



City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 28, 2008

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Transportation and Circulation Committee Chair David Tabor called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL:

Present:

Planning Commission: Chair George C. Myers, Vice-Chair Stella Larson

Commissioners: Bruce Bartlett, Charmaine Jacobs, and Addison S. Thompson

Transportation and Circulation Committee: Chair David Tabor, Vice Chair David Pritchett

Committee Members: Bill Boyd, Mark Bradley, Keith Coffman-Grey, Michael Cooper, Steve Maas.

Staff Present:

Barbara Shelton, City Planner

Browning Allen, Transportation Manager

Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Tabor opened the public hearing for items not on the agenda, and with no one wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

IV. DISCUSSION ITEM: **This item was heard out of order.**

B. WORK SESSION ON PLAN SANTA BARBARA CITYWIDE TRANSPORTATION MODELING

As part of the *Plan Santa Barbara* effort, a citywide transportation model will be prepared to assist in analyzing policy options and evaluating traffic and circulation effects of future development. A work session will be held to present information about the citywide transportation model under preparation as part of the *Plan Santa Barbara* process. This is a work session discussion only and no action will be taken. Transportation Planning staff and the City's *Plan Santa Barbara* transportation consultant Fehr & Peers/Kaku Associates will summarize a baseline report on Existing Transportation Conditions in the City of Santa Barbara, and will discuss the development

of the City transportation model. The Planning Commission and Transportation & Circulation Committee will receive public comment and discuss the transportation modeling.

Note: Copies of the *Existing Transportation Conditions* report will be distributed to members of the Planning Commission and Transportation and Circulation Committee. The public may view the report at the *Plan Santa Barbara* web site at www.YouPlanSB.org or at the City Planning Division office.

Staff: Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner; Barbara Shelton, Project Planner

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Staff Presentation:

Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner, introduced a presentation about the transportation model and the Transportation Existing Conditions Report which is to be the basis for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document required as part of the General Plan update.

Brian Welch, Fehr & Peers, lead member of the City's transportation professional services team, gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the transportation modeling effort, including what the model will be used for; how the model will be developed; and what information the model will contain.

The Existing Conditions Report provides the setting for CEQA and also informs the modeling effort to analyze general plan growth scenarios. Socio-economic factors for Santa Barbara were incorporated into the transportation model. The model also includes data on the modes of transportation used in Santa Barbara and commuter habits. Levels of congestion at specific intersections within the city were identified. The model will identify the number of miles commuters are traveling and the number of commuters driving alone. The model also considers parking conditions within the city, and considers the impacts available on-street parking has on the utilization of city parking lots/garages. Public transportation was also taken into consideration in constructing the transportation model.

Commissioner and Committee Member Comments and Questions:

Chair Myers

Requested further information on Upper State Street traffic levels, which Mr. Welch will provide to the commissioners. Requested time frame for completion of the model. Mr. Welch noted that the basic model is complete and will be undergoing collaboration and validation, after which City data on future land use will be available.

Commissioner Jostes

Expressed concern that Mr. Welch suggested that the model could not be used in a prescriptive manner. Would like some assurance that staff would be able to go beyond simple density modifications and get into unit-size, modal-splits, and for development of coherent and comprehensive policies that link circulation, mobility and land-use together. Mr. Welch responded

that the model was capable of that level of sensitivity, and could potentially predict impacts of many sorts of changes.

Commissioner Jacobs

Asked how the “population count” and “trips count” are related and how the model takes into consideration the fact that the population of Santa Barbara rises during the work day as employees come in on their work-commute. Mr. Welch replied that the model looks at land use within the city but balances that with data collected during peak times when commuter employees are present. The model captures not only the night-time population, but also the influx of commuters during working hours. The model distinguishes between: 1) trips that both begin and end within the city; 2) trips that begin or end outside the city; and 3) trips that merely pass through the city, neither beginning nor ending in Santa Barbara. The model relies heavily on the SBCAG transportation model to determine the number of trips which fall within these three categories.

Ms. Jacobs commented that in addition to transportation considerations the reason for this discussion is that the City is in the process of updating its land-use and housing elements as part of *Plan Santa Barbara* and are under a strict deadline. She had hoped that the transportation model would be available to use in crafting these decisions and asked again when the model would be made available for such applications. Rob Dayton responded that questions would need to be submitted to be entered into the model and that decision makers should begin thinking about what questions they would like run with the model. He also said that when the general plan framework is complete the policy recommendations should be run in the model to see how these proposed policies may play out.

