

WORKSHOP #3—SEPTEMBER 17, 2009

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS/SUMMARY

Note: the questionnaire included questions that were multiple-choice (i.e., check-boxes) and open-ended (with space for longer responses). Some participants also wrote comments beneath the multiple-choice questions, which are transcribed here as written.

PUBLIC SPACE (BOARDS 2A AND 2B)

1. Does the Emerging Plan have an adequate diversity of public spaces?

Yes—35

For the most part—36

Not really—7

No—1

Comments

- Yes—Need public art! Murals like Palo Alto downtown.
- Not ECR across from Menlo College area
- Hard to see from boards.
- Yes—I would like to see a pocket park on or closer to ECR and Santa Cruz intersection on the downtown side. If you want me to walk downtown, as an older person, I need a place or two to take a break that is NOT the outside chairs/table of a restaurant.
- Hard to tell.
- – ECR needs far more public space.
– SCA is good.
- Diversity should not be the primary goal. Usability and appropriateness of public spaces should be. The plazas seem too small. They could be of various sizes, but usable for benches, cafe seating, interaction, modest events, even play.

2. Regarding Santa Cruz Avenue, do you prefer:

Option 1 (varied/wider sidewalks; retain median trees)—42

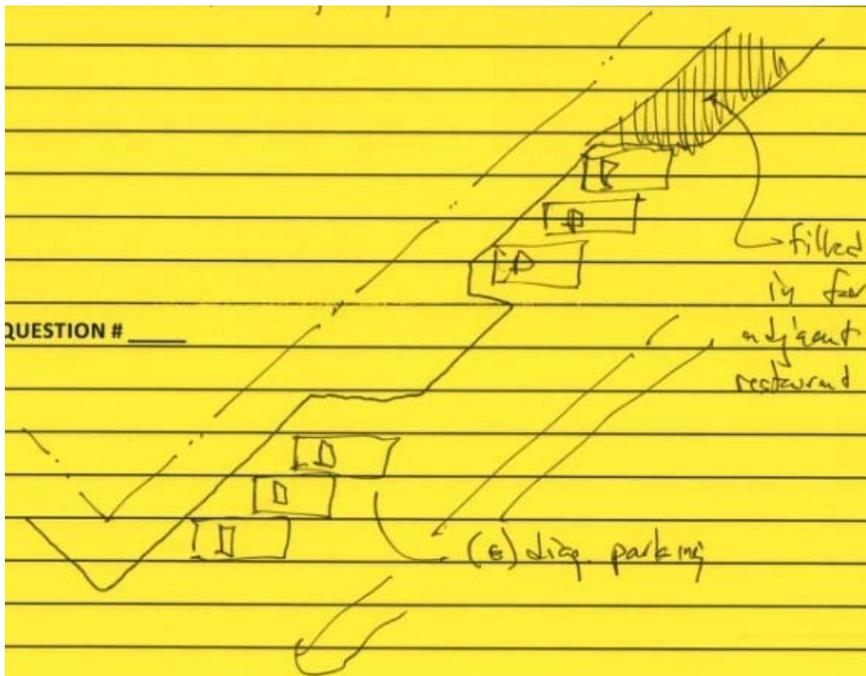
Option 2 (widest sidewalks; remove median trees)—31

- Option 1—How about this instead of the 18' sidewalk [see photo]?



- Leave Santa Cruz Ave. as it is.
- Option 2—More sidewalks will enable more trees and much better pedestrian experience.
- Advantages to both.

The Santa Cruz sidewalks benefit from localized widening. I propose the widened areas require a retail (restaurant) sponsor who will commit to using it, then we build it [see drawing below].



- Option 2—I love them, tough and hard for them but purpose was to narrow street—but widen sidewalks with trees lining street is better to have café spillover. Can we have wider sidewalk with medians (e.g. eliminate parking on street)?
- Option 1—Maybe ok if increase trees on sidewalks.

- What interests me more is bike travel along Santa Cruz Ave. I'd trade off wider sidewalks for safer bike lanes or more parking off street for wide sidewalks and bike lanes.
- Option 1—Please keep median trees! These are ideal in front of our store.
- Suggestion for Santa Cruz regarding sidewalks, parking and existing trees: I suggest a combination of wider sidewalks (same width both sides of street), trees on sidewalks replacing trees in mid-street, and continuing diagonal parking as well. Rationale—it takes the average person a lot longer to get into and out of a parallel space than a diagonal one; therefore, ties up other drivers a lot longer. Current sidewalks are too narrow so a balance of wider with easy diagonal parking would be great.
- Hard to say.
- Option 1—No need to change.
- Option 2—Perhaps add more trees along the sidewalks.
- Option 1—ABSOLUTELY
- Option 1—Would be stupid waste to cut them down/lose shade.
- I'm ok with either option, slight preference for Option 2, but would LOVE to close Santa Cruz to cars.
- Neither. Alternative Option—Two story building only (NO canyon), wider sidewalks, keep trees, village atmosphere with class! So many chairs and tables now it's dangerous in spots.
- Option 2—Or keep median trees and have parking behind stores.
- Option 1—I like the trees—they are a traffic-calming measure, they add to reduction of GHG emissions, they contribute to a pedestrian scale.
- It's good the way it is.
- Option 2—Much better use of space. Encourage new development.
- Option 2—Pull them out, put in CA drought-resistant trees on wider sidewalk on side of street instead of middle.
- Option 1—Keep the trees!
- Option 2—No question, no brainer (remove median trees)
- Option 2—The wider the sidewalks, the more diverse the options for use (“Santa Cruz Model”)
- – Option 1—Maybe—not sold on it at all.
- – Suggest pilot test of paseo and closed-off street using temp barriers—e.g., NYC.
- Neither. I prefer closing off most of Santa Cruz, making it available for large plaza, walking, shopping.

3. What additions or changes to public space improvements should be considered?

- Centralized restaurant zoning to 3 block area.
- As much planting as possible—public restroom.
- – Choose drought tolerant and/or native trees.
- – Bicyclists don't want bulb-outs or whatever they are called.
- – Parallel parking is very difficult for lots of drivers.
- – Regarding #2, we suggest that restaurants are able to extend seating and tables out into the parking spots.

- Wider sidewalks should not be used by bikes.
- Public spaces must be attractive to teenagers. They are the ones who will help revitalize the town.
- – Please allow the heritage oak in Plaza 6—the location of the Menlo Park Farmer's Market—to remain. The area around this tree is the focal point of the Farmer's Market where entertainment takes place—i.e., youngsters from local community play.
 - Please also consider removing the retail development in Plaza 6.
 - The farmer's market needs access from Chestnut Street—closing Chestnut Street to traffic would have an adverse impact on the farmer's market.
- – Capturing light (in winter) + shade (in summer) in public seating.
 - Having Menlo Ave. (currently) function as the major route for ECR up to University/Santa Cruz/Sand Hill creates a nightmare around Draegers. Any way to encourage Valparaiso use to cross town E/W?
- Why are you even considering keeping El Camino as 4 lane—the consultant's comment on time from Valparaiso to Middle was unrealistic; obviously, he has not driven during peak traffic.
- – Removing some of the trees from Santa Cruz not all.
 - Eliminating parking on Santa Cruz.
 - Wider sidewalks.
 - Updated street furniture, new light fixtures
 - Brick sidewalks should be replaced with another type of surface that is easier to keep clean.
- – There needs to be a reason—what will Menlo Park offer shoppers/walkers that is unique. Barrone's and Kepler's so far have attracted people to come to MP. What else? Another Plaza?
 - I like the idea of wider sidewalks. A long time ago, there was a proposal to block off Santa Cruz Ave. for a plaza.
- Chestnut Street should be designed to allow traffic during the week. Consider extending a roof across Chestnut between the new "Market Place" buildings. Use the "new" Chestnut for Sunday AM's Farmer's Market.
- Extend and improve sidewalks all the way up to Santa Cruz Ave. I'm guessing there are more pedestrians on the upper part of Santa Cruz than there ever will be on El Camino, including school kids, churchgoers, festival goers, etc.
- – Maybe one more pocket park downtown.
 - We need sure small, lower-cost housing in the TOD.
 - What is the space (alley) between parking structure and adjacent buildings?
 - If the train goes underground, how do we use the found space?
- Closing Chestnut to cars—great idea!
- – Like wider sidewalks on ECR with setbacks.
 - Can we do Class I bike lanes there, too?
 - Need cultural places—another movie theater and improve Fremont Park?
 - Like the wider sidewalks on Santa Cruz.

