



PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES

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Wednesday, March 19, 2003
SPECIAL MEETING – 7:00 PM
City Council Chambers
Civic Center, 1st Floor
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, California 94301

ROLL CALL:

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Commissioners:

Annette Bialson, Chair
Michael Griffin, Vice-Chair
Karen Holman-absent
Patrick Burt - absent
Bonnie Packer
Phyllis Cassel
Joseph Bellomo

Staff:

Steve Emslie, Planning Director
Joseph Kott, Chief Transportation Official
Olubayo Elimisha, Staff Secretary

AGENDIZED ITEMS:

1. Transportation Strategic Plan
2. Approval Of Minutes -- None

Chair Bialson: I would like to call this meeting to order. Would the Secretary please call roll. Thank you. I want it noted that the agenda has me being absent and I am very much here. If somebody cares to correct the agenda, please go right ahead.

The first item on the agenda is Oral Communications.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS. Members of the public may speak to any item not on the agenda with a limitation of three (3) minutes per speaker. Those who desire to speak must complete a speaker request card available from the secretary of the Commission. The Planning and Transportation Commission reserves the right to limit the oral communications period to 15 minutes.

Chair Bialson: I have no speaker request cards so we will close that item.

CONSENT CALENDAR. Items will be voted on in one motion unless removed from the calendar by a Commission Member.

1
2 Chair Bialson: There are no items on the Consent Calendar.

3
4 ***AGENDA CHANGES, ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS.***

5
6 Chair Bialson: There are no Agenda Changes, or Deletions or Unfinished Business.

7
8 ***UNFINISHED BUSINESS.***

9 ***Public Hearings: None.***

10
11 ***Other Items: None.***

12
13 Chair Bialson: So we go right into New Business and we have one item on the agenda, which is
14 the Transportation Strategic Plan. If Staff wishes to speak to that we would all appreciate it.

15
16 ***NEW BUSINESS.***

17 ***Public Hearings:***

- 18
19 1. **Transportation Strategic Plan:** Consideration of draft transportation implementation
20 plan, proposed transportation system performance measures, and comparative review of
21 Transportation Division functions.

22
23 Mr. Steve Emslie, Planning Director: Thank you Chair Bialson and members of the Commission
24 it is my pleasure to introduce tonight the team headed by Joe Kott, our Chief Transportation
25 Official, who has prepared for you the Strategic Transportation Plan. The Commission will
26 recall it reviewed this last fall on a preliminary basis and we collected some data from the
27 Commission and have continued to take data and thank the Commission for their help in filling
28 out the forms. I recognize they are a little bit complicated but hopefully we were able to explain
29 it well enough to get through it.

30
31 Before the presentation tonight I really wanted to put this in a little bit of context. This is really
32 if you think about our continuum of policy, this is really a bridge between the policies in the
33 Comprehensive Plan and its implementation program and the work that Joe is doing and his staff
34 is doing in implementing the citywide transportation analysis. This is a necessary, it is a finer
35 grain analysis of the issues regarding implementation and a priority setting that is necessary for
36 us to set the groundwork and to contribute and inform the process that is ongoing with the
37 citywide transportation plan. So following close in the heels of this work will be the citywide
38 transportation plan. We do have preliminary findings and analysis to present to the Planning and
39 Transportation Commission within the next three to four weeks. In fact the next time you will be
40 seeing Joe it will be a presentation of the preliminary results of the work that Joe and his staff
41 have been doing on the citywide plan. So I would like to just mention that as something for you
42 to keep in mind as you hear the presentation. Keep in mind that this is really part of a continuum
43 of efforts starting from the very cerebral, philosophical level at the Comp Plan and working our
44 way down to the implementation and funding mechanisms that would be in place in the citywide
45 transportation plan. With that I am going to turn it over to Joe who will introduce the team and
46 start off the presentation.

1 Mr. Joseph Kott, Chief Transportation Official: Thank you very much, Steve. Good evening
2 Commissioners. With me this evening are Staff of Nelson Nygaard Associates, a firm that has
3 been working with us on this project including Adam Malard Ball seated to my left, Jeffrey
4 Tumlin who has just raised his hand and John Ells.
5

6 This Commission has already considered our proposed performance measures and our proposed
7 transportation implementation plan in a study session on October 30, 2002. In reference to the
8 Staff Report you have been given we have three recommendations this evening. A
9 recommendation that you in turn recommend to Council our Transportation System Performance
10 Indicators, further recommendations to Council are propose Transportation Implementation Plan
11 and receive and accept findings of our Transportation Division Peer Review.
12

13 So what is this Transportation Strategic Plan? We see it as really a carrying out of the policy
14 dictates/mandates of Palo Alto's Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element. Some of you
15 worked on the Comprehensive Plan in its development and you are aware though the document
16 is very progressive in many ways it does lack a certain amount of detail, which makes it
17 somewhat difficult to operationalize or take action on or use as an action guide. We see the
18 strategic plan as providing somewhat more detailed action guidance that we need. We are not
19 breaking new policy ground here or suggesting that really. We are just trying to make the Comp
20 Plan more useful to all of us who are engaged in making our transportation system work better
21 for the community. We will talk later about the various components of the Strategic Plan. Our
22 focus tonight is on three that is the performance indicators, the Implementation Plan and the Peer
23 Review.
24

25 What are we going to use the Strategic Plan for? Well, it is going to be a guidance for us in
26 seeking external funding, particularly grant funding. It will be a guide to us in preparation of our
27 own work program. In other words we would like to focus our staff resources on the more
28 meaningful, the more important, aspects of our Transportation Plan. You will give us guidance
29 on that tonight in terms of what parts of the Transportation Plan and the Comp Plan are most
30 important. This process that Steve indicated is also a linkage to more specific efforts in some
31 cases at the intersection level. We will talk about that further too. Overall we see the Strategic
32 Plan as fostering what you might call fitness to purpose, that is to make sure that our activities,
33 our resources, our focus is the right one, it is on the more important rather than the less important
34 activities and projects. So it is a strategic vision or framework for action. Other metaphors,
35 well, a roadmap may be a good one, clarifies and specifies what is in the Comprehensive Plan
36 Transportation Element. Our performance indicators really are guidance system and odometer;
37 think of other metaphors that allow you to understand better where you are going, how fast and
38 in which direction.
39

40 The linkage between this Strategic Plan and our Citywide Land Use and Transportation Study,
41 which we call the Nexus Study informally, is that the Nexus Study goes down to the intersection
42 level. The various mitigations be they alternative modes or be they somewhat more traditional
43 like signal improvements the overall framework for policy, what is important and what is not
44 will be set in the Strategic Plan, clarified, and the Land Use and Transportation Study will
45 provide specific guidance which will ultimately be put into an ordinance on what to do to make
46 the major intersections in Palo Alto un-congested in the future. For us in Palo Alto un-congested
47 means an acceptable level of service not only for vehicles but also for cyclists and pedestrians.
48 So the Strategic Plan is at a higher level of focus the Land Use and Transportation Study is at a

1 tactical or narrower focus. Again the Strategic Plan looks at overall aggregates, how are we
2 doing and how do we shift more people to more environmentally benign modes of travel, reduce
3 the overall dependence on vehicular travel as is prescribed in the Comprehensive Plan, reduce
4 the overall impacts of traffic on residential quality of life, reduce the overall impacts of our
5 transportation system on other important variables like air quality. We need both perspectives
6 though this more aggregate citywide strategic perspective and we also need a tactical specific
7 one at the intersection level. On April second when we come to you to update you on the Land
8 Use and Transportation Study we will be at the intersection level of detail not at this higher level
9 of detail. Both are needed because both provide the kind of guidance one needs.

10
11 On to performance indicators there is a lot of interest in this topic these days. This is a document
12 and there are many like it in different fields but this is specific to transportation. It arrived in my
13 mailbox the other day from the U.S. DOT. I am not recommending it particularly but it is
14 interesting because it does relate to performance measures. It is a document called,
15 "Performance Measurement." It talks about different places in the country that have attempted
16 to measure their performance in doing what they are doing in transportation, creating a report
17 card like we are interested in doing here. We would like to create a transparent and policy
18 relevant set of indicators to tell the community, the Commission and the Council whether we are
19 moving forward and at what rate toward the goals and objectives set forth in the Comprehensive
20 Plan Transportation Element. We would like to do this annually in a report card format, put it up
21 on the web and deliver reports to this Commission annually. It is very difficult to determine how
22 successful you are without any way of assessing that, without any grades, without any marks or
23 indicators. We are proposing a number of them this evening.

24
25 The value of the indicators is to focus us on performance and policy. Performance is fine and it
26 needs to be as good as possible but if it is not relevant to policy it is not important. If the policy
27 is relevant but the performance is not good that is not helpful either. So we are trying to get the
28 policy guidance straight and the detailed and actionable as well as the performance measures,
29 which tell us and tell all of you whether or not we are achieving these policy ends. We do
30 emphasize because we do like empirical measures. This Commission receives a lot of very good
31 input from the community, it is very important input, much of it based on experience people have
32 and somewhat subjective experience as experience like that is but we are suggesting some more
33 objective measures to compliment or supplement testimony this Commission does receive and
34 we rely on. We have recommended to this Commission a set of performance indicators and we
35 believe this set will help guide not only us but guide the community policy makers.

