

SOSIP OPEN HOUSE – WRITTEN COMMENTS

February 6, 2010

Comments organized by Themes & Project Subareas. Comments include those received with questionnaires, on drawings, and by email.

Goals

Place-making

Provide active recreational space for new residents Downtown so nearby neighborhoods are not overwhelmed with people looking for parks—dog parks, basketball courts, etc.

Maintain/improve vehicle access so those celebrated pedestrians can get downtown. Stop economically killing downtown with more congestion and less parking.

Public Life

Encourage programming and activities for all ages (e.g. play sculptures for kids, chess tables for seniors, etc.)

“Active” uses, outdoor cafes, etc. Don’t create loitering hangouts.

Promote and leverage arts and culture in synch with visit Berkeley “come for culture, stay for food” (sculpture, performance, murals, etc.)

An area is more inviting where there are places to sit, face to face, drink coffee (not part of a restaurant)—places for enjoyment—not just or primarily for buying-being consumers.

Health & Comfort

Preserve sidewalk sunlight (Berkeley is a cool (meteorologically) city—sidewalks need sun.)

Traffic is “calm” downtown—it doesn’t move. Make downtown walk-able (safely) by getting cyclists and skateboarders off sidewalk.

Access

Yes!

No, do not prioritize any modes over others.

Sustainability

Use permeable paving and streets.

Plant lots more trees!

General Comments Related to Goals

Before any more time and money is spent on planning the downtown we must decide on who we want to do in the downtown, what they could/would want to do there. 1. Residents of all of Berkeley? 2. Residents who live downtown? 3. Students—both UC/Berkeley High? 4. Visitors –for other areas?

Key points for downtown: The downtown core can be a beautiful, economically vibrant, and ecologically beneficial area if we (the City) commit to a full vision of: (1) “green” streets, (2) closure of Center Street to traffic, (3) removal of some on-street parking spaces to allow for wider sidewalks and “green street” features, and emphasis on the pedestrian as the focus of redesign, not the car.

Emphasize LID, “green” amenities + green mechanisms for storm water/flood control!

The cities + towns where green streets, plazas, + pedestrianization have worked so well to bring in tourism, visitors, residents, shoppers, etc. are the ones that acknowledge that we need to reduce traffic volumes in our downtown core areas. Period. These places should emphasize people, not cars. This should include removing on-street parking so we can add + enhance pedestrian + green amenities, features

80% of the tourists in SF have been to SF before. Figure out how to bring those people to Berkeley with their wallets.

Aiming for regional detail downtown doesn't make sense to me: I don't see how downtown can compete with areas with easy freeway access (Emeryville, 4th St)

Let's focus on a more modest scale, and try to make downtown work as well as possible for Berkeley residents.

Ensure minimum sidewalk clear pathways meet all ADA requirements.

Michael Katz email: 1) First, thanks to staff for your diligence and imagination.

2) But my objection is that the SOSIP alternatives are each trying to accomplish too much at once. The SOSIP package seems designed to satisfy multiple constituencies and goals. But these constituencies and their goals are not only diverse, but also heartfelt and often contradictory.

That's why the SOSIP alternatives remind me of the cliched committee-designed horse, the camel. A Berkeley downtown designed by committee will likely still suffer from its current affliction -- being a blah place.

The alternatives that I saw at the Feb. 6 open house seem destined to produce a downtown that's more of a three-dimensional checklist than a vision. And we need a vision. Lose the humps, acknowledge that we won't make it across the Sahara, and breed a racehorse.

I also find it odd that the City is even presenting such wide-ranging alternatives for redesigning downtown, just when City Councilmembers and managers are warning that we're facing steep, yawning deficits and budget cuts. It seems unlikely that Berkeley will have adequate resources to even plan for the SOSIP alternatives any time soon, let alone build them.

So I recommend that we switch to a downtown transformation that's more modest and affordable -- but more focused and coherent. Lose the humps, and the critter will look better and run faster.

3) In particular, we should set an upfront criterion of losing NO mixed-flow travel lanes and no parking spaces downtown. Our downtown is suffering from a long-term economic decline, whose key causes include the ongoing loss of downtown parking spaces, and the perception that the downtown is highly congested.

And the perception is the reality. With shoppers staying away in droves, anchor storefronts permanently vacant, and marquee restaurants failing, no one wants to hear technical defenses about marginally adequate LOS levels or spiffy parking-supply management. They want to be able to drive somewhere in reasonable time, and find a place to park.

Some Berkeley residents have constructed an identity out of hating the private automobile. Unfortunately, the people who can economically sustain our downtown (or condemn it) rather like their cars. And in this project's planning horizon, those cars will become increasingly electric-powered, emissions-free, and charged by renewable and low-carbon electrical sources. At that point, the only rationale for further inconveniencing drivers will be a nostalgia for the moral clarity (and cardigan sweaters) of the Jimmy Carter era. Get over it. Within this criterion, there is still plenty of room to add "green" features like swales, rain gardens...and literally green trees. Oh yeah, trees:

4) What should we focus on instead? The best idea I heard on Feb. 6 is to plant abundant new street trees downtown. This alone shows that the City has matured since its last effort to remodel downtown: In the mid-1990s, the initial Measure S plan's most visible feature was to kill lots of healthy street trees and replace them with Sycamores, possibly the world's dullest tree.

But the SOSIP's current take on street trees -- plant a mix of species that are hardy, and that complement what's already growing downtown -- underserves the "placemaking" potential of new tree-planting. Wise tree selection can give downtown Berkeley a vision, branding, and a real sense of place.

