

City of Belmont

General Plan Update

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS REPORT

NOVEMBER 14, 2014



PREPARED BY
DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

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Stakeholder Interviews Report

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I Introduction

I.1 Belmont General Plan Update

What will the next 20 years hold for Belmont? The existing General Plan dates back to 1982, and new opportunities, challenges, and approaches have emerged in recent years. The City initiated the multi-year process of updating the General Plan in 2014, beginning what will be a unique and important opportunity for residents to share their ideas about their community's future. The General Plan Update process provides an opportunity to explore these ideas and shape the city's future, by putting policies in place to guide the next twenty years.

The General Plan is a policy document that implements the vision of the community. Therefore, public participation is an important part of the process of shaping the 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, including:

- Community workshops;
- City Council and Planning Commission meetings;
- Surveys;
- Draft Document review and comment;
- Comments via e-mail; and
- Website at <http://www.belmont-2035generalplan.com/>.

I.2 Stakeholder Interviews Purpose and Process

The General Plan Update work program is designed to identify issues, opportunities, and challenges early on in the planning process to enable the planning team to reflect on these issues in the preparation of alternatives. Interviews were conducted with a cross-section of stakeholders, representing residents, business owners and employers, developers, community groups, and service providers. These interviews were conducted in person on October 23, 2014. Further community input at this stage will be gathered through a community-wide mail-in survey and the initial community visioning workshops.

A total of 16 stakeholders participated in the interview process. Interviews were generally conducted in groups of two to four people, although one individual interview was also conducted. Most sessions lasted approximately one hour. General Plan consultants conducted the interviews. The structure was loosely guided by an initial set of questions used as prompts; however, responses were “free form.” Stakeholders were given the opportunity to provide their viewpoints on issues of significance, visions for Belmont’s future, general planning concerns, and other topics of specific interest. The “prompt” questions used in the interviews are included in Appendix C.

The stakeholders represented a diverse range of local and regional interests including housing, real estate, local business, environment, education, arts, social advocacy, historic preservation, and the community at large. Many of the interviewees were residents as well. A complete list of those in attendance can be found in Appendix A.

The varying points of view offered by individual and group stakeholders are recognized in this report. To understand perspectives of the general Belmont community, the City will be undertaking additional outreach efforts at this stage and throughout the process that are targeted at the community at large, such as workshops and surveys.

1.3 Report Organization

This report provides a summary of the issues and ideas that emerged during the stakeholder interviews. Chapter 2 identifies major issues brought up by a wide cross-section of the interviewed stakeholders, with expanded discussion of the primary ideas and themes. The report concludes with information about how this input will be used during the next steps of the General Plan Update process. Appendix A includes a list of those interviewed; Appendix B contains a copy of the invitation letter sent to potential stakeholders; Appendix C includes the questions asked at the interviews; and Appendix D includes a full listing of participants’ comments, organized by topic.

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 the city. While the stakeholders represented a diverse spectrum of the Belmont community, no sampling techniques were employed in selecting the stakeholders, and consequently, the results cannot be generalized as the sentiments of the population 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 General Plan.

2 Major Themes

During the stakeholder interviews, several themes were repeatedly identified. Major issues identified by multiple stakeholders are summarized below for quick references. Subsequent sections of the report provide the varying individual perspectives on these topics, as well as additional explanations.

Belmont's greatest assets were identified as:

- Strategic location in the region
- Strong sense of community and citizen participation
- Small-town character and physical setting

Challenges identified as most important to be addressed were:

- Circulation and mobility
- Downtown
- Housing
- Role of city government in development

Other recurring topics included:

- Open space and parks
- Schools
- Notre Dame de Namur University
- Economic development
- Community facilities and arts and culture
- Historic resources

2.1 Primary Topics Addressed

CIRCULATION AND MOBILITY

Nearly all of the stakeholders raised Belmont's circulation system as a major issue in the city, and concerns focused on a few main topics, including Ralston Avenue, public transit, and the city's

bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In general, parking was not much of a concern in Belmont, except around the community centers and parks.

Ralston Avenue

There was strong consensus across the stakeholder interviews that the Ralston Avenue corridor is a major issue in Belmont. The City of Belmont is already undertaking the Ralston Avenue Corridor Study and Improvements Project, and stakeholders' comments reinforced many of the issues that other community members have brought up as part of this project. Stakeholders identified the corridor as heavily congested, slow, unsafe for bicyclists, and challenging for pedestrians. Many believed that the problems stem from the fact that Ralston Avenue is essentially the only east-west thoroughfare in the city. There were different needs and challenges identified on the street:

- Ralston Avenue is the main route to travel from the western part of Belmont (where the many residents live and where the connections to Highway 92 and Interstate 280 are located) to the central and eastern portions of the city (where commercial and industrial areas, El Camino Real, and Highway 101 are located). While there are some winding east-west routes through the Belmont hills, most residents use the Ralston corridor to move around town. Thus, there are heavy travel demands on the whole corridor.
- The western portion of Ralston Avenue has steep hills and a higher speed limit, which leads vehicular traffic to travel at higher speeds and makes it difficult to cross and pull onto or out of for other vehicles.
- Many of Belmont's schools are located on or near Ralston Avenue, including the school district's only middle school, which creates a great deal of congestion at the start and end of the school day when parents are dropping off and picking up children.
- The intersection of El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue is the only way to get across the El Camino Real corridor into the eastern or western portion of Belmont, causing traffic to slow and back up on both El Camino and Ralston.
- Belmont's freeway access to Highway 101 is provided via on-ramps and off-ramps on Ralston Avenue, which also creates traffic on the thoroughfare.
- The Ralston Avenue overcrossing of Highway 101 is the only way for vehicular traffic to reach the most eastern portion of Belmont.

Some stakeholders proposed more east-west connections in Belmont, such as an additional crossing over El Camino Real to Old County Road at Davey Glen Road, to decrease congestion at the Ralston/El Camino Real intersection and to spur economic activity and redevelopment along Old County Road. Others posited that the proposed roundabout on Ralston Corridor would not be as successful as hoped in solving traffic issues, and bicycles and pedestrians would have a harder time navigating it than vehicular traffic.

Transit

The stakeholders identified the Caltrain station as an asset for the Belmont community. Many expressed desire for additional train stops at the station, instead of the current once-per-hour stop.

The lack of services around the Caltrain station was identified as an issue; several stakeholders pointed to the Depot Cafe at the San Carlos Caltrain station as an example of what should be done at Belmont's Caltrain station.

The stakeholders were mixed in their views on bus service in Belmont. Some thought that the service was adequate, and others thought that service could be improved in residential neighborhoods, especially in the east-west direction. One area that many stakeholders agreed on was improved bus service for students to and from schools. The hilly topography of the city presents a challenge for students who might bike or walk to school, even if they live relatively close by, and many parents end up driving their children to school, which creates congestion. Stakeholders suggested more user-friendly buses or shuttles and improved routes through residential neighborhoods to take students to school.

Bicycles and Pedestrians

Stakeholders expressed enthusiasm for opportunities to walk and bike around Belmont. They characterized some parts of Belmont as very pedestrian and bicycle friendly and especially valued the bicycle and pedestrian overcrossing at Highway 101. However, many also thought that the city could do more to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Belmont. General ideas included more walking paths, a bicycle path program, more sidewalks where feasible in residential neighborhoods, more bike lanes where feasible across the city, more crosswalks for pedestrians, and curb cut improvements to make the existing sidewalks more accessible.

For Downtown Belmont, ideas included enhanced pedestrian connections to make it easier to "park once, then walk" in the area, as well as pedestrian improvements between residential neighborhoods and the Downtown. One stakeholder questioned the design decision to put yellow vertical dividers up in the median of Ralston Avenue at the El Camino intersection, instead of a small, better-looking divider like a planted median. El Camino Real and Old County Road were identified as particularly dangerous for bicyclists and difficult to cross for pedestrians.

In the western residential neighborhoods, where roads are windy and narrow through the hills, stakeholders suggested that the city could pick some key corridors and put the sidewalks there, rather than putting sidewalks on every street. They acknowledged that while pedestrian safety is a concern in some neighborhoods, especially those with narrow, winding streets with poor sight lines, the topography and right of way restrictions make sidewalk installation virtually impossible in many places. One idea proposed was for the City to paint walking/biking areas on the streets and trim the overhanging trees to improve safety and visibility on the hilly streets. Another suggestion included taking an inventory and formalizing the major vertical trails in the hills that pedestrians use to go between different levels of streets in the hills.

On Ralston Avenue, the absence of a bicycle lane extending the length of the corridor contributed to stakeholders' characterization of the street as unsafe for bicyclists. In addition, the steep hills and higher speed limits allow cars to travel at high speeds, making it more dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians. Stakeholders especially identified the area around Carlmont Village as not very safe for pedestrians. There are few crosswalks in the corridor to allow pedestrians to safely cross the street. Some stakeholders thought that more could be done to improve pedestrian safety along

the corridor, especially for children who walk the street to school, perhaps with an attractive railing along the edge of the sidewalk between the cars and the walkers near schools.

DOWNTOWN BELMONT

Vision for Downtown

Virtually all of the stakeholders thought that the potential of Downtown Belmont has yet to be realized, despite a general desire for Downtown to become a vibrant place. The areas around the Caltrain station, El Camino Real, and Old County Road were repeatedly identified as opportunity areas. In addition, Ralston Avenue was seen as dividing the Downtown into separate north and south areas instead of one cohesive neighborhood. Many were optimistic that the General Plan Update could play an important role in transforming Downtown Belmont into a thriving center for the community. The downtowns of Redwood City, San Carlos, and San Mateo were referenced as desirable precedents for Belmont's Downtown.

