



ENVISION CONTRA COSTA 2040

El Sobrante Meeting #2: Guiding Principles

Elks Lodge #1251
3931 San Pablo Dam Road, El Sobrante, CA 94803
Wednesday, September 4th, 2019

The second community meeting for El Sobrante residents as part of Envision Contra Costa 2040 took place on Wednesday, September 4th, 2019, from 6:30 to 8:30 PM at Elks Lodge #1251 on San Pablo Dam Road. The purpose of this workshop was to collect feedback on draft guiding principles, which articulate the values, priorities, and aspirations for the future of El Sobrante shared by community members at the first community meeting. The guiding principles are organized into five categories: Community Character, Mobility, Housing, Recreation and Nature, and Safety and Resiliency. Some community members expressed desire for a sixth category: Sustainability. In addition, participants were asked to share ideas for potential policies, actions, and other strategies that support those guiding principles.

County staff and consultants facilitated the workshop and 15 residents attended and participated. After a presentation about the Envision Contra Costa 2040 process, community members broke into three small groups to discuss guiding principles, policies, actions, and other strategies specific to El Sobrante. Input and ideas are summarized below. Detailed notes from the small group discussions, as well as two comment cards submitted at the workshop, are attached to this summary.

Community Character

- Support small farms, backyard farming, and a farmer's market or farm stand for local growers.
- Encourage diverse, locally-serving and locally-owned businesses or smaller chains with practical goods and services (e.g., a grocery store with fresh, high quality food) so residents do not need to travel to other communities to shop.
- Attract businesses that also provide meeting spaces for the community to draw people downtown, like coffee shops or grocery stores with seating and eating areas.
- Encourage new businesses that are oriented to families and children.
- Ensure that new businesses are developed at a human scale.
- Provide more signage, like welcome signs and gateways with iconic imagery.
- Establish an arts district with rotating public art and live/work studio spaces for artists.
- Provide incentives for property owners to improve facades along main routes, according to a set of community design guidelines. Ensure that these are incentives rather than requirements.
- Encourage mixed uses along corridors, with ground-floor commercial space and housing on upper floors.
- Provide a community center in Downtown El Sobrante.

Mobility

- Improve sidewalk connectivity on main roads, and implement other improvements that encourage walking to school and outdoor play.
- Prioritize improvements to pedestrian safety on San Pablo Dam Road and Appian Way.

- Construct a bike path on San Pablo Dam Road that connects to the Bay Trail.
- Improve connections to the Richmond Ferry terminal.
- Improve transit and paratransit connectivity, especially between El Sobrante and other communities.
- Provide highly visible speed limit and wayfinding signs.
- Provide trees and landscaping in street medians.
- Employ universal design principles in new transportation projects to improve access for differently abled people and those with mobility challenges.
- Improve transparency from the Public Works Department regarding local projects, especially when amenities that the community prioritized are not ultimately provided. Improved transparency can be achieved with better coordination between Public Works and other departments (like Conservation and Development).
- Build from the 2001 Downtown El Sobrante Transportation and Land Use Plan—the content is closely related to the General Plan Update and most of it is still relevant.

Housing

- Require that new housing development use sustainable building materials and practices.
- Prioritize affordable housing.
- Identify areas for tiny houses and other alternative housing models (like an arts district with live/work studios for artists). Allow more flexibility and mixed uses in these areas.
- Balance new housing with more open spaces or open space improvements (e.g., trails).
- Encourage new housing to include community gathering spaces.

Recreation and Nature

- Improve access to the creek, perhaps with a creek-side boardwalk trail, lighting, and other safety features.
- Preserve more land for parks, especially around creeks.
- Provide outdoor play areas for children and families like parks and pocket parks that are accessible via bike lanes and sidewalks.
- Improve recreational access, specifically for bikes, all the way around the reservoir.

Safety and Resiliency

- Implement flood control through green infrastructure projects (e.g., rain gardens).
- Develop a plan for disasters that includes disaster resiliency training programs for residents.
- Provide fire roads that double as horse and hiking trails.
- Ensure that fire risk mitigation does not come at the expense of natural resources and beauty.
- Provide more health and emergency services (like fire stations) nearby and that are easily accessible.
- Identify areas where the community can shelter in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

Sustainability (proposed guiding principle)

- Reduce regulatory barriers to individual energy production (like only allowing wind turbines on properties that are 1 acre or larger).
- Implement a zero-waste plan.
- Reduce regulatory barriers for “off the grid” living.



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COMMENT CARD

Date: 9-4-19

Please fill out this form if you have any comments about the General Plan, Zoning Code, and/or Climate Action Plan Updates. (Name and contact information are optional).

Name: Cindy Sweet

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Phone / Email: cindysweet29@hotmail.com

Comments (Use back if necessary): _____

There was a 2001 ^{el Sobrante} transportation
+ land use plan — one point was
bike lanes on S.P. Dam Rd.

Now it's 20 years later, the
SP Dam Rd is being completely re-done
and there are still no bike lanes
20 years later!!

Why do we even have these
Plans if they are never implemented?;



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COMMENT CARD

Date: 9/4/19

Please fill out this form if you have any comments about the General Plan, Zoning Code, and/or Climate Action Plan Updates. (Name and contact information are optional).

