

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] [Julie Vaissade-Elcock](#); [Judith Mayer](#); [Dan Tangney](#); [Scott Davies](#); [Christian Fiqueroa](#); [Karen Diemer](#); [David Loya](#); [Jennifer Dart](#); [Delo Freitas](#); [Sarah Schaefer](#); [Kimberley White](#); [Meredith Matthews](#)
Subject: Comments for tonight's Planning Commission meeting
Date: Tuesday, January 10, 2023 1:56:54 PM

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To Arcata staff and Planning Commissioners:

I read the packet and want to commend staff for its excellent job in preparing the packet information, including the slide presentation from Arcata Fire, the summary of preferences for community benefits of individual Commissioners, and the two proposed revised elements of the Arcata Genera Plan. It's a huge agenda, and I wish you well in handling it all in this single session.

I have several observations:

-[if !supportLists]-->11) I believe you need to seriously work with Cal Poly to address the capacity of Arcata Fire to address buildings higher than 4 stories. If they're relying on the Arcata Fire District communities to foot the bill, I suspect there will be a major taxpayer rebellion. They appear to have failed to work with Arcata or the Fire District on this issue, and I hope staff will work with them or at least tell us if they have or what is planned. This is a serious liability issue for both Cal Poly and Arcata. Construction is planned to begin this month per what I last read.

-[if !supportLists]-->22) The Planning Commission and staff are spending a great deal of time discussing and selecting amenities before it is even clear that building greater than 4 stories is either desired by the Arcata Community (no valid representative survey has been conducted) or feasible economically for contractors to build, particularly if we are trying to construct affordable housing, due to the enormous cost of the required foundations and other building materials. We need to address both the Community's desires and the economic and environmental feasibility of constructing such buildings, alongside the fire response issue.

-[if !supportLists]-->33) The amendments to the Land Use Plan appear, on first glance, to be comprehensive and excellent. But there is only very limited mention of the possible benefit of building ADUs and second houses on residential lots. I recently heard a story about an individual who was purchasing individual homes, adding an ADU for that home, then adding a second home with its own ADU, allowing the creation of 4 units on a single lot. This is a new and creative form of investment (for owners and investors) and a viable way of producing a major increase in residential units. I think the Planning Commission and staff may wish to seriously explore and encourage development of ADUs and second houses, etc. as an alternative to focusing mainly on multi-story buildings. Limiting buildings to four stories may occupy more space per lot, but it solves the solar shading and fire department issues.

Thank you.
Jane Woodward

Please include this letter in the Community Engagement section and forward it to the new Planning Commissioners.

Delo Freitas

From: Colin Fiske [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, January 09, 2023 4:41 PM
To: Peter Lehman; Scott Davies; Christian Figueroa; Judith Mayer; Dan Tangney; Julie Vaissade-Elcock; Matthew Simmons
Cc: David Loya
Subject: Comments on Agenda Items for January 9, 2023

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Commissioners,

I am writing on behalf of CRTP to provide comments on several items on tomorrow's agenda.

Arcata Fire District Presentation

In the presentation included in your agenda packet, the Arcata Fire District argues that it does not have the capacity to serve future 4-8 story buildings in the Gateway area, and that building heights should therefore be limited to less than 40 feet - which in most cases will mean 3 stories or less. This is problematic for multiple reasons.

First, the presentation admits that there are no legal or professional firefighting standards for 4-8 story "mid-rise" buildings, only for taller high-rises, but despite this says that AFD will "treat the Gateway mid-rise buildings equivalent to high-rise buildings for response staffing." It is unclear to us why Arcata should treat its mid-rise buildings differently than the rest of the state or the country for fire-fighting purposes.

Second, and of greater concern, mid-rise buildings are not just a future possibility - Arcata already has a number of buildings which are 4 stories or taller, and will soon have 7-story buildings developed by Cal Poly Humboldt at the Craftsman Mall site. If AFD can't serve buildings which are 4 or more stories tall, that is an urgent problem. In other words, AFD's presentation seems to imply that it could not currently respond effectively to a fire at the Jacoby Storehouse, or Sorrel Place, or the university's BSS building. If that's true, we've got to solve this problem now, not in the future. Which means it won't be a limitation by the time any new development could take place in the Gateway Area. In fact, Gateway development would help pay for the increased service needed to protect Arcata's existing mid-rise buildings.

