CHAPTER 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the existing conditions in the Southside/Downtown Study Area. The full Existing Conditions report includes overviews of the Study Area's land use, demographics, economy, commute trends, transportation modes, and parking. The Existing Conditions report is available at www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/planning/.

The analysis of existing conditions provides a framework for the Transportation Demand Management activities reviewed and recommended by this TDM Study. The first two sections summarize important facts and conclusions drawn from the data. The third section highlights the outcome of 30 stakeholder interviews conducted in the Study Area.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The Study Area

- The Study Area is a compact, mixed-use urban center attracting residential, commute, visitor and business trips each day. The land uses in the Study Area are supportive of alternative modes of transportation. A map of the Study Area is shown in Figure 2-1 on the following page.

Population

- Between 1970 and 1999, Berkeley's population decreased 5%, while the number of housing units increased 0.0012%. Between 1970 and 1999, the number of jobs in Berkeley increased 50% (draft General Plan, 1999). As a result, the number of people commuting into Berkeley for jobs increased, placing increased demand on the transportation system.
- University population has remained fairly stable since the 1980s and this trend was expected to continue through 2005. Recent state growth, however, has put additional pressure on the entire University of California system. UC Berkeley's preliminary estimates show that UCB's daily headcount will increase from roughly 42,000 faculty, staff and students in 2000/01 to 44,000 in 2010/11, about a 5% increase. Tension is created as the University must be responsive to both State demands and the physical constraints of the Berkeley environment.

Employment

- Employment projections for the Downtown, Southside and UC Campus show that the number of jobs will increase 6.0% between 1990 and 2022. (CMA, City of Berkeley)

FIGURE 2-1
STUDY AREA MAP

- The most recent projections for UC population estimate that staff and faculty headcount will increase about 10% between 2000/01 and 2010/11; from 11,214 to 12,400.

- Citywide, projections show that the ratio of the number of jobs in Berkeley to the number of employed Berkeley residents will continue to increase. (ABAG, Projections 2000)

- There are just eight employers with 100 or more employees located in the Study Area, including UC Berkeley and the City. Commute trip reduction efforts, then, must include strategies that can address all-sized employers.

Housing

- The number of housing units in the Study Area is expected to increase over 64% by 2022. (Alameda County Congestion Management Agency, City of Berkeley) Thus, planning efforts are already underway to increase opportunities for Berkeley employees to live closer to their jobs. (Household projections include 2,200 student residence hall beds -- 1,100 households.)

Residential Patterns

- 75% of employees commuting to the Study Area (including UCB employees) live in Berkeley or the adjacent communities or El Cerrito, Albany, Emeryville and Oakland. The center of each of these communities lies within five miles of Downtown Berkeley. (1990 JTW Census data)

- The overwhelming majority of UC students live in Berkeley (72%), and about 31% of UC faculty and staff live in Berkeley. (UC Berkeley)

- Housing prices and rental rates are increasing throughout the Bay Area, and Berkeley has not been left out of this trend.

- Berkeley's rent control law was revised in 1999 to allow landlords to increase rents to market rates when units are vacated.

Commuting Patterns

- Berkeley commuters, whether commuting within Berkeley, from Berkeley or to Berkeley, drive alone less frequently than the average Bay Area commuter. 1990 Census Data show that the drive alone rate among employees commuting to all employers located in the census tracts that make up the Study Area is just 46%. This compares to a 1990 Bay Area drive alone rate of 66.9%.

- Half of UC Berkeley faculty and staff use alternatives to the Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) to get to campus, while 85% of students use alternatives to the SOV to get to campus. (Faculty and Staff Housing and Transportation Survey, 1996; Student Housing and Transportation Survey, 1997)

- Although students have a significantly lower drive alone rate than do faculty/staff, they make 4,250 daily auto trips. Staff and faculty combined make about 5,500 daily vehicle trips. (Calculations provided in Chapter 9)

- The percentage of students, faculty and staff who drive alone to work has decreased over the course of recent UC Berkeley transportation surveys. (Faculty and Staff Housing and Transportation Survey, 1996; Student Housing and Transportation Survey, 1997)

- The transportation advantages of proximity for faculty and staff diminish after three miles. Beyond three miles, over 50% of faculty and staff drive alone regardless of how far they live from campus. In 1996, 33% of faculty and staff lived within three miles of campus.

- Students living closest to campus are most likely to use transportation alternatives. About 97% of students who lived within one mile of campus in 1997 used alternatives to driving alone to access campus. (Over 57% of the student population lived within one mile of campus in 1997.) Students living five to ten miles from campus have the highest drive alone rates.

- Those who live and work in Berkeley (28,000 people) are more likely to use a transportation alternative (64%) than those who live in Berkeley and commute to other cities (59%) or those who live in other cities and commute to Berkeley (35%). Just 36% of those who live and work in Berkeley commute by single occupant vehicle, a number far below the Bay Area average of 66.9% (Conditions, Trends & Issues, COB, 1993).

