PLANNING& TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES

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Meeting of Wednesday, August 26, 2009
Council Chambers, Civic Center, 1st Floor
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94301

ROLL CALL: 6:02 PM

Commissioners:	***Staff:***
Daniel Garber - Chair	*Curtis Williams, Planning Director*
Samir Tuma – V-Chair	*Julie Caporgno, Chief Planning and Transp. Official*
Susan Fineberg	*Donald Larkin, Assistant City Attorney*
Karen Holman	*Chitra Moitra, Planner*
Arthur Keller	*Rafael Rius, Transportation Engineer*
Lee I. Lippert	*Zariah Betten, Admin. Associate*
Eduardo Martinez	*Gayle Likens, Consultant*

AGENDIZED ITEMS:

1. Review and discussion of major themes, vision and overall goals of the adopted 1998 – 2010 Comprehensive Plan.
2. Oregon Expressway Improvement Project
3. Colleagues' Memo on Conversations in connection with Quasi Judicial Matters and Planned Community applications. – Continued to September 9, 2009

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes of July 29, 2009

AT 6:00 PM

Chair Garber: Opening missing

Would the Secretary like to call roll? Thank you.

I suspect we will see Commissioner Keller in a moment or two here.

The Study Session is regarding the Comprehensive Plan Update. This is a review of the current Comprehensive Plan's Vision, Themes, and overall Goals. Please note that Commissioner Keller has joined us. Staff I believe you have prepared a presentation for us.

Study Session:

1. Review and discussion of major themes, vision and overall goals of the adopted 1998 – 2010 Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Julie Caporgno, Chief Planning and Transportation Officer: Thank you Chair Garber. We have a brief presentation because there seems to be some confusion in what we are doing here tonight, and particularly what the process we are proposing for the future review of the Comprehensive Plan.

So for tonight's discussion the Staff Report identified the current seven Themes on which the Comprehensive Plan is based. Those Themes feed into the Vision Statements for each of the chapters that are in the Comprehensive Plan. Those chapters comprise the seven elements that are required by state law. We have six chapters but for some of our chapters we have more than one element that is addressed in the chapter. We gave you a chart that was attached to you Staff Report that was out of the Comprehensive Plan that identifies the seven state mandated elements and then the corresponding Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan elements.

Then the one thing that we are really hoping that the Commission focuses on tonight is the sample of the Land Use Element Goals, Policies, Programs, and format that we hope to use to review with you all of the policies and programs in the existing Comprehensive Plan.

The next steps in the process are we were going to come back to you probably in September and have a discussion on the Vision Statements of the six elements. You have seen them tonight and you have seen the seven major themes. To discuss them for context with each other and also if at this initial stage there are any changes that you see for the Vision Statements as they currently exist. Admittedly we are going to have much time over the course of this review process in which you can make additional changes but just at the get-go if there are ones that you see that do not, as far as you are concerned, reflect the vision of the City for each of these chapters.

Then we will be reviewing existing Goals, Policies, and Programs of the individual elements for relevance and relationship with the four main components of the work programs. Those are restricting conversion of nonresidential land, limiting loss of retail serving uses, strengthening provision of services, and incorporating sustainability concepts. This was also attached to your Staff Report. The way we have proposed to do this is using a matrix that identifies the Goals, the Policies, or the Programs, and then shows the status of that Goal, Policy, or Program. We have added another column based on the discussion we had with the Chair and Vice-Chair earlier this week, and that is relevance with the current work program. Then we will have another column that talks about proposed language change. These are just for what is in the Comprehensive Plan right now. We are assuming that most of those are still valid. What we were proposing to do is we go through each chapter on a meeting basis, so there are probably going to be six meetings in which you discuss these, and maybe some of them will carryover depending on how long it takes for us to get through them. We are not going to be constrained by an hour. These will be regular agenda items. You will go through each of these and we will identify with a check the ones that are relevant to the current work program, and we won't discuss them now. Those we are going to reserve for future. We are going to try to get through the ones that really are pretty much what we think are still valid, relevant, and maybe make few tweaks. Then we are culling out the ones that we are going to discuss more in detail later on that relate to the direction of the work program.

So how this will work is in phase one we are going to examine the Vision, Goals, Policies, and Programs of each element, going through the process that I just described. We are going to identify the Policies and Programs that require modification of language change, and hopefully

make those. Those will be draft because we can change them. Nobody is adopting them and we have not sent them to Council. Then we are going to look at all of these as we go through Policies and Programs against the four work program items for each element, and as I said check those or reserve those. Then the next steps in the process, the phase two after we do all of that, then we are going to revisit the Vision Policies and Programs of each element that relate to those work plan items after we have completed the growth projections, the Comprehensive Plan area studies, and the housing site analysis. That is going to give you direction as to where we might want to make changes. When we find out how much housing we are planning on or there is a possibility of providing and where that is then it may change what we do with our Community Services Policies. We may find out that we don't need to change them, we have sufficient Community Services, or maybe we need more because we won't have enough if we approve the housing that we may need. The growth projections are very important too because how much growth do we expect over the next ten years? If we don't expect very much maybe we don't need to provide very many more services. If we do then we are going to have to provide more services. So then we are also going to be revising and modifying the Vision Statements of each element if necessary at that point. Then we would add relevant new policies and programs to each element that kind of focus on the work item elements.

The one thing that I didn't put in the PowerPoint is that we are planning on going to Council to get some feedback from them. We are hoping that it is a Joint Planning Commission/Council Study Session early in 2010. We were going to go in the next couple of months, probably in October, but then we had discussions internally and decided there wasn't much point in going to Council when four to five Council Members will be leaving, at least four. So we wanted to go to the new Council so that we could provide them with some background as to where we are with this and the direction to date. Then we can get them up to speed and get some direction from them as to where we are heading.

So that is the program. Before I turn it over to you I wanted to mention that you have before you some comments that Commissioner Fineberg sent this afternoon. I think the question, does the Comprehensive Plan matter, is more a rhetorical question and she has provided some of her thoughts on that. The second question is the current Comprehensive Plan has seven chapters and how do existing Comprehensive Plan chapters map to the proposed major themes outlines in the Staff Report. I think there was a little bit of a misunderstanding. We weren't proposing anything and that is why we distributed the Introduction to the Comprehensive Plan. The major themes that we identified in the Staff Report are in the current Comprehensive Plan. So they are kind of the rubric that everything kind of falls under and then the Vision Statements come out of those seven themes. Each chapter has a Vision Statement. So that is the way those themes are supposed to be incorporated in each chapter in the Vision Statement and the Policies, and Programs, and Goals in each chapter. The second comment about is the Business and Economics chapter being merged into the Community Facilities chapter was maybe unclear from the chart that we had provided but they are separate. We are not proposing any changes to the chapters. We are going to still have the same six chapters that are currently in the Comprehensive Plan. So the will be Land Use and Community Design, Transportation, Housing, Natural Environment, Business and Economics, Community Services and Facilities. Then the third question that she had was the proposed wording of these themes assume an outcome of what the stated Comprehensive Plan Policies should be before there is any public discussion or analysis of alternatives. Again, we are not proposing anything we are just bringing to you what is currently in the Comprehensive Plan. So those are themes and if you look at the

introduction that we distributed in the second and third pages of that Introduction which is directly from the Comprehensive Plan it lists those things.

So that is it for us. If you have any questions we will be glad to try to respond. We would like you to focus on that chart. Again, we will be coming back with more of a discussion probably in a month of just the Vision Statements and the major themes. Then we will be getting into the individual chapters.

Chair Garber: Thank you. I have one light from Commissioner Lippert and then we will go to the public, there is one person that would like to speak. Then we will come back to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Lippert: I just want a clarification on one thing here with regard to what you have described in terms of the steps we will be taking. State law requires that we I guess have the Housing Element tied up within 18 months of getting our allocation. When did that clock begin and will we be making that schedule?

Ms. Caporgno: We are behind schedule. The actual Housing Element was supposed to have been completed by July 1. So we are not going to make that deadline. We are not going to be able to have an adopted Housing Element until 2012 when the Comprehensive Plan EIR is completed.

We can get a draft done. We are anticipating having a draft Housing Element to the state some time next year but it is not going to be able to be adopted by Council until the completion of the EIR. When the Council delayed this process for a year we were going to have the EIR ready in 2011, but now it won't be until 2012. We have contacted the state and they are aware of that. So right now we are out of compliance as far as the state is concerned because we don't have an adopted Housing Element.

Commissioner Lippert: Okay, then as a follow up on that I think the state also requires that the rezoning of properties be completed within three years of the approved Housing Element. So where does that put us with regard to that?

Ms. Caporgno: Well, if we have to rezone properties in order to meet compliance with the Housing Element we will probably have to be doing that very quickly after the Housing Element is adopted or when they certify the Element they will indicate how soon we will need to have those sites, if in fact there are sites that we are going to propose rezonings on. If any sites are associated with the two study areas we could be doing those in conjunction with this whole process. So we may have some sites that come out of that. At this point I don't know how many sites we would need rezone in order to provide sufficient sites.

Commissioner Lippert: So we might be able to do some of this concurrently or before the Housing Element is approved.

Ms. Caporgno: Yes if they are in conjunction with one of those study areas.

Commissioner Lippert: Okay, thanks.

Chair Garber: Commissioner Fineberg also has a clarifying question and then Commissioner Holman, and then we will get to the public.

Commissioner Fineberg: Thank you for the answers to my questions Julie. I have a couple of follow up questions. On the first one, which the beginning was stated as a rhetorical question, does the Comprehensive Plan matter, I think everyone would agree, of course. But down in the third section of that is the nugget I think of the important piece of that question. I would like to ask if we can consider that during this discussion. The question is if the Comprehensive Plan does matter then how do we get the long-term goals and policies to be put into practice? What do we need to do differently so the Comprehensive Plan does matter? I ask those questions because as we discuss tonight the different Vision Statements if we could consider any ways of crafting anything differently or if there are tools where we can give the Comprehensive Plan more ways to matter. I just want that to be part of our considerations.

One more quick clarifying question on the second one where I am asking for a mapping between the themes and the chapters. Your Staff Report does an excellent job on page 3 of providing the mapping between the state mandated elements and the Palo Alto chapters in the Comprehensive Plan. Where I am not following the mapping is how the eight identified themes come out of the seven themes that are on page 2 of the Staff Report, how they come out of the seven chapters. So that is why for instance I asked if the Business and Economics was going to get rolled into Meeting Residential Needs. Otherwise I don't see where it exists in the theme. Then there were a couple of themes that are obvious like Meeting Housing Supply I believe maps directly to Housing Element. If we for instance don't have a theme for Business and Economics where do we make sure that those themes are incorporated, or is there some extra theme that it is redundant? There isn't a one-to-one mapping of the seven themes to the seven chapters, or at least not that I could connect.

Ms. Caporgno: My understanding is that the seven themes are incorporated. Again, I was not here when this was prepared. The seven themes are not a one-to-one it is that they are incorporated throughout the Comprehensive Plan. So what we were even proposing is the Sustainability. When we incorporate Sustainability into the Comprehensive Plan we incorporate it as a theme and then it is going to be found in the various chapters where it is relevant in each of these chapters. I think if you were to look at for instance Protecting and Repairing Natural Features that is probably in a few of the chapters. So that is my understanding of how this was developed. So I don't think it is really specific that you could specifically say it is this one versus this one. I think it is a little bit muddier than that.

Commissioner Fineberg: Understood. So then the only other piece of that is if we have seven major themes that don't map exactly to the chapters as we do our reviews starting in September will we be reviewing the themes or the chapters as topics?

Ms. Caporgno: We are going to be reviewing the chapters. The reason we provided the themes is we are trying to give you the big picture of how we got to where we are going.

Chair Garber: As a suggestion you may want to follow up with Commissioner Fineberg separately to help her with some education and history on her paragraph number three, under number one where she is wondering about the connection between the Comprehensive Plan and

how programs have become set and what their success rates are, etc. That might help streamline our conversation.

Commissioner Holman you had a brief one and then we will go to the public.

Commissioner Holman: Yes, a very quick one. I know this has been stated before but just for a reminder. You had indicated earlier that the Housing Element would be going to Council and then there might be some rezoning or maybe not in association with that. When or where in that process, before, after, during, will the Council be deciding how it is going to respond to ABAG in terms of housing?

Ms. Caporgno: What we are planning on doing is prior to the beginning of the year we are going to try identify all the sites that are currently in the city that could accommodate new housing. Then when we go to the Council and probably at this Joint Session that we are probably going to have with the Commission and the Council we will be identifying those sites too. So it will give them some ability to understand how many units we currently have that we could possibly put on the Inventory or the potential, and then what the dearth is, how much we would need to provide in order meet the requirements. So that will give them some indication as to whether or not the ABAG numbers are viable or not. At this point they probably don't have enough information to be able to give us a clear direction. So that is what we are hoping to do in the next three months.

Chair Garber: Julie, would it be fair to say that that would not likely happen before you introduce the Commission to the phase two process?

Ms. Caporgno: That is correct. In fact I should have put on the PowerPoint the four things that would happen before phase two would include some Council direction.

Chair Garber: Thank you. Anything else? We have one member from the public that would like to speak on this item, Sheri Furman. You will have three minutes.

Ms. Sheri Furman, Palo Alto: Good evening Chair Garber and Commission Members. I wrote my comments based on the Staff Report before Julie made an explanation. So given what I am saying feel free to ignore some of the things I am saying or not.

According to the Staff Report you asked for a big picture overview of division of the Comprehensive Plan and how it is various Vision Statements support each other. Nowhere in this report do I find any of that. What I see is a reiteration of what is written in the Comprehensive Plan and which you should all pretty much know by heart. There is no discussion of how maintaining and enhancing community character can be resolved with meeting housing supply challenges, or how you build community and neighborhoods while at the same time meeting commercial needs. The Natural Environment element talks about meeting today's needs without compromising the needs of future generations. It will never build another neighborhood park in Palo Alto despite exploding housing development. How will we provide quality community services if we never create another community center and we even consider selling Cubberly land? Where are the visions of what Palo Alto wants to be and look like over even the next ten years let alone 20 or 50? The Housing Element vision talks about converting nonresidential lands to residential. Will be continue to be driven by ABAG numbers at the expense of retail? What kind of balance do we want between residential, retail, and commercial?

How can we talk about retaining a vital business environment yet interpret the Comprehensive Plan's designation of neighborhood centers to mean they could be replaced primarily by housing? One of the most galling is the last sentence of the Land Use element. All Palo Alto neighborhoods will be improved each to have public gathering spaces, essential services, and pedestrian amenities to encourage less reliance on the automobile. Just where and how are we achieving that?

The Vision Statements are all nicely idealistic sounding but not only are they largely ignored they don't really support each other. So I hope as part of your discussion you can figure out based on what I was reading in the Staff Report how all these things can tie together. Thank you.

Chair Garber: Thank you very much. Commissioners, we have just over 30 minutes. We will just take everybody in order here. We will each have about five minutes. We will be starting with Commissioner Keller, Commissioner Tuma, and then whoever else turns on their light. We will go down the row. Commissioner Keller.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you. I just wanted to remind you of my question of the legality of rationing of market rate housing. I still have not gotten an answer. I know City Attorney is not here. I understand that we are going to look at the Housing Element sometime. I would like that well before we look at the Housing Element. So if we could have that a meeting or two before that that would be very helpful.

When do the new Housing Element inventory sites in that list become effective? So if we put something on that list and we send it to the state does it become effective then or does it become effective when the Housing Element is approved by us or by the state? How does that work?

Ms. Caporgno: It becomes effective when the Housing Element is approved by the City and the state. So it wouldn't be effective until we have an environmental document that can enable the Council to approve the document. They can recommend that this is the new Housing Inventory and that would go to the state and they are going to look at it in conjunction with the whole Element and then get us feedback. But there is not going to be an actual change to it until we have an environmental document. There won't be a change to it until we have an environmental document that covers it. What I started to say was the only way that we could do it quicker is if we have sufficient sites that are currently zoned and planned for as much housing as the ABAG numbers provide, we put them on the inventory, it goes to the state, comes back, and we could do a Negative Declaration for that document. Then it could be approved outside of the Comprehensive Plan process.

Commissioner Keller: So let's suppose in our Draft Housing Element we put a list of sites that include 123 Main Street and therefore somebody owning the property 123 Main Street before this gets finally approved says okay I want to build housing over there and it is not zoned for that. What would happen then?

Ms. Caporgno: If somebody comes in with a project on a property that is not zoned for housing and they want to put housing on it….

Commissioner Keller: Or it is in the Draft Housing list but it has not been approved yet.

Ms. Caporgno: They would have to rezone the property. It would have to go through that process. The thing about the Housing Inventory is it doesn't create any – ideally the sites you put on the inventory are zoned and planned for housing. But in many cases if there are not enough sites you have to rezone them but you would have to do that if you wanted to develop it without it being on the Inventory too.

Commissioner Keller: Well, for example, 195 Page Mill was never zoned for housing. I think it is zoned GM. However, it is on the Housing Element and housing is going in there.

Ms. Caporgno: Can I just add that we started the rezoning process after the Housing Element was adopted on that particular property. Then the applicant came in and somehow there direction to the Planning Department to kind of put it on hold for some period of time.

Commissioner Keller: Can we amend Comprehensive Plan Goals, Policies, and Programs even if they are not part of the four foci and can you remind us what the four foci are?

Ms. Caporgno: Yes, I can remind you what they are. They are restricting conversion of nonresidential lands, limiting loss of retail serving uses, strengthening provision of services, and incorporating sustainability concepts.

Commissioner Keller: So if we identify textural changes to other Comprehensive Plan Goals or whatever that don't just fit into these four can we do those or are we limited?

Ms. Caporgno: They could be done. It is just that the focus is supposed to be on these. If there is something that is relevant, when you go through this process if there is some relevant change that is required or deemed to be necessary that can be done. It is just that the Council direction was to focus on these four elements.

Commissioner Keller: If we wish to, how do we amend the text of these themes that you talked about in the handout today in the introduction? Is there a process for amending those basic themes if we wish to?

Ms. Caporgno: There is not any direct process. The process you are going through is we are opening up the Comprehensive Plan.

Chair Garber: Actually, if I may, the process is for us to get to the next meeting where we will be having the conversation about what the Vision Statements are and that will lead into then a conversation about how the various chapters would be modified to support those Vision Statements. Then eventually it will be drafted.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you. With all due respect, let me just in closing say that with respect to Commissioner Fineberg's first question, third paragraph I am not convinced that it is due to a lack of understanding of Commissioner Fineberg but rather a divergence of practice from what the Comprehensive Plan actually says. It is sometimes because the Comprehensive Plan has conflicting statements in it and certain people may cherry pick certain statement as being consistent with that when some actions are taken, such as certain developments, are actually in contravention of the bulk and the main thrust of the Comprehensive Plan. I think that was what she was referring to but Commissioner Fineberg can answer that herself.

Chair Garber: Thank you. Commissioner Tuma and then Martinez.

Vice-Chair Tuma: I want to talk a little bit about timing and procedure. I am pleased that our liaison from Council is here tonight too because I think these are questions that we have asked before and I think we need maybe somehow some discussion to go on about how these processes are going to work. The Joint Meeting that we are envisioning, timing-wise putting aside what month it might happen but I think driven more by when in the process it should happen, is the idea or the vision that it would happen between what we are kind of calling phase one and phase two? Once we finish with the phase one work. Let me just ask the corollary there or first make a statement. One is I think that the process here is iterative by definition. So I think the interaction between the ultimate decision-making body and the advisory body can also be iterative. I think it is difficult for us to do our job in somewhat of a vacuum. We can make guesses. One could argue well, we should just come up with our own vision of what this should be and give that to Council. But I think some overarching high-level guidance is beneficial and appropriate. Now I know that we are going to change Council Members to some extent here but I am still sort of hungry for some input at a high level from Council about where we should be going with some of these key issues.

Let me drill down on one of them because it is a popular one and that has to do with the Housing Element. On the one hand having the information about the sites and the inventory and all that sort of stuff will be helpful for Council to ultimately decide where they want to go with the Housing Element. However, I don't think that even at this date it is too premature to get some guidance along the lines of A) at all cost we are going to meet the ABAG number; B) under no circumstances are we going to meet the ABAG numbers; or something more likely in between. So without making a definitive decision having some sense for what the ultimate decision-making body wants to do on some of these key issues is going to be helpful. Maybe it doesn't happen until right after the first of the year but I am not completely persuaded that we need to wait until we have done the inventory to at least get some preliminary guidance on policy on the big issues.

