

#### **REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Date: 3/8/2022
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: Zoom

#### **Regular Session**

#### A. Call To Order

Mayor Nash called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

#### B. Roll Call

Present: Combs, Mueller, Nash, Taylor, Wolosin

Absent: None

Staff: Interim City Manager Justin Murphy, Assistant City Attorney Greg Rubens, City Clerk

Judi A. Herren

#### C. Agenda Review

None.

#### D. Report from Closed Session

No reportable actions.

#### E. Public Comment

• Jeff Schmidt spoke in support of community centers, teachers, parents, and creating a destination for community activities.

#### F. Presentations and Proclamations

F1. Introduction: Menlo Park Fire Protection District Chief Mark Lorenzen

Mayor Nash introduced Menlo Park Fire Protection District Chief Mark Lorenzen.

F2. Presentation: Downtown market study (Attachment)

Interim City Manager Justin Murphy introduced the item.

HdL ECONSolutions representatives Barry Foster and Kirstin Hinds made the presentation (Attachment).

- Katie Behroozi spoke in support of reviewing the Downtown Specific Plan and pedestrian and bike safety considerations, and requested clarification on economic issues facing businesses.
- Fran Dehn spoke in support of improving and revitalizing the Downtown.
- Adina Levin spoke in support of the opportunity in the housing element for improving the Downtown.
- Jeff Schmidt expressed challenges for commercial brokers connecting to property owners.

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City Councilmember Mueller exited the meeting.

The City Council discussed bringing vibrancy to the Downtown, parking garage mixed-use with housing, housing element to expand the Downtown mix-use options, grants to restaurants in Downtown, next steps for short, min, and long-term, need for economic Development Director.

The City Council received clarification on consumer demand and market supply and sales tax revenue.

City Councilmember Mueller rejoined the meeting.

#### G. Consent Calendar

- G1. Adopt a resolution authorizing the city manager to execute a software service agreement with PerfectMind for a parks and recreation registration management platform per the recommendations in the City Council approved Information Technology Master Plan (Staff Report #22-045-CC)
- G2. Adopt a resolution initiating the Menlo Park landscape assessment district proceedings for fiscal year 2022-23 (Staff Report #22-046-CC)
- G3. Waive second reading and adopt an ordinance amending Municipal Code Chapter 16.92 (Signs-Outdoor Advertising) to allow increased signage for qualifying projects within the SP-ECR/D (El Camino Real/Downtown specific plan) zoning district (Staff Report #22-047-CC)

**ACTION**: Motion and second (Taylor/ Combs), to approve the consent calendar with the exception of item G3., passed unanimously.

**ACTION**: Motion and second (Combs/ Taylor), to waive a second reading and adopt an ordinance amending Municipal Code Chapter 16.92 (Signs-Outdoor Advertising) to allow increased signage for qualifying projects within the SP-ECR/D (El Camino Real/Downtown specific plan) zoning district, passed 4-0 (Mueller recused).

#### H. Regular Business

H1. Adopt a resolution to install no parking restrictions on a portion of El Camino Real and timed parking restrictions on a portion of College Avenue (Staff Report #22-048-CC)

Assistant Public Works Director Hugh Louch made the presentation (Attachment).

- Katie Behroozi spoke in support of bike and pedestrian safety and the pedestrian median.
- Frank Schumann spoke in opposition of the parking removal.
- Cherith Spicer spoke in opposition of the parking removal.
- Adina Levin spoke in support of the parking removal and crosswalk implementation.
- Karen Grove spoke in support of the parking removal.
- John Donahoe, Director of Planning and Entitlement for Stanford University, spoke to describe Stanford's responsibilities and constraints related to the development of Middle Plaza and to note that Stanford had never opposed removal of parking on the east side of El Camino Real.

The City Council received clarification on the safety of the El Camino Real and Middle Avenue intersection, the safety benefits of the median related to the removal of parking and costs and project delays if median construction is postponed.

The City Council discussed the value of removing parking, future bike lane plans on El Camino Real, adding a bike lane on the eastside of El Camino Real in the short term, the impact of the median on new residents and business at Middle Plaza, and voting at the March 1, 2022 meeting on this item.

**ACTION**: Motion and second (Combs/ Mueller) to remove parking on east side of El Camino Real in front of Middle Plaza & Stanford Park Hotel (67 spaces), implement one-hour time limit parking between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday to Friday except Holidays on the south side of College Avenue from El Camino Real to approximately 160 feet westerly, modify El Camino Real and Middle Avenue intersection to add a crosswalk on the south leg, and direct staff to return with median options, failed 2-3 (Taylor, Nash, and Wolosin dissenting).

