

**From:** Andrea Wall <techwriter.andrea@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 10, 2024 5:45 PM  
**To:** PC Public Comments  
**Subject:** Application PA-23-15\_\_760 Victoria Street

Hello

I'm a close resident to the church and would like you to hear concerns about the application.

I live on Wallace Avenue, which is the street that runs north of the back of the church property.

We see directly into the church yard because we're at a slight lower elevation. And we hear everything extremely well because we're down wind. Not only is there nothing on campus to block the sight, but there's nothing to block the noise.

One day working from home, I heard a lady go on and on, and it was really loud and embarrassing because obviously she didn't know how loud she was speaking. This went on long enough for me to go outside and explain this to the lady. I thought she was on her cell phone on the other side of my hedges, but when I went out, it was coming down from the church!

I would like to propose that the PC consider perhaps a landscape design element to brake up the sound waves. Again, there is absolutely nothing that blocks the noise. It shoots straight down Wallace Ave like it's an open channel.

It's not the decibel level. It's the clarity. It's like having someone talk on their phone loudly close to you. It's not the decibel level, it's that you are an unwanted participant in whatever it they're doing and you can't get away because it's in your house.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Andrea Wall  
2224 Wallace Ave, Costa Mesa, CA 92627

949-929-9587

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**From:** GREEN, BRENDA  
**Sent:** Monday, March 11, 2024 10:15 AM  
**To:** PC Public Comments  
**Subject:** FW: March 11, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting - Public Hearing Item 2 - General Plan Amendment PGPA-23-0001 (Pedestrian Master Plan and revision to policies in the Circulation Element of General Plan)  
**Attachments:** Bullet Points re PMP.pdf

*Brenda Green*  
 City Clerk  
 City of Costa Mesa  
 714/754-5221

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**From:** Cynthia McDonald <cmcdonald.home@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 11, 2024 10:03 AM  
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**Cc:** CITY CLERK <CITYCLERK@costamesaca.gov>; Ralph Taboada <taboada1@sbcglobal.net>; REYNOLDS, ARLIS <ARLIS.REYNOLDS@costamesaca.gov>  
**Subject:** March 11, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting - Public Hearing Item 2 - General Plan Amendment PGPA-23-0001 (Pedestrian Master Plan and revision to policies in the Circulation Element of General Plan)

Dear Commissioners,

The Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP), while being an important project of the Active Transportation Committee (ATC) and greatly needed by the City, is simply not ready to be called a “Master” Plan. It only covers a fraction of the entire city and lacks many components, studies, and projects to make it the Master Plan, a task that was given to the ATC and included in the ATC workplan, which workplan was not followed by Staff.

I have attached a bullet list of the issues I ask you to consider. The following are detailed explanations of some of those issues:

**Recommendations.** I am concerned about the use of “Recommendations” versus “Policies” because there is no assurance that the recommendations will be carried out or enforced. Policies provide a promise that these items will be acted upon when the opportunity arises. Also, knowing that grant applications often look for a nexus to the request, the term “Policies” is more acceptable. This is one of the reasons why the some of the Recommendations were

changed to Policies upon the adoption of the General Plan Amendment that incorporated certain goals, policies, objectives, and recommendations of Active Transportation Plan (ATP) into the Circulation Element of the General Plan. Now we see Staff making more substitutions of the word “Recommendation” with “Policy.” That tells us that the use of the word “Recommendation” is not endorsed and the PMP should only contain goals, policies, and objectives.

It is important to note that the only place that the term “Recommendation” occurs in the General Plan is only in the Circulation Element, and only then is it used in the context of active transportation. This was due to a prior City Council’s desire to limit the requirements imposed on developers of new projects, but has created problems with accomplishing the goal of complete streets.