- A great many people walk to work within the Study Area, the highest percentage in the region outside of Downtown San Francisco.

Transportation Modes

- There is a great deal of transit service in the Study Area, although many people who have a choice of modes believe the system is not quick and frequent enough.

- UC Berkeley provides its own campus shuttle system, offering four daytime and six night-time/off-hours routes around campus. In 1998/99, the system carried 850,000

annual passenger trips. The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory operates four daytime shuttle routes for its employees and visitors that carry approximately 2,500 passenger trips per day.

- UC Berkeley instituted a Class Pass program in Fall 1999 which allows all UC students to ride AC Transit buses without paying a per-ride or monthly fare. Students voted to assess themselves an annual fee for AC Transit service.

- Traffic volume data shows that Berkeley is succeeding in keeping the heaviest traffic on main arterials as opposed to on neighborhood streets.

Parking

- There are about 6,300 UC-owned parking spaces available for student, staff and faculty parking within the Study Area. There are about 7,500 non-UC parking spaces located in the Study Area, including restricted and non-restricted private spaces as well as on-street and off-street public spaces.

- Parking in the Study Area tends to fill up at weekday midday peak hours. Campus parking is 100% full by midday. The City adjusted parking rates in August 1999, but at least half the public lots (2 of 4) are at 100% occupancy between 11 AM and 1:30 PM. University lots reach 90% occupancy by midday.

- Parking, especially in City and UC garages and lots, is generally available on evenings and weekends, although there are exceptions when large events occur in the Study Area.

- Employers, retail and residents compete with each other for transportation access. Retail uses want short-term parking, while employers want to provide employee parking for recruitment, retention and employee morale.

- Visitors to the University, as well as faculty, students and staff create demand for short-term parking.

- The University's 1990 Long Range Development Plan called for an increase of 1,010 spaces between 1989 and 2005 (500 for student resident parking and 510 for commuter parking). Between 1989 and 1998, 600 parking spaces have been lost from the central campus and environs as parking lots have been displaced by new campus development.

- A 1999 UCB parking study showed that about 4,100 faculty, student & staff daily vehicle trips are not accommodated by university-provided parking. These cars are parked in on-street parking and in public and private lots. Analysis conducted

through the TDM Study showed that UC Berkeley students, faculty and staff occupy about 2,200 non-campus parking spaces on a daily basis.

- UC parking fees are lower than public parking rates in the Downtown and Southside. While no data sources are available, experience shows that employers typically do not charge rates equivalent to public parking rates for employer-supplied parking. In 1998, UC Berkeley coupled a five-year parking price increase with a program that allows faculty and staff to set aside their transportation costs (including parking fees) pre-tax. Over the course of the five-year increase, the gross parking rate will rise 55%.

CONCLUSIONS

- Data from a variety of sources shows that there are approximately 15,000 people who usually drive alone to work or school in the Study Area. About 60% of this drive alone market is traveling to UC Berkeley. The remaining 40% is employees of other Study Area employers. The number of people traveling by vehicle for non-work purposes and the number of daily trips they generate are not known.

- Further in-fill development and densification would support economic growth while lessening automobile dependence.

- Many people who are able to use alternatives to driving alone are already doing so.

- Changes in Berkeley's rent control law could make it more difficult for employees and students to live close to their jobs or school, making it less feasible to use transportation alternatives. This trend, however, has not yet appeared in Berkeley.

- Population growth in Berkeley, while expected to be just 0.11% per year over the next ten years, will probably be absorbed by the Study Area, since the Study Area is zoned to accommodate more density than other parts of the City.

- Housing prices are increasing throughout the Bay Area and in Berkeley. This could push more Berkeley employees to live in cities such as Vallejo or Livermore, or even in cities peripheral to the Bay Area, such as Tracy. While this could limit the number of transit commuters, it could increase the number of car and vanpoolers. A decrease in the percentage of Berkeley employees living nearby has not yet been visible in Berkeley.

- To achieve build-out under the LRDP, the University would need to add over 4,000 beds of student housing. The 1990 LRDP did not project the increase in the numbers of students currently anticipated by statewide population projections. The need for student housing in the future may be critical.

- Non-work trips make up 75% of daily trips in the Bay Area, and should not be overlooked as a source of vehicle congestion in the Study Area. The Downtown and Southside draw retail and entertainment trips to the Study Area. Unfortunately, data sources do not exist to understand the number of non-work daily vehicle trips.

- While the Study Area is served by high levels of transit, the existing transit routing and variety of shuttles are confusing to the uninitiated rider. Despite the many routes, many people state that transit does not go where they need.

