

# Transportation Commission

November 28, 2012

Item 4A

Action

## Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes: Wednesday, September 26, 2012

*Commissioner Jesus Vargas* called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:04 p.m.

### 1. Roll Call

Roll was called and the following was recorded:

Members Present:

Thomas G. Bertken

Christopher Miley (Vice Chair)

Sandy Wong

Jesus Vargas (Chair)

Eric Schatmeier

Members Absent:

Michele Bellows

Staff Present:

Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator

### 2. Agenda Changes

*Commissioner Vargas* made a motion to add an item before item 8 “Adjournment” that discussed the next meeting.

<i>Commissioner Bertken</i> seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.
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### 3. Announcements / Public Comments

*Matthew Fitzgerald* announced that Alameda Bicycle opened for operation in 1969 and his family took over in 1987. His family business is a good small business, which contributes to the community. If anyone has any questions, please contact him at Alameda Bicycle Sales, Repairs, and Rentals at (510) 522-0070 or pay a visit at 1522 Park Street Alameda, CA.

*Commissioner Vargas* acknowledged that Alameda Transportation Engineer Obaid Khan was departing and he wanted to thank him for his services.

## **4. Consent Calendar**

### **4.A. Draft Meeting Minutes – July 25, 2012**

*Commissioner Vargas* asked the Commission to make comments to the July 25 minutes.

*Commissioner Bertken* made a motion to approve the July 25, 2012 minutes. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-0.

### **4.B. 2012 Transportation Expenditure Plan Fact Sheet**

*Commissioner Vargas* reviewed the 2012 Transportation Expenditure Plan Fact Sheet. He acknowledged that it would be a good thing to vote the right way for Measure B1.

## **5. New Business**

### **5.A. Traffic Control and Contingency Plan during Construction for I-880/29th Ave./23rd Ave. Interchange Improvement Project in Oakland**

*Virendra Patel* from Alameda Public Works introduced *Garrett Gritz* from RBF Consulting who presented an update on the project.

*Commissioner Vargas* opened the floor to public comment.

*Jim Strehlow*, Alameda resident and local employee, explained that he was okay with everything else about the project except at 23rd Avenue where the lanes should be four or five lanes. His main concern was that the project is under funded and it is not the right size for the needs of Alameda. He said the entirety of the project would increase greenhouse gas emissions since there are three lanes instead of four lanes on 23rd Avenue. The three lanes would cause backups and, according to the project, there would be an additional 10 percent of traffic in Alameda after the project is completed. This project, therefore, should not proceed and Alameda should file suit to require that the project be properly funded.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* asked about phase II of the project. He wanted to find out about the impact on transit service from Park Street to the Fruitvale BART Station, especially since the project would close the corridor for up to a year. He asked Mr. Gritz if they discussed contingency plans regarding the routing with AC Transit.

*Garrett Gritz* explained that they had conversations with AC Transit and the agency has commented throughout the entire process. They have the stage construction plans and are in the process of developing additional actions that the consultants can do. He mentioned that the key piece to the project is to hire the contractor and then to complete their construction schedule. Once the schedule is known, they can give more details.

*Commissioner Bertken* felt that the whole program for taking care of traffic during construction

is well thought out and impressive.

*Commissioner Wong* asked about the triangle portion near the 7-11 convenience store and Nikko's Cafe where the signal light would be. She wanted to know how the traffic signal would impact vehicles driving over the Park Street Bridge and specifically traffic feeding into 29th Avenue to the roundabout and around the Park Street Bridge.

*Garrett Gritz* said the existing conditions at Ford Street is a stop sign. This movement would not allow vehicles to turn left here. Also, under the proposal, this intersection would be signalized and would have crosswalks and pedestrian signal phases. Moreover, there would be durations where vehicles coming off the bridge would want to turn left that currently have a free movement that would get a red light and stop. He noted that the most challenging part of the intersection is the pedestrian movement, which ends up taking up a lot of time. To combat the problem, they would implement a refuge area, which would allow the green time to be reduced for the pedestrian crossing.

*Commissioner Wong* asked about the type of signals proposed on 29th Avenue. She mentioned that in terms of the bridge being up and potential traffic exiting on 29th Avenue versus 23rd Avenue what is the potential backup and study of the back up.

