

EL CAMINO REAL/DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN

Draft Plan Review – Meeting 3

City Council

Tuesday, September 20, 2011

Meeting Overview

- Brief overview presentation
- Receive public comment
- Geographic area review and preliminary recommendations
 - El Camino Real (other than ECR SE zoning district)
- Review and discuss non-geographic topics
 - Bicycle/pedestrian improvements
 - Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA)
 - Public benefit
- Review and finalize overall direction on the Draft Specific Plan

El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan

- Multi-year process to establish a clear long-term plan for the El Camino Real corridor and Downtown.
- Specific Plan process preceded by an initial visioning exercise to define broad goals
- Extensive community engagement and documentation of process on project web page (www.menlopark.org/specificplan)



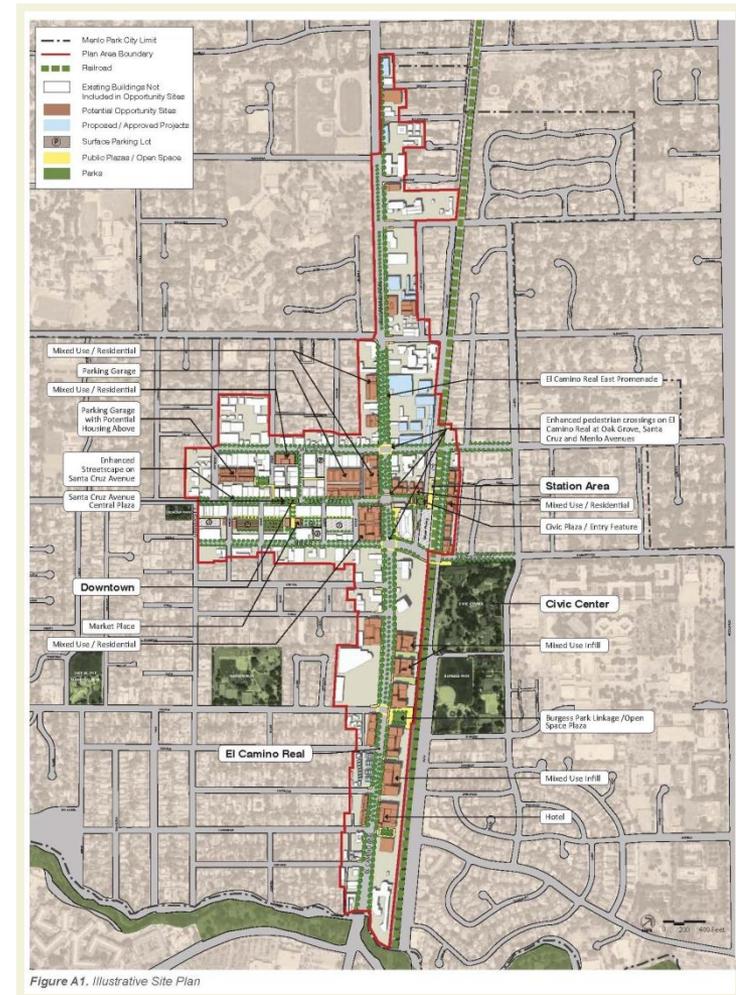
El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan

What is the Specific Plan?

- A clear and action-oriented plan for the next 20 to 30 years
- A detailed framework for public space improvements
- A strong foundation for private development
- Currently, a *draft* document

What is it not?

