



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



Council Meeting Date: June 10, 2008  
Staff Report #: 08-076

Agenda Item #: B1

**STUDY SESSION: Consideration of the Revised Draft El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan and Discussion of Potential Next Steps for the Visioning Process.**

---

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council review and provide feedback on the Revised Draft El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan, as well as provide direction on potential next steps for the visioning process.

## BACKGROUND

At the City Council workshop on January 6, 2007, the Council identified a goal to set a clear long-term plan for the El Camino Real and Downtown areas. The setting of this goal was inspired in part by the presence of a number of large vacant parcels along El Camino Real that were formerly occupied by auto dealerships, as well as by the referendum of the Derry Lane mixed-use development, which placed on hold General Plan and Zoning Ordinance Amendments for an area near the Caltrain station.

Over the following months, the Council discussed various options for realizing this goal, establishing a Council Subcommittee of Council Members Boyle and Cline and reaching general agreement that a broad and inclusive community visioning process (Phase I) was needed prior to creation of a Specific Plan, Zoning Ordinance Amendment, or equivalent implementation strategy (Phase II).

During the latter part of 2007, the City conducted a public, multi-phase consultant review and project scoping process, ultimately selecting Design, Community & Environment (DCE) to manage the community visioning process. The selection of DCE was based primarily on the firm's strong emphasis on broad community involvement and public participation, as well as its extensive Bay Area experience. The primary project work commenced in December 2007, although City staff conducted some initial outreach tasks during the consultant selection and project scoping process. These tasks and the main outreach work are discussed in more detail in the Analysis section.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Visioning Process and Revised Draft Vision Plan**

The primary objective of the visioning process is a general one: to develop a long-term vision for the El Camino Real and Downtown areas. The Vision Plan is not meant to be as detailed as a Specific Plan or equivalent planning document, but it is intended to set the stage for a Phase II implementation strategy.

The open-ended nature of the Vision Plan objective is by design, as the City Council has acknowledged that the lack of success of some previous plans could potentially be traced to a perception that they were burdened with preconceived outcomes or solutions. The two-phase structure of the current process has served to reinforce that principle. For example, an alternate decision to start working on a Specific Plan (even one that incorporated a significant visioning component) could have been interpreted as an implication that significant changes to the current General Plan and Zoning Ordinance were assumed, and that more modest modifications had already been ruled out. By contrast, the current visioning process has been set up to fully allow for a wide range of outcomes, including a validation of the existing regulations.

From the beginning, the key guiding principle of the visioning process has been an emphasis on broad public outreach and participation. The process has engaged a wide range of community members, including those who may not have previously been involved in civic activities. The goal has been to create a guiding plan that truly represents the community's vision.

### **Oversight and Outreach Committee**

As part of the visioning process, the City Council approved the formation of an Oversight and Outreach Committee ("the Committee"). The Committee has operated with the following primary tasks:

1. Provide input to the consultant and staff regarding the management of the process; and
2. Reach out to other community members and help bring them into the broader visioning process through participation in the Community Workshops and other visioning activities.

The Committee consists of 18 community members, appointed either by a designated group (such as a City Commission) or by the City Council. The Committee membership is as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Member</u>
Parks and Recreation Commission	Kristi Breisch
Planning Commission	Henry Riggs
Housing Commission	Elizabeth Lasensky
Environmental Quality Commission	Daniel Kocher
Transportation Commission	Reginald Rice
Bicycle Commission	John Fox
Stanford University	Steve Elliott
Downtown/El Camino Real Business Owner	Kerry Hctor
Downtown/El Camino Real Property Owner	Lorie Sinnott
Development Community Representative	Jeff Warmoth
Downtown/El Camino Real Area Resident	Tom Hilligoss
Downtown/El Camino Real Area Resident	Todd Temple
Downtown/El Camino Real Area Resident	Elizabeth Weiss
At-Large Member	Vincent Bressler
At-Large Member	Ben Eiref
At-Large Member	Katie Ferrick
At-Large Member	J. Michael Gullard
At-Large Member	Clark Kepler

The Committee has conducted four meetings, all of which were open to other community members, and public comment was welcomed and incorporated by the Committee into its own discussion. All materials presented at the Committee meetings are available on the project web site. The meetings provided an opportunity for Committee Members to discuss outreach efforts, as well as to review and comment on past project tasks/events and the plans for upcoming project work.

The Committee has served as an invaluable sounding board, and in several cases helped to direct substantive changes to the format of the workshops and other project events, such as by emphasizing the importance of general verbal visioning exercises prior to diving into detailed map review. In addition, the Committee also restructured its own meetings by asking that Public Comment be allowed both at the beginning and the end of each session, to allow greater input from the broader community. The Committee has also worked to increase turnout at the project events by posting flyers, sending messages to various private email groups, and informally promoting the project. The Committee has concluded its formal set of meetings, although Committee Members have been strongly encouraged to stay involved through the remainder of the visioning

process, to conduct additional outreach efforts and to provide continuity and related project assistance.

### **Community Surveys**

Two short surveys were distributed to every postal address in Menlo Park, as well as to all local property owners with an out-of-town mailing address of record (approximately 19,000 addresses total). Both surveys included paid return postage.

Prior to selection of DCE as the project consultant, City staff sent a short open-ended survey card in October 2007, which generated approximately 600 responses. The general input received was used to help structure the primary visioning process, and was also useful in helping establish a strong base of project email list subscribers.

In February 2008, a second, more focused survey was sent, which to date has resulted in over 2,000 responses (approximately 11% return rate). The survey was used to establish and prioritize specific topics for further discussion at the Community Workshops. A summary of the survey results is included as Attachment E. This summary was also distributed at Community Workshops #2 and #3, and is also available on the project web page.

### **Mobile Tour**

On February 6, 2008, a mobile tour of neighboring communities took place, primarily for the benefit of the Oversight and Outreach Committee, although several other community members also attended and contributed to the discussion. The group visited various sites in San Carlos, Redwood City, and Palo Alto, looking at a variety of buildings, street configurations, streetscape improvements, grade separations, and other aspects of the built environment. The objective was to learn from a wide range of examples, in order to help inform Menlo Park's visioning process. Tour stops included sites and features such as: a one-story retail corridor with newer streetscape improvements (San Carlos); mixed-use buildings, district identification signs, and plazas (Redwood City); and a bicycle-pedestrian tunnel, low-rise parking structures, and playing fields (Palo Alto). Photographs from the Mobile Tour are available on the project web page.

### **Walking Tours**

On February 9 and 23, 2008, three separate walking tours were held of the north and south segments of El Camino Real and the Downtown. The purpose was to allow participants to review the existing conditions, discuss challenges and opportunities, and interact with other community members in an informal setting. The tours stopped at key locations to collect input and opinions from participants. Participants also discussed the character of development, transportation issues, public space and other issues at each site. Approximately 40 people attended the walking tours of El Camino Real, and 50 people attended the walking tour of the Downtown.

Comments and photographs were taken by individual community members and later reviewed and consolidated by the consultant. A summary of the feedback received on the walking tours is included as Attachment F. This summary was distributed at Community Workshops #2 and #3, and is also available on the project web page. Tour maps and photos are also available on the project web page.

### **Stakeholder Interviews**

On February 13, 2008, the consultant conducted a set of small-group interviews of several target groups:

- Residents
- Property owners/managers
- Business owners
- Schools, religious institutions, and seniors
- Architects and developers
- Former City Council Members
- Applicants for the Oversight/Outreach Committee
- City staff

These interviews were intended to generate useful, frank discussions that would identify key issues to be discussed during the main portion of the visioning process. A summary of the stakeholder interviews, with comments sorted by group, is included as Attachment G. This summary was distributed at Community Workshops #2 and #3, and is also available on the project web page.

### **Targeted Outreach**

The process has included targeted outreach to community groups, with the specific goal of increasing attendance at the workshops by members of the target groups. Early outreach efforts included presentations to service clubs (Rotary International, Kiwanis International), the Menlo Park Senior Center, Belle Haven Child Development Center, and a general canvassing of the Downtown during a typical lunch hour and during a weekend Farmer's Market.

### **Speaker Series**

The first public event for the visioning process took place in October 2007, with the inauguration of an educational forum on planning and related topics. The speaker series has continued throughout the primary visioning process, with the objective of generating discussion that could help inform the Community Workshops. All presentations have been followed by question-and-answer sessions, allowing for a lively exchange of ideas.

Staff and the consultant have attempted to schedule a range of topics, with the full schedule consisting of the following presentations:

- “Previous Planning Projects in the El Camino Real/Downtown Areas, Visioning and Planning Projects in Other Cities, and Lessons for Menlo Park” (Michael Dyett, October 24, 2007)
- “Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in the Peninsula Context” (Dena Belzer, November 14, 2007)
- “The Economics of Mixed-Use Development” (Denise Conley, December 12, 2007)
- “Preservation and Prosperity in Downtown Environments” (Frederic Knapp, February 13, 2008)
- “Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategies for Cities Like Menlo Park” (Jeffrey Tumlin, March 12, 2008)
- “Twelve Ingredients for a Successful Downtown” (Jeff Eichenfield, April 9, 2008)
- “Context-Sensitive Thoroughfare Solutions” (Jim Daisa, May 14, 2008)

Recordings of the forums are available on the project web page (with one exception due to a technical failure), along with electronic versions of all presentations and handouts.

### **Newsletters**

In addition to the initial project flyer sent in October 2007, three project newsletters and two postcards have been sent to every postal address in Menlo Park, as well as to all local property owners with an out-of-town mailing address of record (approximately 19,000 addresses total). The newsletters and postcards have been intended to keep the general community apprised of the progress of the project and to solicit ongoing input and community participation.

### **Project Web Site and Email Updates**

A project web page has been established at the following address:

[http://www.menlopark.org/projects/comdev\\_eocrdowntown.htm](http://www.menlopark.org/projects/comdev_eocrdowntown.htm)

This page provides up-to-date information about the project, allowing interested parties to stay informed of its progress. The page hosts electronic copies of all presentations, handouts, meeting notices and agendas, photos, maps, staff reports, and all other supporting materials. The project web page has been an important part of the outreach process, allowing community members to stay informed and involved, even when attendance at certain meetings is not possible.

In addition, the page allows users to sign up for automatic email bulletins, notifying them when content is updated and when events are occurring. The project list currently has

701 subscribers, which is significantly more than any other planning-related project list. Dozens of bulletins have been sent to this list over the course of the visioning process.

### **Community Workshops**

The three Community Workshops represent the core of the visioning process. The input received through the walking tours, surveys, and other earlier outreach efforts was used to help structure these events, in particular by helping create alternative visions for the community to evaluate. The workshops themselves then served as a forum for community members to work with each other to discuss the trade-offs of potential visions. The interactive workshop format allowed community members to gain a deeper understanding of unfamiliar or opposing views and to consider potential areas of common ground, in contrast to the primarily one-way dialog of standard public comment.

The first Community Workshop, held March 6, 2008, provided an opportunity for the public to learn more about the Vision Plan process and to provide initial input. Opportunities and constraints in the Study Area were discussed, including results of the public walking tours and community surveys. The workshop included individual and group exercises, summaries of which are included as Attachments H and I.

At the second and third Community Workshops, held April 3 and May 1, 2008, community members began to create a more detailed vision, focusing respectively on the El Camino Real corridor and Downtown. Each workshop started with a summary of the input received to date, in order to orient newcomers to the process. Then, workshop participants broke into small groups to provide feedback on conceptual alternatives, combining and modifying ideas and adding new proposals to agree upon a vision. Each workshop concluded with a summary from each group, followed by an overall summary by the consultant of areas of underlying agreement, as well as areas for which there did not appear to be current community consensus. Summaries of these workshops are included as Attachments K and J.

The attendance at all Community Workshops has been very positive in relation to both past City projects and the consultant's professional experience, with approximately 100 attendees at Community Workshops #1 and #2 and 70 attendees at Workshop #3.

### **Planning Commission Workshop**

On May 19, 2008, the Planning Commission hosted an event that functioned as a hybrid of a Community Workshop and a standard Planning Commission meeting. Over 80 community members attended this event. The overall goal of the meeting was for the Commission and the public to review and comment on the Draft Vision Plan, which was prepared in accordance with the extensive visioning process described above. At the heart of the Draft Vision Plan was a set of 12 detailed goals and objectives. Each goal statement included a list of objectives for meeting the goal, as well as a background statement, which described the community input that led to the formulation of that

particular goal. Eight of these goals were based on what the consultant and staff believes to be relatively clear areas of suggested community compromise, while the remaining four were not. The focus of the meeting was the goals for which there was not clear community agreement, although any aspect of the Draft Vision Plan could be discussed during this segment. The Draft Vision Plan in the form discussed at the Planning Commission Workshop is included as Attachment L.