Gateway Community Benefits

We appreciate and agree with most of the types of community benefits being considered by the Commission for inclusion in the Gateway Area Plan's community benefits program. We particularly appreciate the fact that almost every Commissioner has ranked transportation and mobility benefits high on their lists of priorities.

We also agree with most of the specific benefits being considered under the transportation category, with one significant exception: Underground parking should not be considered a community benefit. Parking of any kind benefits only the user, not the broader community, and in fact incentivizes excess driving with all of its safety, health and environmental impacts. Underground parking is also extremely expensive to build, and a landowner or developer with a limited community benefits budget could likely provide a complete package of every other transportation benefit for less than it would cost to build a single sub-surface parking structure. Please remove underground parking from your list of eligible community benefits.

We also encourage you to rank bike parking/storage and showers for bike commuters higher on your list of priorities. Both are proven methods to increase biking, and also increase equity by providing needed support for those who bike out of economic necessity.

Draft General Plan Land Use Element

We appreciate and support the increased focus of the draft Growth Management and Land Use Elements on walkable, transit-oriented infill development. We submit the following specific comments:

- Policy LU-1c calls for reducing or eliminating parking mandates in walkable areas near transit. We appreciate this direction, but we call on you to go further and eliminate all parking mandates citywide. Parking may still be provided by developers, but there is no reason for the city to require it. [As this map shows](#), cities large and small across the country are acknowledging the high costs of parking mandates and eliminating or severely restricting them. Now is Arcata's chance to follow suit.
- Policy LU-1e calls for "maintaining an appropriate balance" among housing types. It is unclear to us what this means, but it is clear that the current housing stock is out of balance. Most of the city's land is zoned for single-family homes only; "maintaining" this current balance would limit much-needed alternative and multifamily housing development.
- The objective stated in Policy LU-2 calls for new housing to be "compatible with established neighborhood character." This creates a major obstacle to change, and change is needed if we are to provide sufficient housing in walkable, transit-oriented neighborhoods. It also may run afoul of the state's requirement that local rules about housing follow clear and objective standards.
- Policy LU-4h prohibits petroleum production in Arcata, which is great, but includes some old language in support of petroleum extraction generally. This strikes the wrong note in our modern understanding of impending climate chaos.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

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Colin Fiske (he/him)
Executive Director
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Delo Freitas

From: Cathy ChandlerKlein [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, January 14, 2023 12:37 PM
To: Peter Lehman; Scott Davies; Christian Figueroa; Judith Mayer; Dan Tangney; Julie Vaissade-Elcock; Matthew Simmons; David Loya
Subject: Gateway

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Planning Commission:

I cannot attend the upcoming Gateway meeting this Thursday so am submitting my input this way.

I am an Arcata resident, living adjacent to the Gateway area. While I am aware that there are issues that need to be addressed to ensure that the Gateway is done well (sea level rise questions, fire preparedness, etc), I strongly believe that these issues can be addressed/resolved and that the advantages outweigh the concerns.

The "pros" of the Gateway are clear. It addresses the desperate need for housing for varied incomes with an infill approach which helps mitigate climate catastrophe. We are rapidly running out of time on climate and need to do all we can locally.

We live in a unique and wonderful small town. I understand the resistance to change and development. But we have an ethical obligation to share this place with others who do not yet have education and/or housing. We have an ethical obligation to fight the climate emergency.

The fire department report tells me that we are not prepared for fire for many existing structures. That needs to be addressed. So as a community, let's figure that out and proceed with the Gateway. Thank you.

Cathy Chandler-Klein

Delo Freitas

From: Colin Fiske <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, January 16, 2023 1:26 PM
To: David Caisse
Cc: David Loya; Netra Khatri
Subject: Comments for TSC

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David C.,

Could you please forward the comments below to TSC members?

Thanks,
Colin

Transportation Safety Committee Members,

I am writing to comment on the draft General Plan Circulation Element which you will be reviewing at your meeting tomorrow (Tuesday, 1/17). In general, CRTP appreciates and strongly supports the draft Element's focus on enabling, encouraging, and incentivizing safe, healthy, low-carbon modes of transportation like walking, biking, rolling and public transit.

