

Civic Center Station Area Plan Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes: Wednesday, December 14, 2011; 7:00 – 9:00 pm
Guide Dogs for the Blind, 350 Los Ranchitos Rd.

Attendance

Civic Center Station Area Plan Advisory Committee

Emily Dean	Rich McGrath	Judy Schriebman*
Elissa Giambastiani	Larry Paul	Roger Smith
Nicholas Kapas	Andrew Patterson	Tammy Taylor
Preston McCoy*	Jeff Schoppert	

*Ex officio, non-voting member

**Ex officio alternate

Absent: Damon Connolly*, Mike Fryer, Marcus Lee, Casey Mazzoni, Bob Huntsberry*, Stanton Klose*, Greg Knell, Brigitte Moran, Jean Starkweather, Gayle Theard, Craig Thomas Yates

Observers: Greg Andrew, Jerry Belletto, Mary Fellow, Elaine Lyford-Nojima, Sue Mace, Kate Powers, Jeff Rhoads, Stuart Shepard, Ken Taylor

Staff: Katie Korzun (Economic Development Coordinator, San Rafael Redevelopment Agency), Rebecca Woodbury (Management Analyst, City of San Rafael), Paul Jensen (Community Development Director, City of San Rafael), John Eells (Consultant to TAM)

Welcome, Announcements and Introductions

Co-chair Jeff Schoppert opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. noting a quorum present. He said the purpose of the meeting was learn about what happened at the November workshop as well as the traffic modeling for the land use alternatives. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Nicholas Kapas made a motion and Elissa Giambastiani seconded. Minutes were approved. Nicholas Kapas left the meeting.

Jeff Schoppert said he would be chairing the meeting since Mike Fryer was out for a family emergency.

A member of the public asked when the committee would be taking public comment. Rich McGrath asked if public comment could be moved up earlier in the agenda. Jeff Schoppert assured there would be time for public comment throughout the meeting as well as at the end.

Jeff Schoppert acknowledged a letter sent to the committee from Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative (MEHC) on 10/31 and said staff had prepared a response. Both letters were in the agenda packet. Roger Smith asked who MEHC was and how many people are part of the organization. Elissa Giambastiani wondered what the committee was supposed to do. Jeff Schoppert asked if anyone in the committee had any objections to the staff response. Roger Smith suggested that the letter did not warrant a response. Katie Korzun noted that the letter as well as members of MEHC asked for a response. Jeff Schoppert said there was no longer a quorum so he tabled the topic.

Workshop Analysis

Rebecca Woodbury said the committee hosted a workshop in November and it was attended by 37 members of the public. She walked through the material presented at the workshop and presented information gathered during the workshop as well as a debrief of staff and committee members after the workshop.

Rebecca Woodbury said that some people at the workshop were curious about connections between bus, rail and shuttles and wondered if there was an opportunity for a mini bus hub near the train station. She said that most people were OK with the on-street parking opportunities identified, but some showed interest in parking opportunities for SMART riders on the west side of the station. Judy Schriebman noted the parking on McInnis is in close proximity to wetlands.

Rebecca Woodbury said there was general consensus at the workshop that the area needs more sidewalks and safer bicycle facilities. She said people showed an interest in having an at-grade pedestrian crossing on the west side of the station. Rich McGrath asked about the connection of the multi-use path to the path at Puerto Suello Hill. Rebecca Woodbury said SMART has not shared design plans yet. A member of the public suggested an at-grade auto connection of Merrydale Road.

Rebecca Woodbury said most people at the workshop liked Option A for the Promenade plan, connecting the Promenade through the Northgate III parcel down Merrydale to the SMART multi-use path. With regards to roundabouts, she said people at the workshop were concerned about pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Rebecca Woodbury said that the land use surveys showed that generally people favored Alternative A, although 2 people noted that both alternatives proposed too much development. She pointed out that in several areas the vote count was close and in area B, the votes were even.

Judy Schriebman questioned the amount of support for some of the ideas about development, noting that some people said they preferred no new development in the area. She said the comment about new office on the east side of the freeway conflicted with concerns about sea-level rise. She expressed concern that the analysis displayed bias.

Rebecca Woodbury noted that the comment about office use on the east side of the freeway was only made by one person and that people said they were interested in heights of 3-4 stories in some areas. Desire for heights above 4 stories was not indicated.

A member of the public said there were not enough people at the workshop and many people did not fill out the land use survey. The workshop was not advertised well. It doesn't seem like that many people favored higher densities.

Larry Paul said it was unfortunate not to have more people at the workshop and that people need to show up if they want their opinion counted.

A member of the public said that people in Santa Venetia are very involved, but they are also burnt out because of all the issues they are involved with.

Judy Schriebman said people at the workshop were shocked at the effect sea-level rise would have on the area and they expressed concern about wetlands.

Rich McGrath noted that the Santa Venetia neighborhood is represented on the committee.

Traffic Modeling Analysis

Katie Korzun explained the results of the traffic modeling for the land use alternatives. She said that in both alternatives the traffic model showed gridlock throughout the area, but we learned a great deal about where there is capacity for development including:

1. Increases in residential density to 60 units/acre across the board are not supportable; it may be possible in area FGH. Some increases in density, on a case by case basis, may be possible.
2. The addition of housing in the general area of the Northgate Mall, Northgate I and III, and the office area on Las Gallinas, is possible.
3. The addition of housing in Area B is possible.
4. Some addition of housing in Area DE is possible, but the regulations and locations must be carefully reviewed.
5. Increases in FAR over 0.3 are not possible
6. Increases in activity at the County Government Center, a major employment and activity node, is possible.
7. Retail development can be accommodated in the general area of the Northgate Mall, Northgate I and III, and the office area on Las Gallinas.
8. The addition of retail in area FGH was not indicated in the capacity numbers, but might be possible in limited amounts if the office development is altered.

