

WINCHESTER BOULEVARD URBAN VILLAGE

CHAPTER 2: BIG IDEAS

INTRODUCTION

The Winchester Boulevard Urban Village is a long corridor that provides a range of commercial services, retail, restaurant, and residential uses, and is a connection to three regional destinations: The Winchester Mystery House, and two large retail commercial centers—Santana Row and Westfield Valley Fair. The three regional destinations are located within the Santana Row/Valley Fair Urban Village that is adjacent to the Winchester Boulevard Urban Village, but is physically separated by the I-280 freeway. This Urban Village is also in close proximity to two major freeways and future express bus service along Stevens Creek Boulevard, and a potential future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line along Stevens Creek Boulevard. The neighborhoods surrounding this Urban Village are predominantly single-family detached residences, while residential uses within the Urban Village are predominantly multi-family.

The character and location of this Urban Village presents a tremendous opportunity for new and intensified residential and commercial development that is vibrant, walkable, bikeable, and well-integrated with existing uses that will transform Winchester Boulevard into a more urban and walkable corridor.

Community participation throughout the Urban Village planning processes has yielded several “big ideas” about the future of the Winchester Boulevard Urban Village. These ideas emerged from the community at public advisory group meetings, community workshops, and on-line surveys. Summarized in this chapter, the “big ideas” inform the Plans’ goals, policies, and implementation actions.

Big Idea 1: A Diverse, Inclusive and Sustainable Place

New development in the Winchester Boulevard Urban Village will support a diversity of housing and employment opportunities. The Plan preserves the inclusiveness and affordability of housing within the Urban Village, while also supporting new housing, and accommodates a range of employment opportunities, from existing small businesses and retail destinations to an incoming hi-tech workforce. The Plan ensures that new commercial spaces are not only high in quality, but that they provide ample opportunity for small and family-owned businesses to thrive.

The Plan also prioritizes environmental resiliency for the Urban Village by promoting green development practices and a convenient and efficient multimodal transportation network that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and improves air quality.

Big Idea 2: Bridge the Barriers between Neighborhoods

This Plan strives to improve connections between the Winchester Boulevard Urban Village and the Santana Row/Valley Fair Urban Village, as well as between the Winchester Urban Village and existing adjacent neighborhoods to the east and west. Improved connectivity, including wider sidewalks, mid-block crossings at key locations, paseos, improved sidewalk landscaping, and bike lanes will improve the Urban Village’s accessibility and attractiveness and help to unify the wider community. In particular, the Plan envisions the Winchester Boulevard at the I-280 freeway overpass as having potential to not only improve the connection between the two urban villages, but to also become an iconic space in San José.

The plan encourages a number of potential design solutions for this important connection point, including integrating a new park, commercial space and/or transit facilities.

Big Idea 3: Vibrant and Dynamic Neighborhoods with a network of Parks and Plazas

Build upon Winchester Boulevard's assets to develop an attractive and memorable San José destination that integrates a variety of outdoor plazas, public art, and parks where the community can meet, linger, and socialize.

The Plan identifies opportunities for a range of parks, plazas, urban farms, green roofs, and linear green buffers between single-family residences and taller development along Winchester. The Plan also encourages the incorporation of diverse and stimulating art that enriches the identity of Winchester Boulevard and enhances the experiences of neighbors and visitors.

Activity nodes are envisioned at the north and south ends of the Urban Village, supporting higher-intensity development. The northern activity node, near Moorpark Avenue, is an office and retail destination within easy walking distance to Santana Row, while the southern activity node, near Payne Avenue, is a commercial and residential mixed-use node. Between these two nodes, the Plan envisions a mix of uses at a lower intensity, with ground floor retail lining much of the Winchester Boulevard street frontage.

Big Idea 5: Winchester Boulevard as a Great Street

The Plan recognizes the dual role that Winchester Boulevard must play for the Urban Village and for the wider community, as a major vehicular thoroughfare, as well as a neighborhood-serving street for the nearby residents. As such, Winchester Boulevard accommodates a full six lanes of through traffic at peak hours, and four through lanes with on-street parking during the weekend and evenings—prime hours for shopping, running neighborhood errands, and dining out. This arrangement, combined with continuous bicycle lanes and a range of pedestrian and transit enhancements, transforms Winchester Boulevard within the Urban Village into a truly Great Street that is safe, accessible, and convenient while also remaining a key element of the regional roadway system.

