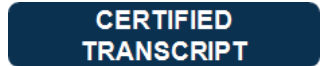


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CITY OF MENLO PARK
Planning Commission

In re:
Draft Environmental Impact
Report (Draft EIR) Public
Hearing/Lane Partners, LLC/333
Ravenswood Avenue (includes 201
and 301 Ravenswood Avenue, and
555 and 565 Middlefield Road)
(referred to as the Parkline
Master Plan Project). (Staff
Report #24-031-PC).



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
AGENDA ITEM F1
MONDAY, JULY 22, 2024

Reported by AMBER ABREU-PEIXOTO
(Via ZOOM Videoconference)
Certified Shorthand Reporter No. 13546
State of California

1 ATTENDEES

2

3 The Planning Commission:

4 Jennifer Schindler- Chairperson
Andrew Ehrich - Vice Chairperson
5 Linh Dan Do
Misha Silin
6 Ross Silverstein

7

SUPPORT STAFF:

8

Corinna Sandmeier, Principal Planner

9

10 Kyle Perata, Assistant Community Development
Director

11 Christine Begin, Planning Technician

12

PROJECT PRESENTERS:

13 Corinna Sandmeier, Principal Planner

14 Mark Murray, Lane Partners

15 Marc Pfenninger, Studios Architect

16 CONSULTANTS:

17 Jessica Viramontes, ICF
Kirsten Chapman, ICF
18 Ollie Zhou, Hexagon

19

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21

22 BE IT REMEMBERED that, pursuant to Notice of the
Meeting, and on July 22, 2024, via ZOOM Videoconference,
23 before me, AMBER ABREU-PEIXOTO, CSR 13546, State of
California, there commenced a Planning Commission meeting
24 under the provisions of the City of Menlo Park.

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1	MEETING AGENDA	
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3	Presentation by Chair Schindler	
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6	Project Presenters:	
7	Corinna Sandmeier, Principal Planner	
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9	Consultant Presentation	
10	Jessica Viramontes, ICF	
11	Mark Murray, Lane Partners	
12	Marc Pfenninger, STUDIOS Architects	
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14	Public Comment	
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16	Commission Questions and Comments	
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1 JULY 22, 2024

7:00 p.m.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

4

5 CHAIR SCHINDLER: All right. We will now move on
6 to Item F1, the Draft Environmental Impact Report, or
7 Draft EIR, Public Hearing, Applicant Lane Partners, LLC,
8 as it relates to 333 Ravenswood Avenue, including 201 and
9 301 Ravenswood Avenue, and 555 and 565 Middlefield Road,
10 referred to as the Parkline Master Plan Project.

11 This Agenda item will cover the following:
12 Public hearing on the Draft EIR evaluating the
13 environmental effects of the comprehensive redevelopment
14 of the SRI campus with a mix of residential and office and
15 research and development (R&D) uses, with limited
16 restaurant and retail components.

17 The project site is zoned C-1(X) or
18 Administrative and Professional District, Restrictive,
19 conditional development, and governed by a Conditional
20 Development Permit.

21 The proposed project would include approximately
22 1.1 million square feet of new office/R&D space in five
23 buildings, retention of approximately 287,000 square feet
24 of office/R&D space for SRI's continued operations, with
25 no net increase in commercial square footage, and

1 approximately 550 residential dwelling units.

2 The project variant would also include an
3 additional parcel located at 201 Ravenswood Avenue, up to
4 800 residential units, and then approximately 2- to
5 3-million-gallon below-grade emergency water reservoir and
6 related facilities to be built and operated by the City of
7 Menlo Park.

8 The Draft EIR was prepared to address potential
9 physical environmental effects of the proposed project and
10 project variant in the following areas:

11 Air quality, biological resources, cultural
12 resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas
13 emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and
14 water quality, land use and planning, noise, population
15 and housing, public services and recreation,
16 transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities and
17 service systems.

18 The Draft EIR finds significant and unavoidable
19 impacts from the proposed project and project variant in
20 the follow topic areas:

21 Construction noise, construction vibration,
22 cumulative construction noise, and historical resources.

23 Commissioner Do.

24 COMMISSIONER DO: Thank you, Chair Schindler.

25 I just wanted to take this opportunity to

1 disclose that while I do live within a 500-foot radius of
2 the project, I received advice from both the City Attorney
3 and the Fair Political Practice Commission that due to it
4 being a month-to-month lease, I can take part in this
5 discussion.

6 I also am confident that I can do so in an
7 un-biased and constructive manner.

8 Thank you.

9 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you, Commissioner Do.

10 Ms. Sandmeier, I believe we're going to proceed
11 with roughly the following structure, in terms of
12 presentation and discussion:

13 I think staff is going to provide an introduction
14 and some context for this first public hearing portion of
15 our agenda. This item F1 is also significantly related to
16 our next agenda item, which is a study session on this
17 project.

18 So after we have staff introduction and some
19 context, I believe that the Applicant, specifically
20 Mr. Murray and Mr. Pfenninger are going to speak
21 representing the Applicant. And then we will have a
22 presentation from the EIR consultant who I believe --
23 there we go. Okay. Ms. Viramontes [pronouncing].
24 Correct pronunciation? Thank you. Apologies for not
25 checking in on that ahead of time.

1 And after we have had those presentations, we
2 will take public comment on the Draft EIR, followed by
3 commissioner questions and comments. And then we will
4 move into the Study Session.

5 Members of the public who wish to speak to the
6 completeness and accuracy of the Draft EIR may do so
7 during our public comment period.

8 So with that, Ms. Sandmeier, would you like to
9 lead us off with an introduction and some context for this
10 first part of our discussion of the project.

11 CORINNA SANDMEIER: Yes. Good evening, Chair
12 Schindler and Commissioners. I'm Corinna Sandmeier with
13 the Planning Division. So I'll be giving a quick overview
14 of the Parkline Master Plan Project.

15 So this is the recommended meeting format.
16 First, we have introduction by staff, and then
17 presentation by the Applicant, and then presentation by
18 the City's EIR consultant, then public comments on the
19 Draft EIR, then commissioner comments and questions on the
20 Draft EIR. And then we'll close the Draft EIR Public
21 Hearing.

22 And then we'll have the Study Session,
23 introduction by staff, commission questions, public
24 comments on the proposed project and project variant, and
25 commissioner comments and discussion.

1 So as noted, there are two separate public
2 comment periods. So if -- we ask that people focus on
3 either the Draft EIR, when that public comment period is
4 up, or the study session, when that public comment period
5 is occurring.

6 So this is a quick location map showing the
7 location of the project. So it's the SRI campus that's
8 bounded by Laurel Street, Ravenswood, Middlefield, and the
9 Burgess right-of-way.

10 In general, this map shows the proximity to
11 downtown, El Camino Real, and City Hall and Burgess Park.
12 There's a little section along Ravenswood that is not
13 shown as part of the project here because it's not part of
14 the SRI campus. And that's 201 Ravenswood, and that is
15 included in the project variant.

16 And so this site plan shows the proposed project.
17 So, again, this is the SRI campus. Generally, the
18 proposal is to add 550 residential units, to replace 1.1
19 million square feet of commercial, office, and R&D, and
20 retain buildings P, S, and T. And those are shown in the
21 kind of darker blue. And those would be retained for
22 SRI's continued operations on the site.

23 And then this is the project variant that was
24 also analyzed in the EIR. And this includes the 201
25 Ravenswood Avenue site. It includes up to 800 residential

1 units, and it includes an underground water storage, 2- to
2 3-million gallons, and related facilities that would be
3 operated by the City. And this is the project that the
4 Applicant indicates they are pursuing entitlements for.

5 So this is the slide on the meeting purpose. So
6 the first item is the Environmental Impact Report. So
7 it's an opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR. And then
8 the second is a study session. And so that would be then
9 comments on the proposed master plan and proposed general
10 plan and zoning ordinance amendments to enable the master
11 plan. And no actions will be taken tonight.

12 The public comment period for the Draft EIR ends
13 on August 5th. Staff and the consultant will then review
14 and respond to all substantive comments in a document
15 called the Final EIR.

16 The Planning Commission is a recommending body on
17 certification of the Final EIR and on most land use
18 entitlements. The Planning Commission is the acting body
19 on future architectural control permits for the individual
20 buildings.

21 And so that concludes my presentation, and I'll
22 turn it over to the Applicant team. Thank you.

23 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you. I believe we have
24 presentation from the Applicant team.

25 MARK MURRAY: Good evening members of the

1 commission and city staff --

2 CHAIR SCHINDLER" yeah. Just one second. Let's
3 be sure that that's working. Try it -- want to try one
4 more time. Thank you.

5 MARK MURRAY: Better?

6 CHAIR SCHINDLER: That's perfect. Thank you. I
7 want to be sure folks can hear you online.

8 MARK MURRAY: Good evening, Members of the
9 Commission, City Staff, and residents of Menlo Park. I'm
10 Mark Murray, with Lane Partners. We're a Menlo
11 Park-based real estate development firm that SRI selected
12 several years ago to be their partner in helping them
13 re-envision the campus they've called home for over 80
14 years now.

15 Our firm has also been in Menlo Park since it was
16 founded over 18 years ago. So our office is half a mile
17 from the site down Ravenswood, and I actually live half a
18 mile down Laurel with my family. So, obviously, very
19 familiar with this site.

20 But just wanted to let you know that everyone
21 involved in the Applicant's side is -- recognizes the
22 importance and special nature of this opportunity and
23 we're very proud to be a part of it.

24 Next slide, please.

25 So when we were engaged by SRI, I think about

1 five years ago now, the primary responsibility we were
2 given related -- was related to the research campus. This
3 has been an incredibly venerable and productive research
4 campus for many, many decades. But the facilities are
5 outdated.

6 So the primary responsibility we were given by
7 SRI is to re-envision that R&D campus for the future,
8 something with new aesthetically-pleasing, sustainable
9 buildings, something that would not only be a long-term
10 solution to be a home for SRI, but also to create a
11 multi-tenant environment so you could attract the best and
12 brightest from various aspects of the research and
13 development field to create a multi-tenant environment
14 there.

15 And one of the challenges we have as you look at
16 how we planned out the site, is SRI has to consolidate
17 into several buildings and stay on campus. But that
18 creates a planning challenge. It's also -- they have to
19 stay in business throughout the process, including
20 construction and redevelopment. So it's something that
21 has been a challenge from the get-go and will remain a
22 challenge.

23 Next slide, please.

24 I know it's in there, so I'll do my best to tell
25 you what it says. So in addition to that primary

1 responsibility, we sat down, from the get-go, with SRI and
2 tried to create, you know, what we wanted to be the
3 guiding principles for this project. And while the
4 project has changed over time, based on community
5 feedback, those guiding principles really haven't changed
6 much. And we've worked really hard, actually, just to
7 kind of stay in conformance with those principles. And
8 one of those is just opening up the site itself.

9 For decades, at least as long as I've been in the
10 area, you know, it's been a fenced-off, closed-off area.
11 Kind of acts as a big blockage in town. It's a large area
12 of land, in a very central location, but essentially is
13 blocked off from the community.

14 So one of the primary principles we looked at is
15 opening up the site itself, physically, but then creating
16 a new district or a new neighborhood where one of the
17 primary features is actually community access and public
18 access.

19 The other thing we wanted to do, based on what we
20 were hearing in the community, even prior to starting the
21 public process for Parkline itself, was the need for
22 housing. So we wanted to create a new housing district.
23 And, actually, in the current CDP plan, which is our most
24 recent proposal, there's actually two housing districts,
25 totaling 800 units.

1 Another goal was to create a really permeable
2 site to really improve bike and pedestrian access, not
3 only for people using the site, getting around the site,
4 but because of this location and scale of this project, it
5 really has a chance to improve bike and pedestrian access
6 for folks getting from one side of town to the other,
7 whether or not they are actually -- Parkline is actually
8 their destination.

