



# Planning & Transportation Commission

## Draft Action Agenda: March 31, 2021

Virtual Meeting  
6:00 PM

### Call to Order / Roll Call

Approximately 6:02 pm

Chair Hechtman: Thank you, Mr. Nguyen, and welcome to the public, to Staff and to my fellow Commissioners to this March 31<sup>st</sup> edition of the Planning and Transportation Commission regular meeting. Mr. Nguyen, will you roll the tape?

[An automated voice recording begins to play disclosing Zoom procedures.]

Chair Hechtman: Mr. Nguyen, please conduct the roll call.

Mr. Vinh Nguyen, Admin Associate III: Chair Hechtman?

Chair Hechtman: Present.

Mr. Nguyen: Vice-Chair Roohparvar?

Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Present.

Mr. Nguyen: Commissioner Alcheck?

Commissioner Alcheck: Present.

Mr. Nguyen: Commissioner Chang?

Commissioner Chang: Present.

Mr. Nguyen: Commissioner Lauing?

Commissioner Lauing: Present.

Mr. Nguyen: Commissioner Summa?

Commissioner Summa: Present.

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Mr. Nguyen: Commissioner Templeton?

Commissioner Templeton: Present.

Mr. Nguyen: Ok we have a quorum. Thank you.

Chair Hechtman: Thank you. Before we move to oral communications I actually want to start tonight by welcoming Bryna Chang. Our newly appointed seventh Planning and Transportation Commissioner. Bryna, we all look forward to working with you and to your contributions to the Commission so welcome.

Commissioner Chang: Thank you. I look forward to working with all of you.

Chair Hechtman: The other piece of business I'd like to take care of before oral communications is to let the public know and I see that there are only maybe four attendees right now so you get the inside scoop. We have a new feature as part of our PTC Zoom meeting and that is a live transcript which is appearing on my screen at the bottom of the screen. If it's not appearing on your screen in the same... in some location then if you look at the bottom of your screen next to the raise hand button. There should be a live transcript CC, Close Caption, button. I think if you click on that you can turn the feature on and ready along which may be helpful or may be distracting. Depending upon what you feel about Close Caption meetings or movies so but we're happy to have it as an additional accessibility feature and I want to thank Staff for making that happen. So, with that, I will move to oral communications.

### **Oral Communications**

The public may speak to any item not on the agenda. Three (3) minutes per speaker.<sup>1,2</sup>

Chair Hechtman: This section is for the public to speak on items that are not on tonight's agenda. Please raise your hand if you wish to speak. On the Zoom App, there's the raise hand button on the bottom of your screen. Not far from the live transcript button and if you're dialing in from a phone, please press \*9 for the same effect. Mr. Nguyen, are there any public speakers for oral communication tonight?

Mr. Vinh Nguyen, Admin Associate III: Yes, we currently only... we currently have two raised hands. First will be Neilson followed by Carol. Our first speaker is Neilson.

Mr. Neilson Buchanan: Thank you. My name is Neilson Buchanan, I live in Downtown North, not far from the real City Hall. I would like to make some comments about past history and talk about one I can see in the preferred future. I've been involved with Downtown North and neighborhood parking and parking for the commercial corridor on University Avenue for over

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1 11-years. This is not the night to site all the past history but I would like to say after 11-years  
2 I've got a fair amount of knowledge about some of the objectives we could be talking about.

3  
4 Of those 11-years, over... almost 2/3's were spent just trying to get started. I developed a  
5 reputation for helping get started the RPP for Downtown but that was never my goal. My goal  
6 was to find a dialog for the balance of commercial parking versus the residential parking in the  
7 neighborhoods and the balance within the commercial cores. So, now's the time to really look  
8 forward because I think we've got three big opportunities that I hope the Planning Commission  
9 will embrace in a future meeting.

10  
11 Here are the assets we have as we come out of the COVID situation. First, we have a legitimate  
12 Office of Transportation and that's about 3-years old depending on how you measure. The  
13 other is a framework for parking activities and that's Attachment A later in the agenda. Some  
14 35 items that a consultant came in at behest of Ed Shikada to pick up all the loose ends. Those  
15 35 items are not the complete constellation. They're missing three or four but that doesn't  
16 really matter at this point. The third advantage we have is the fact that we've got a COVID  
17 pause time. We have probably 12-months to really catch our breath and get organized better  
18 for the future and particularly for the 35 to 40 items that are not well put together. They're not  
19 into any kind of budgetary array and they're not in any kind of a timeline or a pert chart to my  
20 satisfaction.

21  
22 So, to move to the future, here's what I propose. I ask the Planning Commission and Staff to  
23 schedule a 2-hour study session to take a look at that past and where we are. Tonight, you'll be  
24 discussing one of the components of the constellation of things to do. That's the pricing  
25 program which I enthusiastically support but what I don't know is what is the sequencing or  
26 staging of all the efforts that are details in the 40... 35-point plan. So, in summary, it would be  
27 great to catch our breath, let's really get organized with the Planning Commission and the  
28 Council and the Finance Committee. So, we have a logical flow of the reforms we want in  
29 neighborhood parking and most importantly, the commercial core parking. Thank you very  
30 much.

31  
32 Mr. Nguyen: Thank you for your comments. Our next speaker is Carol and the followed by  
33 Rebecca.

34  
35 Ms. Carol Scott: Good evening, I would like to... if you can Mr. Nguyen, to put my slides up for  
36 this for the oral communication?

37  
38 Mr. Nguyen: Carol, I believe you only sent me slides for the parking study session.  
39

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1 Ms. Scott: I also sent you one for traffic calming. If you find it, that would be great. I can speak  
2 to it but it's better if they see the photos. What I'd like to speak tonight is a request... there we  
3 are. That's not the right one though. That's going to be for the later one. That's for later.  
4 There's another presentation I sent you for oral communication. We'll just go ahead. It's ok, I  
5 don't want to waste everyone's time and I can send it to the PTC later so they can see the  
6 visual.

7  
8 What I'd like to ask for at this time is that the PTC consider instituting traffic calming devices for  
9 all parks in Palo Alto and tonight I'd especially like to talk about Peer's Park and Evergreen Park.

10  
11 If you could see the slides you would see that coming down Park Boulevard from El Camino Real  
12 towards the park. It is completely invisible until you are almost on the park itself. And for a  
13 variety of reasons, Park Boulevard has become a speed way for cars and of course, it's a major  
14 bicycle transportation route as well. When you get to the park, you will see that it is a very busy  
15 one. There's a lot of people that go there, both neighbors as well as others from outside the  
16 area. So, there's often a lot of traffic and a large number of children that play there. But  
17 because of the speeding cars, I often see people going traveling 35-40 miles an hour around this  
18 curve. Only to hit the park totally aware that there could be a child crossing the street, a bicycle  
19 in the roadway, which they're allowed to use along with cars, and so on.

20  
21 The only traffic quote calming device that's on Park Boulevard at the movement is a ridiculously  
22 small round about at Stanford Avenue. There used to be a three-way stop there as Stanford  
23 dead ends into the park but the City took that out. I guess because they wanted to make the  
24 ride smoother for bicycles and they put in a roundabout. But unfortunately, the largest one that  
25 they could use there is ridiculously small so that cars don't even need to slow down to go  
26 through it. So, in other words, once you past Birch Avenue on Park, go down Park from El  
27 Camino, past Birch and then you have no need to stop until you get to California Avenue; which  
28 of course encourages bad behavior of people using Park as a shortcut down to get to Page Mill.

29  
30 So, what I would like to suggest to you, if that we need, disparately need, at least two-speed  
31 bumps leading to the park and in front of the park to cause cars to slow down. This is  
32 something that if you were in Hoover Park, you would be able to see. Hoover Park has two and  
33 it's a similar size park, maybe Hoover is a little bigger, but it's also on Cowper which carries a far  
34 amount of traffic. All the kids in Palo Alto need to be safe and this is a particular safety issue.

35  
36 I have requested that the Public Works Department take a look at this some time back. I know  
37 that they received my request but I heard nothing further back from them. And I understand  
38 that this will cost money but a lawsuit for a child that is injured or killed there will be vastly  
39 worse. And if there is such a lawsuit, I can guarantee that I will be standing right with the

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1 grieving family talking about why the City did not put a speed bump or traffic calming device at  
2 this park. Thank you.

3

4 Mr. Nguyen: Thank you Carol for your comments and I apologize for not having your  
5 presentation. If you can email that back over to me, I'll make sure to forward that to the  
6 Commission and also post it online. Our next speaker is Rebecca.

7

8 Ms. Rebecca Eisenberg: Thank you so much. This is Rebecca Eisenberg. Thanks for letting me  
9 speak. I wanted to talk about Castilleja. I really... as... I usually talk about. I really hope that all of  
10 you all got to listen to the very lengthy conversation, discussion, by the City Council on Monday  
11 night. If you missed it, I think... I really urge you to watch and listen. The City Council said over  
12 the course of many hours, pretty much all of the arguments that I and the others who have  
13 been urging you to take a more holistic equitable approach towards Castilleja have been saying  
14 all along.

15

16 And it's going to come back to you and so I got to say, this whole discussion and consideration  
17 of Castilleja's drive to put a much larger school in... on 55 residential lots, a plot of land that it  
18 outgrew already many years ago, to operate a commercial venture that it is not zoned to  
19 operate in the heart of the residential neighborhood where I live.

20

21 It's been a non-starter from the start and it's going to keep going to City Council and come back  
22 to you and waste so much time and money and energy when we're dealing with so many huge  
23 crises. Like the crisis of homelessness and the crisis... the ever-growing crisis of homelessness  
24 and the ever-growing need for affordable housing. You all have been spending way too much  
25 time and spinning way too much too many wheels on trying to accommodate the needs to a  
26 private organization that offers no public benefit.

27

28 So, with that said, when it comes back to you, I really hope that you will take a much stronger  
29 look at what they're asking and look at it from the point of view of the community benefit. And  
30 if you see what all of us have seen who've been opposed to this and what it appears that many  
31 on the City Council see too is that if a private party seeks to do an unzoned activity. In this case  
32 commercial activity on a residential plot, they just can't do it if it doesn't have a public benefit.  
33 Public benefit and you know so when you take a look at Castilleja again, ask questions about  
34 safety to children riding bikes on Bryant. Ask questions about should the City continue to  
35 subsidize such a wealthy, profitable organization during such an extortionary difficult time.

36

37 You know, Castilleja has no right to run a commercial operation at that site. I hope you'll keep  
38 that in mind when it comes back so we can end this. Thank you.

39

40 Mr. Nguyen: Thank you Rebecca for your comments. Chair, that concludes oral communication.

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2 Chair Hechtman: Thank you, Mr. Nguyen.

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4 [The Commission moved to City Official Reports]

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6 **Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions**

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

8 Chair Hechtman: Agenda changes, additions and deletions. Any Commissioners have any  
9 agenda changes, additions or deletions? Commissioner Templeton.

10  
11 Commissioner Templeton: Yes, thank you for catching that. I was just wondering if we're  
12 comfortable with the order of our agenda this evening? I noticed it goes past 11 o'clock and  
13 that's if everything goes to schedule. Sometimes we don't and the last item looks like  
14 something that might be kind of timely and quick. Is that something that we should think about  
15 moving earlier so we can make sure we don't let it fall off the radar or how do other  
16 Commissioners feel about that?

17  
18 Chair Hechtman: Any other Commissioners want to comment? Commissioner Alcheck.

19  
20 Commissioner Alcheck: Yeah, my preference would be that for the... I typically am hesitant to  
21 change the order when we have applicants who are scheduled attendance. So, but I would be  
22 fine if you wanted to move... I would support the idea of switching around the items that don't  
23 have community member applicants. So, if we kept Number Two where it's at and then if we  
24 wanted to juggle Five to Three, I don't... I would support that because at least the people who  
25 are not members of the Staff and Commission are [unintelligible] the whole time don't have to  
26 wait later in the evening than they originally thought.

27  
28 Commissioner Templeton: That makes sense to me if other Commissioners are cool with that or  
29 Staff, if you could tell us whether that would be problematic? If they're waiting to log on until  
30 later or something like that.

31  
32 Ms. Rachael Tanner, Assistant Director: I believe that Director of Transportation has a comment  
33 on this item. Philip?

34  
35 Mr. Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official: Assuming I can unmute myself, apologies. I was  
36 just going to say I think the study session item that we had anticipated that we would have  
37 fairly... it's one of those ones where it's hard to judge but we anticipated a large chunk of time  
38 due to the expectation that we might have a lot of people here to public comment. Noting that  
39 right now we have 10 attendees, I don't necessarily think we would need as much time on the  
40 study session as we had allotted.

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Chair Hechtman: Thank you. Commissioner Chang. You're muted.

Ms. Tanner: You're muted.

Commissioner Chang: I think it's better to do things that require a lot of thinking earlier and so and also, I'm concerned about keeping people waiting around when we don't have to. And I don't know where we would move Item Five earlier that would allow people to leave earlier because I see that we have a bunch of City Staff here and I think there's also going to be a lot of people commenting on parking. And so, I think normally I would agree but today perhaps not given where I think the comments are going to come in.

Commissioner Templeton: Alright, well I'm glad we have had a chance to talk about it. It sounds like there's not a huge appetite for it and we maybe should just save the minutes of discussing it and move on. I don't know but I just wanted to bring that up so thank you, Chair.

Chair Hechtman: Alright, well then, we will keep our agenda as set but it as Commissioner Templeton mentioned. It's a packed agenda and so because that's so and because if things take as long as we're anticipating they're going to take. We are going to go past 11:00 and that includes members of the public who want to observe and participate in the last item. I'm going to encourage my fellow Commissioners to be synced in your comments and I'm also going to limit speaker time during public comment on all items tonight to 3-minutes. And that of course would not include the applicant's time on upcoming Item Number Two. So, just to give everyone a heads up, expect 3-minutes if you want to speak on any item on our agenda tonight. So, with that, I do want to move us into our first action item.

[The Commission moved to Agenda Item Number Two]

## **City Official Reports**

### 1. Directors Report, Meeting Schedule and Assignments

Chair Hechtman: We will move then to City Official Reports. Ms. Tanner?

Ms. Rachael Tanner, Assistant Director: Thank you, Commissioners. Good to be with you this evening. Rachael Tanner, Assistant Director of Planning Development Services for the City of Palo Alto. I just want to give a few updates to you concerning kind of upcoming items. I will be brief.

I wanted to note in the Packet that you have, you don't have the upcoming months. We have developed a schedule for the Council Liaison Schedule. That does include our new

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1 Commissioner, Commissioner Chang. That gives her a few months to get her kind of planning  
2 legs I guess underneath here before she's on the docket for Council Liaison.

3  
4 The next item that we have coming up that did come to the PTC is on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April where  
5 we'll be looking at 640 Fairemède which will be an action item before the Council. That was one  
6 of the lot splits that we have had in the past few I guess really few weeks because it's only the  
7 4<sup>th</sup> month of the year.

8  
9 Commissioner Lauing, you are on stack for April, if that's ok and Vice-Chair Roohparvar, you're  
10 the backup? But as according to the Council schedule, that's the only item we have that has  
11 come to the PTC and then going onto Council but I will update you if that changes or items are  
12 added.

13  
14 Chair Hechtman: That's the 14<sup>th</sup>. 14<sup>th</sup>, not the 19<sup>th</sup>?

15  
16 Ms. Tanner: Let me just double-check. This is an item going to the Council meeting which the  
17 14<sup>th</sup> (interrupted)

18  
19 Chair Hechtman: Oh, I'm sorry.

20  
21 Ms. Tanner: I think is our meeting.

22  
23 Chair Hechtman: No, you're right.

24  
25 Ms. Tanner: It's ok. I'm like wait, have my... let me just check. And then a couple items that are  
26 going to Council that you may be interested to either watch or to kind of see the outcomes are.  
27 We have on Monday we'll be talking about our Housing Element Update with the City Council  
28 and as I mentioned in an email to you all earlier. One item before them will be whether or not  
29 they would like to form a joint subcommittee with the PTC and the Council. And that could be  
30 something that's discussed and then also whether or not they want to have a joint kick-off  
31 meeting with Council and PTC both on perhaps May 10<sup>th</sup> to kind of kick off the Housing  
32 Element. So, on Monday they'll be also selecting the Members of the Housing Element Working  
33 Group and kind of really getting us together to begin this large endeavor. And just preview for  
34 you all, the PTC, what will happen is again, unless a significant changes are made, there will be a  
35 working group that will be working, there will be a Council subcommittee of Council Members  
36 and ultimately what those groups will be doing is bringing forward a recommendation of both  
37 housing opportunity sites and housing programs which are essential components of the  
38 Housing Element. And then the PTC will be making recommendations to Council on those  
39 matters so that's kind of the... you have a big role there. A lot of work happening at... from the  
40 working group as is in their name but ultimately coming to you all. So, we want to make sure

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1 that throughout the process the PTC and the Council stay really update with the work of the  
2 working group so that we can make sure that we are submitting our finalized Housing Element  
3 at the end of next year to be certified.

4  
5 We also have on April 12<sup>th</sup>, the Council will be taking a look at Planned Home Zoning. You may  
6 recall this is kind of a revival of the PC Zoning and we had so far three pre-screenings for  
7 housing proposals. One of which may go forward, one which may come back, and then one that  
8 has declined to go into becoming housing and we have a couple others waiting in the wings. So,  
9 Council wanted to take a look at this program and provide some more direction on its use.

10  
11 And then lastly, on April 19<sup>th</sup> as well, we'll be having a discussion about the street closures and  
12 parklets that are part of our uplift local programs in response to the pandemic and the future of  
13 those. So, definitely a busy a month in April and lots of land use items that will be coming. Am I  
14 frozen?

15  
16 Chair Hechtman: You were momentarily.

17  
18 Ms. Tanner: Ok, I'm going to just... if I can... if I freeze again I guess... I don't know, I won't be  
19 able to see you all because you'll be frozen for me. Those are the main items that I had and in  
20 addition, just to mark your calendars for May 10<sup>th</sup> as a possible date for a joint meeting with the  
21 PTC and the Planning Commission or and the City Council.

22  
23 Philip, did you have any updates from transportation that you wanted to offer at this time or  
24 should we go to the next item?

25  
26 Mr. Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official: Yeah, thank you. Just a really brief one. I just  
27 wanted to mention that the City Council meeting this past Monday. Was it this Monday or a  
28 week ago Monday? I'm losing track of time. We had a study session on the XCAP's final report.  
29 That's the Expanded Community Advisory Panel, of which one of your Commissioners is a  
30 member of, which was providing advice on the grade separation project. So, we had our initial  
31 study session and we have a follow-up session that's planned for the 26<sup>th</sup> of April. So, just want  
32 to give a heads up that that's coming and will not be the last discussion that we have on that  
33 item. So, we anticipate that there will be multiple meetings to follow that meeting.

34  
35 I wanted to just provide an announcement about that because that's a big one and just wanted  
36 to mention that one of our public commenters in the open comment period, I believe it was  
37 Carol Scott. I'll be getting ahold of you or I'll actually have my Staff get ahold of you to talk  
38 about the traffic calming program and to help you navigate that process. Thank you.

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1 Ms. Tanner: If I can add two more things I forgot which is just the outcome of some items that  
2 were at PTC that did go to Council. So, Castilleja was there on this past Monday and some items  
3 were remanded back both to the ARB as well as the PTC. So, Ms. French will be working with  
4 the applicant to figure out when they'll be prepared to come back to the PTC and that will  
5 probably be sometime in the summer is what we're imagining. But we will let you know as soon  
6 as that is scheduled and then we also had 855 El Camino Real go to Council which was about  
7 the Town and Country retail kind of healthy additions to that shopping center. And so that was  
8 also sent back to PTC to come up with a definition for that type of retail. We expect that will  
9 come back on our April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting is our goal to bring that to you. So, that's my report and  
10 I'm available for any questions if there are any.

11  
12 Chair Hechtman: Any questions of the Commission by the Commissioners? Commissioner  
13 Templeton.

14  
15 Commissioner Templeton: Yes, for the joint meeting, will that be a 5:00 p.m. meeting or an all-  
16 day meeting? What kind of placeholder shall I put on my calendar?

17  
18 Ms. Tanner: I don't think it will be all day. The Council has been taking up the practice of  
19 starting their meetings at 5 o'clock pretty consistently this year and study sessions are  
20 supposed to be the first item. So, if those two things hold, I would hold around 5 o'clock if  
21 you're able to.

22  
23 Commissioner Templeton: Great, thank you so much.

24  
25 Chair Hechtman: Commission questions of Staff? Alright, then I want to actually move back to a  
26 step I missed.

27  
28 [The Commission moved back up to agenda changes, additions and deletions]

29  
30 **Action Items**

31 Public Comment is Permitted. Applicants/Appellant Teams: Fifteen (15) minutes, plus three (3) minutes rebuttal.  
32 All others: Five (5) minutes per speaker.<sup>1,3</sup>

33  
34 2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 181 Addison Avenue [20PLN-00300]: Request for  
35 Review of a Preliminary Parcel Map with Exception and Variance to Subdivide One  
36 Existing Lot into Two Parcels with Less Than the Minimum 60 Foot Frontage.  
37 Environmental Assessment: Use of a Previously Adopted EIR for the City's  
38 Comprehensive Plan. Zoning District: R-2 (Two Family Residential) within the SOFA 2  
39 CAP. For More Information, Contact Danielle Condit at:  
40 [danielle.condit@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:danielle.condit@cityofpaloalto.org).

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Chair Hechtman: It's a public hearing, quasi-judicial, 181 Addison Avenue. It's Planning file 20PLN-00300. Request for a review of a Preliminary Parcel Map with Exception and Variance to subdivide one existing lot into two parcels with less than the minimum 60-foot frontage. Staff report, please.

Ms. Rachael Tanner, Assistant Director: Thank you, Chair Hechtman. We have Danielle Condit who is one of our planners here in the department who will be doing a presentation. We also do have an applicant who is here and present and they will also speak after Danielle has finished her presentation. So, Ms. Condit, if you will share your screen and take it away.

Ms. Danielle Condit, Planner: Hello, good evening everyone. Let me just go ahead and get the presentation shared. So, today Staff has brought before the PTC an application for consideration of a Preliminary Parcel Map with Exception and Variance.

The subject site is located at 181 Addison Avenue and is located within the R-2 Zoning District. The R-2 Zone regulations permit one to two dwelling units under the same ownership on a site under regulations that preserve the essential character of single-family use. The property is also located within the SOFA... well, South of Forest Area Two Coordinated Area Plan but I will refer to that as SOFA 2 from here on out.

The existing conditions of the site is an oversized lot that contains an existing single-family home that was constructed as a detached garage. That was constructed in 1914 and as a detached garage and carport. The... in the 2001 Dames and Moore Study, the site was considered potentially eligible for California Register of Historic Resources and was recorded in the SOFA 2 guidelines as a potential historic resource. In 2019, the property underwent a historic evaluation performed by the City's historic consultant and the site was determined not individually eligible for listing on the CRHR.

The applicant wished to demolish the existing structures on the site and subdivide the oversize lot into two standard lots. The lots would comply with the Development Standards for Lot Area and Depth but would require an Exception from the Minimum Lot Width. Per the SOFA 2 guidelines, any deviation from the Development Standards may only be granted through a Variance or a Home Improvement Exception. In this case, an HIE application is not applicable to the application type which is why the Variance is the appropriate request to process an application that requests an Exception from the Development Standard. For context, these photos are... these are photos of the existing site conditions. The main residence is pictured top and center with the detached garage in Figure 9 on the bottom left and the carport in Figure 10 on the bottom right.

