

1 **APPROVED MINUTES OF SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE PLANNING**
2 **COMMISSION AND THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**
3 **APRIL 12, 2000**

4
5 **Location:** South Berkeley Senior Center, 2939 Ellis Street.
6 The meeting began at 7:05pm.

7 **Planning Commissioners Present:** Boverhuis, Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton, McCamant,
8 Morris, Poschman, Wengraf, Wrenn

9
10 **Transportation Commissioners Present:** Adams, Ferrell, Hasselsteiner, Orjala, Resnik,
11 Thomason, Wheeler

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13 **Transportation Commissioners Absent:** Jaramillo, Betcher

14
15 **Staff Present:** Haney-Owens, Thomas, Landau, Kass

16
17 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

18
19 None.

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21 **GENERAL PLAN TRANSPORTATION WORKSHOP**

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23 Commissioner Wrenn explained that the workshop would be a discussion organized around the
24 seven categories listed in the workshop announcement.

25
26 **Public Transportation**

27 Deborah Badhia stated that the Berkeley Repertory Theatre is a regional attraction and therefore
28 cannot expect all its customers to use public transportation. The theatre requires particularly
29 good access for senior citizens.

30
31 Michael Katz stated that light rail transit should be considered on routes that do not replicate
32 BART and where good transit does not currently exist (e.g., Macarthur Blvd.).

33
34 Susan Libby from Libby Labs stated that an expanded electric shuttle service in West Berkeley
35 would be a significant contributor to public transit accessibility.

36
37 Staff Landau explained that the shuttle service was reduced north of University Avenue because
38 of low ridership, and that AC Transit is considering improved service on route #9 to better serve
39 this area.

40
41 Maria Barra, from Bodytime stated that getting to West Berkeley with public transportation is
42 difficult, and that Bodytime cannot expand its operation because weekend transit is inadequate.

43
44 Roland Peterson from the Telegraph Business Improvement District stated his support for light
45 rail transit on Telegraph. Berkeley has seven main shopping areas, with BART serving only one
46 of them (the downtown). He stated that BART effectively serves intercity travel, but that better
47 service is needed for travel within Berkeley.

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2 John English stated that a light rail line should not end on Telegraph Avenue at the University,
3 but rather should continue through Downtown, west on University Avenue to West Berkeley, the
4 Amtrak Station, and the 4th Street shopping district.
5
6 Michael Katz stated that AC Transit is looking at other transit technologies such as bus rapid
7 transit and a hybrid “bus-tram.”
8
9 Staff Landau stated that some technologies benefit from an exclusive right-of-way, and that this
10 requires sacrificing some existing space, whether it be a traffic lane, on-street parking, or a
11 median.
12
13 Carrie Sprague asked how Berkeley could encourage more daytime bus riders.
14
15 Maria Barra stated that it takes her 1 hour and 15 minutes to go from North Oakland to 8th &
16 Gilman by transit.
17
18 Commissioner Wrenn polled the workshop participants about how they get to work: single-
19 occupant vehicle, transit, walk, bike, carpool, and telecommuting. There were a significant
20 number of people in each category.
21
22 Commissioner Poschman stated that the majority of trips are non-work trips and asked how the
23 automobile-use could be reduced for such trips.
24
25 Commissioner Resnik stated concern about the lack of bike considerations. He stated that many
26 trips are shorter than one mile which makes biking ideal. Bicycling will be even more accessible
27 with forthcoming bicycle boulevard improvements.
28
29 Commissioner Wrenn stated that he does not expect the General Plan to contradict the Bike Plan
30 in any way.
31
32 Staff Landau stated that efforts to get people on transit focus on commute trips for several
33 reasons:
34 • Commute trips tend to repeat the same route so it pays for people to learn and get
35 comfortable with the most efficient transit options.
36 • Commute trips often involve travel to and from the central business district, where it is most
37 efficient to provide frequent transit.
38 • Commute trips often occur during congested periods when transit is most competitive with
39 the automobile.
40 Staff Landau stated that increasing the number of non-work transit trips requires a different kind
41 of service.
42
43 Nancy Holland stated the following points:
44 • Bus service needs to be improved.
45 • On-time performance is critical for work trips.
46 • Bus rapid transit service should connect East Bay cities.
47 • There should be more transit subsidies.
48 • Bus stops should have more route and schedule information.

