



# Planning & Transportation Commission

## Staff Report (ID # 7483)

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**Report Type:** Approval of Minutes **Meeting Date:** 11/30/2016

**Summary Title:** October 26, 2016 PTC Minutes

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**From:** Hillary Gitelman

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) adopt the attached meeting minutes.

### **Background**

Attached are minutes for the following meeting(s):

- October 26, 2016

### **Attachments:**

- PTC Minutes 10.26.16(PDF)



# Planning & Transportation Commission Action Agenda: October 26, 2016

City Hall / City Council Chambers  
250 Hamilton Avenue  
6:00 PM

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**Call to Order / Roll Call: 6:08 pm**  
**Commissioner Alcheck Late Arrived 6:13**

Chair Fine: I'd like to call to order this meeting of the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC). Tonight is October 26, 2016. Robin, if you'd please take the roll call and I'd also like to thank you for all of your help on our Commission for many, many years, but it was nice enjoying cake with you. Thank you so much.

Robin Ellner, Administrative Associate III: Thank you. It's been a pleasure working with all of you as over these past six years or so. So let's get started with roll call. Commissioner Alcheck, Chair Fine, Vice-Chair Gardias, Commissioner Rosenblum, Commissioner Tanaka, Commissioner Waldfogel. Five present with Commissioner Alcheck arriving late.

**Oral Communications**  
The public may speak to any item not on the agenda. Three (3) minutes per speaker.

Chair Fine: Thank you. Let's move to Oral Communications. Do we have any not on the agenda?

Vice-Chair Gardias: Just a moment. I want to clarify we have two speaker cards and are those cards for the item about the update on the Middlefield Road or they are just a general?

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Robin Ellner, Administrative Associate III: No those are for Oral Communications already verified with the speakers.

Chair Fine: Ok.

Vice-Chair Gardias: So we have two cards so the first one is from Neva Yarkin. Yes please; you have five minutes.

Neva Yarkin: Good evening, Planning Commission. My name is Neva Yarkin and I live at 133 Churchill Avenue; a danger waiting to happen. A few years ago I was caught on the train tracks at Churchill and Alma with my mother in the car. The car in front of me did not make the right hand turn on to Alma. I was right in the middle of the train tracks. I had written to the Transportation Department several years ago. Nothing was done. A car about three weeks ago was also caught on the tracks and lives in the car were almost lost.

Another problem area which I saw about two months ago the corner of Churchill and Alma with student bikers from Palo Alto High School (Paly) at 8:00 am in the morning there can be between 50 to 100 bikers at that hour. It fills one lane of Churchill Avenue and also one lane of Alma Street. I have seeing students caught in the middle of Alma Street when a train comes by. These are two problems that the Transportation Department needs to fix immediately before an accident happens. Thank you so much for your time.

1 Vice-Chair Gardias: Thank you. The next speaker is Sara Cody.

2

3 Sara Cody: Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Sara Cody. I am a lifetime resident of  
4 Palo Alto and in fact back in the 70's my father sat on the Planning Commission. I admit I didn't  
5 attend many of the meetings at that time. I'm proud graduate of public Palo Alto public schools  
6 and I'm the parent of a student at Addison and another student at Jordan. I live on Kellogg  
7 Avenue about a block from Castilleja and half a block from the Bryant bicycle corridor.

8

9 I'm here tonight to share my perspective on the current impact of the school, the Castilleja  
10 School on our R-1 zone neighborhood in which I live and the potential future impact if the City  
11 grants Castilleja's request to increase enrollment by another 30 percent. Castilleja has  
12 promised, has proposed to accommodate the additional 125 students by subjecting the  
13 neighborhood to a large multi-year construction project and building an underground parking  
14 garage. I could not be more opposed to this expansion. I urge the City to be responsible  
15 stewards of the City's Comprehensive Plan and to value public good over private gain. It is not  
16 the City's responsibility to ensure that Castilleja can meet its enrollment desires or tuition and  
17 financial goals or to provide a private education to more students most of whom arrive to Palo  
18 Alto from outside cities. I would also like to emphasize that the school is operating under a  
19 Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and they've been out of compliance with those conditions for well  
20 over a decade. I urge the City to hold them accountable. We need you to do so and that is the  
21 City's job.

22

1 I am especially concerned about the proposal to build an underground parking garage which  
2 would draw an additional 140 some odd cars into the neighborhood at peak traffic times.  
3 These extra cars would turn on to the Bryant bike corridor which this corridor is the envy of  
4 Safe Routes to School programs across the County. I can tell you I co-chair the County's traffic  
5 safe communities network and Palo Alto is the shining star. So these bikes on the Bryant bike  
6 corridor would be drawn into a large underground parking garage at the exact times of day  
7 when our public school students are trying to transit from downtown neighborhoods to Paly  
8 and Jordan. We already have unsafe traffic conditions in our neighborhood with luxury cars  
9 speeding down Kellogg and we don't need them making a right turn into a bike lane full of  
10 Jordan and Paly students to enter a private garage. Families with elderly, disabled, and young  
11 children live in my neighborhood in fact right on my block and increased traffic in the  
12 neighborhood will reduce safety. I'm already concerned with about the Castilleja traffic on the  
13 Bryant bike corridor. An underground parking garage and increase in enrollment would make it  
14 even more unsafe.

15

16 And why would the City bend over backwards to accommodate the enrollment needs of a  
17 private girls' school? Castilleja is a large private space in a residential neighborhood, there on a  
18 CUP. It does not serve a community or cultural center for Palo Alto, it serves as an elite  
19 institution to serve primarily residents of nearby communities. It is not open to the  
20 neighborhood to use. When my children were small and I tried to take them there to learn to  
21 ride their bikes that was possible. Castilleja has since closed their gates. It is not a public good.  
22 So the school does not serve a public good, but it does significantly erode the neighborhood  
23 conditions in our R-1 zoned neighborhood and we need you and the City to stand up for us.

1 We've been speaking with Castilleja, but this is the City's job. Please uphold the values of this  
2 City and align your actions with the City's Comprehensive Plan and land use and community  
3 design. Thank you.

4

5 Vice-Chair Gardias: Thank you.

6

7 Hillary Gitelman, Planning Director: Chair Fine?

8

9 Vice-Chair Gardias: Can we address these two requests? Thank you.

10

11 Ms. Gitelman: Yes, thank you. Hillary Gitelman, the Planning Director. Just briefly I'm sure the  
12 speakers are aware that the Commission can't really take up issues that aren't on the agenda,  
13 but if I could offer a couple quick comments on both speakers. First on the Churchill crossing  
14 Caltrain does have a project in the works for next year that will improve that crossing to some  
15 extent. It's not going to address all of the issues that the speaker raised and of course we all  
16 have to exercise caution when approaching those areas not to enter the train track area when  
17 we can't get through to the other side.

18

19 The other speaker talked about the Castilleja project and the City has decided, determined that  
20 an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is going to be required to evaluate that application. The  
21 Planning Commission will have an opportunity to discuss the scope of the EIR either at your late  
22 November meeting or early in December. So you and the speaker will have another  
23 opportunity to address that project at that time. Thank you.

1

2 Chair Fine: Thank you very much and thank you to our speakers. Next we have any agenda  
3 changes, additions or deletions.

4

5 Geri McGilvray: Excuse me, but I filled out a card to speak when we first started. My name's  
6 Geri McGilvray.

7

8 Chair Fine: Let's... do we have a card Robin? Please do speak.

9

10 Ms. Ellner: Yeah we do.

11

12 Ms. McGilvray: [Unintelligible].

13

14 Ms. Ellner: Ok. Yeah, hold on just a moment please. She has addressed to speak to Item 4.

15

16 Ms. McGilvray: Except we found out that we're excluded because we're south of

17 [unintelligible]. But I still want to speak before I go home.

18

19 Chair Fine: Would you like to speak now under Oral Communications? Please.

20

21 Ms. McGilvray: Let's see, yeah sorry about that, but it's important. We've been excluded

22 because we're south of Oregon Expressway and I've been told to move rather than deal with

23 the fact that there's zero enforcement of speeding or red light running in in my area, which

1 happens to be Midtown. And I know that I've spoken with every lot of people in the Council  
2 and City Manager they don't think that people come into Midtown from Jordan. Let me tell  
3 you... hundreds and that's fine. They're so welcome, but I want them safe and I want me safe  
4 exiting and entering my driveway.

5

6 And we have been excluded even from community groups which were about the Palo Alto  
7 neighborhood because we're on Middlefield and we learned about it recently in a meeting at  
8 our home to which a Liz Kniss was kind enough to come and also Greg Tanaka we hope  
9 everyone votes for, but it's so important that you not forget Middlefield Road is still Palo Alto  
10 when it crosses Oregon Expressway. It's absolutely terrorizing to come out of our driveways  
11 now that people are driving 40 and 45 miles an hour. The reason we still have our 25 mile an  
12 hour speed signs is I had a group once, thirty-five people, they hate meetings that we got our  
13 speed signs back after the City had taken them down after meeting in 2009. And then Jaime  
14 Rodriguez helped us get our electronic speed meters, but there's zero enforcement. They took  
15 down all of our trees at the corner of our next block which is north of Marion at old Oregon  
16 Expressway. The group which you're addressing tonight above Middlefield, they had a lawyer  
17 and they saved a lot more trees. But I want you not to forget us while you're speaking and I'll  
18 go peek on T.V. That's what I usually do. Are you on T.V. tonight? Yeah.

19

20 And but I did want to have people... we're paying very high taxes. Everything you know and  
21 that's not it. It was my City; it was such a fantastic neighborhood. We even have raised  
22 hardwood floors and crawl spaces. We're supposed to be a good thing to be on Middlefield



1 Road and I just want us to be remembered and do a better job. Tell the City Manager to  
2 authorize speed enforcement and red light enforcement where we are. Thank you so much.

3

4 Vice-Chair Gardias: Thank you.

5

6 Chair Fine: Thank you very much.

7

8 Ms. Gitelman: Just another quick comment Chair Fine and Commissioners on the subject of  
9 Middlefield Road in its entirety we are looking at retiming the signals on Middlefield Road. That  
10 might not help the speed issue, but at your next Commission meeting we're going to have a  
11 study session on speed surveys and enforcement, the interrelationship between the two and  
12 some decision points that are going to come before the City in the next couple years. So I'll  
13 look forward to that conversation with the Commission. I hope the speaker can come back for  
14 that meeting.

15

16 Chair Fine: Alright, thank you very much. Do we have any agenda changes, additions or  
17 deletions? Is there one last card for oral communications?

18

19 Ms. Ellner: No, no, no. Again this was for Agenda Item 4 and I've given Commissioner Gardias

20 [Note-Vice-Chair] all cards.

21

1 Vice-Chair Gardias: So we will we will continue item along the agenda. So sorry, if you could  
2 wait, please? Unless there is some urgency, right? That this topic will be coming up as per  
3 agenda.

4  
5 Ms. Gitelman: I think it's a similar situation as the prior speaker. They're speaking about a  
6 segment of Middlefield Road that is not implicated in Item Number 4.

7  
8 Chair Fine: Sir, were you hoping to speak now before the end comes to us and then... ok. Let's  
9 allow it. Let's just do that it's easier for him. Thank you.

10  
11 Mike Bechler: Thank you for... thank you for listening to me and letting me speak when... I came  
12 here to speak about speeding on Middlefield Road especially between Colorado and Moreno  
13 going north toward Oregon Expressway. People routinely drive 40 and 50 miles an hour  
14 through this stretch of road. According to the City of Palo Alto road map this is a residential  
15 arterial. The residential... the definition of a residential arterial is a major roadway mainly  
16 serving through traffic takes traffic to and from expressways and freeways, provides access to  
17 adjacent properties most of which are residential properties located on both sides of the  
18 roadway with direct frontages and driveways on that roadway.

19  
20 One solution to slow people down would be to time the lights for 25 miles an hour. Josh Mello  
21 has informed me that there is a plan to do that. That would slow the traffic. It would move as  
22 many cars 25 miles an hour with no stops should move as many cars as thirty-five to forty with  
23 stops. It would increase safety and encourage obedience to the law. Another solution is to

1 issue speeding tickets regularly until this section gets a reputation as a place where you should  
2 not speed. I heard a rumor that there's a stretch of road on Embarcadero where Palo Alto  
3 Police issue lots of speeding tickets, but that might just be a rumor. Anyway we'd like the same  
4 consideration on Middlefield Road.

5  
6 The definition of a residential arterial includes an implicit promise that the City will respect the  
7 rights and ability of residents on these streets to enter and exit their driveway safely, safely.  
8 We can't do that when people are driving 15 to 20 miles an hour over the speed limit. I call on  
9 the City to honor that obligation and do whatever it takes to slow this traffic down. Thank you.

10  
11 Chair Fine: Thank you very much sir. Any other Oral Communications that we don't have the  
12 cards? Ok.

13  
14 **Agenda Changes, Additions, and Deletions**  
15 The Chair or Commission majority may modify the agenda order to improve meeting management.

16 **None**  
17  
18 Chair Fine: Are there any agenda changes, additions or deletions? Ok.

19  
20 **City Official Reports**  
21 1. Assistant Director Lait Provided an Update on City Council items.  
22 2. Planning and Transportation Committee Schedule and Assignments Reviewed  
23

24 Chair Fine: Just before we get into the reports just two quick notes, we have had our Vice-Chair  
25 reappointed and we've had new two new Commissioners appointed starting with us December  
26 15th. Our last meeting for the year however is December 14th. So at our next meeting, which I

1 believe is on the... in November. November 9th we're planning to agendize a vote to see if we  
2 want to postpone our election of new officers to the new year to allow our new Commissioners  
3 to vote on that as well. So you'll be hearing more about that.

4  
5 I'm also working on the year annual letter to Council from the Planning and Transportation  
6 Commission (PTC). We will plan to share it at our December meeting just for any feedback that  
7 you all may have. Alright, let's go to City Official Reports please.

8  
9 Jonathan Lait, Assistant Director: Thank you, Chair Fine. Just to advise or inform the  
10 Commission there were two items that might be of interest that the City Council has considered  
11 since we last met. One was the Faircourt Single Story Overlay (SSO) that application was denied  
12 at the City Council and staff was given direction to explore changes to the ordinance. And also  
13 the architectural review findings which the Commission has reviewed twice it was reviewed  
14 again by the City Council, continued, and we're going to send it back in November for what we  
15 hope to be a final approval. And that concludes the report.

16  
17 Chair Fine: Excellent, thank you. Item Number 2 is about our meeting schedule and  
18 assignments. I'm sure those of you who caught get the packet and paper noticed that we found  
19 a new binding and all of the information is in there. Were you hoping to speak on that or just  
20 changes to the meeting schedule?

21

1 Mr. Lait: Yeah, so just this is an opportunity for us to review the schedule and advise staff if  
2 there's any planned absences that are expected in the subsequent meetings and then we'll also  
3 be presenting a new calendar probably at our next meeting for the 2017 calendar year.

4  
5 Chair Fine: Any comments/questions on this? No? Alright (interrupted)

6  
7 Hillary Gitelman, Planning Director: If I can just add something to that?

8  
9 Chair Fine: Oh, sure.

10  
11 Ms. Gitelman: We're hoping that the subcommittee appointed on the housing impact fee can  
12 meet next week in which case we may try and move that item to November 9th. We'll see if we  
13 can do it. It would be really tight for noticing, but we'd like to just because that meeting on  
14 November 30th is already full of other items. Just trying to even it out.

15  
16 Vice-Chair Gardias: So I have a question about this schedule, right? So I may be joining  
17 remotely on November 9th. Since we haven't practiced this I just want to verify if that is  
18 acceptable. I believe that Council allows for remote participation I just wanted to check if that  
19 is the case in, for this Commission. Thanks.

20  
21 Cara Silver, Senior Assistant City Attorney: Yes, Cara Silver, Senior Assistant City Attorney.  
22 Remote participation is acceptable. We have to have a quorum of the Commission present in  
23 Palo Alto, but if we have that and we'll do a poll then you can participate. We also have to

1 publicly advertise your location and you have to provide us a publicly accessible location for you  
2 to call from in order to allow the public to actually appear at that location. It's a rather old  
3 fashioned ruling at this point, but that's what the Brown Act requires.

4

5 Vice-Chair Gardias: So I think we can work out the details. I'll be in Chicago, Chicago Loop. So  
6 that's accessible four hours and 40 minutes by flight. It's a public hotel.

7

### 8 **Study Session**

9 Public Comment is Permitted. Five (5) minutes per speaker.

10 3. Assistant Director Lait Provided an Update and the Comprehensive Plan Quarterly Status  
11 Report.

12

13 Chair Fine: Alright, thank you very much. Let's move to Item Number 3. This is a  
14 Comprehensive Plan update or quarterly report. And I believe our Planning Director will take  
15 this one.

16

17 Hillary Gitelman, Planning Director: Thank you, Commissioners; Hillary Gitelman the Planning  
18 Director again and I'm representing a whole team of people who've been working hard on the  
19 Comp Plan Update for quite some time now and I want to thank Chair Fine who's been the  
20 Commission's representative to the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) now for over a year. I  
21 mean we've been at this for a long time, but as you can see from the schedule attached to the  
22 agenda item we're getting to the fun part. There's going to be a discussion of land use, the  
23 Land Use Element recommended by the CAC at the City Council towards the end of November.  
24 We don't expect the Council at that point to really narrow down the options that are on the  
25 table in that Element, but just advise us of any initial comments and make sure we have all the

1 options on the table that the new Council will want to consider when they review the Comp  
2 Plan Update in the new year.

