



# Planning & Transportation Commission Action Agenda: June 14, 2023

Council Chambers & Virtual  
6:00 PM

## Call to Order / Roll Call

6:01 pm

Chair Summa called the meeting to order and requested Staff conduct the roll.

Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant, conducted the roll and announced all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Hechtman.

## Oral Communications

The public may speak to any item not on the agenda. Three (3) minutes per speaker.<sup>1,2</sup>

Chair Summa invited members of the public to provide their comments to the Commission on items not on the Agenda.

Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant, announced there were no speakers.

## Agenda Changes, Additions and Deletions

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

Ms. Amy French, Chief Planning Official, announced there were no changes from Staff.

## City Official Reports

### 1. Directors Report, Meeting Schedule and Assignments

Ms. Amy French, Chief Planning Official, reported several items were scheduled for June 28, 2023, July 12, 2023 and July 26, 2023 for the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC). She acknowledged there were no items set for the meetings in August and that the PTC may cancel the first meeting in August for a potential break. The last City Council meeting before their summer break was Monday, June 19, 2023 and there were several planning items on the Consent Calendar for their consideration.

Mr. Rafael Rius, Senior Transportation Engineer, announced the City recently launched a website regarding the Lincoln/Middlefield Intersection which included the Safety Assessment

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1 Report, upcoming community engagement activities and a form for residents to provide input  
2 on the project. Also, on the upcoming June 19, 2023 City Council meeting, the Office of  
3 Transportation had several items on the Consent Calendar, including a contract for the Bicycle  
4 and Pedestrian Transportation Plan.

5 Vice-Chair Chang asked if the various community members who provided written comments in  
6 the past regarding the Lincoln and Middlefield intersection were notified of the website launch  
7 and upcoming community meetings.

8 Mr. Rius replied not yet, but Staff was in the process of compiling an email list. A notification  
9 was sent to the resident's location in the nearby vicinity and he predicted an email would follow  
10 soon.

11 Commissioner Akin mentioned he notified a number of the residents personally.

## 12 **Action Items**

13 Public Comment is Permitted. Applicants/Appellant Teams: Fifteen (15) minutes, plus three (3) minutes rebuttal.  
14 All others: Five (5) minutes per speaker.<sup>1,3</sup>

15 2. PUBLIC HEARING / QUASI-JUDICIAL. 800 San Antonio (23PLN-00010): Rezoning of  
16 Two Parcels of Land, Proposed to be Combined Into a Single 38,194 Square Foot  
17 Property, from Commercial Service (CS) Zone to Planned Community/Planned Home  
18 Zoning to Allow the Construction of a Five-Story Residential Building Providing 76  
19 Dwelling Units Including 16 Below Market Rate Units (21%).

20 Ms. Emily Kallas, Planner, mentioned along with the proposed 76 units, the project would  
21 include two levels of underground parking. The project was requesting Exceptions for height,  
22 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Lot Coverage. The project was proposed to be used for only  
23 residential use and if approved, it would merge two existing parcels into one. The project would  
24 be located on San Antonio Road near Leghorn Street. Other development projects in the area  
25 included 788 San Antonio, 824 San Antonio and 3997 Fabian Way. The project was following  
26 the Planned Home Zone (PHZ) process. It went through the prescreening in August of 2022 and  
27 then a formal application was submitted. Staff had reviewed the application and the project  
28 was before the PTC for its first hearing. The next steps included a hearing with the Architectural  
29 Review Board (ARB) for review. Then it back to PTC for a recommendation before going before  
30 Council. With respect to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the project required  
31 an addendum to the Housing Incentive Program (HIP) Expansion Environmental Impact Report  
32 which was being prepared. Staff did not expect there would be new significant environmental  
33 impacts that were not investigated by the HIP Expansion EIR, but if discovered, the project must  
34 comply with all adopted mitigation measures. Although several of the balconies on the rear  
35 façade encroached into the rear setback, the project met all required setbacks including the 24-

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1 foot special setback along San Antonio. The majority of the units had outdoor balcony space  
2 and the project met the open space requirement required by the zoning district but on an  
3 average basis, not by unit base. The proposed materials for the project included fiber cement  
4 panels, metal panels, metal trim and glass windows and railings. In regards to the requested  
5 Exceptions, the project was seeking a 2.99 FAR where only 0.4-1.0 was allowed, it requested 65  
6 percent Lot Coverage where 50 percent was allowed and the project proposed no ground floor  
7 commercial when typically 5,729-square feet was required. The project also requested an  
8 Exception to the 50-foot height limit and proposed a height of 60-feet to the top of the parapet.  
9 Staff recommended PTC provide initial comments and feedback and that Staff forward the  
10 project to the ARB for review.

11 Chair Summa inquired what the time limit was for the application's presentation.

12 Ms. Amy French, Chief Planning Official, confirmed they had 15 minutes.

13 Mr. Mark Donahue, the applicant, shared a view of the project from San Antonio Road. The  
14 project conformed to many of the objectives outlined in the City's newly adopted Housing  
15 Element. The project was compatible with the new developments along San Antonio Road and  
16 the project would bring a high-end contemporary design to the area. He mentioned the project  
17 would be nestled among major transportation routes, the City of Mountain View and was close  
18 to retail. The project was over 700-feet away from existing low-density residential zoning and  
19 was 350-feet away from other residential uses. The project was a prime candidate for PHZ  
20 zoning because it provided diverse housing and included inclusionary units. The proposed  
21 density factored in the finance and construction cost constraints. The project respected the  
22 special 24-foot setback to allow flexibility for the City. The building was to be a rectangular  
23 shape with a serrated rear façade and an open courtyard located in the center. The lobby area  
24 would include two stories of glass that folks from the street could look through to the central  
25 courtyard. The project included two levels of below-grade parking and a refuse area in the  
26 garage. Also, included was a bicycle storage room, residential units on the ground floor and a  
27 pedestrian bridge on the second floor above the lobby. With respect to design, a lot of effort  
28 was taken into making the proposed five-story building appear to be a four-story building.  
29 Those specific design elements helped reduce the massing and scale of the building and were  
30 carried throughout the building's facades.

