

MEMORANDUM

DATE November 18, 2015

TO Andrea Ouse, Community Development Director
Mark Hoffheimer, Senior Planner
City of Vallejo

FROM Andrew Hill

SUBJECT Narrative Description of the Preferred Scenario for the Vallejo General Plan Update

Andrea and Mark:

The Preferred Scenario outlines a citywide vision for Vallejo built with ideas that community members contributed at a series of workshops, online activities, and outreach events this year. The vision is anchored by a vibrant downtown and waterfront, which together are a focus of local life and a regional tourist attraction. Strong job centers south of downtown around Solano Avenue, on Mare Island, and along central Sonoma Boulevard north of Redwood Street provide good jobs for local residents and employees from the wider region. Thriving regional retail and entertainment attractions are located at the intersection of the Interstate-80 and Highway 37. A network of neighborhood corridors link these key destinations, supporting safe, livable residential neighborhoods. At some key intersections along these corridors and in residential areas, “village centers” with shops and services catering to the daily needs of residents act as neighborhood focal points

This memo describes the major points of the vision, focusing on key areas of the city. The memo outlines the vision for the core area of the city, the employment districts, the residential neighborhoods and corridors, and the gateways to Vallejo.

The Preferred Scenario Map, attached, shows the proposed land use pattern.

CORE AREA

Downtown

- Vibrant downtown Vallejo is a destination for locals and visitors alike.
- A variety of new housing added on York Street, Georgia Street and Virginia Street, including market rate condominiums, live/work units for creative professionals and senior housing. Some surface parking lots on York and Virginia would be developed with mixed-use buildings, and there would be redevelopment of existing buildings on Georgia Street.

- New development downtown preserves and enhances the area's historic character, with compatible and complementary design. Buildings are typically 3 to 5 stories high, with ground floor retail, restaurants, and professional offices. Housing units are located on the upper stories.
- Larger parcels on York or Virginia Streets could host a college campus or student union downtown.
- The historic Empress Theatre anchors a dynamic downtown arts and entertainment district, celebrating local arts and culture.
- Workers, residents, and students activate the downtown area seven days a week, providing the critical mass to support a "cafe culture" and technology access via enhanced fiber and broadband infrastructure, sparking innovation and entrepreneurship.
- The downtown is enhanced as an arts & entertainment district, anchored by the Empress Theater.

Waterfront

- The waterfront is Vallejo's distinctive gem: a treasure for locals and tourists.
- Waterfront promenade extends from South Vallejo, north to River Park and White Slough, offering opportunities for strolling, jogging, skating and cycling. Pause points with seating are provided at particularly scenic spots. As it runs through the Central Waterfront, the promenade connects a series of public green spaces with recreational amenities for families and children.
- Independence Park, south of the Ferry Building, has open space for kite flying and other informal activities, as well as picnic spaces for families, playscapes for children, and public art or monuments and interpretive signage showcasing the City's proud military and maritime history.
- Service Club Area (the green north of the Ferry Building) continues as an open space available for festivals, events, and informal play. Active, family
- In the Northern Waterfront, open space areas along Harbor Way will provide a setting for recreation and possible music and entertainment as well as a visual amenity with interpretive features for scenic recreation.
- A series of linkages connect the waterfront with the downtown area, including the Maine Street extension, the existing Vallejo Station Paseo, the Georgia Street extension and the anticipated Capital Street extension. Together with an enhanced street furnishings (lighting, banners, etc.), these facilitate pedestrian circulation and visual links between the waterfront and downtown. .
- Commercial development, such as office, retail and visitor serving uses, adjacent to the parking structure on Santa Clara Street and across from the bus terminal, bringing commuters, tourists and business visitors to the area and helping to connect the Ferry Building with downtown Vallejo.

Building heights step down closer to the waterfront to ensure that waterfront open spaces remain sunny and open.

