

SANTA CLARA GENERAL PLAN

GENERAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE – MEETING #1 SUMMARY

Meeting Date: July 10, 2008

Location: Santa Clara City Hall

Attendees:

Steering Committee Members Present:

Joe Kornder, Co-Chair
Jamie McLeod, Co-Chair
Tom Banholzer
Dixie Baus
Michele Beasley
Brian Brennan
David Delozier
Todd Fitch
Ray Hashimoto
Joe Head
Jerry Marsalli
Teresa O'Neill
Kevin Park
Alice Pivacek
Andy Ratermann
Ed Richards
Peter Yoon

City Planning Staff:

Kevin Riley
Carol Anne Painter
Doug Handerson
Zaheen Chowdhury

Dyett & Bhatia, Consultants:

Rajeev Bhatia
Sarah Nurmela
Jean Eisberg

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Complete initial organization and introductory tasks.
- Build upon community input from workshops and stakeholder interviews to brainstorm on issues and vision for the future of the City of Santa Clara.
- 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 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 (Co-Chair)

City Councilmember and Co-Chair Jamie McLeod opened the meeting and welcomed Steering Committee members. This was followed by self introduction of the General Plan team (City staff and consultants) and Steering Committee members.

II. Introductions of Consulting Team and Staff (Kevin Riley)

Mr. Riley provided an overview of the role of the Steering Committee and history of general plans in the State and City:

Steering Committee Selection Process

- Four at-large residents were ultimately selected to serve on the Steering Committee.

Role of Steering Committee

- The Steering Committee is being asked to advise the City Council on how to proceed with the General Plan. The City Council is the ultimate policymaking body.
- The Steering Committee is made up of a broad spectrum of members. Members are invited to represent their individual interests and activities, but also encouraged to be broad-minded and think about the interests of the City as a whole.

General Plans in State of California

- The State has a history of supporting planning through planning commissions, planning laws, and general plan requirements.

City of Santa Clara General Plan

- The City last completed a comprehensive General Plan Update in 1992.
- The Housing Element is updated every five years and will be part of the Steering Committee's efforts.

III. General Plan Update (Rajeev Bhatia)

Mr. Bhatia gave an overview of the General Plan Update's objectives, process, and schedule. He also described the public participation program and the draft ground rules for the Steering Committee:

General Plan Update Requirements

- A general plan must be comprehensive, internally consistent, long-range, and realistic. It must address the full range of planning issues.
- A general plan is composed of various elements, required and optional.
- Updating the Plan will include: reconnaissance and visioning; identification of opportunities and constraints; alternatives analysis; selection of a preferred plan; preparation of an EIR; and, an update of the Zoning Code.
- The General Plan Update process and the Steering Committee's effort will be completed in two years.

Public Participation Program

- The General Plan Update process includes an extensive public outreach program. Stakeholder interviews and the first set of community workshops have already been held. A newsletter has been sent to every residence.
- Steering Committee Members and community members are encouraged to sign up for email alerts on the project website: www.santaclaragp.com.

Proposed Schedule of Steering Committee Meetings

- City staff will work with Steering Committee members to coordinate a schedule of meetings dates by the next meeting.
- A Steering Committee Member requested as much advanced notice for meeting times and dates as possible.

Draft Ground Rules

- The Steering Committee accepted the Draft Ground Rules which support the General Plan Update as a consensus building process. The process should be collaborative and inclusive of all participants. For any issues with differing opinions, the Committee can report the alternatives to the City Council for consideration.
- Co-Chair McLeod indicated that it is essential that all voices are heard. Steering Committee members were encouraged to speak up, even if they are the only member with a particular opinion.
- City staff requested that Steering Committee members send any emails to Doug Handerson at dhanderson@santaclara.gov, for distribution to all members. This will ensure that everyone has access to the same information.
- Ms. Painter stated that Steering Committee meetings are not covered by the Brown Act, but that the City will follow Robert's Rules. She confirmed that the public is welcome at all Steering Committee meetings. Co-Chair McLeod indicated that 15 minutes were set aside for public comments on the meeting agenda.

IV. Results of Initial Outreach—Key Themes (Rajeev Bhatia)

Mr. Bhatia described key findings from the completed public outreach activities. The Stakeholder Interview Report was provided in the Steering Committee meeting packet and is available on the website. A summary of the first community workshops was also provided in the agenda packet; a completed report will be available by the next Steering Committee Meeting.

Stakeholder Interviews

- In general, the 34 stakeholders interviewed identified the following priorities:
 - Revitalize the Downtown and El Camino Real corridor,
 - Focus housing around transit areas,
 - Maintain the diverse fabric of industrial and business uses,
 - Allow intensification of employment areas,
 - Improve alternative transportation options,
 - Ensure a high level of public services, and
 - Enhance sustainability.

Community Workshops

- Approximately 130 people attended the two community workshops held on June 21st and June 23rd. Participants expressed a desire to:
 - Expand the public transportation network,
 - Revitalize the Downtown with housing and retail,
 - Consider housing north of 101,
 - Improve older business and the El Camino Real corridor,
 - Preserve existing neighborhoods,
 - Create neighborhood commercial centers near existing residences.

Other Input (Website, Correspondence, etc.)

- Based on the approximately 20 comments received, many of the same issues and suggestions expressed during the workshops and stakeholder interviews were reiterated.

