DATE ISSUED: October 15, 2003 REPORT NO. 03-205

ATTENTION: Land Use and Housing Committee and
Planning Commission Joint Meeting
Agenda of October 22, 2003

SUBJECT: Mobility Element Workshop

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE, THE PLANNING COMMISSION, OR THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

The Mobility Element is being drafted as a part of an overall General Plan update that began with City Council adoption of the Strategic Framework Element on October 22, 2002. The Strategic Framework Element sets forth the City of Villages strategy to address the challenges of growth and improve quality of life. Policy direction is provided to protect the natural environment, increase housing affordability, enhance neighborhoods, increase mobility, create economic prosperity, provide for equitable development, and provide public facilities. New growth is to be targeted in mixed-use village centers in order to create lively activity centers, provide housing, preserve existing low density residential neighborhoods, improve walkability, and help support a state-of-the-art transit system. Strategic Framework Element mobility recommendations call for reshaping our transportation system into a multimodal system that gets us where we want to go, expands individuals' travel options, and minimizes environmental and neighborhood impacts.

The Mobility Element is being drafted to expand upon Strategic Framework Element policies, to update and replace the existing General Plan Transportation Element (last updated in 1985), and to propose new polices where needed. The new Mobility Element will set forth a multimodal approach to congestion management. It will include policies to implement Strategic Framework Element core values for "walkable communities with tree-lined streets" and "a convenient, efficient, aesthetically pleasing, and multimodal transportation system." In addition, the link to

land use planning in meeting mobility goals will have a greater emphasis in the new Mobility Element than has occurred in the past.

DISCUSSION

Mobility Element Issue Areas

A summary of proposed Mobility Element issue areas is included below. Please see Attachment 1 for specific goals, discussion, and policies that have been drafted to date for some of these issue areas.

Land Use and Transportation
Better integrate land use and transportation by focusing much of the City's new growth within walking distance of transit services. Link the planned transportation network to the new Land Use Element (which will include the City of Villages map). Support Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and design.

Walkable Communities
Design and retrofit our City so walking is a safe, comfortable, and frequently used form of transportation.

Transit First
Support implementation of a transit system that is so attractive and convenient that transit will become the first choice of travel for many trips. Support expansion of service to areas on the City of Villages map. Detailed maps showing the City of Villages opportunity areas and the Regional Transit Vision service network will be presented for discussion at the workshop. Some versions of these maps will be used as a basis for future transit/land use coordination.

Streets and Freeways
Improve driving conditions and balance the needs of multiple users of the public right-of-way.

Bicycling
Develop a safe and effective bikeway network that serves commuter and recreational riders and encourages more people to bicycle.

Transportation Demand Management
Manage traffic congestion by promoting alternatives to driving alone or during peak periods. Optimize the performance of the street and freeway system without adding expensive new infrastructure.

Intelligent Transportation Systems
Improve the efficiency and safety of the transportation system through traffic control, information dissemination, freeway lane management, emergency management systems, crash prevention and safety, and other intelligent transportation systems.

Environmental Quality
Recognize the broad environmental impacts from motor vehicle operations and infrastructure and seek to minimize those impacts.

Parking Management
Address parking supply and demand to meet the needs of multiple users, while reducing the amount of land devoted to the automobile. Develop innovative regulations and parking management programs. Consider parking facilities as part of the community infrastructure and develop community-specific solutions to parking problems. Parking issues are further discussed below.

Environmental Justice
Develop transportation policies and programs that result in the fair treatment of all people.

Financing
Influence and prioritize the collection and use of transportation revenues.

Monitoring
Develop new multimodal measures of mobility.

Airports, Goods Movement, Freight, and Noise
These sections will be updated.

Relationship to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

The Mobility Element is a part of a larger body of plans and programs that guide the evolution of our transportation system. The RTP, prepared and adopted by the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), is considered the region's blueprint for transportation. It contains policies and projects designed to meet the region's long-term mobility needs. The RTP includes the Regional Transit Vision, which calls for development of a fast, flexible, reliable, and convenient transit system that connects the region's major employment and activity centers with a rich network of transit services. The Regional Transit Vision (based upon the Metropolitan Transit Development Board's "Transit First" strategy) was endorsed in the Strategic Framework Element. SANDAG prioritizes and allocates the expenditure of regional, state and federal transportation funds to implement RTP projects.

