

## **Davis Community Building Workshop: Looking to the Future instead of the Past**

The 1974 Davis General Plan made US municipal history for innovation, and the City of Davis has done everything it can to lock that sterile image long into our future.

To the Progressive Reactionaries who have dominated city politics since 1996, any change is bad. They will support pie in the sky, but when you talk about a real project, all they can do is oppose.

Too much City policy is defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA was invented by Governor Reagan's lawyers to bog down the environmental activists in delaying mechanisms in the courts. CEQA is not community organizing, it is ineffective and inefficient as municipal planning, it almost never improves the environment, and it narrowly defines socio-economic enhancement to land use building.

The current Davis plan has been out of date since 2015. City staff invented the Downtown Plan Advisory Committee (DPAC) process as another delaying tactic to minimize public involvement in the process. Basically staff uses an outside consultant architect to impose/announce decisions to the DPAC, which the DPAC is only allowed to rubber stamp approval – then city staff presents only what they want to the city council while claiming public engagement in support of the latest decision.

It is the staff's effort to perpetuate the status quo. How many people do you know besides the city staff, the city council and Judy Corbett support form-based coding, which is the only thing the Downtown Plan Advisory Committee is allowed to consider, until staff wants a quick approval for a recommendation to the City Council?

### **Davis Community Building Workshop**

The Davis Community Building Workshop is designed to address many of these criticisms: it is self-organizing, useful to each of the participants, future-oriented, and easy to share ideas with other people.

The Davis Community Building Workshop has 200 designated volunteer slots.

Davis is divided into 11 communities, plus UCD makes 12. Each of the 11 communities has 16 slots, and UCD has 24 slots. 8 of the slots in each community are for renters and 8 of the slots are for home owners. The remaining 24 slots go to UCD: 4 picked by UCD administration, 10 for UCD dorm residents and 10 for UCD commuters from out of Davis; for the Downtown with so few residents, half the slots are businesses.

### **Products and Outcomes:**

- build network for Davis as 11 communities of villages and neighborhoods
- build a real time model of the Davis economy
- establish what the issues are for the 2020 Davis City Council election for 3 seats on March 3<sup>rd</sup>
- apply the Viable System Model to the Davis economy and identify areas for potential economic enhancement
- build a Viable System Model of the relationship between the City of Davis and UC Davis, and identify problems created by UC Davis from the City's perspective.
- create a first draft of a proposed City of Davis charter based on Policy Governance.

7:00-8:00 Introductions/Viable System Model applied to your community and Davis as you see it

8:00-8:45 Project teams

8:45-9:00 break

9:00-10:00 Policy Governance/The Davis Economy

Second Monday of the month, commitment for October 14, November 11, December 9, January 13, February 10, March 9, April 13, May 11, and June 8.

Davis Neighbors Night Out (DNNO) is Sunday, October 13. Most Workshop Participants should expect to attend at least one event. Copies of the Workshop community survey should be available for people to add their thoughts about the future of Davis.

Prior to the October 14 Workshop, each of the 12 Community Groups will meet to: pick chair and co-chair, encourage each person to complete their 1) personal VSM, 2) VSM of their community, 3) VSM of Davis (these will all be very

different from each other), 4) a VSM of Davis and UCD, from Davis' point of view (the bogus UCD Long Range Development Plan is their inconsiderate version), and 5) a VSM analysis of the Davis economy.

At the October 14 Workshop, after a brief introduction of the VSM and Policy Governance, each community group will convene and develop their first VSM analysis of their community as a group, and their analysis of the City. That will give us 12 draft City VSMs.

#### Workshop Coordination Team

This will be the internal management system for the workshop.

In preparation for each monthly Workshop, a team with a member from each of the 12 Community Groups will coordinate the Workshop Process through to June. First, the Workshop Team will consolidate the 12 draft City VSMs into one new version, and distribute the new City VSM and the updated 12 Community VSMs for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop November 11.

The second part of the evening is to develop citywide projects of interest. We will use the economic renewal guide grassroots approach to community building. The Davis economy really does not exist; there are a few bars, restaurants, and hotels, but no real businesses with jobs.

The economic renewal guide process: Oct: what I love, what I would change, what would be better; Nov: what we have to work with; Dec: discovering opportunities; Jan: generating project ideas; Feb: picking projects and creating citywide project teams; Mar: team reports.

