



PLANNING COMMISSION DRAFT MINUTES

Regular Meeting
April 6, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers
701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025

CALL TO ORDER – 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Bressler, Combs, Eiref (Chair), Ferrick, Kadvany, Onken (Vice Chair), Strehl

INTRODUCTION OF STAFF – Michele Morris, Assistant Planner; Nicole Nagaya, Transportation Manager; Kyle Perata, Associate Planner; Thomas Rogers, Senior Planner

A. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A1. Update on Pending Planning Items

- a. Housing Element Annual Report – City Council – March 24, 2015

Senior Planner Rogers said the Housing Element Annual Report was reviewed and approved by the City Council on March 24, 2015.

- b. ConnectMenlo (General Plan Update)
 - i. GPAC #6 (March 25, 2015)
 - ii. Joint CC/PC Meeting (March 31, 2015)

Senior Planner Rogers said the primary result of the joint City Council and Planning Commission meeting on March 31, 2015 was to conduct more outreach on the General Plan Update. He said at the April 14 City Council meeting, there would be an information item on the next steps and revised dates. He noted the ConnectMenlo survey period was extended.

- c. Planning Commission Appointments – City Council – April 14, 2015

Senior Planner Rogers said that the Planning Commission appointments had been moved to the City Council's May 5 agenda.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS #1 (Limited to 30 minutes)

There were none.

C. CONSENT

Commissioner Onken said he had to recuse himself from the consideration of C2.

- C1.** Approval of minutes from the March 9, 2015 Planning Commission meeting ([Attachment](#))

Commission Action: M/S Strehl/Onken to approve the minutes from the March 9, 2015 Planning Commission meeting.

Motion carried 7-0.

- C2. Architectural Control/Denise Forbes/138 Stone Pine Lane:** Request for architectural control for exterior modifications including enclosing the existing second floor balcony to enlarge the existing kitchen by approximately 120 square feet, building a new third floor balcony, and a vertical planting trellis located on the front elevation of a townhouse located in the R-3 (Apartment) zoning district. ([Attachment](#)) ***Continued from the meeting of March 23, 2015.***

Commission Action: M/S (consensus) to approve as recommended in the staff report.

1. Make a finding that the project is categorically exempt under Class 1 (Section 15301, "Existing Facilities") of the current CEQA Guidelines.
2. Make findings, as per Section 16.68.020 of the Zoning Ordinance, pertaining to architectural control approval:
 - a. The general appearance of the structure is in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.
 - b. The development will not be detrimental to the harmonious and orderly growth of the City.
 - c. The development will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood.
 - d. The development provides adequate parking as required in all applicable City Ordinances and has made adequate provisions for access to such parking.
 - e. The property is not within any Specific Plan area, and as such no finding regarding consistency is required to be made.
3. Approve the use permit subject to the following ***standard*** conditions:
 - a. Development of the project shall be substantially in conformance with the plans prepared by William Maston Architect & Associates, consisting of six (6) plan sheets, dated received March 17, 2015, and approved by the Planning Commission on March 23, 2015 except as modified by the conditions contained herein, subject to review and approval by the Planning Division.
 - b. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall comply with all Sanitary District, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, San Mateo County Health Department, and utility companies' regulations that are directly applicable to the project.
 - c. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall comply with all requirements of the Building Division, Engineering Division, and Transportation Division that are directly applicable to the project.

- d. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall submit a plan for any new utility installations or upgrades for review and approval by the Planning, Engineering and Building Divisions. All utility equipment that is installed outside of a building and that cannot be placed underground shall be properly screened by landscaping. The plan shall show exact locations of all meters, back flow prevention devices, transformers, junction boxes, relay boxes, and other equipment boxes.

Motion carried 6-0 with Commissioner Onken recused.

D. PUBLIC HEARING

D1. Use Permit/Jack McCarthy/1295 Middle Avenue: Request for a use permit to demolish an existing one-story residence, pool and shed, then construct a new two-story single-family residence on a substandard lot with regard to lot width located in the R-1-S (Single-Family Suburban Residential) zoning district. ([Attachment](#))

Staff Comment: Planner Morris said two additional emails were received and distributed to the Commission. She said one email was from the property owners of 3 Hermosa Place, who had questions about the plan, the hedge and the deck. She said the other email was from the next door neighbor who had concerns about their tree's roots safety with the proposed construction.

Public Comment: Mr. Jack McCarthy, project designer, said the existing home would be demolished and the pool removed. He said the home design was a two-story in a Craftsman style. He said he met with the neighbor this evening whose concern was their large tree and protection of its roots during construction. He said there was a distance of 17 feet from the tree to the new house. He said they would also have an arborist review the situation. He said regarding the other email received that property owner had not been able to meet with them this evening. He said in response to that neighbor that they were fine leaving the hedge and fencing as it was, and they would use down lights for the master bedroom deck and across the back of the home.

Commissioner Onken asked about landscape screening. Mr. McCarthy said they had not discussed it yet but they would do additional screening. Commissioner Onken said that this home would be the only two-story home on its side of the street. Mr. McCarthy said to minimize the effect that the house would have a roof element and dormer on the front façade. He said there were two-story homes across the street and nearby. Commissioner Onken noted the garage was very much in the front. Mr. McCarthy explained the design strategy noting the lot was 60-feet wide. He said they would use landscape screening to soften the appearance of the front-facing garage.

