

El Camino Real Plan Advisory Committee (ECRPAC) Meeting #3 Summary Notes

Senior Center (Laurel Room) - 550 E Remington Drive, Sunnyvale

March 10, 2016 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

ATTENDEES

ECRPAC:

Chris Figone, Christopher Wiegel, Michael Shum, Raj Singh, Steve Pavlina, Gary Guiffre, Linda Garcia, Margaret Okuzumi, Petya Kisyova, Sue Harrison

Alternates: Tracy Tripp

Members not present: Patti Evans, Rutawari Sharma

Project Team:

City Staff:

Rosemarie Zulueta (Associate Planner/Project Manager), Trudi Ryan (Director, Community Development Department), and Andrew Miner (Planning Officer)

Consultants:

Dave Javid and Geoff Bradley (M-Group)

Community Members:

Approximately 12-14 community members were present at the meeting

MEETING AGENDA

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Summary of Q+A From ECRPAC Meeting #2
- III. Review Purpose, Procedures and Purview of ECRPAC
- IV. Identify and Prioritize Key Planning Principles (visioning)
- V. Public Comment
- VI. Next Steps
- VII. Adjourn

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome Introductions

Mike Shum, Vice Chair, welcomed Committee members and alternates to the third ECRPAC meeting. The ECRPAC, City staff and consultant team introduced themselves. Rosemarie Zulueta provided a brief overview of the last meeting and the updated project schedule.

Summary of Q+A From ECRPAC Meeting #2

Rosemarie Zulueta provided a brief summary of the answers to questions that came from the ECRPAC in Meeting #2. The questions included interest in the latest demographic trends, sidewalk design standards, transit and parking trends, and the influence of concurrent planning efforts made by other agencies regarding the corridor. She noted that more detailed information regarding circulation and parking will be provided as the development of the Sunnyvale El Camino Real Corridor Plan (ECR Plan) progresses.

Review Purpose, Procedures and Purview of ECRPAC

Rosemarie Zulueta reviewed the ECRPAC's roles and responsibilities and purview on this project. She noted that the each member of the ECRPAC was appointed by the Council to create a committee that represents the various interests and perspectives of the community.

Identify and Prioritize Key Planning Principles (Visioning)

A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to confirming key planning principles that were derived from input received thus far from the community through workshops and meetings. Through an online survey (<http://sunnyvale.peakdemocracy.com/3458>) which reached 178 participants as of March 10, the ECRPAC along with the community at large were asked to rank a list of draft planning principles and provide feedback. The following is how the planning principles were ranked through the survey process:

- A. Improve circulation and movement through the corridor.
- B. Apply a multimodal approach that emphasizes safety and accessibility for different methods of travel.
- C. Preserve the quality of life of adjacent neighborhoods and existing assets to the community.
- D. Enhance the streetscape and landscaping to improve the aesthetic quality of the corridor.
- E. Create an attractive pedestrian-oriented environment.
- F. Support the establishment of small and local businesses.
- G. Promote a diversity of shopping and dining options.
- H. Encourage high-quality design and human scale development.
- I. Provide housing opportunities to meet the needs of the community.
- J. Create community gathering spaces.
- K. Develop and maintain a distinct identity for the corridor.

Attached to this summary are the ECRPAC members' individual responses and average ranking of principles (many thanks to Chris Wiegel for determining the average ranking).

Members of the ECRPAC and public provided additional feedback on the planning principles. There was general support for the range of principles and how they ranked; however, the discussion also acknowledged that each principle could have equal weight in priority. The following is a summary of the direction provided by the ECRPAC, as well as noted concerns/cautions from the committee members and the community in attendance, organized under overarching topics/objectives:

- **Improve Safety and Multimodal Circulation**
 - Find a balance between the efficiency of vehicle movement through the area and the desire to establish a safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.
 - Create a landscape buffer along the sidewalks to separate pedestrians from the street, with large canopy trees.
 - Design sidewalks to safely accommodate everyone (e.g., kids, elderly and disabled). View the sidewalk as a means of transportation and movement for people, not storage space for street furnishings (hydrants, streetlights, etc.).
 - Install bike lanes and improve the signal timing to improve safety along the corridor. Explore other bike-friendly paths to provide access for bicyclists to and from the corridor (e.g., bike boulevards similar to Palo Alto's).
 - Align signal timing and speeds throughout the corridor to increase traffic flow, keep cars moving through the area and coordinate with pedestrian street crossings.

