



## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** 1/24/2022  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Zoom

### A. Call To Order

Chair Michael Doran called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. At Chair Doran's request, Associate Planner Matt Pruter explained how applicants and the public would be able to participate in the virtual meeting.

### B. Roll Call

Present: Andrew Barnes, Chris DeCardy (Vice Chair), Michael Doran (Chair), Cynthia Harris, Camille Gonzalez Kennedy, Henry Riggs, Michele Tate

Staff: Deanna Chow, Assistant Community Development Director; Fahteen Khan, Assistant Planner; Ori Paz, Associate Planner; Kyle Perata, Acting Planning Manager; Matt Pruter, Associate Planner; Corinna Sandmeier, Acting Principal Planner; Tom Smith, Acting Principal Planner

### C. Reports and Announcements

Acting Principal Planner Corinna Sandmeier said the City Council at its January 25, 2022 meeting would consider an Urgency Ordinance to continue the Downtown Street Closure Program.

### D. Public Comment

Chair Doran opened Public Comment and closed it as there were no speakers.

### E. Consent Calendar

- E1. Approval of minutes and court reporter transcript from the November 15, 2021, Planning Commission meeting. (Attachment)

Commissioner Chris DeCardy asked to pull Item E1 from the Consent Calendar. He referred to the middle of page 12 of the November 15, 2021 minutes that stated "that at this point in the meeting, Commissioner Tate seemed absent." He said that seemed conjectural and unfair to Commissioner Tate. He asked if staff could clarify whether Commissioner Tate was present or absent at that point.

Commissioner Michele Tate said her recall was she had stated she would need to leave the meeting at a certain time.

Commissioner DeCardy suggested the minutes be corrected to indicate that Commissioner Tate had left the meeting.

**ACTION:** M/S (DeCardy/Kennedy) to approve the minutes and court reporter transcript from the November 15, 2021 Planning Commission meeting with the following modification; passed 6-0-1

with Commissioner Cynthia Harris abstaining.

Page 12, correct to read: "Commissioner Tate left the meeting."

- E2. Approval of minutes from the November 22, 2021, Planning Commission meeting. (Attachment)

ACTION: M/S (Henry Riggs/Camille Gonzalez Kennedy) to approve the Consent Calendar Consisting of the minutes from the November 22, 2021 Planning Commission meeting as presented; passed 7-0.

## **F. Presentation Item**

- F1. Presentation for a Master Plan/Signature Development Group and Peninsula Innovation Partners, LLC on behalf of Meta Platforms, Inc. (formerly Facebook, Inc.)/1350-1390 Willow Road, 925-1098 Hamilton Avenue, and 1005-1275 Hamilton Court:  
Receive a presentation on the proposed Willow Village mixed-use master plan development. This presentation would allow for the Planning Commission and members of the community to learn more about the proposed project. The proposed Master Plan would comprehensively redevelop an approximately 59-acre existing industrial, research and development (R&D), and warehousing campus with up to 1,730 housing units, up to 200,000 square feet of retail uses, up to 1,600,000 square feet office campus for Meta, formerly Facebook consisting of up to 1,250,000 square feet of office space and the balance (i.e., 350,000 square feet if office space is maximized) of accessory space in multiple buildings, a 193 room hotel, and publicly accessible open space including an approximately 3.5 acre publicly accessible park. The proposal includes a request for an increase in height, floor area ratio (FAR), and density under the bonus level development allowance in exchange for community amenities. The proposed project also includes the realignment of Hamilton Avenue and an elevated park to connect the main project site with the Belle Haven Neighborhood Shopping Center. The project would also consider reconstruction of an existing service station at 1399 Willow Road and an approximately 6,700 square foot expansion at the Belle Haven neighborhood shopping center as a future separate phase. The main project site encompasses multiple parcels zoned O-B (Office) and R-MU-B (Residential Mixed Use). The gas station and shopping center parcels are zoned C-2-S (Neighborhood Shopping, Restrictive). (Staff Report #22-005-PC) *This item was continued from the January 10, 2022 Planning Commission meeting.*

Chair Doran said for the record that he had met with Meta staff and the project developers both in person pre-Covid and more recently on zoom calls regarding this project. He said he did not think these conversations would affect his impartiality regarding the project as it came before the Commission.

Staff Comment: Acting Planning Manager Kyle Perata said this presentation was an opportunity for the applicant team to reintroduce the project to the Commission and community members. He said since publication of the staff report for the January 10<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission meeting (when item was originally scheduled and continued) that staff had received four additional items of correspondence. He said those had been forwarded separately to the Planning Commission. He said the project was in the environmental review development phase and plan review phase. He noted the upcoming formal items for Planning Commission consideration and noted that this presentation should not involve lengthy discussion.

Applicant Presentation: Mike Ghielmetti, Signature Development Group, said they had made numerous changes since an initial study session for the project in 2019. He said they hoped the

Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) would be released sometime in the first quarter of 2022. He provided an overview of existing site conditions and the events and activities leading to a new plan in 2019. He said in 2020 they had to change how community outreach was done due to Covid, but they were able to talk with many people. He said in 2021 they did more detailed architectural submittals informed by what people had said, which was to minimize traffic, improve the connections and connectivity with the surrounding neighborhoods, especially Belle Haven, do a better job with the jobs and housing balance, increase the amount of housing and particularly the amount of affordable housing, deliver the promised neighborhood services faster including grocery and other retail and services, and provide more and better publicly accessible open space.

Mr. Ghielmetti highlighted the major plan revisions and updates that included: a 30% reduction in office space / employee capacity for a 30% reduction in office traffic and better jobs / housing balance. He said they also created a direct connection from Belle Haven, increased affordable housing from 15% to 18%, accelerated the full-service grocery store to Phase 1, improved and increased the size of the Town Square and added more open space, trails and gardens.

Paul Nieto, Signature Development Group, said this was a one-of-a-kind development blending a community with a tech campus, which typically were standalone and very secure. He said responding to feedback they moved significant parking underground to service retail, office and hotel visitors. He provided a virtual walking tour of the project.

Chair Doran referred to the comment that the office space was being reduced 30% and office traffic reduced 30% and noted that the amount of square footage being developed was not reduced. He asked if the space removed from office use was being used for meeting or conference room use. Mr. Ghielmetti said the office space was being reduced to 1.25 million square feet and there was about 350,000 square feet for meeting facilities / collaboration space. He said it was not just a reduction of office space but also about a 30% reduction in employee count.

Chair Doran opened for public comment.

Public Comment:

- Corey Smith, Housing Action Coalition, a Bay Area nonprofit, said he and his organization strongly supported the Willow Village project proposal.
- Justin Wang, Greenbelt Alliance, an environmental nonprofit, said after careful review his organization was pleased to endorse the proposed Willow Village project.
- Ken Chen, Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County, said all office development should include housing including affordable housing. He said the proposed project was a step in the right direction.
- Bonnie Lamb, Belle Haven, said she strongly supported the proposed Willow Village project, noting favorably the community outreach and the design team's positive response to community input.
- Fran Dehn, Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce, said the Chamber viewed the proposal as a model of corporate campus expansion and noted that the developers had listened to the

community and delivered in response to that input. She encouraged the Commission to support the project once it came back for review.

- Vince Rocha, Vice President, Housing and Community Development with the Silicon Valley Leadership group, said the Group was founded to address issues of housing, energy and environment for the community. He said the proposed Willow Village project addressed all those issues and more. He said the Leadership Group fully supported the proposed project.
- Adrian Brandt said he served on the Caltrain Citizens Advisory Committee but was speaking as an individual. He referred to a study to reactivate the Dumbarton Rail Corridor by this project's proponent but since the pandemic that support seemed to have evaporated. He urged the development team to do all it could to encourage Meta to reexamine its support and consider at least a scaled back implementation for some rail service or transportation service on that corridor, and at least link Caltrain to Redwood City and potentially Bart across the Bay.
- Karen Eshoo, Head of School, Midpeninsula High School, said the proposed open space park was on the lot line their school shared with Meta. She said they were partnering with the development team and thought it was a great project. She said they were also discussing how they might work together for the addition of a few classrooms to their campus over the next few years and improving the current space by adding windows to one side.
- Pam Jones, Belle Haven, said she had written letters about the project. She said as a standalone project it was fantastic, but missing in the discussion was the fact of the pre-pandemic 16,000 Facebook employee count in its buildings. She said this project would add about another 6,000 employees. She said it was known that Facebook had intended to have 35,000 employees. She said they needed to look at everything as a whole and the current traffic nightmare on Hamilton Avenue would increase and worsen post-pandemic. She commented favorably on the Signature Development Group's work with the community. She said the community would benefit if even more was done to balance housing / jobs and affordable housing, noting the increased homeless population in the area. She said consideration would need to be made about the over-park particularly about its safety. She referred to the corner of Willow Avenue and Hamilton Avenue and preserving current services and retail there.

