



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Planning & Transportation Commission

Action Agenda: February 28, 2024

Council Chambers & Virtual
6:00 PM

Call to Order / Roll Call

6:01 pm

Chair Summa called to order the February 28 Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) meeting.

Administrative Associate Ms. Veronica Dao conducted the roll call and announced all commissioners were present.

Oral Communications

Chair Summa invited members of the public to share their comments with the Commission on items not on the Agenda.

Ms. Veronica Dao announced there were no speakers in person and none on zoom.

Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

Chief Planning Official Amy French announced there were no changes from staff.

City Official Reports

1. Directors Report, Meeting Schedule and Assignments

Chief Planning Official Amy French expressed thanks to the Commissioners who attended the San Antonio corridor visioning open house. A presentation will be given by the students, possibly in March. The Joint session with Council for the Housing Element revisions that was scheduled in March has been pushed back to April 15th. Staff are working with The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) reviewer, building a successful working relationship, and talking about the changes the City plans to make. Furthering fair housing and program development have been some of the topics. The hope is this will improve the likelihood of receiving a certification for substantial compliance. The number of units will likely be modified. Upcoming meeting dates include March 13th. Staff requests the Commissioners let

1 them know if they can be available for a 5:00 pm start time as there will be presentation to
2 work through a state mandated change to an ordinance that will take about an hour, following
3 is the joint meeting with the Human Relations Commission. The Retail study session Part I is
4 also scheduled after the CalTrans presentation. The packet lists upcoming meeting and
5 scheduled items for those meetings. Vice Chair Chang is the representative for City Council in
6 March, Ms. French will email the upcoming schedule for City Council.

7 Transportation Planning Manager Sylvia Star-Lack reported that CalTrans manages El Camino
8 Real and is recommending adding bike lanes as part of it's upcoming repaving project of the
9 State Highway (82). They are hosting a community meeting tomorrow, February 29, followed by
10 several opportunities to share feedback. Community input will inform City Council is tentatively
11 set for April 1. The meeting tomorrow will be located at the Palo Alto High School Media Art
12 Center Atrium at 6:00 p.m. There will be a joint Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee
13 (PABAC) and City School Transportation Safety Committee (CSTSC) meeting on Thursday March
14 7th at 6:30 p.m. at the Mitchell Park Community Center. There will also be a joint PTC and HRC
15 meeting on Wednesday March 13th at 6:00 p.m. here. The Council meeting will be held on April
16 1st. There is also a webform on the city's website entitled City's issued letter to CalTrans SR
17 82/El Camino Real Bikeway Project that allows the public to provide feedback to CalTrans and
18 City Staff about the bike lane proposal. The webpage includes the draft bike lane plans as well
19 as the correspondence between the City Manager and CalTrans about the proposal.

20 The Commissioner's discussed concerns regarding the early starting time of the Joint session
21 with the HRC and the full Agendas in the upcoming meetings as related to the recent lack of
22 meetings. Ms. French stated many of the items were recent additions with short deadlines.

24 Study Session

25 Public Comment is Permitted. Three (3) minutes per speaker.

27 2. Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Action Plan Collision Analysis

29 Transportation Planning Manager Sylvia Star-Lack and consultants Alexandra Lee-Gardner and
30 Ashlee Takushi with Jilva Stiiw provided a presentation to share the collision data analysis for
31 the ongoing development of the City's Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan. Collision
32 data from 2018 through 2022 was analyzed by crash severity and other factors to determine
33 collision profiles and a High Injury Network that will be used to prioritize future roadway
34 projects and institutionalize the Safe System Approach into the City's existing policies and
35 guidelines. In late 2023, the City of Palo Alto and Fehr & Peers began the Safe Streets and Road
36 for All Comprehensive Safety Action Plan. City staff introduced the Action Plan and the Safe
37 System Approach to the Planning and Transportation Commission. This Plan will meet the
38 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)'s SS4A requirements for a safety action plan. The
39 primary goal of this planning effort is to identify proactive, citywide opportunities across the
40 Safe System elements (safe users, safe speeds, safe roads, safe vehicles, and post-crash care) to

1 improve safety for all road users in support of the Vision Zero goal of reducing roadway
2 fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. The Safe System Approach leverages crash data and
3 contextual information about the built environment to identify traffic safety hot spots, analyze
4 crash patterns, develop citywide insights from these patterns, and identify safety
5 improvements that focus on eliminating fatal and serious injury crash risk. The Comprehensive
6 Safety Action Plan includes the review of Citywide collision data from 2018 through 2022
7 available through the Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS). TIMS reports injury
8 collisions from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) but excludes collisions
9 that cause property damage only and no injuries. During 2018 through 2022 in Palo Alto, there
10 were a total of 1,132 collisions, of which 47 were a collision in which someone was killed or
11 severely injured (KSI). Youth and senior citizens can also be vulnerable to collisions. In Palo Alto,
12 youth collisions (under 18 years old) make up 12% of all collisions and 9% of all KSIs. Youth
13 bicyclists are involved in a quarter (25%) of all bicycle-involved collisions. However, given Palo
14 Alto's high youth biking population, the crash rate for youth bicyclists is very low (about 2%).
15 Senior citizens (65 years old and above) make up 16% of all collisions and 17% of all KSI
16 collisions. Primary collision factors (PCF)'s are cited by the responding officer and based on their
17 judgement of what contributed to the collisions. PCFs do not include contextual information
18 related to the design of the location that could have been a primary or secondary contributor to
19 the crash. The most common PCFs in Palo Alto for all collisions are unsafe speed, improper
20 turning, and vehicle right of right of way violation, while the most common PCFs for KSIs are
21 improper turning, DUIs, and pedestrian-related collisions. Broadside (90-degree angle) collisions
22 and head-on collisions had two of the highest percentages of KSI collisions, and most collisions
23 occurred on weekdays and in the afternoon and evening (3 PM to 9 PM). To assess corridors
24 experiencing a disproportionate share of collisions, a High Injury Network (HIN) was identified
25 that shows that 62% of injury collisions occurred on 4% of Palo Alto's streets. Within the City's
26 roadway network, roadways are owned by the City, County, and Caltrans. The HIN incorporates
27 and color-codes the roadways owned by each entity. Key roadways on the HIN include higher
28 speed arterials, as well as expressways and a few collectors. Note that the City and Caltrans
29 have identified or initiated safety projects on portions of the High Injury Network in Palo Alto.
30 The City's Charleston/Arastradero Corridor Project is in its final phase of construction this
31 spring. City staff are also pursuing funding for a striping trial of the South Palo Alto Bikeways
32 Project and will engage the community to review the concept plans that Council endorsed in
33 2021 for E. Meadow Drive, Fabian Way, and the Waverley Path. Based on its review of collision
34 data, Caltrans is currently proposing to repurpose on-street parking for bicycle lanes as part of
35 its Route 82 (El Camino Real) Pavement Rehabilitation and ADA Improvements project. A series
36 of community engagement meetings to provide feedback on this Caltrans plan has been
37 scheduled for March and April. Seven collision profiles were also developed to summarize key
38 collision and associated roadway contextual conditions in Palo Alto. Each collision profile
39 represents up to 6-15% of all KSI collisions in Palo Alto. These profiles include Residential
40 Arterials, Alcohol Involved, Pedestrians On Arterials at Night, Pedestrians On Major Downtown
41 Streets, 90 Degree Angle Collisions with Bicyclists, Walk and Roll Routes on Higher Stress
42 (higher speed/volume) Streets, Children Riding Bicycles. These collision profiles will be used to
43 determine roadway safety projects, programs (including adult and youth safety education),
44 policies, and practices the City can pursue to institutionalize safety in Palo Alto and achieve the