City of San Diego interests are represented in the development and adoption of the SANDAG documents through the votes of our elected officials serving on the SANDAG Board of Directors, participation on SANDAG committees, direct citizen participation in the process, and staff collaboration. The City's proposed Mobility Element and the RTP both stress the importance of integrating transportation and land use planning decisions, and using multimodal strategies to reduce congestion. However, the Mobility Element will more specifically plan for the City's transportation goals and needs.

Parking Issues

The amount, design, and cost of parking have a tremendous influence on site planning, urban form, individuals' transportation decisions, business viability, housing affordability, and development feasibility. A lack of free (to the user) or convenient parking can be frustrating for drivers and detrimental to businesses. However, regulations that require overly high parking ratios perpetuate our automobile dependence by stimulating the demand for vehicle travel. A cycle develops, as "the observed travel demand becomes the guide for designing the transportation system that brings cars to the free parking."[1] In addition, high parking ratios make a pedestrian-friendly streetscape and transit-supportive densities difficult to achieve, and force households to make a fixed, monthly, parking expenditure for spaces they may not need. If more costs of driving were out-of-pocket rather than fixed, the real costs of driving would be more readily apparent and individuals would have more choices in how they spend their transportation dollar. For example, a household could own only one car, rather than two or three, and save thousands of dollars annually that could be put toward a home mortgage.

The City Council's Land Use and Housing (LU&H) Committee has directed staff to discuss parking issues in the context of the Mobility Element and to specifically address tandem parking, the Transit Area Overlay Zone (TAOZ), and parking for affordable housing as a part of this Mobility Element workshop.

Transit Area and Tandem Parking Overlay Zones

Among the City's most important tools to promote TOD and affordable housing are the TAOZ and Residential Tandem Parking Overlay Zone (RTPOZ). The parking reductions permitted in the TAOZ have been in the Municipal Code since 1987, adopted as part of the Mobility Program and associated Transportation Demand Management Program to acknowledge lower demand for parking in areas with a high level of transit, and to encourage development in these same areas. A local study (San Diego Shared Parking Study, JHK and Associates, 1996) confirmed the validity of the lower parking ratios (see Attachment 2). Up until 1994, tandem parking was permitted citywide, but when the TAOZ was updated in 1994, there was a concern in some communities that tandem parking was not being fully utilized by residents, resulting in more demand for on-street parking. This concern resulted in the adoption of a haphazard map of where tandem parking is permitted, varying from community to community.

The TAOZ identifies areas with a high level of transit service that are entitled to an approximate 15 percent reduction in required off-street parking. It consists of areas within ¼ mile of a light rail station or bus service with 15 minute headways (frequency of service). There is some community concern that parking should not be reduced in areas of the City that have constrained on-street parking. However, the lack of on-street parking in these areas is largely the result of past community development that occurred when regulations required little or no on-site parking. The current minimum parking ratios were adopted in 1987, at which time adequate parking was determined to be required to meet the 85th percentile of parking demand, meaning that 85 percent of projects would be required to provide the amount of parking needed--or more than what would be needed--to accommodate all vehicles on-site.

[1] Donald Shoup, "The Trouble With Minimum Parking Requirements," (1999).

Another update of the TAOZ should be undertaken, since the last update was based on transit service information that is now four years old. (If the last update of the overlay zone is repealed--hearings for which are taking place now at LU&H's request--the TAOZ will be based upon 1992 levels of service.) Other potential changes to this overlay zone relate to such issues as walkability to transit, the required level of transit service, and the ongoing addition of transit services. These issues are described in greater detail in Attachment 3.

