

DRAFT
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES
November 15, 2006

Chair Knox White called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. **ROLL CALL** – Roll was called and the following recorded.

Members Present:

John Knox White

Jeff Knoth

Michael Krueger

Robb Ratto

Absent from Roll Call:

Eric Schatmeier (arrived 7:45)

Robert McFarland (arrived 7:40)

Staff Present:

Obaid Khan, Supervising Civil Engineer

Barry Bergman, Program Specialist II

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Knox White advised that there was not a quorum to vote on the minutes of October 25, 2006, and that they would be considered at the end of the meeting if *Commissioners McFarland* and *Schatmeier* arrived by that time.

3. **AGENDA CHANGES**

There were none.

4. **COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

There were none.

5. **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

There were none.

6A. **REVIEW ALTERNATIVES AND RECOMMEND BUS STOP LOCATION ON OTIS DRIVE.**

Staff Bergman presented the staff report and displayed a map of the Otis Drive corridor. He provided the history of this matter. He noted that both sites were constrained, and that the eastbound location for Pond Isle would be located diagonally across the intersection,

and the westbound location would be just behind where the photo showed. Normally, AC Transit preferred far side intersection locations, but it was not feasible in this instance because of the presence of a driveway and a tree. He displayed a chart that summarized the impacts, including the loss of on-street parking.

Staff Bergman noted that Attachment 2 summarized the location of Otis and Willow, and the eastbound stop on the southwest corner of the intersection already had an existing red curb; no onstreet parking would be lost.

Commissioner Krueger expressed concern about the Whitehall and Willow stop, which he believed was substandard. He added that there was no sidewalk and no paving, and that it was a mud strip on the westbound direction. He believed it was in limbo because of the South Shore redevelopment, and inquired whether it was outside the property line for South Shore.

Staff Bergman believed that bus stop was not part of the South Shore site.

Commissioner Krueger inquired whether that stop would be upgraded or eliminated, and believed that in its current state, it was unacceptable. *Staff Bergman* had not heard any discussion about that stop.

Commissioner Krueger suggested that the stop be moved around the corner and relocated to Willow.

Staff Bergman believed the bus stop for the W was on the near side of the intersection, and suggested that this subject be discussed during Staff Communications.

Public Comment

Mina Katoozian, 1936 Otis Drive, noted that she had lived at her address for 10 years and added many of the residents of the single-family homes had between one and three cars. It was not her opinion that these residents needed a bus, and she had not observed anyone in the neighborhood use the bus. She noted that she operates a large family day care, and believed the presence of buses in her neighborhood would be a safety hazard. She opposed the presence of this bus stop near her house.

Liz Cleves, 1815 Otis Drive, pointed out that Ivy Walk is a pedestrian path connecting Otis Drive to Sandcreek Way. She supported the Pond Isle location specifically because of its proximity to Ivy Walk.

Barbara Nemer, 3202 Ravens Cove, supported the Pond Isle location, and added that the westbound side of the street was almost empty of cars during the day. She believed that the neighbors had offstreet parking for their homes.

Marilyn Teplow, 1805 Otis Drive, believed that empirical, practical thinking must be used to arrive at a sound conclusion. She noted that there were three streets along the

odd-numbered side of Otis (Glenwood Isle, Pond Isle and Sandalwood Isle), with three residences between Sandalwood Isle and the crosswalk to Lum School. She noted that there had been strong objections to this bus stop on safety grounds. She believed that the site between Glenwood Isle and Pond Isle was a better solution, because it was halfway between the existing bus stops. She conducted an informal 14-day survey, which revealed that there were seven days when there were no cars parked along that corridor; three days when one car was seen; three days when two cars was seen; and only one day when three cars were seen for part of the day. She did not believe that removing parking space would interfere with a bus stop on the odd-numbered side of Otis Drive. She did not believe there would be a perfect solution, but hoped the Commission could find a solution that would do the least harm to the greatest number of people.

Diane Voss, 1815 Otis Drive, believed it was important to have a bus stop on Willow and Otis, and noted that all of the measured distances would be thrown out of scale if it did not go in. She noted that after safety, ridership was the next most important criterion. She did not understand why the bus was ever rerouted from Shoreline to Otis. She noted that while she did not like to see trees removed, she would support that removal if it would allow a bus stop for the public interest.

Eva Csoboth, 1932 Otis Drive, had collected signatures from her neighbors in opposition to the proposed bus stop, and read her letter into the record:

“We are writing in regards to the proposed bus stop of AC Transit 63 Line you are considering installing in front of our house, located at 1932 Otis Drive. We oppose this bus stop installation proposal for the following reasons: We, the residents of Otis Drive, have never been surveyed or asked about the proposal to install the bus stop in our residential area, and these surveys should be mandatory before even considering such a proposal. It is questionable that the majority of residents of this section of Otis Drive would need or request an additional bus stop. The new route of the AC Transit 63 line passing our house on Otis Drive was routed from Shoreline Drive one or two years ago, I don’t know exactly when, has increased the noise level and air pollution already.