**ACTION**: Motion and second (Wolosin/ Nash), to adopt a resolution to Install no parking zone on the east side of El Camino Real from the southerly driveway of 700 El Camino Real to the Menlo Park/Palo Alto city limit. Install no parking zone on the west side of El Camino Real from Middle Avenue to College Avenue. Implement one-hour time limit parking between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday to Friday except Holidays on the south side of College Avenue from El Camino Real to approximately 160 feet westerly. Update existing one-hour time limit parking on the north side of College Avenue from the end of the existing no parking zone to approximately 50 feet westerly to between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday to Friday except Holidays, and direct staff to modify two residential parking on College Avenue to timed parking, passed 3-2 (Combs and Mueller dissenting).

#### I. Informational Items

11. City Council agenda topics: March 22 – April 12, 2022 (Staff Report #22-041-CC)

#### J. City Manager's Report

Interim City Manager Justin Murphy reported out on current advisory body recruitment, the Independent Redistricting Commission public hearing review of submitted maps, and Springline project below market rate housing drawing.

#### K. City Councilmember Reports

City Councilmember Taylor reported out on upcoming C/CAG, SFO Roundtable, and District based Reimagining Public Safety Subcommittee meetings.

Mayor Nash reported out on MidPen Housing's Gateway Rising wall rising.

#### L. Closed Session

- L1. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL— ANTICIPATED LITIGATION
  Initiation of litigation pursuant to paragraph (4) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9 of the
  Government Code: (one potential case)
- L2. CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL—EXISTING LITIGATION
  Paragraph (1) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9)
  Name of case: City of Menlo Park vs. Pacific Gas and Electric Co., et al. (San Mateo County Superior Court No. 21-CIV-06284)

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#### **Call to Order**

Mayor Nash reconvened the meeting at 9:56 p.m.

#### **Report from Closed Session**

Assistant City Attorney Greg Rubens reported out on item L1., the City Council voted 5-0 to intervene in litigation and no reportable actions for item L2.

#### M. Adjournment

Mayor Nash adjourned the meeting at 9:57 p.m.

Judi A. Herren, City Clerk

These minutes were approved at the City Council meeting of March 22, 2022.





## Trade Area Overview

## Retail Market for Downtown Menlo Park

- Menlo Park residential population = 35,131
  - Daytime population = 42,000
- Residential population within 20-minute drive time = 255,000
  - Daytime population = 370,000
- 13,297 households with 2.64 people per housing unit
- Residents are 84% White Collar and 16% Blue Collar
- 54.8% have a college degree
- Average household income is \$248,661 (San Mateo County Average = \$165,184)
- Median household income is \$160,784 (San Mateo County Median = \$122,641)
- Menlo Park is ethnically diverse with 56.6% White, 20.1% Hispanic, 9.3% Asian, 5.1% Black,
   2.3% Pacific Islander and 6.6% Other





## Downtown Menlo Park

## **Benefits and Opportunities**

- 200 unique and upscale shops, galleries, markets, retailers, financial institutions, personal services, and dining choices
- Mixed-use and new residential developments in and near downtown projected to produce new consumer opportunities
- Renovation of Guild Theatre to host more events
- Caltrain station, Stanford University and several corporate campuses within close proximity
- Temporary outdoor seating and community space
- Weekly Farmers Market, Spring and Fall Art Stroll, and Summer Block Party & Fest







# **Competing Downtowns**

## **Redwood City**

- Caltrain station easily accessible to downtown
- Mixed use, residential units, and evening activity in DT
- Saturday Farmers Market
- 15-18 hour downtown, with restaurants open past 10pm
- Downtown Events, such as outdoor concert and movie series, music in the park, Chalk Full of Fun event, & more

## Mountain View

- Mixed use, walkable center
- Caltrain station easily accessible to downtown
- Castro Street closed through January 2023 with outdoor dining and public seating available
- 15-18 hour downtown environment
- Downtown events, such as Thursday evening Farmers Market, Taste of Mountain View, outdoor concert and movie series, & more

## Palo Alto

- Healthy mix of retail, dining, and entertainment
- Caltrain station easily accessible to downtown
- Prominent nightlife with 18-hour environment
- Saturday Farmers Market
- Ample public parking, including large parking plazas