9 Sustainability is another major component of the
10 project, and that's not just achieved by replacing old
11 buildings with new. We're also replacing 100 percent of
12 the utility infrastructure that has major impacts on
13 things like carbon production.

14 And then, you know, one of the ongoing
15 challenges, which is still a challenge today, is how do
16 you accomplish all these things, particularly adding
17 housing, things like that, while respecting neighborhood
18 edges and being responsive to community concerns.

19 Next slide, please.

20 So we are now entering the fourth year of the
21 public process of the Parkline Project. We were working
22 with SRI for several years before that. But over the last
23 three-plus years, we've really worked hard to both solicit
24 a lot of community feedback. We've had, I think, 10 open
25 houses -- in addition to public hearings, these are open

1 houses we had for members of the public. Had -- I think
2 it was a thousand surveys, but that info is missing on the
3 thing too.

4 But -- and we've really worked hard to try to --
5 try to take those desires into account, in terms of what
6 we're producing in terms of community amenities, but also
7 work with concerns we were hearing in terms of traffic, in
8 terms of height and massing, and really try to make all
9 these components work while being respectful to what we
10 were hearing from the community.

11 And I would say the biggest challenge we had
12 throughout -- there was a lot of overwhelmingly positive
13 feedback to some of those themes we were going for: Open
14 space, bike and pedestrian, transit, adding housing. But
15 it was a major challenge in terms of, you know, what is
16 the right amount of housing. We really heard kind of a
17 constellation of opinions on -- you know, from folks that
18 are just kind of pro-housing and less sensitive to height
19 and massing, to folks who live nearby who really wanted to
20 see the minimum, and a lot of folks in the middle as well,
21 who, you know, wanted to see a big housing component but
22 thought, you know, hundreds and hundreds of units and
23 going to five or six stories might be too much for the
24 neighborhood.

25 Next slide, please.

1 KYLE PERATA: So if we could maybe -- through the
2 Chair. I'm sorry to interrupt. But I think we're seeing
3 other slides might be also corrupted. But I think we have
4 a different version. So we might switch sharers real
5 quick from Christine to Corinna. If we could just take 30
6 seconds to do that.

7 MARK MURRAY: Sure.

8 KYLE PERATA: And while -- no problem. While
9 we're doing that, I think I'm hearing reports from online
10 that we're having trouble hearing you. So I don't know if
11 it's the mic or if you move it closer. If we just maybe
12 try to play around with that while we do this kind of
13 quick swap of presentations for the Applicant. Maybe do a
14 quick test.

15 MARK MURRAY: Sounds good.

16 KYLE PERATA: That's better. I think. I hope.

17 CHAIR SCHINDLER: That looks better.

18 MARK MURRAY: Yeah. That's great. One more
19 slide forward, please.

20 So just to take you briefly through the evolution
21 of the project, I think we initially started in spring of
22 2021. And our initial -- we did public outreach prior to
23 that. But it was kind of an open question as to what the
24 right amount of housing was. We knew we wanted it to be
25 substantial. At the same time, we didn't want it to be

1 too much, where it was going to, you know, garner
2 opposition or something that was out of place in the
3 community.

4 So we started at 400 units, with essentially
5 saying we wanted to speak to the community about it.
6 We're willing to do more. We're also willing to do less.
7 And, again, our initial submittal was 400 units. We had
8 our first study sessions with both Commission and Council
9 in the summer of 2022. At that point, City Council told
10 us to study up to 600 units at a maximum. And then later
11 that year, we made our next formal submittal, which was
12 550 units. So we increased it significantly, but didn't
13 go all the way up to the maximum. Again, that was -- the
14 direction was a study, 600 as a maximum, not direction to
15 go to 600.

16 So after that next submittal, we had a series of
17 both the scoping session and study session before Planning
18 Commission. And I think that was actually -- ended up
19 being spread out over three hearings, but essentially the
20 guidance went to study up to 700 units and then ultimately
21 up to 800 units. And that was the direction on the EIR as
22 well.

23 We went away from those hearings thinking that,
24 you know, we really had to strive to do as much housing as
25 we could, at least as we could pull that off with doing it

1 in a way that would be acceptable to the community. That
2 was a huge challenge. We looked at -- you know, I think
3 we had only made that submittal in late 2022, and now
4 you're seeing our most recent CDP, which was just several
5 months ago. But in that 18-month period, I can't tell you
6 the number of iterations we tried, to try to, you know,
7 find that balance of how do you get to density without
8 doing so in a way that is going to not be well-liked in
9 the community.

10 And I don't think that would have been able to be
11 accomplished without -- we have since gone into contract
12 to acquire the Church of Christ of Scientists. That's the
13 201 Ravenswood address. So that's a one-acre parcel
14 fronting on Ravenswood, near the corner of Ravenswood and
15 Middlefield. And while that's only one acre of land, the
16 church also has rights over adjacent SRI property.

17 One of those rights is having a really large
18 parking field. I think it's 125 stalls at a minimum. But
19 if you look at some of the early iterations of our
20 project, you'll see there's kind of a large parking field
21 over in the corner there, that was to be in compliance
22 with those rights. And then they also had ingress and
23 egress rights, which sort of went through that corner.

24 So by acquiring -- we haven't acquired the
25 church, but by being in contract to acquire the church and

1 making that part of the Parkline plan, it really opened up
2 more like a four- to five-acre area in that corner, which
3 really wasn't -- we weren't able to redevelop or plan to
4 redevelop before.

5 And that really allowed us to significantly
6 spread out the housing; create a second housing district
7 of nearly 200 units in that corner. And that really
8 allowed us to -- that was kind of the main change that
9 allowed us to really do what the current 800-unit plan is,
10 which we think is the best version of 800 units, taking
11 into account concerns we heard from the community.

12 Next slide, please.

13 So the entitlements we're seeking now are what we
14 would call "programmatic entitlements." Those things like
15 the General Plan amendment, rezoning, and the CDP, which
16 we have submitted. I wanted to make the Commission aware
17 that this project actually bifurcated architectural
18 controls and these other approvals.

19 So assuming we go through this process, which is
20 I think currently on schedule to happen this year, there
21 will be an entire Day 2 process with the Planning
22 Commission that is a full architectural review. That's
23 not to say we don't value architectural feedback now. At
24 the very least, that would help us get it right, as fast
25 as possible, when we get to that stage. I just wanted to

1 make the Commission aware of that fact.

2 Next slide, please.

3 And this is the timeline for, again, these
4 programmatic approvals we're seeking. So the EIR public
5 comment, I think, ends in the first week of August. And
6 then we're currently on track to come back to this
7 Commission for a final recommendation in October, and then
8 final City Council hearings in November or December of
9 this year.

10 And I think one of the -- one of the things we're
11 really looking to achieve tonight, hopefully from Planning
12 Commission, is really feedback that the program we're
13 showing, the site plan we're showing, is the right
14 direction. We assume that going to 800 units, instead of
15 doing less, is probably the direction from prior hearings,
16 but please let us know. But we're really hoping to get
17 that kind of master plan feedback. Again, there's a lot
18 of details we worked out, EIR studies, things like that,
19 but we're hoping to move forward with that.

20 We had a City Council hearing two months ago.
21 That was something we actually requested. It was not a
22 required hearing in the process. And that was one of the
23 goals we had there. And I think we achieved that at that
24 last hearing. But we'd like to know that so we can keep
25 moving the project forward and stay on track and hopefully

1 get closer to bringing this to reality.

2 And with that, I'll turn it over to Marc
3 Pfenninger, who is our design lead to talk more about
4 design.

5 MARC PFENNINGER: Thank you, Mark. Thank you,
6 Chair Schindler and members of the Planning Commission and
7 city staff. I'm Marc Pfenninger. I'm a principal with
8 STUDIOS Architecture, and we're the master architect for
9 the project.

10 I just would like to start off and pick up from
11 where Mark left off and move into the project and just
12 talk about what is the experience of the project and how
13 will this site change. This is the site plan that you saw
14 earlier that shows the boundaries of the site and its
15 location to downtown.

16 Next slide, please.

17 But I think this is actually, really, probably a
18 more important way to look at the site. This is the way
19 everyone experiences the site today. You can walk across
20 the street and see this for yourself. The site is
21 entirely fenced off from the community. It is not
22 accessible. And the -- parts of the buildings that are on
23 the inside, that present themselves to committee, are --
24 they're old. They're in need of upgrades to maintain
25 their viable use. And, actually, when you go inside the

1 site, the site is -- has -- you know, a very similar
2 experience. It's a series of research and development
3 buildings that do need upgrades. But it's also a site
4 that is largely full of surface parking lot today.

5 Next slide.

6 And so one of the first things that we're
7 proposing in this project is a change of experience by
8 providing two new residential neighborhoods at the site;
9 the first on the right-hand side of this image is the
10 residential neighborhood along Laurel.

11 And that neighborhood begins with the Burgess
12 Classics, which is towards the right side, right adjacent
13 to that -- consciously thinking about, how do we weave in
14 a neighborhood that respects that scale. So a series of
15 town homes that have an imagery of a detached
16 housing-type.

17 And then the next two residential buildings, or
18 the major residential buildings of the development, but
19 they step up in scale. They start at four stories, which
20 is something we committed to early. But four stories, and
21 having articulations as a way of breaking up the mass, and
22 also thinking about how you can use -- use that mass to
23 create connections into the site. And then, as you get to
24 Ravenswood, they step up even more, to four stories -- and
25 then on the left -- up to five stories. I apologize.

1 And on -- the left side shows the new
2 neighborhood of Middlefield. And this is where the 100
3 percent affordable site is, along with new town homes
4 there as well and -- which we will talk about a little bit
5 more. Right next to this is this recreation field, which
6 is at this nexus of the R&D, the residential, and the
7 access to the community.

8 Next.

9 In the middle of the site is where we've, you
10 know, repurposed the -- not repurposed, but providing to
11 replace the existing R&D with five new buildings. And
12 rather than have them all be in a row with parking lots,
13 we're trying to push them to the perimeter of a new
14 central commons. And that central commons is really meant
15 to create a new, you know, feeling of this park that is
16 open and really trying to create, you know, a true
17 research park where new ideas can happen.

18 Next slide, please.

19 So here's the site plan. Now one thing I wanted
20 to point out about the site plan -- that we'll talk about
21 as we start to zoom into sections -- is, you know -- the
22 reasons why some of these buildings are cranked a little
23 bit and have funny shapes is we're trying hard to save as
24 many heritage trees as possible along the site -- whether
25 they are heritage trees that are around the perimeter of

1 the site, but the site actually has quite a few old growth
2 trees that are, you know, buried deep in the site that we
3 want to, you know, make visible and accessible and
4 leverage them to become new parks.

5 Next.

6 If we start to walk around the perimeter of the
7 site, and starting with Laurel, this is where we start to
8 see there's a bunch of heritage trees along Laurel. And
9 the proposal is the bigger residential buildings which are
10 on the right in this plan, they're actually pushed back
11 from Laurel to turn those heritage trees into a linear
12 park, which can start to line Laurel Avenue, which is the
13 image you see on the lower left.

14 And then right between Residential Building 1 and
15 the town homes is this paseo you see on the right. And
16 you can see here how the buildings step in scale from four
17 stories down to a smaller scale.

18 Next -- thank you.

19 And so between Residential 1 and Residential 2 is
20 -- this starts to show how we're thinking of bringing new
21 pedestrian connections into the site. And then what will
22 it connect to? It's not just about connecting through the
23 site, but providing amenities that the public can use,
24 whether it's dog parks or areas for people to eat and
25 picnic or playgrounds.

