

Transportation Commission Special Meeting Minutes

Wednesday March 23, 2016

Commissioner Michele Bellows called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Roll was called and the following was recorded:

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Staff Patel, Transportation Engineer
Staff Payne, Transportation Coordinator

2. Agenda Changes

None.

3. Announcements / Public Comments

3.A. Next Transportation Commission meeting would be Wednesday, May 25, 2016, 7 pm

Commissioner Bertken stated that he received information about the Water Emergency Transportation Authority's (WETA) next board meeting. He said the next meeting will be in Alameda at City Hall Council Chambers on Thursday, April 7, 7 pm.

Commissioner Schatmeier said he stopped receiving AC Transit's Interagency Liaison Committee (ILC) meeting notices. He explained that he missed the January meeting and he would like to know when the next meeting will take place.

Staff Patel said he would check the date and provide the information to *Commissioner Schatmeier*.

4. Consent Calendar

4.A. Transportation Commission Minutes – Approve Meeting Minutes – January 27, 2016

Commissioner Schatmeier moved to approve the minutes. *Commissioner Hans* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0.

5. New Business

5.A. Cross Alameda Trail Gap Closure on Atlantic Avenue: Accept a Status Update and Approve Grant Application Submittal

Rochelle Wheeler, Alameda Public Works Transportation Planner, presented the report.

Commissioner Vargas asked for the cost estimate on the range of what the concept may cost, not the actual design, but the construction costs.

Rochelle Wheeler explained that staff brought the \$200,000 cost, which pertains to the project concept at its minimum and without the signal work to the Commission in January. She went on to say that staff developed the design that was currently attached within the staff report and the \$200,000 is the cost of construction. However, she explained that the grant application would now include the signal work and mid-block crossing, so the estimate would be \$600,000. Yet, the grant monies received from Measure B would be up to \$600,000, therefore staff may receive the full amount needed to complete the work.

Commissioner Schatmeier explained that staff asked the Commission to approve the project in concept in January, but he asked what would staff need from the Commission at this point.

Rochelle Wheeler replied the environmental review stating that this was categorically exempt and this particular element that staff is attempting to move forward.

Commissioner Schatmeier asked staff if the Commission decided to take action and accept staff recommendations would that allow staff to proceed.

Commissioner Bellows said she had a concern about an issue that was brought up during the January Commission meeting. She explained that apparently the curb ramps came into question and they may become obliterated. So, she asked for clarification on whether staff analyzed all ADA access for all modes of transportation.

Rochelle Wheeler replied that she received the email that was forwarded to the Commission from *Mr. Grishtohl*. She said staff would like to separate users through the crosswalk as much as possible and staff will be looking at what is allowed in the vehicle and municipal code because the idea is to separate users as much as possible.

Commissioner Bertken asked if the Commission was approving an environmental review of this portion of the project concept.

Rochelle Wheeler replied no, this type of project was categorically exempt from environmental review. However, she said if the City is adding a mid-block crossing or implementing traffic signals, then the Commission would have to approve an environmental review. Thus, she asked the Commission to essentially approve the project concept including the portion presented that evening.

Commissioner Bertken asked under what conditions was the project categorically exempt.

Rochelle Wheeler replied it was categorically exempt under state law.

Commissioner Bellows referred *Commissioner Bertken* to the staff report, Environmental Review, Section 15301.

Commissioner Bertken stated that the attachment within the staff report indicated signaling and other items for the safety of the bicyclists along Atlantic Avenue and Constitution Way. He asked staff to explain the intention of the signaling.

Rochelle Wheeler replied the design (Exhibit 1) is the same as presented in January.

Commissioner Bertken replied in January staff did not exhibit a safety example for the bicyclists.

Rochelle Wheeler replied staff is still developing the safety portion for the bicyclists and they will provide the Commission a fully formed example in May. She explained that staff would like to provide signal changes such as a dedicated signal for bicyclists.

