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**MINUTES  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
July 28, 2015  
CITY HALL  
250 Hamilton Avenue  
Palo Alto, California**

13 **Commissioners Present:** Stacey Ashlund, Deirdre Crommie, Jennifer Hetterly, Abbie  
14 Knopper, Ed Lauing, Pat Markevitch, Keith Reckdahl

15 **Commissioners Absent:** Stacey Ashlund, Keith Reckdahl

16 **Others Present:** Eric Filseth, Council Liaison

17 **Staff Present:** John Aiken, Daren Anderson, Catherine Bourquin, Rob de Geus, Peter  
18 Jensen

19 **I. ROLL CALL CONDUCTED BY:** Catherine Bourquin

20  
21 **II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:**

22  
23 Rob de Geus: I emailed the Commission earlier today about the time's not accurate on  
24 here. Both the Avenidas project and Junior Museum project could last up to an hour.  
25 They're big projects. Staff and the consultants have done a lot of work, so I don't want to  
26 limit them to 30 minutes.

27  
28 **III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

29  
30 Vice Chair Markevitch: I have one speaker, Gabriel Lewis. You have 3 minutes.

31  
32 Gabriel Lewis: My name's Gabriel Lewis. I'm an intern at the Sierra Club and at the  
33 Audubon Society. I'm working with Shani Kleinhaus, who a lot of you might know. I  
34 have a degree in economics, and I was raised in Palo Alto, and I'm working at a stats  
35 institute at Stanford while I apply to a Ph.D. That's where I'm coming from. I'm here to  
36 comment on Palo Alto's trees, specifically on how we choose which ones to plant and  
37 how we care for them. Shani had me look at Palo Alto's Urban Forest Master Plan which  
38 is still being written, as I understand it. Looking at the current draft, a few things worried



39 her and worried me both as an economist and as an environmentally conscious citizen.  
40 The first thing that worried me was just a number, 46,888. That's the number of dollars  
41 that Palo Alto's trees supposedly are costing the City because of a reduction of air quality  
42 according to a report from the Davey Resource Company in 2010. Supposedly this is  
43 because trees are emitting what are called volatile organic compounds which react in the  
44 atmosphere to create ozone, which is considered a pollutant when near the ground. If this  
45 sounds familiar, it's because it's one of the things that Ronald Reagan talked about in the  
46 '80s to say that trees cause pollution. As an economist, I was astonished that they could  
47 report this number without a hint of uncertainty down to \$8. Few real world analyses are  
48 that certain. As an ecologically minded person, I was also bothered that they used this  
49 number to justify not planting oak trees and some other trees as well. The problem there  
50 is that oaks are keystone species in California. In California they create entire  
51 ecosystems that sustain birds, squirrels, butterflies, bees and a lot of other important  
52 creatures. I thought it would be bad enough to miss the forest for all the trees, worse to  
53 miss the trees for all the VOCs. I looked into the scientific literature behind these claims,  
54 and I wrote a white paper on it, which I can present to any of you if you're interested. I'd  
55 like to summarize it briefly. First, what are volatile organic compounds? They're  
56 nothing scary. The smell of pine, mint, eucalyptus, those are all VOC emissions from  
57 trees or plants. These can create ozone when they react with human-made pollutants,  
58 oxides of nitrogen in the atmosphere. The estimates of the amount of detriment that  
59 comes from this process, they have to be created through these very complex  
60 mathematically models. I looked into these models, and it turns out that the  
61 measurements upon which they are predicated and the models themselves contain a huge  
62 amount of uncertainty. I can't emphasize that enough. Stephen Hawking has called those  
63 kinds of models the great unsolved problems of science. There's still more uncertainty in  
64 whether these VOCs are actually causing harm once they've been emitted. I found that  
65 there's considerable reason to believe that these effects on ozone are completely  
66 overstated and likely to be negligible in Palo Alto. These trees are pretty likely to be  
67 reducing ozone regardless of whether they're oaks. The point is I talked to Palo Alto's  
68 forester yesterday. He also seemed to agree that these VOCs should not be part of the  
69 consideration for which trees we plant, which ones do we water. In general, the benefits  
70 to human beings and the ecological values far outweigh these VOCs. There's a similar  
71 point to be made for carbon sequestration. I didn't do a formal analysis of that, but most  
72 trees are sequestering about the same amount of carbon. I was also bothered by the fact  
73 that the amount of carbon sequestered seemed to be an important factor in the analysis  
74 when in reality the relative difference between an oak and (inaudible) carbon  
75 sequestration is minimal and shouldn't be considered. Again, it's these ecological values  
76 which I don't think I should have to summarize here that are more important. I'd like to  
77 thank you all for your time.  
78



79 **IV. BUSINESS:**

80  
81 **1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the Special Meeting of June 23, 2015.**

82  
83 Approval of the draft June 23, 2015 Minutes was moved by Commissioner Lauing and  
84 seconded by Commissioner Hetterly. Passed 4-0

85  
86 **2. Avenidas Capital Project Study Session.**

87  
88 Rob de Geus: Are you going to start this off, James?

89  
90 James Winstead: (inaudible) get ready.

91  
92 Mr. de Geus: Just to introduce a little bit here. This is James Winstead, and we also have  
93 Lisa Hendrickson in the audience somewhere. They're going to provide a presentation on  
94 the Avenidas project, the exciting campaign that they're undergoing. The City, of course,  
95 has a long history and partnership with Avenidas. Most of you know Lisa; she was the  
96 Executive Director for a long time at Avenidas and now is leading the campaign to help  
97 rebuild the City building. With that, I'll pass it to James.

98  
99 Mr. Winstead: Specifically, what we're here to present is the interface on the park side  
100 with Cogswell Park and how the improvements relate there. Let me step back and orient  
101 you guys around the project. The proposal is to renovate the existing building and add an  
102 addition on. It consists of three pieces. There's the historic fire station from 1927 which  
103 faces on Bryant Street. That's probably what you think of most as you drive by. There's  
104 a cottage building in the back, referred to as the garden shed building, that was built in  
105 the '50s. This portion of the building was added on in the 1970s when Avenidas took  
106 occupation of the building. The proposed improvements to the building are to renovate  
107 the fire station portion, but leaving it intact as a historic structure; keeping the garden  
108 shed building outside, but repurposing it as a community activity space; and an addition  
109 over this portion of the building that was the 1970s improvements. Site improvements.  
110 Around the site, improving and refreshing the landscape, plantings, etc. There's a  
111 courtyard that has existing trees, and then improvement of the courtyard for the use of the  
112 people there. About here on the building, at the third floor, there's an outdoor terrace  
113 with views over Downtown and the Stanford campus. To specifically address the  
114 improvements happening along the park side of the project, we're proposing that we  
115 would be replacing up to approximately the work line of the existing curb block here, not  
116 anticipating to disturb that at all. All of the existing park beyond would remain intact, no  
117 impact at all. Planting up to the back of the walk here. We're proposing to add bicycle  
118 parking on the street for ten bicycles. As you come down the building face here, there's a  
119 service entry into the kitchen component of the cafeteria. We're proposing to add  
120 evergreen hedge screening and probably a structured fence to obscure views to recycling



121 bins and such that are stored out there. As you work your way down here, outside the  
122 cafeteria which is being remodeled as part of the building renovation, we're proposing to  
123 expand the paving here. We have (inaudible) comparing the existing condition to the  
124 proposed condition to create more of an outdoor space to connect the activities inside the  
125 Avenidas Center to the park, provide some more outdoor seating there. Specifically the  
126 improvements would be keeping most of the sidewalk intact, replacing the paving with  
127 probably interlocking pavers, holding up the grade underneath this existing tree with a  
128 low retaining wall. It's only going to be about 12 or 18 inches high; the grade difference  
129 is not that extreme. We'll be keeping the existing lights as part of the planting  
130 improvements around there. Putting in some evergreen hedge screening between the  
131 parking lot and the seating area, so you're not sitting there looking at license plates. A  
132 short presentation, but that's really it. The implications on the park we feel are pretty  
133 minor. As I said, we're working pretty much just up to this walk line, and everything  
134 outside there is to be as it is.

135  
136 Commissioner Hetterly: Can you show us on the diagram where is the park boundary?  
137 Where's the property line?

138  
139 Mr. Winstead: I believe it's a shared property. It's all City property.

140  
141 Kevin Jones: There's no defined property line between the Avenidas (crosstalk) park.

142  
143 Commissioner Hetterly: The park is dedicated parkland. Is the building on the dedicated  
144 parkland? The whole building isn't.

145  
146 Lisa Hendrickson: Immediately adjacent to, it butts up against the park.

147  
148 Mr. Jones: The land under the building is not zoned park.

149  
150 Ms. Hendrickson: It's not zoned park.

151  
152 Commissioner Hetterly: The park goes all the way up to the building? Thank you.

153  
154 Vice Chair Markevitch: Thank you for that brief presentation. We'll start with  
155 Commissioner questions. I'm going to do something interesting on this, because Jennifer  
156 said she had a number of them, but I bet if we let her go first, she'll probably ask a lot of  
157 questions that we all have. Take it away, Jennifer. I'm sorry. I know there's a lot of  
158 questions on the building design and parking and all that. If you have questions  
159 regarding that, that's okay. Keep them brief. Our purview is the park itself and the effect  
160 it would have on it. If you do have questions about the design or traffic, that's fine, just  
161 keep them brief.

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163 Commissioner Hetterly: That was my big question. It's really exciting that Avenidas is  
164 looking at expanding facilities. You guys provide an invaluable service to the  
165 community. Obviously we all know that demand for that is increasing over time. It's  
166 very sensible to plan ahead to meet that future need. I'm happy about that. I do have  
167 some concerns about the proposal. I'm afraid they do touch on some of the things that  
168 Chair Markevitch asked me not to talk too much about. I'll be brief. Presumably the  
169 Architectural Review Board and the Historic Resources Board is going to get into the  
170 nitty gritty of the design. I wanted to give my sense as a layperson, my perspective of the  
171 design of the new building. It seems to me completely incompatible with the existing  
172 historic building. I'd rather not see that new building design even right next to the old  
173 building, let alone integrated as much as it is. As far as the direct impact on the plaza and  
174 the park, I'm a little concerned about that huge wall that you see on page 8. That's a  
175 general view where you're sitting in the plaza, and you look over and what you see is a  
176 giant blank wall with no visual appeal to allow you to enjoy it very much. I think maybe  
177 an earlier plan had a lot more glass. That wall is maybe to replace the glass. I'm not sure  
178 what the history of that is. I'm a little concerned about that wall. I'd like to have  
179 something more visually appealing for the park users. Building aesthetics, though they're  
180 not our purview on this Commission, they define our community landscape for decades.  
181 They really matter to not only the experience of the people who are inside the building,  
182 but the experience of the people outside the building. A community center like Avenidas  
183 represents the heart of our community. I'm hopeful that you'll avoid the temptation to  
184 build for expedience, getting as much as you can in a simple way and instead invest in the  
185 design that enriches the community from inside and outside the doors. That's my  
186 aesthetic comment. Talking about the outdoor seating area. I was concerned about the  
187 parkland interactions. I certainly didn't realize that the whole building was on parkland.  
188

189 Mr. de Geus: I don't think it is.

190  
191 Ms. Hendrickson: It's not.

192  
193 Commissioner Hetterly: That's what you just told me. That's good. I wondered why you  
194 need a PIO, but it sounds like you do because the parkland goes all the way up against the  
195 building is why you might need a PIO to make improvements.  
196

197 Mr. de Geus: It might need. It's when there's significant construction or something  
198 happening on parkland. I don't know if this qualifies in that sense. Out of an abundance  
199 of caution, we're looking into that with our attorneys. Are those necessary for the Park  
200 Improvement Ordinance?  
201

202 Commissioner Hetterly: What about as a park use? I'm not sure that a dining patio  
203 qualifies as a park use. Would we have to undedicate that part of the parkland to allow it  
204 for a specialized use like that? That's something I'd like to know some more about.



205  
206 Mr. de Geus: Our initial review is that we thought it would be a suitable use of the park  
207 in that small portion. It's somewhat recreation focused with the community room right  
208 there. We'll be checking that with our attorneys.  
209

210 Commissioner Hetterly: It's exclusive to the users of the community center.  
211

212 Mr. de Geus: I don't believe it is exclusive. Is that right?  
213

214 Ms. Hendrickson: No, it would not be exclusive. It would be available to anybody.  
215 There are already tables and chairs in the park.  
216

217 Commissioner Hetterly: In that section?  
218

219 Ms. Hendrickson: No, not right there.  
220

221 Commissioner Hetterly: Yeah, in the plaza.  
222

223 Ms. Hendrickson: Right, right.  
224

225 Commissioner Hetterly: I'm reluctant to jump on board to a plan that has potential to co-  
226 opt public access. I want to make sure that it doesn't do that in your visioning and  
227 implementation. As far as feedback on the drop-off and loading areas in the parking lot, I  
228 didn't see much detail in here about that. It would allow me to weigh in. I am concerned  
229 about parking. The lack of new parking is potentially disastrous. With the bigger  
230 facility, you're likely to have more staff over time and you certainly hope to have more  
231 users. Without accommodating additional parking, that is a significant challenge that will  
232 impact park users as well as have a rollover effect on the surrounding neighborhood in  
233 terms of parking. That's a really important issue to consider.  
234

235 Ms. Hendrickson: May I address that?  
236

237 Mr. de Geus: Of course.  
238

239 Ms. Hendrickson: If I may on the parking. Obviously we've been thinking about it since  
240 the moment we decided we wanted to pursue this. Our leasehold interest is limited to the  
241 building, so it's bound by the alley, the Bryant Street sidewalk, the park and the parking  
242 lot. We have no control over that rear parking lot. We have no authority to do anything  
243 there. We have no land on which to build parking. We have nothing available to us that  
244 would make it possible for us to build new parking spaces.  
245

246 Commissioner Hetterly: Did you consider any underground parking? That's certainly  
247 something that you could do within the building.

248  
249 Ms. Hendrickson: It's a very small footprint for underground parking, particularly when  
250 you take into ...

251  
252 Commissioner Hetterly: Because of the existing building.

253  
254 Ms. Hendrickson: Yes, because of the existing building. I doubt that we could build that  
255 many underground spaces. I'm sure it would be cost prohibitive, not to mention what it  
256 might to do the historic building. It's a very tight space back there. If you've been back  
257 there, that patio, we probably only have 20 feet from the back of the building to the  
258 parking lot, maybe 30, maybe not. It's very tight.

259  
260 Commissioner Hetterly: The parking lot is tight also for its current use. Did you  
261 consider other locations, where you could have better facilities to accommodate your  
262 users?

263  
264 Ms. Hendrickson: We have considered everything. We have considered south Palo Alto,  
265 the 101 frontage area. We've considered buying. We've considered renting. We've  
266 considered everything. We keep coming back to this location because it's so well suited  
267 and so accessible to our constituents, the seniors. People can walk. People can ride their  
268 bikes, and do. There's public transportation and there's a density of seniors in the  
269 Downtown area that this center has always served. We have long-term interests in  
270 securing space in south Palo Alto. In fact, for a while back, we worked to secure some  
271 land on the Cubberley site when there was a lot of working being done on what might  
272 happen at that site. We've not been able to turn up a better alternative than to build an  
273 addition onto this building and to renovate this building.

274  
275 Commissioner Hetterly: Have you done any analysis of how much you expect your  
276 usership to increase over time? How many more users do you expect to come? I only  
277 ask because I know the population is growing. I am concerned that you're going to  
278 impair the ability of your users to use the facility (crosstalk).

279  
280 Ms. Hendrickson: Because of the parking?

281  
282 Commissioner Hetterly: Right. You won't get the uptake that we all would like you to  
283 have because of the parking.

284  
285 Ms. Hendrickson: In fact, we're seriously exploring ways in which we can expand our  
286 own transportation services to help people get to the building, so they don't have to drive.  
287 We've done a study and have learned that less than 60 percent of our folks drive their

288 own cars. More than 40 percent get a ride, use public transportation or walk. About 3  
289 percent ride their bikes. We think that's a pretty high percentage of folks who, at this  
290 point in time, do not drive their cars to the center. We'll be doing everything we can to  
291 increase that number over time through our own resources and otherwise. We can do  
292 that, and we will be doing that for sure.

293  
294 Commissioner Hetterly: The current parking accommodates that 60 percent who are  
295 driving now?

296  
297 Ms. Hendrickson: It does.

298  
299 Vice Chair Markevitch: Ed and then Commissioner Crommie.

300  
301 Commissioner Lauing: You were right. Her first five questions were my first five  
302 questions. We didn't collaborate on that beforehand. I wanted to underscore the stat that  
303 you put in the overview. There's no question that the "over 55s," or whatever that  
304 reference is, is growing. It's undeniably growing; it's going to keep growing. This is a  
305 phenomenal facility that obviously has to grow somehow, somewhere, to your point of  
306 other locations to accommodate that. As we look at the Parks Master Plan, this is an  
307 undeniable statistic. A lot of them are not undeniable; they're a little fuzzy. This one's  
308 happening. Getting ahead of this is really important for the City. You're obviously doing  
309 that within constraints. Appreciate the answers to questions. When I looked at this, I  
310 started with the impacts on the park. If truly that patio is open to everyone, then that  
311 answers that question. The elevation as it faces the park does impact our jurisdiction. I  
312 would also encourage some review of that. To me, it looks like another big office  
313 building sticking up, not unlike SurveyMonkey against the train station or the grocery  
314 store against the Alma. I encourage some help there. With respect to the modern design,  
315 which I find completely dissonant, I'll refrain from comments on that. I wanted to ask if  
316 there was some reasoning for that, psychological reason for the folks that are using it. Is  
317 there some intention there of keeping it modern for folks that are not quite as modern or  
318 something like that?

319  
320 Ms. Hendrickson: We would beg to differ. We think it would be very valuable to  
321 Avenidas if this community center had a fresh and modern entryway, albeit a rear  
322 entryway. There is value to having two faces, if you will, of this community center. The  
323 old, the 1927 one, the Bryant Street face, and then a very fresh and modern rear-looking  
324 face. We worry a lot about making sure that we remain relevant, especially as boomers  
325 age into the cohort that we want to support.