What's wrong with downtown Berkeley is that it's at best functional, not memorable. There's not much there there. And let's be honest about the constraints that preclude us from ever building it into a great downtown -- certainly not by building alone. It's a narrow sliver, defined by an old streetcar route, jammed between a campus that keeps expanding and residential neighborhoods that fight back just as hard.

But other Bay Area towns and cities have small downtowns that are nevertheless memorable and welcoming. The best communities do it by picking a single,

dramatic tree species that serves to "brand" the downtown as a defined place. Some examples:

* Mill Valley: Retained and replanted redwood trees, illustrating the town's origins as a logging center. The town's compact downtown is an inviting urban forest.

* San Rafael: Its Fourth Street would be mostly a blah, cautionary example of 1960s redevelopment (apart from some new neotraditional buildings that have restored a bit of architectural character). But it's redeemed by the liquidamber (sweetgum) trees that someone had the vision to plan all over the downtown. Now mature, they turn the downtown into a blaze of different colors for much of the fall and winter. Different subspecies turn different colors, at different times, adding more variety. These deciduous trees are bare for only a few weeks of the year.

* Walnut Creek: Also architecturally dull -- but similarly enlivened by "branding" with similarly colorful trees. I believe these are sourgums (*Nyssa sylvatica*), which have sweetgums' advantages, but do better as street trees -- less invasive roots and less limb drop.

My recommendation is that Berkeley pick just one or two dramatic and hardy tree species, and "brand" downtown by planting them prolifically. We would be wise to pick species that celebrate our mild climate, that provide striking color, and that are left with bare branches for little or none of the year.

I'd specifically vote for branding downtown Berkeley with redwoods (especially on medians) and sourgums (especially as sidewalk trees).

Presto: instant sense of place; instant there there. The redwoods to celebrate Berkeley's longtime role as a cradle of California conservation and environmentalism. And the sourgums to turn riotously colorful in the fall, connoting the New England college towns whose standard of academic excellence Cal transplanted to the West Coast.

The City forester attending on Feb. 6 listed other viable candidates that thrive as street trees, and that deserve consideration. Among the prettiest are Japanese Maple, Chinese Pistache, and Brazilian Pepper (*Schinus Terabinthifolius*). I'd add California Pepper (*Schinus Molle*) to that list.

5) In all cases, I recommend favoring "active" over "passive" uses. I like the idea of public spaces enlivened by vendor kiosks and outdoor cafes. I do not like the idea of creating more neutral, unattended open space downtown.

The BART Plaza is a failed, forbidding place. And let's be realistic about this city's long-term demographic fallout from the 1960s' freak-outs and the Reagan era's explosion of homelessness.

Any unattended downtown public space is likely to soon become a homeless encampment, as Sproul Plaza, People's Park, and San Francisco's UN Plaza do after dark.

6) Some people will consider my vision for downtown too focused and unaggressive. They will instead advocate an ambitious "heart of the city" project

that offers residents a car-free refuge. It should have daylighted creeks and natural habitat. And it should be laid out by one of the nation's leading landscape architects, with his design donated at no cost to city residents.

And you know what? They're right. Wait a minute, we already have it! It's called the UC campus.

For too long, a handful of enthusiasts have driven a conversation about Berkeley's downtown that pretends the UC campus doesn't exist. It does, it's right next to downtown, and it's open to the public. Its graceful natural landscaping was gently shaped by F.L. Olmsted, the genius of New York's Central Park.

It's a magnificent resource that most cities would die to have. But let's be honest that it also imposes some constraints. UC takes over city space for its purposes, never vice versa. The campus' location terminates what would otherwise be two of the East Bay's major inter-city arterials (Telegraph Ave. and College Ave.).

Add the traffic deflection around Shattuck Square's historic train-station site, and you have three of the reason for the common perception that Berkeley roads are congested: they actually are congested.

So let's celebrate the UC campus as a downtown resource for us all to enjoy. And let's stop talking nonsense about closing even more downtown streets, to complete the downtown's economic strangulation.

7) But wait, some people will say: We need a green space that's in downtown proper, and is the people's space. It should be car-free, and green, and should contain an above-ground water element.

And they're right, too. Wait a minute, we already have that, too! It's called Civic Center/MLK Park. It provides a beautiful mall between old and new City Halls.

It's unfortunate that Civic Center Park is separated from most of the adult private sector's experience of downtown. Perhaps we should be thinking of ways to better connect it to people's downtown destinations. Those ways might not be obvious or expected. For example, perhaps we should be encouraging new streetfront retail and restaurants on Center St. and Allston Way west of Shattuck.

8) Some people will still call for more elaborate transformations of downtown. A few folks have spent so long advocating for particular projects, or particular zoning changes, that they feel they own part of downtown through sweat equity and should control it. At the Feb. 6 open house, Kirstin Miller demonstrated her assumed ownership of Center St. by not letting anyone near "her" Center St. presentation boards for most of the inspection/graffiti period.

Sorry, but it's not Kirstin Miller's downtown. It's not Gordon Realty's downtown. It's not Susie Medak's downtown. It's not Patrick Kennedy's downtown. It's not Susan Muscarella's downtown (although as a JazzSchool student, I believe it would be better if it were). It's most emphatically not Tom Bates' downtown. It's everyone's downtown. Don't leave real people out of any changes that are planned here.

9) Please do not repeat the statement that there "is excess capacity" (for mixed-flow traffic) on downtown streets. Most Berkeley residents and stakeholders do not find this to be true, and find such blanket statements arrogant.

