

Transportation Commission and Planning Board Minutes: Monday, September 30, 2013

Commissioner Jesus Vargas called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Roll was called and the following was recorded:

Transportation Commission Members Present:

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

Absent:

Sandy Wong
Gregory Morgado

Planning Board Members Present:

David Burton (President)
Dania Alvarez-Morrone
Stanley Tang
Mike Henneberry
John Knox White
Lorre Zuppan
Kristoffer Köster

Staff Present:

Alex Nguyen, Assistant City Manager
Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator
Virendra Patel, Transportation Engineer
Andrew Thomas, Alameda City Planner

2. Agenda Changes

None.

3. Announcements / Public Comments

Commissioner Vargas opened the floor to public comments for Item 3. He also stated that he met with Brian Kelly, the California Transportation Secretary. He said one of Mr. Kelly's goals is to enhance Caltrans and make the organization more efficient.

Denis Carole, Marina Village resident, said he was concerned with vehicular access to the island through the tubes. He thought the bike and vehicle access by the estuary should be planned for the long term. Also, he felt the approaches coming in and out of the City are bottlenecks. Additionally, he pointed out there are a lot of alternatives working around those issues, but the nature of the infrastructure needs to be reviewed. Moreover, he felt the City had a patchwork system in place and he resents the amount of pressure that is being put on development within the City.

4. *Draft Regional Transit Access Study*

Staff Payne presented an overview of the study.

Colin Burgett, Nelson Nygaard Consulting Principal and *John Atkinson* (subconsultant) presented the outcome of the study.

Nathan Landau, AC Transit Project Manager, appreciated the City and consultants' work. He supported the consultants and staff's choice to not move the route from Santa Clara Avenue to Lincoln Avenue because Lincoln Avenue has a mixture of business and residential traffic. In terms of Ralph Appezzato Memorial Parkway, he was glad that the city is looking at dedicated bus lanes, but the options should include two-way lanes. He felt two-way lanes were needed in both directions because Alameda Point would be developing further. He cautioned the Board and Commission on the use of shuttles, especially as Alameda Point builds out over time.

Commissioner Vargas asked *Nathan Landau* if he was referring to the letter attached to the exhibit dated September 13th. He then opened the floor to public comments.

Jon Spangler, Alameda resident and a League of American Cycling Instructor, said he was happy to see the Ralph Appezzato Memorial Parkway corridor being reviewed and he was happy to see *Nathan Landau* responding to the study. He believed access to the island was a big draw for businesses looking at locating to Alameda Point. Furthermore, he was glad staff recommended to stay with Santa Clara Avenue.

Commissioner Bellows stated that when reading the West end Corridor Comparison and the preliminary cost estimate if it includes the cost of buying the right-of-way and she was curious to know if the City did include eastbound and westbound bus only lanes would there be room to do it.

Colin Burgett replied the cost estimate is based on current right-of-way and there is room for a westbound bus only lane along with the eastbound lane. The original concept was a median way, but that is very expensive. He said that the cheaper option is carving out a westbound lane closer to the sidewalk. The trickier question posed was related to the bike lane if they can fit both a bike lane and bus lane. Overall, he felt the reason of focusing on a bus lane in that direction is related to how the traffic operates.

Commissioner Bellows asked about the right-of-way costs.

Colin Burgett replied that the right-of-way is currently public. He explained further west on

Atlantic Avenue closer to Main Street there could be a future need for a bus lane; there is a right turn lane that could be converted to a bus lane.

Commissioner Bellows asked if the common thing to do was to have a long eastbound bus lane and start the westbound lane later.

Colin Burgett replied that this is somewhat usual because it is essentially a very long queue jump lane. The flip side is that it is less than a mile between Webster Street and Main Street so it would not be a long median transit way. Furthermore, he said this Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is not the typical system that we would see in other cities.

Commissioner Bellows asked if there is a way to further study the westbound phase. She was not interested in piece-mealing, but if there is a plan, the City should not exclude it for later particularly when we expect development.

Colin Burgett replied that they could incorporate some elements that would keep the cost down later.

Boardmember Alvarez-Morrone pointed to the schematic illustrative shown on the screen and referred to the bicycle lanes on the street and to the right another bicycle lane. She was not quite clear as to why there is redundancy within the space. Also, she wanted to know if there would be a bicycle connection from Jean Sweeney Park to Alameda Point.