- Love the closing of Chestnut for a paseo—really make it more park-like, less "street" like (integrate with buildings).
- A) Central Plaza—add site-specific sculptural/architectural "focus" elements, such as a thematic-related sculpture/water feature(?) on all four corners, lightly "bulbed-out", creating a "quad angle" effect as an artistic "center-of-focus" around which the pulse/rhythm of the civic experience can revolve and evolve.
- B) Tie this into/in-with the Civic Plaza in theme and potency. All European "plazas" are grounded by sculpture/fountains/garden-level (cascaded) public seating with beautiful (manicured) hardscape and floral softscape/landscape.
- Consider providing free internet (Wi-Fi) in all the open public spaces. See <http://www.svunwired.org/> for what they've done in Milpitas and Mountain View. They put Wi-Fi antennas on light poles, so the City and State (for SR-82) need to be involved. Free Wi-Fi will draw people and create vibrant outdoor areas.
- Transition between parking structure and retail/other needs careful consideration—easy to go to shops, but with room for loading trucks, garbage, etc. Loading zones?
- No housing over parking structures.
- Change parking on Santa Cruz.
- Please be sensitive to all existing trees.
- The name for the healthy campaign to encourage parking in the lots/structures: Menlo Park and Walk!
- I am interested in a third option to Question #2 where the center median is maintained, street side parking removed and the sidewalks widened. It seems that there will be more than enough parking provided in the parking structures to handle demand and, considering the relatively small number of spaces provided street side, their removal shouldn't negatively impact the downtown. I completely disagree with the option of current retail owners that keeping street side parking is necessary. In fact, I feel the opposite will be true. Big fan of the parking garage option.
- My final plea for sidewalks—when we have nice ones, will the MP business community pay for frequent high pressure sidewalk cleans? Our sidewalks are depressingly dirty while much of PA cleans University with some frequency.
- – The area around the train station needs to be expanded as public space in conjunction to transit oriented housing—move McDonald's to another location.
- – We need parking structures—partially underground.
- None. What is proposed is well thought out.
- Less parking, more trees.
- As much public/gathering space as possible.
- Bike-ability—safety. Permeable pavements. Green roofs.
- Diagonal parking and all parking plaza—make spaces w-i-d-e-r.
- If Chestnut is closed to traffic, then the alternate northwest-bound routes (Curtis and Crane) remain. However, unlike Chestnut, these streets do not intersect Santa Cruz at a 3-way stop. Entry to or "across" Santa Cruz from these streets is already difficult. Recommend adding stop signs at Crane (south) and Santa Cruz.
- Planters on sidewalks.

- If median trees are removed, plant 2x trees elsewhere.
- – If wider sidewalks are a high priority—gain additional space by giving back to parallel parking and give building owners incentive to give up some prime ground floor space by gaining more space (multiple times the amount given up) on an upper floor. But the center trees MUST stay! They are what make MP different. They give a special character to downtown MP.
 - If adequate parking (structures) were provided, parking on Santa Cruz Ave could possibly be omitted entirely.
- 1) Remember that large public spaces with no trees are not good—no one wants to be there.
 - 2) I see only one pocket park on the drawing. More would be better. Parking structures ugly ugly ugly, ok to put them by the train.
- In the downtown area, I'd like to see wider sidewalks and more space for outdoor eating/cafes rather than grassy parks. We need more shade trees along sidewalks in downtown and on Middle/Santa Cruz/University so that it isn't too hot to walk in summer.
- Keep median trees!
- How can you widen the south sidewalk and keep center trees and parallel parking? Where does the 3' come from? (I have no strong feeling for center trees.)
- 1) Increase the utilization of the park at Santa Cruz and University. I feel its way under-utilized.
 - 2) Convert the front and sides of Menlo Presbyterian Church for public gathering spaces—tables, chairs, and umbrellas. They are certainly using downtown commercial Menlo Park for their operations and benefits and it looks like they will really benefit from parking garages!
- Driving down Santa Cruz Ave is not a great experience because of all the funky stop signs/intersections. While improving pedestrian experience is clearly an imperative, it would be great to think about how to improve the car traffic experience through town, as well.
- – Wider sidewalks bring people downtown so that they spend money.
 - A parking structure is a good idea, freeing up more public space; other neighboring cities have appreciated theirs. BUT must have access off of Oak Grove; Maloney Lane is too small and crowded.
- – I hate parking structures. They are dirty and claustrophobic.
 - Spread out commercial gathering space by moving covered market to space between El Camino and train station, where you now have open space only. We need more purpose to that area. Extend café space there too.
- The details of the type of public spaces suggested will be critical to its ultimate viability of the open space. Fremont Park works for Block Party or 1:1 conversation. How will these new open spaces provide for gathering spaces? Different from Nealon or Fremont? Or will they be beautiful greener? Will these open spaces be adaptable and city-wide draws or neighborhood block oriented?
- – Widest sidewalks promote use and public activities; therefore, median tree removal is an acceptable sacrifice.

- Maximize mixed use (residential with ground floor retail along Santa Cruz) up to three stories.
- *IDEA* Instead of five-story parking garage in plaza #1, have two levels underground and a park (or additional parking) on ground level. Many businesses face plaza #1 and this would be a nice space to attract folks to downtown—and be good for my business (rather than looking at a three story concrete block).
- – Preference for no parking on Santa Cruz.
- – Improve traffic flow of Santa Cruz across El Camino and train station.
- – CalTrain to provide parking garage at station.
- I prefer diagonal parking on Santa Cruz—it’s easy to get in and out, and makes our town livable—parallel parking is harder. Everything we do needs to encourage people to come, park, and shop in town.
- I think there should be a community conversation about shared ownership of the public space—respect for cleanliness, respect for other users. I’d like to see a conversation about dogs and dog walkers. There could be more room on the sidewalks if people acknowledge that leashing a dog close is more respectful.
- Parking garage.
- Please further consider underground utilities downtown. Studies in other cities show that this can pay for itself in lower maintenance and higher availability. In addition, it is considerably more attractive than the current above-ground utilities. Very necessary to get full value out of other streetscape investments.
- Use drought-tolerant plants in any of the park areas (talk to Sunset).
- I like the paseo/permanent market idea, but I am interested in seeing more of a plaza-type space considered, surrounded by retail/cafes—a safe (for kids especially), lively place, perhaps with a water feature. I am concerned about use of proposed pocket parks—they will not be used very much if there are cars and service trucks going around there. Play equipment might make them more attractive to families.
- – Wider sidewalks for restaurants are great!
- – Would like to look at bigger permanent plaza off Chestnut Paseo combined with zoning to allow businesses to face Plaza and have eating/restaurant space.
- – Plaza across from Safeway and Middle is great—just ensure there is a pedestrian underpass as well!
- – Permanent Farmer’s Market too inflexible. Take space from two parking areas on either side to create a central plaza. Put a replica of the old Menlo Gate on the Plaza.
- 1) Bike lanes on Santa Cruz (University to train).
- 2) Sidewalks west to University.
- – Bike lanes are absolutely required. SAFETY ISSUE!
- – Provide parking for residents in their buildings (underground) and electric vehicle charging stations.
- – I think with wider sidewalks and a paseo on Chestnut, there are enough public spaces.
- – How can any of these things be decided until we know what will happen with HSR???
- Access to civic center area—over or underground walkways, bike tunnel, etc. The complete integration may not be possible due to physical barriers/train as at present; civic center

remains an island—when east of tracks has more development and change, this may improve but may not be possible.

