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**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
DECEMBER 10, 2013
CITY HALL
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, California**

Commissioners Present: Stacey Ashlund, Deirdre Crommie, Jennifer Hetterly, Abbie Knopper, Ed Lauing, Pat Markevitch, Keith Reckdahl

Commissioners Absent:

Others Present: Council Liaison Greg Schmid

Staff Present: Daren Anderson, Greg Betts, Catherine Bourquin, Rob de Geus, Walter Passmore, Joe Teresi

I. ROLL CALL CONDUCTED BY: Catherine Bourquin

II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:

None.

III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

IV. BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Draft November 19, 2013 Minutes.

Approval of the draft November 19, 2013 Minutes as amended was moved by Commissioner Reckdahl and seconded by Commissioner Crommie. Passed 5-0 with Commissioner Ashlund abstaining and Commissioner Knopper absent.



2. Update on the Environmental Impact Report for the Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course Reconfiguration and Baylands Athletic Center Expansion Project and discussion on the related tree mitigation plan.

Rob de Geus: Good evening, Commissioners. Rob de Geus, Assistant Director Community Services. Good to see you all. I'm joined here by Joe Teresi. He's a senior engineer in the Public Works Department as the project manager for the golf course reconfiguration project and is shepherding the EIR through the process. We have Walter Passmore here, who is the urban forester working with a number of folks and other interested parties on the tree mitigation plan, which is the last piece of the EIR that we're trying to put together before we have the final EIR ready for the Council sometime early next year. I thought we'd have Joe Teresi begin by talking a little bit about the EIR process and what you can expect next and then we'll pass it on to Walter.

Joe Teresi: Thank you, Rob. Again I'm Joe Teresi, senior engineer in Public Works. I'd like to get you up to speed on where we are with the project to implement the golf course reconfiguration from several aspects. We're continuing to work with our golf course architect on the plans and specifications that will be used to bid the project. Recently we received what he considers to be the final documents and they're under final review. The project itself is pretty much wrapping up in terms of all the details that we'll give to a potential bidder. We're also in the process of doing a prequalification process with bidders, so that we are going to only accept bids from qualified folks who have to meet certain criteria as far as experience, financial strength, and ability to have the bonding necessary to build such a large project. That will ensure that we get a high quality contractor when we enter into construction next year. We're continuing to accumulate soil on a portion of the golf course that will be used to reconfigure and reshape the course. We are about to submit our applications to the State and Federal resource agencies who have to issue us permits in order to do the construction. Lastly we have the EIR. As you recall, we brought the EIR through the process with the Architectural Review Board and the Planning and Transportation Commission and yourselves and got comments. We've received all the comments on the draft document and now we're wrapping up our response to those comments and planning to take them to Council. Right now that is scheduled for February 3rd. When we go to Council, what we'll be asking them to do is basically three things. One is to certify the Environmental Impact Report. Secondly to approve what's called a site and design application for the project. In this case, when I say project I mean only the golf course aspect, not the athletic center portion of the project that's addressed in the EIR. Thirdly, to approve a park improvement ordinance which allows for the improvements to occur on the golf course. This evening we're going to talk about one particular aspect of the Environmental Impact Report. As I said we've passed the comment period, so we've received comments from Boards and Commissions and members of the public. Now we're responding to those. The last piece that we haven't quite finished yet is exactly how we're going to mitigate for

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the impacts of the loss of the trees that will be taken out as part of the golf course project. We're here tonight to focus on that particular aspect. Walter Passmore is going to go over where we are in that process and is looking for your input so that we'll be able to finalize that last piece of the response to the comments in preparation for bringing the EIR to Council early next year for certification.

Walter Passmore: Good evening, Commissioners. Thank you for your participation as we've adapted this mitigation strategy to try to answer some of our constituent feedback that we've received and also feedback from this Commission. I hope what we're presenting tonight is quite a bit better, and we have resolved some of the issues that were brought up in previous discussions. We are trying to distill a black-and-white approach from shades of gray, which you realize that defining nature is almost an impossible job. So that's why I named the presentation this way. This is a very short presentation and you do have information in your packets that's much more detailed. Why do we need to mitigate? Tree removal on public property is required to be mitigated by City ordinance. That's reason number one, enough of a reason why we need to accept or adopt some kind of an approach of how we're going to mitigate the trees. Number two, it's required by our CEQA process. As Joe mentioned, due to an unavoidable impact we're going to be removing 543 trees and we're not replacing that many. So we have an unavoidable impact. CEQA demands that we address that and describe how we're going to mitigate for that impact. Number three, there are definitely values to the community. There are values to the golfers and there are values to advocates from many groups, as you've heard in previous meetings. How do we go about mitigating? This has been the subject of much discussion. I think we've summarized a lot of feedback into the approach that we're presenting tonight. Number one, we are allowed to do tree replacement with a ratio based on the canopy size per specifications in the Tree Technical Manual. This is our most commonly used approach, our traditional approach. We intend to employ that as a portion of our mitigation. We will be replanting trees on the golf course as part of the renovation, but that does not satisfy our complete mitigation requirement. The second approach is canopy replacement. We're also proposing to do canopy replacement in a somewhat untraditional way, by protecting some trees on the preserve property that had been naturally established. We heard early on from constituents that they did not like the idea of planting thousands of trees to replace the canopy that is going to be lost, but they were not opposed to protecting naturally established trees and allowing those to mature. Thus, replacing some of the values that that canopy gives us. We looked at appraised value. We did not think that this was an approach that was as relevant to the conversation as some of the other ones. We also looked at ecosystem services as a way to try to have an equivalency established between replacing trees and replacing other plant ecosystems or habitat in the Baylands environment which naturally does not have a lot of trees. How do we go from a golf course that has a lot of trees on it to something with less trees and satisfy our mitigation requirements? That was where our constituents said that ecosystem services calculations sounded like a reasonable basis of establishing a value of how to

move forward with that mitigation. Finally we're going to be talking about a hybrid approach. When we got the consultant's report back on ecosystem services, we recognized that that only captured a portion of the services that those trees currently provide. Unfortunately science is not advanced enough that we can calculate a dollar value of everything that trees provide. How much to mitigate? That's a real question that we hope to receive some feedback from the Commission tonight on. We can mitigate by number of trees, by square feet of canopy, by the value of loss of trees or the services that those trees provide, by the value of the outputs that are designed to replace that loss, or some kind of hybrid equation. That's what we've been talking about with our constituent group most recently; some kind of equation where we have trees planted on the golf course accounting for a portion of our mitigation, trees protected at the Arastradero Preserve as a portion of the mitigation, and finally Baylands habitat restoration. Now, what that final sum is, I think, yet to be determined. I'm going to describe some evidence that we have, because I've already told you that the ecosystem services calculations that we performed on the value of the trees to be removed was not a comprehensive assessment. It did assess values that we can quantify such as carbon sequestration, air quality values, storm water management values, but there are a number of values that we cannot quantify. We reasonably assume that things like wildlife habitat especially for threatened, endangered, rare, unique species is a value. We don't have a good model to quantify that into dollars and cents. Native plant communities that are contiguous to rare or diminishing ecosystems such as the Bay wetlands, grasslands, oak savannah riparian corridors, we recognize that those are very valuable. It's hard to put that value into dollars and cents. Water quality pollutant capture is accomplished by trees. We don't have a good model of how much the new landscape is going to capture as far as pollutants going into the rough areas in the golf course. It may be somewhat similar, but we don't have a model to actually quantify that. There are other values such as mental health values, general health, speed of recovery for people recovering from diseases, enhanced learning environment because of natural elements in our community, recreational activities. When we're thinking about the golf course, such things as bird watching, walking, waypoint finding are all compatible activities with golf. How do we combine what we can calculate quantitatively with some of these qualitative values that are a little bit harder to grasp? I think the ecosystem services calculations were a basis. Our constituent groups recognize our consultant study as that, as a basis for establishing a real value to move forward. We also heard from our constituents that they wanted to know what some of the output values looked like. If we had to plant trees using a traditional approach, how much would that cost us? How much would it cost us to do Baylands restoration? How much would it cost us to plant seedlings with this canopy replacement approach? We've generated those cost estimates. In your packet you can see that there's a wide variation and it depends on a number of factors. Some approaches such as planting a park tree or a street tree are very predictable. We have pretty good cost estimates for that. The cost goes down as we have trees that are grouped into larger projects so that we can get economies of scale, and we drastically reduce our costs when

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we can irrigate as opposed to watering with our truck. That's a very easy cost to estimate or quantify on that output. The range goes from having a couple of really large scale projects to having a lot of very small or individual projects. The seedling restoration effort, a little bit less certain. There's a little bit more risk in that approach, and that's why the cost has more variation in it. Finally, the grassland or native Baylands habitat restoration is probably the least certain. We have the largest chance of failure. It's very costly to restore native grasslands because of the preponderance of invasive species surrounding those grasslands or native Baylands habitats that we're trying to restore. There's a huge variation in cost as well, going from projects estimated for a 36,000 acre project over 50 years at \$1.4 billion, about \$40,000 an acre, up to individual projects which are in the realm of \$200,000 an acre. You can see that's a very costly process and probably the least certain as far as success. It requires long, long-term monitoring. Over the course of the ten-year restoration period which we're projecting for tree establishment, we would be fairly uncertain with grasslands or native Baylands ecosystems. There are a few different project options there. What we've heard from our constituents is that they would like a minimum of \$200,000 worth of funding and they would like that divided into a hybrid group of projects. Number one, and these are in priority order, is establish new trees or native or naturally simulated habitat within the golf course to replace some of the values lost by the trees being removed. That's never something that we departed from. Number two is to restore and/or substantially improve native Baylands spaces near the golf course. That would include sites like Byxbee Park, sites near the landfill, near the Water Quality Plant, in the Baylands Preserve. We've prepared a map in your packet with some of the proposed project sites that the constituent group thought were potentially viable sites. Those do have acreages on them and you can see that there are enough acres there that we could expend more than \$200,000 just doing Baylands restoration. Number three that the group felt was important to include was to protect naturally occurring seedlings on the Arastradero Preserve to enable them to mature and replace some of the lost values for the tree removals. That being said, I know we're still a little bit in shades of gray. I didn't give you an exact approach. What we're hearing from our constituent groups is that they want a minimum of \$200,000 worth of funding and they want it applied to those types of projects that I mentioned.

Mr. de Geus: Thank you. That concludes the staff presentation. We're happy to answer any questions on any part of the EIR or particularly focused on the trees.

Chair Lauing: To review the timeline, the EIR is hopefully going to Council in February. Is that correct, Rob?

Mr. de Geus: Tentatively scheduled for February 3rd.

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Chair Lauing: Okay. Just be aware of that. Is there any public comment on this issue? I don't have any speaker cards. This is the only speaker on this issue, so you can come up and speak to the issue, Linda Ruthruff.

