



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING OF JULY 11, 2011
AGENDA ITEM E1

PROJECT: **El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan
Review of Draft Specific Plan
Meeting 1 – Overview/Background and Public Input**

BACKGROUND

Menlo Park is developing a long-term plan for the El Camino Real and Downtown areas. The completed visioning process (Phase I: 2007-2008) has led into the preparation of a Specific Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA) (Phase II: 2009-2011). The culmination of the first phase of work was the City's Council's unanimous acceptance of the Vision Plan, which serves as the foundation for the Specific Plan. The completed Specific Plan will be a comprehensive, action-oriented set of rules, containing elements such as plans for open space and other public improvements, detailed land use regulations, design guidelines, and implementation measures.

The Specific Plan process is currently in Task 4 (*Draft Specific Plan, Fiscal Impact Analysis, and Draft EIR*), having completed the *Project Initiation, Existing Conditions Analysis; Vision Refinement; and Development of Framework, Concept Plans, Programs and Guidelines* tasks. Key milestones of the current phase of work were the release of the Draft Specific Plan on April 7, 2010, and the release of the Draft EIR on April 29, 2011, both to strong community interest. The Draft EIR comment period ran through June 20, 2011, and comments were received both in written correspondence and verbal remarks at a June 6, 2011 Planning Commission public hearing. Draft EIR comments that address the adequacy of the EIR or the City's compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will be responded to in the Final EIR and can potentially result in changes to the Draft EIR text/analysis (non-environmental comments will be noted). The response to comments in the Final EIR will be reviewed at a future Planning Commission meeting.

With the conclusion of the Draft EIR review period, the project focus is the Planning Commission and City Council's review of, and recommendations/direction on, the Draft Specific Plan itself. The Planning Commission was originally scheduled to hold one meeting to provide direction on the Draft Specific Plan, but the Commission subsequently expressed an interest and willingness to hold additional meetings in order

to more fully explore and address comments, questions, and concerns, both from the Commission and the public, with the aim of providing clear and specific direction on potential improvements and refinements to the plan. The Commission formed a subcommittee (Bressler/Ferrick/Riggs) to propose a recommendation for an expanded review process, which was approved by the full Commission in November 2010 and which is the focus of this report and associated presentation.

ANALYSIS

Planning Commission Review Process Overview

The Planning Commission's expanded review process consists of the following four (potentially five) meetings:

- **Meeting 1 – Overview/Background and Public Input – Monday, July 11 – 7:00 P.M start**
 - Overview Presentation
 - Project history and Vision Plan Goals
 - Specific Plan Process
 - Key Elements of Draft Specific Plan
 - Geographic Area Breakdown – Orient Commission and Public to Station Area, Downtown, and El Camino Real
 - Discussion of Public/Private as Framework for Subsequent Discussion
 - Public: sidewalks, parks, market place, public garages, bike lanes, etc.
 - Private: regulations and guidelines for private buildings, off-street parking, etc.
 - Interrelationships – potential changes to some elements can generate unintended consequences to other elements
 - Public Comment
 - Planning Commission Procedural/Technical Questions and Clarifications
 - **Meeting 2 – Station Area – Thursday, July 21**
 - **Meeting 3 – Downtown – Thursday, July 28**
 - **Meeting 4 – El Camino Real – Thursday, August 4**
- These three meetings would follow the same format below, but the primary discussion would respectively focus on the three geographic areas noted above
- 'Refresher' Overview - 6:00 P.M. start (Planning Commissioners not required to attend)
 - Abbreviated version of Meeting 1 overview presentation and what's occurred since then, including summary of previous public comment
 - Public Comment - 7:00 P.M. start
Chair may consider requesting that comments not duplicate previous comments and/or limit time depending on number of comment cards received
 - Commission Discussion
 - Public
 - Private
 - Preliminary Recommendations

- **Meeting 4 End (Thursday, August 4) or Meeting 5 (Monday, August 22) – Review/Wrap-up**
 - Public Comment
 - Review and Finalization of Commission Recommendations

Each of the three geographic area meetings are intended to conclude with the Planning Commission making tentative recommendations on aspects of the Draft Specific Plan for that particular zone. Recommendations are expected to generally take the form of direction such as the following:

- “Strengthen and expand on *Topic A*”
- “Modify *Development Standard B* from Z feet to Y feet”
- “Remove *Improvement C* from consideration”

The tentative recommendations will be compiled and considered comprehensively either at the end of Meeting 4 (August 4) or in an optional Meeting 5 (August 22). The Planning Commission will then finalize its recommendations, which will form the basis for the City Council’s subsequent discussion and direction on the Draft Specific Plan.

The Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA) was originally intended to be published in advance of the start of the Planning Commission’s review of the Draft Specific Plan, in order to more fully inform the Commission’s discussion. However, the initial administrative drafts have required more work than anticipated. In particular, staff has added an analysis of the impact on non-City special districts (fire and school districts, specifically), which was not originally scoped but which has been a topic of interest on related FIAs. In order to finalize the City analysis and add this special district supplement, the FIA release will be delayed, but it will be published and considered in advance of the Planning Commission’s final recommendation on the Draft Specific Plan, at which point recommendations can potentially be modified to address fiscal issues.

The remainder of the Analysis section addresses topics specific to the July 11 Meeting 1 (Overview/Background and Public Input). The next meetings in the review sequence will have their own staff reports and presentations.

Overview Presentation

The overview presentation will provide with Planning Commissioners and members of the public with a full background on the project, including the earlier Vision Plan process. Topics that will be highlighted include the following:

1. Community Outreach

The Vision Plan and Specific Plan processes have both benefited from unprecedented community outreach and engagement. This has included eight citywide mailouts to all residents and businesses in Menlo Park, two community-wide surveys responded to by over 2,000 people, seven workshops, an email list of over 900 people who get regular updates, one-on-one interviews with

downtown business owners and other important stakeholders, approximately 20 Planning Commission and City Council meetings, two walking tours, regular Chamber of Commerce outreach, displays at all the Downtown Block Parties, personal outreach from the project's Oversight and Outreach Committee, and more.

The community engagement process is not over; new input is encouraged and welcomed, although new contributors are encouraged to learn as much as possible about what has already occurred and to acknowledge and respect earlier contributions. Menlo Park is a community with a wide range of informed and deeply-held opinions, and a successful community planning process will by its nature require a healthy amount of give-and-take. No single individual or group should expect that every aspect of the Plan will be their first preference, but all should feel heard and respected.

2. Vision Plan – Vision Statement and Goals

The El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan was unanimously accepted by the City Council on July 15, 2008. The Vision Plan established broad principles that represent established City policy that guides the Specific Plan process. The Vision Statement and Goals are excerpted in Attachment A.

3. Draft Specific Plan – Guiding Principles

The Draft Specific Plan establishes the following fundamental rules that underlie the concepts, policies, standards and guidelines:

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

The guiding principles are expanded on in the Plan excerpt provided as Attachment B.

4. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Answers to common inquiries are provided in a FAQ on the project web page, which is included as Attachment C. Of particular note, the FAQ addresses in brief the interrelationships of the El Camino Real corridor and downtown area, and why both areas have been part of an integrated planning process from the beginning.

5. Key Aspects of the Draft Specific Plan

The overall Plan will be summarized in the overview presentation, similar to what was presented at the “open house” events when the Draft Plan was released in April 2010.

Geographic Area Breakdown

The Draft Specific Plan contains a wealth of detail and specificity regarding topics such as public space, land use and building character, and circulation. In order to effectively review and provide direction on the Plan, the Planning Commission elected to separate the discussion into the three geographic area divisions described in Chapter C (“Plan Principles, Framework + Program”), which are: 1) Station Area, 2) Downtown, and 3) El Camino Real. The breakdown of the discussion into geographic zones will allow the Commission greater time for discussion and will also permit community members with a particular interest in one area to potentially attend that meeting only. As noted previously, all of the tentative geographic area recommendations will be reconsidered as a whole at the conclusion of the Planning Commission’s review, so that any potentially redundant or contradictory direction can be resolved.

The geographic areas are described in more detail in Section C.4 of the Draft Specific Plan (pages C10 – C18), and also represented conceptually in Figure C1 (page C7), which is excerpted as Attachment D. The geographic areas are also cross-referenced here with their associated primary Zoning Districts (Figure E2 on page E11):

1. Station Area (Zoning Districts SA E and SA W)
2. Downtown (Zoning Districts D and DA)
3. El Camino Real (Zoning Districts ECR NE-L, ECR NE, ECR NW, ECR NE-R, ECR SW, ECR SE)

As noted in the Draft Specific Plan, these areas are distinct, but they are also connected, and as such some zoning districts may be considered to be part of multiple areas. For example, the SA E zoning district is primarily part of the Station Area discussion, but may have some relevance to the Downtown discussion as well.