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1 This is a photo of the proposed Preliminary Parcel Map. The new subdivision will create two lots  
2 that front the Emerson Street. Parcel A, the corner lot, has a proposed lot width of 56-feet and  
3 Parcel B, the interior lot, has a proposed lot width of approximately 56 ½-feet. Although the  
4 Preliminary Parcel Map will require an Exception and a Variance from the Minimum Lot Width,  
5 the new lots created would still be considered standard lots, and meet the Development  
6 Standards for Lot Area and Depth. Excuse me. The subdivision would also dissolve an oversite  
7 lot that exceeds the maximum lot size for the R-2 Development Standards. To be considered a  
8 substandard lot, the width would need to be less than 50-feet wide or have a depth that is less  
9 than 80-feet... 83-feet long and have an area that is either less than or equal to either... less  
10 than or equal to 83 percent of the Minimum Lot Size. The Minimum Lot Size in the R-2 district is  
11 6,000-square feet which equates to a lot size that is 4,980-square feet or less. In the R-2,  
12 substandard lots are limited to single-story development and a maximum height of 17-feet.  
13

14 Generally, a request for Exception from Minimum Lot frontage would only require a Preliminary  
15 Parcel Map with Exception. However, as noted earlier, the language in the SOFA 3 guideline  
16 would require a Variance for an Exception to the Development Standards. While Variance are  
17 rare in the City, Staff supports the granting of this Variance. I would also like to note that at this  
18 time the Record of Land Use Act is a work in progress and Staff has continued to fine-tune the  
19 language for the Variance Findings I believe the PTC will appreciate.  
20

21 So, to discuss the Findings, we'll go one from one... one by one. Finding 1 is because of special  
22 circumstances applicable to the subject property, including but not limited to size, shape,  
23 topography, location, or surroundings. The strict application of the requirements and  
24 regulations prescribed in Title 18 substantially deprives such property of privileges enjoyed by  
25 other property in the vicinity and in the same zoning district as the subject property. The  
26 subject site is the only oversize lot in the R-2 District and denial of the Variance would  
27 substantially deprive the site of the opportunity to create a standard lot size that is more  
28 compatible with the existing development pattern in the vicinity. As indicated in the table  
29 pictured, only 16.7 percent of the lots comply with the 60-foot width standard within a 500-  
30 foot radius.  
31

32 So, go back to Finding 2, the granting of the application shall not affect substantially complies  
33 with the regulations or constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations  
34 upon other properties in the vicinity in the same zoning district as the subject property.  
35 Properties in the R-2 District are subject to the 60-foot width standard however, not many  
36 properties zoned R-2 need to process a Variance Application to process a Preliminary Parcel  
37 Map with Exception. Except for the 14 R-2 properties located within the R-2. Per the existing  
38 conditions of those 14 lots, only one could be subdivided and still create a standard lot which is  
39 the subject site. The new R-2 lots would meet the required lot area in depth while only need an  
40 Exception to the 60-foot width standard. The Variance application is unique to the site because

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1 the circumstances and the outcome could not be replicated in other properties in the vicinity in  
2 the zoning district.

3  
4 Finding 3, the granting of the application is consistent with the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan  
5 and the purpose of Title 18, Zoning. Additional housing opportunity is encouraged through  
6 multiple goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The proposed subdivision  
7 complies with all Zoning Ordinance requirements, other than requiring an Exception from the  
8 Lot Width. As an exception or as an extension to the Comprehensive Plan, the SOFA 2  
9 guidelines also has a policy specifically H-1 that states that within the SOFA 2, Phases 1 and 2,  
10 provide for a total of 300 residential units and promote the retention of existing housing units  
11 and encourage the development of new housing units throughout the SOFA areas.

12  
13 And lastly Finding 4, the granting of the application will not be detrimental or injurious to  
14 property or improvements in the vicinity, and will not detrimental to the public health, safety,  
15 general welfare, or convenience. The granting of the application will facilitate the development  
16 of two standard lots in the R-2 Districts that are consistent with the goals of the Comprehensive  
17 Plan, Housing Element and SOFA 2. That preserves the health and welfare of the existing  
18 neighborhood character and is reflective of the typical lot size in the vicinity. And the granting  
19 of the subdivision fosters consistent development patterns within the neighborhood in terms of  
20 mass and scale for a future residential development.

21  
22 Staff recommends that the Planning and Transportation Commission take the following action  
23 which is to recommend to City Council approval of the Preliminary Parcel Map with Exception  
24 and Variance per the draft Record of Land Use Action Findings and conditions. Thank you, that  
25 concludes my presentation and I do have the applicant here, Khoi Le, who has prepared a short  
26 presentation as well and is here to answer any questions.

27  
28 Chair Hechtman: Let me first ask if there are questions of Staff before we move to the  
29 applicant. Any Commissioners have questions for Ms. Condit at this time? Seeing none we will  
30 move to the applicant. You have up to 15-minutes. Welcome.

31  
32 Ms. Tanner: Also Mr. Le, if you do need to share your screen, you should have the ability to do  
33 that but please let us know if you need any assistance.

34  
35 Mr. Khoi Le: Perfect. Can you folks hear me?

36  
37 Ms. Tanner: Yes, we can.

38  
39 Mr. Le: Perfect. Thank you, Danielle, for that thorough presentation. As she mentioned earlier,  
40 the project location is 181 Addison Avenue. It's in the corner of... oops... it's in the corner of

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1 Emerson and Addison there and it's an existing R-2 lot in the SOFA District. On the existing  
2 property, there's a single-story house there which I'm highlighting right now and also a  
3 detached garage in the center of the property and also a carport here and two curb cuts. One  
4 curb cut on Emerson and one curb cut on Addison there.

5  
6 The slides you see in front of you is a view from Addison Avenue which shows a single detached  
7 dwelling there in that corner there and all the redwood trees there. And along Emerson  
8 Avenue, you can see the single-story residences there and also the curb cut there. What we'd  
9 love to do is we'd love to subdivide the lot so that we could have... along Emerson so we have  
10 two R-2 lots so we can provide a little bit more housing for Palo Alto.

11  
12 If you folks have any questions, that concludes my presentation?

13  
14 Chair Hechtman: Questions of the applicant? I'm not seeing any hands so thank you, Mr. Le.  
15 Stay with us, we're going to go to public comment and then you'll have an opportunity for final  
16 comment rebuttal after that. So, we are going to move now to open the floor for public  
17 comment. Please raise your hand if you wish to speak on this agenda item. On the Zoom App,  
18 there's a raise hand button on the bottom of your screen. If you are dialing in from a phone,  
19 please press \*9. Mr. Nguyen, are there public commenters on this agenda item?

20  
21 Mr. Vinh Nguyen, Admin Associate III: Yes, there's currently one hand raised and that's  
22 Rebecca. Ok, so our speaker is Rebecca.

23  
24 Ms. Rebecca Eisenberg: Hi there, it's Rebecca Eisenberg again. I... first I want to say I fully  
25 support this application and I have three quick comments in response to this and the fact that  
26 it's before you.

27  
28 First is, how interesting that there is an area zoned RH-2. That was a... I just learned that  
29 tonight. I don't know if you... any of you may have just learned this too. I think that it's super  
30 interesting that there is. I think... I urge you to consider maybe to recommend as part of your  
31 advisory role that there's a study on RH-2 areas in Palo Alto to see how many lots that are  
32 zoned for RH-2 actually host two homes rather than just one home like this lot was doing. This  
33 would be an analysis I think would be crucial before this Commission and helpful for the City  
34 Council actually before they object to anything like the formally known as State Bill 1120. That  
35 was a bill that gave homeowners the right to subdivide or duplex their lots even in RH-1.  
36 Opponents to that I think fairly misportrayed that as the death of RH-1 when really in my mind  
37 it just it gives property owners a little more rights in their land and that's... you know while  
38 having the impact of increasing housing in the neighborhood. I think it might be useful for the  
39 community to hear that there are actually already RH-2 lots in Palo Alto and that not all of them

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1 are actually being used for RH-2. I think that might help the community understand a bit more  
2 about what it means to put this power and this decision in the hands of the homeowner.

3  
4 Two other quick things. The second one is, this again I consider to be a big waste of highly  
5 expensive Staff time in the context of some pretty urgent crisis. I... you know the whole reason  
6 for this presentation, two presentations, is because Palo Alto continues to have zoning  
7 requirements that are completely out of date and inappropriate in this day and age. Like  
8 minimum frontage space, I mean there just shouldn't be a concept of a Minimum Lot Size all  
9 together is pretty hostile to housing and we just... we're not in a time that our City can really  
10 afford to keep enforcing these outdated rules.

11  
12 Finally, real fast, is that I think... I just wanted to react real quickly to the applicant said oh, the  
13 purpose of this is to create more housing in Palo Alto. The purpose is to increase the value in  
14 your land and that's ok. I think it's better, to be honest about the purpose and the purpose is to  
15 increase the value. Great, the consequence is more housing and I thank you for what you're  
16 doing. Thanks so much.

17  
18 Mr. Nguyen: Thank you for your comments. Chair, that concludes public comments for this  
19 item.

20  
21 Chair Hechtman: Thank you. Mr. Le, do you have any final remarks that you'd like to make?

22  
23 Mr. Le: I just wanted to thank Rebecca for her comments there. She's absolutely right about  
24 being transparent. Yes, it is... actually, we're... it is to make more money and have more housing  
25 built. That's the end result but one other thing I just want to say. I just love the close caption  
26 feature there. I've been reading it all night long.

27  
28 Chair Hechtman: Alright, thank you. So, with that, we will close the public portion of the public  
29 hearing and move to Commission deliberation. Commissioners, what's your pleasure? Can I see  
30 a hand? Commissioner Summa, thank you.

31  
32 Commissioner Summa: I'll go first if no one wants to. I think the fact that this creating two  
33 standard lots is very compelling and that the prevailing pattern in the neighborhood does not  
34 include the 60-foot frontages. I'm included (interrupted)

35  
36 [note – unintelligible chatter]

37  
38 Commissioner Summa: Oh, I'm sorry.  
39

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1 Ms. Tanner: Vinh, I think you're... if we can mute Ripon, Vinh, that would be helpful? Thank you.  
2 Sorry, continue Commissioner Summa.

3  
4 Commissioner Summa: I'm sorry, what happened?

5  
6 Chair Hechtman: Someone was not muted. Go ahead and continue.

7  
8 Commissioner Summa: Oh, sorry. I'm inclined unless I am convinced by concerns of my  
9 colleagues to be in favor of this project. So, I'll just kick it off with that.

10  
11 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Alcheck.

12  
13 Commissioner Alcheck: Hopefully, I'll come in clear here. Most of time I try to keep my video on  
14 but I am getting a constant message thing that my connection is unstable. So, I'm assuming you  
15 can hear me because I can see the subtitles.

16  
17 Chair Hechtman: A little hard to hear you but give it a try.

18  
19 Commissioner Alcheck: I'll try to speak a little louder. So, I think Staff did a super job on the  
20 Packet. I think this is a textbook Variance request. I'd like to make a motion that we  
21 recommend approval of this application. I think where everyone did their homework. I think it's  
22 obvious that discussion probably really isn't really necessary. I don't think there's any  
23 complicated questions here that we need to navigate and while I wish we had an opportunity to  
24 talk about whether some of our requirements, our minimum requirements, are problematic  
25 and outdated. I'm not going to entertain that invitation tonight but if Staff ever wants to have a  
26 conversation about how Minimum Lot Sizes and frontages play a role in complicating our  
27 subdivision and housing process. I would be happy to do that. So, I'm going to hold off on the  
28 motion until Chair signals that he's ready for it but I really do think that we could push this off  
29 the table pretty quickly tonight. And Staff again, I think Staff did a great job and this is really  
30 why we have the process is because sometimes things don't add up the way the rules expect  
31 them to be and there's a lot of consistency in that... in the neighborhood and the Findings are  
32 so easily made. They're so well-articulated I don't think they need to be repeated.

33  
34 Chair Hechtman: Thank you. Commissioner Lauing.

35  
36 Commissioner Lauing: Yes, I'm totally supportive. The irony here is that the existing lot exceeds  
37 the zone Maximum Lot Size anyway so we're actually kind of fixing things and I wanted to point  
38 that out. And it looks like you double-checked the historical value for some odd reason in 2001.  
39 It was considered and there was no decision but checked it in '19 and are comfortable that it

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1 doesn't have historical value so I'm good with that. Just a question, are there also ADUs allowed  
2 on these lots?

3  
4 Ms. Condit: Yes, so residential lots do have the opportunity to construct an ADU and a JADU on  
5 the site.

6  
7 Commissioner Lauing: Ok, thanks. I'm supportive.

8  
9 Chair Hechtman: Other Commissioners? Vice-Chair Roohparvar.

10  
11 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: I'll start off by saying yes, I can supportive of this. I'm very grateful that  
12 this could bring the potential for four additional housing units when you count the ADUs and  
13 then potent... actually potentially six if you count JADU and ADU if that's permitted here.

14  
15 I do want to encourage us and I don't want to belabor this but I do want to encourage us if  
16 when we're saying all other lots in the area are not conforming to our Development Standards.  
17 We should probably fix our Development Standards and so that we don't run into this weird  
18 situation where you're taking something that's non-conforming and making it less non-  
19 conforming because that was the only hurdle that was kind of a bit persnickety for me. But I am  
20 supportive of this because of the great potential for housing here.

21  
22 Chair Hechtman: Any other Commissioners who haven't spoken? You don't need to unless you  
23 want to. Commissioner Templeton.

24  
25 Commissioner Templeton: Yes, I'm supportive of the Staff recommendation as well.

26  
27 Chair Hechtman: Ok, I don't see any... Commissioner Alcheck, I see your hand. Let me give my  
28 brief comments and then I'll come back around to you. I just have a few.

29  
30 First of all, I noticed in the Staff report that this application was filed on December 21<sup>st</sup> and here  
31 we are about to make a recommendation on March 31<sup>st</sup>. So, I think that's fast, I think that's  
32 terrific and I want to acknowledge Staff and my appreciation of them for providing that kind of  
33 customer service.

34  
35 Second item is when I look at the aerial, it looks like right now there are three structures on this  
36 oversize lot and just a comment. Condition 11 from the Building Division says all buildings shall  
37 be removed/demolished. Now, I understand that that may be the owner's intention but I think  
38 as a City where our interest is to make sure that there aren't any buildings left that interfere  
39 with the new parcel line. And so typically you have to remove anything that is either straddling  
40 the line or would invade the setback of the new line. And so, it's not clear to me whether... the

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1 house I think clearly is on or over the line but the other two structures I'm not so clear of. So,  
2 I'd ask Staff to look at that and if not all of the structures need to be removed to have a legally  
3 recordable map. Then we should tailor that condition to only require removal of the things that  
4 are legally required. That was my second point.

5  
6 My third point and this is actually I'm going to pick up on something that Ms. Eisenberg  
7 mentioned. This R-2 Zoning is kind of fascinating because what it allows is you can build two  
8 full-size homes on an R-2 Zone. They have to be owned by the same owner but rather than  
9 build a full-size home and a 1,200-square foot ADU and maybe a JADU. You could actually build  
10 two full-size homes and that to my mind adds even more value to the property and of course,  
11 more housing stock to... for families. And so, I'd encourage Mr. Le to look at that once you... as  
12 you move forward with this, the possibility of really using this property to its full housing  
13 potential.

14  
15 And then the final thing I want to say is I agree with Staff's Parcel Map Reserve Findings with  
16 their Exception Findings and with their Variance Findings and I'm ready to support a motion.  
17 Mr. Alcheck? Commissioner Alcheck?

18  
19 MOTION

20  
21 Commissioner Alcheck: Ok, I'm going to make a motion but before I do I have to dispute the  
22 notion that they're of even more value as an R-2 and the reason why is because of the archaic  
23 and arcane idea that the same person must own both homes. That intentionally removes a right  
24 and nothing is stopping the applicant from continuing to own both parcels and still having two  
25 homes but if he wanted to sell one. He can under this application but if he wanted to sell one of  
26 the two homes in the R-2, he wouldn't be able to and I think the question is did we need to go  
27 through this whole process to subdivide the home to achieve the goal he had or could the rule  
28 regarding ownership of the two homes, had there been a TIC, could there have been some  
29 arrangement that allowed for the selling of the two improvements if you will that could work?  
30 So, I agree, R-2 is interesting. I'd like to explore some of those guidelines. I'd love for Staff to  
31 calendar that. I do think the rules regarding R-2 are also interesting. So anyways, I'm going to  
32 move on.

33  
34 I'd like to make a motion that we recommend approval of this application to City Council based  
35 on the Findings and subject to the Condition of Approval in the Packet with the slight  
36 modification that the Condition related to the removal of the structures be looked into by Staff  
37 and amended if... as Commissioner... as Chair Hechtman suggested. It didn't... the lot line did  
38 not intersect with the structures that were there in proximity such a way that require removal.

39  
40 Chair Hechtman: Thank you, Commissioner Alcheck. Do we have a second?

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SECOND

Commissioner Lauing: I'll second.

Chair Hechtman: Thank you, Commissioner Lauing. Commissioner Lauing, would you like to speak to your second?

Commissioner Lauing: No, I already spoke. Thank you.

Chair Hechtman: Ok. Then does anyone need to speak to this motion? I'm not seeing any hands so Mr. Nguyen, will you please conduct a roll call vote for the motion on the floor?

Mr. Nguyen: Commissioner Alcheck?

Commissioner Alcheck: Yay.

Mr. Nguyen: Commissioner Chang?

Commissioner Chang: Yes.

Mr. Nguyen: Chair Hechtman?

Chair Hechtman: Yes.

Mr. Nguyen: Commissioner Lauing?

Commissioner Lauing: Yes.

Mr. Nguyen: Vice-Chair Roohparvar?

Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Yes.

Mr. Nguyen: Commissioner Summa?

Commissioner Summa: Yes.

Mr. Nguyen: Commissioner Templeton?

Commissioner Templeton: Yes.

- 
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Mr. Nguyen: Ok, the motion carries 7-0.

MOTION PASSED 7(Alcheck, Chang, Hechtman, Lauing, Roohparvar, Summa, Templeton) -0

Chair Hechtman: Thank you. Ms. Condit, I'm sorry, I saw your hand too late. Is there something you wanted to tell us?

Ms. Condit: Only in regards to the accessory structures. The Building Department and I believe also the Transportation Department requires those structures to be removed when the removal of the single-family dwelling is removed. So, that is just something that would take place within the scope of the subdivision.

Chair Hechtman: Thank you for that clarification. Some in this situation all structures do need to be removed. Not necessarily because they interfere with the line but because of other rules. Thank you for that. Alright, we will now move onto our next agenda item which is a study session.

**Commission Action:** Motion to approve by Alcheck, second by Lauing. Carries 7-0

**Study Session**

Public Comment is Permitted. Five (5) minutes per speaker.1,3

3. Review and Discussion of Proposed Commercial Parking Enhancements and the Draft Palo Alto Parking Action Plan

Chair Hechtman: And it is review and discussion of proposed commercial parking enhancements and the draft Palo Alto Parking Action Plan. May we have a Staff report?

Ms. Rachael Tanner, Assistant Director: Thank you, Commissioners. We have Nathan Baird from the Office of Transportation. He'll be supported also by Philip Kamhi, the Director of the Office of Transportation. So, I'm going to turn this portion of the meeting over to Philip and to Nathan.

Mr. Nate Baird, Transportation Manager: Good evening Commissioners. I'll be leading the presentation and we'll have myself and Philip for questions afterward and I'll just go from there. Let me play from the beginning. Alright, so we're going to have two topics this evening that really do relate to each other. The proposed commercial enhancements that we're kicking off discussion about this evening and we'll be engaging a lot of community folk's input and feedback over this spring and summer are specific to University Avenue and Cal Avenue Parking

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1 Districts. But the draft Palo Alto Parking Action Plan is Staff's commitment to be transparent  
2 about our parking strategies... implementation strategies for moving forward on our Parking  
3 Work Plan and those 35 recommendations that had been previously made. So, we'll be  
4 continuing to make updates on those work plans but the draft Palo Alto Parking Action Plan is  
5 how we'll be discussing our strategies moving forward as we continue to make progress on  
6 those recommendations.

7  
8 On this slide, we've just got an overview of the parking planning efforts that have been taking  
9 place in the City over the last few years. Many of the RPP Programs are fairly new. That we have  
10 had some around for a little bit. The RPPs are all set up individually. There are six different RPP  
11 Programs and then our commercial districts are set up differently and operated differently as  
12 well and those are in again, University Avenue and Cal Ave. 2016 and 2017 we did a lot of study  
13 and community engagement about potential ways of moving forward in the downtown. That's  
14 pretty well documents and online. What we're talking about to now are the potential to do  
15 some sort of commercial pilot to advance some of those ideas. 2018 and 2019 we did an RFP to  
16 get a permit and citation management company on board, Duncan Solutions. It's a switch from  
17 who was previously helping us, SP Plus. SP Plus remains on board to help us do valet but  
18 Duncan has take the role of our permit citation management system. To help us secure some  
19 costs savings this past year we've been... we left SP Plus earlier and Staff have been managing  
20 some of the district's permits and citation management while we were rolling the online system  
21 online. So, College Terrance and Crescent Park have received online permit portals back in the  
22 fall. South Gate and Old Palo Alto RPP Districts received their permit portals... online permit  
23 portals tomorrow in time for March 3<sup>rd</sup> resuming of enforcement. And then later this year and  
24 into next year we'll be rolling our license plate recognition in the districts. This will really help us  
25 have a better view of how individual walks and zones of each of the districts are affected by  
26 different parking impacts. Previously, all our RPPs have required specific study to figure out  
27 what the issue where and scope... help us scope out what's needed to address them. The real  
28 benefit of moving to license plate recognition is the ability to monitor those conditions nearly in  
29 real-time over the course of the year. So, that we can start to understand if one of the  
30 programs is not working as desired, we can address that over time.

31  
32 Back to the commercial district, we've documented in the previous studies some real parking  
33 pain points. Chief among them is that peak parking demand pressures are not very well  
34 managed by our current systems. This leads to traffic congestions and unsatisfactory customer  
35 and visitor experiences at the peak times. So, folks who are aware of Palo Alto pre-COVID  
36 understand that at like lunch and during the dinner hours it was very hard to find parking in our  
37 commercial areas. And while COVID has had a huge impact on that, we do expect those peak  
38 parking times to continue to not be well served by our current system and furthermore, we  
39 expect those peak parking demand pressures might change as employee's office trips change,  
40 travel trips change, and as our economy continues to adjust and adapt to the current systems.

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1  
2 The other key point to know is that we've really managed the business district's peak parking  
3 demands by... with Employee Permit allocations. Over time, we've learned that there's a 60  
4 percent show rate over all which has helped us to sell a few more permits sometimes in specific  
5 locations. But again, any individual hour or day could be different and we do expect moving  
6 forward into the future event-based type things that might have more of an impact on parking  
7 demand than individual office workers showing up 40 to 60-hours a week in the downtown. So,  
8 we could see shifts in that and what we're proposing are some ideas that were first mentioned  
9 in the previous parking studies and we'll talk... I'll talk a little bit about how new ways of  
10 approaching are current commercial parking might help solve some of these issues.

11  
12 The other thing that happens is our rates are very static. Visitors and customers must choose  
13 between the 2- or 3-hour free parking stay or ramp up very quickly to a \$25 fee for a daily  
14 permit. And so, there are some options for us to consider for someone who wanted to stay just  
15 for 4- or 5-hours and have an alternative to the \$25 daily fee; or potentially if they're  
16 employees who have odd shift hours or don't need to be in the downtown or in the Cal Ave for  
17 a whole day or 5-days a week. Potentially some sort of hourly rate could better serve them than  
18 having to purchase a reservation that is... a Reservation Permit that's good for 6-months or a  
19 year that gives them access every day. So, we'll talk about how that can be addressed.

20  
21 Back to the larger Parking Action Plan that I've been mentioned previously. We really are trying  
22 to be more transparent, prioritized community engagement and how we move forward. And  
23 so, we'll be documenting online on the City's new website our current parking implementation  
24 strategies. We'll be updating regularly about opportunities for feedback as we go through this  
25 process. We're really wanting to adopt a data-driven approach to parking management so that  
26 our parking system can adapt to changing parking demands in different locations of the City  
27 appropriately. We're also really wanting to center customer experiences and feedback as we...  
28 our current parking programs have both residents, employees, businesses and visitors who all  
29 have different needs and different user experiences are experienced. So, we want to continue  
30 to be able to deliver specific parking options and parking permit options to different types of  
31 users who may have different needs.