It would be just as accurate to say that there "is excess capacity" for bicycles in parts of the city. A prime example being the vacant new bike lanes on Marin Ave. - where almost no cyclist really wanted to ride, but where homeowners saw a chance to divert traffic elsewhere by invoking the needs of phantom cyclists. We may soon have "excess capacity" for cyclists on The Alameda, too, if Councilmember Capitelli gets his way.

10) Cyclists (I am one) should certainly be accommodated downtown. But we should drop the presumption that space for bike lanes should necessarily be subtracted from vehicle space.

Why not take it out of sidewalk space? One of the planet's two best bicycling cities, Copenhagen, uses a system of two-level sidewalks on all major streets. Pedestrians get the wider, top level. The city's ubiquitous cyclists get the middle level, which is still several inches above the street. Everyone bikes -- 67% of the city's trips are taken by bike.

Cyclists also get their own stop signals. They obey them, and they yield to pedestrians -- including clueless tourists (like me) who wander onto their lanes.

On Berkeley's Shattuck Ave., there are wide sidewalks that arguably have "excess capacity" that doesn't work well for anyone. The people who really use our downtown know that the primary assault on its "walkability" is not the motorists who are now designated public enemies. The active threat is from rowdy cyclists riding illegally (and fast) on the sidewalk, with no police response; and from rowdy skateboards whom the City has been too timid to even nominally regulate.

Consider giving the wheeled, nonmotorized vehicles their own lanes -- but take those out of the sidewalk space they're already making unsafe and unusable for pedestrians.

11) Please avoid references to "livability" in future SOSIP discussions. The term is vague and unquantifiable. It means such different things to different people as to be meaningless. To some people, "livability" clearly means low building density, low building heights, open space where they live and circulate, and sunlight access. To others, "livability" is just as clearly defined as high density, high buildings, constricted streets, and the presumption that open space is being preserved somewhere else. People in both camps have strong feelings. Fortunately, we also have enough specific and quantifiable words that we can have coherent debates without linguistic Jello.

12) Please exclude the word "improvements" from future SOSIP presentations and materials. Anyone who has participated in any public planning effort knows that "improvement" is used as a blanket synonym for "change." At least half of stakeholders will view each invocation of "improvements" as an Orwellian synonym for "detriments." Use the neutral "proposed change(s)," and everyone can evaluate proposals on their merits.

Ohlone Greenway along Hearst Avenue

Yes – develop the Extension. The Park also needs improvements.

Class I Bike path on Hearst would facilitate extension of Ohlone Greenway and improves -pedestrian and bike access to downtown.

Widen sidewalks and landscape areas along south side (consider future Helios building impact: shading, pedestrian circulation.

Add street trees at north side, in landscape swale or pervious. Add berm.

Very positive about these concepts.

Don't narrow Hearst to 2 lanes. U.C. will never stop expanding and traffic counts will only go up.

Good idea to extend 1-lane-each-way north to Oxford!

Option 2 or 3, safer bikeways

All 3 options would be fine with me. This piece could be done separate from the others, and could be done soon. People would see progress, which would be great.

We don't need four lanes of traffic on Hearst between Shattuck and Oxford

Love the proposal to narrow Hearst, so that we can extend the bike greenway and add other greenway features.

Extend the bike path to Oxford

Berkeley Way-S. of Hearst would be an opportunity. (N. of Berkeley Way-Walnut St.) would be an opportunity for open space.

Why is the south side emphasized and not the north side? More appealing or the N.S.

S. of Hearst between Shattuck/Walnut no street trees.

Do not narrow Hearst Ave.—maintain 2 lanes each way. It needs this capacity already, especially as a corridor for the downtown fire station to run trucks eastward. It will need more mixed-use capacity as the UC Berkeley Art Museum moves downtown.

Just plant more trees.

Concern about cost

Option 3 is preferable

Prefer option 1 because it's the easiest option to implement

Bike lane next to parking is dangerous

To bring more people who will spend more time downtown—have places to sit—face to face—not connected to a restaurant—attract people not just see them as patrons.

Hearst improvements could be done separate from other more complex things on Shattuck, and they could hopefully happen sooner so people would see some progress and be inspired to make more changes on Shattuck.

I like the idea of a bike trail! Perk for bikes, safer for everyone and people could feel safer biking with kids and dogs! Would help promote a bike culture!

Great idea to go down from 4 lanes to 2 lanes and create bike trails.

There is no "excess capacity" here. Don't remove travel lanes.

Berkeley Way, S. of Hearst, between Shattuck and Walnut would be an opportunity for open space as well.

Definitely great to narrow street. Going to 3 lanes on Hearst immediately W of Oxford could help make that intersection less of a disaster. The streets are now much too wide, which leads to very long red light times, illegal turns, people walking on red, etc. because the waits are so awful. Narrowing Hearst on the W side would help that some. It would be great to also change the NE corner, narrowing Oxford there to reduce walk distance, which would cut red light times and make it easier and safer for pedestrians.

Narrowing street would also make it much easier and safer to cross and make Hearst/Shattuck less awful for pedestrians, wheelchairs, etc.

It would also be great to work with the University to try to change the SE corner. Right now it's very unwelcoming...just a barrier and delivery area/parking lot. It would be great to try to get a welcoming entrance to Cal there to work with a nice parkway on Hearst (one good reason to emphasize the south side of Hearst).

Suggest narrowing Berkeley Way a lot E of Shattuck, maybe one way E. Extending the greenway all the way down to Milvia and MLK would be great.

Don't even THINK of reducing the lane count on Hearst. The downtown fire station on Berkeley Way rely on Hearst almost daily to get their trucks to emergencies quickly!

Bike lanes in street are better for bikes.

Options with Class 1 bikeway best.

