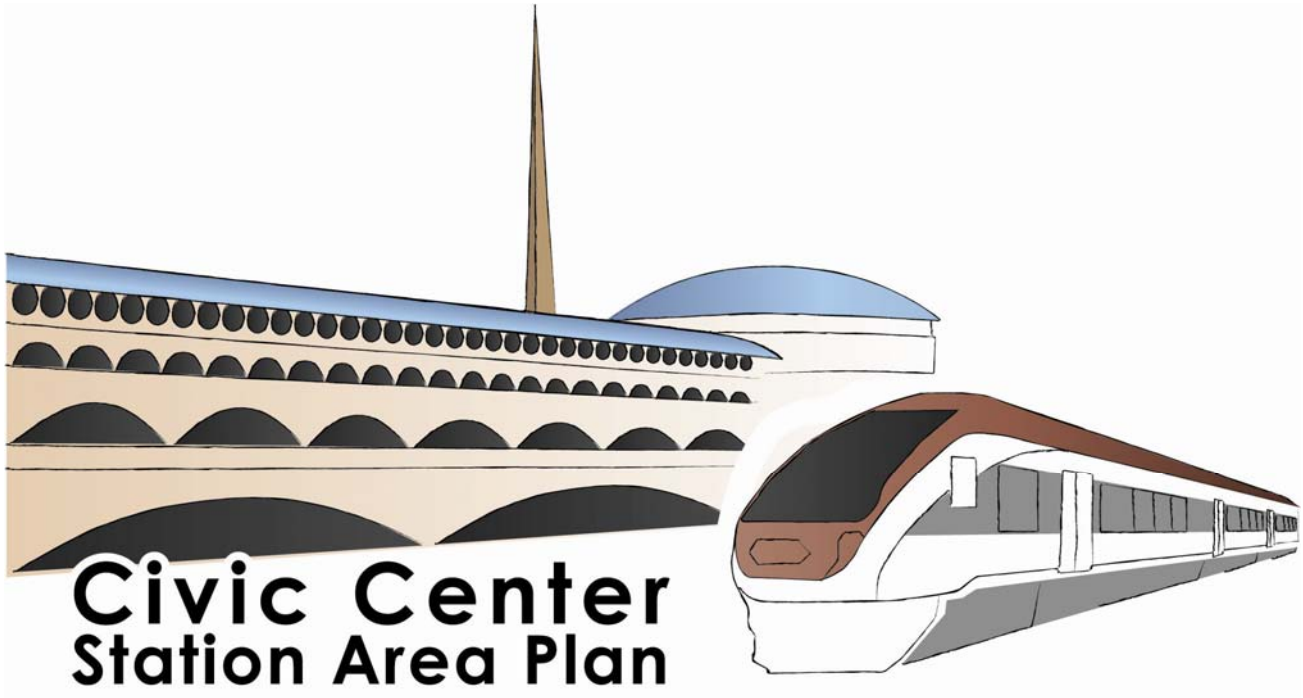


Workshop Summary Report

Civic Center Station Area Plan – *Community Visioning Workshop*



Wednesday November 9th, 2011
Guide Dogs for the Blind, 350 Los Ranchitos Road



Acknowledgements

The Civic Center Station Area Plan Advisory Committee includes:

- Damon Connolly, City Council*
- Emily Dean
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- Elissa Giambastiani
- Bob Huntsberry, Design Review Board*
- Nicholas Kapas
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Many people contributed to the success of this visioning workshop. They include:

- City of San Rafael
 - Katie Korzun, Economic Development Coordinator
 - Paul Jensen, Community Development Director
 - Rebecca Woodbury, Management Analyst
 - Stephanie Lovette, Economic Development Director (Acting)
- Fehr & Peers Transportation Consultants
 - Chris Mitchell, Principal
 - Ben Larson, Senior Transportation Engineer/Planner
- BMS Design Group
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- County of Marin
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 - John Nemeth, Planning Manager
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To retrieve a copy of this report, visit www.cityofsanrafael.org/stationareaplans or contact Rebecca Woodbury at rebecca.woodbury@cityofsanrafael.org or 415-485-3076.