V. Brainstorm on General Plan Vision (Committee)

Co-Chair McLeod led the Steering Committee members through a brainstorm of key issues, ensuring that each member had an opportunity to speak. She first asked if there were any additional issues to consider. One Steering Committee member requested adding “residential” as a topic. City staff responded that housing will be the focus of the next Steering Committee meeting.

(Note: Unless otherwise noted, the following discussion points are attributed to Steering Committee members.)

A. City Character and Identity

Several Steering Committee members highlighted the importance of the City’s small town feel as a defining element of the City’s identity. Another member acknowledged the City’s progressive policies and business, suggesting the City retain the diversity of neighborhoods and uses in the future. A dichotomy for Santa Clara’s identity as a small town and as a high-tech magnet was noted along with the challenge of how to blend these two identities. Several Steering Committee members also identified areas of the City for future improvement, including a Downtown center and walkable neighborhoods that provide safe routes for children and access to neighborhood retail services.

B. Neighborhoods and Historic Preservation

Steering Committee members acknowledged that each neighborhood has a unique character. One Steering Committee member suggested that understanding the character of each neighborhood can be used as a foundation in the General Plan Update. Steering Committee members supported the maintenance of the well-known historic areas, such as the Old Quad, as well as lesser known neighborhoods, such as Maywood. In general, Steering Committee members asked that the General Plan Update respect existing uses, particularly single-family neighborhoods, and ensure that new residential development—which will likely be built at higher densities—be compatible. One Steering Committee member suggested consideration of the impacts that future changes in technology, family types, and employment patterns could have on development trends (e.g. telecommuting, dual-income families).

C. Land Use and Mix (Industrial, Office, Retail, Mixed Use, etc.)

Several Steering Committee members identified the separation of residential and industrial uses as a characteristic of Santa Clara. One member suggested a discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of this separation, to determine whether this pattern should continue, and the implications of change to this pattern. Steering Committee members expressed concern about potential conflicts between different land uses, particularly in the City’s business and industrial core area. One Steering Committee member asked other members to consider how the General Plan Update could provide flexibility to accommodate future use patterns. In general, Steering Committee members expressed support for the City’s auto sales uses along Stevens Creek Boulevard, recognizing their contribution to the City’s General Fund. On the other hand, several members supported improvements along El Camino Real to both its appearance and its retail offerings. Steering Committee members expressed some caution about prioritizing mixed-use development along this corridor, suggesting that the Committee have further discussions about appropriate typologies and locations for such development.

D. Energy and Sustainability

Steering Committee members discussed the possibility of solar energy production on individual residences, for neighborhoods, and on commercial buildings, parking lots, or open spaces.

E. Parks and Public Facilities

Since the City does not have the amount of open space that it used to, one member proposed that the City be more creative. Examples included continuing the School District and City partnership in sharing facilities and parks. The City should consider the impacts of new development on existing parks and encourage developers to build parks or contribute to an in-lieu fund as part of new development projects. The Steering Committee member encouraged the rest of the Committee to consider the types of open spaces and activities the community will want 20 to 30 years in the future.

F. Transportation and Traffic

Steering Committee members generally felt that alternative transportation options needed to be improved in the City, but differed on how much parking should be provided in the mean time to accommodate existing and projected car use. At least two Steering Committee members suggested that the Committee address transportation in conjunction with land use during the General Plan Update process.

In closing, Co-Chair McLeod indicated that the Steering Committee has an opportunity to take a step back and consider what *can* be in the City.

VI. Public Comments (Chair)

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

- Density proposed near Kiely and Homestead would result in 23,000 persons/square mile. This creates negative air quality impacts. Density needs to be dispersed across other areas.
- The project EIRs show no traffic or school impacts. Better, more accurate EIR documents are needed. In addition, impact fees should be applied to all new development, not just residential development.
- In considering how development should proceed in the future, the Steering Committee should consider: What are we doing? Why are we doing it? Is there a better way? This test should be applied to the conversion of industrial land; the appropriate location and design of high-density housing; the maintenance of affordable housing in existing apartment buildings; solar energy production; and the provision of major tax revenue sources, such as the auto dealers on Stevens Creek Boulevard. The City should also coordinate with Caltrans and California Highway Patrol who are responsible for El Camino Real and the county expressways, respectively.
- Alternative transportation options should be explored to accommodate future growth projections.

VII. Conclusion and Next Steps (Kevin Riley)

- City staff requested that Steering Committee members email any comments to Doug Handerson or Carol Anne Painter, who will compile and send out in

advance of the next meeting. If Steering Committee members expect to miss a meeting, they may also email comments to City staff.

- There are several upcoming events:
 - Housing Stakeholder meetings
 - EIR (8/4, 6pm) and Housing Element (8/4, 7pm) Workshops
 - Next Steering Committee Meeting: August 28, 5:30-7:30pm
- In response to a Steering Committee member request, City staff/consultant will post meeting summaries onto the website.
- A straw poll indicated that Wednesday and Thursdays may be good nights for Steering Committee Meetings. City staff will coordinate meeting dates with Steering Committee members via email.
- Co-Chair Kornder will facilitate the next meeting and will be asking each Steering Committee member to introduce his or her neighbor at the table.

VIII. Adjournment (Chair)

NEXT STEPS

The next Steering Committee Meeting on the Housing Element and Environmental Impact Report will be held on Thursday, August 28, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Santa Clara City Hall Council Chambers.