



Date: April 9, 2023
To: Arcata Planning Commission
CC: David Loya, Community Development Director
From: Oona Smith, Senior Regional Planner
Re: **April 11, 2023, meeting (III.C) General Plan Update, Circulation Element**

Thank you to the City of Arcata Planning Commission and staff for your diligent work towards long-range planning and community visioning. Please accept these comments related to updating the General Plan Circulation Element. I offer these comments in consideration of the adopted objectives and policies of HCAOG's Regional Transportation Plan, *Variety in Rural Options of Mobility (VROOM) 2022-2024*.

HCAOG staff appreciate and support the draft/suggested changes that serve to most effectively increase safety, most broadly increase accessibility for users—especially the most vulnerable users, increase equity in transportation investments and resources, decrease transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, and improve health outcomes. As more and more research supports, transportation policies that engender these benefits simultaneously augment the social, economic, and recreational qualities of neighborhoods.

I find that Planning Commissioners have suggested changes to the December 2022 Draft that will bring the Circulation Element more up-to-date, i.e., more consistent with current concepts/strategies of what works to create walkable, healthy neighborhoods and fiscally-sound cities. In particular, I appreciate that Planning Commissioners are recommending or considering:

- adding a Vision Zero safety policy in the General Plan: 2045;
- emphasizing equity, mobility, and accessibility, including by adding language explicitly supporting accessibility for users with disabilities;
- relegating the use of level of service (LOS);
- considering streetscape safety and quality over the capacity for drivers to enter/exit intersections and roadways; and
- reassessing the provision of parking as a valuable and/or scarce resource more than an obligatory subsidy for private car storage.

Such planning approaches are consistent with HCAOG's *VROOM 2022-2042* goals and objectives.

Below are HCAOG staff comments on specific draft language, followed by “Errata” that simply calls attention to typos, syntax errors, redundancies, and minor edits to improve clarity. (Note: Text identified as “PC’s comment” refers to language from this source: “General Plan Update Commissioner Comments Compilation And Bike Rack (current through 03/27/2023).”)

PC’s comment: “5) I propose we stop using Level of Service as a management consideration for city streets. And prioritize traffic calming and safety on all city streets regardless of classification.”

HCAOG staff appreciates that Planning Commissioners are discussing changing the Circulation Element’s policy direction away from applying either the operational analysis and intersection level of service (LOS) or the federal functional classifications of streets as long-range planning tools or planning rationale. While they may be useful to apply for evaluating traffic patterns, numerous planning professionals, academics, institutions and advocates agree that they are not good tools for creating multi-modal systems or walkable

neighborhoods. It would be more consistent with the Circulation Element's Principles and Goals to omit or amend corresponding language, for example:

- Page 2-50: **Table T-5 Proposed Vehicular Circulation Improvements** – Notes for three projects highlight “LOS Deficiency.” (Correlated PC’s comment: “Table T-5 and Figure T-k should be modified accordingly to remove projects motivated solely by congestion concerns.”)
- Page 2-56: Guiding Principles and Goals: D. Manage the street and highway system to promote more efficient use of existing capacities rather than increase the number of travel lanes.”

Page 2-57 Policy T-1 Balanced Transportation System with Choice of Modes, Objective.

Instead of focusing the Objective on “a balanced transportation system” and “reducing automobile trips,” Policy T-1’s Objective could better reflect the Guiding Principles and Goals which say to provide for a “connected multimodal transportation system...” and “increased use of active and shared transportation modes...” Secondarily, saying “transit” (instead of bus transit) would not preclude how public transit is becoming more dynamic with microtransit and on-demand trips that do not necessarily use buses.

PC’s comment:

“6) How is this negative? Consider removing the word negative.

a) **Balanced Transportation System.** Create and maintain a balanced transportation system with choice of bus transit, bicycle, and pedestrian as well as private automobile modes. Reduce the percentage of trips that are made by automobile and provide the opportunity, incentives, and facilities to divert trips from automobiles to other modes. Provide negative incentives, such as parking meters, permit parking, time-limited parking, carpool incentives, and other targeted parking measures that encourage alternative modes utilizing “induced demand” strategies.

Page 2-57, T-1a “Investment in alternative modes. In order to provide a **realistic** and cost-effective balance between travel modes...”

Consider updating the term “alternative modes” to “active modes.” Clarify what “a realistic balance” means.

Page 2-57, T-1c Intercity travel.

