



Public Health and Quality of Life Town Hall Meeting Summary
Thursday, January 8, 2015
6:00-9:00
East Palo Alto Senior Center

Workshop Overview

On Thursday, January 8th, 2015, the City of East Palo Alto hosted a town hall meeting to discuss and obtain feedback on a variety of topics related to health and other topics that impact the quality of life in the City. This was the final workshop in a series of eight that were intended to galvanize community participation in the General Plan Update process. Other subjects addressed at the workshop included neighborhood land use designations, second unit conversions, and public safety. Lastly, this workshop was the final opportunity before the draft General Plan to provide feedback on all topics not discussed during the outreach process to date. Approximately 120 community members attended the meeting, one of the highest turnouts to date for any meeting related to the General Plan Update. The Mayor of the City and two councilmembers were in attendance. Simultaneous translation in Spanish was provided for those who requested it, and refreshments were also available. Facilitation was provided by Dr. Omowale Satterwhite of the Community Development Institute, Melvin Gaines of the EPA Police Department, and by other city staffers and members of Envirocom Consulting.

Group Discussions

The workshop began with a short presentation by Matt Raimi of Raimi + Associates about the status of the General Plan update, background about public health, public safety, parks and recreation, and habitat in East Palo Alto, and a short overview of the dot exercises. Following the introductory talk, attendants were split into two groups to discuss either “[Public Health Issues](#)” or “[Social Equity Issues](#).” These large groups were then further divided into small teams to tackle specific aspects of public health and social equity. These aspects were:

- **What are the issues/problems?**
- **What is the game plan?**
- **What does success look like?**

Social Equity Group #1: What are the main social justice issues?

- *Lack of High-Quality Educational System*: students need help preparing for high school, schools need more funding, the curriculum should be more well-rounded, high schools need more guidance counselors, better early childhood education, lack of extracurricular activities for youth
- *Lack of Access to Resources*: poor access to healthy food, very limited mental health services, housing costs/rents are rising faster than incomes, drug & alcohol rehab is hard to afford/find
- *Economic Underdevelopment/Inadequate Career Pathways*: local start-ups/entrepreneurs need support, youth lack clear career pathways, legal services and advice is nonexistent, need to involve local corporations in supporting the re-entry of ex-cons into the workplace

Social Equity Group #2: What is the game plan?

- *Outreach and participation* (through door to door canvassing, peer role models, greater youth involvement, having city officials advocate for more resources, outreach to the faith community, doing a better job of keeping residents informed of news/events, advocating community issues at the county and state levels)
- *Working towards economic success* (new housing/lower rents, the City making funds available for property or business improvements, livable wage ordinance, promoting low interest rate loans, building up property values, having a small business center and cheap space to support entrepreneurs and small businesses, giving preference to community residents in hiring, including STEM in educational curriculum, career and employment opportunities for youth, make it harder for banks to foreclose & harder for speculators to flip homes)
- *Enhancing our social capital* (protect senior citizen housing, look out for each other in the neighborhood, take pride in our community, teach history lessons on EPA, keep the City culturally diverse, uniting residents across racial lines to work together, fix Bay Road near Cooley Landing, meet and work with other races)
- *Evolve the Police Department* (work towards better relations with PD, Police Department employees should be hired from within the community, stop police brutality)

Social Equity Group #3: What does success look like?

- **Stronger, more active community**: lots of community events (art fair, chili cook-off, salsa festival); vibrant small businesses, nice restaurants, entertainment venues; vacant lot at University & Bay Road is developed; active downtown or arts district, farmer's market
- **Improved education**: higher test scores, all local schools score well (no "lottery"); Institutional support and clear pipelines for encouraging high school graduation, Facebook and other tech companies embrace (and hire) local residents
- **Safer, cleaner neighborhoods**: Safer streets where you can walk, well lit; improved + paved bike routes, especially along Weeks & over dikes; cleaner community – not acceptable to litter, better enforcement to prevent illegal dumping; feeling safe / reduced crime
- **Sense of community pride & respect**: tell our stories to ourselves and the world via media/internet; positive role models in the community; a community member can imagine him/herself living here and doing their "calling"; fair and affordable housing (no harassment)

Public Health Group #1: What are the problems?