1 goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries. Having completed an existing conditions assessment
2 of current safety policies, programs, and practices as well as quantitative and qualitative safety
3 data, the project is moving into the recommendations phase with the development of an action
4 plan and implementation strategy. Alongside the collision data, community input that came
5 through the forms of a survey, interactive maps, and emails to the Office of Transportation was
6 reviewed to provide a qualitative understanding of safety concerns in the City. On June 19,
7 2023, Council approved (CMR 2305-1525) the funding agreement with FHWA and the related
8 budget amendment to the Fiscal Year 2024 Adopted Capital Budget for the Transportation and
9 Parking Improvements Project (PL-12000) to increase the revenue and expense appropriation
10 by \$160,000 to reflect the grant revenue and project cost, respectively. The additional \$40,000
11 in project cost, which is the 20% City match portion required in the funding agreement, will be
12 absorbed from the same project (PL-12000), as a part of the FY2024 Adopted Capital Budget.
13 No additional budgetary action is required for the City match obligation. This study session is
14 not a project as defined by CEQA because it does not involve any commitment to any specific
15 project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment. CEQA
16 Guidelines section 15378(b)(4).

17 Vice-Chair Chang inquired about the higher KSIs during 2020, Transportation Manager Sylvia
18 Star-Lack explained that while the traffic volume was lower in 2020, more people were
19 speeding which is what accounted for the higher KSIs as speed is a driver in those numbers.

20 Commissioner Akin commented a lot of his questions at the prior meeting were answered in
21 this presentation and he greatly appreciated that and wanted to ensure that traffic being
22 rerouted to make a particular area more safe wasn't being pushed onto areas that are less safe
23 and gave University Ave as an example. Ms. Takushi stated that while the collision profiles took
24 into account a lot of Palo Alto roadways, the counter measures would be tailored to specific
25 context of the roadways as well, the list will be a bit more comprehensive and are pointed to
26 specific roadways that were highlighted for each of the profiles.

27 Commissioner Lu appreciated the analysis and inquired if there were any notable distinctions or
28 observations that could be drawn about incidents where people were killed versus incidents
29 where people were seriously injured. Ms. Takushi responded she did not have that answer off
30 the top of her head. There is a high weight to people killed in collisions overall as a group, as
31 those are the ones the strive to reduce to zero. They aren't looked at separately for the
32 analysis. Also, there were 47 KSIs throughout the city over a five year period. It's definitely
33 lower than other agencies that she had seen.

34 Commissioner Lu asked if the full results will be available regarding people's preferences
35 regarding speeding cameras on El Camino. Ms. Takushi stated she believed it would be
36 provided as an appendix to the report. Commissioner Lu asked if the Vision Zero for 2030 had
37 been adopted yet. Transportation Manager Sylvia Star-Lack stated it had not yet officially been
38 adopted. They had the Commission's feedback on that but ultimately it will be a Council
39 decision.

1 Commissioner Templeton thanked the team for working on the report, it's important work, and
2 inquired about the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) data as it related to crashes that involved
3 youth and commented the solutions slide was confusing. Ms. Takushi replied there are two KSIs
4 on the SRTS data that involved bicycle collisions. Transportation Manager Sylvia Star-Lack
5 clarified that the KSIs on the SRTS map did not involve youth. They overlayed the maps of the
6 school routes, which is a proxy for roads they think are low stress.

7 Commissioner Templeton referenced the solutions slide and asked if they had, looking back,
8 implemented all four of the solutions listed, would it have mitigated the 4 KSIs. Transportation
9 Manager Sylvia Star-Lack clarified those are listed as potential counter measures, any counter
10 measure chosen would have to fit the context of that location. Without having the details of
11 the KSIs, it would be a difficult question to answer. Commissioner Templeton requested they
12 ensure they are addressing the human side when they return to have the discussions on how
13 they plan on addressing incidents that have already happened and reduce the likelihood of
14 them happening again.

