

**Community Development
Department**

Planning Division
1017 Middlefield Road
Redwood City, CA 94063
(650)780-7234
www.redwoodcity.org



**El Camino Real Corridor Plan
Citizens Advisory Group**

Kevin Bondonno (Chair)
Marc Manuel (Vice Chair)
Roger Buckhout
Erin Callaghan
Stacy Huisman
Brian Jaffe
Stephanie Kolkka
Alma Montalvo
Elliot Rivas
Muhammad Safdari

**February 22, 2017
Meeting Summary**

**7:00PM
City Council Chambers**

PRESENT: Chair Bondonno, Vice Chair Manuel, Members Callaghan, Huisman, Jaffe, Montalvo, Rivas, Safdari

ABSENT: Buckhout, Kolkka

STAFF: Planning Manager Steven Turner; Lindy Chan; Diana O'Dell; Apollo Rojas

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS: None

ITEMS:

INTRODUCTIONS:

Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) member roll call.

PRESENTATION - Lindy Chan & Sophie Martin (Consultant)

Ms. Chan and Ms. Martin gave a presentation providing an update of the planning process and background information for the CAG discussion (see [presentation](#)). The CAG discussion will be focused on activity centers, community benefits, and small businesses/economic development strategies.

CAG DISCUSSION:

Land Use – Activity Centers

The CAG discussed the advantages and disadvantages of a singular downtown activity center versus multiple activity centers along the corridor. Sequoia Station would make a great activity center, but we should not put all of our eggs in one basket as the center may not get redeveloped in the near future. Much of the recent development and focus has been downtown. The intent of this plan was to spread activity along the corridor and the surrounding neighborhoods. There will be more and higher density housing to support multiple activity centers. El Camino Real feels like a canyon that separates Redwood City. Multiple activity centers could draw people into the area and connect the neighborhoods.

The activity centers should be neighborhood serving, but should not introduce more traffic to the adjacent areas. We have a downtown, we don't need mini downtowns. Multiple centers can help to take cars off the road by making it possible to conduct errands near the neighborhood. The centers could be areas where shared public parking could work, allowing people to park once and take care of your immediate needs. Shared parking lots would help to mitigate the removal of on-street parking.

The activity centers should function as neighborhood serving which could include more parks and/or open space for people to enjoy. Incorporate charm and design into the activity centers. They should have active ground floor uses, be pedestrian oriented, have housing on upper floors, and provide public plazas. They can create a sense of place so that people will know they are in Redwood City when they enter the city on El Camino Real. There would be an inherent redevelopment potential in and near the centers, providing a great opportunity for façade improvements. It should be walkable within the activity centers. How will the City ensure that the right mix of uses are maintained or added? How would we ensure that an area would not get changed and no longer serve the residents first?

Community Benefits

Affordable Housing is a priority. The affordable housing should be provided on-site instead of paying an in-lieu fee. If it is found to be possible, we should increase the percentage of affordable housing. Publicly accessible parking should also be a community benefit.

Open space and parks should also be provided where feasible. The parks should be accessible to the public and not just the development. Perhaps pool funds to create a community benefits fund. This would allow putting the money towards what's needed most, such as parks, housing, or child care.

Economic Development & Small Business Support

It would be nice to see tenant retention but there should not be tenant rent control. There should be some measures to retain the charm of El Camino. There should be incentives for regulatory compliance. A signage program or a façade program would be supported, if the money did not come directly from tax payers and instead either came from a new project/developer or directly from the businesses. The improvements could come from a fund or in the form of a Business Assessment District. A marketing strategy for the area could be an improvement. The group also supported a parcel assembly density provision.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Billy James – Identifies as a pedestrian, motorist, and cyclist living in Redwood City. Strongly in favor of a series of activity centers. Great familiarity with Whipple/Hopkins. Recommend moving activity center North of Whipple, perhaps to Edgewood/City Limits to include existing commercial area [Includes - Insurance company, pending condo development (150 El Camino), vacant Mountain Mike's, KFC, San Mateo Feed Store, Stacks. 7-11, FedEx, Starbucks, T-Mobile, Liquor Store]. Going further out with activity center would embrace many more residents. Has no concern that more centers would be creating many downtowns because San Francisco has many different centers which are successful in supporting the surrounding neighborhoods. Thrilled at growth here. Traffic and parking are a major consideration, but short quick trips can co-exist with people going out to dine. Look at the parking lot at Stacks and the pet store. All works together. The plan should consider all uses in all spaces. I love the idea of a pedestrian refuge on Whipple. Bus bulb-outs are a good idea.

Gita Dev – Represents Sierra Club Sustainable Land Use Committee and resides close to El Camino Real. I like having identifiable imagery in Redwood City. I like the idea of extending the northern node, as Billy suggested. I heard, with some dismay, members of the CAG's comments regarding retention/prioritization of parking. The downtown is over-parked like most downtowns. The Box building is over-parked. Once you build the parking, you give away that land and money. Don't give that precious real estate away. It is very hard to convert parking into anything else in the future. Some communities are struggling to convert garages into retail/office. We are planning for next 30 years. We are going to get autonomous cars soon in CA. We really are changing and we should be thinking of other ways to get people through this corridor to make it pleasant. The most dense volume method of travel is pedestrian. Try to go for the lowest parking. But, we do need a residential parking permit program if we reduce parking. Residents tend to resist the program initially, but they work well and residents end up liking them - San Carlos is a good example. Office buildings should also provide affordable housing within a 1/4 mile of the project instead of paying an in-lieu fee. I support requiring

1% for public art because it generally makes your building beautiful. Subsidize rent on ground floor for community spaces (ex. child care, a dance studio, etc.). I walk on El Camino Real and it feels dangerous because the sidewalks are narrow and sloped, especially if you are in a wheelchair. You need wide sidewalks with trees to make pedestrians feel protected and to provide a barrier. There is an opportunity to turn Franklin St-Lathrop into a nice street and activate it. All the big housing going up there turns their backs on Franklin.

- Public Comment Closed -

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned to the next CAG meeting in April or May (exact date to be determined at a later time). The Planning Commission will receive a status update on the Corridor Plan, tentatively scheduled for **March 21, 2017** at the City of Redwood City Council Chambers, City Hall, 1017 Middlefield Road, Redwood City, CA 94063. Public notification will be provided at that time.