

TO: JAMES L. APP, CITY MANAGER

FROM: BOB LATA, CONTRACT PLANNER

SUBJECT: SPECIFIC PLAN DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS, CHANDLER RANCH
AREA SPECIFIC PLAN

DATE: APRIL 18, 2006

Needs: For the City Council to consider authorizing staff to contract with a qualified design professional to assist with preparation of Design Standards for development of the Chandler Ranch Area Specific Plan (CRASP) and design standards for all City gateways.

Facts:

1. Under the premise that a Specific Plan should be considered as a cohesive unit, each of the property owners in the CRASP have been requested to provide input regarding design parameters for their respective sub-areas. The expectation that was communicated was that this input would be received by the City by April 10, 2006. Attached is a copy of the March 8, 2006 memo that communicated this process.
2. Along with the call for design parameters to be submitted by April 10, 2006, the March 8 memo to property owners described a proposed process to establish a "Gateway Zoning Overlay" for commercial development areas. The intent of this overly would be to address minimum design and land use standards for commercial development within the CRASP.
3. Subsequent to our initial meetings with property owners, staff also identified the need to establish similar standards to all other gateway entrances to the City of Paso Robles.
4. In order to prepare the "Gateway" design standards and anticipate the potential need to prepare and/or refine design parameters for some of the residential sub-areas, it is recommended that the City Council authorize staff to contract with a qualified design professional.
5. A related policy question is whether or not the design parameters for the CRASP should be adopted as "Guidelines" or incorporated into the Specific Plan in ordinance form (which would establish a set of adopted minimum design standards).

Analysis
And Conclusion:

In order for the CRASP to be viewed as a cohesive unit, the City will need design parameters for the entire Specific Plan area.

Input on proposed design parameters has been requested from the respective property owners with a deadline of April 10, 2006.

On behalf of the Jonatkin/Wurth property ownership, the Wallace Group had prepared Design Guidelines which contain both proposed “standards” and advisory “guidelines”. These Design Guidelines were included in the Draft Specific Plan that was published in November 2005 and were referenced therein as non-binding “advisory guidelines” that would be intended to supplement the adopted Specific Plan.

Since November 2005 there have been concerns expressed that having “guidelines” would not provide an adequate level of certainty and consistency for a Specific Plan that is likely to be built-out over many years. Having minimum standards adopted by Ordinance (along with the Specific Plan) would help provide continuity in the face of changes of property owners, Planning Commission and City staff. Additionally, adopted standards would provide the community with better assurances that the Specific Plan area will develop as adopted.

The latest indications are that the Wallace Group is preparing design parameters for Chandler Sand & Gravel and the Wilcox/Lloyd property, plus perhaps the Centex parcel. Representatives of Our Town have also submitted a graphic illustration of their intended development pattern.

Bringing a qualified design professional on board would accomplish the following:

- a. Compile design parameters received from the respective property owners, supplementing the content as needed to provide a complementary set of design parameters for all of the residential designated areas;
- b. Assist the City in converting design “guidelines” to design “standards” (if adopted by Ordinance the standards become code requirements, necessitating a more rigorous review and confirmation that the standards would be consistent with the Council’s policy intent);

- c. Combine the design parameters from each of the CRASP sub-areas into a single illustration of the proposed land use and form for the entire Specific Plan area.
- d. Prepare form-based minimum design and land use standards for “Gateway” commercial development within the CRASP, with the intent to establish clear expectations for the character of future development.
- e. Prepare form-based minimum design and land use standards for other community gateways including all highway frontages, exits, and other major entryways.

Informal discussions are underway with the firm of Crawford, Multari Clark to determine if they might be available to assist with this process. Their firm has assisted the City in the past and has a high level of professional expertise in this type of work. If their firm is not available, other options will be explored.

Options:

- a. That the City Council
 - (1) confirm that it is the City Council’s intent to have a single, cohesive design illustration for the entire CRASP; and
 - (2) confirm that it is the Council’s intent to have design parameters for the CRASP adopted by Ordinance instead of advisory guidelines (with the recognition that there may be a mix of firm standards and advisory provisions within the adopted document); and
 - (3) authorize staff to obtain a proposal from a qualified design professional to prepare the following four point scope of work; the budget, which would be reimbursed from CRASP property owners through Specific Plan fees, would be presented for subsequent Council approval:
 - o compile and supplement sub-area design parameters
 - o convert “guidelines” to “standards” to be adopted by Ordinance
 - o prepare form based Gateway design and land use standards

- combine design parameters from sub-areas into a single illustration
- b. Amend, modify or reject the foregoing option.