- **Cost of Living/Property Values**
 - High cost of living forces people into overcrowded conditions which is bad for health of residents, there are more cars in the neighborhoods, an impact on public education.
 - A permanent source of funds for affordable housing is needed
 - There should be better economic development to form a tax base and pay for housing
 - Community benefit agreements needed to get services and amenities from developers
- **Mental Health Care**
 - No drug and alcohol residential programs for youth. Mental health services are very limited--only 1 location and no residential program
 - Firefighters and police officers are not trained in mental health first aid. This is dangerous for mentally ill community members. This training should be mandatory.
 - Training for family/community members on mental health issues should also be available
- **Nutrition and Fresh Food**
 - More opportunities to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. Market analysis done years ago indicated a new grocery store wouldn't make it in EPA, but that may have changed now.
 - Lack of nutrition education
 - Farmers market hours don't work for most people (during work hours on a weekday)
 - Rents are going up and there's an increase in homelessness and crime
- **Lack of Services**
 - Lack of access to transportation. There is LOTS of support for the free shuttle that was discontinued. People want it back.
 - Lack of health insurance
 - Lack of adequate services for seniors and homeless
- **Other Issues**
 - Better outreach about services & programs is needed
 - Inadequate funding for seniors
 - Very little code enforcement for anything. Highlighted: parking, noise, garbage/litter, interior apartment health/safety codes. People often park blocking fire hydrants.
 - Flyover noise from planes landing at nearby airports degrade quality of life.
 - Currently there is no high school in EPA

Public Health Group #2: What strategies are needed to achieve success?

- **Help for mothers and youth** (help young women who are getting pregnant, and aren't prepared to be mothers; program for children's health to obtain proper nutrition, programs for those youth who will not go to school including vocational programs; need more nutritious food in schools; need ways to help parents communicate with their children)
- **Combat the scourge of addiction** (get our youth away from drugs, provide information to the people who live near the Free At Last facility as they arrive as early as 7am and people who use the bus stop are afraid, a center for youth rehab, treat mental health issues as well as addiction,
- **More information/outreach about available treatment** (spread the word about Free At Last, programs to assist with job finding; a coordinated public care strategy, hire more people in health related programs, including volunteers; programs for people newly released from jail)

Public Health Group #3: What are the solutions?

- **New and improved green/open space** (poor physical fitness, asthma, need safe places to relax outdoors with family and friends, no dog parks, need to activate public spaces, could close down streets for activities)
- **Reduced traffic/air pollution** (unsafe streets, safety is so important – people would walk more if streets were safe, few sidewalks and bike lanes, drivers take shortcuts to/from the Dumbarton Bridge and drive through residential areas at unsafe speeds,
- **More mental health care**
 - PTSD (from shootings, growing up in violent surroundings)
 - Reducing crime will positively impact public/mental health
- **Improved access** (healthy food, health insurance, services, frequent public transportation)
- **Less violence** (domestic and street violence, improving street lighting, police aren't responsive)
- **Sense of community**. If there was a downtown area where people could congregate, they would feel more connected to the community & neighbors. Success is when people in the city feel connected to each other

Health/Quality of Life Boards (Dot Exercises)

Following the two group discussions, participants were asked to circulate around the room and vote on their preferred options for various subjects. Community members also provided additional free-form comments as they saw fit.

Parks and Pedestrian Network

Participants expressed a preference for new parks *and* improving existing parks through better access and equipment. Activating the parks through programs and activities was a close runner-up.

Add new parks throughout the City	14
Construct new parks and trails along the Bay	14
Construct new linear parks along existing utility rights-of-ways and creeks	2
Build community gardens	10
Improve connections to the Bay Trail	7
Improve bike and pedestrian access to existing parks	16
Create shared use agreements with schools	10
Fund programs to activate parks	14
Make parks safer through design improvements	6
Renovate existing parks with new equipment and features	18

Other comments included a desire for new drinking fountains and parks with usable bathrooms. One resident suggested that the City hire local residents to pick up litter. One idea was proposed that the City partner with RCSD (Redwood City School District) to enhance access to recreation facilities, which would allow for new programs such as adult intramural leagues.

