

EL CAMINO REAL/DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN

Draft Plan Review – Meeting 2: Station Area
Planning Commission
Thursday, July 21, 2011

Meeting Overview

- Provide an overview of Station Area aspects of plan
- Receive public comment
 - July 11 meeting intended as the primary comment opportunity; comments summarized in staff report Attachment A
- Opportunity for Planning Commission technical or clarification questions
- Provide tentative recommendations for Station Area

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)



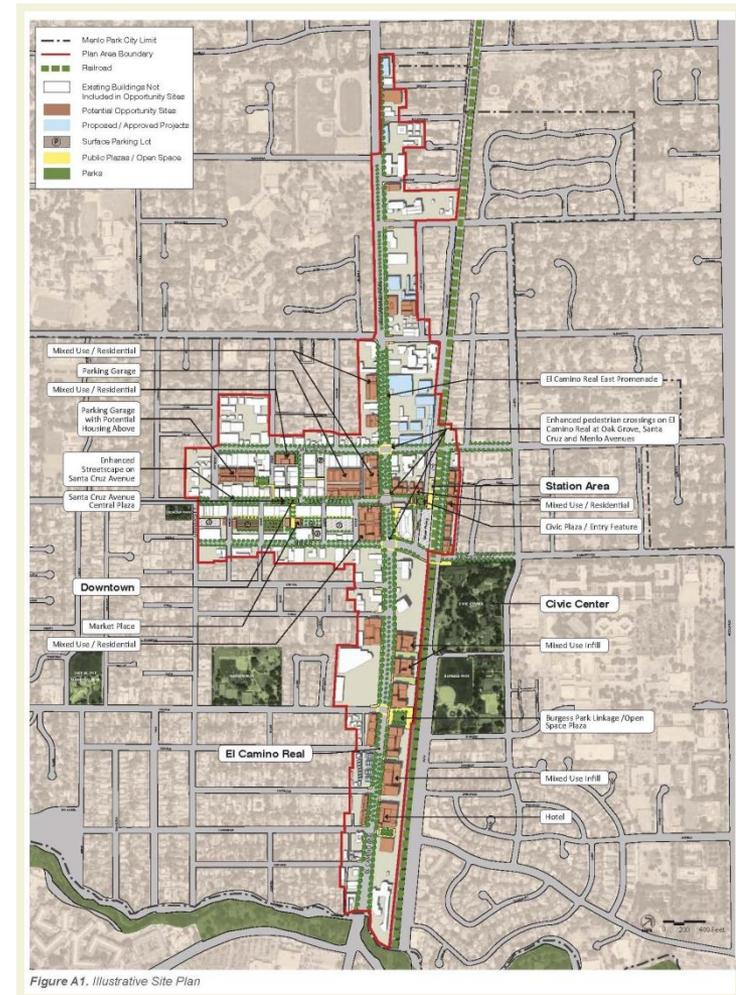
El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan

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

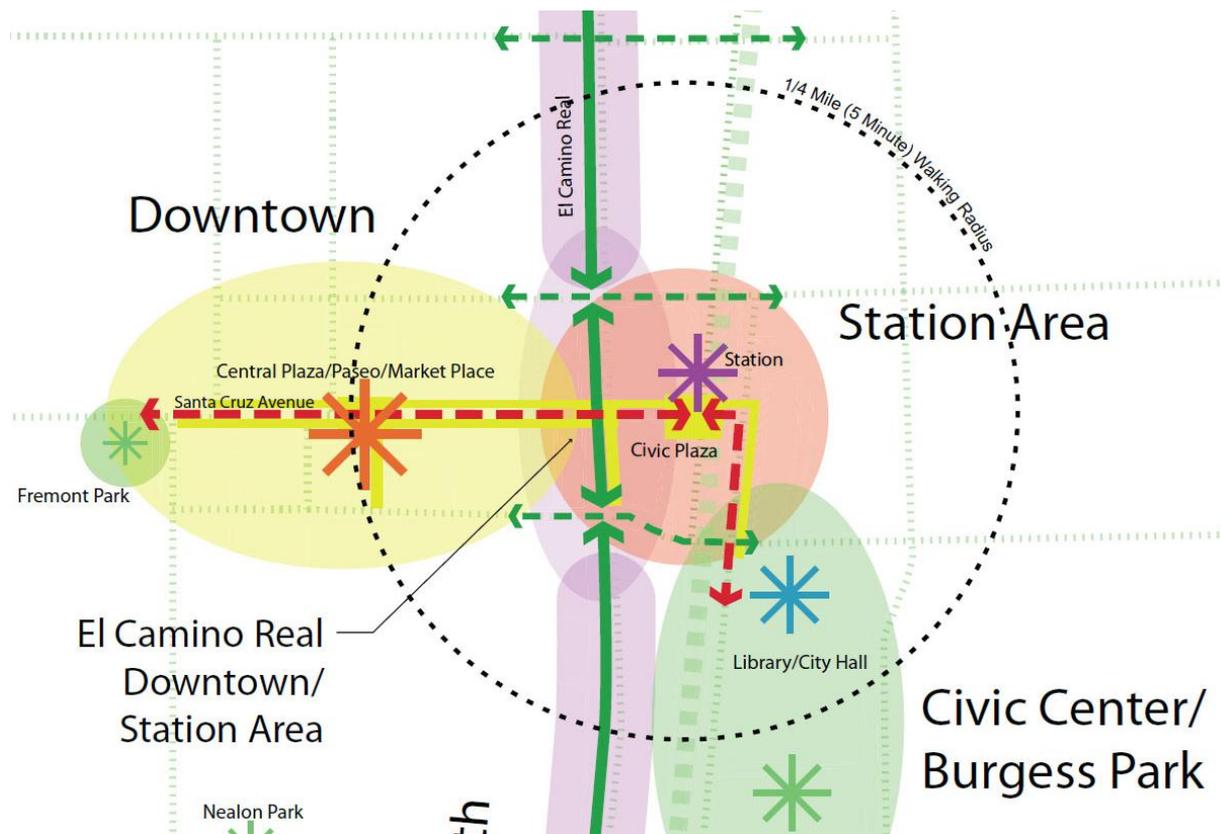
What is it not?