- I’m happy the way we are.
- I like the idea of the street raised to the sidewalk level, could work. I saw something like that in Quito, Ecuador.
- – Should we consider removing street parking completely on Santa Cruz Ave, just leave two lanes for traffic? Even wider sidewalks.
– Should cars be completely removed from Santa Cruz Ave except for emergency vehicles? (European city model).
- The parks/plazas currently shown could be made larger if all proposed downtown parking was placed underground (for example, if the parking lots 1 and 3 were designed to include 2/3 of existing surface parking at grade with any additional parking underground new public plazas could be incorporated into the plan).
- – ECR—wider setbacks in many places—15’-20’, not 10’. ECR Southeast needs a rich network of internal alleyway, plazas, stair cases, etc. Need to create virtual city block of modest length to break up buildings. (See Form Based Codes p.62)
– SC Ave: Am not convinced sidewalk widening is so essential to 18’. Might pursue more modest changes and block-by-block. I’m dismayed that ECR existing sidewalks will remain narrow until buildings are torn down.
- – The paseos seem narrow and the plazas very small. The goal should be usefulness, not just decoration. I'm unable to comment further because I can't read what's on the charts.
– El Camino does need much wider sidewalks, setbacks of buildings from street. There must be a buffer from this highway; parking provides some of that and I think it must stay UNLESS there are major setbacks between the street and sidewalks where pedestrians will be.

BUILDING CHARACTER (BOARD 3)

4. Does the Emerging Plan reflect an appropriate building character and massing for:

a. Downtown?

Yes—30 For the Most Part—30 Not Really—6 No—9

b. El Camino Real?

Yes—30 For the Most Part—26 Not Really—5 No—10

- El Camino Real—Not really—Try changing the orientation of the buildings so they’re angled. Similar to the building across from Kepler’s (Schwab Bldg).
- El Camino Real—For the most part—I don’t like the up to five story building towering over the ECR and Santa Cruz intersection.
- Both will radically change the face of the village.
- – Downtown—Not Really. Need to set back buildings from street and upper floor needs set back more.
– El Camino Real—No. Buildings are too tall, too urban. Could have exception on height for senior housing and hotel only. Need to set back buildings from street and upper floors need

set back. In both areas, the examples look too urban and are too vertical with adequate setbacks or variation.

5. What changes should be considered?

- See comment on back about hotel space [We have too much hotel space on the boards—I don't think we can support so many.]
- One- to two-story buildings are appropriate on Santa Cruz. Three-story buildings will be too high and create a tunnel effect.
- Shorter buildings are preferable to keep things on a human scale. We pay \$\$ to live here because of the climate. When you propose tall buildings we lose light and air. If I wanted to live in SF (or Redwood City!) I'd have that, but I choose to live here because it is NOT currently overbuilt. Two stories are ideal, three a stretch (and max).
- Let's quit studying this and get going. The City Council should stop paying for more studies and adopt a plan and move ahead.
- The plan is varied enough to add vitality with additional greenery with the pocket parks, wider sidewalks, additional parking.
- – Building height should not exceed 3 stories.
- – Including upper level setbacks will help keep an open feeling.
- 1) Let's do this "first things first." Do something about the ugly eyesore of the old Park Theater.
- 2) What would make Menlo Park a "destination place." Redwood City has its movie theater, The Fox and the History Museum/Plaza. Los Altos has country character and great places to buy produce.
- Consider a parking structure (3 above, 2 below) between Chestnut and Curtis combined with a new Trader Joe's (TJ) building: to include parking on TJ roof, TJ entrance facing Chestnut and complimentary to the "Market Place" idea. One modification: TJ pay a substantial fraction of cost of parking structure since they are the principal beneficiary!
- Consider architectural guidelines: some modernist styles run counter to village character.
- – Backsides of Santa Cruz need attention—include the refuse/recycling bins.
- – Mostly 2-story, a little 3 off Santa Cruz.
- – 3-4 stories on corners of ECR and Ravenswood is too much at "key gateway" intersections.
- – 3-4 stories along ECR is fine. Don't like 5 stories, even with setback, No 5 story!
- – Need more parking required for 3 blocks around train station embedded into buildings as a public benefit, especially to make sure train is heavily used by all!
- – Need more transit-oriented housing and less office.
- – Housing and retail is key and especially with Bohannon going in.
- A.) Draeger's: We do not readily agree with/support closing the N/E terminus of their parking lot. It serves a crucial role in their traffic circulation flow!! N-W corner of Menlo and Evelyn: why not place the 2-story mixed-use HERE?!
- B.) We are concerned about the 2-story structure across the street (N-E side of Evelyn) and how/where the residents would park.

- Enough new retail development to support this? Overall nationwide reduction in amount of retail and want to make sure small businesses can still exist downtown. Move office/commercial rather than retail?
- – Three story max.
- – Only one hotel—not on Santa Cruz.
- – If going to be 5 stories, MUST create setbacks.
- – As a business owner, my worry about the mixed residential/retail space in our back parking lot will create too much of an obstacle for customers.
- – Maintain a strong architectural/design theme so that future and existing buildings blend well.
- – Consider charging stations in parking facilities for plug-in vehicles.
- – Consider designing in the ability for regular street closing to accommodate community events. The Thursday night Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo is the beating heart of the town, downtown business (which love it!) and out of town visitors. Consider replicating all or parts of SLO's success here in Menlo Park!
- – Need for connectivity—walking trails between commercial areas—backdoors of business concerns need cosmetic adjustment (garbage enclosures).
- – The intersection of Ravenswood-Menlo needs total redesign
- – Business on Menlo corner (dry cleaner, etc.) is poorly designed, needs total redevelopment.
- – Taller buildings can still be village and provide density/vitality. Setting back upper floors may not be necessary.
- – Menlo Park is ready for change. I have lived here 57 years and a lot has changed. Planned changes are better than unplanned change.
- – Roofs cause urban heat island effect and increased stormwater run-off.
- – New development should require at least 50% coverage by foliage and landscaping for all areas exposed to the sun, especially roofs.
- – Green roofs lower temps and storm surges while increasing opportunities for birds.
- Three story max height—mixed use.
- Density/height/set backs looks/feels too grounded. More setbacks staggered 15/25/20/15, etc. Limit to three story.
- Keep the median trees!
- Since Zone 3 and 4 have the tallest buildings, their design will define the personality of the new downtown. Careful attention to the zoning is important since they will visually appear to be the gateway to downtown.
- I would prefer more residential development on Santa Cruz Ave.
- – No 5-story buildings—big set backs!
- – Major problem: adding to jobs/housing unbalance.
- – I'm in favor in taller buildings (5-6 stories) with larger setbacks and articulate facades. Just don't put HVAC equipment on roofs—it really increases ambient noise.
- Love the paseo idea!
- 1) Tall townhouses overlooking shorter business buildings are unappealing.
- 2) Parking garages are too big; a bad experience for shoppers.

- 3) Inappropriate streets proposed as closed (e.g., Chestnut).
- – Don't see how this gets implemented.
 - – Nothing over 4-stories.
 - – Need varying orientations of buildings like the Schwab building.
 - The zoning along El Camino should not allow buildings taller than 3-stories—60-foot heights are not acceptable. The plan should include shadow (light plane) studies particularly when existing residences are involved.
 - No concept changes but more detailed scenarios/alternatives to take into account what developers might propose.
 - Concentrate on keeping Menlo a classy, high quality welcome place. Most people I talk to, me included, do not go downtown Palo Alto because of its extreme congestion and difficulty of parking. I really want Menlo to not follow Palo Alto's "massing" and extreme congestion.
 - Better street landscaping—modern seating and planters.
 - – Heights seem appropriate.
 - – Setbacks on massing makes sense.
 - – Like setback on El Camino.
 - – Could you encourage business owners to do creative and professional landscape plantings in front of their business places? I noticed walking downtown today that even office buildings that have human-scale gardens/plantings/landscaping out front seem to present village character. The small gardens could be a feature of the downtown's character. No other small town prides itself on unusual, multiple style landscaping in front of buildings. This will be our signature.
 - ECR is not City owned, but getting the parking off ECR and into the parking structures to widen the ECR sidewalks would be great to support the Grand Blvd initiative. Can there be an open space that connects ECR to MP? ECR is the gateway through MP and this doesn't seem to be addressed either at Valparaiso or Middle?? ECR increased height and mass is good but only with well articulated Design Guidelines and articulation. Let's not lose the two theatres on ECR.
 - El Camino at 4-stories is acceptable; 5-stories becomes too tall and out of character—require two underground floors instead.
 - – Want variability along length of buildings (as many photos show), not just a long wall.
 - – Want more plantings/trees in front of buildings. Do not build right up to sidewalk.
 - Easy does it—keep the buildings to three stories and under—Menlo Park is such a livable town, let's not lose this quality.
 - I think the median trees are wonderful. It is amazing that the City was able to accomplish the three rows of trees in spite of Caltrans concerns. I work for the City of San Carlos—what an asphalt wasteland the ECR is there. Regarding stepbacks—height at back of sidewalk is OK, everyone's favorite cities are intimate with more height relative to street width.
 - No change.
 - Building heights for #4 is a good idea. Not so sure about #1-3—traffic trade off may be a bad trade.

