



**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
DRAFT MINUTES**

TUESDAY, March 15, 2016

Rinconada Library – Embarcadero Room
1213 Newell Road
Palo Alto, CA 94303
5:30 PM TO 8:30 PM

1 **Call to Order:**

2 **Co-Chair Garber:** Robin, are you prepared to call roll?

3 **Robin Ellner:** Yes.

4 Present: Emberling, Filppu, Garber, Glanckopf, Hetterly, Hitchings, Keller, Kleinhaus, Kou,
5 Levy, McDougall, McNair, Moran, Packer, Peschcke-Koedt, Summa, Sung,
6 Uhrbrock, van Riesen, Wenzlau, Uang

7

8 Absent: Fine, Nadim, Titus

9

10 **Robin Ellner:** Twenty present.

11 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you.

12 **Oral Communication:**

13 **Co-Chair Garber:** Now is the time for anyone that would like to speak on any topic to speak. I
14 have four speaker cards. If anyone would like to speak, please fill out a speaker card. Looks like
15 we have a fifth as well. The first speaker is Don Barr, to be followed by Linnea Wickstrom.
16 You'll have 3 minutes.

17

18 **Don Barr:** Good evening, I'm Don Barr. I am the veteran of multiple knock-down, drag-out
19 battles over what is the appropriate use of a particular zone designation. I'm talking about the
20 Opportunity Center, and I'm talking about the 801 Alma affordable housing for families. I just
21 want you to know that this issue of affordable housing, especially affordable housing targeting
22 the very low and extremely low income populations, i.e., those making very low income in Palo
23 Alto by federal standards is a family of four making less than \$60,000 a year. Also the issue of
24 permanent supportive housing, which the Opportunity Center has been providing for nearly 10
25 years, and we certainly need more of on the Peninsula. I want you just to be sure that in
26 targeting how we're going to designate the appropriate zone districts, I know that you're talking
27 about that in terms of a diverse, inclusive community with a mix of housing types, but you're
28 also talking about residential neighborhoods within walking distance of commercial
29 neighborhoods. That's where you bump up against things. Please be sure that you put into the
30 Plan that there should be special attention paid to and zoning designations for affordable
31 housing for the very low and extremely low income populations and for permanent, supportive
32 housing for the homeless. Without those zone designations, we're not going to get more of
33 these facilities. Thank you.

34



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1 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Linnea Wickstrom to be followed by Jan Stokley.

2
3 **Linnea Wickstrom:** Good evening. My name is Linnea Wickstrom. I live on Monroe Drive in
4 Palo Alto. My son, Pear [phonetic], is here tonight. There he is. He's a young adult with
5 disabilities. I'm here to urge you to support a couple of things in land use. Number one, the
6 City to work with Housing Choices and other agencies to create affordable housing for people
7 with developmental disabilities like the one my son is now living at 1585 Studios on El Camino
8 in Mountain View, which was a collaboration of First Community Housing, Housing Choices and
9 the City. That's notable high density, transit oriented. It's right on El Camino. They take buses,
10 get to the light rail, etc. I always like to point out that you can be very innovative with lot size
11 and so forth for this kind of development, because very few adults with disabilities drive or own
12 cars. They do have to have support staff and so forth, some parking. The 1585 Studios, for
13 instance, has ten parking spots for support staff, the property manager, etc. Only two of 26
14 residents actually own a car or are able to drive. I know parking is a big issue in Palo Alto, so
15 that's one of the ameliorating factors for this kind of housing. The second thing is I would like
16 to urge you to urge the City to reduce the bars to granny units. For the long haul for me and for
17 many parents of children with disabilities, granny units can be an affordable, practical solution
18 for independent or supported living in an impossible housing market. Personally, I have a
19 10,000 square foot lot; the only barrier really to me is the parking thing. Once again, we're
20 talking people who don't require a lot of parking. I know several of you are already advocating
21 for people with disabilities amongst other populations that need affordable housing, and I
22 thank you for including this in your recommendations. Thank you.

23
24 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Jan Stokley to be followed by Pat Saffir.

25
26 **Jan Stokley:** Thank you. Jan Stokley, Housing Choices Coalition, following up on the remarks of
27 Linea and her son, Pear, who are living the experience of an older resident family of Palo Alto
28 whose adult child is in need of affordable housing in order to live independently. What I want
29 to do is share a little bit of the data with you, so that you have a sense of the scale of the issue
30 in Palo Alto, and urge you to take advantage of any opportunity in your land use plans to
31 support the creation of affordable, high-density, transit-oriented housing that will be inclusive
32 of the needs of this population. Just real quickly, there are 437 people with developmental
33 disabilities living here in Palo Alto; 88 percent are living at home with parents which is a really
34 high percentage. Of the 216 Palo Alto adults with developmental disabilities, only 48 are able
35 to live in their own apartment here in Palo Alto. This means that there are approximately 168
36 adults with developmental disabilities in Palo Alto living at home with aging parents. We have
37 been referred 51 people from Palo Alto in the past year who need help finding affordable
38 housing. Again, most of them are adults who are living at home with aging parents who need
39 to begin to make plans for their child to live on their own in the community. The greatest
40 barrier to this is affordable housing. San Andreas Regional Center is a state-funded



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1 organization that serves these residents and provides the services that residents need to live
2 independently in the community. The service part of the equation of the permanent,
3 supportive housing for people with developmental disabilities is funded. The challenge that we
4 face and the one that we need you to address is to make sure that housing is developed where
5 there are a certain number of units affordable to extremely low income, so that we can provide
6 the services and provide the housing in an inclusive setting that really mirrors your values as a
7 City to provide a community that is welcome and makes a home for everyone who lives here. I
8 know that the land use plan is very challenging and poses many issues, but look at 1585 Studios
9 in Mountain View as a success story where a very small, strangely shaped lot was used to
10 develop 27 very lovely units for people with developmental disabilities at affordable rents right
11 on El Camino where they have access to transit, libraries, shopping, everything that they could
12 need. It's being done in other cities, and we urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to
13 figure out how to help it get done in Palo Alto. Thank you so much.

14

15 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Robin, will you amend the minutes to show that Co-Chair Keller
16 has joined us? The next speaker is John—that was Pat Saffir, correct?

17

18 **Female:** No, that was not Pat Saffir.

19

20 **Co-Chair Garber:** Okay. The next speaker is Pat Saffir, followed by John Kelley.

21

22 **Pat Saffir:** I'm speaking tonight for the League of Women Voters. Chairmen Keller and Garber
23 and the Committee. While the League of Women Voters recognizes that the Land Use Element
24 covers many topics, our comments this evening are focused on housing. Please note that our
25 letter for the December 15, 2015 CAC meeting expressed our desires for maintaining the urban
26 growth boundary and for developing Complete Streets and worrying about climate change. It is
27 encouraging that the Land Use Element makes mention of mixed use development with
28 residential added and particularly smaller unit styles at many locations such as in CC, CN, CS and
29 CD districts. Too often, however, the Element uses the terms evaluate, consider and possibly
30 rather than create, encourage or simply zone for more housing. A further concern is that,
31 although mixed use is great for housing, if the City Council chooses to maintain a tight square
32 foot commercial development cap, housing will not be constructed because it is part of the
33 commercial development that is being discouraged. Please write the Comprehensive Plan
34 language such that housing will be encouraged, realistically zoned along transit corridors and
35 within our CC, CN, CS and CD districts as well as such places as the Stanford Research Park.
36 Mixed use is great, but standalone multiple-unit housing must be feasible and encouraged as
37 well. Thank you.

38

39 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Our last speaker of the evening is John Kelley. If anyone else
40 would like to speak, please forward me a card.



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1 **John Kelley:** I'm not going to have time to say everything I want to say on this issue. I think this
2 is one of the most important things for Palo Alto. I'm sure you all recognize that housing is an
3 absolute critical problem for our community. If you haven't figured that out during this
4 process, I would encourage you to go talk to somebody who's gotten kicked out of their house,
5 is just trying to move here, or someone who's a senior who's aging out of place. I'm going to
6 distribute a really short little PowerPoint. I just want to say one thing in particular about ADUs,
7 because I think that's part of the solution here. I think alternative dwelling units or secondary
8 units are a great way to provide a lot of housing, and I mean a lot of housing, in this community
9 quickly, inexpensively and to serve the needs of the people who need it most. What I'd like to
10 say about ADUs or secondary units or granny units is that they really are friendly. They're great
11 for the community. I'd like to give you four specific reasons why you should think about them
12 this way. First of all, they're family friendly. They're good for seniors. They're good for
13 children. They're good for parents. Perhaps most importantly, they're good for what I would
14 call continuity in our community, people who have grown up here, people who have lived here,
15 people who have worked here, and people who would like to continue their lives here. I have
16 friends who are getting kicked out of this community even though they've grown up very near
17 to my home. I think that's a travesty. I think that's a shame. I think we have a duty as a
18 community to those who have grown up here, but we also have a duty to people whose parents
19 want to be near their loved ones. ADUs can be senior friendly. They're going to allow more
20 people to age in place, and they're going to provide supplemental income to people who aren't
21 billionaires in Silicon Valley. ADUs are also community friendly. They'll promote greater
22 diversity in the community. Perhaps even more importantly, they will begin to address a
23 problem we are all going to confront if we keep living here which is just generational imbalance.
24 We know that the community is getting older, and we need to have opportunities for younger
25 people to join us in this community. Otherwise, what's Palo Alto going to look like? Finally, I'd
26 like to say that ADUs are values friendly. Let's just think about what's important to us. We hear
27 time and time and time again about parking. If parking's a problem, let's put a price on parking.
28 Let's control it that way. Let's not use land use or zoning as a means to deal with congestion or
29 parking. I would submit to you that people are more important than cars. I'd also like to say
30 that people are more important than stuff. I've done a rough count on my block. I think maybe
31 15, maybe 20, best case 25 percent of the people on my block actually keep a car in their
32 garage. Most of us all know that land is too valuable here, so we keep stuff there. Sometimes
33 we've got pool tables. I've got a pool table in my garage. Let's be honest with one another and
34 say that we don't really keep cars in our garages, so let's stop using parking requirements or
35 garage requirements for denying people an opportunity to live in our community, especially
36 people who have lived here for a long time. I fully support everything that was said before
37 about meeting the needs of people with disabilities, but there are a lot of people without
38 disabilities who need better housing in Palo Alto. They need better choices. This thing's
39 circulating around. I'm not going to tick all this off, but I'd invite you to look at the specifics that
40 I said on the second half of this slide. Thank you.



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1 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Neil Shea, who is our last speaker unless I get another card.
2

3 **Neil Shea:** Thank you. I may just share some themes that have already been said. I think a lot
4 of folks are saying we need to address our housing shortage. I don't see how we do fully
5 address the deep housing shortage that we have only with ADUs and if we insist on keeping the
6 height limit. I think we need to find certain areas in transit centers where we need to be able to
7 relax the height limit and put up some attractive, comfortable, taller, multifamily units of the
8 kind that many other communities have had good luck with. I think we need to find ways to
9 create more housing in Palo Alto, both to address the ongoing congestion and transportation
10 needs and to keep Palo Alto what it has been which is a place that people that aren't super rich
11 are welcome to be here. I think my comment is we need an "all of the above" strategy. I
12 definitely agree that parking costs should trend up to the cost of actually providing the parking.
13 We probably have to look forward to a world where we're not all in a single occupancy vehicle
14 for all of our transportation needs. I would strongly encourage us not to be afraid of
15 designating certain areas of the City to go beyond the height limit and allowing some real
16 density to flourish in some areas. Thank you.
17

18 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. I see no other cards.
19

20 **Staff Comments:**

- 21 **1. Recap of City Council discussion on February 22 and review of upcoming events and a**
22 **revised schedule.**
23 **2. Invitation for a small CAC delegation to participate in the City Council's March 21**
24 **discussion of housing issues.**

25 **Co-Chair Garber:** We will move onto our next agenda item which is Staff comments. Hillary,
26 Elena.
27

28 **Hillary Gitelman:** Thank you. Good evening, everybody. Welcome to the Land Use Element.
29 This is going to be the beginning of the hard part. Before we dig into the business of the
30 meeting, there are a few things I wanted to do. First, I wanted to recap what happened at the
31 Council meeting on February 22nd. That was the day, if you recall, the Council had requested a
32 discussion of the jobs/housing imbalance in Palo Alto and development of what they called the
33 fifth scenario, which is now the quality of life scenario, for inclusion in the EIR before it's done.
34 It was a really great discussion. We started by showing a presentation of the jobs/housing
35 balance here in Palo Alto as it compares to the county as a whole and the region as a whole,
36 and the differences are striking. We have a ratio of jobs to employed residents that's about 3:1.
37 Whereas, in the region as a whole and in the County of Santa Clara, the ratio is much closer to
38 1:1. The Council accepted that presentation, and then really started to focus on what that
39 means in terms of quality of life, and have asked us to develop a series of options and
40 information and bring back to them so they can formulate this fifth scenario for analysis and



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1 inclusion in the EIR before we get to the end of this process. What we're going to do as a result
2 of the Council's direction, first, is to gather some more input and intelligence from
3 conversations with the Council on a variety of issues. Next Monday, we have a conversation
4 that is specific to housing sites and programs. The Staff report is already available on the
5 website, if you want to take a look at it. It talks about the housing sites in the current Housing
6 Element and the programs that were identified for implementation in the early years of the
7 Housing Element and is asking the Council for input and direction on a number of those sites
8 and programs. We'll get the Council's direction on Monday on housing-related issues. On
9 April 18th, the Council will have the annual Earth Day report and hopefully a presentation from
10 Gil on sustainability issues, so we'll gather from that conversation the Council's input and
11 direction on those issues. On April 25th, the Council's scheduled to have their hearing on the
12 Draft EIR. It's an opportunity, we hope, for the Council to look closely at the mitigation
13 measures that we've included in the EIR as well as all the data and analysis that's provided.
14 What would be particularly useful for us in crafting this fifth scenario is a focus on the
15 mitigation regime and what should be added, changed, strengthened, etc. We're going to take
16 all of that information, develop some of the data and responses that the Council requested on
17 February 22nd, and go back to them in May, after the close of the comment period, with some
18 options and discussion about the fifth scenario or the quality of life scenario. What you do in
19 the course of your review of the Land Use Element is also going to be of help to us. Obviously
20 we would love to get your thoughts and ideas as we start to craft this series of options or
21 recommendations to the Council. We'll be listening closely this evening and at your next
22 meeting in April. I did want to invite the CAC to send a delegation to the meeting on Monday.
23 We actually had a conversation about the schedule on February 22nd as well with the Council.
24 Unfortunately, it was late at night. I'm not sure any of us were at our best; I certainly wasn't.
25 We didn't get a lot of specific direction on the schedule, but we did hear a couple of things.
26 One was an invitation. Because we don't have a joint meeting with the CAC scheduled on
27 housing issues, an invitation for the CAC to send a delegation. I hope the Chair will ask for
28 volunteers and appoint less than a quorum to come and be part of that discussion on Monday.
29 We also talked with the Council about some of the constraints that we've put in place about
30 subcommittees. Those of you who are Brown Act savvy know that this group is subject to the
31 Brown Act. Technically, our subcommittees are not subject to the Brown Act. As the Council
32 directed us to set up and establish subcommittees, there was a concern about transparency,
33 and so they asked us to ensure those meetings are noticed to the public. We have been
34 enforcing these kind of Brown Act-lite rules with regard to the subcommittees and reminding
35 ourselves and you incessantly about how to make that work. I think the Council is still okay
36 with all of that, but they did want us to be a little more flexible when committee members want
37 to talk to each other outside of this meeting. As long as you're not engaging with a quorum
38 either at one time or serially, they thought we could ease up a little bit on the constraints about
39 communication and encourage you to reach out to people who think similarly to you but also to
40 people with whom you disagree in between our meetings and see if you can't make some



