

Transportation Commission Special Meeting Minutes

Wednesday November 16, 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)

Jesus Vargas

Gregory Morgado

Thomas G. Bertken

Samantha Soules

Members Absent:

Christopher Miley (Vice Chair)

Michael Hans

Staff Present:

Jennifer Ott, Base Reuse and Transportation Planning Director

Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator

Rochelle Wheeler, Transportation Planner

2. Agenda Changes

None.

3. Announcements / Public Comments

Jim Strehlow, Alameda resident, said at the last Transportation Commission meeting he brought up the Posey Tube construction project and he asked staff when Caltrans reached out to the community. He was informed by staff that Caltrans presented in 2014. He felt there was a difference between a presentation on the project and a workshop about the project. He said a workshop gets the community involved and Caltrans only informing the community was not enough. He said Caltrans did not provide much notice about when they were going to implement their design.

Dorothy Freeman, Alameda resident, explained that the last Alameda traffic study utilized the proposed development housing unit numbers entered into the Alameda Housing Element in 2012. She said since then, some studies for each individual developments have been done, but the new citywide traffic study is in progress. She said currently the number of houses that have

been requested along the Northern Waterfront far exceeds the numbers that were used in the study. The housing units approved for Del Monte, Encinal Avenue Terminal, Alameda Landing, and Alameda Marina basically doubled from what was used in the study. She said residential units under construction have not completely affected Alameda's traffic system as of yet. She noted that the development, 2100 Clement Street, just started construction and many more developments are under construction. She explained that the City has not resolved cutting Clement Avenue through Pennzoil, so all of the new southbound traffic will be pushed onto Buena Vista for an undetermined period of time. She said a new bus lane will soon begin along Buena Vista further slowing down the traffic and she has yet to see how the newly occupied units will affect not only traffic going southbound, but through the tube, transit lines, ferries and City streets. She asked the Commission to express these concerns to the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Tony Daysog, Alameda City Councilmember, said mid-December would be the last month as a City councilmember and he thanked the Commission and staff for their service. He felt these are really exciting times for the City and especially for the transportation field, which includes autonomous technology. He encouraged the Commission to continue to always be positive because the items they review will provide positive improvements to the lives of residents now and into the future.

Commissioner Vargas stated that he attended the California Transportation Association Conference that day and they had competing receptions earlier that morning. He said he attended the Latinos in Transit gathering and they talked about the challenges associated with the election results in terms of federal funding for transit. He explained that we should be in a good place since we tax ourselves in California. He said there was great concern about transit funding and unfortunately he was unable to attend last month's Transportation Commission meeting because he was leading a delegation to learn more about California High Speed Rail and how Public Private Partnerships could be implemented on the local level.

Nancy Heard, Alameda resident, said she is working on some projects in the City and when conducting community service she reviewed various Planning Department studies about where people travel to once they off board the ferry. She explained that one study stated that people go to San Francisco and another study stated that commuters go different places. So, with the City's planned development coming down the pipeline, she felt a study must be conducted again to make traveling off the island easily feasible.

Commissioner Bellows said that she attended the Walk and Roll to School Day event on October 5 at Franklin Elementary School with Lieutenant Guilari. She explained that the students listened attentively about being safe, do not speed, wear helmets and remember to walk their bikes in the crosswalks.

4. Consent Calendar

4.A. Approve Meeting Minutes – September 28, 2016

Commissioner Vargas asked staff to review whether the Transportation Engineer was in the roll call last month and whether he will be included in the roll call going forward.

Commissioner Morgado moved to approve the September 28, 2016 minutes with *Commissioner Vargas*' comments. *Commissioner Bertken* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0.

5. New Business

5.A. Provide Status of the I-880/23rd/29th Improved Project

Joy K. Cheung, Caltrans Senior Transportation Engineer, provided an update.

Commissioner Morgado asked *Joy Cheung* if Caltrans staff could move construction activity a little bit faster because he drives that way every day and it's crazy.

Joy Cheung said she understood his concern, but they have to do the work in stages because they cannot tear both bridges down and that is why it will take three years.

Commissioner Vargas stated that the interchanges are very important for automobiles and buses, but he wondered what about the interim accommodations for bicyclists. He asked if Caltrans staff would provide special traffic detours for cyclists to traverse the area, especially right off the Park Street Bridge.