Public/Private Improvements

Within each geographic area, the Planning Commission’s discussion will focus in turn on public improvements, with “public” representing elements such as sidewalks, parks, Market Place, public garages, and bike lanes, and “private” representing the regulations and guidelines for buildings on private property and associated regulations. Public and private improvements are not fully independent aspects of the Plan, but they do provide an effective way to break down the discussion into manageable segments.

Interrelationships

Many aspects of the plan are interdependent, meaning that changes to one element would affect another element, potentially in an unintended or undesirable way. The following examples represent a few possible interrelationships:

- *Downtown parking garages and public space improvements:* The proposed Santa Cruz Avenue sidewalk extensions, pocket parks, paseo, and other public space improvements would require the relocation of some parking spaces, but these would be made up for in the proposed new parking garages. If the parking garages were removed from the plan or modified significantly in size, most or all of the public space improvements would likely not be achievable.
- *Bicycle infrastructure and automobile traffic/parking:* On some streets, such as El Camino Real, the bicycle infrastructure is proposed as a shared auto/bike lane, with “sharrow” markings. Because the “right-of-way” (public street/sidewalk area) is limited, if a dedicated bicycle lane were desired, that would likely require the removal of an auto travel or parking lane (which could be considered negative) or acquisition of private property (which could be costly/difficult).
- *Revitalization of underutilized parcels/buildings and public benefits:* A key goal of the project is to see improvements on parcels that are currently vacant or otherwise underutilized, which would have inherent benefits of creating more activity and new revenue. At the same time, the community would like to see other appropriate public benefits provided. However, if public benefits are required to an extensive degree, that could negatively impact the desire and ability of property owners and developers to redevelop and provide the inherent benefits of revitalization.

Additional interrelationships will likely be addressed on an ad-hoc basis as the Planning Commission discusses various topics.

City Council Guidance

On June 14, 2011, the City Council conducted a general review of the project status and provided individual comments for the Planning Commission’s consideration. Detailed meeting notes are provided as Attachment E, and some key points of emphasis are listed below:

- Ensure that Menlo Park’s small-town (or “village”) feel is maintained;
- Look at opportunities to provide more specifics on Public Benefit topic;
- Examine parking garages in detail: design, timing, financing, etc.;
- Look at timing/sequencing for other infrastructure improvements;
- Consider phased impacts of plan area being developed over time (i.e., it will not be built out all at once);
- Stay as objective as possible, consider facts and data; and
- Incorporate additional input from the Transportation Commission.

Public Comment and Correspondence

The initial meeting of July 11 is intended to be the primary comment opportunity for the Planning Commission's review of the Draft Specific Plan. By receiving comprehensive comments at the beginning of the expanded review process, the Planning Commission can most effectively consider recurring and/or overlapping comments, questions, and concerns throughout the following meetings. Each of the subsequent Planning Commission meetings will have additional opportunities for public comment, although the Chair will have the discretion to request that comments do not duplicate previously-relayed remarks and/or to limit the amount of time available for comments.

Written correspondence is also welcomed and will be distributed to the Planning Commission throughout the review process. As noted previously, a number of Draft EIR comments were received during that review process, and all written correspondence is available online as part of the project web page. No new written correspondence arrived in advance of the staff report publishing date for the July 11 meeting.

Planning Commission Procedural/Technical Questions and Clarifications

The meeting will conclude with an opportunity for Planning Commissioners to individually ask questions that are of a procedural or technical nature. To the extent that such questions can be answered at this meeting, staff will do so, although answers to questions may become part of the upcoming meeting sequence. The Planning Commission may also consider using this opportunity to inform staff if there are key topics or concerns that Commissioners would like to be considered during the upcoming geographic area meetings.