Installing a bus stop resulting in the stopping, idling and restarting of the bus would further increase the noise and the fumes in front of our house, which is a significant health hazard. I have been treated for asthma and this would be a further risk factor for an exacerbation. Our tax dollars would be wasted on installing new bus stops when there are existing bus stops on Shoreline Drive. The recommended 1,000 feet distance between bus stops could be easily achieved if the AC Transit 63 line would be rerouted to an area where a higher number of people live, and more people would be able to use the bus. We only received your letter informing us about the proposed bus stop installation on Friday, November 10, five days before this Transportation Commission meeting. This late notification suggests that this proposal might not be known to the affected residents. We are requesting your reconsideration of this matter.”

She noted that this letter was addressed to City Engineer Barbara Hawkins, and submitted it into the record.

Geoffrey Kline, 1940 Otis Drive, believed the Commission was looking for a solution to a nonexistent problem, and did not believe there was a need for a bus stop in this location. He noted that many of the residents were retired; one worked in Benicia, and very few people took the bus. Anyone who took the bus could walk to the existing stop on Willow. He did not want the few remaining trees to be removed for a bus stop, and he did not believe many people wanted the bus stop. He noted that he recently retired from public service in San Mateo County and added that at one time he was their traffic engineer. He believed it was reasonable for people to be able to park in front of their house. He noted that the speakers who supported the bus stop did not live near it.

George Wales, 2031 Otis Drive, agreed with the previous speaker, and did not believe the bus stop was needed. He noted that the nearby condo complex would lose six to ten parking spaces. He expressed concern about air pollution generated by the bus at Sand Creek. He did not believe a bus stop was needed at all.

Bill Beltz, 2051 Otis Drive, noted that he and his wife were very concerned about the traffic congestion because of the buses; they did not believe another bus stop was needed. He noted that the noise level of buses and other traffic was very bad. He noted that many of the buses were running nearly empty. He was very concerned about the traffic safety, and had seen a pedestrian hit and injured.

Closed Public Comment

Commissioner Ratto inquired whether it might make sense to make an exception to the guideline for bus stops every 1200 feet or so. He noted that some of the testimony was compelling enough to indicate that might be the case. He assumed the meeting was properly noticed, and noted that no one spoke in favor of a bus stop on this street.

Commissioner Krueger did not believe it was fair to have an exception in this case when they were not allowed for bus stops in other parts of the City where there were objections.

Commissioner Schatmeier noted that most neighborhoods in the United States did not have a majority of residents who use the bus regularly, but many people do. He noted that many low-density neighborhoods do need bus stops for the riders who use it. He did not believe it was a compelling argument to state that no one used the bus. He noted that if a majority of residents was the criterion for bus stops, there would be none in the City.

Commission Ratto did not want it thought that he wished to do away with public transportation. He stated that in this one particular case, from what he heard from the speakers, that the existing bus stops at Grand and Otis, and at Willow and Whitehall would be sufficient to service the bus-riding population in this area. He heard nothing during the public comment period that would change that perception.

Chair Knox White noted that he would not be comfortable suggesting no bus stops between Whitehall and Grand. He noted that he occasionally rode that bus line, and heard some people discussing how they missed the old stop. He suggested that this stop could be put in for a year to measure ridership, and if that were to be the case, the stop could be removed. He believed that the best location for a stop would be in the center of where people lived.

Staff Khan expressed concern due to the need to install a crosswalk at adjacent to a new bus stop. In particular, this is an issue since the location is near a school, and this will result in the children crossing Otis Drive at multiple locations.

A discussion of the costs of crosswalks, pedestrian ramps, signage and paint ensued.

Commissioner Ratto inquired whether a resident requested this bus stop, or whether its installation was being explored because a stop was required every 1200 feet. He suggested that whatever the expense would be to build a bus stop, that nothing be put there; if bus riders felt they were not being properly served, they could come to the Transportation Commission and request a bus stop. He tended to agree with the speaker who felt the bus stop was being forced on the residents of that block.

Commissioner Schatmeier noted that he completely disagreed with *Commissioner Ratto's* comments and believed that he presented a false choice. He believed that use of transit was created by the access to transit. He believed that fewer people would use the bus if the stops were too far away from each other.

Staff Khan noted that staff must examine potential crosswalk sites to ensure that they meet warrants. Also, staff may want to look at the ridership at the previous stop locations at Otis Drive and Sandcreek Way.

Chair Knox White stated that he would entertain a motion.

Commissioner Schatmeier noted that he was leaning towards the Pond Isle location, which he believed had the fewest negatives associated with that location.

Commissioner Krueger believed that Sandalwood was a slightly better location for spacing.