36
37 I should add that in the process of developing these indicators we did make good use of an
38 advisory panel. We made good use of a logical framework that was agreed. The outcome was
39 pretty good with one exception and I am taking responsibility for this. I did not agree with the
40 outcome that puts vehicular level of service as secondary measure of performance. My own
41 view is it should be a primary one that we should track. We do anyway but we should put it as a
42 major item of importance for us. So I am taking that on my own responsibility to amend that
43 recommendation you have in your Staff Report to include vehicular LOS as a primary measure.
44 Dissemination again through the website we need to do a much better job especially in such a
45 computer literate town as Palo Alto in letting the public know via the web in particular where we
46 are with traffic impacts, traffic volumes and all the other measures that we talked about in the
47 performance indicators.

1 The Implementation Plan this Commission did undergo somewhat painful, I think, mock study
2 process of assessing and rating by scoring all the projects in our Comp Plan. We are suggesting
3 that the scores are less important than the broad categories that the scores put the projects into.
4 We are asking this Commission to apply a straight-face test. If a project has been categorized by
5 score into a high importance category and it shouldn't be this Commission as broadly
6 representative of the community and the community's interests should have leave to shift it
7 around regardless of its score. We also have made an attempt to categorize projects by order of
8 magnitude costs. We have five cost ranges so we are not dealing in just simply an abstraction
9 here. We are giving you some idea of the price tag of these things. Now most of the items in the
10 Comp Plan haven't undergone detailed engineering analysis so these are order of magnitude
11 costs. Readiness is critical. When we have opportunities for grants a big issue is are you ready
12 to take something off the shelf and go with it, do you have at least a conceptual plan, can you
13 move right into engineering, design and so forth. So we are giving you a take on project
14 readiness and that is an important thing to think about.

15
16 Lastly, telling you whether we as a community or as a City are the project lead or some of our
17 regional partners are. Remember the source of our projects including the Comprehensive Plan of
18 Palo Alto, the Draft Bicycle Plan for Palo Alto but also the big regional transportation plans, the
19 VTA's long-range plan, which is called VTP2020, and the Transportation Commission's
20 Regional Transportation Plan. Improvements to Caltrain for example which are vitally important
21 to Palo Alto we would support and do support as a community through our Council and Comp
22 Plan but are not under our control or really we would never be a lead in those efforts. Our
23 approach in the Implementation Plan is developing a logical scoring framework and weighting
24 various factors of importance in applying those weighted scores to the projects as this
25 Commission has on October 30. Do keep in mind, as you recall from our study session the
26 assessments, high, medium and low importance are based on citywide considerations, citywide
27 considerations. In other is this project, bicycle boulevards in Palo Alto, is this important
28 citywide or is it not? That was the grounds on which the scorings and rating were done. Again,
29 please do focus on the placement of projects and categories not the position within the
30 categories. Please do keep in mind the strategic and citywide perspective. We will come back to
31 you every year to do reassessments of these placements.

32
33 I should say I agreed with everything except one and this is a big one. Our advisory panel rated
34 computerized traffic management at low importance category. My own view, again I will take
35 this as my responsibility, is that it really should be a high importance category. I believe it was
36 not adequately described. I take responsibility for that. Computerized traffic management will
37 allow us to do a lot of different things. It will reduce and even eliminate in many cases the need
38 to widen intersections, which means that walkers and cyclists won't have additional difficulty
39 getting through intersections and we will have more efficient signal operations. It will allow us
40 to do some fancy stuff with our signals including eventually giving preference to transit vehicles,
41 hold the green, or keep the red at bay for awhile and let the bus go through. These are
42 capabilities which really are very much pro alternative modes. They are also pro safety as a
43 more even traffic flow with a reduced speed differential is much more important than almost any
44 other variable to keep our roads safe. So computerized traffic flow is highly important and I
45 would urge the Commission to consider that as a high category of importance.

46
47 Next steps in this process, we will come back to the Commission with a funding plan with
48 sources like grants and sources like the proposed transportation impact fee which will be

1 described as a result of our transportation land use study and other sources of funding through
2 our Capital Improvement Program and so forth. We are coming back to the Commission with a
3 full scale draft strategic plan which will include, Adam will discuss this a bit, our own prioritized
4 work program for the Transportation Division. We want to right size our effort so that we are
5 focused on what is important taking this from the project level emphasis down to the Staff
6 emphasis. We would like to get as much leverage from the Staff resources we have because we
7 are well aware we won't be able to augment these resources for a very long time given the
8 economy. Eventually we would like to go to Council with this Strategic Transportation Plan
9 package.

10
11 I would be glad to answer questions now or if the Commission prefers we can transfer over to
12 Adam Malard Ball who will discuss the Strategic Transportation Plan further and actually has a
13 somewhat different perspective on things.

14
15 Chair Bialson: I think we should have him speak at this point.

16
17 Mr. Adam Malard Ball, Nelson Nygaard Associates: Thank you, Joe. Good evening
18 Commissioners. While I will be doing most of the presentation we also have Jeffrey Tumlin and
19 John Ells who both did some intrinsic study of this analysis so I will be referring to them
20 depending on the specific questions that come up this evening.

21
22 As Joe said, why do we need an implementation plan? The issue is really the Comprehensive
23 Plan was adopted in 1998 with a very broad vision and there is lots of excellent materials and
24 specific projects and programs in there but it doesn't really give any guidance as to which are the
25 most pressing, which should be prioritized the most. Also the implementation plan needs to take
26 into account the plans that have been developed since then, particularly the Bicycle
27 Transportation Plan for the City of Palo Alto but also a lot of the regional plans developed by in
28 particular VTA that have come along since then.

29
30 This is all the projects and programs that are actually included in the Comprehensive Plan.
31 Thirteen of those we don't really need to worry about here tonight they have already been
32 implemented or they are already fully funded. Of the remainder there are 15, which are entirely
33 funded by a different agency. Although they still have an important role for the City in guiding
34 its advocacy efforts as in which are the most important to press for at the County or the Region
35 level. There is a further four where the City may need to contribute funds but it isn't the lead on.
36 The most important from there in terms of which to prioritize are the 22 which aren't yet fully
37 funded, they haven't been implemented and where it stand the City as the lead agency to
38 determine how and when they go forward.

39
40 So the aim is to provide not only a framework for which projects to pursue for funding but also
41 in terms of which to prioritize for Staff time and resources and which to take forward to the next
42 level of engineering or planning detail. There is also to develop a more specific performance
43 indicators to assess which projects are in line with the broader goals articulated in the
44 Comprehensive Plan. We went over a lot of this material in October and since then we have
45 actually revised a lot of the scoring to incorporate the exercise that you did that night. We have
46 combined those with the scores we got from the advisory panel. In most cases there were very,
47 very similar so the actual prioritization didn't end up changing that much, which also give us
48 confidence in our methodology that it is robust enough that given these two different groups and

1 people, yourselves and the advisory panel doing the exercise at different times come up with a
2 broadly similar result. So as I said we have also de-emphasized the actual initial scores in
3 recognition that this is a very qualitative process. So really emphasizing that the categories that
4 those fall into which are the highest priority, which are medium and which are low.
5

6 We also started work on the second phase of our effort, which is Strategic Plan and Work
7 Program, third Transportation Division itself. We have the Peer Review, which we will be
8 talking about in a bit and it is also in your packet and then we will be following up on that with
9 additional tasks in the next few months including a strengths/weaknesses analysis, work program
10 and a funding plan.
11

12 So why do we need performance indicators? There are four key roles of these indicators, which I
13 want to talk about here. Firstly, in terms of which individual projects best fulfill the City's goals.
14 It actually provides a mechanism to assess that on a more objective basis that can allow all the
15 projects to be compared on an equal footing. It is also an overall report card on how the City's
16 transportation network is performing. It can be on the website, it can be presented to the
17 Commission and to the City Council, and it helps operationalize these broad goals in the
18 Comprehensive Plan. For example to improve the quality of public transit it is a great goal but it
19 doesn't really offer a way to measure that very easily. There is a possible future role in
20 environmental review, which we are not recommending here tonight but it is something to bear
21 in mind for the future. Automobile level of service or vehicular level of service is really the
22 traditional method of measuring transportation system performance. It refers at each individual
23 intersection how much delay each motor vehicle is experiencing and then that is rated on a scale
24 from A to F. The benefit is it is a widely accepted standardized measure but it is also got
25 unintended consequences. These are measure of movement of vehicles through the system rather
26 than people. So a bus with say 20 or 30 people on board is counted the same or very little more
27 than a vehicle with one occupant and bikes and pedestrians don't really count at all in this. It
28 also focuses on individual intersections rather than the system-wide congestion. Joe has
29 recommended adding this to the list of strategic indicators in the Staff Report and I am totally in
30 agreement with that in particular it gives flexibility for future work on the Land Use and
31 Transportation Study and the Nexus Study. It provides a mechanism to levy a fee based on those
32 vehicle impacts. I also wanted to stress that we are not using this indicator to actually compare
33 the project performance and actually prioritize projects. It is really a separate indicator that has
34 more specific uses particularly for the impact fees. Is that fair that we are using to actually
35 determine which indicators to actually select. Firstly, obviously they have to reflect what was in
36 the Comprehensive Plan both the spirit and the tone of that plan as well as some of the specific
37 policies in the plan. It shouldn't be an expensive effort to undertake. It should retain a high
38 level of focus so aren't bombarded with 20 or 30 indicators and then it is difficult to get a clear
39 view of what is important and what the overall result is. And it should be comprehensible to the
40 public and the citizens of Palo Alto should really understand how their transportation system is
41 performing. As I mentioned also the particular use of the forthcoming Land Use and
42 Transportation Study or the Nexus Study, which will help levy future development impact fees.
43

44 These are same indicators that we brought to you in the study session last fall. The first two are
45 fairly self-explanatory: reducing vehicle trips and reducing dependency on single occupancy
46 vehicles. Then the next three are a bit less intuitive. They are related to the concept of vehicular
47 level of service. If you can assess level of service for a vehicle you can also come up with a
48 indicator that provides you with a level of service for a bicycle or a pedestrian or a transit rider.