Linda Ruthruff: I'm Linda Ruthruff. I'm here on behalf of the California Native Plant Society, the local chapter, which I'm the volunteer conservation coordinator, and the Audubon Society. We appreciate that we have been included in this proceeding and that our concerns are trying to be addressed. One of the concerns we have about the three proposals put before you is that they are to some extent measuring different things. The first two are looking at replacement costs; saying we've lost this many trees, how much will it cost to replace them, how much will it cost us to replace that value. The third one is looking at what was the value of what was lost, but it's not looking at how much will it cost us to replace what was lost. It's kind of the difference between when you have insurance on your home. If you have one type of insurance, you get a settlement of a certain amount dollars but it's not enough to build your new house, to replace what you had. If you have replacement cost insurance, you now have enough money to rebuild what you had. We are asking that you come up with a proposal, the hybrid proposal, that would allow us to replace the value of what was lost, so that there would be enough. Not just saying that, well, we're going to lose this many trees and we're going to replace this much value, but we're not up to the standard of what was there before. We would like the amount of money to be the amount it would cost to replace it. You have estimates in numbers one and two that are much higher than the estimates that are in number three. I also have a slightly different take on what some of the constituents said at the meetings where we gave feedback. I think that they saw that in Arastradero a lot of the trees there are about the same age. Many of them are not in the greatest of shape. There are some naturally occurring saplings that are coming up. The easiest way to get trees replanted there is to just protect those saplings. In terms of cost per tree, that's going to be the least amount of cost that you could do, is to take care of some of those trees up there. I think that was actually a high priority. It certainly is for Audubon and for the Native Plant Society. Past that, we are hoping for restoration of the areas that he's indicated and that they be restored with native plants that are appropriate to the area. I think that everyone is on the same page on that one. I thank you for your interest in our feedback.

Chair Lauing: Thank you. I don't see any other speakers on this topic. Open this to questions and comments from Commissioners. Yes, Commissioner Crommie, you were on the subcommittee that looked at this.

Commissioner Crommie: Yes. I was wondering if I could lead off.

Chair Lauing: Yeah.

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Commissioner Crommie: Okay, great. Thank you, Mr. Passmore. Nice presentation. I was able to attend the last two meetings for the stakeholders. This is a lot of information to digest in this report. I just wanted to draw everyone's attention to the first page. Let me ask some questions and then I had comments.

Chair Lauing: Sure.

Commissioner Crommie: Do you want me to do everything at once?

Chair Lauing: Maybe we should just go by quickly for questions and then go back around for comments. Give everybody an oar in here.

Commissioner Crommie: Okay, great. You pretty much answered this question, but I'm just going to ask it as a clarifying point. We do notice that we have three alternatives on the first page. We've been given a cost range for the first two and the third one we're not given a range. I would like to ask about that a little bit, because I think it is a really important discrepancy in the numbers that will come out more during discussion. Could you please clarify how you got the range from \$200,000 to \$1.3 million on the first row?

Mr. Passmore: Sure. The \$200,000 is assuming one or two large projects where we could have the greatest economy of scale. We could water the trees with irrigation and we could utilize smaller container sizes to accomplish the same goal. When you have a large project like that, it really drives your cost down. The \$200,000 would be the least amount we could do it for. The \$1.3 million is if we're establishing individual trees. We're watering with a truck. We don't have that same economy of scale. That's the very upper end. If we establish one tree, it costs us about \$650.

Commissioner Crommie: Can you explain the range that you got on the second row?

Mr. Passmore: Sure. Also, that's regarding economies of scale. It's much more variable with the seedlings, because it's uncommon to be able to irrigate. If you do have a large number of seedlings and you have the ability to gravity feed irrigation, which we do on Arastradero with some of the areas that we have identified, you can drive the cost down with irrigation, group plantings, having all of the trees installed and monitored at the same time. Anytime that you can generate those economies of scale, it really drives your cost down. Whereas, if you're doing much smaller scale projects and they require that individual attention, then it's just a lot more trips, a lot less of that efficiency that's involved with a large project.

Commissioner Crommie: If I understand correctly, it seems like the second row is a higher standard. The first row you're talking about 2,000 trees and the second one you're

289 talking about square footage of canopy. Is that also why the range goes up to \$2.5
290 million on the second row?

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292 Mr. Passmore: No.

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294 Commissioner Crommie: Can you clarify?

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296 Mr. Passmore: Right. They're different outcomes values because the tree ratio per the
297 Tree Technical Manual is specified, and most of the trees that we have out at the golf
298 course would require either a 3:1 or 4:1 replacement ratio with 24-inch box containerized
299 trees. That's the standard in the Tree Technical Manual. It's a different way of
300 generating that cost estimate. Whereas on the seedlings, we're requiring square feet of
301 canopy to be replaced, so it's a total canopy replacement within ten years. We had to
302 generate that number a different way. Seedling planting is a whole different approach
303 than containerized tree planting. Timing is much different and we're planting a much
304 larger number of trees, because we expect higher mortality with bare root trees that are
305 very small.

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307 Commissioner Crommie: Okay. I wanted to get at that point. I wanted to get at the
308 point of risk. We can set forth a plan and any plan that we choose is going to have an
309 inherent risk which means survivability of that which is being planted. Can you talk
310 about the risk for each of these categories? Also I believe it's missing from the third row.
311 When you have a flat value of that +/-130,000, I assume that there's no risk being
312 calculated, the survivability of what's being done there. I think that gets at the issue of
313 replacement. In the third row which is set at 130,000, does that take into account risk of
314 it really working for that value? Because the way I look at these numbers is that the first
315 two rows might be higher because they're taking into account success. The ranges go up
316 high because. as you try to do something more difficult, there's more risk and it costs
317 more to be successful. I'm worried that that hasn't been taken into account on the third
318 row for ecosystem services.

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320 Mr. Passmore: Ecosystem services is a valuation methodology, not an output
321 methodology for projects. Whereas the first two are valuation plus output. A traditional
322 tree planting ratio with containerized trees, we typically have about a 98 percent success
323 rate. You have a small risk. The seedling method for canopy replacement valuation,
324 somewhere between 70-80 percent if you have irrigation. It drops way, way down if
325 there's not irrigation supplied. 70-80 percent with irrigation and I think that would be
326 acceptable risk for that project. The Baylands restoration, which is where we used the
327 ecosystem services valuation method to try to establish that equivalency, I've heard a
328 variety of success rates. I think at our last constituent meeting someone threw out a 50
329 percent success rate as maybe an average for the industry. I think that these efforts have
330 not been undertaken for enough years that we really have a firm estimate of what that risk

331 is. I think we can take the 50 percent risk of failure as something that is unproven,
332 hearsay evidence, but maybe that puts it into perspective of risk.
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334 Commissioner Crommie: Okay, thank you. This is my last question. Thanks for that
335 clarification. So it's really the range of the first two values for the traditional tree
336 planting, and the canopy replacement really doesn't have to do with extremely high risk,
337 especially if you have a 98 percent success rate. What that brings us back to is the point
338 that you made in your presentation, that it's really the type of planting that you're doing is
339 what drives that upper range if I understand you correctly. What we're looking at here in
340 my eyes, from my perspective, is habitat replacement is tantamount here because that's
341 what we're losing. One of the main things that we haven't quantified, we're losing
342 habitat. We have not been able to quantify it. Ecosystems does not quantify habitat, but
343 we know we are losing habitat by cutting down the trees on the golf course. If we want
344 to replace that, if you chose number one and you even went to go do a traditional tree
345 planting to replace habitat, that's at the top end of your range if I understand it correctly.
346 The low end of your range might be going and planting a high volume of trees on a
347 residential street or in a park somewhere. That's the lower end of your range if I
348 understood you. The high end of your range, where you get up to \$1.3 million, is when
349 you are going into a more difficult, unknown terrain of an open space and trying to
350 establish a habitat. Is my understanding correct or, if it's not, can you clarify what does
351 cost \$1.3 million?
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353 Mr. Passmore: \$1.3 million is if we had to do 2,000 individual tree plantings. If we're
354 doing one or two large scale tree plantings regardless of where they are, we can drive that
355 cost down closer to the \$200,000 number. For instance, if we were planting 2,000 trees
356 on the golf course, which we don't want to do but I'm just saying if, then it would be
357 closer to \$200,000. If we were planting those 2,000 trees in 1,000 tree increments
358 anywhere in the City, we can still get the cost down to that \$200,000 range. It's only
359 when we start planting trees as individuals, we plant three trees here, five trees there, two
360 trees over somewhere else, that the cost starts elevating.
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362 Commissioner Crommie: Thank you.
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364 Chair Lauing: Other questions before we get to comments?
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366 Commissioner Reckdahl: I had a question.
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368 Chair Lauing: Yes, Commissioner Reckdahl.
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370 Commissioner Reckdahl: In the report it mentions the plan to bury some of the trees on
371 the golf course. Does that save money or does that cost money?
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Mr. Passmore: That actually would reduce the ecosystem services calculation.

Commissioner Reckdahl: I'm talking about construction costs for the golf course.

Mr. Passmore: We're predicting that will save money on the construction costs, and it will also perpetually sequester the carbon contained in those trees. That's why I'm saying it wouldn't be as much of an impact to bury them environmentally, plus we're saving some construction costs. We decided that that was kind of a no-brainer to make that choice and opt to bury some of the trees that we can.

Commissioner Reckdahl: They're buried deep enough that there's not enough oxygen to decompose? Why do they not breakdown?

Mr. Passmore: They breakdown very, very slowly at a rate that the carbon is absorbed into the soil, because soil has some amount of carbon storage.

Commissioner Reckdahl: The protection of the seedlings, how would that go forth? What would be the process for protecting the seedlings? Are you talking about watering them or are there other things?

Mr. Passmore: No. Primarily it's caging them so that they're not damaged by animal predation and then monitoring them.

Commissioner Reckdahl: What type of animals? Is it deer?

Mr. Passmore: Yes, deer primarily.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay. On page 8 there's a table there with four different types of trees. Can you translate those? Are there common names for those? Page 8, table 4.

Mr. Passmore: Right. You're talking about the replacement trees that are part of the landscape plan for the golf course. The Rhamnus californica is a California coffee berry. It's a small-growing native tree. The Myrica is a California wax myrtle, also a small-growing native tree. It's actually more common when we get closer to the Bay. The Ceanothus, another native-growing, small tree. Then the Quercus agrifolia is the coast live oak. The planting of those large coast live oaks is restricted to the buffer mound between what is anticipated to be the golf course and the other area yet to be determined, described as athletic areas.

Commissioner Reckdahl: That is because of salt tolerance or why are they restricted?

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Mr. Passmore: It was determined that large-scale trees were not appropriate for the design within the main body of the course. Some were placed on that buffer mound area.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Of these four, would these be native to the Baylands area? If we came here 200 years ago, would they be down there naturally or are they not natural to that particular area?

Mr. Passmore: Certainly the California wax myrtle, maybe fewer of the California coffee berry, probably fewer yet of the Ceanothus. It would be very rare that a coast live oak would establish itself in the Baylands other than in a riparian area such as next to the creek. You may have had a rare live oak next to the creek where it could have an adequate supply of fresh water.

Commissioner Reckdahl: How do these trees compare for salt tolerance? If we plant them in the golf course, do we have any concerns that they'll be healthy 20 years from now?

Mr. Passmore: The live oaks going up on the buffer amount, that's not really a concern. The other three species are all fairly salt tolerant.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay, good. Okay, that's all for now.

