

**WORKSHOP #3 – SEPTEMBER 17, 2009**  
**INDIVIDUAL VERBAL PUBLIC COMMENTS SUMMARY**

*Note: comments are summaries, not exact transcriptions.*

- I love a lot of this plan—finding a way to library across train tracks excites me but 18.5-foot sidewalks one block from where there are no sidewalks is just bizarre. Planners should look at bigger area. We haven't given much thought to beyond project area. All of El Camino Real—from Alameda to train station—needs bike/pedestrian.
- Regarding the sidewalks, clearly the trees are a sacred cow. You're only adding five feet by removing trees—keep the trees and just gain space by going to parallel parking or having parking behind stores, whether structured or lots.
- I support maintaining trees in center medians but also expanding sidewalks—eliminate parking in street, bike lanes OK, then put all parking in back. Retailers should then enhance back entrances for two access points. Have campaign for healthy living; promote the benefits of walking.
- Reason for having parking structures—maximize north-south flow on El Camino Real. El Camino Real flows everywhere except Menlo Park. Recapture six lanes—gridlock is ugly. Grand Boulevard people might come after us.
- Sidewalks issue—if you widen, have opportunity for twice as many trees (new trees).
- Happy to see trees on wider sidewalk—not religious about median trees. Seems like a lot of development for only a four percent revenue increase—need better economic outcome.
- I came to Menlo Park in 1975, not much done since then. Strong opinion that village character is what I want. We've already gone too far, however, to avoid parking structures. Before the recession, we had too many cars; when we recover we'll need structures. You can make parking structures that are complementary and integrated with village feel.
- I run a chiropractic business across the way. Not amenable to have big concrete parking block.
- We found parking in Menlo Park on Friday peak hours—don't really see a parking problem. Suggest San Carlos—village-type city with wide variety of community-serving retail and thriving. I come to Menlo Park because it always has parking.
- I encourage you to think about the back doors of our stores—opportunity to add character/interest—a resource to look at more.
- I have several points:
  1. Not enough housing in this plan, especially given amount of office proposed citywide. Ratio of housing/office/retail very important.
  2. Schools/fire must be analyzed now.
  3. Class III bike on El Camino Real not a good idea—safety issues.

4. Don't understand reduction of parking ratio regarding train station.
  5. European/café spillout feel of more trees would improve vibrancy—even if we lose median trees.
- Parking structures—take 2-3 proposed structures, underground them all, and keep at-grade parking.
  - Regarding El Camino Real—don't turn into Grand Blvd. Keep parking that is there now—merchants need it for survival.
  - Concerned with cutting parking. I shop in Palo Alto all the time; my Menlo Park shopping is one stop. In Palo Alto, I park in a structure, it's easy, and walk around to my shops. I vote for widening sidewalks, removing median trees, and increasing visibility across the street. Skeptical about El Camino Real traffic analysis (even base numbers seem off).
  - The community has done a remarkable job to date. Greatest need is El Camino Real south area—a disaster—would do most for community, needs most attention.
  - If this plan comes to fruition, what is your estimate of the population increase?
  - Regarding trees in center median on Santa Cruz Ave—the reason was to create continuity—to mitigate the hodge-podge of structures; also slowed down traffic. Prior to that, it was a 35-mph speedway with accidents. Also, we made it a shopping street with restaurants. We made it friendly for pedestrians and merchants. If you want to take the median trees out, we want our \$1.5 million back, because downtown merchants paid for it, not City.
  - I work at Charles Schwab on El Camino Real—total gridlock. The idea of adding four seconds is exponential, just makes it worse. Flow needs to be improved, even if it means taking out parking—just create more parking elsewhere. Parking underground with parks on top. Also, reducing parking ratio doesn't make sense.
  - Surprised how much focus on Santa Cruz Ave. There is much vacant space on El Camino Real, that is the main problem. Putting structures in plazas is disappointing—retain potential open space. There are other places for housing, not in downtown. Also, office/housing/jobs ratio needs to balance.
  - I have an office across the lot here—very concerned about the kind of “progress.” The trees are fabulous. At its last meeting, the planning commission talked about LEED-certified buildings. We need same thinking for our parking structures—park on top, etc. Not too much massing in Menlo Park.
  - The last census indicated that only 10 percent of people who work in Menlo Park live in Menlo Park—that's why we need transit-oriented housing. We have a plan for housing—the Derry Project. The train station needs to have more importance. What do you have in mind for the train station?
  - I have a store downtown and live here. The marketplace proposal still looks like there's a street running through it; need to eliminate the street feel. Ideally, get Trader Joe's to open for the marketplace.

- I'm on the Environmental Quality Commission. I'm looking forward to (as the EIR emerges) seeing how car trips, for example, will be reduced, addressing issues like reflective roofs, alternative vehicle charging stations in parking garages, etc. This plan has to show the way on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> gases.
- If you're going to have 1,500 new people with new housing, you'll probably have 1,000 more cars.
- At-grade parking is most preferred for our customers, mostly women with kids in tow. They want security. Locate parking structures at transit centers. Need to preserve circulation for our customers—very practical. Regarding zoning residential in these parking plazas, just use existing zoned areas for increasing residential. I hope Trader Joe's is paying for the property for the public marketplace.
- Don't lose sight of Middle Ave and importance of that connection to Burgess Park—bike/pedestrian connection between east-west is very important for future development.
- I'm a downtown property owner. Regarding the surface parking—important to recognize the impacts on existing businesses. Surface parking is what makes this community a special place. Diversity of business and surface parking essential to maintaining healthy retail district.
- 35-40 years ago, I was a traffic commissioner—not much has happened since. Only the median trees and Sand Hill. The most important decision is what kind of community do you want to have: a Los Altos type? Palo Alto type? Regarding parking, people who work here have to keep rotating their cars. Have underground garage for all-day parkers.
- Parking structures—some are surprisingly attractive. It's a matter of architecture. We must have a minimum expectation of architecture. We want to have people walking around.
- I like a lot of the bold ideas that have been presented. Don't lose sight of opportunities to make Menlo Park more walkable, human scale, a lot of amenities. I like the parking under Kepler's, under the theatre in Redwood City. Demonizing parking structures is not productive. Parking structures will open up green space that is desperately lacking.