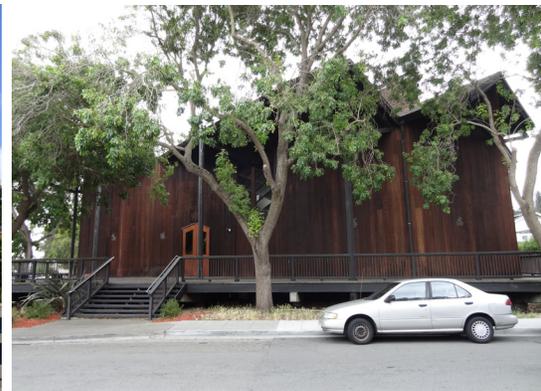


City of Belmont

Belmont Village Specific Plan



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW REPORT

NOVEMBER 2015



PREPARED BY

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

City of Belmont

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City of Belmont
Belmont Village Specific Plan

I Introduction

Belmont Village Specific Plan Objectives

The Belmont Village Area is currently the primary development focus of the city. It has been designated a “Priority Development Area” by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments, due to its potential to support new housing and employment near transit. The planning process for the future growth and development of Belmont Village is currently underway and will culminate in the preparation and adoption of the Belmont Village Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan will formalize a vision for Belmont Village and put in place an implementation program that can help realize change in the Village through detailed zoning regulations, prioritized public realm improvements, financing strategies, and design guidelines for new developments. The Plan will strive to fulfill the community’s vision for the area, preserve and enhance the Village’s livability, and allow for new growth, economic activity, and investment.

Public participation is key to the shaping of the Specific Plan. Opportunities for public input have been designed to allow the planning team to learn directly from city residents, business and property owners, and other community members about their needs and values, as well as to allow the public to provide feedback throughout the phases of the planning process. Community members and interested parties are invited to participate in the process and stay informed in many ways. These ways include: going to community workshops, attending City Council and Planning Commission meetings, reviewing and commenting on draft documents, emailing comments to city staff, and visiting the project website at <http://www.planbelmontvillage.com/>.

Purpose and Format of Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews are one tool by which the planning team learns from community members about the challenges facing Belmont Village and the opportunities for the future. As part of the community outreach effort for the preparation of the Specific Plan, the planning team interviewed 14 stakeholders on October 7, 2015 and two stakeholders on October 16, 2015. All interviews were conducted at Belmont City Hall. The interviews were conducted in groups of one to four, with one hour allotted for each interview session. Stakeholders included business owners and representatives, property owners, developers, transportation agency representatives, and a member of the local clergy.

The purpose of the interviews was to learn about stakeholders' experiences living, working, and owning businesses and property in Belmont Village, as well as their future visions for the area. Specifically, interviewees were asked what types of development would be best for the future of Belmont Village, what scale of development was most appropriate for the area, and which communities provide good models for future development. Stakeholders were asked what infrastructure improvements, parking management strategies, and gathering spaces they would like to see in Belmont Village. Business and property owners were asked about the constraints they currently face and how new policies could help mitigate them. In addition to these particular topics, interviewees were given the opportunity to discuss issues of significance to them.

The full list of discussion questions and prompts are included in Appendix A. The list of participants is included in Appendix B. The following summary presents the range of responses organized by topic area, without attributing any remarks to specific individuals.

It is important to recognize that the issues presented in this paper may not necessarily be representative of the community at large, or a comprehensive assessment of opportunities and challenges faced in Belmont Village. While the stakeholders represented a diverse spectrum of the Belmont Village community, no sampling techniques were employed in selecting the stakeholders, and consequently, the results cannot be generalized as the sentiments of the community at large. It is also important to recognize that information presented by the stakeholders included perception and opinion. Nonetheless, the valuable insight shared during the interviews greatly informs the planning process for the Specific Plan.

2 Stakeholder Comments

Key Themes

During the stakeholder interviews, several themes were identified. Those mentioned by many stakeholders are summarized below for quick reference. The following sections provide the varying individual perspectives on these topics as well as additional issues that were raised.

