

ATTACHMENT 2

SCAG recommendation letter and Staff's
response

May 20, 2017

Planning Commissioners
City of San Jose Planning Commission
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Stevens Creek Advisory Group Recommendations for the Stevens Creek Urban Village

Dear Planning Commissioners:

For the last 11 months, the Stevens Creek Advisory Group (SCAG) has met a dozen times with the community, consultants, Council Staff, and City's Planning Department to develop an Urban Village Plan (Plan). The urban village is located on the south side of Stevens Creek Boulevard west of the Santana Row / Valley Fair Urban Village and east of the City of Cupertino and stretches over two miles.

The Plan defines the design guidelines and policy framework to accommodate the land use, circulation, and parks required to accommodate the additional 3,860 dwelling and 4,500 jobs envisioned by the General Plan. There was a feeling within the group that these numbers were arbitrary and may not represent a fully developed urban village. This was particularly true with the housing component.

The SCAG requests the Planning Commission recommends conditional approval of the Plan to City Council. With the following three conditions:

1. Require staff to reconvene the SCAG for the development of the Plan's transition and implementation strategies.

The current Plan does not include an Implementation chapter and does not adequately address the transition between land uses. Neither staff nor the SCAG consider the existing plan to be complete.

2. Heart of the Village should extend to Kiely on the west and consequently the land use designation should change from Urban Village Commercial to Urban Village.

The natural geographic boundary was not considered due to current usage

3. Albany and Kiely not be considered as designated bicycle corridors.

The issue was not adequately discussed during the course of the deliberations yet included in staff's plan. Additional study is required in advance of designating these streets as designated bikeways.

The SCAG was in agreement with the majority of the Plans policies. The SCAG overwhelmingly agreed with the Plans overall Vision, to grow the Stevens Creek Urban Village into an economically vibrant commercial corridor that serves the surrounding communities. The SCAG understood that additional development in the area is necessary to obtain the amenities required to provide parkland, build pedestrian and bicycle corridors, and create a 'sense of place.' Although the SCAG agreed on the overall vision of the Plan there was differences of opinion on its specific components. Maximum

building heights was the issue that divided the committee more than any other. A significant portion of the committee believes the densities proposed were too high. There was also the perspective that Stevens Creek will never rise to the level of an Urban Village, but will continue to be an urban thoroughfare with urban villages embedded at key intersections.

The SCAG would like to continue the work it has begun. The SCAG does not believe the plan being presented to you today is complete. In addition to not completing the implementation chapter, the SCAG didn't have time to evaluate innovative strategies, such as putting a cap on 280 at Saratoga, allowing parkland on leased rather than deeded property, change the circulation patterns on smaller streets, or grander visions on how the neighboring Urban Village can be more integrated. In addition, the committee didn't adequately address the area's affordability.

The SCAG recommends that the Planning Commission forward a recommendation to the City Council to approve the plan with the three conditions identified.

One thing is abundantly clear, without the support from Councilmember Jones' office, Christina Pressman specifically, there was no chance for success. Christina spent literally hundreds of hours (at the office and on her personal time many evenings) at both the Winchester Advisory Group (WAG) and Stevens Creek Advisory Group (SCAG) meetings. While Councilmember Jones' staff in general is great, Christina should be singled out as an exemplary member of our City team. I know we speak for the WAG too on this point. Any future Advisory Group **needs** an executive sponsor and supporting staff to help the community navigate the system and help guide the process.

SCAG would also like to thank Lesley Xavier in Planning for her resiliency and for leading this team while two of her lead planners left after this process started. She stuck with it and spent hundreds of hours as well on all of these plans.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the public in their participation, whether they liked the idea of an Urban Village or not. We all know change is hard, but we all need to be involved and engaged so we can positively influence the outcomes, while keeping in mind the needs of the future, not just the needs of the past or present day; these are forward looking plans.

The SCAG appreciates the time of the Planning Commission in reviewing our thoughts and guidance. Appendix A has a list of "Lessons Learned" that we hope will further inform and direct future Advisory Groups for Urban Villages.

Kind regards,

SCAG Co-Chairs, Robert Levy and Kirk Vartan

Appendix A: Lessons Learned

No project is complete until the process has been evaluated. The community engage process for the development of urban village plans in the City of San Jose is new and being formulated. The City should learn from this experience and modify future endeavors with the lesson learned here. The following are the lessons learned from the SCAG co-chair's perspective.

What worked

- The community was well represented by the current community with the exception of renters
- Public outreach was effective but not many attended
- The council district office serving as the sponsor and shepherding the process
- The committee and community was educated on land use and urban village design
- Great meals.

What didn't work

- Unable to complete the project in the time allotted
- Not able to effectively take innovative ideas into account
- Collaboration with neighboring Cities
- Collaboration with neighboring urban villages

What would you do differently

- More clearly define goals at outset of the process
- Understanding the background conditions (Don Weden type content)
- More realistic timeline (the timeline was inappropriately condensed)
- Provide a greater opportunity to explore creative/ innovative ideas
- Include more renters and younger residents (too many middle age and older participants)
- More discussion on affordable housing

Appendix B: Survey Results

A survey of the proposed goals and policies were forwarded to the SCAG for their input. The following summary section identifies the committee's relative level of support for most of the major policies identified within the plan.

