



SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Date: 3/4/2025
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Locations: Teleconference and
City Council Chambers
751 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

Special Session

A. Call To Order

Mayor Combs called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Combs, Nash, Schmidt, Taylor, Wise
Absent: None
Staff: City Manager Justin Murphy, City Attorney Nira Doherty, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk Judi A. Herren

C. Closed Session

- C1. Closed session conference with labor negotiator pursuant to Government Code §54957.6 regarding labor negotiations with the Menlo Park Police Sergeants' Association

Agency Designated Representatives: City Manager Justin I.C. Murphy, Assistant City Manager Stephen Stolte, City Attorney Nira Doherty, Legal Counsel Charles Sakai, Legal Counsel Genevieve Ng, Administrative Services Director Brittany Mello, Human Resources Manager Charla Freckmann

Adjourn to Closed Session

D. Call To Order

Mayor Combs re-called the meeting to order at 6:23 p.m.

E. Roll Call

Present: Combs, Nash, Schmidt, Taylor, Wise
Absent: None
Staff: City Manager Justin Murphy, City Attorney Nira Doherty, Assistant City Manager Stephen Stolte, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk Judi A. Herren

F. Report from Closed Session

No reportable actions.

G. Study Session

- G1. Review and discuss site selection criteria and previous evaluation of City-owned properties completed for the 2023-2031 Housing Element (Staff Report #25-036-CC)

Principal Planner Tom Smith made the presentation (Attachment).

- Will Oursler spoke in support of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas.
- Keri Nicholas spoke in opposition of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas and in support of reopening Santa Cruz Avenue and affordable housing.
- Sean Van Dril spoke in support of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas.
- Katie Hahn spoke in opposition of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas and in support of affordable housing on other sites.
- Alex Beltramo spoke in opposition of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas.
- Andrea Chan requested clarification on where parking is going to be, traffic impacts and plan allotments
- Cherie Zaslawsky spoke in opposition of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas.
- Billy McNair spoke in opposition of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas and in support of affordable housing on other sites.
- Katherine Dumont spoke in support of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas.
- Chris Joy spoke in opposition of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas and in support affordable housing on other sites.
- William Hindson spoke in support of additional visual and audio aids at City Council meetings.
- Carl spoke in opposition of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas.
- Rich Johnson spoke in opposition of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas and support of housing.
- Jenny Michel spoke in support of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas.
- Carmen Caricchio spoke in opposition of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas.
- Adina Levin spoke in support of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas and other sites.
- Brittani Baxter spoke in support of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas.
- Sarah Zollweg spoke in support of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas.
- Skip Hilton spoke in support of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas and on other sites.
- Kevin Cunningham spoke in opposition of housing on the Downtown parking plazas, in support of affordable housing in other locations and considering all city owned lots and/or purchasing land for housing.
- Keith Quiggins spoke in opposition of affordable housing on the Downtown parking plazas and in support of revisiting other sites.

The City Council received clarification on uses and constraints of sites that were considered but not pursued during the Housing Element development, City acquiring land for housing, steps to modify Housing Element sites, United States Geological Survey (USGS) and other private property housing site options and constraints, California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) additional review triggers, impacts to anti displacement and below market rate policy updates from exploring additional housing sites and civic center zoning.

The City Council discussed exploring constrained sites, sites to research and level of analysis for each site, impacts to green space on constrained sites, future study sessions on the consideration

of individual sites, current and upcoming housing units in District 1, reviewing three parks and the civic center and reviewing responses to the request for qualifications (RFQ) to understand if housing is viable for Downtown before considering the study of additional Housing Element sites.

H. Informational Items

H1. City Council agenda topics: March 2025 (Staff Report #25-035-CC)

- Adina Levin spoke on the upcoming Housing Element progress report and requested clarification on a parking and access study in Downtown.

The City Council received clarification on the parking demand study timeline.

I. Adjournment

Mayor Combs adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Assistant to the City Manager/ City Clerk Judi Herren

These minutes were approved at the City Council meeting April 15, 2025.

The background of the slide is a scenic landscape photograph of a body of water, likely a bay or estuary, with a grassy hill in the background under a dramatic, cloudy sky. The image is framed by a blue horizontal band containing the title text.