1 Most of these are based on some excellent innovative work that is being done in Florida, which
2 the Florida Department of Transportation has recommended for all local jurisdictions in Florida
3 to adopt and for both in measuring overall transportation system performance and also in
4 environmental review there. Travel safety and healthy and safe school commute again those are
5 fairly self-explanatory. These are the only indicators we want to talk about. There is a lot of
6 excellent data that is already being collected by the Transportation Division or other agencies
7 particularly VTA. They are actually a good compliment to these six strategic indicators. They
8 can help analyze the reasons that the changes and trends, analyze why these goals are being
9 achieved or possibly not being achieved. So we really draw on the existing data that is already
10 out there. This is just a long list of all of the data which is mostly already out there. For example
11 ridership on the City shuttle, transit pass sales by VTA and the number of people participating in
12 the City's commute program.

13
14 It is really important to tie these back into the Comprehensive Plan goals. We are not breaking
15 new policy ground here. We are really trying to operationalize what is already in the
16 Comprehensive Plan. So the Comprehensive Plan goals are in the left-hand column and then the
17 objectives, which are the indicators, which we are looking at tonight, these are how these relate
18 to the Comprehensive Plan goals on the left. For example I mentioned before convenient,
19 efficient public transit system that provides a viable alternative to driving. It is a great goal but it
20 is difficult to actually measure. So we are proposing to measure it by the following indicators
21 through transit level of service, how much this transit system actually persuades people to
22 actually get out of their cars, provides an alternative to driving and therefore leads to a reduction
23 in vehicle trips.

24
25 The main focus of the next section is really how you use these indicators to prioritize the projects
26 and how you prioritize these 60-odd projects and programs in the Comprehensive Plan to
27 determine which are the most important to go forward with quickly and prioritize the funding.
28 So there is a qualitative process and that is actually an advantage because it allows all of them to
29 be compared on a level playing field. Some of them have not been worked up into a great level
30 of engineering detail so we don't have the hard data on the precise impacts and sketch level of
31 analysis and the qualitative system they can all be compared on an equal footing.

32
33 So on each of the projects we did this review in October. We also did it with the advisory panel
34 scoring each project against each indicator. We got a very high level of agreement there. It is
35 not the only factor to determine which projects to take forward. Cost is obviously a very
36 important one and also project readiness, which can be taken forward straight away and funding
37 applications drawn up. This most important projects where the City has determined how to
38 spend the funding available to it but it is also important in guiding regional advocacy efforts. I
39 want to say particularly for Caltrain or the VTA or even at the regional or MTC level which
40 projects are most important to fight for from the City's perspective.

41
42 I don't want to spend much time on this. This is what we did with you last fall, rating each
43 project on a scale of negative five to positive five. The positive five is a very major positive
44 impact all the way down to a very major negative impact. There is actually some indicators
45 which the advisory panel in particular thought were more important than others in particular the
46 travel safety and promoting a healthy and safe school commute and also reduce vehicle trips. So
47 a matrix can double or triple any scores that are assigned in those categories to reflect their
48 relative importance. This is how it looks when you put it all into a matrix. Then actually

1 converting those into priorities is the next step both to give a clear understanding on which
2 projects to pursue most vigorously and also rather than actually just looking at the score looking
3 at this in a more qualitative fashion which are high priority, which are medium and which are
4 low and helping to assess the costs against the impacts.
5

6 These are the results for the highest priority ones. They are mainly the bicycle and pedestrian
7 projects also the neighborhood traffic calming scores very highly along with the University
8 Avenue Intermodal Transit Center. In the medium priority we have again a lot of bicycle and
9 pedestrian projects and some residential arterials for example along Middlefield Road some
10 treatments to actually maintain the capacity while making it a safer and more attractive street.
11 the low priorities, we aren't saying these aren't worthwhile projects that they wouldn't actually
12 bring benefits to the City just that their overall benefit is likely to be lower than some of the ones
13 above it in the table. For example the Downtown alleyways that is also very low cost and the
14 transportation information kiosks and I am happy to defer to Joe on the computerized traffic
15 management that perhaps we didn't really get over the message of how that impacts transit
16 riders, bicycles and pedestrians.
17

18 The last item is projects where the City of Palo Alto is the lead. These are the ones where there
19 is another agency in the lead and the City may have to contribute some funding. The BRT on El
20 Camino and the Regional Bicycle Plan has come up the most. Actually the roadway link
21 between the 101 and the Dumbarton Bridge actually comes out as a negative score there that
22 actually works against a lot of the City's goals to reduce vehicle trips and promote transit,
23 walking and cycling.
24

25 These are the external projects where the City's role is really advocacy in determining which to
26 give the most support to. A lot of the Caltrain projects, electrification and the Baby Bullet come
27 out really highly there. Then some of the ones that are really less important are perhaps the
28 Amtrak Coast Daylight, which have a very, very minimal impact if any on local transportation
29 within the City and issues such as the freeway information monitoring control.
30

31 It is difficult to read but what we want is for projects to be in the top left-hand corner where it is
32 both the lowest cost and the highest benefit. This really provides a way to assess the costs
33 against the benefit. A version of this table is on page 23 of your packet if you want to have a
34 closer look. The ones that come out best are the ones, which are both really high benefit and also
35 relatively low cost, which are the neighborhood traffic calming and the bicycle boulevards.
36 Projects such as the University Avenue Intermodal Transit Center give a really high benefit but
37 you have to also set against it that it is the highest price tag of any of the projects in the
38 Comprehensive Plan. As we get to the Downtown alleyways, the bicycles and the pedestrian on
39 the bottom left is a low priority but it is also a really low cost. So it is one of these small simple
40 things that you can do that wouldn't have a major citywide impact but actually will bring maybe
41 some local benefit and not at a very high cost. Then some of the ones that perhaps don't score so
42 well are low benefit but they are also medium or high cost. One is the vertical curbs where we
43 are replacing the rolled curbs with vertical curbs to stop the cars driving up and parking. Very
44 badly is the regional solution to the link between the 101 and the Dumbarton Bridge, which
45 actually has one of the highest price tags and is also a negative benefit. So rather than arriving at
46 a firm decision on this is number one and this is number two we just want to put it in context.
47 This is just a general guide but we should be going for the ones in the top left and the ones in the
48 bottom right are less important. The actually decision in a lot of cases will depend on the

1 availability of specific sources of funding and project readiness. So there has to be a certain
2 amount of opportunism there as well.

3
4 To move on to the second part of the presentation which fixes on the second phase of the work,
5 which is the Work Program for the Transportation Division, and looking at the management side
6 of this and how to manage this work program and what the work priorities should be. Our first
7 stage on this was actually to look at five peer cities, which are comparable to Palo Alto. They
8 were of similar size, there was a major university there so a city within a major metropolitan area
9 and they also have a reputation for good multi-modal transportation planning. The five there are
10 Berkeley, Boulder in Colorado, Cambridge on the outskirts of Boston and Davis and Santa
11 Monica also in California.

12
13 One of the issues we looked at is actually where transportation falls in the city's organizational
14 chart. Is it its own department or is it like Palo Alto as a division within a bigger department.
15 Actually only one we looked at where it is its own department is Berkeley. In these cities it is
16 located within a broader planning or community development department as in Palo Alto, Santa
17 Monica and Cambridge. Some cities actually put it within public works such as Boulder and
18 Davis. Then we looked at actually what the responsibilities of the transportation division are
19 whether it is combined with planning and traffic engineering or whether these functions are
20 largely separated or whether they were in a completely different departments all together as in
21 Cambridge. Finally we also looked at the staffing levels for different cities with similar
22 responsibilities to Palo Alto's Transportation Division. Actually Palo Alto is fairly high when
23 you consider the staffing in terms of number of residents but when you look at number of jobs in
24 the city it is actually the lowest. So it really depends on which you take as having a bigger
25 impact on the overall transportation program whether it is the residents or the number of jobs.
26 So without going into detail on that I would say that Palo Alto is fairly in the middle and it is
27 about right-sized as compared to some of the other departments.

