

PANIL Notes

Volume 34

Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League - PO Box 20375, Oakland 94620

Feb 2009

DRAFT TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2035

Long Term Plan for Bay Area Transportation

By William Manley

After nearly two years of dialogue and analysis, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) on December 19, 2008 released the *Draft Transportation 2035 Plan: Change in Motion* for public review and comment. Workshops had been held throughout all nine Bay Area counties in the Spring and Summer of 2008 to collect citizen input. Over 6000 citizens participated.

The draft is the Bay Area's transportation blueprint for investing \$226 billion in projected revenue expected to flow to the region over the next 25 years. While that seems like a lot of money, the costs of building and maintaining the transportation infrastructure is high, and of that \$226 billion, 190 billion is already spoken for, leaving only \$36 billion for discretionary investment.

The stated core principles for the planning are economy, environment, and equity, the "three E's." Transportation is a critical element in vital regional economy. Bay Area workers, particularly in the South Bay, spend an inordinate amount of their work day commuting. Environmental concerns—particularly global warming—ranked very high as a concern among those surveyed. The third

**The three E's
for the
transportation
plan of the
future:**

**Economy,
Environment,
and
Equity**

Continued on page 4

THE PRIMARY TOOL FOR CONTROLLING LAND USE

Citywide Zoning Update:

by Stuart Flashman

Adapted by Valerie Winemiller
from a story first published in the *Rockridge News*

Land use is an important issue in the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood. A city's zoning ordinance is usually the primary law controlling land use. In Oakland, however, for the past 10 years that hasn't been the case. Instead, both neighborhoods and developers have had to deal with unpredictable land use decisions made by City staff and the Planning Commission on a project-by-project basis. That, however, may soon change.

The problem began in 1998 when Oakland adopted a new General Plan. If zoning is a city's land use law, the General plan is its constitution. Normally, with a new General Plan would have come a revised zoning ordinance. Unfortunately, that didn't fit with then-mayor Jerry Brown's priorities. Instead, he put the zoning update on the back burner and had the City Council pass an "interim" ordinance allowing the staff and Planning Commission to consider projects based on whatever zoning they felt best fit the General Plan's broad outlines.

Now, Mayor Dellums and the City Council are finally moving forward with the long-overdue zoning revision, with Assistant Planning Director Eric Angstadt and planner Neil Grey in charge.

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PANIL Monthly Meeting: Wed., February 11 — 7:30 p.m.

Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council — 7:30 pm

Bring your concerns and questions to
Paul Brekke-Miesner our Neighborhood Services Coordinator
Anthony Ramos, our Problem Solving Officer
and other members of the Oakland Police Department

General Meeting — 8:00 pm

Sidewalk "Trip and Fall Liability"

The City of Oakland Proposes to Transfer Liability to Home Owners

Piedmont Gardens, 110 41st Street — 11th Floor Sky Room

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CHANGES AT THE LIBRARY

Sharon McKellar is Our New Librarian

By Ronile Lahti

Sharon McKellar, the new supervisory librarian at Piedmont Avenue Branch, replaces both Jamie Turbak and Helen Bloch who was the children's librarian as well as the acting supervisory librarian. Sharon comes to our Branch after five years service in the Oakland Public Library system, spending the first three and a half years as the children's librarian at the Melrose Branch. She has been the Children's Librarian and Acting Branch Manager at the Golden Gate Branch since 2007.

In addition, for the past three years Sharon has been the co-chair of the library's LGBT Services and Programming Committee (Piedmont Avenue has the largest LGBT collection in the system). She is a member of the Rainbow Committee of the American Library Association (among other committees). Sharon also reviews children and teen books for the School Library Journal and has hosted a yearly Mock Newberry here in Oakland.

Two years ago, Jamie Turbak was temporarily assigned to the Golden Gate Branch and Helen Bloch, our then children's librarian, became our temporary manager. We expected Jamie to return to our branch; however, senior management at the library had other plans for her! She is now assuming the position of supervisory librarian for the Main Branch—a well deserved promotion.

