



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Regular Meeting
April 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers
701 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025

CALL TO ORDER – 7:01 p.m.

ROLL CALL – Bressler, Combs (absent), Eiref (Chair), Ferrick, Kadvany, Onken (Vice Chair), Strehl

INTRODUCTION OF STAFF – Michele Morris, Assistant Planner; Nicole Nagaya, Transportation Manager; Stephen O'Connell, Contract Planner; Thomas Rogers, Senior Planner; Corinna Sandmeier, Associate Planner

A. REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A1. Update on Pending Planning Items

- a. ConnectMenlo (General Plan Update) – Schedule Update – City Council - April 14, 2015

Senior Planner Rogers said the City Council at its April 14 meeting considered an extended timeline for the General Plan Update to allow for more outreach, particularly to the Belle Haven neighborhood.

- b. Public Benefit Study Session – City Council – April 14, 2015

Senior Planner Rogers said also at their April 14 meeting, the Council conducted a study session on public benefit in general and specific to zoning districts. He said the consultant provided a presentation on what other cities have been doing and what the current model was in Menlo Park.

- c. Planning Commission Appointments – City Council – May 5, 2015

Senior Planner Rogers noted that the Council would make three Planning Commission appointments at its May 5 meeting, noting that Commissioner Onken had reapplied.

Senior Planner Rogers said that there would be annual commissioner training and appreciation event on May 12 with training from 4 to 6 p.m. and a reception afterwards.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS #1 (Limited to 30 minutes)

There was none.

C. CONSENT

- C1.** Approval of minutes from the March 23, 2015 Planning Commission meeting ([Attachment](#))

Chair Eiref noted he was absent from the March 23 meeting. Commissioner Strehl indicated she was also absent. Chair Eiref continued the minutes until the next meeting.

Commission Action: Minutes continued.

D. PUBLIC HEARING

D1. Use Permit Revision/Kpish Goyal/957 Rose Avenue: Request for a use permit revision to add an approximately 1,457 square foot basement to previously approved two-story, single-family residence on a substandard lot with regard to lot width and lot area in the R-1-U (Single-Family Urban Residential) zoning district. The previous use permit was approved by the Planning Commission on August 18, 2014. ([Attachment](#))

Staff Comment: Contract Planner O'Connell said there were no additions to the staff report.

Public Comment: Mr. Kpish Goyal, applicant, said their project for a two-story, single-story residence had been approved by the Planning Commission on August 18, 2014. He said that he and his wife had reconsidered their project to provide more space for their immediate and extended family, and were now requesting a basement addition.

Commissioner Strehl asked if the original design was the same. Mr. Goyal said everything was the same except for one light well that would require decreasing the size of the bathroom for the first floor bedroom to accommodate.

Commissioner Onken said the arborist report was confusing regarding the heritage oak as it both said the tree would be safe during construction and to remove the tree. Contract Planner O'Connell said the arborist had two recommendations and that was to keep the tree or to remove it.

Mr. Goyal said the oak tree was on the adjacent property and a branch extended into his property. He said the arborist said one option was to remove the tree or the other option was to take preservation efforts to protect the tree, which was what they were intending.

Chair Eiref closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Commissioner Onken said the excavation for a basement might impact the tree roots. He confirmed with Contract Planner O'Connell that the basement excavation would require stitch piling in front of the oak tree and to follow the arborist's instructions for basement construction to protect the oak tree. He moved to approve the project revision. Commissioner Strehl seconded the motion.

Commission Action: M/S Onken/Strehl to approve the item as recommended in the staff report with the following modification.

1. Make a finding that the project is categorically exempt under Class 3 (Section 15303, "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures") of the current CEQA Guidelines.

2. Make findings, as per Section 16.82.030 of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the granting of use permits, that the proposed use will not be detrimental to the health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the persons residing or working in the neighborhood of such proposed use, and will not be detrimental to property and improvements in the neighborhood or the general welfare of the City.
3. Approve the use permit subject to the following **standard** conditions:
 - a. Development of the project shall be substantially in conformance with the plans prepared by Chris Spaulding Architect, consisting of ten plan sheets, dated received March 30, 2015 and approved by the Planning Commission on April 20, 2015, except as modified by the conditions contained herein, subject to review and approval by the Planning Division.
 - b. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicants shall comply with all Sanitary District, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, and utility companies' regulations that are directly applicable to the project.
 - c. Prior to building permit issuance; the applicants shall comply with all requirements of the Building Division, Engineering Division, and Transportation Division that are directly applicable to the project.
 - d. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall submit a plan for any new utility installations or upgrades for review and approval by the Planning, Engineering and Building Divisions. All utility equipment that is installed outside of a building and that cannot be placed underground shall be properly screened by landscaping. The plan shall show exact locations of all meters, back flow prevention devices, transformers, junction boxes, relay boxes, and other equipment boxes.
 - e. Simultaneous with the submittal of a complete building permit application, the applicant shall submit plans indicating that the applicant shall remove and replace any damaged and significantly worn sections of frontage improvements. The plans shall be submitted for review and approval of the Engineering Division.
 - f. Simultaneous with the submittal of a complete building permit application, the applicant shall submit a Grading and Drainage Plan for review and approval of the Engineering Division. The Grading and Drainage Plan shall be approved prior to the issuance of grading, demolition or building permits.
 - g. Heritage trees in the vicinity of the construction project shall be protected pursuant to the Heritage Tree Ordinance.