Chair Eiref closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Commissioner Kadvany said he agreed with Commissioner Onken about the obtrusiveness of the garage, which he thought marred an otherwise nice design. He said separating the garage doors was a help and he appreciated the board and batten siding and cedar shingles.

Commissioner Onken said it was an approvable project but he thought the Commission should have been given a more definitive screening plan as it was a tall house in a row of bungalows. He said the materials were good and he did not think the deck in the back was an issue. He said he would like a condition for an acceptable landscape plan.

Commissioner Combs said he thought the project was approvable and was not adverse to some requirement for a landscape plan. He said he had also noted that this project was the only two-story on that side of the street. He said there was not a definitive neighborhood character however as the homes in the surrounding area were set back and screened with shrubs.

Chair Eiref said he liked the home design and thought landscape screening would be desirable.

Responding to the Commission, Senior Planner Rogers suggested adding a specific condition related to submitting a landscape plan to provide screening for neighbors and the public right-of-way, prior to the issuance of the building permit and subject to planning staff review and approval.

Commissioner Onken moved to approve the project as recommended in the staff report to include a condition for a landscape plan for screening prior to issuance of the building permit subject to staff review and approval. Commissioner Strehl seconded the motion.

Commission Action: M/S Onken/Strehl to approve as recommended in the staff report with the following modification.

1. Make a finding that the project is categorically exempt under Class 1 (Section 15301, "Existing Facilities") of the current CEQA guidelines.
2. Make findings, as per Section 16.82.030 of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the granting of use permits, that the proposed use will not be detrimental to the health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the persons residing or working in the neighborhood of such proposed use, and will not be detrimental to property and improvements in the neighborhood or the general welfare of the City.
3. Approve the use permit subject to the following **standard** conditions:
 - a. Development of the project shall be substantially in conformance with the plans prepared by Jack McCarthy Designer, Inc., consisting of 10 plan sheets, dated received March 30, 2015, and approved by the Planning Commission on April 6, 2015 except as modified by the conditions contained herein, subject to review and approval by the Planning Division.
 - b. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicants shall comply with all Sanitary District, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, and utility companies' regulations that are directly applicable to the project.
 - c. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicants shall comply with all requirements of the Building Division, Engineering Division, and Transportation Division that are directly applicable to the project.

- d. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall submit a plan for any new utility installations or upgrades for review and approval by the Planning, Engineering and Building Divisions. All utility equipment that is installed outside of a building and that cannot be placed underground shall be properly screened by landscaping. The plan shall show exact locations of all meters, back flow prevention devices, transformers, junction boxes, relay boxes, and other equipment boxes.
- e. Simultaneous with the submittal of a complete building permit application, the applicant shall submit plans indicating that the applicant shall remove and replace any damaged and significantly worn sections of frontage improvements. The plans shall be submitted for review and approval of the Engineering Division.
- f. Simultaneous with the submittal of a complete building permit application, the applicant shall submit a Grading and Drainage Plan for review and approval of the Engineering Division. The Grading and Drainage Plan shall be approved prior to the issuance of grading, demolition or building permits.
- g. Heritage trees in the vicinity of the construction project shall be protected pursuant to the Heritage Tree Ordinance.

4. Approve the use permit subject to the following project-specific conditions:

- a. Simultaneous with the submittal of a complete building permit application, applicant shall submit a landscaping plan which includes landscaping that addresses privacy screening, subject to the review and approval of the Planning Division.***

Motion carried 7-0.

D2. Use Permit Revision/Intersect ENT/1555 Adams Drive: Request for a revision to a use permit, previously approved in June 2012, to modify the types and quantities of hazardous materials used and stored at the site for the research and development (R&D) and production of medical technologies for use in treating ear, nose, and throat patients, within an existing building in the M-2 (General Industrial) zoning district. All hazardous materials would be used and stored within the building. ([Attachment](#))

Staff Comment: Planner Perata said staff had no additional comments.

Public Comment: Mr. John Tarlton, Tarlton Properties, introduced Mr. Daniel Castro of Intersect ENT.

Mr. Daniel Castro, Vice President of Operations, Manufacturing and Engineering, Intersect ENT, said the company develops, manufactures and distributes medical devices for the treatment of ear, nose and throat conditions. He said their products have been used in over 50,000 patients and have helped them recover from chronic sinus surgery. He said in 2012 when they first applied for their use permit there had been 80 employees. He said there were now over 240 people and they planned to continue to grow. He said the use permit revision being requested would allow them to increase their manufacturing and expand their development into new products and new tests, the latter currently being done out of state.

Commissioner Strehl asked about notification to East Palo Alto residents and other neighbors of this proposed use permit revision. Planner Perata said for hazardous materials applications that the City sends notices to all properties within a quarter mile of the subject property, and in this instance, notice was sent to a number of East Palo Alto residents.

Commissioner Kadvany asked about the scale of the request. Mr. Castro said their sales and manufacturing had increased. He said part of the request also related to some processes changes they had not anticipated including additional cleaning steps to insure cleanliness of their products. He said they use and dispose of IV solvents which they had not anticipated in 2012 when they applied for the use permit. He said they were using the same solvents but more of them. He said they were relocating some of the points of storage and pickup.