Once again, the meeting commenced with a background summary to help orient attendees who were new to the process. Following the summary, attendees broke into randomly-assigned small groups to discuss the Draft Vision Plan in greater detail. Planning Commissioners were not assigned to a particular group, but rather 'floated' from table to table, observing the dialog. At the completion of the small group exercise, each group appointed a representative to summarize that group's discussion to the Commission and the other community members. The consultant then summarized areas of underlying agreement, as well as areas for which there still did not appear to be community consensus. A summary of the small group feedback is included as Attachment M. The Commission then asked clarification-type questions of the consultant.

Following the interactive workshop portion of the evening, 14 individual attendees gave public comment. The comments varied significantly by person and did not reach overall consensus, although several individuals suggested that the visioning process was potentially ending too soon and that additional work was still needed. Following individual public comment, the Commissioners also relayed individual comments, summarized in the Commission-approved Workshop Summary and Recommendations (Attachment N). The Commission then summarized the key feedback into the following direction, approved by general consensus, 7-0:

- For the City Council Meeting of June 10, the consultant should prepare a document that presents Vision Plan options. The consultant should evaluate the various options with regard to certain criteria and should make a recommendation.
- The Vision Plan should be based on the underlying principle that if any changes would result in benefits (such as "upzoning") to private property owners, the public should also receive benefits as a result of a project. The Vision Plan should set the stage for a specific public benefits framework and/or implementation strategy.
- The consultant should consider and potentially include revitalization techniques such as an area-wide sales-tax in-lieu fee.

The consultant and staff have addressed aspects of the first bullet point, which requests that options be presented for each of the 12 goals, through the preparation of a Revised Draft Vision Plan (described in more detail below), but full adherence to this direction is not possible without an amendment to the project scope, timeline, and budget (described in more detail along with other options in the Next Steps section of this

report). The consultant and staff believe that the latter two bullet points address concepts that are more accurately part of the Phase II (implementation) part of the process and as such should be considered in more detail after the completion of Phase I (visioning).

Since the Planning Commission Workshop, staff has received one item of correspondence regarding the Draft Vision Plan, from Mitch Slomiak, Co-Chair of the Menlo Park Green Ribbon Citizens' Committee (Attachment O).

### **Revised Draft Vision Plan**

The Draft Vision Plan has been revised in response to the feedback received at the Planning Commission Workshop. The Revised Draft Vision Plan consists of a vision statement and 12 detailed goals and objectives (Attachment A), as well as a conceptual illustrative map and cross-sections of El Camino Real and Santa Cruz Avenue (Attachments B, C and D) that relays aspects of the vision statement and goals in a visual format.

At the core of the Revised Draft Vision Plan is the set of 12 detailed goals and corresponding objectives, organized by topic area. Each topic includes a detailed background statement, which describes the community input that led to the formulation of the particular goal and associated objectives. In response to the Planning Commission's direction, the 12 goals have been extensively reorganized and expanded to include more context. While it was not possible to fully address the Commission's direction to present each topic area as a set of options without a change to the consultant budget and scope, the revisions more effectively describe the ways in which various options and alternatives were an integral part of the earlier visioning process. In addition, the revisions attempt to better relay the richness and context of the process, highlighting notable concepts considered in the workshops.

After having received and considered individual public comment, Council Members should use the Study Session as an opportunity to comment on the content of the Revised Draft Vision Plan. Council Members may also ask questions of the consultant and staff regarding the plan and/or the visioning process.

### **Next Steps**

In the approved scope of work, the June 10 City Council meeting was intended to focus primarily on the Revised Draft Vision Plan, where the Council could either accept the plan that same evening with minor revisions, or direct more substantial changes that would be reviewed at a subsequent meeting. After the Planning Commission Workshop, the consultant and staff conferred with the Council Subcommittee regarding the workshop feedback (both from the Commission and the public) and potential next steps. As a result, the consultant and staff have reformatted and expanded the Draft Vision Plan as described above to provide greater context, and have postponed other project tasks that would have otherwise taken place, in order for the Council to weigh in

on the next steps in the process. In particular, the creation of artistic perspective renderings of future streetscapes, a detailed discussion of implementation strategies, and the mailing of a detailed project newsletter have been postponed.

When considering options for the completion of Phase I, the Council should keep Phase II in mind as a part of the overall project. A key element of Phase I that will also be a key element in Phase II is the focus on public outreach, involvement and consensus building. In addition, while the exact format of Phase II is not known at this time, if the work involves any potential change to the General Plan or Zoning Ordinance, it will have to include an environmental review component. Depending on the scope of the proposed modifications, analysis such as a traffic study and/or full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) could be required during Phase II. Such analysis would allow the community and the Council to better understand the ramifications of the Vision Plan and, if needed, make changes to specific vision elements if they would otherwise result in impacts that would be unacceptable to the community.

### **Recommendation**

Staff and the consultant believe that the process as it was originally scoped and as it has been conducted has been successful in developing a future vision in the community. The process has been deliberate and transparent, and has engaged a broad cross-section of community members, not only through well-attended workshops but also through utilization of a community survey that helped establish a foundation for the process. On this basis, staff is recommending the completion of the work plan for Phase I as provided in the approved scope of work. This would include the following steps:

- Council Members provide feedback at this study session on the content of the Revised Draft Vision Plan in order to inform discussions about the next steps in the process.
- The consultant and staff would revise the plan into a Final Draft Vision Plan, including the postponed artistic perspective renderings and implementation strategy elements.
- A final newsletter would be sent describing the Final Draft Vision Plan in detail and inviting the public to provide input at a future regular Council Meeting.
- At a subsequent meeting, the Council would receive public comment and review the Final Draft Vision Plan. Assuming the plan meets with the Council Members' satisfaction, the Council would vote to accept the Vision Plan and direct preparations for Phase II. Under this scenario, no modifications to the project budget would be required.

### **Other Options**

Staff and the consultants recognize that there is some community interest in modifying and/or expanding the Phase I visioning process, as represented both in the Planning

Commission's recommendation and in general public comment. For this reason, staff and the consultants believe it is appropriate for the Council to consider possible options for modifying the visioning process. Staff has outlined several options for further consideration. The options are not mutually exclusive; elements from two or more could be combined.

Although staff has provided options for further consideration, staff is sensitive to the fact that the process to date has included an unprecedented amount of community outreach and engagement, with a large number of community members participating in a clearly defined process. While the Council should consider changes that would enhance the process that has been conducted to date, care should be given to respect and support the contributions and participation of the public such that it does not undermine the community's confidence in the outcome.

Staff would note that the options presented below would require changes to the project scope of work, timeline, and budget. Based on the Council's direction regarding the inclusion of various options, staff would return at a future meeting for Council approval of a revised scope of work and budget appropriation. The consultant will be prepared to discuss potential budget ramifications of various options at the June 10 City Council meeting.

#### 1. Provide Options and Additional Analysis

This option would fully address the direction of the Planning Commission, which recommended that the consultant revise the Draft Vision Plan to provide a more robust analysis and presentation of options for each of the 12 goals and objectives. It would then be the Council's responsibility to determine the best course of action for review of the options, potentially including additional outreach (see Option 2 below). As noted previously in the report, the Revised Draft Vision Plan includes revisions to partially address the Commission's recommendation by providing more description of the integrated discussion of options and trade-offs that occurred during the workshops.

#### 2. Conduct Additional Outreach

The City Council could amend the process to conduct new tasks such as additional workshops, targeted outreach, focus groups, and/or surveys. For example, one or more workshops could be added to work through the 12 draft goals in more detail, or another survey could be sent to gauge support for the draft plan.

If additional outreach were to be considered, the Council would need to be clear on the purpose of the outreach, and the additional outreach would need to be conducted such that it supports and does not overshadow the high level of community engagement and feedback that has already taken place.

### 3. Modify Oversight/Outreach Committee Charter for Additional Tasks

As noted earlier, the Oversight and Outreach Committee has been a crucial and positive part of the visioning process. The Council could expand the Committee's role to hold one or more additional meetings to help refine the process for additional outreach (Option 2), provided the Council has clearly specified the purpose of that outreach.

### **IMPACT ON CITY RESOURCES**

The Vision Plan requires both staff resources dedicated to the project as well as previously-appropriated funds for consultant services. Modifications to the scope would require a new General Fund reserve appropriation at a future City Council meeting.

### **POLICY ISSUES**

The El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan is intended to lead into a Specific Plan, Zoning Ordinance amendment, or equivalent document or strategy that could result in policy clarifications or changes related to land use and transportation issues.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

The Vision Plan (Phase I) is a planning study and as such is not considered a project requiring environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Subsequent work on a Specific Plan or equivalent implementation strategy (Phase II) would require environmental review.

---

Thomas Rogers  
Associate Planner  
Report Author

---

Arlinda Heineck  
Community Development Director

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. In addition, a postcard was sent to every postal address in Menlo Park, as well as to all local property owners with an out-of-town mailing address of record.

In addition, the City has prepared a project page for the proposal, which is available at the following address: [http://www.menlopark.org/projects/comdev\\_eocrdowntown.htm](http://www.menlopark.org/projects/comdev_eocrdowntown.htm). This page provides up-to-date information about the project, allowing interested parties to stay informed of its progress. The page allows users to sign up for automatic email bulletins, notifying them when content is updated.

## ATTACHMENTS

- A. Revised Draft Vision Plan
- B. [Draft Conceptual Illustrative](#)
- C. [Draft Illustration of El Camino Real Configuration](#)
- D. [Draft Illustration of Santa Cruz Avenue Configuration](#)
- E. Summary: Community Survey
- F. Summary: Walking Tours
- G. Summary: Stakeholder Interviews
- H. Summary: Community Workshop #1: Individual Exercise
- I. Summary: Community Workshop #1: Group Exercise
- J. Summary: Community Workshop #2: Small Group Discussion
- K. Summary: Community Workshop #3: Small Group Discussion
- L. Draft Vision Plan from Planning Commission Workshop
- M. Summary: Planning Commission Workshop: Small Group Discussion
- N. Planning Commission Workshop Summary and Direction
- O. Correspondence from Mitch Slomiak, Co-Chair of Menlo Park Green Ribbon Citizens' Committee

## **EL CAMINO REAL/DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN**

This document is a working draft of the *El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan* for use at the City Council Study Meeting on June 10, 2008.

### ***A. The Vision Plan Area***

As shown in Figure 1, the Vision Plan Area generally includes all parcels fronting onto El Camino Real for its entire length through Menlo Park; parcels fronting onto Oak Grove Avenue, Santa Cruz Avenue and Menlo Avenue generally between University Drive and the railroad tracks; and parcels fronting onto Alma Street immediately east of the train tracks.

### ***B. Outreach Efforts***

The Vision Plan is being developed through a community workshop process. Attendance at those workshops and community interest in the Vision Plan process were generated through a series of outreach efforts to the Menlo Park community. Those efforts included:

- ◆ Oversight and Outreach Committee
- ◆ Mobile Tour
- ◆ Walking Tours
- ◆ Stakeholder Interviews
- ◆ Community Surveys
- ◆ Targeted Outreach
- ◆ Speaker Series

Input gathered from these outreach efforts, the three previous Community Workshops and the workshop held with the Planning Commission are included as appendices to this report.

### *C. Vision Statement*

Downtown Menlo Park and the El Camino Real corridor through Menlo Park will continue to be known for the vitality and diverse range of activities that are available. It will become a place where people live, work and shop and a place that provides services and offers cultural opportunities. A unique identity can be created for the Vision Plan Area that builds on the attributes and opportunities that exist as community assets in the Vision Plan Area today. Those Menlo Park assets include:

- ◆ **Santa Cruz Avenue.** Menlo Park’s “Main Street” is an intimately-scaled street with fairly wide sidewalks and a rhythm of storefronts that is conducive to pedestrian activity. City-owned parking plazas are accessible via a series of similarly-scaled cross streets and augment the on-street parking provided on Santa Cruz Avenue.
- ◆ **The Menlo Park Train Station.** Rail and bus service connects Menlo Park’s downtown to the region; the station provides the opportunity for Menlo Park residents to access job opportunities elsewhere on the Peninsula as well as to bring visitors to existing and expanded opportunities in downtown Menlo Park.
- ◆ **Menlo Park’s Independently-owned Businesses.** The range of services and goods provided by local businesses and merchants has been identified by several community members as a major contributor to the small town, or village, character in Menlo Park. One-of-a-kind retail businesses and services contribute greatly to making a downtown unique.
- ◆ **Strategic Opportunities for Near-term Change.** Vacancies and under-utilization of the Plan Area’s larger parcels, particularly those with the exposure that El Camino Real provides, offer the opportunity to envision future uses that are different than those that formerly occupied those key sites.
- ◆ **City-owned Parking Plazas.** These areas are integral to the health of businesses and merchants in the Downtown. However, the parking plazas are also the largest areas of City-owned land in the Plan Area, outside of public streets. A comprehensive redesign of these areas could provide

the potential for a more efficient configuration and greater number of parking spaces, as well as shade trees in conjunction with plazas or small park spaces that could be components of a coordinated downtown pedestrian network.