- 1 • Transit funding sources must be identified.

2
3 Commissioner Wrenn stated that the City intends to collect a transit services fee.

4
5 Staff Thomas stated that the fee is not being collected because it must be adjusted to conform to
6 state regulations.

7
8 John Atkinson, West Berkeley Shuttle director and Bayer employee, stated the following:

- 9 • Coordination with other systems was critical to the success of the southern portion of the
10 West Berkeley shuttle.
11 • The key to shuttle success is coordination with work schedules.
12 • Private shuttles succeed in coordination with “traffic abatement measures.” They should be
13 built into developments in the early planning stages.
14 • The City should help coordinate shuttle programs.
15 • The West Berkeley shuttle is currently at 95% capacity, and approximately 10% of Bayer
16 employees use the shuttle.
17 • Although Bayer does not charge for parking, they offer preferential parking for van and
18 carpools.
19 • It is difficult to get people to use alternative transportation 5 days a week.
20 • Transfers are a significant deterrent to public transportation use.

21
22 Eva Bansner stated that certain features would enhance the image of buses such as good bus
23 shelters, “yield to bus” signs, and signal preemption.

24
25 Richard Register stated that there are problems with fossil fuel expense, supply limits, and
26 environmental impacts, and that bikes and walking are a key part of the solution

27
28 Kirsten Miller described transportation progress in the City of Curitiba, Brazil, including 26
29 ‘pedestrian-only’ blocks in the city center as well as efficient, high density radial bus networks.

30
31 John English stated the City should consider the success of UC Berkeley’s Class Pass, and that
32 the General Plan should address additional transit pass options.

33
34 John DeClerque stated that transit works when it is fast and convenient, and that the City should
35 have diamond bus lanes.

36
37 Councilmember Worthington stated the following:

- 38 • The City Council recently designated 159 potential sites for new bus shelters in Berkeley.
39 Neighborhoods will be noticed and there will be a forum to discuss potential impacts for
40 chosen sites.
41 • UC Students assessed themselves an \$18/semester fee for the AC Transit Class Pass.
42 Everyone pays the fee, whether or not they use the service. Similar programs should exist for
43 employer based transit passes.
44 • He supports light rail transit on Telegraph, to downtown, and to Amtrak.
45 • Transit needs must be addressed for those living in the hills. Many would like to take transit
46 but have few real options.

1 Deborah Badhia stated that downtown BART is heavily used, and that the City should take more
2 advantage of this station by improving the design, providing more information about the City,
3 locating a tourist bureau nearby, and improving station area signage.
4

5 Pat DeVito from Berkeley Path Wanderers stated that pathways play an important role in
6 improving access in that they were designed to provide direct access to transit lines. She stated
7 that completing the pathway system would provide east-west access to existing bus lines.
8

9 Commissioner Adams stated that using transit is difficult if one does not live along the route, or
10 is unfamiliar with the system. She stated that signage should have more destination names,
11 transfer times must be below 5 minutes, and Vine Street should have an east-west shuttle.
12

13 Commissioner Orjala stated the need for a process by which transit alternatives can be evaluated,
14 and noted that since the decisions are all about money, the City should consider potential new
15 funding sources, as well as the real economic costs of the current system.
16

17 **Auto/Truck Use**

18 Staff Thomas summarized new traffic volume counts. He noted some surprising decreases
19 including portions of the Derby-Belrose-Warring corridor. He suggested that these decreases are
20 the result of traffic calming measures which may cause drivers to choose other routes.
21

22 Staff Landau stated that the air quality impacts of traffic calming remain uncertain.
23

24 Commissioner Resnik stated that the Transportation Commission is hearing concerns about
25 traffic congestion on local streets. He noted that in the past speed humps used to be installed to
26 slow traffic, but they are not permitted right now. He stated that faster traffic may need to be
27 facilitated on main streets in order to avoid increased use of local streets.
28

