



CONNECTMENLO

menlo park land use & mobility update

Focus Group #1: Growth Management Summary

Focus Group #1 Growth Management was conducted on September 29, 2014 (7 – 9 pm) in the Juniper Room at the Arrillaga Family Recreation Center, 600 Alma Street, Menlo Park.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT

Harry Bims, GPAC Member
Sheryl Bims
Kristin Duriseti, GPAC Member
Rose Bickerstaff
Jacqui Cebrian
John Kadvany
Frank Petrilli
Ryan Patterson
Reginald Harris
Zoe Liang
Jason Chang
Maya Perkins
Chuck Bernstein
Harold Schapelhouman, Menlo Park Fire Chief

CITY STAFF AND CONSULTANTS PRESENT

Justin Murphy, Development Services Manager
Deanna Chow, Senior Planner
Charlie Knox, PlaceWorks
Rosie Dudley, PlaceWorks
Eric Panzer, PlaceWorks
Ron Golem, BAE Urban Economics
Stephanie Hagar, BAE Urban Economics

MEETING PURPOSE

The purpose of the meeting was to hear participants' ideas about economic development and growth management in the M-2 area and Belle Haven neighborhood. The focus group began with a summarized version of the content of Symposium #1, which addressed local and regional growth and economic trends. PlaceWorks Principal Charlie Knox welcomed everyone and introduced Ron Golem of BAE Urban Economics to present on key economic trends, including:

- M-2 Area Opportunities: Growing high-tech sector; existing manufacturing, suppliers, and services; potential for live-work-play area.
- M-2 Area Development feasibility: 4 - 8 story Class A Office Space; limited interest in new industrial; opportunities for local-serving retail and lodging.
- M-2 Area Development considerations: Industrial preservation vs. new development; appropriate areas for redevelopment; community benefits from development.

See the project website for a copy of this presentation: www.menlopark.org/connectmenlo

FOCUS GROUP #1 SUMMARY

COMMENTS

Focus group participants were then asked to consider the following questions:

- What should the M-2 area and adjacent area look like in the next 20 years?
- What types of land uses should be allowed and encouraged in the M-2 area and Belle Haven?

All participants were given chances to speak, with no time limits. Participants provided their comments roughly in the order in which they were seated, with participants occasionally asking questions of one other or responding to the comments of another participant. Although not every point that was made is included below, the following bullet points encapsulate the major themes or ideas discussed by one or more participants at Focus Group #1.

- **M-2 and Belle Haven should be better connected to and integrated with the region and other areas of Menlo Park.**
 - Transportation, traffic, and congestion issues on Marsh and Willow Roads should be addressed.
 - Dumbarton Rail could provide key regional connection with the potential to reduce driving and congestion, especially if it provides connections between BART and Caltrain.
 - Dumbarton Rail corridor could include a pedestrian/bike path.
 - Rail stations could act as focus for new development and neighborhood centers.
 - Building a park over Highway 101 is an aspirational idea for connectivity and recreation.
 - Safety of existing bicycle routes should be improved, especially along Willow Road.
- **Changes in M-2 and Belle Haven should foster greater livability:**
 - Educational opportunities should be increased and improved for Belle Haven residents.
 - Residents of Belle Haven and workers in M-2 should have better access to services, shopping, and other amenities—most notably coffee shops, drug stores, an affordable gym, and a full-service grocery.
 - Belle Haven and M-2 Area should be a live/work/play/learn area, where residents have access to jobs, housing, services and entertainment, and educational opportunities.
 - Having more uses open at night would benefit residents and help improve safety.
 - Community benefits from new development should be commensurate with development impacts.
 - Continued or expanded operation of the Belle Haven police substation is important for the police department's effectiveness and its relationship with the community.
 - Plan should seek opportunities to have new commercial developments offer public plazas, cafes, and potentially daycare centers.
 - Plan should include policies promoting urban forestry, including context-appropriate street trees.
- **The planning process should consider how existing uses and future development result in impacts to Belle Haven and M-2**
 - Belle Haven currently hosts more than its fair share of affordable housing.
 - Belle Haven residents are at greater risk of exposure to pollutants and hazardous materials due to presence of freeway and industrial uses, as well as storage of materials along the Dumbarton rail line.

FOCUS GROUP #1 SUMMARY

- **The planning process should be inclusive, rigorous, and forward thinking:**
 - The process should seek a three-way partnership between the city, the community, and developers.
 - There may be differences development types preferred by landowners and those preferred by community members.
 - All stakeholders should be included so that process is not driven solely by the needs of any one group.
 - The process should be informed by an abundance of detailed data.
 - Regional impacts of economic development should be considered.
 - Land Use Plans and General Plan policies should allow flexibility for development to accommodate changing needs in the future.
 - Land use alternatives should consider impacts to service demands and revenue generation.

- **The planning process should address issue of affordable housing:**
 - The process should address and attempt to determine the benefits of in-lieu fees vs. inclusionary housing.
 - Plan should consider how City policies regarding the safety and quality of housing could be better enforced.

- **The planning process should address issues of emergency services and emergency access:**
 - Rising rents and limited land availability have constrained fire department facilities.
 - Growth in Belle Haven and M-2 will require increases to fire department resources, increased water supply, and improved access to the area.
 - Traffic along Marsh and Willow Roads present challenges to response times.
 - Fire department would support high-quality bike/pedestrian path along the Dumbarton Rail if it is wide enough for a fire truck, since it would facilitate access.