### Los Altos

- Mixed use, including over 150 shops within 6-block triangle of unique cafes and boutiques
- Lush green-scape lining streets creating small town atmosphere
- Events held on 1<sup>st</sup> Fridays (of each month) with live music 6-8pm
- Free public parking on streets and in parking plazas



# What makes a successful downtown?



- Walkability & easily accessible connections
- Mixed-use including residential units, retail, entertainment & dining
- 15-18 hour Downtown environment (activity throughout the day and into the evening)
- Placemaking, offer gathering places and interesting spaces
- Establishing branding and adding gateway features and wayfinding signage
- Hosting frequent community and special events
- A rising population, and diversity in people and business offerings
- Uniform and evening store/restaurant hours
- Strong economic opportunities and critical mass of successful businesses
- Parking availability





# **Examples of Activities and Events**

- Concert series or music events
- Food events (Ex. multiple and ongoing "Taste of Menlo Park" events)
- Summer movie series
- Brew or wine festival

- Educational series (children, adult, and family friendly)
- Classic car events
- Arts festivals





## Consumer Demand and Market Supply

City of Menlo Park By Establishment	Consumer Demand	Market Supply	Opportunity Gap/Surplus (%)	Opportunity Gap/Surplus (\$)
Bar/Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)*	\$3,992,302	\$0	-100%	-\$3,992,302
Clothing Stores	\$31,614,752	\$15,207,187	-40%	-16,407,565
Building Materials/Supplies Dealers	\$38,845,055	\$23,468,632	-40%	-\$15,376,423
Other General Merchandise Stores	\$77,438,638	\$53,694,707	-31%	-\$23,743,931
Full-Service Restaurants	\$54,519,861	\$45,436,160	-17%	-\$9,083,701
Casual/Limited-Service Restaurants	\$55,454,147	\$48,630,582	-12%	-\$6,823,565

The opportunity gap/surplus (%) represents the amount of demand under or over supply; therefore, a larger negative percentage represents a larger gap within that retail segment.



<sup>\*</sup> This use requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP)



## Sales & Use Tax

## Trends and Per Capita Comparison

- 222 active businesses in Downtown Menlo Park generating sales tax
- Annual sales tax revenue increased 16% from 2014 to 2019
- COVID-19 Pandemic lead to a -24% sales tax revenue decrease from 2019 to 2020
- Menlo Park sales dollars per capita (SDPC) were on average \$13,551.81
- The highest sales tax performers in Downtown Menlo Park make up 88.3% of the total sales tax revenue generated in FY20/21, including:
  - 1. General Consumer Goods (\$269,873)
  - 2. Restaurants & Hotels (\$235,641)
  - 3. Food & Drugs (\$213,108)





# **Top 20 Sales Tax Producers**

## Downtown Menlo Park

[List is in alphabetical order, not in ranking.]

- Ace Hardware
- Amici's Pizzeria
- Angela
- Bow Wow Meow
- Bistro Vida
- Cheeky Monkey Toys
- Chef Kwan's
- Derby Interiors Design
- Draeger's Market
- Fleet Feet Sports

- Gray's Paint
- LB Steak / Camper
- Left Bank
- Mattress Firm
- Mike's Camera
- Refuge
- Ristorante Carpaccio
- Stacks
- Trader Joe's
- Walgreens

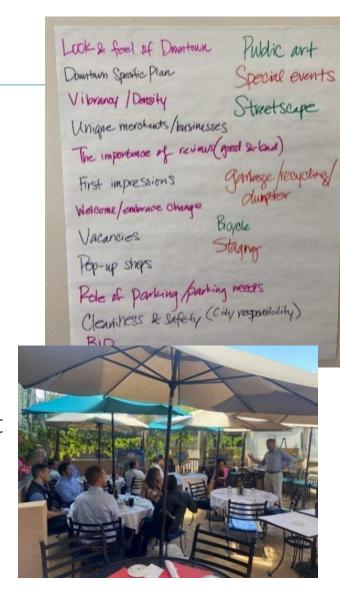




# Focus Groups Summary Report

Summary of input from Downtown business owners/operators, stakeholders & Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors:

- Improve aesthetics of Downtown to create a modern and branded look and feel
- Increase support for local business operations shop local
- Encourage expansion of mixed use
- Improve parking accessibility and availability
- Revisit Specific Plan, or create new Downtown Development
   Plan and solicit suggestions and ideas from stakeholders
- Public engagement through special events, public art, live music, etc





Next Steps and Recommendations

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# Placemaking & Enhancing a Sense of Place