Chair Lauing: I had one pretty obvious question. Ultimately the Council has to come up with policy. First a minor comment, I found the English in this report kind of difficult to decipher. It may be my question is that. From the get go of the Executive Summary, it basically says this mitigation plan is going to do about half of what is there right now. It's articulated on pages 8 and 9 where, I think Keith just referenced this, 91 percent of the trees are going to be considered small. Obviously big ones would be better. Then it quantifies all the reduction on pollutants, storm water, etc. Am I just misreading this that that's just literally in the golf course acreage and then the rest of it we have an opportunity to restore that other places?

Mr. Passmore: Correct. That is just for the golf course. It does not include the value of burying some of the trees so that we reduce our carbon footprint impact there. It only includes the trees that we told them were in the landscape plan, referring back to that table 4. Right, that's only the golf course.

Chair Lauing: So the rest of it is made up with Byxbee and Arastradero and so on?

Mr. Passmore: Correct. That's where we make up the difference between what's represented in this report and what's required for full mitigation.

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Chair Lauing: Okay. A related point is when they say that this difference is, I guess it's supposed to say accrue as opposed to accrual, annually, what's the math on that? Are we saying this is a comparison so that you multiply the delta by 10 relative to the golf course replacement situation?

Mr. Passmore: You can. Typically with environmental projects your timeframe is much longer, but the ten-year timeframe is specified for canopy replacement in the Tree Technical Manual. So we defaulted to that as a conservative estimate of what would be required to mitigate the impact.

Chair Lauing: Okay, thank you. Other questions from any Commissioners?

Commissioner Reckdahl: I just had one more follow-up. Doing the math, we have to get about 6 acres of trees, at least on the first page. If you look on the first page at the second row, that 264,000 square feet, that's 6 acres.

Mr. Passmore: Yes.

Commissioner Reckdahl: On the next page at the map, we have a variety of sites, some of which we may use, some we may not, that range anywhere from 2 1/2 to 1/2 acre, 1/4 acre. How much grassland is up at Arastradero Preserve right now? Do you know? Daren, do you know how much?

Chair Lauing: What was the question?

Commissioner Reckdahl: How much grassland is up at Arastradero?

Daren Anderson: Daren Anderson, Open Space, Parks and Golf. Approximately 100 acres of the 700-acre Preserve.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay, thank you. I was wondering how serious is this. The worst-case scenario, if we put all 6 acres up in Arastradero, how much of an impact would that be? If you have 100 acres of grassland and you're losing 6 acres, it doesn't seem to me that that would be a large impact to Arastradero, particularly since that was native oak land. We aren't planning to carpet all of Arastradero with oaks, so to me that seems, Deirdre, you're shaking your head.

Commissioner Crommie: The whole point of having these stakeholder meetings was to, the original plan was to put about 2,000 trees in Arastradero Preserve to do this mitigation. A high volume, maybe that would reduce the cost of the mitigation. The conservation groups have weighed in very articulately about that, saying that's not a good idea to put that many trees in Arastradero. Arastradero long, long ago used to be a

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woodlands habitat. Right now it's a grasslands habitat and it's a thriving grasslands habitat. From what I've learned from the experts in conservation is that that's what we're missing out in California. We have a shortage of grassland habitat. The idea from the stakeholders is it's not a good idea to plant thousands of trees, maybe it was even up to 5,000 at one point. I guess the original idea was 5,000-7,000. I've heard various numbers, but huge numbers and people said that's not a good idea for the ecosystem in Arastradero. We had these series of stakeholder meetings and what came out of the stakeholder meetings was a tiered approach. The approach was to do something in the Arastradero Preserve. A good compromise was to protect naturally occurring saplings, just help the natural regeneration by protecting those trees that have sprouted. Another idea was we should do something closer to the site where the problem is taking place. There's been a huge amount of interest among the stakeholders to actually do something in the Baylands. The problem is that we don't need more trees in the Baylands. Those are not natural. That's the conundrum. We want to do something in the Baylands, but we don't want to plant a whole lot of trees. The idea is to do this equivalency and replace trees with grassland habitat in the Baylands. That's what the stakeholders came up with, that compromise to do something in Arastradero and something in the Baylands. If we can move into the discussion into the discussion about that?

Chair Lauing: If you're done with your questions, that's where we going to go.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Yes, I'm done with my questions.

Chair Lauing: Did you want to launch the discussion?

Commissioner Crommie: Yes, I would like to. I was the only Commissioner who was able to make it to the last stakeholder meeting, so I wanted to report back. There was a lot of dissent with the ecosystems report. I'm not sure any stakeholder was very happy with the report. I know that Mr. Passmore completely understood the limitations. We all discussed those. It's just we have to do our best with the information we have at hand. This number of \$130,000 is really a bare minimum kind of mitigation. The group definitely felt it was way to low because it just doesn't take into account all the different parameters and it doesn't get at the replacement costs. To do a valuable mitigation would be to replace what's being lost. What was discussed was this minimum idea of at least a couple hundred thousand. If we can as a Commission, I think it would be nice if we can banter this about a bit and decide maybe some number. Now, where I think it should be is around \$500,000. The reason I would say that is because that gets closer toward this idea of replacement. Really to get some habitat restoration value, we need to go high enough that we can be effective in that effort. If we look at what's being done around us, we're talking about \$1 million to landscape the water processing center. That's a lot of money, and I know Palo Alto is not paying all of it. Doing restoration is very costly. I think that we have a lot to gain from doing the restoration. We are going to get a lot

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more use out of the Baylands. I think that we already have some money to test out this concept of planting islands of native plants. We have a CIP for that. By using mitigation money, we can expand that approach and really get some bang for the buck out there. If you put in too little money, I think you might end up with nothing at the end. I think a good approach would be maybe to protect 500 saplings in Arastradero Preserve from that money. To have a pot of money and put some of that toward Arastradero and then put some of it toward restoration in a way where we can get at some kind of replacement cost and be realistic about what it might take. Another thing I'll throw out is we have a CIP on our agenda today which is to redo a parking lot for the golf course which costs \$600,000. If we can put money into a parking lot, which again is a valuable asset, the golf course is being remodeled and the reason we want to spend money on a golf course parking lot is to get the full value out of it. I'd say if we're going to do a mitigation where we're actually creating habitat, which is very hard to create, we need to spend the money to do it effectively.

Chair Lauing: Other comments from Commissioners? Commissioner Markevitch.

Commissioner Markevitch: I think I had mentioned this before. If you're looking to just bump up numbers of trees, it's kind of piecemeal, but look into when you redo the parking lot at the golf course to put as many trees in there as you can. That's great to have shaded parking areas and I think it would go a long way towards helping balance this out a little more.

Mr. Passmore: Yeah, there's certainly a lot of opportunity with the amount of parking that's out at the golf course right now. If we employ some techniques to get more viable soil under those parking spaces, then we could have a fairly dense tree canopy where right now there's almost none in the parking lot.

Chair Lauing: I'd like to ask a question on the comment. To Commissioner Crommie, that 500,000, are you saying that's intended for all kinds of restoration or trees specifically?

Commissioner Crommie: No, not trees specifically by any means.

Chair Lauing: Okay. That's all I wanted to clarify.

Commissioner Crommie: I would say to go by the priorities that came out of the stakeholder meetings. It was carefully vetted how the priorities should be organized. I think there was good consensus on the prioritization. The final meeting we vetted it even more. I'd say that lump sum would be for all the projects on the priority list. Again I'm proposing the 500,000 to get at a range rather than the bare minimum.

Chair Lauing: Other comments? Mr. Reckdahl.

Commissioner Reckdahl: On the second page where we show the map of the different candidates, can you give me some insight into what are the most likely pros and cons of those five sites?

Mr. Passmore: Those sites were all very accessible. The better access that we have, the more that we can monitor the site, the lower the cost of actually taking out all of the invasive plants that would prohibit the natives from getting established, the more that we're able to monitor those sites and maintain those sites. There was some really distinct advantages of those sites. Plus they were in sore need of restoration. They met a lot of the parameters that the constituent group was looking for as far as Baylands habitat restoration.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Are there any high priority versus low priority or are they all equal?

Mr. Passmore: I think they're all fairly equal. Obviously we would have to do more exploration once we decide upon a final funding amount so that we can see how far we can stretch that. Also it's yet to be determined if there's any sources of leveraging that we might be able to use to stretch mitigation money a little bit further.

Commissioner Reckdahl: What do you mean by that?

Mr. Passmore: Possibly grants, partnerships with organizations that are already doing Baylands restoration that might be willing to partner with us on cost. There's two very large restoration efforts that are ramping up right now, starting to acquire some funding. There's potential that we could partner with someone and really stretch this money out further.

Commissioner Reckdahl: What about other spots like the levees? You can't plant trees in the levees. Can you plant bushes there? Are there any types of other vegetation that could be allowed on the levees?

Mr. Passmore: I think that's a remote possibility.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Just because of the structural issues with the roots?

Mr. de Geus: Yeah. It's actually not permissible to plant any trees on the levee.

Commissioner Reckdahl: How about shrubs or other cover?

Mr. de Geus: It's pretty restrictive.

Mr. Teresi: Of course with shrubs you wouldn't expect too much of root penetration. But the fact that it covers the surface makes it harder to inspect them. It's important to be able to inspect them for cracks and for rodent holes and things like that. That's partly why you can't plant on the levee.

Mr. Anderson: If I can add to that. Are you talking about sections on this map, section A for example?

Commissioner Reckdahl: A is not a levee, is it?

Mr. Anderson: There's a levee there. It's not a flood protection levee. But that's one example where, not just planting on the levee but there's also 40 feet between that and before you get to water, where we do have naturally occurring shrubs. Ones like that would certainly be part of the palette of restoration that happens there. It wouldn't all be low-growing marsh plants, because those typically taper up where you're closer to salt marsh that you get tidal inundation. Those are where you get your more halophytes or salt-tolerant plants. As you slowly get to higher ground, long before you get to the toe of the levee, like I say there's 40-50 feet in some areas, that's where you get some of those upland shrub varieties. You could have a wider array of plants that would fit into that restoration palette.

Commissioner Reckdahl: What's the path forward then? Is there a formal plan that gets submitted or who's at bat?

Mr. de Geus: Walter can expand on this, but I think Walter will have another meeting with the stakeholders committee and will take feedback from this Commission back to that committee. I think that will help them move forward. Then the plan is sometime in early January to have a complete mitigation plan that we can include in the final EIR for Council certification.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Okay. And some of that would be performed with the golf course and some of it would be performed in future years?

Mr. de Geus: The actual mitigation itself?

Commissioner Reckdahl: The planning itself.

Mr. de Geus: Correct.

Chair Lauing: Abbie, do you have a comment?