15 Commissioner Hechtman thanked staff for the hard work and felt this report and the data
16 received is a great step in a long process, and referenced the data provided on the high injury
17 network on packet page 13. In trying to identify what the streets were in reference to the 62%
18 of injuries on 4% of the city's streets he requested clarification on which streets were in the 4%.
19 Ms. Takushi answered the HIN covers El Camino Real, Middlefield, Embarcadero, Charleston,
20 Oregon Expressway, University Avenue, San Antonio Road, and a few others which get into the
21 1% range. Those add up to 63% and then just looking at mileage of the total roadway network,
22 that's where they get the 4% of Palo Alto Streets.

23 Commissioner Hechtman commented that is a linear calculation and for example El Camino is
24 included and that's the whole length of it as it passes through Palo Alto and noticed in figure 5
25 and looking at Embarcadero, there was one red dot. Ms. Takushi stated that map also took into
26 account the sever injury collisions as well, the blue dots are also spread throughout the whole
27 corridor. Consultant Alexandra Lee-Gardner explained there were other red dots that were
28 hidden behind the B of Embarcadero on the map and another one and they considered
29 Embarcadero in the mix due to the KSIs and whether or not the collision involved a pedestrian
30 or bicyclist and youth, and senior collisions were also weighted in the calculation.

31 Commission Hechtman pointed out inconsistencies in the data and suggested staff consider
32 how that is perceived when the same data was driving all of the information. Transportation
33 Manager Sylvia Star-Lack answered the data appeared to be specific to incidents between
34 vehicles to vehicles only, Consultant Alexandra Lee-Gardner added it's also how the layering of
35 the dots were layered together in the presentation, some are hidden.

36 Commissioner Reckdahl stated the information was great, they pulled in a lot of good data and
37 not a lot of conclusions but recognized that's challenging to do. If they were able to flush out
38 the causation that would be very helpful in deciphering the data for making better changes and
39 decisions. He shared concerns similar to the other Commissioners and cited Charleston and
40 stated as a bicyclist it is so much safer than it was before so volume on those roads also plays a

big part. Referring to Packet page 11 where 16% involved seniors, knowing what percent of the drivers were and having that denominator would also be useful.

Transportation Manager Sylvia Star-Lack mentioned regarding Charleston and wanted to note that Charleston is still not completed along the Charleston/Arastradero corridor, they are still waiting to strip the bike lanes across El Camino Real. Additionally, the collisions that appeared on the map and mapped them according to which part of Charleston was completed at the time. The more interesting data will likely come in the future when they have the completed corridor, and they can do real time before and after analysis. Commissioner Hechtman noted there's also a lot of children that drive the volumes on Arastradero.

Chair Summa thanked the group for the presentation and hoped they could get to real specificity at locations and much of it sounds like boiler plate options and they need to look at some of the intersections very carefully but that's down the road and asked if staff felt the survey response was good. Transportation Manager Sylvia Star-Lack felt like for a city run survey it did quite well.

Chair Summa inquired if they had considered more lighting at night and if there was a way to understand the correlation between lighting and safety. Transportation Manager Sylvia Star-Lack stated what she's noticed in her own neighborhood, sometimes there's a lot of leaves on the trees that block the street lights and have often wondered the same thing. Ms. Takushi agreed that was helpful information for them to look into and to include in the study down the road. John Hopkins is also doing some studies about lighting and night time collisions. She's happy to share those with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Templeton mentioned the further you get away from the highway the more the lighting is a blessing and a curse and encouraged anyone looking into it to look into more reflective surfaces to help the community find the roads easier and to see objects like cars or bikes. The patterns in collisions in the KSIs showed the need to improve the flow and safety of El Camino. That data was very compelling, she just wanted to call that out.

Action Items

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

3. 4075 El Camino Way [23PLN-00202, Palo Alto Commons]: Consideration of a Planned Community (PC) Project Amending an Existing PC (PC-5116) to Allow Additions to an Existing 121 Unit Assisted Living and Memory Care Facility. The Additions Would Include 18 Assisted Living Units. Environmental Assessment: Pending. Zoning District: PC-5116 (Planned Community).

Chair Summa introduced the next item called for disclosures.

Commissioner Templeton stated she has no disclosures, and she hasn't been contacted in any way about being within any kind of radius, although she lives across the street in Baron Park.

1
2 Commissioner Hechtman stated he had no disclosures.

3
4 Vice-Chair Chang stated she visited the sight that day and has a close family friend who is there
5 currently, and she's been on location quite a bit in the last few months.

6
7 Chair Summa stated she visited the site that day.

8
9 Commissioner Lu visited the site and walked around the block.

10
11 Commissioner Reckdahl visited the site but had no conversations.

12
13 Commissioner Akin stated he also visited the site with no other interaction.

14
15 Planner Emily Kallas provided the staff presentation for the Planned Community (PC)
16 amendment project includes the addition of 18 units (approximately 6,800 sf) to an existing
17 121-unit, 83,500 sf assisted living facility. The existing PC would need to be amended to allow
18 for increases in density, floor area, lot coverage, and for the building to protrude up to 1'8" into
19 the daylight plane in some areas. The additions would be consistent with the existing building
20 height. The application is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental
21 Quality Act (CEQA); the review is in process. The City Council reviewed a prescreening project in
22 August 2023. The current application requires initial review by the PTC, followed by review by
23 the Architectural Review Board (ARB) of the development plan. After ARB review, the PTC will
24 review a draft PC ordinance and provide a final recommendation on the development plan
25 before it is presented to the City Council for final action. The project and property owner is
26 Stephen Reller from R and M Properties with Daniel Bowman as the architect. City Council
27 reviewed a Prescreening application for a project with 14 new units on August 7, 2023. Minutes
28 of the prescreening are provided as Attachment E. Council supported the concept to add more
29 units to Palo Alto Commons. However, Council raised concerns about the encroachment into
30 the daylight plane adjacent to single-family homes, on-site parking, and affordability of the
31 assisted living units. Members of the public also echoed similar concerns. Council encouraged
32 the applicant to consider if it was feasible to add a fourth floor that would be stepped back
33 from the current edges of the building, rather than nestling the new units into the existing step-
34 backs. In response to this, the applicant submitted a memo, Attachment C, explaining why it is
35 not feasible to add a fourth floor. Primary reasons include the existing location of egress stairs
36 and elevators, increased displacement of residents during construction, structural capacity of
37 the existing structure, and cost. However, the project has been redesigned to reduce the
38 intrusion into the daylight plane. Additionally, four more units, for a total of 18, were added to
39 the project. These four units are smaller, and potentially more affordable by design, than the
40 current units. This project is a request to amend an existing Planned Community (PC) for an
41 Assisted Living facility. The project site currently consists of two Senior Living communities, Palo
42 Alto Commons, providing 121 Assisted Convalescent units and approved in 1987 (PC 3775), and
43 The Avant providing 44 Independent Living units and approved in 2011 (PC 5116). The existing
44 Palo Alto Commons building is three stories tall and tapers down to two and one stories closest

