



## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

### SPECIAL MEETING

July 28, 2011

7:00 p.m.

City Council Chambers

701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025

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**CALL TO ORDER** – 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL** – Bressler (Chair), Eiref, Ferrick (Vice Chair), Kadvany, O'Malley (absent), Riggs, Yu

**INTRODUCTION OF STAFF** – Arlinda Heineck, Community Development Director; Thomas Rogers, Associate Planner

#### A. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

#### B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

A gentleman requested that a sign, which was blocking the audience's view of the Commissioners, be moved. Planner Rogers noted the information on the sign was in the staff report.

#### C. CONSENT - None

There were no items on the consent calendar.

#### D. PUBLIC HEARING

1. **El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan - Review of Draft Specific Plan: Meeting 3 – Downtown** – The Planning Commission will continue its multi-meeting review of the Draft Specific Plan. The intent of the overall review is for the Commission to provide clear and specific recommendations on potential improvements and refinements to the draft plan, for the future consideration of the City Council. The focus of the July 28 meeting will be the Downtown geographic zone.

Planner Rogers noted that a number of written comments were received after the publication of the staff report. He provided an overview of the process of the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan. He said the Downtown was the historic core of Menlo Park and closely situated to El Camino Real. He said the Plan contained some graphic conceptual plans that would be possible in the Downtown area. He said much of these were public space improvements. He said all of these graphics were conceptual. He said the public space improvements were

clustered around Crane and Chestnut Streets in the center of the Downtown Area. He described the potential change to parking along Santa Cruz Avenue to increase sidewalk width for the enhancement of outdoor dining and pedestrian access. He said the Plan proposed a central plaza on Santa Cruz Avenue between Crane and Chestnut Streets. He said travel lanes and median trees would be retained in this area but on-street parking would be removed entirely so the sidewalks could be widened. He said part of Chestnut Street would be pedestrian only and would be linked to the area called the Marketplace, which was a concept that would be refined in the future. He said this concept was not proposed to directly compete with the existing Farmer's Market, Draeger's, and Trader Joe's. He said the heritage Oak tree in Plaza 6 would be preserved and described a pedestrian path that would be along the south side of the parking plazas, the creation of more attractive entrances at the back of buildings, flex space parking lots with improved landscaping and more sustainable pavement treatments in Parking Plazas 5 and 6 to allow for parking most of time but that would be more pleasant to use for special events. He said there was the possibility for smaller pocket parks and street and alley improvements to improve access to the Parking Plazas and a potential parking garage. He said the Plan proposed enhanced crosswalks at El Camino Real, Oak Grove Avenue and Ravenswood, Class 3 bike routes on Menlo Avenue, University Drive and Crane Street, and a Class 2 bike lane in both directions on Oak Grove Avenue from University Avenue to Laurel Street. He noted the Class 2 bike lane would require removal of parking on one side of Oak Grove Avenue.

Planner Rogers said the Plan would allow for up to two parking garages, which were proposed at Plazas 1 and 3 as those were larger areas. He said the garages would offset the loss of parking needed to widen sidewalks and provide bike lanes. He said the parking structures would also allow for private development and extended parking time limits. He noted that the City Council had approved a current parking change for the downtown to allow longer than two hour parking in two of the plazas. He said parking structure(s) would increase parking to about 256 to 536 spaces. He said there were design guidelines including setbacks from private properties to allow for emergency access.

Planner Rogers said regarding private improvements that there were two categories of new development standards. He said the base development standards would have increases over the current standards and achieve enhanced public benefit. He said secondarily, there was a public benefit bonus standard. He said the new regulations had more detail and specificity than the current ordinance. He said land uses in the Downtown and Station Area are mixed but are primarily retail and restaurant with personal services limited in size per business entity and office space limited to lot size. He said the Main Street Overlay allowed for retail and restaurants on the first floor and office, personal services and residential limited to second and upper stories. He said opposite Santa Cruz Avenue and on the side streets of University Drive, Oak Grove Avenue, and Menlo Avenue would allow for an office and residential zone with a focus on nonretail uses that would improve the vibrancy of the Downtown. He said that for height, there was a façade height of 30 feet above which there would be a 45 degree setback and allowance for a second story to 38 feet. He said the second story height allowable for the parking structures was 48 feet. He said sustainable building and LEED standards would be required for development, and there would be no blank walls or inaccessible spaces allowed. He said the parking standards for private development would be based on use and there could be shared parking reductions for mixed use.

Commissioner Riggs recused himself due to a potential conflict of interest.

Chair Bressler said members of the public would have three minutes to speak.

Public Comment: Mr. Alex Kugushev, Menlo Park, said he had lived in Menlo Park for 45 years and had seen the City improve over the years. He said the City had spent a million dollars on this project and planned to spend more money on it. He questioned if the Plan was necessary. He said he did not see anything broken that needed to be fixed which led him to believe the Plan must benefit someone. He questioned whether it would be developers and special interest groups, or the taxpayers who would benefit from the Plan.

Mr. Richard Draeger, Menlo Park, said his family had owned Draeger's Market for 55 years. He said he was a member of the Downtown Alliance, and despite there being a public comment that the Downtown Alliance was engaged with the City on this project, the group's efforts had been fruitless in that the group's recommendations except for the retention of the downtown medians had not been incorporated into the Plan or EIR. He questioned how it would be a responsible action to rezone the parking plaza at Draeger's to allow for a mixed use office building that would occupy one-third of the parking spaces as that Plaza was currently at capacity. He also questioned how engaged merchants had been in the proposal to remove 50 percent of parking spaces along Santa Cruz Avenue and in the south parking plazas. He said if the City was trying to maintain the village character that the two proposed 50-foot tall parking structures were inconsistent with that and he wondered where the estimated \$60 million dollars to build those would come from, and asked if it would come from the downtown property owners or the City's tax payers. He said he did not see a problem that was so broken in the City that it would have to be fixed in such a way that could very well cause rampant bankruptcies among existing City merchants.

Chair Bressler noted that the next speaker, Mr. Mark Flegel, had been given additional speaking time from three other speakers as he would make a presentation.

Mr. Mark Flegel, a local business owner, said the Downtown Alliance was pro-Menlo Park and supported maintaining and enhancing Menlo Park's small town charm. He said the City's Plan has a goal of preserving the City's village charm and character. He said the Downtown Alliance supports the preservation of all customer convenient surface parking. He said the Alliance proposed a two-level parking garage on Plaza 2 and another near the train depot. He said the Alliance supported upgrading and beautifying the existing parking plazas. He said the Specific Plan would allow for almost 400,000 square feet of new buildings and eliminate 550 or more parking spaces. He said the Specific Plan was already driving new businesses away from the City. He said the City continued to ignore the Downtown Alliance's suggestions and proposals.

