

# Union City General Plan Update

## Comments on Preliminary Public Review Draft Mobility Element

### General Plan Advisory Committee (July 18, 2018)

#### *Introduction and Circulation Diagram*

1. Concern over Whipple Road widening, particularly how it would impact the small lots near Mission Boulevard. Will eminent domain be used?
  - Response: The first step is to prepare a plan line study to determine the extent of the right-of-way need and impacts on adjacent properties. The road may not be the same width along the entire length.
2. Does Union City Boulevard have a special State designation? A GPAC member recalled that the City might have been eligible for special State funding at some point for Union City Boulevard.
  - Response: Staff was not able to find any official documentation related to Union City Boulevard having a special State designation.
3. Why isn't Union City Boulevard shown as a Complete Street project similar to Decoto Road? Union City Boulevard has bicycle lanes.
  - Response: The term "Complete Streets project" was used to signify that the project would include improvements to increase mobility for all modes of travel (pedestrian, bicycle, truck, auto, etc.) within the Decoto corridor. The Union City Boulevard Bicycle lane project was not referred to as a Complete Streets project due to the grant funding being focused on new bicycle lanes only. However, any time the City is doing roadway improvements, it must comply with the City's Complete Streets policy, which requires staff to consider the needs of all roadway users.
4. Page 5-3; last paragraph: clarify that BART connects to Downtown San Jose and the San Jose Airport.
  - Response: Text added to introductory language on page 5-3.
5. Update Figure M-1 to add local airports
  - Response: Figure M-1 has been updated to include the Hayward Executive Airport, San Carlos Airport, and Palo Alto Airport.
6. Add a guiding principle on supporting technological advancements.
  - Response: The guiding principles will be contained in the introductory chapter to the General Plan. The following statement was already included in the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles: *Support the integration of emerging transportation technologies and modes.*

Staff recommends modifying the existing guiding principle to read as follows:

*Stay on the leading edge of transportation, by embracing new and emerging transportation technologies and modes*

### *Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities*

7. Address how bike facilities can help from an economic development standpoint. Attracting bicyclists are good for the economy; they eat in restaurants.
  - Response: Text added to the introductory language on page 5-14.
8. Add a description of how the East West Connector will accommodate bikes and pedestrians, and include images showing the design of the East West Connector.
  - Response: The following text was added to page 5-31: “The proposed East-West Connector roadway includes enhanced pedestrian and bicycle facilities. In addition, the project includes new Class 1 facilities that will connect to the Alameda Creek trail, Quarry Lakes, and surrounding areas. The project will also result in direct bicycle and pedestrian access to the BART station via 11<sup>th</sup> Street.
9. Policy M-2.7: Update to state the City will work with East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD)
  - Response: Modify Policy M-2.7 as follows (also see response to Comment 38):  
  
***M-2.7 Connect with Regional Trails.*** *The City shall ~~support~~ work with East Bay Regional Parks District and other agencies on regional efforts to implement trails (such as the Bay Trail, and Bay Area Ridge Trail, and Alameda Creek Trail) and shall identify opportunities to connect local trails with regional trails.*

### *Public Transit*

10. Add policy to address 24-hour shifts; expand transit hours.
  - The City’s Transit Manager provided feedback that Union City transit buses experience their lowest ridership in the early am and late pm. There is concern that expanding Union City’s Transit’s hours of operation beyond what they are currently would not be cost-effective. This issue is further complicated by an increasing preference by transit riders to use transportation network companies (e.g. Uber, Lyft). Feedback was also provided that AC Transit runs a 24-hour bus line (Route 801) along Mission Boulevard that provides a bus bridge between the different BART stations when BART is not in operation.
11. Update Policy Title M-3.8 to read “Support efforts to...”
  - Policy M-3.8 updated as indicated
12. Update Intro to clarify that AC Transit runs Transbay express
  - Response: Text added to introductory language on page 5-22.
13. Clarify M-3.4 to call out other regional transportation agencies
  - Response: Modified Policy M-3.4 as follows:  
  