Motion carried 6-0 with Commissioner Combs absent.

D2. Use Permit/Malika Junaid/1121 Carlton Avenue: Request for a use permit to allow construction of a second story on an existing single-story, single-family residence on a substandard lot with regard to lot width and area, in the R-1-U (Single-Family Urban Residential) zoning district. The proposal, which includes expansion of the existing first floor, would exceed 50 percent of the existing floor area and is considered equivalent to a new structure. ([Attachment](#))

Staff Comment: Planner Sandmeier said there were no changes or additions to the staff report.

Public Comment: Ms. Pushpinder Lubana, property owner, introduced her fiancée Mr. Nathan Henderson, and said they were planning a revision to her home to allow for a merger of their two families including three children and aging parents.

Mr. Nathan Henderson said that in starting this project they reached out to their neighbors, sent out flyers with basic project drawings, and invited neighbors to review the plans. He said their rear neighbors had concerns with construction noise and asked them to observe City codes for construction. He said they assured them they would.

Ms. Malika Junaid, project applicant, said she was the architect for the project. She said the addition was done to create more privacy for the master bedroom and more separate and private rooms for the other age groups in the merged family.

Chair Eiref closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Commissioner Onken said the design was only a partial second story, which was appreciated. He said also the design controlled side facing windows, which could be a problem. He said the project was a good design and a nice addition to the neighborhood. He moved to approve as recommended in the staff report. Commissioner Eiref seconded the motion.

Commission Action: M/S Onken/Eiref to approve the item as recommended in the staff report.

1. Make a finding that the project is categorically exempt under Class 3 (Section 15303, "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures") of the current CEQA Guidelines.
2. Make findings, as per Section 16.82.030 of the Zoning Ordinance pertaining to the granting of use permits, that the proposed use will not be detrimental to the health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare of the persons residing or working in the neighborhood of such proposed use, and will not be detrimental to property and improvements in the neighborhood or the general welfare of the City.
3. Approve the use permit subject to the following **standard** conditions:
 - a. Development of the project shall be substantially in conformance with the plans prepared by M-Designs Architects, consisting of 14 plan sheets, dated received March 26, 2015, and approved by the Planning Commission on April 20, 2015, except as modified by the conditions contained herein, subject to review and approval by the Planning Division.
 - b. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicants shall comply with all Sanitary District, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, and utility companies' regulations that are directly applicable to the project.
 - c. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicants shall comply with all requirements of the Building Division, Engineering Division, and Transportation Division that are directly applicable to the project.
 - d. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall submit a plan for any new utility installations or upgrades for review and approval by the Planning, Engineering and Building Divisions. All utility equipment that is installed outside of a building and that cannot be placed underground shall be properly screened

by landscaping. The plan shall show exact locations of all meters, back flow prevention devices, transformers, junction boxes, relay boxes, and other equipment boxes.

- e. Simultaneous with the submittal of a complete building permit application, the applicant shall submit plans indicating that the applicant shall remove and replace any damaged and significantly worn sections of frontage improvements. The plans shall be submitted for review and approval of the Engineering Division.
- f. Simultaneous with the submittal of a complete building permit application, the applicant shall submit a Grading and Drainage Plan for review and approval of the Engineering Division. The Grading and Drainage Plan shall be approved prior to the issuance of grading, demolition or building permits.
- g. Heritage trees in the vicinity of the construction project shall be protected pursuant to the Heritage Tree Ordinance.

Motion carried 6-0 with Commissioner Combs absent.

D3. Use Permit/Matt Nejasmich/629 Harvard Avenue: Request to demolish two existing single-story, single-family residences and construct one new two-story, single-family residence and one new single-story, single-family residence on a substandard lot with regard to lot width in the R-2 (Low Density Apartment) zoning district. The following three heritage trees are proposed for removal: a 16-inch tulip, a 28-inch silver maple, and a 58-inch Monterey pine. ***Continued to a future meeting.***

E. REGULAR BUSINESS

E1. Architectural Control/Eric Peterson/718 Oak Grove Avenue: Request for architectural control to modify the exterior of an existing three-story mixed-use building in the SP-ECR/D (El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan) zoning district. The changes include repairing the existing stucco finish, replacing existing decorative trim and materials with new neutral-colored cast stone banding and stone cladding, adding new non-structural columns, new cornice and window trim at the roof parapet and along the front elevation and select portions of the side elevation windows, new metal balcony railings, and a new double entry front door. ([Attachment](#))

Staff Comment: Planner Morris noted a correction to the first paragraph of the proposal in the last sentence of the paragraph: “.....and a new double entry front door.” to remove the word “double” before “entry front door”.