28
29 Making comparisons is really difficult because there are so many different factors between these
30 different cities. Some of them have very large specific programs that take up a large amount of
31 staff time. For instance in Santa Monica three of their employees are dedicated just to one
32 program, to the Transportation Demand Ordinance. In Boulder they have very extensive local
33 shuttle system, which compliments the regional transit system, and they have 11 full-time
34 employees just devoted to that whereas in Palo Alto I think it is a half full-time equivalent
35 position devoted to the shuttle. So the overall conclusion is that Palo Alto does a lot compared to
36 other divisions but it doesn't necessarily go into as much depth or detail on these specific
37 elements as some of the other cities. I won't go through any of these in detail but overall these
38 are the things that Joe's Division actually does at the moment.

39
40 How do we use this and take this into the next steps? We are actually going to work to develop
41 some goals and objectives and a strengths/weakness option to threats analysis for the division.
42 We start with the actual prioritized list of projects to develop a more formal work program for
43 the Transportation Division. This and the Peer Review will feedback into the Strategic Plan for
44 Transportation Division which in turn will be a part of this larger Transportation Implementation
45 Plan which will include everything that I have talked to you about tonight.

46
47 Mr. Kott: Adam, just in terms of why we are coming back to the Commission with the Draft
48 Strategic Plan we need to have guidance about the Transportation Implementation Plan and the

1 performance measures and some input on the Peer Review before we complete the whole
2 package. Really the whole package includes the funding plan, we need to determine where we
3 can get funding likely sources for the higher importance projects. Secondly we need to have
4 some guidance in terms of what is important and what is not for our detailed staffing Division
5 Work Program. In order to get some guidance on the Division Work Program we thought you
6 would need to see the Peer Review too. In order to complete our Strategic Plan we need your
7 guidance on the critical elements that we need to complete it.

8
9 Chair Bialson: So that is the completion of the Staff Report?

10
11 Mr. Kott: Yes.

12
13 Chair Bialson: Thank you. Do the Commissioners have any procedure questions or preliminary
14 questions before we ask the public for their comments? You will have an opportunity for
15 questions later. Why don't we hear from the public at this time? We will give each speaker five
16 minutes. We have only one speaker at this time, Bill Phillips of Stanford.

17
18 Mr. Bill Phillips, Stanford: Good evening, Commissioners. I am not trying to make a habit of
19 this and I am going to try tonight to just speak very broadly about something that I have been
20 befuddled by since the start of this study, which I think is an excellent study. The target, which
21 applies to reducing vehicle trips, is to hold total vehicle trips at not more than 2002 levels even
22 with population and employment growth. So maybe I am not getting it but here is my problem.
23 2002 was a period, which continues to today of probably of anywhere from 18% to 25% vacancy
24 in our office buildings Downtown, throughout the Research Park and just about everywhere
25 other than probably along Welch Road. If you are going to hold the vehicle trips down to that
26 high vacancy level then as the employees start to come back in and occupy that vacant space and
27 hopefully begin purchasing in our shops again hey are all going to have to be somehow shifted to
28 another non-vehicle mode of travel. If that is the case I am just not seeing how you are going to
29 do that. There is no evidence so far in what in what I have done in terms of reviewing aggressive
30 TDM in business parks, what I have seen in terms of aggressive TDM in cities in California that
31 would get the mode choice off of single occupancy vehicles and into a non-vehicle type of trip.
32 Where any business park, where any city has been somewhat successful is moving those single
33 occupancy trips into van or carpool trips but those are vehicles. So I agree with the objective. I
34 think there is a challenge there that can be grappled with and dealt with fairly successfully but I
35 think you have setup a target that is very unrealistic and is going to come into conflict with any
36 goals that the City may have regarding restoring its economic health at this time. Thank you.

37
38 Chair Bialson: Thank you. I have one more speaker, Joy Ogawa. Joy, you will have five
39 minutes.

40
41 Ms. Joy Ogawa, 2305 Yale Street, Palo Alto: Thank you. I just turned in a copy of the October
42 30 minutes where I made my comments. Actually it took me quite awhile to find those because
43 there was nothing in the Staff Report indicating the previous date of the Study Session. There
44 was no procedural history so there was no context and there was no indication that the Planning
45 Commission had made comments or that members of the public had made comments and how
46 they had been addressed. I made comments at that previous meeting about how I really wanted
47 to see reduction in cut-through traffic be one of the performance indicators. I pointed out where
48 in the Comprehensive Plan it talks about reducing cut-through, Policy T-28 and Policy T-30. It

1 really makes sense to me that reduction in cut-through traffic as performance indicator would
2 make a lot of sense. I don't understand why it was not included or not addressed in any way. So
3 I just am curious to see why it is not talked about in the Staff Report. Is it because they just
4 forgot about it or is it because they thought about it and decided that it is not a good performance
5 indicator for whatever reason?
6

7 The other thing when I look at the Staff Report and the results of the rankings with these
8 performance indicators I do see neighborhood traffic calming getting ranked very high. Then I
9 think about the budget survey that the City did recently and how neighborhood traffic calming
10 ranked really low in priority of things that the residents wanted to see be a priority. I wonder
11 about why there is that disconnect. I think part of it is a disconnect between the theoretical
12 performance of neighborhood traffic calming, what it is supposed to do theoretically and maybe
13 the actual performance that we have experienced in Palo Alto. I think that actually residents
14 maybe understandably lack confidence in neighborhood traffic calming giving us a good result.
15 So actually that makes me wonder how useful this ranking, these performance indicators and this
16 ranking, will really be in terms of something practical. If it is just kind of a theoretical thing that
17 is really out of touch with the experience of residents and the opinions of residents. Those are
18 my thoughts. Thank you very much.
19

20 Chair Bialson: Thank you. I have no other speaker request cards so we will close the public
21 portion of this and bring it back to the Commission. Bonnie, would you care to say something?
22

23 Commissioner Packer: I have a couple of questions. One, I appreciate the comment that Mr.
24 Phillips made about the baseline for reducing vehicle trips. I remember raising that question
25 during our study session. If you could answer that. Also there is a little bit of a description of
26 how you define a trip and is the issue trips in general or trips in specific areas when you get
27 down to that land use level study if you are going to do a relationship between an absolute
28 number of trips or trips in certain areas of the City that are more highly impacted than other
29 areas.
30

31 Mr. Kott: The specific indicator here is on motor vehicle trips. Motor vehicle trips create
32 impacts not so much person trips. It is good for people to travel. We would like more people to
33 travel in a less impactful way if at all possible, for example walking and cycling and using shared
34 ride vehicles like transit vehicles. The indicator suggested here focuses on the impactful kind of
35 travel that is the level of vehicle trips, the vehicle trip volume. Here we are talking about an
36 aggregate measure that is what I probably described to this Commission more times than you
37 want to hear, it is a title measure. It is an overall level of traffic in the City measured by total
38 vehicle trips. Presumably we want to hold the tide. Now, what happens at the individual
39 intersection level is more for the analysis of the transportation and land use so-called Nexus
40 Study where we zoom, it is kind of like Map Quest where you zoom in, geographically zoom in.
41 That is what we are doing in that study. Here we are dealing with aggregate. We know that in
42 the aggregate more vehicles create a lot of community bads. They not only include traffic
43 congestion along corridors and at intersections but they include other impacts of traffic that
44 degrade residential quality of life and make it difficult for walkers and cyclists and all that.
45

46 In terms of the baseline I think Bill has raised a very good point. In fact, Bill typically raises
47 very good points. This is a very strict baseline and he is certainly right that 2002 was a
48 recessionary year, which translates into less travel at peak periods. In Palo Alto we import a lot

1 of jobs. You saw the measurement of FTE per population and per jobs. This may be self-
2 serving but jobs really count a lot because those commute trips come in during peak hours. We
3 are setting a strict standard and that is certainly for this Commission's discussion and debate.
4 Remember one of the bravest experiments along this line of setting baselines is what Portland,
5 Maine did a number of years ago. They set as their baseline rolling back commute trips to 1980
6 levels and they did their strategic plan exercise in about 1994 or 95. 1980 was a year that was
7 still effected by the second oil embargo, the Iranian War oil embargo, there was a lot of
8 carpooling and a blip up in transit usage and a lot of interest in cycling. So that was a severe
9 standard. I haven't kept up with them and I am not sure whether they have come near to
10 attaining, my guess is they have not. We have consciously decided to set a strict standard, which
11 is going to mean that we are going to have to divert a lot of trips from vehicles over to alternative
12 modes.

13
14 Commissioner Packer: I want to respond to that because if I may because when I looked at the
15 project scorings as related to the performance indicators only those projects that are in the
16 regional area were scored as to have any impact on reducing auto trips. All the other ones that
17 are within our control in Palo Alto that have ones and twos, reduce vehicles trips there are some
18 twos, but none of these projects are going to have a significant impact on reducing trips. So
19 there is a disconnect between the performance indicators and the projects that we are being asked
20 to prioritize. That bothers me if we are going to have a strict baseline.

21
22 Mr. Kott: There is something in economics called facilitating investment as a concept. In order
23 to make something work you not only need to do an action, make an investment, build something
24 but often you need supplementary things to happen too. For example to be a little more concrete,
25 with Caltrain Baby Bullet which is a great project and which if it succeeds will divert a lot of
26 people from their automobiles to the train because the train is going to be twice as fast. In order
27 to make that really work there will need to be an improvement in local access to these train
28 stations including shuttles, cycling and walking programs and facilities and so forth. Without the
29 access the major benefit of the regional transit improvement will not materialize. That is what I
30 consider to be facilitating investment. The primary investment is Caltrain and Baby Bullet in
31 that instance. So the local actions are very important but in terms of regional commuting they
32 need to partner up with the big regional projects.