- Make Belmont Village a destination, a place where community members and people from surrounding communities travel in order to shop, dine, and spend time.
- Capitalize on Belmont Village's potential, including its convenient location and proximity to large employers.
- Higher density and building heights (four to six stories) in Belmont Village will be tolerated, particularly if the buildings are well designed and aesthetically pleasing.
- Permit and encourage a greater mix of uses in Belmont Village.
- Encourage commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses above.
- Encourage jobs to locate in Belmont Village.
- Burlingame Avenue (Burlingame), Laurel Street (San Carlos), and B Street (San Mateo) are, generally speaking, good models for Belmont Village's future.
- El Camino Real is a significant barrier to mobility in Belmont Village.
- Parking is a concern to many; however, stakeholders are open to sharing parking among uses and developments.
- Long-term leases limit what property owners can and will do on their land.

Stakeholder Comments

A comprehensive list of comments made by the stakeholders, organized by topic, follows.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Stakeholders were asked to describe what they thought were the key opportunities and challenges facing Belmont Village today, as well as in the next 10 to 20 years. Many opined that Belmont Village is not a destination today, but with its many positive attributes, such as its central location and proximity to high-tech employers, it has an opportunity to become one. Other challenges noted by stakeholders are the perception that existing residents are resistant to change, as well as some skepticism that the City of Belmont is capable of shepherding large-scale change to the community. On the whole, stakeholders are eager to see positive change occur in Belmont Village.

Specific comments from stakeholders on these challenges and opportunities are listed below:

Belmont Village as a Destination

- Belmont should be a destination location.
- It would be nice to see people spend time and money in Belmont, rather than going to Burlingame or San Carlos.
- Our business is a destination. Customers are not coming to us because we are located in Belmont; they're coming because of what we offer.
- I don't hear people saying, "Let's go to Belmont."
- To compete with these [more popular] destinations, we need a plan.
- To make Belmont more of a destination, it needs some sort of central area with nice shops and stores, as well as places for kids to hang out.
- There are a lot of families around here, but they go to different places with their kids.
- People around here have a lot of money, are upper-middle-class, and have disposable income. They should be spending their money in Belmont.
- To create walking traffic, you need more of a reason to come to Belmont. You need more than one store. You need [a variety of restaurants and stores.] I'm not against any of this. I just have a hard time seeing how this is feasible without destroying half of Belmont.

Belmont Village's Potential

- Belmont has more potential.
- Belmont is a great city. If the City can come up with a good idea, we are all for it.
- The most unique thing about this area is that 101, 92, and 280 are all right here.
- There is a lot of potential because of the proximity of high-tech companies, such as Oracle.
- Many international tourists stay in nearby hotels and motels.

Resistance to Change

- A lot of residents have been here for many generations.
- People are touchy about change.
- When we started our business, residents informed us that our customers were parking on their street. We had to meet with them and Carlos.
- People will come around.
- The biggest challenges will be getting community support for increasing intensity and managing parking. There will need to be an education component. It is possible to maintain the character of the community while still seeing some positive change take place.
- I want to see beautiful things done [but] most people do not want Belmont touched.

Skepticism Towards the City

- I have a hard time trusting the City because if they can't solve a small problem like the vacant lot where the Emmett house was formerly located, I don't see how they can do an ambitious project.
- We are open to whatever the City is will to give us, but we are skeptical.
- The City has a terrible reputation in the development community.
- It has been difficult to build and get permits in Belmont. I have heard from other people in the city. The building next to ours has been for sale for several years. Everyone who wanted to move in was turned down.
- The City's desire for revenue and sales taxes makes it hard for a property owner to bring in a tenant. The City needs to open up to having a different mix of tenants.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Stakeholders were asked how they envisioned Belmont Village growing and developing in the future, and specifically, what form they would like such development to take in terms of building heights, intensity, and the like. A mix of opinions was voiced. In general, stakeholders want aesthetically pleasing development in Belmont Village. It is possible that taller buildings will be found more palatable if they are attractively designed, set back from the street, and sensitive to their surroundings. In general, stakeholders voiced an interest in seeing buildings no more than four to six stories tall. Some stakeholders spoke about the specific height requirements that would be necessary for development to pencil out in Belmont Village.

Specific comments from stakeholders on development standards are listed below:

Maximum Building Heights

- Five stories should be the maximum height of buildings in Belmont Village.
- Four to five stories.

