

# MINUTES

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## SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LANCASTER PLANNING COMMISSION

October 27, 2008

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### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Vose called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### INVOCATION

Commissioner Burkey did the invocation.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

### ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Burkey, Ervin, Haycock and Jacobs, Vice Chairman Smith and Chairman Vose.

Absent: Commissioner Mahli.

Also present were the Deputy City Attorney (Joe Adams), Planning Director (Brian Ludicke), General Plan Project Manager (Dave Ledbetter), Associate Planner (Chuen Ng), City Engineer (Carlyle Workman), Traffic Engineer (Michelle Cantrell), Recording Secretary (Tess Epling), and an audience of 5 people.

### PURPOSE

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Chairman Vose opened the public hearing at 6:00 p.m. for the review and discussion of the City-wide General Plan Update, which tonight will continue discussion and recap of the General Plan Policy Document.

Brian Ludicke noted that the Commission has had the opportunity over the past two special meetings to review and discuss the long-term goals and objectives of the General Plan. He explained that staff wanted to ensure that the Commission has the opportunity to also review the subordinate policies and specific actions that provide FOR implementation of the goals and objectives to make sure that these actions are understood and the commissioners are comfortable with them. Brian noted that in the near future, the Commission would take up discussion of the

land use alternatives. From that point on, the commission will deal with how the map is created based upon the Policy Document. Brian indicated that he would like to make sure that staff also answers the commissioners' questions regarding the Policy Document.

Chairman Vose noted that, staff has encouraged the Commission to review the entire Policy Document and that for tonight, in addition to the Policy Document introduction, the Commission will review and discuss the policies and action programs for the Plan for Physical Development, Plan for Economic Development and Vitality, and Plan for Physical Mobility.

Referencing to the Page I-18, the last paragraph of the Policy Document introduction, Commissioner Jacobs noted that the proposed General Plan recommends that vacant infill property within the Urbanizing Area be developed before the outskirts of the City." He expressed concerns about how development will be encouraged. He wanted to know if this would tie the hands of City Council and developers and who decides what projects are carried out before infill is completed? Dave Ledbetter responded that the Urbanizing Area is simply the demarcation between urban residential and rural residential land uses. It does not prevent areas outside the Urbanizing area from being developed. Through land use surveys, Staff determined that the area within the Urbanizing Area contains enough vacant urban density land to accommodate the 2030 growth projections without the need to convert additional rural land for urban density uses. If in the future the City Council determines that additional land is needed for urban density growth, this could be considered through a General Plan amendment and zone change.

Commissioner Jacobs said he wanted to know who would define "need." He explained that he was concerned that a person could interpret the document any way they want. Chairman Vose asked Commissioner Jacobs if he was concerned that the language was restrictive. Commissioner Jacobs said that it does not allow for the market to take hold and allows somebody from the City to make the determination that we do not need any growth outside. Referring to the language of Specific Action 18.1.3(a), he stated that it seemed prohibitive to say "prohibit areas unless there is a demonstrated need". He would like to see the language toned down. Chairman Vose noted that if staff recommends denial of land use change request, it will have to come before City Council. He suggested modifying the word "prohibit" to "discourage".

Brian responded that ultimate need is determined by the City Council. However, it is important to note that this is the direction that we received from the community outreach effort. There was concern over creating a development pattern that is very scattered. From the City's standpoint, we would be concerned about infrastructure cost and other costs associated with that pattern. The intent is to state that there should be sufficient designated area to accommodate expected growth by 2030. It allows the City to predict long-term, where we could put investments in infrastructure, services and facilities. If somebody were to say that they want the City to consider a large outlying area for development, the City, based on General Plan policy, would need to debate that there is a need to do that. "Need" could take a number of different forms. It may be that that development provides some amenity level not provided by the current land use pattern. It has to be balanced against cost of services and economic impact on the City.

