

Beresford Hillsdale Neighborhood Association
General Meeting February 15, 2011

Treasurer Karen Herrel called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Approximately 23 members attended the meeting.

Karen announced that the minutes of the January General meeting were posted. They include the record of the election of the 2011 officers. She urged members to bring forward names of members who would be able to fill the vacant officer positions (president and secretary).

Karen announced that a number of members have volunteered to help prepare the newsletter for mailing each month, and to take it to the various pick up locations in our neighborhood. Other volunteers are still welcome, especially to take the newsletters to the Post Office bulk mail facility.

Larry Ivich, from the Hillsdale Mall, will be our March speaker. The current work on Hillsdale Blvd is to relocate the bus stop west from the former Mervyn's location. Members are urged to come to the March meeting to hear what else is planned for the future of the Mervyn's area, and other parts of the mall.

A member asked if BHNA is trying to stop the garbage rate increase. As mentioned last month, it will take many thousands of protests to stop this increase, which is unlikely. Members are encouraged to contact Roxanne Murray at the Public Works Department (522-7300) for more information about this, and to attend the City Council meeting, to make their feelings known.

Our speaker was Associate Planner Darcy Forsell, who presented the draft Hillsdale Station Plan. She passed out copies of the Power Point presentation, and forms on which the audience could jot down questions to ask during the meeting, or submit in writing after it was over. The draft plan is available for review at the Downtown Library. In response to a question, Darcy will see that a copy is also at the Hillsdale branch.

Highlights from her talk, and questions asked by the attendees included:

The Hillsdale Station Plan is a 20-year plan for approximately 150 acres of land, stretching from El Camino Real to Flores/Edison Streets, and from 25th Avenue to 36th Avenue. The planning process has been paid for with a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay area Governments (ABAG). The plan will not change anything in our current General Plan or codes (height limits, density limits, land use, etc.) It is a continuation of the previously adopted El Camino Real Plan and the Rail Transit Corridor Plan, which are currently in effect.

The planning process for this Plan has included several public workshops. The City has spent over \$20,000 on noticing the various workshops, study sessions and meetings. This outreach has led to the participation of more diverse sectors of our community, which do not ordinarily participate in these projects.

The plan has two parts. One is the actual Hillsdale Station development, which is intended to be much more than a train stop. The Hillsdale stop will move north of 31st Avenue, and is designed to include multi modal transit (buses, trains, shuttles, “kiss and ride drop off, parked cars), a public plaza, and possibly retail. This is envisioned where the current Borders Books and the Ana Furniture buildings sit. All station plans are subject to Caltrain decisions and outside funding. Current estimates are \$100,000 for a new transit center at an elevated station.

The second half of the plan addresses the El Camino “streetscape” (tree and median planting, wider sidewalks, improved pedestrian scale lighting), 25th Avenue upgrades, and sidewalk oriented land use requirements for redevelopment of the El Camino frontage and the Hillsdale Shopping Center. There are transit oriented (reduced) parking requirements, urban design for active uses on the ground floor of buildings, and encouraging neighborhood serving retail. The plan is completely dependent on market demand to effect any of these changes. Laurel Creek visibility should be incorporated in future redevelopment, where possible.

The plan is expected to go to the Planning Commission on March 22nd, and to the City Council in April, for approval.

If Caltrain and/or other sources of funding cannot fund a new train station, the land use part of the plan would still be able to move forward. Sidewalk improvements on 25th Avenue, including potential under grounding of utilities (PG&E as the lead agency), are planned “soon”. The City has already received funds for streetscape improvements between 28th and 31st Avenues on El Camino Real. The 25th Avenue improvements should follow soon after that.

BHNA was represented at the joint Planning Commission City Council study session recently, where we raised concerns about capping allowable parking in this area. The concern is that capped parking will just push cars into the part of the BHNA neighborhood close to El Camino, similar to the parking problems created by changes at the Hillsdale Gardens Apartments. Both the Planning Commission and City Council expressed their opposition to parking caps for this plan.

The current station site, which would be vacated in the future, has access and geometry constraints. It is very narrow and will be even more difficult to reach if 31st Avenue becomes an underpass, as is planned. Some of the land belongs to Caltrain. The HS Plan does not propose any significant uses in that area.

The group discussion raised several questions, which can only be answered by the Hillsdale Shopping Center folks. We look forward to Larry Ivich’s appearance in March, when we can continue this discussion about the Mall’s views on the Hillsdale Station Plan.

The group thanked Darcy Forsell for her informative presentation. Darcy stayed and spoke with people individually, as the meeting closed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45PM.

Submitted by Karen Herrel, Acting Secretary