

SANTA CLARA GENERAL PLAN

GENERAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE – MEETING #2 SUMMARY

Meeting Date: August 28, 2008

Location: Santa Clara City Hall

Attendees:

Steering Committee Members Present:

Joe Kornder, Co-Chair
Jamie McLeod, Co-Chair
Dixie Baus
Michele Beasley
David Delozier
Patricia Finnigan Biocini
Todd Fitch
Ray Hashimoto
Dixie Haus
Jerry Marsalli
Teresa O'Neill
Kevin Park
Amisha Patel
Alice Pivacek
Ed Richards
Peter Yoon

City Planning Staff:

Kevin Riley
Carol Anne Painter
Doug Handerson
Lindsay Speck
Gian Paolo Martire
Rick Gosalvez

Dyett & Bhatia, Consultants:

Rajeev Bhatia
Sarah Nurmela
Jean Eisberg

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Build upon community input from workshops and stakeholder interviews to brainstorm on housing and environmental topics.
- Provide an opportunity for all Steering Committee members to participate.

MEETING SUMMARY

This summary is organized by the meeting agenda and includes a description of the presentation from staff and consultants in bullet form. Comments provided by staff and co-chairs are attributed to these individuals; comments made by Steering Committee members or members of the public are not.

I. Welcome and Announcements (Chair)

Chair Joe Kornder opened the meeting and welcomed Steering Committee members. Steering Committee members then introduced one another to the group.

II. Meeting #1 Summary Approval (Chair)

Minutes from the first Steering Committee meeting were approved.

III. Discussion of Housing Topics (Committee)

Introduction: Summary of Housing in the General Plan

- Ms. Painter provided an overview of how housing will play a role in the General Plan, Housing Element, Environmental Impact Report, and Zoning Code. The Steering Committee is being asked to provide input about housing for each of these documents.

Results of Community Outreach and Regional Housing Needs/Trends

- Mr. Bhatia described the results of community outreach to date:
 - During the Housing Stakeholder meetings, participants expressed interest in promoting affordability, providing flexibility in regulations given the limited land supply, rethinking parking standards, addressing neighborhood resistance, supporting and expanding the City's housing programs, and improving public awareness about housing affordability and density issues.
 - During the community workshop on housing, participants expressed interest in adding residential development Downtown along with shops and restaurants, minimizing traffic impacts, ensuring adequate public services, and preserving neighborhood character.
- The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) identifies regional housing needs allocation (RHNA). Santa Clara's RHNA for the 2007-2014 planning period is 5,873 units (or sites available to accommodate this many units), with over half available at below market rates (BMR). Mr. Bhatia explained that the City built 25% fewer BMR units during the previous planning period (1999-2006) than identified in the current planning period, suggesting that it will be a challenge to meet the current RHNA allocation. The City Council ultimately determines whether or not to accept the RHNA allocation.

Activity: Appropriate Locations and Preferred Housing Types for New Development

- Mr. Bhatia explained two activities for the Steering Committee to complete: selecting appropriate locations for various residential densities and defining personal preferences for various residential densities and designs. He explained that these activities can help initiate conversations about future housing possibilities and preferences in Santa Clara. These activities were also completed at the Community Workshop on housing on August 4, 2008.

Activity Results

- Ms. Nurmela explained the results of each activity:
 - **Design and Density.** This exercise resulted in a preference for 10 unit/acre single family homes, but also support for 20 unit/acre housing, higher density housing at 45 units/acres and even some interest in up to 79 units/acre. The activity did not provide an option for a 0-7units/acre housing type, since these typologies are not being built in the region at this time.
 - **Location.** In this exercise, Steering Committee members indicated a preference for low-density homes in the southern half of the City. Medium-density housing

was preferred along El Camino Real and on Stevens Creek near Saratoga Avenue. Higher density development was preferred near the Station Area, Central Expressway, Lawrence Expressway near the Lawrence Station, and along the Tasman VTA line.

- Ms. Nurmela explained that the Steering Committee's results on these two activities were consistent with community members' preferences from the Community Workshop. There was, however, more support among Steering Committee members for housing along El Camino Real, compared with participants at the workshop.

Discussion: Critical Needs, Location, and Housing Types

A. Critical Housing Needs

Steering Committee members identified several critical housing needs, but diverged on how much growth the City should accept. The Committee acknowledged that Santa Clara is a job surplus community and discussed the need for housing in response to the large number of commuters coming into Santa Clara for work every day. Several Steering Committee members supported adding housing and affordable housing in Santa Clara in order to remain competitive in terms of employment.

A couple of Steering Committee members cited the aging population in Santa Clara and Statewide as the basis for the need for senior housing. This may mean smaller housing units, condos or mixed-use developments, near public transportation and services.

