



Town Center Area Plan Update: CAC Meeting #1 Summary Notes

Date: August 26th, 2025, 6-9 pm | Location: Independence Hall

Attendees

- **Town of Woodside Staff:** Jason Ledbetter, Town Manager; Jean Savaree, Town Attorney; Sage Schaan, Planning Director; Julie Paping, Deputy Town Clerk.
- **Consultants:** Good City: Aaron Aknin, Kevin Gardiner, Troy Reinhalter. Urban Field Studio: Jane Lin and Ryan Call.
- **CAC Members Present:** Barry Kuhl, Carly Rivera, Caroline New, Christine Roberts, Daniel Druker, Don Lindsay, Ehsan Farkhondeh, Julie Sequeira, Lyle Weaver, Matt Garr, Patricia Del Gavio, Richard Ersted, Stephen Lubin, Steve Patrick, Sue Poletti, Sue Sweeney.
- **CAC Members Absent:** Vanessa Johnson, LeeAnn Gilbert.

Overview

On August 26, 2025, the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Woodside Town Center Area Plan Update held its first meeting. The purpose of the meeting was as follows:

- Introduce the Committee and provide a project overview; confirm member roles, responsibilities, and review ethics/Brown Act regulations.
- Review and discuss existing Issues & Constraints, and Opportunities & Ideas to enhance the Town Center.





Presentation and Discussion

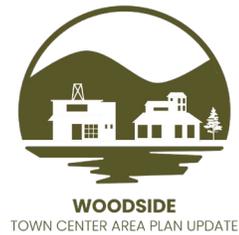
After introductions, Good City Company presented an overview of the project process including planned community engagement activities, and the CAC's roles and responsibilities. After a short break, Urban Field Studio provided an overview of the consultant's analysis of existing conditions in the Town Center.

After the presentations by the consultants, Kevin Gardiner of Good City Company opened up the floor for discussion by CAC members. The following is a summary of the CAC's comments, which are organized by the various topics discussed. Members of the public were invited to speak and provide comments at two different occasions during the CAC meeting, and their comments have been incorporated into the topics below.

The following is a summary of the CAC's comments which are grouped by topic:

Topic Area #1: Transportation & Streetscape

- **Highway 84 (Woodside Road) interface & control:** State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) control is potentially a major constraint; CAC is interested in creating a narrower, slower "arrival" section of Woodside Road that feels like a town center; potential solutions include traffic calming, lane narrowing where feasible, addition of sidewalks/bike facilities.
- **Caltrans coordination:** Would Caltrans be open to modifications within the right-of-way Highway 84? Are there policies and regulations governed by Caltrans that would allow for modifications to reduce vehicle speeds, enhance pedestrian safety, provide a more rural character of the road? Find opportunities to collaborate with Caltrans on new designs and circulation improvements.
- **Safety & schools:** Build upon recent improvements on the south side of Woodside Road that extend from the Town Center to Woodside Elementary School. Safe Routes to School; improve crossings and lighting. There is also an existing need to improve the safety of bicycle and pedestrian pathways to and from the school and into the Town Center.
- **Design of key intersection:** Evaluate roundabouts and/or other vehicle speed calming at the intersections of Woodside Rd–Cañada Rd–Mountain Home Rd and



Whiskey Hill Rd–Woodside Road and implement speed reductions on adjacent corridors.

- **E-bikes:** Coordinate with the elementary school and high school to address unsafe e-bike behavior through education and enforcement.
- **Pedestrian gravel walkway:** Explore a gravel walkway on the north side of Woodside Road (between the Town Center and the “Little Store”) to improve walkability and access to the Elementary School.
- **Triangle island (“porkchop”):** The triangle or porkchop island across from Roberts’ Market has rocks that discourage safe crossing across Mtn Home Road; suggestion that there be a redesign of the island and the addition of safer pedestrian crossings to reach it.
- **Bus Connection:** Consider bringing public transit stops into Town Center/Woodside generally. District 5 students can only get to school by driving. Woodside Elementary School is hard to get to without a car. Add buses to help solve the traffic and parking problems in Town Center. Strengthen bus service between the Town Center and Cañada College and evaluate the possibility of a Town Center shuttle.
- **Emergency evacuation:** Wildfire is a concern, therefore, the ability for Town residents to evacuate through the Town Center in the event of a fire (or other emergency) is important.
- **Historic influence of 280:** The construction of 280 led to traffic cutting through town, and as a result Caltrans widened Woodside Road significantly, and made it less charming/safe for pedestrians.
- **Historic roadway changes:** Assemble evidence that Woodside Road was widened in the early 1970s to support a safety-first case for narrowing.
- **Woodside Road dimensions:** Woodside Road is too wide for a Town Center. Provide landscape shoulders and possible landscape median to slow down vehicle traffic. Make Woodside Road look like it is appropriate to drive 20 miles per hour and not look like a highway.
- **Potential Enhancements:** The CAC discussion identified the following ideas to be explored:
 - Prioritize enhancements to streetscapes (sidewalks, pathways, street furniture, signage, lighting) and landscaping (medians, street trees, public green spaces). The Town Center is full of pavement and prioritizes car movement/experience, rather than peds, bikes, horses.