Introduction

The San Rafael Civic Center Station Area Plan effort, funded in part by a \$175,000 grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), is one of two station area plans being created by the City of San Rafael. These plans for the neighborhoods around San Rafael's two new Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) rail stations will set the stage to create vibrant, mixed-use, livable areas supported by a mix of transit opportunities, including passenger rail service. The Civic Center Station Area Plan is a multi-agency collaborative planning effort between the City of San Rafael, SMART, Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD), Marin Transit, the San Rafael Redevelopment Agency, the County of Marin, and the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM). As a partner in MTC's grant program, the Association of Bay Area Governments is also involved in the planning project.

The effort includes two public workshops, the first of which occurred on Wednesday, March 9, 2011 at the Guide Dogs for the Blind. The second workshop was Wednesday, November 9, 2011. This workshop was open and advertised to the public and project stakeholders, and attended by approximately 37 members of the public. The open-house style workshop included five themed stations facilitated by members of the consultant team, City staff, and members of the multi-agency project team. The stations were:

- Transit Connections
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections
- Parking
- Promenade Connections
- Roundabouts
- Land Use

In addition to these stations, Gallinas Watershed Council and the County of Marin each had informational booths. Staff from SMART was also on hand to answer questions.

Outreach Efforts

Prior to the first workshop, the Civic Center Station Area Plan Advisory Committee members and City staff conducted outreach efforts through various outlets to maximize public awareness of and involvement in the planning process. These efforts included:

- Email notification to various stakeholder groups and their constituents
- A mailing to all property owners, renters, and businesses in the plan area
- A write-up in *Snapshot*, the newsletter of the San Rafael City Manager
- A press release to local newspapers
- A posting on the City of San Rafael's homepage
- A mailing to key stakeholders and nonprofit organizations in the area

As a result, 37 members of the public representing a diverse group of interests engaged in the 3-hour visioning process, providing valuable input and insight as the community plans for the future of San Rafael's Civic Center station area.

Draft Vision Statement

It's 2035; over twenty years after the completion of the Civic Center Station Area Plan. This area is a vibrant and popular destination for North San Rafael residents and visitors. The station is a central hub for connecting to a wide variety of local activities, cultural and natural, including the seat of Marin County government at the landmark Frank Lloyd Wright Civic Center building, Veterans' Memorial Auditorium, lagoon and grounds.

The train station fits well into its niche below the freeway and adjacent to the surrounding neighborhoods. Connecting paths, sidewalks and streets are comfortable, beautifully landscaped and artfully well-lit. There are places to park cars, scooters and bicycles, charge electric vehicles, and rent a bike. People are waiting in comfort for a train or bus, or just enjoying a cup of coffee and the great views of the distinctive rolling hills. There is housing nearby for people who work in the community. A public plaza near the station is a lively local gathering place.

With respect for Marin's landscape, the area is planted with a wide variety of native plants and trees. A small fork of Gallinas Creek that flows through the station delights everyone with its ever-changing parade of wildlife. The whole area feels open and park-like; it's easy to tell that the natural environment is appreciated and important to the community.

The station is at the center of a culturally and economically diverse community. The Marin Farmer's Market has grown into a full-scale daily shopping market, where fresh, locally grown organic produce, crafted cheeses, and quality goods of all kinds can be quickly picked up on the way home from the train.

While the station area is bustling with activity, it still maintains a hometown feel. Buildings are not so tall that they block the views of the hills and the new buildings complement the existing homes and natural areas. There are shops, coffee houses, restaurants, and convenience stores in the station area. Residents and businesses both benefit from having people and needed services within walking distance.

It is safe and easy to get from place to place. Multiple ways to travel are fully integrated and cars no longer dominate. Frequent bus and shuttle services help keep distant areas connected. Bikes, moms with strollers, and pedestrians enjoy easy access to their destinations thanks to thoughtful design changes. The North San Pedro Road underpass, the Merrydale overcrossing, and the station crossing are all pleasant places to experience views of the community and the hills.

