

Union City General Plan Update

Planning Commission Study Session Summary

November 17, 2014

Status Report on the General Plan Update

Ted Holzem, Mintier Harnish Project Manager, provided an update on the General Plan Update process and schedule. Mr. Holzem reviewed meetings conducted to date, including the All-Hands Kickoff Meeting (July 7, 2014), Community Workshop #1 (September 20th, 2014), GPAC Meeting #2 (October 15, 2014), and completed project milestones, including: publication of www.uc2040.com, the online townhall forum, Community Workshop #1 Summary, and GPAC Meeting #2 Minutes. Mr. Holzem also discussed current efforts, including: preparation of the draft Background Report and gathering additional community input on assets, issues, opportunities, and a community vision through the online townhall forum. Finally, Mr. Holzem highlighted next steps in the process, including: confirming the draft vision; preparing a summary report and newsletter on issues, opportunities, and assets; publishing the draft background report; and meeting with the City Council.

Planning Commission Summary

The Planning Commission was generally in agreement with much of the community input provided during Community Workshop #1, through the Online Townhall Forum, and at the GPAC Meeting. Commissioners provided additional input related to the Assets, Issues, and Opportunities that should be addressed or considered during the General Plan Update, and suggested additional ideas for a Vision for Union City.

Assets

- The BART Station and Union City FLEA are attractive modes of transportation for people who want to get around Union City and the region without driving. People have moved to Union City for the transit service.
- Union Landing attracts people from throughout the region. It drives the local economy and generates tax revenue for the City.
- Union City's parks and recreation areas are a value and asset to the community. The Public Works Department does great job maintaining City parks.
- A lot of good people live in the city and make Union City a special community. We can go from good to great.
- The city has a small-town atmosphere.

Issues

- Union City doesn't have a lot of available land for future growth and development. The city needs land for housing. The only way to grow is up or down. Realistically, we can only go up, or to reclaim land, but we need to consider our views of the hillside areas.

- Can the east end of the hills be developed? The Hillside Development Plan provides only for limited development east of Mission Boulevard.
- Areas of the City planned for Research and development are challenged. How can the City increase opportunities in this area?
- The city needs more cultural events.
- Traffic congestion along Niles/Mission Boulevard is an issue.
- The city needs more community policing. Better street safety.
- The community could benefit from having more youth programs sponsored by City.
- We need to find a balance between parks at schools in order to make them a community resource.
- The General Plan Update needs to address aging population and how the City will provide programs for seniors.

Opportunities

- The city's warehouses are underutilized. There is opportunity to convert them to high-tech centers and office space. For example, San Leandro and Fremont have created high-tech zones to promote this type of development. The City should consider identifying one or more districts.
- The City should increase areas available to develop office space to provide opportunities for higher paying jobs.
- Consider using the hillside area Mission Boulevard for recreational uses.
- There is potential near I-880 for hotels and other visitor serving uses.
- The community could benefit from having more cultural festivals.
- There is an opportunity to relieve traffic by providing better transit connections or shuttles from the BART station to job centers throughout the city.
- Consider stabilizing and improving the Horner-Vesey area so it can accommodate future growth and development.
- Union City Boulevard is a very busy corridor that offers opportunities for economic development.
- The Decoto area has large lots with small homes that have created underutilized space. There is opportunity to promote this space for home expansions or new housing opportunities.
- The City needs to continue to focus on senior citizens and youth. We should carry on existing General Plan goals and policies for youth, families, and seniors.
- The City should use Measure BB funding to expand transit capacity at the BART station and beyond.
- The General Plan Update offers an opportunity to go to the High School to ask what Union City youth think about the future. What is their vision? They will inherit the City, so the Plan should reflect their expectations.

Vision

- Union City is a self-contained, viable city with ample parks and recreation opportunities.
- Union City has attractive to businesses and is a center of bustling economic activity. It is supportive of small, unique businesses and restaurants. It is conducive to starting and growing businesses. There are hotels and visitor serving uses location near 880.
- The Old Alvarado Area is unique and home to festivals.

