

Transportation Commission Minutes

Wednesday, June 27 2012

Commissioner Kathy Moehring called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:04 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Roll was called and the following was recorded:

Members Present:

Kathy Moehring
Thomas G. Bertken
Michele Bellows
Christopher Miley

Members Absent:

Jesus Vargas
Sandy Wong

Staff Present:

Obaid Khan, Supervising Civil Engineer
Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator

Staff Khan asked the Commission to move item 4E up, because there was a consultant that would speak on behalf of the project.

Staff Payne stated that Sergeant Ron Simmons would have to be contacted so that he could join the meeting earlier than scheduled.

Commissioner Moehring replied staff should contact Sergeant Ron Simmons and as soon as he joins the meeting, the commission would move the item forward.

2. Minutes

Approval of Minutes - May 23, 2012

<p><i>Commissioner Miley</i> made a motion to approve the May 23, 2012 minutes. The motion was approved 3-0; 1 abstention.</p>
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3. Oral Communications – Non-Agendized Items / Public Comments

None.

4. New Business

4A. Transportation Commission Bylaws – Order of Business Revisions

Staff Payne presented the staff report.

Commissioner Miley replied the presentation was helpful and the suggestions would allow the meetings to precede a little smoother. He asked if one speaker could speak at both public comment periods.

Staff Payne replied yes and that each person has a three-minute time limit at each of the public comment periods.

Staff Khan explained that the intention was to allow the public to comment and that is why it is agendaized twice.

Commissioner Moehring also explained that public comment was originally scheduled at the end of the meeting. So, the public had to sit through the entire meeting, which at times could be lengthy. So, as a courtesy to the public, the agenda included two comment periods.

Commissioner Bertken asked if the Commission would have the written copies of all the information in the consent calendar. He was concerned that a percentage of the public would not be able to obtain the reports online. So, he asked staff if there is a way for the public to have copies of the reports.

Staff Payne said that the standard procedure is to have all hard copies available at the City Clerk's office and available at the City libraries.

Commissioner Bertken asked if it would be onerous to have a few copies at the meetings.

Staff Payne said that per the Sunshine Ordinance staff is required to supply one copy at the meeting. So, they do have materials present.

Commissioner Bertken replied that people coming to the meeting and viewing the consent calendar might want to see the reports that coincide to the subject of the consent calendar. Therefore, there should be two or three copies at the meetings. He also explained to staff that, at some point, staff should announce that the documents are available on the web.

Staff Payne said the city's website link is available on the second page of the Transportation Commission's meeting agenda.

<p><i>Commissioner Bertken</i> made a motion that the Commission should adopt the new bylaws. <i>Commissioner Bellows</i> seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.</p>

4B. Quarterly Report on Activities Related to Transportation Policies and Plans

Staff Payne presented the staff report.

Staff Khan presented the Access Plan for Alameda Point, the Miller Sweeney Bridge Replacement project, and current and upcoming traffic calming projects.

Commissioner Bellows wanted clarification on the Island Drive/Robert Davey Jr. Drive traffic-calming project could use a pedestrian scramble where everyone would stop and let everyone off might help during the morning hours.

Staff Khan replied that the scramble phases are viable; however, they impact the overall traffic signal operation. Additionally, the traffic volumes at Island Drive, Robert Davey Jr. and Packet Landing would greatly impact pedestrian activity. Also, when a scramble is installed, they would have to change the signal heads and that is quite expensive.

Commissioner Moehring announced that item 4E. would be presented next.

4E. Webster Street Intelligent Transportation Systems/Smart Corridors Project and Community Meeting Update

Staff Khan presented the staff report.

Commissioner Miley asked Staff Khan if he could describe in more detail Phase II of the project and if it would include cameras in the tubes.

Staff Khan responded that Phase II would continue the communication connection through the Webster and Posey Tubes. The City contacted Caltrans in regards to the cameras in the Webster and Posey Tubes. Caltrans explained that the cameras were for Homeland Security and could not be used for other purposes. Staff is trying to see if there is enough space to hang the camera in the Posey and Webster Tubes. Alameda staff also is working with Oakland staff to look at a Smart Corridor on Harrison Street. Staff is also interested in looking into the connection between 6th Street and Jackson Street on ramp.

Joy Bhattacharya, PE, PTOE, TJKM Transportation Consultants, worked on the signal coordination portion and presented a visual simulation of the intersection.

Staff Khan responded that they have increased the crossing times for pedestrians. The current system uses a 4 feet per second walking speed for pedestrians, which is faster for older pedestrians. The new standard is 3.5 feet per second.

