

Community Workshop #1 | MEETING NOTES

NORTH VENTURA COORDINATED AREA PLAN

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP AND SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NVCAP WORKING GROUP

Date + Time Tuesday, February 5, 2019 | 6 pm - 9 pm

Location Mitchell Park Library - El Palo Alto Room 600 E. Meadow Drive
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Agenda Items:

1. Open House
2. Welcome and Introductions
3. Project Background and Context
4. Interactive exercise and Discussion
5. Small Group Discussion and Report Out
6. Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Attendance/Meeting Facilitators:

City staff:

Jonathan Lait – *Interim Planning Director*
Elena Lee – *Senior Planner*
Chitra Moitra – *Planner*
Samuel Gutierrez - *Associate Planner*
Roland Rivera - *Land Use Analyst*
Sherry Nikzat - *Sr. Management Analyst*
Jodie Gerhardt - *Planning Manager*
Graham Owen - *Planner*
Margaret Monroe - *Management Analyst*
Claire Hodgkins – *Planner*
Robin Ellner – *Administrative Associate III*

Consultants:

Geeti Silwal – *Principal (P+W)*
Kristen Hall – *Lead Designer (P+W)*
Rachael Cleveland – *Project Designer (P+W)*
Dave Javid – *Engagement Principal (Plan to Place)*
Leah Chambers – *Outreach Specialist (Plan to Place)*

Working Group Member Volunteers

(others WG members also in attendance):

Kirsten Flynn, Angela Dellaporta, Gail Price

General public: approximately 30

MEETING NOTES

The following is a brief summary of participant feedback from the Q+A following the project background presentation, discussion during the interactive survey (or live balloting) exercise, and the small group discussion report out.

Project Background Q+A

- Noticing more cut through traffic through Ventura
- Safe bike and pedestrian crossings needed
- "Urban character" up for debate in Palo Alto
- Retail incentives should include affordable housing
- What does "urban features" mean
- NVCAP is a neighborhood in transition (need to plan for young kids)

Interactive Survey Discussion

Question 1

- Strongly agree - logical as people want to stay
- Somewhat agree - unsure about retail and unsure about interconnected aspect if lose housing
- Disagree - could be designed as unique neighborhood instead of typical

Question 2

- Support for affordable and work force housing
- Support for range of housing for multiple income levels

Question 3

- Some support for increase in height for housing
- Concern about character and impact on street (canyon effect)

Question 4

- Matadero Creek - paired with Park, floodable in rain event, remove concrete channel
- Other - space for teenagers to go

Question 5

- Fry's can come back
- Plan for bars?? and childcare

Question 6

- Consider a Park along the canal that stretches down to Park and Cal Avenues
- Considered community gardens and rooftop gardens

Small Group Report Back

- Enhance connectivity through the site for bikes and pedestrians – 5 similar comments
 - Allow for alternative modes of transportation throughout the site
 - Widened sidewalks on Park Avenue and El Camino to allow for safer pedestrian access and separate bike Lanes - consider removing parking
 - Keep cars on the perimeter, no cut throughs for cars
 - Improve connectivity to Cal Ave
 - Safe routes to school and Stanford Residential Park
 - Enhanced/safe bike and ped paths along railroad and creek
 - Bike and ped expressway overpass
- Housing, Heights, Urban Design and Architecture (could be split into two groups) – 5 similar comments
 - There is a need for affordable housing and retail spaces for small/local businesses
Mix of income housing including very low income
 - Workforce Housing
 - Allow for more than 50-foot building heights to encourage affordable housing
 - Higher densities (taller buildings) located centrally on the site with upper floors stepping back from the street and surrounding lower buildings
 - Encourage a mix of building heights to allow for daylight and open architecture
 - Step back upper floors from the street and with quality architecture
 - Setbacks at the property line in addition to upper floor step-backs to reduce “canyon effect” and allow for generous public spaces and active outdoor spaces at the street
- Naturalize the creek, should be uses as a community amenity with access – 4 similar comments
 - Revitalize Creek on both sides of El Camino
 - Integrate creek into a park
- Parks and Open Spaces – 3 similar comments
 - Community gardens and a community center
 - Street trees
 - Community park through a green spine from the creek to Cal avenue with space for plazas and local retail
 - Community space activated throughout the day
- Land Uses
 - Keep Frys
 - A Town Center
 - Child Care
 - Senior Care
 - Homeless Services
 - No office uses - neighborhood retail only
- Connection of Ash would eliminate housing?
- Drone free area

COMMENT CARDS

The following is a transcription of the comment cards received from participants. Contact information was optional.

"Great job, I appreciate all the hard work that went into making the evening a success, lots of great ideas."

"Love the clicker exercise! - Quick read on participants desires

Don't use words like connectivity and incentivize or the iso-something drawing. - You're talking to lay people not other designers

Use times on your agendas, would have been helpful to know first 30 minutes was an open house."

"1) how can we plan to incorporate the new businesses so that they recognize they are part of the community - and can benefit from that and contribute to it?

2) Kristen - "more in line with the urban features of other Palo Alto neighborhoods" - what does that mean?

3) would love to see a "neighborhood museum" - that shares history of Ventura and incorporate participation by new residence, maybe in the "pub" or interactive markers along the creek and Park boulevard?

4) are there any people of color or under 40 years old on the working group? How are we getting their input? (As they weren't here tonight either)

5) maybe some education for the working group / City council on culturally responsive landscape and architecture?"

"A well-run meeting and strong support from those who facilitated. Thank you!"

"My biggest concern is architecture. Please no modern ugly bear buildings. Palo Alto is famous for Craftsman style housing and Spanish style."

"Meeting - 6 p.m. doesn't work for working folks. Please have slide handouts available during meeting."

BOARDS

Restore the Creek (2)

Community Ownership and or profit/ tax income sharing model so residents share in generated wealth instead of getting pushed out by gentrification.

Widen Park Boulevard Sidewalks (2)

Enforce sufficient setbacks so we aren't living in an urban canyon.

Provide services for the homeless such as laundry and showers and a safe place for their things. Services assistance and outreach like counseling, job services and getting benefits.

I hope this project will emphasize housing, especially for teachers and average income people.

Lots of households can only afford to live here because they bought 25+ years ago. There should be an effort to include as much affordable housing in NVCAP as possible.

An additional pathway through the site would be a nice option so pedestrians don't have to use Park, where the sidewalks are too narrow or El Camino which is unpleasant.

Looking forward to a bike/ped connection across Caltrain ROW. (2)

Loma Verde Trail needs to be a part of the NVCAP

Also need to note Caltrain parcel with rail spur on info map.

Pedestrian distance from Lambert to California Ave Station is 10 minutes. Pedestrian circulation along the south end of Park Boulevard and Lambert is underestimated.

Planned bike/ped improvement at ECR & Hansen see Grand Boulevard Initiative Grant for safety with Transportation department.

SITE MAPS