The third part of the evening will be an introduction to Policy Governance in the context of a critical analysis of the Davis economy.

Each subsequent Workshop will be internally organized by the participants, coordinated by the Workshop Coordination Team. Self-organized like the 2<sup>nd</sup> Continental Congress.

It is the inevitable consequence of the Viable System Model. It gives people the opportunity to have better communication.

The thinking is inexorably democratic.

At the end of each monthly Workshop, each participant will have a laundry list of specific tasks that they expect to accomplish for their community before the next monthly Workshop.

When you leave a city council meeting, it is a rare thing to feel like you accomplished something, made progress and moved forward. The Progressive Reactionaries and the city staff only want to stop any change.

This will require thinking outside the CEQA box that has defined economic development ever since Ronald Reagan was Governor of California.

Texts (all available at no charge; Economic Renewal Guide specifically approves it):

- Davis Community Building Handbook by Jon Li
- Google "Jon Walker" + VSM for Jon Walker's excellent introductory guide to the VSM
- Leonard, Allenna, "How to do your personal VSM," (<http://allennaleonard.com/PersVSM.html>)
- Diagnosing the System for Organizations by Stafford Beer (about how to apply the Viable System Model)
- Disseminated Information in Real Time, or How to Run a Country (or a City) by Stafford Beer
- Platform for Change by Stafford Beer Tutorial by Jon Li
- Economic Renewal Guide: Collaborative Process for Sustainable by Michael J. Kinsley
- Google search John Carver and Policy Governance

#### Cost:

\$1.00 + per Workshop, funds go to pay Jon Li's expenses to put on the workshop, including going to the Stafford Beer Fan Club Metaphorum, November 1-3 in the Netherlands.

For more information: Jon Li, 753-0352, [jonli@dcn.org](mailto:jonli@dcn.org).

## Davis Community Visions: Installment #1

### 1. Dennis

El Macero

Home owner

No UCD connections

Retired

The purpose of the city is to provide services like police, fire, traffic, economic development and parks. The city in general, and the city council in particular, is so distracted with minutia that the important things the city must do are being neglected to the point of crisis. Roads in Davis are a crisis now, and parks are well on their way to requiring major rehabilitation. Trying to protect the downtown businesses is the excuse that the city has made to destroy the potential for economic development: neighborhood businesses are not allowed to have outside service because it might compete with the downtown. That means the threat of success kills the potential. The Davis economy is more than just the downtown.

### 2. Dane

Downtown

Renter

Wife is a UCD student

Bike mechanic

We come from Portland; after my wife completes her Ph.D., we are going to have to move back to the Portland area because it is too expensive to live in Davis, as much as we appreciate that Davis would be a great place to raise our two children, Davis is so expensive that it has become a place where rich people raise their children. While the UCD students have racial diversity, there is a real lack of economic diversity in Davis. Working class and low income people of color, and different religious or political beliefs are systematically excluded because they do not have economic privilege. Housing affordability is key: whether it is at the state or the city level, policy changes are necessary so that housing is affordable.

### 2. Craig

Covell East Nugget/Birch

Home owner

No UCD connections

Home based business: IT support

Shopping: Trader Joe's, Grocery Outlet, Nugget, CVS

Meeting places: patio at Nugget

Public services: very good

Police: interactions quite positive

Potential for economic development: excellent for spinoffs from UCD

Environmental concerns: superfund sites

Vision of the future: As UCD continues to improve, the city infrastructure continues to deteriorate, especially streets, sewers, and water. City council prioritizing by squeaky wheel approach by powerful influential people. Council needs to define what is right and correct to maintain infrastructure, price it out, explain to citizens costs, impacts and implications, then put it to a vote. If the residents vote down taxes to maintain infrastructure, then it is their own fault and experience the consequences. A declining Davis forces UCD to shift to Sacramento.

### 3. David

South Davis West

Renter

Former UCD Student

Retired

As I grow older and it gets harder to walk, it seems like Davis should do more to accommodate seniors. What do I do when I run out of money to pay my rent? I am trying to avoid becoming homeless.

### 4. Business person

Downtown

Parking for employees downtown is a real, on-going problem that the city only talks about - there needs to be real improvement.



