

**DRAFT**  
**TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**October 25, 2006**

Chair Knox White called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:38 p.m.

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

Members Present:

John Knox White

Robb Ratto

Robert McFarland

Eric Schatmeier

Members Absent:

Jeff Knoth

Michael Krueger

Staff Present:

Obaid Khan, Supervising Civil Engineer

Barry Bergman, Program Specialist II

*Chair Knox White* requested that Item 6A be addressed immediately because of the number of public speakers.

**6A. REVIEW ALTERNATIVES AND RECOMMEND BUS STOP LOCATION ON OTIS DRIVE AND REVISIT COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL TO ADPT AC TRANSIT BOARD'S BUS STOP POLICY.**

*Staff Bergman* presented the staff report.

Bus Stop Location – Otis Drive. At the last meeting in May, the Commission made a recommendation that the City Council adopt AC Transit's bus stop policy, but did not comment on the merits of specific bus stop locations on Otis Drive. Because of the public interest in this issue, the PW Director has since requested that the Commission make a recommendation about a specific location for the stop. *Staff Bergman* reviewed the background of the issue, and noted that some of the major considerations were the impacts on the neighborhood such as removal of on-street parking, street trees, opposition from adjacent property owners, sign clutter, potential conflict with street furniture, the need for new crosswalks, availability of lighting, presence of traffic control devices, availability of ramps, etc.

Staff assessed the possible locations in that area and assumed that bus stops would be in position at Otis and Willow, which had not gone through the process yet. He described the spacing, signage, street furniture, crosswalk, striping, visibility and tree removal issues at the intersections. Staff requested that the Commission recommend a location for a bus stop at one of the listed locations.

*Chair Knox White* inquired whether the neighboring property owners had been notified of this discussion meeting.

*Staff Bergman* noted that at this time, there was no proposal to actually install anything at those locations, and that the standard noticing procedure had been followed.

*Chair Knox White* did not feel comfortable moving forward with this item without hearing from the residents at these locations. He suggested that the discussion be refocused on Otis Drive at Sandcreek Way, and whether or not there were other, better options; the discussion may be rescheduled for November after taking public comment.

*Commissioner Ratto* inquired when and why the bus stop was abandoned.

*Audience member* responded that it was abandoned in February 2005 because of safety issues.

### **Public Comment**

*Elmer Garlitz*, 1511 Pacific, noted that he has worked as a crossing guard at Otis and Sandcreek Way for Lum School, and that he was totally opposed to a bus stop anywhere near Sandcreek Way and Otis Drive. He believed it would create a safety problem for the crossing guards in getting the children across the street, and noted that it would be very difficult to hold the children until the bus went by. He believed the bus should be held to allow the children to cross. He believed the bus stop as proposed would create a safety hazard because the bus stop sign was placed in such a position that the bus stops right on top of the crosswalk, thereby blocking the view of oncoming traffic from either direction from behind the bus, requiring the crossing guard to step into the path of oncoming traffic without being seen until he or she clears the body of the bus. Since the average traffic speed is about 30 mph, this would mean that a driver could not safely stop the vehicle in time to avoid striking a pedestrian using the crosswalk. He would like to see changes in the current signage.

*Barbara Nemer* suggested that this bus stop would be a mistake, and noted that two children had been hit at Franklin Elementary the previous week. She did not understand why a bus stop that had been removed for safety purposes would be reconsidered. She noticed that there were no red curbs in other areas of Alameda where bus stops were located.