In general, stakeholders want to see more activity and more attractions so that the Downtown becomes a hub for community and culture in Belmont. One stakeholder was inspired by a historic photo of Belmont that was hanging in the hallway of City Hall that showed a sign that said "Belmont: The Hub of the Peninsula." Many stakeholders agreed that new housing at higher densities should be developed in Downtown Belmont to bring energy to the area in the evenings through a mix of uses. The proximity of the Downtown area to the Caltrain station was another reason that some stakeholders recommended that denser residential developments, including affordable and senior housing, be constructed in the area. Other ideas for new development in Downtown included a large, central gathering space or town square for the community; a civic center that capitalizes on the proximity of the current City Hall and Twin Pines Park to Downtown; entertainment-related uses such as a performing arts center, community theater, a concert hall, or movie theaters; and a gym, local restaurants and bars, and other local businesses.

Urban Design and Aesthetics

Nearly all of the stakeholders agreed that they wanted new development to fit in to the Village context and not detract from the small-town feel of Belmont, while at the same time adding density to the Downtown area. In general, heights of three to four stories were supported, along with regulations to avoid the "canyon-effect" of tall buildings lining streets without setbacks. Some suggested that transitions between the residential areas and commercial areas need to be carefully considered and regulated, because it could be a potential issue in the future.

Several stakeholders expressed an interest in the creation of a high-quality, attractive public space to serve the community and anchor Downtown, in addition to new buildings. The decorated fire hydrants in Belmont are valued, and some stakeholders expressed hope that similar projects would help give character and charm to Downtown Belmont. Stakeholders commented that they would like to see a more pedestrian-friendly environment that encourages residents to stroll, linger, and socialize in Belmont, instead of going to neighboring cities (Redwood City, San Carlos, and San Mateo) for these activities.

HOUSING

The issue of housing was raised repeatedly during the interviews. The affordability of housing in Belmont and the broader Peninsula was a concern shared by the majority of stakeholders. Multiple individuals noted that Belmont has a large population of renters (estimated to be up to 40 percent of the population), and they expressed concern about high turnover in the community, fearing that people are being forced out of the city because of frequent and high rent increases. Other stakeholders were concerned about the rising prices of homes and the fact that many families cannot afford to purchase a home in Belmont. In general, stakeholders agreed that Belmont should be an accessible place to live for people of all income levels, and the City should strive to meet this vision of Belmont through the General Plan Update.

Tied in to the affordability issue, another repeated concern was the very low amount of housing that is being produced in Belmont. The city is largely built out, and there was broad support for housing production through infill development. The Downtown area – Plan Bay Area’s “Priority Development Area” around the Caltrain station, El Camino Real, and Ralston Avenue – was frequently suggested as an opportunity area for denser housing development, to capitalize on the proximity to transit and services. Many stakeholders expressed enthusiasm for a variety of housing types to be developed in Belmont, to meet the needs of seniors, students, and working and middle class families. Live/work units and accessory or in-law units were supported as well.

In general, stakeholders thought that the City could do more on the housing issue. Some proposed the City adopt rent control policies or other legal actions to address the affordability issue, but others were strongly opposed. An area of agreement to help address the issue was to increase the supply of housing in Belmont. One stakeholder pointed out affordable units are provided when development occurs because of inclusionary housing policies, so the City should generally prioritize development as a way of increasing the number of affordable units.

ROLE OF CITY GOVERNMENT IN DEVELOPMENT

A common issue across many interviews, stakeholders recommended that the City create a more business- and customer-friendly environment, specifically regarding the development review process. Many interviewees described the development review process and the regulations in Belmont as subjective, slow, unclear, and unpredictable for all types of projects. As a result, one stakeholder involved in real estate commented, “We don’t have a lot of enthusiastic responses about coming to develop in Belmont.”

Stakeholders were concerned that the current General Plan does not serve as a guide for development, because it does not clearly articulate the City’s goals and priorities. Similarly, they characterized the City’s regulations and procedures as unclear and unpredictable for all involved in the process, from community members to developers. One stakeholder noted that the architectural design review, Planning Commission, and City Council approval processes have been known to delay even small-scale residential projects for years. A number of stakeholders commented that the Zoning Code in its current form is problematic, and many projects rely on variances and/or planned development permits to get approved. There was also concern that the sign ordinance is so restrictive that it negatively affects Belmont businesses, and the tree ordinance protects non-native species while obstructing desirable views. Several stakeholders recommended an increase in City staff. With regard to public services like water and sewer, one

stakeholder commented that it is important for the City to coordinate with the Mid-Peninsula Water District and other utility providers to ensure that development is not haphazardly approved.

In general, stakeholders emphasized that it was critical for the City to ensure that the development requirements are clear and consistent, and that the review process is timely and predictable in order for the City to attract more development. To that end, many stakeholders viewed the General Plan Update as an opportunity for the City to clarify its expectations, simplify regulations and approval processes, and update land uses and development standards.

Downtown Development Regulations and Review Process

Many stakeholders observed that there hasn't been much development in Downtown Belmont in recent years, to the detriment of the community. Stakeholders reported that it is difficult to comprehend realistic opportunities for projects in Belmont, the community's expectations, developer time and cost estimates, and the City's development review and approval process. They noted that the lack of clarity in the plans, regulations, and process negatively affects the Belmont community as well, because residents are also unclear about what can be expected from development projects and what the guidelines are.

Stakeholders who are active in development, housing, and business communities thought that there are two main strategies that the General Plan Update can employ to attract development to Belmont and realize the potential of Downtown Belmont. First, they specifically recommended that Belmont create a Downtown Plan like Redwood City's Downtown Precise Plan, with a clear vision and policies, as well as accompanying guidelines and environmental clearance. Through the creation of the Downtown Plan, stakeholders suggested that the City could create an inventory of all properties in Downtown, including the age of structures, current uses, and development capacity, to evaluate potential visions for the Downtown area. Then, the Plan and its accompanying regulations would establish clear heights, setbacks, parking ratios, land uses, community benefits, and other guidelines to make the development potential and process very clear in Downtown. This clarity would greatly benefit both the development community and the community of Belmont, because it would allow all involved parties to understand exactly what can happen, the desired outcomes, and the process of development. Moreover, program-level CEQA clearance would expedite the environmental review process as well.

Second, a number of stakeholders suggested that the City create incentives to facilitate parcel assembly in the Downtown area. The parcels in Downtown are very small in size, often have existing structures, and are owned by many different property owners. Under these conditions, stakeholders commented that it is very difficult to assemble land and construct projects without the City's assistance in parcel aggregation. Given that the City no longer can use eminent domain through the Redevelopment Agency to assemble parcels, multiple stakeholders recommended that the City use other incentives. With a strong Downtown Plan, a clear General Plan, predictable development guidelines and processes, effective community benefits and incentives regulations, and accompanying environmental review documentation, the City could make the development process "turnkey" in Belmont, especially in Downtown Belmont.

2.2 Other Common Topics

OPEN SPACE AND PARKS

Virtually all of the stakeholders identified Belmont’s open spaces and parks as one of its strongest assets and a significant part of the City’s character and identity. Stakeholders agreed that Belmont has a large amount of open space and parks, especially compared to other neighboring cities, and most of the parks and open spaces are located south of Ralston Avenue. There was general agreement that there is more open space than developed or improved park space per capita in the city, but opinions were mixed about whether or not more formal park space needs to be provided. Some thought that the City should provide more parks in the neighborhoods north of Ralston Avenue, because those residents have to drive to reach a park or open space. Others believed that given the large quantity of open space and parks in Belmont overall, the City should focus on other efforts. There was strong support for keeping “open spaces” distinct from “parks;” the community values the playgrounds, sports fields, picnic areas, and programming in the parks, while also having access to wildlife, trails, and the natural environment in the open spaces.

In the open spaces, stakeholders requested improvements that were limited to trails and grounds maintenance, while in the parks, requests included more playground facilities, extended hours for sports fields (including those under joint-use agreements), and increased programming and community events, in addition to grounds maintenance. One stakeholder suggested that stronger protections could be in place by ensuring that the General Plan and the Zoning Map land use designations are correct for parks and open space parcels (current designations include “agriculture” on park land, for instance).

SCHOOLS

Stakeholders valued the public schools in Belmont and raised concerns about overcrowding. Belmont and Redwood Shores share a strong elementary and middle public school district (the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District) that is known for its high test scores. As a result, Belmont’s high-performing schools attract families with school-aged children to the city, and overcrowding at the schools has become a significant issue in recent years, particularly as Redwood Shores has attracted more families with children than were originally envisioned for the area. In the 1980s, the District sold some of its land and facilities in Belmont because enrollment had declined; now that enrollment has increased dramatically, there is a shortage of facilities and many of the schools are overcrowded. Much of the enrollment growth is occurring in Redwood Shores, which was originally intended to be a retirement community, so a new elementary school was recently constructed there. However, Redwood Shores families that need to get their children to school further west in Belmont (especially to the middle school) contribute to the traffic congestion described above. More modest growth is predicted for Belmont itself; however, the city still bears the impacts of district-wide enrollment growth and increasing desirability of the school district.

Across the district, enrollment is currently largest in the younger grades, so additional capacity is needed for the middle grades as current elementary school children age, as there is currently only one middle school in the district. Options are limited for building new schools in Belmont, given the shortage of vacant land, but the District is examining options to add additional facilities to

existing schools and to convert existing elementary schools (K-5) to elementary and middle schools (K-8) instead.

The public schools are dependent on SamTrans for bussing students, because the District does not own or operate its own bus system. Given the hilly topography in Belmont, it is challenging for students to walk or bike to school, so many ride the bus or drive with parents. There are joint-use agreements to use the school fields and playgrounds as park facilities with the City of Belmont, coordinated by the City's Parks and Recreation Department.