*Garrett Gritz* explained that all of the signals on the 23rd Avenue corridor are interconnected and equipped with wiring to allow AC Transit to be able to have the capability when the technology comes to trigger the lights with signal actuation. He mentioned that AC Transit does not have enough resources to equip all AC Transit buses with that technology and AC Transit is in the process of eventually receiving green prioritization. Additionally, they are coordinating with Alameda Public Works on the rail project, which was one of the mitigation measures. They also plan to have communications under the Estuary between Alameda and Oakland.

*Commissioner Wong* asked about the Ford Street and 29th Avenue intersection and what studies were conducted on Alameda's side. She inquired about the study because occasionally when the bridge goes down and depending on the time of day vehicles driving over the Park Street Bridge could wait up to 15 minutes because it is backed up to Central Avenue. She wondered whether the signal timing could be extended on the Alameda side so vehicles could get on the on-ramp SB I-880 without having to wait.

*Garrett Gritz* replied that the signalization at Ford Street and 29th Avenue would not impact that condition because when the bridge goes up the vehicles cannot come through there. So, the intersection would not be impacted. Thus, it is more about when the bridge comes down and when vehicles are approaching I-880.

*Commissioner Wong* replied that she was referring to after the bridge goes down and the potential traffic impact.

*Garrett Gritz* explained that when the intersection becomes signalized there will be an increase delay regardless of whether bridge is up or not.

*Commissioner Wong* asked when they remove the 29th Avenue overcrossing, would southbound I-880 be accessible.

*Garrett Gritz* explained that during the day it would be open. However, there would be some nighttime closures and they would realign the on-ramp to accommodate the construction and that would happen late at night. Furthermore, there would be a period of time that they would close the freeway in both directions, but not at the same time.

*Commissioner Vargas* asked *Garrett Gritz* whether the County of Alameda was included in the coordination list and whether he could talk about any coordination with potential bridge improvements that might happen during the construction to alleviate any concerns that *Commissioner Wong* had.

*Garrett Gritz* explained the County does have a retrofit project schedule during the four-year construction period and they have participated in the coordination meetings. The seismic project along with several others are all part of the traffic management plan.

*Commissioner Vargas* referred to *Jim Strehlow's comments* about the funding and whether that impacted the side of the structures and if there were any comments on the Environmental Impact Report on air quality impacts in terms of the traffic perspective in Alameda.

*Garrett Gritz* explained that the environmental document was circulated in early 2010 and they had a meeting at the Alameda Transportation Commission to let the public know that the document was circulating. Regarding the greenhouse gas emissions, the project is an operational and safety improvement project. Thus, the implementation of the project would decrease the travel time for northbound I-880, which would increase travel flow for northbound I-880 and decrease greenhouse gas emissions. He exclaimed that all funding is in place (a total of \$75 million) because they maintained a specific project schedule and the project is schedule driven. He has personally been working on the project for several years and he has let the public know about what they are trying to accomplish.

*Commissioner Vargas* asked Alameda staff if they had a public awareness campaign in place to promote awareness of the construction changes and various detours.

*Garrett Gritz* replied *Staff Khan* was instrumental in implementing the contingency plan. The contingency plan is set up where there is a committee that meets at least once a month and the members include a representative from the City of Alameda, City of Oakland, and Caltrans Traffic Management Plan Coordinator. Caltrans administers the contract and *Staff Khan* advocated a mechanism to where everyone can communicate. So, any member of the committee would be able to call a meeting whether in person or by conference call and the meeting would have to happen within 12 hours. Additionally, the Caltrans Public Information Officer is required to attend public meetings and would answer questions from the community directed towards Caltrans. Ultimately, *Staff Khan* accomplished a lot in order to make sure communication was there and the document was circulated amongst the agencies (Alameda, Caltrans and Oakland).

*Commissioner Bertken* felt *Commissioner Vargas* was talking about putting together a public

information program, meaning a detailed program about what is going to happen with the project. This program would include how project representatives reach out to the community and media so that the public is up to speed on the project.

