



**SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE
WEST BERKELEY PROJECT AREA COMMITTEE
PLANNING COMMISSION, and
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**South Berkeley Senior Center*
2939 Ellis Street at Ashby Street**

**Thursday, February 22, 2007
7:10 PM**

MINUTES

I. Call to Order 7:10 and Roll Call:

- **Project Area Committee Members** McBride, Spence, Risley, Markham, Goddard, Libby, DeCredico, and Kahn. *Absent: Cabral*
- **Planning Commission Members** Burke, Ferrazares, Gurley, Poschman, Samuels, Sheen, Stoloff, and Wengraf *Absent: Pollack*
- **Transportation Commission Members**, Gravelle and Haselsteiner. *Absent: Greenhut, Landau, Smulka, Syed, Wrenn, and Alfsen,*

Staff: PAC Secretary Amber Evans. Transportation Secretary Peter Hillier. Planning Secretary Jordan Harrison. Wendy Cosin, Alan Gatzke, Calvin Fong, and Ryan Lau.
City Officials: Council Member Moore.

PAC Chair McBride introduced the meeting, reiterating the intent was to engage comment on the proposed scope of services for the West Berkeley Circulation Master Plan (WBCMP), rather than make comment on traffic in general. McBride introduced the PAC members serving on the PAC's Transportation Subcommittee, Members DeCredico, Markham and Libby who drafted the scope with Peter Hillier. An aerial photo, zoning map and Traffic Analysis Zone map of West Berkeley were provided for participants' reference.

II. Public Comment Public Comment was taken immediate following introductory presentations and following transportation and planning commissioners' comments. Ten members of the public spoke and approximately 30 were in attendance.

III. Agenda Review – no changes except as above.

IV. Discussion and Action Items

- a. Report from PAC West Berkeley Circulation Master Plan Subcommittee**
See: www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/redevelopment/ for scope

Joe DeCredico, PAC Transportation Subcommittee member, presented the rationale for the Plan and the process leading to its drafting. He noted importance of looking at how industry, residential, commercial, retail, and leisure circulation patterns and systems are operating in West Berkeley. Further he highlighted significant gaps in available data, noting the West Berkeley Plan's transportation analysis utilizes 20 year-old data. He noted only a portion of the anticipated build out of the West Berkeley Plan has occurred yet dramatic changes have occurred in: how products get to market; rail traffic; housing; and the presence of pedestrians and bicycles.

Thus where and how to spend the scarce resources we have for infrastructure improvements needs to be based on current, relevant data and objective analysis.

Amber Evans, PAC Secretary, presented an overview of the proposed Scope including geography, key elements, and funding. The presentation is available at <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/redevelopment/> Key objectives include: Provide baseline traffic data; Understand and address cumulative traffic; Standardize baseline for development decisions; Allow for evaluation of the West Berkeley Plan; and Identify improvements, key funding needs, and critical infrastructure, funding options & implementation strategy Further, the Plan offers targeted analysis of preferred truck routes, opportunities for easing freeway access and understanding increased rail traffic effects on circulation and potential crossing improvements.

b. Public Workshop: Scope Review of West Berkeley Circulation Master Plan

Public Comment – West Berkeley residents and interested stakeholders spoke on variety of issues, indicating generally consistent support for the release of the RFP. Zachary Running Wolf suggested UCB student services could be solicited to reduce the cost of the proposed Plan. Steve Wollmer encouraged regional analysis particularly in regards to the Ashby interchange and Emeryville's impacts there. He also stressed need to look at financing mechanisms, including an area specific impact fee. Harry Weiner indicated specific attention to health issues as related to traffic, should be addressed, given area's high rate of asthma.

Mary Lou Van Deventer called for five elements: 1. Comprehensiveness regarding geography 2. Fresh traffic counts 3. Actual observation 4. All Approved projects 5. Scenarios for the future. A written statement was distributed on these points. Ms Van Deventer suggested specific zoning changes such as the Mayor's proposal for commercial zoning on Gilman and Ashby should be analyzed under future conditions. She also raised concerns that the Gilman roundabouts and grade separation's could conflict with proposed capital improvements at the Transfer Station. She suggested staff coordinate with the Zero Waste Commission to ensure the City's Departments' plans are compatible or a "disaster" could be in the making.

Carol Sutton endorsed inclusion of health concerns, particularly regarding dust and air quality. She also asked that train noise be reduced and sidewalks and street paving, particularly on 2nd, be addressed. Ms. Sutton suggested eliminating the Gilman on-ramp and pushing traffic to the recently improved on-ramp to I-80 at Buchanan Street in Albany. Betsy Morris encouraged the inclusion of Bus Rapid transit (BRT) on University Avenue and management practices to increase transit offerings in West Berkeley such as expansion of the EcoPass program. Tony Bruzzone asked that a purpose statement or a task to set goals in the RFP be added. Staff indicated Plan's goals have been drafted and will be in the introduction of the RFP, prior to the scope's description of tasks.

Rick Auerbach requested consideration of the many San Pablo projects in the pipeline and policies supporting intensified use along the Avenue. He asked if parking would be considered. PAC member Markham stated where capital improvements might affect parking (e.g. lane modifications) the study would analyze and revise improvement's rank accordingly, but WBCMP will not propose specific improvements to expand parking infrastructure. Patty Marks asked why Marina was excluded? Peter Hillier noted WBCMP will analyze traffic as recorded at University and I-80 from Marina and the proposed ferry terminal's Environmental Impact Statement. Greg Mason asked if the University or the City is taking out traffic barriers? PAC chair McBride stated he knew of no such effort.