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1 progress outside the meetings. If you have any questions about that Brown Act stuff, Elena and
2 I are always available to answer them. Just a couple more things. On process, I know on every
3 agenda we have this feedback for continuous improvement, but again it's always at the end of
4 the meeting when we're kind of in a rush and we're maybe not at our best. I would like to
5 invite any of you who have questions or suggestions or concerns about our process to reach out
6 to me between the meetings, and we can engage in a more direct and hopefully fruitful
7 conversation about any suggestions that you have for our process. I've been through quite a
8 number of planning processes like this. We're kind of at the point in any long and involved
9 process where there's that freak-out moment, like "Oh, my God. We're not going to be able to
10 do this." That's natural. We will get over that. We are all coming to this, I think, with the kind
11 of intelligence and generosity of thinking that will get us over that hump and, I think, make at
12 the end of the day a very fruitful effort. A couple more things. I wanted to thank Elena for
13 stepping up and all of her work during this last month to coordinate the committees and the
14 packets and everything. She's done a fantastic job. Andrew has helped, and other Staff as well.
15 We are still looking to bring in a project manager to replace Jeremy in his role with the Comp
16 Plan Update. I'm really, fingers crossed, hoping to have someone at our next meeting. We're
17 making some headway on that and have an announcement in April. Finally, I just wanted to let
18 you know that for the second month in a row, I am double booked this evening. I have to be at
19 a Council Finance Committee meeting, so I will be leaving after an hour, but I will get a full
20 report from Elena and from the Co-Chairs. I wish you all the best with a very, very meaty
21 subject luckily spread over the next two meetings. Anything we don't get to today we will try
22 and tackle next month. Thank you.

23
24 **Co-Chair Garber:** What we would like to do is—actually you could probably raise your hands if
25 you would like to volunteer for the committee, and I will announce your names when you raise
26 your hands for those who would like to volunteer to be the CAC's representatives on the
27 housing discussion. We want to have at least three but not more than five. Arthur and I will
28 end up doing the selection. We will do our best to spread the distribution geographically as the
29 Council has been interested in the past. I'm seeing Elaine, Amy, Lydia, Doria, Julia, Bonnie,
30 Steve. Anyone else? Seven, okay. At some point in the very near future, we'll tell you who
31 goes. Probably not tonight.

32
33 **Agenda Items:**

- 34 **1. Discussion of the Land Use & Community Design Element.**
35 **a. Recap of key points from the December 2015 meeting.**
36 **b. Initial discussion of priorities for the Land Use and Community Design Element.**

37
38 **Co-Chair Garber:** Hillary, did you also want to—I think you've already done this. Item 1a, the
39 recap of key points, was there more that you wanted to talk about there?
40



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1 **Hillary Gitelman:** Andrew's going (inaudible).
2 **Co-Chair Garber:** Andrew. Welcome, Andrew. Thank you, Elena.
3 **Elena Lee:** I just wanted to make a few opening statements, and then I'll pass this on to
4 Andrew to get into the land use details. We just wanted to add that we've clearly heard from
5 everyone concerns about consistency between the Elements and then consistency specifically
6 with the S/CAP given the sustainability subcommittee that happened on Wednesday. We just
7 wanted to stress that this is the beginning of the process. The intention is to focus really on the
8 programs and policies, really to dive into the details. There will be opportunity at the end of
9 the process when we can look at everything holistically. At that point, we'll see how all the
10 pieces fit together. There'll be opportunities for us to adjust the pieces and also to do the
11 prioritization exercise that we discussed earlier. Just also to stress that we're in regular
12 communication with Gil and his group to make sure that there is consistency between the
13 S/CAP and our process, so we won't come to a situation where there's obvious conflicts
14 between the two. We are going to have regular conversations. Additionally, in terms of
15 sustainability issues, there'll also be opportunity to get into those details with the Natural
16 Resources Element that's coming up. We're hoping that through this process we'll get into the
17 details. At the end of the process, then we can work together to look at the connections and
18 make those changes as necessary. Also, I've heard from everyone not everyone's received the
19 EIR. I'll send an email out to everyone to verify if they have received it and if they need another
20 copy. With that, Andrew. Thank you.
21
22 **Andrew Hill:** I wanted to take a couple of minutes just to recap what we've heard about the
23 Land Use and Community Design Element so far in order to set up the detailed discussion that
24 you are going to have. As you may remember, back in the fall City Council weighed in with
25 some direction to Staff on the goals and particular content of this Element. Their motion is
26 included in your packet tonight as Attachment C. In December, the full CAC had your first
27 meeting on the Land Use Element. You had sort of a general discussion on broad priorities for
28 the Element. What we heard from that discussion were several broad points of consensus
29 including support for the use of coordinated area plans as a planning tool for targeted areas of
30 the City; for the need for regional collaboration on housing, for example. We also heard some
31 support for a mix of housing types in the community in order to support a thriving, diverse
32 community. On the basis of that feedback from Council and the points of consensus from the
33 CAC meeting in December, Staff and the consultants have gone ahead and—we felt that we had
34 some pretty good direction, so we started with the current adopted policy framework for the
35 Land Use and Community Design Element. That's included as Attachment B in your packet
36 tonight. Then the changes to reflect direction from Council or the points of consensus from
37 your December discussion are shown in track changes in Attachment B. Another thing that's
38 also reflected in Attachment B is mitigation measures from the EIR that pertain to
39 shade/shadow studies. Protection of historic and cultural resources have also been input into
40 that Attachment B, and they're also shown in track changes. We've put this in front of you as a



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1 way of moving the ball forward. We'd like to get your reaction to that. Please, when you make
2 your comments, feel free to comment on that. Another thing that came up in the discussion
3 back in December were several topics where we really had a wide range of differing ideas on
4 the CAC. Those topics are also listed in the Staff report for tonight's meeting. They include
5 different ideas on a new mixed use designation and whether office should be included in that
6 or not, different ideas on height limits, raising the height limits or not, and commercial growth
7 limits and the idea of shifting housing sites. These are areas where still further discussion
8 among the CAC is required to give Staff and the consultants direction as to how to incorporate
9 consensus into the updated policy framework. We hope tonight that you will all take some
10 time in your comments to focus particularly on those issues and start to move towards
11 consensus that Staff and the consultants can take away and continue to build into the Element.
12 We hope that focusing on these areas will also spark discussion and the lively conversation.
13 That would be another hope for this evening's meeting.

14
15 **Co-Chair Garber:** We're going to start our first round. Arthur, is there anything that we need to
16 address? Rather than going to my left as I normally do, I'm going to start with my right. Lisa,
17 nice hat. Can you start off? You'll have 2 minutes plus the sort of space between the timer
18 which probably averages out to about 3 by the time we're there. Excuse me. I apologize, Lisa. I
19 had forgotten. We wanted to get comments from the sustainability committee which met, I
20 guess, earlier this week and their suggestions for this Element. The members of the
21 sustainability committee, could you raise your hand please? Arthur, Steve, so three of you met.
22 I know that Steve was not there. Bob, Don, Shani. Was there anyone else?

23
24 **Elena Lee:** Thank you. I just also wanted to add that with your at-places that was also emailed
25 earlier is a summary of the subcommittee discussion that happened last Wednesday.

26
27 **Co-Chair Garber:** Bob, do you want to go first? Then Don and then Shani.

28
29 **Bob Wenzlau:** I think one of the major outcomes of the discussion—I'm sure others will come
30 in—was that we chose a definition of sustainability. That's where I'm actually trying to find that
31 definition right now. Is that in the minutes? Here we are. I just thought I'd read it.
32 Sustainability is based on a simple principle. Everything that we need for our survival and well-
33 being either directly or indirectly on our natural environment. To pursue sustainability is to
34 create and maintain the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive
35 harmony to support present and future generations. The meeting had Gil Friend coming in to
36 speak to the S/CAP. One of the things that we noticed was that within the S/CAP and our
37 Comprehensive Plan were kind of two different spirits of what sustainability was. What our
38 discussion involved was rather than using the S/CAP where it brought in topics of economy and
39 social justice that we ended up realizing that sustainability would be more clearly defined if it
40 spoke to more of an environmental space rather than trying to mix in economy. I actually was



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1 holding out for some of the economy and social justice topics, but I think what we learned was
2 that it would be better if sustainability was more pure as a topic. That was where we went with
3 the discussion. I think as a group we really struggled with the hidden elements of the S/CAP.
4 As a team, we don't have the S/CAP right now. We have some great PowerPoint slides, we
5 have the spirit of the S/CAP, but it lacks the detail. During the meeting, we explored what the
6 force of the S/CAP as a document would be versus the force of the Comprehensive Plan. I think
7 it's unclear right now as far as does the S/CAP trump the Comp Plan, does the Comp Plan trump
8 the S/CAP. I think we just couldn't really manage to bottom out on that. I'll flip it over to
9 another member just to fill in anything that I missed.

10
11 **Co-Chair Garber:** Don and then Shani.

12
13 **Don McDougall:** I want to repeat the EPA definition was what we really focused in on. It
14 basically says well-being depends either directly or indirectly on our natural environment.
15 That's really what we wanted to focus on relative to sustainability. Within that, we were
16 interested in the fact that there needed to be some compromises made within the whole
17 structure of everything that we're doing in Palo Alto and in the CAC. That brought about the
18 fact that within sustainability, in order to maintain parks and all the other things we want to
19 maintain, we need to think about raising the height limit in certain areas. We need to model
20 that somehow, so that we understand the impacts. It can't be done without consideration, but
21 we really need to consider that. We all believe that the airport component of the
22 Transportation Element should be moved into the Land Use Element. We also believed that—
23 I'll leave it at that and see if Shani wants to add anything else.

24
25 **Co-Chair Garber:** Shani.

26
27 **Shani Kleinhaus:** Thank you. I think you covered most of the things I wanted to talk about
28 which was the definition and the airport. We felt strongly about that and about the question of
29 how to integrate the S/CAP or the Sustainability/Climate Action Plan, for those who are not
30 familiar with that term because I don't think we defined it here, and the Comprehensive Plan
31 and where do things come in and how do they work together. Since we don't have the S/CAP,
32 we don't know. There was some CEQA documents that were handed out to us early on that
33 indicated that there is some—it wasn't clear to us which one trumps which if these things are
34 not compatible. I hope they are; I expect they will be, but we don't know that. There was a
35 long discussion on that. The issue of nature as part of the sustainability, since I was there that
36 came up and the need for more parks. One other thing that we talked about is the need to
37 really look at sea level rise and look at—the definitions from the S/CAP were protect, adapt and
38 retreat, so how do we protect our City from sea level rise, how do we adapt to it, and how do
39 we retreat from the danger areas. To that, we tried to consider what do you do east or north of



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1 101. What do you do there? Is there something we can do as a City to plan retreat in some of
2 those areas that are going to be flooded sooner or later? That's all I have to say. Thank you.

3

4 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Gil.

5

6 **Gil Friend:** Certainly our goal is to have these be compatible and complementary, not
7 duplicative. We're not trying to have the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan cover all the
8 same ground and all the same detail the Comp Plan is doing and vice versa. We've had an
9 administrative draft, went through senior staff review, a half-day workshop a couple of weeks
10 ago. We've now boiled that down, and tomorrow we're introducing into the internal review
11 process the draft Sustainability and Climate Plan, aimed at a Council meeting for April 18th.
12 Whatever the timing is, I guess about 10 days or 2 weeks before that meeting, there'll be a draft
13 on the street for you to review and be able to look at that in more detail. I'm sorry it's taken so
14 long, but we've got our process that we have to go through. There are a bunch of areas of
15 overlap. Also we recognize that these two plans are really coming at some similar issues from
16 different directions. The Comprehensive Plan is building on an existing plan and modifying it.
17 The Climate Plan is standing in the challenge of what do we do about climate change and
18 looking more backwards at how do we get there. There'll be a challenge, I think, of reconciling
19 these or accepting certain differences between them. Those are questions that we'll get into as
20 it's on the street. Again, April 18th to Council for that. On the matter of sea level rise, there is a
21 separate Staff initiative that I think now, Hillary, is scheduled for what, early May, for a study
22 session on sea level rise. There will be a lot more detail about that. It's reflected in the Climate
23 Plan but not in as much detail as you'll see in the separate Element. I think that's probably
24 what I could add usefully at this point.

25

26 **Shani Kleinhaus:** Can I ask a question?

27

28 **Co-Chair Garber:** Shani.

29

30 **Shani Kleinhaus:** I think in one of the recent City Council meetings there was a directive that
31 the fifth scenario will include the S/CAP. That's going to be part of the Plan?

32

33 **Hillary Gitelman:** The Council's direction on that fifth scenario or the quality of life scenario
34 was that it be compatible with and incorporate elements of the S/CAP. That's part of the
35 reason I said we're going to have to listen to the Council's feedback and direction on April 18th,
36 and then use that information to bring back some options for them in mid-May about this
37 scenario.

38

39 **Co-Chair Garber:** With that, let's start our rounds. Lisa, you're first, followed by Steve.



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1 **Lisa Peschcke-Koedt:** Thanks. I did my comments really in the way you were asking, about the
2 points of consensus and then the places where there might be more. I'm just going to share my
3 views on those differences. Is that right? On the points of consensus, agree on the points. One
4 I think I might stress on the mix of housing is that we talked about diversity, and we did
5 include—is it not on? Is that better? I'm agreeing that—with the points of consensus, I agree. I
6 think we did largely all agree on those. I would add on the mix of housing options that one of
7 the ones I personally care a lot about is the economic diversity. It's certainly mentioned, but
8 again I think that was enough that it might be a consensus. One other possible point of
9 consensus, I think we all said that we thought that housing, transportation, sustainability, it all
10 fits together. At the end, we wanted to make sure it was sort of internally consistent at the
11 end. Again, just a point of consensus. Going to the ones for the further discussion. The mixed
12 use designations, again showing my view on this, I definitely like the idea of mixed use.
13 Personally I would go for housing and retail and small business offices but not large business
14 offices. I think the communities that have huge Apple and Google presence have some issues
15 that I don't think we really want. I like the idea of the mixture. The height limits, similar to
16 what you were saying on the sustainability side. I actually think we—much as I originally
17 protested against all the high buildings that were coming up Downtown and such, I actually
18 think with the wave of the future it does make sense to have some higher buildings in certain
19 areas, like along Alma, possibly along El Camino. I'm not picking favorites, but in certain areas
20 close to transit where it won't be as disruptive of the neighborhood, etc. I actually do. Then
21 trade it off against more parks, less cars, less parking needed in those developments. It's that
22 tradeoff. The commercial growth limits. I know the City Council will be deciding the next two.
23 Just sharing my view on it. I think some cap on office and retail is a good idea, except maybe in
24 certain areas that we want to promote that development there. Again, it's a strategy. I hope
25 we'll continue to grow in all areas, but I do think that there's probably more need for some
26 housing, especially some of the mixed use we talked about. I think the cap has to be flexible.
27 That's it.