3  
4 In terms of the Planning Commission's role you'll see we plan to come back to the Commission  
5 in March of next year for a discussion again of the planning scenarios that we're analyzing in the  
6 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) documents. At that point if the Commission wants to make  
7 a recommendation on what the preferred scenario should be whether it's one of the six we're  
8 analyzing or some blend of them that would be your chance to do so. And then you will also  
9 have a series of hearings in middle of next year about the each of the elements. So we haven't  
10 worked out the exact schedule, but there will be multiple meetings where the Commission  
11 reviews all of the elements that have been recommended by the CAC and you provide your  
12 recommendation to the City Council. So it's going to be a full year 2017 of work on the Comp  
13 Plan Update and hopefully it will be completed and we'll all be celebrating around this time  
14 next year. Be happy to answer any questions.

15  
16 Chair Fine: Thank you. I'm assuming there are going to be a few comments here. Just one thing  
17 I know we've spoken about here on the Commission before and we'd reiterate is if possible  
18 bring each element to us as it's ready. That way we can get a faster start on it and hopefully get  
19 the Comp Plan adopted for the City and up to Council for adoption there; any questions or  
20 comments from other Commissioners?

21

1 Vice-Chair Gardias: So I per this schedule if I read this correctly, CAC is about to be done with  
2 their reviews and work by the end of by February, is this correct? Or there will be farther work  
3 planned for CAC?

4  
5 Ms. Gitelman: They get through, their scheduled to get through all of the elements by February,  
6 but they'll have some final discussions in March, April, and May. You see in that first column  
7 they have a review of the whole thing kind of put together and some recommendations on the  
8 implementation plan and the governance topics in March and April. So they don't really finish  
9 until May by this schedule.

10

11 Vice-Chair Gardias: Thank you.

12

13 Chair Fine: Other comments/questions? Ok, thank you Director Gitelman. That was helpful.

14

15 4. Chief Transportation Official Joshuah Mello Provided an Update on Transportation Plans  
16 and Projects Along Middlefield Road.

17

18 Chair Fine: I guess we go on to our next item, Number 4, which is an update on Transportation  
19 plans and projects along Middlefield Road, a number of scenarios which are up on the board  
20 there, and Josh Mello will take this one for us.

21

22 Joshuah Mello, Chief Transportation Official: Good evening, Chairman, Members of the  
23 Commission, Joshuah Mello, Chief Transportation Official. I want to thank you for asking me  
24 here this evening Chairman Fine and Commissioner Tanaka to update you on our three projects



1 that we have underway along Middlefield Road between the Menlo Park City limits and Oregon  
2 Expressway.

3  
4 This is a very important slide because we're going to talk about these three projects throughout  
5 my presentation I want you to be clear on which segment I'm referring to when I get into the  
6 presentations. So shown in green is our Middlefield Road/North California Avenue Complete  
7 Street Project Phase 1. That went into construction this summer. And the boundaries, the  
8 limits of that project are Lowell Avenue to Oregon Expressway on Middlefield Road and then  
9 Alma Street to Newell Road on North California Avenue. And then in dark blue is the  
10 Middlefield Road/North California Avenue Complete Street Project Phase 2. The design of this  
11 project was done at the same time as Phase 1; however the construction of this will not occur  
12 until next summer in 2017. And finally in light blue at the far north end of Middlefield Road  
13 between Menlo Park and Forest Avenue is our Middlefield Road North Traffic Safety Project  
14 and this just kicked off this past summer and construction is not scheduled till early 2017. So all  
15 three of these are essentially separate projects though. Phase 1 and Phase 2 were designed  
16 and went through community engagement at the same time.

17  
18 So the first project is the Middlefield Road/North California Avenue Complete Street Project. As  
19 I mentioned there's a Phase 1 and Phase 2. This project was a direct result of plans by the  
20 Public Works Department to resurface Middlefield Road between Forest Avenue and Oregon  
21 Expressway in the summer of 2016 and the summer of 2017. So we typically use resurfacing  
22 projects as opportunities to revise signing and striping and make other operational  
23 improvements along roadways and implement some of our policies. It's a lot more affordable

1 to do it when there's a contractor already out there repaving the road and replacing the  
2 pavement markings. So in late 2015 we initiated the planning process by sending out notice  
3 cards to residents along the entire stretch of Middlefield Road. In January of 2016 we held a  
4 community open house at Lucie Stern Community Center where we presented several different  
5 options and then between January and June of 2016 we refined the concepts and moved into  
6 the final design phase. In June of 2016 we held a second community open house in this room  
7 where we presented the construction drawings for Middlefield Road Phase 1 and Phase 2. And  
8 then as you know construction began this summer on Phase 1 which is shown in green on the  
9 map and then summer of 2017 we're planning to complete construction on the blue section  
10 which is Phase 2.

11

12 With every transportation project we operate within a policy framework. For this particular  
13 corridor the policy framework included the Comprehensive Plan. One of our earlier speakers  
14 mentioned the residential arterial classification for Middlefield Road. This attempts to strike a  
15 balance between moving regional traffic, but protecting the neighborhoods and the residents  
16 along the corridor by moderating speeds, adding gateway features/landscaping, while not  
17 dramatically reducing capacity and diverting traffic onto local streets. We also have a recently  
18 passed Complete Streets Resolution that requires us to look at all roadway users on all projects  
19 and this even includes maintenance projects. So just because it's a resurfacing maintenance  
20 project does not mean we do not need to look at adding pedestrian, bicycle, and transit  
21 facilities.

22

1 We also have our Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan which was adopted in 2012. This  
2 has a concept for a Webster Street Bike Boulevard that parallels Middlefield Road. It does not  
3 recommend bicycle lanes on Middlefield Road. It recommends a shared lane condition. It also  
4 calls attention to the difficulty of for cyclists making the dogleg between the two North  
5 California Avenue segments in the Jordan Middle School vicinity. And then there are several  
6 spot safety improvements recommended at Seale Avenue, Kingsley, and some other roadways  
7 where they're recommending, it recommends crosswalks.

8  
9 We also have a fairly robust Safe Routes to School walkabout list of recommendations for every  
10 single school within the City and we consulted those before we moved into the public  
11 engagement for this project. In the Jordan Middle School recommendations it calls out a new  
12 traffic signal at the north leg of North California Avenue in order to facilitate that bicycle  
13 movement between the two legs of North California. And the walkabout also recommends a  
14 new crosswalk at Seale Avenue on Middlefield Road.

15  
16 Before going to the public we also typically do a series of data collection. In the case of  
17 Middlefield Road we collected motor vehicle counts/bicycle counts using our new [Vi-Mach]  
18 automated bicycle and pedestrian counters. We also conducted daytime and nighttime parking  
19 occupancy surveys to see what the parking utilization was along Middlefield Road. We looked  
20 at the collision history, collected speed data as well as travel time data so we had a pilot cars  
21 drive up and down Middlefield Road and time how long it takes to travel the corridor. And then  
22 we also conducted extensive field observations and these were very helpful particularly around

1 school arrival and dismissal time. We were able to observe traffic patterns with parents picking  
2 up and dropping off their children.

3  
4 In January of 2016 we held a community meeting for Phase 1 and Phase 2 at Lucie Stern  
5 Community Center. We had over 50 attendees. It was a very raucous meeting; hot, crowded  
6 room. Almost everyone in the room opposed to removing on street parking to add bicycle  
7 lanes along Middlefield Road which was one of the alternatives that we presented; however,  
8 there was general support for the addition of a short Class 4 separated bikeway to connect the  
9 two legs of North California Avenue in front of Jordan Middle School. We learned a lot about  
10 the road at that meeting. We discovered that a lot of community members are concerned  
11 about speeding along Middlefield Road, difficulty crossing the street, and a lot of the older  
12 residents particularly had trouble pulling out of their driveways and side streets because of  
13 sight lines and visibility issues due to parked vehicles. And then there were a lot of residents  
14 who also expressed difficulty about just crossing the street when they wanted to walk around  
15 their neighborhood or access shuttle or transit stops.

16  
17 So these are some of the project goals that came out of that first meeting. We wanted to  
18 discourage speeding, limit aggressive and unsafe passing. We also heard about lots of instances  
19 of motorist passing unsafely on the right in what is the parking lane, it's not a passing lane, as  
20 people are waiting to turn left onto into driveways or side streets. And you can imagine as  
21 someone's trying to creep out of a side street or a driveway and then somebody passes at a  
22 high speed in the parking lane that could be rather dangerous. We also wanted to rationalize  
23 traffic operations so we look for opportunities to improve lane drops, add additional turn lanes

1 at intersections, and make other operational improvements. A lot of the pavement markings  
2 out there were left over from decades ago when it was a much quieter street and didn't have a  
3 lot of the turning movements that it does today. We also wanted to improve pedestrian  
4 connections and enhance bicycle connections as part of the resurfacing project. So we went  
5 back to the drawing board after the community meeting and we decided to move forward with  
6 a concept that did not include bicycle lanes, but did include elements that would reduce travel  
7 speeds and improve sight lines at some of the cross streets and also add better pedestrian  
8 connections.

9  
10 So at the second meeting we had about 20 attendees. We sent mailings out to the entire  
11 neighborhood for both of these community meetings. At that meeting we had general support  
12 for the project. There were some very specific concerns about particular intersections and sight  
13 lines and one particular intersection there was a row of trees that a resident brought our  
14 attention to and then there was a little bit of concern about using a dashed yellow centerline.  
15 Folks did not want us to be encouraging passing and we did talk at length about what the  
16 passing laws are in California and that that does not in fact by default allow passing along the  
17 roadway.

18  
19 So some of the elements of a project the Complete Street Project Phase 1 that I'm going to go  
20 over are the narrow travel lanes, the dashed single yellow center lines, some new crosswalks.  
21 We also implemented some curb extensions, widened a sidewalk, and installed a short two-way  
22 Class 4 separated bikeway. One of the most significant changes is that we added a white edge  
23 line to the travel lane so prior to the resurfacing there was about a 16 foot travel lane because

1 there was no edge line between the parked vehicles and the travel lane. So we marked a  
2 dashed single yellow center line which is more residential in feel. We use similar treatments on  
3 Stanford Avenue, Churchill Avenue, some of our other residential collector and arterial streets.  
4 This does not in fact allow passing. It's always illegal to pass if there's a vehicle within a certain  
5 number of feet approaching you or you're within or you're approaching an intersection. So  
6 along this section there's very few areas where would be legal to pass someone.

7

8 This does however remove the highway feel to the corridor. It's much more residential in  
9 nature and less visually intrusive as far as pavement markings go. The lanes are now 10 feet  
10 wide which is fairly standard in urban areas. You can see there a Santa Clara Valley  
11 Transportation Authority (VTA) bus fits within the travel lane. There's not much room to spare,  
12 but there is a three foot shoulder now to the right of the travel lane between the travel lane  
13 and the parked cars. So this provides a psychological effect for motorists and actually makes  
14 the roadway feel more constrained even though it's still the same width it makes the travel lane  
15 feel a little bit more constrained.

16

17 This is the intersection of Seale Avenue. These are brand new high visibility crosswalks that did  
18 not exist before the resurfacing project. We're working on adding rectangular rapid flashing  
19 beacons to this intersection through our beacon contractor within the next six months to a  
20 year. On the far side and I apologize I don't have a great picture of these, but on the far side  
21 you can see we installed a hatched area on the near side of the intersection and we've actually  
22 added raised white traffic buttons to those areas. And it's if I can use the pointer it's this area  
23 over here. And what was happening where vehicles they were proceeding straight were driving

1 in the parking lane and passing vehicles waiting to turn left which could endanger pedestrians  
2 who were stepping out on the roadway, vehicles who were pulling out, and generally creates  
3 more of a highway feel. It's a residential arterial, people need to be moderating their speeds  
4 and it's not a big deal to wait a couple seconds while somebody turns left to ensure the safety  
5 of the intersection. So we added these at the near side of most of the intersections so now it's  
6 very uncomfortable to drive through this area. There's actually raised traffic buttons. It would  
7 be a little bumpy if you drive over them and so far it's discouraged most people from using that  
8 as a passing lane.

9  
10 On the left there we widened the sidewalk in front of Jordan Middle School between the two  
11 legs of North California. That sidewalk was five feet wide. So it was half the width that is today.  
12 We went in and we added another five feet and doubled the width so that pedestrians and  
13 cyclists who use the sidewalk area there will have more room to operate. And then we also  
14 added a Class 4 separated bikeway which is on the right. And this connects originally it was  
15 going to just run along Middlefield Road and connect the two legs of North California, but then  
16 we started to think about how cyclists would transition in and out of the separated bike lane.  
17 We decided to extend it all the way down the Newell Road where there's an all-ways stop and  
18 the other bike cage for the school so that there's a safer, there's a more controlled intersection  
19 where cyclists can enter and exit the separated bikeway. We also added bicycle detection to  
20 the intersection of Middlefield and North California so now if you're approaching the  
21 intersection on a bicycle the video cameras there actually can see you and will trigger a new  
22 exclusive pedestrian phase. So prior to this project cyclists who are traveling eastbound on  
23 North California going into Jordan Middle School would be conflicting with motor vehicles

1 turning right onto Middlefield. That's no longer the case, there's an exclusive bicycle and  
2 pedestrian phase at that intersection now. So at the time this separated bikeway and the  
3 crosswalks are have a walk signal all motor vehicles in the intersection have a red and our  
4 stopped. So we've seen a little bit of increased delay due to that, but it provides a much safer  
5 movement for students who are accessing the school.

6  
7 Results to date, we've seen pretty positive results. I'm going to start moving a little quicker I  
8 don't want to spend too much time on this, but basically there's been very little impact to travel  
9 time. We've actually seen improvements to travel time so before the study, sorry, before the  
10 project if you're traveling northbound from Oregon all the way to Menlo Park it took you  
11 between eight minutes and 27 seconds and nine minutes and 23 seconds and your average  
12 speed was 13 to 15 miles an hour. Today if you make that same trip your travel time is  
13 somewhere between eight minutes and 5 seconds and eight minutes and 30 seconds and your  
14 average speed is 15 to 16 miles an hour. Southbound the travel time after has increased a little  
15 bit. The average and the average speed has gone down a little bit. So south, southbound  
16 seems to be a little slower than northbound.

17  
18 One of the good findings is the 85th percentile speed which is the speed at which 85 percent of  
19 vehicles travel at or below actually went down. So the speed limit on Middlefield Road is 25  
20 miles an hour. Before this project the average speed, the 85th percentile speed, was 33 to 34  
21 miles an hour. Today it's 29 to 32 miles an hour so we saw a reduction in the 85th percentile  
22 speed. And then the last item there is before the project we counted 11,000 vehicles. In  
23 September we counted 9,300 vehicles. I think this may be a quirk. We're going to do another



1 count to verify that because over the last several years it's varied from 11,000 to 12,000  
2 vehicles and to see a 2,000 vehicle drop is very significant. So I wouldn't trust that data point  
3 that's why it's highlighted in red.

4  
5 So this is not all rainbows and unicorns. There have been some issues with the implementation  
6 of this project. There's a period of adjustment whenever you make roadway changes or  
7 changes to lanes or traffic signal timing. We have noticed that occasionally there is a  
8 northbound vehicle turning left on North California and they can no... and through vehicles can  
9 no longer pass in what was the parking lane in front of Jordan Middle School. So now if a  
10 vehicle is turning left onto North California all traffic is stopped. We've gone out there several  
11 times. We've heard some complaints from residents that traffic was backing up into Oregon  
12 Expressway when this was occurring. We've seen that happen a couple of times. By no means  
13 is it happening continuously during the peak hour. It does happen occasionally and we're  
14 working on ways to address that through signal timing.

15  
16 We've also heard concerns about continued unsafe passing by southbound motorists at North  
17 California. We did not install one of the curb extensions at North California because they  
18 intersections offset so folks heading southbound are still passing left turning vehicles in the  
19 parking lane there. And then of course there is some additional delay due to the new exclusive  
20 pedestrian/bicycle phase that we implemented in North California and any time you introduce  
21 a new signal phase you're going to add time to the total signal cycle. We've also heard some  
22 comments that the two-way separated bikeway is not as legible and understandable as it could  
23 be. We've done extensive educational work with the school. We created a handout that

1 explains how the signal operates, how you should approach the separated bikeway. We went  
2 out there the day it opened myself and about three of my staff members went out there and  
3 observed and people seem to intuitively know how to use it. Approaching North California  
4 we're probably going to add some additional signage there and make it more clear that you  
5 wait in the wait here queue box that's marked there in green.

6

7 We've also been working with our Public Works Maintenance Crew to figure out how to clean  
8 around the bollards and the traffic buttons and we've adjusted the bollards to enable a street  
9 sweeper to fit within the two-way cycle track, the separated bikeway. And then we're also  
10 going to adjust the traffic buttons to allow a street sweeper to get behind those.

11

12 Phase 2 is going to construction next year and as I said this was designed along with Phase 1.  
13 So it'll have a lot of the same elements of Phase 1. It will have narrower travel lanes, dashed  
14 single yellow center line, new crosswalks, curb extensions, and I think we're going to move  
15 towards making more permanent curb extensions with concrete and landscaping so that  
16 they're easier to sweep around. The buttons have been an issue for the street sweeping crew.  
17 And then we're going to install a new traffic signal in turn lanes on Embarcadero Road and I'll  
18 talk a little bit more about that on the next couple slides. And then we're going to revise the  
19 southbound lane drop at Homer Avenue. So right now the lane drops after Homer Avenue and  
20 you're confronted with a row of parked cars. We're actually going to drop that lane as a right  
21 turn only onto Homer which will be hopefully a little bit more legible and easier for a motorist  
22 to understand.

