



Planning & Transportation Commission

Staff Report (ID # 7511)

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

Summary Title: November 9, 2016 PTC Minutes

Title: November 9, 2016 Planning & Transportation Committee Minutes

From: Hillary Gitelman

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) adopt the attached meeting minutes.

Background

Attached are minutes for the following meeting(s):

- November 9, 2016

Attachments:

- Attachment A: 11.09.16 PTC (PDF)



Planning & Transportation Commission Regular Meeting Agenda: November 9, 2016

Council Chambers
250 Hamilton Avenue
6:00 PM

Vice Chair Gardias participating from:
University of Chicago Booth School of Business
Gleacher Center
450 N. Cityfront Plaza Dr.
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Call to Order / Roll Call: 6:08pm

All Commissioners were present with Commissioner Przemek Gardias participating via telephone.

Chair Fine: [tape starts in progress] Commission November 9th. It's 6:08 and if we could please take the roll.

Yolanda Cervantes, Administrative Assistant: Commissioner Alcheck, Chair Fine, Vice-Chair Gardias?

Chair Fine: He is disembodied on the phone back here.

Commissioner Tanaka: Gardias, are you here?

Vice-Chair Gardias: Here.

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Ms. Cervantes: Commissioner Rosenblum, Commissioner Tanaka, Commissioner Waldfogel. Ok, six present. Everyone's present.

Chair Fine: Thank you.

Election of Officers

1. The Commission will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for 2017

Chair Fine: Our first order of business is electing a Chair and Vice-Chair for 2017. As I mentioned in our last meeting we had spoken at the pre-Commission meeting where we felt it might be more appropriate given some of the roll off here on the Planning Commission and given we have two new members joining us to perhaps postpone that to January although all our codes do say we have to make a vote in November. So the floor is open for any Motions on the Chair and Vice-Chair, but happy to take a discussion as well.

Commissioner Rosenblum: Quick, quick point of order or maybe a question for Cara. Is there any... it does seem like the right thing to do would be to wait until we have all Commissioners seated given that two people will be leaving us, one person has not yet been seated, it's sort of an odd time to be choosing a Chair and Vice-Chair. Is there any latitude or is the code fairly strict on this or can we make a Motion to delay with Council's approval or something?

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Cara Silver, Senior Assistant City Attorney: Yes, thank you. So different boards and commissions have different requirements; the Planning and Transportation Commission's (PTC) requirement is actually codified in the municipal code and it says that you must take up the election of Chair and Vice-Chair in November. So we have calendared it for you to comply with the municipal code requirement; however, we do believe that you have discretion to postpone the vote to January when you have a full, a new Commission.

Chair Fine: Any comments or questions from Commissioners on this? Otherwise we either have to take a vote tonight or vote to postpone if I understand correctly. Commissioner Waldfogel.

MOTION #1

Commissioner Waldfogel: Move to postpone.

SECOND

Commissioner Rosenblum: I second.

Chair Fine: We have a Motion to postpone this vote. Can we get a date?

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Commissioner Waldfogel: I guess it would be the first meeting in January. What is the...

Commissioner Rosenblum: January 11th.

Chair Fine: Sorry, I think we may want one more piece of information which is when the new Commissioners get seated.

Commissioner Rosenblum: Right, so...

Jonathan Lait, Assistant Director: Great. The new Commissioners are their term starts on December 16th which is after your last meeting in December and so they will attend the first meeting in January, it's January 11th.

Commissioner Rosenblum: Sorry, a follow on to that. I think you're referring to Doria Summa and, but not to the people replacing.

Mr. Lait: Oh, very good. Thank you. Yes, I was referring to the two Commissioners that were recently appointed. We will have two vacancies here and I don't... it has to go through that the

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1 process that the City Council has of appointing new Commissioners. So there will be those
2 vacancies.

3

4 Commissioner Alcheck: Can I chime in?

5

6 Chair Fine: Commissioner Alcheck.

7

8 Commissioner Alcheck: So I don't want to sound too controversial here, but I think would be a
9 mistake to postpone. Doing that would result probably in such a long delay. They're probably
10 going to have to reinterview which will require somewhere around I imagine four to six weeks
11 to collect applications. I imagine that the City Council will want to wait for its newest members
12 to join the Council before they review those applications. And so if assuming we did vote in
13 January we would be voting without two seated members anyways.

14

15 Commissioner Waldfogel: Just one because Commissioner Tanaka's term is already expired.

16

17 Commissioner Alcheck: Right, so potentially with one missing. So then I mean look again, I
18 don't think I have a horse in this race, but it seems to me like we would be essentially swapping
19 out unfamiliar voters with familiar voters. My assumption is that we will not nominate a new

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1 member to leadership, but we might. I guess I... we are six people today. I wonder if we could
2 review the concept of postponement if for example we had some sort of stalemate.

3

4 Chair Fine: Vice-Chair, any comments?

5

6 Vice-Chair Gardias: I'm sorry I didn't hear the question. If you mind repeating?

7

8 Chair Fine: We're trying to decide if we should postpone the vote of new officers until all new
9 Commissioners are seated or whether we should have that vote today.

10

11 Vice-Chair Gardias: Yeah, and are you asking about my stand because I thought that there was a
12 Motion on the floor, right, to postpone it.

13

14 Chair Fine: There is a Motion on the floor. I'd like to get some feedback from across the
15 Commission.

16

17 Vice-Chair Gardias: Ok. So [unintelligible] it wasn't clear to me. So in terms of my perspective
18 it's like this I think that it would be proper to have new members and a and with [unintelligible]
19 being appointed to the City Council we will be missing only one person. So it's proper to have
20 new members and add and the second person, Doria, to participate in the vote as they will be

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1 full-fledged members of this Commission. I believe that so from this perspective it's good to
2 wait till the meeting on January the 11th, but with this in mind I just want to make a comment
3 because I remember when Greg's tenure started two years ago and I think that it was he was
4 elected by us in December and it was, it gave him the proper time to be a Chairman for the full
5 twelve months. While Adrian when we elected Adrian to be a Chairman he was also elected in
6 January and as a result he pretty much there was a loss of like a 10 percent of the time. So I
7 think that what I would like to do, I would like to only wish that this is our last time when we
8 have to postpone elections and the system will be fixed so we can continuously work and the
9 tenures would be full 12 months.

10

11 Chair Fine: So would that be your preference for voting now, today, with the Chair to transfer
12 Chair and Vice-Chair transfer in December?

13

14 Vice-Chair Gardias: No, I think that pretty much with this what we have right now we don't, I
15 don't believe that we have much choice if we really want to respect the new members that
16 were elected to the Commission. So with this and with those two new members in mind I just I
17 support the Motion that's on the floor just to move it to the 11th of January, but also I just
18 wanted to express regret that I don't believe that the system should work like this.

19

20 Chair Fine: Ok. Thank you. Commissioner Tanaka.

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Ms. Silver: Through the Chair? I did want to make one clarification is that we do recognize that these timing requirements are not completely aligned. We made some amendments I believe last year and the City Clerk's Office is going to be making some further amendments hopefully to bring all of this in alignment. So we appreciate your patience on that.

Chair Fine: Ok, thank you. Commissioner Tanaka.

Commissioner Tanaka: So I definitely appreciate the Motion about trying to delay it, but I think most likely who will be Chair and Vice-Chair is going to be someone here because we have experience. I think any new member is going to be very difficult. In fact the new members probably don't know the existing members very well and so you if you wanted to think about like who is best informed to make this decision I think it's the six people sitting here today because it's going to be... well, maybe not the two of us, but it's going to be the four, one of the four people here today. And so I suggest we actually do as the code requires and make a decision and that way the new Chair would have a full term to serve.

Chair Fine: Thank you. Commissioner Alcheck.

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1 Commissioner Alcheck: Yeah I mean again I think I would I think I posed the notion of delaying
2 mostly because I... again, we won't have a full Commission even in January and I'll just add a
3 little context, when we had the transition and I think it was just me and you here at the time,
4 but when we had the transition from Commissioner Martinez to Commissioner Michael there
5 was like a year and three quarters Chair. Like it literally lasted forever because we didn't have
6 sort of a codified process and I think that... again, I do think that there is a benefit to sort of
7 having the process always take place at the same time of the year. And my hope would be that
8 when we get to January we wouldn't delay further for another month if for example we had a
9 new, newly, [unintelligible] the process for newly appointing the remaining Commissioner was
10 sort of midway. And then my last comment would be I do think that there is some significant
11 benefit to having our current leadership as well as what can be described as our City's future
12 leadership weigh in on this decision. So...

13

14 Chair Fine: Ok, Commissioner Rosenblum.

15

16 Commissioner Rosenblum: Yeah I just want to say I think I'm persuaded by Commissioners
17 Tanaka and Alcheck that we should not delay the vote. We should go forward. I don't know if
18 that means withdrawing. I'm still happy have a vote on this Motion, but I would be voting
19 against now. I agree with you guys. I think we may as well go forward. It's not a really big net
20 gain to wait. It just ends up delaying for another two months.

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Chair Fine: If you're going to not support this Motion that you've just seconded...

Commissioner Rosenblum: Then withdraw my second and you can (interrupted)

MOTION #1 WITHDRAWN

Chair Fine: Ok, floor is clear. I'd like to have a Motion then on electing Chair and Vice-Chair for 2017. It's open. And Commissioner Gardias [Note-Vice-Chair] please speak up if you have a Motion you'd like to make.

Vice-Chair Gardias: No, I think that somebody else made the Motion. So I support the Motion on the floor.

Chair Fine: It's been with, the seconds been withdrawn so there is no Motion on the floor.

Vice-Chair Gardias: Oh, there is no Motion on the floor.

Chair Fine: Yep.

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1 Vice-Chair Gardias: So I think that I think it's turn to Mike, Eric, and Greg they just spoke about
2 different, different Motions so maybe they would propose a Motion.

3

4 Commissioner Rosenblum: Yeah if we're not going to have another second on the Motion to
5 delay then I could propose a Motion on first Chair and then Vice-Chair, but I want to give
6 Commissioner Waldfogel a chance to push through his Motion.

7

8 Chair Fine: Commissioner Waldfogel.

9

10 Commissioner Waldfogel: I don't have any further comments.

11

12 Chair Fine: Commissioner Rosenblum.

13

14 NOMINATION FOR CHAIR

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16 Commissioner Rosenblum: So I'd like to nominate Commissioner Alcheck in his last year as our
17 Chair if he would accept.

18

19 NOMINATION ACCEPTED

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1 Commissioner Alcheck: I will accept your nomination.

2

3 SECOND

4

5 Chair Fine: Is there a second? I'll second the Motion. Would you like to speak to your Motion?

6

7 Commissioner Rosenblum: Yes. Commissioner Alcheck is the longest tenured here I believe
8 after the transition. He is consistently thoughtful and deliberate. He has domain expertise in
9 land use. I find myself often persuaded by arguments that he brings up from his legal
10 perspective and I think he's be, he often has ideas on how to streamline process and seems
11 very interested in this. As I've got to know him I think that he would be a really effective Chair
12 and I'd like to see him get a chance to implement some of his ideas around making this body
13 more effective.

14

15 VOTE

16

17 Chair Fine: Thank you. I'll speak to my second. I agree with you that I find Commissioner
18 Alcheck's business and land use background very informative to this Commission. I know he
19 gives me a lot of critiques for letting our meetings go too long so if elected Chair I hope he can

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1 make them go a little bit faster. Are there any comments on this Motion or should we take a
2 vote?

3

4 Alright, let's take our vote on all those in favor of electing Commissioner Alcheck as Chair in
5 2017. All those in favor? Commissioner Gardias, Vice-Chair Gardias?

6

7 Vice-Chair Gardias: I abstain based on the argument that I already provided that I think it would
8 be proper just to have the upcoming members [unintelligible].

9

10 Chair Fine: Ok, we have four and all those against? Ok. So we have four in favor, two
11 abstentions. Commissioner Alcheck congratulations for 2017. And (interrupted)

12

13 NOMINATION PASSED (4-0-2, Vice-Chair Gardias and Commissioner Waldfogel abstaining)

14

15 Mr. Lait: Chair if you could just give us one minute?

16

17 Chair Fine: Sure.

18

19 Mr. Lait: So the conversation we were just having here at staff is there was the conversation
20 about whether this gets postponed to 2017 or not and maybe you can clarify if that was the

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1 intent? Otherwise going forward this would take place today after your nomination of Vice-
2 Chair.

3

4 Chair Fine: Certainly.

5

6 Mr. Lait: Commissioner Alcheck would take over and be Chair for this meeting.

7

8 Chair Fine: Yep.

9

10 Mr. Lait: Ok, so Vice-Chair would be the next nomination.

11

12 Chair Fine: Ok. I'd like to entertain any Motions on the Vice-Chair.

13

14 NOMINATION FOR VICE-CHAIR

15

16 Commissioner Alcheck: I'd like to make a Motion to nominate Commissioner Rosenblum for
17 Vice-Chair.

18

19 NOMINATION REFUSED

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1 Commissioner Rosenblum: I'm honored, but I would not accept. I was going to nominate
2 Commissioner Gardias [note-Vice-Chair] again in hope that he would serve again. That I'd
3 prefer not to. I prefer to see you with Commissioner Gardias [note-Vice-Chair].

4

5 Chair Fine: We're still looking for a Motion on our Vice-Chair to take over starting today.

6

7 NOMINATION FOR VICE-CHAIR

8

9 Commissioner Rosenblum: Yeah as mentioned I would like make a Motion for Commissioner
10 Gardias [note-Vice-Chair] to do a second term as Vice-Chair.

11

12 Chair Fine: Commissioner Gardias if you are nominated for Vice-Chair would you accept that?

13

14 NOMINATION REFUSED

15

16 Vice-Chair Gardias: So I appreciate this nomination very much, but based on the same premise
17 of inclusion of the upcoming Commissioners I'd like to... I'd prefer just to have their votes.

18

19 Chair Fine: Ok.

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1 Vice-Chair Gardias: On the new, on the Vice-Chair.

2

3 NOMINATION FOR VICE-CHAIR

4

5 Chair Fine: Then it seems like we have one remaining member here. Commissioner Waldfogel,

6 I'd like to nominate you for Vice-Chair.

7

8 SECOND

9

10 Commissioner Rosenblum: I would second that.

11

12 Chair Fine: Would you accept this nomination?

13

14 Commissioner Waldfogel: I'm just processing this since my expectation coming to this meeting
15 was that we take this up in January.

16

17 Chair Fine: Yep.

18

19 Commissioner Waldfogel: I think we have a problem if we don't have anybody left.

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1 Chair Fine: I still think you'd do a very fine job. It's not because your last one.

2

3 NOMINATION ACCEPTED

4

5 Commissioner Waldfoegel: Yeah, yeah, yeah. No last man standing. Ok, I will accept the
6 nomination.

7

8 Chair Fine: Ok, thank you. Commissioner Rosenblum I believe you made the Motion or I made
9 it and you seconded it. So I'll just speak to it quickly. Commissioner Waldfoegel has been an
10 extraordinarily quick study. Your e-mails are very detailed in terms of questions and ideas for
11 the different issues that come before the Commission. I think you'd be a huge asset and a good
12 partner with our Chair Alcheck. So I would look forward to seeing you as Vice-Chair.
13 Commissioner Rosenblum?