1 to the adjacent single-family (R-1) neighborhood. The project would add 18 units
2 (approximately 6,800 sf) to the Palo Alto Commons building by adding second floor area and in
3 some locations third floor area to the “step backs”, as well as three modestly sized ground floor
4 additions which will vary in height from two to three stories. If approved, the amended PC
5 would allow for increases to the density, floor area, lot coverage, and allow an up to 1’8”
6 protrusion into the daylight plane in some areas. The development plans are provided in
7 Attachment F.

8
9 The application requires initial review by the Planning and Transportation Commission,
10 followed by review by the Architectural Review Board (ARB). Upon recommendation from the
11 ARB, the draft ordinance for the project is presented along with the development plan to the
12 Planning and Transportation Commission for recommendation to the City Council for final
13 action.

14
15 A detailed review of the proposed project’s consistency with applicable zoning standards is
16 provided in Attachment B. The proposed changes would need to be considered as new
17 development standards under the Planned Community amendment. Based on the feedback
18 from City Council and the neighbors, a parking study is being prepared to analyze the efficacy of
19 the existing parking spaces and any potential needed increase from the proposed units. The
20 applicant clarified that of the 55 spaces on site, 41 are dedicated to onsite staff, and 14 are for
21 visitors. This applies only to the Palo Alto Commons portion of the site. The Avant is a separate
22 PC zone and has its own parking. This project is located on the VTA 22 bus line but is not within
23 walking distance of a CalTrain station or other public transportation. The applicant has been
24 asked to provide additional information regarding existing and proposed bike parking. It does
25 not appear that there was a requirement for bike parking at the time of original development.

26
27 Notice of a public hearing for this project was published in the Daily Post on February 16, 2024,
28 which is 12 days in advance of the meeting. Postcard mailing occurred on February 15, 2024,
29 which is 13 days in advance of the meeting. There were four public comment speakers during
30 the August 7, 2023 Council Prescreening, as reflected in the attached meeting minutes
31 (Attachment E). Additionally, the applicant hosted an outreach meeting on October 11, 2023 at
32 the project site and invited all adjacent neighbors. Approximately 10 people attended, including
33 City staff and former Mayor Kou. The neighbor’s comments were focused on concern about the
34 increase in height, that adding one story was better than adding multiple, i.e., the parts of the
35 building going from one to two, or two to three, is more appropriate than parts going from one
36 story to three stories; there were concerns about noise, the daylight plane, parking, and adding
37 height adjacent to single family resident neighbors. A parking study is currently being prepared.
38 The subject project is being assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in
39 the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the
40 environmental regulations of the City. While a noise report is being prepared, no new
41 significant environmental impacts are currently anticipated as a part of this project. The
42 recommended motion is that the PTC provide feedback and recommend moving the project
43 forward to the ARB.

1 Steve Sandholtz, with WellQuest the manager and operator of Avant Senior Living in Palo Alto
2 Commons presented information regarding the upgrades necessary on the property to
3 continue providing quality service to the seniors living on the property.
4

5 After clarifying questions Chair Summa went into Public Comments and explained the group of
6 five people will get 15 minutes.
7

8 **PUBLIC COMMENTS 1.59**

9 Kevin Ji spoke on behalf of Janis Loursritski, Edwin Ong, Celine Wang, and Katie Peterson and
10 commented the previous agenda item was super cool to see staff and the commission working
11 with the data set analysis for Safe Streets for All. He is a resident of 4072 Wilkie Way and
12 mentioned Title 18.6.060 Section IV, subsection B states that massing and orientation of
13 buildings respect and mirror massing of neighboring structures by stepping back upper stories
14 to transition to similar small scale buildings, such as the R-1 neighborhood where this group of
15 people live. Mr. Ji continued with parking overflow concerns and noise concerns and suggested
16 a noise analysis be completed during peak HAVC use months. He is empathetic towards the
17 existing senior community and his concerns are not about them not getting the upgrades,
18 rather requesting the additional stories be added to the sides of the property that are not
19 adjacent to the R-1 properties. The costs of these facilities are noteworthy, however, not at the
20 expense of the daylight plane of the adjacent neighbors. The ADU window of his property faces
21 the back lot and with the daylight encroachment of these plans there will be days when he
22 receives little sun. In the 1980s when the stair step back methodology was created it was for
23 the purpose of respecting the daylight plane of existing neighbors around Palo Alto Commons.
24 He hoped Palo Alto Commons would continue the good working relationship with the existing
25 neighbors.

26 Mona He provided comment regarding the direct impacts of her property from the senior
27 center and recalled at a previous Council meeting when City Council requested a study about
28 building a fourth floor on the El Camino side so they would not build the fourth floor on the R-1
29 neighborhood. They are now trying to build up to four stories on both sides. They already lost
30 their privacy; with this addition they will now lose their shade. Using trees to keep privacy will
31 still reduce the sunlight to the residential properties. Additionally, there are lack of parking
32 concerns.