In addition to the public schools, there are many private schools in Belmont, including one affiliated with Notre Dame de Namur University. The private schools draw some students that would otherwise attend Belmont's public schools.

NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR UNIVERSITY

Belmont is home to Notre Dame de Namur University, the only university in San Mateo County. Many stakeholders identified the university as a cultural and economic asset for the Belmont community. They especially valued its theater, concerts, sports field, public speakers, classes that are open to the community, and economic activity from students and faculty. One stakeholder associated with the institution estimated that the university has about 1,500 full-time enrolled students, with about 400-500 students living on campus. Many of the students rent homes in the Belmont community; others commute to school via the Belmont Caltrain station. Many stakeholders viewed the university as an underutilized asset and thought that the bridge between the university and the City could be strengthened for the benefit of the Belmont community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND LAND USES

As mentioned earlier, a number of stakeholders interviewed, especially those active in the business and development communities, thought the City could do more to cultivate a more business- and customer-friendly environment. The City's sign ordinance reportedly had negative effects for some businesses, and the process for applying for a business license was identified as unnecessarily expensive and time-intensive. One stakeholder said that many property and business owners would rather not deal with the City and the hassle of trying to change or update their property or business; instead, they just maintain the status quo, much to the detriment of the City's economy and the community.

Across the interviews, the Carlmont Village Shopping Center and the adjacent commercial area on Alameda de las Pulgas were identified as economic activity and community hubs for Belmont. Some suggested that the City recognize the Carlmont Village/Alameda area and direct energy towards improving development in this part of town, in addition to Downtown.

Stakeholders in the business community believed that Belmont has a strong customer base for a range of businesses (especially the education sector), with many professionals, families, and seniors. Other stakeholders confirmed they like to support local Belmont businesses and would appreciate additional opportunities to spend time and money in Belmont, particularly in the Downtown area. Some thought that business shuttles between Downtown Belmont and large employers, such as Oracle, would be successful in drawing more economic activity to Belmont without bringing more cars in, especially during the lunch hour during the workweek.

Stakeholders expressed a desire to see a wider variety of commercial and industrial land uses in the General Plan Update and Zoning Code in Belmont. Some stakeholders thought that it is important to maintain the Harbor Industrial Area (HIA) and the eastern side of Highway 101, as well as Old County Road, as places for industrial and commercial uses. In addition, stakeholders expressed an interest in seeing more office and retail uses (but not big-box retail) in Belmont, particularly along the El Camino Real Corridor. One stakeholder thought that the affordability of commercial space in Belmont is an issue. A few stakeholders were concerned about the transitions between housing uses and commercial and industrial uses and thought that the General Plan should address this issue. Additionally, one stakeholder was concerned about the placement of cellular transmission towers, especially in residential areas, and hoped that the General Plan Update could address the issue.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ARTS AND CULTURE

Belmont has a number of community facilities that are appreciated by the community. The library was praised across many interviews; it functions as a community center for the residents of Belmont and is so popular that it can be hard to find parking there at times. The senior center was also named a community asset by the stakeholders. It was suggested that more could be done with Barrett Community Center. In general, the stakeholders valued the programming that is done in Belmont to bring the community together, such as events like Save the Music, the Greek festival, National Night Out, and events at Twin Pines Park. There was strong support for more programming and events to bring the city together, especially low-cost or free programming.

There is an interest in reviving the arts in Belmont and improving the cultural facilities in the city through the General Plan Update. One stakeholder commented that in the past, the arts had a strong presence in Belmont (Ralston Avenue was known as the “Avenue of the Arts” and there was a popular annual art and wine festival). In more recent years, the City considered installing an art park on a vacant site near the Caltrain station, but the project did not move forward because of costs. Stakeholders expressed support for an Arts Ordinance to promote the arts in Belmont, perhaps through a “1 percent for the arts” program. The development and business community members present in the interviews did not object to such an arts program if it was incorporated into the effort to make the Belmont development process and regulations predictable and clear.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Belmont’s historic resources, including historic buildings and two historic districts, contribute to the city’s character and distinction. There was strong support for updating the inventory of significant historic resources in Belmont, because the previous inventory was conducted nearly 25 years ago and there may be historically significant properties in the city that are not listed or protected. Similarly, there was strong support for improving the City’s requirements for and processing of historic resources. Stakeholders reported that the regulations and the processes for designated historic resources are confusing and cumbersome, partially because the current historic resources ordinance is not in the Zoning ordinance, but rather elsewhere in the Municipal Code.

3 Next Steps

The input gathered during the stakeholder interviews will be used in subsequent phases of the General Plan Update process. The first-hand knowledge and experiences of the stakeholders will be invaluable in creating a new Plan that reflects the community's collective goals and visions.

After carefully reviewing information shared by the stakeholders, assessment of opportunities and challenges, as well as general public input from the community workshops, the survey, and City Council and Planning Commission meetings, the planning team will prepare land use and transportation alternatives and review them with the community. A Preferred Plan will be prepared, and following City Council endorsement, draft planning documents will be prepared and reviewed with the community.

Appendices

A. Stakeholders Interviewed

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Michael Arase-Barham	Good Shepard Church
Michele Beasley	Greenbelt Alliance
Joshua Hugg	Housing Leadership Council
David Irmer	Developer
Judy King	Sunnyslope Neighborhood
Denny Lawhern	Belmont Historical Society
Michael Milliken	Belmont Redwood Shores School District
Karl Mittelstadt	Open Space Trust
Drew Morgan	Real Estate Broker
Mary Morrissey Parden	Chamber of Commerce
Cari Pang Chen	Sterling Downs Neighborhood
Michael Picone	Carlmont Shopping Center
Henry Roth	Notre Dame de Namur University
Tammy Rudock	Mid-Peninsula Water District
Michael Stoner	Developer
Susan Wright	Sustainability

B. Stakeholder Interview Invitation

Name
Title
Company
Address
City, CA Zip

Re: City of Belmont General Plan Update

Dear [Stakeholder]:

You have been identified as an individual with knowledge and interest in planning and development in Belmont, California. The City is preparing a comprehensive update of its General Plan, including an enhanced new focus on the Belmont Village downtown area. As such, the City would like to interview you to gain insight into your experience, desires, and issues of concern related to the update. The stakeholder interviews are scheduled for October 23, 2014, and we are hoping you can attend.

The purpose of the Belmont General Plan Update project is to:

- Provide policy guidance to help realize the community's vision for the future;
- Help us manage Belmont's future growth;
- Revitalize Downtown;
- Attract high quality businesses and jobs;
- Protect natural resources;
- Promote high quality design of buildings and public spaces; and
- Maintain public safety and municipal services.

A strong collaborative effort between stakeholders, community members, and decision-makers is essential to this process. Your role as a key stakeholder is to be an information resource and provide observations and suggestions. You will also be notified about future meetings and the release of draft documents.

The stakeholder interviews will approximately 45 minutes and will be held at Belmont City Hall on October 23, 2014. Please select your preferred meeting time from the list below:

OCTOBER 23, 2014 LOCATION: BELMONT CITY HALL
9:00 to 10:00 a.m.
10:00 to 11:00 a.m.
11:00 to noon
1:00 to 2:00 p.m.
2:00 to 3:00 p.m.
3:00 to 4:00 pm
4:00 to 5:00 pm

Please contact Colleen Turning by October 8th with your preferred time slot. She can be reached at (650) 595-7417 or cturning@belmont.gov.

If you have questions regarding this project or your role as a project stakeholder, please contact me at (650) 595-7440 or cdemelo@belmont.gov. Thank you for your assistance with this very exciting project! I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Carlos de Melo
Community Development Director
City of Belmont

C. Stakeholder Interviews – Guiding Questions

1. What do you like most about Belmont? What do you think are the major assets that the new plan should seek to preserve or build upon?
2. What do you think will be the top three key challenges Belmont will face in the next 10 to 20 years?
 - #1 _____
 - #2 _____
 - #3 _____
3. Do you think the current General Plan addresses these challenges?
4. Thinking about recent development, do you think the City is getting the quality it should? If not, is more guidance needed for design review, or should the General Plan itself set out design principles and expectations for livability and sustainability?
5. Now, let's get into some details that will be covered in the General Plan itself, which as you may know has to cover a number of specific topics:
 - a. Possible new uses (stores, homes, offices, industrial uses, etc.) that are held back by the current General Plan or zoning:
 - i) What
 - ii) Where
 - iii) What form (height, density, intensity)
 - iv) Other ideas or concerns about new development or redevelopment – what you might like to see and why would this be important.
 - v) Should the General Plan have a specific program for development incentives? If so, why – what would you like accomplished? Tie it to public art program? (Or just require public art for large projects?)
 - vi) What about the residential/commercial interface and transitions are these handled well?
 - vii) Historic resources and demolitions: is this a concern? What should be done?
 - b. Downtown/Belmont Village is the heart of the community and there has been a lot of discussion about this area; for the General Plan we are going to prepare a separate “element” that focus on the Village. We could like to know you thoughts about opportunities and constraints, and concerns you may have about what the policy direction should be.
 - c. Transportation – access and connectivity both within the City and to the regional systems also is important. A General Plan also has to say what the City will be doing to realize the concept of “Complete Streets”.

- d. Community facilities, such as parks, community centers, library, schools etc. also are important in a General Plan – and the City might want to do more to foster public-private partnerships and to use zoning to get “community benefits”)
 - e. Open space also is important – are there areas where you want to see new or different designations to protect sites for Parks, Recreation and Open Space? How about “community gardens” – is this an idea that should be in the General Plan? Where?
6. Other thoughts or topics you would like to share?
 7. In closing, what are your top 3 priorities for this General Plan, reflecting back on our conversation?

