



# REPORT TO COUNCIL

# 9

## City of Sacramento

915 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-2604

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INFORMATION

July 26, 2005

Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Council

**Subject:** A Workshop on the Conceptual Framework and Broad Planning Concepts for the Docks Area.

**Location/Council District:** The Docks Area is located along the Sacramento Riverfront, north of the Marina/Miller Park, west of the Interstate 5, south of Capitol Mall and east of the Sacramento River (District 4).

**Recommendation:**

Receive and file.

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**Presenters:** Laura Sainz, Economic Development Department  
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Stu Williams, Utilities Department  
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Greg Fasiano, Nichols Consulting Engineers  
Mike Leacox, Nichols Consulting Engineers  
Gail Ervin, Ervin Consulting  
John Long, DKS  
David Zehnder, Economic and Planning Systems

**Department:** Economic Development Department  
Parks and Recreation Department

**Division:** Downtown Development Group  
Parks Planning, Design and Development

**Organization No:** 4451  
4725

**Summary:**

The planning process for the Docks Area is designed to facilitate the redevelopment of the area in accordance with the vision created during the 2003 Sacramento Riverfront Master Plan. The community has participated in two workshops to date and is helping



to establish the framework for a Specific Plan for the Docks Area. The framework includes very broad design concepts that are in keeping with the guiding principles for the Riverfront Master Plan developed in 2003 and include a mixed-use neighborhood with parks, celebration areas and a riverfront parkway. The purpose of this workshop is to review the broad concepts developed to date and to receive direction from the City Council regarding further refinement of the Specific Plan. Final staff recommendations will be brought back to the City Council upon completion of the public workshops and an analysis of the budget impacts of various constraints related to development.

**Committee/Commission Action:** Staff has presented the Docks Area scenarios to the Design Review and Preservation Board and the Planning Commission for review and comment only. Staff will be presenting the scenarios to the Parks and Recreation Commission at its August 11, 2005 meeting.

### **Background Information:**

#### **The Vision for the Docks Area**

In July 2003, the cities of Sacramento and West Sacramento accepted the newly updated Sacramento Riverfront Master Plan. At that time, the City Council defined a vision for the Docks Area that included:

*A combination of public open space and mixed-use...creating an active riverfront neighborhood. Proposed development should be predominantly medium- to high-density residential mixed with some retail, cafes and possibly office space, strongly oriented to the riverfront open space. Restaurants and cafes located along the riverfront edge offer a destination for local residents as well as visitors...At the north and south ends are two new public parks that connect directly in to the riverfront park system. Additional public access to the water is offered in the form of a visitor boat dock and fishing pier.*

The goal of the Docks Area planning process is to implement that vision through the redevelopment of the site. To facilitate the redevelopment, preparation of a Specific Plan that will lead to rezoning of the property is underway. The Specific Plan is being developed per City Council direction to remove barriers to infill development, which includes the Docks Area.

The constraints to development in the Docks Area are numerous and include the following:

1. The site is currently zoned heavy industrial (M-1 and M-2), which does not allow for the vision established during the 2003 Riverfront Master Plan;
2. The entire site is a Brownfields site with existing deed restrictions related to prior and remaining contamination that do not allow the type of development envisioned in the 2003 Riverfront Master Plan;
3. Property ownership in the area includes numerous public agencies, which makes site assembly by a private developer difficult. This includes key sites owned by the State Department of Parks and Recreation and PG&E;

4. The 2003 Riverfront Master Plan envisioned a riverfront parkway, which requires the regulatory review of numerous state and federal agencies;
5. There are heavy rail tracks along the existing levee system in the Docks Area that service the excursion train operating out of Old Sacramento;
6. Almost one-third of the site is occupied by the Pioneer Reservoir, an existing public facility, which constrains use of the property for either open space or development;
7. The site is surrounded by freeways, including Interstate 5 to the east and Interstate 80 to the south. The freeways require careful analysis of land use and noise/air quality issues; and
8. The State Department of Parks and Recreation parcels have been identified as the possible site for the cooling towers for the State's Central Plant project.