1 Next slide.

2 This starts to talk about the experience at the
3 corner of Ravenswood and Laurel and how the residential
4 building is pushed back far enough to keep the heritage
5 trees along there and start the beginning of a linear park
6 that connects Laurel to Middlefield along Ravenswood.

7 Next slide.

8 In the middle block, this is the part that's
9 probably today, the most visible, about the heritage trees
10 that you see on this site. This is where there's that
11 great grove of trees that are, you know, old and
12 established. And here the proposal is to -- actually,
13 this is where you start to be able to see the R&D
14 buildings -- but to push them back further and have this
15 linear park become wider so that it becomes more of a
16 parklet, more of a place for the public to occupy.

17 Next slide, please.

18 And then, finally, when we get to Middlefield,
19 the corner of Middlefield, it's just showing how the
20 planning of this linear park terminates at Middlefield and
21 terminates with the residential, but also thinks about --
22 you know, this is where we locate the recreation area.
23 And it's located in this area, between the residential on
24 your right and the office R&D on your left, the parklet up
25 above, because this is what we think will bring the most

1 use from all directions to it.

2 Next slide.

3 And then, if we go into the site, one of the
4 major amenities that are in the site is this -- is this
5 central commons. And, actually, it's a cafe, which is
6 publicly accessible, which is on the left, but the central
7 green, which is right in front of it, which can become a
8 multi-use place for amenities throughout the year.

9 Next slide.

10 Then, if we zoom back, this starts to show this
11 central commons by pushing the R&D buildings to the
12 perimeter, that there can be a series of open spaces, a
13 series of open greens that are connected by paths
14 throughout it that will weave the site together.

15 And then throughout the central commons,
16 throughout this common greenway is meant to be a series of
17 amenities that are available to the public. And these
18 range from bike repair shops -- we've talked about dog
19 parks -- you know, places for people to play. The open
20 lawns can be places where there can be informal --
21 informal recreation happening, as well as a number of
22 other amenities.

23 Next.

24 We've thought since the beginning that it would
25 be important to take advantage of the site, which is

1 currently inaccessible, with fences around it, and
2 leverage it to weave it back into the neighborhood. And
3 one of those ways is by bike paths.

4 One of the priorities of the project is to
5 increase connectivity to the surrounding
6 bike infrastructure, whether that's new bike lanes along
7 Laurel, on the left side -- the ability to connect bikes
8 through Burgess through the site to the Middlefield side
9 of the site -- whether it's new bike paths along
10 Ravenswood that could then bring traffic safely down to
11 Ringwood.

12 And then on the inside of the site, in the blue,
13 consciously thinking about how all of the connecting roads
14 need to have an element, will have an element, of bike
15 access as part of them.

16 Next.

17 And it's not just bikes. It's also pedestrians.
18 But thinking hard about the importance of pedestrian paths
19 and how pedestrian paths can be woven into the site to get
20 them away from the traffic of the loop road and the other
21 roads and really make it a safe, accessible & inviting
22 place for everyone to come.

23 Next slide, please.

24 And maybe now just coming from center and back
25 out. Just the visualizations of what this will look like.

1 This is the central green and the amenity
2 building you start to see on your right. A mass building
3 that could have a public cafe on the lower level. And
4 then you start to see the iconography or the imagery of
5 the R&D buildings, which are broken up in mass, but
6 they're meant to have terraces that activate the central
7 area, but push back so that it really makes a nice, open
8 park in the center.

9 Next slide, please.

10 The entrance along Ravenswood to the campus.

11 Next slide.

12 Right at Ravenswood, at -- this is Residential 2,
13 which is the taller of the main residential buildings; how
14 it's pushed back and really creates a nice parklet as you
15 get to the corner of Ravenswood.

16 Next slide.

17 And as you turn down Laurel Avenue, how this
18 parklet starts to become a linear park that goes down
19 Laurel. That's for pedestrians. And you can start to see
20 along Laurel, out in Laurel, new bike lanes.

21 Next slide.

22 And, finally, the paseo that connects to the
23 central commons to the public parks across the street, and
24 how this paseo, not only is a way for the public to get
25 into the site, but starts the residential buildings, four

1 stories, which you see on the left, and the smaller town
2 homes on the right, which starts to connect to Burgess
3 Classics.

4 And then I'd like to hand it back to Mark to talk
5 about community benefits.

6 MARK MURRAY: So I just wanted to briefly give an
7 overview of the community benefits components of the
8 project.

9 Next slide, please.

10 So as it relates to housing again, we talked
11 about expanding the amount of land being dedicated to
12 housing, increasing to 800 units. To put that into some
13 context, the 800 units, for the current RHNA cycle, which
14 goes through 2031, I believe that's 27 percent. The 800
15 units would equal 27 percent of the city's RHNA
16 obligations for this cycle. And, again, this stat is
17 actually incorrect as of the HUDs in the most recent
18 count, but it's 31 percent affordable, which I think is,
19 by a pretty wide margin, the highest level of
20 affordability proposed in Menlo Park.

21 Next slide, please.

22 And Marc did a great job with the bike safety and
23 connections. One thing I just wanted to highlight, I'm a
24 parent with two students at Encinal School. We live off
25 Laurel. One thing we heard kind of over and over again,

1 from folks who live nearby, is Laurel is kind of one of
2 the main arteries -- is probably the main artery from this
3 part of town getting to Encinal School. There's a lot of
4 kids and parents using their bikes on this artery. So
5 there's a lot of concern about, you know, bikes mixing
6 with cars.

7 We did a couple things here. One, we really
8 limited the access from those large residential buildings.
9 The building turning the corner on Ravenswood has no
10 direct connectivity to Laurel.

11 And then for the building in the middle, the
12 four-story building Mark mentioned, it only has ingress
13 only from Laurel. So there's no exiting whatsoever. So
14 we're reducing, at a minimum, you know, 75 percent of the
15 car trips. And those two buildings will no longer be able
16 to use Laurel.

17 And then we had that Class IV bike lane on both
18 sides. So Class IV is, we actually have a physical
19 border, and that's on both sides of the street.

20 So we really tried to reduce traffic, but also
21 enhance safety with that artery, because school children
22 from elementary, all the way to high school, were kind of
23 the main -- we want the bike and pedestrian to serve
24 everybody. But that's one of the groups we really thought
25 a lot about.

1 And then on Ravenswood as well, we have that main
2 paseo. So there's two existing bike lanes on each side of
3 Ravenswood now. We'll maintain those. We're actually
4 going to widen and buffer them a little more so they're
5 hopefully a little more safe. But we'll also have that
6 paseo on our property, out the street, that's really meant
7 to focus, you know, in particular on kids going to MA or
8 going the other direction to Hillview School.

9 Next slide, please.

10 In terms of sustainability, I mentioned before
11 that, you know, obviously we're removing 35 old buildings,
12 replacing them with five new ones. All of the new
13 buildings will be fully electric, with the exception of
14 emergency generators. But in addition to that, I think I
15 mentioned, we're replacing site infrastructure, utility
16 infrastructure.

17 And one of the existing infrastructure pieces is
18 a cogeneration plant that's been in service for several
19 decades, which we plan to take offline and decommission.
20 And that cogeneration plant is responsible for about 11
21 percent of the carbon output in the city on an annual
22 basis.

23 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Is there any adjustment we
24 could make to that real quick? Just to...

25 MARK MURRAY: Does that do it?

1 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Seems better. Thank you.

2 MARK MURRAY: And the removal of that
3 cogeneration plant is the equivalent of about 61 million
4 miles driven by a typical gas-powered vehicle. And that's
5 on an annual basis. So this is really a massive impact
6 from a carbon reduction standpoint.

7 Next slide, please.

8 Tree preservation. I think Marc touched on this
9 as well. But we really went to great lengths. At the
10 very beginning, we categorized each and every tree
11 on-site; not just, you know, species and age and size, but
12 really ranking them in terms of quality, likelihood for
13 longevity. And we really worked hard. We can go into
14 more detail as you like, but we really went to painstaking
15 lengths to try to preserve what we thought were the best
16 specimens.

17 Next slide, please.

18 And as I mentioned, respecting neighborhood
19 edges. We really worked hard with the neighbors to find
20 that 800-unit scheme that comported with the concerns we
21 heard from neighbors.

22 Next slide, please.

23 We can go to the next slide. I think Marc
24 covered the open space pretty well on his walkthrough.
25 But this is just kind of the summary of the major

1 community benefits. Again, 20 acres of
2 publicly-accessible open space. It has that series of
3 amenities Marc walked you through.

4 In addition to that, there's the 2.7 acre
5 dedication to the city. That would be a -- in terms of
6 programming that, I think the idea is that will be a Day 2
7 process run by Parks and Rec to program that exactly.

8 We're showing a sports field there now, to show
9 that's one possibility, but also to give you a sense of
10 scale of that area.

11 The 1.6-acre dedication to a third-party
12 nonprofit for a building that will be up to 154 units, but
13 100 percent affordable at the low income and below levels.
14 2.5 miles of bike and transit, as well as a bike repair
15 shop. 31 percent below-market rate in terms of
16 affordability in the housing.

17 And then it will have that centralized amenity
18 building, the lower level of which will be food and
19 beverage, about 17,000 feet. So I think that's really the
20 equivalent of, kind of, you know, three to four full-scale
21 restaurants in that area.

22 Removal of cogeneration plant. Again, that
23 massive carbon reduction.

24 In that sports field area as well, we have -- and
25 this is being studied in the EIR a place to fit a 2- to

1 3-million-gallon potable water reservoir for emergency
2 uses. And then we plan to make financial contributions
3 both to the Middle Avenue Caltrain crossing, because
4 that's a big part of our plan for bike and pedestrian
5 transit, as well as the Railroad Quiet Zone Program.

6 And with that, I'm happy to answer any questions.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you. I think we'll move
9 on to the next component of our presentations, which is
10 from our EIR consultant. Thank you.

11 Do we have the presentation for the Draft EIR?
12 There we go. Thank you.

13 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: Thank you. Good evening
14 Chair Schindler, members of the Commission, City staff,
15 members of the public. Thank you for joining us tonight
16 to discuss the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the
17 Parkline Project.

18 Next slide.

19 My name is Jessica Viramontes. I'm a principal
20 at ICF, the lead EIR consultant for this project. I'm
21 serving as ICF's project manager. I'm joined virtually by
22 my colleague, Kirsten Chapman. She's serving as the
23 senior advisor for the project. I'm also joined virtually
24 by Ollie Zhou, who's vice president and principal
25 associate with Hexagon, the transportation consultant for

1 this project.

2 Next slide.

3 This presentation will clarify the purpose of
4 tonight's hearing; provide an overview of the proposed
5 project; describe the environmental review process,
6 including the next steps; provide an overview of the
7 contents of the Draft EIR; and, finally, explain how to
8 submit comments on the Draft EIR.

9 Next slide.

10 The overall intent of tonight's hearing is to
11 receive public comments on the analysis in the Draft EIR,
12 specifically on the environmental impacts evaluated in the
13 Draft EIR and the adequacy of the document pursuant to the
14 California Environmental Quality Act, commonly referred to
15 as CEQA.

16 An important reminder is that the purpose of this
17 public hearing is not for City staff or the consultant
18 team to respond to substantive comments or questions from
19 the public or the commission. That process will be part
20 of preparing the Final EIR. Next step.

21 This slide shows a conceptual plan for the
22 project. The Draft EIR evaluates the potential
23 environment impacts of both the project and project
24 variant, which will be shown on the next slide. Corinna
25 and the team already provided details about the proposed

1 project and the project variant, so I won't go into more
2 detail here.

