



## 3. General Plan Update Process

### Overview

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the steps taken during the update process, including a review of all workshops and public outreach, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and advisory committee meetings. This chapter is important to identify and recognize the community's contribution to this document.

### Introduction

The City of East Palo was founded in 1983 on the principles of self-determination, diversity and inclusiveness, and these principles have continued to guide the community as the City has matured over its first 31 years. In keeping with these founding principles, the General Plan update process was designed as a collaborative process, with frequent and varied opportunities for East Palo Alto's active and diverse residents and other stakeholders to continue to guide their City's future.



*A mural by the Mural Music and Arts Project at the East Palo Alto Police Department.*

At a minimum, State law requires that a City's planning agency "provide opportunities for the involvement of citizens, public agencies, public utility companies, and civic, education, and other community groups, through public hearings and any other means the city or county deems appropriate" (Gov't Code sec. 65353). Ultimately, a city's General Plan will only succeed, however, if the community's stakeholders have been, and remain, stewards of its development and implementation. For this reason, extensive public input and civic engagement was planned from the start of the planning process to ensure that the General Plan sets forth the desires and vision of the community through 2035, the planning horizon year. The specific goals of the planning process were to:

- Engage and empower community members in the visioning and planning process;
- Build capacity in the community to guide and support implementation of the General Plan for the next generation of East Palo Alto residents;
- Achieve broad demographic and geographic representation from community members and other stakeholders;
- Accomplish an end product that has community support and ownership so that community members feel that their voice was heard;
- Engage the community in a planning process that results in sustainable recommendations;
- Involve stakeholders and the general public at key points with interactive participation that ranges from one-on-one activities, to informed committees and to large-scale community meetings and activities; and
- Develop easily understood and culturally appropriate informational materials.

In June 2013, a draft Community Engagement Plan that addressed these goals was presented to the community at a Town Hall workshop, and subsequently modified to reflect feedback received there. This revised roadmap was not set in stone; rather it was designed to flex as needed during the 3-year planning process to thoroughly address community concerns as they emerged and changed. This iterative process included a variety of meeting types, sizes, venues and times to ensure that participants were welcomed into the process whenever they could participate, including those who regularly participated in civic activities and those who didn't. Spanish interpretation and childcare was provided at key workshops to ensure that the predominantly Hispanic population and families could also participate fully. All community members and stakeholders were regularly informed about the planning process through the project website, [www.vista2035epa.org](http://www.vista2035epa.org), written materials and updates, email blasts, periodic meetings and local media.

Throughout the General Plan Update process, local community-based non-profit partners (Nuestra Casa and Leadership Development Inc.) joined members of the technical consultant team (Envirocom Communications Strategies and Raimi + Associates) and City staff – some of who were bilingual - to ensure that a variety of voices were heard and interests represented in the planning process. The public outreach process successfully engaged hundreds of diverse residents and stakeholders in developing a vision of the community through 2035, and the requisite goals, policies, implementation measures and capacity to bring this vision to fruition.



*Westside Town Hall meeting.*

## Existing Conditions Report

An Existing Conditions Report (Report) was completed in February 2014 and posted to the project website for public review and use. Because the City's existing General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 1999, the Report provided an up-to-date snapshot of key issues facing the City, so that the General Plan Update process could effectively address them. The Report includes chapters on demographics and socio-economic characteristics, economic and market conditions, land use and policy, community character and design, transportation and circulation, housing conditions and needs, parks and public facilities, and conservation, noise, hazards, and air quality. Readers were encouraged to provide comments, corrections or concerns about anything in the Report so that they could be addressed during the planning process. Key aspects of the Existing Conditions Report are included in each chapter of the General Plan.

## Public Outreach and Communication

The City and the Consultant team identified a variety of ways to communicate with the public throughout the project with traditional public information methods such as flyers and announcements, as well as more contemporary electronic media. In addition, several suggestions were incorporated based on community feedback during the June 5, 2013 Town Hall meeting. Whenever possible information was available in a bilingual (Spanish/ English) format. The primary methods of communication included:

- **Email.** Throughout the process the consultant team maintained a database of interested residents, businesses, and other stakeholders and communicated with them about General Plan Update activities, including upcoming meetings, availability of materials for review, and other information.