33
34 Mr. Ball: If I can add a little to what Joe said, first I think it is really important to keep in mind
35 that we are not suggesting these indicators will be used for development decisions. It is not a
36 case of you won't be able to build anything more because it might make the transportation report
37 card look worse. It is really that the Comprehensive Plan says that there is an aim to actually
38 reduce vehicle trips in the City. This is a way of operationalizing that. It is a very tough
39 challenge but there are some good examples of places that have achieved that, Cambridge,
40 Massachusetts is one and right here in your backyard Stanford University which is got its no net
41 new vehicle trips agreement with the County but it still managed to accommodate a lot of growth
42 in recent years.

43
44 Related to Commissioner Packer's question on the impact it is true that most of the projects we
45 are looking at will have a small impact citywide and to a great extent that reflects that most of
46 the transportation system not just in Palo Alto but anywhere is already built and so the marginal
47 impact of any change you make is going to be relatively small. What we really need to look at
48 even though each project in itself will have a small impact that when you actually sum the

1 impacts from various projects and combine that with good development decisions then those
2 ones and twos start to add up to fours and fives. I think it is fair that there is no single magic
3 bullet actually solving the City's transportation problems. A lot of it is working around the
4 edges and combining the impacts of various projects.

5
6 Chair Bialson: Okay. Michael.

7
8 Commissioner Griffin: Joe, I would like to have you address a question dealing with the Peer
9 Review portion of this Staff Report. Benchmarking our own Palo Alto Transportation
10 Department with like organizations throughout the country is extremely important. I found,
11 however, that it was difficult for me to really judge the validity of these choices because I really
12 didn't understand the general population of cities that you examined and why they were rejected
13 and you found these people to me more of a right-on hit. Would you like to talk about that?

14
15 Mr. Kott: Yes, of course. Analogies are always difficult to make because no two situations are
16 ever identical. The cohort we have suggested and we have used a model that colleges and
17 universities do all the time when they compare themselves for recruiting students and faculty for
18 example with others. The method we used was to select which cities around this country are
19 reputed to be the best in multi-modal transportation planning. We have decided consciously to
20 put ourselves in that cohort. Now, Palo Alto has a very distinguished history in bicycle
21 transportation for example. It is often cited nationally for that reason. We think we belong in
22 that peer group. We aspire to be if we are not quite there but I think the membership in a cohort
23 like that is always debatable. You could certainly add or subtract communities quite readily and
24 have pretty good arguments for doing that. Just in our trade terms these are the best in the
25 United States in comparable sizes. Plenty of cities larger also have wonderful transportation
26 planning programs. Portland, Oregon for example clearly does.

27
28 Chair Bialson: Commissioners, if there are no more questions in general are being asked I would
29 like to have us go through this in a way that it has been presented, that is number one, two and
30 three. If you have some more questions in general about procedures then do so.

31
32 Commissioner Cassel: I think these can be worked in except for the fact that I kind of would like
33 a response to Joy's question.

34
35 Mr. Kott: I think Adam may want to offer one too but we are certainly very concerned about
36 cut-through traffic. It is a major problem in Palo Alto near congested intersections. The problem
37 relates to collecting data that is cost effective on cut-through traffic. Now the trade way to do it
38 is called an Origin Destination Study. College Terrace working with us just did one of those. It
39 is extremely labor intensive. The procedure is license plate last four-digit matching of vehicles
40 entering and exiting an area. In order to collect a significant enough sample of cut-through
41 locations and update that database was at least in our view not cost effective. I should say for
42 cut-through traffic that is an important criterion for qualification and ranking in our Traffic
43 Calming Program. When and where we have the resources we do an analysis of cut-through
44 traffic. We do a study of cut-through traffic. Our ordinary procedure though is to use a map and
45 use professional judgment as to whether or not a location is subject, and of course resident
46 testimony, to cut-through traffic. So that is a reason why we did not include that as an indicator
47 we would have to update.

1 Chair Bialson: Thank you. Joe.

2
3 Commissioner Bellomo: Just a follow up. How would you differentiate cut-through traffic and
4 neighborhood calming or would you?
5

6 Mr. Kott: Commissioner Bellomo the criteria of interest in the neighborhood traffic calming
7 program include not only the volume of traffic on a street but the speed of that traffic and the
8 crash history on the street, proximity to schools, variables like that some quantitative and some
9 less quantitative.

10
11 Commissioner Bellomo: Would you like me work my questions into your next line?
12

13 Chair Bialson: If we could let's try to go through and have this on a item similar to the way the
14 Staff has presented it. In other words, I would like to first address the system performance
15 indicators proposed by Staff. We have already had one modification of what has been set forth
16 in the Staff Report and the bringing forward of the level of service from the sub-indicator to the
17 strategic performance indicator table. What I understand from you, Joe, is these are directly tied
18 to Comp Plan policies and what you want the Commission to respond to is whether we want any
19 added. In other words, if they are already here and we agree with it enough said but if there are
20 additional ones or modifications perhaps about ranking does that make any difference or are we
21 assuming everything on figure one is equal rank?
22

23 Mr. Kott: Yes, Chair Bialson, I should add too you see under the Years column, 2007, 2012 and
24 baseline to be determined. We need to do data collection and in some cases figure out an
25 adequate methodology for collecting and maintaining data. You are right we would like to know
26 whether this list is adequate to fit the purpose. The purpose being is it well tied to our
27 Comprehensive Plan goals and policies not to public opinion surveys as important as they are but
28 this is specifically intended to test whether or not we are carrying out the Comprehensive Plan,
29 which was adopted by Council in 1998.
30

31 Chair Bialson: Thank you. Yes, Joe? If we don't have questions about it and we don't seem to,
32 ah, Bonnie has a question.
33

34 Commissioner Packer: I am trying to understand the real difference between the first two
35 indicators, reducing vehicle trips and reducing reliance on single occupancy vehicles. If you
36 reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicles I assume you are going to reduce the vehicle trips.
37 Or if we said something like increase transit or other modes of transportation as opposed to
38 saying reduce vehicle trips. I wonder if there is a real difference of it is just the way that you
39 collect data. Can you address that?
40

41 Mr. Kott: In one case depending on how you look at things it may be a worst case, maybe it is
42 the best case, I am not sure. But if there is just a lot of growth, a lot of development we may
43 very well be in the position where we are able through active programs, successful programs,
44 Baby Bullets, etc., reduce the mode share of single occupant vehicle trips but end up having
45 more vehicle trips per se. Maybe we have a lot more carpools but we have a whole lot more
46 employees so on net we get more vehicles even though we have a lower solo occupant share. It
47 is by the way, you are right Commissioner in I think what you are implying here there is an

1 overlap and it may be kind of a redundancy to it. It is sort of an insurance policy is one way of
2 looking at it. Adam?

3
4 Chair Bialson: Joe, do you have a comment to make? Why don't we just speak to it?

5
6 Commissioner Bellomo: I guess Joe I would like to speak to the strategic performance indicators
7 in regards to education/incentives. One thing that I feel might be missing is how important those
8 two elements are where to reduce vehicle trips each person must be educated as to why that is
9 necessary. Bill spoke to it as a retail and office developer I am just wondering how do you see
10 that fitting in, that education program, ten years from now our next half a generation is educated
11 to a point where they understand the value of getting out of the vehicle. Where is that policy and
12 how does that implement?

13
14 Mr. Kott: That is a lot like the value of education in terms of traffic safety, awareness raising,
15 training programs for kids cycling for example or programs that we have done in the past that
16 were not always terribly well received for example our "As if" advertising campaign and any
17 effort that raises people's awareness about safety. It is very hard to document the direct effect
18 that has on crashes. We can certainly measure how many advertisements we display, if we put
19 up banners for traffic safety, how many of those are put up. But the importance is not the
20 number of banners or the number of training sessions it is the crash rate. We are going to have to
21 figure out as these variables change like the vehicle trips in the case of education on mode choice
22 we will have to figure out the right mix to make that indicator go the right way. That is why the
23 report card idea is so important. We can report to you that we have done 50 training sessions for
24 people to use their bicycles better and we do have a very good training program, I think
25 Commissioner you know that along these lines, but if we don't know whether it is having any
26 effect at all in combination with other things then it is an empty number. The effect of education
27 is not directly measurable in our view. So it is the kind of activity that contributes to the overall
28 variable we are interested in. We are interested in measuring that variable, traffic volume.

29
30 Chair Bialson: Okay. Phyllis.

31
32 Commissioner Cassel: I have a question. Actually I have two questions. One is I didn't quite
33 catch the sub-indicators that were listed before. The other is I don't understand on proposed
34 strategic performance indicators in the middle under where it says Improved Conditions for
35 Pedestrians, to increase the length of commercial streets with pedestrian level of service A or B
36 and below it to increase the length of other defined pedestrian routes with pedestrian level of
37 service. I didn't understand what that is talking about in there. You had four sub-indicators up
38 there and I missed which four they were sub-indicators that were important.