Colin Burgett replied the bicycle lanes were Class 2 lanes on the street and then a facility proposed off the street also is proposed. The idea was to separate the more experienced cyclists from the less experienced ones.

Staff Payne replied that the path shown is part of the Cross Alameda Trail, which is also proposed to go through the Jean Sweeney Park.

Commissioner Schatmeier stated that he had some objections to relocating the east and west transit corridor across the island from Santa Clara Avenue to Lincoln Avenue and he is relieved to see that the staff recommendation is not to make the change. Overall, he would like staff to continue to be cognizant of proposed trunk lines and service demand.

Director Knox White asked if the Lincoln Avenue Rapid Bus proposal is in addition to the current bus system running on Santa Clara Avenue.

Colin Burgett replied that the original idea was a new service on Lincoln Avenue and that would be a rapid service from Alameda Point to Fruitvale BART Station, but that new service would be too close to the AC Transit Line 51. AC Transit staff members did not want to see redundancy if the Line 51 was running along Santa Clara Avenue. Thus, the recommendation was if the City wanted to make Lincoln Avenue a transit corridor, it should be in conjunction with AC Transit service.

Boardmember Knox White asked why is there a financial discrepancy of the proposed shared travel lane between the Clement Street corridor, which is \$10 million and the Santa Clara

Avenue corridor, which is \$3 million.

Colin Burgett replied Clement Avenue has narrow sidewalks and tracks in the middle of the street whereas Santa Clara Avenue has finished curb and the improvements can be within the existing curb line.

Director Knox White asked if transit were to be placed on Clement Avenue it would need to be widened.

Colin Burgett replied yes including other improvements such as lane restriping, changes to the middle tracks, sidewalk widening and pedestrian crossing improvements.

Director Knox White said AC Transit voiced concerns of running a line parallel to Lincoln Avenue next to its existing Santa Clara Avenue line. Yet, staff did not consider Clement Avenue.

Colin Burgett replied that AC Transit had similar concerns of duplicating service along Clement Avenue.

Boardmember Knox White referred to page 115 of the staff report and noted projected ridership goals by full build out including Alameda Point and Alameda Landing would be roughly 160 passengers per day, per bus or 75% vehicle capacity. However, that does not line up and he cannot figure out what it is saying.

Colin Burgett said that could be related to the separate shuttle line, but the estimate was 4,000 passengers daily and when you factor in the Northern Waterfront that could potentially be 6,000 passengers per day.

Commissioner Bellows referred to page 114 and said that the statistics refer to the Alameda Landing Shuttle.

Boardmember Knox White said if these were short-term operation parameters, he would suggest re-writing that part because it suggested that Alameda Point and Alameda Landing are fully built out. He also referred to page 125 of the report regarding short-term shuttle service. The statistics show a cost of \$4,000 annually for peak period only, but operational costs showed short-term costs of 16 hours a day for 252 days a year for two buses at \$266,000. He wondered why it jumped 62 percent.

John Atkinson explained that there were two scenarios and the information is related to shuttle acquisition meaning if the City owned and operated the shuttles or if they decided on turnkey operations. However, he would look at the exact information and get back to *Boardmember Knox White*.

Boardmember Knox White referred to page 47 and said the report outlined 6 percent of daily person trips would be to and from Alameda to San Francisco. He wondered if the percentage was for all the internal trips as oppose to commute trips.

Colin Burgett replied if you have a job intensive development like Alameda Point, the people

commuting would not be City residents going to work, but people coming in.

Director Knox White mentioned the study highlighted 15 percent of commuters to Alameda jobs were made by residents of San Francisco.

Colin Burgett replied that is 15 percent of San Franciscans commuting by transit to Alameda. People to and from San Francisco have a higher rate of public transit usage.

Commissioner Miley said he would like to see a BART station in Alameda addressed or mentioned in this study.

Andrew Thomas, Alameda City Planner, explained that the study was focused on public transit and shuttles. However, they are in constant dialogue about a proposed BART Station. Specifically, BART was at a recent Planning Board meeting and they are involved in this conversation. However, he pointed out that this requires many years of planning. Additionally, he and his staff are having regional transit conversations with the Water Emergency Transit Authority (WETA), which is the ferry service provider. He explained that the department would do a better job to give up-to-date information to both commissions regarding conversations.