3 Next slide.

4 And here is the conceptual plan for the project
5 variant.

6 Next slide.

7 As provided in the CEQA guidelines, an EIR is an
8 informational document that is intended to inform public
9 agency decision makers and the general public of the
10 significant environmental impacts of a project; possible
11 ways to avoid or substantially lessen the significant
12 effects; and, finally, reasonable alternatives to the
13 project. Thus, the purpose of this EIR prepared for
14 Parkline is to provide detailed information about the
15 environmental effects that could result from implementing
16 the proposed project or the project variant; examine and
17 identify methods for mitigating any adverse environmental
18 impacts should the proposed project or the project variant
19 be approved; and, finally, consider feasible alternatives
20 to the proposed project and project variant, including the
21 required "no project" alternative.

22 Next slide.

23 The environmental review process started with the
24 release of the Notice of Preparation, commonly referred to
25 as NOP, in late 2022. We are currently within the 45-day

1 Draft EIR public review period.

2 Next slide.

3 Consistent with the CEQA guidelines, the EIR
4 provides a detailed project description; environmental
5 setting; environmental impacts, including cumulative
6 impacts; mitigation measures, where applicable, to reduce
7 impacts; and a reasonable range of alternatives to the
8 project -- excuse me. To the project and the project
9 variant.

10 As previously mentioned, the EIR evaluates a
11 variant to the proposed project. Because the variant
12 could increase or reduce environmental impacts, the EIR
13 analyzes the potential environmental impacts of the
14 project variant.

15 Next slide.

16 Chapter 3 of the EIR evaluates the potential
17 impacts of the project for the environmental topics, as
18 required by CEQA, that are shown on this slide. And I
19 won't list each and every one of them.

20 Chapter 4 evaluates the potential impacts of the
21 project variant for these same topics. So, again, Chapter
22 3 for the project and Chapter 4 for the project variant.

23 Each CEQA topic in this list is given its own
24 section, with each containing a description of the
25 applicable environmental and regulatory settings, along

1 with an analysis of the environmental impacts.

2 Next slide.

3 As noted in Section 3.1 of the Draft EIR, it was
4 determined that the project would have no impact related
5 to agricultural and forestry resources, mineral resources,
6 and wildfire.

7 In addition, the project site is in an infill
8 site located in a transit-priority area, and the project
9 proposes a mixed-use residential project. Therefore, the
10 EIR does not consider aesthetic or vehicular parking
11 impacts in determining the significance of impacts under
12 CEQA.

13 For informational purposes only, Appendix 3.1-1
14 of the Draft EIR includes a discussion of the potential
15 aesthetic changes as a result of the project and the
16 project variant.

17 Next slide.

18 The Draft EIR identifies and classifies the
19 environmental impacts as potentially significant,
20 significant, less than significant, and no impact.

21 For each impact identified as being potentially
22 significant, the Draft EIR provides a mitigation measure
23 -- excuse me. Provides mitigation measures to reduce,
24 eliminate, or avoid the adverse effect. If the mitigation
25 measures would successfully reduce the impact to a

1 less-than-significant level, this is stated in the Draft
2 EIR. If the mitigation measures would not reduce the
3 environmental effects to a less-than-significant level,
4 then the Draft EIR classifies the impact as significant
5 and unavoidable.

6 Next slide.

7 These next two slides summarize the significant
8 and unavoidable impacts and mitigation measures. Unless
9 otherwise noted, these apply to both the proposed project
10 and the project variant.

11 Significant and unavoidable impacts of the
12 proposed project and the project variant include
13 construction noise, ground-borne vibration, cumulative
14 construction noise and, on the next slide, historical
15 resources.

16 As shown in italics, Mitigation Measure NOI-1.3
17 would be implemented for the project variant only, instead
18 of Mitigation Measure NOI-1.1.

19 All other mitigation measures shown here would be
20 applicable for both the proposed project and project
21 variant.

22 Although mitigation measures would be implemented
23 to reduce the impacts shown here, these would not be able
24 to reduce impacts to a level of less than significant.

25 Next slide.

1 This slide summarizes the significant and
2 unavoidable impacts on historical resources. As shown in
3 italics, Mitigation Measure CR-1.4 would be implemented
4 for the project variant only, since the project site would
5 include the chapel building at 201 Ravenswood.

6 All other mitigation measures would be applicable
7 to both the proposed project and the project variant.

8 Next slide.

9 The Draft EIR considered a range of reasonable
10 alternatives. These alternatives could attain most of the
11 project's basic objectives, while avoiding or
12 substantially lessening any of the significant
13 environmental effects of the proposed project.

14 Alternatives were considered to reduce the
15 significant and unavoidable impacts associated with
16 construction noise and vibration, but these were
17 determined to be infeasible. Therefore, alternatives to
18 reduce the significant and unavoidable impacts were
19 considered, but rejected, in the Draft EIR. Excuse me.

20 However, the EIR evaluates three alternatives,
21 those shown here: Project Preservation Alternative 1, 2,
22 and 3, in addition to the required "no project"
23 alternative, to reduce the significant and unavoidable
24 impacts on historical resources, as summarized in this
25 slide.

1 Next slide.

2 Oh, sorry. One slide back. There we go.

3 So similar to the project alternatives, we have
4 project variant alternatives. So based on the goal of
5 reducing the project variant's significant impacts, while
6 attempting to meet the basic project objectives, the City
7 developed three alternatives to the project variant for
8 evaluation, plus the "no project" alternatives.

9 It is important to note that these alternatives
10 are similar in concept to those selected for the proposed
11 project, as listed on the prior slide. However, the
12 project variant alternative shown here includes
13 slightly-altered site plans due to the differences between
14 the proposed project and the project variant.

15 Next slide.

16 With respect to next steps in the environmental
17 review process, the City will prepare responses to
18 comments received on the Draft EIR during the public
19 review period and will prepare the Final EIR. After the
20 Final EIR is released, the decision makers will take
21 action on the proposed project or the project variant and
22 the EIR.

23 Next slide.

24 This slide describes how to comment on the Draft
25 EIR. You may comment tonight virtually by raising your

1 hand via Zoom or in person by submitting a speaker card.
2 You may submit written comments addressed to Corinna at
3 the physical address or e-mail address shown on this
4 slide. All comments must be received by 5:30 p.m., on
5 Monday, August 5th, 2024.

6 Thank you so much for your time, and we look
7 forward to receiving your comments.

8 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you to all who have
9 presented on this project in support of this agenda item,
10 our public hearing. We're going to move into public
11 comment at this time, with regard to the Draft EIR.

12 Ms. Begin, could you please provide instructions
13 and open the public comment -- actually, call for public
14 comment. And then once we have a rough estimate of how
15 many comment cards and hands raised online, we'll assess
16 time allocations.

17 CHRISTINE BEGIN: Thank you, Chair Schindler. As
18 a reminder, you're welcome to speak on this public comment
19 period by raising your hand, with the hand icon on Zoom,
20 or by pressing star 9, if calling by phone.

21 If you're participating in person, please fill
22 out a comment card and bring it to me.

23 Currently, we have zero in-person comment cards
24 and four hands raised online.

25 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Let's give it one more moment,

1 just to count -- for a count.

2 Any additional hands raised? Are we still around
3 four?

4 CHRISTINE BEGIN: We have just -- fluctuating
5 between four and five.

6 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Okay.

7 CHRISTINE BEGIN: But looks like four.

8 CHAIR SCHINDLER: With that count, let's proceed
9 with the standard three-minute allocation to each speaker.
10 So if you could please make sure they have the correct
11 instructions and begin calling for public comment, or
12 calling the commenters.

13 CHRISTINE BEGIN: Okay. Our first speaker is Bob
14 MacDonald.

15 Bob, I will now allow you to speak. You do not
16 have to provide your name and address or locality with
17 your public comment, but you are free to do so, if you
18 choose. I will start now, and you will have three
19 minutes.

20 Go ahead. Bob, you can un-mute yourself.

21 CHAIR SCHINDLER: We're not able to hear you,
22 Bob.

23 BOB MACDONALD: Can you hear me now?

24 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Yes.

25 Wonderful. Thank you.

1 BOB MACDONALD: Perfect. Hi. I'm Bob MacDonald.
2 I am a member of the Christian Science Church at 301
3 Ravenswood, and our property is now part of the Parkline
4 Project. And I am in charge of the committee at our
5 church for the transition of our church to a better,
6 right-sized facility in our future.

7 And what I'd like to do tonight is just speak in
8 support of the Parkline Project. Coincidentally, with SRI
9 and Lane Partners getting together with the Parkline
10 Project, it was in the same time frame that our church
11 congregation realized that we needed to right-size our
12 church operation for a much smaller congregation today
13 than we've had in the past. And as we were evaluating all
14 of our options, we determined that selling our property
15 into the Parkline Project, after over 70 years as a
16 partner with SRI, seemed to make the most sense.

17 We're very supportive of the project and what
18 it's bringing to the community, especially the need for
19 housing and especially affordable housing. I think the
20 proximity -- we think the proximity, especially to Menlo
21 Atherton High School, and other schools in the area, as
22 well as for the City government operations is going to be
23 a wonderful thing.

24 On our own, we had been looking at what we might
25 do to help the housing situation, and becoming part of

1 Parkline seemed to be the best thing. We have been
2 partnered with SRI for over 70 years because they've been
3 providing parking for our services for all of this time.

4 We are also working -- we currently have a
5 daycare that is using our facility during the week; Alpha
6 Kids. And we're also working with them to find a new home
7 because of how the project is going to move forward. So,
8 anyway, it's been, you know -- we're in great support of
9 this plan and how it's come together, and especially the
10 housing component of that which has us very pleased.

11 That's it.

12 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you for your comment.

13 CHRISTINE BEGIN: Okay. Our next speaker is
14 Kevin Rennie.

15 Kevin, I will now allow you to speak. Again, you
16 do not have to provide your name and address or locality
17 with your public comment, but you're free to do so, if you
18 choose.

19 You can please go ahead and un-mute yourself,
20 when you're ready, and you have three minutes.

21 Thanks.

22 KEVIN RENNIE: Hi. My name is Kevin Rennie. I'm
23 from the Willows neighborhood.

24 Chair, Commission members, staff, thank you for
25 taking the time and organizing all of this. I just -- I

1 read, as well as I could, through the Draft, and I just
2 wanted to list a couple of my concerns.

3 I read that the number of parking spaces was
4 going to be 3,719. I'm extremely concerned with the
5 amount of traffic that will bring in cars and buses in the
6 surrounding neighborhoods. For example, in the Willows
7 neighborhood, there's a cut-through, Woodland Avenue,
8 that's used during commute times, among other roads in the
9 Willows neighborhood. I didn't see it listed in the ERI
10 -- EIR.

11 Additionally, cumulative proposed projects not
12 being accounted for air quality, which are listed in all
13 the housing elements' projected projects to come.

14 Additionally, there's a proposed Ringwood/Coleman
15 bicycle/pedestrian project, which I didn't see listed in
16 this EIR, which would -- which is proposed to close
17 Coleman to a one-way, which would send more traffic to Bay
18 Road and Middlefield.

19 Additionally, Willows neighborhood, during peak
20 commute, is challenging to exit or even enter along Willow
21 Road and more specifically, Willow and Gilbert Avenue and
22 Middlefield, at Woodland Avenue. A lot of times I have to
23 -- if I could bike, and it was safe -- it's not safe to
24 bike, or I would do that. There's no complete or safe
25 sidewalks or bike lanes along Middlefield, the complete

1 lane.

2 Overall, I believe this project has a larger
3 commercial footprint. Everybody keeps talking about the
4 housing, but it's basically a commercial project with some
5 housing.

6 And I don't -- to extend the charm and beauty
7 inherent to our Menlo Park community, I think more needs
8 to be done. I think this is blurred with the congestion
9 of having 7,500 -- 3.7 parking lots, I think it's going to
10 impact congestion and property values and air quality.

