



**NORTH VENTURA COORDINATED AREA PLAN  
WORKING GROUP  
AGENDA**

**WEDNESDAY, January 16, 2019**

City Hall – Community Meeting Room  
250 Hamilton Avenue  
Palo Alto, CA 94301  
5:30 PM TO 7:30 PM

Call to Order: 5:30 PM

Jonathan Lait, Interim Director for the Planning Department called the Working Group meeting to order today, January 16, 2019.

Rollcall

Present: Alexander Lew, Angela Dellaporta, Dorian Summa, Gail Price, Heather Rosen, Keith Reckdahl, Kirsten Flynn, Lakiba Pittman, Lund Smith, Parker Mankey, Siyi Zhang, Terry Holzmer, Time Steele, Yunan Song, Alternate Waldek Kaczmariski

Welcome and Housekeeping:

Mr. Lait welcomed everyone back after the holidays. He asked that when someone wants to speak, they turn the mic on. He turned to mic over to Working Group Member Carolyn Templeton.

Ms. Templeton noted she will be on the Planning and Transportation Commission, and as there is already a member of that Commission in this Working Group, Doria Summa, Ms. Templeton notified the Working Group she will vacate her seat. She believed Lakiba Pittman would be available to take her place on the Working Group.

Mr. Lait acknowledged Ms. Templeton's remarks and thanked her for her input.

1. Agenda overview

He noted at this point he wanted to check in with the Working Group and the community at large as to where the project was. He shared that he has received correspondence from the

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Ventura Neighborhood Association and other correspondence and he wanted to reassure everyone that the Working Group is not getting further ahead than people think they might be in terms of where they were and what they were trying to accomplish with this process. He has shared some of the remarks he has received but there were a lot of things that needed to be worked through. He acknowledged that sometimes the Working Group meetings feel a little constrained in time, not getting a lot of feedback from the Working Group members and the public expressed concerns about the amount of time available at the end of the meetings for public comment. He explained that was something they have been thinking about and in working with the consultant, they wanted to extend the meetings up to an additional hour if that was acceptable with the Working Group to accommodate the dialogue they hoped for. He indicated they were prepared to do that at this meeting to the extent the Working Group members were prepared to do that and would welcome that dialogue. He then indicated he wanted to clarify several things. The Working Group had a very distinguished role in the process which is set forth in the Municipal Code. Mr. Lait noted he checked in with the Working Group to assist staff who also identify areas and issues that needed to be thought about as the Coordinated Area Plan was developed. This Working Group was different from the Community Advisory Committee with the Comprehensive Plan which gave the City much more direction and feedback which then went on to the City Council. He stated he was working very closely with this Working Group and wanted to make sure the members were heard from and their comments and ideas were advanced on to the City Council. He shared that there were other expectations he heard from the community about the Brown Act meetings, this was a Brown Act meeting so there is a notification requirement of 72 hours to publish an agenda and provide notice of the meetings and he believed that has been done. This group was not on the same schedule for City Council where the packets were pushed out ten days in advance. This was more of a discrete aspect of the work being done. There was also a time frame involved. The City received a Federal Grant of approximately \$750,000 and one of the requirements was that the planning process would be completed in two years. The schedule that was endorsed by the City Council included this time frame. There was a time constraint for use of this month and the schedule reflects that. Other comments were that maybe this group was getting too far ahead of the community, the neighborhood area, based on some of the packets that were prepared and some of the information already delivered to the Working Group that the community has also seen. He reiterated that there were no plans prepared for this 60-acre boundary. This was the very start of this process and he wanted to get everyone in the Working Group, the consultants and staff at the same foundation and build from there. To that end homework has been done to note observations and report those back to start to put together a patchwork of understanding of what's happening in the community, how were people moving around, the diversity, how it was built out. What was presented in the second Working Group was a somewhat comprehensive report on that. That was not intended to make anyone feel this process was further along than it was. What they wanted to show was that data was being collected and available options were being looked at. He reported there was a schedule that would be presented to give more understanding what where they were and what they were trying to accomplish. He reiterated there were many sensitive issues with this project

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boundary. There were single-family homes in the commercial areas and help is needed from the Working Group and the community to understand how this evolved. He felt it was important that there was a shared understanding that there was an expectation that there would be some change in this neighborhood. This was a Comprehensive Plan goal and was reflected in the goals and objectives of the Working Group. There was an expectation that there would be more housing, working with street grids and improve bike and mobility access in this area. It was anticipated that there would be some change by engaging in this process. The questions were how much, where and how would it all come together. Part of staff and consultant's job was to push those levers somewhat, possibly making them a little uncomfortable about what those options are, to understand what the boundaries were, what the range was in order to obtain a hybrid solution. He clarified that if something was presented there was not a grand scheme of trying to do something, but trying to understand what the boundaries were. Staff and the consultants were here to help the community and the City Council get to a point so there was a plan that was well endorsed by the community and received a 7-0 vote from the City Council. That was the objective. He encouraged feedback | moderation, adjustment or response was needed along the way.

## 2. Update on consultant team work in progress.

Mr. Lait turned the meeting over to Kristen Hall to briefly go over the schedule so there was a sense of where they are and where they're going, the open to the Working Group if there were any questions about the opening remarks.

Ms. Hall reiterated they were still in the data-gathering phase. She noted the calendar shown was not in the packets. Along the bottom there were three phases, the first of which was the gathering phase in which there were two Working Group meetings and this was the third. After this were would be the first community workshop. The first Working Group meeting was introductory, the second there was a lot of data given and questions. Today's meeting would be starting to develop a very high-level vision, confirming the vision given by the General Plan and setting some ideas around metrics that might be used to analyze some ideas later to see if goals were being tracked. This would also be a prototype for the community workshop on February 5<sup>th</sup> so they were looking for feedback on this activity and see if this would be helpful and interesting in ways to frame this for the community workshop on the fifth. After that would be the joint session with City Council with the Working Group, which would be the end of the data-gathering phase, reporting to them what was learned during this phase, confirm the vision. Then would be the move into the plan development. Starting at the fifth Working Group meeting would be generating alternatives together, very hands on, looking at many of the targets talked about today and figure out how it would all come to ground. That would be a prototype for a community workshop which would be doing a similar activity. It would be starting with this group, testing ideas, moving to the community workshops to ground truth and confirm, deny or raise any different ideas that might come out of a broader group. Based on that information would be a start to creating some preferred alternatives which would be

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talked about at the sixth Working Group meeting. That would be really discussing some tangible ideas. After that is another Council meeting to report out on what has happened. Then would be a review of the preferred alternatives. Usually there would be two alternatives put forward and each would explore a range of different ideas, comparing and contrasting alternatives. In the seventh Working Group meeting the ideas that seemed to work be put together. From that a plan would be developed and then would come the review phase of the plan, which is where the Group would be asked to read and report back on the different elements of the plan. The ninth Working Group session would be used for review. More Working Groups could be added if needed. She noted things would start to become a little clearer after the alternatives were developed, what were the big challenges, where would policy direction be needed from Council.

