



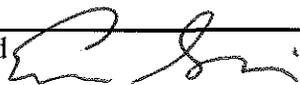
# Memorandum

**TO:** TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Joseph Horwedel

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** April 24, 2008

Approved 

Date 4/25/08

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** City-Wide  
**SNI AREA:** All

**SUBJECT: GREEN VISION: "GREENING" THE GENERAL PLAN**

## BACKGROUND

Goal #7 of the City's Green Vision is "Adopt a General Plan with measurable standards for sustainable development." This memorandum outlines how the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan Update process will result in a green General Plan and achieve Green Vision Goal #7.

## ANALYSIS

### *Sustainability in the San Jose 2020 General Plan*

Prior to discussing how the new Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan will be an environmentally sustainable General Plan, it is first important to review and acknowledge the existing strategies and goals related to sustainability in the present San Jose 2020 General Plan. One of the seven central themes (called Major Strategies) in the San Jose 2020 General Plan is Sustainable City. The Sustainable City Major Strategy is a statement of San Jose's desire to become an environmentally and economically sustainable city. This Strategy seeks to reduce traffic congestion, pollution, wastefulness and degradation of our natural environment. This Strategy is also a commitment by the City to encourage and participate in cooperative/regional efforts to improve the quality of air and water, and to conserve land, soil, water, energy and ecosystems, such as the baylands, forests, riparian corridors, fisheries, grasslands, etc.

One of the primary purposes of the General Plan is to guide the future physical growth of the city by establishing where public and private development will occur, as well as the shape or design of that development. The San Jose 2020 General Plan's emphasis on smart growth has

contributed, and continues to contribute, towards sustainability. By planning for a balance of jobs and housing and by focusing development into urbanized areas and around transit facilities, the San Jose 2020 General Plan is facilitating the development of a City where people can drive less and have opportunities to walk, bicycle and take transit to their destinations. These smart growth land use strategies in turn help to reduce vehicle miles traveled, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and help to preserve open space, biological resources and watersheds.

The San Jose 2020 General Plan also includes many goals and policies specifically related to natural resource consumption and natural resource quality that support the Sustainable City Major Strategy. These goals and/or policies include:

- Natural communities and wildlife goals and policies that seek to protect biological diversity and protect and enhance riparian corridors, wetlands, bay lands and the City's urban forest.
- Water resources policies address the need for the conservation and protection of watershed and groundwater recharge areas.
- Air quality policies that require seek to maintain acceptable levels of air quality and minimize the air pollution produced by new development.
- Energy policies that seek to reduce the use of non-renewable energy resources in transportation, building and urban services and expands the use of renewable energy resources.
- Urban design and land use goals and policies that discourage urban sprawl, and promote the efficient use of land and the conservation of open spaces.

#### *Status of the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan Update*

On June 26, 2007 the City Council approved eight Guiding Principles for Envision San Jose 2040. The Guiding Principles are "ground rules" for the General Plan Update process and shape the direction for development of the General Plan's major policy framework. Sustainability is one of the eight Guiding Principles. This important Guiding Principle calls for the management, conservation and preservation of natural resources for present and future generations, and the identification of opportunities that would enhance the City's sustainability policies through the implementation of the Urban Environmental Accords, which the City Council signed in 2005 along with many other cities around the world.

Sustainability has emerged as a major issue at Envision San Jose 2040 Task Force meetings, at public outreach meetings, and at the October 13, 2008 Community Visioning Workshop. Several Task Force meetings have focused on topics related to sustainability and included the following themes: The City's Green Vision; City transportation policies; land use and development; health and the built environment; and the Habitat Conservation Plan. Sustainability has been defined broadly by the Task Force to include economic, fiscal and environmental sustainability. These three different components of sustainability are seen as linked, with the achievement of one facilitating the achievement of the others.

Environmental sustainability was emphasized by the Task Force and the public as critical to the overall health and vitality of the City of San Jose. The most critical environmental sustainability issue identified was global warming and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in San Jose. As a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Task Force and the public identified the need to become a city with a more interconnected and mixed land use fabric where jobs, residences, shops, parks, and other public facilities are closer together, affording people the opportunity to drive less to meet their daily needs. Related to this strategy, the Task Force and the public identified the need to create a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly city and the need to improve public transportation.

A significant Envision San Jose 2040 accomplishment to date includes the development of a draft Vision Statement. This Envision San Jose 2040 Vision Statement, which is attached, was developed from input received at early public outreach meetings, the Community Vision Workshop and Task Force discussions. This Vision is intended to describe what the City of San Jose will become through the successful implementation of the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan. As such, the Vision will inform the preparation of the details of the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan document, including the land use and transportation plan, strategies, goals, policies, and implementation actions.

The draft Vision Statement identified seven major elements, three of which were regarded as a higher priority than the rest. The three high priority vision elements are Environmental Leadership, Innovative Economy, and Diversity and Social Equity. The Environmental Leadership Vision element corresponds with the Sustainability Guiding Principle and the City's Green Vision, calling for San Jose to become a model of an environmentally sustainable and healthy city, a leader in green technology, and a vigilant steward of its resources for present and future generations. The other four vision elements are: Healthy Neighborhoods, Quality Education and Services, Vibrant Arts, and Culture and Interconnected City.

#### *Next Steps to achieve a Sustainable Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan*

The primary undertaking for the Task Force, in Phase I of the Envision San Jose 2040 process, is to develop land use strategies that will accommodate projected growth through 2035. The Sustainability and other Guiding Principles, as well as the Draft Vision, will guide the development of these land alternatives. For example, a growth strategy that is emerging in the Envision San Jose 2040 process is reflected in the Interconnected City Vision element. This strategy seeks to locate new development in a more mixed, less segregated, land use fabric that places the activities of daily life in close proximity and easily accessible by walking, bicycling and public transit. Consistent with this developing strategy, some members of the public have expressed the need to create a city with multiple vibrant neighborhoods centers or "villages" that meet the daily needs of surrounding residents.

