

## **Response to Council Questions from LUTE Study Session – May 19, 2015**

At the May 19 Joint Study Session of the City Council and Planning Commission regarding the update to the Land Use and Transportation Element (LUTE) Councilmembers and Commissioners posed a number of questions. This memo provides responses to most of those questions. The questions have been organized by topic.

### **VILLAGE CENTERS**

- Are there examples of successful village centers?
- A number of communities have already. Let's get a summary of other communities who have adopted village centers as part of final presentation.

The draft LUTE describes Village Centers as Community areas that create a sense of place, a vibrant mixed-use character, provide nearby services and reduce the need for automobiles. During the study session, staff got the impression that a few members of the Council and Commission thought that Village Centers were also transit oriented development (TOD). Two of the Horizon 2035 committee members had similar thoughts and contacted staff after the Study Session noting:

*I had the sense that there was confusion about the concept of the Villages as compared to Transit-Oriented Development projects ... talking about the 80% of people using their cars to get to work outside of Sunnyvale, but the Village concept is more geared to the non-work travelling to access local services.*

*Key in much of the plan is not just to move folks to work by intensifying centers, but rather it is to reduce all those other trips we make in our daily lives. The village center reduces the number of trips we all need to make each week.*

Page 26 of the Draft LUTE presents the proposed Goal referencing Village Centers and includes a boxed description of typical features of a village. The Horizon 2035 Committee identified three different types of mixed-use land areas. Only the Transit Mixed-Use (Downtown, Lawrence Station Area) and the Corridor Mixed-Use (El Camino Real) would be considered TODs. The Village Mixed-Use areas would likely be too small to qualify as TOD; however the intent is that they could support additional transit options in the future.

#### Successful Village Centers

In Sunnyvale and the Bay Area there are several examples of relatively new completed and successful neighborhood village centers. Staff finds interesting

examples in lower density neighborhood areas of larger cities, including San Jose, Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon. The Tasman Crossing Via Development, in Sunnyvale, is considered a successful Village Center. The Cherry Orchard project at El Camino Real and Mathilda is a horizontal mixed-use site that shares parking and a common driveway between the two uses. The project has been highly successful.

#### Other General Plans with Village Centers

As the committee considered land use options they became familiar with General Plan efforts in other communities. Both Mt. View and San Jose adopted the village center concept in their General Plans before or during the committee's efforts. Staff also learned that Palo Alto has incorporated this concept in its Comprehensive Plan since 1998.

The comprehensive plans of other Santa Clara County cities generally share certain key components:

- Defining three to four types of mixed use centers that provide variation in scale. As is proposed in the updated LUTE, most cities include: smaller-scale neighborhood centers; slightly more dense and commercial- or retail-oriented centers in larger neighborhoods or along corridors or near transit stations; and large-scale mixed-use centers along major corridors, downtown, or as part of major re-development sites.
- Many of the cities describe the intended character and general land use concepts of each mixed-use center within the general plan.
- Nearly all cities require development of specific plans for mixed-use centers. In some cases, mixed-use centers also have their own design guidelines.
- Cities which have longer term experience with mixed-use centers indicate that this device is very effective at concentrating growth within the centers and helping to preserve existing character in surrounding neighborhoods.

Staff will compile a list of other village centers in the Bay Area and provide these examples to the City Council and Planning Commission at the next study session in August.

#### **MODE SHIFT/VMT/TRANSIT USE BY TENURE**

- Do we have a way to gauge where we are on mode-shift?
- Are there any specific statistics about how many people live in transit-option development actually use the transit? Let's get some numbers on this, particularly if we can tie it to Sunnyvale.
- Staff will research out information on any VMT difference between ownership and rental residents

- Are we looking at potential for, and what they do to impact LOS and other traffic metrics? Staff noted that staff will look at the transportation options (shuttles) expressed in the action statements, and refine as needed.
- Extend our grid system to provide options for bicyclists.

### Gauging Mode Shift

The American Community Survey (ACS—conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Census) provides estimates each year on the mode share of primary commutes for each city. This can help describe mode shift in Sunnyvale, although it only speaks to the mode used for getting to work, not secondary commute choices or non-work trips. ABAG also synthesizes and reports ACS-provided regional commute behavior each year. Findings from the 2009-2013 ACS indicate that 77% of Sunnyvale residents commute alone by car.

