



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 4944)

Report Type: Action Items

Meeting Date: 8/4/2014

Summary Title: Comp Plan Update and Scoping Session

Title: PUBLIC HEARING: Comprehensive Plan Update – Discussion of Alternative Futures & Issues for Consideration in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR “Scoping” Meeting). The City will Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Update of its Comprehensive Plan. Staff will Summarize Input Received at Recent Public Meetings and Invite Comments and Suggestions from the Public and the City Council Regarding the Alternatives and Issues that Should be Included for Analysis in the EIR. (Note: After an initial presentation, comments, and discussion, this public hearing will be proposed for continuance to 7:00 PM on Wednesday, August 6, 2014.)

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Planning and Community Environment

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council conduct a public scoping meeting by accepting public testimony and providing feedback regarding environmental issues and alternatives to be considered in the program-level Environmental Impact Report (EIR) being prepared for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Following the public hearing, staff recommends that the City Council either: (1) direct staff to proceed with preparation of the EIR analysis taking into consideration input received during the scoping period, and based on the four conceptual alternatives described in Attachment I, with specified modifications and refinements as desired; or (2) identify the specific, additional information required to further define the conceptual alternatives prior to initiating the analysis of potential impacts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Comprehensive Plan amendment was initiated by the City Council in 2006 to focus on preservation of commercial land uses, preservation of retail and community services to support new residential growth, incorporate sustainability concepts, update the housing element and

prepare concept area plans for East Meadow Circle and California Avenue/Fry's areas. The Comprehensive Plan Update has been the subject of multiple City Council hearings since 2006. Most recently, the Council endorsed on February 3, 2014 a new framework for a more robust public process for the preparation of the Update. A revised schedule was approved by Council at the March 17, 2014 hearing.

The new schedule includes key milestones of a release of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in December 2014 and a City Council hearing for a Draft Comprehensive Plan Update at the end of 2015. The new approach included the identification and analysis of multiple alternatives in order to allow for meaningful public dialog about critical issues, "alternative futures," and potential impacts and benefits of the alternatives. The adopted schedule assumed that alternatives would be designed through a public scoping process and that the EIR analysis would begin in early to mid-August 2014. Earlier public engagement meetings and these August scheduled hearings before the City Council constitute the public scoping process.

To identify issues and alternatives for analysis, staff issued a formal "Notice of Preparation" to solicit input on the scope of the EIR, and initiated public engagement efforts as part of the "Our Palo Alto" initiative. The engagement included three public meetings to solicit feedback from the public regarding (1) critical issues facing our community; (2) growth management strategies and regional growth projections; and (3) alternative futures. These public workshops and the concurrent online engagement efforts are described further in the Background section, below.

In the course of the public workshops, members of the community reiterated their longstanding commitment to preserve residential (R-1) neighborhoods and public open spaces in the City, and discussed directing change to other areas in order to protect these neighborhoods and open spaces. The vast majority of Palo Alto (90 plus percent) would remain unchanged and off-limits for any land use plan change. Six "focus areas" emerged from the discussion as locations where the participants felt change could be accommodated if necessary: Downtown and the Stanford Shopping Center; the El Camino Real corridor; the California Avenue area; Stanford Research Park; the East Meadow Circle/Bayshore area; and the South San Antonio area. Participants in the third workshop considered these areas in crafting nine potential alternative futures, or visions for the City. These nine potential alternatives were subsequently condensed to form the four conceptual alternatives presented for discussion this evening.

The four conceptual alternatives or scenarios each address any potential future growth in a different way, and would each result in different additions and changes to the draft policy document reviewed by the City Council earlier this year. In brief:

- Scenario 1: Do Nothing/Business as Usual represents the No Project Alternative and is required by law. It assumes the Comprehensive Plan is not updated, and that by the end of the planning horizon, the current "cap" on non-residential development

(downtown and citywide) is exceeded due to regional growth pressures and the development potential available under existing zoning.¹

- Scenario 2: Slow Growth & No Changes in Land Use Designations would manage growth by metering the pace of non-residential development, and would include policy changes to ensure that new housing is focused on meeting State housing requirements. There would be no changes to the City's current land use map and zoning and limited transportation infrastructure changes.
- Scenario 3: Slow Growth & Adjust the Location of Housing Sites would also manage growth by metering the pace of non-residential development and include policy changes to ensure that new housing is focused on meeting State housing requirements. However this alternative would also eliminate housing sites along South El Camino and San Antonio, and replace them with increased densities and new sites in areas better served by transit and neighborhood services, such downtown, the California Avenue area, and certain "nodes" along El Camino Real. This alternative could also test the idea of depressing the Caltrain tracks south of Page Mill Road.
- Scenario 4: Net Zero Concepts would use performance measures rooted in the City's sustainability goals rather than a growth management strategy to minimize community impacts and would test a number of "Net Zero" concepts. For example, this alternative could include policies and programs to ensure no net increase in vehicle trips between now and 2030, to ensure net zero energy use by new non-residential development, to significantly reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions and improve water conservation. This alternative could potentially allow more non-residential and residential growth than the others if projects could meet these much more stringent requirements that control the impacts of that growth.

These four scenarios are described in more detail in Attachment I, and staff is seeking public and City Council input on these as well as the environmental issues that should be included in the EIR analysis.

Also, because the four scenarios are high level "vision statements" at this point, they will need to be further developed in order for the consultants to begin the EIR analysis. For example, staff has been assembling data regarding the pace of non-residential development in Palo Alto since 1989 (long term) and since the end of the recession (short term) to inform the selection of an annual non-residential growth rate for Scenarios 2 and 3. Staff has also been researching

¹ A 350,000 square foot cap on non-residential development downtown was called for by Program L-8 in the City's existing Comprehensive Plan and implemented via Municipal Code Section 18.18.040. A 3.2 million square foot cap on non-residential development citywide was included in Comprehensive Plan Policy L-8. This alternative unrealistically assumes the City would not take steps to defend or replace these caps and is intended simply to provide a baseline for comparison with other scenarios rather than speculating as to what the outcome(s) of a future planning process might be.

other jurisdictions that use a performance-based approach to inform a list of performance measures and monitoring/implementation mechanisms for Scenario 4, and considering the specific land use map changes that should be included in Scenarios 3 and 4.

Staff is seeking Council's direction whether to proceed with the conceptual alternatives' definition at a staff level and begin the EIR analysis, or whether to return to Council with specific information for further discussion prior to beginning the EIR analysis.

BACKGROUND

The 1998-2010 Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) contains the City's official policies on land use and community design, transportation, housing, the natural environment, business and economics, community services, and governance. The Plan's policies apply to both public and private properties and collectively determine the physical form of the City. The Plan is used by the City Council and PTC to evaluate land use changes and to help inform funding and budget decisions. It is used by City Staff to help regulate building and development and to make recommendations on projects. It is especially important in framing and informing zoning changes. It is used by citizens and neighborhood groups to understand the City's long-range plans and proposals for different geographic areas. The Plan provides the basis for the City's development regulations and the foundation for its capital improvements program.

Between 2008 and 2010, City staff reviewed the existing Comprehensive Plan elements with the PTC, prepared background reports on baseline growth topics, and developed preliminary information regarding the two concept area plans. In June of 2010, the PTC formed sub-committees to review each Comprehensive Plan element. Work included updating the vision statements, goals, policies and programs. New goals, policies and programs were added where appropriate and existing goals, policies and programs were edited to reflect desired changes. Relevant policies and programs were carried over to the draft elements. Draft elements were reviewed by the full PTC at regularly scheduled public meetings with staff recommendations to include the draft elements into the Comprehensive Plan Update. This PTC sub-committee process continued through 2013.

At a December 2, 2013 study session, the City Council discussed ways to initiate a conversation about the community's shared vision for the future. Staff suggested reframing the long running Comprehensive Plan process to increase community engagement and explore alternatives in an expansive and ongoing way. The discussion, which grew out of community concerns about issues such as traffic/parking and the pace of development, led to the development of an organizational framework for ideas, action, and design we refer to as "Our Palo Alto."

On February 3, 2014 the Council endorsed this framework and directed staff to return to Council with a specific schedule and scope of work to create a blueprint for the future of land uses and development in our City by re-framing the ongoing update to the Comprehensive Plan to include broad community engagement, discussion and analysis of alternative futures, cumulative impacts, and mitigation strategies.

On March 17, 2014 staff presented the Council with a recommended schedule to complete the Comprehensive Plan Update and associated program-level Environmental Impact Report by the end of 2015. The Council voted to approve staff's recommendations and directed Staff to return to Council with additional considerations of the outreach process, composition and procedures for the Community Leadership Group. The Council also asked staff to review the prior Comprehensive Plan process and SOFA Plan process for lessons learned.

On May 5, 2014, the City Council reviewed the draft elements, collectively titled, "Draft Comprehensive Plan 2030, Vision Statement, Goals, Policies and Programs (April 2014)" <http://goo.gl/Sq9cvj>. Council provided comments on many aspects of the document. At the conclusion of Council's review, the City Manager indicated that staff would organize the comments into groups of issues and convert the comments into questions that could be further discussed through the community engagement process. The comment groups and questions are contained in Attachment A.

Comp Plan Engagement and Workshops Summary

The community engagement plan for the Comp Plan update included a series of community workshops to help develop alternatives to study in the EIR. The goal of the Comp Plan Update outreach process is to:

- Solicit meaningful input regarding the critical issues facing our City and a design for its future;
- Ensure participation by a wide cross section of Palo Altans, including traditionally underrepresented groups, and
- Ensure that the public's input informs the final work product that is presented to decision-makers for their consideration.

Three workshops were held in May and June. The workshops were held in various locations of the City to engage the as many members of the public as possible. Summaries of each workshop are provided as Attachment C.

The first workshop, the Critical Issues Forum, was held on May 29, 2014 at the Avenidas facility in downtown Palo Alto. The goal of this meeting was to have the community identify Palo Alto's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). Approximately 40 members of the community attended this first workshop. Participants were placed in small groups and asked to share their opinions on a variety of issues, including housing, transportation, energy, quality of life, technology, and the regional and global economy. Common themes emerged from the group discussion. The themes include the importance of the quality of life, importance of the City's relationship with Stanford, concerns of traffic, public trust, citizen participation, transit, the high cost of housing and high speed rail. A detailed matrix of the common themes can be found in Attachment C. The summary has also been made available to the public on the Comp Plan Update website.

The second workshop, the Growth Management Forum, was held two weeks later on June 10, 2014 at Palo Alto High School, with approximately 30 attendees. A summary of the last workshop was provided and a presentation on growth management techniques was given. The presentation covered jobs, housing and population growth trends of Palo Alto, as well as an overview of tools used by other jurisdictions. Building upon the themes identified at the last workshop, the public was asked to identify which areas of the City they thought might or should change and which areas should be protected and preserved during the 15 year life of the updated Comprehensive Plan. Attendees were placed in small groups of six to eight people to discuss their opinions and asked to identify the areas on land use maps. Six distinct areas emerged from the discussion as “opportunity sites” or “focus areas,” where the City could direct change and development as a way to protect and preserve other areas. The six focus areas included 1) Downtown and the Stanford Shopping Center, 2) El Camino Real corridor, 3) California Avenue, 4) Stanford Research Park, 5) East Meadow Circle/Bayshore, and 6) South San Antonio.

The most recent workshop, Alternatives Future, was held at the Elk’s Lodge on June 24, 2014. This workshop, building on the previous two workshops, was well attended with over 70 participants. The purpose of this workshop was to ask the public to help identify potential alternatives based on the concepts discussed at the previous meetings. The presentation included an overview of the past process and the goals for the workshop. Attendees were placed in small groups to discuss what they thought the City should consider as alternatives. As a guide, the participants were provided with potential alternatives, in addition to a no project alternative: 1) Slow Non-residential Development and Encourage Housing, 2) Slow Non-residential Development and Focus Housing in Transit-rich Areas, 3) Can We Be a Net-Zero City and What Does That Mean? Attendees were also given the option of creating their own alternative. A lively discussion resulted in nine separate alternatives. A number of groups described alternatives that slowed the rate of growth, and focused any new development in one or more of the mixed-use “focus areas” identified. Others suggested allowing more housing and neighborhood serving retail near transit. A detailed summary of the workshop outcomes is provided in Attachment C.

In addition to the three planning workshops described above, planning staff and consultants have initiated online tools to continue the discussion and to provide opportunity for input by those who were not able to attend the meetings. The Comp Plan website provides an email list for interested parties to keep informed of the project. It also provides an email for additional questions and comments. Online versions of each small group activity from the workshops have been and will be posted online as part of Open City Hall. The first online event requests the public to identify the critical issues for Palo Alto. The second online exercise requests feedback on the six focus areas.

Staff has also solicited applications for the “Leadership Group” that is expected to assist with community engagement for the balance of the planning process. Based on applications

received, the City Manager has appointed 13 members. Over the next 18 months, the group will work with City staff undertaking the community engagement portion of the planning process. The kickoff meeting was held on July 21, 2014. The Leadership Group will provide a regular, monthly forum for discussing community engagement activities, including ways to reach residents and businesses that don't typically participate in planning efforts. Members are expected to become knowledgeable about the Comprehensive Plan, which is the City's primary tool for guiding preservation and development in Palo Alto, and the group may advise staff about ways public input that is received could or should inform alternatives and outcomes.

All of the community engagement activities planned as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update and all of the community input received will be documented and cataloged so it can be used to inform the analysis and policy decisions that will be made. In the near term, input received this summer will be used to help define issues and alternatives to be analyzed in the program EIR.

PTC Hearing

A Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) hearing was held on July 9, 2014 to consider the draft alternatives and to solicit scoping comments for the preparation of the EIR. The hearing was attended by approximately 23 members of the public, and eight members of the public provided comments at the hearing. The public comments included the following:

- This will be the best vetted comprehensive plan.
- An important question is how to keep people engaged.
- The development of alternative scenarios is engaging the public. Continue to regularly engage the public.
- Need city staff dedicated toward collecting and analyzing land use, transportation and demographic data.
- Downtown parking is problem.
- Neighborhood quality is important.
- Birds and nature have intrinsic value to nature, not just benefit for humans.
- Not clear about Concept 4 (the "net zero" concept); this should not be an alternative for Comp Plan.
- More housing wanted in E. Meadow Circle with services and a park.
- Once the study ends, it is about implementation.
- Undergrounding CalTrain tracks is an opportunity and solution.
 - ✓ It will improve east/west connections through Palo Alto.
 - ✓ Create real estate (or get it back).
 - ✓ Create bikeway.
 - ✓ Opportunity for housing and commercial.
 - Eliminate crossing delay.
 - Improve quality of life.
 - Prepare way to underground HSR.
- Independence of the PTC is critical.
- Alternative #2 resonates most.

- Would like stricter allocations with respect to ABAG allocations.
- The more companies locate and grow in the city, the more ABAG will require housing.
- Palo Alto should preserve quality of life.
- Should focus on maintaining existing land use and development and add no more.
- Shift growth outside of Palo Alto.
- Need to use land wisely.
- Support for slow residential and slow non-residential growth.
- Keep 50' height limit.
- Place taller buildings in south ECR and the research park.
- Keep human scale and quality of life.
- Missing is discussion about EIR is the potential for flooding from sea level rise – need to address.
- Hazardous materials – need more recent study.
- Alternative #1 is most realistic, but #2 is best otherwise.
- Development within ½ mile of transit is larger than what ABAG considers for transit oriented development; ½ mile would include Baron Park.
- Support keeping 50' height limit.
- Need to find out what the commercial and residential markets want.
- Nervous when change proposed for El Camino Real; too many property owners that need to cooperate makes change less likely.
- Need to consider Stanford Hospital expansion in discussion.
- Palo Alto is not isolated. Need to consider East Palo Alto and to lift them from the outside. Same with Mountain View and Menlo Park.
- Need to look at air traffic - More planes, more noise and more impacts.
- Need alternative to Stanford for medical services. Stanford is too expensive for everyone.
- Beautification of El Camino Real is important.
- Need to understand that the areas south of Page Mill Road are different from the areas in the north.
- Need to quantify the alternatives to study impacts.
- Need to be aware of what is legal and discretionary, need more specificity in the alternatives.
- Public needs to know the costs of mitigations.
- For alternatives, need to talk about neighborhood supporting services, such as bank, salon, etc.
- Focus is too much on commute trips.
- Jobs near transit would reduce trips because those people will walk.
- Need to place housing near services.

The PTC provided extensive feedback on the alternatives as well as the pending Draft EIR. The PTC thanked the public for their participation throughout the process. A detailed list of their comments and suggestions are provided in Attachment B.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this scoping meeting is to allow the City Council and members of the public, individually and/or as a group, to provide comments regarding the alternatives to be evaluated in the EIR, as well as the scope of environmental issues. The City has conducted four earlier workshops or scoping meetings in connection with the Our Palo Alto process (three Community Outreach meetings and one PTC session) and this fifth scoping meeting with the City Council is intended to synthesize some of the earlier comments and provide an opportunity to weigh in on particular environmental issues before the EIR is commenced. Of course, The Council may also amend the schedule and the alternatives under consideration before initiating the EIR.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a state law that requires California agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and describe feasible measures that can be taken to avoid or mitigate those impacts. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required by CEQA when an agency determines that a project may have a significant effect on the environment. An EIR evaluates a proposed project's potential impacts on the environment, and recommends mitigation measures or alternatives to reduce or eliminate those impacts. Decision-makers use information in an EIR to help determine whether or not to approve a project, and what modifications should be incorporated into the project, if any. In this way, an EIR is used to inform public input and agency decisions; it does not itself constitute a plan or a final decision.

The most common type of EIR assesses potential impacts associated with a specific development project. The Comprehensive Plan Update is not a specific development project, and instead constitutes an effort by the City of Palo Alto to determine comprehensive land uses, policies, and programs that will guide public and private decision making regarding land use and development issues over the next 15 years. For the Comprehensive Plan Update, the City will prepare what's referred to as a Program EIR, which assesses the potential cumulative impacts of development that may occur during the life of the plan, considers potential alternatives, and identifies mitigation measures that should be adopted to reduce or avoid significant impacts. This is the same level of environmental analysis that was prepared for the existing Palo Alto 1998-2010 Comprehensive Plan. Preparing a Program level EIR for citywide growth allows the City to better identify –and mitigate– cumulative impacts of overall growth that may otherwise be missed in a more focused project specific environmental analysis.

CEQA specifically requires that a program EIR be prepared for plans that govern a continuing program. Although the legally required contents of a program EIR are the same as project specific EIR, such as the one prepared for the golf course project, a program EIR is more conceptual, with a more general discussion of impacts, alternatives and mitigations. For example, the Comp Plan EIR will include several project alternatives. But those discussions will be more general as it involves the entire city instead of a particular site. Preparation of a program EIR parallels the development of the Comprehensive Plan. CEQA clearance for subsequent projects can “tier” off the program EIR, meaning that they can rely on the program EIR to a limited extent, and focus any new analysis on site-specific impacts or impacts that were

not covered in sufficient detail in the program EIR. Depending on the complexity of the project, such CEQA clearances can include Negative Declarations and Supplement EIRs.

An EIR describes the objectives for a proposed project, the location of the project and actions proposed. It evaluates how the existing environment would be changed if the project was approved and provides feasible mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce significant adverse changes to existing conditions. An important component of the EIR process provides an opportunity for public input regarding environmental issues and alternatives to be addressed in advance of the Draft EIR's preparation, and this is the "scoping" step that the City is currently engaged in. There is another significant opportunity for public input when the Draft EIR is made available for review and comment. Under the City's current schedule, the Draft EIR would be released at the end of 2014 for an extended comment period in early 2015, prior to selection of a preferred scenario by the City Council and preparation of a Final EIR. Review of the Draft EIR would be concurrent with an extended review of the revised draft policies and programs of the Comprehensive Plan (i.e. an 80% draft of the plan).

Environmental Analysis- Our Palo Alto 2030

The first step in processing any EIR is issuance of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) by the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency, in this case the City of Palo Alto, issued an NOP for the Comprehensive Plan Update on May 30, 2014. The NOP (Attachment D) was disseminated for public review with an orientation brochure (on the Internet at: <http://goo.gl/ah1PMw>), published in multiple newspapers, and mailed to public agencies as required by the State CEQA Guidelines. The end of the NOP public review period was specified as June 30 for public agencies and August 6, 2014 for the general public. All input received during the NOP period will be considered during preparation of the EIR. The NOP also listed 5 public scoping meeting opportunities. As of the end of the agency public review period, staff has received three agency comment letters. Letters were received from the Valley Transportation Agency (VTA), the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

As currently envisioned, the Draft EIR that is prepared for the Comprehensive Plan Update will examine several alternatives at an equal level of detail, allowing for an informed decision to adopt one of these alternatives at the end of the process, or potentially a blend of the alternatives if the impacts of that blended alternative have been adequately bracketed by other alternatives in the EIR. The EIR will have to describe and define the alternatives in sufficient detail to permit an analysis of their potential impacts and to permit meaningful public input. The alternatives can assess a variety of land use and infrastructure options, and collectively present a range of possible outcomes to inform a final decision about the future of Palo Alto. (See below and attached for further discussion of alternatives.) It's also important that the alternatives and the EIR consider whether there are proposed policies and programs that might have physical environmental impacts in addition to any changes in land use designations and infrastructure.

The City's consultant, PlaceWorks, was hired to help staff prepare the Comprehensive Plan Update and the program EIR. The firm, originally known as DCE, was hired in 2008 and has continued to support staff as the Comprehensive Plan update has evolved over the past five years. PlaceWorks offers a range of planning services, including general plan/comprehensive plan preparation, community participation programs, preparation of environmental documents and zoning code/form base code updates. The PlaceWorks team consists of three key staff members. They include Principal Charlie Knox, Associate Principal Joanna Jansen and Associate Andrew Hill. The firm has worked closely with staff in the development of the project website and the various components of the outreach process, including the three recent workshops. PlaceWorks will provide a brief overview of the recent process and the program EIR at the August 4th City Council hearing.

The draft EIR will analyze the environmental impacts of each of the alternative future scenarios approved for analysis by City Council in addition to a No Project Alternative, as required by CEQA. In keeping with the requirements of CEQA, the Draft EIR will determine potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures in the following resource categories:

- **Aesthetics**

The aesthetics analysis will review Comprehensive Plan Update policies and programs that may impact scenic vistas and other resources, as defined in the Comprehensive Plan, such as views of the hills or the Bay. We will describe existing visual resources within Palo Alto, including descriptions of scenic views and corridors within and adjacent to the city. Each resource will be described, photographed, and mapped to provide context for the reviewer. Based on the aesthetic resource significance criteria, PlaceWorks will assess potential significant aesthetic impacts, such as impacts on scenic views and corridors. If necessary, mitigation measures to reduce aesthetics impacts to a less-than-significant level will be recommended in the form of additional or revised Comprehensive Plan policies.

- **Air Quality and Community Health Risk**

PlaceWorks will prepare an air quality, community risk and hazards, and GHG emissions analysis to support the Comprehensive Plan Update and EIR. The impact analysis for the EIR will be based on the current methodology of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). The technical analysis will be integrated within the EIR and modeling datasheets will be included as an appendix.

Air Quality: In accordance with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) CEQA Guidelines, a Plan-level analysis will be prepared. This section will include the current air quality within the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin (SFBAAB or Air Basin) in the vicinity of the City and a summary of regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing health-based impacts associated with poor air quality. Existing levels of criteria air pollutants available from the nearest air quality monitoring station will be incorporated.

The air quality analysis will include a qualitative analysis of criteria air pollutants and precursors generated from buildout of the proposed land uses plan. Buildout of the Comprehensive Plan would generate emissions from an increase in trips and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) associated with land uses within the City. The Program-level air quality analysis will include a consistency evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan to the BAAQMD's land use and transportation control measures within the air quality management plan. The SFBAAB is in nonattainment for particulate matter and for ozone. The potential increase in VMT provided by Hexagon Transportation resulting from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will be discussed in relation to the projected population increase. The air quality impact analysis will also describe land uses within the city that have the potential to generate nuisance odors. Buffer distances and/or control measures for odor sources listed in the BAAQMD's guidelines will be incorporated.

Community Risk and Hazards: The air quality section of the EIR will include an assessment of air quality compatibility based on guidance within BAAQMD's draft *Community Risk Reduction Plans for Toxic Air Contaminants (TAC) and Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}): Community Development Guidelines*. The community risk and hazards evaluation will include a discussion of potential health risks from TACs and PM_{2.5} in the project vicinity based on BAAQMD's guidance. BAAQMD does not require site-specific health risk assessments as part of the Plan-level evaluation for the Comprehensive Plan. Recommended measures specified in the BAAQMD's Guidelines for future sensitive land uses within the areas mapped will be considered. For land uses within areas mapped as having elevated risk, the EIR will detail performance standards for future development project, including requirements to reduce risk from exposure to significant concentrations of PM_{2.5} and TACs. Recommendations to reduce risk associated with placement of new sensitive land uses associated with the Comprehensive Plan adjacent to major sources of air pollution will be based on the recommended buffer distances based on BAAQMD screening tools, CARB guidance, and the California Air Pollution Control Officer's Association (CAPCOA) guidance.

- **Biological Resources**

PlaceWorks' subconsultant TRA will provide a programmatic evaluation of biological resources in Palo Alto. The Draft EIR analysis of biological resources will address direct impacts on special-status species and sensitive habitats from the implementation of the updated Comprehensive Plan. Indirect impacts on these resources from the urban development that may be carried out will also be analyzed. Special attention will be given to impacts on Barron, Matadero, and San Francisquito Creeks.

The Draft EIR will rely on the California Natural Diversity Database and a search of the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology records in describing the affected environment for biological resources. No protocol-level species-specific field surveys are proposed.

The EIR will analyze the effectiveness of the goals and policies in the updated Comprehensive Plan in minimizing and mitigating impacts on listed species, including loss of their habitat, and provide an evaluation of how the goals of the Comprehensive Plan will encourage sustainability and conservation of natural resources.

- **Cultural Resources**

PlaceWorks will analyze potential impacts to cultural resources that could result from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update, drawing on the Palo Alto Historical Inventory and other existing cultural resource surveys and documents prepared for the City. Preservation programs or other measures necessary to address potential impacts resulting from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update will be suggested for inclusion either in the EIR as mitigation measures or as Comprehensive Plan polices or programs.

- **Geology, Soils, and Seismicity**

PlaceWorks will prepare the “Setting” section of the EIR. It is expected that geologic impacts may relate to seismic shaking, liquefaction, erosion, expansive soils, and subsidence. Potential seismic impacts, including ground shaking, surface rupture, liquefaction, and landslides will be described. Additionally, potential impacts related to geotechnical soil properties, such as erosion, expansive soils, and subsidence will be described. The PlaceWorks’ senior geologist, with 30 years of experience, will review the draft Comprehensive Plan policies pertaining to geology, soils, and seismicity, and suggest revisions to these policies or new policies, if necessary, in order to mitigate potential geotechnical impacts.

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Implementation of the City’s Comprehensive Plan Update would result in an increase in GHG emissions from energy use (natural gas and electricity), transportation sources, water use and wastewater generation, and solid waste disposal. (Although Scenario 4 would effectively mitigate or offset these increases.) The analysis will draw upon past inventories conducted for Palo Alto. The Comprehensive Plan EIR will summarize the most recent community GHG emissions inventory for existing (CEQA baseline) environmental conditions and forecast GHG emissions at the Comprehensive Plan Horizon year. The GHG inventory for CEQA baseline and buildout will be modeled using the latest modeling tools (EMFAC, CalEEMod, and OFFROAD). The boundaries of the community-wide GHG emissions inventories will be based on a combination of sectors over which the City has geographic and jurisdiction control. For example, the transportation sector will be based on VMT generated by trips that start or end in the city and exclude trips that pass through the city. The EIR will evaluate the impact from the change in GHG emissions in the city compared to CEQA baseline conditions pursuant to BAAQMD thresholds. Area-wide construction-related impacts, such as fugitive dust due to earth moving and grading and exhaust emissions associated with construction equipment and material hauling operations, will be discussed commensurate with the

level of detail available regarding construction activity within the Comprehensive Plan area. Standard construction mitigation measures will be identified, where appropriate.

The GHG section in the EIR will also discuss the City's commitment to reducing GHG emissions in accordance with the GHG reduction goals of Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) and Senate Bill 375 (SB 375). Project consistency with the California Air Resources Board 2008 Scoping Plan and 2013 Scoping Plan Update and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Government (ABAG) Plan Bay Area will also be reviewed. The City of Palo Alto has a Climate Protection Plan and is embarking on preparation of a Sustainability/Climate Action Plan. The EIR will include a consistency evaluation with the GHG reduction measures identified in the Palo Alto Climate Protection Plan, as may be modified by proposed implementation of the Sustainability/Climate Action Plan, as well as climate protection programs in the updated Comprehensive Plan.

- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

Several parts of the city, including the California Avenue/Fry's Area and East Meadow Circle Concept Plan areas have a history of research and development and high technology industrial uses. A number of these uses generated hazardous materials that contaminated the environment. Volatile organic compounds commonly used by high tech companies are present in groundwater in some areas of the city, so the EIR will need to carefully consider potential impacts from volatile organic compound vapor intrusion into new residential buildings on former industrial sites.

To identify potential hazards-related issues, PlaceWorks will identify potential risk areas for subsurface contamination, both soil and groundwater, that may potentially affect development. PlaceWorks will assess available public and private reports and data regarding potential subsurface contamination. PlaceWorks will identify historical activities that may have compromised the environment and identify proactive requirements that will be applied to future development to minimize any future environmental contamination and/or liability. The historical assessment will evaluate the likelihood of subsurface contamination from past activities. PlaceWorks will also describe current regulations that require plans and actions to minimize future environmental issues. Standard Environmental Site Assessment regulatory databases will be utilized along with at least two sources of available historical site information such as Sanborn maps and aerial photographs, as well as information provided by the City of Palo Alto and/or Santa Clara County.

PlaceWorks will also utilize the Regional Water Quality Control Board's 2003 South Bay study, which identifies regional plumes and areas of subsurface concern related to former or current industrial and commercial zones. By identifying general areas of concern, SES will be able to assess potential impacts from future construction dewatering and vapor intrusion.

PlaceWorks will complete the following tasks:

Complete a database search and historical site use assessment.

- Review the site-specific data, including all pertinent City plans and available regulatory agency reports, to create a site map showing the established areas of groundwater contamination.
- Discuss areas of concern with various interested persons within the city.
- Identify known zones where VOC plumes have contaminants above the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Environmental Screening Levels (ESLs).
- Evaluate pathways of potential exposure through typical future development.
- Identify potential impacts from any existing hazardous waste conditions for exposure to the planned area improvements, such as new development, infrastructure or daylighting of drainages.
- Identify potential impacts and develop or review proposed mitigation strategies to reduce the potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

- **Hydrology and Water Quality**

PlaceWorks will evaluate potential impacts of implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update on hydrology and water quality, including stormwater quality. In particular, the EIR will focus on potential impacts related to groundwater contamination (including salt water intrusion), development in groundwater recharge areas, current drainage capacity, sedimentation, and increases in impervious surfaces and flooding. The EIR will also include an overview of relevant federal, State and local regulations as well as a discussion of how these regulations can reduce or avoid the potential impacts to hydrology and water quality that could result from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

- **Land Use and Planning**

PlaceWorks will describe the existing regulatory framework applicable to land use, as well as existing land uses in the City and its vicinity, and will evaluate potential impacts from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update, including impacts associated with Comprehensive Plan land use designation changes. The evaluation will include a thorough analysis of land use compatibility issues associated with future development under the proposed Comprehensive Plan Update.

- **Noise**

PlaceWorks will prepare a noise analysis that will identify potential impacts on sensitive land uses associated with the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The EIR will discuss relevant standards and criteria for noise exposure, and the assessment of impacts will be based on federal, State, and local ordinances, policies, and standards.

The ambient noise environment in the city will be established through field noise monitoring, and traffic noise modeling. A survey of existing ambient noise levels will be conducted to establish the character of the noise environment within the city. Noise

measurements will be taken at up to twelve (12) locations and observations of noise sources and other noise correlates during each measurement period will be documented.

The existing regulatory setting regarding noise will be summarized, and. Documentation of the existing ambient noise environment is important because these baseline noise levels will affect the identification of Comprehensive Plan policies and specific mitigation measures required for future impacts. The Setting section of the Noise Section of the EIR will address:

- *Transportation Noise:* Noise from vehicular traffic will be assessed using a version of the US Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Traffic Noise Model; these contours will utilize the traffic forecasts provided in the traffic impact analyses for the Comprehensive Plan update. These analyses will identify areas along freeway and roadway segments that would be exposed to noise increases above criteria specified in the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the noise analysis will identify potential noise and vibration impacts to sensitive uses in the city from rail and aircraft sources.
- *Stationary Noise:* Noise impacts from non-transportation sources such as major retail and commercial/industrial uses will be discussed in terms of potential impacts to nearby noise-sensitive receptors. Future ambient noise and land use compatibility will be discussed, and noise mitigation will be provided to reduce potential impacts to future sensitive land uses related to noise, if applicable.
- *Noise and Land Use Compatibility:* An analysis will be prepared to assess noise and land use compatibility for focused areas in the city that could be affected by land use changes or by changes in traffic patterns. Potential land use conflicts within the city will be identified based on the results of the noise monitoring and modeling results.
- *Construction Noise and Vibration:* Potential construction impacts associated with implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will be evaluated at a programmatic level. Future noise and vibration effects from construction activities will be discussed in terms of accepted federal standards.

- **Population, Housing and Employment**

This section will focus on the potential for displacement of people or housing and for population growth that could result from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. PlaceWorks will describe existing population and housing conditions and summarize the relevant State and local regulatory framework including the City's Regional Housing Needs Association (RHNA) and the current Housing Element. Based on the population and housing significance criteria, PlaceWorks will assess potential population and housing impacts. If necessary, mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level in the form of Comprehensive Plan policies will be recommended.

- **Public Services**

This section will evaluate potential impacts on public services, including fire/emergency

medical services (EMS), police services, and schools. PlaceWorks will describe existing public services within the city. The setting will include a description of each public service provider, including current and projected capacity. Based on the public services significance criteria, PlaceWorks will assess potential impacts. If necessary, mitigation measures to reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels in the form of policy recommendations will be identified.

- **Parks and Recreation**

The Parks and Recreation section will evaluate potential impacts on existing park and recreation facilities based on the anticipated increase in daytime population. This section will draw on standards and objectives described in City documents, including any master plans for existing City or regional parks. PlaceWorks will describe the existing recreation setting within the City. Based on the recreation significance criteria, PlaceWorks will assess potential parks and recreation impacts. If necessary, mitigation measures in the form of policy recommendations will be listed to reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels.

- **Transportation and Traffic**

This section will address any potential operational and level of service deficiencies on the key transportation facilities based on expected projections of traffic volume, transit ridership, and walking and bicycling levels associated with the Comprehensive Plan Update.

In preparing the transportation and traffic study, the consultants will utilize the City's updated Travel Demand Model to forecast future traffic volumes under the various scenarios in conformance with VTA requirements. The transportation analysis will then use outputs from the Model to estimate the potential cumulative transportation impacts resulting from development that may occur during the life of the Comprehensive Plan, and will result in recommended mitigation measures that can be included in the final plan that is considered for adoption. Transit, pedestrian, and bicycle impacts will be analyzed, and the provision of adequate facilities, including for capacity and safety, will be identified. Pedestrian and bicycle issues were not studied in great detail in the previous Comprehensive Plan EIR.

- **Utilities and Service Systems**

The City of Palo Alto is the only municipality in California that operates a full suite of City-owned utility services. The EIR will provide current regulatory agency context, references, and requirements, as well as a description of existing utility and service systems within the city, including current operations, capacity, and facility locations. PlaceWorks will provide a comprehensive analysis of potential impacts related to wastewater, water, stormwater, natural gas, energy and solid waste systems associated with buildout of the Comprehensive Plan Update. If necessary, new or modified Comprehensive Plan policies will be recommended to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

- **Alternatives Analysis**

The current contract scope presumes PlaceWorks will evaluate up to three alternative scenarios in addition to the CEQA-required No Project Alternative -- all at an equal level of detail. This approach is intended to provide ample information upon which the City Council can base selection of a preferred alternative once the Draft EIR is published. At that time, the City Council could select one of the scenarios analyzed in the Draft EIR or a blend of two or more alternatives, as long as the blended option and its potential impacts can be inferred from the Draft EIR. The Draft EIR may also analyze other alternatives at a lesser level of detail if these are needed to reduce or avoid significant impacts associated with the scenarios. The Draft EIR will also identify the Environmentally Superior Alternative as required by CEQA.

- **CEQA Mandated Assessment**

PlaceWorks will prepare the appropriate conclusions to fulfill CEQA requirements by providing an assessment of unavoidable significant environmental impacts, if any; significant irreversible environmental changes; growth inducing impacts; and effects found not to be significant.

Alternative Future Scenarios

As described above, the Program EIR will analyze three possible future scenarios in addition to the No Project Alternative required by CEQA. Each scenario will be described in terms of land uses, policies, overall employment and household growth, and infrastructure changes. While the future scenarios will all be generally consistent with the policies and programs developed by the PTC and presented to the City Council earlier this year, each will likely require some modifications and additions that will be described in the Draft EIR. The reason for analyzing multiple scenarios is that this approach will provide the public and decision-makers with an understanding of the key environmental tradeoffs, allowing an in-depth examination of the relative merit of focusing growth in one geographical area or another and the pros and cons of various public investments. The alternative scenarios can assess different development intensities and land uses in the limited areas of the city proposed for change, and explore concepts such as “net zero” emissions or other performance standards.

The recent public engagement activities, described above, were designed in a way to help develop alternative futures that could be described in the Program EIR. To kick start the third public workshop, City staff developed three alternative future concepts, which were modified and expanded on by participants at the workshop. The end result of the workshop was nine separate alternatives, with many unique elements.

These nine alternatives and many unique elements have been combined and consolidated to form the four potential concepts described in Attachment I, which are still subject to refinement and revision based on input from the public and the City Council. All of these alternatives assume that R-1 neighborhoods and open spaces would be protected, and that any growth and development that occurs in Palo Alto over the next 15 years will be directed to

specific focus areas where some level of change is deemed to be acceptable. A high-level comparison of the alternatives is included in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Comparison of Alternative Futures Suggested for Analysis in the Draft EIR (See Attachment I)

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Comp Plan Policy Changes?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Comp Plan Land Use Map Changes?	No	No	Yes	Yes
Transportation Infrastructure Elements?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Growth Management Strategy?	Non-Residential Cap	Annual Metering of Non-Residential Growth	Annual Metering of Non-Residential Growth	Performance Based Approach
Projected Increase in Employment 2014-2030?	15,890*	Less	Less	Same (provided performance standards are met)
Projected Increase in Households 2014-2030?	2,668**	Same	Somewhat More	Somewhat More (provided performance standards are met)
Notes:				
* Regional Projections Prepared by the Association of Bay Area Governments. (Projections are based on regional economic trends. New employment can derive from redevelopment/use of existing buildings and thus does not equate to new development.)				
**Represents historic trend of 167 new dwelling units/year and is substantially less than the City’s likely Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA) for the period 2015-2023 and the period 2024-2030.				

Source: Palo Alto Planning & Community Environment, July 30, 2014

A few ideas were raised at the public workshops and at the PTC scoping meeting that are not reflected in the four scenarios. These include the idea of fully undergrounding Caltrain, which staff felt was a regional project, and perhaps too ambitious to include within the 2030 planning horizon. Also, none of the scenarios include the idea of adding some limited, additional density to R-1 neighborhoods, an idea suggested by the public comment.

The City Council is requested to provide comments on the attached scenarios in addition their comments on specific issues that should be addressed in the Program EIR.

NEXT STEPS

Because the four conceptual alternatives are high level “vision statements” at this point, they will need to be further developed in order for the consultants to begin the EIR analysis. For example, staff has been assembling data regarding the pace of non-residential development in Palo Alto since 1989 (long term) and since the end of the recession (short term) to inform the selection of an annual non-residential growth rate for Scenarios 2 and 3. Staff has also been researching other jurisdictions that use a performance-based approach to inform a list of

performance measures and monitoring/implementation mechanisms for Scenario 4, and has been starting to define the specific land use map changes that would be included in Scenarios 3 and 4.

Staff is seeking Council’s direction whether to proceed with the conceptual alternatives’ definition at a staff level and begin the EIR analysis, or whether to return to Council with specific information for further discussion prior to beginning the EIR analysis. In either case, staff assumes that final details about *the mechanics* of the suggested growth management systems (e.g. how will the implementing ordinance be drafted?) will be worked out after the EIR analysis is underway and that some additional, specific policy language will need to be developed after identification of necessary mitigation measures in the Draft EIR and selection of a preferred alternative.

Figure 1, below, illustrates the entire planning process reviewed by the City Council in March 2014. As shown, start-up or lead-in tasks have been completed, and we are drawing toward the end of the “scoping” period. Once the Council has directed staff to begin work, the next steps include several months of hard work by the consultants and staff preparing the Draft EIR and a revised Draft Comprehensive Plan for public review. During the same time period, the Leadership Group will convene to help design community engagement strategies, and the public will be asked to weigh-in on baseline data reports for each topic in the Draft EIR. The current schedule provides for publication of a Draft EIR and a Draft Our Palo Alto 2030 Comprehensive Plan document at the end of the year. The public release of these documents would initiate the next formal round of public comments and community engagement in early 2015, during which time the City Council would be asked to select (and shape) a preferred alternative, and offer specific guidance regarding programs and policies in the Draft Comprehensive Plan.

In terms of the timeline, the planning process and schedule reviewed by the City Council in March assumed that preparation of the Draft EIR analysis would begin in early to mid-August 2014 upon receipt of City Council’s comments on the conceptual alternatives and issues suggested for inclusion in the EIR. If the Council takes more time on the alternatives identification phase and direction to staff, the overall schedule will, naturally, be extended.

The City Council will be involved in every step of the Comprehensive Plan Update process, and the timeline discussed in March envisioned: (1) Council sign-off on the alternatives proposed for analysis in the Draft EIR in early to mid-August 2014; (2) Council review of the Draft EIR and the Draft Comprehensive Plan (80% draft) in early 2015; (3) Council selection of the preferred alternative at the close of the comment period on the Draft EIR and Draft Plan; (4) Council review of the Final EIR and the revised Comprehensive Plan for possible certification and adoption at the end of 2015, and (5) Council review and adoption of a “user’s guide” to the Updated Comprehensive Plan in early 2016. Each of the above steps may take multiple meetings, which have not been called out specifically in Figure 1.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE

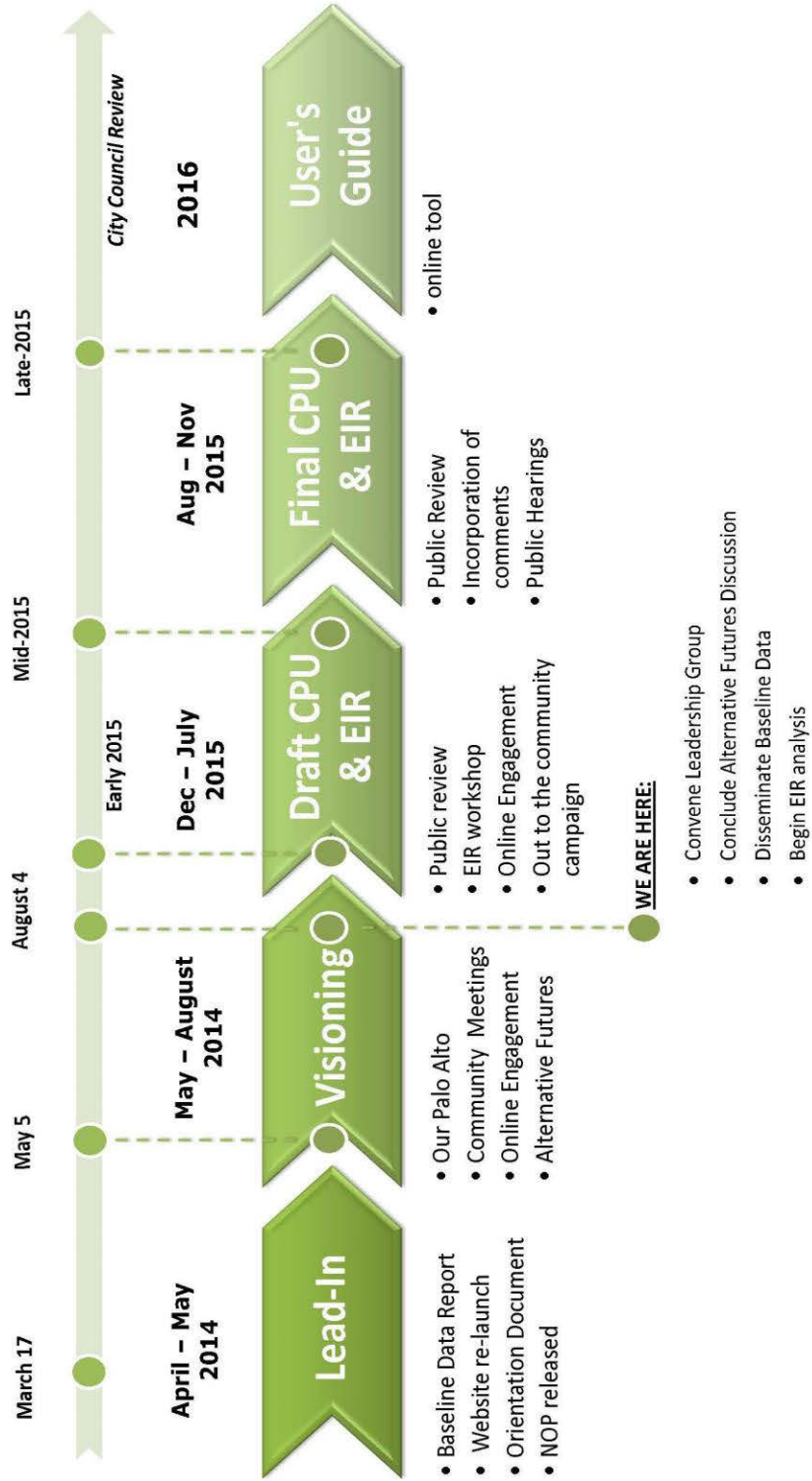


Figure 1: Planning Process Timeline

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The City's existing Comprehensive Plan is its governing land use policy document or "constitution" and was intended to extend to the year 2010. While the existing plan remains valid, the City has long recognized the need for updating, and the current planning process has been designed to conclude the long-running process by the end of 2015. The process will update the goals, policies, programs of the plan with an eye towards the planning horizon year of 2030, and will also include the data, narratives, maps, and diagrams necessary to communicate the City's collective vision for the next 15 years.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Comprehensive Plan Update will be the subject of a program-level EIR, and tonight's public hearing is designed to solicit input regarding the alternatives and issues that should be considered in the Draft EIR. Following public review of the Draft EIR (expected in early 2015), City staff and consultants will prepare written responses to all substantive comments received regarding the Draft EIR and will make necessary changes to the text and analysis in the Draft. A Final EIR containing these responses and changes must be certified before any final decision can be made to adopt the updated Comprehensive Plan. Also, feasible mitigation measures included in the Final EIR to reduce or avoid significant, cumulative effects of development anticipated during the life of the plan will have to be adopted as stand-alone measures or as policies and programs in the updated Plan.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: City Council Comments (PDF)
- Attachment B: Planning and Transportation Commission Hearing Comments (DOCX)
- Attachment C: Workshop Summaries (PDF)
- Attachment D: Notice of Preparation (PDF)
- Attachment E: July 9, 2014 Planning and Transportation Commission Staff Report without the attachments (PDF)
- Attachment F: Planning and Transportation Commission Minutes Draft_EIR_Scoping_07.09.14 (DOC)
- Attachment G: Leadership Group Process (PDF)
- Attachment H: Orientation Document (PDF)
- Attachment I: Draft Alternative Futures for Our Palo Alto 2030 (DOC)
- Attachment J: Growth Management Strategies (PDF)
- Attachment K: Additional Correspondence (PDF)
- Attachment L: Comp. Plan Powerpoint Presentation - Our Palo Alto 2030 EIR Scoping Hearing (PPTX)

City Council Summary Comments
and
Questions for Further Consideration, Adapted from Council's Comments
Our Palo Alto 2030 Policy Document, ver. 1.0
City Council Meeting, May 5, 2014

Housing

Council Comments:

Housing Element- Locations for new housing- The thirds approach: 1/3 downtown, 1/3 Cal Avenue, 1/3 on ECR (Schmid); difficult to be that prescriptive (Kniss). The document should consider a prescriptive method for determining where to locate additional housing units. (Kniss)

In multiple family projects or districts, could services be brought to these areas as a means to reduce car trips? (Price)

Retain existing housing units. (Holman)

Diversity of housing types, but consider the effect of this on existing residences. (Scharff)

A resident-centered concept focused on livability and quality-of-life. Additional housing units would not improve the quality of life. (Scharff)

No need to consider jobs-housing imbalance. (Scharff, Klein)

Questions, adapted from comments:

Should the City plan for additional housing beyond what is identified in the 2015-2023 Housing Element? If so, where should it be located to take advantage of services without a reliance on automobiles? What type of housing should the City promote?