At one time in 1992, the City did adopt a plan that would have allowed urban density growth just about anywhere (between 110<sup>th</sup> Street East to 107<sup>th</sup> Street West), and it became apparent that

there were problems associated with that, such as cost of services and infrastructure. There was a General Plan revision five years later, and City Council pulled back the urban boundaries and said we are far better off to define an urban area. The City should ensure that the area has already invested in infrastructure and services, and that use of the land is optimized prior to a large outward movement.

Chairman Vose said that the document also reflects capitalization of infrastructure as opposed to stand alone infrastructure/improvements so other parts of the community cannot be burdened. Brian responded that it is another factor for consideration. Commissioner Jacobs clarified that he is not against infill, the City just has to look at factors related to infill. A big developer will not be encouraged to develop five acres here and another 10 acres there or smaller parcels versus 50 acre parcels in the outskirts of town. Commissioner Ervin inquired if the review is done on an annual basis. Brian responded that the City does a General Plan report annually but that a review can be done at any time. If one of the goals is infill, the City has to provide incentives and environment for that to happen. If that need could be met in an outlying area, the ability to meet that need internally becomes less or the incentive for it becomes less. It is a matter of how the City determines its land use patterns, and its growth best benefit its citizens.

Commissioner Ervin commented that it is important to fill open spaces within the City before expanding out. It is also important to pay attention to how we grow and where we grow. Chairman Vose said that he is not against developers paying for things that need to be done. He would rather that the City encourages discussion to solve these problems instead of just saying outright that it is prohibited. Commissioner Burkey pointed out that the word “unless” is present after the word “prohibited.” Chairman Vose inquired if it has been problematic as far as projects being proposed that would not necessarily fall within that language. Dave answered that there are several outstanding General Plan Amendment (primarily on the westside) that have not come to public hearing and they are all outside of the Urbanizing Area. Most of these requests, if approved, would convert rural residential land to urban residential densities. Chairman Vose stated that within this current policy, there are projects that have been proposed that are proceeding to a process and therefore, the commission will not be modifying anything that is a policy. Dave responded that the language of the noted specific action has been strengthened under the proposed General Plan but that it has been in place since the time of the 1997 General Plan. The General Plan amendments under consideration would be the first test of the policy.

Chairman Vose noted that there have been some written communications received from proponents of future projects. He requested staff to please take a look at those projects comparatively for further discussions. Brian clarified that the language in the General Plan mirrors the findings that is required for approval of a General Plan Amendment that City Council adopted a resolution laying out the requirements for approving a GPA. There has to be a demonstrated “need.” Staff will review to find out if that is from a City Council adopted resolution.

Commissioner Jacobs noted that the Plan for Physical Mobility (Specific Action 14.1.1(a)) references adoption of the Transportation Master Plan as a Priority 2 time frame, which should be initiated within 6 to 12 months of General Plan adoption. He wanted to know the timeframe staff is looking at as to when that will be done. He also inquired if it was the same for the Master Plan of Trails. Michelle Cantrell, City Traffic Engineer, answered that it is underway, a

consultant is on board and the schedule right now is March 2009. Brian stated that the Master Plan of Trails effort has not been initiated yet so it is separate effort to be undertaken in the future. Commissioner Jacobs inquired if it is appropriate to list dates as a priority and add some verbiage that if the funding is not there, the plan would have to be put off. Dave said that depending on available funding, the intent is to adopt the Master Plan of Trails. Brian added that another factor for consideration would be if the funding is available, move forward because the Master Plan takes a while to do, and influence conditions of approval. He suggested that the commissioners put forward their recommendations. However at this time, that effort has not been initiated by the City. Commissioner Burkey noted that communities like Santa Barbara have great bike trails and paths so it should be a priority. Vice Chair Smith inquired if the reason for non-implementation is economic, even though it has been in the plan since 1992, and if there has been procurement of funds pursued. Dave concurred and noted that a large part of such a system will be funded through grants and state funding sources. Brian said that the City is currently in the process of putting an application together for additional work on Amargosa Creek. State funding is being pursued.

