

Mark Elliot
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June 31, 2010

Mr. Ira M. Friedman, Chairperson
Traffic & Parking Commission
City of Beverly Hills

Dear Commissioners:

I would like to follow up on my earlier communication to the Commissioners (dated June 17th) concerning my suggestion that the City Council form a bicycle & pedestrian transportation subcommittee for the purpose of elaborating and implementing the city's new Bicycle Master Plan. As I mentioned in that earlier communication, comparing our Bicycle Plan with those of other cities shows our city's own plan to be lacking in substance.

We in Beverly Hills remain solidly behind the progress that other cities have made in developing responsible plans for the safety of cyclists. The Los Angeles draft bike plan identifies policy objectives such as increasing the number of bicyclists and making streets safe to ride bicycles, and includes provisions for an eventual citywide bikeway system of 1,600 miles - with 200 miles of new bikeways added every five years. Astonishingly, it identifies more than a hundred implementation programs to ensure equity in street access, parking, and transit. A five-year implementation framework will guide construction that will extend for three decades.

What about Beverly Hills? With bicycle planning back at the front of the transportation agenda in Southern California, why does it lag here? Past Traffic & Parking Commission agendas and minutes, for example, don't show a single reference to the Bicycle Plan, bike planning, or 'bicycle.' Surely this is an oversight; doesn't this Commission make policy recommendations?

Earlier this month (June 17) I suggested to the Commissioners that Council needs to form a subcommittee to address bicycle & pedestrian planning. I see from tomorrow's agenda that there are scheduled staff reports for numerous issues:

- Westside Subway Extension Update
- Taxi Update
- Tour Bus Update
- Olympic Boulevard Multiple Family Update
- Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit
- Upcoming Traffic & Parking Commission
- Traffic & Parking Commission Project Matrix

None address implementation of the city's Bicycle Plan, however. California policies now mandate greenhouse gas reductions and encourage sustainable development. Even SCAG is preparing guidelines for bicycle planning in their service area. There is a role here for the Commission to establish policy objectives for our city, and to suggest the next steps in bike plan implementation.

Re: Bike Plan
Traffic & Parking Commission
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Beverly Hills must join surrounding municipalities to plan for sustainable transportation (and the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians). There are best practices already in place in cities around the nation that plan well for bicycles. But in our own brand new plan, even basic omissions are conspicuous (among them a lack of current and legible maps by which new bicycle lanes may be discussed, and a reasonable implementation framework that would reflect the attention devoted to other elements in the General Plan).

I've suggested to Council that our guidelines mandate including bicycle and transit trips in traffic studies for the purposes of environmental review. This would give planners in Beverly Hills a tool by which to plan responsibly for new modes of transit. Perhaps the Commissioners could discuss how these alternative modes should be counted in studies, and moreover, to be incorporated into every aspect of transportation planning and policy going forward.

I look forward to addressing the Commissioners at Thursday's meeting to introduce my suggestion to form a subcommittee to take bicycle planning forward - not to *next* steps, you see, but to the *first* step. We're not there yet.

Sincerely,
Mark Elliot

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