Name: Cindy Franks

Affiliation: El Sob Planning & Zoning Committee

Address: 3050 Black Feather Dr

Phone / Email: 510 691 3697 510 691 3697
510 691 3697
cfrank@cmfg010@yahoo.com

Comments (Use back if necessary):

Please reference the 2001 El Sobrante
Transportation & Land Use Plan
(which I can send you.)

Many of the ideas therein
remain great options &
are in alignment w/
topics discussed today.

* - unpretentious \neq derelict

↳ wish to express the idea that community wishes to improve & have more amenities

* - "institutions" - what does it mean? That term has negative connotations. Amenities instead

- full service - should mean commercially diverse

↳ don't lose sight of need to be attractive

↳ want fresh food, quality food
farmers market

- sidewalks good

Mobility

- better connections to Richmond
Farm)

* - bike path on SPDR connected to
Bay Trail

- ~~plan~~ median landscaping
Trees along streets generally

* - LOTS of good stuff in
2001 Plan. (Chamber of Comm
discussed & liked)

e.g. - bike lanes

- vision statements / guiding principles

- example road profile

- "bold" vision

Housing

- Would like a Community Center ("Mechanics Bank"?)
- protect scenic hill sides
- ★ — encourage mixed use along major corridors
(Commercial on 1st flr, housing above)

Rec

- need bike path, sidewalks, parks
- ★ — "remain" not accurate w/ respect to recreational facilities
- encourage EBRPD & others, to buy more park land
- focus on creeks

Table 2

Community Character

- 1st bullet Pretentious is vague/ambiguous. Perhaps keep but not as the 1st descriptor
- 2nd bullet "Small-town" instead of "suburban"
(suburban connotes a 'bedroom town')
- 3rd bullet "local serving & locally owned businesses"
(local serving could still mean big chain businesses)
- 5th bullet Reduce regulatory barriers to individual energy production.
(e.g. min acreage for wind turbines)
- Some of these ^{exp.} not fitting in "Community character."
Principle — add another?
→ maybe "sustainability"
- Zero waste measures should be explicitly included (maybe in new guiding principle)

Table 2 | MOBILITY

- Better transparency from Public Works re: projects. Why do projects turn out differently than envisioned?

Better coordination

↳ restriping San Pablo Dam Rd. does not include better bike lanes

↳ 3rd bullet should have specific measures like 2nd bullet has.

Define "safer" & "more attractive!"
for example: "improvements to pedestrian safety" on San

Pablo Dam Rd. & Appian
Wy.

Table 2 | HOUSING

- Live/work spaces, particularly
(for artists & artisans
↳ allowing flexibility/mixed use
- add a phrase that includes
affordable housing
- incentives for attractive
façades along main routes
& design guidelines (incentive-
based, not penalizing)

Table 2 / Rec. & Access to Nature

• Add ~~st~~ Statement about increasing access to the creek

~~• Add statement about protecting creek ecosystem (including upstream watershed) as appropriate~~

replace "Enhanced" with "protected"

Table 2 | Safety & Resiliency

- Instead of "retained" access to healthcare, say "established" or "enhanced" (access isn't great currently)
- add statement about Community disaster preparedness training
- Consider fire roads doubling as horse/hiking trails

Community Character

- Small town, small farms/backyard farming
→ farm stand or farmer's market
- Local Biz vs. Large Chains
- Preferably Local or smaller chains
- No need for more (or many) Thrift stores
- Opportunity for many smaller shops
- Would like a Coffee shop/Café.
Trader Joe's, Community spaces.
↳ or whole foods, or organic market
- Human Scale ✓
- Families & Children should be included
↳ Park (Pocket Park) → opportunities for play
- Signage → Character of the Community
(“Welcome to El Sobrante”; Iconic imagery)
- Rebrand → Arts District
- Delete “ameliorate” or use more plain language

Recreation & Nature

- Children & families : Play Areas
- Creekside Boardwalk
- Daylight the creek

Mobility

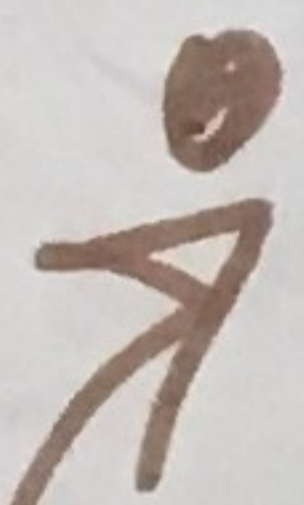
• Replace "San Pablo Dam Road" with "major thoroughfares"

- Sidewalks - too many gaps on main roads
↳ Would like to see more kids outside
- Paratransit connectivity improvement
↳ And Bus transit ↗ between Cities
- Signage - lack of speed limit signs and wayfinding signs
- Address access for differently abled people and those with mobility challenges