Chair Eiref closed the public hearing.

Commission Action: M/S Onken/Eiref to approve as recommended in the staff report.

1. Make a finding that the project is categorically exempt under Class 1 (Section 15301, "Existing Facilities") of the current CEQA Guidelines.
2. Make findings, as per Section 16.82.030 of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the granting of use permits, that the proposed use will not be detrimental to the health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the persons residing or working in the neighborhood of such proposed use, and will not be detrimental to property and improvements in the neighborhood or the general welfare of the City.
3. Approve the use permit subject to the following **standard** conditions:
 - a. Development of the project shall be substantially in conformance with the plans provided by DES Architects/Engineers, consisting of six plan sheets, dated received March 19, 2015, and approved by the Planning Commission on April 6, 2015 except as modified by the conditions contained herein, subject to review and approval of the Planning Division.
 - b. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall comply with all sanitary district, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, San Mateo County Environmental Health Division, and utility companies regulations and submit the appropriate permit applications that are directly applicable to the project.
 - c. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall comply with all requirements of the Building Division, Engineering Division, and Transportation Division that are directly applicable to the project.
 - e. If there is an increase in the quantity of hazardous materials on the project site, a change in the location of the storage of the hazardous materials, or the use of additional hazardous materials after this use permit is granted, the applicant shall apply for a revision to the use permit.
 - f. Any citation or notification of violation by the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, San Mateo County Environmental Health Services Division, West Bay Sanitary

District, Menlo Park Building Division or other agency having responsibility to assure public health and safety for the use of hazardous materials will be grounds for considering revocation of the use permit.

- g. If the business discontinues operations at the premises, the use permit for hazardous materials shall expire unless a new business submits a new hazardous materials business plan to the Planning Division for review by the applicable agencies to determine whether the new hazardous materials business plan is in substantial compliance with the use permit.

Motion carried 7-0.

D3. Use Permit Revision/John Tarlton for O'Brien Drive Portfolio, LLC/1035 O'Brien Drive: Request for a use permit revision to convert a mixed-use office/research and development (R&D) and manufacturing building to a predominately R&D use to allow for an existing tenant, Avalanche Biotechnologies, to expand to the entire building located in the M-2 (General Industrial) zoning district. The previous (2012) use permit approval limited the office/R&D square footage to 14,432 square feet (40 percent of the building). At this time, the applicant is proposing to modify the uses within the building to increase the square footage devoted to wet-lab R&D and supporting office uses. The building's land use would be generally considered R&D, but would contain ancillary manufacturing, warehouse, and office uses. The proposed project includes a request to modify the types and quantities of hazardous materials used and stored at the site. The Planning Commission approved a hazardous materials use permit in April 2014. All hazardous materials would be used and stored within the building. As part of the project, the applicant is requesting a use-based parking reduction based on the specific tenant operations and its Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan, which is intended to reduce the potential increase in trips from the site. A total of 103 parking spaces would be provided, where 120 parking spaces would be required by the M-2 square-footage-based parking requirements. In addition, the applicant is requesting approval of a Below Market Rate (BMR) In-Lieu Fee Agreement for this project. ([Attachment](#))

Staff Comment: Planner Perata said staff had no additions to the written report.

Public Comment: Mr. John Tarlton, O'Brien Drive Portfolio, said that Avalanche was another of their star tenants. He said the company was looking for expansion of their conditional use permit related to hazardous materials associated with their increased area and operations. He said there was also a change in how they would use the building and the implementation of a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan. He noted in response to Chair Eiref's question that their company's TDM program was applied building by building.

Mr. Hans Hull, Vice President of Operations at Avalanche, said the company went public last summer and a clinical trial readout would happen this summer on their lead product. He said their expansion was to use the full building for research and development. He said part of the expansion was the TDM plan, and noted that living in San Francisco he uses the shuttle provided by the property managers from the train to the work place.

Chair Eiref closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Commissioner Onken said that there was a new TDM plan which was a plus, and moved to approve as recommended in the staff report. Commissioner Kadvany seconded the motion.

Commission Action: M/S Onken/Kadvany to approve as recommended in the staff report.

1. Make a finding that the project is categorically exempt under Class 32 (Section 15332, "In-Fill Development Projects") of the current California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.
2. Make findings, as per Section 16.82.030 of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the granting of use permits, that the proposed use will not be detrimental to the health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the persons residing or working in the neighborhood of such proposed use, and will not be detrimental to property and improvements in the neighborhood or the general welfare of the City.
3. Approve the use permit subject to the following **standard** conditions:
 - a. Development of the project shall be substantially in conformance with the plans provided by DES Architects/Engineers, consisting of 10 plan sheets, dated received March 25, 2015, and approved by the Planning Commission on April 6, 2015 except as modified by the conditions contained herein, subject to review and approval of the Planning Division.
 - b. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall comply with all sanitary district, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, San Mateo County Environmental Health Division, and utility companies regulations and submit the appropriate permit applications that are directly applicable to the project.
 - c. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall comply with all requirements of the Building Division, Engineering Division, and Transportation Division that are directly applicable to the project.
 - d. If there is an increase in the quantity of hazardous materials on the project site, a change in the location of the storage of the hazardous materials, or the use of additional hazardous materials after this use permit is granted, the applicant shall apply for a revision to the use permit.
 - e. Any citation or notification of violation by the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, San Mateo County Environmental Health Services Division, West Bay Sanitary District, Menlo Park Building Division or other agency having responsibility to assure public health and safety for the use of hazardous materials will be grounds for considering revocation of the use permit.
 - f. If the business discontinues operations at the premises, the use permit for hazardous materials shall expire unless a new business submits a new hazardous materials business plan to the Planning Division for review by the applicable agencies to determine whether the new hazardous materials business plan is in substantial compliance with the use permit.

