

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES OF APRIL 27, 2009

2008-0486 - Lawrence Station Transit Village Study Issue to review and analyze current and future development feasibility in the area around the existing Caltrain station near Lawrence Expressway for the purpose of increasing transit ridership. (Study Issue) SB

Surachita Bose, Associate Planner, presented the staff report. She said staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend that Council direct staff to develop a comprehensive Station Area Plan (SAP) for the area; that the study, goals and principles listed in the report be adopted to guide the development of the future SAP; that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be signed with the City of Santa Clara; and that staff be allowed to pursue additional grant opportunities to raise funds for a comprehensive study. She said should Council agree to move forward staff would return to City Council and Planning Commission with a detailed work plan when adequate funding is available, or in nine months, whichever is sooner.

Comm. Hungerford discussed with staff whether this area might compete with the Downtown. Staff explained this plan is a long range plan and implementation could be 10 to 20 years from now. **Trudi Ryan**, Planning Officer, said that the similarities between Downtown and this area would be jobs and housing noting differences as the retail component of this area serving the residents and employees and the Downtown retail serving the larger community. Comm. Hungerford discussed with staff the high speed trains that would pass through this area.

Comm. Sulser said that he is excited about this issue and had staff further elaborate on transportation, the problematic internal circulation, and the lack of access, signage, and lighting in both Santa Clara and Sunnyvale in this area. Comm. Sulser asked staff to discuss the retail situation, and the encouragement of more pedestrian and bike uses in the area, with the goal to have the ability to shop, work and live within a 1/2 mile radius.

Comm. Klein further discussed with staff the 1/2 mile radius goals, and the odd shape of the targeted area with staff explaining the boundaries. Comm. Klein discussed with staff about including some of the area north in the target area.

Vice Chair Chang discussed with staff possible zoning changes and whether this area would have a special designation. Ms. Ryan said the result would be a type of specific plan for the area. **Andrew Miner**, Principal Planner, added that this plan would not be to change the uses or densities in the nearby existing single-family neighborhoods, with the hope being to improve the residents' experiences with the nearby changes.

Vice Chair Chang opened the public hearing.

Arthur Schwartz, a Sunnyvale resident, commented that the high speed rail should not be a concern as it would not be on the surface, and spoke in favor of the plan.

Vice Chair Chang closed the public hearing.

Comm. Sulser moved for Alternatives 1 and 2, to recommend to City Council that action be taken on the following: to adopt study goals and principles to guide the development of a Station Area Plan; to direct staff to develop a comprehensive Station Area Plan for the Lawrence Station Transit Village study area; to proceed to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the cities of Sunnyvale and Santa Clara to develop a comprehensive and joint Station Area Plan; to adopt the Resolutions to apply for and accept the Caltrans grant and accept the VTA (Valley Transportation Authority) grant (Attachment F and G); to pursue additional grant opportunities to raise funds for a comprehensive study; and for staff to return to Council with a work program, including a detailed schedule, budget and MOU, when adequate funding for the study becomes available or in nine months, whichever is sooner. **Comm. McKenna** seconded the motion.

Comm. Sulser said he used to live in this neighborhood and a lot of the surrounding land uses do not support this train station. He said if the City does the right planning this neighborhood can be improved. He said this is the first step forward, the hard decisions will come later, and he would like this plan to go forward.

Comm. McKenna said she enjoyed reading the report and that this is an exciting potential to change the way this area develops with the two cities. She said she particularly liked the oral comments from Ms. Bose this evening about the pedestrian access and she hopes to see this area develop for the many reasons discussed tonight.

Vice Chair Chang said he thinks this is a great project and this is where our land use and planning comes into play with the long term vision. He commended staff on obtaining grant funding for this project.

Comm. Klein said he would be supporting the motion. He said he would like staff to consider including a little more area to the north as there are more attractions to the north. He said he can see the community growing towards the need for a Transit Oriented Development community and this area could be a gem area for both Sunnyvale and Santa Clara.

ACTION: Comm. Sulser made a motion on 2008-0486 to recommend to City Council that action be taken on the following: to adopt study goals and principles to guide the development of a Station Area Plan; to direct staff to develop a comprehensive Station Area Plan for the Lawrence Station Transit Village study area; to proceed to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the cities of Sunnyvale and Santa Clara to develop a comprehensive and joint Station Area Plan; to adopt the Resolutions to apply for and accept the Caltrans grant and accept the VTA (Valley Transportation Authority) grant (Attachment F and G); to pursue additional grant opportunities to raise funds for a comprehensive study; and for staff to return to Council with a work program, including a detailed schedule, budget and MOU, when adequate funding for the study becomes available or in nine months, whichever is sooner. Comm. McKenna seconded. Motion carried 6-0, with Chair Rowe absent.

APPEAL OPTIONS: This recommendation will be forwarded to City Council and is scheduled to be considered at the May 12, 2009 Council meeting.