- Permanent organic Farmer’s Market on El Camino just North of Stanford Park Hotel (on same side). A permanent large structure can be an attraction to out of town shoppers, as well as a convenience to local shoppers.
- Add character to back entrances or businesses, put parking underground—parks at street level.
 - However, 60’ on downtown side of El Camino might conflict with village feel, reduce to 48’.
 - Height of parking structures above ground no more than 3-stories.
- Place the Farmer’s Market permanently on El Camino at the old car dealership site (Stanford University owns the land—north of Stanford Park Hotel).
- – I feel that the photos shown of El Camino/Santa Cruz corner look way too massive as to buildings.
 - I do not think we should reduce parking space requirements for new buildings.
- The reduced parking concept for office buildings—at least on the surface—does not make sense. Although, the hope would be to a less automobile-driven focus on the downtown, the reality is that office workers generally travel via auto to get to a suburban location such as Menlo Park—even if from residential neighborhoods within the City or nearby—the public transit doesn’t come near to addressing on internal vehicles and bicycle riders are a minimum percentage of the work force. Proposed parking is weak. Really must consider more underground parking/parking structures.
- 5-stories along El Camino is not acceptable. 3-stories along Santa Cruz is too high.
- I’m afraid that 5-story buildings will make Menlo Park less desirable.
- – Like the residential/retail mix.
 - How do we ensure architectural diversity while keeping cost reasonable? Quite frequently new developments end up looking “cookie cutter style”—cost is probably a major driver.
- – El Camino Real—great setbacks, 3-stories max, step back on 3rd story.
 - Downtown—2-story max.
- Development on the El Camino should include parking (flex parking in some cases) that would provide parking near transit. This will promote not only the opportunity to draw patrons to the new retail that can be created but will promote the use of transit.
- – ECR: Building FAR should be reduced to much smaller percentages on higher floors. Suggested massing is far too great. See: Form Based Codes p. 74 (Parolek et al)
 - Around train station, keep buildings @ 2-3 stories; same for ECR near SC Ave.
 - ECR Northwest, Southwest, also 2-3 stories. Need similar alley, street articulation and connection to public space. Also need design guidelines.
- The building character should be mindful of the Mid-Century Architecture that prevails in the Downtown area. Building facades should incorporate elements of Mid-Century design, this would create an underlying theme in all of the buildings Downtown (new and old). This theme would tie in all building design regardless of massing and new construction direction.
- A. The downtown plan should not provide for any buildings more than 2 stories high.
B. The ECR plan should not provide for any buildings more than 3 stories high.

LAND USE ECONOMICS (BOARD 4)

6. Based on the findings from the fiscal impact and financial feasibility studies, is additional building height on El Camino Real (as shown—up to five stories) an acceptable tradeoff for increased City revenues and vibrancy and a greater likelihood of redevelopment?

Yes—46

No—28

- – Not sure about five—would like a four-story limit.
- – Like west lower than east.
- More intensive development along El Camino is acceptable if parking is provided.
- Undecided
- No—I'm fine with development but we need to get much more than 4% net increase in revenue.
- – No—4% net seems modest and doesn't include schools and fire. Shouldn't school districts and fire department impacts be solicited now and included in full economic analysis? Can't myopically focus on general fund and know how this pencils out/how sustainable it is?
 - But, need more housing, so if we need developer fees to compensate for it (for schools, city, and fire department impacts).
- No—2-3 stories on west side; 3-4 stories on the east side ok, but not 5 stories.
- Yes—However there must be strict guidelines for design of building to ensure the village feel—i.e., setbacks, plantings, and plazas!
- No opinion.
- Yes—So long as the architectural style of the 4-5 story buildings is diverse and not solid dark lumps like the building where the Pendleton store is. But a series of big block buildings is not conducive to ever walking (by choice) in that section ECR.
- Yes—Need to pre-zone for housing update General Plan.
- Yes—absolutely
- Yes—and I think it's aesthetically good in its own right.
- No—Kepler's parking ok. Redwood City underground parking horrible.
- Not five. Need housing on Transit Corridor.
- No—Absolutely not. Please see above. Also consider backside (non ECR side) of these tall buildings.
- Yes—Assumption of 300+ hotel rooms in 2014 is very speculative.
- No—Quality and not quantity. A 4- or 5-story canyon with massive noise reverberation?
- Yes—It's the future! Density can be pleasing if done well.
- Yes—Financial feasibility evaluation is an excellent addition to the analysis.
- Yes—Cultural uses need to be reflected and appear lacking—outdoor art, outdoor performance area, even if small.
- No—Build down, not up—allow 4-stories above ground.
- No—4-story max.
- Yes—Again—I think cities should consider what happens when residential is built without yards. Increase in dogs and the damage they do to street, furniture, etc.
- Yes—On east side of El Camino, probably not elsewhere.
- Yes—As long as enough parking for new residents and shoppers is provided (in their own buildings); don't low-ball amount needed for residences.

- Yes—Although depends on type of development (e.g., hotel with high revenues) and side of El Camino.
- No—The traffic during early morning, lunch time and late p.m. is very bad now—I do not think we need 5-story buildings to add to this.
- No—no, no, no
- No—5-stories seems too high.
- Yes—Not an expert on this topic, but many European cities have about 5-story buildings downtown and thrive very well!
- Not really—fiscal benefit seems modest. Can redevelop and increase vibrancy without major revenue goals. Building height should be set for livability and sense of space.
- Vibrancy comes from the uses, not the height. There are other ways to get revenue, including promoting uses such as retail. Certain amenities might be considered community investments and funded through taxes to preserve character if necessary.
- No—Higher buildings will not increase “vibrancy” or likelihood of redevelopment. Instead, they will result in “canyon” look and discourage pedestrian travel.

CONNECTIVITY AND TRAFFIC (BOARD 5)

7. Does the Emerging Plan provide for adequate enhancements to east-west pedestrian and bicycle connectivity?

Yes—17 For the Most Part—39 Not Really—14 No—5

- Not really—But what can realistically be done given the constraints?
- For the most part—Love the bike/pedestrian connection at Burgess.
- Must get the rail underpass.
- Too hard to interpret from plans with minute type and confusing keys.
- Not really—Only if Middle features a Class II or better bike path connected to existing bike paths near library/Civic Center.
- More, such as a bike/pedestrian underpass would be really nice.
- Unknown—Where are your overpasses? Underpasses? Palo Alto has them.
- No—Class III lanes are not safe for school kids going across town east-west to Hillview and west-east to MA High.
- Yes—Great ideas to make more obvious connection.
- For the most part—no bulb outs
- Yes—keep enhanced crossing at Middle. Need Class II bike lane from Safeway on Middle to Olive and then to Valparaiso for kids on bikes going to high school.
- For the most part—No pedestrian extension. You cannot see bulb outs at night. Please do not incorporate bulb outs.
- Impossible to read online or in printout, Looks good. Need more bike safety ‘boxes’ at intersections. Have as many 4-way x-walks as possible and as wide as possible.
- No—I don't see any improvements to bicycle connectivity anywhere. The pedestrian connectivity isn't obvious either.
- No—No adequate provision for travel across ECR.

8. Based on findings from the traffic study, is the increase in travel time an acceptable tradeoff for increased vibrancy and development of vacant parcels?

