



CITY OF UNION CITY
MINUTES
GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2015, 6:30 P.M.
IN THE CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM OF CITY HALL
34009 ALVARADO-NILES BLVD., UNION CITY, CALIFORNIA

I. CALL TO ORDER: 6:35 pm

GPAC MEMBERS: Jim Navarro (City Council Member); Pat Gacoscos (City Council Member); Roy Panlilio (Planning Commissioner); Chuck Kennedy (Parks and Recreation Commission); Jaime Patino (alternate for Yesenia Moinar, Human Relations Commission); Domingo Filardo (Senior Commission); Jaden Grey (Youth Commission); Lance Nishihira (EDAT); Barry Ferrier (At-large); Lisa Mata (At-large); Larry Bowen (Chamber of Commerce)

Staff: Joan Malloy (Economic and Community Development Director); Gloria Ortega (Economic Development Manager); Nancy Hutar (Staff Planner); Ted Holzem (Mintier Harnish Sr. Project Manager)

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Lance Nishihira made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 3, 2014, meeting and Barry Ferrier seconded.

III. BUSINESS MATTERS:

a. STATUS REPORT ON THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Joan Malloy, Economic and Community Development Director, provided an update on the General Plan Update process and schedule. Ms. Malloy reviewed meetings conducted to date and discussed current efforts, including: preparation of the draft Background Report and the Assets, Issues, and Opportunities Report. Finally, Ms. Malloy highlighted next steps in the process.



B. REVIEW OF GENERAL PLAN DRAFT VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Ms. Malloy gave an overview of what a General Plan vision statement encompasses and why it is needed. Ms. Malloy described the outcomes from the “visioning” exercise from the first community workshop and outlined an example vision statement. Holzem provided an overview of the draft Vision and Guiding Principles.

C. FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Gloria Ortega, Economic Development Coordinator, facilitated an exercise with the GPAC member to gather ideas and input on topics identified by the City Council, including:

1. Capitalize on what makes Union City unique and different now and in the future;
2. Identify what the City can do to set itself apart from its neighbors and other cities in the Bay Area; and
3. Prioritize actions, within the framework of the draft Vision and Guiding Principles document, to assist with these goals.

See Attachment 1 for an overview of this discussion.

IV. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:** No public comment.

V. **GOOD OF THE ORDER:** Carmela Campbell, Planning Manager, announced that the GPAC bus tour would be held on Saturday, October 18, 2014 from 9:00 – noon.

VI. **ADJOURNMENT:** 8:35 pm



Attachment 1

Different and Unique

GPAC members were asked to identify features the City could capitalize on that makes Union City different now and in the future, and to identify what the city can do to set itself apart from its neighbors and other cities in the Bay Area. GPAC members were given Post-It® notes, which they used to identify specific ideas. The ideas were gathered by City staff and organized by the following topics:

General

- Citizen involvement
- City staff totally committed to making U.C. the best it can be
- Really low crime rate
- Elected officials are accessible

Land Use

- Location to jobs, universities, national labs, bridges, transportation, BART
- Union City is and should remain affordable
- 280 growing days – climate
- More futuristic mall design
- U.C. has an “envied” shopping mall with Union Landing.
- Station District will be a center of city’s action for entertainment, transportation, young families, arts
- Upscale lodging limitation; an item for change
- Provide more retail options
- World class cafes, restaurants, culinary entertainment
- Establish places for more hi-tech industry
- Middle class access to housing
- 40-100 years Future: Moratorium on housing development on flat lands to promote business development; allow upscale development in the hills
- Lack of space will trigger more infill development
- Should discuss population projections

Neighborhoods and Districts

- Safe neighborhoods
- Upgrade/promote Alvarado historic district as destination point
- Union City’s history is different than other cities

Transportation

- UC is accessible given that it’s so central to the Bay Area and East Bay
- UC is now accessible to modern transportation BART, AC transit, and others



- UC is located on the BART line and is one of the first stops
- Travel hub
- East West connector will connect transportation corridors
- Bike/PED trail that almost full connect throughout the City
- Union City isn't that congested. How do we maintain this?

Schools and Education

- Educated workforce.
- James Logan High School 4,000+ students and great programs (large school, but lots of programs that would otherwise not be possible)
- Award-winning co-curricular programs for students
- Band/color guard, forensics, athletics programs
- Only city around here with only one high school (unless we act)
- There should be more opportunities for higher education
- Quality K-12 education
- Chabot and other colleges should locate campuses here
- Give young people activities that will steer them away from drugs, crime, etc.

Community Facilities

- Parks and recreation is very much a priority to the City
- Modern/large library
- More community meeting space
- Event center next to BART
- Encouraging sustainability by building/upgrading trail system instead of upgrading new roads

Diversity

- Many different ethnicities in different area of town
- Union City will continue to accept, appreciate, and provide for diverse cultural activities
- Promote diversity and inclusion

Priorities

GPAC members were asked to prioritize actions, within the framework of the draft Vision and Guiding Principles. GPAC members broken out into groups and took the topical areas of the Guiding Principles. Each group either identified/ranked the top three guiding principles in each topical area or identified action items the City could implement the further the Vision and Guiding Principles.

