

Meeting of February 12, 2008



Staff Report

RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE GRAND BOULEVARD INITIATIVE (GBI) AND DIRECTING INCORPORATION OF SUCH PRINCIPLES INTO AREA PLAN AMENDMENTS FOR EL CAMINO REAL

Honorable Chair and Board Members:

Summary/Background

The Grand Boulevard Initiative (GBI) is a collaboration of 19 cities, the counties of San Mateo and Santa Clara, local and regional agencies, private business, labor and environmental organizations united to improve the performance, safety and aesthetics of Highway 82 on the Peninsula from Daly City to downtown San Jose. (Details, including the Task Force roster, can be found at <http://www.grandboulevard.net>). The Initiative encompasses 43 miles of El Camino Real, from its northern end beginning in Daly City, where it is known as “Mission Street” and ends in San Jose near the Diridon Station, where it is known as “The Alameda.” The study area boundaries also includes ¼ mile on both sides, forming the “El Camino Real corridor.”

GBI utilizes a committee system to assure widespread participation in developing specifics of the Initiative. The Task Force, made up of elected officials and executive-level staff from regional agencies and Caltrans, sets policies and makes policy decisions. The detail work is performed by the Working Committee, made up of assigned staff members from the member agencies. Councilmember Coralin Feierbach has represented Belmont on the Task Force; Carlos de Melo, Community Development Director, represents Belmont on the Working Committee.

The first step was creating *The Existing Conditions* report, which examined City and County planning documents and identified common themes. These themes became the base for the Guiding Principles. The report can viewed at:

<http://www.elcaminoreborn.com/library/GrandBoulevard/GrandBlvdExistingConditionsReport101006FINAL.pdf>

These Guiding Principles have been approved and recommended by the Grand Boulevard Initiative (GBI) Task Force. They define the GBI vision, that “El Camino Real will achieve its full potential as a place for residents to work, live, shop and play, creating links between communities that promote walking and transit and an improved and meaningful quality of life.” The Principles are written to be general in nature as the Task Force, which sets policy for the Grand Boulevard Initiative, wanted to assure maximum flexibility for each jurisdiction while ensuring that common Principles were put in place. The Guiding Principles are consistent with Belmont Vision Statements associated with a “distinctive community character”, “thriving economy” and “easy mobility” that can be conferred to Belmont’s slice of the El Camino Real.

As such, staff recommends that the Agency adopt the attached Resolution endorsing these Guiding Principles of the GBI and directing their incorporation into future area plan amendments involving El Camino Real within Belmont.

Discussion

The following are the Guiding Principles of the Grand Boulevard Initiative:

1. Target housing and job growth in strategic areas along the corridor
2. Encourage compact mixed-use development an high quality urban design and construction
3. Create a pedestrian-oriented environment and improve streetscapes, ensuring full access to and between public areas and private developments
4. Develop a balanced multimodal corridor to maintain and improve mobility of people and vehicles along the corridor
5. Manage parking assets
6. Provide vibrant public spaces and gathering places
7. Preserve and accentuate unique and desirable community character and the existing quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods
8. Improve safety and public health
9. Strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connections with the corridor
10. Pursue environmentally sustainable and economically viable development patterns

Attachment B describes the full text of the GBI Guiding Principles, including Potential Strategies for each. Note these Strategies are examples only and Belmont (with adoption of this Resolution) will not be committed to performing them as part of this approval.

Next Steps for the GBI

The GBI recently completed its first competition for awards for projects and plans that embody the Guiding Principles. The awards are designed to recognize communities and developers that have taken significant strides towards upgrading elements of the corridor.

In addition, SamTrans, C/CAG and VTA have awarded grants to projects on El Camino. Those programs were independent of the Grand Boulevard Initiative, but it is interesting to note the recipient projects all parallel the Guiding Principles. There seems widespread agreement on the

traits of the Boulevard we seek for the Peninsula and South Bay. GBI staff will continue to seek funding to assist cities and counties with plans and projects that embody the Principles.