Committee Member Pritchett

Asked how the ideas and questions offered by the TCC and PC are being incorporated in the model. Mr. Welch responded that many of the suggestions regarding sensitivity to trip generation, etc. have been incorporated. Suggestions about making the model responsive to changes in the status quo will be incorporated as part of future model-runs. He said that they can be included in future incarnations of the model.

Public Comment

Chair Tabor opened the hearing for public comment.

Mikey Flacks. Ms. Flacks stated that she walked to the meeting and intended to walk home afterwards. She is happy that the model confirms a point she had been trying to make for some time: Residential units of differing economic values do not generate car trips equally. ITE numbers do not reflect this fact. She suggested that planners walk or drive the downtown area during peak commute hours to see the number of low-income workers commuting by bicycle.

Chris Schaffer, CalTrans District 5 in San Luis Obispo. Mr. Schaffer stated he has recently read the Existing Conditions Report. The report provides detailed information for the region but gives little consideration to Highway 101. They would also like to see that the list of regional partners on page 2 of the report include the California Department of Transportation. He made a distinction between Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and Transportation System Management (TSM) and noted that the trend among

transportation agencies is to look more at TSM. He explained that it is important to consider the consequences of applying TSM facilities (such as on-ramp meters) to the freeway. Economics and other issues will lead to more ramp meters.

Ralph Fertig, President of the Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition. Mr. Fertig submitted a letter to the Committee which included data from the Federal Highway Administration. Over the past 25 years there has been an increase in the number of miles traveled until 3 years ago when it leveled off before decreasing by 5% last year. This decrease in miles traveled has coincided with a 20% decrease in traffic fatalities. Those most affected by higher gas prices are the young and the old. Data indicates that reduction in driving is not just a one-time occurrence prompted by a spike in gas prices, but something that may continue for years. The Policy Options Report discussed energy efficiency in buildings but missed the fact that transportation accounts for 48% of energy use in Santa Barbara goes to transportation. For every 5 people walking in Santa Barbara, there is one person riding a bike as transportation.

Paul Hernadi, Citizens Planning Association Comprehensive Planning Committee. Mr. Hernadi summarized a letter that was submitted to the TCC and PC, for the record.

Bill Marks, Santa Barbara League of Woman Voters. They have submitted a letter to the TCC and PC. The League supports policies to promote alternative modes. They supported Measure D in 1990 and are supporting Measure A in this year's general election. They agree that the city needs the funds which will come from Measure A, but are not convinced that this funding will be adequate to complete necessary improvements to transportation infrastructure. The League is troubled that the Existing Conditions Report assumes that housing along transit corridors will be affordable to workers. They are concerned that developers will merely provide the required 15% of affordable housing and no more. This will further aggravate traffic congestion. They believe that occupants of higher income condominiums to be developed will likely have two or more cars each.

Courtney Deitz, Santa Barbara Walks, a project of the Coalition for Sustainable Transportation. Many of us are pedestrians. Ms. Deitz noted that the Existing Conditions Report shows that over half of the households in Santa Barbara have one or less cars. Fuel costs are causing more people to walk, and Santa Barbara's rate of walkers is more than twice both the national and California averages. They believe that these numbers will continue to increase.

Chair Tabor closed the public comment section of the hearing.

Commissioner and Committee Member Comments

Commissioner Thompson

Asked Mr. Welch to describe how data was gathered to account for variations in the ITE numbers for specific land uses. Mr. Welch replied that initial trip generation rates used to calibrate and validate the trip-validation stage of the model come from SBCAG's model and other sources. They then adjust for specific uses. In Santa Barbara they have four sets of rates. Mr. Thompson then asked how long to run a scenario with the model. Mr. Welch replied that the model takes only about ten minutes to run a scenario. Mr. Thompson then asked what the output of the model would look like. Mr. Welch responded that the model is based heavily on GIS and can report graphically or statically. These outputs can then be used to create even more sophisticated analysis tools. He asked whether the model would capture internal non-resident traffic movements within the city, lunchtime movements, etc. Mr. Welch answered that the model is currently set up to analyze 3 time periods (daily, morning-peak and evening-peak) and give a snapshot of traffic conditions during those periods. In order to analyze lunch hour conditions additional traffic surveys would be required. The "daily" data gives 24 hour totals. Mr. Thompson commented that he is often told that the period when traffic is most difficult is during the lunch hour. Mr. Welch offered that a decision must be made to devote resources to analyze transportation conditions on a city-wide basis to address issues that impact only specific areas like Upper State Street. In order to run the model for mid-day peak, additional trip-generation and other data must be collected.