31 Chair Summa invited the Commissioners to ask questions of the applicant.

32 Commissioner Akin appreciated the mix of unit types and sizes, the high density without office  
33 space, adequate parking and the proposed solar power with backup.

34 Chair Summa invited Commissioner Akin to ask his questions and hold his comments until after  
35 public comment.

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1 Commissioner Akin referenced Pages A-0.1 and A-0.4 and noticed the proposed unit mix was  
2 slightly different than the mix listed under required parking. He recommended those figures be  
3 double-checked. He referenced Code Section 18.38.080 (D) and asked if Staff or the applicant  
4 had the projected sale or rental prices for the project.

5 Mr. Donahue confirmed the units will be for sale, but predicted the sale prices would be  
6 changing as the project moved through the process.

7 Commissioner Akin clarified his question pertained to conformance with the Code rather than  
8 an answer that needed to be shared now. He inquired how the proposed parking will work with  
9 the stackers.

10 Mr. Donahue remarked the efficiency of the stackers relied solely upon the stacker provider  
11 and the project will use a provider that has a proven track record.

12 Commissioner Templeton appreciated the open space on the ground floor but asked why the  
13 applicant did not explore an open space on the roof.

14 Mr. Donahue answered that a roof deck was costly and that having a roof deck may deter folks  
15 from buying the top-floor units. Also, it complicated the ingress and egress of the roof. With  
16 that said, the project included open space that was behind a fence line at the front of the  
17 property which was a shared amenity of the building.

18 Commissioner Templeton mentioned the front façade along San Antonio Road appeared to be  
19 wider and taller than the building walls themselves.

20 Mr. Donahue explained that the blues blades at the corner of the building were meant to give  
21 the building a sense of lightness and they provided a broader front façade to allow the other  
22 elements to be imbedded into the building.

23 Commissioner Templeton inquired if those blade elements contributed to the height or was  
24 there rooftop equipment that matched the height of the blades behind them.

25 Mr. Donahue concurred the equipment behind was roughly the same height, if not slightly  
26 lower. He noted without the corner elements, the overall mass of the building would be more  
27 pronounced.

28 Vice-Chair Chang referenced the Tree Protection Plan and inquired if the street trees are going  
29 to be replaced.

30 Mr. Donahue remarked the landscape architect was not in attendance, but mentioned tree  
31 streets were proposed to be included to satisfy the requirement of the streetscape design.

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1 Vice-Chair Chang loved the street trees and had concerns that the project would not include  
2 the street trees. She asked Staff how the project would meet the tree requirements.

3 Ms. Kallas answered there were still Staff comments that had not been incorporated into the  
4 project and noted there were several Urban Forestry items that needed to still be addressed.  
5 She confirmed Staff would double-check the inconsistencies in the plans.

6 Vice-Chair Chang understood that future planning of a bicycle path along San Antonio may  
7 result in the street trees being removed.

8 Ms. Kallas confirmed the City would have to take into account the street trees if a bicycle path  
9 were explored.

10 Vice-Chair Chang shared she reviewed the City Council's prescreening minutes and noted there  
11 was a lot of concern about how little greenery there was along San Antonio Road. She asked if  
12 there was any other space to add additional greenery.

13 Mr. Donahue stated trees could be planted above the underground garage. Also, the special  
14 setback prohibited the project from placing permanent plants in the setback to allow for a  
15 future bicycle path or greenway. He shared that smaller landscaping could be incorporated into  
16 the plan but nothing permanent.

17 Vice-Chair Chang asked how it worked if not all the trees that needed to be mitigated were not  
18 planted on the site.

19 Ms. Kallas answered the applicant would pay the in-lieu fee that could be paid based on the size  
20 of the trees being removed.

21 Vice-Chair Chang asked where the trash refuse would be picked up from.

22 Mr. Donahue confirmed the trash pickup zone was proposed to be on the street just south of  
23 the driveway entry. There was a separate zone for deliveries and ride-share services on the  
24 front façade of the building.

25 Vice-Chair Chang inquired how far the rear balconies encroached into the rear setback.

26 Mr. Donahue answered approximately 1 foot 8 inches to 1 foot 10 inches and that was  
27 consistent for all the balconies on the rear portion of the building.

28 Vice-Chair Chang asked if the ground floor patios encroached into the special setback.

29 Mr. Donahue remarked those patios did not encroach into the setback and that those patios  
30 were associated with community rooms.

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1 Vice-Chair Chang understood the below-market-rate (BMR) units were going to be for sale.

2 Mr. Donahue confirmed that was correct.

3 Vice-Chair Chang asked Staff to provide further details on how that worked for, for sale BMR  
4 units.

5 Chair Summa answered the City's provider Alta Housing verified income annually and if the  
6 income increased, the person would have to vacate the unit.

7 Ms. French noted the person would not be asked to vacate immediately.

8 Mr. Albert Yang, City Attorney, stated Chair Summa was correct with respect to rental units. He  
9 requested additional time to verify the process, for sale units.

10 Commissioner Lu invited the applicant to explain the appearance of the side yards.

11 Mr. Donahue commented the side yards included the balconies and additional space for fire  
12 fighting circulation. Low shrubs were planned for the spaces which provided a green zone  
13 between the adjoining projects.

14 Commissioner Lu clarified he was interested in the space between the project at 788 San  
15 Antonio and the development. There was a proposed inlet in the front and he found it to be  
16 pleasant and nicer than having a tall fence on the property line.

17 Mr. Donahue answered the exact nature of the fence had not been determined yet. Typically,  
18 Lowney Architectures' projects avoided tall solid elements, but due to liability issues, some type  
19 of fence would be constructed.

20 Commissioner Lu invited the applicant to explain their reasoning as to why the project did not  
21 include retail.

22 Mr. Donahue explained there had been long discussions about a retail element, but based on  
23 experience, isolated retail did not have a high success rate. There were discussions about  
24 having a café that would serve the building as well as the public, but there was not enough foot  
25 traffic in the area to support such a business.

26 Commissioner Templeton wanted to know the approximate elevation of the site above sea  
27 level.

28 Mr. Donahue answered he did not know.

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1 Commissioner Templeton asked if there were any concerns about the underground garage and  
2 water.