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PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. A notice was also published in the local newspaper on June 29, 2011. In addition, the City has prepared a project page for the proposal, which is available at the following address:
<http://www.menlopark.org/specificplan>. This page provides up-to-date information about the project, allowing interested parties to stay informed of its progress. The page allows users to sign up for automatic email bulletins, notifying them when content is updated and meetings are scheduled. The project list currently has 965 subscribers.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Vision Plan Excerpt – Vision Statement and Goals
- B. Draft Specific Plan Excerpt – Guiding Principles
- C. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- D. Draft Specific Plan Excerpt – Figure C1
- E. City Council Guidance – June 14, 2011 Meeting Notes

EXHIBITS TO BE PROVIDED AT MEETING

Overview Presentation

AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW AT CITY OFFICES AND ON THE PROJECT WEB PAGE

- Draft Specific Plan
- Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared by ESA, dated April 2011
- Draft EIR Comments
- El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan

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Attachment A
El Camino Real/Downtown Vision Plan
Excerpt: Vision Statement and Goals

Vision Statement

Downtown Menlo Park and the El Camino Real corridor through Menlo Park will continue to be known for the vitality and diverse range of activities that are available. It will become a place where people live, work and shop and a place that provides services and offers cultural opportunities. A unique identity can be created for the Vision Plan Area that builds on the attributes and opportunities that exist as community assets in the Vision Plan Area today. Those Menlo Park assets include:

- Santa Cruz Avenue: Menlo Park’s “Main Street” is an intimately-scaled street with fairly wide sidewalks and a rhythm of storefronts that is conducive to pedestrian activity. City-owned parking plazas are accessible via a series of similarly-scaled cross streets and augment the on-street parking provided on Santa Cruz Avenue.
- The Menlo Park Train Station: Rail and bus service connects Menlo Park’s downtown to the region; the station provides the opportunity for Menlo Park residents to access job opportunities elsewhere on the Peninsula as well as to bring visitors to existing and expanded opportunities in downtown Menlo Park.
- Menlo Park’s Independently-owned Businesses: The range of services and goods provided by local businesses and merchants has been identified by several community members as a major contributor to the small town, or village, character in Menlo Park. One-of-a-kind retail businesses and services contribute greatly to making a downtown unique.
- Strategic Opportunities for Near-term Change: Vacancies and underutilization of the Plan Area’s larger parcels, particularly those with the exposure that El Camino Real provides, offer the opportunity to envision future uses that are different than those that formerly occupied those key sites.
- City-owned Parking Plazas: These areas are integral to the health of businesses and merchants in the Downtown. However, the parking plazas are also the largest areas of City-owned land in the Plan Area, outside of public streets. A comprehensive redesign of these areas could provide the potential for a more efficient configuration and greater number of parking spaces, as well as shade trees in conjunction with plazas or small park spaces that could be components of a coordinated downtown pedestrian network.
- Future Railroad Conditions: Although precise determinations of future activities on the Caltrain tracks are unknown at this time, alterations or

expansion of the tracks to accommodate high speed rail or future Caltrain needs seems likely. Acknowledging that such changes may occur provides the opportunity for the Vision Plan to propose ways to expand east-west connectivity across the tracks for bicyclists and pedestrians, in addition to vehicles, in conjunction with future track changes.

- Other Unique Community Assets: Menlo Park also contains a number of additional community assets, both in and outside of the Vision Plan Area. Allied Arts Guild, an architecturally unique complex, is located near the Vision Plan Area. Fremont Park, Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, Burgess Park and the Menlo Park Civic Center are also important community assets located just outside the Vision Plan Area. The Park Theater, now vacant, is located in the Vision Plan Area and is considered by some community members to be a significant cultural asset. The numerous trees of the city are also considered by many to be an important community asset.

Goals

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.

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Attachment B
El Camino Real/Downtown Draft Specific Plan
Excerpt: Guiding Principles

Enhance Public Space

The Specific Plan establishes an expansive "public realm", an integrated network of public spaces, including widened sidewalks, plazas and parks, that invites strolling and public gathering and allows for community life, identity and sense of place. The plan's comprehensive public space network supports a more active, vibrant downtown and healthier living by encouraging walking, biking and social gathering.

Generate Vibrancy

The Specific Plan acknowledges the community's desire for a more active, vibrant downtown and station area, with a mix of retail, residential and offices uses that complement and support one another and bring vitality, including increased retail sales, to the area. In addition, the Specific Plan establishes standards and guidelines that encourage development of underutilized and vacant land on El Camino Real while ensuring a building character that is modulated and in keeping with Menlo Park's small-town character. The Specific Plan focuses on creating new connected places of activity and social life that enhance community life and contribute to a vibrant downtown.

Sustain Menlo Park's Village Character

The Specific Plan recognizes and builds upon the unique qualities of downtown Menlo Park and El Camino Real, in particular its small town character of lower-scale buildings and diverse and local neighborhood-serving businesses. The Specific Plan accommodates future development in ways that complement the area's existing character, using design controls and guidelines to regulate building form and scale.

