



## Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan Update Roadshows and Focus Group Meetings

As part of the outreach for the General Plan Update, several roadshow and focus group meetings were conducted. These meetings provided an opportunity for focused outreach to specific groups and organizations. The purpose of the meetings was to provide a forum for attendees to provide input specific to their area of interest or expertise. Each meeting began with an overview presentation of the General Plan Update process. Attendees then engaged in an open discussion guided by questions specific to the group or topical area.

A summary of the discussion and comments received at each of the meetings is provided below.

### CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – August 15, 2016

#### *Discussion*

- Review of RSM General Plan Vision: basic core & general vision is still relevant
- Want to make sure it (the vision) doesn't go sideways.
- Values for business:
  - Lot of income – higher spending
  - Don't have as many people
    - Push to visit RSM (currently is not a “go-to” destination)
  - Great services and products
  - Unique Corporations/Businesses –
    - Applied Medical
    - Pieology
    - Johns Incredible Pizza
    - Hanna's Steakhouse
  - Safe community
  - Nice people – businesses attract good people
  - Rental rates are high – negative thing
    - Cost of keeping businesses open are high
    - Everything in RSM but high turnover
    - Some move to other areas or close down completely
    - Businesses need to engage in the community – those who do tend to do better
  - RSM rolls up at 9:00/10:00 at night
    - Restaurants would stay open later if they could
      - No night life
      - Community is more family-oriented
      - Restaurants would stay late if people would come out
  - Geography – limits demographics
    - Not typical radius for corporations.



- Need to bring in and retain businesses.
- Fees – developer impact fees for tenant improvements
- Need to engage businesses and see what their needs are – City Manager and planners along with the mayor or City Council members – sometimes we lose sight of communications, but this has improved in recent years.
- Most businesses will reach out to chamber who connects them to City
  - Maybe didn't know who to contact
  - Perception of difficulty working with the City – improve communications or letting businesses know City is helpful.
- Needs:
  - Rents are high
  - Outreach in getting people from other areas to come out to RSM
    - Ex: Shop and dine in RSM or RSM week
  - Marketing
  - In-n-out and BevMo – beat their own expectations earlier than anticipated and by more
    - City help with In-n-out sold 1 acre of land to improve circulation works well – good planning.
  - Any official retention program?
    - Chamber meets with 5-7 businesses a week – both non-chamber and chamber members.
  - Businesses want stand-alone; Planning works with businesses to help coordinate with owners (underutilized)
- Businesses feel like they cannot get through on parking – 2007 code after everything built – generally no parking issues – not short on parking
- Plaza Empresa – does have parking issues – not designed as a shopping center – industrial location of post office; operating well
- Trader Joe's – people experience parking issues
- Non-retail uses – how do we support?
  - Tend to be smaller businesses
  - Usually under 10 employees
    - Some rent small spaces
  - Many work out of their home
    - Small business type banks
  - Businesses are a part of Chamber – but hesitate to lend if there is no earning history.
- Consumers don't want growth – bedroom community
- Contractors feel that the City & process is supportive
- Regulations for tenant improvements is an issue – example: ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance; cannot afford to do tenant improvements because of other costs – unfortunately some regulations are outside of the City's control.
- Wages are difficult for smaller businesses – changing to technology to replace workers due to higher minimum wages.



- Suzanne (RSM Chamber) meets with other chambers in the area. Legislators also meet with them quarterly.
- Economic Development did not seem the strong focus for City Council for a time period – no focus on retention.
- Medical uses – is parking more restrictive?
  - 2007 zoning code provided good parking regulations
- City and Chamber work well together.
- Need to talk to businesses more and possibly develop a strategy for business support.



## COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS OF RANCHO (CAR) – September 6, 2016

### **Presentation – General Discussion/Questions**

- Why are we updating the General Plan?
- What is the difference between zoning and the General Plan?
- Where are we in terms of build-out in comparison to the protected areas?
- Comment: There is no vacant property within RSM
  - General Plan doesn't set a cap for residential build-out – we can change zoning
    - Housing element doesn't set number of housing – regional affordability standards
- Chiquita Ridge zoned for Open Space, not residential right now
- How does the vote on the 241 (Trestles) affect our transportation?
- Do new (State) regulations get included in the General Plan?

### **Discussion**

Does RSM's vision reflect the vision and values of the community?

- The Vision doesn't mention anything about technology to improve City functions. It should be added.

Are you familiar with the goals and policies of the General Plan relating to parks, open space, and conservation? What changes would you like to see made to the plan?

- Sports parks/lighted fields are needed, but no one wants to take it on
- SAMLARC Sports Field Study – 2011 – identified shortfalls in sports fields
- No adult sports in RSM
- There's no continuity in regional, City, or SAMLARC (Rancho Santa Margarita Landscape and Recreation Corporation) trails; need regional connection
- Dove Canyon, Rancho, Trabuco – how does Open Space interface with environmental restrictions – fire fuel requirements; habitat constraints
- Regional-type indoor facility – there's no indoor facility for events
- Dog park – need improvements

Are there specific user groups that need to be represented?

