

**MINUTES OF THE
PLANNING COMMISSION JOINT STUDY SESSION
NORTH CAMINO RAMON SPECIFIC PLAN**

January 4, 2011

A Joint Study Session of the Planning Commission and representatives of the Parks and Community Services Commission, Economic Development Advisory Committee, Housing Advisory Committee and the Transportation Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair Sachs at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, January 4, 2011 in the Council Chambers 2222 Camino Ramon, San Ramon.

Phil Wong - Planning/Community Development director gave a brief summary that the purpose of the study session is to create an informal forum to allow the appointed officials, Planning Commission, Committee members, and public to participate in an informal setting. The study session was not a public hearing or public workshop and no decisions were being made. Mr. Wong added that Planning Services staff has met with various committees and boards as well as other Civic groups to discuss the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan (NCRSP). Mr. Wong also added that the vision of the NCRSP is to create a long-term land use plan that would provide economic sustainability to the City.

Lauren Barr - Senior Planner gave a brief PowerPoint presentation stated that the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan (NCRSP) area consists of approximately 295 acres border generally by the City limits to the north, Executive Parkway to the south, Highway 680 on the west and Alcosta Boulevard to the east. It is accessed primarily by way of Crow Canyon Road, off Interstate 680. Mr. Barr added that the NCRSP is planning for smart growth infill development, creating a mix of land uses that strengthens the City's financial base, addressing the retail and service commercial needs of the community and recognizing the need for housing types in proximity to our employment base.

Chair Sachs opened the floor to the Committee chairs for their input on the North Camino Ramon Specific Plan.

Devon Powers – Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Committee stated that EDAC has been familiar with this plan. Mr. Powers added that as the plan evolved the Planning Department staff and the consultants accommodated diverse opinions about the plan. Mr. Powers added that the NCRSP is a unique plan that could accommodate large format retail opportunities. Mr. Powers also added that integrating housing in proximity to Bishop Ranch and other jobs is an attractive feature. Mr. Powers further added that there is a transition from the City Center to the NCRSP, to the Crow Canyon Specific Plan and each has an unique attributes.

Chair Sachs asked Mr. Powers if EDAC had concerns about the Plan. Mr. Powers replied the concerns were not with the plan, but how to go about implementing the Plan. Mr. Powers added that analyses conducted showed that the plan is sustainable and will add to the fiscal vitality of the City. Mr. Powers also added that the plan has gone through a number of revisions to allow the flexibility for a full range of market opportunities.

Comm. Benedetti asked Mr. Powers if he felt the mixed-use overlay would provide the flexibility

needed for marketing. Mr. Powers replied that the key would be to direct propose tenants to the correct property.

Vice Chair Kerger asked Mr. Powers if the Plan accommodates a range of business sizes. Mr. Powers replied that EDAC feels that this plan would provide unique opportunities for both large and small businesses.

Chair Sachs asked Mr. Powers how EDAC felt about the service commercial uses and would this plan enhance people using those businesses. Mr. Powers replied that the intent is to ensure that sufficient service commercial uses would be available and not restricting any opportunities for small or large property owners.

Comm. Wallis asked rather than to redesignate the area as service commercial, if the proposal was to allow service commercial uses. Mr. Barr replied yes.

Comm. Benedetti asked Mr. Barr if he was referring to the area north of Crow Canyon Road. Mr. Barr replied yes, as well as properties along Alcosta Boulevard.

Chair Sachs asked Marc Fontes Economic Development Director if he had anything to add to Mr. Powers comments. Mr. Fontes replied that specific issues that were raised regarding service commercial uses have been addressed by the recent change.

Comm. Wallis commented there were a number of well known medium to large retailers who had an interest in San Ramon. This plan offers unique opportunities and no other area would allow for that kind of use. Mr. Fontes replied that is correct outside the Shops at Bishop Ranch and The Home Depot, all of our other retail centers are anchored by grocery stores. Mr. Fontes added that one of the main drivers of this plan is to provide a much greater mix of retail.

Jim McVay- Chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee asked if there are any residents that support this plan and has a survey been done of what residents want. Vice Chair Kerger stated that there are constraints to the size of available retail space. Vice Chair Kerger added, that the mixed use would not only enhance the area, but would bring in tax revenue dollars.

Chair Sachs asked Mr. McVay what the committee thought of the plan and the traffic circulation. Mr. McVay replied that the committee was impressed with the layout of the plan and that it needs to be pedestrian friendly. Mr. McVay added that the concern is that the plan calls for 1,500 new residential units and how would those additional trips be accommodated.

Comm. Wallis stated that the plan has flexibility and provides opportunities for retail growth. Housing would follow as the housing market recovers and with new businesses coming into Bishop Ranch, the demand for housing would increase.

Mr. McVay asked with the additional housing, proposed additional police services and medical facilities are going to be needed to service the residents.

Comm. Wallis replied that the Planning Commission approved a medical building on Alcosta Boulevard and added that Kaiser Permanente Hospitals recently purchased a building on Camino Ramon.

Kathy Stewart - Chair of the Housing Advisory Committee asked if there was support from the residents for the plan and how were they being notified.

Carol Lopez - Chair of Parks and Community Service stated that she agrees with Ms. Stewart. Ms. Lopez added that she has heard comments from members of the public who do not understand why the plan is moving forward.