326  
327 Commissioner Lauing: That's exactly my question. Is there some intentionality there?  
328

329 Ms. Hendrickson: This design will be that much more appealing, in addition to making it  
330 possible to build a wing with the kinds of amenities that we need to be able to offer the  
331 community.

332  
333 Commissioner Lauing: I don't think I can add anymore.

334  
335 Commissioner Hetterly: I have one more question. Can I tag it on?

336  
337 Vice Chair Markevitch: Yeah.

338  
339 Commissioner Hetterly: My only other question was about lighting, the impact of  
340 lighting coming off of that wall of windows. Do you expect that light to reach off the  
341 property beyond the parking lot? It seems to be right on the parking lot side of the back  
342 of that building, by the dining, the glass ...

343  
344 Ms. Hendrickson: Are you referring to facing the parking lot or facing the park?

345  
346 Commissioner Hetterly: I'm talking about this wall of windows and the impact on the  
347 park, but also the surrounding community. Lighting is a big issue for many people. How  
348 do you expect to handle the impact of the light that comes out of there after dark?

349  
350 Ms. Hendrickson: We are going to have mechanical shades that can be dropped down;  
351 although, they're primarily to control the sunlight and not the artificial light. At the  
352 moment, this center is not widely used in the evening, where you would have it brightly  
353 lit. We expect over time we will use it more in the evenings, of course. We haven't  
354 worked out a lot of the details.

355  
356 Mr. Jones: There will be no interior spillage of light outside the building footprint. Your  
357 perception in looking across the street and seeing a building that is lit will occur, but  
358 there's no light source ...

359  
360 Commissioner Hetterly: But it's not going to spill out.

361  
362 Mr. Jones: ... interior that'll be spilling outside (crosstalk) ...

363  
364 Commissioner Hetterly: That was my question.

365  
366 Mr. Jones: ... exterior walkways or parking lots.

367  
368 Ms. Hendrickson: That's Kevin Jones, our architect.

369  
370 Vice Chair Markevitch: Commissioner Crommie.

371  
372 Commissioner Crommie: Hi there. Thank you for your presentation. I have all the same  
373 concerns as the other two Commissioners who have spoken. They're obvious concerns. I  
374 appreciate how you did your elevations in this packet. Thank you so much, because you  
375 made it transparent to understand what we're looking at. We don't always get those kinds  
376 of presentations. I want to thank you for that. I do worry about that. We're in such a  
377 development phase in the City. I have a big development that went on down my street on  
378 Monroe, the redevelopment of the Palo Alto Bowling Alley. Now I have to come home  
379 to a big wall face. That's just a couple of blocks from where I live. They really do  
380 encroach upon you. It's everywhere. It's where you live, and then it starts to be where  
381 you go to relax. I don't know quite what to do. If there could be some kind of terracing  
382 with plants, so it's not just a wall, even if it's artificial balconies, something that looks a  
383 little more European with something that's visually appealing. This is not visually  
384 appealing in any way I can see. I find these buildings that are full of glass and then you  
385 end up covering them all, because it's so bright. I don't understand the theories behind  
386 building it that way. Because of that dissonance that both Commissioners prior to me  
387 pointed out between the old architecture and the new, if you're going to go so far as to  
388 bring something new and modern, it has to be hugely useful. Can you explain to me why  
389 you need all those big panels of windows, especially if you're thinking of covering them  
390 up?  
391

392 Ms. Hendrickson: It will only be to protect against the late afternoon sun in the summer  
393 time. That space is largely circulation space, not classrooms. There is a lobby, and it is  
394 an atrium. We wanted to give our participants an indoor/outdoor experience, so they  
395 could be in the atrium, making their way from one place to another, but have clear views  
396 of both the courtyard and the outside. We thought that would be attractive. It also  
397 exposes more of the rear façade of the historic building, which we felt was an advantage  
398 so you can not only see part of the rear façade, because it won't be covered at all, but  
399 other parts of the rear façade will be visible from inside the building and through the  
400 building through the glass.  
401

402 Commissioner Crommie: Do you have a view of that you could pop up on the screen?  
403

404 Ms. Hendrickson: I don't know if it's in there, to tell you the truth. Much of that rear  
405 façade will be visible, not only from outside the building but also inside the building.  
406

407 Commissioner Crommie: The tiled roof?  
408

409 Ms. Hendrickson: The rear of the building, the wall of that building with its windows.  
410

411 Commissioner Crommie: The users of that facility still feel cutoff to nature. From  
412 visually looking at this, it feels like, you are right next to a park. I wish there was some  
413 way to integrate that experience of open space. Maybe you're getting there by ...  
414

415 Ms. Hendrickson: I hope you noted that on the park side, the wing is entirely exposed to  
416 the park. It's going to afford beautiful views of the park for those people that are in those  
417 rooms.  
418

419 Commissioner Crommie: Is this the best picture of that?  
420

421 Ms. Hendrickson: That's not the best picture. I'm sorry, let me find this one for you.  
422

423 Vice Chair Markevitch: Are you speaking about the top story where the windows are  
424 overlooking the park?  
425

426 Ms. Hendrickson: All three stories will overlook the park. The top story we're imagining  
427 as a fitness room. The dining room is on the lower level on the third floor, as it is now.  
428

429 Mr. Jones: If you refer to A5.1 sheet, look at the northwest elevation. This is the park  
430 face of the building. The existing building, the proposed new addition has three levels at  
431 that point which basically stack up on top of each other. The first level being the dining  
432 area, which is located on the first floor in this area which is the motivation for (crosstalk)  
433 out to a patio in this area which would directly allow for the users as well as the public to  
434 come and have some outdoor seating opportunities directly off of the dining area. The  
435 second level above that also orients to the park. The whole room looks out that way into  
436 this pretty nice, beautiful grove of redwoods that are there. That's anticipated as being a  
437 wellness center. The very top of the third floor with the same orientation as the fitness  
438 center. Visually there's a pretty strong connection to the park that we've been trying to  
439 explore in our work to date on this. There are a couple other graphics that give you a feel  
440 of that in here as well.  
441

442 Ms. Hendrickson: That was an idea that was first raised by the ARB when we took a  
443 different design to them last October. They expressed the interest in having space that  
444 interacted with the park.  
445

446 Mr. Jones: If you would go to sheet A2.2. The image on the right says La Comida  
447 dining room, that is the proposed conceptual view of the dining hall, which is on the  
448 ground floor. The window area you see is the area where we're talking about visually  
449 looking out here, connected to the patio. Our desire is to have some access to this from  
450 that dining hall. That whole wall, that glass wall which we've heard comments on, is  
451 oriented to help create these strong views out into the park and take advantage of that  
452 position. If you go up to the sheet, on the bottom of it, the fitness room is the view of that

453 same area on the third level with the room having its primary orientation also into the  
454 trees and into the park.

455  
456 Commissioner Crommie: Thank you for that. I'm starting to get in the groove with what  
457 you guys are driven by. That integration does seem important. The trees block the view  
458 all the way into the plaza, as far as I understand. The users of the building will see  
459 mostly the trees?

460  
461 Ms. Hendrickson: Yes, that's correct.

462  
463 Commissioner Crommie: What's your impression of this comment we are giving on the  
464 wall? I'm only looking at it from this picture here. Is that a fair representation of what  
465 someone sitting in the plaza will see?  
466

467 Mr. Jones: That's a fair representation. There's been a lot of evolution on this. We're at a  
468 very preliminary stage. We've been to the Historic Review Board on a preliminary basis.  
469 We're going to the ARB on a preliminary basis. We had worked on this for quite a while  
470 with a lot of different ideas. The main concept of this was trying to create a fairly open  
471 and airy building design. That was the relationship to the glass. That had a lot of  
472 resonance with Avenidas particularly in light of the comments that Lisa made to you  
473 about this notion of the future and how we were trying to do a design that spoke to the  
474 future of Avenidas as well as trying to fit within the Secretary of the Interior's Standards  
475 about how one adds a new building to a historic building, having a clear differentiation  
476 between the two. Granted there are a lot of levels about that. That's part of what we're  
477 doing over the next couple of months, figuring out from a ARB, HRB and community  
478 base where do we want to be with this. The concept behind that was based around this  
479 idea of this open element. The wall that everyone is referring to was proposed as a very  
480 rich, textured limestone wall. It may not come across in the imagery of this. We've  
481 heard a lot of different comments about that. Clearly we're continuing to study it. At this  
482 stage, all I can say is that it's a work in process. We've appreciated comments that we've  
483 heard from various different views. We'll be continuing to study.  
484

485 Commissioner Crommie: Are you getting comments from the residents who are using  
486 the facility?  
487

488 Mr. Jones: We had a large meeting about a month ago where we invited the community  
489 to hear about the project that we're doing. We had a very good turnout. There were  
490 about 50 people that showed up that evening. Overall the people who had comments  
491 were very favorable. We're encouraged, but every comment is an important comment for  
492 us to evaluate. We will continue to do so.  
493

494 Commissioner Crommie: Can you have input sessions during the day when you're saying  
495 most of the seniors are there, rather than the evening?  
496

497 Mr. Jones: We've done a couple of things. This project has been in evolution over a two-  
498 year period to date. One of the activities that Avenidas and Lisa had taken on was to  
499 survey the participants about the quality of the facility that was there and what some of  
500 the deficiencies were and what some of the expectations would be for the new building.  
501 We've done a very elaborate polling. Lisa can share the results of that with you. It was  
502 broadly based. There are a lot of people who are critical of an old stodgy building that  
503 needed some improvement in terms of the interior. There are people who love the  
504 existing historic building, which we do too. There were viewpoints of trying to see how  
505 we could provide the services and amenities that other community centers in the area,  
506 senior service providers, have that Palo Alto doesn't.  
507

508 Commissioner Crommie: You got initial input which guided you in some ways. Have  
509 you shared these pictures with everyone and gotten ...  
510

511 Ms. Hendrickson: Yes.  
512

513 Mr. Jones: Yes.  
514

515 Ms. Hendrickson: These pictures line the office out of which I work. The door's always  
516 open, and it's open to a public lobby. The folks that come into our building are not shy.  
517 We've been talking about it and showing it to people.  
518

519 Commissioner Crommie: Thank you for that. I wanted to comment on the parking. I do  
520 feel like it does connect to our purview. We oversee access to recreation within the City.  
521 We are limiting access to this building. You spoke about people walking from that  
522 surrounding neighborhood, but we know we have a lot of people who are aging in all  
523 parts of the City. The people who are going to be cut off by not having parking are the  
524 people who are still driving and want to come from other parts of the City where they  
525 don't have that opportunity to walk. You're going to increase your resources for  
526 residents, and then they're going to be stymied as far as getting there. I don't know what  
527 to do about that. As I was thinking about it, it occurred to me, as Commissioner Hetterly  
528 said, did you consider another site where you could do parking. I don't know if there's a  
529 precedence within the City of getting to expand a building when you can't do anything  
530 about parking. I saw in the report that you said you might do some equivalent things.  
531

532 Ms. Hendrickson: What we will do is pay a fee to the Parking Assessment District, an in-  
533 lieu fee. In lieu of building parking spaces, we can pay a fee, and that is provided for  
534 developers who can't build parking as is the case for us.  
535

536 Commissioner Crommie: That fee, whoever gets that, doesn't help the residents who  
537 need to get to the facility.

538  
539 Ms. Hendrickson: Over time the Parking Assessment District will use the money that's  
540 accumulated as these fees are paid to build more parking garages. That's the mechanics.  
541 We feel fortunate that, because of the kind of operation we have, we do operate  
542 transportation services. We run shuttles around town, and we have a very busy door-to-  
543 door transportation program. You can call us and ask for a ride tomorrow. A volunteer  
544 will drive his or her car and pick you up at the door, take you wherever you want to go,  
545 carry your groceries and hold your arm, whatever you need to make that a good trip for  
546 you. That program has been growing very rapidly. Maybe that's what we expand.  
547 Maybe we operate more shuttles. We know that we want to make sure that people can  
548 get to the building. If that means that we have to build capacity in our own transportation  
549 services, we'll do that.

550  
551 Vice Chair Markevitch: Commissioner Knopper, do you have any questions?

552  
553 Commissioner Knopper: All the questions have been exhausted. Just a personal  
554 comment. I love the building. I love glass facing nature, because it brings it indoors so  
555 you can experience it. Making the building relevant for the boomers moving forward, so  
556 they want to come into a new, clean, lovely facility is great. Plus your services are  
557 marvelous.

558  
559 Vice Chair Markevitch: I have a few. I think I crossed the line this year on being able to  
560 use the services there. I live in Downtown North, and I see time and time again how the  
561 in-lieu parking fee has impacted the surrounding neighborhoods. People who are putting  
562 up buildings pay the money, and then the traffic is still parking in the neighborhoods. I  
563 know it's only a trial, but in September they're starting a parking permit program in the  
564 surrounding neighborhoods, which might impact your ability. The shuttle expansion is a  
565 good idea. That's one thing. Early in the presentation, I heard the phrase "fence and  
566 hedges." Was that with respect to the outdoor seating area? Could someone elaborate on  
567 that?

568  
569 Mr. Winstead: The outdoor seating area we're talking about is here outside. There'll be  
570 low plantings on the edge directly between the patio and the parking, like the bumpers of  
571 the cars. The rest of this will be low, like ornamental grasses, regular-type planting. The  
572 photograph doesn't quite show it, but further down the building this way, right here is a  
573 service entry. If you walked down there today, there's a blue recycling bin. The  
574 proposed hedges would basically wrap that corner so you could maintain those services  
575 that are already out there, but you're not seeing that as you walk by. It'd be maybe chest  
576 high, like a 4 or 5-foot fence, and then evergreen hedges around that concisely in that  
577 area.

578  
579 Vice Chair Markevitch: We just spent a chunk of money to redo that park. Part of that  
580 was removing the hedges and making them smaller, so there was visibility for the police  
581 so they could see what was going on. There was some pretty unsavory things going on in  
582 that park. I am concerned that by putting up fencing like that and more hedges, it's going  
583 to start over again. I don't want to see anyone harmed from Avenidas at night. That  
584 would be a horrible thing. For me, it's important to keep in mind why we did what we  
585 did.

586  
587 Ms. Hendrickson: Point well taken. We are delighted with the new landscaping that was  
588 done. It has improved the park enormously for those of us who work in that building and  
589 our participants who come and visit us there. Yes, we're delighted with that. We don't  
590 want to do anything to turn back the clock.

591  
592 Vice Chair Markevitch: Regarding the large wall that faces the parking lot and you can  
593 see it from the park, that's sandstone or ...

594  
595 Mr. Jones: It's proposed as limestone, a textured limestone pattern was the original  
596 conception. We've heard a variety of comments, so we'll see what it is in its next  
597 iteration.

598  
599 Vice Chair Markevitch: My comment on that would be go look at Union Bank at the  
600 corner of Waverley and University and consider putting plantings on it. Let it go straight  
601 up with greenery. They clean it up a couple of times a year. There's birds nesting in it.  
602 It's pretty cool to watch. That would be my comment. Commissioner Crommie has one  
603 more.

604  
605 Commissioner Crommie: This is especially relevant because we have our consultant  
606 heading up our Parks and Recreation Master Plan. My father-in-law is about 82. He  
607 volunteers at Avenidas, and he rides his bike there from Barron Park. He is getting ready  
608 to convert his bicycle use to a tricycle. He owns one, an adult tricycle. He's very active  
609 in Second Community, so he leads bike rides for older people around the City. Is there  
610 any way to make a parking place for tricycles?

611  
612 Ms. Hendrickson: Yes. The bike parking that's in the front will accommodate tricycles.

613  
614 Commissioner Crommie: A few of them? They're big. Encourage that. Sometimes  
615 when there is space, people start to use that opportunity.

616  
617 Ms. Hendrickson: We not only would like to see people ride their tricycles over, we're  
618 thinking of a way to make them available for people to try out and demo so as to  
619 encourage their use.

620  
621 Commissioner Crommie: Wonderful. I love that idea of that education. You're  
622 providing a new opportunity with the parking area.

623  
624 Vice Chair Markevitch: Commissioner Hetterly.

625  
626 Commissioner Hetterly: I had one more comment about the two glass walls. We hear a  
627 lot on this Commission about bird hazards created by big glass walls. With all those tall  
628 trees very close to the building, that may mitigate that, but I encourage you to check in  
629 with the bird experts. Shani Kleinhaus would be ...

630  
631 Mr. Jones: We've gotten some of that discussion about glazing products that help prevent  
632 bird strikes.

633  
634 Vice Chair Markevitch: Thank you. Thank you for keeping it under an hour.

635  
636 **3. Junior Museum and Zoo Capital Project Update.**

637  
638 Rob de Geus: A couple of introductions here. We have people that are going to help us.  
639 We have Brent McClure and Sarah Vaccaro from Cody Anderson and Wasney  
640 Architects. We have John Aiken back here. He is the Director of the Junior Museum and  
641 Zoo. He does a fantastic job. While I mention that, the staff of the Junior Museum and  
642 Zoo are amazing. That's what makes the Junior Museum and Zoo as special as it is. It's  
643 all about the building today, but it's really the staff and John's work that makes it special.  
644 We also have some Board Members. I don't know all their names, but I do know Bern  
645 Beecham. We have Rhyena Halpern, who is an Assistant Director in Community  
646 Services and oversees the arts and sciences division which includes the Junior Museum  
647 and Zoo. We'll go now to Brent. He's going to walk through a presentation. They've  
648 done some pretty hard thinking about the comments the Commission made last time it  
649 was here. We look forward to hearing your comments on their work.