Bike path ("bike track") on both sides is best.

Lower Shattuck (Dwight to Durant)

Fix the Fountain! Such an embarrassment. I did not understand why the City could fund the recent improvements to the Park and then ignore the biggest eyesore in the middle of the Park. Please tackle this major issue for the downtown which you can view from the City Hall windows.

Recommend extending it to Adeline as means to create better gateway to downtown and to have the park be multiuse greenway. (Class 1 Bikeway). Move the greenway to east or west side of Shattuck—will make it more usable and attractive to pedestrians.

Mid-median areas are not safe or healthful places for pedestrians: -“people activity” in middle of the arterial is too disruptive and distracting, may result in accidents and injuries.

Putting the open space in the middle would be terribly wrongheaded! Especially considering Shattuck’s heavy traffic volume, people wouldn’t use it. Being there would be uncomfortable. Put the open space, instead, on the sides. (The comparison with SF’s South Park is absurd; that open space is in the middle of a quiet back street.) Having open space on the sides would help the adjacent retail—such as by allowing sidewalk cafes.

Extend this idea south to Adeline.

I like the idea! See “street trees” (below) for a suggestion/possibility.

Option 2

Both options (and 2 look good to me—Do something! (I think I’d like the “park” area to be on one side of the street, but that’s a small think and I know merchants might worry...)

No

Love the “Park Blocks” idea. I’m all for reducing traffic in the downtown core, and along streets, so that we can increase public open space in the downtown, and create new parks + pedestrian spaces.

Should not be two schemes—treatment should be the same all along—with wider sidewalks and landscaping next to the stores—traffic in the center with parallel parking (if absolutely needed)

Please maintain angled parking. (Otherwise, we lose parking spaces, and downtown continues to die economically).

Please avoid any wide open plazas. They will become dead space, like the BART Plaza even if “green.”

Just plant more trees. Keep things “active.”

Continue park blocks further south Adeline.

Proposal to have wider sidewalks with activity rather than a green median

Love idea of park blocks. More pedestrian space, green space, and trees, please!

Like open space at play areas—families needed this!

This is a nice concept, but I agree with others who say that the green space would be too separate from buildings and sidewalks. Not a good use of resources to build this.

Please create outside dining opportunities. It is a huge disappointment living in Berkeley knowing the City makes it almost impossible to create outside sidewalks areas with tables and chairs. It does not impede foot traffic. Instead, street-side dining enlivens a city, creates a sense of community and defines public space. For almost 2 years I have repeatedly inquired about the outdoor seating application submitted to the City by Peet's Coffee on upper Solano—a simple outdoor gathering area. When the traffic calming bulb was added at this site next to the crosswalk, I saw it as an ideal location to add seating. I have been told repeatedly by the Peet's management that the gathering space application had not yet been approved in the application process—2 years? The Peets site on upper Solano begs for an outdoor gathering space. When the 2 story building at Solano and Colusa was built—with no partial plaza, I realized something was inherently wrong with the City's vision for its city streets.

Look at Copenhagen, San Luis Obispo, Santa Monica, San Cristobal many successful walking streets—enhance stopping.

I disagree that this idea would help commercial visibility. Like in Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz the pedestrian/green space is next to the shops and doesn't isolate the shops. It seems very successful.

If vendors are part of park space—strong consideration should be given to impacts for deliveries, etc and the resulting traffic. Analyze how street vendors can be challenging.

Yeah park blocks! They work great on Coronado Island. Food might not be appropriate—but natives, rain gardens, and seating would be great!

Putting the open space in the middle is absurd. People wouldn't use it. (Traffic here is 30,000 ADT.) Put the open space on the sides.

Plan/extend to Adeline intersection.

Good idea to extend it as a greenway to Adeline—which facilitates Class 1 bikeway trail improvements as part of the scheme. This would recommend putting the greenway/"park blocks" to east side of street, not the center as proposed. This would make it a safer, more usable to all users—having it in the center isolates

pedestrians/people between traffic flows which makes it less attractive a park space.

No, not in front.

Retail needs bike parking!

Watch out for doors!

Option 2 - Limited Access & Passive Program. I agree with this! I like the idea of water drainage following the sidewalk—a seasonal water feature. But community gardens bad idea—not maintained and interferes with cross-pedestrians. If we think of all of the auto and truck traffic on Shattuck, having a garden growing food is not a good idea. All of the traffic pollution is unhealthy, and collects on the plants and soil. Garden would need a wall or fence which could not allow much crossing traffic (no jaywalking). Public gardens don't always get maintained.

Please remove no mixed-flow vehicle lanes.

Please remove no vehicle parking spaces, and do not convert angled to parallel parking.

Prioritize "active" over "passive" uses -- do not create loitering hangouts or homeless encampments.

Concentrate new features on sidewalks, to strengthen hollow commercial district -- not on medians.

Shattuck Square and End of University Avenue

Eliminate one of the streets (traffic flow North) – Make it a public green space, or public plaza area.

Close off E. Shattuck Square and make it a plaza – (focusing 2 way traffic on W. Shattuck). This will create synergy with proposed Center Street Plaza.

Prefer 2-way traffic at west side Shattuck Sq., and pedestrianizing at east side.

Make Shattuck's west leg two-way. Shattuck's present east leg should be a combination of plaza and local-service-type street.

Like your proposals.

Putting 2-way traffic on west side is a good idea. Closing east side to traffic (1) loses parking and (2) blocks access to hotel proposed by U.C.

I like the idea of either having all traffic on West side of Shattuck Square, or having almost all of it there, with 1 lane northbound on the east side of the square (perhaps R. turn only at University). There's a ridiculous amount of underused asphalt in the current system.

