



NORTH VENTURA COORDINATED AREA PLAN WORKING GROUP AGENDA

Thursday, November 15, 2018

Downtown Library – El Camino Room

270 Forest Avenue

Palo Alto, CA 94301

5:30 PM TO 7:30 PM

Call to Order: 5:30 PM

Welcome and Round Table Introductions:

Jonathan Lait, Interim Director for the Planning Department welcomed everyone. He encouraged everyone to speak into the mic because voices would not be picked up for the video recording. There was a microphone set up for any speakers also. He remarked the response from the public to come to this meeting was tremendous and he thanked everyone. He asked Robin Ellner to call roll for the working group members.

Members present: Alexander Lew, Angela Dellaporta, Cari Templeton, Doria Summa, Gail Price, Heather Rosen, Keith Reckdahl, Kirsten Flynn, Lund Smith, Parker Mankey, Terry Holzemer, Yunan Song.

Ms. Ellner noted there were twelve present, two absent.

Mr. Lait noted everyone had an agenda before them. At the last meeting everyone was given a big packet of information and one of the things he wanted to come back to was the ground rules to see if anyone had questions about the ground rules or if this was something that probably would not need to be used but it was basic information on how to run meetings and how to respect each other's voices. There were no questions about this. He introduced Nivi Das to lead the first part of the discussion.

Nivi Das noted on the agenda, after the introductions would come the self-guided tour reports. After that the consultant team would present their initial findings on the existing conditions. There would then be another engagement on assets and opportunities after which the meeting would be opened to public comment. After that would be the wrap up and another assignment

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for everyone for the next meeting in January. She noted Kristen Hall and Dave Javid would guide everyone through the next section.

David Javid stated there was a project website which was paloaltonvcap.com. It should be on the bottom of the agendas as well. He asked everyone to look at it and report any additional feedback. It included information on resources, what's available and information about upcoming events, past events and the things talked about. That would be an ongoing resource.

Agenda Items:

1. Self-Guided Site Tour Report Back

Mr. Javid confirmed the next part of the meeting would be hearing from members after their self-guided walking tour. The goal would be to start to record some input the members observed, what they liked, what stood out, opportunities for change or any general observations. Those would be recorded on the map. There would then be a conversation with the consultants about the existing conditions analysis they did. After that would be small group discussions and break out to delve deeper into these topics. The goal was to have one large map that would evolve over time that could be used as a resource moving forward.

Female asked if this was going to be gone through point-by-point, location-by-location and get comments on each location?

Mr. Javid responded that he thought it would be kept open and whatever each member wanted to discuss, whatever location that stood out or building or whatever.

Mr. Lait indicated maybe the high points, then if anyone had a second opinion on something anyone else brought up they could note that.

Female (inaudible, no mic)

Mr. Javid replied they will be adding checkmarks to see which ones were growing, but he wanted to hear from everyone.

Ms. Flynn noted she lived quite close to El Camino so she started walking down El Camino. She had many bus riders in her family so she noted the 22 no longer ran every 15 minutes. She didn't know if the Ventura Neighborhood residents were aware that the north valley transit cuts had been quite severe. The 522 didn't stop for the bulk of the neighborhood under study. That meant those area residents saw and smelled the buses, but couldn't ride them. She brought this up because there is talk of them being near a transit corridor.

Mr. Smith reported he was probably more familiar with this site than most because he used to have an office at the corner of Ash and Lambert and they still had properties along Ash and Olive. He stated something that was somewhat tricky but also an opportunity for the site was that a lot of the streets didn't connect all the way through. The infrastructure was kind of a hodgepodge. He felt there were opportunities to look at the infrastructure and how the street grid ran through it, which could help vehicle flow and pedestrian flow as well.

Ms. Templeton added that she felt there was some design opportunity for the movement from El Camino to Page Mill. That corner was known for causing flat tires because the grate stuck out at a funny angle. There was also often a backup of cars there because there was no dedicated right-turn lane so instead of waiting to turn right for the light, cars would cut through Olive to Ash to get through. That put more traffic there than would be necessary and maybe they could make recommendations for dealing with the traffic flow there.

Mr. Javid noted there was a lot of focus on connectivity and transportation.

Ms. Dellaporta indicated she had a lot to say about all of these things and she wasn't sure how to go about that.

Mr. Javid responded that she could cover key themes, just highlights that she observed. She could go into more depth on everything when the group broke into smaller groups.

Female suggested she could pass her notes to Elena and they would become part of the public record.

Ms. Dellaporta agreed with that. She remarked regarding the last point, she thought that anybody who was living on Olive or Ash would not want to have more traffic on their streets. She thought cut through traffic from El Camino to Park or El Camino to Page Mill would be very sad and not what people wanted to live near. That was her perspective on that one corner. She noted in general through traffic from El Camino for all of these was not the best thing to live with. Regarding Mr. Smith's comment, she wasn't sure if he was talking about the corner of Ash and Lambert, that corner as a nice kind of entryway or not.

Mr. Smith responded that he was not necessarily identifying any specific opportunity, just a basic general comment. Pretending the site was blank, a street grid or infrastructure would not be organized the way this site is organized. There was a segmented section of Ash and stops, Portage didn't go through, Acacia didn't run through. In thinking about the site, sometimes it could be easy to get focused on what was there, but not what could be done to connect the major streets within this site. Would there be opportunities?

Ms. Dellaporta acknowledged what Mr. Smith was saying. She stated when she made her rounds and imagined people living there, she thought how nice it would be to direct the traffic away from the neighborhood and onto the major streets, not the other way around.

Ms. Mankey acknowledged she hadn't done the walking tour. Her biggest thing was the light on Park at the new office building, the light that was just put in, she felt that should be a three-way light.

Female commented that was to alleviate left turn versus oncoming traffic.

Ms. Mankey noted everyone was excited when that light went in because that would decrease the congestion. She felt it would be perfect if it was a three-way light. It seemed like a cheap solution. She stated she had a lot of thoughts but didn't know if it would be productive to bring them all out at that time.