Public Comment: Mr. Eric Peterson, applicant, said he was an architect and senior associate with Pacific Peninsula Architecture, and the proposal was to modernize the subject building's exterior. He said that there was a color and materials board for their review.

Chair Eiref closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Chair Eiref said the building was already nice looking and thought the proposed improvements would work well. Commissioner Kadwany confirmed with the applicant that his company had done a new building with stone work next to the Fire District. He noted

that this stone work was more continuous in its application and an improvement over the stone wrap around look application on the other building.

Commission Action: M/S Eiref/Ferrick to approve the item as recommended in the staff report.

1. Make a finding that the project is categorically exempt under Class 1 (Section 15301, "Existing Facilities") of the current CEQA Guidelines.
2. Adopt the following findings, as per Section 16.68.020 of the Zoning Ordinance, pertaining to architectural control approval:
 - a. The general appearance of the structure is in keeping with the character of the neighborhood.
 - b. The development will not be detrimental to the harmonious and orderly growth of the City.
 - c. The development will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the neighborhood.
 - d. The development provides adequate parking as required in all applicable City Ordinances and has made adequate provisions for access to such parking.
 - e. The development is consistent with the El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan. The exterior changes would comply with relevant design standards and guidelines for commercial ground floor windows and the building entry would remain oriented to the public street.
3. Approve the architectural control request subject to the following **standard** conditions of approval:
 - a. Development of the project shall be substantially in conformance with the plans prepared by Pacific Peninsula Architecture, Inc., dated received April 1, 2015, consisting of twenty plan sheets and approved by the Planning Commission on April 20, 2015 except as modified by the conditions contained herein, subject to review and approval of the Planning Division.
 - b. The applicant shall comply with all West Bay Sanitary District, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, and utility companies' regulations that are directly applicable to the project.
 - c. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall comply with all requirements of the Building Division, Engineering Division, and Transportation Division that are directly applicable to the project.
 - d. Prior to building permit issuance, the applicant shall submit a plan for any new utility installations or upgrades for review and approval of the Planning, Engineering and Building Divisions. Landscaping shall properly screen all utility equipment that is installed outside of a building and that cannot be placed underground. The plan shall show exact locations of all meters, back flow

prevention devices, transformers, junction boxes, relay boxes, and other equipment boxes.

- e. Heritage trees in the vicinity of the construction project shall be protected pursuant to the Heritage Tree Ordinance.

Motion carried 6-0 with Commissioner Combs absent.

F. COMMISSION BUSINESS

F1. El Camino Corridor Study: Potential reconsideration of Planning Commission recommendation from April 6, 2015 meeting. ([Attachment](#))

Staff Comment: Senior Planner Rogers said the Commission had received comments on their group email about its April 6 recommendation on the El Camino Real Corridor study. He noted that some of those who had made comments were present this evening. He said under Roberts Rules of Order that decisions and recommendations could be reconsidered if a commissioner that voted with the majority made the motion to reconsider. He said the Commission's vote on the recommendation at the April 6 meeting was unanimous so any of the Commissioners could vote to reconsider. He said that Commissioner Kadvany had requested reconsideration in writing.

Commission Action: M/S Kadvany/Strehl to reconsider the previous Planning Commission recommendation.

Motion carried 6-0 with Commissioner Combs absent.

Commissioner Kadvany said he had received emails with strong opinions from those who wanted the six-lane option and others, including a prominent bicyclist, who said Alternative 2 was not a good idea without greater protection for cyclists. He said if they decided to do bike lanes it did not have to choose Alternative 2 exactly as presented. He questioned whether the City has a vision of what it wanted for El Camino Real, noting it was auto centric, and people were asking for more than a California highway. He said for those who supported bike lanes that there had to be more emphasis on safe design and that might require stricter speed limits on El Camino Real. He said the Specific Plan recommended Class 2 Bicycle Lanes. He said the General Plan has some parameters about speed on El Camino Real and perhaps those have to be reexamined. He said that at the last meeting Commissioner Onken commented about narrow sidewalks and there was no incentive for property owners to redevelop and widen sidewalks. He said they needed to look at that too within the design of El Camino Real. He said they also had not discussed doing pilot implementations and perhaps they could do pilots for intersection changes, for instance, striping and intersection timing, and perhaps those could be separate from lane changes. He said there was a perception that El Camino Real was different when considering safety but speed limits were greater on sections of Sand Hill Road and Willow Road in places. He said the Urban Street Guidelines by the National Association of Transportation Officials looks at multi-modal issues in design and have a concept of design speed for the roadway. He said their approach was what speed was appropriate for what the designers were trying to accomplish. He suggested the Council familiarize themselves with concepts of design speed, design vehicles, what the vehicles and the conditions were in other

times of the day beside peak traffic times. He said there were bicyclists currently using El Camino Real and either it should be made safer for them or bicycling should not be allowed.