- **Website.** The project team created a project website to provide information about the General Plan, and to allow interested participants to contact the project team and comment on various aspects of the plan. The web address is: [www.vista2035epa.org](http://www.vista2035epa.org).
- **Surveys.** Surveys were used at key points in the process to garner public opinion, make decisions regarding priorities and choices, and to encourage citizens to become more involved in the planning process.
- **On-the-Street Outreach.** During the project, members of the Outreach and Consultant Team and City staff “hit the streets” to inform the East Palo Alto residents and stakeholders about upcoming events and inspire them to participate. This included door-to-door distribution of meeting announcements and distribution of community surveys, as well as distribution of information and surveys at key community meeting places, such as the Senior Center, library, parks, churches and schools, apartment complexes and businesses, and key community events such as Earth Day and East Palo Alto’s 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- **Local Service Providers.** To enhance community engagement in the planning process, the Consultant Team hired and worked closely with local non-profits and service providers who helped with translation and facilitation at meetings, door-to-door outreach and tabling at community events, distribution of notices and project information, provision of meeting space, childcare and refreshments at meetings, survey implementation, and in many other ways.

## Direct Outreach: Events and Organizations

Throughout the process, the outreach team has attended many community events and reached out to many organizations within the community. The purpose of this outreach was to inform the community about the General Plan update process generally, and to provide them with notice of upcoming Town Hall and other General Plan meetings. The following is a list of the organizations contacted.

### Churches

- Church of Christ
- Apostolic Assembly
- Iglesia Evangelica
- Community Church of East Palo Alto
- Calvary Temple Church of God in Christ
- St. John Baptist Church
- Iglesia de la Fe en Cristo
- Iglesia de la Luz
- Iglesia Pentecostal
- EPA SKTT ‘o Tonga/Uesiliaja Church
- Pacific Islander Church
- Bayshore Christian Ministries
- St. Francis of Assisi Parish

### Schools

- Menlo Atherton High School
- Costano School
- East Palo Alto Charter School
- Ronald McNair Academy
- Belle Haven Community School
- Brentwood Academy
- Cesar Chavez & Green Oaks
- Los Robles Academy
- Willow Oaks School
- Creative Montessori
- Ravenswood City School District
- Sequoia Big Picture School
- Sequoia Union High School District

- StarVista
- Phoenix Academy
- San Francisco 49ers Academy

## Organizations

- Child Development Center
- Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula
- YMCA of the Mid-Peninsula
- East Palo Alto Library/San Mateo County Library
- Ravenswood Family Health Center
- College Track
- Free At Last
- Ecumenical Hunger Program
- Aim High
- Building Futures Now
- Children's Health Council
- Collective Roots
- Acknowledge Alliance
- Adolescent Counseling Services
- East Palo Alto Police Department
- East Palo Alto Youth Court
- Education Partnerships Haas Center for Public Service (Stanford University)
- Envision Transform Build EPA
- Foundation for a College Education
- Menlo Park Fire Protection District (MPFPD)
- Girls to Women
- Health Connected (formerly Teen Talk)
- JobTrain
- Linking Immigrants to Benefits, Resources & Education (LIBRE)
- Making it Happen for our Children
- Mid-Peninsula Athletic Association
- MOUSE Squad Student Tech Leadership
- Mural, Music & Arts Project
- Nuestra Casa
- Office of San Mateo County Supervisor Warren Slocum, 4th District
- One East Palo Alto Neighborhood Improvement Initiative
- The John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities (Stanford University)
- Teen Success, Inc.
- Youth Community Service
- Youth United for Community Action
- Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto
- Project Access Family Resource Center at Light Tree Apartments
- All Five
- Live in Peace
- WIC
- RCSD
- EPA Junior Golf

## Flyer Distribution

In addition to contacting the above organizations, outreach occurred at a number of locations and events throughout the community including, but not limited to the following:

- Ravenswood Family Health Clinic Flu shot event
- Live in Peace Family Night
- El Concilio Food Distribution
- East Palo Alto Farmers Market
- Ravenswood Shopping Center
- Three Brothers
- Mi Pueblo
- Jamba Juice
- Starbucks
- Firehouse Grill
- Senior Center events (breakfasts, lunches and activities)
- Brentwood Fall Carnival
- City Council Meetings
- East Palo Alto Library
- Fresh Market
- Dawn Moore Celebration
- San Mateo Credit Union
- WigSplitaz Barbershop
- School Halloween Festival
- Ohava Computers
- Palo Alto Mobile Estates
- EPAPD Beat Meetings
- Ravenswood School District Halloween Festival



## Summary of Outreach Activities

Throughout the General Plan update process, the City and the consultant team conducted a multi-faceted outreach and engagement process that included advisory committee meetings, public workshops, interviews, focus groups and a project website. The following is a summary of the outreach activities. This is followed by a more thorough description of the activities.

