



Mountain View General Plan Update Neighborhood Workshop:

CENTRAL NEIGHBORHOODS AREA

May 27, 2009

Landels Elementary School

Introduction

This first round of City-wide General Plan update workshops were designed to 1) reaffirm and refine community input received during the 2008 General Plan Visioning process; and 2) focus on neighborhood specific General Plan issues from participants who live and work in the specific neighborhood area of the City. Input from these meetings will help inform the development of General Plan update policies and land use alternatives.

In addition to City-wide neighborhood workshops, additional targeted outreach meetings have been held with a variety of groups, including business owners, youth, seniors, and non-English speaking groups. Input from these meetings will also be included in the General Plan update process.

General Plan Update – Discussion Topics

Workshop participants participated in small group exercises to discuss the following citywide topics: 1) Economic and Community Development; 2) Open Space and Conservation; 3) Health and Safety; and 4) Climate Change and Sustainability. They also discussed the following specific neighborhood level topics: 1) Land-Use and Design; 2) Housing; 3) Transportation; and 4) Public Facilities and Infrastructure.

During the small group discussions, facilitators used prompts developed from the community during the General Plan Visioning process, and from staff and consultant expertise regarding specific challenges and issues. These prompts not only assisted participants by providing additional information and context, but also helped reaffirm and refine prior feedback on current and future challenges and issues that have been identified by the community.

The following is a summary of the small group discussions from the **May 27, 2009** meeting at **Landels Elementary School**. The feedback collected from workshop participants is summarized by citywide and neighborhood topics.

Citywide Policy Questions

1. *Economic and Community Development*

The two areas that have the most potential and opportunities for change are San Antonio Center and the North Bayshore area.

San Antonio Center

A new vision is needed for San Antonio Center—both in design and use. It should be mixed commercial and residential (including live/work) and should incorporate the following:

- Pedestrian paths.
- Trees.
- Mini parks.
- Place to congregate, a plaza surrounded by restaurants.
- Parking beneath buildings.
- 2-3 story buildings.
- Linkage to the San Antonio Train Station.

North Bayshore

Housing and mixed use should be considered, but adequate infrastructure (including services, such as a food market) and access have to be considered. There are opportunities and constraints associated with this area's natural setting.

- Consider live/work and loft style housing because it would fit with the industrial/business aesthetic and use while providing housing.
- Improve access for cars, bikes and pedestrians.
- Improve bike safety at Shoreline Boulevard and Highway 101.
- Consider threat of flooding.
- Focus housing near Rengstorff.
- Try to avoid islands of residential within industrial areas.
- Restore wetlands.

Whisman Area

The industrial area feels empty right now. Light industrial and other businesses should be encouraged there.

- Provide for a community garden in the area.

El Camino Real

El Camino is seen as a barrier to bicyclists and pedestrians and suggestions were made for improving its role as a transportation corridor.

- Should be used as a transportation route, not a destination.
- Add bike lanes.
- Make sidewalks wider.
- Remove two traffic lanes and put in a trolley line instead.
- Add pedestrian crosswalks between Calderon and Castro.
- Support the Grand Boulevard Initiative plan for El Camino.

Economic Development

The City should acknowledge changing trends and be doing more to encourage small businesses.

- Consider that more people are working from home.
- Continue to provide space in the city for industrial and light industrial uses.
- Have a long term strategy for businesses leaving the city.
- Encourage greater variety.
- Support small businesses and recognize the negative impacts of big box retail on them.

Jobs/Housing

Participants see the jobs/housing balance as an issue. Some wanted to aim for a balance within the City, while others felt enough had been done.

- Get jobs and housing closer together to reduce CO2 emissions.
- Consider NASA and how job growth there will impact the supply of housing in Mountain View.

Other Comments

- Expand Downtown toward and into Moffett Boulevard. Provide incentives or make it a redevelopment zone.
- Use the vacant land on Shoreline for housing or use it for parks.
- Provide more grocery stores in neighborhoods.
- Locate new residential near existing residential.

2. Open Space and Conservation

As the City approves more housing, it must be sure to increase the supply of park land, especially near housing. Based on their personal experience with

using City parks, residents have many suggestions for improving the design and adding amenities. Residents also see parks as a way of building community.