- Five to six stories, depending on the lot size.
- New development should not block existing homes with views.
- As long as buildings look good, I don't think it's height will be a problem.
- It should not be a problem to see nice, tall high rises in Belmont.
- I don't know if I like tall buildings, especially if they come right up to the street. They make me feel like there are no places to park, nothing for me to do. It feels like they are hiding everything behind it. We have a lot of beauty here in Belmont. I would be opposed to the tallest parts of the buildings being up to the street.
- How you build high is important. Certain places feel inviting. El Camino Real in Redwood City doesn't feel inviting. San Carlos feels more inviting.
- The current height restrictions are too restrictive. It doesn't pencil out.
- You could create a “there” there if more height is allowed. Otherwise, you have a bunch of stakeholders and they are doing fine, and it is not worth it.
- Belmont is a suburban market. You need parking. To have ground-floor retail and residential above, you need at least 40 feet above podium. So, 55 feet, maybe 60 feet.
- Offer enough height or underground parking won't be built.
- If you want at-grade parking with podium, you need to allow for four stories above.
- You could make underground parking work if you allow for five-story construction.
- For condos, I am guessing that you need to get \$1,000 per square foot to make underground parking work here.

Density and Intensity

- Look at economics to get to the next level. On our block, you currently have low density and low FAR. If density and FAR were higher there, you might see market rate development take place.
- Belmont is sleepy. There aren't enough young people here. You need to bring in high-density housing, whether they are townhouses or apartments. You need to change height limits and FAR. Otherwise, you just have existing housing stock, which is difficult.
- Density is needed to drive development.

Design Standards

- Buildings should not be rigid looking or designed by someone who doesn't know what they are doing.
- Aesthetically appealing is important to me as well.

LAND USES

Stakeholders spoke about the mix of land uses they would like to see in Belmont Village. All indicated a desire for a livelier, vibrant scene in Belmont Village. A few noted that currently,

Belmont Village lacks places for children and young people to enjoy, and it would be beneficial to change this. Several stated that they would like to see more jobs in Belmont Village, and that adding jobs could support additional retail and restaurant uses. Others noted the need for additional housing.

Specific comments from stakeholders on land uses are listed below:

General Comments

- I am interested in seeing retail on the ground floor and condominiums on top, with parking behind.
- I am willing to make the first floor of my building retail space, which the people are demanding.
- The trend is to develop commercial on the ground floor and residential on the top floor. You want to get people walking in Belmont, get people walking around Belmont on the way home, have a cocktail, get people to keep their money in Belmont.
- To make Belmont more of a destination, it needs some sort of central area with nice shops and stores, as well as places for kids to hang out.
- Anything to bring people in, have tourists and/or visitors stay or visit Belmont would be a welcome addition.
- It would be awesome to have public open space in Belmont Village.

Office/Professional

- We need density and jobs to make retailers want to be here.
- There are very few jobs here.
- It makes sense to invite Silicon Valley to work here.
- Chipotle passed on the Panda Express site because there is no lunchtime crowd here.

Commercial

- There is nowhere to shop here during lunch. People go only to the Indian grocery store.
- A movie theater would be very popular.
- I'm not sure if it would make sense to have a movie theater.
- Belmont probably does not need two Safeways.
- Nice, high-end shops and stores.
- There is nowhere for Notre Dame students to hang out in Belmont Village.
- A hotel would make sense.

Residential

- The housing stock here isn't sufficient to support office workers.
- More affordable housing is needed in Belmont.

DEVELOPMENT IN SPECIFIC LOCATIONS

Stakeholders were asked how they would like to see Belmont Village develop in specific locations. A few thought Old County Road should retain its industrial character. Others thought this area was ripe for development. A variety of ideas were suggested for Belmont Village's retail core. Interest was expressed in closing streets to vehicular traffic. Some expressed the opinion that a redevelopment of the Safeway site could catalyze change in the Village. Stakeholders reported that the Safeway location is small, but high performing, and perhaps not as high-end as community members would prefer.

Specific comments from stakeholders on development in specific locations are listed below:

Old County Road/Industrial

- Old County Road should stay industrial. More companies should come into the industrial area.
- The need for auto garages is becoming a dinosaur. Small, independent mechanic shops are getting priced out of the market.
- The Old County area and the area around the Arco—that area should be upzoned and redeveloped.
- The industrial uses on Old County Road are sitting on very valuable land.
- All of the low-rise industrial land that's underdeveloped has the potential for redevelopment.