### 3. Questions on materials from previous meetings

Mr. Lait noted two items he had heard. The first was the stakeholder meetings held that day which seemed to create some confusion in the community about what was going on. Those were not Brown Act Meetings. The purpose of the stakeholder meetings was to receive feedback candidly. They were not trying to exclude anyone, just have a system to hear from people in a way that they felt like they didn't have to be guarded in their remarks. The comments were very positive and effective for staff and the general outcomes of those meetings would be shared to guide this dialogue. That process was reviewed by the City Council as another means to engage the community and receive input. He apologized if the communication on that was not clear and they would do better on that. The second item was some comments on historic resources at the area. The consultants were working on reviewing the historic resources. Some testimony was heard in the public about the old cannery what was there. They are trying to understand what that meant. When that data is received it would be shared with the Working Group and the community and at that point if there was need for deeper investigation or some kind of subcommittee review to better understand the cultural connection to the area, there would be an opportunity to do that.

Ms. Mankey felt she was speaking for everyone and expressed appreciation for all the work staff and the consultants put into this. She noted this was a very hard process for everyone

Ms. Summa stated she was on the Comp Plan Group and asked for clarification of the difference between this Working Group and the Comp Plan Group. She thought it would be good to define the role of this Group in terms of such things as the scope and voting and background information the Group would get before decision making or recommendations.

Mr. Lait replied that Elena Lee was more involved in the CAC meetings and could have a better distinction between the two groups. He read from the Municipal Code what the Working Group charge was and Elena could help distinguish this from the CAC aspect. In the Municipal Code the Working Group is involved in the environmental scoping. He explained staff is helping in

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that regard with the consultants and the environmental work done. Also, in the Municipal Code the Working Group is to identify known infrastructure needs and plan and the conversation has begun about interconnected street networks, sidewalks, utilities that might be needed for future development. The Working Group is to explain any known private development proposals; so, what is happening in the area, how that would impact the Plan. The Working Group was to introduce staff and the consultants to the public. It was hoped the Working Group was spreading the word about the community meeting on February 5 so it would be a well-attended meeting. The Working Group was to identify any relevant constraints and opportunities. The consultants and staff were working to give the Working Group feedback they have learned but expecting to hear back about what was missed or mischaracterized it or didn't understand it correctly. The members of the Working Group were selected because of their unique interests and engagement with this neighborhood as property owners, business owners, residents, etc. He called on Elena Lee to explain the difference to the CAC.

Ms. Lee explained that the Comp Plan was basically a collection of goals, policies and programs, so the charge for the CAC was to help staff with the review process and to review the documents prepared. She felt one of the differences was the type of project this is. This is intended to not just be a collection of policies and programs, but actual development regulations and standards. It is a different type of document so the Working Group was looked to for feedback at the various stages and a vote whether the document was supported or not. It was different because of the type of work going into the document. Staff was looking to the Working Group for its feedback and connections to the community to share that with the City Council and the Planning and Transportation Commission.

Ms. Summa then understood that this Working Group was more like the SOFA Group rather than the Comp Plan.

Ms. Lee responded that it was governed by the same section of the Code, so the same type of process.

Mr. Lait asked for any other questions.

Ms. Price explained she was aware of what the minimum requirements were regarding getting information to the Working Group, but asked if there was any way to get the materials out earlier than in the past. She felt that was important because it gave people more time to review and gave the community more time to look at the materials.

Mr. Lait responded that they first started out trying to get the material out the Thursday before the Wednesday meetings, but have not succeeded in that. They will strive to do better on that. He felt part of that was driven by the aggressive schedule.

Ms. Hall noted that they track along behind the work of the Working Group. They put together the packet, send it out, then take what they heard and move forward. So, if the packet is sent out, they are somewhat on pause and it just adds longer time into the schedule in terms of the work of the consultant team.

Mr. Lait replied that it may depend on what was presented to the Working Group. The greater volume of work, the more time is needed to review that, so he would try to factor that into the scheduling and process.

Request was made to get a draft ahead of time, even if it is not finalized, so the Working Group could be more prepared when coming into the meeting.

Mr. Lait responded they would think about that.

Ms. Hall also noted that is what was sent this time.

Mr. Holzmer indicated he was very interested in the historic aspects of this site. He has already a lot of research. He indicated the uniqueness of this site, that the founder of this cannery was a very prominent Chinese-American and his significance to Palo Alto and the Bay Area. Mr. Holzmer wondered if a subcommittee could be formed to look at this particular aspect and he would like to participate in that and encouraged this be done at the earliest possible time. He felt it was worthwhile to understand not only the Fry's site but the surrounding streets and the historical aspect of that area. He cited Olive where he felt there was a lot of interest because this was one of the first African-American communities in Palo Alto and the historical aspect of that.

Mr. Lait acknowledged Mr. Holzmer's request and noted the subcommittee needed something to respond to. It was a function of timing. There was no opposition to that engagement, just a matter of when.

Ms. Hall stated they had engaged an historic consultant to assess the history of the site and were working on that currently. The goal was that that information, alongside the existing conditions memo would be ready for everyone to review before the joint session with City Council. She hoped that information would be available by the next Working Group meeting.

Mr. Lait replied there would be a draft document for feedback from the Working Group before that.

Ms. Summa suggested if there was going to be an historic subcommittee, maybe consideration could be given to the value of other committees to meet between meetings on particular areas of interest, such as parks and creeks or housing.

Mr. Lait remarked that it was in the realm of possibility for the Working Group to have subcommittees, and this was supported to the extent needed. He cautioned about the time that could add to a process, but if it didn't add time and could be accommodated, that could be done. That also would depend on the findings reported and where the need is. He agreed, where the need presented itself, there should be a subcommittee to review that.