If these businesses squawk about shutting this portion of street completely, we could do a single northbound lane (maybe right turn only at University); still have street trees, swales, bike lane. (There is a lot of extra asphalt now).

Option 3 – BRT + 2 way traffic W. side of Shattuck

Option 3 is my STRONG favorite!!! Do this soon.

Both traffic lanes west of Shattuck Sq. Yes. Place bus terminal on east side. Yes.

Designs that provide more green amenities (including green urban runoff control, etc.), and more pedestrian-only spaces are my preference! I'd love to close down more than just Center St.!

Love the idea to move BART entrance to east side of Shattuck (on Center) – think big + visionary!

Local traffic only on east branch of Shattuck

Option 3. Blocking/pedestrian. University and Allston.

Please, no BRT.

Do not reduce the number of mixed-flow traffic lanes. This core part of downtown is already perceived as too congested. People are staying away, and downtown is dying economically. A real improvement would be to improve circulation so vehicles can move faster.

Do not extend paid parking hours.

Just plant more trees.

Love the idea of closing off all of Shattuck Sq. (from University to Center to pedestrians and BRT and parking lots by developing relationship with University to open up lots on Oxford/Addison to public on weekends/evenings. More off -street public parking lots needed!

Option 3.2 is highly preferable—it makes a “heart of the city” possible

Goal is not to move traffic, but to make space attractive!

Option 3 is my preference

Please do the improvements indicated on the plan between Shattuck and Oxford on University ASAP. It is relatively independent of everything else and noncontroversial (and would give us hope that something is happening.

3.1 is feasible and creates a real town center. Go for it!

I saw the plans for the Berkeley Town Square online—it could look like the photos of European cities—and it is very economical—why isn't this an option?

You showed a of a bus transfer island (south apex of the Shattuck Square) would this make Center a energy-point-focus midpoint in downtown. Badly needed.

I would like to stress the importance of being considered a person, not just a costumer or patron. I would be much more likely to spend more time downtown if I could sit down with friends, face to face, drink my coffee and have a meaningful conversation. What values underlie this whole plan—creating a space to farther the development of civil society or shop-shop-shop all ye consumers.

With, or without, BRT Shattuck traffic should be moved to west side of Shattuck Square and be two-way—thus leaving option for open space/green uses/traffic station on other side (east).

Shattuck Sq. should prioritize attention to making BART much more gracious city. BART main entrance should be more visible/transparent and on East side of street to serve campus communities (main source of BART traffic).

Eliminating cars on the east part would be great. Now a real mess for drivers and pedestrians at University/Shattuck.

It would be great to narrow University east of Shattuck. Also to ban right turns on red at the SW corner of Oxford and University during most hours. Really dangerous how people speed through the crosswalk.

Option 3.1: Two-way on West Side; with BRT and East Side BRT Entry. This is by far the best option, and does not seem clearly more expensive than other things in this open house. Please develop it further. BART entry doesn't need to move, and street could still carry small amounts of delivery traffic.

Move the BART entrance.

No BRT, thank you.

Please remove no mixed-flow vehicle lanes. Please do not close EITHER side of Shattuck/Shattuck Square to mixed-flow traffic. There is no "excess capacity" for vehicles here.

But please DO consider creating a sense of place here, by creating displays that recall the two center blocks' original function as a train station. To again point to Mill Valley as a model, that town was brilliant to preserve its historic station structure as an elegant focal point, and to recycle it into a widely patronized bookstore/cafe whose outdoor seating anchors an "active" plaza space.

If Center is closed, hotel site access (incl taxis) must be provided on Shattuck.

Amenity/OS on east side of Square extends amenity of Center Street Plaza.

Bring partial closure & ped amenity on east side up to University.

Center Street Plaza & Greenway

Repair Civic Center fountain!

Create a parallel review process for the Center St design. I would like to see the Council vote for choice of the 3 concepts (so Walter does not continue to give the same presentation). My preference would be the 3rd concept.

Please move now and adopt the Walter Hood design.

Let's move forward with the Walter Hood plan as it has gone through a comprehensive process of engaging various stakeholders. Any remaining concerns can be worked through as the project proponents have shown willingness to work with many diverse stakeholders. The process led by citizens for a Strawberry Creek Plaza is an authentic 12-year process that is as legitimate as any top-down city-led process, if not more so.

One thing that seems important to me as a resident is to follow through on projects that have momentum, like the Center Street Plaza plan that is in an advanced stage of planning (research and designs proposed by Ecocity Builders). This plan would make a dramatic statement to residents (and beyond) of Berkeley's commitment to sustainable urban ecology and in my opinion could generate more support for the other city designs in earlier stages of development.

Create Strawberry Creek/water feature with Pedestrian Plaza (a la Walter Hood Design)

Proceed with Walter Hood planning/design process, and implement elements of landscaping in phases, if necessary.

Yes to Walter Hood's design for the Center Street Plaza! This will animate the heart of the city, and highly upgrade the entry from BART to campus + downtown (especially in conjunction with the hotel and museum, whenever they come back to life!)—let's do it!

Don't spend lots of (scarce!) money on expensive literal creek creating. (Can refer to the creek in symbolic features such as a fountain and sculpture.) Emphasize "social gathering places."

Please eliminate cars on Plaza and make it as riparian as possible. I am a 14 year homeowner in Berkeley and would like downtown to have a "there there," an attractive and meaningful focus.

Closing Center is a bad idea for transit, taxis, etc, instead build wider sidewalks on north. Extend this idea on both sides and west to Milvia or MLK—to B.C.C. and Y teen center.