39
40 Mr. Ball: For the sub-indicators on page five of Attachment A, that lists a lot of them. This isn't
41 really meant to be exclusive because aim of the sub-indicators will really be driven by what data
42 is available or what can be obtained with very minimal additional effort. As it stands we have a
43 good spread but that is really what is driving it rather than what we are listing here. On page five
44 it is really a reflection of the data that is already available. Does that answer your question?

45
46 Commissioner Cassel: In your conversation and in your slides you had four sub-indicators that
47 you thought were more important than others.

1 Mr. Ball: I apologize if I created that impression. They are just examples. I am sorry if I gave
2 that impression.

3
4 Commissioner Cassel: The other question had to do with trying to understand the description of
5 improved conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users. I didn't quite understand the
6 description in here.

7
8 Mr. Ball: For the pedestrian and bicycle level of service indicators these are relatively new
9 indicators. We are looking at the work that has been done in Florida. They have done extensive
10 surveys into what makes people walk and what pedestrians think is a good walking street. There
11 are issues like if there is a sidewalk, how wide is the sidewalk, if there is a buffer between the
12 pedestrians and the travel lane.

13
14 Commissioner Cassel: Right, but I don't understand what this means, "to increase the length of
15 commercial streets with pedestrian level of service A or B." I guess I don't understand what that
16 means.

17
18 Mr. Ball: So rather than measure that for every single street in the City we want to really focus
19 on the streets that are most important for pedestrians. That is really commercial streets is the
20 first one and then other key pedestrian routes which might include parts of safe routes to schools
21 and really focus our efforts on there and what the number of or the actual length of those streets
22 virtually A or B that are the best to actually increase over time.

23
24 Commissioner Cassel: To increase the length of the street that meets the service A and B?

25
26 Mr. Kott: Yes, right.

27
28 Commissioner Cassel: Okay, I am just having a language problem, sorry.

29
30 Chair Bialson: You weren't the only one. Michael?

31
32 Commissioner Griffin: I was just going to say it is the number of lineal feet of street that has a
33 LOS of A for example or LOS of B.

34
35 Mr. Kott: Good reference, Commissioner Griffin, you are right. In our Staff Report Level of
36 Service criteria you may recall we have proposed adoption of a bicycle level of service. One
37 example I gave was an analysis I did of Charleston and Arastradero I rated it using the Florida
38 methodology. We would seek to determine how many miles of the relevant street were in
39 category A, LOS A for bikes and peds, LOS B. Ten miles in A, four miles in B, six miles in C.

40
41 Chair Bialson: Michael.

42
43 MOTION

44
45 Commissioner Griffin: I would like to make a motion that we recommend to Council the
46 Transportation System Performance Indicators proposed by Staff with the addition that we have
47 had tonight of adding the LOS indicator to the strategic measurement.

1 Mr. Kott: Pardon me, Chair Bialson and Commissioner Griffin, to clarify the vehicle level of
2 service?

3
4 Commissioner Griffin: That is correct.

5
6 Chair Bialson: Bonnie.

7
8 Commissioner Packer: Michael, if you will allow me I still have a couple of questions. One
9 question is going back to the trip reductions and the data, how you would collect that data. You
10 talked about travel diaries. What is a travel diary and how would you get people to fill it out
11 especially in light of concerns about privacy and horrible things like the Patriot Act?

12
13 Mr. Kott: The travel diary is an accepted and conventional tool in transportation planning. It
14 involves having people fill out in diary format typically a week of travel by what mode, how
15 many times, for what purpose. It gives a lot more texture than simply counting vehicles. It is a
16 method that has been used for many years by the U.S. Department of Commerce in producing
17 every five years the National Personal Transportation Survey. We would use the very same
18 format so we would compare our data with the national data. It is a very big sample nationally.
19 In terms of the Patriot Act these responses are strictly anonymous. I have never seen a study that
20 identified an individual with a form of travel behavior.

21
22 Commissioner Bellomo: Do City employees currently fill these travel diaries out?

23
24 Mr. Kott: No, that is an interesting methodological problem. I think given our budget situation I
25 think we will seek volunteers but we will try to stratify the volunteer base on demographics so
26 we have a representative sample. And ask people out of the goodness of their heart and interest
27 to fill out diaries. That is likely to be our approach.

28
29 Chair Bialson: Bonnie, you said you have some more questions and then we will go back to the
30 motion.

31
32 Commissioner Packer: That was my last question.

33
34 SECOND

35
36 Chair Bialson: Okay. Any second to the motion? I will second it. Any comment by the maker
37 of the motion?

38
39 Commissioner Griffin: I guess I would say that I think these indicators do relate to the Comp
40 Plan objectives and I am particularly pleased that we were able to add the vehicle LOS indicator
41 to the strategic performance listing. I think that is all I will say about that.

42
43 Chair Bialson: I really don't have any additional comments. I think what we are trying to do
44 here is bring forward the Comp Plan into some sort of concrete indicators and measurable
45 standards and I think that is what this does. Bonnie.

46
47 Commissioner Packer: I would like to suggest a friendly amendment. I would like to go to the
48 issue about the baseline for the vehicle trips, which is at 2002 and it says in Appendix A that we

1 don't have data yet for 2002 because we haven't done the diaries. So I would like to recommend
2 that we leave the baseline open for a year until there is money in the budget to do these diaries.
3 We don't know when that is going to be and we have a baseline that has been appropriately
4 quantified and then we can go from there. Joe is shaking his head. I don't know if he wants to
5 comment?

6
7 Chair Bialson: Joe, do you want to comment?

8
9 Mr. Kott: If I may Chair Bialson and Commissioner Packer, just in terms of our work program
10 and our procedure. I believe we will be able to accomplish a travel diary using volunteer efforts.
11 It is very important data. We are, however, certainly open to the baseline year and we are open
12 to ways in which we might adjust the baseline to reflect the economy. There may be some ways
13 that we could actually factor up, if it is 2003 that is the baseline, factor up the baseline by some
14 factor that would reflect recessionary conditions. In other words normalize the baseline to reflect
15 normal economic conditions. These are more or less methodological issues but I think they are
16 handlable.

17
18 Chair Bialson: Phyllis.

19
20 Commissioner Griffin: My question is how do you peg the perfect year? One of the things that
21 appealed to me about 2002, Bonnie, was the fact that we had backed off of the all-time high in
22 the year 2000, I am going to say. How do you go about establishing this average, which is what
23 we are trying to use as our base point?

24
25 Mr. Kott: Certainly in practical terms we should have put 2003 anyway because if we collect the
26 baseline, if we make a baseline we need to have data that people fill out in the timeframe, in the
27 sampling frame, which in this case is 2003. So we really should have corrected our text to say
28 2003. We are a bit behind because remember we had to reschedule this meeting and we have
29 been delayed. In terms of what is a normal year and the whole issue of baseline the employment
30 levels are way down and I think Bill's comments are certainly correct. I think we may be able to
31 put in a factor that reflects the employment levels currently in Palo Alto compared to the levels
32 that prevailed in what may be a more normal year. We have to get advice from people in the
33 business community and maybe an economist on this. I doubt whether 2000 was a normal year
34 either. If we factor this data, if we take 2003 and say this isn't normal and let's increase the base
35 by 20% because that is what it would look like if we had normal employment we would need to
36 get some advice from an expert in terms of what would be a normal employment level in Palo
37 Alto. So I can't really answer that now.

38
39 Commissioner Griffin: So it sounds like in any event the year 2002 is not going to be used.
40 Would you restate your amendment, please?

41
42 AMENDMENTED MOTION

43
44 Commissioner Packer: Okay. A friendly amendment would be that we recommend these
45 strategic performance indicators with a modification to the description of the first one which is
46 reducing vehicle trips to have a baseline that is 2003 adjusted for normal economic conditions as
47 determined by an economic analysis.

1 Commissioner Griffin: I would accept that.

2
3 Chair Bialson: I accept it as well. So that is the motion at this point on the table. Any other
4 comments, Phyllis?

5
6 Commissioner Cassel: I am glad to see that we are including levels of service for bicycles,
7 pedestrians and transit users in this evaluation. I think it is very important. I will be mean, I will
8 be happy to take the baseline at 2003 and see what we can do with it. It makes it much harder I
9 recognize the problems. On the other hand it is a tough goal. Those are basically my comments.

10
11 MOTION PASSED

12
13 Chair Bialson: Any other comments before the vote? Let's vote.

14
15 All those in favor of the motion please say aye. (ayes) Any opposed? That passes five to zero
16 with Commissioners Burt and Holman not in attendance.

17
18 Let's go on to item number two which is the ranking and high, medium and low priorities for the
19 Comprehensive Plan Transportation Projects and Programs. They are set forth in our
20 Attachment A, figure nine. Do I have any questions or comments with regard to that? Michael.

21
22 Commissioner Griffin: Joe, I would like to ask a question about the bike and pedestrian paths
23 under Alma Street. That is a high score priority is it true that we do have virtually complete
24 funding for that project?

25
26 Mr. Kott: Yes, Commissioner Griffin, we do have complete funding for the Homer
27 Undercrossing. Our Public Works engineering staff will present a report to Council about that
28 funding picture later.

29
30 Commissioner Griffin: And you have previously stated that your recommendation is that the
31 computerized traffic management project which is currently in a low score priority you are
32 moving that to the high score priority list.

