

## **SANTA CLARA GENERAL PLAN**

### **GENERAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE – MEETING SUMMARY**

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Meeting Date: May 6, 2009

Location: Santa Clara City Hall

Attendees:

**Steering Committee Members Present:**

Joe Kornder, Co-Chair  
Jamie McLeod, Co-Chair  
Tom Banholzer  
Dixie Baus  
Michele Beasley  
Ian Champeny  
David Delozier  
Patricia Finnigan Biocini  
Ray Hashimoto  
Joe Head  
Frank Kadlecek  
Jerry Marsalli  
Teresa O'Neill  
Kevin Park  
Andy Ratermann  
Ed Richards  
Peter Yoon

**City Staff:**

Kevin Riley  
Carol Anne Painter  
Doug Handerson  
Julie Moloney

**Dyett & Bhatia, Consultants:**

Rajeev Bhatia  
Sarah Nurmela  
Jean Eisberg

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### **MEETING OBJECTIVES**

- Review and discuss the Draft Annotated General Plan Outline
- Provide Committee members an opportunity to present their goals for the City's future.
- Provide input and direction on the Progressive General Plan framework

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

#### **I. Introduction and Agenda (Co-Chair Kornder)**

Co-Chair Kornder welcomed Committee members and the public to the meeting and briefly described the meeting agenda.

#### **II. Letters to the Future Children of the City**

Co-Chair McLeod invited Committee members to share their visions for the community of children in 2035. The most common themes centered around **quality of life, diversity, balance of uses, a thriving economy, environmental quality, and sustainability**. An expanded list of themes is categorized and listed below:

### *Community Character*

- High quality of life
- Small town values, but with diversity and flexibility for growth
- Understanding the history and heritage of the City, from orchards to high-tech
- Forward-thinking and innovative while respecting the past
- Preservation of the unique character of the City—emphasis on open space and neighborhoods
- Ability to live near where you work
- Balance between neighborhoods and employment uses
- Accountability
- Safe and clean city
- Frugality and determining what works and what does not work
- Community involvement, understanding, and working together

### *Human Needs*

- Diversity in people: cultures, ages, ability, income
- Intergenerational communities
- Satisfaction of human needs and mental balance
- Privacy
- Safety and security
- Freedom
- Health
- Happiness
- Equal opportunities
- Encouraging longevity in the community
- Expanded senior services and access to local retail and services
- Good academics
- High-quality school, libraries, and other public facilities
- Pride in Santa Clara, a desire to raise children here

### *Vibrant Places*

- High-quality urban design and standards
- Allow active lifestyles
- Spaces and accessibility for seniors
- Ability to interact within neighborhoods
- Bustling public realm, scaled to the pedestrian

- A Downtown that attracts small businesses and provides a space for community interaction, with farmers markets, pedestrian paseos, cafes and public art
- Gathering places throughout the City.
- Downtown with a mix of retail, entertainment, and residential uses
- An identifiable Downtown
- Improved El Camino Real
- Spaces that promote a healthy lifestyle

#### *Housing and Neighborhoods*

- Affordable housing with convenient access to basic resources like parks, retail and public facilities
- Quality housing for all community members, adaptive to changing technology and demographics
- Adjacency of affordable housing with jobs
- Protection of residential neighborhoods
- Distinctive and thriving neighborhoods
- Walkable neighborhoods with a mix of uses around public transit
- Housing that can accommodate intergenerational population, staying in place
- Medium- and high-density housing
- Variety of housing types and ranges of affordability
- Separation between residential and industrial uses

#### *Employment and Business Development*

- Balance between non-residential and residential development to preserve quality of services
- New job opportunities and incentives for business and industrial development
- Strong economic and financial base enabling public facilities, including schools and libraries
- Low utility rates to maintain business presence
- Diversity in industries
- Encouraging sustainable businesses
- Flexibility to accommodate changing industries and unknown innovations
- Emphasis on small businesses, local hiring, and a varied business community

#### *Transportation and Mobility*

- Connectivity through trails and pathways
- Availability of alternative transportation
- Reduction in commute times and greenhouse gas emissions

- Safe streets
- Complete streets that accommodate all modes
- Bike- and pedestrian-friendly streets with more bike lanes and secure bike parking/bike parking lots
- Viable mass transit
- Streets designed for people not cars
- Everything scaled to the pedestrian

#### *Environment*

- Preservation and equal distribution of open spaces and beautiful natural resources
- Local community gardens and greenhouses to support urban farming and community socialization
- Access to fresh healthy foods
- More landscaping and open space in all new developments
- Native planting throughout the City
- Restoration of riparian corridors for wildlife and habitat restoration, and trailways
- Upgrade Central Park

#### *Sustainability*

- Recognized and prepared for climate change
- Less energy consumption, air quality pollution, and vehicle travel
- Eco-friendly developments that produce their own power
- A City that accommodates its own growth and housing demand
- Aggressive greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals
- Technology to reduce energy use overall and expand renewable energy sources
- A place that you can improve on in the future
- Conservation of resources, clean water
- Education on sustainable solutions for the community

### **III. Explanation of Planning Process (Kevin Riley)**

Mr. Riley described the General Plan process: staff and consultants synthesize input from community workshops, surveys, public comments, and Steering Committee meetings, as well as technical analyses and contributions from outside agencies to draft the General Plan. The Committee will be responsible for reviewing the draft General Plan and ensuring that it reflects the City vision. The Plan will then be submitted to the Planning Commission and City Council for review.

