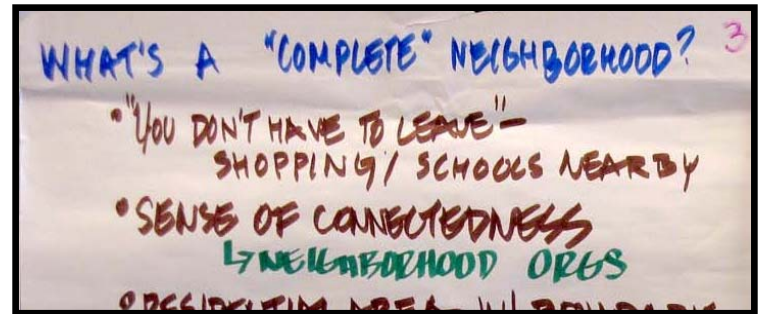
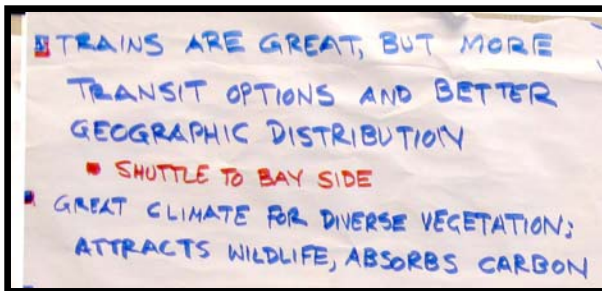


Putting it Together! Redwood City's New General Plan



Affinity Groups Summary of Meetings Spring 2008

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All photos are from CirclePoint unless otherwise credited.

Background: What Is a General Plan?

Every California city and county is required to have a **general plan** to guide long-term growth and development. General plans consist of text and maps. Usually, the most important map in general plan is the **land use map**, showing the allowable types and locations of different land uses. Redwood City's current general plan land use map is shown below. (A full-size version can be found at www.redwoodcity.org/generalplan.) The text of general plans cover seven required chapters or "elements" that address critical questions and issues facing communities. These elements are:

Land Use: What are the types, intensities and distribution of uses in the community?



Circulation: How do people, goods, and services move in and through the community?

Housing: Where in the community should future housing be located? What types of housing should be provided?

Conservation: How do we manage resources such as water, wetlands, air quality, and others?

Open Space: What areas in our community should be preserved as open space, trails, and/or parks?

Noise: What can the community do to control noise impacts on residents and businesses from trains, cars, industrial businesses, etc.?

Safety: What steps can the community take to protect against natural disasters (flooding, earthquakes, landslides, etc.) and address crime and personal safety?

In addition to the seven required elements, cities and counties may include optional elements that address issues of local importance.

A Fresh Start: Redwood City's New General Plan

In 2004, Redwood City initiated an update of the existing General Plan, which was adopted in 1990. Initial tasks for the update included meetings with neighborhood groups and community organizations for input and suggestions. This effort produced five draft General Plan elements.

During the same period, the City's work on the Downtown Precise Plan and other programs made it clear that the 1990 General Plan needed a more thorough overhaul than just a simple update. In the last decade, the planning environment for developed Peninsula communities has become much more complex. Cities must balance their individual preferences with regional roles and responsibilities in a context of shared and limited resources such as water, roadways, and land.

Redwood City's New General Plan will address these topics of critical importance as the community plans for the next 20 years. The New General Plan will take a comprehensive look at fundamental issues and set the City on a course for sustainable growth and change. The New General Plan process also will provide Redwood City residents and the business community opportunities to participate and help put together a healthy and sustainable future.

City staff's earlier work on the 1990 General Plan update produced much useful information that will help form the foundation of the New General Plan. The table below identifies draft General Plan elements (chapters) that have already been prepared, as well as those that will be prepared during 2008 and 2009.

