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## Planning Commission Bumps Back Downtown Plan Schedule

By Cathy Tyson

Date	Who	What
November 7	Planning Commission	Discuss process and schedule for the DSP, EIR and GP amendment.
November 14	City Council	Receive report and update on the Planning Commission's 11/7 discussion
November 16	Staff	Release EIR Memorandum, General Plan amendment, and staff reports for DSP, EIR and GP amendment
November 30	Planning Commission	Present and begin initial discussions on DSP, EIR and GP amendment
December 12	City Council	Receive report and update on the Planning Commission's 11/30 meeting (if necessary)
January 17	Planning Commission	Begin review of DSP chapters and GP amendment
January 30	Planning Commission	Review EIR with focus on mitigation measures
February 6	Planning Commission	Adopt recommendations to the City Council on the DSP, EIR and GP amendment
February 14	City Council & Planning Commission	Present Planning Commission recommendations to the City Council
March	City Council	Begin consideration of DSP, EIR and GP amendment

The Downtown Specific Plan is once again going to take a bit longer than anticipated. At a recent meeting - the Planning Commission approved a revised schedule for the home stretch of the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The Planning Commission will continue to review the DSP and EIR concurrently through January 30; on February 6 the Planning Commission will adopt recommendations to give to the City Council. Forget the chocolates and a romantic dinner, residents will surely want to enjoy the evening of February 14 - Valentine's Day - when the Planning Commission recommendations will be presented to the City Council. The City Council will use that information to start considering the DSP and the EIR for adoption in March, 2012.

It seems like only yesterday the Lamorinda Weekly reported that Planning Commission recommendations to the City Council were slated for late January; this new revised schedule pushes everything back by a few weeks. Responding to a question, Planning Commissioner Will Lovitt said, "No one is more tired of this than I am." The rest of the Commissioners agreed there is no rush, and they would like to take the time to fully complete the process.

A letter was presented by the Lafayette Homeowners Council at the meeting that disagreed with the logistics of reviewing the Downtown Plan and the Environmental report

concurrently, "We urge the City Council in the strongest possible terms to complete the final Environmental Impact Report before deciding on the merits of the DSP Project." The Planning Commission saw it differently, and will review both the EIR and the DSP at the same time, consistent with State guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act review.

Marie Blitz, President of the Lafayette Homeowners Council, stated she was "nervous and concerned" because the current EIR is based on the 2009 staff version of DSP. "It's still an incredibly optimistic schedule," she said. George Burt also disagreed with the Commission, noting he has "significant objections," and in his view, not certifying the EIR first was putting the "cart before the horse."

Planning Commissioner Chair Patricia Curtin-Tinley explained that certifying the EIR, "really just means it's done correctly and in accordance with the law." She argued that, "certification alone is meaningless... unless it refers to a plan."

Reach the reporter at: [cathy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:cathy@lamorindaweekly.com)

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