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**MINUTES  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
January 27, 2015  
CITY HALL  
250 Hamilton Avenue  
Palo Alto, California**

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

**Commissioners Absent:** Stacey Ashlund

**Others Present:** Council Liaison Eric Filseth

**Staff Present:** Elizabeth Ames, Daren Anderson, Catherine Bourquin, Rob de Geus, Lester Hendrie, Peter Jensen

**I. ROLL CALL CONDUCTED BY:** Catherine Bourquin

**II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, and DELETIONS:**

Chair Hetterly: Now that I've read the packet, Item Number 5 on the Master Plan we have scheduled for 45 minutes. I imagine that'll take at least an hour, so let's plan for that. Also, everyone try to be efficient in your comments so that we can move things along.

**III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

None.

**IV. BUSINESS:**

**1. Approval of Draft Minutes from the Special Meeting of December 9, 2014.**

Approval of the draft December 9, 2014 Minutes as written was moved by Vice Chair Lauing and seconded by Commissioner Markevitch. Passed 6-0



**2. Selection of Chair and Vice Chair for 2015.**

Chair Hetterly: Every year we select a new Chair and Vice Chair. We start with the Chair. I can describe the role of the Chairperson and then the process for nominations and elections. You know most of what I do here at the table, but also there's a lot of coordinating with city staff, with other commissions, with Council liaison, coordinating meetings, setting agendas, checking in with Commissioners about any issues that they want to add to the agenda, prioritizing work, keeping things moving forward, staying on top of Council action and action in other commissions that's relevant to our work, managing meetings, identifying and building consensus, trying to keep us on message as we're sorting through issues and managing our time, and also keeping on top of the ad hoc committees. We have a lot of ad hoc committees doing work on their own. Checking in with them and figuring out where they are and keeping that work moving forward as well. Another big job for the Chair is planning and directing the Retreat and the joint Council session. Finally, speaking on behalf of the Commission to the Council or to media or whoever. Skills it requires are basically organizational skills, attention to detail, initiative to keep track of what's going on and keep us moving, communication skills, tact and diplomacy, trying to keep track of who has an interest in what and making sure they get heard. That's kind of a nutshell of what the job looks like. For the election, it's pretty simple. I open the floor to nominations. Commissioners can nominate one Commissioner at a time, and each nominee must get a second. A Commissioner can enter your own name into the nomination as well. After each nomination, I'll ask the nominated person if they're willing to accept the nomination. If yes, we continue on to the next nomination. Once there are no further nominations, we'll close nominations and take a vote. There's a ballot in front of you with a list of names, and you pick the one name that you want to elect. Catherine will tally the votes. The newly elected Chair will assume responsibility for chairing the rest of this meeting including election of the Vice Chair, which follows the same protocol. I'll open up to nominations. Are there any nominations? Commissioner Markevitch.

Commissioner Markevitch: I nominate Commissioner Reckdahl for Chair. I've watched him over the last year really grow into his role. He's very detailed oriented and asks the right questions. I think he'd be a really good Chair. I think it's time for him.

Chair Hetterly: I'll second that. I think Keith will do a great job. Any other nominations?

Vice Chair Lauing: You need to ask him if he's going to accept.

Chair Hetterly: Are you willing to accept the nomination, Commissioner Reckdahl?

Commissioner Reckdahl: I'd be willing. It's not optimal for me; I've got a lot of work commitments. If there's others that would be interested, I would support their interest.

Chair Hetterly: Any others?

Commissioner Reckdahl: I'd like to nominate Jen Hetterly. Is there a second?

Commissioner Knopper: I forget from last year. Are we allowed to ask you if you're interested or do we have to nominate?

Chair Hetterly: Officially the nomination happens and then we have to say. It's a very awkward process.

Commissioner Knopper: It is. It's terrible.

Vice Chair Lauing: I think every nomination should be seconded. I'd be happy to second that and get a response from our current Chair.

Commissioner Knopper: Yeah, okay. I was going to say it also.

Chair Hetterly: I would prefer not to do it this year. I have some family situations that need my attention for the next few months at the very least. I don't think I can give it my full attention either. I would decline.

Commissioner Knopper: Ed.

Vice Chair Lauing: That died for lack of a second. I think the question is if you can do it. If you're going to be absent half the time, then you're not going to feel good about that. The nomination's there.

Commissioner Reckdahl: Deirdre, would you be interested in being Chair?

Commissioner Crommie: I guess I would be, if you don't want to do it or Jen doesn't want to. I guess I would be if no one else wants to do it.

Commissioner Reckdahl: I nominate Deirdre Crommie. Is there a second?

Chair Hetterly: I'll second. Any others? We have Commissioner Crommie and Commissioner Reckdahl on the table. If there are no others, we'll close the nominations and go ahead and vote.

Catherine Bourquin: There's four for Reckdahl and two for Crommie.

Chair Reckdahl: Next, we'll move on to election of a Vice Chair. Commissioner Lauing, could you explain the roles and duties of the Vice Chair?

Vice Chair Lauing: Yes, and I plan to spend at least 5 minutes in this administration. The Vice Chair role has the obvious responsibility of serving in the absence of the Chair and on any of the things that Jennifer discussed including chairing the meetings. That's happened but rarely in my five-year tenure. Beyond that, it's really up to the Chair to involve the Vice Chair in any way, shape, or form that he or she wants. It can be a very close partnership to do a number of things including planning and organizing issues to come before the Commission. Divide up the workload to help share that workload a little more than just give it all to the Chair. Certainly interface with city staff and also just being a consigliere to the Chair about what should we do, what do you think, etc. That's how the last two Chairs and Vice Chairs have operated, but it doesn't have to be that way. Overall, that's what it is.

Chair Reckdahl: Okay. We'll open the floor for nominations. Any nominations for Vice Chair?

Vice Chair Lauing: I'd like to nominate Commissioner Markevitch.

Chair Reckdahl: Do we have a second?

Commissioner Knopper: I'll second.

Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Markevitch, are you interested?

Commissioner Markevitch: I kind of put you on the spot there about workload, so I guess I'll back you up.

Vice Chair Lauing: My nomination of Commissioner Markevitch is that she has very long experience on this Commission, knows the issues and the process inside and out. She's in the last year of her current term. She also has very specific experience as the Chair, a few years back. As a mentor to a new Chair, that's kind of interesting and very helpful. She knows a lot of the city staff very well and has worked with them in and outside the recreation group. She has very good experience and relationships with multiple Council Members as well, which is helpful. Given our new liaison, maybe she can be a mentor to our new liaison and get him up to speed. That's my statement.

Chair Reckdahl: Very good. Any other nominations for Vice Chair? Okay. With no other nominations, we'll now vote for Vice Chair.

Ms. Bourquin: Six for Markevitch.

Chair Reckdahl: Before we start the business, we really should thank Commissioner Hetterly. Last year was her first year as Chairman, and it didn't seem like it. She ran the Commission very well, and we all owe a big debt of gratitude to her because she really took a lot of the load off of us organizing meetings. The meetings were organized and productive, so we thank you for your service.

### **3. Report on New 7.7 Acres of Dedicated Parkland at Foothills Park.**

Chair Reckdahl: We have Peter Neal as our first speaker, followed by Claire Elliott.

Peter Neal: Good evening. I'm Peter Neal, a Palo Alto resident and a long-time volunteer at the Acterra native plant nursery. I actually helped move the nursery into the Foothills Park site in 2003, and I've been there about two days a week for more than 11 years since then. I have a pretty good understanding of the nursery operation. I'm also quite familiar with the 7.7 acre parcel. I can offer to make myself available as an information resource any time if necessary during the discussion of these topics. I'd also like to say I recall distinctly the difficulty that Acterra had in finding a suitable location for the nursery. We looked at many potential sites and rejected many potential sites until finally this wonderful place at Foothills Park became available. Since the nursery relocated there, it has expanded dramatically and has become a real focal point and primary supplier for native plant restoration in the local area. It's highly respected within the restoration and native plant communities, not only for the quality of the plants it supplies but also for the professionalism of the service. I might also add that the nursery is an indispensable part of the Acterra Stewardship Program. All plants used in Acterra stewardship activities are grown at the nursery. I would really like to see the nursery lease renewed and the nursery be allowed to stay at this great location for a long time to come. I'd also like to comment on two other proposals, that being the hydrologic study of Buckeye Creek and incorporating the 7.7 acre parcel into the Parks and Open Space Master Planning process. I think it's very important to do those things. I also suggest that no kind of alteration, construction or development be undertaken on the site until the results of those studies can be completed. I just urge us to take a slow but thorough approach to deciding the best thing to do with this property. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Claire Elliott is up, followed by Alex Von Feldt.

Claire Elliott: Hi, I'm Claire Elliott. I'm a resident of Palo Alto and have enjoyed using Foothills Park for a couple of decades. Full disclosure, I'm also an Acterra employee, and I work with the Stewardship Program. I support whatever we can do to incorporate that land as parkland, especially if there's a way to restore Buckeye Creek. I think we need to look at the environmental impacts of removing all the sediment that's there, but I

think that's doable. I think the nursery is a very low profile, low impact use that has a lot of positive benefits especially that we're also helping to steward Foothills Park. Some of the plants for the restoration could come from very close by and they'll be locally specific native plants, which is really important for the co-evolution with local wildlife. That's something that people are understanding more and more, that we're not providing that link between our plants and our wildlife, because there's nothing that can eat the plants. The non-native plants don't support insect life. For example, 96 percent of birds are eating insects when they're feeding them to their young. That's very important for us to have that base of the food chain be moved up through the insect population. The only way to do that in any healthy way is with native plant species. I also think that the nursery could be accessible to the public. It already is at certain times. There's no need to have it closed off to the public. There's not really anywhere to go from there, so I don't see any need to have trails going through the area. On the other hand, I think it would be possible to do. Thank you very much.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Next is Alex Von Feldt, followed by Jerry Hearn.

Alex von Felt: Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Alex von Felt, and I'm the program director for Acterra Stewardship Program. I know several of you were out at the site when we had the site visit. For those of you that weren't, Acterra is a Palo Alto based environmental nonprofit that engages and educates the community to restore our local open spaces, parks, and creeks. We've been partnering with the City of Palo Alto to assist with land stewardship since 1996. Basically we get people out to enjoy and restore our valued open spaces. We educate our youth about the importance of preserving these places and the services they provide, so that they can be environmental stewards and make informed decisions as adults. Last year, we worked with over 3,500 volunteers on Palo Alto sites alone including Arastradero Preserve, Foothills Park, San Francisquito Creek, Matadero Creek, Barron Creek, Adobe Creek and also several sites within the Palo Alto School District. Over half of our volunteers are youth. Also this past year, the dollar value of this labor was estimated to be about \$250,000. On top of that, Acterra secured about \$115,000 in other grants that went to the direct benefit of Palo Alto sites. Our nursery supports all of our projects as well as it is a regional provider for other agencies such as the Santa Clara Valley Water District and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. We also provide an educational resource. In fact, the California Native Plant Society just had a large conference recently, and one of the sites they went to was our nursery. As Claire mentioned, we are the steward for Foothills Park, and we just recently secured some additional funds to help restore Buckeye Creek. I'd like to voice my support for the staff report, specifically the part about keeping the nursery. We appreciate that. We also support the restoration theme concept and funding the hydrologic study as well as postponing the investment in the infrastructure until we know what the hydrologic study shows us. We are at the nursery site Monday through



Thursday at least. We'd be happy to keep it open so that people can come visit the site, visit the nursery in the interim until the city decides what to do. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Next is Jerry Hearn, followed by Emily Renzel.

Jerry Hearn: Thank you. Good evening, Commissioners. Jerry Hearn. I'm a resident of Portola Valley. I've been associated with Acterra since its inception. Like Peter, I've been involved with the nursery since it was in the backyard of our stewardship manager's home many years ago. Peter also mentioned how difficult it was finding a place, and we really appreciate having the site that we have right now. We work very well with the multiple entities in the Palo Alto system to stay there. I wanted to compliment Daren and the staff on this report. I think it's excellent. I think it was well done and very comprehensive. I wanted to add a few things to what you've already heard tonight. I have worked in the Stewardship Program for many years. Through that I get to know a lot of the kids who are actually doing the work. Let me tell you that the work that they do here leads them into fields well beyond what we would normally expect kids of that age to do. Many of them move on and become conservation biologists. I know some that are climatologists. Some of them are field biologists. All this because of their experiences with Acterra, and that's supported by the nursery. The effect of what's happening here goes far beyond just the community of Palo Alto. As a matter of fact, hopefully it's changing some of the ways that we operate as humans in the world. Turning to the report exactly, I would also strongly recommend that you extend the lease for Acterra for obvious reasons. The hydrologic study is an excellent idea. I also happen to work a lot in the watersheds, the watershed right around San Francisquito Creek. There is definitely steelhead in Los Trancos Creek. Were it possible, they would also be coming up in Buckeye Creek. There is a possibility of some fairly extensive and important restoration to happen there. The study has to happen first. I also happen to side on the committee that's working with the Master Plan project for the parks. I've heard a lot of things that could possibly go on in that area. That 7.7 acres is not an easy area to either restore or to put amenities in for a lot of reasons. However, there have been some relatively interesting ideas. I think before making any changes to the current status beyond opening it up when the Acterra nursery people are there to sort of steward people who want to come in, I think the hydrologic study should be completed and the Master Plan process should be completed so it can inform how that area would be used in a very thoughtful and comprehensive way. Like Peter, I know a lot about this area, and I remain open to any questions or any problems you want to bring up. I'd be happy to be engaged in those. Thank you very much.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Next is Emily Renzel, followed by Shani Kleinhaus.

Emily Renzel: I also think staff did a very thorough job on this staff report. It seemed to me that repeatedly the issue came up of the need to deal with the hydrology of the site

before doing anything else. The hydrologic study is something that I hope you will get solidly behind. I think it should be the driving force of how this site is worked on over time. We tend to think of doing projects in short timeframes, 5, 10 years. This might be a 50-year project. The first step is to understand the hydrology of the site and to make a long-term plan for how it works before trying to do anything else. Just looking, without knowing all the ins and outs of how things are done, it would seem to me since much of this site has been disturbed, that it might make sense to explore moving the maintenance yard to a portion of that site and use the part that's more contiguous with the current Foothills Park for the kinds of activities that have been requested of group picnic areas and so forth. Primarily if you look at the left side of that picture, it's open space and that's probably what this whole area looked like at one time. Over a longer term it would be worthwhile to look at how to make that work both hydrologically and naturally. While I think it's important to have some concerns about adjoining neighbors, our first process is to protect and enhance the park. As far as Acterra, up until this was park dedicated, there was no issue about temporary use of the site. Over the long term it should be explored whether there are other non-park sites for this kind of activity because it's just like a camel's nose in the tent. When people want to do things, they always want to look to parkland because it's the only land left. I think it's important to treat this as a park first and to deal with the hydrology first. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Our last commentator is Shani Kleinhaus.

Shani Kleinhaus: Good evening. I'm Shani Kleinhaus with Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. Our members frequent the park, and we have some bluebird trails there that our stewards monitor how the bluebirds are using them. Children have the opportunity to bring the box down to look inside, to see the bluebirds as they grow. It's a great thrill for a lot of our people. Some of our programs are with Acterra together. When I visited that site, I remembered Daren was there and he said, "Just imagine if all of this was a restored meadow." I think he was right on. I think the hydrological study is needed to see how this could potentially become a restored meadow. It would be lovely to have Acterra and other groups like ours work on that. I also think that the nursery is a regional resource that we should not give up. Acterra's nursery is really important to a lot of restoration efforts throughout our county. They have a frog pond. One of the things that came up in one of the meetings of the Palo Alto Parks Plan was people said, "Where are the frogs? Bring them back. We want to see the tadpoles. We want to see the frogs. Where are they?" Here is your opportunity to show. Emily's concerned that other organizations will also want to do things there, but there is a possibility of saying this is grandfathered in and no more. I would think that this should be a recommendation, so there wouldn't be a proliferation of all sorts of other activities or maybe just carefully consider any more that want to come in. To me, it would be wonderful to realize Daren's meadow. Thank you.



Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. That is the end of public comment, so we'll move onto the presentation. Technically this is the ad hoc committee. Daren, I assume you're the president presenting.