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

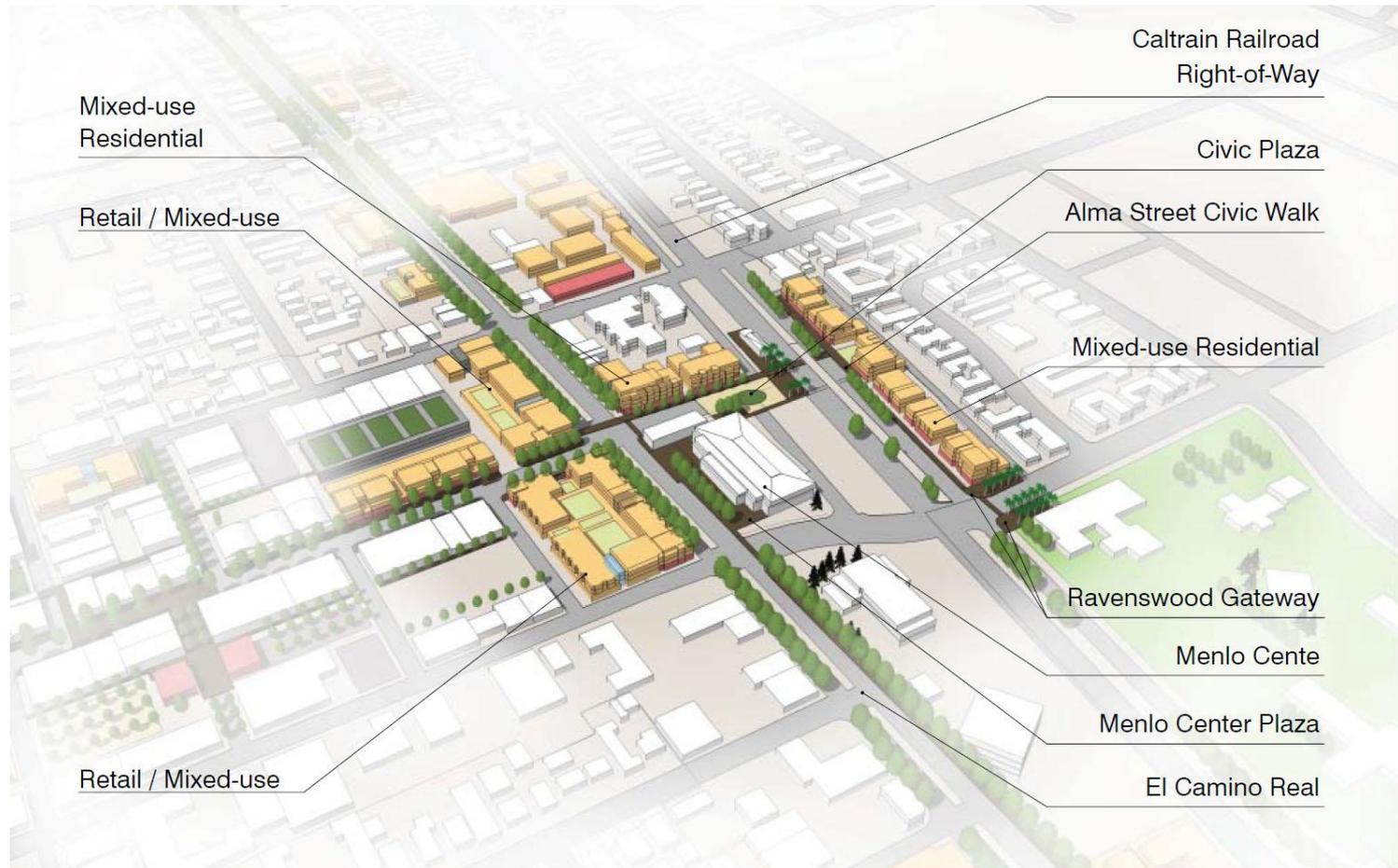


Station Area

- Geographic heart of the plan area
- Where El Camino Real and Downtown come together



Station Area



Illustrative rendering of one potential development scenario- all graphics conceptual

Station Area: Public Improvements

- Civic Plaza
- Menlo Center Plaza
- Alma Street Civic Walk
- Ravenswood Gateway



Station Area: Public Improvements

Civic Plaza

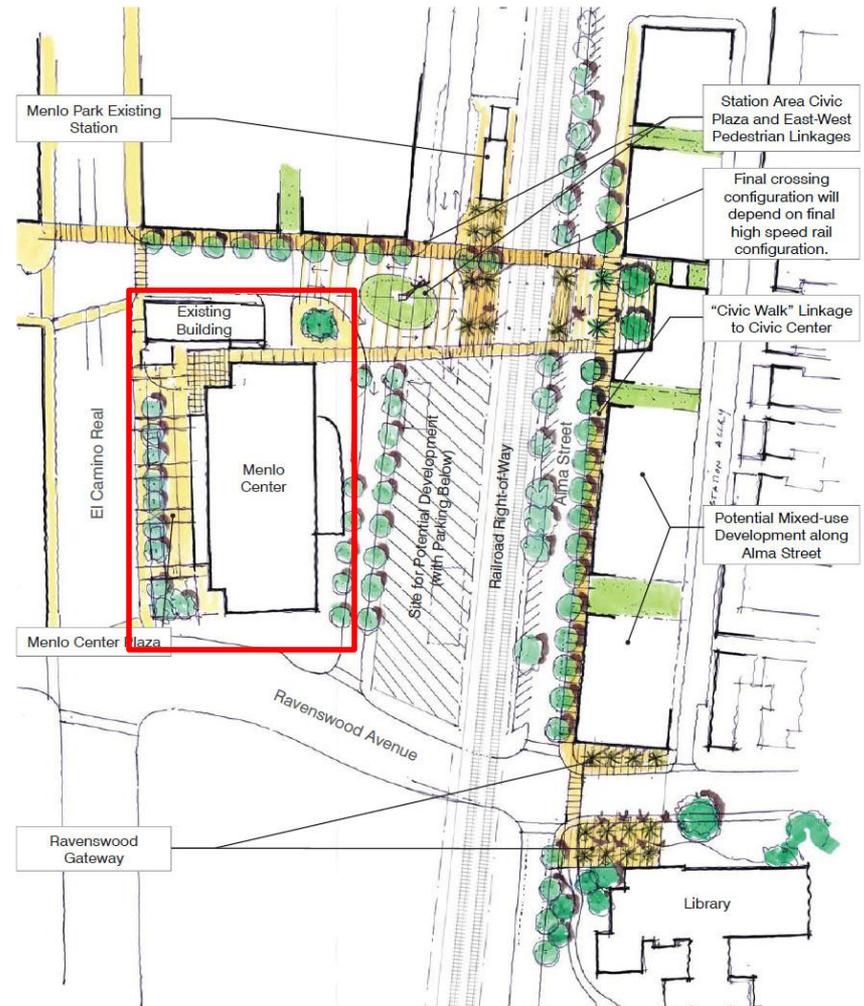
- Landmark space and gateway to downtown
- Iconic central feature (fountain, sculpture)
- Train station preserved, bus access accommodated
- Widened sidewalk along north side of Santa Cruz Avenue