Given that residential population is expected to rise over the next 15 years, how do we protect and enhance Palo Alto's quality-of-life for existing and new residents?

How should we protect existing single-family and low-density residential districts?

Density and Floor Area

Council Comments:

Most critical issues: development, growth, long-term density. (Kniss)

Need polices on maximum and minimum densities. (Schmid)

Density is primary concern (Kniss, Klein). Alternatives should address density issues. (Kniss)

Comp Plan scope should be expanded to include impacts of densification in south ECR. (Shepherd)

Need polices on FAR, minimum and maximums. (Burt).

Questions, adapted from comments:

Should residential density (units per acre) and commercial density (higher floor area ratios) be increased? If so, where should those higher densities be located? What areas of Palo Alto should remain the same or have lower densities?

Should we have minimum residential or commercial densities, or both?

What should exceptional, well-designed, high-density projects look like?

Urban Design

Council Comments:

Design and maintain good street frontages, walkability to promote retail vitality (Kniss); difficult to do on ECR, not currently a good area for walking. (Kniss)

Placing public gathering spaces in each neighborhood is difficult to do. (Kniss)

Public should not have to walk long-distances to get to gathering spaces. (Burt)

Where are the new public plazas that the City has built? (Klein)

Policy statements to guide design are needed; include policies on compatibility standards. (Holman, Schmid).

A discussion on the built environment should strongly emphasize design quality and compatibility (Burt).

Exceptional design should be a requirement for every project. (Holman, Schmid)

Quality urban design is very important (Schmid)

Questions, adapted from comments:

Are the existing design requirements and standards adequate, including Architectural Review Findings (PAMC18.76.020(d)), Context-Based Design Criteria (various sections within Title 18 (Zoning)), Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, El Camino Real and South El Camino Real Design Guidelines, and Individual Review Guidelines?

Should the City undertake a study of the adequacy of these guidelines?

How can these guidelines be better enforced?

What should be the City's plan to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety along El Camino Real?

How can existing neighborhood gathering spaces be improved to attract more neighborhood activity and use?

Should the City acquire land to develop public gathering spaces in underserved areas of the City?

Neighborhoods

Council Comments:

Engage with neighbors to determine resident's wants. (Scharff)

Do Midtown residents really want a plan for their area? (Scharff)

Policies seemed to indicate that neighborhood centers and services encompassed all centers and services. Existing Comp Plan defined them separately. (Burt)

Some neighborhoods feel underserved with grocery stores. (Shepherd).

Grocery store preservation should be incorporated into the document. (Holman)

Questions, adapted from comments:

Does every neighborhood need a neighborhood center?

Should the City improve pedestrian and bicycle connections between neighborhood centers? If so, how should this be done?

What specifically should the City do to retain and attract grocery stores?

Should the City retain an existing policy to develop an area plan for Midtown?

Growth Issues

Council Comments:

Strategic intelligent growth could benefit the City. (Berman)

Growth management and alternatives are critical.

Comp Plan should contain financial implications for various land use scenarios (Price, Schmid).

Comp Plan should include implications of smart growth, TOD, economic vitality, housing and more economically diverse community. (Price)

Heart and soul of existing land use goals has been removed. Goals seem to focus on innovation and did not include character defining details. New goals seem to overemphasize development. (Holman)

Questions, adapted from comments:

Should the City conduct a city-wide, 15-year land use and growth study?

Should the City conduct a city-wide, 15-year fiscal analysis of the expected growth?

Should the City conduct a fiscal and land use analysis of the effects of a more economically diverse community?

Can the City adopt land use policies and programs without detailed analysis? Are growth trends sufficient to provide decision makers with the information needed to plan for growth over the next 15 years?

Business & Commercial Community

Council Comments:

Fair-share payments for impacts related to development. (Schmid)

Promote diversity of retail. (Scharff)

Business community should pay their fair share. (Holman, Schmid)

What policies should the Comp Plan contain to support local, independent businesses? What's currently contributing to their success? (Holman)

Questions, adapted from comments:

Should the City adopt impact fees that cover 100% of the costs of business and commercial development within Palo Alto? Why or why not?

What are the best ways to promote a diverse retail environment?

Transportation

Council Comments:

Transportation Element should discuss implications of TDM and changes in driving behaviors related to the need for traditional built parking structures.

T2.10.2 is important for routine measurements. (Shepherd)

CP should examine expanding the current shuttle system. (Kelin)

Questions, adapted from comments:

Are parking structures the best use of City resources over the long-term?

Should the City's shuttle system be expanded? How and where?

Data

Council Comments:

Historical data should be used to analyze goals for the future. Public won't respond to abstract planning issues. (Klein).

Baseline data is critical. Baseline data compared to historical data could track the consequences of zoning and policy changes. (Holman, Berman, Schmid)

Questions, adapted from comments:

Should the City create a business registry? If so, what information should be collected?

Should the City invest in technology that allows data collection of key metrics (vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian travel, public facility use, etc.) to assess long-term trends?

Should the Council adopt policies and programs if baseline data is not available or incomplete?

Downtown

Council Comments:

How can we enforce the Downtown Cap? (Shepherd)

Questions, adapted from comments:

Should downtown be allowed to grow beyond the existing non-residential floor area cap?

Do the existing multiple-family residential zone districts surrounding downtown provide sufficient protection and transition from the core downtown district? If not, what should change? What changes should be made to these “transition districts” so that downtown can continue to grow?

Once the residential permit parking program is in effect, should we continue to provide free parking downtown?

If our parking programs are successful in reducing vehicle trips and automobile parking downtown, should we reduce automobile parking ratios?

California Avenue Area

Council Comments:

California Ave could get a cap. (Shepherd)

Cal Ave Area needs a concept plan. (Burt)

Questions, adapted from comments:

Should automobile parking requirements be adjusted to promote development at California Avenue and adjacent streets?

How should growth in the California Avenue area be managed? Should there be caps on floor area, automobile trips, and/or other site development regulations?

What steps should the City take to retain the neighborhood serving feel of California Avenue?

Will surface parking lots continue to be the best use for these parcels? Why or why not and what are the trade-offs?

How should the City take advantage of the Cal Train service at California Avenue?

Environment

Council Comments:

Sustainable landscaping and agricultural landscaping should be included. The City should have a community discussion on this. (Burt).

Edible gardens should be a part of mixed-use developments. (Holman)

Environmental sustainability and climate change protection are not synonymous. (Burt)

Recognize salvage and adaptive re-use of building materials. (Holman)

Questions, adapted from comments:

How should the City enhance and improve its existing environmental regulations?

How should the City adapt to climate change? Are the proposed policies and programs sufficient?

Should the City create policies or requirements for urban agriculture? Is this the best use of in-fill development land?

Demographics

Council Comments:

Socio-economic diversity should be included in public engagement. (Berman)

Listen to millennial and seniors preferences and needs to determine the evolution of needs, polices and outcomes in the community. (Price)

Questions, adapted from comments:

Should we plan for the next 15 years based upon current needs and wants or should we plan in a manner that provides the opportunity for change to an extent that would be decided by future citizens and Councils?

Should the City undertake a cost/benefits analysis of a more socio-economically diverse community and/or a community with more diverse housing types and affordability levels?

Energy

Council Comment:

Policy document does not address energy use of the existing built environment. This data could help form appropriate policies (Klein)

Question, adapted from comments:

What else should the City do to address existing and future energy needs?

Noise

Council Comment:

Noise has impacts on livability that should be considered. Noise thresholds should be reduced. Largest contributors to noise should be identified. Move noise equipment in-doors. (Holman)

Question, adapted from comments:

What are the trade-offs of reducing noise thresholds? What policies would be acceptable to the public to achieve lower noise thresholds?

Infrastructure

Council Comment:

Infrastructure: are there policies to ensure that infrastructure improvements would serve all areas of the city fairly? (Kniss)

Question, adapted from comments:

In terms of Infrastructure improvements, how is "fair" defined? Should a sense of fairness be more important than infrastructure need?

Historic Preservation

Council Comment:

Policies on historic preservation are important (L2.6.2), particularly on buffer zones and transitions. (Holman, Berman)

Question, adapted from comments:

Is preservation of our historic resources still a benefit to the community, and if so, how should the City incentivize preservation future historic resources?

Comprehensive Plan Format, Language, Voice

Declarative policies as presented would not garner public input. (Klein)

Maximizing programs is not always feasible or desirable. (Scharff)

Staff should exercise caution in utilizing the term “all” and in making firm commitments to something. (Burt)

Comp Plan should contain preamble or description about the language of the policies. Why were they written in the way they are presented? The Comp Plan should be able to evolve with the community. (Price)

Some policies were too prescriptive: energy use and participation on energy program for example. (Scharff)

Some policies need defining or quantifying. (Shepherd)

Other

“Revitalize” was not the correct word for L3.16. (Scharff)

One-way street policies (T2.23 and T2.25) should be deleted. (Klein)

L2.32.2 (constructing trails in neighborhood parks) should not be included. (Klein)

Glossary is needed. (Klein)

Staff should review programs and policies for relevancy. (Klein)

Are there implications of a City partnership with Stanford to test options? (Price)

Schools and school capacity should be considered. (Price)

The documents should contain more specificity in the meaning of community services.

Council should hear from residents before they consider other critical issues. (Kniss)

Attachment B
Summary of Comments
Planning and Transportation Commission
July 9, 2014

- Public participation greatly appreciated.
- Good to have diversity of opinions from Commission members.
- What is Palo Alto's municipal identity? Is Palo Alto a small town? A suburb? A college town? A city? Need to clarify our identity to set path.
- Quality of life is universal goal, with diversity and opportunity for all.
- Creating online version of the Comp Plan Update process is important to make it accessible to a wide audience.
- Need financial analysis on the alternatives.
- Lack of single overriding vision in the Comp Plan is a fatal flaw. The Comp Plan needs a clear vision.
- Need to preserve what the future may see as historic.
- Infrastructure should be an important priority.
- Location of Municipal Services Center is critical. The current site is subject to sea level rise and has problems with access during emergencies.
- Flooding, sea level rise is an issue.
- Unlimited demand for housing and office, so need to zone for what we want, not what would make developers money.
- Need specific/concept plan for El Camino Real, especially for the areas south of Page Mill Road.
- A precise plan for Fry's is needed.
- Technology could change how we move about the city and our approach to land use.
- Should consider mixed-use zones, with separation occurring not of uses but on other factors.
- Need to map key concerns: quality of life, livability, traffic congestion, enhancing transit, housing cost and affordability, growth or change management, relationship with Stanford, jobs-housing ratio target, PA process and importance of public trust with public transparency, governance, engagement, aging infrastructure, open space, strategy for density, TDM/TMA.

- Bay Area as a whole faces this demand for growth. The choices each community makes affects the other cities in our region.
- Palo Alto cannot develop in isolation. Palo Alto is part of region. Need more robust method of regional collaboration.

- No growth or reduced growth may also affect Palo Alto's traditionally high quality of life. Makes development more expensive.

- Growth is coming, so we need to have plans in place to best manage this growth
 - A certain amount of higher density is needed.
 - Focus development on underutilized properties, such as parking lots.
 - Growth as term is misleading. It is about change.
 - No change would be a disaster. Change can be good if properly managed.
 - Development cap does not work because developers will demand to build what is allowed per zoning. Consider allocating/selling air rights instead.
 - Growth is a choice, not inevitable. It should be residents who decide if city should grow.
 - Foothills and open space must be protected from development.
 - Increasing density elsewhere in the region would be better than making Palo Alto grow.
 - Need to be careful about design to ensure efficient use of space.
 - Concerned that downtown cap will be exceeded.
 - Increase density in downtown, so it will encourage walking and biking.
 - Need more specificity regarding what the concept of growth really means.
 - Need to consider growth that is palatable.
 - City services are clustered in north Palo Alto. Should consider relocating services and city hall to center of the city.
 - California Avenue area should be more vibrant and higher scale. More mixed use, transit oriented development. Move City Hall there.
-
- Should consider meaningful height limit change. 55' as suggested is odd limit. 60' is more realistic because it could result in a better design/building.
 - Would support increase in height in certain areas/transit.
 - Relaxing 50' height limit to allow one more story may be appropriate in certain areas.
 - Better to think of number of stories instead of height.
 - Avoid increase height on El Camino Real near R-1 neighborhoods, such as Baron Park.
 - Height increase for housing does not make sense, because height was originally requested for commercial development
 - Greater utilization of existing space, such as parking lot should be studied before increasing heights elsewhere.
-
- Young people support businesses and money spent at these businesses benefits residents.
 - Good to have workers who spend money to support retail services near residential areas.
 - Need a business ecosystem to support retail vibrancy.
 - Need to evaluate distribution of services around neighborhoods.
 - Need to study how to sustain services.

- Need diversity to support diverse range of businesses.
 - Retail is second to schools as the most important service.
 - Office use intensity will increase even without construction of more office space.
 - Need to encourage retail expansion and a greater mix of retail.
 - Need to factor in change to future of retail. This change could affect how people purchase and obtain goods.
 - Retail must be made more robust (walkable).
-
- Need to use data to provide context.
 - Engage in system-wide thinking and use data to innovate.
 - Need hard data to support decisions.
 - Need to rigorously annotate results/assumptions.
 - Need more specifics, such as inputs and models and how are assumptions developed.
 - Need to see numbers of consequences of each alternative, such as cost, population, etc.
-
- ½ mile radius is too wide for transit oriented development.
 - Housing near transit improves transit use a little, but will increase car use more. Should focus on increasing biking and walking opportunities.
 - Challenge for Palo Alto is that most lots are 6,000 sq. ft., limiting development, not conducive to generating demand for mass transit.
 - Cars are becoming more gas efficient, so move to non-car transport is more about reduction of trips over carbon.
 - How does building next to transit impact transit use? What happens if Go Passes are given to all residents? Will policies change as a result?
-
- There has to be a scenario where jobs are also created or at least explicitly addressed.
 - Jobs near transit reduce carbon footprint more than housing near transit.
-
- Protecting R-1 makes sense.
 - Smaller units for young people and seniors should be encouraged.
 - Focus on protecting R-1 type development precludes finding other opportunities.
 - No inventory for empty nesters looking to downsize from traditional single family homes.
 - Need senior housing, studios and one bedroom units to provide diversity.
 - Limit housing to RHNA numbers. No limits on affordable housing.
 - Market should dictate unit size. Market reacts more quickly than boards/commission.
 - Preservation of R-1 is important, but need to also need housing for seniors, workers, young single workers.
 - There is demand for small units if zoned for, such as recent Equinox project.

- Undergrounding Caltrain can help create real estate above and value.
 - Need to plan for Caltrain sooner rather than later.
 - Take advantage of available money for grade separation construction.
 - High Speed Rail should be an important discussion in Comp Plan. Will magnify importance of transit-oriented development.
-
- Need to consider impacts on school now.
 - If we built for demand, schools would be overcrowded and quality would be destroyed.
 - Preservation of high quality schools is important – it's an important service.
 - Schools are over capacity.
 - Where does assumption that growth is unsupportable for schools come from?
 - Work with Palo Alto Unified, especially on assumption that growth will damage school quality.
-
- Need to consider 27 University in all alternatives.
 - Some alternatives need to anticipate some non-residential growth.
 - The "Do Nothing" alternative can be called "business as usual".
 - Make alternatives more results- or mission-based.
 - One concept/alternative should be about how to maximize quality of life.
 - Caltrain should be in all alternatives, except Alternative #1.
 - Concept for increasing commercial growth outside of Alternative #4 needs to be considered.
 - Mistake to have no Alternative without commercial growth, need to see all options.
-
- Alternative #3, should focus on transit oriented development for jobs, and on housing near services.
 - Alternative #3- transit is dominated by inter-city trips, consider intra-city trips.
-
- Alternative #4 should combine limiting trips with building strategy.
 - Alternative #4 should be redesigned as overlay on all other alternatives.
 - Alternative #4, consider net zero GHG, not VMT. Pay for offsets for auto trips. Should also result in net zero water use and no net overflow parking in neighborhoods.
 - Alternative #4 is more of a pilot program rather than alternative to see if zero net trips or energy possible.



WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan Update
Critical Issues Forum
May 29, 2014, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

The meeting materials and complete set of feedback from the meeting summarized below are available online at <http://www.paloaltocomplan.org/> under Community Meetings.

OVERVIEW

On May 29, Palo Alto citizens gathered at Avenidas for the first of three community workshops that will be held in the next month to elicit input from citizens as the City updates its Comprehensive Plan – to be called Our Palo Alto 2030. The kickoff meeting was a forum on critical issues and covered the tremendous assets the City currently enjoys and how the City could respond to a host of changes the future will bring. The event was the first of three community workshops that will be held in May and June to elicit input from community members on potential issues to incorporate throughout the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan – to be called Our Palo Alto 2030. Approximately 40 members of the public participated in the workshop, and two Council members attended as observers.

The focus of this workshop was a community discussion to identify Palo Alto's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Participants formed six small groups of 5 to 7 people to complete a SWOT analysis, sharing their opinions on all aspects of life in Palo Alto today and the changes we might expect to see over the next 15 years – changes in housing, transportation, energy, water supply, climate, technology, and the regional and global economy.

The workshop concluded with a spokesperson from each group summarizing the opportunities that their group identified throughout the SWOT analysis.



COMMON THEMES EMERGING FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS

A number of common themes emerged from two or more of the breakout groups as they prepared the SWOT Analysis. The matrix below includes some of the most common big-picture themes in each category. A more detailed list is available online at Palo Alto’s [Open City Hall](#). The City is encouraging additional responses through an online exercise similar to the one completed at the May 29 workshop, and complete transcriptions of the notes from each small group are available at <http://www.paloaltocomplan.org/>.

Positive	Negative	
<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-educated population • High-quality school system • City-owned utilities • City services • Thriving arts community • High quality of life • Strong tax base 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs-housing imbalance • Traffic congestion • High cost of living • Lack of diversity • Aging infrastructure 	Internal
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve public transit opportunities • Take advantage of local talent • Collaborate with neighboring communities and the region as a whole • Increase telecommuting opportunities • Encourage and welcome start-up companies • Increase public safety (i.e. bike, pedestrian, transportation) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change / sea level rise • Water supply • Income disparity • Inefficient regional transportation • High speed rail (concerned with dividing the community) 	External

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan Update
 Growth Management Forum
 June 10, 2014, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

The meeting materials and complete set of feedback from the meeting summarized below are available online at <http://www.paloaltocompplan.org/> under Community Meetings.

OVERVIEW

On June 10th, about 30 community members gathered in the Palo Alto High School Library for the second of three community workshops to learn more about and discuss the City’s update of its Comprehensive Plan, *Our Palo Alto 2030*. The meeting was a forum on growth management and covered the jobs, housing, and population growth trends of Palo Alto, along with an overview of growth management tools utilized in other cities.



The focus of this workshop was to identify which areas of the city might change, and which should be protected and preserved, over the 15-year life of the updated Comprehensive Plan. Participants formed four small groups of six to eight people to complete an exercise, sharing their opinions on where they believe change should or should not occur. Using land use maps and colored markers, each group circled areas or corridors they believe future growth and change could be accommodated, emphasizing the need to preserve the majority of Palo Alto in open space and single-family neighborhoods, as it is today. After the small group discussions, a spokesperson from each group summarized the opportunity sites that their group identified throughout the group exercise.

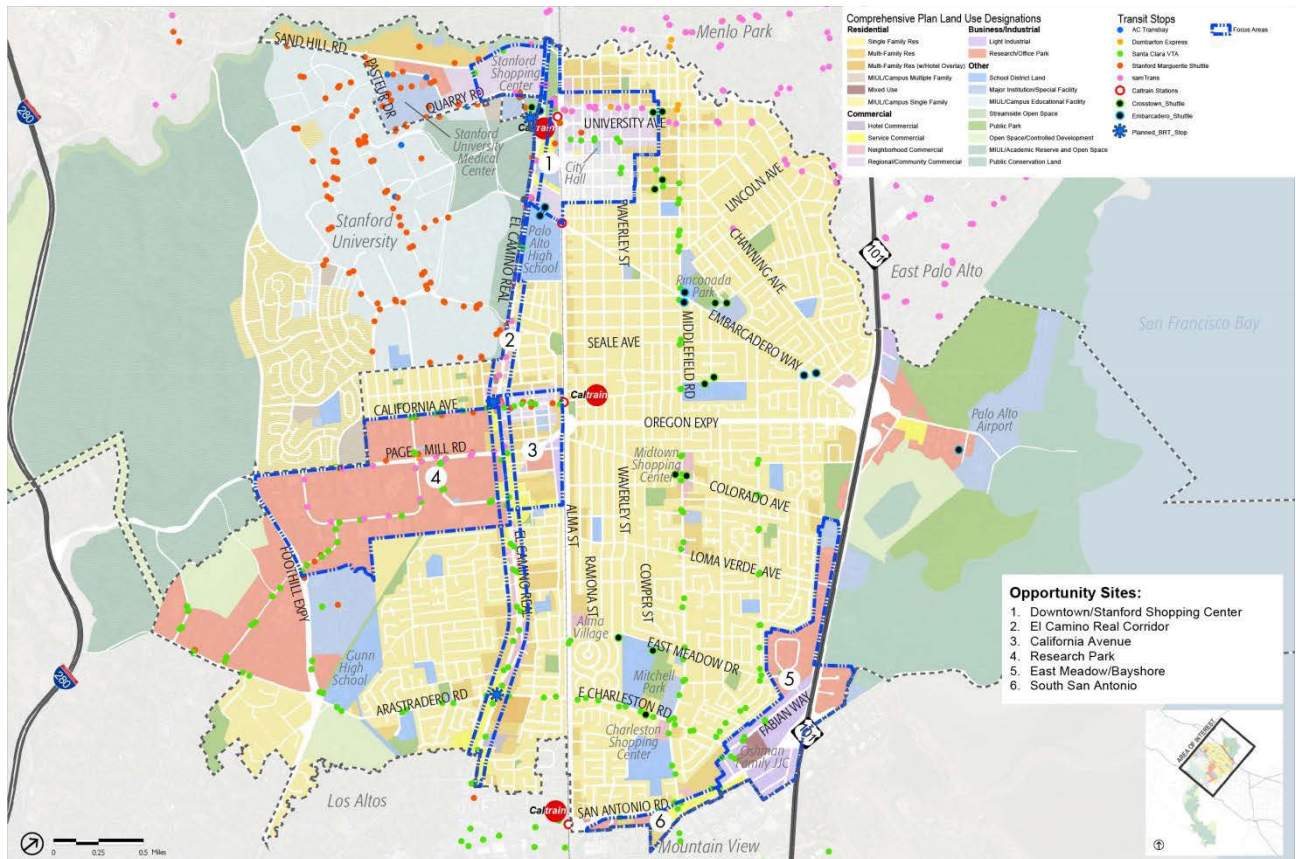


The community input received at this meeting will be used at the “alternative futures” workshop on June 24 at the Palo Alto Elk’s Lodge. Attendees at the June 24 workshop will be asked to consider and evaluate “alternative futures” that would become the basis for alternatives to be studied in the Environmental Impact Report for the Comprehensive Plan Update. These alternatives would be extensively analyzed and discussed in order to develop a collective vision on the policies and programs that will make up *Our Palo Alto 2030*.



COMMON “OPPORTUNITY SITES” EMERGING FROM THE BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS

A number of common areas that may be appropriate to accommodate growth and change by 2030—dubbed “opportunity sites”—emerged from the breakout groups as they worked through the small group exercise. The map below synthesizes the input from the four groups into a single set of potential opportunity sites. A more detailed map is available online at Palo Alto’s [Open City Hall](#). The City is encouraging additional responses through an online exercise similar to the one completed at the June 10th workshop, and copies of each map from each small group are available at <http://www.paloaltocomplan.org/>.





WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan Update
Alternative Futures
June 24, 2014, 6:00 to 8:30 PM

The meeting materials and complete set of feedback from the meeting summarized below are available online at <http://www.paloaltocomplan.org/> under Community Meetings.

OVERVIEW

On June 24th, about 77 community members gathered in the Elk's Lodge for the third of three community workshops in the first phase of the City's update of its Comprehensive Plan, *Our Palo Alto 2030*. The meeting was a forum on alternative futures, asking citizens to explore different ways that Palo Alto might change over the next 15 years.



The focus of this workshop was to identify and elicit ideas for a range of scenarios: type of growth, pace of growth, intensity of development, transportation solutions, energy infrastructure, and quality of life. The discussion built upon the six opportunity sites identified based on a synthesis of the input from the June 10th workshop. Participants formed nine small groups of six to ten people to work together to create an alternative scenario, either responding to a preliminary scenario presented by City staff and the consultant team, or an original scenario. The nine alternatives created at the workshop will be used to shape three alternative future scenarios that – along with a legally-required “no project” (or “business as usual”) scenario - will be analyzed in depths in the forthcoming Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the Comprehensive Plan Update.



Next, the draft alternatives will be presented to the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) and City Council for review and input before they are finalized for study.



ALTERNATIVE FUTURES WORKSHEETS

Each of the nine groups used worksheets to record the group's ideas and comments on the six Opportunity Site building blocks of the alternative scenarios. Scans of each table's worksheet from each small group are available at <http://www.paloaltocomplan.org/>. All groups either came up with a new alternative or modified one of the preliminary alternatives offered as a starting point for discussion. The City is encouraging additional responses through an online exercise similar to the one completed at the June 24th workshop at <http://www.paloaltocomplan.org/>.

Notice of Preparation (NOP) of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

Date: May 30, 2014
To: Responsible Agencies and Other Interested Parties
State Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: City of Palo Alto
Dept. of Planning and Community Environment
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94301

The City of Palo Alto will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan Update project (the Project). The Project, its location, and potential environmental effects are described below. Pursuant to the CEQA Section 15060, the City has determined that an EIR is required for the Project and an Initial Study has not been prepared.

Public agencies and members of the general public are invited to provide comments in writing as to the scope and content of the EIR. Specifically, the City needs to know the views of Responsible and Trustee Agencies as to the significant environmental issues, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures that are germane to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project. Responsible Agencies will need to use the EIR prepared by the City when considering their permit or other approval for the Project.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, responses must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than the close of the NOP review period, which runs as follows:

- **Public Agencies - May 30 through June 30, 2014**
- **General Public - May 30 through August 6, 2014**

Please send written responses to Elena Lee at the address shown below. Public agencies providing comments are requested to include a contact person for the agency.

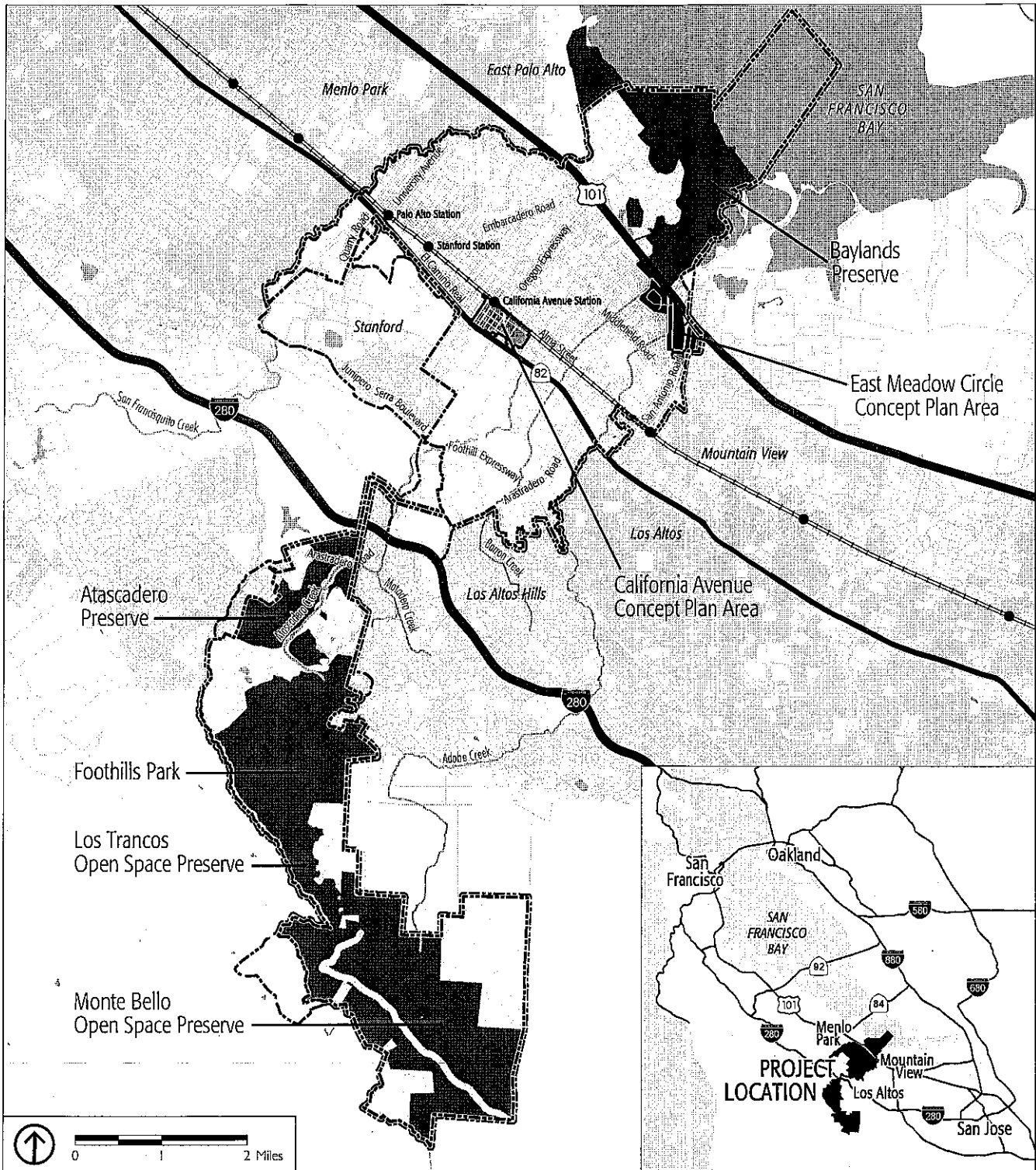
1. Project Title: Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan Update

2. Project Location, Existing Land Uses, and Surrounding Uses:

The City of Palo Alto is located in the southeastern portion of the San Francisco Peninsula in Santa Clara County, as shown in Figure 1. Covering an area of 25.8 square miles, Palo Alto shares its borders with the Cities of Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Los Altos, as well as the Town of Los Altos Hills, the unincorporated community of Portola Valley, and Stanford University. Regional access to Palo Alto is provided by U.S. Highway 101, Interstate 280, and State Route 82. Additionally, the city is served by the Caltrain passenger rail network.

Palo Alto is a diverse city of neighborhoods, with an engaged community, excellent school and public facilities, and a vibrant economy anchored by the high technology and medical employment sectors. The city is home to a large number of high-tech businesses and institutions engaged in research and development, including Hewlett-Packard, Tesla Motors, Groupon, Xerox, Stanford University, the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, and the Palo Alto Research Park. The developed portion of Palo Alto, known as the Urban Service Area, contains a variety of residential, commercial, office, retail, and industrial land uses.

CITY OF PALO ALTO
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT EIR



Source: The Planning Center | DC&E, 2013; The City of Palo Alto, 2013.

- Cal Train Stations
- ~ Creeks
- ▭ City Boundary
- ▭ Public Conservation Land
- ▭ Sphere of Influence

FIGURE I
PROJECT LOCATION AND CONTEXT

The City of Palo Alto also contains important areas of natural habitat concentrated primarily in open space areas within the City limits, including Arastradero Preserve, Foothills Park, Los Trancos Open Space Preserve, Baylands preserve, and Byxbee Park. Several creeks pass through the city generally flowing north toward San Francisco Bay. These creeks include Adobe Creek, San Francisquito Creek, Matadero Creek, Arastradero Creek, and Barron Creek.

3. Lead Agency Contact:

Elena Lee, Senior Planner
City of Palo Alto Department of Planning and Community Environment
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301
Tel. (650) 617-3196
Email: elena.lee@cityofpaloalto.org

4. Project Sponsor:

City of Palo Alto
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

5. Project Description:

The Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan is the City's governing document for land use and development decisions. The City is undertaking a Comprehensive Plan Update in order to establish a shared vision for the future of the community through to the year 2030.

The Project will update goals, policies, programs, maps and diagrams throughout the Comprehensive Plan and will also involve preparation of two concept plans to establish a broad vision for the California Avenue/Fry's Site Area and the East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way Area.

The current Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan includes the following elements, which will be maintained and updated as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update:

- **Land Use and Community Design:** this element sets policy regarding the location and concentration of housing, businesses, public facilities, open space and other land uses.
- **Transportation:** this element sets policy regarding existing and planned roads and transit and pedestrian systems in Palo Alto.
- **Natural and Urban Environment and Safety:** this element sets policy regarding open space, water supply, air quality, urban forest, special-status species, hazardous materials, climate change and noise, as well as policies for emergency management and safety.
- **Housing Element:** this chapter sets policy regarding the development of housing opportunities that enhance the character, diversity and vitality of the City. The Housing Element is concurrently being updated on a separate schedule for compliance with State requirements. However, the Comprehensive Plan Update could include some adjustments as needed to maintain internal consistency.
- **Community Services and Facilities:** this element sets policy regarding existing public facilities and planned infrastructure expansions and improvements.
- **Business and Economics:** this element sets policy regarding future business development and industry.

- **Governance:** this chapter sets policy regarding community participation in government, Palo Alto's role in the region, and process management. It will be reframed as a "user's guide" to the Comprehensive Plan that explains how it should be used and how it can be amended in the future.

6. Probable Environmental Effects of the Project:

The EIR will evaluate potentially significant environmental impacts associated with the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update. Consistent with the State CEQA Guidelines (Appendix G), the following environmental resource categories will be analyzed in relation to the Project:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ▪ Aesthetics | ▪ Hydrology and Water Quality |
| ▪ Agriculture and Forestry Resources | ▪ Land Use / Planning |
| ▪ Air Quality | ▪ Mineral Resources |
| ▪ Biological Resources | ▪ Noise |
| ▪ Cultural Resources | ▪ Population and Housing |
| ▪ Geology / Soils | ▪ Public Services and Recreation |
| ▪ GHG Emissions | ▪ Transportation and Traffic |
| ▪ Hazards and Hazardous Materials | ▪ Utilities and Service Systems |

All of the resource categories listed above will be considered in the EIR; however, given the scope of the Project and the location of Palo Alto, it is anticipated that resource categories, such as Mineral Resources, for which it can be clearly demonstrated that no significant impacts would result from Project implementation will be addressed briefly and "scoped out."

7. Public Meetings

The City of Palo Alto will conduct a series of five meetings to provide opportunity for public agencies and interested members of the general public to comment on the scope of the Project and proposed EIR. Members of the public and public agencies are invited to participate and provide comments to the City at the meetings listed below.

Meeting #1 Community Meeting - Critical Issues

Date/Time: May 29, 2014/6:00 – 8:00 PM

Location: Avenidas, 450 Bryant Street, Palo Alto , CA 94301

Meeting #2 Community Meeting - Growth Management

Date/Time: June 10, 2014/6:00 – 8:00 PM

Location: Palo Alto High School, English Resource Center, 50 Embarcadero Rd, Palo Alto, CA 94301

Meeting #3 Community Meeting - Alternative Futures

Date/Time: June 24, 2014/6:00 - 8:30 PM

Location: Elk's Lodge, 4249 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, CA 94306

Meeting #4 Planning and Transportation Commission EIR Scoping Hearing

Date/Time: July 9, 2014/6:00 PM

Location: City Hall Council Chambers. 250 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301

Meeting # 5 City Council Hearing

Date/Time: August 4, 2014/7:00 PM

Location: City Hall Council Chambers. 250 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301

Date May 30, 2014

Signature 
 Title Planning & Community Environment Director



City of Palo Alto

(ID # 4949)

Planning & Transportation Commission Staff Report

Report Type:

Meeting Date: 7/9/2014

Summary Title: Comp Plan EIR Scoping and Update

Title: Comprehensive Plan Update: Discussion of Alternative Futures & Issues for Consideration in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR “Scoping” Meeting). The City will Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Update of its Comprehensive Plan. Staff will Summarize Input Received at Recent Public Workshops and Invite Comments and Suggestions from the Public and the Commission Regarding the Alternatives and Issues that Should be Included for Analysis in the EIR.

From: Elena Lee, Senior Planner

Lead Department: Planning & Community Environment

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning and Transportation Commission conduct a public scoping meeting by accepting public testimony and providing Commission feedback regarding environmental issues and alternatives to be considered in the preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

BACKGROUND

The 1998-2010 Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) contains the City’s official policies on land use and community design, transportation, housing, the natural environment, business and economics, community services, and governance. Its policies apply to both public and private properties. Its focus is on the physical form of the City. The Plan is used by the City Council and PTC to evaluate land use changes and to inform funding and budget decisions. It is used by City Staff to regulate building and development and to make recommendations on projects. It is used by citizens and neighborhood groups to understand the City’s long-range plans and proposals for different geographic areas. The Plan provides the basis for the City’s development regulations and the foundation for its capital improvements program.

A Comprehensive Plan amendment was initiated by the City Council in 2006 (CMR# 253:06) to focus on preservation of commercial land uses, preservation of retail and community services to support new residential growth, incorporate sustainability concepts, update the housing

element and prepare concept area plans for East Meadow Circle and California Avenue/Fry's areas.

Between 2008 and 2010, City staff reviewed the existing Comprehensive Plan elements with the PTC, prepared background reports on baseline growth topics, and developed preliminary information regarding the two concept area plans. In June of 2010, the PTC formed sub-committees to review each Comprehensive Plan element. Work included updating the vision statements, goals, policies and programs. New goals, policies and programs were added where appropriate and existing goals, policies and programs were edited to reflect desired changes. Relevant policies and programs were carried over to the draft elements. Draft elements were reviewed by the full PTC at regularly scheduled public meetings with staff recommendations to include the draft elements into the Comprehensive Plan Update. This PTC sub-committee process continued through 2013.

At a December 2, 2013 study session, the City Council discussed ways to initiate a conversation about the community's shared vision for the future. Staff suggested reframing the long running Comprehensive Plan process to increase community engagement and explore alternatives in a more meaningful way than typically envisioned. The discussion, which grew out of community concerns about issues such as traffic/parking and the pace of development, led to the development of an organizational framework for ideas, action, and design referred to as "Our Palo Alto."

On February 3, 2014 the Council endorsed this framework and directed staff to return to Council with a specific schedule and scope of work to create a blueprint for the future of land uses and development in our City by re-framing the ongoing update to the Comprehensive Plan to include broad community engagement, discussion and analysis of alternative futures, cumulative impacts, and mitigation strategies.

On March 17, 2014 staff presented the Council with a recommended schedule to complete the Comprehensive Plan Update and associated program-level Environmental Impact Report by the end of 2015. The Council voted to approve staff's recommendations and directed Staff to return to Council with additional considerations of the outreach process, composition and procedures for the Community Leadership Group. The Council also asked staff to review the prior Comprehensive Plan process and SOFA Plan process for lessons learned.

On May 5, 2014, the City Council reviewed the draft elements, collectively titled, "Draft Comprehensive Plan 2030, Vision Statement, Goals, Policies and Programs (April 2014)" <http://goo.gl/Sq9cvj>. Council provided comments on many aspects of the document. At the conclusion of Council's review, the city manager indicated that staff would organize the comments into groups of issues and convert the comments into questions that could be further discussed through the community engagement process. The comment groups and questions are contained in Attachment A.

Comp Plan Engagement and Workshops Summary

The community engagement plan for the Comp Plan update included a series of community workshops to help develop alternatives to study in the EIR. The goal of the Comp Plan Update outreach process is to:

- Solicit meaningful input regarding the critical issues facing our City and a design for its future;
- Ensure participation by a wide cross section of Palo Altans, including traditionally underrepresented groups, and
- Ensure that the public's input informs the final work product that is presented to decision-makers for their consideration.

Three workshops were held in May and June. The workshops were held in various locations of the City to engage the as many members of the public as possible. Summaries of each workshop are provided as Attachment B.

The first workshop, the Critical Issues Forum, was held on May 29, 2014 at the Avenidas facility in downtown Palo Alto. The goal of this meeting was to have the community identify Palo Alto's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). Approximately 40 members of the community attended this first workshop. Participants were placed in six small groups of five to seven people to complete the analysis. Participants were asked to share their opinions on a variety of issues, including housing, transportation, energy, quality of life, technology, and the regional and global economy. Common themes emerged from the group discussion. The themes include the importance of the quality of life, importance of the City's relationship with Stanford, concerns of traffic, public trust, citizen participation, transit, the high cost of housing and high speed rail. A detailed matrix of the common themes can be found in Attachment B. The summary has also been made available to the public on the Comp Plan Update website.

The second workshop, the Growth Management Forum, was held two weeks later on June 10, 2014 at Palo Alto High School. About 30 members attended this forum. A summary of the last workshop was provided and a presentation on growth management techniques was given. The presentation covered jobs, housing and population growth trends of Palo Alto, as well as an overview of tools used by other jurisdictions. Building upon the themes identified at the last workshop, the public was asked to identify which areas of the City they thought might or should change and which areas should be protected and preserved during the 15 year life of the updated Comprehensive Plan. Again, attendees were placed in small groups of six to eight people to discuss their opinions and to identify the areas on land use maps. Six distinct areas emerged from the discussion as "opportunity sites" or "focus areas," where the City could direct change and development as a way to protect and preserve other areas. The six focus areas included 1) Downtown and the Stanford Shopping Center, 2) El Camino Real corridor, 3) California Avenue, 4) Stanford Research Park, 5) East Meadow Circle/Bayshore, and 6) South San Antonio.

The most recent workshop, Alternatives Future, was held at the Elk's Lodge on June 24, 2014. This workshop, building on the previous two workshops, was well attended with over 70 participants. The purpose of this workshop was to ask the public to help identify potential alternatives based on the concepts discussed at the previous meetings. The presentation included an overview of the past process and the goals for the workshop. Attendees were placed in small groups to discuss what they thought the City should consider as alternatives. As a guide, the participants were provided with potential alternatives, in addition to a no project alternative: 1) Slow Non-residential Development and Encourage Housing, 2) Slow Non-residential Development and Focus Housing in Transit-rich Areas, 3) Can We Be a Net-Zero City and What Does That Mean? Attendees were also given the option of creating their own alternative. A lively discussion resulted in nine separate alternatives. Several groups suggested allowing more housing and neighborhood serving retail near transit. Other groups focused on slowing development. A detailed summary of the workshop outcomes is provided in Attachment B.