14

15 Commissioner Rosenblum: Yeah, I concur with everything you said. I recently got the chance to
16 work with Commissioner Waldfoegel closely while looking at the inclusionary or the impact fees
17 for residential and nonresidential use. He's very, very intelligent, very fast, broad range of
18 domain knowledge. I think you'd be a great asset.

19

20 VOTE

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Chair Fine: Ok, so we have a Motion on the floor to nominate Commissioner Waldfogel as our Vice-Chair starting at this meeting. All those in favor? All those against? Any abstentions?

Vice-Chair Gardias: I abstain based on the same argument.

Commissioner Waldfogel: This is a difficult one because I agree with Mike's argument [unintelligible].

Chair Fine: Ok. We have four in favor and two abstentions including the nominee, but congratulations. I'd like to say to our two oncoming Commissioners there was some appetite here to postpone, but it seems like we would have been split and we've made a decision; however, you will be serving for four years and I do hope that you all assume either a Vice-Chairmanship or Chairmanship. I think that would be important for this Commission and I would also encourage staff that we do need to realign these appointments in election years, in years when we have Commissioners rolling off and stuff because it's kind of awkward frankly.

NOMINATION PASSED (4-0-2, Vice-Chair Gardias and Commissioner Waldfogel abstaining)

Mr. Lait: Ok, so then if we're ready we'll move some seats.

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Chair Fine: Let's do it. [unintelligible-lots of speaking off microphone and shuffling around].

Commissioner Action: Commissioner Eric Rosenblum nominated Commissioner Michael Alcheck for 2017 PTC Chair, the nomination was seconded by current Chair Adrian Fine. The nomination passed with a vote of 4 in favor and 2 abstentions.

Commissioner Eric Rosenblum nominated Commissioner Asher Waldfogel for 2017 PTC Vice-Chair, the nomination was seconded by Chair Adrian Fine. The nomination passed with a vote of 4 in favor and 2 abstentions.

Oral Communications

The public may speak to any item not on the agenda. Three (3) minutes per speaker.^{1,2}

Chair Alcheck: Ok, moving on. Oral Communications, the public may speak on any item not on the agenda. We will allot three minutes to anybody who would like to speak. Do we have any speaker cards? We don't have any speaker cards for Oral Communications so let's move on to our agenda.

Agenda Changes, Additions, and Deletions

The Chair or Commission majority may modify the agenda order to improve meeting management.

Chair Alcheck: Are there any agenda changes, additions or deletions?

Jonathan Lait, Assistant Director: None that I'm aware of.

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1 Chair Alcheck: Ok.

2

3 **City Official Reports**

4 2. Assistant Director's Report

5 3. Planning & Transportation Commission Meeting Schedule and Assignments

6

7 Chair Alcheck: Let's begin with the City Official Reports, Agenda Item Number 2.

8

9 Jonathan Lait, Assistant Director: Thank you. I just need one second here to pull up my notes.

10 Ok, well I'll start by saying congratulations to Chair Alcheck and Vice-Chair Waldfogel and your
11 advancements to Chair Vice-Chair. I look forward to working with you in the coming year. I will
12 note that the City Council will consider a preliminary parcel map for 900 California Avenue. The
13 Planning Commission had previously considered this. This is going on Nov 14th and
14 Commissioner Fine is the is identified as the representative to the City Council. If there's an
15 interest in participating, we're not expecting a whole lot of conversation about that particular
16 item. On November 28th the City Council consider the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)
17 recommendations on the Land Use Element.

18

19 And we have some upcoming agendas on the 30th for the PTC and December 14th. While the
20 agenda topics are still a little bit in flux we do anticipate that these will be full agendas and we
21 would encourage the Commission to look toward those calendars to make sure we have a

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1 quorum in attendance for those meetings. And then finally we've included in the packet this
2 evening a proposed calendar for your meetings in 2017. You can find that on packet Page 7. I
3 will note that there is one typo for the May 31st hearing date. That should read 6:00 p.m.
4 instead of 12:00 p.m. We will make that correction. And then if the Commission wants to
5 make a decision now or later regarding the November 29th date and the December 27th date
6 of next year. Otherwise we can take that up at a future date. That concludes the staff report.

7

8 Chair Alcheck: I haven't even really looked that far in my calendar. My initial response to the
9 Thanksgiving meeting is just whether or not we're going to have enough people present. Do we
10 want to explore that right now? Do you guys want to open up your calendars and just
11 determine whether we'll even have a... Right, whether we'll even have enough people on to
12 make a quorum. Are we still going to have the City Council elect members through the end of
13 the year?

14

15 Mr. Lait: Are we going to have what?

16

17 Chair Alcheck: They still serve until the end of the year?

18

19 Mr. Lait: Yes.

20

-
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1 Chair Alcheck: Ok, so why don't if everybody could just double check their calendars and make
2 sure they're available and if anybody is not available can just speak up.

3

4 Commissioner Fine: I'm available on the thirtieth.

5

6 Commissioner Rosenblum: I'm also available.

7

8 Chair Alcheck: I actually don't know. I have to check. I know that I'm out of town on
9 Thanksgiving and I don't know when I'm leaving. I imagine I am leaving on the 30th so...

10

11 Mr. Lait: Ok. I think we may have sent an e-mail to the Commission about the 30th and we
12 think we do have a quorum based on some earlier correspondence that we've received.

13

14 Chair Alcheck: Nevermind, nevermind.

15

16 Mr. Lait: Ok. And I would say for the 2017 schedule it's probably too far out and the note that
17 we've placed on the calendar is that it's subject to cancellation and I think for now we could
18 probably leave it at that.

19

-
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1 Chair Alcheck: Yeah no, I'm sorry. The 30th is the week after Thanksgiving also. So let's
2 proceed with that scheduled meeting. So this will be changed and updated on the web? Ok.
3 Alright.

4

5 **Commission Action:** The 2017 Meeting schedule was accepted, and it was requested that the
6 time for the May 31, 2017 meeting be corrected to show a starting time of 6:00pm.

7 **Study Session**

8 Public Comment is Permitted. Five (5) minutes per speaker.^{1,3}

9 4. Study Session to Present the Findings of the Citywide Engineering and Traffic Speed
10 Surveys and Discuss Alternatives to the Establishment of Speed Limits and
11 Requirements for Enforcement
12

13 Chair Alcheck: Ok, let's begin with the Agenda Item Number 4, the study session.

14

15 Jonathan Lait, Assistant Director: So we'll move on to Item Number 4.

16

17 Joshuah Mello, Chief Transportation Official: All right, good evening Commissioners, Chair and
18 Commissioners. My name is Josh Mello, I'm the City's Chief Transportation Official. Joining me
19 this evening is Sergeant Craig Lee from the Police Department as well as our project manager
20 for our consulting team, Chris **[Tanay]** with the firm Stantec, and in the audience is Ruchika
21 Aggarwal who is our project manager for this project in the Transportation Division. So we're
22 all going to be here to answer questions after my brief presentation. This is a fairly complex
23 and technical topic so I'll try to go as quick as possible and you'll probably get better

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1 information in the question and answer (Q&A) session after the presentation because you can
2 ask us more details.

3

4 So first of all the purpose of the Engineering and Traffic Surveys Project which we're presenting
5 tonight is to facilitate a community wide discussion around speed limits and enforcement in the
6 City of Palo Alto. We also collected data on average speeds and collisions for 70 roadway
7 segments in Palo Alto and this is a great wealth of information that we now have. We are
8 recommending updated speed limits that are enforceable under state law. We also hope to
9 establish target speeds where average speed exceeds current speed limit. And then lastly we
10 would like to implement reduced school zone speed limits that are now permitted under state
11 law.

12

13 So California is rather unique in that there is a very well defined process for setting speed limits
14 within the State of California. The State does allow communities to set prima facie speed limits
15 on local roadways and the streets and local streets are generally defined as minor residential
16 streets with two lanes or fewer. An arterial street like Embarcadero that passes through a
17 residential district is generally not covered under this section. Streets that are not eligible for
18 the prima facie speed limit are required to in order to establish speed limits on those roadways
19 we're required to do engineering and traffic surveys and those are some of the that's some of
20 the data that we're presenting to you tonight. So a roadway needs to be certified by a traffic

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1 engineer after conducting an engineering and traffic survey. That survey looks at the average
2 travel speed along a roadway and calculates what's called the 85th percentile speed. And the
3 process in California requires that a community set the speed limit within five miles of that 85th
4 percentile speed. You are allowed to round up or down depending on typical math. You're also
5 allowed to reduce the speed limit by five miles an hour for extraordinary circumstances: lots of
6 pedestrians, a high collision rate or other factors that are observed by the traffic engineer
7 who's conducting the traffic survey.

8
9 We currently have several arterial streets in Palo Alto that have lapsed traffic and engineering
10 surveys. Those are shown in green on this map. And what that means is it does not mean that
11 the police cannot enforce the speed limit, it means that those roadways are not certified for the
12 use of radar equipment to enforce the speed limit. The police can do pacing and estimation,
13 but those typically don't hold up as well in court. And in a lot of the cases the roadways that
14 you see highlighted in green the speed limit is significantly lower than the average travel speed
15 that we have observed. So that would also make it rather difficult for police to enforce because
16 ultimately the citations could be dismissed when they get to the Traffic Commissioners.

17
18 The segments shown in red on this map are the ones that we conducted traffic and engineering
19 surveys on so we now have average travel speed as well as a collision history for each of these
20 segments and also the average daily traffic. This is a map that illustrates our current speed

-
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1 limits within the City of Palo Alto. So everything that's shown in gray without a color is 25 miles
2 an hour and then the green dashes are 35 miles an hour. There's a couple orange streets which
3 are 30 miles an hour and then as you get towards the west side of the City, the more rural areas
4 there's actually a couple roadways that are 45 miles an hour and 50 miles an hour. But
5 generally most streets within the City of Palo Alto are 25 miles an hour currently.

6
7 We collected three different data points on each of the segments that you see on the map that
8 was two slides before shown in red. We collected this for 70 segments throughout the City.
9 Average daily traffic which is a count that's done typically on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, a
10 typical week day outside of a holiday week and that's the number of vehicles that are traveling
11 on the roadway segment in an average day. We also used radar to calculate the average speed
12 and Chris can go into more detail, but there are several different there's a mean speed, there is
13 an 85th percentile speed, and a couple other average speed points that are collected. And then
14 finally we did a five year collision data analysis for each of these segments. And what that does
15 is enable us to look at reducing the speed limit by five miles an hour on certain corridors where
16 there is a high collision rate or higher than average for a typical roadway.

17
18 I mentioned the 85th percentile speed earlier. This is a traffic engineering term that basically
19 means the speed at which 85 percent of motorists are going at or below. And that's collected
20 and that's a data point that's collected through the engineering and traffic survey. So to

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1 illustrate that this is a bar chart that shows the speeds of motorists on an example roadway.
2 The red arrow illustrates where the cutoff would be for the 85th percentile. So everybody
3 going, everybody below that red line would be going over the 85th percentile speed and
4 everybody above that red line would be going under the 85th percentile speed. And this is
5 generally under California law this is 85 percent of people are found to drive reasonably and
6 safe and 15 percent generally do not fall into that category. So that's how the 85th percentile
7 originated. In general thinking is that 85 percent of the people will operate their motor vehicles
8 in a safe manner on a roadway.

9

10 So our results for folks who drive and walk and bike in Palo Alto they weren't surprising; 14
11 street segments out of the 70 we found that the operating speed was higher, high enough to
12 warrant recommending raising the speed limit by generally by five miles an hour. 14 out of 70
13 is not a huge number, but it as you can see on this map it's quite a few of our major corridors:
14 Embarcadero Road, Middlefield Road, Arastradero Road, Alma, and University Avenue to name
15 a few.

16

17 One of the other components of this project is to move forward with the implementation of
18 reduced school zone speed limits. So AB 321 which was passed in a couple years ago by the
19 California Assembly authorized cities to reduce speed limits in the immediate area surrounding
20 a school to 15 or 20 miles an hour and extend the 25 miles per hour (mph) zone from five

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1 hundred feet to a thousand feet. So in 2012 we completed a study and looked at all of the
2 schools within the City of Palo Alto and identified the streets that were eligible for these
3 reduced speed zones. And the maps on the following slides you can see the light gray area
4 surrounding the schools illustrates the new one thousand foot 15 mph zone and then the
5 darker circle that's a little bit outside the light gray illustrates the extended 25 mph zone. And
6 the streets that are highlighted, the ones that are highlighted in yellow those would be the 15
7 mph zones and then the streets that are highlighted in orange would be the 25 mph zones. And
8 there's maps that were developed for three areas within the City to for all of the areas
9 surrounding the schools.

10

11 The last component kind of this project is the establishment of what's called a target speed. So
12 we recognize that raising the speed limit could be very controversial on some of these
13 corridors. It's contradictory to a lot of the policies in our Comp Plan and a lot of our general city
14 priorities and prerogatives. So what we are recommending is that we establish a target speed
15 and this would be a design speed so it may hypothetically we may elect to move forward with a
16 speed limit increase of five miles an hour in order to allow for radar enforcement.
17 Simultaneously with that we could establish a target speed and say while we're raising the
18 speed limit to 30 to enable radar enforcement ultimately we want the roadway to operate at 25
19 miles an hour. So we're going to establish a target speed of 25 miles an hour and then all of our
20 design decisions will be based on a 25 mile an hour target speed.

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1

2 So the table there illustrates what that would look like. So the first column where it says
3 current is kind of the situation we're in today. We have an operating speed and this is a
4 hypothetical roadway, but it is very similar to what we observed on Embarcadero and
5 Middlefield Road. So the current operating speed or the 85th percentile is 42 miles an hour.
6 The speed limit that we would need to enact to conduct radar enforcement would be 40 miles
7 an hour and then we would establish a target design speed of 35 miles an hour. And you can
8 see the column on the right which says goal is where we ultimately want to end up. We want
9 to have an operating speed of 35, a speed limit of 35, and a target speed of 35.

10

11 Some other things we can do to get to that lower operating speed through design include the
12 installation of medians, adding raised crosswalks or other horizontal traffic control treatments,
13 traffic calming treatments. And then some other things that some of these we've already done
14 on Embarcadero Road we can establish a policy that we set this traffic signal coordination at or
15 below the speed limit in order to try to get those operating speeds down. We can look at the
16 installation of roundabouts in key locations. We can design lane shifts and tapers for 25 miles
17 an hour. We recently did this for Embarcadero Road when you're heading north from Oregon
18 Expressway the taper where the lane shifts over to the left is designed for 25 miles an hour.
19 Sometimes traffic engineers will over design a roadway and design for 10 miles over the
20 operating speed or 5 miles over the operating speed. If we were to establish a target speed we

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1 would clearly give direction to the engineers that they need to design for the desired target
2 speed not what's currently occurring out there. And then we can add signed and marked
3 pedestrian crosswalks and other signing and striping treatments. And we have some ideas for
4 some of the roadways, Embarcadero Road and Middlefield Road particularly.