33
34 Mr. Kott: Yes, Commissioner Griffin, we would appreciate Commission's consideration of that.

35
36 Chair Bialson: Any one else, Bonnie.

37
38 Commissioner Packer: I have a question on some projects that aren't here. I apologize for not
39 raising this in our study session. There are a number of programs in the Comp Plan that are
40 related to TDM, it doesn't say those words exactly, but there is one encourage carpooling and in
41 that whole area the T-6, T-5, T-8 around there. We have been talking a lot about TDM programs
42 in our discussions of various projects that have come before us and in the Zoning Ordinance
43 Update. So I wondered why a TDM management program of some sort wasn't included as a
44 project. That would really help out in the reduction of vehicle trips.

45
46 Mr. Kott: That is a very good point. As you know, Commissioner Packer, we do have a City
47 TDM Coordinator. We do emphasize that and it would be a very useful addition to this list.

48

1 Commissioner Cassel: Where does it go on the list?

2
3 Mr. Kott: My own bias, even though it hasn't been scored per our procedure here, would be a
4 high category.

5
6 Chair Bialson: The Homer and Channing Avenues to two-way that has a cost benefit rank of
7 nine and yet it is a low score priority. What are your feelings about that particular project?

8
9 Mr. Kott: Apart from the scoring results and speaking personally, these are my own views
10 strictly, this project would likely be very beneficial. We have Staff have stated our interest and
11 support for it. The transportation benefit of it compared to other activities and projects appears
12 to be limited not that it is not a worthwhile project.

13
14 Chair Bialson: Also, in the vertical curb item I see that as an assist to pedestrian use because the
15 parking on curbs that are rolled is a real impediment to pedestrians using those streets. So long
16 as it is a general subject like this it is very hard to put it anywhere but the low priority section. Is
17 there anyway to break out vertical curbs in sections and perhaps have those prioritized
18 differently?

19
20 Mr. Kott: If the Commission chooses a good approach might be vertical curbs on school
21 commute corridors.

22
23 Chair Bialson: Do you want to add something, Phyllis?

24
25 Commissioner Cassel: I had a question on procedure here. You have it down as additional
26 costs. This an accepted goal through the City Council, an accepted plan, and yet it is simply not
27 being implemented in any way at all. In my area I have seen recently on some of my walks
28 whole sections or blocks being redone in rolled curbs. My sense is that there is just not any
29 implementation. People are not being told we are going to do curbs if you tell us otherwise or
30 something positive. They are not even being approached about whether their neighborhood
31 should go into straight curbs. Nothing is being done. So isn't some of this just an
32 implementation decision on the part of the City that it is going to start moving in that direction?

33
34 Mr. Kott: When we are asked to advise we always advise replacement of rolled curbs with
35 vertical curbs. This is done as you know in our fine Public Works Department. There is an
36 incremental cost to doing that. I think that may be a consideration. Our own advice simply from
37 a transportation safety point of view is when possible it should be done, yes, and certainly in
38 compliance with Council direction.

39
40 Commissioner Cassel: I guess my question is the other way around. What happens to make the
41 policy of the City happen if your recommending when it can and we are recommending when it
42 can and this clearly is not a department interested in other departments?

43
44 Mr. Kott: The other departments I think in fairness should be here. I would say Commissioner
45 Cassel this is a very good idea. Every project on this list is worthy. The problem is how worthy.

46

1 Commissioner Cassel: I guess I didn't see how much additional cost there is if it is in a
2 neighborhood we are already doing the streets and the curbs on them. I agree with Chair Bialson
3 that for safety of pedestrians and comfort of pedestrians this is critical.

4
5 Chair Bialson: So what do we do about it, Joe? We have your agreement but how do we
6 respond to Phyllis's point?

7
8 Mr. Kott: Commissioner Bialson, my suggestion would be to put in high priority replacement of
9 rolled curbs with vertical curbs on school commute corridors and other sensitive streets.

10
11 Commissioner Bellomo: I would like to add to that that upon redevelopment of certain areas that
12 the rolled curbs are exchanged for vertical curbs. I know I have seen a lot of projects come
13 through where the transitional points of rolled to vertical is a bit difficult and they decide to
14 continue the rolled curb versus the vertical so there is not that awkward transition and it becomes
15 a hazard too so there is another point.

16
17 Chair Bialson: It seems as if we can say on school corridors or as curbs are replaced that they go
18 to vertical because replaced or initial created and perhaps we can have that moved up to a higher
19 priority. If again these are sort of tests for the Commissioners to look at and say okay we have
20 this ranking but now that we have the ranking what do we feel about it as individuals? So we
21 apply the so-called straight-face test that Joe mentioned. I should think that with regard to the
22 vertical curbs we can place that if not at high maybe to medium priority. I would be interested in
23 what the other Commissioners feel about that. Can we speak to that and any other things you do
24 want to have placed? Michael.

25
26 Commissioner Griffin: I would certainly support the gradual elimination of rolled curbs if we
27 can possibly talk our friends in the Public Works Department into cooperating with us. So I
28 would support that, Phyllis. I would also like to apply the straight-face test to the last item in the
29 medium priority listing, remove through traffic lanes in commercial areas. As I understand it
30 this has to do with reducing the number of vehicular lanes in commercial zones in order to make
31 room for more bicycle lanes. Is that the concept?

32
33 Mr. Kott: I think the idea in the Comprehensive Plan, Commissioner Griffin, was similar to
34 some of the ideas with the El Camino Real to create room for cycling lanes and widening
35 sidewalks and so forth. In other words, make the street multi-model.

36
37 Commissioner Griffin: And the two Downtown areas for example on California and University?

38
39 Mr. Kott: Yes and potentially other places. There are other commercial street frontages in Palo
40 Alto so the language is somewhat general in that sense.

41
42 Commissioner Griffin: Speaking for myself I would rather see that become a low priority item
43 as opposed to medium. I would be interested in what other Commissioners had to say about that.

44
45 Chair Bialson: I will say that I feel the same way you do but let's hear from the other
46 Commissioners. Joe.

47

1 Commissioner Bellomo: Can you explain that again, Joe, what exactly the meaning of that
2 removal?
3
4 Mr. Kott: It is taking the street cross-section whatever width it is and reconfiguring it.
5
6 Commissioner Bellomo: So for example University Avenue with parking on each side and a two
7 lane roadway.
8
9 Mr. Kott: Yes, Commissioner Bellomo, at some point that is what happened to University
10 Avenue. As the Commission knows that was proposed on some sections of El Camino Real with
11 the El Camino Real plan.
12
13 Chair Bialson: And in Midtown also I believe it was also proposed.
14
15 Mr. Kott: Yes, that has been muted in front of Midtown on Middlefield between Colorado and
16 Oregon, not the entire length but a section of that.
17
18 Chair Bialson: Comments by other Commissioners?
19
20 Commissioner Packer: Yes. I see it, it says, evaluate smoothing and slowing traffic flow in
21 commercial areas by reducing through traffic lanes. I think we saw examples of that in the El
22 Camino Plan last week. So in certain areas it may make a lot of sense. It is not in all areas.
23 These are just little phrases to talk to a more complicated program. I don't think by approving
24 these phrases we are approving just the phase. It is just a little shorthand for something that is
25 more comprehensive and more specific. So I think it is okay where it is because I wouldn't want
26 it lower because that would be contradictory to what we thought about the El Camino design.
27
28 Commissioner Cassel: At first I agreed with you and then I thought I don't want it lower either
29 because we are already beginning to work on this in Midtown with some concerns we have in
30 Midtown and some layout. It has already gone before the residents association there and I think
31 they have been working on it.
32
33 Commissioner Bellomo: I propose to leave it where it resides as well.
34
35 Chair Bialson: Any other items that you may wish to switch priorities on again realizing that
36 they are rather broad? I want to remind the Commissioners that computerized traffic
37 management is being recommended to go up to high priority from low. We have already talked
38 about vertical curbs coming up to high. Anything else? Bonnie.
39
40 Commissioner Packer: Based on the little exchange that Joe and I had before about traffic
41 demand management I would like to ask the Commissioners where in the high, medium and low
42 the Commissioners feel a traffic demand management program would fit. I would think it should
43 be high.
44
45 Commissioner Griffin: I would certainly support that.
46
47 Commissioner Bellomo: I agree with that too.
48

1 Chair Bialson: You have unanimity there.

2
3 Commissioner Packer: Can I suggest a couple of other very general programs based on what you
4 said, Joe, about education, driver education awareness of the importance of reducing trips and
5 also the safety and then related to that is police enforcement which I know is very expensive and
6 is controversial in terms of effectiveness. Exploring how raising people's awareness about the
7 impacts of their behavior on the streets and if there are programs that would do that. I keep on
8 thinking of an analogy of how we went from not recycling to recycling as a matter of habit. That
9 was done over many years with education and incentives. I wonder if there are programs to
10 explore that could help improve everyone's awareness of what they are doing when they are on
11 the road.

12
13 Chair Bialson: I appreciate what you are saying, Bonnie, but what we are talking about is trying
14 to prioritize these things that are sort of on work programs already. By adding more things I
15 don't think that is doing what we are being requested of this particular evening. I am open to
16 what other Commissioners feel. Yes, Michael.