Concerns/Cautions:

- Make sure that any improvements will not negatively affect surrounding neighborhoods.
 - Recognizing that ECR is currently designed as a freeway, some ECRPAC members were uncertain if it could become multimodal. Other ECRPAC members noted that ECR *has to be* multimodal in order to accommodate the future population, including Millennials that are forecasted to be the majority of Sunnyvale's worker and resident population. It is believed that Millennials are looking for walkable environments, they do not drive as frequently and they seek transit. It was expressed that if there is no high tech, reliable transit, no one will be able to move through ECR as it cannot accommodate more cars.
 - The stretch between the Eastern Node and the Santa Clara border was noted as being very dangerous for pedestrians, especially for children crossing ECR to go to school.
 - In order to create a safe corridor, traffic has to be slow. While members emphasized the role of the corridor in moving vehicles efficiently, it was also acknowledged that increasing the speed of traffic may conflict with the goal of increasing safety along the corridor.
 - The uses and forms that will be allowed on the "fringe" of the roadway (development on private property and sidewalk design) will influence the character and behavior of the roadway.
- **Create Destinations that Support the City's Fiscal Health**
 - Create a retail presence that brings people to the corridor and invites them to linger, while supporting the City's fiscal health.
 - Create "zones" throughout the corridor in order to accommodate all the various land uses we want to fit there, from pedestrian-oriented to auto-oriented.
 - Identify different nodes of activity that have a design and character or "life" of their own, such as:
 - Transportation nodes around the Wolfe Road and the Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road intersections at ECR, that offer a higher density mixed-use development within walking distance of a public transit hub and connected to bike routes.
 - A community gathering space node near the Mathilda Avenue intersection that could provide an opportunity for outdoor dining, leisure and outdoor activities. This opportunity can help support enhanced North-South connection points along Mathilda Ave./Sunnyvale-Saratoga Rd. The shopping center with Sprouts, Ross, Armadillo Willy's, etc., as well as the Pep Boys/Safeway shopping center across were identified as opportunity sites.
 - A safer community gathering space near the edge of cities of Sunnyvale and Santa Clara that includes traffic calming measures and a safer environment for kids.

Concerns/Cautions:

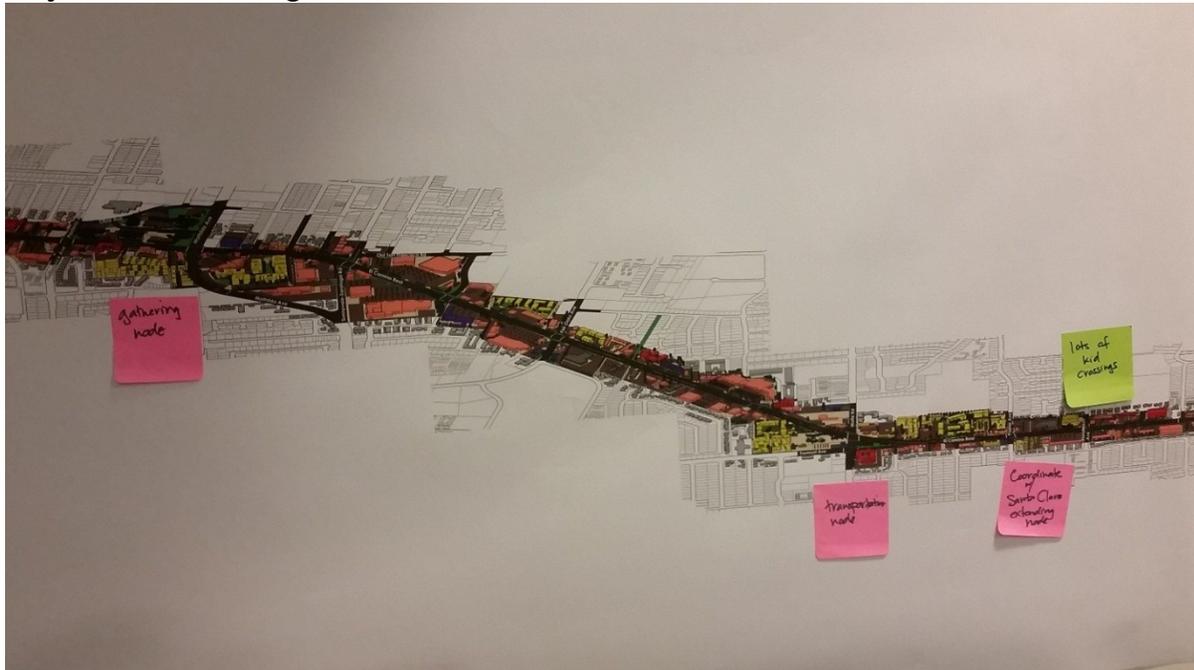
- It was expressed that the right mix of housing is needed with locally serving retail spaces within walking distance to attract more pedestrian activity. It is believed that specialty grocery and other stores may be failing because of a lack of housing and pedestrian activity in the vicinity.

- It was noted that the plan should not settle for ECR remaining a transportation artery, stating that there is an opportunity to allow multiple uses to exist with relatively high density at nodes.
- The preservation of the auto dealers' presence on El Camino Real was discussed. It was asked if auto dealers could be relocated elsewhere in the City as the use seems to conflict with the goals of a pedestrian-oriented environment. The 2007 Plan explored alternate locations for an auto row, but was determined infeasible. It was suggested that perhaps special consideration in development standards should be given to determine the highest and best use of those sites (e.g., multi-story development with car dealers on the ground floor).
- **Accommodate the Housing Needs of the Existing Community and Future Generations**
 - Consider more housing in the area, including higher density and more mixed-use development.
 - Consider high density development *responsibly* so that it does not exacerbate the already congested roadway.
 - Locating higher-density development near transit opportunities could help reduce traffic impacts.
 - More housing is necessary to ensure the success of commercial uses and to support transit.
 - Design and locate multi-story buildings in such a way so that they do not subtract from the character of Sunnyvale.

Concerns/Cautions:

- It was noted that we have no more land/physical space and in order to protect the existing surrounding neighborhoods and greenspace, we need to focus growth on the corridor.
- The community in attendance emphasized the need for more affordable housing. It was noted that "low income" means an annual salary of \$60k-\$70k. If more commercial uses are added to ECR, more jobs will be created and those workers will need a place to live. Housing will be needed to address the population growth forecasted in the Market Study that was prepared by the consultant team. It was expressed that the City must accommodate people that are already here and the needs of our children and future generations.
- Some ECRPAC members expressed strong concerns that allowing higher density development will make Sunnyvale more urbanized and lose its character. It was stated that if more housing is built, there needs to be enough commercial uses in the corridor for the City to maintain its base revenues.
- **Promote Sustainability**
 - Sustainable design and development practices should be encouraged and added as a core planning principle.
 - Consider the impact of climate change not only in how buildings are designed but the appropriate mix of uses that will give people an option not to drive and consider active modes of transportation.
 - Provide more landscaping and shade trees for better air quality and enhance aesthetics.

Project Area Massing Model



NEXT STEPS

The next step in the process includes the preparation of a draft Vision Statement and land use alternatives by the project team which will be brought back for review by the ECRPAC and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), as well as the community through workshops and a joint Study Session with City Council and Planning Commission. The meetings are anticipated to take place in the April through June timeframe.