

Sherman Oaks Neighborhood Council
Land Use Committee
Vision Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
June 5, 2014 Meeting

1. Call to Order at 6:30pm by Jeff Kalban, Chair
2. Roll Call -
Present: Jeff Kalban (Chair), Bob Anderson, Jennifer Charles, Jackie Diamond, Maria Pavlou Kalban, Mikie Maloney, Joan Pelico
Absent: Craig Buck, Ken Fritz, Sue Steinberg
3. Prior Meeting Minutes - Meeting Minutes from the May, 1 2014 meeting reviewed and approved
4. Public forum comments - none
5. New Business -
 - i) Traffic Study Group - presentation by Bob Anderson and Maria Pavlou Kalban.
Highlights from the presentation:
 - In Sherman Oaks, the community historically has been opposed to anything that might increase traffic so planned development typically is doomed from the start. We know that the city has long-term plans to alleviate some traffic issues, but the study group has been looking at some quick-fix solutions to help with traffic issues now.
 - The study group looked at 3 traffic “hot spots” in greater detail to offer both short-term and long-term fix ideas.
 - Hot Spot #1: I-405 SB On-Ramp at Ventura
This small on-ramp was built when the surrounding community was smaller and traffic was much lighter. The on-ramp has two traffic lanes but one is an HOV lane, which limits most traffic turning onto the ramp into one lane. The two lanes merge quickly into one lane that enters the freeway. Morning rush-hour traffic backs up along Ventura Boulevard, which results in dangerous congestion in both the westbound and eastbound directions.
A short-term solution is to eliminate the HOV designation on the left ramp lane resulting in two lanes available for turning traffic. This would allow a second right-turn lane to be added to westbound Ventura Blvd. and would allow more effective turning opportunities for the eastbound Ventura Blvd. left turn lane onto the ramp.
A long-term solution is to add a third on-ramp lane to provide increased turning opportunities for Ventura Blvd. traffic.
 - Hot Spot #2: I-405 Ramps at Burbank Boulevard
The westbound approach on Burbank Boulevard to the southbound I-405 on-ramp gets congested in morning rush-hour traffic. This is because there is only a single left-turn lane with an ineffective short pocket lane available for ramp access. Rush-hour traffic backs up across Sepulveda Boulevard as cars queue for freeway access. Other on- and off-ramps also are constricted by the complex traffic flows. Three full lanes provided for westbound Burbank Boulevard thru-traffic typically are underutilized.
A short-term solution is to change the left-most thru-lane into a combination straight/left-turn lane and eliminate the short pocket left-turn lane. This would provide two full lanes turning left into the existing two-lane on-ramp.
A long-term solution is to add a two-lane flyover ramp from the right lanes of the westbound Burbank Boulevard for southbound I-405 access.

- Hot Spot #3: Single Turn Lane to WB I-101

There is only a single turn-lane from southbound Woodman Avenue to the two-lane westbound I-101 on-ramp. This single lane backs up along Woodman Avenue well north of Riverside Drive and along Riverside Drive, blocking access into and out of the adjacent shopping areas. The drive lane adjacent to the turn-lane is a straight-only lane that ends under the freeway overpass, forcing drivers to merge left unexpectedly and in low-light conditions.

Also, the two-lane on-ramp merges into a single lane before the meter point, causing further congestion. The meter allows two cars to enter the freeway per green signal.

A short-term solution is to change the right straight-only lane on southbound Woodman Avenue into a right-turn only lane. This would allow two dedicated right-turn lanes onto the ramp for better access.

A long-term solution is to extend both on-ramp lanes into the freeway. Each lane could then be individually metered to allow cars in each lane to enter the freeway in an alternate fashion.

- Mitigation: A formula should be established to determine how much a developer is required to pay into a mitigation fund for every car that cannot be mitigated. This fund could be used for shuttle service that removes an equivalent numbers of cars from the roads.

ii) Public comment and discussion with Jay Kim and Tomas Carranza, LADOT

- A public comment was made that they have not seen any mitigation funds put to use in Sherman Oaks.
- Jay Kim (JK) congratulated the traffic study group on a thoughtful presentation. In many cases, congestion on ramps affecting surface streets (LADOT) indicates a larger freeway problem (CalTrans) that is citywide and not easily solved.
- Regarding Hot Spot #1, JK commented that the on-ramps are in CalTrans jurisdiction and that their priority often is to keep the freeways moving fast even if that means squeezing access. Removing the HOV designation on the left lane would be a negative policy move that goes against the larger HOV philosophy in place. This type of change has been asked before and is not easily granted. A question is asked whether a change can be made to allow carpools to turn right from the Ventura Blvd. westbound lane #2 into the existing HOV lane. JK comments that overhead signs would be required to indicate this change, which gets complex. Since there is still only one lane entering the I-405 at the top of the ramp, the rate of freeway entry would be unchanged so the bigger problem would still be unchanged. A public comment was made that these agencies (i.e. LADOT, CalTrans) don't work together and the community needs to get political representatives involved to balance the different needs. JK agreed that this would be worthwhile to pursue.
- Regarding Hot Spot #2, JK and Tomas Carranza (TC) stated that anything over or under the freeway is CalTran's jurisdiction (i.e. the Burbank Blvd. overpass). Changing the thru-lane to a combination left-turn/thru lane would require overhead signage, which is always complex. JK and TC will have the engineers look at this hot spot and the proposed solutions. They will look at the Burbank Blvd. westbound thru-lanes to check the traffic volume. They might be able to re-stripe quickly and then add overhead signs later.
- Regarding Hot Spot #3, JK stated that they are moving away from double right-turn lanes due to pedestrian and cyclist safety concerns. At this intersection, they would need to conduct a pedestrian count. If there were a lot of

