



Mountain View General Plan Update Neighborhood Workshop:

NORTH BAYSHORE / WHISMAN-EAST AREA

June 2, 2009

Google Campus – 1200 Crittenden Lane

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) Climate Change and Sustainability; and 3) Parks, Open Space & Natural Resources. They also discussed the following specific neighborhood level topics: 1) Economic and Community Development 2) 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.

This meeting was primarily organized to solicit input from the North Bayshore and Whisman-East business and property owners. However, some residents who live in the North Bayshore area also attended. Although the questions for this workshop were similar to the questions used in the other workshops, facilitators provided additional emphasis on some topic areas to reflect the interests and needs of the property owners, business owners, and employees who live or work in this neighborhood area.

The meeting was broken into three groups: 1) North Bayshore property owners, business owners, and employees; 2) East Whisman property owners, business owners, and employees; and 3) North Bayshore area residents.

The following is a summary of the small group discussions from the **June 2, 2009** meeting at **the Google campus**. The feedback collected from workshop participants is summarized by citywide and neighborhood topics.

North Bayshore Business/Property Owners

Neighborhood Questions

1. Economic and Community Development

The North Bayshore Area is at a crossroads in land development. A balanced approach to future growth should be pursued by providing much needed housing and services in the area without impacting opportunities for high density office development or harming the natural environment.

- Support mixed use development.
- Provide more neighborhood commercial uses.
- Develop small shopping centers to support the area.
- Create another vibrant Castro Street in the North Bayshore area.
- Locate services such as daycare in the North Bayshore with links to transportation.
- Pursue the redevelopment of the Century Theatre site and create a transit hub while providing necessary housing and services.
- Encourage high density housing, retail and services for employees.
- Include affordable units in new housing projects.
- Provide rental housing for employees.
- Increase job growth.
- Improve the existing public infrastructure during this economic cycle in order to respond to additional growth in the future.

While growth was a topic of discussion, participants voiced concern over constraints due to North Bayshore's geography and existing land uses.

- Limit development in areas that can be threatened by the rising sea levels.
- Proceed cautiously with housing development in areas with hazardous materials or uses.
- Maintain existing open spaces when developing strategies for new growth.

Participants discussed the need for the City's regulations to be more flexible and creative when reviewing higher density office and housing development.

- Support higher FAR's (floor area ratios).
- Discourage the inclusion of podium parking area in FAR calculations.
- Limit heights to 10 stories due to the NASA Ames Airfield.

Due to the geography of the North Bayshore Area and its proximity to the 101 highway, there is a real perception of the area being separated from the City.

- Improve pedestrian/bicycle connection over or under Highway 101 from North Bayshore.

Sustainability, adaptability, creativity, and innovation were words used to express the manner the City should move forward with new development. Participants felt that Mountain View could be in the forefront of development and can become the green capital of California.

- Pursue development with the understanding that one innovative approach is not a single solution.
- Incentivize solar and wind usage opportunities.
- Permit the use of gray water in new buildings.
- Approach improvements to the infrastructure and create more sustainable approaches.
- Create synergy between the Whisman and North Bayshore Areas.

Comment Card

- Increase density without more traffic. Smart transit is the key.

2. Transportation

An integrated transportation strategy dealing with automobile traffic, public transportation, alternative modes of transportation and their connections will help keep North Bayshore viable and not impede the ability for future development.

- Create a transportation hub linking the North Bayshore to the downtown transit center.
- Develop innovative strategies to deal with the need of providing mixed use development without increasing traffic congestion.
- Decrease traffic congestion with innovative transit strategies and more biking and walking opportunities.
- Connect with NASA's existing research programs and technologies to help solve traffic congestion and develop alternative transportation strategies.
- Study shuttle bus programs in other cities and countries.
- Provide more public transportation in the form of shuttle buses and public buses.
- Connect the dots and extend the light rail.
- Contribute to regional scale improvements with other jurisdictions and partner with Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Sunnyvale and NASA in creating transportation hubs.
- Provide centralized parking garages in the North Bayshore for businesses.
- Fill the missing links with the existing bike trail system and create safer routes throughout the area.
- Improve the connectivity from the downtown to North Bayshore.
- Alleviate safety concerns with the overcrossing.
- Pursue opportunities for ferry service in the San Francisco Bay.

Comment Card

- Provide friendly regulatory environment to allow innovation in the transportation sector.
- Create a transportation infrastructure that reduces congestion without using fossil fuels. A high speed connection from the Downtown Transit Center to Shoreline system should be on demand and not scheduled buses that are too slow due to long headways.