- **Overwhelming agreed (80%+):**
 - Land Use, Place Making, and Open Space
 - Support a range of housing types within the Stevens Creek Urban Village and increase the supply of the Village's residential units consistent with the housing growth assigned by the Envision San José 2040 General Plan.
 - Ensure new development along Stevens Creek Boulevard, Kiely Boulevard, Saratoga Avenue, and Albany Drive includes ground floor commercial and/or active spaces such as lobbies fronting the street and wrapping the corner when located on a corner lot.
 - Encourage the aggregation of parcels within the Stevens Creek Urban Village to facilitate new development, especially mixed-use, at a higher density or intensity, and to provide for the inclusion of publicly-accessible plazas and open spaces into new development.
 - All new development shall incorporate some amount of publicly accessible open space, such as plazas and pocket parks, or small areas for seating, into their development that is privately owned and maintained.
 - Explore creative strategies and opportunities to integrate community spaces including parks, plazas, open spaces, indoor/outdoor event spaces, and community centers into new development.
 - The Heart of Stevens Creek is envisioned to become the major activity center and community hub in this Urban Village.
 - The East End Gateway marks the transition into the Stevens Creek Urban Village and will signify this change through gateway treatments and urban design. The shallow lots in this portion of San Jose will continue to house mixed-use commercial uses, including opportunities for small businesses.
 - Prohibit self-storage and big box retail with the Village
 - Prohibit drive through uses within the Village
 - Ensure that all new development includes placemaking elements that focus on improving quality of life, investing on local, existing assets and cultural expression, and creating both physical and psychological connections
 - Public plazas should be completely visible from at least one street frontage and where applicable, be visible from a secondary street frontage.
 - Improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation
 - Remove the parking on Stevens Creek to allow for a dedicated bicycle lane
 - Redesign the lanes to create additional space for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvement
 - Improve pedestrian spaces along Stevens Creek by widening sidewalk space, adding street trees and landscaping, and installing pedestrian scale lighting
 - Installing a pedestrian/ bicycle only over I-280 at John Mise Park

- Provide safe crossings of Stevens Creek and other major roadways through high-visibility elements and shorter crossing distances.
 - Provide pedestrian space within private developments and install signage and way finding to direct visitors to nearby destinations and create a cohesive sense of place throughout the Village
 - Circulation
 - Redesign the right-of-way on Stevens Creek Boulevard to create a complete street that provides for all modes of travel and encourages destination travel to enhance economic development and support the access needs of local businesses and residents
 - Improve traffic flow along Stevens Creek Boulevard through the use of adaptive signal technology, signal timing, or other technology
 - Make transit a more desirable option within the Urban Village and to surrounding destinations to support mode shift and improve roadway conditions.
- Somewhat agreed (60% to 70% agreement) with:
 - Land Use, Place Making, and Open Space
 - The addition of 4,500 new jobs in the planning area
 - The maximum building heights defined within the Village with the exception of the buildings within the 'Heart of the Village'
 - Encourage the integration of deed restricted affordable units within residential development. A goal, and not a requirement of individual projects, is that 25% of the total new residential units constructed are affordable.
 - The West End Gateway character area is the western entry point to the Urban Village, close to the border of the City of Cupertino and the City of San Jose. It will convey the arrival in San Jose and the Urban Village by introducing distinct design elements, such as the iconic vintage Safeway sign.
 - Create vehicle parking requirements and guidelines for new development to encourage travel mode shifts and efficient use of land.
 - Improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation
 - Foster a development pattern that supports the creation of a walkable dynamic environment and reduces motor vehicle travel by encouraging the use of other modes of travel.
- Divided (40% to 60%)
 - Land Use, Place Making, and Open Space
 - Allowing for 150' rather than 120' height limit in the 'Heart of the Village'
 - Setback and Step Down Guidelines
 - Façade Articulation Guidelines and Standards: Select color palettes and materials that are harmonious with existing character defining building and signage along Stevens Creek Blvd., Saratoga, Kiely, and San Thomas Expressway.
 - Circulation

- Design new developments and redevelopments to accommodate autonomous vehicle maneuvering and parking activities
- **Disagreed with the Plan (>40%)**
 - Improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation
 - Activate Albany as a multi-modal corridor that accommodates auto, bike, and pedestrian.
 - The team felt that street was already too narrow to accommodate the existing traffic and parked cars. Encouraging additional bicycle usage would be unwise. Bike traffic should be directed to a dedicated bicycle lane on Stevens Creek.
 - Land Use, Place Making, and Open Space
 - The additional of 3,860 new housing units.
 - 37% approved of the number the remainder of the SCAG. The majority of those who disagreed felt the number was too low. Additional housing in the area is needed