28

29 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Steve followed by Bonnie.

30

31 **Stephen Levy:** I support Lisa's remarks on housing and the height limit, and am thankful to
32 John and I think it was Neil and Pat and Bonnie's letter, and associate myself with the desire to
33 see expanded housing options for the people who are here. Also for me, my quality of life that
34 Nancy and I and Becky and Dave had when we're living here was that we had a diverse range of
35 people. I was particularly taken by John Kelley's remark that I echo, that we are through no
36 fault yet of anyone on a path where you have to be a really old and longtime homeowner or
37 really rich to live here. I don't know about you, but that diminishes my quality of life. It's not
38 just about cars on the street and the number of people; it's about the diversity, as Lisa said, of
39 the people we see. I hope we talk about quality of life. Hillary and for the committee, we've
40 had so many people come and talk about more housing and more choices that I hope in the EIR



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1 process our community is at least allowed to explore that, knowing that the next Council will
2 make the final decision. I'm at peace with that. If we don't explore that, it feels like
3 disrespecting all of the people who have come forth tonight and at Council meetings and asked
4 for more ingenuity in this most innovative community about housing, knowing that most of it
5 and certainly if we go taller, will be in areas near shopping and services, because that's what
6 makes sense for people and the environment. I don't think we're talking about encroaching on
7 R-1 neighborhoods or the south. That'll be something the Council will discuss in the 22nd
8 meeting. Yeah, quality of life to me means more than how hard it is to find a place to park. It's
9 about the people and the welcoming in my community.

10
11 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Bonnie then Julia.

12
13 **Bonnie Packer:** I wholeheartedly embrace all the wonderful statements that are being said
14 about the need for more housing, especially affordable housing, so I won't use my 2 minutes for
15 that. My comments that I submitted at your places go through a lot of detail, suggestions for
16 edits to the various programs and policies. One important one I think—I know Council is
17 dealing with this now, and that's the issue of caps on commercial square footage. I don't think
18 our Comp Plan should put in specific numbers with regard to that. This is an issue that is
19 currently bothering people in 2016. In 2020, it may not be. We should probably have language
20 in there that says periodically review caps on the amount of square feet for nonresidential
21 development in appropriate areas of the City. In other words, let's have a general policy
22 instead of let's put a cap of X amount of square feet, because we don't know what's going to be
23 in 15 years, 20 years. The other thing we might want to consider is that, since we want
24 housing, instead of using the space that's in our commercial zones, allow housing in the
25 commercial zones. I think it was taken out of some of the commercial zones recently. Put it
26 back in and have policies that encourage square footage for use of residential square feet
27 instead of nonresidential, if that's where we want to go. As far as all the impact of the jobs,
28 we're dealing with that in the Transportation Element, with the parking and getting out of your
29 single use. A couple of things on housing though. I strongly urge us to consider a coordinated
30 area plan for San Antonio Road, because that is coming before Council on Monday. I don't
31 know if anybody's studied that area, and all of a sudden they're saying we don't have services
32 there. How do you know? If you put housing, you might develop the basis for services. It's the
33 chicken before the egg. That's a coordinated area plan for San Antonio Road. There's some
34 other policies that were put in here that were kind of overreaching in the historical
35 preservation section. All of a sudden there was a new policy about evaluate every demolition
36 to see if the building is historical. To require an evaluation every time somebody wants to
37 demolish something is really going counter to what we've done in the past about historical
38 designations. Those are a couple of my main points. Thank you.

39
40 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Julia.



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1 **Julia Moran:** I would echo the points that the three speakers before me said, especially Lisa's
2 points. Just on a broader note, under this interesting presidential campaign process, I think it's
3 been made clear that there are so many places in our country where people are losing jobs or
4 underemployed. I think that we need to remind ourselves what a privileged problem we have
5 that we have so many high-paying jobs that we need to figure out how to manage that. I feel
6 pretty fortunate to be here. I moved here a few years ago. The reason why I chose Palo Alto as
7 opposed to the other cities around here is because it has such a vibrant community, and there's
8 an energy about Palo Alto specifically that, I think, we need to continue. I think that the City's
9 evolving. It won't be what it was 30 years ago, and it won't be what it is today. I think that's
10 fantastic. I think we need to push forward with that. In order to do that, people need to be
11 able to live here. Just a quick Google search, the average household income in Palo Alto is
12 about 122,000 which is 2 1/2 times the U.S. average. The median house sales price is 2.2
13 million which is 10 times the average for the country. I think I'm the only renter here. I'm not
14 planning on buying any time soon, because it just doesn't seem reasonable to me to spend my
15 money buying when I can rent. I think that until we have more units, we're not going to have
16 young families investing in our community. If that's important to our community, which I think
17 it should be, we really need to look at adding more housing. Mountain View has taken a great
18 step with their announcement this past week, 2 weeks ago. I think we can learn from that.
19 More specifically, the similar things that Lisa was saying but more housing. Thanks.

20

21 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Heidi.

22

23 **Heidi Emberling:** Thank you. I echo in agreement about economic diversity in housing, just for
24 the record. I think Jennifer made these comments, but I appreciated this redlined version in
25 the packet. That was very helpful for me, so thanks for doing that. I also thought it was much
26 more effective and efficient for me than going back and forth between the other two and trying
27 to figure out all the comments. Thank you, that was in terms of process very helpful. I like that
28 idea of a coordinated area plan for San Antonio. Nice idea. For mixed use designations—
29 actually before I say that, I think for all the things in which there are sort of more discussion
30 needed, we have to remember the old saying there are two things people hate, density and
31 sprawl. I think we're seeing that here in terms of the controls we're trying to make. I really like
32 the point that growth control should be balanced with growth enablement and sort of looking
33 at general guiding policies as opposed to the specific numbers as opposed to a specific number
34 on a height limit. If there's a tradeoff for housing, then we would balance the needs of what we
35 wanted. There has to be balance. You can't decide all the decisions now, because we can't
36 predict. We need the Comp Plan to be somewhat flexible for future decisions. I, along with
37 several people in this room, served on the Housing Element committee last year. Of course, we
38 had many, many discussions about housing there. I'm in support of implementing the current
39 Housing Element that we came up with in terms of shifting the housing sites to more transit
40 locations, and would be happy to move forward with that after the year's worth of work that



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1 those of us who served on that committee did. I just wanted to add my comment. Yes, mixed
2 use. Retail and housing would be my priority, promoting ground-level retail in commercial
3 districts as well. Just one last thing is no on the zero setback. Nobody likes Alma Plaza. That's a
4 big reason. Thank you.

5

6 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Whitney.

7

8 **Whitney McNair:** There's a desire throughout the Comp Plan to improve the jobs/housing balance.
9 Many cities in the area have really grown their jobs, but they keep their jobs/housing ratio in balance by
10 adding additional housing. The Comp Plan is really—all I've seen is a lot about limiting jobs to get that
11 balance. The flip side of that is one could also add housing. I don't want to lose sight of the housing
12 piece of the puzzle. The EIR considers housing in the Research Park at the corner of El Camino and Page
13 Mill. Through some market research that Stanford's done, we've identified there's a few missing uses in
14 the Research Park including a hotel and a conference center and food and beverage facilities as well.
15 The EIR considers an opportunity at Palo Alto Square; however, the way the development's really
16 described in the Staff report is it just adds housing along the edge, in the parking lot. We took a look at
17 that based on the densities that are shown. In order to get that number of units, the building heights
18 and the parking requirements and really the breadth of that site needs to be considered. Standard
19 zoning might not work there. The Comp Plan talks about maybe opportunities for overlay zones. If this
20 type of development is supposed to be one of the necklace, the pearls as described in the Staff report, if
21 you really want to make a cultural change and allow a real mix of uses with housing in there and re-
22 imagine transportation for a development, you have to think about expanding that area, so it's not just
23 the little strip that's along El Camino. You really need to make something that's a little more substantial.
24 Otherwise, you just continue that typical El Camino Real pattern. It's just one more spot along El Camino
25 rather than creating something special. I agree with Bonnie's comments on the caps. I won't repeat
26 those. Policy L-44 talks about the Research Park as a compact employment center, and then there's a
27 note that this policy could change depending on Council direction regarding the preferred scenario. I
28 just question how that might change and want to keep our eye on that. That's all.

29

30 **Co-Chair Garber:** We'll call that the Glenn Miller thought. A string of pearls. Alex.

31

32 **Alex van Riesen:** I wanted to add obviously the discussion about affordable housing is important. I
33 guess the piece that feels missing to me in most of the discussion is any kind of sense of how much it
34 would take for things to be different. It seems to me, unless I'm missing something, that it's market
35 driven in terms of how much things will cost because you'll build these units and unless you zone them
36 specifically, so I don't see the language in here where it says it is zoned for a certain price or a certain
37 threshold. One of my suggestions was is there a study or can we get a study on how much it would take
38 for prices to change with regards to affordable units or affordable living in Palo Alto. It seems to me,
39 and I agree with Jennifer in what she wrote, that it was overly simplistic to expect that if we build
40 enough housing it'll be affordable to all. I don't see an explanation for that. I also just don't understand
41 that there's a lot of language about studios and even at some point in there micro units. It seems like
42 most of our general conversation is about families. There's a discontinuity there between building micro
43 units. Those aren't for families; that's just for one individual who is working there in the community. I
44 think we need to decide—I agree there needs to be different types of affordable housing. To say that



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1 that bandwidth is all of those, I think there needs to be a closer scrutiny of what are we trying to
2 achieve, who are we trying to draw, what kind of units would we build. I would say I disagree with the
3 breadth of those units. I appreciate also Jennifer's comment. I do agree with the height limit, but I
4 thought a meaningful discussion on those and if there was particular zones. I would not want to leave it
5 open to just sort of people to decide on a case-by-case basis. I just wanted to highlight on specific one,
6 Goal L-2, Policy L-11. It's about the mixed use, just as an illustration of my previous comment, mix of
7 type, sizes and affordability. I do not know how you can encourage affordability. I'd love to hear
8 someone comment on that. There's nothing affordable in my neighborhood. What determines
9 affordability is the highest price that you can get for it. No matter what you build, it will be competed
10 for to get the highest price that you can get.

11
12 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Jennifer.

13
14 **Jennifer Hetterly:** I agree that we have consensus around promoting a mix of housing options. That
15 seems to be consistent all the way around. What I think we need further discussion about is what we
16 want that mix to accomplish. I think more unaffordable housing, no matter what size or type or
17 location, is not a solution to any of the problems that we're facing right now. It doesn't meet the needs
18 of our seniors or our workforce. It doesn't improve our economic diversity. I think we need a common
19 understanding among all of us about what we mean when we say affordable, just as Alex mentioned.
20 What tools we have to promote affordability, I'd say 100 percent of median income or 150 percent of
21 median income. How our policies and programs are going to narrowly promote affordability goals while
22 also restraining unaffordable growth. I'm also really concerned about impacts on neighborhood centers
23 and parks. Neighborhood centers are not employment centers. They're not transit hubs, and they're
24 embedded in our neighborhoods. I don't think we can justify the costs of the significant impacts of
25 scale, character, safety, congestion and single occupancy vehicle commutes without associating them
26 with the specific desirable benefits. If they are justifiable, I think we have to say how we're going to
27 mitigate those impacts in specific policies and programs alongside any policy that targets growth to a
28 particular area. Parks, I think an open-ended more housing strategy is unmanageable and completely
29 unsustainable. If we want to promote housing growth, we have to define and manage how much. We
30 have to commit to the physical infrastructure to support it, and that includes parks and schools which, of
31 course, takes real estate which we don't have. The Element, I think, should include policies and
32 programs that explore the acquisition of land for parks, require new or expanded parks in areas targeted
33 for new development and zone for where we can put new schools that we'll need if we add a lot of
34 housing. I also think that we should cap commercial growth Citywide and strictly limit it to small spaces
35 that are not readily combined to serve large employers. Continued office growth, I think, just
36 exacerbates the real estate crunch that we're looking at. The growing lack of diversity in the type and
37 size of our employer community, I think, poses a threat not just to our culture but also to our economic
38 stability. Finally, I want to support Shani's comments about the Urban Forest Master Plan, the land use
39 definitions. I also liked Arthur's revisions to the definitions and shading of creeks and public spaces and
40 incorporation of the Baylands Master Plan.

41
42 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Shani.

43



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1 **Shani Kleinhaus:** Jen said a lot of the things I wanted to say. I want to say something about
2 affordability. I used to be on the board of the Housing Choices Coalition that came to talk about
3 affordable housing for people of disadvantaged, really low income. I don't think Palo Alto can supply
4 that unless we subsidize housing, unless Palo Alto has an internal program to actually support that kind
5 of housing. San Jose has a lot of housing and not a lot of jobs. People are evicted there just like here.
6 They move from here to Sunnyvale then to San Jose. The market situation in this area is such that it
7 doesn't matter how much we build, it's not going to solve the affordability problem. We do need to
8 think about how we build it. I'm not opposed to building more housing; I think we need it. We can't
9 pretend that it's going to solve the problem, building more. Whenever we build new housing, the old
10 housing where people are actually living maybe in an apartment that is not in a good shape, these guys
11 get evicted. I know two people who left Palo Alto just in the last month because they could not afford –
12 either the buildings were just replacing the carpets and you're rent is going up \$1,000 a month. This is
13 not something we can solve by creating more housing. We need to solve it in other ways. It has to be
14 subsidized in some way if we want to keep the teachers and all these other people here. I am strongly
15 opposed to zero setbacks. I think we need wide setbacks with nice trees, not palm trees but nice, big
16 trees with shade that really encourage pedestrians to come in and walk and enjoy their time. I think we
17 should start with implementing the existing Housing Element, just like Heidi said, and look at that. We
18 haven't really studied that and how that works together. The Council directions were not to find new
19 places; they were like maintain and strengthen the existing language supporting housing supply. I think
20 we need to look at what the directions were. In my comments, I put things about bird safety in
21 buildings. I put things about parks. I put things that have to do with nature in the City. Sustainability is
22 to a large extent keeping our nature in the City, and that's the Urban Forest Master Plan, creeks,
23 setbacks for creeks, maybe habitat overlay zones like they did in North Bayshore in Mountain View. We
24 need to look at tools like that. Thanks.

25
26 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Annette.

