

SANTA CLARA TRANSIT AREA PLAN

STAKEHOLDER MEETING #2

Meeting Date: January 18, 2007

Location: VTA, Auditorium

Attendees: Representatives and Stakeholders from VTA, City of Santa Clara, and City of San José

The objectives of the Stakeholder Meeting were to:

1. Provide a project overview and update.
2. Review background research, opportunities and constraints, and public outreach to date.
3. Present TOD Alternatives.
4. Obtain feedback from stakeholders.

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND UPDATE

After general introductions, Dyett & Bhatia began the meeting with a project update and overview. Completed products such as the Existing Conditions Report, Santa Clara Stakeholders Report, and Report on Community Workshop #1 were referenced as available on the project website. The project overview included discussion of the scope, purpose and goals of the project as well as its relationship to planned transit improvements. Key points made in the presentation were:

- The Station Area Plan will lay the foundation for development and revitalization of the planning area.
- Plan components include Land Use/Urban Design; Circulation and Access; Parking Management; and Streetscape.
- The primary funding source for the project is grant funds from MTC—funding which is based on meeting ridership and housing (3,850 units) criteria within a ½-mile radius of the station.

Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Constraints

The discussion of existing conditions and opportunities included a review of the location and size of the Planning Area and the existing and future transit services to be provided at the Station. The overview included several contextual maps showing the Planning Area, existing land use, ownership, and opportunity sites. In addition, the presentation also reviewed the results of the circulation and access study, which showed the zone for a potential vehicular/bicycle connection between El Camino Real and the FMC site, as well as two pedestrian overcrossings at Brokaw Road and Newhall Street.

A synthesis map of site constraints was also presented, showing noise contours, airport safety zone restricted areas, hazardous material and deed restrictions, sensitive habitat, and FAA height restrictions. Further illustrating the height restrictions over the Planning Area, a drawing

showing the allowable heights in relation to site topography showed that much of the Planning Area could accommodate building heights of between 140 to 160 feet.

Public Outreach

Dyett & Bhatia presented the overall public outreach strategy, which includes the project website and mailing list, PAG and TAG review/meetings, stakeholder participation, community workshops, and public access to all documents and results. Major issues from the several completed outreach elements (first round of stakeholder interviews for each city and first community workshop) were also reported:

Stakeholder Interviews

- Overall support for higher-intensity mixed-use district
- Agreement on housing on both sides of tracks
- Feathering of residential density to protect single-family quality of adjacent neighborhoods
- Need for improved east-west connectivity
- Focus upon multi-modal access: transit, pedestrians, and bikes

Visioning Workshop

- Support for TO
- Mix of uses
- New connections
- Residential support, including high density; compatibility with single family neighborhoods on the west side of the Planning Area
- Preservation of history and culture

OF TOD ALTERNATIVES

CONCEPTS

Scenario 1:

This scenario has a mixed-use focus with non-residential commercial and hotel uses located closer to the station. The area is anchored by a retail/commercial connection along the Brokaw Road/Benton Street corridor that connects the station area to Downtown Santa Clara via a bridged connection across El Camino Real. Outside the station campus area, parks are used and located to buffer residential uses along the rail corridor and the non-residential uses in the FMC site.

Projected development for the scenario includes 4.5 million square feet of non-residential uses like retail, office, hotel and a mix of uses; 1,654 hotel rooms; and 2,905 new housing units. The resulting total of housing units in 2030 within a ½-mile radius is 4,433 units—well over the 3,850 units required by MTC's Resolution 3434.

Scenario 2:

Residential uses within the station area are emphasized in this scenario, with higher-density residential development located on both sides of the rail corridor. Park space is provided in a greater amount to provide a sense of place for both residential and commercial uses in the area. The park spaces also act as a central organizing element within the two residential concentrations on the east side of the tracks. A “Main Street” of ground-floor retail/mixed uses bridges the two residential areas and parks together.

Projected non-residential development for the scenario in 2030 is almost 40 percent less than Scenario 1, with 2.8 million square feet of non-residential uses and 1,090 hotel rooms. Conversely, residential development in this scenario is 40 percent more than Scenario 1, totaling 4,105 new units in the Planning Area and 5,633 units within the ½-mile Station Area.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Input from stakeholders was recorded on-screen during the meeting, with major issues and concerns noted. These issues have been organized by topic and are presented below.