Commissioner Moehring stated that the simulation was useful and she opened the floor to public comment.

Jim Strehlow, Alameda resident and local employee, commended the City for receiving outside funds for the project. The public should be told what the cost is for installing and repairing a camera system and should compare it to the costs for bicycle loop detectors. Ultimately, the public should know the cost of the camera systems before deploying this throughout the City or the department should only install the system at Webster Street. He felt that instead of spending money on electric signs that display traffic information, the City should build a public website or iPhone application so the public can see the intersections and traffic conditions. He wanted to thank *Joy Bhattacharya* for producing the simulation because the simulation is a 2012 solution, which community members need.

Commissioner Moehring stated that Webster Street has been looking for something like this for a long time. She thought about the community feedback that she received and one of their concerns was that the traffic coordination would reduce people visiting the nearby shops. She wholeheartedly disagreed with that concern and she believes that it will improve the streetscape and increase shopping activity. She stated that as soon as Constitution Way was built, 80 percent of the traffic was diverted from Webster Street to Constitution Way. Additionally, she hopes that the coordination system will bring some of the traffic back at a nice pace. Furthermore, she felt the signal coordination prevents speeding.

Sergeant Simmons, Alameda Police, agreed and said that the coordinated traffic light system would prevent drivers from speeding to beat the light changes. If drivers had an understanding of the flow of lights during the commute hours, they would stop and visit the stores and then continue through the corridor.

Commissioner Moehring mentioned that the Fire Department station is right off of Webster Street on Pacific Avenue. The traffic signal would make life easier for the department, and would allow trucks to more easily travel through the intersection.

Rick Zombeck, Division Chief for Alameda Fire Department, supported the solution and felt the system is good for the community. His station responds up and down the Webster Street corridor often and Station # 2 is the second busiest station in the City.

Commissioner Moehring stated that it is a very busy pedestrian corner. She questioned whether the electric signs going up could be used for other purposes such as when the City conducts the festival on Webster Street and there are street closures.

Staff Khan replied he would work with the West Alameda Business Association; however, the City cannot use the signs for advertisements. The signs could be used when the City supports a fair or festival. He would take up the suggestion to the City Manager for approval.

Commissioner Miley stated that he is happy to see the corridor modernized. He believes that the system would provide the City with a lot of flexibility in terms of managing the flow of traffic. He asked staff to explain the project's relationship to the Broadway/Jackson project. As a commuter through that area, he felt the electric signs would be helpful, especially when the tube gets backed up. He wanted to know how the City planned to work with Oakland to further relieve the congestion.

Staff Khan stated that the Commission's action would be to either accept or reject staff's recommendation to move the project towards the construction phase and then to vote to prioritize the following two items: Central Avenue and Webster Street crosswalk and Pacific Avenue and Webster Street traffic signal.

Commissioner Miley made a motion to accept staff's recommendation to allow the project to move to the construction phase and to prioritize the Central Avenue and Webster Street crosswalk and the Pacific Avenue and Webster Street traffic signal. *Commissioner Bellows* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

4C. Proposed Shoreline Drive/Westline Drive Bike Lane Project Community Meeting Update

Staff Payne presented the staff report.

Commissioner Bertken asked *Staff Payne* if the Commission saw the grant application to Caltrans.

Staff Payne replied that she could provide it to him if he was interested.

Commissioner Bertken replied that since it was the basis of where they received the money, it would be interesting to see it.

Staff Payne replied that one of the seven variations is the Caltrans grant application placeholder and the Commission will see the variation tomorrow night along with the other six project concept ideas.

Commissioner Moehring asked whether staff had a breakdown of attendees' residences and what were the pros and cons. She wanted to see a break down of people who live right along Shoreline Drive.

Staff Payne replied that staff did not ask attendees where they lived, but she knew how staff reached out to attendees. They conducted an outreach encompassing a 300-foot radius around Westline and Shoreline Drives. Thus, an estimated 15,000 people were informed and that included the condominium and apartment units. Also, Bike Alameda reached out to bicyclists, and the Public Works Department issued a press release and placed barricades in the neighborhood.

Commissioner Moehring said that staff did a great job reaching out to residents and she was curious about the statistics of the attendees because in addition to all users of the road giving input the residents also should participate.

Staff Payne replied that they heard more from the neighborhood and bicyclists more than from residents throughout the entire City of Alameda. She also mentioned that the document displays broad range of opinions.

