



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Date: 12/2/2025
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Locations: Teleconference and
City Council Chambers
751 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

Special Session

A. Call To Order

Mayor Combs called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Combs, Nash, Schmidt, Taylor, Wise
Absent: None
Staff: City Manager Justin Murphy, City Attorney Nira Doherty, Assistant to the City Manager/ City Clerk Judi A. Herren

C. Closed Session

C1. Conference with legal counsel – anticipated litigation
Initiation of litigation (paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of §54956.9): One potential case

C2. Conference with real property negotiators pursuant to Government Code §54956.8
Property location: 150 Constitution Dr., Menlo Park, CA
Negotiating parties: Anthony Kamm
City negotiators: Justin I.C. Murphy, Nira Doherty
Under negotiation: Price, terms of payment, property negotiations

Regular Session

D. Call To Order

Mayor Combs called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

E. Report from Closed Session

No reportable action.

F. Public Hearing

F1. Receive the Elections Code section 9212 report regarding the proposed initiative measure entitled “Downtown Parking Plazas Ordinance Initiative” (Staff Report #25-181-CC)

Community Development Director Deanna Chow introduced the item and M-Group President + Principal Geoff Bradley made the presentation (Attachment).

Mayor Combs opened the public hearing.

- Mary Seaton spoke on concerns about the analysis, including fire safety and response times not being addressed within the Elections Code section 9212 report.
- Adina Levin spoke on the difficulties achieving Housing Element goals without the Downtown Parking Plaza housing site.
- Caleb Wigham spoke on the need for housing and foot traffic in downtown.
- Kirver spoke in support of affordable housing and need for more people to revitalize downtown.
- Karen Grove spoke on a comparison to a Redwood City Downtown housing project.

Mayor Combs closed the public hearing.

The City Council discussed the findings of the report.

F2. Determination of action, pursuant to Elections Code section 9215, regarding the proposed initiative measure entitled "Downtown Parking Plazas Ordinance" (Staff Report #25-180-CC)

City Attorney Nira Doherty introduced the item.

Mayor Combs opened the public hearing.

- Rubye Cervelli spoke in support of approving the Downtown Parking Plazas Ordinance, noting that a vote is the ultimate public participation, and expressed that affordable housing should not be where it would harm business and employees.
- Alex Beltramo questioned whether the parking plaza is the right place for affordable housing and indicated that the decision should be made by the people.
- Rob Foster spoke in support of affordable housing, approving the Downtown Parking Plazas Ordinance or submitting the initiative to a future election.
- Kia Shepherd spoke in support of affordable housing benefitting everyone.
- Cherie Zaslawsky spoke on concerns related to the study.
- Adina Levin spoke in support of submitting the initiative to the November general election.
- Elysa Gurman spoke in support of submitting the initiative to allow the decision to be made by the people.
- Karen Grove spoke in support of submitting the initiative to the November general election.
- Brittani Baxter spoke in support of submitting the initiative to the November general election.
- Collette spoke in support of submitting the initiative to a future election.
- Virginia Chang Kiraly spoke in support of public engagement and emergency response and safety for everyone.
- Jennifer Michel spoke in support of submitting the initiative to the November general election.
- Ken Chan spoke in support of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas.
- Katherine Dumont spoke in support of submitting the initiative to the November general election.
- Caleb Wigham spoke in support of submitting the initiative to the November general election.

Mayor Combs closed the public hearing.

The City Council discussed submitting the initiative to the voters, including the initiative on the general election or a special election and impacts to the Downtown Parking Plaza housing element program.

ACTION: Motion and second (Schmidt/ Nash), to adopt a resolution of the City Council of the City of Menlo Park submitting the citizen sponsored initiative measure to prohibit the City of Menlo Park from selling, leasing, donating, disposing of or conveying City-owned Downtown Parking Lots that would affect or diminish the availability or convenience of parking, without voter approval, to the voters at the next general municipal election (Nov. 3, 2026), and authorizing and requesting the County of San Mateo conduct the election; establishing the schedule for submission of ballot arguments, passed unanimously.

G. Adjournment

Mayor Combs adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Assistant to the City Manager/ City Clerk Judi Herren

These minutes were approved at the City Council meeting January 13, 2026.