Chair Doran closed public comment.

Commission Comment: Commissioner Henry Riggs commented favorably on the project proponent's responsiveness, and noted in particular the realignment of Hamilton Avenue. He said the project's sustainability efforts were notable. He made varied comments about sidewalks. He referred to Mr. Brandt's comments about the Dumbarton Corridor transit opportunity and the additional traffic impacts. He said he understood potential federal assistance for Dumbarton Corridor was available.

Commissioner Andrew Barnes commented on the need for data regarding traffic and future study and assessment.

Commissioner Harris said the community was very concerned about traffic and she was concerned also about safety crossing Hamilton Avenue noting accessibility for Belle Haven residents. She echoed Mr. Brandt's comments about Dumbarton Corridor revival.

Commissioner Doran said traffic for many in the community was the greatest impediment to support the project proposal. He said an obvious solution was rail transit to Redwood City and to the East Bay.

Commissioner Tate expressed enthusiasm for additional affordable housing. She said traffic and safety were an issue. She said Dumbarton Rail was interesting. She suggested having access to Bayfront from inside of the property, the newly created area, would probably relieve some of the traffic on Willow Road.

## **G. Regular Business**

- G1. Determination of Substantial Conformance/709 Harvard Avenue: Review of staff determination that exterior material changes to siding, windows and doors at the main house and detached garage, and window and door relocations, are in substantial conformance with the previous approval. (Attachment)

Commissioner Camille Gonzalez Kennedy recused herself from the item.

Staff Comment: Assistant Planner Fahteen Khan said the applicant had since the memo was distributed had written the windows would be simulated divided lights with spacer bars.

Applicant Presentation: Patrick Williams introduced his wife Lori Lyons-Williams and said he understood there was a question about the grills on the windows. He referred to a visual presentation and noted that through the demolition portion they found extensive water and termite damage throughout the house. He said they had to remove about 70% of the lumber and had worked with Planning staff on revised plans part of which was a revised window plan in July 2020. He said the windows they intended to use had been shown on all of the plans except not the rendering that was part of the Commission's approval. He showed slides of the windows and doors.

Commissioner Riggs said he had questioned why the windows were not simulated true divided light windows, but it was clarified this evening that they were. He moved to find that the project was in substantial conformance. Commissioner Harris seconded the motion.

ACTION: M/S (Riggs/Harris) to find that exterior material changes to siding, windows and doors at the main house and detached garage, and window and door relocations, were in substantial conformance with the previous approval; passed 6-0 with Commissioner Kennedy recused.

## **H. Public Hearing**

- H1. Use Permit/Charlene Cheng/269 Willow Road:  
Request for a use permit to construct a new two-story residence with an attached garage on a substandard lot with regard to minimum lot depth in the R-1-U (Single Family Urban Residential) district. The parcel is a vacant panhandle lot, with access via an easement located over 267 and 275 Willow Road, and 269 Willow Road is proposed as the new address for the subject parcel. (Staff Report #22-006-PC)

Staff Comment: Associate Planner Ori Paz said Commissioner Andrew Barnes was recused for this item. He said since publication of the staff report correspondence was received from a neighbor that had been added to the agenda online. He said another piece of correspondence received before this meeting raised concerns about the proposed change to the fence between the subject property and

the property to its left at 247 Willow Road. He said a comment was received from a neighbor regarding an inconsistency in the arborist report. He said staff confirmed that the tree numbers shown in the tree inventory and in the tables shown on the plans were shown consistently. He said however the labels on the photos within the arborist's report did not reflect the accurate numbers in the table. He said staff was recommending a specific project condition: *Simultaneous with the submittal of the complete building permit application, the applicant would be required to provide an updated arborist report that corrected those photo labels for the trees to be shown consistent with the tree inventory table and the project plans, subject to review and approval by Planning staff.*

Questions of Staff: Commissioner DeCardy confirmed the lot was nonconforming because of lot depth. He referred to Attachment C and said if the width and depth were switched the lot would be conforming. He suggested it was a unique parcel and he was unclear why the project was coming before the Commission.

Planner Paz said the front of the lot was where the access from the right of way reached the property.

Applicant Presentation: Henry (Hong) Zeng, project architect, made a visual presentation noting the vacant lot and easement to it. He referred to lot restraints and said they were careful to set the second story back from the side yards and neighbors' properties. He said the project would have a one-car garage. He said it was a Colonial style home and that design worked well for this lot.

Commissioner Riggs noted the dormer windows and asked if attic space was intended. Mr. Zeng said those were to provide light to the first-floor rooms.

Chair Doran opened the public hearing.

Public Comment:

- Josh Spira, 245 Willow Road, said he had a question about the fence on the plan and that in the diagram just shown by the architect. He said the fence currently was seven feet tall, but would be reduced to four feet towards the front of the new proposed property line because of City regulation. He said removal of their existing seven-foot-tall fence and reducing a portion of it to four feet was invasive to their privacy. He said he would like the current fence to be retained noting it was in good shape or that it be replaced with another seven-foot fence.
- Rick Schwartz said he and his wife lived at 254 Santa Margarita, which was immediately to the rear of the subject property. He said in reviewing the plans they noticed aspects that they believed would significantly degrade the aesthetics and privacy for their property. He said he and his wife also have a cottage at the rear of their property about 20 feet from the property line. He said it was not shown on the area plan although two other out buildings on their property were. He said the rear wall they would see lacked articulation and was 48-foot long, 20-foot high, not counting the roof and not counting the additional one-story 15-foot wings on both sides. He said they would have six second-story windows overlooking their property particularly their cottage. He said portions of the proposed deck behind the structure would stretch to within three feet of their property line. He said only three small trees of the total six trees currently there would remain in the 20-foot setback behind their property. He said two of the three trees that would stay were on the sides and not between them and the rear of the subject house. He said they had requested in writing that the footprint of the new home be moved four and a half feet closer to Willow Road to the minimal 20-foot setback at the rear of the property as that would increase

privacy and allow for more plantings. He said they requested that the rear wall of the structure be articulated to reduce the massiveness, to reduce the number of second story windows at the rear, and to increase the number of trees or tall plants to provide year-round screening between the proposed structure and their property line.

- Samira Bozorgi said she and her husband Josh Spira requested the Commission consider the unique nature of their property as the side yard they shared with the subject property was their backyard, and that was why they had a vested interest in a seven-foot fence remaining. She also asked that more screening be considered along the fence line as well to increase property privacy.

Chair Doran closed the public hearing.

Commission Comment: Chair Doran referred to the question of the fence. He said 245 Willow Road was next to the subject property's side defined as the side. He said it seemed zoning regulations regarding front fences was being applied to this side yard and asked why. Planner Paz said it had to do with the lot orientation. He said similarly to the subject property 245 Willow Road was accessed at a T juncture so the front property line of it and the subject property were parallel to Willow Road. He said the front setback of 20 feet was applied and within that zoning a maximum four-foot fence was allowed. He said beyond the front setback fences were allowed to be up to seven feet in height in residential areas. He said a conditional use permit application might be made to allow for a taller fence in the front setback area, but that request was not made within the use permit application for the subject property. He said as that was not noticed the Commission would not be able to take action this evening on it.

Replying to Chair Doran, Mr. Zeng said a taller fence was fine, but they had tried to respect the City's code and requirements. He said they could help the neighbor file the application or something to have a taller fence or they were fine if the existing fence was kept. He referred to the public speaker's request to move the footprint. He said they had a little room to move in but needed a minimum 25 feet garage depth and 25 feet for backup turning radius for a car. He noted the easement to the front and side. He referred to the question of articulating the second floor. He said it was a very narrow site and they felt articulating the longer northern side to step down to the first floor was much more effective to the overall massing. He said with the seven-foot backyard fence that the nine-foot ridge line was probably just barely visible. He said he had a conversation with their landscape architect and they were happy to provide more trees for privacy screening.

Chair Doran said it sounded like the two property owners were willing to keep the existing tall fence. He asked how to ensure that could happen.

Commissioner Riggs said for all intents and purposes this was a vacant conforming lot and the set of rules that applied 99% of the time did not do quite so well for this property. He said he had no objections to the project and it was well executed. He said the Colonial-style design had been done correctly. He said he appreciated the responsiveness about planting additional trees in the lower right corner to address the request from the property owners of 254 Santa Margarita Avenue and noted that would hopefully become a condition. He said he was embarrassed that a requirement for a four-foot fence at the street was applied 100 feet deep in a pan handle lot. He said he understood you could not have a seven-foot fence within 20 feet of a public right of way but to define it as the front facing edge of the lot rather than the right of way was difficult for him to hear. He asked if staff could look at the option to interpret the code as meaning 20 feet from the right of way. He said the applicant knew of the code and did not ask at least for the neighbor's sake to not be required to

demolish the existing fence, which in his opinion this project had no right to do nor was the applicant's attention brought to the potential to request use permit exception for the existing fence. He asked if staff could be asked to look again at the requirement regarding the fence.