***M-3.4 Connected Regional Transportation System.*** *The City shall work with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Alameda County Transportation*

*Commission (ACTC), AC Transit, Dumbarton Bridge Regional Operations Consortium (Dumbarton Express Bus), SamTrans, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, CalTrain, BART, and other regional transportation agencies to provide a connected regional transportation system. (Source: Existing General Plan, Policy TR-B.1.7, modified)*

14. M-3.6 to call out “major businesses” employers?

- Response: Modified Policy M-3.6 as follows:

***M-3.6 Establish Dumbarton Rail Passenger Service.*** *The City shall work with the cities of Newark, Fremont and cities on the Peninsula in addition to major employers and regional partners to establish Dumbarton Rail.*

15. Add policy regarding oversight of Dumbarton Express

- Response: Modified Policy 3.4 as follows:

***M-3.4 Connected Regional Transportation System.*** *The City shall work with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC), AC Transit, Dumbarton Bridge Regional Operations Consortium (Dumbarton Express Bus), SamTrans, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, CalTrain, BART, and other regional transportation agencies to provide a connected regional transportation system. (Source: Existing General Plan, Policy TR-B.1.7, modified)*

16. Policy M-3.14 (Comfortable and Convenient Bus Stops): add places to sit at all bus stops. Provided example of seat attached to pole that can be pulled down. Concern over seniors.

- Response: Comments noted. Policy M-3.14, Comfortable and Convenient Bus Stops, already addresses these concerns.

#### *Vehicular Traffic*

17. The GPAC had questions about the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) threshold and whether or not the City will continue to evaluate projects for level of service (LOS) impacts.

- Staff added an explanation of LOS and VMT as a call out box on page 5-29.

18. One of the more important reasons for the grade separations is to improve response times for emergency vehicles. Draw attention to response times in Policy M-4.7.

- Response: Comment noted. Emergency vehicle response is included as a reason for implementing grade separations in Policy M-4.7.

19. Electric vehicles (EV) charging stations seem to be located closer to buildings than disabled parking. Those using EV chargers are often leaving their cars there longer. This creates unnecessary delay for people who are not using EV charging stations. Can the City develop a policy or standard to encourage EV charging stations to be located further from buildings main entrances?

- Response: EV charging stations are required to be ADA accessible, which is why they are typically located adjacent to handicap parking stalls. To date, the City has only one EV charging station within the city. The comment is duly noted and staff will work with property owners when they come in for installation of future EV charging stations to address this concern.

20. Policy M-4.6 is not clear on whether the fees would apply to new development.

- Response: Modified Policy M-4.6 as follows:

***M-4.6 Transportation Impact Fee and Other Funding.*** *The City shall establish a transportation impact fee to ensure new development pays its fair share contributions to transportation improvements, and shall continue to explore other funding sources to assist large-scale capital projects.*

### *Parking*

21. Policy M-6.1: update type of occupancy to include multi-generational families

- Response: Modified Policy M-6.1 as follows:

***M-6.1 Variable Off-Street Parking Standards.*** *The City shall continue to implement variable parking standards that reflect expected level of parking demand based on such factors as proximity to transit, type of occupancy (e.g., seniors, multigenerational families), and number of bedrooms. Parking standards should reflect the City's goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled. (Source: New Policy)*

22. Policy M-6.6 – Update policy to address parking for people with disabilities. A shuttle or conveyor would also increase accessibility, since the disabled parking spots fill up quickly.

- Response: Modified Policy M-6.6 as follows:

***M-6.6 Adequate Parking at BART.*** *The City shall encourage BART to provide adequate parking, including disabled parking, to accommodate future demand.*

23. Policy M-6.10 – Add wording to address parking garage technology (stacked cars)

- Response: Modified Policy M-6.10 as follows:

***M-6.10 Adopt New Parking Technology.*** *The City shall evaluate, and incorporate as feasible, new parking technologies, including technology for staked cards in parking garages and technology that can identify available parking spaces for patrons and adjust parking pricing as demand allows.*

### **Public Comments at GPAC Meeting (July 18, 2018)**

#### *Elizabeth Ames*

24. Commenting on the East-West Connector: transit is the solution, not roads. Wants to see protected bike lanes on Decoto Road. The future is VMT and the City should be looking at that

metric. Need to focus on transit and create transit centers. Hope that East West Connector does not get built and a transit community is developed.