4. Approve the use permit subject to the following **project-specific** conditions:
 - a. The property owner shall retain a qualified transportation consulting firm to monitor the trips to and from the project site one year from commencement of operations within the subject building and shall submit a memorandum/report to the City reporting on the results of such monitoring for review by the City to determine the effectiveness of the TDM plan (Attachment D). This report shall be submitted annually to the City subject to review by the Planning and Transportation Divisions.
 - b. Prior to or concurrent with the submittal of a complete building permit application, the applicant shall execute the review to the Below Market Rate (BMR) Housing In Lieu Fee Agreement. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall pay the in lieu fee of approximately \$149,897.60 in accordance with the BMR Housing Agreement (as of July 1, 2014). The BMR fee rate is subject to change annually on July 1 and the final fee will be calculated at the time of fee payment.

Motion carried 7-0.

E. STUDY SESSION

- E1. El Camino Corridor Study:** Status update and opportunity to provide comments and recommendation to the City Council on potential alternatives for El Camino Real within Menlo Park. ([Attachment](#)) ***Continued from the meeting of March 23, 2015.***

Ms. Nicole Nagaya, City Transportation Manager, said the purpose of the El Camino Corridor Study was to focus on the transportation elements of El Camino Real and how it could better serve the community. She said the process was twofold and evaluated the function and vision of El Camino Real and improvements around Ravenswood Avenue as mitigation measures outlined in the Specific Plan.

Mr. Mark Spencer, principal with W-Trans, said the study objectives given to them were for safety and traffic improvement for El Camino Real using a multi-modal approach. He said the given parameters were to stay within the existing right-of-way, keep the medians, look at things from a curb to curb basis, consider surface improvements only, and improvements on the northbound El Camino Real approach to Ravenswood Avenue. He reviewed the public engagement process to date and presented information on daily traffic volumes along El Camino Real. He noted two strong contingents, one of which wanted El Camino Real for motor vehicles and measures to improve traffic flow and the other which wanted to calm the route for safer use by bicyclists and pedestrians. He said the survey asked for the most and least desirable changes. He said the top desirable change was enhanced pedestrian safety in crossing, bicycle lanes along El Camino Real, more bicycle parking close to downtown, more landscaping, perhaps buffers, and timing of traffic signals. He said an undesirable change was more convenient parking along El Camino Real, which became an important decision point in looking at alternatives. He said both higher and lower traffic speeds along El Camino Real were undesirable. He said through lanes along El Camino Real were also undesirable.

Mr. Spencer said there were three alternatives being proposed in addition to a “do nothing” alternative including 1) continuous six lanes along El Camino Real between Sand Hill Road and Encinal Avenue, 2) buffered bicycle lanes, and 3) completely separated bicycle facility with a higher level of protection. He provided visual information on the proposed alternatives in comparison to current conditions.

Replying to an inquiry from Chair Eiref, Ms. Nagaya said there was an increasingly diverse body of research related to the “if you build it, they will come” phenomenon. She said whether a freeway lane, a bike lane, or full out bike network were built that the use would build to fit the capacity. She said New York City has done before and after use counts of protected bicycle lanes.

Mr. Spencer said travel time remained fairly constant throughout all of the alternatives. He reviewed other factors of the three alternatives considered in transportation planning. He said at the last community workshops they had attendees compare alternatives to the others. He said on street parking particularly for alternatives two and three seemed to be viewed as a negative. He said aesthetics was a factor and the number of trees to be removed to provide another right turn lane onto Ravenswood Avenue was a point of discussion. He said most points of comparison were split other than general support that the level of transit was adequate. He said based on the input they did a ranking and a weighted average and found that Alternative 2 probably came out the same or slightly better than Alternative 3.

Mr. Spencer said regarding next steps that they were reviewing the feedback from various workshops, the online rankings that people provided, preparing the draft report for City staff, and making presentations. He said the goal for the discussion this evening was to give City Council a preferred concept. He said from that they would prepare full design plans, environmental analysis and higher level cost estimates.

Ms. Nagaya said letters had been received from the Menlo Park School District and the Menlo Park Fire District and were on the dais for the Commission’s review. She said the Fire District preferred Alternative 1 with three continuous lanes north- and south-bound. She said the School District did not indicate a favored alternative and expressed a desire for improved crossings of El Camino Real and improved intersections for children walking or biking to school.

Chair Eiref said in Table 6 that there was not much difference in travel time but it seemed that Alternative 1 had a remarkably greater impact on travel time being a 17% difference. Mr. Spencer said the 17% difference was from 4.1 minutes to 4.8 minutes, which would not be extremely perceptible to someone driving the corridor. Ms. Nagaya said whatever the alternative even when adding capacity there did not seem to be much improvement in travel time.