*Diane Voss* cited an article in the *Alameda Journal* of September 5 2006, which referred to the crossing guards as “sentinels of safety.” She urged the Commission to listen carefully to the opinions of the crossing guards, who had been consistent in their opinion that a bus stop at Otis Drive and Sandcreek Way would be unsafe. She had been told the red curb was to prevent people from parking or stopping there to keep the visibility at the crosswalk open, not so a bus stop could be placed there. She believed that the spreadsheet’s statement that no additional signage was required at Otis and Sandcreek was incorrect, and that it would have to be put up for the bus alone. She noted that the sheet did not mention the children who use the crosswalk at Otis and Sandcreek. She believed that a bus stop at either location would not have children crossing every day at their respective locations. She noted that the children would be at Otis and Sandcreek, not

at Otis and Pond or Otis and Sandalwood. She believed that a bus stop at this location would have a far greater potential for a pedestrian accident than the other two listed on the spreadsheet. She believed that safety should be the primary issue, and urged the Commission not to allow the bus stop to be reinstalled at Otis Drive and Sandcreek Way.

*Marilyn Teploe* agreed with the previous speakers' statements, and noted that her driveway was located right at the crosswalk. She noted that the red curb was there when she moved in six years ago, and that it was not put there because of the bus. She believed it was put there for the safety of the schoolchildren, and added that she also did not have parking in front of her house. She would be in favor of a bus stop in the vicinity of Pond Isle.

*Liz Cleves* noted that there were skid marks at the crosswalk at Otis and Sandcreek, which was of concern to her. She agreed with the other speakers that it was a very dangerous crosswalk, and was extremely concerned that a bus would block a driver's view of children in the crosswalk.

*Shannon Nicholson*, 2122 Santa Clara Avenue, noted that she had also seen the skid marks and uses extreme caution in that area. She agreed with the previous speakers, and cited AC Transit's Board Policy #508 that "the ultimate decision for placement of a bus stop is made by the jurisdiction in which the stop is located. The bus stop must also be convenient to the places where passengers wish to go." She questioned how many passengers wish to go to the area near Otis and Sandcreek Way. She believed that a midblock bus stop directly in front of a crosswalk used primarily by children would not be in the best interest of AC Transit or the City of Alameda, and would definitely not be in the best interest of the children and other pedestrians.

### **Closed Public Comment**

*Chair Knox White* inquired how many buses travel through the area during school; at what times were they scheduled to go through; and what was the usage of the stop.

*Nathan Landau*, AC Transit noted that with the number of buses going through the area, that bus ran every 30 minutes, with one in each direction.

*Staff Bergman* noted that the stop was in usage for a very short time, and data from AC Transit on that stop was not available. The stop had been there for one year or less.

*Commissioner Ratto* inquired whether the Police Department had changed their opinion on the bus stop's safety issue.

*Staff Bergman* replied that they had not heard anything.

*Chair Knox White* was glad to hear the public's comments on this issue, and noted that the question was not whether there should be a bus stop, but where it should be located. He noted that if safety was a compelling issue at this stop, as the residents believe, he believed the other two should be examined more closely. He would like to hear staff's assessment of the safety issues, and whether a crosswalk at one of the other two alternatives would have adequate

visibility. He would entertain a motion to bring this item back in November in order to discuss the validity of selecting another site for this stop.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* would support a bus stop located somewhere, but did not want the conclusion to be that there would be no bus stop located anywhere.

*Staff Khan* expressed concern about the proximity of establishing additional crosswalks at adjacent intersections, and recommended channelizing pedestrians toward the existing crosswalk at Sandcreek Way. He indicated that the concerns of the crossing guards could be addressed by working with staff and AC Transit.

*Commissioner Ratto* moved to eliminate the possibility of putting a bus stop at Otis Drive and Sandcreek Way, to agendaize looking at Sandalwood Isle and Pond Isle at the November meeting, and to instruct staff to do the appropriate noticing. *Commissioner McFarland* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, [4-0].

#### Revisit Commission Recommendation to City Council to Adopt AC Transit Board's Bus Stop Policy

*Staff Bergman* summarized the staff report, and noted that bus stop spacing recommendations were fairly consistent within the City's current transit plan, which was a range of 800-1300 feet for local routes. He noted that the 63 was considered a local route. Staff was concerned that there were some provisions in the policy that were not applicable to the City, and this might be better handled as part of the Transit Plan Update through the TMP. Staff recommended that in terms of spacing, until the TMP is amended, that the City use the existing Transit Plan's guidelines of approximately 1000 feet.