Yes—52 No—21

- Question validity of time given. At 5-6 pm, traffic is very slow, and increased would slow even more.
- Yes—But I don't believe the low estimates for increased time.
- No—I think you have underestimated the additional time that will be incurred during busy times. I opt for NO parking on El Camino.
- No—It would help if MP provided bus services for schools (especially MA and Hillview).
- No—I have sat and waited at these intersections.
- With your plan of 4-story buildings on El Camino...your traffic flow on El Camino is going to get much worse.
- No—but could be “yes”. El Camino traffic is already unacceptable. Any increases in travel time are bad idea, unless the developmental tradeoff is exceptionally good.
- No—Time the lights! It is presently a parking lot at commute times—El Camino flows until you hit Menlo Park.
- No—Keep lanes traveling in a straight line from point A to point B.
- No—Improving traffic flow on El Camino is a far more desired goal—the vibrancy issue will be moot if the traffic worsens.
- On El Camino Real.
- Not of this magnitude (30% increase). More traffic congestion will diminish vibrancy.

9. Is the change in distribution of parking downtown acceptable?

Yes—30 For the Most Part—26 Not Really—24 No—4

- For the most part—It appears we're only getting a few hundred more spaces net from all the changes?
- Not really—Not enough parking very near the train station.
- For the most part—Only if done right. Use Watry design; add easy access (ingress and egress) from multiple sides, try not to charge for the first 2-3 hours, with fair and reasonable monthly fees for dedicated users.
- For the most part—“Yes” if street side parking on Santa Cruz is eliminated or scaled back sufficiently to allow for the middle median and wider sidewalks.
- Yes—Multi-level is critical.
- Not really—underground structures.
- Menlo Presbyterian should really benefit!
- Yes—Parking structures are a good idea.
- For the most part—As long as the Farmer’s Market has a spot.
- Yes—Consider garage on south side Santa Cruz.
- Bad question. Should not be separated from other downtown objectives in using space. Can have 0, 1, or 2 new parking structures of various heights.

- – Doesn't make sense. The parking problems are most acute where the boutique hotel is placed, which would aggravate the problem even more, and the market obliterates key parking in that same area.
 - Parking near the church is at the opposite end of where needed. Note that townhome residents over parking near the church are unlikely to want to vacate their spaces in the evenings and weekends when the church would most need the space. Not a problem to me, but might make sharing impractical.

10. What additions or changes regarding pedestrian connectivity, traffic, parking, bicycle circulation and/or transit should be considered?

- – Bike tunnel not bridge.
 - More Class 2 outside El Camino.
- If you take out the median strips on Santa Cruz—what will be done to help pedestrians cross the street safely?
 - Maximizing train station areas use is most important.
 - Consider pedestrian overpasses for El Camino.
 - Trying to improve access to Burgess etc is a pipe dream—it can't be done effectively and should not impede on the vision for downtown.
- A more protected series of bike lanes (at least class 2) are really needed here. It could be a great biking town (so many families/kids here) but there aren't safe routes. We need the tunnel under the train (at Middle as proposed is very busy—maybe one block south or north would be better?)
- Be sure to adjust traffic lights so that traffic on El Camino keeps moving thru.
- – Tear down some houses on Oak Grove Ave and put parking plazas on them.
 - Peripheral parking is preferable to high-rise parking garages.
- Ravenswood and Alma needs a better (safer) pedestrian crossing with flashing lights (more visible).
 - Don't let sidewalks get too wide. Bulb-outs for café seating better than continuous wide walk which will seem "vacant."
 - Need ECR site to support local shuttle service
 - ECR is not going to be good parking or good bike use—let it be open to cars.
- – Wider sidewalks that will accommodate outdoor dining, vendor carts, public art, seating fountains—human scale walkability.
 - Encourage businesses (other than just Kepler's and Café Barrone) to stay open later to provide vibrancy in our city.
- – Class III on ECR is too dangerous for bikes (especially for kids). Need better north/south on east side of tracks (Alma).
 - Make Middle Ave bike path a class II to facilitate safe east/west movement by kids (and all).
 - Bike/pedestrian passage behind south side Santa Cruz retail is great, too.
- – More stop signs and pedestrian crossings along Santa Cruz downtown.
 - Possible to improve traffic flow along Oak Grove/Menlo parallel to Santa Cruz? Divert EW

traffic to those streets?

– North-South on ECR needs improvement somehow.

- No bulb outs.
- – North-south biking and pedestrian traffic along El Camino is awful. NEED wider sidewalks, etc.
- – Pedestrian crossing at Ravenswood and Alma is dangerous. NEEDS improvement.
- I'm a good reader and studier of maps and design educational material. But the boards are simply too busy, complex, and non-user friendly to comment on with intelligence and thoughtful contemplation.
- 1) Let's start by cleaning up Park Theatre
- 2) Parking garage must have entrance off street
- 3) No 3 story buildings on Santa Cruz
- The most important change requested for El Camino in the city-wide poll was to improve traffic flow by recapturing 6-lanes, enforcing no-parking on El Camino.
- – I think reducing my crossing time by a certain number of seconds begs the question: I still have to travel the exact same total distance (sidewalk and street).
- – There should be no reduction in parking space requirements for new commercial/residential buildings.
- Just have one bulb-out on El Camino and Santa Cruz—that's where most pedestrian traffic is (2nd is at Menlo Ave).
- By keeping the median trees and eliminating parking on Santa Cruz Ave, there would be space for as wider sidewalk and possible bike lane. To encourage people to park in the lots or parking structure, the City could launch a campaign to promote healthy daily habits, such as walking (to/from parking). Statistics on time spent walking, calories used, carbon emissions lessened when one doesn't circle about seeking parking—these can all be "sales points" to get the public to park and walk is good for you.
- – Suggest a business-funded shuttle system which would connect areas surrounding downtown east-west connectivity up Willow Rd.
- – Shuttle services to office sites-reduce VMT.
- I walk El Camino regularly. The wait to cross street is not as important as vehicle traffic. I am willing to wait to cross the street while walking but not willing to wait in my car.
- All parking requirements should be dropped to provide developers with the most flexible range of options.
- – I strongly approve of the parking requirement reductions.
- – Also; this might be the “third rail” in Menlo Park but I suggest removing the overnight parking ban, at least in the downtown area. This would allow for higher densities without excessive parking. Indeed, the new apartments could perhaps charge for reserved parking.
- – Smaller streets, underground parking plazas to offset loss of parking; green roofs and increased vegetation.
- – Trees are a major focal point of Menlo Park. Let's keep it that way and not reduce them.
- Let's really plan for a 50-year non-auto environment. European cities have spent centuries making human-scale urban life possible and successful. What do we want to have on the

Menlo Park postcards?? No great edifice was popular at its inception, but may have become icons of civic works.

- My main concern is parking for new buildings for retail, commercial, and residential. Any new building should include new underground parking. Example: the new building on Evelyn.
- El Camino needs much stronger bicycle marking to be at all safe. Disappointed that only one bike lane parallels Santa Cruz.
- No class 3 bike lanes on ECR.
- Connection (across) RR tracks. Great idea! At Middle.
- Don't close Chestnut to traffic—bad for small business. Parking structures below industry standards. Unless we have convenient cheap or free, frequent comfortable public transit—this is bad.
- I don't dare ride my bicycle around town anymore. It would help if we built parking garages and eliminated on-street parking downtown so that true bike lanes could be included on all streets.
- 1) It's "overdone"; "too much".
- 2) "Barnes Dance" (scramble) would be appropriate at El. C and Santa Cruz and at El C. and Menlo Ave.; the pedestrian wait times are onerous.
- The most important traffic feature should be the restoration of six lanes of through-traffic on El Camino. If necessary, remove parking on ECR to accomplish this. The bulbouts/"sidewalk extensions" should be deleted from all plans, as these are unnecessary impediments to traffic.
- All job increases, increase that RHNA housing allocation that ABAG requires. No one seems to know that the State requires cities to at least plan to—this amount of housing.
- – Where there is no street width for bike lanes, use Sharrows for all Class III bike routes.
- – Details matter for bike use—racks, signs, and striping.
- – The Middle Ave/ECR intersection and CalTrain underpass are important features.
- Overpasses, underpasses.
- Better bike route north-south along El Camino—upgrading bike path (to Class I) on road next to CalTrain tracks would be unnecessary, it's a short stretch of quiet road already. Would like to see straight shot through town along railroad tracks or along El Camino. Wide bike lanes that accommodate bike trailers (for kids) are a very dear sign of a family-friendly town. Feel like plan really needs to emphasize bikes, not just pedestrians (this is how pedestrians are going to get to town, after all).
- We need Class II bike lanes. Everywhere you have Class III. Class III is not safe for kids. It is scary for adults like me. Please eliminate bikes having to merge with cars to cross El Camino as now at Ravenswood/Kepler's corner.
- More details need to be described for the connections to succeed. It is hard to tell how this will be feasible. Explanations are too generic and not tangible explanations. Drawings too generic to see if the suggestions will work in MP.
- North-south flow on ECR is important—don't make it worse; delays of 15-25% are too much. Consider pedestrian tunnel. Is there really that much pedestrian traffic? (No.) With redevelopment to 4-stories and more residential, tunnels under ECR may make good sense.