Mr. Javid again commented that the consultants would be giving some analysis of existing conditions that might spur additional ideas that could be explored when in smaller groups.

Mr. Reckdahl remarked he did the walking tour the previous day during rush hour and he stated there was a lot of cut-through traffic on Ash. He thought Ash should be just north to south there to prevent people from taking the right turn through the neighborhood. His biggest impression was that El Camino and Page Mill were really isolating, they were big barriers. He questioned if this was supposed to be a self-sustaining neighborhood with no interaction or interaction with California Avenue. He suggested something like a pedestrian/bike tunnel at Ash might be wonderful. Currently people walk across that. On Sunday mornings people from the Olive neighborhood were walking over to the farmer's market. People were even cutting across there at rush hour. That was an isolating barrier to the neighborhood.

Female asked what Mr. Reckdahl what he meant, talking about pedestrian traffic against the light across non-crosswalks?

Mr. Reckdahl responded that there was no crosswalk at Ash, across Page Mill and people walked across and waited at the median and then waited for the other side to clear, then went to the other side.

Female noted she frequently observed that also.

Mr. Reckdahl remarked it was very common and very dangerous. He acknowledged a pedestrian or bike tunnel or bridge would not be trivial but he thought there would be a lot of upside to that.

Ms. Rosen replied she didn't have a lot of extra things to add. She did the walking tour during the farmer's market on Sunday. She went to El Camino and crossed that way, but that was not a very pleasant way to walk across that area through California. She was surprised by how much concrete was around the whole area and it felt drastically different from the rest of Palo Alto.

Ms. Price noted her comments were irrespective of costs. She had some general observations. It was not a particularly pleasant walking experience for pedestrians. She specifically focused on Page Mill where she felt a lot of softening of areas and edges was needed. On Page Mill contingent on Caltrain, would there be buffer landscaping that was safe. Could there be widening of sidewalks, making sure there was appropriate lighting? She noted there were many great treatments on California Avenue that could possibly be incorporated in this project area, maybe a design of a serpentine sidewalk. She acknowledged that added many design issues and may not be feasible. She hoped for a little more whimsy in this area. This was a heat island with the asphalt. She recalled there was an underground passage under El Camino, but she felt it was on the other side and outside the project area. There also might be security issues. She noted the earlier comment about making it safer for people on foot to cross was particularly important.

Female clarified that underpass was where the old elementary school was by the soccer fields.

Ms. Price responded on the northwest side. She noted there were a lot of comments being made that were aligning with the El Camino Guidelines and the grand boulevard goals. She felt looking at some of the earlier work might help organize some of the thoughts.

(inaudible)

Ms. Price commented that any properties along El Camino of sufficient square footage she would like to see as housing, affordable housing. She stated there were a lot of issues related to landscaping and swales and other issues that would probably be addressed later. She reported she would put her comments in an organized written form and submit them.

Ms. Flynn noted general points regarding the massing the members observed, the more broken up the roof and face plane of the building is, the better she liked it. There was a big difference between three stories and four in her observations. Regarding the public benefit items the members were asked to look at were not public because there was a big plaza at the building at Page Mill and Park that was technically public. She was walking there with her daughter and commented that was a public benefit but it belonged to that building, the apartments. She felt any public benefit should actually be public and should read and feel welcoming to the public and be adjacent to the right-of-way. Lastly, the creek was in a maximum-security prison and physical access might lead to issues of safety or pollution, but she felt an effort should be made to restore visual access to the creek and slow the water down which would be more correct for more contemporary visions on how to manage creek pathways.

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Mr. Reckdahl responded that he wanted to follow up on what Ms. Price said about landscaping. On the north side of Page Mill there was a spot where the sidewalk went from five feet from the road to ten feet, and that extra five feet made a total difference. When walking down that sidewalk it was almost like not walking next to a busy street, but that shrank back down to five feet which was a really big contrast.

Ms. Song said she had done two walks, one on a weekend, the other at rush hour on a weekday. She noticed there were a lot of commuters or bicyclists there from California Station to either El Camino or Page Mill. The sidewalk at Page Mill was wider, but at El Camino it was very narrow. She felt it was not safe walking around El Camino and there was no bicycle lane on El Camino. There was a lot of traffic that tried to cut through Ash or Olive. She wanted to avoid walking on El Camino so she tried to walk on Park Boulevard or Ash but Ash was segmented so she couldn't cross to other buildings. She felt there was a chance to regrid those roads to encourage people to not walk along El Camino. Regarding the creek, she thought it would be good if that could be kept. She had done some research on how other cities treated creeks where there was no water for most of the year. There were some very contemporary things built such as bike lanes along the creek instead of the parking spots as there are now. Also, maybe some plants or arts could be put on the wall of the creek.

Mr. Holzemer noted he walked the area about one week ago. He made extensive notes but said he would just give the highlights. He also wanted to comment on the plaza that's on Page Mill that Ms. Flynn mentioned. That plaza was not very inviting on Page Mill and Park Boulevard. He noticed along Park Boulevard there was really no entrance to that park at all and that plaza. You would have to down to Page Mill to enter that little park area. He also noticed in that area there is a smoking hut which was a concern to a lot of people, that consideration would have to be given to moving that or adjusting it in some way to make it friendlier if you truly wanted to make it publicly accessible to everyone. Regarding the creek, making it more accessible. It was a concrete monster that races through the Ventura Neighborhood and he thought improvements could be made to make it friendlier and inviting such as bike paths or pedestrian walking paths. He also talked about the Fry's Building. He was very interested in the historical aspects of the building. He thought it did offer some unique historical aspects to Palo Alto and he wanted to investigate that further and in more detail. He noticed there were two features on top of the building that were very unique. They were kind of like cupolas which ran the entire length of the building. He didn't know if those were original but he thought they were unique structures that possibly were worth preserving in some way.