32  
33 We're also wanting to prioritize fiscal and environmental sustainability. So, we know now that  
34 all our parking programs really do influence each other. But we've got to update and move  
35 them forward individually and so we've don't a lot of work over the last year involving the... in  
36 conversations about how we might improve the RPPs. This effort right now is kicking off a  
37 conversation about how to improve the commercial experience in particular. And then that  
38 environmental sustainability is just a nod to the fact that parking is a real fundamental tool in  
39 addressing traffic congestion and trip behavior. And we really want to start moving forward to a

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1 program that can help us take advantage of those opportunities for TDM tie-ins and other types  
2 of benefits.

3  
4 I want now to just take a few... we've got a few slides here not... that summarizes our current  
5 parking implementation strategies. This is more of a global look so folks can get an idea of all  
6 the various efforts Staff are involved in. So, these are five of our current Parking  
7 Implementation Strategies. These are how the Staff are moving forward on implementing those  
8 recommendations that were put forward in the MRG Plan and we're presenting this to the PTC  
9 because the PTC is in the Work Plan a key partner in helping Staff understand and prioritized  
10 community engagement. But also... sorry, I lost my train of thought there for a second but  
11 again, these are our strategies for moving forward on all those Work Plan items.

12  
13 So, at the top, we're continuing to work on Residential Preferential Parking improvements and  
14 community engagement efforts. We've had a request for monthly resident-focused meetings  
15 and we seem... and I am noting here that we're good with that and we'll continue to do that.  
16 We'll also have focus groups and customer survey options for that.

17  
18 We're also developing strategies to decrease the number of Employee Permits sold in the  
19 downtown and Evergreen Park Mayfield RPP District in favor of encouraging employees to  
20 utilize the public garages and lots. And then we're also interested in developing virtual permit  
21 options for RPP customers and there will be more on that over the next couple months that we  
22 will be discussing with the public.

23  
24 The other major effort we're moving... we're taking on right now is just resuming our normal  
25 operations and permit sale cycles as soon as possible. So, on-street enforcement in commercial  
26 and residential districts is going to resume on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Off-street enforcement in garages and  
27 lots will continue to be resumed... will continue to be on pause until the state and county  
28 COVID-19 color tiered restrictions have been rescinded. After those have been rescinded, we'll  
29 make an announcement and restart the sales and then move forward from there.

30  
31 The other big effort that's happening with City Council's approval in February of Automated  
32 License Plate Reader for the RPPs is we'll be moving forward with that contract, making the  
33 order for the equipment that's needed, installing that equipment and then working with our  
34 consultant partners to update our program permit and citation system. So, the LPR is expected  
35 to be enforced in select districts beginning as soon as fall 2021 and winter 2020... through  
36 winter 2022. Subsequent permit cycles where our... where we'll be doing our initial parking  
37 availability data to be collected. Following that, we'll engage community folks in understanding  
38 of that data and how it affects their experience of their RPP Districts.

39

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1 Another effort here and this is kind of on top the large... part of one of our larger topics that  
2 we're wanting to discuss this evening is that we're hoping to develop and pilot new commercial  
3 parking regulations options. These could potentially include mobile payment, virtual payments,  
4 or hour performance pricing rates in select popular locations. Now, I've got a couple slides  
5 down from here that will explain a little bit how performance pricing rates work and how that  
6 can be an advantage for Palo Alto's commercial district. So, this spring we're doing some initial  
7 community engagement. We'll be looking at the Municipal Code to look at what types of  
8 changes there would need to be made to come forward with some sort of option. And then in  
9 May, I'll be bringing back to PTC a community engagement update on the results of the queries  
10 that we'll be doing and the listening that we'll be doing. We also have Cal Poly Pomona Urban  
11 and Regional Planning students involved in a parking data mapping exercise for us and they'll  
12 bring that to us in May as well.

13  
14 The other piece of this is just this part... is these comprehensive Parking Implementation  
15 Strategies will be online as part of the Parking Action Plan, which will be a living document on  
16 the City website. We're going to be using the site to center and cultivate community  
17 engagement with and ownership of the City's ongoing Parking Implementation Strategies. We'll  
18 have there our scheduled milestones, opportunities for feedback and regular monthly Staff  
19 updates.

20  
21 Alright, so now we're going to transition back to performance pricing and you know,  
22 performance pricing is really about charging the right price to manage peak parking demand  
23 effectively. To ensure destinations in our commercial areas have parking availability nearby and  
24 to offer parkers flexibility for various lengths of stay and different types of parking needs  
25 whether those be daily, monthly, or annually. The... it's really about setting a pricing policy  
26 instead of specific static prices. I've got Seattle here as an example but it's not the only City that  
27 does this but it's a good example because it's a little bit easier with Seattle's program to wrap  
28 your head around what it means. So, in Seattle, they have curb meter prices in their different  
29 commercial areas. It's not throughout the City, it's not in the residential districts. This is just in  
30 the commercial areas. The current meter prices there are different in the morning, midday, and  
31 in the evening based on previous occupancy levels that have been observed. They also have  
32 minimum and maximum price limits per hour are set so that no one is going to be caught off  
33 guard potentially at what the maximum price would be and then the rates are reviewed  
34 regularly. So, right now you can see that most of the City had \$.50 an hour which is their  
35 cheapest price for parking and that would just be reflective of the pandemic that's been going  
36 on. So, all of these prices have dropped to their very lowest while folks are working from home  
37 in Seattle, but you can see that that one area in blue in the middle. That's \$1.50 an hour in the  
38 morning. That rate actually drops in the midday and evening as the office... the few office  
39 essential workers go home and don't need to stay there as late and the curb price... curb  
40 becomes more available there.

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9

Another example that I have here is from Redwood City and Redwood City monthly prices varies by garage and how late into the evening the parking is needed. So, they've got here this Marshall Garage that costs different based on how long you need to stay there regularly into the evening. So, it's a little bit cheaper for you if you only need to stay till 7:00 p.m. but if you want to stay into the evening then it's a little bit more expensive. And again, this is just reflective of setting a pricing... setting pricing policy to prioritize parking availability at different times or under different pressures in the City.

10 For Palo Alto, we've got a few different options for moving forward with a potential commercial  
11 pilot that take advantage of existing contracts and existing services. Some of these we'll have to  
12 do some more work to figure out how to move forward but we are just kind of scoping out right  
13 now what the options are, working to engage the public and understanding what these options  
14 are. And then we'll be developing some different programmatic options for Finance Committee  
15 to weigh in and for PTC to weigh in on as well. So, at the top, hourly time extension rates.  
16 Basically, these can be considered a paid-to-stay model. So, these would... once our 2- and 3-  
17 hour restrictions in the commercial district resume, an hourly time extension rate would allow  
18 people to affordably stay an extra hour to beyond the free parking time, 3- or 4- or 5-hours, but  
19 not have to pay all the way up to \$25 unless they're staying there the whole day. And so, a third  
20 or fourth hour could cost \$2 or \$3 more to stay and that could ramp up such that the longer  
21 stay is \$25 and still stay within some of the existing parameters.

22  
23 The other option is to engage some of the private sector in mobile options for us. So, have  
24 hourly time rates at popular locations. So, right now if you visited downtown, for example, we  
25 know that there are particular lots or blocks, curb street blocks, or even some of the lots that  
26 are much harder to find a spot in than others. So, these locations would be prime locations to  
27 put out an RFI for a private sector partners to help us bring hourly time rates to these locations.  
28 The advantage of hourly time rates in the most popular locations is it helps with turnover. It  
29 helps people find a spot in these locations if they really want it but it also helps orient  
30 customers to where our parking supply is that it's cheaper as well. So, folks who are able to see  
31 oh this block has spaces available but it's \$1.00. You know there are garages and lots where  
32 there's 2- and 3-hours free. It helps people see that \$.50 an hour charge, that would be where  
33 we would start, and then agree to pay that rate or be able to find where we still have free  
34 parking available for them. So, it helps folks... helps orient folks that want to save the money on  
35 parking find those... find that supply that's already existing.

36  
37 It also gives us... we could also, with these types of vendors, get more flexibility with our  
38 Employee Permit allocations. So, in our garages and lots, as we move forward with technology  
39 in places like Cal Ave Garage. We'll be able to monitor how full the garages are getting and be

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1 able to offer different types of discounts or other sorts of customer validation and programs to  
2 give customers options as they come into these areas.

3  
4 The other great thing about charging an appropriate price for commercial parking is that it does  
5 allow us to do TDM tie-ins like Guaranteed Rides Home. And eventually, Parking Cash Out type  
6 programs are much easier for employers to put in place when the City is really helping to create  
7 the market for parking to create reasonable pricing. It allows the private sector and their  
8 private resources of parking to better navigate our local.

9  
10 In terms of process, we'll be determining the pilot... a pilot approach in coordination with  
11 stakeholders. We'll be seeking consistent or a similar solution both the downtown and Cal Ave  
12 commercial areas. We're hoping to provide a predictable parking experience that's easy to  
13 understand and navigate. We're hoping to secure online data collection in the commercial  
14 districts. So, while the LPR has been approved for the RPP Districts and we'll have good data  
15 there. We will need to use technology or technology partners to secure the data that we would  
16 need to move forward. But that data really is integral in terms of being able to make decision  
17 that reflect what can be really changing daily parking demand situations.

18  
19 Part of this conversation will be continued at City Council in May but focused on the Cal Ave  
20 Commercial Parking District in particular. We did bring some employee demand location  
21 proposals to Council last... late last year and Council decided they wanted us to do a little bit  
22 more engagement. So, we're currently conducting that stakeholder feedback but we'll also be  
23 wrapping into some of the proposals some of the ideas and feedback that we'll be getting  
24 globally about the commercial parking districts.

25  
26 In terms of how we'll be working through this. Today is our initial discussion, we had an initial  
27 discussion with Cal Ave's stakeholders this past Monday but we'll have some more  
28 opportunities in the near future. PTC, well I'll be back in May with our Cal Poly Pomona  
29 students to display some of our parking data that they've been mapping for us. We'll be  
30 developing more spelled out, more specific commercial pilot options for Finance Committee  
31 and then we'll bring it to PTC to review those... review some pilot recommendations before we  
32 would finally go to Council if all goes as well as planned.

33  
34 So again, the recommendation, I'm just asking... we're asking for feedback on the planned  
35 commercial parking enhancement in University Avenue and California Avenue. Those options  
36 that we laid out earlier but also feedback on the Parking Action Plan and our community  
37 engagement approach is also appreciated. So, again the key discussion topics that we're looking  
38 for feedback and input on. The commercial pilot options on hourly time extension, performance  
39 pricing, feedback on our current parking implementation strategies. So, you can go back to  
40 those five strategies that were the license plate recognition, the developing the Parking Action

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1 Plan approach for online. All of that we appreciate feedback and input on for this study session.  
2 That concludes the Staff presentation. Philip and I are here to answer questions. Thank you.

3  
4 Chair Hechtman: Thank you Mr. Baird for that comprehensive report. Before we go to public  
5 comment on this study session item I want to find out if there are any Commissioners that have  
6 questions of Staff. Commissioner Chang.

7  
8 Commissioner Chang: Hi, yes, so I just wanted to ask a big picture question which is regarding  
9 the prioritization. So, I know there's 35 items and there's I think it was five or so things that are  
10 prioritized and I'm wondering was that prioritization... how was it created? And also, with the  
11 remaining 35 items, is there... it was difficult to understand what the relative priority of all  
12 those items were. Plus, it occurred to be as I'm looking at it, that some of those items seem to  
13 be really low-hanging fruit potentially that would actually deeply impact some of those  
14 prioritized five items. So, I just wanted some background and context for how this was all done.

15  
16 Mr. Baird: Sure, and I'll ask Philip to step in and fill in any gaps that I miss but essentially, in  
17 2019... 2018, a parking consultant brought 35 recommendations that would be helpful for us  
18 moving forward. The following year those were put into lumps in terms of what sort of  
19 feedback and process is needed to move forward on those items. So, the prioritization that  
20 happened is that they were broken up into three groups. The first group are items that the City  
21 Manager can move forward on as we're able to. The middle chunk are items that we need to  
22 engage the PTC and the public in. One of those items was specifically about whether we wanted  
23 to create a steering Committee group specifically of residents and stakeholders or alternatively,  
24 present to the PTC directly. We're essentially moving forward with both options in the sense  
25 that we'll be engaging our stakeholders, residents, businesses, employees, employers. We'll be  
26 engaging all stakeholders, taking in all that input and also be coming back to PTC regularly as  
27 well. And we'll be using the website to talk... that talks folks throughout we're moving forward.  
28 So, the prioritization is really about process and the PTC's real key prioritization was the  
29 community engagement piece on these tasks and giving us feedback on how we move forward  
30 with these ideas.

31  
32 The Parking Action Plan that we presented is Staff's strategy for moving forward as many of  
33 those recommendations as possible. So, yeah, they're... some of the recommendations are less  
34 important than others.

35  
36 And then finally, you weren't here last March but last March we came forward and talked about  
37 of the recommendations that PTC had responsibility for giving us feedback on. The parking  
38 availability was the key one that helps us pick up a lot of the other ones and that's why Staff  
39 moved forward with presenting LPR as a technology that could really help us move forward a  
40 lot of those items. So, as we move forward with LPR, a lot of the other items will get picked up

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1 as we transition to the capabilities that License Recognition gives us in terms of understanding  
2 the parking data and the parking trends in the City. I hope that answers your question but let  
3 me know if you have any follow-up or if maybe I've just made it more confusing.

4  
5 Chair Hechtman: Alright, thank you. Other Commission questions of Staff before public  
6 comment? Alright, I see no hands so we will not open the floor for public comment on this  
7 study session item. Please raise your hand if you wish to speak. On the Zoom App, there is a  
8 raise hand button on the bottom of your screen. If you're dialing in from a phone please press  
9 \*9. Mr. Nguyen, are there any public speakers for this item?

10  
11 Mr. Vinh Nguyen, Admin Associate III: Yes, we do have two raised hands. Our first speaker is  
12 Carol, then followed by Neilson. Carol has a presentation for which Medina will put up on the  
13 screen for us. Thank you, Medina. Ok Carol, whenever you're ready.

14  
15 Ms. Carol Scott: Alright, I want to be sure that I'm not muted. Good, alright so I am a resident of  
16 Evergreen Park and I'm going to be speaking this evening only for Evergreen Park. Not for  
17 Mayfield or downtown. We are the only three areas in the City with RPPs that currently have  
18 employee... all day Employee Parking Permits to us.

19  
20 So, mostly I would love to talk about the pricing experiment but I don't think I will have time  
21 given the abbreviated [unintelligible]. But I will speak to a little background that I would like you  
22 to keep in mind when you think about the Parking Action Plan. We could have our next slide,  
23 please?

24  
25 So, first of all, I want you to understand what's happening here. I have some photographs for  
26 you. So, first of all, I want you to understand these are parking lots and garages and they are  
27 municipally owned in the California Avenue District. This is where parking... commercial parking  
28 should be. That is why we built them, that's why we built a brand-new garage, this is where you  
29 maximize that and what happens in these blocks is parking. If we could have the next slide,  
30 please?

31  
32 These are residential streets in Evergreen Park and I don't know if any of you have ever been to  
33 Evergreen Park or not but I'd be happy to give you a tour if you're interested. You can see that  
34 primarily they're single-family homes and here's a picture of Peers Park which you would have  
35 seen earlier except we were unable to manage that. In residential streets, this is where you  
36 minimize traffic. You minimize air pollution and you maximize the safety and quality of life here.  
37 In these areas, yes people do park but they also have vendors who come to visit. You have to  
38 put your trash cans out on the street and I would love to show you a picture which I have one  
39 street in Evergreen Park now where two homes are being built or rebuilt. And there's not an

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1 inch of parking to be had because of construction crews. Things happen in residential areas that  
2 don't happen in parking lots. Next part... next slide, please?

3  
4 Our neighborhood looks a lot like College Terrace and that's why when we originally proposed  
5 the RPP we asked to be annexed to College Terrace. It's right across the street from us and  
6 Evergreen Park was mentioned in the Stanford allocation that funded College Terrace, to begin  
7 with. But as you can see in College Terrace there is no employee parking there. Next, please?

8  
9 These are commercial streets and you'll see on one Cambridge, there's one on Park Boulevard  
10 but interestingly enough, you'll see all day no all-day parkin here slide. This is... these are office  
11 buildings but you're not allowed to have employee parking there. It's 2-hours only. Next slide.

12  
13 This is a residential street. In fact, it's the Peers Park residential street but interestingly enough,  
14 because of the ways, the rules are set now. Employees can park all day right along Peers Park  
15 which I suggest is not really a very good strategy to have for a park. Next slide, please.

16  
17 Chair Hechtman: Ms. Scott, if you can wrap up, please?

18  
19 Ms. Scott: I'm going to give it a try but we were a little slow getting the slides. Can I have the  
20 next slide, please? Though it's consistent with Palo Alto... I don't believe this is the very next  
21 one but that's alright. Consistent with Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan, we encourage commercial  
22 enterprise but not at the expense of residential neighborhoods. And as you shall see which you  
23 can for lastly is the College Terrace language in its ordinance which talks about the difficulty of  
24 motor vehicle traffic noise and pollution and quality of life in neighborhoods. Next one please  
25 and I believe we will do this. That's it.

26  
27 We skipped one of the slides which showed what it looks like for 150 cars which is the  
28 maximum that the City can now send into the Evergreen Park neighborhood. I suggest that  
29 there is no need to send 150 cars to my neighborhood. Commercial parking does not belong in  
30 this residential neighborhood and the standard for commercial parking there should be zero.  
31 Thank you.

32  
33 Mr. Nguyen: Thank you Carol for joining us tonight. Our next speaker is Neilson.

34  
35 Mr. Neilson Buchanan: Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'd like to ask a process  
36 question. The agenda stated what we would have 5-minutes to speak. Most of us have planned  
37 a longer presentation. In fact, we asked our neighborhoods not to participate so we could make  
38 one coherent 5-minute presentation. To my knowledge, I'm the last speaker and you're ahead  
39 of schedule.

40

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1 Chair Hechtman: Mr. Buchanan, you're right. Our agenda does indicate that typically we allow  
2 5-minutes. I do have the prerogative to reduce it to three but I did that in part tonight because I  
3 didn't know... I anticipated that we might have very many speakers for this item. I did allow Ms.  
4 Scott to go nearly 5-minute and so I will allow you the same privilege. So, you can present what  
5 sounds like is you're the entire presentation that you had intended. Thank you.

6  
7 Mr. Buchanan: The clock will be reset to 5-minutes so I can pace myself?

8  
9 Chair Hechtman: Yeah, we'll work on that. There you go.

10  
11 Mr. Buchanan: Thank you. First of all, the main topic of tonight is the pricing program and I'd  
12 like to deal with that upfront. I think that's just a terrific idea. I've had the opportunity to get to  
13 know the Office of Transportation Staff and they're moving the wet noddle along very well, but  
14 what I'd like to talk about is the bigger picture.

15  
16 I believe that we need to make change based on accountability, compromise and data. And  
17 fortunately, we have an Office of Transportation that's composed primarily of transportation  
18 professional engineers and they are very good at data. Unlike Planning, which more is an art  
19 rather than a science but most of the transportation issue reduced themselves to good science  
20 and data. So, I want to bring that value forward because it establishes a new working  
21 relationship with the Planning Commission and the Council. So, let me deal with what I... the  
22 remarks I made earlier.

23  
24 There's not 35 but there are at least 45 stars in the constellation that will probably pull together  
25 a fairly decent transportation plan to address parking and traffic. And I go back to my earlier  
26 comments, what we really need you to conclude today is give the go button to the pricing  
27 program but haul in all the other loosely formed 40 something reforms that we've been talking  
28 about at nauseam for 11-years off and on. I think if we had a good study session to pull  
29 together I think what Commissioner Chang, I'm sorry, I... the new Commissioner that I don't  
30 know whose name is. I've never talked to her but I thought she made the most synced remarks.  
31 That you really need to understand how all those things fit together and how they will be  
32 funded and how a small but capable engineering Staff can pull them off. Let me give you a little  
33 orientation.

34  
35 Sad but true, I doubt if any citizen knows the parking situation in the two commercial cores and  
36 the neighborhoods more than I do. I have an unhealthy amount of time monitoring all that  
37 stuff. In fact, I can map the parking situation quicker than anybody in town. Including the  
38 consultants that you want to bring in. I'll take that challenge if you want to issue it to me but let  
39 me tell you. Both commercial cores do not have a long, all-day problem with parking peaking.  
40 The peaking occurs between about 10:30 and 1:30. Not five days a work week but a few days a

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1 week. Every Mayor that I've worked with that sat in the corner office of City Hall could look out  
2 the window to Cowper-Webster Garage and see that the top floor has never been occupied. So,  
3 that's an awfully good example. In fact, the City hasn't been managing its own public parking  
4 assets and I could go into more detail but nothing's more visible. I often thought about buying  
5 binoculars for every Mayor but the problem now is they put solar panels on top of Cowper-  
6 Webster Garage and you can't monitor it from the Mayor's office but we can.

7  
8 What we really need to do is take stock of what's worked in the past and what hasn't worked.  
9 We've got all the examples of what really hasn't worked. To kick off Downtown RPP, the City  
10 started its negotiation with the neighbors asking permission to give the City Manager the  
11 authority to issue 2,000 non-resident permits. It so egregious of an offer, we residents just  
12 agreed to it. It was totally unreasonable, totally un-engineered and I think Philip will  
13 acknowledge and so will Nathan that the City has never issued that many non-residential  
14 permits when they were absolutely unlimited. So, rather than worrying about the past, that  
15 really the opportunity to go forward is the 35 to 40 options we have. Put them into an array  
16 with practical funding. It will take 3- to 5-years to implement them.

17  
18 Tonight, I hope you ask Nathan and Philip how long would it take to go from trial pricing to  
19 implementation for commercial cores? I'm very enthusiastic about what I've been told today  
20 about the pricing program and I'll close early with one comment. We residents and interested  
21 citizens got the Staff report basically late last Friday afternoon. Most of us had something to do  
22 over the weekend but we pulled together, looked at the report, got five or six residents  
23 together to say what is this thing? Well, the truth of the matter is we'd have been a lot more  
24 informed if we had this PowerPoint that Nathan and Philip just presented. That would have  
25 answered all the... not all but most of the questions that we pondered over all weekend. So, let  
26 me close on the fact that Staff reports could be a whole lot better, but not withholding,  
27 essential information that I suspect that Staff had all this time. Thank you.

28  
29 Mr. Nguyen: Thank you for your comments. Chair, that concludes public comments for this  
30 item.

31  
32 Chair Hechtman: Thank you, Mr. Nguyen, and thank you to our public commenters. I'm going to  
33 bring it back to the Commission now for our discussions. This is a study session item and Staff I  
34 looking for feedback and so that will not need to take the form of a motion. But rather they're  
35 looking for direction and so individual concerns and thoughts of the Commission will be  
36 appreciated. So, who'd like to lead off? Thank you Commissioner Lauing.

37  
38 Commissioner Lauing: Ok, yeah, Thanks. It's quite interesting, Commissioner Chang used the  
39 exact same words that happen to be at the top of my page; which is that I wanted to start today  
40 with some big picture questions and then maybe the next round move into some more detail.

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1  
2 I really respect the idea that you all are proposing of an extraordinarily comprehensive analysis  
3 on a proposed scope of this, which is massive, on how to substantially improve our very serious  
4 parking and contention issues. So, first of all, thanks for that but I simultaneously get concerned  
5 about Staff resource to get all these things done and the elapsed time it's going to take to have  
6 an effect on the streets and a lot of questions about how such a really complicated pricing  
7 program. Just changing pricing changing all the time in practice will be able to be managed by  
8 Staff. Assuming that it's understood by drivers which is one of my questions. So, I mean I just  
9 want to raise the question and for this effort, I'm wondering if we're getting the biggest bang  
10 for our buck.

11  
12 So, two things, one first of all as you move forward here, I'd really like to see you document the  
13 key goals of your analysis with the intended outcomes and knowing that all this analysis will  
14 take time. Secondly, I hope you can tell us what you can do now to address some of the  
15 problems while this thing is moving forward. So, I'd love to see from all this, I'm going to give  
16 you some examples, of what are the top five goals, the next three and so on. That for the effort  
17 that gets invested, it's on the highest priorities so we know we're getting the big bang for our  
18 buck so.

