Background

“If you don’t have understanding, how can you have compassion?”
--Education focus group participant

“I love it. The food, the culture, the people. White, black, brown—it all adds to the richness.” --Paul Fong, Chinese-American instructor at Evergreen College

WHY WE NEED A SUMMIT ON IMMIGRANT NEEDS AND AN ACTION PLAN FOR IMMIGRANTS IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

Santa Clara County is a demographic, economic, political, and multi-cultural microcosm of the paradoxical future in high-growth areas of the globe undergirded by high productivity. This multi-cultural microcosm is fueled by immigrants, or foreign born, who have been called “the steroids of the new economy”.

No other 1.75 million people on earth live at quite the pace, living mostly to work, in the midst of permanent innovation, among immigrants from every corner of the world.

This summit on immigrant needs and contributions represents a huge community effort to understand the shifting sands of Santa Clara Valley: from those who till the dirt or clean the dirty to those who make silicon chips or use them for programming or for higher research. In all these instances, immigrants play a fundamental role.

The key reasons for researching the needs and contributions of immigrants in Santa Clara County and developing implementing recommendations, within a study of the global context, are five-fold:

1. Immigration provides the underpinning for the profound demographic shift and multi-cultural bonanza that Santa Clara County has experienced within the last 25 years and particularly within the last decade. “Immigrants ‘R Us.”
2. To know which immigrants come to Santa Clara County and why, it is important to understand immigration within the context of the global economy and the contributions of immigrants within the new economy.
3. Following the recession of the early 1990s, an anti-immigrant hysteria led to anti-immigrant policies and practices that have harmed hundreds of thousands of immigrants in Santa Clara County, “yearning to be free” from the restrictions.
4. Our collective need to integrate, improve, and transform the lives of all residents of Santa Clara County depends upon our ability to integrate, improve, and transform the lives of immigrants and the need to re-think planning, policies, and practices.
5. The deep-seated needs of immigrants in Santa Clara County were assessed by community members, the Social Services Agency, and the Office of Human Relations and they were recognized by many entities and the Board of Supervisors in particular as assessed needs not only to be understood but to be addressed.

1. The Demographic Shift: “They Are Us”

The quantity, percentage, diversity, and pattern of immigration to Santa Clara County best exemplifies the profound demographic shift that is transforming the racial and ethnic composition and the economy and social fabric of the United States, California, and Santa Clara County. In Santa Clara County, “They are us.”

A. Quantity

The demographic center of immigration in Southern California is Los Angeles County and the demographic center of immigration in Northern California is Santa Clara County. Data from prior years and indicators from Census 2000 show that the best estimate of the number of immigrants in Santa Clara County is nearly 600,000 out of a projected population of 1,750,000. This is over twice as many immigrants as any other county in the Bay Area. Of California’s 58 counties, only Los Angeles County and Orange County have more immigrants than Santa Clara County.

Santa Clara County is a majority minority county with more Asian or Latino immigrants than any other Bay Area county. Approximately 49% are white, 25% Latino, 23% Asian, and 3% Black. Similarly, the City of San Jose, the 11th largest country in the United States with a population of 925,000, is a majority minority city and has more Vietnamese than any city outside of Vietnam. The white population was more than 80% of the county’s population for most of the 20th century, including as recently as 1970.

More importantly, when you include children born in the United States who have immigrant parents to the number of immigrants in Santa Clara County, almost 1.1 million county residents (61% of the county’s population) constitute what the San Jose Mercury News calls “immigrant stock”, or direct immigrant lineage, as of 1996-97. The implications of adding about 27% of the county’s US-born children of immigrants with approximately 15% of the county’s foreign-born children of immigrants are staggering. The impacts in schools and neighborhoods alone—the challenges of teaching and learning and of healthy multi-cultural co-existence—provide the county and its 15 cities with rich barriers and benefits unforeseen until the recent past. Under what conditions will these children enter the workforce? Mixed status households of US-born and immigrants means that when we address immigration policies and practices, we are in fact addressing issues that affect vast numbers of people in our county, many more than those who are foreign born.
According to the 1990 census, 370,695 of the county’s residents were immigrants. The six leading countries of origin, with ten thousand or more foreign born, were the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Since 1980</th>
<th>Before 1980</th>
<th>Totals:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>39,101</td>
<td>35,746</td>
<td>74,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>32,756</td>
<td>16,149</td>
<td>48,905</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>23,142</td>
<td>19,824</td>
<td>42,966</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>8,131</td>
<td>7,974</td>
<td>16,105</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>9,860</td>
<td>4,968</td>
<td>14,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>8,954</td>
<td>3,446</td>
<td>12,400</td>
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This information was made available by the U.S. Census Bureau and reported in the San Jose Mercury News in September 1993. Similarly, we will probably not receive accurate data regarding country of origin and total number of immigrants in Santa Clara County from Census 2000 until the year 2003. Of the 370,695, a total of 15,190 stated they were from “abroad”, meaning that the above figures are understated. INS data and other evidence suggest that India has since surpassed Taiwan in the total number of residents living in Santa Clara County.