33 Ziming Weng provided comment regarding the loss of daylight plane and privacy with the
34 additional floors added to the building and the parking is already a problem, it will become
35 worse with the added units. Visitors should be considered as well as the residents of the senior
36 housing building.

37 Jenny Chen provided comment and echoed her son Kevin Ji's comments regarding the loss of
38 daylight plane, the nuisance of HVAC noise and the lack of parking with the existing facility. The
39 changes being proposed will have a devastating impact on the current residents in the R-1
40 neighborhood adjacent to the project.

1 Garret Chan provided comment as a resident of Wilkie Way on the loss of daylight plane and
2 parking as there are already parking concerns for the visitors of the current residents of the
3 senior housing development Avant. He is against the project as it is currently planned, but
4 believes the residents deserve upgrades to the building. The developer recently did a mock up
5 for the R-1 residents and one of his neighbors chose to sell his house before the property value
6 declines because of the imposing impacts of the current proposal.

7
8 Yanfeng Wang provided comment that she is proud to be able to come into City Hall and speak.
9 She told the story of when she recently purchased her home on Wilkie Way. She was told the
10 previous owner loved his home and she does now too, but she was not told about the project
11 that was about to begin and expressed concern regarding the loss of daylight plane due to the
12 high building and large trees that were required to help with privacy.

13 Lily Lee spoke as a resident of Wilkie Way and expressed concerns regarding the shortage of
14 parking, the loss of daylight plane, and the noise. Privacy is a concern because there are direct
15 sightings of Avant residents, regardless of the vegetation. When voiced to the property owners
16 they were provided with potential tree plantings which is going to worsen the lack of daylight
17 plane even more after the additional stories are built. The noise has been an issue with
18 distressed residents. Traffic and parking are an issue and will be worse with the additional units.

19 James Porter provided comment as a Wilkie Way resident. He echoed most of the previous
20 comments and added he too has a direct line of sight of the current residents in the building,
21 removing the step back will make that worse. The massing of the plans will be oppressive on
22 the neighbors behind them. Parking is already impacted on El Camino and Wilkie Way, the
23 additional units with no added parking will impact that in a negative way. He has a child who
24 bikes to Gunn and the added parking and traffic is going to make an already scary ride, scarier.
25 Staff of the building are already parking on Wilkie way, with the addition, there will be added
26 staff and that will compound the parking issues.

27 Nia Porter provided comment regarding the current impacts of the existing structure to the
28 daylight plane and lack of privacy, adding additional units will make those worse. It's sad to
29 hear that this project has caused neighbors to move away, one was her neighbor who was also
30 her 6th grade teacher. The traffic trying to turn left onto El Camino has cars backed up on Wilkie
31 with parked cars on both sides of the traffic. It's a very dangerous situation for kids biking to
32 school.

33 James Cham provided comment as a Wilkie Way resident who is opposed of the project for
34 many of the reasons already noted. His biggest concern was there seemed to be a parking
35 discrepancy described in the study versus what is actually happening, he was glad to hear the
36 notes from the Commissioners and also from his neighbors. The impact of the loss of daylight
37 plane is quite different in person from what is depicted in the plans.

1 Kia Porter provided comment as a resident of Wilkie way and echoed the comments of his
2 family and many neighbors. The proposed edition is going to further exasperate what the
3 neighborhood is already feeling in terms of the daylight plane, parking, and privacy. When Palo
4 Alto Commons was built there was a steady dialogue between the owners, and it seemed they
5 truly cared about the impacts on the residential adjacent community, and it seemed like that
6 was no longer the case.

7 Bella Davies provided comment from zoom and commented that the building is already quite
8 imposing on their home, the addition will make that worse, will lessen the daylight plane, there
9 are other options that could be explored for the additional units, such as adding them to the
10 front side of the building. Parking is also a concern already; additional units would make that a
11 bigger problem. There are times when parking is not available for the residents on Wilkie Way.

12 Jayashree provided comment and concerns regarding the massing of the structure and the
13 negative impact it will have on the daylight plane and privacy. The owners should be required
14 to find a solution for the parking, daylight plane issues, noise from the HVAC's, and privacy,
15 however, won't because of their property value, in turn it will be the resident's of the adjacent
16 neighborhood who will lose property values.

17 Daniel Pei provided comment and stated the proposed additions threaten the already low light
18 from the daylight plane. It lowers the quality of life and the value of their homes. He's also
19 concerned about the precedent this project will set. Allowing such substantial alterations to an
20 existing structure will further encroach on future residents and their access to natural lights and
21 views. Had they been informed about these plans prior to purchasing their home, it would have
22 given them pause.

23 Aaditya Divekar provided comment in opposition to the project directly behind Palo Alto
24 Commons. He echoes the concerns of his neighbors. He is one of the few residents in the
25 neighborhood that still enjoys a decent back yard, that will not be the case with the loss of
26 privacy and daylight plane. It will lower their property value; the project owners should work to
27 help mitigate that.

28 Chair Summer closed public comment and brought the discussion back to the Commission.

29 Commissioner Lu requested more information on the current parking situation from the
30 applicant given the neighbors observations versus the information the applicant provided on
31 vacant parking; the building envelope, and if they had considered other public benefits such as
32 they did in 2010. Mr. Sandholtz stated staff are in the process of having a parking analysis
33 completed, so that data is not yet completed. They are committed to looking at what they can
34 do to help mitigate those issues; they would have to do an entire 3rd floor, not just one unit,
35 they are willing to look at options of reducing the impact, it is a big building; adding public
36 benefits has not been proposed by staff, providing additional senior housing units provides a
37 public benefit, but they were open to those discussions. Commissioner Lu commented that he
38 agreed senior housing is a benefit, however Council emphasized and was hoping for some kind

1 of affordability. Considering their options for something additional would be responsive to what
2 Council flagged.

