WORKSHOP SUMMARY

I. Introduction
On August 18, 2007 a community workshop was held for the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan at Fairmont Elementary School. More than 40 members of the community and key stakeholders attended the meeting and participated in discussing of the area’s assets, issues, and opportunities. Daniel Iacofano of Moore, Iacofano and Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) welcomed the audience, provided an overview of the agenda, and served as the meeting facilitator.

II. Presentation: San Pablo Avenue Today
Daniel Iacofano began the presentation portion of the meeting with an overview of the purpose of the Specific Plan. He explained state requirements for specific plans and how they will be applied for San Pablo Avenue.

Chris Beynon of MIG continued the presentation and gave an explanation of findings from the existing conditions analysis. The presentation covered urban design, land use, and transportation conditions for the corridor. It also included photographs and maps relating the existing conditions.

III. Large Group Discussion: Vision, Assets, Issues and Opportunities
Mr. Iacofano facilitated a large group discussion to gain an understanding of the community’s ideas for San Pablo Avenue’s vision, assets, issues and opportunities. During this discussion key themes emerged regarding:

- Safety
  Participants would like to see a reduction in crime, enhanced pedestrian mobility, and safer street crossings.
Transportation
Participants would like to see alternatives to private auto use, such as transit, bikes, Bus Rapid Transit, and BART.

Urban Design
Participants would like to see context sensitive design guidelines and high quality landscaping.

Land Use
Participants would like to see building uses, heights, and setbacks that are appropriate for the existing character.

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

IV. Community Character Preference Survey
The purpose of the Community Character Preference Survey was to identify the character of development the community would like to see along San Pablo Avenue. Participants examined and rated a series of photographs showing buildings, transportation, and streetscapes with a range of characteristics. The images were categorized into groups representing: Commercial; Mixed-Use; Residential; Open Space; Transportation; Street and Pedestrian Environment; and Street Furniture, Signage and Public Art.

In general, survey participants indicated that they preferred two- to four-story commercial developments with mixed-use elements. For the most part they disliked strip mall style development and buildings that were higher than four stories. In response to residential images, participants favored single-family or duplex development more so than higher density condos and apartments. Participants also favored tree-lined streets and activating streetscape elements.

Survey findings are presented in Appendix B. Each image is shown with a graph that reflects how participants rated the corresponding photo.

V. Breakout Group Discussions
Facilitators divided the workshop participants in to two groups of 15 to 20 people. The breakout groups further discussed visions, assets, issues, and opportunities for San Pablo Avenue. The facilitators recorded notes on flip charts and maps. Each group’s comments are listed below and have been categorized into topic areas.
**Group #1**

**Safety**
- There are homelessness and crime issues along the corridor.
- There should be shared enforcement between Richmond and El Cerrito.
- Traffic calming is needed to slow traffic and create a safer pedestrian environment.

**Transportation**
- Pedestrian access in some areas is good.
- Access is good from Richmond Annex to El Cerrito shops.
- There is good bicycle access from nearby trails.
- Turning left from Carlson to San Pablo is difficult.
- Traffic and parking from San Pablo Avenue has a negative impact on surrounding neighborhoods.
- There are too many cars. We should reduce their use by implementing:
  - Improved transit and a free shuttle.
  - Better bike facilities and lanes.
  - Improved Ohlone Greenway connections.
  - Public relations campaign for walking and transit.
  - Bike/tricycle rentals.
  - Transit passes in exchange for parking.
- Increase the role of public transportation to fight global warming.
- Improve east/west connections across San Pablo Avenue.
- Increase use of shuttles and car share programs.
- BART could be more bike and environmentally friendly.
  - Provide access to monitored and safe bike parking.

**Streetscape and Urban Design**
- Litter is a problem along San Pablo Avenue because there are not enough public trash cans.
- Create green buildings, “healthy” buildings.
- Widened sidewalks with bulbouts would improve the pedestrian environment.
- Increase the use of pedestrian-scaled lighting.
- Encourage BIDs and merchant associations to help maintain and clean their areas.
- Buildings should be located near the street frontage.
- Trees should be planted along the sidewalk on both sides of the street all along the corridor.
- Character should build upon new El Cerrito wayfinding signage.
Land Use
- High-end department stores are located in El Cerrito.
- There is some high-density development surrounding transit hubs.
- There are too many fast food restaurants along the corridor.
- Sidewalks are not wide enough to accommodate newsstands.
- Consider cumulative impacts of policies on surrounding neighborhoods.
- Need increased amount of affordable and senior housing. It should be accessible and located near transit.
- Recreation center and better youth facilities are needed.
- Housing and mixed-use should be located near transit.

Parking
- Parking spills over onto public streets.
- Parking supply study revealed that business and residential parking should not spill over.

Other
- Strengthen communication between residents and businesses.
- Infrastructure improvements should be coordinated between El Cerrito and Richmond.

Comments from Map
- Jaywalking, safety issues (San Pablo Avenue between Knott Avenue and Hills Street).
- Improve connections to and from the high school (Potrero Avenue).
- Locate “Richmond Plaza” public open space near Staples.
- Congested/parking spillover (Schmidt Lane).
- Farmer’s market opportunity (corner of Portola and San Pablo Avenue).
- Good crosswalk and pedestrian respite! (San Pablo Avenue and Waldo Avenue).
- Allow legal U-turn (corner of San Pablo Avenue and Stockton Avenue).
- Left turn needed (corner of San Pablo Avenue and Huntington Avenue).
- No median (corner of San Pablo Avenue and Eureka Avenue).
- Congested, over-loaded (El Cerrito Plaza BART Station).