To the west, the completed Promenade now allows graceful walking and biking along the beautifully restored Gallinas Creek to the Northgate mall and beyond. Folk of all ages enjoy stopping to relax and watch the steelhead salmon that have returned. To the east, walkways and bikeways stretch all the way to the Civic Center.

The area also offers a variety of housing types for all incomes including housing affordable for the local workforce. The simple, elegantly-designed affordable units have allowed young people to return to Marin, bringing a new vibrancy into the social fabric. Seniors also find these smaller homes near services and transit especially convenient and desirable.

The changes made to this neighborhood center around North San Rafael's new train station have transitioned the area into an exceptionally enjoyable place.

Workshop Highlights

The following presents a summary of each display station and the comments, including both a summary of comments as well as more specific and detailed notes. Displays and materials presented at each station are also included.

Transit Connections

This display showed conceptual shuttle routes for two proposed SMART shuttles that meet train passengers at the station and take them to major employment areas, including Kaiser, Marin County Civic Center, Fair Isaac, Professional Center Parkway, Marin Commons and Northgate Mall.



Comments at the workshop included:

- Consider connections through hospital and office area.
- Who is funding the shuttles? Will they be free to passengers?
- Let shuttle go up to Sutter.
- Santa Venetia has many nursing homes with employees. I'd like to see shuttle service.
- Office buildings at 100 Smith ranch – consider stop here.
- Hospital has 24/7 shifts.
- Would be good to have the SMART shuttles, Marin Transit routes (45, 49), Community shuttles (259, 233), and any other transit converge at a “hubette”.
- Would be good if there was a bus transit hub “hubette” near the SMART station with easy pedestrian access.

Parking

This display showed current parking demand and supply, the location of parking provided for SMART patrons and opportunities for additional parking supply.

Comments at the workshop included:

- Merrydale north needs to be promenade.
- Put parking on west side of freeway to avoid Las Freitas intersection, borrow parking from Marin Ventures.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections

This display showed the existing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and the gaps to fill in for more complete connections.

Comments at the workshop included:

- A bridge across a tidal creek bed for this bike path here could get real complicated...
- Ped crossing first to main entry road, lagoon. Ped crossing to Contempo.
- Connect Los Ranchitos from Walters north to Constance.
- Meets my needs. Everything is covered!
- Yes on new pedestrian touch crossing.

- What can you do to make safer for bike/ped at Freitas/Old redwood Highway.
- Sidewalks around/on freeways would be great! =)
- On bike – left from Northgate onto Los Ranchitos light doesn't change for bikes.
- Please provide a class II facility vs. a class III along Las Gallinas + wherever/whenever possible for increased safety.
- Please provide a class II facility vs. a class II along Los Ranchitos and Merrydale for increased safety.
- Yes more sidewalks!
- Please provide what the proposed class I along the SMART right of way from the station south along Los Ranchitos interfaces to the Lincoln Hill path.

Promenade Connections

This display showed three options for connecting the North San Rafael Promenade to the SMART station.

Option 1 – “Full-Build”

The northern connection of Merrydale Road to the street network would be provided by a new intersection along Las Gallinas Avenue. The Merrydale Overcrossing slip ramps would be closed to vehicular traffic and would be converted to a multiuse path on the south side of the Merrydale Overcrossing, and made available for development on the north side. This would create a new roadway that would bisect the parcel and create two smaller parcels. This configuration is preferred as it would allow the ability to construct a multi-use pathway along the west side of Merrydale Road from Las Gallinas (where one currently exists around the northern perimeter of Northgate Mall) down to the SMART Civic Center Station.