3 Commissioner Templeton touched on the zoning of the PC and challenged the statement that
4 there are no residents and expressed concerns that the residents in the neighborhood had
5 been heard and the owners of Palo Alto Commons had been heard, it was interesting that the
6 benefits seemed to lean in the direction of the owners of Palo Alto Commons at the expense of
7 the property value of the residents adjacent to the project, yet those who currently live in the
8 PC had not been heard. There is definitely a parking problem and one that needs to be
9 addressed when there are claims there is all the extra parking but the neighbors on Wilkie Way
10 can't find parking where they live. That will likely be dialogue that needs to be started prior to
11 the Palo Alto Commons getting anywhere on the developments they are seeking.

12 Commissioner Hechtman inquired about the noise impacts, and parking. Planner Kallas
13 responded that all equipment would be required to meet noise standards; Mr. Sandholtz stated
14 that the parking is for both buildings. Commissioner Hechtman stated that solving the parking
15 issues is something that really needs to be done and it will be an important part in the ARB's
16 review; completing the parking study will be important.

17 Vice-Chair Chang inquired how many residents have private nurses or staff that come in to do
18 work for the current residents and questioned how the staff would not be different between
19 personal visitors and professional guests; and felt the parking situation should be corrected,
20 and the daylight plane should be honored, she hoped that when they return they will have
21 more information regarding what is discretionary and what the actual daylight plane
22 requirements are; and there are windows back up to the residential neighbors in the change
23 plans, the privacy is definitely a concern; there is also a massing concern. Ms. Charlene Kussner
24 stated on average there are about 5% - roughly five private companions. They have a consistent
25 system in place of people signing in and out.

26 Mr. Yang commented regarding Commissioner Templeton's questions in terms of commercial
27 zoning with residents living onsite.

28 Commissioner Reckdahl questioned the prescreening, expressed concerns for the addition of
29 the units abutting the backyards of the neighbors, and parking.

30 Chair Summa agreed with a lot of the comments from her colleagues, she wouldn't necessarily
31 call the current seniors onsite clients rather than residents because it is a service use,
32 particularly since the units don't have kitchens. The lack of parking is definitely an issue and
33 what she saw when she visited the site was not what was described, particularly since it is an
34 upper scale place, most clients would likely have professionals visiting them for yoga or in
35 person services, even if it weren't for companions. She doesn't believe imposing on the
36 residential neighbors without compensating them is the right thing to do and she wished it had
37 come to them after the parking study had been completed, and she finds the issues with the
38 daylight plane also need to be resolved and stated she didn't feel the PTC would be doing any
39 one any favors by recommending the project move forward with the ARB review. Even though

1 this is a service use and not a residential use, they need to ensure they are taking care of the
2 people that are there currently, and the adjacent neighbors.

3 Commissioner Hechtman believes that there is a community of Palo Alto residents that live in
4 the Commons, and the owners and the City need to ensure they are taken care of. He
5 appreciated the changes that had been made and hoped that with a few more outreach
6 opportunities they would resolve some of the current important challenges with the plans and
7 find where the additional units can go without impacting the residents on Wilkie Way with
8 more parking issues and less daylight. He thanked the neighbors for input. He disagrees that the
9 current residents are clients; they are people's family members who live in the building, even if
10 they don't have a kitchen.

11 Commissioner Templeton explained why people had brought up for profit corporations. There's
12 a deal being made and it's not a fair deal and it is unbalanced. One of the parties is benefiting
13 and one is losing.

14 Vice-Chair Chang suggested the applicants lessen the number of units to the original units
15 proposed and remove the ones that are high impacts.

16 Commissioner Lu agreed with many points from Commissioner Templeton and Commissioner
17 Hechtman and Council was really excited about the prospect of additional senior housing and
18 believed the project does have legs, but a compromise needs to be made.

19 Commissioner Summa commented that the PTC was not ready to move it forward to ARB, they
20 wanted to see more refinements and the completed parking study first.

21
22 **MOTION** by Chair Summa, seconded by Commissioner Reckdahl for the project to return to the
23 PTC after staff and the applicant make additional refinement on the design with particular
24 attention to daylight plane and massing impacts to the residents on Wilkie Way, and after the
25 parking study has been completed.

26
27
28 **VOTE**

29
30 Ms. Dao recorded the Motion carried 7-0-0.

31
32 **MOTION 1 PASSED 7** (Akin, Chang, Hechtman, Summa, Reckdahl, Lu, Templeton) -0
33 **Commission Action:** Motion by Summa, seconded by Chang. Pass 7-0-0
34

35 Commissioner Reckdahl commented regarding the two options for daylight plane and
36 suggested staff really concentrate on the requirements for using the R-1, as that would require
37 using residential setbacks, and this building does not meet those requirements.

1 **The PTC took a brief break and returned with all members present.**

- 2
- 3 4. 2501 Embarcadero Way [22PLN-00367]: Recommendation to Council for
4 Approval of a Site and Design Application and a Variance to Allow the
5 Construction of a Local Advanced Water Purification System at the Regional
6 Water Quality Control Plant (RWQCP). The Proposed Project Includes the
7 Construction and Operation of a Membrane Filtration Recycled Water Facility
8 and a Permeate Storage Tank at the City's RWQCP to Improve Recycled Water
9 Quality and Increase its Use. A Variance to Allow for a Taller Screening Wall is
10 Also Requested. Environmental Assessment: Council Previously Adopted an
11 Addendum to the 2015 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the City of Palo
12 Alto Recycled Water Project Which Evaluated the Environmental Impacts of the
13 Proposed Project. Zone District: PF (D) (Public Facility with Site and Design
14 Combining District). For More Information Contact the Project Planner, Claire
15 Raybould, at Claire.Raybould@Cityofpaloalto.org.