At the end of last year, after almost two years as temporary manager, Helen was interviewed for the permanent supervisory librarian post for our branch. Members of our neighborhood's library community felt Helen more than deserved the position. However, once again the fates intervened and Helen was offered a promotion to become the children's librarian at the

Main. Another loss for our branch, but another well deserved promotion.

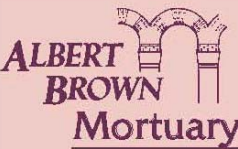
Sharon brings both training and experience. She attended library school at CUNY – Queens College in New York City and during that time worked for the Brooklyn Public Library for two and half years as a librarian trainee doing teen and children's services at the Brooklyn Heights Branch.

When asked about her goals for our branch Sharon said, "I welcome ideas




Sharon McKellar, Helen Bloch, Jamie Turbak

and suggestions from all the people. Many of them have been using this library for years. Please let me know what you'd like to see — I'm open to changes but I don't have any interest in changing the things that are really working for people. I look forward to digging in to see if there are ways I can build on and improve the current collection."




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Do We Really Want to See Those Scrubs on the Avenue?

By Valerie Winemiller

A January 8 story in the Wall Street Journal, "Hospital Scrubs Are a Germy, Deadly Mess: Bacteria on Doctor Uniforms Can Kill You," makes us think twice because Kaiser, Alta Bates/Summitt staff and employees from many nearby medical offices are frequently seen on Piedmont Avenue in hospital scrubs. Scrubs are the loose-fitting uniforms worn by medical personnel.

The article describes dirty scrubs as a means of spreading bacteria to patients in the hospital and allowing hospital drug-resistant bugs to escape into public places such as restaurants. Astoundingly, surveys show that doctors' lab coats

are probably the dirtiest. "A national hospital survey released last November warns that *Clostridium difficile* infections are sickening nearly half a million people a year in the U.S., more than six times previous estimates."



Twenty years ago, hospitals began requiring staff to launder their own uniforms, though home laundering is less effective in sanitizing. In the wake of new studies in the US and Britain, some hospitals are returning to laundering uniforms for their personnel.

One PANIL neighbor, whose medical professional life began in Europe, relates that she was shocked to see how casual the American medical profession is about wearing uniforms out in the streets. "[In Europe,]...our white lab coats never left the pharmacy," she stated emphatically. "In all my trips back over the years, I have never ever seen someone walking around on the streets in hospital scrubs."



According to Judy DeVries, Assistant Director, Public Affairs East Bay for Kaiser Permanente, Kaiser is subject to state regulations and, in addition, maintains an internal "infection control team." She explained that Kaiser launders surgical scrubs only for the staff in "controlled areas" such as operating rooms and intensive care units. Employees are required to remove their uniforms when they leave those areas. Employees in non-restricted patient areas of the hospital, clinics, and labs provide their own uniforms, and they are asked to clean the uniforms daily.

The full story in the Wall Street Journal can be viewed at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123137245971962641.html>.

Count Me In

I want to support PANIL's work to keep the neighborhood informed and make our voices heard. **I want to be a member.**

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ (minimum of \$15) made payable to PANIL

Name and address:

E-mail address _____

Calendar

For more neighborhood events go to www.panil.org/calendar.

PANIL Meeting

2nd Wednesday of the month
 7:30 to 9 p.m.
 Piedmont Gardens
 110 41st Street
 11th Floor Sky Room

PANIL Steering Committee

email contact@panil.org for time, date and place of monthly meeting

Glen Echo Creek Work Day

2nd Saturday of the month
 Monte Vista Avenue, 9:30 a.m.
 654-1930

Mt. View Cemetery Tour

Docent led tour
 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month
 10 a.m., FREE

Events at the Chapel of the Chimes

4499 Piedmont Avenue
 654-0123

Historical and Botanical Tour

3rd Saturday of the month
 10 a.m. to noon, FREE

Jazz at the Chimes

3rd Sunday of the month
 \$20/children under 12 FREE
 2 to 4 p.m.

Oakland Heritage Alliance Lecture Series

2nd Thursday of each month
 \$8 OHA members/\$10 non-members
 For more information contact:
www.oaklandheritage.org,
 763-9218

Piedmont Avenue Branch Library

160 41st Street, 597-5011

Storytimes

Toddlers
 Wednesday, 10:15 a.m.
 Pre school
 Wednesday, 11 a.m.