In reference to Specific Action 10.2.2(b) which requires dedication of rights-of-way for new trail development consistent with the Master Plan of Trails, Chairman Vose asked if this would place a burden on the commission to provide conditions of approval consistent with the Master Plan. He clarified that it is not like the body could impose it as a condition of approval as part of a resolution, as what was done with water. Brian said that it could be difficult. Commissioner Jacobs said that he just would like to ask for an end date that the public could see a document and requested staff to research when the master plans could be initiated. Brian responded that the commission has the responsibility of reviewing recommendations for the various Master Plans. Staff could look at a reasonable time from date it was initiated that a plan could be in place or at least have it for review and recommendation.

On page I-27 regarding water resources and conservation, Commissioner Jacobs asked for clarification on "full allocation." Brian said that he did not think that AVEK has gotten a full allocation. For the type of growth envisioned by SCAG for the Antelope Valley, there has to be an additional source of water supply, in addition to conservation efforts made. Commissioner Ervin noted that the wording should definitely change to reflect various times that the City has less water.

On page II-11 Objective 3.2 (reduction of per capita water consumption), Chairman Vose said that consistency should be based on what City Council recently adopted. Brian stated that reduction of 1/3 of the per capita consumption was thought to be a realistic goal to 200 gallons/day. Commissioner Jacobs inquired if there was any concern for consistency in relation to the Antelope Valley as a whole. He was unclear as to where the amount of 200 gallons/day came from. Commissioner Ervin interjected that he had spoken to Palmdale representatives and they hoped to come down on the consumption level. This would hopefully open up a dialogue with Palmdale. Brian said that consistency is an objective, but the issue of reducing water use in current development is trickier than prospective reductions in new development.

Commissioner Jacobs inquired as to how it will be ensured that land use will not increase dependence on the ground water basin. Brian replied that there needs to be an ongoing dialogue between the City and water purveyors (LACWWD), and that the City is in discussions with them

now. Commissioner Jacobs inquired if it is the City's intent to say that it does not agree with the determination of the water purveyor. Brian clarified that for individual projects, the will serve letter is what the City will look at for the project to go forward. On a larger scale, the City has to be concerned that groundwater basin is properly managed. Adjudication procedures are underway. The will serve letter issuance will still satisfy the City but there should be a concern that the basin is not overdrafted.

Chairman Vose noted that the different commissions such as Architectural & Design, Section 8, Criminal Justice, etc., should be inserted into the Policy Document as it relates to proper sections so that there is identification of these various entities' participation in the process. Dave answered that this is a good suggestion and inserting these committees in specific actions where needed was discussed previously.

In addition to the review of the General "Plan for Physical Mobility, Chairman Vose asked if the commissioners will also review the recommendations on Master Plan of Transportation, to which Brian answered yes. Michelle responded that Master Plan of Transportation is underway and the targeted completion date is spring of 2009. Commissioner Haycock said that there was no mention of transportation going north to Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB) and no anticipation that people from California City or EAFB will come to the City for business opportunities. This should not be overlooked. Chairman Vose asked if this was an issue being addressed by the North County Transportation Coalition since the job base of EAFB is in the thousands. Michelle stated that she has gone to North County Transportation Coalition meetings and the conversations have been for travel to the south. Dave explained that studies done in the past show that the majority of working commuter population heads south, but EAFB is a very important part of the job base. Chairman Vose suggested infusing northern and eastern points of the county into the section.

Chairman Vose inquired if the policies and specific actions relating to the Congestion Management Plan (CMP) apply to proposed development under the CEQA process. Brian explained that there are certain roadway sections in the CMP and there are provisions to consider the effects of the projects on these. Chairman Vose inquired how that judgment could be made. Michelle answered that there are specific streets to be monitored that are indicated within the CMP, and that no city street are identified as necessary for monitoring. In some traffic studies for some developments, the City looks at arterial streets and state facilities impacted by a specific project. Brian added that under the CMP that exists, the only transportation facility that Lancaster affects is Highway 14. Within CEQA, there are specific circumstances in which the City has to address the effects of projects on highways.