Commissioner Bertken replied that bicyclists could not move when other traffic is moving presumably.

Rochelle Wheeler said that was correct and that would be studied.

Commissioner Bellows opened the floor for public comment.

Jim Strehlow, Alameda resident, stated that he did not see the bus stops analyzed and at the previously meeting he brought up the Main Street to Webster Street section of Appezzatto Parkway and asked how staff would place the bus stops in that design and no one had an answer for him. He felt he would have to wait for the next Commission meeting to see what is actually planned for this area. He said he continued to favor sharrows because cyclists would ride in the directional flow of traffic. He explained that he visited the state of Florida not too long ago and they use sharrows, so he wondered what makes Alameda so different. He went on to say that the City needs two lanes on various streets to get across town from Alameda Point. So, taking away a lane would be contradictory to the City's General Plan. He said the Commission should handle everyone's needs not just bicyclists' needs. He stated that he was interested in the earlier design with no right hand turns off Atlantic Avenue onto Constitution Way. However, he hoped that the Commission would allow right hand turns from Atlantic Avenue onto Constitution Way close to the designed cycle track because otherwise traffic will back up all the way to Webster Street. He explained further that if a right turn is not implemented then there will be traffic along Webster

Street onto Atlantic Avenue. He also exclaimed that West Alameda Business Association (WABA) was not notified of this project because he attended a meeting with them earlier in the day. He pointed out that the level of service concerned him because the level of service would be reduced from a level D to level F. He felt the Commission is becoming a traffic congestion creation Commission and as a citizen who has lived in Alameda for 60 years he wondered why the Commission would make things worse.

Commissioner Miley addressed the public outreach comment brought up by *Jim Strehlow*. He said he understood from the January meeting that staff would be engaging WABA and other stakeholders. However, he said staff explained that the project's design would be discussed in the May meeting and this meeting would take action to seek grant money. However, in the interim staff would reach out to stakeholders before the May meeting.

Rochelle Wheeler replied that was correct, she reached out to AC Transit and *Staff Patel* would discuss reaching out to WABA.

Staff Patel replied they have reached out to the WABA design committee members with the concept plan leading up to the January meeting.

Commissioner Miley replied in advance of the January meeting in terms of any additional data or potential tweaks to the design that was originally presented in January, staff should reach out to WABA again.

Staff Patel replied yes.

Commissioner Vargas explained that he did not vote for this item when they met last time and there still was no concept further designed. He said he wished to have heard more about the concepts and impacts to the affected stakeholders before staff requested a grant approval by the Commission. He felt troubled that staff said they would provide more information about the issues presented at the January meeting, but an update has not been received by the Commission.

Rochelle Wheeler replied she understood *Commissioner Vargas*' comments, but she did not want to come unprepared. Thus, she wanted to give more time to conduct outreach and data gathering before presenting the full design. She understood that she said this to the Commission at the January meeting, but she wanted to make sure there was a thorough design brought forth. She went on to say that the last meeting staff was explicit about the \$200,000 identified through Measure B did not include the mid-block crossing or signal work. So, she said staff found additional money where the bicycle signals and mid-block crossing could be included in the project.

Commissioner Vargas stated that a member of the police department was in the audience. He said one of the comments that was asked in January was about emergency responders. He wanted to know if staff has information or comments about that.

Rochelle Wheeler replied no not yet, but she has that listed as one of the items and will follow up.

Commissioner Schatmeier stated that the Commission approved the concept last month and the cycle track and removal of the lane was part of the concept. He explained that the Commission listened to a lot of public comments that were relevant and caused some concerns. He said the Commission asked staff to address those concerns, but for this meeting the revised plan is not before the Commission tonight and they are not going back and revisiting the issue of the cycle track or the single lane. He understood that this meeting was to move the grant application forward and the Commission understood that it was categorically exempt.

Rochelle Wheeler explained in particular staff would like the Commission to approve the midblock crossing location and signal improvements.