Commissioner Knopper: Thank you so much for the report. It's very thoughtful. I think that a lot of the questions or the, I don't want to use the word frustration, is that there isn't a 1:1. If we replace this canopy versus doing this, it's not a direct 1:1 ratio. I think that when we're considering our comments and thoughts as a Commission, we have to think about strategically what we want to accomplish here. To Deirdre's point earlier, here's a rare opportunity for us to really make an impact in an area with this mitigation that has been lacking a little bit. That restoration would be very helpful for all of the reasons that you've laid out with regard to habitat and greenhouse issues, etc. I think that we just have to, or at least this is what I'm thinking I have to do, is think about the priority with regard to what as a City or as a Commission we want to accomplish. Yes, obviously we want to try to preserve as much canopy as possible, but that isn't the only thing that we should be thinking about. We have to be thinking about this on a long-term environmental impact. That differential between the cost, the \$200,000 versus \$1.3 million, I mean that's a huge financial differential. I would hate for us to make a recommendation to Council that's a minimum. Again, money for projects like this is very difficult to come by and it takes many years and time and meeting. To get the most bang for our buck, so to speak, I think it's something that we really need to consider. Whether its \$200,000 or \$500,000, keeping the stakeholders' thoughtful comments and expertise as well as the staff's expertise in mind is very important too.

Chair Lauing: The one comment I just want to make is that this is Palo Alto, so the phrase could be "Trees Are Us". I don't want to be flip and say this is the most important issue in Palo Alto, because there's a ton of them that are. This is really almost a symbol of the City. To the extent that we can address this and try to get close to, over time, full mitigation somehow, whether that's multiple discussions of budget committee and so on.

Mr. Passmore: Just one final comment. I know we're all trying to arrive at a very holistic approach. Instead of just doing a 1:1 replacement of trees with trees, we're trying to do something that is more appropriate for the ecosystem of the Baylands. We know that that golf course did not naturally establish itself there, but we're trying to have a brighter future than what we have today. That's where the real challenge is. We can't adequately describe all of these values. An acre of Bay habitat may be worth more than an acre of trees in that same area. It's not necessarily an apples for apples calculation. We've done a lot of work between staff and our constituents who have been very involved to try to arrive at an approach where we do have a basis to establish an amount. I think that's another challenge. We have to establish justification to arrive at a certain dollar figure that is then going to be applied to these projects. It's definitely not an easy task and I appreciate the thoughtfulness of all of the Commissioners on this very complex issue.

Chair Lauing: Very fair. Thank you.

Commissioner Hetterly: I'd just like to say that I do like the idea of the hybrid approach. I'm happy to hear that there seems to be a lot of consensus around that. Obviously the numbers are where we run into the trouble. It's hard to compare. Surely other jurisdictions have run into exactly this same problem doing development in the Baylands. Have they not been as attentive to mitigation or have they come up with a way to value restoration versus traditional tree planting?

Mr. Passmore: I think we're dealing with a project of unprecedented scale here. Our traditional development activities even in the Baylands are impacting many, many fewer trees. You're talking about projects that are large construction-type projects. They have the opportunity to put trees back in a fairly dense manner in their development project, flanking their parking lots and between buildings. Whereas we don't have that same opportunity in the golf course if we really want to employ this more Baylands-looking design.

Commissioner Hetterly: When you talk about using the ecosystem services as a baseline for coming up with ideas about how to value various things, would it be fair for us to expect then a recommendation might come forward suggesting we do this much containerized tree planting, this much seedling protection, this much habitat restoration? Using that ecosystems model, that's how much value we would get from that distribution of improvements?

Mr. Passmore: We could calculate some of the benefits, but some of the benefits, as I mentioned, are qualitative. We can't calculate them.

Commissioner Hetterly: But to the best of your ability, you would use whatever resources you have under the ecosystems analysis to compare? So we can look at a chart, for example, and say, okay, if you're going to put this much money into the seedling restoration and this much money into tree planting and this much money into restoration, we can have some idea of what ecosystem benefits we would expect to get out of those based on the ability the model provides.

Mr. Passmore: With limitations, yes.

Commissioner Crommie: I wanted to follow up on Commissioner Hetterly's point. A problem that I had with the ecosystem services report, if you go to table 3 and here's where the ecosystems group quantified the parameters that they find quantifiable. There's a list of them starting with storm water management and going hence through the table. All of those come up with dollar values and you can see those dollar values on the right-hand side of the table. What's really interesting is when you get down to air quality, which is the second line from the bottom, you now have these negative numbers. What happens here, if you read the report, is that certain trees emit products that combine with

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products in the air and produce smog. Let's say you're cutting down a bunch of those trees that happen to do that, that gives you this negative value that you have to subtract from everything. You get all these benefits, but then you get these dollar amounts that you need to pay to account for what you're losing. You then need to subtract from that to account from what you're gaining. Here the gain is the elimination of the pollutant trees. This is all very technical and it makes perfect sense when you're talking about pollutants. But if you're talking about a bird who's flown in from the Arctic who just wants a place to land, they don't care if they're landing on a polluting tree, which I take are some of these eucalyptus. They just want a tree to land and to rest for the night. That's what you can't quantify here. I have a lot of problems with these values, because it's really only a partial list. It's trying to get at something that hasn't really been fully developed yet. I think it's an interesting exercise. I think it needs to evolve further to be highly productive in terms of coming up with numbers. I think it allows us to at least quantify where possible and then have a baseline that we then need to jump from to go into the discussion of what's not quantifiable and why it's not quantifiable. I think we can still make a case to go beyond this report.

Commissioner Ashlund: I think what Chair Lauing and what other Commissioners have said about the importance of justifying tree loss or mitigating tree loss and the importance to Palo Alto is a huge issue. If we overlook it now, we would definitely hear it from the community. I understand absolutely the value of the habitat restoration and the cost and the risk involved in that. I'm glad that we're proposing a hybrid approach here. I'm just wondering if we couldn't look into some longer-term mitigation that, as part of this mitigation which doesn't replace tree for tree by any means, we could contribute to trees or dollars to Canopy or some organization that could have a longer-term impact on the canopy in Palo Alto. I don't know particularly, Rob, if that's something that we can suggest as a Commission, but I wanted to throw it out there for discussion, if others are interested.

Chair Lauing: Rob, did you want to respond?

Mr. de Geus: Everyone's had their comments I think. I just wanted to see if I can understand where there seems to be consensus. I think there is here on the three tiers that the stakeholders came up. The first tier being of most importance is establishing new trees, native or natural, naturally simulated landscape within the golf course. Number two is restore and substantially improve native Baylands spaces near the golf course. The last one being protect naturally occurring seedlings in Arastradero. It seemed like everyone was fairly supportive of those tiers in that order.

Mr. de Geus: The real question is the money, \$200,000 or more. That's where the stakeholders group is going to have to wrestle through that. I do want to mention that the budget is not endless. It's a big project. The cost of redoing the golf course is at \$8.5

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million right now. The golf course operates in a way that it has to fully pay for itself. The mitigation money, whatever that is, would need to be paid off by the golf course business, and there are limitations there. That's not to say we shouldn't do the right thing. We absolutely should. We need to do meaningful mitigation. I don't know that it's an opportunity to do everything we would love to do out in the Baylands.

Commissioner Knopper: I had a quick question. There's isn't a line item in the golf course budget for mitigation, correct? So that \$8.5 million doesn't include, that's just the golf course.

Mr. de Geus: That's correct.

Commissioner Knopper: This is money that's going to have to come from a different source to be put into this project.

Mr. de Geus: It'll come from the loan that the City will take out to pay for the golf course reconstruction. It'll add to the cost of that loan.

Chair Lauing: Thanks again to all City staff who presented this and is working on it and will continue to do so.

3. Update on public outreach for the Scott Park capital improvement project.

Daren Anderson: Good evening. Daren Anderson, Open Space, Parks and Golf. I'll give you a quick recap of where we came from on this CIP originally to the latest information. My colleague Peter Jensen, the City's landscape architect, has a revised design for the park and he'll walk you through that momentarily. Again this was a 2012 CIP originally intended to just replace the older, damaged park amenities. In August 2012 we had our first public meeting and at this meeting bocce was suggested as an amenity we would add to the park. We did an online survey in July 2013. About 85 percent of the respondents said yes, they supported bocce; however, there were numerous comments that highlighted the impacts from residents who live very close to the park, saying there are other factors such as noise and parking that could seriously be detrimental to the neighbor if you added something like bocce. On August 27, 2013 staff brought a park improvement ordinance to the Commission with a design for Scott that did include a bocce. The Commission did not support it. We formed an ad hoc committee and hosted another public meeting on November 21, 2013. Peter Jensen created the revised design for that public meeting. The meeting really focused on creating consensus around a lot of the items that were in question, but we thought we could get their agreement on. That would be moving the picnic areas out from the more secluded area, adding bike racks, reconfiguring the basketball court, and adding elements like sand and water to the sand feature. The meeting was very successful. We did reach consensus on numerous items. I'll wait for

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Peter to pull up the revised design so you can see those. In that aspect the public meeting was a great success. In another regard, it was also successful in elucidating that we didn't have consensus on the bocce. It gave an opportunity for these various stakeholders and residents to say this is how we feel about it. They had the opportunity to have a back-and-forth both with the ad hoc committee and to some degree with the advocates for bocce. They went back and forth and had a bit of a dialog. Where it ended was without consensus on that one. You had the pro bocce enthusiasts basically saying this is the appropriate site. We think it's a quiet and appropriate activity for this park. We believe that residents in the neighborhood adjoining parks are to be expecting some noise associated with recreation in those areas. Conversely, those that did not feel bocce was appropriate highlighted that noise is an impact and that they want to retain the character of a quiet, more passive park like Scott and highlighted concerns about potential parking issues as well. What staff is really hoping to get from the Commission tonight are really feedback on this design with of course the special focus on how to handle this bocce situation. Do we add it? Do we not? Ultimately we'd come back to the Commission with a final revised design with a park improvement ordinance to move forward and go on to Council. As I mentioned at that public meeting, Peter Jensen presented a revised design that incorporated some of the elements that we'd heard from stakeholders including the Commission. In it you can see, as you turn to Attachment B of your handout, I believe Peter's got the hard copy out here, you'll see that the bocce has been moved to expand that turf area. Peter can point to that perhaps and illustrate that you've got a larger, more usable turf area. This was generally met with agreement with the stakeholders at that public meeting. You can see that the playground is no longer in the rear of the park, in that more hidden area. Again this was feedback from the community, saying this is a secluded area. It's not seen by police who drive by and it sometimes draws in people who are doing inappropriate activities. By pulling the playground, and you can see the sand, the swings and another element that was requested and added in this most recent Attachment B design is the spring toy. It was a requested item and we were able to accommodate that. In the sand area, there was some talk of can you have a water element there. The ad hoc committee very wisely said you've got a drinking fountain adjacent to the sand area. Rather than adding an element that sometimes can be expensive and problematic with flooding, can you add a little spigot at the bottom that would both service dogs for water as well as kids with buckets to bring water over to the sand area. That seemed like a great suggestion and that again has been incorporated into the design. Another element was a suggestion by a participant in the meeting, a vegetated row separating the basketball court from that playground and picnic areas so that balls wouldn't come by and inappropriately hit folks who are sitting or eating at the picnic area. Peter, do you have any other thoughts on elements to the design that were modified?