Time Permitting:

- Economic Development: what more could the City do? More density/height in East Belmont?
- Area Plans, such as for the Western Hills and Juan Hills - any particular issues or concerns?
- Vegetation Management and the Urban/Wildland Interface - do you think more should be done?
- Cultural Facilities: interest in an “Arts Element” or policies on the arts in Belmont?

D. Summary of Comments by Subject

BELMONT'S ASSETS

Strategic Location in the Region

- Easy access to San Francisco and San Jose. Central location draws companies who want to be between two big cities (Belmont has Nikon and other industries located on east side).
- Location-wise – very convenient if you work in SF or in SJ. Lots of people use Caltrain to get to/from work. The accessibility for jobs combined with the good schools = good place for working families. Close to 92 too.
- Central Location – for the dual income household where one spouse works in SF, one works in Silicon Valley. Airport is 15 min away (for work travel).
- Good infrastructure to set a platform to build to the next level.
- Caltrain station is an asset.
- Near Highways 92 and 101 also.
- Its location is really key – Belmont benefits from a lot of it.
- Good location. Great weather.
- Good infrastructure to set a platform to build to the next level.

The Community

- Belmont has an amazing community – the people are the strength of this place.
- Asset and liability is the citizenship. On asset side – caring, knowledgeable about the city, very involved.
- Caring citizenship gives you a better place to live – this town cares a great deal and people show up. It's a great community.
- The residents and the businesses that have stuck with Belmont through its ups and downs is another asset. The change in Council came from the residents. It's a residential based community that values its open space.
- The people who live here are the strength. Lots of professionals and retirees. Good customer base for businesses. Families and seniors – it's a good mix, and the age diversity is a strength.
- People, Parks, Pride. The Three Ps – those are our assets.
- Good social structure, good police department, library, etc.

Small town character and setting

- People like how small it is, it has a small-town feel.
- “It feels like a small town but isn't small-minded.”

- Drawn in to the rural, bucolic feel of the town, winding roads, no grid (in contrast to San Carlos), the trees, the hiking and trails. Belmont is “cooler” than San Carlos.
- Some areas have sidewalks, some don’t – Belmont offers both. In Belmont you’re close to everything and yet there’s all this open space around you - it’s very convenient.
- The topography – it’s very scenic.

CIRCULATION AND MOBILITY

Ralston Avenue

- Ralston Avenue has challenges – lots of congestion. Get the traffic down, especially with those who want to get to the East part of the City, where lots of jobs are (“the Oracle Mile” – starts at Ralston).
- To fix the Ralston Avenue corridor – this is a real impediment for east/west divide in Belmont, and for seniors and people walking.
- Belmont’s infrastructure and geography is very challenged. Ralston Ave Corridor Study happened for this reason – lots of transportation issues.
- Ralston Avenue is the only cross between East and West. There should be a crossing at Davey Glen – even to go under. There aren’t crossings in the northern part of the City. The whole area could really be improved if there were more crossings. You have to go to Ralston or San Mateo to cross over to east city.
- Infrastructure – make Old County Road as useable as El Camino – can really develop it. Have a below grade crossing to it from El Camino at Davey Glen.
- The Ralston Avenue Corridor Study – they didn’t study to put more traffic on Old County Road – missed opportunity.
- The way that they did the grade separation was really good. That saved Ralston. They could’ve had good commercial services right near the station. Should’ve been like Grand Central Station and the Ferry Building, where you can get some food or a drink.
- El Camino and Ralston is a nightmare intersection. It’s extremely congested, it goes way up the hill.
- Transportation and traffic concerns. Topography concerns on western portion of the city – it’s hard to ride bikes. Bottle necks on Ralston b/c all of the roads funnel to it. The Ralston corridor gets a lot of pressure because the middle school is the only one up there in the hills, draws from all of Belmont and Redwood Shores.
- High speeds on Ralston – only city on Peninsula does that. It’s both north and south of Ralston where the challenges are. Don’t widen Ralston any more – don’t expand it more.
- Rail to protect to the kids along the sidewalk on Ralston (something attractive) – something that separates them so they don’t get shoved into street.
- Get people out of the cars and start mitigating vehicle traffic.
- A lot of drivers don’t pay attention to the bike lanes in Belmont, especially on Ralston.

Stakeholder Interviews Report

- The east-west connection in the City is really hard except if you're in a car. Ralston and Alameda is a nightmare too – needs major improvement. Most of the traffic comes from parents driving to school. Need more Safe Routes 2 School – getting kids on bikes and walking.
- Traffic here is such a nightmare. Ralston Avenue is a complete nightmare. There are totally different needs on different segments of the street. For instance, in the Sterling Downs neighborhood people speed through to try to avoid the traffic – they're trying to cut around the traffic. The schools are up on Ralston, but there aren't good sidewalks. Cars speeding down Ralston, so getting in and out of the middle school is really difficult. Getting across Ralston is really difficult because of the speed of the hill. The one main corridor is a challenge because it's the only way to get around. Sometimes people try to cut through the hills to avoid Ralston. During rush hour around school openings/closures is total chaos. The Sterling Downs neighborhood has a good bus system and can take the buses to the schools. People have actually moved to this neighborhood so they could get the bus system.
- Merge SR2Ss with Ralston Corridor with active transportation efforts. They need someone on staff to step forward. They could get grants to fund it.
- The Ralston avenue roundabout. They aren't very good for pedestrians and bicyclists, even if they are good for cars. They were talking about putting one on 6th and Ralston too – and that would be disastrous.

Public Transit

- Caltrain station is good, but train doesn't come as often as it would be desired.
- Access to Caltrain is great.
- Buses seem pretty good.
- Need more stops at the Caltrain station, especially with the students. It's a big problem.
- Rush hour with the schools – they need to have an effective school bus system so that the buses go into the neighborhoods. It would get the cars off of the road – it would be beautiful. If you look at the traffic, it's completely different when schools aren't in session. There are other ways to solve the traffic issue besides widening the roads or adding roundabouts – work with schools to make it happen. Geography plays a role in this too.
- People need buses in east-west direction too. Walking and biking is a great option, it's not for everyone – that's why buses are needed too.
- In this part of the town (downtown) there are lots of transportation options – bus, train, car. Kids that go up the Ralston corridor in the bus. Deficit of transportation options in the Carlmont area.
- Bus routes need to be improved.
- Transportation and flow are the major issues that will affect overall city growth with business opportunities and housing growth.

Bicycles and Pedestrians

- Bikepath over 101 is great.
- In Sterling Downs, it's very walkable, lots of sidewalks (not the case in the western neighborhoods).
- "Bicycle path program would be awesome" – it would be amazing to see that. Right now bicycles have to fight cars for space. More walking paths. Very hard for bikes and motorcycles on Ralston right now.
- Bicycle/pedestrian needs on both El Camino and over 101.
- Idea for pedestrian bridge over El Camino Real.
- Belmont is a very pedestrian friendly and bike friendly place. People are very open to biking and walking. Are the sidewalks good? I'm not sure.
- The bike lane on Ralston is good. Some of the more rural roads that would have bike paths and signs. They're trying to make not a bike friendly town into a bike friendly town as best they can.
- Too dangerous to ride a bike on the streets.
- Bicycle routes need to be expanded, need to be connected. El Camino is really dangerous for bikes.
- Don't need to expand roads for cars. People could walk down to Ralston if that became a bus corridor. More bike lanes – continuous bike lanes all the way down the corridor for Ralston. Missed opportunity.
- No sidewalks in the neighborhoods that are near schools. Need to partner with the public health departments, bike coalitions, schools. That really needs to be revised.
- Walkability could really be improved.
- Sidewalks being inserted in the hills - the City could pick some key corridors and then put in sidewalks there. Things could be done with paint – to show where people are going to be, show where crosswalks are. Cut back trees to increase visibility. Not worth it to put in sidewalks everywhere. Physically – it's impossible to put them everywhere. If they chose key corridors they could do it. Where there are sidewalks, accessibility is needed with the curb cuts at intersections.
- The lighting on the streets is really critical in the eastern neighborhoods because it lets you know what is going on. Needed on Old County Road.
- Crosswalks needed, especially on Old County Road. It's really dangerous to cross.
- Paper trails – should be formalized, inventoried, etc. In the hills, there are stairs/trails that go up and down between the roads. Would be nice if it was linked to the DT area. They could choose some that would get kids to school.
- Streets are a mess. It isn't safe to walk in our neighborhood – you have to be vigilant.
- On Old County - Appreciated that they changed all their bike lanes recently in San Mateo, so that got rid of a lot of long-standing issue in San Mateo – but it stopped at the Belmont

Line. Can Belmont improve that? On Old County, it's a major issue because it's under multiple jurisdictions' controls.

- Safe routes needed for bicycles across the city.
- Lots of activity in Carlmont Village area – it isn't safe for pedestrians. The lighting and the streets could be improved to make it feel walkable.

