

**The City of San Jose  
Winchester Boulevard Enhancement Strategy**

**Community Meeting  
April 29, 2009  
NOTES**

Prepared by Field Paoli Architects  
April 30, 2009

## **Introduction**

On Wednesday, April 29th, 2009 the San Jose Redevelopment Agency held the sixth in a series of meetings and workshops to obtain input from the public for developing an enhancement strategy for Winchester Boulevard. The Winchester Boulevard study area covers the length of Winchester Boulevard between the City of San Jose's southern boundary with the City of Campbell at Impala Drive and its boundary with the City of Santa Clara at Stevens Creek Boulevard to the north. The focus of this workshop was to summarize the potential strategy ideas for improving the identity of Winchester Boulevard.

The meeting was held at the Winchester Mystery House, from 6 pm to 8 pm. Approximately 35 community members were in attendance, in addition to Agency staff, Councilmember Constant and staff, Councilmember Pierluigi and staff, and consultants. Participants included local business community members and residents from neighborhood communities, including representatives from Neighborhood Associations.

Councilmember Pete Constant (District 1) and Councilmember Pierluigi Oliverio (District 6) began the meeting by introducing the purpose of the workshop series and the project team. Richard Keit from the Redevelopment Agency also gave a brief introduction. Urban design consultants Field Paoli Architects, Frank Fuller, Dennis Dornan, and Jane Lin, summarized the main ideas that developed from the workshops and commercial development and streetscape strategies for each

of four clusters. Community members were invited to ask questions during the presentation and to make comments on the potential strategies that were posted in the room.

## PRESENTATION

The enhancement issues discussed included:

### 1. Regional Context

An overview was given of the boundaries of the project area and relevant projects in Campbell and Santa Clara. The regional traffic network was discussed, along with freeway improvements as presented by the Department of Transportation at previous meetings.

### 2. Winchester Boulevard Configuration

The question of whether Winchester Boulevard should be 2 or 3 lanes of traffic in each direction was brought up. Possible configurations include (1) narrowing the 3 lanes and adding a bicycle lane and parallel parking and (2) eliminating one lane of travel in each direction where appropriate to allow for a bicycle lane, parallel parking, and an enhanced sidewalk. From studies and discussions with the Department of Transportation, it was determined that (1) it was inappropriate to reduce the capacity of Winchester north of I-280 near Santana Row and the Winchester Mystery House, (2) studying the possibility of a 2-lane option south of Williams is reasonable, and (3) further study would be needed to determine whether 2 or 3 lanes would be appropriate for the stretch between Williams and Moorpark.

### 3. Walkability

Vehicular traffic has been the main focus for discussion, design, and development on Winchester Boulevard, while other modes have been largely overlooked. The walking experience along Winchester Boulevard has much to be improved. Distances between crosswalks and along blocks can be very long for pedestrians. Neighborhoods are not well connected to Winchester Boulevard. Ideas were presented where

landscaping, seating, wider sidewalks, and building orientation for future development could help enhance the walking experience.

In addition, an idea to extend the width of the walkway at the overpass over I-280 was presented. The design of the overpass could include an element of public art or landscaping to help improve the identity and memorability of Winchester Boulevard.

#### 4. Alternative Transportation

Many ideas were suggested for alternative modes of transportation on Winchester Boulevard. However, the most plausible, in terms of implementation and ridership, is the introduction of a community shuttle bus. The program could be similar to the DASH community shuttle downtown. The loop would include Winchester Boulevard, Stevens Creek Boulevard, Bascom Avenue, and Hamilton Avenue, and would link regional attractions such as Santana Row, Winchester Mystery House, and Valley Fair, with San Jose City College, the new Bascom Library, as well as current and future neighborhood shopping centers.

Improvements to primary routes in the bicycle network were also presented that aim to strengthen connections within the network.

#### 5. Local and Neighborhood Traffic

Considering the impact of possible changes to Winchester Boulevard on neighborhood traffic has been an important issue that has come up in every workshop. There are two zones on either side of Winchester Boulevard where further traffic calming could be applied pending new development – Traffic Calming Zone A is east of Winchester Boulevard, and Traffic Calming Zone B is west, focusing around Eden Avenue. In these zones, strategies selected from the Traffic Calming Toolbox could be applied. The toolbox includes many different solutions in a document that can be found at

[http://www.sanjoseca.gov/transportation/traffic\\_calming.htm](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/transportation/traffic_calming.htm)

#### 6. Land Uses

An inventory of places that are possible opportunity sites was assembled

from feedback collected at previous workshops. The inventory, along with analysis of retail land uses and opportunities on surface parking lots, helped to determine key sites for possible new development.

#### 7. Clusters along Winchester

Considering the retail competition in the trade area, it became clear that the most appropriate type of retail for Winchester Boulevard is neighborhood serving retail. An idea for improving the identity of retail on Winchester is to concentrate new and existing retail into clusters. Creating a distinction between clusters would help make the street more memorable and more convenient for shoppers who can park once and access many stores. Illustrations were presented of how these clusters could possibly look if developed under this concept.