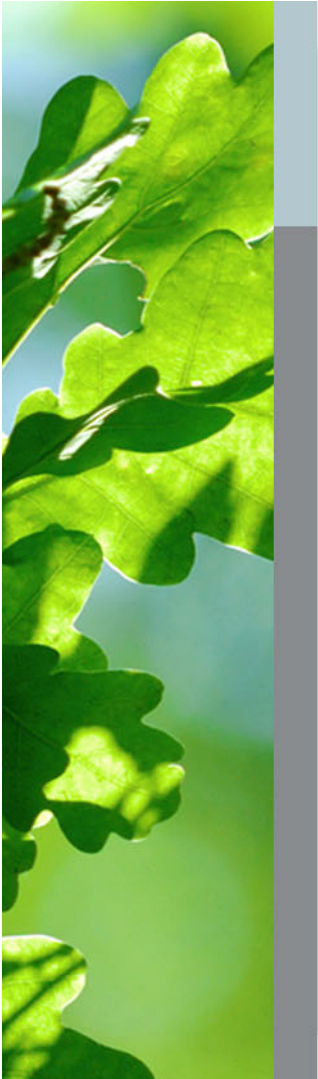
SITE SELECTION CRITERIA AND CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES IN 2023-2031 HOUSING ELEMENT

March 4, 2025



BACKGROUND

- Tonight's meeting is a study session
 - Opportunity for discussion and direction to staff on future actions
- No formal action will be taken at this meeting



BACKGROUND

- Jan. 28: Councilmember Schmidt requested to agendize discussion on Housing Element site selection criteria
- Feb. 11: City Council directed staff to return with overview of process, including extent of Civic Center analysis
 - Overall focus on City-owned properties
 - No new information or analysis requested



HOUSING ELEMENT BACKGROUND

- Required 6th Cycle Housing Element update
 - Plan for city's housing needs from 2023 to 2031
 - First adopted by City Council in Jan. 2023; certified by state in March 2024
 - Includes goals, policies and programs to preserve, improve and develop housing for all income categories and affirmatively further fair housing
 - Must also include a site inventory to show sufficient sites to meet regional housing needs allocation (RHNA)



REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION

2023-2031 RHNA by income category					
	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	Total
RHNA units	740	426	496	1,284	2,946
30% buffer	222	128	149	385	884
Total units	962	554	645	1,669	3,830



HCD SITE SELECTION FACTORS

- California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) maintains Housing Element Site Inventory Guidebook
- Sites must meet several criteria to include in Housing Element
 - Adequate land area
 - Zoning that allows residential uses
 - Access to infrastructure
 - Lack of environmental constraints that would preclude development
- City must also identify which RHNA income category each site is anticipated to accommodate



OTHER FACTORS TO MEET LOWER INCOME RHNA



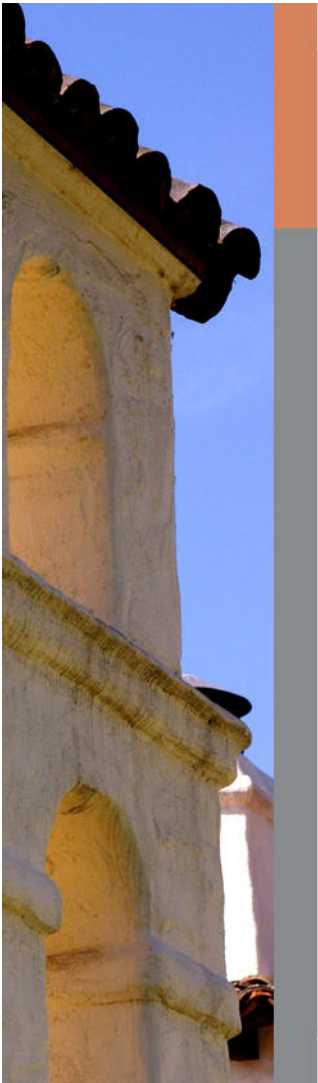
- Site area between 0.5 and 10 acres (or additional analysis for sites outside that range)
- 30 dwelling units per acre zoning density
- Locations that affirmatively further fair housing
 - Provide housing opportunities in high-resource areas (high-performing schools, proximity to jobs, etc.)
 - Cannot be concentrated in areas of segregation or poverty