5

6 Potential future actions depending on the direction of the Commission and City Council; we
7 could retain the existing speed limits for fifty-six roadway segments where we found that the
8 speed limit was within that 85th percentile. We could move forward with increasing the speed
9 limits for 14 roadway segments to allow for radar enforcement. We could also establish target
10 speeds and post advisory speeds on these segments. So an advisory speed is a typically a
11 yellow warning sign with a speed that's a lower than the sign, the posted speed limit. It's not
12 enforceable. It's not a legal limit, but it's an advisory speed for motorists. We could also
13 implement the reduced school zone speed limits as identified in the previous study and
14 advocate for changes to the state law regarding speed limits. And in particular we could
15 advocate for the ability to set a citywide default speed limit of 25 miles an hour and then we
16 would sign any roadway that we wanted to operate at a higher speed.

17

18 So assuming we want to move forward with one or two or all of these potential actions our
19 next steps would be to we're going to City Council in November to get their feedback on the
20 same information that we're presenting tonight. We intend to hold community workshops in

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1 January. We wanted to come to you first and gauge your opinion on these matters before we
2 went to the public in 2017. And then we would return to Council in March with ordinances that
3 would include any number of the proposed actions that I covered in the previous slide. And
4 ideally any speed limit changes or anything that we end up moving forward with would be
5 implemented in the spring of 2017.

6
7 That concludes my presentation. Again we have Craig Lee from the Police Department as well
8 as our traffic engineering consultant, Chris [Tanay], here to answer questions for you. Thank
9 you.

10
11 Chair Alcheck: OK. Does anybody want to kick us off? Questions, discussion? Go ahead.

12 Commissioner Rosenblum.

13
14 Commissioner Rosenblum: Yeah, thank you for this. I just have a couple of questions to
15 understand a little bit about how traffic works with relation to accidents and future behavior.
16 So I imagine the relationship between raising the speed limit and accidents on any given
17 roadway may be fairly complex, but is there a fairly simple like you have a model that says prior
18 to recommend changes taking place/post expected accident rate? Is that somewhere? The
19 spreadsheet that you gave is great, but I don't see any kind of model output.

20

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1 Christopher [Tanay], Stantec: Yeah, Christopher [Tanay]. The for this particular study what it is
2 that we essentially are looking at all the published rates that from California Highway Patrol
3 (CHP) which the City sends there. So we are looking at the overall rate. We're not specifically
4 looking at what caused those accidents either to be high, too high or too low, but to answer
5 your question is that there are published data, research data that shows for certain roadway,
6 let's say that is very wide and that is red light being control by signal and there's a lot of red
7 light running and if you implement certain changes let's say in terms of let's say maybe
8 reducing sudden signal timing this is what result you're going to get. So I think there are
9 published rates that stays if you perform certain countermeasures to looking after you look at
10 the trends you might get certain results, reduction in collision. But for this study we are
11 essentially looking at the overall rates.

12
13 Mr. Mello: Yeah and I would just add that there is quite a bit of research on the likelihood of a
14 pedestrian or cyclist being killed at various travel speeds. And under 25 miles an hour and
15 under most pedestrians and cyclists survive. I think it's a 8 in 10 survive and then as you start to
16 cross over that 35 and 45 mile an hour threshold the rate of fatalities dramatically increases.

17
18 Commissioner Rosenblum: Yeah, so right now like I said I'm just trying to clarify a couple things
19 and probably will come back with some comments on your specific recommendations. The
20 second question I have is: is there a circular relationship between raising the speed limit to hit

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1 the 85th percentile speed and then the speed increasing again? And I know that you have a
2 slide addressing this saying once you set the target speed you want that to equal actual speed
3 and enforcement speed, but is there... so if current 85th percentile for example is 37 miles an
4 hour so you the speed at 35 does, do you expect that the 85th percentile then creeps up to say
5 42 miles an hour? Do people tend to generally drive a certain amount over the speed limit?

6
7 Mr. Mello: So I'll let Sergeant Lee build off this, but it's our understanding that when appeals
8 are made to citations it's a little bit more difficult to uphold a citation if there isn't at least if
9 someone's not exceeding the speed limit over a certain threshold. One or two miles an hour
10 typically is not something that would hold up when it got to the Traffic Commissioner, but I'll let
11 Sergeant Lee... So the answer was probably yes. I think if you were to raise the speed limit from
12 35 to 30 people would see that as a license to go a little bit, five miles an hour faster than they
13 were when the speed limit was 25, but I'll that Sergeant Lee also respond to that.

14
15 Sergeant Craig Lee, Palo Alto Police Department: Good evening. I would say that the
16 psychology of the drivers would be that they would drive higher than the new posted speed
17 limit.

18
19 Commissioner Rosenblum: Ok.

20

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1 Sergeant Lee: And I think there are some rumors out in the public that say that officers don't
2 write tickets for speeds 15 over the posted speed limit. So they think that's sort of like the
3 grace and that's not necessarily true, but I think that is a prevailing rumor and therefore
4 presumably speeds would increase above the new posted limit.

5
6 Commissioner Rosenblum: And my final clarification question is you have a certain number of
7 road segments that are recommended having increased speed limits based on this analysis,
8 based on observed a 85th percentile behavior and other data you have your recommendations.
9 Were there places where you've recommended not increasing because the 85th percentile is
10 higher than what you would see as a safe speed and therefore the recommended measure
11 should be traffic calming measures for example? So instead of just saying well, drivers seem to
12 be driving quickly through this area therefore we're going to raise the speed limit, say they
13 shouldn't be driving quickly this area, we're trying to make the 85th percentile lower by using
14 some the traffic calming measures that you discussed.

15
16 Mr. Mello: So I'll let Chris delve more into the details, but I will say one of the goals of this
17 project is to establish those target speeds and that's exactly what you're referring to. In the
18 case of let's say Middlefield Road particularly the north section, the two lane section if we
19 observe speeds that are higher than what we think are acceptable currently the speed limit is
20 25 miles an hour I think we would look to simultaneously with adjusting the speed limit to

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1 enable radar enforcement we would want to implement traffic calming to bring that speed
2 back down. So this is not increasing the speed limits to enable enforcement is not seen as a
3 permanent solution. The target speed what ultimately defined how we what traffic calming
4 devices we implement and how we design the roadway to get those speeds back down to
5 where we think is appropriate in City policies and community, as we go to the community and
6 start to talk about what the target speeds should be along these corridors. But I'll let you delve
7 in and talk if there's any specific corridors where you were concerned about the 85th percentile
8 speed.

9
10 Mr. Tanay: Sure. I think the intent I think Josh as you mentioned is that we would like to first
11 establish what is impossible based on the 85th percentile setting limit and the law so that it is
12 enforceable. But I think Josh you mentioned is a multi-tong approach because at the same time
13 we're recommending a target speed because with that we can implement traffic calming
14 measures. For example, we mentioned just now a [unintelligible] in terms of the median and
15 also raised crosswalk and also the last one that you mentioned is to implement a reduced speed
16 zone as you go to school district, AB 321. I think the effect of 321 based on where the schools
17 are is that my sense is that sort of [unintelligible]. My sense is that once those school zones are
18 sort of enforceable, 15 and 20 mph, I think driver's get a sense as they pass through certain
19 roadways these are enforceable roadways I think instead of driving faster my sense is that they

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1 will probably be very cautious about going through those neighborhoods. So I think with all
2 that I think there will be more of kind of a positive effect on the speed.

3

4 Chair Alcheck: I'll start with a few questions. So along the lines of the theory that if we increase
5 these speed limits to essentially enhance the opportunity for enforcement we might see some
6 increases in speed travel and then this would all be an exercise to eventually get us back down
7 to a lower speed limit. Why not just begin implementing the pieces of our target goal speed
8 like the medians or the various street enhancements now? Like why, I appreciate that there is
9 this notion that we could also enforce, but to me it seems like for the vast majority of Palo
10 Altans that we're not paying attention and also other drivers not necessarily from Palo Alto that
11 are driving through to this particular conversation it's going to be like information whiplash,
12 right? The speed is going to go and then it's, but no one will be achieving that speed goal; I sort
13 of look at the speed limit sometimes as like the goal of the road, right? And so if for example
14 you post speed limits at 40 and then you immediately follow that up with these enhancements
15 then nobody's achieving that speed and then we reduce the speed it seems like that exercise of
16 actually changing a limit wouldn't necessarily be necessary. We could skip that step. It would
17 probably result in less enforcement opportunities although I'm not even sure that's the case
18 and then implement the roadway enhancements that would in essence psychologically lower
19 the speed because people would feel comfortable traveling at the higher, at excessive speed. Is
20 there any sort of perspective on that?

-
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1

2 Mr. Mello: So first of all I want to thank you for that comment because one of the reasons we're
3 here this evening is to help craft our message to the community when we go out for the
4 community meetings and this is a very complicated topic and any advice you can give us on
5 how to conduct these meetings and what, how we should cover this information is greatly
6 appreciated. And to answer your question I think one outcome one alternative outcome of this
7 project could be that we decide not to implement the higher speed limits and instead we just
8 establish the target speeds and then we have a clear City policy on how these roadways should
9 be operating, what speeds we should be designing for, and then we can revisit the speed limit
10 discussion after some of these improvements are implemented.

11

12 Chair Alcheck: So I mean I don't know that any of us are really traffic experts with respect to
13 setting speeds. I imagine there's just like a tremendous amount of analysis on this that would
14 help sort of provide guidance, but I imagine that the reaction I'm having to this notion of
15 increasing speeds only to reduce them is something that you'll see when you go into the
16 community which I think is a good exercise. I would like to hear from anybody else that's
17 interested in commenting on this, but I'll add one more question that I'm interested in getting
18 some feedback on which is there are a number of streets in Palo Alto I can think of West
19 Bayshore for example where there is a... there may even be one on Alma, there is a sort of a
20 speed indication radar billboard, I don't know what you call it, that informs the driver of their

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1 speed and kind of has this added effect that once it identifies you as excessively speeding it
2 then flashes your speed in red as opposed to orange or then it reminds you of what the speed
3 should be. I'm, I'd be really curious to know how effective those are and particularly if that is
4 what that falls into the sort of rubric of street enhancements that you would recommend
5 achieve a target speed?

6

7 Mr. Mello: Yes, we call those speed feedback signs. We're currently inventorying all of those
8 signs. We have quite a few that are malfunctioning currently. So we're inventorying those and
9 we're going to switch over to one particular product that our maintenance crews really like and
10 then after that we're going to look at opportunities to add additional speed feedback signs
11 where we think they're needed. There's a, Chris can jump in, but I think there's a couple mph
12 reduction that you see with those, but I don't think it's a huge factor in reducing speeds. But I
13 don't know if you have more experience with speed feedback signs?

14

15 Mr. Tanay: What you mentioned is a [unintelligible] been shown that to reduce a few miles
16 per hour. I think that those are all non-engineering per se in terms of the target speed we're
17 recommending engineering measures where we change the roadway as opposed to speed
18 feedback is [unintelligible] non-engineering it's more of an educational and information. So
19 that's the difference.

20

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1 Chair Alcheck: Ok. One more piece of, one more question and another piece of feedback which
2 is I would really love if the information provided included a laundry list of items that would fall
3 into the category of street enhancements to achieve everything from speed not bumps, but the
4 other version of speed humps or whatever it is that you can travel over at the speeds that we're
5 talking about. I think having that laundry list will help the community identify that the ones
6 that they think are not as effective from their perspective, just getting perspective on what
7 items would really upset them and maybe which items are most effective.

8
9 And then my second question is we've got a list of school zones. And I'm wondering if is the
10 state law specific with respect to whether they're public schools or private schools because I
11 don't see some of our private schools on this list and I'm wondering whether or not they should
12 be? I'm not wondering. I think they should be added because those schools are just as likely to
13 have kids traveling to and from them on foot or by bike and I am having a hard time reconciling
14 why we wouldn't have a 25 mph school speed limit or the 15 which may be a little aggressive,
15 but regardless next to some of our private schools that are on for example Fabian which is got a
16 speed limit of 30 and other parts of Embarcadero. I'm curious to know if there's a reason why
17 those were excluded?

18

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1 Mr. Mello: The maps that are included in your packet were developed in a as part of a study
2 that was done back in 2012 before I joined the City. I'm not quite sure why private schools
3 were not included. We can look into that and certainly include those as part of this project.

4
5 Chair Alcheck: Is there is it like an entitlement question? Like is the "speed law" that requires...
6 I read this to understand that like if it's a school zone it's required to be 25 in California. Is that
7 not applicable if it's a private school?

8
9 Mr. Mello: We'll look into that. I can look into it right now actually I have a document in front
10 of me, but we can look into that and get back to you whether it's just public schools or public
11 and private.

12
13 Chair Alcheck: Let's assume for a minute that there is some distinction. I would suggest that
14 when we go to the community we consider widening the application to all of our schools. Ok,
15 does anybody else want to sort of, go ahead.

16
17 Commissioner Fine: Just one comment, Commissioner Gardias is hoping to speak, but you may
18 have to help him out.

19
20 Chair Alcheck: Commissioner Gardias, your light's not on. Please.

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Commissioner Gardias: Very good. So yeah I have before I just have question, right? So I'd like to understand why on slides when there was an increase of the speed limit which is Slide Number 10 there is an increase on Embarcadero to 30 mph why there is a subsequent slide that talks about installation of the roundabout and some other items that would slow traffic 25 mph. I'm not really sure which is which one is which, right? So before I just proceed to my questions I'd like to just understand why those two slides seem to be discrepant?

Mr. Mello: So Slide 10 shows the results of the engineering and traffic surveys that were completed. So if we were to strictly base our decisions around speed limits on those engineering and traffic surveys and we wanted to enable radar enforcement on Embarcadero Road we would raise the speed limit to 30 miles an hour. The slide that's further back in the presentation is discussing target speeds. And it may very well be that the community thinks that 25 miles an hour is the appropriate target speed for Embarcadero Road. Currently it's not based on the operating speed it's not sending the message to motorists that the speed limit is 25 miles an hour. They're feeling comfortable going much faster than that. So if we were to set a target speed we would make the design decisions and implement signing and striping and other geometric treatments that would bring that speed limit back down to 25 miles an hour.

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1 So to answer your question Commissioner Gardias there are two different topics of the
2 evening. One being the speed limit there would be enforceable under state law and the other
3 being the community's preferred target speed for that particular road.

4
5 Commissioner Gardias: Ok. I understand. So just so I understand that you're not proposing to
6 raise these limits to 30 miles an hour on Embarcadero, right?

7
8 Mr. Mello: No. We're just presenting the options this evening. Ultimately it will be up to the
9 Commissioners to decide what direction they want to give us and then Council as well when we
10 go to them.

