

Transportation Commission Minutes

Wednesday, July 25, 2012

Commissioner Thomas Bertken 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

Michele Bellows

Christopher Miley

Sandy Wong

Jesus Vargas

Eric Schatmeier

Staff Present:

Obaid Khan, Supervising Civil Engineer

Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator

2. Agenda Changes

Commissioner Vargas made a motion to pull item 4B from the consent calendar and to present this item first under “New Business” since there are members of the public that would like to talk about that item. *Commissioner Miley* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 6-0.

3. Announcements / Public Comments

Matthew Fitzgerald announced that the Alameda Bicycle opened for operation in 1969 and his family took over in 1987. His family business is 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.

4. Consent Calendar

4A. Draft Meeting Minutes – June 27, 2012

Commissioner Miley made a correction on page 7(10) under “*Commissioner Miley’s* comments” it should be corrected to say CBS, such as Outdoor Clear Channel.

Commissioner Bellows made a correction on page 3(10) under “*Commissioner Bellows* suggested that the Island Drive/Robert Davey Jr. Drive traffic-calming project could use a pedestrian

scramble.” She actually only asked if that was possible and wanted clarification.

Staff Payne explained the structure of the Consent Calendar. The chair would ask if anyone would like to move an item from the consent portion of the agenda. The chair then would make a motion to approve the consent calendar. Afterwards, the chair opens the floor for any questions or discussions on items remaining on the calendar. After reviewing the remaining items, the chair would ask for any objections. If none are offered, the remaining items are considered passed.

4D. 2012 Transportation Expenditure Plan Fact Sheet

Commissioner Schatmeier asked about the transportation expenditure plan and he wanted to know more about the status of it. He felt if the transportation expenditure plan appears to increase operating funds, he would like to know how that would affect the City of Alameda. Thus, he wanted to know more about it.

Staff Khan said the transportation expenditure plan has been finalized and approved by the County Board of Supervisors, and will go to voters for approval in November. AC Transit will receive a significant amount of money for operations and maintenance. Currently, not much has been done about how they will use that money. He did explain that *Commissioner Schatmeier’s* point was valid, and he would talk about the next steps and that should be discussed with the Interagency Liaison Committee.

Commissioner Schatmeier replied that he was most interested in the transportation expenditure’s plan to increase AC Transit’s operating funding by 100% to increase and restore services. He felt that increasing the operating subsidy means essentially doubling transit service or buses running every 30 minutes will be increased to every 15 minutes. He hopes for a process in which the City could participate so they get their share of expansion money even if it is not specifically identified for Alameda.

Staff Khan stated that if the Measure B passes that will bring other money to the City. The City estimates that the plan will bring \$240 million of potential project funding to Alameda.

Commissioner Bertken made a motion to approve the consent calendar. *Commissioner Vargas* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 3-0; 3 abstentions.

5. New Business

5A.1 Shoreline Drive / Westline Drive Proposed Bike Lane Project – Community Meeting #2 Summary of Comments

Staff Payne presented a summary of the report.

Carol Gottstein, an Alameda resident, stated that she grew up near Shoreline Drive and is a third generation Alamedan. She could not attend the first meeting, but was interested in attending the second meeting. She noticed in the Transportation Commission minutes that *Staff Payne* heard

more from the neighborhood and bicyclists than other residents. Additionally, she thought there would be break-out sessions, but when she came, she was handed a nametag and sat in an assigned seat. She also was unable to elect her group's spokesperson. The group had to select one out of six alternatives for the plan and every table, which seemed odd, selected the same alternative. She also found that someone at her table lived in Oakland. She felt that the participants were manipulated to respond in a particular way. Ultimately, she wanted to make sure that cyclists from out of town are not planning routes for their benefit and that all group attendees understand the meaning of cycle tracks and what that entails.

Jon Spangler, Alameda resident and a League of American Cycling Instructor, explained that he does not live on Shoreline Drive, but lives in the mid island area. He has driven, bicycled and taught bicycle safety along Shoreline Drive since 1977. He tried to ease Ms. Gottstein's concerns by letting her know that there were not people stacked outside or inside Alameda to respond in particular way. He felt the reason the cycle track was chosen was because anyone who is concerned with children and new cyclists riding along the street could clearly see that the cycle track was the safest option for providing bicyclists with access to the shoreline. He personally does not like cycle tracks, but allowing cyclists to ride safely on the street is crucial. Furthermore, he noted that Crown Beach is a regional resource and not the property of the City.