Ms. Summa replied that there were lots of good comments. She thought in a general sense parts of this area were not at all friendly for pedestrians and other parts were friendlier. On Park Boulevard going farther north there were more mature trees and it was kind of nice there. She agreed that the public benefits had fallen short of what it was hoped they would be. She thought if the creek couldn't be 100 percent naturalized which would probably be difficult, at

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least joining it to Boulware Park and making a statement big park there which she felt was very much needed in this part of town. There would also be an opportunity with the AT&T site to add that to Boulware Park. She felt one of the problems on El Camino for pedestrians was that the cars were so fast and there were many big trucks and buses and the sidewalks were not wide enough to give pedestrians a sense of refuge and safety. This had to do with a lot of existing regulations that might be changed. She thought there should be more mature trees almost everywhere, especially on Page Mill. She didn't know people were crossing Page Mill at Ash and using the median as a stopping place and that should be addressed. She had a great interest in preserving the Fry's Cannery buildings. She noted this was one of the first Chinese-American businesses in the area and was hugely successful. During the Second World War when there weren't enough people to process, they hired make students from Stanford. She felt there was a huge story there and in the rest of the neighborhood with the residential community that lived there originally. She hoped those buildings could be repurposed in a way that was interesting, lent character to this area and retained what was interesting about the area. She noted there had been train tracks that guided the way the buildings grew up and the way the street went around it. She felt retaining that original character hadn't been done a lot in Palo Alto and she thought that was worth doing here.

Mr. Lew remarked that his overall impression was that the neighborhood was very fragmented, partly because of the railroad and the creek. He didn't think the City had ever figured out a better solution, so now would be the opportunity. Things that struck him as opportunities were, first, the creek. There were some really beautiful oak trees along there. Even though it was a concrete channel, earlier this year he looked at the **Noki Magrow (phonetic)** Creek in Tokyo and that was a concrete channel but for several weeks it was stunning. On the Fry's building, he liked the covered porch which reminded him of the old market district in Omaha. It was like Town and Country but at a grander scale. The rooftops were all lined with flowers and below were restaurants and cafes. He was also interested in the Fry's Building history. He had looked at some old maps and there used to be about 25 small cabins at the site for workers. He noted he was a bicyclist and in the course of crossing through the site he saw a lot of people commuting to the Research Park and they had to do like a zig-zag to go through Portage on El Camino to get to other places in the Research Park. He saw many Caltrain commuters zig-zagging to get to other places and he hoped the whole experience could be made better for them.

Female apologized for being late. She walked on Sunday afternoon and her biggest impression at that time of the day was there were not very many people out there. There were a lot of open spaces and there was a lot of potential to make it more welcoming. Regarding the park, location number three, she felt it was a really sad place, a lot of cars and traffic but no way to attract people to stay there, nothing interesting going on. She felt the little park there could have more mobility features to help bikers such as a bike share or things that were more fun. Her impression while walking along Fry's was that the parking space was vast. A lot of the land

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was not utilized especially along the creek, so there would be potential there. At number five, Olive Avenue and El Camino Real, she tried to take the shortcut to drive there but she had to get on El Camino and turn left and she realized there was a huge gap between the Ventura side versus what was on the other side of El Camino. She wondered if anything could be done to help the walkers get easier access to the other side of El Camino. She felt like there was a need to expand the bridge at number eight to make it more accessible. She agreed there should be more bike lanes and make the roads safer and brighter. She was there at sunset, and she felt it was a little bit unsafe to walk there.

Ms. Dellaporta said she supported a lot of what people had been saying but asked to add another idea. There used to be a light rail line that went from the Caltrain Station and passed the Cannery and restoring that came up as an idea. This would help the people who were commuting from the Caltrain Station to the Stanford Research Park. It would also provide a way for people who were not walking or on bicycles, but didn't want to take their cars to get from this area to the California Avenue business area. This would solve a lot of problems and it would be historic.

Ms. Mankey noted at the Mike's Bike site there could be a pedestrian crossing at Olive, so there could be a crossing that would alleviate some of these problems.

(Male inaudible)

(crosstalk)

(Male inaudible)

Mr. Lait said all this discussion was a perfect segue into the existing conditions of talking about the transportation, bike, pedestrian safety and all the things observed during the existing conditions.

2. Consultants Findings on Existing Conditions.

Ghiti Sowel (phonetic) felt this was exciting, almost ready to start planning with the many ideas. She noted she would introduce the consultant team who would then share their preliminary readings of this site. They just started diving into the analysis. She was a principal at Perkins & Will and she was leading the consultant team.

Kristen Hall was the senior, lead designer for the project.

Nivi Das was the project manager.

Rachael Cleveland was the urban designer.

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Jhata (phonetic) was the principal strategic designer who would be talking about the housing analysis.

Paul Biti (phonetic) Arrow (Phonetic) Transportation Planning who would give insight on connectivity.

Tave (phonetic) and Leah were leading the community outreach.

Ms. Sowel (phonetic) noted there were two other consultants who were not currently in the room, but would be at subsequent meetings. BKF were the civil engineers. David J. Powers and Associates were the environmental planners. She called on Paul to go through a quick analysis of the transportation findings.