11
12 Commissioner Gardias: Ok, very good. Because the idea of raising speed limit on Embarcadero
13 to 30 or even more that was that the idea that originated like many several years ago if I
14 remember. I heard it from someone of course I don't remember, but you need to be aware of
15 this, right? The community rejected that notion to increase the speed limit and that the reason
16 that it stayed on at 25 per hour. So that's about Embarcadero. In terms of the... I just want to
17 have my one comment about some of the solutions that you have and (interrupted)

18
19 Mr. Mello: If... if... If I can respond to that first comment? I neglected to mention that these
20 engineering and traffic surveys need to be done every seven years. So there are quite likely

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1 was a discussion, a very similar discussion five to seven years ago around this topic or some
2 number of years. And we'll keep having to have this discussion as we renew our engineering
3 and traffic surveys as required under state law.

4

5 Commissioner Gardias: Ok. So that the second item is about the roundabout that you have on
6 Slide 18 and we had this brief conversation when we talked about the biking routes if you
7 remember a couple of months ago? And I was the only one that spoke about this. So I just
8 would like to make this comment again and make it maybe more clear that about the
9 roundabout. So the reason that I questioned that notion of installation of the roundabout was
10 pretty much that either on the biking route or on the car routes was pretty much that it was
11 based on the cost aspect. I didn't believe in any findings that you provided. It didn't
12 substantiate any observation about increasing the safety of traffic when those roundabouts
13 would be installed because there were no collisions at those places. So I have a concern about
14 proposing those because they will not change anything from the safety perspective. They may
15 of course slow down the traffic, but on the other hand they will burden the community with the
16 expense of installation and maintenance of those roundabouts. So that's what I would like to
17 advise you about. [Unintelligible] comment that I wanted to make. Thank you.

18

19 Chair Alcheck: Ok. Commissioner Tanaka. I don't know if that's still your title, but
20 Commissioner Tanaka.

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2 Commissioner Tanaka: I think it is. Thank you. So thank you staff for your work on this. I could
3 tell you that the work you did here is something that the community really, really wants. So I
4 think this is definitely good work and it looks like it's good progress forward. So can you talk a
5 bit about some of the work you're going to be doing in terms of trying to get the outreach to
6 the community and get feedback because some of this stuff is kind of it is the state law, right?
7 So you have to do what you have to do, but what's your thoughts about how to how can you
8 because you're talking about a lot of streets here. So how do you hold those kind of feedback
9 sessions?

10

11 Mr. Mello: It's still a work in progress. Any ideas that you have typically for a project that has
12 defined project limits we would send mailings to all of the households within a couple blocks of
13 the corridor. In this case we may limit that just to the segments where we'd be recommending
14 speed limit increases. I think we need to have a larger community discussion around the target
15 speed issue and the school zone issue and I think we've struggled a little bit to figure out how to
16 have that community conversation. So that's why we wanted to come to you and Council first
17 to get your input on that.

18

19 Commissioner Tanaka: I think I saw in one of your slides that you're thinking about going to
20 Council November 2016, is that right? So like in a few weeks?

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Mr. Mello: Yeah, we're on the 21st.

Commissioner Tanaka: Ok.

Mr. Mello: November 21st agenda.

Commissioner Tanaka: Because it seems to me that unless you've actually got some feedback from the community isn't it a little bit early to go to City Council on this?

Mr. Mello: We strategized very early on and we thought that this was a, this is really a policy decision ultimately and we want to go to the community with what we think is reasonable and something that Council would ultimately elect to move forward with. So I think we want to gauge their opinion on what direction they want us to move on this before we go to the community so that we don't mislead the community and go down a road that ultimately may not go anywhere.

Commissioner Tanaka: Because I would guess that the Council would probably want to do what the committee wants, but the Council needs to know what the community wants. The Council could have a bunch of ideas about like this option or that option, but I think we need we do

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1 need community buy in. So I just was wondering whether it might be better to actually get
2 some community outreach, get some feedback, come back to the Commission really and let the
3 Commission kind of work out these issues and then you go to Council with a solid plan that has
4 feedback.

5

6 Mr. Mello: We could certainly come back to the Commission again. We're already on the
7 Council agenda for the 21st. Originally we were going to go in December, but the meeting that
8 we were scheduled for was too full so they moved us to November 21st.

9

10 Commissioner Tanaka: Yeah, I personally think that I mean it looks like you guys did a lot of
11 homework, but I think the key piece missing is community feedback because I have walked up
12 and down all of these streets and I'll tell you some people feel very passionate about this stuff.
13 And I think Council would like to know to hear some of that passion and if you go there with
14 just the technicalities, right, of what's going on it's great, but a lot of the members on these
15 streets have very strong opinions and I think Council will need to have that input to make these
16 kind of decisions [unintelligible] recommendation. So I mean whether you go forward or not I
17 think it might behoove everyone's time if you actually did the feedback first.

18

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1 Mr. Mello: Yeah. Just I agree and just to clarify the Council item on the 21st is a study session.
2 It's not an action item so they won't be taking any action they'll just be providing us with similar
3 input that you are this evening.

4
5 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok. And then the other thing is: is there any possibility of doing some
6 sort of simulation? So if you actually do some of this like some sort of traffic model and what
7 happens if you actually do some of these things and what happens to does the traffic move
8 over to a side street, right? Like what is there any model you could do so you could see kind of
9 like maybe do some sort of what if scenarios?

10
11 Mr. Mello: The models are not that specific enough. We could do monitoring. So if we decided
12 to implement some traffic calming measures we could monitor the parallel streets and see how
13 much spillover there is. And we typically would do that with any kind of pilot project.

14
15 Commissioner Tanaka: So when you do the community outreach are you planning to also reach
16 not just the main street, but... Ok. So you're doing the side streets too? Great. The other
17 question is do you know roughly how much enforcement happens on these streets today? Do
18 you have any information on that? Like because I tell you those people the residents that live
19 on these streets that claim there's none. Zero enforcement.

20

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1 Mr. Mello: So I'll let Sergeant Lee answer that question.

2

3 Sergeant Lee: It's a very good question and it's a question that we've been dealing with since I
4 was on traffic since 2005 as a motor cop and a traffic team supervisor and taking, intaking a lot
5 of those community complaints about speeds within their neighborhoods. So I know. I agree
6 with you, it's a very passionate subject. Currently the panel may be aware that we do not have
7 a traffic team effective with this last fiscal year and that was three officers dedicated to traffic.
8 When I came on board there were seven of us. So the discretion to enforce speed relies now
9 on the patrol officers who are because of staffing doing a lot more with less, so speed currently
10 is being enforced on a priority basis in relation to calls for service and all the other collateral
11 duties that an officer in patrol functions may be faced with at any given time of the day or that
12 week.

13

14 Commissioner Tanaka: Any numbers of like for the streets were studied? How many? Ok, so I
15 think that by the time you go to Council I think that would be a good thing to have because I
16 mean here's how it could play out in the community, you're going to increase the speed limit so
17 we can actually do radar enforcement, right? Where there's no enforcement anyways. You
18 have to think how that goes down with the community, right? What people are going to be
19 thinking about it if that's how it's presented because I mean because it's not being enforced
20 when we raise the speed limit, right? It's almost encouraging people to go faster, right? So I

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1 think so it sounds like this is not just a... there's also a budgetary issue in terms of can it be
2 enforced even if a lot of these things were implemented.

3

4 Sergeant Lee: Right and to mention some of the streets that are segmented and are covered
5 under the survey where radar is permissible some of the other factors that that go into this is
6 only the few number of officers who actually are certified to operate radar and/or lidar devices,
7 but also even if we were able to look at all the citations written for unsafe speed it wouldn't
8 necessarily collate with these areas that we're talking about specifically. It could be outside of
9 the survey. So I don't know if those numbers would be significant enough to garner any sort of
10 direction.

11

12 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok. So I think the other thing I've heard is that sometimes like on the
13 part of Middlefield that's near Menlo Park that the cars go so fast that you can't stop them
14 safely. Is that true?

15

16 Sergeant Lee: I'm sorry, what segment of Middlefield?

17

18 Commissioner Tanaka: Kind of like University to Menlo Park.

19

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1 Sergeant Lee: Right. That is a very troublesome area one of which is because there's no place
2 for a police car to safely identify and have a safe observation point and then because of all the
3 other density of the traffic to actually go out and go after the violator. And that's assuming that
4 they are, the officer is radar or lidar certified and so otherwise we're relegated to using pacing
5 and that segment of the roadway is just too short to get a safe pace.

6
7 Commissioner Tanaka: Because residents claim that people know that there's no enforcement
8 of speed there and maybe it's true and that so I'm just trying to think of how this all plays out,
9 right? Because it's you can have all the signs you want, but if there is no enforcement it doesn't
10 matter.

11
12 Chair Alcheck: Ok. Commissioner Waldfogel [Note-Vice-Chair] and then Commissioner Fine.

13
14 Vice-Chair Waldfogel: Thank you. Actually relative to that last question if you go to Slide 4 I
15 would strongly recommend that in your presentations of this that you somehow shade that
16 segment of Middlefield if it was previously studied that segment from University to Menlo Park
17 because it looks like it's not included in any of the studies.

18
19 Mr. Mello: So I neglected to mention that there were 36 traffic and speed surveys done in 2014
20 and that segment is actually certified for radar enforcement.

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Vice-Chair Waldfogel: Yeah, I believe that. I would just recommend that you mark this map that shows that it was that it studied.

Mr. Mello: Well it wasn't studied as part of the 70 that we're presenting this evening, but we could add another map that shows the ones that are already certified before this.

Vice-Chair Waldfogel: Let's do it in different color or something. I mean you don't need to proliferate maps. And I would suggest if you I think you asked a question about how to present some of this to the public. So I'll just make a couple of suggestions about language I would consider using and just you can judge if these are true or not. I mean I would say to the public that you did these studies to improve predictability of travel time. I don't know if that's true or false, but if it is I would say that, that it was to reduce collisions. Again that seems to be an explicit goal of these studies, but if it isn't don't say it and to allow radar enforcement. But anyway if those things are true those are kind of framing language that you can put around this about why we did this and what the benefits are to the to the public, but I'm sure you have better ideas on how to frame that. So.

Mr. Mello: Yeah, I would say the last point is true. The first two are not really driving this project. This is really a technical thing that we have to do in order to conduct radar

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1 enforcement under state law. And we're trying to improve the community conversation by
2 talking about the greater goal of target speed and because going to them and just telling them
3 that we have to do this to do radar for enforcement I think would be a difficult conversation.

4

5 Vice-Chair Waldfogel: Yeah, I just think that if we stick with the technical language we're going
6 to we're passing over people's heads. So just finding a way to frame this with more benefits
7 language than functional language is always helpful. And then just one detail question if you go
8 to the chart in the booklet, I'm not sure if you have this and this is the street by street segment
9 chart. Yeah, is it on... it's on Page 13 of the packet. I just have a specific question about
10 Segment Number 2, which is Alma Street from Lincoln to Oregon Expressway. It has a pretty
11 high number of collisions, 138. That's one of the highest numbers in the table and I assume this
12 is because it's a similar condition to Middlefield we have turning movements on and off of Alma
13 from the side streets. And just how do we take that into account as we think about the
14 recommended speed limits? I mean I also notice that there's a 20 percent gap between the
15 85th percentile speed and the recommended speed limit. So just how do we think about a
16 segment like that?

17

18 Mr. Mello: So thank you for pointing that out. I would first like to direct your attention to the
19 collision rate. That's a better measure to look at than just the sheer number of collisions
20 because if you see that's also one of the highest volume segments at 30,000 ADT. I think one of

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1 the things we'll do with this data is we're currently ramping up a comprehensive traffic safety
2 program. We've hired a new traffic engineering lead and Ruchika's actually joined that group
3 as well. And one of the projects they're working on now is the Middlefield Road North segment
4 between Menlo Park and Channing. And after that project starts to wind down we're going to
5 start to look more strategically at the high crash segments of roadway throughout the City and
6 identify exactly what the factors are that are causing those collisions. And we'll be able to use
7 this actually to start that process.

8
9 Vice-Chair Waldfogel: And then just one final question which is: is there any ability in
10 conducting these studies to also count non-motor vehicles? Because I think that would be a
11 great column if that was if that were available in these tables.

12
13 Mr. Mello: So the answer is yes. The reason it's not in this dataset is we used tube counters to
14 capture speed and volumes and tube counters are not very good at capturing cyclists and they
15 can't capture pedestrian traffic at all. When we do turning movement counts which are
16 intersection counts we always include bicycle and pedestrian data, but for this type of study of
17 it would have been difficult to do that. We could have got bicycles, but it wouldn't be that
18 reliable because if they're on the sidewalk they wouldn't be counted.

19

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1 Vice-Chair Waldfogel: If it's not possible it's not possible. It'd just be helpful on some of the
2 segments, but thank you.

3

4 Mr. Mello: We can provide that data if we have it from other sources. We just won't have it for
5 every one of the segments that are in this table.

6

7 Commissioner Fine: Thank you very much for this presentation. I think the Vice-Chair had a lot
8 of good comments on framing in terms of the costs and benefits here. Just in my experience I
9 would actually zoom in on many of these maps and show what the difference is and exactly
10 where. These are pretty high level maps and it would be helpful to really zoom in for folks.
11 Also talk about the benefits as the Vice-Chair mentioned whether it's travel time, whether it's
12 reducing collisions, all that stuff is really important framing.

13

14 Just a few couple questions this kind of gets to the framing issue as well. Are there any
15 additional force minute mechanisms the City could consider whether it's something like
16 bringing back the traffic team or the cameras that capture people as they're speeding and just
17 put those on the table for residents to see what kind of appetite there is. Does the City have
18 any of those speed cameras right now? Is there anything prohibiting us from doing them?

19

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1 Mr. Mello: I believe we can verify those, but I believe that only red light cameras are authorized
2 under California law I don't believe speed cameras are allowed within the State currently.

3

4 Commissioner Fine: Ok.

5

6 Mr. Mello: But we could certainly include a more robust discussion about enforcement when
7 we go to the community. But just to react to your first point I don't know that staff is fully
8 committed to moving all elements of this project forward and I think when we start to talk
9 about cost benefits we're looking for guidance from you as well before we go to the community
10 because I think I have the same question about is there a cost? Does the cost benefit make
11 sense in this case to move forward with the speed limit increases and some of the other
12 elements of this.

13

14 Commissioner Fine: Right and that might be helpful to do for each of these road segments
15 actually, right? And then you can show residents like where the City's threshold is as directed
16 by the Planning Commission or Council. That would be helpful, but right now these tables kind
17 of read as like well people are driving faster so we should increase the speed limit. That's not
18 the best argument to start with. Yeah and then just also just include additional enforcement
19 mechanisms whether it's our Police Department (PD) working on it or additional technologies
20 or designs on these streets that might help residents, just give them something as well.