General Plan/Vision Statements

Adoption of the GBI Principles Resolution furthers the City's Vision Statement as follows:

Distinctive Community Character

- *We connect with each other in all kinds of gathering places.*

Thriving Economy

- *A charming, vibrant town center is the heart of our civic and economic life.*
- *Our economy prospers with a mix of attractive successful businesses that fit with our community character.*

Easy Mobility

- *We put a priority on getting out of, into, and through town efficiently.*
- *Bicyclists, walkers, and other nondrivers get where they're going easily and safely.*

Fiscal Impact

There are no financial implications to adopting the GBI Guiding Principles.

Public Contact

This matter was placed on the agenda and posted as required by the California Government Code.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Agency adopt the attached Resolution endorsing these Guiding Principles of the GBI and directing their incorporation into future area plan amendments involving El Camino Real within Belmont.

Alternative

1. Provide guidance to staff on revised components of the Resolution regarding the GBI Principles.
2. Take no action.

Attachments

- A. Resolution Adopting GBI Principles
- B. GBI Principles/Potential Strategies (Full Text)

Respectfully submitted,

Carlos de Melo
Community Development Director

Jack R. Crist
Executive Director

Staff Contact:

Carlos de Melo, Community Development Director
(650) 595-7440
cdemelo@belmont.gov

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY RESOLUTION NO. _____

**RESOLUTION OF THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF BELMONT
ENDORING THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE GRAND BOULEVARD
INITIATIVE (GBI) AND DIRECTING INCORPORATION OF SUCH PRINCIPLES
INTO FUTURE AREA PLAN AMENDMENTS INVOLVING EL CAMINO REAL**

WHEREAS, after one year of research and debate the Grand Boulevard Task Force has approved ten Guiding Principals and recommended their adoption by member agencies; and,

WHEREAS, Guiding Principles were formulated as a result of examining the common themes and goals from City and County plans for El Camino Real; and,

WHEREAS, The Guiding Principles will further the Grand Boulevard Vision statement, that “El Camino Real will achieve its full potential as a place for residents to work, live, shop and play, creating links between communities that promote walking and transit and an improved and meaningful quality of life”; and,

WHEREAS, The Guiding Principles will be an integral part of shaping an improved future for El Camino Real in our community, meeting our goals of enhancing neighborhoods and supporting local business; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Redevelopment Agency endorses the Grand Boulevard Guiding Principles as approved and recommended by the Grand Boulevard Task Force and directs incorporation of these Guiding Principles into area plans to be developed that involve El Camino Real within the City of Belmont.

* * * * *

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Belmont at a regular meeting thereof held on February 12 2008 by the following vote:

AYES, DIRECTORS: _____
NOES, DIRECTORS: _____
ABSTAIN, DIRECTORS: _____
ABSENT, DIRECTORS: _____
RECUSED, DIRECTORS: _____

Secretary, Redevelopment Agency

APPROVED:

Chair, Redevelopment Agency



Attachment B

The Grand Boulevard Initiative

The Vision

El Camino Real will achieve its full potential as a place for residents to work, live, shop and play, creating links between communities that promote walking and transit and an improved and meaningful quality of life.

The Grand Boulevard Challenge

El Camino Real will become a “grand boulevard of meaningful destinations” shaped by all the cities along its length and with each community realizing its full potential to become a destination full of valued places.

The Grand Boulevard Task Force is a broad federation of interested public and private parties that challenges communities to rethink the corridor’s potential for housing and urban development, balancing the need for cars and parking with viable options for transit, walking and biking.

Stretching from Daly City to San Jose, the vision is of a boulevard that connects communities by a mix of land uses designed to attract people. Cities are encouraged to design for neighborhoods that include high quality building designs and diverse land uses, preserve historic buildings and places, and enhance our economic and cultural diversity, with the broad involvement of residents, workers and local businesses. Rail stations and bus facilities are valued not only as vital transportation services, but as public gathering places and assets to spur transit oriented development. Roadway improvements will be context sensitive while continuing to meet the need to move people and commerce and preserve environmental resources. Above all, change will recognize and incorporate our history and create a sense of community.

The Grand Boulevard initiative will succeed only with the enthusiastic support of public agencies, leading businesses, non-profit agencies, neighborhoods and community advocates. The Task force endeavors to coordinate planning efforts, develop incentives and other mechanisms, and secure funding to make this vision a reality.