Mr. Flegel said the Downtown Alliance was a large group of 120 downtown property and business owners whose livelihood was directly and vitally connected to the economic success of the downtown. He said they had joined together to voice their hopes and concerns related to the future of the downtown community. He said many of the group worked on and supported improvement plans for the downtown 20 years ago, which resulted in how the downtown looks today. He said they wanted to retain Menlo Park's unique character and that the City was not Palo Alto or Redwood City and they did not want it to become like those cities. He said they did not support peninsula cities having a cookie cutter appearance. He said Menlo Park was very unique and was a special place for a business to be located and for people to shop, and the Alliance wanted to retain that identity and character.

Mr. Flegel showed an illustration on University Drive, Plaza 3, of what a four-level parking garage at just under 40-feet in height would look like. He said the City's proposal for a parking structure was almost 50 feet high. He said the Alliance questioned how two, five-level, almost 50 foot tall, immense parking garages as proposed in the Specific Plan would convey the small town village image the City claimed it wanted to maintain. He said the proposed parking garages would alter the sky line and impact the sunlight for many of the adjacent buildings. He said the Specific Plan would turn Menlo Park into a replica of Palo Alto or Redwood City.

Mr. Flegel said each easy access parking space was an important element for the continued success of downtown businesses. He said forcing shoppers to walk several blocks with their purchases and groceries to a parking garage would not encourage them to shop in Menlo Park. He said the Plan specifically proposed the selling or leasing of parts of the existing downtown plazas to developers to build office buildings as it was claimed the plazas were underutilized. He said the Alliance supported a two-level parking garage being built on Plaza 2 and some type of parking garage adjacent to the train depot. He said by building structures on the outskirts of the business district their construction would be less disruptive to the downtown businesses. He said the Alliance supported beautifying and upgrading all of the existing parking plazas. He said 20 years ago the City budgeted funding to upgrade all of the plazas over the next eight years, yet 20 years later only three plazas had been upgraded, and now the City wanted to lease or sell parts of those three plazas. He said the City also allocated funding to maintain an attractive Santa Cruz Avenue with ongoing maintenance and fresh seasonal flowers such as what one sees at Stanford Shopping Center. He said the Alliance supported the City maintaining and beautifying the Santa Cruz Avenue area and resuming upgrading all of the parking plazas.

Mr. Flegel said the Specific Plan supported a buildout of almost 400,000 square feet. He said this would result in 4,600 new car trips to downtown every day and the Specific Plan did not address where those additional cars would park or the impacts on the economic vitality of downtown businesses. He cited Los Altos construction on State Street and businesses seeing a resultant 30-90 percent loss in business revenues due to the construction. He said the Plan proposed eliminating over 550 downtown surface parking spaces with the two parking garages being proposed to replace those spaces. He asked who would pay for the parking garages and noted that cost concerns were driving away new businesses that were afraid of the uncertainty of who would pay for the downtown parking garages. He said the Specific Plan was negatively affecting the livelihood and appearance of the Downtown. He said the City continued to ignore the Downtown Alliance's suggestions and proposals for improving the Downtown. He said the group had attended several meetings and met with several Council members but none of their suggestions made its way into the Specific Plan, which led to the question of whom the City was supporting. He said there were urban developers hungry to turn Menlo Park into another Redwood City. He said the Downtown Alliance suggested the City first focus on improving the appearance of El Camino Real and then address the Downtown at a later date, and urged the City to work with the downtown property and business owners and not against them. He said together they could produce a more vital and vibrant downtown. He distributed a list of signatories to their petition and the proposals they submitted in the past to the City Council to improve the Downtown.

Mr. Jim Brenzel, Menlo Park, said he was a practicing accountant with an office on Oak Grove Avenue. He said from his office he sees the existing backup of traffic heading to El Camino Real every afternoon. He said the proposed Santa Cruz Avenue Plaza would constrict traffic

and divert it to Oak Grove and Menlo Avenues causing greater backups, which he could imagine extending all the way to the Alameda. He said 20 years ago the Downtown study group opposed extending sidewalks at intersections on Santa Cruz Avenue for safety reasons. He said the Fire District objected as their large trucks would have trouble negotiating corners downtown. He said he would be interested in the Fire District's response to having two blocked streets, extended sidewalks and a very backed-up Oak Grove Avenue. He said the Plan proposed bike lanes on Oak Grove Avenue and would remove some of the street parking to accomplish that. He asked the Commission to imagine trying to take a parcel to the post office with no on-street parking and backed-up traffic. He said as an accountant he was familiar with a good portion of the business community and had discussed the proposed Specific Plan with many of them. He said none of the business persons he had met or any of his clients were in favor of the Specific Plan. He said he was a west Menlo resident and had chatted with many of his neighbors, all of whom, except for one woman, were opposed to the Plan. He said the one woman wanted to get additional information on the Plan. He said opposition to the Plan was overwhelming and no one wanted a disruptive and obstructive park in the middle of a business district. He said Menlo Park was very fortunate in having a most attractive village type environment for its downtown. He said it was the best in the Bay area and had escaped the well-intentioned renewals in neighboring cities that have destroyed those cities. He said Menlo Park was rated the eighth walkable community in the nation. He said the cost of housing spoke to the desirability of the area. He commented that if the City was not broken, then do not fix it, and to remember to first do no harm. He said the Plan had enormous costs but little community benefit. He said he had two questions for the Commission and Council. He asked why the City did not just leave the community alone, and have you no shame?

Mr. Henry Riggs, Menlo Park, said he was speaking as an individual and had speaking time donated by Mr. Edward Moritz. He said for many years he had heard people say that the Downtown needed changes, and that all of his neighbors except for two had commented that it was about time for the Downtown to look better. He said he had heard many people comment on the need to make changes to the Downtown at the workshops for the Specific Plan. He said the Plan workshops and other engagement opportunities were open to all who wanted to participate. He thanked the Planning Department and all of the volunteers who had supported the Specific Plan process over the past four years. He said the Plan included many positive elements such as the creation of attractive walkways linking the parking plazas and upgrading the back entries of businesses. He noted the added economic viability that would come with changes in densities, intensities and heights, the inclusion of a residential option on upper floors, inclusion of elements attractive to seniors and families so that they might park once and walk, shaded parking spaces, options for parking spaces without time limits, and a second layer of spaces in structured parking. He said he shared concerns raised about parking structures but believed those concerns could be resolved by the Plan. He cited an example of a well designed parking structure in Palo Alto and suggested that heights of parking structures be limited to the heights of adjacent buildings. He said that the residential use proposed as an option on parking plaza 3 was not appropriate and would be better on El Camino Real. He said any structured parking should have 50 percent support of adjacent property owners and be incrementally developed starting with the relocation of permit parkers to assess the value of the structures. He recommended that the perpendicular parking in Plaza 5 not be repeated as it was not attractive to users. He suggested using the current parking in-lieu fees as a source of funding for the parking structures. He said diagonal parking was preferable and efficient and suggested that any widening of sidewalks should be sponsored by a specific user or at least have a programmable use except for the one area of the proposed Santa Cruz Plaza. He

suggested that newspaper boxes and similar structures as well as small clusters of bike racks be placed on islands at the end of the parking rows. He also suggested that the Plan needed to include more features to enhance east-west connectivity such as an undercrossing of El Camino Real at Santa Cruz Avenue. He said the Plan needed to make it attractive for owners to invest downtown.

