

SANTA CLARA GENERAL PLAN

GENERAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE – MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Date: May 18, 2009

Location: Santa Clara Senior Center

Attendees:

Steering Committee Members Present:

Joe Kornder, Co-Chair
Jamie McLeod, Co-Chair
Michele Beasley
Patricia Finnigan Biocini
Ray Hashimoto
Joe Head
Frank Kadlecek
Jerry Marsalli
Kevin Park
Alice Pivacek
Andy Ratermann
Ed Richards
Dave Tobkin (Substitute)
Peter Yoon

City Staff:

Kevin Riley
Carol Anne Painter
Doug Handerson
Julie Moloney
Gian Martire
Alexander Abbe

Dyett & Bhatia, Consultants:

Sarah Nurmela
Jean Eisberg

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Continue review and discussion of the Draft Annotated General Plan Outline
- Provide input and direction on the Progressive General Plan framework

MEETING SUMMARY

I. Welcome and Announcements (Co-Chair)

Co-Chair McLeod welcomed Committee members and the public to the meeting. Co-Chair Kornder read comments from absent Steering Committee member, Teresa O'Neil, recommending that the Plan add the Lawrence Station area, Great America Parkway, Bowers Avenue, and Tasman Drive to the focus areas.

Staff summarized the discussion from the prior Committee meeting held on May 6, 2009:

- Sharing of “Letters to the Future Children of Santa Clara;” *Individual Committee members will be contacted about the potential to use quotes from these letters in the General Plan.*
- Discussion of the General Plan outline, including:
 - Overall organization and Community Guide
 - Major Strategies

- Discretionary use policies and transition zone policies
- Historic resources, environment and public services
- Appendices organization

A copy of the meeting summary was provided in the May 18, 2009 agenda packet and made available on the General Plan website (www.santaclaragp.com).

II. Continue Discussion on Draft Progressive General Plan Outline Overview: Land Use Classifications (Carol Anne Painter)

Ms. Painter introduced the remaining sections of the draft General Plan outline and invited feedback from the Committee on the format and content of the overall outline. She stated that staff and consultants are revising the Major Strategies based on the Committee's feedback from the May 6th meeting.

Ms. Painter then reviewed the proposed transportation classification components, indicating that specific designations had not been finalized. New classifications would include multimodal travel, including bicycle, transit, and pedestrian facilities.

The proposed land use classifications are based on a "nesting" concept that allows uses under current General Plan designations to continue under the new General Plan designations in order to minimize the need for General Plan amendments for individual properties. Details for development standards and policies for each land use designation will be developed in the coming months following input on the proposed "nesting" concept from the Steering Committee, Planning Commission, and City Council. The land use categories presented by Ms. Painter are briefly described below, with Committee comments and discussion in the bulleted lists.

Residential

The residential classification system reduces the current General Plan designations from five to four categories and reflects typical building construction types to create more realistic categories and density assumptions.

- The residential densities reflect existing housing in the City. Actual population densities are determined separately and assume a citywide average of 2.6 persons per household, currently, with an estimated projection of 2.5 persons per household for future development through 2035.
- Under the proposed classification system, High-Density Residential has a maximum density limit of 50 units per acre (whereas there is no upper limit under the current General Plan). This standard is intended to promote compatibility with adjacent uses. There may be opportunities for higher densities and heights within focus areas (see "Focus Areas" section below).
- Very-Low and Low-Density categories reflect existing neighborhoods only; no new large-scale development is anticipated for these use classifications.
- Prerequisites for infrastructure and public facilities, as well as the progressive plan phase must be met before anticipated or proposed development in certain areas may proceed. City staff is in the process of modeling the anticipated buildout of the General Plan phases in order to develop the prerequisites. The prerequisites will be

designed in order to provide checks and balances to allow flexibility, ensure appropriate services/infrastructure for development and require assessment of the phasing strategy at periodic intervals.

Commercial

The proposed commercial designations consolidate six categories under the current Plan into three simplified categories. Development intensity is calculated using Floor-Area-Ratio, or FAR, which is the ratio of gross building floor area to the gross land area of the site. Parking structures are calculated separately from building floor-area ratios.

Mixed-Use

The mixed-use designations essentially combine various residential densities with specific commercial intensities. Proposals would require minimum and maximum amounts of commercial development to ensure a mix of uses, unless exempted from this requirement in a focus area.