“The City shall **coordinate with Humboldt County and Caltrans** to provide adequate facilities for vehicles, buses, and bicycles to serve intercity demand. Coordinate with long-distance bus operators to improve services to Arcata. Joint efforts may include transportation improvements outside of Arcata which serve intercity travel, such as bicycle links connectivity, timed-transfer bus stops, park-and-ride lots, and regional transit service and development of park-and-ride lots in Arcata to reduce intercity vehicular travel.”

It is also beneficial to coordinate with regional agencies (e.g., HCAOG, RCEA), neighboring jurisdictions, and Cal Poly Humboldt.

Page 2-58, T-1e Parking and public transit service study.

Integrate this policy with T-6a Downtown Parking.

Page 2-59, POLICY T-3 BUS TRANSIT POLICY

“Objective. Maintain a bus transit system which connects to other active-travel modes, and serves major commercial and employment areas within Arcata, Cal Poly Humboldt, public schools, and higher density residential areas. Increase average citywide transit mode share of daily person trips to ___% from the 2020 level of 3%.”

T-3a 5-year transit plans. The City shall maintain the existing **(1)** A&MRTS routes (as shown in Figure T-e), frequency, and level of service **until increased demand, additional development, and**

transit planning studies identify the need (2) for either route modification, an expanded route system, or increased service on existing routes. The transit planning studies should evaluate the cost-effectiveness and feasibility of increased routes and service based on projected capital and operating costs, fare box recovery, and state and federal subsidies (see Policy T-3c for planning criteria.)"

- (1) This does not allow the City to decrease service due to decreased demand (COVID-19?).
- (2) Neither could the City modify service unless all three come about. Increased demand, regardless of additional development, should allow the City to modify service.

"T-3b Regional transit service. Short- and long-range transit plans shall be coordinated with the regional transit service provided by the Redwood Transit System. The City supports regional transit ~~plans which~~ plans' recommendations or implementation measures to improve service and timed transfers, and reduce headways for intercity travel."

HCAOG updates the Transit Development Plan every five years, which evaluates all transit systems based in Humboldt County. The City's policy may want to incorporate relying on that resource. For regional service, the City may want to coordinate only with the RTS line, but with Humboldt Transit Authority, Greyhound, Amtrak, and Redwood Coast Transit Authority (Del Norte).

{Re edit: Technically speaking, plans—in and of themselves—do not improve service.}

Page 2-66, **POLICY T-6 PARKING SUPPLY AND PARKING MANAGEMENT**

"Objective. Provide an adequate supply of parking. Minimize the impacts of Cal Poly Humboldt parking into adjacent neighborhoods. Ensure that new development provides an adequate but not excessive supply of parking."

HCAOG would support a broader objective that recognizes the pros/cons of the City's role or assumed responsibility for parking supply and parking management. There are conditions under which on-street car parking can aid pedestrian and bicyclist safety, have a net positive financial impact on city and/or business revenues, and/or contribute to recreational access and environmental (e.g., a parking benefits district).

Public discourse (and agreement) on parking is hard, so I will end with a light-hearted analogy by Donald Shoup, from "The High Cost of Free Parking."

Minimum dessert requirements

If cities required restaurants to offer a free dessert with each dinner, the price of every dinner would soon increase to include the cost of a dessert.

To ensure that restaurants didn't skimp on the size of the required desserts, cities would have to set precise "minimum calorie requirements." Some diners would pay for deserts they didn't eat, and others would eat sugary desserts they wouldn't have ordered had they paid for them separately. The consequences would undoubtedly include an epidemic of obesity, diabetes and heart disease. A few food-conscious cities like New York and San Francisco might prohibit free desserts, but most cities would continue to require them.

Many people would get angry at even the thought of paying for desserts they had eaten free for so long.

(Shoup sources: <https://parkade.com/post/donald-shoup-the-high-cost-of-free-parking-summarized>,
<http://shoup.bol.ucla.edu/PayAsYouPark.htm>, Donald Shoup "Parking and the City" (2018).)

ERRATA (Typos & Syntax)

(1) Page 2-45: the Regional Transportation Plan (RPTRTP).

(2) Page 2-49: **Existing Modes of Travel.** Based on 2020 census data, the majority of Arcata residents drive alone to work (57%) as shown in the accompanying figure.
The 57% reported is of total city population ("residents"), not 57% of employed people?

(3) Page 2-56, Guiding Principles and Goals:
"B. Create a transportation system that incentivizes offers a choice of travel modes and is safe, accessible, comfortable, accommodating, and welcoming to all users."
"Incentivizing a choice" is not clear.

"E. Create a multimodal transportation system that will improve the livability of residential neighborhoods, including use of methods to calm or slow traffic and reduce such as by calming streets, slowing traffic, and minimizing through-traffic on local neighborhood streets."