In addition to the three planning workshops described above, planning staff and consultants have initiated online tools to continue the discussion and to provide opportunity for input by those who were not able to attend the meetings. The Comp Plan website provides an email list for interested parties to keep informed of the project. It also provides an email for additional questions and comments. An online version of each the small group activity from the first and third workshops has also been posted online as part of Open City Hall. The first online event requests the public to identify the critical issues for Palo Alto. The second online exercise requests feedback on the six focus areas.

Staff has also solicited applications for the "Leadership Group" that is expected to assist with community engagement for the balance of the planning process. Based on applications received, the City Manager has appointed members, and the group is expected to have its initial orientation meeting before the end of the month.

All of the community engagement activities planned as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update and all of the community input received will be documented and cataloged so they can be used to inform the analysis and policy decisions that will be made. In the near term, input received this summer, will be used to help define issues and alternatives to be analyzed in the program EIR.

Purpose of the July 9 2014 Meeting

The purpose of this scoping meeting is to allow the community and the Commission, individually and/or as a group, to provide comments regarding the scope of the environmental issues and alternatives to be evaluated in the EIR.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a state law that requires California agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and describe feasible measures that can be taken to avoid or mitigate those impacts. An Environmental Impact

Report (EIR) is required by CEQA when an agency determines that a project may have a significant effect on the environment. An EIR evaluates a proposed project's potential impacts on the environment, and recommends mitigation measures or alternatives to reduce or eliminate those impacts. Decision-makers use information in an EIR to help determine whether or not to approve a project.

The most common type of EIR assesses potential impacts associated with a specific development project. The Comprehensive Plan Update is not a specific development project, and instead constitutes an effort by the City of Palo Alto to determine comprehensive land uses, policies, and programs that will guide public and private decision making regarding land use and development issues over the next 15 years. For the Comprehensive Plan Update, the City will prepare what's referred to as a Program EIR, which assesses the potential cumulative impacts of development that may occur during the life of the plan, considers potential alternatives, and identifies mitigation measures that should be adopted to reduce or avoid significant impacts. This is the same level of environmental analysis that was prepared for the exiting Palo Alto 1998-2010 Comprehensive Plan. Preparing a Program level EIR for citywide growth allows the City to better identify –and mitigate—cumulative impacts of overall growth that may otherwise be missed in a more focused project specific environmental analysis.

CEQA specifically requires that a program EIR be prepared for plans that govern a continuing program. Although the legally required contents of a program EIR are the same as project specific EIR, such as the one prepared for the golf course project, a program EIR is more conceptual, with a more general discussion of impacts, alternatives and mitigations. For example, the Comp Plan EIR will include several project alternatives. But those discussions will be more general as it involves the entire city instead of a particular site. Preparation of a program EIR parallels the development of the Comprehensive Plan. CEQA clearance for subsequent projects can tier off the program EIR. Depending on the complexity of the project, such CEQA clearances can include Negative Declarations and Supplement EIRs.

An EIR describes the objectives for a proposed project, the location of the project and actions proposed. It evaluates how the existing environment would be changed if the project was approved and provides feasible mitigation measures or alternatives to avoid or reduce significant adverse changes to existing conditions. An important component of the EIR process is to provide an opportunity for public input regarding environmental issues and alternatives to be addressed in advance of the EIR preparation, and subsequent opportunity to review and comment on the Draft EIR documents prior to preparation and certification of a Final EIR by the City Council.

Environmental Analysis- Our Palo Alto 2030

The first step in processing any EIR is issuance of a Notice of Preparation (NOP) by the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency, in this case the City of Palo Alto, issued an NOP for the Comprehensive Plan Update on May 30, 2014. The NOP (Attachment C) was disseminated for public review with an orientation brochure (on the Internet at: <http://goo.gl/ah1PMw>),

published in multiple newspapers, and mailed to public agencies as required by the State CEQA Guidelines. The end of the NOP public review period was specified as June 30 for public agencies and August 6, 2014 for the general public. All input received during the NOP period will be considered during preparation of the EIR. Comments can be submitted in writing via hard copy directly to staff or submitted electronically.

As currently envisioned, the Draft EIR that is prepared for the Comprehensive Plan Update will examine several alternatives at an equal level of detail, allowing for an informed decision to adopt one of these alternatives at the end of the process, or potentially a blend of the alternatives if desired. The EIR will have to describe and define the alternatives in sufficient detail to permit an analysis of their potential impacts, and to permit meaningful public input. The alternatives can assess a variety of land use and infrastructure options, and collectively present a range of possible outcomes to inform a final decision about the future of Palo Alto. (See below for further discussion of alternatives.) It's also important that the alternatives and the EIR consider whether there are proposed policies and programs that might have physical environmental impacts in addition to any changes in land use designations and infrastructure.

Comprehensive Plan Update Consultant Team

The City's consultant, PlaceWorks, was hired to help staff prepare the Comprehensive Plan Update and the program EIR. The firm, originally known as DCE, was hired in 2008 and has continued to support staff as the Comprehensive Plan update has evolved over the past five years. Placeworks offers a range of planning services, including general plan/comprehensive plan preparation, community participation programs, preparation of environmental documents and zoning code/form base code updates. The Placeworks team consists of three key staff members. They include Principal Charlie Knox, Associate Principal Joanna Jansen and Associate Andrew Hill. The firm has worked closely with staff in the development of the project website and the various components of the outreach process, including the three recent workshops. Placeworks will provide a brief overview of the recent process and the program EIR at the July 9th PTC hearing.

DISCUSSION

As currently envisioned, the Draft EIR will analyze the environmental impacts of each of three alternative future scenarios approved for analysis by City Council in addition to a No Project Alternative, as required by CEQA.. In keeping with the requirements of CEQA, the Draft EIR will determine potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures in the following resource categories:

- **Aesthetics**

The aesthetics analysis will review Comprehensive Plan Update policies and programs that may impact scenic vistas and other resources, as defined in the Comprehensive Plan, such as views of the hills or the Bay. We will describe existing visual resources within Palo Alto, including descriptions of scenic views and corridors within and adjacent to the city. Each resource will be described, photographed, and mapped to provide

context for the reviewer. Based on the aesthetic resource significance criteria, PlaceWorks will assess potential significant aesthetic impacts, such as impacts on scenic views and corridors. If necessary, mitigation measures to reduce aesthetics impacts to a less-than-significant level will be recommended in the form of additional or revised Comprehensive Plan policies.

- **Air Quality and Community Health Risk**

PlaceWorks will prepare an air quality, community risk and hazards, and GHG emissions analysis to support the Comprehensive Plan Update and EIR. The impact analysis for the EIR will be based on the current methodology of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). The technical analysis will be integrated within the EIR and modeling datasheets will be included as an appendix.

Air Quality: In accordance with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) CEQA Guidelines, a Plan-level analysis will be prepared. This section will include the current air quality within the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin (SFBAAB or Air Basin) in the vicinity of the City and a summary of regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing health-based impacts associated with poor air quality. Existing levels of criteria air pollutants available from the nearest air quality monitoring station will be incorporated.

The air quality analysis will include a qualitative analysis of criteria air pollutants and precursors generated from buildout of the proposed land uses plan. Buildout of the Comprehensive Plan would generate emissions from an increase in trips and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) associated with land uses within the City. The Program-level air quality analysis will include a consistency evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan to the BAAQMD's land use and transportation control measures within the air quality management plan. The SFBAAB is in nonattainment for particulate matter and for ozone. The potential increase in VMT provided by Hexagon Transportation resulting from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will be discussed in relation to the projected population increase. The air quality impact analysis will also describe land uses within the city that have the potential to generate nuisance odors. Buffer distances and/or control measures for odor sources listed in the BAAQMD's guidelines will be incorporated.

Community Risk and Hazards: The air quality section of the EIR will include an assessment of air quality compatibility based on guidance within BAAQMD's draft *Community Risk Reduction Plans for Toxic Air Contaminants (TAC) and Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}): Community Development Guidelines*. The community risk and hazards evaluation will include a discussion of potential health risks from TACs and PM_{2.5} in the project vicinity based on BAAQMD's guidance. BAAQMD does not require site-specific health risk assessments as part of the Plan-level evaluation for the Comprehensive Plan. Recommended measures specified in the BAAQMD's Guidelines for future sensitive land uses within the areas mapped will be considered. For land uses within areas mapped as

having elevated risk, the EIR will detail performance standards for future development project, including requirements to reduce risk from exposure to significant concentrations of PM_{2.5} and TACs. Recommendations to reduce risk associated with placement of new sensitive land uses associated with the Comprehensive Plan adjacent to major sources of air pollution will be based on the recommended buffer distances based on BAAQMD screening tools, CARB guidance, and the California Air Pollution Control Officer's Association (CAPCOA) guidance.

- **Biological Resources**

Placeworks' subconsultant TRA will provide a programmatic evaluation of biological resources in Palo Alto. The Draft EIR analysis of biological resources will address direct impacts on special-status species and sensitive habitats from the implementation of the updated Comprehensive Plan. Indirect impacts on these resources from the urban development that may be carried out will also be analyzed. Special attention will be given to impacts on Barron, Matadero, and San Francisquito Creeks.

The Draft EIR will rely on the California Natural Diversity Database and a search of the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology records in describing the affected environment for biological resources. No protocol-level species-specific field surveys are proposed.

The EIR will analyze the effectiveness of the goals and policies in the updated Comprehensive Plan in minimizing and mitigating impacts on listed species, including loss of their habitat, and provide an evaluation of how the goals of the Comprehensive Plan will encourage sustainability and conservation of natural resources.

- **Cultural Resources**

PlaceWorks will analyze potential impacts to cultural resources that could result from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update, drawing on the Palo Alto Historical Inventory and other existing cultural resource surveys and documents prepared for the City. Preservation programs or other measures necessary to address potential impacts resulting from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update will be suggested for inclusion either in the EIR as mitigation measures or as Comprehensive Plan polices or programs.

- **Geology, Soils, and Seismicity**

PlaceWorks will prepare the "Setting" section of the EIR. It is expected that geologic impacts may relate to seismic shaking, liquefaction, erosion, expansive soils, and subsidence. Potential seismic impacts, including ground shaking, surface rupture, liquefaction, and landslides will be described. Additionally, potential impacts related to geotechnical soil properties, such as erosion, expansive soils, and subsidence will be described. The PlaceWorks' senior geologist, with 30 years of experience, will review the draft Comprehensive Plan policies pertaining to geology, soils, and seismicity, and suggest revisions to these policies or new policies, if necessary, in order to mitigate

potential geotechnical impacts.

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Implementation of the City's Comprehensive Plan Update would result in an increase in GHG emissions from energy use (natural gas and electricity), transportation sources, water use and wastewater generation, and solid waste disposal. The analysis will draw upon past inventories conducted for Palo Alto. The Comprehensive Plan EIR will summarize the most recent community GHG emissions inventory for existing (CEQA baseline) environmental conditions and forecast GHG emissions at the Comprehensive Plan Horizon year. The GHG inventory for CEQA baseline and buildout will be modeled using the latest modeling tools (EMFAC, CalEEMod, and OFFROAD). The boundaries of the community-wide GHG emissions inventories will be based on a combination of sectors over which the City has geographic and jurisdiction control. For example, the transportation sector will be based on VMT generated by trips that start or end in the city and exclude trips that pass through the city. The EIR will evaluate the impact from the change in GHG emissions in the city compared to CEQA baseline conditions pursuant to BAAQMD thresholds. Area-wide construction-related impacts, such as fugitive dust due to earth moving and grading and exhaust emissions associated with construction equipment and material hauling operations, will be discussed commensurate with the level of detail available regarding construction activity within the Comprehensive Plan area. Standard construction mitigation measures will be identified, where appropriate.

The GHG section in the EIR will also discuss the City's commitment to reducing GHG emissions in accordance with the GHG reduction goals of Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32) and Senate Bill 375 (SB 375). Project consistency with the California Air Resources Board 2008 Scoping Plan and 2013 Scoping Plan Update and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Government (ABAG) Plan Bay Area will also be reviewed. The City of Palo Alto has a Climate Protection Plan and is embarking on preparation of a Sustainability/Climate Action Plan. The EIR will include a consistency evaluation with the GHG reduction measures identified in the Palo Alto Climate Protection Plan, as may be modified by proposed implementation of the Sustainability/Climate Action Plan, as well as climate protection programs in the updated Comprehensive Plan.

- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

Several parts of the city, including the California Avenue/Fry's Area and East Meadow Circle Concept Plan areas, have a history of research and development and high technology industrial uses. A number of these uses generated hazardous materials that contaminated the environment. Volatile organic compounds commonly used by high tech companies are present in groundwater in some areas of the city, so the EIR will need to carefully consider potential impacts from volatile organic compound vapor intrusion into new residential buildings on former industrial sites.

To identify potential hazards-related issues, PlaceWorks will identify potential risk areas

for subsurface contamination, both soil and groundwater, that may potentially affect development. PlaceWorks will assess available public and private reports and data regarding potential subsurface contamination. PlaceWorks will identify historical activities that may have compromised the environment and identify proactive requirements that will be applied to future development to minimize any future environmental contamination and/or liability. The historical assessment will evaluate the likelihood of subsurface contamination from past activities. PlaceWorks will also describe current regulations that require plans and actions to minimize future environmental issues. Standard Environmental Site Assessment regulatory databases will be utilized along with at least two sources of available historical site information such as Sanborn maps and aerial photographs, as well as information provided by the City of Palo Alto and/or Santa Clara County.

PlaceWorks will also utilize the Regional Water Quality Control Board's 2003 South Bay study, which identifies regional plumes and areas of subsurface concern related to former or current industrial and commercial zones. By identifying general areas of concern, SES will be able to assess potential impacts from future construction dewatering and vapor intrusion.

PlaceWorks will complete the following tasks:

Complete a database search and historical site use assessment.

- Review the site-specific data, including all pertinent City plans and available regulatory agency reports, to create a site map showing the established areas of groundwater contamination.
- Discuss areas of concern with various interested persons within the city.
- Identify known zones where VOC plumes have contaminants above the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Environmental Screening Levels (ESLs).
- Evaluate pathways of potential exposure through typical future development.
- Identify potential impacts from any existing hazardous waste conditions for exposure to the planned area improvements, such as new development, infrastructure or daylighting of drainages.
- Identify potential impacts and develop or review proposed mitigation strategies to reduce the potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

- **Hydrology and Water Quality**

PlaceWorks will evaluate potential impacts of implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update on hydrology and water quality, including stormwater quality. In particular, the EIR will focus on potential impacts related to groundwater contamination (including salt water intrusion), development in groundwater recharge areas, current drainage capacity, sedimentation, and increases in impervious surfaces and flooding. The EIR will also include an overview of relevant federal, State and local regulations as well as a discussion of how these regulations can reduce or avoid the potential impacts to hydrology and

water quality that could result from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

- **Land Use and Planning**

PlaceWorks will describe the existing regulatory framework applicable to land use, as well as existing land uses in the City and its Sphere of Influence and will evaluate potential impacts from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan Update, including impacts associated with Comprehensive Plan land use designation changes. The evaluation will include a thorough analysis of land use compatibility issues associated with future development under the proposed Comprehensive Plan Update.

- **Noise**

PlaceWorks will prepare a noise analysis that will identify potential impacts on sensitive land uses associated with the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The EIR will discuss relevant standards and criteria for noise exposure, and the assessment of impacts will be based on federal, State, and local ordinances, policies, and standards.

The ambient noise environment in the city will be established through field noise monitoring, and traffic noise modeling. A survey of existing ambient noise levels will be conducted to establish the character of the noise environment within the city. Noise measurements will be taken at up to twelve (12) locations and observations of noise sources and other noise correlates during each measurement period will be documented.

The existing regulatory setting regarding noise will be summarized, and. Documentation of the existing ambient noise environment is important because these baseline noise levels will affect the identification of Comprehensive Plan policies and specific mitigation measures required for future impacts. The Setting section of the Noise Section of the EIR will address:

- *Transportation Noise:* Noise from vehicular traffic will be assessed using a version of the US Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Traffic Noise Model; these contours will utilize the traffic forecasts provided in the traffic impact analyses for the Comprehensive Plan update. These analyses will identify areas along freeway and roadway segments that would be exposed to noise increases above criteria specified in the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the noise analysis will identify potential noise and vibration impacts to sensitive uses in the city from rail and aircraft sources.
- *Stationary Noise:* Noise impacts from non-transportation sources such as major retail and commercial/industrial uses will be discussed in terms of potential impacts to nearby noise-sensitive receptors. Future ambient noise and land use compatibility will be discussed, and noise mitigation will be provided to reduce potential impacts to future sensitive land uses related to noise, if applicable.
- *Noise and Land Use Compatibility:* An analysis will be prepared to assess noise and land use compatibility for focused areas in the city that could be affected by land use changes or by changes in traffic patterns. Potential land use conflicts within the city

will be identified based on the results of the noise monitoring and modeling results.

- *Construction Noise and Vibration:* Potential construction impacts associated with implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will be evaluated at a programmatic level. Future noise and vibration effects from construction activities will be discussed in terms of accepted federal standards.

- **Population, Housing and Employment**

This section will focus on the potential for displacement of people or housing and for substantial population growth that could result from implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. PlaceWorks will describe existing population and housing conditions and summarize the relevant State and local regulatory framework including the City's Regional Housing Needs Association (RHNA) and the current Housing Element. Based on the population and housing significance criteria, PlaceWorks will assess potential population and housing impacts. If necessary, mitigation measures to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level in the form of Comprehensive Plan policies will be recommended.

- **Public Services**

This section will evaluate potential impacts on public services, including fire/emergency medical services (EMS), police services, and schools. PlaceWorks will describe existing public services within the city. The setting will include a description of each public service provider, including current and projected capacity. Based on the public services significance criteria, PlaceWorks will assess potential impacts. If necessary, mitigation measures to reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels in the form of policy recommendations will be identified.

- **Parks and Recreation**

The Parks and Recreation section will evaluate potential impacts on existing park and recreation facilities based on the anticipated increase in daytime population. This section will draw on standards and objectives described in City documents, including any master plans for existing City or regional parks. PlaceWorks will describe the existing recreation setting within the City. Based on the recreation significance criteria, PlaceWorks will assess potential parks and recreation impacts. If necessary, mitigation measures in the form of policy recommendations will be listed to reduce impacts to less-than-significant levels.

- **Transportation and Traffic**

PlaceWorks will prepare the transportation and traffic section of the EIR, based on the transportation and traffic study completed by Hexagon Transportation Consultants and approved by City staff. This section will address any potential operational and level of service deficiencies on the key transportation facilities based on expected projections of traffic volume, transit ridership, and walking and bicycling levels associated with the

Comprehensive Plan Update.

In preparing the transportation and traffic study, Hexagon Transportation Consultants will utilize the City's Travel Demand Model to develop forecasts of future cumulative traffic volumes under the provisions of the updated Comprehensive Plan. The analysis will use outputs from the Model to estimate the potential cumulative transportation impacts resulting from development that may occur during the life of the Comprehensive Plan, and will result in recommended mitigation measures that can be included in the final plan that is considered for adoption. Transit, pedestrian, and bicycle impacts will be analyzed based on model forecasts, and the provision of adequate facilities, including for capacity and safety, will be identified. This pedestrian and bicycle focused analysis is a somewhat new analysis and was not studied in great detail in the previous Comprehensive Plan EIR.

■

- **Utilities and Service Systems**

The City of Palo Alto is the only municipality in California that operates a full suite of City-owned utility services. The EIR will provide current regulatory agency context, references, and requirements, as well as a description of existing utility and service systems within the city, including current operations, capacity, and facility locations. PlaceWorks will provide a comprehensive analysis of potential impacts related to wastewater, water, stormwater, natural gas, energy and solid waste systems associated with buildout of the Comprehensive Plan Update. If necessary, new or modified Comprehensive Plan policies will be recommended to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

- **Alternatives Analysis**

PlaceWorks will evaluate up to three alternatives to the proposed project in addition to the CEQA-required No Project Alternative. The alternatives will be based on the alternative future scenarios approved for analysis by City Council. Based on this analysis, the Environmentally Superior Alternative will be identified (as required by CEQA).

- **CEQA Mandated Assessment**

PlaceWorks will prepare the appropriate conclusions to fulfill CEQA requirements by providing an assessment of unavoidable significant environmental impacts, if any; significant irreversible environmental changes; growth inducing impacts; and effects found not to be significant.

Alternative Future Scenarios

An important component of the Program EIR will be the environmental analysis of future scenarios that describe alternatives that differ from the Project Description in terms of land uses, polices, and overall growth of the City. As part of the program EIR, a set of alternatives will be identified and evaluated to provide decision-makers with an understanding of the key environmental tradeoffs between alternative scenarios. The Program EIR would include

evaluations of a limited number of alternative scenarios, allowing us to examine the relative merit of focusing growth in one geographical area or another and to weigh the pros and cons of various public investments. The alternative scenarios can assess different development intensities and land uses in the limited areas of the city proposed for change, and/or explore concepts such as “transit-oriented development” and “sustainable communities.”

The recent public engagement activities, described above, were designed in a way to help develop alternative futures that could be described in the Program EIR. To kick start the third public workshop, , City staff developed three alternative future concepts, which were modified and expanded on by participants at the workshop. The end result of the workshop was nine separate alternatives, with many unique elements.

These nine alternatives and many, many unique elements have been combined and consolidated to form the following potential concepts, which are still subject to refinement and revision based on input from the public, the Commission, and the City Council. All of these alternatives assume that R-1 neighborhoods and open spaces would be protected, and that any growth and development that occurs in Palo Alto over the next 15 years will be directed to specific focus areas where some level of change is deemed to be acceptable.

Concept 1: Do Nothing (This is a legal requirement for the EIR)

No changes would be made to Comp Plan land use designations or policies. Projected population and job growth would be accommodated in new development permitted under existing zoning.

- **Downtown** would continue to see redevelopment of low density sites to provide additional office space and the downtown cap on non-residential development would be exceeded. Separate programs related to parking management (e.g. Residential Permit Parking) could be implemented, but no new garages would be constructed, and little residential development would occur.
- **El Camino Real** would continue to evolve consistent with existing land use designations and zoning. Auto-oriented uses would diminish and new mixed use projects would add office and housing over retail where small parcels can be assembled for redevelopment.
- **The California Avenue** area would continue to experience growth pressures, with new office and housing uses on the streets surrounding Cal Ave, and these pressures could spread to the **South San Antonio** area over time.
- **The Stanford Research Park, Stanford Shopping Center, and East Meadow Circle/Bayshore** areas would remain job centers.

Concept 2: No Change in Land Use Designations; Policy Changes would Slow Non-Residential Development & Allow Only Modest Housing Growth to Meet State Requirements

In this alternative, the City would establish a procedure for controlling the pace of new commercial (office and R&D) development projects greater than 10K square feet, such as a yearly floor area cap. The City would also modify its policies and development standards to ensure that the amount of residential growth and development is modest, and focused on

meeting State requirements, with an emphasis on smaller units that are affordable to people who work in Palo Alto. R-1 neighborhoods would be protected and policies would encourage the preservation of neighborhood-serving retail where it exists throughout the City. There would not be major new infrastructure investments, except this alternative would test the impacts and benefits of making roadway improvements included in the County Expressway study.

- **Downtown** would not change substantially from its current appearance and mix of uses, although managing the pace of non-residential development downtown would likely result in more residential development instead. The 50' height limit would remain, and one or more surface parking lots could be redeveloped to provide additional parking.
- **El Camino Real** would see increased setbacks where new buildings are developed and those buildings would not exceed three stories. Any added housing would have to be relatively low density unless it met strict affordability requirements. Retail uses would remain, and would be primarily neighborhood-serving.
- **California Avenue** would keep its eclectic, local-serving character, and no tall buildings would be added. The City would try to keep Fry's and encourage housing to be built on top. If Fry's did leave, then medium-density housing would be developed on that site. No new Tech Corridor overlay would be added. Parking would be provided to support any new growth in this area. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements would be prioritized.
- The **Stanford Research Park, the Stanford Shopping Center, and the East Meadow Circle/Bayshore area** would remain job centers. Some services for workers and a shuttle service would be added, but no housing would be added.
- The **South San Antonio** area would continue to support a variety of non-residential uses until market forces result in mixed-use development consistent with existing zoning.

Concept 3: Slow Non-Residential Development & Change Land Use Designations to Focus Housing in Transit-Served Areas with Neighborhood Services

In this alternative, the City would establish a procedure for controlling the pace of new commercial (office and R&D) development projects greater than 10K square feet and would adjust land use designations and policies to discourage or prohibit new housing unless it's within one half mile of a Caltrain or Bus Rapid Transit stop and to increase allowable residential densities within those areas. This "swap" would effectively downzone areas that are not immediately accessible to transit in exchange for up-zoning transit served areas that include neighborhood services. R-1 neighborhoods would be protected, and policies would encourage the preservation of neighborhood-serving retail where it exists throughout the City. This alternative could test the impacts and benefits of depressing the Caltrain tracks below-grade between San Antonio Ave. and Page Mill Rd.

- High density housing would be added **Downtown**. A slight increase to the height limit would be allowed, raising it to 55 feet as long as the additional height is used for residential units. Smaller units (studios and 1-bedroom apartments) and/or senior

housing would be encouraged. The 27 University Avenue site would be developed as a transit center with workforce housing.

- Along **El Camino Real**, new development would be focused in nodes at planned BRT stops, and housing would be prohibited outside of identified nodes. Portions of the **Stanford Research Park and the Stanford Shopping Center** fronting on El Camino Real could be redeveloped to include housing if these areas also incorporate neighborhood services and are coupled with streetscape improvements and pedestrian, bike, and transit connections to Downtown and Cal Ave.
- **California Avenue** itself would remain a “quirky” low scale commercial street, and the surrounding area would accommodate additional multifamily housing at medium densities with underground parking.
- The **East Meadow Circle/Bayshore** and **South San Antonio** areas would continue to support a variety of non-residential uses, and housing would be prohibited.

Concept 4: Explore Innovative Net-Zero Impact Concepts

Under this alternative, Palo Alto would lead the state and the country in testing various “net zero” concepts: net zero greenhouse gas emissions, net zero new vehicle miles traveled (VMT), or net zero potable water use. Some policies might be applied citywide; others would be focused on specific areas. Affordable housing and neighborhood-serving retail could be exempted from such requirements, but presumably no specific growth management strategy would be needed on the theory that the “net-zero” requirements would address the pace and impacts of development. R-1 neighborhoods would be protected and policies would encourage the preservation and expansion of neighborhood-serving retail throughout the City.

- The current **Downtown** cap on non-residential development would be replaced with a restriction on net new vehicle trips. The area would retain its current mix of uses and would be promoted as a cultural gathering place for all ages, with a full range of services for residents and employees. Significant pedestrian improvements would be introduced, along with improvements to the Caltrain station and transit center intended to make Downtown a regional transit hub with free shuttle service to destinations throughout the City.
- Along **El Camino Real**, mixed use development with ground floor retail and residential above and behind would be allowed. While new development would be two or three stories in most areas, it could exceed the 50-foot height limit at three nodes along the corridor, where projects would be models of sustainability, with small units, car share and transit access rather than resident parking, net-zero energy, and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. Wider sidewalks and bike enhancements would be prioritized along El Camino, and local energy/solar panels would be strongly encouraged all along the corridor on new and old buildings.
- **California Avenue** itself would see little change in this alternative and would remain an eclectic, neighborhood-serving retail destination but the surrounding area would evolve to include more jobs and housing. Specifically, the Fry’s site would transform to include a mix of uses with housing over commercial, with public gardens serving the new

homes. A Tech Corridor overlay along Park Boulevard would facilitate the creation of small new tech companies and Park Boulevard itself would become a true “boulevard” with substantial pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

- The **Stanford Research Park** would become a cutting-edge proving ground for innovative concepts in energy generation, carbon sequestration, recycled water, urban farming, and drought-tolerant landscaping. In some areas, existing surface parking could be undergrounded and covered with vertical mixed use buildings, surrounding plazas and public gathering places, including restaurants and nighttime retail. In these areas, new housing would include townhomes, apartments, and lofts, and new streets would be added to break up the current “superblocks.” A bike sharing program and a new free shuttle would serve residents and workers alike. All landscaping would be required to utilize low/no water plants.
- **The East Meadow Circle** area would be transformed from a research and office park to a new village center with housing around a central plaza, as well as a potential new school. The office and light industrial uses along Fabian Way and Bayshore would remain as is and transit service to the area would be dramatically improved.

In the **South San Antonio** area, existing businesses would be protected from displacement, although there could be limited new housing once walkability and transit connections to/from Caltrain are improved.

The PTC may want to provide comment on these scenarios in addition their comments on specific issues that should be addressed in the Program EIR.

NEXT STEPS

The PTC’s comments will be forwarded to the City Council for a scoping session to be held on August 4, 2014, along with public input received on the proposed alternatives and issues to be considered in the EIR. Staff will be asking the Council to provide direction regarding alternative future scenarios to be studied in the Program EIR. The meeting will also include an opportunity for the Council and public to provide comments on specific issues that should be addressed.

Unless directed otherwise by City Council, the August 4, 2014 Council meeting would initiate preparation of detailed alternative descriptions and the impact analysis. Existing conditions reports would be made available for public review while this work is ongoing, and the Leadership Group would convene and advise City staff regarding continued public engagement. The current schedule provides for publication of a Draft EIR and a Draft Our Palo Alto 2030 Comprehensive Plan document at the end of the year. The public release of these documents would initiate the next formal round of public comments and community engagement.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: City Council Comments on Policy Document (PDF)
- Attachment B: Scoping Meeting Summaries (PDF)
- Attachment C: NOP (PDF)
- Attachment D: Orinetation Brochure (PDF)
- Attachment E: Placeholder - Growth Management Memo (PDF)

- Attachment F: Placeholder - Demographic Information (PDF)

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**Planning and Transportation Commission
Draft Verbatim Minutes
July 9, 2014**

EXCERPT

9 **Public Hearing**

10 **Comprehensive Plan Update: Discussion of Alternative Futures & Issues for Consideration in**
11 **the Environmental Impact Report (EIR "Scoping" Meeting).** The City will prepare a
12 programmatic environmental impact report (EIR) for the update of its Comprehensive Plan. Staff will
13 summarize input received at recent public workshops and invite comments and suggestions from the
14 public and the Commission regarding the alternatives and issues that should be included for analysis in
15 the EIR. *For more information contact Elena Lee at elena.lee@cityofpaloalto.org*

16
17 Chair Michael: The next topic is the Comprehensive Plan Update: the discussion of alternative futures and
18 issues for consideration in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), the EIR scoping, and we'll begin with
19 a report from staff. Director Gitelman?

20
21 Hillary Gitelman, Director: Thank you Chair Michael and Commissioners. I'm Hillary Gitelman the
22 Planning Director and I wanted to start with just a few remarks before turning this over to Steven Turner
23 who is managing this process with his staff and our consultants. In our earlier discussion it was brought
24 up what's the Planning Commission's role in the Comprehensive Plan Update? And I wanted to
25 emphasize that it couldn't be more important. You all contributed those of you who are on the
26 Commission contributed to a draft policy document that the City Council has received. And that will be
27 valuable input to this process and even more importantly this evening you're really taking a first step in
28 looking at the input we've received so far on general concepts and alternatives and teeing that up for a
29 City Council discussion of alternative futures in early August. We think this is absolutely critical and it's
30 going to lead to a very we hope fruitful and productive analysis after we decide on the general concepts
31 that are to be analyzed.

32
33 We know that after the City Council discussion on August 4th we owe you a better description of what
34 your role will be in later phases of the Comprehensive Plan process. I want you to be aware that we are
35 thinking about that. A lot of this depends on the Council's discussion on August 4th and what they choose
36 to do as next steps, but we will get back to you after that discussion with more specifics about your role
37 and how we'll be able to leverage all the work that you've done to date and your discussions this evening
38 to take this plan, planning process to a successful conclusion. As you know our goal is to get to the finish
39 line by the end of 2015 on a comprehensive update to the City's Comprehensive Plan.

40
41 You can also help us between now and August 4th spread the word about alternatives. And I see that the
42 Commissioners have some index cards there with website information on it. We're really trying to get the
43 word out, thank you, and asking you to distribute those cards to 25 of your closest friends because the
44 input doesn't stop this evening or on August 4th. We really want members of the public who can't come
45 to meetings to go on our website, provide the kind of input that they would be able to provide if they
46 were here, any other ideas that occur to them about critical issues that are facing the City of Palo Alto,
47 what some alternative futures might look like that we should analyze in this process hoping that by the
48 end of the process we get to forming a collective vision for the future of our City that is every bit as
49 useful and important as the last Comp Plan was to the future generations and that we're trying to
50 leverage or build on.

51
52 Anyway that's all I had to say except with one addition, which is I think I referenced it earlier that I
53 wanted the Commission to know that the City Manager did appoint what's called the Leadership Group,

1 13 individuals from our community that we're asking to help us with community outreach and
2 engagement during the Comprehensive Plan Update. The group hasn't even met yet, but we hope that
3 we'll convene them this month and that they will help the staff and by extension the Commission get the
4 word out on all of these issues and ensure that by the end of the day we have a full suite of input from
5 all directions on this planning process and everybody's idea is taken into consideration as we start to
6 winnow down and get to a revised plan. With that I'm going to hand it over to Steven and his
7 consultants for a brief presentation and then we'll get on to the main event, which is the public testimony
8 and the Commission's feedback on the materials in your packet.
9

10 Steven Turner, Advance Planning Manager: Great, thank you Hillary. I'm Steven Turner the Advance
11 Planning Manager. I'm very pleased to bring this back to the Commission for your review and comment.
12 The last time that we met with the Commission was back at the end of April on April 30th and at that time
13 staff presented you with a status update on our work on the Comprehensive Plan Update and we also
14 described the Our Palo Alto concept that the City Council had adopted as a framework for organizing all
15 of the concurrent planning efforts that staff has been working on over these past few months. And we
16 also outlined a schedule for completion of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment by December of 2015.
17

18 But we have a lot of good news to report since our last meeting. Number 1, Council reviewed the
19 Planning Commission's work of goals, policies, and programs that were contained in our Comprehensive
20 Plan policy document version 1.0. Council provided a lot of comment and feedback and that feedback is
21 contained within an attachment in your staff report so you can see what they've said about those policies
22 and programs. Number 2, Council also accepted our plan for community engagement. Staff has been
23 working extremely hard over the past two or three months to really implement that plan and we have a
24 lot of information to present to you tonight with that regard. Council also accepted the California Avenue
25 Concept Plan as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update and so that will be moving forward with the
26 Comprehensive Plan. As Hillary mentioned we are, have developed the Leadership Group that will advise
27 us on engagement matters and that will start up very shortly. And I think probably the best news is that
28 we're still on schedule. Which is no small feat given all of the time that it's taken so far.
29

30 So really where are we now? As I mentioned before we have draft goals, policies, and programs
31 contained within our policy document. We've released a Notice of Preparation (NOP) at the end of May,
32 which really signals our intent to prepare a program EIR for the Comprehensive Plan and we'll talk a little
33 bit about that as well tonight. We're in the middle of really the period of soliciting public input and
34 comment within the program EIR. And tonight's meeting is a very important step in obtaining that public
35 input. We have designed two opportunities in addition to the community engagement meetings that we'll
36 talk about to solicit that input tonight and then also with the City Council on August 4th. Those are two
37 opportunities for people to provide comments and questions that will help guide our environmental
38 review going forward.
39

40 For tonight we really have two main goals: we want to accept the public testimony on environmental
41 issues and the alternatives as proposed, and then have the Commission provide staff and consultants
42 with any feedback that you might have regarding our direction. You're not taking any direct action
43 tonight. Again, this is just one of the two official scoping meetings that we are having to solicit public
44 input. We're extremely interested in the comments from the public and from the Commission again to
45 help guide our efforts. We're not here tonight necessarily to respond to questions or comments on the
46 EIR or the analysis tonight. Really what we're here tonight is to listen and to take in questions and
47 comments that will help guide our analysis over the next few months. It would be helpful if the Planning
48 Commission could express some concurrence especially over the draft alternatives that staff has put
49 together and are contained within the staff report and that you'll hear more about this evening, but it's
50 not required. But certainly having that concurrence that we can then report back to the City Council on
51 August 4th would be very helpful.
52

53 And I think that is about all I wanted to mention before I introduce Joanna Jansen from PlaceWorks.
54 PlaceWorks has been our consultant on the Comprehensive Plan Update for many years now and I think
55 she is as excited as I am to finally get to this point of scoping meetings. With that I'll give it to Joanna.
56

1 Joanna Jansen, PlaceWorks: Thank you Steven. I have a brief presentation to explain to members of the
2 Commission and the public what the EIR is that we're accepting scoping comments on tonight and also
3 briefly go over the alternatives that we or that the initial concepts rather for the alternatives that we're
4 hoping to more fully flesh out over the next few weeks and that will be covered in the EIR. Steven's
5 already told you that our goals for tonight are mainly to listen to the public and to the Commission and
6 hear your comments so with that let me explain a little bit about what the EIR is. The... and I just want
7 to, this is I'm going to talk about the content, purpose, timeline of the environmental review process.
8 Where are opportunities for public input? Touch briefly on the concept of a program EIR and then go
9 through the topics that are going to be covered in the EIR we anticipate.

10
11 The EIR is an Environmental Impact Report. It's required by State Law, the California Environmental
12 Quality Act (CEQA). It explains the objectives of a given project, the location of the project, any actions
13 that are proposed and potential impacts that could occur to the environment to existing conditions in the
14 environment. And an EIR is also required to present feasible mitigation measures or alternatives to a
15 given project that could reduce or avoid the impacts. In our case the project that we're talking about on
16 this slide is the update of the Comprehensive Plan and I'll get into what that means a little bit later.

17
18 So the purposes of the EIR are to disclose information about the project and about its potential impacts
19 as well as about possible mitigation measures, to provide an opportunity for public input, and to support
20 the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) and the City Council in making a decision about a
21 given project. Again, in this case that project would be the Comprehensive Plan Update. We're looking
22 at a timeline of going on over about the next year and a half. We've already issued what's called a NOP.
23 That's a form that states for members of the community and for all State and other public agencies that
24 the City is preparing this document and it gives everyone a chance to respond to the City and say as
25 you're preparing this important environmental document here are the topics that you really need to make
26 sure you address. And this meeting tonight is an important part of that process. So that NOP was issued
27 on May 30th. Public agencies had until June 30th to give us their comments about what the EIR should
28 cover and the public has until August 6th to give similar comments including at tonight's hearing. So
29 again this is not comments necessarily on the project, but comments on what the environmental impact
30 analysis needs to keep in mind. It floods behind my house, there's terrible traffic at this intersection, you
31 need to keep in mind this important special status species, those are the types of comments that we can
32 receive during this scoping period about what we need to cover during the EIR.

33
34 And then once we have a full set of comments and everyone's had a chance to make sure that we heard
35 from them about what the EIR needs to cover we'll be conducting the analysis later this year through the
36 end of the year. And we're aiming to publish the draft EIR containing all of this analysis at the end of the
37 year in December 2014. And then that the public review period that would be yet another public review
38 period for people to review all of the information in the EIR. I'm sure most of you are probably familiar
39 with what an EIR is. It's often a very lengthy, very detailed document so we have 60 days. Right now
40 we're anticipating at least a 60 day public review period. That will be for the community as well as for
41 any other public agencies that want to review and comment on the draft EIR.

42
43 The next slide just gives kind of a visual diagram of the process that I just described highlighting again
44 the areas for public input, which is one of the key functions of an EIR. So right now we're in the on the
45 first column on the left we're in that white box of the 30 day scoping period, which is for the community
46 members is actually a 69 day scoping period lasting until August 6th. And then we will be working on
47 conducting the environmental review and publishing the draft EIR moving into another public review
48 period. After that second public review period on the draft EIR itself closes then we will be working with
49 City staff to respond to the comments. And the City is required to respond to each comment individually
50 in what's called a final EIR. There is then yet another public review phase for that final EIR document to
51 review how all of the comments have been responded to. And once that document is published then the
52 PTC can hold their hearings to review the final EIR and make a recommendation to Council. And then
53 the final step is for the City Council to certify the EIR and approve a project. So that approval will be
54 obviously contingent upon the information that's disclosed in the draft EIR and would likely be some
55 version of one or more of the alternatives that I'm going to talk about a little bit later in the presentation.
56 So the approval would be an adoption of an updated Comprehensive Plan.