- Incorporate a preference for native plants into the Town Center Area Plan, along with additional street trees, and traffic calming like traffic circles.
- Consider adding benches, shade/native plantings, safer crossings near key areas
- Pursue the amphitheater activation concept from Measure A.
- Add public art from local artists, maybe hold a design competition.
- Add Murals and use the local community's ideas and design for signage and wayfinding.

Topic Area #2: Parking

- **Private property parking management:** Encourage private property owners to implement time limits, and/or payment for parking to improve turnover.
- **Right-sizing & visibility:** Provide more on-street parking on Woodside Road, most notably the northside of Woodside Road between the Chevron gas station and Cañada Road where it is appropriate. Evaluate the possibility of allowing below grade, or parking structure options only where necessary and require visibility screening.
- **Parking management ideas:** Test solutions such as paid parking, more enforcement, valet parking, and/or a shuttle.
- **Public parking management:** Address overflow from visiting cyclists or other outside users at public parking lots by considering time limits (e.g., a 90-minute limit) with exceptions to Town resident vehicles identified by issued permits.

Topic Area #3: Public Spaces & Community Facilities.

- **Places to gather:** Add benches and comfortable seating; activate the museum amphitheater; explore a community center for Woodside, like other communities have with wellness, classes, intergenerational programming. Potentially look to Portola Valley as an example for public gathering spaces.
- **Wayfinding & identity:** Use native landscaping, gateway elements, and public art/murals to reinforce a small-town character.
- **Teenager amenities:** Provide additional activities and spaces for teens and young adults who currently have few options in the Town Center. Think about young people as key users of the Town Center.



- **Library & Village Hub coordination:** Integrate the Library and the Village Hub into programming and community uses.
- **Community Center:** Provide a community center between the Museum and Town Hall. Enhance walking paths to the Town Center and sitting area along the paths.

Topic Area #4: Character & Design

- **Clear rules to preserve rural character:** Prepare concise design standards (materials, massing, signage, landscape, art, wayfinding) that preserve flexibility for property owners to remodel and re-use buildings. The current lack of design guidelines is a major opportunity to develop new, standard design criteria and more clear guidance for building character. Putting in place new design guidelines/standards would be necessary and very welcomed.
- **Historic resources context:**, and other buildings in the Town Center have received preservation awards. Design standards should reflect and support preservation and adaptive re-use.
- **Orientation to Equestrian “culture:”** Create ways to onboard residents and visitors to the equestrian community as part of Town Center programming.
- **Retail activity:** Residents want to see a broader mix of consumer retail – several key things are missing. Provide more activities for seniors and the younger generation.
- **Commercial building design:** Existing commercial buildings have grown haphazardly. Would like to see the Town Center remain vibrant – allow property owners to configure their buildings & sites more flexibly.

Topic Area #5: Housing

- **Modest, well-designed housing options:** Explore affordable housing that serves local workers and teachers; consider allowing duplexes and where context-appropriate, explore allowing modest increases in maximum building heights (i.e., one or two more stories).
- **Duplexes:** Explore allowing duplexes on small/specific opportunity sites.
- **Housing on Village Hill:** The Area Plan Update should explore the idea of building housing on Village Hill; however, this would require a voter initiative.
- **Housing Element sites:** Can the City go back to HCD and trade some of the current Housing Element sites, if we opened up more housing in the Town Center



as part of this process? **Answer from staff:** Potentially, we would need to follow up with HCD on this idea.

- **Housing for local employees:** Teachers, firefighters, etc. and Town staff live an hour away – the Town should seek to house some of these folks better.
- **Design standards:** Let’s capture “what is Woodside” through design standards. Housing in the Town Center could be successful through the application of the right design standards.
- **Density to support additional transit:** A member of the public supported some housing in the Town Center in the hopes that would then attract/justify some transit in the Town Center.