Retail Core

- There should be a walkway on Sixth Avenue.
- Close Sixth Avenue to vehicular traffic.
- I wish the City would improve the empty lot where the Emmett house used to sit. It is so ugly. Almost every morning, someone dumps birdseed there. As a result, pigeons have become a big problem. On that lot, I would like to see a plaque letting people know that this was the site of the old Emmett house. Initially, I thought this would be a good site for a park, but there's too much traffic there. Maybe there could be some benches. Or, a parking lot. If you would just level out the site, you could have a food truck there every day.
- Anything is better than what is currently on the old Emmett House lot.
- Fifth Avenue should extend all the way to Emmett or Ralston.
- Firehouse Square development will help. It doesn't seem like the stores really use the parking back there. It would be great if there were cohesive development there.
- There should be a family area near Twin Pines Park.
- If you close the area between Ralston and O'Neill to traffic and create an open courtyard feel there, it would be nice to spend time there.
- On the west side of El Camino Real, I would like to see commercial uses on the ground floor, residential uses above.

Safeway

- In order to facilitate development, Safeway could be the anchor.
- The redesign/redevelopment of parking at other Safeway locations have been driven by location and usage patterns of customers. For instance, some locations in Downtown San Francisco offer limited parking but are still successful. Other grocery stores require traditional lots because that is what customers require.
- Safeway would require more parking if it increased the square footage of its store. Convenient access is the lifeblood of a grocery store.
- The Belmont Village Safeway is doing exceptionally well. Safeway is very happy operating in Belmont.
- If any changes would be made to the current Safeway store, it would be to enlarge it. The current size of the store is 44,768 square feet. The redesign for this type of location is 55,000 to 60,000 square feet.
- In the hypothetical situation in which a new Safeway was built in the location of the existing Safeway parking lot, concerns would include the ability to keep the existing Safeway open during construction, the ability to maintain truck deliveries and circulation, and economics.
- Access from El Camino Real is critical to Safeway, especially considering the level of service on Ralston Avenue.
- Safeway's peak hours are weekends from 10 am to 6 pm, and on weekdays from 3 pm to 7 pm.
- Obstacles to a Safeway redevelopment include high land values and construction costs. To redevelop, it would be necessary to close or relocate tenants, which is very expensive.
- How the Burlingame Avenue Safeway has been redesigned is a good model.
- Safeway has said they've had some interest in redeveloping their store. It's a pretty small store. When I go into that store, there's nothing I can even buy. It would be great if it were more of an upscale Safeway.
- Safeway is owned by a private equity firm. They are going to do something with the property. The question is whether it is going to be good for the community.
- The Safeway is key. Offer enough density so they can build a store with housing above and parking below ground.
- Belmont Village's Safeway receives very little benefit from foot traffic.
- There are no minimum requirements with respect to FAR, zoning, or density to redevelop a Safeway. These are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

MODELS FOR BELMONT VILLAGE'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

When asked if there were specific places in the Bay Area they thought would serve as good examples for Belmont Village, stakeholders spoke of three nearby locations. Several stakeholders spoke positively about Burlingame, although some noted difficulties finding parking there.

Stakeholders also spoke positively about Laurel Street. One stakeholder spoke positively about B Street in San Mateo, noting that the movie theater catalyzed positive change in that area.

Specific comments from stakeholders on exemplars for Belmont Village’s future development are listed below:

Burlingame Avenue, Burlingame

- It would be nice to have a strip of high-end shops, stores, restaurants in Belmont Village, like in Burlingame.
- Burlingame did a great job.
- It is difficult to park on Burlingame Avenue.
- Burlingame needs a parking structure.
- One of my tenants is moving to Burlingame because it has a better downtown.

Laurel Street, San Carlos

- Laurel Street in San Carlos
- Laurel Street in San Carlos has businesses in front and parking is located behind.
- How you build high is important. When I go to certain places it feels inviting. Redwood City on El Camino Real doesn't feel inviting. San Carlos maybe feels more inviting.

MOBILITY

Stakeholders spoke about connectivity in Belmont Village. Some stated that while the Caltrain Station is functioning well, access to and from the station is a significant problem. Others pointed to El Camino Real being a significant barrier that pedestrians do not like to cross.

Specific comments from stakeholders on mobility are listed below:

Caltrain Station

- Caltrain, in partnership with Belmont, just received a Federal Transit Administration grant for a station management plan, to determine the highest and best use of the Belmont Caltrain Station, TOD opportunities, station access facilities, etc. The planners involved in that plan and the Belmont Village Specific Plan will want to dialogue and coordinate.
- With electrification, Caltrain Station will get more services. There will be an increase from one train an hour to two trains per hour.
- One major issue is the Caltrain Station access issue—how people get to and from the station.
- The Caltrain grade separation project resulted in our restaurant losing 80 percent of our lunch business.