Saturday Knitting Club

Every Saturday 3 to 4 p.m.

To place an item on PANIL's calendars, send e-mail to: contact@panil.org

Plan for Bay Area Transportation

(continued from page 1)

principle, equity, demands that all citizens of the area should share in the benefits of these projects and have affordable access. For decades the bulk of transportation dollars went to automobile projects, support suburban expansion and freeway projects. Urban residents saw the impacts of freeways bisecting neighborhoods, but few benefits. This draft plan has a much greater emphasis on transit; it recognizes that as baby-boomers age, they will move to more urban, more dense, housing and have a greater need for transit.

The plan is about 150 pages in length, with abundant illustrations and graphs. About 500 projects are identified, broken into regional and then county projects. Included in the regional projects are some very big ticket items: \$40 billion for Muni, \$37 billion for BART, and \$13.5 billion for AC Transit "capital improvements." About 60 projects are identified for Alameda County. For anyone who travels anywhere in the Bay Area, it's a fascinating read!

What does it mean to Oakland and the Piedmont Avenue area? There is an allocation of \$250 million to implement Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on the Telegraph Ave.—International Blvd.—14th St. corridor and \$41 million for BRT on the Grand-MacArthur corridor. Closest to home is a \$300k allocation for a traffic signal at Grand and Rose!

A key project for this county is the "Build a BART Airport Connector from the Coliseum"—the proposed light rail connection between the Coliseum BART Station and the Oakland Airport. If this is anything like the Skytrain systems found at SFO or Kennedy, it will be a great improvement over the awkward bus system BART has now. Some criticize the ever-rising cost projected for the connector and say it is not justified for the few high-traffic days per year. Chris Peeples, At-Large AC Transit Director points out that if such a rail system replaces the current bus service, there would be no provision for local stops that currently serve all the employment areas in or near the airport.

Along with these location-specific projects, there are nebulous items like \$300 million for "implement bicycle/pedestrian projects in Alameda County" or "rehabilitate state-owned bridges in the Bay Area."

In the sheer number of projects, highway enhancements greater, and may account for most of the spending in this plan. But the attention to transit, bicycle and pedestrian alternatives is remarkable.

Of course charting a future for 25 years is a risk-ridden enterprise in these turbulent times, and the plan is based on many assumptions. It's to be revised every four years, but what is put forth this year will dictate the direction our region takes for many years to come.

The public invited to comment on this document and its attempt to influence, cause or initiate a whole range of "changes in motion."

To save costs and paper, MTC encourages you to view both the *Draft Transportation 2035 Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area* and its companion *Draft Environmental Impact Report* online at http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/2035_plan/index.htm. Other technical reports also will be available online. If you require a printed copy, send an e-mail to library@mtc.ca.gov or call 510.817.5836.

Submit your comments

Written comments on the Draft Plan must be received by 4 p.m. **Monday, March 2, 2009.**

Additional comments can be made before the Commission at its public meetings up to the time the plan is adopted, which may be March 25, 2009.

Written comments may be mailed to Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Attn: Public Information
101 Eighth St. ,
Oakland , CA 94607 ,

or sent by e-mail to info@mtc.ca.gov

or by fax to MTC at 510.817.5848, Attn: Public Information.

For other information, contact the Public Information Office at 510.817.5757

Citywide Zoning Update

(continued from page 1)

As a first step, Angstadt has set up two technical advisory groups (TAGs), one for residential and one for commercial areas.* These panels, made up of representatives from different Oakland constituencies, have been charged with identifying issues to be addressed in the update. Final recommendations will come from city staff to the City Council.

PANIL steering committee members Valerie Wine-miller and Terrace Street neighbor George Skinner both sit on the commercial TAG.