Station Area: Public Improvements

Menlo Center Plaza

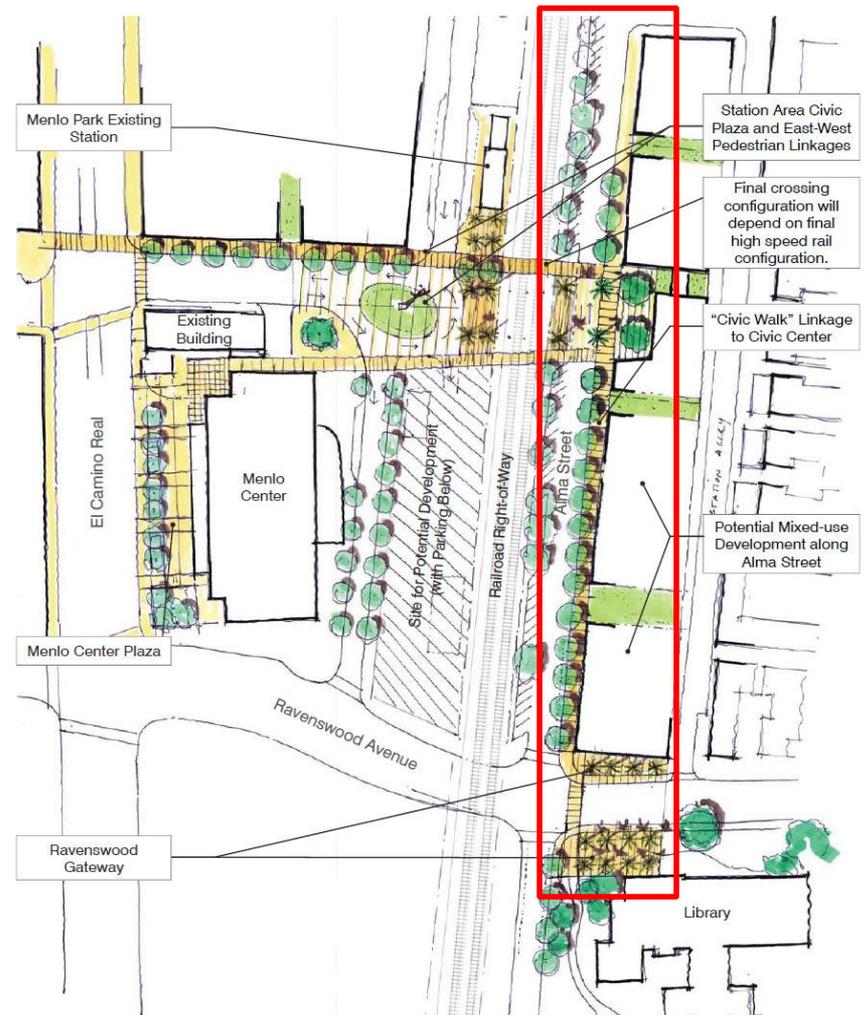
- Better connections and visibility to train station
- Opportunity to link this activity center with Civic Plaza
- Private property, so improvements may be limited