Ms. Caporgno: I think that we were originally planning as I said to go in October, which we were not going to have any inventory ready, but since we have now delayed this to probably late January we figured maybe we would have the inventory and it could just be that much more helpful. I don't think that is driving our discussion with the Council. It is more of if we went to the Council now and they gave all of us direction that let's say they don't like the ABAG numbers and then we get four new Council Members who do then – I realize we are going to be back and forth but it seems like this way we would get all them together. The Council that is going to ultimately approve the Comprehensive Plan Update as well as the Housing Element should provide that direction. So that is where we were coming from.

Vice-Chair Tuma: Okay. I am just asking for an iterative process and we don't have to wait until we have certain things locked down because I think we can start it at a higher level and then as we get more locked down there is more guidance, and more guidance.

Our job as Commissioners, as a Commission, is to create a draft of this but doing it without some level of high-level guidance I think is possibly a waste of time.

Ms. Caporgno: I think that what we were planning on doing in going through these chapters at least as early kind of a culling of the chapters we can make some progress but yet at the same time it is not progress that is significant as far as policy. So that way when we get that direction from Council then we will have everything kind of hopefully focused so that you can deal with the ones that are more meaningful. As you can see even from the example that we gave you some of these or many of these policies and programs I don't anticipate that you are going to want to change at all. They have been around for 30 years and they are going to continue but we can at least identify the more important ones and reserve those until after the discussion with Council.

Vice-Chair Tuma: Okay. Let me just make one very quick comment because you had asked for specific input on this chart. I do think that it would benefit from having one additional column before the proposed language changes that identifies the issue that needs to be addressed. In other words, we talk about what the policy is, the status, but then if we are going to change something, in other words if language is necessary then it must have been because we identified something that needs to be addressed. So I think a column that gives us that, what we are trying to fix, by changing the language would be helpful. Thank you.

Mr. Curtis Williams, Planning Director: Chair Garber, can I make a comment?

Chair Garber: Yes.

Mr. Williams: Tagging onto what Julie was saying before the intent I think of what we want to do for the Commission and for the Council before getting the specific answer to how do we want to and what kind of direction are we looking for on ABAG numbers is number one provide the overall Comprehensive Plan context for that discussion. So we don't want to have that discussion in a vacuum of the sort of what is the overall development pattern for the city, what are we trying to balance here in terms of transit service areas versus neighborhoods, etc. Just have some of that discussion, which generally flows from the Vision Statements and getting everyone familiar with what those are and we are not necessarily going to get necessarily changes in those at this point in time but at least everybody get on the same page with those.

Then the second one is to the extent we can I think it would be good for everyone to understand whether we have sites right now that are zoned in a way that gets us halfway there, three-quarters of the way there, all the way there. It gives you a feeling for what the task would be before us in order to in some way comply with or not comply with the ABAG number.

So those are sort of the two components and that is what we really want to focus on, those two issues when we get to the Council. We are hoping it will be a Joint Meeting with the Commission. We are not proposing that it would be part of a Council Meeting as a Study Session. It either needs to be a separate night or a Saturday morning or something like that where we really get a block of time where we can be focusing on those key big picture issues and get some initial direction from the Council, and then follow that up with more details before we really get into the nuts and bolts of the Housing Element and where we are going with it.

Vice-Chair Tuma: Thank you.

Chair Garber: Thank you. Commissioner Martinez followed by Fineberg.

Commissioner Martinez: I want to get back to the themes for a minute. I am just a simple architect from the barrio. I have not really memorized all of the Comprehensive Plan yet. As I read the seven themes it seems to me that one, two, and six kind of say the same thing. I have read it over and over and maybe they start blending even more as you read them more often. I think it would be helpful and I think our public speaker kind of alluded to if instead of your elegant prose you can do like bullets of kind of the essential elements of each of these things. I see them kind of getting at the same thing. Maybe that is okay because I understand that they are diffused throughout the Comprehensive Plan and that is a good thing. But to have sort of themes that sort of jump from one area to another I think helps make it a little bit more confusing for us to read. So if it would be possible to draft this page with just line items, an outline, of what these themes are going to I think it would help us as we move forward with the rest of the review.

Secondly, in terms of the big picture, the four foci, it seems to me that one and two are linked at the hip. That we are trying to stop rampant rezoning of nonresidential land, and we are also trying to support our commercial uses. It seems to me those really go hand-in-hand. Is there a difference that you are trying to get at? Can you let me know that?

Ms. Caporgno: That was the Council direction when the work program was adopted. So they differentiated the two but you are right that they are very closely linked.

Chair Garber: If I may interrupt. Vice-Chair Tuma has possibly a clarifying statement for you.

Vice-Chair Tuma: I think one of the differences there is that the first one dealing with the conversion of nonresidential land was put in at a time where and there was a phase where we lost a fair amount of light manufacturing and other types of property. The next item deals with retail serving uses. So where some of the newer, larger developments are going in those were something other than retail that was lost in those places. So there is an overlap for sure because some of it is preserving retail and not converting to housing, but it was also other types of uses that were being lost during that timeframe.

Commissioner Martinez: My last point is the objective of redoing the Comprehensive Plan to really try to limit the amount of revision or is it more open-ended allowing you and us to really make quite dramatic changes to it? Do we have a limit on time and resources to get this done that we are really trying to target specific actions rather than general overall changes?

Ms. Caporgno: It was supposed to be very focused. Those elements that you have just referred to are portions of them. That is why they identified specifically those areas that they felt there were concerns about how the Comprehensive Plan addressed those areas. The Council has periodically or repeatedly said that overall the Comprehensive Plan as it currently is drafted they feel is pretty much the direction that the city should be heading in. That has been the Council direction to date. Again, when we have a new Council we will see.

The work program was limited. Our contract funding for consultant work is limited and the Staff work was limited also.

Commissioner Martinez: Okay. One very quick comment. We are kind of in a unique economic and development time as we all recognize. It seems to me that there is the opportunity

to really reexamine some of our development notions and goals. Overlaid with that is our Green Building Ordinance which I am hopeful will really change the way development happens, smaller development, less emphasis on getting there by your car, and so on. Is there going to be the opportunity for us to address this in the Comprehensive Plan?

Ms. Caporgno: Sustainability is one key element and that would include this whole Green Building concept. That is one area that the Council really wanted to emphasize. Actually, when they first approved the plan they just wanted us to acknowledge it and then it had become such an important, key element in the city that we have now strongly emphasized it in the work program. So I don't know if I am getting at your question.

Chair Garber: Thank you. Commissioner Fineberg and then Lippert.

Commissioner Fineberg: I would like to start by thanking Commissioner Keller for his earlier clarifying comments about my question one, third paragraph. In the interest of expediency in the meeting I didn't read into the record the second paragraph of that which explicitly talked about why I was asking the question of how can we get the Comprehensive Plan to work better, to be enforced. I am still unclear how when we have Vision Statements, which are the big visions in the Comprehensive Plan, and then when we have project review and we are told the Vision Statement doesn't have the force of law it is only a vision, and then we cherry pick specific Policies and Programs and we do that to justify converting retail to housing, to teardown light manufacturing and convert it to housing, to teardown recreational facilities and convert it to housing. I don't understand how the Comprehensive Plan is working. So I bring it back to the question of is there anything we can do in the Comprehensive Plan so that biggest most important vision items are the pieces that are compared with the actions of projects, so that the specific projects carry the vision of the Comprehensive Plan and is the sidewalk the right width, or is there a front door in the right place. If we are tearing down things that are vital to the community and vital to the vision of the Comprehensive Plan that to me is a bigger miss than whether it is Policy P or Z. So enough said on that one.

On the discussion for tonight is it intended that we are to have a discussion of specifics regarding the handout we got called Introduction that lays out the themes? Is this our shot at commenting at the themes or will they come back as items through each chapter review?

Ms. Caporgno: What we planned on doing, initially we were thinking you were going to have a discussion of those tonight and then you would continually have an opportunity to kind of modify them through the process. However, after talking to the Chair and Vice-Chair earlier this week we decided that this is just kind of a preview for you tonight and we are going to have a meeting and we will have more time. It won't be just an hour. We will have a meeting probably sometime next month in which we will discuss the Vision Statements and the themes. Just kind of generally what you think of their applicability now. They are not going to mean that this is it you are never going to be able to touch them again but kind of at the beginning of the process of your reviewing everything as a what do you think of these. So when you start looking at the individual chapters for this first phase you will have an idea of kind of what the bigger picture direction of the Comprehensive Plan currently is. As we go through this you will have an opportunity to change them. You can make some suggestions now. Nothing is going to be approved at this stage. As I think Vice-Chair Tuma mentioned this is an iterative process. It is

not just an iterative process for Council direction but it is an iterative process for your discussions.

Commissioner Fineberg: Okay, I appreciate that. I then would like to reiterate I believe it was Commissioner Tuma's comments regarding the difficulty of us commenting and giving Council recommendations on what might be public policy decisions that are best left to Council. Without their guidance on things like the Housing Element and satisfying ABAG goals, or on some of the big items – I understand it is our role to make recommendations to Council but there are certain things that Council will be the deciding body and we need some guidance from them on what their vision is too. So if there is any way we can get that before new Council is sworn in I think that would be productive even if it means an extra meeting or maybe there is a swing in the sentiment of Council. Thank you.

Chair Garber: Thank you. Commissioner Lippert and then Holman.

Commissioner Lippert: I would like to begin first by thanking Sheri Furman for her comments early on. I think that you were spot on in terms of your comments and I don't think they are against what Staff has proposed here at all. I think it is quite appropriate what you had to say.

I would like to begin by saying that – I guess I am going to rant for maybe five minutes or so. I went to that SB 375/AB 32 training in Sacramento and a little bit of knowledge can often times be a bad thing. I learned a lot I really did about growth and land use, and how California is going to be growing. The first thing that came up, the first speaker City Manager, Newport Beach, and what did he do? He pulled this out, our Vision Statement on our Comprehensive Plan. What he said is this pays nothing but lip service. He says, I am not singling Palo Alto out it is like every other city in California it describes this wonderful, livable, workable, walkable, bikable, beautiful community but it does nothing in its Comprehensive Plan to arrive at those and achieving the goals and policies that are outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.

Now, what I am about to share with you I think is really important and that is SB 375. SB 375 finally begins to tie land use and transportation and that is a major theme that needs to be included in our Comprehensive Plan. Not just the Housing Element but where we are going to grow, how we are going to get people in and out of this community. We have a major jobs/housing imbalance. We have 100,000 people plus that commute into Palo Alto every single day. We are talking about taking industrial off the table in terms of redevelopment. We want more people living in Palo Alto, working in Palo Alto, living and working and that is how we are going to achieve some of these goals in terms of our carbon, our greenhouse gas emission reductions, how we are going to get people off the road, how we are going to get people biking through our community, how we are going to wind up with more parks in this community, and how we are going to wind up with this becoming a livable, walkable, bikable, wonderful community. So I just wanted to bring that up. I am ranting as I said.

The other aspect of it is SB 735 really begins to address things like transportation, warehousing, and intensification of land use happens near transit. The definition that the State of California had was within a quarter mile of transit nodes you really need to intensify. They have extended that out to half a mile. We need to be looking at everything within half a mile of the Downtown transit center and half a mile of California Avenue as being prime target rezonable sites for housing because we want people to get on the train and take the train to San Francisco or San

Jose. Then in addition to that it takes 22 to 28 units per acre for VTA to begin to look at transit lines in terms of light rail and bus lines in order to make them viable. So the meat and potatoes of this whole thing is we can look at this, and we can wordsmith this Introduction as much as we want, but what it boils down to is us being able to come up with the right equations to meet the ABAG numbers. I say that, the ABAG numbers whether we like them or not are the numbers, and how we are going to begin to have these policies become equations. So this Introduction really needs to be written at the end of this whole thing. It is almost like writing a prologue to a story that has not been written yet.

Then one last thing that I need to say is with regard to our low-income housing element. That is really the meat and potatoes I think of the Housing Element. We are really pretty far behind with regard to that portion of it, the very low and moderately low. Am I correct? If I might just finish this up?

Prescribed within our requirements 15 percent of market rate housing has to go into the affordable housing. Well, the only way we are going to make these below market rate numbers is to make sure that all those market rate housing that is built balances with the number of below market rate housing units that need to be built. We are not going to be able to build those below market rate housing units and make those below market rate numbers unless the market rate housing allows us to do that because it is not coming out of our pockets individually. It is coming out of the developers' pockets when they build that market rate housing.

So I think I have ranted enough but that is my two cents and take it for whatever you want.

Chair Garber: Thank you. Commissioner Holman and then myself and then we will move to the regularly scheduled meeting.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. I think there have actually been some very good comments made and I want to take a little bit different angle on some of this. I think the Vision Statements do paint a picture that is rosy. It does describe what our community is like now and I would agree with some comments about we don't do much to support these. For instance the first theme talks about Palo Alto's diverse neighborhoods are the building blocks of the community yet we do nothing to support neighborhoods being able to choose what kind of development goes in their own neighborhoods. We have the single-family story overlay, I am talking quickly because of the lack of time here so pardon me. Those tools are not made available. We talked about that during the Zoning Ordinance Update and we have never gotten back to it, yet the Commission had supported doing that but as a follow up. We have never gone back to it.

I could go through a number of these things. It talks also about Public Facilities and small business is an essential part of neighborhood life and helps build a bridge between neighborhood and community. Yet we had an opportunity recently where we let a lot of the small businesses go away and be converted to housing at a neighborhood center. That sort of thing.

So I think one of the things that would be really helpful for us to know how to address the Comprehensive Plan Update and I think actually it would help greatly with the two study areas that we are looking at is what tools are available to the City to get more parkland through Quimby Act. I want to make two comments here. What tools are available? What are they? What are the right proportions in a town this size? What should be the right proportions of retail,

office, housing, parkland? What would be the ideal proportions? What are the tools that we can use to make those things happen? Quimby Act is an example.

Here is my second comment is I have heard many times, I don't know that I disagree that the City is reactive rather than proactive. So we have the Quimby Act as a tool yet we let a couple of major projects, I am not being critical of Staff that is not my intention here whatsoever, I am just saying that it is how the City is running and has for some time. So we have the Quimby Act as a tool but we don't adopt it until after we lose a couple of opportunities on El Camino for large developments. So I think if we have on the table what those tools are we can actually be more proactive because there will be a greater awareness of the existence of those tools.

Another example of where I would like this to help us out is small businesses retaining and attracting. We have the ten myths of Downtown that we have seen in a couple of different iterations of that and the importance of those businesses. What are the tools we can use to attract them? To retain them? This week I found out we are losing another one of our 30-year-old businesses in the Ramona Street district. The community of our local businesses, which is what differentiates our community from other communities and other communities from us, that community grieves, literally grieves. I see it when those businesses go away. What are we doing to help them make it through tough times or even good times when rents are escalating? What tools do we have and what are we doing?

For some of our visual elements, one of my favorite quotes is architecture is static music, by Gurtha. We have the El Camino Design Guidelines but yet they don't seem to be working. The public doesn't seem to think that they are working either. It relates to our themes here and our vision. That is probably enough said.

Some low-hanging fruit. Perhaps when we are going through this we can do one thing that has frustrated a lot of people I think is if we could possibly renumber and letter so we don't have Policy L-1 and Goal L-1 and Program L-1. If we could look at some way of fixing that that would be terrific.

Chair Garber: Some very quick comments because we are over time. Some great comments, thank you Commissioners for providing them.

A couple of quick comments regarding the process. It matters less to me whether we start at a vision or we start at the data to get to the end and that is primarily because the process is designed to be iterative. It doesn't matter where we start it is going to be the wrong place and that is why we will come back and correct that and the process accommodates that. So I am not afraid of starting with a vision and then moving down into the data because we will come back and modify the vision as we get there, as we learn from the subsequent steps what our starting point should have been, and we will correct that.

I think it is also important to recognize that visions are important because they establish what we want to be. The Goals, Policies, and Programs that support those visions are the strategies that are then employed to get us from where we are now to where we want to be. It surprises me not at all that we are recognizing that the difference between where we want to be and where we are is very great because if for no other reason the Comprehensive Plan that we have been working

under is well out of date, having been first published over ten years ago. So it should be a large gap and part of our task is to find ways and the strategies that need to bridge those things.

That is a separate exercise from the question of Comprehensive Plan effectiveness. An interesting topic but one I think we have to guard ourselves from approaching in generalizations. If we believe there are breaks in its effectiveness it seems to me we have plenty of opportunities to look at that very specifically and only through specific investigation will we actually reveal and come to terms with what some of the potential tools are that need to be employed, or processes that need to be fixed that will get us a closer match between what we want and where we are.

Finally, one last comment and that is, although there could be plenty of others, but just specifically regarding Attachment C I am assuming that not columns but additional rows will be added as we get into each one of these things so that you can then identify very specifically the pieces that we will and potentially will not be revising and the degree to the revision that needs to be addressed.

Other than that I will thank the Commissioners for some very good comments and we will close the Study Session.

AT 7:00 PM

Chair Garber: We will open the regularly scheduled Planning and Transportation Commission agenda of Wednesday, August 26, 2009. We have already called roll. Now would be the time that anyone from the public can address the Commission on items that are not on our agenda. I have no cards so we will move to Agenda Changes, Additions, and Deletions.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS. Members of the public may speak to any item not on the agenda with a limitation of three (3) minutes per speaker. Those who desire to speak must complete a speaker request card available from the secretary of the Commission. The Planning and Transportation Commission reserves the right to limit the oral communications period to 15 minutes.

AGENDA CHANGES, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS. The agenda may have additional items added to it up until 72 hours prior to meeting time.

Chair Garber: We have one. Item number three, the Colleagues Memo on conversations in connection with quasi-judicial matters and Planned Community applications will be removed from the agenda and will be added to our next meeting of September 9.

That brings us to our first item of the regularly scheduled meeting, which is actually item number two, the Oregon Expressway Improvement Project. Recommendation to City Council on the request by County of Santa Clara, Roads and Airports Department for the approval of the proposed Concept Alternatives at nine intersections as part of the Oregon Expressway Improvement Project.

Before we get started I have to declare that I have to recuse myself from this item and I will not be participating on it because I happen to live within 400 feet radii of one of these items so I cannot participate on it.

Also, Vice-Chair Tuma has to leave the meeting as well for personal reasons. So the Acting Chair will become Commissioner Holman and the Vice-Chair or as I have been corrected the timekeeper will become Commissioner Lippert. We will make that change and they will carry this item forward.

Public Hearing:

2. **Oregon Expressway Improvement Project:** Recommendation to City Council on the request by County of Santa Clara, Roads and Airports Department for the approval of the proposed Concept Alternatives at nine intersections as part of the Oregon Expressway Improvement Project.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you and thank you for your patience while we rearrange ourselves here. If there are more speaker cards to come if they could be provided to the Staff and then the Staff will forward them since we do not have a Secretary at this time.

Then does Staff have a presentation? Do you want us to take a two-minute break? You are shifting from one to another.

Ms. Caporgno: Before I introduce Rafael who is going to give the presentation I just wanted to mention that we have from the County Road and Airports Department with us tonight Dan Collen who is the Deputy Directory and Ananth Prasad who is the Senior Civil Engineer. After Rafael gives a presentation they may want to just briefly some comments to the Commission but they are not here for a presentation, but will be here for questions if you have any of them. With that I would like to introduce Rafael Rius who is our Transportation Project Engineer and has been working with Gayle Likens on this project. Rafael.

Mr. Rafael Rius, Transportation Project Engineer: Thank you Julie. I am here to give a brief summary of the Oregon Expressway Improvement Project.

A little bit of background. This project covers Oregon Expressway between US 101 and El Camino Real and is approximately 1.6 miles with six signalized intersections and three unsignalized intersections that are being analyzed for improvements.

A little bit of background. A 2003 Comprehensive Expressway Planning Study was adopted and it was intended to provide a long-term plan for the improvement and maintenance of the County expressway system with the following objectives: to improve coordination along Oregon Expressway to reduce delay and enhance efficiency of the intersection operations, and to improve the safety of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. The Oregon Expressway Improvement Project secured a $3.5 million federal grant to implement the improvements. Thus far there have been three community meetings and several meetings with stakeholder groups such as the Midtown Neighborhood Group, PABAC, and the Ohlone PTA. Now they are ready to present the concept plans to you.