Comments at the workshop included:

- *Option A*
 - What would be done with the rest of the parking area? Still dedicated as parking?
 - Ped only past overpass.
 - Need pedestrian/bicycle/horse crossing, with grade crossing protect you.
 - Horses on multi-use path.
 - Need at grade crossing.
 - A – best, C – interim

Option 2 – “Phased Build”

Option 2 would be a precursor to Option 1. The Promenade would be constructed between the Merrydale Overcrossing and a transition to the current roadway network would be created at the Merrydale Overcrossing. Class III bicycle routes would be signed/stripped along Merrydale Road and the Merrydale Overcrossing slip ramps as to not force a difficult transition point from the multiuse path at the Merrydale Overcrossing. A crosswalk would provide a connection from the multiuse path on the west side of Merrydale Road to a pedestrian connection to Northgate III on the west side.

Comments at the workshop included:

- *Option B*
 - Consider including a sidewalk along Merrydale in option C (B), which connects with the multi-use pathway. Similar to the sidewalk proposed in option C. Love option A!

Option 3 – “Partial Build”

A wide pedestrian walkway would be provided on the east side of Merrydale Road from the sidewalk on the southern border of Northgate III to the SMART Civic Center Station. A sidewalk would also be constructed on the slip ramp south of the Merrydale Overcrossing to provide a connection to Merrydale Road. At its terminus, a crosswalk would provide a connection to the east side. Class III bicycle routes would be signed/stripped along Merrydale Road and the Merrydale Overcrossing slip ramps.

Comments at the workshop included:

- *Option C*
 - Bike lanes on Merrydale over crossing please.
 - Think that long term option A is best. Do option C as stop gap.

Roundabouts

This display showed conceptual drawings for roundabouts, a tool for increasing traffic capacity.

Comments at the workshop included:

- Roundabouts are terrifying – especially for old folks.
- Love roundabouts ++
- Roundabout doesn't seem to make the intersection safer, why do it? Encourage high ped/bike connections, don't compromise ped/bike safety.
- ADA? (Americans with Disabilities Act)
- Complicated for pedestrians and bikes – why complicate?

Land Use

This display showed land use alternatives developed by the committee that explore higher densities in residential and commercial development in the area.

Workshop participants were asked to fill out a survey based on the alternatives. The survey broke down the alternatives by area and asked participants to denote which alternative they preferred in each area. The overall results showed a slight preference to Alternative A (higher density) except in Area B, where the surveys reflected an equal number of people preferring each alternative.

General comments at the workshop included (not from survey):

Additional Opportunity Areas

- Consider some residential retail here (just north of Medical Offices 'F'). There are many condos/apartments. Retail could make this area more walkable.
- Develop Northgate parking lots?
- Housing at Northgate; “built in” customer base. (at Northgate Mall)
- Grade crossing for Merrydale – vehicles and pedestrians. (Merrydale at McInnis Parkway)
- Put Parking on public storage lot. (public storage just southwest of SMART Station)
- Cut Merrydale through to allow west side auto access.

COMPILED RESULTS

	ALTERNATIVE ONE	ALTERNATIVE TWO
AREA A	13	8
AREA B	10	10
AREA C	14	5
AREA D	11	10
AREA E	12	8
AREA F	12	8
AREA G	11	7
AREA H	10	8



- Use area as a link to join the pond/civic center with Northgate.
- Merrydale is a “complete green street” peds, bikes, vehicles, and creek.
- Area for public space, gathering for neighbors. (near Chevron & McDonalds)

Alternative 1

- Need urban design features – what gives identity to each of these areas and to whole district?
- Limit neighborhood retail on Merrydale. (Area E)
- Limit neighborhood retail on Merrydale. (Area D)

Alternative 2

- Retail on Merrydale backing the project to the freeway.
- Low-income housing. (Area E)
- Limit neighborhood retail on Merrydale. (Area E)
- Limit neighborhood retail on Merrydale. (Area D)