	General Plan Elements (Chapters)	Where Covered in New General Plan	Initial Draft Completed	Now in Progress
REQUIRED ELEMENTS	Land Use	Land Use, Community Design, and Circulation		✓
	Circulation	Land Use, Community Design, and Circulation		✓
	Housing	Housing		✓
	Conservation	Natural Resources and Open Space	✓	
	Open Space	Natural Resources and Open Space; Cultural and Human Needs	✓	
	Noise	Public Safety	✓	✓
	Safety	Public Safety		✓

	General Plan Elements (Chapters)	Where Covered in New General Plan	Initial Draft Completed	Now in Progress
OPTIONAL ELEMENTS	Economic Development	Economic Development	✓	
	Infrastructure	Infrastructure and Water Supply	✓	
	Historic Resources	Historic Resources		✓
	Social Policies/ Programs	Cultural and Human Needs		✓

Guiding Principles for the *New General Plan*

As part of the process that began in 2004, the City developed a set of Guiding Principles that serve as statements of broad community goals related to potential future growth and change. The Guiding Principles are intended to steer the direction of the *New General Plan*.



Affinity Group Summary

During spring 2008, the City convened a series of “affinity group” meetings. These meetings were intended to bring together members of groups sharing one or more “affinities” to discuss issues and opportunities facing Redwood City. In setting up affinity group meetings, the General Plan team considered the elements of the New General Plan. This document summarizes the affinity groups’ input for the New General Plan.

The City sought to cast a wide net – within budget and schedule constraints – in reaching out to affinity groups. More than 100 people participated in eight affinity group meetings.

Each affinity group meeting was structured to tap into the deep knowledge of local experts, ranging from leaders of neighborhood organizations to bicycle advocates to property developers. Below is a summary of the affinity group meetings and key topics considered at each. A complete listing of organizations and people invited to the affinity group meetings is presented in **Appendix A**.

- **Bicycle and pedestrian groups:** How can the City make it easier to get around Redwood City on bicycle or on foot?
- **Developers:** What are the anticipated trends in commercial and residential development in Redwood City?
- **Chamber of Commerce:** What are the City’s economic markets, and how can the City respond to local and regional trends?
- **Environmental organizations:** What are the environmental assets of Redwood City; what and how can the assets be preserved?
- **Healthcare providers:** What is working well and what can be improved in terms of resident health and healthcare?
- **Interfaith organizations:** How can faith-based organizations partner with government organizations to address human needs, regardless of religious affiliation?
- **Latino community** (via English as a Second Language adult classes at Hoover and Taft schools): What are the concerns and aspirations of Spanish-speaking residents of the community?
- **Neighborhood organization members:** Is there a sense of real neighborhoods in Redwood City? What makes neighborhoods “complete,” and how can the New General Plan help achieve neighborhood objectives?



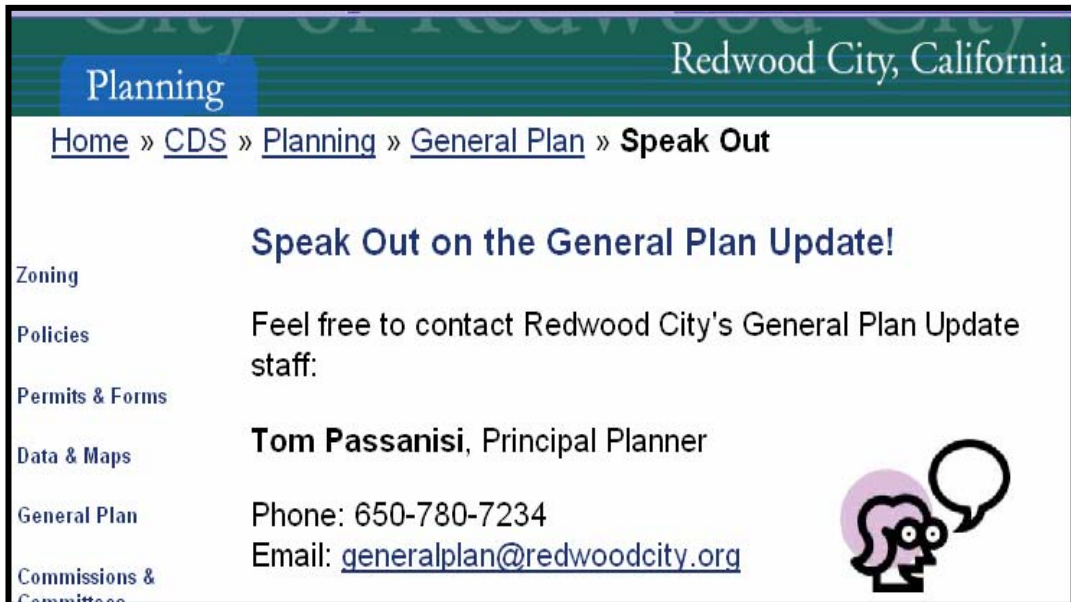
Participants were asked to define key issues critical to moving Redwood City forward in a positive direction and potential strategies to address these issues with the New General Plan.

