



*CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING COMMISSION*  
*JOINT STUDY SESSION AGENDA REPORT*

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MEETING DATE: JANUARY 14, 2014

ITEM NUMBER:

**SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE – VISIONING STATEMENTS**

**DATE: JANUARY 2, 2014**

**FROM: DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPT.**

**PRESENTATION BY: GARY ARMSTRONG, AICP, DEV. SVCS. DIRECTOR**

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## **BACKGROUND**

The General Plan update process was initiated in June 2012. The City entered into a contract with MIG (former Hogle-Ireland Inc.) for the General Plan Update and Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR). On March 19, 2013, City Council directed staff to start a public engagement program referred to as “Great Reach” with public workshops and public engagement programs instead of a General Plan Advisory Committee. Since May 15, 2013, nine workshops and six road shows were held throughout the City. Three of the workshops, discussed in more detail below, focused on visioning.

Staff is requesting input from the Council and Commission to direct staff on desired concepts and wording of the Vision Statements. The final draft language will be presented to the Planning Commission in a public hearing and forwarded to the City Council for final review, modification if necessary, and or approval.

For a complete list of all the workshops and the summaries please refer to the following link at the webpage:

<http://www.costamesaca.gov/index.aspx?page=1592>

This report includes: a) summary of all events leading to the joint study meeting, b) comprehensive summary of all public input gathered during the visioning workshops, and, c) the draft vision statements for consideration of City Council and Commissioners.

## **VISIONING WORKSHOPS**

June 19, 2013 Workshop

The workshop started with a presentation on the purpose of Visioning and examples of other jurisdictions. As noted in the presentation and note below, “Visioning” can facilitate

the General Plan update with a set of general goals that will guide development of alternatives and influence policy making decisions:

“Visioning” is the term given to the process that enables a city to define its future in a very public process. Visioning participants can be brought together to recognize shared values and purposes, with the aim of articulating a shared vision for the City of Costa Mesa. A vision defines what the community should look like physically, socially, and environmentally in five, 10, or 20 years. The visioning step in the General Plan update process creates a sense of ownership for City residents, business and property owners, and other stakeholders to the extent that they want to see and help make that vision a reality.

Following the presentation on the purpose of visioning, the workshop included a fill-in the blank diagram. The participants were divided into groups that worked collaboratively and presented their vision at the end of the workshop. A number of common themes emerged when listening to the breakout group summaries and evaluating the workshop materials (visioning worksheet, maps, flip chart comments, etc.) that are discussed below and a comprehensive hand out on visioning and samples of other city’s vision statements were provided, which is included as Attachment 1.

#### *Features and Assets:*

- *Arts:* Participants identified the arts community as an important distinguishing asset that adds to the cultural diversity of Costa Mesa. Participants agreed that Costa Mesa does a good job providing ample opportunities for all-ages recreation and offers a number of well-utilized parks and open spaces.
- *Diversity:* Participants noted that Costa Mesa was unique in its diversity – diversity in its residents’ ethnicity and economic backgrounds, diversity in neighborhood character, and diversity in the types of housing and commercial developments.

#### *Community Values:*

- Strong ethnic and economic diversity
- Extensive public open spaces as community anchors
- Distinct neighborhood character contributes to larger sense of community

#### *Vision Statements:*

- Explore opportunities to expand and create additional public gathering places
- Focus on mobility solutions to improve access and circulation for residents and visitors
- Enhance public safety

#### *Issues and Concerns:*

- Homeless Population: Participants identified the City’s homeless population as an area in need of improvement.

- Traffic Congestion: Participants noted that traffic continues to be a local problem, but could be somewhat alleviated by making it safer and easier to use other modes, such as walking and bicycling.

#### August 21, 2013 Workshop

This workshop included a visual preference survey, and a question and answer session. The workshop's purpose was to build on prior exercises at workshops in June and July, and to obtain input and receive comments regarding residential densities and land use types.

A visual preference survey was conducted using a PowerPoint presentation. Every attendee received a remote control device (clicker) where they could use the device to vote for a particular land use preference for eight different nodes throughout Costa Mesa. The three land use choices were residential, commercial, and mixed use. The results of the voting were shown live for each land use node. The attendees also participated in a discussion related to density followed by questions and answers section. All comments were written on flip charts and the summary is included as Attachment 2.

#### September 12, 2013 Workshop

During this workshop twelve vision statements were presented to the community (only 10 related to land use were discussed due to limited time). The Vision Statements were arranged on display boards for viewing of the participants prior to the meeting. Attendees were encouraged to place stickers noting their opinion supporting, not supporting or maybe supporting each of the concepts. There was not much opposition to the statements: however, general comments were made related to concerns with additional development not in keeping with the one and two-story neighborhoods, potential traffic and congestions associated with new development and impacts of high density development on quality of life in general.