1
2 When we're doing an EIR on a plan especially a plan that affects an area as large as the entire City of
3 Palo Alto we do what's called a program or programmatic EIR and that's distinguished from a project
4 level EIR. A project level EIR is, deals with a specific site or a certain number of parcels. You will have
5 diagrams of exactly what the buildings are going to look like on the parcel, where the parking is going to
6 be, where the entrances and exits are, which trees would be kept or removed, a very high level of detail
7 about that specific project. And the EIR on that project would look at that level of detail, look at site
8 specific analyses of hydrology or biological resources or cultural resources and then identify and mitigate
9 any particular impacts for that project. When we're looking at a document like the Comprehensive Plan
10 obviously it's much more difficult to say exactly how a given parcel would be developed or where a
11 particular driveway cut would be. We don't look at the City in that level of detail.
12

13 In a programmatic EIR we're looking much more conceptually at what type of development would be
14 allowed and where and although there is a quantified analysis of things like traffic impacts and air quality
15 impacts there are not site specific studies for any particular parcel. So it's a much more conceptual level
16 of detail in a programmatic EIR and because of that additional development projects that go forward
17 under the Comprehensive Plan would then depending on what type of project they are require additional
18 levels of environmental analysis. And that's the point where you would get the site specific level of
19 detail. So that's just a little bit about the difference between a project level EIR and a programmatic EIR
20 like the one we'll be preparing for the Comprehensive Plan Update.
21

22 Both EIRs no matter what level of detail they're at, both types of EIRs including the programmatic EIR
23 have a similar list of topics that they address and again these are established in the CEQA. So this is a
24 list of the topics that we anticipate addressing in the EIR. Again it focuses on impacts to the existing
25 physical environment and it covers as you can see a very wide range of topics including some topics that
26 are perhaps slightly less about the physical environment like the public services sections, which look not
27 only at the physical environment, but also at the services provided by the City and to serve development.
28

29 So what your EIR is going to cover is a range of alternatives. You can go ahead Elena. And these
30 alternatives are part of your packet tonight in their very initial preliminary form. They have been the
31 result, where we are today is the result of a series of meeting that have been held over about the past
32 month and a half or so since May 29th. The EIR as I mentioned is going to cover each one of the
33 alternatives in the same level of detail, which is rather unusual and innovative for an EIR on a
34 comprehensive plan. And so it's worthwhile to explain a little bit about what those alternatives are and
35 how they're shaping up so far. So we've had a series of three meetings with the public and I see a lot of
36 familiar faces from those meetings, so thank you all for continuing to be involved in the process. We're
37 very grateful for your time. We've had meetings starting on May 29th, June 10th, and June 24th that built
38 on each other and I'm going to speak briefly about each one of those.
39

40 At the first meeting we talked about critical issues and we asked small groups to complete a SWOT
41 exercise to consider Palo Alto's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. And a number of
42 common themes emerged from the groups in each one of those four categories including the importance
43 of maintaining Palo Alto's high quality of life, building on and taking advantage of the unique relationship
44 with Stanford, addressing concerns about traffic congestion and public trust, reaching out to citizens and
45 making sure that they're integrated and engaged in this process, concerns about the high cost of housing
46 both rental and ownership, and interest in high speed rail or Caltrain electrification both as a threat and
47 an opportunity. There were a number of other critical issues that were identified through the SWOT
48 exercises. Those are just some of the highlights that we heard from many of the small groups. The
49 complete feedback from that website, excuse me, from that meeting and all of the meetings is available
50 on the general plan, excuse me, the Comp Plan Update website.
51

52 So if you go to the next page you can see an example of the online engagement that we've, is also
53 possible on both this topic and the opportunity sites topic that I'll address in just a second. In a way, as
54 one of the ways of reaching out to citizens who can't take three hours out of their evening to come to a
55 meeting we have put up online versions of several of the exercises that we've done at the workshops and
56 this is just one of those exercises. So if you go to the project website or if you scan this Quick Response

1 (QR) code with your telephone then you can get immediately to this online tool and we're definitely still
2 taking input and we'll welcome additional input through the online tools that are available.
3

4 So after working on some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats at the first workshop
5 we then moved to talking about potential growth in Palo Alto. What's projected for the region and for
6 Palo Alto? What do other California cities do to manage growth? And then we asked small groups to get
7 together and look at maps of Palo Alto and brainstorm about areas that might potentially be appropriate
8 to accommodate change and which areas should be preserved over the next 15 years during the life of
9 the updated Comprehensive Plan. So if we see on the next slide there is an example of what one of
10 those table maps look like after the small group discussion and then looking at all four of the small group
11 table maps that were created staff and consultants worked together to collate those into a synthesized
12 map of six specific opportunity site areas that we focused on then at the third workshop. I'm noticing
13 that the top of this map is a little bit cut off so I apologize for that, but there is also an area including the
14 Stanford Shopping Center, Downtown, the entirety of the El Camino corridor, the California Avenue area,
15 the Stanford Research Park area, the East Meadow Circle and Bayshore area, and then the San Antonio
16 Road area as the six opportunity site areas that came out of the small group work at Workshop Number
17 2.
18

19 And then so at Workshop Number 3 we asked the participants there to look at those areas and think
20 about for each of those areas what are some different alternative ways that they might develop? And to
21 help spur that conversation we provided three potential alternatives very conceptual and offered
22 participants the chance to respond to those alternatives and revise them or to create their own new
23 alternative. So we had about 70 people ended up working in about nine small groups and each one of
24 those groups came up with a slightly different variation on the alternatives. Some groups created
25 completely new alternatives. I think we had two groups that chose that alternative that chose to create
26 their new alternative. Other groups worked with one of the three preliminary alternatives that we had
27 suggested and then made changes and refinements to that. So at the end of that workshop we then
28 took the feedback from those groups and tried to synthesize them into the draft alternatives that you
29 have to consider tonight. Before I move on to talking about those I just want to note that in addition to
30 the workshop, the face to face workshop, again online right now we have this tool where we are still
31 collecting input about these particular opportunity sites, what role they should play in the City in 2030,
32 what they should look like, what policies or programs might be necessary to achieve your vision for these
33 areas 15 years from now. So again that's ongoing and we welcome continued input with that online tool.
34

35 So from all these sources we have now the four alternatives that are described in greater detail in your
36 staff report. They, before I start talking about each one of them individually I just want to stress that all
37 alternatives would preserve existing open space areas and existing areas that are zoned R1. We've heard
38 very clearly through this process the importance of residential neighborhoods and the importance of open
39 space to Palo Alto's character and its quality of life and so none of the alternatives would include changes
40 in those areas.
41

42 The alternatives include a do nothing alternative. In CEQA this is called the "no project alternative."
43 That doesn't mean that nothing would happen between now and 2015, it means that none of the existing
44 regulatory documents would be changed. So the project that we've been talking about is an update to
45 the Comprehensive Plan. Under the no project alternative the existing Comprehensive Plan and existing
46 zoning would all stay in place as they are. Number 2 would slow, Concept Number 2 would slow non-
47 residential development and allow some modest housing growth. That's contrasted with Concept
48 Number 3, which would slow non-residential development, but would not discourage housing growth or
49 limit it, but would rather focus it in areas that are served by transit. And then finally Concept Number 4
50 is somewhat less about the location of development or type of development and more about ensuring
51 that new development is coupled with exploring potential new net zero impact concepts. And I'll talk a
52 bit more about each one of these briefly and that will be the end of my presentation.
53

54 So again under Concept Number 1, the do nothing alternative, existing Comprehensive Plan policies and
55 zoning designations would be in place and those designations do allow for some new development. So
56 new development would go on, it would go on under the existing policies that are in place. Under those

1 existing policies the City is already poised to see a relatively slow change in the types of uses along El
2 Camino Real. The California Avenue area would continue to see the types of there would be nothing to
3 change the types of development projects that are being proposed in the California Avenue area.
4 Existing job centers like the East Meadow Circle area or the Stanford Research Park would remain job
5 centers and would not have any housing or other types of uses added to them. And again in the staff
6 report there is much greater detail about each one of these alternatives.
7

8 Under Concept Number 2 we would slow non-residential development. Housing growth would be focused
9 on that that is necessary to meet State requirements and there would be no change to existing land use
10 designations. Under both this alternative and the next alternative Concept 3 there, the City would adopt
11 a new procedure for metering the pace of office and Research and Development (R&D) projects over
12 10,000 square feet. This is the opportunity for me to emphasize that these concepts are all very
13 preliminary at this point. The ideas are still percolating about what the concepts should be. We're here
14 to hear from you tonight. We're going to be hearing from the Council on August 4th. The particular
15 mechanism for example for regulating office growth, the legality of that mechanism, the accommodation
16 of the permit streamlining act, all of those types of details would definitely have to be worked out and
17 they are not worked out yet. So when we have the alternative and when we do the EIR those are details
18 that are definitely going to have to be fleshed out before we begin the EIR analysis. We're not quite
19 there yet. We're still working on forming these alternatives.
20

21 But in this alternative again we would focus residential growth on meeting State requirements and
22 limiting residential growth really to that kind of bare minimum that would be needed to meet State
23 requirements. There is not, there would not be a significant change to the existing character or mix of
24 uses in Downtown or along Cal Avenue or in any of the places that are primarily job oriented right now
25 like the Research Park/East Meadow Circle. And along El Camino the character would be a little bit more
26 lower density, increased setbacks away from the road, three story height limit for example on new
27 development.
28

29 Concept Number 3 would similarly slow non-residential development, but in the case of residential
30 development it would shift development, residential development capacity from existing residentially
31 zoned areas to areas that are within a half mile of Caltrain or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations. So the
32 capacity would essentially be down zoned in many areas in order to up zone those areas that are within a
33 half mile of the transit stations and accommodate increased development there as a way of further
34 strengthening protections for existing residential, single family residential areas. Also under this
35 alternative we might test the possibility of depressing the Caltrain tracks from San Antonio to Page Mill
36 Road and we would add, Downtown would change to add more housing, adding housing also along El
37 Camino Real and not along Cal Avenue itself, but in the area around Cal Avenue, and in the Research
38 Park most likely along El Camino again in areas that are particularly close to the BRT stations or
39 otherwise well served with transit.
40

41 And then finally in Concept 4 there would not be growth management instruments added such as a
42 restriction on new office and R&D development, but instead the City would adopt policies to address the
43 impacts of that new development whether it would be from the vehicle trips that the development would
44 generate, the greenhouse gas emissions, water consumption, energy consumption, net zero is a very
45 broad concept that could be applied to many different aspects of development. As part of that project or
46 that alternative rather we would consider mixed-use projects along El Camino and some of those could
47 even go over 50 feet in height. That might be in exchange for providing a certain type of housing or
48 achieving a certain net zero goal that the City established. And the Research Park in particular might see
49 the greatest amount of change under this alternative becoming a proving ground or a testing ground for
50 a whole range of concepts that might include additional bike sharing programs, urban farming programs,
51 alternative energy generation, water conservation programs. So the Research Park as a test case for a
52 lot of net zero concepts under this particular alternative.
53

54 Before I end I just want to briefly explain what the process of these alternatives is. We've already done
55 Step 1 of synthesizing the input that we heard from the workshops. We're now on Step 2, presenting the
56 draft alternatives to you and to the City Council. Again, once the alternatives are better fleshed out and

1 we have a little more input on how they're evolving then we will need to assign specific estimates of the
2 quantity and type of development to each alternative so that it can be analyzed in the EIR including
3 traffic modeling, air quality modeling, noise modeling, and other quantitative analyses. And then again,
4 each one of those four alternatives will be analyzed at an equal level of detail in the draft EIR which we
5 hope to publish at the end of this year. And I believe that concludes my presentation. So again, as
6 Steven mentioned we're here to hear from the public and from you on the topics of the EIR and on the
7 content of the alternatives if you have that input.
8

9 Chair Michael: So thank you very much for that excellent presentation. Let's now open the public hearing
10 and we'll allow anybody from the public who submitted a speaker card an opportunity to speak. We're
11 thinking this is an important topic. We want to definitely give you enough time to share your thoughts or
12 raise questions so individuals will have, typically we give three minutes, we'll give you up to five minutes
13 and if you're here on behalf of a group then you can have longer. I think there's at least one such
14 representative. We'll give you 9 or 10 minutes. Anyway, so Vice-Chair Keller who is first?
15

16 Vice-Chair Keller: Our first speaker is Neilson Buchanan and is he on behalf of a group? So I guess I'll
17 give you 10 minutes.
18

19 Neilson Buchanan: I brought a companion here and I can take his spot I'm going to be greedy.
20

21 Michael Griffin: My name is Michael Griffin. I'm yielding my time to my comrade in arms here.
22

23 Mr. Buchanan: I want to thank all of you for and all the people that have been working on the process so
24 far for this, the Comp Plan, which is got to be one of the most nebulous documents to describe to
25 someone that there is. There's one thing for sure for me is this will be certainly one of the best vetted
26 Comp Plans in a long time. The input I got as talking to sort of the middle management neighborhood
27 folks out there is that that's all and good, I don't want to get involved. It'll be updated by people brighter
28 than I am and no more and it will then go back into the usual dead document file. That it'll be used
29 heavily by people who know how to manipulate the system and nothing wrong with that, but it's not a... I
30 haven't heard of anybody in the country that has a dynamic comp plan. And something is missing for me
31 that there's got to be a companion to the Comp Plan and I've talked to the real experts and I still don't
32 understand what it could be. Maybe it's a set of concept plans for the critical areas of the City, maybe it's
33 the precise plan features that's sprinkled out along to hit the future pressure points that we know are
34 coming. So that's all I've got to say about the Comp Plan. I'm glad I'm not involved.
35

36 A more serious issue is your effort to engage people in the City planning. And the Comp Plan is just one
37 of those engagements. And as far as launching one I think you've done about everything that you could
38 expect to be done and it will be done better and all that stuff. But I, for the life of me I haven't been
39 able to figure out how do you keep people engaged? The Comp Plan itself is not an engaging document
40 in my opinion, but as I honed in on this and talked to a few people and said please take a look at this
41 there's one thing that began to excite people and that was these very rough scenarios that are coming
42 out through the EIR process. And what I would urge is that if you're looking for a role to take on that
43 you ought to periodically stop and take a look at the two to three to four scenarios that are going to
44 come out of this. Have them renewed periodically, take them back to the public and get comments on
45 just how does this grab you? Because each one of those scenarios, elements of each one of them excites
46 somebody, I don't think there's a single scenario, but there are elements in each one that I guarantee
47 you will fill up rooms if you properly vet that. And that would be a real interesting way I think to keep
48 people engaged.
49

50 I have about eight points here tonight, but I'm only going to cover about four or five of them. In fact I'm
51 going to steal ideas that I hear tonight and I'm going to rewrite them accordingly. None of that scenario
52 development and refinement can happen in my opinion I've said this publicly many times with the current
53 staffing of the Planning Department. There needs to be a dedicated data division and that actually spells
54 out 3D, but any normal corporation in America today has forward looking, has people that can capture
55 good data and look forward. And Hillary needs somebody dedicated, I don't know how much and it's not
56 my job to worry about how much, that does nothing more than create data, see where we are for

1 baselines and then make high, low, and medium projections whenever possible. That would drive those
2 scenarios very, in a very healthy fashion. So I don't think we can get from where we are to where we
3 want to be without a stronger reliance on professional data. Basically you got to have the tools of the
4 trade.

5
6 And I just want to close on one of my pet projects because it's going to test the mettle of this City. Let
7 me step back because I had a good chance to get some education from Steve Levy about something I
8 think is the overwhelming driver of what we're into. The regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is
9 growing at Steve? Five, six, seven percent, the stress on the cities is a couple of points below that.
10 That's real refined advice from the economist. And that's creating enormous pressure on every city and
11 town from the Bay Area, of the southern Bay Area from Oakland down to San Jose. And I don't think
12 we've begun to deal with the political and social impacts from the last couple of years and put I think is
13 the next two years. And that's going to create an enormous stress.

14
15 And let me just illustrate that whatever's going on in Menlo Park we'll know a little bit more next week on
16 what the City Council does, the reaction from Save Menlo Park and I'm not going to take sides one way
17 or the other. We had our own Maybell situation. There's balance Palo, Balance Mountain View going on
18 of trying to figure out what their balance between office and housing and density and very creative work
19 is going to come out of that. I had a chance to talk two hours with people down there yesterday and I
20 just and I've said it over again, I just don't want to throw our City into mass confusion and hate and
21 discontent, but we're creeping up there on that. Downtown parking is going to be a problem. The
22 parking permit issue is not permit parking, it's the quality of neighborhood issue and I'm not going to go
23 into that because we're going to have a chance to vet that very soon.

24
25 And we have an election coming up and whatever this election is I think it's going to be mild compared to
26 the election in 2016 because of the economic drivers and the social and political consequences. I hope
27 I'm going to conclude with that remark and I don't want it to be negative. It just means that's another
28 factor you need to be thinking about. I don't think the Comp Plan can address that it's the intermediate
29 planning processes and how the Council and you operate vis-à-vis the citizens that come forward. So I
30 wish you the best. I know there are a lot of people in Palo Alto who want to make this a constructive
31 process. I especially do. Thank you.

32
33 Vice-Chair Keller: Michael Griffin do you want to take any of the remaining time? Thank you. Ok, the
34 next speaker is Shani Kleinhaus to be followed by Stephen Rosenblum.

35
36 Shani Kleinhaus: Thank you. I'm Shani Kleinhaus; I'm a resident of Palo Alto and the Environmental
37 Advocate for Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. So I'm going to talk about birds a little bit and about
38 things that concern me as a resident as well.

39
40 So one of the things that we saw in Hillary's presentation was [unintelligible] issues and it talks about
41 quality of life. So I think there is some kind of an assumption that birds and nature is part of quality of
42 life. Not that it is not, but it has its own value and that was mentioned in several of the tables there; that
43 there is an intrinsic value to nature that is not associated with human benefits or quality of life that needs
44 to be recognized. And the reason I mention that is because in the comments that I have provided
45 previously on the Natural Element of the Comprehensive Plan there were a lot of comments that we tried
46 my group to enter about how do we make this a bird friendly city? And that included how do we plant
47 and how do we trim trees and what kind of windows we have. And what do you do in the natural areas,
48 but also how do you make our City a living city not only for people? And people love birds. We have a
49 lot of birders, we have a lot of people that have a bird feeder in the back yard. We don't want to lose
50 that. This is the only connection that people still in a city can have to nature is birds. So how do you
51 improve that? That needs to be a part of the general plan or the Comprehensive Plan and not only as a
52 quality of life issue.

53
54 And I had a few other notes. So I want to go back to the four concepts and the Concept 4 that has
55 innovative net zero concept and I'm trying to figure out what that means. I don't think it's clear. I think
56 it was really good to have a story about it in the newspaper today, thank you. But it's still not clear what

1 this means and I'm not clear whether this is kind of an experiment on a citywide scale, which would be
2 really scary because it could be an outcome that is not what we expect at all. And it could be a
3 mitigation that is actually presented as a general plan and that is not right either. So I think it's really
4 interesting concept and could be done on one neighborhood. I would love to see it at East Meadow
5 Circle, which is really close to my house and I think that could be a good example, but I would not try to
6 adopt that as an alternative to a general plan or a Comprehensive Plan.

7
8 I have followed some of the processes in Mountain View very, very closely and what is going on in terms
9 of how the North Bayshore area where they have a lot of offices is going to deal with increase. And
10 there were a lot of concepts so they tried to figure out how do we stop growth of car trips, how do we
11 stop emissions, what are the other alternatives? So far a lot of creative solutions, but none of them
12 works to actually have net zero. They just don't work. So there probably is no solution like that. It
13 would be wonderful to try and find one, but not on a city scale. It has to be an experiment that is much
14 smaller in scale.

15
16 And as a resident near East Meadow Circle I just want to go back to that specific plan to that side and
17 say that I would love to see more housing there. I think that to use the Circle for housing and the center
18 for services and park would be a wonderful thing instead of what's there right now and a lot of people
19 came in the last 10 years to live there. Initially there was a response from some of the neighbors who
20 did not like it, but I see that they assimilated into the neighborhood very well and it's a really nice
21 neighborhood to have these people live there.

22
23 What else did I have? The last thing I'm going to say is something about the process. When something
24 is now decided if it's in a, an alternative is moving forward or something in the EIR is decided and we're
25 moving forward with that there is no way back almost. It's almost impossible and the people in the
26 audience might not know this, but once something moves forward going and saying well, we're only
27 studying this so let's study what the impact is, the study is not whether or not to do something, the study
28 is how to do something. So once it's in there it's not coming out. And we've had at Audubon some big
29 issues with that and did manage to get some things out of EIR's at the last moment, but it's almost
30 impossible to change a plan after it's set in motion. And the EIR will not study whether or not something
31 is a good idea, it will only study how to do it and what kind of cost it's going to cost all of us and mitigate
32 for that to some extent, not completely. Thank you.

33
34 Vice-Chair Keller: The next speaker is Stephen Rosenblum to be followed by Kevin Murray.

35
36 Stephen Rosenblum: Hi, my name's Steve Rosenblum. I live in Palo Alto as well. I just wanted to bring
37 up an issue that is a vision issue I think and belongs in this study because of its overarching effect on life
38 in Palo Alto and that is the undergrounding of Caltrain. I think to me it represents an opportunity and a
39 solution to many problems. If the Caltrain right of way were underground it would immediately improve
40 the connectivity between east and west sides of Palo Alto. People could cross the train tracks on any
41 street again the way they used to be able to before the grade crossings were there. It would create real
42 estate above the train tracks, which would be accessible to transportation. It would possibly create a
43 bikeway depending on how the land were used and also opportunities to build housing and commercial
44 depending on how it was zoned. And this is really a way of creating real estate, something which God
45 usually doesn't do except in places like Hawaii. We can actually get real estate back that is, that wasn't
46 existing.

47
48 And some of the other aspects of it, it would eliminate traffic delays that we have now at the crossings
49 leading to a lot less loss in time of people waiting and concomitantly will allow Caltrain to increase
50 frequency of service because they would no longer be limited by gate downtime. So this would enhance
51 transit in both ways, both mass transit and vehicular and pedestrian transit because of having no more
52 traffic delays. It would also eliminate accidents at grade crossings as well as suicides, which we've had
53 many in the past. And so I think that's another improvement. And it would also eliminate the train noise
54 from our environment. This would include the mechanical noise of the train as well as the horn noise,
55 which they are required to sound at every grade crossing. So that would be, improve quality of life for all
56 people living next to the tracks.

1
2 And then as a final thing it would prepare the way for undergrounding of high speed rail should it
3 eventually come to Palo Alto. And from what I'm understanding from the latest planning in contradiction
4 to what high speed rail had said early on is that they plan to retain grade crossings even when the trains
5 are going by at 125 miles an hour, which I think is not very sensible. I think it's a real threat to our
6 environment as well as to our life and limb. So I think just I commend this as an idea to the
7 consideration of the Commission and that they should consider this as part of their planning process.
8 Thank you.
9

10 Vice-Chair Keller: The next speaker is Kevin Murray to be followed by Beth Bunnenberg. Is Kevin here?
11 Ok, great. So...

12
13 Kevin Murray: Hi, Kevin Murray, 2091 Harvard. I was listening to all of the presentation, thank you. I've
14 looked at the, I've read the plans; I've had the presentation on the TV. Let me emphasize this
15 Commission, first in terms of process as a political scientist I'm disappointed to hear that you're
16 appointed by Council Members. I want you to be more independent. So maybe we can revisit that
17 process. Second, I'm not really aware of any of the people on the Commission are in any way related to
18 commercial development or attorneys related to intellectual property rights. Hopefully there's no
19 connection there either. Again, independence is critical. Because those are like the two triads that make
20 up what is driving Silicon Valley.
21

22 Of the four plans Number 2 resonates with me the most. I would even like stricter allocations however
23 with respect to Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) remember the more companies we allow to
24 expand in Palo Alto the more ABAG will pressure us to bring in housing. Now I know we can do plans for
25 housing, but we don't have to build the housing. So that's the good news. That's the good caveat and
26 hopefully we can stay with that.
27

28 Mr. Tanaka spoke earlier about the fact and I appreciate your comments trying to be inclusive that we
29 have to be maybe sensitive to the investment concerns of these commercial developers. Hey folks,
30 c'mon, they are here to invest and get a return. This is really about power, money, control, glory and I
31 for one as a Palo Altoan representing the citizens' voice rather than the commercial interests want to
32 preserve the quality of life we have here. In my humble opinion your only role should be focusing on
33 how do you manage the existing development rather than plan for future development. Now we're going
34 to hear a lot of survey questions discussing about look at the growth trends. I know we're living in a
35 second gold rush boom right now and have been. In fact I saw it in 1984. To me the traffic levels were
36 too bad in 1984 when I lived here, of course I've been here since 1960. In the last 15 years my God,
37 what happened to the leadership? They just, they just surrendered. They surrendered to the financial
38 interest.
39

40 Our only power is in numbers. I know that. And if we get enough of us, the people in seats, the rest of
41 the Palo Altoans here it will change, but the true change only comes with electing a whole new slate of
42 non-developers to the City Council. And then they will direct this Commission to come up with ways on
43 how to manage our existing traffic. Push the success, the financial success, which I celebrate of Silicon
44 Valley out of Palo Alto. Shift it to San Jose where it deserves the redevelopment. And for those
45 urbanites who want to have that world experience, that's great. I want to get you to move to San
46 Francisco, we want to get you to move to San Jose and enjoy those days, but for us we still want to feel
47 like we live in a community. This is the new sea change, so the closest one for a voice for the sea
48 change is Item Number 2, Item Number 2.
49

50 With respect to granny units I own three of those granny units and I applaud Mr. Keller's earlier remark.
51 Sure, if you want to rezone so some existing property owners can do granny units on their existing
52 properties that might be the one way to accommodate housing crunch. All those become an executive
53 community in terms of the pricing of real estate. The homes are nothing to applaud, but that's ok. That
54 was the World War II generation that picked up on the mass development of Middlefield. I remember
55 when Middlefield was literally a field prior to the Eichlers, but the housing values have so skyrocketed
56 that we've got to be realistic that really again note the success of the Silicon Valley really needs to be

1 pushed out to other communities not only in California, but throughout the nation. The challenge here of
2 course is, and I don't blame them venture capitalists they want to talk to one another and go across
3 town. They're all centered here and again so are the law firms and so are the startups. And they, in
4 their mind's eye they think that they need to be a part of the action and understandably the real estate
5 development says that's right and we'll facilitate that by giving them the infrastructures to succeed. We
6 know what they're doing here, but it's gotten out of control. It's beyond even reasonable.

7
8 So it is my passion and hope that the only thing that will get passed here will be Item Number 2, 2 vision.
9 And I thank you for the time it must have taken to go through all the input. So for a voice of Palo
10 Altoans who really comes from the numbers not from the domestic and foreign investment that's driving
11 the incredible expansion that I've ever seen in the history of this town this will be a voice helping to
12 coordinate a new City Council slate to redirect the direction of this Commission to plan for the existing
13 density and no more. Thanks for your time, I certainly appreciate it. Good night.

14
15 Vice-Chair Keller: The next speaker is Beth Bunnenberg to be followed by Robert Moss.

16
17 Beth Bunnenberg: Beth Bunnenberg speaking tonight as an individual. I am a Palo Alto resident. In
18 terms of vision I don't envision Palo Alto in 30 years as a collection of skyscrapers that blocks our views
19 of the coastal hills and the bay. We are locked into our present land area and there aren't any more
20 suburbs for us to annex. Therefore we must use our land very wisely.

21
22 I favor the option that actually was presented by our group at the Elks Lodge, which was a double slow;
23 slow growth on residential, slow growth on non-residential. We already have projects in the pipeline that
24 are greatly going to increase traffic and parking problems. Now history has shown that putting too many
25 people jammed together too tightly and the quality of life goes down. Already Palo Alto or at this point
26 Palo Alto has a pretty good balance between residential and parkland, but still there are traffic jams.
27 Tempers flare, people fight over parking places, and pedestrians are hurt and killed on our streets. We
28 love that parkland and yet we continue to see some threats to those parklands. I strongly recommend
29 keeping the 50 foot height limit and sticking to it. Place those 50 foot high buildings in areas such as
30 Stanford Industrial Park and the southern part of El Camino. Keep the buildings of human scale, both
31 residential and non-residential. Please accept the double slow alternative and let's keep our quality of
32 life. Thank you.

33
34 Vice-Chair Keller: The next speaker is Robert Moss to be followed by Sea Reddy.

35
36 Robert Moss: Thank you. Couple of comments, in the list of topics one of the things that's missing is the
37 potential flooding sea level rise. Under hydrology you should be considering that because it's almost
38 certain that within 20 years the sea is going to go up by more than a foot. And a rise of that amount will
39 flood most of Palo Alto between the bay and Middlefield. So talk about that, you don't just ignore it.

40
41 Second, in the hazardous materials the staff report talks about having a report from 2003. That's old
42 data. I have ones from 2005 and I know they've been issued from 2010. Furthermore, the toxic levels
43 for trichloroethene (TCE) was significantly reduced about 18 months ago. So something that would have
44 been acceptable a year, three or four years ago is not acceptable and the mitigations are different today
45 than they would have been then. Keep that in mind when you're talking about building in the California-
46 Olive-Emerson (COE) area in particular.

47
48 On the various concepts the two that I think are the most realistic are Number 1, keep the existing
49 Comprehensive Plan. We spent years getting that developed. We don't have to come up with a revised
50 Comprehensive plan for a few years. Let's live with what we've got. If you want to make some changes
51 Concept 2 makes more sense than the others. One of the things that bothers me about Concept 3 and to
52 a certain extent Concept 4 is you're talking about allowing densification within a half a mile of the transit
53 routes. ABAG is only asking for densification within a quarter mile of transit routes. A half mile would
54 include almost all of Barron Park, Evergreen Park, I could name the neighborhoods going up and down El
55 Camino, which would be impacted by increasing density along there.

1 The City Council supposedly adopted a basic principle that all existing R1 zones shall not have an increase
2 in density. That must be adhered to no ifs, no ands, no changes. Same with the 50 foot height limit.
3 There's no reason why you can't build housing within 50 feet. I could show you hundreds of housing
4 units along El Camino and other major streets that are 50 feet or less. The reason that the CN zone has
5 a lower height limit is because we wanted it to be compatible with the housing behind it in Barron Park.
6 We didn't want a 50 foot height limits.
7

8 Now when you talk about housing developments and you're asking to put in developments that have
9 studio and one bedroom units find out what the market wants because you may find the market hates
10 studio and one bedroom units. Let me give you two examples: there's a townhouse development on El
11 Camino Way just north of Charleston and there's another one on San Antonio just east of what used to
12 be Mayfield Mall. Both of those were developed with the allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR), but between
13 half and two-thirds the number of housing units that would have been allowed. And the developers were
14 asked why do you build these big units, 2,000, 2,500 square feet? And the answer was that's what the
15 market wants. The market doesn't want 800 square foot units. The market doesn't want one bedroom
16 units. So find out what the market wants. Don't tell the market what it ought to be doing, the market's
17 going to tell you.
18

19 When you talk about changing El Camino I get very nervous because one of the things you're talking
20 about is getting all of the property owners to band together and combine lots and work as a group. Been
21 there, done that, it crashed and burned. We tried that in the Barron Park Association years ago. For any
22 25 properties along El Camino you will find there are at least 30 property owners, some of whom don't
23 talk to each other. So unless you can actually get somebody to come in and buy up the properties and
24 combine them you're not going to be doing that. You're going to have individual properties developed
25 one at a time.
26

27 And as an example there's a vacant lot just south of Matadero. It's been vacant for more than 40 years,
28 since the building that was on there burned. Jim Baer was trying to buy that and develop it as a hotel
29 about 25 years ago and found out that the person who owns it lives in Texas and the amount that she
30 wanted for it he considered grossly excessive and that was years ago, decades ago. So you're going to
31 find 4146 El Camino, which has now come in with another development and this is the fourth
32 development they've come in with that property is owned by a woman in Hong Kong. She's had two
33 projects approved. Both of them were never built. The approvals expired because she never went
34 forward and actually built them. So getting things done along El Camino is very different than getting
35 things done under normal development projects.
36

37 Vice-Chair Keller: Our final speaker unless we have additional cards is Sea Reddy.
38

39 Sea Reddy: Thanks for taking me in. I came in late. A few things that I would like this team to talk
40 about and include or consider is the Stanford Hospital expansion. Now it's Stanford and they're doing
41 what they're already doing, so how would we incorporate whatever traffic whatever things that
42 happened, 24 hour emergency services, all that so would we probably need to I'm sure you've already
43 thought about it, but I just would like to put it as a list of things that we need to talk about.
44

45 And then East Palo Alto, you know we don't live in an isolated world and I've seen this in Manhattan
46 Beach that when we had riots in 1991, Rodney King and all that, so there was Hawthorne and there was
47 Manhattan Beach. It was only two miles, very similar to here. It's only about half a mile to East Palo
48 Alto. So we need to lift up that community so that we can live peacefully as well. We're not living in an
49 isolated world, so I think we any of our planning we need to work with them; same thing with Mountain
50 View, same thing with next door, Menlo Park. So we're not in an isolated community, we... what they do
51 impacts us, what we do impacts them. I think I'm more concerned with what they do that we might be
52 able to understand. So I think that discussion like Stanford would help.
53

54 And the other one is the when I look up on the sky; you know Palo Alto is a beautiful community and all
55 that. I used to live in Newport and there are extensions in the traffic. It seemed like the planes come
56 above wherever they go I haven't researched whether they go to Oakland or San Francisco, I don't know,

1 I haven't researched it. It needs to be looked at. The more traffic that that comes through it's going to
2 break us up. An airplane unfortunately could have a mechanical damage, things like that. It's going to
3 severely impact our life. So we need to participate there, we need to give more inputs, maybe they could
4 take an alternate path later at night? But I see planes beyond 10:00, 11:00 at night, which wasn't the
5 case in Newport we had restrictions.

6
7 And then I think this is very important to me as we get older we need to have an alternate way for going
8 to the doctor. My five mile zone is Stanford and Menlo Park. We need to allow some other medical care
9 facilities other than Stanford. Not everybody can afford to go to Stanford. They are more expensive and
10 citizens might need alternative means of getting that medical care without having to drive. You know
11 when I call a taxi drive, they need to go they can take a taxi and go \$20 and go to the hospital. It's very
12 important to the community and a lot of people have a lot of money, but a lot of people don't. Seniors
13 are more frugal too and caregivers and all that that need to be considered.

14
15 The last thing is beautification of El Camino. El Camino Real is not the prettiest thing and I was totally
16 surprised when I saw what's on El Camino south of Page Mill Road. It's quite different than what we see
17 on the north side so I think we had one city, one community, I didn't really consider lifting that
18 community up like look that area up. Thank you.

19
20 Vice-Chair Keller: Speak and then you can turn in the card. So Stephen Levy you will have five minutes.

21
22 Stephen Levy: So I'm Steve Levy and I live about a block from here in Palo Alto. In terms Joanne and
23 Steve of the scoping plan, the EIR, my experience is that the analysis goes forward if you have really
24 specific alternatives. I'm sure you know that. We're at a conceptual level. You've got people arguing
25 growth or no growth, but without numbers on those four alternatives not on individual parcels, but on
26 the program you can't do your EIR, right? You can't do the impacts. And nobody here is going to know
27 what happens. So that's the first piece. You know that piece.

28
29 But there's a second issue and I've been talking to Hillary and Steve back and forth. I don't know what is
30 discretionary for the Commission and the Council, what is legal? What is legal under the existing Comp
31 Plan? That is how much growth the City can expect unless they do something that violates the law. I
32 think that will inform the discussion in the following way: it will move it to a discussion of where the best
33 locations and what are the best mitigation measures to handle the amount of growth that is legally
34 entitled now as opposed to an argument that may not be realistic about stopping growth altogether. I
35 don't know the answer, but I think going forward you all need to be informed about what is legal. I
36 remember Steven and Joanna at the last meeting I think Steven you said there's a lot of development
37 capacity generally in the City. Maybe not in Downtown, but I heard that correctly. So those two things
38 together will bring a lot of specificity to this.

39
40 Third, for the scoping plan I think the public deserves to know what it costs to do the mitigation. Ok?
41 Just saying something's there, undergrounding Caltrain is a huge expense. I think we know it, need to
42 know the cost. In terms of the alternatives I have two suggestions. One, the document you passed out
43 talks alternately about neighborhood retail and neighborhood services. I think probably the correct
44 concept to think about is services. We have a big shopping center, we have a smaller town and country,
45 most areas have a grocery store or a CVS or something. What makes those neighborhoods walkable is a
46 bank and a dry cleaner and a UPS store and a place to get a haircut and tailor, restaurants, but all of
47 those services I think we focus too much on the commute trips and not enough on reducing walkable
48 evening and daytime trips for services that people take not the commute trips.

49
50 The last point I think the half mile of bus stop or transit is not quite the best way to think about it. When
51 I see Caltrain and those people getting off they're getting off to go to jobs and it works because half of
52 them walk Downtown, half of them walk to the shuttle, half/half... a third and a third have bikes. Ok? So
53 I think if you're serious around transit to reduce the commute you'd put jobs, which goes in the face of
54 what a lot of people want. It may not be a distinction which must, with much merit because it turns out
55 the transit stations are in Downtown areas. And so you're absolutely I think want to put your housing

1 near where services and everyday retail are to really reduce as much as possible the parking and net
2 commuting of people who can then walk or bike to those services. So thank you.
3

4 Vice-Chair Keller: Thank you. Are there any more speakers who have come later? I guess not.
5

6 Chair Michael: So I'd like to thank members of the public who spoke this evening very much for your
7 thoughtful comments. It's always humbling being on a Commission in a City like Palo Alto where the
8 collective Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and knowledge base of the residents far exceeds our seven
9 appointed representatives on the Commission. I think that is instrumental in getting to the best possible
10 Comprehensive Plan Update.
11

12 Let's, we're going to close the public hearing and come back to the Commission. And I think given the
13 importance of this topic maybe we'll allow for two rounds of comments and take say up to five minutes in
14 the first round and then you don't have to talk all that time. If you have more we'll give you a second,
15 second chance. So who would like to begin? Commissioner Rosenblum.
16

17 Commissioner Rosenblum: Thank you. As opposed to the previous round I may fill up my full time and
18 have to go to the next time. I'm very passionate about this. So I wanted to divide comments into some
19 high level comments and low level comments.
20

21 On the high level side one of my personal talking points is that this Palo Alto that everyone loves and this
22 sort of halcyon notion of walkable streets and low traffic and thriving businesses and I think we had a
23 number of people come up and refer to the Palo Alto of their youth. It's a system and I think we need to
24 realize that this no growth/reduced growth in perils that system in some ways. So the Palo Alto of your
25 youth I'm sure had teachers living in Palo Alto, maybe policeman living in Palo Alto. Different people
26 could afford to live here. We have a demographic skew that now skews older and skews against young
27 working people without families. That is different from the Palo Alto of your youth. And a no growth or
28 negative growth policy exacerbates that difference. It makes it more expensive for young people to live
29 here, especially if there are no jobs for them. So they're going to live here, pay a premium to have to
30 commute somewhere else.
31

32 And the interesting thing about young people is they go out every day. When I was a young person I
33 went out probably two times a day because I ate my lunch out, ate my dinner out, maybe meet friends
34 for drinks after work. I now have a young family. I go out maybe once a week. It's very nice that once
35 a week I occasionally support our Palo Alto businesses, but they don't live off me. They live off the
36 people who go there every day. And I benefit from that because I like walking to businesses and all of
37 us do, but we are in some ways I don't want to call us free riders, but we benefit from the people who
38 support businesses intensively. And we make it more difficult for those people to go and support those
39 businesses, makes it more difficult for the businesses, which by the way are paying very high rents
40 because we restrict commercial growth. So my one plea here is to recognize that there's a system and
41 we talk about changes from the past. A big change from the past frankly is that a lot of people look the
42 same now. We're getting older and wealthier and a lot of people can't afford to live here anymore. And
43 it's not just a pity because a diverse place is I think an exciting place, but actually you need diversity to
44 support diverse businesses. So that's sort of my high level point.
45

46 One other high level point I think it's important to put us into context. I don't think that we are a major
47 city. I also don't think we're a suburb. We're an important college town. If you look at other important
48 college towns be it Pomona or Davis or San Luis Obispo and I'm only naming California college towns,
49 we're far less dense than any of them. And all of us can look up this data and see what our density is
50 versus others. Even if you get rid of all of our open space and say I'm going to double Palo Alto density
51 we're still less dense than they are. They have found solutions to make livable places with colleges, with
52 a vibrant ecosystem, manage growth in a healthy way. And so my second plea is let's use the data. It's
53 available, we always complain there's not enough data for this or that and that's true. A lot of data is
54 outdated and some data is not that useful, but there is certainly data to put this into context. So I'm
55 going to jump into the specifics, but the pleas on the high level is engage in system level thinking and
56 innovate within our context, use the data.

1
2 On the specific I think all the alternatives that have been mentioned they all are couched in sort of low
3 growth or anti-growth. I understand that there's a certain environment where there's great suspicion of
4 growth. Alternatives 3 and 4 anticipate some limited growth. I would say neither of them anticipate any
5 non-residential growth. I think that's probably wrong. I think there needs to be a scenario where jobs
6 are also created or at least explicitly addressed. Specifically Alternative 3 around the growth strategies
7 limits building height to 55 feet if additional height is used for residential. I'm not sure how the additional
8 five feet really helps to, for residential. I've also heard from a number of people that for modern
9 buildings we now have higher ground floors that a 60 foot limit is more palatable or more, makes for a
10 nicer building. I think that also should be considered. The 55 feet limit I think is just an odd limit. If
11 we're going to violate historic precedent for 50 feet then I think it should be a meaningful violation so to
12 speak. It should make a good building.
13

14 I'd also, I'd like to see something that contemplates a combination. Alternative 4 I view as orthogonal to
15 the others, which is to try to go for zero growth in trips strategy versus other growth strategies in terms
16 of building square footage. I think that can be combined to try to limit trips and have a building area
17 strategy. So I'd like to see kind of the crosstown of those. 27 University is only explicitly discussed in
18 Alternative 4. I think that's such an important parcel it has to be part I think of every plan. It's a big
19 parcel. It's Downtown. I think not talking about it is sort of an elephant in the room.
20

21 And I'll say one more thing just quickly then I'll do the rest in my second piece. I agree with Bob Moss.
22 Density drops within .25 miles of transit hubs. I think just saying .5 is kind of a cop out and the
23 usefulness of transit, dense transit oriented design using that big of a radius I think also is a bit of a cop
24 out. I think having more density but closer to transit makes more sense.
25

26 Chair Michael: Commissioner Alcheck.

27
28 Commissioner Alcheck: So one of the goals is sort of determine consensus here on the Commission's
29 thoughts? I think if your plan is to prepare a summary for Council that's similar to the summary you
30 prepared tonight you could add my name behind every single thing Commissioner Rosenblum just said in
31 the bullet point list of comments. That was like a breath of fresh air, really. I don't think I could have
32 said anything you said better than the way you said it.
33

34 We often use the word... so I'm going to take the same approach; I'm going to talk high level plea and
35 then some specifics. We often use the word developers, yeah, we often use the word developers when
36 we talk about some of the commercial projects that come our way. I really prefer the term
37 redevelopment and one of the reasons why is because I have a since distinction in my mind between infill
38 development and sprawl. And I think there's a lot of residents that are very interested in the notion of
39 environmental protection particularly when it comes to climate change. And our esteemed community
40 member Stephen Levy is here and he knows better than probably everybody in this room what sort of
41 growth California's going to see in the next 10, 20, 30 years, which is to say that he knows it's
42 astronomical. And so the solution is two things, we can create seven more Fresno's between here and
43 Los Angeles, which will devastate the environment of California.
44

45 Correct me if I'm wrong, not tonight, not at this moment in time, but I once read that California is home
46 to one of every eight Americans. It ought to be its own country. It's that massive. And when you think
47 about that out loud and you think about the growth we're about to encounter the notion of taking all of
48 this open space and running water to it and running electricity to it and paving it with concrete is
49 ludicrous. So every time I meet with an individual in this City and they express to me this notion that the
50 50 foot height limit is just daunting and they don't want to see any more homes being built and the
51 density ideas are awful I like to remind them that the growth is coming, show me where you'd like it.
52 And if you point to the Foothills of Palo Alto I'll tell you why I don't like putting it there.
53

54 And so I like to refer to the developers as redevelopers. I like the idea of redeveloping these parcels in a
55 way that enhances the density. I know that's not popular among the residentialists. I'd like to think that
56 we have a diverse Planning Commission membership here because the City Council wanted to hear

1 different points of view. I think that's why I'm on this Commission frankly. Maybe because it pays to
2 have that sort of urbanist perspective every once in a while, but I really just want to emphasize that it is
3 an environmental issue where we will grow.
4

5 And I walk Downtown, I bike Downtown more and I'd like to think that if we increase the density we'll
6 encourage greater walking and biking. I don't doubt for one minute that even if we were to triple our
7 residential development in this town there would still end up being maybe three more Fresno's on the
8 way to Los Angeles in the next 30 years. Because the truth is it doesn't matter how much we're going
9 to... the truth is our growth is probably not going to be adequate in any real way to make room for the
10 growth, the population increase. So there will be some impacts to the environment that are essentially
11 unavoidable. But that is one of the biggest components of the way that I like to look at this concept of
12 density, which is to say where do we want to put it? And I don't think it's just about well what about
13 Menlo Park and Mountain View and Sunnyvale and San Jose and San Francisco? I think every single one
14 of these communities is essentially facing the same challenge and to look at it as if we're really separate
15 is myopic in my view. I think it's the One Bay Area unfortunately. Our towns run into each other and
16 frankly when one town next door makes significant inroads or makes significant decisions it actually
17 impacts us, right? The San Antonio development is going to impact Palo Alto's traffic situation.
18

19 I'm just going to take 10 more seconds just to say that, well actually you know what I'll just wait until the
20 next round.
21

22 Chair Michael: Commissioner Tanaka.
23

24 Commissioner Tanaka: So I think we've had some really good comments from the public as well as from
25 the Commissioners on this topic. I think it's a very important question and issue that we're talking about.
26 And I think the one comment I think I've heard that I think has been pretty consistent whether it be pro-
27 growth or keeping things exactly the way they are is I think what's important is the quality of life. So I
28 think that's probably one universal goal, which I don't think there's anyone in this room that would say
29 no, no, no, I want a decrease in quality of life. I don't think anyone's going to say that. I think if
30 anything people want to increase the quality of life. And then the question of course is well, what does
31 that mean, right? Is quality of life meaning more growth or less growth? And I think Commissioner
32 Rosenblum had a very good comment in that Palo Alto from the Sixties to Seventies to Eighties has
33 grown, has changed, and that's part of the quality of life. I mean the vibrancy that we get from
34 Stanford, from the high tech companies in this area is a blessing and a large part is what made the many
35 property owners in this room wealthy to be honest. And so in terms of quality of life I think we have to
36 think about is how we get this quality of life by freezing everything. Is that how we get it? And
37 everyone basically has some of the other Commissioners had mentioned we basically slowly age into a
38 retirement community. Is that the quality of life, the high quality of life that we all are accustomed to?
39 Or is it having a diverse, vibrant city that welcomes all walks of life and allows opportunities for
40 everyone? And I'm more into the favor of I think we want a diversity that allows opportunities for all, not
41 just the privileged few who came here first. So I think that's something that we have to think about.
42

43 Now with that said I do think that having a, protecting the R1 areas makes total sense. I think we want
44 to do that. I don't think there's anyone here that's saying that we build a 100 foot skyscraper in the
45 middle of an R1 neighborhood. I mean I for one had not voted for the Maybell project mainly because it
46 was a four foot, four story building in, near a R1 neighborhood. That doesn't make a lot of sense, but so
47 I think that's something which I think protection of that makes... this is important because I think that
48 does protect quality of life. But at the same time I think everyone here enjoys having a grocery store
49 near their neighborhood, they enjoy having services near them, they enjoy being able to shop and walk
50 to those places, and I think enabling that to happen is important and enabling that to happen sometimes
51 means a certain amount of density.
52

53 And so I've heard this a lot and then I think Palo Alto's probably at least the citizens think of themselves
54 as one of the greenest places on Earth, but if you look at per capita compared to let's say a city like
55 Manhattan, that's not suggesting that we should be Manhattan, but per carbon footprint of a person in
56 Manhattan is much lower than any suburb like Palo Alto because they take transit, they don't drive,

1 there's a whole bunch of reasons why. And one of the comments I think Stephen Levy mentioned and
2 it's, I've read it in so many, from so many different areas is that jobs near transit actually reduces the
3 carbon footprint a heck of a lot more than any housing near transit. So I think having workers who
4 spend money who can support these retail services that we take for granted in our City near residential
5 neighborhoods, but not in residential neighborhoods I think is important. Because if you want the quality
6 of life that we are used to we want this quality of life that is enabled by I think the word that Rosenblum
7 used was system. We want an ecosystem that can support this kind of vibrancy in retail where we walk
8 around and get things without having to jump in our cars, which I think is actually important especially
9 since there is a large, a larger and larger older population which maybe can't drive all the time anymore.

10
11 And I think that's also why I think you know there's one thing to say well what does the market want and
12 there's another thing to think about well what does it take to keep the quality of life in Palo Alto high?
13 And that might mean smaller units so that the generation that has helped build Palo Alto and kept it
14 vibrant can stay in Palo Alto and walk to services. It also might mean smaller units so that the people
15 that pay all the sales tax and keep all these retail businesses alive so that we can go there one day a
16 week can survive. And so I think that's something that we need to think about and so anyways I'll
17 continue next time.

18
19 Chair Michael: Commissioner King.

20
21 Commissioner King: Thank you. I'm going to use my first round at least most of it primarily for
22 questions. I'd like to ask is it Joanne our consultant? Yeah, can you just explain your firm and I assume
23 you do these, have done these for multiple cities and maybe if you could just give me answers like how
24 many towns or cities you've done EIRs for in support of Comp Plans?

25
26 Ms. Jansen: Sure. I've been with the planning, PlaceWorks, which is formerly The Planning Center DC&E
27 and formerly DC&E for 15 years as of this month. And for most of that time I've been working on
28 general plans and the vast majority of general plans that I work on I also manage the preparation of the
29 EIR for that general plan. So I would say probably a dozen general plan EIRs over that time.

30
31 Commissioner King: Of all different size?

32
33 Ms. Jansen: Yeah.

