

## **SANTA CLARA STATION AREA PLAN EIR**

### **SCOPING MEETING NOTES**

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Meeting Date: September 19, 2007

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The main points of each discussion are discussed below in bullet form.

### **SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

*Kevin Riley and Justin Fried*

Project explained briefly. Main goal of the project is to increase ridership within a half mile radius.

### **EIR PROCESS**

*Akoni Danielsen*

Akoni explained that this EIR has a slightly unusual process, because City of San Jose and City of Santa Clara are Co-Lead Agencies for the EIR (i.e. cooperative efforts on EIR by both lead agencies/joint exercise of power).

The EIR will discuss the project and alternatives to the project. CEQA analysis will assess physical environmental impacts of the project and its alternatives.

Akoni explained that the scoping meeting was a way to get the input of the public on the scope and content of the EIR, how the project may affect the environment. There will also be more opportunities for the public to give their input on the EIR during the CEQA process.

### **EIR SCOPING AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES TO BE COVERED IN THE EIR**

*D&B Staff*

D&B staff explained the topics that would be covered in the EIR. These include Land Use; Aesthetics; Transportation and Circulation; Air Quality; Noise; Geology, Soils, and Seismicity; Biological Resources; Hydrology and Water Quality; Agricultural and Mineral Resources; Utilities and Service Systems; Safety and Hazardous Materials; Public Services; Parks and Recreation; and Historic and Cultural Resources.

D&B clarified that while most of these topics would be studied thoroughly for the EIR, a few specific topics like Agriculture would be discussed only briefly, since the Planning Area does not have any existing agricultural resources. These items will be identified and discussed as they relate to the Planning Area in the EIR, where the reasoning for not including further study will be addressed.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED**

### **Area to be Covered in EIR**

Question from the public, regarding what specific area we are covering in the EIR:

Kevin Riley explained that the EIR would not cover the BART station, but the Plan area around the BART station. BART will conduct its own independent environmental review for the BART Station, as needed.

### **Program EIR**

Question regarding whether this is a program- or project-level EIR:

City staff and D&B staff explained that this is a program-level EIR. Subsequent development proposals pursuant to the proposed policies of the Plan will tier off this program EIR. This will allow later project-specific EIRs to focus solely on the new effects or detailed environmental issues not previously considered. If an agency finds that no new effects could occur, or no new mitigation measures would be required, the agency can approve the activity as being within the scope of the project covered by the program EIR, and no new environmental document would be required.

Jenny Nusbaum mentioned recent environmental review for projects in the City of San Jose, including 1270 Campbell Avenue (Mitigated Negative Declaration – to be confirmed with Jenny)

Question regarding how smaller projects will fit into the larger plan:

Smaller projects (under the plan) would have to be evaluated; part of evaluation of the smaller projects would be to talk about background of the plan and environmental evaluation of the plan. Any new impacts not covered in the program-level Plan EIR would have to be disclosed and discussed.

### **Significant Unavoidable Impacts**

One commenter asked what will be done to reduce these significant unavoidable impacts.

### **Phasing**

Received a comment about potential impacts of the implementation/phasing of the project in relation to the timing of the proposed extension of BART line from Fremont to City of Santa Clara.

Quotes:

“It could take BART 10 years to come to this area, but we are already planning the development around BART..... Should we not be putting BART in first, and the development in later?...And what happens if BART decides not to come to this area and the development is already in place, in anticipation of the BART extension?....Plan-related development would generate too much traffic for existing roads”

The first phase of development (or more) might be constructed before BART comes to this area. The EIR should address the potential impacts of putting in development before BART comes to the area.

City staff explained that one of the project alternatives assessed in the EIR would be the “No BART Alternative.” Analysis of this Alternative will deal with impacts related to development in the interim period before BART comes in. Analysis of the project in the EIR does not necessarily mean the project and project-related development will be implemented.

No BART Alternative would be in addition to the CEQA-required “No Project Alternative” in the EIR.