Economic Development *(identified/ranked the top three guiding principles)*

1. Encourage office buildings, including Class-A office space, in appropriate locations within the city to increase and expand the city's property tax and job base. *[In order to have a stable property tax base.]*



2. Strategically position Union City to succeed in a global marketplace.
3. Protect and expand economic assets within the city by supporting existing commercial and industrial sector businesses to ensure that they remain a vital part of the City's economic base and by expanding Union City's base of high-quality jobs and revenue-generating businesses in the commercial and industrial sector.

Health and Quality of Life (*identified action items*)

- Work with non-profits and other organizations to provide services
- Locate a satellite college/university campus in Union City
- Promote and support mentorship programs

Land Use (*identified/ranked the top three guiding principles*)

1. Maintain a balanced mix of residential, employment, and commercial uses that provide residents with places to live and work. [*Commenter pointed out that topographically a balanced land use would include preserving the flat lands for industry and the hills should accommodate residential.*]
2. Encourage higher-density developments and mixed-use projects in appropriate areas throughout the city, including areas adjacent to transit stops, along transit corridors, near job centers, and in strategic focus areas throughout the city.
3. Implement sustainable and resilient development practices that provide for the needs of existing residents and businesses, while preserving choices for future generations.

Community Design (*identified/ranked the top three guiding principles*)

1. Create vibrant public places that serve as gathering places for the community and function as regional draws for visitors.
2. Improve Union City's appearance by creating attractive commercial and mixed-use corridors and centers that are integrated with surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Locate and design buildings, streetscapes, and public spaces that contribute to walkable neighborhoods, corridors, and districts.

Housing (*identified/ranked the top three guiding principles*)

1. Promote a mix of housing types and affordability throughout the city that meets the needs of existing and future residents.
2. Include a mix of housing types within neighborhoods to promote a diversity of household types and housing choices for residents of all ages and income levels.

Mobility and Access (*identified/ranked the top three guiding principles*)

1. Create a safe and convenient transportation network that incorporates complete streets concepts by meeting the needs of all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, persons with



disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, users and operators of public transportation, emergency responders, seniors, children, youth, and families.

2. Develop a balanced, integrated, multimodal transportation system that is efficient and safe with frequent service connecting every neighborhood to the rest of the city and the region.
3. Continue providing a variety of transportation choices that promote alternatives to the automobile, including walking, bicycling, and transit.

Sustainability and Resiliency *(identified action items)*

- Allow onsite greywater recycling
- Encourage/provide programs to convert landscaping to drought tolerant/native species
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emission to help achieve the State and City's reduction goals to address climate change. *[Especially through the promotion of planting trees, including fruit trees]*
- Develop community gardens *[Relates to tree planting policy, too]*

Parks and Recreation *(identified action items)*

- Develop areas for spectator sports to encourage visitors to come to Union City for tournaments and sporting events
- Develop festival grounds for fairs and large events
- Remove and don't plant destructive trees (i.e., those that impact infrastructure: sidewalks, pipes)

Public Safety *(identified/ranked the top three guiding principles)*

1. Improve coordination among residents and businesses and City Departments including the Police Department, Fire Department, Economic and Community Development Department, and Public Works Department to address security issues and maintain a safe community.
2. Ensure public facilities and infrastructure investments contribute to the safety and security of residents (e.g., lighting in public places).
3. Minimize Union City's vulnerability to natural disasters and manmade hazards through long-range contingency and resiliency planning in all decisions.

Services and Facilities *(identified/ranked the top three guiding principles)*

1. Provide quality public services, facilities, and infrastructure that are distributed equitably throughout the city.
2. Ensure City revenues are sufficient to maintain and enhance City services, programs, and facilities that serve residents and the business community.
3. Ensure new development is fiscally neutral or positive to the City and provides a net social or economic benefit to the community.



Suggested Refinements to the Vision and Guiding Principles

During the discussion and exercises, GPAC members suggested a few refinements to the Vision and Guiding Principles:

- The Vision statement should say “Provide direction to decision makers...”
- While Union City is centrally located, we haven’t characterized ourselves as the “heart” of the Bay Area; other cities have done that (i.e., Hayward). We should come up with a different word or phrase for the Vision to emphasize our location in the Bay Area. Maybe the “Gateway to Silicon Valley”.
- The Vision and Guiding Principals should address trees and our urban forest. Should we plant trees on the hillside? Can we plant fruit trees that provide people with food?
- We should plan to have a college or university in Union City.
- Revise the following Guiding Principles as indicated:
 - Maintain a topographically balanced mix of residential, employment, and commercial uses that provide residents with places to live and work.
 - Provide quality staff and public services, facilities, and infrastructure that are distributed equitably throughout the city.
- Merge the following Guiding Principles:
 - Strengthen the City’s emergency response capabilities.
 - Continue to support and expand the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program to better prepare residents for natural disasters.

Other Comments

- Want to make sure the idea of adding another high school isn’t off the table. It should be evaluated as part of the process. The single high school causes traffic problems.
- The General Plan should discuss the previous implementation measures that have to been met and why.