Chair Eiref asked about through traffic and local traffic. Ms. Nagaya said in 2010 for Specific Plan the study indicated there was 40% local and 60% regional traffic. Chair Eiref said his original perception was that greater capacity would be better but found the information in the models in the report indicated otherwise. Mr. Spencer said local and regional models were calibrated against existing conditions and regarding the absolute numbers there was justification but no absolute certainty they were correct. He said the difference in volume between the alternatives was good representation as everything else held true. Ms. Nagaya said the C/CAG

VTa model being used to project travel demand was the most sophisticated tool available in San Mateo County.

Chair Eiref said there were five very large projects coming forward in the next few years, and asked if the “do nothing” assumed those projects. Mr. Spencer said the projects assumed and currently approved in the build out of the City’s Specific and General Plan and the County’s General Plan, and the ABAG forecast were built into these models. Replying to Chair Eiref, Mr. Spencer said the 1300 and 500 El Camino Real projects were not approved and SRI was in a holding pattern. He said within the model there was a forecast of growth that could be any and all of those projects. He noted that this question came up often during the public workshops.

Commissioner Bressler asked about bus rapid transit and dedicated lanes and if that could be forced upon the City at a later date. Ms. Nagaya said they have been coordinating with SamTrans whose representative was at the City’s last workshop. She said SamTrans just finished a bus rapid transit study in San Mateo County and they were not going to pursue dedicated lanes in Menlo Park. She said SamTrans could not unilaterally make changes but would need City and Caltrans approval.

Commissioner Bressler asked if their models would say the same relative story whether there was a lot of growth or not as much growth. Mr. Spencer said that was affirmative. He said they would continue to have growth and congestion on El Camino Real. He said this project was not so much a pressure relief valve but recognition that congestion as it comes would have to be dealt with and that they could do better accommodating other modes of traffic and getting people downtown. Ms. Nagaya said the land use assumptions were the same in all the options.

Commissioner Combs asked if Mr. Spencer knew of a community that started with Alternative 2, saw an increase in bicycle traffic volume and then moved to a more built out infrastructure for bicycles. Mr. Spencer said they see a more phased approach. He said San Jose started with some green lanes in some areas, measured traffic and were now moving toward buffered bicycle lanes. Commissioner Combs asked about the suitability of El Camino Real for bicycle lanes. Mr. Spencer said that it certainly was viable. He said there was a wide range of comfort levels that different bicyclists have related to road type and other factors such as speed. He said the biggest question was how to get bicyclists and pedestrians across El Camino Real.

Ms. Nagaya said the City of Mountain View was developing an El Camino Corridor Specific Plan. She said staff understands that they were proposing buffered painted bicycle lanes. She said Atherton was discussing narrowing El Camino Real to two lanes but were waiting until Menlo Park finished its study. She said the City of Redwood City was looking at some turn lanes and median closures. She said the City of San Mateo just finished a Sustainable Streets Plan and through that process identified raised bicycle lanes as the preferred option.

Commissioner Strehl asked what the City of Palo Alto was doing for the El Camino Real corridor. Ms. Nagaya said she did not think they were pursuing bicycle routes on El Camino Real, noting the very good bicycle route they have parallel to El Camino Real on Bryant Street. She said El Camino Real south of Sand Hill Road had higher traffic volume approaching University Avenue. Commissioner Strehl said she was surprised the study did not look at the Bryant Street bicycle route. She asked if they had looked at other alternatives parallel to El Camino Real for bicycle routes. Ms. Nagaya noted that there were three options prepared in

the study for bicycling off El Camino Real that could be combined with the El Camino Real option of three continuous traffic lanes in both directions. She said one from San Mateo Drive to Wallea Drive would use the San Mateo bicycle bridge that leads from Stanford West running north/south along San Mateo and Wallea Drives. She said the second option would start at San Mateo Drive and zigzag over to downtown. She said the third option would start at Alma and the Palo Alto Avenue bicycle bridge that tied into Alma Street and over to the future Garwood extension as part of the 1300 El Camino Real project if developed. She said they did not look at the Willow Place bicycle bridge as a tie-in but could noting they had tried to do routes that were parallel and closest to El Camino Real.

Commissioner Strehl said it appeared that Alternative 1 for three continuous traffic lanes would increase traffic on El Camino Real and reduce traffic on Middlefield Road. Mr. Spencer said that was correct but not at a one to one correlation. Commissioner Strehl asked about cut through traffic. Mr. Spencer said that Alternative 1 would keep more of the traffic on El Camino Real and cause less of a traffic diversion to neighborhood streets. He said with Alternatives 2 and 3 the models showed roughly the same number of vehicles on Allied Arts streets. He said there was the potential to reduce neighborhood cut through traffic and ways to manage cut through traffic with traffic calming measures. Commissioner Strehl asked about Caltrans' involvement in this planning process. Ms. Nagaya said they have kept Caltrans apprised during the process of the different options. She said one of the Council directives was that any adopted alignments or improvements should be consistent with Caltrans design guidelines. Commissioner Strehl asked if Caltrans would look at emergency vehicle and emergency access as part of their approval. Ms. Nagaya said that was part of the City's and Caltrans' processes.