Ms. Dellaporta asked about the best time to bring up detailed questions about the previous meeting.

Mr. Lait noted what was presented was the existing conditions sort of discussion. So, where there were questions or something was wrong that information could be presented. That was not the end of the data collection or reporting. There will be an Existing Conditions Report that would be the memorialization of the discussion. There will be a draft of that, and there would be a chance to comment on that specifically. There may have been some adjustment in the first Working Group sessions. That will be moderated with some pauses to get feedback. When the Existing Conditions Report is out that would be the best time to comment on it. If there was something felt to be imperative it can be sent off line.

Ms. Dellaporta explained she just wanted to know the best time.

Mr. Lait asked if there were any other questions. He noted public comments would be taken at the end of the session.

#### Discussion Items:

1. Working Group Report Back on Places.

Ms. Hall noted members of the Working Group had homework and member was asked for a two-minute presentation of what each member returned with. The prompt was, pick a district that you thought would be a good model for the NVCAP area, select three images that represent this district and be prepared to state what you liked about your images and why you think this place would be a good model for the NVCAP. She thanked everyone for the thoughtfulness each put into this.

Mr. Lew picked the Emeryville Greenway, a one-mile-long path in Emeryville. It is a work in progress. They did a plan in 2002 and have been working on it in phases over the last 15 years. He picked it because it was similar to North Ventura. It had three railroads, a creek, a street like El Camino, San Pablo Avenue, and it has a lot of former industrial buildings. Over the last 15 years they built 800 units of housing in the neighborhood, mostly townhouses and apartments. Some distinct differences between Emeryville and Palo Alto are Emeryville doesn't have a lot of kids, only 200 in their school district. It is a different kind of demographic. The top photo shows the Greenway in the middle, there is a landscaped bike and pedestrian path, two new buildings,

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one commercial and one with townhouses. There are terraces and balconies on both buildings facing the Greenway. There is a sculpture which isn't in the photo, and there are two corner restaurants with outdoor tables that can't be seen very well in the picture. He has been there on weekends and during the week and noted there was a really interesting people. People were walking and bicycling it. It connected to Berkley and Oakland, so there were destinations. There was an old speakeasy there, the Berkley Bowl West Grocery Store, a vegetable garden and they built a new central park in the middle of the Greenway. The left lower photo was also a former railroad which was turned into a linear park. The housing there was apartments. He liked that there were two courtyards facing south onto the Greenway. He noted a lot of housing now has huge underground garages where they can't put trees. The courtyards are podium level, so there's very minimal landscaping. Here, all the units open onto the park which was very nice. The third photo was also on Greenway. They had been using the old brick facades on the buildings. There are lots of balconies and terraces on the units. The trail itself is designed for runners and walkers, pedestrians and bikers. There is a separate gravel trail for runners. He felt this was a very nice way of tying it all together.

Ms. Hall remarked that if each person can't get through everything they want to say during the time allotted, there will be an extensive conversation after this with breakout groups, so there will be more opportunity for discussion.

Ms. Rosen indicated her choice was Old Town Edinburg, Scotland. Picked it because she thought it did a very good job of incorporating a lot of the old architecture and old themes of the city, but making it nice and new but still keeping the same buildings and the same layout. The bottom right picture showed the arches. This was right across from the train station, so they did a really good job of incorporating public transportation and making it accessible to many areas people wanted to go to. They kept the old building, but each little section was like a new, modern thing, so there were a lot of pop-up bars and juices and many little shops, arts and jewelers, but still in the old structure. The top photo was a park that was several blocks away and it was nice idea to have that much green. They did a good job of making that close enough to be accessible to the train station. There were a lot of places to walk around. There was a Christmas Market every year with a big festival with stalls. The bottom left photo showed they kept the old architecture on top, but the bottom section was new and different, but it was combined with good aesthetics.

Keith Reckdahl picked St. Anthony Main, which was a part of northeast Minneapolis, across the river from downtown. It was an urban area. Since it's not downtown, it was quite similar to Palo Alto. There were a lot of traffic issues, there were not typical high rises. This development was mostly residential, high-end condos, but some lower-end condos were included, so there was a mixture of demographics in the group. He liked that it was an urban area but had the feel of a neighborhood. It didn't feel like a bunch of towers put together. There were open spaces with that neighborhood feel. The upper left photo showed a plaza with a fountain. There was outdoor seating to have drinks or dinner outside during the summer. It had some similarities

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with Ventura because it was isolated. It was kind of a cul-de-sac between a busy street and the river, and Ventura has between the busy street of El Camino and the train tracks. So, you could design it to have the cul-de-sac type feel so it has very little cut-through traffic. People who are going there will go and park and there were a lot of bicyclists going up and down the river. It was very bike friendly. The roads were very small, cobblestones with a nice feel to that. The lower right photo showed the outdoor seating, the theater there with approximately four restaurants. It's mostly residential, but it had something that people didn't have to go across to downtown to go out for the evening. It also had some walking trails at the river, which was nice. Ventura didn't have that kind of attraction, but there was Cal Ave so some kind of walking access to Cal Ave, that would be a plus.

Ms. Flynn picked the Oak Park Arts District in Illinois. This was a commercial strip on one side of Oak Park. Interesting was the extreme mix of buildings which were unified by not having their parking upfront. The parking was in alleys in this district, and the fact that they had a mix of duplexes, single family homes and multiple family homes sort of in the same block. What unified them was that there was a consistent setback which made the feeling on the street very similar from one area to another. It was very cold when the picture was taken so it doesn't look very lively. The bottom right picture is the commercial strip. What was interesting was that by calling it an Arts District and holding arts events there and having some sponsored art galleries, they created a reason for viable retail because people had a reason to go there. They had sculpture gardens and creative benches and contests to repaint these occasionally. It made what was kind of a dying district very vibrant and desirable. There was a mix of eras in the buildings and a mixture of densities, because there was everything from four-story apartment buildings to single family homes.

