

PLANNING COMMISSION

Staff Report



Date: January 19, 2010

File: North Camino Ramon Specific Plan Preferred Land Use Alternative

Project Planner: Lauren Barr, Senior Planner *LB*

Recommended Action: Informational Item- Receive Report and Provide Comments

I. BACKGROUND

The proposed North Camino Ramon Specific Plan (NCRSP) area consists of approximately 295 acres bounded generally by the City limits to the north, Executive Parkway to the south, Highway 680 on the west and Alcosta Boulevard to the east. The underlying goal for NCRSP is to create a long range land use plan that can provide stimulus for economic development to address unmet commercial and retail needs while balancing quality of life for San Ramon residents. The long term vision for the NCRSP is for an infill development/redevelopment plan that is pedestrian/bicycle friendly, mixed use and a transit oriented development, and based on the smart growth principles embodied in the voter approved General Plan 2020 that will be a complement to the approved City Center Project.

On December 1, 2009, the City Council and Planning Commission held a joint Public Workshop to solicit comments and provide input on the NCRSP development concepts. The three alternatives provided for a range of housing densities and commercial opportunities. Based on the workshop comments, the ultimate recommendation was for a hybrid of the presented plan elements to form a preferred alternative.

II. ANALYSIS

Based on the comments received, there was support for a modified version of Concept 1. On December 15, 2009, staff issued a Memorandum outlining the feedback received and responses to the issues raised (Attachment A). Included in the Memorandum is a Hybrid Land Use Concept that Staff believes reflects the comments from the Workshop and represents the preferred land use alternative.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission accept the staff report and affirm the preferred land use alternative for the NCRSP.

IV. ATTACHMENTS

- A) Memorandum Dated December 15, 2009 (with Attachments)
 - 1. Hybrid Land Use Concept
 - 2. Response to Councilman Livingstone's Comments



PLANNING SERVICES DIVISION

MEMORANDUM

To: City Council, Planning Commission and Economic Development Advisory Committee

From: Phil Wong, Planning/Community Development Director

CC: Herb Moniz, City Manager and Department Heads

Date: December 15, 2009

Subject: North Camino Ramon Specific Plan Workshop-Preferred Concept Summary

**SUMMARY COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
DECEMBER 1, 2009 WORKSHOP**

This a summary based on the input received from the December 1, 2009 City Council and Planning Commission Workshop. In addition, Planning Services Division Staff will present this summary as an informational item at the regularly scheduled January 2010 Planning Commission and Economic Development Advisory Committee meetings. The following is a summary of the direction provided:

1. Concept #1 with changes.
2. Include public space/park elements and consider site amenities such as plazas, seating areas and water features that enhance quality of life for San Ramon residents. These public space/park elements create a sense of place and serve residential development in a manner consistent with General Plan policies and performance standards.
3. Modify and simplify the circulation/street framework to allow larger parcels, particularly for sales tax generating retail development. The internal circulation of these larger parcels can be defined through the development standards and site level design to provide the greatest flexibility.
4. Flexibility for location of large floor plate retail.
5. Residential– lean toward the current General Plan number with senior and workforce housing.
6. Maintain opportunities for service commercial uses
7. Consider location of the Transit Center south of Norris Canyon Road.
8. Address Councilman Livingstone's questions.(See Attachment 2)

In response Staff has provided a summary conceptual drawing (See Attachment 1) that staff believes reflects the intent of the comments received. The following narrative is intended to describe the

revised Concept 1 by land use element; however, the specific densities, floor areas and detailed use requirements have yet to be defined:

Opens space: A central public space/park element has been provided adjacent to the shared parking resources in the central core. A linear park element has been provide connecting the central core blocks to the Bishop Ranch replacement as well as east/west access from the office and residential areas to the Iron Horse Trail (IHT) and central core. The addition of site amenities (water features, site furnishings, etc.) can be included as part of the design guidelines and specific site development proposals.

Circulation System: Road system has been simplified to a central parkway spine with linear parks and the Crow Canyon Place road extension for access to larger sized floor plate sites. The orientation allows for larger parcels and the flexibility desired by the plan. Additional secondary circulation can be implemented as part of the design guidelines and specific site designs to promote internal pedestrian movement and connectivity between plan elements.

Retail Medium-Large Size Floor Plate Options: Opportunities have been provided for large and medium size floor plate retail development. The large size floor plate options have the ability to accommodate larger or a combination of mid-size retailers. Likewise medium size floorplate sites could be combined to accommodate larger retailers. The specific development standards will likely contain performance standards and checks to ensure that there are ample sites to accommodate the larger and medium size floor plate businesses.