Topic Area #6: Existing Policies and Planning Process

- **Buildings Heights with respect to voter measures:** Acknowledge existing height and story limits and ballot-controlled provisions; consider shifting from “zoning by ballot” toward standards with normal review while remaining compliant. One outcome of this process could be new ballot measures or modifications to existing measures to allow for changes.
- **Plan horizon:** Keep a 30+ year outlook and avoid self-limiting at the vision stage.
- **Boundaries and scope:** Consider the expansion of the Town Center Area boundaries and scope of the project. These amendments to the boundaries and future planning initiatives will be discussed in the following CAC meetings.
- **Area Plan Boundary:** The Area Plan boundary includes the existing TCAP areas as well as extensions along the Woodside Road right-of-way to the east and west. Comments included the potential need to incorporate parcels adjacent to the Woodside Road between the existing TCAP boundaries and I-280 to the east, and the existing TCAP boundaries and the Elementary School to the west. During the meeting, it was noted that the focus outside of the current TCAP boundary along Woodside Road would be within the right-of-way. [It is noted that the CAC may provide recommendations to include additional parcels adjacent to Woodside Road].
- **Measure J limitations on residential uses:** Housing Element process was complicated due to limited options – don’t let Measure J stop us here in this process. Don’t let Caltrans stop us. Keep all these ideas alive.
- **Measure J height rule:** Measure J and its influence on the development of Commercial Core frontages along Woodside Road’s public right-of-way edge was



discussed, along with the fact that change the measure would require a citizen's vote (Council or citizen initiative).

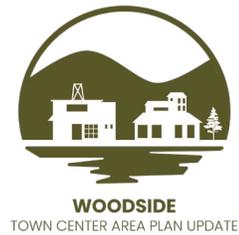
- **Follow-up on Measure J:** A member of the public requested that we follow up with the Town Council on the correct interpretation and possible refinements to Measure J.
- **Owner investment incentives:** Identify incentives and streamlined processes that encourage property owners to reinvest and remodel.

Topic Area #7: Implementation

- **Diverse toolkit:** Pursue grants (including state transportation safety/streetscape), consider bond/tax options, and coordinate with local philanthropy for public-realm improvements. Don't let funding constrain our early thinking.
- **Don't stall the vision:** Stage improvements; prioritize quick wins while pursuing larger funding.
- **Woodside Community Foundation:** Recommend partnering with the Woodside Community Foundation to support fundraising.
- **Funding opportunities:** Seek grants, philanthropic partnerships, and potential ballot financing tools.
- **Emergency planning:** Coordinate with ongoing evacuation planning and event traffic management.
- **More flexibility for property owners:** Give property owners more latitude to remodel/re-use their spaces.
- **Holistic approach:** A member of the public noted that we should be thinking about the Town Center and Town holistically.

Topic Area #8: Constraints

- **High-voltage power line easements:** Acknowledge constraints from power-line easements that limit development under and adjacent to transmission lines.
- **Former auto uses:** Note that multiple legacy gas station sites have been redeveloped, shaping today's parcel patterns.
- **Limited parking supply:** Town Center has a finite amount of parking so there is some limit to how much square footage we could have.
- **Lack of funding:** Concerns about how the Town pays for improvements. Consider seeking Caltrans funding for Highway 84 improvements.



- **Funding options:** Money is a very real constraint to pay for improvements. Consider all options, bond measures, taxes, etc.
- **Environmental constraints:** Past auto-oriented uses still shape today's form; we need to address practical barriers (e.g., poison oak along trails).
- **Measure A lawsuit:** How should we let the lawsuit related to Measure A constrain or inform our thinking on this effort? **Staff noted:** The lawsuit will be resolved in December so we will know more then. Keep an open mind regardless of the current litigation; don't pause work on the plan update while monitoring outcomes.

Comments that do not fall under any of the above topics:

- **Woodside Road historic records:** The Town should assemble historic Right of Way and plat maps to facilitate Caltrans coordination.
- **Correction to presentation:** Update the presentation and other documents to reflect that Town Hall is on the Historic Register.
- **Parcel ownership map correction:** Update the Existing Conditions map to reflect that a particular parcel has split ownership, where it was shown as having a single owner.
- **2013 Process documents:** Consider sharing the ideas that came out of 2013 process and send this background to the CAC. Housing Element is the only new thing since 2013.