Universal Design

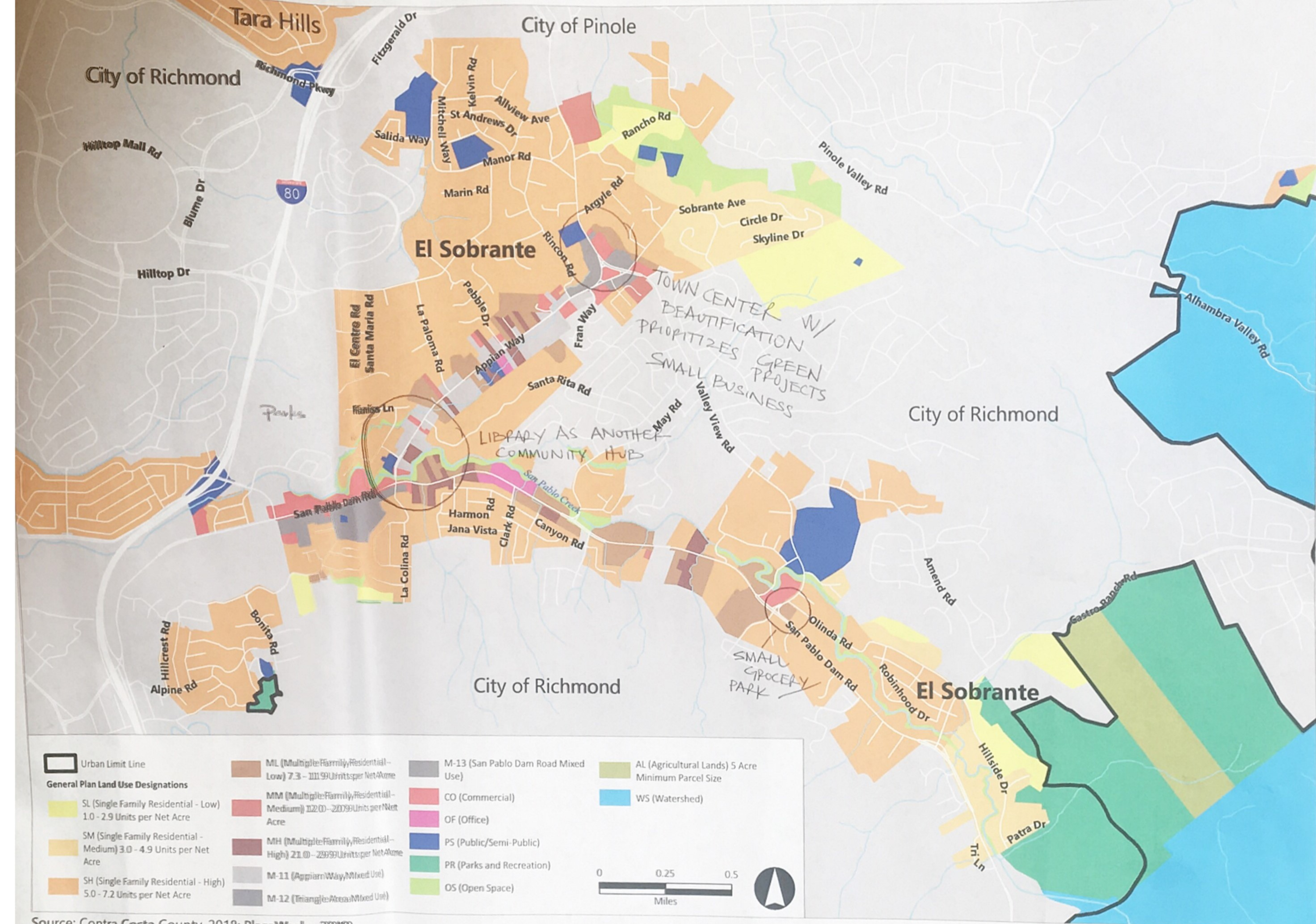
Housing

- Sustainable Building (e.g. Straw Bale)
- Areas for Tiny Houses or alternative housing mo.
- Need more housing balanced with open space
- Bullet Point relates to Community Character → emphasize Community Gathering space.



Safety & Resiliency

- "Should be retained" - strike for "Encourage"
- Flooding (Rain Gardens) ←
- Need to Plan for disasters
- Enable "off-the-grid" living for Built-in resiliency
- Green Infrastructure



Urban Limit Line	ML (Multiple-Family Residential - Low) 7.3 - 111.99 Units per Net Acre	M-13 (San Pablo Dam Road Mixed Use)	AL (Agricultural Lands) 5 Acre Minimum Parcel Size
General Plan Land Use Designations	MM (Multiple-Family Residential - Medium) 12.0 - 20.99 Units per Net Acre	CO (Commercial)	WS (Watershed)
SL (Single Family Residential - Low) 1.0 - 2.9 Units per Net Acre	MH (Multiple-Family Residential - High) 21.0 - 29.99 Units per Net Acre	OF (Office)	
SM (Single Family Residential - Medium) 3.0 - 4.9 Units per Net Acre	M-11 (Appian Way Mixed Use)	PS (Public/Semi-Public)	
SH (Single Family Residential - High) 5.0 - 7.2 Units per Net Acre	M-12 (Triangle Area Mixed Use)	PR (Parks and Recreation)	
		OS (Open Space)	

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Source: Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2019.