Peter Jensen: In general, from the comments that we received from the first meeting and the conversations about the bocce ball, that's kind of where it led to this design, which is

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definitely more of a full, revised renovation of the playground than what we talked about before. I think the first design really just looked at the amenities that were there and left most of those amenities in the locations they were. There is currently a little asphalt-paved picnic area that sits back by this Heritage oak tree. Well, in the design I think we were going to do that again. Since we have the ability to look at that now, that's something that I would probably move away from that oak tree and create some more permeable surfacing. That then started to drive this design where we started to use the main view corridor into that park to really capture the main activity in that user area there, for people of the community being able to see that it's located there as well as it being patrolled and looked at. Placing the bocce ball court more at the back allowed the turf back there to be reconfigured in more of a usable, larger space which again adds and enhances the park itself. I felt that in the meeting the consensus was they liked this new layout that we had. It's really about the bocce ball court now and if it's going to be part of the park itself or if it goes away and becomes an expanded turf area. That's kind of the other option.

Mr. Anderson: Thank you, Peter. The only other thing I'll add to that is there was a nice benefit of the public meeting where, unaffiliated with the park design itself, everyone in the entire room said you know what would be terrific is if you could address the problem of that crosswalk on Channing at the Scott Park junction, where numerous cars come by without noticing that there's a crosswalk. It's a threat to pedestrians and bicyclists. Staff met with the Transportation Department and talked it over. It's now on the short list of places where they can potentially add flashing beacons much like near the Channing House. That one looks like it will happen. With that, we turn it over to the Commission for questions and comments.

Chair Lauing: Maybe the ad hoc committee should speak. I just want to thank the majority of this Commission who showed up at this meeting. There were four Commissioners and six residents. No, I'm teasing. Twelve or fifteen and two or three staff members. It was great.

Commissioner Hetterly: Do we have any public comment?

Chair Lauing: I don't know. Do we have any public comment for this item? Okay.

Commissioner Hetterly: I think one of the tough questions about bocce ball that we struggled with on the ad hoc committee was whether or not this was the kind of decision that would be aided by the Long Range Master Plan, helping us identify whether this is a broader need in the community, and if this is the right location or if maybe it would be better at a bigger park. This is a tiny park for increasing intensity of use. I think the conclusion we reached was that it actually did make sense to move forward with bocce at this site, primarily because there was such strong support in the neighborhood. It gave us

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an opportunity to test out the pilot, if you will, whether it is really successful or this is a passing fancy and after six months nobody ever uses it again. It was unclear whether we would get this level of detail from the Long Range Master Plan on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. Our feeling was that it did make sense to go ahead and try out bocce at this site at this time. We also liked all the other additions. Aside from the vegetation between the basketball court and the picnic tables, I think Peter also added that whole row of bushes on the far side of the bocce court. We're hoping all of those new plantings will help with some of the reverberated noise from basketball as well as bocce. Interestingly, those of you who were there probably remember some of the strongest opponents to bocce did not object to the basketball court. They were fine with the experience of having basketball there. It was really the increased intensity that they were concerned about. I think we have some folks with noise concerns and some folks with intensity of use concerns.

Commissioner Reckdahl: It makes us a little uncomfortable the fact that there is a kind of split decision in this neighborhood. We can't let that stop us from doing the right thing. I think in this case the right thing is to do bocce. I think the current design that Peter put together is very nice. It'll be very usable for anyone who doesn't want bocce. Bocce is along the edge of the park and will not affect the functionality of the park at all. You still have a nice turf area both in the top part next to the bocce, but also you'll have a turf area down below too. I think this will be a very usable design. I think it's very nice. The point I want to make about the lack of consensus is that when you say lack of consensus, it makes it sound like there's hot debate. In all the meetings, there's really been two people who have been against it. There have been on the order of ten people for it. That's a very good ratio. I think that the neighbors have shown their dedication. They've come to several meetings requesting bocce. I think this is a very good location. The park is very small. There's not a lot you can do there. You can't play baseball or some of the larger sports. Bocce does fit very well. It's a neighborhood park. There'd be activity that you could do. You just walk down the street and play your bocce. I think it fits well with the park. I think it will be used because the neighbors showed such good support. I really think that this park design should go forward with the bocce. It'll give us good evidence whether bocce maintenance costs will be troublesome, will it be used. It'll be a very good pilot program. If it works well, we can extend it to other parks. The other thing is that the people who were complaining about it, it wasn't like this park was constructed after they moved in. They moved in with the park there. They knew the park was going to be used. That's the purpose of a park, is to use it. Even though I feel some sympathy for the noise, I think the added noise for the bocce will be very small. I think the number of times they close their windows because of the bocce noise will be far outnumbered by the number of times they close it for the lawnmowers that are cutting the lawn or for the people playing in the tot area. I think the noise that bocce will add is very small. I think two years from now they'll accept it and it'll not be a big deal. I think this is a very good decision.

960
961 Commissioner Hetterly: One other thing that we were concerned about was we didn't
962 want to be developing a facility that would end up being exclusively for the use of a
963 limited number of neighbors. We talked some about access to the equipment you need to
964 be able to bocce. I think, Daren, you were going to look into whether we could have a set
965 that you could check out at the library with the Downtown Library being a block away.
966 Were you able to make any progress on that?

967
968 Mr. Anderson: I haven't gotten the answer back on that one, but I am looking. There was
969 another question the ad hoc committee mentioned. There's a row of trees on the senior
970 facility basically opposite the playground there. They're older trees and the ad hoc
971 committee said it'd be great if we could get those out of there. They're actually not City
972 trees. They are property of the adjacent owner. We can make contact and see if they're
973 willing to move on those, see if there's an option of replacing some of those older trees
974 that are really in need of replacement. It might be subsequent to this project.

975
976 Chair Lauring: Any other Commissioner comments? Yes.

977
978 Commissioner Knopper: I was the one Commissioner not on the ad hoc committee that
979 went to the meeting. I have to say that I think that this is a great plan. I think that you all
980 really took the neighborhood comments and integrated it. I think it's going to be a
981 wonderful addition to that community. I think that the enthusiastic bocce players will be
982 very happy. I had no idea personally that bocce was such an enthusiastic sport to be
983 excited about, but I'll go try it. You also moved the benches from the last time, because
984 that also came up in the community meeting. I thought that was really great and the little
985 bouncy swing. I really think that this is very well done and really took all the
986 constituents' comments into consideration.

987
988 Commissioner Crommie: I really like this design. I visited the park around the time we
989 had our first meeting on this. In just looking at this design, it's just so much more vibrant
990 than what's there now. I can hardly imagine how many different activities are possible in
991 this small space. I think you've done a beautiful job integrating so many possibilities
992 here. It's a lovely design. I really thought the tot lot was misplaced in this park, sort of in
993 that deep corner. If we're going to recommend the bocce, I think it's in a really nice
994 location in getting the children into a more open area. I also like how this park has a
995 multigenerational appeal. It's a really lovely example of this, where it can hit all different
996 ages and different activity levels. I've been able to play bocce myself and it's a really fun
997 sport. I can attest to that. A couple of questions I have are, I hate to even suggest it, but
998 is there a lot of support for the four tables? How many tables are in the park right now?

999
1000 Mr. Jensen: I believe it's four.
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Mr. Anderson: Some of them are different lengths. There's a few ones there not standard length. The amount of seating capacity is roughly equivalent to what is proposed in this plan. Also that one was discussed at our last public meeting. They asked those questions. How many are there? Is the proximity to the basketball court correct? Are we going to have problems there? It was nice to have that dialog, where there was some back and forth. The group did buy into both the location and the size of that picnic area.

Commissioner Crommie: I was only thinking if you took away two of them, you could expand the tot play area. Is this neighborhood park getting the same square footage of the tot play area that they currently have? Is that staying the same?

Mr. Jensen: I would say yes. It's very close to the same square footage. The amenities that are there now are basically what will be placed back, as far as the tot swing and the bouncy riding toy. The other thing to consider too with the playground itself is that Heritage Park is very close to this playground, which does have a good playground facility. I did look at putting other features, play equipment, a play structure in this playground as well, which could have the possibility of being where the sand is. I felt it was better just to maintain the existing elements due to Heritage Park being so close and that having a bigger, expansive playground at that location.

Commissioner Crommie: I wasn't thinking of a play structure. I was thinking of swings for older children as well. I'm a big proponent of that. I think they're great fun. If it was made larger, you could possibly fit in two extra swings. Again if no one in the community brought that up, I don't think at this point it would be necessary to rethink that. I'd like as we develop parks to really pay attention to having the older swings in parks.

Commissioner Reckdahl: I think one of the issues was that the landing area for older swings is large.

Mr. Jensen: Yes. A bigger kid swing set basically has a much larger fall zone and it takes up a larger area. Much more difficult to incorporate in there. The other difficult part about it is the separation of the tot lot swing as compared to the older kids' swing. Technically they're supposed to be separated instead of put together as one piece of equipment, just because of the size of the kids that are playing on them. Normally what happens is you have two swing sets, one for the older kids, one for the younger kids. Due to this fall zone size again, you take up a very, very large room for that. That's why usually you don't see them bulked together in the same playground. Again that's why we stuck with making this playground a tot lot for kids ages 2-5, instead of allowing another apparatus that would basically increase the age of that playground. Looking again at Heritage Park and it having a swing set there.

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Commissioner Crommie: Again, I just want to clarify, did anyone ask for that kind of swing set?

Mr. Anderson: We did talk about it. It was mentioned. The consensus was let's leave it for tots.

Commissioner Crommie: In the report I think there's a mention of sound barriers around the basketball court. Can you just describe that a little bit? I am sensitive to how much noise basketball does make. That's a wonderful sport, but the people who live near the basketball court now have the tots. I don't know how particularly noisy they are. They also have the picnic tables. In the current situation, do picnic tables exist next to the basketball court or not?

Mr. Anderson: No.

Mr. Jensen: They're in the other corner opposite of the playground.

Commissioner Crommie: I'm very sensitive to just the noise factor for those residents who are getting a net increase in volume of people in that area. Can you just go over how you're planning for that?

Mr. Anderson: We discussed it. There was a couple of questions saying is there any way we can mitigate it. Is there anything you could sort of build up or screen somehow? The truth is no. It's not something you can silence. The one good suggestion Peter had was the existing backboard is an old metal frame that does vibrate and that is a little louder. You might be able to bring the sound down a little bit by putting in a more modern fiberglass unit that doesn't have quite the vibrations. What I heard from the residents was it was the dribbling on the pavement that causes this reverberation in that little horseshoe area that causes some trouble. There isn't a way to mitigate that.

Commissioner Crommie: Thank you.

Mr. Anderson: I should, however, point out there were other residents on Scott who commented they hear the basketballs at their home too and they acknowledge that it is loud. They like it. It signifies people are out playing and having fun and they like that element. I should also note that the gentleman who said he represented the condominiums across the street said basketball is not an issue. It's been there for 25 years or whatever the case has been, and they're content with it. He just didn't want bocce added.

Chair Lauing: A couple of very quick questions. In the new design are we plus or minus on turf?

Mr. Anderson: It would be minus, but it's reconfigured in a way that makes it more usable.

Chair Lauing: So it's minus in terms of net turf from the last plan that included the bocce court?

Mr. Anderson: That's correct. I'm sorry. From the last one that had bocce? It would be about the same.

Mr. Jensen: I would say it's pretty close. Again though I think the configuration of the new plan does make that turf more usable. Out there now it kind of meanders around and makes these little pockets of turf that are tiny areas of grass that aren't as usable as a bigger, more unified space.

