Phase I Vision Plan and Goals

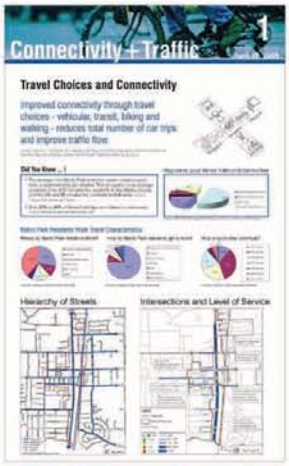
Phase I Vision Plan

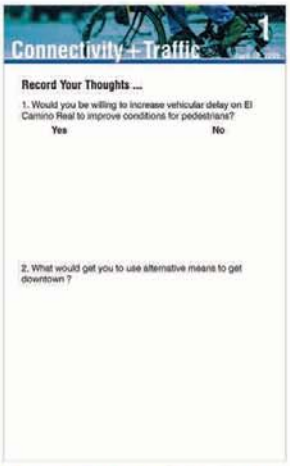
- Vision Plan Area Character: Maintain a village character unique to Menlo Park.
- East-West Connectivity: Provide greater east-west, town-wide connectivity.
- El Camino Real Circulation: Improve circulation and streetscape conditions on El Camino Real.
- Neighborhood Context: Ensure that El Camino Real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

