

**Attachment B**  
**El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan**  
**Summary of Public Comment**  
**August 4, 2011 Planning Commission Meeting**

*This summary is intended to inform the Planning Commission's review of the Draft Specific Plan.*

Patty Boyle

- Housing Commission Chair; presented Housing Commission's recommendation
- Housing Commission supports the Specific Plan and the efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Housing Commission recommends creating housing adjacent to the El Camino Real transit corridor for seniors who no longer drive and job holders needing connection to transit
- Housing Commission supports the replacement of blighted areas with housing infill projects that will serve a variety of income groups, including Below Market Rate; expressed concern that no new housing had been built on El Camino Real since Menlo Square in the 1990s and that no new proposals are in the pipeline; Noted that the Wait List has over 75 people wanting one- and two-bedroom units
- Housing Commission supports east-west connectivity that will create a more walkable, vibrant and safe community at Ravenwood and Santa Cruz Avenues
- Housing Commission supports better utilization of public land by consolidating parking into garages and using the air rights above the garages for small condominium units that might help to pay for the garages; noted that this would also serve to eliminate parking heat island impacts thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Stated that it is time to restore El Camino Real to a grand boulevard
- Stated that the community engagement process has been thorough

David Geraghty

- Resident who resides on College Avenue and interacts with El Camino Real as a driver, cyclist and pedestrian
- Stated that the Plan needs more focus on concrete bike and pedestrian improvements
- Noted that the main improvement is the sidewalk extensions but that he is opposed to the extensions because of the obstacles they create to bicyclists
- Stated that the sidewalk extensions are not of much benefit since the distance is not the largest impediment to crossing, rather it is the length of time it takes to wait for signals

Adina Levin

- Member of Green Ribbon Citizen's Committee; co-founder of Driveless Challenge, member of Environmental Quality Commission but speaking for self
- Commented that other communities set goals for bike, pedestrian and transit access and then weigh improvements against those goals; stated belief that

traffic impacts can be mitigated if improvements are made to bike, pedestrian and transit access

- Stated that the Plan looks at improvements to places as opposed to routes to get from place to place and that place-based solution do not address route needs; Provided examples of Middle Avenue where an underpass is proposed but only moderately enhanced crossways at El Camino Real and routes from the transit center to workplaces and downtown; noted that if pieces of routes are missing people will use their cars and add to traffic
- Suggested that Plan look at potential for removing parking at rush hour noting that cycling around cars in rush hour is a safety issue
- Stated that there is significant room for improvements to bike and pedestrian access and that the improvements should be based on routes and goals around how much of the city's transportation needs we want to meet by other than single-occupant vehicles in order to address traffic mitigation, congestion relief and transit goals

#### Ray Mueller

- Member of Transportation Commission but speaking as a resident
- Provided written information on traffic counts from 1995 to 2009 noting that when he first learned of the increase of 13,000 car trips as a result of the Plan he had a similar reaction as many people that are concerned with the potential level of change and impacts on village character; however, with review of the historic traffic counts learned that there has been a decrease in traffic between 1995 and 2009 of 12.5%
- Noted that the decrease in traffic is greater than the 13,000 new trips resulting from the Plan
- Stated that the Plan is not about adding traffic, but replacing traffic already lost and that the Plan is trying to make the city healthy again
- Stated that it is smart to add housing near transit and revitalize downtown
- Stated support for the Plan with the exception of the consideration of reduced heights along southeast El Camino Real from the proposed 60 feet to 48 feet or four stories with the ability of the Planning Commission to consider individual proposals for taller heights based on possible public benefit such as compensation for the bike and pedestrian underpass and/or mitigation of the Stanford-related traffic

#### Mike Tevis

- Current resident of Portola Valley; has lived and worked in Menlo Park for 30 years; active real estate investor and developer; provided examples of past and current projects
- Commented that a major factor in successful developments and the activation of a downtown is access to all forms of transportation
- Commented that downtown retail thrives on local repeat customers and that most of those customers do not use their cars; noted that dense affordable rental residential and dense office contribute to retail vibrancy; noted that retail vibrancy is not created by adding more retail and suggested that the Plan allow retail in all

districts but only require retail on Santa Cruz Avenue between University and the train station and on El Camino Real between Menlo and Valparaiso Avenues

- Commented that young people invigorate street scenes and that more young people should live and work downtown
- Stated support for high density around transit and arterial streets, high residential density to encourage smaller units, limiting building size by Floor Area Ratio (FAR) , parking and height, encouraging creative office uses, providing parking garages in new developments, including bike parking in garages, using shared parking for 24-hour use of spaces, density bonuses for underground parking, public art and gathering spaces, heights of 70 feet (5 stories) and 3.00 FAR on El Camino Real and heights of 55 feet (3 stories) and 2.00 FAR elsewhere in Plan area, minimum interior heights of 18 feet on the ground floor and 12 to 15 feet on upper floors, no density limits, the encouragement of bike routes and parking, and connection to transit through safe bike lanes
- Stated that the vision will take time to implement but can serve to propel downtown into a positive economic climate with a high quality of life for years to come.