- **9 General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) Meetings.** The GPAC met throughout the process to provide input on the overall vision of the City, with an emphasis on land use and transportation.
- **9 Westside Area Plan Advisory Committee (WAPAC) Meetings.** The WAPAC also met throughout the process, focusing on vision and policies for addressing Westside-specific issues, including protection of affordable housing, and lack of parks, open spaces, and pedestrian and transportation access.
- **5 Citywide Town Hall Meetings.** Citywide Town Halls were specifically designed to solicit feedback and direction on a variety of planning issues and to build local knowledge and capacity to ensure the community had the resources necessary to effectively weigh in on key planning vision and policies. Topics included vision and key issues; land use and economic development; transportation; housing; and public health and quality of life.
- **3 Neighborhood Workshops.** These workshops occurred in different parts of the City to encourage discussion of issues and opportunities specific to the City's neighborhoods.
- **Youth Workshop.** This meeting focused on the unique interests and ideas of the City's youth and was documented in a video on the Project Website.
- **3 Westside Town Hall meetings.** Westside Town Halls primarily focused on the future of the Westside, but many subjects covered, particularly

affordable housing, were of great interest to the broader community as well.

- **Focus Groups.** Smaller focus groups addressed the specific needs of teens and young adults, Asian Pacific Islanders, and open space advocates and organizations.
- **Project Website.** The vista2035epa website was used to provide detailed reports and current information to the public. All notes and information from workshops and advisory committee meetings were posted on the website during the process, and will be made part of the City's planning record.
- **Direct Outreach.** The Outreach Team reached out to community members via email, newsletters and other media, phone calls, door-to-door surveys, meetings with local organizations and tabling at community events. The team also directly met or spoke with surrounding cities and local agencies.

**AYUDE A DAR FORMA AL FUTURO DE EAST PALO ALTO**  
**PARTICIPE EN UNA CONVERSACIÓN DEL AYUNTAMIENTO!**

La Ciudad de East Palo Alto está embarcándose en un esfuerzo importante de planificación, esta es la realización de un esfuerzo de varios años para desarrollar un nuevo plan para el futuro de la Ciudad (llamado Plan General). Para asegurar que el plan refleje las necesidades y deseos de la comunidad, la ciudad tendrá una serie de reuniones del Ayuntamiento.

Su aporte ayudará a las personas responsables de la ciudad a tomar decisiones que afectarán la calidad de vida y la vitalidad económica de nuestra comunidad. Por favor planee asistir a una o todas las discusiones del Ayuntamiento.

**1 VECINDADES (Sábado 8 de Noviembre, 2014, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm)**  
 Asista a uno de los tres talleres simultáneos en su vecindario. Los temas a ser explorados incluyen seguridad de los peatones, identidad del barrio, congestión del tráfico, y más.  
 Lugar 1: Centro de Salud Familiar Ravenswood anexo, 1842 Bay Road  
 Lugar 2: Centro para Personas de la tercera edad, 560 Bell Street  
 Lugar 3: Centro de Educación de East Palo Alto, 763 Green Street

**2 TALLER DE JÓVENES (Sábado 8 de Noviembre, 9:30 am - 12:30 pm)**  
 Un taller para adolescentes y jóvenes adultos para discutir el futuro de la ciudad.  
 Lugar: East Palo Alto Academy, 1050 Myrtle Calle

**3 USO DE LOS TERRENOS Y DESARROLLO ECONÓMICO (Lunes, 17 de noviembre 2014, 6:30 - 9:00pm)**  
 Exploraremos los posibles cambios en el uso de los terrenos en la ciudad y aprender sobre cómo el nuevo desarrollo puede mejorar la vitalidad económica.  
 Lugar: Centro para Personas de la tercera edad East Palo Alto, 560 Bell Street