### **The Docks Area Planning Process**

The Docks Area planning process was based on the process developed for the 2003 Riverfront Master Plan, including significant public participation and community outreach. Additionally, the guiding principles that were established in the Riverfront Master Plan are the foundation for the development framework that is being refined through the community workshops. These principles include:

1. Public access to the river;
2. Linkages to adjacent neighborhoods;
3. Pedestrian orientation throughout the area; and
4. An animated riverfront district, i.e. celebration venues, activity sites and contemplative park settings.

The process includes a total of three community workshops. Two of those workshops have already been held. During the first two community workshops, the community reaffirmed the general vision established in 2003 including:

- A mixed-use neighborhood with an emphasis on residential development;
- Pedestrian and bicycle access integrated throughout the plan area;
- Public and open space including parks and a riverfront parkway; and
- Medium- to high-density development with building heights designed to maximize views.

The following is a summary of the key comments received to date from the community:

- **Riverfront Views and Access:** Community members expressed the desire for riverfront views and access to the riverfront.
- **Sound Buffer:** Buildings and landscaping should be designed and oriented to eliminate as much freeway noise as possible.
- **Massing:** Most were in favor of higher density and would like to see high-rise buildings near the freeway with building heights stepping down toward the river.
- **Promenade/River Parkway:** Community members would like to see this regional destination as a family friendly, active riverfront with green space, high foot traffic, retail along the promenade and public art.

- Open Space: An active open space is favored and suggestions include outdoor entertainment area, basketball courts, retail carts/kiosks, playground, fountains, benches, soccer field, dog park, community center and community garden.

### **Community Driven Conceptual Plans - Land Use Scenarios**

Following the community workshops, three land-use scenarios have been developed based on community input. The following assumptions are the same for all three community driven conceptual plans:

- Each scenario includes a riverfront parkway. The riverfront parkway will substantially improve public access to the riverfront for recreation, fishing, picnics and river viewing opportunities. In addition, the riverfront parkway will convert former industrial uses to open space for public trails and observation points. The parkway will also link the area to adjacent neighborhoods and public space, including the Old Sacramento Historic District to the north and the City's Marina/Miller Park to the south. Public art and interpretive signage for both historic and riparian/wildlife purposes will be included along the parkway. Finally, the parkway will serve to improve flood protection by strengthening the existing levees and improving access for flood protection activities.
- Each scenario includes, at a minimum, a seven-acre park anchored over Pioneer Reservoir. This park will take advantage of green roof technology to allow the joint use of an existing city facility as active, open park space.
- Each scenario assumes a basic street grid and other typical infrastructure including water, sewer, storm drains, electrical, telecommunications and natural gas lines.

The scenarios do not include a description of the riverfront parkway because the analysis of the constraints related to the parkway has not been completed. At a minimum, the parkway will include pedestrian and bicycle access. Recommendations for the parkway related to the rail line and/or vehicular access will be presented in August after review of the following issues:

- What are the physical boundaries of the potential parkway? What is the width of the existing levee, where are the pinch points and how does that impact the design of the future parkway?
- What are the cost implications related to the size of the parkway?
- What are the Public Utility Commission's requirements related to an active rail line on the parkway? How will those requirements impact the area from a noise and aesthetic perspective? How will those requirements impact the community's vision of the parkway?
- What are the potential traffic issues from a circulation perspective? What are the potential traffic issues from a public safety perspective?

- What are the requirements in terms of access and facilitating the success of commercial ventures along the riverfront and how does that coincide with the community's vision regarding what the parkway looks like?

### **Community Driven Concept Plan 1: Higher Density Scenario**

The Higher Density Scenario includes a total range of 2,000 to 2,565 residential units, a total of 135,000 square feet of retail development and approximately 12 acres of park space on both the north and south portions of the project area, as outlined below, and illustrated in Attachment A.

#### **North of Pioneer Bridge: Short-Term Development**

- Approximately 12 acres of mixed-use development with residential and retail uses;
- Approximately 8 acres of park land space, not including the riverfront parkway;
- A riverfront parkway connecting the neighborhood to the Old Sacramento Historic District on the north and the Marina/Miller Park to the south. The parkway provides a greenway and improves access to the riverfront and adjacent neighborhoods;
- Building heights from low- to mid-rise buildings to mid- to high-rise buildings designed to maximize views. Mid-rise is defined as 5-8 stories and high rise is defined as 9-20+ stories;
- 35,000 square feet retail space; and
- 900-1,200 residential units.