Mr. Biti (phonetic) indicated they had done an extensive data collection exercise over the past few weeks. Regarding traffic flows, there were the major flows along El Camino Real and along Page Mill Road, with smaller volumes within the site. There had already been comments about issues the traffic caused for pedestrians and cyclists trying to cross from the site towards the downtown area and also across El Camino Real. There were lower volumes on the other perimeter roads around the site so there could be opportunities to harness that and not jeopardize that by inviting traffic through the site. They looked at routes through the site and around the site in terms of the daily profile of traffic to see what it was like through the day, not just in the peak times. They found that daily traffic volumes were quite low through Olive Avenue, but they saw the route running that was experienced along Olive and through Ash. He encouraged being very mindful of that in terms of design and options so that wasn't encouraged. This area needed to be safeguarded for walkability and for cycling. Also, around the eastern and southern perimeters such as Park Boulevard, there were some spikes in the peak hours, but volumes were generally low. That needed to be safeguarded and used as opportunities for promoting walkability and cycling in the area. They looked at bikeways and pedestrian networks. There was good provision along Park Boulevard. Transit stops were generally well preserved by bike connections, but a lot of that was unprotected and a lot of the cycling, especially along El Camino and Page Mill had to interact with traffic. That was not a very inviting environment for pedestrians and cyclists and that needed to be considered in some of the designs. Penetration through the site was talked about and there would be opportunities to open up the site better for walking and cycling. Traffic was mentioned but focus could be on pedestrian-only thoroughfares to discouraged some of the route running now seen. They looked at intersection volumes for walking. At major intersections like El Camino and Page Mill there were high levels, but along El Camino Real between those major intersections it was quite low. That again was a symptom of an uninviting neighborhood. Connectivity through the site and the lack of coherent routes was an issue that also came up. He indicated a slide that corroborated the comments that were already heard in terms of the permeability. They did a travel time, walk time isochrone from the intersection of Olive Avenue and Ash to see where

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you could get to in five minutes, ten minutes and fifteen minutes. A section of Olive Avenue presented quite a barrier to getting anywhere in the site. On the slide, the dark orange blob in the middle showed where anyone could get to in five minutes from that point. It was small and focused on the northern side of Olive. Increased permeability through that site could open up that whole area to get much further in that five- or ten-minute period which would make walking much more of an enjoyable and efficient experience to get to Cal Ave and beyond to the train station. They looked at the volumes of biking at the intersections. This was low through the site representative of the lack of penetration and connectivity. Park Boulevard was very well used. He noted when it was done right it worked and was very well used, connections to the train station were there. But Page Mill Road at El Camino Real was very low and a symptom of the conditions that were there. In terms of travel times, obviously you could get further biking than walking, but that could be increased if "ground zero" was a lot more permeable to get through the site and beyond. That would open up Palo Alto Station and downtown Palo Alto was within commutable distance for biking. The daily volumes were looked at for walking and cycling on those routes. Park Boulevard was higher than Olive and Lambert and pedestrian volumes peaked in the middle of the day. For cycling there were very specific spikes in the peak periods with the morning and afternoon rush. There were very low volumes of cycling on Olive and Lambert reflecting that emerging theme of connectivity and permeability. Regarding public transit, it had been mentioned that there were many stops, but maybe not as many services stopping as there should be. especially within the site. There may be opportunities to potentially route some services through this site to provide better connectivity to a wide regional public transit system. There was a fantastic regional transit system that should be capitalized on and promoted. The key to doing that was providing adequate connections. Public transport needed to be enhanced to make it a more attractive mode of travel for those who wanted to use it. That would be making it very accessible for people within that area, as well as people getting to and from work from that area. Parking had been mentioned. They looked at the number of parking spaces, both on street and off street in this area which showed a huge amount of space in the site devoted to parking. There were about 2,500 off-street spaces and just under 500 on-street spaces in that area. Data collection was used to see if that was all used or all needed. The on-street data did counts throughout the day from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM and found there was a constant steady demand throughout the day. The 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM counts were high which suggested a high level of residential parking in the area which needed to be safeguarded. The on-site duration of stay profiles during the day were looked at and almost 50 percent of all the parking acts recorded were less than three hours, which suggested a high level of short-stay retail visits, business visits. There was a modest level, about 17 percent, of long-stay all day parking which suggested people driving in for work, staying all day, then leaving. Residential parking needed to be safeguarded but there could possibly be opportunities for consolidating some of the spaces. He noted some of the uses, such as the short-stay use, people commuting, they may be availing themselves of free spaces there. Could that be consolidated because maybe not all those spaces were needed. They could also look at some parking demand management strategies for short-stay use. For travel behavior, census data was looked at and in terms of travel time to work, the majority of

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trips made to work were less than 20 minutes, but 50 percent of those trips were made in single-occupancy vehicles. There could be an opportunity to promote and enhance public transport revision, the walkability of the site, maybe business in the area helping out with travel demand management practices. Could that balance be addressed away from single-occupancy and realizing the benefits in terms of economic generation, environmental pressures and the general health and well-being of people living in the area. There were a number of planned improvements already and there could be an opportunity to really drill into these to see where there could be alignment to some of the planned improvements that were ongoing and harness some of those to help with the options being looked at for the site.

Ms. Hall spoke next. She talked about some of the improvements. There were a number of things happening in the area already. There were some crosswalk safety enhancements that were planned, particularly at the corner of Olive and El Camino. There was a Caltrain Rail Corridor Grade Study happening, which was thinking about electrification of Caltrain and potentially high-speed rail. There was the Grand Boulevard Initiative along Al Camino Real, which was thinking about a whole peninsula in South Bay, an idea about El Camino being a different kind of environment that was more walking and bike friendly. Page Mill Expressway Corridor improvement was happening and that was about multi-modal mobility and safety upgrades, which probably includes bike lanes. Park was envisioned as a bike boulevard and would be moving into the second phase of that soon. A bike boulevard was sort of an elevated bike facility where there would be priority for bikes mixing with cars, so it was very clear that the bike has the priority. She wanted to give a little bit of the context of what was happening. She noted looking at the Comprehensive Plan, the land uses for the site, as compared with a lot of the other parts of the City, this was a very diverse mix of uses, which she said was something interesting about the character found there. There was a whole mix of uses from office, research park to single family to service, commercial and this could be an opportunity to create an interesting mix of urban things happening. That same type of mix was happening at Cal Ave which was one of the reasons Cal Ave was a fun, exciting place. Looking at the bigger context as well, she reported there were four parks within the immediate vicinity. She gave some reference for scale on the slide using the Cal Ave train station and walking a half mile radius that would be about a ten-minute walk. On the slide, the purple streets were the through streets. Park Boulevard would be one of the main opportunities for connectivity. Olive was a through street across El Camino with the planned improvements. Ash Street continued past Portage to Boulware Park, but didn't continue through the site on the western portion. These streets didn't continue all the way through to cross El Camino Real. Zooming in a little at the site, there were a number of locations that were within walking distance of the site. The blue arrow at the top indicated the walk to Cal Train was about 15 minutes. Walking to Cal Ave, which was the main retail connection was about a 10-minute walk from the edge of the site. If there was a connection from an area she noted on the slide, there would be stronger east-west connections, but the two safe locations to cross currently are at the north and south side of the site. Talking about some of the parks, Sarah Wallis Park was about an eight-minute walk, Boulware Park was about a two-minute walk from the edge of the site. Hoover Park at the