**4 TRANSPORTE Y ESTACIONAMIENTO (Martes, 09 de diciembre 2014, 6:30 - 9:00pm)**  
 Discutiremos los problemas de transporte y de estacionamiento que enfrenta la ciudad, incluyendo la congestión del tráfico, bicicleta, aceras, y el servicio de transporte público.  
 Lugar: Centro para Personas de la tercera edad East Palo Alto, 560 Bell Street

**5 SALUD PÚBLICA Y CALIDAD DE VIDA (Jueves, 08 de enero 2015, 6:30 - 9:00pm)**  
 Discutiremos una amplia gama de temas de impacto en salud pública y calidad de vida en la Ciudad incluyendo, parques y espacios abiertos, seguridad pública, árboles y jardines y otros temas.  
 Lugar: Centro para Personas de la tercera edad East Palo Alto, 560 Bell Street

PARA SUSCRIBIRSE A LOS AVISOS DE REUNIONES O PARA MÁS INFORMACIÓN Visite el sitio web del proyecto ([www.vista2035epa.org](http://www.vista2035epa.org)) o póngase en contacto con la Administradora del Proyecto de la Ciudad, Anne Cook, al 650.853.3142 o al [ajcook@cityofepa.org](mailto:ajcook@cityofepa.org)

**VISTA2035**  
 EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

SE PROPORCIONARÁ CUIDADO DE NIÑOS Y TRADUCCIÓN AL ESPAÑOL.

Bi-lingual flyer distributed for outreach efforts in Fall 2014.

## Citywide Town Hall Meetings

The following is a summary of the Citywide Town Hall meetings (or public workshops) that occurred during the process.

### Citywide Town Hall #1 - Outreach and Engagement Plan

On June 5, 2013, the City hosted its first Town Hall to receive community input and direction about how to maximize opportunities for the citizens of East Palo Alto to participate in the development of the General Plan. The Consultant Team presented an overview of the General Plan Update process, the draft Community Engagement Plan, advisory group recruitment, and opportunities for local businesses and non-profits to participate in the planning process. Over 40 residents, business owners, community leaders and other stakeholders attended the meeting and provided feedback that helped shape the planning process and ensure it was inclusive.

### Citywide Town Hall #2 – Existing Conditions and Visioning

On Saturday, November 23, 2013 the City hosted a four-hour Citywide Town Hall at Costaño Elementary School to engage with community members about the General Plan Update. Over 50 community members attended. The Town Hall's "open house" format allowed community members to visit nine activity stations, where they learned more about existing conditions, voted on community priorities, and shared their visions and ideas for the City's future:

- Living, Working and Shopping
- Community Need and Priorities
- Visioning
- Neighborhood Identification and Planning
- A Growing Community
- Market and Economics
- Housing
- Transportation
- Methods of Outreach

Detailed results from each Town Hall station helped inform the GPAC's discussions of key issues and neighborhood boundaries discussed by GPAC members during subsequent meetings.

### Citywide Town Hall #3 – Land Use and Economic Development

On November 17, 2014, the city hosted a "Land Use and Economic Development Town Hall". It followed the Mayor's State of the City address, providing the community with an opportunity to reflect both on what the City had achieved thus far and what the future could be. Approximately 60 participants attended and commented on potential land use changes in "change areas" of the City, including the Westside, University Avenue, The Ravenswood TOD Specific Plan Area, Gateway101, East Bayshore Road, and Newbridge/Willow. Participants also had the opportunity to learn more about how development could enhance City services and economic vitality and to comment on alternative revenue generators.



*Discussion amongst community members regarding informational boards on economic development.*

### Citywide Town Hall #4 – Transportation and Parking

On December 9, 2014, the City hosted a Town Hall at the Senior Center to discuss transportation and parking issues facing the City, including traffic and parking congestion, biking, sidewalks, and transit service and receive feedback on the initial transportation and parking direction for the General Plan update. Approximately 20 community members attended this "Transportation and

Parking Town Hall,” in addition to City staff, elected and appointed officials, and Consultant Team members.