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1
2 Commissioner Rosenblum: So now to get to my first round I asked a few questions and now I'd
3 love to give some feedback on your next stage and the items that you said you'd like guidance
4 on. So first, you don't really have the basis for cost benefit analysis here, but I would suggest
5 that the framing is this whole study the technicality is that you need to do this set the 85th
6 percentile speed in order to be enforceable under California law. But only some stretches
7 perhaps are community priorities to be enforced. So if you're talking about having our scarce
8 policing resources have to be deployed at various places I would suggest that in only a couple of
9 places that is the community really crying out for increased enforcement. And so number one
10 you have a long list of places that you want to set a new speed limit. I would also try to have at
11 least your sense of where staff has gotten feedback from the community where they're looking
12 for increased enforcement. Particularly because you are increasing the speed to match more or
13 less the rate of current traffic which would be counter to when the community is asking for
14 enforcement they're asking you to lower the speed which I know this is maybe a step towards
15 that.

16
17 But number two is I think that then the focus of the conversation needs to be around getting to
18 target speeds as quickly as possible. I know that's your intention. I somewhat disagree with
19 Vice-Chair around saying that the technical aspect of this will go over people's heads. I think it's
20 fairly clear that there's a state law that in order to get in compliance here are some measures

-
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1 we have to do. Don't worry we're not just trying to increase speed throughout town we are
2 trying to do this is step one, but step two we're trying to figure out what the right speed and
3 enforcement level should be for these intersections. Here's our current proposal. And I so I
4 think that staging process could be done crisper upfront, but I would say that for our
5 community anyway I wouldn't think that that messaging should go over people's heads. But it
6 has to be emphasized that this is a at least two stage process.

7

8 And then the final piece of feedback is I think that people are anxious around accident rates
9 and so I think this information needs to be highlighted a bit better. So for example, I had the
10 same when I was going through the package earlier I had the same question that Commissioner
11 Waldfogel [note-Vice-Chair] had, but then I was looking at gross numbers versus rate. The unit
12 of rate to me is not that transparent. And so just really concentrating in on accident rates is
13 something when the community talks about enforcement I think what people are worried
14 about are accidents. So I would bring that forward and that also is the question that I asked at
15 the outset which is what is relationship between speed and accidents. So you brought up what
16 it means for fatalities, but also what it means for the rate if anything at all. So I would
17 anticipate those questions from the public and have a section around the relationship between
18 speed accidents/safety. And those are all my framing points. Hopefully that's useful guidance.

19

20 Mr. Mello: Yes, thank you very much. It's very useful.

-
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1

2 Chair Alcheck: Ok, thank you for your presentation. I my sort of departing comment would be
3 I'd love to see the staff take a little bit more of a bold position on the stated issue of the zero
4 budget for the enforcement team. So I would have had a slide that said we really don't need to
5 spend a lot of time talking about enforcing higher speed limits if the City Council isn't going to
6 create a budget for an enforcement team where we went from seven to three to zero. That
7 shouldn't be something we learn in the question and answer session. That should be like the
8 front page of this whole discussion because if for example there's a large population of
9 individuals who think that there is zero enforcement it's not a thought, it's a fact. And if we're
10 going to entertain even for five minutes this discussion about increasing the speed limits so that
11 enforcement is even possible under the law then we got to hire some traffic cops. So I mean it
12 was a little disheartening to find that out in question and answer because it's like are you
13 kidding me? So anyways I would encourage you guys to put that in your slide packet so that
14 City Council sort of can't ignore it that this conversation is relatively inefficient if we don't talk
15 about budgets. Ok, let's move on to Item Number 5.

16

17 Commissioner Gardias: Hold on a second. If I was talking about the vote I know that we have
18 some difficulties with connecting, but may I still speak?

19

20 Chair Alcheck: Yeah, if you have comments for Item Number 4.

-
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1

2 Commissioner Gardias: That's correct, yes.

3

4 Chair Alcheck: Ok. Go ahead.

5

6 Commissioner Gardias: So a couple of comments. Number one is that when you're going to
7 work on your study it would be also nice to find out the associated risks so my ask is pretty
8 much that once you're going to just come back to us with after the meetings with the
9 community and some I don't know how you're going to do this. The pilots, are there going to
10 be any pilots or anything like this? We would like to, I would like to at least just understand
11 where's the risk of implementation because we're going to depress the car speeds, but there
12 would need to probably this would once you push this way it's going to probably just push out
13 the other way so there would need to be probably some offset and that may result with the car
14 with [unintelligible] being clogged. So my question would be how we going to mitigate that risk
15 of taking longer route to work by a couple of minutes or maybe even more? So my ask would
16 be that when you going to return just please tell us what's the impact of the study? That's
17 number one.

18

19 Number two is that when I look at slides that provide distribution, the Slide 18, that Vice-Chair
20 Waldfogel was speaking about that distribution would be nice to work this way that distribution

-
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1 is as narrow as possible. So if there is a possibility to find out if there are any options available
2 to discharge cars at the uniform speed as opposed to having the speeds being distributed along
3 the vertical line as it is in this example. So again, the objective should be just to keep the
4 distribution as narrow which would pretty much mean that the cars travel with the most
5 uniform speed. Thank you.

6

7 Chair Alcheck: Ok, why don't we take a... why don't we take a four minute break and reconvene
8 and begin with Agenda Item Number 5? Thanks for your presentation

9

10 **Commission Action:** None

11

12 **THE COMMISSION TOOK A BREAK**

13

14 5. Study Session to Review Modifications and Updates to Title 18 to Implement Housing
15 Element Programs and Zoning Code Clarifications

16

17 Chair Alcheck: **[recording starts in progress]** would be the Planning Code Amendments study
18 session.

19

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1 Jonathan Lait, Assistant Director: Thank you, Chair Alcheck. We're going to, I'm going to ask
2 Clare Campbell who has recently... who's been with the City for some time, but has now
3 switched over to our Long Range Planning Team to help us with our list of policy items to lead
4 you in the presentation and we're here to answer any questions that you may have.

5

6 Clare Campbell, Senior Planner: Great, thank you. Good evening, Commissioners; Clare
7 Campbell, Senior Planner. So tonight we have a collection of proposed code amendments for
8 our zoning code that we'd like to get some direction from you. We're looking to get some
9 comments and suggestions for our code language so we can bring that forward for
10 recommendation next month. So tonight we're basically focused on four different areas.
11 We've got some housing related amendments, some review process modifications, corrections
12 and modifications to our off street loading and parking standards, and a brief discussion on our
13 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan requirements.

14

15 So the first one up today is our housing definitions. So in our Housing Element the City
16 committed to updating these two definitions for transitional housing and supportive housing,
17 to remove the references to multiple family uses. And the text that we're using or that we're
18 proposing is taken directly from the Housing Element program language and it's shown here on
19 our screen and it's also in the staff report.

20

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1 The second item is for our housing inventory sites small lot consolidations. With the adoption
2 of our Housing Element the City also committed to meeting specifications of Program H2.1.9 by
3 January 2017 which involves amending the zoning code to create incentives that encourage
4 consolidation of smaller lots that are specifically identified on our housing inventory sites and
5 developed with 100 percent affordable housing units. So here I have a map it's not as clear as
6 I'd like it to be, but I have a separate one if we need to pull that up. But basically here we have
7 the distribution of our housing inventory and we have a cluster in the Downtown, we have
8 some along the El Camino corridor, there's a cluster in the Cal Ave. area, and also along the San
9 Antonio corridor. So there are 27 sites that have been identified as consolidation opportunities
10 and these cluster basically in the Downtown area and near the Fry's site. So in the Downtown
11 area we've got two lots that are zoned CD and we have 21 lots in South of Forest Avenue 2
12 (SOFA 2) which are RT35. So this is the majority of the lots that have been identified as a small
13 lot opportunity sites for consolidation. So RT is the predominant zone for these properties.

14

15 So the next one is in the Fry's area, we have four CS lots near the Fry's area and so for moving
16 forward we've come up with some suggested standards and incentives for these consolidations.
17 So as far as the standards go basically we're saying we'd like to recommend that these housing
18 inventory sites can be merged with both inventory sites and non-inventory sites. The units
19 have to be deed restricted for a minimum of thirty years as 100 percent affordable housing.
20 We've established or suggested some affordable levels of income for these for ownership units

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1 and for rental units and we're also suggesting that we use RT35 development standards for all
2 of these project types. For the incentives we're suggesting that the these projects have priority
3 processing for their entitlements, that we streamline the subdivision process for the project, we
4 would establish a legal conforming status for non RT35 lots, we would eliminate parking for
5 small units that are less than 300 square feet (sf), and we would provide a reduction in the
6 required guest parking for the project.

7

8 Alright, so moving on to housing density, so earlier this year we had four bills that were related
9 to density bonus that were adopted and we have some recommended amendments or
10 amendments that we have to comply with. And basically we've got a 20 percent density bonus
11 where at least 10 percent of the total housing units are designated for foster youth, disabled
12 veterans or homeless persons and are offered at the same affordability levels as very low
13 income units and this is AB 2242. Another amendment is to adopt specific procedures and
14 timelines for processing a density bonus application and this is related to AB 2501. And the last
15 one is guidance on what to do you when a density bonus replaces existing housing units and
16 this is related to AB 2556.

17

18 Alright, so the last housing item is a new policy and it's related to converting older hotels or
19 motels to housing units and if we assume that we want to go in this direction we've been
20 thinking about what can the City do to facilitate the change in use. So we know that we have

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1 these types of projects we have code required upgrades for life and safety issues that those
2 cannot be waived whatsoever, but we are suggesting to waive some other types of zoning
3 requirements when it when there's a change in use such as changing the parking requirements
4 and for example, open space requirements for residential units. So we would ask the question:
5 what do we do to encourage this type of housing and what would we want in return for this?
6 So some of our suggested terms or requirements for this project would be a 30 year term for
7 affordable housing, 100 percent affordable housing, and priority given to Palo Alto residents or
8 employees.

9

10 So the next item is our first process item and this is regarding approvals. So we have a
11 longstanding practice of requiring all relevant planning entitlements to be approved before any
12 consideration of acting on the associated demolition permit. The zoning code has specific
13 requirements for this when it relates to architecture review applications, but it's silent on its
14 applicability to any other type of entitlement. So we're looking to update the code to require
15 entitlement approvals prior to related demolition approvals for all projects and not just the
16 architecture review, so just to be explicit about that requirement.

17

18 Ok, so the next one is forwarding entitlements to Council for action. So when a project requires
19 multiple entitlements where the required action is split between the Planning Director and City
20 Council for example, site and design where that needs Council action and a variance which

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1 needs a Planning Director's action maintaining separate authority can be a drawback to the
2 overall review of the project. We're suggesting that we make some code changes to allow the
3 Planning Director to forward all relevant planning entitlements to the Council for action where
4 Council action is required for one of those entitlements as a complete package for
5 consideration. So this allows the Council to get a complete picture of what's being proposed for
6 this project and can act accordingly. There are also other scenarios where forwarding projects
7 to Council for action may be recommended such as when projects involve leases or agreements
8 with City owned property and if on a case by case basis when the Director deems it to be
9 appropriate. And we can get into discussion a little bit more about that later.

10

11 Ok, so moving on to TDM plans. We'd like to establish when a TDM plan is required for a
12 project. Our code includes references to TDM plans in association with requested parking
13 adjustments in non-parking assessment areas and we'd like to establish some citywide
14 standards for when a project triggers the preparation of a TDM plan. So some of the
15 recommended thresholds are 100 or more new weekday trips, a.m. or p.m. peak hour or
16 weekend peak hour trips, reduction on onsite parking or in order to support claims for projects
17 for a projects lower trip generation when the applicant claims that.

18

19 And the very last... oh no, next we're moving on to loading. So our loading table was basically
20 established in 1978. There was a consolidation of the parking chapter to create a one parking

-
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1 chapter information was consolidated from the individual zone districts and basically over the
2 years through formatting changes and updates some information has been lost in the updates
3 and erroneously emitted from this table. So here we have a red line version of the errors that
4 we need to correct. So basically I mean it's pretty straightforward. So somehow we've dropped
5 this upper threshold here for the for this room or area size for this building. So this is to put
6 that back in. We have a threshold here from 0 to 4,999 that was dropped off the table before
7 so we're putting that back in and adding this second level of square footage where it requires
8 one. So this is all what was consistent in the original tables for the loading requirements
9 previously and lower for manufacturing processing. We have the same error that was made
10 when the format was changed for this particular table.

11

12 Alright, so the next loading item is adjustments. So some developments in dense areas like the
13 Downtown can be significantly impacted when required to provide the off street loading space
14 and this space by our code definition is 45 feet long by 12 feet wide and requires a 15 foot
15 height clearance. Staff is proposing to allow the Planning Director the discretion to reduce or
16 modify this loading requirement when conditions are appropriate. And later on we do have
17 some examples of some site plans that we can show you to kind of help with this discussion.

18

19 Ok and then we need to clarify mixed use loading requirements. Our current loading table
20 doesn't specifically have a line item that's for mixed use, but basically we just want to make it

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1 clear that loading requirements shall be based on the specific land uses that are being proposed
2 for that project. So it's just a clarification that we'll change there.

3

4 And the last item is regarding mechanical lifts for the parking. And basically the proposed use
5 for mechanical this is becoming more popular. We're seeing more applicants coming in and
6 suggesting it or wanting to use these types of mechanisms to help satisfy the parking
7 requirements. We've had several projects and maybe in the last five years that we've
8 approved. It's gone through the process and we've approved them. They've all been mixed use
9 projects, residential and commercial, and they've all been projects where these lifts are in a
10 garage facility. So nothing is outside that's visible. So we'd like to have some parameters in the
11 code to basically allow this type of solution for parking and these are some of our suggested
12 standards for these lifts. So we want to clarify that we would it would be for residential or
13 office land use only, not to be used for guest parking, accessible parking or loading zones, it
14 needs to accommodate a full size sport utility vehicle (SUV), and basically to have some
15 provisions for nonresidential use to have some non-mechanical lift spaces so if someone needs
16 to just pull in and park real quick they have that opportunity to do that. So we can talk through
17 that.

18

19 We can also include in the past with some of the projects that I've personally worked on we've
20 had conditions of approval that there's parking management plans and plans that provide

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1 emergency guidelines for when something goes wrong so that way everyone in the building is
2 aware of what they need to do and what, who you're supposed to call when something isn't
3 working the way that it needs to. And we can definitely include provisions in the code to
4 require maintenance and usability for the life of the project. I know that that can be a concern
5 so we can specify that as well.

6
7 Ok, so next steps. So we're looking to get your feedback today for these changes and we're
8 hoping to return in December with some of the supported changes that we're talking about
9 tonight for formal recommendation and ideally we would go to City Council in early 2017 with
10 your recommendations for these code amendments. Thank you.

11
12 Mr. Lait: And Chair we didn't have a chance to strategize about how we might approach this.
13 So I might unless you have some ideas I might recommend that we go through the items in the
14 staff report starting on packet Page 16, Page 2 of the staff report where we list through Roman
15 numbers perhaps?

16
17 Ms. Campbell: Yes.

18
19 Mr. Lait: The nine proposed amendments. That might provide the process and I would just like
20 to make one other point that and we included some staff report last year there was a little bit

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1 of awkwardness and when staff approached this last time and we're, we want to not have that
2 this time around. So I want to be clear that whatever the recommendation is from the Planning
3 Commission that's the recommendation we're going to advance to the City Council. There's not
4 going to be a staff recommendation and a Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC)
5 recommendation. That didn't turn out the way that we thought it would last time and so we
6 want to be making some changes this time around. There is I think one or two state mandated
7 changes. Those ones we do need to move forward regardless of where the PTC may be on that,
8 but we can include the policy conversation in the staff reports. So with that we're here to help
9 with that discussion.