- ◆ **Future Railroad Conditions.** Although precise determinations of future activities on the Caltrain tracks are unknown at this time, alterations or expansion of the tracks to accommodate high speed rail or future Caltrain needs seems likely. Acknowledging that such changes may occur provides the opportunity for the Vision Plan to propose ways to expand east-west connectivity across the tracks for bicyclists and pedestrians, in addition to vehicles, in conjunction with future track changes.

These community assets will be the building blocks for attaining a vision of a more vital and thriving downtown and establish Menlo Park’s segment of El Camino Real as an integral component of that vitality. In order to achieve this vision for the future of the El Camino Real corridor and downtown Menlo Park, future development and public improvements need to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the next section.

#### *D. Goals and Objectives*

This section provides goals and specific objectives for twelve topic areas, all of which were derived from the visioning process. The goals and objectives follow a brief background discussion about the community input on each topic. For some goals and objectives, an expanded discussion providing recommendations for implementation or potential City improvements is provided.

##### **1. Vision Plan Area Character**

###### *Background*

An image that was repeatedly provided by a number of community members was one of a “village feel.” This was quite often characterized by the inclusion of vertical mixed-use, but not “highly intense” development. Also con-

tributing to what people feel is a necessary component of the village character would be a comfortable, walkable scale and pedestrian safety in conjunction with active places, expanded business hours and more vitality in the Downtown. The interest in expanded vitality was also heard from participants seeking an appropriate balance between “village” and “city”, where the latter might have more cultural institutions, restaurants and shops.

Given this input, it is recommended that Menlo Park establish the following goal and objectives to ensure that the “village feel” is pursued for the Vision Plan Area:

*Goal: Maintain a village character unique to Menlo Park.*

*Objectives:*

- Downtown accessible by all transportation modes, and particularly for pedestrians.
- Expanded housing opportunities, particularly for seniors and all segments of the workforce.
- Well-designed and well-maintained buildings, plazas and streets.
- Downtown storefronts exhibit community pride and contribute to Menlo Park’s identity.
- Development in the Downtown and on El Camino Real is sensitive to the adjacent residential context.
- A mix of uses, with upper floor uses ranging from residential to office and—under specific circumstances—retail.
- Specially-designed and strategically-placed gateways mark the entry to Menlo Park as well as to Downtown.
- A rich tree canopy in Menlo Park.
- A balance of hardscaped plaza spaces, and active and passive green spaces.

## 2. East-West Connectivity

### *Background*

East-west connectivity was identified as an important issue for the Vision Plan Area during the community outreach process. Community members specifically identified El Camino Real and the Caltrain tracks as barriers to traveling from east to west through Menlo Park, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists.

During the workshop process, most people reported they liked the idea of a bicycle and pedestrian underpass of the train tracks and a plaza, tentatively identified at the terminus of Middle Avenue, particularly along with improved bicycle and pedestrian crossings of El Camino Real at Middle Avenue. Community members also expressed an interest in improved connections between the west side of El Camino Real and the train station and civic center areas. There were a variety of ideas expressed for how such connections could be improved, ranging from pedestrian and bicycle underpass/overpass to a grade separation, to putting some or all of El Camino Real underground as it goes through Menlo Park. Trenching Caltrain through Menlo Park was another potential solution identified by community members.

During targeted outreach sessions in Belle Haven, it was reported that some members of that community don't go to the west side of town because the transit connections between the east and west are slow and infrequent. They would like to use the train and the recreational amenities of Burgess Park but need to be able to access those areas of town more easily.

Given this input and preliminary analysis, it is recommended that Menlo Park establish the following goal and objectives to create better east-west connections:

*Goal: Provide greater east-west, town-wide connectivity.*

*Objectives:*

- Improved pedestrian/bicycle connections across the railroad tracks.
- Improved vehicular connections across railroad tracks.
- A pedestrian/bike underpass of the railroad tracks in conjunction with a public park or plaza.
- Improved crosswalk and pedestrian connections across El Camino Real.
- Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections between Downtown and Civic Center/Burgess Park.

It is recommended that this goal and corresponding objectives be implemented through the following actions:

- Train tracks grade separated by lifting tracks moderately to allow Oak Grove and Ravenswood to run underneath.
- El Camino Real crossing improvements at grade, including textured pavement and pedestrian refuges, where feasible.
- Pedestrian/bicycle underpass of rail in conjunction with a public park or plaza at Middle Avenue (or other appropriate intersection).
- Pedestrian underpass of train tracks at station.
- Improved connections to Civic Center/Burgess Park; including resolving possible conflict with Grade Separations.

Other solutions for improving east-west connectivity, including the undergrounding of Caltrain and El Camino, were not recommended for the following reasons:

- Costs of these methods are high, and it is unlikely that funding could be secured during the lifespan of this Vision Plan.

- The horizontal distance required to underground Caltrain would require extensive new infrastructure, and likely have an effect on Caltrain outside of the Menlo Park city limits.
- Undergrounding Caltrain or El Camino Real would dramatically change current block and street pattern in Menlo Park, including demolition of existing buildings.
- Undergrounding Caltrain would require deep tunneling to ensure that San Francisquito Creek is not disturbed.

### 3. El Camino Real Circulation

#### *Background*

Traffic flow and north-south connectivity on El Camino Real was identified as an issue for the Vision Plan Area during the community outreach process. Community members specifically identified parking, traffic and pedestrian amenities as major issues for El Camino Real.

Reconnaissance of El Camino Real for this planning process determined that there are approximately twenty-two cross-sectional configurations. These twenty-two conditions are sometimes replicated so that in the approximately one and one half mile length of El Camino Real in Menlo Park, at least twenty-seven different changes in configuration take place. Some community members suggested trenching or tunneling El Camino Real for a distance that would range from just the blocks between Menlo Avenue and Oak Grove Avenue to a longer stretch of El Camino Real. With regard to non-trenching solutions, community opinions expressed at Workshop #2 included the following approaches:

- Convert the entire length to two travel lanes and one parking lane in each direction.
- Convert the entire length to three travel lanes and no parking lane in each direction, except where parking could also be accommodated.

- Convert the entire length to two travel lanes and one parking lane in each direction; however, the parking lane would be closed during commute hours to accommodate a third travel lane.
- Extend Alma or other alternate north-south routes to alleviate traffic on El Camino Real.
- Trench El Camino Real.

In addition to the input from the community, it is important to consider Caltrans in determining the vision for El Camino Real because it is a Caltrans facility. A preliminary meeting with Caltrans indicated that they would have concerns about any reduction in the number of lanes. This is due to a recent agreement with City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG) stating that lanes should be retained for future Bus Rapid Transit opportunities. C/CAG does, however, recognize in the agreement that additional lanes for Bus Rapid Transit may not always be possible through downtown-type settings.

Given this input and some preliminary analysis, it is recommended that Menlo Park establish the following goal and objectives to improve conditions on El Camino Real:

*Goal: Improve circulation and streetscape conditions on El Camino Real.*

*Objectives:*

- Wider sidewalks.
- Less congestion.
- Calmer traffic.
- Increased opportunities for safe east-west connectivity.
- Standardized cross-sections of El Camino Real, including number of lanes, lane widths and availability of parking lanes, where feasible.

These objective would need to be followed up with further engineering studies to determine how the standardized cross-section could best be achieved. There will be several different considerations to take into account in this

study, including Caltrans' and C/CAG's preferences to retain lanes for Bus Rapid Transit; the desire for a more pedestrian-friendly roadway; and the desire to reduce congestion on El Camino Real. In order to implement this recommendation, the City would need to work closely with Caltrans and C/CAG to find an acceptable configuration.

#### 4. Neighborhood Context

##### *Background*

During the visioning process, community members generally agreed that the scale of development allowed in Menlo Park should be altered to allow greater density and height in certain areas. This opinion was accompanied by an equally strong desire to carefully identify where development intensity could increase.

Workshop participants felt that the east side of El Camino Real could accommodate higher intensity development because it does not have immediate neighbors (between El Camino Real and train tracks) and the buildings would not cast shadows onto any other buildings. On the west side, more concern was expressed about casting shade on neighboring single-family residential parcels. When El Camino Real was discussed in small group sessions at Community Workshop #2, most groups used Alternative 2 (moderate development) as a starting point. They discussed making sure buildings on the west side stepped down to be sensitive to the existing residential neighborhoods. At the north end of the Plan Area, participants generally felt there is not much of a market for retail or restaurant uses, which have often ended up failing in that part of the city. There was more interest in housing or office uses, or retail uses that are different from those in the Downtown.

Additional opinions with less support surfaced throughout the visioning process that contrast the majority vision described above. Specifically, some community members felt that the existing development intensities in Menlo Park are appropriate, and should not be altered. Another minority opinion

observed was that the vision should include higher intensity development, including 4-6 story mixed-use development along El Camino Real and in Downtown.

Given this input and preliminary analysis, it is recommended that Menlo Park establish the following goal and objectives to ensure that new development along the El Camino Real corridor is in accordance with the desires of the community and is sensitive to nearby residential neighborhoods:

*Goal: Ensure that El Camino Real development is sensitive to adjacent neighborhoods.*

*Objective:*

- Variations in building heights and uses on different parts of El Camino Real are respectful of their neighboring contexts and also provide opportunities for variations in the character.

It is recommended that this goal and corresponding objective be implemented in the following ways:

- On the west side of El Camino Real, new buildings are up to 2 to 3 stories in height, stepping down in height on the sides of the building that are adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Uses include residential, office and, potentially, smaller hotels.
- North of Oak Grove Avenue, new buildings on the east side of El Camino Real are up to 2 to 3 stories in height. Uses include residential and, potentially, office.
- South of Ravenswood Avenue, new buildings on the east side of El Camino Real are up to 4 stories in height. Uses include residential, office and potentially a hotel with conference facilities.

## **5. Vacant and Underutilized Parcels on El Camino Real**

### *Background*

There has been general agreement throughout the planning process that something needs to be done on vacant sites in varying states of disrepair to improve the character of El Camino Real. This is most notable in the southern portions of El Camino Real on the land formerly occupied by automobile dealerships. Additionally, the community supported redevelopment of other parcels along El Camino Real currently developed in a less-efficient manner. For example, community members expressed that small, 1-story auto mechanic and service uses were not appropriate on El Camino Real.

Given this desire of the community, it is recommended that Menlo Park establish the following goal and objectives to ensure that vacant and underutilized parcels are redeveloped on El Camino Real:

*Goal: Revitalize underutilized parcels and buildings.*

### *Objectives:*

- A hotel with conference facilities should be part of future development of the south end of El Camino Real.
- The Park Theater site is a cultural amenity that complements but does not compete with the Downtown.
- New development maintains a sensitive relationship to adjacent neighborhoods.
- North-south bicycle and pedestrian connections are created on or adjacent to the railroad tracks.
- Wider sidewalks are provided on El Camino Real in coordination with redevelopment.

While there has been general agreement that the Park Theater site should remain a cultural amenity, some community members have expressed concerns that this may not be economically viable without support from the City.

Implementation of this objective would likely require further study and possibly collaboration with the property owner.

## 6. Train Station Area

### *Background*

Community members expressed that the train station area should be livelier and provide something for people to do as they are waiting for the train. During community walking tours of the Downtown, participants expressed that the uses around the station do not take advantage of their location. Even the generally-approved-of Menlo Center (the building housing Kepler's Books and Café Borrone) turns its back on the train station and does not show much of an entrance to the station area.

Given this desire of the community, it is recommended that Menlo Park establish the following goal and objectives to promote increased activity, new uses and plaza spaces near the Caltrain station area:

*Goal: Activate the train station area.*

### *Objectives:*

- There are expanded housing opportunities, particularly for seniors and all segments of the workforce.
- New cultural institutions or similar facilities contribute to the liveliness of this area.
- New parking facilities in this area are generally underground.
- A public plaza terminating Santa Cruz Avenue serves as a forecourt to the station.
- Mixed-use development with active ground floor retail uses.

## 7. Santa Cruz Avenue Pedestrian Character

### *Background*

There has been much discussion on the future sidewalk and street conditions of Santa Cruz Avenue. Community members expressed their desire to maintain and expand the pedestrian character of Santa Cruz Avenue. Wider sidewalks were often identified as a desired improvement. This change would allow for additional street furniture, outdoor seating and other activities. Though most agree that these improvements would be positive, there is some disagreement about what strategy will be most appropriate for Santa Cruz Avenue.