5. Singh

South Davis West

Commuter: Rancho Cordova

No UCD connections

Retail clerk

Davis is an attractive place because of the University. But there are not enough places for people to rent. I love to work here but the rent is so high that rentals are not available. I drive 32 miles each way to go to work because I cannot afford the high rents. If I could, I would live here. The more people that shop, that spend money, that pay taxes, then the local economy will do better and people pay more property and sales taxes. Students do not pay taxes, working people with jobs do. Working people are priced out of the Davis housing market.

6. Ivan

Downtown

Commuter: Woodland

UCD graduate

In Hawaii and around the world, Davis is famous for our bikes as well as UCD. We have bikes and bike paths, but it could be so much more. We could really make Davis more of a bicycle friendly town, and the center of a bicycle conscious region. Make Davis the bicycle Mecca of California, the place that is so cool that people come from all over to bike, explore, experience our great countryside and year-round bicycling climate. UCD has been growing since the 1950s and it is going to continue to grow new things, new adventures, new things to look at around UCD. UCD's growth is turning Davis into a mini-San Francisco; Davis needs to connect up with UCD to create more bicycle amenities, including more parking for cars for people from out of town who bring their bikes, which would require real parking structures. We need a serious plan. Parking should be free, or realistically cheap, like a maximum of \$5/day, which means 24 hours. Then people can come, park their car, ride their bikes around the Davis-Sacramento area for a few days, and then maybe go on to the Pacific coast and continue their green geographic high energy low fossil fuel time of their lives.

7. Gippy

South Davis West

Commuter: Sacramento

No UCD connections

Retail clerk

Davis needs more apartments. More affordable housing. The rent is too high. Cars coming off the freeway onto Richards at Olive Drive is very dangerous, especially for the UCD students who live on Olive Drive. The city needs to build an overcrossing for the railroad tracks from Olive Drive to Second Street, so that the UCD students can go straight to campus through the downtown without fighting the cars at Richards Blvd.

