

**From:** [Zdeba, Benjamin](#)  
**To:** [Lee, Amanda](#)  
**Cc:** [Ramirez, Brittany](#)  
**Subject:** FW: SPON Comments - Steering Committee Meeting May 15  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 15, 2019 12:07:35 PM  
**Attachments:** [General Plan Update Steering Committee Meeting\\_190515.pdf](#)  
[image001.png](#)

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FYI – This was sent to the GPUSC members this morning.

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**From:** SPON: Still Protecting Our Newport <Info@SPON-NewportBeach.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2019 9:08 AM  
**To:** Gardner, Nancy <NGardner@newportbeachca.gov>; James, Carlson <JCarlson@newportbeachca.gov>; O'Hara, Catherine <cohara@newportbeachca.gov>; Selich, Ed <ESelich@newportbeachca.gov>; Stevens, Debbie <DStevens@newportbeachca.gov>; Tucker, Larry <ltucker@newportbeachca.gov>; Watkins, Paul <pwatkins@newportbeachca.gov>; Dixon, Diane <ddixon@newportbeachca.gov>  
**Cc:** Jurjis, Seimone <sjurjis@newportbeachca.gov>; Campbell, Jim <JCampbell@newportbeachca.gov>; Zdeba, Benjamin <bzdeba@newportbeachca.gov>  
**Subject:** SPON Comments - Steering Committee Meeting May 15

Dear Chair Gardner and members of the Steering Committee,

Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration of the need, purpose, process and desired outcomes of the General Plan Update process.

Over the past several years, SPON has sent a variety of messages to the City Council regarding the need for a General Plan Update (GPU). The letter we have attached for your consideration for tonight's meeting simply reiterates some of those concerns and confirms our continued active attention and participation.

The attached also specifically addresses our concerns about the consultant interviews which are on tonight's agenda.

If you have any comments or questions regarding the attached, please do not hesitate to ask.

*Marko Popovich*

President



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[SPONNB.org](http://SPONNB.org) | [FB @SPONNB](https://www.facebook.com/SPONNB) | [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvKjKjKjKjKjKjKjKjKjKjKj)  
Twitter/Instagram @SPONNewport

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SPON is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public education organization working to protect and preserve the residential and environmental qualities of Newport Beach.

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## OFFICERS

May 14, 2019

### PRESIDENT

Marko Popovich

City of Newport Beach

### VICE PRESIDENT

Vacant

100 Civic Center Drive

Newport Beach, CA 92660

### TREASURER

Dennis Baker

Attention: General Plan Update Steering Committee

### SECRETARY

Allan Beek

Re: GPU Steering Committee Meeting May 15

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Dear Chair Gardner and members of the Steering Committee:

## BOARD MEMBERS

Nancy Alston

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Nancy Skinner

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Portia Weiss

Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration of the need, purpose, process and desired outcomes of the General Plan Update process.

Over the past several years, SPON has sent a variety of messages to the City Council regarding the need for a General Plan Update (GPU) and by this letter simply wants to reiterate some of those concerns and continue our active attention and participation. In this case, our comments pertain to the choice of consultant.

To cut to the chase, we believe there is only one of the five applications so far that is complete and responsive to the City's needs. Kearns and West has indicated its ability and capacity and experience in dealing with the General Planning processes for many cities similar to our own. Ideally you would seek at least two more qualified firms to be interviewed. The interviews themselves are of value in building a strong consensus as to what and how the city is attempting to be the best it can be.



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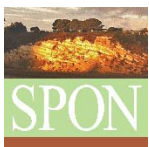
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To elaborate a bit more on the matter of being the best city we can be, we believe there is a broad range of possibilities in terms of public outreach and visioning. There is also a broad range of participation possible as the implementation and monitoring takes place. Much of the responsibility lies with the public itself and its motivation to do a good and responsible job. That is where SPON and other local organizations come in. We are of the belief that we and others did not do enough to engage fully in the final outcomes and implementation of the 2006 GPU and don't want that to happen again.

As an example, we were not paying enough attention subsequent to 2006 when some of the implementation took place. In 2010 there were changes made to the General Plan resulting in undesirable and controversial projects now. Two notable examples are the proposed Koll Center 15-story luxury condominium towers project and the 3-story office building now going up on Old Newport Blvd. which was allowed 1.0 FAR rather than the .5 in the 2006 General Plan. Other examples which many are trying to call attention to are the 3-story homes that seem to be out of scale and character with the neighborhoods they are in.

To begin the process of being the best participants we can be, in September of 2017 SPON began to educate as many as possible and draw attention to the need for enlightened and consistent participation in the GPU process and follow-up opportunities. SPON held forums and provided speakers to help us fully understand General Plans and what the best practices are for public engagement. Some of the attendees have become convinced that we need more attention to design guidelines and have begun to study how other unique cities have found solutions. Each city is different and a great deal of public pondering needs to go in to making the right choices for policies and implementation.



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With all that said, we believe that the consultant hired for the General Plan Update should be fully qualified with successful work experiences in General Plans – not just public outreach. Kearns and West seems qualified but their proposal, at least as submitted in writing, does not seem particularly innovative. It would seem that the appropriate action would be to revive the RFP with slight modifications and seek at least two other qualified firms for comparison purposes and a chance to explore the full array of services and methods that are available.

Once again, thank you all so much for giving your time to this important project.

Sincerely,

*Marko Popovich*

President

cc: **Steering Committee Members**

Nancy Gardner, Chair  
James Carlson  
Catherine O'Hara  
Ed Selich  
Debbie Stevens  
Larry Tucker  
Paul Watkins  
Mayor Diane Dixon, Ex Officio Member

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