3 Mr. Donahue answered no, but wanted to consult the Geotechnical Study to confirm his  
4 answer.

5 Commissioner Templeton appreciated Vice-Chair Chang's comments about the setbacks and  
6 asked what was behind the building facing the City of Mountain View.

7 Mr. Donahue answered there was a window manufacturing plant with a 40 to 50-foot deep  
8 parking lot.

9 Commissioner Templeton noticed there was a 10-foot setback for fire access but there was only  
10 a 5-foot fire access proposed for the sides of the building.

11 Mr. Donahue confirmed there was a 5-foot way around the site for firefighting. The proposed  
12 building would be using high fire rating construction and if approved by the fire department,  
13 that allowed the building to have a smaller fire access around the building.

14 Commissioner Reckdahl requested more details about the landscaping in the rear 10-foot  
15 setback.

16 Mr. Donahue answered it would be a mixture of low shrubs and ground cover.

17 Commissioner Reckdahl inquired if folks could walk back there.

18 Mr. Donahue answered no and would be used for maintenance and emergency access only.

19 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if the side yards would be gated.

20 Mr. Donahue confirmed that was correct.

21 Vice-Chair Chang wanted to understand how the project had changed since the City Council's  
22 prescreening.

23 Mr. Donahue understood from the prescreening that the project was appropriate for the site  
24 and the project was refined based on City Council's comments.

25 Vice-Chair Chang clarified how had the project changed with respect to deeper affordability.

26 Mr. Donahue confirmed the project now included an additional BMR unit since the  
27 prescreening.

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1 Vice-Chair Chang asked if there was an affordability matrix.

2 Commissioner Akin answered Sheet A-0.1.

3 Mr. Donahue noted that the locations of the affordable unit had changed as well and that was  
4 based on Staff and City Council feedback. With respect to the change, the project met the  
5 affordability requirement before the prescreening and now exceeded it with the additional  
6 BMR unit that had been added.

7 Vice-Chair Chang inquired about what level of AMI where the units before the change.

8 **An unknown male speaker from Lowney Architecture** confirmed based on the feedback, the  
9 units were changed to lower-income units overall.

10 Mr. Yang answered with respect to for sale BMR units, Alta Housing does an annual check for  
11 owner occupancy but not income re-verification for ownership units. If the unit is sold, the unit  
12 must be sold at an affordable price again.

13 Chair Summa inquired if all the units had private outdoor space.

14 Mr. Donahue answered yes.

15 Chair Summa understood the trash and loading area were proposed to be in the public parking  
16 along San Antonio Road.

17 Mr. Donahue confirmed the pick-up zone was in the public right of way.

18 Ms. Kallas clarified Staff had not yet approved the trash pick-up plan and predicted it would  
19 change.

20 Chair Summa mentioned she was concerned about that due to the future need for safe bicycle  
21 lanes on the street. She asked if the rear and front setbacks counted as shared open space.

22 Mr. Donahue answered no, but wanted to verify it.

23 Chair Summa inquired what height required emergency ladder access.

24 Mr. Donahue answered it had to do with the height of the building as well as what fire rating  
25 the construction material was rated. He mentioned the proposed building would use Type 3A  
26 fire-rating construction.

27 Chair Summa invited members of the public to share their comments with the Commission.

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1 Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant, announced there were no public speakers.

2 Chair Summa brought the item back to the Commission for discussion.

3 Commissioner Akin appreciated that the project managed to achieve what was being proposed  
4 with few Zoning Exceptions. He requested the ARB consider the courtyard being at the bottom  
5 of a 60-foot well and if that would appeal to future residents. Also, for the ARB to consider  
6 whether the project was compatible with 788 San Antonio Road. He acknowledged the mix of  
7 the BMR unit types in the project was very good, but there were not nearly enough units in  
8 total. He observed that if every project submitted to the City had the same ratio of BMR units,  
9 there would have to be 253 projects to meet the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)  
10 requirements.

11 Commissioner Templeton stated 20 percent of the units being affordable was awesome and  
12 very few projects present that percentage. Also, the applicant had added a unit and she  
13 encouraged more applicants to seek ways to include more affordable units in their projects. In  
14 general, she appreciated the proposal and agreed there were elements that the ARB will want  
15 to discuss in further detail. She appreciated that the majority or all the units have private open  
16 space, but suggested the applicant clarify that for future presentations. She liked the proposed  
17 materials and the design. She wanted to see the project retain the proposed street trees and  
18 greenery along the front façade. With respect to the location, she predicted the City of  
19 Mountain View will be redeveloping its sites along the rear of the proposed project and she  
20 encouraged the applicant to work with the adjoining neighbors in this regard. The project also  
21 included a variety of unit sizes, specifically unit sizes for families, and that should be highlighted  
22 as well. She encouraged the applicant to participate in future City discussions about schools and  
23 safe crossings. With respect to the underground parking garage, while she was hopeful, she  
24 recommended the applicant have a contingency plan if it does not work out. In conclusion, she  
25 strongly encouraged the applicant to provide more greenery.

26 Vice-Chair Chang expressed she was very pleased when she saw the size of the units, the  
27 affordability table, bicycle storage on the ground floor and she supported the small  
28 encroachment for the proposed balconies. She supported the height exception because the  
29 proposed building would not overshadow low-density residential homes. She mentioned the  
30 site, and surrounding area, lacked trees and was often very hot. That was more a City problem  
31 than a project problem but she encouraged the City to consider that when more applicants for  
32 the area are submitted. Another concern was the proposed loading zone being in the public  
33 right of way and the City needing safe bicycle lanes along San Antonio Road soon. She asked for  
34 affordability, if there were 15, three-bedroom units, the City's goal was to have 20 percent of  
35 those units be affordable.

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1 Ms. Kallas answered yes and Staff had identified that the project will have to change one of the  
2 one-bedroom units to a three-bedroom unit to meet the affordability requirement.