In the next two decades, Santa Clara County will gain more new residents (261,400) and more new jobs (231,000) than any other Bay Area county. San Jose will gain 129,300 new residents, reaching a population of 1,054,000. Over the next 40 years, it is predicted that Santa Clara County will grow by 47%, reaching over 2.5 million residents.

As of September 2000, there were 97,377 Latino registered voters in Santa Clara County, 29,472 Vietnamese-American registered voters, and 23,592 Chinese-American registered voters. In one City Council District in San Jose (District 4), Asians make up 68% of the community but only 45% of the registered voters.

More than three million of the U.S. Asian-born population lives in three major urban areas. The Bay Area is the leading area: 54.3% of immigrants in the Bay Area are Asian. The other two major urban areas, the Los Angeles and Chicago metropolitan areas, have 28.5% and 20.6% Asian populations as percentages of their foreign-born.

In California, 8 million of the 34 million residents are immigrants, more than any other state. An annual net flow of immigrants into the state of 250,000 is likely to continue in the coming decade. Of all immigrants who came to the United States in the 1980s and 1990s, about 4 in 10 came to California. This was true for refugees, lawful permanent residents, and undocumented immigrants. Of the 9 million plus residents of Los Angeles, 2.8 million residents or 31% are immigrants.

Until recently domestic migration from other states was a larger source of population growth in California than immigration. Over the decade of the 1990s, about two
million more people left California than arrived from other states. Those entering California had higher educational levels and those leaving California were more likely to live in poverty. California experienced a net outflow of Latinos of over a half million in the 1990s, whereas a higher percentage of Asians and Blacks arrived in California than left for other states during the same period. In the late 1990s, Asians began to leave in higher numbers.

Only 200,000 immigrants left California between 1993 and 1999; most immigrants remain in the state they have chosen as the destination of their immigration. California continues to attract a large number of immigrants, both legal and undocumented, with very high levels of education and even more with very low levels of education, as immigrants satisfy a growing portion of California’s labor needs. In Los Angeles, net domestic outflows of poor California residents are more than offset by immigration and natural birth rates. Santa Clara County appears to be following a similar pattern.

Nationally, 26 million inhabitants of the United States population are immigrants, including about 6 million undocumented immigrants. Of the 26 million immigrants in 1997, over one-half (13.1 million) were born in Latin America and about one quarter (6.8 million) were born in Asia. As a whole, the largest number of immigrants comes from Mexico, the Philippines, China, Vietnam, and India, in that order. Driven by the demands of high tech, from 1990 to 1997 the highest gains in the number of legal immigrants have come from China (430,000, with a 64% increase) and India (298,000, with the highest percentage of growth at 66%). The number of immigrants in the United Stated increased by about six million from 1990 to 1997.

Currently, 237 counties out of 999 counties in the United States are majority minority. About 35 million of the U.S. population is Black, 31 million is Latino, and 11 million is Asian and Pacific Islander. By 2010, Latinos will surpass Blacks to constitute the largest minority in the United States.

**B. Percentage**

Except for a few higher-percentage areas like New York City and Miami, Santa Clara County ranks at the very top of areas within the United States that have a large percentage of immigrants. One-third or 33% of the county’s population is foreign-born.

Santa Clara County is home to 5 of the 10 school districts in the Bay Area with the largest percentage of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Of the 19 school districts in the Bay Area with a percentage of LEP students above the statewide average, 10 are located in Santa Clara County. For example, 55% of the Franklin-McKinley Elementary School District, 45% of the Berryessa Elementary School District, 31% of East Side Union High School District, and 26% of San Jose Unified are LEP students. Latinos, Asians, and African Americans now constitute more than 60% of the county’s students.
Similarly, 53% of Santa Clara County’s CalWORKS recipients report that they possess a first language other than English. About 2/10 are lawful permanent residents and over 3/10 are naturalized citizens. Many refugees and immigrants who have legally entered the country—the only immigrants eligible for welfare—are finding that with little or basic English language skills and job skills, they are challenged by the entry-level pay and the strict time limits of welfare reform in their goal to become self-sufficient.

According to state demographers, by 2015 Santa Clara County will be about one-third Asian, one-third Hispanic and one-third white. In 2025 whites will be the third largest racial group.

The largest ethnic groups in the City of San Jose are Asian and Pacific Islander (API) at 34% (10% Vietnamese) and Latino at 33% (27% Mexican). Thus 67% of the residents of San Jose are either of either API or Latino heritage. Less than 30% are white.

About 24% of California’s residents are immigrants, and 46% of Californians are either immigrants or have an immigrant parent. About one third of the state’s annual population growth in the past decade was because of immigration. About a third of the nation’s immigrants reside in California. As of the year 2000, California is a majority minority state, with whites comprising 49% of the state’s population, Latinos 31%, Asian and Pacific Islanders 12%, African Americans 7% and American Indians under 1%.