Response: Comments noted.

*Steve Nichols*

25. Concern over kids getting to school across Whipple Road; especially a concern if Whipple Road is widened. Can the City consider adding a parking garage with a roof top garden? Clarify how the City projects out future population and employment growth?

Response: Comments noted. Regarding future population and employment growth, staff utilizes, in part, the projections generated by Plan Bay Area 2040, which is a regional forecasting model that is managed by the Association of Bay Area Governments and Metropolitan Transportation Commission. For the General Plan Update currently underway, staff also evaluated the potential population and job growth attributed to the development/redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites within the city.

*Other Comments (anonymous)*

26. Bicyclists are not paying their fair share. We need to look for ways to spread the cost. Public transit does not make money; it requires subsidy.

Response: Comments noted.

#### **Planning Commission Meeting (July 19, 2018)**

27. Clarify that only Measure B is funding the East-West Connector.

Response: The East West Connector project has approximately \$109 million of the estimated \$320 million needed for the project coming from a combination of Measure B and local funds. As part of the 2014 Measure BB Traffic Expenditure Plan (TEP), the East West Connector is listed as one of South County Example Projects to compete for the \$639 million of competitive funds under the Local Streets Maintenance and Safety category. In addition, under the same TEP, there is \$120 million under the BART, BUS, and Senior and Youth Transit for a line item "Dumbarton Corridor Area Transportation Improvement," which the East West Connector project qualifies for funding.

28. Concern over too many commas. Clarify which Style Manual is being used?

Response: The Consultants will conduct another round of editorial review.

29. Concern over widening of Whipple Road. There is housing on both sides of the road. How can the road be widened in that area without impacting homes?

Response: See response to Comment 1, above.

30. Can the City obtain funding to install bicycle lanes separated from traffic lanes?

- Yes, the City received grant funding to install separated bicycle lanes on Union City Boulevard.

31. Is the City in support of scooter and bike share companies? Should the City create ordinances to protect from nuisances from these types of companies such as scooters being left on the sidewalk?

- Response: There are several policies supporting new scooter and bike share services. The City will address nuisances should they arise.

32. The General Plan should provide more policy direction to address what is needed to support autonomous vehicles such as fiber. The City should consider building its own infrastructure to support autonomous vehicles. Recommend reviewing studies to inform design of parking structures and travel lanes.

- Response: The Draft General Plan already contains policies and implementation programs supporting fiber infrastructure, specifically Policy ED-4.2 (High-Performing Business Infrastructure) in the Economic Development Element and Implementation Program PF-8.A (Expand High-Speed Internet) in the Public Facilities and Services Element.

In addition, staff recommends modifying Policy M-4.17 as follows:

***M-4.17 Autonomous Vehicle Technology.*** *The City shall actively work to understand and explore installing the infrastructure needed to support ~~monitor the development of~~ autonomous vehicle technology, actively participate in regional discussions regarding the potential needs and impacts of autonomous vehicles, and consider the local impacts of this new technology on signage, speed limits, signal timing, parking facilities and roadway design standards. (Source: New Policy, EDAT)*

33. Enhance connectivity between the west side of the City to the BART station such as a Bus Rapid Transit from Union Landing to assist with getting people out of their cars. The City should also consider development of a monorail.

- Response: Both Union City Transit and AC Transit have transit service along Alvarado Niles Road between Union Landing and the BART Station, connecting the east and west sides of the city.