3. Public Facilities

The North Bayshore has a good balance of existing public facilities, such as parks and trails but there is an opportunity to expand the use of these facilities.

- Develop a creative usage for Crittenden Hill.
- Advertise connection and provide better signage to Stevens Creek Trail.
- Provide community gardens.
- Allow opportunities for businesses such as biking and boating companies to serve the North Shoreline Park.
- Improve youth recreational opportunities.

Comment Card

- A participant sent an e-mail stating that before high density is planned in the Bayshore area, we should study existing technologies that could shift the need of having typical offices and cubicles and look at a technology called Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) where employees can fully collaborate securely, completely and in real-time with their organizations from any location and therefore reduce the need to build more offices at a higher FAR.

Citywide Policy Questions

1. Economic and Community Development

San Antonio Center

San Antonio Center lacks identity and redevelopment is imperative.

- Design the Center as creatively as Castro Street was redeveloped.
- Give San Antonio Shopping Center a fresh identity.
- Collaborate with other local jurisdictions for its redevelopment.

Downtown

The Downtown is a thriving and dynamic environment.

- Develop Castro Street into a pedestrian mall.

El Camino Real

El Camino Real physically divides the community resulting in a visual and mental barrier in the community.

- Create traffic volume diversion techniques to connect areas.

2. Climate Change and Sustainability

Flood Plain

The North Bayshore area's proximity to the San Francisco Bay will be impacted by climate change and therefore, any plans for new growth must anticipate the need to respond to flood impacts.

- Collaborate with Oakland Airport planners to educate the public and City staff on flood plain issues.
- Consider the impacts of developing on contaminated properties near the flood plain and how this would affect San Francisco Bay's health.

Green Building

The need for the City to adopt a Green Building ordinance is imminent but along with the adoption of such an ordinance, incentives for developers and property owners need to be created, so that the ordinance does not impede growth.

- Continue to apply for Federal and State tax rebates and grants to assist with sustainable growth initiatives.

- Provide incentives for developers to build green buildings.
- Simplify the process for green building.
- Continue to support solar energy initiatives but do not be concerned about aesthetics.
- Do not politicize the Green Building Ordinance.

General

- Study the visual impacts of housing along Highway 101.
- Advertise existing recycling, gray water and composting programs.
- Provide incentives for employees who use public transportation.
- Develop a strategy to provide electronic charging stations in the North Bayshore Area.

3. Parks, Open Space & Natural Resources

- The North Bayshore Area has many opportunities for recreation with existing lakes, trails, parks and open space.
- Revisit the City's existing park plans and look at native plants and water usage.

East Whisman Area Business/Property Owners

Neighborhood Questions

1. Economic and Community Development

New office and retail opportunities should be created without driving away small companies.

- Preserve existing office developments that support small companies.
- Support zoning changes that allow for Research & Development and manufacturing for small companies.

Encourage an expansion of commercial land uses and higher density development to help support the East Whisman Area without having the uses conflict.

- Encourage retail development in locations that will be supported by existing office development.
- Hire a professional retail developer to study the North Whisman area and develop a plan for where retail should be located.
- Increase FAR for office development without additional infrastructure improvement costs.
- Provide more neighborhood commercial uses.

City processes need to be simplified, more expedient and flexible in order to attract new development.

- Speed up the process by outsourcing work conducted by the City Attorney's office and other City departments.
- Strategize how to deal with who will be responsible for the impacts of increased density as related to CEQA.

NASA's land use plan will have an impact to the East Whisman Area.

- Engage with NASA and develop plans to mitigate increased traffic due to the proposed new development.
- Take a stance on the proposed NASA development.

General

- Clean up the Fairchild Drive area because it is currently driving out businesses and residents.
- Work with developers and lenders to reduce the number of parking spaces required for office development.

2. Transportation

- The area is well served by existing public transportation opportunities, connections and roads but there is an opportunity to strategize and develop incentives to entice employees to use public transportation.
- Create programs to entice people to take public transportation such as working with Downtown merchants to provide coupons to encourage light rail transit use.
- Connect North Bayshore and Whisman areas before NASA development occurs.

3. Public Facilities

- Develop a park in the East Whisman area possibly at the MOC.

General

- Increase school capacity in the area.

Citywide Policy Questions

1. Economic and Community Development

San Antonio Center

- Design the Center with a central focus but do not follow the Santana Row model because it is a difficult model to follow financially.