In California whites make up almost ¾ of all votes cast, even though they make up less than ½ of the state’s population. Of California’s Latino electorate, nearly one-half was born outside the United States.

Nationally, about 1 of every 10 persons in the United States is an immigrant, or 10% of the United States population. This percentage compares to 15% at the turn of last century. By 2050, 25% of the US population will be Latino, African Americans will be at about 16%, Asians will increase from 4% to 9%, and the white population will decrease from three quarters (3/4) to one-half (1/2).

C. Diversity
Santa Clara County parallels New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles in constituting one of the most diverse populations on earth. Within 15 years the county’s population will have equal numbers of whites, Latinos, and Asians, with a smaller number of African Americans. Immigration is clearly driving the demographic shift.

According to figures and projections from the Immigration and Naturalization Service, since 1990 approximately 200,000 immigrants have legally entered Santa Clara County from 177 countries. This does not include temporary entries such as those on H1-B,
tourist, or student visas, undocumented immigrants, or the in-migration of immigrants from other counties and states.

One indicator of the incredible immigrant diversity in Santa Clara County is that the county continues to offer free citizenship days in 18 languages. The Summit on Immigrant Needs public assistance surveys were completed in 15 languages.

Many school districts report the profound challenges and benefits derived from having students from dozens of countries in their classrooms. School districts from Franklin McKinley to East Side Union to San Jose/Evergreen Community College District possess student populations of about two-thirds (2/3) immigrant and/or their US-born children, reflecting the community they serve.

About two-thirds (2/3) of neighborhoods in Santa Clara County have become more diverse. In one working class West San Jose neighborhood of about 27,000 residents in zip code 95117, almost 3,000 immigrants from 66 countries have moved into the neighborhood since 1990. On the other hand, about one-third (1/3) of the county’s neighborhoods indicate patterns of re-segregation. Zip code 95110 in downtown San Jose is 77% Latino and zip code 95133 in Berryessa is 46% Asian. Latinos, Vietnamese, and Blacks are largely settled in East San Jose; Filipinos are centered in Milpitas; and many Koreans and Taiwanese live in the West Valley.

D. Pattern

Santa Clara County is an immigrant demographic microcosm of the United States: five of the top six sending countries to the United States are the top five sending countries to Santa Clara County. These are Mexico, the Philippines, India, Vietnam, and China (PRC). Only Cuba (3.5% of immigrants nationally) is not represented in high numbers in the county. Similarly, these are the top five countries of origin of immigrant public assistance recipients in Santa Clara County, with Mexico and Vietnam constituting over 85% of recipients within these top five.

In the same light, Santa Clara County is home to a large number of refugees from the top five sending countries to the United States. These refugees had a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, ethnicity, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. These refugees who are resettled in Santa Clara County in large numbers are from Bosnia/Herzegovina, the Former Soviet Union, Vietnam, Somalia, and Iran.

When we examine the types of immigrant jobs in Santa Clara County, the county also reflects the United States immigrant occupational structure. In the areas of agriculture work in south county, low-paid service jobs throughout the county, and high tech employment in north and west county, Santa Clara County’s immigrant job structure represents a microcosm of the hourglass economy and a potent portent of immigrant employment trends nationally, given the low unemployment rate, the United States’ aging population, and the need for younger workers to uphold the social security
system. For example, in Silicon Valley technical workers from India, China, and Taiwan dominate the computer and internet industries (where 36% of Asian immigrants are employed in professional or managerial jobs, versus 24% for all immigrants and 30% for the US-born), and workers from Mexico dominate agricultural and janitorial positions.

2. The Global Context and the Contributions of Immigrants

A. The Global Context

If we are serious about understanding immigrants in Santa Clara County we must be serious about understanding what is happening in the world. Why do many immigrants abandon their families, their friends, and everything they know to come to the United States? What are the particular reasons that they choose Silicon Valley, and once here, why do they stay here, or do they?

Immigration to Santa Clara County is intimately related to globalization and the dominant features of the world economy: 1) the growing polarization of haves and have-nots: 1/5 of the world’s resources are used by 4/5 of the world’s population and 4/5 of the world’s resources are used by 1/5 of the world’s population, 2) within the growing polarization, a more narrow polarization of the “haves” into a narrow segment of super-rich, concentrated in the United States and increasingly concentrated in Silicon Valley, and 3) the corporate use of third world countries to exploit inexpensive labor, natural resources, and markets for goods, services, and gains through financial and monetary policies that favor them, exacerbating the north-south, “developing-underdeveloping” rift of nations on earth.

With the United States’ dominant role in the world, these economic realities are increasingly backed up by military force, geopolitics, foreign policy, control of international finance institutions, and foreign aid policies. Civil wars increasingly have less to do with local ethnic or religious differences than they do with the above economic considerations, as indicated by the focus group conducted with eleven leaders of eleven different countries with large immigrant populations in Santa Clara County, in May 2000.

Corporate leaders in Silicon Valley correctly point out that “Moore’s Law”—the ability to basically double the number of transistors on a piece of silicon every 18 months and lower prices for electronics products—can open up vast areas of consumption of products and information. The electronics revolution certainly does have the potential to improve consumption patterns around the world.