Regarding street bicycle lanes and Master Plan for Trails, Chairman Vose noted that the commission reviewed a CUP project on 30<sup>th</sup> Street West and Avenue K where bicycle lanes are currently marked on the street but they are not considered bicycle lanes by the City and not maintained as such. Brian said that the intent is for the bicycle lanes to be put on secondary streets, over the long term. The City can maintain bike lanes in some circumstances on arterial streets, but for the most part, it is not the preferred location given the amount of traffic they carry. Chairman Vose asked if those areas will be identified once the Master Plan comes to effect. Michelle responded that the Transportation Master Plan will look at the types of streets most appropriate for bicycle lanes.

Vice Chair Smith asked for an explanation of alternate transportation mode as identified on page V-4, 2nd bullet point. Dave explained that bus service is not always plausible in some rural residential areas that do not have the population density to support transit use. The plan would be to offer alternatives such as providing vouchers or other similar systems to provide service for outlying areas. However, the General Plan does not identify the entity that would provide such services. Vice Chair Smith noted that she is unsure how feasible a voucher system would be.

Referencing page IV 4, Chairman Vose asked if it was incumbent upon the commission to identify opportunities to establish a major multi transportation hub that will provide connectivity on the land use map. Brian stated that land use patterns well help determine where such a location could be. A good example would be the Metrolink station in Palmdale where there are bus lines feeding into the Metrolink lines. Chairman Vose noted that no truck route was designated under commodities section. He surmised that the Transportation Master Plan would likely identify truck routes in industrial areas with connectivity to state highways Michelle responded that the Master Plan will take a look at whether the City needs to determine specific truck routes.

Chairman Vose asked if there is policy referencing the Fox Field Specific Plan area in the Plan for Physical Mobility. Dave responded that the Fox Field Specific Plan is addressed in the Plan for Economic Development. In reference to Goal 14, and Objective 14.1, Chairman Vose commented that it is important that the community understands that certain traffic flows entails delay during peak hours and that this objective reflects that. Brian acknowledged that it does recognize the reality that there are times of delay during those peak times.

Chairman Vose asked why Specific Action 14.1.1(a) has a Priority 2 time frame. Dave clarified that priority two indicates that a referenced program will commence within 6 to 12 months from the time of General Plan adoption. Chairman Vose observed that it appears that it should be Priority 1. Dave noted that at the time that the Specific Action was introduced, it was thought that the Transportation Master Plan would be adopted some time after the General Plan. Since this has changed, the priority could be adjusted.

Pertaining to Specific Action 14.1.1(e) regarding the establishment of an ongoing traffic monitoring program, Chairman Vose inquired if it is similar to what the City of Palmdale is doing and has been doing for a while. Michelle explained that the City does have video detection for majority of the intersections. City hopes to expand the monitoring program on intersections that can be monitored and fed back to Traffic Operation Center (TOC). Chairman Vose noticed that Specific Action 14.1.2(a) relates to ensuring that the Transportation Master Plan, Subdivision Ordinance, and Municipal Code conform and that this program is given a Priority 1. He is confused about the order of priorities. Brian clarified that it is listed that way because the first thing to be done after adoption of the General Plan is starting the review and revision of the development code of the City (including zoning code and subdivision ordinance).

Regarding Specific Action 14.1.4(a), coordinating traffic signals in major arterial systems, Commissioner Burkey noticed that it indicates that the program is implemented. Does that mean it is done? Michelle concurred, saying that it was completed during spring of this year and was fine tuned two months thereafter. Commissioner Burkey asked for the definition of major

corridors of City's arterial system. Michelle cited examples such as Avenue J, 10<sup>th</sup> St. West and Avenue K. Responding to further questions regarding signal timing, she noted that the signals are not in coordination during weekends. Currently, there are no plans to look at weekend timing.

In the Parking Facilities sub-section of the Plan for Physical Development, Chairman Vose noted the direction to reexamine parking requirements and commented that there must be an ongoing study to address these concerns. Brian said that as part of reworking of commercial and industrial zones, current parking requirements will be reevaluated. For Amargosa Creek Specific Plan, the City looked at shopping center parking requirements.