29 Commissioner McCamant stated that enforcement is an important part of the solutions. She
30 stated that the City can achieve safety goals without more stop signs and stop lights, which cause
31 air quality impacts, and that the City needs a responsive police program where one could report
32 violations.
33

34 Miriam Hawley, AC Transit Board member, stated that buses must become more competitive
35 with auto travel times. Signal priority and “queue jumper” lanes are a means of achieving this.
36

37 Carrie Sprague suggested that AC transit passes be mailed to people along with their
38 parking/traffic tickets.
39

40 Commissioner Farrell stated that enforcement is sometimes good but is done in an ad hoc
41 fashion.
42

43 Susan Libby stated that the Gilman “round-a-bout” has high priority for funding, and asked
44 about the status of the project.
45

46 Staff Landau stated that plans are underway for two “round-a-bouts” on either side of the
47 freeway at Gilman, and that these are probably 2 or 3 years from completion.
48

1 Commissioner Poschman asked if there is more recent data on travel modes in Berkeley.
2
3 Staff Landau stated that fewer than 90 of 800 downtown employees have designated parking
4 spaces.
5
6 Commissioner Morris stated a concern about simultaneous increases in traffic and housing along
7 major corridors. She suggested that transit should consider shorter routes with smaller shuttles
8 as a means to improve on-time performance.
9
10 Staff Landau stated that San Pablo will have a bus rapid transit system with three express stops
11 in Berkeley, and that this system might include special lanes.
12
13 Commissioner Boverhuis stated that the gas tax should be increased to pay for public transit.
14
15 Commissioner Farrell stated that there is excess street space on Adeline Street. If this space is
16 not needed for cars then it should be used for other purposes.
17
18 Paul Frankie asked that the City produce a map showing the distribution of car registrations in
19 Berkeley.
20
21 Patrick Kennedy stated the following:
22 • High-density housing is the solution for transit problems in Berkeley.
23 • People must drive because Berkeley has lost housing.
24 • The Planning Commission needs to make a strong case for high-density housing on transit
25 corridors.
26 Commissioner Bronstein asked Kennedy how people in his buildings travel.
27
28 Patrick Kennedy stated that most people in the Berkeleyan (Oxford & Berkeley Way) walk to the
29 University and that approximately 40-50% of the residents in his University Avenue building use
30 transit.
31
32 **Parking and Other Topics**
33 John McBride stated the following:
34 • The Telegraph Area Association Sather Gate Advisory Committee supports efficient use of
35 parking.
36 • On-street parking, structured parking, and surface parking should be treated as distinct
37 categories for the purposes of setting parking policies.
38 • The Southside Plan discussion currently proposes no surface parking and more efficient use
39 of Sather Gate Garage.
40 • University lots are often unused in the evenings and at night.
41 • There are many conflicts with UC over special event parking. Spillover into the
42 neighborhood is a key controversy.
43 • Problems with the residential permit parking program must be addressed.
44
45 Commissioner Wheeler reviewed two policies from the 1977 Master Plan:
46 • Policy 2.57 states that the City should encourage UC to reduce parking capacity. The City
47 needs to do this and request market rate pricing.

1 • Policy 2.51 calls for reduction of parking requirements in residential areas. He stated that it
2 has been difficult to put this into practice on recent projects.
3

4 Commissioner Wrenn stated that the General Plan Update affords the opportunity to change the
5 zoning to reduce parking requirements.
6

7 Commissioner Resnik stated that there is no need for huge new parking structures. He stated that
8 parking is considered an absolute right in Berkeley and that he finds this perspective to be
9 problematic.
10

11 Commissioner Capitelli stated that people in Berkeley often say they won't come to downtown if
12 parking is not readily available.
13

14 Richard Register stated that Curitiba confronts transportation issues from the moral perspective
15 that we are destroying the planet and this must stop.
16

17 Daniel Koraco stated the following:

- 18 • San Pablo is problematic because it functions as an alternate to I-80.
- 19 • Oxford and Spruce are becoming primary routes to downtown.
- 20 • Institutions need to have adequate parking.
21