10

11 Chair Alcheck: Alright, so we do have a speaker card so let's see, Steve Pierce, if you could come
12 up and I'll give you five minutes.

13

14 Steve Pierce: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission, I'm Steve Pierce of the
15 Downtown North neighborhood. Like to speak to you for just a few moments about the loading
16 zone changes that are before you and I certainly support what's in the staff report, but I don't
17 think it really goes far enough to cause to kind of remedy a problem I think is in the code.

18

19 Now this off street loading the zones are huge 45 feet long, 12 feet wide, 15 foot vertical
20 clearance and they apply to many uses such as restaurants and retail and so forth. So they

-
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1 really don't apply to a number of the areas that we have in town. So if you consider for
2 example the Apple Store that was built some years ago, spectacular glass building, they being
3 more than 5,000 sf would have been required to have somewhere within those premises a
4 truck loading zone which obviously is absurd. I'm involved in a project on Cambridge Avenue
5 which is recently been rezoned so that the first floor is supposed to be retail and then again
6 now we're supposed to provide a loading zone somewhere within that small footprint which
7 basically is impossible. So while the City on one hand saying hey we want retail here, the
8 loading zone provision makes it impossible to even provide that. The result is you don't do
9 anything because you can't.

10

11 So I would recommend... well, let's put this way I mean the loading zones certainly have their
12 purposes for shopping centers, grocery stores, your large box stores of which I don't think we
13 have any in town. Well, maybe one. So basically we know as Clare mentioned they really don't
14 work in our urban centers. So they don't work in Downtown, there's no purpose for them
15 there. There's alleys, there's off site loading zones. Cal Ave. area really doesn't work and
16 there's probably the other areas in town where it doesn't work either. So what I would suggest
17 is that we actually do a couple things. Number one, with respect to loading zones that we
18 exclude certain areas of town such as the Downtowns that we have and also that we really pick
19 up the need for the loading zones at a much higher threshold where now it's anything over
20 5,000 sf which is a reasonable size restaurant it really needs to be geared more to the grocery

-
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1 store, to the shopping center so we're probably talking 30,000, 50,000 sf and above should
2 have a loading zone and requiring it for at these much smaller levels and areas of the City which
3 are just can't accommodate them basically just pushes a lot of projects through. Well, if you
4 approve this sort of Director approval and having to consider these things a lot of which just
5 don't make sense on the face of it. So I would just suggest that we change the criteria so that
6 this loading zone requirement is made more operable. Thank you.

7

8 Chair Alcheck: Ok, thank you. I do have an idea of how I'd like to do this tonight. And I actually
9 really appreciate you sort of setting the framework for how we're going to get through this
10 process because in the past it's been a little, it has been a little hairy. This is what I would like
11 to do. Since this is going to be a two meeting study session what my preference tonight is for
12 us to go through the items that each of us feels particularly interested in discussing and being
13 very specific about a change that you'd like to see. I'd like to go one at a time and not
14 necessarily item by item. I'm going to let each individual sort of go through the items in this
15 packet that they'd like to comment on. I am hopeful that staff can essentially take notes,
16 copious notes. And what I would like to see if a Commissioner either feels, finds himself in
17 strong agreement with some other comment just make that point. Like oh, I agree with that,
18 I'd like to see that. And if they feel strongly against it make that point and if there isn't a strong
19 opinion about a particular change don't.

20

-
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1 And my response, my request also will be that for example, I imagine maybe some
2 Commissioners will respond to our speaker's comments. Ideally if staff feels like let's I'm going
3 to use this as an example, we had a suggestion tonight that the loading sites not apply to
4 certain areas like Downtown. If for example a Commissioner suggests that we adopt that into
5 this study session or that we should pursue that what I'd love to see is staff come back in the
6 follow-up meeting if they believe that that change could result in sort of a negative
7 consequence. Like for example, tonight you don't really know if that is an applicable or suitable
8 adjustment if when we come back in the next study session we could say ok we know we
9 explored this idea of certain zones and here's where we think that could be problematic or
10 here's where it isn't so that we get sort of immediate feedback on the suggestions we make
11 tonight. Ok, so that's my suggestion.

12
13 I'm going to go first by way of example. And I'm going to speak to the issues that I'd like to
14 speak to and everybody can kind of jump in on their issues. So I'll just reiterate that I think that
15 the comments related to the off street loading made by our guest are interesting to me and I
16 would like to see sort of a little bit broader discussion about whether or not we can eliminate
17 some of those requirements in the certain zones specifically in Downtown so that we can
18 alleviate some of the tougher standards where they really potentially aren't possible. And I
19 don't know that I need to explore the anymore except that if staff feels strongly and what I'll do
20 is after we finish we can have staff respond. Ok?

-
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1

2 The next item I want to talk about is mechanical lifts. I thought it was particularly unappealing
3 for these lifts to only apply to residential and office land uses. I know from personal experience
4 that they can be very effective in hotel uses and so I find that the fact that it's not included as
5 potential uses... I almost think that maybe restricting the use is not a suitable way of doing this.
6 I think we should leave it open and if there is a specific concern that a mechanical lift isn't
7 suitable for a specific use I think we should sort of highlight that as opposed to having to
8 continue to broaden. Well, ok we'll use them in residential maybe in office. Ok, maybe in
9 hotel. Ok, maybe in retail. I would prefer almost that we eliminate that distinction.

10

11 I felt the same way about the notion of guest parking. I wasn't entirely sure why certain types
12 of users couldn't necessarily use of a mechanical lift. That felt overly restrictive. Even the
13 Bullet 3 about full size utility vehicles I wondered if there wasn't some sort of data where
14 certain populations, our population uses a certain percentage of full size and a certain
15 percentage of small size. Do they all have to accommodate what would be a full size SUV. That
16 seems a little onerous.

17

18 And then I'm going to skip forward the no demolition until replacement project approval; one
19 of the concerns I've had throughout this process of what was initially described as cleaning up
20 the code is that I think sometimes when we attempt to sort of create clarification by subtle

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1 adjustments in the language we don't realize that we're actually making policy changes. So I'll
2 give you an example, right now if you don't have a project that's subject to the review you can
3 theoretically get your permit to demolish or even more importantly deconstruct your project in
4 anticipation of approval. And I think the reason why that's the case is because when you know
5 the rules going in your application is more likely to comply with those rules as opposed to with
6 the review board there's so much grey area to how your project could go and it could take
7 months before you have resolution. So having a site that's basically demolished is unappealing
8 in our neighborhoods. I will say this, there we this is an example of an area where I think more
9 thought should take place. Are we theoretically discouraging deconstruction? Deconstruction
10 typically takes a lot longer than demolition. Being able to get started on a project's
11 deconstruction which is a very green way of dealing with old materials is something that if you
12 can get started with earlier in your process you have an incentive to do it. Time is money when
13 it comes to this process and so if for example you have to wait till the very last minute to
14 demolish your structure you may elect to demolish instead of deconstruct. I think we're
15 creating incentives here. So I would love to see us either table that one or spend a little time
16 talking about that.

17

18 And those are my comments on the items. So what I'd love to see is you guys light up the
19 board and we and go through your things. If you have specific comments just make them and
20 we'll give staff an opportunity I think at the end of this first round to sort of respond so that you

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1 can kind of understand where we're at. And then if we need to we can do more discussion and
2 then finally we can let staff come back to us in the following study session. Ok, Commissioner
3 Rosenblum.

4
5 Commissioner Rosenblum: Thank you. I'll try to use this process. We'll see how I do. I want to
6 divide this list into big things and small things. And I agree with the comment that these for the
7 most part are not wording changes. These are all kind of big items. So just I know that we had
8 the discussion before.

9
10 Mr. Lait: We did.

11
12 Commissioner Rosenblum: And I don't want to revisit it.

13
14 Mr. Lait: I just want to so on this process I want to... I hope there's an opportunity for a little bit
15 of give and take because my concern is we're going to hear from all six of you about something
16 that I might want to clarify so we don't have to have that conversation.

17
18 Chair Alcheck: Absolutely, if you have a clarification just jump in.

19

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1 Mr. Lait: Great, thank you. And just on that point we were, I feel like we were clear in the
2 report summary we're not expressing the... we don't have the position that these are minor
3 tweaks. I mean 80 percent of them, 70 percent of them may be, well actually less than that I
4 mean there may be a I'm just picking a number. Like 20 percent may be like legitimate code
5 errors that we just need to fix. There's another percentage that reflect City policy and how
6 we've done things. And that's we're not do anything really new, we're just memorializing how
7 we've done it. And then there are definitely some new concepts that we're introducing and we
8 talked about that. And we say that there are new policy new initiatives related to affordable
9 housing and transportation management plans and so forth. So I agree, some of these things
10 aren't little tweaks.

11

12 Commissioner Rosenblum: Ok. So in my category of really big things I think that the City's
13 affordable housing crisis and housing in general is top of the list we look at our City's citizen
14 survey around greatest source dissatisfaction is the affordability and availability of housing. So
15 the two items the consolidation of small lots to encourage denser affordable housing units I'm
16 quite supportive of this and the map identifying the actual places they all seem to be clustered
17 around our two major transit hubs. The item I would suggest for consideration by Council is to
18 have and one of the big incentives is that units under 300 sf are exempt from parking
19 requirements regardless of number of bedrooms. I would like to see that increased to 500 sf,
20 300 sf is an extraordinarily small unit and again we're building affordable housing close to

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1 transit. It's a significant incentive to give a parking reduction and this one would be in
2 combination with the TDM measures that we'll talk about in one moment.

3
4 The second implementation of state law density bonus 20 percent where at least 10 percent of
5 total housing units are designated for foster youth, disabled veterans, homeless people,
6 etcetera. My gut on that is given the nature of these units a 20 percent bonus may still not
7 make it attractive to build these units for this population. This is very low income units and so
8 again my advice to Council would be consider to go up to 40 percent or at least study that, to
9 study the economics of building something with 20 percent bonus for very low income and that
10 you may have to increase the density bonus.

11
12 TDM I think is the last of the really big ones to me. I like the staff suggestion which is 100 net
13 new trips fires off the TDM requirement. The advice that I would have as part of the packet
14 that goes to Council is to study what San Mateo did. So if San Mateo has implemented
15 something like this around basically what measures seem sufficient in order to basically you're
16 having TDM measures in place in exchange for some sort of parking reduction I think is part of
17 the intent of this. That you're going to have to have some measures in place in exchange for
18 that the benefit is that you build fewer parking spaces. And so my advice is I don't have any
19 specific input on levels, but that San Mateo has gone through this process quite recently and so
20 for Council to consider that would be germane information.

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2 And then the things I think are a little bit smaller, I agree with our Chair for the most part on the
3 use of mechanical parking except on two items. I agree with him that we should not restrict
4 use types meaning I see no reason why hotels or auto dealerships, etcetera wouldn't benefit
5 from mechanical parking. However, I do agree with staff's recommendation that you have to
6 have normal guest parking of people coming in and out I think it's a serious impediment to have
7 100 percent mechanical. And I also think that we do need to accommodate full sized SUVs and
8 not get too fancy around having different proportions of different kinds of mechanical lifts that
9 support different sides of cars.

10

11 The loading zone I am persuaded by our speaker that there are certain parts of town and
12 certain size of buildings where it doesn't make sense and undermines other ordinances like our
13 want for retail in the Downtown cores and I understand that and agree that that's an important
14 distinction and would encourage staff to look at exemptions for certain areas for certain types
15 of uses.

16

17 And then the final one that I think is a little bit niche is around the hotel conversion for
18 affordable housing. This seems to make sense to me. It seems to have been done once. Staff
19 doesn't think that's necessarily going to be done quite often, but has identified seven other

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1 sites. The incentives seem to make sense to me. So this is one I don't have any... I would pass
2 this one. That's it.

3

4 Chair Alcheck: Thank you. That was excellent. Commissioner Fine.

5

6 Commissioner Fine: So thank you very much to staff for this. I was particularly pleased to see
7 some of the small lot of maps. That was actually really helpful to envision what those changes
8 might look like. Some information that might help us make a decision here on
9 recommendations or for Council; how many of the loading area exceptions have been made
10 across the City in the past few years? Are they concentrated in the Downtown area? I was
11 persuaded by the speaker and by my colleagues here. I'd just like to know what are the
12 exceptions there? Why have they been made? What are the specifics?

13

14 On terms of lifts I agree about the additional uses, I'm just wondering how they've been used at
15 all in Palo Alto. Do you guys, do any of you know of mechanical lifts used in the City so far?

16

17 Ms. Campbell: We have, so we have some projects that have been built. One's across the
18 street, the 240 Hamilton. So that one has a unique system where it's not actually it's an
19 elevator so you drive in there's an elevator that takes you down into the basement and it has a
20 turnaround system that helps the car get turned around and you can come back out and you

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1 can drive out. So that's one example of a mechanical assisted parking system. There's another
2 project at 102 University where that also has a lift. You park, you drive in and then the lift will
3 take you down into the basement where it's a full parking lot for cars. And that's also a mixed
4 use building just like 240 Hamilton. 611 Cowper that is a mixed use project where they've
5 added lifts, a few lifts, so basically it's just the two and it just goes down. I have a couple
6 pictures of what these lifts generally look like, but and they have that it's not a full load of lifts
7 like against a wall or something like that. But there is the 2500 El Camino project that's a
8 housing project and they have a significant number of lifts that they're using for their housing
9 parking requirements. And they're actually staggered like you've got one set against the wall
10 and another set so you actually have to drive through two sets of or if you're in the back you
11 could drive through the two. So we do have projects that we've reviewed that we've approved
12 lifts for.

13

14 Commissioner Fine: It would be nice just to have a quick index of that for those things. Two last
15 points. So one TDM, there may be something in there in terms of when we're triggering TDM
16 for that user or entity or building to look at the Transportation Management Association (TMA)
17 and see if there's any way to opt in to some of their projects, just kind of backfill on the efforts
18 the City's making with the TMA.

19

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1 And the last one is kind of on the replacement projects. So I've heard from some folks that
2 generally after the first round of plan checks you're still allowed to go to the Chief Building
3 Official to get your demo permit and this can cut a lot of time off the project as a whole. I just
4 want to make sure we retain that flexibility here. That if you're going through plan check you
5 would still get your demo permit if things look good. And that's all for me.

6

7 Chair Alcheck: Ok, thank you. Commissioner Tanaka.

8

9 Commissioner Tanaka: Yeah, thank you. So... yeah so... ok, yeah so I agree with the comments
10 about the lifts. I think in general it makes better utility of the land so it makes total sense. So
11 what the parts that I thought I wanted to have more discussion on is around the fact or around
12 the proposal to have as you consolidate small lots to make it 100 percent affordable housing
13 and we certainly have affordable housing crisis here, but some of these locations are actually in
14 areas where there's retail and I think it can't be 100 percent because I think if you convert like
15 especially ground floor to housing that could be a bit of an issue. So I think for areas there are
16 in retail areas we need to actually have some retail facing businesses because it really hurts the
17 other retailers around there. So I think that's important. I don't know if staff has any
18 comments on that?

