



CITY OF
**PALO
ALTO**

Planning & Transportation Commission Action Agenda: April 26, 2023

Council Chambers & Virtual
6:00 PM

6 **Call to Order / Roll Call**

7 6:02 pm

8 Chair Summa: Welcome you to the regular meeting of the Planning and Transportation
9 Commission (interrupted)

10
11 Automated voice: Recording in progress.

12
13 Chair Summa: This Wednesday, April 26th and may we please have the roll call, Ms. Dao?

14
15 Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant: Chair Summa?

16
17 Chair Summa: Present.

18
19 Ms. Dao: Vice-Chair Chang?

20
21 Vice-Chair Chang: Here.

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1 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Akin?

2

3 Commissioner Akin: [off mic] Here.

4

5 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Hechtman is absent. Commissioner Lu?

6

7 Commissioner Lu: [off mic] Present.

8

9 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Reckdahl? Commissioner Templeton?

10

11 Commissioner Templeton: Present.

12

13 Ms. Dao: We have a quorum.

14

15 Chair Summa: Thank you so much and before we get started this evening Commissioner

16 Reckdahl will be here. He's just a few minutes late and I wanted to welcome our newest

17 Members, Commissioner Lu and Commissioner Akin. Thank you so much and congratulations.

18 And also of course, to Commissioner Templeton who's reappointed so we're all back together.

19 So, a little round of applause and with that we will get started and with our regular business

20 this evening.

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1 **Oral Communications**

2 The public may speak to any item not on the agenda. Three (3) minutes per speaker.^{1,2}

3 Chair Summa: And that would be if we have anybody who would like to speak to an item that is
4 not on the Agenda either in the room or out in Zoom land on the phone.

5

6 Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant: There's no in-person speakers and I don't see
7 environmental any raised hands on Zoom.

8

9 Chair Summa: Okay, thank you for that. We will move onto City Staff with Agenda changes,
10 additions and deletions.

11 **Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions**

12 The Chair or Commission majority may modify the agenda order to improve meeting management.

13 Ms. Amy French, Chief Planning Official: We have no changes for today's Agenda.

14

15 Chair Summa: Thank you so much for that and then if you have a Director's report we can move
16 on with that. And I'm not sure who else is here from Staff who would like to but why don't you
17 start Ms. French?

18 **City Official Reports**

19 1. Directors Report, Meeting Schedule and Assignments

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1 Ms. Amy French, Chief Planning Official: Sure, yeah we can start and likely we have Rafael Rius
2 on deck to report out on any transportation items. [unintelligible] you're... are you up? Okay, so
3 we actually have somebody live from Office of Transportation, Ripon, who can give any updates
4 or answer some questions on the transportation matters.

5
6 I have not prepared anything for tonight but as you know May 8th is a big day coming up where
7 just again recall, especially... well, the new folks also are aware that May 8th is a day where
8 we're having a joint meeting with the Council. We haven't done this in years so all of you all will
9 be sitting up on the dais somehow, 12 people. At least it's better than last time we did it when
10 there were nine Council Members and seven Commissioners. So, squeeze in, maybe have to
11 share some iPads or something. So, that's May 8th and we're working fast and furious to bring
12 that together to this momentous day where we're asking for adoption of the Housing Element.

13
14 Let's see and then we have adjusted, it may not reflect it in this week's Packet, but we have
15 made adjustments looking forward to representation with now a full Commission on future
16 meetings to represent Planning Commission at City Council. So, you'll see that in your Packet
17 for May 10th, assignments.

18
19 Chair Summa: Thank you, is that everything?

20

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1 Ms. French: That's all I have for right now.

2

3 Chair Summa: Thank you and is anybody else on Staff want to...?

4

5 Mr. Ripon Bhatia, Senior Engineer: Good evening honorable Commissioner and the rest of the
6 Commission. Ripon Bhatia, Senior Engineer with Office of Transportation. Philip and Rafael was
7 not able to make it but a brief update about the transportation project is that Public Works is
8 continuing to do progress on the Charleston/Arastradero corridor. Working on the Wilkie signal
9 and switching out the controllers that were temporarily placed. So, there's work in progress
10 and just wanted to keep that information flowing so thank you.

11

12 Chair Summa: If you could just introduce yourself because I don't think all the Commissioners
13 know your name so.

14

15 Mr. Bhatia: My name's Ripon Bhatia, Senior Engineer and I'm in Office of Transportation. Work
16 on grade separation projects primarily and other capital improvement projects that may be
17 related to transportation.

18

19 Chair Summa: Thank you so much for that. Does any... do Commissioners have any questions?
20 Commissioner Templeton.

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Commissioner Templeton: Thanks for coming Mr. Bhatia, it's nice to see you again. I was aware that we had some work being done in our district on El Camino though I know we don't own El Camino. There was some pot holes being filled. Are you able to provide any updates on the status of the Caltrans work that's happening in our City?

Mr. Bhatia: Thank you Chair... Commissioner Templeton. With regards to the El Camino Real project, there has been ongoing coordination with Caltrans and discussing their major capital improvement project. But their ongoing maintenance we don't get regular updates on their pot hole and filling and repairs, but maybe perhaps Rafael or Philip may have an update on that and we can certainly share with you if there's some update available.

Commissioner Templeton: Thank you, so we don't know if there's going to be more. I know they did some work but El Camino is long so I'd love to know if they're getting down to other parts of it. So, if you are able to find the follow-up or something please send it out. That would be fantastic, thank you.

Mr. Bhatia: Thank you.

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1 Chair Summa: Other questions for Staff? And we should also, for the record, mention that
2 Commissioner Reckdahl has joined us.

3
4 Ms. French: I'll have just one more thing and I didn't mention May 10th. Just remember we have
5 two meetings that week so May 10th we will have the CIP Report as well we're going to have an
6 adjustment to the By-Laws. You may remember, those of you who were here, voting for Chair
7 and Vice-Chair, but now we have new Commissioners. And so, we're going to bring By-Laws
8 forward that fix the problem in the By-Laws about when these things happen. And we will have
9 a vote again for Chair and Vice-Chair on that date, May 10th.

10
11 Chair Summa: Thank you for that and then, unless there's any other questions, we will go ahead
12 to our first item which is a study session on train Quiet Zones.

13 **Study Session**

14 Public Comment is Permitted. Three (3) minutes per speaker.

15 2. Study Session to Review Quiet Zone Study and Conceptual Plan for Caltrain Corridor
16 at Palo Alto Avenue.

17 Mr. Ripon Bhatia, Senior Engineer: Good evening Chair and Members of the Commission. Again
18 Ripon Bhatia, Senior Engineer with Office of Transportation. Tonight (interrupted)

19
20 Vice-Chair Chang: Mr. Bhatia, could you just speak really close to the mic because these mics
21 don't pick up the sound so well? Thank you.

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Mr. Bhatia: Sorry about that, sure. Tonight, we are bringing forward this Quiet Zone Study at Palo Alto Avenue and Alma Street crossing for your review and consideration. This study was conducted in collaboration with City of Menlo Park and included four intersections... four crossings in Menlo Park and one crossing in the City of Palo Alto. The only one that had included in the study was at Palo Alto Avenue and Alma Street crossing.

The services of the consultant, Kimley-Horn and Associate, was procured to conduct the study and members of the consultant team are here with us today. Peter Meyerhofer and Brent Ogden from Kimley-Horn. They're virtually present on... virtually available today and will be helping us making the presentation to. And I will now request them to come on and... Peter... to introduce themselves and begin the presentation.

Mr. Peter Meyerhofer, Kimley-Horn and Associates: Good evening, this is Peter Meyerhofer with Kimley-Horn. Can everyone hear me okay?

Chair Summa: Yes, we can, thank you.

Mr. Meyerhofer: Great.

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1 Mr. Brent Ogden, Kimley-Horn and Associate: Hello, this is Brent Ogden with Kimley-Horn.

2

3 Chair Summa: Thank you.

4

5 Mr. Meyerhofer: Alright, should we go into our presentation part?

6

7 Mr. Bhatia: Yes, please go ahead Peter, next slide.

8

9 Mr. Meyerhofer: So, yeah we'll just... we've got two slides to share with you today. We're going
10 to walk through what a Quiet Zone is, the quiet basics. The specifics of this particular Quiet
11 Zone Feasibility Study Analysis we're looking at that entails both Menlo Park and Palo Alto
12 crossings. The process we're going through for the Quiet Zone and then the work done to date
13 and the work that's remaining to fully implement the Quiet Zone. Next slide.