8. Jon

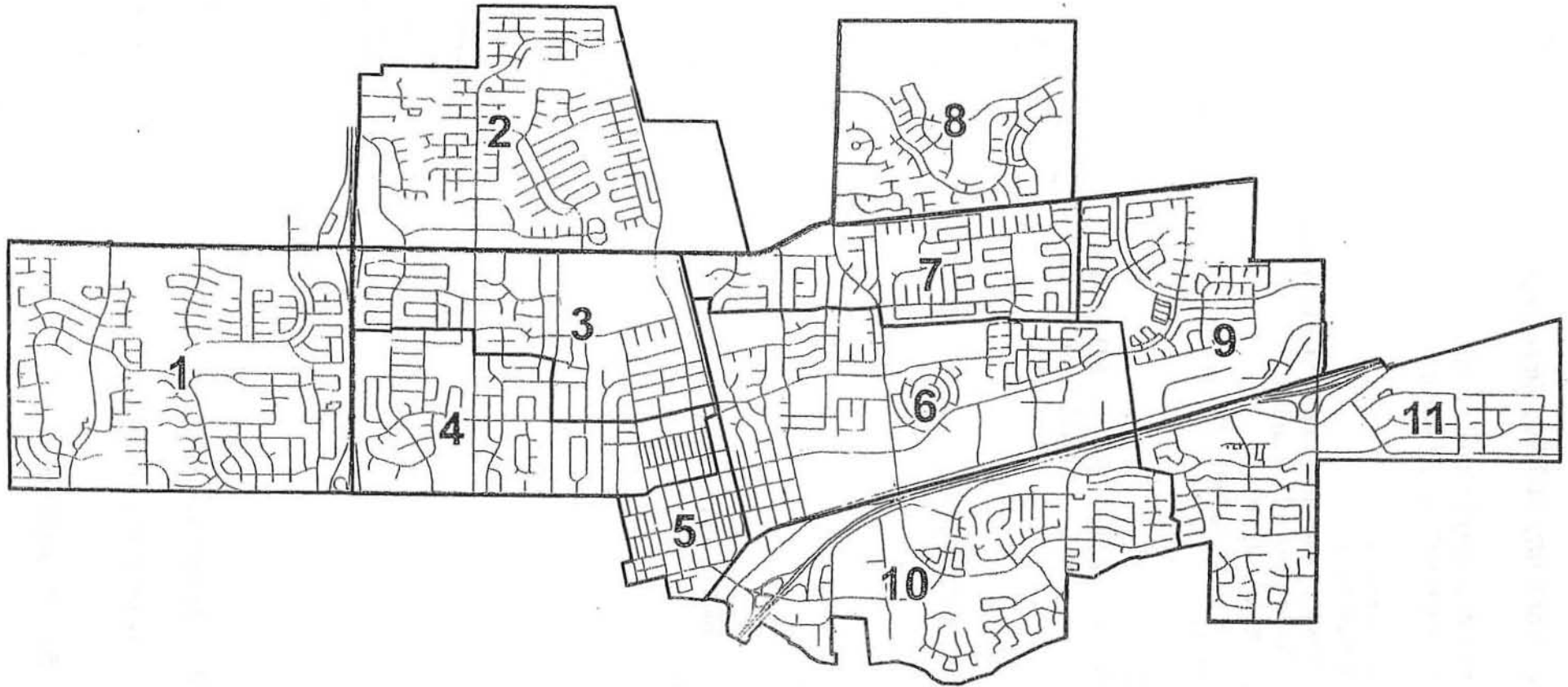
South Davis West

Renter

UCD graduate

Writer/dog handler

City staff only care about their own jobs; the city council is focused on the status quo, so we have a weak mayor/weak city manager form of government. Since the anti-growth people took over the general plan process in 1996, Davis politics has stagnated because staff prohibits input. The current Downtown Plan process only meets at the convenience of the outside consultant, to rubber stamp whatever the staff wants. City council is then told about the latest staff recommendation, calling it an adequate public process. As a result, City Council public comments are mean spirited out of frustration by citizens that the city council is not leading staff, so staff is going into its own dark no-where. Part of the problem is that city government is too big for most citizens to comprehend, but it is how city staff think. I propose that we force city staff to think in terms of communities, so that we can find common language, common ground, and a workable future.



Community Map Number	Community Name	Approximate number of residential units	Approximate population (number of units times 2.6 persons per unit)
1	Far West Davis / Stonegate	4376	11378
2	North Central Davis	3273	8510
3	West Davis / Anderson / Marketplace	2436	6334
4	West Davis / U Mall Graduate	2228	5793
5	Downtown	498	1295
6	East 8th	3393	8822
7	Nugget / Birch Lane	1890	4914
8	Wildhorse / Covell East	1126	2928
9	Mace Ranch / 80 Target	1245	3237
10	Western South Davis	2797	7272
11	Eastern South Davis	1877	4880
Totals		25139	65361

## ***Survey/Application for the Davis Community Building Workshop***

This questionnaire is your personal Davis Community Economy Plan, which is the building element for creating a new Davis City Economy.

Name of the Davis community where you live/reside:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> West South Davis         | <input type="checkbox"/> West/U Mall Grad                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> East South Davis         | <input type="checkbox"/> Downtown/Business Improvement District, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mace Ranch/80 Target     | <input type="checkbox"/> West/Anderson/Marketplace               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wildhorse                | <input type="checkbox"/> Northcentral Davis                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Covell East Nugget/Birch | <input type="checkbox"/> Far West Davis/Stonegate                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> East 8th                 | <input type="checkbox"/> UCD                                     |

Do you rent\_\_\_, own\_\_\_ or commute\_\_\_ ?

Do you have any UCD connections? Student\_\_\_ Faculty\_\_\_ Staff\_\_\_ UCD Alumni\_\_\_

Where do you work: in Davis \_\_\_ Work at UCD\_\_\_ Work Elsewhere (where)\_\_\_

What do you do?:

Your Community Economy Resources:

Grocery Store where you do most of your regular shopping:

Stores where you shop regularly:

Short Stop/7-11/All-Night Stores in your community:

Meeting Places in your community:

Evaluate the Problems and Resources available in your community:

Related to your Home and where you live

Transportation

Health care

Education

Youth, Seniors, Art, Recreation

Utilities

Citywide Computer Networking

Public Services

Police

Fire

Potential for Economic Development:

Environmental Concerns:

Other Unmet needs:

Resource Contact People in your community that you can count on:

Your vision of the future of Davis and your vision of your community:

How Should Davis Evolve?

Send your personal statement to: Jon Li, 753-0352, jonli@dcn.org.