

**ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING COMMISSION
SUMMARY OF THE JANUARY 22, 2014 STUDY SESSION
SAN ANTONIO PRECISE PLAN**

EPC Deliberations:

Overall Input: Through straw motions on key precise plan topics, the EPC supported:

- A mix of two draft development alternatives – the Parkways and Central Green alternatives. One Commissioner supported the Streetlife alternative.
- Bicycle Option B.
- EPC input mixed and matched features from different alternatives. A majority of the EPC supported specific changes identified for key precise plan topics below.

Topic-Specific Input:

Open Space, Active Frontages & Primary Pedestrian Routes

The majority of EPC liked the large central open space in the Central Green alternative with open space locations away from major streets. The EPC preferred the Parkways strategy for pedestrian access points and direct north/south and east/west connections through San Antonio Center. By straw motion, the majority of EPC supported:

- *Open Space & Active Frontages* - modify the Central Green alternative to:
 - Add linear green space between the main central green/ open space and Showers Dr. to improve the balance and distribution of open space in area (7-0).
 - Add active frontage locations (5-2), including the following in order of priority (6-1):
 - Along the North/south extension of Pacchetti Way within SAC;
 - Along portions of Showers Dr. and SAC frontage on California St.; and
 - On the corners of San Antonio Rd./El Camino Real and San Antonio Rd./California St.
- *Primary Pedestrian Routes* – Use pedestrian routes, access points and crossings from the Parkways alternative (5-1-1).

The EPC discussed the challenge of activating and improving the interior of SAC while trying to avoid having the Center “turn its back” to public streets as well as the need to find a balance of space for congregation and shopping. Some EPC members raised concerns about the amount of bicycle and pedestrian traffic that could occur on Pacchetti Way, the feasibility of adding so many priority active frontages and putting too much focus on the interior of SAC. Some EPC members also preferred an additional or alternate priority frontage and/or pedestrian connection along Showers Drive. One commissioner supported some additional active frontages accompanied by less active frontage area on the north side of California Street.

Bicycle Options

By straw motion, the majority of the EPC supported Bicycle Option B with the following changes:

- Remove bicycle lanes on the El Camino Real frontage of San Antonio Center (6-1);
- Use the Option C crossing of San Antonio Rd., connecting Fayette Ave. to the Hetch Hetchy bicycle route (7-0); and
- Study separated bicycle lanes on Showers Drive as long as no road diet is needed (6-1).

The EPC supported separated facilities through San Antonio Center to provide off-street connectivity for bicyclists who do not feel comfortable on major public streets. The majority of the EPC did not support road diets to construct separated facilities on public streets, particularly given objectives to retain regional commercial uses. One commissioner supported keeping the option open for bicycle facilities on El Camino Real and more substantial changes to Showers Drive to improve the pedestrian and bicycling environments.

Land Use Priorities

San Antonio Center Land Uses

The EPC expressed a refined vision for San Antonio Center that retains regional/big-box shopping as a fundamental feature of the area. The EPC supported retaining at least the existing amount of regional/big-box commercial uses but not planning for additional regional/big-box commercial uses. By straw motion, the EPC supported the Parkways (6-1) alternative to meet this objective and add desired mixed-use residential and limited office development to SAC. The EPC altered the Parkways alternative for land use priorities north of California Street.

Land Uses Near Transit

By straw motion (7-0), the EPC supported different land uses near the three main transit facilities in the area:

- Mix of residential and office near Caltrain, based on the Central Green alternative;
- Predominantly regional commercial uses near Showers Drive, through a mix of the Parkways and Central Green alternatives; and
- Office uses near El Camino Real, based on the Central Green alternative.

The majority of the EPC felt strongly about the mix of land uses near Caltrain, where office was supported because it leverages and supports Caltrain service in the area and residential development was also desired to transition to the existing Crossings neighborhood. Two EPC members thought specific polling of the Greater San Antonio Community Association was needed to understand desired land uses and heights given conflicting public input.

Building Heights & Scale

The EPC discussed building heights based on the Central Green alternative. By straw motion, the EPC supported a general cap of 6 stories throughout the area (5-2), in locations where up to a maximum height of 8 stories is allowed by the General Plan. Two commissioners supported height flexibility to achieve specific objectives. After further discussion, the EPC amended their input to support:

- Providing a typical height cap of 6 stories, with height exceptions considered on a case-by-case basis only for stellar proposals with significant public benefits that are easily accessible to most people (7-0).

The EPC also supported the following additional changes to building height maximums in the Central Green alternative:

- Height maximum of 3 to 4 stories immediately north and south of the central green space (7-0);
- Height maximum of 3 to 4 stories on the northwest corner of California St. and Pacchetti Way (7-0); and
- Height maximum of 4 to 6 stories north of California St. along San Antonio Rd. (7-0).

Precise Plan Programs & Administration

Although not specifically addressed in the draft alternatives, the EPC also provided input on the following two topics.

Tiered FAR Structure - The EPC unanimously supported studying a tiered FAR program, to consider ways to address community needs and objectives for open space, affordable housing, small/neighborhood-serving business, circulation improvements.

Shared Parking - This topic was raised during the public comment period and by Commissioners. The EPC unanimously supported studying shared parking options closely, including for structured/underground parking. Commissioners indicated that parking strategies in the precise plan should ensure the area is not over-parked and any parking program is equitable to existing and future businesses. One commission noted shared parking could be a potential public benefit. Another commissioner identified a parking in-lieu program as an option for the area.