Commissioner Miley asked if staff conducted outreach through the Alameda Unified School District.

Staff Payne replied that she tried to get the meeting included in the Lum School newsletter, but they did not publish it. Ultimately, she emailed the information to the Lum and Wood school administration and the PTAs, but she does not know how they distributed the news.

4D. Bicycle Facility Design Guidelines

Staff Khan presented the staff report.

Commissioner Moehring stated that she and *Commissioner Bellows* noticed on page 25 that staff might want to edit the pictures.

Staff Khan replied staff would correct the issue.

Commissioner Moehring replied staff did a terrific job incorporating the comments and working with the community including Bike Alameda and all concerned parties.

Commissioner Miley believed that staff conducted an extensive outreach effort, which is wonderful.

Commissioner Bertken asked about the issue regarding right turn lanes. He referred to the diagram on page 23 and it showed the cyclists moving straight through and there is a crossover on the right turn traffic, which looks very abrupt.

Staff Khan replied that on page 23, Figure 10, it was a standard treatment for all bicycle lanes when they get to the intersection.

Commissioner Bertken stated that he was not arguing that point, but there were no dimensions on the diagram and it appeared that there was just one lane of traffic coming in. Thus, the diagram was a bit ambiguous.

Staff Khan replied the diagram is a bit misleading and when staff looked at standards around 200 feet in advance. They dropped the bike lane and included the dashed line to guide the motorists and bicyclists.

<p><i>Commissioner Miley</i> made a motion to accept the draft guidelines as presented and request that they be presented to the Planning Board. <i>Commissioner Bertken</i> seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.</p>
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4F. I-880/Broadway/Jackson Multimodal Transportation and Circulation Improvements for Alameda Point, Oakland, Chinatown, Downtown Oakland and Jack London Square

Staff Khan presented the staff report.

Commissioner Miley asked about the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) portion and whether staff considered any other stop locations. He also questioned whether conceptual stop plans were being developed and would staff look at specifics in the next coming months.

Staff Khan stated that is exactly right. Their rule of thumb is a bus stop located within every one-half mile. This is just a planning document for now and nothing will continue until staff works with the community and local transit operators.

Commissioner Moehring opened the floor to public comment.

Jim Strehlow stated that there are many laudable designs of the project, but the project fails the goal of the deficiency plan. The plan would improve the traffic at Harrison Street and 6th Street. He referred to slide 6 or page 11 in the original documents. He viewed Webster Street and 6th Street as a new choke point with more vehicles entering per hour. The shorter off ramp was a convenience not a necessity for Alameda residents at the expense of the Chinatown neighborhood and hits the intersection of Webster Street and 6th Street. He then referred to slide 9 and explained, as designed, 6th Street is a walkway to nowhere given there are no businesses and traffic will increase. He suggested the following modifications: 1) close Webster Street from going into Alameda and route traffic around Chinatown, 2) change the bus routes to go down 6th Street instead of 7th Street, 3) staff should consider a long-term, ten year plan for the tube that would shift vehicles away from the off ramp at Broadway and 5th Street and turn the area as a cyclist and pedestrian way, and 4) when referring to slide 4 on the Alameda side, staff should remove the dedicated right-hand bus lane because vehicles could no longer make right-hand turns. He suggested keeping the right-hand turn lane because there will be traffic that would want to make a right turn onto Webster Street, so the City should allow that lane to be shared.

Commissioner Miley stated that since it is a conceptual design for future BRT stops, he would like staff to consider a stop at 14th Street and Harrison Street looking at the employment centers in downtown Oakland. When mentioning the Octavia Boulevard corridor of San Francisco, it would be good for staff to include pictures of that segment. Regarding I-880, he felt the area is a dark passage, and it is not a friendly location. Thus, he suggested that the city of Oakland consider some type of art and light installation or CBS might be interested in installing billboards with backlighting. Furthermore, he asked what are the city of Oakland's efforts for the project and especially what are they doing to create consensus around the project.

Staff Khan replied that the project is a joint effort so both cities are working together. At this moment, Alameda is looking towards starting a community outreach effort in the Chinatown neighborhood. Given that the City is the sponsor, but most of the land is located in Oakland, staff has looked at developing the scope of work to work cooperatively with Oakland.

Commissioner Miley replied that he understood that idea, but his concern was that Alameda would look like the only ones pushing for this project. He felt that many of the City's development projects coming down the pipeline are going to create more traffic coming in and out of the City. The City of Oakland also has development plans close to the Chinatown neighborhood and Alameda.