I love the Walter Hood plaza design! I think it would be great to tie it into a plaza on what is currently northbound Shattuck at Shattuck Square, or, better, to

continue it all the way down Center. (By the way, I eat lunch on Center about every week.)

Option 1—open creek or provide water reference, remove cars (permeable surfaces for delivery)

Option 2 is my preferred one. I do not like option 3. Seating on sunny side of street would be good.

Implement the proposed Berkeley Town Square Plan. It is doable and financially the best choice to make an immediate impact on the downtown.

Water feature – yes. Daylighting creek – no. at least follow Walter Hood plan. Absolutely try to do a green link all the way to MLK Civic Center Park.

#1: Adopt Walter Hood's design! (And close Center St. to traffic except emergencies/limited delivery times).

Beautiful, elegant design that addresses so many stakeholder concerns... my personal preference would have been more creek/walkway, more green, etc. –but this design encompasses so much, and so well, that I just have to support it.

#2: I think bike lanes/access should be eliminated on Center St. (I say that as a biker, by the way)

Create a real Public Plaza around the BART station.

On Center St. Greenway what is the elevation of Strawberry Creek as it leaves UC Campus? Why can't we keep the same elevation of the creek instead of using the current manmade piping of the creek under Center Street. Daylight it.

Much as I like the idea of daylighting the creek—and I love Walter Hood's work—if the creek is difficult + expensive to expose—I would favor spending the money on pedestrianizing/trees/social nodes.

Option 3 is far preferable. Build on past investments/improvements on Center St.'s south side, which have helped economically revitalize it. Work with UC/Berkeley Art Museum to make the north side more inviting. Maintain mixed-flow vehicle access to serve the new museum and to avoid crippling downtown. Do not reduce the lane count, nor remove angled parking. New trees welcomed but not beside new museum.

Drop in elevation makes interesting waterfalls possible!

Adopt the Walter Hood Design!

Adopt the Hood proposal!

Present Walter Hood's proposal to subcommittee.

Option 1 A: MLK to Milvia.

Fix fountain as specified in the mid 90's plan for MLK Park—with turtles. Remove free parking for City Council members and aides—add this area to park.

I agree—this was specified in mid 90's plan for the park.

I agree.

Yes—give them electric bikes!

This is way too deep—simply silly! But creek farther east is good.

This does not have to be this deep.

This is too deep: can't see the water; dangerous for kids; liabilities.

Option 1 C: Shattuck to Oxford

Open creek in 3 phases. C: Shattuck to Oxford—First Phase, B: Milvia to Shattuck—Second Phase, MLK to Milvia—Third Phase.

Agree

On all 3 blocks—include outdoor gallery space on weekends + permanent public art and nodes.

Use ceramic or other pavers with some color scheme (e.g. terra cotta or green) for all 3 blocks to maintain unity.

Love this!

No, do not close this block to mixed-use traffic. Access is essential to new museum, U.C. west circle, and broader downtown.

How do taxis and cars get to hotel?

No hotel developer will accept a site without access.

Access can come on Shattuck and/or provide limited access for hotel drop-off only.

Close Center Street to normal vehicular traffic. Pedestrian Plaza next to BART would be a huge success!

Option 2 B: Milvia to Shattuck

Reroute existing failing culvert to go down Center, as existing alignment will fail in an earthquake—it's under several large buildings. Green Center to Park—use W. Hood's proposal to upper Center.

Option 2 C: Shattuck to Oxford

No, do not close this block to mixed-use traffic. Access is essential to new museum, U.C. west circle, and broader downtown.

See hotel access question from above.

Option 3

This is by far the best option!

Do not remove angled parking. New trees welcome.

Be careful with new trees on [Shattuck to Oxford] block. Museum façade must be visible. Drought—tolerant low shrubs preferable.

Please do not close Center St. to mixed-flow traffic.

Please remove no vehicle parking spaces.

Please keep the facade of the UC Printing Plant visible. As UC adapts this building as its new museum site, it will want to use the facade to externalize the museum's holdings and invite the public in. So new street trees on the north side of Center St. probably won't work. But there is potential for beautiful low-rise landscaping there -- drought-tolerant chaparral like ceanothus, lavender cotton, succulents, etc.

An open creek—terrific! An open creek 30 feet down? Awful

Mid-Shattuck (from Durant to Center)

Eliminate diagonal parking bays; widen sidewalk areas and pedestrian amenities: consolidate parking in structures.

Consider extension to Adeline.

Don't have dedicated BRT lanes on Shattuck. They would be (a) pointless and (b) wasteful. Pointless, because for the short distance involved there'd be no appreciable speed/reliability saving. Wasteful, because the space should be used, instead, for pedestrian open space (on one or both sides of the street).

Yes

Best is to retain parallel parking and no center park.

Option 2 + wider sidewalks/bike lanes

Both options would be fine with me. I would like to get rid of the diagonal parking regardless of which option.

Remove lots of on-street parking (and/or change diagonal to parallel parking), to allow for wider sidewalks, many more street trees, "green street" features (rain gardens, swales, etc.), and the like. Dedicate lanes for transit.

Please, no BRT.

Please, keep angled parking (to avoid parking loss).

Just plant more trees! That's the "park." Park with parking.

I favor an active/full access central park to encourage pedestrian traffic and "close up" the width of Shattuck.

How would adding transit stations in the middle of the street (i.e. BRT) improve the use of downtown?

(See SFSU trolley lane on 19th street example) How would this be the same or different—focused primarily on the visual and urban design aspect of this—it's also very lively area, but separate from businesses.

Show where the parking garages are.

