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To:
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Memo

Subject: Task 2.3: Initial Public Engagement Summary

Introduction

The purpose of this memo is to summarize the initial public engagement (Task 2.3) for the City of Marysville (City) Specific Plan and General Plan Update (Project). This summary is provided for information purposes to the City to share the engagement activities to date.

Project Background

The City has received funding under the State of California, Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Grant Program. The REAP Grant funding is intended to facilitate housing production, promote infill, encourage transit, bicycling, and walking, enhance community assets, and provide inclusive engagement. The purpose and focus for the General Plan Update include securing economic and fiscal sustainability, expanding options for transportation, expanding housing opportunities, ensuring State law compliance, streamlining future development, and developing the 2040 planning horizon for a successful Marysville. These separate but related efforts are working towards the City reaching its full potential in 2040 and beyond.

Engagement Activities

General Plan Advisory Committee Meeting #1

On April 20, 2022, public engagement activities were kicked off with the initial presentation to inform the General Plan Update Committee members about the Specific Plan and General Plan Update process and to receive feedback that would help assess the topics and problems most important for community members and the City. The input received in this meeting guided the questions and topics that were later generated for the electronic survey to the general public.

Electronic Survey

As part of the engagement activities, a community survey was conducted seeking initial input about the critical needs that exist in the City, most important community assets, and problems and unrealized opportunities. The survey was provided in English and disseminated via the City's website and through community email contacts beginning on April 15, 2022, and remained active through May 31, 2022. There was a total of 63 survey responses.

The survey questions posed to the public are listed below and include the summaries of responses. The survey included the option for respondents to provide open-ended responses for each question. These collective responses are summarized below and can be found separately in **Attachment A**.

Question 1: Which best describes you?

Most respondents included residents (66 percent), followed by workers (33 percent), those who own a business or lead an organization focused on the City (15 percent), and the remaining included a combination of past residents, frequent visitors, nearby residents, and current or future owners of businesses in the City (14 percent).

Question 2: What do you love most about Marysville?

The respondents love the small-town charm that makes up the City the most (50 percent), followed by its history and historic architecture (40 percent), outdoor and recreational activities (8 percent), and its natural beauty (3 percent). Many respondents described how the small-town charm and natural beauty of the City has diminished over the years due to blight, traffic, litter, road conditions, and homelessness. Respondents also explained how the traffic, litter, and poor road conditions decrease the willingness and desire that individuals feel towards choosing alternative transportation modes like walking or biking. There was shared disappointment surrounding the destruction of historic architecture that has occurred in the City, with many respondents feeling that a significant amount of history has been erased which could have contributed to the City's success. Furthermore, the respondents stated that the remaining historical buildings aren't properly taken care of, which exacerbates the issue and their concern. Many were adamant that the history and historical architecture that makes up the City is an invaluable asset and that it's critical for it to be preserved. Similarly, some respondents described the threat that big-box stores and retail chains pose in destroying the City's small-town charm and historical character.

Question 3: What are Marysville's biggest challenges today?

The biggest challenge identified was property owners not investing in or making the best use of the land and buildings. This was followed by homelessness, unattractive appearances in town (trash, poor landscape maintenance), traffic and congestion during peak-period use, lack of economic and population growth, lack of identity/prestige/image, and the physicals constraints to growth. Interestingly, many respondents don't consider physical constraints to growth an issue and described it as a virtue and a beneficial feature. Instead, emphasis was placed on building upwards and optimizing utilization of land. However, some respondents are against building upwards and think that multi-units, especially near the entrance of the City, diminishes the small-town charm. There was a significant number of comments pertaining to the appearance of the City's entrance. Many respondents identify this as a crucial area to beautify in order to attract investors and future residents and improve the City's image. Respondents highlighted the importance of attracting investors and employers that will align with the City's vision to ensure that optimization of land is achieved, and unique businesses are prioritized. Overall, most respondents recognized how these issues are related and affect one another,

and therefore are all crucial. For example, one respondent noted that Ellis Lake is a significant asset to the City, but there is a large amount of trash in and around the lake as a result of homelessness, so it dissuades residents from enjoying and using it.

Question 4: What are the most valuable community assets?