Daren Anderson: Is the ad hoc committee okay with me presenting this? Great. Good evening. I'm Daren Anderson. I'm with Open Space, Parks and Golf. Tonight I've got my colleague, Lester Hendrie, Supervising Ranger at Foothills Park, with me as well. We're here tonight to discuss that 7.7 acre parcel of parkland up at Foothills Park and to receive guidance from the Commission on how best to use this land, help us chart our way forward through the process, and guidance on concepts that you think should be further developed to include cost estimates, if that's the way the Commission would like to move forward. A quick background. In August 2014, Council dedicated this piece of land as parkland and directed the Commission to guide the process through developing options for land use. We hosted ranger-led tours up at the site and held a public meeting to collect suggestions on what the public wanted to see at this location. There were three major themes that came out of this public meeting and outreach that we had done. Primarily there were recreation activities, and there was a variety. All this is in the staff report. Restoration themes. The third being sustain the nursery; it's a vital part of the park, and we'd really like to see it stay. The staff report lists a number of challenges associated with developing this particular parcel. They range from the very poor soil which is about 5 feet deep. It's overburdened; that came from the adjacent quarry. Buckeye Creek flows right through the property and associated sediment, flooding, culvert issues and creek setback limitations. All part of the creek passing through this piece of property. The need for the hydrologic study to address those aforementioned creek issues. The lack of any existing utilities on the parcel. The easements, such as the emergency ingress and egress easement. The fact that it's a one-way entry and exit that passes through a maintenance area. In November 2014, the ad hoc committee provided an update for Council at a joint meeting. The Council had a number of suggestions and questions, all enumerated in the report. The staff report includes a section on feasibility and needs assessment associated with these themes that were generated. I just want to highlight this. This assessment was done by staff; this was not part of the Master Plan. It was predicated on an analysis of our existing facilities, such as our campground. We looked at our reservations and confirmed when it's busy, when it's booked, and when we had extra requests. This is staff analysis and analysis of our existing reservations. For example, on the recreation theme we looked at camping. This was one of the elements we looked at. The demand on camping is there. We've got our existing Towle Camp. When we look at reservations, we know weekends during the summer we always book out. There is demand for more camping at our park, and we could definitely fill additional requests if there was another campground. The feasibility section lists a number of issues that make camping problematic in that area. Likewise for restoration, it's fairly clear the site would definitely benefit from restoration. The need is very clear. It's bare soil basically, compacted, with a few weeds. You can see in the photo of the site

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the adjacent area is heavily treed and wooded. There's a variety of options for restoration. The feasibility of restoration, however, is challenging but not impossible. I've been to restoration workshops where I've seen very compacted, poor soil eventually made proper, healed basically. There's a variety of different ways that could happen, but it would be long and involved. The last page of the staff report includes a list of nine options that the staff and the ad hoc committee have put together, that we thought might foster discussion and help guide the discussion a little bit tonight. Attachment C, there's a number of aerial photographs. If there was a particular amenity that you saw that was generated as part of these suggestions that you thought was really important to add to Foothills, let's say camping or a group picnic area, but you thought it might not be appropriate for the 7.7 acre spot, but you did think it was necessary, Attachment C was to help illustrate there are other areas in Foothills that might be an option to consider. This particular one is a little spot below Station 8 up in Foothills. It's flat, small. You'll see the depiction of what it would look like if you put one of the amenities there. I believe this is a group pavilion area and what it would look like with the Acterra nursery in that spot. Only to illustrate that if there was a particular amenity that you really wanted to have and you didn't think it would fit in the 7.7 acres, this was just another option to consider. There is an aerial photo that shows what it would look like if you placed the group picnic area and a parking lot in the 7.7 acres. This was just an example we took from a Santa Clara County park. This is a group picnic area that would probably accommodate about 100 people. It's covered and a parking lot that would accommodate about that many vehicles is associated with it. Again, it's rough estimates; just strictly to give you an idea what it would look like with these amenities on this property. That concludes the staff presentation. I defer to the ad hoc committee if there is anything else to add. Lester and I are available for questions.

Chair Reckdahl: Anyone from the ad hoc committee?

Commissioner Knopper: Thank you very much, Daren and Lester, for leading the group meetings. Obviously this is a hot issue. A lot of people have opinions about it, and there's a lot of different elements that go into making the appropriate decisions as to what this parcel of land could or couldn't be. I wanted to say thank you very much for that. This staff report was extremely efficient and laid everything out so everybody understands all the different parameters and all of the different issues that might preclude us from going in one specific direction. We obviously want to open it up to the Commission for discussion.

Chair Reckdahl: We'll open it up for questions or comments. Commissioner Crommie.

Commissioner Crommie: Thank you for the report, Daren, and thank you to the ad hoc committee for your work. I think it's a really well thought out report. I have a couple of comments. First of all, I think what has been missing is the hydrology study. That is of

paramount importance. We know there are problems there. Despite some kind of attempted remediation, the creek channelization has gotten worse. Those things are definitely deteriorating rather than getting better. For us to make the best use of our natural resources, we need to invest in the study. It just seems like a no-brainer to get this study done. I appreciate you, Daren, having worked on this previously. The last time you proposed it, this wasn't yet dedicated parkland. There's a lot more interest in this now. I hope that will gain traction. I wouldn't ever want to see a parking lot go into that area. Any activity that needs a parking lot should automatically be crossed off the list. The beauty of this land is it's a continuation of this valley. I don't see why we would want to mess it up with a parking lot. Something that is undervalued in this report is the interest in hiking trails. There's a comment here that it wasn't stated in public meetings, but I do recall people mentioning it. There's a couple of line items, Number 7, it's mentioned in your list of public comments. Line item number 23 for connectivity. I think people are interested also in trails with respect to this idea of it being a rustic campground. The idea is that you would hike in there. I don't think anyone, aside from using it maybe as some children's activity center, was really contemplating having people drive into this area. I don't really support camping at this site, but I do support trails because I support connectivity. Connecting this as one continuous valley, it doesn't have to be some extensive trail system. In supporting the hydrology study, I very much support restoration in whatever way we can do it. It'd probably have to be done quite slowly. The hydrology study would help plan that all out. As far as Acterra goes, I know they provide essential activities for the city, but I do not think it should be assumed that Acterra should be on this site. It's parkland. There are other places Acterra can go if the hydrology study shows that they're in the wrong place. I feel the same way about the maintenance yard. That was recently remodeled, so obviously we wouldn't want to do anything to it too soon. Again, there wasn't a big picture. There wasn't a comprehensive look at this land the last time that maintenance area was remodeled. I think it is in the way, but it happens to be there and I know it was really expensive. Just in terms of long-term thinking, maybe it should go somewhere else. The same with Acterra. I would not support renewing their lease for 5 years, not until the hydrology study is done. Maybe some shorter term renewal. That's not to say that Acterra is not incredibly important to our city. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Lauing.

Commissioner Lauing: Just a few questions before getting to the options that were discussed. Is it fair to say that under almost all circumstances, unless it were a parking lot, that that 5 feet of stuff has to come off? I didn't quite get if you can put stuff on top of that and get habitat going in there.

Mr. Anderson: Again, I think that's partly predicated on the outcome of the hydrologic study. That'll dictate some of that. The other part is there are lots of options that could

456 go on top. That wouldn't necessarily have to be removed. I was talking with some of our  
457 Public Works staff who have talked about you could get rid of some of it. You could  
458 reshape and contour parts, bring in new soil for a portion. There are lots of options to  
459 consider that don't involve necessarily removing all of it.

460  
461 Commissioner Lauing: Okay, that's going to be a huge cost. I just had a detailed  
462 question. The water goes through there, and you were talking about how the sediment  
463 settles out at the end of the acreage. This is the last opportunity to clear that before  
464 getting into the large culverts. If it goes in there, does it just settle in there and that's  
465 where it mostly has to get cleaned out of?

466  
467 Mr. Anderson: Ideally you're doing the clean outs before that. There are multiple points  
468 where you've got access. The adjacent landowner does have his staff person come in and  
469 do those clean outs. If you didn't and you had an accumulation of those heavy sediments  
470 and you had a big rain flush, yes, it could back up there and eventually clog certain  
471 elements either downstream or right there in the 7.7 acres and cause overflow.

472  
473 Commissioner Lauing: Thanks for adding that information that that cost has been  
474 covered by the owner there. That's important for Council to understand. The hydrologic  
475 study, Keith and I are both on the CIP committee, and we battled for that last year. I  
476 think there's going to be more receptivity to that. We've got to do first things first, and  
477 that's clearly one of the first things. Also, it's great that you just point out that whatever  
478 need comes up, it doesn't have to go in that area. There's other places at the park. I think  
479 that was really helpful. I don't think, in terms of the context of this report, that we should  
480 be too optimistic that the specifics for the 7.7 acres is going to be forecast or identified by  
481 the Parks Master Plan, because they're looking at a gazillion acres, and the specific uses  
482 of that one is not likely. They might come up with "we need an outdoor place  
483 somewhere for meetings," and that's one of ten options as you said. I want to be on the  
484 record for that. In terms of general comments, that's it for me.

485  
486 Mr. Anderson: I was just going to tag onto one point you mentioned. To highlight again,  
487 the Master Plan will be completed November 2015. If we got approval for the hydrologic  
488 study, the earliest it could start is July 2015. It would not be completed by the time the  
489 Master Plan is. Any studies or any analysis done by the Master Plan would be absent the  
490 information from the hydrologic study.

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492 Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Hetterly.

493  
494 Commissioner Hetterly: Thanks. First, I want to thank all the speakers for coming  
495 tonight. I really appreciate that every time this is on the agenda, a lot of you show up and  
496 tell us about what it is that you love about that spot. Just as a lot of folks didn't know it  
497 existed, we also don't know much about what Acterra's doing there or what the nursery's

all about. It would really be helpful for us and for the public to reiterate that at every opportunity that you get. Looking at the ad hoc recommendations, I think we would likely have consensus up here about supporting the hydrology study, and that should come first before anything else. I agree with Commissioner Crommie that five years is probably too long a lease, given that we haven't done that study yet and we don't know what our options are or how quickly we may or may not want to act on something. I would renew the lease but for some period shorter than the five years. I would also not support expanding the scope of the Master Plan to include a lot of work on this topic. Simply because of the timing, I don't think it's very effective. I also don't think it makes a lot of sense to try to invest in fencing and supervision to open up the site to the public in the interim. We've had numerous opportunities for the public to go there. There hasn't been a public clamoring for information, to see what's going on. I don't feel a compelling need to jump through hoops to open it for people to look around.

Chair Reckdahl: Any other comments? I have a few comments and questions for you, Daren. What was the native condition, say 200 years ago? Would this be a grassland or would there be shrubs there? Do we know?

Mr. Anderson: I don't have that information. Perhaps Lester Hendrie can comment.

Lester Hendrie: I showed the pictures to Peter. I did some research just to see the oldest aerial photos I could find, back into the '50s. Excuse me, not the '50s, the 30's I believe, before the quarry was excavated. It was contiguous valley, Los Trancos Valley, where the picnic and the Interpretive Center are. Buckeye Creek had always meandered across it, about in its existing location. It wasn't channelized.

Chair Reckdahl: That valley was covered with wildflowers or would it be shrubs?

Mr. Hendrie: The valley had been used for pasture land for quite some time. Just looking through the aerial photographs and the history information, we could not find when Buckeye Creek was diverted against the hillside. It used to flow right down the middle of the valley. In the oldest aerial photographs we could find, it had already been diverted. It was probably diverted at the turn of the century.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Also the bathrooms right now that we have at the Interpretive Center and by the picnic areas, are those septic or do we have a sewer system or how do they get rid of the waste?

Mr. Hendrie: The Interpretive Center at Foothills Park is the last restroom on the sewer system. It ends at that point. The Oak Grove picnic area, the one that's closest to the 7.7 acres, is on a septic system.



Chair Reckdahl: If we put a new picnic area in where we wanted a bathroom, would we use septic or would we try and hook up?

Mr. Hendrie: Yes, it would have to be on septic.

Chair Reckdahl: How about that alternate location, we'd septic that also?

Mr. Hendrie: The location below Fire Station 8, that cut slope, would be accessible to sewer. The sewer is between that site and Boronda Lake. It flows along the turf there.

Chair Reckdahl: If we were to put camping in, would that be a big financial impact? To be able to hook up the sewage versus septic.

Mr. Hendrie: I don't know what the costs would be, but it's not that far of a run. 75 yards approximately from the flat below Fire Station 8.

Chair Reckdahl: In the past, have we considered adding camping at all to Foothills Park.

Mr. Anderson: Many years ago, the former director had considered different options to increase revenue. One of them was adding yurts in and around the existing campground.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. That's it.

Commissioner Hetterly: One more comment?

Chair Reckdahl: Yes, please.

Commissioner Hetterly: I meant to comment on the theme concepts that you had outlined in the staff report. Generally speaking, I'm probably leaning most supportively towards the habitat restoration. Buckeye Creek dechanneling is a really interesting prospect. I think that if we were to displace Acterra, I would want to make it a priority to find them another suitable location. Just for the ad hoc's benefit as you keep thinking about that. Thanks.

Chair Reckdahl: What? Go ahead.

Vice Chair Markevitch: I don't know what our next steps are for this report. Do we take this to Council with our findings?

Mr. Anderson: I'll be looking to the Commission for guidance on that. Specifically we have to come back for a recommendation from the Commission before we come back to



Council for something. If that's what you want to do. If you wanted to do a study session with Council, whatever the Commission would like, I'd be glad to help facilitate.

Vice Chair Markevitch: If I recall, I think we did want to do a study session with Council at some point. I'd also like to see, before we do that, a "back of the envelope" on the groupings. If it's a campsite, what would the rough costs be? If it's restoration of the site to wild lands, what that would be. That type of thing. I know, for example, we can't relocate the maintenance yard because of the fact that there's an underground gas tank there, and that would be prohibitively expensive. It would be nice, because it gives us more to think about and to discuss with the Council.

Commissioner Lauing: I'd like to put a question back to the ad hoc. Did you guys give any weight to any of these or are they equally weighted? That's the first question. The second question is, because of this good work of saying there are alternative spaces, it seems like that's another level of analysis that should be—come to think of it, now that we see that, it'd be better to be away from the personal residence of Mr. Arrillaga and stuff like that. Maybe three of these go off of here relative specifically to the 7.7 acres.

Commissioner Knopper: Before I address what you said, I want to slightly disagree with what you just said. I know that there was a possibility of a discussion/study session with Council that was requested at our joint meeting in December. That's almost putting the cart before the horse. Until we do the hydrologic study and find out what is possible and what are the environmental impacts, it's almost impossible to make suggestions as to what should actually happen there. There's a lot of creek setback requirements, the channelization, the sediment, if we get rain again and it floods. There's so many things that would have impact, that if we make a suggestion and people just sort of lock into, yes, we need a picnic area, and then we realize after we do that study, well, you know what? That just doesn't make sense now. Then we have to sort of backtrack.

Vice Chair Markevitch: I agree with you on that. The two things that are going to drive these decisions are the hydrologic study and the costs of each option. Getting back to what Ed had asked, we did not weight these. We just put them all out there, because we just wanted a discussion amongst the Commission members to get their ideas. We didn't want to sway them one way or another. These pictures of the other options for the campgrounds and other areas of the park, I don't want to start getting into a "let's redesign the entire park." We need to stick to the 7.7 acres. It's comforting to know that if there are other options out there, it could be done. It's just something to think about.

Commissioner Knopper: The other issue that I wanted to bring up is I too agree that we shouldn't dive too deep into the MIG because of the weird timing of the report. However, the benefit of having all of that download and that strategic information is that we will see what gaps are in our programming as a city overall. From a broad analysis

perspective, if we see that we need more campsites in the City of Palo Alto, that could help drive this conversation. It doesn't have to be specific to the 7.7 acres.

Chair Reckdahl: Rob, do you have a comment?

Rob de Geus: I just wanted to mention about the study session. Sometimes when we have study sessions with Council, you get nine different opinions about something. This was one of those things. It may have been mentioned by one or two Council Members that a study session might be helpful, but I don't think that was a consensus or direction necessarily from Council. If the Commission or staff are generally in agreement as to what the recommendation is, then a study session probably isn't necessary, rather a staff report that's written together with staff and the Commission should be forwarded to the Council. They can decide, if they agree or disagree, whether they want to engage the Commission in a study session or something else.

Chair Reckdahl: I'll make one comment here. It seems to me like this is a new toy, and people really want to use this new toy. We have to be careful of saying we want to put a campground here as opposed to putting a campground in the best spot in Foothills Park. If that happens, then we'd choose the spot. If it's not the best spot, we shouldn't do it just because it's our new toy. Commissioner Crommie.

Commissioner Crommie: I think that the ad hoc has done its role. They met with staff. They studied it. They held a public meeting. They got public input. I don't think there's anything more the ad hoc needs to do other than write a draft of a recommendation to City Council. Having the ad hoc spin off and do anything more would be an inappropriate use of an ad hoc. I picked up on that at our Council meeting. I heard a couple of comments saying, "Is this behind the scenes work or is this your full Commission?" People were asking that. The ad hoc has reported back to us, and we're all fully capable now of commenting on a report they write and suggesting edits, coming together as a Commission and doing that. That's what we've done in the past. We did that when we had our creek and urban trails ad hoc that led to a recommendation. We did it on El Camino Park.

Commissioner Lauing: I don't mean to interrupt. It may be that the consensus is already here right now from what we've heard. We're ready to recommend that we do the hydrologic study and put the rest of it on hold.

Commissioner Crommie: In that case, it would just be a step-wise recommendation. There's a lot of meat in this document that we've mulled over. Do we want to say just the hydrologic study or do we want to write a memo saying what we think is important there? Just like in categories.

Commissioner Lauing: I was just trying to summarize what I heard around the table so far. It seems like everything is dependent on that study, before we can prioritize anything. On top of which a lot of this stuff needs fleshing out in terms of cost and so on.

Commissioner Crommie: We might also give a recommendation on the Acterra question, because we probably should weigh in on that. I didn't hear everyone's opinion on that. I'd like people's advice on whether we think we need to weigh in on that or not. I have an opinion on it.

Vice Chair Markevitch: I have a point of order on that one. This is a discussion item, not an action item. I don't know if we can take a vote tonight.

Commissioner Crommie: No, you're right. I meant for that to come back to us; make it an action item next time. We have to decide the scope. You just presented hydrology only. I'd say maybe broaden it out just a little bit.

Commissioner Knopper: I think that it should be hydrology only. We've been working on this for several months now. Any future decision really is dependent on that. Any element that we pull apart out of the staff report could change based on what the hydrologic study comes back with. That would be very useful information for the Council. It would be definitive. To the point earlier, it does feel a little bit like a new toy that everybody's really excited about and it's fantastic because it's so rare. In a geographically stressed area like Palo Alto, to all of a sudden find new acreage, it's pretty awesome. A thoughtful, scientific, definitive study would provide much needed information. Next steps would logically flow from that.

Chair Reckdahl: Let's break this off now, and we can talk more about it when we set the agenda for next week at the end of the meeting. Any final comments, Daren or Rob?