22 Fran Gilotti from the Berkeley YMCA stated that many seniors and families are not going to use
23 transit to come to downtown, and that an adequate level of parking must be preserved.
24

25 The Director of the Jazz School stated that she needs more parking, noting that the Jazz School
26 has about 600 visitors/week and they expect that to grow to 1200/week. Parking is their main
27 constraint.
28

29 Sue Morris, Director of the Magnus Museum, stated that the Museum will be moving to
30 downtown Berkeley, and that the Museum will promote public transit and would like to see car-
31 free environments. She also stated the following:

- 32 • The Magnus Museum is a regional institution and will need some parking.
- 33 • She would like to work with other downtown institutions and business to coordinate efficient
34 use of parking.
- 35 • A remote parking lot served by shuttles and funded by downtown employers is one good
36 option.
- 37 • It is possible to maintain an environmental ethic and still add some amount of parking.
- 38 • One foreseeable problem is the limited space for school buses that bring children to the
39 Museum.
40

41 Commissioner Wrenn stated that while the Oxford Lot is frequently full with cars waiting for
42 spaces on weekend evenings, the nearby Tang Center lot has nearly 200 spaces available for a \$5
43 evening fee. He stated that an important part of the parking issue is whether the City and other
44 institutions use existing resources efficiently.
45

46 Bud Dickinson from the Green Party stated that parking structures should not be subsidized by
47 public money and that satellite parking is controversial.
48

1 Commissioner Morris asked where satellite parking could be located.
2
3 John McBride stated that satellite parking would not be used.
4
5 Staff Thomas stated that Alta Bates has functioning satellite lots for commuters and that Golden
6 Gate Fields has significant parking capacity whenever races are not happening.
7
8 Staff Landau stated that UC had a satellite lot at 8th and Gilman which was not well used and
9 thus discontinued. He noted that most satellite models are either employee parking or proximate
10 to a destination.
11
12 Commissioner Thomason asked if the transportation services fee is collected from housing
13 projects as well as office projects.
14
15 Staff Thomas stated that the transportation services fee is currently not collected given that the
16 City has not had the resources to implement the necessary program elements. He noted that
17 there must be a nexus between the project and the issues being mitigated by the fee.
18
19 Commissioner Thomason stated that he would prefer that the fee not be applied to residential
20 properties. He also asked about the Draft General Plan policy stating that we should “limit
21 parking based on need.”
22
23 Staff Thomas stated that the purpose of the policy is to set criteria for who should have access to
24 parking. He noted that this is a policy appears in the 1977 Master Plan.
25
26 Joe Carroll from the BART Bicycle Task Force stated that the attended bicycle parking facility at
27 the downtown BART consistently reaches capacity and should be expanded. He stated that he
28 would like BART to charge for automobile parking and use these funds for expanded bicycle
29 facilities.
30
31 Richard Register stated that greater density would allow more transit, more services, creek
32 restoration and more trees, and that Ecocity Builders proposes higher density downtown and
33 along corridors along with more open space.
34
35 An unidentified woman supported this concept. She stated that the City should experiment with
36 much higher densities in a smaller area because there is so much opposition, and that Berkeley
37 must get beyond supporting the environment but fighting reasonable density.
38
39 John DeClerque stated that Berkeley needs more housing at higher densities, more offices, and
40 more parking in satellite lots.
41
42 Michael Katz stated that Shattuck is different from the transit corridors in Curitiba, noting that
43 Curitiba has three times the rate of car ownership than the Brazilian average. He stated that
44 Berkeley needs targeted enforcement of moving violations.
45
46 Carrie Sprague stated that she wants a parking lot at University and Martin Luther King Jr.
47 Boulevard to serve cars going to the downtown.
48