14

15 Just to give everyone kind of a brief background on why we want to do a Quiet Zone. Railroads
16 are regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration. The FRA requires train operators to sound
17 their horns as they approach areas where the railroad intersects a roadway, so a railroad
18 crossing. The train horn acts as a failsafe in the event the warning devices, gates and bells, don't
19 work or don't prohibit a person or vehicle from entering the crossing. And the train horn is
20 supposed to be loud enough to catch attention. Train horns are required to sound at specific

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1 volumes, generally 96 to 100 decibels, so pretty loud. In addition, they have to sound their
2 horns beginning 20 seconds prior to entering a giving crossing; next slide.

3
4 A Quiet Zone is a section of a railroad or a railroad corridor in which the train operator does not
5 need to sound the train horn as it approaches a crossing. So, for a Quiet Zone to be
6 implemented, a crossing or a set of crossings must meet certain safety thresholds as
7 determined by the FRA. So, most crossings would not qualify for a Quiet Zone in their current
8 state so upgrades are needed to make them safe enough that a horn doesn't need to sound.
9 This is achieved by what we call supplemental safety measures, SSMs, at the crossing and
10 ensures that the Quiet Zone Risk Index for the crossing, or the set of crossings, qualify under
11 the FRA guidelines to be a Quiet Zone. So, essentially, increasing through added safety
12 infrastructure, making it above whatever it considers safe enough to be a Quiet Zone. So, by
13 adding this infrastructure, basically, we're doing an analysis to show that a particular crossing,
14 or a set of crossings, are safer with these added improvements than they were previously when
15 a horn was sounding if that makes sense; next slide.

16
17 So, where we're at with... in Phase One of this study, which is what we're doing now, we started
18 with the agency coordination. That includes obviously the cities, City of Menlo Park, City of Palo
19 Alto, Caltrain, California Public Utilities Commission... CPUC... the FRA, and UPRR as well. And
20 so, you know, we are also going to also be going through... we went through actually

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1 conceptual design and did a safety analysis. We've been undergoing public outreach, including
2 kind of talking with you all tonight to solicit input and then we're going to summarize all of our
3 findings. Including the design, the field diagnostic meeting we had with the stakeholders and a
4 final report.

5
6 And then the next phase would include actually taking the conceptual designs already produced
7 and bought off by all the stakeholders and creating final design, construction documents and
8 obviously constructing it in the field. And during that process, we'll also go through permitting
9 with CPUC and Caltrain and with CPUC specifically we're talking about doing a Grade Crossing
10 Modification Permit, a GO 88-B.

11
12 So, again as mentioned, a number of stakeholders are involved when you go through a process
13 like this. Obviously, Caltrain, they're the owner/operator in the corridor, Union Pacific also has
14 operating rights so they were included or at least invited to the field diagnostic meetings and
15 review of designs. Caltrans, FRA and the municipalities of course and so those agencies have all
16 been a part of the process to date in looking at both in the field and the conceptual design; next
17 slide.

18
19 So, the Menlo Park/Palo Alto Quiet Zone being discussed tonight would span about 1.5 miles.
20 This entire corridor includes actually four crossings in the City of Menlo Park and one crossing in

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1 Palo Alto being the Palo Alto/Alma Street crossing. And so, we'll get into specifics of each of
2 these but its... the entire crossing would be 1.5 miles if we were to implement all these
3 together as one Quiet Zone. And specifically, the crossings for Menlo Park, just for reference,
4 would be at Encinal, Glenwood, Oak Grove, the Menlo Park Caltrain station and then
5 Ravenswood so.

6
7 So, here's just kind of a brief look at the five different crossings. The conceptual design phase
8 involved engineers designing proposed improvements for each of the four roadway crossings
9 included in Menlo Park as well as the crossing of Palo Alto. The crossings in Menlo Park
10 generally include installing four-quad gates and I'll talk a little bit about what that is. For the
11 Palo Alto crossing, however, a four-quad gate system is not required, rather just median
12 improvements essentially which are much less costly thankfully for the City so.

13
14 So, the safety improvements focus on implementation of a four-quad gate system, raised
15 medians, a sidewalk realignment and refreshing roadway striping and signage. So, you know,
16 the four-quad gate system essentially prohibits cars from driving around gates that are in the
17 down position and moving onto the tracks. It essentially creates a sealed barrier across the
18 roadway to protect against crashes during train actuation. Raised medians designed high
19 enough that a standard vehicle wouldn't want to drive over it acts in a similar manner to a four-
20 quad gate system. Essentially, it prevents vehicles from driving on the wrong side of the road to

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1 move around the down gates. So, this safety measure has specific criteria attached to it that
2 made it infeasible for the Menlo Park crossings unfortunately but it is feasible for the Palo Alto
3 crossing. The sidewalks were often realigned to make for a more streamline path of travel
4 across the railroad tracks and generally, this again is required when you're installing the four-
5 quad gate system. So, all of the crossings to we anticipate minor roadway striping refreshment
6 and updated signage as well on the approaches so.

7

8 So, here's just another graphic illustration of the four-quad gate system. How it essentially seals
9 the rail corridor from vehicle traffic and potential vehicles to drive around the activated gates.
10 You know, the four-quad gate system is a type of supplement safety measure that reduces the
11 risks associated with a crossing for FRA Guidelines and again, these measures are only being
12 proposed at the Menlo Park crossings but just for reference.

13

14 So, here's specific to the Palo Alto/Alma Street crossing, raised medians you know designed
15 again have to be high enough, 8 inches, that a standard vehicle wouldn't want to drive over it.
16 So, what you'll see at this proposed crossing improvements for Palo Alto is we will need to
17 actually reconstruct the medians slightly higher so that can meet that threshold for FRA. And
18 again, the fact that we have this median here, we have to extend it as well to meet
19 requirements of FRA. But the good news is this type of improvement is much, much cheaper
20 than putting a four-quad gate system in so and essentially does the same purpose.

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As discussed before with the four-quad gate though, you know you're going to have to do additional realignment of the sidewalks just to accommodate the added infrastructure that you're putting in. And then when you do that you have to put added grade crossing panels in as well so it's kind of a spiraling effect of required improvements when you're adding gate infrastructure so next slide.

Some typical signage and striping that's required at all the crossings. You know, the railroad, you know the cross bucks, two-track signs, things like that. There's probably a dozen or so different types of signage that we will either have to replace or add in but in the grand scheme of things relatively minor improvements for these crossings.

So, here's the conceptual design of the Palo Alto/Alma Street crossing. Those items in green are actually existing infrastructure that we'll be leaving in place. The majority of the work at this crossing is going to be as discussed is going to be reconstructing the median to full height as well as extending it to the required length for FRA requirements. So, again, we'll have some striping and marking as well as four-quad gates are not going to be necessary here. So, there won't be any reconfiguration of the sidewalk either.

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1 So, we started public outreach a couple months ago. Received some good input from the
2 different cities and any feedback about these crossings and their improvements is encouraged.
3 What... we want to take all this in and what we receive will be included in our designs that we'll
4 be finalizing as well as the final report that we'll be issuing to the cities for the Quiet Zone so.

5
6 So, the final report will be the last phase of this... the Phase One of work I guess you could say.
7 It's going to be summarizing the concept designs, the feedback from the different stakeholders
8 and the general public. It will provide the recommendations and concept design for each
9 crossing. [unintelligible] as well and timeline of implementation so to complete the Quiet Zone
10 certification.

11
12 So as talked about at the very beginning of our presentation the next phase would be
13 completing final design and construction documents. And during that process, would also
14 require permitting particularly with CPUC and Caltrain. Soliciting funding for the different
15 crossings and then of course construction, and at the ever end once it's constructed finalizing
16 with FRA and have a certified Quiet Zone. Ripon?

17
18 Mr. Bhatia: Thank you, Peter. So, in conclusion, I will say that the next steps of permitting and
19 design will initiate soon after the approval of the concept plan and the completion of the final
20 study which we are anticipating in the fall of this year. Going to the City Council and getting that

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1 approval. The construction cost estimate for this particular crossing is about \$150,000 and we
2 are hoping to reach out to a few funding opportunities to see if we could qualify and meet their
3 requirements. But we'll definitely... not... definitely not delay and continue to move forward
4 with the design of the project and proceed with construction without further delay. We are
5 hoping that the project will... this particular construction for the median island improvements,
6 seeking approvals as well as getting the permitting and bidding, and based on the normal
7 assuming reasonable times for the approvals and procurement of the services and bidding of the
8 project, will take about 18 to 24 months.