34
35 Commissioner King: Ok, great, thanks. And so let's see, a question so the way I'm interested in the
36 process of where, how we got here. So now we've got the four scenarios, but within each of those
37 scenarios there are maybe four to eight different components. And so really if you were to say hey,
38 we're going to study do the math there would be hundreds of different ways you could take those
39 components and mix them, mix and match them. But what we've ended up with is four scenarios with
40 specific components, a choice of each of those four to eight components within those plans. How, why is
41 that and how is that, how does that support the process?

42
43 Ms. Jansen: It's a pretty typical process for a community to go through to do what Palo Alto has done
44 and use public input to identify the parts of the city that are most likely to change during the horizon of
45 the general plan or in Palo Alto's place the Comp Plan like what we did at Workshop Number 2 and then
46 refined in Workshop Number 3. So when we asked for that input from residents and we thought about it
47 as staff and the consultant team we came up with these six areas that are the six kind of building blocks
48 of the alternatives that are in your staff report where it seems like at least some people in some of the
49 groups from the workshops it felt comfortable saying that one or more of those areas could be a place
50 that might change over the next 15 years. And that excludes as you can see from the map that we
51 showed the vast majority of Palo Alto the R1 areas, the open space areas, so when we narrow our focus
52 to those six opportunity sites as we're terming them in this process then we can kind of just think about
53 those as the building blocks for the individual four alternatives.

54
55 When we do the analysis in the EIR it's true that there's kind of an almost an infinite way that the
56 different alternatives could be combined or recombined within those areas even if you limit it to those six

1 areas, but what we're going to need is citywide scenarios that we can compare apples to apples for
2 things like the traffic analysis for example. It is really an incomprehensible level of complexity if we were
3 to try to publish a document that looks at 6 alternatives in one area and what would that be compared to
4 12 alternatives in a different area. So we're going to be using these building blocks to put together four
5 citywide alternatives and what we're trying to do is come up with alternatives that both explore different
6 options for each one of the six areas across the four alternatives, but are also internally coherent so that
7 they make an alternative that makes sense if it was to be adopted as a whole. But just to be clear
8 there's no requirement that what's ultimately adopted has to be exactly one of the alternatives. It could
9 be a mixing and matching of different facets of the, that were considered I the alternatives or even
10 something that wasn't necessarily considered.
11

12 Commissioner King: Ok, so it's really to reduce complexity that would be just unmanageable you have to
13 do this. And with the other EIRs you then in support of other general plans, comp plans is this, is that
14 the same on each? So you come up with four alternatives or is that specific to Palo Alto?
15

16 Ms. Jansen: What's very unique to Palo Alto is that the EIR will cover all of those alternatives at the same
17 level of detail. Many cities do a very similar process as I've said, but the analysis of the alternatives
18 might come before the EIR and the City would go through the process that you're going through now to
19 identify which alternative it thinks it wants to commit to and then only study that one at a great level of
20 detail in the EIR. So Palo Alto's kind of leaving those options open much longer and getting a greater
21 level of analysis about each one of the alternatives because the EIR level of analysis that we would do if
22 a city had already selected an alternative is much greater than the level of analysis that we would do
23 earlier in the process for them while they're kind of still exploring the alternatives and thinking about
24 which one they like the best or which one they want to create as their preferred land use plan.
25

26 Commissioner King: So this is sort of the deluxe process? We're saying hey, we want to invest... ok,
27 great.
28

29 Ms. Gitelman: Could I, I'm sorry, could I just add one comment? I want to amplify a little bit on that two
30 ways. One is the reason we chose to go and the City Council supported this idea of analyzing
31 alternatives at an equal level of detail is it allows us to have a process where we're getting the kind of
32 input we've received here this evening longer into the process. So well after the draft plan and draft EIR
33 on the street we're still going to be talking about tradeoffs and options between the alternatives.
34 Typically you'd start to narrow that discussion and that engagement process much sooner in the process.
35 So that was the motivation for the process we've developed.
36

37 The other thing I wanted to mention is we're a little bit I don't know how to say this exactly, but we're
38 using our crystal ball to try and come up with alternatives that bracket a range of possible outcomes for
39 the City and the planning process. And to a large extent we're counting on the wisdom of the
40 Commission, the public, and the Council to help us structure that range well so that the plan that is
41 ultimately considered for adoption falls within that range. But I just wanted to make sure everyone
42 understood it's not a guarantee. We might get to the end of the process and if we've guessed wrong and
43 we want to do something outside the range then our EIR is going to be lacking. So we have to do a
44 good job at selecting this range of alternatives to bracket the possible impacts so that we give ourselves
45 the maximum possibility at the end of the day to proceed expeditiously to a decision. I hope that's clear,
46 that's a little bit of a (interrupted)
47

48 Commissioner King: No, I think that, yeah you just set basically the largest envelope possible so I
49 understood. Thank you.
50

51 Ms. Gitelman: Ok.
52

53 Chair Michael: Commissioner Gardias.
54

1 Commissioner Gardias: Thank you Chair. So before I get to the essence I just want to give a couple of
2 kudos to the audience and a couple of good comments because I felt about the same, so Mr. Neilson
3 Buchanan thank you very much for about your comments about dynamic plan, right? Of course it's an
4 important comment, but also data division that you recommended to Ms. Gitelman. I think that if you tie
5 it to the conversation about the business registry if we had an analyst to do queries pretty much you
6 would not need to have a business registry because a person like that probably would answer that
7 question with just running the queries out of the data. So that's one point.
8

9 The second point that the second comment I heard from Mr. Steve Rosenblum about undergrounding
10 Caltrain, which is exactly the same scenario that New York had many years ago when they were pretty
11 much redesigning Grand Central Station they were designing, they were doing this because of the
12 different objectives they just wanted to, the issue was to address the steam locomotives and that was
13 their problem, but because they were able to by engineering this they were able just to create this
14 massive value out of the, for the real estate above the train tracks in the middle of Manhattan and they
15 created this way Park Avenue. It would create automatically probably a billion dollars or maybe more for
16 Palo Alto if we did this [unintelligible] this and for the other adjacent municipalities. So thank you very
17 much for those comments, please come here more often.
18

19 So I want to just, I want to... yes. So I want to address a couple of specific aspects on the, from this
20 concepts that we had. So a couple of Commissioners talked about the Concept Number 4. So it looks
21 like an overlay to me as opposed to a concept itself. It has a mixture of the prescriptive designations and
22 then some policy aspects. And I because of this it's not as clear as you would like, so it may be
23 confusing for the audience and then may not be clean cut. So I would recommend just to remove it and
24 as others spoke in the same spirit create an overlay on all the other concepts and then drop some
25 aspects that are prescriptive in this so just focus on the net zero energy as opposed to planning aspect.
26 So that's about Concept Number 4.
27

28 From a perspective of Concept Number 3 I would like to we had from the couple of speakers that they
29 were against 55 feet raising they were against raising 55 limit to the 55 feet and some other, some other
30 growth elements. What I would like to just supporting this, that notion I would like to just focus on this
31 concept because it addresses development or redevelopment around the transit nodes and that's very
32 important. Other two concepts they don't have it so maybe by removing this 55 feet limit or increase of
33 the limit to 55 feet height but then as opposed to this focusing on some other areas that are
34 underdeveloped and then when I met with Steven we talk about allowing or discussing development of
35 the parking lots that is not within the Downtown Cap. That could be an opportunity for the Downtown as
36 well as the California Avenue without raising any limit. Ok? Thank you very much.
37

38 Chair Michael: Vice-Chair Keller.
39

40 Vice-Chair Keller: Thank you. So firstly I hope that we prominently indicate where people can
41 subsequently in between the meetings email their comments in and I assume they go to the this Palo
42 Alto Comp Plan or Our Palo Alto website and there are places to email your comments. So please keep
43 those cards and letters coming in folks.
44

45 The next thing is with respect to a living Comp Plan one of the things I noticed in the chart, it wasn't
46 necessarily in the it was in a more Our Palo Alto process in an earlier meeting, not tonight's meeting was
47 the idea that as the Comp Plan is created they'll be some interactive web based thing. And I think that
48 the idea of creating a highly hyperlinked, highly searchable, highly indexed, highly integrated Comp Plan
49 that allows you to explore and analyze and find the ones that are relevant I think that it's possible for
50 Palo Alto to do that. And I think if we do an excellent job we may even win and award for making a
51 Comp Plan actually accessible to the community. I would look forward to that.
52

53 So let me get into the detailed comments. First of all I would consider myself a data scientist and that
54 what I know about being a data scientist is this concept of garbage in, garbage out. If the input to your
55 data is garbage the output will be garbage. So the interesting thing is we need to make sure we have
56 hard data. I've spent several days in the last few weeks analyzing census data based on transportation

1 and such and had a number of conversations with Hillary and with Roland Rivera about this and I was
2 hoping we'd have some data about that. I'll work on that and produce some of that. But essentially one
3 of the things from that analysis is yes, when you add more housing near transit you get slightly more
4 transit use, but you get a lot more cars too. In fact a lot more cars than you get a slight increase in
5 transit use. And the idea of transit oriented housing makes sense in the East Bay where people are in
6 bedroom communities commuting to San Francisco. It's not the kind of commute patterns we have in
7 Palo Alto. Somewhere on the order of approximately 60 percent, maybe a little less than 60 percent of
8 people who live in Palo Alto work and are employed work in Palo Alto, Stanford, Menlo Park or Mountain
9 View, ok? So they're going to drive or bike or walk. And therefore what you really want to do is increase
10 walkability and increase bikeability. And in fact biking has increased dramatically over the last 10, 12
11 years more than anything else and that's pretty impressive.

12
13 Ok, a couple of things; first of all we need to think about the school impacts of growth. The
14 Comprehensive Plan is the only time when we look at development or redevelopment as Commissioner
15 Alcheck I guess he would know the term would be is the idea is this is the only time we can look at
16 school impacts. We must look at them now or we will not look at them at all. And I think we should also
17 think about a financial analysis on the City Budget because now's the time to look at that and it's not
18 typically part of an EIR process, but should be added to it.

19
20 So alluding to my question is we really need to understand for Palo Alto, not for the East Bay, how much
21 does housing near transit drive transit use versus driving, driving if you will. When you think about
22 expanding retail people want to have more opportunities for retail pushing retail making more services.
23 When we think about services probably the number one service people think about besides schools is
24 retail. Retail uses being able to walk to that and there are other things like libraries and things like that,
25 but we think about we probably use retail more than we use any other service besides schools.

26
27 I mentioned the idea of promoting bicycling and walking to work. We should have renamed the no
28 project alternative it's not do nothing. It is really business as usual. It is really growing to the maximum
29 allowed by zoning based on market pressures. That's what it really is, ok. Call it what it is. In terms of
30 Alternative 3, we should focus on transit oriented jobs, which appropriately they are slow growth and
31 service oriented housing. And just think of transit as another service. It shouldn't be elevated among
32 everything else. Really think about housing near services and I think Stephen Levy's exactly right, it's in
33 terms of all those other trips people take, not just the commute trips that are important. In terms of
34 Alternative 4 we have, we used to think in terms of no new net trips and may, can I finish Alternative 4?

35
36 So in terms of no new net trips with offsets, in other words, if you put more cars on the road get
37 somebody else's cars off the road by paying for shuttles, by particularly for our school kids. Think about
38 the more of our school kids that you get off the roads and parents driving in to school that is a significant
39 improvement. No new, net zero greenhouse gasses. Now in particular I'm not talking about no net
40 vehicle miles traveled. Vehicle miles traveled is considered as part of greenhouse gasses, ok? No new
41 net trips affects Palo Alto and it effects the traffic within Palo Alto. Net zero water and no net overflow
42 parking into the neighborhoods. To me that's the real issue of net zero and I'll continue my comments
43 later.

44
45 Chair Michael: So when I was introduced to the current Comp Plan, which was adopted in 1998 on the
46 very first section it says that there is no single vision for the City yet each Element has a beginning
47 portion which is entitled Vision. To me the lack of the single overarching vision is a fatal flaw and I think
48 it is carried out in terms of leadership of the City, of the Council, the Mayor, whatever who can't speak to
49 what the vision is. So there's this sense of it's open for debate or maybe there are seeds of mistrust.
50 And I think that I think it's critical that the Comp Plan that we adopt from now to 2030 state a clear
51 vision and not miss that opportunity. And I think part of leadership comes from listening to the public,
52 but it also may involve leading.

53
54 I think that the role of the Chair of the Planning Commission, which I've been privileged to do for half a
55 year now and will do for a while longer is in some sense to ensure that we have an effective deliberative
56 body and not to show my sort of personal opinions whenever the chance arises, but I think I'm going to

1 put on my resident hat a little bit and just say that like some of the speakers from the public I was born
2 here in 1951, I grew up here, attended Palo Alto public schools and then Stanford. I've been very
3 fortunate I could live anywhere and I sincerely believe that this is a great place to call home. In that
4 sense I may be a residentialist, but I sincerely disagree with the implications from the militant anti-
5 growth rhetoric that that faction of the voters is discussing as it relates to the Comp Plan.

6
7 On a personal level in the foreseeable future my wife and I have this lovely home in the Community
8 Center neighborhood. It's a very large house; it's now an empty nest. We may be looking to follow in
9 the steps of Stephen Levy and find a nice apartment somewhere. And I think that fact that the Comp
10 Plan is bowing to the concerns of the community and not touching the R1 allocation in our zoneable living
11 space is a mistake because when the time comes I don't think there's any inventory for me and my wife
12 to find the kind of place that we'd like to call home much as we'd like to stay in Palo Alto. That inventory
13 doesn't exist.

14
15 So in no particular sense of priority one of the concerns that comes up throughout the document,
16 different alternatives is preservation of historic character of the City. And when I first saw the Housing
17 Element Policy Number 1 of the Housing Element is preserve the character of existing neighborhoods and
18 I went somewhat berserk because I'd spent decades in large public companies trying to make decisions
19 based on data and they want character. How do you measure it? Where's the data? And then realized I
20 became a history major at Stanford when I took the course on American character. I thought ok, alright,
21 so I can get my teeth into this, but I think one of the aspects of the preservation of historic character is
22 we should allow for the creation of resources, the future view as historic because I think that that is one
23 of the things that we should do in our planning the legacy of Palo Alto.

24
25 Growth is an unfortunate metaphor to me. I agree with colleagues who note that this is a built out city.
26 Any development is infill development or even redevelopment. I think it's not although growth is not
27 what everyone uses as the catchphrase I think it's change. It's not growth it's change. And I think if you
28 think of it as change versus no change to me no change is a recipe for entropy, disaster, decline, not
29 anything that any one of us would appreciate. If we have yards we plant flowers. We grow trees. We
30 promote positive change. And I think change is good if properly managed, but it's always threatening
31 because it's change.

32
33 Density and height I think that there is many virtues in a community to critical mass relative to vibrancy,
34 walkability, utilization of infrastructure, distribution of City services and so forth. And I think in many
35 ways cities that are that allow for selectively more height, greater density can take advantage of those
36 virtues and leverage those resources which benefit many of us profoundly. My personal opinion although
37 I'm perfectly willing to follow the law is that relaxing the 50 foot height limit selectively would allow an
38 additional story going from four stories to five stories in certain neighborhoods where that may be
39 appropriate, Downtown, perhaps California Avenue, perhaps along El Camino and... can I have more
40 time? Yes I can. And so I think the sacrosanct nature of the height limit is a mistake personally. But if
41 it's the law I will follow the law, but I won't necessarily think it's a good policy.

42
43 With Stephen Levy and Greg Tanaka I served on the Infrastructure Blue Ribbon Commission (IBRC) and I
44 think that in the Comp Plan alternatives it's critical that we address the top priorities of infrastructure
45 needs. I think the Caltrain plan whether it's the trench, undergrounding, the longer we wait the more it's
46 going to cost and the longer until we have the benefit of that incredibly sensible idea. What to do with
47 the Municipal Services Center (MSC), which was by the way which was the biggest single ticket item on
48 the list of the half a billion in infrastructure items are unfunded given to IBRC to study, the MSC is going
49 to be under water not too many decades hence and that's going to be a bad thing. So where do you put
50 it? It's got emergency response resources and if there's a catastrophic earthquake and the overpasses
51 get threatened how do emergency vehicles get to put out the fires and save you? Another thing is the
52 location of City services and above ground infrastructure is clustered on the north end of town, which I
53 think is unfair in many ways to the residents who don't live in the north end of town. And perhaps City
54 Hall and the Public Safety Building should be relocated to the geographic center of the City, which is close
55 to California Avenue and maybe allow for incredible opportunity for this block to be used in a different
56 way.

1
2 Many colleagues have noted that Palo Alto likes to think of itself as special. Sometimes does planning in
3 isolation, but we're actually part of a region. And figuring out more robust processes for regional
4 collaboration with East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Stanford, Mountain View, and so on, Los Altos is incredibly
5 important such that we have a Comprehensive Plan that dovetails with the Comprehensive Plans of the
6 adjacent communities and the regional plans.

7
8 And then finally Palo Alto likes to think of itself as a city. I did a little research, I was a lawyer once and I
9 did the legal research. It makes no difference under the law if you call yourself a city or a town. It
10 doesn't matter, but if you call yourself a city and we're like 113th largest city in the last census. We're not
11 very big, we're not very important except in our own minds. I think if you think of yourself as a city that
12 leads you to making decisions that are appropriate to cities. If you think of yourself as a town or a
13 village then maybe you go in a different direction. So I think that that self-image confusion would be
14 important to sort of work out in this version of the Comprehensive Plan because if we want to grow up as
15 a major city then you make different decisions. If we're perfectly content being a small livable town
16 that's different. And that's ok. I mean as I said I grew up here, like it here, I wouldn't have lived
17 anywhere else, but maybe someday I'll have to.

18
19 So I'll stop for now. Round 2 in maybe a different order from Round 1? Anybody primed and ready to
20 go? Vice-Chair Keller is ready.

21
22 Vice-Chair Keller: Thank you. So a couple of things; first of all there is unlimited demand for housing and
23 offices in Palo Alto. And it's certainly true that if you build it they will come. And if you allow them to
24 build it they will. And that may not be true in the same degree in other communities. And we cannot
25 quench the demand for people to live in Palo Alto and if we did allow everybody to live in Palo Alto our
26 schools would be so overcrowded that their quality would be destroyed. That's what we face if basically
27 people move here for the schools often. And people want to stay in our community. And therefore it's
28 not a matter of the idea that the market wants, it's not the market who wants big units to be built in
29 townhouses. It's the people who build the big units and want to put them in townhouses they want it
30 because it's the most profitable, but it's not our objective to tell to make things as nice for the
31 redevelopers so that they can maximize their profits. What we instead want to do is zone for what we
32 want, which is a saying that I've heard one of the Council Members use a lot. Zone for what we want.
33 And in particular the issue is that in order for Chair Michael to stay in the community we need to build the
34 kind of housing we want to build is housing he can downsize to, which is smaller units. Senior housing,
35 studios, and one bedrooms are the kind of housing that's missing and will provide the kind of diversity
36 that we think we want, that we say we want in Palo Alto.

37
38 We think in terms of height 50 feet, 55 feet. I think we need to think in terms of how many stories that
39 is also. So the reason that the suggestion was to go to 55 feet is because people think of 50 feet as
40 being four stories, but now the discussion is that they want a few extra feet more for the first story in
41 order to have higher height retail because that's what retail wants. So is 55 feet four stories? Is 60 feet
42 five stories? Well if you go to five stories then you have this short retail. So I think that the idea is to go
43 to 55 five feet but mean four stories, not five. And so think in terms of the number of stories because
44 that also affects the number, the amount of square footage.

45
46 The even if we don't build another square foot of office space there will still be an increase in jobs in Palo
47 Alto due to an intensification of jobs density. There hoteling, they're pushing people smaller and smaller
48 spaces. We saw what happened with Facebook when it was adjacent to College Terrace. They crammed
49 them in cheek to jowl and that's that trend more so than we have some law offices where people get lots
50 of space, but we also have startups in which people are crammed in cheek to jowl.

51
52 So let me make a couple of detailed comments on this. Firstly in order to think about slowing the jobs
53 growth what we really want to think about is allowing retail expansion, considering a mix of retail, and if
54 you're going to slow the growth of office space of non-residential, non-retail space then you want to think
55 about how to do it. A cap doesn't work because when you exceed the cap people say ah, you exceeded
56 the cap you're not allowing me to develop what I have the right to develop because of my zoning rights.

1 I have the right to develop to my FAR and whatever. Well and so therefore instead what you need to
2 think about is in terms of an air rights allocation. If you say you're allowed to grow so many square
3 footage more than allocate it out and make sure you leave room for TDR's. You allocate it out somebody
4 wants to build they got to buy it from somewhere. Other cities do that, they limit the amount of growth
5 by allocating air rights.
6

7 In terms of limiting the market the residential growth you can do that by I believe by limiting market rate
8 housing to the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) allocation for above moderate. You're not
9 limiting Below Market Rate (BMR) housing if the BMR housing developers can build, can buy the land and
10 develop the housing they can do it without having a cap. That's the way you can, I think that that's a
11 legal process for accomplishing the limit of residential growth.
12

13 I think that it is very important to limit Caltrain, I'm sorry, underground Caltrain. Now I was an advocate
14 in back in 2008 before the election the Palo Alto Weekly had a stint about undergrounding Caltrain high
15 speed rail and I was the advocate for cut and cover. And there's a zippering approach where you
16 consider alternating which side you cover and do things like that in order to be able to cover most of it
17 and yet allow for the escape so it's not too expensive in terms of if there's a crash or something like that.
18 To the extent that we working with SVLG in getting money to Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), which is
19 going to happen and we get money for Caltrain and make sure some of that money goes for grade
20 separations for Caltrain. There will be money for grade separations for the four grade separation in Palo
21 Alto. If, with that money we could either have overpasses built, a basically train going over or we could
22 figure out how to spend the additional money through a bond issue that I think would be partly paid for
23 by developing over that land to put the train underneath. And you could do that both south of Oregon
24 Expressway, but I think that we should also collaborate with Menlo Park to underground north of Oregon
25 Expressway. Now you can't underground where Oregon Expressway is because changing the
26 interchange is just too expensive, but north of Oregon Expressway into Menlo Park working with Menlo
27 Park to underground until it gets to Atherton, maybe Atherton wants to pay for undergrounding further,
28 that's a possibility. And with a cut and cover approach with the tracks the road is slightly raised over the
29 tracks, you don't have to cut under and you sort of essentially tunnel slightly under San Francisquito
30 Creek, under the El Palo Alto, which you can do because redwood trees go laterally out. Ok.
31

32 In terms of El Camino height limit increase we have to be careful about not next to R1 residential
33 particularly in Barron Park. There are places where the lots are deeper. There are places where the lots
34 are shallower. There are places where the shallow lots are separated from R1 housing by a narrow
35 alleyway. You don't want a 41, a 50 foot or higher canyon to be happening over towering the R1
36 properties that are often one story and sometimes two on the other side. So we have to think about
37 where you need to do that and that's why we need to have an El Camino Real, particularly South El
38 Camino Real Concept Area Plan so we can study where it makes sense for higher, where it makes sense
39 for non-higher, and where it makes sense to in fact lower the heights because you want to do it context
40 based not... you want to do it concept based, based on context not other things.
41

42 So let me mention the comment that was made about distribution of services around the City by
43 neighborhood. I agree with that as a thing that we need to evaluate. In terms of flooding and sea level
44 rise I think that's an important consideration particularly for the Regional Water Quality Control Plant. I
45 won't even use the expression I would use in terms of what happens if that's underwater. I think we
46 need a Fry's Area Precise Plan in order to understand that big piece of land redevelopment. It's
47 comparable to what happened when we redeveloped the Palo Alto Medical Foundation (PAMF) when it
48 moved. If SOFA deserved a precise plan which it has, in fact there are two of them for South of Forest
49 Avenue (SOFA) 1 and SOFA 2. We need one for Fry's.
50

51 And I'll close by asking this question, when... of staff I guess. When will we choose an alternative among
52 these four? How does that process happen for choosing an alternative among these four including the
53 mix and match along them? Because I presume that we may not take one alternative over another
54 alternative, we may pick a mix and match. So maybe you can sort of give that answer tonight.
55

1 Ms. Gitelman: Sure let me start and then Joanna and Steven can add on if necessary, but I think our
2 concept is that we'll continue to get input on these, on three or four concepts try and get direction from
3 the Council at some point to move them forward into the EIR analysis, carry them through to the draft
4 EIR stage, and the draft EIR will tell us what their relative merits and impacts are. So we'll understand
5 their benefits and impacts at a greater level of detail when the draft EIR is available and after the
6 comment period on the draft EIR that's when we would try and narrow it down to what our preferred
7 alternative is. And we could choose one of the alternatives. If we guessed right and one of the
8 alternatives in the range we described is it, we love it, we'll go with that. If we want to massage them
9 and choose one alternative with modifications or elements from another alternative as long as we've
10 captured the impacts of that blend in the range of alternatives we should be ok to proceed to the final
11 EIR and plan adoption. So that's the strategy for now. So if we stay on schedule we're talking about first
12 quarter of 2015 we'd be making the decision how to get down from four alternatives to one.

13
14 Chair Michael: Commissioner Alcheck.

15
16 Commissioner Alcheck: Ok, so I just wanted a few specifics. I think in the focused development
17 alternative I share the view that I think Commissioner Michael suggested which is that in those selected
18 sites I think the approach should consider a meaningful deviation from the height limit. And I know
19 we've articulated this notion of sort of a greater height on ground floor retail. I'm not sure, I'm not sure,
20 I'm not just suggesting 55 or 65 or I guess that part is open. I'm not suggesting a specific height
21 increase, just that that increase could be exceeded potentially.

22
23 I'd also like to state that I, this is a unique moment. I share Bob Moss' opinion regarding dictating
24 market preference, dictating preferences to the market. I don't believe this body or the City Council for
25 that matter has the expertise to dictate what size units should be developed in Palo Alto. I believe the
26 marketplace and the market players should have freedom and flexibility there especially because I like to
27 throw this out there I was at Planning Commissioner Academy this year and the key note speaker talked
28 about the future of transportation specifically personal vehicles. And he showed a picture of 5th Avenue
29 in 19 whatever, I can't recall, Twenties, Thirties, and then he showed a picture of it 10 years later. And
30 the picture basically represented there was a single horse and carriage on 5th Avenue and then 10 years
31 later there were probably 30 or 40 cars. And he suggested that in that 10 year span this was a just an
32 unbelievable change in the way we transported ourselves. And then he suggested that do you think that
33 the change from potentially cars we have to drive to cars that are self-driven will take that long and what
34 will that, how will that look if we depicted it in a picture? And I only mention that because he suggested
35 and potentially very accurately what would we do with all our parking garages if suddenly the cars that
36 took us everywhere didn't have to be parked because after we used them they picked up another person
37 and kept on running indefinitely. And so I was astonished after he made that comment because all I
38 kept picturing were four or five story parking garages that were suddenly empty and what would we do
39 with all our garages? Obviously that change is not going to be overnight, but I mention it because the
40 market reacts much more quickly to the needs, its own needs then I think boards and commissions and
41 councils can really determine.

42
43 And so I think part of the Our Palo Alto process will always be flawed to some extent because technology
44 is changing at a very fast pace and there will be some potentially magnificent impacts specifically in the
45 transportation, in the transportation category over the next 15 years. We're all talking about what it was
46 like 10, 15, 20 years ago and we're all making the assumption that in 15 years traffic's going to be 10
47 times worse. What if this keynote speaker, he was a Stanford professor in the business school and a
48 transportation expert, what if his predictions come true and suddenly we're all in self automated cabs
49 that we own some, have some ownership percentage, I have no idea.

50
51 But anyway in a similar vein when it comes to the discussion of rail and transportation infrastructure I'm
52 reminded of a lecture I attended by Tom Friedman at De Anza and his quote was something like if you
53 visited Grand Central Station in New York or Grand Central in New York and then you went to the Central
54 Station in Berlin you would think they won the war. Something to the effect of how we've really avoided
55 investing any money in our mass transit infrastructure. I continue to think that this high speed rail
56 discussion has a place in our Comprehensive Plan and its alternatives. And I know that there's significant

1 expenses to some of the ideas that people have mentioned and maybe even significant opportunities if
2 you think about it, but it's a huge asset to this community and so the potential changes that may come
3 from the State's investment in high speed rail. I don't know how we incorporate that, but that will
4 magnify the value of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) I think. I think if the rail was faster maybe it
5 would be even more appealing or I'm not exactly sure how to kind of put that into words, but I just think
6 there's some real innovative opportunities for discussion. I think it can be incorporated into the notion of
7 how we plan for TOD. Ok.

8
9 Chair Michael: Commissioner King I see you have some notes there?

10
11 Commissioner King: Thanks. Let's see. I've got some questions still, but I guess in keeping with the
12 theme that we want to do our big picture position statements so regarding Palo Alto as a system and
13 somehow that resulting in a compelling need for growth I think that every physical system has a
14 maximum capacity. And in our case our City has a fixed geography and there, that means there's a fixed
15 amount of how many humans and how much built stuff can exist within our City. So to ask as if growth
16 is perpetual and inevitable is not makes, is not logical. Just as if you own a home on a lot you can't keep
17 growing infinitely, indefinitely. At some point you've got enough stuff there. So I'm not saying we're
18 there, but I'm saying that growth is a choice. That's a stolen quote. And that it's a function of what's
19 here now. It's a function of the infrastructure we have, how much infrastructure we can put in, and the
20 type of zoning that we have built now. And that ultimately it's the residents should decide when is there
21 enough growth. Again, it cannot go on infinitely.

22
23 And regarding the Palo Alto as a town versus a city I call Palo Alto a town. It may be changing, but I
24 believe it to be a town. If you look at the great cities, the great transport cities they were built, they've
25 got zoning of 20 to 50 units per acre. And so that enables say Manhattan to have transit that's within a
26 five to ten minute walk of just about everybody. And so it, in that case density works great and it draws
27 the services so all residents are I think Commissioner Keller's quote was service oriented basically. The
28 issue we have here in Palo Alto, and that's true also of smaller towns along historical rail districts, along
29 Caltrain if you look at the core downtowns along Caltrain before the post war boom. If you look at Marin,
30 Larkspur, Sausalito, Fairfax, all those places have density of probably 20 to 40 units per acre. The
31 change we have, a challenge we have in Palo Alto is the bulk of the town is on 6,000 square foot lots. So
32 that's like five units per acre. And so if you as we densify the Downtown that means and therefore there
33 will always be with any density there's not 100 percent usage of transit that means that the impacts to
34 those people who live on 6,000 square foot lots and are not within a quarter mile walking distance to
35 services and transport becomes a significant burden. And so I think we have to be very careful in
36 assuming that this, the density that it, that continued density Downtown or in the identified areas is
37 manageable without horrendous impacts to those people who can't change their zoning, their on a one of
38 those 6,000 square foot lots.

39
40 I'd also say regarding the transit versus car, cars are I think I actually did the, looked at the numbers.
41 Cars are actually getting quite efficient. If you put four people in a Prius it's about as fuel efficient carbon
42 efficient as riding the train. There's an assumption amongst many people that trains and buses are
43 they're there so there must be no carbon usage, but in fact trains particularly are a big huge things that
44 need to be moved up and down tracks that burn a lot of fuel. So in my mind the non, the move to non-
45 car transport is probably more for congestion issues than it is for our carbon footprint. And so my point
46 is that where we have non-TOD here in Palo Alto the car is probably going to be the solution and
47 hopefully we can improve its efficiency.

48
49 Regarding the climate change and the densification of zoning here saving the planet or materially altering
50 climate change I'm very hopeful that that could be the case. I'd like to see that scientifically supported.
51 It may actually make more sense to have seven Fresno's built with 20 to 50 units per acre for saving the
52 planet than it does us trying to make 20 to 40, 20 to 50 units per acre in our town and therefore
53 potentially causing more and more gridlock.

54
55 And the other, ok that's my statement. Statements. Then I'd like to go back for the comments. So I
56 would like to make sure that we are considering the future of retail. I mean if you look around you see

1 how many competitors Google, I think EBay, all these competitors that are about delivering the services
2 to us rather than us going and purchasing the services so I am curious as to how we factor that into a
3 plan during which time we can expect significant changes in how we purchase and obtain goods.
4

5 And one last one; can you tell me regarding the online input for the Comp Plan is that anonymous?
6

7 Ms. Jansen: Users have to register to use the system if you want to provide a comment or respond to a
8 comment you have to register with your name and address. You don't have to have an address here in
9 Palo Alto. Anyone can register it's just a process of verifying that there is an actual person and not a
10 robot behind the input that is being received. But once the person registers they have the option of
11 displaying their name or not displaying their name.
12

13 Commissioner King: And so why would we think that that's appropriate that residents of any town can
14 have equal input on our Comp Plan?
15

16 Ms. Jansen: Sure. There's, it, there's not a restriction on registering and people from Palo Alto could
17 register and give comments on another person's site as well if they wanted to, but what there are online
18 are a number of tools if you go to the online forum and look there are tools where you can map the
19 location of any, not the specific location, but you can map the responses from inside versus outside Palo
20 Alto and that's another reason for collecting that address information.
21

22 Commissioner King; Oh that's based on the, but that's self... they're not verified by anybody.
23

24 Ms. Jansen: It's just an automatic, automated verification system that this is a legitimate address, but
25 there's not a background check to make sure that one person lives at that exact address.
26

27 Commissioner King: Ok, well that's of some concern to me because it means that we don't know really
28 who is commenting on our Comp Plan. Thank you.
29

30 Chair Michael: Commissioner Tanaka.
31

32 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok, well lots of good comments. So I have a suggestion that might help. So I've
33 been looking at the different concepts, Concept 1, 2, 3, 4. And these concepts are all very kind of like
34 zoning code based, which is not surprising. But I was thinking that rather than making zoning code
35 based maybe what we should do is make it more results based. Like what do we want out of it? So for
36 instance maybe, I mean I guess what I'm trying to say is make it more mission based. So maybe one is
37 Concept 1 although Vice-Chair Keller cynically called it the, I forgot what he called it... business as usual
38 one, ok. Concept 2 maybe is or I guess Concept 2, 3, 4 are all very similar, but basically no growth
39 whatsoever or something to that effect.
40

41 And then maybe there'd be a third concept or a fifth concept, but maybe and it's kind of a concept I'm
42 going to call like trying to maximize not for no development or de facto, but maybe trying to optimize it
43 for quality of life. And I know that's extremely subjective and it depends on who you're talking to, but I
44 think we've heard various comments on the Commission and from the attendees tonight, but what do we
45 do to maximize the quality of life? And rather than thinking about it in terms of zoning or in terms of like
46 zero development, development as it is, but what about how do we maximize quality of life? And so I
47 think that's a hard one because it's so very subjective, but I've listened to a few thoughts and these will
48 probably be controversial so I'd love to get feedback and thoughts on it, but so one of them I do think
49 that the preservation of R1 is important although I do sympathize with the fact that we need housing for
50 seniors as well as the workers, young single workers in the City, but I think that's actually kind of an
51 important tenant for the City. I think also it's important to if I and I think Vice-Chair Keller said it very
52 well earlier, which is aside from schools the service that people use most are these retail establishments.
53 I do agree that the nature of retail is changing dramatically and I think about that a lot all the time, but I
54 mean what makes I think Palo Alto great is exciting University Avenue. It's Cal Ave. it's being able to
55 walk go somewhere close without having to jump on a train or car and go up to San Francisco, right? I
56 think that's actually very important. So how do we make this robust, awesome retail experience that's

1 second to none that makes this place lively? That makes it a place that we want to live, not just a place
2 we want to retire. And so those are kind of the first two thoughts I've been thinking about in terms of
3 how do we get an awesome quality of life.
4

5 I do think preservation of really high quality schools is also important because that's a service. So I
6 guess how do you maximize kind of the top level of things how do you maximize the highest level of
7 service for everyone? And then the thing about it is how do you sustain these services? And I think so
8 there's a couple of thoughts there. So one thought is you know I think the tax base in Palo Alto is
9 actually very important. So we, the Chairman and I both served on IBRC and we know the state of our
10 infrastructure and the lack of infrastructure funds and the fact that even though we're a very wealthy city
11 as individuals, the City itself is not wealthy. I mean compared to a lot of neighboring cities it's not
12 wealthy at all. So how do you enable a robust sales tax base or tax base so that it allows us to do all of
13 the things that we want to do and have the vibrancy that we all want to live in? And so, so I think
14 thinking about how do we financially make the City strong and robust so we can do the cool things like I
15 think everyone, there's no one, I don't think there's anyone in this room who thinks that Caltrain should
16 be above ground. I don't think there's anyone here that thinks that. But the problem is that nobody has
17 a really good answer to how are you going to finance that. I mean could you finance it by selling the
18 space to make office space perhaps, but could you sell the space to... how do you turn a wish into a
19 reality? And so if we had the finances if we are able to monetize the land, if we're able to make these
20 dreams come true rather than just talk about it I think that's important. So and because it's one thing to
21 wish it or to say oh this is our preference, it's another thing to actually make it happen. And I think
22 making a super high quality of life city is something we should make happen.
23

24 And yeah, so ok. I'd love to get feedback from others on this quality of life concept.
25

26 Chair Michael: Commissioner Rosenblum.
27

28 Commissioner Rosenblum: Yeah as I mentioned I used my first session... is it on? Ah, there we go. I
29 used my first session for some large hopefully not boring but more high level concepts then moving into
30 specific input for the consultants. And I think this is a really good job and I think it's easier to engage
31 with these concepts. And I agree with Mr. Levy that it has to get more specific for it to really have teeth
32 and so my comments are really about this now.
33

34 Ideally people really are going to react to impact on traffic, parking, and then finally schools. The schools
35 bit may be outside your scope, but I want to come back to that in a second. And so what I'd love to be
36 able to see is the actual model that you use so the EIR makes mention of the Transportation Demand
37 Model. I'd like to know the inputs and outputs so what inputs and what assumptions do you use? So
38 Vice-Chair Keller brought up an excellent point. I'm glad he's doing the data research. I'd love to see
39 this that you put a building next to transit that you increase transit use slightly, but you increase car use
40 dramatically. I think that that's a difficult data point to digest because that means what if I put a building
41 there with no other policies? What if I as we do make sure we have adequate parking for all residents or
42 what if you made sure that all residents had to have Caltrain Go Pass? Would that change the dynamics?
43 Would the input change if it was optimized for younger people who tend to not have cars or people who
44 have families that tend to all have cars and have to use their cars?
45

46 I think all these things change and so I agree, garbage in, garbage out. It's a great piece of data, but I'd
47 like to see if innovative policies change the assumptions. And in particular I'd like to see the consultant's
48 models and how they handle these assumptions because I think it's very subtle. The policies that you
49 have will influence the variables that you use. I'd like to know how we understand those variables.
50

51 Even more specific again we talked about the 55 foot height limit. I completely agree again with Vice-
52 Chair Keller that probably 55 came up because people said oh, you need more height in retail ground
53 floor it's probably four stories. So it's inconsistent with the comment that the additional height should be
54 used for residential. If that is the case than it has to be even higher, if it's not the case then you're
55 talking about a three story building with additional height for residential, but even then I'm not sure it
56 actually makes sense. So that one I think go back and see what the actual logic was. I would say in the

1 right area I would support a higher height limit. Again taking Bob Moss' comment to heart, much closer
2 to transit, but again taking Arthur's comments to heart. Let's find out what happens under different
3 circumstances and policies to encourage transit use.
4

5 Next, again 27 University I would like it to be in basically all of them except the business as usual where
6 by definition it's not considered. But it's such a large and important strategically located parcel it has to
7 be considered. We need a concept that contemplates commercial growth outside of Concept Number 4.
8 Concept Number 4 I view as a pilot program to see if we can get to zero net trips or energy used or
9 some concept of zero net. That's the only way that has any commercial growth whatsoever. I think it's a
10 mistake to have no policy specific that would have an increase in commercial cap. As unpalatable as that
11 may be to some people I think it's if you're creating a solution set that goes from one end to the other
12 and we're trying to see all the impacts we're explicitly not using one of the axis, which is increased
13 commercial space.
14

15 Caltrain I had mentioned. We have Caltrain being discussed only in Option Number 3. It probably needs
16 to be again in all the options except for Number 1. Also you had mentioned it's from San Antonio to
17 Page Mill. That doesn't make a lot of sense to me, in fact if anything it's from Page Mill through
18 Downtown. And again I admire Vice-Chair Keller's knowledge of the root systems of redwoods. I think
19 that it's, it would be great if we (interrupted) [unintelligible Ms. Bunnenberg off microphone]. Oh are
20 they really? Ok, I'm glad you brought that up. I was amazed.
21

22 Ms. Bunnenberg: They were, it was searching for water.
23

24 Commissioner Rosenblum: Oh, is that so? We should feed it on suds. Ok, well (interrupted)
25

26 Ms. Bunnenberg: [Unintelligible] Yeah, so they're all [unintelligible] around those [unintelligible] that hold
27 up the bridge.
28

29 Chair Michael: So Commissioner Rosenblum has the floor. Thank you very much.
30

31 Commissioner Rosenblum: Sorry, I invited it. It's my fault. And so finally when we do this model as I've
32 asked for so I've given some specific inputs on some of the things I think need to get adjusted in the
33 scenarios. We need to rigorously annotate the assumptions. So for example the woman from the
34 Autobahn Society had made a statement saying there have been a lot of net zero proposals, none of
35 them work. I think that that's demonstrably untrue. There are net zero proposals. Stanford is in our
36 backyard and has had a net zero trips operation for 10 years. I worked at Google for a while. The
37 number of Googlers on campus has increased dramatically. The number of cars has also increased at a
38 much lower rate though through active management of these programs. So with innovative programs
39 there are things that can be done. There are programs that have worked in many areas of the country,
40 but her point is generally correct, which is there's a lot of flimflam. And so when we have the
41 assumptions it would be good to document why do we believe this is so? Who else has done it, why do
42 we believe it would work in our case, is our case like their case?
43

44 And so the final thing to come back to the things I think are the big tests the two straw men that are
45 always brought up: growth will lead to more traffic so anything around traffic just rigorous annotations I
46 want to see where the assumptions come from, and 2) growth puts unsupportable pressure on our
47 schools. We're well below the peak population of Palo Alto schools. We're well above the Nader of Palo
48 Alto schools. I'm not sure that there's a correlation necessarily between the degradation of schools
49 versus the growth or decline, but again to the extent that it can be thought of this has to be done in
50 conjunction with Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD). They've been very good at projecting their
51 population. I'd be shocked if they are surprised by what's going on and that the overcrowding schools in
52 inevitable and destructive, but it has to be contemplated.
53

54 Chair Michael: Commissioner Gardias.
55

1 Commissioner Gardias: Thank you very much Chair; a couple of points and then a couple of other
2 comments, but first two major points. In terms of some discussions that we had here about raising
3 height what I would like to see in all these plans, right, to giving prioritization of utilization of the existing
4 opportunities. There is so much open space in Palo Alto that taking that space and I'm talking parking
5 lots, garages, unusual lots, right, before we start considering going over limit height, which should be in
6 this sequence, right? Because otherwise if we're going to start just going over the limits and increasing it
7 it's easy of course we can do it, right? But then we would be losing that opportunity, which from the
8 planning perspective it may be an opportunity to build more of the retail space, walking area, and so
9 forth, right? I'd like to just see it as a continuous walkable spaces streets on the retail left side and right
10 side, right, as opposed to the higher buildings that have parking or garages between. So that would be
11 one of the priorities.

12
13 And then I can give a couple of examples; for example, we talked in the past about moving cars
14 underground. All this precious retail area that we have is taken by cars. In some buildings it has
15 garages underneath, but they need the ramp and ramp takes majority of the retail or the potential retail
16 area in the ground space or garages, that retail space or some other space for public should be instead.
17 So that's a great opportunity I would like just make sure that we don't miss it. Or at least this should be a
18 priority. Have this before some other heights.

19
20 There is also another opportunity that I see here in the plan in the zoning. Zoning that we have in Palo
21 Alto and zoning historically right is pretty much based on the historical, on the historical separation of
22 different land uses. That's not true today with the material and technology progress. And then also
23 different laws, you can mix them and match them as you please. And then in many areas, in many
24 municipalities mixed zoning it's standing up and then zones are not for the land separation but rather for
25 regulation of the heights or some other factors, but then larger mixed usage is allowed thus reducing a
26 number of trips, greenhouse gases commuting to the work and so forth,. And of course greater
27 utilization of the parking spaces as well.

28
29 And then so those are just two main points. A couple of other smaller items that when you prepare the
30 studies please just give us some numbers. We would like to see the consequences of all of this, all of
31 this plans that have. It would be for us easy to grasp what is the consequence of Scenario 1, 2, 3, and 4.
32 Hopefully we're going to go away with four, so one, two, and three. Quantify it and just show us some
33 numbers from the perspective of cost, additional population, and so forth. Thank you.

34
35 Chair Michael: Vice-Chair Keller.

36
37 Vice-Chair Keller: I think I already went, but I'm going to just add very two, three quick things. Ok, so
38 the first think is that it was mentioned that PAUSD at its peak 15,000 or so students. There are 24
39 elementary schools, 3 high schools, 3 middle schools. Now it's about over 12,000, which is somewhat
40 over 50 percent where the trough was if you will. There are only about a dozen elementary schools, two
41 high schools; each of these two high schools is at not quite double their original design capacity. And not
42 only that but if you look at the PAUSD projections the ones that came out in December, which I read, it
43 says they assumed no increase in housing. They can't project housing that doesn't exist. They only
44 project specific housing units. So when the housing unit is built they project for it. Before the housing
45 unit is built they don't project for it. So they actually have this drop off if you look at it showing the rate
46 of growth of the housing and what happens is that housing they basically had this nice drop off that
47 happens as the housing gets filled and students flow through the system, but they don't project out far
48 enough in terms of additional housing.

