



SAN PABLO AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1

June 28, 2007 ♦ 7 - 10 p.m.

El Cerrito Community Center Skylight Room
7007 Moeser Lane, El Cerrito

SUMMARY

Attendees

San Pablo Avenue Advisory Committee Members Present:

Nagaraja Rao

Jay Ifshin

Bill Jones

David White

Gayle McLaughlin

John Rudolph

Tracy Giles

Michael Woldemar

Rock Brown

Kate Sibley

Lisa Hammon

Janet Abelson

Jovanka Beckles

Marty Kaliski*

San Pablo Avenue Advisory Committee Members Absent:

Tony Thurmond

Che Soto-Vigil

Andrew Butt

John Baer

* - Alternate

Dale Power

Ann Cheng*

Gary Hill*

City Staff:

City of El Cerrito:

Mitch Oshinsky, Community Development Director

Jennifer Carman, Planning Manager

City of Richmond:

Richard Mitchell, Planning and Building Director

Lori Reese-Brown, Principal Planner

Consulting Team:

Chris Beynon, Eric Phillips, and Brian Soland, MIG, Inc.

I. Welcome and Introductions

On July 28, 2007 the first San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan was held at the El Cerrito Community Center Skylight Room. Chris Beynon asked meeting participants to give brief introductions. Bill Jones, the Mayor Pro Tem for the City of El Cerrito, gave a brief speech thanking participants and emphasizing the importance of the Specific Plan.

II. Meeting Purpose and Agenda Overview

Chris Beynon of MIG briefly discussed the purpose of the meeting and the agenda for the evening.

III. Presentation

Mr. Beynon and Eric Phillips of MIG gave an overview presentation of the definition and purpose of a Specific Plan and the process and schedule for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. Mr. Phillips discussed the charge, purpose, and goals of the San Pablo Avenue Advisory Committee (SPAAC). He explained that SPAAC members are asked to provide input into the Specific Plan project and process, help articulate and refine the community's vision, review and refine work products, and to serve as liaisons to their respective organizations, their neighborhoods, and the community at large.

IV. Discussion

Mr. Beynon led SPAAC members in a discussion about the plan area identifying desired outcomes, visions, issues, and opportunities.

Committee comments included the following:

General Comments and Questions

- The San Pablo Boundary should extend further into Richmond.
- CalTrans, BART, AC Transit, and other transportation agencies should be included in the discussion and attend future SPAAC meetings.
- How is this Specific Plan working with Loni Hancock's San Pablo Avenue Working Group.
- What does El Cerrito's General Plan state regarding San Pablo Avenue.
- The Del Norte Design Guidelines should be considered.
- How much area is in Richmond compared with El Cerrito?

Assets

- Access to the Ohlone Greenway is a major benefit to the Corridor.
- The Streetscape Project for El Cerrito should be incorporated into this project.
- BART and RAPID Bus have short (12 to 20 minute) headways.
- Capitalize on new El Cerrito City Hall to energize new development.

Issues and Opportunities

- The high volume of traffic may create too much pollution for housing.

- Artistic Character should be more pronounced along the corridor with public art and other elements.
- Landscaping should include more vibrant colors.
- Small businesses and retail should be encouraged along the corridor.
- San Pablo Avenue, between Durant and University, in Berkeley is a good example of how this corridor can progress.
- People should be better connected along the corridor—perhaps a trolley would be appropriate.
- People should be better educated and aware of the range of public transit options along on San Pablo Avenue.
- Countdown signals should be installed at intersections.
- Landscaping standards should be set for the area and upkeep is very important.
- Signals at the Del Norte BART station and the intersection of San Pablo Avenue and Central Avenue do not work well for pedestrians.
- The opportunity exists to increase sustainability and green building along the corridor.
- The quality and quantity of water runoff should be considered.
- A sign ordinance should be needed in El Cerrito.
- The Del Norte BART station should be improved.
- Design guidelines should help avoid fake architecture.
- San Pablo Avenue should be more bike-friendly.
- Maintenance and code enforcement should be strict
- Safety should be improved throughout the corridor. This could be achieved by: police patrol on bikes, “eyes on the street,”
- The image of the Corridor should be improved.
- Pedestrian safety should be improved. This could be achieved by: bulbouts, raised crosswalks
- Nodes could be connected with small business clusters
- Policies and programs that reduce the number of cars along the corridor. For example, new housing developments could incorporate car sharing program
- Noise related to cars should be addressed.
- Can the number of lanes along San Pablo Avenue be reduced?
- Attractive landscaping and bus shelters should be incorporated.
- Condition of sidewalks need to be improved.
- All sidewalks and crosswalks should be accessible to all people.
- The plan should connect and build upon successful existing uses, such as the El Cerrito Theatre.
- Allow private improvements to somewhat encroach upon public right of way (e.g. outdoor café seating)
- The plan should identify opportunity sites for development.
- Concern about city boundary line between Richmond and El Cerrito.

- Freeway access, including on-ramps and off-ramps, should be studied and improved.
- Gateways and public art should refer back to San Pablo's history.

The consultant team recorded real-time meeting proceedings of the discussion on a "wallgraphic." An image of the wallgraphic is included in Appendix A.

V. Public Comment

The meeting was opened to public comment. Public comments included the following:

- Need to consider overflow traffic from Interstate 80.
- The plan needs to consider how changes will affect communities.
- Bus circulation should be improved.
- The jobs housing balance should be considered.

VI. Summary and Next Steps

A brief recap of the meeting was given by Mr. Beynon. SPAAC members suggested changing the start time of future meetings from 7 p.m. to 6 p.m. and the ending time from 10 p.m. to 9 p.m. Next steps were discussed and included: Upcoming Community Workshop, Existing Conditions Report, and Community Connector meetings with transportation agencies.

APPENDIX A
WALLGRAPHIC