- Getting down to the basics of complete streets would help improve station access. High visibility crosswalks. Making sure there is a place in the median for pedestrians to stop. Countdown signals. Bulb-outs.
- Integrate the Caltrain Station into the larger community.
- Add more bicycle parking to the Caltrain Station.

El Camino Real

- The Caltrain Station is functioning well, but El Camino Real is a barrier.
- SamTrans does not have a preferred stance on bus/bike interactions. For the Grand Boulevard Initiative, individual communities have been allowed to determine what makes sense for them.
- Looking at the bike lane/shoulder, it is beneficial to have clear pavement markings near bus bulb-outs to make clear there will be conflicting movements and interaction.
- Caltrans has an updated design manual to allow more flexibility into their process. There is an understanding that there are different "place types." There is more flexibility with respect to design speed, reduced shoulders, increased curb bulb-out length.
- Caltrans requires a median to be at least 12 feet wide if you want a tree larger than four feet in diameter. That hinders what you can do with your median design.
- There is a lot of parking on the other side of El Camino Real, but customers will not cross the street.

PARKING

Stakeholders provided their thoughts and ideas about parking in Belmont Village. Some indicated that parking, or the lack thereof, was a consistent problem in the Village. However, many were open to parking management strategies. When asked whether business and property owners would be amenable to sharing parking, many indicated they would be, if the arrangement made sense. Others were open to removing parking on El Camino Real, particularly if off-street parking was available.

Specific comments from stakeholders on parking are listed below:

General Comments

- Everyone is concerned about traffic and parking.
- My shopping center's parking lot gets filled all of the time.
- Parking is always tight.
- Previously, there were 10 people who worked in my building – and 13 parking spots. The people who worked there filled up the lot except three spaces. Each of the tenants has clients, who park in the three remaining spots, or nearby. There are always spots across the street, so it isn't an issue. It's right at capacity Monday-Friday (empty Saturday and Sunday).

- Half the people who inquire about leasing space in the building ask about parking. The other half doesn't mind walking a block. If I provided fewer parking spots, I'd have to search twice as hard to find tenants. I get to charge more in rent if parking spots are included. Parking is now at a premium. If I take the parking spots to build something for retail or office, that could overcome the parking premium. If there were a restaurant in my building, I'd hear a lot about parking.
- It is hard for elderly folks to park up the street from my restaurant, because we are located on a slope.
- Some residents do not like strangers parking on the street in front of their houses.
- Most people don't want to cross a big street unless they are able to cross at a special walkway. People don't want to wait five minutes for a light. They would rather walk a few blocks away and park on the same side on the street as their destination.

Shared Parking

- Fifth Avenue could be great with shared parking.
- Caltrain is open to having a conversation about sharing parking.
- The owner of the restaurant across the street once asked if I wanted to share parking. Now there is a chain blocking the entrance of his parking lot so no one can park there.
- The idea of restaurants sharing parking is silly because restaurants are busy at the same time.
- Shared parking is a great idea.
- How open I am to shared parking is dependent on how big the parking structure is and how many businesses are sharing parking.
- People want to see a designated parking space.
- Some kind of parking structures is needed, both in the northern and the southern quadrants.
- Cities cannot rely on business owners to provide parking for everyone. Instead of relying on property owner, they should build nearby parking structures.

Removal of Parking on El Camino Real

- It would not be a problem for our business if there were no parking on El Camino Real. Other businesses near us, they only have parking on El Camino Real. Their customers would have no place to park.
- If there were no parking on El Camino Real, it may be a problem, depending on where parking structures are proposed.
- For service style businesses, as long as there is parking in back, I would rather see more square feet for businesses.

Parking Regulations

- Near bus lines and trains, only 0.5 parking spaces per apartment unit should be required. We are doing that for a building in Hayes Valley. Parking is not needed anymore. But that is the opposite of the philosophy in Belmont.
- For small lots, allowing the payment of in lieu fees where on-site parking is not feasible would encourage redevelopment.
- The existing parking requirements are too prohibitive. Retail requires a ton of parking under the current code; it uses up all of my space.
- If parking were not a constraint, I would use the space for retail, an outdoor eating area, gardens and landscaping. The whole plan to update the building changes toward density if parking weren't a constraint.