pedestrians moving along the west side of Woodman Avenue, a 2nd right-hand turn lane would not be allowed.

- Moving to discuss the citywide view of traffic, JK mentioned that in previous decades the philosophy was to widen streets. Now the understanding is that the streets have already been built out, but the city continues to grow. How do we handle growth now? A public comment was made that during the Olympics, traffic was distributed and offices extended their hours to help alleviate traffic issues. JK commented that we are part of the problem. The I-101 volume dipped 5% 4-5 years ago when gas prices hit \$5.00 per gallon. This translated into a 25% travel timesaving. Specific fixes are helpful but bigger changes are needed. A public comment was that public transit is not promoted enough and that the DASH routes need to have more posted maps so people are aware of this travel option. JK mentioned that there is a larger problem with public transportation. There needs to be a bigger approach that creates a compelling alternative to driving. A public comment was made that mass transit takes too long and there needs to be more reasons to take public transportation. JK stated that this ties into the first mile/last mile problem and that bike share and car share options need to be explored. A public comment was made that the DASH line could be better. Could a DASH line be placed on Ventura Blvd.? JK replied that it is costly to run DASH busses. Five years ago a DASH line in Warner Center didn't get enough riders to justify its operation and was removed.
- Jeff Kalban, Chair (JKalban) said that this vision group will maintain contact with LADOT to give feedback and discuss potential ideas. JK and TC are in the planning arm of LADOT. Tommy Newman, CD4 Deputy (TN) confirmed that this meeting is where the dialogue starts.
- TN asked about the Specific Plan and whether there is money there to conduct a traffic study of the Ventura Blvd. corridor. TC commented that the west side has done these types of traffic studies. JK said that their hands are tied to use the money. Sometimes the money is tied to a specific intersection for capital improvements only. If the Ventura Blvd. Plan Review Board concurs then perhaps the money could be used for a traffic study. Since the Specific Plan spans multiple council districts, not all of the council districts may want to do this. TC said that once a traffic plan is done, it could be used to go after grants.
- A public comment was made that improvement to public transportation should be considered by this vision study group as well as a parking study.
- JKalban mentioned that based on the Vision Beautification group report, the existing unsignaled crosswalk at the intersection of Ventura and Lemona could be made safer with the additions of bump-outs and/or a median. JK mentioned that TC and he could be the conduit for this type of idea and will have it checked out internally. One thing they would look into is whether the bike master plan would conflict with the proposed bump-out locations. If things check out, LADOT could draft some options and get internal buy-in.
- JKalban mentioned that Ventura and Tyrone was an area where unused roadbed could be incorporated into an existing pedestrian island for safer crossing and for greening opportunities. JK said that it would take staff some time to draw out the options and locate funding. A public question was asked what funds were available and what are the rules tied to those funds? JK will work to make this information available to the sub-committee.
- JKalban thanked JK and TC for attending this meeting and for working with this group.

6. Committee Business:

- Next month there will be no Vision Sub-Committee meeting since the first Thursday falls on July 3, 2014. Everyone is encouraged to attend the July 14, 2014 SONC meeting where the Vision Plan will be discussed and voted on.
- There will be no Vision Sub-Committee meeting in August.
- The next Vision Sub-Committee meeting will be held on September 4, 2014 at 6:30pm in the Sherman Oaks library meeting room.
- JKalban stated that through the vision sub-committee's research, the issue of homelessness in Sherman Oaks has come up. If the sub-committee agreed, the next meeting could include a presentation from the group PATH (People Assisting the Homeless).
- Tommy Newman (TN) stepped up to say that CD4 has set up the Sherman Oaks Homeless Coalition to address issues surrounding homelessness in Sherman Oaks. They have met 5 times in the last 8 months. There is estimated to be 60-100 chronic homeless in Sherman Oaks centered on the intersection of Ventura/Van Nuys Boulevards. Sherman Oaks does not tend to get public services for the homeless since other Valley communities are seen as having a greater financial need. L.A. Family Housing is a non-profit group providing full supportive services to the homeless and is looking to expand its presence in the Valley. The Sherman Oaks Homeless Coalition has a goal to raise \$20,000 to fund a LAFH van one day a week for 12 months to service the Sherman Oaks area. Part of this service will include a final report and a homeless count. The Coalition is using this fundraising effort as a way to leverage the community and increase community awareness about homelessness. If this pilot program is successful, more funds will need to be raised to support on-going services.

7. Meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.