- Bicycle usage in the Study Area is high, but arguably could be higher. Carpooling and vanpooling are not highly used travel modes in the Study Area, compared to usage of other modes, due in large part to the high concentrations of commuters living very near the Study Area. Carpooling and vanpooling may increase if average Berkeley commutes grow longer.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Nearly 30 stakeholder groups and individuals were interviewed regarding transportation in in the Study Area. A full list of the stakeholders is provided in Appendix A. This section outlines the commonalities and tensions between the stakeholder groups.

Common Themes

There were just a few points on which there was 100% agreement. Everyone agrees that

- improving public transit is vital to improving access and livability in the Study Area, and
- the existing parking supply could be better managed and utilized.

Although there are other majority opinions, on every other point there is at least one group with a dissenting opinion. For example:

- Every stakeholder group, save one, agreed that housing supply should be increased in the study area.

- Stakeholders agree that Berkeley should be a pedestrian-oriented community, but the definition of "pedestrian-oriented" differs. Some interpret this to mean that vehicular access would be limited. Others interpret it to mean that more parking would be provided so that people can park and then enjoy the pedestrian "Main Street" feel of Berkeley.

- While most groups want a balance of access by different modes, there are a handful who are opposed to doing anything that will better accommodate the automobile.

- The majority of stakeholder groups see in-fill development as key to making Berkeley vibrant and more pedestrian-friendly, but a few groups believe more development will take up valuable parking spaces, add congestion and decrease community livability.

- Many people agree in theory that in-fill development is good and that more housing is needed. When specific projects are discussed, however, most people oppose the development. People have very specific ideas in mind when they contend to agree with these concepts.

KEY TENSIONS

Many tensions were brought out during the stakeholder interviews. These are summarized in Figure 2-2.

FIGURE 2-2
KEY TENSIONS

Goals		
Vehicular trip reduction is inherently bad because it restricts economic vitality, personal freedom, social interaction, and communication.	**vs.**	Vehicular trip reduction is inherently good because it decreases traffic congestion, air pollution and noise pollution, and improves community livability.
Parking		
Lack of parking encourages people to find alternatives to driving, thereby reducing cars and improving livability.	**vs.**	Lack of parking encourages people to go elsewhere to shop, eat and be entertained, and thus negatively impacts economic vitality.
Increasing parking supply increases the number of cars on the road.	**vs.**	Additional parking will not increase the number of cars on the road, but will ease existing congestion caused by cars searching for parking spaces.
Decreasing parking supply will decrease the number of cars on the road.	**vs.**	There are many other factors requiring people to drive. Decreasing parking supply will not decrease traffic.

Increasing parking supply will ease the difficulty of finding parking in the study area.	**vs.**	Additional parking may ease short-term parking shortages. In the long-term, increased parking supply will encourage more people to drive, resulting in similar imbalances in supply & demand.
Parking should be market-priced.	**vs.**	Parking should be publicly subsidized, because it is part of the infrastructure.
Parking supply should be increased.	**vs.**	Practical barriers to increasing parking exist, such as lack of money and land.
Pedestrian Access		
Make shopping corridors pedestrian friendly by reducing cars.	**vs.**	Most shopping corridors are Berkeley's major through-streets. Traffic must stay on these arterials and off neighborhood streets.
Economic Vitality		
Potential employees in the City should be told up front that parking is not guaranteed.	**vs.**	To get good and valuable employees, offering convenient parking is essential.
To make Berkeley a retail and cultural draw, people must be able to drive to and park in Berkeley with relative convenience. Otherwise they will not come.	**vs.**	Outsiders cars should be kept out of Berkeley.
The amount of traffic on Berkeley roads is good and necessary for economic vitality. The roads even have additional capacity that should be used.	**vs.**	The number of cars on the roads in the study area must be reduced.
Commuters		
Policies should make it difficult for commuters to drive to the study area.	**vs.**	Many commuters have no choice but to drive due to dependent care, work responsibilities and transportation alternatives on the home end of the trip.
Those who live close (within 10 miles) should not commute by driving alone.	**vs.**	Those who live close need to travel more often between work and home, and thus need cars at the worksite.
Those who live far and thus spend all day on campus, should not commute by driving alone.	**vs.**	It is too difficult for those who live far to use alternatives to driving alone.
Housing		
Employment and lack of housing are driving trips, so increasing housing in the study area will reduce the need for people to drive.	**vs.**	More people living in the study area means more cars and more congestion.
Increase the supply of affordable housing.	**vs.**	Affordable housing will attract less desirable residents to the study area.

Role of the City		
The City should play a much greater role in improving access.	**vs.**	Improving access is the responsibility of business and public transit.
Circulation		
There is too much traffic on major arterials.	**vs.**	Keep all traffic on major arterials and off neighborhood streets.
Bicycling		
We should make the most of our bicycle planning dollars by planning bicycle travel to flow with automobile travel .	**vs.**	We need to plan bicycle transportation so that it is a feasible transportation option for more than just the young, brave and physically fit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES