



ENVISION GOALS AND POLICIES: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The Task Force requested an opportunity to further discuss the policies related to new residential infill development within existing neighborhoods (areas with the Residential Neighborhood designation in the proposed Envision Land Use / Transportation Diagram). Following are excerpt of those policies and plan diagrams which illustrate how those policies could be implemented in contrast with the continued use of the San Jose 2020 General Plan. The corresponding Growth Areas / Capacity diagrams for Planning Areas are posted on online. Please review the following policies and consider if they provide adequate and appropriate guidance related to this topic.

Background Information (Excerpts from various sections of the Draft Plan)

San José is a diverse and thriving community known for its status as the Capital of Silicon Valley and its abundant natural resources. The goals, policies, and implementation actions in the Plan build on San José's strong identity; support the characteristics and features that define neighborhoods; promote the City's Neighborhood Business Districts; and grow the programs, facilities, resources, and other amenities that make San José a great place to live, work, and play. San José offers a wide range of housing choices that meet the needs of a diverse community.

A key strategy of the Envision General Plan is to focus new growth capacity in specifically identified "Growth Areas," while the majority of the City is not planned for additional growth or intensification. This approach reflects the built-out nature of San José, the limited availability of additional "infill" sites for development compatible with established neighborhood character, and the emphasis in the Plan Vision to reduce environmental impacts while fostering transit use and walkability. While the Growth Areas strategy focuses and promotes growth within the identified Growth Areas, it also strictly limits growth capacity within the City's established neighborhoods. Infill development within such neighborhoods, often at a density and form inconsistent with the existing neighborhood pattern, has been disruptive to the development of a positive neighborhood character. Focusing new growth into the Growth Areas will help to protect the quality of existing neighborhoods, while also enabling the development of new village areas with a compact and dense form attractive to the City's projected demographics (i.e., an aging population, but also young workers seeking an urban experience), that support walking, provide opportunities to incorporate retail and other services in a mixed-use format, and support transit use.

The land use designations in the Plan that typically allow some sort of residential type uses are Open Hillside; Lower Hillside; Rural Residential; Residential Neighborhood; Mixed Use Neighborhood; Urban Residential; Transit Residential; Village Overlay; Village; Downtown;

Mixed Use Commercial; Transit Employment Residential Overlay; Specific Plan Area Overlay and Neighborhood Business Districts

Designated Growth Areas: The Land Use / Transportation Diagram has a series of designations that identify targeted locations for growth intensification, including but not limited to the Downtown, Village Area Overlays, Transit Employment Centers, and Specific Plan Areas. These areas were selected as the best areas of the City for new growth to further the Plan Vision and associated environmental, fiscal, economic, and transportation goals, including but not limited to support for increased transit use and protection of open spaces and hillsides. Almost all areas with existing or planned fixed transit stops (light rail, heavy rail, BART, high-speed rail) and corridors with existing or planned Bus Rapid Transit are identified as high-growth areas in order to encourage increased public transit use.

Low Growth Areas: Recognizing that much of the land area in San José has a fully developed land use pattern that will remain for the foreseeable future and that the dispersal of new residential growth throughout the City would be counter to various Envision goals, the Land Use / Transportation Diagram limits growth in most of the city's existing neighborhood areas through application of the Residential Neighborhood designation. Use of this designation acknowledges the city's built-out character and supports the primary Envision goal to limit new development outside of the identified Growth Areas while also protecting environmentally sensitive sites and strengthening the Urban Growth Boundary. Through the Residential Neighborhood designation, the series of low to middle density residential designations in the *San José 2020* General Plan are consolidated into fewer designations with generally lower allowable densities for the non-Growth Areas, accompanied by more flexible designations providing for a broader range and intensity of mixed uses within the Growth Areas.

The residential designations in the *Envision San Jose 2040* General Plan place significant emphasis upon identifying the desired neighborhood form and character for residential and mixed use areas. In much of the City not designated for growth in the *Envision* General Plan, new residential development in these designations will primarily reflect the character of development in the existing neighborhoods.

Goals and Policies related to residential neighborhood within the UGB

A community's design defines the character or image of a street, neighborhood, community, or the City as a whole. The Community Design Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions (Policies) guide the form of future development in San José and help tie individual projects to the vision for the surrounding area and City as a whole. These Policies address the character of the City environment and how the streets, buildings, open spaces, and natural environment are symbiotically designed to support one another in a cohesive whole. The Policies here work together with other Policy sets in this plan and at the same time protect existing neighborhoods from incompatible development and support growth and intensification in identified areas.

Goal CD-1 – Attractive City: Create a well-designed, unique, and vibrant public realm with appropriate uses and facilities to maximize pedestrian activity; support community interaction; and attract residents, business, and visitors to San José.