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north was about ten minutes, and the community playing fields were about a five-minute walk from the edge of the site. Looking at the intersections, she stated there were just a handful of controlled crossings, such as a stop sign or light and a crosswalk. She reiterated that El Camino at Page Mill didn't feel great to cross, but it was controlled with crosswalks and signals. At Ash Street there was no controlled crossing and with all the activity there, it seemed that could be a big opportunity to create more of the east-west connections. El Camino was a barrier to the south, and while Lambert didn't have as many controlled crossings, it was somewhat of a slower street, but could also be an opportunity there to open up that edge and some of those connections external to the site. Looking inside the site, what was seen was where there were streets there were sidewalks. There were a number of discontinuous sidewalks within the middle of the site but generally speaking, within the site it was fairly safe for walking with the pedestrian infrastructure. She indicated on the open space context on the slide, there were several things existing and some planned. Park Boulevard was an existing bike boulevard which would be upgraded into a Phase 2 bike boulevard. That also aligned with a pollinator pathway which was an idea about creating continuous plantings that attract birds and bees and butterflies and other pollinating insects. Generally seen in this plan was that where there was pedestrian or bike infrastructure, it overlaid with ecological infrastructure. Thinking about Park Boulevard as the major opportunity for that on this site along with Portage Avenue was identified as a desired pathway for a pollinator pathway. The creek was mentioned as an opportunity. There were several ideas about the creek in the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan. There was an idea about a 150-foot offset from the creek for habitat. In order to make that a viable, functional waterway, best practices would be that it would have at least a 30-foot protected riparian corridor. The 150-foot offset was shown on the slide in purple and the white dashed line was the 30-foot offset. That area was part of Palo Alto's Natural Open Space and Master Plan, which had identified it as an urban canopy target area. She noted when looking at the slide, the green dots were individual trees and there was somewhat of a density of canopy around the site that was different. That density of canopy was not shown within the site, with Olive Avenue being the exception to that. Looking at project context in terms of development, some of the recent development that had happened, the office building was outside the site but very adjacent. There was another development at the corner of Page Mill and El Camino. Within the site there were several redevelopments that had happened recently and other projects that were recently entitled or permitted. Two of those were the recently completed building at numbers one and two on the slide which were entitled and in process. Looking at single family homes owned by individuals, these were in purple on the side. The slide showed a map of parcels that were owned by commercial entities or groupings of parcels owned by a single owner that together amounted to about one-half acre in size or greater. This was just to give an idea of what could potentially be worked with in the area. This wasn't to say this is what would be changing. Looking at census data, this was in tract 107. The census tract was a little bigger than the site, but a good proxy for the site and she pointed this out on the slide. Going through the census data for the site, looking at the total population within this census block there were 749 people living there. That population tended to be slightly older than Palo Alto as a whole. There were a few less children, a few more seniors. That says there may be fewer

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families, more seniors and potentially more working-age people. Looking at ethnicity and race, this area tracked quite closely with Palo Alto. On the slide, the blue was the census block area and the brown color showed Palo Alto as a whole. In terms of households in this area, they were slightly larger than households in Palo Alto as a whole. There were about 55 percent of units for rent, and 45 were owned, so about 60 percent of people living in the area were renters. Also, 21 percent of all households were single-person households. In terms of dwelling unit composition, about 70 percent of the homes in this area were single family as compared with 61 percent of homes in Palo Alto as a whole. This indicated there were more single-family homes in this area than Palo Alto as a whole. The balance were multi-family homes, two or more units, which was 30 percent in this area and 39 percent in Palo Alto as a whole. Looking at businesses, there were several businesses in this area and the majority were office, the olive green color on the slide. There wasn't much retail or services in the area but there were many gyms in this area. There were a number of different employers in the area with about 3,000 jobs. The largest employer was Cloudera which had about 700 people, but there were more smaller organizations than that. The remaining 50 percent was a pretty even mix of other types of uses, including auto repair and manufacturing, lodging and healthcare.

Sue Jhata (phonetic) stated they would be doing a lot more market analysis looking at a variety of different land uses in the future. Today she would highlight some of the housing and affordable housing findings. Palo Alto's housing prices were considerably higher than Santa Clara County as a whole. The graphs showed for attached houses primarily such as condos, townhomes and apartment rents, significantly higher values for housing. There had been a fair amount of new development. She noted many members may be familiar with the process by which states, regions and cities plan for housing in California. There was the Regional Housing Needs Allocation. Every city had to designate a certain number of sites that would be potential sites for housing development and there was a number assigned to each city for a period of seven to eight years. In Palo Alto about 20 percent of the RHNA allocation has been met through permitting for the 2015 to 2023 horizon. Palo Alto was on track to meet its housing needs number, but that was definitely more of a challenge for lower income categories than for higher income categories. Those were tracked by the kinds of incomes the city was trying to meet the goals for. In the North Ventura area there were a number of housing units already in place and about 70 percent of those were single-family homes. Of interest was that there was a higher renter occupancy in this plan area, so many of those single-family homes were actually occupied by renters. There had been some residential and mixed-use activity in this area. One of these was built and the others were planned and proposed projects. They ranged in size and type. Every time the City certifies a housing element, every seven or eight years, they needed to identify sites that had the capacity to be able to deliver housing. According to the City's most recent recertified housing element, this plan area had the capacity to provide about 364 housing units total. That would be about 20 percent of the City's overall goal. The plan area potentially plays an important role to help the City meet its housing needs. All of those numbers would depend on what the assumptions were about zoning, land use, how to deal with how much development could happen on any particular site. These were rough estimates