This overlay zone indicates areas where residential tandem parking (the parking of one car behind another) is allowed to count as two required parking spaces. Cars parking in the front yard behind required parking spaces or garages (areas which can not be counted as required parking spaces) are not considered tandem parking in this context. To be counted as required parking, the two tandem spaces must be:

- behind the front yard setback (typically 15 feet behind the property line);
- assigned to the same dwelling unit (the use restrictions must be enforced by the owner); and
- at least one of the two spaces must be enclosed (in a garage).

Due to concerns that varied from community to community, tandem parking is permitted throughout the community in some parts of the City, only in TAOZ areas in others, and in others it is prohibited altogether.

Similar to the transit area parking reductions, tandem parking is a more efficient form of parking, effectively reducing the paved area needed for parking by at least 25 percent. Not only does it reduce housing costs, but in the case of surface parking it can reduce the amount of storm water runoff per dwelling unit. On small lots, tandem parking greatly increases the feasibility of building to the maximum density allowed by the zone. In addition, City of San Diego Redevelopment Agency staff considers tandem parking to be an important tool to foster new development in urbanized neighborhoods and to reduce the financial gap associated with projects in Redevelopment Project Areas (see Attachment 4).

Community concern with tandem parking is that the two spaces won't be used, either because it is inconvenient or because one or both spaces are used for storage. Some community members are opposed to tandem parking because it allows higher densities to be more easily achieved. Illegal use of a garage for storage is not limited to tandem garage spaces, as many residents use conventionally-designed garages for storage rather than parking. The concern that one of the two tandem parking spaces will not be used because it is inconvenient is only anecdotal; no studies have been found that have looked at this issue.

Staff believes that the RTPOZ should be applied citywide. Other alternatives are to allow tandem parking: in all Redevelopment Project Areas; within the TAOZ; citywide with the addition of required management programs or adjustments to the mix or ratio of allowed tandem parking; or, as currently permitted with or without other adjustments to the regulations. Some community members have suggested prohibiting tandem parking altogether.

Parking Impacts on Affordable Housing

Parking regulations have a large impact on the cost of producing housing. It is difficult to reference specific costs of parking because land costs vary over time and by location. However, it has been estimated that "based on typical affordable housing development costs, one parking space per unit increases costs by about 12.5 percent and two parking spaces increases costs by more than 25 percent compared with no off-street parking."[2]

To obtain local data for the Inclusionary Housing Program, the San Diego Housing Commission asked Keyser Marston Associates (KMA) to prepare development cost estimates for six prototype developments (year 2001 costs). The KMA report identifies the construction cost of a space in a structured parking facility to be between $10,000 and $18,000 per space, depending on the type of structure. This translates to about $12,700 to $39,130 per unit, depending on the type of parking structure and the number of parking spaces associated with each unit. Please note that these estimates cover construction costs only; they do not include land costs. Attachment 5 provides more details on these cost estimates.

Recently completed parking facilities studies for the City of San Diego focusing on the Old Town and La Jolla communities are another source for local data on parking costs (Wilbur Smith Associates, 2002). Cost estimates are as follows:

Study	***Type of Parking Facility***	***Cost per Space (2002)***
Old Town	5-levels with 2.5 levels below grade	$25,205
	5-levels with 3 levels below grade	$31,181
La Jolla	5-levels with 2 levels below grade	$48,839 - $120, 715 (varies by site)

Additional research on parking costs is summarized in Attachment 6.

Despite the cost of providing parking, it is important that the "right" amount of parking be required for new projects. Under-parking can lead to neighborhood and project impacts, while an over supply of parking is contrary to TOD and affordable housing goals. Transportation research has identified household income, residential density, and access to transit as the strongest influences on automobile ownership. Of these, household income has been found to be the most important factor, with lower income households owning fewer cars than non-poor households.[3] To obtain local data on auto ownership and household income, staff requested SANDAG prepare a report using newly available United States Census data. SANDAG prepared the report using Census 2000 5 percent Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) areas that most closely approximate City of San Diego boundaries. Summary results of the report concerning household income and vehicles available are as follows:

[2] Todd Litman, "Parking Requirements Impacts on Housing Affordability" (1999).
[3] Alissa D. Gardenhire and M. William Sermons, "Understanding Automobile Ownership Behavior of Low-Income Households"TRB Transportation Research Circular E-CO26, pp. 179-189, (2001).