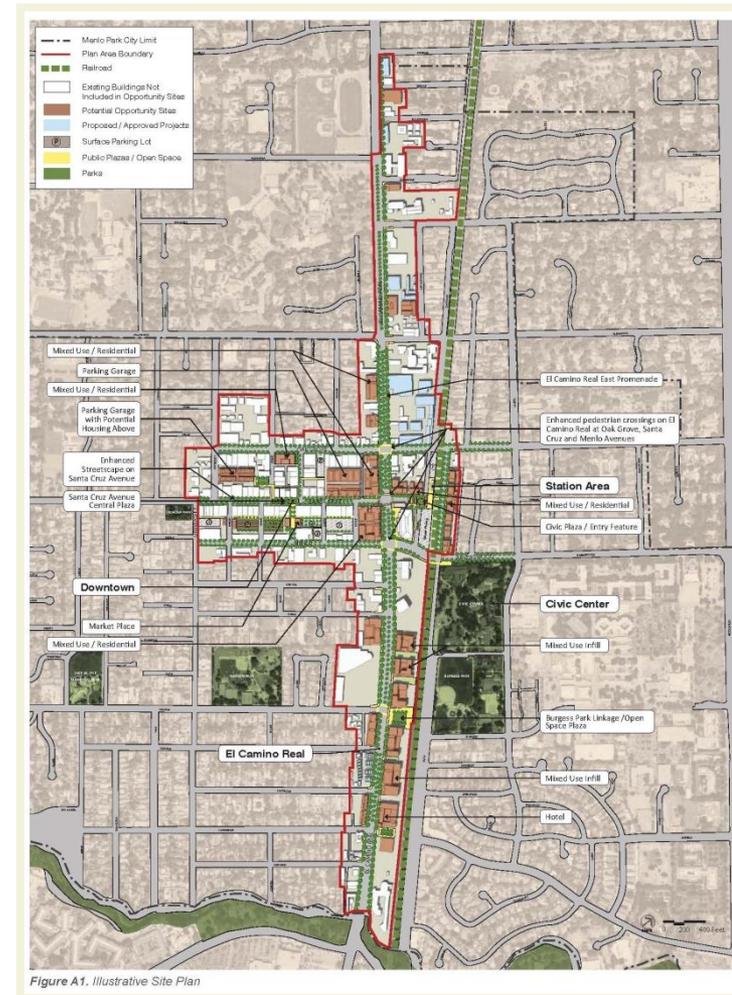
- An individual private development project
- A final decision on every public improvement



Draft Specific Plan released April 7, 2010

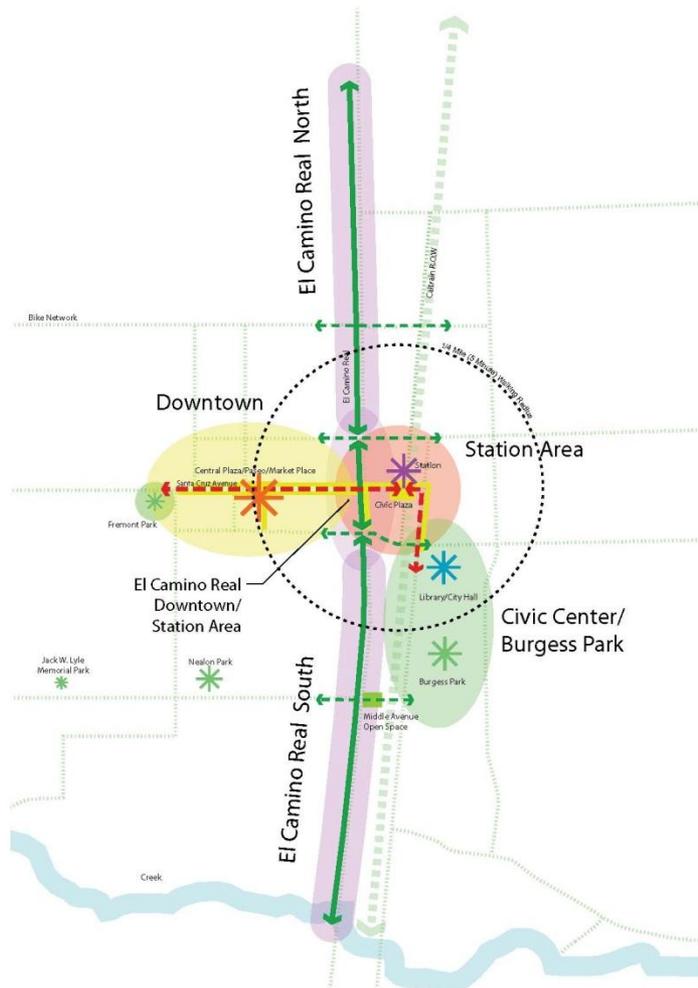
El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan

- Draft Plan discussion complemented by environmental and fiscal analyses:
 - Draft EIR (Environmental Impact Report)
 - Comment period April-June 2011
 - Responses to comments will come in Final EIR
 - Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA)
 - Originally released August 16, 2011
 - Discusses impact on City General Fund and Special Districts



Draft Specific Plan released April 7, 2010

Planning Commission Review



Planning Commission has conducted a detailed review of Draft Specific Plan, with a geographic focus:

- Overview/Background (July 11)
- Station Area (July 21)
- Downtown (July 28)
- El Camino Real (August 4)
- Review/Wrap-up (August 22)

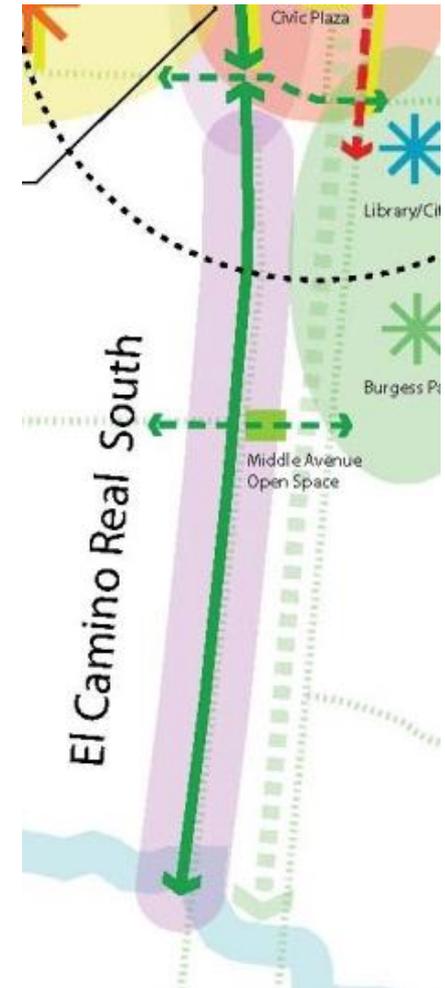
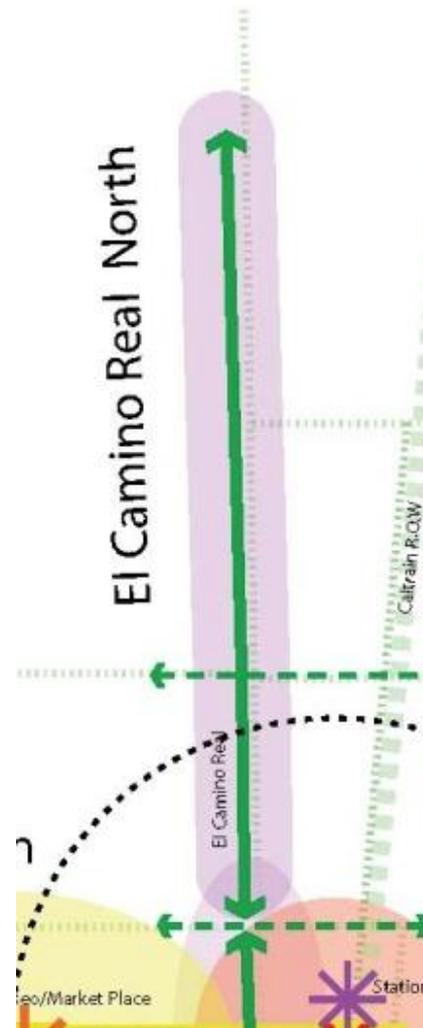
Commission recommends moving forward subject to specific revisions/questions (included as staff report Attachment A).

City Council Review Process

- August 30, 2011
 - Introduction/overview
 - Review and approval of the Draft Specific Plan review process
 - Geographic area review
 - Station Area and ECR SE zoning districts
- September 13, 2011
 - Geographic area review
 - Downtown
- September 20, 2011
 - Geographic area review: El Camino Real (other than ECR SE zoning district) [*deferred from September 13*]
 - Non-geographic topics, including but not limited to:
 - Bicycle/pedestrian improvements
 - Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA)
 - Public benefit
 - Review/wrap-up

El Camino Real Direction

- Key public and private space improvements summarized in staff report (p. 4-7)
- ECR SE zoning district previously addressed, at August 30 meeting
- Council Members Fergusson and Ohtaki have conflicts of interest with ECR SW zoning district and southern portions of associated land use designations



Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements

- Council should consider Bicycle Commission recommendation (9/19)
 - Plan should include/encourage bike **lanes** rather than bike *routes* where feasible
 - Opposed to expanding El Camino Real to three lanes of auto traffic
 - Middle Avenue bicycle/pedestrian crossing is a key improvement
 - Support of downtown parking garages, because they can allow the adding of bicycle facilities to downtown streets without affecting overall parking
- Council should keep in mind trade-offs: adding bike lanes in most locations would require changes to on-street parking

Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA)

- Informational documents disclosing likely impacts
- City General Fund FIA (Attachment I)
 - \$2.15 million net new revenue projected
 - Majority of revenues (60%) from hotel tax
 - Parking garage operations/maintenance costs potentially significant
 - Timing of garage and hotel elements can affect overall performance
 - Corrections/clarifications made in response to resident inquiry; staff also met with residents to discuss issues
 - Peer review just conducted; determined that certain elements could have been inflated differently, but methodology is appropriate, and overall conclusions appear correct
- Special Districts FIA (Attachment J)
 - No major issues identified with most special districts
- Met with Finance and Audit Committee, which found methods/assumptions generally reasonable, and noted other considerations (Attachment K)

Public Benefit – General Points

- **Inherent Overall Benefits**
 - Overall process has consistently asked, “What does the community want the Plan area to be?”
 - Plan has been structured to provide numerous inherent benefits, including:
 - Revitalization of underutilized parcels
 - Increases in activity and vibrancy
 - Improvements to public space
- **General Development Feasibility**
 - Development standards tailored to achieve goals and ensure developments are financially feasible
 - Workshop #3 analysis excerpted as Attachment H
- **New Requirements/Costs**
 - Plan would establish new requirements that represent developer cost, including LEED Silver certification, dedication of land for public use

Public Benefit Bonus Process

- Higher density/intensity levels permitted in exchange for public benefits
- Flexible approach recommended, to best address uncertainties/variables
- Plan recommends the following guidance:
 - Senior Housing
 - Additional Residential Units, including affordable units, and/or lower affordability levels, particularly in areas nearest the station area/downtown (see Figures C3 and C5)
 - Hotel Facility, which generates higher tax revenue for the City while also enhancing downtown vibrancy
 - Platinum LEED Certified Buildings, which exceeds the policy recommendations for sustainable practices found in Section E.3.8 “Sustainable Practices”
 - Preservation and reuse of historic resources.
- Council may augment/refine (some ideas on report p. 9)

Discussion Framework

City Council may consider the Specific Plan within the context of the Vision Plan Goals (Attachment E):

1. Vision Plan Area Character: Maintain a **village character** unique to Menlo Park.
2. East-West Connectivity: Provide greater **east-west, town-wide connectivity**.
3. El Camino Real Circulation: **Improve circulation and streetscape conditions** on El Camino Real.
4. Neighborhood Context: Ensure that El Camino Real **development is sensitive** to and compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.
5. Vacant and Underutilized Parcels on El Camino Real: **Revitalize underutilized parcels** and buildings.
6. Train Station Area: **Activate the train station** area.
7. Santa Cruz Avenue Pedestrian Character: Protect and **enhance pedestrian amenities on Santa Cruz Avenue**.
8. Downtown Vibrancy: Expand shopping, dining and neighborhood services to **ensure a vibrant downtown**.
9. Housing: **Provide residential opportunities** in the Vision Plan Area.
10. Open Space: **Provide plaza and park spaces**.
11. Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation: Provide an integrated, safe and well-designed **pedestrian and bicycle network**.
12. Parking: **Develop parking strategies** and facilities that meet the commercial and residential needs of the community.

Discussion Framework

City Council may also consider the Specific Plan Guiding Principles (Attachment F):

- Enhance Public Space
- Generate Vibrancy
- Sustain Menlo Park's Village Character
- Enhance Connectivity
- Promote Healthy Living and Sustainability

Council should keep in mind “interrelationships”- how changes to one element can affect another.

Discussion Framework

- Planning Commission recommendations considered the foundation for the City Council's review
- Staff can pull up graphics or other Plan details on screen as needed to help the discussion
- Staff will write up preliminary recommendations on screen, for clarity

Next Steps

- Meeting Process
 - Overview presentation
 - Receive public comment
 - Geographic area review and preliminary recommendations
 - El Camino Real (other than ECR SE zoning district)
 - Review and discuss non-geographic topics
 - Bicycle/pedestrian improvements
 - Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA)
 - Public benefit
 - Review and finalize overall direction on the Draft Specific Plan
- Next Steps
 - Final Specific Plan and EIR to return to Planning Commission and City Council in Winter 2011
- <http://www.menlopark.org/specificplan>
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