Big Idea 6: Compatibility with Existing Neighborhoods

New development within the Urban Village should be well integrated within, and respectful of, adjacent existing neighborhoods. Policies and guidelines address the various conditions and adjacencies within and along the perimeter of the Urban Village. Considering such critical factors as privacy, light and shade and shadow, the Plan specifies heights, building massing requirements, and transitions to shape a vibrant and harmonious urban village.

SANTANA ROW / VALLEY FAIR URBAN VILLAGE

CHAPTER 2: BIG IDEAS

INTRODUCTION

The Santana Row/Valley Fair Urban Village is currently a commercial hub that enjoys a wide range of commercial, residential, retail, and restaurant uses with convenient access to two major freeways, and future express bus service along Stevens Creek, and a potential future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line along Stevens Creek Boulevard. The Santana Row/Valley Fair Urban Village is home to three major regional attractions: The Winchester Mystery House, and two large retail commercial centers - Santana Row and Westfield Valley Fair. This Urban Village is surrounded predominantly by single-family detached residences, while residential uses within the Urban Village are predominantly multi-family units. The characteristics of this planning area provide a solid foundation for new urban scale residential and commercial development that is vibrant, walkable, bikeable, and well-integrated with existing uses.

Community participation throughout the Urban Village planning processes has yielded several “big ideas” about the future of the Santana Row/Valley Fair Urban Village. These ideas emerged from the community at multiple public meetings including; advisory group meetings, community workshops, and on-line surveys. Summarized in this chapter, the “big ideas” inform the Plan’s goals, policies, and implementation actions.

Big Idea 1: A Vibrant Regional Entertainment, Retail and Employment Destination

The Santana Row/Valley Fair Urban Village has a robust mix of employment, housing, retail, entertainment, and public spaces, and is already one of San José’s primary regional centers. It is the Urban Village’s two distinct commercial destinations— the Santana Row and the Westfield Valley Fair shopping centers that currently lend the Urban Village its identity. Building upon the area’s existing identity by creating opportunities for additional retail and restaurant space, entertainment venues, employment centers, and residences, is essential to transforming the larger Urban Village area into one, cohesive mixed-use Village.

Big Idea 2: A Center for Innovation, Creativity and Productivity

The Santana Row/Valley Fair Urban Village Plan conceives of an even greater place that inspires creativity, and continues to attract people, businesses and investment. With architecture, urban design, public spaces and transportation systems that reflect the innovation of Silicon Valley, this Urban Village is envisioned be a shining example of a 21st Century mixed use urban community. Building upon the positive attributes of the area, this Plan aspires to create a dynamic urban environment that embraces a creative workforce and attracts new companies and businesses to call the Village their home.

Big Idea 3: Preserve and Enhance the Area’s Distinct Assets

A priority of the Santana Row/Valley Fair Urban Village is to preserve the area’s many existing assets, including the Winchester Ranch Senior Mobile Home Park, Fire Station #10 on South Monroe Street, Frank M. Santana Park, and the Winchester Mystery House and Century 21 Theater Historic City Landmarks. This Plan is also careful to preserve and enhance the area’s existing convenience for its residents within or near the Urban Village - specifically, the convenient access to adjacent shopping,

entertainment, and restaurant uses. This Plan provides a framework that allows for new high density development while at the same time respecting the character of existing residential neighborhoods.

Big Idea 4: An Interconnected Neighborhood with Great Parks and Plazas

The Santana Row/Valley Fair Urban Village will be enlivened with a network of open spaces that is accessible to the entire Village and beyond. The network should expand upon the existing urban plazas of Santana Row and the larger open space of Frank M. Santana Park by creating new public parks and plazas, and by providing clear and convenient pedestrian connections between new and existing spaces. This Plan envisions that new development on constrained sites will provide smaller publicly accessible, privately maintained plazas and paseos, while larger sites, such as the Century Theaters site, may provide opportunities for larger parks and open spaces.

Big Idea 5: Major Roadways as Functional and Attractive Places

Winchester and Stevens Creek Boulevards are, and will remain, the major roadways within the Urban Village. However, this Plan envisions a transformation of these auto-oriented thoroughfares into exciting and comfortable places of interest and a framework for the Urban Village's evolving street life. The Santana Row/Valley Fair Urban Village Plan maintains the existing through-lanes on Winchester and Stevens Creek Boulevards, while integrating enhanced pedestrian amenities, such as wider sidewalks and enhanced crosswalks, and providing bicycle connectivity along Winchester Boulevard. Plazas and paseos connecting off of these roadways will further enhance the right-of-way environment.