Awkward syntax.

(4) Page 2-57: **T-1 Complete Streets.**
The City shall direct the design, construction, reconstruction, repair and maintenance efforts on the City's streets, bridges, pathways, and sidewalks, creating a comprehensive, integrated transportation network that is safe, accessible, comfortable, accommodating, and welcoming to users of all ages, physical abilities, incomes, races, and ethnicities, incomes, and physical abilities, and all modes of transportation and mobility, particularly those walking, rolling, biking, and using transit. In doing so the City shall apply a Complete Streets framework in all applicable and feasible transportation projects to allow all street users the safe, comfortable, convenient and accessible use of streets for all street users.
This long, complicated first sentence is hard to comprehend. The reference of "those" is convoluted.

(5) Page 2-57, Policy T-1b **Interconnections and transfers between travel modes.**
"The City shall provide and maintain a Transit Center to facilitate interconnection and transfers between bus routes and systems. As funding permits, Transit Center facilities shall be improved to encourage its use as a multi-modal transfer point. In addition to facilities at the Transit Center, pedestrian and bicycle amenities shall be provided at other locations which serve as modal transfer points such as bus stops and park-and-ride lots."
This policy covers transit connections, so I suggest integrating it with Policy T-3d Transfers between routes and systems.

(6) Page 2-58, **POLICY T-2 TRAVEL DEMAND MANAGEMENT**
Rename Policy T-2; as is, it does not cover common TDM; it covers linking land use and transportation.
"Objective. Reduce the percentage of automobiles automobile trips and reduce the annual vehicle-miles of travel."
"T-2a Land use development patterns. The City encourages and supports travel demand management efforts. ... Land use planning shall emphasize high-density and mixed land-use patterns in the downtown and neighborhood commercial areas which translate into higher transit and pedestrian travel in the downtown and neighborhood commercial areas. Infill, redevelopment, and reuse of underutilized property at higher densities shall be encouraged prior to outward expansion of expanding City boundaries."
"8. Prevention of large areas of single uses. Avoid Isolated single-use developments at the edge of the City that could encourage and/or force automobile travel for commuting and errands."

(7) Page 2-59

T-3c Bus route system. Public transportation is an enterprise activity and its services must be designed to be as efficient and productive as possible. As a transit operator, the City must balance demand with resources for a sustainable system. ~~The City shall consider adding transit routes or modifying existing transit routes and level of service based on the transit planning efforts described in Policy T-3a.~~ Criteria to evaluate and identify thresholds for changes to the A&MRTS system shall be developed.

Redundant.

(8) Page 2-61, T-3f **Transit subsidies.**

The City supports continued A&MRTS contract services with Cal Poly Humboldt to provide subsidized fares to its students and employees. This ~~revenue source, which allows these users to ride without cost to the individual, program (the JackPass) provides Cal Poly Humboldt students and employees unlimited fare-free rides on A&MRTS.~~ is the single most important Transportation Demand Management strategy for Arcata.

Students and employees do have a cost, albeit indirect.

(9) Page 2-66 T-5i **Retention of railroad right of way.**

The Great Redwood Trail Authority, as the holder of the former North Coast Railroad ~~Authority Agency~~ right of way, is encouraged to maintain railroad rights-of-way through railbanking for interim use as a multi-purpose trail. The City may consider purchase of right of way should the ~~Authority Agency~~ decide to sell.

Madeline Odom

From: Sean Armstrong [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 11:55 PM
To: Dan Tangney; Judith Mayer; Christian Figueroa; Scott Davies; Peter Lehman; Matthew Simmons
Cc: David Loya; Lisa B.; Kimberley White; Stacy Atkins-Salazar; Sarah Schaefer; Meredith Matthews; Alex Stillman
Subject: Please don't rezone our AR farmland as High Density--it's Arcata's popular Greenbelt