27
28 **Annette Glanckopf:** I really like the last three speakers. I may be an outlier, but I totally support the 50-
29 foot height limit. Alma's not a place to do 50-foot high buildings especially with housing just east of
30 Alma. There have been several battles already with the Park Boulevard projects affecting residential just
31 on Alma. My second priority is really to preserve the neighborhoods. Again, obviously we need more
32 growth in housing and diversity, but I think this should be addressed in the Housing Element. If these
33 sites are not appropriate or the types are not appropriate, then this is where the Element should be
34 modified. I wanted to comment about ADUs or second units or whatever we want to call it. This could
35 be a creative way to get more housing, but we need to do this carefully. The devil's in the details. Much
36 of what Arthur wrote I agree with, that we need to follow the current zoning with a little bit of tweaking.
37 I'd tweak the parking requirements which came up. No one ever uses garages anyway. We really have
38 to watch. There are all sorts of things that are in violation. There are two pool houses or accessory units
39 on my block that are being used as Airbnbs. I very much have a concern about these tiny, little units.
40 Obviously we want to keep our family and kids within the neighborhood, but I think it could deteriorate
41 very rapidly. I think we should limit the number per block so one block just doesn't have ten and you
42 have strange people that are coming and going all the time. Obviously if you had a family that wouldn't
43 be the case. I'm also concerned about a lot of the comments in this version of the Comp Plan about
44 neighborhood centers and think we need to split CN zones from the other zoning. Edgewood's just been



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1 redeveloped. Charleston's made major changes. Midtown has over 15 owners, and any kind of change
2 is problematic. I'm also concerned about changing the uses in CN. I'm totally against medical office uses
3 and maybe other neighborhood-serving types of office. We have to look at this very, very carefully. You
4 can see Midtown as an example of what will happen if you just grant conditional uses here and there.
5 You'll have so many drycleaners, nail salons which are uses. A couple more comments. I'm against zero
6 setbacks totally. Just one more thing. Although it sounds really good about adding gathering spaces and
7 bathrooms in CN zones, I can't support removing any parking or trees. We have to think about carefully
8 who would pay for it. I am for public art, trees and kiosks.

9

10 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Len.

11

12 **Len Filppu:** Thank you. I am one of the many leaders of my neighborhood association. I take to heart
13 the City Council's request to ask this committee to provide a wide range of ideas from citizens in this
14 town. I hear many things, and I try to represent as best possible the general problems that I hear on a
15 regular basis and by a number of people. Here are some of them. People feel that so much land has
16 been developed that they're real troubled with traffic and cut-through traffic in the circles, parking and
17 density. They want to promote growth and are understanding of it, but they also first want to make
18 sure that many of these other problems are dealt with, that there's a real solution in hand to some of
19 the other problems that are going on. It's important that the City consider the impact of land use
20 decisions on schools, on the School District. The residents who elect both the School Board and the City
21 Council and are asked to pay for all of it. When one elected body does something, it has an impact on
22 the other. We as residents who vote for both and pay for both want the two bodies to talk to each
23 other, especially in land use decisions. As growth and redevelopment goes, we really need to follow the
24 Grand Boulevard Design Guidelines to ensure pedestrian space and access, trees, setbacks, design
25 standards, safety. When we're designing any project, we need to apply sound and proven design and
26 planning principles to all our projects, paying attention to open space, walkability, compatibility and
27 integrated design. Thank you.

28

29 **Co-Chair Garber:** Len, do you want to finish your sentence?

30

31 **Len Filppu:** No, that's fine.

32

33 **Co-Chair Garber:** Doria.

34

35 **Doria Summa:** I wanted to just make a comment again about the EIR since it came up. I am
36 concerned—I know members of the public and members of this group have shared concerns that it's
37 premature because the fifth scenario isn't even written yet. Now, I just found out tonight that the fifth
38 scenario will include the S/CAP which we haven't seen. I think the DEIR should be scrapped. I think it's
39 way premature. It's impossible to mix and match elements out of the five scenarios, one which we
40 haven't seen, and have them not affect one another. I don't see how the real impacts can be
41 anticipated or mitigated. That's my first comment. With regards to the points of consensus, I was very
42 disappointed to see using coordinated area plans as a tool for guiding change in targeted areas. I know
43 that a couple CAC members mentioned that, but I don't believe there was any consensus or really any
44 opportunity for discussion of that or what it really means. Regional collaboration on big housing issues, I



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1 don't really agree that there was consensus on that either. In general, I'm concerned that people are so
2 happy to redevelop that they forget that every time you redevelop, you displace somebody who is
3 already a part of this community. I live across from a mixed use zone. I'm the beginning of the non-CN
4 zone in my neighborhood, and I have very low income neighbors that would never be able, with kids in
5 the school system, once a building is rebuilt, to move back in. I think we have to be careful when we
6 decide that. I agree that we need more housing. I'm in favor of putting mixed use with retail on the
7 bottom, no office, and housing above within the current setbacks and height limit. I don't see any
8 advantage in exceeding the 50-foot height limit. It is completely inconsistent with L-5 which talks about
9 scale and character. It will ruin our view corridors. It will shade other people. You can say there's
10 places to put it, but anytime you put a taller building, you're going to shade somebody's something or
11 other. I'm completely not in favor of allowing shading on parks. There's no way to mitigate the lack of
12 sunshine. Let's see. That went quick.

13

14 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thanks. Lydia.

15

16 **Lydia Kou:** With regards to sustainability, what was brought up about whether it can trump the Comp
17 Plan, etc., I just want to make sure that Staff might go back to find out from City Attorney. The thing is
18 there is a court case that's between Sierra Club versus The Board of Supervisors which expressly rejected
19 a president's clause within a general plan where the issue of a president's clause was dealt with. I want
20 to make sure that Staff goes and takes care of this. Now with regards to the points of consensus, I'm
21 totally fine with promoting mix of housing within the current zone, although within the current zoning
22 and Municipal Code guidelines. I don't think we came into consensus with regards to coordinated areas
23 nor with this third point, the regional collaboration. We have our own problems to grapple with in
24 terms of housing. To take on regional matters is just out of our—it's just not there for us. In terms of
25 retail mix, it should be addressed in the Land Use Element and referenced in the Business and
26 Economics Element as to how to enhance and make the retail business economically viable and healthy.
27 The areas of further discussion, new mixed designations. I just wonder how is it going to be policed and
28 will the use be enforced. Basically we see how enforcement is today which is why we are where we are
29 today in terms of retail space being forced out and office uses in. I would like to know what kind of
30 enforcement is there going to be and are there going to be penalties for misuse. I think these are all
31 matters that have to give residents and people confidence that there are enforcement. Height limits,
32 totally don't agree to go over the 50-foot line. Although, if you want to place it along the 101 freeway
33 by the frontage road, it would be a great buffer for freeway noise and also as a seawall to hinder flood
34 waters. Commercial growth limits, definitely a cap on the office and R&D development. It should be
35 extended Citywide and all areas are to be monitored. I would give the exception to Stanford Research
36 Park, because I do see that they are working on a TMA that could be successful. Housing, I can go next.

37

38 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Elaine—Ellen, I'm sorry.

39

40 **Ellen Uhrbrock:** I have summarized my reactions to the points of consensus and for further discussion
41 on a single sheet that is on your thing. I thought I would explain the source of my acceptance of what
42 you have said tonight and why I think the way I do. I've had more experience in Palo Alto than anyone in
43 this room in living in high rises and working in small business. I came out here and eventually I—I've
44 always worked at a small business in Palo Alto which I can walk to town, I can do the shopping. It suits



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1 me as a site. It also happens to be a high rise that is a turnkey operation, and I can go away and come
2 back. When I first went there, I was probably one of the only single people with a single income
3 household. Everybody else was couples. The men went off to work. The women were social and stayed
4 home. Think how that has changed in the last 30 years. In that particular high rise which is 101 Alma, it
5 has lived with the changes, and today there are young families. There are lots of young people in it.
6 There are startups and so forth. It's a very stimulating place to live. I ended up on the ninth floor with
7 five children on my floor, and they are still very good friends. Now, I live in Channing House which is
8 also a high rise. It has many pluses. Actually, I have the same view of the Bay that I did when I was at
9 101 Alma. I worked in a small business; it was a successful one. I love small business, because what you
10 do every day, you can see a result. That's exciting. The first thing on the points of consensus, I want you
11 to define small business, and then track it for profitability and living (inaudible). Include this throughout
12 the Element. The suggested definition for me would be a commercial business with 25 employees or
13 less onsite in Palo Alto and dependent on customers to walk in to shop or for service. I'll tell you next
14 time about the further discussion.

15

16 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Don.

17

18 **Don McDougall:** Quickly, a few points of agreement and disagreement, then some comments. I was
19 disappointed, in fact, that Staff and consultants said that there was some support for mixed use and
20 there was consensus on the coordinated area plan as a tool. I thought there was total support for mixed
21 used, and I think that's been demonstrated today. I agree with several speakers who say it's not clear
22 that we had consensus on a coordinated area plan. We've recently had speakers say they were against
23 the height. One of the things I've always liked about Palo Alto is it doesn't have the height. I truly
24 believe from the time that I've spent in the sustainability committee and thinking about land use we're
25 going to have to find places to make compromise. Alma is probably not the place because you probably
26 don't want to be putting extra height on the north-south Alma kind of path. You probably want to look
27 someplace other than that. Overall, I have to say I'm somewhat disappointed in the land use. I'm
28 probably late to being excited about land use. Everybody else here probably thought land use was
29 probably the key to the whole thing. Certainly, Hillary did. I would suggest that the whole Element
30 needs to go back and look at several of the definitions. For example, one of the things that when we
31 presented the Community Services, they didn't like some of the parks that we had defined and told us to
32 put some of the parks into "open space." There is no definition for open space; there's a category for
33 open space, but within that there's no definition for open space. I think that it should be either defined
34 or the term should be changed. Maybe it's conservation land or something else. We talk about
35 residential space, and we talk about transit-oriented, and we talk about 2,000 feet being walkable. Two
36 thousand feet is 800 steps. Even the seniors today are wearing pedometers so they can walk 10,000
37 steps a day. We're saying the definition has to be 800 steps. I think that we really need to look at that.
38 I spent time at the shuttle meeting here the other day. The question is—they focused on the seniors
39 and what we're going to do with the shuttle for them. In all of this, the definitions need to be the spaces
40 and the coordination of the spaces.

41

42 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Hamilton.

43



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1 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Thanks, Dan. These are my abridged comments. The City Council directed Staff to
2 come up with a fifth DEIR scenario that would actually meaningfully reduce the impacts of growth and
3 improve the quality of life. Getting into specifics. In terms of office growth, every site we build for
4 office space is one less site for housing. It's pretty simple. Office space is the most profitable followed
5 by luxury housing. Redwood City is adding 2,200 apartments, and so far they are all luxury units. Is that
6 what we want for Palo Alto? There are currently apartments available for rent in Palo Alto today; it's
7 just they're expensive. The City Council asked to further evaluate regulating office and R&D growth
8 beyond Scenario 2. Thus, the current language below Program L-9, limiting growth to 50,000 square
9 feet per year, falls short and should be reduced further and expanded to cover all Palo Alto except for
10 Stanford Research Park. Any limit should be kept in place until the jobs/housing ratio reaches some
11 predetermined target, for example 2.5:1. We need a zoning designation for retail plus housing and
12 should opportunistically convert some zoning to it. It should be very clear the City Council and the
13 majority of Palo Altans do not support raising the 50-foot height limit in order to accommodate more
14 office development, nor mixed use buildings with office space in them. The Housing Element can meet
15 its target without raising the 50-foot height limit. However, some would like to see additional story
16 added for high density housing near Caltrain stops. Housing Element H-2.1.1 proposes evaluating this.
17 If this was to be pursued, the additional story should be used exclusively for low income and affordable
18 housing, not for luxury units. We need to protect low density residential neighborhoods and not up-
19 zone them with the exception of modest loosening of ADUs, for example for parking. Low density
20 residential neighborhoods are not zoned as hotels or boarding houses. Renting to occupants for less
21 than one month should not be permitted. In general, TDRs have contributed significantly to the growth
22 problems and so should be eliminated or reduced. I don't believe there was consensus on regional
23 collaboration on big issues like housing. We're already three times the average for Santa Clara. We're
24 just trying to get a tiny bit closer to the average. We certainly can't compensate for other areas. I also
25 think basements should count towards FAR. I've other comments, but I'll stop there.

26
27 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Amy.

28
29 **Amy Sung:** Hi, good evening, everybody. I heard that many people talked about the height limits. I
30 wanted to start from there. I make a couple of points that you talked about. First and foremost, you
31 talked about the Citywide 50-foot limit. It really is time to update this limitation. I liked to see either lift
32 it or eliminate it altogether. I also support the mixed use to see that housing is mixed with retail or
33 office. I really like to echo what Julia said, how fortunate we are to live in Palo Alto, that we are
34 worrying about good jobs coming to our region. When we have issues, like a good engineer we should
35 manage it instead of just stop the engine and look back and to see where we can find comfort. Really, I
36 think the current imbalance of housing demand and supply is really a result of zoning and planning. In a
37 way it also impact the generation imbalance. I remember when I first moved to California 16 years ago,
38 we are a young family, was welcomed by the neighborhood. Now I look around my neighborhood, and
39 we are all aging. The City can only prosper when there's a continuous influx. That's why we are looking
40 to see creating the density to accommodate all this young and energy that we desperately need.
41 Remember we all once young and vibrant. Specifically, I really wanted to delve into talking about the
42 limit of the height. It is a notion that is supported by our Housing Element. It will increase the housing
43 density and diversity. People will say if you build it, they will come. I think this the opportunity to use
44 the zoning as a tool so that you incentivize. What do you do with all these extra units when you relax



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1 the height in a building? It has to be an incentive such that when you zone there, it will attract business
2 to come. I will come back and finish my long speech.

3

4 **Co-Chair Garber:** Do you want to finish your sentence? Go ahead. Thank you. Bob.

5

6 **Bob Wenzlau:** I provided some written comments. In this case, I feel if I'm last in one respect I might
7 also be least, because I think that so many their last is best. My view would be in the sustainability
8 space that we need to increase the housing, we need to increase the allowance for height. In my case,
9 I've got daughters and sons living in this City, and there was some concern that there would be a
10 problem that we aren't building homes for these new folks. I know that my kids, as they're moving in
11 with a girlfriend or a boyfriend, just need an apartment or a place to get going. Once they're kind of in
12 the town, they can kind of grind their way up the tree. I think that there's a need for smaller units. I
13 also thought John Kelley's remarks on these sort of alternate dwelling units are really exciting. You put
14 in these little spaces kind of the salt and pepper of our community, the different types of folks that
15 move in, the people that may be a graduate student at Stanford or a cultural or attributes. I hope that
16 we don't get so monolithic that we won't allow these types of units. Generally, I don't see them bringing
17 in a lot of transportation load. I thought Bonnie's remarks on just getting the numeric numbers, the
18 numbers out of the policies—there's a lot of policies where they put a number in there. I think that
19 that's what Council's role is, to use their discretion rather than to be bound by a number. The other
20 comment is as a reader I don't know what they could do to make this land use plan be more welcoming
21 to someone who's not a land use wonk. It's a really hard read. I think that somehow the brilliance that's
22 trying to come forward in our land use plan is going to be lost on 95 percent of the readership. With
23 that, we'll have a chance to come back.