#### **South of Pioneer Bridge: Long-Term Development**

- Approximately 15 acres of mixed-use development with flexible zoning for residential, retail and/or commercial uses;
- Approximately 4.5 acres of park space;
- A riverfront parkway connecting the neighborhood to the residential community on the north and the Marina/Miller Park to the south. The parkway will provide a greenway and improve access and connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods;
- Building heights designed to maximize views;
- 100,000 square feet retail space; and
- 1,100 – 1,365 residential units.

### **Community Driven Concept Plan 2: Medium Density Scenario**

The Medium Density Scenario includes a total range of 1,725 to 1,935 residential units, a total of 97,000 square feet of retail development, and approximately 16 acres of park, on both the north and south portions of the project area as outlined below, and illustrated in Attachment B.

**North of Pioneer Bridge: Short-Term Development**

- Approximately 12 acres of mixed-use development with residential and retail uses;
- Approximately 8 acres of park land space, not including the riverfront parkway;
- A riverfront parkway connecting the neighborhood to the Old Sacramento Historic District on the north and the Marina/Miller Park to the south. The riverfront parkway provides a greenway and improves access to the riverfront and adjacent neighborhoods;
- Building heights from low- to mid-rise buildings to mid- to high-rise buildings designed to maximize views;
- 22,000 square feet retail/commercial space; and
- 900 to 1,000 residential units.

**South of Pioneer Bridge: Long-Term Development**

- Approximately 12 acres of mixed-use development with flexible zoning for residential, retail and/or commercial uses;
- Approximately 8 acres of park space;
- A riverfront parkway connecting the neighborhood to the residential community on the north and the Marina/Miller Park to the south. The riverfront parkway will provide a greenway and improve access and connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods;
- Building heights designed to maximize views;
- 75,000 square feet retail/commercial space; and
- 825-935 residential units.

**Community Driven Concept Plan 3: Lower Density Scenario**

The Lower Density Scenario includes a total range of 1,285 to 1,390 residential units, a total of 87,000 square feet of retail/commercial development, and approximately 18 acres of park, on both the north and south portion of the project area as outlined below, and illustrated in Attachment C.

**North of Pioneer Bridge: Short-Term Development**

- Approximately 10 acres of mixed-use development with residential and retail uses;
- Approximately 10 acres of park land space, not including the riverfront parkway;
- A riverfront parkway connecting the neighborhood to the Old Sacramento Historic District on the north and the Marina/Miller Park to the south. The parkway provides a greenway and improves access to the riverfront and adjacent neighborhoods;
- Building heights designed to maximize views;
- 22,000 square feet retail/commercial space; and
- 600 to 650 residential units.

### South of Pioneer Bridge: Long-Term Development

- Approximately 12 acres of mixed-use development with flexible zoning for residential, retail and/or commercial uses;
- Approximately 8 acres of park space;
- A riverfront parkway connecting the neighborhood to the residential community on the north and the Marina/Miller Park to the south. The riverfront parkway will provide a greenway and improved access and connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods;
- Building heights designed to maximize views;
- 65,000 square feet retail/commercial space; and
- 685-740 residential units.

The land-use scenarios will be refined following the Council workshop. The Notice of Preparation and Initial Study, which were released on June 23rd, did not include any land-use diagrams specifically to afford the Council maximum flexibility in determining the land-use program.

The planning process will also address the barriers that have discouraged private development in the area including:

1. The rezoning of the area to a zoning that will enable the vision established. This includes the required California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review;
2. A facilities plan that identifies the major infrastructure components and public amenities in the plan, including the river parkway, park land and basic utilities required to support the proposed land uses;
3. A financing plan that identifies how to pay for the infrastructure and public amenities in the project area;
4. An Environmental Oversight Agreement with the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) that will allow for the early review of remediation solutions so that the final Specific Plan is realistic and developable; and
5. The opportunity for the City to communicate the vision for the area in a way that developers can translate into a built project.