However, when the ability of Silicon Valley to revolutionize novelty, price, preferences, portable memory, marketing touch points, data bases, and networks is compared to the desire of Silicon Valley to actively mold policies that would counter
the global trends of inequality and meet the fundamental human needs of 4/5 of the world’s population, it becomes readily apparent that the existing world order of hungry consumers will remain hungry. Access to land, resources, food, housing, water, electricity, health care, literacy, democratic participation, and wages or income to consume adequately—including to adequately consume electronics products—are what need to be revolutionized for the bulk of humanity. And some of that humanity is right here in Silicon Valley.

The county is the entity of last resort to help poor people meet their needs. Immigrants constitute a significant portion of poor people in Santa Clara County. In order to counter the trends of the need immigrants have to immigrate, and to help those who are in Santa Clara County and can contribute mightily to its success, the county seeks to enlist the help of corporations located in Silicon Valley.

B. The Contributions of Immigrants

The invaluable and essential contributions of immigrants in Santa Clara County and in the United States provide an indispensable backdrop to understanding their needs within an overall context. Although Santa Clara County has devoted 18 months to studying the needs of immigrants and making recommendations on how to address their needs, it also takes great pride in pointing out everything that immigrants have given to enhance the lives of all county residents.

Immigrants have given their hearts, minds, hands, and souls.

Not only the growth of Silicon Valley but also the satisfaction of the basic and higher needs of Santa Clara County residents would be moderate and not robust without the critical, continuous contributions of immigrants.

In section III we
Explore the methodologies and theories of analysis of the complex issue of the contributions of immigrants, such as the cost/benefit analysis of immigrants to United States society,
Develop a conceptual framework for analyzing the contributions of immigrants, and
Detail the actual, considerable contributions of immigrants in Santa Clara County

3. Anti-Immigrant Policies and Practices

With rising unemployment, the recession of the early 1990s sparked a frontal attack on the benefits of immigrants to United States society. Suddenly, as has occurred throughout the downside of cycles of capitalism in the United States, immigrants became expendable, “the bad guys”, the root cause of the recession. They were no
longer needed and in fact constituted a drain on services and competition to US-born job seekers.

The resulting policy frenzy contained devastating initiatives that immigrants still suffer from today:

**Federally:** Take away food stamps from adult legal immigrants. End Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for elderly, blind, and disabled legal residents. Exclude newly arriving legal immigrants from the five core federal social welfare programs (food stamps, Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicaid and the Child Health Insurance Program. Find new ways to deport immigrants. Triple the size of the border patrol. Create triple barrier walls at the US border. Create stricter procedures at ports of entry. Limit the ability to seek asylum. Redefine aggravated felony to deport those with minor convictions committed decades ago. Eliminate waivers of deportability. Take away the “magnet” of work authorization. Tighten sponsorship affidavit of support requirements so the poor cannot bring all their family members at once. Eliminate appellate review of many INS and immigration judge actions. Make citizenship more expensive and more administratively cumbersome. Create new bars for legal re-entry and extraordinarily difficult standards to legalize, for those out of status. Restrict tourists from third world nations. Make grounds of exclusion more stringent and lower the number of legal entries. Break union organizing drives with social security number “no match” letters making it feasible to deport immigrant organizers.

**In California:** Pass stricter laws against assumed immigrant fraud. Scare the undocumented away from constitutionally protected (K-12 education) or federally permissible (emergency MediCal) services. Take away drivers licenses from the undocumented. End affirmative action. Virtually eliminate bilingual education. Fingerprint CalWORKS and food stamp applicants as a disincentive in mixed status households.

A full 43% of the cost savings of the 1996 federal welfare reform bill or Personal Responsibility Act (PRA) was dedicated to taking away benefits from legal immigrants, even though as of 1994 they only constituted 9% of public benefits recipients. Combined with the sweeping Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996 and restrictive state laws, gubernatorial executive orders, and propositions (187, 209, 227), never before in the history of the United States has so much happened to harm immigrants in such a short period of time.

The rebounding economy of the past few years, including both federal and state surpluses of a magnitude never before imagined, has provided the foundation for policy makers to counter some of the most deleterious provisions of the federal and state legislation.

The doubling of the percentage of Latino and Asian voters in the past 10 years has also had its impact. Public perception has also shifted: whereas 59% of California voters
approved Proposition 187 in 1994 to deny elementary and high school education to undocumented immigrants, in 1999 a California poll showed 84% support their education. A Kellogg Foundation study shows that 77% of U.S. voters support legal immigrants receiving public benefits.

On the federal level, partial restorations of food stamps, SSI, and health benefits have benefited hundreds of thousands of legal immigrants who had access to these services before 1996. In the state, the extension of MediCal to legal immigrants and the yearly re-authorization of food stamps through the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) and of SSI-type benefits for those not covered under the federal law through the California Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) have filled important gaps in the safety net. In Santa Clara County, of the 51,000 legal immigrants who stood to lose SSI or food stamp benefits in 1996, 8,629 adults did lose food stamps for one year. The state later picked up this program.