Joy Cheung replied that they have built new islands and crossings and they will implement a new signal light right there. She went on to say that the temporary detour shows the sign on 29th Avenue and when taking a right on East 7th Street there is a pedestrian and bicycle crossing, but they never changed the bicycle lane. She also noted that cyclists who travel over I-880 and then move towards East 11th Street can view a detour sign.

Commissioner Bellows opened the floor to public comment.

Jim Strehlow stated that it is going to be a maze and pretzel when competing with vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. He said the overall traffic design is a mess and Caltrans said the one reason the 23rd Avenue Bridge was designed for three lanes with a traffic light was because there wasn't funding. However, he explained that Measure BB funds came with a bunch of money and he asked *Joy Cheung* if Caltrans staff could solicit funds to expand the design from three lanes to four lanes.

Joy Cheung replied *Jim Strehlow* was correct; there would be two lanes coming into Alameda and one lane going out and the ramp would be open going the same way, but it will be signalized at East 11th Street. Yet, she said the 29th Avenue Bridge contained only two lanes before and now there will be two lanes coming into Alameda and a straight off ramp from north I-880. She

said this will ease traffic by allowing motorists to make a safe U-turn going towards 23rd Avenue back into Alameda. She further explained that the project was funded by the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC), Measure BB passed last year, and the design was created six years ago. So, if Caltrans staff went back to redesign the project while in construction that would cost taxpayers more money. However, she said she would bring the concern to ACTC to make sure they analyze this in the next phase.

Commissioner Bellows asked *Joy Cheung* to provide the Commission with a project schedule and map.

5.B. Approve the Draft Strategies for the Citywide Transit and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan

Staff Payne provided an update and introduced consultants *Bill Hurrell* and *Brian Soland* of CDM Smith to present.

Commissioner Bellows opened the floor to public comment.

Jim Strehlow said the consultants have their agenda, which includes items they want to promote. He said he attended one of their low participant meetings and they did not discuss alternatives like adjusting school hours that could shift people commuting to school and then work or working with employers and merchants to adjust the hours that businesses are open. He asked staff whether the developers were paying their fair share into the pot because it costs quite a bit of money to build a new ferry terminal, bridges, and tunnels and developers are creating the congestion problem. He mentioned that 90% of the web surveys tend to be bicycle favored because the surveys are anonymous, the bicyclists are hot and heavy and do everything on the web. He explained that you get community representation statistics from what people are saying and the demographics are not spread evenly. He said he was not sure how to get the true demographic information from web surveys. Moreover, he said there's a need to make Alameda a safe bike city, why because the bicyclists say so. He felt there was some need to create more of an emphasis on bike safety even though Alameda is already a bike friendly city. He noted that he had two accidents in the last 13 months and that was due to inattentive motorists.

Jim Meyers, Alameda Health Care District Board member, spoke as an Alameda citizen and explained that as the City reinvents itself one of the issues being reviewed is the health and wellbeing of the community in addition to the oversight and operation of the parcel tax. Therefore, he said he attended one of the stakeholder gatherings for the TDM and noted that many people around the room were developers, but overall the meeting was well-represented. However, he didn't hear many people say they use public transit as their common transportation mode. He encouraged the Commission to consider the opportunity index that is available and the fact that there's a study out that outlines low-income areas of the island that are least served by public transportation. He emphasized that transportation availability is a big component of well-being and he asked the Commission to consider and find ways to hear the voices of the most in need when surveying these choices.

Commissioner Bertken said he understood there is a list of projects, but he wondered what staff needed from the Commission based on the presentation.

Commissioner Bellows replied the presenters somewhat summarized the purpose, but she felt the Commission's purpose regarding the agenda item was to review the list of projects found in the staff report tables. She explained that the project list was divided by transit projects, multimodal, and bicycle and pedestrian projects. Additionally, she stated that the projects were segregated by the individual TDM strategies and then short-term and long-term timeframe.

Jennifer Ott, Director of Base Reuse and Transportation Planning, said there was a lot of information in the packet and she proposed that the Commission review the table in order to find something missing or potential projects that should be included in the table. Furthermore, she proposed that the Commission review the wording to see if something should be stated in another way.

Commissioner Bellows replied that it was unclear whether transit service would be provided to the Main Street Ferry Terminal.

Jennifer Ott explained that providing transit service to the Main Street Ferry Terminal was included. She went on to say that *Staff Payne* worked with Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) and AC Transit on a grant for potential bus service that would be a limited, cross-island service connecting Main Street Ferry Terminal with Fruitvale BART.