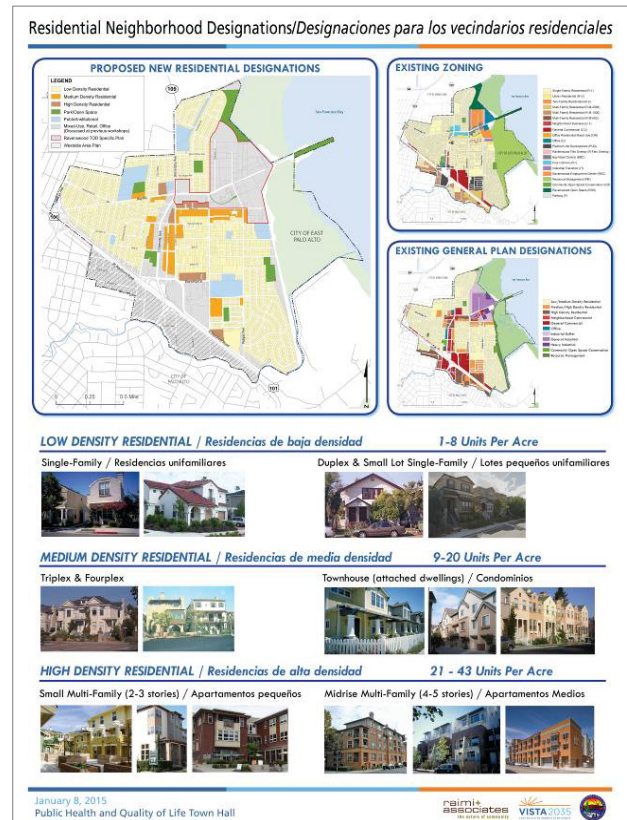
The workshop began with a short presentation and discussion about the status of the General Plan update, results from recent land use workshops, background about transportation and parking in East Palo Alto, and a short overview of voting (dot stickers) exercises. Attendees were then asked to circulate around the room and vote on their preferred options at seven “stations”, including Proposed Street Network, Transit Network, Bicycle Network, Street and Sidewalk Character, Traffic Calming, University Avenue Streetscape Condition, and Neighborhood Parking Strategies.

## Citywide Town Hall # 5 – Public Health and Quality of Life

On January 8, 2015, the City hosted its 5<sup>th</sup> Citywide Town Hall, at the Senior Center. This “Public Health and Quality of Life Town Hall” provided an opportunity for discussion and feedback on a variety of topics related to health, as well as other topics that affect quality of life in the City, including neighborhood land use designations, second units and garage conversions, and public safety. Approximately 120 community members attended the meeting, one of the highest turnouts for any General Plan Update meeting.

The workshop began with a short presentation by the Consultant Team about the status of the General Plan Update, background about public health, public safety, parks and recreation, and habitats in East Palo Alto, and an overview of the dot sticker exercises. Following the introductory talk, attendees split into groups to discuss either public health or social equity issues. Facilitation was provided by the Community Development Department, County and City staff, and members of the Consultant Team.

After the discussion groups, participants were asked to circulate around the room and vote on their preferred options at various “stations,” including Parks and Pedestrian Network, Residential Land Use Designations, Neighborhood Character, Community Facilities/Services, Public Health, Habitat and Natural Environment, and Public Safety.



Exercise board used at Town Hall #5

Should the City consider any of the following strategies to improve public health in East Palo Alto? (¿Debería la Ciudad considerar alguna de las siguientes estrategias para mejorar la salud pública en East Palo Alto?)			
	Yes / Sí	Maybe / Tal Vez	No
Prohibit smoking in multi-family residences, parks and other public places Prohibir fumar en residencias multifamiliares, parques y otros lugares públicos	●●●●●		●
Construct community gardens in parks Construir jardines comunitarios en los parques	●●●●●	●	●
Close down Bay Road on weekends for farmers markets, vendors and community events Cerrar la Bay Road los fines de semana para tener un mercado de agricultores, vendedores y eventos	●●●●●	●	●
Create a tax on sodas to pay for public health programs. Create an impuesto sobre las sodas para pagar los programas de salud pública	●●●●●	●	●
Restrict new fast food restaurants Restringir nuevos restaurantes de comida rápida	●●●●●	●	●
Restrict new liquor stores Restringir nuevas tiendas de licor	●●●●●	●	●
Help small corner stores carry healthier food products (fruit and vegetables). Ayudar a las pequeñas tiendas de barrio a transportar productos alimenticios más saludables (fruta y verduras)	●●●●●	●	●
Organize city-wide weight loss/bikini contests Organizar en toda la ciudad concursos de pérdida de peso / bikini	●●●●●	●	●
Plant fruit trees along public streets Plantar árboles frutales a lo largo de la vía pública	●●●●●	●	●
Encourage local employers to offer free health insurance and paid sick days Animar a los empresarios locales a ofrecer seguro	●●●●●	●	●

Completed "dot-preference" exercise board.