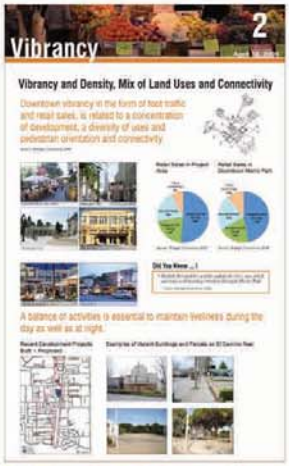
Phase I Vision Goals

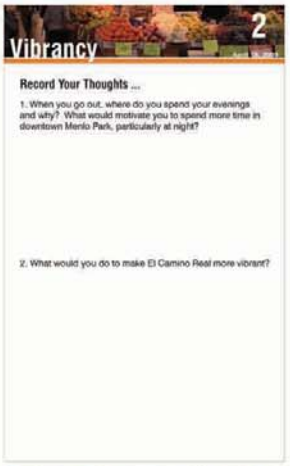
Site Observation and Analysis

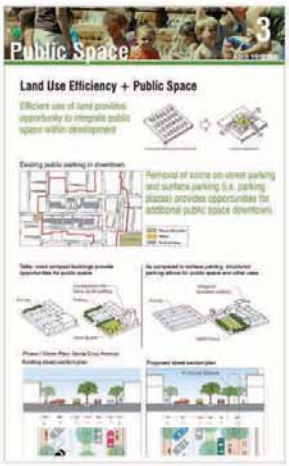
Workshop #1 - April 16, 2009

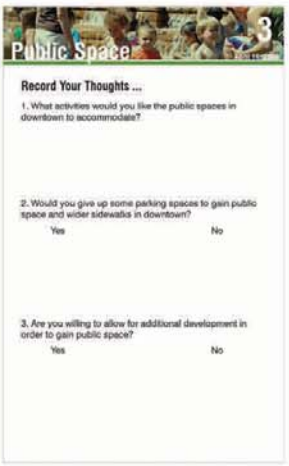


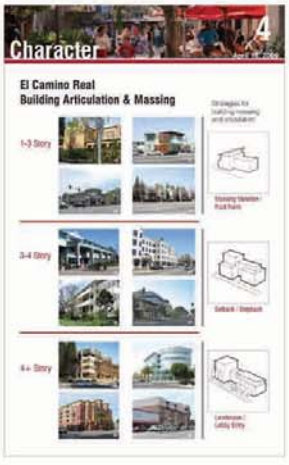




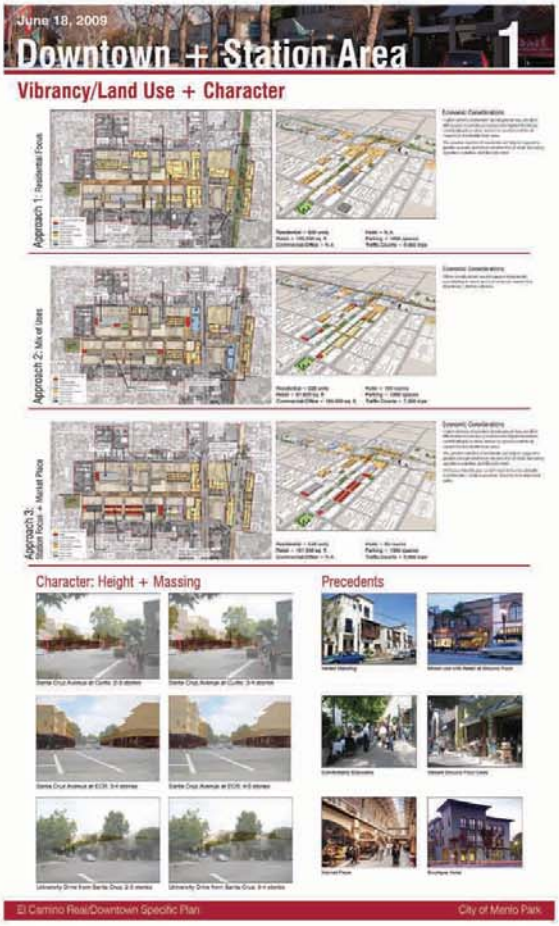


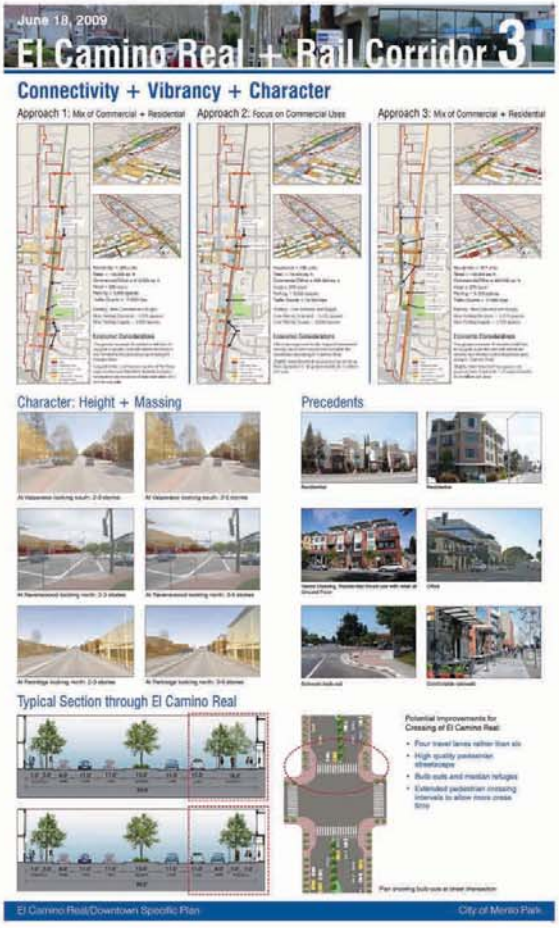


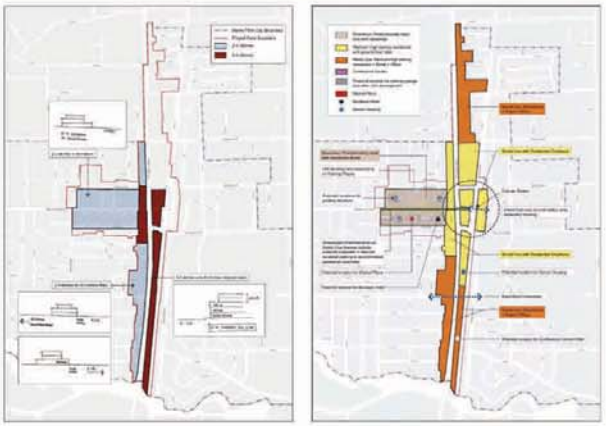




Workshop #2 - June 19,2009







Summary of Community Workshop 2 Findings

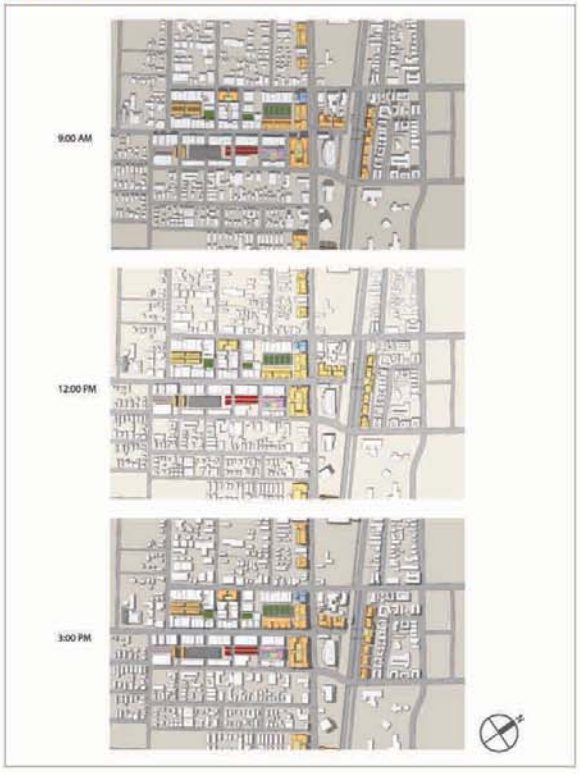
Building Shadow Study

Shadow studies were conducted on the Emerging Plan to understand the extent of shadows that might be cast with taller buildings in the Downtown and El Camino Real areas.