19  
20 And so, in the Staff report, as I'm reading through it, I found it hard to realize or figure out what  
21 you think the biggest priorities are. So, I just wanted to go over some of those which were on  
22 your slides as well, but on Page 43. First of all, you obviously talk about doing a development  
23 price... pricing based commercial pilot. So, I'm not sure if that was a goal or just an overall view  
24 and then at the bottom you talk about the City's parking goals but then you don't actually name  
25 them. So, that was a little confusing.

26  
27 So, then when I get over to 45 and 6 [note – Page 46], I understand you calling them an  
28 implementation strategies and not goals. So, I grant that but a couple of them actually look like  
29 they could be goals. I mean Number One, Bullet Point Two, if this is really what you want as a  
30 goal, to decrease the number of Employee Permit sold in downtown and Evergreen Park. That  
31 would be a specific goal that you could itemize. So, and then you also have some sub-goals  
32 there and then on... but on 47 you jump to new revenue streams from parking and reference  
33 that \$25 a day fee. So, I'm just wondering why that's such a big thing? It tends to weave  
34 through the Staff report. I'm not sure why revenue maximization is a top goal if it is? So, I'd like  
35 to ask that question. Obviously, you heard from Evergreen Park and Downtown North residents  
36 that they don't really want that. Particularly, Evergreen doesn't want any commercial permits  
37 there because there aren't any commercial businesses.

38  
39 So, anyway, I'd like to have that clarified and then let's come back to of the misted of as Mr.  
40 Buchanan said of the 45 things, what can we work now to reduce the congestion? We don't

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1 want to wait for literally 2022 for license plate readers. So, wayfinding signs to direct drivers to  
2 the parking lots. PTC thought that was a great idea in '17 and here we are. You know crank up  
3 the commercial fees, crank up the fines for parking, so we'd like to see that as well. Is in parallel  
4 to this big massive study what could we do in the short term to make some progress. So, I'll  
5 stop there, Chair.

6  
7 Chair Hechtman: Thank you, Commissioner Lauing. Before I... while I wait for other  
8 Commissioners to raise their hand, let me just ask what I think is a... what I intend to be a  
9 clarifying question of Mr. Baird.

10  
11 My impression of reading through the Staff report and what Staff was asking for is really you  
12 were looking for a fairly focused... feedback on a fairly focused set of concepts and those  
13 appear on Page 47 to 48. The pilot hourly rates, hourly time extension option and customer-  
14 centric approaches. And it was to be that focused rather than sort of the breadth of the whole  
15 Parking Work Plan, but and if that's to be the case, I'd like you to make that clear. So, that our  
16 Commissioners can at least address those issues, in addition to whatever else they want to say  
17 on the overall Parking Work Plan. Mr. Baird?

18  
19 Mr. Baird: Sure. So, just in terms of what we're looking for, I'll start with that part and then I'll  
20 revisit Ed's [note – Commissioner Lauing] comments and questions. But we really are looking at  
21 taking in input and feedback on any of these really. You know we have a global parking system  
22 that we're trying to make progress on but it has a number of specific components that need to  
23 be addressed separately. And so yes, you're right when you said there is a bit of... there's a lot  
24 covered very... maybe not in much depth in our Staff report but that's because there are so  
25 many different components to this. So, but we do really want feedback on how we're  
26 approaching this globally. In particular, related to our engaging the public in these various  
27 conversations and so that's why I've been spent a lot of time in the presentation talking about  
28 the Parking Action Plan. Referring back to those recommendations and that work plan that  
29 we're working through and then in addition to that the global approach.

30  
31 You know we really do need feedback from all the districts, from various different stakeholders,  
32 on their understanding of what we're proposing and how we would move forward, but also  
33 specifically about the commercial options. We... those three options that I've delineated do give  
34 us, to Ed's [note – Commissioner Lauing] questions, options for moving forward in a manner  
35 that we can test them and then scale them as appropriate, or even make adjustment to them  
36 before we scale later. And so that's why hourly time extensions has been identified as a way  
37 forward for us because folks already understand in both commercial... in both of the  
38 commercial districts that you've got 2-to 3-hours frees. And our businesses love being able to  
39 advertise those 2- to 3-hours free but giving us... but if we could add some technology tools to  
40 give customers the ability to stay an extra hour. That's a positive move forward in terms of

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1 getting a tech partner to collect data for us on occupancy rates, getting peoples minds wrapped  
2 around paying for an hourly rate but in a specific location that needs that intervention more  
3 soon than other probably would.

4  
5 And so, it's recognizing the fact that we have a global parking system with eight... the RPPs and  
6 the commercial districts but they relate to each other really specifically. And so, if the RPPs, if  
7 we're... because we'll be able to monitor the RPPs soon because we don't have a lot of parking  
8 impacts right now, now really is a good time to kind of test our way forward in the commercial  
9 realm in a very specific, small scale way to start. And then utilize the data that we'll be getting  
10 in to make adjustments and to tweak our approaches.

11  
12 In terms of... I think I've started to answer some of Ed's [note – Commissioner Lauing] questions  
13 about the comprehensive approach and the idea that we really want to document our goals  
14 too. Our goals are reflected currently on the website in some summary documents about the  
15 Parking Action Plan and that's where we talk about Staff goals of being transparent, addressing  
16 some of Neilson Buchanan's repeated critics of Staff's understanding of the data. So, we want  
17 to be able to reflect back to the public our understanding of what's happening with better data  
18 over time. And again, scoping out a commercial pilot, getting some community engagement  
19 both before and during is really I think a good way forward for us because the topic is  
20 complicated. There are a lot of components and sort of experiencing it in a small location first  
21 and doing community engagement as we experience it. Is really a good way forward for us to  
22 test the waters and move forward in a way that makes sense.

23  
24 We're not in a rush to do this. We want to take advantage of resources that we have available  
25 right now and the particular lack of parking demand. That really helps us start the pricing at a  
26 very low rate so that folks can understand when there's not demand, it's low and then we can  
27 adjust things over time.

28  
29 I'm trying to see if I missed any other... oh and then the wayfinding. The wayfinding and the  
30 goal is another way that we're moving forward. We expect Public Works to bring back to  
31 Council before the end of this year the project to add automated parking guidance systems to a  
32 few of the garage downtown. So, those... that project and that priority is still moving forward  
33 and I'll actually make sure that I add that to the list of implementation strategies in progress on  
34 the website. So, that folks can know that that is still an important way that we're moving  
35 forward on these recommendations.

36  
37 Chair Hechtman: Mr. Kamhi, did you have something to add?

38  
39 Mr. Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official: I'd like to just add to that a bit and thanks, Nate.  
40 That was great. I just want to make sure that to first to provide clarification because I think

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1 there's a little bit of... quite frankly, Nate's report tonight has a lot in it. It's a lot of different  
2 programs, there's a lot of different areas all relating to parking which are interrelated but also  
3 have some things that are not necessarily related in some regards. So, not that they're not  
4 related, but not directly related and one of those is this proposal for a commercial pricing pilot.  
5 Is really for the commercial zones only. It's not meant to be in the RPPs. So, just to make sure  
6 that that's clear and then the other issue is noting that right now in our commercial zones. We  
7 really only have a couple options. We have either you park for 2- or 3-hours free which  
8 depending on where you are it's either 2-hours or 3-hours free. Or you buy a \$25 per day  
9 permit and so what we're really talking about the period in between that. Where people don't  
10 really have any option. Maybe they're staying for 3-hours but the only parking available to  
11 them is a 2-hour parking. So, they need to go out, they need to move their car after the second  
12 hour to somewhere else so that they're not in violation, or maybe they have to do 4-hours or  
13 something. And I think this is a time where we're actually going to see that happen more with  
14 people doing more flexible hybrid work schedules and apologies. I'm having a little bit of  
15 technical difficulties so I hope you're all hearing me. I'm frozen on my screen. Ok.

16

17 Chair Hechtman: We are.

18

19 Mr. Kamhi: Ok, great.

20

21 Chair Hechtman: We are (interrupted)

22

23 Mr. Kamhi: So, I think you know part of what we're trying to do is adjust are what we consider  
24 our really inflexible current system and create more flexible options. Ok, great. Nate's texting  
25 me that I'm not frozen. So, we're trying to make sure that we have more options available.

26

27 The real goal of commercial pricing for parking is to maximize our parking inventory. So, it's  
28 really to make sure that we're getting the full utilization of that; whether that's turnover or not  
29 artificially forcing a car to move in the middle of the day if they don't need to. If they want to  
30 pay for that spot, they potentially could stay in that spot. So, I think that's really what we're  
31 hoping to do, is not cause extra pollution, congestion or confusion.

32

33 So, I know it's... and to answer your other question about the confusion of the varying pricing. I  
34 think it could start off really simple. I mean, pricing strategy could be it increases by a dollar  
35 each hour you stay there after the free period or something like that. So, it could be really clear  
36 but what we're going to end up sort of getting through this when it becomes a full-blown  
37 program is really good data. So, that we can find out hey, is this street... if you don't get there  
38 by 7:00 a.m. That street is filled up and you can never park there and is that what we want to  
39 happen on that street or do... is in front of Starbuck where they want to see customers come in  
40 and out and they've got an employee that's parking there all day. So, maybe we want to charge

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1 more money and try to get that turnover to happen. So, that's really the consideration that  
2 we're kind of torn between in that.

3  
4 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Lauing, I didn't mean to jump your questions so before I go to  
5 Commissioners Templeton and Summa. I want to make sure that they didn't forget because I  
6 interfered any of the questions you had asked.

7  
8 Commissioner Lauing: No, that's fine. As I said, that's just the big picture item but I also said at  
9 the beginning that I totally support you doing this. I'm very enthusiastic about it. I just want to  
10 have in parallel knowing what are the higher priorities and then with the point that you just  
11 raised Philip. I'm just very respectful of you guys testing all these things. That I don't think you  
12 need a lot of detailed input from us as to which ones you should test. I mean you guys are the  
13 pros on this and I absolutely agree with the last thing you just said which is, and you stated it in  
14 a very nice simple way of just we can't... we've got to have more than just two ways of pricing.

15  
16 So, let's keep it simple. One of the things I saw on the things that said we want to encourage  
17 visitors in commercial districts to go to the garages instead of circling around. That's a nice  
18 simply goal and that's what we should be focused on. So, I encourage all the testing you want  
19 to do if you've got the time and let's get some stuff done in the interim. That's all I was saying  
20 at my highlight questions here. Thanks, Chair Hechtman.

21  
22 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Templeton.

23  
24 Commissioner Alcheck: Chair Hechtman, I'm sorry to interrupt. I'm sort of struggling to stay  
25 connected to this meeting. I was wondering if I could quickly share some comments and then  
26 I'm going to try to find a different way to connect and if I can't I'm not sure I'm going to be able  
27 to continue. Would it be possible if I quickly comment on this item and then exit (interrupted)

28  
29 Chair Hechtman: Commissioners Templeton and Summa, I hope you won't object to our  
30 temporarily technically challenged Commissioner jumping the line. Commissioner Alcheck.

31  
32 Commissioner Alcheck: So, I'll be brief. I want to acknowledge Mr. Buchanan. I was a very green  
33 Commissioner when he first invited me to his home I think back in 2013 and I really... it was  
34 clear then that he was very invested in this process. And I'm sure Staff has worked with or  
35 appreciates his feedback because it is... he is a source of expertise. I hope you are still on the  
36 call you heard that. I value almost every comment you make on these topics.

37  
38 I think that you have a lot of new membership here and what I'm hoping is that in the long run  
39 there will be the opportunity for us to continue to dive into these topics. I think my main  
40 comment for the purpose of tonight is that I would suggest that I found the hourly time

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1 extension option to be the most provocative. I definitely think there's a better benefit to  
2 engaging with an outside partner who would provide technology that could allow us to go in  
3 multiple directions. And if I understood the information right, that is an option with the hourly  
4 time extension program. That those technologies that would theoretically be put in place for  
5 that option to work. We could then pivot if we wanted to with that technology.

6  
7 I also think that... I mean I know we've had this conversation in the past that sometimes 2-hours  
8 isn't sufficient to encourage the sort of extra time our restaurant's customers could potentially  
9 use when coming and going to frequent the many retail establishments that are on their way.  
10 That are doing their best with their windows to attract customers. So, there's definitely... we've  
11 had the conversation before on this Commission about whether the 2-hours should be  
12 extended to 3-hours in general. And I would suggest that this system with using technology to  
13 give people the opportunity of extending their stay in a particular spot would do just that. It  
14 would give us the opportunity of addressing that issue while also telling us how many people  
15 are doing, and to what extent there's demand for it, and would give us technology partnership  
16 that might lead to potential pay for parking hourly rate option if we decide to pursue it. I'm  
17 generally in the camp that we should be charging for parking. But I also believe that our local  
18 retailers will probably not be excited about that and so this... I think this is a good middle  
19 ground.

20  
21 I don't love fee validations. I think that that... I think it encourages... I just think it creates... I  
22 don't know. I don't want to get into it specifically. I feel like I'm... I don't know if I'm even  
23 coming in clearly right now. I keep getting this pop-up but I would just say I'm not excited about  
24 that option. That would be the last of the three options.

25  
26 And I guess my last... my final statement would be I'd love to know if there's a community  
27 locally, and when I say locally I'd expect anything that's within 50-mile, that is doing these  
28 hourly time extension program. Because I've never encountered that until the Packet and I'd  
29 love to drive there just to see what does that look like, or maybe I can even... maybe you can...  
30 if I knew if there was a community that was doing it. I could look up their chatter if you will to  
31 see if there are conversations about it and its efficacy.

32  
33 So, those are my comments. I'm going to try to reconnect to continue to participate but that's it  
34 for now.

35  
36 Chair Hechtman: Alright, thank you Commissioner Alcheck. So, it's 8 o'clock and just to let the  
37 Commission know. What I'd like to do is I'd like to get through a first round of Commission  
38 comments and questions here. We have hands raised by Commissioner Templeton, Summa,  
39 and Chang and then after we do that then we'll take a brief break. Unless anyone needs a break  
40 now then they can let me know and we'll break now.

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1  
2 Mr. Kamhi: Apologies Chair Hechtman. If possible just to give a quick response? I don't know if  
3 we still have our Commissioner with us since he's having technical difficulties, but a quick  
4 response to that question because others might be interested about where other agencies or  
5 whether other Cities have that opportunity to extend. It's actually available in quite a few Cities  
6 in the Bay Area. It's available in Oakland, Berkeley, San Francisco. If you use what is it, Park  
7 Mobile or one of those types of applications? You'll get a notification on your phone that says  
8 hey, do you want to extend your time? So, that's an example of it. A lot of times those places  
9 don't have 2-hours free which would be the uniqueness that we would have in ours but it's not  
10 totally unique to Palo Alto having some free time before paying for parking.

11  
12 Ms. Tanner: If I may, just on the technical difficulties. I feel like there's been some  
13 Commissioners and also some Staff who've had issues with their technology today and I just  
14 wanted to remind everyone that there is a phone number that you can call in if a Commissioner  
15 or Staff person does need to switch to phone. If you can email myself or Vinh to let us know and  
16 when you call in if you can use \*9 to raise your hand. We can promote you to be a panelist. I  
17 know it's not the same as video but if for some reason you can't connect by video, you can just  
18 use your... I guess it's not old fashion. It's probably a cell phone but your old fashion phone  
19 technology to join the meeting. That's all.

20  
21 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Templeton.

22  
23 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you very much. First, I want to say to Mr. Baird, thank you for  
24 giving an update. It has... it feels like it has been about a year since you came on board and told  
25 us what you were planning to work on and then everything changed. So, it's really exciting to  
26 see that you've used that time to do some analysis and planning and come up with some really  
27 creative ideas. So, thank you for that and also thank you to Mr. Kamhi for hiring for this role  
28 because it's really quiet a luxury to have someone thinking about this problem full time.

29  
30 So, I am very interested in these pilots and to Commissioner Alcheck's points. I have  
31 experienced these. I think a lot of us if you think about using a parking garage that has a  
32 controlled entrance. You have used this hourly rate thing before. It's just that not necessarily  
33 through an app, right? So, if you say a certain part garage, the first 30 minutes are free and then  
34 the next 2-hours cost \$1 and then if you stay longer the rate goes up. Things like that so we  
35 have encountered things like that.

36  
37 I will also say that when I have gone to the movies in Redwood City before the lockdown. Being  
38 able to go to dinner and a movie and have your parking validated made that accessible and  
39 easier for us as a family. So, these are all experiences that we've had in nearby communities

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1 and ways to make it easier to access locations that are otherwise really busy. So, I think it's  
2 really creative. I love that you're thinking about ways to do that, that are app friendly.

3  
4 I'm wondering if you've done any thought about how this affects lower-income individuals and  
5 maybe that's mainly a consideration for Parking Permit, but I don't really know how this would  
6 affect folks in that demographic. So, I was just wondering have we thought about that, or is that  
7 not really a concern when it's a retail area?

8  
9 Mr. Kamhi: Nate, do you want me to go first, or do you want to take a stab? I'll just state that  
10 right now we have you park for 2-hours free or you pay \$25. So, I think giving an option that's  
11 somewhere in between that I think probably is a benefit to anyone that doesn't want to spend  
12 the \$25 because there's always free parking somewhere. And I don't want to (interrupted)

13  
14 Commissioner Templeton: Yeah, yeah, so you can move if you need to but you pay for the  
15 convenience of staying put.

16  
17 Mr. Kamhi: That's right, you pay for the convenience. So, it's a cost of convenience. One of the  
18 items that Nate's going to be working on, which does have relevance to this though, is a low-  
19 income permit for the garages and that's not something we currently have. And I should say, I  
20 should clarify we don't call it a low-income permit, we call it a Reduced Price Permit. Just to  
21 note that we're not trying to classify someone based on the income that they earn but trying to  
22 make an affordable permit for people that maybe can't afford the price of a higher price  
23 permit.

24  
25 Commissioner Templeton: Yeah, that's great. I'm glad you're thinking about that and I just  
26 wanted to make sure we mention it because that does happen. We do have folks that want to  
27 access these great retail spaces at varying levels of incomes so that's great.

28  
29 I would also say that I use to volunteer at an organization in Cal Ave and I hit that scenario that  
30 you were talking about because we'd have our meeting for an hour and a half. And then we'd  
31 want to go grab a coffee and oh god, I have to move the car because I don't need to go there  
32 every day of the week. So, it's really exciting to think about that because that's... I wouldn't  
33 necessarily need to spring for a permit but I'd be happy to pay the extra just to continue with  
34 my conversation without the interruption of moving the car and finding another space in the  
35 middle of the day. So, I think there's definitely demand for those scenarios that you've  
36 described and I just want to say thank you. I think you're on the right track.

37  
38 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Summa. Commissioner Summa.

39

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1 Commissioner Summa: Thank you. I just want to thank the members of the public and I really  
2 want to thank the Office of Transportation. It was something we've needed for a long time and  
3 you're doing a really good job. I... and thank you Chair Templeton [note – Commissioner  
4 Templeton] because I was interested in the lower price permits also and it's good to hear that  
5 you're going to be considering those in the Downtown Business Districts. Both Cal Ave and  
6 University because currently, I think they're only available, correct me if I'm wrong Staff, in the  
7 RPP areas.

8  
9 So, I think the extension idea is a good one because sometimes I've been to City meetings  
10 where they were 3-hours and everybody has to figure out some other way to park. And so, I  
11 think the extension is a good idea and I think it gives that flexibility. I think it could help some  
12 lower-income workers also who have shorter shifts but may have multiple places that they  
13 work. As long as it can't be extended to the point where it becomes an all-day parking spot  
14 because then I'm afraid it would be competition for the places we want the all-day commuter's  
15 parker parking.

16  
17 And to that end, I think because of COVID and the changes it's made on many of our habits,  
18 parking and working habits, and the potential that some of those could change. I think it is one  
19 of my priorities is getting the commuter, all-day parkers out of the neighborhoods and I know  
20 that Evergreen Park had a very strong expectation for that happening just because of the new  
21 Sherman garage. I don't think we want to have so many all-day parking commuter parking spots  
22 available that we invite people to come back when many of their habits which will advance our  
23 greenhouse goal emissions and our traffic congestion problems and level of service. I think we  
24 want to try to leverage what might be a long-term... a longer-term change. Not related to a  
25 worldwide disaster to really get the all-day parkers out of neighborhoods. Neighborhoods have  
26 a real hard time with that. It's hard to make it work. A member of the public just mentioned if  
27 you have two construction projects on one job... on one block I mean. You... there's no street  
28 parking left. It's amazing how localized street parking issues really are. So, they can be half a  
29 block, they can be a block, so I think for me I would like to optimize the parking in garages,  
30 including new garages, as soon as possible. Understanding that it was never even pre-COVID  
31 anywhere near 100 percent and try to get those parkers out of the neighborhoods. That's a big  
32 priority for me and I think any of the reasonable technologies that we can use. Yeah, let's try  
33 them out and use them. I'm not sure how to help you with that but, as a Planning  
34 Commissioner, other than to say yeah, let's get the enhanced time extension and things of that  
35 nature.

36  
37 But I also... oh I wanted to mention, these are just very small specific things but South Gate has  
38 a portion of, in its RPP that is on the westside, the Stanford side of El Camino. That was never  
39 utilized and I know I talked to Philip Kamhi some time ago about this. That's just a little thing  
40 but there's a lot of little specific things that those of us who live in the neighborhoods with RPPs

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1 know about. That we can maybe give you a list, don't have to do it right this second, of things  
2 that are working and things that could be better utilized or optimized in a different fashion. And  
3 certainly, the Stanford side of El Camino between Churchill and Sarah Street is not used. Even  
4 pre-COVID there's never cars there. So, little things like that I would like to help with specifics.

5  
6 And I would like to look at the... a nexus between TDM programs, projects and buildings that  
7 have received TDM reductions. They have TDM programs and have received reductions in  
8 parking. I would like to know how much we really think those buildings or those employees  
9 should be... have access to parking in the residential neighborhoods. Some of those kinds of  
10 specific things are on my mind and definitely with a mind to reduce commuter parking in  
11 residential neighborhoods. I think I'll leave it there for now. Thank you.

12  
13 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Chang.

14  
15 Commissioner Chang: Thank you. So, I echo what all the other Commissioners who have spoken  
16 who have said about the [unintelligible] idea. It's fantastic that we're taking this data-oriented  
17 approach and in particular, if we are looking at the parking that I think people would not be  
18 impressed with Palo Alto coming with a dated parking system without the dynamic type pricing  
19 that is already available in other Cities. So, I think that's a good idea. I think that people who  
20 come to Palo Alto have a certain expectation for how things should function.

21  
22 Mr. Baird has asked for feedback regarding community engagement and we need to beat a  
23 dead horse a bit but I would say and you've seen based on the public commenters that  
24 commenters as well as the Commissioners that if it's not clear what the relative prioritization of  
25 this paid parking investigation is relative to everything else. It's hard for people to focus on the  
26 paid parking because everybody has different burning issues. And so as long as you say well  
27 these burning issues are also going to be worked on but today is focused on this. Then people  
28 can focus on the paid parking discussion. But if commuter parkers are still in neighborhoods  
29 and people who have lower incomes are still having to pay higher prices for their permits. It's  
30 just hard to focus on something that is probably not that popular. Right, it's not popular among  
31 businesses... small businesses, it's not popular for me. If I think... what I would rather have is  
32 free has it has been versus have to pay for it. So, it's just a little bit of a hurdle and so I would  
33 also say that it's, as presented, it really needs to be benefits forwards. The whole point that Mr.  
34 Kamhi made about we don't want people to circle. We want them to be able to know where to  
35 go to find parking.

36  
37 And I would also say as we pilot it if it can be as much as... you preserve the current thing where  
38 it's free until a certain point or free everywhere except for the worst places. That's going to  
39 have a lot more palatability and if some of those types of strategies, potential strategies are  
40 mentioned earlier on in any introduction. Then it seems a little bit less scary for people. So, I

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1 think there is... I don't... I do think that there's going to be a little bit of a negative reaction from  
2 some people. So, in terms of public communication, to make sure what the... make clear that  
3 there are real benefits to this. Or on the flip side, what are the potential negatives of paid  
4 parking and how are we... and to state in the goals like we're going to come up with options  
5 that don't do those negative things. Because I think everybody has also experienced poorly  
6 executed paid parking, right?