Supply and Location of Park Land

- Encourage park space and play fields near housing developments.
- Require new development to provide parks, not just pay in lieu fees.
- Buy more land for parks, especially near where people live. Park space that is not central is of little value.
- Put pocket parks in along South Shoreline Boulevard.
- Aggregate open space into larger parks, rather than creating small piecemeal pockets in new developments.
- Take advantage of small odd-shaped lots for parks.
- Retain open space at schools.
- Take advantage of the acre of land in the Shoreline/Central Expressway semi-cloverleaf for a BMX park.
- Preserve remaining undeveloped land for agriculture.

Park Amenities

- Provide for more community gardens throughout the City.
- Ensure that parks are safe.
- Provide more dog parks.
- Provide better access to the Bay for human-powered watercraft.
- Provide public rest rooms along trails.

Park Design

- Preserve Cuesta Park as green space with no buildings.
- Use drought tolerant plantings in parks.
- Provide more user-friendly open space with things to do such as a drive-in style movie theater and hot dog/ice cream vendors.
- Place picnic tables and shade trees near play structures. Design should be able to accommodate a 10-30 person party for kids.
- Build parks over underground parking and on tops of buildings.
- Provide some small micro-parks periodically along the Stevens Creek Trail.

3. Health and Safety

Improving health and safety is highly dependent on enabling residents to get more exercise by making bicycling and walking easier and safer. Attention

should also be given to opportunities for obtaining better food locally and addressing sources of health problems (e.g., noise, pollution).

Bicycling, Walking and Exercise

- Make walking more convenient than driving.
- Make walking and bicycling safer.
- Build pedestrian bridges and underpasses across major thoroughfares such as Central Expressway and railroad tracks.
- Create bicycle boulevards that focus on bikes, not cars.
- Provide safe, visible bicycle parking, especially on Castro Street.
- Close 3-4 blocks of Castro to traffic.
- Develop a policy to keep cars out of downtown, or to route them around downtown.
- Locate more crosswalks on El Camino between Shoreline Boulevard and Grant Road.
- Keep sidewalks in good condition.
- Calm traffic so people feel safe when they walk near traffic.
- Design parking so that it does not conflict with pedestrian routes.
- Encourage bikeability and walkability, including mixed use development that makes it easier to get to destinations without driving.
- Encourage recreation programs.
- Complete the Stevens Creek Trail.

Access to Food

- Keep the farmers' market, make it bigger and hold it more often.
- Expand farmers' markets to other areas, such as Cuesta and San Antonio.
- Keep fast food restaurants out.
- Develop a policy on encouraging grocery stores within walking distance so that everyone has access to healthy food.
- Encourage more community gardens and organic gardening.

Health and Recreation Facilities

- Leverage the services available at El Camino Hospital and the YMCA.
- Tap into the senior center.
- Expand hours at public pools.
- Attract more private recreation facilities to Mountain View.

Needs of Seniors

- Plan for seniors and how to bring services to them in their homes.

- Provide congregate care for seniors as well as meeting and gathering places for them in their neighborhoods.
- Reach out to seniors by including them in the General Plan process.

Other

- Regulate leaf blowers. Outlaw diesel/gas powered leaf blowers (two-cycle engines that generate higher levels of pollution).
- Consider conflicts between transit-oriented development and railroad noise.
- Provide more trees, especially those that grow large and have good canopies. Educate the public about how to care for them.
- Develop emergency plans.

4. Climate Change and Sustainability

Proposed policies for addressing climate change and sustainability overlap with several other policy areas such as transportation, health, and open space. Some proposals, such as green building requirements, encouraging alternative energy sources and reducing water use are more specifically focused on climate change and sustainability.

Green Building Requirements

- Make green buildings a priority in the City's review process. Facilitate and assist homeowners and developers who want to do green building construction instead of compromising.
- Encourage green remodeling.
- Support green driveways.
- Recycle more demolition waste and discarded construction materials.
- Apply energy efficiency programs (such as weatherization) to all income levels, before moving to new construction (see San Francisco program).
- Make the energy efficiency requirements for extra-large houses stricter than for smaller housing.

Water

- Permit gray water use for home landscaping and for irrigating parks. Currently it is difficult because of State law.
- Control water use ("water police").
- Accept a future of diminished water supply due to increased competition.
- Conserve water in parks by using artificial turf in parks.
- Support and emphasize native vegetation.