The current traffic on Oregon Expressway is roughly 40,000 vehicles per day on a weekday and 24,000 vehicles on a typical weekend. Between January 2003 and July 2008 there were 200 collisions and the majority of them were rear end type collisions. The intersection with the highest volumes crossing Oregon Expressway was at Middlefield Road. Currently Middlefield is the bottleneck and controls the whole corridor in terms of coordinating and cycle lengths.

The general strategies for part of this project are to upgrade the traffic signal equipment and improve the coordination. To change the side street lane configurations and signal phasing patterns. To channelize pedestrians to safer crossing areas, and improve the actual crossing facilities, and straighten out the crosswalks. The main intent is to improve the safety of pedestrian and bicycle crossings, and also restrict some side street movements at the unsignalized intersections where they are currently allowed to turn left or go through Oregon Expressway.

A summary of our recommendations. We do endorse the County's recommendation for improvements at eight of the nine intersections, which include West Bayshore, Indian, Greer, Louis, Cowper, Waverley, and Bryant. We also endorse the recommended improvements at Middlefield Road, which does include the widening and removal and replacement of four trees. We did want to also mention that we understand that there might be some other issues other than traffic. So there is another alternative that is also acceptable.

At Ross Road the County's current recommendation is to keep it as an unsignalized intersection and the Staff's recommendation is to signalize it and it would be consistent with the bicycle boulevard that is planned for Ross Road.

The other recommendations are to direct Staff to work with the County, the neighborhood groups, PABAC, and so forth to develop detailed design plans for implementation. Also to direct Staff to continue monitoring the traffic after implementation and report back within six months.

At the various public meetings several comments were continually raised and they include: that the improvements should focus on pedestrians and bicyclists' safety, the improvements should eliminate conflicting movements with left turn vehicles and pedestrians or left turns through opposing vehicles. The proposed improvements at Middlefield should minimize impacts on the landscaping strips, trees, and it should also be noted that the early proposals for Middlefield had much more widening and removal of up to 13 trees and the County has worked hard to reduce that down to an option that removes four trees and zero trees.

The early concepts for Bryant and Louis needed major modifications based on the public's input. The public also felt full median enclosures at Waverley and Ross were too restrictive but in general they were okay with it at Indian.

Just to summarize the individual intersections, at West Bayshore Road the plan is to widen and include a bicycle slot between the left and right turn lanes. At Indian they are proposing to extend the median through the intersection, which would allow only a right turn in and a right turn out. At Greer Road they would add left turn lanes and improve the pedestrian crossings. The signal operation would be converted to eight-phase, which includes protected left turns. This would eliminate the left turn conflicts with vehicles and pedestrians. It should also be noted that Greer is a school commute route to Jordan that is heavily used. Similarly, Louis is also a

school route. At Louis there are similar improvements, the left turn lanes, and the eight-phase operation. There are currently rolled curbs at Louis, which would be converted to vertical curbs. Currently there are cars that drive up onto the sidewalks when making right turns, and again elimination of the left turn conflicts with other vehicles and pedestrians. At Cowper Street the improvements would include left turn lanes and eight-phase operation, and also the pedestrian crossing improvements. At Waverley Street the intent would be to remove the through and left turns out of Waverley onto or across Oregon Expressway, and also to remove the marked crosswalks. At Bryant Street a new bike slot would be provided for the southbound approach. The intersection would still operate with split phasing but there would only be one crosswalk, the west side crosswalk would be removed, and that would still allow for the split-phased operations to work with the coordinated system.

On to Ross Road, the County's recommendation to keep it as an unsignalized intersection but allow left turns off of Oregon Expressway. It would remove the left turns from Ross onto Oregon Expressway and also the through movements forcing vehicles to turn right. Bicyclists would also need to turn right or they would need to dismount and walk across. The configuration that the County proposes does allow for future signalization that is compatible with the bike boulevard for Ross.

Staff's recommendation is a third alternative which includes the signalization and the bike slot and is consistent with the bike boulevard project. It will provide a protective pedestrian crossing. Right now it is probably limited to funding constraints otherwise it is in general the favorite alternative of most.

Here you can see Alternative 2, which is currently proposed by the County, unsignalized and provides a right turn only lane, the crosswalks are removed. Alternative 3 shows a modification that fits in with the previous Alternative but it is signalized still forcing the right turns from Ross. There is a protected bike slot and a protected crosswalk. This configuration is very similar to what is currently out at Bryant and Embarcadero. At Middlefield Road both the County and Staff were in agreement for recommending Alternative 3, which would require widening of five feet, provide left turn lanes, and improve pedestrian crossing. It would allow the eight-phase signal operation. It is consistent with the mitigation measures that are identified in our City Comprehensive Plan to construct left turn lanes and allow two through lanes in each direction of Middlefield Road. Again, this would require widening and reducing the planting strip from four feet to two and a half feet, and it would replace four existing trees with smaller size ones. There is a fourth alternative which wouldn't require any widening but there would only be a single northbound through lane. The current peak hour traffic volumes show that both work roughly the same but there are fluctuations where there might momentarily large demands of northbound through traffic, which could cause longer queues and backups. Alternative 3, which is recommended would provide more flexibility to accommodate that. Also, there would be an offset with Alternative 4 in the southbound lane of about five feet.

This is Alternative 3, the modified version, which shows you can see in the bottom picture there is a left turn lane, a through lane, and then it is actually a through and a shared right turn lane. The current peak hour demand may cause that right turn lane to operate almost exclusively as a right turn lane but it does have the flexibility to allow through traffic if the demand calls for it. Then no widening alternative, Alternative 4, that right lane would have to be a right turn only lane because there is not enough room for receiving two lanes on the other side with the addition

of the left turn lane. Again, there is the offset and that is why you would see a line painted across the intersection coming in the other direction.

The County prepared a Traffic Impact Analysis Report. The findings of that report show that the intersection of Middlefield would improve from currently deficient levels to acceptable levels with either Alternative 3 or 4. The other signalized intersections would operate roughly the same conditions even though you are adding a left turn phase. The main point is that the safety of those intersections would improve.

The average speeds could increase from what they are currently at, 20 miles an hour, to 23 miles an hour during the peak periods. This could come from enhanced coordination along the corridor. The improvements at the unsignalized intersections would probably have a minimal effect on the way the corridor as a whole operates in terms of traveling up and down Oregon.

In conclusion, again, Staff is in agreement with each of the County's recommendations with the exception of Ross Road where Staff recommends the signalization alternative. We concur with the County for the recommended improvements at Middlefield Road from a traffic perspective it allows the most flexibility. However, if widening cannot be accommodated we would recommend Alternative 4 over the do nothing alternative, which is currently at an unacceptable level. We are available for any questions and so is the County Staff.

Ms. Caporgno: I don't know if anyone from the County would like to offer any comments before we turn it back over to the Commission.

Mr. Dan Collen, Deputy Director of the County Roads and Airports Department: Thank you. I don't have a lot to add I just wanted to say that we deeply appreciate the involvement of the City Staff at each step of the way helping us through this process. I want to say thank you to the participants in this process including Commissioner Keller, who was at each of our meetings, and thank the residents and citizens of Palo Alto for participating in our process and openly sharing your concerns, trusting us to process that information and work through the alternatives which we refined at each step of the way to fine tune a produce, which we think will well serve the citizens of Palo Alto and the users of Oregon Expressway at the same time. So I will make myself available to answer the questions. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Before you leave, I believe there is a question for you. Commissioner Lippert.

Commissioner Lippert: Could you just briefly comment on the Staff's recommendation in terms of alternatives and how the County feels about it.

Mr. Collen: I think that we are basically in alignment. The only difference between what we had proposed for Palo Alto consideration and what Staff has suggested instead is that Ross where the City Staff is recommending the Alternative 3. We only propose Alternative 2 as a matter of timing and perhaps a matter of funding. We don't know what all the final costs are going to add up to be but we know that adding a new traffic signal will have cost for the project. So we felt that the first step was to setup the intersection to function as if it was going to have the bike boulevard treatment, and not implement the bike boulevard improvements until such a time as the bigger bike boulevard project went forward. So for us is it more just a matter of timing. If

the City is prepared to move forward with that improvement at this time then we will certainly try to incorporate that into the project. Like I said, it is just now a matter of costing everything out and prioritizing and seeing where we are.

Commissioner Lippert: Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Does City Staff have anything else to add?

Mr. Rius: Not at the moment.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Keller had submitted some questions. If the Staff would care to go over those that would be great.

Mr. Rius: We received five questions and I would like the County to help in answering numbers one, three, and four. We can answer question number two. I am not sure if we have them available anywhere. The first question is what are the approximate projected costs of each proposed option by intersection.

Mr. Collen: This was a conceptual plan development at this time. It has not been costed out yet. We wanted to focus on what the desired improvements were and we will put the cost numbers on later. We do know from general experience that an intersection rebuild or redo of the traffic signals can cost on the order of $200,000 to $250,000 per intersection. So we are talking about nine intersections needing some kind of treatment. When we extend that out that is real close to where we think we are in terms of the amount of money that will be available for the construction contract. So we are real close right now we think but the bidding environment changes from season to season and year to year. So right now the snapshot says we are looking good but we really need to get into a more detailed development of construction plans, maybe a 30 percent level to get a much better handle on what the anticipated costs will be.

Commissioner Keller: With respect to that question, presumably if we used Option 4 on Middlefield Road that would be cheaper than Option 3M. So one of the interesting questions that we would – since the cost of the Ross Road Option 3 versus Option 2 depends largely on cost one of the issues is that if Option 4 is cheaper than Option 3M by sufficient amount that it pays for the signalized intersection at Ross Road then that might sway the Commission one way or the other. Similarly, if in terms of the tradeoff for West Bayshore whether we make improvements on that considering there are almost no bicyclists taking that route versus moving that improvement over to Ross Road, those are the kinds of tradeoffs I think we need to understand.

Mr. Collen: I think it is early to make those decisions because we don't have the cost figures to really say that we need to tradeoff location A for location B. I don't think that we need to make those tradeoffs at this time. Our rough estimate is projecting out with a rough dollar per intersection estimate everything should be covered. So we are not at a point of tradeoff yet.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. The next one?

Mr. Rius: The second question is what are the constraints on spending the City of Palo Alto funds?

Ms. Gayle Likens, Consultant: The Stanford Research Park Impact Fee Ordinance specifies the use of the funds and how they can be used. I will quote from it in an abbreviated format for the sections that are applicable. The monies in the fund shall be eligible for expenditure only for the capacity improvements at the designated intersections including Middlefield and Oregon as being one of the four, or for alternative improvements or alternative intersections that are determined by the Chief Transportation Official subject to the approval of the City Council to provide adequate feasible alternative mitigation of those impacts addressed in the EIR that are proposed to be mitigated by the capacity improvements, etc., etc. So at this point the alternative improvement that is recommended for Middlefield is totally consistent with the description of the impact and mitigation in the EIR. Any change to that we would have to evaluate and discuss with our City Attorney's Office and report to the City Council and make a recommendation to them. We are not prepared at this point to make a determination as to how the funds could be used alternatively.

Mr. Rius: Question number three is what trees are being removed for this project, including on the Oregon median, and what are the proposals for the replacement?

Mr. Collen: The only trees that would be proposed to be impacted by this project would be the four trees that are involved with the Alternative 3, Modified on Middlefield. There is no impact on trees in the median of Oregon.

The question about replacement is addressed in the Arborist Report that we had done. That report worked out three alternatives. I don't think we are limited or bound to those three alternatives. I think they are just a starting point and as we go into design then we could work much closer with Palo Alto Staff and the residents to come up with an acceptable plan.

Mr. Rius: Question number four is what are the prospects of replacing damaged landscaping on the south side of Oregon caused by the sidewalk project?

Mr. Collen: There were some trees that were removed by the sidewalk construction that is shown in your handouts as by another contract, well that was the contact. It was worked through conceptually in our Expressway Planning Study Update that was completed in 2008. Then it was also included in the discussion at the community meetings in the development of the project description. For ease of construction we put it into the paving project for timeliness as well. It just was an opportunity and it also allowed us to address the routine accommodation as a part of a paving project to bring in some pedestrian facilities at the same time. So there were some trees that were impacted by the project. The most significant impacts actually resulted from trenching irrigation, which we included in the project at the request of Palo Alto Maintenance Staff. We were happy to include that in the project but it did have some impacts. We are currently offering and working with the Palo Alto Staff right now on some replacement plantings that could be done with the current contract or I suppose left over and rolled into this follow on contract.

Mr. Rius: The fifth question is if we can comment on the Middlefield Road intersection any preference by some on the alternatives. The statistics on Table 1 in the report does not show much difference between the two alternatives and should we require additional statistics on differences between Alternative 3 and Alternative 4.

Commissioner Holman: I think there might be a clarification of that question from the author.

Commissioner Keller: Yes, I actually verbally gave that question to Zariah so it was transcribed and doesn't have my usual way of writing questions. My understanding is if you look at Middlefield Road it appears that Table 1 basically indicates there is not much difference in timing from Alternative 3M and Alternative 4. But when you look at this big fat report it appears that the main difference is that there are more people on the northbound side going straight then turning right. There seem to be relatively few pedestrians by your data but there apparently are a lot of bicyclists. So perhaps the fine point to put on this question is if you can compare one through lane and one right lane versus two through lanes with respect to the pedestrian/bicyclist conflict on the logical east side crossing Oregon Expressway because the number of bicyclists according to your data is as many as 33 in the PM rush hour and that is about half as how many take Bryant Street in that location, which is actually amazing data for me to see. So I am sort of wondering the extent to which that bicyclist/pedestrian conflict makes that right turn lane better as a right turn lane or right turn lane better as a through lane.

Mr. Collen: I think the analysis will tend to average things out and not show much difference. What Alternative 3 gives you is more flexibility. You have the ability for any particular cycle of the signal if most of the cars are going through. They can balance in the lane stacking as opposed to having to stack in one lane with very few right turns. Or if there are right turns that need be accommodated they can use the right lane that is a shared through and right. So by being a shared through and right then it gives you more flexibility to deal with the situation that occurs with any particular cycle of light.

Commissioner Keller: In an ideal world that makes sense but since I am approaching northbound probably from Marion or whatever the next street is and if I am heading northbound I need to know which lane I should take. I don't know whether there are going to be right turn people ahead of me who are prevented from making a right turn because a pedestrian or bicyclist shows up at that intersection. So it is hard for me to make that decision and I can't move over if I am already at the interchange. So that is where the question arises.

Commissioner Holman: Gayle.

Ms. Likens: Another aspect of this Alternative 3 versus 4 for bicyclists, and Middlefield is largely an adult cyclist commuter route not withstanding those bicyclists that may be on the sidewalk, but in the Alternative 4 the curb lane becomes a right turn lane. Therefore all bicyclists who are turning north would need to merge over into the through lane and that is less desirable at a major intersection like this. We recognize that Alternative 3 does have narrow lanes, nine and a half foot lanes. So the cyclists are going to have to take the lane but to make that merge over into the through lane is another maneuver that is less desirable for the through cyclists.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Commissioners, unless there are any burning clarifying questions we have 17 speakers so I would like to get to the public. With the public's and Commission's forbearance if there is anybody here who has a small child that would like to come and speak first, if they have turned in a card. If you have a small child with you and you need to speak first if you would identify yourself, and if you have already turned in a card. There are two? You will have three minutes. What is your name, sweetie?

Miss Anuva Benwasy, Palo Alto: To dear City of Palo Alto, having lots of trees is a really good idea. Please do not cut trees in front of my house. Think of the little children like me who love biking, roller blading, and walking. I love Palo Alto. Please keep it green and safe. Thank you. Anuva Benwasy, second grade. This is a picture I drew for City of Palo Alto.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you very much. Nice job. Does your dad want to speak as well? And you have turned in a card? So if you would come forward and identify yourself.

Mr. Andy Benwasy, Palo Alto: I live on Middlefield Road. To the City of Palo Alto, we, that is me, my wife, and Anuva live in the last house on the northwest side of the intersection of Middlefield Road and Oregon Expressway, which is pretty much going southbound. We moved into this beautiful tree-lined neighborhood, section of Palo Alto, just in April 2009. We bought this house particularly for its greenery, proximity to Jordan, and for its kid-friendly surroundings. We have a seven-year-old daughter, Anuva, who has dreams of growing up here and cycling to Jordan when she is ready for middle school.

While there is certainly merit in improving the traffic patterns it is extremely important to do it in a responsible manner that takes into account the people most affected by it. One of them us who lives right on that intersection. We researched immensely before considering several other places before we moved into this neighborhood we love, and would like to nurture it with love and care for several years to come. To find out the very reason we moved here is now challenged pains our heart. Taking away a pedestrian, a bike, and kid friendly section and trees in front of our beloved house is like defeating the purpose and roots on which this whole neighborhood is built on. We implore that you consider this pretty seriously. Please do not take away a kid friendly sidewalk and turn it into a place where our daughter cannot even think of stepping out without fearing her safety. Let's all resolve to spare _____ to the ones who are most effected by this process, which is people who live close to Oregon Expressway. We have confidence in you, confidence in the Palo Alto officials, and we know you will do what is best for Palo Alto in the long term. We think there can be nothing else best for Palo Alto than to be able to preserve, protect, and grow _____ including the children friendly community, bike and people friendly sidewalks, and its great heritage. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. I thought there was somebody else who had a small child but I guess not. If you will come forward and identify yourself. I am going to assume the public is fine with this. You will have three minutes.

Ms. Priya Satia, Palo Alto: I live on the southeast side of the Middlefield-Oregon Expressway intersection. I just wanted to start by thanking you for listening to our comments and thanking the County as well for involving us in this process. Although as one of the emails that you received mentioned this particular discussion came as somewhat of a surprise to many of us. We had not received much notice about it or about the results of the previous meeting at the school on Middlefield.

I just wanted to state as strongly as I can that Alternative 3, 3M it is called now, for Middlefield is absolutely unthinkable for the people who live near that intersection. Even for people who live within blocks of it as you can see from some of the emails you got. It is just a major safety issue. The way the County in these discussions have characterized Middlefield is that it is a

bottleneck for traffic. But for people who live within the area Middlefield's real identity is that it is the place that has all the recreation sites, all the schools, all the shops. It is the main thoroughfare for the entire neighborhood from the Junior Zoo to the Children's Library, the ice cream store, the schools, the parks, everything is there. Kids move along those sidewalks in packs. There are strollers, and I have a double stroller because I have two small children under the age of four as do many of the people on my block. So that is the identity of Middlefield for those of us who live there.

Those land strips are absolutely essential buffers. You feel just absolutely naked at the idea of living there without those land strips as wide as they are now. It just seems very, very dangerous.

We strongly prefer Alternative 4 as many of us said at that last meeting. The concern with that however is that it still involves three lanes on the northbound side. Many of us were curious why there had been no consideration of widening the road by taking space from the southwest side of that intersection where there is only one house that seems to be kind of unoccupied. I don't know what the status is of that house. There is a big church with a lot of lawn space at the front of it. It seems like a useful option that has not for some reason been in play at all. So we would really prefer if there are going to be three lanes at all that the street be widened in that direction, and that we have some statistics about impacts on accidents, impacts on traffic in that area so we have some sense of whether this is just going to turn into a dangerous zone for cars and people or not.

The last thing is I just want to repeat what the child said earlier. This is a time, a moment, where we should be thinking green. I do think we should improve that intersection. The signals are horrible. The curbs are horrible. The curb cuts are horrible. But the VTA is starved for money right now. I don't know how the bureaucracy works and how funds get appropriated for different things. I have been talking to the VTA and one of your Council Members about the 35 bus and we would rather see money invested in that type of improvement than in shoving more cars in Middlefield Road. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. So we will start at the top of the order of cards. Sheri Furman will be first followed by David Fryberger. We are putting the drawing into the public record.

Ms. Sheri Furman, Palo Alto: Good evening. I want to point out that although the Midtown Residents Association has met with City Officials and County Officials and facilitated meetings with residents we are not taking a particular position on this because there are varied opinions. So we will continue to meet with them as a stakeholder but tonight I am speaking just for myself as somebody who has lived in Midtown for 30-plus years.

I just have some points for you to consider during your deliberations. I said before, because I have spoken on this topic many times, that although the County considers Oregon an expressway it really isn't one in the typical sense of the words. At 35 miles per hour it is more like a boulevard. We need to balance the County's desire to move traffic between 101 and El Camino as quickly and efficiently as possible but the residents need to be able to get across town. The more emphasis we place on Oregon as a commuter corridor the bigger the divide Oregon creates between North and South Palo Alto.