9

10 And also, to add to that is that this is our first of the four crossings, so as in as the concept plans
11 that are adopted by the City for this particular crossing. We will have the lessons learned and
12 get to work on the other three crossings that we have in the City and we'll look into the Quiet
13 Zone study for those three crossings as well. So, this concludes our Staff report and we'll be
14 happy to answer any questions.

15

16 Chair Summa: Thank you so much for the Staff report. I'm going to allow Commissioners to ask
17 questions, clarifying questions, and then I think we can go to the public and then come back for
18 our discussion if that sounds alright. So, do I have any questions? Commissioner Templeton.

19

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1 Commissioner Templeton: I have questions but I'm not sure which segment they go in. I'll start
2 and if you want to me to hold them for later just let me know.

3

4 Thank you for this report. It's very interesting and I'm glad to hear that we're piloting and going
5 to learn lessons before we do the other three but that's very, very promising. And so, we'll get a
6 chance to experience what's happening in Menlo Park and Palo Alto Avenue.

7

8 My question is just clarification, we are calling this Quiet Zone but I... maybe I missed it. If it's
9 there, forgive me, just let's point it back out but with the rail crossing guards. We'll still have
10 bells but not the horn right?

11

12 Mr. Bhatia: Correct and Peter, if you want to add to anything there you're welcome.

13

14 Mr. Meyerhofer: That's correct. The horns from the trains are much louder though than the
15 bells on the gate assemblies.

16

17 Commissioner Templeton: That's fair, I just want to make sure as words going to get out people
18 will be very excited and some people for different reasons than others. So, I live far enough
19 away from the crossing that I can't hear the bells, just the horn, but there are people who might

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1 hear Quiet Zone and think the bells will go away for them. So, we should just be really clear
2 about it, thank you.

3

4 Mr. Bhatia: And I'd like to add that the operate... the engineers still have the option to sound
5 the horn if there's any safety concerns. So, they're not prohibited from sounding but routine
6 horns will be... that they will not have to sound them.

7

8 Commissioner Templeton: But still then it will get your attention instead of being something
9 that happens at two in the morning. Anyway, I appreciate that.

10

11 Chair Summa: Commissioner Chang [note – Vice-Chair Chang] and then Commissioner
12 Reckdahl.

13

14 Vice-Chair Chang: So just a clarifying question, the Palo Alto crossing was included in the study
15 just because its proximity to the Menlo Park crossings, correct? Given the 20 second or 15 to 20
16 second timeframe rule, is that right?

17

18 Mr. Bhatia: That is correct.

19

20 Vice-Chair Chang: Thank you.

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Mr. Meyerhofer: That is correct but I will say that you can actually implement ahead of time a small Quiet Zone just for the Palo Alto/Alma Street crossing in advance of the crossings in Menlo Park if you so choose.

Mr. Ogden: Just to make it real clear here, this is Brent Ogden, the whistle post, which is what is placed by the wayside that the train engineer sees, that whistle post that's when they're supposed to pull the cord. It's a quarter of a mile ahead of the crossing, so the nearest crossing in Menlo Park, if you back up a quarter mile from there. You're sort of near the Safeway store on El Camino, in that area, so it could be completely separate what happens in Palo Alto and what happens in Menlo Park.

Chair Summa: Commissioner Reckdahl.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Can you go over the approval process? Who has to approve this and what's the timeline on that?

Mr. Bhatia: Peter, would you want to answer this question? I mean I can [unintelligible].

-
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1 Mr. Meyerhofer: For... from the California Public Utilities... CPUC governs all crossings in the
2 State of California, number one. So, anytime you have any modification to an at grade or a
3 grade separation you have to go through a CPUC approval of those proposed improvements.
4 So, for these crossings in Palo Alto/Alma Street crossing, we are doing improvements within the
5 rail corridor that require a GO 88-B Grade Modification Permit. That is not as lengthy as a
6 permit for instance putting in a new crossings. So, it's a couple months of approval process
7 from the time you submit it to them and it's probably a couple months to prepare that as well.
8 So, it takes four to six months to probably go through that approval process with CPUC.
9 However, that can be done concurrent to design and so that's the good news and design itself
10 will take at least six to nine to 12 months as well to go through the different phases.

11

12 So, you have the CPUC approval process is number one. Obviously, you need to get certified
13 with FRA at the end too but in the Phase One we already did a field diagnostic meeting with
14 CPUC, with FRA, with the cities, with Caltrain and so the concept design that we have, are
15 sharing in front of you today, have already been essentially signed off by the stakeholders. So,
16 it's really at this point, from an approval process, just getting the final design done and getting
17 these things on paper for the CPUC GO 88-B application. So, that's actually a big hurdle because
18 often times with some crossings you have let's say a lot of disagreement on what the required
19 improvements should be. And that can oftentimes take a lot of back and forth to get consensus
20 but in this case, we have consensus which is a big hurdle.

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So, CPUC, FRA and of course Caltrain being the owner/operator, they're going to have to sign off as well so.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay, that's very good news.

Mr. Bhatia: I wanted to add that Caltrain also needs to review and approve it because they would need to provide services during the construction for flagging and other situations. So, having a service agreement or some kind of review process with them is also a key step.

Commissioner Reckdahl: And the cities pay for this all unless we get external funding?

Mr. Bhatia: Correct.

Commissioner Reckdahl: And so Caltrain is not kicking in any money for this. This is purely the City's?

Mr. Bhatia: Yeah, Quiet Zones are in the interest of the community from the local perspective and it is to be paid for by the local agencies.

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1 Commissioner Reckdahl: Thank you.

2

3 Chair Summa: Commissioner Lu.

4

5 Commissioner Lu: A kind of abstract question, so if I got it right you said we would wait
6 probably 18 to 24 months, finish this project and then move on to the other projects. Can you
7 elaborate a little bit on that and, you know, like what do we learn or what do we get if we wait?

8

9 Mr. Bhatia: I'd like to clarify that no, we are not waiting for 18 months to start. Soon after the
10 City Council approves a concept then we start and... design of the Palo Alto Avenue crossing.
11 And at the same time initial the Quiet Zone study procurement for the consultant for that
12 phase of work for the other crossings.

13

14 Commissioner Lu: Okay great, thank you.

15

16 Chair Summa: I had a question about I think that somebody said that Palo Alto could do its one
17 crossing that's being sort of put in with these Menlo Park crossings. We could do that on our
18 own separately. Would there be an advantage in terms of the timeline or maybe even the
19 expense? How we apply for grants of doing it separately from the Menlo Park ones or are we

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1 too far along or does that... you know I wouldn't want to hurt Menlo Park but I was just
2 wondering if there was some advantage?

3

4 Mr. Bhatia: So, the advantage is that we can implement the Quiet Zone for our community at
5 Palo Alto crossing by itself separately from... we don't... we are not tied up with the Menlo Park.
6 So, you can do one Quiet Zone for the entire 1.5 miles which includes all five crossings as one
7 project or you can do two separate ones. Menlo Park can do their own and we can do ours
8 separately so but the advantage is that we... because their project is much complex and much
9 more expensive they will look for funding. I believe their estimate is about \$2 million for each
10 crossing and so they have to wait and look for funding. And in the meantime, we would be able
11 to benefit our community by putting the Quiet Zone for that time so that's the benefit.

12

13 Chair Summa: Okay so there is an advantage for this one crossing at Palo Alto to piggyback with
14 Menlo Park.

15

16 Mr. Bhatia: No so but... piggybacking with Menlo Park would mean it will be delayed until they
17 do their work which we do not anticipate them to be doing right away for the fact that they are
18 very complex and expensive.

19

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1 Chair Summa: Okay because I'm just... I know that there are people in other parts of Palo Alto
2 who have interest in Quiet Zones as well. So, I'm just interested in exploring with my colleagues
3 whether... and with Staff whether it might be easier to do just our Palo Alto Quiet Zone at one
4 time but that's I don't know but.

5

6 Mr. Bhatia: You know the entire Palo Alto?

7

8 Chair Summa: Yes.

9

10 Mr. Bhatia: So, the other three crossings we believe that because they are in close proximity to
11 the signalized intersections. They will be a little bit more complex and expensive and we could
12 benefit and do Palo Alto Avenue at this time. Move forward with that and it won't... it will not
13 hurt in any way because we are moving forward and the cost of this improvement for this
14 particular crossing is not significant or they are not kind of similar improvements for the
15 crossings. And we believe that by forefronting the improvements at Palo Alto Avenue crossing it
16 will... there's no significant cost savings by lumping it with other crossings.