Mr. Anderson: I could use just a little guidance. I heard some suggestions that we start with the cost estimates. That was one of the original ideas from Council, and we've heard it in various different iterations throughout the process. What I was hoping to have is maybe a little guidance on what to get cost estimates on. It's fairly time intensive to get cost estimates for everyone of those. If there was anything that you felt strongly about or guidance or do you want cost estimates for everything? I just need a little guidance there.

Vice Chair Markevitch: That's going to come after the hydrologic study. It's a waste of time to do it before. It's just something that I felt was important when it was presented later on. If it looks like next month we're just going to vote on the hydrologic study, then it's not necessary now.

Mr. Anderson: Great, thank you. Did you want to see in combination with the hydrologic study a recommendation regarding the Acterra nursery lease renewal?

Commissioner Lauing: I would say yes. In connection with Commissioner Crommie saying broaden it, we might also want to include what Jennifer suggested about making a statement that we do not think it should be open to the public at this point.

Commissioner Knopper: I would agree with that.

Commissioner Lauing: That's an issue that more than one person was supporting, so we need to be clear in our recommendation in that regard.

Chair Reckdahl: We'll talk about this at the end when we set the agenda, figure out what we want to do next week and what we want to put off. Next month.

#### **4. Update and Discussion of the Design Competition for the 101 Highway/Pedestrian Bridge Project.**

Chair Reckdahl: We have four speakers. Each speaker gets three minutes. Since we do have a lot of speakers, please try and keep it brief if possible. We would like to keep the meeting going. The first one is Alex Von Feldt, followed by Claire Elliott.

Alex Von Feldt: Hi again. As I said early, I'm Alex Von Feldt with Acterra. The reason why I'm speaking on this agenda item is that Acterra is one of the seven or eight environmental nonprofits that actually reside in the Peninsula Conservation Center. That is a building that was purchased with funds from generous donors in the late '70s or early '80s with the intent that they would rent out the space very cost effectively to local environmental nonprofits. We are in the building. Canopy, Committee for Green Foothills, California Native Plant Society and others. Our building is very close to this, and we actually have many people that work for our nonprofit as well as other nonprofits that bike to work all the time. Having this option is wonderful because, as you all know, when it rains they close the undercrossing from Adobe, so it makes a much longer ride. In looking at the three options that were presented, I'd like to voice my support for Option C for a few reasons. One is just that the profile is much more understated than the other ones. I think it reflects Palo Alto's ethic, if you will, of respecting the land, where manmade structures should be sub-serving, especially in a setting like this with the beautiful Baylands around. It's also, compared to the other options, much more friendly to wildlife. Birds are all around this area. This is a very important estuary as you probably all know. So many birds are migrating around. You see herons and eaglets all the time around here. The other structures look like they would pose a bigger threat to them. I would say I support Option C. Lastly, the way that it interfaces with the

Baylands, using a native plant pallet. I know the landscape architect that is on that plan. I have confidence that it would be done sensitively. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Next is Claire Elliott, followed by Emily Renzel.

Claire Elliott: I'm Claire Elliot. I'm a resident of Palo Alto and a frequent bicycler to work at the Peninsula Conservation Center, because I work at Acterra. I'm absolutely delighted that we're getting closer to having a year-round overpass. I would be curious to hear, I didn't see it in the staff report but I didn't read every word of it, whether anybody actually considered making it less expensive perhaps by using an underpass that was watertight. I don't know if that's done anywhere. We go under the Bay in BART, and it's probably a little late to bring up that option. It seems like it might be cheaper to go that route. It might be kind of cool. It could be translucent, so you could see the fish swimming upstream. That would be one option that maybe no one has considered. I would love to see it connect to Adobe Creek Trail, so that people can avoid going out on West Bayshore. That's very treacherous as you're bicycling down Fabian and have to crossover to get to that underpass. It's a really dangerous spot. If we could have the water district's support and Palo Alto's support, I don't know what it's going to take to be able to bicycle up along Adobe Creek and avoid that road crossing. That would be fabulous. Like Alex, I like the lower profile look if we're going for a bridge, to do something with less bird entrapment and lower expense if possible and lower profile. I've also worked on creek cleanup days along that stretch of Adobe Creek. There's a lot of wildlife in there. I was delighted to see and hear a kingfisher fly up that stretch of creek. It's a really special place, and it's delightful that we're going to get people out there on foot instead of driving to go visit the Baylands. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Emily Renzel, followed by Irene Steves.

Emily Renzel: Well, I concur with the last two speakers with respect to preferring Option C, which is the low profile proposal. It's very exciting to see the other proposals, but I think they would be a huge distraction from the beautiful natural areas that we have there. Also they're not consistent with the idea of just enjoying that natural area rather than to be distracted by being in the McDonald's arch or whatever. As I looked at the different videos of these things, the one that's like a canoe kind of lost me. The large one that is the choice of some of these other commissions struck me as being a real traffic hazard. I listen to 740 traffic all the time when I'm driving, because I want to know where I can go and when. We have a lot of accidents along this stretch in Palo Alto; San Antonio, Embarcadero, Oregon. All the time there's traffic backups due to accidents. I worry that putting something that has all these sparkly disks or whatever they are is going to distract drivers and make it an unsafe thing. It's secondary to my concern about having a profile that fits with the concept of Baylands which are low and flat. I urge you to support Option C.



Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Irene Steves, followed by Shani Kleinhaus.

Irene Steves: Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Irene, and tonight I'm here to speak on behalf of the Sierra Club. At its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on January 26, 2015, the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter Conservation Committee took up the issue of the proposed Palo Alto bicycle bridge. The chapter's headquarters is located near what is to be the bridge's Bayshore landing point. The chapter has been following the public process, having previously commented in tandem with the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. The Conservation Committee unanimously agreed on three points. First, a signature bridge that incorporates aesthetic design features that pose peril to wildlife is a bridge signature that a progressive city such as Palo Alto should have no part of. We see in Options A and B unjustifiable and unmitigable risks to birds. Second, as a national club that is very invested in furthering environmental transportation such as bicycling, we would prefer that bicycle transportation funding be used economically in order to achieve more bicycle infrastructure. We have a long way to go before we feel that we have so much bicycle infrastructure that we can start spending large sums to turn our bridges into public art over freeways. Please consider using half the money to fix the Embarcadero Bridge. Third, our Conservation Committee recommends that Palo Alto proceed with what we perceive as the only Baylands-compatible design, Option C. Option C is humble and brings nature to the city rather than the city into nature. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Our last speaker is Shani Kleinhaus.

Shani Kleinhaus: Thank you. Shani Kleinhaus with Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. I also live really close to the bridge, and I use the underpass when I walk my dog sometimes. It's near home. Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society together with the Sierra Club sent a letter saying that we really worry about birds and risks to birds and how the bridge designs will interact with nature in the Baylands. As we looked at the three designs, we find all of them have issues, but some of them have issues that we think are unmitigable, no way to deal with them. There are two things that kill birds in general in terms of structures. One of them is collision, and collisions occur with transmission towers, with wires. Wires is a big thing, bridges included. And with buildings. Some cities around here started looking at bird-safe design for buildings. There is no reason to put wires in one of the most used areas for birds of this kind. The other thing that causes mortalities is lights. Light pollution is a huge issue, and cities are starting to adopt ordinances for dark sky during migration season and other times. Bridges that have something that includes a lot of light, like the second option, are really dangerous. Even Option C, which we favored because it's lower and it doesn't have those protrusions and a lot of wires only some, has lights at night. We would like to see a change in that. Option A, which looks to us as the most hazardous to birds because of its size and because the



incompatibility with nature or the sense of space of nature in Palo Alto, if you look at the handouts that you were given, the lights during the evening or during fog can actually, those reflective things that are supposed to mitigate the problem, will probably be not effective. During the night, you don't see anything and birds migrate during the night. That's the time they fly. Only the largest birds actually fly during the day. Most of the birds fly at night. There's energy conservation and many, many other reasons, I don't want to get into it, but almost all the shore birds fly at night. Those are the birds that will fly through there. This is a real, huge risk to them. The other thing is those disks have not been tried. I have seen them used at McClellan Ranch. A different type of disk but still the same idea of a reflective disk that moves around to prevent birds from nesting during construction. We found them to be non-effective in terms of how the birds respond to them. People on the trail and people in the offices are really annoyed. Thank you. I hope you move with Option C recommendation with some modification in terms of lighting and potentially a few others. I'm sure there will be a lot of work with the designers later on. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. Elizabeth Ames is here from the Public Works Department. She's been heading up this study, this contest. I'll turn it over to her then.

Elizabeth Ames: Thank you. Good evening. I'm Elizabeth Ames, Senior Project Manager with the city in Public Works. I also have Hung Nguyen, he's our project engineer, sitting over here. I was hoping that we could try to structure this meeting where we could show the YouTube videos and then potentially have the design—there's one design team here. Do I have two design teams? We have one design team here, the winning design, Submission A, here. They can talk about their design after the YouTube video. What we've been doing is structuring these as a study session. We would present the YouTube videos and then segue into the design team discussion, if they are here, and then we would have more discussion with the Commission. If you're okay with that.

Chair Reckdahl: Yeah, I'm okay with that. Go ahead.

Ms. Ames: I also wanted to highlight that Judith Wasserman is here. She is the chair of the design competition. She's also here and available for questions. I wanted to just draw your attention to this comments matrix. I think this is the first page in Attachment F. I don't know if the Commission got the latest—oh, you did get the latest one that has the Public Art Commission comments.

Chair Reckdahl: We received that by email.

Ms. Ames: Do you want a hard copy?

Chair Reckdahl: If you have copies, please pass them around.

Ms. Ames: Yes. I also have the latest comments we had from the public via the city's website, [cityofpaloalto.org/101](http://cityofpaloalto.org/101). We have the YouTube videos and then this way to comment on the designs. That's another attachment. Those two documents are relatively hot off the press, so to speak. We have an updated comments matrix, which is the first page of Attachment F in the packet. I was basically taking comments from all the boards and commissions in the month of January on the pros and cons of each design submission. I will forward this over to the City Council. The City Council would then decide on potentially a design on February 23rd. That's the tentative Council meeting. That's the emphasis I was hoping to gain from the Commission. I'm not asking for a vote. Unless you feel compelled to vote, that's fine. We can do a straw poll. I was trying to get comments in general and fill in the matrix, pro and con for each design submission. That's really what I was trying to do tonight, and forward this to Council. The last time I saw this Commission, we talked about the guiding principles with the Park and Rec Commission and we formalized the guiding principles with this Commission, and then I forwarded that over to the City Council. Those guiding principles, I believe, are an exhibit or attachment in the packet. We used those guiding principles and the design guidelines as the guide, so to speak, for the design competition. The City hired AIA California Council to manage the competition. With those materials, they solicited design teams internationally and locally. We got 20 proposals, qualifications, and a design intent. Those 20 proposals were narrowed down to three. Those three teams received a \$20,000 stipend to develop the designs that you see now, which are on the YouTube videos. The boards are here as well. We have the design boards and a YouTube video, which was made available to the competition jury, which was the five member jury and the four member ARB panel, so it was a nine member group. This information along with the design competitors, they were all presenting their designs via PowerPoint. The competition jury decided the winning team was Submission A, which is the confluence or arch design, which is over on the far left. Judith Wasserman's the chair of the competition, and she could recap a little bit more about what happened there. With that, we're just taking this information forward to the boards and commissions and we're hoping to get comments from this Commission tonight.

Chair Reckdahl: I have a question. You said on February 23rd the Council will be talking about this, voting on which design to pick. How is all the board and commission input being transmitted? Are they just getting the same type of thing that we got from the notes? Is there going to be some staff report summarizing it or is it just going to be raw results like we had?

Ms. Ames: There will be a staff report, and we'll try to generally summarize what we've heard at the boards and commissions. If there's meeting notes, we're going to incorporate those. We have, for example, verbatim meeting notes of the competition itself. I don't know if we get any meeting notes from study sessions. If we do ...

915 Rob de Geus: We'll have meeting notes on this.

916  
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918 Ms. Ames: I was going to include the meeting notes from all the boards and commission  
919 if possible and a high level recap in the staff report.

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921 Chair Reckdahl: Very good. Do you want to start with the videos now or do you have  
922 more content you want to talk about?

923  
924 Ms. Ames: I think that's self-explanatory. The videos say a lot. Then we can go into  
925 questions and answers after that. First will be Submission A, which was the winning  
926 design.

927  
928 [Video presentation]

929  
930 Ms. Ames: I believe we have some of the design team members here tonight, so they can  
931 speak roughly five minutes on the design. That's what we've been doing on the other  
932 commissions and boards. If that's okay with you.

933  
934 Commissioner Crommie: Are you going to show the other videos too? Okay.

935  
936 Ms. Ames: Just to simplify, we were thinking of having the design team speak now or  
937 we can wait. It's up to you.

938  
939 Chair Reckdahl: I'd like to see all three videos and then go into comments. Otherwise, I  
940 think it'll break it up and stretch it out too much.

941  
942 Ms. Ames: Okay, sure. Sounds good.

943  
944 [Two video presentations]

945  
946 Ms. Ames: We can have the design team ...

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948 Chair Reckdahl: My preference, unless Commissioners object, would be not to have  
949 them give a talk right now. If each individual Commissioner has questions that they can  
950 answer, then we'll have them answer at the time as opposed to a presentation.

951  
952 Ms. Ames: Okay, sounds good.

953  
954 Chair Reckdahl: Any comments?

955

Commissioner Hetterly: I have a couple of questions to start with. On the last one we saw, "C", the touchdown area on the west seemed to spend more time on what happens when you touch down on the west side. We don't have very much information in our packet on "B" or "C" frankly. It was hard to tell what the surfacing is, whether there's landscaping there. From the video, it looked like it was just a hardscape all along the road there. Can you tell us a little more about what that looks like on the west side?

Ms. Ames: The west side near the Adobe connection, where it converges there at the Adobe Creek Reach Trail, is very constrained. It's difficult to landscape that area, so we've highlighted that issue in the design guidelines which, I believe, is Attachment E.

Commissioner Crommie: Can you give us page numbers.

Ms. Ames: Maybe I highlighted that. Hold on. On page 24 of Attachment E. It shows this constrained area where you've got a small landscape buffer and then you've got the sidewalk. You have a stairwell leading down over by 3600 West Bayshore. Do you have all the that? Do you have the picture of that?

Commissioner Hetterly: Yeah.

Ms. Ames: Essentially it's constrained because we have to put the ramp next to the sidewalk. Right next to the sidewalk would be theoretically the curb. That area still needs to be designed. We only gave the design teams a month essentially to come up with these concepts. Those touchdowns or those tie-ins still need to be more refined. This highlights that we still have constrained landscaping area, and we also are showing the bicycles sharing the vehicle lane at that location as well, where the ramp ties into (inaudible).

Commissioner Hetterly: Given those restrictions and the extent of the design, there's not much variation at this point in what the west side looks like. Is that what you're saying? Between the various plans.

Ms. Ames: Correct. There's not much variation where the tie-in occurs.

Commissioner Hetterly: Another question about that last one. The plaza on the west side that's below the loop, what is the surfacing there for the plaza?

Ms. Ames: I believe that was cement or pervious. They could propose pervious pavement, but I believe it was cement.

Commissioner Hetterly: It's some kind of hardscape?

Ms. Ames: Yes.

Commissioner Hetterly: My other question was whether Submissions A and B have stair access on one or both sides?

Ms. Ames: I believe Submission A has the stairs on the west side. I don't believe it was located—no, I think it was on both sides. Submission A does have it on both sides. I'm not sure about "B"; it wasn't clear.

Commissioner Hetterly: Those are all my questions. Thanks.

Commissioner Knopper: For Submission A, since that was the chosen submission, I'd like to focus on that particular one. Can you address the bird issue that came up a few times during public comments? Since we are the Park and Rec Commission, I thought that was important for us to talk about.

Ms. Ames: The design team was really charged with innovative design. I just wanted to point out that we did have these guiding design principles, Attachment D, which is innovation, versatility, interconnectedness, and conservation. With this kind of challenge, the design teams came up with what you saw in the YouTube videos. Part of that was those bird ...

Commissioner Crommie: That's on page 13. I'm sorry to interrupt. I just wanted to let the Commission know the guidelines are on page 13 of our handout.

Ms. Ames: This is Attachment D, guiding design principles. Yes, thank you.

Commissioner Crommie: It's really hard to leaf through and find all the attachments in a moment's notice. Any time you can give us page numbers, it's really helpful.

Ms. Ames: Okay, sorry. Thank you. Page number 13 in the staff report. With that challenge, each design team came up with the unique concept. Submission A came up with these disks, these brushed stainless steel disks. That design needs to be studied further. We would have to ask the teams to provide studies and more evaluation, more research if that can work as a bird-friendly design. It was an innovation as part of this submission. It's not something that we got research on or it was proven.

Commissioner Knopper: I think it would be important moving forward to meet with stakeholders like the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club, organizations that work, study, live, breathe, eat saving and conserving the creatures that would have the greatest impact for this particular structure. I did like the lighting. That was very unique, that it was motion. I read that people were concerned about the lighting, and that it was motion

driven. If no one's on the bridge at night, it's dark. I thought that was terrific. The bird issue is something that I would have experts in the field really flesh out to figure out what kind of material would work best, so we don't hurt anybody in the process. When I mean anybody, I mean feathered people.

Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Lauing, do you have comments?

Commissioner Lauing: Are we at the stage where we're also weighing in for comments that she writes down or are we just asking questions at this stage?

Chair Reckdahl: At this point, let's go with questions and then we can summarize to give her material.

Commissioner Lauing: I don't have any questions.

Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Crommie.