23

1 So they'll be fairly significant changes at the intersection of Middlefield and Embarcadero Road  
2 with this project. We're going to add an entirely new traffic signal and it's going to include left  
3 turn signal heads on all of the approaches and then we're going to restripe Middlefield Road to  
4 add dedicated left turn lanes approaching Embarcadero Road. And this will allow us to  
5 eliminate the split phasing that's there and actually operate it as an eight phase signal, which is  
6 much more efficient from a traffic operations standpoint. And we're going to be adding so  
7 there will actually be an additional lane added going northbound. Right now there's only two  
8 approach lanes. We're going to have a dedicated left turn lane, a through lane, and then a  
9 through right lane. And then going southbound we'll have a dedicated left turn lane and then a  
10 through right lane. We'll also be constructing curb extensions and crosswalks at Kellogg  
11 Avenue in front of the Junior Museum Zoo and Lucie Stern Community Center. There's a lot of  
12 pedestrian activity there and has currently no crosswalks.

13

14 The last project I wanted to talk about this evening is our Middlefield Road North Traffic Safety  
15 Project. This kicked off in this summer. Prior to that last year in 2015 we implemented some  
16 time of day turn restrictions at the intersections of Hawthorne and Everett. And this was based  
17 on some concerns from area residents that those intersections were experiencing a large  
18 number of collisions and there was a lot of regional traffic that was bypassing Lytton Avenue  
19 and University and using Hawthorne and Everett to get to Willow Road and US 101. So those  
20 time of day restrictions were left in place for a year. They didn't work that well according to the  
21 residents so they actually brought a petition to City Council for us to look at a road diet along  
22 that segment between Menlo Park and Forest Avenue. And as a result we decided to kick off  
23 an official traffic safety project this summer and we began that with some data collection from

1 July to August. And then we developed some alternatives with the community stakeholders  
2 and the other alternatives are actually up on the boards over here. We came up with five  
3 alternatives and then we had a community open house October 6th at the library across the  
4 street and we had about 20 of the neighborhood residents come out and they looked at all of  
5 the different alternatives. And then we're going to refine those and bring those to City Council  
6 sometime in December.

7  
8 As part of this project we also collected a significant amount of data. We looked at turning  
9 movement counts. There's a graphic on the left there that shows the vehicles turning in all  
10 directions at each of the intersections and essentially we found that the existing time of day  
11 turn restrictions are ineffective. There's actually at one intersection there is more vehicles  
12 making the illegal left turn today than there were before the last turn was illegal before those  
13 signs were installed. So motorists are not really obeying the time of day turn restrictions. We  
14 also found that the 85th percentile speed is 34 miles an hour. Again the speed limit is 25 miles  
15 an hour in this segment so that's 9 miles over the posted speed limit.

16  
17 And one of the surprising data points is even though the Hawthorne Avenue intersection carries  
18 more traffic and has more turning vehicles there's actually more collisions at the Everett  
19 Avenue intersection of Middlefield. And the Everett intersection had 19 collisions over the last  
20 five complete years of data and 13 of those were related to right of way collision, right of way  
21 violations. And a right of way violation is when another vehicle pulls out in front of a vehicle  
22 that has the right of way. So our take on that is that it's folks pulling out of Everett in front of  
23 vehicles on Middlefield Road either to go straight across or to make a left turn. And then the

1 most common collision type was broadside which also confirms our theory that it's people  
2 travelling across Middlefield they're making a left turn onto Middlefield being broadsided by  
3 folks that are on Middlefield Road who have the right of way. And luckily there were fears, few  
4 severe injuries, but there is definitely a crash pattern at both Everett and Hawthorne with  
5 Everett being more severe.

6  
7 We brought five alternatives to the community earlier this month. I'm not going to go into  
8 details about each one because since then we've developed a couple hybrids as a result of what  
9 we heard from the community, but some of the elements are converting one of the travel lanes  
10 to a two-way left turn lane, installing a continuous median, doing a traditional road diet which  
11 would be a three lane two travel lanes a two-way left turn lane and bicycle lanes. And then we  
12 had a couple alternatives that actually included on street parking in lieu of a travel lane.

13  
14 When we took these five alternatives to the community we had about 20 attendees. Very few  
15 nonresidents, it was mostly folks who live along the Middlefield Road corridor. We did do  
16 mailings to the next couple blocks off of Middlefield because we want to get some input from  
17 people that don't live directly on the corridor, but the majority of the turnout were residents of  
18 Middlefield Road. The majority of them seem to support the addition of bicycle lanes. There  
19 was very little support for the addition of on street parking which actually we were informed  
20 historically there was on street parking along that corridor until several decades ago. And then  
21 there was significant concern about the alternatives that included continuous medians.  
22 Residents along the corridor were very worried that they wouldn't be able to maneuver in and  
23 out of their driveways and while the continuous median may prohibit folks on Everett and

1 Hawthorne from making left turns and crossing the residents felt that the tradeoff was not  
2 worth it when it impacted access to their driveways.

3  
4 So actually at the meeting at the library it turned into more of a workshop where we sat down  
5 with the residents and talked about the five different alternatives and we developed two  
6 refined project alternatives. Alternative 6a, 6a would be a road diet. It would reduce the  
7 roadway to two travel lanes, two bicycle lanes, and a two-way left turn lane. It includes what  
8 are called left over treatments at Everett and Hawthorne and a left over is a median that is kind  
9 of S shaped or Z shaped and it allows you to make lefts in and out of... into Everett, but not out  
10 of Everett. So a vehicle on Middlefield Road could make a left turn into both legs of Everett,  
11 but vehicles coming out of Everett would only be able to make right turns and they would not  
12 be able to go through or make a left. These would be short segments only at the intersections  
13 so access to driveways would be preserved and they would be able to use the two-way left turn  
14 lane to make turns into their driveway.

15  
16 One of the big components of this is over here currently there's two left turn lanes coming out  
17 of Lytton Avenue and that allows the intersection to operate much more efficiently than if  
18 there were one left turn lane. So this alternative preserves two lanes on Middlefield Road  
19 departing Lytton Avenue to about mid-block where the left lane would merge into the outside  
20 lane. And if you can recollect that lane drops anyway further up just passed Hawthorne before  
21 you get to Menlo Park. So the loss in capacity is fairly minimal. This alternative does reduce  
22 southbound capacity quite significantly. It includes only one southbound travel lane. There's

1 currently two southbound traveling lanes all the way from Menlo Park to where that lane drops  
2 at Channing.

3  
4 Refined project Alternative 6b is very similar to 6a except instead of including bicycle lanes it  
5 has two southbound travel lanes. So it preserves the southbound capacity as it is today and it  
6 also includes the two northbound lanes departing Lytton that merge shortly after the  
7 intersection. So the loss in capacity at on this alternative is very fairly insignificant. Of course  
8 we'll have to conduct a full traffic analysis using our traffic modeling software in order to  
9 determine what the exact impacts would be.

10  
11 So the next steps for the Middlefield Road North Traffic Safety Project are to analyze and those  
12 analyze those refined project alternatives. So the analysis will include a full modeling in our  
13 traffic modeling software to look at what the impacts would be. We'll also look at whether we  
14 think these alternatives will reduce the collision pattern that we have noted out there and then  
15 we'll have continued meetings with those stakeholders and the community to ascertain their  
16 opinion on these refined alternatives. Our goal is to bring these to the City Council in  
17 December and ask them to move forward with a one year pilot project which would probably  
18 be constructed with temporary materials that could be removed if the pilot does not work or  
19 operate efficiently. And that would depend on the level of environmental analysis that's  
20 required. We're assuming that we don't have to do any kind of high level Environmental Impact  
21 Report (EIR) because there wouldn't be a significant reduction in Level of Service (LOS). If that's  
22 not the case this timeline would probably be pushed back fairly significantly.

23

1 And there's more information available on all three of these projects on our project website  
2 under Transportation on the City of Palo Alto's website. And that concludes my presentation.  
3 Thank you.

4  
5 Chair Fine: Thank you very much. I believe we have some public speakers? Oh, it's on the next  
6 time. Ok, let's open it up to a round of questions or comments from the Commission. I'm  
7 happy to take any lights. Vice-Chair? Ok, Commissioner Rosenblum?

8  
9 Commissioner Rosenblum: Thank you for this. First, I have a child at Jordan and have been  
10 going in and out with the new bike lane and some of the new traffic patterns and I think it feels  
11 a lot safer. As a personal comment it is somewhat unattractive, but I think it is quite a lot safer  
12 and a lot more clear how the kids have to travel, a lot a lot clearer where cars need to pay  
13 attention and so first thank you. I think that it's made that school onramp a lot safer.

14  
15 A question about this last topic around turning on Everett and Hawthorne into Middlefield and I  
16 assume that you're also looking at the effects of what happens to say Willow as people are  
17 coming in and then hooking into Middlefield because that's a major entry point off of 101 down  
18 Willow and then turning on to that intersection. And so I have a couple of questions; with the  
19 reduced southbound traffic under the first scenario have you done any preliminary models of  
20 what that would do during rush hour to traffic coming in from Willow or does that have to wait  
21 for your traffic modeling?

22



1 Mr. Mello: There was an analysis done in 2015 prior to the installation of the time of day turn  
2 restrictions and it looked at a traditional three lane, four to three lane road diet. And the  
3 queuing it was estimated that the queuing would back up from the University Avenue  
4 intersection potentially into the Lytton Avenue intersection in the p.m. peak I believe. So we  
5 are definitely concerned. Where Willow would come into play is if we determine through our  
6 analysis that the removal of a southbound travel lane would actually back the queue up into the  
7 Willow Road intersection. That could potentially gridlock that intersection so we're always  
8 worried when a queue starts to spill back into a signalized intersection. That's where the  
9 problems start to develop. So we were concerned about that going into this and that will be  
10 one of the main things we look at when we do our analysis of whatever the final alternatives  
11 end up being.

12  
13 Commissioner Rosenblum: Ok. And so then my other comment is around one of the planned  
14 alternatives has a bike lane, but it has taken away a road capacity. So this is that so I live in  
15 Downtown North so this is my neighborhood and so I know quite well. One thing I would say is  
16 the need for a bike lane at least for me is a little bit restricted in this area. Meaning Bryant, I  
17 live on Bryant, is obviously the bike boulevard and then you have you go across the bike bridge  
18 from there onto Willow and then you take that. On, if you're on the other side of Middlefield  
19 you also have a way of getting eventually to the creek and then coming down. What you do  
20 need though is a connector. So there needs to be a place that if you're either coming up the  
21 creek for whatever reason and cross the bike bridge and you're coming up through Palo Alto  
22 Ave. or you're coming from the other side and you hit the creek and you're coming to  
23 Middlefield there has to be a safe way to get to eventually the bike lane on Willow.

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And so my recommendation is rather than removing, rather than removing traffic lanes that you do this last connector bit. So just assume that somehow you have to get across the creek in a safe way say. So anyway so comment is I don't see that in either alternative. You have either a bike lane, but reduced traffic lanes or no bike lane and increased traffic lanes. I think there is probably an alternative that has a very short connector and just would ask that you consider that when you do your final planning.

Mr. Mello: So just to clarify by connector you mean the segment between Palo Alto Avenue and the Creek Bridge?

Commissioner Rosenblum: Palo Alto... on Middlefield between Palo Alto Avenue and Willow.

Mr. Mello: Ok.

Commissioner Rosenblum: So basically just in front of Willow Market. Just that area there are you can get there safely and then after that it's harrowing, like there's no way to really safely you just ride on the sidewalk there is what I think most people do. But there are currently safe bike passages that will get you to that point. Otherwise I'm sure my colleagues will have other questions around the rest of the Middlefield area so I'll restrain myself for now and then hear what they have to say.

Chair Fine: Thank you. Vice Chair.

1

2 Vice-Chair Gardias: So just adding to the comment around the traffic that is traffic clogging  
3 around Willow that my colleague was talking about, but I'm concerned rather not about the  
4 southbound actually northbound I think it's a problem because everybody just takes Willow just  
5 to get to the bridge. So there is if somebody wants to leave Palo Alto and cross that or rejoin  
6 that line to go to the bridge or go toward Redwood City it's pretty much impossible. So you can  
7 envision a scenario that if there is a delay on the southbound that's only going to contribute to  
8 the clogged traffic on Willow. It will by the loop contribute to the northbound delay to the  
9 traffic going on the opposite direction, so please consider this.

10

11 A couple of other minor comments, so in terms of the bike lanes around Jordan and you spoke  
12 about the cleaning when you position bollards so the cleaners can get to the bike lanes.  
13 Currently they are littered with the debris and just giving that rainfall I was concerned that  
14 pretty much kids may just fall off the bikes or because this is this doesn't have the same friction  
15 as the clean road. And although you seem to be addressing this concern currently it's not the  
16 case. There is a bunch of the tree needles and leaves and then just with coming and upcoming  
17 rain fall that may be very dangerous. So besides of the there may be a need to adjust the  
18 cleaning schedule because it seems to me that concentration of the debris may be in that area  
19 of the bike lanes. So in addition to adjusting the bollards, right, there maybe some other larger  
20 adjustment needed.

21

22 Mr. Mello: Yes. So to date it has not been part of the regular cleaning schedule. We at first we  
23 attempted to use the green machine device which is used Downtown, but that doesn't pick up

1 pine needles. They're too fine so they have to actually run a full size street sweeper through  
2 and they couldn't do that until we got everything positioned. So it's my understanding that the  
3 final bollards are going in this week and as soon as that's done they're going to be placed at a  
4 width that will enable the full size street sweeper [tenter] and that can actually pick up pine  
5 needles and then it will become part of the regular sweeping route.

6  
7 Vice-Chair Gardias: Right, but that regular sweeping schedule maybe enhanced because the  
8 bike lane is on the side of the crown of the road so naturally the debris is going to concentrate  
9 on the left side or on the right side of the street and that's where the bike lane is pretty much.  
10 Just that does increasing risk for the kids biking along the curb. So maybe there would have to  
11 be another round of cleaning every week, not every other week, right? So that's this comment  
12 about the traffic around Jordan.

13  
14 As you pointed out the other thing as you pointed out that the data collection around the and  
15 the change in the traffic delays that was that maybe not accurate because of the 1,700 cars that  
16 were that were not in your data that was a drop off from August to September. So the whole  
17 schedule may be revised as a result and giving some comments that you may read on Palo Alto  
18 Online and somewhere else that citizens are concerned with the delay. So there may be  
19 something larger because that data may not reflect anything accurate, right? Accurate.

20  
21 Mr. Mello: So the travel time runs and the speed data are separate from the volume data. The  
22 drop in volume which I think is a quirk does not then invalidate the travel time and the speed  
23 data. Those were collected separately.

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Vice-Chair Gardias: But it's correlated isn't it?

Mr. Mello: I don't believe that there are 1,700 fewer vehicles. I think that is an error in the data. That does not necessarily mean that the travel time in the 85th percentile is also invalid because those were collected separately at separate times by separate devices.

Vice-Chair Gardias: Ok. I would think that they may be correlated because the delay may be related to the number of the cars that are on the streets, but maybe not. But we'll just look forward to your update on the data. And the last minor item that about the crossing at Kellogg which is a very quiet residential street it's on the other side of the Junior Zoo and it seems to me that it's not necessary. I don't know how much of the use would be to have this enhanced crossing given that this street, this specific street is very quiet. So I don't know how much matters this comment in the from the perspective of this larger project, right, but maybe sometimes I'm just saying this because sometimes maybe the current condition is sufficient and safe.

Mr. Mello: So that crosswalk is actually provided to connect the west side of Middlefield Road to the front entrance of the Community Center. It's not necessarily for Kellogg. There's a lot of transit riders and folks who park on the west side of Middlefield who need to get to the Community Center. There's actually quite a bit of pedestrian traffic in that area.

1 Vice-Chair Gardias: Ok. I was referring only to the crossing across Kellogg itself not across  
2 Middlefield, right?

3

4 Mr. Mello: Oh, yeah we would do that (interrupted)

5

6 Vice-Chair Gardias: I'm talking about the this crossing on Kellogg itself.

7

8 Mr. Mello: Yeah that's standard practice if we're going to mark the crosswalks on Middlefield  
9 we would also mark the crosswalk on Kellogg which is stop controlled. It would be rather  
10 unusual to only mark the main street crossing and not go ahead and mark the side street  
11 crossing as well.

12

13 Vice-Chair Gardias: Ok. Thank you.

14

15 Chair Fine: I think Commissioner Tanaka was next.

16

17 Commissioner Tanaka: Well thank you for putting together this report. It looks like you guys did  
18 quite a bit of work on this so thank you for that. Kind of a more general question, so I know you  
19 kind of covered the north part of Middlefield. What's the plan and timeline to cover the south  
20 part of Middlefield? Because I've talked to a lot of residents on the south side as well and  
21 there's a lot of [I'm not] talking about the other side of Oregon. Can you talk a little bit about  
22 what your plans are and what the timeline is looking like?

23

1 Mr. Mello: So there are currently no projects of this scale along the segment of Middlefield  
2 south of Oregon; however, Hillary did mention we're about to roll out a new signal timing along  
3 the entirety of Middlefield Road. And that will be coordinated signal timing and it will be  
4 coordinated at 25 miles an hour progression which means that if somebody travels at 25 during  
5 the peak hour in the peak direction they'll be able to get almost every green signal. If they  
6 travel faster they will get a red signal and then they'll have to wait. So eventually folks will  
7 probably learn that they need to progress at 25 miles an hour.

8

9 We're also going to be bringing to you our engineering, citywide engineering and traffic surveys  
10 November 9th and that's a requirement by the State in order to enforce speed limits with  
11 radar. We have quite a few segments of roadways in Palo Alto where the Police Department  
12 cannot enforce speeds by radar because they're not certified by an engineering study. So we're  
13 going to be bringing I think 40 segments to you November 9th and we're going to talk about  
14 some of the ways that we can move forward and enable the Police Department to conduct  
15 radar enforcement. And I think there are segments of Middlefield Road that are not certified to  
16 be enforced by radar.