The shadow study was performed for several time frames, including the maximum impact conditions of the winter solstice (December 21). Please note that the study was conducted on an earlier draft of the plan, which included slightly different land uses, as well as taller buildings than those currently proposed in the Emerging Plan. Therefore, the diagrams reflect a greater amount of shadows than actually proposed.

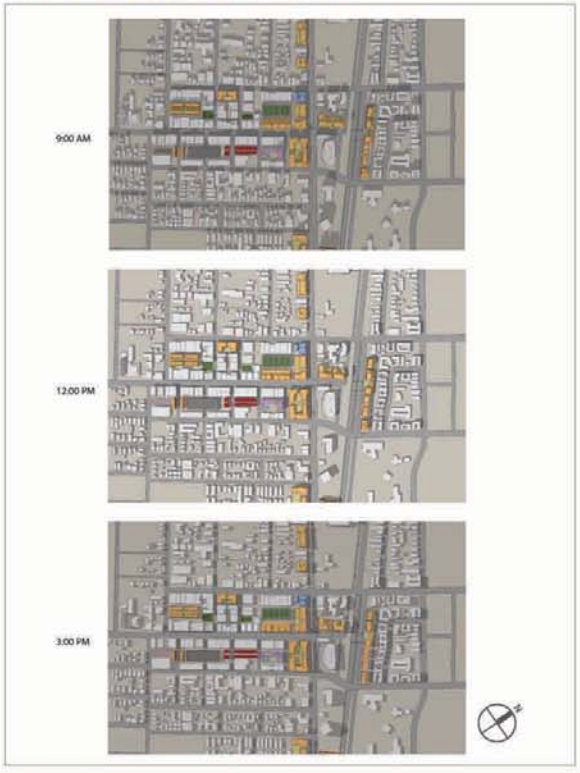
Results from the study indicate that the shadows cast would not adversely impact adjacent single-family residential properties or sidewalks across the street.