11 Some of the things I would like to see completed
12 before the project gets going, complete the Middle Avenue
13 Caltrain bus/when-shared bike lanes all along Ravenswood,
14 all along Middlefield, and a more direct path from
15 Ringwood to Burgess Avenue.

16 I do see you guys have taken some time to put
17 some bike lanes in -- or bike paths, but it's truly not
18 enough. It looks nice, but it's not functional.

19 Thank you for the time. I yield back.

20 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you for your comment.

21 CHRISTINE BEGIN: Thank you. Our next speaker is
22 Pattie F.

23 Pattie, I will now allow you to speak. And you
24 do not have to provide your name and address or locality
25 with your public comment, but you're free to do so, if you

1 choose.

2 And when you're ready, you may, please, un-mute
3 yourself. And I will start now, and you'll have three
4 minutes to speak.

5 Thanks.

6 PATTIE FRY: Okay. Hi. Can you hear me?

7 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Yes. Thank you.

8 PATTIE FRY: Okay. I'm Pattie Fry, from central
9 Menlo Park. And I'm a former Planning Commissioner.

10 I'm concerned about some of the impacts being
11 understated in the EIR, the Draft EIR. In particular is
12 the number of employees, potential employees. As
13 commented before, I'm aware that current corporate and
14 especially technology companies' worker density is about
15 150 square feet per worker; whereas, it looks like this
16 assumed 250 square feet per worker, meaning that the
17 number of employees could easily be 166 percent of the
18 number in the document. It's understating impacts.

19 I also note that in 3.3-18 and 3.14-12, the
20 number of employees is different by a substantial amount.
21 I don't understand why those numbers are different. So I
22 think there's an error in at least one place.

23 I'm also concerned that there's no mention of the
24 current CDP employee cap that's been in place since 1975.
25 Every time SRI let property go for other projects, the cap

1 was reduced; whereas, this seems to be assuming quite a
2 number more employees and workers on-site than has been
3 what we've all known. And that was a policy. That was
4 part of the zoning. And so I don't -- I don't think
5 that's been adequately addressed.

6 The last topic is about the impact on population
7 and housing. I'm really concerned that, as stated on
8 3.14-13, there's a net decrease of 1,656 housing units in
9 the region as a result of this project, but that's on top
10 of a current shortage. And this implies that, you know,
11 Menlo Park's share of that problem is of the modest
12 amount. But in reality, most cities are assuming the same
13 thing; somebody else is going to take care of the problem
14 that their projects create. And so even 800 housing units
15 is not going to, you know, take care of even half of this
16 shortage that's in addition to the current one. So I'm
17 very much concerned about that. And that's not addressed
18 properly, in my opinion, in this document.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you for your comment.

21 CHRISTINE BEGIN: Thank you. Our next speaker is
22 Naomi Goodman.

23 Naomi, you do not have to provide your name and
24 address or locality with your public comment, but you are
25 free to do so, if you choose.

1 I will now allow you to speak, and you'll have
2 three minutes.

3 Thank you.

4 NAOMI GOODMAN: Thank you. My name is Naomi
5 Goodman. I'm a long-time Menlo Park resident and a
6 retired environmental scientist.

7 My comment on the Draft EIR addresses the
8 proposed use of the nonresidential buildings for
9 bioscience R&D. Although the document states that the new
10 buildings could accommodate the relatively low risk
11 Biosafety Level 1 or 2 labs, it has not rejected hosting
12 BSL-3 labs, which work with potentially lethal airborne
13 pathogens and toxins.

14 It's expressed that there will be no hazard
15 impacts from a BSL-3 lab because SRI and its future
16 tenants will comply with all state, federal, and local
17 regulations, and that any accidents that can occur will be
18 addressed by local emergency response.

19 This is, frankly, blue-sky thinking. The county,
20 the city, and the fire department have zero expertise,
21 training, or protective equipment to respond to an
22 airborne release of a potentially lethal biological
23 accident.

24 The DER site map should also identify the
25 location and discuss the operation of SRI's existing

1 bio-containment facility, which their own publicity
2 indicates is used for research into drugs and diagnostics
3 for agents such as HIV, Ebola, drug-resistant bacteria,
4 anthrax, and Hepatitis C. Even if the existing facility
5 will not be modified in this project, opening the fenced
6 SRI campus to the public creates a new risk that the EIR
7 must evaluate.

8 This is critical, considering the proximity of
9 the project to schools, daycare centers, and the new
10 residential areas.

11 Finally, a BSL-3 lab requires a continuous power
12 supply to the HVAC system to ensure that airflow is drawn
13 into the containment rooms and out through the tall
14 rooftop stacks. The DEIR proposes 14 new emergency
15 generators, for a total of 17. The type of generator is
16 not stated in the EIR, but the models that were cited in
17 the noise analysis are all diesel-fueled.

18 The EIR needs to state how many days of fuel will
19 be stored on-site and also evaluate the emissions from
20 those units, in the event of a multi-day power outage,
21 such as the one we experienced recently.

22 Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

23 CHRISTINE BEGIN: Thank you.

24 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you for your comment.

25 CHRISTINE BEGIN: Thank you.

1 Our next speaker is Adina Levin.

2 Adina, I will now allow you to speak. You have
3 three minutes.

4 Thank you.

5 ADINA LEVIN: Hello. Good evening, Planning
6 Commissioners. Adina Levin, Menlo Park resident. And so
7 --

8 CHRISTINE BEGIN: Sorry about that. Adina, can
9 you --

10 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Yes. We can't hear you.

11 CHRISTINE BEGIN: Sorry.

12 ADINA LEVIN: Okay. Aha. Here we go. Great.
13 So hopefully I will not need the extra 15
14 seconds. Adina Levin, Menlo Park resident.

15 And in general, I want to support the
16 environmental benefits of this project, in terms of it
17 being a really great location for infill, mixed-use
18 development near the downtown area, with lots of services,
19 and near the public transportation. Our community has
20 been, you know, long in the habit of doing the larger
21 developments in -- near the Bay side, with less access to
22 services and less access to public transportation. And
23 so, you know, there's just really good benefits of the
24 infill development, especially with regard to our largest
25 source of greenhouse gas emissions and particulate

1 pollution with, you know, driving cars.

2 In general, the amount of anticipated cars, with
3 the amount of parking, and then the transportation demand
4 management programs to help, you know, the amount of
5 driving, in line with or less than the amount of parking
6 available is overall not unreasonable for the location.

7 As a previous speaker mentioned, a trip cap
8 strategy would be a potentially-reasonable thing to do for
9 this location as well, as well as a previous speaker
10 mentioned having good quality bike lanes in the area,
11 which may already be included or supported. At any rate,
12 hopefully that will be clarified because the -- you know,
13 at the location, improving the quality of walking and
14 biking, both for residents and people in the area, help
15 overall reduce the amount of cars driving and pollution.

16 And the green space, including the paths,
17 likewise, help people, you know, enjoy the area,
18 supporting quality of life and help people get around with
19 less driving and with the environmental benefit and --
20 like, the housing is really important, contributing to our
21 housing element, supporting diversity in our community for
22 people at a variety of different income levels.

23 And so, overall, in general, supportive of these
24 different aspects of the project and its environmental
25 benefits.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you for your comment.

3 CHRISTINE BEGIN: Thank you, Chair Schindler. At
4 this time, I do not see any more hands raised, and I have
5 not received any comment cards.

6 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you. Let's just give it
7 another 10 seconds, just in case.

8 Do we have any additional commenters that have
9 raised their hands during that time?

10 CHRISTINE BEGIN: Thank you, Chair Schindler. I
11 can confirm no public comments have been submitted.

12 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Okay. Then I will go ahead and
13 close public comment, Item F-1, the public hearing for the
14 Draft EIR, and we will bring the discussion back to the
15 dais for questions, comments, and discussion.

16 Just as a reminder, there will be no action by
17 the Planning Commission, and there will be no motions and
18 no vote this evening.

19 So with that, do we have a commissioner who would
20 like to begin with questions or discussion?

21 Commissioner Do?

22 COMMISSIONER DO: Thank you, Chair Schindler.

23 I had a question on transportation, given
24 concerns from community members, Council, about
25 transportation.

1 It always surprises me how a project so large can
2 say transportation impacts will be less than significant.
3 And I always have to remind myself, reflecting on the
4 handful of EIRs I've looked at, that it doesn't say we are
5 not going to see changes in our community. And I always
6 have to remind myself that. But it is more that it's set
7 as certain criteria, as stated in the EIR, it does not
8 exceed the defined threshold.

9 So through the Chair, if I could just ask the EIR
10 consultant, maybe just refresh my understanding -- I mean
11 for the benefit of any community members concerned about
12 transportation.

13 One of the ways significance is determined is the
14 vehicle miles traveled, and that it does not exceed the
15 threshold. And there's a chart with a number. And so the
16 vehicles' miles traveled is the amount someone is driving
17 -- an employee or a resident -- as it relates to them
18 going from home to work and back.

19 Is that kind of the concept of VMT?

20 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: Generally, yes.

21 But I do have Ollie Zhou on the line. If we
22 could promote him to be able to answer this question.

23 Thanks, Ollie.

24 OLLIE ZHOU: Hi, Commissioners. Ollie Zhou, from
25 Hexagon.

1 Yes, you are correct. VMT for office is analyzed
2 as the home-to-work VMT, and it is only per-employee
3 basis.

4 Similarly, for residential VMT, it is analyzed
5 for all home-related vehicle miles traveled, including
6 home to work -- you know, going from home to shopping, et
7 cetera.

8 And that is -- also analyzes -- as you mentioned,
9 it's based on VMT per resident.

10 COMMISSIONER DO: Okay. No. That's helpful.
11 It's for residents also doing errands and such.

12 And then, can you just refresh my memory, how is
13 that threshold number determined?

14 OLLIE ZHOU: Yeah. So for the City of Menlo
15 Park, the TIA guidelines require -- establish the
16 threshold as -- I believe it is the city-wide 15 percent
17 below the -- I'm just trying to make sure I'm saying the
18 correct things here.

19 Let me -- I think it's regional duration. Right.
20 So it is 15 percent below the regional. So San Francisco
21 Bay Area regional average VMT per employee, and VMT per
22 resident.

23 COMMISSIONER DO: All right. So there's just a
24 very specific. And I don't -- thank you. I don't mean to
25 get into the nitty-gritty too much. It's, just, when you

1 look at the trip-generation tables -- and currently,
2 there's about 500 trips generated on-site -- and then you
3 look at the projected, whether it's office or R&D, it's
4 about 10,000. And someone can do the math and say,
5 "That's 20 times more than what we see today. How is that
6 not significant?"

7 So it's just helpful for me to remind myself how
8 significance is determined, in the lens of the EIR.

9 Thank you so much.

10 And I had another question, if I can, through the
11 Chair, to staff.

12 Ms. Sandmeier -- and I had e-mailed you earlier,
13 and I don't know if this is an appropriate time to ask
14 that about the EIR studies' 25 and 28 percent VMT
15 reductions for the residents and the nonresidential
16 portions respectively.

17 And I was just curious how that compared to
18 comparable projects in the area, that are also close to
19 transit.

20 CORINNA SANDMEIER: Yeah. Thank you for that
21 question.

22 I think two projects you had brought up, when
23 asking me about this, was the 500 ECR, the Middle Avenue,
24 Middle Crossing Project; and then 1300 ECR, the Springline
25 Project.

1 So both of those kind of went through the review
2 process before, when "level of service" was still the CEQA
3 analysis that was done instead of VMT, vehicle miles
4 traveled.