17

18 That's really the only things that we have in the works that would address some of the issues of  
19 residents along that southern section of Middlefield Road. And for those who may not travel  
20 that section frequently that's the four lane section of Middlefield Road. The lanes are fairly  
21 wide. It has a fairly suburban built environment that and the look of the roadway I think  
22 encourages people to travel rather fast. It's a four lane section with wide travel lanes, not a lot

1 of obstructions, not a lot of pedestrian activity. So I think just the look and feel of the road  
2 itself encourages people to travel faster than they really should.

3

4 Commissioner Tanaka: Have you heard on the south side have you heard a lot of issues about  
5 that?

6

7 Mr. Mello: We frequently get requests for additional speed enforcement and we pass those  
8 along to the Police Department. Not all of those are along segments that aren't certified, but I  
9 will say the police do have a difficult time enforcing speed limits where they can't use radar and  
10 it's not certified. But I don't directly handle the majority of the speed complaints; those go to  
11 the Police Department.

12

13 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok, one recommendation would be definitely consider a study down in  
14 that part of Middlefield because there's a lot of residents who are very concerned. Some  
15 people talk about not being able to get out of their driveways. I don't do you have any accident  
16 data along this road?

17

18 Mr. Mello: We are just starting to systematically move through the collision data on a citywide  
19 basis. We have a new program called Crossroads that we've implemented that's used  
20 countywide. And that's going to enable us to compare segments of roadway against other  
21 segments of similar characteristics and determine whether there's a higher crash rate. We  
22 have not done that yet for the bulk of the roadways in the City. We did it for Middlefield Road



1 north and we did for the segment around North California, but we do want to start  
2 systematically moving in that direction.

3

4 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok. And how will you determine whether that you will do a study on  
5 this side, on this part of Middlefield or not?

6

7 Mr. Mello: The southern segment? Well so we typically the reason the Complete Streets  
8 Project Phase 1 and Phase 2 were advanced because there was an impending resurfacing  
9 project and that's a very low cost way to make striping and signing changes. I don't think the... I  
10 know the far southern section of Middlefield was resurfaced recently, but the section directly  
11 south of Oregon I would have to check and get back to you on what the resurfacing schedule is  
12 for that. But that would be an opportune moment to look at restriping and resigning and other  
13 geometric changes that might reduce travel speeds and improve operations.

14

15 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok, great. One thing I heard about one section of Middlefield is the I  
16 guess it's you're calling it Phase 3, I guess? Maybe you could bring your diagram up again. Well  
17 I guess not in Phase 3. You call it Traffic Safety 2017. And I just want to know if this is true or  
18 not, but I heard that because the cars are traveling fast that police can't stop them even if they  
19 are speeding. Is that true?

20

21 Mr. Mello: I couldn't answer for the Police Department. You're referring to a segment between  
22 Menlo Park and Forest?

23

1 Commissioner Tanaka: Correct.

2

3 Mr. Mello: I do know that the police have difficulty pulling people over on congested roadways  
4 with no shoulder and no parking lane. They would disrupt traffic even more than it already is  
5 during the peak hour, but I don't know about that specific area. I could talk to the Police  
6 Department and get back to you.

7

8 Commissioner Tanaka: I think that would be good because one thing I heard is that because  
9 even if you're speeding right they can't stop you there. And so there's no enforcement. So I'm  
10 just wondering if that's really true and if so how do we remediate it?

11

12 Mr. Mello: I think when we come back on November 9th we're going to have the Police  
13 Department with us for that presentation. I think that would be a great time to discuss  
14 enforcement activities along some of our major streets.

15

16 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok, great. And my, I have a son also at Jordan. So I either bike or drive  
17 that part almost every day so I know a lot about that area. And one thing I've observed that I've  
18 heard from other residents is that because on the California Avenue side when you're turning,  
19 when you go, when you turn, when you're going north on Oregon and you turn left on to  
20 Middlefield to Jordan and you go to California Avenue because you have the bollards now the  
21 cars can't bypass it. Although they I guess they could never legally do that, but now they  
22 physically can't do it. And I think one ramification of that it sometimes causes back up into the  
23 intersection.

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Mr. Mello: Yes so we do recognize that as an ongoing issue and we've developed three potential solutions to that issue and we're looking at all three of those. And I would love your feedback on these. The first is to prohibit left turns during the peak hours so we would install no left turn signs and there are actually plenty of other routes to get to the same destinations. You don't have to use Middlefield and North California. We could implement a separate phase for northbound Middlefield so northbound and southbound would have separate phases. So the northbound would go first be able to make a left without conflicts coming south. The problem with that is it would add yet another phase to the cycle and it would delay everyone pretty significantly because it would add entirely new phase. And then third we could actually remove the parking on the west side of Middlefield and create a dedicated left turn lane. In order to allow for left turn storage there would be about four homes that would need to we would need to discuss that with. They would lose their on street parking along Middlefield. But those are the three potential solutions to address that issue.

Commissioner Tanaka: And which one are you leaning towards?

Mr. Mello: Prohibiting left turns I think would be a good first step, but again you get into enforcement and the police are very stretched right now especially their traffic folks. So I would want to make sure that we could enforce that if we were going to put it in.

Commissioner Tanaka: Ok. And what has the feedback been from residents in the area?

1 Mr. Mello: We've heard negative comments from a handful of folks. There are a couple who  
2 have emailed me quite a few times, called me specifically about that issue of traffic backing up  
3 into Oregon Expressway. I've sent my traffic engineer out there during the morning peak, the  
4 afternoon peak, the school peak to look at the operations and he says that he did observe it  
5 happen a couple of times, but by no means is it occurring throughout the entire peak period.  
6 It's really just happening a couple times. When we went out there to open the separated  
7 bikeway I only counted about six cars making that left turn in an hour and a half period of time  
8 and only twice did they delay people to the point where the queue actually started to reach  
9 Oregon Expressway. So I do think it occurs sporadically, but I don't think it's a systematic issue.

10

11 Commissioner Tanaka: Yeah, I think before you decide which one I think it would probably be  
12 good to talk to a lot of the residents in that area just to get their feedback. And how about the  
13 schools, have you been able to talk to the schools or the parents that either drive or bike there?

14

15 Mr. Mello: Yeah we actually went to the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) I left that off the  
16 community engagement, but shortly after the January meeting in earlier this year we went to  
17 the Jordan PTA and I presented the project. And that's actually what led us to extend the two-  
18 way separated bikeway all the way to Newell because a lot of the parents had concerns about  
19 how students would get in and out of the bikeway if it was right at the Middlefield/North  
20 California intersection. So we did reach out to the parents. We've been working with the  
21 administration. It's a new principal at Jordan. So we have been working with her since she  
22 started and she helped us get out the word before we officially opened the separated bikeway  
23 and we also talked to a lot of parents when we were out there on opening day. They were

1 turning left across the separated bikeway at the loop driveway on North California just letting  
2 them know that there was now going to be two-way bicycle traffic that they needed to look out  
3 for. We'll probably send staff out there again shortly once people become more comfortable  
4 with it just to remind them.

5

6 Commissioner Tanaka: And what was the feedback from the parents?

7

8 Mr. Mello: Generally thank you for letting me know. I talked to a couple of parents on opening  
9 day who are riding with their children and they really liked specifically the intersection of North  
10 California and Middlefield feels a little more intimate now and a little more clearly defined.  
11 Students tend to spill off the sidewalk when they're waiting to leave the school and now there's  
12 an additional 10 feet of separation between the sidewalk and the travel lane because of the  
13 separated bikeway, prior to that the vehicles that were bypassing the left turning vehicles were  
14 actually coming close to the ramp and the curb so that can no longer occur. So I think overall  
15 the folks who walk and bike through that intersection feel like it's a little bit more rational and  
16 constrained and comfortable feeling. I don't know that there's a significant amount of delay to  
17 the parents picking up and dropping off unless they're coming at one of those times when  
18 somebody is turning left onto North California.

19

20 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok. I think the other issue that I saw is when school lets out or even in  
21 the morning a lot of kids bike on the sidewalk and some of the residents have told me about  
22 getting worried about running, like getting run over by kids. What's your thoughts about that  
23 and how do you think we should solve that?

1

2 Mr. Mello: Is this specifically on North California?

3

4 Commissioner Tanaka: No, on Middlefield.

5

6 Mr. Mello: On Middlefield. So I mean we did when we went to the public in January our  
7 original one of our alternatives was to remove one lane of on street parking and add on road  
8 bicycle lanes. And half the crowd didn't want to remove parking and wasn't willing to sacrifice  
9 on street parking to add bicycle lanes. And then the other half of the crowd, the cyclists and  
10 the parents, said even if we added bicycle lanes on Middlefield they would not encourage their  
11 children to use those bicycle lanes and they wouldn't ride with them themselves. So I think  
12 aside from some type of Class 4 separated bikeway along the length of Middlefield Road which  
13 would require removal of parking I don't think that we're going to be able to get cyclists off the  
14 sidewalk in large numbers on Middlefield. People do have to access destinations on Middlefield  
15 even if you use the Webster, the future Webster Avenue bicycle boulevard at some point  
16 people will have to ride on Middlefield to access a property. We don't encourage riding on the  
17 sidewalk, but along a lot of these arterial streets that's the place that cyclists feel comfortable.  
18 I mean we could ask the police to do some spot enforcement. We could have our Safe Routes  
19 group at Jordan maybe reemphasize that sidewalk riding is not the safest place to ride.

20

21 Commissioner Tanaka: But I think the alternative is on Middlefield there's nowhere else to go I  
22 mean because the street is really not very safe for the kids. Actually I'm just curious from  
23 Commissioner Rosenblum how does your son or kids travel on Middlefield?

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Commissioner Rosenblum: Yeah so I had a son that was doing this last year and now a daughter, but we're coming from the other side so it's Bryant all the way left in California. So that's the most normal way. Kids coming on the other side I think hit coming off like Newell they hit California then come in. So I don't, I do think there's an alternative which is why I personally am in favor of the plan as made. I'm not sure putting bike lanes on that stretch of Middlefield I think it slows traffic but I also I think there are alternatives for safe cycling that are not on Middlefield. But anyway that's how our kids get there.

Commissioner Tanaka: Yeah maybe it's about bike education because I think I mean the obvious [unintelligible] would be travel on Middlefield sidewalks, but maybe Bryant or some other areas would be better but I do know that a lot of residents there feel very passionate about parking on Middlefield. So I think that's something that I think is important. I'm just looking I'm sure I could keep going on, but should I... I can...

Chair Fine: How about one or two more and we can come back.

Commissioner Tanaka: I'll let some else take a turn.

Chair Fine: Ok. Commissioner Waldfogel.

Commissioner Waldfogel: Thank you. I was enjoying that list of questions. Let's see, just a quick comment about the probing the left turn at North California. I mean that will shift a lot of

1 traffic patterns. I mean that's an intersection I passed through a lot and I think it will shift left  
2 turns to Santa Rita or shift left... it's kind of complicated to turn left on Oregon and then  
3 circulate down I don't know, Waverley or so anyhow you should just be cognizant that there  
4 will be some interesting shifts.

5  
6 Bit of a meta question I mean I think you're making great progress on what you're doing here,  
7 but I do have the observation and this may be related to what how some people feel about the  
8 way things will look is that there's a bit of a traffic engineers gone wild feel to this. The solution  
9 to every problem is to add something to the street. It's to add a dot or a stripe or a sign or a  
10 bollard or something, you know Windows Vista. Some people get that one. And so the  
11 question is: is there any good thinking about how to make these complete streets more an  
12 inherent design feature of the street rather than making it a series of add ons? Very ad hoc add  
13 ons, because I think that especially as we pass through residential neighborhoods it would be  
14 preferable to just have a street that is just inherently legible as being a multi-purpose street  
15 rather than being something where we have to pass out training manuals to people so they  
16 understand how to use it. I mean that just doesn't feel like good design. So any comments on  
17 that?

18  
19 Mr. Mello: Well, your first comment I take very seriously. I... so this image up here is Seale and  
20 Middlefield. We actually removed there was a double yellow center line along Middlefield  
21 Road which gave it a kind of a state highway feel prior to the resurfacing. For the majority of  
22 the corridor we removed the double yellow centerline and converted to a dashed single yellow  
23 center line which is about 75 percent less pavement markings down the middle of the road.



1 And then these striped curb extensions that I mentioned earlier we purposely did not install  
2 them on the far side of the intersection because we thought that would be overkill and we  
3 really only needed them on the near side because the vehicles that are passing are doing it  
4 before they enter the intersection and if we can prevent them from doing that we don't need  
5 to add markings here. On North California between High and Middlefield we completely  
6 removed a double yellow center line which was not needed. It was not warranted based on  
7 traffic engineering guidance. So we actually removed two of the four lane lines there along  
8 North California Avenue. So we do take it very seriously the visual clutter.

9  
10 I think you might have been referring more specifically to the separated bikeway in front of  
11 Jordan. Because this was done as a resurfacing project we can't do a lot of civil work like curb  
12 and gutter and median islands. Our long term goal is to make that more permanent and more  
13 aesthetically pleasing by installing some type of median island or curbing, additional  
14 landscaping; however, with a resurfacing project we really need to stay within the existing curb  
15 lines and the amount of work that we can do with those is fairly limited. But I do take your  
16 concerns very, very seriously about aesthetics particularly on the residential arterials.

17  
18 Commissioner Waldfogel: Yeah, I appreciate it. And it might be nice if I don't know whether we  
19 have a design guideline book or something that we're updating, but it would be great if we can  
20 maybe we can talk about that at some point and it's great to hear that you're considering  
21 something more permanent than the bollards. I wasn't particularly commenting about those  
22 although I did hear Commissioner Rosenblum mention that there are not the most beautiful  
23 things that we've ever put on the street, but just this general principle of striping and painting

1 and different colors. If we can convey the same intent with less material it would be great to  
2 start thinking about that. Just my suggestion.

3

4 Chair Fine: So thank you very much for this presentation; just a few comments and questions.

5 First of all I think it's great you're showing a decrease in speed [percent else] that should be  
6 kind of our guiding metric what we're pushing for along this corridor, making traffic slower and  
7 the streets safer for everyone. I do want to echo and I won't drive on this what Commissioner  
8 Tanaka said about terms of south of Oregon study and so it would be nice to see one that will  
9 be repaved and what can happen there.

10

11 At a high level four big things I would ask for you as these projects move forward. So first of all  
12 try to understand what are the current enforcement gaps and what changes we might  
13 recommend. And that might be the Police Department just looking at this and saying we  
14 should do this in the future out in these areas. It would be nice to see the share of road among  
15 different users. There seems to be some questions about whether this is a good street for  
16 cyclists. It would be great to see the mode split there out on different sections of the road.

17

18 I also want to echo what Commissioner Waldfogel was saying about having consistent and  
19 understandable design for all road users. I've also heard from a lot of folks and seen it in our  
20 City we're starting to use all these different approaches in different areas and after a while it  
21 just becomes an educational cost when we'd rather have understandable streets. And then  
22 finally encourage you to continue working with Menlo Park particular by the Willow Market I  
23 know we mentioned yesterday in the pre-commission meeting that they were not yet willing to

1 do some sidewalk and bike improvements there, but that's something we should still push for  
2 at least up to Willow.

3  
4 A few specific questions: so something that's come up a few times and we haven't seemed to  
5 be able to address is the issue with driveways pulling out onto the street for residents there.  
6 I'm just wondering what are some common practices to solve that? Is it like requiring turn  
7 around driveways, putting little beacons or flags at the driveway areas and I'm just wondering  
8 what's it, what's best practice there?

9  
10 Mr. Mello: So one of the things we did with this project is we pushed the travel lanes closer to  
11 the center of the roadway using a white edge line and that created a three foot shoulder which  
12 didn't exist previously so the closer you push traffic into the center of the road the better your  
13 sight lines become when you're pulling out of a driveway so that's one way that we address  
14 that issue. Middlefield in particular there's street trees are wonderful, they green the  
15 environment, but there's areas of Middlefield where there's dense rows of street trees and if  
16 you get to a certain point you actually can't see for a couple hundred feet down the roadway.  
17 And we've noticed that in multiple locations and that's one of the reasons we... one of the other  
18 reasons we also added these hatched areas is folks pulling out of the side streets need to get  
19 past this row of trees and if they have to worry about people passing other cars on the right  
20 and they can't tell where the edge of the travel lane is it makes them very difficult for them to  
21 do that. So I think this striping improved the situation for not only people exiting from side  
22 streets, but also folks pulling out of driveways. Assuming they're pulling front ways out of the  
23 driveway. Backing out is a lot more difficult.

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Chair Fine: People do both ways?

Mr. Mello: Yeah.

Chair Fine: Is there anything in terms of like a little bulb outs on the curb cuts or prohibiting little parking right at the beginning and ending of the driveway?

Mr. Mello: We get lots and lots of requests to do red curb at driveways and we've been very cautious about diving headlong into that because we could be in a situation where we're striping red curbing at every single driveway. We do do it in special cases if there is major sightline issues or it's around a blind curve or other extenuating circumstances, but our policy to date has been not to add red curb or parking areas at single family residential driveways. High volume driveways we look at a little bit differently.

Chair Fine: Yep. So I'd just encourage you to think about treatments for driveways or on the roadway as we get to these driveways along Middlefield. It seems to be one unaddressed theme in these projects. Just two last questions, so one: was only thought to addressing pedestrian crossings of Middlefield? I'm thinking particular on like Everett, Hawthorne, University. Lots of folks are jaywalking around those areas and I'm just wondering if there's...

Mr. Mello: Yeah so the alternatives that I showed you are missing one particular component. Everett Avenue is designated as a future bicycle boulevard. So whatever project or pilot project

1 or alternative that we elect to move forward with will need to include some kind of bicycle and  
2 pedestrian crossing at Everett. Hawthorne's a little more difficult because it's around a blind  
3 curve and without some kind of signalization I don't know that I would want to put in any kind  
4 of pedestrian crosswalk there. But I think Everett we're definitely going to have to advance  
5 whatever alternative we advance will include some kind of pedestrian/bicycle crossing there.