7  
8 And then again, also along the lines of community engagement, I think it's important to present  
9 that this is not about revenue generation. That we need to be financially focused. It needs to  
10 sustainable but the goal of this isn't to make money per se.

11  
12 And then finally regarding the three different potential strategies, I don't want to opine on that  
13 because my opinion is this is a data-intensive exercise and you guys are the expert on that. And  
14 so, go crazy with the data and then if validation is what speaks to people. Let's do validation. If  
15 it's not, then let's not. That kind of... so those are... oh what... and then one final thought. I'm  
16 sorry to go on so long.

17  
18 I was reading these 35 items and there's one point that really stuck for me in a negative way  
19 which is the idea of standardizing the Employee Permit parking costs in RPP areas. And to the  
20 point, I mean we're talking about dynamic pricing. I actually think that different RPPs have  
21 different real estate values for their parking and so I would say we can be data-driven about  
22 that too. And in fact, I think it best to not park commuter parkers in RPPs at all but to the extent  
23 that we allow commuters to park in a really busy area. Then they should be charged more  
24 because that parking is more valuable. So, that's it, thanks.

25  
26 Chair Hechtman: Vice-Chair Roohparvar.

27  
28 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: I feel like we have consensus here. You know we're not voting on  
29 anything but I literally agree with everything that's been said. This is so fantastic that you guys  
30 are doing this. I agree we need to focus on the low-hanging fruit and well, there's no reason to  
31 wait on that stuff.

32  
33 I really like the idea of the wayfinding, like better signage, because frankly I do circle downtown  
34 Palo Alto and I'm like where was that public parking lot again? Whereas when I go to Redwood  
35 City or other Cities it's so visible and it's very easy for me to know exactly where to go. I think  
36 we can do a better job on signage for our public parking.

37  
38 I have used as Commissioner Templeton said, the various hourly rate apps in other Cities very  
39 frequently. I think it's great. You can just use your phone and pay and you don't have to run  
40 back. So, I would encourage us to do that.

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1  
2 I'm excited to see the data that we get back as to what works and what doesn't and even  
3 maybe lessons learned from other jurisdictions. I also agree with Commissioner Chang; our  
4 focus does need to be on not on revenue but on traffic elevation.

5  
6 And the point that Commissioner Alcheck raised about retail might not like it if there's paid  
7 parking. But I also think retail is not going to like it if there's traffic jams and people are circling  
8 because when I go somewhere and there's a lot of traffic. I just leave. I don't bother going to  
9 the retail space and I'm like forget it. I'm just going to order online. So, that's... I think there's a  
10 tradeoff to consider there.

11  
12 And I also agree with the palatability of not having a sudden jarring change of now everything  
13 has to be paid for but having it be free until a certain period or valuable spaces having that  
14 additional fee. I like that idea a lot.

15  
16 So, oh, and I had one more thing. I also, you know, listening to the public comment today and  
17 Commissioner Summa. I also think we shouldn't have commercial or commuter parking in  
18 residential areas. We have our garages. My experience has been that they're never completely  
19 full. We should be directing people to go park there and see if that helps before giving up  
20 residential space. Or being very thoughtful before... that should be our last resort in my  
21 opinion. That's all.

22  
23 Chair Hechtman: Alright, thank you Vice-Chair. So, I want us to now take a 5-minute break.  
24 We'll come back. I'll provide my comments and then invite a brief second round for any  
25 Commissioners who feel that they have final comments and then we'll move on to the next  
26 agenda item. So, I've got 8:20 and we'll resume at 8:25.

27  
28 [The Commission took a 5-minute break]

29  
30 Chair Hechtman: Alright Commissioners, as you return please turn your video on at least  
31 momentarily so that I know you're back. Alright, thank you. Let's see, so it looks like  
32 Commissioner Alcheck has not yet been able to reconnect and we have all over Commissioners  
33 present. So, Ms. Tanner, are you with us?

34  
35 Ms. Tanner: I am here.

36  
37 Chair Hechtman: Ok, can we proceed?

38  
39 Ms. Tanner: Yes, we can. I do agree, I don't see Commissioner Alcheck. I haven't seen any note  
40 from him and we don't have anybody calling in so I think we'll continue on.

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Chair Hechtman: Alright so I'd like to next provide my feedback and I'm really going to focus on the particular items that Staff asked for feedback on Packet Pages 47 and top of 48. And I've got some comments and about the same number of questions and comments.

So, the first item is piloting hourly rates. I'm absolutely supportive of moving forward with that. I think it's a why not? Why not? Let's see if it works. Staff had suggested that this could be trialed either in the most popular locations or in select garages and so I wanted to get a little more information on that from Mr. Baird or Mr. Kamhi. What the benefits and detriments to starting a trial in one versus the other?

Mr. Baird: So, currently the only garage that has the technology that would be adaptable to that is the Cal Ave garage and the APGS project will add a few more garages in the downtown. But that will be a year or so off but it is... it does sync up well with the public engagement process that we're doing and then piloting for.

I think, you know, the garages and lots really ought to be prioritized for longer-term stays and so that's the key consideration when you think about on-street versus off-street moving forward. So, some of the on-street locations I believe are probably more popular than the garage locations and would probably... it'd probably be easier to start with a low charge for hourly rates on street. But again, we'll need a new technology partner to help us with that and move that forward.

Chair Hechtman: It sounds to me like we can start sooner with the pilots if we go with popular locations or blocks rather than garages and so I personally like that approach. To be able to move forward with trials and maybe in those trials we can learn things that can then be applied longer-term to future trials in the garages as those come online.

Your next item was the hourly time extension options and yes, please pursue with... please pursue that. It makes a lot of sense and again, we need to start collecting data to allow us to fine-tune that to its most efficient form.

And then the third item, the customer-centric approaches, you reference parking fee validations which I think I'm supportive of. I know that personally when we use to go out, occasionally that was nice benefit that we could go to a restaurant and feel free spending a little bit more because they were going to cover the parking. So, I like that feature but you said other programmatic interventions that cater to specific user groups or customers. Mr. Baird, can you give me a couple of examples of what those might be?

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1 Mr. Baird: Sure, so one of the examples we talked about is the TDM program called Guaranteed  
2 Ride Home and you know when you have a good parking pricing system in place. It makes it  
3 possible for you to offer parking as a benefit to folks who agree to use transit regularly. And  
4 then all of us who use transit regularly have had the experience of having to stay at a meeting  
5 too late and missing the train or getting stranded. So, being able to offer other types of benefits  
6 to folks who like that becomes possible when you're doing a good job of managing your parking  
7 demand.

8  
9 Chair Hechtman: Alright, thank you so... oh, go ahead.

10  
11 Mr. Baird: I was trying to think if there's any other but that's I think a good example to start  
12 with.

13  
14 Chair Hechtman: Well, I guess my attitude on that is again why not? That those are good things  
15 and again they are potentially taking us incrementally toward our goals. And so absolutely we  
16 should consider those kinds of mechanisms. So, those are all of my questions and comments so  
17 now I'll invite any Commissioners who want to come back for a second round. Again, encourage  
18 you to be brief because we are wanting to keep this item under 2-hours and not prolong the  
19 rest of the evening with the items we have left. So, Commissioner Lauing.

20  
21 Commissioner Lauing: Yes, I just want to rip off a few in staccato fashion because a lot of  
22 colleagues have already mentioned it. I'm really glad that Commissioner Templeton and Summa  
23 I think both mentioned the low-wage workers and how we're going to accommodate them. I  
24 think Philip, you've got a new acronym now. You've got an RPP in an RPP, Reduced Parking  
25 Program in the RPP, so congrats you've got a new acronym.

26  
27 The... if we can keep it simple then it's going to be more simple for the customer to understand  
28 and it's going to be on the website. So, I get that and so I would just really encourage us not to  
29 get too far out there. Even in the test program of testing six different pricing things just to get  
30 some baseline data or else we're going to have people just get confused and not play.

31  
32 I totally agree we should be looking at the TDM analysis. The question about enforcement, I get  
33 a little bit worried about is this going to be automatic enforcement-only or is it going to be  
34 adding a lot to Staff. So, I'll just raise that as a question right now but it's a cost as you all know  
35 so.

36  
37 And then the other thing is I just want to emphasize that there aren't really two RPPs a lot and  
38 the example tonight are good because there's a lot of businesses downtown and there are  
39 none in Evergreen. So, it really can't be managed the exact same way with respect to pricing as

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1 Commissioner Chang said or anything else. So, don't go overboard in trying to manage  
2 everything exactly the same because they aren't.

3  
4 And in that regard, I also get a little concerned about what Staff references and somebody  
5 wrote in about saying about underutilized RPP Zones. You know in some neighborhoods that a  
6 problem because it's a lost opportunity for revenue and other neighborhoods that's ok because  
7 there's more places for kids to play. So, let's just be aware of those trade-offs as you're going  
8 forward.

9  
10 And then lastly, please let us know how we can help accelerate the wayfinding signs and we  
11 talk about that offline. So, that's all, thank you.

12  
13 Chair Hechtman: Thank you, Commissioner. Other Commissioners with additional comments  
14 please raise your hand? So, I'm seeing none so let me ask you, Mr. Baird, did you get what you  
15 came for tonight?

16  
17 Mr. Baird: I did. I really appreciate folk's time considering it and I'm excited about moving  
18 forward and developing some more details for folks to really get their teeth into. But I feel like  
19 today's meeting and the meetings we'll be having with the public are really crucial to our  
20 understanding of how to develop it and where... kind of what the temperature is right now. So,  
21 I appreciate the feedback and hopefully, we'll be back soon with more details as we go along  
22 this path.

23  
24 Chair Hechtman: Alright, well thank you for the detailed report and answers to many questions.  
25 We will look forward to progress reports as these programs move forward. We'll move now to  
26 the next item on our agenda.

27  
28 **Action Item**  
29 Public Comment is Permitted. Applicants/Appellant Teams: Fifteen (15) minutes, plus three (3) minutes rebuttal.  
30 All others: Five (5) minutes per speaker.<sup>1,3</sup>

31 4. Review and Discuss Two Concept Plan Alternatives for Improvements to the Alma  
32 Street and Churchill Avenue Intersection and Recommend a Preferred Alternative to  
33 City Council

34 Chair Hechtman: Back into action items with Agenda Item Number Four. Review and discuss  
35 two concept plan alternatives for improvements to the Alma Street and Churchill Avenue  
36 intersection and recommend a Preferred Alternative to City Council. Staff report Ms. Tanner?  
37

38 Ms. Rachael Tanner, Assistant Director: Yes, thank you Chair. We have our Staff again from the  
39 Office of Transportation. We have Ripon Bhatia and Ruchika Aggarwal who will be making the

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1 presentation about this project and I will... we also have and I'm sure they'll mention it. We  
2 have a number of consultants also that are available. You'll see them here as panelists and so  
3 they have other resources that can hopefully answer all the questions as the Commission...  
4 sorry... deliberates the Preferred Alternative of the two that they will present. So, I will hand it  
5 over to Ripon and Ruchika.

6  
7 Ms. Ruchika Aggarwal, Project Engineer: Thank you, Rachael. Good evening Commissioner  
8 Hechtman... sorry, good evening Chair Hechtman and Vice-Chair Roonparvar and other  
9 Commissioners. My name is Ruchika Aggarwal and I am a project engineer with the City of Palo  
10 Alto in the Office of Transportation. I'm here to present on the Alma/Churchill Safety  
11 Improvement Project and along with me, co-presenting will be Marie Mai from Calendar  
12 Associate. Our project team also includes Rafael Rius and Ripon Bhatia from Office of  
13 Transportation, BKF Engineers Jason Mansfield, Jonathan Centofranchi, and Trisha Dudala from  
14 Hexagon Transportation Consultants. We'll all be here at the end of the presentation to answer  
15 any questions that the Commissioners may have.

16  
17 To give the brief background on the Alma/Churchill Safety Project, this... the project limits for  
18 this particular project is the crossing of Alma Street and Churchill Avenue and the railroad  
19 crossing. Next slide, please.

20  
21 Ms. Marie Mai, Consultant: I'm just... I'm muting myself and getting to the slide here. Do you  
22 see that?

23  
24 Ms. Aggarwal: Thank you, yes. Thanks, Marie. So, the project limit as I mentioned is the  
25 intersection along with railroad crossing portion of it. It is a collaboration project between the  
26 City of Palo Alto, Caltrans, Caltrain, CPUC which is the California Public Utilities Commission. It is  
27 federally funded by Section 130 Program and the goal of that program is to eliminate hazards at  
28 grade crossing, rail crossings. This project addresses more safety concerns. We've received  
29 some comments about the project location being one of the long-range grade crossing projects  
30 that is under discussion right now. But this project really addresses immediate safety concerns  
31 that could be handled and we are hoping to be in construction in 2022.

32  
33 The limited scope of work that was developed by a diagnostic team that had Staff members  
34 from all these different agencies and they come up with the recommendations of what needed  
35 to be done at this intersection to improve and enhance safety. So, it's a very limited scope of  
36 work for which the funding is allocated for.

37  
38 We developed two concept plans that we are presenting in front of the Commission today. We  
39 started... we presented one for the community meeting back in January and over the last few  
40 months with different Boards and different public input. We have revised those concept plans

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1 that we will be sharing later in the presentation, but the basic design elements that includes  
2 both the concepts are traffic signal modifications, adding a pre-signal for the east bound  
3 direction on Churchill Avenue with the goal of minimizing or reducing the number of vehicles  
4 that stop on the railroad tracks. Some of the other elements are sidewalk realignment or  
5 widening, repaving and restriping it make it more visible and more prominent. Drainage  
6 improvements and signing and striping for bikes and pedestrians and all users.

7  
8 Thank you. As I mentioned, there are multiple stakeholders in this group in this project. Caltrans  
9 is the funding agency. They are our funding partner. The State Department of Transportation,  
10 Caltrain and JPB, the Joint Powers Board. They maintain and operate the Caltrain in the  
11 peninsula. California Public Utilities Commission as the diagnostic team that is lead by the CPUC  
12 came up with the recommendation of the improvements that need to be done for this  
13 intersection. And the proximity to the Palo Alto High School and adjacent homeowners are also  
14 key stakeholders in this project.

15  
16 Some of the technical constraints as we have been moving forward with the project. The Right-  
17 of-Way, there are various agencies, the City of Palo Alto and JPB, that have the right-of-way  
18 within the project limits. The scope of work includes improvements that needs to be done with  
19 the City's right-of-way and also within the JPB's right-of-way and the City has been actively  
20 coordinating work with JPB and collaborating and coordinating with that agency. And during  
21 that process, we have found many existing utilities that have... that are in conflict or that needs  
22 relocation in order to implement the changes or implement the improvements that are being  
23 proposed. Intersection visibility and capacity are also key constraints in this particular  
24 intersection. Having a high school close to this intersection, we see not just a large number of  
25 vehicles but also a high number of pedestrians and bikes... bicycles using this intersection. And  
26 Alma being a truck route, we also see a high number of larger trucks and large vehicles using  
27 that corridor.

28  
29 So, with this, I will hand it over to Marie Mai from Calendar Associates to continue the  
30 presentation and will be here to answer any questions at the end.

31  
32 Ms. Mai: Great, thank you. Let me know if you can hear me? So, to start with just to orient you  
33 to the site. We're going to run through some of the operating constraints and then I'll walk  
34 through the two concepts. So, this aerial here shows a bird's eye view of our project area that's  
35 shown and outlined in the white dash. So, to orient you, Alma Street and the Caltrain tracks run  
36 roughly top to bottom on the page and we'll go ahead and call that north to south and then  
37 Churchill Avenue runs roughly left to right. Palo Alto Avenue... sorry, Palo Alto High School is at  
38 the upper left-hand corner near the location we labeled with an A and then the yellow arrows  
39 show the existing traffic lanes and also the direction of that traffic.

40

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1 Utilizing site observations and existing IEP pre-COVID traffic count data. The project team found  
2 that during the morning school and work commute period, the peak periods. There is a  
3 significant amount of traffic on westbound Churchill and this congestion spills into the north  
4 bound left-turn lane on Alma Street. And even though traffic on westbound Churchill has a  
5 prohibited weekday morning through traffic prohibition during the school peak hour. There's  
6 still a significant number of pedestrians and cyclists crossing the north leg of that intersection.  
7 And so that, in turn, results in the right... vehicles trying to make a right turn needing to yield to  
8 them and in turn results in long vehicular queues. So, we can see this vehicular traffic in photo  
9 two to the bottom left and that's during the westbound morning commute, where we can see  
10 the cars queuing and then also many students commuting to Pally riding their bikes. And then  
11 conversely in the afternoon we also see long vehicular queues going east bound on Churchill.

12  
13 Slide here shows in yellow the primary pedestrian routes in the project are consisting of  
14 existing sidewalks and crosswalks. And we can see the potential conflict zone as pedestrians  
15 cross the Caltrain tracks which we're showing here in red. So, there's a potential area of  
16 constraint primarily at location B where pedestrians basically get bookended with the tracks  
17 and the trains on one side and then the cars and the roadway on the other. And this location B  
18 also typical experiences heavy pedestrian volumes both during the morning and after school  
19 peak hours. So, photo three shows a view from location A of existing rail gates and the barriers  
20 the funnel pedestrians across the tracks and we can see that it's pretty narrow. It's only a few  
21 feet wide.

22  
23 With this slide, the green shows the bike routes through the area which consists of Class 2 bike  
24 lanes on the street in both directions along Churchill Avenue. And then also the Embarcadero  
25 Trail or Embarcadero Bike Path which is a separated bike path, pave asphalt that routes around  
26 the school perimeter. Sorry. That trail is also shown in photo five at the top left and then the  
27 bottom photo, photo six bottom left. It gives you a sense of how well-used Churchill Avenue is  
28 for student cyclists. You can see in the photo they're riding east bound in the afternoon in both  
29 the bike land and the travel lane.

30  
31 And then this slide shows a more zoomed-out view of Churchill Avenue. You can see the project  
32 area noted by the dashed white box to the bottom right, the corner. The City is also developing  
33 plans for the Churchill Avenue Bike Way Project which terminates or ends at the Castilleja  
34 Avenue intersection shown in the white box at the top left. So, between those two areas, the  
35 improvements will be consisting of primarily of asphalt pavement re-pavement shown in the  
36 green-colored overlay on this slide.

37  
38 So, given those site constraints of the rail road and other elements. The team has developed  
39 two concept alternatives. With Concept One shown in here, the number of vehicular lanes  
40 remains the same and the morning through restriction for westbound Churchill traffic would

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1 also remain. So, with this concept, a number of enhancements are proposed that focus on  
2 improving the visibility of pedestrians and cyclists. So, this includes the use of yellow letter  
3 striping, the addition of stop bars to help discourage motorists from encroaching the crosswalk  
4 and helps maximize the visibility of pedestrians as they cross the street. Visibility of cyclists  
5 would be improved by the provisions of green bike cross markings across the intersection and  
6 then also green painted bike lanes to the segment west of the tracks. The sidewalk pavement at  
7 location B where we see a lot of high pedestrian volumes would be expanded to almost double  
8 the existing space. So, it would increase the amount of queuing space available to students and  
9 pedestrians. Also, at that location a wider curb ramp, again just helps keep pedestrians moving  
10 through, moving more quickly and also looking at widening the railroad gate arms. Again, to  
11 provide for that wider access width and then there's an additional pavement to be placed at  
12 roughly location A. You can kind of make out the grey triangle there and that's just to help  
13 improve and smooth the connection between the corner to the Embarcadero Trail for cyclists  
14 and pedestrians headed in that direction. In addition to these enhancements, a pre-single is  
15 proposed at location X and that would prevent east bound vehicles on Churchill from queuing  
16 on the tracks and also within the train crossing area. This pre-signal would restrict east bound  
17 vehicles from turning right on red onto south bound Alma. So, this does potentially impact the  
18 vehicular capacity at the intersection. However, by modifying the signal timing and the phasing,  
19 we can provide more continuous green time to the vehicles turning right. And then in doing so,  
20 our analysis shows that the potential vehicular delay and potential congestion can be mitigated.  
21 So, the end result here would be that traffic congestion for the overall intersection would  
22 improve compared to the existing conditions and that's even taking into account the increased  
23 frequency of trains from the Caltrain track electrification.

24  
25 With Concept Two, very similar enhancements and improvements to pedestrian and bicycle  
26 visibility. Such as high visibility crosswalks, stop bars, the bike lanes markings, the wider  
27 pedestrian access across the tracks. But there are a few key differences between Concept Two  
28 and Concept One and they are the results of the proposed elimination of the south bound right  
29 turn only lane on Alma. So, there are a few very specific benefits related to the elimination of  
30 that right turn pocket. One, the Alma Street cross distance would be shorter for pedestrians  
31 and cyclists. Two, the pedestrian queuing space would be four times as much as the existing  
32 conditions and then twice as much as in Concept One. And then the elimination of the right  
33 turn only lane, it also provides us with an opportunity to slightly widen the remaining two lanes.  
34 Ruchika mentioned that there's also of truck traffic on the corridor. Eliminating that lane also  
35 allows us to replace pavement with stormwater planters. That's shown in the green in the plan  
36 and so that helps meet City environmental goals, helps treat stormwater runoff, helps improve  
37 water quality. So, a number of benefits there and then with the elimination of that right-turn-  
38 only lane. This would result in the current outer through lane becoming a through right lane.  
39 So, it's important to note that the turning movement would be retained. But it would be  
40 combined with that through lane and that's a condition found at most intersections so those

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1 are pretty typical. Concept Two like Concept One incorporates an addition of a pre-signal and  
2 our analysis found that the potential... again the potential for traffic congestion would be  
3 mitigated with the various signal phasing modifications. And so, this might seem a little  
4 counter-intuitive because of the removal of that right turn only pocket but because that pocket  
5 is relatively short. Vehicle queuing on south bound Alma during the peak period does occur  
6 primarily in that through lane which then because of the queuing there it would tend to block  
7 the through both the through movements and that right turn movement. So, as a result with  
8 Concept Two, like Concept One, would see an overall reduction in congestion compared to  
9 existing conditions but the reduction Conception Two compared to One would be a little bit  
10 less. So, to summarize, there are distinct benefits as well as potential disadvantages between  
11 the two concepts.

12  
13 We've gone to the community and held several meetings over the past few months to solicit  
14 impute. And so, we held a community meeting in January and attendees had indicated a slight  
15 preference for Concept One. Primarily because of an initial concern related to the elimination  
16 of the right turn pocket. Thinking that meant the elimination of that right turn movement  
17 completely and so we clarified that turning movement would not be eliminated. It's just  
18 combined with that through lane. And then, of course, off-peak there'd be fewer cars and so  
19 there wouldn't be any delay expected there.

20  
21 A second primary concern from the community was related to that pre-signal and the  
22 accompanying right turn on red restriction from east bound Churchill to south bound Alma. And  
23 that would be found in both Concepts One and Two. So, again our analysis found that this  
24 would not cause significant congestion on Churchill because that the phasing can be changed to  
25 again, allow for continuous green time and so any potential delay would be mitigated.

26  
27 We've also presented the concepts to PABAC and the Committee there indicated a slight  
28 preference for Concept Number Two. Primarily since it provided the largest queuing space for  
29 pedestrians. They also had a number of comments that encouraged additional enhancements  
30 for bicyclists. And so that was addressed with the addition of the green bike lane markings and  
31 then also the improved connection to Embarcadero Trail. There were other potential  
32 enhancements that were considered such as a bike box and other phasing adjustments but  
33 those did not seem warranted or feasible for various reasons for this particular location.

34  
35 We've also taken the project to the City School Traffic Safety Committee also in February and  
36 the concepts were received positively and we've also shared it with the school district where  
37 we haven't received feedback yet. So, we'll see if we get any input there.

38

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1 And then we've also been sharing and coordinating the project and design and holding  
2 stakeholder meetings monthly to work with agencies such as Caltrans and Caltrain and others  
3 to coordinate the design.

4  
5 And so, our next steps, with the Commission's recommendation tonight we would then bring  
6 the concept to Council in May for approval of a Preferred Plan. And then we would then return  
7 to the community in summer to share that approved concept and then go into construction  
8 drawing preparation over the summer and fall. And so, looking for construction to be done in  
9 2022.