Planner Paz said the codified language was clear about the height of fences not exceeding four feet in the required front setback. Planner Sandmeier said this had consistently been applied for pan handle lots and it was not something over which staff had discretion. She said if the applicant would like to amend their application, then one way forward would be to continue the project and re-notice it for a future meeting. She said there might be room on the February 14<sup>th</sup> agenda.

Replying to Chair Doran, Mr. Zeng said they were open to keeping the existing fence. He conferred with the property owners and they agreed with the suggestion to continue the project to amend the application with a request to keep the existing seven-foot fence.

Commissioner Harris said she was sorry if the project would need to be continued but hoped if it were that it could be added to the next meeting agenda as she thought it would be a quick item.

Planner Sandmeier said they would need to look at the items lined up for the next agenda. She said alternatively the project could be approved as it was and not continued.

Chair Doran said they could not approve the project with a condition to keep the existing fence.

Commissioner Riggs moved to continue the project to the next available meeting to allow the applicant to apply for a use permit for the fence height noting he expected it to need only a brief review. He said also if continued privacy trees could be added to the plans. He moved to continue. Chair Doran seconded the motion.

ACTION: M/S (Riggs/Doran) to continue; passed 6-0-1 with Commissioner Barnes recused.

H2. Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Scoping Session/6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element and Safety Element Updates and Environmental Justice Element of the City of Menlo Park General Plan/City of Menlo Park:

Preparation of an EIR for the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element and Safety Element Updates and a new Environmental Justice Element for the City's General Plan (collectively referred herein as "the Housing Element Update project") in compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR will be a Subsequent EIR to the City's 2016 General Plan EIR (State Clearinghouse Number 2015062054). The Project analyzed in the EIR would include adoption of General Plan amendments that would add or modify goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs related to housing, safety, and environmental justice that would apply citywide. General Plan amendments would also include conforming amendments to other elements of the General Plan necessary to ensure internal consistency. Amendments to the El Camino Real and Downtown Specific Plan and the Zoning Ordinance would also be necessary to modify development standards for certain zoning districts and the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) district to allow higher residential densities for the production of more housing. In addition, the Housing Element would identify specific sites appropriate for the development of multifamily housing (in particular affordable units), and the City would rezone those sites as necessary to meet the requirements of State law. The preliminary list of existing and proposed sites that can accommodate development of multifamily housing includes sites that are located across the city, and is subject to refinement based on additional public input and review of the draft Housing Element by the Department of Housing and Community Development of the State of California. It is anticipated the



Project would complete a full EIR and no topic areas would be scoped out with the exception of Agricultural and Forestry Resources and Mineral Resources, which are topic areas that are not anticipated to require further analysis. (Staff Report #22-007-PC)

***Item was transcribed by a court reporter.***

## **I. Informational Items**

### **I1. Future Planning Commission Meeting Schedule**

Assistant Community Development Director Chow said for the next two upcoming meetings a study session was targeted for a project in the Bayfront area and potentially modifications to the Citizen M hotel project approved a few years prior. She said they would also bring back the Housing Element Annual Progress Report, which was due to the state Housing and Community Development Department by April 1.

Commissioner Riggs referred to the earlier item wherein a four-foot fence was required in the front setback rather than the fence being defined by its location to the public right of way. He said since that exception was generally addressed through a use permit application and not through editing the ordinance, he was curious what other elements of Chapter 16 led to use permit requirement to correct the wording applicable to a project. He requested through the Chair that they consider an agenda item to bring such zoning edits forward to address some “nuisance” items. Chair Doran said he was inclined to agendaize that matter and requested staff provide a framework for that in the future.

Commissioner Barnes said the long agenda packets without hyperlinks was difficult to use. He asked if they could reintroduce an agenda with the agenda items each having a hyperlink. Chair Doran responded that clicking on the icon in the upper left corner provided a table of contents with the list of staff reports, each of which could be opened via that list. He said he found it frustrating that once within the staff report it was difficult to navigate the drawings and exhibits.

Ms. Chow said they were excited to have their new webpage and were evolving with it. She said like Chair Doran indicated there was a table of contents within the agenda packet in the pdf and within the staff reports you could click the triangle (greater than/less than) that lists out each attachment so the user could jump to that attachment. She said they were now also hyperlinking the staff report on the agenda to that item in the full packet.

Commissioner Riggs said it had been eight to 10 weeks that IT had been working to make sure he received the biweekly invite to the Commission meetings, which he stopped receiving somewhere around November 2021.

- Regular Meeting: February 14, 2022
- Regular Meeting: February 28, 2022

## **J. Adjournment**

Chair Doran adjourned the meeting at 11 p.m.

Staff Liaison: Corinna Sandmeier, Acting Principal Planner  
Recording Secretary: Brenda Bennett

Approved by the Planning Commission on March 28, 2022





Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

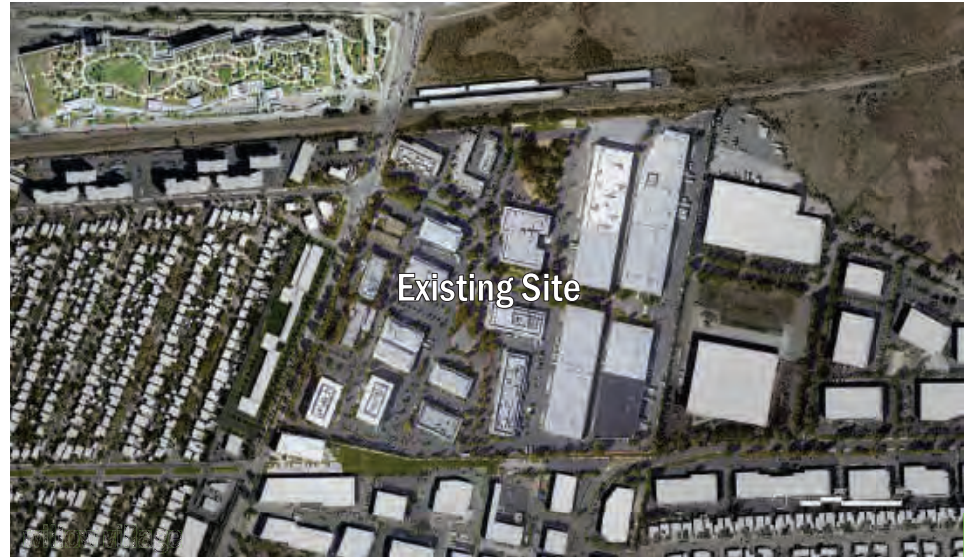
Existing Condition  
January 24, 2022



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Existing Condition  
January 24, 2022



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Existing Condition Aerial Map  
January 24, 2022

## Community Feedback

- Minimize Traffic
- Improve Connections to Belle Haven
- Improve Jobs/Housing Balance
- Increase Housing Units/Affordable Housing
- Deliver Neighborhood Services Faster
- Provide More Open Space



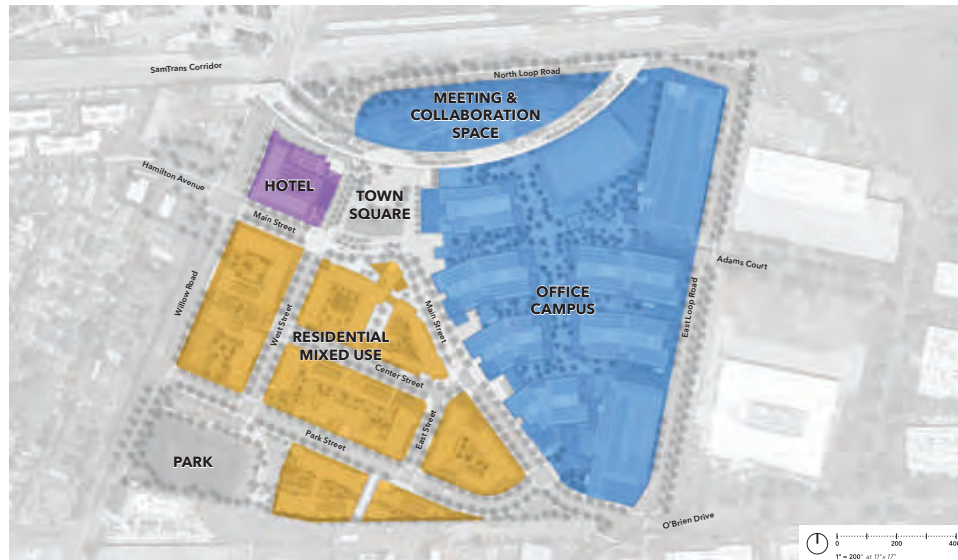
## Major Plan Revisions & Updates

- Reduced office space/employee capacity by 30%
  - 30% reduction in office traffic
  - Better balances jobs/housing
- Created direct connection from Belle Haven
- Increased affordable housing from 15 to 18%
- Accelerated the full-service grocery store to Phase I
- Improved & increased size of Town Square
- Added more open space, trails and gardens