- Between Maine and Capital Streets, a cluster of mixed use residential and retail buildings help connect the waterfront with downtown Vallejo. Multi-family and condominium development grouped around public spaces, with retail and restaurant uses reinforce a waterfront and downtown area for live, work and play.
- The Southern Waterfront, west of Mare Island Way between Maine Street and Solano Street, retains the flexibility to have a mix of uses. This could include multi-family or student housing, corporate or educational campus. Open space along the waterfront, including a boat launch, will be a hallmark of any development proposal.

JOB CENTERS

South of Downtown around Solano Avenue

- Important local employers like Meyer and Petrochem anchor this thriving employment district south of Curtola Parkway in the area adjacent to downtown Vallejo.
- Development with views of Lake Dalwigk and the surrounding open space build on the strengths already in place.
- Attracting new commercial and light industry uses to the area will facilitate a transition to fewer heavy industrial uses over time and bring activities that are more compatible with residences to the north and south.
- The ORCEM/Vallejo Marine Terminal site is shown as Commercial-Light Industry, which could accommodate a range of uses from R&D facilities and light manufacturing to hotels and tourist attractions. However, the land use and zoning for this site are pending Council's upcoming decision on the development currently proposed.

Mare Island

- North Mare Island is a major employment center with over a million square feet industrial, commercial, office R&D and warehouse uses.
- Central Mare Island returns to serve as a substantial employment center, home to light industrial development, and some heavy industrial uses, which utilizes the existing buildings new, well-designed infill buildings of compatible size and function.

- The historic core contains a concentration of civic, retail and office-commercial, and light industrial activities that reuse some of Mare Island's most distinctive historic structures. The area also provides a major public open space along the waterfront, to be used for celebrations, festivals, and tourist attractions like historic interpretation of ships and submarines, and museums. In addition, it features a water connection between the Historic Core and downtown.
- The area south of the historic core serves as a substantial employment center, with a mix of maritime industrial uses and other compatible industrial and commercial uses.
- A waterfront promenade and plaza is an important component of the historic core, offering beautiful views of downtown Vallejo across Mare Island Strait and scenic connections on foot or by bicycle.
- Touro University has expanded its presence on the island, operating educational and administrative facilities, as well as student housing and support services on its campus, in new and rehabilitated buildings.
- Two residential villages composed of 1,400 units in a mix of housing types offer an exceptional quality of life to residents of the island.
- Southern and western portions of the island offer an array of recreational opportunities, including an 18-hole golf course, ball fields, and natural open spaces for hiking and bird watching. There are parks throughout the island for Vallejoans and visitors to enjoy.

Sonoma-Broadway

- A mix of new commercial and office uses complement the existing retail uses along this section of Sonoma Boulevard, taking advantage of the regional connectivity provided by SR 29.
- Kaiser Permanente and Soltrans anchor a cluster of important employers along Broadway, and an enhanced Sereno Transit Center provides easy access for commuters to the area.

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND CORRIDORS

Residential Neighborhoods

- The basic land use pattern of Vallejo's residential neighborhoods would be preserved and enhanced.
- Primarily single-family neighborhoods, such as those found most often on the east side of town, would continue to be characterized predominantly by single-family detached homes.

- Central neighborhoods in the more historic parts of town would remain largely characterized by single-family homes; however, the plan would acknowledge and support the current mix of housing types in these neighborhoods, which include some converted duplexes and fourplexes as well as some smaller scale apartment buildings compatible with the traditional residential neighborhood character.

Network of Neighborhood Corridors

- A network of mixed-use corridors connects Vallejo's neighborhoods with key destinations around town, including the downtown/waterfront area and key employment centers.
- The corridors act as neighborhood "main streets," with shops, services, and housing for local residents. As shown on the map, they run along: Central Sonoma Boulevard (from Curtola to Redwood), Springs Road, Solano Avenue, Tennessee Street (west of I-80), Tuolumne Street, Broadway Street, and Sacramento Street (near White Slough).
- The corridors run within a half mile of some of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the city, putting local residents within easy walking and bicycling distance. This development pattern would help create walkable, livable neighborhoods where people do not have to drive if they do not want to.
- Each of these neighborhood corridors is a "complete street," with wide sidewalks, street furniture and trees, bicycle lanes, crosswalks and bus turnouts to make it easy, safe and enjoyable to get around by any mode of transportation.
- The neighborhood corridors not only enhance connectivity within Vallejo but also serve as destinations in their own right. Neighbors meet on their local main street as they run their daily errands or on their way to and from school or work.