650  
651 Brent McClure: Thanks, Rob. Thanks, Commissioners, for having us back. Since the  
652 last time we met with you in February, there's a lot of comments and a lot of complexity  
653 and a lot going on with this project. We wanted to put together a thorough analysis on  
654 the project for you today. Just for starters, we see this project as a piece in the larger  
655 context of the Rinconada plan. In the plan that's been before you, you've got the Museum  
656 and Zoo over here off the corner, off of Middlefield Road. We're encouraged and excited  
657 about all of the experiences that we'll see when this entire project becomes realized at  
658 some time in the future. Pulling the park beyond the boundary, all the way out into  
659 Middlefield, so that Middlefield pulls you in front of the Museum and Zoo and then all  
660 the way into the park. We've been working carefully to integrate the design of the  
661 Museum and Zoo so that it's very sensitive to the needs of the park and the park patron.

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662 The Museum and Zoo is a jewel of Palo Alto. A lot of people that live outside Palo Alto  
663 take advantage of the facility. The central mission is serving children and education  
664 about science and engaging their sense of learning and excitement and curiosity.  
665 Moreover, they're currently serving upwards of 150,000 patrons over the course of a year.  
666 There's 1,000 children that come for summer school programs at this point. They've got  
667 over 15,700 kids that take advantage of educational programs both within the Museum  
668 and Zoo itself, and then within the surrounding environs. There's the museum. You go  
669 into the Zoo. There's such a robust education program where they take science kits and  
670 put together science programs and bring them into the various elementary schools and  
671 middle schools within the community. It already serves a rich and broad need. The  
672 facilities are grossly undersized to support their present activities. For example, because  
673 of the size of the space, we're looking to address overcrowding within the space. As you  
674 come in the front door, for example, you've got stroller parking that spills halfway into  
675 the museum space and sometimes out the front door. There's not enough space to  
676 accommodate the current need. We're looking to address those kinds of things, to  
677 address safety, circulation and also ADA problems. Restrooms are undersized. We've  
678 got leaky roofs. This building is in need of not only a complete redo but right-sizing and  
679 expansion of the facility. As we look at the teachers and the faculty within the complex,  
680 that space, that shot on the left, is where you've got five or six faculty members that share  
681 this tiny postage-stamp office space. They don't have the space necessary to support the  
682 programs they have. Classrooms are undersized as well. One of the foundational pieces  
683 of the project is that the Zoo and the Museum are seeking accreditation. Currently both  
684 the Museum and Zoo are not accredited facilities. Accreditation is very important,  
685 because it will open a lot of doors and opportunities for the Zoo to seek recognition  
686 within the zoo community, the museum community, to achieve things like future grant  
687 programs. It will allow them to bring in traveling exhibits and other animals. If you've  
688 got an animal that is in another zoo and if you're an accredited facility, then you can get  
689 some reciprocity. It will give them this opportunity to expand those programs. Part of  
690 the reason they're not able to get accreditation is their storage and support facilities for  
691 the Museum collection is what you see here. We don't have the proper ability to store  
692 collections. Lastly the back of house space for the Zoo. What you see here is the Zoo  
693 Director's office, which currently serves not just the Zoo Director's space, but it's the  
694 feeding room, animal care room. It's a one stop shop within this tiny office space to  
695 address all of the needs for the animals and the Zoo. In addition to those programmatic  
696 goals, there's a bunch of sight constraints. We probably touched on these briefly with  
697 you when we met in February. We're in a challenging corner of a larger parcel. It's a  
698 single property that encompasses Rinconada Park, Lucie Stern Theatre, the Girl Scout  
699 Building and the Junior Museum and Zoo. There's the park boundary, which we'll talk  
700 about in a minute as to what that includes and what that touches. The first set of  
701 constraints are what we call boundaries that we're trying to design the facility around and  
702 build around. You can see the edge of Rinconada Park. There's also a utility corridor,  
703 which is the blue stripe that runs through there. We've got storm drain, water, sewer lines



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704 that run through there. Right now, those go underneath the Zoo. That becomes a  
705 constraint as to where we can place buildings within the project; we're going to build  
706 around that utility corridor. We also have setback issues, which are the blue and red lines  
707 at the front. We're adjusting the side setback between Walter Hays Elementary School  
708 and the Zoo, because the existing Museum is sitting off the setback line and on the  
709 property line. Parking is a huge issue, as everybody knows. Currently, the parking lot at  
710 this site is circuitous, a little tortured in some ways. The lanes are narrow. The  
711 wayfinding is difficulty as to how you weave through the space. There's two driveway  
712 access points, one off of Kellogg and one in front. With kids coming and going and kids  
713 coming out of Walter Hays, it becomes a challenge. What we've tried to do with our  
714 project is to not only look at expanding and rightsizing the Museum and Zoo, but also  
715 finding ways to economize the parking lot and increase space. What we've done in the  
716 previous design that we showed in February was to increase the parking by 20 spaces  
717 within the lot. Other constraints. The landscape, trees. There's a rich tapestry of oaks,  
718 redwoods. There's some exciting signature trees that we're trying to design the project  
719 around. The green tree that's next to the words "Existing Junior Museum and Zoo" is a  
720 dawn redwood tree. It's a tree that dates back to the Jurassic era, not this one specimen of  
721 course. It's an important redwood on the site. There's a nicely shaped pecan tree that is  
722 also in front of the existing Zoo. The blue represents the stand of oaks and where they  
723 occur. There's a really good one around the Girl Scout Building. Then the redwood trees  
724 that we're looking to uphold. There's cedar trees that line and front Middlefield Road that  
725 are pretty sizeable as well. Other programmatic constraints. One is our frontage of  
726 Middlefield. We're looking to respect that and not create a huge amount of frontage  
727 along that edge, because we want to be sensitive to the residential neighborhood. Also in  
728 the upper left of this photograph, you can see what the existing park entrance looks like  
729 between the Girl Scout Building, the parking and the trees. It's not a gracious entrance,  
730 and part of our design is to look at how do we create this connective tissue that runs from  
731 the park to the Zoo and Museum and then back again. I've touched on some of these  
732 points, looking at how we integrate with the Junior Museum and Zoo. There's drop-off,  
733 improving the parking, creating this plaza space, creating some interactivity and how the  
734 interactions would work between the exterior face of the Zoo within the park so that park  
735 patrons can see and touch and experience what is going on within the Zoo. Also out at  
736 Middlefield Road, there's going to be some public transportation. There's a bus stop  
737 that's going to be implemented so that people coming on public transit can access all the  
738 facilities on the site. The design that we showed last time at the PRC, I'll go through  
739 briefly. What it does is what we have shown here. The parking lot is reconfigured. We  
740 have the pathway that runs along Lucie Stern and connects to the Girl Scout Building and  
741 then feeds into the park. We've got the pathways that link up there. A park arrival plaza  
742 space that's to the northwest of the Zoo exterior. The building is split into two sections.  
743 There's this U-shaped building at the bottom; that's the Museum and education center.  
744 The round piece in the middle is the open air Zoo. That segmented, pie-shaped building  
745 that's in the back is the Zoo support building. Lastly down at the bottom, between that



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746 and Walter Hays, is the Zoo back of house zone. The Zoo is going to be enclosed in a  
747 netting that mimics a spider web in design, a play off the animal and anthropomorphic  
748 nature of the facility. In doing so, we're going to have what's called "loose in the Zoo."  
749 John is going to take it upon himself to have child friendly animals such as birds. It's  
750 going to be a rich forested canopy within the Zoo. You're going to be able to see animals  
751 and activities happening within the Zoo. The Zoo support building in the back will  
752 support the animal care needs. Here's the footprint as to how that design in February  
753 compared. The blue line represents the footprint shown in the Master Plan. The red line  
754 shows where we were with the existing Museum and Zoo. Here's how the program  
755 breaks down within the spaces. The mustard color would be the Museum and exhibit  
756 zone. That's where you enter into the facility. If you hang a right, you're go into the core  
757 facilities of the building. There's an education wing that fronts the street. As you go  
758 through the Museum and into the Zoo, the space has pathways that link up and down,  
759 with the "loose in the Zoo" concept trying to support interactive experiences. The Zoo  
760 support facility is in the back. As I mentioned before, the education center is going to  
761 serve over 15,000 kids, and it's going to provide some future expansion. We've been  
762 sensitive to the neighborhood, so the second story is set back from the street. There's a  
763 little bit of Museum and exhibit space up above. Staff office space, where they currently  
764 have virtually none, will exist in that zone over there. At the Zoo exhibit building, there's  
765 a little bit of exhibit space up top for butterflies. There's going to be a bat exhibit as well.  
766 Plan-wise, you can see how the spaces orient. What we've done in the Zoo that we don't  
767 have today is we're trying to create height and depth to give kids a variety of experiences  
768 in the space. There's a pathway that runs up and loops around clockwise. The pathway  
769 that loops around counter-clockwise comes down. The one to the left is up, and the one  
770 that comes down is below. That creates a cave-like experience. At the lower portion,  
771 you can look up into the meerkat exhibits or into the turtle exhibit. It takes you to the  
772 second-story platform on the backside. Here's an earlier sketch concept that starts to  
773 illustrate how that experience and the feel might occur within the Museum. Here's a shot  
774 of the rendering, looking overhead from the street. This is an early design concept.  
775 We've gone to ARB once for a study session. We're still in the development stage. In  
776 essence, you've got the main entrance there. This is the pecan tree and then the Zoo as it  
777 wraps around into the park. Then a view looking from the park onto the Zoo. The  
778 segmented building on the left, the design concept with that is we're looking to try to be  
779 as sensitive as we can with the park with that back building, by depressing it  
780 approximately 4 1/2 to 5 feet within the landscape so that it sits lower. That cave  
781 experience is at that lower grade as it relates to the inside of the building, but then have it  
782 stepped down and then segmented so that the facades and the pieces are small. We're  
783 going to look at integrating a green roof on the lower section. The butterfly exhibit will  
784 be glassed in, so that you'll be able to see that experience from the park. That's the  
785 program and the constraints from what we had shown in February with some additional  
786 information to get everybody to the same spot. What we heard at the February meeting  
787 was there's a loss of turf, sounds like a great program, but we need you to study



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788 alternatives, ways to move the building out of the park, ways to go onto Middlefield,  
789 ways to go towards the parking area, and the implications of that. We looked at three  
790 alternatives that I'd like to walk you through. The first one is reducing the footprint. Can  
791 you somehow nip and tuck and tighten the belt and still make everything work? We went  
792 back to the drawing board and we looked at that. Here's the site plan that shows that.  
793 We're going to call it Alternate 1. The red line represents what we had shown last time.  
794 We found some ways on this layering of exhibits to make them even more efficient.  
795 With the pathways' ADA needs and what not, we were able to find some space to tighten  
796 that up. Also tighten up the Zoo support building in the back, leaving the remaining  
797 pieces at the front more or less unchanged. What does this mean as it relates to the park  
798 boundary? We were able to reduce this by about 2,000 square feet of footprint that's in  
799 the park boundary right now. In the meanwhile, all of the other constraints that we were  
800 looking at more or less remain the same. The trees that we were looking to preserve on  
801 the front hold true. The utility corridor that we have to build around is shown there. The  
802 frontage along the street as shown down below is the same as we had before. The park  
803 entry plaza still has that graceful entrance piece. As we connect parkland into the  
804 facility, the connections towards Middlefield and Lucie Stern are still present. We  
805 looked at a second, more aggressive scheme, which is here. That was to look at moving  
806 the Zoo support building out of the parkland and putting it closer towards the park  
807 entrance. You start to see that we reduce the impacts on the parkland more significantly.  
808 This creates some additional challenges. By moving this building out to the front, we're  
809 going to impact another redwood and we're going to impact the pecan tree at the front.  
810 Being able to connect the Zoo support building to the museum and education center, we  
811 weren't able to do that because of the utility corridor. The other piece, as we go to here,  
812 is looking at how significantly adding more building at that location will neck down that  
813 entrance piece that we're trying to accomplish by connecting Rinconada Park into the  
814 greater environs around it. It reduces that throat between the Girl Scout Building and our  
815 facility by upwards of 75 percent. By doing so, we're having to now push out the edge of  
816 the curb and the parking area. From the design we had before, where we were adding the  
817 20 spaces, we now lose close to 16 of those; we're almost at a wash, +/- four spaces.  
818 There's concerns too about as you're coming into the Museum you have to go around the  
819 Zoo support building to get into the space. The last piece I want to touch on with this  
820 concept is this sets up some challenges that would be very difficult for the Zoo to operate  
821 in. If you look to the right of where it says "Zoo Exterior," there's the Zoo support. The  
822 Zoo support space is where animals are taken out of exhibit and put either in cages or  
823 enclosures to get rest, to be away from kids. A lot of times it's very important to have  
824 that relationship transition from that back of house Zoo support zone to directly connect  
825 with the Zoo support building. If you're taking an animal that might be sick or have some  
826 issues, you go from the Zoo to the Zoo back of house area and then into the Zoo support  
827 building. In this design concept, we're unable to do that, because we're having them on  
828 opposite sides of the Zoo. The third idea that we wanted to explore that proved to also be  
829 quite challenging was thinking outside the box, to fundamentally rethink the project and



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830 move the facility towards Middlefield Road. You can see these boundaries and how they  
831 impact parkland. We believe we're going to impact even more trees. The dawn redwood  
832 would be gone. The frontage will significantly increase upwards of 140 feet in this  
833 residential neighborhood. In our meeting with the ARB, they raised concerns that we  
834 need to be sensitive to the residential character of the neighborhood and with that scale.  
835 If we were to move the program in this direction, it would drive two-story construction,  
836 because of the square footages that we need, even closer to the street, as opposed to how  
837 we have them set back from the street. We'd lose the opportunity to have the restroom  
838 building that we had shown in February contiguous with the buildings. Now it becomes a  
839 floater that would have to exist somewhere else. Here the parking becomes even more  
840 challenged. We would lose at least 12 spaces. You can see the orange-dotted line where  
841 the old curb was. We're scrunching and pulling this parking back even further. The bus  
842 drop-off that's at the front, the building is now starting to block that off from where that's  
843 planned to be located. Programmatically, this becomes a difficult, if not impossible,  
844 configuration of space for the operation of the Zoo. Before you had those two functions  
845 on either side of the Zoo, now you've got them together, but they're a really long, skinny  
846 space. If we're going to take an animal out of exhibit, how many of these cages do you  
847 move through to get through this narrow space? It becomes a difficult, if not impossible,  
848 configuration. We looked at these three alternatives. We tried other ones that didn't  
849 make the cut to bring forward as part of this discussion today. Here's the summary of  
850 what those three were as far as their impacts. The last couple of pieces. We heard at the  
851 last meeting concerns about parking and congestion. The different examples show what  
852 we're able to accomplish. Those 120 parking spaces is part of the Rinconada Master  
853 Plan, so it's linked with that and part of the CEQA study that's ongoing right now. The  
854 public restroom, we're absolutely onboard with putting a public restroom, as far as within  
855 the building, on the Zoo support building if that's going to be located adjacent to the park,  
856 to then directly serve park patrons. The last one we heard was bringing back some  
857 information and talk about, regardless of the design direction, how does the exterior face  
858 of the Zoo work with the park. Here's bigger photos of the view from the entrance, the  
859 top photo would be of the Girl Scout Building on the left. Looking today at the Zoo from  
860 the park. We're looking to create a story wall, if you will, that surrounds the Zoo, and  
861 have this wall become highly interactive, a place for learning, a place for telling stories  
862 about science and education, environmental aspects of the park. You can see the Girl  
863 Scout Building on the left. You start to see how that wall opens up. On the right, you  
864 can start to see fully mature trees that would be brought into the Zoo. You'd have this  
865 forested canopy within the Zoo with the netting that comes over. You'd have the  
866 redwood tree that's in the front. Some of the experiences that we're looking to integrate  
867 within the wall would be view portals, one piece that we're looking to explore. People  
868 within the park can have one or two locations to look into the Zoo to see what's going on  
869 and to build that level of interactivity. The wall that's envisioned would be a  
870 terracotta/sandstone colored concrete that would have some thickness and heft. It would  
871 have the ability to do such as this. I was looking and talking about how the animals can



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872 all be on display as you look from the park. Lastly, possibly integrating either fossils or  
873 different types of reliefs within the wall to tell stories about science, possibly astronomy.  
874 The sky's the limit. It's something we're still working on that's in development. We're  
875 open to discussion on what this could be. As you view it from the park, we tried to take a  
876 shot. It's somewhat in perspective. We ghosted in on the right what might be the future  
877 playground structure area. You start to see the Zoo support building as it steps down and  
878 is lowered within the landscape. Possibly benches built into the wall with views into the  
879 Zoo. At that level, we can look into that cave experience. There could be two different  
880 view windows of different types of experiences. Looking at having a green wall on one  
881 side that integrates with the green roof, so that we're trying to get as much foliage and  
882 landscape as this building erodes into the park. Looking upwards to be able to see into  
883 the butterfly exhibit. You probably aren't going to be able to see the butterflies, but to  
884 have that connection from the park. We're trying to make it closed off, yet open and  
885 transparent and integrated with the park as much as possible. The restroom doors you  
886 can see down below. Thank you so much for your time. I know it was lengthy, but  
887 there's a lot of information we're trying to present and cover to have you understand the  
888 project. Thank you very much.

889  
890 Vice Chair Markevitch: I have two speaker cards, that I am going to do before we get to  
891 the Commissioners' comments and questions. The first person is Jane Rytina.