At the same time, overall, immigrants have constituted the one group most disproportionately impacted in the United States and California by the harsh political winds and policy actions of the mid 1990s.

4. The Need to Re-Think County Planning, Policy, and Practices: Improving and Transforming Our Lives

A. Improving Our Lives

The improvement and transformation of our lives in Santa Clara County is integrally inter-wound with the improvement and transformation of the lives of immigrants in Santa Clara County. To the extent that immigrants are not provided the opportunities to integrate into existing structures, improve their lives, and help transform our lives and structures into a meaningful, productive, well-rounded existence, to that extent our economy, society, and culture will decline. We will slide into a Silicon Valley culture less rich in diversity, in knowledge, in growth, and in meeting human needs and potential. If we seek to blame those who look different than ourselves, act different than ourselves, or immigrated to this area at different times and are therefore seen as competitors rather than adding value, we could spiral downward as a county.

To its credit, recognizing the demographic shift and the key role of immigrants, Santa Clara County has made vital and unique contributions in improving the lives of immigrants. The county opposed both the federal and state welfare reform bills, and has sought to amend unworkable provisions harming immigrants. It has been a major advocate in restoring public benefits to immigrants and in opposing the federal devolution of benefits from the federal government to the states and local government.

To mention just 10 actions, the Board of Supervisors has taken other bold steps by
• Unanimously approving prenatal care to undocumented mothers, unfunded by the state
• Funding ethnic-specific, targeted mental health services
• Launching a Citizenship Initiative, providing regular county positions and an annual budget for the purpose of providing ongoing citizenship to its legal immigrants in order to empower them and assure their safety net
• Providing the INS with nine full-time employees to help reduce the citizenship backlog
• Setting aside nearly a million dollars to expand and sensitize the delivery of food programs to immigrants and others, working with the Second Harvest Food Bank
• Funding two community-based hotlines (one Vietnamese/English and one Spanish/Vietnamese/English) for information on changes and basic eligibility criteria regarding public benefits, citizenship, and immigration legal services
• Expanding the number of county-funded immigration legal service providers from one to four
• Initiating a health program to provide health coverage to all children in Santa Clara County, including all immigrant children
• Providing innovative refugee employment and cultural adjustment programs
• Undertaking a broad assessment of the needs of immigrants through its Summit on Immigrant Needs and Contributions

B. Transforming Our Lives

With such a large number, percentage, and diversity of immigrants and a mandate to meet the human needs of all its residents, Santa Clara County needs to engage in long-term, strategic, sustainable, human-needs based planning. In many respects, if the county doesn’t have a vision for meeting the human needs of immigrants in the county and individuals in the world, then the county cannot have a vision for meeting the needs of county residents. More than ever, immigrants and US-born county residents have an interlocking common fate.

In many senses a vision that could potentially meet the needs of the county’s native-born and foreign-born is clouded by both apparent success and the pace of life and work. We are reminded that the county possesses one of the highest per capita incomes in the world, that the county is a dazzling innovator, avid exporter, and the heart of heightened productivity and growth, that people work very hard but are materially rewarded, and that we are the envy of almost every metropolitan area on earth: in essence, that we are actually “living the American dream”.

Yet this apparent success hides very real dilemmas:
• Growth in and of itself (particularly the uncontrolled growth of jobs) does not assure balanced growth to meet other human needs (such as housing and transportation).
• Material success, greater wealth, and high per capita income assume that levels of wealth or consumption define success, unsustainable consumption is acceptable, and over-consumption at the expense of others in the valley and in the world is satisfactory and should not be challenged.
• The race to work and the fast pace of life are assumed to be necessary, in place of a more balanced life with time spent for civic participation, sharing family and household duties, hobbies and recreation, reflection, life-long learning, and friendships.
• Competition and not cooperation is assumed to be perhaps the highest value of all, and in general fallout from competition is to be tolerated, no matter the consequences.

Many immigrants from more mixed economies with different social, economic, and political arrangements have indicated that these assumptions need to be reviewed and evaluated, not just lived and accepted. Policy makers and other community leaders also need to review these assumptions.

Meeting human needs is a complicated proposition without the added dimensions which confront immigrants as they enter the United States and Santa Clara County, dimensions such as isolation, dislocation, alienation, cultural and language barriers, trauma and depression, low wage jobs, employment re-training, discrimination, a weak safety net, and lack of access to civic and direct political participation. These obstacles to healthy, well-rounded human development, which should be the goal and the vision for all human beings, are added to pre-existing institutional barriers for many Americans as real wages have declined by double digits for most workers and the average amount of work has increased by the equivalent of one month in the last 20 years.

Given the growing income disparity and the declining amount of time available in the United States and particularly in Silicon Valley, Santa Clara County needs a vision that addresses both income self-sufficiency and the creation of time to lead balanced lives: what we have and what we do.

