

COMMENTARY

Editorials, letters, columns and other opinions

Googling 'Co-Location' for San Diego Land Use



COMMENTARY

Gary H. London

Recently, Google asked the northern California city of Mountain View, the international headquarters of all things Google, to alter its zoning laws so that homes and stores can be built near its headquarters.

The online search giant has several thousand employees who work at its headquarters in a location with a tough commute. Public transportation in Google's North Bayshore region is limited, so the company sends buses around the Bay Area to shuttle employees to work.

The issue that Google raises has to be familiar to San Diego city and regional planners who have recently been asked to rethink the notion that certain lands in our region remain virtual "zoning walls" for the exclusive use of industrial/research and development/administrative properties.

The Perils of Co-Location

The catalyst for the last round of our local fight about this issue, dubbed "co-location," was several years ago when a local developer asked that a large property in Sorrento Mesa, on which an obsolescent industrial warehouse was located, be rezoned to allow for construction of residential apartments on the site.

It seemed to me at the time to be a great idea. **Qualcomm Inc.**'s headquarters were just up the block. Other large employers were located nearby. Together the companies employed thousands of people who commuted to work. These commuters congested the feeder roads and other main transportation corridors in Sorrento Mesa.

Yet the purported "protectors" of these industries convinced the city of San Diego not to relent on this issue.

The housing was never built. No matter that at the time several technology companies were shipping in foreign labor and housing them throughout the region in any temporary housing they could find.

Clearly there was something of a "disconnect" between the business community and the needs of their employees. These businesses, through their organizational representatives, asked that the neighborhood be "preserved" for the use of businesses similar to those already located there. While they legitimately needed space for future expansion, they were apparently concerned that allowing residential development was a dangerous precedent, a sort of encroachment on their territory.

They even raised the specter that it was dangerous to live near their workplace. What if there was a chemical leak? It was a silly, provocative argument which had no basis because our federal and state standards already clearly protect against such hazards.

Yet they made the argument and the city bought it and backed off.

The New Luddites

There is a great irony in all of this. Arguably Google, one of the world's most innovative companies, wants to house their employees near its place of work. Google is even willing to get into the housing business by creating a modern version of "company housing." It is an old American concept. And it is quite adaptable to modern business models, as Google clearly points out.

Yet, the city of San Diego and other public agencies are the luddites. They want to stick with the old rules of zoning — the very basis of which is the separation of land uses — when they ought to be embracing the integration of land uses. It just makes planning sense.

To accommodate our region's growing population, we must encourage development in already existing communities in

presumably denser integrated, mixed-use urban settings. In papers we posted last week (see our Web site for "No More (Green) Fields of Dreams") I pointed out that to accommodate the 1 million additional persons the San Diego Association of Governments projects will come to our region by 2050, we will need to provide almost 400,000 new housing units. More than 80 percent of that growth is expected to take the form of multifamily housing in already existing communities.

Work/Life Balance

The search giant's goal, according to David Radcliffe, Google's vice president of real estate and workplace services, is to "provide ... work/life balance for all, and efficiently manage transportation."

Am I implying that Google is more progressive than Qualcomm, or any of the other myriad of technology companies residing in our region? No. But I doubt that most have a vice president of real estate and workplace services. If they do, they are likely mostly focused on the workplace, not the home place. And that is a terrible mistake.

If we are to re-create and ultimately sustain a modern, 21st century technology community in this region we better turn to the issue of how we are going to house these employees. It is simply not good enough for SANDAG to throw out the notion that we have the space. Our policy makers have to make the space available and clear the entitlement to allow developers to build these new housing concepts in nontraditional locations because there are virtually no remaining traditional locations left to grow in San Diego. Certainly not enough to accommodate 1 million people.

Gary H. London is president of The London Group Realty Advisors, which provides real estate consulting and economic analysis. Check him out on the Web at londongroup.com.

We Are All Engaged in Selling Something



COMMENTARY

Ann Marie Houghtailing

When I asked a new client this week to explain their sales process, I was told that they didn't like the idea of "selling." This is not an unusual statement. I regularly encounter entrepreneurs and even midsize

companies that believe producing a quality product or service is enough.

When I ask what they say when someone objects to their price or how they ask for business, I'm frequently met with a lot of chair-shifting and silence. They worry that selling will be uncomfortable or even offensive to their customer. You may have a phenomenal product or service, but if you can't sell that product in the marketplace, it's irrelevant.