Commissioner Bertken asked staff if the information that was just reviewed and commented on be included in the final input. Additionally, he wanted to know if there would be later public meetings in the fall and if so is a schedule available on how this will play out.

Staff Payne replied that staff is taking what they learned from this meeting in late June and they are coming up with a draft plan for this route. Staff will present the draft alternative to the participants in the fall. The meeting date is not scheduled at this time. The draft plan will go to the Transportation Commission after the public meeting in the fall, and also will go to the Planning Board and then the City Council.

Staff Khan replied from staff's perspective is to work with the community to find the community's needs and priorities. So, no decisions will be made about the project design until consensus is made.

Commissioner Schatmeier replied that he attended the meeting. He was impressed by how the community received all the comments and was engaged in the process. The community members were collegial, and the meeting was well run. He was told by an acquaintance that Shoreline Drive was a faster alternative than Otis Drive because there are fewer traffic lights and stop signs. He questioned whether the community around Shoreline Drive wants this street to be a through street to avoid Otis Drive or do they want to divert people to Otis Drive. So, the main discussion should be how does the community want Shoreline Drive to operate and that should be a central goal for this process.

Commissioner Miley stated that he also attended the meeting and as someone who grew up in Alameda his group was well run. Regarding the cycle track, the group came to a consensus that the cycle track was the superior alternative. He would be interested to see how staff interprets the comments and refines the alternatives and plan.

Commissioner Wong asked staff how many people attended the last meeting.

Staff Payne stated that close to 100 attendees were present at both the first and second public meetings.

Commissioner Vargas asked if the meeting summary reflected the attendees and if it is possible in the next meeting to see where attendees reside. Also, he would like to know if attendees are joggers, bicyclists or both.

Staff Khan replied from staff's perspective, they do not want to separate the community by geography, especially as the last speaker noted, it is a regional beach and part of the countywide bicycle plan not just the city bicycle plan.

5A. *Election of Transportation Commission Chair and Vice Chair*

Staff Payne presented the summary of election conditions.

Commissioner Bertken opened the discussion for nomination of the new Chair and Vice Chair.

<p><i>Commissioner Miley</i> nominated <i>Commissioner Vargas</i> as the Chair. <i>Commission Bellows</i> seconded the motion. The motion was approved 6-0.</p>

<p><i>Commissioner Bellows</i> nominated <i>Commissioner Miley</i> as Vice Chair. <i>Commissioner Vargas</i> seconded the motion. The motion was approved 6-0.</p>
--

Commissioner Vargas introduced *Commissioner Schatmeier*, and asked him to give a brief summary of his experience.

Commissioner Schatmeier explained that he was one of the original Transportation Commission members and served for 11 years. He worked as the Planning Manager for Caltrain from 1980 to 1992. He then went on to work at Caltrans Headquarters in Sacramento as a director in the Railroad Division. In 2006, he became the program manager for the Transportation Authority of Marin, and he is now retired. He recently got involved with the Commission because he was interested in the AC Transit Transbay OX Line and the fact that AC Transit disallowed local service to passengers on the bus. The agency made the change without coming to the Interagency Liaison Committee and the Transportation Commission first, and he thought that process was assumed as a standard operating procedure.

5B. *Proposed Yellow Crosswalk on San Antonio Avenue in Front of Franklin Elementary School*

Staff Khan presented the staff report.

Commissioner Vargas explained that Alameda resident Alan Ta submitted a letter giving suggestions on the location of the crosswalk. He then called for public comment.

Page Tomblin, parent of a student at Franklin Elementary School, thanked the Public Works and Parks and Recreations Department staff, nearby residents and Alameda School District for working with the PTA and parents to develop ways to access the park safely. The Franklin Elementary School recreational space is small so better access to the park would be helpful.