Commissioner Strehl confirmed with Mr. Spencer that about 250 of the survey respondents were from Menlo Park, and that it was a self-selective survey and not random. She asked if there was a test to limit responses to one per household. Ms. Nagaya said the survey tool used was the same as that used for the General Plan Update process. She said respondents could register or respond anonymously. She said more than one response could occur per household. She said the numbers they were seeing from any IP address were not egregious but ranged from two to four responses. Commissioner Strehl asked the number of people that participated in the three workshops. Ms. Nagaya said generally there were 30 to 65 people with the first one in 2014 being the least well attended. She said they had 405 respondents for the last online survey in which people could rank and choose alternatives.

Commissioner Strehl said they did not look at alternatives for bicycle lanes on Alma or Laurel Streets. Ms. Nagaya said they had done some preliminary analysis but the draft report would further enhance the evaluation.

Commissioner Onken asked if there were any changes into the curb cut into private property through any of the alternatives. Mr. Spencer said they were assuming existing driveways and accesses would remain. Ms. Nagaya said the only change to curb would be at the northbound approach to Ravenswood where there was widening to move the right lane toward the railroad tracks. Commissioner Onken said it did not appear there was objection from business owners who have parking along El Camino Real for it to be removed. Mr. Spencer said it was important to keep getting the information out to the business owners through the Chamber of Commerce and mailers to individual property owners and registered business owners.

Commissioner Ferrick said one of the principles of the Specific Plan was creating east-west connectivity and the primary artery for that was the approach to the Menlo Avenue and the Ravenswood Avenue intersection. She said it appeared that none of the three alternatives levels of service were as good as the existing condition for that intersection. Ms. Nagaya said the queue length summary was looking at the approaches on El Camino Real to a particular intersection. She said the existing configuration at Ravenswood was maintained with Alternative 3. She said with Alternatives 1 and 2 there was an additional through lane but no right turn lanes were being removed. She said the improvement in queue length in Alternative 2 related to no project north of Ravenswood Avenue having 3,100 vehicles moving through the corridor in peak hours. She said under Alternative 1 that increased significantly as more traffic would be pulled into El Camino Real because of the greater capacity. She said they did not see a spike in volume under Alternative 2 with an additional right turn lane at Ravenswood Avenue. Commissioner Ferrick asked if the improvements at Ravenswood Avenue might be combined with other alternatives. Ms. Nagaya said they paired the improvements at Ravenswood Avenue fairly independently as part of Alternative 2 but those could be done with Alternative 3 or not at all. She said ideally they would like the Commission's preference as to the alternatives and perhaps look at the Ravenswood Avenue improvements separately.

Commissioner Kadvany asked about buffered bicycle lanes and accessing driveways. Ms. Nagaya showed graphics demonstrating the different forms of painting and buffered bicycle lanes. Commissioner Kadvany said all of the options included completing the intersections and asked if east-west crossing was a separable item. Mr. Spencer said one of the items to pursue was to complete all four crosswalks at each intersection to provide enhanced crossing of El Camino Real in particular with respect to school travel. Commissioner Kadvany asked if the additional right turn lane at Ravenswood Avenue was required in all of the alternatives or if it could be separated from Alternatives 2 and 3. He asked what the benefits were from the extra through lane. Ms. Nagaya said the third through lane was in the Specific Plan as mitigation but was not a requirement. She said it was assumed in Alternative 1. She showed an Alternative 2 graphic with the northbound approach to Ravenswood Drive and a third through lane continuing across the intersection, which would then trap as a right turn lane approaching Santa Cruz Avenue. Commissioner Kadvany asked if the significant redwood tree at the corner of Ravenswood Avenue and El Camino Real would be removed under any of the alternatives. Ms. Nagaya said the trees in front of the Cornerstone building were shown in green in the graphic. She said all three alternatives had some widening and the City Arborist's preliminary review of Alternatives 1 and 2 indicated that all of the redwood trees there would need removal noting there was underground parking under the Cornerstone building, which further inhibited root health.

Commissioner Kadvany said southbound El Camino Real nearing Sand Hill Road was a constrained point for bicycle routes noting the narrow sidewalks there. Ms. Nagaya said putting in a full bike lane would require reconstruction of the bridge. She said widening sidewalks was not part of this study plan. She said sidewalks would occur through development under the Specific Plan.

Commissioner Kadvany asked about the u-turn movement at Cambridge Avenue from northbound to southbound on El Camino Real and if there was a City policy about that. Mr. Spencer said the u-turns exist and its use was high at different times. He said they were assuming no change in functionality for any of the three alternatives. He said restricting u-turns could have unexpected impacts. Ms. Nagaya said they looked at the City's General Plan

adopted in 1994 which did not have a policy specifically around Cambridge Avenue but also predated the connection to Sand Hill Road. She said they considered reactions drivers would take if that u-turn was eliminated, which might have drivers taking several left turns to get back to southbound El Camino Real. She said that might be more impactful to traffic than the u-turn was.

