

Summary of Comments from Traffic and Safety Commission Meeting on Draft General Plan Transportation Goals, Policies, and Actions

May 22, 2014

Note: Comments are listed sequentially by page and Goal/Policy/Action number, rather than in the order in which they were brought up by Commissioners and the public.

General:

- Consider showing a strip of park/open space along Buchanan west of I-80 to denote the alignment of the Bay Trail? Or perhaps just designate the trail on a map in the Transportation Element or the Recreation/Open Space Element?
- Add policy or action re: funding for enforcement (and other activities referenced in this document, such as maintenance and lighting)
- Ensure that projects are evaluated not only on the number of trips they generate but also vehicle miles traveled. A project may generate many trips, but if those trips are short and local, the impacts may be more positive than if the project was on a green field site where the trips were much longer. VMT may be a better metric than trip generation when analyzing a project.
- Ensure that policies (such as 2.7) do not inadvertently discourage density or drive away development which would be consistent with sustainability principles. Avoid language that justifies denying good projects based on the trips they will generate.

Comments on Goals 1 and 2:

- *(Public comment)* Policy 1.6 and 2.6 (sidewalk accessibility) and Action 4.B (parking on sidewalk)---good ideas, but will the city get serious about enforcement? (Note: A member of the Commission expressed concern about Action 4.B, noting that cars on hillside streets faced the risk of being sideswiped if they didn't keep two wheels on the sidewalk. Perhaps this action should be enforced primarily on flatland streets with parking lanes.)
- Goal 2 should also include reduction of other air pollutants and not just GHG emissions—especially particulates
- Policy 2.7: Modify language to add other pollutants and not just GHGs, especially particulates. Also modify to note that Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) should be considered as a metric for evaluating projects, and not just trips generated.

Comments on Goals 3 and 4:

- Policy 3.9: "Continue to" undertake programs and activities.... (policy already underway)
- Policy 4.2: Enforcement should reference not only the rights of peds/bicyclists but also their responsibilities.
- Policy 4.3: "Continue to" undertake preventive maintenance...
- Policy 4.7: Delete "strollers" and replace with a word that captures other modes of active transportation (wheelchairs, skateboards, etc.)

Comments on Goal 5:

- Policy 5.3 and 5.4: Avoid the term “cut through” traffic as it is hard to define.
- Policy 5.4, Action 5.B (*public comment*): in concept, it’s good to discourage cut-through traffic, but how do we really know what is cut-through traffic and what is simply drivers taking the shortest route, or crossing town, or going to their homes? Can cut-through traffic be clarified or more narrowly defined?
- The Commission had an extended conversation of Policy 5.4 and the phenomenon of cars diverting off the arterials to find faster/easier routes to their destinations. Some observed that it was not “cut through” traffic that was the problem so much as bad driver behavior, especially speeding on residential streets. Perhaps the real focus of this policy should be to concentrate through traffic on designated arterials and discourage aggressive driving on side streets by cars seeking faster routes to their destinations.
- Policy 5.10 (*public comment*): Discouraging sidewalks on hillside streets seems contrary to the direction the City is going. This policy should be reframed or changed. Consider modifying the Municipal Code or clarifying the intent of the policy?
- Policy 5.11: One commissioner felt it was not necessary to single out UC Village (especially since the City does not have jurisdiction here), but another felt it was good to all attention to the circulation system because it provides connectivity to other parts of Albany. Perhaps modify policy to stress integration of these streets with the rest of Albany’s system.
- Policy 5.B: Why is Washington singled out? Perhaps make more general (add Kains and Adams?)

Comments on Goal 6:

- Goal 6: “...motorized and non-motorized vehicle traffic”
- Policy 6.1: Add the hierarchy of bike routes to this policy as well, in keeping with the Complete Streets concept.

Comments on Goal 7:

- Goal 7: Avoid too much government regulation of parking, and let the market dictate some of the standards. Emphasize pricing rather than rigid standards, per Donald Shoup’s book. Borrowing “best practices” from other cities (Action 7.D) is not always a good idea, since many other cities have arbitrary standards that do not reflect the true cost of parking.
- Policy 7.2: Note need for enforcement
- Policy 7.5 (*public comment*): Parking lifts sound good in concept, but it takes time to retrieve the car, and many drivers will opt instead to just park on the street. The Commission noted that parking lifts are most feasible where street parking is hard to find or expensive.
- Policy 7.6: Add bike share as well as car share?
- Action 7.D: Reword to note that we should not only consider changes to requirements, in some cases we should also consider elimination of some requirements.
- Action 7.F: Sounds good in principle, but probably not feasible. Owners and tenants may find loopholes and own cars anyway. Consider a market-based approach in which parking is priced accordingly.