While I do appreciate the substantial safety improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians, keep in mind that providing for school crossings at Ross, Louis, and Greer will necessitate sufficient time for kids to cross, not just the normal pedestrian walking. The kids will take longer. So keep that in mind.

The Middlefield issue is a tricky one. Do we not remove trees and instead have substandard lanes? Keep in mind that the VTA Route 35 bus goes down Middlefield so very narrow lanes could be problematic.

Restricting turns to and from Oregon forces traffic onto neighboring streets. I ask that you continue to allow left turns onto Indian and Waverley and Ross if you don't choose to add a signal, to provide residents a way of getting into to the neighborhood without further stacking up at signalized intersections. I also ask that you seriously consider limiting parking restrictions along the streets crossing Oregon to specific commuter times rather than 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Residents should not be penalized simply to make things more efficient for a few hours a day.

A final comment. Both the 101 auxiliary lane project and metering lights at Oregon/101 are desperately needed and will become reality in the next couple of years. Yet it is unclear how they coordinate with the Oregon Expressway Improvement Project. I don't know if they are going to cause further delays or what but it again is something to keep in mind. Please consider incorporating some of these comments into your recommendations to Council, particularly the limited parking restrictions. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Could you please restate your comment about the parking restrictions?

Ms. Furman: Well, what I am saying is consider having the parking restrictions only during the peak AM and PM commute times. So on weekends if somebody has a party people can park in front of their house when traffic is less frequent. So something isn't in effect at three in the morning and all of that. That is the idea behind that. Because some of these are 150 feet.

Commissioner Holman: Understand. Okay, thank you much. David Fryberger followed by Betsy Fryberger.

Mr. David Fryberger, Palo Alto: I have been a physicist at SLAC for over 40 years and I am speaking as a long time Palo Alto resident and a member of FRED, an acronym standing for Friends of Reasonable Expressway Design. FRED consists of a group of Palo Alto residents who came together out of concerns and questions about the Oregon Improvement Project. We have gathered over 500 signatures from supporters.

I will talk mainly about the Middlefield alternatives. The traffic study by Kimley-Horn and Associates assigns the Middlefield intersection a Level of Service of E, the lowest LOS of all the Oregon intersections. LOS scale ranges from A, which is the best to F, which is the worst. The County is carrying forward two alternatives for Middlefield, 3M, which they favor, and 4, which is favored by FRED as well as over 70 percent of the respondents of the Jordan meeting. City Staff also favors 3M but as we have just heard it does not appear to oppose 4. The K-H traffic study includes simulations and evaluations of these two alternatives and compares them to the

existing situation. In the Staff Report for this meeting Tables are furnished for this comparison. This has been discussed before and I am really backing up what has already been said.

Table 1 on page 5 indicates both alternatives improve the Middlefield LOS from E to D, and detailed examinations of the criteria found in Table 1 indicates that 3M and 4 are both significantly better than the existing situation but they are essentially comparable to each other. In fact in some cases 4 is slightly better than 3M.

In Table 2 on page 6 the three corridor wide simulations to enable comparison between 3M and 4 for Middlefield Road are given. The three are existing. There is scenario one, which is Middlefield 4 plus all the other intersections, and scenario two which is Middlefield 3M and all the other intersections. Again, we see that both scenarios one, which includes 4 and scenario two, which includes 3M, are essentially comparable. That is the results of the traffic study and simulation do not indicate a superiority of 3M over 4, but show that both are significantly superior to the present situation. Thus it appears to me that from a traffic improvement point of view favoring 3M over 4 for Middlefield Road is without proper technical or analytical support.

Finally, I would like to point out a problem with the tree and sidewalk options for Alternative 3M, and I was surprised to find out there were three options instead of the two that are on the website of the County. At present there are 11 feet from curb face to lot side edge of the sidewalk, six feet of this comprises a six-inch curb plus a five and a half foot planting strip. The remaining five feet are the sidewalk. In Alternative 3M these 11 feet have to accommodate a five-foot widening of the pavement, a six-inch curb, and a two-foot planting strip, and a five-foot sidewalk. This is not possible without encroaching on the homeowner's area on the lot side or installing a narrower sidewalk. I consider this problem not sufficiently addressed in the data we have. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Betsy Fryberger followed by Nancy Moss.

Ms. Betsy Fryberger, Palo Alto: I am a long time resident with my husband, David, on Middlefield Road. I have been a Curator at the Cantor Art Center at Stanford. I am about to retire. I have been on the City's Tree Task Force, on the Board of the Gamble Garden, and caring about trees really goes back to my childhood experiences in Chicago where we lived near Lincoln Park. So I continue to plant and care for City strips on Middlefield hoping to encourage other residents to beautify the space and care for the trees. At Stanford one of the exhibitions I organized was about garden history and actually the catalog was recognized in reviews in the *New York Times* and the *Los Angles Times* as among one of the top garden publications of the year. So from my historical perspective about Olmstead and urban planning I really just want to emphasize the importance of trees and green space to help civilize urban areas as well as small neighborhoods. That is why I am disturbed by Santa Clara County's plan to widen Middlefield. This is in opposition to some of the goals in the City's Comprehensive Plan.

I want to thank and acknowledge the City Arborist, Eric Krebs, whose comments are found very late on in that long Staff Report you have received, about doing away with the trees on the west side of Middlefield. He states the recommendations of the County do not provide adequate planting sites or canopy replacements for future trees.

So here is what I would hope Palo Alto's priorities should be. One is to reduce our carbon footprint. It is well known that cutting down trees raises the CO2 content. Reduce automobile traffic by encouraging pedestrian and bicycle usage. Reduce the possibility of traffic accidents by promoting a safety barrier between street and sidewalk. Many students as well as other pedestrians use these sidewalks. I see the County failing to advance any of these priorities.

Palo Alto is a well-educated and forward-looking community, and we should be a leader in facing such tough issues and reaching decisions that send positive messages. We should not settle for endorsing out of date ideas detrimental to our environment. We urge you to reject 3M and vote for Alternative 4.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. The next speaker is Nancy Moss and we don't start the timer by the way until you are set and have stated your name, and when the yellow light goes on you have a minute left.

Ms. Nancy Moss, Palo Alto: Okay, thank you. Since 1980 I have lived next to Middlefield Road on Garland. Since 1978 I have worked as a health and medical scientist at the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. I am currently at San Francisco State University.

From a public health and safety perspective, especially with the needs of our children in mind, Alternative 4 is the only viable option for the Middlefield Road/Oregon Expressway intersection. We cannot support narrowing the sidewalk and widening Middlefield in close proximity to the homes of families with young children, and in an area heavily used by children and young people going back and forth to school at Jordan, Walter Hays, Ohlone, and to buy snacks and hang out at Midtown. Families with preschool children, as you have heard earlier, live in the immediate area where the County proposes to remove street trees and narrow the existing sidewalk.

So let's look at the health effects of traffic exposure on people of all ages, as published in the peer review literature. These are all from medical journals in the National Library of Medicine. First of all, long-term exposure to road traffic noises increases sleep disturbance, daytime fatigue, hearing loss, and the prevalence of respiratory disorders. Specifically, proximity to heavy traffic exacerbates the symptoms of asthma in young children, and increases the risk of cardiovascular disease especially deep vein thrombosis among adults. It decreases immune function among women and reinforces the negative impact of stress on health.

Parkland in the neighborhood as Betsy suggested can improve well being. Also, and in particular, traffic density at intersections combined with a presence of retail establishments and educational sites is associated with child pedestrian casualties varying by time of day and day of the week. Now this month, August 2009, just by chance the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Injury, Violence Prevention, and Poison Prevention issued the following statement, which is very pertinent to the current County plan for Oregon Expressway and Middlefield Road. Each year approximately 900 pediatric pedestrians, younger than 19 years, are killed in traffic accidents. In addition, 51,000 children are injured and 5,300 of them are hospitalized because of their injuries. Parents should be warned that young children often do not have the cognitive perceptual and behavioral abilities to negotiate traffic independently. I would suggest that that is particularly true where you have a sidewalk strip that has been narrowed or where traffic flows have been increased. Most importantly, and this is the message for Palo

Alto, the AAP says it supports community and school-based strategies that minimize a child's exposure to traffic especially to high-speed, high-volume traffic. How could the City of Palo Alto fail to prioritize family and child safety/well being over traffic? Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Judith Wasserman is next followed by Elly Duncan.

Ms. Judith Wasserman, Palo Alto: Good evening Commissioners and temporary Chair Holman. I am the last FRED speaker here today and I wanted to first thank the County for actually listening to us, because their proposals were far worse originally. As far as we are concerned at the Middlefield Road intersection there is just this one item of the trees and narrowing, it is not so much narrowing the sidewalks as narrowing the division between the traffic and the sidewalks.

There are a couple of things that I didn't understand about the Staff Report on why they prefer 3M, although you did explain about the bicyclists coming northbound. When you get to the north side of Oregon Expressway you lose that second lane. So the question is are you going to merge after you cross in the more residential area and create all this conflict in that one block where you have to create one lane out two, or are you going to sort the traffic on the south side and have everybody decide what they are going to do before they make the crossing, which seems to me to make a lot more sense because the closer you get to the school crossing the more kids you have sort of screwing around trying to decide whether they are on the sidewalk or on the street. The middle name of all junior high school students is 'oblivious.' They just don't pay attention to who is coming or where they are. They just walk in groups and talk to each other. That was my big concern with that particular concept.

Then specifically about the Comprehensive Plan, about a year ago I sent you an analysis of how the County proposal conflicts with the Comprehensive Plan. All of these quotes are taken from the Transportation Element. Forget all the nice things about how we are tree loving, green, sustainable, whatever the Transportation Element says that you should develop comprehensive roadway design standards that emphasize bicycle and pedestrian safety. That effective use of the traffic carrying ability of the major street network should be effective without compromising the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. Policy T-39 says prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile safety over vehicle level of service at intersections. I have one more quote about the residential arterials. It says the City's objective is to address the desires of residents of these streets who would like to have slower speeds, safer conditions for bicycles and pedestrians, and aesthetic improvements. So thank you very much. FRED favors 4.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Elly Duncan followed by Elizabeth Schwerer. Elly Duncan is not here. Elizabeth Schwerer followed by John Ciccarelli.

Ms. Elizabeth Schwerer, Palo Alto: Hi I am speaking on behalf of the Ohlone Elementary School community as represented by the PTA, Executive Board, the Site Council, and the Traffic Committee. We described our request in detail in an email we sent this committee in March of this year. Those requests pertain to the intersections at Louis, Greer, Indian, and West Bayshore roads. Several members of the Ohlone community have been struck by cars while crossing Oregon Expressway on foot or bicycle on their way to school. Because of these accidents we studied the intersections closest to Ohlone to understand what made them unsafe. Louis and Greer are really the ones of those that are most traveled by people getting to Ohlone.

If you look at those intersections you can see that the way they are structured in combination with their traffic loads actually functions to distract drivers' attention away from bicyclists and away from the crosswalks. We met with County Engineers in an early phase of this project to talk to them about the safety problems we see and we are just so grateful, we are extremely grateful, that their recommendations for those four intersections reflect all the engineering improvements that we believe are needed at those four intersections.

So what we are asking the City and County now is to move forward as quickly as possible on these safety improvements because even in the last few months there have been more injury accidents at those intersections. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. John Ciccarelli followed by Mike Aberg followed Pam Radin.

Mr. John Ciccarelli, Palo Alto: Thank you Chair Holman. I am a long time former resident of Palo Alto up until about 2006. Former owner of 2321 Ross smack dab between Garland and Oregon. I make my living as a bicycle planning consultant and I was one of the co-authors of the 2003 Palo Alto Bicycle Plan.

I think it is useful to look at a bit of history as to why. I am going to speak mostly towards the Ross Road intersection. Oregon Expressway split the city in the 1960s and we as citizens and planners have been trying to stitch it back together ever since. It split Midtown. Over time crossing improvements have been enacted at Bryant and Louis, incremental improvements to make it easier to get across the street that was not there before. Oregon even striped shoulders that function as a de facto bike lane. The 2003 bike plan looked at improving crossings of Oregon including a bicycle boulevard concept for Ross, which makes sense not in the Oregon context, but citywide.

A Ross Road bicycle boulevard makes a lot of sense. It is important to think of it not as just Ross Road access but Ross, Newell all the way to Woodland, to University Circle, all the way to Menlo Park via Chaucer and Pope, all the way to the south end of town to the Baylands, an environment that doesn't exist elsewhere in the east side of Midtown. Louis has bike lanes. It is a fine street to bicycle on but it is not a place where you take your little kid out that is still a little wobbly. Bryant is. Ross best serves the heart of Midtown, the shopping, the restaurants, the YMCA. It is by far the closest alternative and that is why it makes the most sense. But beyond serving Midtown it does have this cross-town function. It has potential to be just as good a three-mile corridor in combination with Newell and the north end branches as Bryant is on its side of town. Jordan, the schools, the fields, the Lucie Stern Center, the Main Library, the Art Center, the Ross YMCA, Mitchell Park, University Circle for the lawyers that work there. So it is important to get Ross going and seize this opportunity.

Alternative 2 for crossing Oregon on Ross is insufficient. It doesn't provide for a bicycle through movement. I urge you to support and fund Alternative 3 including immediate signal coordination with Middlefield. Fix the right turn island on the south side. The design blocks the bicycle through movement in the eastbound direction. Consider adding an east leg pedestrian crosswalk as well as a west leg. Then start to work on enhancing Ross as a bike boulevard. All you need to do to connect it to Jordan is to make it possible to get from Garland to the California

end of Jordan. Longer term you can do better by knitting Newell together with Ross. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Mike Aberg followed Pam Radin followed by Jeff Weitzman

Mr. Mike Aberg, Palo Alto: Hi live on Moreno Avenue right in between Middlefield and Ross Road. I use Ross Road almost every day or at least three times a week as part of my bike commute down to Lockheed Martin in Sunnyvale. I strongly support Alternative number 3 for Ross Road. I think that is the right thing to do.

One of the things is we don't have a bike boulevard type of thing on our side of Middlefield. I guess that would be the east side of Middlefield. I think Ross Road could also serve as a really good alternative to Middlefield Road if we are talking about the tough crossing on Middlefield and Oregon.

I guess another thing to consider is if we were going to make a bike boulevard on Louis, well there are already bike lanes on Louis. I go down Louis as a bicyclist but I wouldn't take my kids down Louis so much. I think Ross Road would be a lot better, more kid friendly way to go.

I am just going to read through a couple of bullet points here and then I will get off the stage and let other people talk. Like I said before Ross is my bike commute down to Lockheed Martin, Sunnyvale. The Ross light at Oregon would open up the bike commute to North Palo Alto from the South and also it would open up Midtown a lot more for the folks up in North Palo Alto. Placing Ross bike and pedestrian crossing, all three, also allows North Palo Alto access to other things besides Midtown like the new Mitchell Library, the Ross Road YMCA, the new Jewish Community Center, and also the Baylands. Ross is a calm commute compared to Louis Road. Louis is a connector street with greater traffic. I think I have said my piece. I could probably say a lot more but please support Alternative number 3 for the Ross Road crossing. I think it makes a whole lot of sense and I think it is something that Midtown has needed for a long time. Thanks.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Pam Radin followed by Jeff Weitzman and then Tatiana Van Houten.

Ms. Pam Radin, Palo Alto: Hi. I am here just to support Ross Road and to thank the County for all the great work they have done. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Jeff Weitzman followed by Tatiana Van Houten.

Mr. Jeff Weitzman, Palo Alto: Hi I live on Ross Road, about six houses south of Oregon. I have listened to everybody's comments today and really appreciate the thoughtful comments that everybody has made and a lot of the work that they have done. I would urge this Commission to think of this system as a whole. I think looking at things in isolation is probably the biggest mistake you can make.

I have heard the well-organized and well-articulated arguments from people who are supporting Alternative 4 for Middlefield Road. I am not going to purport to tell you what to do but I will

point out that significant compromise has been made by the County in response to a lot of the concerns already at the Middlefield intersection.

The number one priority for this project has to be thought of as a pedestrian and bicyclist effort. That is throughout the system not just at the Middlefield intersection. The stacking up of cars at Middlefield causes significant impacts to the surrounding neighborhood. The cut-through traffic on Ross has not been mitigated by the bumps. I am sure the same is true of Cowper. All the arguments you have heard, and I won't repeat them, for making Ross Road a bike boulevard are excellent. My children travel it all the time to get to school. Being able to safely travel down that road is important but not possible if people can't feel safe. A bike boulevard has to include reduction of vehicular traffic. If we don't fix the entire system the traffic that now stacks up all the way to Louis during rush hours and causes drivers to come flying down our streets will make it incompatible with being a quiet and usable bike boulevard. We have to compromise and we have to find the most flexible, most improvement in the Middlefield intersection, or all the other improvements are for naught, including anything we want to do on Ross.

Finally, with respect to Ross and all good arguments for the bike boulevard. The signalized intersection at Ross would represent, especially for those of us who live nearby somewhat of a sacrifice in the increased signalization in the area, the loss of parking that my neighbors would experience, which would cause cars to stack up along the sidewalks elsewhere. We are willing to make that sacrifice but not in vain. So if you are going to put signals in there we need a bike boulevard down Ross. There is the slight matter of the fact that you can't actually get to the most of North Palo Alto by crossing Oregon. So the crossing there has potential positive impacts, to me the most impact for a Ross Road bike boulevard runs south of Oregon and the effect that it could have there. But we are willing to have that signalized intersection and the sacrifice it represents but not for no gain whatsoever. You need figure out a way to make that a bike boulevard if we are going to have that signal. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Tatiana Van Houten followed by Christine Czarnecki.

Ms. Tatiana Van Houten, Palo Alto: Good evening. I live on Marion Avenue between Cowper and Middlefield. I have lived there since 1972. Over the years as traffic stacks up on Middlefield I have noticed our cut-through traffic has increased. Cars roar down Marion and make a right turn on Cowper so that they can turn left at Cowper and avoid the backup on Middlefield. We on Marion are very concerned that putting a left turn signal on Cowper onto Oregon Expressway is going to make it easier for the cut-through traffic, decrease their time to get through, and they will start cutting through much more. So I have waited at Oregon, on Cowper at the signal and I have never seen a backup on Cowper. I don't see any reason for putting in a left hand signal there. I am really quite sure that it is going to increase the traffic and the traffic during the rush hour goes very fast on that block on Marion.

I appreciate your listening to our input and also the County. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Christine Czarnecki followed by Eric Anderson.

Ms. Christine Czarnecki, Palo Alto: Good evening to the Commission. I live next door to Tatiana Van Houten on Marion Avenue, which is one block or half a block south of Oregon Expressway between Middlefield and Cowper. She has already expressed the problem we have

with the cut-through traffic. I also would like to urge you to please just forget about the left hand turn lane from Cowper onto Oregon Expressway. It is wholly unnecessary.

Since we moved here in December of 2001 I have had to deal with that intersection every day, several times a day. First to take my daughter to Paly for years and now that she is a college grad to take her over to the train on University to catch the 8:05 train to the city and then back again when I pick her up in the evening. I have never ever had a problem on that left turn from Cowper onto Oregon. I am there right now at five of 8:00 or ten of 8:00 every morning and there is no problem. There is never a stack up. Anything you do on that intersection is a waste of money and unnecessary in terms of the amount of traffic during rush hour because I am out there all the time during those times.

The other thing is we want to do the least amount to encourage any pulling off of traffic onto Cowper or from Cowper people cutting through. We have a terrible problem with the cut-through on Marion.

Lastly I just wanted to say I really encourage you to use Alternative 4 for Middlefield because the last thing in the world we need in Midtown is to lose more trees. To have that denuded section will just make it look very commercial and very un-residential, very un-Palo Alto. Thank you so much for your time and thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you for coming. Eric Anderson followed by Penny Ellson.

Mr. Eric Anderson, Palo Alto: Hi. I live on Middlefield Road and I want to talk about the Middlefield intersection. I also prefer Alternative 4. I think it would be a shame to lose the trees and I also have concern about narrowing the sidewalks that there could be safety issues.

I am also a cyclist. I was confused by the Staff comments explaining – I understand cyclists will have to merge if there is only one lane going northbound. What I don't understand is you kind of have to merge anyway if you have to go around cars that are waiting to turn right. that is something an adult might do to make that decision but a lot of kids or something would already be on the sidewalk or they would be in the same situation as if there were two lanes going forward. So I didn't understand the explanation for that. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Penny Ellson followed by Bob Herriot followed by Ann Crichton.