Chief Harold Schapelhouman, Menlo Park Fire District, referred to the letter sent by the District Board noting it was not just specifically related to El Camino Real but also relevant to the ConnectMenlo and Willow Road studies. He said the District has been responding since 2008 to planning efforts with their concerns of impacts to their provision of emergency services but those had not been included with the community goals during the Specific Plan development. He said this study does not include emergency vehicle response and routes, noting El Camino Real is an emergency service route. He said it also does not include El Camino Real as the emergency route to Stanford Hospital, the area's nearest trauma center. He said it also did not consider reciprocal emergency aid agreements that they have with Palo Alto. He said the District supported Alternative 1. He said he thought Alternative 3 would lead to more bicycle and vehicular collisions. He said there were other bicycle routes to get between Palo Alto and Menlo Park. He said El Camino Real was the least desirable route for a bicyclist. He said the discussion should be how to create a bicycle network that did not use busy streets.

Mr. Bill Kirsch, Chair of the Bicycle Commission, said he drives a car and uses a bicycle to do most of his trips around town. He said parallel routes were good for those wanting to get through the town. He said he wanted to access businesses around town and a parallel route on Alma Street would not provide that access for him. He said that was why the Bicycle Commission voted unanimously for Alternative 2 to put buffered bicycle lanes on El Camino Real with the modification of not adding the additional right turn lane off Ravenswood as they thought that would make El Camino Real even more dangerous to cross and would mean removal of redwoods. He said the Transportation Commission voted unanimously for Alternative 3 with separated bicycle lanes. He said he would like the City to get away from the idea of dealing with traffic congestion by adding more lanes. He recommended providing room and access for people who choose bicycles or walking.

Mr. Mark O'Brien, Menlo Park, noted his 40-year career as an arborist and urged further study of the 11 heritage trees before any action was taken to remove them as he strongly believed that all or most of the trees could be preserved. He said they were an important asset now and potentially for hundreds of years into the future. He said he found a report of work done by Caltrans eighteen months ago on a section of Hwy. 101 that was slightly rerouted and widened creating similar impacts to a grove of redwood trees similar to what their heritage trees could experience. He said an independent risk assessment contractor with a track record in this type of high profile projects should be hired before the important trees were removed. He mentioned the contractor that was used for the Seminary Oaks development.

Mr. Henry Riggs, Menlo Park, said he had reservations about this study, how its surveys were conducted, and the conclusion that nine to eleven heritage trees would have to be removed. He said the issue in crossing El Camino Real on bike or foot was not the time allowed for crossing but the two full minute light cycles for traffic to pass by. He asked for the ratio of bicyclists that commute daily versus bus, carpool and train users. He said Facebook, which to his knowledge has the most bicyclist commuters, only has 3% of its employees who bicycle to work. He said the consultants' measurements were not necessarily valid. He said there was no magical cure

for 40,000 vehicles traveling through Menlo Park on El Camino Real daily. He said if El Camino Real worked better for vehicular traffic as residents have requested for nearly two decades it would pull traffic off Middlefield Road and adjacent streets. He said the interest of a few could be well served on a safer bicycle route away from major two-minute intersections, active retail and commercial driveways. He said this bicycle route was already defined in the Specific Plan and required to be done as part of the Greenheart project approval. He said as considered under the Specific Plan, the City in 2018 would have more commerce and more residents, and the question was whether the City would be ready.

Mr. Don Araki, the Tree Specialists, said he was Henry Riggs requested that he look at the heritage trees on the corner of Ravenswood Drive and El Camino Real. He said a possible alternative would be to route the sidewalk in back of the trees as that was City property to allow for more roadway. He said the other alternative would be removal of a few trees closest to the roadway.

Mr. Steve Schmidt, Menlo Park, said in November they concluded a fairly contentious political exercise and the voters decided they wanted to honor the City's Specific Plan. He said that Plan included making the downtown area more pedestrian-friendly, walkable, bikeable and with a more human scale. He said the six-lane alternative would not honor Menlo Park and would degrade the pedestrian experience on El Camino Real. He said they needed to think about what was wanted for Menlo Park. He said if it was more bicycles and a better pedestrian experience that was desired they needed to build an infrastructure friendly to bicycles and pedestrians.

The Commission briefly recessed at 10:10 p.m.

Chair Eiref reconvened the meeting at 10:14 p.m.

Commission Comment: Chair Eiref said his mindset originally had been that the City needed capacity and to get cars through the City. He said the model indicated additional capacity would likely increase congestion. He said he was not now in favor of six lanes. He agreed with Chief Schapelhouman and others that safety was important. He said that he was looking at some version of Alternatives 2 and 3.

Commissioner Ferrick said she wanted them to look to the future and not make things worse. She said the Fire District's concerns were valid. She said studies showed a really protected bike lane could build capacity to use it. She said she saw Alternative 2 as a way to start. She said she was worried about removing the right turn lane at Ravenswood Avenue but also concerned with removing heritage trees. She said Ravenswood was a linchpin for east-west connectivity. She said her concern was if there were fewer cars on El Camino Real if that meant the traffic was using neighborhood streets. She said she liked the idea of Alternative 3 but felt more comfortable with Alternative 2.

Commissioner Kadvany said he shared concerns with implementation but felt the City had delayed improving the infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians, and action was needed. He said he was concerned with the driveway cutouts. He thought the buffer in Alternative 2 might be better than the physical dividers in Alternative 3, which would require traffic stopping. He said four-way pedestrian crossings along El Camino Real have been in the General Plan since 1994.

He said there was an equity issue to provide routes for citizens for whom bicycles were the needed mode of transit.