Enhance Connectivity

The Specific Plan enhances connectivity and walkability throughout the plan area. The plan provides a north-south connection with a wider, more comfortable and continuous sidewalk on the east side of El Camino Real. The plan integrates downtown, the Caltrain station area and the Civic Center with one another through widened sidewalks on Santa Cruz Avenue, Alma Street and El Camino Real. East/west connectivity is enhanced with a number of intersection improvements along El Camino Real, including sidewalk extensions, enhanced crosswalks and new and improved grade-separated pedestrian/bicycle crossings of the railroad tracks.

Promote Healthy Living and Sustainability

The Specific Plan recognizes and promotes healthy living and activity by encouraging walking, biking and access to transit as alternatives to vehicular use, supported by widened sidewalks and enhanced public spaces, development intensity focusing on the station area and a greater mix and diversity of uses. The Specific Plan takes a comprehensive approach to sustainability and carbon emissions reduction, utilizing best practices integrated with guidelines for both public and private improvements. The Specific Plan also encourages development sensitive to the character of Menlo Park.

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Attachment C
El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan Project Page
Excerpt: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is a Specific Plan, anyway?

A specific plan is a comprehensive, action-oriented set of rules for a specific geographic area. For Menlo Park, the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan is setting the direction for the heart of the city over the coming decades. It builds on the successful 2007-2008 Vision Plan process, which established twelve key goals. The Specific Plan will define what our community desires for its future by regulating land use and defining other aspects of possible future public and private development.

Why do we need a Specific Plan? Aren't things fine as they are?

By having a specific plan, we as a community can control our future based on positive changes the community would like to see. Many of the current rules are several decades old, and don't necessarily reflect community values. The plan will help address long-standing concerns people have with the El Camino corridor - parking, blight, pedestrian access, traffic and vacancies. It will also help address concerns people have with downtown - parking, pedestrian access, inviting community spaces and increased vibrancy. At the same time, the plan will help maintain and enhance what we value most about these areas.

We want our future choices to include information about impacts (both positive and negative) so we can make informed decisions about the area as a whole, not as individual projects are proposed and we want to ensure public investment successfully leverages private investment and results in improved prosperity for the community overall. A specific plan helps achieve these important goals.

How has the community been involved in the process so far?

The plan has included extensive opportunities for input in various formats including eight citywide mailouts to all residents and businesses in Menlo Park, two community-wide surveys responded to by over 2,000 people, seven workshops, an email list of over 900 people who get regular updates, one-on-one interviews with downtown business owners and other important stakeholders, two walking tours, regular Chamber of Commerce outreach, booths at all the Downtown Block Parties, and more. And the community input is still in process: we want to continue to see new faces and to get input to refine and improve the plan. The process has used detailed information to help people weigh alternatives and engage in dialogue with one another around the various choices.

Why does the Plan include both El Camino Real and downtown?

From the very first project mailing (October 2007), the process has included both the El Camino Real corridor and downtown district, in recognition of the fact that these zones intersect at the Caltrain station area (which is not the case for all Peninsula towns- for example, Palo Alto and Burlingame's downtowns are not located directly adjacent to their El Camino Real segments). Because of this proximity, the long-term vision for each area needs to consider the other, such as by El Camino Real providing uses that support but don't directly compete with downtown's retail core. As the iterative workshop-based process has unfolded, the community has had the opportunity to tailor the plans for downtown, El Camino Real, and the station area in detail.

How does the Plan support the Farmer's Market and other important community activities?

One important goal from the Vision step was to increase vibrancy - the number of people enjoying the downtown shops and eateries. The plan includes new public spaces for festivals and gatherings, including an enhanced, park-like space for the Farmers Market. These elements are based on extensive community input about the importance of preserving Menlo Park's special public attractions.

How would development occur once the Specific Plan is approved?

The Specific Plan establishes regulations and guidelines for development in the overall area, but does not include detailed development plans. Individual property owners will still need to propose specific development, which will be subject to appropriate review processes, including additional environmental review (such as traffic studies) as needed. We do not anticipate major changes right away, and in fact, development will probably occur at generally the same pace as in the past.

What are the next steps in the process?