Mr. John Boyle, Menlo Park, thanked the Commission and other volunteers for their service and noted the importance of land use issues for local government. He urged the Commission to not let this opportunity slip away for fear of it being a contentious issue or upsetting some people. He said that he understood some tenants in the Downtown had felt unduly pressured to sign the Downtown Alliance's petition. He said the Plan was not about turning Menlo Park into a major urban center but rather it was about bringing the City's zoning into the 21<sup>st</sup> century to respond to changes in real estate prices, construction techniques and prices, and transportation patterns. He said that without the Plan the blight on El Camino Real would spread to the downtown and other parts of the City. He said it took continual investment for the City to stay fresh and meet the community's values of pedestrian character, vibrancy and small town charm. He said investment opportunities must be economically viable. He provided examples of how pedestrian character was aided by widened sidewalks and providing parking and vibrancy by additional residential development. He said there was not easy access to Menlo Park. He said many people he had spoken with wanted to see an upgrade to the Downtown, and commented on the outreach conducted by the Council Subcommittee members and staff with business merchants.

Mr. Dexter Chow said he was the owner of Cheeky Monkey Toys. He said the City needed to revitalize the Downtown or there would be an increase in vacancies. He said that the Plan was a draft, had zoning changes and not specific layouts, and that some changes might be appropriate to the Plan.

Ms. JoAnne Bailey said she had lived in Menlo Park for over 30 years. She said she supported the Downtown Alliance. She said she had attended many of the workshops and talked to some of the Council Members but did not feel the views of the people at her tables were represented in the Plan. She said they supported the Plan's visions for the El Camino Real area, limited parking garages, and many of the things proposed for the Downtown. She said the covered marketplace was not a good idea for the Farmer's Market and that there should not be any development on the parking plazas. She said residences could be built along El Camino Real in the transit corridor. She asked that the Commission listen to all points of view.

Mr. Lawrence Zaro said he represented property owners on Santa Cruz Avenue. He said in that role he had tried to rent out a very nice storefront for three years. He said his realtor had indicated that at least one person would not rent because of the Plan. He said he took strong exception to an earlier comment about the Downtown Alliance pressuring people to join; noted that he was a member and had never witnessed that kind of pressure. He said the Alliance was a voluntary organization. He said the Plan included substantial changes for the Downtown and he questioned how the success of the Plan would be guaranteed. He said he disagreed with the concept that more people were needed to live downtown for increased vitality. He said the Plan was very ambitious in its proposed parking structures, pocket parks, plazas, and a hotel and asked how the City knew it would work. He said the City already had too much competition in the Peninsula for the commercial dollars. He said the City currently had a competitive edge in

that it had convenient and free parking and that the City might lose that advantage with the Plan and face stiffer competition that would hurt local merchants as a result.

Chair Bressler said the next speaker, Richard Singer, had speaking time donated from MaryAnn Mullen.

Mr. Richard Singer said he lived in unincorporated Menlo Park, equidistant from Redwood City, Palo Alto and Menlo Park. He said he chooses to shop in Menlo Park as it was a beautiful environment and because of the convenient parking. He said he has come to the Farmer's Market since it first opened. He said he was concerned the City would lose a lot with adding 400,000 square feet of commercial space. He said that would bring more people to the area and the parking would need to change. He said he was concerned about the ambiguity of the marketplace and its unintended use, and hoped it would not replace the Farmer's Market. He said he did not want Menlo Park to be another Sunnyvale or Redwood City. He said some modernization would be a good thing, but the Plan was too ambitious as to the makeover of the Downtown, much of which he felt was better suited for the El Camino Real corridor. He said the community should be more involved and questioned why the Plan would not be placed on a ballot so there could be public response and so the people who lived in Menlo Park could decide whether or not these were changes that would be for their betterment.

Ms. Ciya Martorana said she was a resident for 30 years and the managing partner at Carpaccio's. She said they were having a hard time with the lack of parking at lunch time, which had a negative impact on the business. She said their dinner business was good but customers during the day indicated that Menlo Park was not a welcoming town in that they get ticketed if they were one minute late to get to their car and had to pay a \$46 fine. She said for 24 years, she had been asking for convenient parking and noted that not all people rode bicycles. She said five years ago she had broken her hip in Parking Plaza 2 but the potholes still had not been repaired and the area was very dark. She said she was donating the balance of her time to Mr. Mark Flegel.

Mr. Flegel said he needed to respond to a previous speaker's comments regarding pressure on business owners by the Downtown Alliance as those were inappropriate. He said that the Alliance supported a Plan that reflected the true dreams and hopes of the downtown community and the community at large.

Ms. Roxie Rorapaugh, Menlo Park, said many people who supported the Plan did so because they believed it would protect the environment and improve the air quality, but she believed the Plan would do little to help protect the environment and would increase the carbon footprint and degrade air quality. She said that although the Plan included requirements for LEED certification, the applicability of LEED was limited to larger projects over 500,000 square feet. She said LEED silver was not the highest certification and only residential projects on more than four acres would be required to be LEED gold. She said a chapter of the Sierra Club praised the Specific Plan for including Traffic Demand Management programs yet there was no guarantee that those would happen. She said the chapter of the Sierra Club also praised the Plan for increased housing in the downtown but there were no guarantees that housing would be built. She said the Plan increased the zoning density and would allow a lot of commercial development to take place without needing an EIR, and the City could end up with all office development and no residential development depending on what developers decided they wanted to do.

Chair Bressler noted that Ms. Rorapaugh had three additional minutes of speaking time donated by Vic Lovell.

Ms. Rorapaugh said one of the worst parts of the Plan was the parking garages because they were expensive and not needed. She cited previous parking studies that showed no existing shortage of parking in Menlo Park, noting poor policies such as the two-hour limit and giving parking tickets. She said the construction of garages would impact businesses, put people out of work and would be harmful to the environment including many nice trees. She suggested improvements to the parking plazas such as solar panels and green paving materials to cut down on heating emissions and to do plantings that would create a park-like effect.

The next speaker, Ms. Sarah Babin, indicated she was giving her time to Mr. John Hickson.