Commissioner Crommie: I have a question for Chair Wasserman, if I'm saying your name correctly. I watched the entire video and read the transcripts. I really digested what went on in your December 17 meeting. I thought you handled everything really well. I was a little bit disappointed when the jury was getting ready to vote. The ARB got to speak first, and I thought they gave some really interesting—I'm addressing this to you too, Elizabeth, thank you so much. I should have started out by thanking everyone. This project has been so long in coming. It's just been amazing to watch this evolve. I've been pleased that I've been able to support it along the way. I think I was probably the first person to bring this to our Commission's attention. I'm an avid cyclist and environmentalist. I spend a lot of time in the Baylands, and I had a connection with PABAC, the Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee. Richard, I can't remember his last name, who was two or three Chairs ago, fought so hard for this project. It almost died many times. He really kept it going. I think our Commission actually brought some visibility to this project. I'm really happy you've come to us. Getting back to that December 17th meeting, before you guys had your vote, I noticed that the ARB got to discuss things. It was a joint meeting with the Architectural Review Board sitting there and also the jury. I didn't get to attend it, but again I got to watch it and read the transcript. When it came time for the vote, I think that people were a little perplexed by "B," and people were leaning to Proposals A and C. I was a little bit disappointed because when it came time to vote, there was an over-emphasis on innovation. Let me ask this as a question. What did you feel about your purview in terms of looking at these four categories? You're judging these bridges on four different categories. The first being innovation, the second versatility, the third interconnectedness, and the fourth conservation. The conservation stipulates bird-friendly design. Interconnectedness is just to respect the ecosystem. Versatility is engineering and art and useful for everyone.



Innovation is contemporary, creative, original, maybe identifiable as a landmark. I want to know if you can speak to us on how you as a jury balanced all of those criteria.

Judith Wasserman: That is a very good question, because I don't think that we addressed them all individually and said, "Okay, which bridge do you think is the most innovative? Which bridge has the best conservation attitude?" I think we just looked at the bridges as a whole and discussed how they met the various criteria in the ways that they did it. On the bird issue specifically, everybody had a case to make. Everybody addressed the question. It was taken seriously. We felt that since each of them addressed it, that they were all equal in that range. The team with the flashing disks is here and can answer your questions about how they're intended to work. They introduced it to us by saying that they were modeled after the Mylar strips used in vineyards to keep critters, birds in particular, out of the grapes. They thought that a similar design would keep birds out of the bridge. I don't know a whole lot about birds, so I don't know whether they would do that. There was a landscape architect on the jury. People had different points of view, but we really did look at each one as a whole. If you want me to go into why we ended up where we ended up, I can do that, but I don't think that's what you want to do.

Commissioner Crommie: No, that's good enough for me. I just wanted a general idea. Thank you so much.

Ms. Wasserman: I think it might be instructive to find out why these people did, since that seems to be the biggest argument against that.

Commissioner Crommie: Yes, I will bring up one of them. I'll ask a question. I'm really concerned with creating something that you have to mitigate. What is bothering me about "A" is it's creating this problem and then trying to address it. Whereas, "C" doesn't even create the problem at all. I know "A" is a very talented group. Did you guys do the Mary Avenue crossing. Many of us have driven under that bridge on Highway 280, which is a very cathedral-like bridge. Have you done a pedestrian bridge over a waterway? Did you do anything in Missouri? I don't know if I got that right. Can you come up a minute? I have a question. I want to know if you've ever designed a bridge over a waterway or in an estuary. I also want to know why you came up with a design that you have to spend so much time mitigating for bird safety. Those are my two questions.

John Litzinger: My name's John Litzinger with HNTB. First off, we'll take responsibility for Mary Avenue Bridge whether it's good or bad.

Commissioner Crommie: (crosstalk)

Mr. Litzinger: It seems to get a lot of positive critique and is still talked about in engineering circles and even in the communities. As far as bridges over estuaries and wildlife environmentally sensitive areas, we designed the twin bridges at the Happy Hollow Park and Zoo that go over the Coyote Creek area. That was using the same bridge type as what was proposed here as a concept. The whole corridor from the east side of Happy Hollow, from the parking lot area going across the Coyote Creek area was all an environmentally critical area. Through that area, the same bridge type, same type of cable arrangements. We worked with the City of San Jose on that particular project. Over the course of the design process, we were able to address concerns like that. The cables that are supporting the bridge, the spacing between the cables can be adjusted, but then you enlarge the size of the cable to support the weight. There's a balancing act between art, environment, birds, etc. That's one location in a wildlife area. A second location is the Lake Champlain Bridge, same type of bridge over a waterway. It's on the border of Vermont and New Hampshire. So far for the number of years that it's been there, we've heard no complaints or comments on wildlife and structure conflicts. What we heard from Elizabeth is through the design process, we could provide studies that would either address it or mitigate it or show that there's not an issue. It's an issue that we need to make sure that is addressed with whatever type of bridge used.

Commissioner Crommie: Thank you very much.

Mr. Litzinger: Sure.

HNTB Team Member: May I add to that comment?

Commissioner Crommie: Yes.

HNTB Team Member: I'll be quick. We took the conservation objective very seriously. In thinking about the project as a whole, not just about the span, the greatest threat to bird species as well as many other species is actually the loss of habitat. When we're talking about conservation, I think it's fair to talk about the whole project and the way it affects bird species, not just about the way it passes over the highway. Our scheme is differentiated in that we do not place any fill in the Baylands. We actually create Bay volume. Our scheme anticipates sea level rise, anticipates habitats that these organisms will need in the future. We reactivate the ecological properties of Bay mud, which lies underneath the fill that is placed in the Bay with storm water and removing that fill. There are many ecological components to the design as a whole, looking far into the future that assures we can do all we can for the species. You asked a very specific question about why create something that you have to go through a lot of trouble mitigating. A simple answer to that is that bridge design is very complicated. In this situation, it's even more complicated. In a larger context, the topic of cost is a driving consideration. The most structurally efficient, cost efficient way to negotiate this very

1165 complicated situation is with an arch. The jury member and engineer on the jury, Steve  
1166 Burrows, said the Romans did it pretty well, and it's a very time-tested method. That's  
1167 very true. The arch accomplishes all of these challenges very effectively in terms of cost.  
1168 It does create a cable-suspended deck. We're showing you one approach. As John said,  
1169 that approach can be modified. There's other ways to support that deck with cables. In  
1170 the Bay context, it is not an unprecedented structural approach. If you look at the  
1171 Berkeley Pedestrian Bridge, equally wide, in a more Baylands condition than this because  
1172 it is an active tidal flat and this is really upland areas and it's a flood control basin and so  
1173 on. That structure has been in existence for over ten years. It's a cable-supported deck.  
1174 As a precedent, it should be looked at closely if you're serious about involving  
1175 professionals who study patterns of birds and strike incidents.

1176  
1177 Commissioner Crommie: Thank you.

1178  
1179 Chair Reckdahl: Do you want to say anything?

1180  
1181 Vice Chair Markevitch: I don't have any questions.

1182  
1183 Chair Reckdahl: I have some questions to go through first, and then everyone gets their  
1184 elevator speech of which design they prefer. I first have some questions for Palo Alto  
1185 City. On the east side right now, do we have the pictures of east side? As you come off  
1186 the bridge, you end up in a "T" right at the current bike path on the west side. Anyone  
1187 coming off the bridge is going to have to take a sharp left turn, go across the bridge, take  
1188 another sharp left turn to get back on the path. Considering that the bulk of the people  
1189 are going from the west side over to the Baylands, why isn't it optimized for someone  
1190 going to the Baylands as opposed to dumping you off right next to the freeway there?  
1191 Rob, can you bring up the picture? (crosstalk)

1192  
1193 Ms. Ames: Are we talking about the west side?

1194  
1195 Chair Reckdahl: I'm sorry, east side, on the east side.

1196  
1197 Ms. Ames: The east side. The Bay side.

1198  
1199 Chair Reckdahl: Yes. When you get off the bridge, there will be a "T" there. Anyone  
1200 coming off the bridge now will have to slow down, take a sharp left turn, then go across  
1201 the current existing bridge across Adobe Creek, and then take a sharp left going out to the  
1202 Baylands.

1203  
1204 Commissioner Crommie: I think page 48, sorry, page 28 has a picture of that, of the east  
1205 side if our Commission wants to look at it.  
1206

Chair Reckdahl: Initially when they were looking at possible layouts, there was one layout that went across the bridge. When it went to the east side, it didn't stop right there, but it continued going across and crossed Adobe Creek and then dumped you out on the way to the Baylands. I was wondering why we removed that as an option.

Ms. Ames: Maybe we can look at page 9 of the packet. Attachment B shows the location of the bridge and the alignment that has this "T" intersection at the San Francisco Bay Trail. Where the approach ramp meets the Bay Trail, it's like a "T" intersection on the east side of the Baylands. We had looked at various alignments in the past, namely the one you mentioned that goes along the creek. We realized that a lot of the users weren't necessarily going in that direction, towards the Bay. Rather, they might be commuting. If you're a recreational user, you might be going towards the Baylands. If the bridge ramp was going parallel to Adobe Creek and terminated by Adobe Creek, that was one specific direction. This direction where there's a "T" intersection seemed most versatile, where somebody going north or south could decide at that point and not have to backtrack if they were going to the north.

Chair Reckdahl: Have we done surveys? I take that route to work, and I see everybody going back into the Baylands and then heading over to the Googleplex and the Shoreline Business Park. I hardly see anyone going north. Before we make a decision on the layout like that, you'd want a survey of where people are going when they cross the bridge.

Ms. Ames: Most of the users we looked at given the build out of this whole area, say that's 20 years from now, there's a complete build out on the east side and the west side. Alta Planning and Design looked at the potential uses and did find that they would mainly go towards the south. Given that though, we also had issues with the Santa Clara Valley Water District. They didn't want us crossing over the Adobe Creek channel on the east side of the freeway. They had a lot of maintenance concerns. With the Santa Clara Valley Water District concerns along with the desire to have connections both north and south, leaving it open for the user to decide, the design team came up with this approach. The design team meaning Alta Planning and Design had done these alignments and presented these alignments to the commissions and the boards previously, and we came up with this kind of connection instead of the one that you saw in 2011, which was parallel into the Baylands and went by Adobe Creek on the east.

Chair Reckdahl: What's problematic is that we're making this bridge with a nice turning radius so you don't have to slow way down. Then at the end of the bridge where it's flat, you're off the bridge now. The expensive part is done and we have a "T." Everyone's going to have to stop and slow their bike down and take a sharp left turn. If you're making the big arching turn on the expensive bridge and stopping at the end, then keeping up speed is not nearly as critical on the bridge.

Ms. Ames: I could say that we are going to potentially go through site and design review, and maybe there can be some design considerations to slow down the bikes and maybe do a better integration and not have this abrupt "T" intersection. There might be a way to have more of a gradual transition.

Chair Reckdahl: Some type of "V." Another question is on the west side. All the designs dump you out away from the freeway. If you now are going back northbound, you're going to have to cross over West Bayshore Road at that point. Are we having a crosswalk there? Are we just going to have the people play Frogger and jump across the traffic? There is quite a bit of traffic on West Bayshore.

Ms. Ames: The west side is complicated. When we had our public scoping meeting, which seems forever, like two years ago, the community asked to open up the Adobe Creek Reach Trail.

Chair Reckdahl: Which I think is a marvelous idea. I like that a lot.

Ms. Ames: Mainly because this access point on the west is so constrained, maybe West Bayshore isn't the best connection to the bridge. The community at the scoping meeting was saying, "Let's open up that maintenance road," Santa Clara Valley Maintenance Road which we're calling the Adobe Creek Reach Trail. That could be a main entrance to the west side of the bridge. Yes, this design crossing, if somebody's going north on West Bayshore, would have to cross over to get to this ramp. There's probably going to be some kind of crosswalk or some kind of crossing that's safe. That's not part of the competition.

Chair Reckdahl: At this point, it's irrelevant because all the designs are in the same boat. Let me move onto some things that are relevant. We have cost estimates for all these. How real are they? Did all three groups have to submit bases for all their costs or did they just do their best guess estimates? Are they based on previous built bridges?

Ms. Ames: At this conceptual stage, we still asked for cost estimates. All the design teams did that. They were roughly in the \$8 million range, which included a 10 percent contingency. The jury also thought that the numbers looked adequate. We don't have engineering drawings, but we did ask for the teams to have design experience. They had to have designed and constructed a bridge in the last ten years. The staff feels and the jury felt that the estimates were okay for now. We'd need to get more cost information later on. Once you do engineering drawings, you know how deep the piles or columns need to be. At 35 percent design roughly is usually when you get a solid estimate and can verify the numbers. At this stage, everybody is saying it's roughly in the \$8 million range.

Chair Reckdahl: The experts on the jury concur with that?

Ms. Ames: Yes. The technical advisory panel, which looked at the cost estimates prior to the competition, didn't have the benefit of seeing the presentations, but they looked at these estimates prior to the competition, had some commentary on the cost estimates and had questions. I think the technical advisory panel memo is also in your packet.

Commissioner Crommie: Yes, it is. It's at the end of the ...

Ms. Ames: It's part of Attachment F I believe.

Commissioner Crommie: Yes. I think it's at the very end after the jury makes their decision.

Ms. Ames: Roughly everyone thought they would basically meet the \$8 million threshold in construction only.

Chair Reckdahl: If we tried to be as cheap and no-frills as possible, what would be the cheapest bridge that we could put over that spot? Do we have an estimate of that?

Ms. Ames: When we did the feasibility study, which was approved by Council at the December 2011 meeting I believe, we had an estimate range between \$6-\$8 million for a bridge. The \$6 million construction estimate was really based on a simple, Caltrans-related bridge. I think it was only 10 feet wide. These bridges are on the magnitude of 18 feet wide, the ones presented tonight.

Chair Reckdahl: If it is only \$2 million over, then we are getting some value. I worry that these \$8 million bridges will become \$16 million by the time they're built. That's outside of my pay grade. I have some questions for the designers. These wires on the network arch are very thin. They're 1 millimeter. Have you worked with that type of wire before? Have you built an arch like this before?

Mr. Litzinger: Yes. We have several designs that we've done that have been constructed within the engineer's estimate from the start. We have a lot of confidence in the bridge type. It's a proven bridge type with low risk of cost escalation along the way. As the spans change, then you have wires of different sizes. We've done a variety of these with different wire size types, different densities of the mesh. If you think about the mesh that way, that kind of balances it. It comes down to the point of aesthetics and other considerations.

Chair Reckdahl: You mentioned Happy Hollow. That's a network arch?



Mr. Litzinger: Yes, it's a network-type arch, very similar to the concept we have shown here.

Chair Reckdahl: They have 1 millimeter wires there?

Mr. Litzinger: Those may have been a little bit larger. In fact, I had some notes that I was taking down to go back and look and see how many wires we were using. The spans were very similar. We might have gone to a larger diameter cable, so we would have fewer of them rather than a small diameter and more frequent.

Chair Reckdahl: But that's going over a creek, so there's birds in that area.

Mr. Litzinger: Correct.

Chair Reckdahl: Have we had any bird hits? Are you familiar with ...

Mr. Litzinger: We've heard of no complaints from the City of San Jose, from their parks and rec group on that issue.

Chair Reckdahl: That has no mitigation? That has just plain wires?

Mr. Litzinger: That's correct.

Chair Reckdahl: I would assume that if you made the wires thicker, it'd be easier for birds to see the wires.

Mr. Litzinger: I think so. I'm not a bird expert; I'm just a civil engineer. We have experts on the team that could address that.

Chair Reckdahl: What would happen if you do some testing now? Maybe I should back up. What testing do you plan to do for these little flappers, the mitigation? Are you building a scale model?

HNTB Team Member: We have a working prototype already.

Commissioner Crommie: He has to go to the mike.

HNTB Team Member: The disks are a collaboration of our teams. We have an artist on our team. His name is Ned Kahn. He's an internationally renowned artist known for the merger of art and science. We've built a working prototype of one of the disks. There

would be many steps to determine their reflectivity and their durability. Would they work with larger cables? Yes. If that's the question.

Chair Reckdahl: Let's suppose you do some testing and find out that these disks don't repel the birds. Now what do you do? Do you change the design or do you just go to thicker cables and have less of them?

HNTB Team Member: I'd leave that question to the engineers in terms of the structural systems. The conservative case would be to go to precedented structural types in the area, like the Berkeley Bridge which I believe is an orthogonal arrangement of cables. That would be the base case, let's say. This would be what we presented to really address the innovation and the signature quality of the bridge. Would it work with a conventional type? I believe so. I'd leave it to John to answer the question.

Chair Reckdahl: By conventional, do you mean vertical?

HNTB Team Member: To vertical or let's say tested and established. Using dimensions and cable types that have been proven to work in other similar conditions such as the Berkeley Pedestrian Bridge, which is a cable-supported span and the cables are orthogonal to the arch and the deck.

Chair Reckdahl: Why is the arch canted? Was there a functional reason for that or was that aesthetics?

Mr. Litzinger: It's an aesthetic.

Chair Reckdahl: One of my concerns is that there's going to be perching spots above that, and birds will sit on there, and there will be bird droppings on 101 and bird droppings on people going across the bridge. Should I be concerned about that?

Mr. Litzinger: It's a concern. I think it's something that we would look at, the path. One of the features of this, where the path swoops out away from the plane of the arch, is to keep the path out of a landing spot or a perching area for the birds. That certainly is something that we would work out in a collaborative manner through the design process.

HNTB Team Member: The condition that you're referring to and most people have experienced commonly occurs when there is ample food source and ample water supply very close by, like food vending situations or college campuses or urban streets where all those things are present, ready and available. Over a freeway, that condition doesn't exist and it's different types of bird species.

Chair Reckdahl: It still makes me nervous. If we're looking to get a black eye, having either dead birds or bird droppings cast down on 101 would not be good for Palo Alto. We do have to look at that. One more thing. You mentioned about the transporters. Where would you anticipate building the bridge and moving it? Would that be on other parkland or would it be somewhere else?