Immigrants like all residents of the county need to access a wage package, self-employment income, or a real safety net that allows them to cover their basic human needs: adequate food, housing, health care, transportation, and child or elder care. At this time our research indicates that many low income immigrants in the county cannot meet these needs because of low wages, contingency employment without benefits, ineligibility for public benefits, inadequate public assistance, or lack of employment authorization.

At the same time, a well-rounded, healthy life demands that all county residents, including immigrants, possess the time to incorporate productive work, family care and house care, learning for life, civic participation, and physical and cultural activities into their lives on a regular basis. This healthy balance is not happening, especially not for recent immigrants who must work multiple jobs, learn English, become re-trained,
travel long distances, live in overcrowded and un-accommodating housing, and care for their homes and their children and their spouses, all in the same breath.

A vision of immigrants that incorporates what immigrants need to have and what immigrants need to do is a human vision. When both US-born and immigrants from scores of nationalities were denied food stamps in 1997 under federal welfare reform, cultural nuances did not influence the need to have food, it only influenced the kind of food and the ability to understand how to obtain food. In this sense, there is no such thing as “immigrant exceptionalism” in meeting basic human needs.

However, most immigrants have been disproportionately impacted and harmed by federal, state, and local policies and practices, in terms of eligibility, access to services in linguistically and culturally appropriate ways, the ability to know the existence of state, federal, local, and community-based programs, and the additional stringent demands placed upon them in their daily lives due to their lack of English, low wages, long work hours, and inferior conditions of life.

Santa Clara County needs a vision that addresses both income self-sufficiency and the creation of time to lead balanced lives, for all county residents. There are many challenges in this regard. Below are some of the challenges.

C. Immigrants Moving Out of Poverty

• Is it possible to train all poor people out of poverty? Isn’t this an even more daunting prospect for immigrants, who generally don’t speak English? Will it matter if all county residents get job training for high tech jobs when three to five times more new jobs are service jobs than high tech jobs and they continue to be paid at low wages?
• Won’t it be most likely that new immigrants--desiring to work in their lifetimes or wanting to earn 10 times the wage they can earn in their home countries--will rush to fill these “low-wage” jobs? Will the cycle continue?
• When Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is re-authorized in 2002, should immigrants receive more time than two years for re-training because of the lack of their language skills and new occupational skills, or is the key to overcoming poverty in the United States mostly linked to wage structures?
• Three out of four Bay Area residents believe that the gap between rich and poor will increase over the years. Are there measures to stem that trend?

D. Immigrants and Employment

• Is the loss of jobs in traditional high-immigrant sectors of the economy like canning, manufacturing, and agriculture leading to economic improvement for these workers or economic impoverishment?
With the passage of a new H1-B bill this fall increasing the number of professional immigrants allowed to enter the United States to 195,000, what will the impact be in Santa Clara County, the leading location for new H1-Bs? What are the implications for Santa Clara County that 46% of H1-Bs currently go to Indo-Americans, that Chinese, Indian, and Taiwanese immigrants dominate the field, that spouses and children cannot work, and that H1-Bs will now be able to switch jobs by petitioning for a new H1-B? Which new services will be necessary, in what languages?

Since the new H1-B legislation also targets funding for additional training in high tech, what will be done in the county to encourage the expansion of technology training locally? With whom? Will immigrants be part of the mix?

Will a new amnesty as favored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the AFL-CIO resolve the issue of poor immigrants? Is a rolling amnesty the better reform approach in that it avoids a permanent under-class?

If each high tech job produces three low paying service jobs, what are the implications of an hourglass economy whose lower half of the hourglass will now bulge more fully?

What can educational institutions, policy makers and private employers do to provide upward job mobility for already-employed immigrants, who need further English and employment skills?

How can violations of labor standards be enforced more effectively both from the perspective of low-cost legal representation and increased regulatory enforcement?

E. Immigrants and Benefits

Will retirement choices in the United States be reduced to working until your late 70s, having lots of children, enjoying reduced benefits, or welcoming immigrants to well-paying jobs to pay into Social Security, as trends indicate? Are immigrants “the ace in the hole” and “indispensable for the continued economic well-being of the entire developed world” in light of its aging population, as posited in the San Jose Mercury News by Ronald Fernandez? “Who will be working to pay your retirement benefits? Immigrants”, June 7, 2000.

The 1990 census demonstrated that 85% of immigrant families with children are mixed legal status families, or families with at least one non-citizen parent and one citizen child. Recent indicators show that when non-citizen family members are severed from benefits, the overall household resources are reduced and U.S. citizen children suffer. In addition, the federal cutbacks of non-citizen public benefits have had the effect of many parents no longer applying for benefits for their U.S. citizen children. Also, new immigration laws restrict undocumented immigrants from adjusting their unlawful status to lawful status, adding to the number of mixed status families. As a result of these changes, about 60% of the growth in childhood poverty in the United
States is among the children of immigrants. What can be done to counter this trend?
• What are the implications when current federal policy requires poor non-citizens to pay for health insurance coverage, but not poor citizens?
• Lawsuits in Los Angeles and New York highlight that immigrants do not have equal access to public benefit programs and employment support services, due to language access barriers. A very significant number of immigrants in Santa Clara County states that English is not their primary language. How will this challenge be met here?
• Should the $7 billion state TANF surplus be used to offset the state costs of providing patchwork safety nets for legal immigrants once federal welfare shifted these costs to the states, when federal welfare reform is re-authorized?