Mr. John Hickson said he was a resident of unincorporated Menlo Park, past president and current secretary of the Live Oak Lions Club, and a long time volunteer at the Farmer's Market, which the Lions Club had run for 20 years. He said the Lions Club was a volunteer service organization which through the Farmer's Market raised \$35,000 per year for charity, most of which went back to the local community. He said every week the farmers have donated 800 to 900 pounds of fresh produce, which the Lions distributed to the needy in the area. He said the market manager was outstanding and gets top quality farmers with top quality produce, much of which was organic. He said the location was ideal with convenient parking and easy access for vehicles and customers, all of which was essential for the continued success of the Farmer's Market. He said the proposed partial closure of Chestnut Street for a 4,000 square foot marketplace structure and the loss of 68 spaces in Parking Plazas 6 and 7 would not enhance or complement the Farmer's Market but would force changes in the market layout that would be a disadvantage for the vendors and inconvenience for customers. He said he was not convinced that the Plan would bring in more customers and was concerned that the Farmer's Market would lose customers and vendors as a result of the Plan. He said when the Farmer's Market was started in 1992 one of the main purposes was to assist downtown businesses by bringing people downtown. He said for that reason they agreed to restrict the market to fresh produce and not offer hot foods to encourage people to patronize existing restaurants and cafes. He said this approach worked to bring in more restaurants and people. He requested that hot foods not be allowed in the marketplace on Sundays and stated that he did not see a need for additional food outlets at anytime. He said he was happy with the Farmer's Market as it was and believed the Plan would only create problems for the Market. He said that any loss in the Farmer's Market would also affect charity donations. He said over the past two years they had collected 2,500 Farmer's Market patrons' signatures protesting the Plan's proposed changes. He requested that any changes be made on a temporary basis so that the impacts might be assessed.

Mr. Frank Carney said he was a 40 year Menlo Park resident. He said Commission Kadvany had previously asked what the goal of the Plan was and what the City wanted, and if it was to improve and enhance the downtown or to significantly change downtown Menlo Park with more development resulting in more people and traffic. He asked if the Plan's changes would result in more vibrancy or in gridlock. He said the community's top priority was to maintain the small town village character of downtown Menlo Park as consistently stated by residents. He said there were 12 vision goals, some of which were contradictory and it was apparent that not everything could be done, but the top of the list was to preserve the village character. He said



staff had indicated that community preference should guide decisions and he agreed with that. He said the existing downtown needed to be improved and enhanced, but he did not want to see it destroyed by bigger development.

Ms. Margaret Carney said she was a long time resident of Menlo Park and President of the Live Oak Lions Club, which supports and runs the Farmer's Market. She said the Farmer's Market, which would soon celebrate 20 years, was started by five women who wanted to bring energy, vibrancy and a hometown feeling to downtown on Sunday mornings. She said originally the proposal for a Farmer's Market was opposed by the downtown businesses as it was seen as competition, and it took two years to get support. She said the Farmer's Market provided fresh produce, contributed to local charities and was a favorite market of patrons, farmers and musicians. She said the Lions Club was fearful of negative impacts from the Plan, including the loss of close and convenient parking and space for the Farmer's Market due to the Paseo development. She said the consultants referenced the Ferry Building in San Francisco but Menlo Park was not a similar tourist destination and she did not believe most Menlo Park residents would want to shop daily for fresh produce. She said the concept of vibrancy was overblown and unrealistic and that most residents wanted to shop quickly and return to their families and homes. She said she did not believe most Menlo Park residents were into hanging around downtown. She asked the Commission to respect the ideas that did not support the proposed Plan, that the concerns of the Lions Club and supporters of the Farmer's Market not be discounted, and that the vibrant and profitable Farmer's Market not be jeopardized. She said the goal of the Plan was to protect and promote Menlo Park's small town atmosphere.

Mr. Jitze Couperus said he was a property owner on Santa Cruz Avenue and an engineer. He said just focusing on the short-term Plan, the City was planning on street widening, a covered marketplace, the Chestnut de Paseo, two pocket parks and a pedestrian walkway. He said this would result in the loss of 175 parking spaces, generally equivalent to one or two plazas worth of parking. He said it was proposed that there would be a parking garage but that would not occur in the short term. He said parking was the life blood of the downtown merchants and the short-term development would strangle business since the Plan would not build parking structures until financing was found. He said the Downtown Alliance has recommended building two slightly smaller garages and good engineering dictated that garages should be built before any parking was removed.

Mr. Pat White said he was born and raised in Menlo Park, and has opposed government projects many times including the rerouting of Santa Cruz Avenue and the widening of Willow and Sand Hill Roads. He said the proposed Plan was the worst project he had seen in Menlo Park as it would destroy downtown by removing parking, narrowing roads, and adding density without new access roads. He said bikes were good for exercise but not for commerce. He said the Plan would presumably allow for permitted uses but Menlo Park was known for its anti-business attitudes. He said the Plan over the years would destroy Menlo Park by bringing thousands of cars creating gridlock, destroying small businesses, forcing property owners to sell, and decreasing property values.

Ms. Nancy Couperus said she was a property owner on Santa Cruz Avenue and would read a letter from a property owner on University Drive, who could not attend the meeting. She asked whether public comment and correspondence had been made available to the public. Chair Bressler asked staff to address the question. Planner Rogers said the staff report had correspondence received between this meeting and the last, and that this had been true for the

previous meeting and would continue. Chair Bressler noted that searches for email comments could be made on the Council's webpage.

Ms. Couperus read Ms. Lindsay Mickles' letter in which Ms. Mickles indicated she had owned property, and occasionally resided, in Menlo Park for 30 years. Ms. Mickles stated that the unique flavor of Menlo Park, due in large part to its openness, produced rich experiences lost to many other communities due to development. She said it seemed that developers had now turned their attention to Menlo Park and the City had fallen prey to the desire for more development and revenue. She commented on the potential features of parking structures, including fees for parking, creation of spaces attractive to criminals, and shading of adjacent buildings and public spaces. She cited examples of Stanford Shopping Center with free parking and the dangers of parking structures in Santa Rosa where in such a structure a murder recently occurred. She said that story poles were not being erected because then people would see the size, scale and height of the structures and would not re-elect City officials in the next election should the project be allowed to proceed. Ms. Couperus said judging by the applause and number of buttons taken by people this evening that three-quarters of the audience had serious concerns with the Plan.

Ms. Catherine Carlton said she was representing the Sharon Heights Homeowners Association. She said Menlo Park needed some beautification and upgrading and she would like to see more revenue in the coffers. She said the loss of convenient parking was a concern and she was not inclined to use a parking structure for quick shopping trips. She said the Plan included some good elements but it was important to listen to the Downtown Alliance and shoppers. She expressed support for a previous suggestion related to the intelligent expansion of sidewalks, expanding where it made sense and keeping on-street parking where it made the most sense.