24

25 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Elaine and then Arthur.

26

27 **Elaine Uang:** I want to voice my support for mixed use designations. I have a couple of thoughts about
28 what to do. I think it's important to just kind of keep this color map in mind. I think there's been some
29 talk about mixed use possibly providing impacts. Have we ever considered the impacts of single-use
30 land use where you have to go from where you live in a yellow zone to where you work in a gray zone to
31 go to the red zone where you shop? All of those things, when they're far apart, require a single
32 occupancy vehicle. I would bet if we studied the carbon footprint and the greenhouse gas emissions of
33 the people who live and work in this area versus this area compared to somebody whose life revolves
34 around single uses only, there'd be a significant difference. I think it's really important to consider the
35 positive impacts and the positive benefits, especially from a transportation standpoint of what mixed
36 use can do and really incorporate that into our land use going forward and tightly align that with the
37 S/CAP as Bob mentioned in his sustainability comments. I think Policy L-10 already asks for things like
38 live, work, retail, residential. What happens is that functionally the way that our Zoning Code works
39 doesn't really allow for that. I think we need to really think about crafting better incentives. As
40 Hamilton alluded to, creating that retail residential configuration. There's other things that we really
41 need to do to really bump up the number of housing units per parcel. On a 10,000 square foot parcel,
42 you can build a 20,000 square foot building. Why are you only limited to ten housing units if it's RM-40?
43 Why can't it be 20 smaller units or 50 smaller studios? Those are the types of things we need to think
44 about and tweak. That's limiting our ability to build more housing stock. Right now, the preference is



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1 for 800-1,000 square foot, two-bedroom apartments. Of course, those are going to be more expensive.
2 They're going to be more luxury. They're going to be geared towards more families. We have a severe
3 mismatch between the number of studio-level housing units, 4 percent, and the number of single-
4 person households, 17 percent. If more of these people could be living in single uses and allowing those
5 other places for extended families or different groupings, I think we'd have more parity. I think in one of
6 my previous comments I said we should go back to the future. I actually think we should look forward to
7 the past. Mixed uses were kind of common, so were no height limits. As long as I've been alive, there's
8 been a height limit. I think we really need to think about looking forward to what we did before, the
9 way that we built communities 50, 70, 100 years ago.

10
11 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Arthur.

12
13 **Co-Chair Keller:** Thank you. First of all, in order to avoid redundancy, I agree with the comments of
14 Alex, Jen, Shani, Annette, Len, Doria, Lydia and Hamilton. Secondly, what Bonnie said about housing in
15 commercial zones, I hope she doesn't mean going back to replacing ROLM kind of zone in West
16 Bayshore which became housing not near services, East Meadow Circle that became housing not near
17 services. That's not the kind of thing I think we want to go back to. I think that's a mistake. Secondly,
18 we've been waiting for a coordinated area plan for South El Camino Real that has much, much, much
19 higher priority than San Antonio Road which was already mostly dealt with in the East Meadow Circle
20 concept plan. We should really just keep with that. The second thing we need to have is a concept area
21 plan is for Fry's because that's a major area that's being redeveloped. That's it. Nowhere else. That's all
22 we need. Secondly, the issue is in terms of schools. We build housing, build housing, building housing.
23 What is the impact of that on our schools? The School District did a projection and based on extending
24 the projection to 2030, their projection is flat school enrollment growth based on half of the production
25 of housing units that are projected in the lowest scenario of the DEIR. There's a mismatch here. We
26 have to figure out where we're going to put the students. Simply cramming more bodies into existing
27 schools is what creates the bullying we're trying to deal with, mental health issues we're trying to deal
28 with, because there's limited place for them to play. The next issue is I think that we need to think
29 about adaptive growth management. I agree that we should not lock in 50,000 square feet, but I think
30 what we need to do is have an automatic system based on accurately measurable impacts. Based on
31 those impacts, we either adjust up the amount of growth or adjust down the amount of growth based
32 on dealing with those impacts. It needs to be adaptive to that. I agree with the idea of economic
33 diversity but, as was pointed out by Elaine, economic diversity really is going to happen by smaller units.
34 Interestingly enough, we have starter homes that used to exist in Palo Alto that are rapidly being torn
35 down and replaced by larger homes that are not affordable anymore. Not even people with high
36 incomes can get them. We need to think about how replacement of these starter homes is being
37 replaced and basically making Palo Alto even less affordable than it would be otherwise.

38
39 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. I'll go, and then we'll start over again. I find myself agreeing with at least
40 something that all of you have said. It's different from person to person. A couple of comments. First
41 of all on the consensus piece, this was a nit, but I noticed that basements were added as a point of
42 consensus. I did not hear that at all. I think that was around the topic of groundwater and basements in
43 residential homes. Some of you probably know that I'm working with Keith Bennett on Save Palo Alto's
44 Groundwater to present the City alternative ways of dealing with basements. I do agree with Staff,



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1 however, that preservation of groundwater is something that deserves our attention and should be in
2 the Natural Element of the Comp Plan. I disagree with my Co-Chair, who just walked away. The
3 importance of coordinated area plans is that the way that the Comp Plan was structured previously was
4 for a much different City. Many of the statements are very broad in that they talk about the City as
5 though it's the same across the entire place. It'll talk about varied neighborhoods, but it doesn't talk
6 about all the neighborhoods. It talks about parking in very general sorts of ways. Our City does not
7 operate that way. There are differences between block and block. There are differences between one
8 side of the street and another side of the street. The only way that we can address that is through
9 coordinated area plans. I think we should have not only the ones that Arthur has described but also
10 others as well. The ones that the Staff has supported, I think is important to do. I don't know if there's
11 consensus around that or not, but that is my feeling. Regarding Arthur's suggestion of dynamic impacts
12 and dynamic ways of managing impacts, I am fully onboard with that. I think that is a very important
13 and a really interesting way for us to explore and try and find a solution. On height, I am a supporter of
14 the City challenging the 50-foot height limit. Some years ago, I spoke with Larry Klein who is the—
15 somewhat to my surprise—Council Member in the '70s that was the proponent and brought forward the
16 50-foot height limit. I asked him at that time what the logic of that number was. There was no logic
17 that tied it to transportation or—I guess I'll finish that comment later. There wasn't any logic that was
18 applied to that number. That number was picked out of the air as a way to demonstrate how strongly
19 the City opposed very tall office buildings that were going up and were being planned 50 years ago.
20 Mission accomplished by the way. I am not opposed to a height limit, but I need to understand what
21 the impact of that height limit does, what its impacts are and importantly what its potential benefits
22 are. That, I think, is something that we can discuss and can study and study further if we need to. May I
23 have—did you have a process question (crosstalk)?

24
25 **Hamilton Hitchings:** I have a point of order which is instead of just going around again, I was hoping at
26 some point we'd actually talk about specific issues and have some kind of a dialog. Is there a different
27 way to structure it than just go around the room again?

28
29 **Co-Chair Garber:** I'm happy to entertain a suggestion.

30
31 **Hamilton Hitchings:** I'm not sure I have the perfect answer, but maybe it's topic based. I don't know
32 whether people ...

33
34 **Co-Chair Garber:** Let's throw out a couple of topics. Height might be one. Yes, hands, height? I'm
35 seeing a majority there. Somebody give me another topic. Coordinated area plans. Growth limits.

36
37 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Somehow some kind of dynamic feedback.

38
39 **Co-Chair Garber:** Meaning? I'm sorry. You're talking about what Arthur was describing? Arthur.

40
41 **Co-Chair Keller:** If we basically go topic at a time, which we can do, and everybody raises their hands,
42 we're not going to be able to cover more than one topic. I think some of the issues are out there.
43 Whether some of this can be done through straw polls. For example, height limit, I don't think that
44 having more discussion is going to be helpful. If we just had a straw poll, how many people are in favor



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1 of keeping the 50-foot height limit? How many people are in favor of increasing that in more than
2 simply the Housing Element? The Housing Element has in it a mention of the height limit. I'm talking
3 about other than the Housing Element, how many people are in favor of increasing the height limit
4 beyond that? Maybe it's a straw poll.

5
6 **Co-Chair Garber:** One moment. I understand. Let me just continue getting a list of the topics that we
7 might talk about, and then we'll see if we can work out a mechanism here. Annette.

8
9 **Annette Glanckopf:** CN zones and specific uses in a CN zone.

10
11 **Co-Chair Garber:** Doria.

12
13 **Doria Summa:** I have a general concern that there's too many places in the Comp Plan where they say
14 things like update this. There are things that I feel we should be talking about that somebody
15 somewhere in the future is going to be doing, and it doesn't say who. The C zones is one of them. It
16 says update use definitions for the C zones. Who's going to update it and when? Shouldn't we be
17 talking about that? Those are very essential land use questions. There's a bunch of other places where
18 there are statements such as that.

19
20 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Alex.

21
22 **Alex van Riesen:** I guess one topic would be sort of what's the vision or the end goal of the affordable
23 housing discussion. What are we trying to achieve through affordable housing as it connects to what
24 kind of units we're actually thinking on?

25
26 **Co-Chair Garber:** Steve.

27
28 **Stephen Levy:** I have a process question. I liked Arthur's suggestion of a straw poll. I heard the room. I
29 think height limits is 12-10 one way or another. I don't know what to do with that. I think there are a lot
30 of "I don'ts." I don't call 12-10 a consensus. I'm interested in the process and the reporting.

31
32 **Co-Chair Garber:** You're interested in the discussion.

33
34 **Stephen Levy:** I do support the straw poll, I do.

35
36 **Co-Chair Garber:** Forgive me, Steve. Just so I understand. You're suggesting that do the straw poll but
37 don't eliminate the discussion around it?

38
39 **Stephen Levy:** You asked for issues. One issue I have is an issue of process and reporting. If have an 18-
40 2 vote, I can see saying we have a consensus. What if we have closer votes? What is our ...

41
42 **Hamilton Hitchings:** We should record the votes.

43
44 **Co-Chair Garber:** Yeah.



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1 **Hamilton Hitchings:** The number. I had something. I wanted to use the questions as exploratory. I
2 actually don't think your height limit questions are detailed enough. You want to ask a bunch of
3 questions so that we can really tease out where there's consensus and where there's still disagreement.

4 **Co-Chair Garber:** Let me got to Elaine, and then Amy.
5

6 **Elaine Uang:** I just wanted to add discussion of housing and the housing sites since it's coming up on
7 Monday. If there's a going to be contingent here going to Council, there should be something for them
8 to report back or just have—I mean, housing sites is one thing, but I think the other thing just generally
9 is just the discussion of housing and opportunities to facilitate housing projects.

10

11 **Co-Chair Garber:** Let me come back to that. I've written it down. Shani.

12

13 **Amy Sung:** It was me.

14

15 **Co-Chair Garber:** I'm sorry. Amy and then Shani.
16

17

18 **Amy Sung:** I actually wanted to support Steve's suggestion that when we support a subject, there is a
19 reason that we support it. I think it's worthy of discussion because it will lead to the other subjects why
20 we support it. I wanted to talk about housing affordability.

21

22 **Co-Chair Garber:** Shani.

23

24 **Shani Kleinhaus:** I think it's probably going to be a lot of it in consensus anyway, but I still want to
25 mention some of the issues around parks and creek corridors and sea level rise and the things that have
26 to do with nature and sustainability.

27

28 **Co-Chair Garber:** Doria and then Arthur.

29

30 **Doria Summa:** I had another concern, and it's a new policy under L-18. It refers to the rail corridor
31 study. As far as I know, we were never given the rail corridor study. I doubt there's very many people
32 here that have read it. I don't think we should be making decisions on things that we have no idea what
33 they say. Until there is a discussion about what the rail corridor study contains, its map, etc., I think we
34 should strike that from the—or Staff should give us the rail corridor study.

35

36 **Co-Chair Garber:** Understood. Sorry. Arthur, and then let's see if we can pull this together.

37

38 **Co-Chair Keller:** The consultant suggested that one of the topics that was brought up by the
39 sustainability committee that we haven't looked at is moving the airport from the Transportation
40 Element to the Land Use. That we should probably explore. The next thing is that I think that part of the
41 idea of understanding where there's consensus and where there's disagreement is that we can get to
42 the pros and cons of the disagreement. Where we get consensus, we can basically try to get better
43 consensus along that line. That's why I think that the use of straw polls in order to be able to figure
44 out—people have commented last time that we didn't do straw polls on transportation, so maybe we
45 should do them early on this. Even though the issue of height is not necessarily clearly defined, I think



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1 that there's pretty clear—from my point of view, other than the suggestion on the Housing Element
2 about the consideration of certain areas in which the height limit of 50 feet might be increased, the
3 broad area of "in general do you want to keep the 50-foot height limit or in general would you like to
4 breach the 50-foot high limit more broadly than it is in the Housing Element" is a pretty focused
5 question. I think that if we ask that question, we can then see what the breakdown is, and then people
6 could provide their comments which might be done offline rather than taking the time now to do that.
7 We basically don't have much time. We have a little over an hour left.

8
9 **Shani Kleinhaus:** Can you just separate the height limit to commercial versus residential? Don't put
10 them together. Like for office versus ...

11
12 **Co-Chair Garber:** Let's not get into this just right here. What I would like is a proposal for how we
13 should—if we have potentially seven topics here, I'm going to suggest that we drop out four. That
14 would give us nominally 10 minutes-ish each to discuss each one and/or take a poll and discuss or just
15 take polls or whatever. Does someone have a proposal for how we might organize that, those seven or
16 so topics? Annette.

17
18 **Annette Glanckopf:** My comment is—I mean that's good to prioritize them. If we're going to be talking
19 about land use for a while, we could do part tonight and part next time.

20
21 **Co-Chair Garber:** That is a good point. Here are all of them again. I have to read my writing here.
22 Height limit, coordinated area plans, growth limit, dynamic management, the specific uses within a CN
23 zone, who does the updates, vision of affordable housing, housing and housing sites, housing
24 affordability, nature and sustainability topics, rail corridor study. I would suggest that the topic of
25 housing and housing sites, we strike that because we're going to end up with a contingent that goes to
26 the City. There's another opportunity for us to talk about that or at least for that group to talk about
27 that and take input on that.

28
29 **Female:** (inaudible)

30
31 **Co-Chair Garber:** I don't know the answer to that.

32
33 **Co-Chair Keller:** We're not agendized for that.

34
35 **Co-Chair Garber:** The update, who does, and the rail corridor studies, I think those are important
36 pieces, but they are somewhat procedural, and we can get Staff to address those directly. The specific
37 uses within the CN zones, happy to entertain it. It's actually just three that I was suggesting we drop
38 out, so there's actually eight topics there. Don.

39
40 **Don McDougall:** (inaudible)

41
42 **Co-Chair Garber:** That's a very good point. Amy.



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1 **Amy Sung:** Would you suggest that the other subjects that we are not going to discuss, that we submit
2 a written report or something? I actually wanted to talk about historic resources too. I know that is not
3 like a hot topic.