Household Income	***Total Households***	***Number of Vehicles Available***			
		0	**1**	**2**	**3+**
Very Low-Income * <$10,000 - $29,999	162,024	33,977 or **21%**	86,033 or **53%**	33,736 or **20%**	8278 or **5%**
Low-Income* $30,000 - $49,999	109,985	7,020 or **6%**	49,552 or **45%**	41,260 or **38%**	12,153 or **11%**
All Others $50,000 +	233,143	6,540 or 3%	51,485 or 22%	115,492 or 50%	59,626 or 26%

*Income categories are not precisely segregated.

Affordable housing parking needs were also investigated in a recent "City of San Diego Multi-Family Residential Parking Study" prepared for the Housing Commission and Planning Department by Katz, Okitsu & Associates (October 2002). The study involved both research and survey components. Study results found that affordable projects require less parking than market-rate projects, and that projects that are both affordable and within ¼ mile of transit require the least amount of parking of those studied. Based on these findings, the study recommended that parking rates be reduced by an additional .25 to .5 spaces per unit for affordable housing units (very low-income and low-income), as shown in Attachment 7. Existing parking regulations call for 1.0 to 2.0 parking spaces per unit for very low-income housing only, which is a .25 reduction from the standard rate.

Parking Problem Areas

There are many communities in San Diego where it is difficult to find an on-street parking space. To not exacerbate this problem, new development should be designed with sufficient parking on-site. However, the solution to existing parking problems goes well beyond ensuring that new development meets its obligations. Mobility Element policies are being drafted to expand upon Strategic Framework Element policies and Action Plan items calling for parking management programs, innovative regulations, analysis of the impact of transit services, community parking facilities, and consideration of parking facilities as part of the community infrastructure. One proposed policy would be to "prepare a parking master plan to inventory existing parking and identify where improvements could occur" in areas where parking problems exists. Strategies for improving parking problems would be drawn from a wide range of tools addressing both parking supply and demand, such as those listed in the Parking section of Attachment 1.

Public Input

Public input on the Mobility Element is ongoing, and has included Mobility Element information e-mails, an open public meeting (September 15), a panel discussion/community forum "Breaking the Gridlock" (September 25), and attendance at community planning group and other interest group meetings. The information e-mails have presented draft Mobility Element goals and policies. We are sending out sections of the draft element as they are prepared in order to get public input early in the process. About 30 responses to Mobility e-mails were sent to us this

past summer. A summary of public responses to the e-mails, organized by issue area, is provided as Attachment 8.

A more complete description of public outreach efforts is included in the General Plan Update Status Report.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue working on the Mobility Element and seeking public input on issues and draft policies. We welcome LU&H Committee and Planning Commission input so we can adequately address your priorities and concerns throughout the General Plan update process. November 2005 is the target date for Council adoption of the General Plan.

Regarding the TAOZ and RTPOZ, staff recommends that amendments to these overlay zones be brought forward in advance of the Mobility Element. There is an existing need to resolve outstanding issues and refine these zoning tools so that we can better meet City policy goals.

In addition, reductions in parking requirements for affordable housing should be brought forward. Reductions are supported by local survey data, transportation research findings, and Census 2000 data showing that approximately 74 percent of very low-income households and 51 percent of low-income households have zero or one car available to them.

Respectfully submitted,

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Approved: P. Lamont Ewell
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Note: Attachments 2 and 7 are not available in electronic format. A copy is available for review in the Office of the City Clerk.

Attachments:
1. Mobility Element Issue Areas and Draft Policies
2. San Diego Shared Parking Study Executive Summary
3. Potential Changes to the Transit Area Overlay Zone
4. Redevelopment Agency Memorandum from Todd Hooks, Deputy Executive Director
5. Prototype Parking Construction Costs Table
6. Parking Cost Studies Summary Table
7. San Diego Multi-Family Residential Parking Study Executive Summary
8. Public Input Summary