Appendix B includes agendas from each affinity group meeting. **Appendix C** contains photographs of each meeting’s notes, which are summarized by “Emerging Themes” starting on page 7 below. **Appendix D** contains comment cards with additional/expanded opinions received during the meetings.

In addition, this summary also incorporates some of outreach to youth conducted primarily in early 2008 as part of the “Redwood City 2020” initiative. Redwood City 2020 is a community partnership designed to support the success of all youth and families, while engaging and strengthening the community. The program is a joint effort of the City, the school districts, San Mateo County, the John W. Gardner Center at Stanford University, and others. During early 2008, several “visioning” sessions were held where Redwood City youth were asked to share their hopes and aspirations for themselves, their families, their schools, and their communities. The feedback from these sessions provides many insights as to how Redwood City’s youth see themselves as part of their community. In addition, between 2000 and 2006, the City conducted a program called “YELL” or “Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning.” Within YELL, the City conducted hundreds of youth surveys and several youth workshops. The findings of these efforts help paint a picture of the type of community Redwood City’s youth would like to see. Summaries of all of these sessions are provided in **Appendix E**.

Looking for more information? Or have some comments of your own?

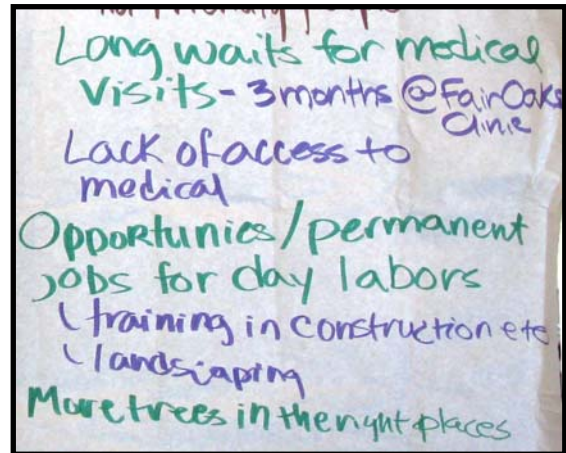
Visit the General Plan website at www.redwoodcity.org/generalplan. There you will find lots more background information, plus a feedback form for your thoughts and comments.



The screenshot shows a website page for Redwood City, California, under the 'Planning' section. The breadcrumb trail is 'Home » CDS » Planning » General Plan » Speak Out'. The main heading is 'Speak Out on the General Plan Update!'. Below this, it says 'Feel free to contact Redwood City's General Plan Update staff:' followed by 'Tom Passanisi, Principal Planner'. Contact information includes 'Phone: 650-780-7234' and 'Email: generalplan@redwoodcity.org'. A sidebar on the left lists navigation options: Zoning, Policies, Permits & Forms, Data & Maps, General Plan, and Commissions & Committees. A cartoon icon of a person's head with a speech bubble is located in the bottom right corner of the page.

Emerging Themes

The following summarizes the themes and visions heard from the Redwood City community through the affinity group meeting process. Assets, issues, and opportunities expressed by participants are organized by New General Plan elements. These comments and concerns will inform the development of alternative scenarios for future land use, transportation, housing plans, and resource. These alternative scenarios will be developed during summer 2008, and alternatives will be brought forward for public review and comments during fall 2008.



Overall, Redwood City has many assets that are important to the community, including San Francisco Bay, local creeks, parks, an ethnically and culturally diverse population, a revitalized Downtown, and a community interested in working closely with their elected officials and City planners.

