

May 17, 2010

TO: Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan Task Force

RE: Suggestions for improving the Land Use/Transportation of the San Jose 2040 General Plan

Thank you for your time and commitment to helping make San Jose's 2040 General Plan a unique and appropriate one for our diverse community. This past week-end I attended the May 15<sup>th</sup> Community Workshop and wanted to send both specific and general ideas for the Land Use/Transportation Plan as it currently stands. I hope you will consider them before finalizing the General Plan.

I believe none of these ideas currently exist on the plan, elevations, or on written comments. They were discussed at our Workshop table on May 15<sup>th</sup>. I hope you will carefully consider how to weave them into the 2040 General Plan.

**1. There needs to be a special status for "Historical Grand Boulevards". These would have all forms of public and private transportation into our downtown just as they did when San Jose was a small village. All connect downtown San Jose to important historical places.**

They include Alameda, San Carlos/Stevens Creek, Santa Clara/Alum Rock, and Monterey Road. Also, new buildings on these boulevards should have historical styles which connect to early California buildings. Historical funding is available for such boulevards.

**2. San Carlos/Stevens Creek and Santa Clara/Alum Rock are the only two boulevards that have long lines of linear high rise corridors.** Neither have high density transportation villages (nodes) along them. High density transportation nodes are something which the Envision San Jose 2040 Task Force General Plan has agreed to do. **Rather than create a wall of high rises along two historical boulevards and tearing out historical buildings and neighborhoods, I suggest you lower the buildings where there are historical neighborhoods or buildings as well as intermittently lower building heights. This way pedestrians, bikers, drivers, and those on public transit do not feel they are driving down walls which block mountain views.** A preferable approach would be to build high tower buildings at transportation hubs. This would greatly help the transition into my Shasta Hanchett neighborhood and not destroy any historical neighborhood homes.

**3. Historical neighborhoods like my Shasta Hanchett Neighborhood should become an asset to San Jose and designated as such.** Maps can be made showing their unique buildings and history. Then they could become tourist designation points attracting business into the neighborhood stores. **There is no category on the plan for historical places of importance** such as the Winchester Mystery House, our Rose Garden or the Rosicrucian Museum. **Historical designation is important to understanding who we are, to attracting tourists and convention visitors, and to increasing tourist days in our city.**

**4. More high density transportation villages (nodes) need to be incorporated into the General Plan rather than lines of shorter high rises.** This will preserve views of the mountains and not create visual walls. Currently there are no such nodes for most of the BART stations and for the places where one changes public transportation modes. **Such places are vital to making the many kinds of public transportation link together.** For example, when one arrives at a regional transportation node on Forest behind Valley Fair, the largest mall in the Bay Area, they must walk through an unsafe parking lot with no pedestrian walks and no signage.

**5. Bike trails must be separate from walking trails because the two users are entirely different. Walkers want to find a sense of peace and be in nature with a biodiversity of plants and animals and places to sit and rest.** Bikers are interested in using the trails to get to

work fast and for speedy exercise. The elevations currently show the two together and this is a big mistake.

**6. At this moment the General Plan only indicates one form of open space. There needs to be a distinction between active recreational open space, passive open space, and permanent urban agriculture.** San Jose needs more peaceful spaces with native plants and biodiversity of birds, butterflies, beneficial insects, water, and benches. **We especially need such peaceful spaces if we are doubling our population in the next 20 years** by building high rises throughout the City. Urban agricultural land currently does not have permanent locations. Permanent places for this land use must be on the Plan.

**7. Safe connections between trails and highly used places are vital.** There needs to be connections to such places like City College/Valley Medical Center, the Fairgrounds, historically important places, large public parks, and large malls. **Malls should connect to the community rather than look inward as does Valley Fair. Valley Fair's inward layout should not be the model for our malls and their parking garage only buildings should not bound important city streets.** Currently the San Jose planning commission has approved a high rise parking garage along Stevens Creek Boulevard. This cannot be allowed.

I was pleased to see the following positive changes in the Plan since I last saw it but questions about the Fairgrounds still remain:

1. Monterey Road, San Carlos/Stevens Creek, Alameda, and Santa Clara/Alum Rock are designated as a Grand Boulevards as are some rings around the city. First Street connects to Monterey Road and is also a Grand Boulevard.
2. **The Fairgrounds land is in 100 percent open space but only according to San Jose's Plan.** The problem: the county owns this land and several county supervisors think they can help reduce its debt by selling off the public's assets like our historical Fairgrounds. I was told that if the Fairgrounds becomes housing then the housing will become part of San Jose and the county will retain the open space. This sounds like a strange way to look at this historical land. **The community has been told that the county is getting rid of their infill urban lands. Should San Jose be pushing to place the Fairgrounds into the City boundary, stop yet another county infill, and insure its future as open space?** I believe there needs to be some special wording for the Fairgrounds in San Jose's Master Plan because it is so unique and important to the community. **It will clearly be the place for citizens to gather if there is a disaster and also important if we decide to go on the world stage and have a San Jose World's Fair or Olympics.**
3. ALL the creeks now have trails! Thank you.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need further details.

Sincerely and gratefully,

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