Ken Carvalho, Alameda resident and Franklin Elementary School PTA, has worked with the Franklin community to address the access and safety issues for two years. The organization worked with the City to produce a written statement to have the City partner with them to make the park accessible. He explained that a Joint Use Agreement was established between the City and the school district. He said that there used to be a mid-block crosswalk at this same location, and he would like to see it restored. Since there is no grass on the school's playground, the kids need the park to play their sports. He hoped that the Transportation Commission would approve the project.

Jon Spangler explained that he became a volunteer at Franklin Elementary School while serving on the original Transportation Commission. He became the crowd control supervisor for kindergarten to fifth graders. This effort led to developing one of two Safe Routes to School maps in the City of Alameda. He also found out that San Antonio Avenue was quite busy with traffic since it did not have stop signs compared to Encinal Avenue. He would like the crosswalk restored, and recommends that the Commission approve the project.

Carol Gottstein, lives on Grand Street, and she went to the community meeting. She does not believe a particular direction was taken at the meeting. She sees the new plan has cluttered signs and painted striping. She read what Mr. Ta wrote, and she believes that he has a lot of good points. The amount of time that is being saved is seconds and does not change access. When she was a kid, she was taught to cross at the corners, which still should be applicable today.

Commissioner Vargas opened the discussion to the Commission.

Commissioner Schatmeier asked if staff wants the Commission to approve the staff recommendation tonight.

Staff Khan replied that they are asking for an action on the staff recommendation.

Commissioner Bellows said that she was happy to see such a collaborative effort between the school, Public Works Department staff, the school district and the PTA. She lives a block away from the area, and watches the kids go to the park. She also reflected on wheelchair bound people and the fact that they have to go all the way around to access the park. So, she supported the

project.

Commissioner Bertken asked if the crosswalk design includes a handicap portion of the sidewalk.

Staff Khan replied yes.

Commissioner Wong questioned whether there were plans to include a crossing guard at the crosswalk during the daytime or after school.

Staff Khan replied no, there were no plans for a crossing guard. The intention of the crosswalk is to enhance pedestrian crossings. The school is taking the lead to improve pick up and drop off operations. Staff recommended to the school that the crosswalk should be addressed in conjunction with the drop off and pickup. He mentioned that there is a crossing guard at the Paru Street and Encinal Avenue intersection.

Commissioner Miley asked if staff had a chance to review the letter by Alan Ta, and if staff could explain some of the points made in the letter such as line spacing and letter heights on the street. He also asked staff to explain why they are moving forward with the proposal.

Staff Khan replied that he read the letter and when the department decides to install traffic controls on a street the City must adhere to the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). There are different criteria for different items to be installed. If the manual says "shall," then the City cannot deviate because it is the state law.

Commissioner Miley understood that not every street is the same and so the MUTCD provides some discretion to accommodate particular circumstances and thus improving access to students in the park.

Commissioner Vargas asked *Staff Khan* if the recommendations section of the staff memo should be amended to include "and watch for one year" or is the project a permanent implementation.

Staff Khan replied even if the street is later closed, the crosswalk will still be valid and pedestrians could continue to use it.

Commissioner Vargas asked *Staff Khan* if the placement of the paddles was something that the City would monitor.

Staff Khan explained that the City staff could not go out every morning so it is a partnership. He then stated that having the school involved makes a big difference because education to improve pedestrian access is crucial for all school zones.

<p><i>Commissioner Wong</i> made a motion to approve staff's recommendation. <i>Commissioner Bertken</i> seconded the motion. The motion was approved 6-0.</p>
--

5C. *Draft Regional Transit Access Study (RTAS) - Overview of Study Corridors, Transit Demand, and Service Examples*

Staff Khan presented the staff report.

Commissioner Vargas called for public comment.

Jim Strehlow, Alameda resident and local employee, was confused about the public comment format because during *Commission Moehring's* term, the Commission discussed the item before the public would comment. Therefore, he was unable to comment on the Commission's thoughts before coming up to speak. He asked the staff to change the spelling of "corridors" on the top of every page of the report. Additionally, he disliked the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) plan because it is not a good fit for the city. He explained that Eugene, Oregon may have extra space for a dedicated lane, but Alameda is not able to dedicate a lane on Atlantic Avenue because it has two lanes. He also did not believe that the proposed fare collection system would speed up the service. He felt that the gains are not what the residents want. He would rather have a well-organized bus system, not a bus rapid transit system. He wants City staff to clarify the gains of the bus rapid transit system.