Commercial Core: The central core remains an option for smaller commercial retail and service uses; however, these spaces could be combined to accommodate medium and larger sized floor plate retailers. In addition, a residential overly or similar mechanism can provide the flexibility for an additional residential component in the core blocks. The central shared parking resource provides opportunities for centralized parking which can result in opportunities for additional density in the core area.

Residential: The plan is looking at an average residential density that will accommodate a minimum 1,124 residential units to be consistent with the current General Plan. Higher density residential is shown east of Camino Ramon while the balance of the units could be accommodated by the residential overlay in the commercial core and other mixed use residential components of the plan.

MU-Residential Emphasis: This district is intended as a transitional district between the commercial core and the residential and office uses. Camino Ramon and Norris Canyon roads are faced with vertical mixed use elements to create streetscape connectivity along Camino Ramon while responding to commercial, office and residential needs.

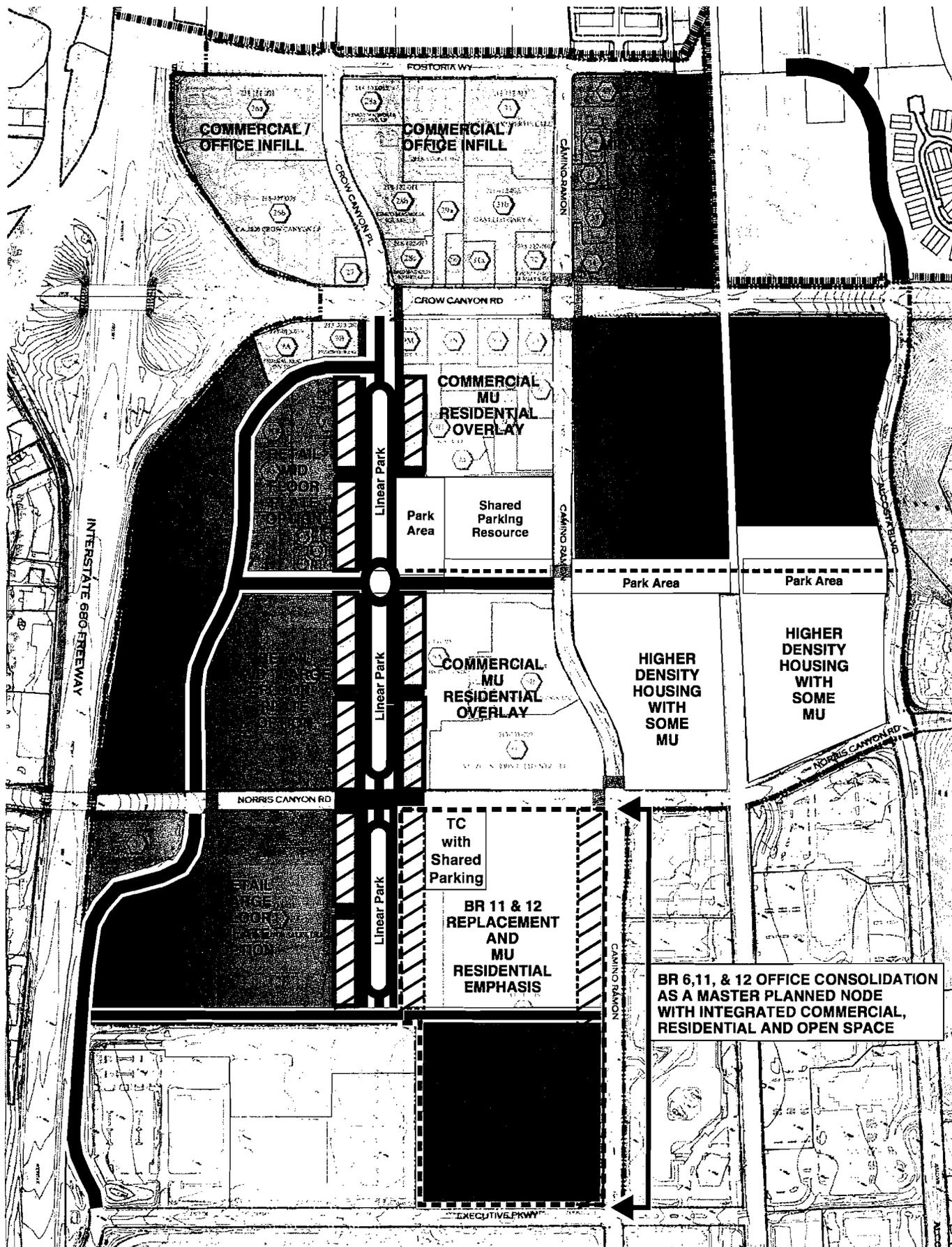
BR 6 Replacement: Bishop Ranch 6 consolidation remains unchanged as an overall land use strategy to provide additional land use opportunities.