We offer the following specific comments in the hopes of strengthening this focus:

1. Vehicular Level of Service (LOS) is a measurement of traffic congestion. It is now well established that attempting to minimize congestion/improve LOS by adding vehicular capacity: (a) causes people to drive more; (b) does not actually reduce congestion in the long term; (c) often decreases safety in the short term by temporarily increasing traffic speeds. Despite all of these arguments against using LOS as a policy tool, the draft Circulation Element still establishes maintenance of LOS to "minimize [vehicular] delay" as a policy goal (Policy T-4). Furthermore, Table T-5 lists many major projects planned partly or entirely to address LOS "deficiencies" or "relieve" congestion. (See also Appendix T-A.) Many of these projects are also needed in some form to improve safety, but could likely be improved from a safety and multimodal perspective if LOS were not a policy consideration. Finally, it should be noted that while we appreciate and support proposed Policy T-4b.2, the arguments against capacity increases apply to all capacity increases, not just new vehicular travel lanes. We strongly encourage the Committee to recommend entirely removing LOS and congestion management from the policy goals and considerations in the Circulation Element.
2. The draft Element includes many roundabout projects. Please refer to CRTP's recent comments and references related to roundabouts and the need to address critical bike and pedestrian user concerns when considering or designing them.
3. We note that, pursuant to the adopted Regional Transportation Plan, HCAOG is planning to conduct bike and pedestrian level of traffic stress (LTS), connectivity and access analysis for streets in the greater Humboldt Bay region, including Arcata. When complete, it will be important to update and prioritize proposed bike and pedestrian network improvements to reflect this newly available information.
4. The (currently blank) target for increased transit mode share at Policy T-3 should be consistent with the adopted Regional Transportation Plan targets to double transit trips by 2025, double again by 2030, and again by 2045,

and to increase non-auto mode share to at least 30% by 2030 and at least 40% by 2050. See also Policy T-5 regarding bike and pedestrian mode share.

5. It is past time for A&MRTS to merge with the rest of the county's transit systems under the umbrella of the Humboldt Transit Authority. Running such a small system as A&MRTS independently is inefficient and causes confusion and friction for transit users needing to access other systems like RTS. The Circulation Element should establish a goal of transitioning A&MRTS to an HTA operation and establishing unified branding, pricing and scheduling.
6. The Circulation Element should include a policy to investigate on-demand microtransit and similar systems for improving transit when ridership and/or land use patterns don't justify expanded fixed-route service.
7. Proposed Policy T-4c.2 specifies that traffic calming should not "compromise emergency access." However, it must be recognized that there are times when slowing traffic will inevitably slow emergency vehicles as well. At such times, the overall risk to life and safety from all sources - including speeding traffic and emergency access - should be considered. Emergency access cannot be a blanket excuse not to implement life-saving traffic calming interventions.
8. It is unclear why proposed Policy T-4c.4 is included. Closing residential streets to through (vehicular) traffic is a common strategy for improving both safety and multimodal access, and should be part of the city's toolbox without undue restriction.
9. Policy T-5a.2 should reflect that Class IV, not Class II, bike facilities should be provided on high-demand streets, as well as higher-speed and higher traffic streets. Arcata cannot truly consider itself a bike-friendly city with no protected Class IV bike facilities.
10. Proposed Policy T-5e specifies that required bike parking in new development shall be calculated as a proportion of vehicle parking. Since the city is moving toward minimizing new vehicle parking requirements, but wishes to encourage biking, this policy link is unwise. Bike parking requirements should be calculated independently from car and truck parking.
11. Policy T-5h should reflect a minimum clear path of 6 feet on sidewalks as a best practice.
12. Policy T-6 and its sub-policies refer frequently to the need for "adequate parking" and reflect the widespread misconception that parking demand is a fixed variable. In fact, research demonstrates that the availability of (free or underpriced) parking encourages driving, so there is no such thing as "adequate parking" independent of cost or availability. Guiding Principle H reflects this in calling for "fee-based parking prices that are high enough to drive more active and shared transportation." This is a critical TDM strategy, but is not explicitly reflected in Policy T-6. The policy should be revised to reflect a goal to minimize or reduce free and underpriced vehicular parking as part of the city's transportation demand management program.
13. Policy T-6c says the city will "consider" eliminating costly parking mandates. This is a good first step, but really there is nothing to consider. The city should join [a growing list of communities](#) across the country and commit to just eliminating minimum parking mandates altogether.
14. Policy T-8 should include a sub-policy requiring an increase in metered and/or permit parking as a source of revenue for transit and active transportation improvements.

Thank you.

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