

DOCUMENTS IN THIS PACKET INCLUDE:

LETTERS FROM CITIZENS TO THE  
PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

RESPONSES FROM STAFF TO COMMISSION QUESTIONS  
(IF ANY)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS FROM STAFF  
(IF ANY)

MISCELLANEOUS  
(IF ANY)



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# PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

## Memorandum

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**Date:** Wednesday, June 22, 2011

**To:** Planning and Transportation Commission

**From:** Curtis Williams, Planning Director

**Subject:** Comments made at the Palo Alto City Council Study Session on the Status Report on the East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way and California Avenue/Fry's Area Concept Plans.

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On October 4, 2010, the Planning and Transportation staff presented a status report on the East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way and California Avenue/Fry's Area Concept Plans. In order to discuss the Concept Plans further and provide comments to Staff, the City Council continued the discussion of both concept plans to October 18, 2010.

Below are excerpts from the minutes of two meetings. These excerpts include all the content from the minutes related to the concept plans. **Content related to the East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way Area Concept Plan is in bold text.**

### EXCERPT FROM THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 4, 2010

**Director of Planning and Community Environment, Curtis Williams gave a presentation on the status of the East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way and California Avenue/Fry's Site Concept Plans that were currently under preparation. For each area, he described the focus of the study, the process for the study, and specific concepts and issues Staff identified in each area for further Council direction. After the presentation, the City Council asked questions of Staff and took public testimony.**

**For the East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way Study, the City Council's questions were primarily focused on impacts of new developments in the East Meadow Circle, the kind of retail East of San Antonio subarea that might be appropriate or feasible along Charleston Road, and how to encourage retail developments in this area.**

For the California Avenue/Fry's site study, the City Council's questions focused on the viability of commercial uses in the Fry's subarea, the retention of Fry's Electronics and reconfiguring parcels or combining lots to maximize visibility from El Camino Real and the streetscape plan

for California Avenue, and public input received during community meetings with residents and businesses.

**The City Council requested economic information on the fiscal impacts on the City from any new development, particularly housing in these areas, and the potential for increased revenue from any land use changes under consideration.** During the public testimony, five speakers expressed opposition to narrowing California Avenue from its existing four lanes to two lanes, one speaker opposed the concept of placing housing on Park Boulevard due to groundwater contamination in the area, **and one speaker expressed concern if development intensified in the East Meadow Circle subarea and heights were increased adjacent to his single-family property.**

EXCERPT FROM THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 18, 2010

William D. Ross spoke regarding the Staff application to the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) for specific funding for the Phase II improvements on California Avenue which contained public improvements that were not listed in the Capital Improvement Plan.

The City Council continued its discussion of the draft East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way and California Avenue/Fry's Site concept plans that are currently under preparation. The Council had begun discussions of both plans on October 4, 2010.

For the California Avenue/Fry's Site study the Council's comments were as follows:

- Retain Fry's Electronics onsite or elsewhere within the City
- Retain uniqueness of California Avenue
- Ensure long term flexibility of land, especially with retention of Fry's
- Ensure viability of retail uses in area
- Accommodate mixed use and startups, especially on California Avenue. Dealerships, incubators, etc. are preferred along Park Blvd. over residential development
- Retain automobile dealerships
- Ensure that land use changes do not encourage owners to eliminate uses that are beneficial to the City
- Prohibit residential development on Park Boulevard. Change designation in area to facilitate auto dealership. Concentrate residential development and higher densities in California Avenue subarea
- Take advantage of area's proximity to transit
- Improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation and safety, especially on Park Boulevard and California Avenue
- Integrate the concept plan with Bicycle Master Plan
- Analyze economic benefit and costs to the City, especially in exchange for allowing more residential density; evaluate relative economic impacts of alternatives
- Protect single family neighborhoods, such as along Pepper and Olive
- Consider applying a hotel designation around 395 Page Mill Road site.

**For the East Meadow Circle/Fabian Way study, the Council's comments were as follows:**

- East Meadow Circle subarea comments were focused on the potential to increase development intensity. Council Member Holman questioned whether there was any benefit at all to increasing development intensities. However, Mayor Burt supported the concept—linking increased development to the provision of amenities and use of Transfer-of-Development Rights as an effective tool for this concept. Councilmember Scharff supported the concept and recommended exploring the advantages and disadvantages of a floor-area cap. He and Councilmember Espinosa both emphasized the need for new development in the subarea to be “bike-friendly”.**
- East of San Antonio subarea comments focused on the concept of new retail development along Charleston Road. Most Council Members seemed to support the concept of retail. Some preferred retail like 4th Street in Berkeley while others were open to exploring larger format development. Council Member Shepherd pointed out viability of the area for freeway visibility. Some Council Members were open to either type of retail development; but there was an almost unanimous concern for more information regarding the feasibility of new retail development and how to attract the desired retail uses.**
- Charleston Road subarea comments were limited to the future of the Fairchild building. Councilmember Schmid emphasized the historical importance of the site; Councilmember Scharff questioned whether a replacement building might better provide incubator space for new fledgling companies.**
- Council Member Price stressed the advantage of choices for the area as a whole that allow future flexibility.**