

Transportation Commission Minutes: Wednesday, July 24, 2013

Commissioner Jesus Vargas called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Roll was called and the following was recorded:

Members Present:

Jesus Vargas (Chair)
Christopher Miley (Vice Chair)
Michele Bellows
Thomas G. Bertken
Sandy Wong
Eric Schatmeier

Staff Present:

Staff Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator
Staff Alan Ta, Public Works Assistant Engineer
Staff Heba El Guendy, Public Works Supervising Civil Engineer

2. Agenda Changes

None.

3. Announcements / Public Comments

Commissioner Vargas attended the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Associated Bay Area Governments (ABAG) meeting on July 19th regarding the One Bay Area Plan and the adoption of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Ultimately, he was glad to see land use and transportation planning coming together.

Alex Nguyen, Alameda City Manager, introduced *Heba El Guendy*, Supervising Civil Engineer, who is in charge of the City's transportation unit.

Staff El Guendy said that she joined the City's Public Works Department a month ago and her 24-years of experience centers on traffic engineering, roadway design and transportation planning. She explained that she has experience as a consultant and has worked for several years in the public sector. Additionally, she said she is passionate about the implementation of complete streets.

4. Consent Calendar

4A. Meeting Minutes – June 26, 2013

Commissioner Vargas called for a motion to approve the Consent Calendar.

<p><i>Commissioner Miley</i> moved to approve the Consent Calendar. <i>Commissioner Bellows</i> seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0; 1 abstention.</p>

5. New Business

5A. Resident Appeal of Public Works Staff's Decision to Not Install the No Parking Street Sweeping Signs on the 2600 Block of La Jolla Drive

Staff Ta gave an overview of the item.

Commissioner Schatmeier clarified with staff that their recommendation was to not recommend the signs.

Staff Ta replied staff is recommending the signs not be installed.

Commissioner Schatmeier asked if the installation of the signs have any influence on the number of times the streets are swept.

Staff Ta explained that the residential streets have a set schedule and they are swept on a weekly basis.

Commissioner Schatmeier asked if the signs are not installed, then occasionally cars will be in the way.

Staff Ta replied yes.

Commissioner Vargas said he spoke with a City sergeant about the fact that his street was swept across the street where there are signs and later into the day they swept the other side without signs. He then asked about the safety implications if the signs are not added.

Staff Ta replied he is not aware of any safety impacts with the signs being present or not.

Commissioner Vargas opened the floor to public comments.

Ann Leonardo, resident of La Jolla Drive, created the petition because the street cleaner comes up Broadway, enters into the La Jolla and attempts to get into the cul-de-sac, which is 125 feet long, and cannot because of the parked cars. Consequently, the street cleaner continues up Broadway. She apologized to the staff and Commission for the amount of time that it has taken to review the issue. When she decided to execute the petition, she attempted to notify her neighbors by knocking on their doors. She felt the street around the cul-de-sac is used as a kind of catch all for parking.

Robert Erdmann, resident of La Jolla Drive, reviewed the staff report, public comments and appeal. He stated that all opposing comments were address in *Staff Ta's* notes during his field

visit on October 22nd. He sent an email the next day and thanked *Staff Ta* for coming out and made it clear that he was against the no parking street sweeping signs and parking restrictions on the 2600 La Jolla Drive block.

Commissioner Miley asked the residents if the gutters and curbs are generally clean on their block.

Ann Leonardo replied that she hired a gardener to clean the 80-foot strip in front of her house. The gardener clears the gutter and he blows underneath cars. However, she felt the residents should not have to do it if there is a street cleaning vehicle going up and down the streets.

Robert Erdmann replied that he grew up on the block and his continued duty is to pick up some occasional leaves and soda cans. He stated tall trees are not present on their block and the wind blows some leaves from the other block, but he sweeps them up because it is not a huge issue. Periodically, on Thursdays, there are not many cars on the street so they could get into the street.

Commissioner Schatmeier confirmed with *Robert Erdmann* that at times the street sweeper is unable to clean the gutter area.

Robert Erdmann said he is usually at work, but his wife does occasionally see the street sweeper unable to get into the gutter area.

