

## **Transit Corridors Plan Mixed-Use to Residential Transition Measures**

The Transit Corridors Plan (TCP) includes a number of techniques to help integrate new development into existing neighborhoods and reduce the impacts on residents.

### Public Review Process

Every new building constructed in the Transit Corridors Plan area will require a public meeting and neighborhood notification. This is an improvement over current requirements, where the approval process does not always trigger neighborhood notification. This will be implemented through the Zoning Code Update. For each new project, the Zoning Code will require analysis of the transition from a new project to any adjacent low-density residential property. For each project, staff will analyze the project to make sure the applicant has considered adjacent residential properties and make recommendations as needed. This would include things like building design, privacy impacts, and exterior lighting. Staff will not be able to recommend approval for projects that do not implement transition measures. The Planning Commission will have to make a legal finding of fact related to the transition, which will bring attention to this issue and make applicants aware that this is a priority for the community.

### Building Design

The TCP includes two different tools to ensure quality design: Development Standards and Design Guidelines. The Development Standards are requirements that set the maximum building envelope and the basic form of buildings. The Design Guidelines address how buildings should be oriented on the site and the quality of the architecture. Together, they will provide guidance to developers on the community's expectations and to the Planning Commission on whether to approve a project.

### **Development Standards**

The TCP includes three specific requirements that will aid in the transition from new projects to existing low-density residential properties:

- **New setback requirement:** The current Municipal Code does not require any setbacks in the C- Commercial Zoning District, which applies to San Bruno Avenue and the majority of El Camino Real. As a result, it would be possible for a developer to build a new building on the property line up to 50 feet tall, immediately adjacent to single family homes. The TCP proposes a new rear setback requirement of 10 feet in the entire Plan Area.
- **Stepback requirement:** A stepback is a development standard that requires the upper stories of buildings to be stepped back, or set in, farther than the lower floors to reduce the apparent mass and bulk of the building. Through the community input process, the required stepback adjacent to existing low-density residential uses was increased. The version of the TCP before the City Council on February 12, 2013 requires a 15 foot stepback above the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor when the project is adjacent to low density residential uses.
- **Graduated FAR requirement:** FAR or "floor area ratio" establishes the maximum permitted building area as a multiple of the area of the lot. Currently, the Municipal Code does not set FAR requirements within the TCP area. For sites greater than 20,000 square feet, the Plan proposes no FAR limit, with the building envelope being limited by height, setback, and stepback. On sites less than 20,000 square feet, the Plan proposes an FAR of 2.0. Thus, projects on smaller sites could not be built to the maximum height

and would be small in scale, minimizing the impact on adjacent residential properties. Projects on larger sites that can take full advantage of the maximum height would have sufficient lot area to incorporate appropriate design measures to create sensitive transitions to adjacent residential properties. Currently, there are a limited number of parcels of 20,000 square feet or more within the Plan Area. Therefore, to achieve maximum buildout, applicants would likely have to do significant land assembly. This requirement is applied throughout the Character Areas.

The development standards in the TCP will be integrated into the Municipal Code through the Comprehensive Zoning Code Update.

### **Design Guidelines**

There are four specific Design Guidelines that relate specifically to the transition from new projects to existing housing.

A2-1 The design of new development should respect the scale, form, and development pattern of existing residential neighborhoods surrounding/adjoining the Transit Corridors Area.

A2-2 Ensure the transition between high-density development and lower density development, including surrounding existing residential neighborhoods, be carefully considered in site design and architectural massing. Reduce the scale of buildings by stepping back the upper-stories, consistent with the Development Standards in this chapter when abutting single family residences.

A3-2 Step down building heights along the secondary frontage and rear of buildings to reduce impact on adjacent properties. Stepping back upper stories will also minimize shadows cast on public amenities and lessens privacy concerns with adjoining lots/neighbors.

A7-4 Site, direct, and/or shield light fixtures to prevent light pollution through glare or light spillage.

### Approved Land Uses

The Transit Corridors Plan would not allow new industrial, auto repair, or storage/warehouse uses anywhere within the Plan Area. These uses are associated with traffic, spillover parking, and noise concerns and do not contribute to the transit-oriented focus of the Plan Area. This will result in a positive benefit for residents in adjacent areas that will not have exposure to these types of businesses. New vehicle sales would only be allowed on El Camino Real if the project meets high architectural design standards.

### Parking and Transportation

The TCP includes recommendations for parking management and proposed parking requirements. Each new development project will still be required to provide on-site parking at a rate that has worked in other transit-oriented development areas. For example, new development Downtown would be required to provide 3 spaces / 1,000 square feet of floor area. This can be compared to the current requirement for retail uses of 4 spaces / 1,000 square feet. There is a potential for spillover parking impacts with reduced parking requirements, so the Plan proposes expansion of the City's Residential Permit Parking system to address this concern. Residential permit parking programs are successful in many communities and operate through

issuance of permits to residents. The Police Department can then do enforcement if non-residents are parking in the neighborhoods.

Permit parking will work along with other programs, such as Transportation Demand Management (TDM), that will require large employers to offer incentives for employees to take transit to work. Additionally, the pedestrian and bicycle improvements proposed in the Plan should benefit existing residents and help transition new residents and employees into the neighborhood.