

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES

NOVEMBER 16, 2005

Chair Knox White called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:40 P.M.

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

Members Present:

John Knox White
Robb Ratto (left at 8:20 PM)
Michael Krueger
Jeff Knoth
Robert McFarland
Eric Schatmeier

Absent:

Pattianne Parker

Staff Present:

Barbara Hawkins, City Engineer
Barry Bergman, Program Specialist II, Public Works

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Knox White made the correction on the October minutes that Commissioner McFarland was not absent but late.

Commissioner Schatmeier requested a minor edit on page 8. He noted that it should say “40% farebox recovery ratio,” not “40% month recovery ratio”.

Commissioner Ratto moved for approval of the October meeting minutes. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. Motion carried by a unanimous vote – 5 (*Commissioner Krueger* abstained).

4. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Krueger provided an update on the activities of the Pedestrian Plan Subcommittee. The Pedestrian Plan public workshop was held on November 9th, with about 15 members of the public in attendance. The discussion was based on questions presented by the subcommittee to help guide the development of policies for the Pedestrian Plan. Topics included positive and negative characteristics what people of walking environments in Alameda, as well as tradeoffs that may be required to balance the needs of pedestrians and other modes of traffic. *Commissioner Krueger* stated that the next step will be compiling the input into a form that can be used to develop the draft policies for the Plan. He noted that the subcommittee will solicit

input from representatives of other boards and commissions at the Pedestrian Plan Task Force meeting in early December.

Chair Knox White asked for the handout on the proposed Commission meeting dates for 2006 to be modified to indicate that the November and December meeting dates not be listed as “alternate” dates, and that the meetings be held on the third Wednesday of the month for both November and December to avoid conflicts with holidays. Since there were no objections from the Commissioners, *Chair Knox White* asked that the dates for both meetings be finalized.

Commissioner Krueger noted that he has some questions about the process on providing red curb at bus stops. He presented *Staff Hawkins* with a list of locations that do not currently have sufficient red curb and requested an update on this process.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – Non-Agenized Items

None

6. OLD BUSINESS

6A. Revised Scope for Shuttle Analysis

Staff Bergman stated that at the October meeting discussed a proposed work scope for a consultant to review potential technologies for use in a future shuttle service. The Commission recommended that a specific project be identified before the technologies be analyzed. Staff has revised the draft work scope to address the concerns and is bringing it back to the Commission for comment.

Commissioner Schatmeier noted that the work scope mentions coordination with the ferry and BART schedules, but AC Transit should be included as well. He also asked that an analysis of the fare structure be included in the scope.

Staff Bergman responded that AC Transit would be included in the study, but this was inadvertently left out of the draft.

Commissioner McFarland wanted to know what level of work is being conducted in terms of estimating ridership.

Staff Bergman said a technical analysis would not be possible given the size of the project. The consultant would identify key employers and other stakeholders to help develop some ridership estimates.

Commissioner Krueger asked if this is an investigative study to assess the feasibility of a shuttle or if a decision has already been made to begin a shuttle program.

Staff Bergman stated that nothing specific has been planned up to this point.

Commissioner Krueger asked if the study would look at modifying existing bus routes if they could serve the same purpose as a shuttle.

Staff Bergman indicated that the work scope focused on a shuttle service, but that Alameda staff and AC Transit staff have discussed this project and would continue to communicate regarding overlaps in service and ways in which the services might be coordinated.

Commissioner Ratto asked if the shuttle program would focus on service to existing areas.

Staff Bergman answered that the shuttle would be designed to connect BART and downtown Oakland to Alameda.

Chair Knox White said the scope should define the project as addressing the west end. He also expressed his concern that there is still not an identified goal, and stated that the consultant would need to begin with a goal to determine the effectiveness of the proposed program. In addition, he asked that the scope be modified to include an assessment of the effectiveness of a limited number of stops, serving primarily longer trips, versus providing more stops and potentially serving more localized transit use.

Commissioner Krueger moved that the Commission support the work scope prepared by staff, with the following modifications: 1) primary and secondary objectives need to be clarified, 2) the project is limited to the west end, 3) the service could include modification of existing routes that may travel outside of Alameda, 4) there should be consideration of bus frequency in addition to routes and hours of operation, and 5) analyze the benefits for local versus more limited stops.