Ms. Megan Fluke, San Jose, said she was a representative of the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, which has 20,000 members, and specifically of the Sustainable Land Use Committee. She said the Plan was a great opportunity to meet many of the Club's environmental goals, including reductions in greenhouse gases and air pollution, increased bike, pedestrian and transit accessibility, preservation of open space by reducing sprawl, and the creation of complete and well connected neighborhoods where people have the option of meeting their daily needs without their cars. She said the Sierra Club had not endorsed the Plan and had many concerns with it. She said the Sierra Club had submitted comment letters and offered specific recommendations including retaining the option for 60-foot tall buildings that could be attractively and creatively designed to use a variation of massing and height and incorporate a variety of uses, inclusion of stronger language related to east-west connectivity, and the inclusion of stronger language for affordable housing for seniors, young adults, and lower-income persons. She said they supported protecting the Farmer's Market and local businesses and suggested inclusion of a policy to restrict larger regional chains.

Mr. Gary Eggers said he was a downtown property and business owner. He said Menlo Park needed renewal but it needed to be done carefully. He said one of the test things they could do would be to temporarily close Chestnut Street to be able to fully assess impacts on traffic and get feedback from the public before making any decisions to permanently change.

Ms. Halle Hewitt noted she had time donated from Lee Murphy. She said she supported change but intelligent change. She said she was concerned that Menlo Park would lose its charm. She said she was concerned with the safety of a large parking structure and that

disabled, seniors and shoppers would have difficulty using such structures rather than more convenient parking. She noted she was a resident on Santa Cruz Avenue and had not been notified of all of the workshops and meetings for the Plan. She asked whether the Plan would go to a vote and whether this was the best time to be spending money given the current economy. She asked whether new boutiques and restaurants like Subway would be attractive and add to the vibrancy of the Downtown. She expressed a concern for increased traffic, especially from the Stanford projects and the impacts of high speed rail. She said similar projects in other cities had not been successful. She said she had volunteered at three block parties, and said she was concerned with the less prominent location provided to the Farmer's Market. She expressed support for the El Camino Real portion of the Plan and indicated that two-to-three stories of height there was acceptable.

Ms. Adina Levin, Menlo Park, said she lived near downtown and was a member of the Green Ribbon Citizen's Committee and Environmental Quality Commission but was speaking for herself. She said the Plan needed to serve the City going into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and cited statistics on driving and commute patterns indicating patterns were changing to have less reliance on driving and use alternative modes of travel more. She said the Plan should include reasonable planning goals to provide improved access and routes for pedestrians, bikers, transit users and other alternative modes of transportation.

Ms. Patti Fry said she was a 20-year resident and former member of the Planning Commission. She said she had submitted a comparison table of existing and proposed zoning regulations for the Commission's review. She said that some of the existing parking plazas were challenging even though the downtown was not completely built out under the current rules. She said under the Plan, parking requirements would be lowered and the approval process for projects would not require projects to document adequate parking. She said the ability to control the effects of development would be limited to design issues under architectural control approval. She said the increased development potential allowed by the Plan and especially the office square footage that would increase more quickly than retail or residential would result in increased traffic. She said the proposals for wider sidewalks and one parking structure were good elements of the Plan. She said it was important to take into account the comments of the downtown property and business owners since they were the most knowledgeable about their operations. She said new development on the parking plazas, including the marketplace did not make sense. She said the marketplace idea came from the consultants and people thought it was an interesting idea but that it should be located in the station area and not in the downtown. She was concerned with the Paseo creating a permanent closure and suggested that the Paseo be a temporary installation because all of the cross streets in downtown were used to maintain a balanced circulation pattern that prevented gridlock. She said she was concerned about adding so much more square footage with office space as that created more traffic.

Mr. Peter Colby said he was a 30-year resident. He said he was concerned that people did not have a clear view of how the downtown worked. He said sometimes people in select groups tended to use the money of others such as taxes. He noted the reliance of big trucks to stock stores that can be walked to and the need for people with specialized skills to drive the trucks through downtowns. He said developers bought up land when El Camino Real was vibrant with the car dealerships and some had since lost their gamble because the traffic would not allow for additional development. He said El Camino Real currently worked well and was walkable.

Mr. Carl Trealivell said he was a nine year resident and shopped and dined in the Downtown several times per week. He said the prevailing request was to keep the small town charm and character of Menlo Park and the Commission needed to heed the public testimony and opinion editorials printed. He said other Plan metrics were not necessarily supportive of keeping the small town character. He said there did not seem to be a need for more parking and that the cost of building parking structures was considerable given current budget constraints. He said that elements such as the removal of parking on Oak Grove Avenue for bike lanes appeared to create the need for parking structures rather than letting the need for parking drive the decision. He said the changes in the downtown should be scaled at a low level and taken in small bites to lower the risks of the Plan. He said he supported changes for temporary approaches to improvements such as the Paseo. He said he had written opinions to the local newspaper.

Ms. Tiger Bachler said she and her husband owned the Alyce Grace boutique and was a working suburban mom of five children. She said as a business owner, the Plan gave her hope that the Downtown area would be revitalized and bring needed revenue to small businesses. She said she was asked to sign the Downtown Alliance petition but had respectfully declined wanting an opportunity to educate herself on the Plan. She said the Plan in her opinion was a guideline for what could happen, not a plan for everything that would be done. She said the downtown needed pockets of areas to experience community and cited Menlo Center and Town and County as examples that were vibrant and centers for experiencing community. She said families do like to hang out downtown but Menlo Park's current downtown looked tired and dead. She said that parking was difficult downtown for her and her customers, specifically with regard to time limits, and noted that providing for longer parking options would be beneficial.

It was noted that Ms. Violet Ramezzano had donated her time to Ms. Halle Hewitt.

Ms. Deborah Miller said she was a resident and was opposed to the Plan in its current form as it would drastically change and detract from the features that make the Downtown charming in exchange for cookie-cutter, mixed use high density development. She said if the Plan moved forward as proposed she was concerned that existing local businesses widely used by the community might be forced out by higher rents. She said she was opposed to increases in density and building heights and the loss of parking plazas in exchange for parking structures. She said that stripping Santa Cruz Avenue of its neighborhood character and making it a destination was a mistake and placed undue burden on the local community and would not serve the local community. She noted examples of local community use and stated that many community activities and the familiar small town feeling would be lost if the Plan were implemented.

Mr. John Chiappe, San Mateo, said he believed that the Specific Plan was the result of a consultant needing a job. He asked who had asked City Hall to save the City. He said that Menlo Park currently had the best parking, a great retail mix and a first class Farmer's Market but a consultant thought things could be better. He asked how the Plan would be funded. He noted difficulties in renting vacant properties on Santa Cruz Avenue due to concerns of construction disruptions. He said the big question was who would pay for the Plan elements. He said there should be a citywide vote on the Plan.