19

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1 Mr. Lait: So what staff is contemplating here is the reason this is before us is because of the
2 Housing Element policy that was adopted and the requirement is that in the Element is that it's
3 for we do this to accommodate 100 percent affordable housing. So the question that we're
4 asking ourselves is the question that you've asked us which is: does that preclude an
5 opportunity for some kind of retail mixed use component? I do think housing projects with
6 mixed use sometimes they get a little more challenging on the financing and that might be a
7 reason why it was discouraged, but we can take a look at that and then we can also take a look
8 at this in the context of the other work that we're doing right now with retail preservation and
9 our expanding of the ground floor protection to make sure that we're not having a conflict
10 between that effort and this one.

11

12 Commissioner Tanaka: Yeah. I mean because I think for retail especially we have blank spots
13 (interrupted)

14

15 Mr. Lait: Right.

16

17 Commissioner Tanaka: In the retail for frontage, right? It's just not good. You don't want to do
18 that.

19

20 Mr. Lait: Right.

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2 Commissioner Tanaka: So.

3

4 Mr. Lait: Ok.

5

6 Commissioner Tanaka: I think it's a intention, but I think you have to also think about what
7 happens, right, to retail. I think the other aspect is converting the hotels to housing. So hotels
8 we get quite a bit of money from, right? From the hotel tax essentially. So it doesn't sound like
9 this is going to impact [unintelligible] it's not going to have a really big impact or not maybe you
10 could tell me, how many properties could be affected by this?

11

12 Ms. Campbell: In our analysis of the hotel properties there's probably just a handful like maybe
13 six or seven sites that we think that maybe are in a older condition that they might have
14 consideration for taking advantage of this change in use.

15

16 Commissioner Tanaka: Ok, because hotels are top three revenue generators for the City and
17 right now we're in kind of a booming economy, but it's not always going to be like this and their
18 might be a time when we actually want that revenue. And if you convert it to housing we lose
19 it forever. So I think that's something we have to consider as well. So how many rooms are we
20 talking about? You said a handful of properties, how many rooms?

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Ms. Campbell: I'll look it up in a sec, thanks. Ok so the total for the rooms in Palo Alto that we have available now is 2,133.

Commissioner Tanaka: 2,000 rooms?

Ms. Campbell: So that's total, all hotels. So these represent roughly 250 rooms.

Commissioner Tanaka: 250 rooms, ok. So I'm going say (interrupted)

Ms. Campbell: That's roughly 10 percent.

Commissioner Tanaka: Ok. Ok, so how much of a revenue loss is that? So we take our hotel tax times the average rate of room times... what would that be in a yearly number?

Mr. Lait: Great. In this what you're asking for basically is an economic analysis of what this impact may have if we were to go forward with that and we don't have that information today and I do need to note that Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenues are protected and we can't share with the public that information. But the bigger issue is that you don't want to advance a policy to the Council without knowing what the economic implications are and I think that

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1 might be a comment we hear further on in the discussion. So it may be that this one requires a
2 little bit more research and analysis before we advance it on to Council.

3

4 Chair Alcheck: Before we sort of leave this topic can either one of you sort of talk about how
5 this because I the way I understood this is this was a very unique amendment that sort of
6 specifically applied to this specific situation. That's how I read it. And so I'm wondering if I just
7 want to if you guys could provide a little more clarity on how you got to this specific notion.

8

9 Mr. Lait: Yes. So this was this concept comes about from a recent article that you may have
10 read where a local building used as a, approved as a hotel and still considered a hotel for
11 planning purposes was... a deal was made with the between a third party and the property
12 owner to rent out those spaces for low income housing. And what we were talking about when
13 this conversation was going on with this with the individual was gosh, it's kind of a shame
14 because we're not going to get any credit for providing low income housing for this use because
15 we still consider it a hotel. And the reason we consider it a hotel is because that conversion to
16 residential would have required parking and it wouldn't have met different standards.

17

18 And so and the hotel I'm talking about is Hotel California. And so this isn't just for Hotel
19 California though it in theory could apply for it, but that type of hotel that you we see in Palo
20 Alto and we think there's about a half dozen of these kind of if you imagine that as a profile or a

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1 prototypical type of hotel that we have in the City then we thought it would be an interesting
2 policy conversation to advance to this body and then on to Council. Is this something where if
3 it didn't have a significant impact to our TOT revenues and impact our that revenue stream is
4 there a good opportunity for here for us here to provide affordable housing, get credit for it in
5 the eyes of Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), and in doing so we
6 would just we would be yielding on a couple of zoning issues which wouldn't really change how
7 the building exists on the land today. They just don't provide additional parking and maybe
8 they have to do some egress or access to the building for stairways and things like that and we
9 would say ok if that's the case we would look favorably upon providing that access and so we
10 may have to make some deviations from the code. There's also open space and some other
11 things, but this is a new policy initiative. It's an interesting concept and we also recognize that
12 there may be some more work that we need to do on this before we move it forward, but we're
13 we welcome the Commission's comments.

14

15 Chair Alcheck: Do you have any more comments on that?

16

17 Commissioner Tanaka: Yeah I just... yeah, I think that so hotels tend to be in kind of busy
18 locations, right? And they definitely tend to be in different locations, in busy visible locations,
19 and I think what residential tends to be is not necessarily that. It tends to be in other areas. So
20 I think that I would definitely love to learn more about how this works, what projects are

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1 affected, [honeymoons] what the revenue impact is because I think that at this I think it's
2 definitely a noble goal, but I think we have to be careful as to when we lose revenue generating
3 properties.

4

5 Chair Alcheck: Ok, thank you. Commissioner Gardias, would you like to?

6

7 Commissioner Gardias: Yes, thank you very much. So I will add to the discussion, but I will
8 share some other items, right? So when I was looking and thinking about this chapter about
9 the hotel conversion I had similar feelings that my colleagues had and I pretty much would
10 require that would go forward some analysis that would prove truly that the objective or the
11 noble goal is truly supported with some fiscal analysis of the all the type overthrow of the other
12 on the other hand there is there is a question about what could be on the site. Also the other,
13 on the other hand there is a question about what could be on the site if that hotel investment is
14 replaced by something else. So I don't believe that we can just tweak it in a vacuum because if
15 there is always opportunity to build some more affordable housing on that site and then maybe
16 even have more appropriate units than the hotel ones that maybe not are appropriate for all
17 the types of populations that we would like to have in there. So that's about this point.

18

19 If I may just go to the other one I have a question about the housing related definition and the
20 change that was that it made for the Paragraph 135.5 and 138 before I proceed with my

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1 question. So there is a change that calls to remove that multiple family use in both cases and
2 replace it with the residential use of property. What's the intention of those changes?

3
4 Cara Silver, Senior Assistant City Attorney: Thank you, Commissioner Gardias; Cara Silver, Senior

5 Assistant City Attorney. So these changes are something that are required by state law. The
6 state law says that cities in their housing elements need to provide for supportive housing and

7 transitional housing along the same rules that apply to all residential neighborhoods. So our
8 current code permits supportive housing and transitional housing only in multifamily and

9 residential zones. And so we need to now just align our local law with the state law
10 requirement that requires that this housing also be permitted in single family neighborhoods.

11 So we agreed to implement this state law change in our Housing Element and the Council
12 adopted this Housing Element and directed us to do it. And this ordinance is just implementing

13 that prior directive.
14

15 Commissioner Gardias: So what I would like to understand if that change would have any
16 impact on the code compliance because California has some codes that are specific for the

17 multifamily housing. So if we adopt this change would this would the code would be
18 disregarded or they would that they still apply? Because those would be truly multifamily

19 housing, right? That's what we are going to have in those area regardless that they would be
20 called differently.

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2 Ms. Silver: Right. So if supportive housing and transitional housing is implemented in the single
3 family neighborhoods they need to occupy single family dwellings in a similar manner as other
4 single family dwellings are occupied. So if there are... you can't subdivide a house into separate
5 units because that would be converting a single family home to a multifamily home, but
6 provided that these types of housing are contained in a in a single family dwelling they really
7 are very similar uses to other comparable properties. So that's really the intent of the state
8 law.

9

10 Commissioner Gardias: Ok, very good. I just was looking for more understanding of this so
11 thank you very much Cara. So I'd like to move go move to the off street loading requirements
12 and a question I have is very simple. If we're going to change the bracket and then we going to
13 have we're going to insert that omitted 0 to 4,999 sf requirement will there be any properties
14 that would be relieved of this out of this requirement after this change?

15

16 Mr. Lait: So Jonathan Lait, the Assistant Director; so Commissioner Gardias when you say
17 relieved I'm trying to understand what you mean by relieved.

18

19 Commissioner Gardias: So the question I have, right, because right now in the code we have
20 that there is the one loading space required for up to 5,000 sf. If we're going to change the

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1 code to zero are there any properties that because of this historical [unintelligible] we're
2 burdened with this requirement now under the change would be relieved from the
3 requirement.

4
5 Mr. Lait: So thank you. I think I understand what you're saying. So in in the past if there were a
6 project the short answer is yes. If in the past there was a project that we required an offsite or
7 an onsite loading zone because it was between zero and 4,999 sf then yes by changing that
8 they're no longer required to have that loading zone. And our perspective on that is they
9 shouldn't have ever been required to have that loading zone because that's the way the code
10 was originally drafted. This is a formatting error and we believe that the loading zone for that
11 size building shouldn't be required, at least historically it has not been. The intent has been
12 that it has not been required.

13
14 Commissioner Gardias: Understood. But the question was pretty much are there any physical
15 properties that we can list today that are under this requirement, this erroneous requirement?

16
17 Mr. Lait: There may be. I don't know because this error occurred back in what was it 1992. So
18 it's (interrupted)

19

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1 Commissioner Gardias: My let me just get where I am getting to, right? If there are any if we
2 make this change probably it would be proper to also follow up and then identify if there are
3 any properties that are currently meeting this requirement and then follow up with the owner
4 and then allow them to remove this requirement or convert the space to something else.

5

6 Mr. Lait: So thank you. I have the comment written down.

7

8 Commissioner Gardias: Ok. So the next question that I have is about... if I may come back to
9 this? Let me just speak to the lift. So that's a third item that you're proposing to change. So in
10 terms of the lift in that preamble or in the paragraph following it's on Page Number 21. In the
11 requirement that the mechanical lift may be used to satisfy off street parking requirements
12 subject to approval by the Director or City Council. I'd like to propose that there is a change of
13 this language to some performance that would need to be attained by the property owner.
14 This way it would relieve the owner from the requirement to seek the Director or the City
15 Council approval or review and approval for this change. It would make it may be simpler and
16 easier for the owner to implement as opposed to just going through the process and be a
17 subject of the of maybe various factors, judgmental factors.

18

19 Chair Alcheck: Commissioner Gardias can you, would you mind actually repeating the specific
20 suggested language?

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Commissioner Gardias: Yeah, so what the proposal is like this to change the requirements of the approval by the Director or City Council to the performance base of the site that it would have to meet when it has mechanical lift.

Chair Alcheck: Which paragraph are you suggesting be changed?

Commissioner Gardias: So under it's on Page Number 21 under the title Number 4, mechanical stacker and lift. There is a paragraph that starts with mechanical lift may be used to satisfy and then it ends with the following provisions. So I would propose to change the part of this paragraph that talks about the approval of the Director or City Council to the performance metrics that this site would have to meet.

Mr. Lait: So I can speak to that. The reason we have that... so there are two entities that approve projects, discretionary projects, in Palo Alto it's the Director of Planning and Community Environment and the City Council for some applications or on appeal of certain applications. So it's pretty standard language that we say these lifts are approved subject to the review of the Director. We review every project that's submitted to the City and it's just pretty standard language that we include that.

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1 Commissioner Gardias: Ok, I totally understand this, right? But for the ease of the developer or
2 the owner of the property (interrupted)

3

4 Mr. Lait: Ok, so (interrupted)

5

6 Commissioner Gardias: I thought it would be may be easier for them if we just tell them that
7 pretty much that requirement is of this that we're not uploading or unloading the car or parking
8 or bringing up back to the street the cars, they pretty much they cannot [unintelligible] blow up
9 the street. They, this needs to be done in the in some indentation so pretty much it doesn't
10 stop the pedestrian or the vehicular traffic from continuing. So I think that this would be the
11 performance threshold.

12

13 Mr. Lait: So if I can I think Commissioner Gardias the interest that perhaps you were speaking to
14 a moment ago was that it's not an ask of the Director for an adjustment, but rather a right that
15 somebody can do this. And I think that's an important conversation that I think the Commission
16 should discuss. We would be interested in getting guidance from the Commission on that. It
17 does have implications on how an applicant would be designing their project at the conceptual
18 stages and could have some implications that might be better addressed early on. They would
19 be able to go forward with a certain amount of understanding if it were by right. Obviously
20 there's a little more uncertainty if there's a discretionary component.

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Chair Alcheck: Commissioner Gardias I think what we'll do is we'll give other individuals an opportunity if they wish to to sort of reiterate their support for that. So why don't we move on?

Commissioner Gardias: Ok.

Chair Alcheck: Do you have any other items that you'd like to touch upon?

Commissioner Gardias: Yes I do, but if you want to move on (interrupted)

Chair Alcheck: No, I mean I'd like you to move on to the next item.

Commissioner Gardias: Oh you want me to move on?

Chair Alcheck: Yeah, we've made a note of it and then we'll give others an opportunity to comment on your comment on your language recommendation.

Commissioner Gardias: Ok.

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1 Chair Alcheck: So I'd like you to move on to the next item on your list.

2

3 Commissioner Gardias: Just a moment I'm going through my notes.

4

5 Chair Alcheck: That's fine, take your time.

6

7 Commissioner Gardias: Also there is another comment that I had to the Section 18.52.080e, a
8 modification to off street loading requirement. It's on Page 20. So my proposal is that is to
9 notify PTC writing within the 30 days before granting such exceptions and this is to pretty much
10 to allow Commission if that is, if that review under this paragraph the Director may modify the
11 quantity or dimensions of off street loading requirement. It would allow the Commission to
12 pretty much keep track of any specific exceptions that were done for the off street loading.

13

14 Mr. Lait: So if I'm understanding it, it's related to the off street loading and wherever there is a
15 modification made or granted by the Director that the PTC be notified within a certain number
16 of days. Is that?

17

18 Chair Alcheck: Yeah, 30.

19

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1 Mr. Lait: Ok, 30. Ok. So yeah, I mean that can certainly be a thing that we discuss. I will tell
2 you that there's a lot of items that we report out on and we're not hitting that 100 percent. So
3 unless we're really critical to do that I would have some concerns.