Mr. Litzinger: There are a few options in the area. There's one location that we looked at. As you go up East Bayshore, there's a little bulb-out maybe a quarter mile up the road that seems to have a sufficiently wide area and that could be used as a construction zone for the bridge to be assembled. Once it's assembled there, then you have the transporters that are supported on either end that would travel down East Bayshore, come to a point where the bridge would be located across 101, have some temporary holes in the barrier on an overnight closure with Highway 101. The transporters would rotate and the bridge would rotate into place.

Chair Reckdahl: The assembly actually would be blocking East Bayshore and all assembly would be done on the road? I just want to make sure that we're not anticipating using any parkland for the assembly, because I think that would be a big impact.

Mr. Litzinger: Right. Right now we're not looking at any parkland. What other work areas are available that are in the public area? Either public roadways, side streets, parking lots. There's a number of different options that could be investigated that is in close proximity to the location. You have the advantage of this bridge type with the assembly being done, then it can be wheeled and dropped into place.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you. If there are no more questions, we'll express our comments. This is our message to the City Council, what you think, what you like, what you don't like.

Commissioner Lauing: Want me to start?

Chair Reckdahl: Yeah.

Commissioner Lauing: First of all I think that our comments, as everyone's should be, are coming off this page 13 which is the guiding design principles. Clearly the judges have decided that all three make that cut. This discussion of birds is appropriate but, even as a couple of the speakers said, we're going to lose birds. You put up a bridge; you're going to lose some birds. That's not the driving force of all things. There's probably thousands of things that come into account in this whole bridge. Just looking at the four criteria, I guess you just want to get some specific comments down here. Talking about innovation and inspiring, I do think that the first one is inspiring as a work of art, elegant and really a lovely statement without being over the top. It really meets all

of the criteria. I would rate that the highest. I also think some of the previous comments are worth pointing out, which is the separation of pedestrians and cyclists. Obviously we just talked about this to death, but they attempt to make it as unobtrusive to bird species as possible. As they point out, which was helpful, the habitat and the connection areas are equally important. I would say a close second—I appreciate the public comments on this—is Submission C. There's one comment on the jury side where they said it's actually too subtle, which I would agree with. It's not quite enough of a statement in spite of its elegance and connectivity and getting the job done. The third one, "B," visually it looks too temporary. It almost looked like a tent and like it's not really structurally sound in some cases. I know that's not true, but visually that's the case. It's so understated as to blend in too much as opposed to addressing the issue of inspiration, engaging the community and maybe even drawing more visitors there, which I think it ought to do. Thank you.

Vice Chair Markevitch: I think it was 2005 or 2006 I went to the VTA Board and said that we need to have a pedestrian bike bridge there. It should have been built when they were doing all of the construction that they've doing for the last four years or however long it's been on 101. They didn't hear me. I'm glad to see it's finally here. I'm looking at all three of these, and I'm thinking there should have been a fifth criteria and that was cost effectiveness. When I was speaking to the VTA Board, I envisioned a very simple bridge that's cost effective, safe, and simple. None of these are. I looked at them, and two of them under the submissions say construction costs are likely to increase. I know that's true. I'm the daughter of a civil engineer. It's not going to be \$8 million on any of them. I would be shocked. The one in the middle, the wood bridge, we're in Palo Alto which is the land of termites. That's just not a good thing especially if it's built over a freeway. My vote is for none of these. It needs to be simple, safe, and cost effective.

Commissioner Crommie: Well, let's see my notes. Looking at the criteria on page 13, of these three bridges Number C meets the criteria the best. I disagree with the jury saying that all of them meet it equally. I just simply don't think that's true. 25 percent of the criteria has to do with bird safety, integration into the ecosystem. That's 25 percent of the criteria. There's no way you can ignore that. I appreciate "A." The design as a suspension bridge is very beautiful. Suspension bridges make a big wow statement, and they've done a beautiful job with it. I just don't think it's in the right place. That's my only hesitation with it. I think there are too many unknowns in this particular location. Going to our website on the Baylands, it says, "The Baylands Preserve is one of the largest tracts of undisturbed marshland remaining in the San Francisco Bay." Palo Alto has been a leader in preservation, conservation of that land, so we need to have a bridge that speaks to that. "C" speaks to that. "C" is innovative in terms of the floating technology, how it uses the cable. That's why it could satisfy innovation. It's not as much of a wow; I agree with that. It's a more subtle statement which is the look of the land. I would draw everyone's attention to how the Lucy B. Evans Interpretive Center is

designed, that sits in our Baylands. It's a very elegant, subtle structure that blends right in with the marsh. The designers had that right. Under the pros for "C," I said innovative in terms of the floating technology, integrated with nature, safest design for wildlife, lowest impact, possibly the shortest route which is important for cyclists. Between "A" and "C," "C" has a shorter route. That's it.

Commissioner Hetterly: In terms of innovation, "B" was the most innovative for its sustainability. It's clear it's the most sustainable plan of all of them. I didn't like it as much. "C" was probably the least innovative, but the simplest and cleanest. "A" probably did the best job of balancing the four criteria and being fairly strong in all of them. The bird issue obviously needs some more consideration. I don't have the expertise to opine on that, so I'll leave that to you all. If the bird issue can be addressed satisfactorily, that would be my preference. I preferred "A" over "C" for the viewing station on the east side overlooking the Baylands to one that's in the middle of the freeway looking straight out on the freeway. I also liked the idea of the water reclamation on the east side as opposed to a cement plaza or hardscaped plaza, whatever the surfacing is. Thank you.

Commissioner Crommie: I just wanted to speak to the east side. I forgot about that, because we haven't really dug into that because it's not very well developed. I'm really worried about that water reclamation scenario. It's a way that "A" is trying to be more environmental as an afterthought. I wanted to voice my concern because it's different from Commissioner Hetterly. I'm just really concerned about how that's going to work. There's not a tidal flow there, so they want it to be standing water. They're going to uncover the mud and create this brackish water spot. It has so many unknowns, and environmentalists are not embracing that. I'm very appreciative that we have many in the audience tonight. I see it as an afterthought.

Commissioner Knopper: I liked "A." It's beautiful and it met the criteria as far as I'm concerned. I already discussed one issue, just making sure that the habitat that lives in that area—thoughtful consideration with regard to reflectors or cables, etc., which I'm sure this will be discussed infinitum for the next however long this takes. It will be addressed. I'm very happy that there will be a bridge there. I'm very happy that it's artistic and interesting and that it has looked at all the criteria from an environmental perspective and has been sensitive to that. Thank you for the examples of the other bridges. I appreciate that.

Chair Reckdahl: When I first saw Design A a month ago, six weeks ago, I thought, "Oh, it's just too gaudy and out of place." I didn't like it initially. Now I've looked at it and grown to like it. I think people get used to it. It is beautiful. There's that wow factor. It has a big risk, the birds. I don't think we've proven to ourselves that it won't hurt the birds. It comes down to whether Council wants that wow factor. They're going to have

to do some studies and convince themselves that there's not going to be bird problems. If they want the wow factor and they're willing to take that risk, then Design A. If they're not willing to take that risk, then it's clearly Design C. Wow factor aside, "A" did have a little better design. I like the separation between the pedestrians and bicycles. It was nice. You have seniors walking. You have young kids walking. Having a separation between the bikes and the pedestrians is a very good idea. I like the water filling and the bathrooms on the east side. Their design was a little more polished. All in all, "A" is a good design, but it has the bird risk. We're going to have to work at that; we can't just cross our fingers. We're going to have to get some evidence to show that the birds are going to be safe. All the designs do have a big risk on money. I agree with Pat that it's unlikely that any of the designs could be built for \$8 million. I'm not sure if the Council wants to get independent people to look at that and price it out or if they can start the process and make decisions along the way. I don't know.

Commissioner Hetterly: Can I add something? Aesthetically speaking, I'm really uncertain about how that wire mesh is going to seem. It seems to me that this whole Commission felt previously concerned about costs. If we're going to go with the bare bones, it shouldn't be an \$8 million bare bones option. If the City decides to reject "A," then it should consider whether "C," if that's the second choice, merits the cost or if we should go back to a simple, basic, utilitarian plan.

Chair Reckdahl: Elizabeth, do you have any final questions or comments or are you ready to move on?

Ms. Ames: Thank you very much. I really appreciate your input. The Commission was instrumental in leading this project and making this a top priority and the Bike and Pedestrian Plan that was adopted by Council in 2012. I really appreciate the Commission's support. Hopefully, you will be there at the February 23rd Council meeting. Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Thank you.

## **5. Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Facilities Master Plan.**

Chair Reckdahl: We have no speakers for this, so we can directly in as soon as Peter's ready to go.

Peter Jensen: Commissioners, good evening. Peter Jensen, Landscape Architect for the City of Palo Alto, here in our monthly address for the Parks, Recreation Master Plan. As the progress goes along, the information and the materials build. I'm happy to say that we have the consultant with us tonight, Ellie on the MIG project team, to go over some of



the handouts that we got this week and discuss those things. Because of time, I'm just going to let her get into it. Then we'll have questions at the end.

Ellie Fiore: Hi, good evening. For those of you I have not yet met, my name's Ellie Fiore. I work for MIG; I'm a deputy project manager on this process. I work closely with Ryan and Lauren who've been to meetings before me. I'm here tonight primarily to field questions and comments on several work products that we've put in front of you. I think there were five in your packet. I don't know if you have a preference for where we start. To frame the discussion big picture wise in terms of where we are in this project, we're pivoting from the information gathering and data analysis phase into recommendations. As you know, our big push at the end of 2014 was the online survey. We got over 1,100 responses which is really remarkable. We're in the process of crunching and summarizing that data. That's a big input that we'll see next month. It'll be in front of you and the ad hoc committee. Then we'll be developing recommendations and a project list, and then going quickly into prioritization in March with an adoption target deadline of October. The five pieces that were in your packet and that we want to discuss tonight were the existing system summary, which might be a good place to start because this encapsulates the work that we did last year and summarizes the pieces that make up that existing system analysis. It has a date of December 22nd. I apologize; they all look alike because they have similar headers. It is to Peter and Elizabeth from Ryan and Ellie. It's formatted with a memo heading.

Vice Chair Markevitch: Page number?

Chair Reckdahl: They're not contiguous.

Commissioner Lauing: This is the one. Does everybody see it?

Ms. Fiore: This is essentially an update on where we are in the scope of work. We've completed most of phases 1 through 5 as I said, the existing system analysis, data analysis and several elements of our community engagement approach. This outlines what we've done, what the work products are, all of which you should have had or do have now, again with the exception of the online survey summary which is underway. I just want to confirm that you've seen all of those pieces and see if there's any outstanding questions or concerns.

Commissioner Lauing: Can we make comments on this?

Chair Reckdahl: Yes.

Commissioner Lauing: I thought this was going to be up third, but I'm glad it's up first. It's actually the most important. Starting at the beginning of your memo where you say,

"MIG has collected and generated a foundation of data" and then "community input." Consistently we've been saying we want data. We're speaking for Council, and they want data, hard data on what the strategic direction of this thing needs to be. The community stuff is very interesting. It's beyond anecdotal, but it's not quantitative. It's qualitative data. The real data is what's going to have to drive the strategic aspects of this. Just repeating that theme, because that's what we're going to need. When we got over to page 4 of this memo, demographics and trends, you guys did some research on local and regional population and demographic trends from the past several decades. This work product went to the City in September of 2014. At our next meeting, Peter, we should revisit that in some level of detail because that's the basis of it. Again I'm contrasting data versus community input. When we're hearing that people want cricket or archery or more baseball fields or whatever, that's one thing. We really would love to have trend data. For example, and I hope I'm making this up, is golf going to die, so we don't need golf courses anymore? We would make decisions like that. Is cricket going to take the world by storm? We need to know about that. We're not going to hear that, with all due respect, from just asking even 1,000 people in our community. That kind of trend data. Also, local data. We were told you were going to look at data from school districts. I'd like to know in the next 10, 20, and 30 years if our 8 to 15-year-old kid group is going to go up by 50 percent or down by 10 percent. Those are the ones that are mostly filling up our fields. We really need that hard approach to this. I don't recall that we dug into this very much in September of 2014. I, for one, would like to see that come back to us next month, so we really have something that's quantitative. Just to put a point on it, the credibility of this whole Master Plan is dependent on that kind of work. For us, for you, for the Council, for the City, for residents. The other item that you guys already know about which is that five-point plan of what everybody wants in parks, geez, we'd really like to have something more than that. Throw a ball, walk around, sit around, look at the sun. It's like that commercial says, we already know that.

Ms. Fiore: Right. Those are the basic elements. Thank you.

Commissioner Lauing: Other comments on this?

Chair Reckdahl: I've got Hetterly.

Commissioner Hetterly: I agree about the need for more data. We're sounding like a broken record; we keep saying that over and over and over again. We need harder data or more quantitative data. For this particular document, I just had a couple of comments. On the top of page 3, you talk about the recreation program review and analysis is going to review the division of responsibility for recreation programs across the Community Services Department and by private and community providers. We'll discuss the program analysis later on. I don't feel like it does review the division of responsibility. It just notes that there are services provided by different providers. Maybe there it would be

nice to know something more, like what percent of offerings in a certain category or categories X, Y and Z are provided by the city as opposed to provided by the City's partners or nonprofits or private organizations. That kind of data helps us understand what is our market share in martial arts or in teen programs. On page 6 under the City Council update, you tell us that you provided City Council with a review of your work completed to date on November 17th, but we haven't seen any feedback from that. We'd like you to provide us feedback about what you heard, what you learned from that interaction with the Council. That would be helpful for our discussions. Also the revenue analysis we have not seen yet, I believe. It's also not described in the summary of work products.

Ms. Fiore: That's correct. That one is in process, but there was a glitch in verifying the data that we should be using. It's been on hold for about the last six weeks. There's a meeting today that either Peter or Rob can speak to better than I. We're moving that forward.

Commissioner Hetterly: My last comment on this document. The prioritization process, you say that you're going to develop preliminary recommendations and a project list and that there will be dedicated prioritization meetings with stakeholder groups and other groups. I just wanted to make sure that those preliminary recommendations and project list is going to be the subject of those meetings as opposed to them happening in a vacuum from the work that's happening behind doors.

Ms. Fiore: I'm not sure I follow you.

Commissioner Hetterly: The prioritization meetings with the stakeholders and the public and the Commission, those meetings are intended to discuss the preliminary priorities that you will identify and (crosstalk).

Ms. Fiore: Exactly. The project list is what will be reviewed in those meetings.

Commissioner Hetterly: Thank you.

Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Crommie.

Commissioner Crommie: Are we discussing this whole document through the following—oh, just this one. I ditto the comments that have been made. I'm really worried about what we're going to be able to do with this report once we get it, quite frankly. It doesn't seem data driven enough. It just looks like a boilerplate report when I look at this. I don't know what to do about it. When it comes to prioritization, it's so difficult to do that. The only way you can make your arguments is to try to use the data. I'm just not sure how we're going to do that. When I see you guys processing the data, it

doesn't reflect my memory of the meetings, which I'll say when we get further into this. I wish I had a better concrete suggestion.

Chair Reckdahl: Are we ready to move on?

Rob de Geus: Chair Reckdahl. I'm concerned about this too, about this question of data and what we're going to do about it. We're moving along here and we're going to get into prioritization. If the Commission's not comfortable with the material or at least the data that we have, then maybe we need to take a pause here and think about how do we get that data and what does it really look like. MIG's done a lot of this work before, and I appreciate what they're doing in trying to get data in a lot of different ways. From the intercept surveys to the electronic survey they got a lot of responses, the workshops, Commission feedback, staff interviews, and other things. I actually think there's a lot of good data there. Maybe it's not sufficient. I don't know. What I would like to hear, and I suspect these guys would like to hear, is what specifically does the Commission want to see in terms of more data. Is it a specific survey that you're looking for, additional workshops, regional trend analysis for park and rec programs? Something specific that we can then work with.

Commissioner Lauing: That's why I brought up number 4 on page 4 first. If you've already done that, refresh our memory and make sure that we're not missing something. You say there, "local and regional population and demographic trends from the past several decades and projections for the coming decades." That's the kind of stuff that I think is more actionable and strategic than 25 people at the community center saying what they think we could do new, which comes up with some interesting ideas that can be incorporated, but it's not the basis for a 25-year strategic plan. That's the kind of data. We talked from the get-go about school board data, about projections of school-aged children. If there's any way that someone here is predicting our own population and what the demographics might be, we should see that too.

Chair Reckdahl: The city does have its own projections on the population of Palo Alto going to the (crosstalk).

Mr. de Geus: Yeah, we do and the school district has it. It's readily available. If some of that is in the demographic report—I know that the school district struggles with these projections though. They typically don't project much further than five years, because it's so unreliable. We certainly can get what they have.

Commissioner Lauing: Even that's instructive. Right?

Mr. de Geus: Yeah.

Commissioner Lauing: If we say, "Well, we think we need fields at the Baylands," so we put in a bunch of fields. The school board doesn't know what kind of kid population we're going to have five years out. We can't do something that's going to impact the city for 75 years. Maybe that causes us pause on some of those issues. Even not doing something is of value for this whole strategic plan that we're doing.

Mr. de Geus: That's helpful. Maybe others have input here.