## Willow Village Timeline

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| • December 2014   | Connect Menlo General Plan Update Commenced                      |
| • December 2016   | Connect Menlo Approved   |
| • July 2017       | Willow Village Plans Submitted to City                           |
| • 2017-2018       | Community Engagement & Feedback                                  |
| • February 2019   | Revised Willow Village Plans Submitted to City                   |
| • Feb-Dec. 2019   | Community Engagement & Feedback                                  |
| • May 2020        | Revised Willow Village Plans Submitted to City                   |
| • May 2020 - 2022 | Community Engagement & Feedback                                  |
| • 2021            | Architectural Submittals, Community Engagement                   |
| • 2022            | Plans Resubmitted to City, Community Engagement, DEIR & Hearings |

# 2021 Design Updates





Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Grocery Store  
January 24, 2022



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Conceptual Master Plan  
January 24, 2022

**Grocer Visions**



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

January 24, 2022

**Placemaking**



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

January 24, 2022



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Town Square  
Main & West Street Intersection  
January 24, 2022



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Main Street Mixed Use  
January 24, 2022



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Town Square  
January 24, 2022

**Retail Expressions**



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

January 24, 2022

## Street Experience, Retail and Office Campus



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

January 24, 2022



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

View from Town Square  
January 24, 2022



Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Main Street  
January 24, 2022



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Elevated Park  
January 24, 2022





WILLOW 2.0

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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Willow Office Campus  
Main Street Plaza O2 - O3  
January 24, 2022

**Local Offerings**



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

January 24, 2022



WILLOW 2.0

Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Willow Office Campus  
Main Street Plaza O1 - O2  
January 24, 2022



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**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Main Street Office Campus Entry  
January 24, 2022

## Residential Street Experience Overview

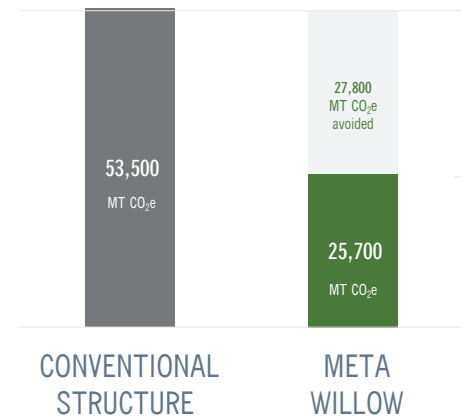


## Sustainability

- LEED Gold
- All Electric
- Photovoltaics
- Recycled Water
- Sustainable Building Materials
- CLT Timber






## Carbon comparison



Conventional buildings primarily utilize concrete and steel for structure. Combined, these two materials are responsible for 16% of global carbon emissions.

### 52% Reduction in Embodied Carbon

To reduce carbon emissions, Meta has selected mass timber as the primary structural material for the Willow Village Office Campus. By doing so, Meta will avoid carbon emissions equivalent to:

-  3,100 homes using energy for a year
-  69 million miles driven
-  36,000 acres of forest sequestering carbon for a year



Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Senior Affordable Housing  
January 24, 2022

- **Park Street**
  - Vehicular street (buses)
  - Limited ground floor activities
  - Raised ground floor
- **West Street**
  - Links Town Square to Community Park
  - Active ground floor
- **Center Street**
  - Residential street
  - Limited traffic; mainly local use
  - Multiple entrances
- **Main Street**
  - Mixed-use
  - Multimodal



Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Conceptual Master Plan  
Distinct Street Character  
January 24, 2022



Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Parcel 7 (Park Street)  
January 24, 2022



Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Parcel 6 (Park Street)  
January 24, 2022



Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Multi-Use Pathway  
East Loop Road  
January 24, 2022



Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA



Parcel 2 Frontage (Park Street)  
January 24, 2022



Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Street Character  
Main Street  
January 24, 2022



Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA



Parcel 6 (Park Street)  
January 24, 2022



Peninsula Innovation Partners

**WILLOW VILLAGE**  
Menlo Park, CA

Publicly Accessible Park  
January 24, 2022

**From:** [Pamela Jones](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Planning Commission 01242022 Item F1  
**Date:** Monday, January 24, 2022 2:37:53 PM

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Chair Doran, Vice Chair DeCardy, Commissioners Barnes, Harris, Tate, Riggs, Kennedy and Staff

Please define a “neighborhood shopping center.”

The area referred to as “Belle Haven Neighborhood Shopping Center” and “expansion of retail uses” implies a shopping area with restaurants, clothing stores, supermarket, drug store and other businesses that support the neighborhood. The area on Willow Road and Hamilton Avenue referred to in the related documents, consists of 5 restaurants, nail salon, Starbucks and Jack in the Box fast food with drive through. The police substation is also housed in this area and not considered retail.

The gas station is the only gas station that serves the Belle Haven neighborhood and the closest alternative is about 1.5 miles away on Willow Road.

The staff report states “potential expansion of retail uses” without further information about location, retailers, etc. and date of available services. There is also no time line or location for the gas station.

Lastly, there is no clear details on the changes of Willow Road as shown in the renderings. It appears that at some intersections there will be 2 additional lanes for turning North and South at Willow Road and Main Street and Willow Road and Park Street. There are no renderings for Ivy Drive and Willow Road that indicate turning lanes. Any changes with negative effects on Willow Road will dramatically effect the quality of life for the current neighborhood.

Respectfully, Pam D Jones

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



**269 WILLOW ROAD HOME**  
 MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA  
 City Meeting | 01.24.2022

**THE LOCATION**  
 PARCEL MAP

**THE SITE**  
 RECENT SITE PHOTOS

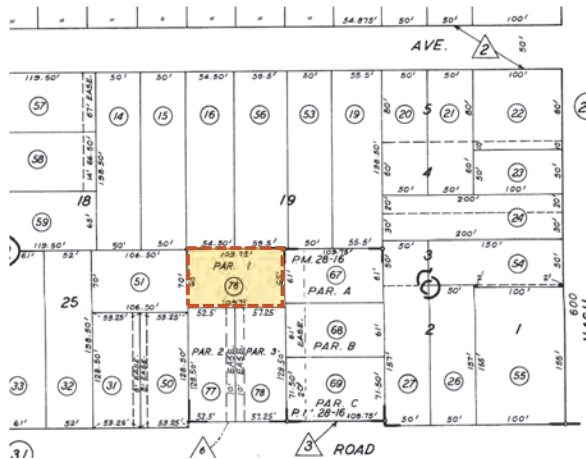
**PROPOSED PLANS**  
 SITE PLAN  
 FLOOR PLANS

**PROPOSED ELEVATIONS**  
 ELEVATIONS  
 MATERIALS & COLORS

**PROPOSED MASSING**  
 3D VIEW

## 269 WILLOW ROAD

City Meeting | 01.24.2022



**269 WILLOW ROAD HOME**  
 MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA  
 City Meeting | 01.24.2022

**THE LOCATION**  
 PARCEL MAP

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**PROPOSED MASSING**  
 3D VIEWS



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 MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA  
 City Meeting | 01.24.2022

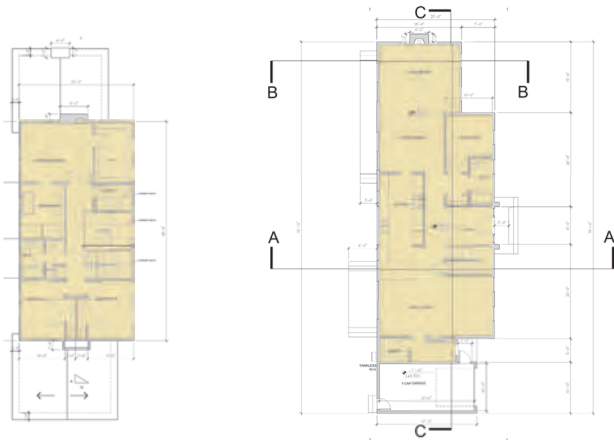
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 City Meeting | 01.24.2022

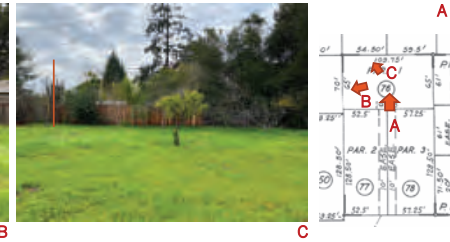
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FRONT(EAST) ELEVATION