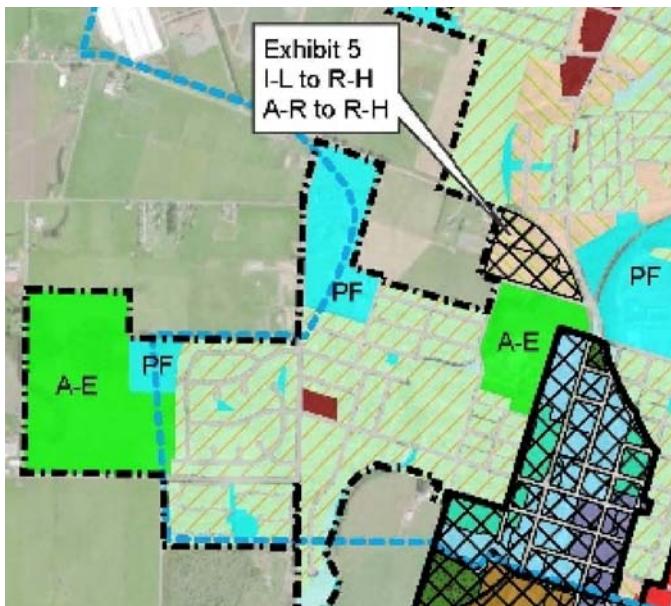
CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Last week I learned that our rented farmland in Exhibit 5 of the Chapter 2 of the Draft LU Element (see below), has been proposed for rezoning from Agricultural-Residential to Residential-High Density. These two farm parcels along Arcata's 17th Street are a beloved part of Arcata's walking and bicycling experience. People stop all day long to feed the llamas and pigs, and to take selfies, like an informal petting zoo. And people love the Tule Fog Farm bacon and eggs we sell at the Farmers' Market.

Small farms are part of what makes Arcata great. That is why:

1. Every prior General Plan has mapped these ag parcels as part of Arcata's Green Belt.
2. Every year the City Council has directed Staff to preserve them in the annual Goal Setting meeting by unanimous vote.



The below Guiding Principal and Goal B adds new language that encourages "developing infill areas" of Arcata's greenbelt, and eliminates language that would prohibit conversion of the ag land. I don't think Arcatans want you to change the Goal language this way. And besides, these A-R parcels do not even meet the definition of infill--they are surrounded on all four sides by AE zoned farmland, Janes Creek and Shay Park.

B. Establish and maintain a greenbelt around the City that consists of agricultural, forest, and natural resource lands, in order to focusing future developing in infill areas, as opposed to annexation of these lands. Preserve, as productive natural resources areas, the open agricultural lands in the Arcata Bottom, the forests on the eastern hillsides, and aquaculture in Arcata Bay. Protect other natural resource lands along the bayfront and watercourses for their ecological value as natural resource lands and community open space.

Similarly, LU-1e/1a below is rewritten by Staff to remove the explicit prohibition against developing farmland. I think Arcatans want you to keep that language from our previous General Plan.

LU-1e1af **Protection of natural resources and agricultural lands.** The designation of open

Arcata General Plan: 2045

Updated Draft June Nov. 2022 March 2023

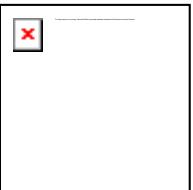
Land Use Element

Page 2-12

Community Development

space throughout the City, and the agricultural greenbelt area around the City, are integral to Arcata's future form. Agricultural [A-E] and Natural Resource [NR] designated lands make up over half of the community land base. Their productive, open space, and natural resource values are important to the community and shall be preserved and conversion to other non-compatible uses shall be prohibited.

My sincere thanks for helping preserve Arcata's open spaces and greenbelt.
Sean Armstrong



Sean Armstrong
(he/him for business, but occasionally she/her)
Managing Principal, Redwood Energy
Schedule a meeting with me at: calendly.com/seanarmstrong

1887 Q Street, Arcata, CA 95521 (unceded Wiyot Territory)
redwoodenergy.net

2023 U.S. Speaker on Net Zero for the U.S. State Department
2022 Clean Energy Champion in the California Energy Commission Clean Energy Hall of Fame
2020 Innovation Award from the Department of Energy
2017 Grand Prize Winner of the United Nations World Habitat Awards
2017 Sustainability Award of the Southern California Building Industry Association
2016 Grand Prize Winner of the international Building Industry Association/PCBC Gold Nugget Awards
2015 Innovation Award from the Department of Energy

Madeline Odom

From: lisab [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 1:51 PM
To: David Loya
Subject: Fwd: April 11 meeting
Attachments: South of Aldergrove Cannabis zone.pdf

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.

Hi David. For some reason this did not get CC'd to you.

Lisa

Dear Commissioners.

Please find attached a map of the Cannabis Zone that I have modified to show the acreages of the parcels/groups of parcels in the southwestern portion of the zone.

I feel that the Commission should consider the question as to whether to rezone these areas to RH to accommodate and plan for Cal Poly's need to provide student-type housing.

It has been 2 years and 8 months since your Planning Commission has reviewed and approved a cannabis related business for the entire zone.

My reason/goals for requesting this change:

*Proximity to the school, easy walking distance.

*Remove the Coastal Zone portion of the Gateway Plan which is risky business given sea level and water table rise.

*Remove the need to rezone agricultural resource land for high density housing.

*Remove the need to rezone residential neighborhoods to RH.