Commissioner Bellows replied for this meeting staff came to the Commission in order to apply for more grant money to create a complete concept including the signals. She explained that until the Commission blessed the action, staff would have to withdraw the preliminary application. She further explained that the final application was not due until after the May meeting. She said the May meeting will allow the Commission to decide if design is not going in the right direction and if not, staff will not send the final application.

Rochelle Wheeler replied the Alameda Housing Authority would still move forward with their plans, but they would not include the transportation plans.

Commissioner Bertken said based upon *Commissioner Vargas'* comments he wanted to understand the amount of money that would be available and what staff would be asking for in this current grant. He asked staff if the City receives this grant would that include all of the traffic signaling and everything that was discussed or would that be an additional grant that has to come down the line.

Rochelle Wheeler replied the \$600,000 includes changes to the signals and mid-block crossing.

Commissioner Bellows replied this would create a more complete project.

<p><i>Commissioner Miley</i> moved to approve staff recommendations. <i>Commissioner Schatmeier</i> seconded the motion. The motion was approved 6-1; <i>Commissioner Vargas</i> voted no.</p>
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5.B. Approve Submittal of Transportation Grant Applications: Active Transportation Program and TIGER

Rochelle Wheeler presented the Active Transportation Program (ATP) grant portion of the presentation.

Commissioner Bellows asked staff if the applications would be due in January.

Rochelle Wheeler replied June 15, 2016.

Commissioner Bertken said the recommendation talked about approving the whole grant submittal. However, the recommendation does not specifically mention the two projects that staff just spoke about. So, he wanted clarification on whether the recommendation would approve the entire package or the two projects.

Rochelle Wheeler replied staff was in the process of selecting which would be the best project to meet the recently released guidelines. So, staff would like to have some flexibility in making sure they submit the project that best adheres to the new guidelines.

Commissioner Bertken stated that he was concerned about staff's recommendation.

Commissioner Bellows replied the Commission would revise the motion to call upon the specific projects.

Commissioner Vargas stated that when he read the staff report, he thought he would be hearing a recommendation from staff for one or the other. He mentioned that staff indicated that the first project Central Avenue went through a diverse community interaction, but he did not hear anything about community outreach for the Stargell Avenue Project. He felt this would have allowed the Commission to make an objective recommendation.

Rochelle Wheeler replied depending on how the term disadvantage community is defined, Stargell Avenue provides access to the Alameda Point area. Also, depending on how the term is defined, there are some disadvantaged communities around the Stargell Avenue area as well.

Commissioner Bellows explained that because the guidelines have just come out staff has not processed what will score the best within the guidelines, but she wondered would this be disadvantaged focus.

Rochelle Wheeler replied yes.

Commissioner Vargas stated that if the Commission is picking one project over the other without having additional information it would be good to know if there's more data on one location versus the other, so the Commission could make an objective recommendation.

Jennifer Ott, Alameda Point Chief Operating Officer, stated that she is working with *Rochelle Wheeler* and *Gail Payne* on the grant applications. She said last year the disadvantaged communities weighed heavily on the decision to award the grants. So, they scoured through the list of all the potential improvements and the two that were most competitive were because of the Alameda Point Collaborative, which has half children and families that are at risk of homelessness. The Central Avenue Project was selected because there is a school along the route that is very close to the supportive housing community. Yet, she explained staff would need some time to produce the staff report and staff felt it was best to come to the Commission now in order to build some flexibility to review the guidelines and see how they are calculating disadvantage communities because it changes from year to year. Consequently, staff chose the two locations because of the supportive housing communities that are located right at the base.

Commissioner Bellows stated that since this information is complex the Commission should break the motion up with the two different funding sources.

Commissioner Bertken agreed with *Commissioner Bellows'* comments, but he was concerned about the staff report and the recommendation that stands.

Commissioner Bellows replied the current recommendation is not specific enough for the Commission. So, the Commission will recommend whether staff can submit the grant application for these projects or not.