## Westside Town Hall Meetings

The following is a summary of the Town Hall meetings that focused specifically on the Westside of the City.

### Westside Town Hall #1 – Existing Conditions and Visioning

On Saturday, November 2, 2013, the City hosted approximately 125 adults and 20 children at a three hour Westside Town Hall meeting at the Four Seasons Hotel. The Consultant Team gave a presentation and answered questions about the General Plan Update project and the existing conditions on the Westside. Community members then broke into groups to discuss the following questions:

- **Vision.** What will the Westside look like in 2035?
- **Current Issues.** What are the existing strengths and challenges facing the Westside?
- **Opportunities.** What are the opportunities to enhance the Westside in the future?

### Westside Town Hall #2 – Housing Forum

To respond to the importance of affordable housing issues, an additional Westside Town Hall was held on March 17, 2014 to provide the community with background information on the State, regional and City requirements and programs that impact housing choices in the City, and the land use and housing scenarios that could occur under those regulations. After a brief review of the final guiding principles for the Westside Area Plan, the rest of the March 17th meeting focused on housing issues in the City, including an overview of the existing housing conditions (based on the Existing Conditions Report), followed by an informational review of the existing regulations and programs that affect housing options in the City. Particular attention was given to the coordination between ongoing City efforts regarding housing and the General Plan update process. Over 125 people attending this widely publicized meeting.



*Discussion table at the Westside Town Hall meeting.*

### Westside Town Hall #3 – Westside Guiding Principles, Community Needs, and Vision

On Monday, June 9, 2014, the City hosted a 3<sup>rd</sup> Westside Town Hall meeting to discuss the Westside Area Plan (WAPAC). Approximately 120 adults and 20 children attended this workshop-style meeting. It began with an “open house” forum during which community members showed where they live in the City and voted on guiding principles and community needs.

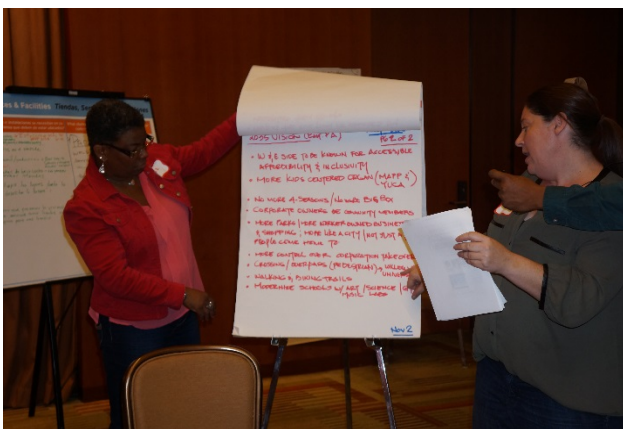
Participants were provided with a list of 14 Guiding Principles developed from past outreach efforts and discussions with the WAPAC, and were asked to indicate their top three priorities using dot stickers. The top three Guiding Principles were: 1) Provide affordable rental housing; 2) Avoid displacement; and 3) On-going community participation in decision-making processes.

Participants also were provided with a list of Community Needs and Priorities developed from past outreach efforts and discussions with the WAPAC, and were asked to indicate their top five priorities, again using dot stickers. The top three Community Needs and Priorities were: 1) Long-term affordable rental housing; 2) No displacement of existing renters; and 3) Stronger tenant protection laws.



*“Where do you live?” activity at the Westside Town Hall meeting.*

After a discussion of existing conditions in the City, the Consultant Team presented three Westside study scenarios that were developed to spark discussion among committee members and the public so that City staff and the Consultant Team could gain a deeper understanding of the community’s vision for where future growth should occur in the Westside, the types of uses that might be acceptable at different locations, and the scale/character of development. At the close of the presentation, Nuestra Casa facilitated small group discussions at each table that focused on these issues as well as level of affordability, prerequisites for development, and other responses to the study scenarios.