DOWNTOWN BELMONT

- Downtown needs everything – amenities.
- Downtown needs more housing for seniors to age in place and millennials are demanding a more urbanized environment in which to live. They're both looking for something a little more vibrant.
- The lots have shallow depths in the DT area. Some sort of parcel aggregation incentives, with more graduated density (Donald Shoup – allows more density for lots that develop together) is needed.
- Top priorities for the long-term view of the city: Maximizing the transit center, including Harbor Blvd in that vision (maintain both light industrial and also maximize on its potential), the area between 101 and El Camino. Need to be sure that there is proactive engagement for people who live there. Plan Bay Area – 80% of new growth is supposed to happen in PDAs. The current owners there know that they can get millions for that land – so that development (that occurs on those lots in the future) isn't going to be accessible to lower income people. Need to have land value recapture, inclusionary housing, impact fee analysis, etc. Belmont has to recognize that it isn't an island – it has to complement the other communities surrounding it. No one else recognizes the jurisdictional boundaries except the jurisdictions. More shared services are needed.
- El Camino is really blighted both north and south of Belmont, and through Belmont. Needs to be dense, it can support density. City needs density and revenue – it needs to be aggressive in redevelopment so that it can raise more funds.
- The whole block of tattoo parlors and nail salons. Not sure whether Belmont could ever have a Downtown – in her view, Downtowns have a street dedicated to retail, movie theaters, high end retail, etc. – but, it could be a destination. If they eminent domain 5th Avenue then they could have it. What they have needs to be more vibrant. A Carlmont shopping center on both ends of town would be great.
- The liabilities are the El Camino Real corridor. Other than that they are normal liabilities. But El Camino is a real liability. Its zoning is the real problem.
- Likes that the premise of the Village is that there is a gathering space – but not suggesting that there needs to be an additional building. Need a good civic space that's oriented to the downtown. Orient the civic center to the Downtown and get this building (City Hall) into community use.
- Project for Public Spaces for the creation of a civic area. Courthouse Square is a happening space on the weekends in Redwood City – they planned it to get people to come. It took a long time. It started with the General Plan there, and their Downtown and their Council have been working on it for years afterwards.

- City Hall is city owned and they could use it to be part of the Belmont Village. They could use the land that this is on. They could partner with a developer to get a good project here, and catalyze the rest of the Downtown. This was originally supposed to be the center of the Downtown. Everything should be on the table.
- Public Works is looking to relocate. Municipal Center – they could share it and create a municipal center. Mid-pen water could share a space with the government.
- Police Dept. has to have their own entrance and exit at City Hall’s parking lot – there’s only public access at one end, for security reasons. Could really create a great civic space if this wasn’t the case – do the police need to be smack dab in the middle of the Downtown space? No, they could be on the side of it.
- Use the General Plan to do this: Figure out the potential purpose of a civic center - X, Y, Z - civic/community center – on City Hall land.
- Likes the El Camino Real corridor, maybe Belmont hasn’t capitalized on it entirely, but the El Camino area is really neat.
- There is nothing going on in Downtown – no movie theater, no community engagement other than the Christmas tree – nothing sustainable. Redwood City has tried to create an identity, they have attractions to draw people to Downtown and they have drawn a lot more development, a dynamic mix of uses. Belmont has some stuff to do – it just doesn’t have a cultural identity. It’s a bedroom community and maybe that’s what it wants to be. No movie theater, concert center, community center, baseball, etc.
- Redwood City Downtown doesn’t butt up against residential. One of the biggest difficulties for Belmont is that its PDA butts up against residential. Need to bring the people who are in the transition area – housing, commercial, retail – into the process early.
- With regards to change in Downtown Belmont, the City needs to consider history: how do the people of Belmont behave historically? Do they accept change and meet the needs? Do they want to live in a snow-globe?
- Recent development is a challenge to talk about – because they haven’t had much development.
- Sea of asphalt on El Camino at the Safeway parking lot – that’s a challenge for the Grand Boulevard.
- There is nothing in Downtown Belmont to get people out of their homes at night – people go to San Carlos. Not sure where to build those uses in Belmont. Would like to be able to keep the dollars here in Belmont but they haven’t been able. They could’ve done it at Safeway site in Belmont –they could’ve done a lot of things on that lot. Go to the gym, go to the movies, etc. all outside of Belmont. There are a few restaurants that are good.
- Gym, theater, etc. should all be downtown.
- How to foster new vitality around downtown? Untapped opportunity with the land right around the Caltrain – like the Depot in San Carlos.
- The town is suburbia – it shuts down by 9pm. It could be more like Mill Valley with interesting restaurants if the City would take an embrace-business attitude. The sign

ordinance was pit against business owners. Owners actually closed down because of the sign ordinance – couldn't properly advertise.

- People draw other people – friends are gathering in these places. Having a place where people could get to know other people in the community. How do newcomers get to know other people? There isn't a neighborhood pub – there's no "Cheers," a place where the eclectic stranger has a place to fit and become part of the community. The idea of a downtown that is thriving is exciting. Belmont: The Hub of the Peninsula – that historic sign that's on the photo, that's inspiring.
- "Mini-Grand Central" – they could create that down by the train station. A variety of things are good.
- The Ferry Building is a good model. I don't know how much Belmont is thinking about doing things, but if they had the will to do it they probably could.
- There's an aesthetic place where people can gather, statues, trees, benches, something that serves an aesthetic value purpose that isn't just a commodity, something that serves other. The Downtown "gem" is the Safeway parking lot. Why did they do that?
- The Healdsburg experience at the town green should be a model for Belmont.
- There is a lot going on Alameda de las Pulgas – it's a second city center, after the downtown. Good place to meet for coffee, etc. Deserves attention for development, just like there is for Downtown. It's been OK with it being a shopping mall. Understandable because they have limited resources. Could be good channel some energy there.
- Carlmont Village has a lot of assets that are great.
- For Downtown: make a pedestrian walk area, re-orient Safeway, bring mixed use development, etc.
- In Downtown: walk and bike, parks, facilities for sports and performing arts, taking your kids to dance lessons.
- Doesn't think of Belmont as having a Downtown (especially coming from San Carlos). Favors density – but keep it in the flavor of Belmont, without saying no to Development. 3 to 4 stories, varied to give it the village feel.
- Downtown area – affects roads, transportation. Center of commerce moved east, from the Carlmont Village. Current Council is going to focus on Downtown area. Crosswalk went across at Ralston, it had retail on both sides.
- Pedestrian connections – having a connection across Ralston between Walgreens and Petstore. Goal: create a "park once" vibe (with shared parking) and then walk around. Trees are really needed in that area too.
- Along Ralston Ave – the yellow stakes down the center of the road are hideous – why didn't they put in a small median? Lots of people are jaywalking – they need more crosswalks.
- The businesses are fragmented in Downtown – there's no cohesion. Ralston really separates the north and south of what you consider downtown. Maybe abandon the north side for commercial use and make that residential, and focus all of the commercial

south of Ralston. That may mean moving out some residential – maybe you make 5th Ave commercial in the future. Allows it to be more cohesive if its centered on one area.

- Maybe it's a case of accepting what we have – we aren't going to have a Laurel Street that's 8 blocks long, maybe we can have a smaller version of it. In terms of revenue, the city is doing OK for now – that's an important issue for them.
- Downtown needs to be developed in a way that benefits the city economically, but can't be Redwood City or San Mateo – 2 to 3 stories.
- Planning commissioners and council members change and then the plans get shelved. New Council is receptive to housing in the Downtown area. Historically – the whole El Camino and Old County Road were mixed use, with residential. Support for bringing residential uses into the commercial areas.
- Strong political presence in the Carlmont Village area. Chamber of Commerce focuses on the west part of the City, not the east part. Safeway turned down the opportunity to put the parking garage on top; an idea was to use the surface parking lot as a central park/square.
- Merchants and Downtown owners – there's resistance once it affects their property, even if they talk a good game. Once their property is affected they aren't interested.
- Resistance to the “canyon effect” – when the tall buildings without any setbacks or plants, etc. line the streets and create a “canyon.” A good setback for trees and benches, etc. is important. The old mixed use development that you can see along El Camino.
- Need to use El Camino wisely.
- No good, walkable Downtown in Belmont. When you go San Mateo or San Carlos, you're going there for a good night out, rather than hanging out in the downtown Belmont that doesn't exist. Their families go to one-stop places in Downtown Belmont right now – to Safeway, and that's it.
- More density of development in Belmont around the train station can create the levels of density that would allow the train to stop more frequently in Belmont.
- El Camino and the Caltrain – good transit access, opportunity to build new development around the transit center.
- Parking: doesn't stand out – people don't have an issue parking on El Camino or around the area.
- Free parking is a huge issue – in the future it's going to be a huge challenge.

HOUSING

- Needs to be for seniors – the County loses several thousand seniors each year because they can't age in place.
- Some 40% of Belmont residents are renters. Needs to be a consideration for how to prevent displacement of the residents. Rent stabilization and rent control – not sure if there is an appetite for it in Belmont. Average rents are in the low to mid \$2000s for a one

bedroom. Average person has a hard time living here now – there needs to be some sort of control in place. Costa-Hawkins Act only applies to older properties...

- Key issue is ownership – owners are doing very well in this County; renters aren't doing well. Prop 13 is rent stabilization for owners. Every tech job has 2-3 service jobs, but the service jobs have lower wages and they can't afford to purchase here – creates a permanent underclass.
- If they want to establish a credible Downtown, the people who make that happen – the lower income people – have to be able to live here too.
- Affordable housing – needed here in Belmont. Need more balance. Jeff Smith should be consulted. They should have mixed use spaces, with the units above commercial space. The General Plan should allow this types of development.
- The non-growth issue has been an issue.
- Affordable housing issue – blue collar workers have a really hard time, people don't have a steady salary, and the fact that rents keep going up - it really affects the community. More turnover means that there are less people invested in the community. Half the tenants in his apartment complex have turned over in the last year. The rents just keep going up.
- Belmont has a subsidy program to help people buy their first home in Belmont. It hasn't been indexed for inflation, and it needs to be reevaluated.
- When the City approves a new development – that's when they can make X% of the units affordable. They have tons of old housing stock. Belmont would make low income housing a priority if they had the development going on.
- Rent controls are the kiss of death for investors in the city.
- Would like a year, not 6 month, leases. Not rent increases every 6 months. Really hard for people to keep up with those kinds of increases. Is that a legal option?
- No rent control south of San Francisco, it would be a really big deal here in Belmont.
- It's now cheaper to own than to rent – the problem is just that there isn't a large supply of homes for sale.
- More affordable housing for people who work for the school district. Teachers are really frustrated that they haven't been paid more – it's a reflection of the cost of living being so high here. The revenue is very flat for the school district, but the cost of living has been going up especially if they want to live nearby. Very challenging for any public servant to live nearby. There was a teacher complaining about having to commute from Tracy to Belmont. A lot of people live on the other side of the (Highway 92) bridge and come in this way. Keep losing local residents in the employee ranks. There are 350+ employees in the school district – not looking for 350 affordable housing units, but affordable housing is something to consider.
- As a renter in Belmont, San Mateo County is extremely expensive and there's a ton of turnover in the community. Affordable units are hard to come by in this place. A thriving community must be able to be accessed by everyone, all segments of society.