Center running dedicated lanes are pointless because for the short distance along Shattuck, having center lanes will not result in any significant speed/reliability difference. Prefer side loading—more comfortable and safer for bus riders.

Diagonal parking is easier to see, and do so preferable to parallel parking. Also diagonal parking will improve traffic flow.

What about public transportation services that are being reduced?

No BRT, thank you.

Please remove no mixed-flow vehicle lanes.

Please remove no vehicle parking spaces, and do not convert diagonal to parallel parking.

Any new bike lanes should come out of current sidewalk space. Try the Copenhagen system of two-level sidewalks: peds on the top level, bikes on the middle level.

Shattuck should be a "true boulevard" where parking/access lanes are uninterrupted by sidewalk "lambchops" [pedestrian bulbouts].

Emphasize bike lanes.

Reduce car traffic, such as through satellite parking.

I'm for BRT.

Can BRT platform/station be connected better with the uphill sidewalk by regarding the street and hardscape improvements.

Make sidewalks wider. Businesses can spillover onto wider sidewalks.

Bicycle Network Improvements

They seem fairly advanced to me now. Put the focus on Bicycle “connections” from the neighborhoods. Add more to the major arterials to improve connections.

These should be incorporated into every option for Downtown OS.

Good ideas

Create bike lanes on Milvia from Center to University—and remove parking from the street’s east side there.

I like the proposed improvements, am a serious biker. OK to eliminate bike lane and parking on Center, but would like more designated lanes soon (for safety!).

I have commuted by bike in Berkeley for the past 18 years... partly because Berkeley is already pretty bike-friendly. Milvia at University, and for a few blocks south, is very challenging... lots of cars/pedestrians/bikes mixed. Not sure how to fix it, but please try to work on it!

Bike lanes off streets, by sidewalk, wherever possible. Auto drivers and people opening car doors are too oblivious.

Having short block-long separate lines may not be that much of an improvement.

Eliminate bike lanes on Center St. (bikes are well-accommodated on other streets... I’m a biker, I know that!)

Improve bike lanes everywhere else

Increase easy, accessible bike parking everywhere!

Extend the bike path to Oxford.

LRDP mitigation signal at Oxford/Allston?

Adjust curb cut to allow South on Oxford from Schlesinger Way

Liked pathway idea on Hearst, path would need to continue past Oxford to Arch

Center St. as a pedestrian priority but with bike access (doesn’t need to have a lane)

Need improvements on Allston especially west of Shattuck

Semi divider on Milvia north of Channing

Problem with garage access from Milvia (and resulting auto traffic) and bike needs

If Allston becomes a bikeway, also needs improvements west of MLK

Milvia/University one of ten most problematic intersections

Oxford/Hearst also a problem

Milvia between University and Allston a problem

Need for more bike parking

Numerous rack locations better than single, consolidated bike parking; better access, attracts abandoned bikes; parking for 1-2 bikes all along a block is best; or at least have both

Need for more racks at University and Milvia

Concern at increasing auto traffic on Milvia if fewer lanes on Shattuck—indicates greater need for bike lanes on Shattuck

Bike racks from recycled materials to create street art and bike parking (Austin, TX)

Bike parking near the high school is needed

Eliminate one side of the parking on Milvia between University and Allston to create bike lanes—remove parking on east side—would be better to better align intersection at University and Milvia

UC and City of Berkeley (major employers) should start now providing free bike rentals to employees to encourage biking for errands and lunch breaks.

More bike racks would be extremely helpful.

1. Do not remove parking from Milvia, between University and Allston. People need vehicle access to City Hall. City employees have usurped formerly public parking spaces on Center St.

2. On Shattuck, consider bike lanes via Copenhagen-style split-level sidewalks. Bikes ride on the sidewalk now, illegally, terrorizing pedestrians. Give them their own level.

Remove parking on east side to improve alignment at University and Milvia.

Do not remove parking from Milvia.

Please consider Copenhagen-style two-level sidewalks to accommodate separate bike lanes, as suggested above.

Bike paths separated from street traffic and parking are essential for safety and enticing more people out of cars

Urban Runoff and Low Impact Development

The city needs to move on adopting advanced storm water practices

Require the use of biofiltration techniques on all new development and retrofit on other sites where it makes sense

Every street should be retrofitted to include LID.

Widened sidewalks along Shattuck, between University-Adeline; add edge berms and percolation/filtration beds with landscaping.

Like swales etc, doubtful about aesthetics of community gardens in Shattuck Ave location (though I am a gardener).

I love the bioswales idea... we definitely want more street trees and greenery, let's make it functional too.

We should also take advantage of any big streets projects to add "slow the flow" cisterns and permeable paving.

We need to open Strawberry Creek to MLK now and treat Center St. as a greenway/pedestrian plaza from campus to MLK. Cars are a 20th century transportation. We've got to look forward.

I really like these things—please include some urban runoff abatement features—like bio-swales.

Urban Runoff great idea—but don't use a lot space for it-work it in with small features

Everything we do at this point should include "green" storm water features, rain gardens, permeable surfaces (roofs, walls, streets, etc.).

Like concept. Worried about maintenance

Repeat visitors to SF. Need draw to come to Berkeley

Downtown demonstration project is a great idea

Concern with water issues impacting BART (especially with park sites)

Parker/Carleton (Honda dealership) not for on-site/area focused green infrastructure implementation to get their LEED certificates.

Why don't all Californians capture/reuse rainwater?

Support permeable pavements to get water into the ground

Support LED lighting in downtown to minimize ambient light which currently disrupts biorhythms

Stencil all storm drains

Permeable sidewalks good (citywide program?)