#### Patti Fry

- 20 year resident; former member of the Planning Commission; member of Green Ribbon Citizen's Committee
- Stated that east-west connectivity is difficult in town and that we need to be more aggressive in looking at underpass and overpass options for crossing the train tracks as well as El Camino Real
- Stated need for more continuous and comprehensive bike routes
- Suggested that a financing mechanism for improvements could be starting the public benefit bonus provisions at a lower level so that some of the benefit given to developers is shared with the community; noted that every blighted lot on El Camino Real has an approved project that is consistent with existing zoning indicating that substantial development incentives are not needed to encourage new development; provided examples of Stanford-owned lands and that Stanford would be doing its own planning and the Park Theater where she did not believe the Plan should address a situation created by the property owner
- Commented that people in the workshops were asked about their acceptance of maximum levels of development without information on the impacts and tradeoffs and that if people had the information they might have responded differently; cited the significant increase in greenhouse gas emissions as an example
- Asked that the Commission modify the Plan to support small town charm instead of a more urban feel

#### Keith Davis

- Representative of the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter
- Stated support for Plan based on the potential for increasing transit ridership and reducing urban sprawl by targeting new development around the transit station and downtown

- Suggested upgrading the planned bike improvements on El Camino Real to Class II; stated that El Camino Real is a difficult environment for bicyclist; Noted that many cities have Class III facilities along El Camino Real but that this is a chance to do better and provide for regional bike routes

#### Margie Roginski

- Member of the 389 El Camino Real task force coalition of neighbors working with the developer
- Stated that the façade modulation requirements in the Plan do not adequately protect the village character of the Allied Arts neighborhood from large bulky massing that would be out of character with the neighborhood; provided an elevation from the project to demonstrate that the 100 foot modulation requirement would not apply along College Avenue since its length is less than 100 feet although the project would be next to a single-family home and that only a color change would be required if the modulation were to be applied
- Requested that the modulation requirement be reduced to 50 feet and more specifically define the types of acceptable modulation and that it be more than just a color change

#### Carole Grace

- Resident of Menlo Park
- Addressed Santa Cruz Avenue due to the uncomfortable environment at the previous meeting
- Commented that with the added vibrancy of Facebook and Menlo Gateway on the east side of the City, we need to make sure that the downtown also stays vibrant; commented that downtown needs a facelift
- Stated support for the Plan
- Commented that the recent tree installation along El Camino Real is a positive attribute of the street and would like to make sure the Plan includes adequate space for trees
- Stated that the sidewalks extensions should be deleted from the Plan since as a pedestrian she does not find them useful and as a bicyclist she finds them very dangerous; commented on the difficulty of biking downtown and suggested the relocation of on-street parking to garages or plazas and providing wider bike lanes and paths to improve bike access and safety

#### Lawrence Zaro

- Represents property owner on Santa Cruz Avenue
- Suggested emphasizing the development of El Camino Real first and looking at other parts of downtown on a more experimental basis and not as aggressively
- Suggested putting the plan to a vote of the people who as taxpayers may have to pay for the plan

#### Jeff Warmoth

- Commented that two of the vision goals support vibrancy and development of underutilized properties; noted that he owns an underutilized property on El

Camino Real; believes this is an important mandate to move forward with the development of property

- Stated strong support for Plan
- Stated that it is critical for a property owner to have a Plan in place that provide certainty as to what can be done; noted that the Plan provide a maximum envelop but that the Planning Commission would retain the ability to review and modify building design and materials to ensure appropriate and high quality development
- Suggested that properties within ¼-mile of the train station be treated similarly with regards to Floor Area Ratio, density and height and be similar to the southeast section of El Camino Real
- Commented that the proposed height of 38 feet does not work from a design standpoint; suggested that the height limit could be 45 feet

#### Gerri Albers

- Stated that she likes the bike provisions in the Plan but noted the bikes and cars do not mix; commented that more bike lanes and paths are needed to make the city bike friendly
- Commented that it is difficult to travel in an east-west direction to reach downtown and suggested taking part of the south parking plazas to add a bike lane
- Suggested a bike route along the train tracks

#### Steve Peckler

- Resident since 1960
- Stated that he does not support high density and is concerned about the impact on school overcrowding, traffic on arterials and the detriment to the city; noted that it is dangerous for children to cross El Camino Real and that more development would only add to the traffic
- Stated that better bike opportunities are needed, especially north-south access; suggested the City work with Atherton to improve the unsafe conditions in Atherton
- Noted that urban sprawl is not an issue since there is nowhere to sprawl toward;