Ms. Zhang chose Central Square, Cambridge, MA where she lived for about three years. What was similar between Cambridge and Palo Alto was that they were both nestled in the most innovative places in the world and also near to top-notch universities with a very vibrant tech workforce. The top left picture shows the annual city-wide dance party. She felt there would be a more inclusive event to bring everybody together. On the right is a florist. It was a very unique local establishment which warmed your heart every time you walked by because they gave a free rose to anyone with a certain name each day. Cambridge had a lot of unique local establishments. It had a nonprofit theater with about 120 shows every year. She hoped Ventura could have unique things like that to bring a unique vibe of the culture and the community. The bottom left was a multi-use apartment building with amazing restaurants at street level and supposedly featuring the world's best ice cream shop. She felt that in Palo Alto dense housing coupled with mixed-use was the way to go. Cambridge was also facing a lot of housing issues, but they came up with a lot of multi-use buildings. A few blocks away there are also single family, but this was something she would like to see.

Ms. Song picked Downtown Palo Alto. She picked this because she tried to pick a place with the size and location and population that was very similar to North Ventura. She thought of a lot of

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places in the Bay Area, picked Downtown Palo Alto because this was a place she liked most. It was similar to North Ventura, it was close to the railway station, close to train tracks, it had traffic, it had busy streets, it had quite nice streets. It had residences, rental properties, business. The first picture she picked was because it was not a big sized plaza but it changed a lot. It made people stop for short times. They can have lunch there, they can talk. Even on rainy days people can stay there for a while. It was not occupying a big space like a park which required a big space. It changed a lot of how people engaged with that. She picked the next picture because there was the Fry's Building, which was an historical site. She wanted to keep it because it showed some history of Palo Alto and it was from the first Chinese immigrant. This was an example of how the historical building could be preserved and changed to something people liked and could use and enjoy. She picked the last picture because it was a very nice office building with big trees and some street parking besides. She felt this building looked very good when she walked by.

Ms. Dellaporta noted she couldn't find one place that she liked, that had everything she wanted, so she chose a variety of different things. The picture on the bottom right is of the Russian River Brewery. She felt this was a good example of industrial buildings that were made to look very charming and lovely, maybe by having two stories, the peaked roofs, the warm colors, the large windows. It was not a hodgepodge. It was a nice consistent look but with a variety of different buildings. She liked the bottom left because it was a very walkable street, very busy with lots of things going on, yet there was room for deliveries or emergency vehicles. It reminded her of a street in France where the food was delivered in the morning and cars disappear and people could use it as a walkable neighborhood. She also liked the varied rooflines, all the balconies. It looked like a very pleasant place to sit. The top picture was a much bigger development, a much bigger area than North Ventura, but it was right next to a river and it had a bike/pedestrian path all along the river with a park there, not a road there. She thought that would be a lovely place to sit. There was a shopping area in the middle, very accessible by foot. The streets in the development were really only useful for people who lived or worked there. There were not cut throughs.

Ms. Price had multiple pictures, some of which were not identified on the website or other sources she had. She was trying to illustrate a variety of architectural designs, a variety of densities. She saw several examples like the one in the upper left of container housing, modular housing, prefab units. She felt with so many choices now, there would be a great deal of possibilities in terms of the North Ventura area. Page one showed different densities, different heights. Some illustrations focused on the landscaping and making an attractive and useful pedestrian environment. The lower left showed a vegetable garden and other gardens with apartment or townhouses in the lower left. She previously mentioned the use of color and adding some whimsy within the region, and she included examples of carefully done enhanced crosswalks and intersections. From what she understood, there were guidelines which were developed by the neighborhood. Guidelines were provided to the neighborhoods and different neighbors got together and decided what design was appropriate. Examples at the bottom of

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pages one and two were from all over the world. In the middle of the second page there was an example of a living wall at the end of a building. She recognized that would pose a real problem in the environment, but she thought it was important to illustrate how this could be done. It adds a softness and attractiveness, lots of ways to make walkers feel comfortable. At the bottom right there was some public art from San Diego. She felt there were many things with color and design and public art that could be utilized to make it a more attractive and interesting area, reflecting the artistic interests and skills of the people in Ventura and in the community.

Mr. Holzmer stated a friend of his recommended he check out a site called The Barlow. It's about an hour and a half drive from Palo Alto, in Sebastopol. The uniqueness of this was that it was once an apple cannery. It was a 12-acre site that was pretty much dead. It was an old cannery that had been abandoned with a lot of old buildings. It wasn't being utilized very well, and they wanted to turn this into a vibrant area. This was a joint effort with the City of Sebastopol and the developer. They decided to redevelop the site but with the community in mind. They got a committee of citizens involved along with the developer. The developer had his own ideas, but he worked with these citizens and the city in developing a plan for the area. The top left was the grand entrance. It was called The Barlow because it was the Barlow Apple Cannery. They turned it into a commercial area that not only appealed to residents but appealed to tourists as well. Sebastopol is not too far from the wine country and one of the major tenants was a winery. They catered to tourists as well as the community. There were small shops along the streets, a microbrewery, places to sit and enjoy eating. The bottom right-hand picture showed a community market. They converted it from an old cannery building into a beautiful market.

Ms. Mankey stated she couldn't find pictures of the places she thought would be like Palo Alto. She stated she never found anywhere she liked more than Palo Alto. Most important to her was having a really walkable space like Angela's picture, have a lot of public art and whimsy. She recalled the food court at the old mill. It had funny cottages above. She would like to see some Greg Brown style artwork, a lot of housing and absolutely no office. Something with a lot of color and whimsy. Something that was like the gardens at the children's library or Centennial Walk.

Ms. Hall brought two. The first was the Pearl District in Portland. It was a very vibrant place. When you walked around on the street you got a sense that there was a lot of life happening there. There were a lot of people living there, working there, shopping there any time of day or evening. It had a lot of ways of traveling through it. It had very small walkable blocks, lots of bike lanes, light rail, heavy rail, busses, bike share, which made it a very easy place to move around. You could feel the freedom of just being able to move easily through a city without needing to find parking all the time. It also had some very interesting older buildings which influenced the newer buildings, like the loading docks and the large windows and the kind of industrial aesthetics of these buildings which influenced the new buildings in the top picture.

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The open spaces were really well programmed and well used, which is also a factor of all the uses there. The second was The Yards in Washington DC. This was also a former industrial area. The top right showed an older building that was reused in an elegant way alongside newer, taller buildings. There was again the kind of industrial aesthetic. There was an open space with a lot of activity around it which ended up being kind of the heart of the community. It had a mix of different types of housing, from the eight-story terra cotta clad building contrasting with the lower rise townhome with stoops and cedar cladding. Really quality materials.