MATERIAL SAMPLE IMAGES

**269 WILLOW ROAD HOME**  
 MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA  
 City Meeting | 01.24.2022

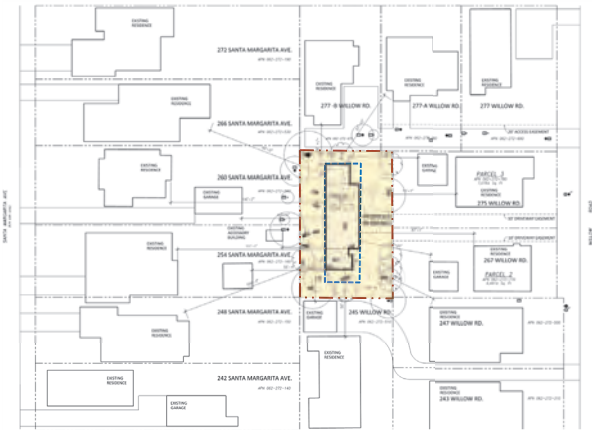
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 MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA  
 City Meeting | 01.24.2022

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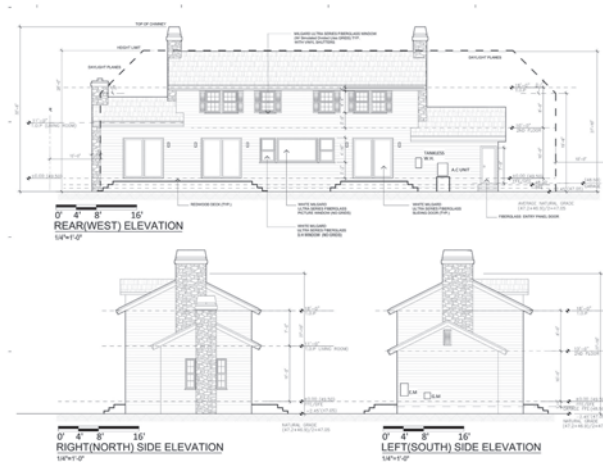
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 MATERIALS & COLORS

**PROPOSED MASSING**  
 3D VIEWS

**Paz, Ori**

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**From:** Daniel Hom  
**Sent:** Monday, January 24, 2022 2:01 PM  
**To:** Paz, Ori; Daniel Hom  
**Cc:** Charlene Cheng  
**Subject:** Re: Urgent please review this Final 269 Willow Plan Set and reply

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I don't have anymore comments.

A neighbor, Shaffer (opposite side along 277) stopped by Sunday and asked me about the project. Apparently they too didn't get the mailer.

Regards,  
Daniel Hom

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**From:** Paz, Ori <OriPaz@menlopark.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 24, 2022 1:50:07 PM  
**To:** Daniel Hom <danielkhom@aol.com>  
**Cc:** Daniel Hom ; Charlene Cheng

**Subject:** RE: Urgent please review this Final 269 Willow Plan Set and reply

**EXTERNAL EMAIL**

---

Hi Daniel,

I wanted to confirm whether you had additional concerns or words of support for the project that you wanted included in the public record and sent to the Planning Commission before tonight's meeting. You are also welcome to attend the meeting to share your input on the item. The link is available here:  
<https://beta.menlopark.org/files/sharedassets/public/agendas-and-minutes/planning-commission/2022-meetings/20220124-planning-commission-agenda-packet.pdf#%5B%7B%22num%22%3A308%2C%22gen%22%3A0%7D%2C%7B%22name%22%3A%22FitR%22%7D%2C-194%2C132%2C806%2C729%5D>

I am sorry to hear you did not receive the mailing. I was able to review the mailing list to confirm your name was on the mailing list.

Sincerely,  
Ori



**Ori Paz**  
Associate Planner  
City Hall - 1st Floor  
701 Laurel St.  
tel 650-330-6711  
[menlopark.org](http://menlopark.org)

---

**From:** Daniel Hom  
**Sent:** Friday, January 21, 2022 7:40 AM  
**To:** Charlene Cheng  
**Cc:** Daniel Hom >; Paz, Ori <OriPaz@menlopark.org> **Subject:** Re: Urgent please review this Final 269 Willow Plan Set and reply

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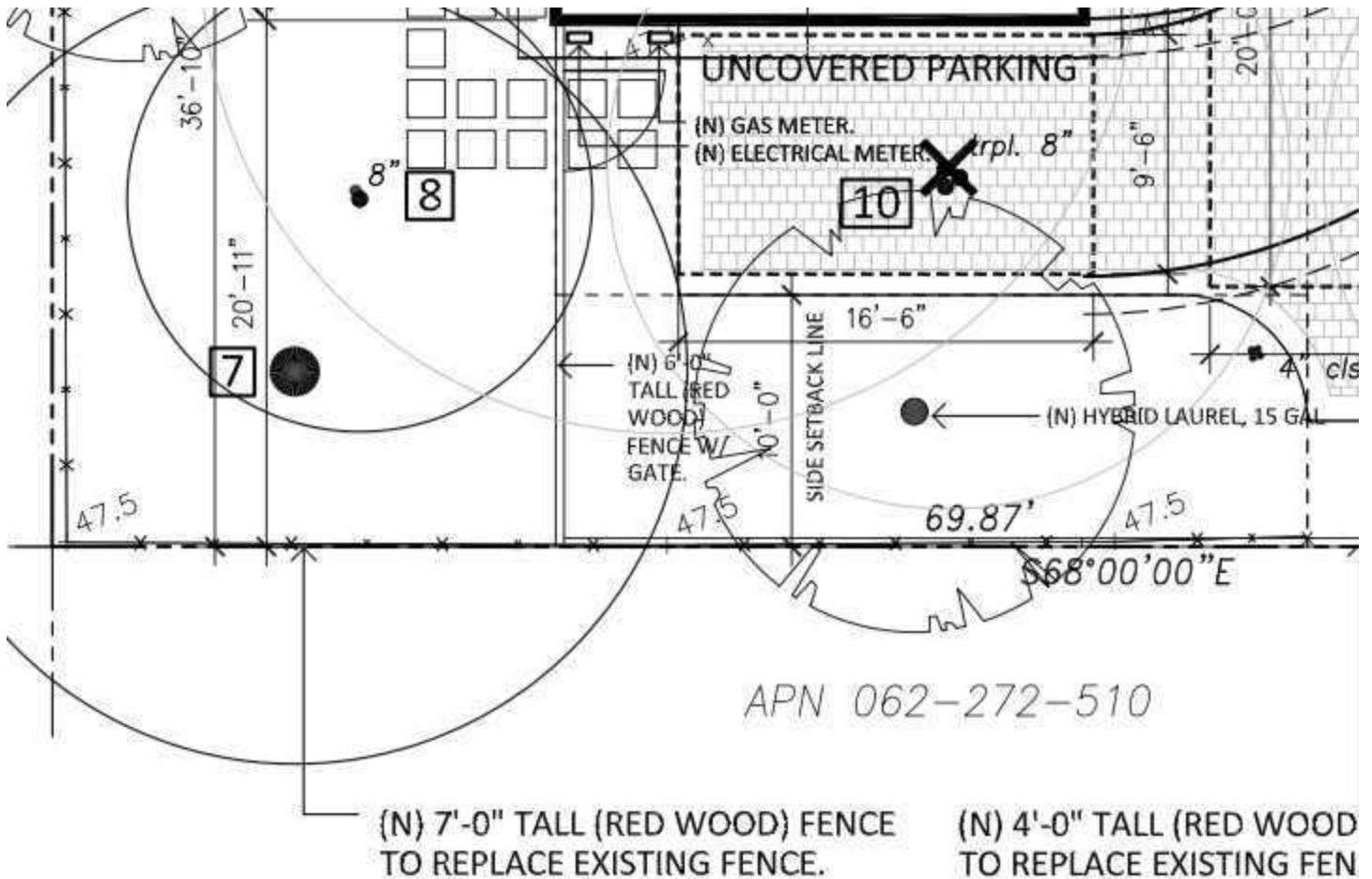
Hi Charlene,

I reviewed the plans and have no further questions or comments as 247 Willow property owner.

I have a question that affect the 245 Willow owner. I see sheet A1.1 notes existing fence to be replace with new 4' and 7'. I don't know if this is still the plan and if 245 owners Josh and Samira is aware.

BTW I never received the public notice mailing. Thank you for emailing me. I learned about the mailing from other neighbors recently.

Regards,  
Daniel



**LEGEND:**

On Jan 19, 2022, at 10:26 AM, Charlene Cheng wrote:

Good Morning Daniel

Please note Ori the planner from the City of Menlo Park is CC in this email.

As my other email to you, June and I came to your house on Sunday afternoon and unfortunately no one was home. I was hoping you can get back to me regarding the latest version of our plan set. I also mentioned earlier that the planning meeting is on 1/24 and the staff report needs your final feedback if any.