Commissioner Vargas called for the Commission to comment.

Commissioner Miley asked about the timeline and when staff would present the final draft report to the Commission. He also wanted to know if this draft plan would go to the Planning Board and City Council.

Staff Khan responded that staff's intention is to create two to three more documents to go through the Transportation Commission. The plan would include a detailed analysis. The grant has an October 2014 deadline, so they have some leeway. The goal is to process the study, and move forward especially since the Alameda Point is moving forward. Staff may go to the Planning Board in the meantime to move the process concurrently with the Transportation Commission and then present the report to the City Council sometime in summer or fall of 2013.

Commissioner Miley understood that the plan was in the early process, but he was interested to see how the Bay Area's first BRT will function in the east bay. Thus, he wanted to know what the timeline was for implementation and service.

Staff Khan explained that in terms of the timing, the East Bay BRT is a little bit ahead of them because Oakland is in the Environmental Impact Report phase. He also mentioned that the project should link into Oakland.

Commissioner Miley said the East Bay BRT had federal funds identified for the project. He explained the proposed plan does have some natural synergies there. So, he questioned how the idea of BRT would work when he understood it as a system with dedicated lanes. Lastly, he commented on some of the travel modes in place of work numbers where you see big numbers for Oakland, San Francisco, Alameda and a lump for Alameda County. He would like to know if staff has data that shows that the dispersion throughout central and southern Alameda County. He

wondered if there were any other natural synergies in terms of job centers throughout the county.

Commissioner Schatmeier asked about the corridors (one in red and blue) depicted for BRT and Rapid Bus. He was curious about beginning the line at Alameda Point and going to Fruitvale BART station for both cases. On the aerial shot, there is a red line going through the tube to Oakland and another aerial shot of the blue line showing that as well. He wanted clarification on what was being depicted there and if it was intended to work in conjunction.

Staff Khan explained that the BRT would be brought before the Commission in September after further analysis. Staff reviewed the two corridors because the General Plan included the need to connect Alameda Point with the 12th Street BART and another connection to the Fruitvale BART Station.

Commissioner Schatmeier stated that when he was originally presented with this information, there was a study on the AC Transit Line 51 and how that line could be sped up. He does not know what happened to that presentation, but there was talk to convert Line 51 to a rapid bus. So, he wondered if the two corridors would supplement Line 51 or replace it.

Staff Khan responded that they have been talking about Line 51 for both Berkeley and Alameda. AC Transit received \$10 million from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) three months ago from their Transit Performance Initiative Program funded from federal sources. Alameda is analyzing Line 51 to see how to reduce delays along the corridor. Also, AC Transit is interested in analyzing whether the corridor should continue on Santa Clara Avenue or move to Lincoln Avenue, but the analysis will be discussed in September.

Commissioner Schatmeier commented that the BRT is further away from the center part of the island and essentially located on the north end of the island along the Beltway and Clement Avenue. He felt that should be acknowledged and discussed later. Furthermore, an analysis of the cost and benefits from each alternative should be discussed.

Staff Khan responded that the red and blue lines presented in the report are just the corridors and they do not represent identified BRT or Rapid Bus service.

Commissioner Schatmeier explained that staff has a lot of statistics on ridership and behavior in the City and they make decisions on deploying transportation not on transit demand, but by funding availability. So, when analyzing the cost and benefits, he would like staff to be cautious and recognize the limitations of the travel model so that they recognize the benefits that may not be measured numerically or by the travel model.

Staff Khan responded that inclusion of Transportation Demand Management and enhanced transit service measures could double the base line numbers based on the data.

Commissioner Schatmeier exclaimed that the numbers are standardized and they do not recognize the ideas that he was talking about.

Commissioner Vargas said the plan does not point out Bay Farm since it is a City of Alameda

study. He does not know if it needed to be included and that is a question for staff. He felt that a background of the General Plan and Senate Bill SB 375 should be addressed and land use policies should be discussed in conjunction with the Planning Board. He also addressed the need to reference other BRT projects in regards to number of miles, cost and ridership in future documents.

Staff Khan spoke about the Bay Farm area. The funding that the City received was intended to connect Alameda Point to the BART station. However, the analysis could lead staff and the Commission to discussions on the Long Range Transit Plan.