Policies – Attractive City

- Require the highest standards of architectural and site design, and apply strong design controls for all development projects, both public and private, for the enhancement and development of community character and for the proper transition between areas with different types of land uses. (CD-1.1)
- Further City Design Concepts of this Plan to focus growth in appropriate locations; design complete streets for people; promote Grand Boulevards, Main Streets, and Downtown; support transit; and foster a healthy community. (CD-1.3)
- Use building design to reflect both the unique character of a specific site and the context of surrounding development. Franchise-style architecture is strongly discouraged. (CD-1.11)

Goal CD-4 – Compatibility: Provide aesthetically pleasing streetscapes and new development that preserves and builds on the unique characteristics of the local area and contributes to a distinctive neighborhood or community identity.

Policies – Compatibility

- In non-growth areas, new development and subdivisions should reflect the character of predominant existing development of the same type in the surrounding area through the regulation of lot size, street frontage, height, building scale, siting/setbacks, and building orientation. (CD-4.4)
- For new development in transition areas between identified growth areas and non-growth areas, use a combination of building setbacks, building step-backs, materials, building orientation, landscaping, and other design techniques to provide a consistent streetscape that buffers lower-intensity areas from higher-intensity areas and that reduces potential shade, shadow, massing, viewshed, or other concerns. (CD-4.5)

Goal CD-8 – Residential Neighborhoods: Regulate the urban form, architectural quality and contextual compatibility of new construction and uses within the City’s varied residential neighborhoods to promote a residential neighborhood environment conducive to a high quality of life for neighborhood residents and visitors.

Policies – Residential Neighborhoods

- Design all new single-family detached residences so that each home has a frontage on a public street or on a private street that appears and functions as a public street. (CD-8.1)
- Support subdivisions of residential lots if the new lots reflect the established pattern of development in the immediate area, including lot sizes and street frontages. Discourage residential developments, such as court-homes or flag lots, that increase residential densities for an area or disrupt an established neighborhood pattern. Consider allowing

secondary units (granny or in-law units) in lieu of creating flag lots, substandard lots, or parcels that disrupt an established neighborhood pattern. (CD- 8.2)

- Direct all significant new residential growth to identified Growth Areas to further the environmental, transit, healthy community, and other *Envision* General Plan objectives. Limit infill development within areas designated as Residential Neighborhood on the Land Use / Transportation Diagram to projects that maintain the prevailing neighborhood form and density as it exists on adjoining properties, with particular emphasis upon establishing and/or maintaining a consistent streetscape form between new and existing development. (CD- 8.3)
- Locate new commercial uses in established residential neighborhoods on busier streets or at street intersections. Discourage new commercial uses on small existing streets unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the commercial use can integrate with the existing residential neighborhood without creating adverse impacts. (CD- 8.4)
- Integrate new and existing neighborhoods and facilitate movement throughout the City by connecting streets and particularly by providing pedestrian and bicycle cross-access connections. (CD- 8.5)

Other related policies that promote residential development

Goal CD-9 – Hillside / Rural Preservation: Preserve the valuable natural resources of the hillsides, and protect their aesthetic and habitat amenities to enhance the rural character of these areas.

Policies – Hillside / Rural Preservation

- Allow development in hillside and rural residential areas consistent with or below existing or planned densities in these areas to maximize resource conservation. Support development only when it is compatible with the character and pattern of the surrounding area, even if below the maximum potential residential density as designated on the Land Use/Transportation Diagram. (CD-9.1)
- Apply strong architectural, site, and grading design controls through a discretionary development review process of all types of hillside and rural residential development that require significant grading activities in order to protect the hillsides and to minimize potential adverse visual and environmental impacts. (CD-9.2)
- Minimize grading on hillsides and design any necessary grading or recontouring to preserve the natural character of the hills and to minimize the removal of significant vegetation, especially native trees such as Valley Oaks. (CD-9.3)
- Apply the following guidelines for development in hillside and rural residential areas in order to preserve and enhance the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the natural terrain (CD-9.4) :
 - a. Design development in a sensitive manner to highlight and compliment the natural environment.
 - b. Use large lot sizes and varying setbacks in order to respect and preserve natural features of the land.

- c. Adapt construction techniques and housing types to variable terrains. Use split pads and stepped foundations where appropriate, especially to minimize required grading, and discourage conventional, single flat-pad housing designs.
 - d. Consider privacy, livability, solar orientation and wind conditions when siting residential dwellings. Dwelling unit sites should take advantage of scenic views but should be located below hilltops to protect the aesthetics and ridgeline silhouette viewed from below, from public places, and from the valley floor.
 - e. Encourage preservation of existing trees, rock outcroppings and other significant features.
 - f. When grading or recontouring of the terrain is proposed, preserve the natural character of the hills and blend the alterations into the natural terrain wherever possible.
 - g. Design streets to provide access and connectivity for area residents, and consider potential viewshed opportunity in siting development. Consider and encourage reduced width and modified street sections to design streets for utility and to minimize grading.
- Consider habitat conservation objectives as part of hillside development proposals. (CD-9.7)
 - Maintain design guidelines and policies adopted by the City to guide hillside development to promote aesthetics and enhance the rural character of hillside areas. (CD-9.9)

Goal CD-10 – Hillside Development: Minimize exposure of the public to potential environmental hazards associated with development on the hillsides.