*Address and plan for the continual need for student housing in Arcata in a location that makes sense due to proximity to school.

Please consider the figures found in the chart below.

Thank you for your attention and diligence.

Lisa A. Brown

Arcata

GATEWAY SOUTH (COASTAL ZONE) CANNABIS ZONE (SOUTH OF ALDERGROVE)

***EXCLUDING THE MILL YARD PROPERTY**

DEVELOPABLE ACRES 60 ACRES 141.16 ACRES

WALKING DISTANCE TO HSU 1.7 MILES 1.2 MILES

FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL 4-14 FEET AVERAGE 40 FEET

Madeline Odom

From: Patrick Carr [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 10, 2023 8:59 PM
To: David Loya
Subject: Gateway and General plans

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.

Hello David,

I know that the Planning Commission has big tasks ahead in shaping these two efforts which will shape Arcata's future.

I want to pass on my hopes that you will work to prioritize safe streets in Arcata, streets safe enough that people can walk and ride bikes with a realistic expectation that they will get to their destinations safely. That is especially important on K St.

Most Arcata residents have at least some concern about the impacts of climate change. When we step out of our cars and use our own energy to get around, we're doing something constructive about this massive problem. Let's work to ensure that our streets, even as they get busier, will become even safer than they are now.

Patrick Carr

[REDACTED]
Arcata CA 95521

Madeline Odom

From: Lisa Pelletier [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 9:45 AM
To: Judith Mayer; Scott Davies; Christian Figueroa; Dan Tangney; Matthew Simmons; Peter Lehman
Cc: Sarah Schaefer; Kimberley White; Stacy Atkins-Salazar; Alex Stillman; Meredith Matthews; Karen Diemer; David Loya
Subject: Please Create an L-Street Linear Park (*not* a truck corridor)

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.

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

I apologize for sending you more than one email in a week. I know how busy you are, but I just realized that the L-Street "circulation element" was on the agenda for the special meeting tonight. In previous Planco meetings, you've devoted time to discuss the need for parks as a "community benefit." We already have a beautiful park in the L-Street corridor, which just needs some landscaping. Why destroy a "community benefit" that is already in place with a truck/car corridor? If you put a street with major traffic running through it, it will destroy the peace and beauty of the Creamery District with noise and pollution, destroying a "community benefit" already in place.

My mom and I like to stroll through and attend events in the Creamery District, but likely wouldn't show up if it becomes a noisy and polluted corridor. That's the opposite of what we look for in a park.

Please consider turning the L-Street corridor into a linear park. Hundreds of Arcatans have signed a petition requesting this. Let's keep the "community benefits" we already possess intact, and turn the L-Street corridor into a linear park that all Arcatans can enjoy for many generations. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Lisa Pelletier (Arcata resident)

April 11, 2023

From: Dave Ryan, Chair, Arcata Transportation Safety Committee

To: Staff Liaison David Caisse (please agendize and forward to committee members and Community Development Director David Loya)

Subject: Agenda item for Transportation Safety Committee meeting of April 18, 2023

I will not be able to attend the April 18 meeting. I will be out of town.

After our February meeting, I took an opportunity to briefly review the second draft of the Gateway Plan. There have been questions raised whether this draft accurately or adequately reflects our recommendation regarding L St being designated a linear park. As a committee, we've spent more than 6 hours over the course of several months, spanning 5 or 6 meetings listening to presentations, discussing the Plan, and offering recommendations. At one point, the City Council asked us to revisit our position regarding this linear park, the implication being we were somehow uninformed, or unprepared to offer this recommendation- so we discussed this again at our October 2022 meeting and reaffirmed our position, with 2 additional members who were not present for the original recommendation agreeing to affirm our position.

Although we've made several Gateway Plan recommendations, the issue at hand is the proposed linear park and the recommendation made by this committee after deliberations from the July and August meetings. The Zoom recording of the August meeting shows that at about the 20-minute mark, I made my first specific reference to *"revise the plan so this area is eliminated as being considered for new streets and car traffic. My recommendation is that it is to become a car-free linear park that prioritizes people"*. I then made the following motion about 53 minutes into the meeting:

"Revise circulation plan that eliminates L St as being considered for new streets and car traffic. This area is recommended to become a car-free linear park that prioritizes people."

This motion was devised to be succinct, concise, and unambiguous. Unfortunately, this exact wording was not typed into the document being used by Community Development staff to record our actions that evening. What was entered was the following: ***"Revise circulation plan that eliminate L St southbound as a through road and maintain L as a linear park."***

After some discussion of the recommendation, Community Development staff asked me to confirm if what was typed "captured" the idea, and I concurred. I now regret this decision. I regret that I didn't insist that my specific wording be incorporated directly into the document. It seemed in the moment to reflect the essence of the motion, but in retrospect is insufficient.

Further, upon review of the second draft of the Gateway Plan, I find no mention whatsoever of this recommendation. The only mention I find is in an attachment to the draft entitled "Other Considerations". This attachment contains "recommendations that are either in conflict with the draft or have competing recommendations". The only place I can find anything remotely resembling this recommendation is in a table under a heading of L St.; it states, "Maintain current configuration; remove

concept of L Street as an arterial couplet with K Street from figures." It's clear now the exact motion, comprising a mere two sentences, should be reflected verbatim in the draft of the Gateway Plan. I request this be done and that the Planning Commission and the City Council be made aware of these two sentences.

This important topic being relegated to a "conflict" and in an attachment nevertheless, diminishes the work put in by this committee.

I'm willing to attend any Council or Planning Commission meetings if necessary, to deliver our recommendation. Below are two links that would clarify the background for the motion. One starts 12 minutes into the meeting and goes for about 8 minutes, at which point the recommendation is made. The actual motion is made at the 53 minute mark:

12 minutes into meeting:

<https://youtu.be/wtd9zAWIKjM?t=721>

Entire meeting:

<https://youtu.be/wtd9zAWIKjM>

The following minor edits are suggested to clean up grammar:

"Revise circulation plan that to eliminates eliminate L St as being considered for new streets and car traffic. This area is recommended to become a car-free linear park that prioritizes people."

Scott Davies

Reviewing minutes, I would like minutes amended to reflect the following changes. First, Oral Communications. Please note that we had four speakers. Two, under Business Item A, please move the statement "Public comment was heard" to the first line, indicating that public comment was heard from four members of the public on both items. Also under Business Item A, under the vote for each of the topics under the agenda item, Simmons is listed as absent instead of Lehman, please correct. And lastly, Business Item B, please update to reflect that there were six speakers. Are there any other suggestions for edits by Planning Commissioners? Anybody else have anything for the minutes?

Fred Weis

Yes, thank you. A question or comment. Commissioner Lehman was absent. He had a letter that was referenced, and the letter contain both materials on Business Items A and B. I'd like to know whether Commissioner Lehman's letter should be made part of the minutes and how it should be referenced.

Madeline Odom

From: janepwoodward [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 1:59 PM
To: Peter Lehman; Scott Davies; Christian Figueroa; Judith Mayer; Dan Tangney; Matthew Simmons; David Loya; Karen Diemer
Subject: Public Comment for tonight's meeting
Attachments: 4_11 2023 PUBLIC COMMENT TO PLANNING COMMISSION.docx; 4_5 2023 PUBLIC COMMENT TO CITY COUNCIL.docx

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.

Attached (and below) are my proposed comments on the K/L street couplet. I've also attached the sea level rise comments I presented to City Council last week and requested be sent to you as well, in case you didn't receive them. Thank you for all your work on behalf of our wonderful community.

April 11 PUBLIC COMMENT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

Fred Weis has already drafted an excellent justification for eliminating L Street as a one-way street through the Gateway Area. I agree with his comments, and want to add a few of my own.

Staff argues that there are no alternative direct north-south routes from Alliance to Samoa, and one is needed a) to ease projected traffic as a result of projected increased residential density and b) avoid pedestrian and bicycle accidents. And if it's in the Draft Plan, it will remain an option. There are several problems with this argument.

1) Arcata currently **does not own the right-of-way** at either the north or south end, and indicates no plans to use eminent domain to obtain it.

Plus, Arcata does not own the right-of-way currently owned by the Great Redwood Trail where the Trail is projected to go.

2). **One of the primary goals of increasing density and limiting parking is to increase walkability and bike-ability.** That is not

accomplished by putting a prime through-street alongside a well-used linear path, and would create both noise and air pollution along

with increase likelihood of vehicular-caused accidents.

3) **The safest path for pedestrians and cyclists is one where there is no or very limited vehicular traffic moving at speed (the current status)**

4) The Creamery District is a prime center for community events, many of which occur outside in the summer. Outside events involve people

and children walking around in crowds and increase the likelihood of accidents. Increased traffic in that area would be disruptive to such activities.

5) The Draft Gateway Plan proposes a new park near Samoa Blvd. Such a park would be a long way from most residents in the Gateway Area.