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done for planning purposes. She noted they spoke with some developers and stakeholders in the real estate community and looked at housing element and other housing documents and identified some of the key barriers to housing in the site area. The first was the fact that there were a lot of small parcels and they were typically difficult to develop because usually a parcel of at least half an acre would be needed to do new development of any significant scale. Another issue was, in the Bay area overall there had been escalating costs of construction, including labor and materials, which made it more difficult to be able to do development. Land costs in Palo Alto were very high. Acquiring sites could be difficult, especially sites that may have some viable commercial uses. Sites could look like they were underutilized but when looking at the underlying economics, the property owner was actually achieving a reasonable return on that site, so it could be challenging to be able to reuse and redevelop those sites. Finally, there were development fees and exactions and other things on development that could also increase the cost for developers. On the regulatory side, they heard from some of the development community that the zoning regulations as they were right now didn't provide enough incentives to be able to make projects work in terms of revenues being able to offset those high costs of development. The City had a Retail Replacement Ordinance for certain sites that required that any retail that was demolished was replaced. The retail environment was rapidly changing, becoming very difficult to find tenants for some of the retail spaces which could be a barrier to trying to do a mixed-use project. She remarked that parking requirements in Palo Alto were higher than some of the neighboring communities, and that could significantly increase the cost of parking. Right now, the estimate for an underground parking space is about \$70,000 per parking space. That could also be a big burden on development. She indicated there were always concerns about what would the impact of new development be on the surrounding community. Many issues came up when trying to accommodate that and mitigating any of those impacts. On the positive side, she noted there were many opportunities for housing, many opportunity sites, some of which were of a large scale that could flexibly accommodate a variety of different types of uses and housing types. The market for housing was really strong. There was clearly a need for housing in the community. Because of the Caltrain and bus transit access, transportation options could be leveraged to provide more options, there might be an opportunity to also address that parking issue and reduce the cost of development. For affordable housing, there were some different kinds of issues that were specific to thinking about very low- or low-income households. Those usually required some sort of a subsidy. At the Federal level, many of those subsidies had been decreasing. On the opportunity side, however, the city had implemented some new revenue sources, including an affordable housing impact fee and increased the commercial linkage fees. These types of funding sources at the local level could really help offset some of the gap. Also, there were some new State and County funding sources. There were some grants that were available for affordable housing, including tax credits and the State Affordable Housing for Sustainable Communities award projects that were close to transit. Those were more competitive for those types of grant sources. She indicated those were some of their conclusions so far on affordable housing.

Ms. Sowel (phonetic) noted they had no findings from the environmental planners yet. They needed to do their study. Many members talked about historical significance of the cannery building and that will be looked into. They would definitely look at the historical context of the site. The challenges would be the potential plume due to the CPI facility. She hoped when they came back in January there would be findings to share with the group. She asked if there were any questions and noted the presentation would be on the website.

Ms. Flynn remarked there had been mention of the completed plans and proposed projects that were within the boundary. She asked if they were also tracking the completed plan and proposed projects that were immediately adjoining the project boundary.

Female replied that they will definitely.

Ms. Flynn noted there was a lot of activity and big projects along El Camino.

Female stated they would keep that in mind.

Ms. Flynn asked how the information about the travel behavior slide was gathered?

Male replied that information was garnered from the census data that Ms. Hall touched on, household travel surveys that were done as part of the census data collection.

Male indicated that was just for the immediate neighborhood.

Male clarified that was for the census block, the immediate area to the south of the study area as well.

Female asked how recently that was done.

Male answered in 2016, two years ago.

Ms. Templeton noted there weren't any members of the African-American community present and she wanted to point out that it was said that there wasn't a lot of difference in the census data of this neighborhood, but there was a 4x difference in the terms of how many African-American families living in Ventura. She felt it was important to define a very special part of the community. She hoped that could be understood and embraced. This was an area that had been historically very welcoming to diversity, whereas other parts of Palo Alto had a different history.

3. Assets and Opportunities Discussion

Female indicated the next part of the meeting would be smaller group discussions about assets and opportunities.

Mr. Javid noted the goal now would be to talk within the groups about the assets and opportunities and general observations. At the end everyone would be asked to report out so all the input could be focused onto one map.

(The members were reorganized into smaller discussion groups.)

Mr. Javid called everyone back to their seats. He asked everyone to name their top three assets and top three opportunities. Everything on the maps would be recorded. That information would be transitioned onto the large map. After that would be the opportunity to hear from the members of the public.

Mr. Holzemer noted his group focused on the Fry's historic building, especially the area around the copulas. They talked about Ash connecting to the market that leads to California Avenue. That would really be an opportunity also, trying to reconnect Ash across Page Mill. That would be a good opportunity for people to travel there. They talked about expanding Boulware Park and making it connect with the Matadero Creek and flowing more toward the railroad tracks; also improving the plaza corner to make it more user friendly and more neighborly. Extending Acacia Avenue so it connected with Ash Street.

Mr. Reckdahl responded that what they liked about the neighborhood was that Park Boulevard was a wonderful bike route, so anyone living in there it was very easy to get on and go north and south with very little competition with traffic. They thought the Olive Pepper neighborhood was wonderful. It was a smaller neighborhood, very quaint. They liked the proximity to Cal Ave and to the Ventura Neighborhood.

Ms. Templeton indicated her group felt the opportunities would be to consider the flow from Ventura all the way to Cal Ave, so it went through out to Hanson. They talked about bike path safety. Currently there was a wonderful bike path on Park but there were many driveways and paths and they wondered if there was a way to improve on that, given the proximity to uninterrupted space near the train tracks or the creek. The traffic flow in the Olive, Pepper, Ash neighborhood could be the biggest opportunity.