Chair Lauing: Net change on cost for this plan?

Mr. Anderson: I don't know if we have a revised plan yet. I think it's in the same ballpark.

Chair Lauing: Other comments? Nope? Good to go. Bring it back next month.

Mr. Anderson: Okay. Excellent. I just want to confirm the general consensus that we're looking generally positive about both the design and bocce. Thank you so much.

Chair Lauing: Unless you can get one more playing field in the middle there.

Mr. Jensen: I can't make space.

4. Debrief City Council/Commission Study Session and consider adding additional Ad Hoc Committees.

Chair Lauing: The Vice Chair and I put our notes together and came up with a list. She had much better notes than I did, but together we have a list of stuff and you guys can add to that. We have one Council Member with us to help us remember these things. I just want to remind everybody we are televised, so be nice to all these good Council Members that are working so hard. The one thing that came up again, proposed by us, is some new activity to look at, kind of shared-use dog runs. The way of trying to work them into parks is they come up for renovation. That just hasn't worked either because the EIR didn't allow us to do that or space didn't allow us to do that or whatever. That's a first and obvious one that I think we should talk about taking action on. Yes, no? The obvious thing to me is to put together an ad hoc and launch on this thing.

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Commissioner Knopper: I'm sorry. I obviously wasn't at the meeting with the City Council. What you're asking is should this even be a discussion point for the Commission?

Chair Lauing: What action should we be taking on the issue of shared-use dog parks? The logical one is to put together an ad hoc and get some momentum around that with the community and with various options in terms of location and just kind of get on with that one. It was very well received, I think, by Council in terms of that's innovative, let's see what we can figure out on that and come back to us.

Commissioner Crommie: It's kind of coming full circle. I sat on the last ad hoc committee for the dog parks. Did anyone else here sit on that? I know Commissioner Walsh and I and maybe Commissioner Losch. It's coming full circle because that was the last thing that we examined on that ad hoc committee. We were very excited about shared use.

Chair Lauing: Your career might not be over. Here's another opportunity.

Commissioner Crommie: I'm not sure I'm going to go on that committee. I can just tell you that the reason we moved away from it was we felt like we had some opportunities with a lot of parks coming up for renovations. Maybe we could go in the direction of trying to get the real thing. We know that has not borne the fruit that maybe we'd hoped for. I think it's good to go back to it. There are a lot of examples of shared use to look at. One very close by we all talk about in Menlo Park. We also looked at some of the literature coming out of San Francisco. I believe they were moving in that direction as well. I think it's the right thing to do, to form a subcommittee.

Chair Lauing: Okay. Other comments on that? No dissent. Go ahead, Keith.

Commissioner Reckdahl: One of the things the Council is concerned about is just making sure we do the due diligence and do the community outreach and make sure we come to a consensus. Some people may not want shared use and let them express their opinions on that.

Chair Lauing: Okay.

Commissioner Crommie: One other question. One thing that didn't come up was the use of school yards for this. Is that just off the, that would never be a shared use.

Commissioner Knopper: I was PTA president.

Commissioner Crommie: I want to say informally I know that all schools are being used for areas for dog play.

Commissioner Markevitch: Right, informally.

Commissioner Crommie: So that's just too messy of a topic?

Commissioner Markevitch: Oh, you have no idea. The school that I was in when I was PTA president, Addison, had the worst problem with people who didn't clean up after their dogs. It was just horrible beyond belief. Moving onto Jordan, that was also an issue there.

Chair Lauing: Theoretically an ad hoc committee could evaluate this.

Commissioner Markevitch: It could, it could.

Chair Lauing: You got good feedback.

Commissioner Markevitch: Yeah. I certainly get a lot of feedback from the school community on that one if you need it.

Chair Lauing: So people that would be interested in working on this ad hoc is the next question.

Commissioner Knopper: I'll do it.

Chair Lauing: Okay. Abbie's one. We need at least two. Commissioner Markevitch, Okay. That feedback will go with you then.

Commissioner Ashlund: Can I ask a clarification question? On the shared use of fields, I definitely thought that was a good suggestion as well. Council Member Holman had mentioned about potential use of Sterling Park or Sterling Canal. Does that preclude that or would that still be considered?

Chair Lauing: Nope. That would just be one of the locations that would be considered by the ad hoc.

Commissioner Ashlund: Okay, thank you.

Commissioner Knopper: Can I ask a question since I wasn't there? Part of the ad hoc is renovating the Mitchell Park dog park that's currently there.

Chair Lauing: I think that'd be up to you guys.

Commissioner Knopper: Can that be part of it?

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Chair Lauing: The idea was to look at shared use specifically as an issue rather than renovation. But if you come up with that, then I don't see any reason to exclude it. That'd be my opinion.

Commissioner Knopper: Okay.

Commissioner Hetterly: You would consult with Daren Anderson on that as well. I know he's been through hoops and jumped over hurdles and struggled mightily with Mitchell Park over the years. You don't want to duplicate all that effort.

Chair Lauing: Okay, good. Abbie and Pat. Another item that was on our agenda was a discussion of looking at the 10 1/2 acres that's out there in the Baylands. Our suggestion that we not go immediately to building fields, rather we should complete the Master Plan. Some feedback from some Council Members was that they were on record as having kind of voted for fields. At this point we've just gotten the highlights on that from Rob, and thank you for getting that quickly. The motion was really to approve the golf course with space for up to three playing fields. I think I have that almost word for word. That was what was in the motion. Space for up to three playing fields may mean to some Council Members that it's time to install three playing fields or it might mean to other Council Members that that was one of the options and other things should be considered. I've had a chance just to scan the minutes. There was a lot of comment on fields and so on. I'd like to thank Greg Betts who was quoted in there as saying that the Commission would like us to consider a lot of recreational uses, and that was in that set of minutes. We were on record and Rob made comments to that effect as well. What I would suggest on this particular issue is that we already have an ad hoc, which is Jennifer and myself, and this is for us to kind of dig into those minutes and think about that a little bit, and see if we should take any further action here. If so, maybe by next month we could come back with some idea of that, maybe to formalize our loose recommendation in the Study Session around doing the Master Plan first. That's what I'd suggest on that, but obviously I'll welcome comment. Commissioner Crommie.

Commissioner Crommie: Thank you. Did you send an email out with the minutes?

Rob de Geus: No. I just found it recently and I sent it to Chair Lauing. I can send it out to everyone.

Commissioner Crommie: I think that'd be nice. Thank you for looking that up. I agree with what you're saying. I think it's good for you to continue studying that on the ad hoc committee. I thought that Councilwoman Shepherd brought up some interesting points at the end which have been on my mind. To put in a lot of fields there, if we went the direction of five, there's a piece of that that soccer parents really understand, who go to tournaments with their children and you're really getting in the business of running soccer tournaments and renting fields. It would be a regional draw. That's what Councilwoman Shepherd was getting

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at. I know we're going to be gathering information on what gaps we have in services through our Parks and Recreation Master Plan and people's ideas and surveying the community. How do we get at that question of asking people, to appreciate what it really means to create that kind of regional opportunity of tournament play? I was wondering if we could try to drill into that a little bit. It's a really big piece of this conundrum. First of all is the piece do we need them. Well, the first piece is what did they vote on. Do we need them? What does it mean to provide them? Our City hasn't done anything like this before. How do we get more realistic about that? Is there anything the subcommittee can recommend? Maybe it will have to do with how we develop surveying for the Master Plan community outreach.

Chair Lauing: Maybe we should take a crack at that over the next months and come back next month with maybe some of that and maybe not. I don't know, because we just got the minutes and it's just fresh from last week. It could go further and say, if we did fields, this is what we have to evaluate; the location, the youth which some Council Members commented on as well.

Commissioner Crommie: I really want to get in there that phrase, "a regional draw." It's right off the freeway. It will be, believe me, a regional draw.

Chair Lauing: That's part of the tournament issue that you raised, right?

Commissioner Crommie: Right. If we can just feed that word regional into it.

Chair Lauing: Yeah.

Commissioner Reckdahl: I have a question. You're concerned about the regional draw just because it'll be displacing field use and residents won't be able to use them as much, or you just don't like that aspect of play?

Commissioner Crommie: It's just bringing in the traffic and it's monitoring it, staffing it, understanding the economics of it. We've delved in, we've had the kinds of pro formas done by experts on how much of a profit the golf course will yield. This is at a massive cost to build these kinds of fields, and then what return are you going to get from that and do you want part of the return to be produced as a profit-making venture.

Commissioner Reckdahl: We have a Field Use Policy, so we could certainly put that in a certain priority. If we thought we didn't like that, we could make that a lower priority so all the local people get first crack at it.

Chair Lauing: I don't think we're there yet.

Commissioner Crommie: Yeah, those are the kinds of things.

Chair Lauing: Right now we're just kind of digging.

Commissioner Reckdahl: I understand why you're concerned about it. It is big business, the soccer tournaments. Why is that bad if it's not displacing people? If all of Palo Alto's field desires are satisfied and we can also host tournaments, is that a bad thing?

Commissioner Crommie: It's a question of environmental impact. It has to be vetted. To me it poses a series of questions that would need to be answered. One has to go into it carefully by doing the proper evaluations.

Chair Lauing: It feels like we're getting a little bit off subject here. We're creating this ad hoc to start thinking about this. If there's anything that's pertinent.

Commissioner Markevitch: No. I'll discuss it later when the ad hoc committee brings it back.

Chair Lauing: Two items that came up could have CIP implications. One of those is the Lucy Evans which I know is ready for a CIP. Right? The interpretative center. That came up because people wondered if we were going to improve on it. I think that might already be on the list, so the answer is embedded in the CIPs. The second one is the El Camino lights which we'll talk about in a little bit as well. The initiation of that light project has to do with community outreach. We need to get moving on that part before we can get the CIP approved. Greg.

Greg Betts: Good evening. Greg Betts, Director of Community Services. I heard two separate questions about the Lucy Evans Baylands Nature Interpretive Center. I believe Council Member Holman was concerned about the piers underneath the building that's actually holding up the whole structure. There is a CIP that is really intended for the sheathing on the outside. The exterior finish is replacing the wood planks that are weathered. I don't believe the scope of that project, since you would essentially have to lift up the building, move it to replace those piers, is going to do anything for the substructure of the building. Staff will be continuing to evaluate what the status of the piers and foundation and building are to see whether that should be an additional CIP in the future.

Commissioner Markevitch: Greg, I was also curious about, and it would probably be a separate CIP down the road. The boardwalk behind it is really, I was out there and it's falling apart as well. Would that be a separate CIP?

Mr. Betts: There is a CIP for the boardwalk and it's a real big question, whether or not a replacement boardwalk, considering the amount of permitting that would have to go through. When that was built, that quarter mile trail, there was not the BCDC regulations. PG&E has boardwalks all over the place which they're not allowed to rebuild. While we can get permits for maintenance of sections of the boardwalk as we have in the past, if we were to look at

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totaling replacing that and going to a much bigger project, we could put the money into the CIP plan, which has been done. Whether or not we'll actually be allowed to do it by Fish and Wildlife and BCDC, Regional Water Quality, State Lands Commission is a big question.