*Staff Khan* noted that AC Transit policy was more focused on a service-oriented approach, in terms of how to provide and improve service. He noted that the examination of crosswalks and pedestrian ramps were not addressed in the AC Transit policy; that was another reason that staff recommended that when the TMP was looked at as a whole, all those concerns could be addressed to be more consistent with the rest of the TMP policy.

#### **Public Comment**

There were no speakers.

#### **Closed Public Comment**

*Chair Knox White* noted that the long-range transit plan for the TMP would probably be worked on within two to three years, and agreed with staff that this would be a great time to work on these issues. He believed there may have been a lack of clarity regarding the current City plan regarding the guidelines.

*Staff Khan* inquired whether the Chair was recommending that this be taken to the Planning Board and City Council to be adopted as a policy; at this time, it is a recommended policy.

*Chair Knox White* responded that it was not worded as strongly as he would like, but there was a discussion of 1000 feet being the recommended distance. He inquired whether staff was withdrawing its recommendation of the bus stop policy, and go back to what the Commission had been asked to amend. *Staff Khan* responded that was correct.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* inquired what the downside of not acting would be.

*Staff Bergman* responded that spacing was only one part of the policy's discussion, and that while AC Transit was concerned with transit operations and service, the City looked at broader neighborhood impacts.

*Chair Knox White* suggested that the Commission vote to support the document as a document and move forward. He noted that the City Council was the only body that could adopt a policy. He wished to entertain a motion to allow this item to move on.

No motion was offered.

*Commissioner Ratto* noted that spacing had always been an issue of his, and did not always agree with being locked in to the 1200-foot spacing between bus stops, no matter what. He noted that it had been a problem on Park Street before it was changed.

*Commissioner Ratto* moved to accept the staff recommendation to develop guidelines for the City of Alameda, and until that occurs, to follow the AC Transit policy and guidelines, minus the enforcement issue. *Commissioner Schatmeier*, seconded. Motion passed 3-1.

## **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Commissioner Schatmeier* moved to accept the approval of the September 27, 2006 minutes. *Commissioner Ratto* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.

## **3. AGENDA CHANGES**

There were none.

## **4. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

*Chair Knox White* noted that he had attended the previous City Council meeting, and that they had supported the Transportation Commission's seven recommended policies. *Staff Khan* would present the details of that meeting.

## **7A. REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS ON DRAFT FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM CONCEPTS.**

*Staff Khan* presented the staff report on this item, and noted that it would be part of the Transportation Master Plan and the Multimodal Circulation Plan.

*Mark Spencer*, Principal, DKS Associates, Oakland, made the presentation on this item, and described the scope and goals of the Draft Functional Classification System. He noted that the three main classifications were arterial, collector and local streets. He noted that Caltrans follows the functional classification system put forth by the FHWA, and that any municipality must follow that system to qualify for federal funding. He noted that Denver used a multimodal approach based on surrounding street context and land use, and they created five new street types: residential, main, mixed use, commercial and industrial. He displayed those street types on the overhead screen and described their functions. Austin, Texas, used a “great streets plan,” which promoted streets as public places, and they accepted congestion as part of success. He noted that most cities were not trying to achieve every one of their objectives with every kind of street concept; some streets will accept more congestion and lower service levels in exchange for a vibrant, multimodal, multifunctional, pedestrian-dominant street. They instituted several new street types: pedestrian-dominant, bike and local access, mixed mode, commuter, rapid transit (with no on-street parking). He noted that a mixed mode street was designed to serve slow-moving vehicles accessing the street frontage uses, and discouraged any kind of through traffic by design. A four-foot safe zone for parking access and bicycle room was also included, similar to the bike lane on Santa Clara Street. He noted that pavement treatment was also used for crosswalks, parking and safe zones.