El Camino Real

- Improve circulation on El Camino Real to assist existing businesses and attract new businesses.
- Collaborate with other local jurisdictions for its redevelopment.

2. Climate Change and Sustainability

- In order to plan for future development a baseline for greenhouse gases and land uses must be generated to develop policies to address the quantifiable limitations.
- Study effective ways to reduce greenhouse gases such as partnering with companies to create an area shuttle program.
- Embrace other technologies for power and production.
- Bring gray water to the Whisman Area and allow the use of gray water for toilet flushing.
- Lease out rooftops to one or more companies to make solar more effective.
- There is a need for the City to adopt a Green Building Ordinance but along with the adoption of such an Ordinance, incentives for developers and property owners need to be created.
- Provide incentives for developers to build green buildings such as allowing for more FAR (floor area ratio) and faster processing times for building applications.
- Simplify the process for green building and waive fees for those projects.

3. Parks, Open Space & Natural Resources

The East Whisman area lacks connections to existing natural resources.

- Improve connections between NASA and North Bayshore.
- Develop trails from NASA to Mountain View.
- Improve the Ellis Street interchange.

North Bayshore and East Whisman Residents

Citywide Policy Questions

1. Economic and Community Development

- Develop mixed use, commercial and residential opportunities. Residential development over commercial development may provide more stable rents for property owners.
- Create opportunities for more senior housing with connections to public transportation and services.
- Create a friendly, modern mobile home park measuring between 100 to 200 acres.
- Educate, encourage and provide incentives for developers to build green.
- Get people out of their cars by extending light rail to North Bayshore and develop shuttle programs that are either City or privately funded.

General

- Develop traffic-calming measures along Shoreline Boulevard.

2. Climate Change and Sustainability

- Develop opportunities for more green building initiatives and the use of solar panels in developments.
- Provide more community gardens since there is a long waiting list. Areas to develop include: Hetch-hetchy right-of-way and existing landscape pockets. Food that is grown could also be provided to the homeless.

3. Parks, Open Space & Natural Resources

- Extend the existing trail system since it is very crowded.
- Continue to use and improve the ample existing open space available.

- Provide areas for teenagers to frequent such as the teen center located at Mitchell Park in Palo Alto.
- Allow teens to use the Senior Center at night.
- Open the Senior Center on Saturdays and provide more parking.

4. Health and Safety Policies

- Improve the safety of drivers along Shoreline Boulevard by using the third lane as an exit lane.
- Study existing interchanges and develop plans to improve them.
- Educate seniors and young drivers on traffic patterns.
- Dedicate routes for seniors and call them “mini expressways.”
- Correct excessive speeding along Bryant Avenue since it is currently being used as a side street for Castro Street.
- Provide more Police protection in residential neighborhoods.
- Consider closing Castro Street to motorists.
- Educate senior and other residents about health programs available at local hospitals and programs such as CERT provided by the City of Mountain View.

Neighborhood Questions

1. Economic and Community Development

- Provide affordable housing for young residents near recreational areas.
- Develop alternative types of housing for young workers such as small studio units integrated into an office campus with community facilities. These developments can take the form of dorms found on college campuses.
- Build restaurants and services along Shoreline Boulevard to support the planned Conference Center.

- Pursue the hotel development since it will bring more services into the North Bayshore area.
- Coordinate development efforts with NASA and extend the road network from NASA to L' Avenida Drive or Crittenden Lane.

2. Transportation

- Extend road and trail connections to NASA.
- Improve the exit from the existing mobile home park onto Pear Avenue to deal with traffic congestion during concerts.
- Provide additional exit routes after concerts.
- Develop a shuttle bus program from the Downtown Transit Center to the Amphitheatre for concerts attendees.
- Extend light rail to the Amphitheatre.
- Install cameras at the intersections of L' Avenida Drive and Shoreline Boulevard; and North highway 101 and Shoreline Boulevard.
- Request developers to fund a shuttle program.
- Develop a shuttle program that stops at the Library and the Senior Center.

3. Public Facilities

- Improve roadway pavement and sidewalks on Shorebird Way and Charleston Road.
- Develop more preschools and daycares and locate them near existing homes, commercial areas.
- Integrate daycare uses into corporate campuses.
- Improve roads at Shoreline Park.
- Improve the WiFi network.
- Use reclaimed water at Rengstorff and Cuesta Parks.