Commissioner Crommie: I'm struggling with this. I'm just going to brainstorm. I personally would like to see more information from our stakeholder groups in a more succinct way. We can develop a list of stakeholders that as a Commission we're interested in, and all of us have contacts with various stakeholder groups. Then develop a list of questions that we give to those stakeholders. We have a lot of interest in the city that funnels through stakeholders. I know we did the wide community survey with 1,000 respondents. A lot of us on the Commission weren't completely happy with those questions, so we have a little bit of hesitation. I'm sure we'll get some really good information from that. I'm just throwing this out. I really value our stakeholders. We can't be overpowered by any one group of them. It's our job to balance that out. As we look at them, we know the forces that be. I worked on the field use policy that our Commission reviewed. Our soccer leagues are very vocal, but we know how to place that in balance. I would like to hear what they have to say. I don't know if other people on this Commission would agree, so it'd have to be a consensus. I would never want to go forward unless other people thought it was going to yield good information. I don't want to keep doing information that people aren't excited about. I just feel like there's such a gap in understanding what the schools want. When I see on this list getting a new community pool, we have all these school pools, and I don't know anything about it and how that fits in. I didn't hear a single community member bring up a pool ever; yet, it's on this list.

Ms. Fiore: What list are you referring to?

Commissioner Crommie: We're going to get into that. I'm just saying that I don't know what's going on in the schools. They seem like a black box. They seem like they're profit motivated to me, that they're holding onto turf to sell it. That's something I don't understand. I've heard our Commission ask for information on that, and I haven't seen any of it yet.

Mr. de Geus: The school data, we've heard that several times. MIG staff and us have met with the schools on two occasions related to this plan, but maybe there's more that we can do there, more data, more feedback. The question about the stakeholders, I think there is a large stakeholder group that's been assembled for this work. I think they've met once, and they have two more meetings.



Commissioner Crommie: I was at the meeting. Keith was there.

Mr. de Geus: That's, I don't know, 20 or 30 of our stakeholders. Is that ...

Commissioner Crommie: No, I don't mean that kind of meeting. It was very hard to get useful information, I found, from that kind of meeting. You need to give them a list of questions and have them respond to it. It's always apples and oranges. One person saying this. We have a report on that meeting. Daren did write it up. Just having been there, my head was spinning with all the different viewpoints. I want something I can bite into, where there's similar questions being asked of people, like a script.

Chair Reckdahl: When Ryan was here, initially the plan was to mail the survey out to everyone in the whole—maybe I should back up a second. In my mind, there's two separate issues. One is the current assessment, what do people need and want right now. Then the projection going forward. You can break those into two. For the current needs assessment, we were originally planning to mail out a survey to everyone who had a utility bill. The question was what kind of return rate would we get. That was the only concern. Then we went away from that and just went to an electronic survey. Now you have sampling error. Ryan said in the past he had ways of, when they'd done electronic surveys like this, to reduce the sampling error. I don't know what methods he uses, but he said in the past they had addressed that. It'd be useful to hear how MIG can massage the data to reduce the effect of the sampling of the electronic survey. That's one issue. The second issue then is how do you go forward. Jen, did you have a question?

Commissioner Hetterly: I did. I think we're a little off track. Now we're looking more at the big issue of what are we wanting to get and how do we get there. There's a lot of details in the packet where we could give you more reaction about what we think is missing. For the big picture view, fundamentally what we're looking to learn from this study is do we have the right mix and supply of parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs to meet the needs of our community now and into the future. That's the fundamental question. The inventory and the matrix is supposed to provide us a starting point to understand where we are. The demographics information and the surveys and all that stuff is supposed to help us figure out where we should be. Right? The problem is there doesn't seem to be any information that we've seen yet suggesting how we get from where we are to where we might want to be. The demographic trends information is generalized. We're going to have more seniors. We have a more diverse cultural population. We have a growing population of kids. It doesn't go into specific detail about how our resources should change to reflect those trends. That's a big gap that we stumble on every time. That's part of why we're looking for more data, so that we can start putting the pieces together as we think about prioritization. There's a fear that we're going to jump from here, where we have a start, to a vague generalized end but nothing in



the middle. March is two months away. How are we going to be able to prioritize anything by then if we don't have any of the middle? I think that's the problem that we're struggling with.

Ms. Fiore: Thank you. That's a valid concern and it's completely understandable, based on the work we've put in front of you to date. The short answer is we're working on it. As I said, we're about to make that pivot into recommendations, all of which will be based on these many pieces that we've been gathering. I know it seems probably like it's been a slow process and that a lot of the information we've put in front of you you may already know because you are Parks and Rec Commissioners. Again, that is part of the systematic analysis of the system. We are generating recommendations, site specific. Another work product that you haven't seen yet is existing conditions maps with detailed analysis of all of your parks including photographs, and the ways they're used, and key features. Our next step is applying recommendations to each of those sites as well as the system.

Commissioner Crommie: When you give us your recommendations, I really want to see the data that you're working with. Not everyone needs to look at it, but I want to see it all. I just want to have complete transparency of what you looked at and what you got from that. If we are questioning any of your decisions, we can go right back and look at it. I'm asking for that right up front.

Commissioner Hetterly: Other kinds of data. Two of the questions we have all hoped to answer through this plan at a very basic level is do we need more fields, as Commissioner Lauing raised. Where is the best suited location for more dog parks? There doesn't appear to be a source of data that you all have been working on that would generate the information to reach those conclusions. If there is and we just aren't getting it, then it would be helpful for you to explain that to us. We're not seeing how you're going to make the leap from what you have so far to provide that kind of recommendation.

Chair Reckdahl: If there are no other comments, we'll move onto the next section.

Ms. Fiore: Thank you. Why don't we move to the sustainability review, which was the first product in your packet. This is a high level analysis of where the department and your system is in the context of sustainability. What policy guidance exists, what current practices and programs exist, which of these elements of sustainability and policy areas generally are most directly relevant to the work that the department does and which can be supported but are really the purview of other departments in the city. Starting on page 8 of this document, we have a list of options. This is not intended to be incredibly directive, but we're imagining this as a menu of options that staff can take as potential directions. If you do want to make increasing sustainability of the department a focus, there's some case studies in there that illustrate where principles of sustainability have

1876 been done very well in parks, including one here in Palo Alto. Then some next steps,  
1877 should you want to take this effort further. This is intended as a snapshot in time of  
1878 where you are, what the policy framework is, recognizing that there's many other similar  
1879 efforts going on that's citywide, but none would be focusing necessarily on parks and  
1880 recreations and programming. There is some good news in here in that there are a lot of  
1881 really strong, sustainable, and resource efficient practices and programs going on even  
1882 where there's not strong policy direction. That was one of our key findings. I should add  
1883 this can function as a standalone document should staff want to run with any of these  
1884 recommendations. This menu also may be pulled forward into the recommendations that  
1885 are elevated in the Master Plan as action items.

1886  
1887 Commissioner Crommie: I just have a question on this. Where would we find rain  
1888 gardens in here, collecting water more efficiently? I just couldn't find it.

1889  
1890 Ms. Fiore: It should be under water.

1891  
1892 Commissioner Crommie: Under water conversation maybe.

1893  
1894 Ms. Fiore: Yeah, under water conservation and water quality. Number 9 on page 12  
1895 mentions rain gardens specifically.

1896  
1897 Commissioner Crommie: We have a sustainability piece in our city Comp Plan. Did you  
1898 pull a lot of this from that?

1899  
1900 Ms. Fiore: We reviewed that as part of the policy context. We did not pull these  
1901 recommendations from that. We pulled these from national best practices of  
1902 sustainability plans that were specifically done for parks and recreation departments,  
1903 which can be \$50,000 standalone products on their own. This again was a snapshot, a  
1904 high level report. We did have your Chief Sustainability Officer, Gil Friend, review this  
1905 document before it went to you.

1906  
1907 Commissioner Crommie: Thank you.

1908  
1909 Commissioner Hetterly: I have just a few comments on this one. At the top of page 2,  
1910 further sustainability goals if they result in a positive change to one of the following  
1911 indicators, and then you list the indicators. I found it notable that there's no mention of  
1912 the balance or interrelationship between the indicators. Not all indicators are necessarily  
1913 created equal. Improvements in one area can sometimes prove detrimental to other areas.  
1914 That's something that should be addressed one way or another here. For example,  
1915 transportation is something that could easily conflict with natural resources and habitat.

1916  
1917 Ms. Fiore: Yep. Very good point.

Commissioner Hetterly: On pages 7 and 8, public health and safety is indicated as a primary consideration on page 7, but then on page 8 it's pulled out as a secondary. That's just an error I suspect. Public health and safety should certainly be primary. We have a lot of policies and practices in our strategic plan and our programs that address that.

Commissioner Crommie: Where is that one?

Commissioner Hetterly: I don't know. You'll have to find it. Page 9, one of the suggestions at the top, create green ambassadors within a department to support sustainability initiatives. I'd like to be sure that that's not just about recycling and greenhouse gas emissions. Maybe they're ecology ambassadors who present the fuller view of impacts. Page 10, natural resources and habitat. There are six recommendations there and many of them, to my recollection, we are already doing. Is this supposed to be exclusively a list of new things that we should do? In other areas, it seemed like new ideas. Many of these we seem to already be doing. One of the things we aren't doing is developing metrics for how we measure benefits to the natural resources and habitat. On page 11, transportation section, it was unclear to me why some of these were in here. Coordinating improvements like showers for employees and ride share services do not seem like something that would be within Community Services. Similarly, alternate work schedules to avoid travel peaks, encourage telecommuting and other practices. Is that about the employee structure or is that something that you're proposing be a policy that the Community Services (inaudible).

Ms. Fiore: Our intention was that this is one of the supporting functions of this department. You work with a transportation management agency, which is under formation right now. Whether it be Planning or Public Works, whatever the lead agency is in the city who has primary responsibility, you coordinate and work with them on that, but then keep an eye towards the staff of this Department and the telecommuting and the showers and the amenities that support their own behavior. In essence it's both.

Commissioner Hetterly: Number 1, install electric vehicle charging stations at park facilities with parking lots. I would like to know a little information about whether that attracts nonusers to park there just to use the charger. What the experience has been in that regard would be helpful to know more about. Finally on page 15 and 16 under education and training and natural resources and habitat, there are a lot of programs and practices that are missing from this table. I'd be happy to shoot you an email about them if you'd like.

Commissioner Crommie: We have an element of our Comp Plan called the Natural Environment Element (NEE). We're up in the air with the Comp Plan, but that's where a lot of really good material is, that the sustainability person might not be aware of. He

might not know that whole section, because sustainability is a part of it. It really does encapsulate habitat preservation, which is a piece that's not as well developed in here.

Commissioner Lauing: I have just a couple. I was pleased to see on page 8, getting into the detail there. There's such a good emphasis on maintenance, where we say maintain trees for a 100-year permanence. That recognition is really important particularly in light of some of the history we've had in the last year about mitigation for trees. You've got to fund the maintenance too or what's the point. I was really glad to see that in there. There's other places there, for example, retrofitting for solar power, not quite maintenance but it's in the same general direction. On your equity point on page 9, I wasn't quite sure what you meant by underserved neighborhoods. On point 3 under equity.

Ms. Fiore: That could be defined a couple of different ways. It could be geographically underserved, parts of the city that have fewer parks in their geographic area. It could also be underserved neighborhoods, low income populations, or cultural groups who aren't necessarily active participants in your current system.

Commissioner Lauing: The top of page 11, you talk about true cost pricing. Whatever the definition is, it's good that we're actually taking everything into account. We don't always do that. Overall, generally, that was pretty well constructed for what we're trying to do.

Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Markevitch.

Vice Chair Markevitch: On page 6, align Community Services mission statements, budgets, and operations with city sustainability goals. I almost feel like it should be the other way around. The sustainability goals should fit into what we already do. We do quite a bit already. I'm afraid that if we are held to a certain level of rules by this sustainability section, we're going to start losing a lot of the flavor of our city, parks, services, classes. It's all going to get compressed into this bland thing. That seems to be happening in other cities. I don't quite know how to put it. That one statement just didn't sit well with me all afternoon. I kept coming back to it. Yes, it's important, but it's not the end all for what we do.

Chair Reckdahl: I have one comment that this seems to be a collection of good ideas. I would like to echo Commissioner Hetterly. You can't always do this, but whenever possible you should use metrics. For example, energy efficiency, when it talks about retrofit facilities with energy efficiency and select energy efficient products. That's just a nebulous good thing to do. It would be nice for us to say, "Well, we're getting some recommendations." If you can say, if you do this, invest this much money, you'll get this much return. Have some type of either money or energy use return and say, "Are these

six good ideas? Which one is the best?" That all comes down to metrics, and whenever possible we need metrics. If there are no questions, let's move to the next section.

Ms. Fiore: Let's move to the recreation program analysis, which is the last piece of your packet. The one that has draft stamped all over it. This again is a piece of that existing conditions summary, a snapshot of what exists on the ground, what the layout is. We wanted to focus on getting the full picture of programs that are available to Palo Alto residents, whether or not they were provided specifically by the city or specifically by the Community Services Department. We took a look at what the private providers are doing in the city and what the full range of programs available to your residents is. We have been working with staff. We've identified some areas where we want to beef up the detail behind a lot of these and learn more about, not just what programs are in demand, but how in demand are they. We are going to get some data to back this up, which is why it has draft stamped all over it. Key findings from my perspective are that you are a community with excellent resources, and there are a lot of things that are in high demand which is good to know. You have a strong and well administered strategic plan that's guiding the department and that's still of value and can be used in the years going forward. There are probably some opportunities for streamlining communications and possibly departmental organization. That's something we'll look at when we get into the recommendations, and that will be augmented by this revenue analysis which is happening in parallel.

Commissioner Lauing: How do you want to process this? Do you want to go through the whole thing here or the pros and then the graph? There's findings at the end, so there's a lot of sections. We could just blast through it if you want.

Chair Reckdahl: Let's just blast through it. Any comments you have.

Commissioner Lauing: The first five, six, seven, eight pages, I think the conclusion is we're doing pretty well already and we've got amazing resources here. As a consultant, you don't have to find stuff that's broken. It's okay to say, "Hey, this is already a pretty good place." The breadth of public and private opportunities is really pretty cool. I'm sure a number of people are going to have comments on this grid. First, I want to make sure we understand it, this two-page grid here. They're both called recreation and programs matrix. Is it just the sort that's different in terms of the x and y axis, because you're taking demographic market segments and cross-tabbing it to stuff that's available?

Ms. Fiore: Correct.

Commissioner Lauing: The other page is the reverse. Right?

Ms. Fiore: Correct. It's two different ways of looking at the same information.



Commissioner Lauing: A few things on this conceptually. Are you using things like Equinox Gym and University Club as examples of private stuff that's available? One argument could be we shouldn't list private stuff on here at all, because it's not in our purview. The other answer is people could take advantage of it, but they've got to pay a lot of money for it because they're really private clubs. They're not necessarily shi-shi clubs but private clubs. Should that be on here or not?

Ms. Fiore: The intent behind including that was to see universally where the gaps or overlaps were, recognizing again that the city is not the only provider but that some people have different levels of access to these different things. If we somehow looked around and uncovered that no one was providing aquatics, even the private providers, that would be a key finding. That's obviously not what we found, but that was the intent of including those private organizations.

Commissioner Lauing: Some of the examples that you have used and could use are pretty inaccessible to a lot of segments. I'm not sure that that's really valid on here. Pardon?

Commissioner Markevitch: Because they're private.

Commissioner Lauing: Yeah, because they're private and expensive. That seems a little bit of a skew to me. It's probably not necessary. I've heard in a number of groups, as we've gone through this process, that we probably don't have enough going on for seniors. That's one of the things we want to prove, if we do or we don't. Just taking that as an example, I could just go down there and check a lot of boxes that aren't checked here, if I'm using the same methodology that you are. For example, seniors can go to Brad Lozares' golf shop and that wasn't checked. They can do master gardening. They can go to a gym. They can play some community sports. They can go to the Oshman JCC which is private. They can go to the YMCA. I'm wondering why that wasn't checked. Similarly, maybe this is a different answer, when we got to people from diverse cultures nothing was checked over there. I don't know what you were saying. That's the question. Why are these not checked? What are we trying to do?

Ms. Fiore: The intent behind the check marks was that it was targeted towards those populations or marketed to them. It's obviously a subjective analysis. This was intended to, at a glance, identify those gaps and overlaps. Certainly it doesn't preclude that seniors could take advantage of those programs, but our read of it was that it wasn't necessarily intended for or marketed towards them primarily.

Commissioner Lauing: For time considerations, I would encourage you to review that and see if those make sense. There are senior rates at the golf course, for example. If



we're trying to come up with gaps, what this graph tells me right now is that it's only—what do we call this again?—people from diverse cultures and young adults that aren't currently served. That's okay if we have actual data to support that. I'm just taking the summary here from your grid. I'm making a methodological comment. If that's what this says and that's what you need to support, then we need to see how you support that. That everything else is taken care of, but the other two are in pretty bad shape. That's how I read this graph. Some other people should jump in on this because (crosstalk).

Commissioner Hetterly: Can I jump in on that point? That's where we have a data disconnect. What this tell us is that, yeah, at Recreation Services they provide some services in all these areas, but it doesn't tell us anything about how much, what the adequacy is, how accessible they are, how affordable they are. It doesn't tell us anything about how they meet the needs of our community. It only says you might be able to find a ballet class somewhere in town either through the city or one of these millions of other providers. That's not really useful information for us as we're trying to develop programs and services.

Ms. Fiore: Yes, understood.

Commissioner Hetterly: That's the data disconnect that we keep struggling with.

Ms. Fiore: Yes, I had the same conversation with Rob last week. That's the second level of detail we want to add to this document.

Chair Reckdahl: In general in the document, most of the work is qualitative. We don't see many numbers. In this case, I think there's two outages. We have the dots here as opposed to having some number that quantifies how many people they serve or how many rooms they have for rent or whatever. Also, we need to marry that with a needs assessment. If you have one community pool, is that enough? I don't know what the needs assessment is for swimmers. Is it met or not? We really need a comparison of those two.