**Only covers a Fraction of the City.** Missing from the list of pedestrian opportunity zones that are the focus of the PMP is a list of important corridors and streets. The list includes Baker Street, Fairview Road, Adams Avenue, Wilson Street, Victoria Avenue, Harbor Boulevard North of the 405 Freeway, Placentia Avenue, Pomona Street, Newport Boulevard, Fair Drive, Del Mar Avenue, Santa Ana Avenue, 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Irvine. The PMP indicates that these streets can be considered/addressed in the future as plans are developed, but this means that the PMP only covers a fraction of Costa Mesa and is incomplete.

Study areas/pedestrian opportunity zones north of the 405 Freeway did not receive a walk audit review. They were left out of the PMP to focus on other areas that needed to be included, specifically Baker Street and Fairview Road north of Baker Street.

The scope of work by the consultant was limited by the amount of money in the grant from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Since the passage of the federal Infrastructure and Jobs Act of 2021, funds are available that could be used to expand and improve the document, in particular the South Coast Metro area that is heavily used by pedestrians (and is next to Santa Ana’s Metro area with new projects focused on active transportation) and the Safe Routes to School (SRS). The PMP should be fully funded to cover the entire city with a comprehensive survey and proposals.

**Regional Connections.** There is still no specific plan or suggested projects to create regional connections. Specifically, the project area for North Harbor Boulevard stops at the 405 Freeway, South of the City’s border with Santa Ana. While some mention is made of the intersection of Gisler and Harbor, the area at the intersection of Harbor Boulevard and the 405 Freeway, which has been problematic for pedestrians and needs safety enhancements, gets no recommendation. The PMP is deficient in that it does not address this problem, despite being a study area. The City needs to work with CalTrans/OCTA on resolving the issues under the freeway bridge and the surrounding intersections.

**Speed Reductions.** Nowhere in the PMP is there a recommendation to reduce speed limits on streets where there are the most crashes. This is a simple solution that many cities are using to reduce deaths and injuries. The second highest number of citations given by the police to

motorists were for unsafe speeds for prevailing conditions (highest was texting while driving). Also, road diets are in a group with the most requested items, but there is no specific recommendation for use in any of the Infrastructure Projects (I do note a general reference on page 81). While this may be due to the limited scope of work (which was reduced during the bid process), this is another deficiency in the plan.

**Demographics and Equity.** A prior draft of the PMP discussed demographics of the residents of Costa Mesa. The elimination of race demographics means that the document completely ignores one of the largest problems with pedestrian plans. According to Smart Growth America, walkers who are non-White, elderly, and traveling through low-income communities are disproportionately more likely to be killed by drivers. Again, the PMP is deficient in that it does not recognize this problem and does not consider it when recommending prioritization of the recommended projects. Further, this creates a deficiency in the document because it does not discuss or address issues of equity or adopt environmental justice policies as required by SB 1000. There is a mention in Section 7.2 of prioritization with need and equity being the criteria. If the areas where equity is an issue are not identified, then there can be no method of prioritizing the projects in those areas.

**Safe Routes to School.** The pedestrian activity count survey shows that the streets with the highest activity were at school sites occurring the start and end of the school day. This information shows the need to prioritize pedestrian improvements in the areas near schools. However, while attention was given to OCTA bus routes and stops, no consideration is given to NMUSD school bus routes and stops. Our SRS have not been updated in many years, perhaps since their adoption. The Safe Routes Subcommittee of the Active Transportation Committee made recommendations to Staff about improving the infrastructure of the existing routes, but the SRS should be expanded to include intermediate and high schools. In addition, the maps for the SRS should be included in the PMP, as other cities have done in their plans. Without inclusion of the SRS and any attention to school bus routes and stops, the document is deficient because it does not address a major pedestrian concern, vulnerable persons. Children, once they leave buses, become pedestrians and are the most vulnerable people. The PMP needs to be revised to include data, consideration of issues, and proposed solutions.