#### **Bike Fremont Comment Letter (August 6, 2018) (comments are paraphrased for brevity)**

*The City received a letter from Bike Fremont, who is a bicycle advocacy group from the Tri-city area founded in 2013. See below for an overview of the comments received and staff's responses.*

34. Explicitly call out Complete Streets projects on Union City Boulevard and Alvarado Niles Boulevard.

- Response: Consistent with the City's adopted Complete Streets policy and new Complete Streets section in the Mobility Element, the Public Works Department always evaluates the needs of all users when completing roadway infrastructure projects. In addition, this issue

will be evaluated further in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update, which is scheduled to begin in the next few months

35. Add protected bicycle lanes to the City's arterials and Include in Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan

- Response: The City prioritizes the installation of protected bicycle lanes along the City's major arterials as grant funding becomes available. The City recently received grant funding to install protected bicycle lanes along Union City Boulevard. The topic of protected bicycle lanes along the City's major arterials will be addressed in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update.

36. Need for City to proactively upgrade roadways to Complete Streets when doing scheduled maintenance similar to Fremont.

- Response: As a routine practice and consistent with the City's Complete Street's policies, the City evaluates the potential for adding or enhancing existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities when completing work in the public right-of-way.

37. Policy M-4.7 (Grade Separations) should be amended to include "improve the complete streets network" as one of the goals.

- Response: Modified Policy M-4.7 as follows:

***M-4.7 Grade Separations.*** *The City shall implement grade separations to facilitate emergency vehicle response, improve safety and accessibility for all users, reduce delays, improve transit reliability, and improve aesthetics.*

38. Update Policy M-2.7 to address inter-jurisdictional local trails including the Alameda Creek Trail.

- Response: The policy states that the City shall support regional efforts to implement trail systems. The Alameda Creek trail is a regional trail. The policy will be updated to reference this trail in addition to the Bay Trail and Bay Area Ridge Trail. Regarding the request to pave the northerly side of the Alameda Creek Trail, this comment will be forwarded onto East Bay Regional Park District who maintains the facility.

Modified Policy M-2.7 as follows (also see response to Comment 9):

***M-2.7 Connect with Regional Trails.*** *The City shall ~~support~~ work with East Bay Regional Parks District and other agencies on regional efforts to implement trails (such as the Bay Trail, ~~and~~ Bay Area Ridge Trail, and Alameda Creek Trail) and shall identify opportunities to connect local trails with regional trails.*

39. Add policy similar to Policy M 2.12, Safety in Sidewalk Design, to require bicycle lanes to be separated from vehicle traffic

- Response: The topic of protected bicycle lanes will be addressed in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update.

40. More public input on bicycle/pedestrian matters is strongly desired. The City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) should review the draft Mobility, Land Use, and Community Design Elements as well as development proposals moving forward.

- Response: The City will be engaging the BPAC in the update of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. Any substantive policy guidance that comes from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan update will be folded back into the respective General Plan elements prior to final adoption.

41. Reliance on outdated LOS metrics.

- Response: The Mobility Element includes policies that require projects to be evaluated with respect to VMT. The City will use LOS analysis for the purpose of understanding congestion and planning for roadway and intersection improvements. However, projects will no longer use LOS to analyze impacts under CEQA. Additionally, the City has modified the LOS policy from the existing General Plan (Policy TR-A.1.3) to allow exceptions to the LOS D policy. Specifically, the City added the following language, as reflected in Policy M-4.3: "...If maintaining the LOS standards would, in the City's judgment, be infeasible and/or conflict with the achievement of other goals, LOS E or F conditions may be accepted provided that provisions are made to improve the overall system, promote non-vehicular transportation, and/or implement vehicle trip reduction measures as part of a development project or a City-initiated project."

42. Question whether the East-West Connector project is viable and request for an updated traffic study

- Response: Should the City Council agree to have the City manage the completion of the design work for the East-West Connector project, the roadway design will be re-evaluated and the traffic study will be updated.

43. Dynamically priced parking could help raise funding for traffic

- Response: Dynamically-priced parking is already addressed in Policy M-6.10 (Adopt New Parking Technologies).