49
50 And in terms of smaller units I just want to point out that the development that's replacing Equinox and
51 We Fix Macs is small units. And so there is demand for it in certain circumstances if we zone for it.
52 Thank you.

53
54 Chair Michael: Actually before the public leaves tonight I just wanted to make a very sad announcement
55 that former Chair Eduardo Martinez who preceded me as Chair of the Planning Commission and served
56 with distinction for two terms and was recently honored by the City for service passed away last week.

1 And so he was a, he had a wonderful sense of compassion, he brought a sense of humor to discussions
2 that were often contentious and controversial and I think many of us also were honored to be his friend
3 and he is, he was a wonderful colleague. So he had a passion for good planning. Hopefully the
4 Comprehensive Plan will honor his passion and will reflect the collective wisdom of the community. He
5 worked a lot on the Land Use Element proposed revision. I would just note that perhaps the Land Use
6 Element is the place where we should identify the need for any specific plans for Downtown or specific or
7 precise plans South El Camino, East Meadow Circle, Fabian Way, and East Embarcadero.
8

9 Commenting on the alternative futures I think this has almost been completely covered by my colleagues
10 and by the public. I think that the Alternative Number 1 the do nothing or business as usual, well it just
11 left me with one big question and that's the reference, the causal reference that the Downtown
12 Development Cap would be just exceeded. I think that this is too important of a policy for that statement
13 to be left hanging there. I think that we should understand exactly what the enforcement of this policy
14 would be or if it needs to be strengthened with an ordinance or a Downtown specific plan. My personal
15 bias is the Alternative Future Number 1 is not my favorite nor is the Number 2, the slow growth. And
16 again I'm not seeing many takers in my suggestion that we substitute the metaphor of change for growth
17 because I think I'm willing to work with the concept of growth because obviously this is meaningful to
18 most of us if not all of us, but I don't think it's parsed in terms of what it actually means sufficiently. So
19 does this mean population increase? Does it mean absolute number of employees as tabulated in a
20 business registry against some ongoing metric of sorts? Does it mean non-residential square footage
21 divided further into retail and office? Does it mean housing units? But I think that if growth at some
22 level slow, slower, slowest, rapid is the topic we should be more precise.
23

24 Option Number 3, which my notes is slow development but focused housing in transit served areas I
25 think that the question that I've always had about the transit and how it serves us is that it's almost it's
26 dominated by intercity commuting transit. And it's not, doesn't recognize any particular infrastructure
27 associated with intra-city movement. And I think that one of the changes in the way we live and work is
28 that many of us don't commute intercity. This may be us being fortunate, but I think that for example
29 most of us came here probably other than Commissioner Alcheck on his skateboard we probably drove
30 here because there is no intra-city transit that is efficient. So I think if you're going to have focus on
31 transit served areas I think that we ought to broaden what transit served means. And I think it ought to
32 include intra-city transit.
33

34 And the two things that disappointed me in Number 3, which was otherwise probably my preferred
35 bucket was the notion that the ideas in the California Avenue Area Concept Plan would be validated in
36 terms of keeping California Avenue low scale. And putting off my impartial fiduciary role as Chair of the
37 Commission I would prefer to see California Avenue sort of more vibrant a little bit higher scale. And I
38 think that that would provide some more mixed use, more opportunities for retail, more leveraging of
39 transit and perhaps evening putting City Hall and the Public Safety Building there would be an
40 improvement in the allocation of resources of the City. Likewise for the what came out of the workshops
41 I was disappointed that in this notion of walkability and sort of clustering things around sort of villages
42 that are scattered around the City, places like Midtown and Charleston Plaza seem to be opportunities for
43 bolstering what's there that people could use, walk to, and maybe even allow for a little more density,
44 more height.
45

46 And I think I said pretty much everything else in the first round and I'm going to yield to Commissioner
47 Alcheck.
48

49 Commissioner Alcheck: There was one other comment I wanted to make about and you just reminded
50 me about it and I've been thinking about it all week, which is I was sort of hoping that out of the Our
51 Palo Alto meetings there would be an opportunity to explore this notion of a limitation on chain stores,
52 particularly in a California Avenue specific environment. I mention that because San Francisco has
53 implemented chain store limitations in several areas of the City and people often describe San Francisco
54 as being a retail rainforest. You look at Hayes Valley or the Mission for example you won't find stores
55 that have more than 10 locations nationwide. What that does is it changes the way an investor or a
56 developer looks at a project. They're not building it for a Chipotle or a McDonald's or a Gap, they're

1 building it for a potentially local business owner. What I'm hoping exploring that idea will do is it will
2 encourage potentially an alternative that considers growth in for example the California Avenue area,
3 mixed-use growth, but it does so in a way that alleviates some of the concern that there won't be a place
4 for our mom and pop businesses. So I just wanted to add, I'm not sure how to incorporate that in the
5 alternatives we have. I also agree with my colleagues here that there should be an alternative that
6 explores those growth options potentially with certain policies in place that affect the growth in a way
7 that is palatable. That's it.
8

9 Chair Michael: So I had forgotten to make one comment, which doesn't respond directly to your
10 alternatives and that is as one comes to study the Comp Plan it takes a while to figure out where to find
11 stuff. And what I heard from coming out of the workshops were a number of pretty articulate concerns
12 that should be in the Comp Plan and should be easy to find. And I'm not sure where they go in terms of
13 mapping them to the elements or to the alternatives that you've laid out, which may be useful for moving
14 this forward. But the concerns that I noted from the workshops and this was just in the materials that
15 everybody had, quality of life in Palo Alto, livability, dealing with traffic congestion, enhancing transit,
16 housing cost and affordability, growth management or change management, utilizing a relationship with
17 Stanford and neighboring cities, some notion of what's the target jobs/housing ratio whether that's an
18 imbalance or there's something ideal, something about the Palo Alto process and the importance of trust
19 with the public transparency, governance, engagement, and so forth I think is coming out of these
20 workshops is one of the elements in the Comp Plan. Dealing with the aging infrastructure from those of
21 us who suffered or served on IBRC; we had 300 meetings. Open space, what's the strategy relative to
22 density or lack thereof, and then Transit Demand Management, Transportation Management
23 Associations... TDM/TMA for you TLA fans. But I think that if there are key concerns we ought to figure
24 out how to map them to what we publish and so somebody who wants to focus on livability can find
25 what's relevant to that. And maybe it's in the glossary or maybe it's right up front. Maybe it's in the
26 structure of some innovative way of presenting the Comp Plan.
27

28 I'd like to thank everybody who showed up tonight who listened and commented. Thank my colleagues,
29 thank staff, consultants. I have more confidence after this evening's discussion in what will be the end
30 result than I think I've had for the last several years. So hopefully that's shared. We're about to go into
31 some housekeeping items. Maybe we'll take a five minute break while people can relocate.
32

33 Ms. Gitelman: And Chair Michael if I can just for the benefit of everybody talk about the next steps? We
34 talked about it before the August 4th City Council meeting is our next step. We're soliciting input on these
35 concepts, these four concepts between now and then. We'd love that input. We have to decide based
36 on your input this evening and the public's input this evening whether we start making changes before
37 this gets to Council. My instinct is that yes we should. We should reflect all of this and continue to
38 evolve and change these alternatives until the Council sees them. It might create some confusion
39 because we've asked people to comment on this version, but I think that's ok. We're at the part of the
40 process where all of the input we get will be valuable in starting to winnow down the ideas and get to
41 one final set of alternatives. So I thank you all for the input. I'm... we'll have to see what we can do to
42 open up the hood and get a lot of the ideas you've articulated into one or more of these concepts as they
43 move forward. Thank you.
44

45 Chair Michael: Ok, so quick break and then we'll do some housekeeping.
46

47 **Commission Action:** No action taken, provided comment and suggestions only.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE

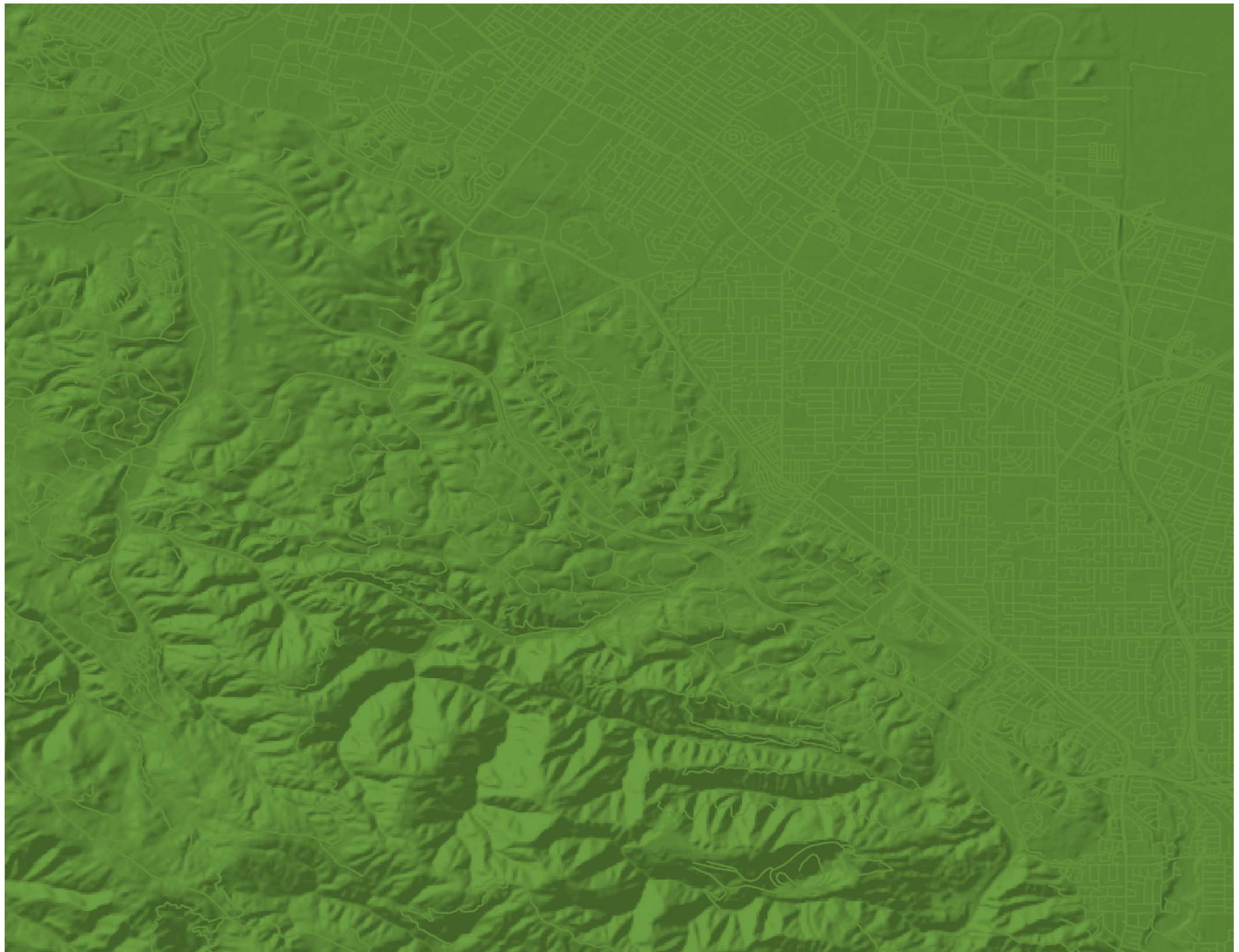


Our Palo Alto 2030

An Orientation




Our Palo Alto
2030
IDEAS • DESIGN • ACTION



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1

OUR GROWING REGION

Renewed prosperity, growth, and opportunity have returned to Palo Alto and the Silicon Valley region. These positive developments come with associated complications, including development pressures, traffic congestion, and parking scarcity. Accordingly, we need a plan for Palo Alto that recognizes this context, preserves our quality of life, and charts a course for our future. The plan must define where and how Palo Alto will grow, and how the City can maintain its global reputation for innovation and still be a livable, sustainable community for generations to come. The pressures of regional growth and change mean that doing nothing—that is, not updating the current Comprehensive Plan—is simply not an option.

Housing

As incomes in Silicon Valley approach pre-recession levels, rents and sales prices for residential property are increasing. Even with significant new residential development in the region, the percentage of first time homebuyers that can afford to live where they work dropped last year after six straight years of improvement. Also, as of the latest available Census data from 2012, about one-third of Palo Alto households, including 40% of renters, were “overpaying” for housing by spending more than 30% of their combined incomes on housing costs. All indications are that this trend has become even more pronounced over the past two years. And, according to the Silicon Valley Index, more people are coming here than at almost any time over the past three decades: the regional population grew about 1.5 times as fast as it did statewide last year, with a net regional influx unparalleled since 1997.

Population Growth 2012-2013

	JULY 2012	JULY 2013	% CHANGE
SANTA CLARA & SAN MATEO COUNTIES	2,562,760	2,596,396	+1.31%
CALIFORNIA	37,872,431	38,204,597	+0.88%

Source: siliconvalleyindex.org

Work

Employment in Silicon Valley is growing across almost all commercial and industrial sectors. Rising venture capital investment in local companies, innovations in science and engineering, and renewed small-business loan activity are contributing to a new phase of regional job growth. Office space is the predominate form of new commercial development. Increased job growth and commercial development, while good for the regional economy, create conditions that impact our city. Perhaps most strikingly, most of the employees at both new and established jobs—about 75% of the Silicon Valley workforce—are driving to work alone.

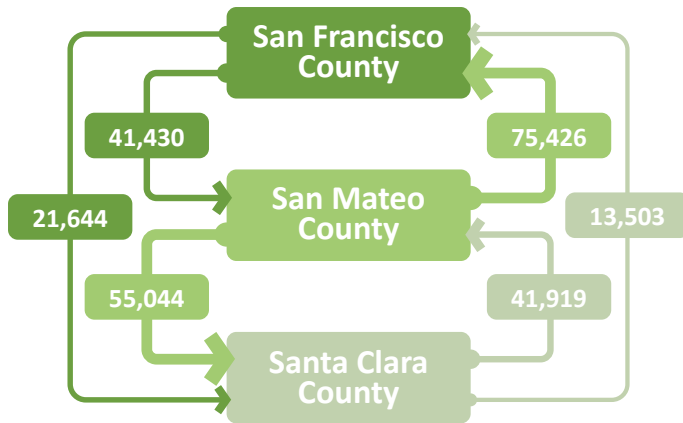
Independent of commuting to jobs in Palo Alto from other places in Santa Clara County, at last count about 55,000 people from Santa Clara County commute northward through Palo

75%
of Silicon Valley Workforce
Drive Alone



Alto. Meanwhile, more than 75,000 people commute south from homes on the Peninsula and in San Francisco, also primarily into and/or through Palo Alto. Some of these commuters are opting to use Middlefield Road, Alma Street, El Camino Real and other Palo Alto roadways to avoid traffic on Highway 101 and Interstate 280.

Regional Commute Patterns



Source: siliconvalleyindex.org

sustainability

Palo Alto residents and City officials are environmentally proactive. Solar installations, alternative-power vehicle use, and utilization of recycled water are ever-increasing at local homes, businesses, and government facilities. Electricity consumption is trending downward locally, and the City-owned utility now provides only carbon-neutral power, some of it generated in Palo Alto and all of it within California.

As another measure of both our commitment to the environment and the importance of the city's special places, our multi-modal transit stations make Palo Alto second only to San Francisco in Caltrain ridership. The fact that our highly transit-accessible business districts are complemented by a variety of residential neighborhoods, an abundance of parks and community facilities, and



Silicon Valley Employment Growth by Major Areas of Economic Activity

Percent Change in Q2 (year-on-year)

	2011-2012	2012-2013
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES	+3.0%	+2.9%
INNOVATION AND INFORMATION PRODUCTS & SERVICES	+3.4%	+2.1%
BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES	+3.8%	+6.4%
OTHER MANUFACTURING	+4.4%	+3.1%
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT	+2.8%	+3.4%

Source: siliconvalleyindex.org

hillside and bayfront open space defines the truly unique character of Palo Alto, as well as what's at stake if we don't plan properly to protect these precious resources.

So how do we manage the pressures of growth while preserving the quality of life, neighborhoods, open space, and the environment in Palo Alto? The solutions will come from us, the Palo Alto community, and will be embodied in our Comprehensive Plan—Our Palo Alto 2030. They include playing a meaningful role in decisions involving Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), Caltrain, Stanford, and Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, and helping the region to embrace prescriptions for improving our health by substituting walking, biking, transit use, and carpooling as much and as often as we can for single-occupant automobile trips that crowd our streets and require ever-more parking. Put simply, Our Palo Alto 2030 must reflect our agreement as a community regarding the contribution to resolving our traffic and parking issues that will be required of new growth or development before it is allowed to be approved.



2

How to Get Involved in the PLAN UPDATE: Our Palo Alto 2030

The Comprehensive Plan is the primary tool for guiding preservation and development in Palo Alto. It builds on shared community values and aspirations to guide preservation and to manage growth and change.

The Plan fulfills the State requirement that the City adopt a General Plan to serve as its constitution, with internally consistent goals and policies that reflect the community's priorities regarding land use, circulation, conservation, housing, open space, noise, and safety. The Plan provides a foundation for the City's development regulations, capital improvements program, and day-to-day decisions.

The current revisions will bring all the Plan Elements up to date, address changing demographic, economic and environmental conditions, and look forward to 2030. The Housing Element is being updated separately to meet a January 2015 deadline set by the State.

The Comprehensive Plan was last updated from 1998 to 2002, with the intent of being re-examined by 2010. City Staff and consultants started work with the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) in late 2008 to review each Element and to shape conceptual plans for the California Avenue/Fry's and the East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way areas. From then until recently, the PTC has carefully reviewed each Element. As needed amendments have been identified to create a clearer, more cohesive document, the update program has grown to include changing the format and organization of the Plan.

Extended Public Review

Meanwhile, renewed development pressures have exacerbated concerns about traffic, parking, and other quality of life issues in Palo Alto. Accordingly, the City is

initiating a new community dialog to ensure that the updated Plan, to be called Our Palo Alto 2030, is a blueprint for preservation, change, and growth management over the next two decades that truly reflects our collective community vision.

The newly expanded process includes a series of phases that efficiently integrate the planning and environmental review components of the update:

- » The **Lead-In** phase will involve collecting detailed background data to inform the community and updating the project website to post the findings.
- » The **Visioning** phase will introduce the community to Our Palo Alto 2030, engages residents in conversations about critical challenges, determines the scope of environmental review, and develops three alternative futures for detailed study.
- » The **Draft Plan and Draft EIR** will present draft policies, programs, alternative futures, and mitigation strategies. Extensive public input will help shape these for consideration by the City Council.
- » The **Final Plan and EIR** will incorporate substantive public comments for consideration and finalization by the PTC and City Council in late 2015.
- » A **User's Guide** in print and interactive online forms will explain how the City will use Our Palo Alto 2030; how its goals, policies, and programs will affect the community; and how the Plan can be amended in the future.

2014

2015

2016

Lead-In

- » Baseline Data Report
- » Website Update
- » NOP Released

Visioning

- » Community Meetings
- » Online Engagement
- » Alternative Futures

Draft Plan & EIR

- » EIR Workshops
- » Online Engagement
- » Out to the Community Campaign

Final Plan & EIR

- » Additional Public Review
- » Incorporation of Comments
- » Public Hearings

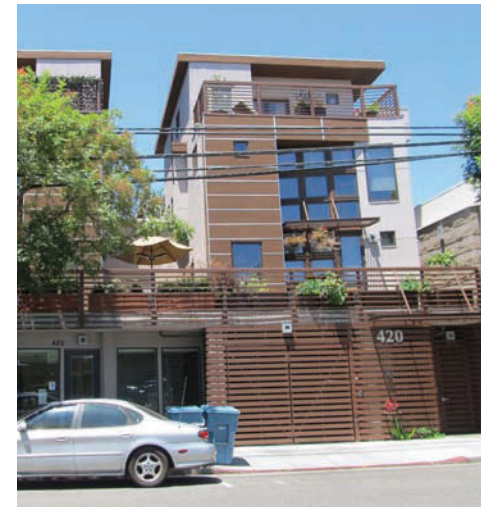
User's Guide

- » Online Companion

General Plan Update Elements

State-Mandated Element Current Comprehensive Plan Our Palo Alto 2030

LAND USE	LAND USE & COMMUNITY DESIGN	LAND USE & COMMUNITY DESIGN
CIRCULATION	TRANSPORTATION	TRANSPORTATION
HOUSING	HOUSING	HOUSING
OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION SAFETY NOISE	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	NATURAL & URBAN ENVIRONMENT & SAFETY
	BUSINESS & ECONOMICS	BUSINESS & ECONOMICS
	COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES	COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES



A Continuum Of Engagement

The City is offering a variety of engagement tools and techniques to create a welcoming and interactive environment for the community to share ideas and concerns about what should be addressed in Our Palo Alto 2030. These opportunities range from informal discussions with City officials and staff to online surveys and community meetings. The engagement opportunities are scheduled throughout the planning process and tailored to each phase. For instance, during the Visioning phase, emphasis is placed on community meetings and online input to inform the development of alternative futures.

Public involvement activities will build awareness, encourage comment on vital issues, and promote participation by Palo Altans who might not otherwise get involved. The City welcomes your voice in improving our efforts. If you would like City staff to speak to your neighborhood organization, service club, or other group, please let us know at: www.paloaltocomplan.org.



A Blueprint for the Future:

Identify and prioritize existing challenges and opportunities

Regulate the pace and location of growth

Put the Plan into action with informed decision-making

Goals
»
Policies
»
Programs

3

tHe LAnD Use AnD Comm UnItY DesIGn eLement

The Land Use and Community Design Element is the guiding force behind the physical form of our city. It lays out a framework for conservation and development to preserve neighborhoods, protect historic and natural resources, channel growth and commercial activity to suitable sites, respond to climate change, reduce pollution, and promote active and healthy lifestyles.

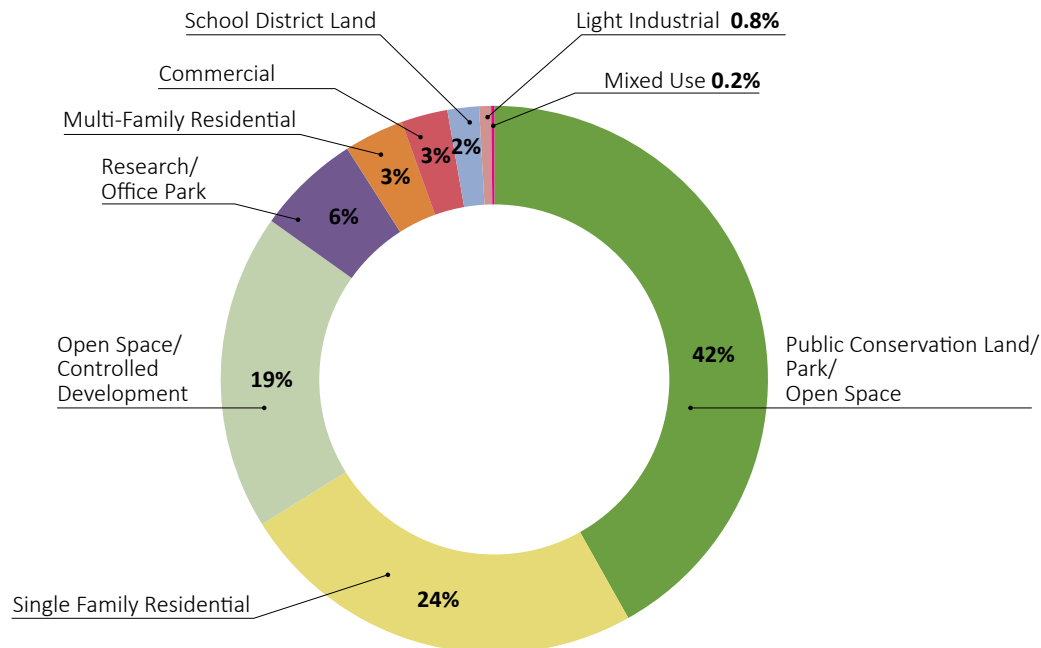
State law requires a Land Use Element to establish the location and intensity of housing, business, industry, open space, recreation, natural resources, and public facilities. The added Community Design component reflects a special interest in Palo Alto in maintaining historic integrity and enriching the built environment.



Vision Statement

Palo Alto's land use decisions shall balance our future growth needs with the preservation of our neighborhoods, address climate protection priorities, focus on sustainable development near neighborhood services, and enhance the quality of life in our community.

Land Use Distribution



THE CURRENT PLAN: A SOLID FOUNDATION

Palo Alto was an early adopter of compact development principles, as embodied in the Urban Service Area designated to manage growth in the current Comprehensive Plan. Through this strategy, the City has endeavored to direct new development into appropriate locations—such as along transit corridors and near employment centers—while protecting and preserving low-scale residential neighborhoods and open space lands that together comprise about 80% of the city.

The Land Use and Community Design Element identifies the residential areas, commercial centers, and employment districts that together constitute the city’s “structure.” Understanding how these parts of the community are connected to each other and the region is essential to resolving transportation and traffic issues and ensuring that businesses can thrive in places where they can serve residents and visitors without increasing impacts on neighborhoods. As the appearance of buildings and public spaces greatly affects how people experience Palo Alto, the Element calls for high-quality design to encourage social gathering in attractive settings.

The existing Land Use and Community Design Element is ably supporting the community’s objectives for growth management, and its cornerstone policy themes will be carried forward to guide future land use decisions, including:

- » Supporting the city’s future needs by accommodating an appropriate mix and amount of residential, commercial, and employment uses within the Urban Service Area.
- » Maintaining and enhancing Palo Alto’s residential neighborhoods, while ensuring that new development respects existing neighborhood character.
- » Providing adequate public services and facilities, parks, and open space.

- » Reducing emissions through energy efficiency standards and land use decisions that support walking, biking, and transit.
- » Fostering high quality design by improving streetscapes, maintaining and increasing connectivity, and enhancing gateways.
- » Preserving and protecting historic buildings and cultural and natural resources.

Our Palo Alto 2030

The updated Plan is intended to build on the solid foundation of the existing Land Use and Community Design Element to direct growth, provide clear development standards, reexamine the growth caps for the City and Downtown, and focus on the relationship between infrastructure, transportation investments, land use, and development. The updated Element is expected to respond to emerging trends and community concerns, including by:

- » Limiting the conversion of retail to residential use.
- » Requiring proposed development to demonstrate that adequate public services are available and that its design supports walking, biking, and transit.
- » Instituting new California Green Building Code requirements.
- » Distributing priority infrastructure improvements equitably across the city.
- » Providing infrastructure to strengthen Downtown as a regional economic center.
- » Expanding the City’s tree network, and restoring the Baylands.
- » Meeting the City’s adopted greenhouse gas reduction targets.

The Land Use and Community Design Element also will include maps and diagrams to depict densities and distribution of land uses.



What do you think? Share your thoughts at:
www.paloaltocomplan.org

4

tHe tRAnS Po RtAtIon eLement

The State requires this Element to address transport of people and goods and related infrastructure such as streets and highways, truck and transit routes, bus and rail stations, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and airports. Its policies take into account the physical, social, and economic effects of circulation, as well as regional impacts and coordination needs. The Element supports traffic safety, roadway improvement, parking and transportation management solutions, special transportation needs for mobility-impaired persons, and efforts to increase bus and rail use.

A significant focus of the Transportation Element is congestion, which contributes to air, water, and noise pollution, and to frustration for drivers, bicyclists, and other travelers. Increases in roadway capacity are not anticipated in Palo Alto, so the Transportation Element addresses congestion with policies aimed at reducing automobile dependency, increasing travel alternatives, and encouraging fewer trips.

tHE curr Ent Plan: a sOlid fO undati On

The Transportation Element lays the foundation for a multi-modal circulation network that serves vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. Transportation and land use are inextricably linked, as higher density and mixed use generally lead to more transit usage and pedestrian activity. The Transportation Element encourages a land use pattern that supports reduced dependence on cars and guides City decision-makers to take into account the environmental and social costs of increased traffic when considering future projects.

The Element capitalizes on the fact that Palo Alto is the second largest generator of weekday Caltrain trips behind San Francisco and a nationally recognized leader in innovative bicycle projects and programs. Transportation Element policies call for more northeast-southwest bike routes, easier navigation at railroad tracks and freeways, and better accommodation for bicycles on trains and buses. Much of Palo Alto is ideal for pedestrians, but

Change in Per Capita Transit Use, 2010-2013

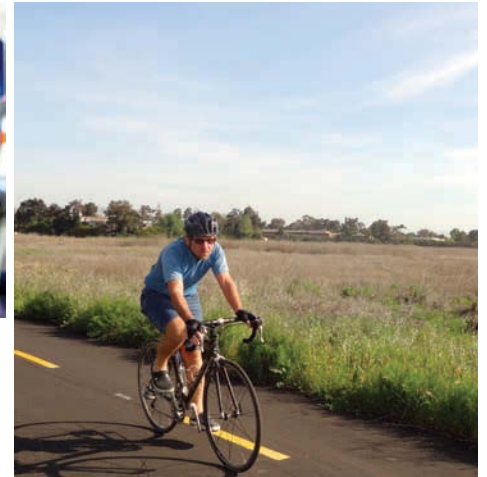
San Mateo & Santa Clara Counties

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM	2010 PER CAPITA RIDERSHIP	2013 PER CAPITA RIDERSHIP	PERCENT CHANGE
SANTA CLARA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (VTA)			
ALL SERVICE	16.69	16.74	0.3%
EXPRESS BUS SERVICE	0.38	0.53	38.3%
SAM TRANS	5.57	4.73	-15.1%
CALTRAIN	4.79	6.05	26.4%

Vision Statement

Maintain and promote a sustainable network of safe, accessible and efficient transportation and parking solutions for all users and modes, while protecting and enhancing the quality of life in Palo Alto neighborhoods including alternative and innovative transportation practices and supporting regional transit facilities and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.





additional policies emphasize filling in gaps in the sidewalk system and making intersection crossing easier.

The Transportation Element in the Comprehensive Plan continues to support the community’s vision of a less congested and more walkable, transit-rich environment, with the majority of its policies being carried over into Our Palo Alto 2030, including:

- » Reducing auto use through carpooling, increased emphasis on electronic information services, and education about transportation alternatives.
- » Encouraging employers to develop shuttle services connecting employment areas with the multi-modal transit stations and business districts.
- » Supporting efforts to integrate train, bus, and shuttle schedules at multi-modal transit stations to make public transit use more time-efficient.
- » Acquiring easements for bicycle and pedestrian paths through new private developments.
- » Reducing neighborhood street and intersection widths and widening planting strips to slow speeds and improve safety.
- » Providing sufficient parking in business districts to address long-range needs.

Our Pal O alt O 2030

The effort to update the Comprehensive Plan is expected to build on the forward-thinking Transportation Element, fine-tuning it to respond to emerging trends and community concerns, including by:

- » Requiring proposed development to demonstrate that adequate public services are available and that its design supports walking, biking, and transit.
- » Supporting reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and promoting electric and alternative fuel vehicle technology.
- » Reinforcing “complete streets” concepts and policies to position the City to qualify for regional grant funding.
- » Supporting Caltrain modernization, including by exploring the potential for grade-separated crossings.
- » Supporting the regional Grand Boulevard Initiative for El Camino Real, including Bus Rapid Transit Improvements to enhance VTA service.
- » Transitioning the Municipal Airport from County to City control.
- » Strengthening policies on preservation of neighborhood residential streets, Safe Routes to School, and general traffic safety.

What do you think? Share your thoughts at:
www.paloaltocomplan.org

5

THE nATURAL AnD URBAn env IRonment AnD sAFety eLement

The Natural Environment Element in the Comprehensive Plan addresses the management of open land and natural resources in Palo Alto and the protection of life and property from natural hazards. It is one of the broadest elements of the Comprehensive Plan, satisfying the requirements for four of the State-mandated General Plan elements:

- » Open Space—with policies describing the use of open space for the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of natural resources, outdoor recreation, and public health and safety.
- » Conservation—with policies to protect creeks and riparian areas, wetlands, the urban forest, water resources, wildlife, and air quality; to regulate and limit the use and transport of hazardous materials; and to minimize solid waste disposal and promote clean energy.
- » Safety—with policies describing how exposure will be reduced to natural hazards such as earthquakes, flooding, and wildfires.
- » Noise—with policies to decrease exposure to undesirable levels of noise in the community.

THE c urr Ent Plan: a sOlid fO undati On

Palo Alto has vast open space resources for a city of our size. The Natural Environment Element seeks to protect the 29 neighborhood and district parks, large holdings in the Baylands, Foothills Park, Montebello and Arastradero Preserves, and Barron, Matadero, and San Francisquito Creeks. All of these areas provide important habitat, scenic, and recreational value.

With more than 300 tree species, Palo Alto's urban forest is an extension of the natural woodland and grassland plant communities and provides a bridge for wildlife between the foothills and the Bay. The Element supports this resource both for its biological benefits and contribution to the aesthetic appeal of Palo Alto.

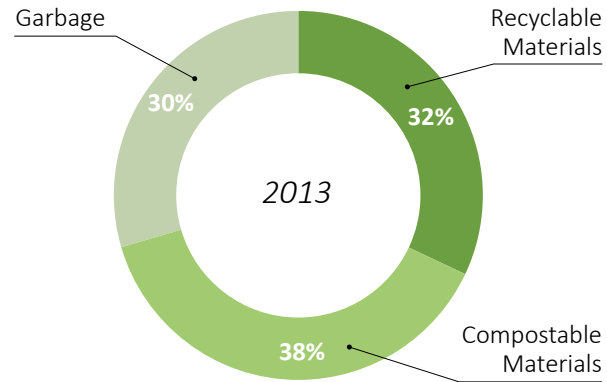
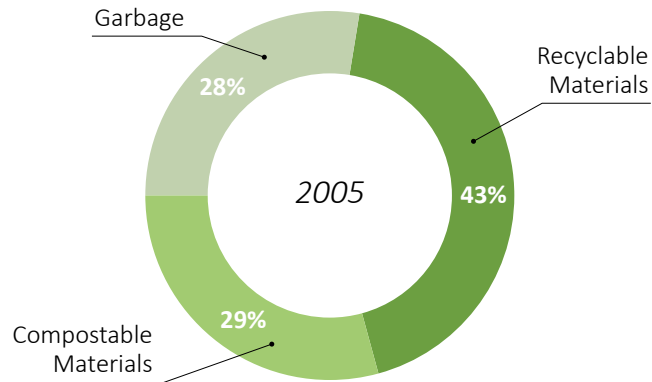
The Natural Environment Element has also proven effective in protecting the health and safety of our community by limiting noise and exposure to hazards. Most of its policies will be carried over into Our Palo Alto 2030, including:



Vision Statement

Palo Alto shall preserve its ecosystems, including its open space, creeks, habitats, and air quality while working towards a sustainable urban environment of urban forests, water quality, waste disposal reduction, emergency preparedness, community safety and a plan for climate change mitigation.

Items Found in Palo Alto Garbage Bins



- » Seeking opportunities for adding open space, including connections between Skyline Ridge and San Francisco Bay.
- » Re-establishing riparian and other natural features that have been diminished by development, and protecting surface and ground water from pollutants.
- » Expanding the urban forest, including by requiring development to provide landscaping and street trees.
- » Conserving water and energy, and securing long-term water supplies and renewable, clean energy.
- » Reducing waste, recycling construction materials, and encouraging reusable, returnable, recyclable, and repairable goods.
- » Protecting the community from noise, air pollution, hazardous chemicals, and natural hazards.

Our Pal O alt O 2030

To better describe its importance and, in light of new issues and trends that have emerged subsequent to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, Our Palo Alto 2030 is expected to feature a renamed Natural and Urban Environment and Safety Element, with added major concepts, including:

- » Monitoring and adapting to impacts caused by climate change.
- » Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- » Emphasizing and supporting community emergency preparedness.
- » Protecting sensitive habitat from human threats.
- » Balancing conservation with improved open space access and encouraging low impact recreational use.
- » Addressing State regulations requirements for transportation noise generated from roadways, airways, and railways, and limiting construction noise around sensitive receptors.



What do you think? Share your thoughts at:
www.paloaltocomplan.org

6

tHe CommUnItY sErV ICes AnD FACILIties eLement

The Community Services and Facilities Element is not a State requirement. It is added to the Comprehensive Plan to reinforce the significance and importance of services like libraries and schools in Palo Alto and the vital role they play in shaping community life.

Palo Alto is a full-service City, with park and recreation divisions and police and fire departments, library and cultural arts programs, and youth, senior and childcare services. In each of these areas, the City is committed to providing responsive customer service for residents and businesses, even going so far in this Element to specify staff management techniques, performance review criteria, and public contact processes in an effort to ensure the quality of service delivery.

and enhance access for all Palo Altans. The Element also recognizes that there are fiscal limits to what the City can provide and calls for collaboration with outside agencies and jurisdictions to fill any service gaps.

The Community Services and Facilities Element provides a solid framework to help the City deliver the services required to meet the needs of the community and add to quality of life in Palo Alto. The majority of its policy themes are expected to be carried forward into Our Palo Alto 2030 to continue to maintain and strengthen public services, including:

- » Providing services that meet the needs of all cultures, ages, and abilities.
- » Meeting fiscal challenges by partnering with other agencies, jurisdictions, non-profits, and businesses.
- » Partnering with PAUSD to maximize the use of school facilities for community use during non-school hours.
- » Maintaining parks and facilities so they can be enjoyed by future generations.
- » Ensuring and expanding access to recreational and public services for disabled and low-income residents.
- » Locating public facilities and services near children and seniors.
- » Expanding new parks and community facilities to meet the needs of a growing community.

tHE cUrrEnt Plan: a sOlId fOUndatiOn

Palo Alto residents have access to a rich array of public services that cater to all ages, cultures, and levels of mobility and education. The City provides a range of direct services to all citizens, and also partners with community organizations and jurisdictions to assist those with disabilities. Palo Altans also have access to cultural and recreational opportunities on the adjacent campus of Stanford University. The Community Services and Facilities Element calls for maintaining and enhancing all of the services, and it supports the excellent schools run by the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD), an independent local government institution separate from the City of Palo Alto.

The Community Services and Facilities Element acknowledges that parks and recreational and social services play a significant role in shaping a healthy and dynamic community and calls for the City to encourage

Vision Statement

This generation must invest in the people, places, programs, and environment of Palo Alto to ensure that the quality and vitality of community services and facilities are present and responsive to the generations to come.



Our Pal O alt O 2030

In light of new issues and trends that have emerged since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the Community Services and Facilities Element in Our Palo Alto 2030 is expected to include major new concepts, including:

- » Advocating for healthy lifestyles for all residents.
- » Helping teens combat depression, isolation, stress, and other mental health issues.
- » Expanding programs to engage seniors in the community.
- » Encouraging universal access to parks, public places, and community facilities.
- » Carrying out the recommendations of the Infrastructure Blue Ribbon Committee regarding the potential need for new and/or upgraded public facilities.

What do you think? Share your thoughts at:
www.paloaltocomplan.org



7

the Business and Economics Element

The Business and Economics Element is not required by State law, but it is just as important as the mandated elements in shaping the future of Palo Alto. Renowned globally for innovation in research and technology, Palo Alto also has regional commercial districts and neighborhood shopping centers that play a major role in local quality of life. The Element offers policies that emphasize diversity, growth, and flexibility of businesses, as well as compatibility with adjacent and nearby land uses, including residential neighborhoods.

the Current Plan: a Solid Foundation

The City has long acknowledged that revenue generation and other positive effects of business growth have the potential to be offset by impacts on the community, especially concerning traffic and parking but also including loss of community character if not properly addressed. Accordingly, the Element calls for modest economic growth in balance with preservation of residential neighborhoods.

In addition to growth limits, the City uses zoning, development review, environmental review, coordinated area plans, and other planning tools to maintain compatibility between residential and nonresidential areas. The Business and Economics Element has helped lead to successful efforts to attract and retain commercial activities that fit with—and are prized by—our community. The majority of its policy directions are proposed to appear in Our Palo Alto 2030, including:

- » Maintaining distinct business districts as a means of retaining local services and diversifying the City's economic base.
- » Ensuring that neighborhood shopping areas, including California Avenue, are attractive,

accessible, and convenient to nearby residents.

- » Promoting public/private partnerships as a means of revitalizing selected areas and providing community benefits and services.
- » Supporting advanced communications infrastructure and other improvements that facilitate the growth of emerging industries.
- » Encouraging pedestrian-oriented neighborhood retail along El Camino Real.

The Element also recognizes the important role that Stanford University plays in our local economy as the largest employer in Palo Alto and as an incubator of new technologies that have helped make Palo Alto a global leader in innovation. The policy framework in the Element supports Stanford Research Park as a thriving employment district and seeks to sustain Stanford Shopping Center as a major regional commercial attraction.



Vision Statement

Palo Alto supports a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that welcomes innovators, entrepreneurs, business professionals, the University, visitors and the community. The City's business policies, balanced economic goals, vibrant downtown, and diverse local and regional-serving businesses combine to stimulate and support viable business opportunities.

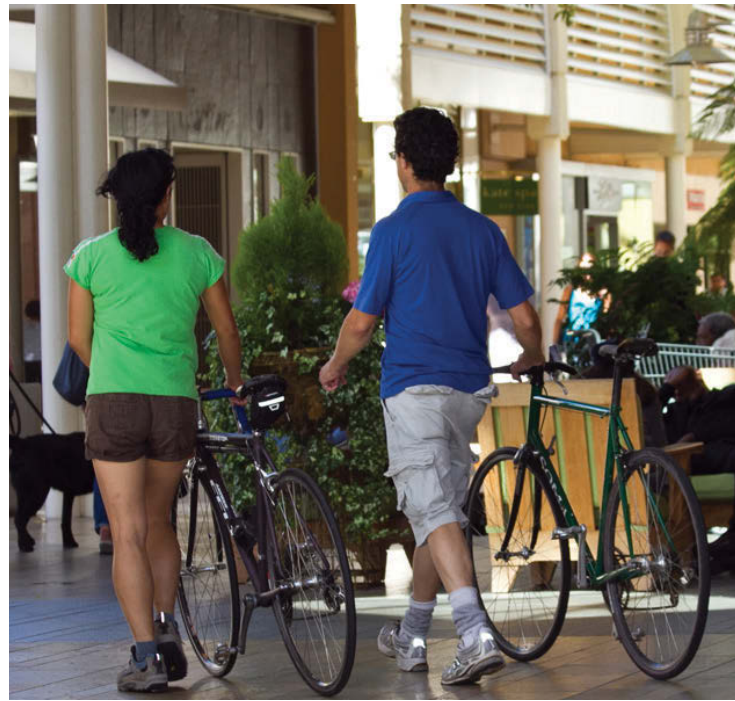
Our Pal O alt O 2030

The Plan update will assess growth management strategies, including potential alternatives to the citywide development cap in the current Comprehensive Plan. Policies will ensure that economic prosperity does not result in unconstrained growth and unacceptable impacts on Palo Alto neighborhoods. Other policy guidance proposed for inclusion in the Business and Economics Element in Our Palo Alto 2030 includes:

- » Encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation.
- » Enhancing and diversifying the retail mix through business retention and attraction.
- » Developing positive parking solutions for businesses in California Avenue and Downtown.
- » Support for creation of business registry.
- » Enhancing Palo Alto's appeal to visitors and tourists.
- » Replacing the cap on non-residential development in the City and in Downtown with an updated or alternative growth management strategy.

What do you think? Share your thoughts at:

www.paloaltocompplan.org



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tHe HoUsInG eLement

The Housing Element is required by State law, and ensuring its consistency with the other Elements, especially Land Use and Community Design, is very important. Its primary purpose is to ensure that the City addresses changing housing needs in Palo Alto by identifying sufficient opportunities to provide housing for all economic segments of the community.

Housing Elements are updated on a State-mandated schedule that does not apply to the other Elements. The City must complete its Housing Element update for the period 2015-2023 and have it accepted by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) by the end of January 2015. As a result, the Housing Element will be adopted as a separate document from Our Palo Alto 2030, although the City can consider additional amendments to the Housing Element when it adopts Our Palo Alto 2030 if those amendments are acceptable to HCD.



The Housing Element must contain:

- » An evaluation of existing housing needs.
- » Estimates of projected housing needs.
- » A review of goals and programs from the previous Housing Element.
- » An inventory of adequate sites for housing and an evaluation of infrastructure condition and requirements.
- » Identification of any governmental and non-governmental constraints on housing production.
- » Programs to address identified needs.
- » Quantifiable objectives for construction, rehabilitation and conservation of housing.

Community Workshops on the 2015-2023 Housing Element were held in April 2014. Anyone interested may continue to submit comments via the City's website or at public hearings on the Draft Housing Element, which run through November 2014.

2007-14 Housing Element Vision Statement

"Our housing and neighborhoods shall enhance the livable human environment for all residents, be accessible to civic and community services and sustain our natural resources."

tHe GoveRnAnCe CHAPteR

The Governance Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan goes beyond the State-required Elements to affirm Palo Alto’s commitment to public participation in decision-making. The Chapter informs citizens about how to participate in government, and it provides guidance to City staff and officials carrying out the policies and programs in the Comprehensive Plan. The Chapter describes how local planning decisions are made, profiles the City’s governing bodies and staff departments, and includes goals, policies, and programs to ensure that inclusion and clarity surround all City decisions.