Commissioner Knopper: Also from a geographic perspective, like for over-serving in one specific area with one specific programming, like north Palo Alto is clustered with X amount of facility. Knowing that overlap too. With regard to ballet, all ballet is happening in south Palo Alto, right? That's the kind of information that would be helpful.

Commissioner Lauing: I have a number of comments on the key findings, but maybe we should leave that to last, just as a suggestion until we get through all the other stuff.

Commissioner Crommie: Even the comment on ballet classes, I don't even see how you'd figure that out, where ballet classes are. There's no heading for ballet classes. We don't

2128 have that granularity. I don't know if we could mentally process it in a table like this.  
2129 Are we going to know how many ballet classes we have and where they are and who's  
2130 providing them at the end of this process or is that something we're not going to know? I  
2131 just want to set expectations here. This is such a general table. One thing that caught my  
2132 eye were disability services. I now can't find it. I'm having trouble with my glasses. It  
2133 seemed like we weren't providing any. On the table, the second row from the bottom  
2134 says people with disabilities. What caught my eye were camps. Camps is the second  
2135 column from the left on page 10. I'm looking in the matrix at people with disabilities,  
2136 how are they doing with camps. I don't see anything checked there. I've had friends who  
2137 have teenagers that have volunteered to help camps with disabilities at the Junior  
2138 Museum. I've seen them standing there and asked them what they were doing. I don't  
2139 know what they were doing, but they told me they were working in camps with kids with  
2140 disabilities. I don't know if it was private. These were teenagers volunteering at  
2141 something during the summer. Rob, do you know?

2142  
2143 Mr. de Geus: Yeah, it's a camp called Summer's Excellent Adventures. Recreation ran  
2144 that camp with Abilities United in partnership for many years. They take the lion's share  
2145 of coordinating that camp now. We have lots of volunteers to support that program.  
2146 That's right.

2147  
2148 Commissioner Crommie: The reason it catches my eye is I'm always looking for ways  
2149 that teenagers can volunteer. It's a really nice service that we provide. Why isn't that  
2150 checked?

2151  
2152 Ms. Fiore: It sounds like that was just an oversight.

2153  
2154 Commissioner Crommie: Rob, do you think it's an oversight or this isn't set up to check  
2155 it?

2156  
2157 Mr. de Geus: I have the most concerns about this report of all the reports as well. As I  
2158 looked at the information and thinking about how do I use this information to decide  
2159 where to emphasize or invest versus not for programs and services, we really don't have it  
2160 with this information.

2161  
2162 Commissioner Crommie: I'm wondering what this is useful for, quite frankly. Can you  
2163 give me the party line on what we would do with this?

2164  
2165 Ms. Fiore: Again, this is the understanding of what's on the ground, what's the universe  
2166 of available recreation programs for Palo Alto residents. It provides some very  
2167 preliminary thoughts on directions you could go for looking at augmenting or changing  
2168 program investment at the city level. This is absolutely not intended as a decision  
2169 making document. That was never the intent of it. That will be a future product. We

2170 have gotten feedback and I think it's well understood that this is not robust enough to  
2171 even get us to that middle point where we're going to base recommendations on it, which  
2172 is why it's still a draft product, work in progress.

2173  
2174 Commissioner Crommie: The issue I have is martial arts is broken out. Someone  
2175 decided to break that out, martial arts. I don't know why that has been broken out over  
2176 ballet classes. I really don't know the thinking behind it, like how it ended up there, even  
2177 though I think it's important. Not a lot of things are broken out, but martial arts is  
2178 considered its own category for some reason of exercise.

2179  
2180 Ms. Fiore: I wasn't the primary author of this document, so I can't answer all of your  
2181 questions. I apologize for that. My guess is that these were areas of concentrated  
2182 programming that rose to the top because there was a certain magnitude of offering.  
2183 Ballet is in fact on there; it's the second one down in the third section. What I'm hearing  
2184 is that this table is not particularly useful. It may not be worth reinvesting our time in  
2185 fixing it. It may just be worth revisiting our approach to this entire product, so we can  
2186 move more efficiently towards recommendations. It seems to be causing more confusion  
2187 than helping.

2188  
2189 Commissioner Hetterly: I have a bunch of comments that are organized by page. Do you  
2190 want me to just go through them?

2191  
2192 Chair Reckdahl: (inaudible)

2193  
2194 Commissioner Hetterly: Page 1, recreation program guidance. You mentioned the  
2195 recreation strategic plan, but the Comp Plan should also be prominently present there.  
2196 Commissioner Lauing already addressed the University Club issue. Page 5, where you  
2197 start talking about the program areas. I couldn't figure out the rhyme or reason for what  
2198 is included under each section. Some things are included everywhere, but no single  
2199 section is all inclusive. I can't figure out why you chose some versus others, if there's a  
2200 reason for why you want to highlight certain things. There were some notable omissions.  
2201 Avenidas should figure much more prominently in every part of this, including that  
2202 confusing matrix. They are our primary source for senior services, and we partner very  
2203 intimately with them. Without them, we show a huge gap that maybe isn't real. Also,  
2204 Peninsula Youth Theater is a huge arts provider for youth. Palo Alto Neighborhoods is  
2205 one of our prides as a city for emergency preparedness, and there's no indication that the  
2206 city has any role in emergency preparedness in that section. All of these program areas  
2207 need to be refined, and I think you need to figure what you want to say with them. Page  
2208 7, youth and teen support services. Project Safety Net isn't really a program. It's a  
2209 collaborative. Sort out the details for those is what I would suggest. You have this  
2210 section on hours of operation and peak use with some notes about what are the peak  
2211 times. There's no data to support that. We don't know the take up rate for rental space in

community meeting rooms during those peak times or during the non-peak times. We don't know if we have a lot of vacancy at any point during the week or during the day that we should be trying to figure out how to fill. That kind of thing. That's more of that middle data that we really need. Are there any categories of classes that are over-subscribed or under-subscribed? There's mention of things getting busy and having more popular classes. Does that mean we have classes that are so popular that people can't take them? We don't know that from here. That's more the kind of notes that would be useful related to peak use. Of course Mitchell Park is now open, so this should be updated to reflect that. Page 13, under user groups and partner organizations. This second sentence about Cubberley, I didn't really understand what you were saying there. It got lost in the editing, so reword that. The sampling of partners below appears to be primarily folks who are located at Cubberley. Is that supposed to be a sampling of Cubberley partner groups or is that supposed to be citywide partner groups? We also have Audubon Society there. I don't know if they're in Cubberley or if that's on here.

Ms. Fiore: It was intended to be citywide, but it may be biased towards Cubberley.

Commissioner Hetterly: It's a little bit confusing coming right after Cubberley, so maybe clarify what that's supposed to represent. Page 16 and 17 is key findings, which I'll let Ed go first since he was saving his energy for that one. Before we get to key findings, at the top of page 16, these two paragraphs talk about low income groups that we may not be making our programs sufficiently accessible for them. Later it says conflict may exist with respect to program scheduling or overcrowding. In the next paragraph, you talk about financial hardship may mean we need more scholarships. There are all these may's and might's that we could say about probably any community in the world. This may be a problem, that may be a problem. We want to know is it a problem and should we do those things. Is this specific to Palo Alto? Do we have sufficient financial assistance to provide access? Does it or doesn't it is what I want an answer to, rather than just raising the question. Though they're good questions, it's more useful to know the answer. I'll save my key findings until everyone's had a chance to comment.

Chair Reckdahl: Any more questions or comments apart from key findings?

Commissioner Crommie: I read this, and then I started to go back to see if I could find information if I was curious about it. Maybe you can help me or someone can help me. I wanted to look and see the swim leagues, how they're listed in this document. We have PASA swim league. Can you help me find where that would be listed? It might be here somewhere. It might be in the ...

Commissioner Hetterly: It's the first thing under program areas, aquatics.

Commissioner Crommie: What page is that on?

Commissioner Hetterly: Page 4.

Commissioner Crommie: Is that listed as a provider?

Commissioner Hetterly: No, every provider is not listed.

Commissioner Crommie: That's what we're pointing out here. That's a huge swim program. When I hear people talking about new pools, we need to know how our pools are currently used. We have a private organization that uses Rinconada. I know because my kids swam in it. That's not run by the city; that's a group coming in and using it for competitive swim league. I want to see some analysis on that. Maybe they need to clear out and make room for residents. Those are the kinds of questions I ask. I don't see that I can get that kind of information in here. It's just a glaring gap for me in the aquatics analysis.

Chair Reckdahl: Ed, you can start with the key points. You've been on deck for a long time.

Commissioner Lauing: I'm very confused by this entire section. I'm sorry to say. I don't think this is just a semantic point, but I don't see a lot of these things as being findings. First is the strategic directions. The first point, that's fine. The second one, I don't think I actually understand. We need to revise things a bit. We're always doing that, so I don't quite get that. The third one, I also don't understand, because we need an appropriate role for recreation in addressing recreation trends. I just don't follow what that is. I don't want to wordsmith each one of these and take the time, so I'm trying to buzz through it. In the programming section, I'd take out three of the five. The only things that are findings are something like this emergency preparedness and gardening are called out separately and there's a gap in programs and services targeted at young adults. The specialized divisions that have used outside funding, that's not a finding; it's a fact. It's good, but I don't see that that's a conclusion. Similarly, something like special events have been underfunded for the last few years. That's just a piece of history; that's not findings. This needs to be rewritten. The facilities thing was a big confusing. I didn't know what the recommendation is on Lucie Stern. To make it more productive as a more specialized facility servicing smaller segment of the marketplace, playing to strengths of existing facilities; I don't get it. There's another one of those. We know this here. Again, it's not a finding. We know we have some great facilities that aren't anywhere else. We're not learning anything from that, nor will Council. There was some comments on Cubberley. We're very familiar with that issue. I could say more, but I'll stop there.

Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Knopper.



Commissioner Knopper: Hi. I would concur. I just keep putting question marks next to almost every paragraph. For instance, since you were just talking about Lucie Stern, about the historic character and that the programming should reflect that. I don't even know what that means. I literally do not have enough information to actually comment, other than I'm a little confused. I like analytics. I like, "Okay, so we have 43,000 ballet classes. This is where they're located geographically. Based on population and all of the data we've collected, you really only need 37,000." Great, that makes sense to me. I just keep feeling like I'm reading these paragraphs with a lot of words that just aren't gelling. That's it. I'm done.

Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Crommie.

Commissioner Crommie: I'll just bring up a couple of points that struck me. Commissioner Lauing and Knopper have made really good points. Ed was pretty specific, so that's probably going to help you. The key findings are really important, because sometimes that's all people read. We're going to need more input on this. We have to go through this document again, because we want to get it right. We want to feel good about this. Something that struck me was under programming areas and populations, the fourth bullet point. I feel like I have my finger on the pulse of the Junior Museum as a user, because my kids took virtually every camp that was offered there. When you say something like it's not present in other areas, I agree with that. Our Junior Museum is completely unique. As a parent shopping around for camps, I'd much rather send my kids there than Camp Galileo for instance, because of the quality of the staff. As a user, that just stood out incredibly to me. The city made a big investment to have a really high quality educational program there. The bottom line in my experience is most of those camps filled up really quickly. As a resident of Palo Alto, I wouldn't want you to make some regional advertisements, to strain our staff to provide even more classes. I don't understand the thinking there. Can you explain that to me?

Ms. Fiore: Again, I'm not the author of this document. My guess would be that other communities might make a policy decision that they want to attract regional visitors either for revenue reasons or for public relations reasons or to help serve gaps that exist regionally. That may very well not be the case based on what you just described. Again, it's one of those may considerations that we're floating out there without drawing a conclusion about it.

Commissioner Crommie: That's an area where you need to understand our community more. There's a lot of anxiety around being a regional supplier. It's hugely controversial in this city. You can't be superficial about it at all. That's a hot button topic as far as I see. It has to do with playing fields, our theater program. Do we want to be a supplier of high quality science camps for the rest of the region? That has to do with use. It's connected to how popular are they. It's all these economic considerations that are really



deeper than just a superficial statement maybe we should go after it regionally. Let me make one other comment. This also has to do with regional activities. For me, how much the city subsidizes the activity really makes a difference in how you want to go after it regionally. From this Commission, we've learned that we subsidize our theater programs quite a bit, to the point some of us think maybe too much as a city. If it's a highly subsidized program, I wouldn't want to subsidize it for the region. You see how the economics plays under decisions?

Ms. Fiore: Yeah, absolutely.

Commissioner Crommie: I don't know within this report how regional considerations are going to be handled. They have to be handled ...

Commissioner Markevitch: (inaudible)

Commissioner Crommie: Children's Theatre groups. We subsidize that as a city, probably more highly than any other services. I'm interested in that. As a Commission, we've been interested in how it all works. We've received tables on it, so we could see for ourselves the economics of it all. Again, it comes back to playing fields. A hot topic in this city is what to do about playing fields and whether we should provide those regionally or not. We don't really know how that all works. There are a lot of forces at play.

Ms. Fiore: Right, understood. Ultimately whether you want to be a regional provider, again is a policy directive from this group and from Council. That's a decision that needs to be made, and then your programming will fall out from that. We're not making any recommendations on that front right now. Again, I understand your point that you need more information to even start to get there.

Commissioner Crommie: I'm just reacting to an off-hand comment on this bullet point. It's just sort of dangling a bit. It's not well developed.

Ms. Fiore: Yes, I understand your point. Thank you.

Commissioner Crommie: Not that it's a bad topic.

Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Markevitch.

Vice Chair Markevitch: Going back to the Lucie Stern Center.

Commissioner Lauing: Which page?

Vice Chair Markevitch: Under facilities. It says it's a major asset to the city. When you're talking about the Lucie Stern Center, are you referring to the community room, the ballroom, the fireside room? Are you also including the theater in there? The Children's Theatre is spelled out in the next bullet point, but Main Stage is not. There are three companies that pretty much take up the bulk of the usage, about 90 percent. I want to make sure they're protected, because they're special. Without that protection, they would not be able to thrive. I just want to make sure that somewhere in here the Main Stage theater is listed.

Ms. Fiore: Okay.

Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Hetterly.

Commissioner Hetterly: I agree with many of the comments that came before me. Under strategic directions, I'm not sure what you're trying to get at with strategic directions. You should have reference to the Comp Plan and the strategic plan working hand in hand. There should be some connection in here to the Cost of Service Study, and maybe that will come out in the revenue analysis. Those seem to me strategic initiatives that are relevant to this plan. I also am confused about those second two bullets under that section. Under programming areas and populations, the first bullet talked about missing opportunities to work together because of a decentralization of function. Rather than talking about missed opportunities, I think you're saying we should identify high value opportunities to bridge the gaps. I think I got lost in wordsmithing there. I'm sorry. On facilities, the first bullet, the Cubberley Community Center, that last sentence says, "Finding a replacement venue for the most important of Cubberley's program offerings should be a priority." Having been on the Cubberley Community Center Advisory Committee, that shouldn't be the priority. You could say "or," but there should be some mention of redesigning facility for more appropriate and efficient use to meet our needs onsite rather than trying to move services elsewhere. Finally, under gaps and overlaps, there is no mention of gaps even though that's in the heading. It only talks about overlaps. I would like to know what are the gaps. Also I'd like to have some more qualitative overlay of where are overlaps unnecessary versus beneficial. That's all I have for that section.

Chair Reckdahl: Commissioner Crommie.

Commissioner Crommie: I just have one quick point. On the gaps and overlaps, you have a sub-bullet saying, "The JCC primarily serves the surrounding community's Jewish population." That's not my perception of it. I don't know that there's this huge surrounding Jewish community. There is an established onsite community of retired people. As far as it being a Jewish section of town, I'm not aware of that. I'm aware of people traveling there from many parts of town. Did I misread this?

Ms. Fiore: Yeah. I don't think that surrounding community in this context was meant as neighborhood. I think it's more of a citywide/regional community.

Commissioner Knopper: It serves the Jewish community.

Commissioner Crommie: I think of the pool there. This is about aquatics, isn't it? There's so much going on there; what are you referring to on that sub-bullet?

Ms. Fiore: The point here is about aquatics. While there are multiple providers, they each target different parts of the market. The JCC may draw a different crowd than the YMCA (crosstalk).

Commissioner Crommie: I don't know that, unless you show me. I really don't know that. I don't know if more Jewish people go there than the Y. Is that what you're trying to say in this sub-bullet point?

Ms. Fiore: We're not trying to make any point about quantity, rather that there are multiple providers serving the market.

Commissioner Crommie: You have the word "primarily" which is a red flag to me. You're using the word "primarily," and I'm not sure that's accurate.

Chair Reckdahl: I just have one comment. On that same page, that last bullet really summarizes what is wrong with the document. It says, "In many cases programming overlaps are not an indication (inaudible), rather they confirm that these are popular, in-demand programs." Without numerically estimating both need and supply, you can't make that statement. This whole section talks about this and that, but it's all very qualitative. In real estate, it's location, location, location. In a study like this, it's metrics, metrics, metrics. We need to know numerically what is the demand, numerically what is the supply. The difference in those two will tell us whether we are serving that need or not. The fact that there's 17 hamburger places in Palo Alto, that doesn't necessarily mean there's a shortage of hamburgers or an excess. It depends on the relative supply. That's what I want to see more of. Rob, do you want to add anything?

Mr. de Geus: That's really good feedback. It's such an important report. We've got to get it right. I totally understand that, but I'm concerned because we have to recalibrate expectations of what MIG's doing and how they're doing it and the data, but also the expectations of what this report is going to do and be. I don't think it can be all of what you're hoping it will be. For instance, if we look at the JCC, we're not going to have all the data about the JCC and demand and use there or the YMCA or some of these other providers.

Chair Reckdahl: In the city classes, if we know they fill up in five minutes—just the vacancy rates on all the facilities tells a lot.