Female noted her group mashed everything together. There were observations about pedestrian flow and bike flow and circulation and connectivity. They definitely wanted a variety of housing types, affordable housing, middle income housing, types, styles, ownership patterns providing increasing capacity there. There were many comments made about environmental features and to naturalize the creek. They talked about enhancing destinations, so looking at a way to incorporate additional retail. One member insisted there should be a bar in the area. They talked about the importance of making this a huge artistic opportunity, such as geometric

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designs at intersections. They discussed massing and height of buildings, the importance of articulation for visual interest, using landscaping artistically, providing buffers to existing housing. They talked about the importance of considering a development agreement, which was a negotiated agreement with the property owners to specifically articulate community benefits that were needed and desired by the community members. They thought a boutique hotel would be a way to bring in the tax to the City and designed in a way to compliment the rest of the site. Architectural elements should reflect the history and the architectural features that currently exist, historical placards could document the history of the neighborhood.

Oral Communication:

Mr. Lait informed everyone this was time to hear from the public and each speaker would have three minutes.

Don Barr noted twenty-one years ago he was on the South of Forest Avenue Coordinated Area Plan Working Group and helped to get Heritage Park there. He was speaking on behalf of MayView Clinic which was currently the only Federally qualified health center in Palo Alto. It treated low-income and uninsured families and had approximately 1,500 families assigned to it by County health. It was currently in the Courthouse and didn't have nearly enough space there. They were collaborating with Palo Alto Housing saying it only made sense to do a mixed use, because if you looked at the goals for the Coordinated Area Plan, goal one was for housing and land use for multi-family housing, goal four was for community facilities. The idea was for a ground-floor clinic that would be the only dental clinic in Palo Alto that took MediCal. It would expand the availability of medical care so they could see the people assigned to them with housing above. Palo Alto Housing and MayView Clinic would like to ask that the Working Group include conceptually in the project a mixed-use project with a nonprofit medical/dental clinic on the ground floor, the MayView Clinic, and housing above. The handout he gave out was now on the website.

Bill Ross noted he had a business at the corner of Ash and Lambert. He had submitted written documentation with respect to the prior meeting. He feels there was still an issue about adequate notification and compliance with full participation of everyone in the plan area. There were both residences and businesses that were off the web. The list that had been developed was not sufficient. He and others had not gotten written notice. His concern was with the type of environmental review that the plan would undergo. The consultant's contract suggested that it should be an addendum to the FEIR for the Comp Plan. He respectfully noted that when the Comp Plan was adopted in November 2017, it did not contain the implementation element. This Coordinated Area Plan was a method of implementation. Also, everyone was dancing around this issue of the plume of contamination from the Stanford Research Park. They were identified at the GeoTracker for the Regional Water Quality Control Board. There were three sites that were either subject to remediation and would be closed out or have closed out. That was independent contamination of both the groundwater and the soil. Notwithstanding that,

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the development of any other property in this area should not be deemed to be a responsible party under Regional Water Quality Control Board regulations. That contamination was caused by the Stanford Research Park, both the fee owner, the University and its tenants. Evidence of that was affected currently. Stanford was suing Hewlett-Packard concerning the cleanup costs they had to have implementing the Upper California Development. To have affordable housing, one of the costs was undoubtedly going to be a new foundation. The water table was high in this area and that would be run into immediately. He suggested it was inappropriate to have an addendum. The standards under SEQA Guideline Section 15164A were not present. They should be pursued. He also suggested, as was in the consultant's contract, that the environmental review for the area not be Phase 1 which was just the surface, but be Phase 2 and have coring in very specific areas so there could be a data base for analysis of groundwater and soil contamination. That affected the construction costs for new commercial, new housing and what's the feasibility of doing this. The definition under SEQA included economic factors, if everyone had to address this remediation of groundwater contamination that was the fault of a third party. He thought, in terms of jurisdiction, the area was basically surrounded by other jurisdictions, the websites of which haven't been acknowledged. Page Mill is a multijurisdictional street, owned and maintained by the County. There was a cooperative agreement with the City. El Camino was the State. Caltrain wasn't in there. The flood control channel was the Santa Clara County Water District. He also suggested, there was a very good model of another jurisdiction that had taken the water out of a flood control channel and utilized it for the development of parks, recharging the groundwater basin, which was the City of Pasadena and the Royal Grande which was where the Rose Bowl was. That was an ongoing project for over 35 years and was an example of something that could be utilized presently for the benefit of all, especially for the generation of more park space.

Elaine Johnson noted she was a homeowner on Chestnut which was parallel to Lambert at the eastern end of the area. She felt the charm and livability of the street where she lived was largely due to the fact that it did not go through to El Camino so she asked everyone to be careful about trying to make throughways and make sure they didn't apply to vehicular traffic. There were many young children who played on her street, which ended at Boulware Park. She continued to be extremely concerned about the traffic at Park Boulevard. There was talk about it being a bike boulevard, but it seemed that the City kept okaying more and more huge buildings that brought more traffic to that street. She wanted to be sure this group was coordinating with whoever in the City okayed construction of buildings. If that was going to be such an important bike boulevard, the size of those buildings should be scaled back and looking more carefully at where that traffic came out. Lastly, regarding the Fry's area, many of the homes in that area were quite small, and she felt it would be wonderful to have a community center included in what was done with that area.

