

DRAFT
North Watt Avenue Corridor Plan
Storefront Workshop
Meeting Notes
May 15-17, 2007

WORKSHOP FORMAT

The Storefront Workshop for the North Watt Avenue Corridor Plan was held over the course of three days, May 15-17, with 11 separate sessions. Approximately 60 residents, local business people, landowners, and agency representatives attended the workshop, in addition to County and consulting staff.

The workshop offered a mixture of general and specialized sessions. The general sessions provided an overview of the Corridor Plan process and introduced possible opportunity areas. Participants were also given the opportunity to model parcels or areas of special interest using SACOG's new 3D community modeling program, which was introduced at the workshop. The special topic sessions addressed traffic and circulation; McClellan Business Park; Splinter City and the proposed Wal-Mart; and streetscape and urban design, with formal presentations followed by open discussion. The key concepts that emerged from these general and special topic sessions are summarized below.

WORKSHOP SUMMARY AND KEY CONCEPTS

Encourage the Development of Mixed-use Nodes

- Potential nodes include: Elkhorn and Watt; Freedom Park Drive and Watt; the McClellan Interface with Watt; and the Splinter City area
- Concentrate activity at these nodes to reduce traffic
- Locate high density/intensity uses near transit opportunities

Combine Efficient Through-Traffic with Local Accessibility

- Seek additional transit options
- Encourage efficient site design
- Add pedestrian/bicycle improvements

Strengthen East/West Connections across Watt

- Elkhorn Boulevard
- Robla Creek
- McClellan Entries at Freedom Park, James, Peacekeeper
- McClellan/Splinter City

Build on Watt Avenue's Proximity to McClellan Business Park

- McClellan as a key economic driver
- Connect McClellan to the community through services and events

Revitalize Commercial/Retail

- Fix current retail/service gaps (medical, restaurants, clothing, entertainment)
- Concentrate commercial/retail at mixed-use centers, rather than reinforcing existing underperforming commercial/retail spread along Watt
- Explore regional retail potential, especially in Splinter City area

Build on the Community's History and Culture

- Display community's aeronautic history in public art, signage, architecture
- Build on changing diversity, such as newer eastern European residents

Support Sense of Place through Good Urban Design

- Design street frontage of buildings to create visibility/access while partially shielding public space from Watt
- Endorse streetscape improvements (trees, pedestrian amenities, bicycle facilities, etc.)

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Detailed notes are provided below, organized by consecutive session, with time, date, and topic noted.

May 15, 2007 - 12:00-2:00 PM - General Sessions

- How will land uses proposed for North Watt affect land uses in West of Watt area?
- Ag-res was constrained by McClellan noise contours, but is not any longer; however, there is not enough functional ag-res to keep for just agricultural uses
- How will traffic affect land uses along Watt / 34th?
- Will corridor plan expand to West of Watt area?
- Raley's shopping center is successful and should be kept
- Commercial/retail development should be concentrated at entrances/exits to McClellan (Freedom Park, James, Peacekeeper)
- Should challenged commercial/retail remain?
- There was a pedestrian bridge to McClellan from Splinter City during before decommissioning (are historic photos available?)

- A new pad will have Starbucks with other retail (see map above)
- Existing uses make it difficult to change and create opportunities for new development
- Preference for views along Watt
- Mixed use in Walgreen area (see map above)

May 15, 2007 - 4:00 PM – Market Study Special Topic Session

Needs

- Potential for additional housing along 34th Street
- School
- Hospital
- Add residential to McClellan
- Use McClellan facilities i.e., restaurants
- Some auto repair is doing well and should be kept
- Higher density housing should be next to Watt

Challenges

- Too much overdeveloped retail space
- Transportation
- Regional growth and effect on Watt
- Railroad tracks - a barrier for traffic connections
- Aircraft flight

Key Drivers

- Wal-Mart
- McClellan Park
- Watt Town Center needs a tenant mix that attracts spending

Issues/Questions

- Housing demand?
- How much will market support?
- Keep housing minimal in area of influence
- West of Watt will be a separate planning effort

May 15, 2007 - 6:00 PM – McClellan Business Park Special Topic Session

Potential Additions to McClellan

- Mixed-use in McClellan
- Shuttle system
- Housing; senior housing(Yes!)

Ideas that connect McClellan to Community

- Community events (such as farmer's markets)
- Sports venue (creative use of hangars?)
- Grocery store
- Dorms could be used as youth hostel (some dorms are currently leased to several tenants)

May 16, 2007 - 12:00 PM – Traffic And Circulation Special Topic Session

- Watt Avenue must accommodate bus, pedestrians, homes, and automobiles
- Changed noise contours affect neighborhood differently than in the past
- Coordinate plan with General Plan Update

Existing Use

- Finding alternative routes to get around Watt
- 34th receiving heavier use/high speeds as alternative to Watt

Ideas

- Couplet - potential to bring:
 - More traffic to McClellan (positive)
 - More traffic to 34th residential (negative)
- Potential for BRT + HOV lanes? (separate or combined?)
- Another Splinter City crossing of railroad tracks/extend Dudley
- Grade-separated connection to McClellan to Roseville Road
- Constraints:
 - overpass - must use a ramp
 - underpass - drainage is a challenge; must have pumps
- Land uses should be concentrated so that less driving is necessary

Bus Rapid Transit

- Need a dedicated lane or queue jumping option
- Can be combined with transit-oriented development (TOD)
- Uses widely spaced stops (1/2 to 1 mile)