Illustrations of one near-term and two long-term visions of potential development, out of many different possibilities, were presented to the community for each of four clusters to solicit input. Near-term strategies for the clusters suggested conservative possibilities for development. Long-term strategies showed more ambitious possibilities including more intensive land uses, which would only be achievable with the introduction of parking structures. The illustrations show potential visions for the future. The implementation of any of the ideas presented would require the cooperation of private landowners within the context of future market conditions.

#### QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

After the presentation, workshop participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments about the strategies presented. Comments are summarized below in the order discussed.

1. Why don't we reduce parking standards as part of the Neighborhood Business District?
  - a. How will reducing parking standards impact parking?

- b. If parking standards are reduced, then people might park in the neighborhoods
  - c. A Parking District could be formed for the neighborhoods that would restrict parking in the neighborhoods
  - d. How about increasing parking standards?
  - e. Should we form a Neighborhood Business District?
2. Online information is not clear enough to read. Please improve the PDFs for the next version.
3. How does traffic compare in similar areas to Winchester Boulevard, such as the Alameda, Willow Glen, Lincoln Avenue where there are 2 lanes of traffic each way? Are these a success? How does it impact the neighbors in terms of parking or traffic?
- a. There are older buildings on Lincoln that are of a different scale
  - b. The Alameda is more comparable in terms of retail where people walk between blocks
  - c. There are examples of shared parking in the Willow Glen area that alleviates parking demand
  - d. Retailers follow a 2 block rule between parking and the store. It is also important to consider what the market can support for new parking.
4. 2 Lanes are better than 3
- a. 3 lanes each way isn't walkable or enjoyable on Winchester
  - b. Lincoln is more enjoyable
  - c. Winchester is a thoroughfare. How do you slow traffic?
  - d. The noise level, even on a street with 2 lanes each way, wouldn't be a pleasant experience
  - e. 3 lanes each way would be unbearable
  - f. How would an expansion to 3 lanes on the block with only two lanes impact existing properties?
  - g. Sidewalks should be made continuous
  - h. 2 lanes of traffic each way is preferred

5. More crosswalks mean more stops. More traffic on Winchester will affect and increase cut-through traffic in the neighborhoods
  - a. How do you balance the additional traffic and restricted traffic flow with the desire for reduced number of lanes?
  - b. More retail means more people and more traffic. Congestion will restrict traffic and deter customers.
  - c. How do you improve accessibility from one side to the other?
  - d. Address the flow of traffic with speed limits
  - e. Give pedestrians a refuge at the medians
  - f. Neighborhood retail will attract local customers
6. How realistic is the off-ramp at San Tomas?
  - a. The off-ramp would require an expensive traffic study that covers the impact on I-280 from I-880 to Lawrence Expressway
  - b. The issue is on the radar for future study if there are traffic study funds available
7. The hope from this enhancement strategy is that the neighborhood would become more upscale
  - a. Clusters would allow people to take care of multiple errands with one trip
  - b. The consolidation of retail will probably make businesses better
  - c. More commercial, residential, mixed use development will attract visitors and be good for neighbors
8. Why are we spending so much time on traffic?
  - a. Find a solution to traffic so that we can move on.
  - b. Block off Eden at Payne and Williams so that we can talk about the Neighborhood Business District and other issues
  - c. The Agency and District 1 will move forward on the Eden Issue
  - d. The number 1 issue is neighborhood cut-through traffic
  - e. Baywood, Phelps, Cypress, & Lynnehaven also have traffic issues
9. 3 lanes northbound desired

- a. How will traffic from the proposed Tisch off-ramp impact Winchester Boulevard? We will need the capacity of three lanes to deal with all those cars.
  - b. Will this really be a disaster to keep three lanes?
- 10. Parking restrictions along Winchester Boulevard are inconsistent
  - a. Overnight parking should be restricted
  - b. Study parking holistically along Winchester Boulevard
- 11. Landscaping Design Guidelines are desired
  - a. Establish consistent tree lines, height, standards for landscaping ordinances
- 12. The Enhancement Strategy can help inform the General Plan 2040
  - a. 400,000 more people are coming to the City of San Jose
  - b. We need to plan for the future of Winchester Boulevard

Workshop participants were also encouraged to write comments on notes and place them on the Overview illustration. The comments are summarized below:

1. (Where are more) PARKS??
2. Right turn off I-280 S seems to push traffic into the neighborhood
3. (Placed on note 2) I disagree, if they put an exit at San Tomas.
4. (At Williams and Winchester) Encroaches on residential neighborhoods
5. Use tunnels for crosswalks. Keep traffic moving.
6. Crosswalks for streets to be made with other materials besides brick – trucks over brick create road noise and vibration
7. Too many crosswalks on Winchester will slow traffic and push it to the neighborhoods
8. (At Payne and Winchester) Don't move the gas station. Make it a smaller footprint or eliminate it.
9. Limit service trucks to smaller ones. Less noise and vibration on road surfaces
10. Parking is a major issue. The structures need to be realistically sized

A draft of the report summarizing the enhancement strategy will be on line for public review and will be presented at a future community meeting for questions and comments. The time and location of the meeting have yet to be determined. Field Paoli recorded all the information presented and has summarized it in this document.

JCL/DRD/Field Paoli  
30 April 2009