- Everyone at the table agrees – affordability is a huge issue. One idea is to use historical buildings for rental units for people.
- Even with professional level jobs, it’s hard to save money for a house when the money all goes to rent.
- Rent control isn’t seen as the solution – the City needs more housing. It’s a regional issue. Project at Firehouse Square was under redevelopment – originally there were going to be affordable units that came out of there, but not sure where it is going to go now, now that redevelopment agency is gone.
- All the service workers and emergency workers are living outside of the community.
- Desire to see a variety of housing types. More live/work units. In San Jose they don’t work very well, but there’s got to be a way to make them work.
- Affordable housing – need policies to ensure that it is provided. Need to build more housing.
- Transitions between residential uses and other uses: Major issue is the huge trucks that come into the residential neighborhoods, etc. in Sterling Downs. Could there be restrictions on parking commercial vehicles right against the homes? Affects visibility, traffic, unsafe for pedestrians, etc. City should look at creative ways to limit parking hours for certain vehicles. Apartment uses on Old County Road are also competing for parking with industrial uses (like big trucks etc.). On Marine View, Mountain View, Sterling View – keep commercial vehicle parking to the top part of the street. That could reduce the noise too and the fumes. It’s a real challenge.
- Cell phone towers – they are right next to homes. Need an ordinance to talk about distance from homes, senior centers, schools. Can’t fight it on the basis of health because of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996. It’s a waste of everyone’s time – needs to be looked at holistically, instead of it piecemeal neighborhood by neighborhood. They could have mini transmitters, instead of the “massive blasters.”
- People living out of vans – homelessness is a real problem.
- Mobile home park – it’s one of the last places in San Mateo County with the mobile homes. The conditions aren’t too good, but it’s one of the last affordable places in the area. Just north of Harbor Boulevard, right next to Mid-Pen Water District. Affordable housing is a key issue, and having mobile homes as an option is really important.
- Not a lot of opportunities to build other affordable housing because Belmont is so built out. But it needs to be a priority, needs to not be overlooked.
- Permitting accessory units or in-law units – the City should support that.
- They should also have more dense building and make sure to include affordable housing, especially along the El Camino Real Corridor.

ROLE OF CITY GOVERNMENT IN DEVELOPMENT

- Everything you get involved in here takes a long time, takes longer than other communities on the peninsula and the bay area. Developers have to get really involved and are sensitive to the time requirement.

- Belmont is made up of a lot of small properties and small ownership – no redevelopment agency any more, so it's very hard to assemble properties because there isn't any eminent domain. It's very hard to buy all the properties that are needed for development.
- The involvement and the investment gets caught up in the cost to carry for 5 years – the financial investments developers want to bring in to the community then get spread out over attorneys, consultants, etc. – the funds are not going to arts, parks, etc., which is where they'd rather have it go.
- If you're looking for investment, the best thing the community can provide is predictability. Through the General Plan update, *provide predictability*. For example, create a "1% for arts" program in the General Plan, so developers and community know what they are getting – it can facilitate quicker development. TOD, environmental review process can facilitate development. Developers need to be able to predict.
- The environment is not one in which a rising tide raises all ships. You can look where investment money is going and where it isn't going. Redwood City has been able to give predictability through their plans, has been able to get the investment there. Form Based Code and the environmental process is quicker, already done.
- Is there a tide shift with the new council? Will there be more predictability? There's a feeling that change is coming.
- Agreement that the predictability issue is *major*.
- Process in Belmont: Community reaches agreement, then the plan/project goes to staff and council, sits forever, changes might happen, but the changes aren't taken back to the community, and then the community doesn't know what they're getting.
- With the zoning, there are no guidelines except some "wild vision" of what could happen.
- People in Belmont want something to happen – they have a big desire for something to happen, lots of great thinking and ideas, and good energy – but it fizzled, and one reason was that you couldn't assemble properties.
- A negative experience with the City in the past at Carlmont Village – changing signs, colors, etc. Every time someone applies for a business license, the fire department comes in and charges \$250. If applying for a zoning change, it's very costly - it doesn't make it cost effective, so the owners don't end up doing anything and just trying to make it work with what they've got. It needs to be treated as a business - opportunities need to be presented as revenue.
- Real estate development community needs to make a profit, but if they can make a profit because they've shortened the timeline of talking/approving the project, then other community services, arts, parks, playgrounds, art on sites, can be provided.
- It would be nice if developers HAD to do community benefits.
- Given the size of parcels and dispersed ownerships, use the General Plan to encourage the collection of properties. Find ways to incentivize two owners to assemble/collaborate and see the larger picture – make it a bonus for them to come together as a partnership to see "our" properties, instead of "my" property.

- Make it extremely predictable for developers to know exactly what they should build. I think that Belmont is bad about that, not having exact “here’s what you can do.” That would be wonderful for the developers and community – predictability.
- In the past, tried to assemble massive amounts of property on El Camino, but it’s impossible because there is always some owner who wants \$100 million for their land. The City of Belmont is a city of many ownerships and many interests. It’s going to be a real struggle to get the massing to build anything that’s more than 10,000 SF. Belmont doesn’t have a lot of vacancies – so it’s going to be redevelopment. The buildings have outlived their usefulness and they are undervalued, but they need the will of the property owner to get the redevelopment to happen. It’s very hard – how do you go in and communicate with them? One solution the development community has found is to partner, and assemble land through the partnership – so then they don’t have to sell, but they are part of the new development partnership. But all it takes is one or two roadblocks, and you’ve got a great plan that doesn’t happen.
- Predictability, CEQA – that’s the biggest driver. If with the General Plan and the Priority Development Areas (PDAs), you’re able to do a precise plan, and then you’ve done the EIR, then it goes so much more quickly and predictably. Include the historical properties – so the developers know which buildings to save. Include climate change, GHG, etc. Then, with the EIR done, the developers can do a direct and quick investment in the community through quick developments.
- Do a Specific Plan with the EIR – like Redwood City – and include height, setbacks, parking ratios, uses. You know exactly what can be done on Redwood City lots. There are guidelines for what they’d like to see, and they are open to change if the developer wants it. Capital loves the predictability of knowing exactly what they can’t do and can do. There was a lawsuit that challenged the whole Downtown Plan in Redwood City, and once it was fought, that was it – that was the end.
- No appetite for Community Service agreement in Belmont, because it’s too individualistic, too many properties. They just expect it to happen.
- Priority for the General Plan Update: Good strong land use study, property by property by property – inventory everything in the General Plan, its age, its use, its capacity, its potential. Do what they did in Redwood City – make it turnkey.
- Old County Road – way past due for cleanup and redevelopment. The RDA declared the area blighted. Prime for redevelopment. Commercial area along Ralston going out to 101 is prime for redevelopment – lots of mixed use in that area but some of it is incompatible. High Speed Rail – putting the tracks on top of Old County Road – those things will affect our planning.
- Everything has become a special zoning – like a planned development. Each project becomes its own variance, conditional use permits, etc. Sarge Regis (?) is the main developer in town. We don’t have a lot of enthusiastic responses about coming to develop in Belmont. Everything is a carve-out. Everything becomes a special district; everything becomes an exception. The exceptions are the norm now. Large projects have to be a carve-out. Carlos has become very creative in getting that development through.
- Rules and regulations are out of touch with what people want.

- Unique to Belmont, this city doesn't have its own water and sewer district – it's part of the Mid-Peninsula Water District. They service all commercial, residential, and industrial in Belmont. Service boundaries aren't the City boundaries – 8200 connections. They've been trying to coordinate with the City more in the past 2 years. 100% reliant on SF PUC. BWSCA – 26 agencies in Bay Area and rely on the Hetch Hetchy / San Francisco Regional Water. Each agency has to manage their own supply – there are significant penalties for going over. Every development project that comes into the city has to come to them, so they've been working more with the city. They are in the process of updating their water capacity charges, to ensure the existing customers aren't subsidizing future development. There isn't currently a buy-in fee – the district has 0 debt, they pay as they go for capital. 5 elected board members govern it.
- The City needs to be sure that they don't haphazardly approve development, until they know how it is going to affect the water situation. They are in the process of re-doing their capacity – at some point they are going to approach their limit. They need to be sure that the development actually HAS water. May have to bore under 101 to get water. Very complex system that Mid-Pen owns, with all the hills. Next-to-last tank site is being seismically updated.
- There is now a functional Council that wants to work with agencies, instead of taking them over. Lots of good back and forth – meetings are not just for meetings sake. They've become less bureaucratic. There's a willingness to try to coordinate projects across the City. Coordination across the departments and the agencies.
- Council has slowed the process down a lot, and they've had a lot of unproductive meetings. Now, it's not just meetings for meetings' sake. The Downtown Village Plan – could've been approved 2 years ago, but it was slowed down. The asset is their government and their staff/Council that is willing to move forward now.
- Trying to get the Planning Commission size down to the size of the Council. The Planning Commission - they eat up and spit up residents. They are going to be very difficult to deal with. It's been a huge block to the process.
- All Commissioners are appointed. 12 years of the Commissioners and the Council going another way – the Council really slowed this down (Dave Warden). This is a good time to do it.
- Carlos has too much on his plate. There's too much going on for him to move this process further. Carlos does too much. As a result, when someone wants to slow things down, it's easy to do it because there's only one person.
- Keep it going and do the General Plan Update now, this is the opportunity.
- Anecdote: One applicant changed his house plans to move its location on the site three times per the Planning Commission comments, over 5 years, City engineers approved it, but the Planning Commission wouldn't approve it, finally the city attorney had to intervene in order to get the house approved. This is what people have to go through. They've also made it really difficult to rehab places or renovate places. Requirements like 2 car garages that must be added to the property, but that isn't always possible. He's had people tell him that "I'm not going to live here because I know I won't be able to do what I want to do to my house because it's too difficult in Belmont." Also for business owners

too – very difficult. Belmont made it really hard to rebuild the chimneys after the 1989 quake.