16

17 Chair Summa introduced the next item and called staff's report.

18

19 Senior Planner and ARB Liaison Raybould provided the staff presentation. The application is a
20 request for Site and Design Review for a proposed local advanced water purification system
21 (AWPS). The purpose of the project is to improve recycled water quality by reducing its average
22 concentration of total dissolved solids (TDS) through the blending of reverse osmosis
23 permeating with tertiary-treated recycled water. The project also includes a request for a
24 variance to allow for a solid wall to provide screening and to serve as a sound barrier. The
25 project responds to Council's expressed goal, as set forth in the Recycled Water Salinity
26 Reduction Policy adopted in 2010, to reduce the TDS level of recycled water to 600 parts per
27 million. It also responds to mitigation measure HYD-3d set forth in the corresponding
28 Environmental Impact Report adopted in 2015, which requires the City to consider treatment
29 options, such as reverse osmosis, to reduce the salinity of its recycled water and thus make its
30 recycled water useable for irrigation of salt-sensitive species. Following adoption of the EIR, the
31 City coordinated with Valley Water and Mountain View to prepare a feasibility study and
32 preliminary design report for a local advanced water purification system (AWPS), which was
33 completed in 2017. The report was used as the basis for preparing preliminary plans for the
34 proposed project. In 2019 the City Council approved an agreement with Valley Water to further
35 the design of the project. A location map for the proposed AWPS is included in Attachment A. A
36 detailed project description is provided in Attachment D. The circular tank would be 50 ft in
37 diameter with a sidewall height of 30 feet and a capacity of 350,000 gallons. It would be
38 erected on a reinforced concrete mat type foundation supported by deep pile foundation. The
39 open-air building covers a membrane filtration system, chemical storage/feed system
40 components, and other ancillary components essential to the purification system. The facility
41 would have a building footprint of approximately 15,544 sf. The open-air building will be
42 constructed over a concrete deck in order to raise the equipment up out of the flood zone per

1 FEMA requirements. The project will also include a blending station located in the basement of
2 the RWQCP administration building and installation of yard piping inside the
3 RWQCP. The project will be located on the northwest side of the RWQCP, abutting
4 Embarcadero Road, partially outside the existing fence line but within the defined boundaries
5 of the plant. The project also includes new landscaping, a new concrete screening wall, and
6 revisions to the chain link fence surrounding the RWQCP to incorporate the area of the new
7 AWPS. Although the applicant has requested a variance to permit a 10-foot tall fence, staff have
8 also identified the Design Enhancement Exception as a possible mechanism to approve this
9 feature in the event the PTC recommends that variance findings cannot be made. Design
10 Enhancement Exceptions are not within the purview of the PTC; they are acted on by the
11 Director following recommendation by the ARB. Minor refinements to the plans are still
12 anticipated to address feedback from various departments, and further modifications may be
13 incorporated based on feedback through the public process. However, overall, the project is
14 consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning
15 Ordinance and other applicable goals and policies of the City. The Comprehensive Plan includes
16 Goals, Policies, and Programs that guide the physical form of the City. The Comprehensive Plan
17 provides the basis for the City's development regulations and is used by City staff to regulate
18 building and development and make recommendations on projects. Further, ARB Finding #1
19 requires that the design be consistent and compatible with applicable elements of the Palo Alto
20 Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan land use designation for the project site is major
21 Institution/Special Facility which includes governmental and community service uses and lands
22 that are publicly owned such as the subject property. The proposed AWPS within the area of
23 the RWQCP boundaries is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Land Use. Staff are still
24 completing a thorough analysis of the project's consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.
25 Generally, the project is consistent with several goals of the Comprehensive Plan, including
26 Policy N-4.17 of the Natural Element. The project is located within the Public Facilities (PF) Zone
27 District as well as the Site and Design (D) Review combining district. The proposed facilities for
28 the treatment of recycled water are considered a public facility and appropriate use within the
29 PF zone district and especially within the boundaries of the existing Regional Water Quality
30 Control Plant. Because the project includes a new building within the Site and Design Review
31 Combining District, Site and Design review is required. A detailed review of the proposed
32 project's consistency with applicable zoning standards is provided in Attachment C. The project
33 is consistent with the PF Zone District and D Combining District requirements or is otherwise
34 requesting to deviate from the code in a manner that is consistent with the zoning ordinance.
35 More specifically, a variance is requested to allow for an approximately 10-foot-tall wall where
36 an 8-foot-tall wall is allowed in accordance with Chapter 16.24 of the code. Draft findings for
37 the approval of a variance are included in the Draft RLUA in Attachment B. The proposed
38 project includes the removal of 35 trees, 12 of which are protected due to their size. These
39 trees are varying species of Eucalyptus, Myoporum laetum, and Casuarina glauca trees which
40 are primarily non-native, invasive species. All of these are within the proposed project
41 footprint. At the Parks and Recreation Commission's request, the project was refined in its early
42 design phases (prior to formal application submittal) to prioritize retention of some of the
43 larger trees along the Embarcadero frontage. The project refinements retained eleven
44 additional trees. However, five of those trees have since died/fallen in storms. The project

1 includes planting 36 trees along the project frontage along with other large and smaller shrubs
2 to provide an attractive landscape buffer between the pedestrian pathway and the RWQCP as
3 well as between the pedestrian path and Embarcadero Road. The existing property lines for the
4 site do not follow the existing boundaries of the RWQCP. Therefore, under existing conditions
5 the new facility would be constructed over an existing property line. A certificate of compliance
6 is required to revise the boundary between the two City parcels (APN 008-05-005; and APN
7 008-06-001). The new proposed boundary is shown in the project plans. Recordation of the
8 certificate of compliance is required as a condition of approval prior to building permit
9 issuance. The subject project has been assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria
10 contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and
11 the environmental regulations of the City. In 2015 Council adopted an EIR for the City of Palo
12 Alto Recycled Water Project. The EIR included mitigation Measure MM HYD-3d, which required
13 the City to consider treatment options, such as reverse osmosis, to reduce the salinity of its
14 recycled water and thus make its recycled water useable for irrigation of salt-sensitive species.
15 On November 18, 2019, in taking discretionary actions to further pursue this project, council
16 adopted an EIR addendum that included more site-specific details associated with the proposed
17 development. The adopted CEQA addendum is included in Attachment E.

