

Almaden Valley Community Association
Meeting Location
Almaden Community Center, 6445 Camden Avenue
Monday, March 14, 2011

Almaden Ranch

President Pat McMahon introduced the speakers:

- Gerald De Young, President of Ruth and Going, Inc.;
- Dan Collen, Deputy Director Infrastructure Development, County of Santa Clara, Roads and Airports;
- Manuel Pineda, Acting Deputy Director, Department of Transportation, City of San Jose

Gerald De Young

The Almaden Ranch location is a 400,000 square foot plot on the Almaden Expressway, north of 85 and south of Safeway. The original request was to have the property rezoned for both commercial and residential (500 dwelling units). As of 2010 Arcadia Development is requesting all retail and commercial. There was a proposal for a bridge over the Guadalupe River to extend Chynoweth through to the Almaden Expressway. This proposal has been dropped.

Q. Is the developer expecting any help from the Redevelopment Agency?

A. No.

Q. Is there still a plan to widen Almaden Expressway in this area?

A. Yes. We want to collaborate on the timing of Almaden Expressway improvements.

Q. Given the empty building that used to house Home Expo, why is the developer looking at Almaden Ranch?

A. Better access in and out.

Q. Any thought to history or heritage in the planning?

A. Planned places to come and sit include Starbucks and Jamba Juice.

Q. What about commercial on the first floor with residential above?

A. Tax revenues are maximized by big box retail.

Q. Will there be a hotel?

A. The requested zoning would allow for a hotel.

Q. There is a current trend to close big box stores. Isn't this project five years too late?

A. We have a new big box store with a new retail concept.

Q. Why now?

A. The market is changing.

Q. Can you give names of businesses?

A. We can't divulge that information.

Manuel Pineda

The Chynoweth extension bridge (in the current plan) over a percolation pond on the Guadalupe River is estimated to cost \$15 million and to alleviate significantly more traffic congestion than the alternative Thornwood extension. The Thornwood extension (also requiring a bridge) is estimated to cost \$20-25 million. Both alternatives are included in the new general plan. Both are at least 10 years away.

Q. Are there any studies on the traffic impact both on Almaden and on the back streets?

A. A traffic impact analysis modeling how many people and where they come from will be part of the Environmental Impact Report (not yet complete).

Q. Are there prospects for the developer to fund traffic congestion alleviation?

A. We usually work very successfully with developers in this area. The project must request a bridge or the City cannot require funding.

Q. How likely is it that the shopping area will be completed without traffic improvement?

A. Mitigation of traffic impact in the EIR findings will be a condition of approval.

Q. How long will development take? Why must we wait 10 years for a bridge? Which alternative does the City prefer?

A. (Gerald De Young) The development is planned for 5 years.

A. It is at least 10 years before funds will be available for a bridge project in either location. The Chynoweth extension would be cheaper, wider, and better for traffic; but would have more impact on residential neighborhoods.

Q. Where will the money come from? Grants are drying up.

A. There is less funding than before; but there are opportunities. It is a question of priorities.

A. (Gerald De Young) Our analysis shows that a bridge is not required for the project.

Dan Collen

Funds are earmarked for the following improvements:

- Widening Almaden Expressway to four lanes each way between Blossom Hill and Branham.
- Four lanes immediately south of Blossom hill on Almaden Expressway with one lane dedicated to Southbound 85 and one lane dedicated to Northbound 85.
- A third left turn lane on Blossom Hill Eastbound at Almaden Expressway.
- A left turn lane from Best Buy onto Almaden Expressway.
- More pedestrian friendly crossings.

See <http://www.countyroads.org> links for the Almaden Expressway project, a Service Request, and a Real Time Congestion Map.

Q. Any plans for a light rail to the airport?

A. No.

Q. Since the City cannot afford changes, won't traffic deteriorate?

A. (Manuel Pineda) The City is not pursuing financing for the bridge.

A. (Gerald De Young) The Developer will construct mitigation connecting Cherry to Sanchez.

Q. Don't we have level of service F on all intersections south of Branham?

A. (Manuel Pineda) Clear City Council policies govern here.
Q. Whole Foods is in but the improvements are not?
A. (Manuel Pineda and Dan Collen) We coordinate.
A. (Don Collen) We are seeking approval from Caltrans (which manages Federal transportation money).
Q. Taxpayers fund all of this.
Q. Is there a driveway problem at Almaden Ranch?
A. We have to move a utility pole. The driveway involves access rights the City cannot afford to buy from Arcadia.
Q. A while ago you said the no-turn-on-red restriction at Almaden Plaza Way (feeding Southbound 85 onto Almaden Expressway) would be reconsidered.
A. "We're getting closer to a decision." [audience and speaker laugh]
Q. What does this project provide that cannot be found within 5 miles?
A. Revenue to the City.
Q. What are the start and end dates for Almaden Expressway construction?
A. The start date "eludes me" – I am "hoping August."
Q. Do we need more retail? Is this what we want?
Q. Could there be a bridge assessment district?
A. Assessment districts are driven by development.
Q. What do we need here in the Almaden Valley? Can we ask the community what we need for retail? Can we decide what we'd like?
A. (Gerald De Young) Retail developers are always interested in community desires. Place making means more money. Council members have significant influence. They ask staff to look at ways to make X happen. Work with your Council member.

This part of the meeting terminated at 8:23 pm followed by a brief intermission.

Business Meeting

Vice President Joe Boudreau opened the business meeting at 8:30 pm. Board Members present included:

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

Treasurer's Report: (submitted by email)

The Treasurer's Report was accepted as submitted, without objection.

(Pat McMahan resumed presiding over the meeting at this point.)

Secretary's Report: (Ray Strong)

The February draft minutes were accepted as corrected.

Jeremy Demis, representing Assemblyman Gordon, reported that the budget may pass soon.

Q. Programs and Bureaucracy eat up dollars.

A. The cuts are broad.

Q. Illegal aliens cost California \$15 billion.

Q. What is Assemblyman Gordon's position on the Governor's proposal to eliminate Redevelopment?

A. Gordon approves in spite of being upset at the loss of new construction of affordable housing.

A Town Hall meeting is planned for Saturday, March 26, at the Los Gatos Town Hall.

The Neighborhood development center budget will be reviewed Thursday, May 5, at the Vineland Library.

There was some inconclusive discussion of the Almaden Valley Rotary proposed sign before the meeting adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Draft Minutes submitted May 10, 2011

Approved June 13, 2011

Ray Strong, Secretary