We are looking forward to your response.  
Charlene

On Wed, Jan 12, 2022 at 4:06 PM Charlene Cheng <wrote:

Happy New Year Daniel and your family!

I just want to make sure you are receiving the latest and final version of the plan set for 269 Willow road, please find attached. Please note the height of the window sills have been raised for privacy concerns.

Our team would be much appreciated if you would kindly reply to this email after you review the plan.

Thanks

Charlene

On Mon, Nov 29, 2021 at 9:03 AM Charlene Cheng > wrote:

Hi Daniel,

Hope you and your family enjoyed the Thanksgiving holiday long weekend!

I just want to inform you that we are making the final plan set submission after three rounds of reviews with the city. Please see attached for your review. Please let us know if you have any questions. In addition, I believe that we have communicated with you in person that the fence height of front yards is no more than 4' per city's requirement and this has been reflected on the plan set FYI.

Thank you for your attention and Happy Holidays!

Charlene

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Henry Hong Zeng** <

Date: Sun, Nov 28, 2021 at 4:56 PM

Subject: 269 Willow Plan Set - 20211128

To: Charlene Cheng <[charlene2005@gmail.com](mailto:charlene2005@gmail.com)>

Cc: Jun ([junzhangzeng@gmail.com](mailto:junzhangzeng@gmail.com)) <[junzhangzeng@gmail.com](mailto:junzhangzeng@gmail.com)>, Yue Zhao <[yzhao1225@gmail.com](mailto:yzhao1225@gmail.com)>

Hi Charlene,

Attached, please find updated plan set. Let me know if you have any questions.

Best,  
HZ

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permanently delete all copies of the original message together with any of its attachments from your computer or device.

REVIEW:  
709 Harvard  
Avenue-  
Windows



REVIEW: 709 Harvard Avenue- Windows

In late January '20, remodeling activity ceased on the property, as the scope of work exceeded the permit. Water and termite damage necessitated the removal of ~70 of lumber in the home.

Working with Lionel Tapia at the Planning Department, we resubmitted plans and got approval to move forward in June/ July '20.

As part of that work, we shared with Leo/ Planning our Window Plan for the home:

- Pella® Architect Series® - Traditional Wood Casement Windows
- The FULL quote with detail on each window were shared with planning and included in our file
- The windows were ordered 3/26/20.

Due to an oversight, the original rendering did not show Grilles on some windows.



REVIEW: 709 Harvard Avenue- Windows

Consistent with our original communication with the Planning Department and the shared contract from Pella, ALL windows at 709 Harvard Ave, excluding two privacy windows for bathrooms, have Cross Grilles.

These grilles, shown below, are a standard option in the Pella® Architect Series® - Traditional Wood Casement Window line.

NOTE: our windows are WHITE on the exterior.



Cross

REVIEW: 709 Harvard Avenue- Windows

Pella® uses Integral Light Technology so that the “grilles are permanently bonded to the inside and outside of your window glass.” The manufacturers continues:

- Nonglare foam spacers in between the grilles cast a realistic shadow like individual windowpanes would.
- These grilles create the most authentic look of true-divided-light windows.”



REVIEW: 709 Harvard Avenue- Windows



Front of Home



Rear of Home

REVIEW: 709 Harvard Avenue- Windows



Left Side of Home



Right Side of Home

Questions?



Menlo Park Housing Element Update (HEU)  
Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Scoping Session



## OVERVIEW

- Purpose of the Scoping Session
- Program EIRs
- Environmental Issues
- Environmental Review Process
- Public Comments



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## Purpose of Scoping

Receive comments from the public and agencies regarding the scope and content of the environmental document, including:

- Key environmental issues of concern
- Potential mitigation measures
- Potential alternatives for consideration

In short, what should we be looking at in the EIR?



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## What is a *Program* EIR?

- A Program EIR is an EIR that considers a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project that are related either:
  - Geographically
  - Logical parts in a chain of contemplated actions
  - Considers general criteria to govern conduct of a continuing program
  - Activities with similar environmental effects and mitigations
- The HEU EIR will be a subsequent EIR to the City's 2016 General Plan Update EIR (ConnectMenlo), meaning that it will build upon the environmental analysis already completed for ConnectMenlo



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## Environmental Issues in the EIR

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology, Soils, & Paleontology
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology & Water Quality
- Population & Housing
- Public Services & Recreation
- Utilities & Service Systems
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Wildfire

## Environmental Issues not in the EIR

- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Mineral Resources

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## Environmental Review Process

Milestone	Dates (Tentative)
Publish Notice of Preparation (NOP)	December 22, 2021
Draft EIR scoping session	January 24, 2022
End of NOP comment period	January 31, 2022
Publish Draft EIR	Mid-June, 2022
Draft EIR comment session	Mid-July, 2022
End of Draft EIR comment period	August, 2022
Publish Response to Comments on Draft EIR	October, 2022
Final EIR certification hearing	November/December, 2022

**January 31, 2023 – Deadline to submit adopted Housing Element to Department of Housing and Community Development**

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**Public Comment Period Runs Through:  
Monday, January 31, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.**

Submit Comments To Tom Smith	
Email (Preferred)	Mail
tasmith@menlopark.org	Tom Smith Acting Principal Planner City of Menlo Park 701 Laurel Street Menlo Park, CA 94025

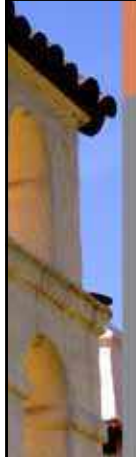

Upcoming Community Meeting	
When / Where	Topics
Saturday, February 12 10:00 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Use Strategies</li> <li>• Potential Housing Opportunity Sites</li> </ul>
Virtual (Zoom)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Goals &amp; Policies</li> </ul>

**[MenloPark.org/HousingElement](https://MenloPark.org/HousingElement)**




## HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE



January 24, 2022 EIR Scoping Session

## MEETING PURPOSE

- Scoping session to receive comments on the scope and content of an environmental impact report (EIR)
- Provides an early opportunity to comment on topics that should be addressed in an EIR
- The EIR will be prepared to evaluate potential environmental effects of the project:
  - Update to the existing Housing Element and related rezonings and other Zoning Ordinance amendments
  - Update to the existing Safety Element
  - New Environmental Justice Element
- No project actions at this meeting



2

## HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE

- The Housing Element is a State-mandated element of the General Plan
- Update will cover an eight-year planning period from 2023 to 2031
  - Also referred to as the “6<sup>th</sup> Cycle”
- Must analyze existing and projected housing needs, and update goals, policies, objectives, and implementation programs for housing at all income levels
- Must include inventory of sites that permit housing development to meet target set by State (target number is called RHNA)
  - For 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle, the City’s RHNA is 2,946 units
  - Including 30% buffer, RHNA is 3,830 units

3

## SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE


- The Safety Element is also a State-mandated General Plan element
- Focuses on protection of the community from risks due to climate change, earthquakes, floods, fires, toxic waste, and other hazards
- Specifies what measures the City will take to reduce potential risks from hazards
- Update is needed to bring Safety Element into compliance with recent State law
  - Address residential development evacuation routes in hazard areas
  - Assess local vulnerabilities to different climate hazards
  - Develop policies and actions toward climate adaptation and resiliency

4





## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ELEMENT

- City's first Environmental Justice Element
- Purpose is to address unique or compounded health risks within disadvantaged communities (DACs) as defined by the State
- Measures could include:
  - Improving air quality and reducing pollution exposure
  - Enhancing public facilities and infrastructure
  - Expanding food access
  - Ensuring safe and sanitary housing
  - Promote civic engagement in public decision-making


## LAND USE SCENARIO FOR EIR

- On December 8, 2021, City Council supported a preliminary land use scenario with multiple strategies to ensure City can meet its 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle RHNA
- Strategies based on feedback from the community, City Council, Planning Commission, and Housing Commission

## NEW HOUSING NEEDED

	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	Total Units
	0-50% AMI	51-80% AMI	81-120% AMI	>120% AMI	
<b>RHNA Required</b>					
6 <sup>th</sup> Cycle RHNA	740	426	496	1,284	2,946
30% Buffer	<u>222</u>	<u>128</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>385</u>	<u>884</u>
6 <sup>th</sup> Cycle RHNA w/ Buffer	962	554	645	1,669	3,830
<b>RHNA Credits</b>					
Pipeline Projects	134	230	230	3,053	3,647
ADUs	<u>26</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>85</u>
RHNA Credit	160	255	256	3,061	3,732
<b>Net New Units Needed</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,490</b>




## LAND USE STRATEGIES FOR EIR

- Re-use housing opportunity sites from the current 5<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element
  - Allow "by-right" development for projects with 20% or more affordable housing
  - Densities on the sites would be 30 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) or higher
- Increase permitted residential densities in Specific Plan area
  - Set minimum density of 20 du/ac
  - Allow at least 30 du/ac for development at base level, with potential increases in densities at bonus level
  - Remove cap of 680 units in Specific Plan area
  - Allow residential development on City-owned parking plazas