Commissioner Markevitch: Is that why the trails under the power poles are fenced off? Is it because they're just not safe?

Mr. Betts: That's correct. They're really intended just for maintenance of the PG&E towers. They don't want kids climbing on those electrified towers. There's no handrails to prevent falling off. Take it from one who knows as a kid. There's no provision for those to be public access.

Chair Lauing: The El Camino lights which was, I'm sorry.

Commissioner Ashlund: I'm sorry. On the interpretive center, my recollection from my notes from the meeting are that Council Member Holman and also Council Member Burt felt that it was more than just exterior and boardwalk repairs that they were referring to. Council Member Holman says it's a little sad really. Council Member Burt said needs to be made valuable and thriving again. His example was for school field trips and suggested a possible avenue for collaboration. I'm just wondering do we agendaize that at some point or propose that for a CIP or take any action on that. I thought it was a really good point. I know that the other building, Sea Scouts Building, was redone and that's a separate nonprofit. The interpretive center, I believe, staff was cut a couple of years ago or even made part-time. Just wondering do we do anything with that feedback from at least two Council Members from my notes.

Commissioner Crommie: I wanted to agree with that. I think it is a treasure out there, because it's a draw. It's a focal point. My kids both went to the Baylands camp there, which is beautifully run, very high quality camp. I mean the kids get to go kayaking. They get to go bird watching. It's a way to educate the local kids about the Baylands. My kids never looked at the Baylands the same. I mean they could see so many more things. Their experience was more nuanced. I went there for the first time about 12 years ago and it was okay then, but it's really deteriorated. I would hope that we can put it on our agenda and try to move forward and look at the CIPs that relate to it in a comprehensive way.

Commissioner Hetterly: Would the two of you like to form an ad hoc to start investigating how we might move forward on that issue?

Commissioner Crommie: I'd be willing to do that.

Commissioner Ashlund: I would as well.

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Rob de Geus: There's two issues here. There's an infrastructure issue and a CIP-related issue, a number of issues around the interpretive center. The second part of the conversation was really about operating the center and programming it and that type of thing. We have endured a number of budget reductions, so we're limited in our ability to do that. Possibilities of partnering with nonprofit organizations, we're looking at those more and more. Is there a potential nonprofit like the Audubon Society or something that wants to partner with the City and have an office? That could be something that would be valuable to look at.

Commissioner Hetterly: Are you suggesting that the ad hoc should focus their efforts on thinking about the programming revitalizing piece and that the CIP process has already begun to address the structural issues?

Mr. de Geus: Yeah. You would need to look at both of them. As Director Betts said, the CIP that's in the process now does not completely renovate the entire center for what's needed out there. So it would be both.

Chair Lauing: The El Camino lights and outreach, we can just pick that up again when we get to the CIPs, to address the outreach part of it so that's a bit in context. Another one that came up from our own liaison is the 7 1/2 acres at Las Trancas which is there. There would be substantive issues to evaluate if we wanted to jump into that one. Greg, would you like to articulate your comment and the possibilities there?

Council Member Schmid: There's a very nice 7 1/2 acre plot of land which is just outside the boundaries of Foothill Park. It's owned by the City. It is deed restricted to parks and open space and has not been used essentially for 20 years now. It's a sort of head-scratcher. It's an extension of Las Trancas Valley, which is that big meadow area with the interpretative center. It would run at least another half mile into the mountains. It's a wonderful asset to have, but it's unutilized.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Why was it not made part of the park?

Council Member Schmid: I guess the City Council just never dedicated it. I don't know if there's a reason, but things go on.

Commissioner Markevitch: Is that also part of where the maintenance yard is?

Council Member Schmid: Yes. It's right behind the maintenance yard.

Commissioner Crommie: Was it ever used for anything?

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Council Member Schmid: It was rented for a period of time to homeowners who were doing some building. They were just using it as a supply yard. It's not being rented now. It's sitting there.

Commissioner Crommie: I think it'd be a lovely place to do a walk through.

Council Member Schmid: Yes.

Chair Lauing: Road trip. That would be a pretty good place to start. Why don't we do that?

Commissioner Reckdahl: We're going to have our retreat soon. When do we have the retreat, what month?

Chair Lauing: It varies, February-ish.

Commissioner Hetterly: We could do it then.

Chair Lauing: Yep. Are there more, Jennifer?

Commissioner Hetterly: Sterling Canal.

Chair Lauing: Carry on.

Commissioner Hetterly: I think there was some discussion about the Sterling Canal and what opportunities that offered for such things as a dog park or community garden. This is something that's come up before. We looked at it around the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. I think we were kind of stymied by the confusion of rights-of-way and overlapping public and private land. That certainly is an area of interest and potential great use for a variety of community resources. If there are folks who have the interest in trying to break that down and figure out what the opportunities and obstacles are, I think that would be worthwhile.

Commissioner Crommie: I'm very interested in that. It was fascinating to do a walk through there. We call it Sterling Canal, but it's actually land. The canal must have run underground.

Council Member Schmid: Underneath, yeah.

Commissioner Crommie: It's a nice open space. It an area of town that can use some more amenities. I'd be willing to be on a subcommittee to look at that. Jaime Rodriguez was very fascinating to speak with around that issue. He took a couple of us on a walk through there.

Commissioner Hetterly: For those of you who don't know, the Sterling Canal extends basically from Greer Park all the way south to East Meadow. It goes to Adobe Creek and

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Baron Creek. It connects the creeks essentially from Matadero all the way south to Baron and Adobe where they join at the Lefkowitz Tunnel. It follows those power lines that go the whole length of the way. A lot of folks have expressed interest in having that be an off-road walking and biking route, to be able to stay off the road and get north/south.

Council Member Schmid: I guess I did a walk through once with the City people. The problem is the access points at both ends, the right-of-way has been given away. They are now the parking lots of various commercial businesses.

Commissioner Crommie: I know Jaime Rodriguez was looking into some of those easements in planning for the pedestrian/bicycle bridge. Some of those same issues were coming up. It's right at that connection. I know he was thinking about what he would have to do. I know that there are barriers. Do you think it's still worth pursuing?

Council Member Schmid: I think it's a great resource, yeah, just a magic resource. Off-road bike path in an area that really needs a bike pathway.

Commissioner Crommie: There's been a lot of housing development there too. I think there's a good population base to try to take advantage of something there.

Council Member Schmid: Yeah. Maybe the businesses would be happy to cooperate, to get people there.

Chair Lauing: Any other ones?

Commissioner Hetterly: No, that's all I had.

Chair Lauing: Any other ones from any of you? Yes.

Council Member Schmid: If I could just give a perspective from the Council meeting. I agree with your two points on the dog runs and the golf course. I had noted that there was almost a majority of Council Members who individually brought those points up. Obviously they're on a high scale and you identified those as the two big issues. Rob, you mentioned that you had found the minutes that describe that. I think it would be helpful to also include the City Council on that, since that was an issue in which there was some disagreement among Council Members. To have that would be helpful. Just to pass along that the informal buzz after the meeting was very positive. Council Members got a kick out of the meeting. They got some important information, and I think they're very engaged in issues that you brought up, more so than I've seen with other Commissions. I think the meeting went very well from a Council perspective. Everyone enjoyed it.

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Chair Lauing: Thank you. We tried to give them some things to chew on that were maybe controversial and important. They seemed to chew. It was good for all of us I think. Are there any other questions on the Council session?

Commissioner Ashlund: Where are we leaving forming an ad hoc to look into Sterling Canal?

Chair Lauing: Happy to do so if you want. We had one volunteer.

Commissioner Ashlund: If we have another, we've just formed another ad hoc.

Chair Lauing: I think you just raised your hand.

Commissioner Ashlund: I'll raise my hand.

Chair Lauing: We should probably officially approve those ad hocs, the three that are now on the table. Do you need them read back as to who's on them or are we up to speed on that?

Catherine Bourquin: You should probably read them back.

Chair Lauing: For the audio? Okay, go ahead. Thank you.

Ms. Bourquin: Oh, me? Could you please repeat it.

Commissioner Hetterly: We have Abbie and Pat, Commissioner Knopper and Commissioner Markevitch on dog parks. Commissioner Crommie and Commissioner Ashlund on Lucy Evans Interpretative Center as well as Sterling Canal.

Mr. de Geus: I would just encourage that we'll have staff involved in each of the ad hoc committees. Also as a matter of protocol, I think we've talked about this before, is trying to define as specifically as we can what the ad hoc committee is set out to do and focus on the specific policy issue that you're focusing on, that you're going to advise Council on. That may be the first thing that the ad hoc committee does over the next month.

Chair Lauing: Good guidance. All in favor of those ad hocs? Can we just vote? Yea? Any opposed? None. Okay, great.

5. Ad Hoc Committee and Liaison Updates.

- i. 2015-2019 Capital Improvement Plan review.**
- ii. Other updates.**

Chair Lauing: Commissioner Reckdahl and myself have been meeting with staff, Greg and Daren and Rob, multiple times. I think what we've come up with tonight is a net that these are



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the ones that are, for a variety of reasons, prioritized for this year. There's a scoring system in here, we can explain it or Daren or Rob can explain it, to kind of prioritize that. Then there's some additional CIPs under consideration on the end of that, meaning that they're not officially in here. There are ways that are being looked at to effectively add these to the list. One of the other conclusions that we made is that each year in the last two years, we've gotten further ahead of the schedule and the timeline. Commissioner Reckdahl and myself and staff have agreed that next year we need to move it up even more, like maybe a couple of months more, two to three months more, so that the Commission can have sort of more input on prioritizing some of these things. In general I thought the process was good, just still not quite early enough. That's one of our collective recommendations for the coming year. Do you want to add, Keith before we go into this?

Commissioner Reckdahl: No.

Rob de Geus: We're ready to sort of answer any questions that you have. I do want to thank Chair Lauing and Commissioner Reckdahl. I think we had three or four meetings. Each were like two hours long and they were good. They were really helpful. Thank you for doing that. Just a reminder, I don't think there's anything new in this report that wasn't shared at last month's meeting. Commissioner Reckdahl went through each one of these. What you have is a little more information, a description and justification, some estimates on what we think they're going to cost. I'm not sure that was presented so much last time. I do have extra copies of the scoring sheet that we used. You might be interested in seeing it and some of you may have already seen it. There's a template scoring sheet that all departments are expected to use. There are five sets of criteria, is it a safety issue, does it relate to Council priority, that type thing. We of course looked at it through a lens of parks and recreation open space and took a little bit of creative license in terms of how we scored it. This score sheet is fairly generic across the entire City.

Chair Lauing: Actually I think that's a good point that Rob raised. Some of the verbiage in the scoring sheets talks about is this an improvement to facilities and we're saying are redwood trees facilities. That probably needs changing in the future too, but that's a more Citywide issue.

Mr. de Geus: The other thing that helped guide this exercise that we went through was the IBRC report, in trying to focus on the catch-up, keep-up items that were identified in that report and with Daren Anderson, in particular, coming forward with areas of real concern that he has. Such as the community gardens and the many breaks we have there in the irrigation system, that's something that's just become an urgent issue that needs to get taken care of. Thank you for the participation. If you have any questions, we're happy to answer them.

