

SANTA CLARA GENERAL PLAN

GENERAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE – MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting Date: September 2, 2009

Location: Santa Clara City Hall

Attendees:

Steering Committee Members Present:

Joe Kornder, Co-Chair
Jamie McLeod, Co-Chair
Thomas Banholzer
Patricia Finnigan Biocini
Michele Beasley
David Dolizier
Ian Champeny
Ray Hashimoto
Jerry Marsalli
Teresa O'Neill
Kevin Park
Alice Pivacek
Andy Ratermann
Ed Richards
Peter Yoon

City Staff:

Kevin Riley
Carol Anne Painter
Julie Moloney
Lindsay Speck

Dyett & Bhatia, Consultants:

Sarah Nurmela

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- Discuss issues related to the City's fiscal health, the jobs to housing ratio, and public facilities and services.
- Provide input on how to approach issues related to fiscal health, jobs/housing balance, and public facilities and services in the future and to suggest policies for the General Plan.

MEETING SUMMARY

I. Welcome and Announcements (Co-Chair Kornder)

II. Vision and Priority Exercise (Committee)

Steering Committee members were asked to respond to the following question: Why did you volunteer to be on the General Plan Steering Committee?

III. Continue Discussion on Draft Annotated Outline Sections Related to Transportation Issues (Kevin Riley and Carol Anne Painter)

Mr. Riley stated that the objective of the Steering Committee meetings on the General Plan was to develop the strategies, goals and policies from conversations with the Committee.

The following discussion was structured as a question and answer forum. The City introduced several topics for discussion with a short presentation followed by several questions to the Steering Committee, which were followed by Committee-member feedback.

Fiscal Health

Mr. Riley described the City's fiscal structure, beginning with the City's fiscal health. The City of Santa Clara's fiscal health is directly related to development within the City. Property taxes from residential developments and sales taxes from commercial developments all contribute to the City's revenue and financial health. For the 2008-2009 year, the City received approximately \$32 million from sales tax and \$10 million for transient occupancy tax. The City also received over \$29 million through collection of property taxes. The fact that the City has good property values is an important component of the City's fiscal health.

The City's fiscal health also relates to operating costs of land uses, such as costs of services like parks and recreation and library services. Expenditures on infrastructure like sewer, water, and electricity affect the City's general fund. In addition to the need to expand the City's infrastructure to accommodate future development, the City must also consider replacement costs for existing infrastructure. For example, much of the City's sanitary sewer system was built in the 1960s and is in need of replacement. Thus, there are services, as well as infrastructure, that need to be provided whether the City grows or not.

Question 1: How can the City better attract high quality development that would maximize these revenues?

Business Development

- The City needs a place for businesses to grow and generate sales tax for the City. Currently, the area north of Bayshore does not have the infrastructure for housing. The City could look at planning mixed use projects along major thoroughfares like El Camino Real and Stevens Creek Boulevard to help generate revenues since residential uses alone do not pay for the City services.
- The City needs to give businesses a place to go, where adjacent uses do not restrict growth. Businesses need a place where they can operate and expand where noise and odor impacts will not bother neighbors. These impacts can cause a lot of friction between industrial and residential areas.
- The Plan should maintain a balanced ratio between businesses and residential uses.
- Different types of businesses like heavy manufacturing should be separate from housing; but there are a lot of small businesses that could benefit from a mixed-use environment.
- There are fewer and fewer manufacturing and heavy industrial uses in the City. These types of uses should be concentrated close to the airport [San José Norman Y. Mineta International Airport].

- The City could take an area like the Great America Parkway corridor and fill it with denser housing where there are already dense office environments. There would be a need for more infrastructure, but denser housing in an appropriate location could be appealing to high-tech companies. This also keeps higher density housing away from southern portion of City.
- Providing a diverse residential mix is key to attracting companies.
- We should identify why Yahoo and other new projects want to locate in Santa Clara, then enhance and build upon the assets that have attracted businesses in the past. Maintaining low utility rates and excellent City services will require continued forward thinking with the General Plan.
- The City has done well with sales tax generation, particularly from businesses along El Camino Real and Stevens Creek Boulevard. Lately, however, the City has lost car dealerships and other retail uses. The City should look at areas that have infrastructure and services in place and determine how to accommodate more housing to sustain services.

North-South Development

- There will be significant burden on the School District to provide new schools in areas where existing facilities do not exist.
- There is still a separation between the north and south portions of the City. Traffic impact fees have not been raised since the 1980s, even though the development environment and traffic volumes have increased. In addition, many of the improvement projects drawing from the fees are located south of Bayshore. Investments could be made to improve transit on major north-south corridors.
- The General Plan should include good transit and mixed-use development, and avoid creating islands of residential uses, to ensure a cohesive Santa Clara.