Residential Land Use Designations

Residents were asked to view and respond to the new proposed land use designations and the following comments were added:

- Tension between affordable/mixed income housing AND desire to maintain feel of neighborhood
- Traffic + lack of parking still an issue
- Develop more mid/high density housing that leaves room for open space, community uses, recreation



Neighborhood Character

In order to develop a sense of how to regulate the remaining large lots in the Weeks neighborhood, voters were asked to place a dot along the spectrum of housing intensity (from low to high). Clearly, single-family and townhouse building types were deemed appropriate in Weeks.

Maintain large lots	Single-family	Townhouse	Small Apartments
6	18	11	7



Community Facilities/Services

Not surprisingly, the young-leaning crowd at the workshop strongly supported new community centers, new youth programs, job training for youth, and support for small business entrepreneurs. The value of creating pathways to long-term employment was emphasized by several attendees.

New city hall/civic center	5
New community centers	22
Additional programming for seniors	7
Additional programming for youth	19
Job training and apprentice programs for youth	27
Emergency preparedness training	7
Flood preparation	9
Info about City operations/finances	5
Support for small business entrepreneurs	23
More quality child care	11

Community Services & Facilities / Servicios e Instalaciones Comunitarias



What community services and facilities should be prioritized for the community? (10 or more ideas do you best) (¿Qué servicios e instalaciones comunitarias deberían ser priorizadas por la comunidad? (Ejemplos))

New city hall/civic center <i>Nuevo Ayuntamiento/centro cívico</i>	
New community centers <i>Nuevos centros comunitarios</i>	
Additional programming for seniors <i>Programas adicionales para los personas mayores</i>	
Additional programming for youth <i>Programas adicionales para la juventud</i>	
Job training and apprentice programs for youth <i>Programas de capacitación y empleo para los jóvenes</i>	
Emergency preparedness training <i>Entrenamiento para emergencias</i>	
Flood preparation <i>Preparación para las inundaciones</i>	
More information about City operations & finances <i>Más información acerca de operaciones de la Ciudad y sus finanzas</i>	
Support for small business entrepreneurs <i>Apoio a los pequeños empresarios</i>	
More quality child care <i>Cuidado de niños de más calidad</i>	