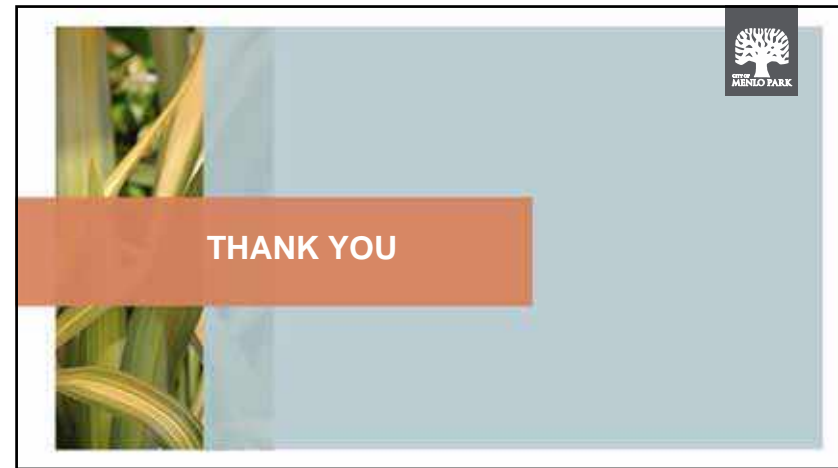
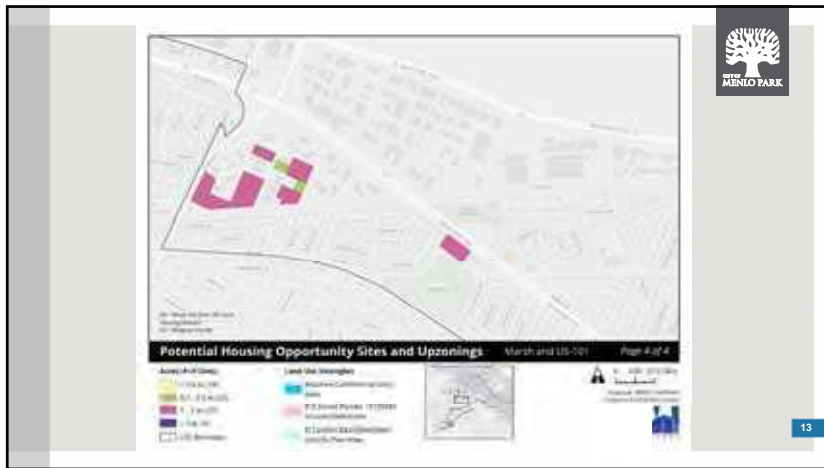


## LAND USE STRATEGIES FOR EIR

- Modify affordable housing overlay (AHO) standards
  - Allow up to 100 du/ac for 100% affordable housing developments
  - Increase allowed densities for mixed-income developments offering more affordable units than the City's below market rate (BMR) requirements
- Modify certain retail/commercial zoning district standards
  - Allow residential uses and encourage mixed-use development
  - Densities would be a minimum of 30 du/ac
  - Would apply to C-2, C-2-A, C-2-B, C-2-S, C-4, and P districts
- Remove 10,000 square-foot minimum lot size requirement for R-3 zoned properties around downtown
  - Allow sites a density of up to 30 du/ac





### NEXT STEPS AND UPCOMING MEETINGS

- January 31: NOP comment period ends at 5:00 p.m.
- February 12: Community Meeting #5 – Review of housing strategy and policies
- Also coming in the near future:
  - Community Meeting #6 – Safety and Environmental Justice policies
  - Other announcements and future meetings will be posted on the Housing Element website: [menlopark.org/housingelement](http://menlopark.org/housingelement)

City of Menlo Park

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**Subject:**

RE: Menlo Park Housing Element NOP Comments

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**From:** Jacqueline B Wender [<mailto:jwender@stanford.edu>]

**Sent:** Monday, January 24, 2022 4:22 PM

**To:** Smith, Tom A <[tasmith@menlopark.org](mailto:tasmith@menlopark.org)>

**Subject:** Menlo Park Housing Element NOP Comments

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, DO NOT click links, open attachments or reply.**

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the 2023-2031 Housing Element NOP. I would like to make four points:

1. I have attended a number of Planning and Housing Commission meetings and City Council meetings on this topic, and have read almost all of the reports from staff, consultants, and Commissions. I consider myself informed and engaged. For the first time, the NOP makes explicit, in writing, the distinction between the number of housing units to be studied in the EIR; the number of units to be subsequently zoned for; and the number ultimately to be built. This clear distinction is very helpful and much appreciated. I hope that it will help the community better understand each phase of the Housing Element process.
2. I appreciate the inclusion of transportation and climate change in the objectives and the technical issues to be studied in the EIR. I look forward to a full treatment of those issues, along with all of the others identified in the NOP. Like many community members, I sincerely hope that the City will use this opportunity to engage in holistic long-range planning, not simply a required governmental exercise, or an exercise focused on housing (especially affordable housing) to the exclusion of other considerations.
3. I am surprised that there is no mention of the impacts of increased zoning on school districts and individual schools. This seems a particularly odd omission given the public comments of District officials, and pledges by City officials to work with the Districts in partnership on this plan. Perhaps the NOP means to include school impact under a larger umbrella of "Public Services," but I think the NOP should call out educational impact explicitly.
4. Finally, I would like to endorse the views presented by Commissioners Pimentel and Riggs in their recent Almanac Viewpoint regarding the approach for zoning the downtown area. I am in full agreement with their views and urge the Commission and the Council to adopt those approaches.

Thank you for including these comments in the public record, and for distributing them to the Planning Commission.

Sincerely,  
Jacqueline Wender

Jacqueline Wender

<https://www.jacquelinewenderart.com>



**From:** [Misha Silin](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Andrew Barnes](#); [Chris DeCardy](#); [Michael Doran](#); [Cynthia Harris](#); [Kennedy, Camille G.](#); [Riggs, Henry](#); [Michele Tate](#)  
**Subject:** Comment on item H2  
**Date:** Monday, January 24, 2022 12:45:06 PM

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Planning Commission Members

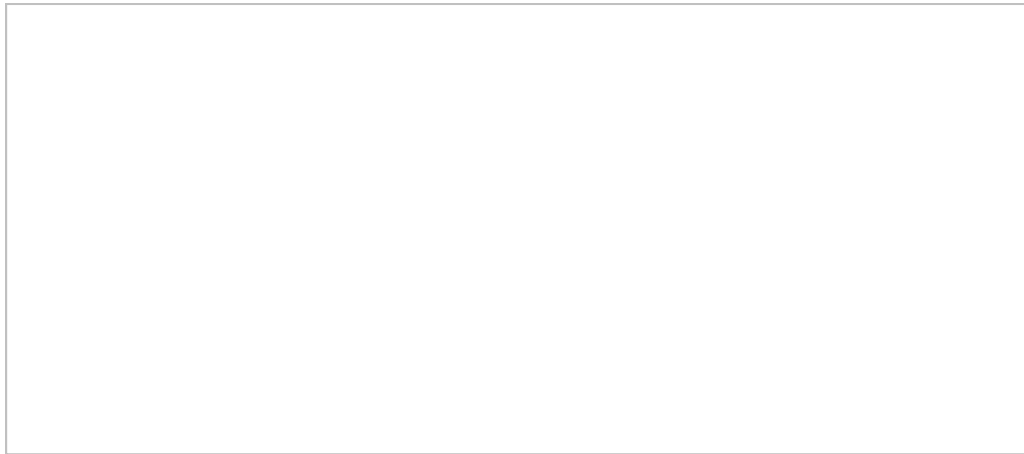
I am a resident of Allied Arts writing in comment to item H2 on the agenda for the meeting on Jan 24th, 2022. I am affiliated with

Since the housing element is asking us to plan ahead for 8 years, this is an opportunity to plan for the Menlo Park that many of us envision. Residents imagine our city as inclusive, vibrant, with opportunities for folks of all income levels and backgrounds to be housed in a dignified manner. We want local families and workers to be able to be housed such that they can live, work, and enjoy all that Menlo Park and our surroundings have to offer.

I have been digging into the proposed sites in our 6th cycle element and I am extremely concerned that this list is unrealistic and is not going to produce the housing we are claiming it will. Not even close. Specifically, I am concerned that our current plan is going to continue the status quo. Very little housing will get built, neighbors and families will continue to get priced out of the area, which will lead to more inequality, congestion due to local workers not being able to live here, and homelessness.

My comments below are mostly based on the [City Council's 12/8 agenda staff report](#) since, on page 20, staff noted the potential housing units expected from each site. The Notice of Preparation (NOP) does not include this number and thus is hard to evaluate.

