

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

ADDENDUM TO
COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1 SUMMARY
Housing Element and General Plan Update

>>> <davidsuder@aol.com> 5/30/2007 9:20 PM >>>

Dear Mr. Wolcott,

We attended the May 24, 2007 Housing Needs Community Workshop #1. Please include the following comments in the workshop report.

Sites Distant from Downtown Davis (H6, H7, H9, H10 and H11)

Often-stated goals that are frequently heard in Davis - from citizens, City Councilmembers, and the business community - include:

- Support our downtown area.
- Maintain the downtown area as the center of the community.
- Maintain the nature of Davis as a bicycle-friendly (and pedestrian-friendly) city.
- Reduce traffic.
- Reduce vehicle emissions.
- Preserve agricultural land.
- Maintain our small-town character and a sense of community.

Probably the most important planning principle that will help achieve all of these goals - or at least minimize the defeat of them - is to maintain a compact urban form by adding new housing as closer to, rather than farther from, the downtown area. The antitheses of this principle are sprawl and leapfrog development.

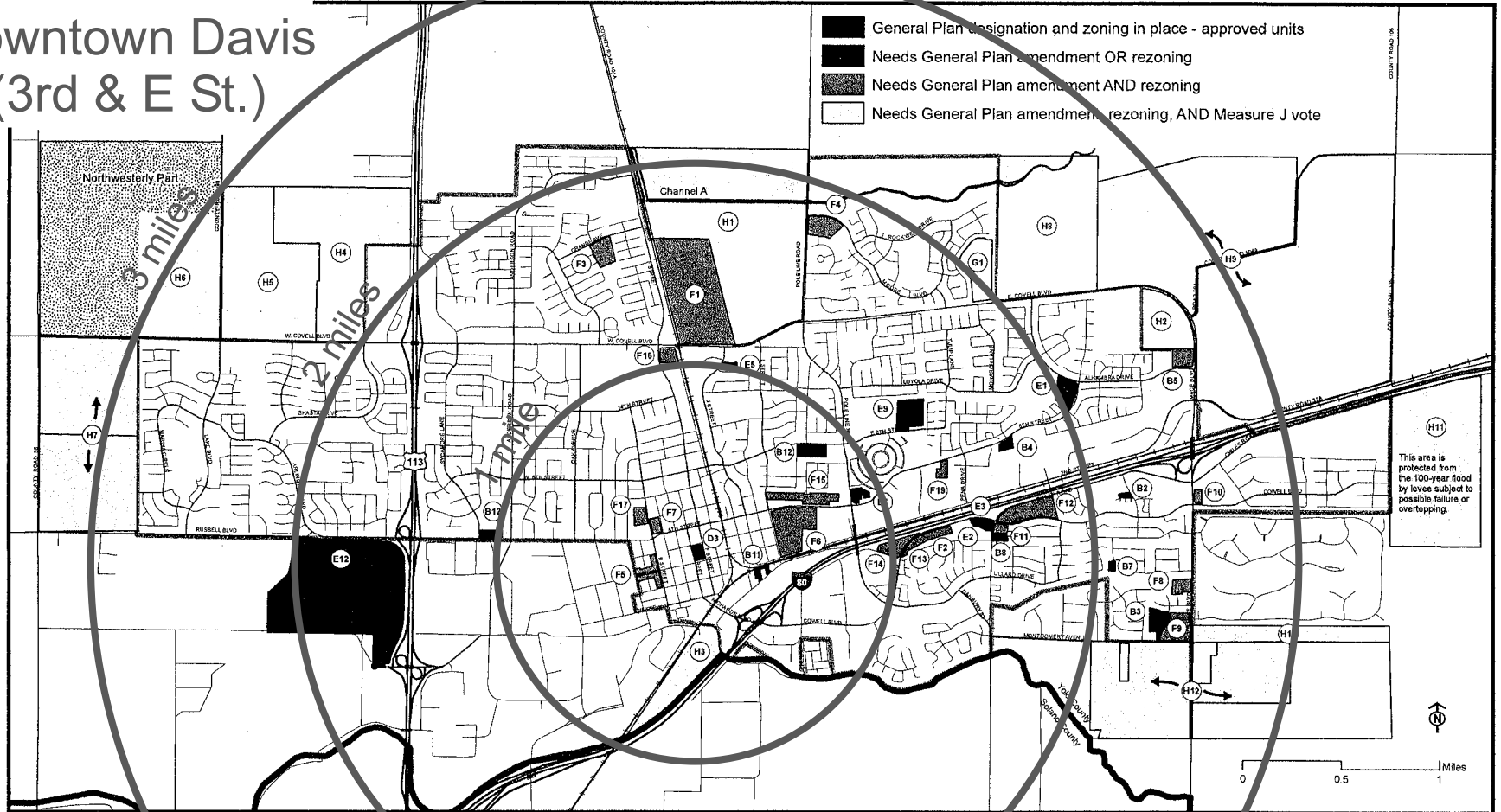
For this reason, it surprises me that the City would even consider sites H6, H7, H9, H10 and H11 (as indicated in the figure on Page C-4 of the workshop background handout materials). As indicated by the attached figure, each of these sites is wholly or partially beyond a three-mile radius of the center of downtown Davis (using the intersection of 3rd and F streets as the center point). Actual travel routes from these sites to downtown all exceed three miles, and the travel routes from the more distant portions of these sites approach or exceed four miles. Simply put, there are no locations around Davis that can claim to be even partially adjacent to our City boundaries that are farther from downtown than these five sites.