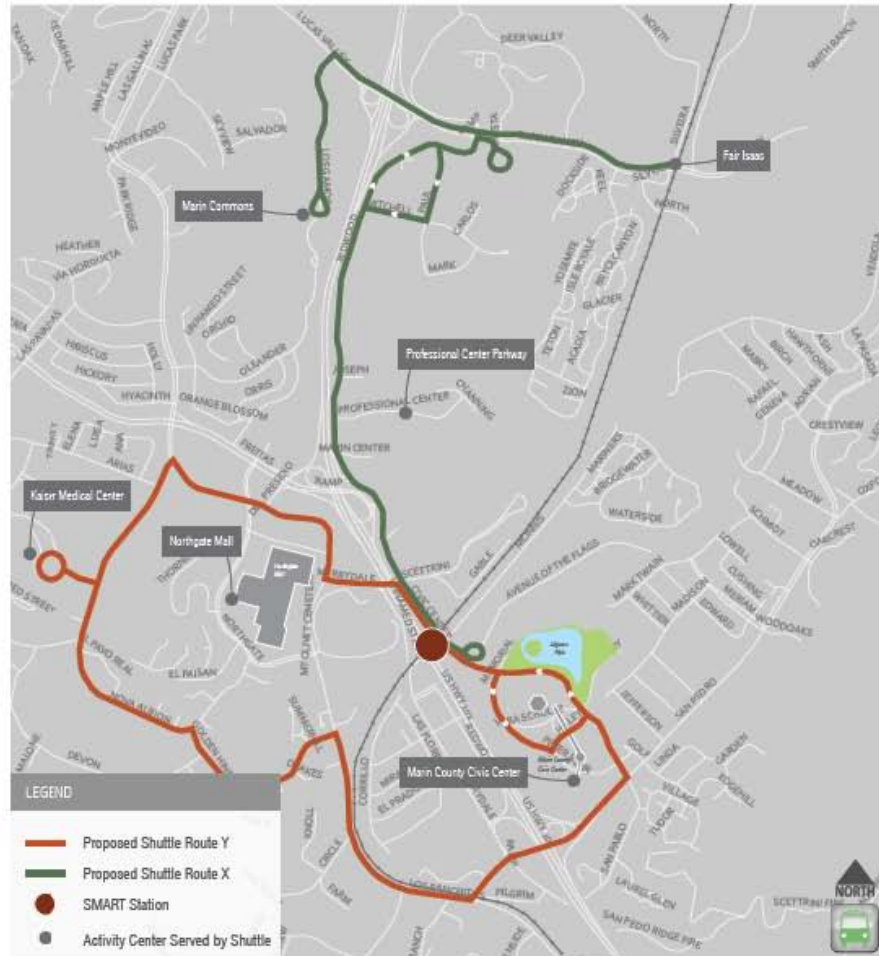
General Comments

- More business related retail on Area H to support hotel
- Attract more businesses like Autodesk
- More events like Bioneers that attract people from outside area

Display Boards

The following pages include the workshop display boards.

TRANSIT CONNECTIONS



PARKING



2

6

7

8

9



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

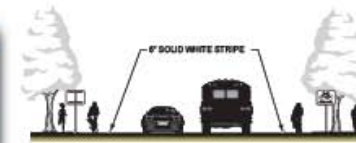
Pedestrian Connections



Bicycle Connections



CLASS I BIKEWAY (Bike Path)
Provides a completely separated right-of-way for the exclusive use of bicycles and pedestrians with on/off-street transition.



CLASS II BIKEWAY (Bike Lane)
Provides a dedicated striped lane for one-way travel on a street or highway.



CLASS III BIKEWAY (Bike Route)
Provides for shared use with or motor vehicle traffic.



PROMENADE CONNECTIONS

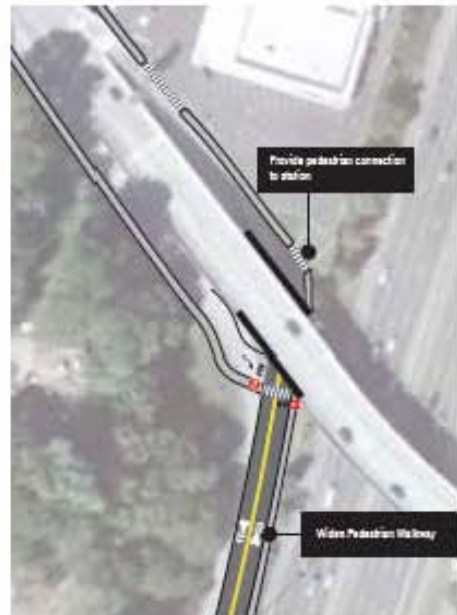
OPTION A



OPTION B

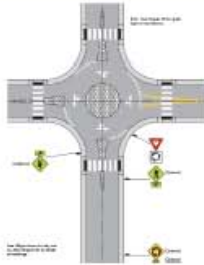


OPTION C



ROUNDBABOUTS

Mini Roundabout Signing (2009 MUTCD):