*Garrett Gritz* said he would follow up and give more specifics in the near future. He also mentioned that they have a public information meeting scheduled this year in Oakland and Alameda and they have a public information meeting scheduled for February 2013 just as the project goes out to bid to keep the public informed.

*Commissioner Bertken* made a motion to approve staff recommendations in addition to a public information program.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* asked that the Commission include public transit in the contingency plan.

*Commissioner Bertken* re-amended the motion to include public transit correspondence with AC Transit in the Commission's comments in addition to a public information program.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 4-0.

### ***5.B. AC Transit Line OX – Reconsider Opening to Local Riders***

*Staff Payne* presented a summary of the report and recognized AC Transit staff – Linda Morris and Wil Buller – at the meeting.

*Linda Morris*, AC Transit Transportation Planner, explained that AC Transit could analyze the lines and implement a potential change in spring 2013 because they typically conduct service changes quarterly. AC Transit staff is looking at Line 631 along with Line OX, to replicate the Line OX on Bay Farm so that the Line 631 timing works better for the students. The agency analyzed extending the last Line 631 trip, but making that four-minute connection typically will not work. She emphasized that they want to re-route Line 631 to accommodate all the students and reinstate the local service on Line OX while monitoring the service to avoid additional issues.

*Commissioner Vargas* opened the floor to public comment.

*Jon Spangler*, Alameda resident and a League of American Cycling Instructor, explained that he took the AC Transit Line 51A for meetings recently and he has taken a lot of Transbay rides. So, based on that he felt the City is less well served out of economic necessity than what was offered over 15 years ago. He felt one of the reasons was the capacity of the system as it exists is not in line with current demand. Ultimately, he wanted AC Transit to look at increasing the capacity of the system rather than shifting a bit of a bus line here and there. Additionally, once the service change is implemented next spring, he hopes local riders would be allowed to board Line OX as long as the local service is adequate. He also encouraged members of the Commission along with

AC Transit and Alameda City Council to talk about increasing transit service to the community.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* said that he lives on Bay Farm Island and was a regular user of Line OX before the policy change. He mentioned that Line 21 was the underlying local service and used to serve Bay Farm from Park Street every 15 minutes. However, a couple of years ago, AC Transit cut the frequency in half. Yet, the Line OX service made the service cut more palatable because it was available during peak periods. AC Transit made a 75 percent service cut without input from the public – it is a significant service cut. Moreover, there are around 23 frequencies of Line OX buses in combination of morning and afternoon and when referring to the memo presented by staff, there were 41 student passengers and 12 local passengers. Ultimately, the 41 student passengers could be spread amongst those 23 buses, but what AC Transit is probably telling us is that they are not spread out and are concentrated amongst a few buses in the morning. Thus, it seemed to be a morning issue. He explained that one solution would be that AC Transit rescind the policy for the afternoon and evening buses and possibly create an interim step to restore local service in the evening. This step would require only one change to the Clipper card in the evening after leaving the Transbay Terminal in San Francisco. The result would lead to multiple uses for the line that potentially would attract additional riders. The riders boarding in downtown Alameda towards Bay Farm in the afternoon/evening would be filling vacated seats from Transbay riders. He advised that the Commission envision a complete picture, which includes some of these possibilities beyond what the staff has recommended.

*Commissioner Wong* asked whether the first Line 631 was available to students at 6:52 am. She explained that originally, there were a lot of students boarding Line OX and she wanted to know which Line OX bus they were boarding since there were 7 am classes scheduled.

*Commissioner Vargas* mentioned that AC Transit staff should review the school's class schedule to see what matches well for bus service. Furthermore, he mentioned that *Commissioner Schatmeier's* concerns regarding the frequency of Line 21 and evening policy modifications for Line OX were worth noting.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* stated his past conversations with Cory Lavigne concluded that restoring the local Line OX policy in the afternoon would be feasible. He asked Mr. Lavigne if the policy restoration would have to wait until the next driver sign up and Mr. Lavigne stated that this change would not require coordination with the quarterly service changes. Since he could not confirm or deny that conclusion, he asked AC Transit staff to relay the message to Mr. Lavigne's successor.