Downtown Area: March 21



Downtown Area: June 21

Downtown Area: December 21



El Camino Real South Area: March 21, June 21, December 21

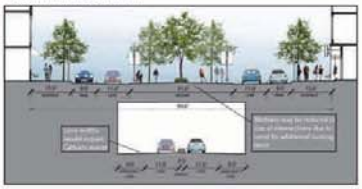
Background Information

Undergrounding El Camino Real

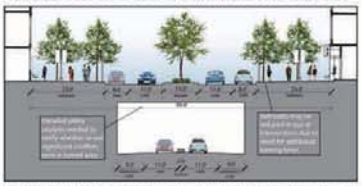
There were discussions by the community to underground El Camino Real in the downtown area to both enhance pedestrian-oriented east-west connectivity and improve through traffic heading north-south. After review of the diagrams and findings below, this proposal was considered to be inappropriate by the community at Workshop #2.

Preliminary Tunnel Study - El Camino Real

A SECTION - RAMP CONDITION



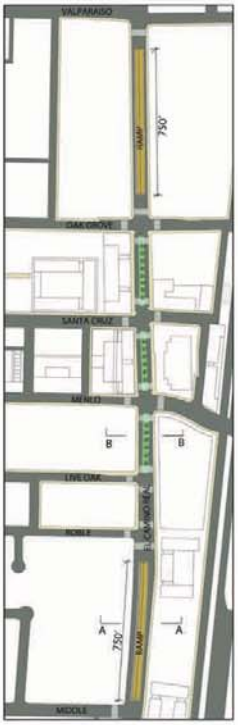
B SECTION ALTERNATIVE #1- TUNNEL CONDITION WITH WIDE MEDIAN ABOVE



B SECTION ALTERNATIVE #2- TUNNEL CONDITION WITH WIDE SIDEWALK ABOVE

Preliminary Findings

- The existing El Camino Real right-of-way constrains the amount of space available for ramp infrastructure, travel lanes, parking lanes, and sidewalks, particularly where ramp conditions are proposed.
- The preliminary traffic analysis results indicate the concept may work technically, with through traffic (approximately 50% of traffic flow) and primary turning movements accommodated. However, a detailed traffic analysis would need to be conducted to understand the full impacts and it could result in the need for additional turn lanes and other improvements that minimize the potential aesthetic impacts discussed below.
- The primary benefits would be seen in the stretch between Roble and Oak Grove Avenues, where two lanes of through traffic (one in each direction) would be fully underground. In this area, significant aesthetic and pedestrian/bicycle connectivity improvements would be possible through widened sidewalks/medians and reduced automotive traffic.
- Between Middle and Roble Avenues and Oak Grove and Valparaiso Avenues, two 750-foot-long open ramps would present significant challenges with poor aesthetics, loss of existing street trees, removal of on-street parking, removal of two traffic lanes (in the stretch between Middle and Roble Avenues), and impacts to existing business with loss of access.
- Costs would clearly be significant, with no likely funding sources identified. There are still many unknowns at this point, including location and potential impediments from underground utilities and potential objections or concerns from Caltrans.
- Construction would require delays and/or rerouting over an extended period.



DOWNTOWN TUNNEL PLAN

- From a business perspective, the tunnel could send a message that Menlo Park is a market to be bypassed, with the gains from an improved visual character and pedestrian/bicycle connectivity in the central area offset by a loss of visibility and unclear access.

Assumptions (based on typical Caltrans standards)

- Ramp slope: 5%
- Ramp length: 750 feet, inclusive of vertical approach
- Vertical clearance: 16.5 feet
- Tunnel cover: 6 feet
- Travel line widths: 11 feet (would require Caltrans waiver)
- Shoulder widths: 8 feet in tunnel and 4 feet at-grade (latter of which would require Caltrans waiver)

Land Use Comparison

The study was conducted to consider the relative impacts of various land uses in the El Camino Real/downtown project area.