Overall/Organizational Comments

- Many stakeholders felt that it would help overall understanding of the scenarios if specific themes or principals were articulated for each scheme.
- The City of Santa Clara expressed its commitment to developing the Station Area/Planning Area as well as improving pedestrian connectivity across El Camino Real.

Land Use

Most stakeholders agreed that a strong commercial/retail component around the Station Area would support transit-oriented development. However, some felt that the difference in land use between the schemes did not differ by much, especially since there seems to be “very little room for play” in uses with the current deed restrictions and development agreements in San José. The resulting scenarios do not differ much from existing conditions, either, since there is only a small component of Santa Clara uses that changes between scenarios.

Costco was another issue of concern by stakeholders. Many were skeptical of Costco being able to share its parking lot with alternative uses, especially since the lot is almost always full. Other stakeholders, however, felt that all parking in the station area should be shared.

Fiscal Feasibility

Stakeholders felt that fiscal feasibility for the cities was of primary concern for each of the scenarios, especially in terms of costs for new infrastructure and city services for schools, etc., for new residences and population. The schemes should have a balance between costs generated and potential revenue. Scenario 1 does provide significant commercial/hotel development in Santa Clara; however, Scenario 2 has far too much housing and will be a drain on City of Santa Clara services and revenues. In addition, the small-scale retail component in Scenario 2 will be similar to that planned for Downtown Santa Clara—unless there is an element of commercial/industrial development on the Santa Clara portion of the Planning Area, the scenario will not be supportable by the City.

Differentiating the buildout between Santa Clara and San José would be helpful in looking at impacts and financial feasibility within each city. Further separating out components or areas within the Planning Area would also help in examining specific development or infrastructure for fiscal solvency/feasibility.

Connectivity

Connectivity to the station was important for stakeholders—several felt that the idea of connecting the future Santa Clara downtown to the station area was strong. This connection could be further improved upon by a strong destination retail/area at the Station Area, which could complement the downtown area, especially if the connection is well-developed. However, the success of Downtown Santa Clara will also depend on enough development supply—especially housing—in its immediate vicinity to support the commercial development currently planned for the site. At this point, neither scenario provides this supportive development.

Traffic on and around Campbell Avenue and Newhall residential areas was a concern for stakeholders, especially the Newhall Neighborhood Association. The proposed connection point for the vehicular underpass in Scenario 2 (at Campbell Avenue and El Camino Real) will have considerable traffic impacts upon Campbell Avenue, especially. The intersection already has issues with back-up, and creating an additional highly-used connection will stress this even further. To better analyze the impacts, perhaps the population and potential trips from the Campbell Avenue area could be isolated to determine specific congestion issues.

Open Space

The idea of the landscape buffer along the west side of the rail tracks is a good idea, especially in tying in pedestrian and bike access between the Newhall pedestrian connection and the Station. However, the location of the buffer is not clear, as to whether it is considered a part of private property or if it is within the rail right-of-way. If on private property, the cities could require that developers reserve a strip of the property during the development process, which would be a great idea for ensuring a continuous buffer.

ATTENDEES

The following attendees signed the sign-in sheet provided at the meeting. Where possible, affiliations have been listed.

David Babcock

Michele Beasley, Greenbelt.org

Ian Champeny

George DeOliveira, Historical RailRoad Society

Sue Gray, Property Owner

Joe Hoffman, Historical RailRoad Society

Nanci Klein, OED, San José

Curtis Leigh, Hunter Properties

Jack Lueder

Cathy Luke, KJL Properties (by proxy)

Pat Mahan, Mayor, Santa Clara

MaryAnn Marinshaw, Historical Landmark Commissioner, Santa Clara

Gloria Sciara, City of Santa Clara

TW Smith, Property Owner

Tim Steele, Sobrato

Joe Sugg, Santa Clara University

John Sullivan

John Urban, Newhall Neighborhood

James Viso, Property Owner, Santa Clara

Steve Von Dorn, Santa Clara Chamber of Commerce