

Title: Transportation Element Subcommittee Discussion

From: Jeremy Dennis, Advance Planning Manager, Planning and Community Environment Department

Background

At their August 17th meeting, the Palo Alto City Council directed that the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) form subcommittees to assist the CAC and staff with a “deeper dive” into the subject matter of each element of the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan). The subcommittee meetings are to be fully noticed and publicly available, but they are not required to be Brown Act-regulated bodies. The CAC voted to adopt a subcommittee process and appointed members as proposed by the co-chairs at the October 20th, 2015 CAC meeting.

This memo provides instructions and background material to facilitate an in-depth discussion of the Draft Transportation Element and the January 26th CAC discussion. Based on the discussion during the meeting, a revised draft Transportation Element will be prepared for further reviewed by the entire CAC. The Transportation Element was initially reviewed and discussed by the CAC at the September 8th and October 20th meetings.

What to Expect at the Meeting:

The purpose of this subcommittee meeting is to identify the issues of consensus and controversies based on the January 26th CAC discussion. The discussions from the September 8th and the October 20th CAC meetings and the direction and restructured goals from the August 31st City Council hearing on the subject element should also be considered. Verbatim minutes from the January 26th meeting are not available yet, but will be forwarded as soon as they are received.

Staff requests subcommittee feedback to ensure that staff has captured comments from the CAC discussions appropriately. For the February 3rd subcommittee meeting, the following outcomes are desired:

1. Identify areas of consensus and controversies for the Transportation element.
 - a. Identify controversies that need further CAC discussion
 - b. Provide a framework for CAC discussion and path to a resolution

Staff Summary

The subcommittee had previously identified areas of consensus and controversies from the CAC meetings in 2015. The outcome of that discussion has been provided to the CAC. In order to facilitate the discussion for the February 16th meeting, staff has identified four issues where feedback is needed. Please use this as a starting point and bring up for discussion any other issues you think need to be addressed.

1. Program T1.10.2 stated that the City should evaluate the feasibility of new transit routes, including ferry service. This new program was incorporated following CAC discussion. However, several members of the public as well as CAC members expressed opposition to bringing in ferry service into the Baylands. One of the CAC members offered as an alternative to provide shuttle or bus service to the ferry stop in Redwood City. Should this program eliminate references to ferry

service or be modified to discuss bus or shuttle service to existing ferry stops instead? More information on the ferry service for the Redwood City port can be found on the following website: <http://www.redwoodcityport.com/p7iq/html/FerryStatus.html>. An alternative policy could be a new policy under regional leadership to support development of this service.

2. There were several comments that the narratives should be trimmed. Staff suggests that the subcommittee identify areas that should be the focus of such changes.
3. There were two different thoughts on how to approach parking. Some CAC members supported reduction of parking to encourage alternative modes of travel. There was also support to not reduce parking requirements and to require that developments be fully parked. It was acknowledged that there was a need to be responsive and reflective to existing conditions but that the City should also be adaptive to the future. Staff has a recommendation on a framework, which is discussed in detail below.

Parking

Although a variety of different approaches to parking was heard, there seemed to be a clear consensus that the Comp Plan should advocate working towards a City that would embrace long term strategies that parking demand. The emphasis would be to provide options so people can make the choice to not drive. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to have a long horizon and needs to be able to be responsive as conditions evolve over time due to a variety of changes, such as the economy and technology. An effective approach would respond to existing conditions but be flexible enough to adapt to changes that occur over time. The subcommittee can consider the following:

- Require full implementation of current parking requirements, unless there are sufficient measures included to justify parking reduction. Measures to support reductions could include implementation of a TDM program, sufficient public parking in specific areas, proximity to transit and evidence that transit would be used.
- Implement a biennial study of parking standards to better reflect parking needs and to support the update of the parking regulations as needed. Studies can also include industry and technological changes.
- Form regional partnerships to seek solutions to provide more options to driving, which should reduce parking demand. Consider regional patterns and changes in evaluating parking demand.

Next Steps

Once the subcommittee identifies issues of consensus and controversies and provides a framework for a full CAC discussion, staff will prepare a draft Transportation Element and staff report. The staff report and revised draft element would then be brought to the full CAC for a review and recommendation.