Land Use

Assets: Redwood City assets include the Bay; its central Peninsula location; probably the most diverse range of land uses on the Peninsula; favorable climate, many parks, creeks, and natural features; and proximity to major job centers.



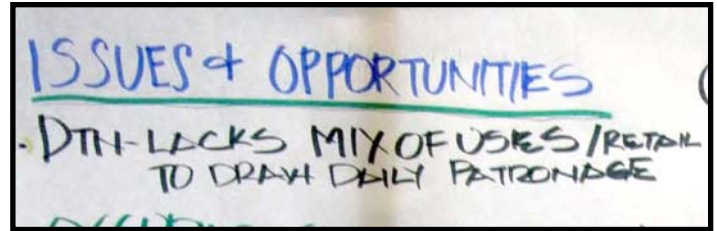
Photo: City of Redwood City

Participants expressed strong interest in ensuring that future growth and change follow the principles of “smart growth” or sustainable development. One example of this is infill development along existing transportation corridors and other already urbanized locations, giving people the opportunity to move from home to work and school and play with a minimum of driving.

Participants expressed interest in seeing more creative development solutions, such as multi-purpose spaces and more flexible zoning regulations.

Land use Issues and Opportunities

- Address flooding in Friendly Acres and adjacent areas
- Maintain and enhance Downtown as a vibrant, economically diverse district – expand shopping opportunities
- Consider new growth, including housing, around Downtown, North Main, El Camino
- Fix deteriorating Downtown infrastructure
- Provide more office space Downtown
- Understand that large retailers have parking requirements and visibility demands that need to be met
- Address barriers created by existing transportation infrastructure – railroad tracks, Woodside Road, others
- Require private development to provide public open space
- Create more community centers/places, particularly in Redwood Shores
- Provide additional spaces in all parts of City for growing religious organizations
- Employ or require green techniques (including LEED) in both new construction and renovations
- Understand development issues and opportunities posed by:
 - Small parcel sizes
 - Fragmentation of parcels
 - High price of land
- Create viable “places” along Whipple Road and Woodside Road where people would want to live/work/shop
- Examine the City’s demographics: do people age in place?
- Seek to tie together sections of the City that are cut off from the City center



Many opinions were expressed regarding the industrial salt mining property east of Seaport Boulevard, known as the Cargill site. The site has been in salt production use for decades. The owner is considering development options for the land (more than 1,300 acres) and has been conducting public workshops in the community over the past 12 months. Affinity group participants had varied opinions on the future disposition of the Cargill site. Ideas expressed for the site included:



Photo: Redwood City

- Restore the area to natural wetlands/recreational purposes/carbon sequestration
- Create a multi-use development with homes, community facilities, and retail and other shopping amenities
- Address concerns about building on Bay mud; it can be seismically unsafe, and global climate change impacts (sea level rise) may inundate or exacerbate levee failure and flooding
- Require that Cargill pay for a 50/50 development/restoration plan
- Look to Docktown: this area has achieved a reasonable balance between nature and housing

Circulation and Transportation

Assets: Proximity to diverse transportation options, including freeways, trains, and buses. An evolving network of bicycle and pedestrian pathways, were identified as the major transportation assets in the community. People expressed interest in a proposed new ferry service to San Francisco.



Photo: Caltrain

People want a city where mobility for all is emphasized. Drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders should have safe and efficient ways to get around within the City and the wider region.

Many participants expressed concern at the difficulty of traveling between portions of town: congested roadways, freeways, and railroad rights-of-way all create barriers to mobility. For bicycle and pedestrian commuters, such barriers are also considered major safety concerns. The



parking solutions articulated in the Downtown Precise Plan were recognized by some as very successful.

