

COMMUNITY DESIGN + ARCHITECTURE

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MEETING NOTES

El Camino Real Advisory Group (AG) Meeting #1

January 28, 2002

4:00 to 6:30 pm

at Ventura School, Palo Alto

1. Welcome and Introductions (Julie Caporgno, Planning Division, Advance Planning Manager)
2. Project Background and Purpose (Virginia Warheit, Planning Division, Project Leader)
3. Description of Project Scope:

Phil Erickson, Principal, Community Design + Architecture and Jerry Walters, Principal, Fehr and Peers Associates presented the scope for the project. Copies of the scope and schedule documents were available as part of the information packages handed out to all participants. The consultants emphasized that the approach is to analyze El Camino Real and the issues associated with it in order to explore and select solutions as opposed to having preconceived notions about what those solutions might be.

Following are key questions raised by members of the AG during this agenda item:

- Q: Will the project look at zoning changes along the street over time?
A: The consultants will take into account any possible zoning changes and updates currently contemplated by the City, but generally base planning assumptions on the existing zoning.
- Q: Will the project be looking at streetscape design details with Caltrans representatives?
A: Yes, Caltrans will be represented on the Advisory Group and on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), during meetings and workshops as part of the process by which the Consultants will address and resolve technical and design detail issues.
- Q: Can Advisory Group members attend meetings of the TAC?
A: Yes. However, participation may be limited to observation and listening during regular meetings of the TAC. During special TAC workshops, comments by Advisory Group members will be noted and a discussion of particular concerns and ideas will be welcomed.

4. Feedback from the Advisory Group

❖ *What observations, concerns and ideas regarding El Camino Real should the Consultants know about?*

- Joe Villareal: At Page Mill the medians are too narrow to provide a sufficient refuge for a wheel chair, the crossing button is not accessible, and pedestrian lights change too fast.
- Paul Goldstein: Regional bicycling patterns and routes make El Camino useful as a longitudinal route for bicyclists. Improvement of crossings along El Camino is important for increased safety on local bicycle routes and to improve connectivity. Currently detection loops are not sensitive enough to detect bicyclists.

At this point, there is no consensus within the bicycling community as to whether there should be striped bike lanes or just enough lane width to accommodate bicycles better.

- John Ciccarelli: 14' feet outside lane width would make bicyclists feel more comfortable in sharing a lane with car traffic. In southbound direction there is no alternative to travel on El Camino. The Stanford campus is too 'opaque' to allow for good connections.

The Comprehensive County Expressway Study now being prepared will include Expressway Bicycle Accommodation Guidelines that will be useful to the El Camino Real project. Also, as part of the the 1996 Measure B Pavement Management Program, bicycle recommendations for Page Mill Road and Oregon Expressway have been prepared, and recommendation for bicycles on other expressways continue to be prepared whenever expressways are repaved.

Stanford Management Company is undertaking collaborative planning with the College Terrace Neighborhood to mitigate traffic impacts from the Stanford Research Park. One of the ideas being considered is introducing streets into the Superblock between California Avenue and Page Mill Road.

- Sukie Stanley: People's behavior needs to be taken into account, such as the likelihood of a driver to run a red light.
- Cathy Blake: Stanford would like to see a differentiation in streetscape design along El Camino that reflects the different character of adjacent uses, and in particular portions of the Stanford campus. There are draft plans for improvements to the 'Arboretum' portion of the campus, such as the planting of native oaks and the construction of new asphalt paths.

Stanford University would to see all future changes to the design of El Camino occur within the current El Camino right-of-way and not through further encroachment onto campus land or moving of the new fence along the athletic fields.

Curbside parking is not needed along the Stanford University frontage; this area could be reclaimed for bicycle or pedestrian circulation.

Kathy Durham: Crossing El Camino is dangerous at many intersections, with Stanford Avenue being a particular example. The frontage along the Stanford campus is problematic

because much of it lacks a sidewalk. Pedestrians are frequently seen standing in the median trying to cross.

Vehicle speeds along the campus frontage are higher than other sections of El Camino because it looks more like an expressway (wide lanes, relatively few entry points). What traffic calming techniques might slow cars on this section?

The Churchill Avenue T-intersection is problematic for bicyclists and pedestrians and vehicle backups along Churchill seem to be increasing. Can this study link the solutions being considered for Churchill between El Camino and Alma to the 'spot treatment' being considered for Churchill east of Alma under the Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program?

Coordinate new signal light to be install at Ventura with the El Camino Real project, if possible.

The very intensive use at Starbucks is a source of possible bicycle/pedestrian conflict with many cars going in and out.

- Ned Farquhar: Would like to see accident statistics for El Camino.
- Tony Carrasco: The 'Trees for El Camino' group would like to see simple solutions that allow for trees to be planted along El Camino soon and still allow for changes to lane widths and curb alignments to occur in the long-term.

❖ *What are the key expectations for this project among Advisory Group members?*

- Q: What is Caltrans' level of commitment to this project?
A: Melissa Joshi, Caltrans representative: As major funding agency for this project Caltrans is very committed to make it a success. Jeff Morales, Caltrans' Director, has issued a Director's Policy, which lays out in which way he wishes every hierarchy level of the agency to contribute to the goal of 'Context Sensitive Design'. Caltrans intends to bring to the process all necessary technical representatives.
- Catherine Blake: Caltrans needs to have the opportunity to approve of conceptual plans that will be developed as part of this process. Doing so will be critical for the success of the project.
- Gayle Likens: A result of the study should be design guidelines for the treatment of intersections with regard to bicyclists and pedestrians. Currently, there are great inconsistencies.

At the end of the meeting options for communication between the Consultant Team and members of the Advisory Group were discussed, including the possibility of a list-serve approach. In the end it was agreed that members of the AG should receive a list with phone numbers and e-mail addresses of all Consultants and visa versa.

5. Future Advisory Group Meetings:

- Advisory Group Meeting #2 was scheduled for March 7, 4:00 to 6:30 pm, at the Lucy Stern Center, Fireside Room.
6. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.