



TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA: City Council Regular Meeting
DATE: July 6, 2021
ITEM #: G.10
SUBJECT: Woodland Research and Technology Park Draft Specific Plan

Recommendation for Action: Staff recommends that the City Council receive an update on the Public Review Draft of the Woodland Research and Technology Park Specific Plan, community and stakeholder outreach to date and comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report.

Staff Contact:

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Fiscal Impact:

As directed by City Council, the City has entered into an Agreement for Advance of Funds with the project applicant to process the Woodland Research and Technology Park Specific Plan. The advanced funding agreement outlines a payment plan to cover all costs associated with processing the Specific Plan.

As part of the project evaluation, a fiscal impact analysis was prepared to identify the net fiscal impact of the project on the city. Staff will provide a brief overview of the analysis during its presentation to City Council on July 6 (see also Attachment 2).

Report in Brief:

The Public Review Draft Woodland Research and Technology Park Specific Plan ("Specific Plan")(Attachment 1) was released on November 17, 2020, followed by release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") on May 14, 2021 (document link: <https://cityofwoodland.org/ResearchParkDocuments>). Since the release of the Draft Specific Plan, city staff and representatives of the project applicant team have met with a variety of stakeholder organizations and facilitated or attended several community and city commission/committee presentations to provide information about the project and to obtain feedback from the community. On July 2, 2021, the public comment period for the Draft EIR will close and on July 6, staff will provide the City Council with an update on the project schedule as well as comments and feedback received to date. Staff will then begin finalizing the Specific Plan and EIR and associated documents, taking into consideration public comments received and any additional guidance provided by City Council on July 6. It is anticipated final documents, including the Final Draft Specific Plan, Final Environmental Impact Report and the project Financing Plan and Development Agreement, will be available for City Council review and consideration in late Summer/early Fall 2021.

Background:

On March 6, 2017, the City received Planning Application PLNG17--00017 for the Woodland Research and Technology Park Specific Plan. The Specific Plan area ("Plan Area") is comprised of all or portions of six (6) individual parcels of land encompassing 351 acres and is located adjacent to the Spring Lake Specific Plan neighborhood to the north and east, County Road 25A and the Urban Limit Line to the south, and is bound by State Route (SR 113) to the west, as shown in Exhibit 1, below. The applicant team consists of five property owners, representing all six parcels of land located within the Plan Area.

As described in the 2017 planning application, *"The Specific Plan is proposed as a new type of employment center that also includes a range of housing options, a commercial mixed-use town center focused around a central green and connected by a multi-modal street network and trail system. Although the City anticipates that agricultural-related research will be a major focus of the Specific Plan, the plan will also support an environment of innovation in flexible formats for a wide variety of businesses in medical and veterinary, bio-tech, engineering, and other fields."*