Commissioner Soules asked staff about the island being well served by public transit because there's a perception that it's not very convenient. She felt there are areas underserved by public transit, especially regarding service performance, which needs improvement. She mentioned that seniors trying to make medical appointments and riders commuting to school to drop off their children and then board the ferry is not feasible. She said an incentive that should be considered would be to provide free rides to build community support and then display transit riders' testimonials. She also noted that when new transit service is introduced, it's important for staff to get the word out and incentivize utilizing public transportation.

Commissioner Bellows asked *Jennifer Ott* about the new development plans and whether staff will work with the developers to provide transit passes especially since parking is limited.

Jennifer Ott replied all of the employees and residents of Alameda Point will have free transit passes as well as the Northern Waterfront.

Commissioner Bellows replied that *Commissioner Soules* was talking about promoting and incentivizing public transit use and publicizing the benefits of taking public transit.

Jennifer Ott said that's a great idea.

Commissioner Soules liked the idea of monitoring the promotion to make sure it's not only effective and justifies the funding, but provides a benchmark that would enable staff to retire projects that aren't working. She asked staff if there's origin and destination analysis for inter-island public transit trips, especially during peak periods. She noticed that the ferries have had an influx of people who do not live in Alameda that create more congestion on the island during those peak times. So, she felt reviewing the inter-island peak trips to inform some of the lowest

hanging fruit when it comes to free bus service would be helpful.

Bill Hurrell and *Brian Soland* replied they looked at the inter-island activity as part of the existing conditions analysis. They said some of their recommendations looked at improving access from BART stations, particularly in Oakland. They explained that WETA is looking at expanding their bi-directional service and that would require either bus service or a last mile connection. They said the Main Street Ferry Terminal would help commuters get into Alameda and their overall recommendations would assist commuters getting into and coming from Oakland.

Commissioner Vargas said he liked the format of the project table, which allowed him to sort things out in his mind. Regarding the Vision Zero policy, he explained that it would be better if the policy included the multimodal elements based on the Swedish model such as freight activity and other vehicles not just bicycles and pedestrians. He liked the structure of the document because it was an easy read and the map in the back was good. He was glad to see projects included in the Bay Farm side. In terms of amending the document, he said he spoke with *Staff Payne* about ideas centered on the Intelligent Transportation System and autonomous vehicles and he referred to the multimodal table on page 13 of the Draft Strategies Memorandum, item #28 “Parking Management and Shared Parking Lots.” He explained that autonomous vehicles/bus services and parking management/shared parking lots should be broken out separately because there’s so much occurring with their neighboring county Contra Costa County that the City should proactively look at this technology. He felt themes such as “Smart Cities” should be kept in mind, especially as the City looks for federal funding and the idea of Public Private Partnerships should be categorized as an opportunity. He explained that he was recently shopping around for a new vehicle like a plug in Hybrid and it occurred to him that he hasn’t seen the reappearance of the City’s municipal electrical car power program. So, he would like to see that partnership revamped. He also recommended that staff start to look at promoting on demand-privatized paratransit service and he would schedule time to talk with *Staff Payne* about this. Additionally, he suggested within the staff report on the first paragraph under background which states “quality of life during a time of anticipated population...” should also include “and employment growth” in the sentence, especially if it goes before the City Council. Including those words would also help the Metropolitan Transportation Commission understand that the City plans to include more jobs within the City.

Commissioner Morgado said that it was interesting to read the verbatim public comments and he found it surprising that the public wanted a free bus system, but didn’t want their taxes raised. He said he was a supporter of a free bus system that’s funded by the municipality. He stated that he read all the public comments and some were classic and others were informative, but overall he felt Alameda has very intelligent residents who pay taxes in this City.

Commissioner Soules felt that places like Alameda, because of its geography, offer a unique environment for immersing technologies and innovative solutions. She stated that either Public Private Partnerships or some form of agreement with a potential equity component in place could spur different ideas that could be Beta tested and not burden the City’s taxpayers. She said being so close to Silicon Valley and having autonomous vehicles there already could be a benefit to the City.

Jennifer Ott said there are testing areas in Alameda Point because currently the area isn't predominately occupied with housing and other uses. She explained there's wind energy and sail drone (water based drones) testing in the area and staff talked about Alameda Point becoming a place for autonomous testing and having the City allow autonomous vehicles. She also mentioned the fact that staff discussed developing transportation network and bike and pedestrian network apps as part of the TDM plan.

5.C. Review and Comment on the Access and Mobility Chapter of the Draft Main Street Specific Plan at Alameda Point

Jennifer Ott presented the report.