Near-Term (within 6 months)	Key Partners	Effort	Near Term Launch Dates	Suggested Near Term Success Metrics
Consider continuing and expanding the Santa Cruz Street Café parklet program with modifications to establish consistent design standards to include beautification of street barricades.	Chamber of Commerce Downtown Business Alliance Downtown property owners	Light	Quarter 1, 2022	Investments in local businesses to meet improved parklet program standards
Short-Term (within a year)	Key Partners	Effort	Short Term Launch Dates	Suggested Short Term Success Metrics
Explore ways to work with property owners, commercial brokers, and the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce to use vacant spaces with interim uses such as 'pop up businesses' (examples are Los Altos, Danville, and Santa Cruz) or for a business incubator program, as well as requiring property owners to install a temporary store front look for vacant building spaces.	Chamber of Commerce Downtown Business Alliance Downtown property owners Menlo Park Public Art Allied Arts Guild	Moderate	Begin meeting with property owners and commercial brokers Quarter 2, 2022	Percent of vacant spaces with temporary store front installation  Total vacancy rate





# Placemaking & Enhancing a Sense of Place

Mid-Term (within 1 to 2 years)	<b>Key Partners</b>	Level of Effort
Create more appealing signage for Downtown including banners, wayfinding signs, as well as designing/installing an entryway arch at the intersection of El Camino Real and Santa Cruz Avenue.	City	Moderate
Consider developing design guidelines for Downtown Menlo Park to enhance and provide a more consistent look to the streetscape appearance with architectural aspects, design elements, public hardscape and landscape features.	City	Moderate
Enhance hardscape improvements including sidewalks, parking plaza, and pedestrian walkways between the streetscape and parking plazas.	City	High
Longer-Term (2 to 3 years)	<b>Key Partners</b>	Level of Effort
Consider closing two blocks of Santa Cruz Avenue to create a pedestrian mall environment and make the Downtown more walkable and expanding outdoor dining opportunities for restaurants in this area.	City; Chamber; Downtown Business Alliance	Moderate





# Creating More Activity in Downtown Area & Producing More Consumer Demand

Near-Term	<b>Key Partners</b>	Effort	<b>Launch Dates</b>	Success Metrics
Establish a shop local marketing	Chamber; Downtown	Light	Quarter 1, 2022	Dollars spent in locally owned
campaign	Business Alliance; Downtown property			businesses
	owners; San Mateo County			Retail sales per capita
				Percent of businesses participating
				in marketing campaign
Create more special events for	Chamber; Downtown	Light	Quarter 2, 2022	Number of events created
Downtown Menlo Park including	Business Alliance; Menlo			
farmer's markets, street fairs, music	Park Farmers Market; Arts			Tourism revenue on event date(s)
nights, summer concerts, food events,	Guild; Pacific Fine Arts			
art festivals & more.	Festivals; partner with local			Retail sales on event date(s)
	hotels to promote events			





# Creating More Activity in Downtown Area & Producing More Consumer Demand

Short-Term (within 1 year)	Key Partners	Effort	<b>Launch Dates</b>	Success Metrics
Work more closely with real estate brokers	Chamber; Downtown	Moderate	Quarter 2, 2022	-Occupancy rate by type of tenancy
and property owners to improve tenant mix	property owners; local and			-Number of annual broker events
in the Downtown, including holding regular	regional real estate brokers			-New business started
broker events.				
Drive more families to Downtown Menlo	Chamber; Downtown	Moderate	Quarter 3, 2022	-Number % of family friendly events
Park through tenant mix and the special	Alliance; Springline			-Number of businesses catering to families
events being held in the Downtown area.	management; Local hotels			
Work with the Guild Theatre to attract	Guild Theatre; Chamber	Light	Quarter 1, 2022	-Number of events held at Guild Theatre
quality events to generate business for the				-Percent tickets sold for Guild Theatre events
theatre and produce more consumer				-Retail sales on event days / weekends
demand in downtown Menlo Park.				
Work with the Chamber of Commerce and	Chamber; Downtown	Light	Quarter 1, 2022	-Number % of businesses participating in brand
Downtown Business Alliance in undertaking	Business Alliance			promotion
a brand development process				
Work with the Chamber of Commerce to	Chamber	Moderate	Quarter 2, 2022	-Percent of restaurants in Downtown Menlo
continue and expand restaurant				Park offering expanded services, measured by
possibilities				type of service
				-Percent of restaurants in Downtown Menlo
				Park offering outdoor dining
				-Investments in outdoor dining improvements