4
5 Commissioner Gardias: Ok, thank you. And then just going back to the item about mechanical
6 lifts that we discussed I propose to add a paragraph about unloading the impact on the
7 adjacent streets. I don't have a precise language, but pretty much there would have to be a
8 requirement that unloading or loading the cars on the lift, right, should have very limited and
9 just it would need to be somehow quantified impact on the adjacent street. And that goes back
10 to the comment that I made before so the traffic is not blocked extensively.

11
12 The next question that I, now I have a question about Paragraph 5 under the same section of
13 the lifts, the mechanical stopper and lifts. It just talks about the Paragraph Number 5 it talks
14 about if the spaces are not independently accessible for individual user a parking management
15 plan should be prepared for review and approval and approval that details the operations,
16 emergency procedure, and appropriate contact. So I am not really sure if that need to be, if
17 there needs to be a plan that needs to be reviewed. I propose just to change it to reduce it to
18 the requirement that such plan needs to be prepared or need to be, needs to exist. I think that
19 this would be left between to resolve between the owner of the property and the users of the
20 parking.

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Chair Alcheck: Ok.

Commissioner Gardias: That's it. Thank you very much.

Chair Alcheck: Ok, before I call on Commissioner Tanaka I just I want to shed a little light about how I'd like this to work. Ideally in places where you haven't gotten a specific recommendation on language I'd like you to create a placeholder. I'll give you an example; Commissioner Rosenblum suggested exploring the idea of increasing the percentage for the density, right? What I would like you to do is if he didn't provide specific language, you provided sort of general guidance there. I'd like staff to explore that concept and if we, if staff can't get to a place where they can give sort of specific new idea or response to that what I'd like them to do is create a placeholder. Similarly for next meeting, for our next time we agendize this topic... similarly in the suggestion here where Commissioner Gardias specifically said he doesn't really have language the comment that he made just before this last comment about he doesn't really have specific language for how he would word this, what I'd ideally like to do is if staff doesn't sort of appreciate his goal and create an opportunity for a little sort of placeholder that we... of specific language they could create a placeholder about potentially achieving his goal. And what I would ideally like is that at the next time we review this packet if individual Commissioners have specific ideas of specific language that they spend the time and they come

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1 to that meeting with that language and ideally what we'll do is we will review these ideas with
2 that specific language and we can quickly up or down vote across the board how we feel about
3 it.

4
5 So I don't intend for tonight for example for us to all get on the same page about whether SUVs
6 have to be specifically lifted. I would like us to have sort of a discussion in general based on the
7 feedback you've got and then if somebody wants to make specific changes to language next
8 time we'll say hey, anybody in favor of this... That will actually give the opportunity for anybody
9 that's paying attention to this discussion to come back and opine on some of these changes and
10 provide any of their specific language edits. Ok, so let's keep going Commissioner Tanaka.

11
12 Commissioner Tanaka: Yeah actually I had another thought about hotels being converted into
13 affordable housing. So instead of taking a old rundown hotel and leaving it as an old run down
14 hotel that now has residential units maybe what a better idea or something that staff could
15 consider and maybe flush out this idea fully is maybe some sort of density bonus where if
16 because there's actually a lot of hotels now that actually have a mix of hotel plus residential.
17 And then I think but the nice thing about hotels is the rooms are actually kind of small. They
18 are by nature generally small compared to a housing unit. And so I think Commissioner Fine
19 and myself talked a lot about micro units. So maybe this is an area to actually explore where
20 you can get a density bonus if you actually have kind of a mix of hotel units where we're not

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1 going to lose the hotel revenue, but we get more affordable units. And it's more affordable
2 because units are smaller and inherently they will be more affordable and they're going to be in
3 kind of a busy transit areas because that's where most hotels are. And so I'm just trying to
4 think about kind of a more of a win-win solution where instead of just keeping a old rundown
5 hotel an old rundown hotel that's now housing units it's at least still a revenue generator and
6 yet it's also providing affordable housing. So I'd like to throw this idea out there and maybe it's
7 something that could be developed further as we get to our next meeting.

8

9 Chair Alcheck: Commissioner Waldfogel [note-Vice-Chair].

10

11 Vice-Chair Waldfogel: Thank you. Let's see, I have a couple questions for staff. One is in
12 districts with that where we might exempt loading areas would those properties be entitled to
13 a street loading area? Maybe time of day street loading area or is that something we'd have to
14 think about relative to this?

15

16 Mr. Lait: So thank you, Commissioner or Vice-Chair. We are not proposing to exempt loading
17 zones from geographic areas in the City. And that it is not our interest that we understand the
18 public speakers (interrupted)

19

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1 Vice-Chair Waldfogel: Yeah well if we were to contemplate that, would that be a feasible
2 tradeoff if we were to allow street loading areas say 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. or something like that?
3 I just wonder if that's a possible tradeoff we could make?

4
5 Mr. Lait: It is. I think it would require more study and exploration than we were contemplating
6 for this particular ordinance, but it doesn't mean we need to abandon the thought. I mean we
7 could (interrupted)

8
9 Vice-Chair Waldfogel: Yeah, no I don't want to push you into more work, but I would hate to
10 just see loading turn into something that just blocks the street. So.

11
12 Mr. Lait: Again our, I kind of feel like our recommendation addresses the issue of graphic areas.
13 We have projects that have been reviewed in the Downtown area for instance where we've
14 made the determination that on site loading was not practical due to urban design
15 considerations or the availability of on street loading or an alley. And so we are already doing
16 this and what we're trying to do is memorialize our practice.

17
18 Vice-Chair Waldfogel: Ok. That's great. On the demo permit question on the staff report talks
19 about avoiding vacant lots or preventing vacant lots as an objective of this change and I support
20 that objective although I'm not quite sure that this is the perfect tool to get there. I mean in old

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1 Palo Alto I can think of three demos that have resulted in multi-year vacant lots. I can just think
2 of one 5 plus year stalled project on Mariposa Street. And so we're trying to reduce vacant lots
3 I would just encourage you to bring something forward that actually goes after vacancy because
4 I'm not sure this is either necessary or sufficient, but just a thought on that.

5
6 On the Housing Element small lot consolidation I think that any feedback on just what will
7 happen if we make these changes. Do we, have we talk, have we reached out to any of the
8 property owners? Do we think that these incentives will cause anything to happen? I mean I
9 would just hate to go down this track if nothing will happen. So it'd be great to get some
10 positive reinforcement just to know that whatever we do will matter.

11
12 I agree with several of my colleague's suggestion on hotels that we need a economic impact
13 study on the TOT. Ironically I can think of two cases where low income housing has been
14 converted to hotels, but now we're thinking about the reverse case. So that's a I'm not sure
15 how many more of those we'll see.

16
17 Then on everybody's favorite topic mechanical lifts, seems to have been a popular one. My
18 view on this is that it feels a little bit like it's still early days with this technology. We're tying
19 this to buildings have 60 to 100 year life spans. We don't really know about the life spans of the
20 technology. So I would strongly encourage you to what you might want to do is have less

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1 prescriptive or proscriptive language here, but be thinking about how do we learn more about
2 this? How do we try this? How do we set up performance requirements that ensure that these
3 will function for the life of the project? They that they'll do the things that we are saying here?
4 The other comment I have is I am uncomfortable with authorizing these for outdoor use. I
5 think indoor use only may be a reasonable first step to take with mechanical lifts so that would
6 be the other thing that I would explore. And it doesn't sound like there have been any cases
7 where applicants have requested an outdoor lift to date. Is that true?

8
9 Ms. Campbell: I don't know if anything has been requested, but I don't think anything's been
10 approved.

11
12 Vice-Chair Waldfogel: Yeah.

13
14 Ms. Campbell: I can say that.

15
16 Vice-Chair Waldfogel: Yeah, so I mean I think until we know more until we sort of know more
17 about how this ties into architectural review it's really hard to say if this is something that that
18 we want to do at this point. I mean just again I just want emphasize it feels like early days with
19 this technology and I would love to learn more.

20

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1 Chair Alcheck: Ok. So I want to be really clear the goal is not to sort of cut anybody off or not
2 give anybody an opportunity to speak. I do want to sort of highlight something that Assistant
3 Director commented on which is that some of these topics may have large policy implications.
4 And to the extent that when we meet next we feel like some of them really need a little bit
5 more extensive study I hope that we will feel comfortable tabling those and moving forward
6 the suggestions that we are comfortable moving forward and that's really the goal. I would like
7 us sort of perfect is the enemy of good here. So I would like us to accomplish as much as we
8 can and if there are items that we feel like we need to spend more time on we will identify
9 those in our next meeting as items that we just don't feel comfortable moving forward and
10 we'll set those aside.

11

12 I also just want to acknowledge that Commissioner Waldfogel [note-Vice-Chair] made a really
13 great point here which is that the concept of using prescriptive language on items that are so
14 new to this to the area is I think something that I personally would love to see less of. It's an
15 opportunity for us to create. I know we always want to sort of protect ourselves from some
16 result we can't imagine, but yeah, this technology is new and particularly with parking I feel like
17 what we're going to see in the next 10 to 15 years is such a dramatic change in our relationship
18 with cars that it's this is and car ownership and car sharing that I almost it's hard to imagine
19 that anything that we do today or even next year could literally be relevant in 15 years.

20

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1 Ok. I want to give anybody else an opportunity to make a comment about specific language.

2 Commissioner Gardias, do you have something you'd like to say?

3

4 Commissioner Gardias: Yes I'd like to talk to a different paragraph.

5

6 Chair Alcheck: Please do.

7

8 Commissioner Gardias: But also for the record, right, I mean I just I think that the technology on
9 the [auto league] has been for the last 60 years and I think that in terms of the maturity it being
10 popular at many places around the world I think that maybe we should be open to move
11 forward in some areas of Palo Alto it may serve us better. But the comment that I want to
12 make is about the combination of the lots. And this is the, this is Housing Element the small lot
13 consolidation 23. I remember when we talked about the Housing Element in 2014. We
14 [unintelligible] policy requirement and I'm totally conscious that we need to pretty much meet
15 our own obligations and do something with this because that's the goal that we our goal that
16 we want to obtain. But what is amazing here is pretty much some nods of approval for the
17 small property owner that we, that would be a subject of this consolidation. We are, we have
18 this policy that would make it easier to consolidate the lots, but we have still number of the
19 small property owners that I think that it would be proper to retain and that may be at risk, we

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1 may be at risk of losing them with this small consolidation for of course the noble objective that
2 we have.

3

4 But I would like to propose I would like to in addition to this I would like to propose that we
5 remove the parking requirements for [RT635] for those small property owners to allow them
6 [spur] investment on their own. And then I think that in addition when we going to come back
7 next time it would be also valuable I know that we have around 30 properties or so. We talk
8 with Jonathan Lait about this at the pre-Commission meeting and I thought that it would be
9 good to understand those small properties that are on the map at the back of the of today's
10 handout. That's the comment I wanted to make. Thank you.

11

12 Chair Alcheck: Ok. Commissioner Rosenblum did you have a final comment?

13

14 Commissioner Rosenblum: [Unintelligible] comments I had given kind of an overview of the
15 things I think are big versus small and so the two housing related issues and TDM. I want to just
16 add a couple of specific items to the TDM thing. What you've done here is suggest a trigger
17 point. So 100 net new trips generated will trigger TDM requirement for the building and I think
18 Commissioner Fine had a great idea which is around adding language that has the option of
19 them joining an existing TMA versus being their own TDM program. I think it's also an
20 opportunity to add the some definitions around TDM components. I know this is something

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1 that based on the paragraph description in this package has already requested, but around
2 specific guidelines for parking reductions, unbundling parking, etcetera. So ultimately it's really
3 about what kinds of transit benefits you're giving in exchange for some sort of parking
4 alleviation. And so this is a good chance to cross-reference. Because just having the trigger
5 won't really mean much if you don't define what happens when you cross that threshold. So I
6 guess the language request is that Council consider the two things together. Consider the
7 implications on parking along with the threshold. That's it, thank you.

8

9 Chair Alcheck: Ok, so when we come back together on this topic my hope is that we will have
10 we'll be very familiar with it. We can look at the items that have been changed and then we
11 can begin as we do our round to sort of up and down indicate where we stand on any changes
12 and any particular terms. And finally I just want to say I want to suggest that if anybody on the
13 Commission comes has a comment that they'd like to make that they didn't make tonight and
14 they come up with it next week or tomorrow or whenever just send it. Forward it to Planning
15 so that they can incorporate it and we'll treat those as sort of comments made in anticipation
16 of the next meeting. Ok, with that I'd like to close this particular item on the agenda and unless
17 staff has any other comments they'd like to make?

18

19 Mr. Lait: Is it fair to us, is it fair to conclude that the items that were not discussed are good as
20 presented?

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2 Chair Alcheck: Yeah. I think what I do think that what will happen is that we'll probably have a
3 moment where we'll ask, I'll ask individual Commissioners to sort of suggest are they
4 uncomfortable moving forward some of these topics without a greater discussion and when we
5 start next meeting. And if that's the case will probably set those aside and deal with the items
6 that we're comfortable moving forward. And then we'll probably have to figure out how we
7 want to deal with the items that require greater debate whether we want to create a study
8 session for those or simply I'll ask staff what they would like to do also.

9

10 Mr. Lait: Great, just one last question. To advance that effort do you want to see an ordinance
11 that reflects our interpretation or no ordinance at the next meeting just a staff report?

12

13 Chair Alcheck: No I'd love to see an ordinance that reflects your interpretation of the
14 discussion. I think you may have received some (interrupted)

15

16 Mr. Lait: Language.

17

18 Chair Alcheck: Competing ideas here.

19

20 Mr. Lait: Right.

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Chair Alcheck: And I think I wouldn't want you to spin your wheels too long on whether or not lifts should handle sport utilities or micro compacts.

Mr. Lait: Ok.

Chair Alcheck: I would just suggest that you write the language sort of with your interpretation of what's the best way forward based on the discussion and then if we want to make changes we will get really specific. I said I suspect we won't have tremendous disagreement here on some of the specific language items.

Mr. Lait: Ok. And then we can simply just strike the ones that don't get advanced.

Chair Alcheck: Exactly.

Mr. Lait: Perfect. And so we'll agendize that as a public hearing excuse me, because ordinances are public hearings.

Chair Alcheck: Yeah and I think would be fantastic if that language was specific so people could respond to it.

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2 Mr. Lait: Fantastic. Thank you.

3

4 **Commission Action**: None

5 **Committee Items**

6

7 Chair Alcheck: Ok. So moving on. We don't have any community items.

8

9 **Commissioner Questions, Comments or Announcements**

10

11 Chair Alcheck: We have no... anybody have any questions, comments, moments of silence? No,
12 just kidding. Ok, with that we're going to adjourn tonight's meeting. It's 9:07. Thank you.

13

14 **Adjournment**

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1. Spokespersons that are representing a group of five or more people who are identified as present at the meeting at the time of the spokesperson's presentation will be allowed up to fifteen (15) minutes at the discretion of the Chair, provided that the non-speaking members agree not to speak individually.
 2. The Chair may limit Oral Communications to 30 minutes for all combined speakers.
 3. The Chair may reduce the allowed time to speak to three minutes to accommodate a larger number of speakers.