Commissioner Wong referred to page 5 of the staff report where there are two pictures of a typical Thursday street cleaning morning compared to a non-street sweeping morning. Overall, the snap shots look like there are more cars. So, she asked if staff could look into moving the street sweeping day to a time when it is not as heavily used.

Staff Ta replied staff has spoken to the maintenance department and asked if they could move the time, but the City's street sweeping schedule is a complicated matrix and to change it for a 125-foot cul-de-sac is not a reasonable use of staff time.

Commissioner Wong asked staff what are the scheduled street sweeping dates for Broadway.

Staff Ta replied the days are Monday and Thursday.

Commissioner Wong explained since the opposite side of Broadway is on Monday then the street sweeper could go down the cul-de-sac since it is a non-street sweeping day. Additionally, based on the photo from the presentation the cul-de-sac would be less impacted by cars.

Staff Ta replied that there would still be an impact of parked cars regardless of the day.

Commissioner Miley asked if the City is required to sweep 100 percent of City streets.

Staff Ta replied that the City has a schedule to sweep all the public streets, but he is not certain of City policy.

Commissioner Bellows said her street contained signs on one side because it was needed to

maintain the overflow and water quality of the Bay from the affluent running off during storms. She went on to say residents could request the signs, but 50 percent or more residents must agree with the need to erect signs and restrict parking. Ultimately, the City is meeting and exceeding the requirement to sweep the streets and the City does not have to sweep every street because the outflow to the Bay is far less.

Commissioner Miley replied that the City has a broader standard and not just a block-by-block policy.

<i>Commissioner Miley</i> moved to accept staff recommendations. <i>Commissioner Bellows</i> seconded the motion. The motion was approved 6-0.
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5B. Encinal High School Improvements – Phase II

Staff Ta presented the report.

Commissioner Bellows asked if Taylor Avenue would still be two-way.

Staff Ta replied yes.

Commissioner Vargas asked staff based on the improvements initially there were 20 movements and in Phase II would there be far fewer movements.

Staff Ta replied yes.

Commissioner Vargas asked staff if there are warrants to be checked regarding the stop signs.

Staff Ta replied that there are, but they are reviewing them qualitatively. Also, based on the geometry and the layout of the five-way intersection, if three cars appear it is hard to see which car goes first. Consequently, the intersection would not be a great candidate for an all-way stop sign.

Commissioner Miley asked about the peak-hour traffic volumes and how many cars are coming from Central Avenue or Third Street and turning onto Taylor Avenue.

Staff Ta said that the counts are found in the presentation.

Commissioner Wong said that she understood the bus stop relocation, which makes sense. However, on the opposite side found on Figure 15, “Passenger Loading Zone”, there is significant congestion in the morning compared to the afternoon. So, if they put the Passenger Loading Zone 4 right there, then that block or create congestion even though cars are pulling to the side. She felt one of the main issues are drivers who are coming from Central Avenue towards the high school stop in the middle of the intersection when students are entering the crosswalk from Third Street across Central Avenue instead of stopping by Central Avenue and Taylor Avenue. She went on to explain that all motorists should stop where they are supposed to stop because cars on Central Avenue would line up until they almost touched the kids. Third Street becomes backed up and drivers going down Central Avenue cannot pass the traffic and

make sweeping turns onto Taylor Avenue.

Staff Ta replied that they reviewed it and were thinking of a few other options, but their priorities were to improve pedestrian and bicycle access.

Commissioner Wong asked staff to move the drop off point down to the corner near the student parking driveway and access to the bay because it is less congested. She emphasized not at the five-way intersection but nearby so only one crosswalk would be moved.

Staff Ta replied that staff could review the benefits of relocating the passenger-loading zone to possibly two locations. Also, he noted they have been working with Encinal High School and Alameda Unified School District on the improvements.

Staff Payne referred to Exhibit 3 in the staff report and asked *Staff Ta* if they were still working with the school district or is it on hold. She just wanted clarification because that passenger loading zone is east of the driveway.

Staff Ta replied that it is still a recommendation.