Committee Member Coffman-Grey

Asked whether Fehr & Peers will be updating the model to keep it current or if the City would be making the updates. Rob Dayton responded that if City Council resolves to use the model as a land development analysis tool, this would be possible. There would, however, be a cost for this capacity. The model was developed to accommodate this contingency but the City has not yet made the choice to do so. Once some preliminary use of the model has been completed and the costs of making it usable for land-use questions are clear, Mr. Dayton will be in a position to recommend to council whether this would be a wise choice.

Commissioner Jacobs

Hopes the model can be used to make land-use choices through the general plan update and that will conserve the transportation capacity. She mentioned that Upper State Street is an area of special interest. The call for a study of this area came from a grass roots effort and she believes the city must not disappoint those who have worked to see improvement here. When using the ITE Manual with early analysis of this area it was found that this tool was inadequate as the projections generated were out of sync with real observations. Ms. Jacobs offered that going forward with the model when it doesn't have the capacity to analyze problems like lunch hour congestion on Upper State may be a waste of money. In addition to just providing data related to AM and PM peak hours, the model should incorporate some of the information found in the Upper State Street Study or at least a midday traffic count. She is more interested in using travel-time counts as opposed to intersection counts. Problems around Upper State occur mid-block and at curb cuts rather than just at intersections. Ms. Jacobs listed three scenarios that she would like to be able to run through the model: 1) dedicated transit lanes; 2) conversion of Calle Real between Mission and Los Postitas to 2-way; and 3) increase in neighborhood markets.

Committee Member Boyd

Asked whether the model could predict the impact of Measure A not being adopted and the transportation improvements dependant on its funding going uncompleted. Also, Mr. Boyd questioned whether the model could predict the impact of a policy change such as discontinuing free parking for City employees. Third, he asked whether the model could analyze the effects of creating on-street pay parking in downtown and major shopping areas; asked if the model would be sensitive enough to measure consequences of TDM measures such as personalized trip planning; asked for some explanation of why there was a conflict between numbers produced by the Upper State Street Study and those from the Existing Conditions Report. Rob Dayton suggested that these discrepancies may be related to LOS assumptions, but that Staff would look at this issue and follow up with an answer. Mr. Welch replied that the model could be used for all of the scenarios suggested by Boyd except for the mid-day analysis.

Commissioner Larson

Asked about the process for running the model, whether it could be run by City staff or whether it would remain with the consultant and staff would have to request that it be run. Mr. Welch responded that it would be available to City staff. Licenses would have to be purchased for the software and some training would be required. The software keys cost \$10,000.

Chair Myers

Offered that the City is currently going through a rapid development of the General Plan and that many scenarios come to mind for which the model could be useful. He referred to the letter submitted by Ralph Fertig and asked whether a "mobility count" could be used. He assumes that emergency situations could be addressed by the model. Mr. Welch replied that the model is capable of producing many such types of projections.

Committee Member Bradley

He asked whether the SBCAG model has a mode-split to cover car and bus trips separately from bike and pedestrian trips. Mr. Welch replied that the new model has a similar split. The model will be designed to account for walk and bike trips at the trip-generation stage. Bike and walk trips will be built into the model. Mr. Bradley asked whether the region assignment uses intersection delay. This model will be more sophisticated than the SBCAG model in how much it depends on turning penalties. He offered that it is important to consider what will happen to Highway 101. The widening south of Milpas would probably result in more peak hour traffic within the city. He noted that if freeway on-ramp metering were to be established, it would require that longer ramps be constructed.

Committee Member Pritchett

Referred to page 6 of the Existing Conditions Report which suggests that air pollution from cars can be offset by traffic. He would like the City to stop stating that there is such a relationship between emissions and traffic because it is a distraction to the public discourse. Cars that emit less pollution still contribute to traffic congestion. Mr. Welch offered that there is new information about how levels of service are related to greenhouse gases. However, better levels of service on arterials do generally mean less greenhouse emissions as less cars are standing idling. Mr. Pritchett suggested that there should be no consideration of trading level of service for less emissions and also referred

to the comment from Dr. Hernandi and stated that he wants the model to be very sensitive to different proposed uses and to consider the income level of occupants when making projections. Mr. Welch replied that the model assumes different trip rates based on types of occupancy. Pritchett then referred to page 50 about bicycles. Mr. Pritchett recommended that staff coordinate with the Bicycle Coalition to get data which is more current than the City's Bicycle Master Plan. He questioned whether the model's reliance on the US Census conducted in 2000 is misplaced as this data is perhaps obsolete. He stated how pricing and availability of downtown parking can be related to behavior pertaining to how far people are willing to walk from parking to final destination.

