

VISITACION VALLEY / SCHLAGE LOCK MASTER PLAN WORKSHOP
Comments & Questions
Jan. 06, 2007

Large Session Q & A

Q. Does Ingersoll-Rand still own the land? Would it be possible to have light industrial or manufacturing on the site?

A. No. Right now the zoning is industrial, but the City will change the zoning – with the Third Street light rail this is an area that can be housing/mixed use.

Once a use is closed for 3 years, it is abandoned. While industrial vs. housing is an issue for the City, the City has decided that this site would be better as housing/mixed use.

Q. What is a ballpark number of housing units that would be at this site, including affordable units?

A. Estimating approximately 1,000 units with 40 – 50,000 sq ft grocery store and 25,000 sq ft retail. May be able to have an additional 200 – 300 units of housing with the mixed-use grocery scheme. 75 – 80% of this is realistic for development. The number of affordable housing units would be at least 15% or higher.

Q. Can you guarantee the grocery store and retail?

A. The City cannot say yes for certain, but it can zone to have these uses and create incentives for a grocery store to go in. It can set regulations to allow for and encourage this. Might have a smaller grocery, 25,000 sq ft. Other retail will attract the grocery store.

Comments from Break-out Groups

Group 1 (Ken & Debra)

Framework and building heights

- A person at the table expressed they are not convinced that 8 stories is good.
- KR – There would be a couple of taller buildings. At the last meeting there was not much resistance to the idea of taller buildings although people wanted to see the shadows.
- Height is related to density. The variation in height could be 5-4-3-2-1 stories
- Another person not certain regarding heights; want to see building sections – without these it feels like we are flying blindly.
- The number of units presented today is greater than in the Concept Plan.
- KR – More units brings more public amenities and there is more developable land than it was originally believed (i.e. the area contaminated is smaller).

- Someone from Little Hollywood pointed out that it is important to see what the view of the taller buildings will look like from Little Hollywood. Will the tall buildings be immediately behind the freeway from her view? Need to see a model of this view with the proposed building heights.
- A couple people expressed they want to stick to the building heights from the Concept Plan – the tall buildings will be too much, no more than 3-4-5 stories. Keep the density.
- KR – 7 stories is mentioned in the plan. We (Planning) didn't know that 7 stories aren't possible. Developers build 5 stories then go to 8. You don't see 6- and 7-story buildings.
- Q. Why is the focus on parks today – when you build a park, need to discuss the details and consider things like – water features bring raccoons and rats. Height and density is more important right now.
- KR – We need to define the rules for the parks now and have that discussion today.
- Roofs should be articulated. Do not want to look down on a parking lot. Ensure that the grocery store is Phase I. It may be initially surrounded by a parking lot, but eventually replace the parking lot with mixed-use over parking.
- Discuss toxics issue for the part of the site proposed for the grocery store – develop in phases following toxic cleanup near the grocery store. Phase II would be mixed-use.
- KR – Remember that things change slowly over time. If you choose to do it in phases this way, it may be a parking lot for a long time.
- Q. Wouldn't a parking lot be necessary for the grocery store?
- KR – Could tear down grocery store and rebuild to have basement parking and mixed-use around it.
- The issue is that you don't know that you can build housing now.
- Q. Can have grocery over parking?
- But ground floor should be active uses.
- KR – Grocery won't be willing to be above the ground floor. Not usually anyway.
- Costco is an example of a place that has store over parking.
- KR – The fastest way to get a grocery store is with a parking lot. Having Phases like I and II may take 10 – 20 years.
- Want to see articulated roofs.
- Want to see flat roofs utilized – have it be green, useable. Gardens, basketball courts, etc.
- Like angled roofs – e.g. Sawtooth building – too bad can't keep bays.
- The top of the grocery store could be used as a demonstration/presentation space for the store (like Albertson's does in San Bruno).
- Q. Wouldn't it be too windy?
- Could have pergolas / trellises on the roofs.
- As far as building types, wouldn't matter if podium or townhouse if podium looks like townhouses from the street.

- One person expressed a preference for podium – more efficient.
- Q. Are we discussing the interior style of the buildings?
- KR - No, that is up to the developer.
- Concerned about lots of stairs. People who are elderly or ill cannot have a place with lots of stairs.
- KR – It is difficult to get elevators in townhouses.
- Q. Will there be senior housing? One-level living available?
- KR – Can mix and match housing types.
- Would like to see street bulb outs – want the streets to have variation to slow traffic and make them more pedestrian friendly. Need to make the street right next to the train tracks more interesting.
- Traffic onto Raymond – can't have left turns.
- Castle building will be preserved. May be able to have a restaurant in there. There may be ways to help fix it up.
- Q. Where else is there retail?
- KR – All long Leland.
- Too much retail is not a good thing – parking is a concern.
- How much parking for the new development?
- KR – It is 1 space per unit.