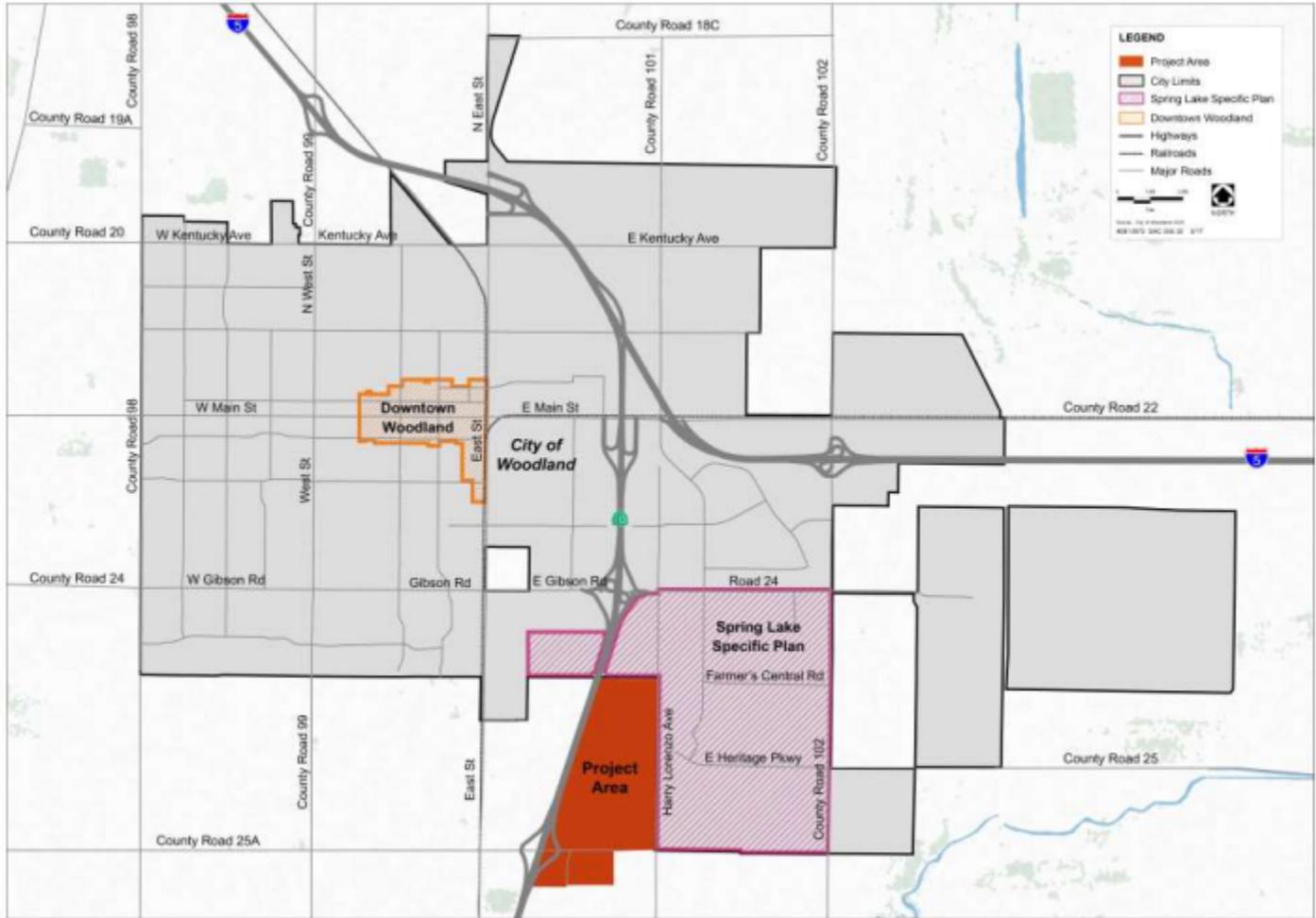


EXHIBIT 1 - Specific Plan Area Vicinity

On June 7, 2017, the City Council voted unanimously to authorize the preparation of the Specific Plan based on a finding of consistency with the vision and policies of the City of Woodland 2035 General Plan for the southern “new growth” area (SP1A). Specifically, the General Plan envisioned development of SP1A as a *"mixed-use neighborhood anchored by a research and technology business park in the ‘Southern Gateway’...The highest intensity of development will occur within the business park area, providing a prime opportunity for job creation within Woodland."*

Since City Council’s authorization to proceed, the applicant team has worked in partnership with the City to prepare the necessary entitlement package to bring the Specific Plan forward for consideration and adoption. Prior to implementation of a Specific Plan, various entitlements are required and entail approval action by the City Council as the lead agency and/or other responsible agencies such as the Yolo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). The following entitlements (typical of specific plans generally) will apply to the proposed Woodland Research and Technology Park ("WRTP") project:

1. Certification of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Mitigation Monitoring Plan - City Council will take action to approve and certify the project EIR and Mitigation Monitoring Program for the Specific Plan.

2. Specific Plan Approval and General Plan Amendment - City Council will take action to approve the Specific Plan and amend the General Plan to create a new City of Woodland land use designation of Woodland Research and Technology Park Specific Plan and amend the Woodland City Limit boundary.

3. Prezoning - City Council will take action to approve the “pre-zoning” of the land within the specific plan boundary based on the approved land plan in preparation of subsequent annexation of the project site into the Woodland City Limit.

4. Financing Plan and Development Agreement - City Council will approve a project Financing Plan and Development Agreement for the WRTP to provide certainty and mutual assurances to the City and the project applicant regarding plan implementation and build-out.