Commissioner Schatmeier seconded motion. Motion carried by a unanimous vote – 6.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7A. Bus Shelter Survey

Staff Bergman noted that the draft survey was brought to the Commission on Disability Issues and that they submitted comments. They expressed concern about the canopy shelters because it has posts but no walls, which can make it difficult for a visually impaired person to navigate the sidewalk.

Commissioner Schatmeier asked how the survey would be conducted.

Staff Bergman said would get input from riders, people who live adjacent to the bus stops, and the group Alamedans for Responsible Transit Shelters (ARTS), which funded some of the shelters. He stated that the survey would also be posted on the city web site to receive comment from the larger community. For riders the surveys would have to be distributed and collected at the shelters.

Chair Knox White asked that staff contact AC Transit and have them email Alameda riders with a link to the survey.

Commissioner Schatmeier mentioned that people who not normally use the bus stop would have to make a special trip in order to get their opinion of it. Important to survey people

Staff Bergman mentioned that under number 2 we could add in none of the above or other...as an option for none of the above so that we can tell which people are filling them out.

Commissioner Krueger suggested that rather than listing all of the shelters that they be grouped by the shelter design, so respondents could comment on a type of shelter. The questions about the shelters could be asked about each shelter type, instead of each specific location, and respondents could indicate how often they use each shelter type.

Commissioner McFarland asked how the survey would evaluate protection from the weather when they were just installed in April of this year. He also asked how staff would know if the shelters are adequate for people with disabilities.

Staff Bergman said that the plan is to distribute the survey in December, so respondents should have some experience using the shelters in the rain. He also noted that based on feedback from the Disabilities Commission, staff was planning to include a question about whether people have a disability, and what type, to see if that perspective is reflected in the survey responses.

Commissioner Ratto asked if the survey could be delayed until the first week in January. He noted that six new shelters on Park Street are about to be installed, and this would allow people the opportunity to comment on them.

Staff Hawkins said that Public Works had made a commitment to the Planning Board to issue the survey in October, but had been delaying it to get input on how effective the different shelters are in the rainy season. She indicated that waiting until January should not be a problem.

Public Comment

Mr. Spangler supported delaying the survey until January. He suggested that the questions about the color and style be separated from the usage of the shelter. He also recommended that the survey enable people to better describe likes and dislikes, and to evaluate other amenities at the stops, such as trash cans.

Close Public Comment

Chair Knox White recommended that questions be divided into ridership questions and community questions, as this would help to separate the issues of how well the shelters meet the needs of transit riders and the impacts that different shelter designs have on the neighborhood.

Commissioner Schatmeier stated that the survey should help with the decision about how many more shelters would be purchased and how to pay for them.

Chair Knox White stated that ARTS is interested in doing additional fundraising to purchase more shelters.

Staff Hawkins said that six shelters from ARTS cost approximately \$22,000 and maintenance has been budgeted for \$40,000 for the year. This includes replacing broken glass panes and removing graffiti. A monitoring report looking at such issues will be presented to the Planning Board.

Chair Knox White asked that the monitoring report be presented to the Transportation Commission, since this would address the effectiveness of the shelters.

Staff Hawkins said that the Council has asked that the report be sent only to the Planning Board.

7B. Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Consultant Work Activity

Staff Bergman said that on November 2nd the Circulation Task Force had their most recent meeting. Suggested to bring a consultant in to review the draft materials and bring back to the task force for review. Get input from the Commission on what should be in the work scope for the consultant work.

Public Comment

Irene Dieter stated Oak Street has been identified as a primary bicycle route and the proposed garage location is in direct conflict with this. She stated that in the 2002 Part Street Streetscape and Town Center Project, in which Mr. Krueger and Mr. Ratto participated, Oak Street was not a recommended traffic corridor, but instead proposed that Oak Street between Lincoln and Central be redesigned as a pedestrian plaza with no curbs and limited traffic. She also state that a parking garage was never recommended at the corner of Oak and Central. She urged the Transportation Commission to write a letter to the Development Services Department stating that this garage location is in conflict with the goals of the transportation plan.

Mr. Spangler distributed his recommended revisions to the previous draft of the Circulation Plan. He stated that the Pedestrian Plan Workshop was very informative. Mr. Spangler suggested that a key idea underlying the Circulation Plan should be that every other mode should enhance and improve pedestrian transportation and safety, including disability access and connectivity. He also expressed his support for Ms. Dieter's comments regarding the recommended uses for Oak Street, and noted that several participants at the Pedestrian Plan workshop advocated for pedestrian plazas.