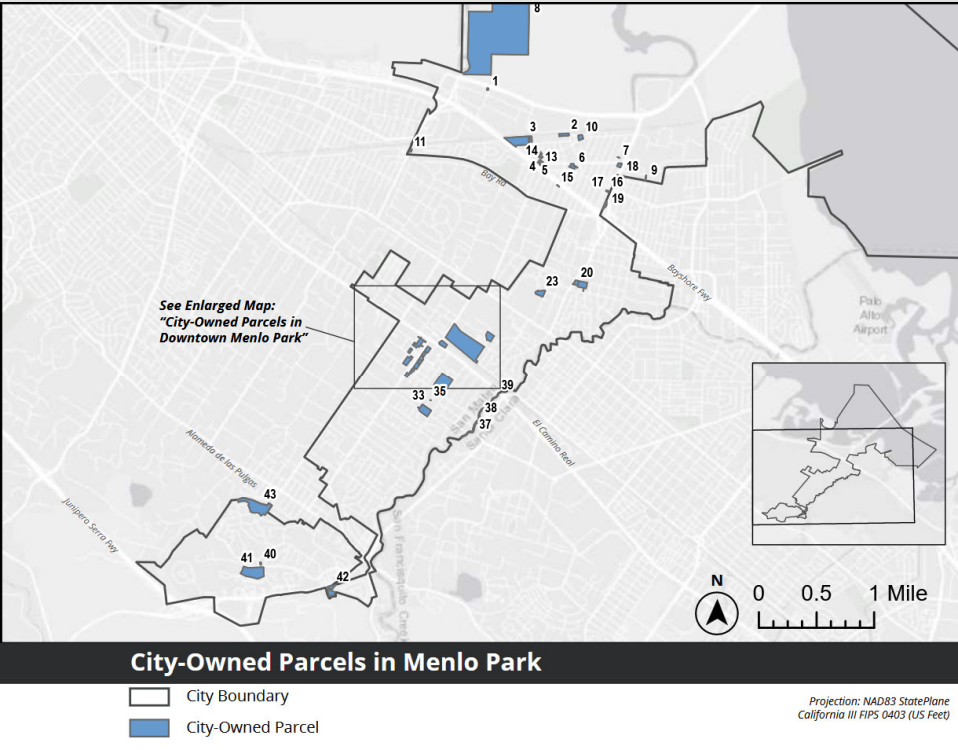
EVALUATION OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES



- HCD recommends City-owned land as particularly suitable for affordable housing
 - Can reduce development costs and market constraints
 - Helps ensure long-term affordability through agreements and deed restrictions
- Staff evaluated all 49 City-owned parcels to determine which could meet HCD criteria and City goals



CITY-OWNED PARCELS





EVALUATION OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES



- Many sites were eliminated due to existing uses and constraints
 - Parks and open spaces
 - Active civic facilities
 - Infrastructure facilities
 - Buildings with long-term leases beyond 2031
 - Sites in City Council District 1
 - Parcels too small or irregularly shaped for development
 - Environmentally-constrained parcels



CITY-OWNED PARCELS SORTED BY SIZE

- Attachment E of staff report highlights parcels between 0.5 and 10 acres in size
- After evaluating against HCD and City criteria, downtown parking lots were determined to be adequate Housing Element sites