Residential Development

- The City has many assets to attract residential development, including its central location, university, transportation infrastructure, and recreation opportunities. New housing development in the City will be higher density than what exists on the ground today and must be integrated appropriately.
- Residential uses may be appropriate in industrial areas near Sunnyvale, since Sunnyvale already contains residential uses near this shared border.
- New higher-density developments need to be well designed, be accessible, and offer additional amenities to attract residents.

Question 2: What are some specific examples of development types that might support continued fiscal health of the City?

- Provide recreation opportunities, particularly for kids.
- Entertainment and theaters of the quality in San Francisco and San José would attract more people to go out to dinner and shop. The City could utilize volunteers to run a City performing arts program.

- Encourage business growth by removing barriers to expansion. Take the revenue gained from sales tax and put it back into the infrastructure to reduce overall service costs, similar to the Silicon Valley Power model. Invest in infrastructure that provides a benefit to residents and businesses, and further attracts new businesses and development.
- Continue to encourage car dealerships and everyday service retail along Stevens Creek Boulevard. Other areas earmarked for mixed-use will need to have strong retail anchors like grocery stores.
- Homes should have outdoor space. Children, particularly older children, need safe, outdoor space in which to gather.
- Restaurants, entertainment, and shopping choices. This is also important for the City's aging population.
- A shopping corridor along Bowers Avenue would support residential areas to the north.
- A mix of uses helps fiscal health and to avoids turning Santa Clara into a bedroom community.
- Provide a safe environment for manufacturing and industry. The City can mix residential and sensitive uses safely with industrial uses. For example, residential uses already exist in Sunnyvale right next to industrial facilities. High density housing is also located along the Caltrain corridor which has noise impacts.
- The Plan does not need to isolate manufacturing in a certain area. Technology advancements will allow uses to coexist.
- There is a need for a variety of spaces to nurture new businesses, including small incubator spaces for start-up businesses.
- Office space and high density housing can exist as adjacent uses.
- A mix of housing types can accommodate different lifestyles and preferences.
- Smart growth and realistic planning can include high density housing as a good candidate for the north of Bayshore area. It needs to have the infrastructure and services for residential uses. The new Safeway in Downtown San José is an example of the type of services needed. Entertainment, hotel, restaurants, and cultural facilities may also be appropriate.
- Promote diversity of business types on commercial corridors. Consider the green industry and biomedical businesses that are supported by research at Stanford and Santa Clara Universities. There could also be other new types of businesses beyond high tech, like law firms and major accounting firms.
- Entertainment uses that are synergistic with the proposed stadium should be encouraged. If the entertainment focus around the stadium is expanded, the City could capture more of the employment up there as well, which would give people more reason to stay in the City. The area would also be a better place for high density, contemporary-designed housing. More historic design styles should be located in the south.

Question 3: How should the General Plan balance job growth with housing growth?

- To have a healthy community, the City needs a balance between jobs, housing and recreation. The challenge will be how to balance new housing and yet still provide a level of services that maintains a high quality of life.
- Use ABAG's projections as estimates, but do not use them to dictate what has to be built.

Question 4: What should the City's service priorities be in the future to help balance expenses? services?

- Develop recreation and performing arts for young kids and families to create family-oriented communities.
- Ensure that basic needs like water, sewer, police and fire services, are in place before new development occurs.
- Provide storm and sanitary facilities (wet utility services) to support new development. Avoid placing the cost burden of all new infrastructure solely on new development.
- Provide an equal level of essential services to residents in the north as in the south (e.g. to accommodate school capacity needs).
- Explore partnerships between City and nonprofits for providing services.
- **Additional Question:** As the City starts to lose some revenue, what kinds of partnerships could the City explore to maintain/expand services?
- Partner with a Sister City.
- Utilize non-profits organizations. For example, the Santa Clara Historic Preservation Society runs historic museums.
- Provide a service for identifying opportunities for volunteers and training.
- Maintain use of City personnel for core services.
- City should maintain control and regulation of services and service levels.

Question 5: What prerequisites related to fiscal health could be included in the General Plan?

Ms. Painter clarified the question with an example of a proposed prerequisite for the General Plan. "As a check-in between each phase of the General Plan, there could be a fiscal analysis and jobs/housing balance check to provide a picture of the City's fiscal health to help plan for adequate infrastructure and services."

- Maintain a balance between new housing and commercial development to generate sales revenue that offsets residential service needs.
- Plan for additional police and fire services.