Roger Smith asked about trading uses, such as office for retail. Katie Korzun said that is a possibility and she added that uses have different trip generations. Preston McCoy asked about the assumptions for the traffic model with regards to bicyclists and pedestrians. Roger Smith said the assumptions for the traffic model are based on average behavior. Nick Kapas asked for clarification about traffic failure. Katie Korzun said that although the traffic model fails under both alternatives, we learned a lot about the capacity in the different areas. She said the model reflects where we are today.

A member of the public said this process is about the community achieving a vision, not a process for development. He suggested the committee think about the goals of the vision, not about how much development can fit. He noted that he is not anti-development, but the committee should be cautious about how much development they propose and where.

Nick Kapas asked about the adjustments staff made in the analysis of the traffic modeling results. Katie Korzun said she scaled the alternatives back, but maintained the same assumptions.

A member of the public said that residents in Santa Venetia commissioned a study by an independent traffic consultant and learned the numbers that the City of San Rafael has are off. She brought in an image of an intersection with cars queuing.

Year end review

Katie Korzun gave an overview of the work that has been done to date and what was coming up for 2012. She said that the committee has finished the information gathering and in January would start working on the draft plan. The consultants have been putting pieces together and some parts are further along than others. Emily Dean asked what work had been completed. Katie Korzun said some work on circulation and connectivity had been done but no land use decisions have been made. Larry Paul said it may be helpful to see conceptual drawings of the proposed densities or diagrams of FAR changes. Roger Smith said the pictures of buildings they looked at were helpful.

Paul Jensen spoke said staff is adding two public forums to this planning process, with the Design Review Board (DRB) and the Planning Commission. These will occur after the draft plan is completed. Roger Smith questioned whether DRB was appropriate. Paul Jensen said elements of the plan relate to

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the Design Review Board and this will help maximize opportunities for public comment. Paul Jensen reminded the group that the finished product is accepted, not adopted by the City Council. The Plan will help to create a road map for the future, but no environmental work will be done.

A member of the public said that he appreciates a transparent process and the plan for the added public forums is satisfactory.

Nick Kapas asked what the committee will be doing for the next couple of meetings. Jeff Schoppert said the committee will be filling in part of the plan. Katie Korzun said staff will bring material for the committee to respond to. She asked for a subcommittee of about four people to help with this process. Jeff Schoppert asked that she send out the subcommittee request via email.

Rich McGrath asked that the public have an opportunity to speak at the beginning of the meetings. Emily Dean concurred, adding that it can be hard for the public to know when is the appropriate time to comment. Katie Korzun said at the next meeting the agenda will allow for open time at the beginning of the meeting.

Public Comment

The meeting was opened to general comments by the public on items not on the agenda.

Greg Andrew provided some clarity on three letters that have been sent to the committee, by Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative (MEHC) and North San Rafael Collaborative (NSRC). He said that MEHC has 25 board members and that NSRC is a group of residents.

Meeting Evaluation

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Katie is providing a great transition.	

Closing

Jeff Schoppert closed the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

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Attendance

	9/22	10/13	10/16	11/10	12/8	1/12	2/9	3/9	4/13	5/11	6/8	7/13	8/10	10/12	11/9	12/14
			(tour-optional)					(workshop)							(workshop)	
Damon Connolly* (CC)	E	√		√	(Brockbank)	(Brockbank)	√	√	(Brockbank)	-	√	√	√	√	-	-
Emily Dean	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Michael Fryer	√	E		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	E
Elissa Giambastiani	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Bob Huntsberry* (DRB)	-	√		-	√	√	√	√	√	-	-	√	E	-	-	-
Nicholas Kapas	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	-	√
Stanton Klose* (GGBPAC)	√	√		√	-	-	√	-	√	E	Resigned	-	-	-	-	-
Greg Knell	√	√		-	√	√	√	√	-	-	√	-	E	-	-	E
Klif Knoles	-	√		-	-	Resigned	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marcus Lee	E	-		√		√	E	√	E	E	√	-	√	√	E	-
Preston McCoy* (BPAC)	(Powers)			√	√	-	√	√	√	√	-	(Powers)	√	E	√	√
Casey Mazzoni						Appointed	√	-	√	√	E	-	√	√	√	E
Rich McGrath	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Brigitte Moran	√	E		√	√	√	E	√	E	√	-	E	√	(Ann Hussman)	√	-
Larry Paul* (PC)	√	-		-	-	E	√	√	E	(Wise)	-	-	√	√	-	√
Andrew Patterson	√	√		√	√	√	√	E	√	√	√	√	√	E	√	√
Jeff Schoppert	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Judy Schriebman* (LGVSD)	√	E		√	-	-	√	√	√	√	√	√	(Loder)	√	√	√
Roger Smith	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	E	√	√
Jean Starkweather	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	E	√	√	E
Tammy Taylor	√	√	√	√	√	-	√	√	E	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Gayle Theard	-	√		-	√	√	√	√	√	-	-	√	√	E	-	√
Craig Thomas Yates	√	-		E	√	-	√	-	√	-	-	-	√	√	√	-

*Ex officio, non-voting member
 E: excused
 BPAC: Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee

CC: City Council
 DRB: Design Review Board
 LGVSD: Las Gallinas Valley Sanitation District

PC: Planning Commission
 GGBPAC: Golden Gate Bicycle Pedestrian Committee