6

7 Chair Fine: Ok, that would be helpful because when you just closed off the through on Everett I  
8 was wondering what happens with the future bike lane. And then just the last thing do we  
9 know, have an estimate of how much cross traffic or through traffic there is on Everett? And  
10 maybe Commissioner Rosenblum actually has an estimate there.

11

12 Mr. Mello: I can get back to you on that. I can tell you that the volume of traffic exiting on  
13 Hawthorne to Middlefield was actually higher than Everett.

14

15 Chair Fine: Ok, but (interrupted)

16

17 Mr. Mello: Which was surprising (interrupted)

18

19 Chair Fine: [Unintelligible] from one side of Everett to the other.

20

21 Mr. Mello: Not that high. The highest volume was actually making illegal left turns out of  
22 Everett. That was the highest volume going eastbound.

23

1 Chair Fine: Alright. Let's go for another round of questions or comments. I'll just go through  
2 the lights. Commissioner Alcheck.

3  
4 Commissioner Alcheck: I'd like to ask about the two alternatives that you're going to be  
5 refining. I know you sort of suggested that there is going to look at more analysis. Do you think  
6 that the reduction in capacity I mean it sounds like you don't have that data yet, but do you  
7 think that that's going to strongly influence the preference of the Department? I guess the  
8 second question I have that I think is worth sort of addressing at the same time is: are there  
9 alternative routes in this particular area of four bikes that make more sense than Alternative  
10 6a?

11  
12 Mr. Mello: So in regard to your first question the loss of capacity going southbound could do  
13 two things that could trigger an EIR that would necessitate us spending a large amount of time  
14 analyzing the environmental impacts of the alternative and would push back the  
15 implementation of the pilot. It could also generate enough backlash against the project that we  
16 can't move forward because we can't find an alternative that we can reach consensus around.  
17 The Transportation Division is not taking a position. This I think ultimately this is going to be a  
18 balancing act between the livability of the corridor for the residents and the mobility that we  
19 need to maintain for regional and local traffic along the corridor. I don't think there's going to  
20 be a right answer at the end of the day as to which alternative. There's not going to be a clear  
21 winner. It's going to be a balancing act and there's going to be a series of tradeoffs in order to  
22 strike that right balance. And that's really what the residential arterial category is about; it's

1 trying to maintain regional and local mobility while also improving the aesthetics and the  
2 livability and the quality of life along the corridor.

3  
4 Commissioner Alcheck: Is it safe to assume that there's going to be a recommended alternative  
5 when you guys go on... I mean it looks like the next step is not to come before us once this data  
6 is collected, but just to go straight to Council. So I'm just curious if there's you anticipate that  
7 you'll make a recommendation?

8  
9 Mr. Mello: I think we have a lot more analysis to do before we get to that point. I think where  
10 we are today is we think both of the refined alternatives meet the project goals.

11  
12 Commissioner Alcheck: Let me rephrase the question. Is that our goal to have a recommended  
13 alternative or to ask Council to pick and choose between all of them? I mean I know to certain  
14 extent they'll have that option anyways. I'm just curious if the end goal is to sort of come up  
15 with our this is what we think is best.

16  
17 Mr. Mello: So based on the public meeting that we had earlier this month there was a strong  
18 preference by the residents to include bicycle lanes in the ultimate configuration. I think we're  
19 going to we may get to a point where consensus it's hard to reach consensus and we may have  
20 to bring two alternatives to Council. Our goal is to reach consensus before going to Council.  
21 That's always our goal, but I don't think it's always possible.

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23 Commissioner Alcheck: Ok.

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Mr. Mello: So I think we may be, we may end up bringing two alternatives forward to Council for their consideration.

Commissioner Alcheck: And just to say it out loud in theory one of those alternatives would include an EIR which could significantly delay implementation of anything really.

Mr. Mello: If our initial analysis determines that the LOS at Lytton and Willow we'd have to look at both signalized intersections if that drops below the threshold that's outlined in order to warrant an EIR then we would have to do a full EIR for this project and that would delay it fairly substantially.

Commissioner Alcheck: I'll just make this recommendation that because the options are really similar if in fact that's your analysis that it would the thresholds would be triggered and you'd have to conduct an EIR then I would suggest that the Planning Department approach City Council with Alternative 6b which could be implemented in the pilot program and if the Council felt like it was of significant community interest they could still conduct an EIR on 6a. And really the sort of the larger pieces of 6b would remain. 6a would only eliminate... it's not a shift in the roadway, right? I don't know. It's a thought. Because you'd essentially have the opportunity of sort of exploring both options, right? And I think I tend to think it's getting to this sooner is better than waiting a really, really long time. The second part of my question was are there alternatives to the bike routes? I mean are people using an alternative route to get between these areas for biking that just isn't sort of covered here?



1

2 Mr. Mello: So our 2012 Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan recommends a bike  
3 boulevard along the entire length of Webster Street and that would serve as the north/south  
4 corridor for bicyclists in lieu of Middlefield Road. There is a gap. In order to get across the  
5 creek your options are fairly limited. You have to use one of the bike/ped bridges and a lot of  
6 folks stay on Middlefield in order to make that crossing. So I think Commissioner Rosenblum  
7 mentioned that that may be the one part where we really need to maintain that bike  
8 connectivity, but Webster Avenue is ultimately Webster Street, excuse me, is ultimately  
9 intended to be the north/south bike corridor in that area.

10

11 Commissioner Rosenblum: So again I don't anticipate that this comes before us again, but I  
12 think it would be abundantly useful if there was a little bit more of a sort of blown out sort of  
13 depiction of this intersection showing how close or how inconvenient or convenient, if you will,  
14 the other alternative for biking is so that it's easier to sort of understand how this biking 6b,  
15 excuse me, 6a solution would affect that, those options.

16

17 Chair Fine: Commissioner Tanaka.

18

19 Commissioner Tanaka: So yeah, just to continue on. So yeah, I also have heard quite a bit of  
20 issues about people getting out of the driveway especially like for instance at Hamilton and  
21 Middlefield because I think sometimes the traffic backs up so much you can't, it's not so much  
22 safety as kids can't physically get out because cars are blocking it. What ideas do you have  
23 around trying to solve that problem?

1

2 Mr. Mello: So one of the things that might... so I've talked a lot to the residents on Middlefield  
3 Road North and we've talked about that issue specifically. And going back to the idea of  
4 creating a shoulder area bicycle lanes don't just serve as a bike route they also push the travel  
5 lanes further away from the curb, they provide better sight lines for people coming out of  
6 driveways, they also provide more separation between the travel lane and pedestrians on the  
7 sidewalk. That's an additional five feet that you would gain. So I think that's one option is to  
8 push the traffic further away from the curb line improving sight lines. By reducing the number  
9 of travel lanes you're also limiting the number of lanes people have to cross to get in and out of  
10 their driveway and they only have to look at one lane. By creating a two-way left turn lane  
11 you're further enhancing that because you're giving them a place to pause. They only have to  
12 cross one lane at a time if they're pulling out of their driveway and turning left they don't have  
13 to make that movement in one phase, they can do a multi-phase turn. So I think there's several  
14 treatments that can address that. I don't know that we're going to solve that problem 100  
15 percent. Driveway access becomes more difficult with congested roadways. It also becomes  
16 more difficult with high speeds and high volumes, but I think those are three things that can  
17 help address that and both these alternatives include either one to three of those different  
18 treatments depending on which alternative.

19

20 Commissioner Tanaka: What about the issue of if you're trying to get out of your driveway and  
21 go the other direction on Middlefield? Right, so there's it's easy to make a right turn, right?

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23 Mr. Mello: Yeah.

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Commissioner Tanaka: Or how you would you on the other side? Like (interrupted)

Mr. Mello: To make a left?

Commissioner Tanaka: Yeah.

Mr. Mello: So if you reduce the number of lanes that you're crossing in order to make the left that's one way to improve it and both of these alternatives do that. If you create a dedicated two way left turn lane that gives you a place to pause so you only have to cross one direction. You can pause in the middle and wait for a gap in the other direction and then pull out. Both of these alternatives include a dedicated two way left turn lane. The reason, one of the primary reasons that these alternatives don't include a continuous median is because the residents at the public meeting actually expressed concern around the alternatives that have continuous medians because they wanted to maintain driveway access, specifically the ability to make lefts out of their driveways. So a lot of the residents in this section think that the two way left turn lane might help with some of their maneuvering in and out of their driveways.

Commissioner Tanaka: Ok. And then on Middlefield and Hamilton have you seen an increased accident rate there or do you know what the accident rate... how does it compare to other intersections in that area?

1 Mr. Mello: We haven't looked at that intersection. We can do that as the next phase in this  
2 project.

3

4 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok.

5

6 Mr. Mello: This pilot is envisioned to go all the way to Forest.

7

8 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok. One idea I heard from a resident and I'm not sure it makes sense,  
9 but I just want to throw it out there and I want to get your feedback on it, was to have one part  
10 of Middlefield to be mainly pedestrian and then the other side for the sidewalks and the other  
11 side to be for bikes. Does that make sense or not?

12

13 Mr. Mello: I mean there are configurations where you have a dedicated bike path on one side  
14 of a roadway and then a sidewalk on the other side. Those are usually in locations where you  
15 have some kind of separated bikeway that's connecting to that from a park or from a river  
16 corridor or along a rail corridor. I don't know that we could expect cyclists to obey the  
17 regulation and cross to the side that was designated for cyclists and residents abut both sides of  
18 Middlefield so some of the residents would have a bike path in front of their homes and in  
19 order to walk they would have to cross the street. I don't know that that would work unless  
20 you had really seamless crosswalks and bikeways to get back and forth between the two sides  
21 and a lot of Middlefield has large stretches of unsignalized intersections so you don't really have  
22 that fluidity between the two sides that you would need.

23

1 Commissioner Tanaka: I think the idea was originating from the fact that you only have so much  
2 space, right? So much road space and how do you accommodate all of the modalities? But I  
3 understand what you're saying. I think back to what Commissioner or the Vice-Chair said  
4 earlier about to do an apples and apples comparison because I saw your traffic numbers, but  
5 you kind of you're not really doing year over year comparisons. You're kind of comparing  
6 different seasons against each other and there might be different traffic levels and I do agree  
7 with the Vice-Chair in terms of what he said about if there's less traffic it might actually go  
8 faster. So I do think that we need to look at that closely to see if indeed there was  
9 improvement because we have to actually look at, we have to do an apples and apples  
10 comparison otherwise we don't really know. So I don't know if that's possible. Do you even  
11 have year over year numbers?

12

13 Mr. Mello: So we always try to do our counts in the same season, but unfortunately we can't  
14 stop working on projects and wait until school gets back into session and so we always struggle  
15 with that and we always get that's a continual line of feedback that we get that we shouldn't  
16 have count, done a count in the summer or we should have waited till Stanford was back in  
17 session. We always try to accommodate all of that, but in reality these projects are moving  
18 forward and we need to get a before count before it's constructed and I wanted to have an  
19 after count before we came to you. So we conducted the after data collection in order to  
20 provide you with the data. I think we'll continue to collect data and with the goal of comparing  
21 apples to apples, but unfortunately given we just got out of summer break. Stanford just got  
22 back into session. We really couldn't wait an entire season to collect the after data.

23

1 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok. No, that's reasonable. And then so back onto the part near Menlo  
2 Park so can you remind me again how many lanes are on the Menlo Park side and how many  
3 lanes are on the Palo Alto side?

4  
5 Mr. Mello: There are two southbound lanes coming into Palo Alto from Menlo Park. There is  
6 one northbound lane leaving Palo Alto going into Menlo Park and then dual right turn lanes  
7 onto Willow Road and a through lane that continues across Willow Road.

8  
9 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok. So there's kind of a mismatch in terms of number of lanes between  
10 Menlo Park and Palo Alto. What issues do you think that causes?

11  
12 Mr. Mello: Well I mean we lose northbound capacity at the Creek Bridge. So we have one less  
13 lane going northbound. Menlo Park did implemented a no turn on red restriction I think about  
14 a year and a half ago and we successfully negotiated with them to remove the no turn on red  
15 restriction at Willow for the outside lane. They still have the no turn on red restriction for the  
16 other right turn lane. I think that's helped a bit. I know there was significant delay when that  
17 no turn on red went up, but Menlo Park's right of ways severely constrained Commissioner Fine  
18 [Note-Chair] mentioned we did talk to Menlo Park. We constructed a new asphalt path on the  
19 east side of Middlefield Road to the Creek Bridge as part of the resurfacing project and we  
20 asked Menlo Park to continue that to Willow Road. And there was, their response was they  
21 don't have the right of way available. It's private property. So a lot of Middlefield within Menlo  
22 Park the right of way is right up against the back of the curb so they actually don't have any  
23 room to do much in the vicinity of Willow Market and Willow Road.

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Commissioner Tanaka: So what's your ideas to kind of solve this mismatch?

Mr. Mello: I think we ultimately we have to wait till the Creek Bridge is reconstructed and we could add an additional lane and potentially have balanced laneage, but if we move forward with one of these alternatives that only has one northbound lane I don't know that we'd want to move forward with widening the bridge because we may after the pilot is done we may decide that's the configuration that works the best for the community and for mobility.

Commissioner Tanaka: Ok. And then kind of (interrupted)

Chair Fine: Commissioner Tanaka can I just ask if you have a number of more questions? I'm wondering also how many folks in the audience are here for Item Number 5.

Commissioner Tanaka: I have two more.

Chair Fine: Ok. Let's just go through those.

Commissioner Tanaka: Ok, so in terms of outreach some feedback I've gotten is that the outreach has been a bit uneven, but it sounds like you've everything. You sent like postcards and I guess why do you think some of the residents feel that outreach hasn't been enough?

1 Mr. Mello: So we had over 50 people at the first meeting in January for the Complete Street  
2 Project which is exceptional. We very seldomly have that number of people. They were very  
3 animated. They were very interactive. A lot of them were self-organized and that's a good  
4 thing in our opinion, but a lot of residents tend to think that that reflects negatively on the City  
5 that they had to self-organize. Our goal is to actually get enough word out that communities  
6 will self-organize and bring themselves to the meetings, but I did hear a lot from attendees at  
7 that meeting that they thought the City was purposely leaving them off the mailing list or and  
8 the reality was we had amazing turnout for that meeting. So I think we did a great job getting  
9 the word out and I think the residents did a great job self-organizing, but we always continually  
10 strive to do better with our outreach.

11  
12 It's really difficult to get people to come out in the middle of the week to an evening meeting.  
13 We're trying different things like Saturday events for the Midtown Connector Project. We had a  
14 green wave for a day event on a Saturday. So I think we're open to looking at different ways to  
15 do outreach, but in this particular case I think we've had amazing turnout and to have 50  
16 residents come out and give us their opinion and we continued to get e-mail after e-mail after  
17 that meeting. I think I probably heard from upwards of three dozen folks after that meeting  
18 through e-mail as well.

19  
20 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok, so do you actually have a mailing list for this area like where people  
21 could sign up with e-mail to get updates and things like that? Do you have like a Middlefield  
22 safety mailing list or something like that?

23



1 Mr. Mello: We do. We've started using GovDelivery which is a service that we use where we  
2 can create topics and maintain a mailing list.

3

4 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok, so people can sign up?

5

6 Mr. Mello: Yes.

7

8 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok, great. And then last one which is I've talked to some parents who  
9 pick up or drop off their kids at Jordan and all of the parents take Oregon to get in and out of  
10 Jordan. And I guess with the current configuration there's a lot of angst over well how do you  
11 get in and out of Jordan easily. What's your thoughts about that? I'm talking about by car this  
12 time.

13

14 Mr. Mello: You know the lane that abuts the curb in front of Jordan was not only used for  
15 people turning left bypassing people turning left on to North California it was also used as a  
16 defacto right turn lane for the north leg of North California. So there was definitely a reduction  
17 in capacity approaching that intersection, but again that elsewhere on Middlefield that is a  
18 parking lane, it is not a travel lane. The area in front of Jordan parking was prohibited so it  
19 became kind of a defacto passing lane. I do think that the operations of that intersection have  
20 become more moderated. The speeds have become more moderated. There is occasional  
21 delay related to people turning left onto North California going northbound, but overall we've  
22 talked to the shuttle drivers who pick up immediately at dismissal on Middlefield Road just  
23 before the first driveway. They have not experienced any additional delay on their route.

1 They've actually said the road seems more rational and they feel more comfortable operating  
2 the shuttles along the roadway. So I think it's highly dependent on when the particular  
3 motorists arrive. I don't think it's a continual issue during the peak hour. I do think there are  
4 certain time periods where the congestion builds from somebody turning left and we're going  
5 to look at that, those three options that I mentioned earlier.

6  
7 Chair Fine: Ok, thank you; any last questions/comments or all good? Alright, thank you so  
8 much. Great presentation, hope we gave you some good feedback. We have one last item 900  
9 North Caroline. Let's take a quick less than five minute break because I know there are a lot of  
10 people here waiting and then we get to this last item. Thank you so much.

11

12 **The Commission took a break**

13

14 **Action Items**

15 Public Comment is Permitted. Applicants/Appellant Teams: Fifteen (15) minutes, plus three (3) minutes rebuttal.  
16 All others: Five (5) minutes per speaker.