*Vision exercise at the Westside Town Meeting.*

Building on the foundation of housing knowledge that was presented at the March 17, 2014 Town Hall, participants were asked to consider some particularly challenging questions about affordable housing, such as:

- 1) Should the City consider higher density development in exchange for more permanent affordable housing; and
- 2) Would it be better for the Westside community to have more permanent affordable housing units for moderate-income households or fewer affordable housing units for lower income households?

Participants also were given the following draft list of “prerequisites” for higher density development on the Westside. These prerequisites were drafted based on community input throughout the planning process and during the WAPAC’s discussion and development of the guiding principles and community needs lists.

- Permanent affordable housing
- Prevent displacement of existing residents
- Preserve “right of return” for existing residents – similar size and similar rent
- Maintain the city’s rent stabilization program
- High-quality new development that enhances the community
- Health and safety improvements such as new sidewalks, parks, community centers, street lighting, safer access across Highway 101, and other similar improvements
- Improved fiscal health of the City.

At the end of group discussions, a spokesperson for each table briefly summarized their table’s discussions for all Town Hall participants to hear. Overall, participants generally felt that the prerequisites were correct, but there were also some specific comments and recommendations that were considered as the planning process progressed.

Participants also were provided with three study scenarios that the Consultant Team developed to show ways that new development could help fulfill the guiding principles and community needs. Many community members supported scenarios that included new uses and higher density, but others didn’t want to see any

change and/or thought the City should keep existing regulations in place. A small number of participants strongly expressed that the scenarios did not reflect their vision for the future. Overall, the study scenarios stimulated discussions that helped City staff and the Consultant Team better understand the community's relative priorities and tolerance for increased density to fund Westside improvements.



Results from workshop questions about Westside development.

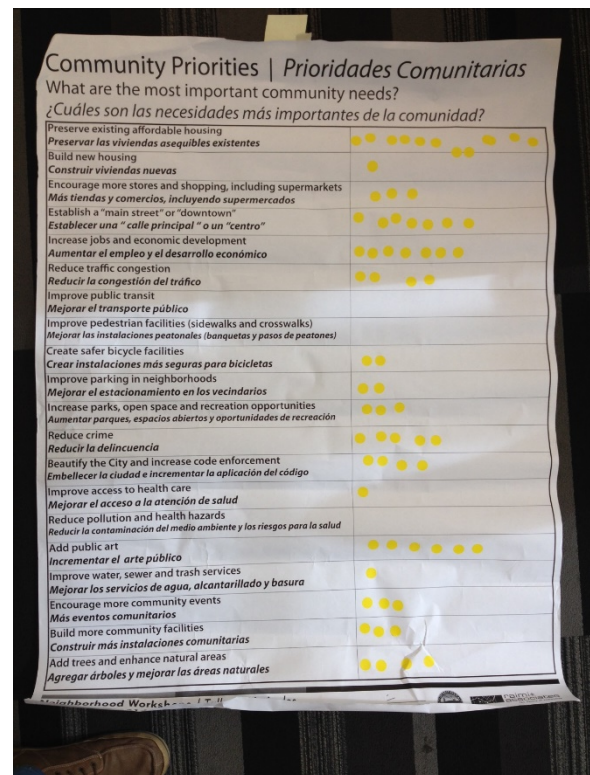
## Neighborhood and Youth Workshops

On Saturday, November 8th, 2014 the City hosted three concurrent neighborhood workshops to explore topics such as pedestrian safety, neighborhood identity, traffic congestion, parking, and other concerns on a more-neighborhood scale than the Town Hall and GPAC meetings allowed. These relatively smaller meetings were designed to enable participants to delve deeply into planning opportunities and challenges in their specific neighborhood area. Overall, approximately 60 members of the public attended one of these meetings, where they addressed the following questions:

- If you could change any three things about your neighborhood what would they be?
- What makes the neighborhood special or unique?
- What challenges are facing the neighborhood now and over the next 20 years?
- What specific changes do you want to make your neighborhood better?