Policies – Hillside Development

- Allow development in hillside areas only if potential danger to the health, safety, and welfare of the residents, due to landslides, fire, or other environmental hazards, can be mitigated to an acceptable level. (CD-10.1)
- When reviewing hillside development proposals, consider the potential for any extraordinary expenditures of public resources to provide emergency services in the event of a man-made or natural disaster. (CD-10.8)

Goal LU-9 – High-Quality Living Environments: Provide high quality living environments for San José’s residents.

Policies – High-Quality Living Environments

- Create a pedestrian-friendly environment by connecting new residential development with safe, convenient, accessible, and pleasant pedestrian facilities. Provide such connections between the new development, the adjoining neighborhood, transit access points, schools, parks, and nearby commercial areas. Consistent with Transportation

Policy TR-2.11, prohibit the development of new cul-de-sacs or gated communities that do not provide through and publicly accessible bicycle and pedestrian connections. (LU-9.1)

- Integrate housing development with our City’s transportation system, including transit, roads, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. (LU-9.3)
- Require residential developments to include adequate open spaces in either private or common areas to partially provide for residents' open space and recreation needs. (LU-9.6)
- When changes in residential densities in established neighborhoods are proposed, the City shall consider such factors as neighborhood character and identity; historic preservation; compatibility of land uses and impacts on livability; impacts on services and facilities, including schools, to the extent permitted by law; accessibility to transit facilities; and impacts on traffic levels on both neighborhood streets and major thoroughfares. (LU-9.8)
- Design single-family and duplex residential development with limited vehicular access to arterial streets as follows (LU-9.11): No direct vehicular access on six lane arterials or within 350 feet of the intersection of two arterials; No direct vehicular access on four lane arterials; The use of frontage roads, corner lots, or other street design solutions for vehicular access is encouraged.
- New single-family flag lots may be appropriate on hillside properties but are discouraged within other parts of the City. Flag lot development in non-hillside areas should have a clear and visible relationship to the neighborhood and the street and should be consistent with the applicable Zoning district which can assure that relationship. To strengthen the neighborhood preservation policies and objectives of the plan, the City Council has adopted a policy establishing criteria for the use of flag lots. (LU-9.15)
- Limit residential development in established neighborhoods that are not identified growth areas to projects that conform to the site’s Land Use / Transportation Diagram designation and meet the Urban Design policies in this Plan. (LU-9.17)

Goal LU-10 – Efficient Use of Residential & Mixed-Use Lands: Meet the housing needs of existing and future residents by fully and efficiently utilizing lands planned for residential and mixed-use and by maximizing housing opportunities in locations within a half mile of transit, with good access to employment areas, neighborhood services, and public facilities.

Policies – Efficient Use of Residential & Mixed-Use Lands

- Distribute higher residential densities throughout our city in identified growth areas and facilitate the development of residences in mixed-use development within these growth areas. (LU-10.2)
- Develop residentially- and mixed-use-designated lands adjacent to major transit facilities at high densities to reduce motor vehicle travel by encouraging the use of public transit. (LU-10.4)
- Within identified growth areas, develop residential projects at densities sufficient to support neighborhood retail in walkable, main street type development. (LU-10.5)

- Facilitate the development of housing close to jobs to provide residents with the opportunity to live and work in the same community. (LU-10.6)
- In the identified growth areas, do not approve decreases in residential density, through zoning change or development entitlement applications or through General Plan Amendments. LU-10.7
- Encourage consolidation of parcels to promote mixed-use and high density development at locations identified in the Land use / Transportation Diagram. LU-10.8

Goal LU-16 – Urban Growth Boundary: Direct new development to areas where urban services are provided in furtherance of both the City and County General Plans and environmental, aesthetic, fiscal, safety & hazards management, and other goals of this Plan.

Policy – Urban Growth Boundary

- Use the UGB/USA to protect public health and safety by preventing urban development in areas subject to natural hazards, in accordance with the Hillside & Rural Preservation Policies and the Safety & Hazards Management Policies. (LU-16.9)
- Establish a program to create new zoning districts for hillside areas and rezone those lands outside of the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary under City jurisdiction to conform with the General Plan designations of these areas and to be consistent with the purposes of the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary. (LU-16.12)