Ms. Gail Sredanovic said she was a lifelong environmentalist and member of Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter and noted that the Sierra Club membership was not consulted on the Club's position. She said she had worked on the team for the Alameda Streetscape project to improve

bike and pedestrian access. She said denser housing belonged on El Camino Real and not in the Downtown, that the proposed marketplace would hurt the existing markets and Farmer's Market, and that the removal of convenient parking would hurt the businesses since customers would go elsewhere for convenient parking. She said the Plan would encourage the replacement of retail services with offices and restaurants and the increased heights would incentivize deconstruction and rebuilding which was not good for the environment. She cited examples in Redwood City and Sunnyvale of failed projects. She said a potential solution to housing was secondary housing units.

Mr. Peter Hart said he was a long-term resident. He noted numerous disagreements on features of the Plan. He said the points of agreement included near universal support for maintaining the residential character and current parking, freshening and renewing the downtown and maintaining a vibrant Farmer's Market. He asked with these points of agreement how anyone could believe that adding 400,000 square feet of new development while also reducing the circulation possibilities would do anything but prevent the top goals from being accomplished.

Mr. Edward Syrett said he had lived in the Willows neighborhood since 1968. He said he had enjoyed shopping in downtown Menlo Park even though it was not the closest shopping to his residence. He said University Avenue in Palo Alto was closer but that he had avoided shopping in Palo Alto because of the parking difficulties as the garages were too far from his destinations and often fully occupied. He said he supported the current vibrancy of downtown, ease of parking, and closeness of parking to the shops. He said parking should not be eliminated before adding new parking. He said it would be sad for him to have to give up shopping at Trader Joe's in Menlo Park for the one in Palo Alto.

Chair Bressler closed the public hearing and called a five minute recess.

Chair Bressler reopened the meeting at 9:43 p.m.

Commission Comment: Chair Bressler asked staff to explain the 400,000 square foot number for development that several speakers had mentioned. Planner Rogers said staff was not sure where that number had been derived. He said the illustrative development plan on Page C20 of the Plan listed total number of residential units, square footage of retail and commercial space, and the number of hotel rooms projected for opportunities for development on certain sites. He said adding up the total square footage for retail and commercial for the entire plan area equaled 320,000 square feet.

Commissioner Eiref asked if the vast majority of square footage for development would be the vacant 10 acres along El Camino Real. Planner Rogers said that included the Station Area West and some parcels between Doyle and Mahoney.

Chair Bressler said several speakers had asked how the parking structures would be funded. Planner Rogers said Chapter G of the Plan listed some of the implementation methods including financing and noted in particular G.4 on page G17. He said as this was a Plan and not a Project, it did not espouse a single method of funding but referred to a number of methods for funding. He said regarding a benefit assessment district that State law required approval by the property owners who would be assessed. Chair Bressler asked if the Plan could address concerns more. Planner Rogers said a plan as opposed to a project would have more flexibility

and generality and was an opportunity to address unique constraints. He said financing aside the Council had asked the Commission to look at phasing of parking structures. He said one speaker implied that all public improvements would occur before a parking garage was built, but the Plan spoke contrary to that and perhaps that could be augmented or highlighted in some way.

Commissioner Yu said there were comments on parking and asked if it was a supply or enforcement problem. Planner Rogers said a number of parking studies over the past recent years had found overall that Menlo Park parking functions were either at or near good levels, which was around 80 percent usage, but some of those studies had been conducted in years that were not the busiest. He said if the Plan was implemented there would be some parking supply and management questions to work through in more detail. He said they had heard that existing employee parking did not work as they had to park too far away, or parked closer and got ticketed unless they could move their cars every two hours.

Commissioner Ferrick said one speaker indicated that property values would go down if the Plan was adopted. Planner Rogers said the proposed changes in the downtown were not much greater than what was currently allowed. He said there was a concern that construction impacts would have short term business impacts. He said he would be surprised if the Plan would lower property values. Commissioner Ferrick asked about the 550 parking spaces estimated to be lost. Planner Rogers said the overall parking effect would be a net increase of between 256 and 536 spaces. Commissioner Ferrick said it was indicated that there would be 50 percent of surface parking removed which she thought was high. Planner Rogers said the presence of parking in the immediate vicinity of a business was the positive. Commissioner Ferrick said she did not see that half of the parking was indicated for relocating. Planner Rogers said it was more of a matter of opinion that proximity overruled anything.

Chair Bressler said the most intense development being considered was along El Camino Real and proposed up to four stories. He asked if those were self parked or if they would need a parking structure. Planner Rogers said the buildings had not been designed but those developments along El Camino Real that are within Downtown and part of the SA W zoning district would be eligible to have the first 1.0 FAR parking provided in the plazas as part of the historical downtown parking assessment district. He said the second 1.0 FAR increment would either be provided onsite or in public facilities but that would only be permitted if capacity was available and an in-lieu fee for space was provided. He said residential would likely have parking onsite due to market preferences. Chair Bressler said it depended upon the permitted use. Planner Rogers said it depended upon the use permitted, the interest, the lot size, and the land cost. He said at the Plan level it was not possible to get to that level of detail.

Commissioner Eiref said there was a statement that it would cost \$60 million to build a garage and asked how that figure had been derived. Planner Rogers said on page F29 there was a header about the cost of parking garage construction which listed an estimated cost of between \$21 and \$24 million for a five-level, 550 space garage. He said he was not sure how the \$60 million figure had been derived. Commissioner Eiref said there were a number of comments about widening sidewalks on Santa Cruz Avenue and asked if that was proposed for all or some percentage. Planner Rogers said there was a potential to widen the entire stretch from University Drive to El Camino Real and the implementation section talked about the option of smaller trial implementations and possible phasing.

Commissioner Yu said the business owners had indicated a preference for a garage in Plaza 2 and asked why that had not been considered. Planner Rogers said the potential sites of Plazas 1 and 3 was driven by an analysis done by the City in 2001 and 2003 on how to build the most effective parking structure. He said larger plazas had more efficient design capacity for circulation and supply. He said they had looked at Plaza 2 which would be less efficient because parking would not be able to be provided along the sides of the drive aisles. He said also the proposed locations in Plazas 1 and 3 were behind buildings whereas Plaza 2 was open to the streets on three sides and more visible.

Commissioner Kadvany asked if the Plan precluded building a two-story structure in Plaza 2. Planner Rogers said the Plan as written recommended parking structures in Plazas 1 or 3 but the Commission could recommend otherwise to the City Council. Commissioner Kadvany asked if the current Council did not think that was a good idea but a future Council did, would that future Council be able to move forward without running into legal difficulties. Planner Rogers said there was a process for amending the Plan by the City Council.