The 2010 Transportation Existing Conditions Report prepared for the LUTE summarizes transportation mode split within Sunnyvale over time. Between 2000 and 2009 vehicle miles traveled per weekday dropped 21% from 2.31 million to 1.83 million. Transit ridership has been increasing since 2005, although it remains lower than ridership in 2000. Bike commuting may have increased over this period but remains less than one percent of work trips. An updated traffic study to be completed later this year will provide updated information on mode splits.

### Transportation Behavior in Transit Oriented Developments

Studies conducted on living in a transit oriented development or near transit find that it does boost transit use. The level of transit use by nearby residents (generally within ½ mile) is affected by the breadth and density of employment, educational, and cultural centers to which the transit network provides access. Reports prepared by California-based transportation consultant Fehr & Peers and the ULI have found that:

- 19.6% of residents within ½ mile of BART commute via transit, and this share has increased since 1990.
- Within ½ of transit stations there are, on average, around ½ the vehicle trips per dwelling unit compared to other areas.
- Areas within ½ mile of transit stations near downtowns have 70-90% fewer vehicle trips per dwelling unit compared to other areas.
- Areas within ½ mile of transit stations in suburban settings have 15-20% fewer vehicle trips per dwelling unit compared to other areas.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has also commissioned research that compares the demographics and travel characteristics of Bay Area residents living within ½-mile of a transit station, within one-mile of a transit station, and all other areas. A report was published in September 2006 that documents the results of this research, which relied on extensive data from the Bay Area Travel Survey (BATS2000). The full report is available at:

[http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart\\_growth/stars/](http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/stars/)

The key findings are as follows:

- People who live close to transit use transit extensively.
- People who live and work close to rail/ferry stops use transit even more extensively.
- People who live close to transit make as many trips per day as those who live in the rest of the region, but these residents have a much higher tendency to use transit, walk, and bike.
- Nearly one-third of households living within ½ mile of rail/ferry transit are zero-vehicle households, three times the regional average.
- People living close to transit are likely to live in smaller households without children.
- Land use density has an impact on transit use levels, even beyond one-mile from a station.
- Average weekday daily vehicle miles of travel (VMT) increases with distance from rail and ferries and decreasing density.
- People living close to rail/ferry transit are about twice as likely to walk for short trips (trips of one mile or less) than people living farther from transit.

Because transit use is influenced significantly by availability of transit and land use patterns, the study provided composite results for the Bay Area as well as finer grain results by county. The results for Santa Clara County are covered in Appendix N. The research found that the percent of total trips in the County using transit, bicycle or walking was 19.6 percent for households located within ½ mile of a transit station and 10.9 percent for all households. Car ownership is also less for residents living within ½-mile of a transit station compared to the county-wide average (0.55 vehicles per person vs. 0.67 vehicles per person).

The conclusion of the study was the following:

*The results presented in this work clearly indicate that those living (and working) close to rail/ferry transit use transit, walk and bike much more than people living farther from a rail/ferry stop. Whether being near rail/ferry transit simply allows people who prefer to drive less that personal choice, or whether it creates a greater interest in such travel options, this research demonstrates that policies to support transit-oriented development hold promise as one important tool, among others, in addressing congestion, transit usage, non-motorized travel, and air pollution in the Bay Area.*

### Mode Split by Tenure

Staff research did not reveal any specific data on tenure effects on transit use. However, numerous studies indicate that higher incomes correlate with greater vehicle miles traveled.

### **TRAFFIC MODEL and LOS**

- Which of the likely impacts are from LOS A-C, which ones from D?
- How much would housing units have to be reduced to have no increase in the E-F intersections?
- Residents would like to have information about what it means to increase housing units to the planned levels and degrading intersections.
- Consider an alternative that changes housing and non-residential square footage to a level that does not increase E-F intersections.
- Staff will verify which of the planned improvements on Lawrence Expressway are in the model

Preliminary data is available on the potential traffic impacts, however the analysis of alternatives is still in process.