892  
893 Jane Rytina: The first point I'd like to make is I'm a Rinconada neighbor who enters the  
894 park from the JMZ entrance, and the parent of two children. Rinconada is our local park  
895 and, at one time, I used to go there once or twice a week, to the JMZ and then have lunch  
896 at the park or vice versa. From the point of Palo Alto residents, we don't see the JMZ and  
897 Rinconada Park as separate. You associate the JMZ as part of the park. Most families  
898 who visit the JMZ will probably end up in the park or go to the park first. The fact that  
899 this project will improve that very dangerous parking lot and that entrance to the park,  
900 which I don't think is represented anywhere else in Rinconada Park. That's the worst  
901 place to get into the park, because there's very little walking space from the parking lot.  
902 That parking lot is so dangerous. Hard to park and hard to see if you're a resident  
903 walking in. For someone to come along and improve the facility and improve all the  
904 entrances and that parking lot and add value to the park through a thoughtful design, it's  
905 absolutely worth giving up a sliver of the park to improve that. From my point of view  
906 and my neighbor's point of view, we don't see it as giving up park space necessarily. We  
907 see it as reorganizing the park of which the JMZ is going to be a part, to make a safer  
908 entrance and parking lot. That's my first point. My second point is I'm a Board Member  
909 of the Friends of the JMZ but also a Palo Alto resident. That is an appreciation of the  
910 incredible role the JMZ plays in Palo Alto. The JMZ fundamentally, 100 percent,  
911 believes children should freely explore nature and science. That leads to that freedom  
912 that leads to creativity and a love of the natural world. That happens at the JMZ, and not  
913 only at the JMZ but at the programs they take out to the schools. There's very few places



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914 as a parent you can take your children where they're absolutely free to explore and be  
915 safe. If you think about it, maybe a park does that. Maybe they're completely safe in a  
916 park. I spent a lot of time wondering around my children going up those play structures,  
917 but I never have to do that at the JMZ. They can run freely; I can see them; it's gentle; it's  
918 quiet. They explore. You can see their minds developing. The teachers at the JMZ are  
919 absolutely amazing, and they ensure science education and a love of nature.

920  
921 Vice Chair Markevitch: Our next speaker is Bern Beecham.

922  
923 Bern Beecham: Good evening, Bern Beecham, a longtime resident of Palo Alto. I'm also  
924 on the Board for the Friends. As you know, both the JMZ and Lucie Stern were built in  
925 the '30s and '40s. Rinconada Park was around the same time. We are mutually  
926 landlocked. By the end of about '51, the last public infrastructure was built in Palo Alto.  
927 The former City Hall now the Art Center and Mitchell Park were both done about 1950,  
928 1951. Nothing was done for another 60 years. Then the citizens of Palo Alto said,  
929 "We're ready to do this again." This building in 1970, but no other infrastructure was  
930 either rebuilt or added to Palo Alto. Beginning about five or ten years ago, the citizens  
931 began to say, "It's time for us to go and reinvest in what we have for ourselves and for our  
932 children." The Friends of the Palo Alto Parks funded probably in 2005 rebuilding  
933 Heritage Park. Much more recently Magical Bridge just got done. You just had  
934 Avenidas here. It was an excellent public-private partnership that rebuilt the Art Center.  
935 Beginning in 2007 a small group of south Palo Altans said, "We need a new library,  
936 Mitchell Library." I don't know if you've been in there when the kids were there in the  
937 afternoons; it was, in a way, great. They were all over the place; it was packed. It was  
938 hot, miserable and the kids loved it, but way inadequate for Palo Alto. This group of Palo  
939 Alto citizens got Palo Alto to support a bond measure by 72 percent and then raised an  
940 additional \$4 million to help outfit the libraries. We, the Friends of the Palo Alto Junior  
941 Museum and Zoo, are in that process now. That gets us to here. We know that the  
942 people love the JMZ. When we talked initially to City Manager Jim Keene, he said,  
943 "Wait a minute. This is a jewel of Palo Alto. What are we talking about? Do we want to  
944 take a risk?" It is a jewel along with the parks. The demand at Mitchell Park, if you've  
945 gone in there, it's packed. You go there first thing Sunday morning when it opens, there  
946 are people waiting to get in. The Downtown library, I've never seen in my history so  
947 many people there as after we rebuilt it. The demand is here to use this when we do that.  
948 Our issue at the JMZ is we're land bound. We are intimate neighbors with the parks. We  
949 have something that we think is right for the community. In your discussion, I hope what  
950 comes out is we've done everything we know how to do to minimize the impact on the  
951 park. This is our best option on how to reinvest in this particular jewel for Palo Alto.  
952 The Palo Altans want it. It's compatible with parks. I'm not making your decision for  
953 you, but Zoos in many places are part of parklands. I hope you can find a way to support  
954 what we're doing. Thank you so much.

956 Vice Chair Markevitch: We'll move onto Commissioner comments and questions.  
957 Which one of you would like to go first? Commissioner Knopper.

958  
959 Commissioner Knopper: You said you're lowering the wall, the support wall. How high  
960 is that wall? I'm vertically challenged, so every wall is high. I was wondering.

961  
962 Mr. McClure: I'm going to ask my colleague, Sarah, to speak to the precise heights.

963  
964 Sarah Vaccaro: On the far side closer to the Museum building, the wall is 8 feet high.  
965 That is part of the Zoo accreditation requirements for enclosing the Zoo. You have to  
966 have an 8-foot high wall to keep animals in and people out. As the ramp within the Zoo  
967 ramps up, the wall has to ramp up. It's not going to be ramping up too high on the side,  
968 because it's going to become the guardrail height for the ramp. On the far side, it will  
969 probably be about 12 feet tall, which is a little taller than the existing fence.

970  
971 Commissioner Lauing: Is this the far left you're talking about? This 12 feet.

972  
973 Ms. Vaccaro: Yes.

974  
975 Commissioner Knopper: How tall is the thing ...

976  
977 Commissioner Lauing: That white space there ...

978  
979 Mr. McClure: The wall continues up and connects to the edge of the building right here.  
980 The height of the wall at this location will be 12 feet.

981  
982 Ms. Vaccaro: The existing fence, John, is 8 feet tall? The wood fence.

983  
984 John Aiken: Correct.

985  
986 Ms. Vaccaro: As you can tell, it's a residential wood fence. Here we're trying to create  
987 something that's much more interactive and rich and engaging. We're hoping that that  
988 will mitigate concerns about the height.

989  
990 Commissioner Knopper: The far left building, the Zoo support, which has the green wall  
991 you're suggesting, is that back to 8 feet?

992  
993 Ms. Vaccaro: The height of the lower mass of that Zoo support building is probably  
994 going to be about 8-10 feet, probably closer to 10 feet when you build in roofs and floors  
995 and so forth. The glass structures that sit on top of the lower base will probably be 15-18  
996 feet in height. Again, they'll be very (inaudible).

998 Mr. McClure: From the ground.

999  
1000 Ms. Vaccaro: From the ground.

1001  
1002 Mr. McClure: Let me restate.

1003  
1004 Commissioner Knopper: Yes, I lost you on that last one.

1005  
1006 Mr. McClure: This building here, the floor level will be 4 feet below grade at this  
1007 location. This height right here will be approximately 8-9 feet. This height in here will  
1008 be approximately 8-9 feet, so that your total building height through here will be about  
1009 16-17 feet. We're looking to squish this down as much as we possibly can.

1010  
1011 Ms. Vaccaro: The second floor, again, is very glassy and open. It won't read as massive.

1012  
1013 Vice Chair Markevitch: Is that the tot lot or the playground area? You're looking from  
1014 Hopkins?

1015  
1016 Ms. Vaccaro: Correct.

1017  
1018 Mr. McClure: You're looking at Walter Hays with the white, box buildings in the  
1019 background.

1020  
1021 Commissioner Knopper: I like the idea about the living wall, that's great. It certainly is  
1022 facing a wall. I also like the idea of the interactivity and the glass circles and the built-in  
1023 benches. That was terrific. A great place to sit and watch either the park or the animals,  
1024 whatever's going on. From a depth perspective, how deep is that?

1025  
1026 Commissioner Lauing: The wall?

1027  
1028 Commissioner Knopper: Yeah. If you're sitting in your circle, your egg, your glass egg.

1029  
1030 Mr. McClure: At that location, we're looking at about 18 inches or so. It could almost be  
1031 a seat.

1032  
1033 Commissioner Knopper: That would be great. I like the idea of utilizing the wall. You  
1034 mentioned that you guys are in discussion with regard to reliefs or something. Being able  
1035 to utilize it for real science, not just a fossil, but information or something that would give  
1036 a user, a child, somebody in the park a reason to go over to the wall, feel the wall,  
1037 experience the wall. I like that idea of interactivity as well. In my opinion, Alternate 1 is  
1038 the only one that should be under discussion. Again, my opinion. You guys listened to  
1039 what we said in February. With the other footprints removing parking spots, parking is a

1040 huge issue with Middlefield. You said that there would be a bus stop on the front edge,  
1041 and the others would impede that. You're being conscientious of the footage on  
1042 Middlefield, which was very well thought out.

1043  
1044 Vice Chair Markevitch: Commissioner Hetterly, do you have any?  
1045

1046 Commissioner Hetterly: I'm going to defer to Ed, since I stole his thunder the last time.  
1047 You can circle around back to me.  
1048

1049 Commissioner Crommie: I'm a huge fan of the Junior Museum. My kids were there all  
1050 the time when they were young. They've used the science camp assistant program. It's  
1051 my 15-year-old daughter's favorite place to go. She looks forward to it every year and  
1052 works as many days as she can there. Huge supporter of it. I want to point out that  
1053 you're putting a building in a park. That's what I have an issue with. Of course, it's  
1054 nuanced. There's all these good reasons for doing it. It is an amazing program for our  
1055 City, but you are putting a building in a park. You are doing that because you don't want  
1056 to put a building on Middlefield Road. You're being very protective of Middlefield  
1057 Road. I'm a little jealous, because I live in south Palo Alto, and no one's that protective  
1058 of our roads. We have big buildings going up all over the place in south Palo Alto. You  
1059 get to the north and it's like, "It's residential. Let's not put the building on the road." Our  
1060 purview is the park, so I want to defend the park. Any chance we can get more building  
1061 on Middlefield Road, we said that last time. You gave us two alternates that we can't  
1062 discuss because they're not good enough. I can go into some detail about ways I would  
1063 look at these alternates. First of all, I am happy you showed us some pictures with the  
1064 existing footprint of the Junior Museum. That existing footprint shows the building  
1065 pretty close to the pecan tree. What you've done in all your subsequent renditions is  
1066 move that building away from the pecan tree and say we need to protect the pecan tree.  
1067 In my understanding of these diagrams, the existing building is closer to it. If you go to  
1068 one of your diagrams that has the blue line on it, the blue line in the existing is pretty far  
1069 toward the Lucie Stern Center. You can point to what I'm showing everyone. Maybe  
1070 you can answer this as a question. Right now, are any existing structures closer to the  
1071 pecan tree? When I say the pecan tree, I mean that biggest circle. Is there anything  
1072 closer to it now than in the proposals?  
1073

1074 Mr. McClure: What's shown there and what's reflected in the diagram is the outer fence  
1075 boundary. There's a Zoo support zone that's been built into the front. There's no building  
1076 that forms that edge. That's the fence line of their outdoor space.  
1077

1078 Commissioner Crommie: I do recall when that went up. In your new proposals, how  
1079 come you're not making the building go out as far as the existing fence goes?  
1080

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1081 Mr. McClure: If we build out towards that fence line, we're going to start to pinch upon  
1082 the entrance plaza. Now, your pathway to get from the front of the Museum and Zoo,  
1083 around into Rinconada Park, is going to be narrowed if not almost completely squelched  
1084 off. We might even run the risk of losing a few extra parking spaces to have that  
1085 tradeoff. A way to illustrate that is with the second alternate. If you can see where that  
1086 dotted line is, this arrow here is pointing at the pecan tree center point. If we built the  
1087 program out into here, you're not going to necessarily lose these parking spaces. You'd  
1088 likely lose some of these, and then your pathway will become a sliver as you sneak  
1089 around to get into the park.

1090  
1091 Commissioner Crommie: I don't like that either. What we have now in the existing setup  
1092 is a little parking lot behind the Zoo that is the buffer between the Zoo and the park. You  
1093 show that in your picture when you show the congested entryway. You show it with all  
1094 of the cars parked in it. You're showing that picture; it's full up with cars. In other  
1095 pictures of your new plan, you never have any cars in that picture, so you show us a more  
1096 spacious entryway, but you're also not putting any cars in it. If you can go back to the  
1097 picture that shows your entryway, we can imagine it full of cars. Those have some  
1098 parking spaces. It looks like it has two or three handicapped parking spaces. There will,  
1099 at some point, be cars in there. Then the entryway aesthetically becomes the piece of that  
1100 opening that's to the left of the car that's not shown there. Visually, aesthetically, when  
1101 the cars were there, like you showed us in the existing picture, it looks more crowded.

1102  
1103 Mr. McClure: The difference here is that the wall of the Zoo peels back at a much  
1104 gentler angle. You can see how this pinches here.

1105  
1106 Commissioner Crommie: Can you remind us what the dotted lines are?

1107  
1108 Mr. McClure: This is that existing. The Museum and Zoo comes all the way back here.  
1109 That wall peels back in this area. We're trying to establish this much more gracious park  
1110 entrance plaza to connect the parking area, Middlefield into the park itself.

1111  
1112 Commissioner Crommie: That's the part that I don't appreciate if it's taking up a lot of  
1113 the park to do that. It's good to make us aware that that blue dotted line is a fence line.  
1114 On the top of it is where that little parking lot would be, that you're taking away. By  
1115 taking away that little parking lot, you are naturally opening up the entry way. There's  
1116 too much space devoted to the plaza at the expense of putting the building in the park.  
1117 You have to justify that to be able to do it. I'm not fully convinced yet that you can't put  
1118 more building mass toward Middlefield. Is there any way you can in your drawing  
1119 program change that building that you're showing us, the dark blue, and allow us to keep  
1120 the dawn redwood tree and make more of the mass of the building jut up against the  
1121 parking lot? Did you play around with that?

1123 Mr. McClure: We did.  
1124

1125 Commissioner Crommie: Can you tell us about it?  
1126

1127 Mr. McClure: I'll talk about that a little bit. We even talked about creating a courtyard  
1128 building around the dawn redwood and the impacts of this. A good way to think about  
1129 this is that we've looked at ways to nip and tuck the square footage as much as we  
1130 possibly can. Nearly 55 percent of the square footage increases in this building are  
1131 devoted to ADA and safety circulation issues alone. There's so little that they have right  
1132 now as part of this rightsizing of the building. If we hold the square footage more or less  
1133 as a constant, if we cut out a hole in the middle, there's square footage here that we now  
1134 need to appropriate somewhere else. Programmatically this little sliver over here is not  
1135 going to work very well to support the animals as they go back and forth. We would  
1136 need more space over here to make this function. In doing so, we take more of this dark  
1137 blue and keep moving it along the street and into the parking lot. This is the cedar zone,  
1138 and the oak tree zone starts somewhere about right here. If we build out in this direction,  
1139 we're going to lose even more parking. The design we had in February and the alternate  
1140 ones have 120 parking stalls, which is 20 more than what is on this site today. The  
1141 CEQA that's underway identified 47 parking stalls in total for the Rinconada Master Plan,  
1142 half of which are on this site. We're already taking away ten parking stalls with this  
1143 design option. If we do what you're proposing, we're going to lose more parking. We're  
1144 trying really hard to balance all of the constraints.  
1145

1146 Commissioner Crommie: You can't lose the parking; that's critical. Are you going to  
1147 lose the parking if you put more of the weight on Middlefield Road? Can you show us an  
1148 elevation? Some of this discussion is let's be very protective of what's on Middlefield.  
1149 Can you show a picture of what that looks like?  
1150

1151 Mrs. McClure: I don't have an elevation here today. If we're going to live along  
1152 Middlefield Road and preserve all of the parking, we're getting a building that is this  
1153 long, narrow, skinny building. We're contorting the shape of this building into something  
1154 that is going to be yet again not suitable and functional for the programs that we're trying  
1155 to support.  
1156

1157 Commissioner Lauing: Can I ask a clarification question? Are you asking why  
1158 Alternative 3 might or might not work? Is that what you're asking?  
1159

1160 Commissioner Crommie: I'm digging for a better alternative.  
1161

1162 Commissioner Lauing: I thought you said earlier that you didn't think that worked  
1163 anyway.  
1164

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1165 Commissioner Crommie: Alternative 3 is getting closer to what I wanted to see. I would  
1166 like to try to save the dawn redwood. There's too much space. If you look at the blue  
1167 line, that space between the blue line and the parking lot, I don't quite understand why  
1168 you need that at all. There's a lot of that white space. If you go up, you can point to what  
1169 I'm talking about in your picture. There's a lot of extra space off the parking lot right  
1170 there.

1171  
1172 Ms. Vaccaro: As it stands, this blue line is the existing footprint. The existing parking  
1173 lot comes right up against this fence. These are the few spots that we saw right next to  
1174 the dumpsters in front. Right now, you have to walk into the parking lot to get around the  
1175 Zoo, if you're going from the JMZ to the park, which is an unsafe condition. What we're  
1176 trying to do is create a safer connection between the JMZ and the park. That's why we're  
1177 maintaining the 10-foot walkway to allow people to circulate safely from the JMZ to the  
1178 park. As we've heard, that's a very common shared use. People come here to go to both  
1179 of those.

1180  
1181 Commissioner Crommie: This is the part I'm interested in right here. You're creating all  
1182 this space in here. How do people get in here? Is there going to be a future walkway  
1183 across the road?

1184  
1185 Mr. McClure: In Alternate 3, we've not drawn one in yet, because you would lose those  
1186 parking stalls to make that happen. I want to go back to a drawing at the beginning of  
1187 this. Unfortunately this photograph cuts it off a little bit, but you can see the edge.  
1188 There's a landscaped edge right here. There's a walkway that goes into the existing  
1189 Museum entrance at this location. There's this island that sticks out. That parking lot  
1190 that you were talking about juts all the way back into here. Towards Sarah's point, there  
1191 really is no connection from this parking lot into the park that allows a pedestrian to come  
1192 over and access the Zoo. You have to walk into the parking lot to come around to go into  
1193 this location here. That zone that we were talking about is only creating about a 10-foot  
1194 wide buffer of walkway with some surrounding plantings to be able to provide an access  
1195 point for someone to walk from here safely, not cross the parking lot, enter the Museum  
1196 and Zoo in the new design and also connect with the street.

1197  
1198 Commissioner Crommie: Can you point with your finger where the current door is to get  
1199 into the new design?

1200  
1201 Mr. McClure: The new design or the existing?