Director Burton said transit placed along Clement Avenue needs to be wrapped in some how with the development along the Northern Waterfront, especially within 5 to 10 years. He referred to the map shown on Figure 2.2 regarding the walking distance to transit lines and the illustration showed the Northern Waterfront is poorly served. He urged staff to evaluate the regional access needs and how new developments are served. Also, he pointed out that regional serving retail at Alameda Point has a different transit need than jobs and housing. Staff should study what is needed for that corridor. He supported option 2b, which is the line along the edge rather than along the median of Ralph Appezato Memorial Parkway. Yet, he felt staff should study the option more to know how we can include the plan in the existing right-of-way and then make sure that it can happen.

Commissioner Vargas asked staff when the report would be revised and what actions are required from the Commission.

Staff Payne replied staff would like feedback from the Commission on how to proceed with Phase II with the construction monies and staff is hoping to focus on west Alameda. She said one option is beginning the bus only lane at Webster Street and Atlantic Avenue. She also wants opinion from the Commission on whether staff is on the right track with Phase I. Staff will come back to the Transportation Commission for an action.

Commissioner Bertken said that the current study hits on the issues of concern to the Commission. He also explained that Plan B focused on the serious issues that are facing the City. He mentioned that the study is a good starting point for access in the Northern Waterfront without disturbing the existing transit patterns that are working well.

Commissioner Schatmeier wanted to know what kind of modifications to transit service do they envision.

Nathan Landau said that there are possibilities of modifying existing routes. Alameda Point will need a whole new route and it is clear there will be a need for operating dollars to start it. Alameda Point properties may be able to generate dollars, but the City needs a robust transit service to make it work.

Andrew Thomas said from the City's perspective would be for AC Transit to modify their services and expand to Alameda Point, but the game plan is to require all Alameda Point housing and businesses to fund additional transit services annually. So, if AC Transit does not provide service then they will be running additional supplementary services from Alameda Point. We have a 70-foot public right-of-way that we are not using south of Ralph Appezzato Memorial Parkway. As Alameda Point develops out, then we could have a dedicated lane or queue jumps and phase in a single transit lane. Alternatively, we could be planning a good 20-30 feet of the 70 feet to provide lanes going both ways.

Commissioner Bellows said on page 79 it showed a construction cost comparison in the west end only. She thought the Commission was planning to talk about an option to pursue in the future.

Commissioner Vargas said staff is not looking for an action, but only consensus and comments.

Boardmember Henneberry asked staff what funds are used to build the Bus Rapid Transit on International Boulevard in Oakland.

Nathan Landau replied there is a mix of capital funds. He explained there is a large percent of federal funds and some Measure B funds. However, the funds are not coming from the city of Oakland or San Leandro. Also, when the last Measure B3 was proposed, Alameda said some of those funds would be used for the BRT system and unfortunately that measure failed narrowly.

Boardmember Henneberry said the City is headed in the right direction in general, but we need to keep the right-of-way flexible and make the system user friendly to get people out of their cars and onto public transit.

Boardmember Knox White said when he was part of the Transportation Commission and helped write the Transportation Master Plan that became part of the Transportation Element, they identified two corridors on the island. He said the idea was not for the corridors to be exclusively used for public transit, but available for whenever there was a time then those corridors could be used. He was concerned that the City would take Lincoln Avenue off the plan if they decided not to run BRT. His opinion is the fact that Lincoln Avenue is a historical exclusive right-of-way and the corridor has never been fully discussed for public transit development. Moreover, he felt the Clement Avenue alignment for BRT would be four minutes shorter and cheaper operations than the alternative alignments. He went on to say there are a lot of North Shore transit needs that are coming through the pipeline and a transit element that ties all of them together can help leverage the planning at Alameda Point and provide better service to Alameda. In addition, he worried that the work being done is serving Alameda Point and then down the Webster tubes is a missed opportunity and serves hardly anyone. He mentioned that the City could use the money for proposals on park-and-rides and ferry terminals that are not being done and he proposed to use the monies to look at the Clement Avenue and Town Center implementations. Finally, he believed the multimodal redesign of Broadway and Jackson Streets

would have to coincide with the BRT proposal and it now seems the proposal will get done whether the redesign gets done or not. He proposed that the plan be its own separate priority project, especially since it is a huge priority for moving people around the west end.