Other Steering Committee members described the importance of identifying what the City's critical needs are and then educating the community on those needs, how they can be met, and how the impacts can be addressed.

B. Location

Locations were identified as being appropriate for a variety of housing types along some of the City's major corridors, as well as in the Station Area and Downtown. Specific locations discussed included:

- Moonlight Shopping Center site for housing or mixed-use development
- Along El Camino Real, on underutilized strip mall sites and the Mervyn's site
- At the future BART Station Area, with high-rise development on the Coleman Avenue side and lower density near the University and Old Quad
- North of Bayshore for high-density development
- Downtown area for housing and mixed-use development
- Homestead Road for mixed-use development.

Steering Committee members expressed some concern about locating housing in existing industrial areas, such as along Lafayette Street, north of the Caltrain tracks. Likewise, Steering Committee members had mixed reactions to mixed-use development along El Camino Real. One member suggested that transit needed to be improved along this corridor before more housing should be constructed.

C. Impacts

Many Steering Committee members expressed concern about the impact of more housing on public services and amenities. Major concerns included transportation and traffic congestion, and the need for additional facilities, such as parks and open spaces, schools, libraries, infrastructure and utilities. Additionally, many Steering Committee members stated their preference for single-family homes and the preservation of existing neighborhoods; they were concerned that new housing would reduce the quality of life for current residents.

IV. Discussion of Environmental Issues (Committee)

Introduction: Result of Community Outreach

- Mr. Bhatia described the results of the environmental/sustainability input from the Community Workshop. Workshop participants supported increasing renewable energy production, public outreach and education, more alternative transportation options, and better management of the water supply (including conservation, quality, and reclamation).

Discussion Topics

A. Energy

Steering Committee members supported renewable energy technology. One Committee Member suggested that the City leverage SVP, as its municipal utility, to achieve renewable energy goals.

B. Air Quality and Traffic

Steering Committee members supported improvements in alternative transportation to reduce traffic congestion and air quality impacts. In particular, members suggested increased frequency of public transit routes and additional safety improvements for bicycles (e.g. separated barriers and more bike lanes).

C. Green Building

Committee members supported green building policies. However, at least one Committee member cautioned that City Departments need to be on board with the regulations and policies in order for implementation to be successful. Another Committee member recommended that the City retain flexibility in its policies to avoid the constraints of one particular accreditation organization (e.g. LEED).

D. Open Space, Creeks, and Trails

The Steering Committee generally desired more parks, open spaces, and trails to provide green space for new and existing development and connections between places. At least one Committee member recommended partnering with developers of non-residential projects and schools to jointly use facilities at different times of the day.

E. Noise

At least one Committee member recommended that the General Plan consider noise impacts, given Santa Clara's proximity to the airport.

V. Public Comments (Chair)

Co-Chair Kornder invited members of the public to share comments. These comments are summarized below:

- Examine history of what ABAG has projected in the past and see if its projections have been accurate to inform our future projections.
- By constraining the choices in the density exercise, the output is controlled. Buses are not fixed transit stations; Santa Clara seems to be ignoring ABAG's directive about planning in these areas. Transportation needs to be designed first, then the housing can be built.
- Development needs to address how it affects the quality of life. Food can be grown in backyards if there is space to do so. Look at the cause and effect of development decisions.
- Workers who are commuting to Santa Clara are living further distances so that they can live in single-family homes. They will not move to Santa Clara to live in an apartment.
- People love Santa Clara's hometown feel. People who live in high-density buildings do not care about schools and parks, and cannot grow their own food. Santa Clara needs to be sustainable for everyone. Silicon Valley Power could put solar panels on school roofs. Children are our future and the City should be created for them.
- There is an appeal for high-density housing: it adds below-market rate housing and gives more money to developers. The problem is the traffic impacts. There is no urban core; the City grew with the automobile.
- This dialogue, the time and efforts of the staff and Steering Committee is appreciated.
- It takes a lot more than homes to build a city. There needs to be an understanding as to where the people and the jobs are. Transportation, infrastructure, schools and parks must be considered in order to look at the City as a whole.

VI. Conclusion and Next Steps (Kevin Riley)

- Mr. Riley announced several upcoming General Plan and EIR meetings:
 - Joint Meeting of Planning Commission and City Council (9/10, 7:00-9:00 pm)
 - EIR Scoping Meeting (9/17, 6:00 pm)
 - October Workshop on Planning Alternatives (10/27, 6:00-8:00 pm)
 - Steering Committee Meeting (11/5, 5:30-7:30 pm)
 - Steering Committee Meeting (12/11, 5:30-7:30 pm)

VII. Adjournment (Chair)

NEXT STEPS

The next Steering Committee Meeting on Land Use Alternatives will be held on Thursday, November 5, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Santa Clara City Hall Council Chambers.