17

18 5. The Planning and Transportation Commission will Consider a Recommendation to the  
19 City Council for 900 N California Ave [14PLN-00233]: Approval of a Preliminary Parcel  
20 Map, With Exceptions, to Subdivide an Existing 30,837 Square Foot Parcel Into Three  
21 Parcels. The Parcel Map Exception is to Allow one of the Parcels to Exceed the Maximum  
22 Lot Area Allowed for the R-1 District. The Project has Been Evaluated for Compliance  
23 With the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines and is  
24 Eligible for an Exemption Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b)(3). For more  
25 information contact Adam Petersen at: [Adam.Petersen@CityofPaloAlto.org](mailto:Adam.Petersen@CityofPaloAlto.org)

26

27 Chair Fine: Alright, I'd like to call us back to order for Item Number 5. This is a quasi-judicial  
28 matter, a public hearing on 900 North California Avenue for us to make a recommendation or  
29 not the City Council to approve a preliminary parcel map of a parcel that's currently 30,800

1 square feet (sf) and subdivided into three separate parcels. I believe staff has a report and let's  
2 go through it.

3

4 Jonathan Lait, Assistant Director: Yes we do, but Chair perhaps before as a reminder because  
5 it's a (interrupted)

6

7 Chair Fine: Disclosures.

8

9 Mr. Lait: Quasi-judicial if you have ex parte communications.

10

11 Chair Fine: Yes. Are there any disclosures? I have none. Thank you.

12

13 Mr. Lait: Great, thank you. And so I would like to introduce Adam Petersen to of M-Group one  
14 of our consulting firms that are assisting the Department with processing applications. Adam,  
15 please? Thanks.

16

17 Adam Petersen, M-Group: Good evening, Chair Fine and Members of the Palo Alto Planning and  
18 Transportation Commission (PTC). As Jon mentioned I'm Adam Petersen. I'm here from the  
19 Planning and Community Environment Department and I'm here tonight to present a request  
20 for a parcel map at 900 North California Avenue. As the Chair said this map for this project  
21 proposes to subdivide one existing 30,837 sf parcel into three lots. There's currently three  
22 homes on the property and a storage shed. The parcel map would allow three new homes to  
23 come in and it essentially would keep the same number of units. The reason why this project is

1 before you tonight, let me back up. Normally these types of projects are handled internally by  
2 staff. The reason why this project is here before you tonight is that there is an exception  
3 requested to Lot 3 to exceed the maximum size allowed in the zoning district. Zoning district  
4 permits a maximum lot size of 9,999 sf. Lot 3 is proposed to be 13,425 sf.

5  
6 As you can see the project is located on the eastern corner of Northern California Avenue and  
7 Louis Road. This is the first home, the second home, the third home is hidden back here sort of  
8 in the trees. As you can see it's an existing single family residential neighborhood and the  
9 project would maintain the character of that neighborhood. This is the proposed lot  
10 configuration for the site. As noted in the staff report there's no real sort of discernible lotting  
11 pattern in the in this neighborhood. Again lot sizes range from 8,000 sf up to 13,425 sf on Lot 3.

12  
13 In terms of staff's analysis for this project the project meets the goals of the Comprehensive  
14 Plan in that it increases the sites or it increases the site's conformance with the City codes.  
15 Right now we have three homes on one lot. This project really comes in and it says alright,  
16 we're going to give a parcel to each home that's going to be on this lot. It preserves the  
17 number of units and in fact it actually provides an opportunity to have a secondary dwelling  
18 unit on that larger lot and like I said it really improves the conformance with the City's codes.  
19 Based on this information staff recommends that the PTC recommend to the City Council that  
20 they find the project exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and approve  
21 the parcel map subject to the conditions and findings in the staff report. Thank you. And I'm  
22 available for any questions that the Commission may have.

23

1 Chair Fine: Thank you very much. So let's see if there are any public speakers go through those  
2 please.

3  
4 Vice-Chair Gardias: Yes so we have three speaker cards. We have five minutes for each speaker  
5 so first speaker would be Beatrix Cashmore followed by Nicholas Koposhilin.

6  
7 Mr. Lait: Excuse me, Vice-Chair. If typically on these types of projects we let the applicant speak  
8 first. And I believe the applicant's represented by Roger Kohler. Thank you.

9  
10 Vice-Chair Gardias: Thank you for reminding.

11  
12 Mr. Lait: And just as a reminder the applicant has up to 15 minutes to speak.

13  
14 Roger Kohler, Kohler Associates Architects: Good evening. Is this on? I guess it is. When I'm up  
15 there they always ask if it's on. So... Yes, I'm Roger Kohler, an architect here in Palo Alto. This  
16 is Greg John the owner of the project. We've been working on this since 2013 when we first got  
17 a glimpse of the project. We've worked with a number of different Planning staff members  
18 who are gone now so we have lots of different opinions. The goal here was to subdivide the  
19 project into the three properties as shown. There is a home on the... it used to be one large  
20 property and the lot on the California Ave. and there's a little there's a home next to that which  
21 creates the kind of the L shaped property on lot I think it's three. And that's why that came  
22 about because it was... and then so then this property was subdivided into three properties.  
23 Each of the homes will built in that they... they have gone through the I don't if you, I'm sure

1 you know about the Individual Review (IR) requirements? Ok. We went through kind of a  
2 Planning Department IR process and actually [Arnold Mobarelli] had looked over the plans as  
3 well even though he wasn't required, made comments, and through Arnold and staff we've  
4 come up with three homes that I think are really going to work well with in that neighborhood.

5

6 And I don't know if you've got... here is the rendering of the three homes that I don't know if  
7 you have that in your booklet, but you can see that they all have front porches and there's a the  
8 front porches tend to diminish the amount of two story home look to the house. This is a  
9 common, that's why you see so many porches in Palo Alto now is that to get through the IR  
10 guidelines you are trying to have homes that blend in with the neighborhood and front porches  
11 are a great means for creating this horizontal line across the neighborhood. So this is one we've  
12 continued that even though this didn't go through IR we've used all the same techniques that  
13 we use in in that process on these homes here. And I'm not sure what else you need to know,  
14 but their the design of each one is a more traditional looking home. The interior of the homes  
15 of these the builder here tends to be a little more modern, so it's kind of a fun thing you walk  
16 from the outside and you expect a very traditional inside, but it's not all of them but some of  
17 the homes have a little more modern look to them inside which isn't your purview at this day I  
18 guess. So I have drawings and things if you have any questions I'll answer anything that you  
19 want.

20

21 Vice-Chair Gardias: Thank you, Mr. Kohler. Are there any questions from the Commission?

22

1 Cara Silver, Senior Assistant City Attorney: Chair Fine? Just to clarify so your purview is just  
2 over the parcel map and of course the IR will be conducted either at the staff level or through  
3 the Architectural Review Board (ARB).

4  
5 Vice-Chair Gardias: Thank you. Are there any questions to the applicant from the Commission?  
6 No? Ok. So with this we can move to the public hearing. So we have going back thank you  
7 very much, Mr. Kohler.

8  
9 Mr. Kohler: Thank you.

10  
11 Vice-Chair Gardias: So we have we have three speaker cards. As I read before the first speaker  
12 would be Beatrix Cashmore followed by Nicholas Kaposhilin. You have five minutes ma'am.

13  
14 Beatrix Cashmore: Thank you. Good evening. Just to be sure that the purview of this meeting  
15 is what I'm here about I'm particularly concerned about some of the aspects of the construction  
16 plans which I looked at 18 months ago when we received our first information cards. By the  
17 way Beatrix Cashmore and I live at 928 North California Avenue. I'm very close to the  
18 properties in question. So the purpose of this meeting is the subdivision, the decision about the  
19 subdivision of the property. It is not about any other aspect of the construction plans. It is or  
20 it's...?

21

1 Chair Fine: That's correct. Our purview tonight is finding this change exempt from CEQA, the  
2 California Environmental Quality Act, and recommending or not recommending the preliminary  
3 parcel map to Council.

4  
5 Ms. Cashmore: Ok, so my concern has to do with some aspects of the plans that I looked at in  
6 the Planning Center 18 months ago which included full basements for all three of these homes  
7 to be constructed and if this is not the purview to discuss that then I really don't have anything  
8 else to say.

9  
10 Chair Fine: Well it's still a chance. I mean I encourage you to follow this project as it moves its  
11 way through the City, but this is still a chance to get some of your comments on record if you  
12 want to.

13  
14 Ms. Cashmore: Well, if you're open to them certainly.

15  
16 Chair Fine: We're all open to listening, but we only have purview over these two items tonight,  
17 of these two different aspects.

18  
19 Ms. Cashmore: Ok. Am I correct in assuming then that the plans if approved will go ahead with  
20 the construction of the two story homes and plus full basements?

21  
22 Chair Fine: We should defer to staff, but that will be a separate process going through IR.

23



1 Mr. Lait: Yeah, Chair I might suggest to the speaker also that if we can hear the presentation  
2 and we'll take some notes and we'll be able to response to some questions that come up during  
3 the presentation so you can maximize your speaking time. So we can we'll respond to the  
4 status of the project.

5

6 Chair Fine: Thank you.

7

8 Ms. Cashmore: Ok so this is really not a good time to do this. Ok. That's ok. Thank you.

9

10 Vice-Chair Gardias: Thank you. So the next speaker is Nicholas Kaposhilin. And you have five  
11 minutes.

12

13 Nicholas Kaposhilin: Thank you. So I am the resident of 936 North California Avenue which is a  
14 couple houses down. I grew up there. So I've been on that street for 45 years minus the 14  
15 that I was gone. I'd like to draw everyone's attention to Page 4 of 7 of the document for tonight  
16 which is really great because this is exactly what I wanted to talk about. Firstly I'd like to say  
17 that the architect and the home owner definitely get some praise from myself. I think that it's  
18 great that we're going to have a solution to that big empty lot that's been there for half a  
19 century. So I'm looking forward to the development, but what I would like to raise is two things  
20 and the second is probably best to be raised in a different time which is what he mentioned  
21 before.

22

1 The first is about the parcelization because what I think would make a lot more sense would  
2 have been for the homeowner to approach the resident of 920, Peter, and ask him if he would  
3 be interested in acquiring the property behind his. Because that lot is by far and away 920  
4 North California Avenue is by far and away smaller than any other lot on our entire street. I  
5 would I'm not sure about by how much, but I would say it's probably half as big as most of the  
6 lots on the street. And it's always been out of place. I don't know how it ever came to be that  
7 such a small parcel with an L shape around it, but it did. This is now an opportunity to rectify  
8 that and I was surprised that the homeowner once acquiring the property didn't actually offer  
9 to sell that land to Peter to expand his property into what should be the correct way of looking  
10 at the street: lot, lot, lot, lot. And that still leaves enough space for three homes which is I  
11 believe what it must have been the plan of the homeowner from the beginning is to buy the  
12 whole lot and redevelop it into three good homes that could be sold. Which is a great idea; I  
13 think most people in the street would be very pro that idea, but we're leaving this tiny little  
14 property. We're building all the way around it. So he's got a lot of privacy now because he has  
15 nothing behind his house. He'll lose all that. And it's a very small lot. So that was the main  
16 thing I had to talk about.

17  
18 I do also have significant concerns with three houses being built at one time on our street. So I  
19 would like to request a time where the residents of the street have the opportunity to discuss  
20 with the homeowner and the staff or whoever it is in charge of making the decision about how  
21 we can stagger that. And I'd also like to call to the staff's attention that in the post in the public  
22 announcements about the redesigns of the homes it was not made clear that basements are  
23 going to be included or not. And considering the problem with ground water we really don't

1 want to see three basements being dug at the same time and the impact to our trees from the  
2 loss of groundwater for those. So those are part of the reasons why we want to be involved in  
3 this process and maybe this is something we could do directly with the homeowner as  
4 neighbors, but it hasn't happened so far. So I think we were here tonight to make sure that we  
5 can get into the process at some point.

6  
7 Chair Fine: Thank you sir very much. Just a few questions to answer some of these comments...  
8 oh we have one more? Ok, let's go to the last speaker and then we'll have a few questions.

9  
10 Vice-Chair Gardias: Thank you very much. So next speaker is Christy Crews.

11  
12 Christy Crews: I had... Hi, thank you. I'm a neighbor on the other side and I just wanted to  
13 address the safety issues having to do with the construction because of the situation with the  
14 traffic and the impact on the kids, but again this isn't I guess the forum to do that. So it would  
15 probably be more in what the previous speaker was talking about it. It would probably be  
16 better to discuss that at that time.

17  
18 Chair Fine: I still think it's worth voicing your concerns. It's on the record, we can listen we just  
19 may not be able to use that as input for the decision we're making tonight.

20  
21 Ms. Crews: I understand. I live next door to the property on Louis that's going to be developed  
22 and currently living directly across the street where there is a house that has been being built  
23 for the last two years and there is a basement that was dug in that. So there was ground water

1 pumped out there. So again there was a lot of ground water in the vicinity. I have some very  
2 large trees. One of which is a redwood tree and I'm a little concerned about the impact of the  
3 water there. I have learned a little bit more about the water and so I have concerns there, but  
4 my main concern that I wanted to bring up was the safety issues. We currently have a street  
5 that is very busy with traffic both coming off the highway and going back on the highway with  
6 all the school cars and kids, bikes, and otherwise. And meanwhile we have a street that's  
7 supposed to be one side you can park on the other side you cannot, but currently we do have  
8 people parking all the time because they're the workers on the house across the street and  
9 that's just one house in one phase of its being worked on. So I was concerned about what the  
10 impact was going to be with three houses going on in a very busy corner that right now is  
11 problematic with parking and so forth and where people would park to do that and just mainly  
12 safety, safety issues having to do with everybody that uses that area. So that's what I wanted  
13 to say. Thank you.

14

15 Chair Fine: Thank you very much. Do we have any other public speakers?

16

17 Vice-Chair Gardias: No, that's it. Thank you.

18

19 Chair Fine: So just to staff, two quick questions. Well, three actually. One, can you identify for  
20 some of the public speakers how what this happens it next goes to Council, the process after  
21 that so they know when they should come and speak before another body again.

22

1 Mr. Lait: Yeah, so this so November 28th is the date that we're targeting for City Council. This  
2 would be on the Consent Calendar, correction it will be a noticed public hearing before that  
3 date. A 600 foot radius around the subject site will get notice. I'll note that the three homes  
4 did go to the ARB and there was a notice of public hearing for that and that's the time where a  
5 review of the design and the basement would have been revealed in terms of the proposed  
6 home development. There is a determination letter that has not yet been issued for that  
7 project, but the ARB did recommend approval of the three homes.

8  
9 Chair Fine: Ok. Were basements included in the noticing or?

10

11 Mr. Lait: I don't have the notice in front of me. I don't recall.

12

13 Chair Fine: Ok. We should identify that and see how we do that going forward for all projects in  
14 the City. I think there's the responses from comments from the public. I believe if the applicant  
15 wants to have...

16

17 Mr. Kohler: I'd just like to clarify.

18

19 Chair Fine: Five minutes.

20

21 Mr. Kohler: Five minutes. I don't [have to stay five]. I've done a lot of basements in Palo Alto,  
22 probably 200-250. We did two, three projects where there were 12 to 18, 20 homes being built  
23 at one time all of them with basements. [The to base] the water goes gets pumped out and

1 gets delivered to the drain line it goes out to the bay. If it doesn't get pumped out it works its  
2 way out to the bay underground anyway and it's been shown over and over that the basements  
3 really don't have hardly any impact on neighboring homes or anything and I could give you a  
4 long list of homes I've done with basements and this and that. It's just done with the proper,  
5 done right with a contractor who knows what he's doing and everything it's just really it's not...  
6 and actually it's a benefit because in the summer when they're digging basements the  
7 contractors know using water from that to wash down their job sites and everything. They  
8 don't have to get water, they recycle the water that comes out of their basements and it's been  
9 actually kind of a boon. So I just want to say it's... ok.

10

11 Chair Fine: Thank you. And one last question I just remembered from the public commenters.  
12 Is there is a way the City does ever stagger construction of multiple home sites on the same  
13 parcel?

14

15 Mr. Lait: So the City doesn't have any regulations that would establish a process for that. There  
16 are some pros and cons with staggering construction, I mean you could have the whole thing  
17 wrapped up in 18 months or you can see the whole thing drag out for five plus years. And so  
18 being around that much construction for that extent of time could have, impose its other  
19 impacts. But there are there were other comments I heard about the construction and I'm not  
20 sure if this is a Safe Route to School route or not, but there was I think a comment about  
21 bicyclists and pedestrians. There are construction mitigation plans that the Commission could  
22 inquire or require as a part of the approving of the exception. We can talk further about that.

23

1 Chair Fine: Ok. Thank you. I'd like to open it up to questions and comments from the  
2 Commission. First Commissioner Alcheck.

3  
4 Commissioner Alcheck: Ok. I'm going to assume everybody's done their homework. I think this  
5 one's really straightforward. I would... because you let individuals comment I just want to sort  
6 of respond to a few of the things that I believe are unrelated to this review, but... So I just want  
7 to respond to your last question Mr. Fine about this notion of staggering. It's like an absurd  
8 question. The lots are subdivided. If individuals on a street want to develop their projects they  
9 don't have to get in line. Everybody is entitled to develop their parcel on their own timeline  
10 and the notion of staggering these projects especially once they're subdivided that seems like  
11 a... You're, we're asking the question because there is one individual involved. If three  
12 different individuals on that street were interested in that enterprise of developing their homes  
13 the notion that they would have to wait for years simply because somebody next door was  
14 going to do it seems like an absurd concept. So I don't want it... I just want us to keep that in  
15 mind that when...

16  
17 The other thing I want to mention is and I'll say one more thing, I think that's a very valid point  
18 that Assistant Director Lait mentioned which is that a project typically and I'm sure Mr. Kohler  
19 can attest to this can take anywhere between 18 months and two years. If you stagger them  
20 you're talking about six years. That could be a phenomenally long time to live on a street  
21 where there's still going to the same number of people involved.