4
5 **Co-Chair Garber:** What I'm trying to do is save a little bit of time at the end as a catchall. As Annette
6 has mentioned, we have one more meeting where we can discuss things. I'm supportive of the idea that
7 we try and see if we can focus on a couple of these topics. Arthur.

8
9 **Co-Chair Keller:** My suggestion on the way to operate is part of the reason for voting, even though the
10 questions may not be completely effectively drawn, is so that we can see how the positions lay more or
11 less. Part of the issue is that I think we'll be able to cover very little of it today. If we can frame the topic
12 as what are the real issues, and then people can in preparation for the next meeting provide written
13 materials that can then be thoughtfully analyzed and brought to us at the next meeting, so that we can
14 address these more carefully in written materials rather than just orally. I think that we don't have
15 enough time to deal with it. Voting allows us to see how much consensus or lack of it there is.

16
17 **Co-Chair Garber:** Here's my suggestion. We'll go through these in the order that they're listed. I'm
18 going to ask the person that made the suggestion to frame the conversation and, if they can, frame a
19 straw poll, and then we'll create some discussion around that or we'll allow discussion to occur for about
20 8 minutes, something like that. The first one was height limits; that was me. I'm going to do this really
21 simply. I think Arthur actually had the right wording which was can I just see a show of hands of those
22 that would prefer that the City not have any policy that goes over 50 feet. Then I'll ask for a show of
23 hands for those that will allow. Then we can have discussion about the nuances within that. A show of
24 hands for those that do not ...

25
26 **Female:** Can you say that again?

27
28 **Co-Chair Garber:** Yes. Raise your hand ...

29
30 **Co-Chair Keller:** (crosstalk) want to keep the 50-foot height limit.

31
32 **Co-Chair Garber:** How many people would like to keep the 50-foot height limit? A show of hands. I
33 have seven. A show of hands for those that would like to exceed the 50-foot height limit for any
34 reason? I'm sorry. I just lost count because I realize I can't count you two. I'm sorry?

35
36 **Female:** Leave the hands up (crosstalk).

37
38 **Co-Chair Garber:** Leave your hands up for a moment. Eleven with myself. Let's, for the next 8-ish
39 minutes here ...

40
41 **Male:** (inaudible).

42
43 **Co-Chair Garber:** I'm sorry? Undecided, good point. Just one undecided? Just Len? If you would use
44 your cards, let's take some conversation. Hamilton.



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- 1 **Hamilton Hitchings:** I was hoping you could do essentially—I like the idea of straw polls. I think they're
2 great. Essentially keep going on the straw poll for height. In other words, do you support the Housing
3 Element? The second one is do you support raising the height limit for housing. Do you support raising
4 the height limit for housing only to help with low income and affordable housing? Do you want to raise
5 the housing for luxury units? Do you want to raise the height limit for office? We can get a feel of
6 where the people are who support it. I think that would be very informative to this discussion.
7
- 8 **Co-Chair Garber:** Give me three of those.
9
- 10 **Hamilton Hitchings:** I just gave you ...
11
- 12 **Co-Chair Garber:** State them right now, because I'm not going to get ...
13
- 14 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Do you support Housing Element 2.1.1 which is raising the height limit near
15 Caltrain stops for high density housing to add, let's say, an additional floor? I think everyone who voted
16 for (crosstalk).
17
- 18 **Co-Chair Garber:** Near Caltrain an additional floor?
19
- 20 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Right. That is a Housing Element. The Housing Element actually says evaluate. A
21 straw poll will help inform that. The second one is do you support it ...
22
- 23 **Co-Chair Garber:** Wait, let's ...
24
- 25 **Co-Chair Keller:** (inaudible) on that one.
26
- 27 **Co-Chair Garber:** Let's just vote. How many support that? You want to repeat it one more time?
28
- 29 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Sure. Do you support implementing Housing Element Item H-2.1.1 which is raising
30 the height limit for high density housing within a quarter of a mile of the Caltrain stops?
31
- 32 **Female:** (inaudible).
33
- 34 **Hamilton Hitchings:** No, density within half a mile, height within a quarter of a mile.
35
- 36 **Male:** Now you've got too many elements in the question.
37
- 38 **Female:** We should incorporate numbers.
39
- 40 **Co-Chair Keller:** This is an existing policy that's been ...
41
- 42 **Co-Chair Garber:** Hamilton, can we just do it more simply in some way?
43
- 44 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Do you support high density housing close to the Caltrain stops?



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1 **Female:** (inaudible)
2
3 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Over the height limit.
4
5 **Male:** By one floor.
6
7 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Above the 50-foot height limit.
8
9 **Co-Chair Garber:** Yes or no?
10
11 **Female:** Hold on. Can we read the policy?
12
13 **Co-Chair Garber:** I don't want to vote on the policy. I want to vote on the concept.
14
15 **Whitney McNair:** If you're voting on concepts, I would say that we should be allowed to participate in
16 (inaudible).
17
18 **Female:** I'll just read you the definition of a straw poll which is an unofficial ballot conducted as a test of
19 opinion. It's not like a vote.
20
21 **Co-Chair Garber:** I tell you what. I will track your votes separately.
22
23 **Elaine Uang:** I'm sorry. Can I just make an amendment which is (inaudible).
24
25 **Co-Chair Keller:** Can you be on microphone please?
26
27 **Elaine Uang:** Instead of specifying a specific height, just vote on the concept of increasing height.
28
29 **Hamilton Hitchings:** That's fine. I just want to get through this vote.
30
31 **Co-Chair Garber:** Do you want to try it again? Try it again.
32
33 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Do you support raising the height limit for housing close to the Caltrain stops?
34
35 **Male:** (inaudible)
36
37 **Hamilton Hitchings:** It doesn't say affordable.
38
39 **Co-Chair Garber:** Raise your hand if you support that. We have 12 of which 2 are our representatives.
40 Now opposed to that. Five. And undecided.
41
42 **Annette Glanckopf:** Dan, this is not helpful to me. It seems to me the devil's in the details. I could go
43 on, but it's just so generic that it's a yes/no vote. It doesn't really—I mean, there might be in this case or
44 that case or this location or that location.



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1 **Co-Chair Garber:** I think you're absolutely right, but I think what the intent here is to try and get a feel
2 for where we are. Then we can have some conversation about some of the nuance, I'm hoping, before
3 we run out of time entirely this evening.

4
5 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Let's try and move through this voting a little faster. Do you want undecideds?

6
7 **Co-Chair Garber:** I was asking if there were undecideds. We had Len and Alex and Hamilton. That's
8 three.

9
10 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Can I ask my next question?

11
12 **Co-Chair Garber:** Yeah, go.

13
14 **Hamilton Hitchings:** Do you support raising the height limit in all the commercial districts above 50 feet
15 for housing?

16
17 **Co-Chair Garber:** All in favor. All commercial districts. For housing.

18
19 **Don McDougall:** What's a commercial center?

20
21 **Hamilton Hitchings:** I don't know. Cal. Ave. and University Ave.

22
23 **Don McDougall:** You've got to know that. It's not consistent in the definition.

24
25 **Co-Chair Garber:** We thought straw polls were going to be really easy. Just as a reminder.

26
27 **Hamilton Hitchings:** The thing I wanted to flesh out is—let me tell you where I wanted to go with this. I
28 wanted to find out whether people supported raising the height limit, for example, for luxury housing.
29 How far did they want to raise the height limit? Where did they want to raise the height limit? Maybe
30 straw polls aren't the best way, but I kind of wanted to flesh out sort of how far people were willing to
31 go with this.

32
33
34 **Co-Chair Garber:** Robin, how much more time do we have?

35 **Robin Ellner:** Three minutes.

36
37 **Co-Chair Garber:** Let's abandon any more straw polls for the moment on this topic, on the height limit
38 here. Let's just open it up for some other comments. I have Amy. I have Bonnie. I have Annette. I
39 have Doria. Amy, go.

40
41 **Amy Sung:** I hear that we are trying to define why we wanted to have this height limit. I hear is it going
42 to be affordable, is it going to be luxury. Luxury doesn't sound like very welcoming here. I think that we
43 need a discussion to say what it is.

44



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1 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Bonnie, then Annette.
2

3 **Bonnie Packer:** The reason it's very important to have as much ability to build affordable or maybe
4 medium housing as in-fill, high buildings is so you can have more parkland. You guys who are saying we
5 need more parks, etc., etc., if you want the parks, if you want the space, then you put the housing
6 someplace else so that there's room for the parks. You can't have your cake and eat it too. If you want
7 more housing and more parks—if you use parks and those kinds of things as a barrier to housing, then
8 we're going against what we heard all this evening about how important it is to have housing. That's
9 why you really have to consider appropriate places where it isn't going to create too much shade or all
10 that kind of thing, to consider raising the height limit. Remember what Larry Klein said; the 50 feet was
11 just pulled out of the air and was not based on any reality. Let's be flexible. Keep in mind, everybody
12 here, we're not creating a new ordinance that's going to be effective tomorrow. We're talking about a
13 plan starting now to the next 20 years. That's why we have to talk on a higher level. Let's not get hung
14 up about the details. Let's be able to craft policies that are really broad. I'll shut up.
15

16 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Annette, and then Doria, and then Steve.
17

18 **Annette Glanckopf:** For me the issue is the Manhattanization of Palo Alto. That's really it in a nutshell.
19 I think everything is becoming supersized. We supersize our houses. As far as the density, people are
20 building these very large places. We changed the height in residential from 30 to 35 feet if you just do
21 the slope of the roof a little bit different. We are going out with every building we can to the maximum
22 FAR. For me, you go down these streets, you don't see sunlight, you don't see views, you don't see
23 anything. It's just a supersized City that is making it not very pleasant to live in. I understand the need
24 for housing, but at some point we're never going to have enough housing. We're never going to have
25 the right type of housing. We can strive to move forward, but these very large structures make it very
26 undesirable at least for many of the people that I hear from in south Palo Alto. I could go on, but I'll
27 stop.
28

29 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thanks. Doria and then Steve.
30

31 **Doria Summa:** At a high level, I do not believe that people moved here because they want to live in a
32 city that has canyon-like structures like downtown Chicago. I don't believe that the 50-foot height limit
33 was arbitrary, but we can go back in time and check it. I agree with Annette. Building all the housing in
34 the world is not going to control the housing price. The idea that building more housing will make the
35 housing stock more affordable is not correct. I think the 50-foot height limit is a good thing to stick with.
36 We already have negative impacts from growth that we have not mitigated. I do not think we should be
37 considering more growth until we mitigate the present negative impacts. I don't think that we can ever
38 achieve jobs/housing parity. What is the point of ruining the quality of life for everyone here for
39 something that is unachievable, which is that every person on the planet gets to live in Palo Alto? I don't
40 think it's desirable. I think we should provide as much housing stock as we can instead of office building
41 under the present height limits. I think mixed use in the C zones is a really great idea. Understand that
42 already there are other Municipal Code that affect how tall things can be. For instance, when you
43 approach a residential zone within 150 feet, nothing can be higher than the residential height. It's more
44 complicated than just put it here. Some of the C zones are one block, so it's actually impossible unless



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1 you get rid of the protection for the residential zone next to it. I think people need to think about it in a
2 little broader sense.

3
4 **Co-Chair Garber:** Steve. I'm going to, with my Co-Chair's permission, allow our conversation to
5 continue on here a little bit. Steve followed by Shani.

6
7 **Stephen Levy:** I'd like to be able to build another Channing House or two if we need it. I've lived across
8 the street; I lived in visual range. I can see the mark out in my backyard. For 35 years, I lived in visual
9 range of the 525 University building. They're all Downtown in appropriate places. Those height in
10 Channing House allows, as Bonnie said, a set of amenities. It may also contribute money for parks. You
11 can't have those amenities in a smaller building. We're taking it away from people who are here
12 already. In answer to Hamilton's question, I probably wouldn't raise the height limit for \$2 million
13 condos, but I might raise the height limit for some very expensive condos if four or five stories, because I
14 raised the height limit, were devoted to below market or affordable housing. It's not an either/or
15 question for me.

16
17 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Shani, then Hamilton.

18
19 **Shani Kleinhaus:** I think as part of the mix we need to also provide some taller buildings, but I think we
20 have to be very, very careful about where they're placed and not unlimited. I think Stanford Research
21 Park maybe some taller buildings don't look over five, that's not a lot of residences, so maybe there
22 would be less (inaudible). I don't see that it's impossible to have some taller houses, but they have to
23 have a lot of units available for people of lesser means. I don't know if affordable, because I meet
24 people that live in affordable housing in my community at the dog park, Arthur. I find those people.
25 One is a doctor at the Palo Alto Medical; the other one works at one of the computer companies. They
26 live in below market rate. I don't know exactly how that works, but it seems like the below market rate
27 is really not aimed at those that really, really need it. I want to find that solution. I don't know how to
28 do that, but I would think that we can provide some of those taller buildings if we could get seriously
29 below market rate or really affordable for low income people.

30
31 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Hamilton, and then—I'm sorry. Arthur, and then Elaine.

32
33 **Co-Chair Keller:** I wish that the tradeoff that Bonnie suggested of tall buildings means you get parks
34 were the case. We might possibly get money for parks, but the City doesn't spend that money on parks.
35 If we built new Channing Houses, tall buildings like Channing, where's the land that would become parks
36 that's around Channing House? It doesn't exist. Mountain View has big pieces of land that they can
37 redevelop. The Palo Alto Medical Foundation when it was Downtown had land that was developable,
38 and we got Heritage Park out of it. There was a lot of development elsewhere that happened without
39 tall buildings. I don't see that tall buildings means we get parks. I think tall buildings just means we get
40 more crowding. I do have concerns about that. I do think that there's one thing that makes some sense
41 in terms of slight height increases. With the 50-foot height limit Downtown, there's a small problem
42 that might benefit from a tweak. Four stories and 50-foot height means essentially that you don't have
43 good heights for retail. I think that a slight tweak that we might want to consider is have 55-foot height
44 limit Downtown with a limit of only four stories in which you have a little bit more height for retail,



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1 which I think makes retail a little bit more viable, and possibly one, possibly two stories of office and one
2 story of housing on top. I'm very concerned that just there's houses around town that are used by office
3 use—startups rent housing. One of the food distributing places that the City of Palo Alto uses, in fact, is
4 located in a house in College Terrace. I don't know how we prevent the housing units built Downtown
5 from being used as cheap office space. I'm very concerned about that. I don't know how we answer to
6 that. The other thing is there's been a proposal around that we build housing units—I agree with
7 building small housing units—but that somehow we don't need parking if we build housing units near
8 transit. If that were the case, why do we have so much parking problems elsewhere? Around
9 Downtown. I think that the issue is that unless there's a demonstrated need that people don't park,
10 then I think we need to require parking for our housing. I disagree with the part of it that says that
11 people just won't have cars. No, they'll park them somewhere. The demonstration from Portland
12 where they experimented with housing without parking shows that did not work in Portland. Portland
13 has much better transit than we have in Palo Alto. The transit we have is pitiful. I'll address one other
14 issue that somebody brought up which is the idea that we need walkability to mean more than 200 feet.
15 I'm sorry, 2,000 feet. Certainly people take 10,000 steps; some people do. I'm not sure how many of
16 them take them all at one time. If you are dragging a bag of groceries home from Whole Foods, and you
17 live a half a mile away, I'm not sure how many people can carry that bag of groceries a half a mile. You
18 can only carry one bag of groceries in your backpack, so there's an issue there. Not necessarily people
19 will necessarily walk. Some of them will drive to Whole Foods. Some of them will drive somewhere. I
20 think that the issue is walkability is usually defined as a quarter mile in some scenarios and half a mile in
21 some scenarios. I think that we need to be careful about increasing that dramatically in a way that
22 doesn't create a walkable neighborhood. I think we need to be careful about that. I'll close there.