F. Immigrants and Education

• What can be done to improve the English skill levels of immigrant parents? Even if programs are offered, are immigrant parents seriously available to take advantage of the courses in Silicon Valley, when immigrants work longer hours than the US-born already?
• How are immigrants affected by high-stakes standardized testing, and what strategies can be developed in the aftermath of Proposition 227 to equip teachers with the skills to effectively communicate with Limited English Proficient (LEP) students?
• What state policies can be developed to provide more resources to secondary schools, which have a proportionately larger number of LEP students than elementary schools in comparison to the funds received for learning English? Will middle school and high school immigrants be left further behind?
• Does the Elementary and Secondary Education Act adequately address the needs of immigrant students in high-immigrant areas like Santa Clara County?

G. Immigrants and Regional Planning

• Should a balanced approach in regional planning be developed to prevent the jobs/housing/transportation/education imbalance? Should this include the creation of disincentives for extreme job growth without corollary effective regional services, such as the “growth impact fee” imposed on Intel by Washington County in the Portland metropolitan area? Will private creativity in product innovation be translated into private creativity for meeting regional critical needs? Will these critical needs be judged not only in terms of housing and transporting employees but also in terms of addressing all human needs? Will the needs of immigrants and their US-born children, 60% of the county’s population, be adequately addressed? Will immigrants be consulted? In their own languages?
- If 200,000 new lawful permanent residents entered the county in the last decade, what will the impacts when a projected comparable number or more enter the county in this new decade? What are the implications for city and county planners? For school districts?

H. Immigrants and Silicon Valley

- Does the pace of profit-seeking and innovation in Silicon Valley, by itself, leave behind those who cannot possibly receive the English and employment training at the same rate, creating conditions whereby a large number of immigrants will be left behind? Slotted into low-wage jobs, does this mean that they will not be able to be housed nor feed nor see their children adequately, creating unmet family and children’s needs which public entities like the county must ultimately somehow meet?
- In his San Jose Mercury News article “5 Tech Issues Missing from Campaign 2000”, Dan Gillmor pointed out that the narrow appropriation of intellectual property rights, the erosion of community values (“What will happen to real neighborhoods?”), the weakening of anti-trust enforcement, corporate welfare, and economic dislocation provide huge challenges over which immigrants, despite their large numbers in Silicon Valley, have little control. Can this change?
- As stated by Michael Clough in the San Jose Mercury News, Silicon Valley and the West play a leading role in shaping the future of the United States and the world due to three distinguishing features: 1) the role of ethnic groups in global affairs, 2) the importance of Silicon Valley in the digital-global economy, and 3) the global influence of Bay Area political activists. “The valley’s economic prowess could translate into real clout—if leaders in business, activism and ethnic communities step up to the challenge and find ways to work together.” What will Santa Clara County, cities, and other public institutions do to help shape that clout in a direction that best meets the human needs of all?
- In Santa Clara County, some analysts now say that the drive to make a profit has overtaken the drive to innovate. This is reflected in the proliferation of companies without “bricks and mortars” and particularly in highly profitable a) job shop companies providing H-1B programmers and engineers and b) low-wage service companies, both dominated by immigrants and subcontracting with high tech companies. Is it within the purview of public policy for the county and cities to address issues brought on by high profit/high growth industries when the collateral fallout creates unmet needs for a high percentage of US-born and particularly immigrant county residents?

I. Immigrants and Community Relations
• Are the differences between people of different colors, between ethnic groups, and between immigrant nationalities sufficiently addressed in regional, city, and neighborhood planning? In addition to multi-ethnic institutions, what multi-national institutions can build trust, build community, and build neighborhoods?
• If “Immigrants ‘R Us”, what special responsibilities do established residents, institutions, and agencies possess to change and adapt to new residents?
• With the demographic shift in Santa Clara County, should a commission be established patterned after the San Francisco Immigrant Human Rights Commission to address immigrant issues as they arise, monitor the progress of immigrants, and assist in community relations involving immigrants?
• Are stable communities being undermined by the housing crisis? What programs can be made available to low-income immigrants so that they may continue to live in Santa Clara County, in the areas of both renting and buying homes? Many endangered immigrants have resided in Santa Clara County for decades, but more recent immigrants are the most imperiled.
• What happens to immigrants during the next recession? Will they be blamed once again when competition for jobs heats up?