At the same time, the City hosted a Youth Workshop for teens and young adults to learn about their visions and goals for the City. Approximately 25 youth and young adults addressed the following questions:

- What makes East Palo Alto special or unique?
- What issues face the City now and in the future?
- What is your vision for the City's future?
- What additional ways can youth participate in City decision-making?



Results of the dot-voting exercise at the youth workshop.

## Focus Groups and Stakeholder Meetings

When appropriate, the consultant team met with individual or small groups of stakeholders, City and County staff, community leaders and member organizations to dig deeper into specific topics and issues such as affordable housing, health and safety, and transportation, among others.



## Council, Commission and Board Updates

To ensure that the City's Boards and Commissions received regular briefings on the advisory committees' work, representatives from the Planning Commission, the Rent Stabilization Board, and the Public Works and Transportation Commission served as liaisons to the GPAC and to the WAPAC, attending committee meetings and reporting back to their respective board or commissions about the events and discussions underway. City staff and the Consultant Team also briefed these boards and commissions as needed during the planning process.

As the planning process unfolded, City staff also provided the City Council with Quarterly Progress Reports, to ensure the Council was regularly briefed and could provide input regarding the many activities and discussions taking place around the City. These briefings also served as another opportunity for the community at large to learn about and weigh in on the planning process.

The first Joint Meeting of the GPAC and WAPAC was held on July 3, 2013. At this kick off meeting, advisory board members learned about the legal and practical requirements of the City's General Plan and the roles and responsibilities of the advisory committees during the public participation process. They also reviewed and discussed the Community Engagement Plan, brainstormed about the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the City, and discussed outreach tools that would be useful during the planning process.

## Advisory Committees

The General Plan update process involved 2 advisory committees – one for the General Plan and another for the Westside Area Plan. The process of each is described below. Note that some of the times the advisory committees met separately and at other times they met together as a single body.

## Role and Formation of Advisory Committees

At the onset of the planning process, the City Council decided that it wanted a bottom-up planning process, as opposed to a top-down Planning Commission or Council-driven process, to ensure that the draft general plan that ultimately came to the City's Boards, Commissions and the Council itself, was a reflection of the entire community's visions for the future of East Palo Alto. In July 2013, the City Council therefore formed and appointed thirteen members to a General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) and nine members to a Westside Area Plan Advisory Committee (WAPAC) to provide input and guidance to City staff, the Consultant Team, and the Planning Commission and the City Council on topics related to the General Plan Update Process.

The City Council made adjustments to these committees in July 2013 and in December 2013 to maximize participation of East Palo Alto residents who reflect the diversity of the City. As a result, there were 15 members on the GPAC and 13 members on the WAPAC, reflecting a diversity of residents, non-profit organizations, and business owners.

The GPAC and the WAPAC both met nine times during the planning process, the first time and the last three times together to ensure integration of the Westside Area Plan chapter with the rest of the Citywide General Plan.

## GPAC Meetings

The GPAC met nine times throughout the planning process. The purpose of the GPAC was to provide high-level guidance on the overall land use pattern, the transportation network and other topics that impacted the City as a whole. Topics covered included key issues impacting the City, a vision for growth and development areas where change could occur, land use designations, transportation system improvements and guidance on the Westside.



## Westside Area Plan Advisory Committee (WAPAC)

The Westside Area Plan Advisory Committee met nine times through the General Plan update process. The purpose of the WAPAC was to provide input and guidance on the vision, guiding principles and land use patterns on the Westside. Throughout the process, the City and the consultant team conducted an education process to ensure that all WAPAC members had a basic understanding of land use planning and housing policy. Key topics for the WAPAC meetings included the following:

- A vision for the Westside
- Guiding principles and community needs
- Prerequisites for additional development
- Alternative growth scenarios for the Westside
- Structure and content of the Area Plan
- Integration of the Area Plan with the General Plan
- Housing policy, including definitions of income-restricted affordable housing, rent control and other laws and regulations

The WAPAC meetings were well attended by the public and the public was invited to provide input at key junctures of the meetings. The input about the future of the Westside was provided to the City Council (at a Special Study Session on March 12, 2015) and the Council provided direction to City staff and the consultant team to be included in the Area Plan. This ultimately provides the foundation for the principles and policy direction contained in the Westside Chapter of the General Plan.



*GPAC and WAPAC joint meeting.*



*Ideas for the Westside are stated by the public at a town hall meeting in 2015.*