The Draft Specific Plan was released for public review on April 7, 2010. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was released on April 21, 2011, and the comment period concluded on June 20, 2011. The Planning Commission is currently undertaking a detailed review (informed by public input) of the Draft Specific Plan, to be informed in part by the pending Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA). The Planning Commission will be providing recommendations on potential improvements and refinements to the plan to the City Council, which will be conducting its own review in late summer/early fall 2011. The draft plan will then be revised and improved, and then presented again for final

review by the Planning Commission and City Council, again to be informed by public input. The Final EIR will also be available for review at that time.

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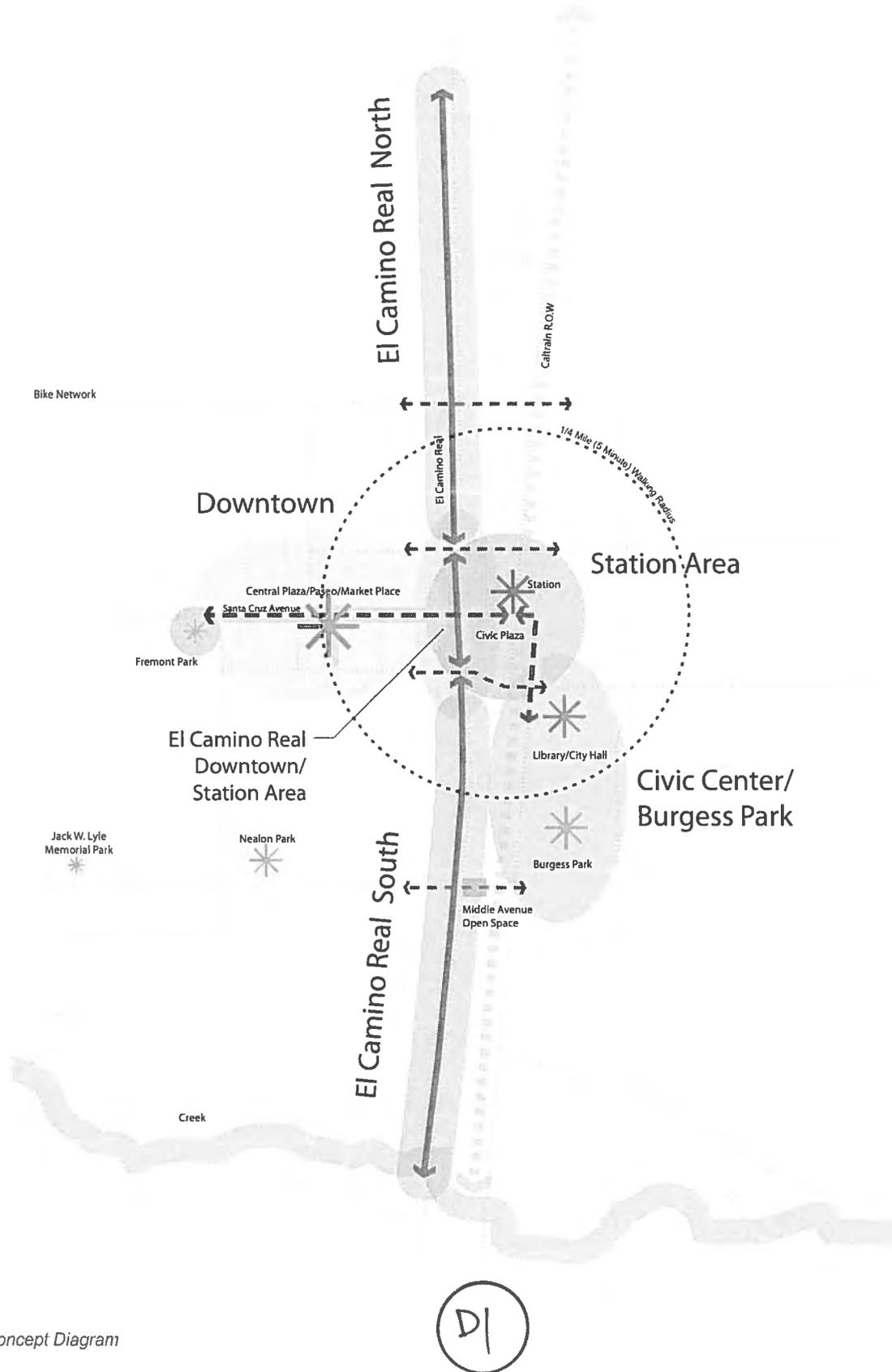


Figure C1. Concept Diagram

Attachment E
City Council – June 14, 2011
Summary of Public and Council Comments on Specific Plan