### Next Steps

At the August 23<sup>rd</sup> City Council workshop, each land-use scenario will be further refined based upon Council input, striking a balance in addressing the following issues to achieve developability of the plan:

1. **Infrastructure and Amenities:** Each scenario includes a basic level of infrastructure and public amenities including: a) the riverfront parkway; b) park space over at least the Pioneer Reservoir; and c) basic utilities to support development in the area. The differences in infrastructure and amenities in each land-use scenario will be presented with an order of magnitude for cost comparison purposes.

2. **Brownfield Development:** Each scenario will also need to be evaluated from the perspective of the required remediation and the costs associated with that remediation.
3. **Cost Feasibility:** Each scenario will be evaluated based on the feasibility of the density supporting the proposed infrastructure, amenities and remediation required.
4. **Housing Options:** The feasibility of including affordable housing will be reviewed.
5. **Commercial Feasibility:** Since commercial development requires certain elements for success, each scenario will also be evaluated from the perspective of commercial feasibility.
6. **Freeway Impact:** The air and noise analysis will provide for recommendations on the placement of buildings, building heights and park space in order to minimize these impacts.
7. **Public space, access and celebration feasibility:** The feasibility of the inclusion and financing of all proposed public spaces, a roadway along the riverfront parkway and celebration sites as close to the river as possible will be analyzed.

Following the August 23<sup>rd</sup> City Council workshop, the major steps in the redevelopment of the area include:

1. City Council adoption of the Plan;
2. Redevelopment Agency issues Request for Proposals/Qualifications in order to solicit developer interest;
3. Design competitions potentially related to building design, the riverfront parkway and public open space. This could include architectural elements, public art, and public open space with water features, places of celebration and programmatic elements for the riverfront, and;
4. Construction of the riverfront parkway and the park over Pioneer Reservoir.

#### **Financial Considerations:**

There are no direct financial impacts associated with providing direction on the Docks Area. However, the land use scenarios and future development may impact tax increment funds from the Merged Downtown Redevelopment Project Area and/or grants and funding secured by the City in the future.

#### **Environmental Considerations:**

Environmental considerations are not applicable at this time. The proposed actions do not constitute a project because they are part of the planning process to further define what the project is going to be. Staff anticipates the CEQA analysis will be presented to the City Council for certification in December of this year, associated with Plan adoption.

#### **Policy Considerations:**

The redevelopment of the Docks Area is consistent with the following goals identified in the 2005-2008 City of Sacramento Strategic Plan:

1. Achieve sustainability and livability;
2. Increase opportunities for all Sacramento residents to live in safe and affordable housing; and
3. Expand economic development throughout the city.

**Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD):**

No goods or services are being purchased.

Respectfully Submitted by: L.F. Sainz  
 Laura Sainz, Economic Development Senior Project Manager

Respectfully Submitted by: J.P. Tindell  
 J.P. Tindell, Parks and Recreation Advance Planning Manager

Approved by: Wendy S. Saunders For  
 Wendy S. Saunders  
 Economic Development Director

Approved by: Robert Overstreet  
 Robert Overstreet  
 Parks and Recreation Director