5. Annexation - City Council will authorize and direct staff to pursue annexation of the project area into the city limit, which will go before LAFCo for review and approval.

Since June 2017, the City has also completed several efforts that bear a direct relationship with the adoption and implementation of the Specific Plan including finalizing a tax sharing agreement with the County; working with Yolo LAFCo to ratify the 2018 Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence update; preparation and adoption of an Agricultural Land Mitigation Ordinance; adoption of the Yolo Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP/NCCP) and an update of the City's Affordable Housing Ordinance. These provisions provide a foundation for implementation of the Specific Plan. As outlined in Chapter 6 of the draft document, the Specific Plan will comply with the City's Affordable Housing and Agricultural Land Mitigation Ordinances and will incorporate specific environmental protection and mitigation measures consistent with the Yolo HCP/NCCP.

Throughout the planning and entitlement review process, staff have engaged representatives of various city departments including Community Services, Finance, Police, Fire, Public Works and Community Development in the development of the Specific Plan and associated guiding documents. Similarly, staff and the applicant team have met and continue to meet with representatives of the Woodland Joint Unified School District, Woodland Community College, UC Davis and key agriculture and food industry leaders and representatives to help inform infrastructure and development needs.

In November 2020, the Public Review Draft Specific Plan was released, followed by the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report on May 14, 2021. The Draft EIR 45-day public comment period closes on July 2, 2021; however, comments on the Draft Specific Plan are accepted throughout the entitlement review process. Upon release of the Public Review Draft Specific Plan in late 2020, staff and the applicant team have held or participated in several community and stakeholder meetings to share information about the project, obtain feedback and respond to questions as outlined in detail below (see "Discussion" section of this report). Upon conclusion of the Draft EIR public comment period on July 2, city staff and the applicant team will begin preparing formal EIR response to comments and will complete final modifications to the Draft Specific Plan based on community feedback received to date and guidance received from the City Council during its July 6 meeting. An updated project schedule is provided at the close of this report.

Discussion:

Since the release of the Public Review Draft Woodland Research and Technology Park Specific Plan in November 2020, and the release of the Draft EIR in May 2021, staff and representatives of the applicant team have held or participated in several community and stakeholder outreach meetings to share information about the project, obtain feedback and respond to questions about the proposed plan. Stakeholder organizations include: the Woodland Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Committee; the Woodland Technology Alliance; Yolo County Association of Realtors; Woodland and Davis Rotary and Woodland Kiwanis clubs; and the Greater Sacramento Economic Council's Food and Ag Innovation Council. Two virtual community meetings facilitated by city staff were held in February 2021 with approximately 100 attendees present at each meeting. Additionally, the Specific Plan was shared at public meetings of the Woodland Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Sustainability Advisory Committee. Staff and the applicant team have responded to several phone calls and emails from the public regarding the plan and have met with a neighborhood working group, predominately comprised of Spring Lake residents, over the course of plan review. A summary of comments received is provided below.

Stakeholder Organizations: As listed above, staff and representatives of the applicant team have met with several local and regional professional organizations representing a variety of industry sectors to share information about the proposed plan and, more importantly, to obtain feedback and guidance on the viability of the proposal. Across the board, feedback received from these organizations was positive and enthusiastic. Specifically, comments focused on the positive economic benefits the Research and Technology Park would have on the community and the opportunity for local professional and career development. Partners in the ag, food and health sectors highlighted the need for this type of development project in the region and the ideal location of this facility in Woodland, recognizing proximity to world-leading research at UC Davis and the existing strengths of the local ag and food economy. While some individuals questioned the need for new office space citing COVID-19 related changes in the workplace, a majority of the feedback supported and encouraged the Research and Technology campus where innovations require in-person and technical facilities and where there is a recognized deficit of similar facilities in the region.