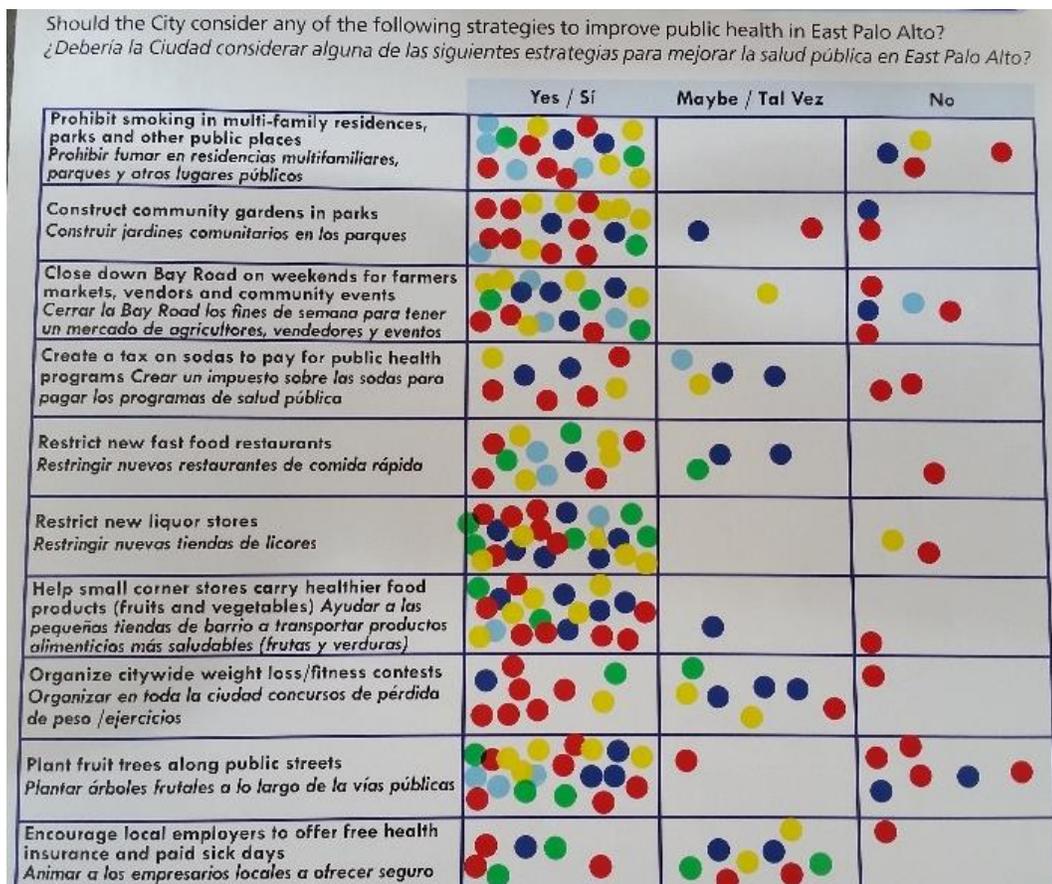
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Public Health

Participants were asked to rate various proposed health-related actions by placing a dot in the corresponding column. The strongest preferences were: 1) Restrict new liquor stores, 2) Help corner stores carry healthier food products, and 3) Plant fruit trees along public streets.

	YES	MAYBE	NO
Prohibit smoking in multi-family residences, parks and other public places	17	0	4
Construct community gardens in parks	18	2	2
Close down Bay Road on weekends for farmers markets, vendors and community events	18	1	5
Create a tax on sodas to pay for public health programs	8	4	2
Restrict new fast food restaurants	13	3	1
Restrict new liquor stores	23		2
Help small corner stores carry healthier food products (fruits and vegetables)	20	1	1
Organize citywide weight loss/fitness contests	9	7	1
Plant fruit trees along public streets	20	1	6
Encourage local employers to offer free health insurance	6	8	1
State-of-the-art ventilation systems along Highway 101	12	0	2



Habitat and Natural Environment

Residents expressed a desire for better access to the San Francisquito Creek, more educational programs at Cooley Landing, trash removal from the Baylands, and more street trees.

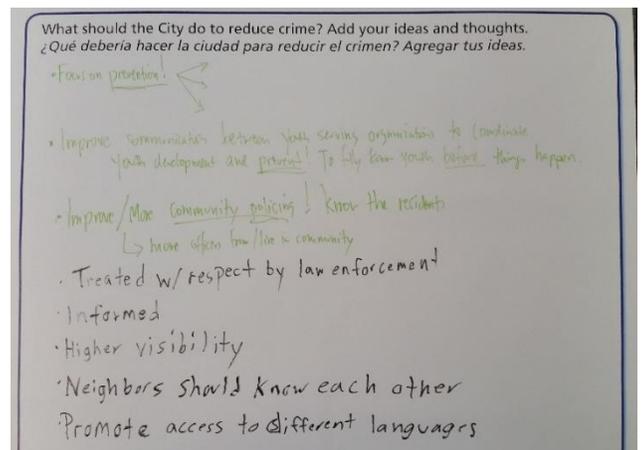
Provide better access to San Francisquito Creek	12
Enhance habitat for plants and animals	10
Remove trash from wetlands and the Bay	17
Clean up contaminated soil	8
Reduce "noise pollution" from low-flying airplanes	8
Plant fruit trees throughout the City	9
Add more street trees	16
Increase policing in outdoor recreation areas	12
Improve access to the Salt Pond restoration project	5
Expand educational programs at Cooley Landing	16