Despite the fact that we are a capitalist society we maintain a cultural phobia and shame about selling. Transacting has existed before we were using shells as a form of currency, and now that we have moved further away from manufacturing our economy is becoming increasingly dependent upon service and

selling. If you want to survive in this rapidly changing marketplace, you will do well to learn how to sell and become more comfortable with the sales process, because all business is sustained through the generation of revenue, and most jobs, particularly good jobs, are dependent upon transacting. If you can generate revenue you will never go hungry.

Salespeople: The Engine of Business

Attorneys, accountants, bankers, writers and architects have to sell. Selling is no longer relegated to certain professional demographics. Have you gone to the post office lately? You can't mail a letter without being solicited for stamps, as well as expeditious and certified services.

I don't know when or how our cultural aversion to selling evolved, but I can tell you that few people are proud to identify themselves as sales professionals despite the fact that salespeople are the engine of nearly every viable business you can name.

Elegant, Ethical, Professional and Valuable

It's 2010, and we are using phrases like business and relationship development in place of the 'S' word, but at the end of the day we are all in the business of selling some product, service, idea or

policy to someone. We are ALL selling something. Until you sell something in your business, you have no business. The sooner we elevate the sales profession and integrate and teach selling as a measurable, transferable skill, the more productive and rapid our growth. When done well, selling can be elegant, ethical, professional and valuable to consumers.

It's important to believe that what you have to offer your customer is valuable and will improve the quality of his life or business. If you don't believe that you need to find something else to sell. I encourage every professional to approach selling with less judgment, fear and anxiety, and with more methodology and precision. I assure you that the person you are selling to is selling something to someone else. Consider the sales process a value to you and your customer.

Lastly, I'll let you in on a secret: There's no such thing as a natural born salesperson — we were all trained.

Ann Marie Houghtailing, principal of The Houghtailing Group, is a sales trainer, motivational speaker and entrepreneur who has trained sales professionals throughout the country in a variety of industries.

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

4909 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92123
858-277-6359 • Fax 858-277-6398
E-mail: sdbj@sdbj.com • Web site: www.sdbj.com

PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER

Armon Mills amills@sdbj.com • ext. 3153

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Scott Whitley swhitley@sdbj.com • ext. 3132

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Reo Carr rcarr@sdbj.com • ext. 3104

EDITORIAL

Managing Editor

Brad Sondak bsondak@sdbj.com • ext. 3139

Asst. Managing Editor

Julie Gallant jgallant@sdbj.com • ext. 3108

Contributing Editor

Tom York tyork@sdbj.com

Senior Reporter

Mike Allen mallen@sdbj.com • ext. 3149

Reporters

Heather Chambers hchambers@sdbj.com • ext. 3125

Brad Graves bradg@sdbj.com • ext. 3115

Kudos/Giving Columnist

Joyce Glazer jglazer@sdbj.com

Photographers

Melissa Jacobs • mj@sandiegophoto.com

Stephen Whalen • peak15@roadrunner.com

RESEARCH

Research Director

Kevin Black kblack@sdbj.com • ext. 3114

Research Assistant

Andrew Schweizer aschweizer@sdbj.com • ext. 3112

Editorial Assistant

Katie Pirillo kpirillo@sdbj.com • ext. 3120

ADVERTISING

Sales Manager

Dale Ganzow dganow@sdbj.com • ext. 3135

Account Executives

Cindy Dunford cdunford@sdbj.com • ext. 3152

Lisa Elrod lelrod@sdbj.com • ext. 3131

Jim LaMarca jlamarca@sdbj.com • ext. 3150

Lauren Rubinstein lrubinstein@sdbj.com • ext. 3133

Classified Account Executive

Mallory Bullard mbullard@sdbj.com • ext. 3134

Sales Administrator

Kathi McArthur kmcArthur@sdbj.com • ext. 3129

Events Administrator

April West aedelston@sdbj.com • ext. 3151

Production Artist/Photographer

Michael S. Domine mdomine@sdbj.com • ext. 3119

ART DEPARTMENT

Director of Production

Darlene Alilain-Horn dalilain-horn@sdbj.com • ext. 3102

CIRCULATION

Director of Circulation & Marketing

Linda Olander lolander@sdbj.com • ext. 3141

Director of Circulation Sales

Lawanda Ashworth lashworth@sdbj.com • ext. 3118

Circulation Assistant

Casimira Lavala-Martinez clavala@sdbj.com • ext. 3142

ADMINISTRATION

Controller

Mark J. Misiano mmisiano@sdbj.com • ext. 3122

Executive Assistant

Cindi Tyburski ctyburski@sdbj.com • ext. 3121/3124

Receptionist

Dorothy Blanchard dblanchard@sdbj.com • ext. 3101