Parks/Open Space

- Parks should be within walking distance – accessible to pedestrians. Right now people utilize Executive Park. It is safe to walk there, no cars. But that will go away [with the proposed development at Executive Park]. Want to have access to similar, safe-walking opportunities.
- Basketball – concern is that existing basketball space in places such as Kellogg Park is not used.
- KR – Should keep in mind that these park spaces would also be for the people who move in.
- The park wouldn't just have basketball – can have walking path, meditative garden.
- Little Hollywood is fine the way it is.
- Want to see curves along the edges of the parks – a mandate of the Visitacion Valley Greenway is to have curves.
- What will happen in the Neighborhood Park (square-shaped)?
- The greenway has a stage but want to see an informal performance area (not in the center) or small flex space. Maybe a step up from the rest of the surface.

- Potential for Farmers' Market in the park? Won't drive onto grass or carry in, need hardscape. Could use grocery store parking lot (but grocery store may not want that).
- May be able to close an adjacent street for the Farmers market. Leland? It would be compatible with the retail there. But concern about parking and access for residents – the parking could be accessed from an alley/street behind Leland.
- Would want to see rooftop gardens on the apartment buildings.
- How about the character of the linear park? See it as a place for walking – peaceful. Need to have flexible spaces – want gardens, but sometimes vegetable gardens don't fly.
- Think it would be great to have a stream running through the linear park. Although there is concern that it might collect garbage.
- Want lots of trees in all the parks. Maybe have a playground/tot lot in the neighborhood park.
- Want the building bulb out off of the Neighborhood park to be green to create a connection – maybe a tot lot there?
- Include some quiet places to sit on a bench and relax.
- Minimize hardscape and keep everything curved.
- Native tall trees would be nice.
- For Blanken Park:
- The building stays and will be a community resource – could have horticulture classes there.
- Have trees and gardens – green spaces that are flexible and may be converted to uses as needed.

GROUP 2 (Claudia)

Framework & heights

- The podium buildings seem more practical but a mix of podium and townhouse is ok
- A person expressed they would like to see no rentals, only ownership/condo housing
- There is also strong preference for no low-income, no public housing and no housing projects but would like to see family and moderately affordable housing. They site safety being a reason
- Mixed-use grocery and retail also seems better
- The group has no problem with the proposed heights, specifically with the taller buildings in the South East portion of the site

Parks/Open Spaces

(most comments recorded on the maps)

- Make sure trees/green areas are maintained
- Would not like to see a farmers market if there is a grocery store
- Would not like to see a BBQ area since the creates trash and it is not clean

GROUP 3 (Lisa & Johnny)

Framework, buildings & heights

- Townhouse concept generally preferred because less "blocky"
- Heights, generally okay, acknowledged that there are some advantages to higher heights (podium proposal)

Parks

(more comments recorded in maps)

- Open spaces should be programmed differently:
 - Blanken Park = gateway;
 - Square = town center;
 - "South Park" = quiet residential activity zone.
- Proper signage and "way finding" signs important, particularly around the Square
- Sonoma Square was referenced as a good example of a town center
- Bathroom in prominent location around square
- Instead of the building bulb-out between the Square and South Park, create a tot lot instead
- Leland = farmers market
- Paved crosswalk at Blanken Park to MUNI across Bayshore; art installations here and water features might be good.

GROUP 4 (Tom)

Framework and Buildings

- All construction should be aware of air quality issues
- There is a need to mitigate noise from the railroad tracks
- In lieu of sinking Bayshore Boulevard, which is a barrier in the community, consider flip-flopping the Central Park and the development block on Bayshore. This would bring the park to Bayshore and make it more a part of the existing community.
- Move the grocery store north, close to Leland and near the park, to create a town square.
- Concerned that new retail on Leland will compete with what is already there and struggling.
- Don't really like the wall of buildings along Bayshore, also the potential for a wall of buildings when viewed from Tunnel Avenue
- Would like to see the view from above the rail tunnel at Blanken.
- Concerned about having too strong of design guidelines
- Interested in seeing cultural design – varied design
- Interested in seeing solar panels – perhaps a solar farm on the vacant areas.
- Question the ratio of residential and commercial
- Do too many guidelines restrict the ability of market rate construction to provide community amenities?

Open Space

(other ideas drawn on maps)

- Repeated interest in changing the park location to create a town square – plaza along Leland.
- Move active noisy uses closer to Bayshore.
- Involve the statuary in the design of the open space

GROUP 5(Sarah)

Framework & heights

- Will this affect my views?
- Have heard higher heights in southeastern corner intended to be location of affordable housing. Fearful of heights, plus poor quality design or cheap housing, creating ghetto.
- Why can't the whole site be lower-rise townhomes?
- Need to address connection along southern edge of site, from CalTrain to MUNI stop. Needs to be safe, pleasant walk, doesn't seem that way now.

Parks/Open Spaces

(comments recorded in maps)

- Need passive and active areas - program each park so it suits one need.
- Farmers market in central green
- Blanken Park will be used as cut-through; instead of trying to prevent this, design as pleasant pathway with flowers and foliage.
- Interpretive elements in Blanken Park to relate to history of site, explain its role in industrialization of San Francisco, etc.
- South Park = jogging/recreation trail.