- A lot of people who move here don't have kids and go for houses that have amazing views. Belmont passed a tree ordinance instead of a view ordinance, and the tree ordinance now blocks views – it keeps the property values lower than other places. Berkeley has an ordinance that protects views – you don't have to cut tree down but at least allow the views. People love the views *and* the trees – there needs to be harmony. Especially now that solar energy is becoming more prevalent. That issue should definitely be addressed. As the trees mature, it drives property values down. Their goal, when passing the ordinance, was to prevent any tree from being cut down again. You have to get a permit to get the tree cut down. Makes sense for heritage oaks but does not make sense for invasive eucalyptus trees.
- Historically, Council solves one problem by creating another.
- People don't deal with permits because it is so very difficult to get them. The permits aren't there to get revenue. The permitting process is too discretionary. The planning department has people that won't do anything for you unless they like what you are doing, it's highly discretionary and seems unfair. The architectural design committee micromanage the projects until people get really frustrated and can't do what they want to do.
- Belmont gets really focused politically, and sometimes not for the benefit of community as a whole.
- A change in the community – new people are coming in and there are new ideas.
- Sustainability: they don't have any dedicated staff to sustainability issues. Even a half time person would help. Lots of County initiatives, other statewide things, PG&E efforts – they could jump on to them but since they don't have staff on it, it doesn't often work out. They're doing LED street lights. They're trying to get the municipal building energy efficiency. Rising sea levels are going to be an issue and how that affects the creek – even with 101. A lot of the City's basic services are vulnerable because of climate change.
- It isn't that there's not a willingness of the community, it's that there isn't staff to go after stuff.
- Belmont has totally good staff, they just don't have enough resources. They need business development to get the resources to get more staff. How can the city get a budget to do these sustainability things? It's not a will problem, it's a resource problem. We need 3 Carloses or Jonathans.
- Density bonuses work and they work well, because they allow the opportunity for direct investment - if they align with what the communities want to see. Things that are tied and provide incentives are great. Where communities have incentives but don't want them, then it's a problem – please don't do that.

OPEN SPACE AND PARKS

- The parks are “total gems.”
- Belmont has a lot more parks and hiking areas (than San Carlos).

- Parks are great, lots of trails. Open space should be expanded and enhanced.
- Having access to the Bay Trail is great.
- The parks are OK. They've done as much as they can do with the areas they have to work with. It's more open space to go hiking or go jogging or mountain biking – but it isn't a formal park. The one standout issue is Twin Pines Park. In the 1800s, Belmont was the hotspot – it was wild, they had shooting contests in the park – and it was all right here at Twin Pines Park. Healdsburg has a town square, and it was THE town place to be – they had music, picnics, wine, etc. (they only enforce ordinances for dogs if its out of control). Belmont should do that – you can't bring dogs, wine, etc. because they have so much control over it. The summer concert series was really nice, it brought a lot of people out and they should do that more.
- Waterdog Park is owned by the university.
- Lots of demand for the one baseball field city – lights are on a lot.
- Lots of parks and open space. Hope we aren't looking for more. It's all about the water at this point. Usage of the parks should increase - make the most of what they have built.
- Trying to preserve the canyon – they passed tons of ordinances to make it really expensive, so they're trying to prevent development by making it really expensive. Instead of just protecting the land and doing it the right way.
- Waterdog Lake could be an amazing asset for the community but it isn't taken care of at all. People use the trails all around the ridge, but not the lake – that's a huge opportunity that the City owns and could make really cool.
- Some of the neighborhoods don't have access to the parks – especially on the north side of Ralston.
- Where do the children play in Belmont? The university has a limited use field, it is only open to the university at certain times. There aren't places for children to play outside – there open spaces area, but those are for hiking – there aren't good places for kids to get dirty. Playgrounds, etc. – good places to play in the City.
- There is a need for spaces that are more oriented towards community events, gathering, centrally located activities. There's a lot open space though, but no programming.
- San Carlos – they shut down about 8 blocks in downtown, with live music – it's a gathering spot for the community. The only place that Belmont has is Twin Pines Park and it should be more programmed, more central to life in Belmont. We need a place where strangers become friends. In San Carlos there are always people out, but in Belmont, there isn't really a place for people to come to.
- There's a dog park at Cipriani, and a park. It's a neat asset that isn't used much.
- Abundance of open space – Waterdog Park is not owned by the City, it's owned by the university. That property is probably going to on the market in the future – it's a huge open space.
- Expanding parks and preserving historical buildings is important. Going to take a lot of work to get there.

- The parks are zoned crazy things – like agriculture use. Address that in the General Plan Update - gives the parks another layer of protection and also makes it easy to get things done in the parks. Protect the concept of what the citizens think we have. Include the open space areas on the parks use category.
- Maintaining the wildness of the nature – the open space elements, not the super formal parks. Need to balance natural park areas and formal park areas. Belmont has succeeded in doing this and this needs to be maintained. Especially near Waterdog Lake. Great community assets.
- Fire issues too – very similar geography to the Oakland hills.
- The parks are not equitably distributed through the City. They need more parks. A lot of hill residents have to drive to parks. Lots of open space per capita. Much lower programmed parks per capita in Belmont.
- Regarding open space – they should develop it a little more, make sure we use it better. Develop the trails more, take advantage of what is there – incorporating all of the area and making it accessible/useable. Need to maintain it.
- Open space and Waterdog Lake, all the trails are assets.
- Kids – actually all of us – need wide open spaces to let their minds wander.
- The fences that are up and the “no parking” signs by the park are really unnecessary and a downer. It’s up in Cipriani park...

SCHOOLS

- The town has really good public schools.
- The districts do well compared to others on the peninsula – good test scores. Scores are about 900 on the STAR tests. Good sports program. Good central location for families and reasonably priced homes (compared to other places). If you look at comparably scoring districts, they are much more expensive.
- School district situation is very fragmented here – the district for the K-8 portion includes Redwood Shores, which has been a little bit of a tricky issue. The lowest achieving school has historically been Nesbit, near Hiller and Ralston. Redwood Shores has newer schools, and the challenge has been with enrollment growth. 3,940 today. In absolute terms, they’ve grown by about 1,500 students, which should be about 3 schools, but only have had one new school in Redwood Shores in 2010.
- Supposed to grow by another 700-1000 students by 2020. There’s a \$48m ballot measure, which takes them to their bonding capacity – no matter, constantly trying to play catch up with enrollment.
- In the 1980s, they sold off schools and land in Belmont, which the district really regrets. Private schools and community centers are now in the former public schools. Barrett is now a community center, used to be a school. The district would love to have a joint-use facility so they could both use it. Only one middle school, it contributes to the Ralston Avenue congestion – all of the district has to go there.
- District doesn’t have their own buses – they rely on Samtrans.

Stakeholder Interviews Report

- All districts on the peninsula participate in the Tinsely Program – court ordered desegregation and equity issue – 100 students from East Palo Alto come to schools here in Belmont.
- One of the things the district is planning to do is to take pressure off of Ralston Middle School - they're adding K-8 to Nesbit, instead of K-5, for next year. They're trying to push other growth to elementary schools, and make them K-8, instead of K-5. Need to find more capacity for middle grades. Enrollment is larger in the younger grades, they're going to need more capacity as they grow up.
- Trying to add capacity in the Shores so there isn't as much discord when they get sent over to schools here in Belmont, like Nesbit. Nesbit is improving though.
- Where is the growth coming from? Mostly from Redwood Shores, b/c Belmont is built out. They raised funds for new school in Redwood Shores, they had bonds for the Redwood Shores folks pay for it – didn't think there was enough support across the district. People want to go to their neighborhood schools.
- The district processes enrollment assignments in batches. The kids' addresses are put into an algorithm and assigned to school that allows for the overall less commute – goal is to send kid to first or second closest school. Enrollment period is when they run algorithm - several times a year.
- Tend to get folks without kids being replaced by folks with kids, because there are good work opportunities nearby, and good student opportunities. Attractive for families with school age kids – an attractive place to sell if you're looking to move out.
- Redwood Shores was developed as a retirement community – when those folks leave there's a good chance that they will be replaced by families with school-aged kids.
- Demographers predict that most growth is coming from Redwood Shores. Potential for growth also in Belmont, but it's more modest than Shores. The district can send Dyett and Bhatia the enrollment projection study – very recent.
- Relationship between the District & City: Positive and quite good now. 4/5 Council members are sympathetic to District's interest. City subsidizes school resource officers – they've taken an active role in partnering with the District. Trying to explore other opportunities for growth – maybe with the Barrett property, things that are a win-win for the community.
- Joint-use agreement for school field. Jonathan Jarmey – head of parks and rec – point of contact for that.
- The school overcrowding thing is a concern – hard to predict more than 5-7 years out.
- Facility challenges – private schools.
- Lots of kids take the bus to get to middle school.
- Safe Routes to School has been done. 1% of students are biking in Belmont. A good number who walk – 100-200 kids walking. More user-friendly shuttles for students, etc. If we're not going to bike, there ought to be something that you can hop on that gets you where you're going that isn't your own SUV. Safety is a big issue on Ralston for kids

- biking – the combination of the steep hills and Ralston safety issue. 40 MPH on the western half of Ralston after Alameda.
- There is going to be a private middle school built off of Ralston near current middle School. Crystal Springs Reservoir (?). Bought the lots to do it.
 - Private Schools: Notre Dame High School, Charles Armstrong, Belmont Oaks, Mary Moppet Preschool, Serendipity shares with Cipriani – tons of private school options. With the drama in the Shores, some of them went to private schools. To a lesser degree, folks from Belmont have done that. Someone is filling up those private schools, likely local kids. No charter schools in this area. Probably because there are so many private schools.
 - District is dependent on Samtrans because they don't have buses. Depend on them to be accommodating with their bus schedules. No guarantee that SamTrans will be the bus service forever – the district may have a false sense of security with their current bus situation. Mayor Gus Jeet (?) is a Redwood Shores resident and he's on the SamTrans board, providing them good representation.
 - Overcrowding in the school district because the schools are the huge attraction in this community.
 - Overcrowding at the schools. Only one school for middle schoolers. Issue with the two jurisdictions but one district – Belmont has to figure out how to deal with this because it is going to affect quality of the schools.
 - Tensions between school district and city in the past – coordination of seeking funding together. Need to coordinate with other agencies to try to cooperate on funding efforts.