Single Lane Striping (2009 MUTCD)



Single Lane



Single Lane with dedicated right turn-lane

Pedestrian Considerations:

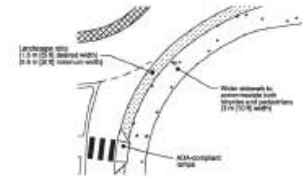
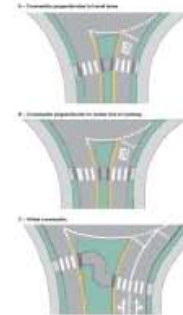


Benefits:

- Easy to determine gaps
- Cars are only coming from one direction
- Fewer lanes to cross
- Splitter island provides a refuge

Trade offs:

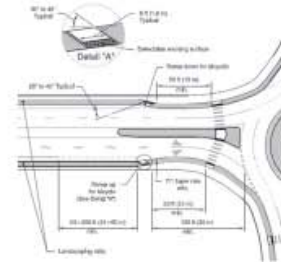
- Pedestrians must assess gaps
- A.D.A issues
- No signal protection



Bicycle Considerations:



- Vehicle speeds are lower (17 – 25 mph)
- Bikes can share roadway with vehicles on single lane roundabouts
- Separate bicycle path or shared bicycle-pedestrian path is preferred at multilane roundabouts.



ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITY AREAS

PLEASE INDICATE ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY AREAS ON THE MAP BELOW



SAN RAFAEL CIVIC CENTER STATION AREA PLAN

COMMUNITY MEETING | NOVEMBER 9, 2011

ALTERNATIVE ONE



ALTERNATIVE TWO



Detailed Survey Results

The following pages include the detailed survey results from the land use alternatives survey.

AREA A

HANDOUT #	ALTERNATIVE ONE	ALTERNATIVE TWO	COMMENTS
1		1	General Comments: is this the urbanification of a suburban area... what is the actual versus potential change in autos in these areas... Marin's current bus/public transit does not support the infrastructure depicted in these mock-ups. How will the traffic density in San Rafael be mitigating in these plans? Have you experienced these areas currently with traffic hours? What's the alternative vs. traditional ratio of transport... not sure these plans address this?
2	-	-	Neither - too congested now.
3		1	Can be positive with flourishing business, small and large.
4	-	-	Both are ugly. Too dense.
5		1	Prefer less dense plan
6	1		I think higher density development would offer more choice of housing and retail and offer an example to Marin the benefits to "smart" development. More opportunities to not use a car is where it is at.
7	-	-	Activity going on off Merrydale near Marin Adventures all times of day and night. Sketchy, not safe activity. Please take a look. Thank You. More development here is good!
8	1		Market rate housing should comprise at least 70% of the units in this area.
9	-	-	Keep businesses with ground-level and provide mixed-use and mixed diverse incomes, i.e: studios, 1 & 2-bedroom and suites.
10	1		
11	1		Put lots of affordable housing here
12	1		Not actually in a neighborhood of single family homes so perfect for higher density. [Photos: Crossed-out City Center Plaza, Question-marked Palo Alto, circled Cinnabar Commons; circled Mixed Use Office Santa Cruz]