<http://www.grandboulevard.net>

Guiding Principle	Potential Strategies
<p>1. Target housing and job growth in strategic areas along the corridor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend General Plans and implement zoning and Specific Plans that facilitate increases in density, particularly around transit stations and key intersections. • In accordance with city goals, encourage more housing and business opportunities, with a greater range of affordability and choices, exemplifying high-quality architecture and urban design. • Preserve significant buildings. • Provide a system of local and corridor-wide incentives to attract private development and economic investment along the corridor.
<p>2. Encourage compact mixed-use development and high-quality urban design and construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop design guidelines to assist in the attainment of the Grand Boulevard vision and challenge statements. • Accommodate housing. • Implement zoning and precise plans with design-specific elements that address street orientation, facades, parking and setbacks • Provide planning aides and design guidelines, such as the Community Design and Transportation Manual, to developers
<p>3. Create a pedestrian-oriented environment and improve streetscapes, ensuring full access to and between public areas and private developments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an integrated pedestrian environment with wide, continuous sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, and signage, all with human-scale details, with a commitment to maintain those amenities. Such amenities should conform to Caltrans standards. • Continuously clean and maintain the Grand Boulevard streetscape and public spaces. • Preserve sightlines between activity areas. • Create landmarks and signature buildings to shape the street environment to a pedestrian orientation. • Repair barriers between activity areas such as discontinuous sidewalks. • Reduce street crossing distances where appropriate.

<p>4. Develop a balanced multimodal corridor to maintain and improve mobility of people and vehicles along the corridor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support transit-oriented development (TOD) and increased density around station areas. • Orient buildings toward transit stops. • Design transit stops for easy passenger loading, unloading and fare payment. • Improve signal timing. • Implement transit-preferential street treatments such as signal priority, bulb out stops, bus by-pass lanes and high occupancy vehicle (HOV)/Bus-only lanes where needed and feasible. • Implement programs designed to reduce auto trips during congestion periods.
<p>5. Manage Parking Assets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider trip reduction due to transit when designing parking requirements. • Pursue the development of public/public and public/private partnerships to develop multiuse parking structures in strategic locations along the corridor. • Consider shared parking facilities (I.e. for business during the day, restaurants at night). • Consider the trade-offs between TOD and parking at rail stations. • Preserve street frontage for active uses by placing parking behind buildings. • Develop and use a network of alleys to access parking and limit vehicular crossings of sidewalks. • Where appropriate, install parking meters or time-limited parking spaces to encourage turnover. • Review parking requirements when considering new developments, possibly substituting reliance on Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and reducing required parking.
<p>6. Provide vibrant public spaces and gathering places</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create public spaces of all sizes that will stand the test of time and provide lasting value for future generations. • Design public areas to attract usage. • Orient new development around existing or new gathering places and transit stations. • Design public spaces to be functional as well as decorative through the careful use of space and amenities. • Encourage the development of small public spaces and pocket parks.

<p>7. Preserve and accentuate unique and desirable community character and the existing quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage design that is compatible with or shares design elements with adjacent development and neighborhoods. • Identify local themes and express them through landscape, architecture and urban design guidelines. • Preserve diverse local small businesses and create economic opportunities for their continued presence in the revitalized corridor.
<p>8. Improve safety and public health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design intersections for a balance between the needs of autos and pedestrians. • Design parallel access routes where needed to separate pedestrian and bike movements. • Provide high-quality pedestrian amenities such as distinct crosswalks, countdown signals and curb ramps. • Ensure adequate public and private (move to #3?) facilities for disabled individuals.
<p>9. Strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connections with the corridor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the distance between corridor crossings to improve connectivity with adjacent neighborhoods where appropriate. • For projects near the corridor, encourage design that provides easy access to the corridor or to cross streets. • Provide pedestrian cut-through linkages to access parking lots, alleys and neighborhood routes between blocks, including additions to "Safe Route to Schools" paths.
<p>10. Pursue environmentally sustainable and economically viable development patterns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide incentives for LEED (leadership in energy and environmental design) certified projects. • Pursue design, engineering and construction techniques that assist with the management of storm water runoff, preserve (and possibly increase) soil permeability, and reduce heat island and other negative effects of urban development. • Pursue cross-jurisdictional shared revenue projects, such as parking structures, that provide mutual benefits to all partners. • Provide a system of local and corridor-wide incentives to attract private development and economic investment along the corridor.