Responding to a question from Chair Eiref, Ms. Nagaya said only Alternative 2 had parking elimination. She said under Alternative 3 with the buffered bike lane option that the only change in capacity was the turn pockets. She said bulb outs which require elimination of the right turn pocket were discussed during the Specific Plan analysis and whether they would have any capacity impacts or cause additional queuing delay. She said Alternative 3 as defined did not include bulb outs but had protected intersection treatments with median islands that vehicles would have to turn around giving more refuge to bicyclists. She said one of the display boards showed a lane removal but there was no lane removal proposed. She said the graphic would be corrected.

Commissioner Onken said he bicycles every evening from the train station to Stone Pine Lane where he lives along El Camino Real. He said accidents were not from cars speeding by you on the left but from cars turning into you or car doors opening into you from the right. He said Alternative 3 did not do anything about that except remove parked cars. He said he would support Alternative 2. He said he thought Alternative 3 would make bicycling too tempting for novices and that was unsafe. He said Alternative 2 would provide a bit more of a buffer, more of a feel of a sidewalk, and support emergency vehicle passage since cars could move into the buffer space to allow their passage.

Commissioner Bressler said he also supported Alternative 2 and that more attention needed to be given to curb cuts, and that the bicycle safety had not been thought through enough. He suggested there should be more radical solutions to separate bicyclists and cars.

Commissioner Combs said he was against Alternative 1. He said generally he was in favor of building out bicycle infrastructure. He said Palo Alto used Bryant Street, which was not a main artery, for their bicycle route. He said he could support Alternative 2.

Commissioner Strehl said she would like to have some estimation of costs as there were many transportation needs in the City and some were very costly. She said she would have liked the study to look at more alternatives for dedicated bicycle lanes other than El Camino Real that would be safer for bicyclists and motorists. She said she could not support any alternative that would remove any of the heritage trees at Ravenswood Avenue. She said she thought the study was biased and that the Council wanted to look at friendlier environments for bicyclists and pedestrians and not necessarily on El Camino Real. She said she could support Alternative 2 as it would provide a test to see if bicycling was viable for El Camino Real and the bicycling community. She said emergency vehicles were very important and providing access for them was critical. She said she would like the option to convert back if it was not being used by bicyclists.

Commissioner Kadvany said the heritage trees provided a beautiful gateway to the City. He moved to make road and bridge improvements to enhance east-west connectivity. Chair Eiref noted it seemed there was general support of Alternative 2. Commissioner Kadvany moved to recommend adoption of Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative and the preservation of the heritage trees on the corner of El Camino Real at Ravenswood Avenue. He said he would like improved safety measures for the San Francisquito Bridge and Ravenswood intersection.

Ms. Nagaya said the City Council approved two capital projects, the El Camino Real Lane Configuration Study and the El Camino Real Ravenswood Right Turn Lane Design and Construction, which spurred the El Camino Corridor Study. She said they currently have in the consultant's contract and budget the ability to do the full design of whatever option was chosen for Ravenswood Avenue and do the construction as well depending on the option chosen.

Chair Eiref said the motion so far was to recommend Alternative 2, preserve the heritage trees on the corner of El Camino Real at Ravenswood Avenue, and improve safety at the bridge and Ravenswood.

Commissioner Strehl asked if the bridge was in Menlo Park or Palo Alto. Ms. Nagaya said it was in both.

Commissioner Kadvany said the City should think more creatively about alternative routes for bicyclists. He said they also wanted to insure best safety design for driveway curb cuts and crossings.

Chair Eiref said they could add a comment for the City Council to thoroughly explore options for parallel bike routes behind development on the east side of El Camino Real.

Responding to an inquiry from the Chair, Ms. Nagaya said the motion included a preference for Alternative 2, with preserving the heritage trees the highest priority, and insuring the best possible safety outcomes including driveway curb cuts and intersection crossings, at the San Francisquito Creek Bridge and Ravenswood Avenue, and thoroughly explore options for a bike lane or path behind the properties along the east side of El Camino Real.

Commissioner Onken said he thought adding the language about a bicycle path behind the properties was unnecessary. Commissioner Ferrick said she thought that was not needed to be added in at this time. Consensus was to separate the motions.

Commission Action: M/S Kadvany/Strehl to recommend that the Council adopt Alternative 2 (Buffered Bike Lanes) as the preferred alternative, but with preservation of the heritage trees on the corner of El Camino Real at Ravenswood Avenue, as well as ensuring the best possible safety outcomes, including appropriate design of the intersections, driveway curb cuts, San Francisquito Creek Bridge, and Ravenswood Avenue.

Motion carried 7-0.

Commissioner Strehl said she did not fully support Alternative 2 but seconded the motion because of the late hour.

Commission Action: M/S Eiref/Kadvany to recommend to the Council to also thoroughly explore the possibility of a shared-use pathway at the rear of proposed developments on El Camino Real.

Motion carried 5-2 with Commissioners Onken and Strehl in opposition.

Commissioner Ferrick noted that the latter motion was meant as an additional recommendation to the Council and was not intended to replace the initial motion.

F. REGULAR BUSINESS

There was none.

G. COMMISSION BUSINESS

There was none.

H. INFORMATION ITEMS

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Staff Liaison: Senior Planner Thomas Rogers

Recording Secretary: Brenda Bennett

Approved by the Planning Commission on May 4, 2015