18
19 Tom Kapushinski and Diego Martinez-Garcia from public works provided a presentation from
20 Public Works on the project. Karin North helped answer clarifying questions.

21
22 Commissioner Templeton noted she would have to recuse herself from the item due another
23 Commission assignment that is related to Valley Water and Financial Oversight and exited the
24 meeting at 10:21 p.m.

25 26 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

27 Shani Kleinhaus provided public comment on behalf of the Palo Alto Audubon Society and
28 spoke about her recent research on the impacts of artificial light at night. Lighting at night
29 should be considered on a biological and ecological stance. While it is not a requirement of
30 CEQA to consider lighting as a biological impact, it is critical to consider lighting from a
31 biological and ecological lens in the Baylands; Ms. Kleinhaus reviewed the impacts.

32 **UNFRIENDLY AMENDMENT** by Vice-Chair Chang to consider 100% native planting and
33 screening of the tank.

34 35 **VOTE**

36 Ms. Dao recorded the Unfriendly Amendment carried 4-2-1 (No by Commission Lu,
37 Commissioner Hechtman, Commissioner Templeton recused).

38
39 Commissioner Lu spoke to his no vote that there had been very interesting case studies of the
40 second Avenue subway in New York and how come agencies weren't paying for it at certain

1 times, there was a lot of scope and discussion. There was a lot scrutiny on how New York ran
2 that process. He believes the PTC scope should be kept tight, particularly on environmental
3 projects that have already run significantly over the original anticipated budget.

4
5 Commissioner Hechtman commented that City Plan experts often have a reason for not
6 wanting 100% native planting. With that, he was willing to defer to their greater knowledge on
7 the topic.

8 **MOTION** by Commissioner Lu, seconded by Commissioner Hechtman for recommending
9 approval of the project, including the variance, to the City Council based on the findings and
10 subject to conditions and asking staff to Investigate utilizing 2700 Kelvin lighting versus 4000
11 kelvin lighting currently propose and consider 100% native planting.

12
13 **VOTE**

14
15 Ms. Dao recorded the Motion carried 6-0-1 (Commissioner Templeton recused).

16
17 **MOTION PASSED 6** (Akin, Chang, Hechtman, Summa, Reckdahl, Templeton) -0 -1 (Templeton
18 Absent)

19 **Commission Action:** Motion by Lu, seconded by Hechtman. Pass 6-0-1

20 **Commission Action:** (Unfriendly Amendment) by Chang carried 4-2-1 (No by Commission Lu,
21 Commissioner Hechtman, Commissioner Templeton recused).

22
23
24 5. Action: Creation of a Retail Study Ad Hoc Committee

25
26 Chair Summa introduced the next item and explained the options for the ad hoc committee.

27
28 **MOTION** moved by Chair Summa, seconded by Commissioner Hechtman to create a Retail
29 Study Ad Hoc Committee consisting of Commissioner Reckdahl, Commissioner Akin, and Vice-
30 Chair Chang with a June deadline to get it to Council.

31
32 **VOTE**

33
34 Ms. Dao recorded the Motion carried 6-0-1 (Commissioner Templeton absent).

35
36 **MOTION PASSED 6** (Akin, Chang, Hechtman, Summa, Reckdahl) -0 -1 (Templeton Absent)

37 **Commission Action:** Motion by Summa, seconded by Hechtman. Pass 6-0-1

38
39
40 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

41 Public Comment is Permitted. Three (3) minutes per speaker.

42

- 1 6. Approval of Planning & Transportation Commission Draft Summary Minutes of
2 October 11, 2023 as revised
3
4

5 **MOTION** by Commissioner Akin, seconded by Commissioner Hechtman to approve the
6 summary minutes of October 11, 2023 as revised.
7

8 **VOTE**
9

10 Ms. Dao recorded the Motion carried 6-0-1 (Commissioner Templeton absent).
11

12 **MOTION PASSED 6** (Akin, Chang, Lu, Hechtman, Summa, Reckdahl) -0 -1(Templeton absent)

13 **Commission Action:** Motion by Akin, seconded by Hechtman. Pass 6-0-1
14

- 15 7. Approval of Planning & Transportation Commission Draft Summary Minutes of
16 October 25, 2023
17

18 **MOTION** by Commissioner Hechtman, second by Vice-Chair Chang to approve the Summary
19 minutes of October 25, 2023 as revised.
20

21 **VOTE**
22

23 Ms. Dao recorded the Motion carried 6-0-1 (Commissioner Templeton absent).
24

25 **MOTION PASSED: 6** (Akin, Chang, Lu, Hechtman, Summa, Reckdahl) -0 -1 (Templeton absent)

26 **Commission Action:** Motion by Hechtman, seconded by Chang. Pass 6-0-1
27

28 **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

29 None

30 **ADJOURNMENT**

31 11:25 pm

Palo Alto Planning & Transportation Commission

Commissioner Biographies, Present and Archived Agendas and Reports are available online: <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/boards/ptc/default.asp>. The PTC Commission members are:

Chair Doria Summa
Vice-Chair Bryna Chang
Commissioner Allen Akin
Commissioner Bart Hechtman
Commissioner George Lu
Commissioner Keith Reckdahl
Commissioner Carolyn Templeton

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Write to us. Email the PTC at: Planning.Commission@CityofPaloAlto.org. Letters can be delivered to the Planning & Community Environment Department, 5th floor, City Hall, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94301. Comments received by 2:00 PM two Tuesdays preceding the meeting date will be included in the agenda packet. Comments received afterward through 2:00 PM the day of the meeting will be presented to the Commission at the dais.

Material related to an item on this agenda submitted to the PTC after distribution of the agenda packet is available for public inspection at the address above.

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