Commissioner Strehl asked if the Specific Plan recommended Class 2 Bicycle Lane for El Camino Real or offered it as a suggestion. Senior Planner Rogers said the original draft Specific Plan carried over the Bicycle Plan recommendation which was for a Class 3 bicycle route. He said when the Specific Plan was reviewed, the Bicycle Commission made a recommendation to the City Council that the City pursue a Class 2 Bicycle Lane on El Camino Real. He said in the final negotiations with the public, the Council set the Class 2 Bicycle Lane as the goal of the Plan but acknowledged constraints such as parking and right-of-way could dictate that Class 3 would be the outcome in the short-term. He said the Specific Plan stated that Class 2 Bicycle Lane was the long-term objective, but that Class 3 minimum could be permitted in the near term.

Public Comment: Ms. Shirley Chu, Sharon Heights, asked the Commission to reconsider its recommendation to add a bicycle lane on El Camino Real. She said she liked the intention to get people out of cars and reduce carbon emission but El Camino Real was not the place for bicycle riding noting traffic there included cars, buses, trucks, 92-year old drivers, and aggressive drivers. She said it was not a safe place for bicyclists, and if they had to add a bicycle lane they needed to design for more protection for bicyclists.

Mr. Richard Li, Sharon Heights, said a bicyclist choosing to ride recreationally would choose Sand Hill Road or Foothill Expressway as although traffic moved much faster on those roads, there was more visibility and less cross traffic. He said very few people use El Camino to ride bikes noting its one-mile length through Menlo Park has an estimated 60 curb cuts, or about one every 90 feet. He said he had heard that the Greenheart and Stanford projects would add a bike lane parallel to El Camino Real which he thought was better.

Ms. Lee Duboc, Menlo Park, noted that people had difficulty getting onto the survey link and that they felt they were unable to express their thoughts. She said some people did not want their names to be made public. She thanked the Commission for reconsidering the recommendation for the El Camino Real corridor. She said that more consideration had to be given to the study.

Ms. Mickie Winkler, Menlo Park, said she was a veteran biker and implored the Commission to change their recommendation to the City Council. She said she would like the Council to work on safe bicycle routes before establishing a bicycle path on El Camino Real. She said with all the curb cuts and intersections, she did not think there was anything that could be done to make El Camino Real safe for bicyclists. She said alternative bicycle routes had been neglected and that the alternatives shown on page 9 did not include some good options such as the end of Willow Place bike bridge that nearly connects to the bike boulevard in Palo Alto. She said there was a bike path that crosses the creek at Alma Street and closely connects to the bike boulevard in Palo Alto. She said there were County bicycle maps that show more alternatives than what was in the Commission's packet. She said El Camino Real was unsafe for bicyclists and there were alternatives to be pursued.

Chief Harold Schapelhouman, Menlo Park Fire District, said he was pleased they were reconsidering the recommendation. He said his letter which they just received this evening listed reasons why the Fire District thought this was something that needed to be tabled or looked at as part of the General Plan circulation element. He said the study never

acknowledged the designated emergency routes for the Fire District, noting that El Camino Real was one of those. He said it made no mention that Stanford Hospital was a primary medical emergency facility and Class 1 trauma center. He said no one really looked at the emergency aid agreements among the District, Palo Alto and Redwood City. He said he spoke with the County's ambulance service and they were completely unaware of this study. He said this item should be tabled and research should be done on alternatives for bicycle routes.

Mr. Rex Ianson, Menlo Park resident and member of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District Board, said the Commission should take a look at a comprehensive bicycle plan. He said he was a bicyclist who would not use El Camino Real.

Mr. Peter Carpenter said he also was on the Menlo Park Fire Protection District Board but was not representing the Board. He said he previously served on the Planning Commission for the City of Palo Alto, and that during his tenure they rewrote the General Plan. He said the two things he learned was that a General Plan update was a challenge to do but once it was done it provided a framework to make decisions in a structured and reasonable way. He said the state law on general plans had changed to require that the circulation element include the complete street perspective, and part of that language was very clear about having City bike routes. He said if there was an updated circulation element to the City's General Plan the conversation being held tonight would be much easier. He said that this bicycle lane goal was mentioned in the Specific Plan was to a large degree irrelevant as General Plan required you go to the outermost geographical boundaries. He suggested the Commission recommend tabling the action, finish the General Plan circulation element update, and then start looking at specific issues.