West Berkeley Project Area Committee - Chair McBride reiterated the importance of studying non-traditional peak times such as congestion on Saturday's, which may be worse than traditional commute areas at some key intersections. He noted 6th and Hearst as key intersection. Vice Chair Spence, acknowledged the importance of health concerns and relationship with housing and thanked the public for sharing their concerns as it greatly enriched the PAC's knowledge of key issues.

Member DeCredico noted that prior studies have been singularly focused on a project rather the area's overall circulation and thus the ranked priorities of one improvement over another has been lacking. Prior Agency report acknowledged the Gilman I-80 interchange is the lynchpin to access for not just cars but truck and balances recreational, commercial, industrial and residential access.

Member Markham addressed a number of comments including his expectation that reduction in congestion would improve area health conditions. Markham stressed the importance of the funding element in the WBCMP. Peter Hillier stated his department needs a specific project to be able to pursue state bond funding available under Proposition 1B and 1C and applauded the PAC's efforts to address funding. Markham and DeCredico stated that existing data from recent reports would be used so limited resources could be targeted to data gaps. Markham noted staff would look at the entire pipeline for future land use scenario as well as existing uses. Staff explained the WBCMP would not evaluate alternative land use scenarios, but rather create a model which the Planning Commission can then use for support of analysis of land use and zoning variations.

Transportation Commission – Commissioner Haselsteiner asked about available funding for Gilman grade separation; possibility of metering lights at the I-80 interchanges; and inclusion of emergency vehicle routes. Hillier noted the recently announced Caltrans project for overall I-80 mobility improvements would need to be integrated with the Plan and Gilman rail crossing may be fundable under Prop 1B and 1C, with justification that the project improves rail access to the Port of Oakland. Staff agreed consideration of emergency vehicle routes needed to be added to the scope.

Planning Commission - Commissioner Samuels asked about the status of the double roundabout proposed for Gilman interchange. Hillier explained the project was under Caltrans' review now. New consideration of a grade separation over the tracks is being analyzed under a existing contract and thus removed from WBCMP Scope. Commissioner Burke stated that Transportation Demand Management (the other "TDM" emphasizing traffic reduction strategies) should be incorporated in scope and reiterated a related goal statement is needed. She also encouraged a Citywide Master Plan, rather than the proposed limited geography.

Chair Stolof asked if staff training to use the model was anticipated or just getting a series of reports? Staff indicated would add training to deliverables. He then asked how considering Buchanan's ability to mitigate future congestion? Peter Hillier noted areas outside WBCMP Area will not be analyzed, but reduction in local congestion might imply mitigation level. Further, Stolof asked how the Planning Commission would participate in evaluating development scenarios? He suggested a liaison from the Planning Commission be designated. Subcommittee members and staff stated a public process for plan development has not been established and suggestions are appreciated. Joe DeCredico suggested a working group of PAC, Planning and Transportation commissioners with staff. Alternately, Dennis Markham suggested PAC could periodically present to other Commissions. Stolof advised against just presentations.

Commissioner Poschman inquired if methods such as travel diary or other methods for site specific trip generation and destinations would be included? Hillier stated that level of detail was not incorporated into the Plan. PAC member Markham clarified trip generation rates would be assumed based on industry standards. Poschman suggested the key challenge was to measure through traffic vs. trips with destinations in West Berkeley (e.g. measuring specific draw of Picante vs Office Depot).

Commissioner Ferrazares inquired if the objectives found in the West Berkeley Plan, such as reducing single occupancy vehicle trips, would be included in the RFP and if the Pedestrian Plan had been considered? Wendy Cosin indicated policy statements of WB Plan could be reviewed for incorporation into scope. Amber Evans indicated pedestrian plan project manager has already been contacted regarding coordination. Peter Hillier noted that level of detail in Pedestrian Plan is not what we would typically see in an circulation master plan, but as we have that Plan we can benefit from it. Ferrazares also suggested looking at Safe Routes 2 School opportunities and AC transit expansion opportunities particularly in regards to youth access.

Wrap-up- Peter Hillier noted the County model only looks at major intersections so the proposed plan is intended to fill in the remaining gaps with counts and modeling for local streets. Steve Wollmer noted Cedar and Dwight serve as key alternatives to the choke points on streets with freeway interchanges, but suggested the key question is will the Plan reallocate traffic or reduce it? Transportation Commissioner Haselsteiner noted exponential traffic growth has occurred and Caltrans plans to designate San Pablo as a alternative to I-80. Planning Commissioner Gurley noted San Pablo is already used as an alternative to the congestion on I-80. Mr. Hillier noted all Caltrans projects and plans will have to be consider in the WBCMP.

Rick Auerbach noted the West Berkeley Plan stated new development can not push an intersection from an operating level of D to E (poor) but the standards for what is D or E has since been loosened and enforcement lax. Carol Sutton asked how Golden Gate Field would be analyzed and if a neighborhood shuttle serving 6th, San Pablo and Gilman could be considered? Betsy Morris asked for analysis of key destinations for populations not served by cars such as elementary school, health clinic, adult school and senior center. PAC Member Markham anticipates dividing area into Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) to look at transit nodes and density at finer geography.

PAC Member Kahn thanked all participants from the public and the joining commissions on behalf of the PAC for their participation in the efforts and the clear focus on a central goal.

V. Informational Items. None.

VI. Adjournment moved by Markham and DeCredico 8:55