Each group has held one meeting. The residential group's first meeting was largely devoted to a staff review of the current zoning and issues that staff had identified as needing review. The commercial group's first meeting included a similar review, but also left considerable time for TAG members to point up what members felt were important issues

Issues raised by commercial TAG members included the following (in no particular order):

- recognizing the importance of parking requirements and how they affect development
- using incentives to promote community benefits
- setting height and density limits so they take into account the increased height and density that bonuses might allow
- providing buffering for high-impact uses
- recognizing the limits of infrastructure (roadways, transit, water, sewer, etc.) in setting development density
- encouraging adaptive reuse of existing buildings
- using transfer of development rights to protect historic properties
- allowing "flex" in the zoning for later changes

Some issues identified in residential zones included (also in no particular order):

- making zoning language and codes more clear and more "user-friendly," possibly regrouping some of the current 15 zones into fewer categories
- possible reworking of parking requirements when neighbors are often concerned about parking demand created by new development, while green cities discourage cars and promote transit, bikes and walking

- dealing with variances such as height limits: a proposal five feet over the height limit is currently treated the same as one 50 feet over—both are minor variances
- controlling or mitigating backyard building of extra units: privacy and lot coverage issues
- limiting impervious surfaces (now limited only in the front yard)
- encouraging historic preservation and respecting prevailing neighborhood context
- better controlling development on problem lots, i.e., steep slopes and substandard sized lots
- improved design review for high density zones
- reconsidering regulations limiting non-residential use, such as home offices (should employees be allowed?), bed-and-breakfast uses (now classified as "hotels"), and whether commercial uses should now be allowed on the ground floor of apartments, such as on Oakland Avenue or Harrison Street
- modernizing the definition of a "dwelling unit" (now defined only by having a "stove")

A parallel process has been debating zoning in the Central Business District, roughly from the Grove-Shafter freeway to the Lake Merritt shore. How to allow for growth while protecting some of Oakland's unique historic architecture has occupied much of the discussion.

The Commercial Corridor and Residential TAGS will meet twice more before staff schedules meetings for input from the broader public. Dates of the next TAG meetings have not been set at this time, but are expected in February. Neighbor participation at the later public meetings will be important, as zoning decisions can be highly politicized by developer lobbying.

*City staff has prepared issue papers for the first meetings of both the residential and commercial TAGs. They can be downloaded from the city's website at <http://www.oaklandnet.com/government/ceda/revised/planningzoning/ZoningUpdateProject/default.html>

How Our Neighborhood Voted

By Valerie Winemiller

The precinct-by-precinct records of voting in Alameda County have been released showing how the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood voted in comparison to other areas. We looked at the breakdown of precincts which are wholly or partially in the PANIL area.

The PANIL area had a voter turnout of 85% this election. Nearly half of each precinct voted absentee; and in precinct 223400, which includes Piedmont Gardens, 59% voted absentee. This has significant implications for timing of campaign literature, which has traditionally peaked on the weekend immediately before an election.

Pundits never doubted the California outcome of the presidential race, and a healthy 61% of the state did vote for Barack Obama. The national popular vote was 53% for Obama and 46% for McCain, with 1% other. Alameda County favored Obama by a wildly enthusiastic 78.2%. Precincts in the Piedmont Avenue neighborhood voted for Obama by a stunning 91% while McCain garnered 6% of our votes; other candidates received 3%.

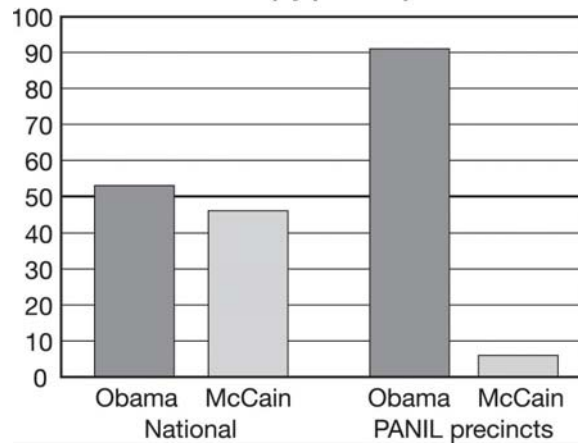
Statewide, Proposition 8 eliminated the right of same-sex couples to marry by altering the state constitution to define marriage as valid only between one man and one woman. The proposition passed statewide with 52.3% voting "yes." It was defeated in Alameda County with only 38% voting for and 62% voting against. In PANIL precincts, it was soundly rejected, with 87.5% voting to defeat the measure.