Mr. Henry Riggs, Menlo Park, thanked the Commission for reconsidering this item. He said he did not think the Commission and Council could subtract the core transportation analysis of the EIR prepared for the Specific Plan. He said following the Specific Plan, the Planning Commission was careful to edit the formatted, prewritten Complete Streets Agreement put forward by the County for all cities to sign under the threat of losing transportation funding. He said the Commission edited that agreement to insure the City would not be required to put bicycle lanes on El Camino Real and defined a safe bike route instead. He said if bicyclists were encouraged to use El Camino Real, the City might be inviting an undesired conflict. He asked the Commission to use their inner best judgment and allow El Camino Real to safely serve the population of Menlo Park.

Ms. Honor Huntington, Menlo Park, said she had served on the Budget Advisory Committee, and has tried to avoid partisan politics in Menlo Park. She said she was pleased they were reconsidering the item. She said she went to one of the study sessions and found it was flawed. She said they did not look at impacts on other streets and intersections such as Middle Avenue. She said the Commission should not put a stamp of approval on this study at all, and suggested they table the item and ask for more information. She said if there were recommendations that the City should try experimental things in increments.

Mr. Robert Cronin, Menlo Park, said it was important to make El Camino Real a complete street not just for cars but also for people so that it would accommodate bicyclists safely. He said he supported the idea of buffered bicycle lanes and if it was done in Menlo Park then it would be done on El Camino Real by Palo Alto, Atherton, and Redwood City.

Ms. Adina Levin, Menlo Park, Transportation Commission, said she was representing herself. She thanked the Commission for considering this item at their last meeting and urged them to maintain the recommendation they made at that time. She said considering the counter-intuitive results that were mentioned that often when more traffic lanes were added that attracted more drivers resulting in traffic slowing down. She said consultants found that keeping traffic lanes and adding a bicycle lane would improve traffic flow. She said alternative bicycle routes had been mentioned. She said in the survey it was asked what people use El Camino Real for whether they were drivers or bicyclists. She said alternative routes might help bicyclists get to Palo Alto or Redwood City but not the use of El Camino Real to run ordinary errands locally. She said regarding the idea that young or older people might be encouraged to ride their bicycles on El Camino Real if there was a bike lane that judgment calls were made all the time by parents about where it was safe for their children ride. She said it was important to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists along El Camino Real.

Ms. Cindy Wilson, Menlo Park Bicycle Commission, said she liked the Commission's recommendation that they made at their last meeting. She said the only way to mitigate transportation was to enable other modes of transportation. She said people already ride bicycles on El Camino Real. She said the City has a duty to improve safety for those users. She said the City needed to coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions and prepare a holistic plan to get people out of their cars and ride bicycles or walk. She said improvements on the corridor would also help east-west circulation. She said having a buffered space for bicyclists would create a much different retail experience noting in other areas it improved retail experience.

Chair Eiref closed public comment period.

Commission Comment: Chair Eiref asked which of the alternatives would remove traffic capacity from El Camino Real. Transportation Manager Nagaya said there were currently three lanes in each direction on El Camino Real south of Robles and two lanes north of Robles. She said 10 or more years prior there had been three lanes in both directions. She said one option was to not reduce the number of lanes. She said Alternative 3 proposed a slight change to the right hand turn pocket at core downtown intersections: Santa Cruz, Oak Grove, Glenwood and Valparaiso Avenues. She said where there were dedicated turn pockets currently that could potentially be removed, which would have very small capacity reduction. She said no through lane removals were proposed.

Recognized by the Chair, Mr. Dana Hendrickson, *Re-Imagine Menlo Park* website editor, said whether lanes were added or removed did not address the fundamental issue of whether traffic could get through the existing lanes. He said with 60 turnoffs on El Camino Real and the addition of bicycles, drivers would have to wait until the bicyclists clear the bike lane to go into any of the retail establishments along the corridor and that would impact traffic flow.

Chair Eiref said regarding the model and data there had been comments that the model could not be trusted. He said whether one was a resident or not what mattered was how long it took to get from one end to the other of town. He asked if there was data to support the model. Transportation Manager Nagaya said a two-step process was used to derive the study results. She said first was an estimate of travel demand. She said they needed to know how to get from land use projections to travel demand projections. She said they used the countywide model that was both maintained for Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties in detail and spans the nine-county Bay Area region. She said the Metropolitan Transportation Commission maintains this

model. She said they look at the land use projections assumed to occur in all the different cities in the region, including in Menlo Park, any projects that were either approved or expected to occur on a regional scale in any of the included nine counties. She said that tool was used to estimate how much traffic and how much travel demand would occur both under the existing conditions as well as in future years. She said here they were looking at 2035 build out of the region. She said that provided the demand side of the equation and that model was calibrated both regionally and locally to give assurance that when a change was made it was reasonably predicting the relative differences between different alternatives and that was how they were using it. She said it tells them relative between different alternatives what they could expect in terms of changes across those options. She said once they have the travel demand projections they moved into an operational model so those volume estimates were plugged into a micro-simulation model that broke down the individual user experience. She said it looked at individual vehicles, individual pedestrians, and individual buses and estimates the amount of delay interaction that occurs between them and accounts for those different variables as part of the interaction. She said it was not the same type of analysis they do for every traffic study. She said El Camino Real was unique and when it was brought up in the Specific Plan previously there were many questions around how it could operate within different scenarios. She said they specifically included that type of modeling in this study, which was why the cost was higher than a study in which they didn't use those types of tools. She said it was much more sophisticated and would help them understand the dynamics both between different users on the street and the interaction in the region of how different options interacted, and to really understand the land use traffic interaction as well.