Transportation

- Provide trolleys or light rail on El Camino to connect Castro and San Antonio Road.
- Improve frequency of train service and make it easier to make regional connections.
- Add bike lanes.
- Make Castro pedestrian-only.
- Discourage car use.
- Improve sidewalks.
- Provide more alternative transportation.
- Encourage employers to jointly operate shuttles.
- Provide incentives for people to use transit when eating and shopping downtown (e.g., receive a discount for using the train).
- Require higher density housing to provide a certain number of electric bikes.
- Encourage car-share programs so not everyone needs a car.
- Instead of mandating parking, discourage parking and encourage shuttles and transit use.

Alternative Energy

- Support solar photovoltaic systems for apartments and schools.
- Put solar panels on all City buildings, e.g., City Hall.
- Improve energy efficiency in City buildings.
- Mandate solar for larger projects.
- Encourage more electric car charging stations (although maintain flexibility to accommodate changing technologies).
- Balance tree policies with solar requirements.
- Don't subsidize non-renewable resources.
- Re-open the methane plant.
- Build windmills in the Shoreline Park.
- Invest in local wind, solar, biomass energy generation.

Development Pattern

- Create incentives for employers to provide housing and to ensure green transportation.
- Decrease number of vehicle miles traveled by putting housing and business close to transit.
- Focus higher density, more affordable development within ½ mile of public transportation.

- Provide our fair share of housing.
- Encourage a variety of housing types and a stable population because it equals sustainability.

Other

- Consider population growth and consumption at the source of the problem.
- Implement single-bin recycling.
- Implement a city-wide compost program.
- Have a plan for sea-level rise.
- Create community vegetable/front gardens and support Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) to reduce carbon footprint of food shipped from afar.
- Reduce water, energy, metals, etc. use to attain sustainability, not just because of global warming.
- Plant fruit trees (restore orchards) giving children a place to play and learn about nutrition.

Neighborhood Questions

1. Land Use and Design

Central Area residents see El Camino Real as the area with the greatest potential for change, but policies for Castro Street should also continue to be refined. There is support for higher density residential near the transit station, specifically the Minton block, and concern about transitions between lower and higher densities in the neighborhoods.

El Camino Real

- Start over on El Camino by replacing aging strip malls with new buildings.
- Encourage mixed use.
- Establish a four-story maximum height limit.
- Provide for small shops and tiny parks every few blocks.
- Increase density.
- Encourage housing like New York brownstones.
- Require larger setbacks or wider setbacks.
- Make El Camino more walkable. Auto uses between Calderon and Castro make it unpleasant for pedestrians.

Castro Street/Downtown

- Plan for mixed use with residential above at the El Camino/Castro corner.
- Reduce amount of outdoor seating on Castro Street.
- Cap heights downtown.
- For mixed use, set back upper stories and avoid multi-story facades.
- Preserve the charm of downtown which is related to its local, individual stores.
- Maintain four-story height limit.
- Provide better walking connections to Downtown.
- Make Castro pedestrian-only (possibly bikes, too) between California and Central Expressway.
- Facilitate a grocery store downtown.

Transit Station

- Plan for mixed use, TOD, live/work on the Minton parcel.
- Set a limit of 25 units per acre or less for the Minton parcel.
- Approve high density and open space for the Minton parcel.
- Allow higher density next to transit.
- Enliven the train station building with a healthy produce market (like the Milk Pail) or by using it for the Chamber of Commerce.
- Provide more parking at the train station.

Building Development Standards and Design

- Require condominiums to have larger setbacks, or to step back, and more open space.
- Maintain the current heights (three stories), possibly taller if not next to residences.
- Allow greater heights in mid-block.
- Preserve the character of existing residential neighborhoods.
- Ensure sensitivity to how higher-density development fits into neighborhoods.
- Don't allow blocky-looking buildings that do not match the neighborhood context.
- Protect lower density by providing gradual density increases.
- Maintain densities of 6 to 10 units per acre or less.
- Require more guest parking; require more parking for higher-density residential.
- Require people to use garages for parking, not storage.
- Update nonconforming structures.

- Don't approve housing like Wild Orchid townhouses.

Other

- Develop a plan for Calderon Avenue to make it more functional for the community (it is "frozen in time").
- Do not replace all of the commercial on Evelyn with housing because people will have to drive more to get to services.

2. Housing

Most people see a need for affordable housing and housing to serve seniors, young families, veterans and young tech workers. There are specific suggestions for improved design.

Affordability

- Plan housing for new veterans returning from service, at Shenandoah and other areas.
- Require developers to build affordable units.
- Disperse affordable housing.
- Redevelop older buildings and include affordable units.
- Provide more housing for the service sector and "young-tech."
- Encourage higher density to allow for more affordable housing.
- Do not subsidize housing or impose rent control.

Locations

- Have housing near work centers.
- Provide higher density near transit and on El Camino.
- Build Santana Row-like housing along Castro.
- Provide high-density retirement housing downtown for people who have lived in the city for a long time and want to move out of their single-family houses.

Seniors

- Provide smaller single-family homes in walkable neighborhoods.
- Provide low-income, high-density housing, especially for seniors.
- Make housing elder and wheelchair accessible.

Design and Types

- Make lobbies and walkways open to the public.
- Design houses with front doors (not garages) facing the street.

- Build smaller single-family starter homes for families, not more apartments.
- Ensure access to sun and light for new and existing buildings.
- Build upscale multiple-family units in place of substandard apartments.
- Ensure that granny flats are compatible with the character of the main house.
- Make it easier to include “granny” units within existing housing.
- Discourage gated, high-density housing with no walkable sidewalks.

Other

- Plan for higher density than needed right now because it will be needed in the future.
- Restrict population growth (although some disagreement on this).
- Maintain the ratio of single- and multiple-family houses.
- Limit low-income, high-density housing.

3. Transportation

Wide roadways should be redesigned to give higher priority to bicyclists instead of cars. More bike parking is needed. There should be a local shuttle system serving Mountain View. High speed rail must be carefully designed because it could have negative impacts on community design and access.

Bicycling and Walking

- Encourage Amsterdam-style bicycling paths.
- Provide more bike lockers.
- Provide bike lockers and public restrooms near parking garages.
- Provide more short-term bike parking.
- Establish a bike share program.
- Provide bicycle access on Central Expressway and Highway 101.
- Provide better bicycle access on Castro.
- Remove a traffic lane from Shoreline Boulevard and turn it into a separate bike lane.
- Redesign Moffett Boulevard to accommodate a two-way bicycle section.
- Light crosswalks.

Public Transportation and Shuttles

- Provide a city shuttle system like Stanford’s Marguerite.
- Provide shuttle service downtown.
- Create a shuttle hub north of the train tracks.

- Provide transit service to the senior center.
- Provide free bus service.
- Provide a free 24-hour commuter bus service in the North Bayshore area.

Roadway Design

- Implement traffic calming on residential streets.
- Remove impediments to pedestrians created by sidewalk dining on Castro.
- Require planting strips with bushes, brick or even gravel along sidewalks.
- Redesign streets to remove auto lanes and replace them with bike or bus-only lanes and wider sidewalks.

Trails

- Develop more paths along creeks.
- Extend the Hetch Hetchy Trail.
- Provide a connection to the San Antonio Preserve from Mountain View.
- Extend Stevens Creek Trail and add another.

High Speed Rail

- Take care that high speed rail does not chop up the City, destroy Downtown and create a barrier. Otherwise, don't support it.
- Coordinate high speed rail with other trains and buses at a transit hub.
- Don't build high speed rail unless there is enough money to do it right.
- Provide additional bicycle crossings between Calderon and Central.

Specific Locations

- Address dangerous intersection of El Camino and Clark.
- Develop another car and pedestrian crossing at Central.
- Implement traffic calming on Mariposa Avenue.

4. Public Facilities and Infrastructure

Utilities

- Create a partnership between the City and a commercial provider to improve internet service.
- Put utilities underground.
- Coordinate water and sewage facilities and plan for growth.
- Slow down increases in rates.

- Use the existing fiber-optic cables.

Parks and Recreation

- Improve drainage at Pioneer Park.
- Re-think the location and purpose of the community center at Rengstorff Park.
- Make Rengstorff pool larger.
- Expand Eagle Park pool from 25 to 50 meters.
- Provide drop-in (1-3 hours) child care.

Library and Community Facilities

- Extend hours at the library.
- Encourage a more vibrant, developed Teen Center.
- Support senior center.
- Build a separate children's library.

Other Comments

- Improve communication regarding reporting problems with utilities.
- Don't allow restaurants to place heavy ceramic pots in the parking spaces on Castro Street because they block parking and are hazards.