Commissioner Eiref said there was a comment about putting a parking structure in the Station Area; he said he recalled there was a consideration about ownership however. Planner Rogers said the public plazas were owned by the City. He said it would be less feasible to buy a private property. He said a parking structure adjacent to the train depot would have to be a joint project between the City and the Caltrain JPA. He said the space might not be large enough and it might be narrowed with high speed rail. Commissioner Eiref asked if the City had approached Caltrain. Planner Rogers said the City had not.

Chair Bressler said it had been suggested to close Chestnut Street temporarily to evaluate the impact. Commissioner Eiref said he thought this was a lower priority as there was nothing really for a Paseo to serve in that location, noting there was a barbershop on one side, and there would be circulation impacts. He said they should also consider the covered marketplace in concert with that. Commissioner Ferrick said she would defer the Paseo concept until there was some organic need for it. She said regarding the covered marketplace that people were more excited about having something like that in the Station Area. She said it was not the critical piece to consider for downtown. Commissioner Kadvany said he did not agree with what was being said about the Paseo. He showed a picture of the City's eight parking plazas and said that parking was a key to the whole Plan. Commissioner Kadvany said the photos showed there were hundreds of parking permits. He said the specific premise of the Plan was that if the City could manage the permitted spaces better those spaces could be used differently. He showed another slide summarizing the hours individuals park around the downtown in the streets and the plazas. He said the opportunity through the Plan was to manage this parking better to free up spaces for consumers. He showed a slide of Plaza 6 and suggested by cutting the Paseo in at the top and keeping circulation between Plazas 6 and 7, leaving the Farmer's market where it was, keeping parking close, would result in the loss of 20 parking spaces, but it appeared that would accommodate operations exactly as it was currently being done. He said there were ways to solve problems. He said the consultants should be dinged for the marketplace idea but this area according to the Plan could be used for anything and there were community related options other than the marketplace. He said there needed to be something there to make the Paseo work. He showed a slide of kiosks with seats in Santa Cruz which only serve the space and create a nice public space. He said if the Paseo was going to be a temporary test that the City could contract to bring in food trucks. He showed a slide that highlighted all of the diagonal parking in the Santa Cruz Avenue. He said if the goal of the

improvements was to improve pedestrian linkages that they could keep the plaza spaces and landscape between them to beautify. He said plaza parking was important and they should look at keeping useful plaza parking and if the Paseo is pilot tested to bring in some temporary service to see if it activated the space.

Commissioner Ferrick said she agreed that parking was the biggest issue and the permit parking for the longer hours indicated a need to change parking policies to allow for longer than two hours. She said she liked the idea to beautify the parking areas. She agreed that the Paseo if it came to pass should be temporary and noted that during the Plan process there had never been an effort or intention to hurt the Farmer's Market.

Commissioner Eiref said it seemed that they wanted a cohesive plan for the area and needed to have discussion about parking and permits.

Chair Bressler said regarding the Farmer's Market that it would be nice if there were not cars and pedestrians on top of one another. He said he thought the Paseo could be done to provide an asset to the Farmer's Market.

Commissioner Yu said there needed to be some reason for people to be in the area. She said the City has a summer music series and suggested relocating that to the Paseo to see if people would enjoy popular community events in a different venue. She said people in Menlo Park like green space and that the City should consider landscaping with anything they propose.

Commissioner Eiref said he thought the Paseo was something that would be done permanently and he thought they needed to be clear about what they were proposing. He said he liked the Farmer's Market and suggested they might try something temporarily on the weekends to support the Farmer's Market and offer some other attractions. Commissioner Kadvany said that sounded like a recommendation. He said the City could work with business owners on Santa Cruz Avenue and on Plazas 6 and 7 to figure out something even if only temporary to see if it would work long term. Commissioner Eiref suggested staging the Paseo temporarily and supporting the Farmer's Market by providing opportunities for other food vendors. He said that local businesses might want to participate and if it worked then look at a more permanent solution. Commissioner Yu said she agreed. She said one public speaker had indicated that people did not like hanging out downtown but she and her family on Sundays walk from the Willows, get food at Trader Joe's and sit on the sidewalk, and then shop at the Farmer's Market. She said they would like a place to hang out longer. Commissioner Kadvany said seating had to be part of the test. Commissioner Ferrick said she agreed she liked to hang out downtown and Sunday was the day to do that as there was no parking restriction. Commissioner Eiref said they should look at some quick easy hits. He said the Plan reflected a lot of people's input and could provide benefit to the community. Chair Bressler asked if this was something that would need to come back to the Commission for review. Commissioner Eiref said at this point it was in the Plan.

Commissioner Ferrick suggested recommending that the Paseo be a temporary space easily installed and removed that would have vendors and seating but there should be no action toward a covered marketplace. Chair Bressler said they were talking about the area on Chestnut Street from Santa Cruz Avenue about halfway to Menlo Avenue for a public space. Commissioner Eiref suggested it was an extension of the Farmer's Market to provide additional space initially on the weekends for more activities including more food stalls. Chair Bressler



asked if the Commission was closing Chestnut Street just on Sunday or for the whole weekend. Commissioner Eiref suggested just on Sunday and to change the name from the covered marketplace which people did not like. Chair Bressler said the recommendation was to close Chestnut Street on Sundays and allow the half nearest to Santa Cruz Avenue to be turned into a public space with seating, room for food vendors, improved landscaping and more attractive paving structures. Commissioner Eiref said there might be a second phase. Chair Bressler suggested Phase 2 could have more permanent improvements if Phase 1 was successful. Commissioner Kadvany said it would be smart to do this on the weekend and suggested on either Saturday or Sunday or both in Phase I. Commissioner Yu said if they were going to get food vendors that they should give local businesses the opportunity to do this.

Commission Action: M/S Bressler/Kadvany recommend to the Council that the Chestnut Paseo and Market Place be done in a phased approach with the first phase including the temporary closure of Chestnut Street as delineated in the Specific Plan on Saturday and/or Sunday to be used as a public space with seating, food vendors (food trucks), landscaping, and possibly decorative paving. The second phase would be based on a review of the first phase and would be used to determine if the Paseo and Market Place should continue in operation and be made permanent through extended hours, days and/or installation of new or permanent features. With both phases, consideration should be given to Menlo Park merchants for access to the public space and should build upon successful existing businesses, including the Farmer's Market. The recommendation is based on a recognition that the Chestnut Paseo and Market Place are closely linked in functionality and that the success of the space will be dependent on uses that would attract people.

Motion carried 5-0 with Commissioner Riggs recused and Commissioner O'Malley absent.

Chair Bressler said regarding diagonal or parallel parking on Santa Cruz Avenue that one speaker had suggested this be done according to individual merchants' preference. Commissioner Kadvany said he thought that was a good approach and suggested temporary pilots starting with the central Plaza area. He said if other business owners were interested they could come forward to the City with that request. Commissioner Eiref said he liked the concept as they were trying to put into place a Specific Plan for decades to come and they did not want to limit it to what people wanted now. Commissioner Kadvany said his intention was that in the Plan the option would always be there whether used now or not. He said he would recommend that they try it in the central area where the parking was going to be removed. He said he did not think they knew enough to prioritize.