Commissioner Strehl asked if any lanes would be removed south of Robles to put in a bicycle lane. Transportation Manager Nagaya said that on street parking spaces would be eliminated to allow for a bicycle lane with a painted buffer or the protected separated curb, and lanes might be narrowed but not removed. Commissioner Strehl asked if their projects included the estimated 3,500 cars expected from a large development on El Camino Real. Transportation Manager Nagaya said that the land use projections built into that first countywide model do include build out of everything within the Specific Plan area and account for those additional uses as well as regional growth outside of Menlo Park. Commissioner Strehl asked where those vehicles would go. Transportation Manager Nagaya said that was why they wanted to use the countywide model so they could look at both the impacts to potential parallel routes as well as to shift modes. Commissioner Strehl asked with more constrained lanes and more cars whether more cars would go through the neighborhoods. Transportation Manager Nagaya said what they were proposing was not to provide any more confinement to El Camino Real. She said the traffic that could come as result of development proposals could do different things. She said in the model they saw a mode shift that either existing traffic or future traffic chooses a different mode based on the competitive travel time of taking transit, riding a bicycle, walking or whatever their transit choices were. She said the other place they would go were parallel routes and that could be Middlefield Road or Alameda de las Pulgas, Hwy. 101 or Hwy. 280. She said for trips destined for other places in Menlo Park there could be other parallel streets that were more local serving such as Laurel Street or University. Commissioner Strehl said potentially those cars would go through neighborhood streets. Transportation Manager Nagaya said potentially but giving people options was an advantage. She said the more networks people have to move around the City gave them a better ability to make choices to see what works and enables them to move around the City best. Commissioner Strehl said it was indicated that increasing the through lanes to six lanes increased vehicle demand. She asked if the study showed where those cars were coming from, for example from Middlefield Road, the

neighborhoods or Alameda de las Pulgas. Transportation Manager Nagaya said that was part of the investigation. She said in the summary report a summary showed the change on Middlefield Road. She said based on the Commission's questions at the May 6 meeting, the consultant was directed to expand that analysis and make sure they thoroughly addressed the question before moving this forward to the City Council. Commissioner Strehl asked if they had the results of the last survey. Transportation Manager Nagaya said they did and would have the results published in next few weeks. She said they had 406 responses to the second survey. She said at this point the Alternatives 2 and 3 for a buffered bike lane or protected bike lane outranked Alternative 1 for the continuous three lanes.

Commissioner Strehl said she had discussed her concerns with Transportation Manager Nagaya that the Planning Commission's original packet had not included the letters received and more thorough analysis of the outcome of the study sessions as that was important data for a commission to have.

Commissioner Bressler said this was a deeply political issue and he was not in favor of adding more lanes to El Camino Real to support traffic from large developments. He said there was technology not being used and capacity would be added through different transit options. He said expanding El Camino Real to three continuous lanes both ways did not lend itself to a friendly street face. He said Alternative 2 involved some striping and adding some lanes; there were no bulb outs and could be reversed without too much expense if it proved not to work.

Commissioner Onken said there had been mention of a countywide dedicated bus lane on El Camino Real but that was not considered in this study. Transportation Manager Nagaya said the City had been communicating and coordinating with SamTrans. She said that agency has studies underway to improve transit on El Camino Real, one of which was to create a dedicated bus lane. She said the City understands that SamTrans does not consider Menlo Park to have the ridership and interest to justify a dedicated bus lane on its portion of El Camino Real. She said as the City only has three lanes on El Camino Real in the downtown today that dedicating one of those to transit would be potentially more problematic than cities that have wider cross sections. She said they included transit questions with the survey as well as bus improvement options in the workshops, which got very little public support. She said they did not see a dedicated bus lane alternative as SamTrans was not pursuing it within Menlo Park and residents' feedback did not support that type of improvement.

Commissioner Onken said that this consideration might be better done within the broader perspective of the General Plan circulation element update and in the context of everything that was occurring on El Camino Real. He said he felt the overriding concern was that this study was being done out of context.

Chair Eiref said he felt the matter was becoming a referendum on bicycles and their safety on El Camino Real. He said the study was intended to provide feedback to the City Council on El Camino Real as a transportation corridor. He said the three alternatives resulted in options for bicycles but he did not think it was intended to be a study on bicycle circulation. He asked about the origin of the work and the intention.