*Linda Morris* replied that originally the agency wanted to wait for the service change because it is a big change and the agency wants to ensure that passengers are notified. Regarding *Commissioner Schatmeier's* conversation with Mr. Lavigne, she would have to speak with the operations department and Robert del Rosario, Mr. Lavigne's successor.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* assumed that Mr. Lavigne was uncomfortable with doing something different in the morning than in the afternoon because it might be confusing to the public or drivers. However, he seemed receptive because of the special nature of the case. Ultimately, *Commissioner Schatmeier* did not want to wait until the spring to make the changes.

*Commissioner Bertken* asked for more detail from *Commissioner Wong* regarding students attending 7 am classes. He then asked AC Transit staff if an additional Line 631 bus would be needed to accommodate students attending 7 am classes and whether that was practical.

*Commissioner Wong* replied a 7 am class depends on the year in terms of the number of classes. Currently, there are at least three 7 am classes of 35 students and not all of the students take the bus, but there are quite a few that do.

*Linda Morris* replied that the passenger loads analyzed were not around 7 am, but the problem was centered on students arriving before the 8 am bell time.

*Commissioner Bertken* said by looking at the provision to Line 631 schedule, arriving to school by 7 am would not be an issue.

*Linda Morris* replied that they would have to look into that, but it may consist of additional service.

*Commissioner Bertken* said potentially a number of riders would need to arrive by 7 am.

*Linda Morris* explained her point was that AC Transit's analysis found that there was an overflow on Line OX around 7:30 am in order to reach school by 8 am.

*Commissioner Bertken* said that looking at the situation now, and since there are a number of classes that begin at 7 am would it be possible for AC Transit to let students onto Line OX before 7:30 am.

*Linda Morris* explained that since they are looking at the entire line as a policy decision, she would take the Commission's comments back to the agency and review and implement the final decisions in the spring. Ultimately, they would not modify the policy on a trip-by-trip level.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* asked staff what are the next steps once the Commission makes a recommendation.

*Staff Payne* replied the Commission's recommendation would be directed to AC Transit staff to see how they would like to move forward.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* stated the goal of his motion was to recognize the growth potential of ridership and to pursue a policy that meets everyone's needs.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* made a motion to include an interim period that would be worked out by staff to explore restoring local service on the evening Line OX buses as quickly as possible in addition to staff recommendations. *Commissioner Miley* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

### ***5.C. AC Transit's Performance Initiative Grant – Line 51A***

*Staff Payne* presented a summary of the report and asked AC Transit staff to make further comments.

*Commissioner Vargas* asked AC Transit staff to discuss their role in the project.

*Wil Buller* explained that the way the entire project would be rolled out was that AC Transit would oversee the development and the preliminary engineering and oversight through design. Upon completion of design and Memorandum Of Understanding agreements, the cities (Berkeley, Oakland and Alameda) would receive portions of the grant to complete construction based upon the design plans. AC Transit's project manager would coordinate with each city with construction management oversight, but it would be up to the cities to complete the construction, procure a contractor and close out the improvements. Construction is expected in late 2014.

### ***5.D. Quarterly Report on Activities Related to Transportation Policies and Plans***

*Staff Payne* presented the following updates regarding the quarterly report on activities related to transportation policies and plans:

- Estuary Crossing Shuttle – The first year had an average of 150 boardings per day and the beginning of the second year is averaging 220 boarding per day. The operation is now running with a low-floor bus.
- Shoreline Drive/Westline Drive Bikeway Project – The third community meeting will take place on Thursday, October 18 and the meeting's results would be presented to the Transportation Commission for action on Wednesday, November 28.
- Park Street Streetscape Project – The project has been completed, and they have installed 6 additional bike racks, resulting in 30 total bicycle racks from Central Avenue to San Jose Avenue.
- TSM/TDM Plan – Staff is completing the Environmental Review.
- Accessible pedestrian signals under the Pedestrian Plan – Staff received a new Freedom Grant and there will be a public hearing for that on Monday, October 29 in combination with the Commission on Disability Issues.
- Safe Routes to School – Staff won the grant to improve the midblock crossing on Grand Street at Wood School and more details will be provided later.
- New Park Street Pedestrian Safety Improvement Program will be presented at the next meeting.
- Countywide Transportation Projects will be reported after the November 2012 election.