**Missing Fact Sheets and Report Recommendations.** There no Fact Sheets for Bristol Street (which needs a multitude of improvements, including sidewalks at South Coast Plaza, street furniture, pedestrian refuge islands, high visibility crosswalks, etc.), Fairview Road (needs refuge islands, removal of poles and utility boxes that block access to sidewalks, etc., and other improvements near Fairgrounds, High School and Athletic Fields), Adams Avenue (subject of proposed bicycle facilities, but needs pedestrian improvements such as trees and street furniture), Newport Boulevard and 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The missing information is critical because the cost estimate for the projects is incorrect without those projects. This is a major deficiency, and the Plan needs to be redrafted to include them.

Some of the recommendations of the Berkeley SafeTREC Complete Streets Safety Report and the Local Road Safety Plan are in the PMP, but more need to be incorporated.

**Vision.** While there is a section for “Purpose” in the beginning of the PMP, it does not set forth what is to be accomplished by the plan. In Chapter 5, Section 5.4, General Traffic Behavior and Other Concerns, Other Concerns Heard From the Community Engagement Effort subsection, there is the statement in the second paragraph “**It is generally more successful to increase the separation between pedestrians and motor vehicles, provide buffers to add to the separation, ensure that convenient crossing locations are available to meet walking needs, and improve overall conditions for walking.**” [emphasis added] This is possibly the most important statement in the document, yet it is buried on page 82. There needs to be a Vision added to the PMP and this statement needs to be a part of it.

**Passive Wording.** Throughout the document there is the use of passive wording. For example, instead of “require,” the words “study” and “encourage” are used, which weakens the document and the nexus needed to quality for grants.

**Public Outreach.** Little public outreach has been done on this draft of the document and the meetings were virtual. When the ATP was going through the final approval process, meetings were held with the public by the (then) Bikeway and Walkability Committee (BWC) to obtain the public’s comments prior to the vote of approval of the ATP by the BWC. Why is the public being excluded from the process? The City needs to do better in terms of outreach and transparency.

**Vision Zero.** The PMP and the ATP are important documents that will lead to the buildout of safer infrastructure in Costa Mesa, but the most critical step is the City Council’s adoption of a Vision Zero policy. Without that policy, I am concerned that this plan will just gather dust on the shelf.

I ask that you take no action on the PMP as currently drafted and return it to Staff. The PMP needs to include **all** of Costa Mesa, not just the few corridors that SCAG designated. As it is, the document is deficient and is by no means ready to be passed onto the City Council for its approval.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.  
Cynthia McDonald (former chair of ATC)

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## PMP Issues

- Did not follow Work Plan
  - Committee was supposed to identify the goals and objectives (Consultant/City Staff did this)
  - Scope of Work (SOW) used pedestrian priority areas from General Plan versus what Committee may have identified, given the chance
  - Data gathered was not from a “broad section of Costa Mesa” (very little of Eastside and none of the South Coast Metro area was covered)
- “Recommendations” instead of Policies and Objectives
  - The Circulation Element of the General Plan is the only element that has recommendations
  - Recommendations provide no assurance that a project will be done and do not help with grant applications
  - The SOW requires at a minimum eight (8) chapters, one of which is “Goals, Objectives and Policies” (not “recommendations”)
- Need a vision statement for the PMP to cover issues and solutions not found in ATP
- No recommendation for a road diet in any of the projects
- No recommendation for pedestrian refuge islands in any of the projects
- No recommendation for multiuse paths to correct the small bike lane and narrow sidewalk problem, i.e., Baker Street and Fairview Road
- No project creates a regional connection or better intercity connectivity
- No project solves the problem of gaps in the existing network
- No policy re equity
  - Recommendations for project areas don’t recognize the problem
  - May be an issue with obtaining grants
- Safe Routes is not included
  - Pedestrian activity is largest around schools
    - Should have been the primary focus area of the PMP as indicated in the SOW
- Public outreach was nonexistent on the last draft of the PMP
  - Dates for comment submission were not publicized (and then changed for ATC members from the date announced in the April 27 meeting)
  - Where are comments from CMABS? School District? Were they requested?
- Recommendations of other reports (Berkeley SafeTREC and the Local Road Safety Plan) need to be incorporated into the PMP
- Council needs to adopt a Vision Zero policy to accompany the PMP
- No goal/policy/objective with respect to creating a healthy walking environment