Commissioner Schatmeier agreed with *Commissioner Bellow's* comments and stated for the Active Transportation Program portion of the motion the Commission would call out the two projects. He asked *Jennifer Ott* if she would report back to the Commission after staff selects a project and the Commission would vote to proceed with the selection or not.

Jennifer Ott replied they would not have time to come back to the Commission in May for a vote because the grant deadline is in June. However, she would report the decision to the Commission in May.

Commissioner Bellows made a motion to approve the Active Transportation Program with an addition of the two projects and provide staff flexibility to select one or both of the two projects for the grant application. *Commissioner Miley* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0.

Jennifer Ott reported on the TIGER grant application process.

Commissioner Miley stated that when she went to Washington D.C. the application and project was well received, but went under the wire. He wanted to know the name of the City's lobbyist.

Jennifer Ott replied Ackerman.

Commissioner Miley replied if there was any way to coordinate efforts and if it has not already been done with other groups like Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) or other local agencies that go to Washington D.C. in order to use their weight and resources.

Jennifer Ott replied staff's hope would be to have AC Transit co-apply with them like last year and with the addition of the ferry terminal staff's hope would be to co-apply with WETA during the application process.

Commissioner Bertken asked staff for the action that needed to be taken by the Commission.

Commissioner Vargas stated that there was one action for Item 5B where *Commissioner Bellows* stated that the Commission should split the recommendations since they are recommending for two funding or grant applications. He explained that so far the Commission took action on the Active Transportation Program portion.

Commissioner Miley moved to accept staff recommendations with the specific language that can be found on page 2 of item 5B that delineates ramp improvements, Stargell Avenue, Main Street and Central Avenue. *Commission Vargas* made an amendment to the recommendation, if time allows, for staff to contact other agencies to co-apply to be part of the grant application. *Commissioner Schameier* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0.

5.C. Status Report of the Citywide Transit and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plans

Staff Payne presented the status report.

Commissioner Vargas said the page numbers should be included in the report. He also asked staff about the outreach efforts and if a stakeholder list was created.

Staff Payne replied there was a list and she would send the list to the Commission for review.

Commissioner Vargas replied the list should also include the city of Oakland and the Oakland office of the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) as there may be some synergy with Broadway Street access. He also asked staff about the proposed fees of the consultants that were shown on page three. He wanted to know if the fee was considered during the valuation or was it qualifications based only.

Staff Payne replied the cost was one of the criterion and there were other criteria like experience and quality of work.

Commissioner Schatmeier replied that he looked at this page too and he did not remember any deliberation that the committee did and it could be viewed as if they chose the low bidder. He said they chose the firm they felt was the best and gave the best value for their dollars.

Commissioner Vargas asked staff about the milestones described during the 18-month process and he asked what would be the key milestones to have the project under control.

Staff Payne replied for the May meeting she would come before the Commission about the existing conditions. Afterwards, there would be a near term strategy type of memo, meaning staff would want to implement the strategies as soon as possible. She then explained that the preliminary strategies and the draft plan would be the other key milestones.

Commissioner Hans asked staff who came up with the 400 surveys.

Staff Payne replied that is the number that allows the research to become statistically significant.

5.D. Comment on the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) Strategic Plan and Seaplane Lagoon Ferry Terminal Plan

Jennifer Ott presented the report.

Commissioner Schatmeier asked if they are envisioning that ferry service will still be on the other side of Alameda Point.

Jennifer Ott replied this is not a relocation or replacement plan of the existing terminal. She explained that the Main Street Terminal depends on Oakland service and Oakland depends on Alameda service, so both terminals would essentially act as west Alameda ferry service.

Commissioner Schatmeier explained that when they first analyzed the transportation plan for Alameda that was the first time he heard about the Seaplane Lagoon site and at that time of the discussion, he thought that would replace Main Street Terminal. He also brought up the fact that the Seaplane Lagoon Terminal would have quicker run times.

Jennifer Ott replied the run times would be approximately the same.

