



**Contra
Costa
County**

To: Board of Supervisors

From: John Kopchik, Director, Conservation & Development Department

Date: June 21, 2016

Subject: Buchanan Field General Plan Amendment

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. OPEN the public hearing, RECEIVE testimony, and CLOSE the public hearing.
2. FIND, on the basis of the whole record before the County, for purposes of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), that there is no possibility that the proposed General Plan Amendment (GPA), County File #GP16-0002, will have a significant effect on the environment, and that the project is therefore exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3).
3. ADOPT the GPA, amending the text of Land Use Element Policy 3-98 of the 2005-2020 Contra Costa County General Plan, as recommended in County Planning Commission Resolution #9-2016 (Attachment A), as part of the first consolidated General Plan Amendment for calendar year 2016, as allowed under State Planning Law.
4. DIRECT the Department of Conservation and Development to file a CEQA Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk.

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY
ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD
COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **06/21/2016** ☐ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: June 21, 2016

Contact: Will Nelson,
(925) 674-7791

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of
Supervisors

By: , Deputy

cc:

FISCAL IMPACT:

No impact to the General Fund. This GPA is being funded 100% from Airport Enterprise Funds.

BACKGROUND:

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is a County-initiated GPA to revise Land Use Element Policy 3-98 to increase the development limit for a three-acre portion of Buchanan Field Airport from 18,500 square feet to 52,300 square feet.

II. SITE/AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject property is located on the west side of Buchanan Field Airport between Sally Ride Drive and Marsh Drive (see Attachment B - General Plan Land Use Map and Aerial Photo). The area designated Business Park [(BP); the “subject area”], which is the area affected by Policy 3-98, is located at the southern intersection of these streets and comprises the southernmost 4 acres [\[1\]](#) of the approximately 19-acre subject site. The entire property is vacant except for a large concrete pad. To the north, east, and south are airport-related uses and to the west is a mobile home park.

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

General Plan: The subject property is designated BP on the General Plan Land Use Element Map. The BP designation allows a mix of commercial, office, and light industrial uses which, “[b]y the high quality of their development and the nature of their operations, demonstrate compatibility with adjacent commercial and residential uses.” (Land Use Element page 3-20)

The following standards apply in areas designated BP:

Maximum site coverage: 40 percent

Maximum building height: 60 feet

Maximum floor area ratio [\[2\]](#): 1.5 (150 percent)

Average employees per gross acre: 100

Zoning: The subject property is zoned Unrestricted (U). Pursuant to County Ordinance Code Section 84-64.002, "All land within a U unrestricted district may be used for any lawful use, but the board of supervisors may hereafter amend this division to place land now placed in an unrestricted district into another district, or by proper amendment of this division may provide regulations for the use of land now in any unrestricted district."

Land zoned U is not subject to limitations on use and no development standards (setbacks, height limitation, etc.) are applicable. However, development at both County airports must comply with the adopted Buchanan Field Airport and Byron Airport Minimum Standards, Development, Facility Use & Lease Policies (the “Minimum Standards”). The Minimum Standards contain restrictions similar to those found in zoning regulations.

Environmental Review: The proposed project is an amendment to the text of the County General Plan. All GPAs qualify as projects under CEQA and are therefore subject to environmental review.

Prior to 2008, Land Use Element Policy 3-98 limited development of the subject property to 180,000 square feet of commercial uses. In 2008 the County adopted an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the GPA associated with updating the Buchanan Field Master Plan. That IS/MND analyzed the impacts of over 300,000 square feet of potential new development on airport property, including the subject area, and identified potentially significant impacts in the following CEQA topics of study: Air Quality, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Transportation/Traffic, Utilities and Services Systems, and Mandatory Findings of Significance. Mitigation measures were identified to reduce all potentially significant impacts to less-than-significant levels.

As explained in Section V below, development of the subject area was artificially limited in order to limit cumulative peak-hour traffic associated with the updated Master Plan to 99 trips. However, several specific projects that were anticipated to occur in 2008 and studied in the IS/MND never materialized. Thus, their anticipated contribution to peak-hour traffic also did not occur.

The proposed GPA involves restoring the subject area's former development potential in light of the fact that the projects anticipated in 2008 did not occur. The proposed GPA would not have a significant impact on the environment for the following reasons:

1. The amended text would still limit cumulative peak-hour traffic generation to 99 trips, thus meeting the intent of the limitation placed in 2008.
2. The subject area is already authorized for development under the Buchanan Field Master Plan and remains subject to the mitigation measures adopted with the IS/MND in 2008.
3. Individual projects on airport property undergo their own CEQA review, so any specific development proposal in the subject area will be studied for potential environmental impacts.

Based on the foregoing, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the proposed GPA is exempt from CEQA because it can be seen with certainty that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment.

IV. AGENCY COMMENTS

A. Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC): ALUC staff indicated that the proposed GPA is not of a type that requires formal ALUC review.

B. Regional Transportation Planning Committee (TRANSPAC): The proposed GPA would not result in 100 new peak-hour automobile trips. Thus, pursuant to the

Contra Costa Transportation Authority's *Technical Procedures Manual*, TRANSPAC review is not required.

V. STAFF ANALYSIS

A. Proposed Amendment to Land Use Element Policy 3-98: In 2008 the County General Plan was amended to support the update of the Buchanan Field Airport Master Plan that occurred the same year. Prior to the Master Plan update, the 19-acre County-owned property located between Marsh Drive and Sally Ride Drive was planned for commercial development and had a General Plan land use designation of Commercial (CO). At the time, Land Use Element Policy 3-98 allowed for up to 180,000 square feet of commercial development on this property.