17

18 Chair Summa: Okay, I think I understand. Commissioner Templeton?

19

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1 Commissioner Templeton: I appreciate you asking for more clarification Chair because it's
2 confusing because of the name of this street. Right, Palo Alto Avenue, so I'm going to reiterate
3 what I think I heard and Mr. Bhatia can correct me. So, the study session that we were just
4 presented with included Palo Alto Avenue and a bunch of Menlo Park stuff. That's enough for
5 us to go to Council to get the concept approved. Once we have approve from Council, you're
6 anticipating that we can do two things at once. Move forward on Palo Alto Avenue and kick off
7 another new study session for the other crossings in Palo Alto. Is that right?

8

9 Mr. Bhatia: I'd just like to make a minor correction.

10

11 Commissioner Templeton: Please, please, yes of course.

12

13 Mr. Bhatia: Not study session but a new traffic... a new Quiet Zone study.

14

15 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you, I knew it had study in there somewhere. Okay, so a new
16 study like we saw tonight will be for our other three crossings. So, we'll be able to move
17 forward implementing the one and studying the others at the same time which should reduce
18 the time to approval should it be approved.

19

20 Mr. Bhatia: Correct.

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Commissioner Templeton: Okay great, this is complicated but thank you. You can tell we're all very interested in this, thank you.

Chair Summa: If there are no other questions from Commissioners I think we should go to the members of the public. Ms. Dao, do we have...?

Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant: Yes, we have two raised or three raised hands on Zoom. First one is Josh Orenberg, if you can unmute yourself you have 3 minutes.

Mr. Josh Orenberg: Can you hear me?

Chair Summa: Yes.

Mr. Orenberg: Can you hear me?

Chair Summa: I think so, speak a little bit more.

Mr. Orenberg: I know Ripon, I bug him all the time. My name is Josh Orenberg, I am main representative of the 101 Alma Community. That's the building, the big medium rise I guess,

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1 across the train tracks from Stanford Shopping Center and I just want to say a couple real quick
2 things. You know, we have over 200 people signed a petition I made for the Quiet Zone and I
3 represent at least 200 residents in the building and most people are very supportive of this. And
4 I wanted to thank everybody for their time, energy and effort. And we are thrilled to see
5 progress on the Quiet Zone finally happening and we anxiously await the completion of the
6 project. So, that's all I have to say so thank you very much.

7

8 Chair Summa: Thank you, Mr. Orenberg. Next speaker?

9

10 Ms. Dao: Next one is Neilson Buchanan.

11

12 Mr. Neilson Buchanan: Good evening, I think you can hear me.

13

14 Chair Summa: Yes, we can.

15

16 Mr. Buchanan: I also live in the neighborhood about two blocks away. I'm... I have a little bit of
17 a hearing loss at my age of 78 but I still can hear the trains. Particularly at night the freight train
18 that runs through. I've had an inactive role in this. I've been helping coaching the residents that
19 are closer to the grade crossing both in Palo Alto and Menlo Park. And I would like to thank
20 City Staff for doing an excellent job of pursuing this issue with all the different hurdles between

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1 the inter-agencies and just to summarize thank you for being part of that process. Now we have
2 to wait and see as it goes through what's under Palo Alto's control and goes on through the sort
3 of called inter-agency approvals.

4
5 I'm optimistic, I'm anticipating the best outcome. I'm a little bit wary about what could go
6 wrong but I don't see it happening as the discussion was presented tonight. I think this is a
7 great opportunity for model planning on our tougher issues of funding, grade crossings and
8 how we're going to get the train to even run. All the inter-agency problems with public transit.

9
10 So, I will like to come back at an open communication time to talk about how valuable this one
11 project is. So, I don't even know the Staff below Philip Kamhi but I thank of you that have been
12 doing that and I thank Philip for shepherding this through. Thank you.

13
14 Chair Summa: Thank you, Mr. Buchanan.

15
16 Ms. Dao: Next one is Adrian Brandt.

17
18 Chair Summa: Go ahead, Adrian.

19

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1 Mr. Adrian Brandt: Thank you. I encourage you to just go ahead with Palo Alto Avenue. There...
2 as Staff said there's no advantage whatsoever to waiting. You are extremely fortunate, there at
3 \$160,000, you're paying about 8 percent of the cost of what the city is dropping in Menlo Park
4 is going to cost. Those are running at \$2 million each because of all the crossing gates that
5 they'll be replacing. It turns out they're going to have to replace, I think the presentation
6 covered this, a lot of the existing... most of the existing crossing gates because standards have
7 changed and add additional ones and so, you're extremely fortunate. If you wait for Menlo Park
8 you'll be unnecessarily delaying for years because they are not sure where they're going to find
9 the money to do their project even for the two-crossing option.

10

11 As I encouraged them and all cities to do is try to see if we can get money from the High Speed
12 Rail Authority using the same logic where they funded a third of the electrification because they
13 need electrification to reach San Francisco via the Caltrain line. That same logic of use of what's
14 called a book ends funding from Prop 1A. That same logic applies to doing quad gates or any
15 kind of improvements. I know you're not looking for quad gates at this particular crossing but at
16 the other three, you probably will need them in all likelihood. And the High Speed Rail
17 Authority's EIR, which has been approved for the peninsula, includes and requires quad gates
18 that they will be building at their expense when High Speed Rail comes to the peninsula. So, by
19 Palo Alto or any city putting quad gates now for purposes of getting a Quiet Zone qualified. You
20 are essentially unburdening High Speed Rail of a future expense that they are absolutely

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1 guaranteed to have. So, there's every reason for them to reimburse or even advance the
2 funding now out of the Prop 1A book ends funding. So, that's something I encourage all cities to
3 go after.

4

5 The other point I'll point out, Cari Templeton [note – Commissioner Templeton] asked about
6 the bells. The horns are required to be 96 to 110 decibels. That's an order... several orders of
7 magnitude louder than the bells and there are crossings, Quiet Zone crossings, I've seen in this
8 country where the gates come down and the bells actually stop ringing when the gates are in
9 the lowered position. They only ring while the gates are moving and truly, I just want everybody
10 to be very comfortable about the safety of this. Caltrain has... does not have a drive-around
11 problem and thankfully has almost no accidental dust. All the dust on the Caltrain line
12 essentially, I mean with very few exceptions, are [unintelligible]; which have nothing to do with
13 safety and occur despite copious horn blowing. Just like on the 45 mile SMART line in the North
14 Bay. They have the same problem and they have Quiet Zones the entire length.

15

16 And if for speed of implementation, I think you should try to maybe consult with Petaluma or
17 any of those cities up there that did it very quickly and expeditiously. Thank you.

18

19 Chair Summa: Thank you. Do we have more speakers?

20

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1 Ms. Dao: No, that's all our raised hands.

2

3 Chair Summa: Okay, thank you to the speakers and we'll take it back to the Planning
4 Commission for discussion or if somebody's ready to make a motion we can do that too.

5

6 Vice-Chair Chang: [unintelligible – off mic]

7

8 Chair Summa: You're right, it's a study session, thanks but we still should give direction to Staff.
9 So, I see that Commissioner Reckdahl would like to go first.

10

11 Commissioner Reckdahl: Yeah, someone who lives close a rail crossing, this is a really good idea
12 but I'll try to be impartial here. I really want to understand what additional risk, if any, do we
13 have. We have a kind of belt and suspenders. The crossing arms come down and we have the
14 whistle. So, if now the... if that whistle goes away and we have a gate malfunction. We're not
15 protected anymore. We're not as protected. Do we have any idea... we look at the statistics
16 across America, how many of the accidents are caused by gate malfunctions? It seems like
17 gates are fairly reliable but sometimes they malfunction so do we have any numbers on that?

18

19 Mr. Bhatia: I don't think we have the numbers for that but what I would say is if the gates
20 malfunction. One thing that Caltrain would have to do is reduce their speeds and at the same

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1 time they would have to whistle... blow the whistle. So, they may not fall in the same category if
2 the gates don't function properly. Brent may be able to add some additional information there.

3

4 Mr. Ogden: Well, that's correct. I mean the fallback if the gates don't operate is they blow the
5 horn and they would probably get someone out to flag the crossing as soon as possible.

6

7 Commissioner Reckdahl: So, are the locomotives or the engineers in the locomotive are they
8 informed when the gates malfunction? Is that automatic or is that have... someone has to
9 report it and someone has to call it in and then they get radioed?

