



**ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

STAFF REPORT – INFORMATIONAL ITEM

TO: CASTRO VALLEY MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

HEARING DATE: May 13, 2024

GENERAL INFORMATION

APPLICATION TYPE

AND NUMBER: *Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan Update*

OWNER/

APPLICANT: County-Initiated Proposal

PROPOSAL: *Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan Update* – Informational Meeting to receive a summary of the community input of the special community workshop previously held on March 13, 2024, for the Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan (CVCBDSP) Update.

**ADDRESS AND
SIZE OF PARCEL:** All parcels located within the *Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan* area.

ZONING: All parcels with Zoning designations in the *Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan* area.

**GENERAL PLAN
DESIGNATION:** All parcels with General Plan land use designations in the *Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan* area.

**ENVIRONMENTAL
REVIEW:** The project may require an Environmental Impact Report, which will be drafted after a draft of the *Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan Update* is released for public review.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council listen to the County staff summary of the community comments heard at the special workshop of March 13, 2024, for the Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan (CVCBDSP) Update, accept public comments, and discuss individual MAC members' impressions of the community input.

BACKGROUND:

The *Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan Update* project is part of a larger effort to implement the Castro Valley General Plan. As the second community-wide interactive outreach event for the project, the County held a Community Workshop on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Provide a brief background on the project to date;
2. Receive community input on existing conditions, concepts, and preferences for improvements in the Plan Area; and
3. Finalize a foundation for the Preferred Plan.

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY COMMENTS RECEIVED:

Below is a summary of the feedback gathered during the group discussions, organized by station topics.

Land Use

The discussions at the land use station focused on defining the activity center of the Castro Valley Business District (CVBD), businesses and activities the community would like to see in downtown, and public open space. Some workshop participants thought that commercial activities should be concentrated to a few blocks on Castro Valley Boulevard between San Miguel Avenue and Redwood Road. Others suggested the existing downtown landscape at the center of Castro Valley Boulevard should be extended to encompass the entirety of the Boulevard, noting opportunities for development on the former Rite Aid lot and near the BART Castro Valley Station, and the lack of density on far ends of the Boulevard and Redwood Road. Participants also considered development opportunities near The Chabot Movie Theater, Golden Tee Golfland, and Castro Valley Center for the Arts, since they are already popular recreational and entertainment destinations in the community that draw a significant amount of traffic.

The following were suggested by participants to diversify activities and business types in the CVBD:

- More variety of restaurants and outdoor dining
- Multi-functional retail center with stores and restaurants
- Family and youth-friendly activities
- Gym, sports, and recreation center
- Bocce court and ice rink on the Rite Aid site
- Public hub for arts and performances
- Small business/startup incubator
- Office-based business types

Many community members stressed the need for more parks, plazas, greenspace, and other public open space downtown. Open space could serve as an event space for live music, public art, recreation, and other community activities. Several participants felt the creek path along Castro Valley Creek next to CVS and the Castro Valley Library is currently undermaintained and could be transformed into a pedestrian walkway connecting the BART station to downtown Castro Valley and revitalizing nearby properties that are currently underutilized on Redwood Road.

Mobility

Discussions at the mobility station focused on connections and improvements for bikes, transit, automobiles, and parking, including discussing potential roadway reconfigurations of Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road (see Attachment A). Some participants expressed their preference to keep the four-lane configuration on Castro Valley Boulevard and cited concerns over the removal of existing street parking and the impacts of new construction on businesses. Some participants liked the alternative street plans that reduced the number of travel lanes to two and recommended diverting some of the vehicular traffic to Norbridge Avenue.

Many community members raised concerns over the availability of parking downtown and suggested a potential parking structure located either near the BART station or on San Miguel Avenue to free up space for new businesses and open space. Participants also suggested that Castro Valley Boulevard should accommodate the loading and unloading of both passengers and commercial goods.

Workshop participants expressed the need for bike lanes throughout Castro Valley. Some participants suggested a path shared by both cyclists and pedestrians on Castro Valley Boulevard, and others preferred a buffered, dedicated bike lane. Several participants suggested traffic signals for bicycles at the Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road intersection due to high traffic volume. Community members also expressed the need for bike lanes on Wilbeam Avenue, Lake Chabot Road, and Crow Canyon Road.

Additional feedback included the following:

- Bike lanes should incorporate guards at street corners to protect cyclists from cars.
- More trees in the buffer zone.
- Reduce the number of curb cuts and driveway entrances on Castro Valley Boulevard.
- Improve crosswalk visibility on Norbridge Avenue.
- Open Strobbridge Avenue to reduce traffic on Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road.
- Speeding is common on Castro Valley Boulevard near Castro Village.
- Make Stanton Avenue two-way.
- There needs to be a main shared pedestrian and bike route to/from downtown along Wilbeam Avenue.

Opportunity Sites

Several opportunity sites for future development in the CVBD were analyzed during the group discussions, including Eden Medical Center, Castro Village Shopping Center, and Castro Valley Transit Village (see Attachment B). Some development concepts, such as a new parking structure, greenspace and public parks for outdoor recreation and entertainment, and more retail options, were recommended for all three sites. While many participants preferred keeping the height limit of buildings at three stories to maintain the “small town feeling” of downtown Castro Valley, others noted the need for more high-density and mixed use development.