Once identified and reviewed by the Council, the alternatives will be evaluated in terms of environmental and fiscal sustainability. The land use alternatives will also be evaluated to the degree to which they implement Action 8 of the Council accepted Urban Environmental Accords Implementation Workplan. Action 8 states that the City will "Adopt urban planning principles

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and practices that advances higher density, mixed-use walkable, bikeable and disabled accessible neighborhoods which coordinate land use and transportation with open space systems for recreation and ecological restoration.”

In Phase II of the Envision San Jose 2040 process, staff will work with the Task Force to review existing San Jose 2020 General Plan goals and policies and to develop new or strengthen existing goals and policies in many different topic areas. As part of this process, goals and policies are intended to guide the City towards achieving environmental sustainability and the realization of the vision of San Jose becoming an environmental leader. Sustainable or “green” goals and policies are expected to address achievable and comprehensive strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy consumption and waste, conserve natural resources, and protect our biological resources. Based on Task Force and community input, it is likely that, the Envision San Jose 2040 process will develop goals and policies in sustainability topic areas that are not addressed by the Green Vision. These goals would look forward through the year 2040, which is beyond the 2022 horizon year for the Green Vision goals.

In contrast to the San Jose 2020 General Plan, the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan will have performance measures. Similar to the ten Green Vision goals, these measures will help assess the City’s progress toward sustainability goals in the short and long term. These goals will enable the City to periodically check in, to identify if the City is moving towards its sustainability goals, and whether a course correction is needed.

At the April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, the General Plan Update Task Force will begin to discuss sustainability indicators in other communities in the nation as an initial discussion to identify potential indicators for Envision San Jose 2040. Examples of potential indicators, which are not already in the City Green Vision, could include targets for reductions in per capita vehicle miles traveled, targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and targets for the number of miles of riparian habitat restored.

In both Phase I and Phase II of the Envision San Jose process, there will be numerous opportunities for public input on the development of a “greener” General Plan. In addition to the Task Force meetings, multiple public workshops will continue to be held throughout the City to obtain public input on the development of land use alternatives that would accommodate projected growth. Furthermore, workshops will also be held to obtain public input on the development of goals, policies and performance measures. As a result of this planned public outreach and anticipated involvement, the Envision San Jose 2040 process is expected to result in a General Plan with strong public support, advancing the City towards environmental leadership and sustainability.

## **COORDINATION**

This memorandum was coordinated with the Environmental Services Department.

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**CEQA**

Not a Project.

  
JOSEPH HORWEDEL, DIRECTOR  
Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

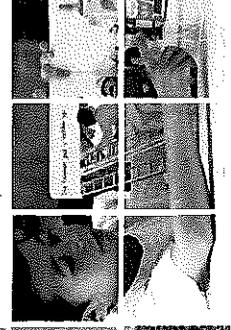
For questions please contact Michael Brilliot at 408-535-7831.

# Attachment 1: Draft Vision

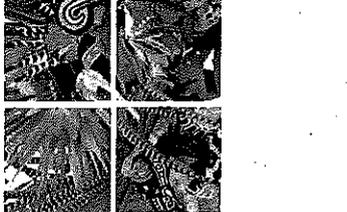
**Innovative Economy**  
San Jose's economy thrives on innovation, providing job opportunities for all and ample fiscal resources for a vibrant community.



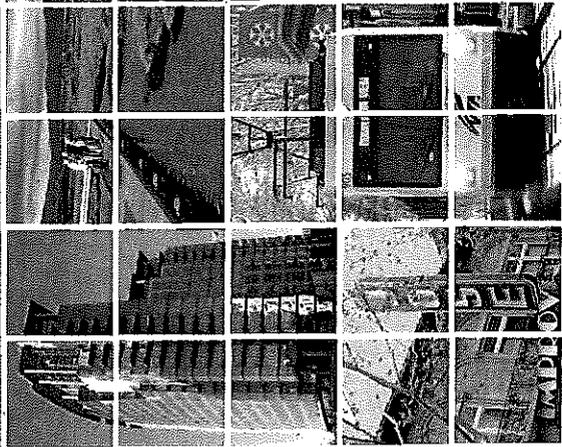
**San Jose embodies the energy and vitality of its unique human, natural and economic resources.**



**Vibrant Arts and Culture**  
San Jose is a vibrant center for multi-faceted arts and cultural programs, celebrating its heritage and inspiring the creative energy of the community and a rich quality of life.

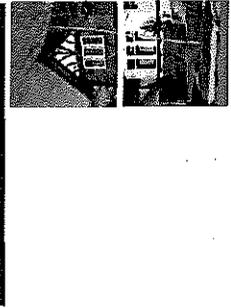


**Environmental Leadership**  
San Jose is a model of an environmentally sustainable and healthy city, a leader in green technology and a vigilant steward of its resources for present and future generations.



**Interconnected City**  
The activities of daily life are in close proximity and easily accessible by walking, bicycling and public transit.

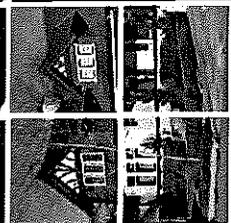
**Healthy Neighborhoods**  
San Jose's neighborhoods are attractive, affordable, and safe places to live with engaged community members.



**Diversity and Social Equity**  
San Jose celebrates, embraces and involves a diverse blend of cultures and achieves social, cultural and economic equity.



**Quality Education and Services**  
San Jose residents and businesses receive a broad range of high quality services and enjoy excellent educational opportunities for all.



# ENVISION SAN JOSE 2040