- North-south along the railroad connecting Palo Alto and Redwood City.
- I would be against eliminating right turn lanes on El Camino, as I think turning cars, feeling pressure not to block cars behind them, could endanger pedestrians crossing on the green light.
- I like the idea of bicycle lanes and paths.
- No change
- Work with Trader Joe's to redevelop building and parking structure and have store face market area.
- I have real safety concerns about any sidewalk extensions—they are extremely dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists—e.g., upper Menlo, personal experience has been horrible. Bulb-outs hard to see at night. Why waste money after the experience of bulb-outs on upper Santa Cruz?
- I am wondering if the two big parking structures downtown are necessary. I think achieving Class I bike path on El Camino is important. I am highly supportive of bike/pedestrian connectivity at Middle—El Camino—Burgess.
- Pedestrian underpass under El Camino from Kepler's to other side.
- Bike lanes—University to train station on Santa Cruz. Sidewalks west of University.
- – Please do not add any “bulb outs”, which impair direct bicycle travel.
- – Make sure the Farmer's Market has equal area.
- – Trucks need to unload behind stores (current plan shows interfering parking structures).
- I guess a parking plaza behind Flegel's might be okay, but nowhere else. I do not like shopping in downtown San Mateo because of the parking garage/plazas. I look for places on the street when I go there.
- The “explanation” that an 8-15% second increase in traffic is not logical. The more traffic is delayed; it is an incremental and exponential build up on the back log. There are repeated times throughout the day that El Camino is completely “full” and stopped—at times, 2-3 lights change to move one block. El Camino need to be widened or the stress level of coming to downtown will not be worth any level of vibrancy. As someone who works at the Charles Schwab building on El Camino, I am already needing to cut thru west Menlo Streets because either north or southbound routes on El Camino are basically stopped. And, as said, I take another surface route—8-15 seconds is absolutely gross under-exaggeration—4-5 minutes and compounding traffic is more in line with reality.
- I think having structured parking in the middle of the block is a good thought. You could park and walk to shopping.
- – “Pedestrian scramble phase” is an interesting option.
- – Additional consideration to bike traffic where appropriate is welcome (a few Class I sections, think “Holland”).
- – Parking structures (above grade) should be removed from the plan and replaced with increased parking on El Camino (near transit) or underground structures designed to retain most, if not all, current surface parking in downtown. Surface parking, or 2/3 of current levels, needs to be retained in downtown.
- – I can only see one location in downtown where a parking structure (above grade) would be acceptable or appropriate. This would be the lot located at Oak Grove between Crane

and Chestnut. It has three sides that are open to the street. A structure that is three stories under and three stories above could be designed (with the roof, this would provide seven levels of parking). Retail could also be added on 1st floor.

- Public space improvements need to be considered along El Camino Real, north of Encinal Ave. The sidewalk and overhead electrical lines makes the area feel like it's not part of the Menlo Park as it looks so unattractive. The existing sidewalk is not attractive and is not safe for pedestrian traffic as it is comprised of many different styles of concrete and designs. Many areas do not have adequate handicap access (cramped space around power poles) and certain locations have large cracks or transitions that create tripping hazards. One area does not even have a sidewalk which puts pedestrians in wheelchairs or those pushing a stroller in an awkward and dangerous situation. In addition, the overhead electrical lines and power poles make the area look old and rundown especially when compared to the improved El Camino Real section located south of Encinal. Please make the residents and business owners of this area feel like we are also a part of Menlo Park by improving the El Camino Real corridor in our neighborhood.
- – I don't understand what downtown strategies are—how building is expected to work with the economics of lease space. Building and sidewalks are not necessarily the solution to downtown. MP leadership needs to articulate a developed vision. I sympathize with the skeptics about downtown, but am not in a position to tell them more than: there are all options.
 - Parking: Can be reduced on ECR SE beyond proposal to allow 0-1 cars for residences, decoupled from purchase.
- – Close off Santa Cruz, making Oak Grove and Menlo one-way streets with bike lanes. The bike lanes are sorely needed, and the concept of closing off downtowns and creating one-way streets has been highly successful and popular in European cities and American ones like Boulder, CO.
 - Do not put a boutique hotel downtown, especially in the most congested area.
 - The market should not be in the Trader Joe's parking lot—it will kill that fine store!
 - If there were an indoor market, place it at the train station and include commuter standup breakfast and tapas-style food options. We just enjoyed a great one in Madrid near the Plaza Mayor.
 - El Camino needs retail. The current Big Five shopping area should be primarily destination retail like furniture/lighting stores.
 - Minimize general office that generates traffic, no revenue. Exception - small offices for local business people, nonprofits.
 - Putting residential uses next to the train doesn't make sense to me. Transit-oriented development could be promoted a bit further away to shield residences from noise and air pollution associated with transit. Some suitable areas are not in the study area, but are well within walking distance of transit (even just another block away or opposite side of train tracks).
 - The fiscal analysis needs to be very careful about mixing economic benefits (sales tax or TOT revenue) with impact fees that are related to increased costs.
 - The entire project needs to consider the potential ADDITIONAL allocation of housing units from ABAG/state based on increased development beyond current General Plan limits.

- Pedestrian connectivity must consider how to move people from neighborhoods to Downtown. We need to look beyond improvements to only the Downtown area and link connectivity 2-3 miles out from the epicenters of our community to the homes of our residents. Think of the “Hub and Spoke” analogy of how to get people from their neighborhoods to Downtown or Burgess Park. It is hassle-free to get in a car and drive Downtown because we lack any easy way to walk or bike Downtown without being subjected to the dangers of traffic. Without neighborhood connectivity our vision planning will ultimately fall short of our intended vision and goals.
- At least one pedestrian bridge across ECR should be considered in order to encourage pedestrian travel from eastside residential development to Safeway Center.

OTHER COMMENTS

- We have too much hotel space on the boards—I don't think we can support so many.
- – Get on with it!!
 - Burgess needs it's own revitalization plan (focus on downtown for now).
 - Can't go on debating forever.
 - Have to spend money to earn/reap the rewards.
- – Mixed-use buildings in Plaza 4 and 5 will have a negative impact on the businesses during construction. Construction could kill off a number of these businesses which rely on cash flow to operate.
 - A parking structure in Plaza 3 may be okay.
 - A parking structure in Plaza 1 will create a highly congested plaza that will back traffic up on El Camino.
- I care about the "village" character that has been mentioned. Height (and cookie cutter "setbacks") of buildings is one of my biggest concerns and fears. I like the wide sidewalks for pedestrians but there are a lot of seniors here, and they will probably have a difficult time with parallel parking (hard enough now!). If parking were eliminated on Santa Cruz and moving it all to the back, it might be better (and have bike lanes instead of parking).
- Pretty pictures, lots of detail—but remember, MP's downtown is small—you still have to worry about traffic E/W, N/S—closing off streets adds more stress elsewhere.
- Put a stop to the do nothing group—you can't stop progress and growth, you should manage it!!
- This is my first attendance at a workshop. My impressions: No way will these complex plans retain the village atmosphere I enjoy in downtown Menlo Park. The plans make a city out of a relaxed, comfortable village. If the plan finally happens, the traffic in every direction will be horrendous. Parking garages are ugly. The plan will overcrowd the schools, the streets, and the town.
- I have appreciated the well-organized structure of these meetings. Everyone has been very professional and knowledgeable. Thanks to everyone for trying to move this process forward.
- Please keep in mind our wonderful Library and its parking area—we need to consider this as part of the E-W corridor. We must not impact its parking area and also the Farmer's Market, which needs a large flat area or plaza area on Sundays.