Some members of the community were skeptical about potential development on the Medical Center site and suggested it is difficult to work with Sutter and challenging to add infill development near hospitals. Other participants were more open to the possibility of a variety of development such as new restaurants and recreation destinations if more flexibility was allowed in the Medical Center district. One participant noted that new amenities near the Medical Center could also serve hospital staff and visitors.

Participants identified Castro Village Shopping Center as popular among Castro Valley residents. The possibility of expanding the Village to include the currently underdeveloped area across Santa Maria Avenue was brought up to create a larger shopping destination. While some community members wanted to keep the Village strictly as a shopping center with no residential uses, other participants liked the idea of adding mixed-use residential development. To improve walkability, participants welcomed the idea of breaking up the large parking lots and creating walkways that connect Castro Valley Boulevard to the Village.

The most underutilized of the three opportunity sites, the Transit Village is currently dominated by large parking areas serving the BART station. Many community members envisioned the Transit Village as a potential location for mixed-use development with stylistic consistency in new buildings and open space that is inviting and well-designed. Participants also suggested that new development should make space for the Castro Valley Farmers' Market that takes place every Saturday.

Besides the aforementioned areas, participants identified other locations in the CVBD as potential opportunity sites, including the Lucky site, The Chabot Theater, Castro Valley Boulevard between Santa Maria Avenue and San Miguel Avenue, the Castro Valley Library area and creek path, and the lumber yard next to Golden Tee Golfland.

Some participants mentioned the opportunity to improve the Castro Valley Library, CVS, and City venture project sites by adding street furniture, restoring the adjacent creek path, revitalizing underutilized nearby properties, and connecting the area to the BART station. For the Lucky Site, participants mentioned that buildings could be closer to the street to encourage pedestrian activities. Improvements for the Chabot Theater and Center for the Arts included creating better connectivity across the Plan Area to these sites and adding more sit-down dining options nearby.

Placemaking

When asked about the downtowns they like to visit, Livermore, Pleasanton, and Danville were the top three most cited destinations by participants. Workshop participants also noted Castro Village Shopping Center, Castro Valley Marketplace, and Lake Chabot as the most pleasant places in Castro Valley to walk, while the BART station area and the far ends of Castro Valley Boulevard were considered the least enjoyable places to walk.

The following improvements to the CVBD were suggested by the community:

- More variety in dining, entertainment, and recreation.
- More public open space for gatherings.
- Improve sidewalks throughout the CVBD.
- Remove fences around parking lots to encourage foot traffic.
- Maintain landscaping in downtown.

- Improve bike lane safety.
- New buildings should not be tall.

Participants were also asked to identify walkability and streetscape improvements to four intersections, including Castro Valley Boulevard and Lake Chabot Road, Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road, Redwood Road and Norbridge Avenue, and Castro Valley Boulevard and Norbridge Avenue.

The following strategies were some of the suggested by community members:

- Crosswalk enhancement is necessary at all four intersections and near the BART station.
- Sidewalks need to be widened throughout downtown Castro Valley, specifically on Castro Valley Boulevard, Norbridge Avenue, Wilbeam Avenue, Wisteria Street, and near the BART station and Castro Valley Creek.
- More active ground floor uses are needed on the auto shop sites at Castro Valley Boulevard and Wisteria Street, in Castro Village, the eastern portion of Castro Valley Boulevard (including the Rite Aid lot), and on the BART station parking lot and the Lucky site.
- Planting and street furniture are needed on Castro Valley Boulevard, Redwood Road, and Lake Chabot Road.
- More street furniture is needed throughout the library, CVS, and City Ventures project sites at the southwestern corner of Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road.

TENTATIVE NEXT MEETING:

The anticipated next meeting date is tentatively scheduled for June or July.

PROJECT WEBSITE:

<http://www.cvgpimplementation.com/phase-2-meeting-information>

The summary of the community comments at the special community workshop previously held on March 13, 2024, can be found at [this website link](#).

PREPARED BY:

Rodrigo Orduña, Assistant Planning Director



Castro Valley Business District Specific Plan Update: Community Workshop Summary

In the Fall of 2022, Alameda County initiated a community planning project to update the Castro Valley Business District Specific Plan (CVBDSP). To support this work, the County hired the support of a multi-disciplinary Consultant Team led by Lisa Wise Consulting, Inc. (LWC). The project is part of a larger effort to implement the Castro Valley General Plan. As the second community-wide interactive outreach event for the project, the County held a Community Workshop on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Provide a brief background on the project to date.
- Receive community input on existing conditions, concepts, and preferences for improvements in the Plan Area; and
- Finalize a foundation for the Preferred Plan.

The workshop, advertised on the project website (www.cvgpimplementation.com) and in the March 6, 2024, edition of Castro Valley Forum, was attended by approximately 55 participants. The workshop was conducted in person in the Chabot Room at the Castro Valley Library. Community members could also listen and watch the workshop live via Zoom.

The workshop began with a presentation by the Consultant Team on the project, work completed to date, project schedule, and workshop activity and objectives (see Appendix 2: Workshop Presentation). Following the presentation, participants were seated at one of the four workshop stations organized by topics—land use, mobility, opportunity sites, and placemaking—and participated in facilitated discussions and activities. Each station included at least one facilitator and/or notetaker who provided an overview of the station and described the goals for input. After each 20-minute session, participants rotated to the next station with a different topic.

Below is a summary of the feedback gathered during the group discussions, organized by station topics.

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