22

1 Mr. [unintelligible] I agree with your assessment of ground water, again it's irrelevant to this  
2 discussion today. But there's a lot of misinformation about groundwater, but I do think that the  
3 City has changed their policy this year to make it substantially harder to pump out a basement  
4 and so that exceptionally now rigorous process I think should go a long way to alleviate  
5 concerns of neighbors because there are now is a process by which you have to have I believe a  
6 certified arborist attest to the ground water penetration you're going to make in our  
7 neighborhoods now. And they even have to go I think it's 500 feet, but it could be wrong it  
8 might be 250. But they have to assess the canopy within a certain radius of the proposed dig  
9 and then provide some sort of certification about as to the impacts that may result as a result  
10 of the groundwater pumping. So I think that you mention that's a strong concern of yours and I  
11 would look into that process a little bit and see what the arbor... I'm sure if there is if they're  
12 going to move forward they'll need that certification and you can look into it and maybe it even  
13 identifies your trees if they're in such close proximity.

14  
15 So ok moving, oh yeah the other thing someone spoke on behalf of this lot, this small so talking  
16 about the subdivision. I'm going to make a Motion that we recommend that the Council  
17 approve this [up live in a lot] and suggest that it meets all of the findings that we need to make  
18 here. Again I'm doing that right off the bat because I think if we've all read this packet then this  
19 is a very, very straightforward. The one comment made by one of our community members  
20 about the way that you divide the lots is an interesting one. The neighbor at 920 I'm sure has  
21 an interest in having a larger parcel or even a parcel that's more consistent with the parcels on  
22 his block. I can think of a number of reasons why maybe Mr. [Schoen] didn't approach him. I  
23 can think of only one reason why the neighbor himself didn't approach Mr. [Schoen] and that



1 maybe that he isn't interested. If he did approach Mr. [Schoen] and they could make a deal  
2 then again that's sort of an interesting concept and interesting discussion, but a substandard lot  
3 isn't unique in Palo Alto enough to sort of suggest that we couldn't subdivide this in the way  
4 that's been proposed that might satisfy all the findings that we need to make. I can go over  
5 those. Do you want me to go over them one by one? Would that help? Anybody?

6  
7 Chair Fine: So if you are going to make a Motion could we make it a little clear (interrupted)

8  
9 Commissioner Alcheck: I'll make that [unintelligible] so I make a Motion that we here I'll read  
10 the language out so that it's nice and clean.

11  
12 Chair Fine: Ok. If you just take the boilerplate.

13  
14 MOTION #1

15  
16 Commissioner Alcheck: I recommend that we, I would like to make a Motion that we  
17 recommend to the Council that this project is exempt from CEQA and that it meets the findings  
18 necessary for this subdivision and those findings would be, hold on, I'll go through them.

19  
20 Chair Fine: In the Attachment B. Ok, we have a Motion on the floor to recommend just a  
21 boilerplate to Council. Do we have a second?

22  
23 Vice-Chair Gardias: I have a formal comment.

1

2 Chair Fine: Please.

3

4 Vice-Chair Gardias: Which takes precedence over Motion. If I may ask just because now

5 [unintelligible] if we can just hold on to the Motions until everybody speaks this way we have a

6 clarity of the perspective and so we can exchange comments.

7

8 Chair Fine: It's fine by me.

9

10 MOTION #1 WITHDRAWN

11

12 Commissioner Alcheck: I'll pull the Motion, but I just I want to make a point here that we're

13 indulging a conversation that is unlike there are some concerns about development of

14 groundwater and if... I'd love to hear if anybody has some real questions about the findings and

15 whether or not they're consistent and if we don't I think we're actually wasting people's time.

16

17 Chair Fine: Ok. I see two lights. So let's just go through those and then we can make Motions.

18 Commissioner Rosenblum.

19

20 Commissioner Rosenblum: Yes, I only have one issue. I also agree it seems fairly

21 straightforward, but there is an exemption which is that one of the lots is larger than the

22 10,000, 9,999 parcel limit. So I do want to ask the applicant Mr. [Schoen] whether or not you

1 did approach the neighbor with the substandard lot and if there has been any discussion of that  
2 because that would seem to obviate a number of problems at once.

3

4 **[Mr. Schoen]**: Thank you Mr. Rosenblum. So I'm **[Greg Schoen]** the owner. So I believe actually  
5 the owner of 920 North California, Mr. Underhill is also here. So over the past three to four  
6 years we actually we did, we had a talk with each other multiple times. So not only once, not  
7 only twice, many times we tried to figure out what would be best use of my parcel as well as  
8 the neighbor, the neighborhood's, particularly Mr. Underhill his parcel because it's a  
9 substandard lot we **[unintelligible]** and our other neighbor had it very accurate. It is a very  
10 substandard lot. And we had exchanged the ideas, the conversation and run some proposals  
11 many times, many times. But by the end both of us we agreed that there's no way it can both  
12 work out, because Mr. Underhill intend, intended and is still now, but the decision is to stay in  
13 his promises and it would not be feasible for Mr. Underhill to acquire the sort of the pocket of  
14 my lot nor for me to... But at the time for the past three to four years to acquire Mr. Underhill's  
15 property over that time. So we did explore all sorts of the options, but I think for now it's at a  
16 **[unintelligible]** between us that's what we both agreed upon. To come with this proposal and  
17 based upon that I believe packets the two pages had explained it from the staff finding very  
18 well the four reasons why this is the only viable option and the best way to do this subdivision  
19 project and I would not repeat it. Those four reasons are in the packet Page 24 and 25. So  
20 that's all what I'd like to respond.

21

22 Commissioner Rosenblum: Thank you, Mr. **[Schoen]**. That was my only question. I think  
23 otherwise this easily meets this takes a noncompliant plot and makes it substantially more

1 compliant, it creates housing value on what's essentially a vacant piece of land. I think that the  
2 neighborhood and the applicant have substantial interest in having more uniformity. So I see  
3 very little controversy, but I did want to clear that up to see if that conversation at least had  
4 taken place because that would be somewhat better to have more uniformity, complete  
5 compliance, no exception, but I understand. As long, if the conversation has taken place and  
6 unable to reach an agreement I also like the Commissioner Alcheck view this as a fairly  
7 straightforward matter at this point.

8  
9 Commissioner Alcheck: Can I just say something real quick? I think it's it wasn't he didn't make  
10 that point just now, but I think it's worth noting it was in the packet that the frontage for the lot  
11 had to be 60 feet. So the this parcel is in theory couldn't really have been made smaller  
12 without then not complying with the second element of the zoning code. So it's worth pointing  
13 out that you can't have it both ways. You can't comply with the lot size and also comply with  
14 the zoning guideline of a 60 foot frontage.

15  
16 Chair Fine: Vice-Chair Gardias.

17  
18 Vice-Chair Gardias: Yes. So but I had a the reason I pressed my button because I had the same  
19 question about the neighbor. So you're Peter, right? And pretty much you have no interest in  
20 acquiring that backside of... [unintelligible-man off microphone]. Could you come to the to this  
21 to the microphone please?

22

1 Peter Underhill: Yes, my name is Peter Underhill, live at 920 North California. I've lived there  
2 for 28 years and Greg approached me when he bought the adjacent properties. He wanted to  
3 buy my lot and so he could develop four homes. And I was reluctant to, I didn't want to sell  
4 because I work at Stanford. I like the neighborhood. The current house is adequate for my  
5 needs. I'm just a working class stiff guy. And Greg was just going to offer me market value and  
6 then if I sold my home where would I move? I'd have to move further away from campus and I  
7 really not at this point interested in taking a cashing out any equity. So and I knew I would  
8 always desired to own that piece in the back behind my house, but he also knew that unless I  
9 won the lottery I would never have that space. So I never asked them sell me the space  
10 because I knew I couldn't buy it unless I went into significant debt and I didn't want to really put  
11 my current value as collateral. So that's the situation. And I'm willing to live with the plans as  
12 they're projected and endure the 18 months of construction.

13

14 Vice-Chair Gardias: Thank you very much for clarifying this was important to understand that  
15 pretty much we were asking about you buying that piece behind your lot which would pretty  
16 much bring everything to compliance (interrupted)

17

18 Mr. Underhill: In my heart I'd like it, but my bank account won't let me.

19

20 Vice-Chair Gardias: Yes and that of course just to clarify this because this lot would be 8,100  
21 and just giving the size over 8,000 you would be entitled just to have a secondary unit and  
22 secondary, a second address on the same lot so from perspective of the investment your lot

1 with the gain on the value and that the other adjacent lot would meet the same criteria. So I  
2 think that you both would be better off, but you know.

3  
4 Mr. Underhill: I mean the discussion was that at some point in the future I may choose to sell or  
5 I may not or my people who my heirs might want to sellable house after I'm gone. And we Greg  
6 has expressed interest in that situation and then there's another parcel, but I don't care about  
7 that. I'm just been waiting since February 2012 figure out what's going to happen. Ok, thanks  
8 guys.

9  
10 Vice-Chair Gardias: Very good. Thank you very much for clarification it was important to us.  
11 Thank you.

12  
13 Chair Fine: Commissioner Waldfogel.

14  
15 Commissioner Waldfogel: Thank you. Two questions for staff. One was I think I heard a  
16 comment that we could put some requirements on traffic management or some other  
17 development conditions parking plans or some... could you expand on that a bit?

18  
19 Mr. Lait: Yes, I can. And there may be some condition on the ARB approval that I'm just not  
20 aware of right now, but having three homes developed at one time on a lot is going to require  
21 some special consideration in terms of construction staging and how the work is getting done.  
22 And so it would not be, it would be reasonable to impose a condition requiring a coordination  
23 plan be submitted and reviewed by the City's departments and that would include Public Works

1 and Planning and the Building Department as a condition of approval. So that's something that  
2 we can do and we've done in the past.

3

4 Commissioner Waldfogel: Thank you. So that's something we could add to a Motion?

5

6 Mr. Lait: Yes.

7

8 Commissioner Waldfogel: Ok, that would be great. Then the second question is for City  
9 Attorney Silver. So we're in the middle of a process to look at a impact fee ordinance and I  
10 guess the question is it appears that this project isn't subject to current Below Market Rate  
11 (BMR) policy, but it would be subject or it's possibly subject to something in the new ordinance  
12 that we're still in the process of developing. And I just wonder if we could potentially make this  
13 subject to and I assume that's going to get approved sometime in the next six months or  
14 whenever the Council takes it up. Is that something that we could condition this on that this  
15 project be subject to whatever comes out of that process.

16

17 Ms. Silver: Yes, thank you for that question. So our current BMR ordinance only applies to  
18 housing projects of five or more units; however, the proposed ordinance that this board is  
19 considering to recommend to the Council will lower that trigger to three units or more. So  
20 assuming that the Council it takes that recommendation and approves the ordinance then this  
21 project would be subject to the new BMR ordinance as proposed. So it would be appropriate to  
22 make a recommendation to Council that the project be conditioned upon compliance with any  
23 newly applicable BMR ordinance.

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Commissioner Waldfogel: Great, thank you.

Chair Fine: Vice-Chair.

Vice-Chair Gardias: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to just take your attention to the sheet SH4 that proposes it's about proposed plan and then I have the question to the to Adam or maybe to applicant if they can explain to us that the plan, proposed plan for that L shaped lot that shows guest house and two car garage at the back of the lot. So questions that I have are as follows: is that a guest house intended to be second unit that would be that would have its separate address. If not that then would there be a restriction on renting out this guest house to the to some other folks? And the second question is about the two car garage that's located within the setback which I understand there would have to be an exemption or separate application to place the garage behind the setback.

Mr. Lait: So to your first question it's a second, it's our understanding is that the applicant is proposing a single family residence and a secondary dwelling unit which is permitted in code by code. The it may very well have a separate address associated with it and there would they would be able to rent that out to make it an available rental for a month or longer on lease basis of a month or longer or one year. One year initially I guess and then followed by month by month is permissive.



1 And as to the second question my understanding is and Adam can elaborate on this further is  
2 that the accessory garage structure is compliant with the City's zoning codes standards with  
3 respect to setbacks. So if there's a question about the specific requirement we can talk about  
4 that. You think it's too close to the to the property line?

5  
6 Vice-Chair Gardias: Yeah, I wasn't I was wondering if it's compliant because the garage is within  
7 the setback line, right? So.

8  
9 Mr. Petersen: Correct. The garage and the guest house are complaint with setback  
10 requirements.

11  
12 Vice-Chair Gardias: It meets the code, right?

13  
14 Mr. Petersen: It meets, it is consistent with the code, yes.

15  
16 Vice-Chair Gardias: Ok. So now related question is like this: was there any consideration of  
17 expanding the setback, the site setback, what's today is a side setback to a back setback on the  
18 left side of that property?

19  
20 Mr. Lait: I'm sorry, if you can repeat that?

21  
22 Vice-Chair Gardias: So what I'm saying is that you took literally back of the property as the back  
23 of the property. When I look at the property I'm not really sure if giving that L shape if that if

1 the if the back is not also at the eastern side. I'm sorry; this would be northern side of the  
2 property. So my question is pretty much giving that L shape of the property is the placement of  
3 the rear setback proper that it's only along one side as opposed to the second the shorter side  
4 of that L shape?

5  
6 Mr. Lait: Right. So yeah the so the code sets forth the location of it defines where the different  
7 property lines are and it tells us which ones a front yard and a rear yard and so forth. And so on  
8 this lot the rear lot line is the one that is opposite from the front lot line and that's the one  
9 that's got the dimension of about 120 feet. The side there's multiple side property lines.  
10 There's the side right off you come off the street and it doglegs to the left and then it continues  
11 again toward the what we're calling the rear property line. So we're considering that whole  
12 property line along the left as you're looking at it in plan view as a side property line and we  
13 believe that's consistent with how the code reads.

14

15 Vice-Chair Gardias: Yes. So I was concerned about the 66.87.

16

17 Mr. Lait: Right.

18

19 Vice-Chair Gardias: Site that has site setback.

20

21 Mr. Lait: And so again we (interrupted)

22

1 Vice-Chair Gardias: Which I understand why you're interpreting this way, right? But I  
2 wondering right if it's compliant with our code? That's number one and also with some other  
3 lots that we may have of this shape.

4

5 Mr. Petersen: Are you asking in terms of lot dimensions?

6

7 Vice-Chair Gardias: No, I'm asking about the physical placement of the rear setback.

8

9 Mr. Petersen: Right, right.

10

11 Mr. Lait: So again, I mean I'll pull up the definition of the different property lines, but that we  
12 believe is this is the side is a side setback, the side property line. Do you want me to pull up the  
13 definition of property lines?

14

15 Chair Fine: So I do want to remind us all that our purview tonight is Items 1 and 2, the CEQA  
16 exemption and the parcel map application. Just a reminder.

17

18 Mr. Kohler: If you have these little handout you get from the counter it shows (interrupted)

19

20 Chair Fine: Hold on.

21

22 Mr. Kohler: I just, but I just want to say (interrupted)

23

1 Chair Fine: Mr. Kohler, Mr. Kohler we have to notice a...

2

3 Mr. Kohler: It's in the booklet. Go get your booklet across the street. You can see it.

4

5 [Unintelligible-man off microphone]

6

7 Vice-Chair Gardias: Yeah, I just want to understand if this is proper. Giving the sites, giving the L

8 shape of the property because there may be concern from the neighbor that may say that look

9 this 66.87 it's not at the side it's a rear back off the property.

10

11 Mr. Lait: Right. So thank you. And again if we certainly would have flagged it if we thought it

12 was problem, but let me read to you the definitions. A rear lot line it is a lot line not

13 intersecting a front lot line which is most distant from and most closely parallel to the front lot

14 line. So that sets the rear one. The side lot line is any lot line which is not a front or a rear lot

15 line. That's how the code defines it.

16

17 Vice-Chair Gardias: Ok, thank you. I was looking for his clarification. Thank you.

18

19 Chair Fine: Do we have any other comments/questions or would we like to make a Motion?

20 Any lights? Commissioner Alcheck.

21

22 MOTION #2

23

1 Commissioner Alcheck: I'll make a Motion that we recommend to Council that this subdivision  
2 request meets their requirements and I will include in that recommendation on Commissioner  
3 Waldfogel's recommendation that we encourage Council to consider implementing some  
4 coordination plan by the Building Department when this project meets its approval process at  
5 that stage. I don't really want to go much further there. I'll look for a second.

6

7 Chair Fine: Do we have a second?

8

9 SECOND

10

11 Vice-Chair Gardias: I will provide the second.

12

13 Chair Fine: Thank you; so the Vice-Chair seconds. Would you like to speak to your Motion?

14

15 Commissioner Alcheck: Yeah, I think as with every development in Palo Alto, every  
16 neighborhood, every house that gets built there is always a lot of... there are a lot of views on  
17 what is going to happen. I would encourage everyone in this room that has particular opinions  
18 on what is coming to be involved in the parts of the process where those decisions are made.  
19 And I think tonight this subdivision corrects a very odd and unique oddly shaped lot and does so  
20 in what I believe is the most efficient way. And I'll also mention that I do think that I imagine  
21 with when this plan doesn't go through the Building Department I think there is already a  
22 process to sort of coordinate everything from truck deliveries to other elements of sort of  
23 arriving at the lot and sort of parking, but I do think that this notion of coordination is a very,

1 very good one and to some extent that that could make the two years of construction a lot  
2 more bearable if during this construction they do have coordination. So I hope that City Council  
3 sort of figures out the best way to make that happen.

4  
5 Chair Fine: Vice-Chair would you like to speak to your second?

6  
7 Vice-Chair Gardias: Yes. I just want to add that I think that with the discussion we just had we  
8 clarified some open issues and doubts that we had at the pre-commission meeting and having  
9 the neighbor, the owner of the 920 North California property being and speaking to us it just  
10 clearly stated that proposed plan was the accurate one and subdivision is the proper.

11  
12 Chair Fine: Ok, just two or three comments before we can entertain any amendments or take a  
13 vote. So one I think just to staff going forward there should be in our notices an issue if there's  
14 a basement. It just seems like a proper thing we should do. Any other comments/amendments  
15 or should we put this to the vote? Mike.