## 2. Neighborhood Vibrancy Metrics.

Ms. Hall remarked that they wanted to start a conversation about what were the shared qualities of really successful places. There were things that were heard repeated throughout the conversations. She noted among these places there was vibrancy, a mix of uses, people on the streets. There was a sense of neighborliness, opportunities to meet and interact with one another, shared resources. There was a sense of connectedness with places that were easy to access with lots of different paths of discovery. There was diversity of people, places, buildings and ways of moving around. Many featured nature, really well-designed open spaces, streets with mature trees that supported health and well-being. These places were economically vibrant which was part of their success. Many had a mix of retail and services, some had just housing, but all supported different ways of living. She remarked that in looking at those qualitative things, how could they be talked about in terms of metrics. They looked the following metrics: population density, number of jobs, number of retail establishments, how many types of transit, looking at the open spaces, some of the qualities and amounts, intersection density, tree canopy as a percentage of these streets. They looked at the neighborhoods sent by the Working Group Members. Some were not received in time in order to share, but they started with the NVCAP area, sharing some data, a little more of the quantitative added to the qualitative discussion. She noted a disclaimer on data, which was that data is not really as objective as it was thought to be, especially when talking about cities which are very complex. This data was used to support a discussion and bring some rigor and common language around the examples and bring everyone to a shared vision about what is hoping to be done. She noted after she talked about each example there would be a break out into a group exercise, asking everyone to think about how the Working Group wants NVCAP to perform in terms of the different metrics. She emphasized that she would talk through what the different metrics mean, how they can be thought about and there would be facilitators to help explore the conversations.

Ms. Summa questioned the scale of the maps, which showed the same area but the actual area was subset inside each one, it was much smaller.

Ms. Hall explained that what was shown on the screen was the NVCAP area. They wanted to include Cal Ave in this area because this district was part of a larger district that included Cal Ave and it was felt that was an important part of the identify of the 60 acres being planned. They wanted to look at what the influences were around the site and what gave it its identity.

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Ms. Summa noted all the other maps such as Emeryville, Mr. Lew talked about a specific area and she question how much of the map was that specific area he talked about.

Ms. Hall stated she would point that out as she went along.

Ms. Dellaporta asked if the Working Group was looking at the different neighborhoods to compare what they have to the NVCAP area, such as population?

Ms. Hall replied that these examples were brought forward for different reasons and looking at what it was about these places that gave them their qualities and knowing the Working Group was planning for NVCAP, were there certain things about some of these places that could be quantified and applied to NVCAP.

Ms. Dellaporta stated she looked at the NVCAP intersections.

Ms. Hall presented a map which showed the NVCAP area within the larger map. She pointed out that Page Mill was a big divider between the Cal Ave area and the NVCAP area. The blue dots represented intersections. On the northern side of Page Mill there were more intersections than on the south side, likely due to the industrial past of this site. There weren't many street connections through there. Qualitatively, as someone walked down Cal Ave with many intersections it was felt there was more opportunity, more choices, shorter blocks, more interesting and engaging. If someone walked a similar distance in the NVCAP area there wasn't as much going on, not as many choices, not as many paths through. She noted there was a board behind here where the examples fell on a spectrum. The NVCAP was a light color which showed the NVCAP had a lower population density than many of the other examples. It was about in the middle for jobs and a little lower on retail and services than some of the other examples.

Question was asked if the population density of the black dotted line or of the red.

Ms. Hall clarified it was of the red dotted line, and it was people per square mile.

It was also noted there was a large undeveloped area in the middle of this example that wasn't in the other example.

Ms. Hall indicated in terms of intersection density it was lower than all the other examples except Emeryville which had been an industrial area. On the map there was a somewhat disconnected fabric within the NVCAP area. For each there were three slides. The first was overall character and uses of the area. The next was the building character and then the street

character. When looking at the overall character, there were small cafes and local restaurants, a mix of retail and services, and the services brought the neighborhood character, a differentiator from lots of restaurants. The incubator spaces brought innovation and new people through the site regularly. There were some smaller neighborhood parks which were not highly programmed. The buildings were a mix of types from multifamily, single family and the Fry's site. The streets were not super pedestrian streets, especially around the boundaries of El Camino Real, Page Mill, Park. Cal Ave was a good example of a street that had lots of storm water treatment, lots of plantings. Next looked at was University Avenue in Palo Alto. Shown was a density of shops, but more intersections throughout, a more connectedness of the intersections. There was still a concentration of retail along University Avenue but there were many more ways to get there. On the sliders, University Avenue was the orange dot, somewhat in the middle of population density, high in terms of jobs density and high in terms of retail and services. Regarding intersection density, it was in the high middle area, with shorter blocks, more walkable streets. Overall character showed open spaces were well used, lots of different types of activities. The building character in this area showed very large single-family homes.

Question was asked what very programmed meant.

Ms. Hall replied it mean lots of specific activities such as a playground versus an open field.

Ms. Hall noted the main message of the slide was that there were multifamily buildings that took cues from the larger single-family homes and these buildings are side by side. She indicated there was a lot of focus on pedestrian movement, paseos only for people and bikes, dense tree canopy along the streets, some traffic calming measures seen on the street. She remarked the bottom left image showed a street that was roughly the same width as the one on the right, but the right has more street trees, the scale of the pedestrian environment felt more welcoming. She then moved to Emeryville and indicated that the area Mr. Lew showed was the Emeryville Greenway which cuts through the neighborhood. It was an old rail easement that was converted to this linear park. This section of Emeryville didn't have many intersections, it had very long blocks but the Greenway was an addition that created ease of mobility through the site. On the sliders, it was the red C. It was lower in population density, in the middle in jobs and low on retail and services. It didn't feel super vibrant. There were not a lot of people walking around on the street. It felt quieter and more residential. The overall character of the buildings showed the campuses used the warehouse aesthetic. A marketplace was the hub of retail but not a lot of retail beyond that. The Greenway was a great connector with a walking path of decomposed granite and a harder surface path, but the overall character was of an industrial nature and the new residential buildings referenced that character. Some quite effectively created a sense of place and there was a larger artist community in the area. The

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streets were generally larger streets, longer blocks, but in the lower right-hand corner, the residential clusters added a nice scale with garages and kids riding their bikes. Next commented on was the Yards in D.C. The map indicated there was a highway which divided. North of that was the historic fabric, south was the redeveloped shipyards area. The sliders indicated the Yards was in yellow with a lower population density, lower jobs, lower in retail and services but really high in intersection density. The open space was centralized and the lower intensity was focused around the open space which created a sense of community heart and gathering space. The image showed the overall character with the gathering space on the lower right-hand side. It was programmed a lot with events and the retail was focused around that space. The buildings varied in scale from taller, eight-story buildings down to townhomes. Some older structures were used to have more character added in with stoops to add a social element to the street. The Yards had a broad variety of street. The top right-hand corner photo showed one of the busier streets with a lot of landscaping a wide buffer between the busy street and the sidewalk. The image on the bottom left showed a street with pavers, cars can't drive there and there was a farmer's market on the weekends. A good scale of things happening. There were pedestrian paseos where people and walk and bike through.