Commissioner Wong stated she understood that, but on the opposite side there are near misses when cars approach on Central Avenue going westbound from Taylor Avenue and Third Street.

Commissioner Bellows stated that she supported Commissioner Wong's comments and asked staff with the projected future growth and warrant for the flashing beacon are these proposed improvements compatible with this structure.

Staff Ta replied that he does not see them as being incompatible.

Commissioner Bertken asked staff based on the illustration presented if the street narrows down as it approaches the other crosswalk at Lincoln Avenue.

Staff Ta replied that the street opens at the crosswalk.

Commissioner Vargas opened the floor to public comments.

Jerry Juhala said for part of last year he helped Officer Yakas conduct crosswalk duties at the school in the mornings. He fully supported the Public Work proposal. He urged the Commission to do at least some of the items proposed before the school year begins. He recommended that they erect the portable signage that says "No left turn from Central onto Third Street" and "No left turn from Taylor Avenue onto Third Street." The signs would make it significantly safer for students to cross going to school and the signage has limited cost. He felt any change would require an educational period for the students and parents. Furthermore, he thought that the loading zones are a good idea, and would help stop parents dropping kids in the middle of the intersection.

Karen Greaves, Taylor Avenue resident, said her biggest issue is the restriction of turning onto Taylor Avenue from Central Avenue and Third Street. She felt Taylor Avenue is not the issue,

but it is the parents that are in a hurry and want to drop their children off at the most convenient place. This recommendation is not the right solution.

Kurt Peterson, Block Captain of 200 Santa Clara Avenue, said they had two community meetings and he attended the last meeting. He noted that the congestion problem is one hour of every weekday and the overwhelming issue is speeding cars headed towards Third Street. He found over 90 percent of the residents did not want to see Taylor Avenue closed, but the staff wants to recommend partially closing Taylor Avenue. Police presence of one hour of every day would help. He complained that the City did not provide an email with the community comments after the meeting.

Debbie Jennings, Taylor Avenue resident, created the petition and obtained the signatures to object to the change. She said that the intersection does not meet the qualification for traffic signals, but does that mean that the state of California would not allow the City to install the lights or does that mean if the City installed the lights then the City must pay the bill. She recommended having a no left turn at anytime during the AM and PM school rush, but closing Taylor Avenue is not going to solve the problem.

Wendell Stewart, Santa Clara Avenue resident, said he supported *Kurt Peterson's* comments, and that only one hour each day is a problem.

Sonja Christianson considered herself an expert because she has lived in the area for over 18 years and walked across that crosswalk to take her child to Paden Elementary every morning. She felt that the traffic speed is one of the biggest issues and it is not addressed in the presentation. Also, occasionally she crossed the intersection going on a walk, and they have not addressed the most dangerous intersection is Lincoln Avenue and Central Avenue due to the curves and the speeding. She requested a traffic signal.

Harold Jennings, disagreed with blocking entry onto Taylor Avenue and during the school hours, he supported a crossing guard or a police presence. Overall, he recommended that the City spend more time looking at the intersection.

Susan Hodges said she does not live in Alameda, but her grandson goes to Encinal High School, and she attended all of the public meetings. The majority of the attendees wanted an on-demand stop light. She supported moving the bus stop, the crosswalk, but the stop light would help.

Jon Spangler, Alameda resident and a League of American Cycling Instructor, explained that he has ridden through this intersection before and he is glad that the intersection is getting attention. The previous speaker mentioned an on-demand stop light, and he suggested that there be an on demand, all direction stop pedestrian signal. The action would demonstrate the Commission and City's belief in a pedestrian friendly City. Also, a uniform no left turn during the peak periods similar to San Francisco's policy would help.

Commissioner Miley asked staff if other warrants besides traffic counts could help erect the traffic signal.

Staff El Guendy replied that the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) provide

for eight warrants that are needed to erect a traffic signal. However, even if all eight warrants are met, the final approval is subject to engineering judgment. She stated that staff provided significant information in the report with two alternatives to address the communities' concerns. She also explained the cost for a full signal at the five-legged intersection would equal to \$500,000 or more, and the City would be responsible for the bill. Also, if they were to install signals that are not warranted that would subject the City to liability if a collision were to occur. Unwarranted stop signals increase certain types of collisions such as car rear and right angle collisions.