16  
17 Commissioner Alcheck: In a subdivision notification.

18  
19 Chair Fine: It was for the actual the project notification, the plans.

20  
21 Commissioner Alcheck: Right, but the project notification I'm still confused a little bit about the  
22 project notification. Did it simply go to the ARB because it involved a subdivision? Because if  
23 it's single story homes the assumption is that it doesn't have an ARB process and so you don't

1 actually notify neighbor residents currently under our current system if it's a single story home  
2 which I think these... That's why I'm a little bit curious about, so how?

3

4 Mr. Lait: So I think what I understood from the Chair is that for our particularly for our ARB  
5 notice, notification when we're describing the project to include the basement, and we typically  
6 do that I believe.

7

8 Commissioner Alcheck: That's what I thought.

9

10 Mr. Lait: Yeah.

11

12 Chair Fine: Ok.

13

14 Commissioner Alcheck: I thought it would come before the ARB if it was a two story home and  
15 then in that process there would be some sort of link or some notification that would allow you  
16 to actually view the plans if you were within the neighborhood.

17

18 Mr. Lait: Yes.

19

20 Commissioner Alcheck: I don't know that we need to...

21

22 Mr. Lait: I think you're talking about like a best management practice (interrupted)

23

1 Commissioner Alcheck: I'm wondering [unintelligible-crosstalk] I'm wondering if you mean in  
2 the subdivision notification in which case (interrupted)

3

4 Chair Fine: No, no, no in the ARB project.

5

6 Commissioner Alcheck: Alright, I think it's there, but...

7

8 Chair Fine: Commissioner Rosenblum I see a light.

9

10 Commissioner Rosenblum: Yeah I just wanted to ask a clarifying question before this vote if  
11 that's ok. The only concern I have is this call for Council to put in place some kind of staging  
12 measures, whatever we call them. And so I want to ask the maker of the Motion if there's any  
13 concern that that's used as an excuse for staging i.e. somehow prohibiting the building of all  
14 three at once, etcetera. And related to that is that our purview is approving the map or not  
15 approving the map based on our findings and so give a CEQA exception. So I have two  
16 concerns; first, that that Council will clearly do what they want, right? That we're just giving  
17 advice, but I don't want this to be the excuse to say well, they are in favor of perhaps staggering  
18 construction, whatever and this is also outside our purview. So I have those two related  
19 concerns.

20

21 Commissioner Alcheck: I'll just say I think I made it clear earlier that I think that the staggering,  
22 the concept of staggering is absurd. I don't even know how the City could implement that.  
23 Maybe it's a conditional, maybe because this is a conditional review that could be something



1 implemented. I'll say during this process that I would highly discourage Council from  
2 considering that as an option, but there is a process when the Building Department gets  
3 involved in development where they play a role in developing sort of a road map on let's say  
4 which streets your truck should go down when you're pulling out mud. And maybe to some  
5 extent because they're if these projects are there are three ways, there's two ways this project  
6 gets developed; they use the same team on all three in which case there won't be three  
7 different groups of framers they'll be one that will move after one month in theory or they  
8 might have three different building teams in which case that is a lot of cars on the road and  
9 maybe to some extent they could coordinate some sort of parking solution. That I could see as  
10 being and I'm only suggesting in our Motion I'm not making it a condition, I'm just suggesting  
11 that Council encourage the Building Department to be involved in that so that it makes  
12 (interrupted)

13

14 Commissioner Rosenblum: I'm comfortable with that answer, thank you.

15

16 Chair Fine: Ok, so we have a Motion on the floor to recommend approval of this project to  
17 Council that it is exempt and with the findings that it's exempt from CEQA and that the parcel  
18 map matches the findings needed in Attachment B with a recommendation that Council  
19 explore coordinated construction management and traffic plan.

20

21 Mr. Lait: And if I could just add a little clarity to that. So what I took from that Motion and  
22 requests we have a standard condition that we can impose on the project and we would just

1 include that in this document. I don't know the Council has to have a further conversation  
2 about it, but we would highlight that that was a condition that was added.

3

4 Chair Fine: That's fine.

5

6 Mr. Lait: Ok, great. Thank you.

7

8 Chair Fine: Ok. Commissioner Waldfogel.

9

10 FRIENDLY AMENDMENT #1

11

12 Commissioner Waldfogel: Thank you. Yeah, I support this so far. I'd also I'd like to propose an  
13 amendment to the Motion that this also be subject to development fees that are in place. We  
14 can choose a I'd say within 12 months of the approval date of this subdivision.

15

16 Chair Fine: Would you accept that amendment?

17

18 Commissioner Alcheck: Yeah, I would I think there's a process, there is a process in place to  
19 determine what how fees are assessed based on the date of the application and I would prefer  
20 that... First of all, I would prefer that we follow that process rather than put in place something  
21 that is somewhat different. I feel the same way by the way about the BMR thing. I think if they  
22 if the project moves forward and at the time it moves forward it's subject to something

1 different then it should pay those fees and if it's not then it's not and I don't know that we  
2 should somehow set an arbitrary date.

3

4 Chair Fine: Is that you do not accept?

5

6 FRIENDLY AMENDMENT #1 REJECTED

7

8 Commissioner Alcheck: [Unintelligible] no, sorry.

9

10 Chair Fine: Ok, any last comments or should we vote on this?

11

12 Commissioner Waldfogel: Do we have a second? I mean I want to propose... do a Substitute  
13 Motion then.

14

15 Chair Fine: Ok. Your Substitute Motion would be Commissioner Alcheck's Motion along with  
16 your amendment about subject to development fees past from the next twelve months?

17

18 SUBSTITUTE MOTION

19

20 Commissioner Waldfogel: Yes.

21

22 SECOND

23

1 Chair Fine: Ok. I would be willing to support that. As a second. So we have a new Motion on  
2 the table, right? Should we vote on this? It's pretty clear these are both recommendations. So  
3 the Motion on the table is we recommend approval with these two findings, a coordinated  
4 traffic/construction management plan and that I guess there's also a conditional to the  
5 approval, subject to development fees that are adjusted within the next 12 months.  
6 Commissioner Tanaka.

7

8 Commissioner Tanaka: Do you want to have a discussion about it?

9

10 Chair Fine: I'm... would you like speak to your Motion?

11

12 Commissioner Waldfogel: We just have this process in motion and it's taken. I think a bit longer  
13 than everybody expected to reach a resolution on it, but the Council or the Finance Committee  
14 has signaled an intent on this. We have a work item on this and it seems like a reasonable  
15 condition to place at this point in the process. So I would like to I'd like to advance it.

16

17 Chair Fine: I'm not to speak to my second. Unless there's other comments so we can call a vote  
18 on this. All those in favor? So the Motion is... [unintelligible-off mike] There was a new Motion  
19 that was seconded on the table. [unintelligible – off mike] Ok.

20

21 Mr. Lait: Procedurally if there is a substitute Motion you make a, you take a vote on the  
22 Substitute Motion and if that fails then you go back to the original Motion.

23

1 Chair Fine: Ok, so we're taking a vote on the Substitute Motion.

2

3 Commissioner Alcheck: Wait a minute. Why wouldn't that be treated as an unfriendly  
4 amendment?

5

6 Mr. Lait: It was a the amendment was rejected and then a Substitute Motion was made which is  
7 provided for in your rules of order. A second was granted to that Substitute Motion and so now  
8 that is the Motion on the floor that gets the vote. [unintelligible-off mike]

9

10 Chair Fine: Because that's the rules.

11

12 Mr. Lait: So again these are the (interrupted)

13

14 [Unidentified Man]: It's you're right, yes.

15

16 Mr. Lait: The rules that we have on (interrupted)

17

18 Chair Fine: So we have a Motion.

19

20 Commissioner Alcheck: So it's the second Motion (interrupted)

21

22 Chair Fine: It's your Motion plus the 12 of development fees. Yes. There we go. We'll take it  
23 that way. Commissioner Tanaka.

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Commissioner Tanaka: Can we get staff's input on this in terms of what your recommendations are in terms of how does this work out because we have something in flight. This is a current project. Is it even legal to do what we're proposing?

Mr. Lait: Well so I'll answer part of that and then Cara can add to the legal components of it. We believe what is being asked is more or less what exists in the books today that if a development were going forward the... yeah, at time that they pull the building permit they're going to be subject to the fees that are in place at the time. What I think Commissioner Waldfoegel is specifically trying to get to is the Housing Development Impact Fees and there could be we don't know how that ordinance is going to play out yet. There could be a reach back provision or there could be a pipeline exception and so what I'm hearing is that there is interest at least by two Commissioners at this point to have it be clear that this project would be subject to the Housing Development Impact Fees should that ordinance become effective prior to a building permit being pulled for the project.

Commissioner Alcheck: What if that doesn't pass by the time they pull permits?

Mr. Lait: So then those fees would not be in place and we would not be able to charge those fees.

Commissioner Alcheck: And if it does pass when they permits then it would of happened automatically?

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Chair Fine: Yes.

Commissioner Alcheck: So is there anything that this does?

Ms. Silver: So I think what it does do is provides a recommendation to Council that projects that are in the pipeline should not be exempted and this is (interrupted)

Commissioner Alcheck: Other projects?

Ms. Silver: Pardon?

Commissioner Alcheck: Like other projects?

Ms. Silver: This project in particular, but I think it raises the issue of should it apply to all pipeline projects. So it's just it's flagging in particular this is the one pipeline project that's come before you and so you can provide a recommendation to Council that if they adopt a development impact fee that this project and other similar projects should not be exempt from that.

Commissioner Alcheck: I apologize for taking time on this, but I'm just, I'm curious. Will the development impact fee come before this Commission?

1 Ms. Silver: It is currently you currently had two hearings and it is scheduled for a third hearing.

2

3 Commissioner Alcheck: I should say that's a [unintelligible] looks like kind of a redundant  
4 question. My real question is: do we think that maybe during that next hearing on that  
5 particular impact fee we could just have a discussion on pipeline projects as opposed to putting  
6 it in this?

7

8 Chair Fine: I think the value here is we're flagging this as the pipeline project.

9

10 Commissioner Alcheck: Fine.

11

12 Chair Fine: Vice-Chair.

13

14 Vice-Chair Gardias: Yes I wish we had... if we have a Motion on the floor it should be the vote  
15 should be taken. But since we just broken the procedural approach I'm going to add to  
16 discussion that I'm concerned about with all respect to the Commissioner Waldfogel's Motion  
17 and I totally respect his intention, but if we're going to take a vote I'd be reluctant to support  
18 this because we can start proposing rules that are fair from one perspective and maybe not fair  
19 to other homeowners that may be in the pipeline. And there is a process for a variety of  
20 different applications and how they are subject to the regulations that are in progress. So I  
21 think that if I may propose just to return to the ordinal language.

22

23 Chair Fine: Commissioner Tanaka:



1

2 Commissioner Tanaka: So I guess I wasn't clear on the answer to Commissioner Alcheck's  
3 question which is legally ok whether we have this Substitute Motion or the original Motion. Is  
4 there a legal difference or would it still would the same outcome happen in either case in terms  
5 of when the development fee, the development impact fees happen? Is there any so let's... ok,  
6 let's go through the different scenarios. Scenario one; the building permits gets issued before  
7 development fees get settled, ok? That's one scenario. Scenario 2 is development fees are we  
8 settled that before the building permits are issued. Maybe there's other scenarios, I don't  
9 know. The project is [unintelligible], who knows? But I guess I'm trying to figure out is there  
10 even a legal difference in terms of what happens. I mean is there a difference between or is  
11 the outcome the same no matter what the scenario is? That's what I'm trying to figure out.

12

13 Ms. Silver: Yeah, I think the outcome generally should be the same. Generally what happens is  
14 if a building when the building permit is pulled the fees in effect at the time the building permit  
15 is pulled apply. So it's likely that the outcome will be the same. The one scenario that I can  
16 think of where it would be different is if the Council adopts the ordinance the Housing Impact  
17 Fee Ordinance and says we exempt all pipeline projects. Then this project will not be subject to  
18 the fees in effect at the time the building permit is pulled because it has an exception.

19

20 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok, but typically projects until the building permits issued the fees aren't  
21 exempt. So that's the default. The Council would have to go out of its way to say projects are  
22 not exempt or sorry, it's projects are exempt which ok so I just wanted to ask the maker of the

1 Motion and seconder of the Motion given what you heard it seems like the outcome is going to  
2 be the same.

3  
4 Commissioner Waldfogel: Could I clarify the Motion is not does not sunset at the point when  
5 the building permits are pulled. The Motion is for a twelve month window. So the Motion that  
6 was seconded is that whatever building is we're giving the Council space to resolve this issue  
7 and to choose to apply.

8

9 Commissioner Alcheck: [off mike, unintelligible]

10

11 Commissioner Waldfogel: Yes, I mean that's and City Attorney Silver has told us that this is that  
12 that this is a legitimate access of our discretion.

13

14 Ms. Silver: Ok, so I apologize I didn't quite understand the purpose of that 12 month period. So  
15 generally what happens is if they've if the applicant has already paid their building permit fees  
16 and then subsequently the fees are increased you can't reach back and apply higher fees  
17 because they've acquired a vested right to build under that original permit. So I would have  
18 some trouble with the framing of the Motion if that was your intent.

19

20 Chair Fine: Ok. That seems to complicate things. That's wasn't how I understood it so. I have a  
21 few more lights here. Commissioner Rosenblum.

22

1 Commissioner Rosenblum: Yeah I just want to speak about the Motion just quickly. So I would  
2 be against this Motion and the brief reasoning. I don't see that it adds much. We're arbitrarily  
3 calling out one project and saying this one project we're going to have this window. We're not  
4 going to be reviewing many other projects if any in the pipeline. So we've specifically called out  
5 one project. When Council and the Finance Committee make their recommendation about  
6 impact fees they'll make a determination about what happens to pipeline projects in general  
7 and I don't see a reason for this Commission to specify this project should be subject to some  
8 window that we've determined. And again nothing we do is binding it's all for  
9 recommendations, but it's just an odd I find it odd thing to do. So I don't support the Motion,  
10 but just want to explain my reasoning.

11

12 VOTE

13

14 Chair Fine: Ok. Should we are there more lights that you guys want to speak or? Should we  
15 vote on this Motion and let it fail and then make... ok. Let's take a vote on this. All those in  
16 favor? This is the Motion by Commissioner Waldfogel seconded by myself. It has the  
17 recommendation that it meets these two requirements the coordinated construction plan and  
18 subject to development fees within the next 12 months which we understand may be kind of  
19 useless flag at this point as we've understood. But let's vote on it. if it doesn't it will be off the  
20 table. We'll probably go back to Commissioner Alcheck's Motion. Alright, all those in favor? All  
21 those against? Commissioner Alcheck here we go. Ok, the Motion fails.

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23 SUBSTITUTE MOTION FAILED

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Mr. Lait: Because that silence would have been considered an affirmative vote and then you would have had a split decision.

Chair Fine: So apologies for that if it was a diversion for all of us. The floor is open for another Motion. Commissioner Alcheck.

Commissioner Alcheck: I'd like to make a Motion that this sub (interrupted)

Mr. Lait: There's a Motion on the floor.

Chair Fine: His earlier one?

Mr. Lait: His original Motion.

Chair Fine: Ok. Should we take a vote on that one? So this will be recommend approval based on these two findings and recommend a coordinated traffic construction management plan. Any comments? Commissioner Tanaka.

Commissioner Tanaka: Yeah so from our legal counsel basically it seemed like there really wasn't a difference between this Motion and the last Motion which is kind of a weird thing that we're voting on the same thing. So except this is a cleaner Motion. So I think for clarity I think

1 this is a more clean Motion for us to, to do and this is irregardless of the development fees  
2 whether you want it or not. So yeah, let's vote on it.

3

4 VOTE

5

6 Chair Fine: Ok, so the Motion on the table is to recommend approval with a coordinated traffic  
7 and construction management plan. All those in favor? Passes unanimously. Thank you very  
8 much. Thank you to the applicant, thank you to everyone who showed up to speak about this.  
9 Sorry we took so long.

10

11 MOTION #2 PASSED (6-0)

12

13 **Commission Action:** The Commission found the project exempt from the California  
14 Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) and; Recommended approval of  
15 the proposed preliminary parcel map application, with exceptions to the City Council, based  
16 on findings and conditions of the approval set forth in Attachment B, and added an  
17 additional condition to require a coordinated construction component. Motion  
18 Commissioner Alcheck, seconded by Commissioner Gardias. Motion approved 6-0

19

## 20 **Approval of Minutes**

21 Public Comment is Permitted. Five (5) minutes per speaker.

22 6. August 31, 2016

23

24 Chair Fine: We have one last item which is our minutes from August 31, 2016. Would anybody  
25 like to speak to the minutes or make the Motion on them?

26

27 Commissioner Alcheck: I'll make a Motion.

28

1 Chair Fine: Yep, Commissioner Alcheck.

2

3 MOTION

4

5 Commissioner Alcheck: I make a Motion we approve these minutes without amendment.

6

7 Chair Fine: Alright, do we have a second?

8

9 SECOND

10

11 Commissioner Rosenblum: Second.

12

13 VOTE

14

15 Chair Fine: Commissioner Rosenblum. All those in favor? Passes unanimously. Thank you very  
16 much.

17

18 MOTION PASSED (6-0)

19

20 **Commission Action:** Motion by Commissioner Alcheck, seconded by Commissioner  
21 Rosenblum to approve the August 31, 2016 Minutes. Motion passed 6-0.

22

23 **Committee Items**

24

25 Chair Fine: No committee items.

1

2 **Commissioner Member Questions, Comments or Announcements**

3

4 Chair Fine: Any Commissioner questions? Anything else? All right. Thank you all. This meeting  
5 is adjourned.

6

7 **Adjournment: 9:12 pm**

# Palo Alto Planning & Transportation Commission

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