44. Parking Section should also address bicycle parking

- Response: Bicycle parking is addressed in the policies in the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities goal section. Specifically, Policy M-2.8 (Secure Bicycle Parking) addresses bicycle parking.

45. Union City should join some of its Bay Area neighbors (Fremont, San Jose, San Francisco) in implementing a Vision Zero Plan

- Response: Staff recommends adding the following policy and implementation program:

**Policy M-1.10 Vision Zero Policy.** *The City shall work to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all. (Source: New Policy)*



**Implementation Program M-1.C Vision Zero Action Plan.** *The City shall prepare and adopt a Vision Zero Action Plan that uses historic crash data to pinpoint the factors contributing to traffic deaths and serious injuries and identifies safety countermeasures to address those factors. (Source: New Program)*

- **Responsibility:** Public Works Department
- **Time Frame:** FY 21/22

**Comments Emailed from Commissioner JoAnn Lew (August 5, 2018)**

46. Page 5-3, 2nd para., 6th line – BART should be spelled out and the acronym shown in parenthesis.
- Response: Text updated as indicated
47. Page 5-3, 3rd para., 1st sentence – “Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART)” should be deleted and replaced with “BART.”
- Response: Text updated as indicated
48. Page 5-3, 3rd para., 3rd sentence – the verbs (“is” and “accommodates”) share the same subject (“approach”), so the comma after “land use” should be deleted.
- Response: Text updated as indicated
49. Page 5-4, 2nd para., last sentence – I believe “an alternate” should be replaced with “alternatives” and “the advancements of technology” should be replaced with “advancements in technology.”
- Response: Text updated as indicated
50. Page 5-5, Figure M-2 does not clearly show the transportation routes for ACE and BART and the blue and green for CALTRAIN and CAPITOL CORRIDOR are too similar. I recommend using four colors that better contrast with each other.
- Response: This comment is referring to Figure M-1. The colors can be modified as needed in the final formatted version.
51. Page 5-6, 4th para., 6th sentence lists Union City Boulevard as an arterial. Why is the speed limit on Union City Boulevard from Alvarado-Niles Road south to the City limit set at 45 mph? This is a heavily trafficked road with vehicles that frequently travel over the speed limit. There is an elementary school located on Eastin Drive, one block from Union City Blvd., so students and parents frequently cross Union City Blvd before and after school hours at two or more intersections. Please consider making Union City Blvd. safer for bicyclists and pedestrians, including lowering the 45 mph speed limit.
- Response: The speed limits on City arterials are set by speed surveys, which monitor and record the speed of the vehicles traveling on the roadway. In order for police to enforce by radar and for those tickets to be upheld in court, the speed limit must be the limit that 85%

of the traffic is traveling at or below. The speed limit for Union City Boulevard according to the latest survey is 45 mph. If we were to lower the speed limit, the police could not enforce the limit posted and any tickets that were issued and challenged would not be upheld in court. In addition, the speed survey must have been done within 5 years of the issuance of the ticket. Thus, we perform speed surveys every five years and update our speed limits accordingly.

The City recently received a grant for the Union City Boulevard Bike Lanes Phase 2 project which will install bike lanes from 600 feet south of Alvarado Blvd to the City limits with Fremont. As part of these improvement the City is looking to reduce the travel lane widths to 11 feet and add protected bike lanes. Once these improvements are completed, we will perform a speed survey to determine if these improvements have helped to slow the traffic speed down and if we can adjust the speed limit. The addition of protected bike lanes should provide added safety for bicyclists.

52. Page 5-11, 2nd para., 4th sentence – the verbs “add” and “improve” should be “adds” and “improves” respectively to match the subject “Implementation.”

Response: Text updated as indicated

53. Page 5-11, 3rd para., last sentence – I recommend deleting “must” after “requires that all jurisdictions.”

Response: Text updated as indicated

54. Page 5-16, Policy M-2.10, 2nd line – I recommend “major expansion” be changed to “major expansions” or “major expansion projects” for consistency.