Ms. Penny Ellson, Palo Alto: Hello. I am speaking as the Chair of the Palo Alto Council of PTA's Traffic Safety Committee delivering this statement. The Committee supports the City of Palo Alto Staff recommendations regarding the Oregon Expressway Improvement Project.

Generally speaking an expressway is no place for school bound children. Unfortunately some students of Ohlone, Jordan, and Palo Alto High School for those students crossing Oregon is a necessity. We appreciate the County's collaboration with City Staff. I want to thank them tonight for the great work both City Staff and County Staff did to improve the expressway crossings that serve Ohlone.

While the engineering limitations of an expressway make it impossible to create an ideal school route we thank the engineers for maximizing the safety improvements that were possible particularly at the Louis Road intersection. These changes also will benefit other pedestrians and bicyclists who must use the expressway crossings throughout the day, while improving or maintaining Level of Service at nearly all intersections. This required excellent engineering work and we appreciate the solutions.

If the school district draws future Garland attendance boundary across Oregon the Ross Road Alternative 2 with no signalization, no marked crosswalk, and no bike lane will provide a completely inadequate school crossing on an expressway that serves 40,000 cars per day. We would not support Alternative 2 design as an appropriate element neighborhood school commute route.

Alternative 3 is safer but still inadequate to meet an elementary school neighborhood population's needs. It is our hope that the school district will not create a precedent by drawing an elementary school attendance boundary across Oregon Expressway. That said the Traffic Safety Committee supports the City of Palo Alto recommendations and we ask that you direct Staff to continue to work with the City School Traffic Safety Committee, as I am sure they will anyway, as detailed design plans are developed. Thank you. Good night.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you for coming. Bob Herriot followed by Ann Crichton followed by Booker Morey.

Mr. Robert Herriot, Palo Alto: I live on Byron Street about three blocks north of Oregon Expressway so this doesn't affect me all that much. I also suggest you see some email I sent earlier today with some comments that are different than what I am going to say.

The first thing I would like to say is it would appear the County did not send any cards out the way they have been sending them to people to let them know about these meetings. They presumably have a huge mailing list of people who are interested in this project. I have been getting postcards from them but nothing this time. I went to their Oregon Expressway.info website and there was no evidence of this meeting or any updates to their literature from March, and yet I think they have made some changes, at least some recommendations. So I question what happened there. There might have been more people here tonight if they had gotten a postcard.

The big question that I have not seen answered is sort of what the benefits are of this. It is clear that intersections like Middlefield need some improvements and there are some others that need improvements but there also seem to be other improvements that are not necessarily needed. I have not seen the County really address the issues of how much accident prevention will occur or how much reduced time there will be for people transiting the expressway.

Let me first get to Middlefield. Middlefield I think is probably the most difficult intersection. It is really trying to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse, which is not possible at least not with the amount of real estate we are willing to give up. So given that all the solutions are really bad probably 4 is the least bad just because it doesn't take away any trees. There are really pros and cons with the laning in terms of right turns and straight ahead. The one concern I really have with the diagram for Middlefield is I don't think the left turn lanes are nearly long enough or the

no parking zones on the north side are long enough. Traffic frequently backs up at commute hour, the five o'clock timeframe or thereabout, all the way to North California from Oregon Expressway. I don't see any change the left turn lane may affect. You may get people blocked in where they miss cycles because the left turn lane is not long enough.

With regard to Waverley, Indian, and Ross I would suggest everything stay the same. I don't see any reason to change things. With regard to Ross Road people have been advocating a light. I would say only if you can somehow push through that block to North California otherwise the light does nothing. You have to go to Middlefield or Louis anyway.

One thing I would say about lights like Cowper I don't think a left turn needs to be at places like Cowper or Bryant. I can see there might be a need at places where there are schools like up at Louis and Greer. There is also the parking issue that was addressed. What I would suggest the County look at is a new way of dealing with left turns and that is a left flashing arrow. The email I sent you has a URL of where that information is. The flashing yellow essentially says you can make a left turn now but you have to yield to traffic. So the idea is that you could have only a full red arrow/green arrow during school times when kids are coming and going but during the rest of the day when the traffic is quite light you would never to the red arrow, you would always have the flashing yellow arrow for the left turns whenever it was green straight ahead. So I would suggest that the Planning Commission look at that idea. I think it has been tried out in a lot of places around the country. In some sense it solves the problem of having this eight-phase light that takes up way too much time and will waste a lot of people's time. Thanks.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Ann Crichton followed by Booker Morey.

Ms. Ann Crichton, Palo Alto: Good evening and thank you to the Traffic Planning Committee for allow us an opportunity to speak tonight. It is a pleasure. As a long-term traffic safety advocate I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight on behalf of the recommendations from the County as well as the great work that the Staff has done on this particular work.

I have advocated for safe changes along Oregon Expressway for approximately eight years, from the time that I took on the Traffic Safety Committee position at Ohlone Elementary School and observed first-hand as a resident close to this particular thoroughfare that it was a particularly dangerous and out dated engineered expressway to allow for safe multi-modal crossing as well as navigation along the thoroughfare trying to get from one end of the community to the other. So as a part of the Traffic Safety Committee I was witness to many accidents both as a resident as well as with the Traffic Safety Committee with Ohlone Elementary School. I participated in the many community outreach activities that not only happened in the community prior to the County's engagement but during the County process as well as the Staff process. I would like to give testimony to the level of outreach and community solicitation that was done to come up with these recommendations. I really want to applaud both the County and the Staff for reaching out and trying to reach compromise to listen to what the community had to say.

So in particular I support what the County has recommended both at the Louis intersections, the Greer intersections, I also represent my community, which is 60 households off of Indian in recommending the closure of the left hand turn lane on Oregon Expressway onto Indian, as well as improvements to the Bayshore intersection. These are absolutely necessary changes for both

pedestrians, bike safety both for children and for adults alike, as well as for automobile traffic. Again, I support the recommendations that were made in this particular set of recommendations.

I thank the excellent for all those people who have been involved over the eight years that I have participated in trying to affect positive change. Thank you. I appreciate this opportunity to speak to you all.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Booker Morey followed by Daria Walsh.

Mr. Booker Morey, Palo Alto: Hi, I live on Cowper one block on the cheap side of Oregon at the corner of Marion. We now have pretty heavy traffic during the weekdays between seven in the morning and nine in the morning. We share it with Middlefield and we share it with Waverley. A lot of it is the commuters. You heard it from the folks living on Marion about the cutoff, which certainly does happen. a lot of it seems to be traffic going to any of the five schools that are south of Oregon either taking the kids to school or the less full cars coming back to their homes.

Now we all have to share in our civic responsibility of dealing with the traffic. I just want to plead with you to make it as fair as possible. For those folks who are now comfortable using Waverley as a way to cross Oregon Expressway or to make a left hand turn, why take away that option? You are simply going to force them back down onto Cowper Street. So all I am doing is asking for some fairness. For those folks that are comfortable using that intersection let them continue to use it, don't take away their ability. That's it.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Daria Walsh and then if Elly Duncan is here.

Ms. Daria Walsh, Palo Alto: Hi. I am interested in talking a little bit about a couple of the proposed and recommended alternatives. To be honest I have not had as much time to look at it as I wanted. I have been following this. In particular one thing that has popped out at me is the one on Bryant where for some reason in several of the intersections that are bike friendly they are eight-phase lights and at Bryant it is a six-phase. It is one of the things that I would like just some answers on why that one is in particular six phase because I think bicyclists going through could use a straight green light rather than having to compete with the lefts on that. Perhaps I don't understand what the six phases are there.

The other one that I wanted to address is Ross Road where I would support Alternative 3 as well with the signal. The only concern I have there is once the kids get across there, and granted the report talks a lot about kids going to Jordan and Garland and doesn't mention the hundreds of kids that already go across at Louis and Middlefield to go to Paly right now. Those kids are crossing at Ross and then they are going down to Middlefield and riding on the sidewalk with all the pedestrians that are also going to Jordan at that time. So it is just one piece that seems a little bit like it is not completely figured out what happens once they get over on the other side of Ross. I love the idea of a pretty much bicycle-centered intersection there at Ross but I would like to see something else happen on the other end because there really isn't a place for those kids to go right now.

The last thing I would like to say is about the Louis intersection, which looks great. That is going to be a great way for people to cross there. But there are some places where it doesn't

seem like they are addressing the pedestrian visibility as much on Louis Road, which is one of the big concerns that we have right now, in particular in the southeast corner of Louis Road. Right it is a very difficult place to see pedestrians and I am not sure that is that well addressed with the current alternative that they are choosing. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Did Elly Duncan return? Seeing not we will take about a seven-minute break and then we will come back. Can we come together again? Commissioners. So if we could ask the members of the public to take their seats we can get going again.

Commissioners, since we skipped the clarifying questions we will do clarifying questions first and also if you happen to have questions for any members of the public while they are here hanging in with us. So first would be if you have any questions for members of the public. Does anyone have questions for members of the public? Commissioner Keller? Commissioner Fineberg? Okay.

Commissioner Keller has participated in a lot of these meetings, attended a lot of them so I am going to cut him a little bit of leeway, but we are going to limit the first round of questions and comments to three minutes. Questions first.

Commissioner Keller: Okay, thank you. So the first question is since there is a shortage of County money that can go towards the Ross Road traffic light and you said that the City money can go towards the Middlefield Road intersection, can the City spend its money on the Middlefield Road intersection and thereby save County money to pay for Ross?

Ms. Likens: That would be something that would be at the discretion of the City Council. I don't think that we know the answer to that now. I think we don't know if the County would actually need any funding to implement the project as recommended by Staff at the present time because they don't have detailed cost and they won't know until they further into the design. So I think as Mr. Collen mentioned it is a little premature to be trying to figure out how everything gets funded. We don't know whether the budget that the County has is sufficient or not.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you. Would it be within our purview to recommend that if there is a shortfall in money that that fundability be used? Okay, thank you. I took that as a yes.

My second question is there was a comment about the sidewalk on 3M on the logical northwest corner, the one where the road is widened. Firstly, I understand that that road is being widened there because of the alignment with the south approach to Middlefield Road. The north side is 41 feet and the south side if 46 feet wide, and that that five feet difference is an offset from the northwest corner. Maybe this is a County question. Are the sidewalks going to be moved on that? There was a question by a member of the public with respect to whether all the numbers add up and is the sidewalk planned to be moved or is the sidewalk in the same spot?

Mr. Collen: I would like to introduce Ananth Prasad our Project Engineer and a Senior Civil Engineer with the traffic engineering section. I think he can comment most specifically to the detail questions on the width or the movement of the sidewalk.

Mr. Ananth Prasad, Project Engineer, Santa Clara County: Thank you members of the Commission. With regard to the sidewalk where discussion about narrowing the sidewalk we

are not narrowing the sidewalk. There is going to be a movement of the sidewalk but the sidewalk width will remain exactly at five feet, which is current with the existing sidewalk. We have to move it. There is some right-of-way behind the sidewalk and we show that we are using one foot of that two-foot space we have behind the sidewalk.

Commissioner Keller: So just like in front of my house there is a piece of land that belongs to the City that is in front of my property line between that and the sidewalk. Here there is two feet of land that belongs to essentially the City between the owner's property line and the sidewalk and you are going to halve that distance.

Mr. Prasad: Yes.

Commissioner Keller: Okay, thank you.

Commissioner Holman: We are going to make rounds. Commissioner Fineberg.

Commissioner Fineberg: I would like to start with a process question about the Staff recommendations. Staff is recommending that the Planning Commission endorse three sets of items. If we are looking at pages 1 and 2 in the Staff Report it is one, two, and three. Then on number four Staff is recommending that the Commission direct Staff to work with the County, the neighborhoods, and stakeholder groups, PABAC to develop detailed design plans and return to the Council with a report on the final design plans and final environmental document. I am a bit stuck on how we can simultaneously recommend items one to three and four because if we are recommending specific options, whatever they might be, then how can we also recommend that Staff, the County, and various groups come up with another plan that may be completely different and may be far, far better but completely in conflict with items one, two, and three. So I don't see how we can do both.

Ms. Likens: I think I can clarify that. What we are asking is that you support the direction to the Council for us to work with the County as they develop their detailed designs based on the concept plans that are approved for implementation. To share those with the Bicycle Advisory Committee as they are developing these plans. To share them with the community, the County plans to hold community meetings, and to have the public still involved as the design plans are further refined in detail. Then we would bring those back to the Council with the environmental clearance from the County at a later date. The idea is not that we are going back to the drawing board, that anyone is going to come up with other concepts, but perhaps it was the way that the recommendation was worded that was unclear.

Commissioner Fineberg: Thank you. So specifically, not because I am advocating for this but just for the purposes of this discussion, let's say we vote for 3M at Middlefield and the citizenry en mass continues to want 4. Does that mean that the County is still going to be sitting down and working with citizen groups who are going to be advocating for 4? How do they get past that? Or does that then give County mandate to say 4 is done it is off the table you are doing 3M? How would that situation play out? I am not advocating for that but just as an example.

Ms. Likens: I believe that the process that we are in is to seek your recommendations to the City Council. The City Council would then make a recommendation that we would forward to the County as to the City's position on these alternatives and concepts. At that point the County

would take the City's recommendations and begin to move forward. Now the County Staff may want to comment if there continues to be concerns from individuals or groups of individuals about these alternative how they would respond. But at that point we would have a policy direction from the City Council to forward to the County.

Commissioner Fineberg: Will the meeting with City Council happen soon enough that the County can continue its work not waiting for that?

Ms. Likens: I don't want to speak for the County but I think they are going to wait for the City Council action before they begin more detailed design. Perhaps Mr. Collen could comment.

Mr. Collen: Yes it is our intent. We are kind of in a transition period now winding down with the conceptual design. We are in a process where I don't believe we yet have the designers in place to proceed with the construction drawings. So we are in a natural break point right now anyway. So using this time to complete the public process with the City is just fine with us.

Commissioner Fineberg: Okay. I have one more question in that part that is slightly different but it naturally flows with it and then I will cede if that is okay. In the recommendation four where we are directing Staff to work with the neighborhood stakeholder groups we specifically spell out that they will continue to work with PABAC. I would like consideration that recommendation also includes direction that County and Staff will work with the PTA Council Traffic Committee so that the representation from the school-wide body is incorporated.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Lippert.

Commissioner Lippert: I am looking at the diagram, Middlefield Road Alternative 4, specifically where you have the trident configuration going northbound. You have the middle lane in the center for straight on traffic and it would also be for cyclists. I believe it was characterized earlier that it would be "adult cyclists" but the truth is that this leads to the middle school so the majority of the cyclists are actually juveniles. Is that going to be problematic at all?

Ms. Likens: I don't know the numbers of cyclists in terms of their ages at this intersection. There are both middle school and adult cyclists. There could be elementary and high school students that all use this Middlefield crossing.

Commissioner Lippert: Okay. The reason I ask is that I think the City Staff Report really promotes this configuration over the two lane straight.

Ms. Likens: City Staff is recommending Alternative 3M as opposed to Alternative 4 at Middlefield.

Commissioner Lippert: Okay, I just want to make sure of that, the 3-Modified. Okay. Then I have one other question regarding Ross Road with the bike slot. The phasing for that that the County proposed in terms of as the Ross Road boulevard is developed, doing the phasing for that is acceptable? In other words, you plan for it but it doesn't get implemented until the boulevard is fully developed?

Mr. Rius: I believe their recommendation was just to setup Alternative 2, which could lead to future signalization but if that was the selected Alternative that would be the extent of their improvement as part of this project.

Commissioner Lippert: Okay.

Ms. Likens: So our recommendation is that they include the full signalization as part of their County project.

Commissioner Lippert: Okay, that is what I wanted to clarify with you. Then with regard to the reference to Embarcadero and Cowper, which has a slotted intersection, is that slotted intersection actually sensored so that as a bicyclist pulls through into there if they were to come to a stop then the light changes in a snap?

Mr. Rius: This is at Bryant Street.

Commissioner Lippert: Is it Bryant, oh yes. Okay.

Mr. Rius: There is detection. I am not sure if it changes immediately.

Commissioner Lippert: As a cyclist it changes almost immediately. I literally come to a stop and the light changes in a snap. So that is what you are proposing?

Mr. Rius: There might be some constraints related to the coordination and when it can turn green for the cyclists.

Commissioner Lippert: Who controls the signalization? The County or the City?

Mr. Rius: The County would control the timing and coordination along the whole corridor.

Commissioner Lippert: Okay.

Ms. Likens: Mr. Collen has some additional comments.

Mr. Collen: Yes, we would include in-pavement detection for the bicycle as we do at several other locations on the expressway system. We actually also are using an adaptive signal system for the bikes so that when we have bike detection it gives a different crossing time based on the bike crossing time as opposed to a car crossing time. That wouldn't apply here since it is only going to be bikes, but it is also pedestrians as well. So I don't know if we would mess with that or not but we do have systems to detect and also provide crossing time based on bike detection.

Commissioner Lippert: Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Martinez.

Commissioner Martinez: Thank you. By my count there are going to be four eight-phase signals and two six-phase, plus whatever happens at Ross. Taking that into account and perhaps even taking into account a new signal at Ross how does that affect traffic along Oregon Expressway?

Is it going to move more quickly because of improved signalization or is it going to be gridlocked even more than it is now? Do you know?

Mr. Rius: Well, one of the six-phase intersections is at Bryant where there would only be one pedestrian crossing instead of two.

Commissioner Martinez: Yes, I want to talk about that too.

Mr. Rius: Okay. So you can reduce the cycle length if there were two crossings and that would allow for better coordination along the Oregon Expressway.

Commissioner Martinez: Yes, but by the time traffic gets to Bryant it has lightened up considerably, once it is past Middlefield. So I don't think that is the problem. But from exiting 101 past Middlefield is the flow of traffic going to improve?

Mr. Rius: I can let the County answer that. They are more informed about the detailed analysis.

Mr. Prasad: One of the things that needs to happen is the Middlefield. That is our bottleneck for Oregon Expressway traffic flow. Currently it is very inefficient. One approach at a time gets a green. We could solve both approaches with the same available time or what is being used for one approach. Thereby you are having considerable savings in time and that saving can be used to reduce the cycle length. Once you reduce the cycle length we can apply that to the entire system because the rest of the intersections don't actually have such a high volume of cross traffic. So once you have a system wide lower cycle then you are able to efficiently serve the pedestrians, bicycles, as well as traffic on Oregon at a predictable speed, because now you have an efficient intersection that has been improved. The Middlefield intersection is the bottleneck. So the key thing for this project is Middlefield. We have to have improvements at Middlefield to recognize any benefits on Oregon Expressway flow.

Commissioner Martinez: Good, thank you. I drive Oregon Expressway at least a couple of times a day. Coming off northbound 101 almost every day I am confronted with traffic coming off southbound wanting to turn left on West Bayshore. Was issue ever addressed or is it being addressed as part of this plan?

Mr. Rius: I'm sorry?

Commissioner Martinez: Traffic coming off of 101that is southbound has its own exit lane except for those that want to turn left onto West Bayshore. They have to immediately cut across traffic to get into that left hand turn lane. Is there any mitigation for that in this plan?

Mr. Rius: This project does not have any improvements for that movement.

Commissioner Martinez: It is probably one of the most dangerous aspects of Oregon Expressway.

Ms. Likens: We could ask the County to comment on that. It wasn't something that was focused on during this project.

Mr. Collen: To separate that movement would be a complicated effort introducing a more freeway-like treatment into the Oregon Expressway environment. You would have to use some sort of braided ramps or some sort of structure to address that. We didn't explore that very deeply. We have been focused primarily on the intersection areas along the expressway, and also the area to the east of West Bayshore Road is Caltrans jurisdiction. We assume that that will be folded into some further work by Caltrans as they study that area.

Commissioner Holman: If you could identify yourself for the transcript that would be helpful.

Mr. Collen: Certainly. Dan Collen Deputy Director, County of Santa Clara.

Commissioner Martinez: It is possible to close the left hand turn lane at West Bayshore, correct? As a possible solution.

Mr. Collen: You could do that.

Commissioner Martinez: Since you are making improvements at Greer traffic could make a U-turn to get back to West Bayshore.

Mr. Collen: I would defer to the City Staff for their input on circulation within the City of Palo Alto.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Commissioner Keller.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you. There was a comment made by a member of the public with respect to the desirability for merging lanes on northbound Middlefield Road past the intersection. Is it normal practice at an intersection to sort of widen approaching a major intersection and then narrow after? I notice this happens elsewhere. Is that a reasonable practice to improve throughput through a road?