3 Commissioner Reckdahl referenced Page L-1 and asked why drivable grass was being proposed.

4 Mr. Donahue answered that was part of the project's stormwater program.

5 Commissioner Reckdahl inquired how reliable stackers are.

6 Mr. Donahue explained the more reliable lift systems require a maintenance call every couple  
7 of years and often more honorable providers have maintenance staff on call.

8 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if the applicant explored solar panels on the roof.

9 Mr. Donahue remarked the roof was packed with other equipment and the new Building Code  
10 was much stricter about how much solar is allowed and when it can be installed. The goal of the  
11 project was to have an all-electric building.

12 Commissioner Reckdahl restated if solar panels will be on the roof.

13 Mr. Donahue answered yes.

14 Commissioner Reckdahl understood those panels were not included in the baseline design.

15 Mr. Donahue explained per Code, a minimum of 15 percent of the roof surface could be  
16 covered by solar panels, but believed more solar panels could be added.

17 Commissioner Reckdahl inquired if solar panels could be installed above the mechanical  
18 equipment.

19 Mr. Donahue answered yes, that was a possibility.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl pressed if there was flexibility in the design to add additional solar  
21 panels in the future.

22 Mr. Donahue confirmed there was flexibility to add more panels in the future.

23 Commissioner Reckdahl echoed the concerns about greenery and inquired what the restrictions  
24 were for planting more plants in the special front setback.

25 Ms. French restated there was a constraint with respect to trees due to their roots.

26 Commissioner Reckdahl asked what is the cost of the in-lieu fee for trees that cannot be  
27 planted on site.

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1 Ms. Kallas remarked the fees are listed in the Tree Technical Manual.

2 Commissioner Reckdahl requested that information be presented when the item comes back  
3 for PTC review.

4 Commissioner Lu echoed the comments regarding the positives of the project. He supported  
5 the proposed density but would have liked to see more and he supported the amount of  
6 parking being proposed. He would have liked to see parking removed than have the podium at  
7 street level. He strongly echoed the comments regarding greenery and mentioned at his home  
8 there are many trees planted over the parking garage. He encouraged the applicant to  
9 reconsider the landscaping, especially in the areas with low shrubs. Lastly, he recommended  
10 the applicant reconsider having a retail space because it would bring more variety to the  
11 neighborhood.

12 Chair Summa understood the bicycle storage included 76 spots and she found that to be a very  
13 limiting number especially since the project included family-size units. Also, only half of the  
14 parking spaces had electric vehicle (EV) charges and she found that problematic. She agreed  
15 with the comments regarding greenery. The open space courtyard was not adequate for the  
16 building considering there would be children living there and there were no nearby parks. Also,  
17 two sides of the open space had patios and that limited the outdoor space as well. She echoed  
18 Commissioner Lu's comments regarding neighborhood-serving retail. The proposed loading and  
19 trash pickup zone was very concerning given it would cause more traffic congestion in an  
20 already congested area. She found it disappointing that the extension of the HIP and  
21 Development Standards was not enough and the project was asking for more concessions than  
22 788 San Antonio that had been entitled. She was concerned the approval of the proposed  
23 project would set a precedent for future developments to seek more concessions on top of  
24 what the City was already giving. Another concern was the City had not considered extending  
25 privacy and Daylight Plane Protections when it extended the HIP. The proposed 5-foot side  
26 setback was unreasonably small and believed the project would be more successful with more  
27 open space around it. Any future bike lane in the 24-foot setback would make the front  
28 entrance of the building unusable and place the building right next to the bicycle lane. She  
29 encouraged the City to pursue a more standard residential multi-family setback for future  
30 projects along San Antonio Road. The City continued to entitle projects that limited its ability to  
31 widen and make San Antonio safer and more accessible for bicycles and pedestrians.

32 Commissioner Reckdahl stated this is a big project and that was good since it was providing 76  
33 housing units. He was also concerned about the small setbacks with limited trees and greenery.  
34 The project was located near the East Bayshore job center and Google was currently adding  
35 jobs so the placement of the project was good. He appreciated the project providing truly  
36 affordable and family-size units. The two biggest complaints were directed at the City with  
37 respect to bicycle lanes and there no nearby parks. If the City continued to pursue high-density

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1 projects in the area, parkland must be provided. Overall, he supported the project and wished  
2 to see it move forward.

3 Chair Summa mentioned the Housing Element included a maximum and realistic anticipated  
4 number of units. The proposed site had a maximum of 40 units with 27 realistic units. With that  
5 said, it was great the project was providing more but the City did not need every site to be  
6 more than the identified maximum to the detriment of the folks living in the developments.

7 Commissioner Templeton echoed the Commission's comments with respect to the City's  
8 inadequate planning and transportation planning. She recalled bringing up the same concern  
9 when the PTC reviewed the improvements for the intersection at Charleston and San Antonio.  
10 She requested when the project returns, what the City was doing with respect to  
11 transportation, cooperation with the neighboring city and future City amenities. With respect  
12 to the trash and loading zone, she asked if ARB would consider that in their review. She shared  
13 her trash cans are placed on the street and thought it was not a apples to apples comparison.  
14 She understood why the applicant was proposing that.

15 Ms. French confirmed ARB will be reviewing it.

16 Ms. Kallas restated the Zero Waste Department had not approved the current arrangement.

17 Commissioner Templeton summarized the PTC was concerned the proposed trash and loading  
18 zone would hinder the flow of traffic.

19 Chair Summa added the PTC also wanted to see space set aside for future bike lanes.

20 Commissioner Templeton agreed and stated that the discussion needed more attention.

21 Ms. French shared she would pass along to the Office of Transportation that PTC strongly  
22 wanted to discuss protected bike lanes along San Antonio Road.

23 Commissioner Templeton remarked if not addressed, it will become urgent and problematic.

24 Chair Summa asked if Staff needed a motion

25 Mr. Yang answered Staff was seeking a motion from PTC recommending Staff move the project  
26 to the ARB.

27 MOTION

28 Commissioner Templeton moved the PTC move the project forward to the ARB with the PTC's  
29 comments.

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1 SECOND

2 Commissioner Reckdahl seconded.

3 VOTE

4 Ms. Dao conducted a roll call vote and announced the motion passed 6-0 with Commissioner  
5 Hechtman absent.

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

7 [The Commission took a 7 minute break.]