Kevin Connolly, Planning and Development for WETA, stated that there are wake-related restrictions because of wild life habitat and speed restrictions.

Commissioner Schatmeier asked if there are similar restrictions going up the Estuary.

Kevin Connolly replied there are wake-related restrictions because of vessel fueling and other reasons. He said currently it takes 20 minutes from Main Street to San Francisco and approximately 20 minutes from Seaplane Lagoon to San Francisco.

Commissioner Bellows asked staff about the 400 temporary parking spaces at Seaplane Lagoon.

Jennifer Ott replied those temporary spaces will become permanent, but the location is temporary.

Commissioner Bellows referred to the Main Street Terminal and wondered if there was a plan of action to gravel where she usually parks.

Kevin Connolly replied yes and staff is analyzing the transit and bicycle access and parking issues related to both terminals.

Commissioner Bellows asked *Kevin Connolly* in the short-term could that area be graveled.

Kevin Connolly replied the Albert H. DeWitt O Club goes into construction on March 28, so Albert H. DeWitt O Club will have approximately 130 to 140 spaces depending on how they stripe it.

Commission Bellows said divots exist in the dirt lot on the waterside.

Kevin Connolly replied there are currently no plans for that area.

Commissioner Vargas felt from *Commissioner Bellows'* comments there was a sense of urgency to improve the parking. He wanted to go with that theme and comment to the schedule that staff showed, which it was slightly different than the staff report plan. He also wondered if it was possible to move this plan forward because BART is having operational problems with their trains, so there is a sense of urgency to have an alternative route. He asked staff if they could shave a year off the projected date. He further asked what could be done and who could implement the project delivery methods. He wondered if the City could take the lead, WETA or a Joint Power Agency.

Jennifer Ott replied there are a number of factors that drive the schedule, but in terms of construction of the terminal, the City is responsible because the City is the applicant. She said another issue would be the boat procurement and the time it takes to construct the boats. Currently, the City does not have operating dollars and if to the extent, the City has to depend on Regional Measure 3 dollars or some regional gas tax it would not be up for this year's ballot. So, ultimately it comes down to operating subsidy, timing of the measure and vessel procurement.

Commissioner Bellows asked staff about the \$16 million cost for one boat.

Jennifer Ott replied they are big boats.

Kevin Connolly replied it is a 450 passenger vessel and there is a small vessel building community in the United States. Additionally, he explained the vessels have to be US built.

Commissioner Bellows opened the floor for public comment.

Jim Strehlow stated that he felt the plan was a great idea, but when he talked to other people they wondered what the "E" in WETA stands for. He wondered why WETA has to include the word "emergency" in the title because the organization should be involved in transportation solutions. He said he was surprised that the WETA administration building at Alameda Point has 50 or so parking spaces for their staff and the Alameda Transit Demand Management (TDM) plan specifically looks for employees to find transit alternatives. He was disturbed by the idea that there are different rules for businesses and residents and government agencies exempt themselves. Finally, he said to not forget about Bay Farm Island. He was happy to see the third ferry option happening, but they did not come up with a solution for Bay Farm Island's parking situation. He exclaimed that residents are having a horrible time with the parking because there is way too much of a demand.

Kevin Connolly stated that he appreciated the Commission working with WETA. Regarding providing service, he said they are bursting at the seams for Transbay service demand and this spring and summer, they are pulling in vessels that are not formal commuter boats for regular service to combat the demand. He noted that WETA recognized the increased demand and growing pains as far as parking challenges are concerned, but he was optimistic that they will find a solution.

Commissioner Miley stated that although the vessels are expensive they are made in America, which was important. He questioned the 20-year strategic plan because that is a big span of time and he wanted to know if WETA will review the plan periodically.

Kevin Connolly replied that WETA has a 10-year short-range plan that is updated every two years that comes with budget constraints and then there's the 20-year plan, which is a guided unconstrained document that outlines how they envision themselves developing as an agency.