Transportation Manager Nagaya said the Specific Plan treated El Camino Real in particular as it related to circulation. She said coming out of the Specific Plan there was disagreement and two entrained schools of thought on what the vision should be for El Camino Real. She said part of

that was related to bicycles and part of it was related to congestion traffic patterns through the corridor, the pedestrian experience, and how that related to potential economics in the retail experience along the corridor. She said all of those questions related to transportation were summed up and scoped out in the Capital Improvement Program as the El Camino Real Lane Reconfiguration Study as well as the design work specifically for the Ravenswood intersection.

Commissioner Kadvany said in reference to questions about the validity of the model used that he had become familiar with the induced demand concept a number of years ago. He said it was a very well known concept and very standard in the transportation world. He said if they had so many bicyclists using a bicycle lane along El Camino Real that cars and emergency access was blocked they would deal with it. He said he agreed in not adding more capacity noting Sand Hill Road traffic slowdown at peak times. He said whatever they did, there were already bicyclists on El Camino Real. He said they should take responsibility to improve El Camino Real appearance and safety.

Commissioner Ferrick said they were making a recommendation on a preferred alternative. She said in essence they were generally indicating an aspiration to have some buffered bicycle lanes and to protect the trees on the Cornerstone property. She said the chart from the staff report provided a rating of changes to traffic and those were generally neutral whatever the alternative. She said it showed that Alternative 2 the Commission chose to recommend last time would improve the experience for bicycles and pedestrians, was neutral on transit, and would improve aesthetic opportunities as opposed to six continuous lanes that actually would make all those elements worse. She said she would support the separated bicycle facility if it was feasible but she understood the Fire District's valid concern to not create obstacles and gridlock, and also did not want the City to invest in rigid infrastructure that might not work. She said based on the ratings that Alternative 2 seemed the logical and preferred choice as it would improve traffic flow on El Camino Real. She said they did not know what Greenheart or Stanford would propose as part of their projects' development, but she was comfortable with their recommendation to the Council for bicycle lanes.

Chair Eiref said he thought the spirit of reconsidering this item was to be creative and consider different ways, and not be prescriptive so that their recommendations were exactly any one of the alternatives. He said he supported mixing and matching. He said he did not know if they needed to amend their motion to get that message to Council. He said to some degree he heard support for a "do-nothing" option or do something and make it safer for bicyclists from speakers. He said whatever alternative he did not want to slow down traffic on El Camino Real and the table in the report indicated that adding capacity slowed down traffic. He said they have wasted space on El Camino Real noting the expanse across from the Stanford Park Hotel. He said he looked at bicycle lane improvements occurring in New York City. He said one idea was to create two lanes side by side rather than on opposite sides. He said if there was more space on one side of El Camino Real than the other they could consider such a doubling up of lanes for bicyclists. He said regarding safety that people were in charge of their own decision where they would ride bicycles. He said it was cheap to put paint on the street and they could experiment, noting in New York City they got paint from a federal program.

Commissioner Bressler said the large developments along El Camino Real should fund improvements and that the City should not be sacrificed to provide continuous three lanes in each direction.

Commissioner Onken said there was visioning to consider and accommodation, and that he was much more interested in a vision for El Camino Real. He said that buffered bike lanes would not work to make bicyclists' use of El Camino Real safer. He said they should this study and put it back into the context of the circulation element in their General Plan Update, and that he was open to all of the possibilities. He noted that no business owners had expressed opposition to the on street parking being eliminated. He said he would prefer sidewalks and trees in the area where the on street parking was proposed for removal. He said he would like to amend their original motion to recommend Alternative 2 to include that the Council not act upon the Alternative but fold it into the General Plan update circulation element.

Chair Eiref asked staff about the General Plan Update and the circulation element. Senior Planner Rogers said the General Plan Update was proceeding with a land use focus on the M2 area. He said the circulation element would be looked at citywide. Transportation Manager Nagaya said the circulation element was citywide. She said several of the public speakers brought up the 2008 Complete Streets Act. She said that law required that the next update to the circulation element had to really address complete streets principles. She said they were underway in data gathering and analysis for that update but there were many steps to take before getting to a completed circulation element.

Commissioner Strehl said she did not think any of the alternatives improved the pedestrian experience. She said when they considered this item previously she had indicated she was not happy with the report, but had seconded the motion for Alternative 2. She said in supporting reconsideration she was not interested in mixing and matching their recommendation. She said they had heard from a number of people, whom she felt had thought through their comments thoroughly. She said they did not really know what the Greenheart and Stanford projects would do and she did not think they should do anything for bicyclists along El Camino Real until they knew. She said she had been with representatives from nearby cities over the weekend and had not heard anything from them about plans for bicycle lanes along El Camino Real. She moved to table and rescind their previously made recommendation, and to keep changes to El Camino Real open for more study and information.