1202  
1203 Commissioner Crommie: The new design. If someone lives across the street from the  
1204 Zoo, what's the pedestrian walking pathway to get into the Zoo from across the street, if  
1205 you live across the street from it?  
1206

1207 Commissioner Knopper: There's two lights. I live in this neighborhood. There's  
1208 Melville up (crosstalk) ...

1209  
1210 Commissioner Crommie: I know Melville.

1211  
1212 Commissioner Knopper: ... and then Embarcadero.

1213  
1214 Commissioner Crommie: Is that the only way people can cross the street to get into this  
1215 place?

1216  
1217 Commissioner Knopper: Mm-hmm, without jaywalking.

1218  
1219 Mr. McClure: Presently yes.

1220  
1221 Commissioner Crommie: In the future, are you trying to change that?

1222  
1223 Mr. McClure: We've not investigated that at this point.

1224  
1225 Ms. Vaccaro: The Rinconada Park Master Plan has (crosstalk) ...

1226  
1227 Commissioner Knopper: Crosswalks.

1228  
1229 Ms. Vaccaro: ... next to Kellogg right there.

1230  
1231 Vice Chair Markevitch: Yeah, right there.

1232  
1233 Commissioner Crommie: The plan calls for a crosswalk at the existing entry point. I still  
1234 don't know why someone's walking around the building, why you've left that 10-foot  
1235 space by Middlefield. Who's walking over there?

1236  
1237 Mr. McClure: Part of the Master Plan also has cutting in a bus stop for public transit at  
1238 this location. You have kids from Walter Hays. You have people walking from different  
1239 points of interest within the greater surroundings. What we're trying to do is create  
1240 pedestrian access and safety, and also do it in such a way where it's visually clear. The  
1241 problem with the site right now is the wayfinding is lost. You don't know where you're  
1242 supposed to walk or where you're supposed to go. In doing this, you've got the public  
1243 right-of-way on the sidewalk. If there's an access point here, you could then walk up  
1244 under the trees into this entry plaza here and then around the pecan and into the park.  
1245 You're separating pedestrians from cars as much as possible at all locations except for  
1246 where you cross.

1248 Commissioner Crommie: My last question. Is this a complete teardown? I have two  
1249 questions. Is it a complete teardown of the facility and a rebuild? Is that what we're  
1250 looking at?

1251  
1252 Mr. McClure: Yes.

1253  
1254 Commissioner Crommie: This is again our purview, looking at programming for  
1255 children in the City and making sure they have summer camps to go to. How are you  
1256 going to phase this in so that the operation continues for kids? How long do you think  
1257 the project will take and how are you going to keep the operation going or are you not  
1258 going to do that?

1259  
1260 Mr. McClure: I believe we're looking at relocating ...

1261  
1262 Mr. Aiken: John Aiken, Executive Director of the Junior Museum and Zoo. I'm working  
1263 with the real estate department of the City of Palo Alto to find a suitable offsite facility  
1264 that we can relocate the animals, our teaching staff and our collections, so that we can  
1265 keep fully functional during the rebuild. We're estimating right now about a two-year  
1266 construction.

1267  
1268 Commissioner Crommie: What's your start date, what are you considering?

1269  
1270 Mr. McClure: We're looking towards clearing the greater entitlement process, because  
1271 we're coming to you, we're going to the ARB. We're not sure yet if it's the Planning  
1272 Commission and/or City Council, possibly City Council. Looking to clear all those, I  
1273 think, spring/summer of next year, and then design. We would be breaking ground at the  
1274 earliest spring of 2017.

1275  
1276 Vice Chair Markevitch: Commissioner Lauing.

1277  
1278 Commissioner Lauing: A bunch of questions and then comments. First, could you  
1279 review with us what the increase in total square footage is with your first plan that you  
1280 presented compared to the existing site?

1281  
1282 Mr. McClure: This plan takes the existing building from 8,069 square feet. The new  
1283 building is 19,900 square feet, for an increase of 11,000 square feet. 6,500 square feet of  
1284 that is for ADA improvements as far as restrooms, proper circulation, pathways and  
1285 whatnot, also creating wider pathways within the facility to support the number of  
1286 students that are there for a safer environment. That amounts to about 55 percent of that  
1287 total increase.

1288  
1289 Commissioner Lauing: 19,000 is the first one that you presented to us?

1290  
1291 Mr. McClure: Yes.  
1292

1293 Commissioner Lauing: You mentioned in your comments that the Zoo support building  
1294 was used sometimes or all the time for animal transfer. I heard in the last presentation  
1295 there was cage storage there and various things like that.  
1296

1297 Mr. McClure: There's an animal program room that's in the middle. That's for activities  
1298 with the animals. There's quarantine spaces, feeding rooms and an office space for the  
1299 Director as well as the restrooms that would serve the park side. Right now that all  
1300 occurs out of the one office.  
1301

1302 Commissioner Lauing: In looking at this thing, did you price an underground basement  
1303 level?  
1304

1305 Mr. McClure: We looked at an underground condition at a preliminary level. The  
1306 Friends and the City together felt it was going to be cost prohibitive to make that work.  
1307

1308 Commissioner Lauing: Would there be the entire footprint available if you dug that  
1309 thing? If so, what would that plate be? I guess it'd be about 4,000 square feet, maybe  
1310 five.  
1311

1312 Mr. McClure: You wouldn't be able to take advantage of putting half the program  
1313 underground, because the things that you'd want to put down there would be service  
1314 support and things that don't ...  
1315

1316 Commissioner Lauing: Specimens.  
1317

1318 Mr. McClure: ... necessarily need a lot of daylight like the storage space. It's this zone  
1319 back in here, and this is the teacher prep area. You're going to want the teacher prep area  
1320 near classrooms. Classrooms are going to want to have daylight. Your Museum space is  
1321 going to want to have daylight. If we're going to get daylight into basement spaces, then  
1322 we're creating ...  
1323

1324 Commissioner Lauing: If it was storage of specimens, temperature controlled areas, the  
1325 teacher goes down there and picks up her two birds to show the kids that day.  
1326

1327 Mr. McClure: That square footage is only about 3,000 square feet or so of the entire  
1328 facility. If you were to do something like that, you're not going to get the economies that  
1329 you're looking for.  
1330

1331 Commissioner Lauing: Did you ask the City to price underground parking there?

1332  
1333 Mr. McClure: We looked at it as far as just being cost prohibitive.  
1334

1335 Commissioner Lauing: I know you considered entirely different locations, and that was  
1336 ruled out. What about partial storage of specimens that are only used once a year or  
1337 something like that?  
1338

1339 Vice Chair Markevitch: Offsite?  
1340

1341 Commissioner Lauing: Yeah.  
1342

1343 Mr. McClure: I may ask for some assistance with this question. There's the offsite  
1344 storage and then the onsite storage.  
1345

1346 Mr. Aiken: I'll try to answer it as succinctly as I can. The specimen collection is the  
1347 smallest part of our overall collections. Mostly it's the stuff that the teachers take out to  
1348 the schools. Some of those are consumable goods as well as consumable collections. For  
1349 instance, birds' nests that are brought to us on a regular basis wear out over time and are  
1350 replaced. Very valuable things are a small part of it and are under lock and key. Brent  
1351 can probably point out where that piece of it is. It's a tiny part of the collection. It's this  
1352 tiny room right here. This is overall storage space for the collections. Under the new  
1353 plan, the idea is that the teachers are going to help curate and manage this, because we  
1354 have essentially teaching collections. We're going to jettison the things that don't meet  
1355 our mission and send them to appropriate facilities and then focus our collection and  
1356 grow our collection over time, so that we have the right things to teach with.  
1357

1358 Commissioner Lauing: In the last meeting we heard about cages. It seemed like a lot of  
1359 that stuff didn't have to be this close at all times. If you put it in temperature-controlled  
1360 storage and moved it in a temperature-controlled truck, that would be a way to do it a  
1361 little bit more cheaply if slightly less convenient. I understand the issue of trying to make  
1362 a beautiful entry. Anything would be better than what we have now in any part of that  
1363 park. That's also my home park, so I've been there for decades. There is such a massive  
1364 plaza area there. It's almost the entire perimeter of the right-hand side and the lower side,  
1365 from a non-architect point of view. I've done a few house remodels. It seems like there's  
1366 a big percentage of stuff that's going to be dedicated to pavers and walk-ins and  
1367 presentations. People want to get in to see the animals or they want to get to the swing  
1368 set. To me, that looks like another tradeoff that may not be as valid as taking more turf  
1369 from the park. You've got a massive parking problem, always had a massive parking  
1370 problem. You've got 150,000 people; you're going to open it up to the park and  
1371 encourage more visitors to come in. More people are going to come. We've got a  
1372 problem here. I don't know how the City addresses that, but it's going to be massive. It's  
1373 just sitting there as a big problem waiting to happen. You did say in your opening

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1374 memo—who did this come from? The Friends—that the Museum and Zoo are a valued  
1375 amenity. Everybody on the Commission would take a nanosecond to agree with that. It's  
1376 unique to the City. We want it improved. The next comment that it's now an integral  
1377 aspect of the visitor experience at Rinconada isn't yet true, because more people are going  
1378 to the park and can't even see it over there. I took my kids there for years, and I didn't  
1379 know what was behind the wall. Some opening up there, integration with the Zoo, is  
1380 going to improve that problem to get there. The assumption that the Zoo and the park are  
1381 one is incorrect for most people that are going there right now. It might get more that  
1382 way as we go forward. The bridge from "it's one now, so we should put a big building in  
1383 the park" is shaky logic. While I appreciate that you gave us some options compared to  
1384 the first presentation, two of those options I don't think you had to give us. As you just  
1385 said in the tradeoff, "If we do this, then I've got to take down more trees or I'm going to  
1386 take out more parking." In all of these situations, something has to be sacred cows. At  
1387 this point, parking is one of them, sadly. We're parks people; we think that trees are  
1388 pretty close to sacred as well. You taking down those massive trees that are out there and  
1389 the ancient ones and the unique ones, I don't think that's a natural, "If we can't move into  
1390 the park here, then we have to take down more trees or do something else over here." We  
1391 don't like a lot of dead trees coming out of this project. You're putting up this 19,000  
1392 square foot structure, and the only proposal that you put forth that you favor that we  
1393 would agree is the only one that's remotely valid is the one that still gives you a 90  
1394 percent encroachment on the park compared to the first time. You're taking 10 percent  
1395 off. That one might even cause some more dead trees along Middlefield; I'm not quite  
1396 sure. The whole problem is that this thing doesn't fit in terms of what you really want to  
1397 do there. The ideal that you want to do doesn't fit. You also mentioned that there were  
1398 site constraints and that you're landlocked because of those constraints. The constraints  
1399 are obvious, Middlefield Road and the school and so on. Our purview is to say that the  
1400 park is somewhat of a constraint too. It's a hard constraint because we can't get any more  
1401 parkland. In all three proposals you put two stories there to get some of the square  
1402 footage and you went outbound with the building and tried to keep some trees, but you  
1403 had to give up some others. You still have to consider some other options. Basically this  
1404 means that you can't have everything. Whatever analogy you want to use, I was in  
1405 software for a lot of years, and we'd have "This is the great product. Yeah, but we can't  
1406 afford it. It's going to take eight years to build." We had what we called feature creep.  
1407 "Here's four more great things we can put in there. Yeah, but the customers want the  
1408 things that you can get in there in a year." Everything has that kind of constraint. That's  
1409 a realistic constraint as opposed to feeling like the good place to move is into the park.  
1410 Some of the things I asked questions about, basement storage could be looked at, offsite  
1411 storage, reduced plaza area. Fundamentally we can't do everything in that location that's  
1412 the ideal. We face that everywhere. I also know there's an argument that a children's zoo  
1413 is a perfectly valid use of parkland because it has to do with fun and family and the  
1414 animals are nature. I'm not going to argue against that. That doesn't mean that we have  
1415 to endorse an incursion into the park with a building. If the animals are spilling out



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1416 occasionally, that would be one thing, but the building's going to be there forever. Parks  
1417 are about open space and trees and not necessarily about big buildings. We can't endorse  
1418 the use of limited park acreage just because something is fun and family-oriented.  
1419 Zoning and other issues aside, if we had somebody come to the next Park Commission  
1420 meeting and presented to us a fully funded program to put a Ferris wheel in that park or a  
1421 roller coaster, we couldn't deny that that'd be really fun for families, but I don't think we  
1422 would approve. Why wouldn't we approve it? Not because it wouldn't be fun, but  
1423 because it would take up the exclusive land for that one thing and a lot of it. For the  
1424 second thing, we're increasingly trying to plan as part of our Comprehensive Plan in  
1425 going forward for that community space to be used by multiple people for multiple uses,  
1426 and more people are coming into the parks all the time. We're having more demand on  
1427 the park space. In this circumstance, you're saying, "Let's take up a little bit of this space  
1428 for a building." Bottom line is this is a little bit like El Camino Park where there was too  
1429 much stuff that we tried to squish into that park and had to back off, because we were  
1430 giving up a lot of open space. That's the similarity here; we'd be giving up a lot more  
1431 open space, albeit what looks like a great visual coming between the park and so on. I'd  
1432 like to see you take a look at a few more options to scale this thing back, so it doesn't  
1433 have to intrude that much. We could still have something that's phenomenal, even more  
1434 phenomenal than all this stuff that you provide right now.  
1435

1436 Mr. de Geus: That's great feedback. I wanted to comment on a couple of things. The  
1437 design is not the Cadillac design that includes everything that the Junior Museum would  
1438 want to have. It's the necessity of what they need to become an accredited Museum and  
1439 Zoo. If you think about the Zoo itself—you can help me with this, John—the number of  
1440 increased animal exhibits in the Zoo is four only. If they wanted to do more significantly,  
1441 it would be even bigger than this. It's about getting to that accreditation. That's an  
1442 important point. If we're going to have a Zoo, we ought to do it responsibly.  
1443 Accreditation allows us to do that. I wanted to comment about a building in the park. I  
1444 see it differently. This is not just a building. It's not an office building or just a place for  
1445 fun. I think about it as an intensive interpretive center, like we have in our open space  
1446 preserves. It's not bringing nature into parks, but in some ways it is. It's teaching  
1447 thousands of children and families about conservation and nature. These kids leave the  
1448 Junior Museum and Zoo and the experience they have there is caring deeply about parks  
1449 and open space. There's value in that. For me, that's why the tradeoff is acceptable,  
1450 because of the value of the program and purpose of the building, which is different than  
1451 just any building.  
1452

1453 Vice Chair Markevitch: Jennifer?  
1454

1455 Commissioner Hetterly: I'll make a couple of comments. I largely agree with  
1456 Commissioner Lauing. Alternatives 2 and 3 are non-starters in light of the two particular  
1457 trees you're talking about and the loss of parking. Parking is hugely problematic. I won't



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1458 dwell on that. Replacing parkland is cost prohibitive for the City. We're not adding  
1459 anymore parkland. The 7.7 acres counts, but in-town parkland is hard to come by and it's  
1460 not just a matter of cost. We can't just pay more to add a park somewhere. I appreciate  
1461 the accreditation comment. It's important to get the accreditation, and that's an important  
1462 goal for you all to be striving for. I appreciate that you took a hard look and tried to  
1463 figure out how to reduce the footprint in the park. You came back with something that  
1464 was thoughtful and showed some sacrifice on you all's part in terms of where you could  
1465 make sacrifices. That said, the entrance plaza, as we said before, looks massive to me. I  
1466 don't think it needs to be as big as it is. For example, in Footprint 3 it's significantly  
1467 smaller. You could make it significantly smaller. You could work off of your original  
1468 proposal, extend out to Middlefield similar to how you would in Option 3, leave your  
1469 cutout for the redwood, make that your entry plaza so this area could be quite a bit  
1470 shallower. You're not encroaching into any parking, so at least you hold onto those extra  
1471 20 spaces, which was a thoughtful design as well in terms of solving the parking  
1472 problem. You take advantage of that tree to give you your gathering space and create a  
1473 welcoming entrance to your Museum. Maybe cut a corner by the pecan tree to add a little  
1474 space there. It seems like this much space for the Zoo support building, you ought to be  
1475 able to reconfigure it while still preserving your trees and your parking and still have a  
1476 substantial entrance, if you keep that tree.

1477  
1478 Mr. McClure: In thinking about this, I'm almost intrigued if there's a way to rotate the  
1479 Zoo. You're talking about making a smaller plaza, taking the square footages and  
1480 smushing them around. If the Zoo and the Zoo support building slide west on the page,  
1481 then that's taking that 10 percent and maybe it becomes 15 or something. It's trying to  
1482 find again the right size for that plaza. We should make it nice but efficient at the same  
1483 time and try to find that balance. That's something that we can study.

1484  
1485 Commissioner Lauing: That took out a lot of shade trees by the way back in the park that  
1486 would have to be replaced and take a while to grow.

1487  
1488 Commissioner Hetterly: I agree that this Zoo support building and the park entry plaza  
1489 don't work, because you don't have a safe passage. That is important as we've heard from  
1490 everybody who's spoken today. It doesn't have to be that big. I hope you all can spend a  
1491 little more effort to try and figure out how you can move things around to keep what you  
1492 need and preserve those trees. It's well worth sacrificing the Middlefield frontage in  
1493 order to preserve the parkland. They're nowhere near even on the balance of value to the  
1494 City.

1495  
1496 Vice Chair Markevitch: Commissioner Knopper, do you have any comments?