8 **Commission Action:** Motion by Templeton, seconded by Reckdahl. Pass 6-0-1 (Hechtman  
9 absent)

10 3. Review the Permanent Installation of the Traffic Calming Pilot Project in the Crescent  
11 Park Neighborhood and Recommend to the City Council for Approval.

12 Mr. Ripon Bhatia, Senior Engineer, reported the residents of Crescent Park raised concerns  
13 about the congestion of traffic and speeding. The City pursued a pilot project for traffic calming  
14 with improvements at various locations. PTC approved the pilot project in September 2020  
15 and later City Council approved the project to move forward. Staff designed and constructed  
16 temporary improvements in the summer of 2021. In the fall of 2022, Staff conducted a post-  
17 installation survey of traffic conditions and collected data that showed there were improvements  
18 to the traffic conditions. The majority of the community supported the permanent installation  
19 of the improvements. Staff requested PTC review and support the review and approval of  
20 recommendations to proceed with the design for permanent improvements to the City Council.  
21 He introduced Chirag Panchal who had been managing the project.

22 Mr. Chirag Panchal, Associate Transportation Engineer, reported the goal of the project was to  
23 improve safety and quality of life, minimize travel speeds during on and off-peak hours and  
24 minimize cut-thru traffic during peak hours. Staff and the consultant identified three areas of  
25 concern and installed temporary traffic calming improvements at each location. Location one,  
26 University Avenue on the eastbound side, received 50-foot bollards along the bikeway.  
27 Location two, Southwood Avenue and East Crescent, received three-way stop signs and curb  
28 extension. Location three, Hamilton Avenue/Central Drive/Southwood Drive, received an oval-  
29 shaped traffic circle. He shared pictures of each improvement in their current condition. He  
30 shared that the pre and post-data indicated that the average volume on Hamilton was reduced  
31 by 35 percent after installation, University Avenue was reduced by 6 percent and East Crescent  
32 Drive/Center Drive was reduced by 23 percent. Also, the average speed on Center Drive was  
33 reduced by 11 percent. Staff conducted a vote for each location on whether the residents

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1 wished to see the improvements made permanent. For Location two, 74 percent voted yes  
2 while 26 percent voted no. For location two, 78 percent voted yes and 22 percent voted no. He  
3 reiterated that the improvements were temporary and were not aesthetically pleasing to look  
4 at. If approved, Staff would begin designing for more permanent solutions and seek input from  
5 the residents on the look of those improvements. The temporary improvements would remain  
6 in place until construction was to begin on the permanent improvements, if and when they are  
7 approved.

8 Mr. Bhatia mentioned the neighborhood and fronting property owners would be involved as  
9 the improvements are designed.

10 Commissioner Akin asked if Staff conducted an origin/destination study to find where the traffic  
11 was coming from and where it was going.

12 Mr. Panchal explained the cut-thru traffic was coming towards Hamilton Avenue and heading to  
13 either West Crescent Drive or Center Drive. Another factor causing congestion was the signal at  
14 Woodland Avenue, which was not owned by Palo Alto, was not coordinated right with the other  
15 signals and it caused traffic to jam up.

16 Mr. Bhatia mentioned Staff only collected the pre-volume and post-volume data. He  
17 acknowledged that the data was impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

18 Commissioner Akin mentioned the Fehr and Peers report acknowledged the pandemic effects  
19 could not be separated from the project effects. He asked how confident Staff was in the traffic  
20 volume effects of the pilot.

21 Mr. Bhatia answered on major freeways and major facilities the traffic has returned to normal  
22 levels but not at the local level. He restated that though the volume had not returned to the  
23 local streets, the improvements have increased the safety at all three locations.

24 Vice-Chair Chang asked what was the main reason for folks voting no to making the pilot  
25 permanent.

26 Mr. Panchal answered the majority reason was that the improvements were not aesthetically  
27 pleasing.

28 Vice-Chair Chang inquired how many residents voted.

29 Mr. Bhatia recalled it was less than 50 percent of the surrounding 319 residential households  
30 participated.

- 
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1 Commissioner Reckdahl inquired how much variability was there in the traffic counts from one  
2 day to another.

3 Mr. Panchal explained it depended on the project but traffic was typically counted on Tuesday,  
4 Wednesday and/or Thursday. From one week to another, traffic did not differ very much. Staff  
5 conducted traffic counts when school was in session and when the weather was good.

6 Mr. Bhatia confirmed the counts differed maybe by 5 percent from any given day.

7 Commissioner Reckdahl shared that his concern was there were two samples of data. He  
8 questioned how much was causation, how much was randomness and was the City trying to  
9 form trends from randomness.

10 Chair Summa asked if location three was voted on by neighbors.

11 Mr. Bhatia clarified it was excluded from the voting process since bollards were typical traffic  
12 calming devices. Staff intended to keep those bollards in place with or without the other traffic  
13 calming measures.

14 Chair Summa asked if the permanent improvements at locations two and three would be  
15 landscaped.

16 Mr. Bhatia restated Staff would seek input from the residents for the design of the  
17 improvements. Staff would then balance the community's input with the budget on how to  
18 proceed moving forward.

19 Chair Summa predicted both locations two and three would be more successful if they were  
20 landscaped. She asked given the pandemic impacts on the data, it would it be better to extend  
21 the pilot program for another year.

22 Mr. Bhatia answered that was an option.

23 Chair Summa invited members of the public to share their comments with the Commission.

24 Mr. James Girand shared he was the homeowner of 590 East Crescent Drive and that his home  
25 was directly adjacent to location two. He stated folk's comments who live right next to the  
26 improvements should have more weight than folks living close by. With that said, he opposed  
27 the improvement because first, after observing the berm, it was not safe due to folks not  
28 stopping at the stop signs. Second, the berm made the intersection too narrow for two cars on  
29 East Crescent Drive to safely pass each other. Third, there was no other berm in Palo Alto of this  
30 size. The Office of Transportation did not test out less obtrusive measures before installing the  
31 berm. The Office of Transportation continued to not answer how the permanent improvement

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1 would be installed. He questioned how PTC could take a vote when they did not know what the  
2 final design was.