5 And the C/CAG hadn't updated their TDM policy,
6 and so there were no specific percentages for those TDM
7 plans that were required. They did submit plans and then
8 were required to implement those, but it wasn't based on a
9 specific percentage.

10 So it's difficult to compare -- compare with
11 project's currently going through the process.

12 COMMISSIONER DO: Oh, okay. Got it. Thank you.

13 I think that's all I have for now on the Draft
14 EIR.

15 Thank you.

16 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you, Commissioner Do.

17 Commissioner Silverstein.

18 COMMISSIONER SILVERSTEIN: I have a couple
19 questions regarding trips.

20 But before I begin, just for clarification sake,
21 is the financial impact report in scope for this
22 discussion?

23 Is there anyone to either speak to that if I had
24 related questions?

25 CORINNA SANDMEIER: Yeah. Thank you for that

1 question.

2 The FIA isn't part of the environmental review.
3 So I think that would be best addressed during the study
4 session portion of the evening.

5 COMMISSIONER SILVERSTEIN: Totally fine. Okay.

6 So following up on Commissioner Do's questions
7 around trips, I am very confused as to how the current
8 estimates were calculated. If you look at the existing
9 number of trips per worker, you have less than one. And
10 then the scenarios in the Environmental Impact Report
11 assume more than two trips per worker. And if you compare
12 the office, 100 percent office scenario, which would
13 expect more employees, you have fewer estimated trips.
14 And you compare that to the 100 percent R&D scenario, with
15 fewer employees, you have more estimated trips.

16 And I am reading this because the calculations
17 are seemingly done based on ITE Land Use code, "Square
18 Footage." But that -- just by sheer fact that we're
19 estimating more trips would come from fewer people, to me,
20 calls into question some of the conclusions made on the
21 potential kind of transportation impact around this.

22 So if anyone has any kind of clarifications on
23 that specifically.

24 OLLIE ZHOU: Yes. Commissioner, I can answer
25 that question.

1 So, first, I think your first question was, how
2 were the existing trips generated. So those are based on
3 actual count. So that was how those were conducted.

4 And then the -- I believe your second question
5 was regarding how the 100 percent office came out with
6 less trips than 100 percent R&D. And the answer is -- so
7 on a peak hour basis, the 100 percent office had more
8 trips than the 100 percent R&D. You know, and that's just
9 based on, you know, data collected by ITE, which is
10 slightly more than the R&D scenario. So on a daily basis,
11 there's a different scenario. And this is all based on
12 data that's collected by ITE.

13 And the hypothesis here is potentially that R&D
14 workers don't always arrive and leave during the peak
15 hour. Maybe they're more spread out throughout the day
16 than the office workers. So that's why you're seeing
17 that, on a daily basis, 100 percent R&D has slightly more
18 trips generated than the 100 percent office.

19 I believe there may have been another question,
20 but -- that I'm forgetting. Please remind me.

21 COMMISSIONER SILIN: Could I just make a quick
22 request?

23 Since there's so many documents, maybe you can
24 refer to what document page number you're looking at?

25 COMMISSIONER SILVERSTEIN: Yes. So in terms of

1 the number of employees, I was looking at the Financial
2 Impact Report that page 8 of -- page 8 of the PDF, page 5
3 of the actual report, shows that the "Estimated" note,
4 total employees of the office scenario would be 4,974.

5 And the total employees of the R&D scenario would
6 be 3,773. So roughly 1,200 employees difference. More
7 employees in the office scenario.

8 And then, when looking at item -- or kind of item
9 No. 3.3-21, which is page 178 of the Environmental Impact
10 Report, that's where it goes through the trip generation
11 estimates and includes more estimated trips for the
12 scenario with fewer employees than the subsequent page,
13 where it would have -- yeah. The opposite. I'm glad
14 everyone's following along.

15 Okay. I have a couple, kind of, other comments
16 about the -- well, one other question around the
17 environmental impact scope as a whole, and then would love
18 to get into some of the details of the project.

19 So I can't find the study today, but I did read a
20 study that most environmental impact analyses only
21 consider the impact that any given development would have
22 within the boundaries of the local municipality. So this
23 example would be Menlo Park and, specifically, this
24 project itself, which is not unreasonable, but it doesn't
25 consider the broader global benefit of giving more people

1 the opportunity to live in a more-dense apartment building
2 closer to downtown, instead of, potentially, in a
3 further-away suburb, with longer commutes.

4 And so my question is, when thinking about the
5 environmental impact of this project specifically, did we
6 at all consider the opportunity cost of not building it?

7 Does it include the opportunity cost of people
8 living here, versus their next best option?

9 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: As part of Chapter 4 of the
10 Draft EIR, we analyzed -- let me make sure I'm quoting the
11 correct chapter. Excuse me.

12 Chapter 6 "Alternatives Analysis," we analyzed a
13 "no project" alternative. So that evaluates what could
14 happen if this project isn't approved and constructed. So
15 that kind of walks down the path of evaluating and
16 describing what would happen, if this project doesn't
17 occur.

18 And an example of that would be that folks don't
19 get to live so close to downtown Menlo Park.

20 COMMISSIONER SILVERSTEIN: But really quickly, as
21 a follow up: Is the scope of that analysis still within
22 the purview of Menlo Park environment?

23 Or is that thinking about where else in the world
24 would people live, and what their emissions are, or kind
25 of, like, what the average CO2 emissions are per capita,

1 on a relative basis between this project and kind of the
2 no-build alternative?

3 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: It does do a
4 semi-qualitative and also semi-quantitative analysis that
5 compares the project to -- or compares the no-project
6 alternative to the project's impacts. But I think it
7 might be getting into a -- kind of a speculative
8 territory, if we were to take it to that level of detail.

9 And I'll pause there for a second. I have my
10 colleague Kirsten on, and she led the charge on the
11 alternative analysis.

12 Did I capture everything correctly, Kirsten?
13 Last name is "Chapman."

14 KIRSTEN CHAPMAN: Hi. Yes. Kirsten Chapman, ICF.
15 Yes.

16 No. Jessica covered that correctly. At that
17 level of detail that you were describing, that is
18 speculative. And so CEQA doesn't get into that level of
19 detail of where in the world other people could live and
20 their emissions, and their sort of environmental impacts.

21 So as Jessica mentioned, yes. It's included in
22 the no-project, but we don't get into a -- speculative
23 assumptions for that.

24 COMMISSIONER SILVERSTEIN: Thank you.

25 Should I just keep going?

1 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Yeah. Go ahead.

2 COMMISSIONER SILVERSTEIN: So on this specific
3 project itself, I had a quick question on canopy and
4 trees. And I know this was something that was mentioned
5 in a public comment to the Commission.

6 But just out of curiosity, do the renderings that
7 are kind of presumed and published and as part of the
8 presentations and as part of the project, does that
9 represent the theoretical tree cover on day one?

10 Or would it potentially take years or decades to
11 establish that level of beautiful trees?

12 And kind of, what is the expectation of canopy
13 starting when the project is built, versus over time?

14 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: I'd have to ask the project
15 applicant to take that question.

16 KYLE PERATA: Sure. So through the Chair, we can
17 definitely call the applicant up.

18 I wonder, though, if that might be more of a
19 study session item and just to maybe take a step back here
20 and try to focus the Commission's comments and discussion
21 right now on the EIR, and the adequacy or the content, the
22 scope, the analysis in the EIR.

23 So if that question relates to an EIR comment, we
24 can definitely take it now. If it is more about the
25 architecture, the landscaping, the kind of design of the

1 project, I would just keep that in mind and hold it for
2 the study session next.

3 COMMISSIONER SILVERSTEIN: That's fine. I'll
4 hold that.

5 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER SILVERSTEIN: Great. So, yeah.
7 My last comment, specifically on the EIR itself,
8 it has been, you know, noted multiple times and is
9 something that the applicant also has brought up, which is
10 the -- you know, the extensive use -- and to whatever
11 extent we can encourage biking and pedestrians, not only
12 within the project, but also to and from it.

13 And I do want to echo some of the comments that
14 were made by, I believe Mr. Rennie, talking about the
15 currently insufficient bike lanes on Middlefield and
16 Ravenswood and really thinking about the overall
17 connectivity of how people could get through Menlo Park
18 without having to kind of face some dangerous biking
19 situations.

20 And I think that -- to whatever extent we can be
21 either confident or promote alternative transportations
22 will certainly ameliorate a lot of the traffic concerns
23 that people have, and the broader community concerns that
24 anyone might have, when it comes to a larger project like
25 this.

1 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you, Commissioner.

2 Vice Chair Ehrich.

3 VICE CHAIR EHRICH: Thank you, Chair Schindler.

4 Through the Chair, I have just a clarifying question for
5 staff.

6 I know the schedule of approvals was presented
7 and I'm sorry if I missed this detail, but -- so the Final
8 EIR is scheduled to come to Council some time late this
9 year, is my understanding.

10 Is that also when the Use Permit, development
11 agreement would come to Council, or is that at a later
12 date?

13 CORINNA SANDMEIER: Yes. That would all go
14 together.

15 What would happen later would be architectural
16 control approvals through the Planning Commission that
17 would -- those would likely be in 2025.

18 VICE CHAIR EHRICH: Okay. Thank you. That's
19 helpful.

20 So related to the EIR, then, for the applicant --
21 so thank you for the timeline that you presented in your
22 -- in your presentation.

23 By my calculation, it's taken around about 18
24 months, maybe a little bit more, to get from the drafted
25 Notice of Preparation to the EIR to right now. I can

1 imagine that the EIR was not the only thing going on for
2 the planning process during that time.

3 But I guess my question is, if we didn't have to
4 do an EIR, how much sooner could we be at Council? How
5 much sooner -- you know, obviously speculation -- could we
6 be at the City Council meeting that's currently scheduled
7 for December?

8 Would we have gotten there a year earlier? Six
9 months earlier? A full 18 months earlier?

10 Do we have any way of estimating that?

11 CORINNA SANDMEIER: Yeah. I'm not sure about
12 that. I think -- I mean, any project of this scope would
13 require an EIR. So I'm not sure. Yeah. There's really
14 no examples to look at.

15 VICE CHAIR EHRICH: I guess -- sorry. I'm
16 curious, from the applicant's perspective.

17 CORINNA SANDMEIER: Oh.

18 KYLE PERATA: I might step in from a staff
19 perspective, and I think that question could probably be
20 better handled through the study session.

21 It's not necessarily related to the content, the
22 analysis in the EIR. And my goal here with that statement
23 is to try to keep the comments focused. We are having a
24 court reporter transcribe these comments for use in the
25 Response to Comments' component of the Draft EIR. So just

1 trying to keep the dialogue this evening, during the Draft
2 EIR public hearing, really focused on the EIR.

3 So the scheduling comment and the implications, I
4 think that is a valid question that could be addressed by
5 the applicant during the Study Session, if that's okay
6 with Vice Chair Ehrich.

7 VICE CHAIR EHRICH: That's totally fine. I have
8 no further comments on the Draft EIR.

9 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you, Vice Chair Ehrich.
10 Commissioner Silin.

11 COMMISSIONER SILIN: Thank you. So, yeah. I
12 have a few questions about some of the information in the
13 EIR.

14 So the EIR has very specific numbers on the
15 number of employees we expect in the two different
16 scenarios, R&D or office. And I just wanted to
17 double-check where those numbers come from and how -- I
18 guess what those numbers mean. Like -- because
19 realistically, I'm assuming it's not going to be that
20 perfect number.

21 So which things would change if the number goes
22 up or down, depending on, you know, market conditions or
23 the tenants that occupy the office buildings?

24 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: In reference to Table 2-7 in
25 the Project Description on page 2 -33, that's, I believe,

1 what shows the different employee generation rates based
2 on the 100 percent office or the 100 percent R&D scenario
3 that you are referring to. Those estimates are, number
4 one, based on existing employees. So that was provided,
5 you know, by the current tenants and owners.