10

11 Mr. Ogden: There's usually a signal that the engineer can see that lets them know that the
12 crossing system has been activated and usually that means that the gates are going to come
13 down because the gates are designed... the way gates are designed is they've... if the power
14 fails they drop. So, they're failsafe in that regard.

15

16 Commissioner Reckdahl: Do we have any stats on how many car accidents we have in Palo
17 Alto? Car/train accidents.

18

19 Mr. Bhatia: At Palo Alto Avenue crossing?

20

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1 Commissioner Reckdahl: Or just in general in Palo Alto.

2

3 Mr. Bhatia: No, I don't have the numbers handy but we do have the... the FRA website does
4 provide that information.

5

6 Mr. Meyerhofer: And that's information that FRA has that has a direct impact on the rating
7 system we talked about on what's required at different crossings for improvements to make it a
8 Quiet Zone and crash history is one of those variables.

9

10 Mr. Bhatia: We can pull up the plan... the collision history from their information but I don't
11 remember... I mean I don't remember off my (interrupted)

12

13 Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay and so then how does Palo Alto Avenue differ from the other
14 three crossings that we have? So, when we go down the road and we want to do the quiet
15 session. Is it because there's signals right nearby, does that change the (interrupted)

16

17 Mr. Bhatia: Yes, so if there's any access driveway or an intersection nearby it changes the
18 evaluation. Also, the volumes of the traffic, as well as the pedestrian volumes, also can take
19 into consideration. Collision history is also another factor, so all those factors are consider into
20 the evaluation of the intersection... of the crossing to determine what the SSM or the safety

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1 measures that will be required in order to be replacing the quiet... the whistle, or the horns on
2 the locomotive.

3

4 Commissioner Reckdahl: Does that just mean we have more hoops to jump through or does
5 that mean that it's not a slam dunk that we would actually get Quiet Zone in those other areas?

6

7 Mr. Bhatia: I would say it's more hoops to jump through like Menlo Park they have quad gates
8 requirements. More likely that would be additional requirements in order to meet the
9 measures that would be required in order to meet the requirements for the Quiet Zone but
10 Brent is our expert. He is the one who has written the... one of the participants in the rule-
11 making for the Quiet Zone on the federal level so maybe he can add to any information that
12 may be available.

13

14 Mr. Ogden: What particularly where you looking for?

15

16 Mr. Bhatia: For the other intersections which are (interrupted)

17

18 Mr. Ogden: But we haven't... I haven't looked at those yet so it's hard to say but I mean I think,
19 it was indicated before if they have traffic signals that are adjacent. You're going to be replacing

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1 the signal house probably and replacing all the gates and you're going to be up in the multi-
2 million dollar category per location.

3

4 Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay but if we have that multi-million then it's still high likelihood that
5 we would get it passed or there's just more uncertainty too?

6

7 Mr. Ogden: You mean whether it would be approved?

8

9 Commissioner Reckdahl: Yeah.

10

11 Mr. Ogden: If authorized... so there's authorized safety measures that FRA has written into the
12 rules. One of which is long medians and the other of which is exit gates which is the approach
13 that Menlo Park is taking. If those features are provided then approval is essentially
14 guaranteed.

15

16 Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay, thank you.

17

18 Chair Summa: Commissioner Templeton.

19

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1 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you, Chair. I thought Commissioner Reckdahl's question were
2 very good. I want to change to ask it in a slightly different way which I think you will have the
3 answer for. I hope you will have the answers for. When... early in the presentation you said that
4 these crossings will be... the only way we can replace the existing safety features is if we replace
5 it with something that has more safety. And I guess my interpretation of what Commissioner
6 Reckdahl was asking is when you assess the safety of the intersection or the crossing. Are you
7 including only when it's perfectly functioning or are you including some risk for the likelihood
8 that the safety features that would be implemented might fail? In other words, are you saying
9 99 percent of the time it works great, it has some small percentage of failing and even with
10 those things combined it's safer than what we currently have? Is that what you're saying?

11

12 Mr. Ogden: The median is a civil improvement. I mean its... once it's built, it's built so it's not
13 subject to failure.

14

15 Commissioner Templeton: And that's the only thing we have to concerned about with Palo Alto
16 crossing.

17

18 Mr. Ogden: At that location, at that location.

19

20 Commissioner Templeton: That clears it up, thank you so much.

-
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Chair Summa: Commissioner Chang [**note – Vice-Chair Chang**].

Vice-Chair Chang: My question is regarding what happens at this intersection with respect to grade separation. It's a very low cost so that's really good and related to what our last public commenter spoke to. It doesn't seem like... you know we would get immediate benefit from our \$150,000 approximate expenditure. That seems like a relatively low cost for a good benefit but what would happen at this or what's being contemplated at that intersection with respect to grade separation? What's the latest I guess?

Mr. Bhatia: The Palo Alto Avenue crossing is currently on hold. We have three other crossings that are currently in progress at the conceptual design phase and once we move into the next phase. We are anticipating that Palo Alto will move into review of the alternatives and development as well as consideration for the next phase of conceptual plan development.

Vice-Chair Chang: So, based on all of that I guess I would say that I think we should go ahead and move forward with this because it's a very low cost and a pretty significant benefit I think. So, I thank you guys for the report, thank you for bringing this forward. It seems like it makes... its like one of those rare incidences where it just makes so much sense. That there's not really a lot of downside so that's my two cents. Thanks.

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Chair Summa: Commissioner Lu.

Mr. Ogden: I did look up the collision history at Palo Alto Avenue. There were two collisions that were recorded in the last several decades. The most recent one was in 2010, resulted in \$10,000 worth of damage to the highway vehicle which apparently stopped on the crossings. Probably it stalled and then there was one in 2003 that was also property damage to the vehicle \$3,000. So, there have been no recorded injuries or fatalities at that location.

Chair Summa: Thank you for that and Commissioner Lu?

Commissioner Lu: I'm sure you're all aware... all well aware of this but I'll also just shot out that cycling along Palo Alto Avenue is reasonably awkward and the left turn where the median is being extended into onto the other bike past is also a little bit exposed. Even right so I'll just shout out for consideration that we think about the left turn and we think about the width of the lanes and whether cars would be tempted to stray into the bike lane.

Chair Summa: Thank you for that. I was also wondering if this would affect bikes because there's a lot of bicycle traffic crossing there. So, I think I agree with most of my colleagues that this is a good project and that people nearby have really wanted some relief from the horns and

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1 as... and it is a low-cost project. And so, it's seems like a good thing to go forward with it.
2 Anything you can do to improve the safety for bikes I think particularly there. It is a little
3 awkward but it's maybe right at El Camino where it's awkward too. So, I think it sounds like a
4 very reasonable project to move forward with and would any of my colleagues like to add
5 something?

6
7 Commissioner Akin: Nothing major, just that this is clearly of interest to a lot of people and it
8 seems like the benefit far outweighs the cost. Let's go for it.

9
10 Chair Summa: Commissioner Templeton, I see your light again.

11
12 Commissioner Templeton: Just wanted to chime in since I didn't explicitly say it. Yes, this
13 sounds awesome. I hope the Council will do it.

14
15 Chair Summa: So, unless any of my other colleagues have more to add I think Staff has a good
16 impression of how we feel about the project and moving forward with it. So, thank you very
17 much for all the work on this.

18

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1 Mr. Bhatia: I'd like to thank the entire Commission in helping us provide this feedback and
2 supporting us in this project. And we'll move forward to other Committees and Commissions
3 before going to the Council. Thank you.

4
5 Chair Summa: Great, thank you so much. Now we're going to move on to our next item which is
6 a continuation of our discussion about our Work Plan here on the Planning Commission.

7 **Action Items**

8 Public Comment is Permitted. Applicants/Appellant Teams: Fifteen (15) minutes, plus three (3) minutes rebuttal.
9 All others: Five (5) minutes per speaker.1,3

10
11 3. Review and Adopt 2023-2024 PTC Work Plan

12 Chair Summa: So, I think we'll start out with a Staff report?

13
14 Ms. Amy French, Chief Planning Official: Yes, good evening, Amy French, Chief Planning Official.
15 On March 29th we had our Planning Director present as far as the accomplishments of the 2022-
16 2023 Work Plan and culled through the 18 projects, goals from that plan; next slide.