What are cost comparisons of pavers, porous paving, and traditional surfacing?

Permeable paving under all parking lanes in city. Especially the north/south streets

Conceive of streets as urban streams (where water is collected) (ecological system conception) yet accommodate cars

Open-surface water areas would breed mosquitoes—luckily you can get mosquito fish from Vector Control, but design catchment with hiding places so fish can evade raccoons!

Calculations/urban runoff/water retention/filtration/vegetated areas and determine how much area in streetscape should be used for water management.

Flooding/ponding on Ohlone Greenway further north where BART comes to surface.

I would worry about lots of exposed water—especially stagnant water. Danger for young children perhaps? But definitely need a solution for urban run-off.

Street Trees

Yes. A unifying theme. Green the downtown. In addition, hold a design contest for street tree grates (instead of DG) or mulch or dirt. An installation of this nature could vastly improve the aesthetic of the downtown. It could be viewed also as a public art piece for the downtown.

These should be a unifying theme. Ensure that each ubiquitous street have same species.

Add appropriate varieties of trees to existing trees, in widened sidewalks.

Yes!

Trees: good ideas from participants: 1) keep existing—don't start over 2) plant a lot more.

We certainly need more! I realize Live Oaks don't make good street trees in most circumstances but they're so great-looking and great for birds... maybe in a "park block"? Maybe create 1 block of "original native habitat" with live oaks, bunch grasses, etc. (We don't have this anywhere in the city right now!)

More. Yes! A great unifying theme.

We need way more street trees: natives with large canopies—plant as many as possible... take out parking to do so, if need be

Plant more trees!

Great downtowns: Mill Valley- preserved redwoods, San Rafael- lots of different liquid amber species, Walnut Creek- colorful, explosively colorful and green trees (but not liquid ambers).

Plant now as many trees as possible

Plant more live oaks. They are perennial and native food for squirrels.

Love trees that refresh our breathing.

I am saddened deeply by removing trees.

Lack of native species particularly in concert with rainwater collections.

Use tree species that allow visibility through even a full foliage season for visibility of retail signage and activity.

Create a downtown identity by planting and branding a dramatic tree species that provides greenery and color, while celebrating our climate.

For Berkeley: redwoods, sourgum, Chinese pistache, acacia baileyensis, live oak, maples, Chinese flame. Criteria: leaves most of the year; color in the fall. No more dumb plain trees/sycamores.

Really needed on Walnut (1 existing), top of Addison, Addison below Shattuck, Berkeley Way top, Hearst (*none* on S side E of Shattuck, I think 1 on the N side between Walnut and Shattuck), top of University (especially N side E of Walnut-not nearly enough there).

Before I went and looked it didn't seem to me there were trees on Univ. E of Shattuck. There are, but I sure didn't have the impression there were. So I don't know if they're not very effective. Right now they don't add much of anything; I hope they're better in spring and after. I asked a friend who thought there weren't any trees there. You might want to look at what's there...for some of us it seems as if they don't exist...

I'd prefer trees that are leafy most of the year; those that lose their leaves for months are much less attractive.

The Zelkova serrata generally has unshapely habits.

Yes [infill is needed]!

As suggested above, select a pair of dominant tree species, and plant them prolifically to "brand" downtown Berkeley. Prioritize dramatic and colorful species that celebrate our mild climate's support for year-round greenery. My first vote goes to redwoods + sourgums.

Also consider: Japanese Maple, Chinese Pistache, Brazilian Pepper (Schinus Terabinthifolius), and California Pepper.

Avoid bland trees that lack color, spend much of the year bare, and transplant the generic look of cold northern cities' street trees. So exclude NATO trees like London Plane or Sycamore.

Other Issues

Parking

I've lived in Berkeley for 20 years and I have never used many of the multi-story parking garages. Too narrow? Too dark? Bad access? I don't know why.

Is there any chance of having a giant parking garage somewhere? That would include bike parking.

How do you expect Downtown Berkeley to compete with the surrounding retail areas if parking is not addressed first?

Downtown needs a centralized parking structure (Santa Cruz did it) reduce on street parking

I really like the idea of reducing how much of Shattuck is taken up with parking. But that seems to mean fewer street spaces, which will provoke complaints. Some ways to deal with that:

1. Increase the parking meter rates to discourage employees from tying up so many street spaces, so more are available for customers.

2. Charge more per hour the longer you stay, to do the same. Like NY and I think SF may do this in places.

3. Refine meter rates the way SF is working on, so you charge more at the busiest times and locations and less at other locations. This maximizes the best use of parking spaces so you don't overcharge at times when demand is low and don't undercharge when there's lots of demand.

4. Obviously it's far better to charge in the evenings and on Sunday, too. Otherwise you're undercharging and not making efficient use of street spaces

Berkeley Way Improvements

Widen sidewalk on Berkeley Way adjacent to UC Public Health & Helios site + plant trees.

Driveways

Should really aim to minimize the width and number of driveways (see Pedestrian Plan); makes a big difference for pedestrians and attractiveness. An example of doing it really badly is on the N side of University right above Walnut-grossly wide driveway, which reduces the options for trees and landscaping and just adds great unattractiveness. Make sure side slopes are minimized for wheelchairs, etc.

Lighting

Promote patterns relative to spacing for good lighting conceive design with lighting in mind

Lighting needs to be both more energy efficient (LEDs) and shielded to reduce light pollution

Light pollution- too much artificial light escapes its intended use as light pollution. Light pollution is causing disruption in the systems of all living things in our biosphere. There are practical ways to provide adequate light for businesses, security, pedestrians, etc, without so much disruptive ambient light.