Mr. de Geus: That data we have. I agree with you it ought to be in here.

Chair Reckdahl: That doesn't tell us if there's some niche that's not met at all. (crosstalk) cricket class, we don't know whether it fills up or not.

Commissioner Lauing: The next page, which is needs, opportunities and challenges, outlines in five bullet points what we're trying to get. I would totally agree with you. If we're not going to get that, we better make some serious changes. It says stuff in the second point, results of analyses including gaps in parks and programs and unmet community demand. That's a big part of what we're trying to get. The other stuff is that as well. If in the midst of this process we don't think we're going to get that, then we better start setting Council's expectation that that's not what's going to come out of it. I'm not saying that, but I'm agreeing with you that if we need to adjust, let's adjust.

Mr. de Geus: That's what I want to take a second look at. Maybe I take a look at it with a couple of Commissioners, just to go back and re-look at the scope that we defined, the outreach plan that we defined. Just to be sure that we have clear expectations of what we're going to receive in this report. We can adapt if we need to take a little longer to make sure we get it right. I do feel like we do ...

Commissioner Crommie: I would say don't overstate. I'm reacting to statements that I think might not be true. You have to be very careful about what you say.

Mr. de Geus: I completely agree.

Chair Reckdahl: Frankly, I don't really care whether the JCC serves Jews or non-Jews. It's irrelevant. Just say what's the capacity; that's more important.

Mr. de Geus: We talked about data and what is the metrics. I agree that really should be driving the report and the findings. I wonder whether it would be helpful to have a couple of Commissioners that are particularly interested in data, as we take a bit of a pause here, to think about where we're at, where we're headed, what's missing in terms of the data that we need. I certainly agree. Particularly with the recreation programming report, there's big gaps.

Commissioner Knopper: Do you think that the data has been collected and maybe it's just, no offense, not articulated? Sometimes when you're living it day in and day out, you just make assumptions and you don't write everything down, so they're not including

things because it's more of a shorthand to abbreviate the report. Do you think the actual data exists at this point?

Mr. de Geus: I think there's good data. I don't know that there's enough, probably not enough. I agree generally with where the Commission is. I struggle to understand some of this as well, because they're all coming in individual reports. I don't know how they relate to each other specifically. Some are a little further along, it seems like, than some of the other reports. I'm finding that a little challenging. I also recognize that we're still in the somewhat early phase of this. All the data hasn't come in yet. The next phase, when we're ready for it, when it starts to come all together, when start to see real trends and a picture for the future, hasn't happened yet. What I'm hearing is a fear that we're going to get to this point of prioritization before we're ready to have that conversation.

Commissioner Crommie: We have to take a look tonight at what the data sources are that are still coming in. Don't you think before we go home tonight we should understand that? Like what's on the docket for collection. You can probably tell us, correct?

Mr. de Geus: It's no surprise; you've seen it all before. It was in the outreach plan that you looked at several times. It included the Mapita research. It included the stakeholder workshops. We've had one; there's two more but that's with all of our stakeholders, representative of a lot of the stakeholders. Then we have the survey; we haven't got that data yet. That's a big piece that's missing.

Commissioner Crommie: We skipped a section in here. Can we just briefly look at it? We have a section on some reporting on data here. It's tabulations.

Commissioner Knopper: That's one of the things that is also frustrating to me. We don't have to drill down too much, but it's the format that it was presented. This was very difficult to read. It's clear that each section was probably written by a different person, because everybody has a different focus. The tables aren't consistent and there's different graphs and different kinds of bullet points. I'm not going to be overly OCD about it, but there's so much data. If it's not presented in a very formulaic way, it's just hard.

Mr. de Geus: The presentation of the information is an easier problem to resolve.

Commissioner Knopper: I agree. Maybe you can extrapolate, so people aren't as frustrated. I got very confused; I admit it. Even the way the headings are laid out. That's semantics at this point, and we have bigger fish to fry. The next time it's presented, just having a cleaner presentation might be more helpful.

Commissioner Lauing: In that very first report we looked at, I suggested we should have a data session around this stuff next month. If we indeed got some of this stuff that's on

page 2 of the final document: needs analysis and essential park elements, responses to demographic changes and trends, and recreation trends product. If that's really there or is going to be there, once that's there and it's digested, there's hope. The qualitative stuff isn't going to get us there.

Commissioner Crommie: Just responding to this report, when I look at page 14 under community workshop summary, I see things missing that I know came up at the intercepts. I'm not seeing a lot about gyms here. Maybe I'm missing it.

Ms. Fiore: This particular document was a summary of the three workshops that we held in October (crosstalk).

Commissioner Crommie: I went to two of the three. I was there, and I'm not seeing badminton. Ping pong came up strongly in one of them.

Commissioner Lauing: Let's focus here.

Commissioner Crommie: I don't know what to make of it when I don't see things. Why isn't it here under recreation?

Ms. Fiore: Ping pong tables is on page 15.

Chair Reckdahl: Right now we don't want to be ...

Commissioner Crommie: We don't want to get into the details.

Chair Reckdahl: I agree that a lot of these points are important, but also we could be here until midnight. Ed is right in that we need to look at what data is going to be delivered. For next month, it would be very good if we say these are the pieces of hard data that's going to be delivered and where are they coming from. Are they coming from surveys? Are they coming from the city? What is the purpose? With that data, do we believe that it's going to give us actionable results for the Council? We need to be able to look at the data next month and be able to say that will be sufficient or that won't be sufficient. Ed, do you want to say anything?

Commissioner Lauing: That's exactly what we need to do. We'll do a gaps analysis of the data to see if we need any other data sources.

Chair Reckdahl: That will go for next month.

Mr. de Geus: Okay.



2590 Chair Reckdahl: Apart from data, do you have any more comments or questions?  
2591

2592 Mr. de Geus: No. Between now and next month, does it make any sense for a  
2593 Commissioner or two to work with staff on this question of data? As we think about how  
2594 to present that next month, we want to present something that makes sense to you all and  
2595 we don't just hear more of "it's a problem." Perhaps that's something we can do after next  
2596 month. If we really do recognize that there's more work that needs to be done, then we  
2597 have an ad hoc committee that works on it.  
2598

2599 Chair Reckdahl: We'd talked about doing an ad hoc before, but it came down that  
2600 everyone was interested. We thought this was crucial, so we wanted to keep it out of ad  
2601 hoc because we all wanted to be in the loop.  
2602

2603 Mr. de Geus: That's right.  
2604

2605 Ms. Fiore: If I may? What would be productive, as I had suggested, would be to  
2606 resurface some of the products that came before. As Rob said, it has been rolling in very  
2607 piecemeal and it's hard to see the big picture. Another layer of synthesis of all the pieces  
2608 we've done and the stuff that's pending, and repackage that in the framework of these  
2609 needs and opportunities and challenges and goals and objectives. I agree with you that  
2610 this middle piece is very unclear at this point. Doing a little bit more work around that,  
2611 maybe that's what we can look at as a group next month and then decide if we're ready to  
2612 get to project list and recommendations after that. It will be important to articulate what  
2613 these data pieces are that were scoped and what has been delivered and what's pending  
2614 and whether or not that meets your and Council's objectives for data. If not, that's a big  
2615 problem.  
2616

2617 Commissioner Crommie: I wonder if it will help us ...  
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2619 Chair Reckdahl: Also ...  
2620

2621 Commissioner Crommie: Sorry. Go ahead.  
2622

2623 Chair Reckdahl: Ed cited this last section, that two pages that summarized what will be  
2624 delivered. Adding some meat onto that would be good. We really want a good  
2625 description of what we're going to be delivering to Council.  
2626

2627 Commissioner Lauing: This is an engineering project. We're delivering quality; we're  
2628 not solving for the timeline. We can't go to an artificial timeline. If it's not ready to go,  
2629 we can't release it.  
2630

Commissioner Knopper: You said the survey piece was missing. That's important for us to know. I feel like if a section is inadequately supported with enough information, we shouldn't even talk about it. There's so much to dive through. To your point Ed, we shouldn't set a false date just to hit the date if we're not going to have the right result.

Commissioner Crommie: Do you think it's going to be helpful if we read a report you did for another city?

Ms. Fiore: Actually that occurred to me earlier tonight. If we could ...

Commissioner Crommie: Did you send us some? I'm sorry.

Ms. Fiore: Yeah, we could send you some ...

Mr. Jensen: At the last meeting, we gave three samples. They're in that plan outline.

Commissioner Crommie: I'll go back. I do remember reading them at the time, but I forgot.

Ms. Fiore: I think they went out with the memo we sent you in November/December, but we could recirculate that. I think that would be very helpful.

Commissioner Crommie: I'll go back and look at those. I think that does help.

Commissioner Reckdahl: I think we've beat that to death. Next month it's coming back, so we're going to beat it some more.

Mr. Jensen: It'll come back every month until it's done. This is the main thing you're going to be working on.

Commissioner Lauing: That sounds like a threat, Peter.

Mr. Jensen: It is.

Mr. de Geus: We're going to wear you out.

Commissioner Hetterly: Maybe we can put it earlier in the agenda next month, so she doesn't have to catch us at our tired and grumpiest.

Chair Reckdahl: Yes, that is true.

**6. Ad Hoc Committee and Liaison updates.**

Chair Reckdahl: Deirdre and I went out to Byxbee on Sunday to look around. We expect we'll have some type of briefing next month, talking about the trail up top, and come to some conclusion whether we like the layout right now or we think there's room for improvement. Daren had some feedback that he's going to be giving to Deirdre. We'll be, I assume, sometime in the next month meeting with Daren.

Commissioner Crommie: Not you and me? We're both together.

Chair Reckdahl: You, me and Daren will get together sometime in the next month.

Commissioner Crommie: We hope so. Stacey Ashlund and I are on the Lucy B. Evans Interpretive Center ad hoc committee. We've had one meeting with Daren Anderson and one with John Aiken to discuss some CIPs that have been written up for the Lucy Evans Interpretive Center. We've already done our work, but we didn't get on the Agenda so we'll report next month. The work has already been done. I guess that's it.

Chair Reckdahl: Anything with dog parks?

Commissioner Hetterly: We had a short one, but we'll save it for next month.

Commissioner Lauing: Where are we on CIPs? Should we reconvene that one? Do you know, Rob?

Rob de Geus: We can give an update next month.

**7. Discussion of Possible Dates for the PARC 2015 Retreat.**

Commissioner Knopper: You mean next December?

Rob de Geus: (inaudible)

Commissioner Lauing: This is the Retreat.

Commissioner Crommie: I wanted to mention something about the Retreat.

Commissioner Knopper: What Retreat?

Chair Reckdahl: The one we go up to Foothills Park.

Commissioner Knopper: (inaudible)

Vice Chair Markevitch: (inaudible) this year.

Chair Reckdahl: That's usually in February.

Commissioner Crommie: I want to throw out whether we can do it at the Lucy Evans Interpretive Center. I've been talking to Daren about doing some canoeing with our Commission. He said he would get the canoes. I was wondering if we could combine our Retreat with a little tour. Plan it around the tides. Would anyone be interested in doing that? Maybe we could just—is that too much? A separate event?

Vice Chair Markevitch: How about an optional?

Commissioner Crommie: After the event maybe?

Commissioner Lauing: Scuba maybe?

Commissioner Crommie: The city owns canoes. I don't think we own scuba gear. I was just ...

Commissioner Lauing: What about dates? Dates?

Vice Chair Markevitch: We're just trying to nail down the date, not ...

Mr. de Geus: Is Friday best for folks? It seemed like that was best last time. We can poll Commissioners for a Friday in February. Friday morning.

Commissioner Hetterly: Early March is better for me.

Mr. de Geus: Early March.

Commissioner Hetterly: I defer to the Chair entirely.

Commissioner Crommie: Maybe we need a poll with a couple of dates at the end of February or beginning of March.

Commissioner Markevitch: That sounds (inaudible).

Chair Reckdahl: Friday morning, is 10:00 a good time for people or do you guys want it early so you have more of the day left?

Vice Chair Markevitch: Just send out the poll.

Chair Reckdahl: Cat, give them options for dates, but also give them options for times too. We have that set.

## **V. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chair Reckdahl: I see none.

Commissioner Markevitch: You're learning.

Commissioner Lauing: You're getting the hang of this, Keith.

Commissioner Knopper: She has one.

Commissioner Hetterly: Just a tiny thing to add to the calendar. The State of the City is February 18th, Wednesday, at 7:00 p.m., if people are interested in hearing the story of the state of the city and what the next year's going to look like.

Chair Reckdahl: What was the date of that?

Commissioner Hetterly: February 18th and it'll be at Mitchell Park.

## **VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR FEBRUARY 24, 2015 MEETING**

Chair Reckdahl: Coming next week, we'll talk about the 7.7 acres.

Commissioner Knopper: Month.

Chair Reckdahl: Next month. The 7.7 acres, particularly we want to talk about Acterra, public access.

Commissioner Markevitch: Hydrologic study.

Commissioner Knopper: It should be an action item.

Commissioner Markevitch: Just state it's an action item.

Chair Reckdahl: Yes, action item. Hydrological study. I want to polish this a little more. We are giving a recommendation to Council or are we deciding whether we want to give a recommendation to Council? What is our purpose for the 7.7 acres discussion next month?

Rob de Geus: It will be a recommendation. Given today's comments, staff will write another staff report with a staff recommendation. We'll list it as an action item, and then you can discuss it next month.

Chair Reckdahl: If the recommendation is wait until the study's done, that would be the recommendation?

Mr. de Geus: Right.

Chair Reckdahl: Waiting is an option. I'm happy with that. That's one item. Then the Master Plan.

Mr. de Geus: We also have the Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo. They were hoping to come this evening, but there wasn't time. There's been one community meeting on this already. Commissioner Lauing attended, which was great. There's big plans to renovate, rebuild the Junior Museum and Zoo with the help of the Friends that supports that program. They have conceptual plans of that.

Chair Reckdahl: What is the timeframe for that?

Mr. de Geus: We are in negotiations with the Friends this year to work through a construction agreement and potential governance agreement after it gets rebuilt with them.

Chair Reckdahl: I thought there was some part of Rinconada that we were waiting and going to do in tandem when they remodeled the Junior Museum.

Mr. de Geus: There is an environmental study that's happening with Rinconada Park that includes the Junior Museum and Zoo.

Chair Reckdahl: Some of the construction near there we wanted to do simultaneously with the Museum remodel.

Mr. de Geus: That's possible.

Vice Chair Markevitch: Could that possibly move to March, since February is already pretty packed?

Commissioner Crommie: What else is on there?

Commissioner Lauing: They're a long way from even raising all the money yet, so we don't have to do this next month.



Peter Jensen: It's mostly now based on the environmental report that's in conjunction with the Rinconada Long Range Plan. To keep on track and not push that out any further, already the environmental report is going to take until December of this. Every month that goes by just pushes that out further. The presentation will be solely on their proposed plan. Some of that you've started to look at already with the Long Range Plan and the expanded footprint into the park, which is probably the key thing to look at. As far as the length of time the presentation can go, it's not a very long presentation and discussion for this set, because it'll be coming back several times as the plan evolves. It would help to keep it on its environmental track to go next month. We were trying to get it on tonight, but I didn't think you guys wanted to be here until 1:00 in the morning.

Commissioner Hetterly: We have to review it before it can go to the environmental review process.

Mr. Jensen: Yeah. Some of that process is the feedback from the boards and commissions. That goes along with the studies.

Commissioner Crommie: What's making next month's agenda so busy? I haven't heard.

Chair Reckdahl: The Master Plan. We spent an hour and a half on the Master Plan tonight.

Commissioner Crommie: We have the bridge which is (inaudible). What are our other items?

Vice Chair Markevitch: 7.7 acres.

Mr. de Geus: 7.7 acres.

Commissioner Crommie: That's two.

Vice Chair Markevitch: If people could be briefer in their comments, it would go smoother.

Chair Reckdahl: It hurt us tonight.

Vice Chair Markevitch: You can't always count on that.

Chair Reckdahl: Tonight we had a half hour worth of consumer content too.

Commissioner Crommie: This is later than usual, but we haven't had a late meeting in a long time.

Chair Reckdahl: My inclination would be to try to do that. If something pops up in the next month when we make the agenda, we will push it off a month. Let's strive for it right now, and we can examine the final agenda and see if ...

Commissioner Lauing: Having seen the presentation that we're going to get, I do agree that it's pretty short. We won't have as much public comment as they did.

Commissioner Crommie: I was also interested in getting someone to report to us on the Measure E parcel, where it stands. It could be pushed out, but it'd be nice to hear back. There were a lot of decisions that were made on that in the last couple of months.

Mr. de Geus: We have someone ready to come. We'll put it on the list for February or March.

Commissioner Crommie: It is affecting parkland.

Chair Reckdahl: Is that it or do you have any more?

Mr. de Geus: No. Just back to announcements. I did want to mention that we'll be going to Council February 9th to ask them for additional funds to continue to operate the golf course. We still don't have permits. We're inching along, making progress. Mostly it's in the hands of Senior Engineer Joe Teresi working with the regulatory agencies. We don't have them in hand yet, and we had budgeted to fund the golf course until the end of February. We need funds through the end of the fiscal year in the event that the permits don't come through. There'll be an updated staff report on the golf course and the status going to Council. I'll make sure you all receive that as well. I'm sure you're interested.

Mr. Jensen: Magical Bridge is getting closer to completion. If you would like to see the site, I do go out there almost every day. If you email me, you can probably meet me out there. It's looking like a playground now. You can really see what it looks like. We're looking at the first of March to open the playground.

Chair Reckdahl: It looks very nice. I can't wait to play on some of that stuff.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned on motion by Commissioner Hetterly and second by Commissioner Knopper at 11:20 p.m.