NOTRE DAME DE NAMUR UNIVERSITY

- The University is a good connection and lots of good opportunities for the community.
- Belmont flies below the radar – it has a university (not just a community college).
- University as an asset.
- Only City in the County that has a university – this should be embraced. University has a good relationship with the City.
- University provides housing for all students – freshman through seniors. But not all of them live on campus, lots of commuter students. The students often walk up from the train, and teachers/staff take the train.
- The City of Belmont has been a good neighbor – but they treat the university as another resident. The university has needs and requirements, some of them are a draw on the community. There is a good relationship with the police department.
- The university offers a lot of economic value to the City – millions of dollars of spin, relationships, viability for the restaurants, commercial entities, etc.
- Roundabout has been put on the university without real discussion, and it's going to be a huge disruption for the institution. They are tuition-dependent and it's going to be very

disruptive for the university. But Ralston Avenue doesn't need a roundabout – it needs to be 4 lanes all the way through instead, not just putting in a roundabout.

- Would like to be able to say that the university is in BELMONT, not the university is in the Bay Area.
- If they could reach out and make the university part of the fabric of the community – its historically significant, nationally known.
- The CUP on the field should go away – that should be open to residents all the way.
- Theater, concerts – its all right there, City could really create more bridges between the city and the university. Huge opportunity for the community.
- Classes for elderly, night school, day school – university has tons of opportunities for community. It has graduate programs, PhDs.
- “University is an underutilized opportunity.” Not just for the Belmont community but for the whole San Mateo. Putting the minds to work for the entire county.
- Lots of students who live in really expensive houses in Belmont where the rents are out of control.
- The university has a lot of good stuff going on – but does Belmont know about it?? They have good speakers, plays, etc. and there are a lot of opportunities for community learning and engagement. The level of energy that college students bring especially to community service is untapped and could be channeled well towards Belmont.
- It's a good high school and college. They put in the lights in at that new field – there was a brou-ha-ha but that shouldn't have been the case. When you don't have kids around, you feel like you're in a retirement facility. When you have kids around, it makes your heart sing – it tells you this is a happy, safe community that is a great place.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Harbor Boulevard – it's unincorporated and is part of the Belmont SOI. This is going to be interesting. Talk with Don Horsely's office because it's in his district.
- Make welcoming business and successful businesses in Belmont to make sure that the City gets tax revenue.
- In the past residents have tolerated business, but haven't understood the vital role it plays.
- Lots of professionals and retirees. Good customer base for businesses. Families and seniors – it's a good mix, and the age diversity is a strength.
- The largest business sector is tied to education – including the university. 30% more education-based businesses than most cities.
- All of the business shuttles are in San Carlos and San Mateo, none in Belmont. Shuttles are a decent idea.
- Not sure how many more single-employers Belmont is going to get – they would need a shuttle – the General Plan dictates this.

- If the General Plan changed the Commercial uses, and allowed other uses, then there could be consolidation of parcels and get the uses then.
- Oracle has shuttles – they have shuttles at Hillsdale. Just for their employees. Need to bring more of them into Belmont for lunch.
- Most industrial stuff is going away, not sure how the City feels about that. There should be a place for industry in the City though – that should be here. There should be an area that can serve those industries. Don't remove them all. Old County Road is a great place for this – industry should be there. Could make a good home in that area, near the train tracks, lots of body shops there.
- Light on office uses in Belmont. Commercial use affordability is an issue.
- Is there a certain type of retail desired in Belmont? Medium box retail – why don't we have more retail on El Camino? Not big box – but something that could make it vibrant.
- The whole Harbor Industrial Area is sitting in the middle of Belmont – there are tons of residential streets that are blocked off. It's dysfunctional. Lots of politics wrapped up in it. In the HIA, there wasn't coordination about zoning – it's commercially zoned in Belmont, but it abuts residential. If they had commercial zoning, then residents there would sell and let it become a commercial zone. The General Plan doesn't define it as commercial. It is an oddity.
- The Chamber of Commerce has many members in the HIA.
- Locally owned business – trying to encourage people who want to start their own business to locate here in Belmont.
- “Off the Grid” – comes to Caltrain station on Monday evening – huge success. Farmers market on Sunday is an excellent use too.
- Belmont isn't going to have big stores – it's a small community of people who live here and work, it isn't for big box stores. There isn't any space for those big stores in Belmont today.
- Area east of the highway – that's industrial. Belmont does have some Oracle buildings that are 3 stories tall. Good ballfields out there too – important facilities.
- Motel 6 redevelopment into a newer hotel.
- It would benefit Belmont if the HIA was absorbed into the City limits.
- Are there shuttles from Oracle to Belmont for the lunch hour? Enhanced economic activity but in a way that doesn't require car use – get people to come to DT Belmont.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ARTS AND CULTURE

- Civic Center and Twin Pines Park is a very nice combination – it's an asset. Senior center and Barret Community center are also gems in the community – places where people can gather and they have good programming, accessible to most people in the community.
- Library is great, and access to grocery stores.

- Proximity to southern San Mateo – there aren't many entertainment or recreational entities in this area.
- Town needs to define itself – home to Notre Dame University, home to seniors, home to families? What is it going to be? Defining itself. Need to look at the whole ecosystem of the Peninsula to determine it.
- The artistic fire hydrants are really cool – from the bicentennial – those are really neat, they have charm, they're great.
- Want to instill interest in the arts in Belmont – used to be very strong in Belmont but no longer is. Bring the creative economy here to Belmont, get the arts into the General Plan. Percentages of new building going into a fund for new art. Belmont prettier and thriving.
- Belmont used to do an art and wine festival every year, but they cut it once they weren't making money. Charges for children's activities in the city are really high. Picnic areas in the park now cost money – reservations required, etc. The arts – being able to have Art in the Park Day, this would be a wonderful service, but if someone came to the City and wanted to do that, they'd have to rent the park area to make it happen. Would like to see more services like that happen.
- Ralston used to be called Avenue of the Arts – they had ideas for putting in a whole arts corridor. Would be nice to see that. Tiburon created an arts trail in the development and the Bay Trail.
- Big empty space by the grade separation – there was a committee to make that into some kind of a park. They wanted to make it an art park, so people could display their art. Consultant gave them a picture. Too expensive to build.
- Top priority for this General Plan: Arts.
- But you need to have balance – murals, fountains, growing vegetables – need to moderate. Arts are important. American Canyon is considering adding an Arts Ordinance (1-1.5% going to the arts) - the permitting process used to be very quick, but now with the arts ordinance, it's become very cumbersome and hard to get anything done, processes are much slower and convoluted. This has become a cost to the bottom line.
- Lots of good things are heard about the senior community enter – nice asset for community.
- Hard to get parking at the library. Some residents go to Redwood Shores library and use their amenities because they are right there.
- Fabulous library and it's its own community center in the community. National night out and support for that. Save the music, the Greek festival, other community events that are really great.
- Barrett Community Center – opportunity to do public/private partnership there. Fitness center/pool or a magnet school or a second middle school. It'd make sense to partner with Kaiser or YMCA to get that coordinated and help out. But who reaches out? Is it the City? City Council?
- Belmont has a bi-modal identity – “Belmont the car-fixing place” and “Belmont the beautiful” – they aren't compatible, they're increasingly diverse.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

- Historic recognition and preservation. In 1990, City created a resource list of all buildings from pre-1940s, and then reviewed with historians to create a list of significant ones and the 3 ways they could be listed. Just one – Ralston hall – is listed on the national register. Most of them are considered local resources.
- The requirements for the process are not in the zoning ordinance – they're in the city code. Two historic districts – one downtown and one up off of Ralston. Don't want to change the historic front of the buildings.
- Process is really cumbersome. If it's listed, then you have to contact the City, there's a process you have to go through – planning commission, council, etc. Several buildings have been removed, and some by mistake.
- Historic requirements and process need to be reviewed and get them into zoning code – make it more transparent, less cumbersome.
- Firehouse Sq. – lots of discussions on that property. Can't preserve every historic building in Belmont. Could preserve the face of the firehouse, or come up with something new. Need a process on paper for something new.
- There needs to be an updated inventory – it's been brought to City Council, and it's always pushed down below. There's a fee involved, and last time it was done through the County for the fees. Takes a lot of effort to put it together. Since 1990 – there are more historic buildings because more time has passed.

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