

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.

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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 either side 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

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

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GROUP 9 (ALTERNATIVE 2)

- Paid parking
- Plaza or park near Caltrain
- 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

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

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