I. SUBJECT

The purpose of this Planning Commission Work Session (Agenda Item No. 6) is to present the revised Draft Background Report (Exhibits 2a through 2m), ¹ and update the Planning Commission on next steps for the General Plan Update (GPU) project activities. Staff is requesting that the Planning Commission provide input on the Draft Background Report, the results of which will be presented to the Board of Supervisors on January 23, 2018.

II. BACKGROUND

From the outset of the GPU process, the Board of Supervisors expressed its desire to rely on the Planning Commission as its principal advisory body with the key task of gathering public input and building community ownership of the GPU process, advising the GPU team on ideas and content for the draft GPU documents, and providing formal recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

The Planning Commission is scheduled to hold several Planning Commission Work Sessions throughout the GPU process; this is the third of 13 scheduled Work Sessions. Each Planning Commission Work Session scheduled as part of the GPU project is identified in the List of Project Phases and Major Tasks (Exhibit 3).

On June 8, 2017, Planning Commission Work Session No. 2 was held to present an overview of the Assets, Issues, and Opportunities Summary Report (which summarizes community engagement activities through June 2017), the Draft Background Report, and the proposed Draft Vision Statement and Guiding Principles. During this Work Session, the Commission provided comments on the Draft Background Report and recommended that staff return to the Planning Commission with public comment revisions before presenting the Draft Background Report to the Board of Supervisors.

The purpose of this Work Session is to secure input from your Commission on the revised Draft Background Report, which was provided to Commissioners on October 13, 2017. In response to staff’s request for input, on October 18, 2017, Planning Commissioner White submitted a comment related Chapter 8 Natural Resources, Section 8.1 Air Quality requesting incorporation of the fact that the ozone standard has been exceeded 22 days to date in 2017 (Exhibit 6). This information, as well your Commission’s input received today, will be incorporated into the revised Draft Background Report subsequent to this Work Session. Additionally, staff will incorporate the erroneously omitted April 27, 2012 comment letter from Ventura Water into the revised Draft Background Report (Exhibit 4). Staff will incorporate these revisions, and others as specified by

¹ Due to the large electronic file sizes associated with Exhibit 2, this document is provided in multiple sub-sections.
your Commission, prior to presenting the revised Draft Background Report to the Board of Supervisors on January 23, 2018.

III. REVIEW OF RECENT PROJECT MILESTONES

This section presents summary information related to Draft Background Report revisions.

A. General Plan Update Revised Draft Background Report

In March 2017, staff released the Draft Background Report (Exhibits 2a to 2m) to the public and GPU advisory groups for review and comment. The report describes existing conditions and trends in unincorporated Ventura County as of 2016 and will be used to describe the environmental setting in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report. Staff also presented this report and associated public comments (Exhibit 4) to the Planning Commission at the June 8, 2017 Work Session No. 2. The Commission provided initial comments on the Draft Background Report with a request that staff return with a revised Draft Background Report that incorporated public comments, for further consideration. During this Work Session and thereafter, public comments were being received on the Draft Background Report and are included as Exhibit 5.

In October 19, 2017, the revised Draft Background Report, which incorporates comments from the public, advisory groups and preliminary comments from some members of the Planning Commission, was released to the public and Planning Commissioners in advance of this Work Session.

The Mintier Harnish consultant team, utilizing their knowledge and technical expertise of the various Draft Background Report issue areas, vetted public comments to determine which comments were pertinent and served to further and accurately describe existing conditions in the unincorporated County. Understandably, there was a wide variety of comments received due to the length and complexity of the document however, staff found that the comments received generally fell into the following categories:

- Comments addressing missing, inaccurate or unclear information;
- Comments that did not address factual inaccuracies related to existing conditions;
- Comments that were identified as appropriate for consideration during a later phase in the General Plan Update project;
- Comments that erroneously mischaracterized or took out of context Draft Background Report content;
- Comments referencing information already included in March 2017, Draft Background Report; and
- Comments submitted as part of ongoing SB18 and AB52 Tribal Consultation.