Ms. Stewart stated that members of the public need to be educated on the planning and vision of the plan. Vice Chair Kerger stated that information on the NCRSP is available on the City's website.

Chair Sachs asked Ms. Stewart what the Housing Advisory Committee thought of the proposed housing numbers. Ms. Stewart replied that the concern is how to keep it affordable.

Vice Chair Kerger commented that the State requires that we increase our work force housing numbers. Chair Sachs added that the Association of Bay Area Governments and the State have developed regional housing numbers for our area and what is needed as far as affordable housing.

Brooke Harris - Economic Development Housing Manager stated that the State of California with the Department of Finance does an analysis of the population growth, which is projected over a five- to seven-year period, as well as the jobs growth. The State assigns a housing number that is needed to accommodate growth in California. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is our Bay Area Council, and we are given a figure that we are supposed to plan for.

Ms. Harris further stated that the Housing Element identifies land that the City has set aside for housing opportunities sites. Ms. Harris added that within the housing numbers assigned by ABAG among the various income categories it is broken down.

Comm. Wallis asked if the Housing Advisory Committee has looked at the City's long range for housing and is housing in NCRSP consistent with that use. Mr. Stewart replied that they would like to see more mixed use and senior housing.

Vice Chair Kerger asked Ms. Stewart if senior housing was discussed or would the Housing Advisory Committee prefer to see affordable housing. Ms. Stewart replied that currently all senior housing is located on Alcosta Boulevard and HAC would like to see more spread throughout the City.

Carol Lopez stated that Parks and Community Services concern was that there were not enough parks and open space being provided, especially if housing is being planned for the area and with families coming in there needs to be parks and open space for families with children.

Comm. Wallis asked Ms. Lopez if her concern was the residential areas that are being proposed not having enough park space. Ms. Lopez replied yes, but park space is also needed in the business areas and that the Commission does not wish to see a plaza as park space.

Chair Sachs asked if staff could explore opportunities for additional park space associated with the Iron Horse Trail.

Comm. Wallis asked when the traffic study and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) would be available for public review. Mr. Barr replied that staff is currently working on the traffic study and that the EIR is expected to be released within 1-2 months.

Comm. Wallis stated that the Parks and Community Service Commission had concerns about there not being enough park space. Comm. Wallis asked if staff feels it would be feasible to provide additional park space in the plan. Mr. Barr replied yes, staff is looking into a number of possibilities and there are a number of ways in which private development can satisfy their park space requirements such as dedication or in lieu fees.

Comm. Viers asked if any tax revenue projections were completed on retail. Mr. Barr replied yes, that about a year ago when the different scenarios were analyzed for alternatives and that they ranged from a commercial base to residential emphasis. There were economic numbers associated with those alternatives in terms of revenue. The preferred alternative had higher revenues and lower costs to the City. Mr. Fontes added that City receives 1% of the sales if it is taxable. Mr. Fontes added that depending on the type of project assuming \$500 a square foot in sales, it is \$5.00 a square foot for the City and if you had ½ million square feet the taxable retail space it would be \$2.5 million annually to the City.

Comm. Viers asked when the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) ramps would be constructed. Lisa Bobadilla - Transportation Division Manager replied that Caltrans has signed the project study report for the Norris Canyon HOV lane. Ms. Bobadilla stated that the next steps are for Caltrans and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority to initiate the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and envision starting the EIR within a month. Ms. Bobadilla further stated that if the EIR will be completed within 2-3 years then the project could start in year 2016. Comm. Viers added that he would like to see the HOV lanes move forward.

Comm. Viers further added that he would like to see more detail on how a small business owners thrive with large retail in the area. Comm. Viers stated that the mixed-use concept compliments the plan and that he agrees with Ms. Lopez that there is not enough park space in the plan.

Comm. Benedetti stated that parks are important to our City and the right balance would have to be found in the mixed-use area to incorporate more parks. Comm. Benedetti added the residents need to be educated on the plan and why the City is moving forward.

Vice Chair Kerger stated that she would like to see an outreach to the business owners who are a vital part of our community and to get them involved.

Chair Sachs stated that he would like clarification on how 1,500 housing units are being proposed and is that increase in housing the cause of decrease in park space.

Chair Sachs opened the public hearing.

Kevin L'Hommedieu – San Ramon Business owner stated that he is against the plan. Mr. Homarial added that he is concerned about the increase in population and traffic.

Yvonne Rhoton – San Ramon did not wish to speak. Chair Sachs read her comments into the record. Ms. Rhoton would like to see an example of what Infill Development would be.

Bill Meine – San Ramon stated that to reduce traffic on Bollinger Canyon road an alternate access to Dougherty Valley by using the PG&E right of way should be considered. Mr. Meine added that another way to compensate for parks is by adding urban roof gardens in large complexes.

Jim Gibbon – San Ramon, stated that there are alternatives to the NCRSP that have not been sufficiently studied. Mr. Gibbon added that the City is built out and by adding more housing and mixed use development will not benefit the City or the residents. Adding more business and disregarding the needs of housing and businesses that already exists is not a good plan.

Roz Rogoff – San Ramon suggested that Kohl's or a Best Buy be looked into instead of having large supermarkets. Ms. Rogoff stated that "mixed use" should be a mixture of different uses and the City should redefine mixed use.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Chair Sachs adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectively Submitted, Luisa Amerigo