17
18 The Planning and Transportation Commission provided direction and asked us to come back at
19 this meeting and so here we are. Last time there were discussions of perhaps thinking about
20 the Council's goals and objectives relative to the Planning Commission's work and then there
21 was some direction provided. That there was some of these things shown on the slide. So, just
22 briefly the plans that's in the Packet... the Work Plan for 2023-2024 includes a brief list of

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1 accomplishments from the past Work Plan year. I have those on the screen and they're in the
2 plan.

3
4 Then we have the rearrangement of some of those goals from last time. We went from a
5 numbering system which the Commission felt indicated some sort of priority just because
6 they're numbered to alphabetically arranged designation. And here on this slide is a visual
7 representation to show how the goals with the numbers became the goals with the letters and
8 some of these merged.

9
10 Noting as well that the Board... the Commission felt that we had pretty much accomplished five
11 of those goals; four, five, six, 15 and 17. So, those did not continue on and some of these other
12 goals were combined or tweaked, revised to be relevant to the coming year.

13
14 So, just again in overview, Office of Transportation who's here represented by Sylvia as well as
15 Ripon. They have Goals A, G, H, I and J in the plan and the Planning and Development Services
16 have B, C, D, E, F, K, L and M. These are not in any prioritized order.

17
18 One item to just mention, the Housing Element I just mentioning, it's been a big effort for us.
19 We're nearing adoption but we're still going to have to wait for certification and then

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1 implementation. So, we have a number of projects ahead of us to work towards
2 implementation.

3

4 And then Goal F is... I split into two goals which is F-1 and F-2. Basically, those are related to the
5 years in which that State legislation was adopted. So, the F-1 piece of that F Goal relate to the
6 legislation passed in 2021 and '22 and in effect now. We're working through that and then the
7 F2 is some items that are coming later that are... that include actually legislation we're
8 anticipating is going to come through the fall. And then we're going to have to hustle like we
9 did with SB 9 last time and gets some ordinances in a hurry.

10

11 So, then we have Goal K which is about the Rental Registry Ordinance that the Commission
12 asked to put on the list. We have Bird Safe Glass and Dark Skies put on the list and then a catch-
13 all for the Comp Plan Policy Implementation. We have existing Comp Plan policies that we're in
14 this period that stretches to 2031 and we're methodically getting through all of those as we
15 can.

16

17 So, that concludes the presentation that I have and I don't know what would be helpful to the
18 Commission. Do you want to ask questions of Staff? I can put one of these slides on the screen
19 again. Also, I have in the presentation if you wanted to look at Council goals and objectives, I do
20 have slides that shows those.

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2 Chair Summa: Thank you so much for that. Did my colleagues have questions? Yes,
3 Commissioner Akin.

4

5 Commissioner Akin: Is there anything coming up with respect to San Francisquito Creek that we
6 will need to see?

7

8 Ms. French: If there's a current planning application that requires Planning and Transportation
9 Commission review. It could come... if it's a... I'm trying to think which section of the creek
10 whether it would require Planning (interrupted)

11

12 Commissioner Akin: Which reach is involved?

13

14 Ms. French: What's that?

15

16 Commissioner Akin: Which reach is involved?

17

18 Ms. French: Yes, which reach, so if it's not on the Agenda we haven't thought of it but there is
19 room of course in any plan year for current planning projects to come through. They're going to
20 come through even if we didn't anticipate them.

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Commissioner Akin: Sure, just checking, thank you.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Can I follow up on that? Who's driving the creek work right now? So, is that Council directed, or is that... or is it Staff driven right now?

Ms. French: So, I think what you're referring to is the Streamside Corridor (interrupted)

Commissioner Reckdahl: No, I'm just talking in general the... both the bridges that we're looking at replacing.

[note – a Commissioner spoke off mic]

Commissioner Reckdahl: Well, JPA (interrupted)

Ms. French: Oh, the J... yeah.

Commissioner Reckdahl: JPA is just doing the Menlo bridge. The other bridge is just in Palo Alto so.

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1 Ms. French: Well, the Public Works Department is in charge of any public improvements in the
2 public right of ways.

3

4 Commissioner Reckdahl: Yeah but I'm wondering is Council driving the path forward on those
5 bridges? Is Staff working that?

6

7 Ms. French: I don't have an answer for you.

8

9 Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay.

10

11 Ms. French: If you'd like I can reach out to our Public Works Director and if you have a specific
12 question I'm happy to forward that.

13

14 Commissioner Reckdahl: Just I would like to have a crisp answer on what the path forward is
15 and who are the decision-makers that are driving the schedule. I mean there's a lot of people in
16 town that would want it tomorrow and there's... so what the balance? Who's deciding the
17 schedule?

18

19 Commissioner Templeton: Chair? Chair, may I ask a question to Commissioner Reckdahl?

20

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1 Chair Summa: Yes, please.

2

3 Commissioner Templeton: Would you want to clarify for Staff which bridges? Like Newell and
4 Chaucer Street?

5

6 Commissioner Reckdahl: Yeah so the... yeah the Pope/Chaucer Bridge is JPA driven but the
7 Chaucer Bridge is Palo Alto's. So, I don't think JPA (interrupted)

8

9 Commissioner Templeton: Newell.

10

11 Commissioner Reckdahl: I mean Newell Bridge, I'm sorry. Yeah, Newell Bridge is the one that's
12 just Palo Alto.

13

14 Commissioner Templeton: And you're asking about the timing?

15

16 Commissioner Reckdahl: Yeah, so what are the next steps? Maybe that's a better answer. What
17 are the next steps on those and is there anything that the Commission can do to facilitate that?

18

19 Ms. French: Okay, I'll endeavor to return with a crisp answer at the next meeting.

20

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1 Chair Summa: Colleagues, do we have other questions or observations? I mean... go ahead.

2

3 Commissioner Akin: Ms. French, I've already sent you a note about this and that's the question
4 of the Lincoln Avenue/Middlefield Road Work Plan. So, I feel like that should be another item in
5 the list in Goal A.

6

7 Ms. French: That's the Road Safety Goal, I'll let Sylvia address that.

8

9 Ms. Sylvia Star-Lack, Transportation Planning Manager: Yeah, that's a good suggestion. I
10 thought it was actually on here. Let me check with our transportation engineering folks and see
11 if we can add that, thank you.

12

13 Commissioner Akin: Great, thank you.

14

15 Chair Summa: So, could you say what that is again? The Lincoln issue that you want to add.

16

17 Commissioner Akin: Sure, I think probably all of us have seen the great letter from Jeff Brown
18 that was in the public comments this time and that this is a safety... road safety issues at the
19 intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Middlefield Road. Craig Yawn [note – phonetics] has been

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1 documenting this for years and I know... I believed Mr. Rius is working on the Work Plan for that
2 but the last time I was in touch with him about that has been most of a year ago.

3

4 Chair Summa: Okay, so it's to address the Lincoln/Middlefield safety situation? Go ahead
5 Commissioner Chang [**note – Vice-Chair Chang**].

6

7 Vice-Chair Chang: Just to add to that, we did discuss it during our Work Planning meeting and at
8 a prior PTC meeting when Mr. Rius was here. He had mentioned that work is being done and
9 we will... and it will be coming to the Commission at some point this year. So, it makes sense to
10 add it because it is something that's planned.

11

12 Chair Summa: That makes good sense. Commissioner Templeton.

13

14 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you. I think it was probably an oversight because it definitely
15 is suppose to be there. I would add that we really need a discussion about collision areas in Palo
16 Alto. Middlefield is notorious, this is not the only site intersection on Middlefield that has issues
17 because it... how it occasionally lines up with the sun and it makes it difficult for people driving
18 down it to see people in the intersections. And we've seen incidents on... in Midtown as well
19 where the young boy was hit in the intersection in front of Walgreens and so we just... we need
20 to talk about it. And this is... I know I say it every time because I love you guys. I really want to

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1 have a good discussion about it because people... when we only can respond to incidents we
2 don't have all the information. We don't understand what are the most critical areas, why are
3 we prioritizing certain things over other things and we need to understand that as a
4 community. It's really terrifying when every other week we're having a child collide with a car.
5 Thank you.

6
7 Chair Summa: Comments? I don't think we need to at this point go through all the letters A
8 through M one by one. So, I'm just going to ask you for more comments and I wanted to make
9 one comment myself about Goal L, which Bird Safe Glass Dark Skies Ordinance, which is great
10 but I think it could be broadened to say Bird Safe Construction. So, it's just a little broader and
11 to really emphasize how high priority both L and M are for me personally because they've been
12 in the Comp Plan for a long time so.