3 Ms. Lisa Lawson, another property owner of 590 East Crescent Drive, was deeply concerned  
4 about the lack of thought and extreme measures taken to solve traffic issues at the  
5 intersection. She recommended a stop sign be installed and the berm is removed. There were  
6 no statistics regarding whether less extreme measures could have been taken. In the beginning,  
7 the City installed an even large berm that blocked the handicap ramp to the house and it took  
8 numerous meetings to have that rectified. The statistics presented by Staff were misleading, as  
9 highlighted by Commissioner's questions. The Office of Transportation refused to share  
10 proposals for how the permanent berm would be installed. It was clear from the first agenda  
11 item that aesthetics was critical to whether a project moves forward or not. Staff had already  
12 indicated that the permanent structure would be constrained by the budget. She requested the  
13 Commission see a bird's eye view of the berm in order to understand the magnitude of it. With  
14 regards to the vote, many residents who participated do not reside at the intersection and  
15 therefore had no real way of providing meaningful comments.

16 Mr. Greg Welch thanked the City and Staff for bringing forward the project. The neighborhood  
17 had been wrapped up in the project for almost 5 years. The concerns raised by the  
18 neighborhood not only were about vehicular traffic but the safety of the pedestrians out in the  
19 neighborhood. Before installation, it was very dangerous for pedestrians to be on the street  
20 during peak hours. During the process, the Office of Transportation held three public  
21 workshops that shared different traffic calming measures that could be implemented. Staff also  
22 provided education on the various improvements and the neighborhood decided what should  
23 be installed. With respect to data, the data collection method used by the Office of  
24 Transportation was consistent with the accepted traffic planning norms. Based on a study  
25 conducted by Stanford, Hamilton Avenue had 35 percent more traffic volume than University  
26 Avenue because of the traffic jams on University Avenue. The statistics showed that after  
27 installation, traffic volumes were reduced on University Avenue by 6 percent but 30 percent on  
28 Hamilton Avenue and that proved that the improvements were working. With all that said, he  
29 felt the improvements made the neighborhood safer for pedestrians and that any permanent  
30 design would meet standards for pedestrian safety and vehicular traffic flow.

31 Chair Summa brought the item back to the Commission for discussion.

32 Commissioner Templeton commented the data has shown that the improvements have made  
33 the neighborhood safer, but some of it did not show the whole picture. She requested Staff  
34 share a view of location two on Google Maps. Once shown, she agreed the location of the berm  
35 made ingress and egress difficult for the homeowner, it went against the adjacent walkway, the  
36 berm area was very large and it distracted folks from the landscape of the home. The  
37 homeowner raised concerns that the stop signs are not hindering folks from stopping and she

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1 encouraged Staff to explore the effectiveness of that control. With respect to irrigation, she  
2 encouraged Staff to explore native plants that required less irrigation so the improvements are  
3 beautiful.

4 Vice-Chair Chang asked how many accident reports were filed at location two before and after  
5 installation.

6 Mr. Bhatia mentioned after installation there was one hit-and-run accident. He requested more  
7 time to run the data for accidents before installation.

8 Vice-Chair Chang invited Staff to explain the next steps for the project.

9 Mr. Panchal restated the next step was to seek Council approval for the permanent installation.  
10 Then Staff would initiate the design and once the design reached 35 percent completion. Staff  
11 would conduct outreach to the community for their feedback in planning and design.

12 Vice-Chair Chang asked if approved by City Council, would Council set the budget during that  
13 meeting. Also, would the design be reviewed by the PTC?

14 Mr. Bhatia explained the community's feedback would be shared with the consultant and then  
15 Staff would work on the design. Once alternatives are developed, Staff would develop a budget  
16 and that, along with the alternatives, would be presented to PTC and City Council.

17 Vice-Chair Chang inquired if during design, could Staff explore the effectiveness of the stop  
18 signs or alternative ways to implement the stop sign.

19 Mr. Bhatia explained the effectiveness of the stop required more monitoring but Staff could  
20 explore it further.

21 Vice-Chair Chang appreciated that the pilot improvements were in place because there were  
22 other areas of Palo Alto where the City was not responsive to safety concerns.

23 Mr. Bhatia answered Vice-Chair Chang's question that from 2016 to 2018 there were three  
24 collisions at location two.

25 Commissioner Akin reference Comprehensive Plan Goal T-4.2.1 which required the City to  
26 evaluate traffic in residential neighborhoods to prioritize traffic calming projects. He agreed  
27 with Vice-Chair Chang that there were many instances in the City where the City did not  
28 respond to neighborhood concerns regarding traffic. With respect to the proposed project,  
29 Lincoln Avenue had 1,480 vehicles which were above the neighborhood traffic calming project  
30 threshold of 1,200. That showed that local streets were becoming residential arterials and the  
31 improvements may begin a "whack a mole" effect. The City did not know the extent of how

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1 quickly that was happening and where. The City must find a way to do what the Comprehensive  
2 Plan required and collect baselines. He supported the proposed project but predicted more  
3 issues and concerns will be raised soon.

4 Commissioner Reckdahl asked how the Staff identified the three locations and the  
5 improvements.

6 Mr. Bhatia understood the Office of Transportation conducted outreach to the community,  
7 which helped narrow it down to three locations and the community recommended various  
8 improvements for each location.

9 Commissioner Templeton recalled a Commission Member at the time who specialized in  
10 transportation and contributed to the discussion as well. With that said, there was not a clear  
11 understanding that the improvements chosen were the right improvements.

12 Mr. Panchal noted the improvements chosen were chosen because they directly addressed the  
13 community's concerns.

14 Commissioner Reckdahl agreed overall, traffic had to be addressed and he acknowledged there  
15 was no perfect plan. With that said, the data did not support the improvements right now. He  
16 mentioned the improvement at location two should have been implemented a long time ago.  
17 For location two, he believed a speed bump would have been more effective and he agreed  
18 with Commissioner Akin regarding the "whack a mole" effect. Also, he agreed the temporary  
19 ones were not attractive and were concerned about the budget impacting aesthetics. The City  
20 currently did not have a lot of money and may decide the money should be spent elsewhere.  
21 That would result in a low-budget design and so he recommended extending the pilot to have  
22 more accurate data.