23

24 **Co-Chair Garber:** Elaine, and then Julia.

25

26 **Elaine Uang:** Yes, we do have an urban growth boundary that we've pretty much exhausted. We can
27 still up-cycle. No one's talking about the Manhattanization of Palo Alto. A four or five or six-story
28 community is not Manhattan; it's more like Brooklyn. It's more like Beacon Hill or Back Bay or Lincoln
29 Park, wonderful, wonderful neighborhoods that we have all across this country. Actually, that's kind of
30 how Palo Alto started out, two, three-story buildings along a couple of gridded streets on University and
31 also in Cal. Ave. I think it's a pretty good model that lots of cities around the world have. We still have
32 room to grow; it's just a question of how we grow it. There's actually only one residential structure on
33 University Avenue, and that's the Hotel President which was converted from a hotel to residential use,
34 but there's nothing else on University. There's also a lot of one-story structures on University for which
35 there's opportunity because of its location. Back in 1971, Palo Alto passed some inclusionary zoning for
36 affordable housing, and they got lauded for it. What we've seen de facto for the last 30, 40 years, pretty
37 much as long as I've been alive, since we changed a lot of the zoning Downtown, imposed the height
38 limits, we've seen a lot of exclusionary zoning. What I really would hate for us to do is to make the
39 choice to create a Land Use Element that is basically exclusive of the community of future people, of the
40 people who grew up here but can no longer stay here. I think if we have an opportunity to up-cycle
41 some of our precious land, make room for certain populations, this is at all income levels. We're not
42 talking just about subsidized housing for very low income people. I think we're losing the character of
43 small business people. We're losing the character of professionals. We're losing the character of young
44 people, because they're just an endangered species. I think we need to really start creating that holistic,



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1 vibrant, diverse community that we used to have. If we have an opportunity to build five stories of
2 housing, six stories of housing where there's currently one-story of retail and nothing else, we should try
3 to examine that opportunity. I don't think that it's a terrible thing for us to try to do. I think the terrible
4 thing for us to do is to be an exclusionary community, pull up the drawbridge and say, "Whoever is here
5 is here. We got what we got, so that's what you have." I just don't think that's how our community's
6 been. We've been very inclusive. We've been very accommodating for the whole of our history. I
7 would like to see us continue moving down that path.

8
9 **Co-Chair Garber:** Julia, Alex, Jennifer.

10
11 **Julia Moran:** I just wanted to say (a) I think that, like Elaine said, obviously we aren't talking about
12 adding tall buildings everywhere in Palo Alto. I think everyone here seems to be on the same page that
13 we want to do it in a very strategic way. I think we need to realize that and know that we do want to
14 protect areas with single-family homes. It sounds like there are a lot of people here that would be okay
15 with raising the housing height limit for specific groups, so I think we should focus more on that. I think
16 adding senior citizen housing, adding small unit housing does help with adding families into the
17 community, because senior citizens are then not living in houses that are bigger than they need and are
18 living in a better facility. Having super small units, I would expect, would help with "brogrammer"
19 housing—I don't know if that's a term—having houses that families could be using instead of having to
20 group roommates together, and a family could rent, so everything does work together. I also agree that
21 by adding a ton of housing, it doesn't change the price of individual houses. I don't think anyone is naïve
22 enough to think that by Palo Alto adding 10,000 housing units, our prices are going to be smaller. We
23 are part of a regional community, and I think it is the place of all of us in all of the communities around
24 here to continue to add housing and work together.

25
26 **Co-Chair Garber:** Alex, Jennifer, Lydia and then Ellen. That's the end I have got. Alex first.

27
28 **Alex van Riesen:** Just in term of aesthetics, it's interesting. If you want to see what it looks like to
29 change it, you could drive around California Avenue. On Sherman, they're building a new four-story
30 building where there was a one-story building. There was a new three or four-story building that has
31 like Tableau software on California Avenue, used to be where the theater was or whatever. If you
32 imagine all of California going even to three or four stories, that is a huge change, I would say, in the
33 character. Those are all at about 50 feet. I can't imagine wanting to see Cal. Ave. with buildings over
34 four stories or five stories. I think there's a fundamental problem here. Even when Elaine was talking
35 about certain cities, the problem I have is fundamentally we're not a city like that. We are a suburb.
36 Everyone likes to talk about Palo Alto as a city, but fundamentally it's a suburb. It's a suburb that
37 happened to be at the epicenter of a technology revolution. Everybody likes that suburb, but you
38 fundamentally can't make it a city by just converting it into a city. I think there's some pressure now
39 because of what's happened and because there are these jobs, of which I think Palantir right now is one
40 of the main players in that, in bringing people into the City. There's no sort of plan for how to bring
41 these two together. My last comment is just that—I knew I should have written it down. Getting too
42 old. What was it? Whatever.



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1 **Jennifer Hetterly:** I support the height limit, but I think that I could very likely be convinced to support
2 exceptions to the height limit in particular circumstances. That would not include for commercial, office.
3 It would not include a blanket height extension in an entire district or all of our transit districts. If I could
4 be presented with an idea that if we either—on a project-by-project basis, I could support extensions. If
5 we add one story or two stories in this area and we have the ability to control that there'll be smaller
6 units or there'll be a minimum number of smaller units, I might be convinced there. I think the devil
7 really is in the details in figuring out what exactly you're getting for giving up that height impact, which I
8 think is a significant impact.

9

10 **Alex van Riesen:** Could I mention my last thought?

11

12 **Co-Chair Garber:** Go.

13

14 **Alex van Riesen:** I forgot again—just kidding. I haven't seen any modeling or any—I think people talk
15 that somehow we could produce this affordable housing with creating some number of different units.
16 I'd like to see an example—I'd like someone to produce a model where by introducing a certain number
17 of units, they brought the median price of housing down. I've not seen it. I would dare someone to
18 produce it. To bring down the median price of housing in this City, it's going to take an incredible
19 amount of units. That's it.

20

21 **Co-Chair Garber:** We have Lydia, and then Ellen, and then we've exhausted everyone that has spoken.
22 There are a couple of people that would like to speak twice. We're almost to 8:00 here. We do want to
23 leave at 8:30. Lydia, then Ellen.

24

25 **Lydia Kou:** I hear Bonnie say go beyond the 50, don't be all looking at it, at a narrow focus, don't need
26 to delve into the details. However, without delving into details, we see what has happened with our
27 City. Frankly, today we're at this housing crisis because of aspirational goals and a less than stellar way
28 of policing how we go about approving projects, especially when we're supposed to have a balance of
29 housing and jobs. It's been going on one end, so now we're supposed to catch up. It's an aspirational
30 goal to say let's raise the 50-foot limit in order to house everybody that comes into our City. That's not
31 going to happen. While I agree with what Julia said that yes, our City is evolving, we also have issues
32 today that we have to look at before we go around with aspirational goals of raising heights in order to
33 put more housing in. It's just common sense or is that just way too common that we can't comprehend
34 it? Lastly, we don't need to go five or six stories. A one-story building, if you make it a four-story, we
35 already have extra housing there. Why is it we have to go way over? Why not see what we can do with
36 what we already have? That's it.

37

38 **Co-Chair Garber:** Ellen.

39

40 **Ellen Uhrbrock:** My concern is for all the service and small businesses that a vibrant community needs
41 to have in the community. What are you going to do with the employees and the owners of those small
42 businesses? They have to get to work and back. The days when people lived above their shops or the
43 whole family lived above the restaurant that they have—you're eliminating so many businesses. The
44 shoe shine man or a little shoe shop, where is he to live and where are his employees to be able to



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1 come? The crucial problem right now incidentally at Channing House is our inability to hire employees
2 in order to do the serving of the meals, the cleaning. They do not have adequate parking for it. People
3 turn you down all the time, saying they won't take the jobs. You can't survive without having a certain
4 amount of services that need to have housing, and they have transportation problems which are acute.
5 I don't have any objection to having mixed housing with income levels there. It's certainly true at 101
6 Alma now. There are no desperately poor people, but there are a range of incomes and families
7 depending on where they are on life's ladder and what they're objectives are. I think the housing
8 situation is much bigger than we remember, because you don't live in a place which depends on so
9 many low level, low income residents.

10
11 **Co-Chair Garber:** We're just past 8:00. Amy and Elaine, you guys have already spoken once. If I may, I'd
12 like to move on. I'd like to do one quick attempt at a straw poll regarding the airport. Would those of
13 you that would support moving the airport from the Transportation Element into the Land Use Element
14 please raise your hand? That is 16. We're done with that. How many would like to keep it in the
15 Transportation Element? I'm not seeing any hands. Are any undecided? Two. Good. Now, the other
16 items that we had listed here—I think we'll only get through one. I'm going to try a straw poll on which
17 one we are going to choose. The ones that we have on the list are coordinated area plans, conversation
18 about dynamic management—I really have growth limits—a vision of affordable housing which is
19 combined with the housing affordability topic, nature and sustainability. It's really those five. Let me
20 get a show of hands of how many would like to take the next several minutes and talk about
21 coordinated area plans? Seven. How many ...

22
23 **Don McDougall:** Could you repeat all of them one more time?

24
25 **Co-Chair Garber:** Yeah, of course. Coordinated area plans ...

26
27 **Female:** (inaudible)

28
29 **Co-Chair Garber:** Yes. Coordinated area plans, dynamic management of growth limits, vision of
30 affordable housing or the topic of affordable housing probably more generally, and then nature and
31 sustainability, Shani's topic that she had brought up. We had seven people who were voting to talk
32 about coordinated area plans. How many would like to talk about dynamic growth management? Ten.
33 How many would like to talk about affordable housing? Fourteen. How many would like to talk about
34 nature and sustainability? Five. I thought I already counted you, but we'll call that five. Fourteen, yes,
35 thank you. I didn't get a chance to do that. The big winner here is affordable housing. We are going to
36 give ourselves 20 minutes, and that'll give us 5 minutes to wrap up. I have the following speakers:
37 Lydia, Hamilton, Amy, Elaine, Arthur, Lisa, Bonnie, Shani, Annette, Doria. Lydia, go.

38
39 **Lydia Kou:** I think in terms of housing, first I think it's most important to define what is affordable.
40 That's what everybody comes to Council, comes to others and says, "I want affordable housing." Is it the
41 nationally defined very low income, low income, moderate income? What is it? Is it the below market,
42 the BMRs? Is it just simply someone who works in Palo Alto and just wants to live in Palo Alto but does
43 not want to pay Palo Alto prices and is demanding a rent that they're willing to pay? I think that in an
44 effort to understand what affordable is, it's more important to build sensibly and purposefully what the



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1 demographic that we see is needed here in the community. One, I would say teachers, small retailer
2 business owners, service workers, clerical workers, City Staff, trades people, nurses, then for seniors,
3 seniors with children with disabilities, and then, three, homeless. Some of this will need to be
4 subsidized; however, it needs to be focused and purposeful if we're going to help these people.

5
6 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Hamilton, then Amy.

7
8 **Hamilton Hitchings:** I agree with Lydia. Let me give you an example. I live right near Edgewood Plaza.
9 They just put in ten townhomes, and each of those townhomes sells for \$3 million, and they all sold like
10 that. What I'm really concerned about, as we're all talking about housing here, left to free market those
11 will all be luxury units, guaranteed. The only thing that's not going to be luxury units is what is required
12 by ordinance or law. That's why in Redwood City all the units are luxury units, essentially they're
13 gentrifying it. We will be actually going in the opposite direction of our goal if we're building more of
14 these \$3 million townhomes or \$2 million condos. I just want us to be thoughtful. If we are committed
15 to this objective, that we come up with a policy that actually allows us to move in that direction and
16 achieve our goal, instead of just making more units for very wealthy folks to live conveniently.

17
18 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Amy, then Elaine.

19
20 **Amy Sung:** Thank you. For affordable housing, I think it is important that we have to use zoning as the
21 tool. Right now, I think the imbalance of the supply and demand that we're seeing in Palo Alto really is a
22 result of past planning and zoning. When we talked about the height limitation, I think that we missed
23 the point. The point is that we are here trying to increase the housing stock. The reason we are
24 increasing it is not because we wanted to do it. It's because there is a demand, there is a need. The
25 population is growing (inaudible) anybody coming in. We have our own family. We have our children.
26 That is the nature of population growth. Therefore, the zoning is a tool to negotiate and to see how we
27 can place people at different places. We all read that Mountain View zoned for this 12-story high rises
28 with a lot of strings attached, but who is going to build it? Therefore, there has to be negotiated room
29 that the builder will be willing to build it because of the zone, meaning just that. You are creating a
30 possibility for somebody to make it happen. I think for the affordability, we want to protect a class, for
31 example, the teachers. The teachers need to live here to see the students that they educate. Also those
32 people with disabilities, they need to be mingled into this large community. Also, I really think—I'm
33 scoring brown points here with our City employees. These people need to live here so that they know
34 when we go ask for permits, that they understand what is the issue. That is the extra housing that we
35 want to provide for people that ordinary cannot compete with the people that we see moving in today.
36 They make a lot of money. That is affordable housing, I think, that we want to provide.

37
38 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Elaine, then Arthur.