Measure OO ("Kids First 2") doubled the percentage of city funds directed to programs for children and youth. To meet this new requirement, money will have to be transferred from other areas of the budget. With police and fire budgets untouchable, this means funds will be transferred from libraries, parks and other public programs which already serve thousands of children and adults.

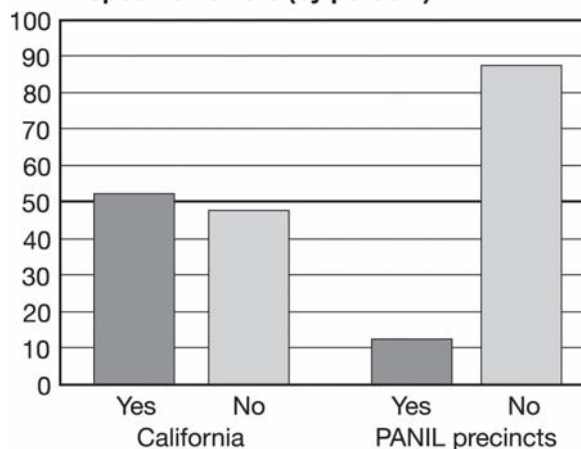
Citywide, Measure OO passed by 53.1% to 46.9%, but in our neighborhood, it was defeated by almost exactly the reverse numbers, 53.3% "no" to 46.7% "yes." About 13% of neighbors who voted for president did not weigh in on this issue.

Political junkies can find precinct maps and a 600-page PDF of precinct election results for downloading at the Alameda County Registrar of Voters website <http://www.acgov.org/rov/>.

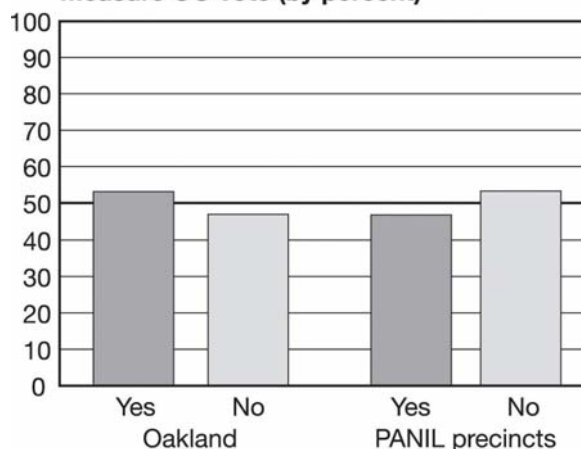
Presidential vote (by percent)



Proposition 8 vote (by percent)



Measure OO vote (by percent)





PIEDMONT AVE PHOTO GALLERY

A View of the Avenue

Our neighborhood is filled with interesting sights.

This photo is the long view of the Columbarium sitting behind classic low-rise buildings on Piedmont Avenue east of Pleasant Valley.

We invite photographers to send photos taken on the Avenue or in the neighborhood to contact@panil.org.



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Recognition for Students at Piedmont Avenue Elementary School

The Problem Solving Officer for the PANIL area, Beat 9X, Anthony Ramos has started a project with Piedmont Elementary School called "Pizza with the Police." The goal is twofold: to reward students recognized for good behavior and improvement in their grades and to present a positive image of our local police officers.

Teachers in grades three through five pick the top students who show improvement in class or who are overall good students. These students spend a lunch hour with Officer Ramos enjoying a pizza and some discussion time together.

Funding for the project comes from PAMA, the Piedmont Avenue Merchants Association, and from individual donors.



In January, this group of good students joined Officer Romero for the pizza lunch. From left: Tamia, Kahleec, Ashanti, Corey, Janell, Salvador, Sky, Khulan, Samantha, Saron, Natria, Luis

As Officer Ramos says, "Straight A's are not a necessary requirement; being a good student is."

At the first "Pizza with the Police" lunch in December, 15 students spent the lunch hour with Officer Ramos. Principal Zarina Ahmad joined them for this photo. From left: Fasihia, Epiphany, Afomiya, Veronica, Payjon, Jaemin, Changel, Laidec, LaDrea, Yonael, Sal, A'Shari, Kevin, Jakaela, Jason



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