Circulation Issues and Opportunities: Roadways

- Address congestion on SR-101, Woodside Road, Whipple Road
- Address safety concerns about fast-moving traffic on El Camino Real, Middlefield Road, Woodside Road
- Add improvements, including more landscaping in the El Camino area and Woodside Road
- Consider “road diets” – like the narrowing of Middlefield Road
- Prevent Woodside Road from becoming an expressway like in Santa Clara County



Circulation Issues and Opportunities: Bikes and Pedestrians

- Add/improve cross-town paths/routes
- Provide better access in/around hillside areas, mobile home parks, across freeways/Woodside Road
- Add bike routes in East Bayshore, creek crossings, along the Hetch Hetchy easement; Maple, Vera, Jefferson, Hudson, and McGarvey streets, and Middlefield Road
- Complete/improve sidewalks, including in Edgewood Park, Bayshore, Redwood, Sequoia neighborhoods
- Ensure better and more bike access via “complete streets” with safe opportunities for bikes, pedestrians, and vehicles; provide these routes on a map
- Enhance the walkability of Downtown
- Consider developing a Level of Service (LOS) system for bike and pedestrian uses
- Provide routes that meet the needs of three types of cyclists: recreational, enthusiasts, and commuters

Transit Issues and Opportunities

- Provide more frequent transit options: more routes, and shorter waiting times
- Consider neighborhood shuttle system to facilitate getting around and reduce congestion
- Add new east-west transit routes
- Address long distances between transit (Caltrain) and employment centers like Pacific Shores
- Consider extension of Marguerite shuttle (Stanford University shuttle); heed example of AC transit shuttle to Union City BART



Parking Issues and Opportunities

- Simplify parking meters/parking policies
- Provide more parking for community centers, churches, apartment buildings
- Consider parking structures Downtown
- Abate semi-truck parking overnight in neighborhoods
- Limit amount of street parking
- Address need for parking at the Port
- Remove surface parking from Woodside Road
- Consider longer-term parking options, including in Downtown



Photo: Redwood City

Housing

The City's diverse array of housing options was considered by many as a major asset. Although the region as a whole lacks sufficient affordable housing, the range of housing types available in Redwood City is one of the most diverse on the Peninsula. Nevertheless, many participants expressed the need for housing affordable to middle-class people, particularly those who provide essential services in the community – police, firefighters, teachers, and others.

Many expressed appreciation for the proximity of houses to schools, shopping, and other everyday destinations.

When asked about good locations for new housing, participant responses included Downtown, or otherwise near shopping and transit, as well as along major corridors such as El Camino Real and Woodside Road.



Safety and Noise



Redwood City has many safe streets and neighborhoods. In many parts of town, crime, excessive speeding, and other dangers are not perceived as major concerns. However, speeding and crime are still concerns for many people in selected parts of the City, particularly in the southside neighborhoods and near North Fair Oaks. Participants also wanted to see more programs for youth, including more sports and youth-center related activities, as a means to reduce the influence of gangs.

Community members want to work alongside police and emergency services providers to protect the safety of residents, protect property, and be prepared for emergencies.

They want improved access for emergency vehicles, disaster preparedness training, infrastructure built on seismically appropriate land, sidewalks and bike paths free from vehicle interference, speed control facilities, labeled streets and crosswalks, streetlights and more “countdown” pedestrian signals. Participants praised the existence of CERTs (Certified Emergency Response Teams) within many Redwood City neighborhoods to help augment local police and fire capabilities in the event of an emergency.

Flooding was a concern for many participants, particularly residents in mobile home parks and the surrounding Friendly Acres neighborhood, and occupants of the new Stanford medical facility. In a world where rising sea levels are projected, flooding problems are anticipated to grow more severe.

Other Noise and Safety Issues

- Monitor ambient air quality and industrial/transportation emissions, as well as indoor air conditions
- Provide safer bike/pedestrian routes to Downtown and neighborhood schools
- Ensure more police presence, particularly on foot or on bicycle, in southside neighborhoods

Economic Development

Assets:

When asked to name the City's major economic-related assets, participants cited the revitalized Downtown; the presence of many large and diverse employers, ranging from Oracle to Kaiser to San Mateo County; the City's strong and diverse labor pool; and the availability of cultural, recreational, medical care, and other support services. Redwood City was noted as benefiting from proximity to the medical science cluster of businesses in South San Francisco, as well as the high-tech/green-tech cluster in the greater Stanford area and Silicon Valley overall.