Some community members have advocated closing it permanently to vehicular traffic, while others have suggested other options for providing a more comfortable pedestrian environment along Santa Cruz Avenue. Some community members have advocated for the transformation of angled parking on Santa Cruz to parallel, dedicating the excess space to sidewalk widening. Others suggested that parking could be eliminated completely from Santa Cruz Avenue.

It is recommended that Menlo Park establish the following goal and objectives to promote increased pedestrian character on Santa Cruz Avenue:

*Goal: Protect and enhance pedestrian amenities on Santa Cruz Avenue.*

### *Objectives:*

- Strengthened pedestrian character on Santa Cruz Avenue.
- Wider sidewalks on Santa Cruz Avenue to provide additional space for outdoor seating, street furniture or other pedestrian amenities.

It is recommended that this goal and corresponding objectives be implemented in the following ways:

- Eliminate parallel parking, retain angled parking and widen sidewalks where parallel parking previously existed.
- Create more “public” mid-block connections between the street and the parking plazas.
- Create intermittent plazas that would form a network between Fremont Park and the plaza at Café Borrone.
- Design “step-down” feature into sidewalk to better accommodate street closure for festivals, farmers markets and other potential community events.

This approach to providing additional sidewalk width on Santa Cruz Avenue was supported by a majority of participants at the Planning Commission Workshop. Preserving the angled parking is most feasible and will also accomplish the following:

- Preserve existing median and mature trees on Santa Cruz Avenue.
- Preserving angled parking spaces on Santa Cruz Avenue will retain more on-street parking for Downtown businesses.
- Continue to bring vehicle and pedestrian traffic through Downtown, ensuring that businesses have a steady stream of potential customers.

## 8. Downtown Vibrancy

### *Background*

The visioning process indicated that there is strong community support for increased vibrancy in Downtown. Community members expressed a desire to encourage a development density and use mix that will help facilitate increased activity in Downtown. Many workshop participants also expressed a desire to have uses in Downtown that would remain active later at night and on weekends.

Some community members expressed a desire for new development in the Downtown to be 1 story in height while others suggested 4 stories would be appropriate. A larger number of reports expressed that 3 stories would work, particularly to expand opportunities for housing. Many of those expressing a desire to see 3 stories in the Downtown suggested that those buildings should step back at the third story. Many community members have expressed a desire for greater liveliness, particularly in the evening hours.

Some community members also suggested that an institutional use, such as a library or some other City service, would help to increase vitality in the Downtown. Some community members think the vision should focus on retail and restaurant uses in Downtown, and that housing uses will not effectively add to Downtown vitality.

It is recommended that Menlo Park establish the following goal and objectives to promote increased vitality Downtown:

*Goal: Expand shopping, dining and neighborhood services to ensure a vibrant downtown.*

*Objectives:*

- Most restaurants and stores are open during evening hours and weekends.
- New buildings are up to 2 to 3 stories in height with the third floor stepping back from the front façade.
- Upper floor uses include residential, office and, potentially, retail.
- There are expanded housing opportunities, particularly for seniors and all segments of the workforce.
- The parking plazas are more active and carefully designed to facilitate pedestrian activity, including the addition of plaza-facing storefronts, articulated walkways, and additional landscaping elements.

- There are anchor destinations at both ends of the Downtown, the train station at the east and another at the west, potentially in coordination with Menlo Park Presbyterian Church.
- Cultural institutions, such as a small museum or theater are part of the downtown mix.
- An independent shuttle bus circulates through parts of Menlo Park with the Downtown as its hub.

## 9. Housing

### *Background*

At the community workshops and other Vision Plan events, a strong majority of community members expressed concern over a shortage of housing options in Menlo Park. Community members generally agreed that new housing opportunities should be provided within the Vision Plan Area.

Many workshop groups expressed that they wanted to see more housing in the area, both as a way to provide affordable housing and as a way to bring more life to the area, bringing people in who would drive the market for a downtown that stays open later in the evening.

Some community members have expressed strong concerns about the impacts residential development has on Menlo Park's schools, traffic and other community facilities and services. Such concerns led them to recommend that no new housing be added unless it could be shown that the impacts could be mitigated. Those impacts need to be considered in the planning for future residential development.

The following goal and objectives capture the community's vision for housing in the Vision Plan Area:

*Goal: Provide residential opportunities in the Vision Plan Area.*

*Objectives:*

- The Downtown, the area around the train station and the El Camino Real corridor see the development of differing types of housing depending on the specific traffic and issues for each of those areas.
- There are new affordable housing options within the Vision Plan Area.
- Housing improves the jobs/housing balance in Menlo Park.

New housing should respect existing development, both in terms of its physical presence and the impacts it may create. These impacts will be studied further as projects are proposed within the Vision Plan Area.

## 10. Open Space

*Background*

Community-wide desire for new parks, plazas and other open spaces was evident throughout the visioning process. The desired types, locations and character of potential open spaces differed across the community.

Open space was discussed by many community members. The plaza in front of Borrone's was often cited as an exemplary model to follow. Park space, particularly in conjunction with new residential development was viewed as being a crucial component of the Vision. A larger park space was discussed for the southern areas of El Camino Real.

Some community members suggested different approaches to providing open spaces in Menlo Park, including the following:

- Make Santa Cruz Avenue a "pedestrian mall" or "walking street".
- Playing fields on existing parking plazas.
- Underground El Camino Real, provide plazas and open space on top.

- Underground parking at existing parking plaza locations, provide plazas and open space on top.
- “Pedestrian way” through southern parking plazas.
- Plazas, outdoor parks, and playing fields on El Camino Real.

The following goal and objectives capture the community’s vision for plazas and parks in the Vision Plan Area:

*Goal: Provide plaza and park spaces.*

*Objectives:*

- Plazas activated by storefront activity or ground floor uses.
- Parks that provide passive and active recreational spaces.
- Parks and plaza spaces that provide amenities for a range of ages, including seniors and children.

It is recommended that this goal and corresponding objective be implemented through the creation of the following open spaces:

- New plaza on Santa Cruz Avenue.
- Pedestrian way through southern parking plazas.
- Plaza/park at Middle Avenue, in coordination with bicycle/pedestrian underpass.
- Plaza at train station.
- Semi-public plazas provided in coordination with private development throughout the Vision Plan Area.

These open spaces could be developed through a number of mechanisms, including a trade-off with developers of future projects. One example of such a trade-off would be the granting of density bonuses to developers of projects providing publicly accessible open spaces. The City could also provide plazas

and parks by allocating funds for such projects, using potential parking revenues to make improvements, creating a Benefit Assessment District, competing for grant monies, or by creating a new tax program.

## 11. Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

### *Background*

Community members have been supportive of increased access and facilities for pedestrians and bicycles throughout the visioning process. Much of the input has focused on east-west pedestrian and bicycle connections, but community members have also discussed north-south connections, so people have alternatives to walking and biking on El Camino Real.

The following goal and objectives capture the community's vision for pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the Vision Plan Area:

*Goal: Provide an integrated, safe and well-designed pedestrian and bicycle network.*

### *Objectives:*

- Pedestrian and bicycle connections provide alternatives to El Camino Real.
- Conflicts between motor vehicle circulation and bicycle and pedestrian connectivity are minimized.

It is recommended that this goal and corresponding objectives be implemented through the creation of the following pedestrian and bicycle improvements:

- A path runs behind the parcels on the southern segment of El Camino Real.

- Another path is on the other side of the tracks, on Alma Street, which connects to the bicycle/pedestrian bridge to Palo Alto at the south end of the city.
- A safe and clear connection between Downtown, the station area and the Civic Center/Burgess Park area.

## 12. Parking

### *Background*

Community members expressed some concern that they would like to patronize shops and restaurants in downtown Menlo Park, but find the current 2-hour parking limit constraining. People sometimes get parking tickets because a lunch or other activity has gone on longer than anticipated. Such comments were often in conjunction with a willingness to pay for parking if it would mean fewer parking tickets and more flexibility in how long they could stay downtown. Some community members are adamant that parking should be free. Specific parking solutions proposed by the community included the following:

- Parking strategies and pricing and timing mechanisms.
- Parking structures—or not; above grade or below.
- Below grade parking as an opportunity to create plaza/park space at grade.
- Coordination with Menlo Park Presbyterian Church.
- Parking Meter District.
- Shortest-term meters on Santa Cruz.
- Short-term meters on Menlo and Oak Grove.
- Advanced parking technologies.
- Employee/Church parking structure on Parking Plaza 3.
- Parking Structure on Parking Plaza 1.

- Free parking in structures for first 2 hours.
- Free parking.
- Paid short-term parking combined with free long-term parking to encourage patrons to spend more time Downtown.

The following goal and objectives capture the community’s vision for parking in the Vision Plan Area:

*Goal: Develop parking strategies and facilities that meet the commercial and residential needs of the community.*

*Objectives:*

- Ample parking to accommodate all Downtown users.
- Development of a “Park Once” strategy--“destination parking”.
- Balanced parking to accommodate the needs of employees and downtown patrons, short visits and long-term.
- Surface parking strategies that accommodate patrons and employees, and encourage greater downtown patronage.
- Underground parking where possible to promote improved aesthetics on El Camino Real.

It is recommended that this goal and corresponding objective be implemented by the following strategies and infrastructure improvements:

- 1-2 parking structures (1 public, 1 in coordination with church/business owners/employees).
- Paid parking on surface lots and streets.

- Shorter-term parking where high turnover is desired; longer-term parking further away from high turnover locations.
- Parking revenues earmarked to benefit the Downtown area.

The community did not come to a clear agreement about parking strategies, but a majority did agree that parking structures and some fee mechanism would be appropriate for Downtown. The recommendation above will preserve some short-term parking for customers visiting the Downtown, provide an opportunity to institute a “park once” strategy in Downtown and encourage partnerships between the City and other entities to provide parking.

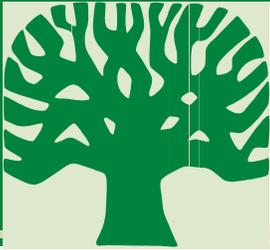
## Attachment E. Summary: Community Survey

### COUNT, OUT OF 2,036 RESPONSES TALLIED

	<i>Live</i>	817
	<i>Work</i>	309
1. Do you live, work.....	<i>Property</i>	569
	<i>Business</i>	132
	<i>Daily</i>	901
2a. How often Downtown?	<i>Weekly</i>	973
	<i>Monthly</i>	104
	<i>Infrequently</i>	54
	<i>Daily</i>	308
2b. How often El Camino Real?	<i>Weekly</i>	1094
	<i>Monthly</i>	354
	<i>Infrequently</i>	267

### AVERAGE RANK ORDER: 1 IS HIGHEST AND 5 IS LOWEST

	<i>Specialty</i>	2.1
	<i>Restaurant</i>	2.1
3a. Most needed Downtown?	<i>Nightlife</i>	2.9
	<i>Mixed-Use</i>	2.3
	<i>Other</i>	3.1
	<i>Specialty</i>	2.5
	<i>Restaurant</i>	2.2
3b. Most needed El Camino?	<i>Nightlife</i>	2.9
	<i>Mixed-Use</i>	2.1
	<i>Other</i>	3.2
4a. Housing Menlo Park?	<i>rank 1-5</i>	3.3
4b. Housing El Camino Real	<i>rank 1-5</i>	3.2
5. Bike/ped El Camino	<i>rank 1-5</i>	2.0
6. Bike/ped Caltrain	<i>rank 1-5</i>	2.1
7. Traffic flow ECR	<i>rank 1-5</i>	1.6
8. Increased Parking Downtown	<i>rank 1-5</i>	2.2



# Help Imagine Menlo Park's Future

In October 2007, the City conducted an initial survey to gain a better understanding of the community's desires for El Camino Real and Downtown. We received over 500 responses! Thanks to those who participated! This survey follows up with some more focused questions, and will be used to help structure the Community Workshops and associated visioning activities. Please refer to the enclosed newsletter for more information about the Vision Plan process and to see the portions of Menlo Park that are included in the Study Area.

1. Do you live, work, own property or own a business in the Study Area?  
(Please circle all that apply)
2. How often do you visit Downtown Menlo Park?  
Daily    Weekly    Once a Month    Infrequently (circle one)  
  
How often do you visit establishments on El Camino Real?  
Daily    Weekly    Once a Month    Infrequently (circle one)
3. Of the following business types, which do you think are needed most in Downtown Menlo Park?  
(rank the following, with 1 being the highest rank)  
specialty stores\_\_ restaurants\_\_ nightlife\_\_ mixed-use\*\_\_ others \_\_\_\_\_

Of the following business types, which do you think are needed most on El Camino Real?  
(rank the following, with 1 being the highest rank)  
specialty stores\_\_ restaurants\_\_ nightlife\_\_ mixed-use\*\_\_ others \_\_\_\_\_

\*Mixed-use development is defined as the combination of two or more uses within one structure. For example, a two-story building with a retail use on the ground floor and a residential or office use on the second floor is classified as mixed-use.

4. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:  
More homes, including condominiums and apartments, are needed in Downtown Menlo Park.  
strongly agree    agree    neutral    disagree    strongly disagree (circle one)  
  
More homes, including condominiums and apartments, are needed on El Camino Real.  
strongly agree    agree    neutral    disagree    strongly disagree (circle one)

For the following issues, please rate the level of importance to you.

5. Bike/pedestrian crossing of El Camino Real  
very important    important    neutral    unimportant    very unimportant (circle one)
6. Bike/pedestrian crossing of Caltrain tracks  
very important    important    neutral    unimportant    very unimportant (circle one)
7. Improved traffic flow on El Camino Real  
very important    important    neutral    unimportant    very unimportant (circle one)
8. Increased parking Downtown  
very important    important    neutral    unimportant    very unimportant (circle one)

Additional Comments/Clarification

---



---



---



---

## Attachment F. Summary: Walking Tours

### MENLO PARK EL CAMINO REAL/DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN – WALKING TOURS

#### Summary of Comments Recorded at the Three Walking Tours

##### 1. North El Camino Real

- Make distinction between north and south El Camino Real
- Improve east-west connectivity
- Encourage appropriate tree planting
- Improve transit facilities
- Improve bike/pedestrian access
- Improve and articulate entrances on El Camino
- Mitigate sidewalk impediments
- Provide affordable housing
- Do not create “canyon” feel with tall buildings close to El Camino
- Re-open Park Theater or redevelop
- Minimize driveways on El Camino
- Buildings should have appropriate architectural detailing and landscaping
- Wider sidewalks on El Camino
- Storefronts should have transparent windows
- Need variety in buildings
- Need level sidewalks
- Land uses should inform building form
- Auto service/mechanics not best use on El Camino
- Shield noise from El Camino
- Underground utilities
- Preserve trees
- Encourage monument signage
- Parking is attractive for potential office tenants
- Consider shared parking and access
- Need more grocery stores

##### 2. South El Camino Real

- Consider a local shuttle service
- Strip malls are unattractive
- Widen sidewalks
- Improve pedestrian crossings of El Camino
- Improve street furniture
- Recreation, housing, hotels, retail for empty car dealer lots
- Provide pedestrian/bike access across tracks to Burgess Park
- Plant more trees
- Underground parking improves visual quality on El Camino
- Balance pedestrian and vehicular needs

- Improve signage
- Improve east-west connectivity
- Consider a new fitness center
- Consider an arts center
- Improve visibility of businesses
- Preserve solar access on El Camino
- El Camino should not compete with Downtown Menlo Park
- Higher densities are appropriate on El Camino

### 3. Downtown Menlo Park

#### *Station Area, Alma and Menlo Center*

- East side of Alma is isolated by train tracks
- Provide connectivity among transportation modes
- Station area is underutilized
- Pedestrians and vehicles conflict in station area
- Merrill Street should be a hub for new retail
- Recognize historical significance of station area site
- Make station area more pedestrian-oriented
- Encourage housing in station area
- Housing near tracks will become slum housing
- Station area needs more parking
- Over/Underpass of El Camino
- Eliminate parking on El Camino to provide more separation between vehicles and pedestrians
- Differentiate between El Camino and Santa Cruz Avenue
- Build pedestrian bridge over El Camino
- Menlo Center is out of scale (too large/tall) for Menlo Park
- Setbacks are important for El Camino
- Mix of old and new (BBC building and Menlo Center) is positive

#### *Downtown/Santa Cruz Avenue*

- Raised storefronts are negative
- Parking is appropriately located behind buildings
- Trees should be encouraged in parking plazas
- Parking plazas are not pedestrian friendly
- Consider parking structures in Downtown
- Consider one-way streets in Downtown
- Plant more trees along Santa Cruz
- Trader Joes often has parking problems
- Consider creating housing above retail
- 1142 Crane Street is an example of good building massing and design

- Replace single-story buildings with multi-story buildings
- Provide more open space Downtown
- Encourage more nighttime businesses/nightlife
- Downtown suffers from lack of investment
- Consider more residential development Downtown to support retail
- Develop parking areas, but ensure common amenities are provided
- Streetscape needs improvement
- Provide wider sidewalks
- Provide space for outside seating
- Underground parking to provide park space above
- Improve rear storefronts and landscaping on parking plazas
- Improve consistency of signage, but still allow for flexibility
- Need Downtown health club
- Offices/banks are not appropriate uses for Downtown

#### *Menlo Avenue*

- Improve landscaping on Menlo Avenue
- Scale of office uses and residential on Menlo Avenue is appropriate
- Retail along north side of Menlo Avenue is not successful
- Taller buildings would be appropriate on north side of Menlo Avenue
- Underground utilities
- Plant more trees

#### *Oak Grove Avenue*

- Consider parking lot at Oak Grove and Crane as an opportunity for development
- Provide greater setbacks on Oak Grove
- Oak Grove businesses are well-landscaped
- Oak Grove needs a clear identity
- Oak Grove should be northern boundary of Menlo Park's central business district

## Attachment G. Summary: Stakeholder Interviews

### MENLO PARK EL CAMINO REAL/DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN - STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Interviews held February 13, 2008

#### A. *City Staff*

- Concerns are with respect to traffic and density.
- Parking structures should be incorporated into any new development.
- Should incorporate parking structures into other uses.
- Interested in creating new housing along El Camino Real and in downtown.

#### B. *Schools, Churches & Seniors*

- Concerns are with respect to transportation, pedestrian safety and capacity of school facilities.
- El Camino Real is not pedestrian friendly and hard to cross.
- Bicycling is difficult and unsafe along El Camino Real.
- Kepler's building is a model for new development, young people congregate there.

#### C. *Architects & Developers*

- Concerns are with respect to design and development needs to make the city a livable and vibrant place.
- Medium to high density development is the only thing that makes fiscal sense, as shown by recent development along El Camino Real.
- The downtown needs to include housing to make it a vibrant space.
- The downtown needs to have a variety of uses and services.
- The size of parcels along El Camino Real makes development difficult; the city needs to facilitate parcel aggregation.
- Housing in downtown makes sense.
- Redwood City's Precise Plan is a model for planning.

*D. Property Owners/Managers*

- There should be more focus on El Camino Real rather than in downtown.
- The “small town” feel creates a fear of growth within the community
- More housing development is a good idea.
- Retail should not be required on portions of El Camino Real north or south of downtown, due to limited pedestrian traffic.
- Need to mitigate traffic congestion on El Camino Real, much of which is generated by other communities. Possibly by removing parking on El Camino and creating bus pull-out lanes and better landscaping.
- Need to assemble parcels to facilitate development.
- Need to create parking downtown.
- Create a “Downtown Village” by redeveloping parking plazas; City can stimulate redevelopment.
- Fees are a barrier to housing development.

*E. Business Owners*

- Concerns are with parking downtown.
- There is no consistency in parking policy, design or payment.
- Feel that there are parking issues in downtown all the time.
- It is important to consider paid parking.
- Standard of 6 parking spaces per 1000 sf seems high and is a detriment to growth.
- Need to update the parking codes.
- Concerned with new retail drawing customers away from downtown area.
- Possible alternate location for farmers market, the present location takes parking away from store customers.

*F. Former City Council Members*

- There needs to be new housing in downtown because it is too quiet at night and the downtown needs the vibrancy people bring.
- It is important to focus new development on El Camino Real, to provide new housing and jobs.
- The housing needs of singles and seniors are not met within the city.
- The city needs to provide more affordable housing.
- The issue of parking clouds every decision.
- There needs to be better public participation to ensure community approval.
- The aggregation of parcels is necessary for development.
- The combination of the downtown and the train station creates a great opportunity for mixed-use.
- El Camino Real needs wider sidewalks and better crossings.
- Retail along El Camino Real is preferable to office because of sales tax dollars.

*G. Residents*

- Concerns are with maintaining residential neighborhood and creating new community amenities.
- There needs to be height restrictions on the residential side of new development along El Camino Real.
- There are downtown parking problems, and it is important to consider underground parking.
- There should be trees along El Camino Real.
- The city needs better pedestrian connections; pedestrian bridge, multi-use trails.
- It is important to bring the “park” back into Menlo Park.
- Closing Santa Cruz Avenue to cars should be considered to make a pedestrian only street.
- Green building standards should be incorporated into new development.
- Preserving the residential neighborhood feel is important.

- It is important to keep Menlo Park unique.
- Higher density needs to include height restrictions and set-backs.

*H. Applicants for Outreach Committee*

- It is important to create a safer and more walkable El Camino Real.
- High density development will require lots of community buy-in.
- A higher end chain hotel should be developed on the former automobile dealership parcels.
- Creating higher density in the downtown area might be better than creating an alternative to downtown on El Camino Real.
- There needs to be bicycle and pedestrian improvements on El Camino Real.
- Office and residential should be developed along El Camino Real.
- Underground El Camino Real.
- There is a need for downtown parking structures.
- Better connections are needed across El Camino Real.

## **Attachment H. Summary: Community Workshop #I Individual Exercise**

### **MENLO PARK EL CAMINO REAL/DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN – COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #I**

Frequent responses to the question: “What improvement would you most like to see to El Camino Real and/or Downtown Menlo Park?”

#### **1. Pedestrian Improvements**

- Widen sidewalks
- Create walkability
- Accessibility
- Encourage walking
- Better crossings on El Camino Real
- Connection across railroad tracks
- Connection to Burgess Park

#### **2. More Housing**

- Affordable
- Closer to train station (TOD)
- Senior

#### **3. Mixed-use Development Downtown**

- Relaxed height limit
- Low density

#### **4. Parking Structure**

- Under-grounded parking mentioned a number of times
- Near El Camino Real

#### **5. New Park or Plaza Space**

- Downtown
- In one of the existing parking lot areas
- At the railroad station
- Include activities for children

#### **6. Trees and Landscaping**

#### **7. Bicycle Improvements**

- Bicycle lanes on El Camino Real
- Connections across railroad tracks
- Connection to Burgess Park

#### **8. Widen El Camino Real**

- Underground El Camino Real
- Three lanes in each direction

**9. Improve Night Life**

- More restaurants
- Theatre
- Shops/Restaurants to stay open later
- Local businesses

**10. Transit-Oriented Development**

- Multiple uses
- Including housing

## Attachment I. Summary: Community Workshop #1 Group Exercise

Comments recorded at El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan Workshop #1,  
held on March 6, 2008

### TRAFFIC, TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING

<i>Count</i>	<i>Comment</i>
5	East-west bike/pedestrian route (under tracks)
6	Off-road bike facilities
13	Underground Caltrain/use space above
4	Improve bike/ped crossing on El Camino
10	Consider undergrounding El Camino/use space above 10
5	Focus on community needs for El Camino and maintain parking
1	No freight on Caltrain line
8	Bridge connection along Alma
4	Sand hill road connection to Alma
1	Maintain and improve regional vehicular access to the downtown
2	Community shuttle
3	Underground parking
1	Caltrain is attractive to homeless population
1	Park once strategy
1	Office space near transit
7	More pedestrian/bike friendly
	Improve transit in MP
2	Consider BRT on El Camino
	Connect bike, pedestrian and transit facilities
6	Six-lane El Camino pass-thru by taking out parallel parking (during commute hours)
2	Maintain or expand current parking ratio
1	Left turn lane onto Santa Cruz from El Camino
5	Improve El Camino sidewalks
10	Pedestrian/bikeway along train tracks connected to Palo Alto
1	Reinstitute Caltrain service
	Maintain free parking downtown
1	Santa Cruz Avenue as walking street (closed off to autos)
4	Extend sidewalks on Santa Cruz Avenue to the west
3	Parking garage

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

<i>Count</i>	<i>Comment</i>
2	Don't use economic values as land use criteria (zoning dictates land values)
8	Garner public benefit from any upzoning
12	Maintain diversity of small businesses
3	Emphasize mixed-use on El Camino
21	Density to support amenities
2	Larger Trader Joes on El Camino
4	Green retail on El Camino

Count reflects number of dots (out of a total of four given to each participant) placed next to the comment. If there is no number, the comment was recorded, but no dots were placed there.