### **LAND USE AND RATES OF CHANGE**

- We should consider alternatives that maintain a 1.5 or similar jobs/housing balance.
- How does Plan Bay Area work with the LUTE? Should we expect that most housing will be located closer to job locations in Plan Bay Area?
- Staff noted that historic development trends can be provided for future discussions

Policy. Staff will prepare a draft policy for Council consideration that addresses the jobs/housing ratio. In drafting a policy, staff considers the jobs/housing ratio to be a regional or sub-regional goal and some cities such as Sunnyvale are more appropriate locations for jobs because their proximity to existing and planned transit, while other cities will remain primarily residential in character. The LUTE is proposing a slightly higher jobs/housing balance, which recognizes its strategic location in Silicon Valley for employment growth.

Plan Bay Area. Staff has provided land use information to ABAG and MTC that was incorporated into the currently adopted Plan Bay Area plan, and the Community Development Director actively participated in the planning process as a participant of the Regional Advisory Working Group. The draft LUTE and the City's adopted Housing Element are consistent with the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), which is a foundational element of Plan Bay Area. The overarching goal of Plan Bay Area is to locate jobs and housing along transit corridors to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet projected

housing needs. The LUTE is consistent with this concept by focusing growth at priority development areas (PDAs) with existing or future improved transit access. ABAG and MTC are starting the process to prepare the next version of Plan Bay Area, and staff will continue to be involved in this regional planning effort.

Development Trends. The following table shows minimum, maximum and average net new development from 1999-2014 (15 years):

	<b>Residential</b>		<b>Non-Residential Industrial/Office/Retail</b>	
	<b>Dwelling Units</b>	<b>Year/s</b>	<b>Square Feet</b>	<b>Year/s</b>
<b>Minimum</b>	<b>8</b>	<i>2003</i>	<b>-371,000</b>	<i>2005</i>
<b>Maximum</b>	<b>921</b>	<i>1999</i>	<b>2,336,000</b>	<i>2001</i>
<b>Average</b>	<b>330</b>	<i>1999-2014</i>	<b>342,000</b>	<i>1999-2014</i>
<b>Median</b>	<b>243</b>	<i>1999-2014</i>	<b>96,615</b>	<i>1999-2014</i>
<b>2014</b>	<b>575</b>	<i>2014</i>	<b>-223,107</b>	<i>2014</i>

## **ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

- Do we have the choice of changing specific LUTE items?
- Illustrate timing and sequence of TIF improvements

City Council is the ultimate approving authority for the General Plan of the City of Sunnyvale. The City Council will have the option of approving a staff recommended version or an alternative version; Council could also decide not to make changes to the General Plan. Based on Council comments and recent discussions on specific projects and policy area plans under development, staff will be suggesting updates, amendments and additions to the LUTE to reflect these more recent discussions. In addition to these amendments, the Council can change the phrasing of policies, delete policies or add other policies; the extent of those changes and how it relates to the EIR would need to be considered. The EIR will include alternatives analyses; however, if the Council is interested in a LUTE that has not been sufficiently evaluated in the EIR, Council action may need to be deferred until new environmental analysis is completed.

Preliminary priorities for transportation improvements in the transportation strategic program will be provided for the Council public hearing on the LUTE.

Staff anticipates returning to the City Council with a revised Transportation Impact Fee program with a list of projects and priorities of the projects within two months of adoption of a new LUTE, for formal City Council action.

## **OUTREACH**

When revised drafts of the LUTE are available in August, staff will provide feedback to the Council about public opinion. In the meantime staff will be offering new topics on Open City Hall to collect opinions. Outreach efforts such as attendance at neighborhood and business association meetings will be available. Other outreach includes attendance at large community-wide events such as at the State of the City in September and smaller regular venues such as the Saturday morning Downtown Farmers' Market. The draft LUTE will also be referred to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, Sustainability Commission and Planning Commission before it is considered by the City Council. For more information Community members can check the project webpage [Horizon2035.inSunnyvale.com](http://Horizon2035.inSunnyvale.com) (redirects to page hosted by consultant), or review community comments directly on Open City Hall.