He noted that the 25 mph concept was used in Denver and Austin, and that Austin used narrow lanes, on-street parking and “commuter streets.” Palo Alto used landscaped medians, curbs, narrow travel lanes, curb extensions and 25 mph limits; they used physical changes to the street to force the slow speed. Santa Cruz was the only city using the term “enforcement” with respect to the speed limit. Traffic calming is consistent with the bulbouts and curb extensions. Santa Cruz has gateway issues from Highways 1, 9 and 17. Portland did not specifically address gateway issues in their street classifications. He requested input and direction from the Commission.

### **Public Comment**

There were no speakers.

### **Closed Public Comment**

*Chair Knox White* wanted more clarification on where they were in the process, and what the next step would be. He also thought that the Commission would start from the work done by the Circulation Task Force as a base going forward; he was surprised to find that was not mentioned in this report. He believed that they had already laid out what they were looking for, and noted that he liked the grids and believed they were easy to understand.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* was gratified to learn that the City was not tied into the arterial format, and that other cities had also used unorthodox ways of defining their streets without jeopardizing funding. He was surprised to find that was not mentioned in the report.

*Staff Khan* noted that this was an initial draft item, and would come back to the Commission in November or December with more detail.

*Mark Spencer* noted that they did not want to bring a finished product to the Commission before it was able to comment on it.

*Chair Knox White* hoped that at the next meeting, they would be able to go back to the work they have already done, and to see how the report mirrors that. He liked the comments regarding landscaping.

*Mark Spencer* noted that information from a subcommittee of the Transportation Commission was used as a starting point for developing the City's street classification system.

*Chair Knox White* noted that even Alameda's commercial streets were residential in character, and that he believed the classifications identified those characteristics. He liked the goals stated by the City of Austin.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* noted that with respect to the classification exercise, he felt somewhat constrained because they did not have extensive knowledge about what could be done, without jeopardizing funding for improvements. Having seen this document, he was relieved that there would be a variety of ways of treating classification systems that did not jeopardize funding; if he had known they had that flexibility at the time, perhaps they would have been able to exercise more imagination in that regard.

*Chair Knox White* noted that he would entertain a motion to accept the findings and use the previously defined Task Force classifications as a guideline for the type of plan the Commission would like to see.

<p><i>Commissioner Schatmeier</i> moved to accept the findings and use the previously defined Task Force classifications as a guideline for the type of plan for the multimodal plan, including the Santa Cruz street classification names, and the type of information contained in the Denver plan in terms of how the classifications and overlays affect the streets as a whole. <i>Commissioner Ratto</i> seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 4-0.</p>
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*Chair Knox White* suggested that the Commission address the Shuttle Study next to accommodate the public speakers.

## **7C. REVIEW AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS ON INITIAL FINDINGS OF WEST END SHUTTLE STUDY**

*Staff Bergman* noted that the consultant, John Atkinson, would present his preliminary findings to date, and added that this would be rolled into the TSM/TDM plan and Transit Plan within the TMP. He noted that Mr. Atkinson had considerable experience operating local shuttle systems, and would bring real-world experience to this matter.

*John Atkinson* noted that the tasks had not followed in a chronological order and that they used a generic, multimodal method to look at the hubbing from the 12<sup>th</sup> Street BART station to the Ferry Terminal, and in looking at services within a 10-12 mile perimeter of those hubs. They also looked at various vehicle types and scenarios of operation. His recommendation to staff was that the City not become involved directly in transportation operations, and that they look at some type of turnkey method for logistic, legal and operational concerns. He added that it would be better to hire a contract for that service. He noted that he could see the City initially needing to close the gap until the second or third phase was underway.

*Chair Knox White* inquired what the initial goal was. *John Atkinson* replied that it was to look at establishing a viable multimodal link between BART and the Ferry to the areas of development out on the West End.

A discussion of ridership in other cities and City funding ensued.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* inquired whether the City had a policy about contracting for services of this type. He recalled that AC Transit used to have a policy about not contracting out for services. *John Atkinson* replied that there were private shuttles not operated under AC Transit. He noted that historically, AC Transit has not used a private contractor, with the exception of the East Bay Paratransit Consortium. He described the low-fare and no-fare zones, and noted that it was postulated that there would be service sufficient to allow people to live in the development without an automobile; that service would be more frequent than every 30 minutes.