**Comments recorded at El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan Workshop #1,  
held on March 6, 2008**

**OPEN PARKS, RECREATIONAL, ETC.**

<i>Count</i>	<i>Comment</i>
	Plan any parks/plazas to not become an attractive nuisance (homeless on benches, etc)
3	Dog park (24 hours)
7	Downtown square
3	Kids facilities-parks, indoors, cultural (museums, etc)
5	Playing/soccer fields

**EL CAMINO REUSE**

<i>Count</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6	Green retailers
2	Marriott Hotel

**HOUSING**

<i>Count</i>	<i>Comment</i>
	Ensure school district impacts are considered
4	Mixed-use to facilitate synergy between housing and commercial
6	Senior housing (especially at Little House) Consider economic viability of existing multi-family housing

**OTHER**

<i>Count</i>	<i>Comment</i>
	Homelessness and services
3	Reduce train noise
	Public art in new development
	Emphasize local character and identity
	Maintain vistas
3	Reasonable height limit to preserve views
3	Green building/minimize environmental footprint
4	Beautiful and innovative building design
	Heights along ecr and near downtown/caltrain
5	Varied setbacks on retail frontages downtown
1	Unique innovative development
	Eliminate overhead utilities
	Restore Park Theater
	Community flag for Menlo Park
5	Shuttle service

Count reflects number of dots (out of a total of four given to each participant) placed next to the comment. If there is no number, the comment was recorded, but no dots were placed there.

## Attachment J. Summary: Community Workshop #2: Small Group Discussion

### Summary of Group Comments from El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan Workshop #2, held on April 3, 2008

#### GROUP 1

- Like the current look and feel of Menlo Park
- Minimize street grade parking
- Widen sidewalks
- Maintain/enhance the “green” look of Menlo Park: Plant new street trees
- Encourage increased building height near railroad tracks and El Camino/Santa Cruz intersection
- Buildings heights should be lower than in southern portion of El Camino
- Office and housing more appropriate in northern portion of El Camino
- Higher densities on east side of El Camino

#### GROUP 2

- New mixed-use with retail and residential uses in north, no retail there now
- Tax revenue-creating uses on vacant car lots
- Underground Caltrain through Menlo Park
- Underground El Camino from Oak Grove to Ravenswood
- Transit oriented development with housing near Caltrain station
- Encourage shared parking
- New hotel with conference center in southern portion of El Camino

#### GROUP 3

- Eliminate parallel parking on El Camino
- Retail should not compete with Downtown
- Market should determine land uses and land use mix
- Increased setbacks on El Camino Real
- New pedestrian amenities between Roble and Ravenswood
- Underground Caltrain through Menlo Park
- Create east-west pedestrian and bike connectivity
- Replace theater with new use
- No residential uses on ground floor
- Underground some portion of El Camino
- Opposed to any increase in density (minority opinion)

#### GROUP 4

- Land uses should support one another
- Residential/retail mixed-use, hotel and light industrial uses on El Camino Real
- Cluster housing around Caltrain station
- Eliminate parallel parking during commute hours
- Wider sidewalks, make El Camino sidewalks ADA compliant
- Improve El Camino crossings at Menlo, Santa Cruz and Oak Grove Avenues
- Support bike underpass below Caltrain tracks
- Underground parking in Downtown plaza, build playing fields at grade

#### GROUP 5

- Want to keep the quiet residential areas and support a vibrant downtown
- New plazas/open space must be supported by businesses and housing
- Improve El Camino crossings at Middle, Menlo and Oak Grove Avenues
- Increase sidewalk widths, larger setbacks

*Note: Due to the number of attendees, there was no Group #6.*

## Summary of Group Comments from El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan Workshop #2, held on April 3, 2008

- Offer incentives for parcel consolidation
- Ensure Plan Area remains accessible to all, including seniors
- Eliminate parallel parking on El Camino during peak times
- Higher density on east side of El Camino

### GROUP 7

- Community form should be tighter, more village-like
- Create a gateway at north and south ends of El Camino
- Concentrate high density development around Santa Cruz and El Camino, buildings should step down in height and density toward the north and south ends
- Attract tax revenue
- Uses should be appropriate for all age groups
- Underground parking
- Mitigate “canyon” effect of taller buildings on El Camino
- Create a centralized plaza
- New hotel use on southern portion of El Camino
- Develop architectural guidelines for development to ensure “unified” look

### GROUP 8

- Like the quiet town feel of Menlo Park
- New hotel use on southern portion of El Camino
- Conference center associated with hotel, providing facilities for large groups
- Uses on vacant car lots should compliment hotel
- New recreational/gym facility

### GROUP 9

- Create an identity for Menlo Park: village feel, especially on Santa Cruz
- Concentrate taller buildings on southern end of El Camino and Downtown
- Augment bicycle underpass with new open space
- Improve landscaping
- Improve crossings in southern portion of El Camino
- Senior housing on west side of El Camino
- Need amenities to support new residential uses
- Attract medical office uses
- New hotel use in northern portion, to prevent competition with Stanford Park
- Mixed-uses with retail at central and south, mixed-use with office in northern portion

### GROUP 10

- El Camino should not be trenched
- Maintain parking on El Camino
- Widen sidewalks along with increase in density
- Design buildings to mitigate “canyon” effect from increased height
- Mixed-use development with housing, but still pay attention to tax revenue
- Emphasize housing, especially affordable housing and jobs/housing balance

*Note: Due to the number of attendees, there was no Group #6.*

**Attachment K. Summary: Community Workshop #3: Small Group Discussion**  
**Summary of Group Comments from El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan**  
**Workshop #3, held on May 1, 2008**

*Community Workshop #3, which focused specifically on the Downtown portions of the Study Area, began with a presentation by the consultant about the Vision Plan process, a summary of the input received at Community Workshop #2, a discussion of the community impacts of different land uses, and an overview of different development types and open spaces that may be appropriate for Downtown. After the presentation, participants split into groups to discuss their vision for Downtown, as well as review and comment on three conceptual development alternatives. The development alternatives provided ranged from least intensive change for Alternative 1 to most intensive change for Alternative 3. Each group was asked to choose one of the three alternatives to alter and comment on. After this exercise, a volunteer from each group presented their maps to the workshop participants. Three of the groups chose to begin with Alternative 1. Three groups chose Alternative 2. Two groups chose Alternative 3. One group combined elements from Alternatives 2 and 3. Below are summaries of the content that came from each group.*

**GROUP 1 (ALTERNATIVE 2)**

- Streetscape Improvements (Santa Cruz, Oak Grove and Menlo)
- Pedestrian bridge over ECR @ Santa Cruz Avenue
- Underground parking at Caltrain station
- Downtown Plaza at Chestnut and Santa Cruz
- 3-story development on Santa Cruz Avenue (set back 3rd story)
- Expand housing downtown
- Connect Menlo and Oak Grove to Santa Cruz Avenue
- Underground utilities

**GROUP 2 (ALTERNATIVE 3)**

- 3-4 story along Santa Cruz and at Caltrain Station area
- Pedestrian and bicycle connections from Downtown to Civic Center/Burgess Park
- Parking structures on parking plazas 1 and 3 (4 levels above, 1-2 subterranean)
- Improve El Camino crossings
- Iconic gateway feature at Santa Cruz/El Camino intersection
- Paid parking, using new technology (similar to Redwood City)
- Loaner bike program

**GROUP 3 (ALTERNATIVE 3)**

- 5-level parking structure on Plaza 1 (3 above ground, 2 subterranean)
- 3-story mixed-use along Santa Cruz
- Provide affordable housing
- Organic or “irregular” pedestrian connections
- Small access streets behind retail on Santa Cruz
- Acknowledge importance of Santa Cruz/El Camino intersection
- Eliminate parking on Santa Cruz
- Widen sidewalks on Santa Cruz
- Water features or fountains in Downtown
- Allow for temporary shut-down of Santa Cruz for community events
- Preserve solar access
- Retail, entertainment, restaurants, office and small hotel appropriate Downtown
- Underground utilities

*Note: Due to the number of attendees, there was no Group #5.*

## Summary of Group Comments from El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan Workshop #3, held on May 1, 2008

### GROUP 4 (ALTERNATIVE 1)

- Widen Santa Cruz sidewalks
- More parking needed for businesses close to El Camino
- Maintain median on Santa Cruz
- Eliminate some parking on Santa Cruz
- Maintain and expand tree cover
- 2-story buildings on Santa Cruz
- 3-story along El Camino, Menlo and Oak Grove
- Improve bicycle connections
- Underground utilities
- Encourage architectural variety
- Recognize importance of Santa Cruz/El Camino intersection
- 2-3 story development near Caltrain station

### GROUP 6 (ALTERNATIVE 1)

- Need architectural design guidance Downtown
- Plaza and cultural center near Caltrain station
- Pedestrian mall on Santa Cruz for one block, on both sides of El Camino
- Landmark architecture at Menlo/El Camino intersection
- Eliminate parking on Santa Cruz
- Widen sidewalks on Santa Cruz to allow more outside seating
- 2-story maximum on Santa Cruz
- 3-story maximum on east side of El Camino
- Eliminate street parking on Menlo and Oak Grove
- Underground Caltrain
- All downtown parking to be free and underground

### GROUP 7 (ALTERNATIVE 2)

- Parking structure (3 levels above ground, 1 subterranean)
- Street level enhancement of El Camino crossings
- Bike connection from Roble to Civic Center
- Improve overall pedestrian experience
- Minimize office uses Downtown
- Improve "back doors" to parking plazas
- Provide affordable housing

### GROUP 8 (ALTERNATIVE 1)

- Free parking
- Bike route along Caltrain tracks
- Downtown employee parking reservoir at Oak Grove/Crane intersection (parking plaza 2)
- Workforce housing near Santa Cruz/El Camino intersection
- New north-south street west of Caltrain tracks
- Dedicated right-turn lane on eastbound Menlo Avenue onto southbound El Camino
- Zoning should allow mixed-use Downtown
- Maintain small town feel
- Beautify parking plazas

*Note: Due to the number of attendees, there was no Group #5.*

## Summary of Group Comments from El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan Workshop #3, held on May 1, 2008

### GROUP 9 (ALTERNATIVE 2)

- Paid parking
- Plaza or park near Caltrain with active uses (businesses/cafes) surrounding it
- Pedestrian thoroughfare (pedestrian street during daytime hours only)
- Coordinate parking structure with Menlo Park Presbyterian Church (plaza 3)
- Uses and amenities should be balanced to offer to all age groups
- 2-3 stories on El Camino
- 3 story mixed-use development on Santa Cruz
- Nighttime vibrancy
- Performing arts center
- Gym
- Green spaces in Downtown

### GROUP 10 (ALTERNATIVES 2 & 3)

- 3-story mixed-use on Santa Cruz
- 4-5 story mixed-use near El Camino
- 2-story mixed-use along north side of Menlo Avenue
- Playing fields
- Small scale hotel for Downtown
- Pedestrian "alley" between Santa Cruz Avenue and Menlo Avenue
- Quality architecture

*Note: Due to the number of attendees, there was no Group #5.*

## Attachment L. Draft Vision Statement and Goals

### EL CAMINO REAL/DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN

This document is a working draft of the *El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan* for use at the Planning Commission Workshop on May 19, 2008.

#### A. *The Vision Plan Area*

As shown in Figure 1, the Vision Plan Area generally includes all parcels fronting onto El Camino Real for its entire length through Menlo Park; parcels fronting onto Oak Grove Avenue, Santa Cruz Avenue and Menlo Avenue generally between University Drive and the railroad tracks; and parcels fronting onto Alma Street immediately east of the train tracks.

#### B. *Outreach Efforts*

The Vision Plan is being developed through a community workshop process. Attendance at those workshops and community interest in the Vision Plan process were generated through a series of outreach efforts to the Menlo Park community. Those efforts included:

- ◆ Oversight and Outreach Committee
- ◆ Mobile Tour
- ◆ Walking Tours
- ◆ Stakeholder Interviews
- ◆ Community Surveys
- ◆ Targeted Outreach
- ◆ Speaker Series

Input gathered from these outreach efforts as well as from the three previous Community Workshops are included as appendices to this report.