23 Commissioner Lu inquired if Staff had pedestrian or cyclist data for any of the intersections.

24 Mr. Panchal answered no since the initial concern was speeding, cut-thru traffic and up safe  
25 driving behavior. With that said Staff recommended the improvements at the location tree to  
26 protect bicyclists from the cut-thru traffic.

27 Commissioner Lu invited Staff to explain best practices with respect to turning radiuses and  
28 whether tighter turning radiuses made intersections safer.

29 Mr. Panchal explained the improvements were engineered to allow large vehicles like fire  
30 trucks and garages to clear the improvements safely.

31 Mr. Bhatia agreed the greater the radius, the higher the speeds.

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1 Commissioner Templeton appreciated the comments made by Commissioner Akin and  
2 Commissioner Lu with respect to the data only being vehicular data. The origin of the complaint  
3 was pedestrian and vehicular conflict and that should be measured. She asked if Staff had data  
4 that proved that the traffic control at location two was not effective.

5 Mr. Panchal remarked he observed the intersection multiple times before the improvements  
6 were installed and he witnessed many drivers swerving around the intersection. After  
7 installation, residents complained the turning radius was too tight and that was a concern Staff  
8 would explore during the design phase. With respect to folks not stopping at the stop signs,  
9 that was more poor driver behavior and a Code Enforcement issue.

10 Commissioner Templeton understood the frustration of the public speaker if the goal of the  
11 berm was to deter drivers from running the stop sign and they were still running it. She wanted  
12 to understand if there was a design that could have a higher safer impact. The concern raised  
13 by the Commission, and the public, was that the improvement at location two was flawed and  
14 recommending approval implied that the temporary design was working when it was not. If the  
15 project was to move forward, would the design proposed have to be used or could it be  
16 improved?

17 Mr. Bhatia restated Staff would work with the residents to improve the existing design where  
18 feasible. Staff could then return to the Commission to seek feedback on the concept plan  
19 before implementation.

20 Commissioner Templeton understood Staff would explicitly have conversations with folks who  
21 lived in the affected intersections.

22 Mr. Bhatia confirmed that was correct.

23 Commissioner Templeton understood also that Staff was willing to make refinements and  
24 accommodate feedback on the concept plan. With those promises, she could support the  
25 project and recommend it moving forward.

26 Chair Summa shared she lived through the College Terrace traffic calming program and a traffic  
27 circle was installed in front of her driveway. She acknowledged it is hard to find a perfect  
28 solution that satisfies everyone's concerns. At the time, College Terrace voted to have  
29 landscaped traffic circles and it took 8 years for the City to landscape the circles. With that said,  
30 if the improvements are voted to be landscaped, they should be landscaped promptly. She  
31 agreed the oval traffic circle was a no-brainer and it improved the functionality of the  
32 intersection. The improvement at location two was not acceptable, was bizarre, was too big  
33 and folks only stopped at stop signs when police officers are nearby. Also, having an empty bulb  
34 out or a traffic circle could result in them becoming a trash receptacle. She supported moving

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1 the project forward only if the improvements are landscaped, location two is rethought  
2 completely and the improvements at University Avenue remain as presented.

3 Commissioner Reckdahl inquired if the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PABAC) had  
4 reviewed the plans.

5 Mr. Bhatia answered they did not, but there was no negative comments reviewed.

6 Chair Summa mentioned that PABAC did not represent all of the bikers in the community. She  
7 recommended approval of locations one and three with the condition that they be landscaped  
8 in a manner that was discussed with the neighborhood and rethink location two. She agreed  
9 there may be a “whack a mole” effect and it is very hard to mitigate it.

10 Commissioner Lu stated tighter turning radiuses are safer and though the data is flawed, best  
11 practices have proven that. Also, he believed the bulb out and the traffic circle could be  
12 landscaped quickly. He wanted to move all three location improvements forward and allow  
13 quick changes to be implemented now.

14 Commissioner Reckdahl did not believe the City had the funding to do both locations two and  
15 three properly. He recommended location three be done properly and location two be delayed  
16 until more funding is available.

17 Commissioner Templeton stated the money argument was irrelevant to the PTC’s discussion.  
18 She agreed with Commissioner Lu about trying to combine the design cycle, but also the  
19 majority of the Commission indicated loudly that it was not comfortable with the design at  
20 location two. She encouraged the Commission to move the project forward with very clear  
21 instructions and allow Council to downsize it if needed.

22 Commissioner Reckdahl announced he was not convinced the proposal was the right solution  
23 for location two and perhaps speed bumps would be better.

24 Commissioner Templeton inquired if the motion should say the option should be studied.

25 Commissioner Reckdahl answered yes, that other options should be explored and whatever  
26 improvement is chosen. It should be aesthetically pleasing to the neighborhood and its  
27 residents.

28 Chair Summa remarked the proposed improvement at location two appeared to be an  
29 extension of the homeowner’s yard and it looked awful. The design of that improvement  
30 should be designed in collaboration with the homeowner and the City. If it was landscape as is,  
31 it would not be visually pleasing and though Commissioner Lu was correct about tighter turning  
32 radiuses are safer, the proposed one was not correct.

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1 Commissioner Templeton encouraged the motion to include the Chair’s sentiment.

2 Commissioner Akin cautioned the Commission on second-guessing the engineering work of City  
3 Staff. While some of the proposals appeared to be correct, the proposal at location two may be  
4 the right solution. Though he could not confirm that because he had not seen the other  
5 alternatives that were considered.

6 Commissioner Templeton commented the Commission was not second-guessing the  
7 engineering of the design because the design had not happened yet.

8 Commissioner Akin clarified the pilot was the product of a design process that included a lot of  
9 public input.

10 Commissioner Templeton stated the proposal was not the level of design the Commission  
11 wanted to see if the project was moved forward.