While three to four miles is well within the range of enthusiastic or committed cyclists, it is clearly beyond the typical range of bicycle travel for residents who are not so committed. It is also quite unlikely that families with small children, or elderly adults (other than bicycle enthusiasts) would travel to downtown Davis from sites H6, H7, H9, H10 or H11 by bicycle on a regular basis, if at all. Even for a healthy adult, a three-mile bicycle ride on a 100-degree summer afternoon is not a pleasant undertaking.

Walking to downtown from the aforementioned sites is also unlikely for most residents. While they may chose long walks for exercise or pleasure, few residents are likely to undertake regularly a three-to-four mile walk to visit downtown merchants or restaurants. A typical walking pace for a healthy adult is about three miles per hour, so a walking trip to downtown would take at least an hour each direction for residents living at any of these sites. It is clearly an unrealistic expectation that many would choose to do so on a regular basis.

Assuming that an efficient and reliable public transportation system would be built to service any of these sites, it is still likely that most trips from outlying areas of Davis will be made by car. Sites H6, H7 and H10 are all separated from the downtown area by major freeways, and the logical motor vehicle travel routes from any of these sites to downtown include many of our most heavily-traveled roads and overpasses: Mace, Russell, Covell and Richards. It will probably be many years before any additional overpasses are constructed.

Distances from Downtown Davis (3rd & E St.)



Potential Residential Sites That May Count Toward Regional Housing Needs Allocation and 1% Growth Guideline

Date: May 14, 2007



In the case of Sites H6 and H7, access to downtown Davis would require travel on Covell or Russell Boulevard. The Covell/Hwy 113 overpass is already at Level of Service 'F' for portions of many weekday afternoons. Compounding the problem is the overflowing of the left turn pockets on Covell for traffic entering Hwy 113 north or south, thus restricting through travel. This occurs on every weekday. On some occasions, traffic backs up into the intersection on east side of the freeway (at the on/off ramps). Development of sites H4 and H5 would also exacerbate this problem.

Traffic from site H7 to central Davis would travel on Russell Boulevard. Although existing traffic levels on Russell are acceptable, the EIR for the university's West Village project indicates that residents of that project will generate 24,500 new vehicle trips per day. Many of those trips will follow Russell Boulevard. (Although the university has pledged not to connect directly to Russell Boulevard, a significant portion of West Village traffic will still travel on Russell east of Hwy 113 to reach downtown Davis and points east.)

It is important to realize that not only the distances from these proposed sites to downtown are of concern; there is also the issue of their distance from one another. Even today, our city stretches about 6 miles in the east-west direction. Travel between the extreme east and west neighborhoods (e.g., between Stonegate and Mace Ranch) takes 15 minutes when traffic is light. As the travel times between neighborhoods increase, Davis will likewise increasingly feel not like one community, but several.

All of the sites listed above, as well as H5, H4, H8, H3 and H12 are in agricultural production. It should also be noted that significant portions of sites H4, H5 and H6 lie within "special flood hazard areas" as depicted on Flood Insurance Rate Map 0604230560D (FEMA, revised 2002).

Development of Sites H6, H7, H9, H10 and H11 would be contrary to all of the oft-stated goals cited above. To develop those sites would virtually guarantee the further decentralization of the city. If we are serious about achieving, or minimizing the decline of, these goals, Sites H6, H7, H9, H10 and H11 should be eliminated from further consideration.

Site H6 (proposed site of Oeste Ranch)

We are well aware that H6 is not merely a hypothetical site, but rather represents the proposed Oeste Ranch project, a 2,100-unit, 640-acre senior housing subdivision similar to Sun City. We believe that it would be wiser and more Davis-like to develop moderate-size condominium-style senior housing (perhaps with a food service option) within walking distance of downtown. This would encourage residents of such developments to become integrated into the social and economic fabric of Davis - rather than relegating them to outlying areas from which trips to downtown may be difficult or impossible for some.

Specific Question Related to Labeling of the Figure on p. C-4

The inner portion of Site H6 is indicated as "Needs General Plan amendment, rezoning, AND Measure J vote." However, the outer portion of the same site is indicated as "Need General Plan amendment AND rezoning." The implied difference, therefore, is that the outer portion would not require a Measure J vote, but the inner portion would. What is the difference between the two portions of this site that would allow development of the outer portion without a Measure J vote?

Site E12 (proposed site of West Village)

The City, unfortunately, has no jurisdiction over this project. However, the project as currently planned will have significant impacts on the City. The EIR for the the university's Long Range Development Plan indicates that the project will house about 4300 residents, generate 24,500 new vehicle trips per day, and will create numerous "significant and unavoidable" impacts. Many of those significant impacts could be eliminated if the university were to house as many students as possible on the central campus. Likewise, many of the significant impacts could be greatly reduced if the location and configuration of the project

was changed to a north-south footprint, centered on Hutchison Boulevard (even without changing the size or population of the development). The City Council recognized the reduction of impacts that would accompany such a change, and in 2003 specifically requested of the university that these changes be made. Given that the impacts of West Village and other new residential developments will be cumulative, it would be appropriate to at least incorporate and reiterate those principles and requests in the General Plan Housing Element.

Site H11 (Covell Village)

Given the defeat of Measure J in 2005, one would hope that residential development on this property - if any - that is incorporated into the General Plan would specify that only a portion of the property be developed for residential use, and that a significant area of open space be preserved within that site.

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