Response: Text updated as indicated

55. Page 5-19, last sentence on the page – I recommend changing “between Sacramento to San Jose” to “between Sacramento and San Jose” or “from Sacramento to San Jose.”

Response: Text updated to read “between Sacramento and San Jose”

56. Page 5-20, 1st para., 2nd sentence – I recommend the restrictive clauses following “Niles Subdivision” and “Coast Subdivision” be changed to non-restrictive clauses by changing “that” to “which” and adding the appropriate commas.

Response: Text updated as indicated

57. Page 5-21, 1st para., 2nd sentence – the two semicolons should be changed to commas. Use semicolons in a list only if any of the listed items contain commas.

Response: Text updated as indicated

58. Page 5-22, Policy M-3.4, 2nd line – the acronym for the Alameda County Transportation Commission is “Alameda CTC”, not “ACTC.”

Response: Text updated as indicated

59. Page 5-23, Policy M-3.14 excludes Dumbarton Express bus stops (there are several along Decoto Road). Dumbarton Express Services is provided by a consortium of AC Transit, BART, SamTrans, Union City Transit, and Valley Transportation Authority.

Response: Modified Policy M-3.14 as follows:

***M-3.14 Comfortable and Convenient Bus Stops.*** *The City shall work with BART, AC Transit, Dumbarton Bridge Regional Operations Consortium (Dumbarton Express Bus), and Union City Transit to ensure that bus stops and shelters are sited in appropriate locations and are designed to maximize rider comfort and safety.*

60. Page 5-26, 4th para., 2nd sentence – I recommend deleting “assigned” after “LOS involves assigning letter grades” and the comma after “vehicle speed.”

Response: Text updated as indicated

61. Page 5-27, continuing paragraph at top of the page, last sentence – I recommend changing “delay” to “delays.”

Response: Staff recommends no change

62. Page 5-27, 2nd para., 1st sentence – the two semicolons should be changed to commas and “and” should be inserted after the second comma.

Response: Text updated as indicated

63. Page 5-28, Policy M-4.3, 1st sentence – “Levels of Service” should be “Level of Service.” Since the term has been used previously, using just the acronym “LOS” is sufficient.

Response: Text updated as indicated

64. Page 5-28, Policy M-4.5, 2nd line – I recommend removing the comma after “system.”

Response: Text updated as indicated

65. Page 5-29, the text box at the bottom of page indicates the East-West Connector will be paid for by Measure BB funds. This is incorrect. The East-West Connector was excluded from the Alameda County Transportation Expenditure Plan for Measure BB.

Response: See response to Comment 27, above.

66. Page 5-33, Policy M-5.2, 2nd line – “development” should be “developments.”

Response: Text updated as indicated

67. Page 5-38, Figure M-7.1 – I recommend the color (blue) showing the East-West Connector be a different color to alleviate confusion with BART, which is also shown in blue. Also, can the street names associated with the “Potential Future Truck Route” be shown? Finally, can the three freight rails shown in the figure be labeled?

Response: The figures have been updated base on these comments.

68. Page 5-39, Policy M-7.5 – please clarify the locations of the “Northern Corridors” and consider rewriting the policy for clarity and correctness. For example: “The City shall support freight rail activity from the Port of Oakland to the Central Valley via northern corridors, which are the shortest freight routes and may allow for more passenger rail activity in southern Alameda County.”

Response: Modified Policy M-7.5 as follows:

***M-7.5 Support Freight Rail Activity on Northern Corridors.*** *The City shall support freight rail activity from the Port of Oakland to the Central Valley to use northern corridors, which are the shortest freight route and ~~create~~ may allow for more passenger rail capacity activity in southern Alameda County.*

### **Staff Comments**

69. Staff recommends implementing a new street signal at the Intersection of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Whipple Road to facilitate left turns onto Whipple Road. Staff recommends adding this improvement to the Circulation Diagram.

Circulation Diagram updated to include future street signal at the intersection of 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Whipple Road.