**RECOMMENDATION APPROVED:**

Robert P. Thomas

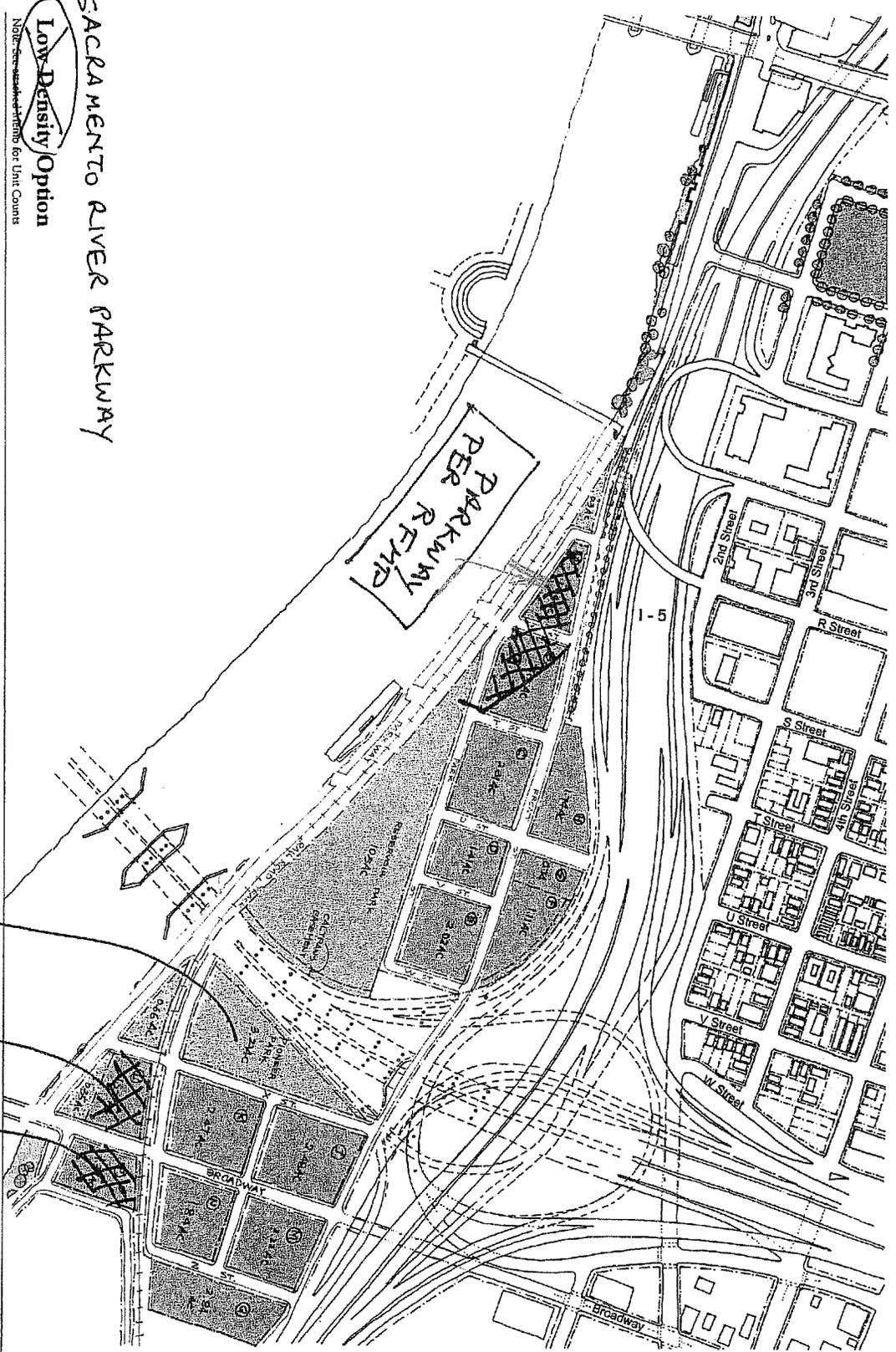
ROBERT P. THOMAS  
 City Manager

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more parking west of RR

#9



**Development Parcel Chart**

**LOW DENSITY OPTION**

Parcel	Low Density
<b>North of Pioneer Bridge</b>	
A	1.04 ac
B	2.41 ac
C	2.31 ac
D	1.41 ac
E	2.02 ac
F	1.11 ac
Total	10.11 ac net
<b>South of Pioneer Bridge</b>	
G (R&E)	0.74 ac
H (R&E)	1.76 ac
Total	2.50 ac net
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12.61 ac net</b>
Reservoir Park	10.50 ac
R Street Park	0.30 ac
Total	10.80 ac net
<b>Pioneer Park river edge</b>	
I	NA
J	2.48 ac
K	2.47 ac
L	1.27 ac
M	2.22 ac
N	1.84 ac
P	1.37 ac
Q	2.84 ac
Total	14.49 ac net
<b>Combined Total Developable land</b>	<b>26.61 ac net</b>
<b>Combined Parks</b>	
Total	15.01 ac net

SACRAMENTO RIVER PARKWAY  
 Low Density Option  
 Note: ~~See Attachment~~ for Unit Counts

WRT-SOLOMON E.T.C. | 15 June 2005

Friends of the Sacramento River Parkway  
 6-24-05

SWAP FOR RIVER FRONT LAND OF RR TRACKS  
 PARKWAY (Under the bridge)