#### C. *Vision Statement*

Downtown Menlo Park and the El Camino Real corridor through Menlo Park will continue to be known for the vitality and diverse range of activities

that are available. It will become a place where people live, work and shop and a place that provides services and offers cultural opportunities. A unique identity can be created for the Vision Plan Area that builds on the attributes and opportunities that exist as community assets in the Plan Area today. Those Menlo Park assets include:

- ◆ **Santa Cruz Avenue.** Menlo Park’s “Main Street” is an intimately-scaled street with fairly wide sidewalks and a rhythm of storefronts that is conducive to pedestrian activity. City-owned parking plazas are accessible via a series of similarly-scaled cross streets and augment the on-street parking provided on Santa Cruz Avenue.
- ◆ **The Menlo Park Train Station.** Rail and bus service connects Menlo Park’s downtown to the region; the station provides the opportunity for Menlo Park residents to access job opportunities elsewhere on the Peninsula as well as to bring visitors to existing and expanded opportunities in downtown Menlo Park.
- ◆ **Menlo Park’s Independently-owned Businesses.** A significant contributing factor to the small town, or village, character that is highly valued by community members today is the range of services that are provided by local businesses and merchants. One-of-a-kind retail businesses and services contribute greatly to making a downtown unique.
- ◆ **Strategic Opportunities for Near-term Change.** Vacancies and under-utilization of the Plan Area’s larger parcels, particularly those with the exposure that El Camino Real provides, offer the opportunity to envision future uses that are different than those that formerly occupied those key sites.
- ◆ **City-owned Parking Plazas.** These areas are integral to the health of businesses and merchants in the Downtown. However, the parking plazas are also the largest areas of City-owned land in the Plan Area, outside of public streets. A comprehensive redesign of these areas could provide the potential for a more efficient configuration and greater number of parking spaces, as well as shade trees in conjunction with plazas or small

park spaces that could be components of a coordinated downtown pedestrian network.

- ◆ **Future Railroad Conditions.** Although precise determinations of future activities on the Caltrain tracks are unknown at this time, alterations or expansion of the tracks to accommodate high speed rail or future Caltrain needs seems likely. Acknowledging that such changes may occur provides the opportunity for the Vision Plan to propose ways to expand east-west connectivity across the tracks for bicyclists and pedestrians, in addition to vehicles, in conjunction with future track changes.

These community assets will be the building blocks for attaining a vision of a more vital and thriving downtown and establish Menlo Park's segment of El Camino Real as an integral component of that vitality. In order to achieve this vision for the future of the El Camino Real corridor and downtown Menlo Park, future development and public improvements need to achieve the goals and objectives detailed below, which are illustrated in Attachment I, the Conceptual Illustrative drawing:

- ◆ **Maintain a village character unique to Menlo Park.**

There is a distinct character to the place. There are many ways to access the Downtown, particularly for pedestrians. There are expanded housing opportunities, particularly for seniors and all segments of the workforce. The buildings, plazas and streets are well-designed and well-maintained. A sense of pride that merchants maintain in their storefronts contributes to a Menlo Park identity. Development in the Downtown and on El Camino Real is sensitive to the adjacent residential context. Specially-designed and strategically-placed gateways mark the entry to Menlo Park as well as to Downtown.

### *Background*

An image that was provided by a number of community members was one of a "European village feel." This was quite often characterized by the inclusion of vertical mixed-use, but not "highly intense" development. Upper components of that mixed-use could range from residential to office and, under specific circumstances—retail. Also contributing to

what people feel is a necessary component of the village character would be a comfortable, walkable scale and pedestrian safety in conjunction with active places, expanded business hours and more vitality in the Downtown.

◆ **Provide greater east-west, town-wide connectivity.**

An examination of potential ways to achieve this goal will be part of the work taking place at the May 19 Planning Commission Workshop. Discussion topics include:

- East-west connections across the railroad tracks
- Grade separations for all streets currently crossing the railroad tracks
- A pedestrian/bike underpass of the railroad tracks and public park or plaza
- Improved crosswalk and pedestrian connections across El Camino Real

*Background*

During the workshop process, most people reported they liked the idea of a bicycle and pedestrian underpass of the train tracks and a plaza tentatively identified in the area of Middle Avenue, particularly along with improved bicycle and pedestrian crossings of El Camino Real near the proposed underpass. Community members also expressed an interest in improved connections between the west side of El Camino Real and the train station and civic center areas. There were a variety of ideas expressed for how such connections could be improved, ranging from pedestrian and bicycle underpass/overpass to a grade separation, to putting some or all of El Camino Real underground as it goes through Menlo Park. During targeted outreach sessions in Belle Haven, it was reported that some members of that community don't go to the west side of town because the transit connections between the east and west are slow and infrequent. They would like to use the train and the recreational amenities of Burgess Park but need to be able to access those areas of town more easily.

◆ **Improve circulation and streetscape conditions on El Camino Real.**

An examination of potential ways to achieve this goal will be part of the work taking place at the May 19 Planning Commission Workshop. Discussion topics include:

- Provide opportunities for wider sidewalks
- Alleviate congestion
- Increase the opportunities for safe connectivity
- The configuration of El Camino Real, including number of lanes, lane widths and availability of parking lanes

*Background*

Observations of El Camino Real for this planning process determined that there are approximately twenty-two different configurations of the lane configuration. These twenty-two conditions are sometimes replicated so that in the approximately one and one half mile length of El Camino Real in Menlo Park, at least twenty-seven different changes in configuration take place. Some community members suggested trenching or tunneling El Camino Real for a distance that would range from just the blocks between Menlo Avenue and Oak Grove Avenue to a longer stretch of El Camino Real. Because of the impact this would have on existing businesses and property owners along El Camino Real, in addition to the cost and time required for construction, the consultant believes that approach is not achievable. With regard to non-trenching solutions, community opinions expressed at Workshop #2 were approximately divided between three approaches:

- Convert the entire length to two travel lanes and one parking lane in each direction.
- Convert the entire length to three travel lanes and no parking lane in each direction, except where parking could also be accommodated.
- Convert the entire length to two travel lanes and one parking lane in each direction; however, the parking lane would be closed during commute hours to accommodate a third travel lane.

In all three scenarios above, excess space in the cross-section should be devoted to making sidewalks wider on El Camino Real.

◆ **Ensure that El Camino Real development is sensitive to adjacent neighborhoods.**

Variations in building heights, setbacks, landscaping, and uses on different parts of El Camino Real are respectful of their neighboring contexts and also provide opportunities for variations in the character. The variations include:

- On the west side of El Camino Real, new buildings up to 2 to 3 stories in height. Uses include residential, office and, potentially, smaller hotels.
- North of Oak Grove Avenue, new buildings on the east side of El Camino Real are up to 2 to 3 stories in height. Uses include residential and, potentially, office.
- South of Ravenswood Avenue, new buildings on the east side of El Camino Real are up to 4 stories in height. Uses include residential, office and potentially a hotel with conference facilities.

*Background*

Workshop participants felt that the east side of El Camino Real could accommodate higher intensity development because it does not have immediate neighbors (between El Camino Real and train tracks) and the buildings would not cast shadows onto any other buildings. On the west side, more concern was expressed about casting shade on neighboring parcels. When El Camino Real was discussed in small group sessions at Community Workshop #2, most groups used as a starting point Alternative 2 (moderate development). They discussed making sure buildings on the west side stepped down to be sensitive to the existing residential neighborhoods. At the north end of the Plan Area, participants generally felt there is not much of a market for retail or restaurant uses, which have often ended up failing in that part of the city. There was more in-

terest in housing or office uses, or retail uses that are different from those in the Downtown.

◆ **Revitalize underutilized parcels and buildings.**

A hotel with conference facilities is part of future development of the south end of El Camino Real. There is also the development of residential uses and neighborhood-oriented park space. Some of the residential use is on upper levels, with retail on the ground floor. New development maintains a sensitive relationship to adjacent neighborhoods. The Park Theater site is a cultural amenity that complements but does not compete with the Downtown. Wider sidewalks are provided on El Camino Real. North-south bicycle and pedestrian connections are created on or adjacent to the railroad tracks.

*Background*

There has been general agreement throughout the planning process that something needs to be done on vacant sites in varying states of disrepair to improve the character of El Camino Real.

◆ **Activate the train station area.**

There are expanded housing opportunities, particularly for seniors and all segments of the workforce. New cultural institutions or similar facilities contribute to the liveliness of this area. New parking facilities in this area are generally underground. A public plaza terminating Santa Cruz Avenue serves as a forecourt to the station.

*Background*

Community members expressed that the train station area should be livelier and provide something for people to do as they are waiting for the train. During community walking tours of the Downtown, participants expressed that the uses around the station do not take advantage of their location. Even the generally-approved-of Menlo Center (the building housing Kepler's Books and Café Borrone) turns its back on the train station and doesn't show much of an entrance to the station area.

◆ **Protect and enhance pedestrian amenities on Santa Cruz Avenue.**

An examination of potential ways to achieve this goal will be part of the work taking place at the May 19 Planning Commission Workshop. Discussion topics include:

- Pedestrian character of Santa Cruz Avenue
- Wider sidewalks, less on-street parking, possibly a pedestrian-only mall
- Mid-block connections between the street and the parking plazas
- Intermittent plazas that would form a network between Fremont Park and the plaza at Café Borrone.

*Background*

There has been much discussion but no clear general agreement on the future sidewalk and street conditions of Santa Cruz Avenue. Some community members have advocated closing it permanently to vehicular traffic.

◆ **Expand shopping, dining and neighborhood services to ensure a vibrant downtown.**

Most restaurants and stores are open during evening hours and weekends. There are expanded housing opportunities, particularly for seniors and all segments of the workforce, creating more active users of downtown businesses. New buildings are up to 2 to 3 stories in height with the third floor stepping back from the front facade. Upper floor uses include residential, office and, potentially, retail. The parking plazas are more active and carefully designed to create conditions that are more pleasant for pedestrian activity. There are anchor destinations at both ends of the Downtown, the train station at the east and another at the west, potentially in coordination with Menlo Park Presbyterian Church. Cultural institutions, such as a small museum or theater are part of the downtown mix. An independent shuttle bus circulates through parts of Menlo Park with the Downtown as its hub.

*Background*

Some community members expressed a desire for new development in the Downtown to be 1 story in height while others suggested 4 stories would be appropriate. A larger number of community workshop small group summaries expressed that 3 stories would work, particularly to expand opportunities for housing. Many of those expressing a desire to see 3 stories in the Downtown suggested that those buildings should step back at the third story. Many community members have expressed a desire for greater liveliness, particularly in the evening hours.

◆ **Provide residential opportunities in the Vision Plan Area.**

The Downtown, the area around the train station and the El Camino Real corridor see the development of differing types of housing depending on the specific location in the Vision Plan Area and surrounding context.

*Background*

Many workshop groups expressed that they wanted to see more housing in the area, both as a way to provide affordable housing and as a way to bring more life to the area, bringing people in who would drive the market for a downtown that stays open later in the evening. Some community members are concerned about the impacts residential development has on Menlo Park's schools and other community facilities and services. Those impacts need to be considered in the planning for future residential development.

◆ **Provide plaza and park spaces.**

Plazas activated by storefront activity or ground floor uses and parks that provide passive and active recreational spaces are key components of the Vision Plan Area.

*Background*

This issue was discussed by many community members. The plaza in front of Borrone's was often cited as an exemplary model to follow.

Park space, particularly in conjunction with new residential development was viewed as being a crucial component of the Vision. A larger park space was discussed for the southern areas of El Camino Real.

◆ **Provide an integrated, safe and well-designed pedestrian and bicycle network.**

Pedestrian and bicycle connections provide alternatives to El Camino Real. A path runs behind the parcels on the southern segment of El Camino Real. Another path is on the other side of the tracks, on Alma Street, which connects to the bicycle/pedestrian bridge to Palo Alto at the south end of the city.

*Background*

Community members discussed north-south connections, so people have alternatives to walking and biking on El Camino Real.

◆ **Develop parking strategies and facilities that meet the commercial and residential needs of the community.**

An examination of potential ways to achieve this goal will be part of the work taking place at the May 19 Planning Commission Workshop. Discussion topics include:

- Development of a “Park Once” strategy
- Parking strategies and pricing and timing mechanisms
- Parking structures—or not; above grade or below
- Below grade parking as an opportunity to create plaza/park space at grade
- Coordination with Menlo Park Presbyterian Church

*Background*

Community members expressed some concern that they would like to patronize shops and restaurants in downtown Menlo Park, but find the current 2-hour parking limit constraining. People often get parking tickets because a lunch or other activity has gone on longer than anticipated.

Such comments were often in conjunction with a willingness to pay for parking if it would mean fewer parking tickets and more flexibility in how long they could stay downtown. Some community members are adamant that parking should be free.

## Attachment M. Planning Commission Workshop: Small Group Discussion

### Summary of Group Comments from El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan Planning Commission Meeting, held on May 19, 2008

*The Planning Commission meeting began with a presentation by the consultant describing the Vision Plan process and summarizing the input received at previous community workshops. The presentation also outlined 12 broad goals of the vision plan. On eight of these goals, the community had previously reached relative agreement, while there were still four goals that warranted further discussion by community members. After the presentation, participants divided into groups to briefly review the first eight goals and then discuss in more depth the four remaining goals. These groups also commented on the Draft Conceptual Illustrative. After this exercise, a volunteer from each group presented their group's work to all of the workshop participants. Below are summaries of each group's discussions.*

TABLE 1

- ◆ FIRST 8 GOALS – General agreement.
- ◆ E-W CONNECTIVITY – Support for north-south pedestrian and bicycle improvements (crossings and paths). Consider pedestrian refuges in the median of the road. Also, the idea of pedestrian scrambles might be considered. Grade separation at Ravenswood and possibly at Oak Grove was supported.
- ◆ EL CAMINO REAL – Supported making El Camino real 3 lanes with no parking. Lanes should be narrower to reduce speed.
- ◆ SANTA CRUZ – Not mentioned.
- ◆ PARKING – Eliminate parallel parking. Support for 2-3 story structure with 1 story below ground.