6 And then the estimates for the possible or
7 potential future employees were based on kind of a variety
8 of examples and also typically-used generation rates from
9 other prior EIRs in the city, too, for the sake of
10 consistency.

11 And then I believe your third question was what
12 would change if in fact the employee generation rates were
13 higher or lower than what was disclosed in this table and
14 analyzed in the EIR. So, for example -- and Kirsten can
15 correct me if I miss anything, but, you know, public
16 services and school impacts are heavily -- and population
17 and housing. Those topics are heavily reliant on the
18 estimates here. And those topics, including -- or those
19 topics rely on the HNA that was prepared by Keyser
20 Marston, that analyzes the housing needs' assessment
21 impacts of the project.

22 So if this EIR did underestimate the employees
23 under either scenario and -- it could potentially
24 underestimate the potential impacts. And then that's not
25 to say that the impacts would raise to a level of

1 "significance"; whereas, right now, they're less than
2 significant.

3 So it just could kind of be moving the dial a
4 little bit, one way or another, but not necessarily
5 increase an impact to a different level.

6 COMMISSIONER SILIN: Thanks.

7 And so -- just so I'm clear on how this works.
8 So today, we're sort of providing comment, and we're going
9 to be making a decision on this project based on this EIR.
10 And if it turns out that the reality is much different
11 from what was assumed in the EIR, I understand that has,
12 like, real-life impacts, but does it have impacts on,
13 let's say, procedural things?

14 Like, does a new EIR need to be done, or do we
15 revisit any of these things at any point, or it's just,
16 like, we tried our best, and it ended up being different?

17 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: If we're talking before the
18 project is constructed, but there might be a change to the
19 project where, you know, more square footage is proposed
20 that would result in more or less employees, then I defer
21 to the City, but the decision could be made to do kind of
22 a follow-up CEQA analysis, in terms of, like, an addendum
23 or a subsequent EIR, or something like that, to kind of
24 capture and evaluate those changes, if it's deemed
25 necessary.

1 COMMISSIONER SILIN: Thanks. I was referring to,
2 like, after. So once the project is built, it turns out a
3 lot more employees are coming to these buildings, let's
4 say.

5 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: I'll defer to the City on
6 that question.

7 CHAIR SCHINDLER: And with staff, I'm wondering
8 if that is a question that we would cover in the Study
9 Session, where we're talking about some of the long-term
10 time horizons associated with different outcomes, as
11 opposed to the specific EIR. But...

12 KYLE PERATA: I think that's a valid question for
13 now.

14 I do want to take a minute to step back to part
15 of the introduction of the item where staff and our CEQA
16 consultant, ICF, identified that this is an opportunity to
17 receive comments, receive questions. We're not going to
18 necessarily respond in detail to all comments and
19 questions this evening.

20 So this would be one where we could certainly
21 take that and respond in the Response to Comments. I
22 think the high-level response, and I know our City
23 Attorney is also on this evening and can kind of chime in
24 here after I speak, but I think the high-level response to
25 that -- you know, the analysis does include a lot of data

1 that are used from multiple different sources.

2 So in terms of, like, trips and looking at number
3 of trips to and from the site, you're looking at source
4 data from the Institute of Transportation Engineers. So a
5 lot of studies use a lot of data collected.

6 I think, from a staff perspective, we feel very
7 confident in that data. Otherwise, there are a number of
8 other data sources that we -- from staff and our
9 consultant team -- have looked at and feel confident in
10 this evening. That being said, we'll certainly take your
11 comment and respond to it in the Final EIR Response to
12 Comments, as appropriate.

13 And I'll turn over to Mr. Biddle to identify
14 anything else I -- to add to that.

15 MICHAEL BIDDLE: Good evening. I would just -- I
16 would just add that after the -- after the project is --
17 or some component of it is approved and built, you don't
18 get to go back and revisit mitigation measures and
19 conditions, if that -- if that's the thrust of the
20 question there. If I understood it.

21 COMMISSIONER SILIN: Thank you. Yeah. That's
22 sufficient.

23 And I have a similar question on the office --
24 100 percent office versus 100 percent R&D scenarios. Is
25 that something that -- by the time we're -- or Council is

1 voting to approve this project, that will be a finalized
2 thing, or are these just two different -- and I realize
3 it's going to be somewhere in the middle.

4 But are these just two different scenarios we are
5 considering for the purpose of analysis, and the applicant
6 has leeway to steer it whichever way, once the project is
7 approved?

8 CORINNA SANDMEIER: Yeah. I think -- let's see.
9 I think the way it was studied in the EIR was that either
10 would be possible, or a combination of R&D and office.

11 I think, certainly, if the City Council approves
12 the Master Plan, they could condition it to, you know,
13 have a certain percentage office or R&D. That would be
14 possible, or it could potentially be approved, I think,
15 with either scenario -- with the option of either
16 scenario.

17 KYLE PERATA: And if I may just add to that.

18 So the Draft EIR analysis does look at both
19 scenarios, as Ms. Sandmeier mentioned. What is, I think,
20 key to note -- and Ms. Viramontes can chime in as well,
21 but the scenario was identified on each topic area based
22 on the more-conservative analysis so that the Draft EIR
23 would cover the range that kind of most -- for lack of a
24 better word -- impactful range of effects from the
25 project.

1 So studying both or either office and R&D based
2 on which land use scenario would create or potentially
3 result in that more-greater effect, and then utilizing
4 those mitigation measures to reduce it to
5 less-than-significant, if feasible.

6 So the EIR does provide that flexibility for the
7 applicant team to consider. And as Ms. Sandmeier
8 mentioned, certainly from a policy standpoint, separate
9 from the EIR, the Planning Commission and City Council
10 could consider those land-use components as part of the
11 entitlements for the project.

12 So hopefully that answers the question. And if
13 there's anything to add, I'll look to ICF, if necessary.

14 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: Yes. What was said was
15 correct, with the additional note that each and every
16 topic section in the methods for analysis discussion, it
17 identifies what was just referenced as the most impactful
18 scenario and provides a brief discussion as to why, to
19 help readers see what was evaluated and why, and the
20 impact analysis for that topic and for that significance
21 threshold.

22 COMMISSIONER SILIN: Thank you.

23 I had a -- so in terms of the mitigation
24 measures, one of the ones I ended up focusing on was the
25 construction process; noise, pollution, et cetera. One of

1 the things I was a little bit confused about was, the
2 noise section, you know, states that our construction
3 hours in Menlo Park are 8:00 to 6:00. But then there are
4 potentially concrete pours happening at 6:00 a.m. or 7:00
5 a.m., and then there's different requirements for those.
6 So I was just hoping to get clarification from staff
7 regarding what the public should expect, in terms of when
8 there will be construction happening.

9 I know that there's mention that the water
10 reservoir requires overnight construction. But just
11 outside of, kind of, exceptions to that, what -- you know,
12 what should we expect?

13 And also, what level of monitoring will be
14 happening from, like, a third party, whether that be the
15 City or a different party, to see if those noise levels
16 are in compliance with the EIR?

17 CORINNA SANDMEIER: Yeah. I think there are
18 options to get exemptions from the noise, those daytime
19 hours, for construction, when needed. And that's why it
20 was kind of analyzed in the EIR that way.

21 I believe, generally, noise complaints would be
22 -- go through code enforcement and/or the police and be
23 based on -- be on a complaint basis.

24 COMMISSIONER SILIN: So will there be a point in
25 which the public is aware of construction happening

1 outside of regular hours, or is that just something that
2 kind of happens, as the process unfolds, between the City
3 and the builder?

4 KYLE PERATA: Yeah. No. Great question.

5 So as Ms. Sandmeier mentioned, the City does have
6 a typical noise exemption hours. So those are the 8:00 to
7 6:00 hours.

8 With projects of this scale, it's very common for
9 projects to have to do night work for certain activities,
10 whether it's the concrete pours for certain foundations
11 that need to occur during an uninterrupted duration,
12 usually not in the heat of day, if it's during summer,
13 stuff like that, as well as off-site improvements to limit
14 disruptions to traffic in the area for, kind of, purposes.

15 And so the City does have a process, as
16 mentioned, that allows for those exemptions -- or
17 exceptions, excuse me, to be reviewed and granted. And
18 there can sometimes be notification there. So that's
19 something we can certainly look at as part of the project.

20 But the process is an evaluation by the Community
21 Development Department for -- to make sure that the
22 request is necessary to actually construct and can't be
23 done during the typical hours.

24 But with projects of these scales, you do see
25 work that needs to occur outside those hours. I don't

1 want to say frequently, but it does occur, just based on
2 the necessity of those types of activities.

3 And so we do have that process. That's certainly
4 something we can look into outside of the EIR, in terms
5 of, you know, the entitlements for the project; how it may
6 or may not structure that component.

7 COMMISSIONER SILIN: Thank you.

8 And I see that the mitigation measures include
9 the assignment of a liaison, a construction liaison to --
10 for the public to contact with concerns. And I just
11 wanted to clarify whether that's someone from the City or
12 from the builder or the developer?

13 Just -- you know, my personal experience with
14 construction happening on El Camino, for example, during
15 Middle Plaza, was that it was often hard to figure out,
16 you know, who's doing what. I think people were sometimes
17 using the ACT Menlo app.

18 But I do think it would be nice to have a point
19 of contact that people could go to, especially, you know,
20 residents in that area.

21 CORINNA SANDMEIER: Yeah. I believe the
22 construction liaison would be part of the applicant's
23 construction team. It wouldn't be a City employee.

24 COMMISSIONER SILIN: Okay. Thank you.

25 And my last question is going back to the trip

1 counts that Commissioner Silverstein was asking. I was
2 surprised to see that out of the approximately 10,000
3 trips that are being estimated, only about 22 percent of
4 those are during peak hours.

5 I guess my assumption is that, you know, the
6 majority of trips, specifically for the office or R&D
7 portion, would be people commuting to work in the morning
8 and going home in the afternoon, during, you know, what we
9 would consider rush hour, peak hour.

10 And given that there are about 2,800 parking
11 spots, presumably, that's what the developer is assuming
12 will be needed and will be mostly full. So that seems
13 like a lot higher number than the peak-hour trip counts
14 that are in the report.

15 So I'm just wondering how that calculation was
16 done, and what those other, you know, 80 percent of
17 trips -- when those would be taking place in the report or
18 the model?

19 OLLIE ZHOU: Yeah. Ollie, from Hexagon, again.
20 So thank you for that comment.

21 So, first, the public peak hour is only just the
22 one hour; 60 minutes in the morning. You know,
23 presumably, like, the morning commute is a much longer
24 period. It usually goes from 7:00 a.m. -- you know, it
25 used to go until 10:00, or sometimes 11:00 a.m. in the

1 morning before, and then similarly for the afternoon.

2 What we are calculating is just the one hour, the
3 peak one-hour volume used to know the entire PM commute
4 period. Right? That is going to be way longer than --
5 not everybody is going to be arriving within the same one
6 hour. You know, somebody might -- might need to be
7 picking up or dropping off their kids during that time,
8 and then they'll be coming way later into the office.
9 Right?

10 And then this is why you see that traffic is on
11 the roadways for -- you know, it's very heavy traffic on
12 the roadway for more than one hour. That's because
13 traffic is occurring during multiple hours -- not just one
14 hour.

15 And all of this data is based on IT's data
16 collection in the field in various areas. And that's the
17 -- I guess the best information that transportation
18 engineers have to use to be able to estimate traffic for
19 this type of analysis.

20 COMMISSIONER SILIN: That makes a lot more sense.
21 Thank you.

22 I don't have any more questions at this time.

23 Chair Schindler, thank you.

24 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you, Commissioner.