Upgrading the Linear Path to a Linear Park that goes throughout the Gateway Area **would increase accessibility to all residents.** Pocket parks on private land are no substitution, even if developers propose them as an amenity

6) There are many ways to increase the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians alongside and crossing K Street, including more stop signs and lighted pedestrian crosswalks. If that slows down traffic for a few minutes, that is probably highly desirable if accidents can be avoided. If that causes leakage to other north-south streets, that's a minor inconvenience. We don't need people to be racing through Arcata.

7) If the K/L-street couplet is not in the Draft Plan, that does not mean that the Plan cannot be amended at a later date to permit the proposed couplet if it is determined to be necessary. The cost of creating a new street and obtaining the needed rights-of-way would undoubtedly be much higher than the cost of carrying out the 2010 plan for creating a linear park. And we could probably obtain grant funding for such a park, as we have elsewhere.

8) A linear park throughout the Gateway Area would be a draw for attracting new residents to the Gateway Area and increase its desirability.

In light of these points, I recommend that the Planning Commission vote to designate L Street as a linear park as recommended by two City Committees and almost 600 petitioners, and follow through with the recommendations of the 2010 Great Redwood Trail study.

Thank you. Jane Woodward, Arcata resident.

Madeline Odom

From: Colin Fiske [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, April 12, 2023 11:54 AM
To: Peter Lehman; Scott Davies; Christian Figueroa; Judith Mayer; Dan Tangney; Matthew Simmons
Cc: David Loya
Subject: Re: Comments on Draft Circulation Element & K/L Couplet

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.

Commissioners,

Thank you for taking action last night to move forward several of CRTP's suggestions for safe and sustainable transportation improvements to the Circulation Element. Deprioritizing level of service, charging for downtown parking, and other changes you made to the Element are well supported by research in the field. We look forward to your discussion of other topics of concern, including public transit improvement, Class IV bikeways, and roadway functional classification, when you return to these topics at an upcoming meeting.

Now that you have deprioritized level of service (LOS) and specified that it should be used only as an indicator of efforts to slow traffic and encourage mode shift, there are a number of other places in the Element which should be amended for consistency. Many of these are identified in the Commissioner-proposed edits which you didn't get to discuss last night. For example, several other places in the Element refer to "unacceptable [vehicular] delay" or "deficient operation" of intersections or streets, which are concepts that doesn't make sense following your decision last night. These terms apply only when an agency has adopted a specific "acceptable" LOS, and streets or intersections fall below it, triggering plans for vehicular capacity increases - a debunked strategy and exactly the opposite of the approach that the Commission and city staff articulated last night.

Most worryingly, the old LOS approach is also still reflected in the project list found at Table T-5, where "LOS deficiency" or "circulation improvement" (which mean the same thing in this context) is listed as the primary or only reason for 5 of the 11 projects. I do not doubt that city staff and consultants would consider safety and multimodal access when designing these projects, but the fact that the primary or only motivation is to reduce vehicular delay and increase LOS is very troubling. **Deprioritizing LOS should mean that these projects are either: (a) removed from the Circulation Element (and Capital Improvement Plan) entirely; or (b) if staff believe that improvements in these same locations are still necessary for safety or active transportation access, the projects should be re-scope/re-characterized in that manner, without reference to LOS.**

Although I have not been able to locate a copy, it also appears from the description that Appendix A is entirely focused on capacity "improvements" to address LOS "deficiencies," despite this being contrary to your decision last night and the city's stated approach to LOS.

It's important to recognize that while the city has wisely disavowed the practice of adding more lanes to streets or highways (a policy already reflected in the Circulation Element), adding more through lanes is not the only way to increase vehicular capacity. Turn lanes, roadway extensions, channelization, and roundabouts are other common ways to increase capacity, and are all reflected in the Circulation Element plans. Just like adding through lanes, none of these will actually work to decrease congestion in the long term. And more importantly, almost all of them will decrease safety. (The possible exception is roundabouts, which have well-documented safety benefits for car occupants, but which can actually decrease safety for people walking, biking and rolling if not designed specifically for their protection.)

In order to prioritize safety and low-carbon modes of transportation and to deprioritize LOS in keeping with last night's decision, we ask that you remove from the Circulation Element other references to LOS "deficiencies" and to any need for vehicular "circulation improvements," along with removing any projects or plans that are motivated only or primarily by LOS "deficiency" concerns.

Finally, I also feel it is important to address staff's contention last night that sometimes LOS improvements are necessary to prevent traffic diversion or "leakage" onto other city streets. While this seems like common sense, it may not be accurate. Research has shown that even actively removing vehicular capacity (e.g., lane reduction) usually does not result in significant traffic diversion. And if diversion is still a concern, it can be mitigated with traffic calming or even barrier/diverters on the potential alternate routes - if an alternate route is just as slow because of stop signs, speed bumps, narrow widths, winding path of travel, etc., few people will choose to divert.