# Creating More Activity in Downtown Area & Producing More Consumer Demand

Mid-Term (within 1 to 2 years)	Key Partners	Level of Effort
Pursue more entertainment uses for Downtown to build upon the coming opening of the Guild Theatre.	City; Chamber; Downtown Business Alliance; Guild Theatre	Moderate
Pursue more of a 15-to-18-hour environment for Downtown Menlo Park, including expanding the use mix and adding more mixed-use development in the Downtown including more residential development.	City; Chamber; Downtown Business Alliance; property owners; developers	Moderate
Work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote Downtown Menlo Park as a preferred location for Design/Home Furnishings/Furniture uses.	City; Chamber	Light





# Infrastructure Improvements

Near-Term	<b>Key Partners</b>	Effort	<b>Launch Dates</b>	Success Metrics
Develop a plan to install more bicycle racks, trash/recycling containers/public restrooms in the Downtown area and to evaluate the need for additional handicap or senior parking accommodations	City	Light	Quarter 3, 2022	Annual dollars invested in public infrastructure
Short-Term (within 1 year)	Key Partners	Effort	Launch Dates	Success Metrics
Develop a schedule to improve public hardscape improvements including streets, sidewalks, parking plazas & light enhancements (for safety, aesthetics, etc.)	City	Light	Quarter 2, 2022	Percent of planned investment in Downtown infrastructure relative to all capital investments





# Infrastructure Improvements

Mid-Term (1 to 2 years)	Key Partners	Level of Effort
Create a master wayfinding signage program for Downtown Menlo Park.	City; Chamber; Downtown Business Alliance	Moderate
Longer-Term (2 to 3 years)	Key Partners	Level of Effort
Study developing parking structures on city- owned/operated parking plazas in combination with mixed-use projects of affordable housing and retail at street level.	City	High





# City Planning & Economic Development

Near-Term	<b>Key Partners</b>	Effort	Launch Dates	Success Metrics
Work with the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Business Alliance to undertake a Survey of Downtown Businesses and Residents to better understand their ideas to improve the Downtown.	City; Chamber; Downtown Business Alliance; Downtown Residents	Light	Quarter 2, 2022	Percent of survey participants (residents, businesses, and property owners considered separately)
Short -Term (within 1 year)	<b>Key Partners</b>	Effort	Launch Dates	Success Metrics
Partner with the Chamber of Commerce to adopt a formal business ombudsman or concierge program to improve communication between the City and Downtown businesses.	City; Chamber;	Light	Quarter 2, 2022	The addition or selection of an ombudsperson  Number of small businesses assisted as a percent of total businesses
City to look at ways to enhance the planning and entitlement process and improve ease and efficiency.	City	Moderate	Quarter 3, 2022	Time it takes for the City to review applications

**ECONSolutions** 



# City Planning & Economic Development

Mid-Term (1 to 2 years)	Key Partners	Level of Effort
Pursue a comprehensive review and update the nearly 10-year-old El Camino & Downtown Specific Plan.	City	High





# Transforming Next Steps into Action Items

Action Item Summary...

## Action Item 1.

Expand the Santa Cruz Street Café parklet program, adding consistent design standards to include beautification of street barricades and the extension of the existing Santa Cruz Avenue closure

## Action Item 2.

Establish a shop local marketing campaign for Downtown Menlo Park.





# **Transforming Next Steps into Action Items**

## Action Item 1.

Expand the Santa Cruz Street Café parklet program, adding consistent design standards to include beautification of street barricades and the extension of the Santa Cruz Avenue Closure.

- Parklets are an economical solution for businesses to continue to operating under public health restrictions and to take advantage of Menlo Park's weather
- Consistent design guidelines and the beautification of street barricades will help create a more cohesive look and sense of place in the downtown
- Closure of Santa Cruz Avenue provides pedestrian access to the streets as walkways, encourages social distancing, and enhances business opportunities to safely serve patrons

- Launch Date: Quarter 1, 2022
- Success Metric: Investments in local businesses to meet improved parklet program





# Transforming Next Steps into Action Items

## Action Item 2.

Establish a shop local marketing campaign for Downtown Menlo Park.