1. First, it would be great to have the potential housing numbers for each site in the NOP so that we can all understand exactly what is being planned. There are a number of sites included in the NOP that were not included in the 12/8 staff report.
2. Below is a graph I made that shows how the % of new units breaks down by "existing use", based on the 12/8 staff report, assuming only the "carved out" portions get developed on the bigger sites.
  - a.



- b. The highlight is that **45% of the new housing units are expected to come from current office sites**. This is alarming and concerning because most real estate analysis firms put the SF Bay Area in the 2nd or 3rd most expensive office market (by asking rent or purchase price) in the United States. And given that we are very close to Facebook, Google, Apple, etc. this is further magnified in our specific city. Office space is very lucrative here, and thus I am extremely skeptical that it will be redeveloped into housing.

3.

Here are some examples of sites included in our NOP in the “Office” categories

- a. 85 Willow represents the largest number of units in the entire element. This is currently home to RobinHood’s headquarters, the financial company that went public last year for over \$60bn dollars in market value. They are unlikely to move anytime soon from this location; instead they have been expanding and leasing other office space in the area.
- b. There are numerous multi-story office buildings identified on Middlefield and Sand Hill Rd., currently occupied by large venture capitalist firms who manage billions of dollars in assets, and local startups funded by said VC firms. Why would these companies want to vacate their space, and why would the owners of the building want them to, given the extremely high office rents in the area (often 2-3x higher per square foot than residential)?
- c. Multiple buildings on Bohannon Dr. and Campbell Ave. **These were not included in the 12/8 staff report so it’s not clear what assumptions are being made there.** One of the sites is the US Post Office (3875 Bohannon) while others are large office buildings with big biotech companies currently residing there such as Abbott (current market cap: \$222bn on NYSE). Would I like to have these sites turn into housing? Perhaps. It’s right next to the freeway, which doesn’t seem ideal for health. But even if I did, **what evidence do we have that these property owners will want to take their extremely valuable office space and turn it into housing?**
- d. Note that in many cases, the 12/8 report’s “carve out” strategy expects that only the parking lot of these office buildings will be converted to affordable housing. This term/concept is not mentioned anywhere in the NOP.

- e. On top of this, the NOP states (on page 5) that for existing retail and commercial use parcels, housing will only be added as an option to the zoning. So **the current use will still be allowed**, again reducing the incentive for the property owners to make any changes. This issue applies to most of the office sites in the NOP (like the ones on Sand Hill and Middlefield), but not the parcels from item c above, the properties on Bohannon/Campbell, which are zoned "office". The NOP does not state whether those uses will be allowed to continue since those sites were added after the 12/8 council meeting.

4. Other questionable categories:

- a. "Shopping Center" – this assumes that both the Safeway shopping centers, on Middle and in Sharon Heights, will convert their parking lots to housing. **No substantial evidence (as required by HCD) has been presented by staff or otherwise that this strategy has any likelihood of bearing fruit.** Why would the owners of these retail lots want to turn their parking lots into housing?
- b. "Churches" – this assumes that our local churches want to build housing on their parking lots, recently made possible by AB 1851 in the CA legislature. Again, I believe **no evidence has been provided that any of our churches actually want / plan to do this.**
- c. Another new group of sites added to the NOP is sites from the Downtown Specific Plan. The idea now is to remove the 680 unit cap from that plan and increase the allowable density. **No evidence has been presented that this is going to work. Have developers said that this change would incentivize new housing when it didn't before?** All of these sites were included in our 5th element already.

5. Some of the sites that I *do* think have potential are our downtown parking lots, USGS, and a few older office buildings near Caltrain. Perhaps we can do more to increase the density on those parcels.

## CONCLUSION

1. **A majority of the housing planned in the sites listed in the NOP seems to be coming from sites that are unlikely to be developed since they are currently extremely valuable office buildings.**
2. **To my knowledge, little to no evidence has been given that ANY of the larger sites in the NOP are likely to become housing.**
3. **Little to no evidence has been given that the other strategies outlined in the NOP, such as increasing density for the downtown Specific plan, will lead to large numbers of affordable housing being built**
4. **HCD requires "substantial evidence" that an infill site will be redeveloped as housing, and has**

been rejecting housing elements that don't provide it (ex: Beverly Hills, Davis, Redondo Beach of recent).

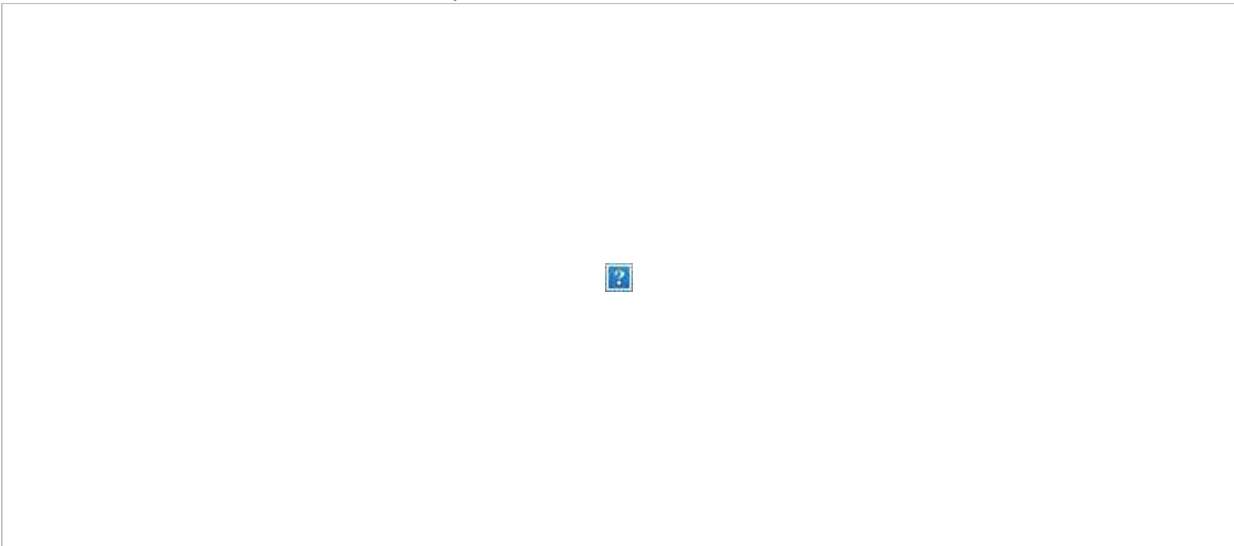
- a. **Because the residents of Menlo Park want to live in a city that welcomes new residents, and because the city will suffer numerous [bad consequences](#) if the housing element is rejected, these sites must be justified, or must be replaced with more plausible sites**

What would I like to see at this point, and what do I encourage you to ask for from staff?

1. **More evidence of feasibility for the sites listed in the NOP**
2. **Additional feasible sites identified and added to the list**
3. **More aggressive strategies and policies to make sure there is an overwhelming amount of incentive and lack of barriers for housing to get built on the selected sites.**

One last point. One thing HCD will consider when reviewing the element (and we should consider) is past history. I took a look at [our last cycle's approved element](#) to see what we said was going to happen and what actually happened.

- a. First obvious point - there were ZERO large office parcels or shopping center parking lots in the previous element. And no such parcels have been turned into housing in the past 8 years that were not in the site list either. So previous history tells us this is, at best, unlikely to happen.
- b. See below for the summary of what was in the 5th element



Source: p. 111 of [5th cycle adopted housing element](#)

- c. All "high density" opportunity sites – located east of 101 in Belle Haven (Table 1, p. 164 of 5th cycle element)

- i. Many of the lots were vacant, storage, warehouse, or light manufacturing use. And indeed, some of them became housing. However, besides all of those lots being in D1, **no lots of that type are included in the 6th cycle plan**
- d. El Camino / Downtown Specific Plan (Table 2, p. 165 of 5th cycle element)
  - i. 430 BMR units total are shown in the table above. The specific plan only allowed 680 total residential units so we know this is wishful thinking from the get go.
  - ii. Here are some of the larger sites included in the site list:
    - 1. 217 affordable units were expected from 1300 El Camino and Derry Ln (2 parcels). That is now the Springline project, bringing in only 20 BMR units total across both parcels (8% of expected)
    - 2. 118 affordable units were expected from 700 El Camino - CVS/BevMo/Big5 retail center. That parcel was not developed and is being included AGAIN in the 6th cycle. (0% of expected)
- e. Given our track record from the last element, **I submit that we either need a lot more evidence that the sites in the 6th element will actually be developed, or we need to add a lot more sites to the new element knowing that very few will actually result in housing being built.**

Thank you for taking the time to read my long comment. I hope we can have a productive discussion this evening and make the housing element more aligned with our vision for Menlo Park.

Best,

Misha Silin