Commissioner Ferrick said it was anticipated that retail would increase based on the Specific Plan and the early previews of the kind of projects they had seen over the last few years. She said that could actually make retail successful and having bike lanes there made a lot of sense in making the pedestrian experience that much nicer even if the sidewalk was slightly restricted in certain parts.

Commission Kadwany said the Council should get the best cases for redesigning El Camino Real with goals of safety, enhancement of the business corridor and general experience, and consideration of various tradeoffs such as having or not having future capacity. He said at a certain point there were costs and costs might be in cars or dollars. He said he thought the Council needed something new, a creative vision as to how to make this corridor work.

Chair Eiref said he recalled mention there was a budget to do something particularly for the intersection at Ravenswood. He said they might need to push it out for General Plan circulation element consideration, and perhaps they wanted to recommend doing something in the future.

Commissioner Ferrick said the bicycle lanes had been in the Specific Plan for years and she did not think another level of study was needed for them. Commissioner Strehl said it was a goal or aspiration of the Plan. Commissioner Kadvary said it was a recommendation along with other recommendations on page F12 of the Plan. Transportation Manager Nagaya said that was correct. She said the map on page F11 showed all the recommended bike lanes in the vicinity and El Camino Real was shown as a future Class 2/minimum Class 3 bicycle path. She said since then there had been studies that indicated that Class 3 was not a good treatment for a road such as El Camino Real. She said the separated bicycle lane was not a known treatment at the time of the Specific Plan. She said the Plan did analysis on keeping parking and adding bike lanes. She said in a lot of cases they have the width to maintain parking and add four to five foot bicycle lanes without removing travel lanes except the need to treat right turn pockets. She said however parked cars were a safety hazard for bicyclists and they did not think it a good recommendation to put the two together in a tight span of 12 to 13 feet.

Commissioner Onken said in their recommendation last time they were saying that a protected bike lane with separated curb was not preferred for reasons of luring people into the bicycle lane with a false sense of safety that should not be there and issues of emergency vehicles and reducing the capacity of El Camino Real. He said they also did not recommend increasing lanes. He said regarding the motion on the table he would suggest amending it to indicate a preference for those options but not as a formal recommendation. Commissioner Strehl said her motion was to table the recommendation and since she did not hear support, she would withdraw her motion. She recommended that the Council do some inexpensive experiments to see how options would work such as was suggested with putting traffic cones to get some empirical information.

Chair Eiref said he felt they were supporting their previous recommendation.

Commissioner Strehl said she was withdrawing her support for Alternative 2. She said before they did anything along El Camino Real for bicyclists that they needed to have a discussion on the circulation element of the General Plan and the El Camino Real projects, which she expected would move forward in some months.

Commissioner Ferrick said she was happy when she heard this item was put back on the agenda for greater discussion. She said they did not want to slow down traffic on El Camino Real and Alternative 2 did not do that. She said it would also vastly improve the bicyclist and pedestrian experience along El Camino Real. She said the data really mattered as it helped to make the best recommendation. She said she agreed with Commissioner Strehl about the upcoming development projects. She said she did not think the Alternative 2 recommendation would be implemented before the discussions for those projects occurred. She moved to recommend Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative including preserving the trees on the Cornerstone property. Chair Eiref seconded the motion.

Transportation Manager Nagaya asked if her motion also included the previous motion's bullets to include preservation of the heritage trees on the corner of El Camino Real at Ravenswood Avenue, as well as ensuring the best possible safety outcomes, including appropriate design of the intersections, driveway curb cuts, San Francisquito Creek Bridge, and Ravenswood Avenue.

Commissioner Ferrick said she did not think they should put in a lot of different things and was glad to confirm that Alternative 2 would not eliminate traffic lanes. She said also Alternative 2

was the best public safety option as it had the ability to give cars space when emergency vehicles.

Commissioner Onken said he would abstain as he thought this should be considered in the wider context of the General Plan circulation element update.

Commissioner Bressler said he would support as there were already people on El Camino Real bicycling and this would improve safety.

Chair Eiref said that there had been time and money already spent and he did not like the idea of extending the discussion.

Commissioner Ferrick said she chose Alternative 2 as it addressed public safety concerns.

Transportation Manager Nagaya said that whatever alternative was recommended there would be multiple steps to design the plan and implement.

Commission Action: M/S Ferrick/Eiref to recommend the following.

The Commission recommends that the Council adopt Alternative 2 (Buffered Bike Lanes) as the preferred alternative, but with preservation of the heritage trees on the corner of El Camino Real at Ravenswood Avenue and El Camino Real.

Motion carried 4-1 with Commissioner Strehl opposed, Commissioner Onken abstaining, and Commissioner Combs absent.

G. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

H. INFORMATION ITEMS

There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:59 p.m.

Staff Liaison: Thomas Rogers, Senior Planner

Recording Secretary: Brenda Bennett

Approved by the Planning Commission on May 18, 2015