### **Cultural Resources**

Question from the public, regarding what would the cultural resources topic in the EIR cover. City staff and D&B staff explained that the cultural resources topic would cover historic architectural resources: the Santa Clara Railroad Depot; historic districts within or bordering the Plan area; and older, potentially historic structures (e.g., homes).

### **Urban Design**

Received a comment about scale of development in transition areas. One of the commenters pointed to the Land Use and Connectivity Diagram and asked about the area of scale/density transition (southeast corner of the plan). What was planned and would be the heights there? D&B staff responded and said two- to three-story residential development was planned for that area.

The commenter said that existing homes surrounding this area are one story, and residents would like to have development of the same height around it (i.e., one story homes, single family stand-alone units, with eclectic design-motif—not same design row upon row).

Quotes: “How do you propose two-story development will blend in with single-story homes?”

The commenter asked that the EIR analyze how the planned development would blend in with existing development. D&B staff said that the comment was noted and the EIR will cover discussion of compatibility of existing and planned uses/scales of development.

### **Intensity/Density of Development and Housing Needs**

Comments received regarding density of development related to project.

Quotes: “The level and scope of this Plan is very aggressive.”

The EIR should provide an alternative that reduces intensity of development to avoid significant impacts. An alternative steps down the intensity and density of the land use plan; especially further outside of the ½-mile radius. The EIR should clear alternatives that avoid impacts.

City staff responded that each city is required to meet its housing needs and certain density/intensity of development is needed to meet these needs. The EIR will address whether the project helps the Cities meet their housing needs.

City staff (Jenny Nusbaum) also said that the EIR will cover maximum-minimum development scenarios, plus an 80% development scenario (which is what the plan realistically projects will be built).

### **Green Design**

Comment: The plan should incorporate green design USGBC neighborhood design principles as a basis for the plan design.

City staff response: The plan will not have an actual rating and discussion not included in the EIR. This is a long-range plan and LEEDs is evolving, so requirement of specific LEEDs certification for plan-related development in the EIR will be outdated by the time development is implemented. Public buildings will be green buildings (expect some level of LEEDs certification).

### **Transportation/Circulation**

Received comments regarding circulation being substandard on DelaCruz/CA 82, and the western side of the tracks. The transition between the state highway CA 82 and De La Cruz should be analyzed in the EIR.

The EIR should consider impacts on the proposed east-west vehicular underpass between Coleman and EL Camino Real. The EIR should also look at traffic issues along The Alameda, and traffic impacts from the tunnel on the west side.

What could be done with intersections with (existing?) significant impacts? The Campbell Road and El Camino Real intersection is odd and has less than desirable geometry. The EIR should discuss existing traffic problems related to this intersection and potential impacts of the intersection redesign of Campbell Road and El Camino Real.

Existing intersections are congested. The EIR should address how project will affect traffic issues.

Orientation of streets and planned changes should be addressed in the EIR.

The City should do an opportunity cost analysis of the project and identify the trade-offs.

### **Noise**

The EIR should analyze noise impacts of the tunnel on the west side, when it comes up.

### **Aircraft Noise/Environmental Justice Issues**

Comment regarding housing (in particular high-density affordable housing) planned in proximity to the airport would have potential noise impact issues. Housing seems to be planned in downwind leg area of the airport.

Planes usually circle around the proposed planning area from the north, and then curve to the east over to the runway. The EIR should study noise impacts of airplanes on proposed housing, as well as noise impacts from emergency vehicles and rail lines traffic (not so great especially for rentals). The jet center is open 24 hours – possibility for all day/night traffic.

With Plan implementation and increased residential/population density, the airport will have to deal with the need for operating more commercial flights and increased train traffic, into the night, perhaps. This would lead to even more noise impacts. The EIR should study potential increases in noise impacts due to growth inducement pressures.

Increase in number of people could lead to increases in crime (and requirement for more police protection – effect on public services). The EIR should study that.

City staff response: Your comment is noted and we will do a detailed noise study for the EIR. (Have ESA look into it for noise issues.)

### **Water Supply/Stormwater**

Stormwater runoff and other environmental impacts on surrounding areas/context should be addressed in the EIR.