Community Informational Meetings (Virtual): On February 9 and 11, 2021, City staff hosted two virtual webinar style community meetings to provide a detailed overview of the proposed Specific Plan (recording of the meetings available here: <https://www.cityofwoodland.org/ResearchParkOutreach>). To get the word out about the meetings, over 3,000 postcards were mailed to Spring Lake property owners and residents, notification was provided in the Daily Democrat and on various city and neighborhood social media channels, and newsletters were emailed to approximately 300 community residents on the project's email listserv. Approximately 100 attendees were present at each meeting and in total, approximately 140 questions were submitted via the webinar "chat" function or orally during the question and answer period. Staff and the applicant addressed most questions during the live webinars and followed up with a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on the project website, synthesizing all questions received into 30 categories and responding to each (<https://www.cityofwoodland.org/ResearchParkFAQ>). To date, the FAQ page has received over 200 unique page views and over 300 page views in total.

While many questions were received during the webinars, a majority of questions focused on the following six categories:

- Affordability and diversity of housing, primarily the desire for more affordable housing and variety of housing types in Woodland. Conversely, concerns were also expressed about too much high density housing in the plan area;
- Provision and desire for an elementary school in the plan area;

- Sustainability aspects of the plan, including the desire for solar and electric vehicle chargers as well as other more progressive sustainability measures;
- Circulation and infrastructure improvements, primarily pertaining to the Spring Lake area, CR25A, CR102 and Hwy 113/CR25A interchange improvements;
- Public services, primarily police and fire; and
- Project phasing, timing of amenities and financing plans.

Staff finds that a majority of the questions received are addressed in the Draft Specific Plan, Draft EIR or are more appropriately addressed separately from the plan, including questions specific to Spring Lake or other areas of the city. Several topic areas remain to be further defined as part of the plan implementation documents. Specific recommendations around sustainability features and infrastructure are currently being reviewed by the applicant team for possible incorporation into the final draft Specific Plan Implementation chapter and incorporation into the financing plan. Additionally, the Specific Plan anticipates a future school site of up to 10-acres north of the main park (The Yard) where it will be well served by bike and walking infrastructure and easily accessible to households within the plan area as well as Spring Lake. Staff and the applicant team continue to meet with the Woodland Joint Unified School District and members of its Board of Trustees to identify the timing, need and funding mechanisms necessary to support a school in the plan area. Staff will update the City Council and interested public on these discussions as they progress.

As noted above, a group of community residents has requested meetings with staff and the applicant team over the course of the plan review to better understand the project and make recommendations. This group of residents as well as individual community members apart from the group have provided helpful feedback with regard to specific elements of the plan including circulation, schools, infrastructure and sustainability. Additionally, the group provided recommendations on community outreach strategy, future entitlement review, and potential concerns of adjacent Spring Lake residents.

City Commissions/Committees: In March, April and June respectively, staff presented the Draft Specific Plan to the City of Woodland's Parks and Recreation Commission, Sustainability Advisory Committee and Planning Commission. Feedback from the Parks and Recreation Commission and from the Sustainability Advisory Committee was positive and supportive of the plan as presented.

Comments from the Parks and Recreation Commission centered around the provision of solar panels and facilities, consistency with the city's Climate Action Plan, native landscaping, and support and excitement around the greenbelt and trail circulation network and the 11-acre linear park as a non-traditional park intended for gathering purposes.

Comments from the Sustainability Advisory Committee focused on specific recommendations around sustainable design measures individual development projects may consider in addition to those already outlined in the plan. The committee expressed appreciation for the plan's consistency with the City's Climate Action Plan and greenhouse gas reduction strategies.

Members from both the Sustainability Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission expressed strong support to see a correlation and balance of non-residential "jobs" build-out in relation to residential build-out to ensure the plan delivers the needed economic benefits to the community and does not become a "bedroom community." The Planning Commission also expressed support for the development of the Specific Plan to date, offering comments around specific design elements including gateway elements and enhanced corridor features and recommendations around specific uses. The Planning Commission acknowledged public concerns around the provision of an elementary school in the plan area. The Planning Commission will be asked to take

formal action (a recommendation to City Council) on the project prior to City Council's final action on the adoption of the Specific Plan and the certification of the EIR.

Draft Environmental Impact Report: The Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Woodland Research and Technology Park Specific Plan was released on May 14, 2021, and made available on the project website (<https://www.cityofwoodland.org/ResearchParkDocuments>). Notification of the availability of the Draft EIR and opportunities for public comment was published in the Daily Democrat. Additionally, notification was mailed to property owners and residents within 500 feet of the Specific Plan area boundary, was posted on the city's social media channels (and shared on neighborhood social media channels), and newsletters were emailed to the project email listserv. The 45+ day public review period will close on July 2, after the posting of this staff report and the City Council agenda packet for July 6. As such, a summary of comments received on the Draft EIR will be shared by staff during its presentation to City Council on the July 6.