1497  
1498 Commissioner Knopper: Rob was very articulate. The example of putting a Ferris wheel  
1499 in a park is very different than a JMZ. No disrespect. This is an educational program



1500 that teaches science. Any time a human being can interact with live creatures that aren't  
1501 human, mammals and reptiles, etc., provides an opportunity to create passion for this  
1502 Earth that a lot of people unfortunately don't seem to have. After listening to all of the  
1503 comments, I definitely can see that, to Jennifer's point a little earlier, increasing the  
1504 frontage on Middlefield to save some of the corner. My only fear is you create a dead  
1505 space in this back corner. What would that be used for?  
1506

1507 Commissioner Hetterly: Can I ask a follow-up question?  
1508

1509 Vice Chair Markevitch: Yeah.  
1510

1511 Commissioner Hetterly: On the footprint in all of the various alternatives that's shown in  
1512 this light blue, is that inclusive of all the netting and the posts for the netting or do they  
1513 extend beyond that, so that the netting goes out like this?  
1514

1515 Mr. McClure: We're suggesting to extend the posts outbound of that line. That line  
1516 would represent the wall of the Zoo. If you go back to those diagrams, you'd have these  
1517 posts that would come out, but the netting would be above. The idea is to be playful as  
1518 we have our touch within the park.  
1519

1520 Commissioner Hetterly: That does make the impact on the park even greater. It's  
1521 balanced out somewhat by the interactivity of the wall. In terms of usable parkland,  
1522 instead of the blue line being where the Zoo ends, the Zoo really ends 5, 10 feet further  
1523 out, wherever the posts are going, where the net extends to. That becomes ...  
1524

1525 Mr. McClure: You see it suggested on this drawing. This is the plan. It's ghosted in  
1526 back here. We can play with the location of these columns. We can pull some of these  
1527 columns in a little bit as a possibility. As you get further into the park boundaries here,  
1528 this is the oak that's in front of the Girl Scout Building. As you get towards the back  
1529 where the back of house building is, that dissolves. We don't have posts that are coming  
1530 out along this edge. It's only along this walkway zone.  
1531

1532 Commissioner Hetterly: If you were to move the back room support buildings elsewhere,  
1533 it would go all the way around the circle.  
1534

1535 Mr. McClure: Yes.  
1536

1537 Commissioner Knopper: The public restroom is on this corner?  
1538

1539 Mr. McClure: That's on Alternate 3. We didn't land the restroom per se on that line.  
1540 Right now it would be over here, so that it would be front and center, looking out towards  
1541 the park.

1542  
1543 Vice Chair Markevitch: I have two comments. First, the pillars. For example, if  
1544 somebody was playing Frisbee, that could interfere. It looks like the pillars are on the  
1545 other side of the walkway and into the grassy area. Now we're chipping away at it. If  
1546 you look at all of our parks and open space and if you include the 7.7 acres that we just  
1547 dedicated, we're still not meeting the Comp Plan acreage per 1,000 residents. Every time  
1548 something like this comes up, I thought of it tonight when they were talking about  
1549 Avenidas, "We just want to put a couple of benches here." It's death by 1,000 cuts. Our  
1550 parkland is getting chipped away. We need to draw a line in the sand as a Commission at  
1551 some point and say stop it. We need more parkland to come up to what the Comp Plan  
1552 wants us to have. It's very important that we think hard about these projects as they're  
1553 coming up, because it's starting to change the character of the town, and I don't think for  
1554 the good. Having said that, I'm a big fan of the Junior Museum. Whatever you can do to  
1555 make it work for both parties would be most appreciated. Any other comments or  
1556 questions? I don't think so, unless Rob has something.

1557  
1558 Mr. de Geus: A final comment to thank the Friends of the Junior Museum and Zoo.  
1559 They're an amazing group of people. They're stepping forward to raise all the money to  
1560 build this program. It's remarkable. It says a lot about this community. We just talked  
1561 about the same thing, people stepping forward and raising the money to make this  
1562 community better. A huge thanks.

1563  
1564 Commissioner Lauing: The least the City can do is put in underground parking for them.

1565  
1566 Vice Chair Markevitch: That's about \$65,000 a parking spot. That's a lot of money.

1567  
1568 Commissioner Knopper: It's in a flood zone, so I don't even know if FEMA would allow  
1569 them to do it.

1570  
1571 Vice Chair Markevitch: Thank you for your hard work.

1572  
1573 **4. Review of the Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Facilities Master**  
1574 **Plan.**  
1575

1576 Peter Jensen: Commissioners, good evening. Peter Jensen, Landscape Architect for the  
1577 City of Palo Alto, here to continue our ongoing discussion of the Parks Master Plan.  
1578 Tonight we'll be viewing the framework for the community outreach that is associated  
1579 with this phase of prioritization and recommendation. I'm going to let Ryan go into more  
1580 depth about that. We've been meeting with the ad hoc group concerning criteria and this  
1581 outreach process. There is more to come about the criteria. We've had a good dialog  
1582 with the ad hoc group about that. We'll be developing that more for the next meeting. I  
1583 will be meeting with the ad hoc again before next meeting to vet the revisions to the

1584 criteria that we're working on. Tonight we want to focus on the outreach effort for the  
1585 community, how that will be structured and what that will entail. Without further ado, I'll  
1586 let Ryan from MIG, our consultant, take us through that process. The handout that you  
1587 got basically follows along with that.  
1588

1589 Ryan Mottau: Thank you, all. Ryan Mottau, I'm your project manager this evening. The  
1590 work that we've been doing over the last couple of weeks led to this handout which we're  
1591 walking in with. I know you haven't had a chance to read this. I'm going to walk you  
1592 through the key points. Most of it is just building on things that we have seen in  
1593 preliminary versions, that you all have had some feedback on. What you're going to be  
1594 seeing are some revisions based on that feedback and some extra clarification. As Peter  
1595 said, we're trying to get to a place where we're all comfortable, particularly you all are  
1596 comfortable, with an approach to the community outreach to get us a point of feedback  
1597 from the community about prioritization. I want to clarify that this is not the be-all and  
1598 end-all prioritization. We're not going to ask the community what exactly should go first.  
1599 We're looking for a point of input about what their knowledge of the community is  
1600 suggesting should be prioritized in front of other things. That's a complicated question.  
1601 As you all know, we've been dealing with a lot of detail, a lot of finessed points of  
1602 analysis and of input. A big part of this exercise is about how do we generalize some of  
1603 the things that we've been thinking of in a way that we can get meaningful feedback and  
1604 that people can provide us with some degree of emphasis about not only what things they  
1605 put in position 1, 2, 3, but if they feel like something is particularly important. We want  
1606 them to be able to accent that as they go through these exercises and give us that  
1607 feedback, that not only is this important, but it is the most important thing to me or the  
1608 most important thing in this category. With that, I'm going to walk you through a little  
1609 bit about what we've been talking about. The ad hoc committee has helped us think  
1610 through some of this. The first piece of this handout is a reminder that we're working  
1611 through this process that's going from that data collection and analysis on to Plan  
1612 development and review. We're continuing on that path. This stage is about giving you  
1613 guys one of your points of input for the criteria that we have been discussing and getting  
1614 into that community priority and how to get a better sense, building on some of the other  
1615 input that we've had, of what the community feels is most important, but not just of  
1616 anything. We've, of course, done a lot of filtering as we've gone through this process.  
1617 We've gone through and thought about what broad directions the community wants to go.  
1618 We've shaped some principles which were in the framework discussion in your packet  
1619 last month. We introduced to you these areas of focus and got some feedback and  
1620 revised, got a little more feedback and revised. What you're seeing starting on page 1 and  
1621 flowing into page 2 is a revised list of those areas of focus, which are intended to serve as  
1622 a bit of a proxy or a summarization of what will be more detailed recommendations.  
1623 Again, I want to emphasize that with the community going into the action-by-action, line-  
1624 by-line recommendations is a much higher level of detail than we can expect them to  
1625 readily respond to. What we want to do is give them categories of these

1626 recommendations to work with. In order to clarify those, each one of those areas of focus  
1627 now has a brief description, a couple of example projects, trying to give more meat for  
1628 people to chew on about what we're talking about in each of these areas. In some of  
1629 those areas, things have been collapsed, combined, to get this list into a more manageable  
1630 number of items. It's still a pretty long list, because there's a lot of things that we've  
1631 talked about. There's a lot of areas that this Plan covers. As we've talked through every  
1632 step of this process, there's a lot of different things included in this Park, Trails, Open  
1633 Space and Recreation Master Plan. The areas of focus, as a whole list, is the first couple  
1634 of pages of this. I'm going to walk you through the community priority exercise,  
1635 particularly for time reasons. I'm open to and happy to discuss the areas of focus, where  
1636 we've collapsed, what we've done to those. I would love to get your feedback about  
1637 those. I do want to explain the community priority exercise, so that you can understand  
1638 how we're intending to use them, how we're introducing them to the public.

1639  
1640 Commissioner Lauing: What we're trying to do here is make these areas of focus a little  
1641 bit smaller? It was 18 down to 16, now it's 11. This is supposed to go in front of people  
1642 in the community for them, as he'll discuss with you, to "weight." The second thing is we  
1643 didn't feel that one line was going to be enough definition, so we asked for specifics  
1644 about what this thing talked about and some examples to make it crystal clear.  
1645 Hopefully, that's what's happened in the first two pages.

1646  
1647 Mr. Mottau: This a reflection of our understanding of what we were talking about as we  
1648 were developing these things. Totally open to the reality that people are going to read  
1649 these a little bit differently. We might need some more clarification on those  
1650 descriptions. Yes, that was exactly what we were aiming for, to get that detail in their  
1651 hands as they're looking at it. Even at 11 items, it's still a fair bit of content. One of the  
1652 other things the ad hoc helped us think through is a structure for working through this  
1653 exercise in a way that gives a chance to deal with these in chunks as we work through this  
1654 exercise. On page 3, we start talking about this exercise and how we would design this  
1655 exercise. We aren't just throwing out ideas. This is based on our experiences with  
1656 various different ways of prioritizing with communities. We're setting out some goals.  
1657 We want to get a range of input, not just the thing that people walked in the door thinking  
1658 about. "Sports fields is my most important issue so, whatever you say, the most  
1659 important answer is sports fields." We want to make sure that those people who come in  
1660 with one topic in mind also get a chance to process some of the other things that are being  
1661 discussed in this Plan. We want people to be able to assign a value or a budget to items,  
1662 making some tradeoffs. They're relatively gross tradeoffs. They're not finally  
1663 understood; "I understand the minute differences between one choice and another." They  
1664 are forcing people to make some choices; to think about the fact that we can't necessarily  
1665 do everything that we all want to do; to give people that second chance to put the big red  
1666 star or the big underline underneath the projects that they feel are most important.  
1667 Overall, they are getting that chance to discuss, to add into that discussion that important

1668 emphasis. We have five items here, five points. I'm going to point out that this whole  
1669 exercise is designed to be done in person, in a workshop setting as well as online. That's  
1670 learning from our experience with the earlier workshops in this process. We wanted to  
1671 make sure that we not only got the face time, the in-person discussion, bouncing our  
1672 ideas off our neighbors and our community members, but we also got a chance to reach a  
1673 broader audience through the online efforts. We got great response from the online  
1674 efforts early on, so we want to get some more bulk of numbers involved in this exercise.  
1675 You'll see as we go through this that there's a little bit of clarification in each step about  
1676 how we would do it online, how we would do it in the workshop format. I'll just walk  
1677 through quickly the five points of this agenda for the meeting or the structure of that  
1678 online exercise. Obviously there'll be a welcome. That's self-explanatory. The project  
1679 update as well will be fairly self-explanatory. You all don't need much of that, but  
1680 somebody coming into the workshop who hasn't been involved since the initial  
1681 workshops or maybe not at all will want to get up to speed. Where do these things come  
1682 from? What are we basing this on? It's not that we pulled it out of the air. The third item  
1683 is where things get interactive. We want to save as much time in this agenda and in this  
1684 exercise to give people as much time as possible to get hands on, to be thinking about this  
1685 in small groups in the workshop setting. This is where we break down that overall list of  
1686 11 items. We're proposing to break it down by the elements that we've been talking about  
1687 in our analysis and in our overall structure. The three elements are described starting on  
1688 page 4. The parks, trails and open space deals with the physical lands and the  
1689 connections between them,. The recreation facilities, the pieces that enable the kinds of  
1690 activities that we want to do, the physical pieces. The recreation programs which also  
1691 enable the range of activities that we want to do, but represent more the people and the  
1692 class type side of things. For each of these elements, we're setting up an exercise where  
1693 probably we would have one table for each element. We would have a staff member or  
1694 project team member there to discuss this and knowledgeable about that particular  
1695 element. We would break down the overall group so that each time there would be  
1696 people at each of these tables giving a score to the items that were most directly, out of  
1697 that list of 11, related to that element. There's a little bit of overlap in these. What we  
1698 ended up with is six items for each of those elements. We're going to ask people to  
1699 assign five points across those six elements. We might do this in a physical way with  
1700 pennies or with tokens or things like that. We'll probably have them, in any case, filling  
1701 this out for themselves in a worksheet format, so that we can quickly do some tallying up.  
1702 They can do some mental comparisons. At one table, we have people talking about  
1703 parks, trails and open space and giving their score. They might give three to enhancing  
1704 comfort and making parks more welcoming, one to another item and one to a third item.  
1705 Again, this is about forcing some choices. It's about setting some priorities. Then we  
1706 would have them rotate. Each group would move to all three tables. After they've had a  
1707 chance to rank for themselves, they would have a chance to have some discussion  
1708 amongst that small group for a few minutes about what did you choose, what did you  
1709 observe, what was important to you. We talked with the ad hoc and the staff about the



1710 importance of randomizing these folks as they come in, so we don't end up with a table of  
1711 like-minded thinkers, so we get a chance for people to mix, and to have a diversity of  
1712 ideas. This will give us a chance to look at each of these elements and to think about  
1713 what is most important within those elements. We tried to match the overall areas of  
1714 focus with those elements. They distributed pretty well. As I said, there's a little bit of  
1715 overlap. One or two items fell into all three, but mostly they're in exclusively one or in  
1716 two categories. We are looking at this at a system-wide level. We want to break it down,  
1717 give people a chance to read through these areas of focus, think about them in these  
1718 smaller chunks. Now that they've had a chance to think about all the areas of focus, bring  
1719 them back up to that system-wide level and say, "If you were going to put your five  
1720 tokens down on any project or any area of focus across the entire system, what would it  
1721 be? Where would you put your gold star? Where would you put your big red underline  
1722 to make sure the process as a whole understands that you think this is important?" We  
1723 envision the workshop setting probably being a get-up and move around exercise. We  
1724 like to get people out of their chairs if we can. We're thinking a large format printout of  
1725 all of these areas of focus and giving everybody five dots. They get to put up the colored  
1726 dots. We're building in live action a bar chart of the votes that people have made for  
1727 different items. Then we have a wrap-up conversation that carries forward a little bit of  
1728 "What did we find in common about these items? What things started surfacing as very  
1729 important?" Also giving in that fifth point a chance for people to provide their open-  
1730 ended comment. What's the thing that they felt like was missing or the thing that they  
1731 would like some extra clarification about? As you walk through this and as you get a  
1732 chance to read this in more detail, you'll see we've detailed how this will work online.  
1733 We've got a tool that we can use that will force people to vote not more than five times on  
1734 any group, and giving us that feedback in a quick way for a lot of people. The workshop,  
1735 as I said, is about getting those people interacting and getting the discussion flowing face-  
1736 to-face with your friends and neighbors. The final point is that all of this input, as I said,  
1737 is going to be summarized together and looked at as one of these overall criteria that  
1738 we've been discussing. We're still working on it, as Peter mentioned. One of the  
1739 constants in the criteria discussion is that everybody's felt this community priority aspect  
1740 is very important. This is feeding into that community priority criteria that will be one of  
1741 the things that we, as the project team, and you, as the PRC, use as one of your criteria  
1742 for doing that final more detailed recommendations. With that, I'm curious about any  
1743 thoughts about the format of the exercise. We want to start dialing that in so that we can  
1744 get that, particularly the online exercise, mocked up and ready for you to look at before  
1745 we send it live. The areas of focus have been an evolving list. We've just introduced to  
1746 you those descriptions and examples. I understand that it might take a little bit of time  
1747 for you to absorb those. I wanted to get them in front of you with the explanation of how  
1748 we would be using them. With that, I'm going to be quiet and listen to what your  
1749 responses are about how that exercise might work.

1751 Commissioner Crommie: I'm concerned that community gardens fell off the list. I'd like  
1752 to know if we can put it back on somewhere in the areas of focus, specifically mention  
1753 community gardens. We heard from the survey that people brought it up a lot. I want it  
1754 to be there in language so people can choose it. Where would it fall? If you had to  
1755 choose one, where would it fall under these 11?  
1756

1757 Commissioner Knopper: Integrating nature maybe.  
1758

1759 Mr. Mottau: I could see it in integrating nature. I could also see it in diversity of  
1760 activities.  
1761

1762 Commissioner Crommie: That's what I thought, diversity. I'd like it to be spelled out in  
1763 words.  
1764

1765 Mr. Mottau: As an example in one of them. I agree that it's a point that people have  
1766 come specifically looking for. I see your point.  
1767

1768 Commissioner Crommie: They won't know what to do. I'd also like to move nature up in  
1769 the list. It's trailing over here.  
1770

1771 Mr. Mottau: I meant to point out that the numbering and the order of these is totally non-  
1772 significant to me right now. I needed a reference point so that, when we started  
1773 clustering them, we'd be able to cross-reference. The presentation of these would be  
1774 more stacked than linear, not so much an ordered list.  
1775

1776 Commissioner Crommie: Under recreation programs on page 4, it seems vague to me.  
1777 How is it going to move into specifics? What do people really want here? Especially  
1778 when you talk about trying out new types of programs. All of these seem vague to me.  
1779 Increasing the variety of things to do and existing parks for all ages and abilities. If  
1780 someone chooses that, do we then ask them what they want to do?  
1781

1782 Mr. Mottau: That's a good point. In recreation programming, it is particularly  
1783 challenging, because of the rapid evolution and change in that area. That's an area of  
1784 focus that is difficult to pin down at any point. What we're looking for is some general  
1785 input about some bigger questions. If you go down one level, it's far too far, because  
1786 you're going to go down to a particular type of program and people are going to like it or  
1787 not like it.  
1788

1789 Vice Chair Markevitch: You're going to get 50 different responses.  
1790

1791 Mr. Mottau: What we've found to be useful in long-range planning for recreation  
1792 programming is "Do you think what we're doing right now is on the right path? Do you

1793 think we need to be trying a bunch of new things? Do you think we need to find specific  
1794 areas that people are diving into?" Underneath these we would be seeing specific  
1795 recommendations that are a result of the variety of inputs that we've had. What we're  
1796 seeing is those individual things should fit underneath one of these areas of focus. As  
1797 we're thinking about prioritizing the master list of actions, we can say, "People said that  
1798 improving access was a huge priority to them, and this action is about improving access."  
1799 We're attributing that input to that specific action. I understand the point. I don't have a  
1800 way to say we're going to get them to say something more specific with any reliability.  
1801 We're open to their commentary on those. We can work that into the worksheet, if  
1802 people had specific ideas that they wanted to write in.