For Specific Action 14.1.2(d) regarding review and revision of rural street standards, Chairman Vose asked if the commission will address the issue of curb, gutter, and sidewalks being waived in the rural areas. Brian explained that one of the things that the City is looking at is whether there is overdevelopment in the streets in areas that are long term rural. There might not be a need for the same kind of pavement improvements that are required. There has to be a determination whether interim improvements can be done instead. Regarding Policy 14.1.4 (minimizing turning movements and curb parking), Chairman Vose asked if this will apply to all street sections or is it just in major arterials. Michelle responded that they are typically in arterial street sections where we want to move traffic.

Chairman Vose noted that Specific Action 14.2.2(a) identifies a separate Plan for Community Design. Dave explained that originally, the intent was to establish a Community Design Plan within the framework of the Policy Document. However, after further examination of the format of the Policy Document, staff decided that it was more practical and appropriate to address community design within the Plan for Physical Development by replacing the former Community Form sub-section with a new sub-section regarding community design. The reference to the separate plan for community design in Specific Action 14.2.2(a) is an oversight and will be corrected.

Pertaining to Specific Action 14.2.2(b), pertaining to requirement for street trees, Chairman Vose asked if consideration will be given to street trees that use lots of water and those that are drought tolerant. Brian said that he anticipates requirements for street trees to change but that the long term aesthetic effects on the community, shading, etc. should be considered.

Regarding Specific Action 14.2.4(a), Chairman Vose asked for an explanation of the High Desert Corridor. Dave replied that a former route is shown on the adopted land use map located at around 90th Street East and turning west at Avenue D along the border of EAFB but that this route is no longer current. Michelle stated that as currently planned, the High Desert Corridor would run west from Victorville to connect with Avenue P-8 through Palmdale to the Antelope Valley Freeway. She noted that the City of Lancaster is part of the joint powers involving Palmdale, San Bernardino, and Victorville, and that quarterly meetings are held regarding this. Michelle explained that the next step would be to acquire the right of way and the City's support of the current corridor.

Regarding Specific Action 14.2.2(a), Chairman Vose said that he was concerned about public safety because what this specific action tends to do is shove parking behind visual barriers

and buildings in industrial areas. His concern is particularly for the safety of employees. Dave replied that it is the intent of the language to design these facilities taking into consideration factors for police surveillance in order to address public safety issues of this nature.

Regarding Specific Action 14.3.2(c), Chairman Vose asked what needs to be revised in the development criteria in order to integrate parking facility layout and improve pedestrian access. Brian responded that as part of revision of the development code, pedestrian safety in parking lots should be given weight.

Regarding Specific Action 14.4.2(c), Chairman Vose asked for clarification of the intent of this specific action. Michelle replied that it is to provide for bus turn outs, shelters and pedestrian connectivity at bus stops. It would involve conducting a study of bus stops in the City and determining what improvements need to be done (sidewalk, ADA ramp improvements, etc.).

Regarding Specific Action 14.4.3(a), Chairman Vose asked about providing reasonable bicycle storage space for both patrons and employees. Brian said that it comes down to defining what we are looking for in terms of bicycle facilities. The City's current commercial code looks at alternative transportation, particularly people who walk and bike. There are some things that could be addressed better. The code has not been revised for 15 years. Dave added that this is also relates to the establishment of trail systems. Agencies who provide grants and financial resources want to see a connection between these facilities and places of employment and that places of employment have facilities to accommodate bikes.

Regarding Specific Action 14.5.1(a), Commissioner Haycock asked for an explanation of an inland port. Brian replied that it is a concept whereby distribution comes from a remote location rather than occurring from a port location. The intent is traffic decongestion. The creation of an inland port is one of the ways to grow the job base in outlying areas, including the Antelope Valley. If that occurs, we want to make sure that any type of truck transportation facilities are adequately dealt with. Chairman Vose commented that off street truck parking facilities, which is also indicated in the Policy Document as a new program, have to be addressed. Brian agreed that the City has not given enough thought to that issue.

Regarding Specific Action 14.6.1(a) pertaining to regional airports and encouraging regional air flights, Chairman Vose noted that it does not talk about subsidies or grants. Brian replied that what it envisions is that the City would provide assistance deemed appropriate to help develop air flight facilities.