- – Quality of new buildings, especially façade materials, is key to success, especially for larger buildings.
 - Might note the proposed parking structures on south corner for small gathering place/landscape.
- – More green space/open space/flexible use space.
 - Love all the great, creative, bold ideas like the covered market, pocket parks, plazas.
- – Concerned about the reduction in the parking ratio downtown—we need more intensive parking in the 2-3 blocks radius around the train station and require increased parking as a public benefit.
 - Need to be concerned about the greenhouse gas emission increases' impact on climate change. Require green building minimum thresholds and offsets for all net remaining increase in CO₂. Require they fund.
 - Like the separation of the 2 parking structures—but need to be attractive with a park on the top. Design standards are needed for all new structures and buildings and building them with Low GHG materials (cement is a hugely CO₂ intensive material—what low CO₂ alternatives are there that we can require?).
 - Can we do some "basement" parking, too?
 - Want a hotel in heart of Downtown very near train station. Don't put all hotels south on ECR. Need all parking to include EV and PHEV charging stations throughout, "cool roofs", "light pavements", "green/living roofs", solar PV and solar water heating on roofs.
 - Can't we require leadership levels if we re-zone these district?
- – Want an undercrossing at ECR and Santa Cruz for pedestrians (and/or a 2nd story connector).
 - Must offset all net green house gas impacts that can't be reduced onsite through green building requirements.
 - Like curb extensions.
- Thank you for all your dedication in stewarding this complex process into its current phase of evolution.
- 380 hotel rooms, and specifically 300 on ECR in 2014, is not realistic.
- – I like the suggestion for the 5-story parking structure to have ground floor be some community friendly space, at least partially—would help open the "back" entrance and make less imposing.
 - Or some parking structure (on ECR?) for workers to free up existing parking, or underground for long term.
 - Elevator for parking structure.
- Financial impact analysis should show how the hotels incrementally impact the bottom line (both revenue and cost); similarly the housing.
- Walkability (and cycling-ability to a lesser extent) is key to a village/community feel. These are acceptable along Santa Cruz but not along or across El Camino.
- Pretty pictures—lots of detail—BUT remember MP's downtown is small—you still have to worry about traffic east and west, north and south, closing off streets pushes traffic to other streets.

- – I am all for larger sidewalks on Santa Cruz Ave, but we need to create more parking if we do so.
 - The parking between S.C. Ave and Menlo is ugly and crowded. A central structure for cardboard and garbage would be nice.
- – Many people head to Palo Alto in the evenings because the majority of businesses are open late, where Menlo Park stores close up early. The City should explore options and incentives to influence Menlo Park businesses to stay open late. This could be tax incentives, preferred permitting for new businesses, etc.
 - Encourage more arts/entertainment/community centers as part of the retail mix downtown. It would be a shame if after all of the planned investment in downtown, we end up with boutiques.
- Suggestion for Santa Cruz regarding sidewalks, parking, and existing trees: I suggest a combination of wider sidewalk (same width both sides of street), trees on sidewalks replacing trees in mid-street, and continuing diagonal parking as well. Rationale—it takes the average person a lot longer to get into and out of a parallel space than a diagonal one; therefore, ties up other drivers a lot longer. Current sidewalks are too narrow, so a balance of wider with easy diagonal parking would be great.
- The most important aspect is to construct parking garages before cutting spaces out elsewhere.
- – Hold off on building office space—need for a variety of housing options which are affordable—moderate to low—smaller units for singles, seniors.
 - Avoid parking "heat islands."
- Don't bulb out right thru lanes for pedestrian.
- – I think the area on the NE side of the station is a bit dead and could stand to be substantially redeveloped.
 - I think overall the plan is excellent; thanks for the hard work! Surely there will be some criticism—you will of course pay attention but I hope you push through something close to the proposed plan.
- I think the Emerging Plan strikes a good "reasonable" balance between character and progress and by that I mean the financial possibility MP could realize new development by allowing reasonable development.
- Move parking structures to El Camino opposite Safeway and/or to Fremont Park.
- Parking is key to our business. We are an Orthodontic office.
- We've got to get people out of their cars and on to bikes and on their feet.
- There is a lot of data and information to understand in too short of time. These are my best answers. I understand it is necessary but the village character must be preserved and not driven away.
- – What is the plan to get the proposed housing units the support needed to get built (i.e., how do we avoid the lawsuits that follow high density housing projects in Menlo Park)?
 - Who is responsible for the types of businesses that will be downtown? How will we achieve the right mix to draw more people to downtown MP?
 - Is Stanford participating in this process since they own a lot of the parcels?

- – Traffic study and EIR for the specific plan should exempt future development from studies and EIRs.
 - There should be a Jazz club downtown.
 - Please keep the sidewalk trees on ECR!
- Much of the success will depend on well placed and well designed parking structures. Surface parking is simply too expensive. That space must be used more efficiently.
- Emulate San Carlos, not Palo Alto or god forbid Redwood City Downtown. Palo Alto and Redwood City doesn't offer basic services to residents as well as San Carlos.
- – I think the overall process has been a very constructive planning process!
 - I live close to downtown and I want to feel safe riding my bicycle. Right now, there's too much traffic, on street parking, misaligned streets for bike safety.
- 1) Farmer 's Market needs flexible space, as it has now.
- 2) Tree at Farmer's Market should be protected.
- 3) El Camino South needs development first. Shoppers need on grade, not parking structures.
- Bulbouts/sidewalk extensions do not affect safety in any way at signaled intersections.
- – Keep trees in middle of Santa Cruz.
 - Village character on Santa Cruz.
 - Small parks on top of parking.
 - Very reduced price parking in structures for day workers.
 - Transit oriented housing on El Camino, not especially downtown.
- Much of the plan is not useful because it doesn't account for CalTrain electrification and grade separation or the impacts of High Speed Rail.
- – Assumption of mixed-use buildings on ECR is dependent on developer's ideas. There is much work for Planning Commission and City Council to control development.
 - Keep Middle Ave as bike route, in addition to Menlo and Oak Grove.
- – I am for progress and new ideas and a "Gold LEED" business area.
 - How long does it take to build a 5-level parking structure with two underground and three above all the buildings?? What is the impact to the businesses? What is going to happen at the top floor of a parking structure? Specifically the 5-layer structure? (1) Consider a seating, meeting, park for people to congregate? Trees/Coffee houses? (2) How are we going to keep homeless people out of the parking structures? Homeless shelter?
- Unless we have merchants in place "owning" that public space around the new proposed fountain/entrance way to MP, it will be filled with homeless. Extend commercial café spaces like Café Barrone behind that big building with Barrone in front. Spread out the "goodies" to connect both sides of town, which is divided now.
- This planning process is great but it doesn't get to sufficient detail to really see the pragmatic tradeoffs. People need to study the emerging plan to seriously get thoughtful feedback; instead I worry too many react without adequate understanding of the tradeoffs.
- More parking, more parking, more parking. One multi-story structure won't do it. Consider two more such structures (underground partial) on Menlo Ave.
- I would like to see Santa Cruz Ave businesses improve their back entrances and make them more attractive and user friendly. Some don't encourage or have public access.