1803  
1804 Vice Chair Markevitch: A comment section online?

1805  
1806 Mr. Mottau: Yeah. There would definitely be a comment section. There's going to be  
1807 open-ended comment online, because that's easy to collect.

1808  
1809 Commissioner Crommie: Under Number 4, which is a key thing, distributing park  
1810 activities and experiences across the city also relates to these inequities that we discussed  
1811 about the dog parks and community gardens. Maybe people feel the same way about  
1812 community centers. I don't know the full myriad of things that would come up. Why do  
1813 you phrase it as improving access to parks through active transportation? That's listed  
1814 first. What are you (crosstalk).

1815  
1816 Mr. Mottau: Part of that was about collapsing some things together. In our effort to  
1817 break down this list or crunch this list together, we were expanding this one to look at  
1818 ways to add more things and to make it easier to get to things. It is a little bit of two sides  
1819 of the same coin. It's a little bit of a stretch from the original description. The intention  
1820 was to try to capture some of that active transportation focus that has been very important  
1821 to the discussion overall.

1822  
1823 Rob de Geus: I think we've lost our quorum. We need to wait.

1824  
1825 Vice Chair Markevitch: We need to take a break please.

1826  
1827 Commissioner Crommie: I'd like to follow up on that. I understand you're trying to  
1828 condense a lot of information. What do you mean by active transportation?

1829  
1830 Mr. Mottau: Active transportation incorporates bicycling, walking, using a scooter.  
1831 Maybe this is too jargon-y; that may be what I'm hearing. Collapsing all those things that  
1832 are people-powered. Most people consider active transportation to be biking, walking,  
1833 rolling.

1835 Male: Not cars.

1836  
1837 Mr. Mottau: Not cars, not buses, not trains.

1838  
1839 Commissioner Crommie: It was lost on me. I thought you meant providing our bus  
1840 routes when I read that. I was a little concerned about that. It seemed like it wasn't quite  
1841 satisfying the urge. A lot of people who want to get to recreational activities or find time  
1842 to go to the park don't want to get on a bus.

1843  
1844 Mr. Mottau: We'll work on the language around that.

1845  
1846 Commissioner Crommie: It's a very tender point, this idea that we're not meeting our  
1847 Comp Plan ratios. We don't have enough parkland per person. We're glossing over it on  
1848 this list. If they want to come in and say loud and clear, "I don't think we have enough."  
1849 Where does that person go on this list?

1850  
1851 Mr. Mottau: One of the things we discussed as a possibility is the acquisition of  
1852 additional parkland on an opportunity basis. It's one of those things that we thought  
1853 could go without saying. As you said, currently it is a Comprehensive Plan goal to get to  
1854 a certain level of parkland. Needing to underline that five times or 500 times didn't feel  
1855 as important as getting some of the nuance between these other points. There isn't a place  
1856 on this list to say, "I want more." A lot of these things would imply and would require  
1857 either more space or tradeoffs of space. No matter how many times you say you want it,  
1858 it doesn't make it more available. We don't need any more public voice than we've  
1859 already heard.

1860  
1861 Vice Chair Markevitch: I'd like to piggyback on that, if Commissioner Crommie doesn't  
1862 mind. Nowhere in the rough draft could I find where it spells out the Comp Plan goals. I  
1863 would like to see the actual piece from the Comp Plan, word for word, pulled out of it  
1864 and put in our document somewhere, even if it's in the overview. It's missing and that's ...

1865  
1866 Commissioner Lauing: In the Master Plan, you mean?

1867  
1868 Vice Chair Markevitch: In our Master Plan. It needs to be directly pulled from the Comp  
1869 Plan and put in there and locked down.

1870  
1871 Mr. Mottau: That was one of the topics that we were discussing this afternoon in  
1872 preparation for the City Council work session that we're planning for August. That type  
1873 of standard is difficult to obtain for one thing. It becomes impossible once you stop  
1874 growing at the edges of the City. If you continue to add people and you don't continue to  
1875 add land, you cannot achieve a population-based acreage standard.

1877 Vice Chair Markevitch: Not true. Heritage Park and Johnson Park both came from  
1878 donated land. Buildings were torn down; parks were put in. It is doable. I strongly feel  
1879 we should be putting that language somewhere, even if it's in the overview.  
1880

1881 Mr. Mottau: It needs to be addressed, because it is a stated goal.  
1882

1883 Council Member Filseth: Can I chime in on this?  
1884

1885 Vice Chair Markevitch: Yes, please.  
1886

1887 Council Member Filseth: If you're looking for language, Policy C-28 in the existing  
1888 Comp Plan is one place that it's called out and breaks it out into two categories of parks.  
1889 One is neighborhood parks and the other is City parks or something like that. That was  
1890 my reference. We've talked about population growth. Population growth is impacted by  
1891 policy. The idea that population is going to grow and we can't afford any more park  
1892 space, that's too constraining for what you guys need to do.  
1893

1894 Mr. Mottau: This is a live discussion. Both the opportunity to express more as a  
1895 statement and also, as Commissioner Markevitch is saying, it's important to acknowledge  
1896 that existing goal and to be thinking about (a) is that the most useful goal and (b) where  
1897 and how do we incorporate it and does it need to be shifted in one direction or another.  
1898 It's an important question.  
1899

1900 Council Member Filseth: If I understand your response to Commissioner Crommie, more  
1901 park space is motherhood. Some of all of this is motherhood. Enhancing comfort and  
1902 making parks more welcoming is motherhood too. Everybody wants that. If you don't  
1903 figure out how to put that in your priority scheme somehow, then you're ignoring it.  
1904

1905 Commissioner Crommie: We can do it. I don't like to hear you say we can't. Other cities  
1906 have found ways to do it.  
1907

1908 Mr. Mottau: I'm not saying that you can't add parkland. I'm saying that you're chasing a  
1909 goal that will slip further away from you as population increases, if population is  
1910 increasing. All indications as part of this process are that that is the intended direction.  
1911

1912 Council Member Filseth: It seems to me you're being overly constraining by saying that's  
1913 a self-fulfilling prophecy. If we don't put it on the table, then we're not going to address  
1914 it. It seems you're being overly constraining. You're saying, "We don't believe we can  
1915 do anything about this, so let's ignore it even if it's a high priority."  
1916

1917 Mr. Mottau: I didn't mean to represent that it was not a priority for people or that we  
1918 would ignore it. We were taking it as a fundamental good. In all of the input that we've

1919 heard, I have not yet heard people saying, "We have too much parkland and we aren't  
1920 going to need any more."

1921  
1922 Council Member Filseth: I haven't heard anybody saying our parks are too comfortable  
1923 and they're too welcoming. You can make that argument about anything you've got on  
1924 your list.

1925  
1926 Mr. Mottau: We have heard that our parks are not comfortable enough and are not  
1927 particularly welcoming in places. Those are choices that have to be made. I hear what  
1928 you're saying. There is a fundamental balance of this. What you're talking about is, is  
1929 there something here that people would say no to. In relation to other items, what we're  
1930 trying to get is an expression of relative interest. I wouldn't want anything to be on this  
1931 list that we didn't think this community supported. At this stage in the game, if we  
1932 haven't gotten to that level of filter, we would have missed the boat entirely. This is  
1933 about giving us some input on where to focus effort, most immediately, most pressing,  
1934 most important to me which is what we're going to get from this kind of exercise.

1935  
1936 Commissioner Hetterly: Can I interject?

1937  
1938 Vice Chair Markevitch: Yeah.

1939  
1940 Commissioner Hetterly: You have two different levels of questions going on. You have  
1941 these areas of focus. If you use this list as revised, you would get input from the  
1942 community for us to filter the millions of things that came up through the outreach  
1943 process so far. We can say, "If we have a fixed pot of money and these are the five areas  
1944 that you want us to focus on." It helps us decide among this huge universe of possible  
1945 programs, facilities, activities. Overlaying all of that is the question of should we be  
1946 investing in these kinds of activities in the areas of focus or should we be taking an active  
1947 stance to promote acquisition of new parkland. It is in the Comp Plan. It is something  
1948 that a lot of people think is motherhood and apple pie. It's certainly not something  
1949 everybody thinks is how the City should spend money. Whatever the cost of real estate  
1950 in Palo Alto is, there are plenty of people out there who are going to say, "No. That's not  
1951 a good return on investment." I imagine. It's a legitimate question to raise to the public  
1952 to get their sense of should we be doing that. We have this secret list of properties that  
1953 people are keeping their eye on in case we want to acquire it or in case it comes on the  
1954 market. There doesn't seem to be any plan to take action on that. There's no momentum  
1955 or push for the City to say, "Those targeted properties, we should make an offer on that  
1956 one in order to meet this goal of the City." There's nothing to push that. If you don't ask  
1957 the question to get a sense of the public, do we want to do that or not do that, then we  
1958 don't know and there's not ever going to be any momentum. There's just going to be us  
1959 saying, "We need more parkland. The Comp Plan needs more parkland." Everybody  
1960 saying, "Yeah, we can't afford it."

1961  
1962 Vice Chair Markevitch: The second you pull that list out of your back pocket, you get a  
1963 land rush.

1964  
1965 Commissioner Hetterly: I understand that. That's been the reason why we have never  
1966 pursued it. I don't know if any of those properties have come on the market. Once it  
1967 comes on the market, the second the City's interested, the price goes up. It's an inevitable  
1968 outcome of property exchange. It seems like that perspective, we can't talk about it  
1969 because prices are going to go up, means we're never going to do it. That's my worry.

1970  
1971 Mr. Mottau: We've talked in a lot of communities about opportunity-based acquisition  
1972 funds, so that you can start building some resources, so that when something comes up ...

1973  
1974 Commissioner Hetterly: You're ready.

1975  
1976 Mr. Mottau: .... you have it. In order for that to work as a strategy, there have to be some  
1977 resources somewhere to make a quick move if a property becomes available or if an  
1978 option on a property becomes available or some big change happens. That's a good point.  
1979 It may be in here and it may also be from other points of input, but us building the case  
1980 that that is important to this community or not is an important point. Let me work back  
1981 through that and figure out if it unfairly or unreasonably got dropped out of this list, also  
1982 if there's another way to build that case and understand that story. It is something we've  
1983 heard a lot about. In fact the reason it came off the list was we felt like we'd heard a lot  
1984 about it over the course of the project.

1985  
1986 Commissioner Crommie: You can't leave it off if you're going into prioritization. To  
1987 leave it off means you lose it. That's my point.

1988  
1989 Mr. Mottau: I hear your point.

1990  
1991 Commissioner Crommie: If it's that important, that's exactly why it should be on here.  
1992 Bringing up what Commissioner Hetterly said, we're asking detailed questions and we're  
1993 asking big picture questions. I don't know if you want to tier prioritizations. It makes it  
1994 more complicated to have two kinds of prioritization lists. If you wanted to have big  
1995 picture prioritization ...

1996  
1997 Mr. Mottau: Are you speaking in terms of the breakdown versus the larger? We talked a  
1998 little bit about that too.

1999  
2000 Commissioner Crommie: If I understand what you're doing, you're going to give people  
2001 chips and they're going to put dots on something and they're going to have maybe five of  
2002 these. You could have them have to work with one list and distribute those five or you

2003 could give two lists. You could have data coming in in parallel with two sets of chips. If  
2004 you find things are out of balance or you say, "if we put acquisition of land or something,  
2005 all chips are going to go there." Commissioner Hetterly is saying maybe not. Maybe  
2006 they won't. Sometimes when people are prioritizing, you do have to make the choices on  
2007 equal footing. If acquisition of land can't be on equal footing, then it has to be on a  
2008 separate prioritization list.

2009  
2010 Mr. Mottau: I hear what you're saying about the equal footing. That decision and the  
2011 detail it will take to get to that is going to use this input and other things. I don't think the  
2012 community is going to tell you that, because one thing costs \$1 million and one thing  
2013 costs \$750,000 or one thing costs \$200,000, it's going to influence their shuffling of what  
2014 they think is important that much, in my experience. We've done things with budget  
2015 numbers attached and not attached and various other things. It is important to recognize  
2016 those differences in projects. Improvements to comfort in a park might be a \$50,000 a  
2017 year thing and you could do the whole system for the cost of adding an acre.

2018  
2019 Commissioner Hetterly: I wouldn't bill it as acquire new parkland. I would bill it as  
2020 maybe an area of focus, invest in a reserve fund to enable future purchase of additional  
2021 parkland or something to that effect.

2022  
2023 Mr. Mottau: Let me see if I can work this in.

2024  
2025 Commissioner Hetterly: Out of my \$5, I don't want to abandon our whole park system in  
2026 order to buy a new park. That doesn't make any sense. I might spend one of my pennies,  
2027 invest it so it can be growing over time while I'm also investing in these other things.

2028  
2029 Mr. Mottau: I hear what's being said there. Let me see about how we can work that in.

2030  
2031 Commissioner Crommie: Can you also tell me on this list where gym space is? That's a  
2032 hot topic in the City.

2033  
2034 Mr. Mottau: Improving and enhancing community center spaces and recreation spaces  
2035 across the community was capturing a variety of indoor spaces. We talked about this  
2036 with the ad hoc committee. This is Number 2. There's a lot of things that could be  
2037 considered when you're talking about indoor spaces. There's a lot of variety in that. In  
2038 this case, unlike recreation programming where you jump into the real detail, there  
2039 maybe is a split in that that could be more of a classroom versus sport kind of space.  
2040 That's a little bit of what we're getting at. We've heard that split a lot. There's more  
2041 classroom space, even if it's not exactly the classroom space that some people would like,  
2042 than there is gym space available. There's other things going on with that. Is that getting  
2043 at ...  
2044

2045 Commissioner Crommie: Gym space is lost. If the rest of the Commissioners think it's  
2046 okay, it's not my burning passion. It feels like it's a bit hard to find in here.

2047  
2048 Commissioner Lauing: Space for indoor sports.

2049  
2050 Commissioner Crommie: Do you think people will pick that up?

2051  
2052 Vice Chair Markevitch: You could put "(gyms)" if you needed to.

2053  
2054 Commissioner Lauing: We've given other examples such as gyms and fitness.

2055  
2056 Commissioner Crommie: Maybe throw the word "gym" into that.

2057  
2058 Mr. Mottau: Like you were saying with community gardens, it may be something that  
2059 people are looking to key on. They're like, "This is the thing that I came looking for,  
2060 because it has been a topic."

2061  
2062 Commissioner Hetterly: Another one they might do that with is aquatics. That doesn't  
2063 fit. That's not indoors.

2064  
2065 Mr. Mottau: That's true, and it's a big ticket item.

2066  
2067 Vice Chair Markevitch: Commissioner Hetterly, did you finish your comments?

2068  
2069 Commissioner Hetterly: No. I was just piggybacking on somebody else.

2070  
2071 Vice Chair Markevitch: Commissioner Knopper, do you have anything to say?  
2072 Commissioner Lauing, how about you?

2073  
2074 Commissioner Lauing: Nope. I spent a lot of time in the ad hoc.

2075  
2076 Vice Chair Markevitch: I have nothing to say about this.

2077  
2078 Commissioner Hetterly: I do have some comments.

2079  
2080 Vice Chair Markevitch: Go for it.

2081  
2082 Commissioner Hetterly: I was trying to think of the things that we've heard a lot about  
2083 that ...

2084  
2085 Mr. Mottau: That people might be looking for.

2086

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2087 Commissioner Hetterly: ... people might look for. Aquatics was one of them. Loop  
2088 trails was another. It would fall in Number 6, but I would use the words in the  
2089 description. Loop trails came up strongly as I recall, and signs illustrating exercises using  
2090 a park horse did not come up very strongly. I would substitute loop trails for that. I  
2091 agree that community gardens should be called out. Number 8, integrating nature, that  
2092 darn topic. I struggle with it, but my biggest problem is "all Palo Alto parks." I can see a  
2093 group of people looking at that and saying, "We want a bird habitat in every single park?  
2094 That isn't a wise investment." I would take out "all."

2095  
2096 Vice Chair Markevitch: Some parks are too small to accommodate it. I couldn't imagine  
2097 trying to integrate nature in Scott Park.

2098  
2099 Commissioner Crommie: I don't agree with that. All parks have room for nature. It  
2100 doesn't take a lot of space to put plants that butterflies like.

2101  
2102 Mr. Mottau: You're both right in that there is a way to do it, but I don't think the public is  
2103 necessarily is going to connect with that. It may be a turnoff.

2104  
2105 Commissioner Hetterly: Taking "all" out doesn't preclude it.

2106  
2107 Mr. Mottau: It can be addressed in multiple ways. It doesn't preclude it. Dropping "all"  
2108 and saying "in Palo Alto parks."

2109  
2110 Commissioner Crommie: It should be done in all parks, so I like the word. If you want  
2111 to take it out and say "in Palo Alto parks."

2112  
2113 Commissioner Lauing: The questionnaire will depress response rate on that question if  
2114 you put in "all."

2115  
2116 Mr. Mottau: A little bit of trigger in that.

2117  
2118 Commissioner Crommie: Since we're on that topic, we've lost the word "preserving."

2119  
2120 Vice Chair Markevitch: We still have Jennifer's comments.

2121  
2122 Commissioner Crommie: In the title, it's just saying "integrating."

2123  
2124 Vice Chair Markevitch: She was still doing her comments.