Economic Development Issues and Opportunities

- Facilitate and encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings – ensure flexibility to be able to accommodate next waves of technology businesses
- Encourage/expand upon synergy between small industries
- Ensure better City outreach to both businesses and residents
- Consider issues specific to the Port of Redwood City: Allow complementary land uses that would benefit from proximity to the Port; examine the long-term viability of the Port; explore potential future uses
- Recognize that lack of affordable housing results in long-distance commuting – long drives can have negative impacts on employees over long term; consider ways to involve business community in helping to provide affordable housing
- Encourage/require green practices to help achieve sustainability goals while also benefiting local start-up businesses; balance job and economic growth with larger environmental considerations
- Recognize that high land prices make many types of land uses (e.g., some industrial, warehousing, etc.) cost-prohibitive while making commercial properties attractive to developers for residential opportunities. Recognize that many industries chase after cheap labor – some leave the Bay Area entirely
- Provide for more construction, landscaping, day-labor job opportunities
- Improve educational opportunities to ensure viable future work force



Natural Resources and Open Space

Assets: Redwood City has diverse natural assets that participants want to preserve and enhance: the Bay and waterfront areas, wetlands, creeks, hillside areas, and local parks and recreation facilities. Many of these features were identified as community-defining: they help distinguish Redwood City from other Bay Area cities. In addition, new infrastructure could involve harnessing solar and wind power. Retrofitting existing buildings and requiring new buildings be built to green standards will carry Redwood City into a sustainable future.



Photo: Quest

Conservation and Open Space Issues and Opportunities



- Encourage more community gardens
- Plant more trees on streets; take better care of existing City trees
- Create more access to waterways by daylighting creeks; increase opportunities for recreational water uses
- Capture “free” resources: rainwater, solar energy, wind power
- Protect groundwater resources
- Expand opportunities to create and use recycled water
- Consider long-term viability of bayfront lands and uses in anticipation of rising sea levels; expansion and restoration of wetland areas to guard against current and anticipated future flooding
- Plan for facilities and utilities that consider both peak demand and supply
- Give more weight to environmental considerations when considering job and housing growth; sustainability practices, including concentrating development in already urbanized areas; “complete” neighborhoods where everyday needs can be met with minimal automobile trips
- Implement more green building practices: green buildings/green roofs, LEED standards
- Preserve/enhance creeks/riparian areas as wilderness corridors
- Ensure better maintenance of Jardin de Niños

Cultural and Human Needs

Assets: Redwood City's cultural and economic diversity was cited by many participants as an asset. Providing the social infrastructure to meet the needs of this diverse population is considered to be an ongoing challenge for the City. Participants appreciated the sense of community created by local historic resources and cultural institutions.



Cultural Resources/Human Needs Issues and Opportunities

- Involve the full range of the community in the New General Plan and future decision making; outreach to Spanish-speakers, youth, and others (reach Latino community through local Spanish radio stations)
- Recognize the broad diversity within the Latino community – it is composed of many distinct groups
- Enhance/expand Fair Oaks Community Center's ability to provide needed services for recent immigrants and the uninsured
- Address City's unique health care concerns such as high rates of childhood asthma and other diseases in North Fair Oaks area
- Identify ways to create healthier communities that foster walking, access to fresh food, healthy recreational opportunities to help reduce chronic diseases and the need for acute care
- Acknowledge that there is separation within Redwood City's communities along ethnic and social class lines; find creative ways to bridge these gaps
- Provide more activities for youth such as a youth center, recreational/sports opportunities
- Expand childcare opportunities – use churches, schools, etc.
- Improve access to medical care for those in need; Fair Oaks Community Center is helpful but people report long waits (three months) to see physicians
- Engage the Asian/Pacific Islander population
- Recognize the lack of skilled nurses/nursing facilities despite access to several medical facilities – Sequoia, Kaiser, and soon Stanford
- Understand trends in healthcare delivery; anticipate that more home-based system of care is likely in future
- Capitalize on opportunities to work with faith-based organizations to help deliver needed services to the community