Draft Background Report Funding and Timeline

The GPU scope of work allocated $377,110 in project funding for completion of the Background Report (Phase 2 of the project). The Mintier Harnish team, based on their experience drafting
Background Reports for California cities and counties, allocated funding and time to address anticipated public comments however the volume of comments well exceeded the budget. The County of Ventura has a long history of strong community engagement and as a result, public involvement and input in this project has been enthusiastic and robust. As such, the Planning Division received a large volume of comments on the Draft Background Report from GPU advisory groups, the public, and Planning Commission. Exhibit 4 of this staff report includes 642 pages and Exhibit 5 includes 27 pages of documents that contain various public comments which required review, vetting and as applicable, incorporation into the Draft Background Report by staff and the Mintier Harnish team. Mintier Harnish reported that given this unanticipated volume of public comment, which is atypical in their experience working with other jurisdictions, that approximately $45,000 in additional project funds would be needed to integrate public comments into the Draft Background Report. The Planning Director authorized the use of $45,000 in project contingency funds to complete Draft Background Report revisions which also required an additional four months of staff and consultant time to complete – the results of which is the Draft Background Report that is before you today (Exhibits 2a through 2m).

As discussed above, the Draft Background Report will be updated in the manner specified by your Commission, prior to presenting the revised Draft Background Report to the Board of Supervisors on January 23, 2018. Thereafter, the GPU Scope of Work calls for the Draft Background Report to be revised during Phase 6 in conjunction with preparation of the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report and adopted during Phase 7 in conjunction with adoption of the General Plan and certification of the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report.

**Chapter by Chapter Summary of Revisions**

As discussed above, pursuant to the Planning Commission’s recommendations on June 8, 2017, staff and the Mintier Harnish team revised the Draft Background Report. This effort required review, vetting and as applicable, incorporation of the public comments included in this staff report in Exhibit 4 (642 pages) and Exhibit 5 (27 pages) of documents. The Mintier Harnish team is composed of seven consulting firms representing various areas of technical expertise. Staff from all seven firms were responsible for drafting content for the Draft Background Report and participated in document revisions included in Exhibits 2a through 2m.

Although not exhaustive, the following list highlights revisions within the Draft Background Report made by both staff and consultants:

- **Chapter 1 Introduction**: Minimal revisions made to address miscellaneous comments.
- **Chapter 2 Demographics and Economics**: Revisions included review and verification of forecasts from the Southern California Association of Governments, creation of Creative Economy and Nonprofit industry snapshots within Section 2.3 Regional Market Trends, additional comparison with the other countywide reports, and revisions to improve clarity as needed based on miscellaneous comments. Section 2.5 Market Demand Measures for Different Land Uses was revised to improve clarity and list assumptions used to calculate land supply and demand.
- **Chapter 3 Land Use**: Revisions included creation of a new table summarizing city general plans, changes within the discussion of remaining development potential within Section 3.7
Development Holding Capacity and Remaining Development Potential, revisions to references to open space land designated or zoned for Open Space to improve clarity, additional references to the Channel Islands that fall under County jurisdiction, and revision of miscellaneous comments as needed.

- **Chapter 4 Health and Well-Being**: Added a discussion on environmental hazards related to Senate Bill 1000 and environmental justice.
- **Chapter 5 Housing**: No revisions made.
- **Chapter 6 Transportation and Mobility**: Revisions included review of transit services to integrate new information provided by commenters, review of the City of Oxnard’s General Plan documents for relevant information, review of the Ventura County Transportation Commission Wayfinding Study (2017), and completion of revisions to address miscellaneous comments.
- **Chapter 7 Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure**: Revisions included addition of Section 7.11 Parks and Recreation (previously located within Chapter 8), review of Public Works Integrated Master Plan and addition of references where appropriate, revisions to discussion of regional sanitation districts, addition of description of services provided by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, revisions to discussion of behavioral health services, and addition of discussion and data from broadband-related reports and incorporate references within Section 7.4 Utilities.
- **Chapter 8 Natural Resources**: Revisions included the addition of a discussion about the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan within Section 8.1 Air Quality, including a discussion of ozone and smog. Other clarifications were made to open space designation and zoning references, movement of Section 8.3 Open Space for Outdoor Recreation to Chapter 7, addition of map and data related to oil and gas wells, and revisions to discussion of solar power and renewable energy.
- **Chapter 9 Agriculture**: Revisions were coordinated with the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office and included integration of the most recent statewide agricultural land conversion statistics (2016), integration of additional statistics from the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office, reconfiguration of the discussion of economic status of agriculture, and addition of content related to agricultural pests and programs.
- **Chapter 10 Water Resources**: Revisions included addition of discussion of the Ventura County Groundwater Ordinance, additional discussion related to the Integrated Regional Water Management Program, additional details related to the Calleguas Creek Watershed, revisions to address miscellaneous comments, and revision of structure of chapter to isolate the Oxnard Forebay/Oxnard Plain as a separate watershed and updating maps, tables, other discussions accordingly.
- **Chapter 11 Hazards and Safety**: Revisions included additional discussion related to coastal flooding and minor changes regarding traffic noise.
• **Chapter 12 Climate Change**: Revisions included the addition of a new discussion regarding short-lived climate pollutants (SLCP) and the California Air Resources Board’s SLCP Reduction Strategy, carbon sequestration and storage, black carbon and statewide regulation and reduction efforts, and edits to address perceived bias related to discussion of climate change impacts.