*Chair Knox White* noted that the Commission would provide a range of scenarios to City Council. He was surprised to see AC Transit not mentioned as a possible operator, and he agreed with *Commissioner Krueger's* idea of adding new transit systems that not only compete, but are another system for people to use. He believed that part of the plan needs to address how it fits into any perceived West End transit service that exists, or will exist, as the development goes forward.

*John Atkinson* noted that they should coordinate whatever service would be proposed with what AC Transit currently proposes so they did not compete for ridership and detract from each other's services. He added that if AC Transit was interested in bidding on the project, they should be included as one of the potential operators.

*Commissioner Ratto* noted that following the discussion between the City and AC Transit, it may be that the City's service may best serve the West End.

*John Atkinson* noted that this would tie in with the TSM/TDM plan, and that it would incorporate other programs in the West End.

No action was taken.
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**7B. RECONCILING OF TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDED POLICIES FOR REVIEWING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTS (EIRs) WITH THE PREVIOUSLY RECOMMENDED TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN (TMP) POLICIES.**

*Staff Khan* presented the staff report and summarized the discussion from the City Council meeting. Staff recommends to the Transportation Commission to assign the task of examining the seven policies, and to provide a recommendation during the November meeting. The City Council had approved the process for a General Plan Amendment, and for staff to move forward with the updating of the Transportation Element of the General Plan. During the discussion on October 17, the Council raised issues relating to the seven new policies, particularly Policy 7 regarding the congestion that could be acceptable within the City at certain locations and intersections. City Council comments related to this policy were very specific, and that it may need some language revisions. According to the City Council minutes, Council directed that Policy 7 be rewritten. Staff prepared some discussion points to be considered by the Transportation Commission, and that if Policy 7 were to be expanded in terms of providing guidance regarding how the City would address acceptable congestion levels. Also, the implementation of the policy during the review process and the threshold would be considered.

*Staff Khan* noted that staff also recommended allowable impacts to pedestrians, bicycles and transit be verified due to increasing congestion. Staff also recommends accepting increasing queues at intersections, as a result of increasing congestion. He noted that the next item was to establish quantifiable impacts to the emergency response times. Increasing congestion may increase the emergency response times, so there may be some kind of a threshold that should be established for policy guidance. He stated that the last item was a quantifiable level of service for different modes of transportation that are required at congested locations and intersections. City Council also approved that policies 1 through 6 be used as guidelines until the General Plan is amended. Council also indicated that if those guidelines were to be followed, there may be some conflicts with the existing General Plan. City Council has asked the Transportation Commission to examine and address any potential conflicts so the guidelines may be used until the General Plan policies are adopted. He distributed a list of items prepared by staff to the Commissioners.

*Chair Knox White* noted that he would look at the items, and would suggest that the subcommittee do the same, but did not believe that the City Council asked the Transportation Commission to develop a list of conflicts and their solutions. He noted that they said they would use the guidelines, and noted that staff may identify where they conflicted directly with the General Plan. He noted that if the City Council minutes stated that, they did not reflect the discussion that was held at the end of that hour the previous week. He would review the video to confirm his assessment. He noted that it would not be practical for him to read through the General Plan to identify conflicts, and that if staff found conflicts, he would be willing to discuss it further at the November meeting. He stated that he respectfully believed that staff is attempting to fight the EIR policies.

*Staff Khan* stated that it was not the intention to ask the Commissioners to create or provide the thresholds to staff. Staff was attempting to follow City Council's direction with respect to clarifying language.

## **8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

A discussion of the packet preparation timeline and meeting schedules ensued. It was decided that the Circulation Subcommittee would meet by November 8 to follow up on Item 7B, and to allow it to fit into the Alameda Landing schedule.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.