Boardmember Burton said he seconded *Boardmember Knox White's* comments about Lincoln Avenue. He felt we do not know what is going to happen 20 to 30 years out. Also, he asked about the \$1.5 million dollars used for the proposal and wondered how it should be spent. He felt the report did not refer to great projects of that scale and it is not fair for the Commission and the Board to ask for direction when they had not received concise options for projects that would fit within that framework. He would like to see more work done there.

Boardmember Zuppan referred to the illustration and neighborhoods that are within the outer borders of the City that have no transit service. She said the Clement Avenue option should be considered more and staff should look at pockets where the City is developing. Moreover, she was concerned about the lack of examples shown for the money that would be used. Lastly, she agreed with AC Transit's opinion to reserve or set aside lanes in both directions and it is hard for her to believe that there would not be a need, especially at major intersections.

Boardmember Tang said he was concerned with the bus only lane and wondered if the City would implement limited service hours within the BRT lanes.

Colin Burgett replied the BRT lanes would be open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

Nathan Landau replied limiting the hours of bus only lanes, similar to San Francisco would create tremendous enforcement problems.

Boardmember Alvarez-Morrone said she was concerned with the funding deadline.

John Atkinson replied that the remaining section of the grant is being passed through by BART and consolidated until November 2014. It should go through the construction process by that time, but they could go to the federal agencies to extend the deadline. He explained that Phase I was extended twice, so there is a possibility.

5. Transportation Demand Management Plan

Jennifer Ott, Alameda Point Chief Operating Officer, presented an introduction of the plan at Alameda Point.

Jim Daisa, Kimley-Horn and Associates, presented the plan.

Commissioner Vargas opened the floor to public comments.

Ethan Clifton lives on the Annex and presented the Alley Cat Project before the panel.

Jon Spangler said he appreciated the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan; however, the plan depends on the land use planning that precedes it. Firstly, he explained the TDM would work if there is high density housing built along the Ralph Appezato corridor and the Town Center area. Secondly, he said single-family housing could not be built until the TDM is in place and works. Lastly, he felt the City needed to implement the TDM policy Citywide.

Lucy Gigli, President of BikeAlameda, explained that there are a couple of TDM plans within the City and she wondered how do we factor them all in so that they are not duplicating programs and implementing shuttles that overlap each other. Regarding public input, she heard comments made at the annual reporting to the City Council, but she wondered if that is the only opportunity for public input. Additionally, she wanted to know if the programs would benefit everyone living and traveling within the City. Moreover, she wanted to see biking and walking opportunities similar to the Estuary Crossing Feasibility Study in the TDM plan.

Boardmember Alvarez-Morrone asked if the study was a collaborative effort with other groups working on transit plans within Alameda.

Jennifer Ott explained that *Jim Daisa* has reviewed all the plans and documents for the City.

Boardmember Alvarez-Morrone said she was happy to see that parking was brought up because she is on the Waterfront Subcommittee and the topic was brought up.

Commissioner Miley asked how would the TDM plan work if we were just looking to do this on one section and not citywide. He also wanted to know if there are other examples of TDM plans that focus on one district. He felt if we do not focus citywide then other districts will have a competitive advantage.

Jim Daisa replied that the City has a TDM plan that is robust and comprehensive. He was not sure how it is being implemented on a regular basis, but he is just taking aspects of that framework and applying it to the development area.

Commissioner Miley asked staff how effective is the City's TDM plan.

Andrew Thomas replied the vast majority of traffic is generated in the morning from residents driving through the tubes. The Bayport development added a little traffic back in the year 1999

when the project was approved and essentially the City had no real transit strategy for that project. He said since then every residential project approved has some form of a TDM program and the key is paying for transit. He said it is handled in a number of different ways such as having shuttles or buying Easy Passes from AC Transit in perpetuity. Moreover, the City requires that the Home Owner Association (HOA) cannot vote the TDM policy out. He explained based on the long-term strategy for the west end that Alameda Landing would go first. They have to setup a Transportation Management Association (TMA) and Target is paying annually towards public transit services. He went on to say that eventually it might make sense for Alameda Landing and Alameda Point to merge as one TMA. Also, he said part of the strategy is to insert businesses and HOA members into the TMA board and they can adjust the program as necessary. Essentially, they are building a citywide TDM through each project that they approve. Regarding parking around businesses, he felt as a community, we could decide to adjust because business parks at Alameda Point have to pay for parking, whereas older developments do not.