Public Facilities

Mr. Riley introduced the next topic of Public Facilities, which encompasses public safety services, cultural facilities, and recreation facilities. Public facilities needs for the City range from new substations to new libraries. An additional consideration for public facilities is pedestrian access, such as to parks and creek trails. Most of the City's residential areas are well-served by and close to existing parks; however, if new areas north of Bayshore are developed for residential uses, access from these areas to facilities will be an important issue to address. Mr. Riley urged the Steering Committee to think about what other types of facilities they would like to see, like the Wilcox Theater, museums, green or open spaces, and recreation programs.

Question 1: How can the City of Santa Clara improve and support public facilities?

- Consider school facility needs and funding. The City has a good track record, as in Rivermark, for allocating land for school and library facilities. Developer fees will not support new construction of facilities. The School District has facilities in south Santa Clara that could be reopened, but it may need to provide new facilities in the north.
- Intensify school facilities and look at urban models with smaller sites and two story buildings.
- Improve police service in the southwest portion of the City.

Question 2: How can the City attract more cultural and arts facilities?

- Establish an arts incubator environment, which would help create an attraction for visual and performing arts. The Downtown area should be planned with space for an arts/entertainment area with gallery spaces and interactive public spaces. Open studios could encourage and attract Santa Clara artists. Uses within such a district should be mutually supporting; for example, cafes to visit before or after an event.
- Use Redevelopment money to help build affordable artist housing, perhaps near Santa Clara Station, along Lafayette Street, or in an entertainment district north of Bayshore. Live/work housing could include space for performances.
- Make use of existing resources. For example, theaters in school facilities, the Mission City Opera, Santa Clara Players, Triton Museum, and the Redwood Amphitheater at Great America.
- Subsidize existing arts facilities to assist in programming and sustainability, such as the Convention Center, Santa Clara University, or the historical theater in Agnews.
- Develop general purpose rooms, like the one at the Senior Center, for groups to utilize.

Question 3: What other public facilities are needed within the City?

- A second senior facility is needed as the existing Senior Center is serving above its capacity. The Parks and Recreation Department is considering a second senior facility, potentially in the western part of the City, which would serve the increasing senior population.
- Provide another youth activity center, especially on the north side of the town.

- Larger, publicly accessible sports fields, in addition to fields that are part of school facilities, are need.
- Encourage neighborhood recreation places for gathering, like those at Westwood Oaks and Maywood Park.
- Expand the use, flexibility or subsidy of library community rooms.
- Provide citywide wireless access.

Question 4: What types of park/open space and/or recreation facilities are needed in the City?

- More parks are needed overall.
- Enhance riparian corridors and expand trails to celebrate creeks.
- Offer an outdoor theater, like Redwood City's courthouse theater.
- Promote community gardens and diversify park uses.
- Provide "Pavement to Parks" programs.
- Small pocket parks within neighborhoods accessible by walking are needed.
- Hetch Hetchy right-of-way could be used as an open space/trail.
- Reuse the post office near Franklin Mall, if it closes in the future.
- Facilities could be named after Sister Cities.
- Provide sports fields.

Question 5: Should the City consider additional joint-use agreements with the School District for playing fields and other parklands?

- Everyone agreed that this would be a great opportunity to make a better use of space and not spend more money.

Jobs/Housing Balance

The discussion for the City's Jobs/Housing Balance was reassigned as "homework" to the Steering Committee. Ms. Painter asked Committee members to expand upon their comments related to the City's Jobs/Housing Balance that were provided throughout the course of discussion of Fiscal Health and Public Facilities.

IV. Public Comments:

- The young demographic coming to Santa Clara for jobs would love to have mixed-use, walkable, high density communities with some open space.
- The Walnut Factory as a live/work development is a great idea which could be expanded upon in Santa Clara. There are a lot of people who commute in from San Francisco because they value an urban setting with smaller, high density housing.
- The need for liability insurance coverage for groups to access public facilities negates the existence of the space. School facilities could be used as another option.

- There is a need for open space for children and seniors, especially for high density residential development. It is important to continue to build community with common areas and places of interaction near shopping and public facilities. This includes community rooms in residential developments, which could serve as gathering spaces available to the rest of the surrounding community as well.
- It is important to have good companies and a strong employment base, but many people come to the City from other communities. The challenge is how the City handles these employees in terms of transportation to jobs and managing their impacts.
- The City should determine its own definition for a good balance between jobs and housing.

V. Next Steps

The discussion for the next Steering Committee meeting on September 21 will address all four of the Focus Areas, including El Camino Real, Stevens Creek, Santa Clara Station Area, and Downtown.

Committee members were reminded to reflect and expand on their comments from this meeting and to provide any additional comments on Jobs/Housing Balance by September 11. This feedback will be sent out to Committee members for distribution at the next meeting.