25 Commissioner Silverstein.

1 COMMISSIONER SILVERSTEIN: You know, one last
2 question, as part of the EIR.

3 So I recognize that this project doesn't meet the
4 significance threshold regarding VMT. But it doesn't mean
5 that there aren't any colloquial significant impacts to
6 potential neighboring residents. One big concern that has
7 been expressed is the increase in hyper local car traffic
8 and specifically how it would increase the cut-through
9 nature of nearby local residential streets.

10 So my question is, what is the opportunity --
11 what opportunity does the Commission have to recommend any
12 traffic flow changes or street scheme improvements to slow
13 down cars on any cut-through streets?

14 Is -- I guess my question is, is that in the
15 scope of the EIR?

16 Or because there's no significant VMT impact on
17 the aggregate level, there are no mitigations needed
18 whatsoever, even at the hyper local level?

19 OLLIE ZHOU: Staff, I didn't know if you wanted
20 me to answer this.

21 KYLE PERATA: Yeah. Ollie, we can start with
22 you, and then staff can follow up. If you want to start
23 from the CEQA technical side.

24 OLLIE ZHOU: Sure. Okay. Yeah.

25 So, Commission -- so the CEQA analysis, you are

1 correct. It only looks at VMT -- you know, the colloquial
2 local roadway intersection operations that is being
3 analyzed in terms of level of service, and that is being
4 wrapped up in the Transportation Impact Analysis report.
5 I believe that is an attachment to the Staff Report,
6 although it is separate from the CEQA analysis. It is
7 something that the City of Menlo Park requires to be
8 analyzed, and it has been analyzed.

9 But in terms of cut-through traffic, that is
10 something that has been taken into account when we
11 assigned the project traffic in the local roadway network.
12 You know, we took into account, you know, the nature
13 cut-through route that may be present in this area when we
14 assigned that traffic and analyzed intersection operations
15 accordingly.

16 In terms of what traffic-calming opportunities
17 are made to be conditioned on this project, the TIA report
18 did not identify any because it is looking at it from an
19 intersection operation's perspective. Although I do
20 believe we made the recommendation at the intersection of
21 Middlefield Road and Seminary Drive to prevent traffic
22 from being able to go from the project site onto Seminary
23 Drive that eventually you said it's a cut-through to
24 Willow Road. And we recommended that potentially some
25 traffic-calming be considered along Seminary Drive.

1 The City also have a separate policy to implement
2 traffic-calming through your Slow Streets Program.

3 So I'll stop there and see if staff wanted to add
4 anything to that.

5 KYLE PERATA: Thank you.

6 So not necessarily EIR related, excuse me, as
7 mentioned. So some of these questions regarding, kind of,
8 other off-site improvements or connectivity to and from
9 the site could definitely be a study session topic for the
10 Commission to provide feedback on. That can certainly be
11 something that staff and the applicant can receive this
12 evening as feedback. And we can look into it and follow
13 up.

14 But as Mr. Zhou mentioned, I think we're -- we've
15 identified, in the City's TIA guidelines, the VMT
16 component for the EIR and then the non-CEQA LOS component
17 in that supporting document, the TIA, the Transportation
18 Impact Analysis, already.

19 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you.

20 Commissioner Do, did you have a follow-up
21 question?

22 COMMISSIONER DO: Yes, I did.

23 And, Chair Schindler, I realize we haven't
24 received your insights on the Draft EIR, so I will be
25 quick. First, a comment, and then a question to the EIR

1 consultant.

2 My first comment is I feel like we would be
3 remiss if we didn't comment on the -- the fact that the
4 reduced-parking alternative is always rejected. And I
5 think the rationale is that if you reduce parking too
6 much, people will drive around the neighborhood and end up
7 creating more problems.

8 I would like to believe that if an employee
9 experienced that after one or two days, they would figure
10 out a way, how to get to work without their car. But,
11 maybe, you know, parking and other strategies, like
12 Commissioner Silverstein is referring to, that can be
13 studied on the study session side of things. That's my
14 comment.

15 My question is -- it was brought up by a Council
16 member and also by a public commenter this evening, just a
17 concern that impacts aren't represented -- aren't fully
18 represented.

19 Mr. Perata, you stated that the point of an EIR
20 is to be conservative and study the worst case scenario.
21 So I am just wondering why the office space -- I think 250
22 square feet per worker is used and just question why --
23 why and where the number comes from. The number that
24 we've heard is 150 square feet. So I'm just curious if
25 we're trying to figure out the worst and most-extreme

1 impacts, why the 250 number is used, through the Chair.

2 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: Kirsten, do you have any
3 input on where that difference in square footage came
4 from?

5 KIRSTEN CHAPMAN: So, let's see. Kirsten
6 Chapman, ICF. So let's see.

7 So this is going back to Table 2-7 in the Project
8 Description, which is on page 2-33. And the generation
9 rate that we used for office is -- I'm sorry. It's 250
10 square feet. So that was given to us by the project
11 sponsor. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.

12 That was actually not given to us by the project
13 sponsor. That was based on current market trends for
14 office-generation rates. And I believe it is consistent
15 with other office-generation rates that have been used in
16 other EIRs in the City of Menlo Park, based on existing
17 office trends.

18 So I do believe that it is consistent with
19 projects like Willow Village and other projects in the
20 ConnectMenlo study area.

21 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: Yeah. And just to add on to
22 what Kirsten said, footnote B in the table that Kirsten
23 cited -- while generation rates provided by the sponsor
24 for Life Science uses are lower, at 450 square feet per
25 employee, the EIR went the conservative route and assumed

1 350 square feet for current employee for R&D uses.

2 So we did try to take a more conservative
3 approach.

4 COMMISSIONER DO: Okay. Thank you. Both of you,
5 thank you.

6 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you, Commissioner Do.

7 So I, myself, do not have any significant
8 additions or corrections that I would like to nominate to
9 be included in the next iteration of the EIR.

10 I did want to take the opportunity to support and
11 amplify some things that other commissioners and staff
12 have also alluded to here. You know, this EIR, like
13 others, may not be looking at impact the way that members
14 of our community does, or they're for their fit for
15 themselves, for their families, or for their city. But we
16 do have a standardized process across the state for how
17 things are structured, how this report is structured, the
18 criteria for quantifying things, the criteria for
19 determining what is significant as an impact, what
20 mitigation looks like, and what the impact of that
21 mitigation looks like.

22 In my very-limited experience, especially
23 compared to our consultants, our staff, and the
24 applicants, but in my very limited experience, I've
25 experienced -- I've seen a benefit of having that

1 standardized process between projects. So while I
2 appreciate that many of the assumptions could potentially
3 be out -- you know, would have a mild degree of wiggle
4 room around them, I think there's value in following this
5 consistent process.

6 I do want to, again, thank -- thank the EIR team
7 for the incredible amount of content and work that is in
8 that very large document. I personally expect to come
9 back to the following sections at length, when we get into
10 the next phases of this project. When we start talking
11 about the nuances of the development agreement, I'm
12 definitely going to be relying heavily on the Traffic
13 section, the Public Services and Recreation section, as we
14 define things that we would like to see put in as
15 constraints or as requests on behalf of the city and the
16 community.

17 I expect, when we get into the zoning amendments
18 and the rezoning components of this process, the Land Use
19 and Planning section is going to be incredibly useful.

20 There are a lot of other -- there's a lot of
21 other valuable content in there, but those, in particular,
22 I think will be front of mind for me in the next section
23 tonight and in subsequent meetings.

24 And so I will quickly just turn and see if other
25 commissioners have follow-up questions.

1 Commissioner Silin.

2 COMMISSIONER SILIN: Thank you.

3 Going back to circulation and traffic, which
4 sounds like a shared concern among many commissioners, I
5 saw that in the Staff Report, it mentions that other
6 projects, such as the META campuses and other projects on
7 that side of 101, have trip caps from the City. The Staff
8 Report talks about ways to do the counting and
9 enforcement.

10 But I'm wondering if implementing a trip cap is
11 part of the EIR or the TDM, if that's appropriate?

12 Or, like, at what stage is that typically done, I
13 guess?

14 KYLE PERATA: Yeah. So thanks for the question.

15 I think the discussion on whether or not there is
16 a trip cap or a monitoring plan, some of that actually is
17 more related to the policy decisions regarding the
18 entitlements.

19 There certainly would be a monitoring plan
20 associated with ensuring that the Transportation Demand
21 Management Plan, that was used in the environmental
22 analysis, is implemented.

23 But certainly regarding how that actually plays
24 out with all the details, a lot of that will get flushed
25 out in the potential -- or potentially get flushed out in

1 the Conditional Development Permit. And so I think a lot
2 of those items are bringing up our, kind of, broader
3 policy decisions regarding, you know, the appropriate,
4 kind of, monitoring plan or caps, and where those caps may
5 or may not be applied to across the site.

6 But certainly the EIR -- and I'll look to our
7 CEQA consultant to confirm exactly how this translates
8 into the EIR -- but the EIR found a less-than-significant
9 impact to vehicle miles traveled with implementation of
10 the applicant's proposed TDM plans for the office and
11 residential.

12 So those would be required to be implemented as
13 part of the project, at a minimum.

14 JESSICA VIRAMONTES: I don't have anything to
15 add.

16 Ollie, is there anything you want to add to that?

17 OLLIE ZHOU: No.

18 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Commissioner Silverstein.

19 COMMISSIONER SILVERSTEIN: I just wanted to echo
20 what Commissioner Do said about the reduced-parking
21 alternative. And I know we can talk about it in the study
22 session, but specifically as relates to the EIR language
23 itself.

24 I noticed that in Table 3-6 -- or 3.3-6, on
25 Potential Mitigation Measures of TDM and Estimated Trips,

1 that the amount of available parking is non-existent in
2 those potential measures.

3 And then, in the kind of qualitative text
4 regarding a reduced-parking alternative, it states that,
5 "Precise changes in travel or behavior, in response to
6 constrained parking alone, are difficult to predict and
7 are not anticipated to reduce overall VMT."

8 While I agree with the "difficult to predict"
9 part, I am in agreement with the previous statement that I
10 would certainly anticipate that a lack of parking would
11 reduce overall VMT.

12 I recognize that that's not a requirement at this
13 point because the project is not above VMT thresholds, but
14 I do take slight umbrage with the conclusion on -- on that
15 alternative.

16 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you, Commissioners.

17 Seeing no more questions indicated, I just want
18 to confirm with staff and with the EIR team that you have
19 received the feedback that you were seeking tonight, and
20 ask if there are any points of clarification that we could
21 offer?

22 CORINNA SANDMEIER: No. I think we've received
23 the feedback. And we'll include that, of course, with the
24 comments in the Final EIR.

25 CHAIR SCHINDLER: Thank you.

1 With that, I will close the public hearing for
2 this Draft EIR, Item F-1, on our Agenda.

3

4 (Whereupon, Agenda Item F-1 ended.)

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19 **CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER**

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22 I, AMBER ABREU-PEIXOTO, hereby certify that the
23 foregoing videotaped proceedings were taken in shorthand
24 by me, a Certified Shorthand Reporter of the State of
25 California, and was thereafter transcribed into

1 typewriting, and that the foregoing transcript constitutes
2 a full, true, and correct report of said proceedings which
3 took place;

4

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6 That I am a disinterested person to the said
7 action.

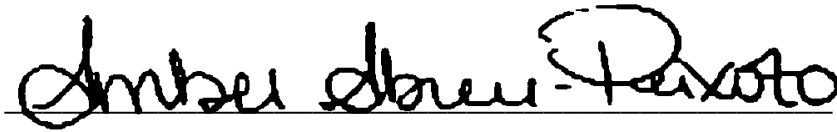
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10 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
11 this 6th day of August, 2024.

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