- Shop local campaigns educate consumers on economic and social advantages that local businesses bring to a community
- Effective campaigns result in healthier businesses, job creation and enhanced retail opportunities
- Collaboration with partners can help tell a real and relatable story to educate consumers about shopping local in Menlo Park

- Launch Date: Quarter 1, 2022
- Success Metrics:
  - Dollars spent in locally owned businesses
  - Retail sales per capita
  - Percent of businesses participating in the shop local marketing campaign







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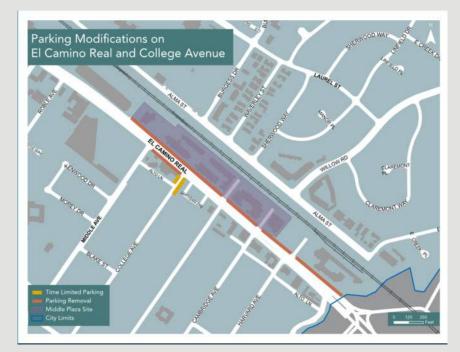






## **AGENDA**

- Background
- Council Questions
- Options for Council Action







### **BACKGROUND**

- Middle Plaza development includes several street improvements as a condition of approval
  - New turn lane to access Middle Plaza
  - Signal upgrades
  - New crosswalk on south side of intersection
  - New 10-foot sidewalk on an easement from Stanford
- Middle Avenue is the only El Camino intersection without a median today
- Construction at the El Camino Real/Middle Avenue intersection is imminent

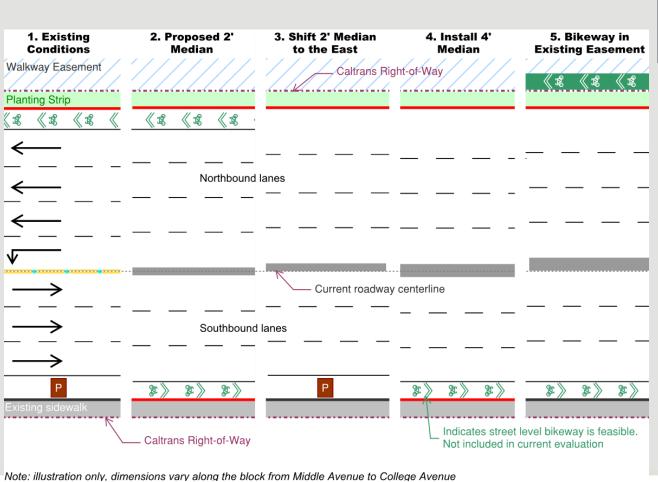




### **QUESTIONS FROM MARCH 1 MEETING**

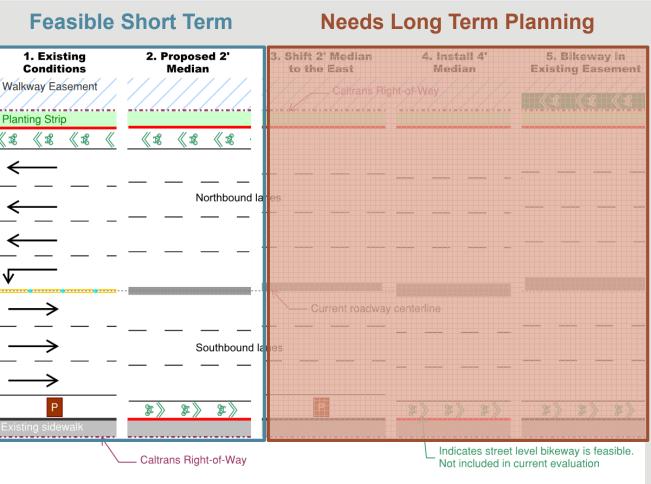
- Can the median be shifted east towards Middle Plaza?
- Can the sidewalk in front of Middle Plaza development be redesigned to provide a separated bikeway at sidewalk level?
- Is a wider median possible?











Note: illustration only, dimensions vary along the block from Middle Avenue to College Avenue







### FEASIBLE SHORT TERM MEDIAN OPTIONS

■ Option 1 – Install 2-foot median, remove parking now

Option 2a – Retain existing striping/post median, retain parking

Option 2b – Option 2
 + explore median
 enhancements

 All options assume parking removal on the east side of El Camino Real







## **COUNCIL ACTION(S)**

Potential Action	Rationale
Remove parking on east side of El Camino Real in front of Middle Plaza & Stanford Park Hotel (67 spaces)	Remove parking before occupancy of Middle Plaza
Remove parking on west side of El Camino Real between Middle & College Avenues	Install 2-foot wide median in short term
Convert parking on first block of College Avenue to 1-hour parking	Provide customer parking for local businesses