Committee Member Maas

Clarified that the Transportation Development Act is in fact not a federal funding source as suggested in the presentation, but a California law which mandates collection of tax for transportation funding. Mr. Maas pointed out that the report used transit data from fiscal year 2007. He suggested that due to dramatic increases in ridership reflected in data from fiscal year 2008, this data, which is now available, should be incorporated into the model if it is not too late to do so. He also noted that while the model may use assumptions of increased mass transit, additional transit will not be available without additional subsidies. Mr. Maas asked how the model will address plans to make dramatic improvements to transit and other alternative modes. Mr. Welch answered that the model would be adjusted to reduce vehicular trip rates to account for increased transit ridership and other modes of travel. The model does not include a true "transit model" but it can reflect shifts from vehicular trips to mass transit trips.

Commissioner Bartlett

Asked what the increase in number of vehicles present in the City during the work day was, and whether the assumptions of land use for each parcel that were incorporated into the model are available to be examined. Barbara Shelton responded that they are currently using the existing, on-the-ground land use database to calibrate the model. Much of this data is contained in the Development Trends Report. Staff is working on databases for future growth at the parcel level and proposed scenarios for growth will be evaluated by the model. The Regional Housing Needs Allocation assumption is one scenario that could be examined with the model. Mr. Bartlett asked whether (assuming the City does fund updating the model) the model could be used in lieu of ITE trip-generation analysis. He suggested that the model could be funded by charging fees to developers for its use in lieu of doing EIRs or other more costly analysis. He also asked how frequently the model must be updated to remain viable. Mr. Welch replied that the model should be calibrated and validated occasionally as is the SBCAG model. Mr. Bartlett asked whether the model can be run to predict how higher gas prices could affect number of trips. He asked whether the model could inform decisions about where to place work-force housing, etc. Mr. Welch responded that gas pricing can be a factor. The model provides better cumulative analysis than other methods.

Committee Member Cooper

Asked whether the model can predict the economic impact to businesses and tax revenue. Mr. Welch offered that the model isn't designed specifically for that type of analysis but will give analysis that can be used for such projections.

Chair Tabor

Commented that every trip begins and ends with a pedestrian trip. The modal split which is part of the model is important. Mr. Tabor also pointed out that bicyclists are more sensitive to minor issues on bike routes than are drivers. He pointed out that the report doesn't accurately reflect reality on the Mesa such as the fact that many assume that Cliff Drive is safe for pedestrians because there aren't many accidents, and pointed out that discussion of transportation issues on the Mesa should include areas where those residents are required to travel through.

Committee Member Boyd

Asked Mr. Welch to provide a copy of the questions used by the City of Santa Monica with their model. He also wanted to know if rail trips are reflected in the model. Mr. Welch replied that they are reflected in the model to the extent they offset vehicle trips. The model could be run to address proposed increases in rail travel.

Commissioner Larson

Stated that she hopes that the model could show a shuttle bus service on the Mesa.

Committee Member Pritchett

Read some written comments from a member of the public: would like to see planning for residential land use and enhanced pollution and air quality control along the freeway corridor influence the zoning and residential locations in the plan. Mr. Pritchett would like to know what the effect on traffic commuters who may be taking commuter trains in the future would have.

Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner

Wanted to remind everyone what the effect of Measure A monies could have in the future: The modeling efforts are producing less ITE than the old way, and this is much more conservative than what Santa Barbara is today: The Framework Report will provide the final policies and input for the CEQA document in our modeling product.

Chair George Myers adjourned the Planning Commission from the joint meeting at 8:12 p.m.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. DISCUSSION ITEM: PLAN SANTA BARBARA – TCC STATUS UPDATE

The *Plan Santa Barbara* process is underway to update City General Plan and growth management policies to govern development over the next two decades. Transportation Planning staff will provide a presentation on the *Plan Santa Barbara Policy Options Report* and July public workshops, for Transportation & Circulation Committee discussion and feedback.

Staff: Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner; Barbara Shelton, Project Planner

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Updated given.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

Chair Tabor adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.