



**Mountain View General Plan Update Neighborhood Workshop:**

**MONTA LOMA / FARLEY / ROCK STREET AREA**

May 18, 2009

## **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 18, 2009** meeting at **Monta Loma Elementary School**. The feedback collected from workshop participants is summarized by citywide and neighborhood topics.

# Citywide Policy Questions

## 1. *Economic and Community Development*

### **San Antonio Center**

The San Antonio Shopping Center must be improved to provide better shopping opportunities for residents.

- Create a unique and upscale shopping center with underground parking and more stores.
- Design the center to be pedestrian-friendly and accommodate smaller shops like Castro Street.
- Consider residential mixed-use.
- Provide additional landscaping.

### **North Bayshore Area**

Additional services for employees and publicly accessible amenities for residents are needed in the North Bayshore Area. Mixed feedback was received about the North Bayshore Area related to housing.

- Consider housing and schools in North Bayshore.
- Discourage new housing in North Bayshore.
- Provide retail stores and commercial services for workers in North Bayshore.
- Provide public access to hotel facilities and ball fields in North Bayshore.

### **Improved Commercial Services**

More shopping and service choices are needed for residents, such as grocery stores and neighborhood serving businesses, in convenient locations that do not require getting into a car.

- Provide services closer to where people live.
- More mixed use in commercial areas.

- Encourage stores that cater to local neighborhoods.
- Open up the big block pattern of commercial areas.
- Provide more retail on Castro Street.
- Provide more grocery stores and banks.

## **Housing**

Place high-density residential along major commute corridors or by transit and ensure that new projects are carefully designed to blend into the surrounding area.

- Encourage high density housing along El Camino Real but be sensitive to existing context.
- Encourage high density housing close to Highway 101.
- Provide housing for workers to reduce commuting.
- Provide socioeconomically diverse housing for a variety of income levels.
- Determine if the City has enough high density housing.
- Place affordable housing near transit.
- Encourage a variety of designs in larger housing projects, avoid monotonous design.

## **Efficient Use of Land**

Provide more room for pedestrian activity by supporting taller buildings with open space around them instead of shorter buildings that cover more of the site.

- Encourage multi-story “vertical” construction instead of “lateral” low-height buildings that cover more of a property with buildings.
- Allow taller buildings and use the land around them for parks.
- Promote underground parking instead of surface parking lots.

## **General Citywide Comments**

- Place overhead utility lines underground.

## **2. *Open Space and Conservation***

### **Expand Park System**

Consider a wide range of methods to increase the supply of park land for residents.

- Use park-in-lieu fees in the area a project are constructed.
- Sell excess City land in order to purchase additional parkland in underserved areas.
- Find opportunities to use vacant sites (such as Alvin/Middlefield) for a temporary public use.
- Consider purchasing foreclosed homes, blighted or vacant sites for parkland.
- Do not trade existing parkland south of El Camino for newly purchased parkland north of El Camino.
- Allow taller buildings and use the land around them for parks.
- Add usable open space along the Hetch-Hetchy corridor.

### **Park Improvements**

- Balance the needs of individual park users with the needs of organized sports users.
- Provide port-a-potties with diaper change tables at mini-parks.
- Encourage ball fields with lights in the North Bayshore area.

### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Friendly City**

Create a pedestrian and bicycle friendly city that is less reliant on driving automobiles.

- Strive for a citywide network of safe pedestrian and bicycle routes.

- Develop a pedestrian master plan.
- Improve and extend biking and walking routes throughout the City.
- Improve pedestrian/bike access to North Bayshore and Shoreline Park.
- Ensure that new projects provide opportunities for safe walking and biking.
- Convert some streets to pedestrian traffic only, including parts of Castro Street.
- Improve the biking experience on roadways.
- Provide bike paths to connect neighborhoods (without using roadways).
- Provide more secure bike parking.
- Publicize biking and walking routes.
- Provide walking routes throughout the City on shaded paths.
- Add more bike lanes along streets.
- Explore walking and biking connections between existing neighborhoods.

### **General Conservation Comments**

- Place a high value on preserving Heritage Trees in the City.
- Cite and fine repeated water wasters, such as residents with broken sprinklers.
- Upgrade the wetlands.
- Consider different uses for the Shoreline golf course.

### ***3. Health and Safety***

#### **Provide Healthy Foods**

Create opportunities for residents to have access to healthy foods to improve the overall health of the community.

- Support healthy/organic food stores.

- Expand community gardens, including using vacant lots and the Hetch Hetchy corridor.
- Expand the Farmer's Market.
- Provide a larger community farm area that could sell produce at the Farmer's Market.

### **General Comments**

- Ensure that the high speed rail system is quiet and non-disruptive.
- Keep public areas clean.
- Encourage a program where each neighborhood has a nurse to care for the local community.
- Enforce leash laws.
- Encourage more community events.

## ***4. Climate Change and Sustainability***

### **Land Use Decisions**

Make land-use decisions that support sustainable principles, including efficient use of land, high-density residential near transit, local services near neighborhoods and providing transportation alternatives to residents.

- Encourage high density housing close to Highway 101.
- Provide housing for workers to reduce commuting.
- Promote underground parking.
- Encourage multi-story "vertical" construction instead of "lateral" low-height buildings that cover more of a property with buildings.
- Reduce parking requirements because people will walk if no parking is provided.
- Provide services close to where people live so customers do not have to drive to the store.

## **Transportation**

Actively encourage alternate methods of transportation other than the automobile.

- Implement a bike sharing plan.
- Promote shuttles and transit to neighborhood centers.
- Make transit more affordable.
- Encourage green hybrids.
- Provide small and frequent “green” shuttles such as a jitney shuttle system that connects the North Bayshore to the rest of the City.
- Provide a shuttle or other transit options to connect people to services.

## **Sustainable “Green” Methods**

Encourage “Green” building techniques and methods in the City.

- Encourage solar panels by reducing permit fees
- Request that PG&E institute a pilot program that encourages solar panels.
- Encourage green building techniques.
- Require that garbage trucks use green energy.
- Discourage wood fireplaces.
- Require good wall insulation on all new and renovated structures.

## **General Comment**

- Prepare plans for sea-level rising.

## *Neighborhood Questions*

### *1. Land Use and Design*

#### **Old Middlefield Way**

Improve the appearance of Old Middlefield Way with new landscaping, encourage mixed use residential and commercial uses on Old Middlefield Way, while retaining and protecting existing commercial services that provide Citywide benefit.

- Support residential and commercial mixed use along Old Middlefield Way and step back the upper levels to reduce the visual impact.
- Allow live/work units along Old Middlefield Way.
- Maintain existing heavy commercial service uses along Old Middlefield Way.
- Improve the streetscape along Old Middlefield Way.

#### **Monta Loma Plaza**

Encourage the Monta Loma Plaza (corner of Rengstorff and Middlefield) to develop into a viable, pedestrian-friendly retail shopping center to serve the neighborhood.

- Encourage smaller shops and services that reduce the need to drive outside of the neighborhood.
- Improve the design and pedestrian access.
- Re-open the grocery store.

#### **Center at the corner of N. Rengstorff and Central Expressway**

Provide development options that will result in improvements to the shopping center at Central Expressway and Rengstorff Avenue.

- Improve the appearance and safety at the center.
- Allow mixed commercial and residential development at the center.

## **New Development**

New development (or redevelopment) must be designed to fit into the neighborhood context.

- Ensure new buildings are compatible; one method is to step back and include significant amount of window area on upper floors.
- Encourage redevelopment of old buildings.

## **General Comments**

- Provide more retail opportunities in the Mayfield site.
- Consider residential and commercial mixed use in the industrial areas north of Old Middlefield Way.

## **2. *Housing***

Support a variety of new housing development options, with high-density development limited to select areas.

- Build mixed use retail and high-density housing development along Old Middlefield and at older shopping centers in the neighborhood.
- Allow live/work lofts along Old Middlefield Way.
- Allow well-designed, high-density development in select areas where traffic impacts can be mitigated.
- Encourage housing at the northwest corner of Rock Street and Independence Avenue near W. Middlefield Avenue.
- Encourage housing at the north side of Old Middlefield Way near the intersection of W. Middlefield Road.
- Encourage housing at the south side of Old Middlefield Way in between Rengstorff and Sierra Vista Avenue.
- Encourage housing in the Rengstorff focus area to replace aged apartments.

- Encourage two to four story residential buildings near transit and Old Middlefield Way.
- Encourage two-to-three story affordable housing projects.
- Encourage small-lot single-family and rowhouse projects with open space in the R3 neighborhood bound by Rengstorff Avenue, Permanente Creek, W. Middlefield Avenue and Central Expressway.
- Consider limiting new high density residential projects.
- Concern with the impact of new housing development on local schools.
- Encourage a variety of designs in larger housing projects, avoid monotonous design.
- Encourage using vacant buildings as homeless shelters.
- Address overcrowding of units.

### ***3. Transportation***

#### **Pedestrian and Bicycle Opportunities**

Expand pedestrian and bicycle routes through the neighborhood. Improve safety for riders in bicycle lanes.

- Explore pedestrian/bicycle connections across Highway 101.
- Explore pedestrian/bicycle connections to get residents across Central Expressway and the railroad line to the San Antonio and Central Neighborhoods Area.
- Improve the pedestrian/bicycle connection from the neighborhood to Rengstorff Park.
- Extend the Permanente Creek Trail to Central Expressway.
- Connect Hetch Hetchy trail to the Stevens Creek Trail.
- Improve intra-neighborhood connections by providing bicycle and pedestrian connections between cul-de-sacs and dead end streets.

- Provide better bike boulevards, using Palo Alto's bike network as an example.
- Improve routes to schools.
- Provide a pedestrian and bicycle path along entire Hetch Hetchy pipeline route.
- Provide a bike route map.
- Consider vehicular traffic calming along the Bicycle Boulevard.
- Improve bicycle safety on the Central Expressway bike lane.
- Improve bicycle safety on the bike lane on Montecito east of Rengstorff Avenue.
- Increase outreach about safe bicycle routes.
- Explore dedicated bike trails separated from roadways.

### **Alternate Transportation Options**

Improve transit options for residents to reduce the dependency on the automobile.

- Provide frequent bus service that ties the neighborhood with other areas of the City.
- Increase transit options so that all neighborhoods are a 10-minute walk from transit.
- Consider a shuttle to the downtown.
- Consider a smart car share station.

### **Neighborhood Traffic Calming**

Discourage cut-through traffic in neighborhoods with traffic calming devices.

- Reduce cut-through traffic through neighborhoods.
- Encourage traffic calming in neighborhoods such as traffic circles and speed bumps.

## **Traffic Congestion**

Reduce the congestion on major arterials serving the neighborhood.

- Improve the San Antonio Road/Central Expressway overpass area to reduce congestion.
- Improve the Rengstorff Avenue and Central Expressway intersection by grade-separating the vehicular traffic with the rail line.

## **General Comments**

- Improve the neighborhood connection to the REI Center (Charleston Plaza).
- Remove on-street parking.

## ***4. Public Facilities and Infrastructure***

### **Parkland and Open Space**

Provide additional park and open space opportunities throughout this neighborhood area.

- Develop park land, open space, and community gardens along the Hetch Hetchy right-of-way.
- Encourage community gardens.
- Narrow W. Middlefield Road and use the extra right-of-way as parkland.
- Look for opportunities for small parks.
- Consider the open space potential of land behind the Buddhist Temple on Shoreline Blvd.
- Consider giving nearby residents priority for the use of parks.
- Provide bathroom facilities and a change station at Thaddeus Park to increase its use.
- Provide more fitness facilities for seniors.

## **Safety and Enforcement**

- Enforce City ordinances more rigorously, including the 72-hour street parking regulation.
- Ensure that the Train Station is well lit and regularly patrolled.
- Improve the perception of safety at Rengstorff Park.
- Reduce the loitering at the San Antonio Shopping Center.

## **General Comments**

- Consider a public facility near Leghorn Street and Independence Avenue such as a sports field, post office or library.
- Consider additional libraries that are in walking distance to residents.
- Place utility lines underground.
- Provide public toilets, such as port-a-potties, should be considered along walking/biking routes.
- Consider maintaining the Google WiFi network based on a resident's opinion that Google does not sufficiently support it.