Chair Bressler said these were fairly small changes in terms of budget and asked if these could be funded with money already allocated for public benefit. Planner Rogers said curb and gutter reconstruction could be pretty expensive and doing the whole block with a permanent installation might not be easy to achieve but there were temporary installations the City could do with limited spaces at a time. Chair Bressler asked if that would look as good as curb and gutter replacements. Planner Rogers said the ones he had seen in San Francisco were done with donated architectural design and donated materials and would not be permanent. Commissioner Kadvany said that would provide valuable information to do a block or half of diagonal parking as a pilot to determine if that was desirable. He said so many of the downtown business owners preferred the diagonal parking. Commissioner Eiref said there were very successful restaurants downtown that did not seem to be able to provide enough seating and suggested that they might close down a block or so after 5 p.m. to allow for more outdoor

seating. Planner Rogers said they had done a trial for block parties but the road being crowned caused problems. He said the installations he had mentioned were platformed creating flat surfaces and allowing flow. Commissioner Ferrick said that those could be made as small as a parking space but she was concerned about the cost and the irregularity. She said she would like more of a plan as to what part of the block would have a temporary installation.

Commissioner Eiref said the proposal was to have wider sidewalks and suggested starting small with the option to expand over time based on the success of the initial experiment in accord with the Plan envelope. Commissioner Ferrick said she agreed. Commissioner Kadvany suggested they vote and move on.

Commission Action: M/S Bressler/Ferrick to retain the sidewalk widening elements and guidelines of the Specific Plan with implementation starting on a temporary basis for smaller block or half-block areas in order to assess the viability of the widening and whether to expand and make permanent the widened sidewalks over time.

Motion carried 5-0 with Commissioner Riggs recused and Commissioner O'Malley absent.

Commissioner Kadvany said he would recommend including Plaza 2 as a possible parking garage location but had no current recommendation for the number, location or sizes of the garages as they did not have enough information to make that recommendation. He said this would depend on the financing as these structures were expensive. He said they should require the highest aesthetic standard for any parking structure. Commissioner Yu said she agreed and suggested not providing specifics as that could create restraints. Commissioner Eiref suggested including that possibility under the Plan and to eventually look at the goal of who they wanted to park in these structures such as the permitted parking. Commissioner Ferrick said the preponderance of permitted parking seemed to be in Plazas 1, 2 and 3 and she supported exploring the possibility of a parking structure on Plaza 2. She said there was concern expressed about how a parking structure would be financed and that business owners might be assessed. She asked if they wanted to recommend certainty about financing of the parking structures as the City did not want leases lost because of fear about a parking assessment. Commissioner Kadvany said he thought business owners had some leverage and would be able to get compensation in exchange for parking structures. Commissioner Eiref said a speaker had talked about creative solutions for parking. He said in Pasadena all of the money from meters went into a fund to improve the downtown area. He said some people indicated that one parking structure would be fine and he agreed. He said others were concerned about height. He asked about undergrounding two rather than just one level. Planner Rogers said if that meant needing mechanical ventilation there would be increased costs. He said the 48-foot height limit would enable the residential option on top so if that was removed the overall height could be lowered.

Chair Bressler said the recommendation was to 1) include Plaza 2 as a consideration for a location for a parking structure; 2) encourage permit parkers to occupy any parking structures; 3) provide opportunities for business owners to finance parking structures to their own benefit by reducing their permit costs; and 4) demand greatest aesthetic standards for parking structures.

Commissioner Yu said related to the greatest aesthetic standards that there should be space for landscaping and setbacks while maintaining spaces at the surface level and she would prefer a lower height if that did not limit opportunity. Commissioner Ferrick said she liked those ideas

but was sensitive to merchants' concerns about losing surface parking. She suggested minimizing the amount of surface spaces lost and put some thought into landscaping and green on the buildings. Commissioner Kadvany asked if parking structures have setbacks. Planner Rogers said the first floor has a 25-foot setback from neighboring properties and a façade height of 38 feet with a 45 degree angle. Commissioner Kadvany said he agreed with Commissioners Yu and Ferrick's comments.

Chair Bressler said they would change the item related to the greatest aesthetic standard to include landscaping and variation in design. Planner Rogers said the recommendation was to include Plaza 2 for consideration as the potential site of a parking structure, encourage permit parkers to use parking structures, provide opportunities for property owners to contribute financing to their own benefit with discounted permits, to build to the highest aesthetic standards and include landscaping with functional considerations and additional landscaping with setbacks or vertical elements and explore opportunities to maintain the most surface parking spaces. He said there was no consensus on height.

Commissioner Ferrick suggested scaling parking garages to what was adjacent existing or planned. Commissioner Eiref asked if there was anything that would preclude them from going more than one level underground. Planner Rogers said there was nothing that precluded that.

Commission Action: M/S Bressler/Ferrick to include Plaza 2 in addition to Parking Plazas 1 and 3 as a possible site for a parking structure, encourage utilization of parking structures by parking permit users, provide opportunities for businesses to contribute to the financing of parking structures to the benefit of the business through reduced parking permit costs or other incentives, require high aesthetic standards for the parking structures, including landscaping within required setbacks or as a vertical element of the structure, encourage the preservation of as much surface parking as possible within the parking structures, and retain the height standards of the Specific Plan as maximums but encourage the design of parking structures that are consistent with the scale of adjacent planned and existing buildings.

Motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Riggs recused and Commissioner O'Malley absent.

Chair Bressler said he had written some ideas on public benefits but he thought it would be preferable to consider at the next meeting.

Commissioner Kadvany said they had recommended adjustments to the residential parking standard for the Station Area and asked if they should make the same change downtown. Chair Bressler said he thought it should be more restrictive in the downtown as he was concerned with too much congestion at the intersection of downtown and El Camino Real. He said he was concerned about circulation in downtown with additional residential density but they could make residential parking as restrictive as they had done for the Station Area.

There was consensus to discuss residential parking at the next meeting.

Commissioner Ferrick said one speaker had indicated it took two years to get the Farmer's Market started because of merchants' opposition which she thought was encouraging to the progress of the Specific Plan. Commissioner Yu said she would like to see information on

school resources and related impacts. Commissioner Kadvany suggested that they had had two meetings and in the next meeting they take an hour for Commissioners to list issues. Chair Bressler said the Commission had been told by the Superintendent of Schools that there would not be a problem with school resources.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

Staff Liaison: Arlinda Heineck, Community Development Director

Recording Secretary: Brenda Bennett

Approved by Planning Commission on October 3, 2011