#### **IV. Draft Progressive General Plan Outline Overview (Carol Anne Painter)**

Ms. Painter introduced each section of the draft General Plan outline and invited feedback from the Committee on the format and content of the outline.

##### *Plan Organization, Requirements and Citizens Guide Discussion*

The Citizen's Guide represents an executive summary of the Plan, providing a convenient abridged version of the major themes and components of the Plan.

- The Committee generally agreed with the concept of the Citizen's Guide, but recommended that the section be renamed to the "Community Guide..."
- The public participation process should be included as an essential component of the development of the Plan.
- Consistent numbering between the Community Guide and the main body of the Plan should be used for easy referencing.
- An index should be incorporated, in addition to the glossary of definitions (including abbreviations and acronyms) in the Appendix.

##### *Major Strategies and Special Focus Areas Discussion*

The Major Strategies represent the vision statements of the Plan that have emerged during public outreach activities. Special Focus Areas represent places in the City that have particular challenges or needs that require specific policies or measures based on their location. Proposed areas include: North of Bayshore; between Bayshore and Caltrain; El Camino Real; Stevens Creek Boulevard; and the Santa Clara Station Area.

- Committee members recommended splitting up the "North of Bayshore" area into two or three categories, distinguishing between industrial areas, existing and proposed residential areas, and entertainment zones.
- Major Strategy #2 should capture the needs of new mixed-use and higher density residential neighborhoods, not just single family neighborhoods.
- The definition of sustainability in Major Strategy #3 should acknowledge the need for housing in Santa Clara to locally address global climate change. There was a recommendation to separate this statement into two strategies to capture the global and local aspects of sustainability, placing the emphasis on infill in another strategy. Suggested elaborations included addressing greenhouse gas reduction, improving transit, connections to sustainable food industry, and promoting sustainability for existing uses, like industrial development.
- Major Strategy #5 should capture the end goal of economic vitality, which may be the assurance of public facilities and services for the community. There was a recommendation to amend this strategy to identify focus areas as areas of change that may require specific policies to meet goals. A separate strategy for community vitality was suggested to address neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.
- Major Strategy #6 seems to emphasize public fiscal health.
- Flexibility should be included to allow technologies and new businesses that may emerge over time.
- There is a need to push beyond strategies to define overall goals.

### *Discretionary Use and Transition Zone Policies Discussion*

Discretionary use policies will allow greater flexibility to expand opportunities on sites with particular needs, such as historic sites (e.g. allowing alternative uses). Transition zones policies will address land use compatibility (e.g. between single-family and multi-family homes or buildings of varying heights or uses).

- There was a recommendation to define Historic Preservation resources using the age of the structure or other reasonable criteria, rather than streets/geographic areas.
- Consider an Industrial to Residential (ITR) classification as used in other cities to preserve industrial uses for a period of time and manage the transition to residential use. In tandem, consider a residential to industrial conversion, if appropriate. There was a concern for protection of businesses where residential uses are introduced as conflicts can arise that stymie business growth and security.
- Regarding the phasing of the Plan, the Committee requested a method by which decision makers could manage developer requests or uses not yet in place according to the Preferred Progressive Plan (e.g. classified as industrial today, but residential in 15 years).
- Applicable “rules” of transition zones/policies for sites, especially those that allow for a change in use (from industrial to residential for example) should be understandable and representative of actual development potential that is acceptable to both the City and surrounding community.

### *Appendices, Implementation, and Zoning Code Update Discussion*

Appendices will include supportive information, including the Sustainable Community Plan, the Housing Element, documentation of compliance with State law, a glossary of definitions, and index.

*Note: this agenda item—a review of the annotated outline—will be continued to the next meeting on May 18, 2009.*

### **V. Update on Parking Lot Issues (Kevin Riley)**

This agenda item will be discussed at the next meeting.

### **VI. Recap of Open House and Next Steps (Kevin Riley)**

Mr. Riley provided a brief summary of the open house. A more detailed summary of the meeting is provided in the meeting packet.

### **VII. Public Comments**

Co-Chair Kornder invited members of the public to share comments:

- Consider a new category for office/industry that responds to innovation and changing business types. A mixed-use industrial and retail project is possible.
- Consider what makes a downtown. It’s not just about shopping and housing. It’s an economic, spiritual and cultural center; the anchor of a community where annual events are held. It should have a history and be the focus of historic preservation.

It should be rough around the edges. It should be an attraction for tourists and conventioners. It should have an ice cream store and the city's main post office. There seems to be more evidence of this type of downtown around Warburton than around Franklin Mall.

- Encourage policies to support public health, including quality of life, safety, walkability and biking, parks, and access to fresh foods. Continue to explore ways to ensure a healthy Santa Clara for all people of all different demographics such as:
  - Wide and safe sidewalks and bicycle lanes
  - Grocery stores and access to fresh foods
  - Expanded park space and recreation programs
  - Safe and accessible places for seniors and young people to walk

### **VIII. Adjournment**

#### **NEXT STEPS**

The next Steering Committee Meeting will be held on Monday, May 18, 2009, 5:30-7:30pm at the Santa Clara Senior Center in order to complete the agenda items from the May 6, 2009 meeting.