

SANTA CLARA DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY MEETINGS – NOTES

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COMMUNITY MEETING #1 – CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 10/21/2015, 6:30 to 8:30 PM

10/21/15 – GROUP A:

- Downtown should be on Franklin Street, as it once was. “Franklin is a very logical pedestrian way”. One end of Franklin is a the train station, the other may extend all the way to Lincoln. There should be a pedestrian overcrossing at end of Franklin to the station and perhaps over the tracks. Underground crossing at Depot is important. Franklin west of Monroe should be reconfigured to be more pedestrian friendly. Franklin within the superblock could be a pedestrian-only pathway with parking below. Franklin from El Camino Real to Lafayette should be a pedestrian mall. Benton and Homestead are critical vehicular roadways, more vehicular capacity is not needed on Franklin.
- Parking strategies are needed. Comments ranged between “Free parking is a must”, and suggestions of placing a parking garage behind the Courthouse.
- Historic design styles important. Style is mission/adobe/spanish. Historic homes should be moved if new development is desired in their place.
- Downtown is a commercial area. A diversity of tenants is desired to provide food service and neighborhood retail.

First steps

- Decide what makes Downtown Santa Clara Special
- Define “District” boundaries
- Determine key importance of Franklin. Need consensus that Franklin is the critical spine
- City should make a clear plan by areas with policies representing a “vision”
- Specific Plans help developers do what the City has envisioned

Examples:

- Chico (University & Town)
- Willow Glen (parking)
Campbell
- Los Gatos (parking)
- Murphy Street, Sunnyvale
- Japantown, San Jose
- Cupertino bridge
- Santana Row

10/21/15 – GROUP B:

- Downtown needs to have a new vision

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- The university should be involved. The biggest attraction is the University. The downtown needs to be more attractive to students. Downtown should match Santa Clara University architecture with classic brick facades to create a college town. Can the University do more to tie/connect the pieces? To serve the students, more University-serving retail should be placed on Lafayette.
- This downtown won't be like Santana Row. And, hopefully won't be like Mervyn's plaza. The future must not miss opportunities for social gathering.
- Who are the target customers for the downtown? Students, local residents? We need roof tops to make retail work - students are seasonal.
- Downtown is currently around the superblock and Franklin Square, the super block "in the middle" could be the most intense part of the downtown.
- The superblock should change, but keep the post office.
- Make new development walkable, with strong connections supported with retail to give people a reason to walk.
- Remove old apartments and replace it with better architecture.
- Keep key historic buildings, or adapt them.
- Parking is needed: including permit parking, build a new parking garage or share University parking.
- Connect downtown with transit, make it possible to walk from the Caltrain station to downtown.
- Franklin Street should be a pedestrian area that goes all the way through Monroe. How far should downtown go? Past Carmelites? Vehicular traffic stays on other streets like Homestead, Benton, Washington Street.
- Benton - what should happen there? Should it be left alone?
- New independent/local retail desired, such as bookstores, and pubs

COMMUNITY MEETING #2 – MAIN LIBRARY – 10/26/2015, 3:00 to 5:00 PM

10/26/15 – GROUP A:

- Currently, Downtown is the superblock (Homestead/ Lafayette) with Franklin Mall. The only thing left of the historic downtown is the post office. Concentrate efforts for redevelopment on this superblock.
- Reuse historic buildings for retail and/or relocate homes.
- If Franklin is closed it would be an attractive walking environment. It can't be too long though, the Carmelite monastery is too far. Keep Franklin open to Alviso.
- Retail could include local small scale businesses, such as bookstores, boutiques, cafes, restaurants, hardware, gift shop, pharmacy, and other neighborhood services. Events could include open air concerts

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- Downtown could be a walkable environment with patios, green space, courtyards embedded along main spine. Make it a multi-generational appeal and design. Provide a uniform streetscape that is pedestrian friendly.
- Strategic infill opportunities could make downtown more vibrant. Infill retail and residential in areas that currently have industrial buildings.

First Steps

- Test feasibility of the key ideas
- Prepare a traffic study
- Find out about current development
- Prepare design guidelines for new development
- Work on attracting a smaller supermarket
- Survey of current retailers

10/26/15 – GROUP B:

- Downtown boundaries are the Old Quad, El Camino to Bellamy, RR to Monroe or to the Monastery.
- Traffic needs to be addressed on Winchester, Monroe, Lafayette (is a major street), El Camino
- The opportunities for new development are in the superblock, Monroe/Homestead (Wilson's)
- The core of downtown was along Franklin (which was annihilated). Celebrate the historic core and reinstate/reconnect Franklin. The 100% corner in 1945 was Franklin / Washington.
- Could Franklin Street be narrower without Monroe?
- People choose to go to the closest center. "Downtowns" are everywhere. The Levi's Stadium project is destination commercial as opposed to downtown.
- The advantages of the neighborhood include historic Victorian homes, transit connections, the University.
- The challenges are access to area, Franklin doesn't connect to El Camino Real.
- Traffic is not stopping in downtown, commuters create cut-throughs, the main action is between Lafayette and Monroe.
- Downtown was torn down because of lack of off-street parking. Should there be underground parking?

First Steps

- Identify what downtown area is
- Extend Franklin Street
- Make streets walkable
- "Mission City Quad" or "Mission Quad" as the name for the Downtown Core

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Examples

- Chico state
- Butler University

10/26/15 – GROUP C:

- Downtown is Franklin from Monroe to the train station and Main Street, which is missing. New development should take back the old downtown and create a focal point and sense of place.
- Downtown should be walkable, refer to the history of the old town center, have a grand boulevard, integrate with the surrounding city, be a center for culture and arts, include areas with gardens, courtyards and trees. The streets of downtown should be a place where people of mixed ages can interact.
- Franklin from Lafayette to El Camino Real needs to be walkable. A bridge needs to extend over El Camino Real to connect it to Caltrain.
- Parking needs to go underground, surface parking areas should be converted into mixed use development. Parking should be shared in the evening.
- New mixed use development along Benton, Sherman, and El Camino Real. Building heights should be limited to 2 stories with more density along El Camino Real. More density is needed by the police station. Mixed-use development could be nice at the Caltrain station
- Downtown should have office uses in heart, lofts, Mom and Pop shops, Coffee shops and cafes (City Lights) Mio's, smaller stores (mixed sizes), small markets, and housing options.
- Downtown should feel like Campbell, Willow Glen, and San Mateo
- New downtown development should connect with the University more
- Give the current businesses a facelift (marked on Monroe and Franklin)
- Provide a location for urban farming or rooftop gardens.

First Steps

- Start by focusing on the old town heart and give it a sense of place and focus
- Integration with the university

Examples, Places with an Old Town Heart

- Jackson
- Homestead
- Benton
- Lafayette

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COMMUNITY MEETING #3 – SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY – 11/11/2015, 6:30 to 8:30 PM

11/11/15 – GROUP A:

- Signage needed to better connect from Caltrain across El Camino into SCU. Create a historic walk and provide supporting wayfinding from El Camino towards Franklin including Mission gardens, using old historic photographs. Preserve historic homes. Introduce a historic trolley route or bus. The Historic Depot is a landmark.
- There is no current downtown. Downtown is defined as Benton - Monroe - Homestead, heart of this area is Washington/Benton and Homestead.
- Could there be a tunnel under or bridge over the train tracks for cars and connection to Avaya? Can we have a connection to Coleman area? The Santa Clara Train Station needs a bike share stand like the ones in San Jose and corresponding locations in Santa Clara downtown near the University.
- Provide green areas/ pedestrian walkways
- Desire for more development, retail and dining in old downtown on Franklin. Boutique shopping, small and quaint stores that sell books, ice cream, coffee. Restaurants for dining with outdoor seating, independent shops, craft stores, toy shops, movie theater. Reconnect the street grid to make a nice shopping district.
- Move City Hall to this area to reinstate the government center of the City.
- University feels to closed off to the rest of the downtown right now. Make this a unique college village.
- Some said no more than 4 stories, others said to include housing density that is 7-11 stories. "Density is needed to make it work." Break up the height and mass so buildings vary in scale. Infill with mixed-use development, storage buildings along Benton and El Camino should also be considered as opportunity sites.
- put parking underground at at the street, hide the parking
- Improve access to parking and transit.
- Provide a building setback on Benton to keep the charm of the street and buffer the nice houses.

11/11/15 – GROUP B:

- Downtown should be walkable and historical
- Downtown should have a mix of heights, 1-2 stories, alleyways
- Santa Clara wants a place where they can people watch and enjoy evening entertainment
- Downtown could revive the Old Quad in future development. The Old Quad is Scott/Newhall/ RR. The historic evolution of this neighborhood began as a Mission with a

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quad, then came the train station, then the University, and now a connection needs to be made to connect the City to the University.

- Santa Clara University is in center of downtown and could be the core draw
- Vital connections should focus on railroad station and the entrance to Santa Clara University. The university is looking at bringing out a history walk along Franklin Street with “intersection of time” installation on Franklin - each installation would tell a different story
- Parking strategy is needed. To optimize usage, drive parking underground. This would allow developer to build density
- Residential density should remain the same at 2-3 stories in the core of the commercial mixed use district.

First steps

- Create a Specific Plan - specify density and design standards
- Include the University in planning (especially regarding development on the edges of campus)
- Encourage better connections throughout the area.
- Strengthen the connection between the RR Station to the Museum and the Mission.
- Focus on Lafayette street and Washington Street.
- Need to incorporate technology into plans using technology to tell the story about the history.
- Employ “Autonomous Vehicles” as public transportation instead of the trolley
- Include Public Art Works, especially interactive public art with cultural, social, and historical references

OPEN CITY HALL COMMENTS SUMMARIZED – 11/9 to 11/22/2015

- Downtown should be "the main street" and the most interesting part of Santa Clara to visit. It should be similar to all the other nearby main streets, found in Campbell, Willow Glen, Los Gatos, Palo Alto, Los Altos, Menlo Park, Mountain View, and even Santana Row. Develop the downtown main street in a part of the city which already shows steady demand for entertainment and retail. Make it safe to walk both on the main street, and getting to the main street (no more no-stop intersections focused on throughput)
- Downtown should be an attractive place to meet up with friends, family, or have a date night. There should be a variety of food and drink at various prices. It should be safe, well-lit, have some covered and heated spaces enjoy in the colder months. Santana Row is a nice idea, though I think too upscale for most residents to feel really comfortable. It should be a destination location to meet up with friends, or go browsing and shopping.
- A downtown is not needed and Santa Clara is overbuilt.

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- The ideal downtown would be really low key with no big box stores. Santa Clara is not a big city and overcrowding is a problem.
- Make the **streets** narrow and cozy. Plant little trees and make the sidewalks out of brick. Require a minimum amount of public space, like parks & plazas, rather than a minimum amount of parking. It should have wide side walks with restaurant seating outdoors and indoors. It should be attractive with landscaping. I love the mature trees, the fountain in Franklin Square and the beautiful post office building. Include more parks and outdoor seating, include trees and attractive landscaping. Include traffic calming measures on the roads. The future downtown should be very **eco-friendly** and full of green and vibrant plants.
- An **ideal downtown** has places to hang out with lots of shops and food shops/ restaurants. It should have places to eat with the family for breakfast lunch and dinner, including dessert and coffee shops open early to late at night. A brew pub would be nice. Non-chain stores and nice coffee shops/ bakeries/ galleries, restaurants, clothes boutiques, unique knick knack shops, coffee shop/tea shop book store, gelato or frozen yogurt shop, home decor store, a bakery, a deli, a bar with live bands. Local mom and pop businesses not chain stores. Business that are unique to Santa Clara. A place with small shops that sell clothing, food, services. Food would include restaurants, simple fast food like Erik's deli, Hungry Hound, Togo's, an expanded 7-11, University book store. I would like a wide choice of good restaurants, independent coffee shops and interesting little stores.
- Downtown should be in a place where a lot of **people live**, so that they can easily walk out of their homes and into entertainment options. It would be really nice to have something that is walkable, yet kind of modern.
- My vision of downtown does not have any new condos or townhouses. Only the existing neighborhood housing.
- Allow multi-story combined retail, office, and residential buildings which can be flexibly re-balanced rather than having parts left empty when demand shifts.
- Downtown Santa Clara is the remnant of the core city centered around the train station and university. We need to keep and redevelop our downtown.
- The downtown area does serve as a **transit** link.
- Opportunity sites: development on the blank, unused parking lot behind the courthouse would be a wonderful addition to our downtown area.
- Having **places of interest** between the train station and our so called Downtown would attract more visitors. Here in the Old Quad, residents love to gather and share in a small town feeling.
- Having places that are attractive to our seniors, our families and our students would be ideal. We need places where we can use our senses - Listen to music, smell and taste great food, see beautiful gardens, some of which are shared community gardens, a place where folks of all ages can stroll and hold hands.