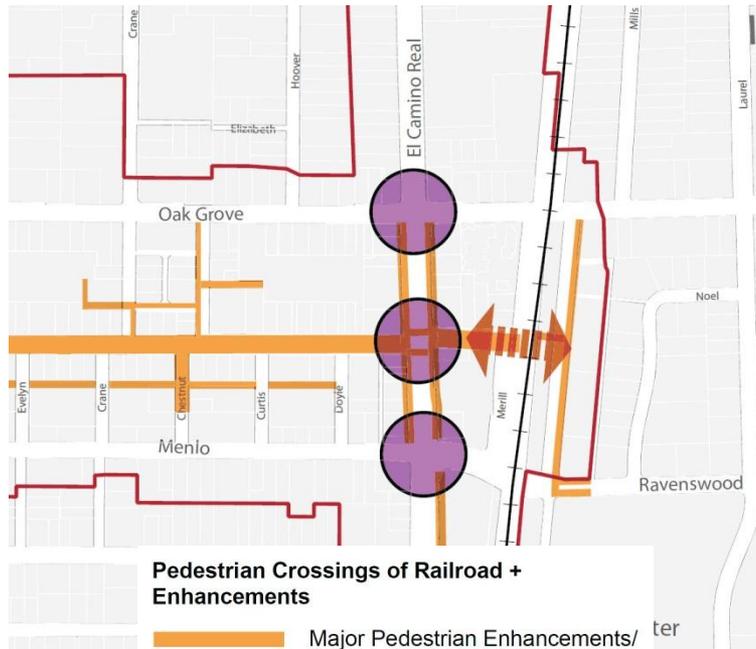
Station Area: Public Improvements

Alma Street Civic Walk and Ravenswood Gateway

- Wider, tree-lined sidewalk
- Improved crosswalk at Ravenswood Avenue
- Iconic landscaping and signage
- Better link with Civic Center, an existing activity node



Station Area: Public Improvements



Pedestrian Crossings of Railroad + Enhancements

-  Major Pedestrian Enhancements/ Widened Sidewalks
-  Other Pedestrian Enhancements/ Widened Sidewalks
-  Pedestrian Crossing With Special Treatment
-  Pedestrian Crossing With Basic Treatment
-  Planned/Proposed Grade Separated Railroad Crossing

Pedestrian Improvements

- El Camino Real sidewalks widened
- Crossings at Oak Grove, Santa Cruz, and Ravenswood/Middle Avenues improved with high-visibility crosswalks, median islands, etc.
- Grade-separated crossing at station

Station Area: Public Improvements

Bicycle Improvements

- Class III bicycle routes (shared auto/bike lanes) on El Camino Real, Merrill Street, and Alma Street
- Class II bicycle lane on Oak Grove Ave (would require removal of parking on one side of street)
- Grade-separated crossing at station



Station Area: Private Improvements



Land Uses (highlights- see Table E1 for full details)

- **Downtown/Station Area Retail/Mixed Use:**
 - Permitted: Retail, Restaurants, Personal Services (limited size per business), Office (limited size per parcel), Residential, Hotels
- **Downtown/Station Area Main Street Overlay:**
 - Primarily retail and restaurants on ground floor
 - Office (limited size per parcel), personal services, and residential allowed only on upper floors