41	74262190	9.99	1100 Monte Rose Dr	Sharon Park	Park	In Use	Open Space and Conservation (OSC)	5
36	71312230	9.00	800 Middle Ave	Nealon Park	Park, Senior Center, and Pre-School	In Use	Open Space and Conservation (OSC)	4
3	55280040	7.80	100 Terminal Ave	Menlo Park Community Campus and Kelly Park ^a	Community Center and Park	In Use	Public Facilities (P-F)	1
33	71291320	3.75	640 Fremont St	Jack W. Lyle Park	Park and Adult Care Center	In Use	Public Facilities (P-F)	4
20	62300320	2.62	490 Willow Rd	Willow Oaks Park ^b	Park	In Use	Open Space and Conservation (OSC)	2
21	62360550	2.35	333 Burgers Dr	Corporation Yard	Corporation Yard for equipment	In Use	Public Facilities (P-F)	3
26	71102400	2.28	Oak Grove Ave south of El Camino Real	Parking Lot P1	Parking Lot	In use as surface parking; overhead utility lines	Specific Plan, Downtown (SP-ECD-D (D))	4
24	71092290	1.99	University Dr at Oak Grove Ave	Parking Lot P3	Parking Lot	In use as surface parking; overhead utility lines	Specific Plan, Downtown (SP-ECD-D (D))	4
23	62460050	1.89	299 Santa Monica Ave	Seminary Oaks Park	Park	In Use	Single-Family Suburban Residential (R-1-S)	3
42	74324010	1.55	2400 Branner Dr	Stanford Hills Park ^c	Park	In Use	Open Space and Conservation (OSC)	5
12	61443010	1.51	1000 El Camino Real	Office building at corner of El Camino Real and Ravenswood Ave	Office building next to two arterials	Office building with long term lease	Specific Plan, El Camino Real Southwest (SP-ECD-D (ECD-SE))	4
2	55260240	1.02	1467 Chico St	Menlo Park Fire District - Station 77	Fire Station	In Use	Public Facilities (P-F)	1
29	71281160	1.00	Santa Cruz Ave at Crane St	Parking Lot P5	Parking Lot	In use as surface parking; overhead utility lines	Specific Plan, Downtown (SP-ECD-D (D))	4
32	71285160	1.00	Santa Cruz Ave	Parking Lot P8	Parking Lot	In use as surface parking; overhead utility lines	Specific Plan, Downtown (SP-ECD-D (D))	4
6	55363330	0.92	410 Ivy Dr	Belle Haven Child Development Center	Child Care Center	In Use	Public Facilities (P-F)	1
10	55480480	0.92	550 Hamilton Ave	Hamilton Park	Park	In Use	Open Space and Conservation (OSC)	1
20	62300250	0.88	490 Willow Rd	Willow Oaks Park ^b	Park	In Use	Open Space and Conservation (OSC)	2
42	74321120	0.81	2400 Branner Dr	Stanford Hills Park ^c	Park	In Use	Open Space and Conservation (OSC)	5
30	71283140	0.76	Santa Cruz Ave at Chestnut St	Parking Lot P6	Parking Lot	In use as surface parking; portion of plaza is privately owned; overhead utility lines	Specific Plan, Downtown (SP-ECD-D (D))	4
18	62103640	0.66	1283 Willow Rd	Vacant Lot at Willow and Ivy Dr	Vacant	None Apparent	Neighborhood Commercial (C-MU)	1
27	71272580	0.63	Santa Cruz Ave at University Dr	Fremont Park	Park	In Use	Open Space and Conservation (OSC)	4
28	71273160	0.62	Santa Cruz Ave at Evelyn St	Parking Lot P4	Parking Lot	In use as surface parking; overhead utility lines	Specific Plan, Downtown (SP-ECD-D (D))	4
31	71284100	0.59	Santa Cruz Ave at Curtis St	Parking Lot P7 ^d	Parking Lot	In use as surface parking; overhead utility lines	Specific Plan, Downtown (SP-ECD-D (D))	4
3	55280050	0.57	100 Terminal Ave	Parking Lot adjacent to Kelly Park ^a	Parking Lot	Used for adjacent park (including pool and community center)	Public Facilities (P-F)	1
38	71427010	0.57	Creek Dr at Yale Rd	Middle section of San Francisco Creek	Creek in a ravine	Too slender and steep to build	Unclassified (U)	4
25	71094180	0.56	Oak Grove Ave at Crane St	Parking Lot P2	Parking Lot	In use as surface parking; overhead utility lines	Specific Plan, Downtown (SP-ECD-D (D))	4
19	62120010	0.52	NW corner of Willow Rd and Bayshore Rd	Vacant lot at Willow and Bayshore Rd	Vacant	Located in City of East Palo Alto	Public Institutional (PI)	Adjacent to District 1
39	71435010	0.52	Creek Dr at El Camino Real	Northernmost section of San Francisco Creek before El Camino Real	Creek in a ravine	Too slender and steep to build	Unclassified (U)	4



CIVIC CENTER EVALUATION

- Burgess Park/Civic Center site is a single 29-acre parcel zoned Public Facilities (P-F)
- Housing Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council discussed potential housing at Civic Center
- Across five meetings between 2021 and 2022, City Council affirmed guidance not to use parks as housing sites
- Correspondence and public comments generally indicated support for excluding parks and including downtown parking lots as Housing Element sites



NEXT STEPS



- Staff recommends City Council provide guidance on any requested City-owned sites for additional analysis
 - Specific parcels, geographic areas, land use types, and/or other criteria
- If additional sites are identified for study, staff would schedule future City Council study session
- Estimated timing would depend on desired level of review

Analysis options and estimated timing		
Level of analysis	Potential components	Estimated timing
Basic screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Plan and zoning consistency review • Overview of legal considerations • Draft Housing Element site sheet 	2-3 months
Moderate analysis	Basic screening plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title reports • High-level feasibility assessment 	4-6 months
Comprehensive study	Moderate analysis plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete feasibility study • Legal analysis of individual site restrictions • Environmental assessment • Community engagement events 	12 months



NEXT STEPS



- If any modifications to Housing Element are proposed, City would need to coordinate with HCD
- Changes to housing inventory sites would require General Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments, potentially environmental review



THANK YOU