

Subcommittee Proposal for Land Use

Preface

These are the subcommittee's thoughts and interpretation of the Committee's work on land uses over the last year. We present this land use proposal as a starting point for the Committee's consideration and discussion. It is not written in stone and we expect it to be further shaped at the future meetings. We listened carefully to the technical input from staff and consultants and to community input at meetings and workshops and combined it all with our own observations and expertise.

The subcommittee deliberations were not absolutely bound by the existing technical considerations of zoning, densities, intensities, parking regulations or traffic capacities. These items and other practical considerations certainly influenced our discussions, but did not drive them. The Civic Center Station Area Committee is developing a vision of what **can** be – the technical aspects will be addressed in later, separate planning actions.

Our overall intent was to respect the existing neighborhoods' characters, especially in the residential areas. However, we recognize that the future in general and SMART in particular will bring change and we want the Station Area Vision to shape that change in a positive way. A successful train will draw and accommodate increases in intensity which are naturally part of a dynamic community. We are confident that this can make the station an attractive, new neighborhood amenity and community feature.

Overall Considerations

In general, multi-family residential of 3 to 4 stories (unless otherwise noted) within walking distance from the station should be encouraged throughout the area, even on the sites that were not identified as priority development sites including the Cemetery, Guide Dogs and the County property. This is a long range 35 year plan, and major alterations in uses could occur that are not currently contemplated. Development that is focused and clustered around the freeway and train station and not extending into the nearby neighborhoods will help preserve the existing residential neighborhood character.

While policies should emphasize residential development, increases in both residential and commercial intensities are seen as positive in the immediate vicinity of the station, especially within walking distance. The goal is to achieve lessened reliance on single occupancy vehicles and to develop the station area as a community center. The market should also be allowed to determine the specific usage.

There does not appear to be a market demand to support significant additional, general purpose retail in the area. Limited station-related retail should be allowed in very close proximity to the station. Additional neighborhood retail should be allowed, but not required in areas that are appropriate for mixed use.

It is also understood that higher density demands greater attention to high quality design. Where height limits are increased, architectural quality becomes essential. With close proximity to the freeway, care should also be taken to insure that occupant safety and health are maintained. Further, environmental considerations are always important, especially attention to the area's wetlands.

Area east of freeway and surrounding the Civic Center

Current office and hotel development sites should allow greater densities and heights and should allow for the addition of residential development. The level properties along Civic Center Drive within walking distance of the Station are excellent locations for more intense usage. In particular, the vacant County site adjacent to the station presents a great opportunity for an intense, transit oriented use. It is large, close to the station and offers a blank slate for a new and exciting project. The currently developed properties could be further developed with added office space, housing added to the office development for mixed use, or for complete conversion to residential. Any housing on the Civic Center Drive hilltop sites must include improvements that facilitate access to the Station, including addressing the perceived barrier of the uphill climb from the station to the site. Housing or mixed use throughout the area should be allowed up to 5 stories.

Area around Northgate Mall

Multi-family residential should be allowed and encouraged at Northgate Mall and allowed to develop up to 5 stories. Multi-family residential and commercial mixed-use should be encouraged on the CVS site at 3 to 4 stories, and should include an extension of the Promenade. Housing would be permitted but not encouraged in the office area along Las Gallinas across from Northgate Mall. This stretch is well suited to its current, convenience-oriented commercial uses.

Area around Merrydale/Redwood

All single family areas should remain as single family and be buffered from new development. Multi-family housing should be encouraged on the properties closest to the Station, specifically Northgate Storage, Public Storage, and Marin Ventures. These close-in lots could also contain small amounts of station serving retail, such as a coffee shop, convenience store or cleaners, clustered near the station. Development should be allowed up to four stories, with design guidelines addressing building articulation, massing, and setbacks.

The area south of the station along Merrydale and Redwood Hwy is an appropriate place for a mix of retail and residential. Residential could be added to the commercial uses along Redwood Hwy, and developments with residential above retail could go to 4 stories. Properties along Merrydale should remain residential with up to 3 stories. Design guidelines are necessary for the Merrydale properties and should include height transitions, building articulation and varied setbacks to prevent the appearance of a solid wall to the adjacent single family neighborhood.

Civic Center Station Plan Schedule / Timeline

Meeting Date	Discussion item /activity at meeting
Jan 11	Land use
Feb 8	Parking Policy changes
March 14	Consultant presentation of proposed document Begin Committee review of Consultant Proposal
April 11	Complete review of Consultant Proposal Direction to consultant on adjustments to proposal
May 9	Accept Draft Plan for public review May 22 Design Review Board June 5 Planning Commission Committee presentations to interest groups
June 13	Committee review all public comments Direct consultant on adjustments to Draft
July 11	Review Final Plan and send to City Council
	August 6 Council Meeting