Mr. Rius: Yes it is. Capacity through the intersection is limited by the amount of green time and if you have more lanes to get through during a limited green period and once they pass the intersection they not constrained by the green time and they can merge together. So that does happen in other parts of the city as well as other cities.

Ms. Likens: Just a comment. We currently have that situation on northbound Middlefield at Oregon right now. There are two through lanes and the two through lanes carry forward to the north side of the intersection and then there is a lane drop and you merge into one lane further north. I think it is before Garland now. During the detail design I am sure we would look at the length of that merge and determine if Alternative 3M is approved for implementation how long that merge would be.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you. So what happens when people are stopped you have a capacity issue of how many people can enter the intersection. When they are speeding up the merging happens faster and therefore there is more capacity in some sense.

A question about where I am talking about plans 3M and 4 for Middlefield Road intersection. That means that there were plans 1 and 2 and could you talk about where we went to get from

where you started and where we are? What kinds of modifications have you done to Middlefield Road? Because I know that I went to a bunch of the meetings but I am not sure that the members of the Commission or some of the members of the public might be aware of what you have actually done there.

Mr. Collen: Okay, thanks for the question. The alternatives were not necessarily developed in series. One through 3 were explored in parallel as an array of options for the public to consider and comment on, and the City to give us input on. Basically 1 involved widening at three out of the four corners. Alternate 2 was at two corners, and 3 was just the one corner. Then 4 came later after the community meetings and we said let's develop a zero corner impact option and look at what the tradeoffs would be of doing that. So essentially we came forward with 1 through 3 at the same time but as we fine-tuned them based on the comments that we got then 1 and 2 basically fell off the table as unacceptable based on the comments that we were receiving, and 3 we modified to address some of the issues that were raised. Then it became Alternate 3M and then 4 was brought in later in the process.

Commissioner Keller: In comparing designs 3M and 4 is it correct that on the southbound direction, other than the offset, the lane widths are exactly the same and the only difference in the two plans is the offset and how many lanes there are in the northbound direction. Is that right?

Mr. Collen: I think one of the lanes is a half-foot narrower, six inches narrower in Alternate 3 because there are more lanes that are being accommodated.

Commissioner Keller: Okay, thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Fineberg.

Commissioner Fineberg: I would like to get one idea on the record just to make sure that it minimizes future confusion. A couple of days ago the School Board voted to defer the opening of Garland school. In my opinion that does not in any way change the fact that there are now and there will continue to be school age children crossing Oregon. It is a question of whether they are private school children, public elementary school children, or middle school children. That facility is used currently while it is under lease as a private school for camps in the summertime. There are hundreds of parents bringing their kids and bikes there to camp in the summer. It is used for after-school programs. It is used for sports fields. So regardless of the disposition it is still a target for kids and parents and bikes and walking.

On a separate topic, I am concerned a little bit of the idea of un-striping some of the significant pedestrian crossings at intersections. I notice recently that when I was Downtown at Whole Foods the intersections there don't have stripings. My kids were stunned. They have learned, we live at the corner of Louis and Greer, they have learned they walk to the corner, they walk between the crossings, and they wouldn't dream of crossing mid-block. I don't know how they would react frankly to getting to an intersection in my neighborhood and not having a crosswalk. They have never seen that. So it would be a very different beast for them. It may be that there is some kind of science about unmarked intersections being safer but if it is the exception and the only one in the area for young minds who have learned rules and are not quite as rational I don't know that it would be as safe.

Commissioner Holman: Excuse me, would Staff care to comment on that?

Mr. Rius: What you mentioned is true. I am not totally sure of the science. The County might be able to answer. But often times marked crosswalks do provide a false sense of security that the pedestrian has the right-of-way and cars will stop. By taking it you are promoting crossing at one of the signalized adjacent intersections. If you insist on crossing it is still legal cross in an unmarked crosswalk and typically pedestrians would use a lot more caution in those situations.

Commissioner Fineberg: So I understand that from the Staff Report and I would agree that that might be true for adults. I am saying that I don't believe it is true at least for my own two kids. They, I don't think, have ever been confronted with an unmarked crosswalk at an intersection south of Oregon. There might be some mid-block or at some of the funky cul-de-sacs that come off a street, but not at a major intersection. There may be some but not where we have been wandering. How am I on time? I will cede and come back later.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Martinez, questions?

Commissioner Martinez: Yes. In the Staff Report it refers to an August 2003 City Council directive on the improvements to Oregon Expressway to emphasize pedestrian and bicycle safety. By and large this is accomplished in the proposed plan except at the most critical intersection of Middlefield. I feel that we have not provided a safe passage across Oregon Expressway for bicycles. There is not a bicycle slot. In one of the scenarios it is being proposed that we merge bicycles with cars crossing the intersection. In some ways what we have now may be a safer alternative for bicycles than what is being proposed in either alternative. It seems to me what is driving both alternatives is this need for an exclusive left hand turn signal only. To me that isn't the greatest need of this intersection. I don't support narrowing the planting strip or cutting trees. However, I don't support not addressing this critical safety need of this intersection. I would like to see why this was ignored by the County, Staff, and in your presentation to the community. It feels like we are locked into 3M or 4 and neither seem adequate for the problem that exists.

Ms. Likens: I think that this is a package of things that there are tradeoffs for one thing. Looking at improving the safety, all of these intersections are going to be improved with better signalization, straighter crosswalks, no impediments to crossing the medians, better signalization, and also as part of the project there will be reduced delay on the side streets including Middlefield. They are very congested on Middlefield. But we do have finite width the approaches on Middlefield. North of Oregon the street is 41 feet wide from curb-to-curb. South it is 46 feet wide. Any additional lanes beyond what we have now have to come from the right-of-way or the curb-to-curb width. Adding bike lanes at Middlefield would take up road space as well, and none of the alternatives include removing a vehicular lane. That is what we have out there now. We have a split phase operation and four lanes of traffic. Part of the problem with the whole corridor and the delays at the major intersections are a result of having no left turn lanes.

So the County's goal in this project is also to include left turn lanes, which would facilitate operational improvements throughout the corridor that would also facilitate the safety improvements on the side street approaches for the minor streets. So the concerns about bicycle

traffic I think the plan itself is maybe not optimal. If we had more right-of-way and the ability to add through bike lanes and change major changes at this intersection that would be a different situation. We did share these recommendations with the Bicycle Advisory Committee and they gave us input on their thoughts about the alternatives that were under discussion. Perhaps Rafael can go into further detail about what we heard from our own advisory committee with regard to the bicycle approach to this project.

Mr. Rius: Regarding the Middlefield intersection the Bicycle Advisory Committee generally they thought the alternatives were comparable to what is out there right now, not necessarily worse. The narrower lanes do tend to lead bicyclists to take the whole lane for themselves as opposed to trying to squeeze in between cars. They did have some input regarding bicycle detection and markings and possibly adding 'share the road' signs. They were understanding that part of this project was to improve the crossings at Bryant and Ross nearby Middlefield. They were not against the improvements at Middlefield.

Commissioner Martinez: Thank you, I appreciate that. I would just add a couple of other comments about bicycle and pedestrian safety. I would look to see that at each six-phase or eight-phase crossing that we have crosswalks on both sides of Oregon. I noted that you are removing that from Bryant. I think if you change that right turn only it would be feasible to add a crosswalk on that side.

Then second thing I have a quick question about is is the pedestrian crossing going to be similar to Homer and Alma where no cars are permitted to turn while pedestrians are crossing Oregon Expressway or is it to be shared with cars? Thank you.

Mr. Rius: I don't believe there are any plans for a pedestrian only phase. Vehicles would still need to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. With regard to the Bryant Street crossing there were several issues with this. I am trying to recall and maybe the County could chime in on why the crosswalk. I know there were issues with the southwest corner and an existing redwood tree being unsafe for pedestrian corner at that corner without removing the really huge redwood tree. Also with it being a bicycle boulevard adding the crosswalk at the same time as trying to keep one pedestrian crossing and the cycle length down there would be other sacrifices such as the bike slot in the southbound direction. That was the reason PABAC, the Bicycle Advisory Committee, also was in agreement with the one side crosswalk being on the east side.

Commissioner Martinez: In this case I think the pedestrians weigh more heavily than the bicyclists do. We have two crosswalks there now and pedestrians going to Alma, to the park, to Caltrain, to California Avenue would cross there. They wouldn't cross on the other side because we don't provide a crosswalk to get across Bryant from the way it is proposed now. So I would really urge you, I don't think it is impossible to come up with a plan to provide two crosswalks at that intersection. Okay, thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Keller.

Commissioner Keller: To follow up on the question of Commissioner Martinez. In the plan 2M does it make sense to put a crosswalk across Bryant Street on the north side of Oregon Expressway? It seems like a pretty easy thing to do.

Ms. Likens: Could you repeat that?

Commissioner Keller: I am wondering in plan 2M does it make sense to provide a crosswalk across Bryant Street on the north side of Oregon Expressway.

Mr. Collen: Physically it is simple enough to show a crosswalk. But the design that was developed came out of discussion with the community in the community meetings, from the residents nearby, comments that Rafael mentioned related to sight lines that the traffic sight line was limited for the southeasterly quadrant, and that the residents reported that there was a lot of late amber eastbound traffic. So the pedestrians needed to be able to get a good line of sight on the traffic coming that couldn't be counted on to stop for an amber signal.

Commissioner Keller: I am not referring to a crosswalk across Oregon Expressway. I am referring to a crosswalk across Bryant.

Mr. Collen: Across Bryant.

Commissioner Keller: North of Oregon Expressway, north of the service road there, north of Oregon Avenue.

Ms. Likens: You are talking about on the City's, north of the frontage road.

Commissioner Keller: That is correct, north of the frontage road.

Ms. Likens: Not at the intersection.

Commissioner Keller: That is correct.

Ms. Likens: that would be something we could consider and discuss during the design phase. That would be a City crosswalk. It wouldn't be at the expressway itself. It would be an uncontrolled crosswalk because you do not stop at the frontage road when you are on Bryant. It is something that could be looked at and discussed. I don't know whether we would have a recommendation on that at this meeting.

Commissioner Keller: Okay, well something to consider. There is a letter by Public Works Managing Arborist, Eric Krebs. It looks confusing. I understand this statement might be a question but the question mark is missing. It says, one might argue that if the proposal exhausts all possible planning scenarios, this is presumably for scenario 3M, given the public property constraints and it is still an inadequate plan, then is it wise to plant trees that would result in liabilities such as the conflicts with traffic. I assume that is a question, is that right?

Ms. Caporgno: It sounds like it. We could confirm that with him but it sounds like it in reading it. That is what we are inferring.

Commissioner Keller: So it sounds like he might be skeptical as to whether you could replace the four trees that are being removed with new trees in the minimum width there.

A question for County Staff. Assuming that there was sufficient money for building the traffic light across Oregon Expressway at Ross Road would the County be in favor of the option that involves a traffic light at that intersection?

Mr. Collen: We have developed the alternatives that we think are reasonable and more or less interchangeable. We showed a preference for the option 2 just as a matter of timing. We would I think respect the City's preferences on that. If the City is going to tell us that the City position is that we should proceed with Alternative 3 at Ross.

Commissioner Keller: Well, you said it is a matter of timing. If not now when, to quote Hil El. If we were not to build the traffic light at Ross Road when would it happen?

Mr. Collen: When the bike boulevard concept was fully developed.

Commissioner Keller: So doing a traffic light in anticipation of a bike boulevard – in other words you have reservations about doing it in anticipation of bike boulevard but other than that if the City wanted one for you it is just a matter of funding?

Mr. Collen: Basically. I think that we have heard tonight from the public two different points of view on that subject. So we have just identified that as a consideration.

Commissioner Keller: The fact that the distance between the traffic light currently at Bryant, at Cowper, at Middlefield, and each of those distances are approximately the same as the distance from Middlefield to Ross to Louis to Greer. There is sort of a rhythm there. Ross Road sort of breaks the rhythm. There is a much larger gap between Middlefield and Louis Road. Do you think that it is reasonable for a bicyclist wishing to or a pedestrian wishing to safely cross Oregon Expressway at Ross Road to have to go to Louis or Middlefield considering that in all the other locations they don't have to go nearly as far as this?

Mr. Collen: I think it depends on what the destinations are, what the attractions are, and the general volume of crossing that needs to be accommodated. From a traffic point of view I don't see that there is an issue with the additional light there. As an agency another light means another maintenance liability for us and that is a consideration. We can easily blend that signal into a timing plan. The timing plan would not be in operation all hours of the day though so there would be times that an additional light means an additional stop for somebody. There are a lot of different pluses and minuses that that could be considered.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: A couple of questions. One is the Stanford Research Park funding has to do with or could be used for capacity or alternate improvements. How much money is that component and what might be considered alternate improvements?

Ms. Likens: Are you asking what the budgeted item in the impact fee?

Commissioner Holman: Yes.

Ms. Likens: I think it was budgeted and the last time it was updated which was I think in 2001 for the ordinance that is currently in place as $1.2 million improvement. That was including more widening than the County is proposing. In terms of looking at an alternate improvement we would have to follow what the ordinance says and develop what would provide the same mitigation at this intersection or other alternate intersections and I can't think of an alternate intersection for Middlefield that would be proximate that would alleviate the congestion at Middlefield, and then follow the course that is recommended in the ordinance, and that is to develop a recommendation and seek Council approval for it.

Commissioner Holman: As opposed to alternate intersection what about alternate types of improvements. Does Staff have any thoughts about what those might be or was there other alternate improvements discussed during this whole discussion?

Ms. Likens: The alternate improvements are the one that are before you, and the precursors to these that were winnowed out as being unacceptable to the community and those largely involve more widening and more loss of vegetation and landscaping.

Commissioner Holman: I guess what I am trying to get at is were there alternate means that didn't involve tree removal, widening of the street, as a member of the public said it is in conflict with the Comprehensive Plan. So are there any other means like I think the signalization is maximized here in this plan. Was there anything else that was feasible or was considered?

Ms. Likens: The purpose of this report wasn't to evaluate alternative improvements to meet the goals of the mitigation measure for the Comprehensive Plan. What was referenced in this report was how this project was consistent with the mitigation measure for Comprehensive Plan EIR.

Commissioner Holman: Okay. I was referencing the Comprehensive Plan Policy that said that we wouldn't widen intersections. So I am not sure if we are talking the same thing. That we wouldn't widen capacity.

Ms. Likens: The Comprehensive Plan doesn't rule out completely widening, making capacity improvements. It discourages widening and capacity improvements but it also directs us to look at the benefits of bicycle and pedestrian safety when considering intersection improvements.

Commissioner Holman: Okay. Then Waverley is being proposed as having right turn only both northbound and southbound as are indicated on the sheet, northbound and southbound. The con is of course as indicated here is that there is no through traffic. So has any indication been made or considered about what that would do to the adjacent streets in terms of increased traffic?

Ms. Likens: We would ask the County to comment on that first. I believe that they did do an analysis. I think it is in the report of the impact of those restrictions.

Mr. Collen: Overall the diversion is pretty slight. Amanth will go into the specifics for you. He is getting the material here. But in general the diversion is not a big number. What is interesting and stands out as a number is the accident history at Waverley and the broadside accidents in the accident history that we have collected. It is comparable with a much busier street so that would indicate that it has a higher rate of accident. I will let Amanth speak.

Mr. Prasad: Waverley did not have a significant volume to begin with and the diverted volume we are looking at is six through vehicles in the AM and five through vehicles in the PM on the southbound side. On the northbound is five through vehicles in the AM, four through vehicles in the PM going through. That is across. Then this is for the alternative that is proposed. So with the very minor volume that traffic will be able to handle with a U-turn at the next signalized intersection and that will not significantly impact because of the low volumes that are present at Waverley.

What we heard at the community meeting is that the people who live on Waverley will not cross during peak hours. So they are already doing those diversions anyway. So this does not impact anything during the peak hours because people don't take chances crossing the expressway at unsignalized locations. So they are already doing the diversions currently now.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you for that clarification. Commissioner Fineberg, you had a couple more questions?

Commissioner Fineberg: I am trying to filter how to balance the goals of why we are doing this project. We are trying to get more cars through with shorter delays on Oregon Expressway. We are trying to improve crossings at some of the cross streets like Middlefield. We are trying to make crossings at some of those intersections safer. If we implement the bike path at Ross that would be one place and the same thing might be said at Bryant, and a couple of the other locations. We are also trying to balance the needs of the individuals who are most negatively impacted by the projects with the needs of the people who use the routes. We are balancing public health, safety, and the beneficial aspects of trees. Weighing all of those I am coming to different answers at every different intersection. I am wondering if there is some easy sort mechanism that do we simply say public health and safety is more important than trees and then that is the guiding rule. Or do we say at a particular intersection we will tradeoff not have speed, not sacrifice safety, and keep trees? But is speed, I shouldn't say speed, but number of cars going through with less delay if that is an overwhelming priority I come to a different conclusion. So how do we weigh those at each – if we could talk a little bit about that in our other comments, how do we weight each of those? Maybe it is more important to get cars through Middlefield with less delay because that is a big choking point and maybe that is a place where we compromise certainly not public health but maybe trees, but then not trees at other locations. I am not sure I am willing to go that route. But then are we saying we are not going to get the benefits of increased throughput with lower delay. So maybe Staff can help filter that.

Ms. Caporgno: It kind of feeds into what you were saying, the City Attorney found in the Comprehensive Plan Policy T-28 is make effective us of the traffic carrying capacity of Palo Alto's major street network without compromising the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists also using this network. Then there is an inset, which is entitled Locations of Proposed Intersection Improvements. Additional turning lanes and other related changes are proposed at the following major intersections in Palo Alto, and one of them is Middlefield Road and Oregon Expressway.

Commissioner Fineberg: So what would the conclusion be from that? How do you prioritize the values at Middlefield then? Public safety first, which would mean bicycles and pedestrians, and then cars afterwards? Does that talk about trees?

Ms. Caporgno: I think it is one of those things that when you look at the Comprehensive Plan that this is a judgment call. I think that policy says make effective use of the traffic carrying capacity of Palo Alto's major street network without compromising the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists. So I would say that the roadway improvements are a priority but at the same time you are recognizing that you are not supposed to do something to the extent that there is going to be a significant effect on bicyclists or pedestrians.

As far as the tree issue I realize that we have policies in the Comprehensive Plan about preservation of trees but we are talking about four trees here too, so I don't know. That is one of those things that you have to weigh. It is a judgment call.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Lippert you had another question.

Commissioner Lippert: I do have another question before I ask my question though your question was very leading. I wanted an opportunity to respond to it. I think that the priorities are public safety number one, quality and character of the environment number two, and then traffic number three. Level of Service as far as I am concerned is not in the equation here. These are arterials and it is important that the traffic be able to move at a frequency, which is safe for the pedestrians. With regard to the trees, trees not only define the quality and the character of our environment and Oregon Expressway is a major boulevard, defining boulevard in our city and it is defined by its trees, but the trees are a traffic calming element, important in terms of getting people to slow down.

Now when you have an intersection there is no element needed to have cars slow down because that is the traffic signal's job. But along mid-block the trees are very important as a traffic calming measure. I want to use two very good examples. Middlefield Road in Menlo Park has trees and because of that the traffic moves along at a reasonable speed, it is unimpaired, and it flows very nicely. It is a very safe boulevard to move through and the experience is really one of quality. The same thing happens out on Sand Hill Road where we have trees in the median. Again, it slows the traffic down but it is really the traffic signal that has the traffic stop at the intersection or is controlled at the intersection.

I almost used up all my time here and I want to ask my question. This is for Mr. Collen and I am specifically looking at Middlefield Road, Alternative 3-Modified. What I am interested in is pedestrian and bicycle safety getting through that intersection north on Middlefield Road. If I look at the original diagram there is a pedestrian crosswalk. The old pedestrian crosswalks used to have a diagonal line that would join up. So basically what you have is a box with the corners beveled for the pedestrian. Today they take a much more linear approach where it is the ramp going to the pedestrian crosswalk that really directs pedestrians across the street. At that point we have a piece of salvage that is left over in that intersection between where the traffic moves and where the pedestrians are. Have you ever seen anything where that area might be striped for a bicycle crosswalk where bicycles could bicycle across a major intersection like that in their own north and southbound lane as such parallel with the pedestrian crosswalk?