- General Plan needs to be revised to include planning of projects in the city must be scaled for bicycling and walking
- All projects need to be reviewed for new crosswalks in areas where mid-block crossings are routinely seen, and especially those with long blocks, such as Baker between Fairview and College
- Some of the Pedestrian and Intersection movement counts were outside of the POZs and some of the POZs/study areas did not have any count, resulting in data for the projects that is inconsistent and underrepresents the existing conditions in the city
- The draft PMP does not fulfill the obligations of the SOW:
  - It is not the “detailed localized plan” that is required by paragraph 2 of “Background”
  - Does not “provide a plan for open and easy access to walking for recreation, community and other daily needs” nor does it “propose improvements to infrastructure for pedestrians connecting communities, schools and parks,” as required by the SOW (see paragraph 2 of “Background”)
  - Task 3.2 of the SOW (Survey of Existing Conditions, Improvements and Walk Audits) – Consultant did not identify “Gaps in the existing network” or “Pedestrian Suitability for travel”
  - Task 4.1 of SOW (Develop Prioritization Methodology) – “In developing the prioritization methodology the Consultant shall consult with Bikeway and Walkability Committee and consider community need, regional, county and statewide policy and funding frameworks; and the timeframe for implementation.” BWC was not consulted.
  - Task 4.2 of SOW (Identify Local and Regional Network Project List) – “The City, SCAG and the Bikeways and Walkability Committee will review and comment on the draft project descriptions for the fact sheets.” Was not done by the BWC
  - Task 4.3 of SOW (Develop Implementation Strategy) – “Consultant shall develop and implementation strategy to include planning-level cost estimates for identified priority projects and potential funding sources.” That was not done. “Consultant shall develop a walk audit tool to be used on this project and future projects.” The walk audit tool needs to be delivered to the City and the ATC for use in future walk audits
  - Task 5.1 of SOW (Draft Plan) – Several items missing, notably “List of citywide [emphasis added] pedestrian projects including calling out community preferred facilities”, “Regional integration strategy with recommendations for interregional connections”, and “Recommendations to address citywide pedestrian connectivity to key destinations and other locations”

- Additional goals/policies and objectives and other items that are needed:
  - Equity
  - Health
  - Correction of “goat paths” on private property as part of planning and code enforcement
  - Motor vehicle speed reduction where possible
  - Consideration for Level of Stress in new projects
  - Adopt World Health Organization’s HEAT tool to estimate the value of reduced mortality that results from regular walking
  - Adopt changes to the zoning code and General Plan that identify improvements to the active transportation environment
  - Prioritize schools with the highest auto traffic volume during peak hours and insufficient parking for staff and parents. Plan and install pedestrian facilities adjacent to those schools. [This parallels language in the ATP]
  - Develop a policy controlling pedestrian sidewalk crossing. A hierarchy of pedestrian crosswalks is advisable to help indicate to drivers of motor vehicles that they are approaching areas of higher pedestrian activity or special conditions such as nearby schools
  - Maps of (i) existing gaps and (ii) desired new paths
  - Timeline of completion of projects and cost estimate for each project
  - Pedestrian Infrastructure Toolbox needs to include:
    - Require the use of dedicated bike and pedestrian paths in new and remodeled developments to eliminate long blocks between cross-streets
    - Moving or undergrounding of utility poles and boxes will be considered so as to remove these obstructions from sidewalks
    - Addition of street furniture, street art, appealing plaza areas and shelter from the elements of sun and rain to the toolbox. The arrangement of physical elements shall be managed in a way that promotes defensible space
- Prioritization of projects should be done by City Staff in cooperation with ATC
- Need five (5) year plan for implementation of highest priority projects and cost estimate
- Require that any street improvement project greater than 1/8 mile include installation of elements of the ATP and PMP