

Almaden Valley Community Association
Meeting Location
Almaden Community Center, 6445 Camden Avenue
Monday, April 12, 2011

Envision San Jose 2040

At 7:00 pm President Pat McMahon introduced the speakers: Dave Fadness and Michael Brilliot. Dave Fadness is an expert on transportation and a frequent speaker at AVCA meetings. Michael Brilliot was the leader of the San Jose project, Envision 2040. Dave Fadness was appointed by Council Member Nancy Pyle to represent District 10 on the project.

Dave Fadness (DF)

Dave began by explaining that Michael Brilliot has been reassigned from the project to work on San Jose's immediate budgetary problems. He thanked Nancy Pelosi for his appointment to represent District 10, quipping, "You know on a scale from 1 to 10, we're number 10."

Envision 2040 is a draft general plan for San Jose. Cities in California are required to have general plans to cover land use, capital investments, and coordination of availability of services. In 1975, "some of us in this room were involved on the first formal general plan," Horizon 1990. San Jose suffered from explosive growth. A next plan, Horizon 2000, attempted to establish measurable performance criteria in 1984. Around 2006 the Horizon 2020 plan was completed and in 2007 work began on Envision 2040. The purpose of these plans is to make San Jose a good place to live, work, and play.

Envision 2040 introduces a new concept, the urban village together with a new approach to planning called Community Based Planning. The Envision 2040 thirty-seven member task force attempts to represent "all interest groups." So far the task force has held 49 working meetings, 7 community meetings and workshops, and received input from more than 4500 on-line participants.

Working with survey responses, the task force established the following priorities for San Jose:

1. Economic development (job growth)
2. Fiscal stability (sustainability)
3. Environmental leadership
4. Transit ridership
5. Urban villages.

The task force introduced the concept of a Regional Employment Center in answer to the imbalance in locations of housing and jobs. San Jose businesses have only 80 jobs for every 100 employed residents. **Michael Brilliot (MB)** commented that the nighttime population of San Jose is greater than the daytime population. The Envision 2040 plan is

to raise the current 0.8 ratio of jobs to employed residents to 1 by 2020 and to 1.3 by 2040.

Q. Why is the imbalance bad?

DF. The imbalance is bad because houses represent a net case outflow for the City while jobs represent a net case inflow.

Q. I am a business owner in San Jose with employees who commute from far away. Does this plan increase long commutes?

MB. San Jose is best in the area for housing; but needs more jobs to be fiscally responsible.

Q. How do jobs bring income to the City?

DF & MB. The City receives income from sales tax, property tax, and business tax. It is easier to tax manufacturing. Businesses demand services with a smaller cost of delivery per property area than that of homes.

The plan is to intensify (increase density of) employment lands, create transit oriented business centers, expand commercial activity, and to add employment lands in Alviso (between two and five hundred acres).

Q. North San Jose has all these empty properties.

Q. Our vacancy rate is currently higher than that of surrounding communities.

DF. The plan calls for 100,000 new jobs in North San Jose. In the Blossom Hill area, the plan calls for an additional 7,300 dwelling units and 9,000 new jobs.

Q. It is difficult to start a new business in San Jose. We need to see why businesses are leaving.

Q. We wouldn't choose to live in a high rise. Retired people are not working. Affordable housing residents are also not working.

DF. The plan envisions life style changes for future generations but it also envisions protecting existing neighborhoods. Supply and demand will govern the prices of homes in the existing neighborhoods. We would have to replace the green belt with residential areas in order to lower prices.

One of the concepts introduced by the plan is the fiscally sustainable city. In this context, the City is composed of City operations and services, cultural resources, and a land use framework. The City Council struggles with the cost side. Land use can affect both cost and revenue. Jobs will provide revenue. 40,000 new dwelling units have already been approved. But there will be no development in the South Almaden Valley Urban Reserve or in the Coyote Valley until 2040.

Following a principle of "focused growth," the urban growth boundary will be strengthened to emphasis transit oriented and "walkable" dwelling units. However, San Jose is a charter city. Charter Cities make their own rules and may treat their plans as guidelines.

Michael Brilliot

An important organizing concept of Envision 2040 is the idea of villages, corridors, and hubs. The goal is shorter commutes.

Q. Would villages be like Santana Row.

MB. Not exactly. It would be more similar to the Old Brewery Alameda location.

Q. How many people work at this location?

MB. The design would be to give people options.

Q. Transportation still seems to be fundamental.

MB. We're integrating growth and transportation.

Q. Public transportation seems headed in the wrong direction. Public transit is not frequently used. People don't want it.

MB. Public transportation doesn't work because of land use. Traffic will get worse. Walking will be emphasized. Present day streets are built for automobiles. The plan envisions "complete streets" built for all users: bicycle, pedestrian, automobile, and public transit, also emphasizing use by seniors and children. There will be "grand boulevards" and "main streets" like Lincoln Avenue in Willow Glen.

Q. Costs always overrun. Transit doesn't pay for itself.

Q. Will commercial buildings be knocked down after 10 years?

MB. In place of "concrete tiltups" we will have high rise building with more office space.

Q. Isn't San Jose commercial property now 50% vacant?

The market won't let the plan happen until the private sector does it.

Another important concept is that of maintaining the "greenline" in the name of "environmental stewardship." The plan to reduce per capita vehicle miles by 40% by the year 2040 will require a "draconian tax policy." Even more serious is the plan to reduce per capita energy consumption by 50% by 2022.

Q. Does this mean electric cars with better mileage?

DF. We have to pay for the road maintenance.

Q. Vehicle miles travelled should not be punished. This is a measure of the robustness of an economy.

Q. Is there any example of the success of anything like this farfetched plan?

Q. Places of worship provide net negative revenue to the City. Will they be discouraged?

Q. This is reminiscent of "Big Brother."

DF. I have come to appreciate the usefulness of zoning laws. There is an example community called "Five Winds" at Alum Rock and 101. Environmental Impact Reports will continue to drive environmental action.

This part of the meeting terminated at 8:55 pm.

Business Meeting

Vice President Joe Boudreau opened the business meeting at 8:55 pm. Board Members present included:

- 1. President: Pat McMahon,**
- 2. Vice President: Joe Boudreau**
- 3. Secretary: Ray Strong**
- 4. Treasurer: Bob Boydston**
- 5. Directors: Jerry Mungai ,Susan Bailey, Steve Levin, and Bob Strain**

A motion to adjourn passed without objection.

Draft Minutes submitted June 12, 2011

Approved June 13, 2011

Ray Strong, Secretary