

City Council Study Session September 13, 2016
El Camino Real Corridor Plan Presentation of Vision and Land Use Alternatives
Questions and Comments and Staff Responses (*in italics*):

FROM CITY COUNCILMEMBERS

- Which slide (number) contains the numbers comparing anticipated growth under each ECR Alternative so members of the public could have access to it?
 - *The entire presentation is available on the City website, and that all the information is also on the project website at <http://plansunnyvaleecr.m-group.us/> or PlanElCaminoReal.inSunnyvale.com. The growth numbers are on slide 25.*
- How does this planning effort relate to the Draft LUTE and CAP?
 - *The two processes do inform one another. The Draft LUTE states that the ECR corridor will be studied for potential additional growth capacity and that determinations will be made through the Specific Plan process. Alternative M is closest to the recommendations in the Draft LUTE.*
- The ECR Plan has to be considered in the broader context of the City's General Plan (i.e., whether the General Plan designates the corridor to absorb the community's future housing needs), and not in isolation.
 - *The ECR corridor is one area that will be designated for future housing. The adopted LUTE includes potential for about 8,000 additional housing units city-wide. The Housing Element details some of the larger sites including along El Camino Real (1,200 units on residentially zoned properties and as potential mixed-use development); and also on vacant and underutilized sites (about 700 dwelling units), the remaining Industrial to Residential Areas (about 3,000 dwelling units), Downtown and the Lakeside Specific Plan areas (1,000 units). There are also projects for which building permits have been issued (e.g. former Town Center) that are not detailed in the housing element or that had pending general plan amendments at the time the housing element was adopted. The Housing Element can be found [online](#); the available sites discussion starts on page 79.*
- Vision Statement and Elements are good.
 - *Thank you. Staff will bring the Vision Statement and Alternatives to City Council for formal action, tentatively scheduled for January 2017.*
- Before choosing a preferred Alternative, would like to understand how the ECR Plan Land Use Alternatives impact the jobs-housing ratio
 - *The information on jobs-housing ratio will be provided with the alternatives for Council Consideration, tentatively scheduled for January 2017.*
- Implementation is key. We are going to see a lot of partial improvements as individual properties are redeveloped. The Plan should have a defined implementation program that provides guidance on when upgrades should be required to existing nonconforming public facilities (e.g. sidewalks and streetscape improvements) adjacent to a proposed development.
 - *The implementation chapter of the Specific Plan will address this concern.*
- Provide a Fiscal Impact analysis of the Alternatives.
 - *A pro forma analysis will be provided with the alternatives for Council Consideration, tentatively scheduled for January 2017.*

- It seems that there may be conflicting retail goals (e.g. high end furniture stores vs. local daily services like dry cleaning or car wash) for the corridor, or perhaps what is needed is a wide range of commercial uses.
 - *There will be more discussion on this topic as the planning process progresses. The Market Analysis recommended a three-pronged strategy to maintain and enhance the City's fiscal health, including clustering high-end furniture/appliance stores, creating a themed pedestrian-oriented retail and restaurant street and preserving or adding to the City's new-car dealerships; however, El Camino Real will continue to be that neighborhood street that residents rely on for daily services. The planning process will determine the most appropriate locations for the various commercial uses.*
- Interested in seeing the possible circulation improvements throughout the corridor, especially how to cross ECR.
 - *More discussion of this topic will be provided.*
- Why are certain properties within the Nodes designated as mixed use at 24 du/ac or 24R (allowed to be residential only) in all three alternatives, including Alternative R? The medium density, 24 du/ac, tends to yield only townhomes, which seems low for their proximity to a major transit stop.
 - *Those properties designated as such tend to have narrower frontages, are smaller or shallower or have complicated ownership situations. In mixed use developments, a 24 du/ac project could seem denser with the commercial use on the ground floor and residential uses above. This is a first pass at the designations, and they can change through this process.*
- It seems there could be more opportunity for higher densities in the Nodes. Lower densities could constrain the provision of more affordable housing. If the existing Council Policy of achieving at least 75% of the maximum density allowed will apply to the ECR Plan, the indicated designations in the Alternatives may not achieve affordable housing goals.
 - *See above comment. The study will assess opportunities for different densities.*
- How will the preferred Alternative be decided?
 - *The preferred alternative will be decided by City Council at a future public hearing, tentatively January 2017.*
- Address the following items when appropriate throughout the planning process:
 - Affordable Housing Strategy equals Density Strategy. We have to be up front about how affordable housing is more attainable at higher densities.
 - *The affordable housing strategy will address how density bonuses may affect for affordable housing and how overall density may also address affordability.*
 - Residential potential outside the nodes, but still in proximity to transit.
 - *The current Land Use Alternatives maps show the ¼ mile and ½ mile radius from the major transit stops, and many of the potential residential sites outside of the current nodes are still within the ½ mile radius. Information on all bus stops (not only the major stops) will be provided.*
 - ECR corridor has portions with shallow lots—What is the appropriate height?
 - *Design and zoning standards will be provided for the community, and ultimately City Council to determine if setbacks meet expectations at a future phase.*
 - What does “future major transit stop” mean as indicated on the Alternatives maps?
 - *“Future major transit stop” in three of the four locations shown correspond to the current VTA 522 stops along the corridor, which staff assumes will remain*

but anticipate that facility enhancements could be made in the future by VTA. They are referenced on the land use maps to show that the greatest concentration of potential residential and commercial growth are located at these major intersections. The “future major transit stop” shown at the Sunnyvale-Saratoga Rd. intersection is a proposed relocation of the 522 stop as it is in closer proximity to larger opportunity sites, the Palo Alto Medical Foundation and potentially a better north-south connection to Downtown.

- Enhance the pedestrian environment, shorten crossings, but mid-block crossings are not safe unless signalized
 - *Staff agrees about the mid-block crossings and will seek other strategies to enhance pedestrian safety along the corridor.*
- When analyzing traffic along the corridor, determine how much is coming from outside Sunnyvale (i.e. how much of it is generated regionally vs. locally).
 - *This information will be provided at the environmental review phase.*
- Avoid building massing close to the street.
 - *Design and zoning standards will be provided for the community, and ultimately City Council to determine if setbacks meet expectations at a future phase.*

FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Staff has discussed these points with the individuals at the workshop, meetings, etc., and captured these comments in the slide presentation.

- We need more homes along the corridor to preserve our treasured natural open space. More homes and eyes on the street mean a safer environment for walking, biking and transit. Review the Sunnyvale Sustainable and Affordable Living Coalition’s Policy Platform calling for a 25% enhanced affordable housing requirement and mode-share targets for the corridor.
- There needs to be adequate parking for grocery stores. It is not likely that a family of four will be bicycling to go grocery shopping. Be mindful of the essential, but taken-for-granted services we could be losing if properties are redeveloped, including car washes, U-Haul/rental car agencies and auto services. Preserve these uses through zoning, and when considering commercial uses, think functionally vs. tax-based.
- Vision Statement Element 2.C is good, but do not shy away from installing bike lanes just because the roadway geometry presents challenges. Translate the vision into reality.
- Need to enhance public transportation and pedestrian facilities, and address how to make those last mile connections. ECR is currently an unsafe and unpleasant pedestrian environment and needs more “eyes on the street.” Be mindful of height restrictions and lighting.
- ECR is one of the last places we have left in the City that can absorb the current and future housing demand.