Use	General Fund Revenue	Vibrancy Downtown Business Activity	Support of Local Population Needs	Vehicular Flow at Peak Hours	Schools	Community Services (fire/police)	Market Demand
Residential (multi-family)	Relatively low revenue generation compared to retail and hotel. Generates property tax	Additional population supports businesses	Provides a variety of housing unit types to accommodate different family types and incomes	Lowest number of daily trips across over the day	Residential use will include some families with kids, most likely younger families	Residential uses place the greatest demand on fire and police services	Strong long-term market demand
Retail	Generates sales and property tax	Adds to street-level activity and draws more customers downtown	Provides convenient goods and services for local residents and employees	Highest number of daily trips, but concentrated at PM peaks.	No impact	Low impact	Some near-term demand for additional retail; demand will be greater with additional households and office workers
Medical Services	Typically no or very low sales tax. Generates property tax.	Employees and medical office visitors will support local businesses	Provides convenient medical services for local residents and employees; provides local jobs	High number of daily trips, spread fairly evenly throughout the day.	No impact	Low impact	Strong long-term market demand
Office	Sales tax possible for some types of office uses (corporate). Generates property tax.	Employees and office visitors will support local businesses	Provides local jobs	Lower number of daily trips. Higher number of trips at AM/PM peaks	No impact	Low impact	Strong long-term market demand
Hotel	Highest tax generator through Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenues.	Hotel guest spending will support local businesses, especially restaurants	Limited impact on local residents	Low number of daily trips, with more trips than office but spread over the day	No impact	Low impact	Moderate long-term demand

Pedestrian Bridge Over El Camino Real

There were discussions by the community to provide a pedestrian bridge over El Camino Real in the downtown area to enhance pedestrian-oriented east-west connectivity. At Workshop #2, the consultant team presented a summary of the findings which are described in more detail below, and which appeared to be understood and accepted by the community at the workshop.

A pedestrian bridge over El Camino Real would not be an appropriate solution to provide improved pedestrian crossing and should not be considered. Improving the at-grade crossings would provide more overall benefit at a much lower cost. This conclusion is based on the following:

1. There is insufficient room for the bridge's ramping system or elevator and stairs, unless the elevator and stairs can be incorporated into a new building to be built on a redeveloped site.

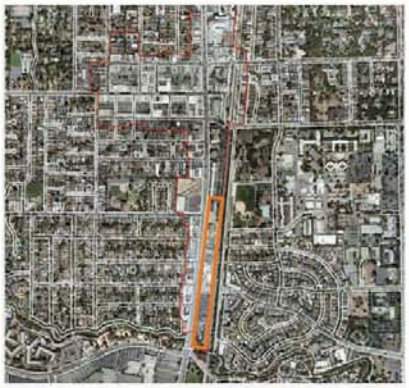
2. The pedestrian crossing time with the bridge and ramps would be 226 seconds, compared to the 26 to 186 second at-grade crossing time. Therefore the pedestrian bridge would be less convenient and people would not be inclined to use it.

3. The crossing time with an elevator would be shorter than with the ramps, but not always shorter than the at-grade crossing time. Elevators have other disadvantages, including unavailability during breakdowns and maintenance checks and security.

4. If the bridge were constructed, people would continue to cross El Camino Real at grade. The crosswalk and pedestrian signals would be removed at the bridge location thus creating an unsafe situation.

5. Measures to reduce pedestrian waiting times, decrease pedestrian crossing distances, and slow traffic speeds on El Camino Real would be less costly and more beneficial and therefore should be considered instead of a pedestrian bridge.

Stanford Properties

Stanford University owns 6 parcels totaling 12.8 acres at the southern end of El Camino Real, south of downtown. The parcels are composed of short-term and long-term leases.

- Total Acreage = 12.8 acres
  - 4.24 acre Stanford Park Hotel
  - 8.56 acre other 5 parcels
- Stanford plans to redevelop 8.56 acres in a comprehensive, integrated manner after all current leases expire in 2013
- Stanford foresees a market-driven mix of office (including medical office), hotel, retail and possibly not-for-sale residential uses
- Stanford has not prepared any master plan for the parcels at this time