17
18 Commissioner Griffin: Bonnie, if you want to keep going on that vein that is fine but I wanted to
19 bring up another item here. Off-road paths which is currently in the medium priority listing and
20 if I understand correctly that is to utilize Matadero Creek right-of-way during the non-flood
21 season apparently in order to get under Alma Street as well as some other ideas. Perhaps you
22 could elaborate on that, Joe.

23
24 Mr. Kott: Yes, Commissioner Griffin. There are some links in the Draft Bicycle Plan that do
25 depend on off-road facilities. Most of our bike plan envisions on-road for a number of reasons
26 but there are some links as you mentioned, that are off-road and that is the intent of the Comp
27 Plan reference to pursue those projects. Another big one is this Bay to Foothills trail that would
28 off-road not on-road.

29
30 Commissioner Griffin: That one is a low score item and I would propose that off-road paths
31 which is currently medium also be scored low along with the Bay to Foothills path. Comments?

32
33 Chair Bialson: Yes, I would agree with you on that. How are the other Commissioners leaning
34 on that one? Phyllis.

35
36 Commissioner Cassel: I don't. I think one of the critical pieces of making a bicycle or
37 pedestrian path work is the links and the connections that happen between good roads. I don't
38 anticipate these are necessarily long ones. I agree that the Bay to Peak path is not going to
39 produce much in terms of vehicle trips for jobs and things of that sort but little links in the City
40 when we can get them, and it will depend on when we can get the connections, are really
41 important to making it easier for bicyclists and giving you a preference to taking a bicycle trip
42 because it is actually shorter.

43
44 Chair Bialson: Joe.

45
46 Commissioner Bellomo: I concur with Phyllis. I think she brings up a good point about these
47 nodes and connectivity. Thank you, Phyllis.

1 Chair Bialson: I take it you agree, Bonnie?

2
3 Commissioner Packer: I agree with Phyllis and Joe.

4
5 Chair Bialson: I like the philosophy. Any other attempts at moving some of these items or are
6 we absent the comments we have already made relatively satisfied with the project ranking?

7
8 Commissioner Bellomo: Aside from the project ranking I would like to put an asterisk at the
9 bottom of this that really many of these be implemented in the Zoning Ordinance Update. That
10 in fact a lot of these are connectivity into the development regarding land use and development
11 agencies. We are concurring with how they parallel with Public Works, the Planning
12 Department, etc. This is a big asterisk for me that these kind of feed into that Update.

13
14 Chair Bialson: Michael.

15
16 MOTION

17
18 Commissioner Griffin: I would make a motion that we recommend to City Council the list as
19 Staff has proposed it including moving the computerized traffic management program from low
20 to high and adding an item for TDM programs likewise with a high status.

21
22 Chair Bialson: And vertical curbs?

23
24 Commissioner Griffin: And the third addition would be the gradual change to vertical curb as
25 old curbs and sidewalks are replaced particularly along the school corridors.

26
27 Commissioner Packer: As a medium priority? We move it from low to medium or low to high?

28
29 Commissioner Griffin: Medium.

30
31 Chair Bialson: Joe.

32
33 Commissioner Bellomo: I think and as development occurs within the rolled curb zones.

34
35 Commissioner Griffin: I accept.

36
37 Chair Bialson: A second?

38
39 SECOND

40
41 Commissioner Cassel: I'll second.

42
43 Chair Bialson: Phyllis seconds. Do you feel you need to speak to that motion?

44
45 Commissioner Griffin: No, I think we have already discussed that quite adequately.

46
47 Chair Bialson: Seconder?

48

1 Commissioner Cassel: I agree. I think we have completed our discussion.
2
3 MOTION PASSED
4
5 Chair Bialson: Let's take a vote then. All those in favor say aye. (ayes) There are no nays.
6 That is five in favor with Commissioners Holman and Burt not in attendance.
7
8 Next we go on to the Draft Transportation Division Peer Review. I know we had some questions
9 with regard to that but let's focus in on it at this point in time. Do I have any questions or
10 comments by Commissioners? Phyllis.
11
12 Commissioner Cassel: I have several questions but the first one that kept hitting me was 139,000
13 jobs in Palo Alto. Is that 139,000 jobs in Palo Alto or in Palo Alto and Stanford? If it includes
14 both then it doesn't include housing or anything else are they equal numbers?
15
16 Mr. Kott: I believe it includes both. We will have to confirm that Commissioner Cassel.
17
18 Mr. Jeffrey Tumlin, Nelson Nygaard: The Stanford census designated a place which we never
19 could quite figure out exactly how much of the Palo Alto portions of the Stanford Campus was
20 actually included is not included in these numbers. This is just Palo Alto. It doesn't include the
21 academic facilities. It may include the shopping center and medical center. Bill thinks yes.
22
23 Commissioner Packer: What year is that number from?
24
25 Mr. Tumlin: 2000.
26
27 Commissioner Packer: 2000, thank you.
28
29 Chair Bialson: Any other questions or comments? Bonnie.
30
31 Commissioner Packer: What exactly is being asked of us with regard to this study? This is the
32 first time we have been asked to comment on what seems to me an internal management
33 decision. I feel uncomfortable as a Commissioner to get involved in decisions that have to do
34 with how the City staffs itself to implement programs. It seems to me it wouldn't be our role.
35
36 Mr. Kott: Maybe the language is a little bit looser. We have asked the Commission to receive
37 and accept not to endorse. So that says to us we should include it as a chapter in the Strategic
38 Transportation Plan and we should consider it as we do our work program.
39
40 Chair Bialson: Phyllis.
41
42 MOTION
43
44 Commissioner Cassel: Shall I move that we receive and accept this report?
45
46 Chair Bialson: Let's do that. Any seconds?
47
48 SECOND

1
2 Commissioner Griffin: I will second the motion.

3
4 Chair Bialson: Second by Michael. Phyllis, do you want to speak to that?

5
6 Commissioner Cassel: It is interesting to have it done and I think it will help in the work that
7 you are doing to have looked at this. Obviously these cities are not exactly equal. They didn't
8 start from the same place and they have different constraints. Even if we take out the large open
9 spaces that we have that somewhere like Cambridge doesn't have, we still come up with a lot
10 lower density in those comparisons. I am sure that in the long run if we understand them
11 liberally that they give us idea or your some idea whether you are anywhere in the ballpark when
12 someone says you are asking for too much help or too little help or whatever.

13
14 Chair Bialson: Does the seconder wish to speak?

15
16 Commissioner Griffin: I have already ask you, Joe, what were the cities that didn't make the cut.
17 In fact when you come back to us I am not going to make this part of the motion but it would be
18 interesting to know what other cities you did investigate. I echo the other Commissioners
19 comments that I feel a little bit awkward passing judgment on this sort of thing when in fact we
20 really don't have the expertise to do more than just say we trust you, we hope you are picking the
21 right group of cities for your benchmark.

22
23 MOTION PASSED

24
25 Chair Bialson: Any other comments? All those in favor of the motion say aye. (ayes) That
26 passes unanimously again with Commissioners Holman and Burt not in attendance. With that I
27 will close this item. Hold it, we have some questions here. First Phyllis.

28
29 Commissioner Cassel: I had a general question, which I didn't ask at the beginning but sort of
30 follows after this. This is how will the proposed budget cuts that are affecting staffing affect the
31 implementation of these projects?

32
33 Mr. Kott: Well, one example I mentioned as part of an answer to an earlier question if we do
34 additional data collection we will have to do it on a shoestring. We will have to rely on
35 volunteers to some large extent, the travel diary, bike counts and so forth. So we are really
36 shifting to a different mode. We are not spending very much anymore to collect data.

37
38 Commissioner Packer: I just want to say that despite all my questions I really thought this
39 analysis was excellent and very helpful especially tying the projects to these performance
40 indicators really helps us think through our decisions on these and the cost benefit rank and the
41 cost per point. I thought it was really a great way for decision-makers to see through all this
42 information and help us sort through. So I just want to thank you for all that.

43
44 Chair Bialson: Thank you. I second her compliment, etc.

45
46 Now we move on if the Commissioners are ready to Commission Member Questions, Comments
47 and/or Announcements. Michael.

1 ***COMMISSION MEMBER QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND/OR ANNOUNCEMENTS.***

2
3 Commissioner Griffin: I would just like to say that this afternoon I spoke with Fred Herman
4 about the sound system in the Council Chamber. It was my understanding that the IT
5 Department has attempted to modify the volumes of these desk sets. Speaking for myself I will
6 say that it still needs additional attention as well as the headsets that I understand we have in
7 process some new chargers and batteries for hearing aid facilities. I encourage all of that to carry
8 apace.

9
10 Chair Bialson: I direct Commissioner Bellomo's attention to the fact that while he was absent
11 we slipped his name into May for Commission representation. I want to confirm that. Also we
12 have you listed here as our representative to the Palo Alto Intermodal Transit Center. There are
13 question marks on the agenda. That's okay? Then we can remove those question marks from
14 the agenda.

15
16 ***APPROVAL OF MINUTES. None***

17
18 Chair Bialson: With that I will announce that our next meeting is next week on March 26 and
19 this meeting is adjourned. Thank you so much.

20
21 ***NEXT MEETING:*** Regular Meeting of March 26, 2003.

22
23 ***ADJOURNED AT:*** 8:55 p.m.