10  
11 So, with that, the formal presentation is ended. We have our last two slides here we'll... I'll keep  
12 it up for reference during discussion and Q&A. This slide shows the two concepts side by side  
13 for a graphic comparison and then we also have a slide with kind of a more bulletized list  
14 comparing the two concepts. With that, I will turn it back over.

15  
16 Chair Hechtman: Alright, thank you, transportation team. Before we go to public comment let  
17 me find out if any of the Commissioners have questions for Staff. Commissioner Lauing, I see  
18 your hand is up but I'm wondering if that is from the last item? It is, alright then we'll go to  
19 Commissioner Templeton.

20  
21 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you and thank you Ms. Aggarwal for the presentation. I would  
22 like to know about this turn pocket in Concept Two. Does that have any implication on  
23 ownership of that space? I'm asking because I think there's a portion of it that is shared and  
24 wondering if changing it from a lane on Alma has an implications that we should understand.

25  
26 Ms. Mai: That question has come up in prior meetings and there wouldn't be any change.

27  
28 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you for clarifying. Someone asked me that today and I was  
29 just like well I should try and understand that better. I didn't know. Ok, that's all. (interrupted)

30  
31 Mr. Ripon Bhatia, Chief Engineer: [unintelligible]

32  
33 Commissioner Templeton: Oh, go ahead.

34  
35 Mr. Bhatia: Commissioner Templeton is that yes. Part of that right-hand lane is in JPB's  
36 jurisdiction, but our intent by putting the improvements over there is to retain the  
37 encroachment as is.

38  
39 Commissioner Templeton: Right so it would just be for a different type of vehicle, but we'd still  
40 be in charge of maintaining the (interrupted)

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Mr. Bhatia: Correct. It's not going to be vehicular movement. It's going to be a drainage improvement there so we... the City will still continue to keep the encroachment there.

Commissioner Templeton: Thank you so much, Mr. Bhatia. Alright, that was my question. Thank you.

Chair Hechtman: Summa.

Commissioner Summa: Thank you. I just wanted to verify that the area that's on the east side of the tracks in the black hashes. That would know... where you can sometimes sit there and wait to either go straight, left, or right. That would no longer be... would the pre-signal eliminates the use of that are by vehicles? Is that... am I correct?

Ms. Mai: That would be... that's correct. That would be the intent is to again, you know, so there's the hash mark and then also the keep clear striping on the pavement. The intent is to keep vehicles out of that area.

Commissioner Summa: Great, thank you very much.

Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Chang.

Ms. Aggarwal: Well no, I would like to clarify that yeah, keep clear is where we would intend the vehicles not to stop. The hashed area would still remain as a holding pocket for cars either going straight or turning right but it would minimize the number of cars that can wait there because of the pre-signal.

Commissioner Summa: I just noticed from experience because it's a truck route, Alma, that a large truck turning left westbound onto Churchill cannot make a turn if you're sitting there. I've had to back up onto the track to avoid getting hit. So, it's... I think eliminating or reducing the use of that area would increase the safety also.

Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Chang followed by Vice-Chair Roohparvar.

Commissioner Chang: Thanks. I have a data question, so with electrification, there should be more trains going through and we would expect more delays, right? But I was looking at Page 81 of the Packet or Table Six and unless I'm reading something wrong. The right most column, the times in the right most column were worse before electrification and so I'm wondering what might cause that? Worse for the south bound lands on Alma. Basically, I'm thinking about

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1 Option Two and then the biggest downside on Option Two is slowing down some traffic on  
2 Alma. So, I'm trying to figure out how big those differences are and it's not making sense to me.

3  
4 Ms. Mai: A question that maybe Trisha can answer?

5  
6 Ms. Trisha Dudala, Consultant: Yes. Good evening everyone. This is Trisha with Hexagon  
7 Transportation Consultants and you're probably looking at the delay shown for Alternative Two  
8 for the south bound approach. So, the delay... so with the elimination of the right turn pocket  
9 under Alternative Two, what would happen is the south bound right turns would echo from  
10 outer through lane. So, sometimes you could come... so, because the right turns are occurring  
11 from a shared through right. It could cause some impedance to the south bound through traffic  
12 which would cause the delays to increase for the south bound through movements. So, that's  
13 what the table shows. However, when you compare the overall intersection delay in  
14 conjunction with the... which includes both the safety improvements which includes a pre-  
15 signal in conjunction with the timing... signal timing modifications that we recommended. The  
16 overall average delay of the intersection would still be better compared to existing conditions.

17  
18 Commissioner Chang: I understand and what I was comparing was say the morning peak with  
19 electrification and without. And I can't figure out why it would... the delay would actually be  
20 less with electrification according to your data.

21  
22 Ms. Dudala: I don't have the report here. My computer... office computer actually froze but I  
23 can take a look at that once my computer restarts and then get back to you on that.

24  
25 Commissioner Chang: Well, compare Table Two to Table Six for the south bound lane.

26  
27 Ms. Dudala: Ok.

28  
29 Commissioner Chang: It does look like it causes up to a minute greater delay for the south  
30 bound compared to existing conditions. In some... depending on which peak we're looking at.  
31 Ok, that's it, thanks.

32  
33 Chair Hechtman: Vice-Chair Roohparvar.

34  
35 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: So, that was my exact question. Commissioner Chang hit on it. I was  
36 trying to figure out like it looks like Concept Two causes more of a traffic delay and then the  
37 electrification issue. I was wondering the same thing so no question for me.

38  
39 Chair Hechtman: I have a question for Staff before we get to public comment. Do we have  
40 accident information at this intersection? Car on car, car and bike, car and pedestrian?

- 
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1  
2 Ms. Aggarwal: I don't have the collision report readily available with me but I do remember at  
3 one of the stakeholder's meeting. Caltrans and Caltrain bringing it up that this intersection is  
4 one of the intersection with high number of collisions and that's why the federal funds were  
5 being allocated here. But I don't have that data with me handy right now and I'm happy to look  
6 at it and send it.

7  
8 Chair Hechtman: Your answer (interrupted)

9  
10 Mr. Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official: And I'm sorry to just say this antidotally because  
11 I don't remember the exact details but I think this was the grade crossing that was like the fifth-  
12 highest amount of collisions in the state or something similar to that. Don't quote me on that  
13 but it's something very similar to that which is why this specific crossing was selected to receive  
14 this funding. And just noting that this is 100 percent funded by the federal Section 130 funds for  
15 that purpose.

16  
17 Chair Hechtman: Ok, thank you and that's a sufficient answer you've... to help me understand  
18 even without the specific numbers. And then the other question I had just to make sure I  
19 understand these tables. I'm looking at Table One and Table Five which are Levels of Service.  
20 Table One is without electrification, Table Five is with electrification and I think I'm reading that  
21 Alternative One in both tables has a little bit less delay than Alternative Two. Am I reading  
22 those two tables correctly?

23  
24 Ms. Mai: I'm sorry you're comparing within Table One?

25  
26 Chair Hechtman: Yeah, within Table One, I think Alternative Two is the last column and  
27 Alternative One is the column next to it immediately to its left.

28  
29 Ms. Mai: Yeah so yeah if you look at the LOS which is the Level of Service kind of assignment  
30 then yes. I read... yes, that third column is Concept One because it's existing plus the safety  
31 improvements and then that fourth column is the existing safety but there's no right turn. That  
32 right turn lane has been removed and so you compare the LOS in the a.m. in the morning.  
33 They're both E but it's an improvement from the existing conditions which is F and then with  
34 the after school. The third column, Concept One is D, the last column is E and there's a slight  
35 improvement compared to existing which is E. So, we're going from E to D or E to E and then  
36 the last, in the afternoon, it's going from E to E so no significant change there.

37  
38 Chair Hechtman: Although the average delay and this is really what I was focusing more than  
39 the Level of Service which is a range of delays, right? Here for example when you look at the  
40 p.m. in Table One. There's a 59.53-second delay for Alternative One and a 61.23-second delay

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1 for Alternative Two. Even though they're both LOS E. So, I just wanted to make sure I was  
2 reading those right and it's the same read for Table Five which is with electrification I think.

3  
4 Mr. Bhatia: Yes, that's correct.

5  
6 Chair Hechtman: Ok, alright, those were my questions. Anymore (interrupted)

7  
8 Ms. Bhatia: I'd like to add on to the questions that were asked before. I think the reason is that  
9 the Table Two and Table Four when they were looking at it is the a.m. and p.m. So, for a.m. the  
10 traffic has both school and the regular peak combined and, in the p.m., they are separated. So,  
11 the school... there's a midafternoon p.m. peak and p.m. peak so there's that difference. That's  
12 why there could be a difference in the Level of Service and the delays kind of questions.

13  
14 Commissioner Chang: That was... I was actually comparing Tables Two and Six which are both  
15 a.m. peak and not (interrupted)

16  
17 Ms. Bhatia: Ok, let me take a look at two and six. (interrupted)

18  
19 Commissioner Chang: [unintelligible] or something magical happens with electrification.

20  
21 Mr. Bhatia: No, actually it's the electrification and the signal improvements. So, the signal  
22 improvements that the project provides for in addition helps in doing those improving the Level  
23 of Service and the delays.

24  
25 Commissioner Chang: Right but there's signal improvement in both of them.

26  
27 Mr. Bhatia: So, two and six.

28  
29 Mr. Jason Mansfield, Consultant: This is Jason Mansfield. I'm with BKF Engineers and I think  
30 what it is, is that you're looking at the south bound meeting north bound Alma Street as well.  
31 With electrification you get more green time on Alma because the gates are down, blocking the  
32 westbound east bound movements. That's my guess but I think Trisha is going to look at it in  
33 more detail.

34  
35 Ms. Dudala: Yes. Yeah, this is Trisha. I was able to get my computer back on and compare Table  
36 Two and Table Six and the delays for the south bound through movement and what Jason  
37 mentioned is absolutely correct. With electrification what happens is there are increased  
38 number of gate closures which means Alma Street, going north and south, would receive more  
39 green time because when the gates are down in order to service the train. The north bound and  
40 south bound on Alma Street, they continue to receive green. So, on the electrification, since

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1 more time is allocated to north bound and south bound approaches compared to on the  
2 existing conditions without electrification. You do see a slight decrease in delay for the south  
3 bound approach on Alma Street.

4

5 Commissioner Chang: Thank you. That explains it. I was trying to figure it out so thank you.

6

7 Ms. Dudala: Alright.

8

9 Mr. Bhatia: Good question.

10

11 Chair Hechtman: So, thank you Staff for that. Any further Commission questions of Staff before  
12 we go to public comment? I'm seeing no additional hands so we will now open the floor for  
13 public comments. Please raise your hand if you wish to speak. On the Zoom App, there is a raise  
14 hand button on the bottom of your screen. If you're dialing in from a phone, please press \*9.  
15 Mr. Nguyen, do we have public speakers for this item?

16

17 Ms. Vinh Nguyen, Admin Associate III: Yes, we do have two hands raised. Our first speaker will  
18 be Carolyn and then followed by Robert. Carolyn, if you're there, please unmute yourself.

19

20 Ms. Carolyn Chow: Hi, good evening. I'm speaking on behalf of the Palo Alto Unified School  
21 District and we appreciate the City's efforts to improve safety at this intersection as it is a major  
22 pathway for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles traveling to and from the Pally High School  
23 Campus.

24

25 However, PAUSD, parents and the community have been focused on contending with the  
26 COVID emergency and have been unable to provide adequate engagement or representation  
27 on this critical process. The district was not included as a relevant stakeholder to provide input  
28 or ask questions of the design professionals in the monthly meetings. And was only included in  
29 the single City School Traffic and Safety Committee back in February. An email was sent to the  
30 Superintendent yesterday asking for review and comment. So, I hope that tonight's evening will  
31 provide an opportunity for comments to be recorded. Due to the immediate district need as  
32 the time to open our schools. All relative parties were not able to attend or stay for the entire  
33 presentation.

34

35 We were not fully aware of the proposed changes. We respectfully ask if the Commission seeks  
36 to proceed with Concept Two which includes altering the right-hand turn lane. That the  
37 Commission hold off on that decision until the design team can meet with our transportation  
38 manager and transportation team to review any potential impacts to bus routes and to bus turn  
39 radii. Our buses currently cross through the Alma/Churchill intersection over 20 times a day as

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1 part of their routine business and we have not had the opportunity to fully understand if this  
2 impacts our service to students.

3  
4 We would also ask that any construction at this key intersection be in coordination with the  
5 district as to not impact operations to our students or during the school instructional day.  
6 Otherwise, we are in full support of the proposed safety improvements, but again seeking  
7 opportunities to review these plans with our team. Thank you.

8  
9 Mr. Nguyen: Thank you for your comments. Our next speaker is Robert and then followed by  
10 Rebecca.

11  
12 Mr. Robert Neff: Good evening. Can you hear me?

13  
14 Mr. Nguyen: Yes, we can hear you. Thank you.

15  
16 Mr. Neff: Good. I'm glad to see this project moving ahead and to see the [unintelligible] traffic  
17 report for the two alternatives. This crossing is dangerous right now and it needs the safety  
18 improvement.

19  
20 I think the second alternative adding more space to the northwest corner of the intersection for  
21 queuing of bicyclists and pedestrians going through safely. And currently, the space is really  
22 minimal and there are a lot... there is a lot of queuing especially after school.

23  
24 When this report came to PABAC where I heard it. We had not yet had a traffic report from  
25 Hexagon and I have a couple comments. The first is I think the City Staff should start routinely  
26 asking for measures of pedestrian and bicycle Level of Service as well as traditional automobile  
27 Level of Service. It should not take much additional work to figure out the average and  
28 maximum crossing times for one or two streets and to notice if there's so much bicycle  
29 congestion that perhaps cyclists have to wait. According to the data, there's 400 bicyclists who  
30 are crossing going westbound in the morning.

31  
32 Also, that also impacts with electrification when you have the gates coming down and I'm a  
33 strong bias toward traffic on Alma. So, there can be a very large impact on crossing traffic. In  
34 particular, on crossing pedestrians and bicyclists having to wait through an extra cycle or  
35 sometimes even two cycles. My observation crossing at Meadow is that the changes to the  
36 signalization over time have been disadvantageous to pedestrians or bicyclists crossing there.  
37 Thank you for your service to your City.

38  
39 Mr. Nguyen: Thank you for your comments. Our last speaker is Rebecca.

40

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1 Ms. Rebecca Eisenberg: Hi there. Thank you for having me speak again. You might hear some  
2 noise in the background. That actually is Caltrain. I'm talking from Alma Street. I mostly wanted  
3 to really point out the need to include the public school in this conversation. So, I was  
4 extremely relieved to hear the first speaker and I really want to amplify everything she said. I  
5 have a kid at Pally. Today he was practicing driving so drove me to his baseball practice and on  
6 the way there and on the way back we crossed that particular intersection. And even now  
7 before electrification, it is extraordinarily dangerous and it has a significant impact on the public  
8 schools.

9  
10 That said, the solution should not be one that impacts the buses because the buses are  
11 essential for... especially for one of many reasons but one is because they take kids from under-  
12 resourced neighborhoods to our Palo Alto public schools, which is an extremely important  
13 equity program. And we must really protect it and honor it and already these kid's bus rides are  
14 so long. Additionally, these buses are truly important to take kids with physical disabilities and  
15 that's important too. I know that I... I just to kind of to respond to and sorry there's not the  
16 timer here. So, if you could tell me I'm at the comment [unintelligible] I want to honor that but  
17 real quickly I was told that in one of the earliest conversations where there was initially a school  
18 district person to kind of respond to that. I guess there was maybe some confusion,  
19 miscommunication, and whatever. The truth is that if the school district did not actually opine  
20 about this and they must. And they did send a letter with regard to the XCAP and that letter, I  
21 saw it for myself, was completely not looked at, relied upon. Just utterly ignored. As a  
22 reminder, there are 12,000 kids in our public-school system at 16 schools. It is essential that  
23 you all consider them as a stakeholder in all of these actions including Castilleja. I shouldn't be a  
24 person, I'm to no one, to put them on notice that you all going to put up a garage on a bike  
25 boulevard or shut down an essential route for buses. Please include the school district. They are  
26 stakeholders, they're... public schools are actually your stakeholders while private companies  
27 are not. Thank you for considering. Have a nice night.

28  
29 Mr. Nguyen: Thank you for joining us tonight. Chair, that concludes public comments for this  
30 item.

31  
32 Chair Hechtman: Alright, thank you members of the public for speaking to us on this item. I'll  
33 bring it back now to the Commission for deliberation. What Staff is looking for tonight is a  
34 recommendation; Alternate One, Alternate Two, or something else. So, I think that will take the  
35 form of a motion so I'd like to start with a round of comments from Commissioners. You're  
36 thoughts on the two alternatives. Who would like to go first? Thank you, Commissioner Chang,  
37 followed by Commissioner Summa.

38  
39 Commissioner Chang: Thanks. What the PAUSD representative (interrupted)  
40

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1 Chair Hechtman: Can you speak up a little bit? We sometimes we're having a little difficulty  
2 hearing you.

3  
4 Commissioner Chang: Sorry about that. What the PAUSD representative said seems pretty  
5 important to me. I don't know if there's a way to delay because I'm very concerned that we  
6 would negatively impacting bus traffic potentially with the removal of that right-hand lane.  
7 Otherwise, I would say that the safety benefit of additional queuing space is what makes me  
8 lean towards Option Two. I do have a reservation which is that it looks like with respect to  
9 south bound traffic on Alma. If we went with Option Two, we could be increasing queue delays  
10 for some of the south bound lanes by a minute and sometimes more. And I guess my concern  
11 there... I mean overall, the LOS for the intersection has improved relative to the current  
12 situation. But my concern is would we be creating an incentive for bad behavior by drivers who  
13 are already traveling very, very fast on Alma and I guess I'd be... maybe I should have asked this  
14 in the questions. I'm wondering if there's any data with respect to what driver behavior is if  
15 they know there's going to be a much longer wait time if they hit that light? I don't want drivers  
16 running the light on south bound Alma because they want to make sure they bet the light and  
17 hit kids as they're going through. So, that would be my biggest concern. That's it.

18  
19 Ms. Kamhi: So, if I can, I think that the first thing that we should do is the comments from the  
20 school district which I think just noting that there's been some confusion. And this has actually  
21 been an issue that's plagued this project from the beginning is that there's some confusion  
22 about the grade separation project and these safety-related projects that are required. We're  
23 required to do these by CPUC. We are required to do these. These are not something that we're  
24 saying oh we'd like to maybe do these. These are things that we are required to do. We are on  
25 contract to do so we have to do something here. So, just noting that that's the first thing.

26  
27 I also want to note that we sent... that this is a much less significant project in comparison to  
28 grade separation which is a very long-term project expected to take many, many years. So,  
29 noting that we did receive a letter from the school district regarding... district regarding grade  
30 separation. And specifically, regarding the XCAP recommendation for closure at Churchill  
31 Avenue but noting that the City Council has not taken any action or recommended even any  
32 alternative to be recommended there at this point. So, they're just currently reviewing  
33 alternatives but the school district was formally part of that group but any rate, not to get too  
34 much into that grade separation project. Just to mention that we did ask the school district to  
35 provide comments on this specific project back in February. I believe that Carolyn Chow was  
36 referring to a reminder that we sent because we were hoping to get their input on this project  
37 before we go to City Council.

38  
39 And with that, I think it's really critical just to note that we're not trying to prohibit any kind of  
40 turning movements or any kinds of traffic. This is very different from the closure as I

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1 mentioned. So, the closure to Churchill Avenue would prevent any buses from going through.  
2 This is really just trying to make sure that students that are trying to get across the street can  
3 do it safely and that's really the key to this project. But noting that we have also had a lot of  
4 collisions at this intersection so we're trying to improve the safety at this intersection. But  
5 again, I want to emphasize that this is from CPUC, this is required of us federally to improve the  
6 safety of this intersection and once again, it's 100 percent funded by them.

7  
8 So, with that I'm going to turn it over to Ruchika who I believe can talk about the questions and  
9 concerns about a bus getting through this intersection; which I do think are a worthwhile topic  
10 of discussion.

11  
12 Ms. Aggarwal: Thanks, Philip. That's right, just to reiterate, that we are not eliminating the  
13 south bound right turn lane from Alma to Churchill. And since this is a really preliminary  
14 concept phase, we haven't looked into it but we would be sure to use the radius that would be  
15 turning radii that would be allow the buses and trucks and large vehicles to be able to make  
16 that turn safely. So, as we develop the concept that would be under consideration.

17  
18 Chair Hechtman: Mr. Kamhi, is there more from Staff before we go to more Commission  
19 comments? Nope, alright then Commissioner Summa followed by Commissioner Templeton.

20  
21 Commissioner Summa: Thank you. I was concerned about the bus issue but it sounds like Staff  
22 knows that they have to use a radius for right turn on red there that will accommodate buses  
23 and also, it's a truck route as we've discussed earlier. So, I'm less concerned about that, I am  
24 very anxious to see this improvement and I guess either one would be good.

25  
26 I guess I have a slight preference for Number Two. I think that's an extra short turn pocket that  
27 often causes stack-ups in the through lane anyway because it's such a short turn pocket and I  
28 think this is a good solution. I think it addresses the peak hour problem of pedestrians and  
29 bikes. It would probably be ok to have a right turn on red there during nonpeak hours but I  
30 don't see how we can accommodate that. And I think our main goal here is safety for  
31 pedestrians and bikes. So, I have a slight preference for two.

32  
33 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Templeton.

34  
35 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you. This is so interesting. Full disclosure, I was on the XCAP  
36 and did a lot of exploration of alternatives for that project. It does definitely need to be... to  
37 have immediate safety improvements. So, it's exciting to see that these could be in place as  
38 early as 2022 whereas everything that we've been talking about for the XCAP is probably 7- to  
39 10-years away at the minimum.

40

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1 I think I understand about the pocket on Alma. The concerns that I've heard in addition to that  
2 are the potential backups on Churchill and those are... that would exist in both of these options  
3 because of the elimination of the right turn on red from Churchill to south bound Alma. And I  
4 was just wondering if... Staff, do you have any thoughts about this? I'm going to... before you...  
5 while you prepare your answer I want to ask is this the same that would happen on Charleston  
6 or is that movement... I know that the... you're not supposed to cross the tracks to wait for the  
7 light at Charleston, but I think you can still turn right on south bound Alma there. So, can you...  
8 is there... can you compare it to Charleston? And then can you tell me more about what... how  
9 come you think it's going to be ok and won't become an even worse queuing problem for  
10 Churchill if we do that?

11  
12 Mr. Rafael Rius, Traffic Engineering Lead: Sure, either... we can have Trisha answer that or I can  
13 answer that too. Either... why don't you go ahead, Trisha.

14  
15 Ms. Dudala: Yeah, I can take the question. So, on the Churchill, in addition to the pre-signal  
16 what we are... our recommendation is to provide an overlap phasing for the east bound right  
17 turns on Churchill. So, the east bound right turns would get a green signal that would... and  
18 they could turn onto south bound Alma concurrently with the north bound left turns from Alma  
19 to Churchill. So, we will be providing additional green time for the right turns to be able to keep  
20 that queue moving. And our analysis shows that with the proposed... with the recommended  
21 overlap phasing for the east bound right turns and some signal timing modifications. The ques  
22 on east bound Churchill would not extend all the way to El Camino Real. So, it would be shorter  
23 or comparable to existing conditions.

24  
25 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you and does that requiring any changes to the curbside  
26 parking on Churchill?

27  
28 Ms. Dudala: I don't believe so.

29  
30 Commissioner Templeton: For you to have the room to stack for that right turn movement  
31 since it won't be flowing through. You know sometimes there's vehicles parked in that potential  
32 pocket. It's not really a pocket on Churchill but it's sort of de facto.

33  
34 Ms. Dudala: I believe there is... I mean the pocket is pretty long. It's the right turn pocket so it  
35 can accommodate at least a couple [unintelligible – low audio] like to six to seven places.

36  
37 Commissioner Templeton: Oh, I'm sorry, I couldn't hear the last things you said but you said it's  
38 long enough and it can accommodate the length of the queue.

39  
40 Ms. Dudala: Yes.

- 
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1  
2 Commissioner Templeton: Ok, yeah, I was hearing some anecdotal stories about parking along  
3 Churchill interfering with that stacking and I wasn't sure if it would require changes to that. So,  
4 it sounds like not really.