TABLE 2

- ◆ FIRST 8 GOALS – General agreement.
- ◆ E-W CONNECTIVITY – Supported a bike tunnel but only with best practices outlined and in conjunction with safer El Camino Real crossings. Did not support a bicycle/pedestrian overpass.
- ◆ EL CAMINO REAL – Did not support encouraging fast traffic. Lanes should be left as they are now.
- ◆ SANTA CRUZ – Liked the idea of widening sidewalks. The current design is not bicycle friendly and an alternative should be developed with this in mind.
- ◆ PARKING – Supported 2 structures with a pricing structure that is more expensive nearer the shops. Perhaps proceeds from new parking meters could go to building downtown structures.

TABLE 3

- ◆ FIRST 8 GOALS – General agreement, though there was some concern about having too much housing near the railroad tracks.
- ◆ E-W CONNECTIVITY – Supported bicycle and pedestrian underpasses on Oak Grove and Valparaiso for better pedestrian circulation. Supported enhanced crosswalks.
- ◆ EL CAMINO REAL – El Camino Real should be left at 2 lanes and areas currently with 3 lanes should be converted into 2 lanes. With the extra room, make sidewalks wider. Be sensitive to sensitive to the lack of off street parking.
- ◆ SANTA CRUZ – Liked the suggested design for Santa Cruz Avenue, no disagreement on DC&E suggested design.
- ◆ PARKING – Supported parking structures as well as the “Park Once” philosophy, but parking should still be free. Shuttles for parking structures should be considered. Employees especially should be encouraged to use parking structures to reduce demand closer to businesses.

## Summary of Group Comments from El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan Planning Commission Meeting, held on May 19, 2008

TABLE 4

- ◆ FIRST 8 GOALS – Not mentioned.
- ◆ E-W CONNECTIVITY – Ravenswood undercrossing is most important. Also, the bike tunnel at Middle Avenue is a good idea but there was concern about cost or feasibility.
- ◆ EL CAMINO REAL – Unresolved. One person said to retain parking on ECR for businesses.
- ◆ SANTA CRUZ – Widen sidewalk a little bit (2 feet), but don't eliminate parking. Work to accommodate bicycles on Santa Cruz Avenue. Support for paid parking on Santa Cruz Avenue similar to what is in Redwood City.
- ◆ PARKING – Try metering Santa Cruz Avenue to help with turnover.

TABLE 5

- ◆ FIRST 8 GOALS – Not mentioned.
- ◆ E-W CONNECTIVITY – Concerned about high speed rail and grade separation.
- ◆ EL CAMINO REAL – Leave traffic circulation the same. On street parking is important along this corridor. Improve the sidewalks gradually as development occurs (take from parcels).
- ◆ SANTA CRUZ – Poll business owners to be sure that the sidewalk widening would be equitable for all businesses. Instead of losing parking on one side, just make the existing diagonal parking all parallel parking so that parallel parking is on both sides.
- ◆ PARKING – Supported parking structures, though the more below grade parking the better. Need to decide who gets the benefits from the parking structures, balancing the benefits. Especially liked the structure closer to the train station. Fees for parking should only be after 2 hours of free parking.

TABLE 6

- ◆ FIRST 8 GOALS – Concern about traffic and impacts of higher density on neighborhoods west of El Camino Real.
- ◆ E-W CONNECTIVITY – Supported grade separation at Ravenswood and possibly at Oak Grove. Liked the bike tunnel at Middle Avenue.
- ◆ EL CAMINO REAL – Should be 2 lanes with parking for its entire length. Also, ECR should have wider sidewalks/beautification/etc. Traffic signals could be coordinated to help with traffic flow. Keep speed on El Camino Real slower (25/30 miles per hour).
- ◆ SANTA CRUZ – Liked extending sidewalks and alternating by block and removing parking. Remove the 35 spaces and replace with sidewalk.
- ◆ PARKING – Concerned about harm to businesses if paid parking is implemented. Either metered parking or building a structure with free parking to discourage parking on Santa Cruz Avenue. Consider other placement options for the parking structure (above ground or below ground) as well as pricing options (2 hr. free or always charge). Have good signage with parking structure.
- ◆ OTHER – Support for building better biking facilities.

TABLE 7

- ◆ FIRST 8 GOALS - General agreement about the first eight goals, though group members had differing views of a “village” character. The term “village” needs to be defined. Also had

## Summary of Group Comments from El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan Planning Commission Meeting, held on May 19, 2008

concerns about affordable housing (rental housing) vs. ownership and the proximity of new housing near the train station. Also concerned about the process for achieving a vision.

- ♦ E-W CONNECTIVITY – Pedestrian crossing at Middle Ave has strong support, while grade separation doesn't have as much support. Specifically, a grade separation at Ravenswood is even more controversial. Perhaps the two issues should be separated.
- ♦ EL CAMINO REAL – Unresolved. While agreed that El Camino needs wider sidewalks, they would still need to be more separated from traffic.
- ♦ SANTA CRUZ – Unresolved. Santa Cruz Avenue would likely need anchors on each end. There was moderate support for a pedestrian only mall, though implication for retailers on that mall needs to be researched more.
- ♦ PARKING – Agreed that parking structures are needed, perhaps behind buildings and underground.
- ♦ OTHER – Not enough focus on Bike lanes, bike facilities/infrastructure.

### TABLE 8

- ♦ FIRST 8 GOALS – General agreement, though there was some concern about building heights. Supported heights near the train station, but there was not agreement on how high buildings should be on south El Camino Real.
- ♦ E-W CONNECTIVITY – A Bike/Pedestrian tunnel at Middle Ave was supported.
- ♦ EL CAMINO REAL – Tentative support for keeping El Camino Real 2 lanes. The idea of placing El Camino Below grade should still be considered, with local traffic above.
- ♦ SANTA CRUZ – General consensus for wider sidewalks on both sides of Santa Cruz, with parallel parking on both sides. Liked the idea of developing the back of the parcels on the south side of Santa Cruz. Also, there was too much emphasis on only Santa Cruz, and there should be some development plans for Oak Grove and Menlo Avenue.
- ♦ PARKING – General consensus on the parking structures, but there were concerns about structures both being on the north side of the street. Location of parking structures should be equally accessible for most businesses.



# PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

May 19, 2008

7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

*(with mid-meeting small-group discussion tables in the Administration Building)*

701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025

---

**CALL TO ORDER** – 7:05 p.m.

**ROLL CALL** – Bims, Bressler, Deziel (Chair), Keith, O'Malley, Pagee, Riggs (Vice chair)

**INTRODUCTION OF STAFF** – Deanna Chow, Senior Planner; Arlinda Heineck, Community Development Director; Thomas Rogers, Associate Planner

**A. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None**

**B. CONSENT - None**

Items on the consent calendar are considered routine in nature, require no further discussion by the Planning Commission, and may be acted on in one motion unless a member of the Planning Commission or staff requests a separate discussion on an item.

**C. PUBLIC HEARING - None**

**D. REGULAR BUSINESS**

1. **[El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan](#)**: Menlo Park is in the process of developing a long-term vision for the El Camino Real and Downtown areas. The Planning Commission Workshop will provide an opportunity for the Commission and other community members to review and comment on the Draft El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan, which consists of a draft vision statement, goals and objectives, and a conceptual plan. The feedback and direction received at this meeting will be used to prepare the revised Draft Vision Plan that will be presented for review at the City Council Meeting of June 10, 2008.

1. **[Welcome and Introductions](#)**

2. **[Vision Process Summary](#)**

The consultant provided an overview of the visioning process and the Draft Vision Plan for the benefit of the Commissioners and the other community members.

3. **[Small Group Discussion](#)**

Attendees, having been assigned a random number upon check-in, broke into small groups to discuss the Draft Vision Plan in more detail. Some tables were located

within the Council Chambers, and some were located in the Administration Building. Planning Commissioners were not assigned to a particular group, but rather 'floated' from table to table, observing the dialog.

#### 4. Small Group Reports

All attendees returned to City Council Chambers. Each small group appointed an individual who then summarized that group's discussion to the Commission and the other community members. The consultant then summarized key themes and potential areas of agreement from all the groups.

#### 5. Planning Commission Discussion with Small Groups

Commissioners had the opportunity to understand more of the context and richness of the small group discussions, asking follow-up questions of the consultant and the group representatives.

#### 6. Public Comment

The following members of the public addressed the Commission regarding the Draft Vision Plan and the visioning process:

- Elias Blawie
- Chuck Bernstein
- Charlie Bourne
- Mitch Slomiak
- Clark Kepler
- Elizabeth Houck
- Richard Draeger
- Michael Gullard
- Margie Roginski
- Barrett Moore
- Skip Hilton
- Frank Priscaro
- Morris Brown
- Fran Dehn

#### 7. Planning Commission Review and Comment

The Commission gave the following direction by general consensus, 7-0;

- For the City Council Meeting of June 10, the consultant should prepare a document that presents Vision Plan options. The consultant should evaluate the various options with regard to certain criteria and should make a recommendation.
- The Vision Plan should be based on the underlying principle that if any changes would result in benefits (such as "upzoning") to private property owners, the public should also receive benefits as a result of a project. The Vision Plan should set the stage for a specific public benefits framework and/or implementation strategy.
- The consultant should consider and potentially include revitalization techniques such as an area-wide sales-tax in-lieu fee.

Prior to the direction as listed above, commissioners also gave individual comments, which are summarized below:

- Concern about the narrowing of consensus and drawing conclusions too quickly
- Support for ideas such as underground parking and a connecting underpass of El Camino Real, like the California Avenue station in Palo Alto
- Need to emphasize nightlife and appealing to a broad cross-section of customers
- Question whether workshop attendees represent the broader community
- Concern with small-group discussion nuances getting lost in summaries
- Desire for a bold vision; bold ideas do not often come from consensus
- Concern with overall process and individual workshop exercises potentially moving too fast
- Encourage quality and diversity of businesses; discourage chain stores
- Debate whether increasing housing density in downtown would substantially improve business vibrancy
- Encourage the promotion of downtown as home furnishings market
- Existing downtown parking regulations need to be reformed to achieve goal of being a European-style village
- El Camino Real businesses should not compete with downtown
- Parking plaza entrances to downtown businesses should be improved
- Under grounding of El Camino Real not realistic and not preferred even if realistic, unless it provides some connection to downtown
- Improved sidewalks would help draw Palo Alto and Atherton pedestrians into town
- Encourage consideration of short loop shuttles
- Community members who have not already been involved in process should be brought into it and welcomed
- Alternating an expanded Santa Cruz Avenue sidewalk from side to side is not understood by some (existing parking alternates diagonal with parallel)
- Need for more bicycle improvements
- Community members who have been involved in the process are the most interested people; bringing out less-interested people may not be productive
- Surveys don't account for opinions developing and changing over the course of a process
- Concerns about speeding cars in neighborhoods is an issue of enforcement
- Consider idea of charging for short-term parking, not long-term; encourage shoppers to visit multiple establishments in one trip
- Belief that El Camino Real is where traffic is allowed; walkability is not high priority relative to downtown
- The recurring complaint about traffic is really about flow: if we restrict El Camino Real, we get more perception of "traffic"
- Downtown garage to serve employees
- Support for housing in and near downtown
- Discourage Safeway-style site layouts, with parking in front and buildings at rear

#### **E. COMMISSION BUSINESS - None**

#### **G. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS - None**

**ADJOURNMENT** 12:30 a.m.

Regular Meeting	June 2, 2008
Regular Meeting	June 16, 2008
Regular Meeting	July 14, 2008
Regular Meeting	July 28, 2008
Regular Meeting	August 11, 2008
Regular Meeting	August 25, 2008

---

This Agenda is posted in accordance with Government Code Section §54954.2(a) or Section §54956. (Date Posted: May 16, 2008.) Persons with disabilities, who require auxiliary aids or services in attending or participating in Planning Commission meetings, may contact the City Clerk at (650) 330-6600. Members of the public can view or subscribe to receive future weekly agendas and staff reports in advance by e-mail by accessing the City website at <http://www.menlopark.org>

Planning Commission meetings are recorded and audio broadcast live. To listen to the live audio broadcast or to past recordings, go to [http://menlopark.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view\\_id=2](http://menlopark.granicus.com/ViewPublisher.php?view_id=2).