Issues/Concerns

- Development to north of North Highlands
- Need to improve signal timing (“signal interconnect” upgrade)
- potential for restriping of roadway near McClellan (ex: Peacekeeper and Watt)
- May need to acquire ROW to widen Watt to 6 lanes

Mobility Study Alternatives

1. General Plan - 6-lane, sidewalks
2. Accessibility plan - BRT-lanes, 6 lanes, sidewalks
3. Couplet - 1-way 3 lanes, BRT lane on Watt and 34th.
4. Expressway, consolidate commercial retail driveways (similar to 1) HOV and enhanced bus

[Informal voting was held, and preference was expressed for Option 2]

May 16, 2007 - 2:00-4:00 PM– General Session

Needs/Issues to Consider

- Developers have been getting more involved with planning
- Can existing buildings be integrated into new development? Eminent domain unlikely, but SHRA and County can purchase land on the open market
- Need additional pedestrian crossings when signals are widely spaced
- Amphitheater for community events
- Trader Joe's
- One stop shopping - town center
- Will SuperCenter compete with local businesses
- Parks and open space
- Destination for local services
- Safety
 - lighting
 - occupancy/use
 - police patrol
 - eyes on the street
- Family restaurants - nicer quality, variety
- Outdoor seating - wider sidewalk
- Entertainment - day and night uses
- Housing opportunities - factors to be considered
 - trails
 - parks / fitness
 - entertainment
 - services
 - schools
 - grocery stores
 - cost
- Brand name vs. building design?
- Façade improvements can help
- Proximity
- Retail choices
- Opportunity for housing?
- Center housing around transit
- Have business owners been involved?
- Variety of owners

May 16, 2007, 6:00 PM – Wal-Mart Special Topic Session

Concerns

- Why current location for Wal-Mart? What other options?
- Appearance of shopping center

Constraints

- Too much retail; Mixed-use can't support the retail (but, the market for the residents remains strong in Mixed-use developments)

Traffic/Transit

- Traffic between employment (especially office, schools) and residential = biggest transit ridership
- Capital improvements better funded than operations
- BRT + light rail + bus transit (BRT lanes?) = 8 lanes? Placer Vineyards will have this
- People use alternative routes to Watt
- Wal-Mart traffic? Used to be a Costco in the vicinity
- Most current Watt traffic is N. Highlands; Wal-Mart will capture some of this existing traffic
- Create east/west access to Dudley, then use Longview to access I-80
- Note: Regional Transit updating transit Master Plan priorities for Light Rail stops

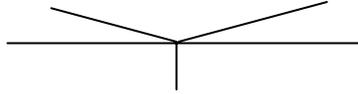
Options

- Alternative uses for the Wal-Mart property
- Connections to McClellan across Roseville Road/Union Pacific RR
- Restaurants
- More green/open space
- How function without a car? Capture the short trips (grocery, school, post office, etc.)
- Need additional residential

May 17, 2007 12:00 P.M. – Streetscape And Urban Design Special Topic Session

Urban Design

- Aeronautic theme in buildings
- Burbank example of historic preservation
- Gas stations have a particular shape that mimics aeronautic forms



- Grummond building - good example (James Street in McClellan)
- Museum / SureWest architectural styles relate well to each other
- Could F-105 be used as an entry feature?
- Play up history of area
- Could create a Freedom Park/Town Center type of street
- Nodes themed on aeronautic topics
- time line in the built environment

Watt/Elkhorn

- Lots of Pedestrian Activity at this intersection
- Median/oasis could improve pedestrian safety
- Traffic synchronization is needed - (sync pedestrian light, then auto light)
- Changes in paving materials can help slow traffic

Pedestrian bridge near Peacekeeper

- Signage needed
- Offers safe pedestrian crossing
- Could be redesigned with public art
- Has historic value
- Serves as community gateway
- Could be used for banners showing community events
- Not ADA accessible; need an at-grade crossing for this

Potential Improvements along Watt

- Tree Gates - concentrate at nodes; grates cost \$
- Vary landscaping to suit context
- What defines the character?
- Creek Trails → San Luis Obispo provides good example
 - Getting around McClellan
 - N Highlands has creeks, but community doesn't flood
- Awnings for shade/canopy
- Light fixtures (enclosure/color)
- Flowers
- Partial visual screening of certain areas (half wall, etc.)
- Tree motif on existing signage; make it a reality on streets

Potential Uses

- Improve safety of ped/bicycle - tunnel under railroad
- Grade changes to enhance pedestrian experience
- Add pedestrian amenities (benches, trash cans, etc.)
- Concentrate on "town feeling" at nodes

- More walking; serve Russian and other local groups
- Good example of mixed-use - 65th & Folsom
- Put gathering places behind / beside street frontages

Concerns

- Soil limits species (hardpan)
- Tree wells may limit health of trees
- Uses next to major street
- Vandalism of light fixtures can be addressed by good maintenance and right materials

May 17, 2007 2:00 P.M. – General Session

Concerns

- Watt carries high volume of truck traffic
- Challenge to create a Main Street atmosphere

Visions for Change

- Everything - landscape, buildings
- SHRA can be a resource for change
- Mixed-use a good choice for area
- Senior housing - Watt Town Center at Elkhorn & Watt
- West of Watt at Plymouth Drive - can it be zoned Commercial? That's its current use, but is currently zoned residential
- Bulb out between Elkhorn/Antelope on 34th would slow traffic

Modeling

- Concern about residential close to transfer station
- Need to connect Area C with McClellan