Commissioner Bertken commented that it was worthwhile to bring up that staff had a diagram of the route, which includes the ferry terminal, but the corridor stopped at the edge of the base. He mentioned that there is discussion to have a transit center at the terminal. So, as a matter of presentation, the corridors should end where the new terminal will be placed. Also, he pointed out that there would be 300 new ferry passengers due to Alameda Point development. Yet, there is no place within the report to show that there are close to 700 trips today across the Bay to San Francisco. Lastly, he asked staff if the consultants that were used would be on board for the entire study.

Staff Khan explained that Nelson Nygaard would be on board for the entire plan.

Commissioner Bertken said Nelson Nygaard did a wonderful job putting the information together as an introduction to where we stand today, but further discussion is needed. He mentioned that the lines that are shown in the report are not where the population lies. They might be good streets from a physical standpoint, but for attracting riders who may want a relatively short walking distance, they may not be.

6. Staff Communications

On-going Traffic Calming Projects

Staff Khan mentioned that staff held a community meeting at Fernside Blvd about the traffic-calming project at the end of June, but the meeting was not well attended given that it was a holiday season.

Complete Streets Policy Requirement

Staff will bring information about a proposed Complete Street Policy to the Commission at the September meeting. 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. So every jurisdiction should have a complete street policy adopted by early 2013, and 2) the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) has a Complete Street requirement in their funding agreement that the City signed and must adhere to in order to receive Measure B funds by June 30, 2013. One advantage for the City is that they recently updated their Transportation Element in the General Plan.

Draft Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans

Staff Payne explained that ACTC has issued the Draft Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans and they are on their website at www.alamedactc.org. The deadline for public comment is this Friday, July 27th, but they should be flexible about receiving comments after the deadline.

Alameda CTC Planning and Programming Update

Staff Khan explained that schedules for funding were made available, and the City must adhere to the deadlines. Staff will continually inform the Commission about what is happening at the ACTC.

Potential Future Meeting Agenda Items

Staff Payne explained that the next meeting will take place Wednesday, September 26th and should include the following:

- *The Quarterly Report*
- *Complete Streets Policy*
- *Draft Prioritized Transportation List*
- *Regional Transit Access Study*

7. Announcements/ Public Comments

Commissioner Schatmeier commented about the AC Transbay Line OX and that the item was not on this agenda. He wanted to acknowledge the passing of Cory LaVigne, Director of Service Development and Planning at AC Transit. He knew him professionally, and he thought he was a fine man. He hoped that the Line OX item would be on the September meeting agenda.

Staff Khan acknowledged that Cory LaVigne's sudden passing and it impacted City's transit timeline for the Line OX item.

Jim Strehlow wanted to speak after the Commissioners' comments about agenda item 5C. He understood that there was a discussion of having a circulator bus traverse through Alameda Point. He would like to know when they are going to discuss the Beltline because the property would be used instead of Atlantic Avenue or Pacific Avenue. Moreover, he would like to know when will the area be developed and when will they have access to it.

Staff Khan responded that the Beltline property has been transferred to the City and a portion of the property is going to be used for the BRT.

Jon Spangler explained that the BRT proposal looked good to him and since he once lived in Eugene, he was glad to see that area increase their transit service. His reason for speaking was to remind the Commission that Saturday, August 18th from 11 am to 8 pm the East Bay Bicycle Coalition would hold Pedal Fest at Jack London Square. More information can be found at <http://pedalfestjacklondon.com/>. Also, he mentioned during the month of August, BART will

have its first pilot project to eliminate the bicycle blackout periods. For the five Fridays in August, bicyclists can take their bicycle on any BART train at anytime of the day.

Matthew Fitzgerald announced a Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, July 29 from 9 am to 12 noon at Fire Station #1, 2401 Encinal Drive.

Michael John Torrey, representing The People of the City, explained that a lot of people are looking for the bus circulator at Alameda Point, especially for people who want to visit the USS Hornet. Also, many elderly residents live in Alameda and he would like a circulator to pick up passengers between Webster Street and the ferry terminal. Line 31 only stops at Ranger Street and not at the ferry terminal.

8. Adjournment

9:19 pm