The City offers many opportunities for citizens to participate in governance through a variety of boards and commissions that advise the City Council, and in some cases are responsible for final decisions on project proposals. These include the:

- » Architectural Review Board
- » Historic Resources Board
- » Human Relations Commission
- » Library Advisory Commission
- » Parks and Recreation Commission
- » Planning and Transportation Commission
- » Public Art Commission
- » Storm Drain Oversight Committee
- » Utilities Advisory Commission

Palo Altans also have a voice in regional planning via the City Council members that represent the community in organizations such as the Santa Clara County Cities Association, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

The Governance Chapter embodies Palo Alto’s commitment to conducting City business in a collaborative and transparent manner. Its objectives will be featured in the Executive Summary for Our Palo Alto 2030, its policies will be carried over in the updated Plan, and it will inform the Our Palo Alto 2030 User’s Guide. The Governance Chapter’s initiatives include:

- » Building relationships among City staff and officials and neighborhood groups.
- » Providing access to information via all available media.
- » Encouraging volunteers, including youth and seniors, to provide community services.
- » Developing innovative new planning processes that emphasize collaborative exchanges of ideas.
- » Providing decision-makers and residents with clear tools for understanding planning regulations.



Vision Statement

Palo Alto will maintain a positive civic image and be a leader in the regional, state, and national policy discussions affecting the community. The City will work with neighboring communities to address common concerns and pursue common interests. The public will be actively and effectively involved in City affairs, both at the Citywide and neighborhood levels. Where appropriate, the City Council will delegate decision-making responsibilities to local boards and commissions. The Council will also assign advisory roles to these bodies as well as other community groups. Residents, businesses, and elected and appointed officials will work collaboratively to address the issues facing the City in a timely manner. This inclusive, participatory process will help build a sense of community.

10

ACCom PAny In G Con CePt PLAns

calif Ornia avEnu E ar Ea

In conjunction with the creation of Our Palo Alto 2030, a conceptual plan is being developed to guide future land use in the area between Cambridge Avenue, the railroad tracks, Lambert Avenue, and El Camino Real. This area is home to a number of important landmarks, destinations, and popular local institutions. Through community input, three distinct subareas have been identified where change can be accommodated: California Avenue, Park Boulevard, and the Fry's site.

The California Avenue Area Concept Plan weaves together a variety of prior planning initiatives for the area, including Caltrain station area development regulations, streetscape improvements, a design guidelines update, designation as a Priority Development Area, and a rail corridor study, together in a unified vision to guide future change while preserving and enhancing the quality of life in nearby residential neighborhoods. Developed on the basis of public input received during a series of four community meetings between 2010 and 2012, the Concept Plan generally maintains existing Comprehensive Plan land use designations.

POlici Es and Pr Ograms f Or calif Ornia avEnu E:

- » Incentivizing mixed-use development and requiring active uses on the ground floor of buildings.
- » Supporting development of a hotel and associated hospitality uses in proximity to transit.
- » Working with employers and transit agencies to encourage transit use.

POlici Es and Pr Ograms f Or Park bOul Evard:

- » Adopting a Technology Corridor Overlay and determining incentives to encourage smaller, technology-related firms.
- » Studying safety for cyclists and pedestrians along Park Boulevard and alternative routes, and incorporating additional recommendations for improvements into the BPTP.

POlici Es and Pr Ograms f Or t HE fry's sit E:

- » Encouraging mixed-use development at the higher end of the allowed density range.
- » Coordinating site planning and outreach to improve the relationship of the site to its surroundings.
- » Requiring a minimum of 20% of the total square footage on the Fry's site be residential.



Together the California Avenue and East Meadow/Fabian areas present much of where Palo Altans expect change to occur during the life of Our Palo Alto 2030. As has been the case for decades, change is also expected in the Downtown, where the current Development Cap is being re-examined to reflect the community's vision for the future.

East Meadow Circle / Fabian Way Area

Developed in 2012, this Concept Plan outlines a vision for the area between Highway 101, Charleston Road, and Louis Road. The Plan includes recommendations for improvements to the local bicycle network, as well as specific policies and programs for three subareas: West Bayshore Industrial; East San Antonio; and Charleston Road. A product of a series of stakeholder meetings and well-attended public workshops, the Concept Plan identifies the kinds of uses and types of future development that would be desirable in the area.

The Concept Plan maps potential new pedestrian and bike routes along Adobe Creek, Barron Creek and Sterling Canal, and calls for improving access to the Baylands across Highway 101. Residential and day care uses are prohibited in the Plan area, with schools allowed only on selected West Bayshore parcels with conditional use permit review.

Policies for West Bayshore:

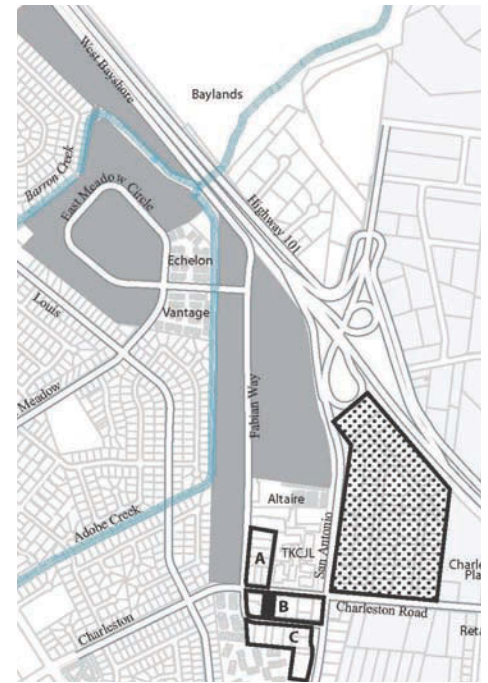
- » Encouraging expansion and attraction of high-end research and development uses with appropriate transitions to adjacent neighborhoods.
- » Supporting construction by Space Systems Loral of a new facility in an appropriate location to accommodate assembly of larger telecommunication satellites.

Policies for East San Antonio:

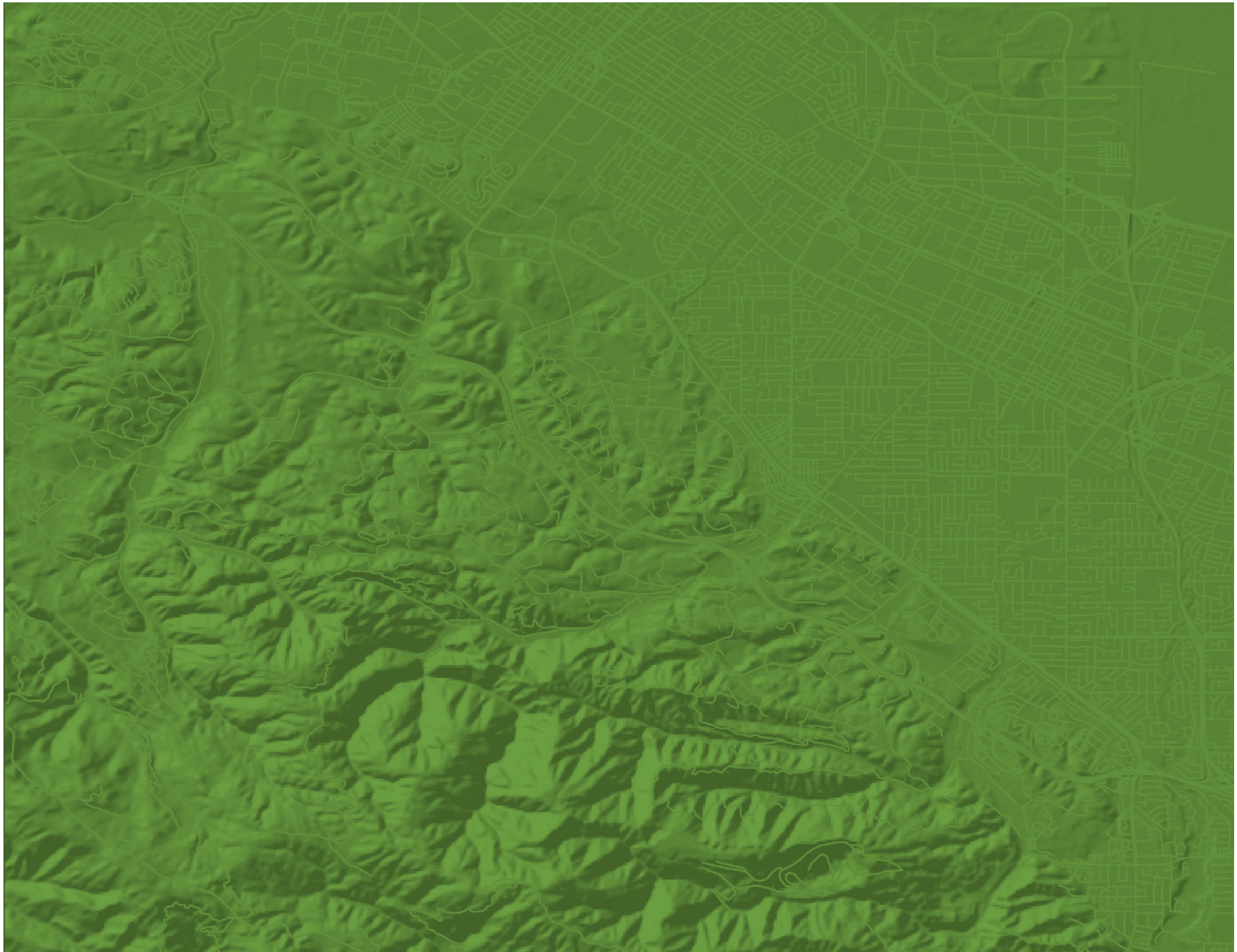
- » Encouraging larger-scale commercial development that generates revenue, complements existing development, and provides a lively streetscape that accommodates vehicles while encouraging pedestrian use.
- » Retaining existing land use and zone designations.

Policies for Charleston Road:

- » Exploring opportunities to rehabilitate the Fairchild Building by working with the owner to assess challenges such as parking, possible clean up, and flood-zone requirements, and considering historic designation.
- » Retaining manufacturing and light industry uses.









city Of Pal O alt O

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Our Palo Alto 2030: Draft Alternative Future Scenarios

The following four conceptual alternatives or scenarios were developed based on public input received during and after a series of public workshops in May and June 2014 regarding the City of Palo Alto's ongoing Comprehensive Plan Update. Each scenario presents a somewhat different vision for Palo Alto in the year 2030, and would result in different adjustments and additions to the City's current Comprehensive Plan. All of the scenarios would protect and preserve single-family residential (R-1) neighborhoods and public open spaces. Commercial and multiple-family development would occur in areas described within each concept.

These four draft conceptual alternatives are intentionally described at a high level in an effort to receive input from the public and the City Council. At this stage, staff and consultants are interested in whether these alternative visions represent a reasonable range of possible futures worth analyzing in detail in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Once there is agreement or direction from the City Council on this point, the hard work of quantifying and analyzing each scenario in detail can begin. The mechanics of implementing each scenario can also be worked-out.

Selection of one preferred concept will happen after the detailed analysis – presented in the form of a Draft EIR for public review – is complete and after the public has had an opportunity to weigh-in on the potential impacts and benefits of each scenario and on draft policies and programs proposed for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan Update. Once selected, the preferred scenario will be memorialized in the goals, policies, programs, narrative and maps of the updated Comprehensive Plan presented for the City Council's consideration and adoption at the end of 2015.

Scenario 1: Do Nothing/Business as Usual

This concept represents a business-as-usual scenario, describing the change and development in Palo Alto that is likely to occur by 2030 if the existing Comp Plan remains in place with no change to current land use designations, policies, or programs. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires analysis of this scenario for the purpose of comparing its impacts with those of other alternatives.

Under this scenario, new job growth would be accommodated in the City's existing employment districts, which would see an anticipated annual rate of growth of 1.04 percent, in line with Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projections for the City. This rate of growth represents approximately 990 new jobs per year for a total of 15,840 new jobs in Palo Alto by 2030. While some new jobs would be created in existing and re-developed buildings, the net increase in new non-residential square footage in this alternative could exceed the Citywide "cap" by the planning horizon of 2030. (This Citywide cap is found in Policy L-8 of the existing Comp Plan.) There

would be no additional protections or incentives for neighborhood-serving retail under this alternative, and no major transportation infrastructure improvements.

Under the Do Nothing/Business as Usual scenario, housing growth would likely continue at a rate of approximately 167 units per year, in line with the historic trend, resulting in 2,668 new units in the city by 2030. New housing would be built primarily through redevelopment of property as permitted under existing zoning. In the short- to medium-term, housing construction is anticipated on the sites identified in the Draft 2015-2023 Housing Element. These sites are concentrated primarily Downtown, along El Camino Real and in the California Avenue/Fry's site area.

Change and future development would not be specifically focused in one or more geographic areas. Existing land use designations and zoning regulations would continue to define development throughout the City. For the purposes of this discussion, the following are descriptions of development that may be likely within six focus areas identified by community members at workshops in June:

- **Downtown** would retain a predominantly commercial character. Redevelopment of lower density sites would continue and new office and retail space would be constructed until the cap of 350,000 square feet of new non-residential development is reached. Pursuant to Municipal Code Section 18.18.040, when the Downtown cap is reached, a moratorium would go into effect. While the moratorium is in effect, redevelopment activity would be curtailed, although the City would be under pressure to permit the addition of square footage “earned” through the two incentive programs included in the zoning ordinance (related to seismic upgrades and historic preservation) and this scenario assumes some development would continue. The 27 University site would remain in its existing use and configuration as a transit center and restaurant. Some housing would likely be built downtown under this alternative consistent with existing zoning, but the focus of future development and redevelopment would be predominantly commercial office and retail. To address the increased traffic and parking demand that would accompany this change, the City could implement parking management programs (such as residential permit parking) and construct new parking structure(s). Additional parking would also be provided in new development in accordance with the requirements of existing zoning.
- The **El Camino Real** corridor would continue to evolve as permitted under the existing land use designations and zoning. South of Stanford Avenue, the corridor would take on a more mixed-use character. Auto-oriented uses would be replaced with new projects providing office space and housing over retail as low intensity sites are redeveloped and where smaller parcels can be assembled.
- The **California Avenue** area would continue to experience strong development pressure and much of the area would ultimately take on a more mixed-use character, consistent with the existing land use designations and zoning. New housing and office space would be built on California Avenue and surrounding streets through the utilization of the Pedestrian Transit-Oriented Development District overlay, which is available on sites

including Cambridge Avenue in the north to Olive Avenue in the south, bounded by the Caltrain tracks to the east and El Camino Real to the west. Retail and restaurant uses would continue to evolve on California Avenue itself, with a trend towards more corporate or “formula” retail/restaurant tenants. South of Olive Avenue, the Fry's site would retain its existing multi-family residential land use designation and zoning. If Fry's were to leave its current location, the site would likely be redeveloped with housing in accordance with existing land use regulations.

- The **Stanford Research Park** would continue as a major employment district, absorbing a significant portion of the new job growth anticipated under this alternative. Dedicated on-street and off-street bicycle lanes would be added to serve this area as proposed in the Palo Alto Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan; however it is not anticipated that VTA or other transit service providers would increase service. Private vehicles would continue to be the most convenient mode of access to this site for people who work there in 2030.
- **Stanford Shopping Center** and the **East Meadow Circle/Bayshore** areas would have a similar character in 2030 to the character they have today. No change in land use designations or zoning would be made, and these areas would absorb some of the new job growth anticipated under this alternative. No new housing would likely be built in either area under this alternative since the land designated for residential development in the East Meadow Circle/Bayshore area is already developed, and the Stanford Shopping Center has used nearly all of the development potential allowed by zoning. Private vehicles would continue to be the most convenient mode of access to these areas for many people who work there in 2030.
- The **South San Antonio** area would retain its current mix of light industrial uses and multi-family housing; however, this area could begin to experience development pressure as available sites in the California Avenue area and El Camino Real corridor get built out.

Scenario 2: Slow Growth & No Changes in Land Use Designations

Under this scenario, existing Comp Plan land use designations would remain unchanged, however, Comp Plan policies and programs would be modified to slow the pace of non-residential growth in the city and to focus modest housing growth on meeting State requirements.

To implement this vision, the City would replace the current Downtown and Citywide “cap” on new non-residential square footage with an annual limit to control the pace of growth. The annual limit would apply to new research & development, office, and light industrial development on a Citywide basis, and procedures would be established to evaluate proposed projects subject to the cap based on their location and other criteria, and to ensure the annual limit was not exceeded. The City would also modify its policies and programs to ensure that the modest amount of residential growth and development that is anticipated annually would be focused on meeting State requirements, with an emphasis on smaller units that are affordable to people who work in Palo Alto and to plan for the wave of existing “baby boomers” desiring to downsize. Comprehensive Plan policies and programs would continue to focus on protecting the quality of life in Palo Alto's R-1 single-family neighborhoods, and the City would

adopt policies to encourage the preservation of neighborhood-serving retail and services where they currently exist throughout the city.

This alternative would test implementation of improvements to the regional expressway system planned by the County of Santa Clara, including:

- Oregon-Page Mill Expressway widening west of El Camino Real;
- Freeway interchange improvements on the Oregon-Page Mill Expressway;
- Full or partial grade separation at the Alma and Foothill/Junipero Serra Boulevard interchanges on the Oregon-Page Mill Expressway; and
- Full grade separation of the Arastradero interchange on the Foothill Expressway.

The character of each of the six focus areas identified by community members at workshops in June would be as follows under the Scenario 2 in 2030:

- **Downtown** would generally retain its current appearance and mix of uses. The 50-foot height limit would remain in place; however, the citywide mechanism for metering non-residential growth would likely result in less non-residential development and more residential development downtown. The 27 University site would retain its function as a transit center and restaurant. Comp Plan policies would encourage smaller-sized, workforce and senior housing units with reduced parking requirements. The City would redevelop one or more existing surface parking lots to provide additional parking downtown.
- The **El Camino Real** corridor would take on a more residential character by 2030 because many of the housing sites identified in the Draft 2015-2023 Housing Element are located along El Camino Real south of the Stanford Research Park. Retail and services uses would remain in order to serve the adjacent neighborhoods. Development and redevelopment would be consistent with existing zoning regulations, which allow building extending three to four stories high and City regulations would require relatively low densities unless strict affordability requirements are met. Development standards would result in increased setbacks where development and redevelopment takes place.
- **California Avenue** would keep its eclectic, local-serving character, and no tall buildings, beyond what would be allowed under existing zoning, would be added. The City would work to ensure Fry's Electronics remains at its current location and would encourage redevelopment of the balance of the site with housing, consistent with its existing zoning. Formula retail and restaurant uses would be discouraged along California Avenue, in favor of independently owned and operated establishments. The pace of non-residential development of vacant and underutilized lots in the area would slow, and additional parking would be added to support any new growth in the area. Additionally, Comp Plan policies and programs would prioritize circulation and safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The **Stanford Research Park, Stanford Shopping Center and East Meadow Circle/Bayshore** areas would have a similar character in 2030 to the character they have today. No change in land use designations or zoning would be made and these areas, which would continue to serve as employment districts. Some retail and service uses

catering to the daytime employee population would be added in these areas, but additional housing would not be built in these areas. Comp Plan policies and programs would encourage the use of transit, carpooling, cycling and walking over the use of private automobiles.

- The **South San Antonio** area would continue to support a variety of residential and non-residential uses in 2030. Land use and zoning for this area would not change; however, as other areas of the city are redeveloped, market forces will likely result in more mixed-use development in this area, as permitted under existing zoning.

Scenario 3: Slow Growth & Adjust the Location of Housing Sites

This scenario would experience the same amount of job growth and residential development as would Scenario 2, and would similarly replace the current Downtown and Citywide “cap” on new non-residential square footage with an annual limit to control the pace of non-residential development. This scenario would also adjust land use designations and policies to discourage or prohibit new housing unless it’s within a transit-rich area with ample neighborhood services. This scenario would also test the idea of depressing the Caltrain tracks below-grade between San Antonio Road and Page Mill Road.

By changing Comp Plan land use designations and policies to discourage or prohibit new housing unless it’s within one half mile of a Caltrain station or one quarter mile of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stop, and by increasing allowable residential densities within those areas, this scenario would effectively downzone areas along South El Camino Real that are not immediately accessible to neighborhood services and transit in exchange for up-zoning transit-served areas with neighborhood services. Land use designations would foster mixed use development in nodes at planned BRT stops along El Camino Real to support the evolution of the corridor into a grand boulevard. Comp Plan policies would encourage small-unit workforce and senior housing with reduced parking requirements. Comp Plan policies and programs would continue to focus on protecting the quality of life in Palo Alto's R-1 single-family neighborhoods and the City would adopt policies to encourage the preservation of neighborhood-serving retail and services where they currently exist throughout the city.

The character of each of the six focus areas identified by community members at workshops in June would be as follows under Scenario 3 in 2030:

- The role of **Downtown** in the cultural and commercial life of the community would be supported with the addition of some higher density housing. A slight increase to the height limit to a maximum of 55-60 feet would be allowed, as long as the additional height is used for residential units. Comp Plan policies would encourage studio and one-bedroom units or senior housing. Existing surface parking lots Downtown could be redeveloped with either housing or non-residential uses, as long as the overall amount of parking provided is consistent with trends and projections for automobile use in the Downtown area. The 27 University Avenue site would be developed to serve primarily as a transit center with some workforce housing.
- Along **El Camino Real**, new development would be focused in nodes at planned BRT stops, and housing would be prohibited outside of identified nodes. Comp Plan policies

- would allow for additional height and density within these nodes and would encourage retail and services catering to residents of the adjacent neighborhoods.
- The **Stanford Research Park** and the **Stanford Shopping Center** would retain the current character, with some housing added in the portions of these areas fronting El Camino Real as long as redevelopment incorporates neighborhood services and is coupled with streetscape improvements and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections to Downtown and the California Avenue area.
 - **California Avenue** itself would remain an “eclectic,” low-scale commercial street providing services and shopping for local residents. Formula retail and restaurant uses would be discouraged along California Avenue, in favor of independently owned and operated establishments. The surrounding area would accommodate additional multifamily housing at medium densities with underground parking. Existing surface parking lots would be redeveloped and parking consolidated in a manner consistent with trends and projections for automobile use in California Avenue area. The City would work to encourage Fry’s Electronics to remain at its current location, and Comp Plan policies would encourage the addition of housing to site. In the event that Fry’s elected to relocate elsewhere, medium-density housing would be developed on that site. Additionally, Comp Plan policies and programs would prioritize circulation and safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the California Avenue area.
 - The **East Meadow Circle/Bayshore** and **South San Antonio** areas would continue to support a variety of primarily non-residential uses. Additional housing would be prohibited in these areas, but land use designations would be adjusted to foster the development of neighborhood services that cater to employees and the residential population in adjacent areas.

Scenario 4: Net-Zero Concepts

This scenario would concentrate growth into key areas of the city in order to create complete centers with a rich array of housing, job and cultural opportunities in proximity to transit. This scenario would include the most job and residential growth of the four alternatives; however, growth would be allowed only on the condition that it (individually or collectively) satisfies "net zero" performance standards, such as net zero energy for new non-residential construction, net zero greenhouse gas emissions, net zero new automobile trips or vehicle miles traveled (VMT), net zero potable water use, and/or no new natural gas hookups.

Under this scenario, Palo Alto would lead the State and the country in pioneering “net zero” concepts. Some policies might be applied citywide; others would be focused on specific areas. Affordable housing and neighborhood-serving retail could be exempted from such requirements, but presumably no specific growth management strategy would be needed on the theory that the “net-zero” requirements would address the pace and impacts of development. To meet the performance standards, the City would institute an aggressive transportation demand management program and adopt new development fees to fund community transit services, including new Citywide shuttle routes and/or new “on-demand” transit services designed to provide residents with an attractive alternative to the private automobile for non-commute trips. R-1 neighborhoods would be protected and policies would encourage the preservation and expansion of neighborhood-serving retail throughout the City.

- The current **Downtown** cap on non-residential development would be replaced with a restriction on net new vehicle trips. The area would retain its current mix and proportion of uses, including jobs, housing, and retail/entertainment, and would be promoted as a cultural gathering place for all ages, with a full range of services for residents and employees. Pedestrian improvements would be introduced, along with improvements to the Caltrain station and transit center intended to make Downtown a regional transit hub with free shuttle service to destinations throughout the City. The 27 University site would be improved primarily as a transit center with some non-residential office space, potentially geared towards non-profit organizations that might otherwise be priced out of Palo Alto.
- Along **El Camino Real**, including within the **Stanford Shopping Center** and the **Stanford Research Park**, mixed use development with ground floor retail and residential above and behind would be allowed similar to Alternative 3. While most new development would be two or three stories, it could exceed the 50-foot height limit at two or three nodes along the corridor, where projects would be models of sustainability, with small units, car share and transit access rather than resident parking, net-zero energy, and net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. Wider sidewalks, bike enhancements, and beautification (street trees, benches, lighting, plantings) would be prioritized along El Camino, and local solar would be strongly encouraged all along the corridor on new and old buildings.
- **California Avenue** itself would see little change in this alternative and would remain an eclectic, neighborhood-serving retail destination, but the surrounding area would evolve to include both more jobs and more housing given the proximity of the Caltrain station and neighborhood services. Specifically, the Fry's site would transform to include a mix of uses with housing over commercial uses such as offices, with public gardens serving the new homes. A Tech Corridor overlay along Park Boulevard would facilitate the creation of small new tech companies and Park Boulevard itself would become a true "boulevard" with substantial pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements connecting workers along the Tech Corridor and on the Fry's site with the Cal Ave Caltrain station.
- The **Stanford Research Park** would become a cutting-edge proving ground for innovative concepts in energy generation, carbon sequestration, recycled water, urban farming and forestry, and drought-tolerant landscaping. In some areas, existing surface parking could be undergrounded and covered with vertical mixed use buildings, surrounding plazas and public gathering places, including restaurants and nighttime retail. In these areas, new housing would include townhomes, apartments, and lofts, and new streets would be added to break up the current "superblocks." A bike sharing program and a new free shuttle would serve residents and workers alike. All landscaping would be required to utilize low/no water plants and would be selected to support native birds and insects.
- The **East Meadow Circle/Bayshore** area would be slowly transformed from a research and office park to a new village center with a mix of housing types around a central plaza, as well as a potential new school. The office and light industrial uses along Fabian Way and Bayshore would remain as is and transit service to the area would be dramatically improved.

- In the **South San Antonio** area, existing businesses would be protected from displacement, although there could be limited new development once walkability and transit service (including Caltrain service) are improved.



MEMORANDUM

DATE July 29, 2014
TO Palo Alto City staff
FROM PlaceWorks consultant team
SUBJECT Growth Management Strategies applied in a Sample of California Cities

This memo presents a brief outline of growth management strategies put in place in a sample of California cities to offer context for the alternative scenarios currently being formulated for the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan Update. The sample includes communities with strategies addressing both residential and non-residential development, as well as communities with strategies addressing only one type of development or the other. The communities covered are, in alphabetical order, Carlsbad, Cupertino, Mountain View, Pleasanton, San Luis Obispo County, Santa Monica, and Walnut Creek.

The following examples are not intended as a recommendation to adopt one or more of these strategies. Any program adopted in Palo Alto would need a high degree of customization to fit its unique local conditions. In addition, other than the Pleasanton example, these strategies have not been “tested” in court. Legal analysis would have to be prepared for any growth management strategy that Palo Alto may want to adopt.

Strategies Addressing Both Residential and Non-residential Development

Carlsbad

Carlsbad, located on the Pacific Coast in northern San Diego County, is known for its successful growth management program, which ties the provision of public services and infrastructure to new development. In the 1980s, Carlsbad experienced a building boom that put pressure on public services and infrastructure. In response to this growth, voters passed Proposition E, the City’s Growth Management Ordinance, in 1986. The Growth Management Program (GMP) plans for an estimated citywide buildout of 54,600 dwelling units or an estimated population of 135,000. (The City’s current population is about 105,000.) This buildout estimate serves as the basis of the City’s Capital Improvement Plan. The GMP divides the City into 25 geographic sub-areas, each of which has a Local Facility Management Plan that outlines improvements necessary to accommodate new development. In addition, the Local Facility Management Plan establishes any necessary development impact fees to help fund identified improvements. The GMP requires that residential and non-residential

development meet 11 citywide public facility performance standards, established in the Capital Improvement Plan, as well as the specific standards outlined in the applicable Local Facility Management Plan. City staff actively monitor the GMP to make certain that development and services are appropriately timed, as well as to ensure that the growth cap is not exceeded.¹

The Carlsbad system is not focused on controlling the pace of growth. The issue in 1986 when it was established was the belief that too much housing was planned, so the program intends to reduce potential density citywide and make sure that (primarily residential) development provides adequate public facilities and services by geographic zone (“pays its way”).

- **Does the system include an overall cap on jobs/square feet?**

No. There’s only a cap on residential buildout.

- **Does the system include an annual limit on approvals?**

No. Controlling the pace of growth is not one of the goals of this system. (For residential development, there’s a “growth control point” to ensure range and distribution of dwelling unit/development sizes/types. It operates like a citywide TDR program under the voter approved CAP and tends to leads to master planned communities.)

- **Does the system include competitive scoring that pits projects against each other? Are any categories of project exempt (e.g. certain type of industry, projects under 10k sf)?**

No.

- **Does the system extract community benefits from developers? If so, what types of benefits and how successful has this been?**

Yes. For nonresidential projects benefits are extracted through negotiated conditions of approval. Typical benefits include streetscape amenities and open space to serve the development.

- **How flexible is the system/How does it allow for exceptions and/or creativity?**

For nonresidential development, the system is relatively flexible and allows for exceptions through the negotiated conditions of approval.

- **What is the staff burden of administering the system? Are there lessons learned about keeping the system simple to administer and easy to understand while achieving goals?**

Carlsbad’s GMP divides the City into 25 sub-regions. Although the system has managed growth well for the City, it does require active staff monitoring of a multifaceted system. The

¹ City of Carlsbad, <http://web.carlsbadca.gov/services/departments/planning/pages/growth-management.aspx>, accessed on July 2, 2014.

Facilities Management Plan consistency creates an additional layer of review, and the specific accounting system for residential development (e.g. tracking exact amounts and types of development in 25 sub-regions) creates a challenging staff burden.

- **Does the system get the results the community desires? Are there any unintended consequences?**

The system is working well. The Council and community are happy and satisfied with resulting services. The residential development tracking system could be more efficient.

Walnut Creek

Walnut Creek has regulated commercial growth since 1985, when voters approved Measure H, crafted by Citizens for a Better Walnut Creek, a growth-control initiative that would have limited or prevented non-residential development until traffic congestion at major intersections improved. Measure H was a reaction to resident concerns about traffic and the construction, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, of a number of large commercial office buildings in downtown Walnut Creek, primarily around the Walnut Creek BART station. A major local landowner sued the City, and the case eventually went to the California Supreme Court. In 1990, the Court ruled that Measure H was invalid because it functioned as a zoning ordinance but conflicted with the City's adopted General Plan, which called for Walnut Creek to be a regional job and retail center. Although Measure H was invalidated, the City continued to regulate the amount of commercial and residential development allowed each year, acknowledging the residents' desire to meter growth in Walnut Creek. In 1993, the City Council adopted a Growth Limitation Program that limited new commercial growth to 75,000 square feet per year, metered in increments of 150,000 square feet every 2 years, and was adopted for 10 years. The program helped the City to limit growth to 620,000 square feet of new commercial development in the first 10 years (1993-2003), and was extended through 2015 in the City's 2005 General Plan Update. The Growth Limitation Program excludes the Shadelands Business Park.²

- **Does the system include an overall cap on jobs/square feet? If so, how is that set? Changed? Enforced?**

Yes. The Walnut Creek Growth Management Program includes an annual cap of 75,000 commercial square feet/year metered in 2-year increments, but no total overall cap. The purpose of Walnut Creek's Growth Management Program is to meter the pace commercial growth, rather than to cap it at a specific level. The 75,000 square foot annual limit was

² City of Walnut Creek, *Walnut Creek General Plan 2025*, page 4-13. Available online at http://www.walnut-creek.org/citygov/depts/cd/planning/documents/general_plan_2025.asp.

derived on the basis of pipeline projects and growth projections available at the time the original program was put in place in the 1990s. The cap is set in the General Plan (which incorporated an earlier Growth Limitation Program from the 1990s). It is enforced by the Planning Division. Staff tracks available allocation and a building permit cannot be issued unless an allocation is available. If the building permit is allowed to expire prior to construction, the allocation is revoked and returns to the pool.

Residential development is capped at no more net new dwelling units than the total Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for all income levels assigned to the City.

See Policy Bulletin No. PB-041 - Growth Management Program:

<http://www.walnut-creek.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=5035>

- **Does the system include an annual limit on approvals? What is it? How is it set and changed?**

Yes, there is an annual limit of 75,000 commercial SF/year, metered in two year increments starting April 4 of even numbered years. Therefore allocations for 150,000 square feet of commercial development are available in each two year cycle. This limit is set in the General Plan and is not changed or adjusted. Unused allocations from one cycle are rolled over to the next cycle. Project applicants get credit for any existing commercial SF that would be demolished with construction of their project.

For residential projects, the cap is linked to the RHNA cycle rather than an annual limit. Credit is given for existing dwelling units that would be demolished with construction of the project. If the number of units demolished exceeds the number to be newly constructed, the difference gets added back to the allocation pool.

- **Does the system include a competitive point system pitting projects against each other? Any categories of project exempted (e.g. certain type of industry, projects under 10k sf)?**

There is no “beauty contest” type competition. Allocations are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis when the project planner deems a project application complete.

Development in the Shadelands Business Park on the eastern edge of the City, and specific types of Community Facilities, are exempt from the Growth Management Program (see Policy Bulletin No. PB-041 for complete list). Additionally, the Planning Manager can grant exemptions to larger, more complex projects so that their allocation can be reserved for longer than the 12-month period for which allocations are usually reserved.

- **Does the system extract community benefits from developers? What types of benefits? How successful has this been?**

Community Facilities are exempt. Also, the following types of dwelling units are exempt:

- Income-restricted dwelling units for Moderate, Low, or Very Low Income Households as defined by Part 1, Article 3 of the Zoning Ordinance
- Second Family Residential Units permitted pursuant to Part 3, Article 5 of the Zoning Ordinance
- Inclusionary Units required pursuant to Part 3, Article 9 of the Zoning Ordinance
- Density Bonus units permitted pursuant to Part 3, Article 10 of the Zoning Ordinance

- **How flexible is the system? (How) does it allow for exceptions and/or creativity?**

Yes, the system does have a far degree of flexibility built in – not in the cap, but rather in how it is calculated and implemented. That it is calculated in 2-year increments of up to 150,000 sf offers some flexibility; that unused allocation is carried over to the next cycle also offers flexibility; that certain community facilities and the Shadelands Business Park are exempt provides flexibility too. Further, the system allows project applicants to reserve allocations as soon as their application is deemed complete and to have it held for up to one year, with the possibility of having that reservation extended at the discretion of the Planning Manager for larger, more complex projects.

- **What is the staff burden of administering the system?**

Tracking is done on a quarterly basis, requiring approximately 4-5 hours of staff time per quarter. One Senior Planner is charged with compiling allocations and tracking the total versus the cap. In recent years, the level of staff effort required to complete the task has not been excessive; however, Walnut Creek has not come close to its cap recently. Tracking would be more complex and more time-consuming if the City were running up against the cap each year.

- **Does the system get the results the community desires? Are there any unintended consequences?**

The purpose of Walnut Creek's Growth Management Program is to meter the pace commercial growth, rather than to cap it at a specific level. In the late 1990s, the program was tested when the City ran up against the cap on more than one occasion, and it was judged a success because it achieved the aim of metering the pace of growth without sacrificing projects deemed beneficial to the community. The original Growth Limitation Program

(precursor to the Growth management Program) included a safety valve whereby it was possible -- where certain conditions were met -- to borrow ahead from future allocations in order to allow for the right project at the right time. Borrowing ahead required a special Council resolution and was done only once in about 2001. Subsequently, the program was streamlined, renamed Growth Management Program, and incorporated into the General Plan when that document was last updated in 2006. Since then the City has not come near its annual cap and the program will not be renewed when it sunsets in 2015.

Strategies Addressing Non-residential Development Only

Cupertino

Cupertino, like Palo Alto, is a city that caps the amount of growth that may occur in certain areas. The City's current General Plan controls the area and density of commercial, office, and hotel uses built in the city through development allocations in terms of square feet (commercial and office) or rooms (hotel).³ Currently, allocations are geographically assigned in certain neighborhoods, commercial and employment centers, so that private development fulfills City goals and priorities, and reduces adverse impacts to the environment. The City allocates development potential on a project-by-project basis to applicants for net new office and commercial square footage and hotel rooms.

As a result of several recent approvals of projects, including Apple Campus 2, a large amount of the current office, commercial and hotel development allocation has been granted, leaving an inadequate pool to allocate to additional development in the city. The City Council expressed concern that future development projects, which would benefit retail sales and employment growth in the city, would not have sufficient available development allocation necessary to move forward through the 2020 Horizon year of the current General Plan. Accordingly, in the summer of 2012, the City Council directed staff to evaluate ways to replenish citywide office, commercial, and hotel development allocation to ensure the City's economic needs and goals are met. That effort is currently underway as the City has drafted a General Plan Amendment to increase the allocations for all development types and has published a Draft EIR analyzing the impacts of the increased development allowances. (See <http://www.cupertino.org> for more information.)

³ City Of Cupertino, *General Plan Amendment, Housing Element Update, And Associated Rezoning Draft EIR*, June 2014. Pages 3-7 and 3-8. Available online at <http://www.cupertino.org/documents/view/180>

- **Does the system include an overall cap on jobs/square feet? If so, how is that set? Changed? Enforced?**

Development allocation caps the amount of commercial, office, and retail space, hotel rooms, and residential units. Housing and mixed use development allocation is determined based on certain commercial, office and industrial sites, consistent with long-term City revenue projections.⁴ Neighborhood residential units are allocated through the building permit process unless subdivision or planned unit development applications are required. Overall, development activity should be controlled so that private development fulfills City goals and priorities.

- **Does the system include an annual limit on approvals? What is it? How is it set and changed?**

No annual limit. Development allocation is determined on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration such as community benefits, fiscal benefits, and traffic.

- **Does the system include a competitive point system pitting projects against each other? Any categories of project exempted (e.g. certain type of industry, projects under 10k sf)?**

On a case-by-case basis, the City may allocate development potential to private developments based on the community benefits the project would provide.⁵ Allocations may be adjusted to ensure the City's economic and goals are met. Citywide development potential is calculated by summing the development potential from each of the City's areas. Individual properties are assigned base development potential, but most property owners will need to apply for additional allocations to develop their properties.

- Strategy 3 Major Companies. Prioritize expansion of office space for existing major companies in Cupertino. Retain a pool of 150,000 square feet to be drawn down by companies with Cupertino sales offices and corporate headquarters. New office development must demonstrate that the development positively contributes to the fiscal well-being of the City.
- Strategy 4 Flexible Allocations. Allow flexibility among the allocations assigned to each geographical area. Allocations may be redistributed from one geographical area to another if necessary and if no significant environmental impacts, particularly traffic, are identified.
- Strategy 5 Allocation Review. Review allocations of the development priorities periodically to ensure that the development priorities meet City needs and goals.

⁴ City of Cupertino 2000-2020 General Plan, Land Use/Community Design, page 2-15.

⁵ City of Cupertino 2000-2020 General Plan, Land Use/Community Design, page 2-16.

- Strategy 6 Development Agreements. Unused development potential committed in development agreements may be reallocated following the expiration of each development agreement, after a public hearing.
- **Does the system extract community benefits from developers? What types of benefits? How successful has this been?**

General Plan Policy 2-23.A states that, at the discretion of the City Council, and as indicated in certain land use policies, the City Council may approve heights different from the maximum base height standard in gateways and nodes, if a project includes a retail component and provides community benefits. The community benefits that can be proposed by developers and agreed upon by the City include:

- Transportation and Mobility Improvements
 - Funding towards and/or create new or expanded bicycle and pedestrian facilities above those required by the project to mitigate project impacts
 - Contributions toward facilities, transit improvements and/or amenities including adaptive traffic signal management systems, above those required by the project to mitigate project impacts
 - Contributions toward ongoing operation and maintenance of community shuttles (to move people around to key commercial centers) above that which might be required by the project to mitigate project impacts.
- Schools and Education
 - Funding to the City towards facilities and/or operations benefitting the school district, above that required by the project to mitigate project impacts
 - Public education facilities within a project
 - Teacher housing
 - Contributions toward tax revenue generators specifically for education
- Affordable Housing above and beyond Below Market Rate (BMR) requirements
 - Affordable housing within a project
 - Land to build an affordable housing project
 - Funding to build, buy or renovate an affordable housing project
- Public Art and Cultural Facilities
 - Funding toward and/or construction of a new community senior, teen, or youth facility
 - Funding toward and/or construction of a community gathering space (e.g. conference space or cultural center) or a museum
- Parks and Open Space

- Funding towards new or expanded publicly accessible but privately maintained parkland
 - New park and/or open space with a project (including rooftop parks open to the public)
- **How flexible is the system? (How) does it allow for exceptions and/or creativity?**

Policies/strategies in the General Plan 2020 allow for flexibility so that development allocations can be redistributed from one geographical region to another in order to meet economic goals and community benefit.
 - **What is the staff burden of administering the system?**

We did not receive a response from Cupertino staff.
 - **Does the system get the results the community desires? Are there any unintended consequences?**

Unintended consequences largely result in allocations in some land use categories being depleted sooner rather than later by one company or industry (e.g. Apple 2 Campus depleted nearly all office allocation), requiring replenishment or reallocation of development from one area to another earlier than expected.

Mountain View

In its recently-adopted General Plan (July 2012), Mountain View calls out eight “Planning Areas,” identified based on extensive community input as areas where Mountain View might significantly change over the life of the General Plan. Planning Areas are distinct from the rest of the City, which is not expected to change significantly. The General Plan identifies new uses and new land use designations within the Planning Areas, including Mixed Use designations, and increases the allowed intensity of both non-residential and residential development above what was allowed in the 1992 General Plan. Most Planning Areas are located along El Camino Real and/or near BRT or light rail stops. Most of the change in the city is focused in the North Bayshore area and along transit corridors in the East Whisman, El Camino Real and San Antonio areas. Currently, the City is preparing Precise Plans and accompanying Supplemental EIRs for each of the Planning Areas. The Precise Plans will add an additional layer of regulation to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and will establish the specific amount of development that can occur in each Planning Area without additional environmental review.

Although development is not restricted only to Planning Areas, the General Plan includes an overarching strategy “to support Mountain View’s sustainability” by “focusing future growth around

major transportation corridors to increase transit ridership.”⁶ Outside of the Planning Areas, Mountain View does not limit development that is consistent with the adopted General Plan and zoning provisions. However, any project that either a) would require a General Plan or zoning amendment, or b) is inside a Planning Area that does not yet have an adopted Precise Plan, must go through the “gatekeeper” process, which the City uses to allocate available staff resources. In the gatekeeper process, the City Council considers proposals on a quarterly basis to determine whether they should be allowed to move forward.

The current generations of Precise Plans are still being formulated and no drafts have been released yet, so many questions about how this system will work are not yet answered. The most recent Precise Plan adopted by City Council is the South Whisman Precise Plan (<http://archive.mountainview.gov/civica/filebank/blobdload.asp?BlobID=5889>), adopted in April 2009. Responses below are based on that document.

- **Does the system include an overall cap on jobs/square feet? If so, how is that set? Changed? Enforced?**

The South Whisman Precise Plan limits growth in this 38-acre area to 1,120 units and 37,000 square feet of retail. It specifies that the retail will be built in two phases, a first phase of at least 17,000 feet and a second phase of 20,000 feet.

- **Does the system include an annual limit on approvals? What is it? How is it set and changed?**

There is currently no instrument to regulate the pace of development that occurs consistent with a Precise Plan.

- **Does the system include a competitive point system pitting projects against each other? Any categories of project exempted (e.g. certain type of industry, projects under 10k sf)?**

No. The Precise Plan provides very specific guidance on amount of development, types of uses, density, phasing, design, etc. Within those parameters projects are approved on a first come, first served basis.

In the case of the South Whisman Precise Plan, the Precise Plan requires that a Master Plan be submitted for all development within the Plan area, followed by or concurrent with the submittal of a Planned Community (PC) Permit for the first phase of development.

⁶ City of Mountain View, Mountain View 2030 General Plan, Chapter 2. Available online at <http://www.mountainview.gov/civica/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=10702>.

- **Does the system extract community benefits from developers? What types of benefits? How successful has this been?**

Section 2 of the Precise Plan, Development Framework, clearly defines requirements for the specific amenities required as part of development, including street trees, gateway treatments, public and private open space, pedestrian and bike improvements, connections to the Light Rail station, and improvements to existing at-grade rail crossings.

Section 3, Development Standards and Design Guidelines, includes both mandatory and advisory guidance on site planning, facades, materials, lighting, signage, open space design, etc. Development has not yet occurred under the South Whisman Precise Plan.

- **How flexible is the system? (How) does it allow for exceptions and/or creativity?**

There is a great deal of flexibility during the Precise Plan process. The City is currently completing a new set of Precise Plans to implement the updated General Plan, and the ultimate content and parameters of what a Precise Plan is and does may change as part of this new generation of plans. However, once the Precise Plan is in place, it sets relatively detailed and specific guidance on development, down to the level of detail of fenestration, building materials, signage, and lighting, as well as specific direction on how and in what order the area will develop. The adopted Precise Plan provides great certainty but does not necessarily encourage flexibility or exceptions. The process to amend an adopted Precise Plan is similar to a Specific Plan or General Plan Amendment, potentially requiring community workshops, consultant support, CEQA review, and multiple Planning Commission and City Council hearings, depending upon the nature and extent of changes.