1 John English stated that along with infill housing, downtown will need a grocery store.
2
3 Kirsten Miller stated that the General Plan is about what we want for the future, not simply how
4 we cope with what we have today. She stated that clustered development connected by transit is
5 a good model and that the plan should help us decide where these clusters are most appropriate.
6
7 Commissioner Bronstein asked about the equity of traffic barriers, noting that some streets have
8 no traffic while others have lots of traffic.
9
10 Commissioner Adams stated that if Berkeley fixes its major corridors, then it could consider
11 changing traffic barriers. She stated that if barriers were removed under current conditions then
12 local streets would get too much traffic.
13
14 Deborah Badhia stated the following:
15 • Maintain and increase parking and concentrate it so that people know where to go.
16 • Consider the economic vitality of the City when considering parking.
17 • The Downtown Business Association supports density at transit hubs.
18 • The General Plan should suggest a mix of housing types at transit hubs.
19
20 Commissioner Capitelli asked staff to obtain information about seismic issues related to
21 downtown parking garages.
22
23 Roland Peterson stated that a parking cap is complex and that he opposes it. He stated that
24 developers should be free to include parking if they so choose.
25
26 Daniel Koraco stated that the comparison to density levels in Paris is faulty.
27
28 Eva Bansner stated the following:
29 • Successful downtowns pay attention to parking.
30 • The problem is that Berkeley hasn't participated in regional planning, including planning for
31 more appropriate land uses around the proposed ferry terminal.
32 • There is an appropriate park and ride site South of Ashby in the Potter area.
33 • UC's Department of Parking and Transportation should attend the General Plan workshops.
34
35 Russell Kildy-Hicks stated that avoiding gridlock is the key issue for emergency response.
36
37 Commissioner Orjala stated that, as a small city in a large region, Berkeley must work more
38 effectively with its neighbors.
39
40 Commissioner Resnik stated that the top priority should be higher density in the downtown with
41 a better mix of uses. He stated that the development underway is positive, but that much more
42 housing is needed.
43
44 Commissioner Wheeler stated the following:
45 • The pavement system is not working well and must be fixed.
46 • East Bay cities are losing out in Metropolitan Transportation Commission funding decisions.
47 • General Plans should be followed, but Berkeley has not done this, and this issue must be
48 addressed.

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ORDER OF AGENDA

The order of the agenda was not changed.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

None.

COUNCIL ACTIONS

Commissioner Wengraf stated that at its April 4, 2000 meeting, Council asked the Planning Commission to consider developing regulations related to formula businesses.

Staff Haney-Owens stated that this topic would be addressed at a future meeting after staff has had an opportunity to discuss the Council directive.

FUTURE AGENDAS

The Commission decided on the following order for the April 26, 2000 Planning Commission meeting: Condo Conversion Project, Underhill Area Projects DEIR, Southside Plan Report.

Staff Haney-Owens stated that the Commission could defer the Subdivision Ordinance item.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 29, 2000 MEETING

(M/S/C) to approve the 3/29/00 minutes. (Poschman/Capitelli) The motion was approved without objection.

REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS DETERMINATION 1999-2000

Staff Thomas explained that the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) deadline for local jurisdictions to comment on the regional housing needs determination is April 28, 2000. The Housing Advisory Commission endorsed staff's letter (included in the 4/12/00 Planning Commission packet).

Transportation Commissioner Adams stated her support for the staff letter. She stated that one way to improve regional coordination is to address the mechanisms for determining regional housing needs.

Commissioner Morris stated her support for the staff letter. She asked if Berkeley could encourage a balance between office and housing growth through ABAG.

Staff Thomas stated that this issue should be dealt with in the General Plan.

Commissioner Capitelli stated that the letter should address the need for suburban centers to meet their housing needs allocation through infill and transit village development instead of simply expanding low density development.

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Commissioner Poschman stated that the types of housing being developed should match the types of jobs being created.

Transportation Commissioner Adams stated that because cities are so far behind in producing affordable housing it is important to focus on expanding the affordable housing supply.

(M/S/C) to send the staff letter to ABAG with additional language suggesting that suburbs develop higher density housing in transit accessible locations (Poschman, Bronstein). Ayes: Boverhuis, Bronstein, Capitelli, Howerton, McCamant, Morris, Poschman, Wengraf and Wrenn. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:30 P.M.