Thank you.

Colin

On Fri, Apr 7, 2023 at 2:58 PM Colin Fiske [REDACTED] wrote:
Commissioners,

CRTP submits the following comments on the draft General Plan Circulation Element which you will be reviewing on Tuesday:

- 1. Remove "level of service" (LOS) or other measures of vehicular delay or congestion from all policies, projects and priorities.** It is well established in the transportation planning literature that responding to delay or congestion by increasing capacity does not work - it eventually just causes more people to drive, leading back to the same congestion (and more emissions). Furthermore, the temporary reduction in delay that can be achieved is actually dangerous, because increased speeds result in more crashes, deaths and serious injuries. Arcata has mostly abandoned the idea of building more roads and more lanes, thankfully. But the General Plan still describes streets with any congestion as "deficient" or "unacceptable" and has many policies and projects that attempt to increase capacity in other ways in response to vehicle delay. Just like adding more lanes, any other attempt to increase capacity just won't work, and for the same reason - reduced delay is itself what induces more driving. Thus, managing for LOS is both ineffective and incompatible with the city's other goals of decreasing the amount of driving and increasing the amount of walking, biking, rolling and transit use.
- 2. Prioritize slow, safe design for all users on all city streets.** The General Plan still uses the "functional classification" rubric to categorize some streets as collectors or arterials, whose main goal is to move traffic rather than to provide access to destinations or provide a safe public space. Exactly because of this approach, arterials in Arcata (and throughout the country) are the most dangerous roads, where serious crashes are highly concentrated. There is no city street in Arcata (aside from a few rural roads) that is not lined with homes, businesses, and other destinations, and is not used by people for a wide variety of activities. Denying this reality has deadly consequences. We ask that you stop using the invented concept of collectors and arterials in the Circulation Element and adopt policies to design all roads for safety and low speed.
- 3. Provide Class IV bikeways on major streets.** Class IV bikeways are protected by a physical vertical barriers. There are currently no Class IV bikeways in Arcata (or in Humboldt County). But if we want to increase biking, we need to build them. Research shows that they not only improve safety for bicyclists and drivers, they also are required for most people to feel comfortable enough to actually bike on busy streets. The Circulation Element should reflect the need for Class IV bikeways in its policies, maps and plans.
- 4. Commit to improving public transportation as rapidly as possible.** Just like faster roads can cause people to drive more, better transit service can cause more people to ride and improve the lives of transit-dependent people. Since these outcomes are necessary to meet climate, equity and transportation goals, the city should commit to improving transit, not just maintaining the status quo. As part of this commitment, the Circulation Element should commit to exploring all-electric microtransit service to complement the fixed-route buses, and to exploring merging AMRTS with HTA for greater coordination and efficiency.

5. **Include a policy to pilot a Slow Streets program.** The current Circulation Element unnecessarily restricts the possibility of closing neighborhood streets to through-traffic, despite this being a popular and successful safety and revitalization measure in many other communities. Instead, the Circulation Element should commit to launching a pilot program to do just that on certain city streets. The Element could also include a policy promoting [School Streets](#) as well.
6. **Begin charging for parking downtown.** The Circulation Element should include a policy to begin charging for downtown parking. Free public parking is a subsidy and incentive for driving, which is incompatible with the city's equity, climate and transportation goals. Furthermore, free parking leads to inefficient use and inflated demand, which results in constant requests for more parking in a never-ending cycle. New smart meters can be programmed to adjust pricing dynamically according to demand, to maximize parking utilization while minimizing the subsidy. Revenues can be used to support public transit, active transportation, or other public amenities. We also note that charging for parking downtown is a measure in the draft regional Climate Action Plan.

Regarding the proposed K/L Street couplet, the staff report for Tuesday accurately conveys CRTP's position. However, in light of our comments above, I would add a couple more details:

- It is possible to redesign K Street as envisioned in the current draft Gateway Plan - bringing it down to a 1-lane, 1-way street - without building out L Street, if the city chooses not to prioritize LOS, as noted above. Southbound traffic would still have many other streets to choose from. We would support this option.
- Even if K Street remains 2-way, much more can be done to improve safety than is reflected in the options in the staff report. If parking lanes are removed, for example, there would be plenty of room for Class IV protected bikeways (which are needed on this street). Stop signs can be added to calm traffic regardless of the "warrants." Even speed bumps/humps/pillows are possible if the city chooses to prioritize low speed and safety over capacity on this "arterial" street.

Thank you for your consideration.

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