- Traffic Calming Projects regarding the Fernside Boulevard Project – Staff scheduled a meeting at Edison School on Thursday, September 27th at 7pm for the Fernside traffic calming.
- At the last meeting, the Commission approved a midblock crossing between Franklin School and Franklin Park, and staff installed the crossing with help from Alameda Unified School District staff.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* mentioned that he met with *Staff Payne* about the Shore Line project to talk about the bus stop treatments along Shore Line Drive. He wanted *Staff Payne* to update the Commission on any discussions between her and AC Transit staff.

*Staff Payne* replied that they do have a recommended plan along Shore Line and Westline Drives because transit service exists between Grand Street and Willow Street. She has discussed with AC Transit to eliminate the midblock stop eastbound towards Broadway because a safety issue exists. AC Transit is fine to move the westbound bus stop on Shore Line Drive at Kitty Hawk Road from the near side to the far side. Staff is recommending to not doing anything with the westbound bus stop on Willow Street at Shore Line Drive. Additionally, there were some challenges with distances between stops because they are taking away the eastbound midblock stop, but since a safety issue exists, that would be the best way to proceed.

*Commissioner Miley* mentioned that since they were talking about safety issues with AC Transit, he noticed that on Otis Drive at High Street, the bus has a noticeably tight turn and cars have to reverse to get out of the way of the bus. So, he wanted to know if the City has looked into that issue.

*Staff Payne* explained that she has noticed that herself and she would take that up with AC Transit staff. Additionally, she explained that the Shore Line/Westline Drive update would be brought before the public on October 18 and brought to the Transportation Commission meeting in November.

## **6. Staff Communications**

## **7. Announcements/ Public Comments**

*Jon Spangler* stated that he is on the BART Bike Advisory Task Force and member of the East Bay Bicycle Coalition. He has been involved in getting the bike pilot on board BART in the month of August. At this time, there has not been a lot of news from BART since the pilot ended on August 31. However, there was a meeting that afternoon to make sure BART continued an evaluation to implement what they could from the pilot. They are looking at reconfiguring the older cars that have a little windscreen inside the door that completely wipes out wheelchair and bicycle access and looking at adding some flexibility in San Francisco during the blackout periods because there is more room at Montgomery Station than Embarcadero Station in terms of vertical access and platform size. Furthermore, BART is looking at 12th and 19th Street Stations to allow bicycles on the platforms and avoid conflict with patrons. He explained that protocols for pedestrians, bicyclists, skateboarders and strollers would need to be communicated with

everyone. He exclaimed that additional signage throughout the BART system including up above the platform to let people know when the train was coming and letting people know the load factor would be essential. Lastly, an evaluation on the pilot program would be presented to the BART Board in November and he wanted the Commission to know that a lot of groups, including bike advocacy groups, BART Accessibility and Bike Task Forces are working hard on this issue.

*Matthew Fitzgerald* announced that he was in an accident while riding the AC Transit Line 75 and the incident will be reported on the news. He also mentioned the commission on disability issues.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* commended Bike Alameda's Riding the Rails activity. He felt the trip and historical presentations were very interesting and Bike Alameda used the activity as an opportunity to promote Measure B1. Thus, they should be congratulated and recognized for the effort.

*Commissioner Miley* stated that he recently learned that *Staff Khan* was leaving and he wanted to thank him for his service. He also wanted to know if the City put out a job announcement.

*Matthew Naclerio*, Alameda Public Works Director, said that he is working with Human Resources to make sure that this is a priority recruitment. The job announcement has not been published yet.

*Staff Payne* explained that the Complete Street's Policy item initially proposed as a special meeting in October should be presented in November. The Alameda County Transportation Commission's Board will be adopting their Complete Street's Policy at the end of October. She would rather dovetail off of what they have done and not have to repeat something at a later date.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* asked *Staff Payne* to include an update on the Line OX policy issue.

*Staff Payne* explained that she added an item for 5a that would include the public information program with public transit added to the contingency plan for the I-880/29th Ave./23rd Ave. Interchange Improvement Project.

## **8. Adjournment**

9:39 pm