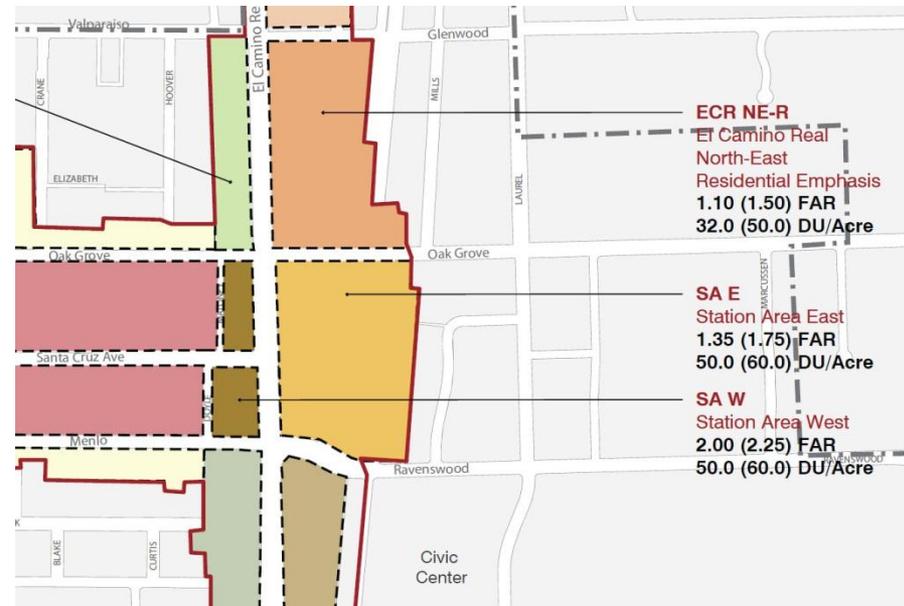
Allowable Uses	Land Use Designations and Allowable Uses				
	El Camino Real Mixed Use	El Camino Real Mixed Use/Residential	Downtown/Station Area	Downtown/Station Area Main Street Overlay	Downtown Adjacent Office/Residential
Commercial					
Adult Business Establishments	C	C	-	-	-
Animal Sales & Services	-	-	-	-	-
Animal Boarding	C	C	C	-	-
Animal Clinics and Hospitals	C	C	C	-	-
Animal Retail Sales and Services	P	P	P	LC (less than 5,000 SF)	-
Automotive/Vehicle Sales and Services	-	-	-	-	-
Automotive/Vehicle Sales & Leasing	P	P	-	-	-
Car Washes and Light Vehicle Service	C	C	-	-	-
Banks and Financial Institutions	P	P	LC (less than 5,000 SF)	-	LC (less than 5,000 SF)
Business Services	P	P	LC (less than 5,000 SF)	-	LC (less than 5,000 SF)
Commercial Recreation	-	-	-	-	-
Snack Bar	P	C	C	-	-
Cinema	C	P	P	-	-
Eating & Drinking Establishments					
Restaurants, Full Service	P	P	P	P	-
Restaurants, Limited Service	P	P	LC (less than 3,000 SF)	LC (less than 3,000 SF)	-
Restaurants, Full-Service Drive-Through and/or Outdoor Seating	A	A	A	A	-
Restaurants, Full-Service Drive-Through Only	C	C	C	C	-
Restaurants, Take-Out Only	P	P	LC (less than 3,000 SF)	-	-
Bars and Lounges	-	C	C	C	-
Food & Beverage Service	C	C	-	-	-
Hotels and Motels	P	P	P	C	C
Offices, Business and Professions					
Offices, Medical and Dental	L (no greater than one-half the lot area or public health bonus FAS)	L (no greater than one-half the lot area or public health bonus FAS)	L (no greater than one-half the lot area or public health bonus FAS)	L (no greater than one-half the lot area or public health bonus FAS)	L (no greater than one-half the lot area or public health bonus FAS)