Commissioner Schatmeier referred to *Jon Spangler's* comments about restricting left turn movements during peak hours and that is already done on Park Street. He asked staff if it could be considered an alternative rather than closing Taylor Avenue.

Staff Ta replied that some of the signage already has been addressed, and staff wanted to maintain the westbound Central Avenue left turn for people who live east of the school to access the back of the school. Also, staff wanted to allow motorists coming down Third Street to bypass congestion at the crosswalk on Central Avenue.

Commissioner Schatmeier said he was sympathetic to the sweeping turns that were presented in the report. However, he understood the residents' concerns of closing off the street. Ultimately, he was looking to find an alternative to address both issues and restricting access during peak periods on Central Avenue coming from the base onto Taylor Avenue might help.

Staff Ta explained that the improvement provided a refuge and visibility to the motorist and allowed them to creep out without concerns of the sweeping movements. Staff addressed Taylor Avenue residents' concerns in the alternative proposal.

Alex Nguyen asked *Staff Ta* to go over the alternative proposal with the Commission.

Commissioner Vargas asked staff to go over the public's response of the alternative proposal.

Staff Ta explained that based on the community's input with a permanent limitation onto Taylor Avenue staff developed this alternative, which is very similar in design, but maintains the movement inbound so during off peak hours there is no change to the intersection, but peak hours they could not turn from Central onto Taylor Avenues. However, motorists would be able to enter onto Taylor Avenue from Third Street and there would be signage located within the vicinity of Encinal High School to restrict left turns.

Commissioner Vargas asked *Debbie Jennings* if her group reviewed staff's alternative proposal

Debbie Jennings replied that there is some support from the residents.

Kurt Peterson stated that you need a raised barrier in the red area illustrated in the presentation. Also, the unsafe turn from Central Avenue onto Third Street is needed to be addressed.

Commissioner Miley wondered if the Safe Routes to School program could provide funding opportunities.

Staff El Guendy replied that high schools are eligible for federal Safe Routes to School grants. Also, there might be some regional funds available.

Staff Payne stated that Measure B does not have a competitive grant program.

Commissioner Miley felt that the best thing was to have physical presence to oversee activity, but that requires funding. He supported the alternative to the recommendation and staff should identify grant opportunities.

Commissioner Bertken stated that if they are forming the motion that they should include recommendation two.

Commissioner Wong asked staff how long would they study affects after implementation and would the study look at the population increases.

Staff El Guendy replied that the study would be dictated by the school season and staff could conduct additional observations for the stop control.

Commissioner Schatmeier said the concern is the left hand turn from eastbound Central Avenue onto Taylor Avenue and staff presented it as a sweeping turn that caused safety concerns. So, signs limiting the turn during peak hours would be erected, but he did not hear about a stop sign being installed in that direction.

Staff El Guendy replied installing a stop sign for Central Avenue would require both directions. Thus, warrants would have to be evaluated for the overall intersection for all approaches.

Commissioner Schatmeier asked if staff was proposing a stop sign on Central Avenue.

Staff El Guendy said no.

Alex Nguyen asked for clarification before the Commission made a motion. He asked the Commission if staff should not go ahead with the big loading zone until they studied the possibility of moving it down across the other loading zone.

Commissioner Wong recommended the alternative to staff's recommendation with further study of moving the loading zone.

Commissioner Bertken said Donald Lum Elementary School has yield markings located before the crosswalk where motorists are supposed to stop and wondered if that could be included in this proposal.

Staff Ta replied they are "Yield here for pedestrian" markings with triangles across the street like shark teeth and they could review adding them to the proposal.

Commissioner Miley made a motion to accept the alternative to the recommendation one with staff to review *Commissioner Wong's* recommendation to shift the loading zone # 4 from its

current location further down to Lincoln and Central Avenue. He also added that staff should review *Commissioner Bertken's* comment to add "Yield to pedestrian" markings painted on Central Avenue.