The following statements were **strongly** supported by the participants:

- Costa Mesa is a vibrant, engaged community that embraces its history, values its eclecticism, and promotes economic growth that sustains high quality of life.
- Costa Mesa will always be an inclusive, multi-generational, and economically and ethnically diverse city.
- Costa Mesa is a community of distinctive neighborhoods; where young families, families with school aged children, singles, and seniors live in a mix of housing types.
- Costa Mesa is a City of the Arts: a "place" to experience and enjoy visual and performing arts and cultural events. The City fosters creativity and cultivates cultural enrichment and lifelong learning.
- Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connectivity are as important as private automobile accommodation. Costa Mesa's road network will be retrofitted to put

local mobility needs first. New developments and public spaces will be designed with transit, pedestrians, and bicycles in mind.

The participants were hesitant to support the following statements and noted that they would maybe support them with some revisions:

- Costa Mesa will not become stagnant; the city will change over time to anticipate demographic shifts and respond to demands of its populace. At the same time, these changes will respect and preserve the historical context and character of our city while adapting to meet community needs
- A healthy economy means a healthy community. Costa Mesa will continue to foster conditions that create a healthy and diverse economy, one that retains and attracts new businesses and industries, supports the tax base, and sustains the ability of the City to provide high quality services for all residents, including expanded housing opportunities at all income levels
- Costa Mesa's retail districts will continue to provide a welcoming diversity of shopping opportunities, from a thriving small town downtown feel to eclectic, placemaking gathering spots; and from auto oriented boulevards to an internationally recognized shopping mecca.
- Costa Mesa will promote and embrace an entrepreneurial spirit, welcoming incubator businesses that grow the economy.
- Costa Mesa recognizes its long term obligations to provide parks and open spaces for residents in all life stages. The City will continually enhance established parks and recreation facilities and encourage a diversity of flexible new spaces to meet evolving needs.
- Costa Mesa will incorporate sustainability principles into planning activities and decisions, thus fostering good environmental stewardship and an improved environment for future residents and businesses.
- As a city served by freeways and regional travel corridors, Costa Mesa recognizes that vehicles moving through Costa Mesa often are headed to other destinations. Traffic will be managed in a manner that ensures local mobility needs are not compromised and that Costa Mesa's growth and productivity are not stifled.

The original visioning statements and a summary of the voting results are included in Attachment 3.

## **DRAFT VISIONING STATEMENTS**

The original twelve vision statements were refined and summarized for further discussion into the following six statements. These statements are based on the existing General Plan, the input collected from the workshops and the overall public comments received during the Great Reach process.

**1. Costa Mesa: A Vision for Land Use and Mobility**

Costa Mesa is a vibrant community of diverse and distinctive neighborhoods. We pride ourselves with having businesses, institutions and commercial districts of regional and international renown, and wonderful parks and open spaces that respond to our many needs. We embrace the founding principles that established our community as a great place to live and own a business, with a readiness to anticipate and adapt to regional influences that will move Costa Mesa in positive directions. The City will change over time, but will do so in a manner that ensures that new development is economically and environmentally sustainable, and is compatible in scale and character with our neighborhoods.

**2. Housing Our Residents**

We pride ourselves in being inclusive, multi-generational, and economically and culturally diverse. Our neighborhoods reflect this diversity, both in terms of the range of available housing types and household composition. From single-family homes to apartments to live/work units, residents have many choices of creative living spaces. We aim to preserve this diversity and increase homeownership opportunities throughout the City.

**3. Sustaining Our Economy**

We foster conditions that support a modern and diverse economy—one that retains and attracts new businesses and industries, cultivates innovation, supports our tax base, establishes employment for all skills and educational levels, and sustains the ability of the City to provide high-quality services. A healthy economy means a healthy community. We promote an entrepreneurial spirit and ensure a business-friendly culture that strengthens both locally based businesses and national/international enterprises. Costa Mesa’s reputation as a well-known shopping destination represents just one part of our economic base. The industrial districts and urban-scale office complexes provide places where investment and creativity thrive.

**4. Providing Great Open Spaces**

Costa Mesa recognizes that parks and open spaces contribute to the good physical and mental health of our residents, and to the health of ecosystems and the environment. We are committed to providing open spaces for residents in all life stages. We will maintain our established parks to serve the purposes they were originally intended and provide for flexible new gathering spaces to meet our evolving needs. Natural open spaces will be retained so they can continue to provide valuable functions as habitat resource conservation/protection, and places of education.

**5. Celebrating Cultural Life**

Costa Mesa is a City of the Arts; we are the “place” to experience and enjoy visual and performing arts and cultural events. The City supports intellectual and artistic creativity, and cultivates cultural enrichment and lifelong learning.

**6. Moving In and Around the City**

Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connectivity are as important as private automobile accommodation. Costa Mesa’s road network will be retrofitted to put

local mobility needs first. New developments and public spaces will be designed with transit, pedestrians, and bicycles in mind.

As a City served by freeways and regional travel corridors, Costa Mesa recognizes that vehicles moving through Costa Mesa often are headed to other destinations. Consequently, traffic will be managed in a manner that ensures local mobility needs are not compromised and that Costa Mesa's growth and productivity are not stifled.

Attachments: [1. June 19, 2013 visioning handout](#)  
[2. August 21, 2013 workshop summary](#)  
[3. September 12, 2013 workshop summary](#)

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