Caltrain Station Parking

- Caltrain is functioning reasonably well from an access perspective, although with way more parking than it needs. Approximately 500 people are going through the station per day, most of whom (75 percent) are traveling to San Francisco. One-quarter is driving to the station. Others are walking or getting dropped off.
- In terms of considering turning over some of the Caltrain Station parking to development, an evaluation similar to the one conducted in San Carlos would need to occur. It would be important for a conversation with High Speed Rail to occur in order to determine if they are adding additional track capacity in the area.
- Barely anyone parks in the Caltrain Station except for during Off the Grid and the farmers' market. The parking lot is underutilized. It would be nice to have something else there that is pleasant to the eye.
- Private shuttles are important at the Caltrain Station, and they should be considered.
- If shuttle pick-up service were to pick up, there may be an interest in having a dedicated area for pick-up/drop-off off, if it could be bootstrapped onto another project.

PROPERTY OWNERS

Property owners were asked if they had plans to develop or reinvest in their property. Owners generally spoke of long-term leases, which they said substantially limited what they could do on their land.

Specific comments from property owners are listed below:

- I have a lot of long-term leases, and I am unable to displace my leaseholders during the term of their leases.
- There is a vacant property behind my property. This vacant property, combined with my property, would be a good site on which to develop a hotel. However, long-term leaseholders make this infeasible at this time.
- I can't terminate leases. I would have to write a huge check.

- Leases are not longer than 20 years.
- There aren't provisions in the leases for buying leaseholders out. These are successful businesses. They don't want to be shut down.
- The prices developers are willing to pay are sufficient if not for the leases.
- We cannot raise the rent on our leaseholders for the next 15 years.
- A hotel would make the land worth a lot more money. If there was shopping on the ground floor, I could continue having an ownership interest.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Stakeholders were asked about the public infrastructure improvements they would like to see in Belmont Village. Some noted that street lighting is insufficiently bright in areas. Others noted that the sidewalk is not always accessible to people with disabilities and that improvements are needed to the storm drain system. There were also comments about problems with garbage tumbling down hills during garbage day.

Specific comments from stakeholders on public infrastructure are listed below:

- On garbage days, people leave their garbage bins on the street, and the garbage and bins tumble down the street [due to slopes]. Belmont should get together with Recology to solve this issue.
- Definitely where we are located, the sidewalk is not very accessible. Disabled people have a hard time. It is difficult to get in and out of a van.
- Beautify Belmont.
- Improve the storm drain system.
- What I hear from residents, other than parking, is lighting at night. Ample lighting is important. You will see that there are one to two lights on one side of the road and no lights on the other side of the road.

3 Next Steps

The findings of this report will be shared with decision-makers and the Belmont community. The Specific Plan will be informed by the candid input, feedback, and insights shared by the stakeholders during these interviews, as well as by additional input from City Staff and further research on best practices, ideas, and recommendations. As specific proposals on land use and urban design for Belmont Village are drawn, stakeholders may be consulted again to solicit reactions and feedback.

In the near term, the planning team will be conducting an alternatives analysis. As a part of this analysis, the team will be exploring different concepts relating to land use, densities/intensities and desired building design characteristics, circulation and connectivity for various transportation modes, streetscape improvement proposals, and development opportunities for Belmont Village. Concepts and alternatives will be presented in a community workshop and to the Planning Commission and City Council.

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Appendix A: Discussion Questions and Prompts

The interviewees were provided with a brief introduction of the project and the objective of the interviews. They were then asked the below series of questions, which were slightly tailored based on each participants' background, expertise, and/or interests.

Introduction

The City of Belmont is preparing a Specific Plan for Belmont Village, which is the 80-acre area around the intersection of El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue, in Belmont's downtown. This effort will formalize a vision for the Village. Additionally, it will put in place an implementation program that will help realize change in the Village through detailed zoning regulations, public realm improvements, and design guidelines for new developments. The Plan will strive to fulfill the community's vision for the area, preserve and enhance the Village's livability, and allow for new growth, economic activity, and investment. A strong collaborative effort between stakeholders, community members, and decision-makers is essential to this process. The planning team is interviewing stakeholders to gain insight into their experiences, desires, and issues of concern related to the Specific Plan.

