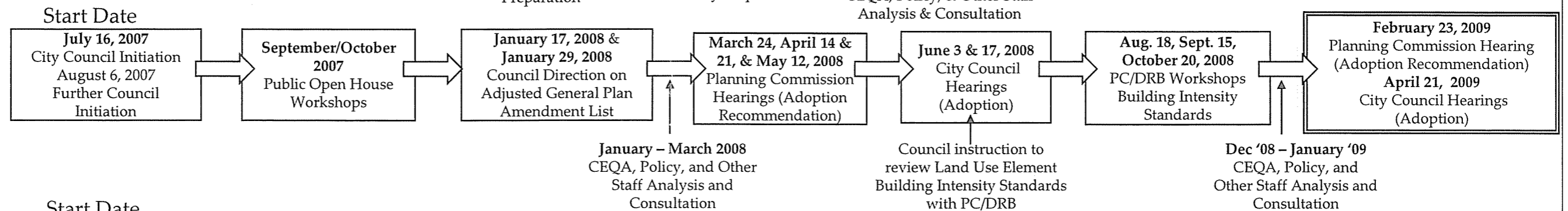
**General Plan Amendment Work Program Chart**

# General Plan Amendment Work Program (February 23, 2009)

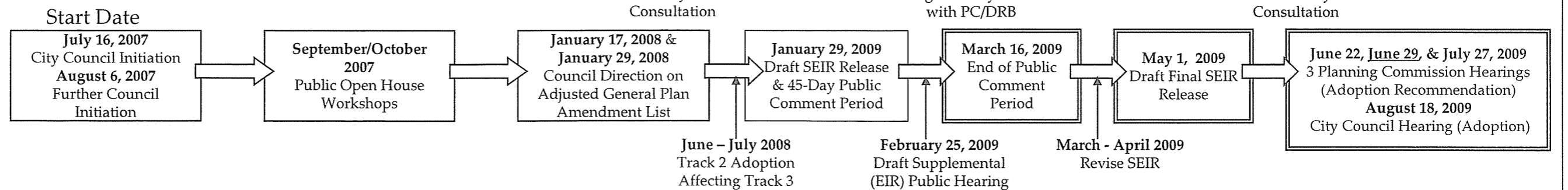
## Track 1 Housing Element



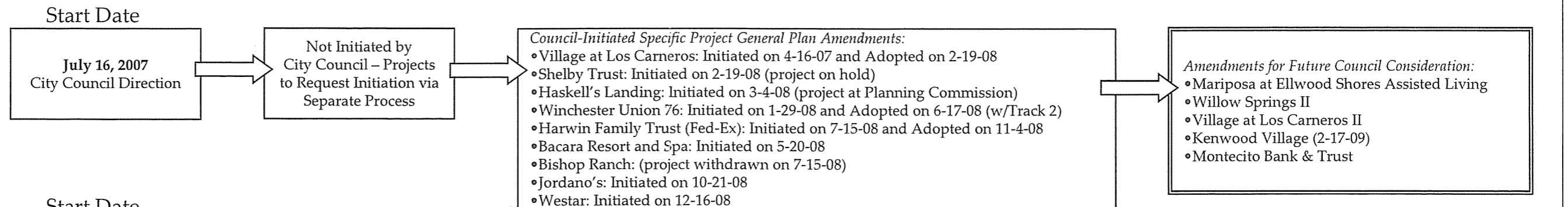
## Track 2 Minor Policy Revisions



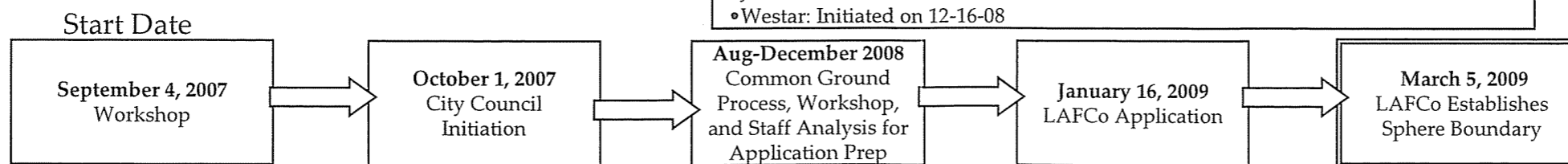
## Track 3 Substantive Policy Revisions



## Track 4 Specific-Project GPA Requests



## Track 5 Sphere of Influence



Task Accomplished

Note: Special Meeting dates are underlined.