<p><i>Commissioner Schatmeier</i> moved to recommend to City staff that bus stops be installed at Otis Drive and Pond Isle. <i>Commissioner Krueger</i> seconded. Motion passed, 5-1 (<i>Commissioner Ratto</i> opposed).</p>

Chair Knox White apologized for the late mailings for this item. He added that the item had been on their agenda for the last month, and that they did not personally do the mailing. He added that the agenda was not officially set until the Wednesday prior to the meeting. He believed that the notices went out once the agenda was officially set. He will

ask staff to notify the neighbors as early as possible so they will have time to prepare for meetings.

Chair Knox White wished to stand by his statement at the previous meeting regarding the stop in front of the Otis School. They had requested that the Police Department return with an actual safety consideration for the stop in that location, and they have submitted a letter indicating that there was no safety consideration for the buses and the school children. The police felt that the concerns were more due to parents double-parking, as well as other behaviors that have since been mitigated. *Chair Knox White* noted that he had voted last time to remove the stop for other reasons, and did not want to sound callous with respect to safety. As the father of a six-year-old and an eight-year-old, he emphasized that safety was very important to him.

Chair Knox White wished to clarify that a marked crosswalk would be installed at Pond Isle; two unmarked crosswalks already exist at that location.

Commissioner Ratto stepped out of the Chambers.

7A. PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON TMP SCHEDULE DUE TO RECENT CHANGES IN THE PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Staff Khan presented the staff report, and recounted the outcome of the October 17, 2006, City Council meeting, wherein it authorized the presentation of a General Plan Amendment to analyze the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) policies proposed by the Transportation Commission. He noted that some changes must be made in the TMP schedule, but staff's goal at this time was to ensure the changes would be minimal, and that delays would be reduced as much as possible. The report also mentioned that two specific sub-plan schedules would be provided; there were currently staffing concerns and they wanted to make sure the schedule presented could be realistically followed. He noted that when the City Council approved the General Plan Amendment (GPA) process last month, staff also presented a tentative schedule that would require returning to City Council in September 2007 to present the GPA for City Council's consideration.

Staff Khan noted that with respect to the pedestrian plan, some specific related policies had already been proposed by the subcommittee. Staff would consider including the specific sub plan policies in the GPA process in order to address and analyze the policies expeditiously. Once the GPA was completed, staff intended to move forward with other sub plan development processes, including specific policies for other future sub plans. He noted that Attachment 2 presented a revised pedestrian plan timeline, which demonstrated it the pedestrian sub plan to City Council in March, 2008. By December 2007, staff will be able to have initial document of the plan. Staff has also worked with the Planning Department on this plan, and they supported having the plan move forward; they believe the December 2007 deadline is realistic.

Chair Knox White noted that the Transportation Commission had discussed bringing back the policies as part of the environmental review for the pedestrian plan, but he did not

recall voting on the supplemental pedestrian policies. He inquired whether that would occur at the December 2006 meeting.

Staff Bergman stated that the minutes stated that the Commission had previously approved the policies brought back by the subcommittee.

Chair Knox White agreed with *Staff Khan* that all three schedules were doable, and was pleased to have staff's commitment to ensure they were completed.

Commissioner Ratto returned to the dais.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Staff Khan distributed the schedule for the 2007 meetings to the Commissioners, and noted that the meetings would generally be on the fourth Wednesday of each month, with the exception of November and December, when they would be held on the third Wednesday to accommodate the holidays.

Staff Khan noted that the mandatory ethics training must be completed by the end of December. Staff would email the information to the Commissioners, and added that the training could also be completed via Internet.

Chair Knox White requested that the City's website be updated to reflect the meeting schedule changes in November and December.

Commissioner Krueger requested that staff communicate with the Planning and Building Department regarding the plans for bus stops at Whitehall and Willow; he believed they were outside the South Shore property. He did not want them to fall through the cracks, and he did not believe they would qualify as accessible, especially the westbound stops.

Commissioner Krueger inquired whether staff had an update on bus stop that had not been red-curbed, like the ones on Encinal, Versailles and Mound. He added that the stop nearest to Broadway on Fernside was not red-curbed. He had requested a staff report before.

Staff Bergman advised that report would be agendized for the December meeting.

Commissioner Schatmeier inquired whether there were any plans in the immediate future for the Interagency Liaison Committee to hold a meeting. He repeated his request that the Transportation Commission be noticed with sufficient time to react to the dates.

Staff Bergman advised that staff had been holding some discussions with AC Transit about the issues, but a date and agenda had not been set up. He advised that he would notify the Commissioners when that information was available.

Commissioner Krueger wished to address the northbound bus stop on Park Street at Buena Vista (near Cavanaugh Motors).

Commissioner Ratto noted that he had already discussed that stop with Matt Naclerio, and that the parking space for the Marketplace had been dealt with. He understood that there would be a memo officially requesting that the northbound bus stop be moved to the far side.

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 p.m.