Commissioner Schatmeier commented that staff should study the traffic volumes for the sweeping turn, which was one of the differences between staff's recommendation and the alternate.

Commissioner Vargas asked *Sergeant Simmons* his opinion about staff's recommendation one and the alternate based on a safety perspective.

Sergeant Ron Simmons, Alameda Police Traffic Section Supervisor, felt the first recommendation was the safest recommendation based on pedestrian and bicycle movements, and he appreciated alternative two, but he would like to see "No stopping anytime" signs on the curve of the sweeping turn from westbound Central Avenue to eastbound Taylor Avenue because he noticed when painted red the parents stop at that intersection to drop-off their kids.

Commissioner Miley moved to approve the alternative to staff's recommendation and review *Commissioners Wong, Bertken, and Shatmeier's* comments as well as exploring future funding. *Commissioner Bertken* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 6-0.

5C. Quarterly Report on Activities Related to Transportation Policies and Plans

Staff Payne presented the report.

Commissioner Bertken asked staff about the conclusion of Neptune Park pathway after they approved the IN and Out Burger development.

Staff Payne stated that is under Alameda Landing Remnant Parcel Updates under item #6.

6. Staff Communications

- **Changed Date for Next Regular Transportation Commission Meeting**
 - Tuesday, September 24 at 7 p.m., City Council Chambers
- **Special Transportation Commission Meeting with the Planning Board on Monday, September 30 at 7 p.m., City Council Chambers (Main Item of Discussion – Revised Draft Regional Transit Access Study)**
- **Alameda Landing Remnant Parcel Updates**
 - Went to the Planning Board on Monday, July 22. The use permit for the Chase Bank, In and Out Burger drive thru aisle, and Safeway Gas station with exception with wine and beer was approved. On August 12, the project is headed for the site design and landscaping. Approval is subject to the provision of the crosswalk on Stargell Avenue and Webster Street, which is in the state right-of-way. Now, staff is communicating with Caltrans to get approval of the crosswalk. There will be a meeting with Caltrans next week to get feedback on the alternatives to the design. Additionally, staff will apply for an encroachment permit for the installation of a

pedestrian signal at that leg and the establishment of the crosswalk. Overall, the site plan has been revised and a fence in the center median on Stargell Avenue was included to prevent jaywalking and mid-block crossing.

- **AC Transit Line OX – Opening to Local Riders**
- **BART Strike Updates and Lessons Learned**
 - There may be a BART Strike on Monday, August 5.
 - *Commissioner Bellows* said she received positive comments on how the City handled the BART strike because residents said it went smoothly.
 - *Commissioner Shatmeier* said that two days ago, he was catching the bus towards the coliseum and usually he takes the Harbor Bay Ferry. He saw a sign that says City of Alameda shuttle to the ferry and he was not aware of it. He would like to know how the City is getting the word out about the service.
 - *Staff Payne* replied that she sent out an announcement to the Commission email list serv about the shuttle and staff set up a City webpage about the BART strike, which included information about the shuttle. Moreover, she linked the shuttle to the 511.org website.
- **Posey and Webster Tube Rehabilitation Project – Next Steps**
- **Potential Future Meeting Agenda Items**
 - Revised Draft Regional Transit Access Study
 - AC Transit Line 51A Performance Initiative Grant
 - Alameda Point Planning Document
 - AC Transit Comprehensive Operations Analysis
 - Alameda Ferry Terminal Station Access Plan
 - City of Alameda Transit Disruption Plan
 - Port of Oakland's Ron Cowan Parkway Proposed Class I Path
 - Traffic Control and Contingency Plan during Construction for I-880/29th Ave./23rd Ave. Interchange Improvement Plan in Oakland: Public Information Program and Transit Impacts

7. Announcements/ Public Comments

Jon Spangler wanted to say the BART Pilot project looks good, but the July BART strike did slow things down because it took away their first 5-days. Yet, they are working on getting the bikes through and the BART Board is scheduled to evaluate the outcome in October.

8. Adjournment

9:04 pm