Peter Lockhart remarked that this was a gem of an area with amazing potential and he was excited about a lot of the pieces of the ideas that came through this evening. He came to Palo Alto in 1958 with his family. At that time there was no overnight parking allowed on the streets

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and the Foothill Expressway took over the **Los Gavas (phonetic)** Palo Alto interurban rail. At that time there was a lot of talk about parking and traffic and this needed to be dealt with in a practical manner. He noted at Redwood City and Menlo Park, Mountain View and Los Altos and the building capacity there, which meant lots more traffic. He noted practical solutions were in order. About thirty years ago he went to the City Council three times trying to push the idea of going from Portage Avenue cutting through, a serpentine drive coming around Ash and blocking off Olive and Pepper so there would be no through traffic. It would have been possible to make a right turn lane and maybe a roundabout. There really was nothing to go from the Baylands to the mountains except Page Mill road. He felt this was an opportunity to kick out the old thoughts and think big and get some new ideas going because the focus so far had been micro. There was a building in Los Altos, the **Ask (phonetic)** Building on El Camino which was a pyramid-shaped building. It could be seen for miles, but it didn't stand out, it didn't cast a shadow. He suggested breaking through the height limit, go up eight stories, put a community center with a restaurant and allow people to rent that room. That allowed landscaping below. Thinking big would allow affordable housing, a boutique hotel, some underground storage. Watch out for the plume, do the studies first. He suggested having the developers put together some ideas, some concept plans. They could make something that would work, that was affordable. Have them assimilate these ideas and present something that would work.

David Adams asked staff if they could make the packet available before the meetings. There was so much in there that it was difficult to come up with sensible questions. He noted the consultant's report looked like just an overview or summary. Could the full consultant's report be published? Regarding the tour and several comments, when the AT&T building went in at the corner of Page Mill and El Camino, there was talk of cutting a right-turn lane which didn't happen, so this was now the worst rated intersection in Palo Alto with cut-through traffic at Olive, Ash, Pepper. As Park Boulevard was seen as a bike boulevard, he suggested cutting off the ingress, egress from Cloudera so there wouldn't be the cross traffic going across a bike boulevard, which made it difficult and dangerous for bikes and pedestrians. He didn't want the streets connected which would create more traffic. Part of the charm of the area currently was that there wasn't a lot of traffic apart from the cut-through traffic at peak times. The sidewalks on Park were very narrow and nobody mentioned the lampposts in the middle of the sidewalks. Riding a bike on Park Boulevard with all the offices now, everyone was coming in at 9. Regarding the extensive data collection exercise, what about surveying the existing residents on Olive, Pepper and Ash. Instead of going to census data from 2012 to 2016, there was a population there to ask questions of. In about ten minutes he came up with twenty questions such as, what mode of transport was used for commuting, how many cars were there per household. The product was to be data driven, not by ideology. Any development taking place should be after the bike boulevard improvements on Park. Putting 20 percent of the housing allocation in this one area was unfair to Ventura residents. This was certainly not one-fifth of the area of Palo Alto. Olive Avenue was single story, single family, so eight stories next door was be a bit much.

Sophie Greenberg grew up in Palo Alto. She felt the main thing she had noticed and really thinks needed to be addressed was affordable housing. The Cardinal Hotel was a prime example of 75 residents being evicted from their homes who had lived there for almost 30 years. They were just given \$7,000 but it was not about the money, it was about giving them a place to live. Palo Alto had come to a point where communities needed to be looked at like eco villages or kibbutz, and sustainability issues looked at. Smaller communities were needed where people lived, not big mansions. All the cars were not needed. This was taking from our planet and giving back to the planet was needed. She felt people needed to live in smaller places, just a roof over your head. She looked for a small community where there were businesses within the community, a garden so outsourcing was not needed, which created more pollution. She looked for more sustainability instead of outsourcing which costs more money and polluted the environment. She said she worked at a school and tried to teach the children about composting, recycling and she felt we needed to move on with its evolution and new ideas were needed. Big houses and so many cars just had to go. Just basic needs needed to be met.

Staff Comments:

Ms. Hall noted much of the afternoon was spent thinking about existing conditions. A baseline was needed to understand what was going on at the site from a technical perspective, an experiential perspective. The next meeting would be thinking about vision, the big picture, exciting opportunities for this site. There would be prework or homework for the next meeting. Group members were asked to think of a district, a neighborhood, a place that they really liked, that might be a good model for this district. Members would be asked to give three images that represented the place and would be asked to talk about what was liked about those images and why those would be good models for this district. She asked that these be sent in ahead of time so a little bit of background research could be done. Note what was in these places that was liked, what were the uses, how did people get there, how did they leave, what was it about the whole experience of the place that was found compelling. Her example was the Pearl District in Portland. She really liked that it had some great open spaces where there were many people, things to do in the park. There were nearby housing and commercial uses which put people in those places days, evenings, weekends. There was a beautiful tree canopy. It was a very vibrant, urban, comfortable neighborhood. She liked that the buildings had interesting architectural characters such as the front porches which had been old loading docks. People could hang out there and talk to their neighbors. She liked the quality of materials in the image. It was very bike friendly with a lot of bike lanes and bike share. Many people were getting around by bike, even though it mists or rains in Portland. She felt those were things that could be opportunities in this district. Each member was asked to give a short report with three images and send those images by December 3 by email.

Future Meetings and Agendas:

Ms. Hall stated the next meeting would be either January 16th or 31st. Location was not known.

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Female asked how early materials would be available for that meeting?

Ms. Hall responded two days before.

Female asked how that would be distributed, on website or email to interested parties list?

Ms. Hall answered on the website.

(Female, inaudible)

Mr. Lait asked anyone to help reach out with this information. This was accessible at City Hall, a letter, any way to communicate to get a paper packet or paper information, but contact information was needed.

(Female) suggested information be made available at the libraries.

(Female) thanked Elena Lee for the contact information to follow up on comments. She also noted she had a text from somebody who had left because she couldn't get in, the doors were locked. She suggested if the meetings were held someplace that was locked, that should be looked at. She also asked if the public speakers could be switched to the beginning, in case they couldn't stay.

Ms. Hall also noted there was a comment about all the color printing in the packet and this could be lightened so the packet was more sustainable. She thanked everyone for their participation.

Adjournment: 7:30 PM

Note: Copies of meeting materials will be posted on the City's project website:

<https://bit.ly/2OtGFJG>.