- Public Comment
 - Charlie Bourne
 - Speaking as individual, not Transportation Commissioner
 - Wants to see more staff support of Transportation Commission and more input from that Commission incorporated into process
 - Frank Carney
 - Been discussing this for months and have attended many meetings
 - Top priority is small-town feel- don't see how that can be maintained with higher buildings and more trips
 - Patti Fry
 - This project is likely to affect heart of Menlo Park for 50 years, need to do it right
 - Not fair to consider plan when associated documents (General Plan and Zoning Ordinance Amendments, FIA) are not available
 - The “devil is in the details”
 - Look at guidelines to achieve stated goals
 - Vibrancy- implied that density is the only way to achieve this, but uses matter
 - City's currency is its FAR, but base increment gives it away
 - Connectivity is an important goal, but not improved significantly, especially for bicycles
 - Additional commercial densities could negatively affect jobs/housing imbalance

Note: Council comments are grouped together by each Council Member, listed alphabetically.

- Mayor Cline
 - Consider cumulative traffic- not just the Plan, but other projects around (including pending Stanford development)
 - Would like to see number of meetings with downtown interests documented- they have had a lot of time and opportunity for input
 - Agree with other Council Members' comments regarding: parking structures, phasing, and public benefits
 - Recommend adding in Transportation Commission meeting
 - Look at objective facts and data, not necessarily just how something was said

- Council Member Cohen
 - Concern about way Transportation Commission has been included, encourage more input from them
 - Request that summaries of all Commission meetings on the Specific Plan be provided
 - Concern that merchants and property owners not included from the start; need to include all input
 - Desire to preserve Farmer's Market and examine issues of parking plazas and structures
 - Traffic a key concern
 - Feels there has been a disconnect between Phase I and Phase II and consultant deviating from Phase I
 - Sees a disconnect between small-town feel and proposed densities
 - Frustrated with downtown merchant outreach
 - Concerns with quality of life, small-town atmosphere, and traffic- Environmental Quality Commission may have input
 - Feels priorities are misguided
- Council Member Fergusson
 - Thanks Planning Commission for taking on a big task
 - Take pride in Menlo Park's small-town feel- want to maintain
 - Think about why we're doing this- reaction against piecemeal proposals in the 2004-2006 timeframe, which were developer-driven and not in keeping with small-town feel; need a collective vision
 - Want the plan to give certainty and clarity
 - Like the idea of "tiered" zoning; would like to see comparison with existing zoning
 - Public benefit process should be well defined (contrast to Derry project); would like to see Planning Commission provide crisp public benefit recommendations
 - Undergrounding of utilities (lines, poles) downtown could be considered a public benefit
 - Interested in option of partnering with Sunset to refresh Santa Cruz Avenue with new landscaping
 - Would like to see more renderings of how Farmer's Market will be enhanced with special paving and other improvements
 - Opportunities to improve bicycle and pedestrian circulation, which enhances family-friendly feel; bicycling from Ravenswood Avenue to Menlo Avenue towards Farmer's Market could be improved
 - Vacancies driven partly by current zoning, which is geared toward uses like used car lots and gas stations- not appropriate to current Menlo Park

- Compare project with CEQA's "no project" alternative, as well as broader regional effects of prohibiting growth in Menlo Park and pushing it to outlying cities (greenhouse gases, VMT, etc.)
- Consider graphs to show the implementation schedule
- Vice Mayor Keith
 - Note that subcommittee has met with the Downtown Alliance and had productive discussions
 - Request that total daily trips be presented in segments of 5, 10, 15 years to provide a more realistic estimate, as opposed to the "full build-out" total
 - Would also like to see more information about garage financing options
 - Would like to see a stronger role for the Transportation Commission
- Council Member Ohtaki
 - Request that Planning Commission take a focused look at the need and aesthetic basis for the two proposed five-level garages vs. a single garage intended primarily for employee parking
 - Examine timing and cost options for parking structures- how would they be financed and when would that happen
 - Reach out to downtown interests and work to reduce areas of difference
 - Desire to preserve Farmer's Market, noting that the proposed market place concept is not intended to compete with the Farmer's Market; it is intended to complement it and could be operated by the Farmer's Market
 - Ask Planning Commission- when should infrastructure improvements be made- for example, should improvements at El Camino Real/Ravenswood intersection be made sooner
 - What is the timing that will support the project?

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