Public Safety

The City received lots of interesting and revealing feedback at the public safety board:

- Focus on prevention – education is the best prevention
- School space should be opened for more afterschool educational support programming
- Advertise/inform residents how to hold block parties or neighborhood clean-ups
- Form block clubs
- Improve communication between youth-serving organizations to coordinate youth development and prevent (to fully know youth before things happen)
- Improve/More community policing – More Officers from/live in the community
- Police need to treat residents with more respect
- Higher visibility policing
- Neighbors should know each other
- Promote access to different languages



Below is a series of relevant East Palo Alto crime statistics compiled by Melvin Gaines at the request of the City Manager.

CRIMES	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Jan-Mar 2014
HOMICIDE	7	15	6	7	5	8	4	8	7	8	1
RAPE	27	24	23	19	18	17	19	18	12	13	4
ROBBERY	104	108	124	62	107	158	103	108	87	82	13
ROBBERY/FIREARM	35	57	72	25	46	95	50	55	43	32	4
ASSAULTS	425	465	325	320	458	510	377	320	406	464	94
ASSAULTS/FIREARM	85	174	104	118	180	170	96	96	190	208	46
BURGLARY	300	390	345	279	313	437	382	458	363	242	40
THEFTS	557	443	410	250	271	332	264	285	237	237	43
AUTO THEFTS	354	303	343	251	349	207	236	160	139	129	43
TOTALS	1774	1748	1576	1188	1521	1669	1385	1358	1251	1175	238

All Crimes in East Palo Alto (2004 - 2014)



EAST PALO ALTO POLICE DEPARTMENT FACT SHEET 1/8/2014



Department Size

	East Palo Alto Police	Menlo Park Police	Palo Alto Police
Sworn Officers	36	48	93
Civilian Staff	8	22	67

Service Levels

	East Palo Alto Police	Menlo Park Police	Palo Alto Police
Population Served	29,000	34,000	67,000
Officers Per 1,000 residents	1.24	1.41	1.39
Annual Calls for Service	29,000 (2014)	34,000 (2014)	65,861 (2013)
Calls Per Officer	805	708	706
City Size Served	2.6 Sq. Miles	17.42 Sq. Miles	25.79 Sq. Miles

Budget Size (General Fund)

	East Palo Alto Police	Menlo Park Police	Palo Alto Police
Police Department	\$9,958,000	\$15,394,959	\$29,831,655
Total City	\$17,095,484	\$46,484,555	\$171,086,000
PD % of Total GF Budget	58%	33%	17.4%

Crime Statistics

Entire 2013:

Part 1 Offenses			
	East Palo Alto Police	Menlo Park Police	Palo Alto Police
Homicide	8	0	0
Rape	13	3	4
Robbery	82	18	30
Aggravated Assault	464	31	21
Burglary	242	179	242
Larceny	237	436	1179
Stolen Vehicle	129	28	69
Arson	0	3	10
Totals	1175	698	1554

Crime Statistics (Cont'd)

2013 Compared to 2014 (through September):

Part 1 Offenses				
	East Palo Alto Police		Menlo Park Police	
	2013	1/1 - 9/30/2014	2013	1/1 - 9/30/2014
Homicide	8	4	0	0
Rape	13	6	3	10
Robbery	82	44	18	13
Aggravated Assault	464	217	31	18
Burglary	242	152	179	91
Larceny	237	170	436	320
Stolen Vehicle	129	127	28	23
Arson	0	0	3	0
Totals	1175	720	698	475

ShotSpotter Activations

A ShotSpotter activation is a shooting event where 1 or more consecutive shots were fired without a pause greater than 2 seconds.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
ShotSpotter Activations	2,148	1,496	1,127	663

- 2014 had 41 % fewer shooting events than 2013
- 2013 had 24.6% fewer shooting than 2012
- 2012 had 30% fewer shooting events than 2011
- Since 2011, shooting events in East Palo Alto have reduced nearly 70 percent