Commissioner Miley asked *Kevin Connolly* if the 20-year plan would be subject to the type of review as the 10-year plan.

Kevin Connolly replied yes, the general practice is to review the 20-year every 5 to 10 years.

Commissioner Bellows asked *Kevin Connolly* if WETA use to be called the Water Transit Authority.

Kevin Connolly replied yes, they were called the Water Transit Authority in their inception and the word "emergency" got legislated in 2009 with capital funding attached to acknowledge that safety was needed.

Commissioner Miley stated that it would be great if that "E" came with more capital or operating funds because it would be great to be able to buy more boats in the event of an emergency.

Kevin Connolly replied that the project's timetable and the year 2020 date to purchase vessels was provided because a certain amount of funds are drawn down from the Proposition 1B program and programmed out.

Commissioner Miley asked staff for a future agenda item to address the Bay Farm parking issue, which was addressed at a past Commission meeting.

Jennifer Ott stated that the WETA Board has decided to come to Alameda on April 7 to hold their meeting at 7 pm at City Hall. She explained that many Alameda related items would be discussed. She said on April 4 the City Council will discuss the ferry terminal and MOU and from her understanding, there will be a referral from a councilmember to discuss the Harbor Bay Ferry Terminal's parking issues.

Commissioner Miley said he understood that staff was working on this issue. He explained that at a previous meeting staff stated they would work with WETA and other joint agencies.

Jennifer Ott replied that she was happy to come back and brief the Commission, but this topic will also be discussed at the April 4 and April 7 meetings.

Commissioner Schatmeier said it has been difficult to get operating funds for transit and it is easier to obtain capital funds. He felt planners should call out the need for operating funds every time they list funding sources and for them to be very specific about the need for operating funds and their scarcity so the word will spread amongst people who are not necessarily professionals in order to grasp the obstacles.

Commissioner Miley explained that a third of Measure B funds are operating and WETA was not included to the extent that they should have been.

Commission Vargas stated that since the developer is leading the design and construction of this project the partnership sounds like a Public Private Partnership or P3. He asked staff if the project has the potential for revenue generating if a third entity would charge for parking or concessions to leverage creating new funds.

Jennifer Ott replied the project is not a P3 because it is a city design and they are contracting with a developer. However, she explained that the TDM plan would look at parking charges at the ferry terminal and staff is discussing this option with WETA and AC transit and also trying to looking at creative ways to find funding.

Commissioner Miley made a motion to accept staff recommendations. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. *Commissioner Vargas* made an amendment to the motion by asking staff to update some of the graphics to match the PowerPoint presentation and schedule because it seemed to be more updated on the PowerPoint presentation. The motion was approved 7-0.

6. Staff Communications

6.A. AC Transit service improvement status

Commissioner Schatmeier asked *Staff Patel* if they know what happened to the recommendation letter once it was sent to the AC Transit Board.

Staff Patel said he would come back and let the Commission know.

Commissioner Vargas asked staff to provide a future update on the status of agency staff. Meaning, does the agency have staff in house or open positions.

Commissioner Bellows asked staff to look into providing a future update on the Broadway/Jackson Project.

Staff Patel said he believed the city of Oakland and ACTC are looking at a combining the consultants for the two different projects for the freeway and downtown circulation plan. He has not been to a recent meeting with ACTC discussing the new project.

Commissioner Bellows said she would still like to know what the project entails and for staff to organize a presentation.

Commission Miley seconded that comment.

Staff Patel replied he would put together a presentation with the ACTC consultant and city of Oakland.

7. Announcements/Public Comments

Jim Strehlow stated that on Thursday, May 12 is Bike to Work Day. He wanted to bring up his past comments once again about citizens of Alameda are interested in the City's pot hole repair program and will there be a grant submission especially with the gas tax dwindling. He also said that he would like to hear about the staff position report that was requested by *Commissioner Vargas*.

8. Adjournment

9:20 pm