Village Centers

- At key intersections along the Neighborhood Corridors – such as the intersection of Sereno Drive and Broadway Street or the intersection of Springs Road and Oakwood Avenue – village centers with shops and services catering to the daily needs of residents act as neighborhood focal points.
- Similarly, village centers at Mini Drive and Sonoma Boulevard, Lemon Street and Sonoma Boulevard, and Magazine Street and Sonoma Boulevard would serve the everyday needs of local residents.

White Slough Mixed Use District

- Mixed-use development fronting the west side of Sonoma Boulevard and Redwood Street, south of White Slough complements existing development in the area and completes the neighborhood corridor connection along Sacramento Street and Redwood Street from the Terrace Park neighborhood to Sonoma Boulevard.
- Closer to White Slough, clustered townhomes provide residents with scenic views and open space for children to play.

GATEWAYS

Cooke Site and Fairgrounds of the Future

- Development on the Cooke site north of Redwood Parkway on the east side of I-80, together with development on the west side of the freeway helps build a connection between several of Vallejo's key regional attractions - the retail center at Gateway Plaza and the existing and planned mixed-use entertainment attractions at the Fairgrounds (known as Solano 360) and Six Flags.
- Attractive commercial-office development on the western portion of the Cooke site is visible from the freeway, and together with other development on both sides of the freeway further north toward Highway 37, strengthens sense of place at this important regional gateway to Vallejo.
- On the eastern portion of the Cooke site, residential development acknowledges the site's natural wetland and topological features, allowing for a mix of housing types that transition to the surrounding single-family neighborhoods.
- On the western side of the freeway, attractive multi-family housing development on vacant and underutilized parcels also contributes to a sense of place.
- Together commercial-office and residential development in this area of the city brings more patrons to the planned restaurant, retail, and entertainment uses on the fairgrounds site, supporting the vision described in the Solano 360 Specific Plan.

Columbus/Callaghan Area

- Land use designations to support and enhance this thriving area of the city amplify its importance as a regional retail and commercial destination.
- Commercial uses in Gateway Plaza encourage development of regional retail and hotel uses.

- A mix of uses on the east side support growth of Solano Community College and help transition from regional mall to the existing single-family neighborhoods.
- Continued growth in this area, including new mixed use development, helps support more frequent transit connections with downtown Vallejo and other areas of the city.
- The Lee site, on the north side of Columbus Parkway, could be the location of a low-rise, well-designed commercial development appropriate to the natural beauty of the surrounding hills. This could include retail, office or hotel development.

Northern Gateway

- Marquee development, attractive architecture and branded wayfinding signal entry into Vallejo at the border with American Canyon.
- Rancho Square Mall at Sonoma Boulevard and Mini Drive is transformed into a mixed-use retail-residential development accommodating a regional bus rapid transit station. Shops and restaurants here cater to local residents, transit users, and visitors passing through on the way to/from Napa.
- Existing retail development in the large triangular area between Sonoma Boulevard and Broadway Street north of Highway 37 is complemented with new commercial-office development, such as a corporate campus or a hotel.

South Vallejo

- The southern portion of Sonoma Boulevard from California State University Maritime Academy (Maritime Academy) to the employment district south of downtown (McLane Street) is a residential corridor, with commercial nodes (i.e. village centers) at Magazine and Lemon Streets to supply neighborhood-oriented retail and services.
- The underlying zoning allows for community gardens and smaller-scale urban farms where local residents can grow fresh, healthy food for their families.
- Greenway along the water provides continuous multi-use trail connecting Maritime Academy with the downtown/central waterfront area and Mare Island, via the Causeway.