12 Commissioner Akin appreciated the concern but stated he was reluctant to second-guess Staff.

13 Commissioner Lu seconded Commissioner Akin’s comments. The proposals were a result of  
14 design and community input and the neighborhood by large supported all three improvements.  
15 The aesthetic design concerns were significant but could be addressed. Moving the project  
16 forward with direction that Staff explore other means may extend the project even longer.

17 MOTION

18 Commissioner Templeton restated that the design had not been approved, nor even explored  
19 yet. She moved that the Planning and Transportation Commission recommend the City Council  
20 approve the permanent installation of the traffic calming pilot project; which included point  
21 three to be permanently installed and point two to be permanently installed with adequate  
22 landscaping. Preferably, with native landscaping and preferably promptly after installation.  
23 Then also take further steps to improve the design of point one at Crescent and Southwood  
24 such that it is as safer, if not safer than what’s there while being more aesthetically pleasing  
25 and suitable to the adjacent properties.

26 Mr. Bhatia clarified the pilot design was the plan of the engineering department and Staff  
27 intended to seek input on that design from the adjacent property owners.

28 SECOND

29 Vice-Chair Chang seconded.

30 Commissioner Templeton commented pilot programs are implemented so that the City can try  
31 reasonable improvements and receive feedback. While Staff did include engineering in the

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1 design for location two, the motion was to have location two re-explored with input from the  
2 adjacent properties.

3 Vice-Chair Chang stated locations one and three were ready to be made permanent but  
4 location two needed work. Though it was stated that tighter turning radiuses slow down traffic,  
5 the data showed that three accidents happened at location two before the improvements were  
6 installed. Also, the adjacent homeowner has seen undocumented collisions at location two  
7 after the improvements were installed. She asked if the motion was recommending Staff  
8 explore other alternatives for location two.

9 Commissioner Templeton answered yes.

#### 10 FRIENDLY AMENDMENT

11 Vice-Chair Chang wanted that to be made clear in the motion that the Commission was  
12 uncomfortable with the bulb-out design for location two.

#### 13 MOTION AMENDED

14 Commissioner Templeton amended the motion that location two come back before the  
15 Commission with the next iteration to confirm that the feedback given was incorporated.

16 Vice-Chair Chang recommended Staff return with a table of why other alternatives would not  
17 work in that location.

18 Mr. Bhatia noted any new traffic calming device would have to go through the voting process  
19 again with the neighborhood with another pilot program in order to be approved City Council  
20 per the City's Municipal Code.

21 Commissioner Templeton asked if Staff was recommending location two improvements move  
22 forward as presented because it had the votes instead of following PTC's recommendation.

23 Mr. Bhatia answered no, but clarified if the concept was changed to a different traffic calming  
24 element. That would trigger the process to start over for that intersection. If Staff was allowed  
25 to redefine the bulb out and incorporate the feedback from the property owner, the  
26 neighborhood and the PTC. That would not require a restart of the process.

27 Commissioner Templeton appreciated that explanation but restated that what was being  
28 proposed for location two needed a redesign with adjacent neighbor feedback.

29 Mr. Bhatia restated the concept plan would include neighborhood feedback, adjacent  
30 homeowner feedback and then return to the PTC for review when the concept design reached  
31 35 percent completion.

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1 Commissioner Reckdahl echoed Vice-Chair Chang’s comment to include a table as to why the  
2 other traffic calming elements were not chosen.

3 Mr. Bhatia explained the neighborhood residents were not in support of having speed bumps  
4 due to the negative effects they would cause. He announced he would check with other Staff to  
5 see what other alternatives were ruled out.

6 Chair Summa understood the intention was not to explore a new traffic calming element for  
7 location two but rather that the Commission supported Staff working with the homeowners on  
8 refinements.

9 Commissioner Akin requested that the motion be restated.

10 MOTION RESTATED

11 Chair Summa restated that the motion was to make permanent number one and number three,  
12 but number three only with a condition that it be landscaped. Also, PTC recommended that  
13 number two needed more work and that the bulb out be made more suitable with direct input  
14 from adjacent property owners.

15 Commissioner Lu understood that location two would remain in place during the redesign and  
16 that Council would evaluate the proposal.

17 Commissioner Summa confirmed that was correct.

18 Vice-Chair Chang noted part of the motion was that location two would return to PTC for  
19 review if approved by Council to pursue permanent installation.

20 Mr. Bhatia announced all three locations would come back to PTC for review.

21 VOTE

22 Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant, conducted the roll call vote and announced the  
23 motion passed 5-1 with Commissioner Hechtman absent.

24 MOTION PASSED 5(Akin, Chang, Reckdahl, Summa, Templeton) - 1(Lu) - 1(Hechtman absent)

25 Commissioner Lu felt it was less thrashy to approve the proposal for location two as presented.

26 **Commission Action:** Motion by Templeton, seconded by Chang. Pass 5-1-0-1 (Lu no)( Hechtman  
27 absent)

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1 **Approval of Minutes**

2 Public Comment is Permitted. Five (5) minutes per speaker.<sup>1,3</sup>

3 4. Approval of Planning & Transportation Commission Draft Verbatim and Summary  
4 Minutes of May 10, 2023

5 MOTION

6 Commissioner Reckdahl moved to approve the draft verbatim and summary minutes of the  
7 May 10, 2023 meeting.

8 SECOND

9 Vice-Chair Chang seconded.

10 VOTE

11 Ms. Veronica Dao, Administrative Assistant, conducted a roll call vote and announced the  
12 motion passed 6-0 with Commissioner Hechtman absent.

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

14 **Commission Action:** Motion by Reckdahl, seconded by Chang. Pass 6-0-1 (Hetchman absent)

15 **Committee Items**

16 None

17 **Commissioner Questions, Comments or Announcements**

18 Commissioner Templeton announced she may not be in attendance for the June 28, 2023  
19 meeting.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl added he would be participating remotely for the June 28, 2023, and  
21 July 12, 2023 meetings.

22 Ms. Amy French, Chief Planning Official, reminded Commissioner Reckdahl to provide in  
23 advance the location he would be participating from.

24 Chair Summa adjourned the meeting.

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1 **Adjournment**

2 9:28 pm

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