Jennifer Ott stated that there are examples of area TDM plans such as Stanford University and Bay Meadows and *Joe Daisa* could provide more examples.

Staff Payne explained that the City has a preliminary TDM/TSM plan in place and the City has an abundant supply of free parking making it difficult to implement the measures.

Boardmember Köster asked how much population is needed to support a true TDM plan.

Jim Daisa replied there is not a rule of thumb because the program would be tailored towards the population. However, the employment is just as important as the residents. He said *Jon Spangler* made a good point on how high density residential attracts self-selective people who want to move towards public transit services.

Boardmember Köster asked who is responsible for educating the public about the transit services.

Jim Daisa replied that the TMA deals with the promotion.

Boardmember Zuppan said she is concerned with the economic impact of the plan. Since there would be 1,425 units and 25 percent of them are low-income, plus three housing collaboratives at most 1,000 people would fund the TMA. Yet, the City would be looking for a catalyst project driving development and limiting or providing costs for parking is not an attraction. Ultimately, she felt parking is a component, but since the City has low traffic and high street parking, it is not smart to outline the parking component. Also, she mentioned the City needed a balanced perspective to create an effective and friendly TDM plan for visitors and pet owners.

Boardmember Knox White said he agreed with all three recommendations and appreciated the idea of not trying to design the perfect TDM plan and requiring everyone to do it. He suggested that staff look at adding a trip cap and a way to gauge the early capacity issues. He highlighted the city of Cambridge as an example and mentioned that unbundling parking is a good mechanism to reduce the hidden costs of parking.

Boardmember Henneberry referred to *Andrew Thomas'* statement regarding the policy of charging employers parking through the TDM plan and the disadvantage for Alameda Point, but not for Harbor Bay and Southshore. He wondered how could that be if the City was implementing a policy that would apply for everybody.

Andrew Thomas replied that based on the development of parts of Alameda Landing, the City required certain conditions based on the entitlements and it is very difficult to go back to the Harbor Bay Business Park Association and change the rules.

Boardmember Burton said in terms of the three discussion questions posed, the Environmental Impact Report used as a base line makes sense. What struck him was that the strategy in both cases focused on employers and residents. He did not see the City focusing on the retail component with varying transit choices that would need to be integrated in the strategy.

Joe Daisa replied that there are strategies applied to retail and they are developing a retail component.

Boardmember Alvarez-Morroni asked who oversees the Citywide TDM/TSM ordinance.

Virendra Patel, Alameda Public Works, replied the TSM ordinance is in flux, as part of the Lewis Bill and the City cannot go after the employer on some stringent requirements. They are waiting for the next assembly bill to be finalized and they will institute the ordinance. He noted that the City does have parking in-lieu fees and the fees go towards up keep of bus shelters and parking meters.

Boardmember Alvarez-Morroni asked if that falls under Alameda Public Works department.

Virendra Patel replied yes.

Boardmember Tang wondered if there are any studies conducted to see if running a smaller, agile, and frequent shuttle rather than a standard bus would benefit the City. Also, he noted there is a big parking lot near Jackson and 12th Streets that has never been opened to the public and it seemed like a waste.

Commissioner Miley replied that parking lot is used for the Alameda County building around the area such as the courthouse and administrative building.

Boardmember Tang stated that it would be good to utilize this space, but a parking garage would help to withstand leakage.

Commissioner Vargas said *Boardmember Tang's* first question would be passed over to staff from AC Transit.

Commissioner Vargas said staff should be careful when moving forward with parking policies.

Commissioner Bertken said the City has to consider the aggressiveness of the TDM to the environmental document based upon the forecast of traffic reduction that it is going to be

achieved by the TDM.

6. Announcements/ Public Comments

Carol Gottstein, 3rd Generation Alameda resident, said that one way of decreasing car usage is to restripe the parking lots more like Mastick Senior Center along Santa Clara Avenue, which are wide and diagonal. Also, she made a plea for a formal disabled parking space in the City Hall parking lot and striping wider spaces so fewer cars are accommodated. Additionally, she went to the library to obtain the documents for the meeting and the library staff could not open the links.

Commissioner Schatmeier said he has been using the Harbor Bay Ferry since it was created and he noticed a spike in ferry demand and the loss of representation of Alameda within the governing board. He proposed this topic should be placed onto the next agenda.

7. Adjournment

10:15 pm