Close Public Comment

Commission Krueger asked if the Circulation Subcommittee considered how the parking garage would impact on the street classifications.

Chair Knox White responded that one purpose of the classification is to help define street design. He stated that the Circulation Subcommittee chose not to identify Oak as a collector or arterial, which could encourage the expansion of lanes, and noted that the Circulation Plan includes no volume limits for streets. He said that the classification of 8th Street poses a similar issue, and the subcommittee chose to classify it as a collector to indicate that the street should not be redesigned to encourage additional through traffic. He suggested that it may be appropriate to use different terminology if that is causing confusion. He also noted that while it is not reflected on the map, that the subcommittee recommends classifying Oak as a priority pedestrian street.

Commissioner Knoth asked for clarification on the pedestrian map.

Chair Knox White stated that the pedestrian zones were not identified as a way to indicate pedestrian routes, but as a way to identify priority areas where funding should be targeted. He emphasized that the map is only an initial draft, and that the Pedestrian Subcommittee should hopefully use this as a starting point.

Commissioner Schatmeier stated that he hoped the role of the consultant is to evaluate the Subcommittee's proposals from a technical standpoint and to look at the consequences of those decisions, and not to question the intent of the Subcommittee.

Commissioner Knoth asked what staff's concerns are about the Subcommittee's recommendations, and what staff would like to see the consultant do.

Staff Bergman said that staff's concerns were mostly related to some of the issues already discussed, such as the classifications of Park Street and Webster Street as minor arterials, and 8th Street, and that the definitions do not fit the standard definition of collector and local.. He noted that the consultant work scope has not yet been drafted, and that staff is looking for input from the Commission.

Staff Hawkins stated that part of the problem was how the process was set up, that Subcommittee and the task force would meet but other department would not have a chance to comment until after it went through all the boards and commissions.

Chair Knox White disagreed, stating said that in the first part of the Circulation Plan, the draft material was routed to staff for comment prior to being presented to the other boards and commissions. What are the goals of the consultant.

Staff Hawkins said that the goals are to look at the work. Lots of it was based on the personal experience and living in the city, whereas the consultant can draw upon on work they have done in other areas. They can look at the concerns raised by the Subcommittee and staff and draw on their experience resolving similar issues elsewhere.

7C. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Call For Projects

Staff Hawkins referred to four handouts that had been distributed: 1) the calendar on how to proceed with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), 2) a list of the carry over projects, 3) a list

of the unfunded projects, and 4) a sample CIP project priority ranking sheet. She noted that the upcoming CIP will include only the one-time capital projects and the annual projects will be removed. *Staff Hawkins* requested input on the unfunded projects and other improvements that the Commission would support including in the CIP. She noted that projects would be evaluated in December to determine if proposed projects rank high enough to move forward in the process.

Chair Knox White asked if there is a description of the projects.

Staff Hawkins said that if there are any questions about specific projects to contact her.

Commissioner Krueger asked what was included in the Bus Stop Accessibility Improvement Phase II.

Staff Hawkins stated that December 16 is the deadline for input on the projects, and that there will be three public meetings through the CIP process, one on Bay Farm Island, one on the East End, and one on the West End.

Commissioner Krueger moved to continue this item on the December 14th meeting. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. Motion carried by a unanimous vote – 5.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Staff Hawkins stated that staff has been working on resolving the issue of the disputed bus stop near Lum School. She said that Public Works staff spoke with the Alameda Police Department about potentially working with the crossing guards at Lum School to not have the children cross the street while a bus is stopped. However, staff has received a number of letters from residents and the crossing guards at Lum School asking that the bus stop not be re-established. She said that this will be brought to the Technical Transportation Team (TTT), and that the Commission would be notified as to the date of that meeting.

Commissioner Krueger asked if there were any alternative locations for that bus stop.

Staff Hawkins said that staff did look at other sites, but there are a number of driveways in that area, so it is hard to find an area that has the length needed for the bus stop. As a result, there would be a potential loss of on-street parking if an alternative site is chosen.

Chair Knox White had talked with the mayor and requested to have a joint Transportation Commission/City Council meeting for sometime before the end of January. He said that the purpose would be to receive some feedback from the Council on their work to date and guidance on future directions for the Commission.

Staff Bergman mentioned that Tuesday, December 13, the Cross Alameda Trail Steering Committee will be holding a public workshop from 6-8:30 p.m. at the College of Alameda in the library.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.