J. Federal Policies Impacting Local Budgets

• Since 70% of the tax contributions of immigrants and everyone else go to the federal government, is there not a need to more equitably distribute those revenues to high-immigrant states and localities?
• Even before federal welfare reform, the federal government received the overwhelming share of taxes paid by immigrants while states and localities paid for most of their services. What can be done to reverse this trend in light of its exacerbation under the further devolution perpetrated under welfare reform?
• Should offices for immigrant and refugee affairs be established at the federal level and state and local offices be established in states and localities with high concentrations of immigrants?

K. International Policies Leading to Further Immigration

• Are the forces driving immigration from abroad responsible for the fact that now there are approximately six million undocumented immigrants in the United States? What can me implied from the fact that the majority of children in these families headed by the undocumented currently in the United States are U.S. citizens?
• Will county, cities, other public and private institutions and organizations be public voices in supporting national and international policies that prevent the growing worldwide inequality and civil wars? What is at stake locally?
Public policy makers need to engage in longer-term thinking, more comprehensive analysis, and more humane solutions to address the issues of current and future immigrants to Santa Clara County.

A recently completed 18-month study by the California Policy Research Center in Berkeley suggests that “The state’s ability to integrate immigrants and their children will shape the California of 2025 and beyond.” While the findings and recommendations emanating from that report were sound, for immigrants (and all county residents) the future is not simply a matter of immigrant integration. Integration connotes that existing conditions and structures provide adequate opportunities for immigrants to lead healthy lives. Rather, these very conditions and structures merit re-analysis. If we can collectively develop, refine, and implement a vision with structures for fulfilling the human needs of immigrants in a holistic way in Santa Clara County, we will make a huge impact on California, the United States, and the world.

5. Assessing and Addressing the Needs of Immigrants

The final and most important reason for holding a “Summit on Immigrant Needs and Contributions” and developing an “Action Plan for Immigrants in Santa Clara County” comes from a number of preliminary need assessments from 1996 to 1999 that indicated that a more profound analysis was required. These included needs assessments by

- The Immigration Task Force of the Employment Support Initiative
  A focus group of immigrant service providers by the county Citizenship and Immigration Program in the Office of Human Relations
  A survey of CalWORKS refugee clients by the Social Services Agency
  A poll by the Citizenship and Immigration Program of 1,322 ESL students
  The May 1999 Community Dialogue on Immigrant Needs

The Immigration Task Force of the Employment Support Initiative was initiated by the Social Services Agency and met monthly for nearly 3 years from February 1996—six months before welfare reform was enacted—until the end of 1998. Three full-day retreats identified the key needs of immigrants, including 14 of the 16 need areas that evolved into summit work groups. The most urgently identified needs included the improved cultural competency and knowledge of cultures by public and government institutions, a sweeping campaign of community education for immigrants to better understand laws, customs, resources, etc. in the United States and in Santa Clara County, the development of an immigrant assistance line, and immigrant leadership development.

The Citizenship and Immigration Program conducted a strategic planning process in the winter and spring of 1998. In February 1998 the program conducted a daylong focus group. The goal
was to identify the needs of immigrants and service providers. All of the 16 need areas were identified as part of that day of planning. In addition, service providers voiced their concerns that the level of funding services to meet the needs of the growing number of immigrants in the county was inadequate and needed to be revisited.

In the summer of 1998 the Social Services Agency conducted a survey of refugees receiving CalWORKS. The most significant needs identified included the need for expanded and improved medical and dental care and the need for more citizenship services.

In a poll of 1,322 ESL students in January 1999, the county Citizenship and Immigration Program found that the major problems confronting the students and their families were needing more ESL, housing, finding a job, dental care, low wages, medical care, immigration legal services, the lack of information in their language, job training, and US citizenship, in that order. Asked which of their needs were not being met, the largest three responses were affordable housing, immigration legal aid, and English as a Second Language. Of the 1,322 from 62 nationalities surveyed, the largest basis for felt discrimination was language-based, and they felt the harshest discrimination first in public services and second in the workplace. Of the respondents, 35% were Mexican, 28% Vietnamese, 9% Russian, and 6% Bosnian.

In May 2000 the Citizenship and Immigration Program with collaborative assistance from the Social Services Agency, the Public Health Department, and the Mental Health Department, among others, held a Community Dialogue on Immigrant Needs in San Jose. The goals for the Community Dialogue on Immigrant Needs were to

Identify and prioritize the needs of immigrants
Explore policy recommendations that could require funding and/or institutional change in the delivery of services to immigrants, new collaborative models of service delivery, coordination of services, advocacy and research
Develop collaborations among (a) the immigrant community and its leaders, (b) public and private entities, and (c) academics and researchers

The Community Dialogue held round table discussions in the 16 identified need areas, divided as follows:

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<th>Family Safety Net</th>
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<td>Income Maintenance</td>
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<td>Mental Health/Substance Abuse</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<td>Public Health/Health Access</td>
<td>Dependent Care (Child, Youth, Senior)</td>
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<td>Immigrant Community Education</td>
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The Community Dialogue served as a controlled community catharsis regarding the unmet needs of immigrants in Santa Clara County. Dozens of immigrant needs and future research areas were identified, and preliminary suggestions on how to meet those needs were advanced.