Staff Khan replied that Alameda officials want the City to work in coordination with the city of Oakland.

Commissioner Miley replied he agreed with *Mr. Strehlow* and staff should look into the suggestions that he brought up. He felt the outreach plan sounds like a similar process to Shoreline Drive and there should be a process for presenting concepts and receiving community input.

Staff Khan replied that both cities have to remind themselves that the region has recognized the area as an important project. Whenever staff presents to the community, they have to take a step back to let them know that revitalization would occur as more funding comes in and if they do not reach consensus then the funding would go to other parts of the County.

Commissioner Bellows stated that she worked on the project some time ago, and she drives the Market Street and Octavia Blvd. intersection frequently. She suggested that staff should include traffic counts when speaking about the Market Street and Octavia Blvd. intersection. She also questioned staff's backup plan if they do not receive Measure B funds and if staff be able to execute an environmental review.

Staff Khan replied that the project is a Tier 1 project regardless if Measure B passes. He explained that not having the Measure B authorized in November may slow the project implementation, but the project is prioritized in the Countywide Transportation Plan and would get the regional support to move forward. Regarding the environmental document, he does not want to jump to that because there was a lot of community concern about the Alameda County Transportation Commission jumping too fast to the environmental document.

Commissioner Bertken asked about the arrangement of the roadway between Harrison Street and Broadway. He stated that two blocks of traffic from the freeway to Broadway weave against the traffic and within the two ramps on the opposite side of the street attempting to get over to Broadway.

Staff Khan replied that staff has looked into it. He explained that there would be a two-phased signal for Webster Street going towards Alameda and as the ramp touches down. There would be a left-turn lane going towards Alameda. He further explained that the lane heading towards Oakland is located on the right side and there would not be a huge weave there, but there is some friction.

Commissioner Moehring explained that she was happy to see that all parties are highly motivated to do something. She mentioned that the letter received by the Commission from the Chinatown neighborhood a several months ago did not include solutions.

Commissioner Bellows replied the letter was written some time ago and staff has made some progress with the objections of the letter.

Staff Khan replied the concerns from the Chinatown community were directed towards the project study report (PSR), and the current concepts came after the PSR. He further explained that the staff for the city of Oakland was aware of the concerns.

5. Staff Communications

The League of American Bicyclists awarded the City of Alameda with a bronze award.

There is a new ferry service between South San Francisco and Alameda/Oakland.

The service began Monday, June 4th and it is a 40-50 minute ride. The ferry system runs Monday through Friday with three morning departures and two evening departures and fits 149 passengers and over 30 bicycles. Additionally, there are some shuttles at the South San Francisco end.

Complete Street Policy requirement for the City.

Staff will bring information about the Complete Street Policy to the Commission in September. The policy requirement is coming from the following two different sources: 1) the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) recently approved the One Bay Area Grant and the funding is coming from federal sources. Every jurisdiction should have a complete street policy adopted by early 2013, and 2) the Alameda County Transportation Commission has a Complete Street requirement in their funding agreement that the City signed and must adhere to it by June 30, 2013 to receive Measure B funds. One advantage for the City is that they recently updated their Transportation Element in the General Plan.

Future Meeting Agenda Items:

Regular scheduled meeting Wednesday, July 25th

- Election of the Transportation Commission Chair and Vice Chair
- Franklin School mid-block crossing proposal
- Traffic Plan during construction of I-880 between 29th Avenue and 23rd Avenue
- Draft Alameda Point Transit Access Plan
- Proposed Neptune Park Path Conceptual Layout
- An update on the Draft Prioritized Transportation Project List

Regular scheduled meeting Wednesday, September 26th

- Quarterly Report
- An update on the Shoreline Drive proposed bike lane project
- An update on the accessible pedestrian signals grant

- Complete Street Policy

Commissioner Moehring mentioned that the City Carshare parking space at Webster Street and Santa Clara Avenue was a success and staff is looking to create an additional carshare space.

Staff Payne replied that staff is coordinating the efforts now.

Commissioner Miley asked would the consent calendar take affect at the July meeting.

Staff Payne replied yes.

Commissioner Moehring stated that staff and her fellow commissioners have been wonderful to work with and have done an excellent job.

6. Announcements/ Public Comments

None.

7. Adjournment

<p><i>Commissioner Miley</i> made a motion to adjourn in honor of Chair <i>Moehring</i> and for her distinguished service for the City of Alameda.</p>
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9:40 pm