Mr. Collen: No, I have not seen that. I would wonder how it would operate when the bicycle traffic would have to rejoin the vehicular traffic on the far side of the intersection. In detailed design we could consider any number of refinements or fine-tuning of these options working with PABAC and benefiting from their insight on those sorts of design questions. So I think we

are open to considering ideas like that but to respond directly to your question I have not seen that used before, no.

Commissioner Lippert: Just what I am thinking off the top of my head is simply I don't want to see bicycles on Middlefield Road. I don't think Middlefield Road is a safe bicycling route. We have bicycle routes or bicycle boulevards which are parallel to Middlefield Road that I ride all the time. I see bicyclists on Middlefield Road and if I am driving I am in shock. I don't feel comfortable with bicyclists on Middlefield Road. What I am looking at here is if there are bicyclists and we are promoting them near where the middle school is a safe way for them to get across Oregon Expressway and not be in conflict with the north or southbound traffic on Middlefield Road. What I am thinking is if you have groups of cyclists, juveniles specifically, that are going in groups up Middlefield Road they could just very carefully just edge over to towards where the pedestrian crosswalk is but you don't want them in the pedestrian crosswalk. So maybe a dashed line with a medallion and a bicycle on it saying that this is a bike lane to get you across Oregon Expressway.

Mr. Collen: There are a number of treatments that are out there, sharros and whatnot. I am not promoting any of those right now. I have a limited experience with Oregon Expressway and Middlefield but when I have been there what I have seen is particularly for the students headed to the middle school are that they are riding on the sidewalk. I am not sure what the status of that is with Palo Alto code or whatever, but it seemed like a practical solution. They just use the sidewalk and the crosswalk in order to get over to the school without having to blend into the traffic.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Martinez, did you have any more questions?

Commissioner Martinez: Just one real quick thing. Is this a package deal? Do we have to accept all six proposals or variations there or can we pick and choose what we would like to see?

Ms. Likens: You have the ability to make your comments and recommendations to the Council as you wish. But I think the minor streets are more independent although the eight-phase operations on most of the minor streets would be necessary, or six phase, in order for the coordination plans to work with the project. So leaving it as it is is probably not a good idea on those side streets or minor streets.

Commissioner Martinez: I agree with that but could we trade Bryant for Ross for example to make sure it gets funded?

Ms. Likens: I think at this point I would caution you about trying to figure out how it is going to get funded and whether we have enough money right now. We don't know that. The County doesn't know that. That would be something that we would bring back down the line if there were a problem that something isn't going to fit in the budget what do we do now? That would be for the County to come back to the City and talk about that, see if there is some opportunities to make things happen the way both agencies would like to see them happen.

Commissioner Martinez: I agree with that. I was not proposing that we decide right now. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Keller.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you. So firstly there was some mention by a member of the public with respect to flashing arrows. I am not sure of the detail of the question but I am wondering if that is worthwhile addressing now or should be addressed in the more detailed design phase.

Mr. Rius: I believe what he was referring to is there are other methods but he was referring to the protective permitted phasing, where it is protected some part of the time and permitted other parts of the time.

Commissioner Keller: Yes, I think it was intended for off-hour use so that you didn't have all the full delays in off hours.

Mr. Rius: That is correct. I know one of the primary intentions of these improvements was to eliminate the conflicting movements between the left turners and the pedestrians and the left turners and oncoming traffic. Other than providing the protected left turns during the peak period it essentially would be what we have right now. Maybe Amanth can explain more.

Mr. Prasad: Thank you. If you look at the current intersection configuration other than Middlefield everything else is permitted left turns. So when there is an opportunity and there is no conflict left turns can happen with the green ball. If you look at what the community has said that has overwhelmingly supported they want to remove the conflict. If you leave it to people to make that decision, if they are late for something they are going to take that risk. That is what is happening today. We had a video clip in one of the community meetings that I recorded to show how aggressive these people are. So you can leave it at some point, maybe at a rural intersection where there is not a lot of traffic it makes sense, but in an urban setting that is not a good option to leave it to people. At certain times you have to restrict because you have seen a pattern of potential accidents because of their behavior. This is one the reasons that we are addressing it at other locations is the safety, to enhance safety, pedestrian safety and bicycle safety with the conflict from left turning vehicles.

Commissioner Keller: So to summarize, what you are suggesting is a few second delay for the cars turning left is worth it for the dramatic improvement in safety provided.

Mr. Prasad: Exactly.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you. There was a comparison also made by a member of the public with respect to Waverley versus Cowper. Cowper has a traffic light. Am I reading this right in this big draft report that it looks like most of the traffic from Cowper onto Oregon is turning left in a northbound direction? So that is probably the most important direction. On Waverley there is almost no traffic going through or turning left it is mostly cars turning right at that intersection so that is useful for comparison. This is sort of an analysis question so I am not sure how easily it can be answered in real time if you will. Obviously the large part of the goal of this is to increase throughput on Oregon Expressway. To what extent does either Alternative 3M or Alternative 4 on Middlefield improve throughput on Middlefield so as to reduce the desire for cut-through traffic on alternative streets? Is there improvement for Middlefield itself?

Mr. Collen: First let me address the perception of the goal being to increase the throughput on Oregon. It is not about increasing the throughput on Oregon. It is about responding to the community concern that was expressed at our very first community meeting where people said, pretty overwhelmingly, can you time the lights on Oregon? We would like you to time the lights. So the project addresses the bottleneck location at Middlefield and then with the eight-phasing at the other intersections. We will be creating the opportunity for timing the lights during the peak periods. That will allow for as Amanth has presented a predictable flow at a predictable speed so that we can have controlled smooth flow of traffic. But it is about reducing the stop delay, the unnecessary idling and unnecessary auto emissions, in order to make it flow smoother. Not that we are planning for more of it. The benefit of improving Middlefield will be, as we have shown in the LOS analysis, an improved operation. So there will be less delay and a better operation of that intersection for the cross street traffic as well as the Oregon traffic.

Commissioner Keller: So the idea is that this will smooth out traffic and reduce the delay traversing Oregon Expressway and it will also improve the delay in all directions for Middlefield Road, for the Oregon direction and for the Middlefield traffic.

Mr. Collen: Yes I would say that as Middlefield is bottleneck for Oregon, Oregon is a bottleneck for Middlefield. So by improving that intersection operation then both flows are improved.

Commissioner Keller: Okay. By improving that flow would that tend to decrease the desire for people taking cut-through traffic on either Cowper or Ross for example?

Mr. Collen: I am not sure that I am the right guy to come to that conclusion, but I would think that if traffic is frustrated with the queues on Middlefield and decides to take a different route, a shorter queue would give less incentive to take another route. A better operation of the signal with less delay for the crossing should keep people on their route rather encouraging them to find some other route.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you. Does Staff want to add to that? I have one more question and I am wondering if I should ask that now or let other people go first?

So my final question is the first question, sort of returning back to the original question. It has to do with the northbound traffic on Middlefield Road approaching Oregon Expressway. The question I raised earlier addresses the issue of whether there is a conflict between the right lane and traffic turning right and bicycles and pedestrians going through, and understanding exactly what the issue is for that. The benefits of a right turn lane there versus the benefits of that lane being a through or right turn lane. That seems to be the biggest most controversial issue.

I understand that PABAC prefers improvements at Middlefield. Did they make a preference for 3M or 4 or what that not asked of them?

Mr. Rius: It was discussed in March and they didn’t make a specific recommendation of one alternative over the other.

Commissioner Keller: Okay, so we don’t know whether they prefer 3M or 4.

Mr. Rius: No.

Commissioner Keller: They just like whatever is happening over what is there now.

Mr. Rius: Yes.

Mr. Prasad: They did comment on having a preference over 3 because having two lanes will help the bicyclist to hug the curb and continue on rather than just when they approach the intersection they would have to move away and move back in. If you look at the picture there that is the alternative with one through lane and that is where the bicyclist would have to ride along the curb line approaching the intersection, but as they come closer because it becomes a right turn only they would have to move into the through lane. They did say that is a difficult move to do for the bicyclists, especially on Middlefield because there is so much traffic. Then they would have to come back. So if you were to have two through lanes, if you go back to the picture with two through lanes, then the bicyclist would be riding along the curb line and just continue on. The vehicle that turns right will have to yield for the bicycle. That is typical at all intersections. So that was one of the comments that they made.

Commissioner Keller: So what I am hearing from you is that the main drawback of 4 over 3M is that in 4 the bicyclists who want to be on the main portion of the Middlefield roadway have to move over in order to bypass the right turners.

Mr. Prasad: Correct.

Commissioner Keller: In the 3M scenario the bicyclists are hopefully given the right-of-way by right turning cars.

Mr. Prasad: Well, the lanes are narrow enough. That is another thing that they like about this is that the lanes are narrower. Usually if you have a 12-foot lane they would have to share with the vehicles. With the nine-foot lane they cannot share so they would have to take the whole lane anyway. So when they take the whole lane it is a lot better to have two lanes because they could be on the curb lane and just keep going. But they would take the whole lane. They would not be sharing the road with the motor vehicles with the nine-foot lane. It is too narrow to share.

Commissioner Keller: Do we have any data on how many of the bicyclists are actually on the sidewalk and going across the crosswalk and how many of them are on the main roadway?

Ms. Likens: We don't have statistics on that, current statistics. Typically most adult cyclists are riding in the road. This is a commuter route. We have bike lanes further south on Middlefield. It is a bike route in Mountain View. It is a commuter route north and south. So most adult cyclists if they are commuter cyclists are probably in the lane. Casual cyclists, less comfortable cyclists who are still using Middlefield probably are on the sidewalk and most students ride on the sidewalks from my observations going to Jordan.

Commissioner Keller: Okay, thank you.

Commissioner Lippert: If I might interject just quickly. With regard to that the right hand lane could have a median with a bicycle as a shared lane for automobiles and bicyclists. As a cyclist

myself I am not comfortable getting into a middle lane with a right hand turn. It is really problematic right in the middle of two cars moving and it is very uncomfortable.

Commissioner Keller: Could you elaborate on what you are suggesting? You are suggesting the bicyclists be allowed to go straight and the cars be allowed to go right. Is that what you are suggesting?

Commissioner Lippert: I am suggesting that the Alternative 3-Modified is appropriate not the Alternative 4 because it is very uncomfortable for a bicyclist to be in between the right hand turn and being in that straight on lane. I am an adult not a little kid and it is a very uncomfortable situation. What I was suggesting is on the Alternative 3-Modified if bicyclists and automobiles were sharing that right hand lane that is going straight ahead, something similar to what is done on Alma Street from Homer to Hamilton.

Commissioner Keller: You mean a sharro?

Commissioner Lippert: It has a cyclist with a line going through it might be appropriate.

Commissioner Keller: I think those are technically called sharros. That is what I understand and what I think you are referring to.

Mr. Rius: The technical term is Share the Road symbol but more commonly referred to as sharros. Those are typically applied where there is parallel parking and there isn't on Middlefield at this section. So by the guidelines they would not be appropriate. There are exceptions to the guidelines. The signage that typically accompanies that goes on the side of the road, warning signs that say to share the road are applicable even without parallel parking.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Finberg, you had one last question?

Commissioner Fineberg: Yes. The Alternative 3M plan at Middlefield I would concur with Commissioner Lippert's assessment that as an adult cyclist it is easier to continue straight when you are at the right lane with the curb. But my question is, and I want to make sure I understand from the conceptual drawing, if we are in the 3M version is Oregon Expressway – must we lose those islands that go in the east-west direction along Oregon Expressway? So is the pedestrian then crossing the entire length of the street, both directions of traffic, without any mid-street island? Must they be forced into that position? Is there any alternative for the east-west direction in 3M? Does that make sense?

Ms. Likens: The current median islands currently extent into the crosswalks. They are an obstacle in the crosswalks now in the middle of Oregon Expressway. So they will be cutback. It is my understanding that the timing will allow for pedestrians to cross the entire expressway without a median pedestrian push button.

Mr. Prasad: There will be sufficient time for a pedestrian to cross from one corner to the other. There will be no need for them to stop in the middle. Having medians like what protrude now is not advisable for blinds who may be crossing there and it is an obstacle that they can't see. So this is the preferred design and it is in ADA compliance. This is the latest new standard and the

timing will be sufficient to get the pedestrian from one corner to another corner safely in one cycle.

Commissioner Fineberg: Okay. So I understand that it won't protrude into the crosswalk but as a mom of two kids, now eight and ten, you are standing there and a shoe flies off. One went with their father and you are struggling to get a kid in a loose shoe and then shopping bag flies open. No matter how your signals are timed the kids are going to be taking their own time. There have been occasions where I have to seek shelter in that center island. So I just want to make sure I understand. It is going to be pushed back out of the middle of the crosswalk but will it still in fact be there so when disaster strikes you can seek shelter, you are just to the side of the crosswalk but it is still the same width, it is there.

Mr. Prasad: Yes. On Oregon Expressway whatever median you see will still continue to stay there but it will be just out of the crosswalk that's all.

Commissioner Fineberg: Great, thank you.

Commissioner Holman: If I can remember I had a couple of little questions. One was again having to do with the funding but there aren't any trees proposed to be added, but we have all talked about trees. Is there any opportunity funding-wise or otherwise, because again I am looking at alternative improvements, to add trees at the intersections? You think about the trees on any of the intersections where you look. We lost one at an important corner recently because it was diseased and it just totally changed the complexion of the street.

If you are going down Oregon and you look at the changes that are being made it does in some regards, if nothing else just because of the very character of the streetlights, makes it look more urban. So if we can plant trees we are going to help retain some of the character of what Palo Alto is. So is there some possibility for that?

Ms. Likens: I think that is something that if you recommend we pass onto the County and we could also do that independently. I don't know what their plans are but if they could incorporate additional landscaping and vegetation within the project, and the budget would allow for it, we certainly would support that.

Commissioner Holman: And we could specifically indicate trees? I had a second question but I think it is gone. So we will close the public hearing and go to Commissioners for one round of comments and then we will hopefully have a motion. Commissioner Martinez would you like to go first? Commissioner Keller has one last question.

Commissioner Keller: Is it envisioned that the $3.5 million from the County will be enough for this project? What is the expected use of the $1.2 million from the City for Oregon and Middlefield?

Ms. Likens: The County can respond. I think they have tried to respond that they don't really know whether the budget is sufficient yet or not but they think it might be. The Stanford Research Park Impact Fee we have been collecting impact fees for a long time and there is about $2.5 million currently residing there. We have four projects that still need to be done: Page Mill, Oregon and El Camino, Hanover and Page Mill, and Middlefield. Those projects exceed

the current available funding in the Stanford Research Park Impact Fee as we have collected it to date. So to say there is exactly $1.2 million that was the estimate of the cost of the improvement at the time the impact fee was updated last in 2001. There is no discreet amount in the impact fee funds that have been collected currently for Middlefield/Oregon.

Mr. Collen: To clarify the project funding, the project was described as a $3.5 million project and thanks to the efforts of your local Congresswoman, Anna Eshoo it was put into a federal bill for surface transportation authorization. Through the earmark process $2.8 million as a federal grant was made available. So the remaining $700,000 would be a County match, which we have pressed forward with the project, but you know with the economy and the state budget and whatnot there has been a lot of pressure on the Public Works Departments and the Road Department as an agency of the County with the efforts to balance the state budget. So we are committed to move the project forward but we certainly would be welcoming any Palo Alto participation in helping us put together the match that is required for the federal earmark.

Commissioner Keller: So if Palo Alto wanted you to – let's just for discussion sake suppose it cost $250,000 for Ross Road. suppose that everything but Ross Road was $3.5 million would the County envision City of Palo Alto contributing $250,000 towards Middlefield and the County using their money towards Ross Road or would the County say thank you very much for your $250,000, we will reduce our contribution to $450,000?

Mr. Collen: Well I think we need to cost out all of the project elements and get a better handle on exactly what the individual pieces are and what the sum total would look like before we start looking at different alternatives. At the present moment, like I said earlier, we think that financially we are in good shape. That is based on what we know right now and the very, very rough estimate that we have done. We would certainly welcome assistance with putting together the match for the federal grant or contribution to extend the scope of the project, either way.

Commissioner Keller: So if the City of Palo Alto wanted to extend the scope for example to improve the landscaping along Oregon Expressway then that is possible.

Mr. Collen: Absolutely, yes.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: I remembered my question. One of the speakers commented about making the parking I believe it was along Louis, Cowper, or Ross so that isn't a 24-hour restricted parking but it is only restricted parking during peak traffic hours. Would Staff have a response on that? It was Sheri Furman's comment.

Mr. Rius: After that comment was made I briefly skimmed through the plans and it appears a lot of the lanes wouldn't be sufficiently wide enough to accommodate travel and parking. A lot of the travel lanes are up against the curb. So even having nighttime parking at least within the limits identified as no parking, I think the extent of the no parking was minimized as much as possible. So just on a quick skim through the plans I don't think that is possible but we can look at it in more detail during the final design.

Mr. Prasad: During the design we did look at or we had a longer section of no parking zone. So to minimize the impact I believe at Greer we are limiting to only 75 feet. As you can see typically the first 50 feet is a no parking anyway because the right turning vehicles need to get on the thing and that is typical. We are extending 75 feet from the intersection so it is not much. At Louis I think it is about 105 feet on one side. So since we have an eight-phase signal it means we have a left turn lane and a through lane. You cannot accommodate parking like for example like there is at Middlefield with two lanes. I think you have a 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM parking restrictions. At night from 7:00 PM to 7:00 AM they can park because the traffic is low and there are two lanes. This one will not support that. That is why it is limited. When we designed it we made sure that we are not impacting too many residents. It is probably the first resident or something. We also looked at whether they have alternate parking spots and there is plenty of available parking.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. One last question. The pedestrian and bicycle underpass at El Camino is not part of this project but could it be addressed? Is it too far out of the physical scope or is it because it didn't address intersections? Again, it is interlinked because of the pedestrian and bicycle safety so could it be a part of the scope of this?

Ms. Likens: Are you referring to the Alma railroad-crossing underpass?

Commissioner Holman: Yes.

Ms. Likens: Okay. The County Expressway Master Plan document that was approved in 2003 and updated in 2008 includes one project that is not part of this high priority tier one operational improvement project that is currently under consideration. It is conducting a feasibility study for what should be done to improve the under-crossing of the railroad tracks and Alma Street and the whole interchange. That is, and perhaps Mr. Collen can comment on where that is in the priority list. It was not a tier 1-A project, which this one is. It was something less than that. I don't have the plan in front of me but it is on the Expressway Master Plan.

Mr. Collen: I think Gayle has covered it pretty well. They were identified as separate projects because the focus was different and the scopes were different, and the potential impacts were different, as well as the benefits were different. The work on Oregon at the intersections addresses the intersection safety, capacity, and Level of Service and whatnot. The under-crossing is basically about infrastructure reconstruction. It would be a massive undertaking and so it was put at a lower tier for future study, which we would propose to do when we have sufficient funding to advance the entire list of higher priority projects that the County has under consideration. That would be just a study to begin with because we recognize that it is going to be a significant investment of money to make that happen.

Commissioner Holman: I am not looking for an answer to this but just a quick comment is that I am assuming, but don't want to, that the safety of that location is checked fairly regularly because there is spalling, the term for concrete when it gets wet. That concrete gets wet all the time, the walls of it and such, so I am hoping that gets inspected regularly.

So comments Commissioners, it is 10:20 so one round of comments and then hopefully we will find a motion. Commissioner Martinez.

Commissioner Martinez: Although I appeared to be unusually hypercritical tonight, I am really a nice guy. I wanted to comment the County, your consultants, our Staff for really an excellent and easy to follow and well designed report. I think you did a great job.

I was thinking about the comments of the moms at tonight's public hearing. One of the things that sticks out in my mind is the comment that cars turning right often don't see the children that are there crossing the street. I would particularly want to emphasize the need to have an exclusive pedestrian crossing light at Greer, at Louis, and perhaps at Middlefield where we know the children are going to be crossing in great numbers in the morning and after school.

I am still struggling with what is happening at Middlefield. I feel we just don't have the right solution yet. I feel that in part it is because of the requirement, I will call it, or the need perceived by our Traffic Engineers to have that exclusive left turn lane on Middlefield. It is causing us to find the space for that third lane, to narrow the remaining lanes, to suggest that we encroach upon the planting strip and remove trees. There is a domino effect of this probably rightly perceived improvement on traffic turning left. I am still not convinced that it is more than a ten percent improvement, five percent, slightly better than what we have now, but at a great cost. While I am willing to accept just about everything else in your report I would really encourage you to give more consideration to what we are going to be doing at Middlefield Road.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Keller, comments.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you. I had the opportunity to see up close all the hard work and diligence and really listening that the County and City Staff do to the public in this process. I know that I went to I think all of most of the meetings and I think those were among the best run and respectful public outreach meetings of those kind that I have been to. So I would commend all the people involved in putting those on.