Ms. Hall responded that the Yards was the part south of the freeway. Ms. Hall continued to Oak Park, Ill. She indicated it was at the bottom area. This was a very residential area, sort of an historic suburb. There were a lot of street trees. The population density was in the middle. There was a mix of single family and multifamily buildings, older brick apartment buildings. It had very few jobs, very little retail and services. Intersection density was in the middle. It had main streets with streets like back alleys with parking in the back. This area had 92% tree canopy, the highest. There was a very large park but it was not very accessible to a lot of the neighborhood. The building character showed lots of older buildings, townhomes, brick apartment buildings, new multifamily buildings towards Harrison Street. Oak Park showed some interesting ways of bringing the art district into the streets with colorful crosswalks and art sculptures. There was a lot of real estate given over to the trees and sidewalk and wide areas of plantings.

Mr. Lait questioned why the rectangle was so large when the study area was relatively small. He thought it may be representative of the Ventura area and Cal Ave, but there was some census tract data to help draw the comparisons. He asked her to reiterate why they saw the shape they were seeing, but the areas people picked out were, in some instances, a small part of that.

Ms. Hall explained that the rectangle was the exact size and shape in all of them, and in each of them they tried to capture similar elements such as capturing the main retail street of the neighbor, if there was a transit station, some open space, so they all kind of had the same

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ingredients, but in different quantities. Ms. Hall went on to the Pearl District which was sort of the highest of all of them. There was a high population density, the highest number of jobs, the highest retail sales and services and one of the highest intersection densities. That was what led to the feeling of vibrancy on the street, people out at all times walking around. There were six modes of transit. They had a high tree canopy, 84%. There were warehouse buildings, parks were programed with play areas and seating areas. The landscape created many opportunities for people to play but there was also a stormwater treatment area. The buildings were varied in terms of height and material, but many retained the industrial character using loading docks to reference that intermediate social scale between the building and the street. There were a wide variety of streets with the loading dock sidewalks alongside streets that didn't have curbs, great bike street. Many of the taller buildings had lower elements at the street and the height was pushed back away from the street, so the feeling on the street is a lower scale. The last was Cambridge, Central Square. The main area was Mass Ave and Central Square split Mass Ave. The population density was the highest of all, probably attributed to the student population. It was middle of the pack in terms of jobs, probably because there were a lot of students. It was middle of the pack in terms of retail and services. They were oriented towards a strong nightlife. It was the highest in intersection density, probably because of the historic neighborhoods, small little streets, small blocks. The character was very artistic, very innovative with street art, great nightlife, lots of street fairs and festivals. With higher population density there were many more people to bring to these activities. The buildings were varied in character from small single-family homes to high-rise buildings. Shown were single family homes across the street from multifamily homes, historic streets with very narrow lanes up to Mass Ave which was a complete street with a bike network and transportation and many shops along it. She hoped this information gave everyone the feel and flavor and symmetrics to think about regarding the quality of these places.

### 3. A "Day in the Life" Exercise.

Ms. Hall explained the entire Working Group would be broken into smaller groups of four. Each group would get a fictional teammate who lived in the NVCAP area in the future. Each had their own interests and hobbies and families and jobs and ways they preferred to move around. Each team was to talk about this person, going through a series of questions and rank on the sliders. There were to look at what this fictional person would need NVCAP to look like in the future. It was hoped each group could come to a consensus regarding this. If anyone in the group had a very different perspective that would be interesting to note. At the end there would be a report on all the thoughts around the conversations. This information would be marked up on the



boards to see where consistency between the groups was found, where there were some different ideas.

Ms. Dellaporta noted she had thought of some other metrics that might improve or change a neighborhood. She asked how those could be indicated as the group worked through this.

Ms. Hall explained there were some extra questions to tease apart some of the metrics and what they might mean in terms of the experience of the street. That would be a good place to record these other metrics.

Ms. Hall replied 15 years. She stated each group would have a facilitator to help answer questions and each group was asked to determine a scribe for the group.

Ms. Hall called everyone back to start the report. She stated as each group reported out, they would keep notes and mark the boards to try to see where everyone falls, the similarities, differences to help see the elements of the vision that were really consistent and the elements that might need more thought.

Jamila's (phonetic) team was represented by Ms. Flynn who stated the following. Jamila was comfortable with a fair amount of density. She wanted enough space so she could have a guest, so not a studio apartment. She wanted some open space for aesthetics. She had a high-tech job and she wanted to feel like she lived in a nice place. She was interested in connectivity and a mix of jobs. She liked to volunteer and would like there to be spaces for nonprofit jobs. She wanted some high-tech in the neighborhood so she would have less distance to commute to work. She enjoyed her bike rides. All group members agreed she was foolish to take Caltrain to Mountain View because she could get there quicker on a bike with the wait time and she wouldn't get bumped off the bike by car. Regarding retail and services, she would like her services to include a community around so she could do community work. She wanted spaces to eat out. She wanted a shared work space so she would have someplace other than her home to work. That could be a café, a gathering place for her. She would like Amazon lockers in the retail and services category. She would like some kind of nightlife like a brew pub, a cider pub or a wine bar. She did not have her own car so wanted very safe bike parking. Being a female on her own, if she rode her bike in the evening, she wanted a place that was safe and well lit. She would like charging for electric bicycles. She wanted some arts events and projects in the retail and services space such as live/work space for artists. Regarding intersection density and street experience, she wanted the lanes, the residential streets, some greenways. She didn't want a lot of local feeders going through her area because those would be intersections where there might be conflicts with cars. The cars could be left on the collector streets where she wouldn't

be on her bike. She wanted protected bike lanes, less on-street parking because of safety issues with car doors. She wanted areas that were bicycle or pedestrian only. She did not want a lot of streets on the interior of the neighborhood where she lived. Her favorite mode of transportation was bicycle with her secondary mode being train. She does walk at times and would utilize ride share or a taxi when needed. She might also use a shuttle occasionally to get to other areas in Palo Alto. To go longer distances or places where shuttles didn't go, she might utilize something like a Lime Scooter. The group felt she needed safe open space, public arts venue for live music or plays. She liked linear green space such as bike paths. In her parks she wanted programming such as frisbee golf or a climbing wall. She wanted a space for gathering in the green spaces and community space for volunteer activities. She also wanted free wi-fi in the parks and public spaces.