Interview Questions

We will use a set of questions to guide each interview session. Questions will vary somewhat for each person or group interviewed, to capture the knowledge and viewpoints of the participants.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

1. What do you think are the greatest challenges facing Belmont Village today? What do you feel will be the key challenges the area will face in the next 10 to 20 years?

KEY ISSUES

Land Use and Urban Design

2. Prior planning initiatives found that community members desired a village-like environment in downtown Belmont. Do you share this vision? If so, describe the places, buildings, streetscapes, and places that you feel evoke this village feel. (Can be outside of Belmont)

3. The Specific Plan will look at the type and location of land uses. Is the existing land use pattern in the area appropriate? Are there land uses that are overrepresented? Underrepresented? Are there development types you would like to see more or less of?

Mobility

4. The Specific Plan will look at ways to enhance connections throughout Belmont Village. What improvements are needed to enhance connections in Belmont Village? Think about walking, biking, transit, as well as driving. Also, consider the ability of people of all ages and abilities to get around.
5. How high of a priority do you place on enhancing pedestrian connections? Where would you like to see stronger pedestrian connections (Caltrain, Notre Dame, Ralston Ave, neighborhoods)?
6. How high of a priority do you place on enhancing bicycle connections? Where would you like to see stronger bicycle connections (Caltrain, Notre Dame, Ralston Ave, neighborhoods)?

Economic Prosperity

7. What specific types of businesses have growth potential in Belmont Village? How could the City use the Specific Plan to attract these businesses?

Development Opportunity

8. There are a number of underutilized sites, including vacant land and buildings, within Belmont Village. How would you like to see them developed?
 - a. In particular, there are many underutilized sites along El Camino Real. How would you like to see that area change, if at all?
 - b. There are opportunities for change and reinvestment in Belmont Village's retail core. Are there changes you would like to see in that area?
9. Belmont Village has been designated a "Priority Development Area" (PDA) by the Bay Area's regional planning agency, which means that it has been identified as an area for potential future growth because of its proximity to transit.
 - a. How do you envision Belmont Village growing and developing in the future?
 - b. What kind of development do you think would be best for the future of Belmont Village?
 - c. What kind of development do you think would be best for the future of your business or property?
 - d. What types of uses should be included in new development in Belmont Village?
 - e. How many stories and how large a floor area should new development have?
 - f. Do you have examples of projects in the Bay Area that you think would be a positive addition to Belmont Village?

10. There is currently no public space or plaza for community members and visitors to gather in Belmont Village. Are there gathering places you would like to see in Belmont Village?

Parking

11. A significant amount of space within Belmont Village is occupied by surface parking lots. Particularly in the retail core, these represent an opportunity for infill development. How would you like to see these parking lots used over the next 20 years.
12. How much do you value on-street parking (particularly on Ralston Ave) vs. the off-street parking in parking lots?

QUESTIONS FOR SPECIFIC DISCUSSION GROUPS

Property Owners/Developers

13. Do you have current plans to develop or reinvest in your property in Belmont Village?
 - a. If so, what are you envisioning?
 - b. If not, do you feel your existing land use designation and permitted development intensity would be appropriate on the site in the future?

Business Owners

14. How long is your current lease?
15. Do you anticipate any major renovations in the foreseeable future?

Safeway

1. Would you be willing to consider a new strategy for circulation?
2. How does Safeway benefit (in terms of foot traffic and attraction) as an anchor in a district.
3. Where are other locations of grocery in Belmont Village that Safeway likes?

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Appendix B: Participants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Kaveh Abbaszadeh	Iron Gate Restaurant
Reverend Michael Arase-Barham	Good Shepherd Church
Megan Channell	San Mateo County Transit District
Mike Chuang	Belmont Village Center Owner (Five Guys/Panda Express)
Susan Chuang	Belmont Village Center Owner (Five Guys/Panda Express)
Terry Chuang	Belmont Village Center Owner (Five Guys/Panda Express)
Tom Culligan	Ralston Plaza Shopping Center
John Glikbarg	Village Properties
Rob Isackson	Village Properties
Maria Lawler	Mark English Architects
Munish Manrao	EPC IT Solutions
Natalie Mattei	Safeway
Dimitri Papas	Iron Gate Restaurant
Sebastian Petty	San Mateo County Transit District
Bob Read	Rosewood Oaks Property Management, LLC
Aleks Tosun	Godfathers Burgers

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