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- 2 or 3 story buildings not 4 and more that will make the area not work. This is not the place for high density. Downtown should be low story buildings, maybe no more than 3 or 4 stories.
- There needs to be more bus stops and plenty of parking.
- Clean up the Homeless areas/College student party areas. This area is now primarily a college area. I would like to see more bars and restaurants moved away from this area. It's just too much a party area for the students. Loud drunk bars are no help.
- We should try to attract some newer pubs or bars to open up to bring people out later at night or on weekends.
- We should uplift the existing building exteriors.

COMMUNITY MEETING #4 – CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 12/1/2015, 6:30 to 8:30 PM

- Downtown doesn't go past Benton and Homestead. The boundary drawn on the map needs to change so that it does not include residential blocks.
- The Adobe on Alameda should be integrated with future development. It is a historic building. Keep the Adobe in mind. San Pedro Market is a good example of how an Adobe is integrated. Perhaps make the surrounding buildings match.
- San Pedro Market is a good place to visit, but not a good place to live.
- Santana Row is not real or genuine, it's a negative example.
- Traffic and cut throughs are a concern. Washington Street is really busy. Commute traffic filters through the neighborhood. Participants are worried about traffic, especially for cut throughs.
- The connection to Caltrain is not important. Caltrain is not local, it goes elsewhere. Do we want a public transit-oriented area? It brings people here, it may be needed for the future of the downtown.
- We should consider pilot programs and projects to test if there is a demand and see if things are appropriate.
- An elevated parking structure will eventually be needed like Willow Glen so that the neighborhoods don't lose parking
- New mixed use development at the block north of Benton and south of Sherman is now in the public comment period for its EIR. See the City Website to provide your input to the city on that specific project. The proposal includes a 5 story building.
- New buildings need to be thoughtful of the totality of the neighborhood. Look at it as a whole. How will it fit in with the residential neighborhoods? Planning the downtown needs to take in the overall impact to all residential neighborhoods in the Old Quad area and be presented back to the community.
- New nice buildings always seem to be covered by the trees obscuring our view from them.
- Consider the residents on the other side

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- Are there examples of downtowns with buildings taller than 2-3 stories and near transit stations that we need to consider? Such as Mountain View, Palo Alto, Burlingame, Redwood City.
- There are no plans at this time for University-owned land, the University welcomes discussion of potential future ideas with the city.
- The University believes that preserving history is important and has a historical walk called the “Intersection of Time” that marks the history at key locations throughout campus and could continue through downtown.
- Make Franklin Street a linear park and pedestrian connection. Walkability is very important, preserve Franklin Street. Put back the grid, open Washington to pedestrians, maybe not cars.
- Old downtown is for the people, by the people.
- Next steps? Present the results of these workshops to the Council, consider doing a Specific Plan, design guidelines, or special focus on the area.
- More meetings are desired. At least two more. Have a planning meeting to give the Old Quad residences a chance to give input. Better outreach is needed by mail. Old Quad needs to be better included. Not enough people were represented. Take a survey, more information is needed.
- Let’s not let this effort lead to nothing. New development is happening and the City is reacting rather than leading. Let’s get ahead of potential development coming to the area and make a plan.