Chairman Vose requested any public input on the Plan for Physical Mobility.

David Sinclair, resident of Lancaster, CA, said that in regard to the trails and the funding problem, an option not brought up is giving developers the option of increasing the usage of their land, increasing the floor area ratio, giving a density bonus to residential. If the City wants to have an aesthetically pleasing City, it should be considered.

Nicole Parson, Lancaster, CA resident, expressed general concerns about better ADA access, global warming, and xeriscaping. Brian commented that per state law, City's General Plan EIR has to address global climate change.



Virginia Stowe, resident of Lancaster, CA, would like to commend the community for considering trails and its vision to include bike lanes. She would like to see an increase in that because she has friends who bike from Lake Elizabeth that come through town.

Hearing no further public comment, the Planning Commission turned to the discussion of the policies and specific actions of the Plan for Economic Development. Regarding Specific Action 16.1.1(a) Chairman Vose noted that the Lancaster Economic Development/Redevelopment Strategic Plan addressed by the specific action has been adopted and that the commission members should have a copy of this plan. Commissioner Haycock inquired about the four pillars of Lancaster's economic development strategy. Brian said that it is outlined within the Strategic Plan and that staff will ensure that the commission members have a copy of this plan prior to the next special meeting.

Chairman Vose asked for an explanation on Specific Action 16.1.3(g), to encourage development of usable commercial uses. Brian replied that the intent of that specific action is to work to encourage newly developing residential areas to have commercial services available nearby to provide daily needs.

In relation to the reference on page VII-4, pertaining to achieving economic self-sufficiency, Commissioner Burkey asked if it is a vision to have the same number of jobs as working population. Brian responded that it is a long-term vision. The SCAG growth projections for the City show a worsening job-housing balance over time. With the transportation issues and energy costs, there are questions whether SCAG's population and job projections are accurate. It is important to note that it is clear that the intent of the General Plan is transitioning from a bedroom community to one that holds an adequate number of jobs locally.

Chairman Vose asked for clarification on the terms "community identity," "strong sense of place" and "creation of a clear choice coalition". Brian said that it is all tied to the City's promotion of its branding campaign. Brian indicated that staff can request Redevelopment to give a presentation if the commission is interested in this subject. Regarding Specific Action 16.2.1(e), Commissioner Burkey asked if there was a model for developing a regional distribution hub. Brian replied that a good example would be found in Dallas, Fort Worth. Regarding Policy 16.2.3, Chairman Vose asked for a definition of "finished site." Brian stated it is trying to find a similar spot where utilities and streets are in place and it is just a matter of building the facility. Commissioner Burkey inquired if there was a game plan to encourage specific kinds of businesses. Brian indicated that the Starwood Call Center is a good example, but suggested that Redevelopment could provide a better overview in this area. Regarding Policy 16.2.4, Commissioner Ervin inquired if there is information showing the results of a monitoring program that tracks the success in attracting businesses locally. Brian explained that if there are situations where the City has failed to attract a certain type of employer, the City revisits the factors that led to the choice of another location. There is a feedback process that evaluates this.

Regarding Specific Action 16.2.2(a), Vice Chair Smith asked for an explanation of what the Lancaster Incubator program is. Brian responded that it is a building designed to incubate or

grow start-up business. It allows assistance and access to resources that permits the business to advance to the next step.

Chairman Vose requested if there was any public input on Plan for Economic Development.

Nicole Parson, resident of Lancaster, CA, made general comments about small business entrepreneurship, non-profit organizations, and the need for an adequate workforce for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **COMMISSION AGENDA**

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None.

### **DIRECTOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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Next Special Planning Commission Meeting is Monday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 6:00 p.m.

### **PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR - NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

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None.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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Chairman Vose declared the meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m. to Monday, November 3, 2008, at 6:00 p.m., in the Planning Large Conference Room.

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JAMES D. VOSE, Chairman  
Lancaster Planning Commission

ATTEST:

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BRIAN S. LUDICKE, Planning Director  
City of Lancaster