2125  
2126 Commissioner Hetterly: That was the last of my comments. I want to make a general  
2127 comment. This is a meaty document. It should be in the packet, because the public  
2128 doesn't have an opportunity to see it, reflect on it, come and comment on it if they don't

2129 like it. At places is not a good way to go and that happens very often with this Plan. Any  
2130 help getting it out earlier would be ...

2131  
2132 Mr. Mottau: I understand and respect that position. You're on the right track. It's been in  
2133 a lot of development. It's been a trick. We will try to get in front of these things a little  
2134 more, so that we can get everything, especially if it's substantial like this, into the packet.  
2135 You were saying about preserving.

2136  
2137 Commissioner Crommie: I'm sensitive to it, because we already have a lot of good  
2138 nature in our parks. I don't want it taken away for a park horse. It's two arms of this;  
2139 don't take away what we have and consider putting in more. In the description  
2140 underneath the title, you do say protecting. That is the word I'm going after. If you'd put  
2141 it in the topic sentence. There are people who just want what we have, not to lose any of  
2142 it.

2143  
2144 Mr. Mottau: You're right, there are a lot of people who will be concerned about that. My  
2145 concern is about putting too strong a language on that front. We had a similar discussion  
2146 about this when we were talking about the principles in terms of balance. When you  
2147 make a decision that in a particular place, maybe some aspect of nature is giving way to  
2148 something else. We're trying to restore that balance in other places. I would caution  
2149 against putting too many absolutes into the language. Preserving feels very strong, and it  
2150 often gets interpreted as everything that is seen as being natural must always stay natural.  
2151 I don't necessarily think that that's your perspective on it, but that is an interpretation that  
2152 we see a lot. People will say, "You're supposed to be preserving nature. This is nature,"  
2153 even if it's marginal nature, even if it's part of an overall balance. I'm curious about that.  
2154 I'm not trying to say one way or the other. That would be my hesitation on using that  
2155 language. It comes back to that balance.

2156  
2157 Commissioner Crommie: You're over-thinking it. I wouldn't get overly caught up on  
2158 that. You do use the word "protect," which I like. If it's impossible for you to wordsmith  
2159 that, (crosstalk).

2160  
2161 Mr. Mottau: We'll take a look at it.

2162  
2163 Commissioner Crommie: Ask other people as well.

2164  
2165 Mr. Mottau: I appreciate the comment, and we'll take a look at it. I wanted to express  
2166 my side of that. Not necessarily my side, but my perspective on it.

2167  
2168 Commissioner Crommie: Do we have accessibility in here, ADA-type stuff? I couldn't  
2169 pre-read this document, I'm struggling to read as you're talking. That's why I'm asking  
2170 these questions.

2171  
2172 Mr. Mottau: Accessibility comes in in two places. One is that by law we have to meet a  
2173 base standard. In addition, there is also a specific area of focus that is about removing  
2174 barriers. It is improving access to the full range of recreation opportunities, actively  
2175 reducing and removing physical programmatic language and financial barriers, so that all  
2176 ages, abilities and cultures can enjoy parks and programs. This is about the best practice  
2177 towards universal design, which I think we've talked about in terms of getting beyond  
2178 what the law requires and thinking about accessibility in a creative way. That is about  
2179 continuous improvement. It's not an absolute final answer, you do it and you're done.  
2180 You are constantly trying to remove the barriers that people are facing. You all  
2181 expressed a lot of concern about the other barriers, the financial barriers, the other kinds  
2182 of barriers that people face. This felt like it came together nicely.

2183  
2184 Commissioner Crommie: I want to make sure it's enough. Commissioner Ashlund is not  
2185 here.

2186  
2187 Vice Chair Markevitch: If it's not, she'll let us know.

2188  
2189 Commissioner Crommie: Maybe she can weigh in on it. It does say adapting existing  
2190 programming, which I like. I wanted to make sure physical barriers are also employed  
2191 here, not just programmatic barriers. You do say actively reducing and removing  
2192 physical. You use the word "physical" in that first sentence.

2193  
2194 Mr. Mottau: We wanted to get the physical and the programmatic, but also the cultural,  
2195 language, financial, etc., barriers that might exist.

2196  
2197 Vice Chair Markevitch: We'll get a copy of this for Stacey, and then she'll have a whole  
2198 month to look it over. I'm sure she'll have some comments next month.

2199  
2200 Commissioner Lauing: Where are we, Peter, on taking this to the public relative to our  
2201 next Commission meeting?

2202  
2203 Mr. Jensen: We are going to have another ad hoc meeting about this. We'll look at this  
2204 again, and then probably bring it back to the Commission next month to confirm and then  
2205 release shortly after.

2206  
2207 Commissioner Lauing: We can do some wordsmithing on this?

2208  
2209 Mr. Mottau: The wordsmithing, I'm not as concerned about. The thing I would like to  
2210 check-in with you on is the structure of breaking it down by the elements and then asking  
2211 the overall question. Commissioner Crommie has expressed some concern about what is  
2212 and isn't included. If that structure works, we can start setting up what that looks like, so

2213 you can see how it works. I don't want to chase that down a rabbit hole if you guys don't  
2214 think it works. By the time we're wordsmithing and getting the language just so, I want  
2215 to be able to show you functionality of it online, so when we come back next month,  
2216 we're able to look at that in detail and then maybe we're making word changes and saying  
2217 go. Does that seem reasonable at this point?  
2218

2219 Commissioner Hetterly: Yep.

2220  
2221 Vice Chair Markevitch: Council Member Filseth, do you have anything to add?  
2222

2223 Council Member Filseth: Nope.  
2224

2225 Commissioner Crommie: Can I ask one more thing, because I ...  
2226

2227 Vice Chair Markevitch: One more and then I'm cutting you off.  
2228

2229 Commissioner Crommie: I couldn't listen and read this thing. It was difficult not getting  
2230 this ahead of time. When you say each small group will complete one element, can you  
2231 (crosstalk)?  
2232

2233 Mr. Mottau: That may not have been clear enough. I apologize for that. We're intending  
2234 that everyone will move through all three of these elements and will prioritize three times  
2235 the break downs of these that are listed on ...  
2236

2237 Commissioner Hetterly: The elements being parks, trails and open spaces; recreation  
2238 facilities; and recreation programs.  
2239

2240 Mr. Mottau: On page 4, each of those lists. If you as a participant walked into this  
2241 meeting, you would be assigned to a group. That group would start on one of those  
2242 elements. You would sit down. You would work through for yourself and in discussion  
2243 with your small group a ranking of the list of six items underneath parks, trails and open  
2244 space. Then you would be asked to rotate to another table. You would go through those  
2245 items for recreation facilities. Then you would rotate to another table.  
2246

2247 Commissioner Crommie: Is the participant reading lists one through eleven?  
2248

2249 Mr. Mottau: Not in one bite. That's an important point of clarification. Because we're  
2250 going to do this first, it gives them a chance to absorb the descriptions of these on the  
2251 smaller list basis, building up to the whole list. The final exercise does involve the whole  
2252 list.  
2253

2254 Commissioner Crommie: When I was reading this and commenting, I was focusing on  
2255 lists one through eleven. That's why I gave you my comments. I will have to make sure  
2256 when I go home and read this that I feel those are well represented under these other three  
2257 categories. I didn't have time to digest it.  
2258

2259 Mr. Mottau: All of the items on one through eleven are incorporated in at least of these  
2260 element lists. If you feel like there's one that should be in this list or not in this list, that's  
2261 a possibility. I want everybody to understand that the intention is every person as a  
2262 participant would get a chance to look at the element and rank the things that we felt  
2263 related to that element for each element. Then to go to the whole list and say, "Overall, I  
2264 feel like these are the five things or the three things or the one thing that is important to  
2265 me."  
2266

2267 Vice Chair Markevitch: Thank you.  
2268

2269 Mr. Mottau: I appreciate the feedback and the help. The ad hoc committee has been  
2270 working with us on this. We will provide you with materials in your packet next month.  
2271 I hear that loud and clear. I apologize for not getting it to you ahead of time.  
2272

## 2273 **5. Other Ad Hoc committee and Liaison Updates.** 2274

2275 Commissioner Hetterly: I have a little update. We're getting close on the website. We  
2276 would like to be on the agenda next month for the website. We have our public outreach  
2277 meeting for the shared-use dog opportunities this Thursday, July 30th at 6:30.  
2278

2279 Vice Chair Markevitch: Any other ad hoc?  
2280

2281 Commissioner Crommie: We worked hard on our community gardens ad hoc. We have  
2282 written a draft report, which we're presenting to staff. We'll have that on an upcoming  
2283 agenda. I won't be here at the next meeting if we have it at the end of August. We might  
2284 do it in September.  
2285

## 2286 **V. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS** 2287

2288 Peter Jensen: The Scott Park opening is on Friday.  
2289

2290 Rob de Geus: Is it Friday?  
2291

2292 Mr. Jensen: It's Thursday.  
2293

2294 Mr. de Geus: The Mayor will be there. Thanks to Daren and staff for organizing it.  
2295 They did a wonderful job with the park, if you've had a chance to drive by it.

2296  
2297 Commissioner Lauing: It looks good.  
2298

2299 Mr. de Geus: If you're around, do come out. Is it 1:30, Daren?  
2300

2301 Daren Anderson: No, it's 2:00.  
2302

2303 Mr. de Geus: There's also a community meeting coming up on August 11. There is a  
2304 new citizen advisory committee working on the Comp Plan. At that meeting, they're  
2305 going to look at the Community Services facilities element specifically on the 11th.  
2306

2307 Vice Chair Markevitch: Do you have the time on that?  
2308

2309 Mr. de Geus: 6:30 to 9:00 at Mitchell Park Community Center.  
2310

2311 Mr. Jensen: Is there someone on the PRC on that?  
2312

2313 Commissioner Hetterly: No. There's not. We were not invited.  
2314

2315 Mr. de Geus: You may be interested in coming to that community meeting.  
2316

2317 Commissioner Hetterly: Do we have a paper? The last time we went through the  
2318 Community Services Element here, maybe the minutes from that last meeting where we  
2319 discussed it, it would be helpful for that committee to have that background information.  
2320

2321 Mr. de Geus: I'll mention it. They're meeting with Hillary Gitelman, the Planning  
2322 Director who's overseeing this work, tomorrow in preparation for the 11th. I'll be there,  
2323 and we'll look at that. The Commission may have put a paper together specific to that.  
2324

2325 Commissioner Hetterly: I think we did.  
2326

2327 Mr. de Geus: It would be good to share that. Maybe the Commissioners would like to  
2328 attend as well. The summer camps and aquatics wrap up in the next few weeks. I don't  
2329 know if there are any Commissioners interested in visiting some of the camps and  
2330 programs before summer ends. If you are, happy to give you a tour. You know where I  
2331 am, so you can call me or email me. Does everyone know who this gentleman is back  
2332 here?  
2333

2334 Vice Chair Markevitch: No.  
2335

2336 Mr. de Geus: This is Brad Eggleston. He's Assistant Director of Public Works. Brad,  
2337 why don't you come up and say hello? Brad carries a huge load within Public Works and

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2338 oversees the capital projects among many other things. Joe Teresi is one of the staff that  
2339 reports to Brad; he's been involved with the golf course. You may not have seen him, but  
2340 he's been very involved. Also the levy flood control work. He always asks about the golf  
2341 course. I'm going to let Brad respond to the challenges we have there. Just the latest  
2342 update.

2343  
2344 Commissioner Lauing: Since Keith's not here, I'll ask the question. How's the golf  
2345 course?

2346  
2347 Mr. de Geus: I knew you were going to do that. Go ahead, Brad. Maybe say a little  
2348 background about what you do.

2349  
2350 Brad Eggleston: Since you mentioned the camps and aquatics, my two 7-year-olds spent  
2351 two weeks at Foothills Park camp and loved it. That was good. Rob, you were saying  
2352 you guys talk about the status of the golf course permitting at most of these meetings.  
2353 The critical issue is getting the permits that we need from the Army Corps of Engineers.  
2354 The ongoing issue that we've had is that both the Corps of Engineers and the Regional  
2355 Board tie the permit for the golf course to the same type of permit that they're also issuing  
2356 for the JPA flood control project. There's a little bit of good news on that front. The  
2357 Regional Board has issued their permit for the JPA project. The Army Corps of  
2358 Engineers has formally initiated that process, and they've begun the consultations they  
2359 have to do with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries  
2360 Service. There is a little movement on the JPA project. The thing that's still bad for us is  
2361 that the Corps of Engineers continues to tell us that we can't get our permits from them  
2362 until they've completed that process. In fact, up to now they have not been willing to  
2363 initiate the consultations with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on our project. We've been  
2364 having some discussions with them. We recently submitted some information that they  
2365 needed from us and sent a letter to them formally asking them to begin that consultation  
2366 and reminding them of the steps they've already taken and the progress that they're  
2367 making on the JPA flood control project. We just sent this letter recently; we're making  
2368 some phone calls and escalating these discussions up the chain with the Corps of  
2369 Engineers. That's the most recent update. A little progress, but more so on the JPA  
2370 project to date.

2371  
2372 Commissioner Lauing: Any issues with respect to rounds of play?

2373  
2374 Mr. de Geus: The golf course is still open. We're in a little bit of a temporary situation  
2375 with the big stockpile there. That's still a challenge, so we have to discount rounds. We  
2376 can't fully recover the cost of running the golf course in the current condition. Given that  
2377 we had advance notice in not being closed, we've been able to bring some tournaments  
2378 back. Play has picked up a little bit, which has been good, but it's still not sufficient.

2380 Commissioner Lauing: It hasn't continued to go down; it's been relatively stable or  
2381 maybe picked up a little in the last six months?  
2382

2383 Mr. de Geus: Relatively stable. Obviously we've had great weather, and that's been  
2384 helpful this year. In the end, the City is essentially subsidizing the golf course at this  
2385 point.  
2386

2387 Commissioner Lauing: Do you know if the driving range has fallen off as well, just from  
2388 lack of traffic, or is that still pretty busy?  
2389

2390 Mr. de Geus: I don't know off the top of my head. I suspect it's dropped off as well, but I  
2391 don't have the figures in front of me to know that for sure. We know half of the driving  
2392 range activity is golfers hitting a bucket of balls before a round of golf. It's a fairly  
2393 significant amount of activity on that driving range from that. It has dropped off, not as  
2394 much as the rounds. Daren?  
2395

2396 Mr. Anderson: That's correct. Relative to last year, June 2015 to June 2014, we're up  
2397 around 10 percent, but nothing to where we were two or three years ago.  
2398

2399 Commissioner Crommie: Why doesn't the Corps of Engineers want to give approval?  
2400

2401 Mr. Eggleston: They tell us, their staff people at least, that they're concerned about  
2402 potential liability, because there are some people opposed to the JPA project, mainly  
2403 some environmental groups who still have hopes apparently that somehow it might take  
2404 more of the golf course and create more habitat. That's what some of these groups are  
2405 wishing for. The Corps of Engineers doesn't want to be perceived as taking any action  
2406 with respect to our permit that would show that they're moving towards approving it  
2407 before they've finished all the steps of analysis on the JPA permit. Obviously if that did  
2408 need to happen and we had already begun building our project, it would create a problem.  
2409

2410 Vice Chair Markevitch: We're about to hit another El Nino, and it's a bad one. This stuff  
2411 is going to back up. The creeks are completely filled with brush and plants. Some of it's  
2412 20 feet tall. They need to be cleaned out as part of this. The more this gets delayed by  
2413 the environmental group or the people who are opposing it, that's not right because  
2414 houses will be a risk at the other end. It irks me that this thing is so slow.  
2415

2416 Mr. Eggleston: It's extremely frustrating.  
2417

2418 Vice Chair Markevitch: It's very frustrating. Not to mention the golf course is suffering.  
2419 Does anybody else have any questions? Thank you.  
2420

2421 **VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR AUGUST 25, 2015 MEETING**

2422  
2423 Vice Chair Markevitch: I have two things, which is the Master Plan and an update on the  
2424 website. Is there anything else?

2425  
2426 Commissioner Hetterly: We'll probably have an ad hoc update on the dog meeting, but  
2427 we probably won't have a full presentation at that point.

2428  
2429 Commissioner Lauing: I'm presuming that this is at the scheduled meeting time?

2430  
2431 Vice Chair Markevitch: The 25th. That's a short meeting.

2432  
2433 Commissioner Crommie: Do we have enough people for that meeting? You did a poll.

2434  
2435 Catherine Bourquin: I think it was even. It was four just like it was for here. I don't  
2436 know if there's going to be a fifth person.

2437  
2438 Vice Chair Markevitch: I think the only thing driving it is the Master Plan update. The  
2439 other stuff clearly could wait a month, but this looks like it can't. We could possibly  
2440 consider doing it another day.

2441  
2442 Commissioner Hetterly: We only had four for the 25th?

2443  
2444 Ms. Bourquin: Yeah. When we tried to do it for the other time—it's up to you guys.

2445  
2446 Commissioner Lauing: You could do a poll again.

2447  
2448 Ms. Bourquin: Sure can.

2449  
2450 Vice Chair Markevitch: It doesn't have to be a Tuesday.

2451  
2452 Commissioner Crommie: Maybe have a poll that represents every week.

2453  
2454 Ms. Bourquin: The rooms, that's the difficulty. All the other Commissions have theirs  
2455 on certain dates too.

2456  
2457 Mr. de Geus: We also could just have a shorter meeting where we deal with the Parks  
2458 Plan and move that along and push the other items off. Seems like the community  
2459 gardens one we shouldn't do if Commissioner Crommie is not here, since she worked on  
2460 it. If the other ones aren't time sensitive, it's fine to have ...

2461  
2462 Vice Chair Markevitch: We could have just a short meeting.

2463  
2464 Commissioner Lauing: The quorum was more critical than the length of the meeting. I  
2465 think you have to poll again.

2466  
2467 Vice Chair Markevitch: We have a tentative agenda for a tentative meeting at a tentative  
2468 date for next month.

2469  
2470 **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

2471  
2472 Meeting adjourned on motion by Commissioner Hetterly and second by Commissioner  
2473 Knopper at 10:20 p.m.