Group #2
Safety
- Incorporate traffic calming to slow traffic and make pedestrians safer.
- Address safety and homelessness.
- Hayward fault is located nearby—we should be prepared for emergencies.
Transportation

- Improve sidewalks and make them consistent.
- Increase the number of local transit stops.
- The public should be better educated about transit.
- Ensure buses are comfortable.
- Improve access to transit.
- Improve signalization on and off freeways.

Streetscape and Urban Design

- There are portions of the corridor that are walkable and pedestrian friendly.
- Implement façade improvement program.
- Ensure good design guidelines that create an engaged environment for pedestrians.
- Create a “village” atmosphere.

Land Use

- El Cerrito Theatre and Pastime Hardware are assets to the community.
- Locate mixed-use housing near transit.
- Affordable and senior housing should be offered, especially as housing becomes more and more expensive.
- Encourage local, “long-term,” and viable businesses.

Parking

- Ensure adequate parking is provided.
- Identify shared parking opportunities.
- Incorporate innovative parking strategies into new developments—standards should be reduced.
- Study the benefits of parking meters and paid parking.

Other

- There is a strong sense of community.
- The community is healthy and diverse.
- There is great potential for improvements along the corridor.
- Economics should play a key role in the plan—it should be economically feasible.
- Look into viability of a carbon tax.
- Address noise issues related to BART and buses.
Comments from Map

- Mixed-use housing opportunities (corner of Macdonald Avenue and San Pablo Avenue).
- Re-circulate buses and improve pedestrian environment (El Cerrito del Norte BART Station).
- Mixed-use housing opportunities (Blake Street and San Pablo Avenue).
- Better signage for “casual carpool” (Eastshore Boulevard, ramp towards Interstate 80).
- Address large truck parking (Eastshore Boulevard, ramp towards Interstate 80).
- There is a modified commercial environment (Richmond’s stretch of San Pablo Avenue).
- Make this area more pedestrian friendly (Fairmont Avenue).
- Address litter (El Cerrito Creek).
- Dangerous for bikes (Central Avenue and San Luis Stress to Interstate 80).
- Traffic concerns, need calming measures (Tehama Avenue and Burlingame Avenue).
- Need parking better for businesses (Wenk Avenue and San Pablo Avenue).

VI. Breakout Group Report Back
Mr. Iacofano reconvened the breakout groups to discuss key ideas that emerged from the session. A representative was chosen from each group to briefly present their group’s ideas.

VII. Summary and Next Steps
Mr. Iacofano wrapped up the meeting by giving a brief summary of the meeting. He informed meeting participants of the upcoming meetings, including the San Pablo Avenue Advisory Committee meeting to be held on August 30, 2007 and a community workshop to be held in February of 2008.

At the end of the meeting a member of the community presented a packet of information from the Richmond Annex Neighborhood Council. The packet included the following documents:

- Description of the Richmond Annex segment of San Pablo Avenue, including recommended development standards.
- Building height perspectives, including pictures of local buildings.
- A need for a specific plan; design guidelines for new commercial buildings; façade improvement program; permissible types of business uses.
- Copy of Albany’s amended zoning for San Pablo Avenue commercial uses (height; setbacks; daylight plane).
APPENDIX A

WALLGRAPHIC
SAN PABLO AVENUE SPECIFIC PLAN
Community Workshop #1 Wallgraphic
August 18, 2007 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
APPENDIX B

COMMUNITY CHARACTER PREFERENCE SURVEY RESULTS
A. Commercial
   A1. Low-Rise Retail

A2. Low-Rise Retail

A3. Retail and Parking Structure

A4. Retail and Parking Structure
A5. Local-Serving Retail

A6. Local-Serving Retail
B. Mixed-Use

B1. Retail and Office

B2. Retail and Office

B3. Retail and Residential

B4. Retail and Residential

B5. Retail and Residential
C. Residential
C1. Single-Family

C2. Single Family

C3. Townhouses

C4. Townhouses
C5. Townhouses

C6. Apartments/Condos

C7. Apartments/Condos
D. Open Space
D1. Greenway

D2. Park

D3. Park

D4. Park
E. Transportation

E1. Bus

E2. Bus

E3. Bus Rapid Transit

E4. Light Rail
E5. BART

E6. Bike Path
F. Street and Pedestrian Environment

F1. Roadway

F2. Roadway

F3. Roadway

F4. Roadway
F5. Sidewalk and Retail Activity

F6. Sidewalk and Retail Activity

F7. Sidewalk and Tree Lawn

F8. Sidewalk and Tree Lawn
F9. Natural Drainage
G. Street Furniture, Signage and Public Art

G1. Outdoor Seating

G2. Outdoor Seating

G3. Outdoor Seating

G4. Outdoor Seating
G5. Outdoor Seating

G6. Bicycle Rack

G7. Wayfinding Sign

G8. Street Light and Banner
G13. Trash Can