39
40 **Elaine Ung:** I think with housing and affordable housing we kind of need a "let's throw everything at it"
41 approach to make things much more affordable. Yes, that probably means way too many units, but the
42 problem is we've sort of dug ourselves a really big hole. When my family moved to the Bay Area in
43 1988, we moved from suburban DC, and already the price of housing here was 2X suburban DC, which
44 was not a cheap place by any stretch of the imagination. Around that same time, I think the average



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1 house in Palo Alto was something like 2 1/2-3 times the national average. Now, it's about 10 1/2 times.
2 Our prices are getting more and more sensitive. By doing that, we're basically creating a smaller and
3 smaller, wealthier pool of people who can buy into this community or be a part of it. I think we need to
4 start thinking about dialing this back. Affordability should not be 10X the national average. I don't know
5 if it should be 2X the national average which is where it was about 30, 40 years ago. We need to start
6 turning the dial back and really kind of moving that back. That really does include housing supply. The
7 Legislative Analyst Office of California issued a really important report. They talked about all of
8 California, all of the coastal communities, collectively building a shortfall of hundreds of thousands of
9 housing units. It's just California. People are attracted to coming here, and it's not our community. It's
10 not just Mountain View. It's not just Sunnyvale. It's not just San Jose and Gilroy. It's all of California.
11 We're probably one small drop in the bucket, we're sort of the harbinger. We're like the poster child of
12 lack of supply gone awry because our housing costs are so high. In this conversation about affordable
13 housing, it's probably true that we can't build enough units in the next 15 years to really make a huge,
14 huge dent in rent, but we need to start thinking about turning the dial back. In the '60s, a car mechanic
15 could live here and raise a family. An accountant with a small business could live here and raise a family
16 and buy a house. Those folks haven't been able to do so for a very long time. I heard someone tell me
17 that they heard in a coffee shop it takes two exits, meaning two sales of major companies, now in order
18 to afford a house in Palo Alto. That's kind of ridiculous. That really changes—I mean, yes, maybe we can
19 talk about not changing the physical character, but that greatly, significantly changes the community
20 character of our town, our City. I actually disagree with Alex. We have a city. A lot of people are
21 attracted here because it's a small city, it has a vibrant Downtown, and it's a very walkable, bikeable
22 area. I don't think we should lose sight. I think there are specific zones in Palo Alto that really are more
23 city-like and not suburban like. Those are assets, and those are actually huge draws for people all
24 around the world. We should recognize that as an asset. We should really start thinking—a
25 Comprehensive Plan, general plan, is a very high level, more of a 20,000-foot view of the community.
26 We should really start thinking about what is that character, the composition of our community, how do
27 we start turning the dial back to a time when there was a lot of different professions and incomes, and
28 making that affordability more reachable for a greater spectrum of people.

29
30 **Co-Chair Garber:** Arthur, then Lisa.

31
32 **Co-Chair Keller:** Mark Twain many years ago said the best investment is real estate because they ain't
33 making any more of that stuff, except maybe the Netherlands building on the water. I'm not sure that's
34 a good idea. First a definition. Affordable housing. There is a definition of affordable housing, and it's
35 basically low, very low, moderate income. There's various levels. The moderate income, I think, is from
36 80-120 percent of area median income which is based on the county. Judy Kleinberg, when she was
37 Mayor, talked about the idea of attainable housing as distinct from affordable housing. There seems to
38 be an increasing gap between the market rate housing and even what the below market rate housing is.
39 There's a big gap in there. I think it's going to be hard to fill that gap. We might be able to build more
40 affordable housing. We can talk about building smaller units which are more naturally affordable. We
41 can talk about building dedicated senior housing which will allow seniors to downsize, maybe they'll
42 keep their place, maybe they'll rent it out (inaudible), maybe they'll move depending on what's going
43 on. Those kind of things make sense. It seems to me that sometimes we're dancing around the fact that
44 there is a Housing Element, and the Housing Element deals with most of these issues. The Housing



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1 Element just got adopted not that long ago. We should think about what the implications of that
2 Housing Element are before we go and start making a whole bunch of wholesale changes based on
3 more, more, more. Let's see what it did. There were a lot of housing advocates who put input into the
4 Housing Element. One of the problems of the Housing Element is it did not at all consider the impacts
5 on schools and school capacity. As I mentioned earlier, the School District's most recent projection from
6 December assumed flat enrollment, but that assumes half of the housing projection production through
7 2030, assuming that we have the same flat line that they have in the School District's projection through
8 2030, our least amount of housing production from the scenario with the least amount of housing
9 production. That's a problem. We need to consider school impact, school capacity and school finances.
10 One of the other issues, from what I've looked at—I haven't gotten a chance to look through the whole
11 EIR. There's a consideration if you build more housing, you get more money. What about the amount
12 of money per capita? Does the amount of money per capita go down, the amount of tax revenue per
13 capita go down? If the amount of tax revenue per capita goes down, then in fact your services
14 deteriorate. Even though there's more money, per capita goes down. If the total goes up slightly but
15 the population goes up even faster, then your amount of money per capita goes down and, therefore,
16 your services go down. I think that's important. There may be more money for the School District when
17 we build more housing and put more students in the schools, but the amount of money per capita for
18 the School District goes down because housing doesn't cover the cost of the students in that way.
19 There's also increased costs for new schools, for reopening schools. Where are we going to put the land
20 for additional schools? There was a decision made 30 years ago to sell off a whole bunch of school sites
21 to build housing. We see how well that worked out. I think that we need to think carefully about what
22 we do and understand the impacts of the Housing Element we did adopt without considering schools.
23 We need to consider schools in the context, not only school capacity and school enrollment increases,
24 but the impacts on schools, the impacts on finances and the impacts on our school kids of being in more
25 crowded schools as we consider the DEIR. I'll add one thing to that. I actually oppose the idea of the
26 S/CAP being combined with Scenario 5. If Scenario 5 is supposed to be the idea of quality of life,
27 combining it with S/CAP is contradictory to that. If we want to consider the S/CAP scenario, it needs to
28 be Scenario 6, not combined with Scenario 5. I just want to throw that in. Thank you very much.

29
30 **Co-Chair Garber:** We have six more people to go. If we give everybody 2 minutes, we are at about 5-ish
31 minutes over, at least, maybe a little bit more. I'm willing to do that.

32
33 **Female:** (inaudible)

34
35 **Co-Chair Garber:** If everybody takes 2 minutes and 10 seconds. Lisa, Bonnie, then Shani.

36
37 **Lisa Peschcke-Koedt:** On the affordable housing, I think a combination of things would work. By
38 affordable, I mean for people who don't make a lot money relative to what we have today in Palo Alto.
39 That includes what many of us have said, the teachers, the firefighters—actually firefighters might
40 (inaudible) paid—regardless, the lower income within our community. I think that economic diversity is
41 critical, including in our schools. Certainly had it when I grew up here. I think it was one of the
42 wonderful things about the area. I also think it led to a lot of the success and the innovation and the
43 creativity here. I think the economic diversity means affordable housing. I would combine it with
44 potentially, again, in some areas higher buildings, more density, smaller units. They can be cheaper. I



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1 think if we did it correctly, Palo Alto could also charge some money that we could use to subsidize some
2 of the housing. I'm actually for subsidized housing; I'm not for rent control. I think an actual program
3 around subsidization would make some sense. Those are my couple of thoughts.
4

5 **Co-Chair Garber:** Bonnie, then Shani.
6

7 **Bonnie Packer:** I'm very pleased that so many of the previous speakers have talked about the really
8 different kinds of affordable housing. Lydia raised the question. I think there are the technical
9 definitions of affordable housing, and that's the affordable housing that tends to get subsidized by all
10 the different regulatory programs that the nonprofit and some for-profit affordable housing developers
11 utilize in order to build the projects. The other kind of housing that Elaine was talking about is really like
12 the attainable housing that you may achieve by increasing the supply to meet the demand and creating
13 the smaller homes. This would be the nonsubsidized. By increasing the supply, you may be able to, as
14 you say, turn the dial back on the price. We're just one little town, or City in how many square miles.
15 We're not going to solve the whole problem. It would be naïve to think that we could provide housing
16 for everybody who works here or everybody who wants to live here. What we don't want to do is
17 create barriers to the building of the subsidized housing for the affordable, the very low. We want to
18 create incentives and not barriers. If that's the least we can do, I don't think we'll—Alex is probably
19 right. I don't know that we'll ever able to achieve enough supply to reduce these horrendous prices, but
20 we can try. What we can do is eliminate barriers to some really good projects for affordable housing for
21 seniors or whomever, the defined affordable housing people.
22

23 **Co-Chair Garber:** Shani, then Annette.
24

25 **Shani Kleinhaus:** One comment. Arthur, it was the City Council that said that the S/CAP should be
26 incorporated, so you should talk to them about the fifth scenario and the S/CAP. I don't agree that
27 throwing everything and seeing what comes out of it is a good idea. I think we need to be very, very
28 careful about how we move forward and really think hard about how we design something that works,
29 rather than let's try everything and something must work. We don't what to do, so we'll try everything.
30 I don't believe in that. I also think that when you build—we have to realize it. The more you attract
31 people, the more you attract people. If we build more, there will be a lot more demand, and the prices
32 will go up, not down. That's what's happening in San Jose. That's what's happening in Mountain View.
33 That's what's happening elsewhere. When you go and build more, more people come because it's more
34 attractive. You have more community; you have more fun. People come. Building more does not make
35 prices more affordable. It's actually the other way. I'm not sure that is something that we don't want. I
36 think that if we use that extra money to create affordable housing too, then we could consider that. I
37 don't want to see the idea that we'll build more and, therefore, it will be affordable. That does not
38 work; we know this. We shouldn't pretend that by having more supply, that solves the problem, and
39 then prices will go down. That's not how it works. Thank you.
40

41 **Co-Chair Garber:** Annette, then Bob.
42

43 **Annette Glanckopf:** I'm not so sure I had my hand up, but I believe this whole discussion belongs in the
44 Housing Element. If we really focus, we can philosophize all we want, but we really have to zone for



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1 what we want. We should have coordinated area plans, and we should subsidize housing. I'm not sure
2 where this sits in the Comp Plan. I think it's really a much more detailed conversation.

3

4 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Bob, and then Alex, who is our last speaker.

5

6 **Bob Wenzlau:** One of maybe the differences in the terminology that I might bring in is to separate out
7 the rental stock from the to-be-bought stock. When I'm watching my kids, they're renting homes or
8 they're renting spaces, and yet some of the projects that are built are to be sold. I wanted to create at
9 least aspirations that would consider the rental stock versus just the to-be-sold. I also was in Whole
10 Foods chatting with someone who had to leave Palo Alto because of the increase in rent. I'm not
11 opposed to some limits or controls on the amount that rent can be increased, because this person had a
12 200 percent increase in their rent. It was short term. In the discussion, she wasn't necessarily asking for
13 something that was not allowing the owner to raise the rent, but just something that was livable. I
14 would ask that we look at essentially a focus on creating rental housing stock that the rental housing
15 stock could be dedicated towards target folks. I was thinking of Ellen's remark where the cook couldn't
16 cook for our seniors. If we don't have a cook for our seniors, we don't take care of our seniors. We can
17 do that through rental controls that we can't do through own controls. Those are just some thoughts.
18 Sorry to go on.

19

20 **Co-Chair Garber:** No worries. Alex, and then we just have a few business items to take care of.

21

22 **Alex van Riesen:** I wanted to make one comment. I just looked it up. The affordable housing definition,
23 at least the one I found on Wikipedia which, of course, it's on the internet so it's true, is no more than 30
24 percent of your income is used for housing. If the median income is \$125,000, that works out to about
25 37,500 a year spent on housing. I mean, I just think we need to wake up and realize the ship has sailed
26 on that low of a cost for people. The cost for living here and mortgages that people are paying are just
27 crazy. The thing that would change it would be if one of the big three were to leave. If Facebook or
28 Google or Apple—all of them have invested in huge infrastructure. They're here; they're not moving. I
29 think this situation is here, so we have to think beyond that. This may lead us to want to think more
30 regionally because I don't think the housing will come from within, but it might come from outside.

31

32 **Co-Chair Garber:** Doria, go.

33

34 **Doria Summa:** Just really quickly, I wanted to say I had a discussion with the Mayor of San Jose. A lot of
35 people have talked a lot about having housing dedicated for certain job categories. They tried to do that
36 in San Jose, and it's illegal in the state to do it. I think it's important to know that, if it's true. That's
37 what the Mayor of San Jose said. We should take that off the board and quit talking about it, because
38 it's silly if you can't do it.

39

40 **Co-Chair Garber:** There are other issues involved with that as well. Aspen, a community not dissimilar
41 from our own although much smaller, has had subsidized housing for some years. Now that it's been up
42 and running for about 30 years, there are a whole series of follow-on issues in terms of people being
43 able to realize their capital investment or not having that. Those are sort of beyond the topic right here.



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1 Let us close this particular piece. I need a motion to approve the minutes from the previous meeting.
2 Anyone?

3

4 **Male:** (inaudible)

5

6 **Female:** (inaudible)

7

8 **Co-Chair Garber:** Thank you. Alex and seconded by Bonnie. All in favor? Any opposed? That passes
9 unanimously. I'm sorry?

10

11 **Co-Chair Keller:** Send in comments.

12

13 **Co-Chair Garber:** Yes. If you have additional comments, please forward those to Staff so they can be
14 distributed to the subcommittee as well as to the rest of us.

15

16 **Feedback for Continuous Improvement:**

17 **Co-Chair Garber:** Let me just ask very quickly if anybody has any comments about how we cobble
18 together a process for today's conversation. Any thoughts or improvements there? Elaine.

19

20 **Elaine Uang:** I'd recommend some discussion with Staff beforehand. I think Staff had set up a number
21 of questions. If we had gone through and hit each one of those four topics in the—identified a straw
22 poll question and then also some ground rules for discussion. That would have been a very structured
23 way. I would love to see us spend our time here focused on the discussion of the topics and less on
24 process. If there's a way to queue that up before the next meeting.

25

26 **Co-Chair Garber:** Sometimes hard to do without everyone's input, but understand the efficiency that
27 would achieve. Anybody else? Alex.

28

29 **Alex van Riesen:** I'd like to ask if there's any way to find if there's any parallel situation to our
30 community, size wise. I know there's almost no duplicate for the economy. It'd be helpful to have
31 something to look at, some illustration about how they might have handled the land use issue.

32

33 **Co-Chair Garber:** Specific to affordable housing?

34

35 **Alex van Riesen:** Yes.

36

37 **Co-Chair Keller:** And attainable housing.

38

39 **Co-Chair Garber:** And attainable housing. We can ask Staff. Anything else?

40

41 **Future Meetings:**

42 **Co-Chair Garber:** I am not at the next land use meeting. I am out of the country on April 19th.

43 Next meeting: April 19, 2016. Rinconada Library (Topic: Land Use & Community Design)

44



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- 1 **Adjournment:**
2 **Co-Chair Garber:** A motion to adjourn?
3
4 **Female:** So moved.
5
6 **Co-Chair Garber:** Sorry. Jennifer, just before we do that.
7
8 **Jennifer Hetterly:** Can you tell us again who is on the land use committee?
9
10 **Alex Van Riesen:** Just the subcommittee?
11
12 **Jennifer Hetterly:** Does anybody have the list? The subcommittee is what I mean.
13
14 **Co-Chair Garber:** Who's on it?
15
16 **Alex van Riesen:** I don't remember.
17
18 **Female:** Can you send us an email?
19
20 **Co-Chair Garber:** Yes, I will send that out. I had sent that out to Staff about a week ago, and I will send
21 it out again.
22
23 **Jennifer Hetterly:** Thank you.
24
25 **Co-Chair Garber:** As for Elaine, Amy, Lydia, Doria, Julia, Bonnie and Steve, we will define the housing
26 contingent representatives shortly.
27
28 **Elena Lee:** I can read off (inaudible).
29
30 **Co-Chair Garber:** Go ahead. The subcommittee of land use is ... Elena.
31
32 **Elena Lee:** Amy Sung, Annette Glanckopf, Alex van Riesen, Hamilton Hitchings, Stephen Levy, Len Filppu
33 and Shani Kleinhaus, Doria Summa and Jennifer Hetterly.
34
35 **Co-Chair Garber:** A motion to adjourn? Between Lydia and Amy. We are done. Annette, you moved?
36 Whatever.