- It's an aging community – needs to be addressed
- Empty nesters are selling their homes for smaller places but want to stay in Rancho
- Kids moving away to find something better
- Question – Dove Canyon (the golf course) is losing money and struggling because of changing demographics
  - Can the owner walk away from the property or convert it to developable land?
    - Any property owner can request to change the use of their property, but it's not part of the General Plan
- We should pursue more senior facilities/ programs for our seniors
- Need to retain retail – we are losing businesses
- Senior housing
- Walkable community – want to see mixed use in the centers for people to who want to walk to services and amenities



## BELL TOWER FOUNDATION – September 14, 2016

### **Discussion:**

Does RSM's vision reflect the vision and values of the community?

- Question – “community foundation” – could be referring to Bell Tower Foundation
  - Maintaining facilities might be out of the purview of “foundations”
- Terms – “well-maintained” and “revitalize” – 15 years later, are we at the place where we need to actually maintain and revitalize now
- Transportation system – big picture question of “when” the toll road is connected and how it will affect the community – combine with impact of Rancho Mission Viejo
- Meet with Rancho Transportation
- How to marry homeowners associations and revitalization
  - Talk to them about what we've learned and what they're doing

What recreational or community programs are missing in RSM? What would you like to see here?

- Lack of culture – theatre, other
- The City could work with the Pacific Symphony for their City programs
  - Volunteer arm to the City that could help get cultural programming
- Dog park – need to improve the dog park amenity and whether or not it's located in the right location – not located in an accessible (safe) location
  - Reach out to residents to know what they want to have
- Demographics have changed
- Public transportation is really minimal – we've built apartments but haven't built any transportation
  - Difficult for minority communities to get around – limited resources – impossible for day laborers to get around
  - Affects the aging population as well
  - Electric bike system?
- Identify where the City's infrastructure is aging
  - SAMLARC (Rancho Santa Margarita Landscape and Recreation Corporation) and City confusion
- Burning and fires – safety element

What amenities and programs could be incorporated?

- Bell Tower supports a food pantry
  - Mike Linares (CDBG) may be able to share demographic information

Other issues or concerns

- Facebook groups for Rancho Santa Margarita
- Parking a key issue – residential neighborhoods that are under parked
- Overflow from local high schools – kids parking on streets, businesses, and in neighborhoods – Santa Margarita High School

Are you familiar with the General Plan?

- Work with City liaisons and the Chamber
- Former Planning Commissioner didn't see references to the Bell Tower Foundation in the General Plan and wonder where they went



## ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT – September 14, 2016

### ***Discussion:***

- The crime rate is rising everywhere (Prop 47 and AB 109, perhaps)
  - Crime spiked 50% and has reduced year after year
- Homelessness is an issue in the County, smaller issue in RSM
  - Law enforcement relied upon to address, but bigger issue
  - No services or resources in the City for homelessness
  - Kids are the majority of homeless – kids of RSM residents
- Solicitors outside of Target and Walmart
- Fewer parking complaints in RSM than experienced in other cities
  - SAMLARC (Rancho Santa Margarita Landscape and Recreation Corporation) regulates the neighborhoods more than in other places
  - More traffic complaints than parking complaints
  - Public high schools get the most complaints
- Deputy Silva – Schools
  - Social media, bullying a big problem
  - Congestion from drop-off and pick-up around schools
- Good relationship with public in RSM – lack of citizen complaints
- Neighborhood watch
  - 7 groups, 18 meetings over the last year, up from zero
  - Expecting the number of meetings/ groups to decrease
  - SAMLARC gets info out to the neighborhoods
- Would like to see separation of crime prevention and school resource officer – separate duties



## AGE WELL – October 10, 2016

### *Discussion*

#### General

- Don't change street names
- Improve pedestrian crossing safety
- Remove bus signs to allow for parking – no longer have bus stops at these locations
- Transportation – Age Well, City vouchers
- More jobs needed here
- Public amenities (internet)
- Highlight/ maintain entrances to City
- Noise and dust from schools sometimes an issue
- Can be difficult to navigate processes
  - Melo Roos info on the City's website
  - Less Red tape (example: to get stair elevator)

#### Why do you choose to live in RSM/what do you like about your community?

- Property Value
- Amenities
- Walkability
- Close to residential & commercial
- Safety
- Family
- Trees
- Amenities
- Movies are too expensive; travel outside of City to see a movie
- Like that you can travel "to" RSM, but not thru it
- Bell Tower
- Age Well very good

#### What types of amenities or services are not here that you would like to see?

- Charging station for scooter in public spaces
- Restaurant with senior menu – cater more to seniors
- More Veterans Day celebration
- More Emeritus classes
- Costco
- Music venues – classical
- Pickle ball court





## BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB – October 11, 2016

### Discussion Questions

- What do you like about your community?
- What would you like to have in your community?
- Is there something you do that's outside of your community?

### Responses

- Things we like about our community:
  - It's safe
  - Family is close
  - It's well kept
  - Can walk to stores; difficult to cross bridge
  - Small, unique restaurants
  - There are colorful plants/ art
  - Girl Scouts
  - "RanchoFest"
  - Fishing Derby
  
- Things we would like to have:
  - Cleaner lake
  - Entertainment/game stores
  - Laser tag
  - Paintball
  - More space for soccer fields
  - Crosswalks
  - Something like the Irvine Spectrum
  - Sports Park
  - Ice rink
  - Need a more affordable movie theater
  - Plays / Theater / Arcade
  - Mini Waterpark
  - Enhance what is here
  - Organized Pokémon event
  - Miniature boat race on the lake
  - Go kart race
  - Chick-fil-A