During the June 17, 2021, Planning Commission meeting, a brief presentation of the Draft EIR content make up and key findings was provided by AECOM, the city's environmental consultant for the Specific Plan. Opportunity for oral comments on the Draft EIR was also provided during the commission meeting. One comment was received from the public, which focused on the provision of a school site in the plan area. Separately, as of the posting of this report, one comment from the public was received via email, which pertained to concrete and cement related carbon offsets. It is anticipated that additional comments will be received prior to the close of the public comment period on July 2, 2021.

FINALIZING THE SPECIFIC PLAN, SCHEDULE UPDATE and APPROVAL PROCESS

After July 2, 2021, and receipt of all comments on the Draft EIR, staff and its technical consultants will begin preparing formal response to comments and the Final Environmental Impact Report, and will begin making final modifications/edits to the Draft Woodland Research and Technology Park Specific Plan in response to feedback received to date and any further direction from the City Council provided during its July 6 meeting. Additionally, the city and applicant team will be working to complete the Draft Financing Plan and project Development Agreement which will be shared with City Council in the coming weeks. An updated review schedule is provided below (see also Attachment 3).

It is anticipated that final documents will be presented to City Council in the September/October timeframe.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENTITLEMENT SCHEDULE 2020-2021

* JULY 2021 SCHEDULE UPDATE *

ANTICIPATED TIMEFRAME	ACTION ITEM	NOTIFICATION
NOVEMBER 2020 COMPLETED	Introduce Draft Specific Plan at City Council and Planning Commission, concurrent with publication of draft plan online	Draft Plan published online CC/PC – Agenda, informational Email to WRTP listserv
DECEMBER 2020 - APRIL 2021 COMPLETED	Community and Stakeholder Outreach / Neighborhood Meetings; Parks & Rec Commission, Sustainability Advisory Committee	Email to WRTP Listserv Mailers (as appropriate) Notice in Daily Democrat Other media posts
MAY 2021 COMPLETED	Circulate Public Review Draft EIR; open public comment period (45+ day)	Email to WRTP listserv Draft EIR published to City website Other media posts Notice to Daily Democrat
JUNE 2021 COMPLETED	Public Hearing at Planning Commission for Draft EIR + Formal Presentation of Draft Specific Plan; public comment period on EIR closes following PC hearing and 45+ day public comment period	Email to WRTP listserv Notice in Daily Democrat Other media posts
JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021	Presentation of Specific Plan, Fiscal Impact Analysis and comments on Specific Plan and DEIR to City Council; CC to provide direction to staff	Email to WRTP listserv Other media posts CC – Agenda, informational
JULY/AUGUST 2021	Edits to Specific Plan and EIR based on feedback received from public, stakeholders, commissions and City Council	
AUGUST 2021	Follow-on neighborhood/stakeholder meetings as needed	Listserv, media posts, Daily Democrat as appropriate
AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2021	Finalize Financing Plan and Draft Terms of Development Agreement(s)	
SEPT/OCT 2021	Final Draft Specific Plan + Final EIR to Planning Commission for formal action/recommendation to City Council	Final plan documents published to City website Email to WRTP listserv Notice to Daily Democrat Other media posts
SEPT/OCT 2021	Final Draft Specific Plan + Final EIR, Financing Plan and Development Agreement to City Council for formal action	Email to WRTP listserv Notice to Daily Democrat Other media posts
OCT/NOV 2021	LAFCo process for annexation	Email to WRTP listserv Public Notice as required

Conclusion:

Staff recommends that the City Council receive an update on the Public Review Draft of the Woodland Research and Technology Park Specific Plan, community and stakeholder outreach to date and comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report.

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Reviewed By: Brent Meyer, Community Development Director/City Engineer

Attachments:

1. Public Review Draft Woodland Research and Technology Park Specific Plan
2. Woodland Research and Technology Park - Fiscal Impact Analysis
3. WRTP Outreach and Entitlement Schedule 2020-2021