Commissioner Morgado asked *Jennifer Ott* if staff spoke to the community and if so what they said.

Jennifer Ott replied said staff spoke to the community and the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society asked to preserve portions of the base that are historic. She explained that another stakeholder requested that the "beehive" street network remain preserved and to not build between the big lights. She said staff also heard from stakeholders who want a connection to the ferry system. Also, she stated that the Site A stakeholders asked to integrate the street network and Alameda Point Partners asked staff to create streets that do not have a cut through that incentivizes speeding. She pointed out that the existing residents in the market rate units are generally supporting the plan, but they want to know the timing and how that will impact their lives. Moreover, Bike Walk Alameda and the Planning Board requested that staff keep streets as narrow as possible and they would prefer 7' foot parking lanes. Further, they requested they make bike facilities available on all the streets and staff addressed that request.

Commissioner Bellows replied given all of the information about South Shore and the parking issues pertaining to the area there were negative public comments received about this.

Jennifer Ott replied narrower parking lanes induces a traffic calming effect, thus creating a pedestrian friendly environment because the overall street width is narrower. She stated that the consultant preferred 7' foot parking lanes, but the City engineer preferred 8' feet parking lanes to provide more comfort to the adjacent bike lanes.

Commissioner Vargas said he grew up in Chicago and there were a lot of tough neighborhoods. He asked staff how they would group the affordable housing units because when the city of Chicago stacked the affordable housing units this subsequently became high-rise "ghettos." So, he wanted staff to be cognizant of the fact that having blended income communities would help everyone help each other.

Jennifer Ott said she's heard this comment a lot and ultimately however the project gets financed will have moderate-income units that will be integrated with the market-rate units. First, she explained that one of the needs from the nonprofit housing group was the need for their residents, who were homeless or at risk of homelessness, to be close to a number of services that allow them to become self-sustaining. Secondly, she said the way affordable housing gets financed in California without redevelopment dollars is to receive low-income tax credits. In

order to receive the tax credit, they would have to finance essentially 100 percent affordable projects and that's extremely competitive. However, staff has discussed this with the Alameda Housing Authority and the Commission's questions are legitimate.

6. Staff Communications

6.A. Potential Future Meeting Agenda Items

1. Cross Alameda Trail – Atlantic Avenue Gap Closure
2. Paratransit Annual Review
3. Transportation Management Association Annual Report
4. I-880/Broadway/Jackson Multimodal Transportation Project

Commissioner Bellows asked staff to provide a map and project schedule for the I-880/Broadway/Jackson Multimodal Transportation Project.

7. Announcements/Public Comments

Jim Strehlow said he didn't think he was going to speak on item 5.c., so he did not fill out a speaker card. He explained that he spent a lot of time on Orion Street and it's an active warehouse district where forklifts enter in and out of the Williams of Sonoma and Pottery Barn buildings, while 18-wheelers and Caterpillar heavy equipment park alongside Orion Street. So, if staff places a cycle track there, they're essentially negating the warehouse district's needs.

Jennifer Ott replied that the warehouse activity is not within the Main Street neighborhood and those uses are found in the Enterprise District, which is located in the southern part of the base. She said the location where the existing warehouses are located will become a real employment center at some point and staff will then contemplate where the cycle tracks will go to balance the various needs.

Commissioner Bellows asked staff about the timeline

Jennifer Ott replied it's in the future and will not happen over night.

Jim Strehlow said when staff and the Commission spoke about autonomous vehicles they favor giving away money to automakers in Silicon Valley versus jobs and he found that to be offensive because producing jobs in Alameda is more important.

Commissioner Soules asked staff if there is an emergency evacuation for people who are heavy users of public transportation that may not own a vehicle.

Staff Payne replied staff could add that in as an item.

Commissioner Vargas asked staff to potentially include a briefing from representatives from GoMentum Station in Concord. The station is where the Contra Costa Transportation Authority leads and facilitates collaborative partnerships, which includes autonomous vehicles and job creation opportunities could be brought to Alameda. He explained that he was going to invite

the Commission and some staff to tour the site. He also learned from the city of San Leandro, during a Bus Rapid Transit tour that during their general plan review, city staff brought the community together to understand their mode priorities and where they should be placed. Subsequently, the city designed a road mode priority plan that cannot be debated going forward. He suggested that a round table discussion should be planned with the Planning Board and the community about mode priorities.

8. Adjournment

8:34 pm