13
14 And then I'm hearing that colleagues would like to add those two items to Goal A and do we
15 have other... Commissioner Akin and then Commissioner Templeton.

16
17 Commissioner Akin: This may be more in the nature of a clarification for Project G, Parking
18 Programs. Does the commercial parking improvements include an update on capacity signage?

19
20 Ms. Star-Lack: When you say... you mean like a sign that says how many (interrupted)

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Commissioner Akin: How many empty spaces are available?

Ms. Star-Lack: Spaces are available, I believe so yes.

Commissioner Akin: Okay, thank you.

Chair Summa: Commissioner Templeton and then Commissioner Lu.

Commissioner Templeton: Thank you, Chair. I just want to back you up on Goal L. I think the Bird Safe Construction is an excellent way to put that. We do have other things that interfere with flight paths and safety of our wildlife. So, I just want to endorse what the changes you suggested, thank you.

Chair Summa: Commissioner Lu.

Commissioner Lu: Every instinct in my body says we should be ranking these goals more aggressively. We should be saying that road safety and... is clearly more important than Bird Safe Construction. Even though we would love to get all of this done and I realize this is probably opening a big can of worms to actually try to group these into tiers of priorities right

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1 now. Is there interest in this and would that be... would ranking these projects be helpful for
2 Staff?

3

4 Ms. French: I don't know, Sylvia would you like to answer as far what... for transportation if
5 ranking by suggestions would be helpful when this is brought to Council.

6

7 Vice-Chair Chang: I wonder if it would helpful if I chimed in a little bit. Just a quick context
8 because I asked the same question I think either it was during our premeeting or actually in our
9 PTC meeting itself of Director Lait. Because we as a Commission are a little bit different from
10 some other Commissions where a lot of our work is not... it's a lot of our work is reactionary.
11 It's not of our choosing so it's driven by applications or it's driven by legislation or its driven by
12 Council directed. And so, as a... at least I think as a group we had sort of decided that we sort of
13 intentionally did not want to create an artificial prioritization because we can't actually
14 necessarily control that work.

15

16 We did however in our discussion emphasize that we all thought that road safety was very, very
17 important and I think that Staff understands that. But that said we did not say that this is our
18 number one priority or anything like that because the reality is going... at least for the next long
19 while we're going to be spending a lot of our time implementing Housing Element stuff. So, I
20 think that was sort of the... that's the roundabout answer and it's not that... I would love to...

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1 you know, in the corporate world I would love to be able to make a prioritized list and then
2 start at the top with the highest priority but we don't have... we don't get to do that I think is
3 the reality.

4

5 So, Council gets to do that more so than we do and that's the challenge.

6

7 Chair Summa: Did Staff want to add to the ranking question or not?

8

9 Ms. French: And I think there's some leeway, in other words for instance the Comp Plan Policy
10 Implementation. We have this period that goes... extends until 2031 when the new Comp Plan
11 would be... start. So, there is some wiggle room there and it's probably not coincidence that I
12 put that as M. Even though they're not in order of appearance important but there it is the
13 catch-all. So, it's at the end where as A is the one that everyone thought was important so we
14 don't miss that one. We will do what... when we can we will fit these things in when they don't
15 have a time certain. Like the Housing Element, we're giving ourselves or its HCD is giving us
16 basically deadlines and years in which we have to do some things.

17

18 So, I guess to that end if there are some things that the Council or the Commission would like to
19 discuss as important like the road safety. It would be interesting to hear, whether we can go
20 that way is another question.

-
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2 Chair Summa: Commissioner Templeton and then I'll go back to you, Commissioner Lu.

3

4 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you. I also want to chime in about the prioritization. I
5 acknowledge that you are desiring to reign in the chaos that might be our Agenda over the next
6 several years. I'm not sure it's productive. First of all, we might not all never agree right and I'm
7 not sure it's necessary because we do have Ad Hoc kinds of things come in to change our
8 priorities over time. But what is useful about having this list, regardless of whether it's
9 prioritized, is that we've all had a chance to express... it's almost more of a values than
10 priorities. These are the things we think are resonating and on the minds of the public right now
11 and we need to reflect that and acknowledge that because people want to be heard. They want
12 to talk about things that are on their minds and that matter and that we're one of many
13 channels to communicate with City Council about those needs and interests. So, it doesn't need
14 the structure and we won't be able to utilize any kind of structure if we were to order them. So,
15 that's my two cents worth.

16

17 Chair Summa: Commissioner Lu.

18

19 Commissioner Lu: Yeah, I think that's fair. I could imagine some order we could impose like
20 some ranking of the things that are discretionary but I agree that's probably getting too

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1 complicated for something that, as far as I understand, we realistically won't be referring back
2 to every few months.

3

4 Commissioner Templeton: And we did, we did cut a lot of things so what's left are the... it is the
5 cream so I think you're right.

6

7 Commissioner Lu: Yeah, maybe stirring the pot a little bit more with one last question about
8 prioritization. One Project C we listed out all of the Area Plans. I remember in the previous
9 meeting we said that there was... realistically we were only going to get to I think a few of these
10 and we were calling out vaguely priorities for these. And do we want to do anything more
11 there? Would we actually want to call out now that one of these is more important than
12 another?

13

14 Chair Summa: I think we have to rely on Council direction for that because Council... Staff can
15 correct me if I'm wrong on this but we don't really get to tell Council what our priority is on
16 these Coordinated Area Plans. Rather we expedite... we sort of make happen what they have
17 time for and it's also a matter of Staffing and whether we get funding to do these. So, there's a
18 lot of balls up in the air besides what we think is the most important to which of these will get
19 done. But I certainly think you should express if you have strong opinions I think you should
20 express them, now's the time.

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I don't know if it's going to... if it makes... I think it's kind of what Commissioner Templeton said. I don't think having us spend a lot of time prioritizing and ranking it will make any difference to what comes to us because what comes to us is going to be what the Council comes to us; what Staff has time to do and what there's funding for. Just reality-wise so but I think you should tell us what you think is really important.

Commissioner Lu: I don't have a strong prior here. I mean I don't know actually if Council has given direction on which one of these is most important or which ones to start with. And yeah, maybe I'll think offline and come back on what options we could have for actually prioritize and work within the things that... within the narrow scope that we actually do have. And I'll just think offline about that scope.

Chair Summa: Okay, I think that would be good. I think you can see some hesitancy in the rest of us with prioritizing because it's really hard to do and it takes a lot of time. And in the end, I don't know that it will matter to us much because what comes to us is going to come to us but I would appreciate if you have brilliant thoughts about it that's what we need.

Vice-Chair Chang: Can I just add something really quickly? It's not to say that we shouldn't voice our opinions. We should voice our opinions. I think what Commissioner Templeton and Chair

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1 Summa was saying is that it's a lot of work for us as several individuals to come up with one
2 prioritization that we have to vote on and agree on. That's difficult and very time-consuming
3 like it will take hours and then because it's not actually actionable nor useful. That it's not
4 worth the time. That said, if you have particular... if you think that particular area plans are
5 particularly important like I definitely have my own opinions and I have voiced them before.
6 That is important to voice and if you feel... I mean if you feel particularly strong about anything
7 you should always feel... you should always talk about it as well as go speak to Council Members
8 directly as a private citizen. So, that's what I would say.

9

10 Chair Summa: I don't know who was first. Commissioner Templeton and then Commissioner
11 Reckdahl.

12

13 [note – Commissioner Templeton and Commissioner Akin began speaking off mic]

14

15 Chair Summa: [off mic] Go ahead, Commissioner.

16

17 Commissioner Akin: Sure. Sorry, this is minor, I just... I see value in your observation that the
18 prioritization is a separate task from the generation of the list of goals. So, that was the only
19 comment that I wanted to make.

20

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1 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you. Just since we're talking about it and maybe we should
2 just feel free to mention our priorities. I would like people to not get... have collisions with cars,
3 bicyclists not have collisions with cars and I'm going to tell you when I looking through this list.
4 Many, many, many of them address that, right? If... our area plans address that, our road safety
5 addresses that, our bike/pedestrian improvement... plan improvement or update addresses
6 that. So, I'm really happy with this list and I think you guys did a great job of capturing our
7 meandering thoughts and making us feel a little bit more focused. Though maybe not quite
8 focused enough but we'll get there and I would love to hear the thread that ties these things
9 together for the other Commissioners should you want to share. Thank you.