13	1		Insure low income housing at that side
14	1	1	Either or but prefer circled buildings [Photos circled are City Center Redwood City, and Mixed use Office Santa Cruz, and Pavona]
15	1		Good spot to add back residential to shopping center district (includes affordable housing throughout)
16		1	Residential densities seem more compatible with local and regional context.
17	1		I prefer the higher density zoning alternatives. A challenge in realizing this vision is that individual property owners will develop properties and the end result may not be this convivial, attractive neighborhood. I suggest design guidelines constrain developers.
18		1	
19	1		I would like to maximize the opportunity for affordable, entry-level housing. More opportunities for young people, especially those who grew up in Marin and would like to live and work in the area/ At this point, will leave the specifics to the planners and the committee.
20		1	
21	1		
22		1	
23	1		Consider walkability and bike lanes
24	1		Higher density. Affordable housing. Good pedestrian/bike/bus/train access.
TOTAL	13	8	

AREA B

HANDOUT #	ALTERNATIVE ONE	ALTERNATIVE TWO	COMMENTS
1	1		Please consider noise and traffic at lights near mall. Good land use impact might increase.
2		1	If you have to
3		1	
4	-	-	

5		1	
6	1		
7	-	-	
8	1		You can't put parking here unless you are willing to cut Merrydale through/across the tracks.
9		1	People will complain but they will adjust! For ADA only!
10		1	
11	1		
12		1	Parking - but need more on west of freeway for SMART - very difficult and DANGEROUS to come south on 101 and get to east of freeway at the intersection at ?bright?
13	-	-	
14		1	Prefer parking
15	1		Put parking on street?
16	1		Pretty setting might be a good site for housing.
17	1		
18		1	
19	-	-	
20		1	Must have parking as well as a number of convenience food outlets and stores.
21	1		
22		1	
23	1		
24	1		Higher density. Affordable housing. Good pedestrian/bike/bus/train access.
TOTAL	10	10	

AREA C

HANDOUT #	ALTERNATIVE ONE	ALTERNATIVE TWO	COMMENTS
1	1		High traffic outlet onto the street. Change in flow might allow for this but AM gridlock is difficult.
2	-	-	What's here now? Not here - no more.
3		1	
4		1	Normal house and yard
5		1	
6	1		
7	-	-	
8	-	-	Too far from the station to worry about.
9	-	-	How about working with a non-profit developer on this? How about no longer even thinking about alternative 2 developments in the future!
10	1		
11	1		
12	1		No parking
13	1		Complex units are compatible
14	1		Higher density
15	1		
16	1		Good site for higher density
17	1		
18		1	
19	-	-	
20	1		
21	1		
22		1	
23	1		
24	1		Higher density. Affordable housing. Good pedestrian/bike/bus/train access.
TOTAL	14	5	

AREA D

HANDOUT #	ALTERNATIVE ONE	ALTERNATIVE TWO	COMMENTS
1		1	
2		1	
3		1	
4	-	-	Whose fantasy?
5		1	
6	1		
7	-	-	
8	1		Put parking at the end of Redwood Highway in place of the self-storage units. Civic Center Drive auto access will not work because passengers cannot get to the station in a reliable time.
9	-	-	Mixed use. Work live spaces. Studios. Upper income units in same building with boutiques at ground. More green areas!
10	1		
11	-	-	Split Area D lengthwise. Make higher density along Redwood Highway (4 stories), and 3 stories along Merrydale.
12	1	1	Alternative 1 along Redwood Highway. Alternative 2 along Merrydale.
13	1		Same as E - both areas need a sense of guidelines for unified, not uniform, development
14	1	1	Alternative 1 along Redwood highway; Alternative 2 along Merrydale.
15	1		Develop "village commons" public use areas, at north end especially - need to create a "village center" identity. Not sure about "general retail" - why not use full depth for residential BACKING on freeway? (with Merrydale as front "main street.")
16		1	
17	1		

18		1	Limit of remove neighborhood retail on Merrydale. Frontage and Las Gallinas OK.
19	-	-	
20		1	
21	1		
22		1	
23	1		
24	1		Higher density. Affordable housing. Good pedestrian/bike/bus/train access.
TOTAL	11	10	

AREA E

HANDOUT #	ALTERNATIVE ONE	ALTERNATIVE TWO	COMMENTS
1		1	
2		1	
3		1	
4	-	-	No density
5		1	
6	1		
7	-	-	
8	1		
9	-	-	Mixed use. Live work units - both affordable and work force and upper income units with boutiques below. You can do better than what you are offering. Push Dandy Market to Merrydale, build above and town houses behind.
10	1		
11	1		
12	1		Apartments and Aegis on west side already. [Photos: Crossed-out City Center Redwood City, circled Cinnabar Commons and Redmond; circled Elmwood Retail]
13	1		3 stories are common all over San Rafael, why not here as well.
14	1		More smaller shops. But keep Micky D's and Hardware Store.