- **What is the staff burden of administering the system?**

Precise Plans add an additional layer of regulation to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. Staff must oversee the preparation and adoption of numerous Precise Plans and accompanying Supplemental EIRs (a process that can be expected to take at least two years and cost in the \$500,000 to \$700,000 range per plan). Following the adoption of the Precise Plan, staff (as well as applicants, decision-makers, and community members) then need to be familiar with the document and review and consider applications in reference to it.

- **Does the system get the results the community desires? Are there any unintended consequences?**

Results of the Precise Plans have varied. In general, development is likely to be consistent with the Precise Plan in the first few years after adoption, but Precise Plans do not always reflect changing conditions over time. City staff indicated that the results of the Downtown Precise

Plan have been very successful, and that the Precise Plan process is successful in achieving the desired outcome of focused input in a given area. Overall, the Precise Plan process and tool has been successful for the City of Mountain View.

Santa Monica

Goal T19 in the Santa Monica Land Use and Circulation Element (LUCE) of the Santa Monica General Plan (adopted in 2010) is to “Create an integrated transportation and land use program that seeks to limit total peak period vehicle trips with a Santa Monica origin or destination to 2009 levels”. This goal is also known as the “No Net New Evening Peak Period Vehicle Trips” goal. The LUCE focuses not only on reducing vehicle trips, but also on encourage walking, bicycling and transit use, creating pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The LUCE foresees the creation of a multi-modal transportation system and “identifies local strategies to manage trips, treating the entire City as an integrated transportation management system with aggressive requirements for trip reduction, transit enhancements, pedestrian and bike improvements, and shared parking. Transportation demand management (TDM) programs that reduce automobile travel demand and incentivize alternative modes such as carpool, vanpools, and shuttles, walking, bicycling, and shared parking are all encouraged.”⁷ The LUCE calls for the City to manage new trips from new development and reduce trips from existing major employers. New trips must be offset through the development of new transportation infrastructure providing alternatives to automobile travel, including public transit, bicycling, ridesharing, and walking. The LUCE also contains a list of transportation policies, projects, and programs that are necessary to accommodate projected growth with no net increase in PM peak hour vehicle trips through 2030.

The LUCE identifies the establishment of fees as a tool to manage vehicle trips and increase alternative transportation options. The LUCE states that “New projects will be required to minimize the trips they generate and contribute fees to mitigate their new trips.” However, the LUCE also states that “To achieve the No Net New Trips goal, *developers cannot be expected to have every project generate zero trips by itself;*” rather, developers will pay mitigation fees that will fund capital improvement projects citywide, such that the net impact of each development project ultimately is zero. Fees will be used for improvements that benefit the City’s transportation system overall, such as additional buses to increase

⁷ City of Santa Monica, *Transportation Impact Fee Nexus Study (Final)*, April 2012. Page 1-3. Available online at <http://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/PCD/Transportation/Developers/Santa-Monica-Nexus-Study.pdf>

frequency, improved walking routes and new bike lanes.”⁸ The provision that the City as a whole will achieve no net new trips by 2030, but that individual projects will not be required to generate no net new trips, has created some confusion and concern among Santa Monica residents as the LUCE is implemented.

Strategies Addressing Residential Development Only

Pleasanton

Pleasanton is another jobs-rich Bay Area city that historically capped the amount of growth. Pleasanton capped residential growth with a voter-approved growth management ordinance in 1986. Revisions in 1998 added a limit of 750 housing permits per year and an ultimate maximum cap of 29,000 homes. This cap was re-approved by voters in 2008. However, the cap prevented Pleasanton from meeting its Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA), and therefore from achieving a certified Housing Element. The City was sued by affordable housing advocacy organizations, in a case joined by then-Attorney General Jerry Brown, and in 2010 an Alameda County Superior Court judge ruled that the City was in violation of State statute and that the population cap was invalid. As a result of the ruling, the City was ordered to rezone adequate land to accommodate affordable housing within 120 days (not within one year, as the City had proposed) and required to halt all non-residential development immediately. The City did not appeal the ruling, but settled with the plaintiffs.⁹

San Luis Obispo County

San Luis Obispo County utilizes a Resource Management System, enshrined in the Land Use Element of its General Plan, to monitor key infrastructure, service, and environmental indicators and prevent residential development that would exceed the County’s capacity or affect public health. The six resources addressed by the Resource Management System are:

1. Water
2. Sewage Disposal
3. Schools
4. Roads
5. Air Quality
6. Parks

⁸ City of Santa Monica, *Land Use and Circulation Element*, July 2010. Page 4.0-12. Available online at <http://www.smgov.net/uploadedFiles/Departments/PCD/Plans/General-Plan/Land-Use-and-Circulation-Element.pdf>

⁹ Fulton, William. *Guide to California Planning*, 4th ed., 2012. Pages 235-236.

The County's Planning and Building Department prepares biannual reports on the status of these resources. If resource monitoring indicates that existing development in a given area is beginning to affect a given resource, staff presents the Board of Supervisors with an advisory memo. The memo identifies the severity of the issue, from Level I (Resource capacity problem) through Level III (Resource capacity met or exceeded), and recommends a corrective action or actions. The Board of Supervisors then holds a public process to consider whether there is indeed a problem that needs to be addressed, and if so, what solutions should be implemented. The County may pursue one or more solutions, such as limiting new development; metering new development to allow additional time to solve the problem; instituting new developer fees to fund improvements to address the problem; or funding improvements with public money. The County must be cautious to ensure the solutions it imposes do not prevent it from meeting the housing obligations imposed by State law.

Attachment K

Additional Correspondence

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DATE: July 28, 2014
TO: Palo Alto City Council and PTC Members
FROM: Stephen Levy
SUBJECT: Background and Ideas for Comp Plan

Update on Regional Trends

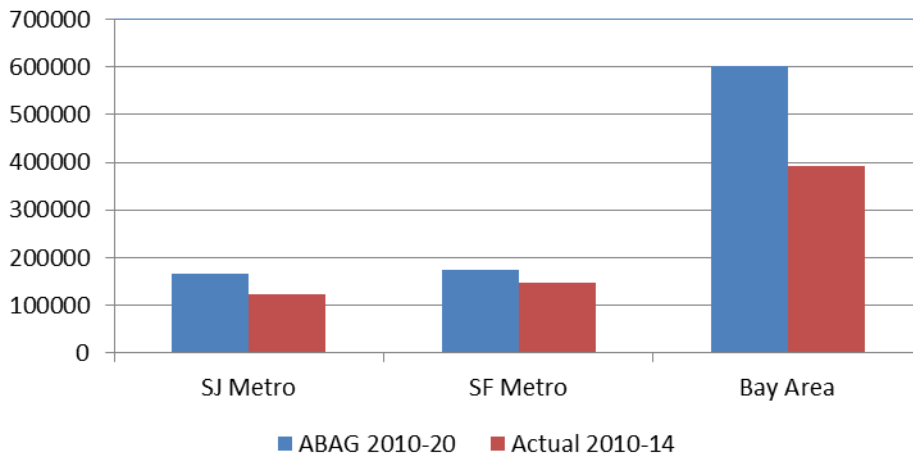
Growth and strategies to address growth challenges in Palo Alto are influenced by job and population trends in the region.

Recent Job Trends—Job Growth Surges Above Plan Bay Area Forecast

The region has added nearly 100,000 jobs per year since 2010 led by strong growth in the San Jose and San Francisco metro areas, which have often been among the five fastest job growth areas in the nation. Unemployment rates in the region declined to 5.3% in June 2014 with lower rates in San Francisco and San Mateo counties.

The recent job growth has outpaced the ABAG projected growth path to 2020 as shown below. In four years since 2010 the San Jose metro area (Santa Clara and San Benito counties) have recorded 75% of the job growth projected by ABAG between 2010 and 2020 while the SF metro area added 84% of anticipated 10-year growth and the region was 65% of the way to the ten year forecasted growth. It is likely that job growth will slow somewhat over the rest of the decade as discussed below but fears that the ABAG growth projections were far too high have not been borne out by actual events.

Job Growth Projected Vs. To Date



Recent Population Trends—Growth Accelerated in 2012 and 2013

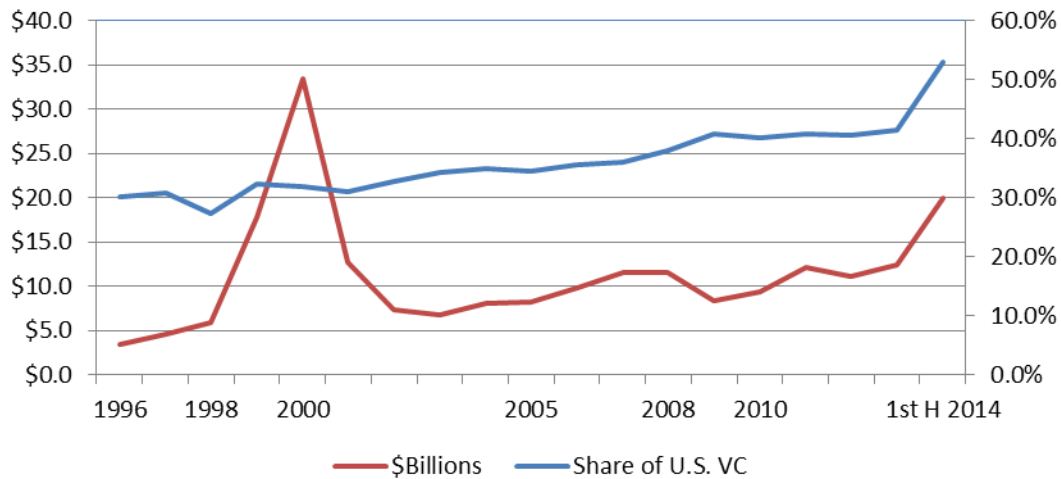
The region added nearly 275,000 residents between 2010 and 2014 or 40% of the ten-year growth anticipated in Plan Bay Area. It is very unusual for job growth to outpace population growth (usually there are roughly 2 added residents for every new job) but this was possible so far as many jobs were filled by existing residents who were unemployed.

But a large share of recent population growth came in the last two years as unemployment fell and more of the jobs required people moving to the region—a trend that will continue now that unemployment is near 5%. In 2012 and 2013 the Bay Area was the fastest growing region in the state and Santa Clara County was the fastest growing county.

Information Relevant to the Near Term Future and to 2030

Job growth will slow toward the end of the decade and beyond but that is already anticipated in the Plan Bay Area forecasts, which now look low for the period to 2030. For the near term the outlook is for continuing strong job growth. The U.S., and state job growth is expected to be strong through 2016. And the latest venture capital data show that the Bay Area is receiving a record high share of VC funding and 2014 shapes up as the second highest funding year after the dot.com boom record in 2000 based on data for the first half of the year.

Bay Area VC Funding Trends



In addition to normal economic activity the south bay will see extra activity surrounding the new 49er stadium and soon to open BART stations.

Two years ago there was discussion in Palo Alto questioning the Plan Bay Area population projections because they were much higher than those released by

the California Department of Finance (DOF). DOF will release new Bay Area and statewide projections for second review by regional/county planning agencies this Friday. They will be similar to the levels expected in Plan Bay Area and compared to previous ABAG and DOF projections have a) lower birth rates, b) more growth in the Asian population and c) similar patterns of substantial growth in the older population.

So the bottom line, which should not be surprising to residents, policy makers or staff, is that the Bay Area is experiencing substantial growth and remains desired by business and prospective residents alike as a great place to live and work.

Implications and Ideas for the Comp Plan

- 1) The Comp Plan horizon is 2030. The new DOF projections should give a good picture of the age and ethnic population trends for the region and peninsula. I appreciate how difficult it is to think about and plan for the future but I hope that the Council and PTC can incorporate the perspective of our 2030 residents and the kind of city they would like. That perspective will include that of existing residents and the substantial aging that will take place but also, I hope, reflect what newer residents will be like and want. One challenge we face with these incredibly rising home prices is maintaining diversity as much as realistically possible.
- 2) Staff has outlined four broad alternatives for the initial Comp Plan discussion. One difference among the alternatives is in the amount of growth that is planned for. I urge the staff, Council and PTC to include an alternative that at least matches the amount of growth envisioned in Plan Bay Area. My discussions with staff indicate that they may adjust one of the alternatives to achieve this broader range of growth alternatives for consideration.

I am well aware of the current mood of many residents about growth but have also seen at the PTC and at the Our Palo Alto meetings that many residents want to see the city offer a broader range of new housing. In addition I am concerned that there are legal risks in preventing discussion of plans that at least study the Plan Bay Area anticipated growth.

- 3) Staff has identified six areas within the city for studying future growth alternatives while trying to steer growth away from existing residential areas except for possible additional retail opportunities. I think this is a good framework for proceeding. In all of the meetings I have attended residents have worked constructively and seen opportunities in all of these locations. While we will not have exact numbers until the alternatives are fleshed out more, it may well be that these six areas can handle the housing growth without any densification of existing R1 neighborhoods. So

what has been a controversy about housing growth in the abstract may be easier to find agreement if we get specific about these six areas.

- 4) I am encouraging staff to provide rough numbers as soon as possible as to how much growth is allowed under current zoning. I am worried that the current upset about recent growth is encouraging residents to have unrealistic expectations about how much growth can be limited apart from the Comp Plan question of what is desirable for Palo Alto. I am hoping that staff including the city attorney can clarify what is in the discretion of Council (certainly there is a lot and I expect vigorous analysis of public benefits for zoning change applications) and what is less or not discretionary—for example, the changes planned at the Yoga Center and CPK sites in downtown.

One factor for all to consider is that office use for tech companies and start-ups is much denser than the way office space was used ten or twenty years ago. This means that a considerable (I hope staff can get an estimate) amount of job growth can occur even if no more buildings are approved. There are solid cost (space is expensive) and productivity (tech workers get benefit from working closely together) for these changes.

Our offices downtown have seen two such changes—1) the way Palantir is using the space that our office and the adjacent training center used space before we had to move, 2) the way that the main tenant in our current building has gone from 10 to 40 employees in the same space and 3) we saw the same trend in our visit last week to our son's new workplace in Irvine where four or five people work in each office—40+ people working in a space that previously might have had 10 to 15.

- 5) There has been a lot of back and forth about what uses are good near transit. My understanding of the best thinking on these issues (which is supported by the Caltrain usage data) is

--for reducing commuting trips the best approach is to locate jobs near transit

--for reducing travel by households apart from commuting (most trips are not for commuting) the best locations are near services and often used retail.

So it is good to locate housing near downtown or Cal Ave, not primarily because they are near Caltrain stations but because they are near places residents go often and can now not need a car.

As a result the goal of locating housing within x miles of transit should be replaced by the goal of locating new housing near services and often used

retail. There are places like T&C and Stanford Shopping Center for other needs. We cannot eliminate car use but can reduce the need for it by these measures.

I am attaching a memo on Caltrain usage. As readers can see Palo Alto ridership is in a strong uptrend and by far the largest use is riders who come to PA in the morning in contrast to those who leave from the city confirming that it is access to jobs that is boosting ridership the most.

- 6) I am attaching a long memo on retail/dining/services demands and locations. There are three bottom lines

--for downtown what we have is what one would expect given the customer base

--growth in the customer base downtown and in many PA locations is driven by jobs and visitors (from afar, from neighboring communities and from other parts of PA). The customer base is not dominated by nearby residents (although we feel well served living downtown) and one should expect prospective tenants to think about the needs of their primary customer base.

--many of the residents who call for more retail also call for limiting housing and job growth putting them in a logical disconnect from the perspective of prospective retail/dining/service owners.

- 7) I commend the city for the three part approach to parking and traffic downtown and wish all participants well. From my perspective there are no villains here and solutions need to respect the perspectives of residents, businesses and workers to solve the problem for everyone and not just move it around. Probably some kind of pricing oriented to incentives to use existing non street parking will be helpful along with capacity increases.

- 8) I am worried about two potential “mistakes” in the Comp Plan process and associated activities—

--a) that residents may underestimate the amount of growth that is coming, which is why I have stressed providing such information and associated legal opinions

--b) that as a result of these underestimates or wishful hopes, we may not go as aggressively as I think we need to in improving infrastructure, expanding school capacity, finding approaches to deal with the expanded parking and traffic challenges

CENTER FOR CONTINUING STUDY OF THE CALIFORNIA ECONOMY

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www.ccsce.com

DATE: July 28, 2014
TO: Palo Alto City Council and PTC Members
FROM: Stephen Levy
SUBJECT: Caltrain and PA Planning Issues

Some Caltrain Trends

Average Weekday Ridership

The Palo Alto (downtown) station remains the second busiest system wide and shows above average growth since 2010. Interestingly, while the Cal Ave ridership is much lower, the rate of growth exceeds that at the downtown station. Since these are total trips, the number of unique riders is roughly half of the ridership totals. So, for example, the growth of 2,574 boardings at PA represents nearly 1,300 additional riders.

Average Weekday Trips To and From Station

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Growth 2010-14	
						Number	Percent
PA	3582	4028	4664	5469	6156	2574	71.9%
Cal Ave	777	865	1069	1294	1408	631	81.2%
Mt View	3049	3368	3670	3876	4274	1225	40.2%
Total	34120	37779	42354	47060	52611	18491	54.2%

Source: Caltrain

Average Peak Morning Ridership

These trends are interesting and shed light on two discussions—1) the priority for downtown housing and jobs relative to transit and 2) parking and shuttle service relative to ridership trends.

Average MORNING PEAK Weekday Trips to and From Palo Alto Station

	Going North		Going South		Total	
	On	Off	On	Off	On	Off
2010	659	790	161	1399	820	2189
2011	382	826	150	1538	532	2364
2012	726	1037	186	1803	912	2840
2013	746	1333	214	2139	960	3471
2014	820	1493	246	2459	1066	3952
2010-14	161	703	85	1060	246	1763
	24.4%	89.0%	52.8%	75.8%	30.0%	80.5%

The first point to note is that the station is used by many more coming here than leaving from here. In 2014 in the morning peak hour 3,952 riders got off at PA station and 1,066 got on. The number of riders getting off at PA increased by 80.5% since 2010 while the departing riders increased by just 30.0%.

More riders (2,459 in 2014) got off coming from the north than from the south (1,493) but there are large numbers and % increases from both directions.

Potential Implications

Palo Alto is a major destination for jobs for Caltrain morning riders. The increase since 2010 has been 1,763. It would be interesting to know the split between those going downtown, to Stanford and perhaps to other locations. I know that many walk downtown after getting off as I see them but I do not have numbers. Perhaps Stanford has and would share shuttle ridership trend information.

Each of these arriving passengers eliminates a parking demand. It would be interesting to know how the increase in riders getting off at PA compares to job increases in downtown and Stanford.

I had thought the increase on people getting on at PA would have been larger and might have been a larger component of the increase in parking pressure. This looks less likely given the ridership numbers and 1) that PA has the second largest on board bikers (732), 2) some people walk to the station and 3) some are dropped off.

I think these data support the idea that locating jobs near transit is the more effective way to reduce auto commute use while locating housing near downtowns remains the most effective way to reduce non commute travel.

DATE: July 28, 2014
TO: Palo Alto City Council and PTC Members
FROM: Stephen Levy
SUBJECT: Shopping, Dining and Services in Downtown

There has been considerable discussion about trends in retail development downtown in the media, on Town Square and somewhat in the Comp Plan update discussions. Neilson Buchanan has continued this discussion in the email that I am forwarding with this memo.

Introduction

I am not a retail expert nor am I a city planner. My expertise is in regional economic analysis and I am familiar with Bay Area economic and demographic trends, Plan Bay Area and the concepts of “smart growth” in these contexts.

I prepared the regional growth forecast that was the foundation for Plan Bay Area and have done similar work for four other regional planning agencies in California as well as for energy and transportation planning. I do not prepare EIRs but have recently reviewed major economic/environmental analyses related to AB 32 for the Air Resources Board and the Southern California air quality district. I serve on the technical advisory committee related to preparation of the new State Housing Element. I served on the PA infrastructure commission.

Nor am I an expert in Palo Alto data beyond what I have shared with the council and planning staff. I can guess at what the data will show but to the extent possible staff or PlaceWorks/Joanna Jansen should collect the data I discuss in the Comp Plan update.

I lived for 14 years with roommates in College Terrace and then near 101 Alma. Nancy and I lived in two homes in the near Duveneck for 28 years and we have lived downtown in a condo for the past 9 years. I have worked downtown since 1969. I have never driven a car (poor eyesight).

I have never represented a developer in a public decision process and own no property besides our condo and a week timeshare in Tahoe.

Is it just Retail or do Residents Really Mean Retail and Services?

Most people “shop” downtown for restaurants/coffee/desert places, services and traditional retail stores that sell goods.

My sense is that people mean to include services and eating/drinking places in the discussion of what they want downtown to serve people who live and /or work downtown. At least for our family once you get beyond restaurants/coffee places, Whole Foods, CVS, Walgreens and TJs (we walk—thank you Palo Alto for the Homer tunnel), most of our purchases downtown are of services.

I think we need to develop a common understanding that retail really means places that residents, workers and visitors regularly use for dining, shopping and services.

The Competitive Environment

Downtown retail in the narrow sense of shopping for goods faces a daunting competitive environment, which probably explains most of the recent trends.

Here are some trends that affect the environment for retail downtown, but much less so or not at all for many services and eating/drinking establishments.

- 1) Downtown is adjacent to a major regional shopping center. It is a good walk or short drive and has what most residents would call a full range of retail opportunities.
- 2) There is a substantially revitalized Town and Country shopping center with, again, a wide variety of smaller retail establishments sprinkled with a few services and a market (TJs) that all appear to be thriving. This competition for downtown is a relatively new occurrence and I would ask a retail expert how this changes what is possible downtown.
- 3) Both Stanford and T&C have two other competitive advantages: a) they operate under coordinated management and b) they have free onsite parking. One of the challenges of retail “planning” downtown is that we deal with individual owners, not a single management entity.
- 4) There has been a major increase in online shopping for items that folks use to get at stores. When I came home today, in our 17 unit condo there were 8 packages from Amazon and the like. I feel confident that the increase in online shopping affects the possibilities for downtown in what potential shoppers want. Again, Amazon does not deliver services, just goods.
- 5) I now get books and music on my iPad. A while back I would go to Borders but no more. I am sure many residents no longer need (or need

as many) bookstores, places to get CDs or places to rent movies in a Netflix world.

- 6) Downtown rents and land prices are expensive—very expensive and that will affect who wants to locate there.
- 7) What remains and what we use and walk to from our downtown condo include

Medical care—at PAMC and Stanford

Our dentists are downtown

Dry cleaning

Shoe repair (I also buy shoes at Footwear but this is not a frequent purchase)

Clothes alteration (for our son's wedding)

Eyeglasses and repair (Nancy walks to T&C)

Chico's

Watch repair and small purchases

Banking (I still do not do mobile banking)

Haircuts (Nancy drives to Mt. View)

The UPS store (and the post office while it lasts)

The Apple, Sprint and Verizon stores which are a mixture of goods and services

Extensive use of Whole Foods, CVS, and Walgreens for food, home supplies, prescriptions,

Lots of visits to restaurants, places to get frozen yogurt, coffee and goodies—we find lots of places that are not too expensive and mostly they are all jammed.

I am interested in what other downtown residents use in the way of shopping or services downtown.

So we are quite satisfied as residents and rarely use the car.

Who are the Principal Customers?

I don't have the data but I have to believe that the largest daytime customers are people who work downtown.

I think the customers downtown establishments (and we should) focus on are

- 1) Downtown residents
- 2) Downtown workers
- 3) Stanford students and workers

4) Visitors

It would be interesting to know the numbers in each group. Whatever the numbers I suspect the growth recently has been in downtown workers and associated visitors.

The Palo Alto residents who do not live downtown have no real need to get into the downtown retail/services discussion. They have closer better options. They do have an interest in downtown dining or perhaps going to the movies or unique places but in general for everyday shopping, downtown is not needed for them.

My observation is that many, if not most, of the new workers downtown are relatively young. I see that in the people getting off Caltrain, the people where our offices have been and the people we see in restaurants and coffee/yogurt places and observe in bars. We also see a lot of families with children downtown in the evening and where we eat.

If I were a retailer I would target these folks. I think there is a lot of nostalgia in these retail discussions, often by people who do not live or work downtown. Our favorite not here anymore places are Hobee's, Good Earth and Machismo Mouse. But we do not suffer for places to eat and if our children were still of that age, we would easily find new places (Lyfe Kitchen, Sprouts, Plutos and others) that meet our needs.

But I am reminded often that I am no longer a typical or in demand customer for many goods and services. TV networks routinely cancel shows we love but I do not pretend they are acting irrationally. My trainer had an office next to mine but we both got moved out when Palantir took over the building and offered so much that the our landlords also moved on. Life goes on and we are surviving.

What do we make of the Empty Retail Places Downtown?

I observe retail places that remain vacant for long periods. The Borders site is one. The Waterworks site is another. There are two on Bryant—the almost kosher restaurant and the restaurant site next to Monique's (vacant seemingly forever). The retail site next to Simply Be has been vacant forever. I am sure there are others. We do not walk around counting vacant sites.

I assume this means that the demand for retail space at the rents offered is not sufficient to fill these spaces.

This leads to the “you can bring a horse to water but you cannot make her drink” dilemma. These vacant spaces are all ground floor in good locations. So I suspect enforcing more ground floor retail space is not any guarantee that it will

be filled and certainly no guarantee that it will be filled by the kind of places the nostalgia folks wish for.

What's Not Coming Downtown

Big box stores, a giant cheap supermarket (nor any other places in PA with our zoning and land costs).

I am interested in hearing from folks what is missing that is realistic to expect and how that might occur through city action.

The Palo Alto Contradiction

Many of the people who speak to the PTC and council and write on Town Square are indulging in illogical thinking.

They want more retail downtown while restricting the growth of the two largest customer bases (workers and residents) and, inferentially by opposing new hotels, restricting the growth of some tourism.

Next they want more retail in a parking constrained area while opposing the growth of traffic or spending money for new parking lots and simultaneously wanting to restrict parking on neighborhood streets without as yet any offsetting investments. **I AM sympathetic to the downtown parking issues and am just pointing out that wanting the growth or retail while restricting the customer base and only solving part of the parking challenges is a bit illogical.**

Conclusions

My perspective is that downtown shopping, restaurants and services are serving the main customer bases well. I observe lots of people in Whole Foods, CVS, Walgreens, and the many restaurants and desert/coffee places we frequent and lots of people downtown in general.

There are plenty of mainstream shopping options for people who do not live or work in downtown and their voices are not much to be trusted relative to future downtown retail. My perspective in listening to the complaints is that they see retail as a way to block more office growth and not because they are injured by the transitions going on.

I am unclear what kind of planning can be done given the many uncoordinated individual property owners or where there is market failure. But expert voices on downtown retail might see other options that are within the city's powers.

Two Other Factors Worth Noting

I will write more about these but wanted here to get the ideas out.

- 1) The Comp Plan is to 2030. That means a) going beyond the current RHNA time period ending and anticipating the needs of the next eight year period which will be within the Comp Plan horizon and 2) anticipating the implications of the large demographic changes in the decade 2020-2030.
- 2) We should rethink the notion in the current alternative that seeks to locate housing within ½ mile of transit. To minimize the travel impacts of new housing it should be located close to services, dining and shopping. The main trips eliminated are non-work trips. Some residents have suggested trying to reduce school driving trips—and interesting idea.

Most people (I don't know for sure but this must be right) who take Caltrain drive, walk, bike or get dropped off but most do not live within a half mile of the stations.

On the other hand smart growth does suggest placing job sites near transit. Look at the success of the downtown Caltrain station, Stanford shuttle combination. Watch as I do who the folks are getting off the trains and where they go.

In the other hand this may be a distinction with only a slight difference in that the train stations are located near services, dining and shopping.

But once you shift from thinking housing will reduce commute trips to the concept of reducing not commute trips and associate parking, the half mile from transit is not the right criterion. For example, where Neilson and Eric live are in the right location for convenient walking trips but are not within a half mile of transit. Our place might make the ½ mile criterion but a block away might not although in terms of downtown use they are identical.



Our Palo Alto 2030: Attachment L EIR Scoping Hearing

City Council Meeting - August 4 & 6, 2014

Goals for Tonight

- Update the City Council on public engagement
- Accept public testimony on environmental issues and alternatives
- Provide Council feedback to staff and consultant team including Council direction to:
 - begin the EIR analysis; or
 - provide specific additional information for refinement of the alternative scenarios

Environmental Impact Review



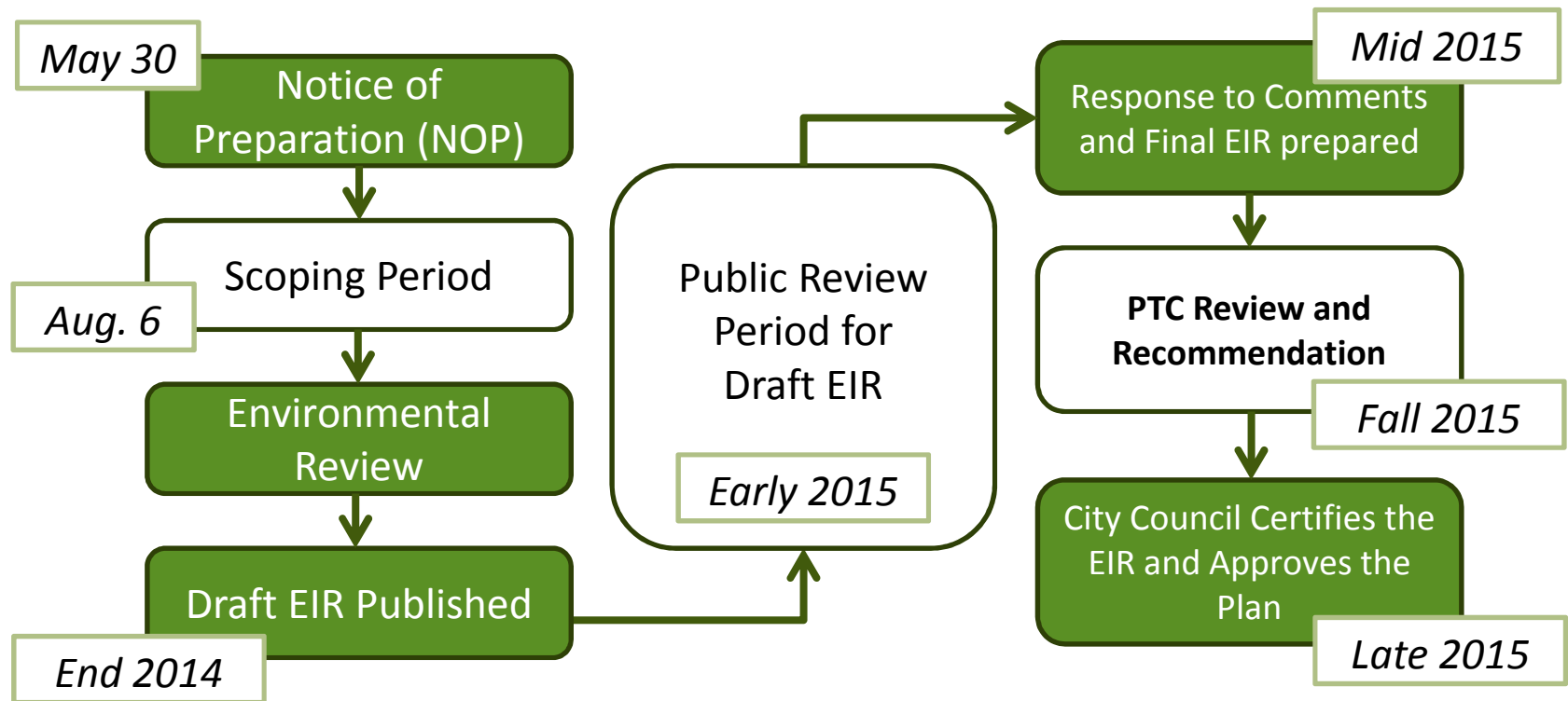
Environmental Review


- Content
- Purpose
- Timeline
- Opportunities for Public Input
- Explanation of Program EIR
- Topics to be Covered

EIR: Timeline

- (NOP) issued **May 30, 2014**
- Close of NOP comment period
 - Agencies: **June 30**
 - Public: **August 6**
- Conduct analysis: **August-December 2014**
- Publish Draft EIR: **End of 2014**
- Draft EIR public comment period: **early 2015**

EIR: Public Input



 = Opportunities for public input

What is a Program EIR?

Project-level EIR	Program EIR
Same legally-required contents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Covers a specific development project➤ Includes high level of detail including site-specific analyses➤ Identifies and mitigates project-specific and cumulative impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Covers policies and programs that will guide future development citywide➤ Includes a general/conceptual level of detail, not site-specific analyses➤ Identifies and mitigates program and cumulative impacts of development during the life of the plan

EIR: Topics

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural, Historical & Archaeological Resources
- Geology, Soils & Seismicity
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology & Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population, Housing & Employment
- Public Services
- Parks & Recreation
- Transportation & Traffic
- Utilities & Service Systems

Community Engagement and EIR Alternatives



“Scoping” Meetings

- #1: Critical Issues, May 29, Avenidas
- #2: Growth Management, June 10, Palo Alto High School
- #3: Alternative Futures, June 24, Elks Lodge



#1: Critical Issues

- Overview of Comp Plan process
- Identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)
- About 40 attendees
- Common themes: quality of life, relationship with Stanford, traffic congestion, public trust, citizen engagement, high cost of housing, High Speed Rail/Caltrain Electrification



Online Engagement

Participate online throughout the process – whenever, wherever, and however you want. Accessible via PC, smartphone, or tablet.



O

Opportunities

resources

start-up culture

innovation

more mixed-use

transit

new

high-speed rail

development

high-speed

solar energy

internet

better housing

caltrain
center

Stanford

partnerships

regional planning

infrastructure

#2: Growth Management

- Presentation on population, housing and employment projections
- Brief overview of growth management strategies in Palo Alto and other cities (an updated version is attached to tonight's staff report)
- About 30 attendees
- Small groups identified potential areas for change





Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations

Residential	Business/Industrial	Other
Single Family Res	Light Industrial	School District Land
Multi-Family Res	Research/Office Park	Major Institution/Special Facility
Multi-Family Res (affordable Overlay)		MSU/Campus Educational Facility
MSU/Campus Multiple Family		Streamside Open Space
Mixed Use		Public Park
MSU/Campus Single Family		Open Space/Controlled Development
		MUL/Academic Reserve and Open Space
		Public Conservation Land
Commercial		
Hotel Commercial		
Service Commercial		
Neighborhood Commercial		
Regional/Community Commercial		

Transit Stops and Routes

- AC Transbay
- Dumbarton Express
- Santa Clara VTA
- Planned BRT Stop
- Embarcadero Shuttle
- Cross-town Shuttle
- Stanford Marguerite Shuttle
- SanTrans
- Caltrans Stations

Consensus for growth

not consensus yet not contested

Housing for low income workers (waiters, janitors, etc)

Tunnel Cal Train, Build Hsg + Greenway on top of it.

Research Park

Distribution between North and South Palo Alto Housing

Walkable

Livable, walkable urban villages

Housing at THE SCHOOLS

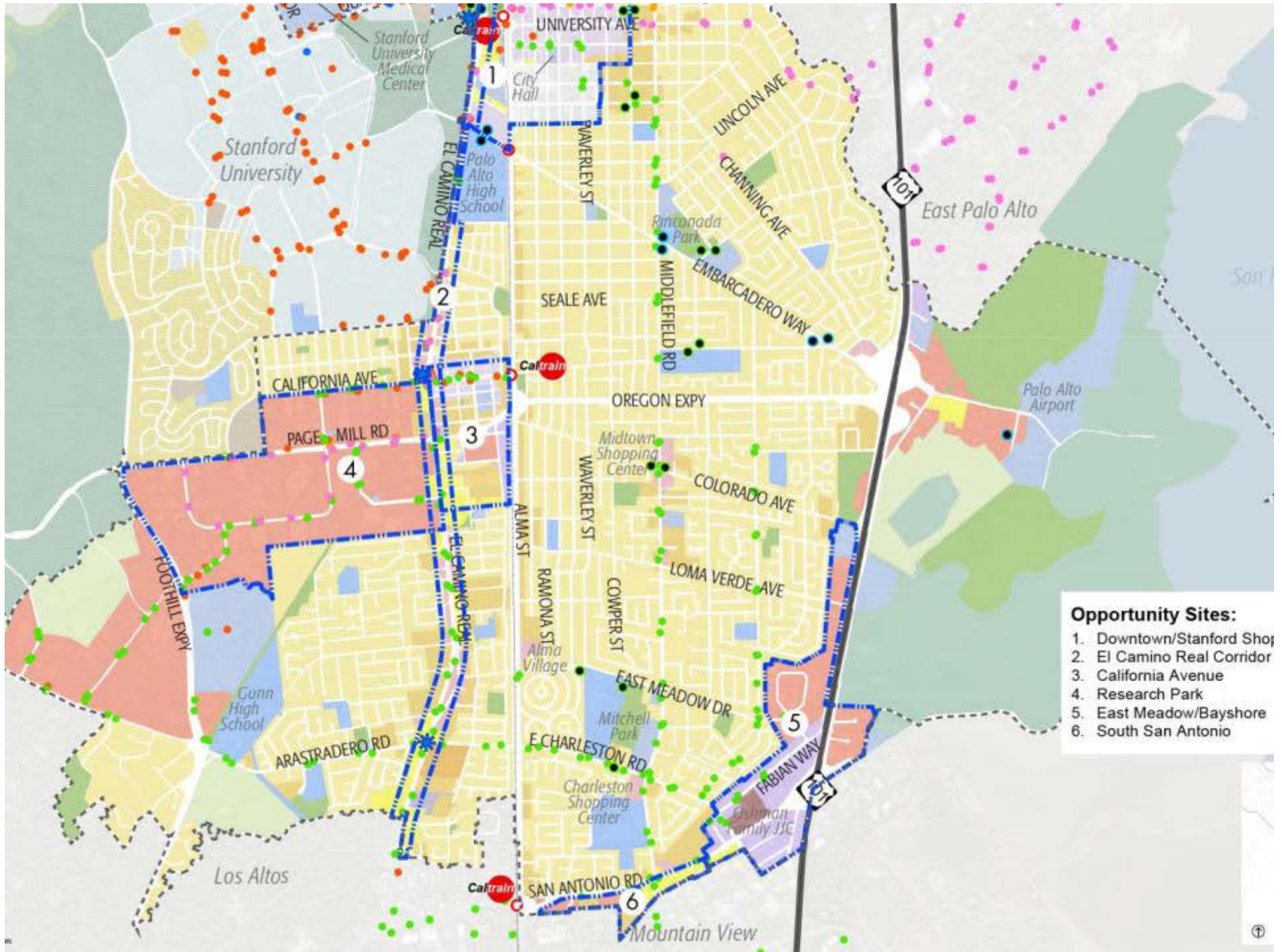
Granny-flat concept

granny flats

housing by employers e.g. Stanford Research Park

- pedestrian-only streets?
- multi-use parking (subterranean)
- mixed use + housing
- rental long





- Opportunity Sites:**
1. Downtown/Stanford Shop
 2. El Camino Real Corridor
 3. California Avenue
 4. Research Park
 5. East Meadow/Bayshore
 6. South San Antonio

#3: Alternative Futures

- Review of past two meetings and focus areas identified
- Explanation of alternatives exercise and description of 3 potential alternatives
- About 80 attendees
- Nine small groups created 9 variations on the conceptual alternatives



Online Engagement

Participate online throughout the process – whenever, wherever, and however you want. Accessible via PC, smartphone, or tablet.



A screenshot of a web application interface for online engagement. At the top, there is a dark navigation bar with links for HOME, INFO, SIGN IN, and HELP. Below this is a row of social media icons for Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Email. A speech bubble icon is followed by the question: "What roles should these Opportunity Sites play in the life of the City in 2030?". Below the question is an "Introduction" section with the text: "Please choose one of the opportunity sites below to explore it in detail and provide a comment." The main content is a map of Palo Alto, California, with several colored overlays: a blue area in the north, a purple area in the west, a green area in the center, and a yellow area in the south. A red line runs vertically through the center of the map. A legend in the top right corner indicates "Planned M1 Stop".

Alternative Future Scenarios

All scenarios would preserve open space and protect R-1 neighborhoods

1. Do Nothing/Business as Usual
2. Slow Growth & No Changes in Land Use Designation
3. Slow Growth & Adjust the Location of Housing Sites
4. Net-Zero Concepts

Concept 1: Do Nothing

- Required by CEQA
- Keep existing Comp Plan designations and policies
- Accommodate new development under existing zoning
- Continued growth in Cal Ave area; evolution of South El Camino
- No major infrastructure improvements

Concept 2: Slow Growth, No change in Land Use Designations

- New procedure for metering office and R&D projects
- Focus modest residential growth on meeting State requirements
- Policies to preserve and enhance neighborhood serving retail & regulate “formula” retail
- Increased setbacks and 3-story height limit on El Camino

Concept 3: Slow Growth, Adjust Location of Housing Sites

- New procedure for metering office and R&D projects
- Housing sites along South El Camino and San Antonio would be replaced
- New sites and increased densities in transit-rich areas with neighborhood services
- Depress Caltrain tracks

Concept 4: Net Zero Approach

- Lead California and US in testing various “net zero” concepts
- Restrict new vehicle trips Downtown, add pedestrian improvements
- Mixed use along El Camino, over 50’ New housing and tech companies near, not along, Cal Ave
- Research Park as a “proving ground”

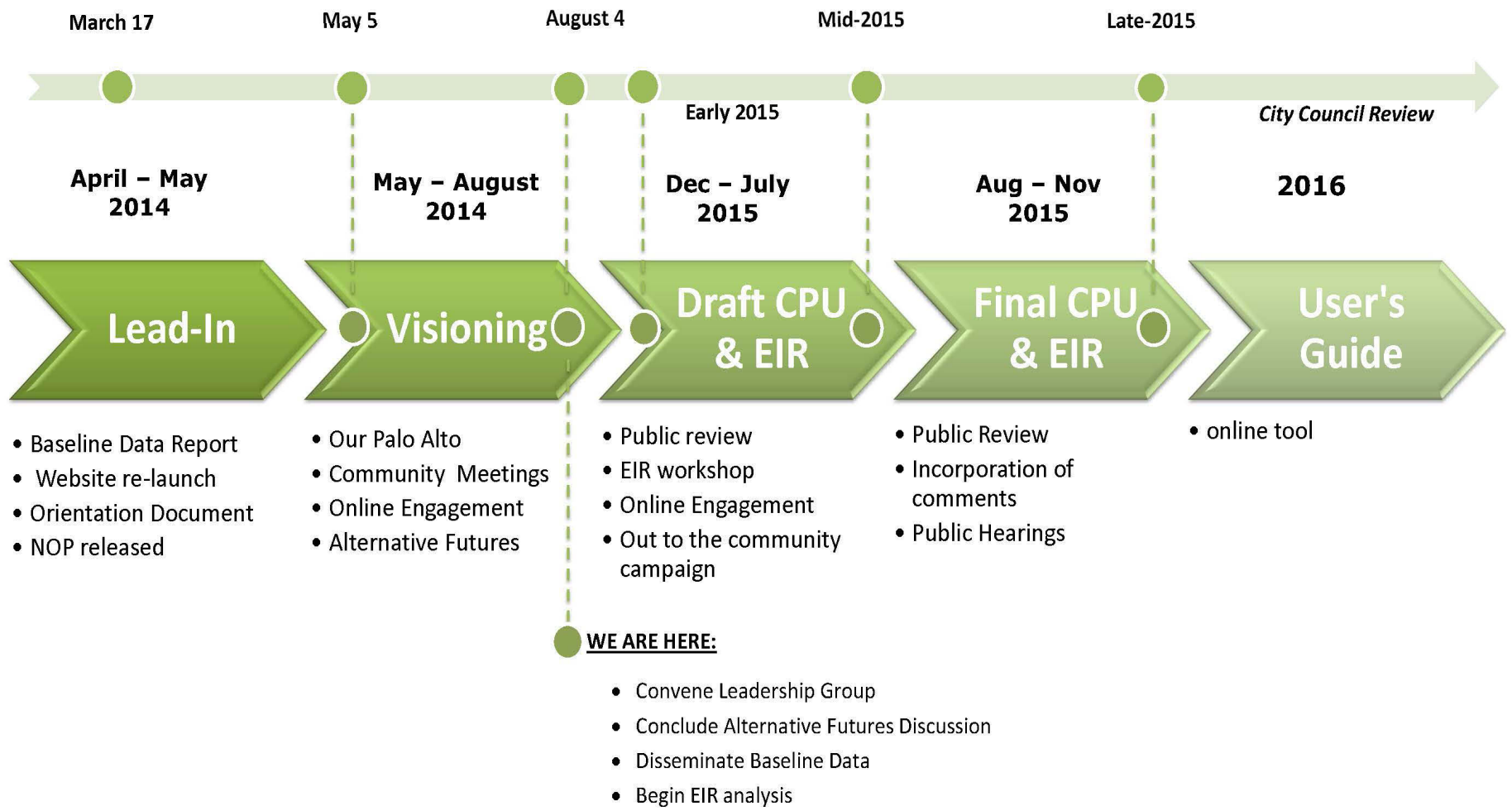
Scenario Development

1. Synthesize input from workshop and online exercises
2. **Present draft alternatives to The Planning Commission and City Council**
3. Estimate quantity and type of development under each scenario
4. Analyze all four scenarios at equal level of detail in Draft EIR, published at the end of 2014





COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE



Goals for Tonight

- **Accept public testimony on environmental issues and alternatives**
- **Provide Council feedback to staff and consultant team including Council direction to:**
 - begin the EIR analysis; or
 - provide specific additional information for refinement of the alternative scenarios



Our Palo Alto 2030: EIR Scoping Hearing

City Council Meeting - August 4 & 6, 2014