5  
6 Ms. Dudala: No, our analysis did not assume any loss of parking on Churchill.

7  
8 Mr. Rius: Currently there's no parking allowed from Mariposa to the Alma. There... I believe  
9 there may be parking allowed between Castilleja and Mariposa. Actually (interrupted)

10  
11 Commissioner Templeton: I think you nailed it. That sounds like that's an intermittent issue. I  
12 don't know if it's allowed or people maybe overstay or (interrupted)

13  
14 Mr. Rius: Well, between Mariposa and Churchill there's about two parking spaces. I don't  
15 think... and I don't think our plans are intended to change that. I think what you do see  
16 sometimes is there's no cars parked there and it becomes used as an extended right turn lane  
17 but it's (interrupted)

18  
19 Commissioner Templeton: Yes, that's exactly the behavior. Yeah (interrupted)

20  
21 Mr. Rius: But yeah that's to the west of mariposa.

22  
23 Commissioner Templeton: Ok, alright, well it's good to clarify. I know there's definitely going to  
24 be some interest in that question so thank you for clarifying. I do think that we need that  
25 stacking space. I think that is a really well-used paths for bikes and pedestrians. So, my  
26 preference would be for Concept Two. I guess my only thought from a risk analysis perspective  
27 is what are you going to do if you're estimations are wrong and it really becomes a traffic  
28 problem. Can we convert it back to a pocket lane or no? So, that's just something to think  
29 about. You know is there a way to test it before you implement it? Are you able to get some  
30 real live test data before you... like is there a way to test it? What do you call it? Prototype it to  
31 verify that your theoretical numbers are correct?

32  
33 Mr. Kamhi: I could let somebody speak to this. I think it's easier for us to convert it back than to  
34 test it probably because I just... I don't believe that you could do it wouldn't doing all the other  
35 things. So, I don't think it's something where you can just cone it off and say alright we're now  
36 not having this lane and see how it functions; because you also need the signal timing changes,  
37 you need the remarking and you need the pre-signal and all the things together to make it  
38 function.

39

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1 Ms. Aggarwal: That's right. I was just going to add that not just the signal timing but also the  
2 hardware. We are proposing different signals and upgraded signals and changes to the signal  
3 phasing and that would be impacted. So, this project would (interrupted)

4  
5 Commissioner Templeton: Well, I was thinking... go ahead, I'm sorry.

6  
7 Mr. Aggarwal: No, yeah so, this project would be a very difficult one to implement it as a trial  
8 and kind of evaluate the effectiveness before building it permanently.

9  
10 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you and I'm sorry for the overlap. There's a slight delay and I  
11 didn't mean to jump in there. So, I guess if I were to challenge you all to think about how to  
12 prototype it. It would be after all of that equipment that is the same between Option One and  
13 Two would be installed and then you can test the lane if you wanted to do that. And the only  
14 reason I suggest it is is that this is a beloved and therefore potential controversial pathway in  
15 Palo Alto and you're going to hear a lot of feedback on it. And so that's just been my experience  
16 when we make changes of this magnitude that sometimes people want to have a chance to get  
17 a feel for it. So, that's just something to think about. I certainly wouldn't want to test the...  
18 whether to keep the pocket or not until like you said, all the other stuff was installed. So, just a  
19 suggestion to think about but my preference would be to make sure that this bike pathway,  
20 which is really well used, is as safe as possible. Thank you.

21  
22 Chair Hechtman: Mr. Nguyen, I see your hand up.

23  
24 Mr. Nguyen: Yes, Chair Templeton... I'm sorry, Chair Hechtman. I wanted to let you know that  
25 we have a phone caller with his or her hand raised and there's a chance that this might be  
26 Commissioner Alcheck.

27  
28 Chair Hechtman: Is there no way for you to find out without connecting them?

29  
30 Mr. Nguyen: I believe that's the only way right now unless one of you guys knows his phone  
31 number? The last four digits here is 3576.

32  
33 Chair Hechtman: That's not his normal phone number. Well, why don't... let's roll the dice to  
34 introduce our mystery caller.

35  
36 Mr. Nguyen: Will the phone call with the last four digits 3576 please unmute yourself by  
37 pressing \*6.

38  
39 Ms. Carrie Yarkin: Hello? Hello? Hello, can you hear me?  
40

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1 Chair Hechtman: Hello. Yes, we can.

2

3 Ms. Yarkin: Hi, this is Carrie Yarkin and I've lived and I've very knowledgeable about that corner  
4 because I live on the 100 block of Churchill or I have lived there and I'm planning to live there. I  
5 just want to bring up a few points because I went to (interrupted)

6

7 Chair Hechtman: Carrie, can I interrupt you for just a second? The public comment portion of  
8 this agenda passed. It's important for us that people who want to speak connect during that  
9 period to let us know. That allows us to orchestrate our deliberation. So, it wouldn't be fair...  
10 there are other attendees watching, it wouldn't be fair to them to reopen for you. So, what I'm  
11 going to ask you to do is the comments that you have are valuable to the City. I would ask you  
12 to put them in an email and send them both to the PTC and the City Council. This item is either  
13 going to be... either we're not going to finish with tonight in which case we'll tackle it again. But  
14 it seems likely that this will move onto the Council and so I want to encourage you to put those  
15 comments in writing. So, that the Council can consider all of your points but we won't be able  
16 to offer you an opportunity to provide public comment tonight.

17

18 Mr. Kamhi... so, Commissioner Lauing, I see your hand up but I also see Mr. Kamhi's hand and  
19 so I'm going to go with Staff first because maybe he'll answer your question before you ask it.

20

21 Mr. Kamhi: Oh no, I... hopefully I'll just... and noting my video is frozen again so I hope you can  
22 hear me ok. I just wanted to come back to Cari's... Commissioner Templeton's question earlier  
23 about undoing or testing it out. Just noting that we're considering that and I think probably that  
24 most feasible way to do would be construct Option One and then trial Option Two as a  
25 removing the lane. But then noting that it would cost us additional if we then determined that  
26 we wanted to construct Option Two because you can just do it without the crosswalk lining up  
27 and all the different components. It's really difficult to separate so that's the way that we can  
28 (interrupted)

29

30 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you so much.

31

32 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Lauing.

33

34 Commissioner Lauing: Thank you. Just to note on Page 50 yes, we don't want to be queuing up  
35 on a railroad track so thankfully both of these solutions take care of that problem. I'm sort of  
36 intrigued on Page 60. Always want to get community input and you guys doing it on this. I'm  
37 questioning the folks that didn't vote. There were 28 people that attended that, you got 10  
38 votes, so did the other people figure that either one was ok or was its midnight and they signed  
39 off Zoom, or do we know?

40

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1 Ms. Aggarwal: Unfortunately, we don't know. It was definitely not midnight. We ended the  
2 meeting by 8:30. We started at 6:30 so I... the assumption would they were probably ok with  
3 either or. Maybe they didn't want their names to be put with a certain concept at that early  
4 stage but.

5  
6 Commissioner Lauing: Ok.

7  
8 Mr. Kamhi: Just to add to that, we did have some people that signed off as soon as we were  
9 done with the presentation of the item and we started asking questions.

10  
11 Commissioner Lauing: Ok. So, I don't think that this particular vote is instructive either way but  
12 I'm glad that we're asking those questions. So, as I understand the issue on the school buses is  
13 that you are representing that that problem is not going to be a problem because whatever  
14 radius you need to make that right turn. It will happen and it will happen just in that one right  
15 turn lane. You aren't going to have to be moving into the left lane. I know I'm being sort of  
16 pedantic about this but it's important. I just want to make sure we're all on the record.

17  
18 Ms. Aggarwal: That's right so yeah, we would use the extra space that we get from that pocket  
19 and widen the remaining lanes and make sure that the turning radius is sufficient for any school  
20 buses and any large trucks or large cars.

21  
22 Commissioner Lauing: Ok. After all (interrupted)

23  
24 Mr. Kamhi: Let me note really quickly that it's not just the school buses, large cars. It's also the  
25 emergency vehicles we need to accommodate; fire trucks, trash trucks.

26  
27 Commissioner Lauing: Good point. Thank you. Good addition to that response. So, I am  
28 leaning to the second alternative as being slightly preferable. Where there's really good analysis  
29 with a lot of data to show us and we don't always have the choice between two good  
30 alternatives on something that we all need and we need right away. So, this is a very pleasant  
31 issue for us to deal with tonight.

32  
33 A couple... one related issue is that what is the length of construction and disruption and what  
34 months? Are you going to try to do it in summer because of school?

35  
36 Ms. Aggarwal: We don't know the length of the construction as of yet. Typically, it takes several  
37 months just to order the traffic signal equipment and the hardware. But we also have to be  
38 mindful of the contract that the City has with Caltrans which terminates in 2022. So, we will try  
39 to do it as soon as we are done with the final design preparation.

40

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1 Commissioner Lauing: So, the answer is you can't guarantee that it will be done in summer is  
2 what I heard. So, it could be during school year.

3  
4 Ms. Aggarwal: It could be during school year but we would the construction hour to minimize  
5 the impact to the school.

6  
7 Commissioner Lauing: Sure, and then do we know what the length of construction would be?

8  
9 Ms. Aggarwal: Not at this time, no. I would presume a few months at least.

10  
11 Commissioner Lauing: Ok. Alright, so I... that's... I really appreciate Staff opining on the right  
12 turn lane issue there and giving us all this data to analyze. So, I'm on board for Option Two and  
13 that's all. Thanks.

14  
15 Chair Hechtman: Vice-Chair Roohparvar.

16  
17 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: I'm still on the fence on this so I mean I'd love to hear Commissioner  
18 Hechtman [note – Chair Hechtman] what you have to say. I really like Commissioner  
19 Templeton's comments about how being able to test it, though I also hear Staff. On this, I have  
20 a question for Mr. Kamhi. How hard is it to... is it easier to go from Option two to One or from  
21 One to Two and when you say there's going to be an impact, what are we talking about? Like  
22 another \$10,000 - \$15,000 and who's paying that? Does that come out of the funds that we  
23 already have and how long would it take to make those changes? A week? I want to understand  
24 the magnitude and then which way is easier?

25  
26 Mr. Kamhi: Yes, I can give you a definite answer for one of those. The easiest way for us to do it  
27 if we were going to trial would be to build Option One and trial Option Two. The second or I  
28 guess the last question you asked is who would pay for it? The answer is I think the City would  
29 pay for it. I don't think Caltrans... we would be done by the time Caltrans... it would be no  
30 longer willing to reimburse us for the work at that point.

31  
32 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Got it.

33  
34 Mr. Kamhi: There's no way we would... the City would end up needing to pay for that  
35 modification. We have not idea how much that additional work would cost incrementally  
36 because that's just not something we've looked at. But that's a really interesting question but  
37 noting that the City would be on the hook for whatever that incremental difference is to make  
38 that modification there. So (interrupted)

39  
40 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Got it.

- 
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1  
2 Mr. Kamhi: I hope I answered all the questions.

3  
4 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Yeah, you did. That's helpful. That's super helpful.

5  
6 Chair Hechtman: Vice-Chair Roohparvar, do you want me to go and then come back to you?

7  
8 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Yeah, I don't have any other questions. I'd just love to hear your  
9 comments too and then make a decision.

10  
11 Chair Hechtman: Ok so I'm going to advocate for Alternative One but before I do that I did want  
12 to respond briefly to the PAUSD representative who expressed some concern should the  
13 Commission recommend Alternative Two, which it looks like it's a distinct possibility. Unless I  
14 am particularly persuasive and that is to tell you, just as I told the public commenter recently,  
15 this is a recommendation that will be made by us. It's going to the City Council and to the  
16 extent you feel that you need to gather more information through your consultants, analyze  
17 things. Then I would encourage you to do that between now and May when this goes to the  
18 City Council and to present your findings to the City Council. I know you join us in agreeing with  
19 all the Commissioners that these safety issues just... we need to move forward with them as  
20 quickly as we intelligently can. And so, I'm... that's why I'm not in favor of slowing this process  
21 for more input. Particularly here where there's an opportunity for that input to come between  
22 us and the Council as much as I'd like to have received it at the PTC level.

23  
24 So, when I... and I have to say I'm pretty familiar with this intersection because I had three kids  
25 use it and I had three kids occasionally queuing on foot or by bike on these corners. And really,  
26 the issues that we're looking at here are safety and then traffic efficiency decisively in that  
27 order. But they're related and to me, I guess I look at this kind of simple. When I look at Table  
28 One and Table Five. What I see is that there is a shorter queuing time with Alternative One and  
29 Alternative Two... than there is with Alternative Two. And my experience as a driver for many  
30 decades and observing other drivers for many decades is that drivers don't like to wait. And the  
31 longer they wait, the more aggravated they get and the more aggravated they get. The more  
32 likely they are to do something dumb or careless. And that increases the likelihood of putting  
33 either a pedestrian or a bicyclist or another car in harm's way. And so, the reason I like  
34 Alternative One is it reduces those delays compared to the present and compared to  
35 Alternative Two. Even though it's not significant, you know 10 percent or less for each of those  
36 delays, it's something and every little bit helps. So, I like Alternative One and I prefer that to  
37 taking what is now a traffic lane and turning much of it into a drainage feature. And then the  
38 rest of it into additional queuing on a corner where frankly I have... it's not my experience that  
39 kids pack that corner so tightly that they're falling off into traffic. So, the additional room would  
40 be nice but I think having a better flow of traffic is going to provide a higher level of safety to

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1 those kids than slower traffic. That's why I'm going to... I would support recommending  
2 Alternative One to the City Council. Commissioner Templeton?

3  
4 Commissioner Templeton: Hi, thank you for sharing that. That's... it brings up a good question  
5 that I don't really think we've explored in detail and maybe it's here and I missed it. But do we  
6 anticipate more bike queuing under electrification where we would need that extra space? That  
7 we might not have antidotally needed yet for bikes. So, I'm speaking to Chair Hechtman's  
8 concern about whether that space would be necessary or not.

9  
10 Mr. Kamhi: Are you asking if there's going to be more bicycling under electrification?

11  
12 Commissioner Templeton: Well, yes so Chair Hechtman just said he doesn't think we need that  
13 space and I'm asking why did you plan for that space if we don't need it? Do you think we need  
14 it and help us understand that?

15  
16 Ms. Kamhi: Yeah, thank you. I think that the answer to that actually is not that electrification  
17 necessarily will bring more biking. Although we do expect bicycling and pedestrians to grow in  
18 the City as we build more infrastructure and we prepare more safety features for bicyclists. But  
19 just naturally it will grow over time and it has grown. Just noting that our progression for our  
20 Safe Routes to School Programs is tracking bicycling and walking to school has grown  
21 incrementally over every year. But also, if you've been out there and observed and this... you  
22 know we had a caller that mentioned this. You'll note that there are a lot, a lot of bicyclists and  
23 pedestrian crossing there. So, I don't think the question of having... I don't think there's a  
24 question of having really too much-queuing space and I don't think it matters electrification or  
25 not. I think... yeah, I think that's just a [unintelligible] (interrupted)

26  
27 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you for clarifying. Sorry, there's a delay Philip. I'm not trying  
28 to talk over you but in my experience too I've seen that during school times. Bicyclists will  
29 queue on that space between Alma and the railroad tracks because there's not enough space  
30 else ware for that.

31  
32 And then I will also ask how long... can you remind me how long that pocket is? Is it two or  
33 three cars length? I mean how much space are we providing queuing for on south bound Alma  
34 that would be lost?

35  
36 Ms. Dudala: So, the south bound right-turn pocket, it's about 100-feet or less. That's my  
37 recollection.

38  
39 Commissioner Templeton: So, just as input... oh, I'm sorry?

40

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1 Ms. Aggarwal: It's about four to five car length pocket for the right turn.

2

3 Commissioner Templeton: Ok, so once the other lane is... has five cars in it. You're not getting  
4 into the turn pocket so it's... it won't make a difference except for those first five? Ok. Thank  
5 you for clarifying. So, just to explore that and I think it was a really good point from  
6 Commissioner or from Chair Hechtman. You know I guess I don't see the additional safety risk  
7 there. I think that Alma is heavily trafficked street during that time and it's going to have  
8 queuing at the lights, and so we're not going to see those hazardous, fly-around vehicles during  
9 school time. But there might be other times like maybe evening rush hour. I see your point but I  
10 also feel like Staff has probably considered the safety in there so maybe we could give an  
11 opportunity to speak to that. Have you thought about any negative implications for losing that  
12 pocket lane on the south bound? Do you anticipate the kinds of behavior we've worried about  
13 and brought up tonight or do we calculate that into safety? How do you, as a traffic  
14 professional, help us navigate this question?

15

16 Ms. Aggarwal: So, it's difficult to anticipate the change in behavior or any behavior issues with  
17 the drivers are with pedestrians or bicyclists. However, having said that, the safety analysis for  
18 that queuing space for Concept Two is much larger than what is proposed for Concept One and  
19 from the existing available space. It's almost four times than what is existing right now. So, I'm  
20 sorry, I don't know if I understand your question correctly. Are you saying are we proposing  
21 much higher (interrupted)

22

23 Commissioner Templeton: Well, let me try and restate it. So, some Commissioners and some  
24 members of the public have tonight brought up questions about removing the right turn pocket  
25 south bound. Potentially encouraging bad, unsafe driver behavior to beat the light to prevent  
26 having to queue up or to swerve around people that are waiting to turn right. Things like that,  
27 so my assumption is we wouldn't be proposing this if we thought it would be more dangerous.  
28 But on the other hand, these are good questions. How can you help us come to terms with  
29 them and understand safety tradeoffs?

30

31 Ms. Aggarwal: Ok, I'll start the answer and maybe Trisha or Ripon can jump in too. So, as we  
32 mentioned, it is a very consistent lane diagram that we are proposing. There are multiple  
33 intersections within the City where we have a shared through and a right turn lane. And it's  
34 difficult to estimate what the driver behavior would be but trying to speed up to make the light.  
35 I mean that's difficult to estimate but yeah, we might see changes where somebody who's  
36 trying to go through might change the lane and go to the second... to the first lane... first  
37 through lane. But again, I would presume and hope that that is done in a safe manner but not  
38 by cutting off somebody or trying to break or violate any traffic rules.

39

40 [note – many people started talking at once]

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Commissioner Templeton: Thank you and it comes... oh, go ahead.

Mr. Rius: Oh no, I was just going to agree with Ruchika. I mean that would be expected that some cars when they see the right lane ahead being blocked by... you know because there's a train coming you have the no right turn. So, the temporary flashing no right turn going and yeah, we would expect them to... some cars to switch over to the left through lane and as Ruchika mentioned. We would... our hope is that would be done in a safe legal manner.

Commissioner Templeton: Yeah, we see that more north on Alma in the downtown area where if someone's waiting to turn left if they're going south bound. Then someone will go around them so I think that behavior is considered safer there potentially because it's a lower speed limit. So, that changing where the boundaries of the lower speed limit might be another way to consider improving the safety. Maybe it doesn't change to 35 until your south of Churchill or something. I don't know. I'm just trying to say to my fellow Commissioners that I hear you. I think we do want to make sure that the driving part is as safe as the biking part but I also don't want to overplay it either. So, thank you Staff for letting us know that you've thought about that.

Chair Hechtman: I don't see any hands up so let me ask a follow-up. Commissioner Templeton's question is the question I would have asked before I gave my own amateur experience-based analysis. Staff, you've brought us two recommendations, Alternative One or Alternative Two. I didn't find anything in the Staff report indicating that Staff believes that one alternative offered enhanced safety compared to the other. So, and I think that that was the question that Commissioner Templeton was trying to ask but I didn't really understand the answer. So, let me re-ask the question that simply. Does Staff have an opinion that one of these two alternatives provides an additional level of safety compared to the other?

Ms. Aggarwal: To... as we mentioned in the presentation, I think the last slide that we have, the goal of the project is to enhance safety. The funding for this project comes from Section 130 which promotes again, enhancing and improving the existing conditions of the at grade crossings. So, comparing the two alternatives, Alternative Two reduces the crossing time for pedestrians and bikes at that north leg of crosswalk on Alma Street. It also provides almost four times the waiting area or queueing space for the pedestrians and bikers in that northwest corner four times than what it is existing today.

So, based on those comparisons and based on looking at the traffic analysis report. Even though the Alternative Two causes a little bit more impact than Alternative One. I would feel and I feel confident that Alternative Two is probably a little bit more safer and provides more safety and

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1 enhances the safety for that intersection. And I would let Jason from BKF Engineers who's  
2 helped us design the project so far to chime in if there's anything you want to add.

3  
4 Mr. Mansfield: Sure, thanks Ruchika and I agree with everything that you've said. I think that's  
5 an accurate description of it. My observations and why we suggested Alternative Two in the  
6 first place as an alternative is that we did observe a spillover of pedestrians and bicyclists in that  
7 area. In fact, actually, I have a video of it if you wanted to see and I'm able to share my screen  
8 I'm happy to show you a video of that queuing as the train gates come down.

9  
10 Ms. Mai: If I can also? This is Marie Mai from Calendar Associates. If I can just add to that too  
11 just from a very objective look at comparing the two. The other main difference was the  
12 reduction in the crossing distance across Alma. Affording again, the kind of again enhanced  
13 safety for pedestrians and cyclists as they cross. That there's less exposure with, if you will, as  
14 they cross the street there so that's one of the main differences.

15  
16 Chair Hechtman: Thank you, Staff. This is all really helpful. You've convinced me to support  
17 Alternative Two. I appreciate the exercise though. Other Commissioners want to talk about this  
18 or are we ready for a motion to make a recommendation to City Council? Somebody want to  
19 step up?

20  
21 Commissioner Templeton: It looks like Commissioner Summa's hand is up.

22  
23 Chair Hechtman: Oh, I'm sorry. It's not showing up here. Oh, that's because... computer issue  
24 on my end. Sorry Commissioner Summa, please go ahead.

25  
26 MOTION

27  
28 Commissioner Summa: Yeah so, I was going to make a motion to move Staff recommendation  
29 Number Two and I also think it might be helpful for the Staff take to take the collision  
30 information to the City Council meeting so.

31  
32 SECOND

33  
34 Commissioner Chang: I'll second that.

35  
36 Commissioner Lauing: Second.

37  
38 Chair Hechtman: Right, we're going to give Commissioner Chang the honor of seconding that.

39  
40 Commissioner Lauing: I like that. I like that.

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1  
2 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Summa, you want to speak any further to your motion?

3  
4 Commissioner Summa: No, I think I've said everything. Thank you.

5  
6 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Chang, to your second?

7  
8 Commissioner Chang: Said everything and I think the Staff... the last bit that the Staff did was  
9 very helpful.

10  
11 Chair Hechtman: I agree, I agree. I've just been informed that Vice-Chair Roohparvar's  
12 computer has crashed so I don't think she'll be with us for this vote. Let's see, Commissioner  
13 Templeton I see your hand up.

14  
15 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you. I just wanted to say that I'll be supporting this motion  
16 and it's exciting to hear that we have a lot of people on board with this. Of course, both options  
17 are good and it's just so important to make these near-term changes and improvements to  
18 safety. All signs point to everybody going back to school in the fall maybe so it's exciting to  
19 think about improving that as quickly as possible. So, thank you for working on this.

20  
21 Chair Hechtman: I see that Vice-Chair Roohparvar has joined us and so let me catch you up. I  
22 don't know how long you were gone but we have a motion. We had a very informative session  
23 with Staff explaining their feeling that Alternative Two offered a bit more safety or I shouldn't  
24 characterize it. More safety than Alternative One and that was followed by a motion by  
25 Commissioner Summa to recommend Alternative Two, seconded by Commissioner Chang. So, I  
26 think that might catch you up. Do you have anything that you want to say before we vote?

27  
28 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: No, that sounds good. I heard all the safety stuff. I dropped out at the  
29 motion so thank you.

30  
31 Chair Hechtman: Alright, then Mr. Nguyen, I'm not seeing any more hands so will you please  
32 conduct a roll call vote on the motion?

33  
34 Ms. Nguyen: Yes. Commissioner Alcheck is absent. Commissioner Chang?

35  
36 Commissioner Chang: Yes.

37  
38 Ms. Nguyen: Chair Hechtman?