Ms. Hall requested John's group give their presentation.

Ms. Dellaporta gave the presentation for John's group. She stated John was very different from Jamila. John was an older person, retired, wheelchair bound, and the group felt the population density wouldn't matter to him. He may or may not want to be around a lot of people. This was also true for the number of jobs. He probably would want some increased retail near his residence, easy to get to, but he wouldn't notice the number of people who worked nearby him. He wanted neighborhood-serving retail and services near him because it was difficult for him to get around, maybe in the same building. Regarding intersection density and street experience, he would probably appreciate having a smooth, wide area to negotiate his wheelchair, not a lot of deep curves or car traffic. He appreciated paseos, lanes, alleys that were quite wide so he wouldn't encounter a lot of people on bikes and separated from the car traffic. He probably wanted some longer blocks so he wouldn't have to worry about curbs or intersecting with people going the opposite way. The cut-through lanes would probably be good. Modes of transit were a challenge. Probably his primary mode of transport would be via car, either ride-sharing or driving his own car, so he would need parking. The bus could be possible, but it would be a challenge to get in and out of the bus and negotiate after that. The train would be even more difficult even with the wheelchair lifts. So, the group felt his modes of transport would be car, bus and then the pedestrian walkways, which would have to be prioritized for him to get around easily where he lived in the neighborhood. Lastly were trains, skateboards and bicycles. He wanted obstacle-free wide sidewalks but Park Boulevard would have to be substantially altered to accommodate him. He liked to be with his granddaughter in the park so he definitely liked good, accessible open space, green space. Also, of interest was some kind of enclosed community meeting space to visit friends, maybe a senior center or cafes, but areas where community could meet.

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Ms. Summa, also from this group, remarked that they felt it would be good to have accommodations in the street for bikes and scooters, etc., so they would be separated from pedestrians and wheelchair users on the sidewalks.

Ms. Hall called on Gin's group.

Ms. Zhang reported for Gin's group. Gin was a 14-year-old female so she would probably prefer a high-density population, an urban area with places with a lot of walkable streets, shared space. She was still in school, wasn't working yet but wanted to meet people, cool people, and learn about careers. She might want to intern at some of the places, so a mix of jobs in the area would be good. Regarding retail services, she didn't have much money, so she preferred a lot of small, fun, inexpensive places to hang out and to eat. She liked to take dance classes so dance school and entertainment space would be nice. She liked to hang out with her friends, so having a walkable district was important with a high intersection density. Her primary mode of transport was walking, but many young people had motorized skateboards and bikes, so areas for those would be good. She would want building space that was urban with a plaza sitting area with very good wi-fi and tables.

Ms. Hall looked to Jose's group.

Mr. Lew presented for Jose's group. Jose was a 45-year-old researcher at Stanford Medical Center. He drives to work. They felt population density was between Emeryville and University Avenue. For jobs they picked something between Central Square and Cal Avenue. Jose worked at Stanford and Stanford developed Page Mill Road for their graduates, so it would make sense that North Ventura had similar jobs for Jose. Regarding retail and services, Jose liked to go out to eat with friends, so they picked something similar to Center Square in Cambridge or University Avenue. Both places had a lot of restaurants within a small walking distance. He liked to do errands after work, and both places had a lot of neighborhood services in the downtown areas. Regarding intersection density, Jose had a dog so lanes and residential streets would be good for him, but he did like to go out to eat, so they picked the Pearl District for the small block, high density of the restaurants. Jose likes to drive, so modes of transportation were car first, walking with the dog second, bus such as the Marguerite shuttle was third. Fourth was bicycle, fifth possibly a self-driving Uber, sixth the motorized scooter, seventh the motorized skateboard and eighth was the train. There were many ideas for open space. They thought about the new dog-walking park in Mountain View and the San Antonio Shopping Center, which was a linear park and the dog run was in the linear park. This was heavily used. Jose liked to play basketball, so an urban plaza with sport courts would be nice. A central park was appealing for people watching, seeing different kinds of people out and about.

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Ms. Hall thanked everyone for their input. She noted they wanted to do about a five-minute conversation about what worked and what didn't work about this, because they wanted to do something similar for the community workshop, but she wanted to make sure they got to public comment. Thinking about doing this with the community group, she asked the group what they thought worked well about this exercise, using fictional characters in the future.

Ms. Flynn noted there were certain realities or premises about the characters that wouldn't be accurate because Jose couldn't drive to Stanford because Stanford has very challenging parking. Jamila wouldn't take the train because it would be faster to bike that distance, because the train is infrequent and bikes often get bumped off the bike car. So, it would be nice to have the little details corrected.

Ms. Mankey commented that 14-year-olds at Palo Alto High School don't take swing dancing. They take 17 extra curriculars, because their parents will disown them if they don't get into MIT on early admissions after three years of high school.

Mr. Holzmer remarked that he didn't see as a character, a family person with children. Their whole lives surrounded their children, who they were and how they operated was based on how the schools were doing, what was happening at schools, what could be done to support the children. He suggested changing one of the characters to that focus.

Question was asked if at the community workshops would there be examples such as the ones they went over today. He felt it was helpful to have some examples of how it could be done differently. If the public came in and didn't understand that, it might be confusing for them.

Ms. Hall asked if the examples as given were helpful.

A question was asked if she meant the examples they went over today, like the five or six different ones.

Mrs. Hall replied yes.

Ms. Hall asked if they were going to narrow the examples down to a few, which ones would be the best ones?

Ms. Flynn felt the Pearl District as the urban one but she suggested that one should be included that was part of a suburban city rather than exclusively parts of urban cities. She noted with the examples that Palo Alto was not part of San Francisco, or a city the size of Boston, or Portland or Chicago. North Ventura was part of a suburban city with a different density, so she would

like to see an example that showed a vibrant district in a suburban city, although Emeryville was a little like that.