15	1		
16		1	
17	1		
18		1	
19	-	-	
20		1	
21	1		
22		1	
23	1		
24	1		Higher density. Affordable housing. Good pedestrian/bike/bus/train access.
TOTAL	12	8	

AREA F

HANDOUT #	ALTERNATIVE ONE	ALTERNATIVE TWO	COMMENTS
1		1	
2		1	Area F is a hard area to get in and out of.
3		1	
4		1	
5		1	Alternative 1 presents traffic and parking issues
6	1		As long as strong consideration for the wetlands/streams is provided, higher density could work fine.
7	-	-	
8	-	-	Too far to care. Topography is too difficult.
9	1		Mixed use with live work and businesses on ground floor
10	1		
11	1		
12	1		Mixed office and density housing
13	1		

14		1	Leave as is
15	1		
16	-	-	
17	1		
18		1	
19	-	-	
20	1		
21	1		
22		1	
23	1		
24	1		Higher density. Affordable housing. Good pedestrian/bike/bus/train access.
TOTAL	12	8	

AREA G

HANDOUT #	ALTERNATIVE ONE	ALTERNATIVE TWO	COMMENTS
1		1	
2	-	-	Neither. Wetlands close to office building, needs to be taken into account.
3		1	
4		1	
5		1	
6	1		
7	-	-	
8	1		Maybe you ought to ask Autodesk what they think.
9	-	-	None. Too close to the creek and natural habitats. The east side south of Scetrini should remain as is.
10		1	
11	1		Get rid of office building and build housing.

12	1		If not underwater [Photos: Crossed-out existing to remain; Crossed out City Center Redwood City; circled Redmond; circled SLO office and top retail photo]
13	1		
14	1		Do away with office complex.
15	1		Allow mixed use
16	-	-	
17	1		
18	1		
19	-	-	
20	-	-	Should have convenience shops for quick food and groceries, and some restaurants.
21	1		
22		1	
23		1	
24	1		Higher density. Affordable housing. Good pedestrian/bike/bus/train access.
TOTAL	11	7	

AREA H

HANDOUT #	ALTERNATIVE ONE	ALTERNATIVE TWO	COMMENTS
1		1	
2	-	-	Next to a sensitive wetland. Lights and traffic would bother wildlife. Marin Lagoon houses are sinking.
3		1	Thank you for presenting detail on where this info will be used.
4		1	Less is better
5		1	
6	1		
7	-	-	
8	1		

9	-	-	None. This area will be impacted by sea level rise. It also borders the creek which will have a negative impact on the creek. This is poor planning.
10		1	Prefer less development here near the wetlands.
11	1		Put affordable housing.
12	1		{Photos: Crossed out City Center Redwood City; Circled Palo Alto (60) and Palo Alto (43); crossed out top office bldg}
13	1		Go with higher density anywhere close to the station.
14		1	Lower density
15	1		
16	-	-	
17	1		
18		1	
19	-	-	
20	-	-	H should be parking
21	1		
22		1	
23	1		
24	1		Higher density. Affordable housing. Good pedestrian/bike/bus/train access.
TOTAL	10	8	

Next Steps

The Committee will be reviewing a draft plan and related topics during the next several months. The Committee meets second Wednesdays each month from 7-9 p.m. at Guide Dogs for the Blind and all meetings are open to the public. There will also be Design Review Board and Planning Commission meetings scheduled in Spring 2012. The public is invited to attend these meetings and provide feedback to the committee on the suggested recommendations.