Commercial/Office infill: Reflects that current land use patterns are relatively stable, but acknowledges that there would likely be some long-term redevelopment and modest intensification of both retail and office uses.

Transit Center: The transit center is located south on Norris Canyon Road. This location is beneficial to the employment center of Bishop Ranch and provides easy access to the proposed Norris Canyon Road HOV ramps.

As an alternative, locating the Transit Center on the north side of Norris Canyon Road offers some distinct advantages to the overall plan. In addition to locating shared parking facilities closer to the

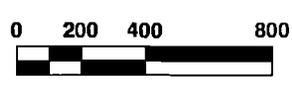
core blocks, there would likely be improved transit turning motions in the PM peak travel times. Access from the Transit Center via the open space parkway provides easy and direct access to Bishop Ranch offices and opportunities for ground level commercial services along the way. The specific location of the transit center will be analyzed in more detail; however, locating the facility adjacent to Norris Canyon Road will maximize the benefit of the HOV ramps and improve circulation to the Plan Area.




Ground Floor Retail and Commercial Services Emphasis

LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Hybrid Concept
NORTH CAMINO RAMON SPECIFIC PLAN
 San Ramon, California



CANNON DESIGN GROUP
 December 10, 2009

COUNCILMAN LIVINGSTONE'S QUESTIONS WITH RESPONSES

1. What is the role of the RDA? What can it do in relation to the specific plan area?

Response: Redevelopment funding can be utilized for projects that benefit the redevelopment area north of Crow Canyon. Additional capital improvements, such as street or signal improvements may be able to use redevelopment funds. The Crow Canyon widening project was partially funded with RDA funds.

2. How important is the City's Housing Element to the plan?

Response: The critical aspect of the Housing Element in relation to the Plan Area is the existing Housing opportunity sites identified in the certified Housing Element. Currently there are 1,124 units programmed into the Plan Area and the City needs to preserve those units or find additional sites to accommodate those programmed housing units. The Housing Element does not require that any additional housing units be considered beyond the 1,124 unit count; however, any changes that would reduce the housing numbers for the Plan Area would jeopardize the current Housing Element certification.

3. How important are the Norris Canyon Road HOV ramps to the plan?

Response: The specifics of the traffic study have not been completed; however, it is clear that the Plan Area will benefit from Norris Canyon HOV ramps. The proposed HOV ramps will facilitate freeway access; result in improved service at the Transit Center as well as the potential for non peak access to the Plan Area by non HOV users during non peak times and weekends.

4. How can we make the Alcosta Blvd. extension happen?

Response: Implementation of the Alcosta Blvd. extension would be based on the environmental review associated with the Plan Area and will need to be developed in coordination with Danville. The proposed CCTA Measure J General Plan Amendment Review Process is intended to encourage discussion on local and regional traffic issues as well as Danville's future plans to develop the Borel property may provide additional opportunities for discussion and negotiation.

5. Is it better to have a centralized parking structure or have parking structures spread around the plan area?

Response: The specifics of the parking configuration are something that is still being analyzed and is largely dependent on the uses. There is no doubt there is an economy associated with centralized parking and a park once concept which would be effective in the project's retail core. In areas with larger size floor plates, that may sell larger merchandise, more direct access to parking would be required. In that context it is conceivable that multiple medium sized floor plate stores within a project block could share common parking resources. However parking and the ability of customers to pick up large retail items must be considered. Parking within the Plan

Area will likely be a hybrid of street parking, small infill surface lots, loading areas, parking integrated into retail structures and larger centralized parking.

6. How will this plan impact the City Center Plan and the Crow Canyon Specific Plan?

Response: City Center, North Camino Ramon Specific Plan (NCRSP) and Crow Canyon Specific Plan (CCSP) all complement each other in different ways. City Center is intended to provide a high quality lifestyle and entertainment driven center in the heart of the City. One of the fundamental goals of the NCRSP is to complement the City Center Project by focusing on the unmet retail demand and workforce housing needs within the City. This is also true for the CCSP in that there are specific retail and service commercial uses that could benefit from the proposed diversity of land uses between the plan areas. The nature of all three plans allow for a great deal of flexibility to accommodate different land uses in a way that supports the vision of each of the plans and creates a balance for the City as a whole.

7. If the automotive uses in the area are displaced, where would they go?

Response: It is clear that Automotive and Service Commercial uses are important resources to the City. The NCRSP is a long range plan and there is no intention to force any business out and the existing automobile service uses can remain. If the need arises, there may be opportunities for additional Service Commercial uses in the Crow Canyon Specific Plan (CCSP) to complement those already existing in the CCSP. Ultimately, the relationship and balance of Service Commercial uses in the NCRSP and CCSP and Citywide will be retained in a manner to meet the needs of the City as a whole.