- – Presentation did not address how to pay for public developments, such as parking garages, landscaping, sidewalks, etc.
 - Proceed immediately with one garage (\$20 million??).
- The idea of a minute more getting down El Camino is a lot—25% more—I’m not for adding time—let’s eliminate time.
- A business improvement district would be a good idea. Hire Marco LeMadre out of San Diego to help put it together.
- 1) Tunnel to Burgess Park is excellent idea—will decrease local use of auto and increase use of bicycle and walking.
- 2) More attention should be paid to south El Camino—develop next—great potential and current disaster.
- – Place Farmer’s Market where car dealerships are near Stanford Hotel.
 - How is High Speed Rail going to effect any of these plans? The high speed bus system?
 - Please do not let people turn left after the train tracks on Ravenswood and Alma.
- – Overall a very balanced plan.
 - Solar canopy on top of parking garage!
 - Keep village feel but with more vibrancy.
 - Hotel downtown—not sure—El Camino or rail station okay.
 - Zone #1 downtown should allow offices or 2nd and 3rd floor. Think about more flexible zoning to back, especially with garages.
- – Get rid of the trees in the median; they were a bad idea to begin with, especially as they aren’t even California natives.
 - Use only drought tolerant plants in parks and plazas. Talk to Sunset, they could do it free and feature it in their magazines.
- I question the financial analysis. I was very dismayed with the idea of three stories on Santa Cruz—since the last visioning meeting, every time I eat or shop in downtown MP, I look at the buildings that are there and feel that more than two stories is too much.
- The consultant trying to intensify the City; we want to stay a small community.
- Great progress! Almost no matter what happens in the end, it will be an improvement over status quo!
- I find it hard to believe the projected revenue from the development of two potential hotels in downtown Menlo Park. As an owner of multiple hotels on the peninsula, Menlo Park does not have enough demand to meet the additional supply of up to 380 guestrooms. There is already a projected increase in supply of 200 rooms with the Bohannon project. At some point, there is will be a shift of business from existing hotels to the newer hotels. The shift in business means that the amount transient occupancy tax the city collect will be lower than what is projected. The only way to really increase TOT as the projection shows is to prove that the projected hotels will be able to create their own new demand and not simply take business from the existing hotels in Menlo Park. For the projected hotels to create that kind of demand would require the development of hundreds of thousands of square feet of new office space.

- Generally, way too much focus on downtown, not enough on ECR. I don't understand station area plan—where is train drop off? What are public transit routes if Merrill is cut off? Ditto any public transit through Santa Cruz Ave.
- – Having been out of country and missing the Workshop #3, I was quite disappointed and extremely frustrated by the lack of material available at this point in the visioning process. The materials online are unreadable - too small but when enlarged they are too blurry. There is no summary. There is no discussion of how certain elements came to be included or not, and why they were placed where they were. There are not multiple scenarios as has been frequently requested, and yet certain things are marked as "potential." The charts have no commentary to aid comprehension. I realize this is not your fault, but you can help the city address this problem. It is quite disappointing, particularly at the point when the community should be very clear on what the specific plan would be BEFORE the EIR and ZOA/GPA processes commence. All of the above is characteristic of a process that is not as friendly, open, inclusive as hoped, and certainly not in any way designed to build consensus. There is time to do this, but such a step is not part of what the process appears to be right now.
 - Because the questionnaire online is a pdf file that cannot be filled in and submitted electronically (geez, guys!!!), I am providing input the hard way by recreating the questions in part (*italics*). I fear that input from others will be missing because of the challenges obtaining and reading the material and providing input. We can do better.
- There is never a winner when we choose between cars and people. When we favor the pedestrian, traffic congestion and commutes suffer. If we favor cars, people will choose not to walk or bike. We can encourage people to get out of their cars by favoring the pedestrian. Give us wider sidewalks, safer bike lanes, and slower speed limits. People will walk and bike in our community. Give us safe routes from our home to Downtown, to the library, to city hall, and to school, we will use them.
- If any of downtown options are adopted, "Village" character—aka Los Altos and Los Gatos—will be destroyed.
- Would like to review hard copy version to shape responses (at least for myself). Please see attached comments dated 9/28/09. [Additional comments posted below]

September 28, 2009

Comments on Short-Range and Long-Range Development of Menlo Park

At the well-done El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan Workshop #3 held on September 24, 2009 I spoke from the point of view of a Menlo Park Traffic Commissioner from roughly 35 or so years ago, as well as a resident from 1964 on. Since those days, at least in my memory, little has changed in downtown Menlo Park and, beyond under-grounding of power lines and improved signaling, little on El Camino Real itself.

Certainly the development of the east side of El Camino has been effectively carried out (but with open spaces remaining to be filled), as has business and residential development beyond the boundaries of downtown, thanks to effective staffs in the Planning and Building Departments.

But today is today is today. After 40 years there is still time to review what has happened in surrounding cities—working south to Palo Alto, Mountain View, Los Altos, Sunnyvale, Cupertino, and even Los Gatos. Consider the architecture, facility usage, and parking facilities, above and below ground and time and cost for construction. Look at Stanford University and El Camino Real northward. The most important question of all, I think, is whether downtown Menlo Park is to remain Old Town, become New Town, or arrive at something in between. Another way is to ask whether downtown is to retain its “character” or be transformed into a “vibrant” space with vastly expanded and different usage. (Because parking needs are the kernel of the project, there may be no alternative: fix the Old Town or build the New Town.)

A principal person at Workshop #3, responding to my question during the viewing period, said no financial analysis has been completed. An important part of that analysis would be calculation of estimated opportunity costs for various components of the project. Off hand, at least five sets of opportunity costs could be estimated: (1) short-term costs for developers, (2) long-term costs for merchants (clearly the most difficult calculation of all because of so many unknowns and dependence on performance of so many outside players), (3) financial costs and returns to the City, (4) project management costs, and (5) visitor costs in time and effort to move about the town as well to measure, like (or not like), and use its “vibrant” space. A sixth opportunity cost would be the choice of parking garages dug from above the surface or dug with almost no breaking of the top surface (which would offer more possibilities for surface mini parks).

Large too-long-unfilled holes dug in the ground to support construction of subsurface parking garages are a problem here. Perhaps techniques used in sub-surface coal mining to avoid disturbing the top surface can be adapted to Menlo Park’s needs. Here again Menlo Park should look elsewhere to identify usable technology. C. C. Meyers in Sacramento might be one place to look for what can be done with time-sensitive innovation. Here again you calculate the opportunity costs: dig a deep long-lasting open hole or cut inward from below without disturbing the surface except at the entry point—and then tie that opportunity cost to others already calculated—especially merchant long-term gains or losses.

How many activities have you previously attended during the Vision Plan (2007-2008) and Specific Plan (2009) processes?

- First time
- Two previous meetings/heard City Council discussions
- Am a member of the OCC—I’ve been to all meetings
- June community meeting
- None
- As a 33-year resident, this is the 3rd set of planning sessions.
- None prior to tonight
- I have attended the vision workshops (2) and 3 of the planning meetings
- Most of the public meetings
- All

- 2nd "table" activity in early summer and a few prior meetings
- None, was in Europe and caught up "late"
- None
- Visioning 1 and 2
- None—just became a resident 2 months ago
- Two
- All of them
- None, first one
- Unfortunately, I have missed most of them
- All three public meetings
- All
- Three
- All but one
- None, but I had spies at all events 😊
- The previous two community workshops and the first meeting with the City Council
- Council meetings. Attended previous community workshops. Worked on statement position to Council with Chair MP Chamber—Visionary Committee
- All three
- 3-4
- 3-4
- None
- El Camino walking tours, a couple of the original visioning meetings, two of the specific plan workshops.
- Workshop #2
- Two
- None
- About 3-4 previous ones
- Two
- El Camino walking tours, a couple of the original visioning meetings, two of the specific plan workshops.
- One
- None
- All of them; plus all the Council meetings and open planning commission meetings
- Last planning meeting
- All, including Oversight Committee meetings
- One, this is my second
- Two previous Vision Plan sessions
- Workshop #2 and countless Council meetings. I am on the Bicycle Commission.
- 6/09, 9/09
- 2 or 3
- Two
- I have participated in almost all the Vision Plan and Specific Plan activities

- Three
- Two
- #1, #2, #3
- 1 very early process/ 1 other more recently
- All since Phase I
- First one!
- None
- This is the first (live) meeting. I have followed each posting and have been able to study the updates provided to date.
- 1 previous meetings
- All workshops, some tours. Thanks for keeping this going and all the progress. Onward!
- I've participated in most of the sessions.
- Walk-arounds. Application for committee position was rejected.
- None

AFFILIATION

Resident—61

Business Owner—12

Property Owner—22

Other—6

- Other—Visitor
- Other—MP Chamber/former resident-Laurel
- Other—parent of six kids
- Other—Environmental Quality Commissioner
- Other—Property Manager
- Other—Realty Broker