10

11 Chair Summa: Thoughts Commissioners?

12

13 Commissioner Reckdahl: You know with these plans that we do, you try and figure out how
14 does it add value and I think prioritizing it, especially for us, I don't think is a good use of our
15 time. To me, I consider it like a broad to-do list and every few months go back and look at this
16 and say is there anything I could do in this category? What happens if we get caught up in our
17 day-to-day operations and all of sudden 9 months, 12 months has gone by and we haven't done
18 anything in half the categories? So, just periodically going back and saying what can I do in
19 here? What can I do there and if you have some ideas on those? Talk to the Chair, talk to the
20 Mayor and I think that's where the value is, is just to remind us what's important.

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Chair Summa: Comments? Oh, Ms. Star-Lack.

Ms. Star-Lack: Thank you, Chair. I did want to call the Commissioners attention to the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. That in Policy T-61 states that the City should continue to make safety the first priority of city-wide transportation planning and it also goes on to say prioritize pedestrian, bicycle and automobile safety over Motor Vehicle Level of Service at intersections and motor vehicle parking. So, that’s the overall policy of one of our goals and furthermore, Policy T-6.2 states pursue the goal of zero server injuries and roadway fatalities on Palo Alto streets.

Chair Summa: Awesome, thank you for reminding us of that. Oh, Commissioner Lu.

Commissioner Lu: Oh, I just wanted to say thank you and that having those priorities baked in is really appreciated.

Chair Summa: Comments or now this is an action item so we will need a motion. Is anybody ready to make a motion? Commissioner Chang [note – Vice-Chair Chang].

MOTION

-
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Vice-Chair Chang: I would like to move that we approve the Work Plan with the suggested modifications... let me see if I can recap them... of adding to Project Goal A the Lincoln Avenue and... at Lincoln Avenue and Middlefield project. Adding a study of collision issues and then modifying Project Goal L to read Bird Safe Construction instead of Glass.

Chair Summa: [off mic] Or glass slash (interrupted)

Vice-Chair Chang: Or Bird Safe Glass/Construction.

Chair Summa: Just broadening it a bit.

Vice-Chair Chang: And I think that was it that I captured.

Chair Summa: Commissioner Templeton, do you have something else?

SECOND

Commissioner Templeton: I want to second it.

-
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1 Chair Summa: Oh, excellent. Would you like to speak to your second?

2

3 Commissioner Templeton: Yeah, this is really good stuff, we should work on it.

4

5 Chair Summa: I think we're all in agreement unless anybody has... do you have a comment? No.

6 We will go ahead and conduct the vote, please.

7

8 Commissioner Templeton: I can't remember, did we take public comment, Chair?

9

10 Chair Summa: Oh, I forgot about public comment. Sorry, thank you. Do we have any public
11 comments?

12

13 Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant: No, we don't have any in-person or Zoom.

14

15 Chair Summa: I must have known that. Okay, so given that we have no public comment. I think
16 we should go ahead and conduct the vote.

17

18 VOTE

19

20 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Templeton?

-
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1

2 Commissioner Templeton: Yes.

3

4 Ms. Dao: Chair Summa?

5

6 Chair Summa: Yes.

7

8 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Akin?

9

10 Commissioner Akin: Yes.

11

12 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Lu?

13

14 Commissioner Lu: Yes.

15

16 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Reckdahl?

17

18 Commissioner Reckdahl: Yes.

19

20 Ms. Dao: And Vice-Chair Chang?

-
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Vice-Chair Chang: Yes.

Ms. Dao: Motion carries 6-0.

MOTION PASSED 6(Akin, Chang, Lu, Reckdahl, Summa, Templeton) -0 -1 (Hechtman absent)

Chair Summa: Thank you very much. Moving on we have some minutes to approve.

Commission Action: Motion by Chang, seconded by Templeton. Pass 6-0 (Hechtman absent)

Approval of Minutes

Public Comment is Permitted. Five (5) minutes per speaker.^{1,3}

4. Approval of Planning & Transportation Commission Draft Verbatim and Summary minutes of March 8, 2023

Chair Summa: The first set of minutes is, let's see, draft verbatim and summary minutes of March 8th, 2023. Do I have a motion and a second?

MOTION

Commissioner Reckdahl: I move we accept them or approve them.

SECOND

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1 Vice-Chair Chang: Second.

2

3 Chair Summa: Then we can go ahead and our new colleagues won't vote on this since they
4 weren't in those meetings. What?

5

6 Vice-Chair Chang: [off mic] Abstain.

7

8 Chair Summa: Yeah. Go ahead and conduct the roll, please. The vote.

9

10 VOTE

11

12 Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant: Vice-Chair Chang?

13

14 Vice-Chair Chang: Yes.

15

16 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Reckdahl?

17

18 Commissioner Reckdahl: Yes.

19

20 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Lu?

-
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Commissioner Lu: Abstain.

Ms. Dao: Commissioner Akin?

Commissioner Akin: Abstain.

Ms. Dao: Chair Summa?

Chair Summa: Yes.

Ms. Dao: Commissioner Templeton?

Commissioner Templeton: Yes.

Ms. Dao: Motion carries 4-0-2.

MOTION PASSED 4(Chang, Reckdahl, Summa, Templeton) -0 -2(Akin, Lu abstain) -1(Hechtman absent)

-
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1 Chair Summa: Thank you. We have another set of minutes to approve.

2 **Commission Action**: Motion by Reckdahl, seconded by Chang. Pass 4-0-2 (Akin and Lu abstain)

3 (Hechtman absent)

4 5. Approval of Planning & Transportation Commission Draft Summary Minutes of March
5 29, 2023

6 Chair Summa: That is minutes from... where's the page? Draft summary minutes from March
7 29th. Do I have a motion and a second, please?

8

9 MOTION

10

11 Commissioner Reckdahl: I move approval of the draft summary minutes March 29th.

12

13 SECOND

14

15 Vice-Chair Chang: Second.

16

17 Chair Summa: Could we conduct the vote, please?

18

19 VOTE

20

21 Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant: Commissioner Akin?

-
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2 Commissioner Akin: Abstain.

3

4 Ms. Dao: Vice-Chair Chang?

5

6 Vice-Chair Chang: Yes.

7

8 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Lu?

9

10 Commissioner Lu: Abstain.

11

12 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Reckdahl?

13

14 Commissioner Reckdahl: Yes.

15

16 Ms. Dao: Chair Summa?

17

18 Chair Summa: Yes.

19

20 Ms. Dao: Commissioner Templeton?

-
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Commissioner Templeton: Yes.

Ms. Dao: Motion carries 4-0-2

MOTION PASSED 4(Chang, Reckdahl, Summa, Templeton) -0 -2(Akin, Lu abstain) -1(Hechtman absent)

Chair Summa: Thank you very much. That actually concludes our business for the evening unless we have any comments, questions, or announcements from colleagues.

Commission Action: Motion by Reckdahl, seconded by Chang. Pass 4-0-2 (Akin and Lu abstain)(Hechtman absent)

Committee Items

None

Commissioner Questions, Comments or Announcements

Chair Summa: Commissioner Chang [**note -Vice-Chair Chang**], yes?

-
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1 Vice-Chair Chang: I just have a really quick announcement in case not all of our... in case our
2 new Commissioners didn't receive the email from Adam Howard. The May Fete Parade is taking
3 place on Saturday, May 6th and we're all invited to participate and it's a really fun thing to walk
4 in and participate in. I unfortunately can't make it myself this year because I have a conflict but
5 I did it last year and we do have an RSVP deadline of April 28th to let Adam Howard know if we
6 can make it. So, I just wanted to remind us all to do that if we're interested in doing it. Thank
7 you.

8

9 Chair Summa: Thank you for mentioning that. Commissioner Templeton.

10

11 Commissioner Templeton: Thank you, I'll be quick. I've... a constituent was asking me about
12 bike paths on El Camino and if the City is working with Caltrans on designing those and I
13 wondered if you knew since Mountain View has it and Los Altos has it and you don't?

14

15 Ms. Sylvia Star-Lack, Transportation Planning Manager: I believe more about this will be coming
16 out and I think City Manager will be briefing Council about this. So, I'm not sure that I should
17 get ahead of that.

18

19 Commissioner Templeton: Fair enough but you'll let us know?

20

-
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1 Ms. Star-Lack: Yes.

2

3 Commissioner Templeton: Excellent, thank you.

4

5 Ms. Star-Lack: Thank you.

6

7 Chair Summa: I once again want to congratulate and welcome our newest Commissioners.

8 Don't expect all the meetings to be this short, so I guess with that we can adjourn.

9 **Adjournment**

10 7:27 pm

-
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