Use of the various Microsoft Word editing tools (e.g. track changes denoting added or deleting text, multi-reviewer comments, revised section and sub-section titles, revised footers, revised table of contents, tables and maps) within the revised Draft Background Report chapters resulted in a document that was impracticable to manage as a single coherent report. As such, the revisions were not made in legislative format (e.g. text that was deleted remained in the document in strikeout type and any new text underlined).

**Final Background Report and Program Environmental Impact Report -Related Revisions**

One of the key functions of the Background Report is to establish the environmental setting for the General Plan Program Environmental Impact Report. This eliminates both duplication of effort and the potential for inconsistent use of data between the General Plan and Program Environmental Impact Report. During the time between publication of the Draft Background Report and completion of the Program Environmental Impact Report, some conditions will change and new substantive information will become available. For instance, new legislation may require additional documentation (e.g., Senate Bill 1000 which requires General Plans identify and incorporate environmental justice goals and policies for designated disadvantaged communities), new analytical information may become available (e.g., Ventura County Transportation Commission travel demand modeling results), or baseline source documents may be updated (e.g., Air Quality Management Plan). Such changes could affect the environmental analysis, so they would need to be reflected in the environmental setting discussion. For this reason, the Background Report will remain in draft form until the General Plan is adopted and the Final Program Environmental Impact Report is certified.

As new information becomes available, the GPU team and the Mintier Harnish team will catalog this information for integration into the final version of the Background Report. The Background Report will then be revised during the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report preparation process (in Phase 6) and adopted in final form in conjunction with certification of the Final Program Environmental Impact Report and adoption of the General Plan Policy Document (in Phase 7).

**IV. NEXT STEPS: LAUNCH OF PHASE 4 – EVALUATING ALTERNATIVES**

Upon completion of Phase 2 (Background Report) and Phase 3 (Vision and Guiding Principles), staff and the Mintier Harnish consultant team will commence with Phase 4 (Evaluating Alternatives). This phase assists with establishing the framework for future growth and development, and will serve as the basis for the updating the goals, policies, and implementation programs contained in the General Plan. Phase 4 will include discussions with community members, stakeholders, and decision-makers about land use alternatives and policy options to ensure the GPU Vision is achieved.
V. PLANNING COMMISSION ACTIONS

Planning Division staff is requesting that the Planning Commission provide input on the Draft Background Report (Exhibits 2a through 2m) for review by the Board of Supervisors at their January 23, 2018 meeting.

If you have any questions please contact me at (805) 654-2481 or at kim.prillhart@ventura.org or Susan Curtis, General Plan Update Project Manager at (805) 654-2497 or at susan.curtis@ventura.org.

Kim L. Prillhart, Director
Ventura County Planning Division

Exhibits:

Exhibit 2a Draft Background Report – Table of Contents
Exhibit 2b Draft Background Report – Chapter 1 Introduction
Exhibit 2c Draft Background Report – Chapter 2 Demographics and Economics
Exhibit 2d Draft Background Report – Chapter 3 Land Use
Exhibit 2e Draft Background Report – Chapter 4 Health and Well-Being
Exhibit 2f Draft Background Report – Chapter 5 Housing
Exhibit 2g Draft Background Report – Chapter 6 Transportation and Mobility
Exhibit 2h Draft Background Report – Chapter 7 Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure
Exhibit 2i Draft Background Report – Chapter 8 Natural Resources
Exhibit 2j Draft Background Report – Chapter 9 Agriculture
Exhibit 2k Draft Background Report – Chapter 10 Water Resources
Exhibit 2l Draft Background Report – Chapter 11 Hazards and Safety
Exhibit 2m Draft Background Report – Chapter 12 Climate Change
Exhibit 3 List of Project Phases and Major Tasks
Exhibit 4 March 17, 2017 Draft Background Report Public Comments
Exhibit 5 June to October 2017 Draft Background Report Public Comments
Exhibit 6 Commissioner Phil White, Draft Background Report Comment Letter, Dated October 18, 2017