I think that the intersection at Ross Road needs a traffic light there to enable the Ross Road bike boulevard to be built at some point. Even if the Ross Road bike boulevard isn't built redirecting the students who live east of Middlefield to be able to cross Ross Road to be able to get to Jordan seems to make a lot of sense independent of whether there is a bike boulevard there. Directing them off of Middlefield is a dramatic improvement of safety and for that reason alone I would do this.

I am somewhat skeptical about the ability to put a full bike boulevard along Ross Road. I don't mean a bike route but a bike boulevard because one of the things noticed about Bryant Street is that Bryant Street has traffic blocks, traffic diverters, and things like that. There are in South Palo Alto where there are creeks the only way to get across the creek on Bryant Street are little bike bridges and pedestrian bridges, and that doesn't exist on Ross Road so it would require putting some sort of blocks along the road. I don't know if we are ready for that. That being said I do think it is worthwhile putting a traffic light there for pedestrians and bicyclists.

With respect to Middlefield Road I think that there is no easy answer. I think that certainly the County Staff has worked on trying to reduce this from their idea, which would try to make enough width in both directions, and each time it has been narrowed. The most persuasive argument to me for 3M is the conflict for bicyclists going northbound on Middlefield in the traffic lane, that conflict with having to move over. I think that the traffic light at Ross Road is

somewhat of a mitigation for that problem. Most of the bicyclists that I see are actually on the sidewalk and not on the roadway. It seems to me that weighing all the issues 3M seems to be the best approach, I'm sorry 4M. The fourth one seems to be the best approach. I mixed it with 3M. Four has the problem with the right turn lane and so four is the best approach because for one thing it does not remove the trees on Middlefield Road. It doesn't require widening the road right-of-way. The other thing it does is it means that when you have a person going in the right hand lane who wants to go straight and is stuck behind somebody turning right who is stuck by a pedestrian or bicyclist you have a problem there. So that is a sticky situation. By having a dedicated right turn lane there it means that traffic can freely turn right easily on that, can turn right on red when people are making left turns from Oregon onto Middlefield. It means that at that intersection you won't have redirection from there onto Ross Road for people going towards 101.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Lippert.

Commissioner Lippert: First of all I want to thank the neighbors, the County and City Staff for coming together. I think that the proposals tonight and what I see in the Staff Report is a win/win situation for everybody. I think that we are beginning to arrive at some consensus in terms of approaching Oregon Expressway. When this process started out I really see that there were almost competing interests and now as I see the solutions I begin to see that everybody can walk away with something that is positive from the Staff Report and what has been recommended this evening.

I am pretty much in agreement with the Staff Report and the recommendations here. I just want to stress two things. Number one, I am really in support of the Ross Road Alternative 3. I think that is a particularly important element and that should move forward as part of our recommendation this evening. In addition to that the Middlefield Road Alternative 4 I am not a proponent of, I don't support that at all. But I do support the Middlefield Road Alternative 3-Modified. I think that is a really good approach here.

Now, my comments are really based on the primary thing, which is pedestrian and bicyclist safety. I think if we promote Ross Road as a bicycle boulevard what it is going to do is take bicycles off of Middlefield Road and allowing that to be the arterial that it needs to be for traffic feeding into Oregon Expressway. What I want to do is separate out and I want to really get or promote the students that are bicycling to both the middle school and Garland Elementary School, whether it is a public school or private school, to take that Ross Road bicycle boulevard as their main route. When I am out cycling I look for safe routes to bicycle on. I look for routes that are marked. I look for routes that have bicycle lanes. I look for the measures that are put in place that slow vehicular traffic. I am not going to find that on Middlefield Road. What I am going to find is cars that are really trying to find the most expeditious way to get home or to get to work. I am also going to find that on Oregon Expressway. But with the Ross Road element built what happens is you come up Ross Road, you hit Garland Drive, and you can go left or right. You can get over to Louis Road or you can get back onto Middlefield Road and wrap around and get to the middle school there. So I think that is a very important element and it pretty much keeps the bicyclists off of Middlefield Road, which is what I want to try to promote.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Fineberg, comments.

Commissioner Fineberg: I would also like to commend the County in bringing forward a very good process incorporating many divergent interests and bringing forward a proposal that seems to be something that offers a great amount to different groups with different interests.

On Ross Road I think it is important that there be the signalized crossing with the bike slots. Ross even without being a bicycle boulevard is relatively calm compared to the adjacent parallel streets. It is wider and it is lovely to bicycle on with little kids but you can't get anywhere from the northern end of Ross at Oregon. So having just that safe crossing across Oregon means it becomes more usable even if we do nothing else on Ross. So I would definitely advocate for the solution 3 on Ross.

For Middlefield I would concur with Commissioner Martinez's characterization that it is not quite there yet. There are some parts of the 3-Modified plan that I think are ideal and there are some parts of plan 4. In 4 that right turn lane just seems awful. I can also see a scenario where people will pull up to the corner, talking on their cell phone, pass the sign that says right turn only, be sitting on top of the right turn arrow, drive straight across the intersection and try to merge with the car that has the lane, and it will not be something that promotes safety for bicycles. So I don't think that one straight lane and the two turn lanes is an ideal scenario.

I don't think anyone wants to lose trees. But if it means we get the intersection right with 3M, if there is any way that can be reconfigured, out of the box thinking, I can't make suggestions of that tonight, but that would sort of be the best of both worlds. I think with what is on the table right now the modified third plan is the ideal scenario at Middlefield.

The only other thing would be if when the motion is made if whoever makes it remembers my suggestion to add the PTA Council to the list of neighborhood groups that will be involved in the furthering discussions.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Keller, do you have a motion?

MOTION

Commissioner Keller: Yes. I am going to make a motion and we will see how many people support it. So I am going to move the Staff recommendation with the following changes. First of all I am going to emphasize that we are totally in support of Ross Road alternative that includes the traffic light. I am also going to modify the Staff recommendation to recommend Alternative 4 rather than Alternative 3-Modified.

With respect to point four make three changes. One is to add to the list of people that Staff works with the PTA Council Traffic Safety Committee Representative. The second is a Planning and Transportation Commission Representative, and that the report is to the Planning and Transportation Commission and then the Council rather than just directly to the Council. In addition, I am not sure whether this should or should not be part of the motion but to consider the potential for expanding the scope to include the landscaping improvements to Oregon Expressway in part due to the damage that was done with the sidewalks that were added, if necessary.

Commissioner Holman: Is there a second?

SECOND

Commissioner Martinez: Second.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Martinez seconds. Would the maker care to speak to his motion or do you feel like you have already?

Commissioner Keller: I think I have sufficiently spoken to this. I realize there is a lot of controversy with respect to Middlefield Road, Alternative 4 versus Alternative 3M. There is no way to build the equivalent of Alternative 3M without widening Middlefield Road. You cannot physically put five lanes in north of the intersection, north of Middlefield Road intersection from the Garland direction. There is no way to put five lanes there without widening the roadway. The roadway there is five feet narrower than the roadway to the south of Oregon Expressway. That is the only way you can fit those five lanes is because of the extra five feet. So we have a choice either four lanes north of Oregon Expressway and no widening, or widen by five feet essentially and five lanes. My preference is to not widen. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: If I might just clarify your motion is for Ross Road it is Alternative 3 because that includes the signal?

Commissioner Keller: Yes, for Ross Road it is Alternative 3, which includes the signal, which I believe is the part of the Staff recommendation number three.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Martinez would you care to speak to your second?

Commissioner Martinez: Yes. Since I am losing traction on getting anyone to listen to coming up with a better alternative for Middlefield I was persuaded in part by Commissioner Lippert's remark that the signalization of Ross Road would encourage more bicyclists to use that instead of Middlefield. With some public education for the availability of a safe crossing at Ross Road I am less inclined to feel that the single lane crossing Oregon Expressway would be as problematic for bicyclists as it would be otherwise. So in a way I am supporting both Alternative 4 for Middlefield Road and Alternative 3 for Ross Road working in tandem to improve a situation that really needs our attention now as the highest priority of this project. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: Before the other Commissioners speak to the motion I am going to ask for an amendment if I might, that has to do with your landscape component of your motion. I would just make it a recommendation and not have all the conditions in it that landscape improvements along Oregon be a necessary component and especially the inclusion of trees and most especially at intersections.

Commissioner Keller: Let me try rewording that statement to say consider the potential for expanding the scope to include landscaping improvements along Oregon Expressway.

Commissioner Holman: That is not what I am looking for. 'Consider the potential for' does not to me make it an imperative to make this a successful project.

Commissioner Keller: So are you suggesting that the rewording be expand the scope, period. Expand the scope to include landscaping improvements, period.

Commissioner Holman: Trees.

Commissioner Keller: Expand the scope to include trees and other landscaping improvements along Oregon Expressway.

Commissioner Holman: And most especially the intersections.

Commissioner Keller: Okay, sure.

Commissioner Holman: Accepted by the seconder as well?

Commissioner Martinez: Yes.

Commissioner Holman: Thank you. Commissioner Lippert, would you care to speak to the motion?

SUBSTITUTE MOTION

Commissioner Lippert: Yes. I would like to actually make a substitute motion, which is to accept all of the language in Commissioner Keller's motion with the exception of adopting Middlefield Road Alternative 3-Modified.

Commissioner Holman: Is there a second?

SECOND

Commissioner Fineberg: I will second that.

Commissioner Holman: I am hesitating here because I think you have heard three people speak to favoring Alternative 4 so I am not quite sure the purpose of the motion.

Commissioner Lippert: Well, let me make my case.

Commissioner Holman: Make your case, okay.

Commissioner Lippert: Actually my feeling about it is I honestly believe that a good solution has not been found here, that there is really a marriage of the two proposals somewhere in the middle. I honestly believe that the two lanes going north are the most compelling for me. Coming south I do agree with this scheme number 4. Maybe there is a way for us to find a middle ground and just say it is not totally resolved and this one area that needs additional work.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Fineberg, care to speak to your second?

Commissioner Fineberg: Yes. I would agree and this goes back to Commissioner Martinez's comment that I don't think we have the right solution yet at Middlefield. The one through lane at a large intersection of an arterial road is a greater negative to me than the loss of a beautiful

aesthetic area for a couple hundred feet. I think back to when I was learning to drive and I was convinced if I couldn't see over the hump of a hill the road was going to end. If I didn't see where the highway exit was going I didn't trust that it was going to continue. I was 15 and a half driving on interstates and I remember my dad told me a big road isn't going to go down to one lane. We have areas like on Charleston where in the whole corridor we are doing traffic calming but people just don't expect a big road, Middlefield, which for miles has been two lanes to suddenly go to one lane. So to me it is more than just how is a bike going to get across it with a right turn lane there. It just doesn't fit traffic patterns that people are used to functioning in. So because of that south, the intersection going north on the southern side of Oregon it just doesn't work. It wouldn't work for me. So I would encourage my fellow Commissioners if they would be supportive of a compromise where we direct Staff to rework that and not take a position. I would be supportive of that but I don't think I could vote for the entire package if we went with Alternative 4.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Lippert.

Commissioner Lippert: If I could restate my motion, I would say that I would prefer to see a melding or a compromising of Alternative 3- Modified and Alternative 4 as originally proposed. That would be my restated motion. Do you concur with that?

Commissioner Fineberg: I will second that.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioner Martinez you have comments?

Commissioner Martinez: It sounds like we are coming around to a position that we don't have a solution for Middlefield that a majority can support. I would be in favor of asking Staff to take another look at this, asking the County as well, with the provision that we not reduce the planting strip or remove trees. I think it is somewhat ironic after our study session earlier where we are trying to put language into Comprehensive Plan that sticks that we are now perhaps looking away from this and supporting a modification of Middlefield that removes trees. So I would be entirely in favor of looking for a compromise between 3M and 4 that we ask Staff to look at that doesn't remove trees from the planting area. Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: If I might ask Staff, do you anticipate or maybe the designers or engineers here too, is there is any concept that might be possible or feasible to come up with a melding of the two that did not remove trees and planting strips?

Ms. Likens: I would just say, and the County can respond, they looked at almost every conceivable layout that would work, aside from the current configuration, which is six phases, which has split phasing on Middlefield and doesn't have left turn pockets. Their interest is to provide the opportunity to go to eight-phase operation, which requires exclusive left turn lanes on Middlefield. Looking at the alignment of the north and south segments of Middlefield and the different widths of those two segments and aligning the lanes perhaps there is an alternative out there that wasn't looked at but I am not sure what it would be.

Mr. Collen: I think that Commission Member Keller has stated the mathematics pretty succinctly. There are 41 feet if you want to put five lanes in there then without moving the curb you would have to go to an eight-foot lane, which I don't think anybody would recommend. A

car is about six feet wide, a truck is about eight-feet wide, and a bus is about eight plus mirrors. So there is no real way to shoehorn anything more in there. It is a difficult tradeoff but the tradeoff is going to have to be confronted and you are going to have to pick a direction. I don't see the two directions as being compatible.

Commissioner Holman: Commissioners, if I might in just an effort to move this along and try to get a vote on the motions. I am going to support the original motion rather than the substitute motion and here is why. Currently when you are going north you have to merge. Actually Commissioner Lippert almost made the argument for using 4 because of I think his right thinking about with the improvements at Ross Road we would be encouraging bicyclists to use Ross rather than Middlefield. I think that having the right turn lane coming north on Middlefield to Oregon is going to relive the stacking that happens there. So I think there are a lot of advantages to Alternative 4 and would encourage Commissioners to, based on comments that we have seen and the amount of time that has been spent, that it is not perfect but I would encourage Commissioners to accept either the substitute motion or the original motion and not ask for this to do a go back. Commissioner Keller.

Commissioner Keller: I thank Staff for their comments and County Staff for their comments that you essentially can't have eight-foot roadway and therefore we have to make the decision. I agree with Acting Chair Holman that we have to make a decision between 3M, 3-Modified, and 4 and it is a judgment call. Essentially going through various plans the County has done their work and now the judgment is for us.

I do have one quick question that I would like to first ask and then speak to. In the back of the book, in the back of the report, Attachment G refers to Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 for Oregon and Middlefield. Which is 1 and which is 2? Do you know? I may have read it somewhere but I am not sure what it refers to.

Mr. Prasad: Are you talking about graphics?

Commissioner Keller: I am talking about the data in the very back. There are all these pages upon pages of numbers in the very back.

Mr. Collen: The Level of Service Chart?

Commissioner Keller: The Level of Service Charts in the very back. The reason I am asking this is because this is the detail data on exactly what the differences are between 3M and 4 in terms of traffic flow. I am trying to understand because I didn't see much difference between Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 in terms of AM or PM and I couldn't tell which was which. I think there is not much difference in traffic and if one of them was 3M and the other one was 4, and we don't know which is which then there is not much difference in the flow of traffic on Middlefield Road across Oregon Expressway. If there is not much difference then why not pick 4?

Mr. Collen: Well there are several pages involved.

Mr. Prasad: Actually what you have in the back are supporting documentation that we went through. It is not shown in the report about 1 and 2 because they were dropped out after the

second community meeting. There was overwhelming support for 3 and also we added a new Alternative, which is 4 based on the feedback. What we have included here are the 1 and 2 that we analyzed just for the records. So really these alternatives were dropped out.

Commissioner Keller: So we don't have an equivalent of the back for 3M versus 4.

Mr. Prasad: We do have that probably in the middle of the report somewhere. The end section was just an appendix to show that we did look at 1 and 2 and those were different alternatives with 1 requiring modifications on all four corners, and Alternative 2 requiring two side widening. I think Alternative 1 was three side widening.

Commissioner Keller: There are a bunch of 3-1s so I am not sure which is which. One of the things that is interesting to me is that at least for all the data that has been presented to us there is not much difference on Middlefield Road delays and throughput for Alternatives 3M and Alternative 4.

Mr. Prasad: It is more often operational. Based on our experience in operating hundreds of expressway intersections how the operation would impact is important and when you have a major arterial like this and if you squeeze that down to one lane you are potentially going to have problems at a later stage when you a bunch of cars that are just arriving and all of a sudden they are all going through. So you will have a long stack of lines that will be still impacting the neighbors whether they are able to get down or not. When you talk about the difference between the two being the loss of trees, the loss of trees you can also look at as a safety. One of the trees has already been hit. It is clearly marked on the tree. It is also in our report. We are removing it but we can also replant it. We have an option to replant it. We can work with arborists. There are some differences as to what kind of tree can go but we can come to an agreement and replant it. Another option that we can explore is work with the neighbors that lost those trees and see if we can plant something in their yard if they were willing to do that. Plus, on top of it we could also add trees along Oregon, or places where it is possible to replace those trees. So it is not a complete loss.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you. I just want to point out that the impacts of those trucks or whatever that hit the trees that may have been a pedestrian that might have been hit if there hadn't been a tree there. So for what it is worth. I thank you for your comments. I do think that there isn't an opportunity to do more lanes on the southbound side so we have to make a decision. I drive that route very often and when I am driving that route going northbound and I am stuck in the right hand lane behind somebody who is turning right I get really frustrated and I am sure that this will remove those frustrations.

Commissioner Holman: Is there any other necessary comments before we vote on the substitute motion? Commissioner Fineberg.

Commissioner Fineberg: I know this is the 13th hour but is there any reason you can't have two lanes going northbound with the left turn lane on Middlefield and then on the northbound side of Middlefield taking the five-foot strip so it would receive the two lanes of northbound traffic and then do the merge similar to the way it is in the existing conditions, but having that extra five feet. Is that the hybrid that we are looking for? I can maybe explain that again.

Mr. Collen: I think you just described 3M.

Commissioner Fineberg: No. You are right. Take it back. It is the 13th hour.

Commissioner Holman: Okay, Commissioner Lippert.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION WITHDRAWN
Commissioner Lippert: I think I persuaded myself by comments that I made earlier. I am going to withdraw the substitute motion. I think that what Commissioner Keller is proposing is perfectly adequate and we are mincing words here. I think just fish or cut bait.

MOTION PASSED (5-0-2-0, Commissioners Garber and Tuma conflicted)

Commissioner Holman: Thank you Commissioner Lippert. So we are ready to vote on the original motion. I don't think Staff needs it repeated. All those in favor say aye. (ayes) Opposed? So that motion passes on a five to zero vote with Commissioners Martinez, Keller, Lippert, Fineberg, and Holman all voting aye. So that will conclude that item. Thank you to Staff, members of the public and the County Staff.

So we go now to Approval of Minutes for July 29. Do we have a motion to approve?

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes of July 29, 2009

MOTION

Commissioner Fineberg: Motion to approve minutes.

SECOND

Commissioner Holman: I will second.

MOTION PASSED (5-0-0-2, Commissioners Garber and Tuma absent)

All those in favor say aye. (ayes) That motion passes on a five to zero vote with Commissioners Martinez, Keller, Lippert, Fineberg, and Holman all voting aye.

Reports From Officials and Committees. Our Council Representative is not here. Does Staff have any reports?

REPORTS FROM OFFICIALS/COMMITTEES.

Ms. Caporgno: I don't but I do have the Tentative Agenda listing that I can distribute to all of you.

Commissioner Holman: Great, thank you.

COMMISSION MEMBER QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND/OR ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Commissioner Holman: Our next meeting is the regular meeting of September 9. We do need a representative for September. Do we have a volunteer for September? I believe Commissioner Fineberg did so Commissioner Fineberg has September.

NEXT MEETING: Regular Meeting of September 9, 2009

Commissioner Holman: Seeing nothing else on our agenda, unless someone has comments we are ….. Commissioner Keller you had a quick comment.

Commissioner Keller: Yes, especially since Gayle is here it would be useful to make this comment. I understand there was a bicycle accident on College Avenue and El Camino recently. I am wondering what thought are made about improving that intersection or having a traffic light over there.

Commissioner Holman: Perhaps that is something that Gayle could email to us when you have more opportunity to consider it.

Ms. Likens: Yes, I don't have the specifics of the accident itself. Of course that is an intersection controlled by the state so we would have to follow up with the state.

Commissioner Keller: Thank you.

Commissioner Holman: I should have welcomed Rafael for your first presentation to the Commission and thank you for your participation. So with that the meeting is adjourned.

ADJOURNED: **11:15 PM**