Comment was made that example of University Avenue was a good one. People knew it well.

Another example was stated The Barlow might be another good one.

Ms. Dellaporta suggested she would like to see some other metrics such as the miles of bike and pedestrian paths that were separated from cars, the amount or number of retailers that was actually in pedestrian-friendly areas, the number of car trips that were made in and out of these neighborhoods at different times of the day, the number of street events in the different neighborhoods.

Ms. Zhang felt this was a good exercise and it was good to get the community engaged in this kind of exercise. She asked if there was someone in the community who didn't fit into any of the personae, would there be any form or time when they could talk about themselves and what they wanted.

Ms. Hall acknowledge that was a good question. She asked the Working Group if they felt they were able to talk about their own experiences alongside the character, or did they feel it was really dominated by the character. If that was the case, what would be a good way to introduce that element into it?

Ms. Price suggested giving the participants an opportunity to expand their characters to reflect some of the things they were interested in, that their characters would enjoy but maybe other people would enjoy too.

Ms. Flynn said maybe telling the participants they could add one characteristic that wasn't in the description. Her group added the fact that Jamila was into the arts, which wasn't in her description.

Ms. Dellaporta noted she appreciated that at the end the group was given a separated amount of time to talk about what they thought.

Ms. Summa thought that, given that this is a built-out area, the community would want to tell the group what they needed, not what imaginary people might need. She also felt the metrics were confusing because they didn't just talk about the area, they went to a broader area. The maps were confusing. The North Ventura area map was the best because it showed the focus area within the map. There also may be a lot of pushback in talking about imaginary characters in the future versus the real needs of people living there.

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Mr. Reckdahl asked if they did something like offering six different possibilities and people chose the one they were most like and went with that group?

Ms. Price commented on the metrics. She suggested artistic enhancement, public art, the kinds of things introduced into communities might be something that could be discussed. In terms of the characters, all were people of some means. She felt at some point there should be a discussion about people who have very little or nothing who are living within these neighborhoods or in the communities. It's a slightly different perspective but she felt it was a broader, truer reflection.

Ms. Flynn noted in this region, a person could be a very well employed liberal arts major and not be a person of means in comparison to the rest of this area. A real effort would have to be made to encourage even that modicum of socioeconomic diversity.

Mr. Reckdahl felt the imaginary characters worked for him. It made him think outside of what his thoughts were. He believed a community group would want to communicate their thoughts. They would want you to listen and they might be irritated with talking about an imaginary character and not about them.

Ms. Mankey remarked that how she would structure this exercise would be front loading it with other places that aren't Palo Alto. Then asking what the community wanted from Palo Alto and what their grandchildren would want. Not what they would want for them, but what they would actually want. How was that different. So, bring it back and don't talk so much about Portland and Emeryville and the other places, and just make it about Palo Alto.

Ms. Flynn stated that one of her reasons for volunteering was that she cared about the great State of California, and she felt they were talking about this property in isolation a lot of the time. Is wanted to think that she was contributing to solving some of the problems that were affecting the State her family lives and some of the Statewide pressures were not expressed in the background information they were given. She felt that was why there was so much pressure on this project, specifically the housing crisis, which was Statewide.

Ms. Summa asked why they weren't looking at SOFA Downtown. The goals of SOFA were virtually the goals of this group. It was a little different because there was a little more of a commercial component here, but she felt SOFA had a lot of relevant housing options built into their zoning that could be looked at more specifically for this. She stated she didn't think of that until after the January 3<sup>rd</sup> deadline for submitting ideas.

Ms. Hall thanked everyone for all of the thoughtful participation and feedback. She felt this would enrich the workshop a lot.

#### Oral Communication:

Mr. Ken Joyce referenced a letter he had sent after the second Working Group meeting which was up on the website and he encouraged the members to look at it. It was under the heading Public Comments. In the letter he raised a question which had to do with slide number 43 of 48 in that packet which talked about barriers to market rate residential. He did not see anything about affordable housing which he felt was echoing what some of the Working Group Members said. He felt affordable housing should be part of this and hoped a strong emphasis would be put on that.

Mr. Waldemar Kaczmarek wanted to comment on what was presented today. He liked the exercise a lot and felt it was valuable for people who didn't work with designing cities on a daily basis to refocus them from the technical language focus on the person. He felt it was important to give parameters that stretch the ways of thinking. Not just density but how lives were lived and how this would reflect that by architecture. Regarding the analysis of different neighborhoods, he thought this was also valuable except he choices were somewhat random because they were coming from different perspectives. These were what people liked but not necessarily in the context of how this was structured. He felt it would be better for the community to see examples of clearly different neighborhoods to help understand what the impact was between high density, what that offers, versus low density. Basically, show all the aspects of this. Not everyone has experience living in dense cities versus the suburbs. He felt it would be beneficial to use similar metrics to show clearly defined for environments for future choices.

Ms. Karen Holman noted she had served on SOFA I and SOFA II, and some of the comments she heard here reminded her of that. The Council appointed the members of the SOFA Working Group so there were some ways that group deviated from this. On the SOFA Working Group there was an affordable housing expert, there was a retailer, there was somebody who represented historic preservation, and childcare. There were representatives of these different pockets of the community and she thought it really helped people understand specific points of view rather than supposing what somebody else needed, all these things that might play into this. Another thought that just occurred to her was how the Needs Assessment that the City had been conducting would play into this. There had been a lot of talk about the community wanting a bowling alley to replace the one that has lost in El Camino. When students were polled about what they wanted, a bowling alley was very high on the list. There was a lot of talk by members of the community about a public pool in South Palo Alto. She emphasized she was not advocating for these things, just wondered where the Needs Assessment Study would be applied to this process and felt it was good to get these things on the table.

### Staff Comments:

Ms. Hall thanked everyone for their input. The meeting went way over time but hoped everyone felt it was a really valuable conversation. She asked if anyone was interested in helping facilitate the workshop please reach out to Elena Lee.

### Future Meetings and Agendas:

The next meeting was the Community Workshop on February 5 at the Mitchell Park Library. The next Working Group meeting will be a joint session with City Council on February 25 and materials would be sent out ten days ahead of that meeting as required by that body's rules.

### Adjournment:

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

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