39  
40 Chair Hechtman: Yes.

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Ms. Nguyen: Commissioner Lauing?

Commissioner Lauing: Yes.

Ms. Nguyen: Vice-Chair Roohparvar?

Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Yes.

Ms. Nguyen: Commissioner Summa?

Commissioner Summa: Yes.

Ms. Nguyen: Commissioner Templeton?

Commissioner Templeton: Yes.

Ms. Nguyen: Ok the motion carries 6-0 with one Commissioner absent.

MOTION PASSED 6(Chang, Hechtman, Lauing, Roohparvar, Summa, Templeton)-0- 1(Alcheck absent)

Chair Hechtman: Alright, thank you everyone and again, I want to encourage the... Ms. Chow, the Palo Alto Unified School District representative, to please do your work and provide any comments and concerns to the Council. So that those can be factored into the final decision.

So, we will move on to Agenda Item Five.

**Commission Action**: Motion by Summa, seconded by Chang. Carries 6-0 with Alcheck absent.

5. Recommendation on Ordinances Responding to State Housing Bills Regarding Density Bonus and Affordable Housing. Environmental Assessment: Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

Chair Hechtman: I've got to find it. Another action item. This is a recommendation on ordinance responding to State Housing Bills regarding Density Bonus and Affordable Housing. Staff report, please?

Ms. Rachael Tanner, Assistant Director: Thank you, Chair Hechtman and Commissioners. This is an item as was noted to comply with our state laws and updates that happened and actually took effect in January of this year. So, these laws in effect, we are abiding by them for projects that do come in. We don't have a ton of State Dense Bonus Law projects in Palo Alto but we do

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1 want to make sure that we update our codes accordingly. So, our attorney Albert Yang will be  
2 presenting on this item and take it away Albert.

3  
4 Mr. Albert Yang, Assistant City Attorney: Great, so I don't have a PowerPoint for you because I  
5 think the Staff report really... I would just repackage it. So, this is fairly straightforward. I think it  
6 was back in November we came to you with a little preview of state laws that were going to go  
7 into effect January 1<sup>st</sup> and told you to expect some ordinances to come through implementing  
8 those state laws. And we've actually had this ready for a couple months but it just kept on  
9 getting bumped because of how busy your schedules have been. So, we saw an opportunity to  
10 squeeze it in at the end of the meeting here and that's what we're doing.

11  
12 There is not much to say here. We are just implementing the state law, updating our code to  
13 reflect that. As Assistant Director Tanner mentioned those state laws are self-executing so we  
14 have been applying the new state law to any applications that have come in and we're... this is  
15 really just an effort to update our code. So, anyone who looks online at our Municipal Code  
16 sees something that reflects what we're doing. So, with that, I'll just I'll leave it for any  
17 questions from the Commission.

18  
19 Chair Hechtman: Thank you, Mr. Yang. Commissioner Lauing. You're muted.

20  
21 Commissioner Lauing: Yeah, I just wanted to ask a procedural question of the Chair. The  
22 operative statement is on Page 96 that the changes to state law are going to dictate the City's  
23 action and have been. And this is basically wording changes to the document so how do you  
24 want to proceed here? Four of us present are not attorney's and you're a really good one but  
25 how do we want to work through this in terms of process, language, etc.?

26  
27 Chair Hechtman: So, we've been presented a revised ordinance that we can recommend to the  
28 City Council. If there are issues that any Commissioners have with particular changes that are  
29 being proposed by Staff to bring our current ordinance into conformity with state law. Then I  
30 think it would be... then we could... we'd want to start with those. Basically, if you don't... if  
31 there's a Commissioner who thinks that a change to 20 percent in someplace that Staff is  
32 suggesting... is recommending is not... does not match state law. Then we should take that up  
33 first and sort of like we did with Castilleja. Take the discrete issues upfront if there any and then  
34 a motion to cover everything else. Am I answering your question?

35  
36 Commissioner Lauing: Yes, thank you.

37  
38 Chair Hechtman: Do you have any discrete items that you want to raise regarding the draft  
39 ordinance?

40

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1 Commissioner Lauing: But that it... I just raised my hand for the procedural aspect of it so.

2

3 Chair Hechtman: Oh, alright. Alright, so are there any other questions of Mr. Yang or Staff  
4 before we go to public comment? I'm not seeing any and so this is an action item so we will  
5 open the floor for public comment. Please raise your hand if you wish to speak. On the Zoom  
6 App, there is a raise hand button on the bottom of your screen. If you're dialing in from a  
7 phone, please press \*9 [note - \*6?]. Mr. Nguyen, it looks like we may have one public speaker  
8 for this item.

9

10 Ms. Vinh Nguyen, Admin Associate III: Yes, we currently do have one raised hand. So, our first  
11 speaker will be Rebecca.

12

13 Ms. Rebecca Eisenberg: Hi again, again I don't have the timer so I'm just looking at my phone.  
14 Oh, thanks. So, just as background, I've been a lawyer for a lot longer than Mr. Yang and I  
15 actually think that something extremely important that should have been communicated to you  
16 all which isn't necessarily just common sense to non-lawyers. Is that the state's numbers are  
17 minimum, minimum. They're not maximum, they're minimum and except to the extent that  
18 they're maximums to the extent, there's... you know what I mean. The state has very clear  
19 policy to that Cities are instructed, are demanded, are required to do what's reasonably  
20 necessary to enable more affordable housing. That is the overwhelming policy. So, all of these  
21 numbers, the minimums or in some exceptions the maximums, have to be interpreted in that  
22 way.

23

24 I guess I just want to point out that it's not really an option for you all to say no, we refuse to  
25 reduce lot sizes or we refuse to enable rezoning to make housing more easy. That's not an  
26 option. So, what is an option is to say hey, we're going to pass our own version of State Bill  
27 1120 which would entitle RH-1 owners to have the option of creating a duplex in their homes  
28 which doesn't destroy R-1 neighborhoods. Rather it gives more power and more value actually  
29 to property owners in the City of Palo Alto. So, I beg you to look at this as minimums, not  
30 maximums.

31

32 And the other thing I want to say is I didn't see any reference to the programs. That last I heard  
33 the City Staff was still denying the existence of and that's the more than \$1.5 billion that the  
34 State of California is offering to municipalities to actually build affordable housing and  
35 homelessness shelters. Last meeting, Rachael Tanner denied its existence. Since that time, I've  
36 actually connected with someone from the School Board so they can [unintelligible] City Council  
37 or to you all to speak to a woman at Move... Life Moves. A non-profit who does this. Anyway, I  
38 really want you to wrap your mind around the fact that not... this isn't an obligation that would  
39 take a lot of City money. If you would just apply for the state's money that they want to give.  
40 Thank you so much.

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1  
2 Ms. Nguyen: Thank you for your comments. Chair, that concludes public comments for this  
3 item.

4  
5 Chair Hechtman: Alright, then we will end public comments and bring it back to the Commission  
6 to deliberate and make a recommendation. Commissioner Lauing, your hand is up. Is it still up  
7 from before? Ok. I think you're mouthing yes, it is.

8  
9 Commissioner Lauing: Yeah, sorry my cursor was on top of it which means I didn't see it.

10  
11 Chair Hechtman: I had the same experience when Commissioner Summa was trying to make a  
12 motion on the last item. So, I'd like to ask a question while other Commissioners raise their  
13 hand and it is on Packet Page 102. And I don't have any... and it's this language. It's subpart  
14 one, toward the top of the page. Sorry, subpart two. If the development is located within ½-  
15 mile of a major transit stop. The City will not impose any maximum controls on density. So, I  
16 don't have any issue with that language. I understand it is being transported into our code from  
17 state law but I don't understand how it practically works. If... I mean can somebody propose a  
18 100-story building and so I'd just appreciate a little bit more understanding of whether it means  
19 there are no controls?

20  
21 Mr. Yang: Sure. So, the structure of the Density Bonus Law is if you provide a certain level of  
22 affordability, then the City must provide you with a certain additional percentage of units that  
23 you're allowed to build on a lot. So, if we allow, for example, up to 40 units per acre at a certain  
24 level of affordability. You'd be allowed a 50 percent bonus and that would be you would be  
25 able to build 60 units per acre. In this case, the state has created a new program for 100  
26 percent affordable development and they're saying the City can't apply a density standard  
27 which would be the number of units per acre. But the City would still be able to apply some  
28 Development Standards which then govern height for example.

29  
30 Chair Hechtman: So, the existing City regulations really create an envelope that can be filled  
31 using that provision in 100 percent affordable within a ½-mile of transit?

32  
33 Mr. Yang: Yes, although I'll say Density Bonus Law also requires the City to provide concessions  
34 and incentives which might include Waiver but Waivers are also a separate category. But would  
35 require modification of our Development Standards so that project would also be able to ask to  
36 exceed our Development Standards in a number of ways.

37  
38 Chair Hechtman: Alright, thank you for that clarification. Commissioners, do I have questions,  
39 comments, or a motion? Vice-Chair Roohparvar.

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1 MOTION

2

3 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: I will make the motion that we recommend... I'd like to move to... that  
4 we recommend that the City Council adopt the attached ordinances which update Palo Alto's  
5 Density Bonus and Parking Regulations to comply with recent changes in state law.

6

7 Chair Hechtman: [unintelligible – no audio] Vice-Chair. Do we have a second for that motion?

8

9 SECOND

10

11 Commissioner Summa: I'll second.

12

13 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Summa, thank you, seconds. Vice-Chair Roohparvar, do you  
14 wish to speak to your motion?

15

16 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: No.

17

18 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Summa, to your second? Do you wish to speak to your second  
19 Commissioner Summa?

20

21 Commissioner Summa: Just to say that since these laws have already been enacted and we're  
22 following them. We're not making any substantive change. We're just responding to  
23 requirement to not skip following the law.

24

25 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Templeton.

26

27 Commissioner Templeton: I just wanted to clarify that the Vice-Chair's motion is the Staff  
28 recommendation. Like all this stuff in here?

29

30 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Yes.

31

32 Commissioner Templeton: Ok, great, thank you.

33

34 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: I was reading directly off of it.

35

36 Commissioner Templeton: Well, I saw the text here and I was like well? Yeah, I just wanted to  
37 make sure. It's the (interrupted)

38

39 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Did I say it incorrectly?

40

- 
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1 Commissioner Templeton: No, no, no.

2

3 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: I read directly off of it.

4

5 Commissioner Templeton: You did but their Staff recommendation doesn't say all the stuff  
6 that... all these changes. Anyway, I just wanted to make sure, so you're saying what we've  
7 received is these changes it what you're moving.

8

9 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Yes.

10

11 Commissioner Templeton: Ok, great. I'll support it. Thank you.

12

13 Chair Hechtman: Any further Commission discussion? I see Vice-Chair Roohparvar and  
14 Commissioner Summa's hands are still up. I take it those are... gone now. Alright, so Mr.  
15 Nguyen, will you conduct a roll call vote on the motion?

16

17 Ms. Nguyen: Yes. Commissioner Alcheck is absent. Commissioner Chang?

18

19 Commissioner Chang: Yes.

20

21 Ms. Nguyen: Chair Hechtman?

22

23 Chair Hechtman: Yes.

24

25 Ms. Nguyen: Commissioner Lauing?

26

27 Commissioner Lauing: Yes.

28

29 Ms. Nguyen: Vice-Chair Roohparvar?

30

31 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Yes.

32

33 Ms. Nguyen: Commissioner Summa?

34

35 Commissioner Summa: Yes.

36

37 Ms. Nguyen: Commissioner Templeton?

38

39 Commissioner Templeton: Yes.

40

- 
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1 Ms. Nguyen: Ok the motion carries 6-0 with one Commissioner absent.

2

3 MOTION PASSED 6(Chang, Hechtman, Lauing, Roohparvar, Summa, Templeton) -0- 1(Alcheck)

4

5 Chair Hechtman: Thank you. We'll move now to approval of minutes.

6

7 **Commission Action**: Motion by Roohparvar, seconded by Summa. Carries 6-0 with Alcheck  
8 absent.

## 9 **Approval of Minutes**

10 Public Comment is Permitted. Five (5) minutes per speaker.<sup>1,3</sup>

11 6. February 24, 2021 Draft PTC Meeting Minutes

12 Chair Hechtman: We have February 24<sup>th</sup> minutes revised. Can I have a motion to approve the  
13 minutes?

14

15 MOTION

16

17 Commissioner Summa: So, moved.

18

19 Chair Hechtman: Thank you, Commissioner Summa. Second?

20

21 SECOND

22

23 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: I'll second.

24

25 Chair Hechtman: Thank you, Vice-Chair. Any discussion? No. Mr. Nguyen, a roll call vote,  
26 please?

27

28 Mr. Vinh Nguyen, Admin Associate III: Commissioner Alcheck is absent. Commissioner Chang?

29

30 Commissioner Chang: I abstain because I wasn't there.

31

32 Ms. Nguyen: Ok. Chair Hechtman?

33

34 Chair Hechtman: Yes.

35

36 Ms. Nguyen: Commissioner Lauing?

37

38 Commissioner Lauing: Yes.

39

- 
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1 Ms. Nguyen: Vice-Chair Roohparvar?

2

3 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Yes.

4

5 Ms. Nguyen: Commissioner Summa?

6

7 Commissioner Summa: Yes.

8

9 Ms. Nguyen: Commissioner Templeton?

10

11 Commissioner Templeton: Yes.

12

13 Ms. Nguyen: Ok the motion carries zero... I mean I'm sorry, 5-0-1 with one Commissioner  
14 absent.

15

16 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Actually, sorry, can I abstain? I just realized I wasn't... this was the 2/24  
17 minutes? I wasn't there. I thought it was the (interrupted)

18

19 Chair Hechtman: Alright.

20

21 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: Sorry, I was... it's getting late. I'm confused. Can I abstain? I wasn't here  
22 on 2/24. I thought it was the March minutes which I was here for. Apologies, apologies Chair  
23 Hechtman for that.

24

25 Ms. Nguyen: Ok, then the motion carries 4-0-2 with one Commissioner absent.

26

27 MOTION PASSED 4(Hechtman, Lauing, Summa, Templeton) -0- 2(Chang, Roohparvar abstain) -1  
28 (Alcheck absent)

29

30 Chair Hechtman: We'll move now to Committee items.

31 **Commission Action**: Motion by Summa, seconded by Roohparvar. Carries 4-0-2 with Chang and  
32 Roohparvar abstaining, Alcheck Absent.

### 33 **Committee Items**

34 Chair Hechtman: Anyone have a Committee item to share?

35

36 Ms. Rachael Tanner, Assistant Director: The only thing I will share is that when... we had our  
37 orientation for Commissioner Chang on Monday. Sorry. We had our orientation for  
38 Commissioner Chang on Monday and I know she was interested in the XCAP. So, I suggested

- 
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1 that maybe she connect with Philip and also possibly with you Commissioner Templeton to  
2 learn more about that project. So, just something that I wanted to bring up.

3  
4 Commissioner Templeton: Awesome. Be happy to do that. Give us an excuse to hang out. I have  
5 something for the next agenda item.

6  
7 Chair Hechtman: Let's move there.

## 8 **Commissioner Questions, Comments or Announcements**

9 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner question, comments, announcements or future agenda items.

10  
11 Commissioner Templeton: Yay.

12  
13 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Templeton.

14  
15 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you. I would just like to remind the Commissioners that it is  
16 March 31<sup>st</sup> and we have an action item due tomorrow. So, if you haven't submitted your Form  
17 700 please remember to do so and then something that I was hoping that we could talk about  
18 as a group. Maybe provide comments on is kind of our target end hour. I don't know if this is a  
19 good time to talk about it Chair, but I've heard a few comments about it. It's getting late, it's  
20 tiring and I don't know if we have a norm on that. Is that something we should talk about now  
21 or maybe send you an email about or?

22  
23 Chair Hechtman: I'm going to admit we ended an hour earlier than our agenda suggested.

24  
25 Commissioner Templeton: Yes.

26  
27 Chair Hechtman: Which is terrific.

28  
29 Commissioner Templeton: Yes.

30  
31 Chair Hechtman: But since we all had mentally prepared ourselves to stay later. I'm going to  
32 suggest that we have a few minutes to talk about this. If it becomes a prolonged discussion  
33 then maybe we can take it offline or bring it up later. But sure, I think we have a little time now  
34 but let me set the table since I'm the Chair. And since really our agenda has been unusually  
35 impacted I think in the last few meetings which was different than the first year I was with the  
36 Commission and so I'm trying to adapt to that. My goal, frankly, is to have meetings that look  
37 like Commissioner Templeton's meetings last year when she was Chair and my impression of  
38 those meetings was we should try to end by 10:00. There will be circumstances where we can't  
39 but we shouldn't really plan an agenda that goes past 10:00 and if we get to 10:00 and we're

- 
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1 running late. Then we have a check-in and we're going to see if it's the will of the Commission  
2 to keep going, is the end in sight, or if we think we have three more hours on something. Then  
3 maybe we don't want to but to stop at 10:00 and have that dialog. I think it worked very well  
4 for Chait Templeton last year and so that's kind of where I'd like to take this. And I've already  
5 has some dialog with Ms. Tanner about getting a little bit earlier handle on what's coming to us  
6 in terms of a draft agenda. And so, I think that will help us because I have heard from a number  
7 of Commissioners at different times that past 11:00 they are not going to be doing their best  
8 thinking. And they want to do their best thinking because that's the joy of the job.

9  
10 So, that's where I'm thinking of taking us, back to where we were. Back to the future, I guess  
11 and so I'd be interested in other Commissioner's comments on that strategy. Vice-Chair  
12 Roohparvar.

13  
14 Vice-Chair Roohparvar: First of all, I do want to thank Chair Templeton [note – Commissioner  
15 Templeton] for raising this issue. You know, it has been, I'll be honest, pretty rough. These past  
16 couple of meetings that have gone super later because some people... I do wake up at 5:00 in  
17 the morning. So, but I appreciate and I wholeheartedly agree with the 10:00 p.m. You know  
18 let's plan agendas that are intended to end at 10:00 and if we have to go over, then that's fine.  
19 But that would also give all of us some visibility too into scheduling on our own end. So, I'd be  
20 in favor of that.

21  
22 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Chang.

23  
24 Commissioner Chang: I agree. I'd be in favor of structuring agendas to plan to end at an earlier  
25 hour but what I want to say... with a caveat that I don't want to cut short necessary discussion  
26 because, you know, it's supposed to be a public meeting. And but... and I would also add that  
27 having meetings that go till midnight, the public... that's not fair to the public either because if  
28 people want to comment. Then they've got to hang on to the bitter end. And I know I'm the  
29 newbie here but I was trying to sit in on PTC meetings in preparation for applying and it's really  
30 difficult to stick with it. So, that would be.

31  
32 Chair Hechtman: Thank you. Commissioner Lauing.

33  
34 Commissioner Lauing: Basically, I would second your motion exactly as you put it. I think the 10  
35 o'clock, we've agreed to stop at that point. We have sort of soft if we agree to go on to 10:30  
36 that's fine, but if it goes past 10:30. I think we should institute sort of a supermajority of six that  
37 has to agree to go on or something like that. Because we've just had a couple of extortionary  
38 important agendas that have crept up to and past midnight. I don't think that's fair to the  
39 Council who we represent or who we're recommending. I don't think it's fair to the public and  
40 then we can talk about ourselves. And what that does to us because we've spent a lot of time

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1 preparing for it and then sort of like I need a recovery day because I got to go bed at 1:30 when  
2 I finally unwind and sleep till 10:00 if I can. So, I think it's just logical and basically, it just has to  
3 do with agenda planning and I think we do have to have a good cooperation with the City Staff  
4 that if some things can be pushed. Then they just need to be pushed for the good of everybody.

5  
6 For example, tonight, I felt that we were going to finish about now based on a couple of the  
7 agenda items and I was glad that we did. But if we really thought that we couldn't get through  
8 it, like if the last item was going to take an hour and a half. As Albert just said, it's not that  
9 urgent because we're already doing the state law. So, I think that that would be one that we  
10 could have said well, we got to push it another... to another month. So, I think you're right on  
11 track.

12  
13 Chair Hechtman: Let's see, I got a thumbs up from Commissioner Summa and a hand up from  
14 Commissioner Templeton.

15  
16 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you and thank you all for participating in this discussion. I  
17 really support your approach Chair Hechtman and I think it's fine to have a target in mind and  
18 just what a norm is. There's always going to be times when we have exceptions like what  
19 Commissioner Chang mentioned and what Commissioner Lauing mentioned. You know there  
20 are times when we need to complete the discussion and there are times when we may need to  
21 continue the discussion. And while I don't support the supermajority suggestion, I do like the  
22 idea of being able to check-in and talk about it with each other because that is... that's the way  
23 to be collegial. So, I like the idea of pausing at 10:00 or 10:30 and or some kind of natural break  
24 there and checking in. So, I think that's a great suggestion and to Staff, I would say, I know you  
25 told us it was coming. That we have an avalanche of backlog that we need to deal with. You  
26 know I think mainly the reason I brought it up is... was not a critic but more a plea that we need  
27 to keep those longer meetings as the exception rather than the rule. So, thank you all for having  
28 this discussion. I think it was very productive.

29  
30 Chair Hechtman: I'll add a couple things. I'd prefer not to impose a supermajority or any kind of  
31 rule what happens after 10:00. I think what's important is that we discuss as a group what  
32 happens after 10:00 if we get to 10:00.

33  
34 But with that in mind, one thing I have observed in the time I've been on the Commission is that  
35 there have been times when we have spent too much time talking about our process. And so,  
36 when we get to these instances when we get to 10:00, I don't want to spend half an hour  
37 talking about whether we should keep going. So, we need to all kind of find a sync way to  
38 develop consensus in that moment. So, that we're not wasting late hours figuring out if we  
39 want to stay late.

- 
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1 Well, thank you for bringing that up, Commissioner Templeton. I think it was really useful and  
2 it's given me... I appreciate the support in trying to taking it in this direction. And I'm looking  
3 forward to working with Ms. Tanner to make it so.

4  
5 The only other comment or announcement I will make is there was made available to us last  
6 week Commissioner and Board Member training. I was unable to attend that. I was out of town  
7 but I'm going to catch up and I think that Ms. Tanner is going to be able to provide a link to the  
8 movie. The video and so if any of the other... of the rest of you missed it, so there's an  
9 opportunity to catch up as well.

10  
11 Ms. Rachael Tanner, Assistant Director: I'll just offer that the training goes over the Handbook  
12 that we have which we'll be talking about I believe next time. And it also does include a little bit  
13 of a refresher on Brown Act. So, if you... I find it helpful just the fact that I have to get that every  
14 year. Usually through an orientation or something, just a little refresher on some of the Brown  
15 Act rules. So, I think it's a very helpful training and it's not very long. As soon as we have that  
16 video link, we will send it out to the Commissioners.

17  
18 Chair Hechtman: Commissioner Lauing.

19  
20 Commissioner Lauing: Just a question on do we have a high probability list for next time or not  
21 quite yet, Ms. Tanner?

22  
23 Ms. Tanner: For the items for the agenda?

24  
25 Commissioner Lauing: Yes.

26  
27 Ms. Tanner: Oh yeah, it's pretty settled. We will have the S/CAP will come before us which is  
28 not in our department but obviously a cross-departmental total City project. We will have our  
29 Board and Commission Handbook subject and we're also going to be talking about renter  
30 protections. So, three items but one of them, I think the handbook will be interesting but not  
31 very lengthy. There's some changes to our operations but nothing really significant to how we  
32 operate as a Board. And then the renter protection and S/CAP, S/CAP is a study session getting  
33 feedback from the Commissioners and renters protections likewise is an action item looking for  
34 recommendation to Council. So, we should have... I think we should definitely be able to end by  
35 10:00. I mean famous last words but. I think I'm not going to [unintelligible – audio cut out].

36  
37 Chair Hechtman: We'll never know what she knocked on because she muted herself too soon.  
38 Alright, I'd like to thank the members of the public who observed and participated tonight. I  
39 want to thank Staff for all their good and hard work and the excellent reporting. And I want to

- 
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- 1 thank my fellow Commissioners and congratulate Commissioner Chang on completing her first
- 2 meeting. We are adjourned. Thank you.

3 **Adjournment**

4 10:30 pm

5

- 
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