Ballot Measure Impact Analysis

Pursuant to Elections Code 9212

Geoff I. Bradley, AICP, M-Group



Agenda

- Background and Overview
- Findings
 - Fiscal Impacts
 - Planning Impacts
 - Housing Impacts
 - Infrastructure Impacts
 - Business Impacts
 - Equity Impacts
 - Other Impacts

No formal action is required on this item



Background and Overview



- **Oct. 10:** Pursuant to Elections Code 9208, petition for proposed initiative was filed with City Clerk
- **Nov. 4:** Pursuant to Elections Code 9212, City Council directed preparation of impact analysis report on the Ballot Measure upon validation of the 2,200 signatures provided
- **Nov. 26:** Ballot Measure impact analysis report available for public review
- **Dec. 2:** Receive the 9212 report and pursuant to Election Code 9215, determine action regarding the proposed initiative (separate agenda item)



Background and Overview

The Ballot Measure would prohibit the City from taking the following actions without voter approval if such action would diminish the availability, access or convenience of public parking for Downtown customers, workers and visitors:

1. Disposing, selling, trading, leasing, donating, or otherwise conveying all or any portion of a Parking Plaza
2. Designating a Parking Plaza as “surplus” or “exempt surplus” land pursuant to the Surplus Lands Act
3. Modifying, altering, or constructing any improvements on the Parking Plazas
4. Changing the use of a Parking Plaza

Fiscal Impact Findings



Ballot Measure could potentially:

- Limit housing on sites which could prevent higher service costs than revenue
- Discourage mixed-use and commercial projects which could generate more revenue and have a positive fiscal impact
- Make any type of development more difficult, slower, or less likely to occur thereby reducing City revenues
- Limit redevelopment and reduce revenue from property tax, sales tax, from future mixed-use projects
- Constrain long-term economic benefits from workforce housing



Planning Impact Findings

Ballot Measure could potentially:

- Limit attainment of goals, policies, and programs in the Land Use Element, Environmental Justice Element, and Housing Element which affect internal consistency with the City's General Plan
- Limit the ability to implement General Plan policies that would be determined by a subsequent Ballot Measure for the approval, or not, of housing, mixed-use, and parking development
- Result in increased procedural requirements, additional costs, and potential delays that do not align with General Plan principles, goals, and policies
- Conflict with the goals and vision of the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan

Housing Impact Findings



Ballot Measure could potentially:

- Impact the internal consistency of the City's 6th Cycle Housing Element and the City's ability to meet its housing goals
- Discourage leveraging City's own resources to mitigate land costs and reduce development costs to facilitate new housing projects and goals
- Constrain future land use decisions due to longer timeframes, significant expense, and uncertain outcomes



Infrastructure Impact Findings



Ballot Measure could potentially:

- Limit Menlo Park's ability to secure regional transportation funding tied to transit-oriented development
- Result in higher infrastructure costs and limited opportunities to fund improvements if development becomes more difficult or shifts elsewhere
- Result in a loss of potential funding, on-site improvements, and grant competitiveness associated with redeveloping centrally located and transit-accessible sites, if no development occurs

Business Impact Findings



Ballot Measure could potentially:

- Limit taxable-sales recovery Downtown if it reduces the possibility of additional residents who could shop locally
- Limit long-term reinvestment opportunities, modernization of parking or introduction of new uses that strengthen visitation and economic vitality



Equity Findings



Ballot Measure could potentially:

- Make it difficult to develop affordable housing Downtown in a high resource area
- Limit progress in reducing housing cost burdens for Black, Latino, and lower-income households
- Risk reinforcing longstanding patterns of unequal access to high-opportunity areas and widening racial and economic inequities

Other Impacts Findings - Transportation



Ballot Measure could potentially:

- Limit the City's ability in accommodating updated parking and accessibility requirements, adding new electric vehicle charging stations, and converting one or more surface Parking Plazas to structured parking
- Result in slight increase in citywide residential VMT per capita since there would be fewer low VMT housing units
- Result in slight improvements to traffic congestion on roadways within the immediate vicinity of the parking plazas



Other Impacts Findings

The report also covers other topics:

- Mixed-use development with parking in nearby downtown district
- Vacant land impacts
- Soil and environmental contamination risk impacts
- Waste management impacts
- School and public facility impacts
- Parks and open space impacts
- Fire safety and evacuation impacts



Recommendation



Receive the report pursuant to the Elections Code 9212 regarding the proposed initiative measure entitled “Downtown Parking Plazas Ordinance Initiative”

- No City Council action is required