Industrial

The four industrial categories are designed to protect existing and future industrial uses by maintaining intensity limits.

- As an incentive to reduce traffic, support oriented commercial uses for employment centers (e.g. lunch establishments) should be allowed within the industrial districts without counting toward the maximum FAR.

Public/Quasi Public

Public uses (e.g. schools, City facilities, etc.) will be consolidated into a single category and be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. These uses may be addressed by a discretionary alternative use policy or PD zoning. The staff work on these ideas is still underway. Performance standards, such as intensity of use or hours of operation, could depend on the surrounding land use context. The appropriate land use category for places of assembly has yet to be determined.

Parks and Open Space

Parks, recreation and open space are also proposed to be consolidated into a single category, which is being developed. Facilities within these designations would likely be treated similarly to Public/Quasi Public uses.

Focus Areas

Focus areas are predominately proposed to be designed as overlay districts that address unique location-specific (e.g. the Santa Clara Station Area). These overlays would include special policies and development standards tailored for the area. These areas would likely have an underlying land use designation from the standard set of classifications in conjunction with the appropriate flexibility or constraint associated with the overlay district.

- Historic Resources could be identified on a case-by-case basis, with the primary intent to preserve the resource and to ensure neighborhood compatibility. The actual land use designation could be a secondary consideration. Historic sites could be marked on a map or listed in an appendix.

- The addition of an entertainment focus area in the northwest portion of the City the Lawrence Station area, and the Bowers Avenue/Great America Parkway/Tasman Drive corridors were all suggested as possible focus areas.
- Heights above five stories may be acceptable within a focus area (i.e. around transit stations), but should not be allowed under the standard classifications.
- Higher densities at existing transit stations, such as Lawrence Station, were suggested.

Other Staff and Committee Comments and Discussion

- Existing uses will be able to continue under new General Plan designations. For an estimated 90% of properties in the City, the proposed new land use designation is consistent with the current designation. On the remaining 10% of sites, owners will be notified of the potential land use change and asked for feedback. City staff will ensure that property owners have adequate time to respond to proposed changes.
- An analysis of uses citywide and their potential fiscal effects was suggested. This could include the ratio of the various land use categories.
- The amount of residential land is consistent with the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) population projections. It was recommended that the assumptions for the General Plan projections be discussed at a future meeting.
- The Committee questioned whether or not the proposed residential densities were sufficient to support proposed destination areas in the Plan like Downtown.
- Expansion of the City's traffic impact fee program to including residential projects was suggested.
- Developing a Plan that would minimize the use of variances and exceptions was encouraged.
- There was some concern that access and support of transit was not adequately emphasized in the land use classifications and that transit availability and concurrent development should be stressed in the policies.

III. Update on Parking Lot Issues (Kevin Riley)

Outside Agency and Other Comments

City staff met with 17 public agencies and community groups to present the Progressive Plan and solicit input. A summary of comments was provided in the May 6th Steering Committee meeting packet and is available on the project website (www.santaclaragp.com).

Parking Lot Comments

Mr. Riley described the "parking lot" topics that have been brought up during Steering Committee meetings and other community outreach activities to date. These issues will be discussed at subsequent Steering Committee meetings and will be tracked and summarized accordingly. See the "Next Steps" section below for the proposed schedule.

IV. Public Comments

Co-Chair McLeod invited members of the public to share comments. Staff replies are shown in *italics*.

- Promote public transit and encourage home-based businesses and telecommuting policies to reduce vehicle miles traveled. *These policies can be included in the Transportation section of the General Plan.*
- Consider a form-based zoning code that is driven by how people use space, rather than by development standards. *Staff is investigating a combination of form-based and traditional zoning concepts.*
- Charging for parking downtown will drive business away from Santa Clara. *The City can regulate the supply of parking, but private owners typically determine the price of parking.*
- Allow higher building heights in order to accommodate growth and to support commercial businesses. *Heights and higher densities will be evaluated within focus areas.*
- Continue to provide meeting summaries and documents on the General Plan update project website.

V. Adjournment

NEXT STEPS

Staff will work on identifying three to four additional meeting to cover the topics identified and the Committee. These meetings will be held between July and October. Dates will be announced via email to Steering Committee members and through the General Plan update website.