Chair Lauing: Commissioner Crommie.

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Commissioner Crommie: I just had a question. First of all thank you for your involvement in this. It's really a nicely prepared report. I really appreciate seeing it. One of my questions was how the scoring works, so I really appreciate getting to see this. Also, I remembered when we were talking about the Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan that Daren Anderson had mentioned that one issue is that staff is very involved with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan currently and, I take it, maybe some of the same staff members would be doing both. I was wondering if, Daren, you could let us know what timeline you imagine for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan? When that might be finished.

Daren Anderson: The best guess right now is that's going to be a two-year process. As it started to expand in scope, I believe that's what we're looking at right now. It would be really advantageous not to have them concurrent, that is, the Baylands CCP and this Parks Master Plan shouldn't be concurrent. I think one or the other will suffer if we do so and hence the reason for pushing out for 2017, even though there are so many good reasons to try to make it happen sooner.

Commissioner Crommie: I was just going to put a plug in to ask if we could possibly try to move it up to 2016, just because so many things are riding on that in the Baylands. I hate to feel that we might be doing some things inefficiently or creating inadvertent damage by not being sensitive to some needs in the Baylands. I'm asking just because of other work that is going on there currently.

Mr. Anderson: Yeah. I'm very sensitive to that and agree the sooner the better. There's a couple of things to highlight that address this in some ways. One is that very recently the adopted US Fish and Wildlife Service Comprehensive Conservation Plan looks at exactly the same thing; habitat, wildlife and recreation and how those three elements should be blended and formulated holistically. That's for the entire area of the US Fish and Wildlife Service around the Don Edwards Preserve. It's part of the Baylands. The Faber-Laumeister Tract for example is Don Edwards Preserve. Many elements apply directly to what we do. In concept a lot of that can be borrowed, incorporated and utilized now and has been and will continue to. That's going to tide us over in some ways, I believe. There's a perception that it's not being looked at holistically. For example, we've got some money, let's spend it on restoration, what am I going to choose. It's not quite so random as that. We have gone through, in the original process of looking at a Baylands Comprehensive Plan, I was part of that for almost a year. We made it through almost half, a quarter of it at least. In the process we vetted out quite a bit. We had numerous stakeholder meetings. We consulted with all the big regulatory agencies and experts in this field of restoration and in recreation, again deferring to Don Edwards Preserve. It's not like we're flying by the seat of our pants and we haven't vetted this with either our neighbors or other experts in the field. We have partnerships with groups like Save the Bay. They're going on well over a decade now. That's a very long time to have a collaborative relationship with the agency that's responsible for the restoration for the entire Bay. They've got an even bigger holistic view of our overall wetland and San Francisco Bay

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issues and needs. They can take that knowledge and apply it to our area. It's a real strong partnership. It's not the kind of thing where they're out doing their own thing. They're in consultation with our staff constantly. Though we started with a small section of the Baylands, this is ten years ago, they have stretched out and expanded. They're looking at the whole park and the whole preserve. I'm not saying that the plan's not needed, but I also want to highlight that we're not going in blind. We've got experts in the field advising us on where and what to do, where to put our efforts. We only have two staff out there and we're utilizing in the neighborhood of, I think it comes to almost 11 FTE just on volunteers. It's a significant amount of volunteer labor that's put into the field of restoration for that site. I just want to counterbalance that to say we do have some advice, we do have some expertise and there is some guidance already. The plan is also necessary and will be great when we get there. I think we can make it work with 2017, especially given this constraint with staffing and that Parks Master Plan, which is also incredibly necessary and as soon as possible.

Commissioner Crommie: I want to thank you for the leadership that you've shown in this area. I really appreciate the time and energy and the thought and level of expertise that you put into this. I really appreciate it.

Chair Lauing: Anything else on CIPs? All right. Any other ad hoc committee reports?

Commissioner Reckdahl: What's the scheduling for the CIPs? When are they finally announced and the money's awarded?

Mr. de Geus: The next step on the CIPs. I don't have any specific dates. Now that all of the departments have submitted their CIPs with their descriptions and justifications and their estimated costs, there is an internal vetting process that occurs with the finance staff in the department. From there it goes to the City Manager who takes a review. From there it starts going through the formal committee review which is Finance Committee and Planning and Transportation Commission. Eventually it goes to City Council for adoption in June. We can keep you up-to-date all the way along. If things start to fall off or other things crop up, we'll certainly let you know.

Chair Lauing: Any other ad hoc committee reports? Commissioner Ashlund.

Commissioner Ashlund: Commissioner Hetterly and I met a couple of days ago about the Commission website. We just spoke with the CIO, Jonathan Reichental, and somebody named Chris who reports to him. The last name I can't quite pronounce correctly. We are kicking that off and we don't have anything to share with you at this point, but we are moving forward and we'll be talking further with staff about how to move forward on that process.

Chair Lauing: Any other reports? All right.

V. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council Member Schmid: I probably should just pass on to the Commission, the Council meeting of December 2nd we had a special session called on planning. We discussed a wide range of big issues that there is some planning activity going on in the City. It includes parking and traffic which are two major public issues at the moment, but also density, both housing and commercial densities, design which includes sidewalks and pedestrian amenities, economic benefits and Comp Plan updates. It wasn't an action session. It was a Study Session, so there's a lot of discussion of it. We were given dates, a calendar. A lot of the pieces of this will be coming to the Council over the next quarter, through the first quarter of the year. I know there's probably some of those where the Parks and Rec Commission would have an interest, certainly in the aspects of the Comp Plan, but also maybe some of these other elements as well. There are things that might concern you. Just that you're aware of that calendar coming up at the Council for open discussion that might involve things of interest and importance to you.

Commissioner Crommie: Can staff help us a little with that? I know we've been getting this great calendar about upcoming dates. Can we integrate that in?

Chair Lauing: Other comments or announcements? Rob.

Rob de Geus: I have four tickets here for very inexpensive golf play at the Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course. \$22 during the week and \$30 on the weekend, you can't beat it, the bridge course. It's actually playing really well. I'm going to leave those here, whoever can get there first. Our winter Enjoy! catalog that has all of the classes for the department, for the Art Center, the Junior Museum, the Children's Theater is out. Resident registration began on the 6th and non-resident registration begins at the end of this week. If you want to sign up for a class, you better get on that right away. In fact, I think this would be great stocking stuffers too for kids. You can do a little note that says you'll sign them up for anything that they have an interest in. I want to share that. The last thing I have is we have the 29th Annual Senior New Year's Eve Bash coming up. It's at the JCC. It's a really fun event. It's actually held during the day and they do a countdown at midday, but they're always looking for volunteers. If you're interested and you're around, let me know and we'll get you signed up.

Chair Lauing: Great, thank you. Quite the pitchman tonight. Other comments and announcements on happenings?

Commissioner Reckdahl: I had one question. We had the fee for services in September and there's some feedback. What's the next step on the fee for services report?

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Mr. de Geus: I'm going to have to get back to you on that, because I'm not quite sure on the next step. I believe it went back to Finance Committee once more for further discussion, yet to go to Council. I'll send an email out to the entire Commission with an update.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Is it coming back through us before Council or is it coming straight to Council?

Mr. de Geus: I think this one is going through Finance Committee and then straight to Council.

VI. AGENDA FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Chair Lauing: Looking for items for the January 28th meeting.

Commissioner Markevitch: I got one. That would be the election of Chair and Vice Chair.

Chair Lauing: Others? Good. That'll be a short meeting.

Rob de Geus: Scott Park will be ready for an action item.

Commissioner Hetterly: Will the tree mitigation come back?

Mr. de Geus: Yes, the tree mitigation. We'll have to see how things go with that. It could be that the Commission may want to have a special meeting around the golf course and the tree mitigation, because of the timing. If we do in fact get to go to Council with a certification, we'll request them to approve the final EIR on February 3rd. The January 28th date for the Commission meeting doesn't allow for a lot of time to turn that around and include the Commission's thinking in the staff report that goes to Council. I'll have to talk to Chair Lauing about this. We've talked a little bit about it already. The timing may be that we want to have a special meeting earlier in January around the tree mitigation.

Commissioner Crommie: Should we just ask Commissioners' availability with travel during that time? Can we just vet it a little bit?

Commissioner Hetterly: Are we talking the first, second, third week? What week are we looking at?

Chair Lauing: Not likely the first.

Mr. de Geus: I think it would be at least the second week. What the Commission can consider also is that we have one meeting in January. We just change the date and do it earlier to allow for the tree mitigation discussion.

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Commissioner Crommie: I think that would be good, to just try to do it into one. Do people know when school starts back up again in January?

Commissioner Knopper: The 6th.

Commissioner Hetterly: The 20th is a holiday.

Mr. de Geus: So it's the 14th of January.

Commissioner Markevitch: The 14th is a holiday?

Mr. de Geus: The 14th of January is the second Tuesday of the month.

Commissioner Crommie: Do you know when the Martin Luther King holiday is?

Mr. de Geus: That's the 21st; 20th, sorry.

Commissioner Crommie: I'd be in favor of that 14th, because it's after people are back and it doesn't conflict with Martin Luther King holiday weekend.

Chair Lauing: Okay. Well, I'm sure other things will come up. If we need to move it to the 14th, that seems workable?

Commissioner Knopper: Can we consider maybe the 21st? That's a difficult week for me. But if everyone else can its fine with me.

Commissioner Hetterly: The 21st is better for me.

Mr. de Geus: That could work.

Commissioner Crommie: There's a chance I'll be gone, but it's a low enough probability that I'd be willing to risk it. I might get back to town just in time for the meeting.

Mr. de Geus: That would be two weeks before the Council meeting.

Commissioner Ashlund: The 21st is difficult for me.

Commissioner Knopper: The 28th works. I'm just saying, because it's already in my calendar.

Mr. de Geus: We may end up having a little more time. We have a tentative schedule with the Council on February 3rd. If that changes, if it gets pushed out for one reason or another, then

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we may go back to the 28th. What I was hearing is the 21st was probably the best; although, not for Commissioner Ashlund. Is that right?

Chair Lauing: That's fine.

Commissioner Crommie: Can someone clarify, I had on my calendar that there was an EIR meeting before Council, or Planning and Transportation. Is it still tomorrow?

Commissioner Hetterly: No.

Mr. de Geus: No. As it turns out, it doesn't have to go back to Planning and Transportation. It's going directly to Council, which we didn't know last month. It goes directly to Council.

Commissioner Hetterly: Can I add one more announcement? You all probably got an email inviting you to the State of the City, Council reorganization January 6th at 7:00 p.m. That's where they announce the new Mayor, new Vice Mayor. It's kind of a fun event. For those of you who haven't been, you may want to put it on your calendar.

Commissioner Ashlund: That's here in the chambers?

Commissioner Hetterly: Yes.

Commissioner Reckdahl: January 21st, right?

Chair Lauing: The 21st is the tentative date, right? Or do you just want to officially move it to that? We could do that.

Commissioner Ashlund: Difficult as in I'll see what I can do. I'll just see what I can do. We're not going to reach agreement. I don't want to hold it up if that's what works for most.

Chair Lauing: All right. Let's go to the 21st then.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned on motion by Commissioner Crommie and second by Commissioner Reckdahl.