Table E1. Land Use Designations and Allowable Uses

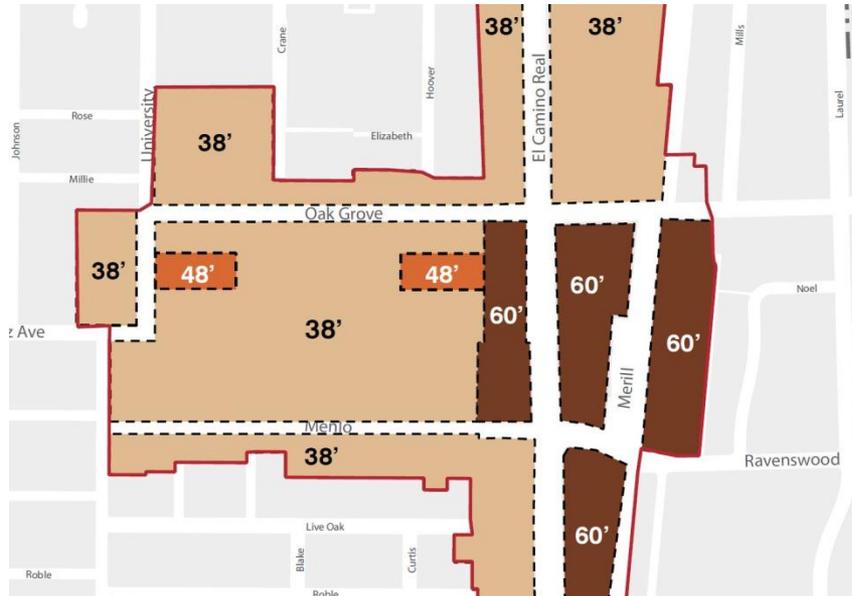
Station Area: Private Improvements

Zoning Districts

- SA E (Station Area East)
 - FAR: 1.35 (base) – 1.75 (public benefit bonus)
 - Dwelling units per acre: 50 (base) – 60 (public benefit bonus)
- SA E (Station Area West)
 - FAR: 2.00 (base) – 2.25 (public benefit bonus)
 - Dwelling units per acre: 50 (base) – 60 (public benefit bonus)

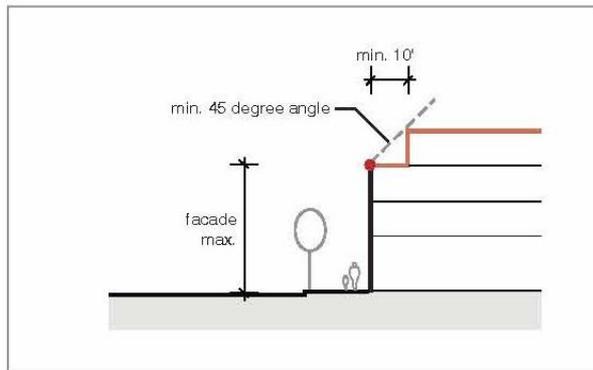


Station Area: Private Improvements



Height

- 45' façade height at building edge, with 45-degree step-back above, in order to limit perception of mass
- 60' overall height (4 to 5 stories)



Station Area: Private Improvements

Setbacks

- For most of Station Area, setback set at zero feet, to match historic context
- Alma Street set at 7-12 feet, to help achieve Civic Walk improvements
- Façade modulation requirements would prevent monolithic building types



- Plan Area Boundary
- No Setback
- 5 Foot Setback
- 5 - 20 Foot Setback
- 7 - 12 Foot Setback
- 10 - 20 Foot Setback

Station Area: Private Improvements

Plan-wide Regulations and Guidelines

- Sustainability (including LEED Silver certification)
- Active ground-floor uses
- Retail frontage
- Parking/service access

MENLO PARK EL CAMINO REAL AND DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN (DRAFT)

E.3.5 Building Ground Floor, Entry and Retail Frontage Treatment

A building's ground floor is the portion of the building most experienced by the pedestrian. Its treatment can affect the overall experience and feeling of safety of the passerby. Well designed ground floor treatments, building entries and retail frontage help ensure a pleasant and safe pedestrian experience and help create a successful retail environment and an appropriate transition between buildings and sidewalks and other public places. The careful design of these features, either in isolated locations or along a shopping street such as Santa Cruz Avenue, is an essential component to overall building design.

The Specific Plan encourages use of the following guidelines in order to maximize the strategies that lead to a vibrant and welcoming street and successful retail environment.

Guidelines

Ground Floor Treatment

E.3.5.01 Buildings should orient ground-floor retail uses, entries and direct-access residential units to the street.

E.3.5.02 Buildings should activate the street by providing visually interesting and active uses, such as retail and personal service uses, in ground floors that face the street. If office and residential uses are provided, they should be enhanced with landscaping and interesting building design and materials. Blank walls at ground floor are discouraged and should be minimized.

E.3.5.03 For buildings where ground floor retail, commercial or residential use are not desired or viable, other project-related uses, such as a community room, fitness center, daycare facility or sales center, should be located at the ground floor to activate the street.