The most valuable community asset identified were the major employment centers (Rideout Memorial Hospital, Caltrans, Beale Air Force Base), followed by historic areas and buildings, vacant and underutilized Downtown locations available for development, Ellis Lake and neighborhood parks, Riverfront Park, levees to be used for recreation, sport programs for children, and the Marysville Raceway. One respondent noted that although major employment centers are valuable to the City, they are unlikely to attract and retain prospective residents since there is higher-quality housing in nearby areas that individuals working in specialized jobs and making more money are more likely to want to live in, such as Yuba City. Hence, higher-quality housing in the City is necessary to optimize the long-term benefits associated with having major employment centers, like attracting future residents and contributing to population growth. There is a resounding consensus that parks need to be improved regarding their infrastructure, landscaping, and with the addition of features such as volleyball courts. Respondents are adamant that historical buildings are an invaluable asset and must be preserved and used as attractions for visitors. Some respondents claimed that it is imperative for the City to become cleaner and safer first, since quality investors and businesses are unlikely to be attracted to the City until that occurs. Furthermore, respondents noted that vacant and underutilized locations, as valuable as they are, are useless and contribute negatively to the City if they remain underdeveloped.

Question 5: What do we need more of in Marysville?

Respondents indicated that attractive destinations and events (entertainment options) are most needed in the City, followed by engaging activity and nightlife in Downtown, recreational facilities and programs for children and families, housing for residents and workforce, convenience amenities, community center and/or senior center, and hotels. With more attractive destinations and events, respondents predict that hotels would also be important to establish after visiting increases in the City; however, it is important for these hotels to feel safe since respondents claim they have become dangerous due to crimes associated with homelessness. Respondents are in strong agreement that more recreational centers are needed for activity in the community, such as swimming pools, tennis courts, volleyball courts, and such. Also, there was frequent mention of needing more restaurants and other unique and useful businesses like a bakery, wine shop, craft stores, which will increase attracting visitors and residents. Furthermore, better quality grocery stores were requested, and that the restoring of homes and businesses should be prioritized before creating new ones.

Question 6: What are the barriers to convenient and safe biking and walking to reach destinations?

The respondents identified the lack of safety features (lighting, signage, dedicated lanes for bicyclists) as the most prominent barrier to convenient and safe biking and walking to reach destinations. This was followed by not enough walking paths or bike paths, dangerous drivers, dangerous locations such as areas with higher speeds or where sightlines are interrupted, and tree cover and shade for pedestrian comfort and cooling. There is an agreement that heavy and continuous traffic is a major burden to the City and its residents as it negatively impacts safety for walking and biking and contributes to noise and air pollution. A respondent noted that the City should strive towards creating an environment which allows biking and walking to be a lifestyle choice, rather than only a weekend activity. Many respondents attributed heavy traffic as a key contributor to most of the problems facing

the City including safety, aesthetic appeal, environmental damage, and discouraging economic activity since the Downtown area poses dangers for pedestrians and shoppers. Some recommendations included the implementation of programs to slow traffic, educating drivers with signage, and exploring possibilities to change circulation to divert traffic to improve safety with biking and walking. Also, many respondents express concern that the homelessness crisis contributes toward feeling unsafe while walking and biking. Some respondents acknowledged the features that are already in place in the City to encourage walking and biking, such as tree-lined sidewalks and appealing historical architecture, but this can't be appreciated unless individuals feel safe.

Question 7: Where should the City focus investment?

The most popular focus for investment was the renovation, preservation, business development and incentives for historic areas and buildings. This was followed by streetscapes, infrastructure, Ellis Lake, traffic control/circulation, attractions and entertainment options, public transportation, hotels, and electric vehicle chargers. In addition to these topics, there was a lot of mention about the importance of promoting and securing more businesses, but not franchises or big-box chain stores, but independent and local businesses. Respondents identified that through beautifying the entrance of the City, increasing signage, and offering a checklist for prospective investors it could help motivate and attract investors. Responses also included the idea of creating a bypass and/or traffic deterrents to aid the safety, aesthetics, air and noise pollution of the City. There are inconsistencies in opinion between the respondents about the potential of Ellis Lake, as some respondents think it is a valuable asset while others think it isn't and should be the last priority for investment.

Question 8: Think of a city or neighborhood you love. Why do you love it?

The responses generated from this question were in alignment with what was identified for the most important needs of the City and what the most challenging issues are. The top reason why a respondent loved a city or neighborhood had to do with having many entertainment options, followed by the cleanliness and safety of an area, ease and enjoyment of walking and biking to reach a destination, a unique experience offered, and recreational activities.

Attachment: A – Survey Open-Ended Responses