When the Master Plan update was occurring, several large development projects were planned at Buchanan Field. To accommodate these projects while ensuring that enough land remained for future aviation-related development, the County determined it was appropriate to redesignate approximately three-quarters of the subject property from CO to the Public/Semi-Public (PS) use designation and redesignate the subject area to BP.

As the County proceeded with the environmental review for the Master Plan update and GPA, the analysis revealed that anticipated development would generate over 100 peak-hour traffic trips, thus necessitating preparation of a traffic impact analysis. In an effort to stay below 100 peak-hour trips, the County ran numerous development scenarios for the subject area assuming that the then-proposed projects would be developed, which resulted in a determination that development of the subject area should be capped at 18,500 square feet of business park use types. However, mainly as a result of the recession, none of the projects planned in 2008 were implemented. The County has now been approached by an applicant seeking to develop up to 52,300 square feet of light industrial/business park uses on the subject area, but the current iteration of Policy 3-98 prevents such development.

The 18,500-square-foot development limit for the subject area is an artificial limitation meant to address cumulative trip generation from projects that never materialized and has no other practical reason for existing in the General Plan. This artificial limitation yields an allowable FAR of approximately 12 percent for the subject area, where the normal FAR for land designated BP is 150 percent (the former CO designation for the site allowed an FAR of 100 percent). In order to restore some of the subject area's former development potential, staff proposes amending Land Use Element Policy 3-98 as follows (with deleted text shown as strikethrough and new text shown as underlined):

3-98 The area designated for Commercial (CO) use at the entrance of John Glenn Drive is limited to development of 220,000 square feet of space; the area designated Business Park (BP) at Marsh Drive and Sally Ride Drive is limited to ~~18,500~~ 52,300 square feet. New development undertaken pursuant to the

Buchanan Field Master Plan (2008) shall not cause cumulative automobile trip generation to exceed 99 peak-hour trips unless a traffic impact analysis has been performed consistent with the most recent version of the *Technical Procedures Manual* adopted by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority and the appropriate documentation has been prepared pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Adoption of this amended language provides a FAR of approximately 40 percent, which is well within the allowable FAR for land designated BP, while still maintaining the intent of the 2008 GPA to limit peak-hour traffic generation to 99 trips or fewer. Any eventual development of the subject area must comply with the adopted *Minimum Standards* and the mitigation measures identified in the 2008 IS/MND. Such development must ultimately be approved by the Board of Supervisors.

B. General Plan Consistency: Policies 3-91 through 3-101 (Land Use Element), and 5-59 and 5-61 through 5-63 (Transportation and Circulation Element) pertain specifically to Buchanan Field Airport. Additional goals and policies in the Transportation and Circulation Element are general and pertain to both County airports.

The proposed amendment to Policy 3-98 is consistent with the general and specific policies for County airports. The General Plan as originally adopted included Policy 3-109, which allowed for up to 180,000 square feet of development on the subject property. The policy remained unchanged until 2008 when it was amended to reflect the newly-applied BP land use designation and limit development of the subject area as described above. At that time several other policies pertaining to Buchanan Field were adopted or amended. Three of these, Policies 3-95 through 3-97, refer specifically to the subject area and reinforce the County's intent for it to be developed with non-aviation uses. Restoring a portion of the subject area's original development potential is consistent with those policies.

VI. CONCLUSION

The 18,500-square-foot development limit for the subject area is an artificial limitation that no longer has a practical purpose. Therefore, staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopts the proposed CEQA finding and GPA to restore the development potential of the subject area, as recommended in County Planning Commission Resolution #9-2016. The proposed GPA would be part of the first consolidated GPA of calendar year 2016 along with County File #GP16-0004, the proposed GPA related to compliance with the State's 2007 Flood Legislation.

[1] While the subject area is approximately four acres, a 52-foot-wide swath along the west property line is reserved for a future transit corridor and trail and the Buchanan Field Master Plan depicts an access road crossing the site, effectively

reducing the developable area to approximately three acres.

[2] Floor area ratio (FAR) is the ratio of developed or developable square footage relative to the size of the parcel. For example, a FAR of 50 percent or 0.5 means that a property can be developed with square footage equal to half its size. Thus, a 10,000-square-foot property with a FAR of 0.5 could be developed with up to 5,000 square feet.

CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

If the Board does not approve the proposed GPA, then the development limit for the subject area will remain at 18,500 square feet, making it difficult to establish an economically-viable land use.

CLERK'S ADDENDUM

CLOSED the public hearing; FOUND, on the basis of the whole record before the County, for purposes of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), that there is no possibility that the proposed General Plan Amendment (GPA) will have a significant effect on the environment, and that the project is therefore exempt from CEQA ; ADOPTED the GPA, amending the text of Land Use Element Policy 3-98 of the 2005-2020 Contra Costa County General Plan as part of the first consolidated General Plan Amendment for calendar year 2016; and DIRECTED the Department of Conservation and Development to file a CEQA Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Adopted County Planning Commission Resolution #9-2016

Attachment B - General Plan Land Use Map and Aerial Photo

Attachment C - Staff Report to County Planning Commission 5-24-16

Attachment D - Notification Materials for GP16-0002