Well designed ground floor treatment and retail frontage ensuring a pleasant and safe pedestrian experience (Vancouver, Canada)



Guideline E.3.5.01. Ground-floor uses and entries oriented to the street (Portland, Oregon)



Guideline E.3.5.02. Active uses at ground-floor (San Francisco, California)

Station Area: Private Improvements

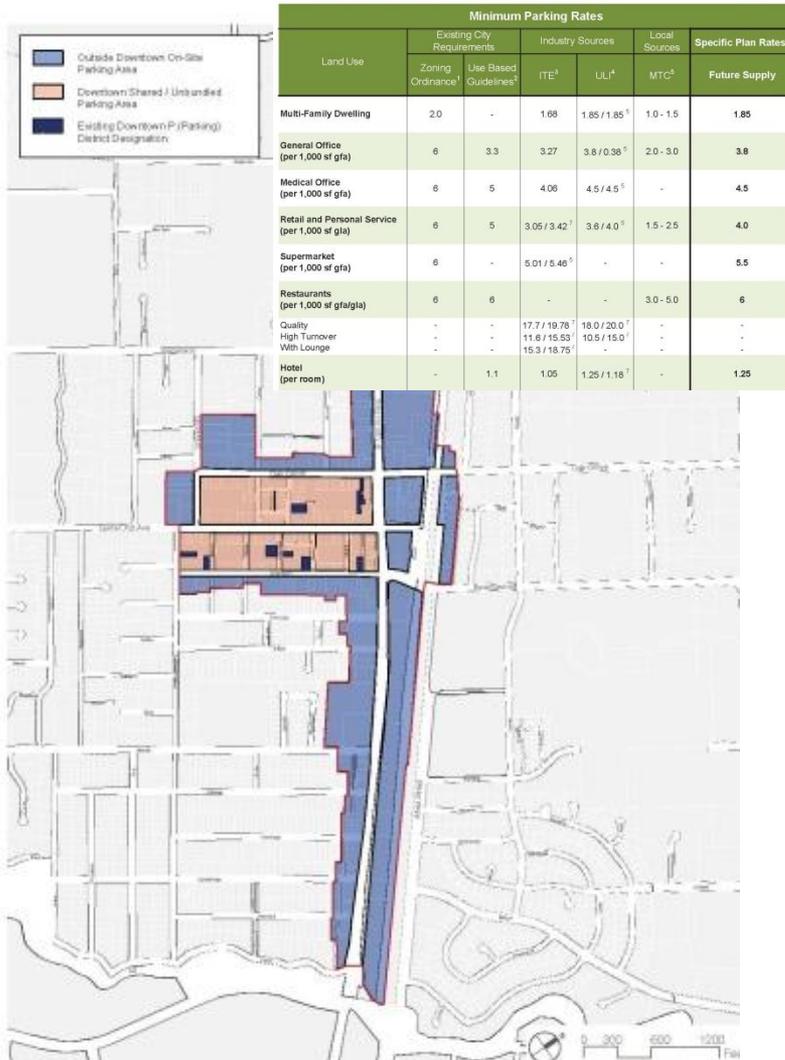


Figure F5. Parking Area

Parking

- New rates established by use
- Option for shared parking reductions
- SA E developments required to provide all parking on-site
- SA W developments may provide parking on-site, or within public facilities (if capacity is available and in-lieu fee is paid)

Commission Questions/Comments from July 11

Staff report provides additional information on several fiscal/economic questions raised at the last meeting:

- Market Study – summarized in Chapter B of draft plan
- Development Feasibility – presented at Community Workshop #3 and excerpted as Attachment F (*results were used to help establish draft height and intensity regulations*)
- Implementation – addressed in Chapter G of draft plan

Discussion Framework

Planning Commission may consider Station Area elements within the context of the Vision Plan Goals (Attachment D):

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

Planning Commission may also consider Station Area elements within the context of the Specific Plan Guiding Principles (Attachment E):

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

- The Commission may consider alternate discussion frameworks, which can be folded into following sessions.
- Commission should keep in mind “interrelationships”- how changes to one element can affect another.

Next Steps

- Meeting Process
 - Public Comment
 - Technical or clarification questions
 - Tentative recommendations for Station Area
- Next Steps
 - Station Area (July 21)
 - Downtown (July 28)
 - El Camino Real (August 4)
 - Comprehensive Review and Finalization (August 4 or 22)
 - City Council Review (August/September)
- <http://www.menlopark.org/specificplan>
- throgers@menlopark.org