

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES

OCTOBER 26, 2005

Chair Knox White called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:35 P.M.

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

Members Present:

John Knox White
Eric Schatmeier
Robb Ratto
Pattianne Parker
Jeff Knoth (arrived at 7:45 P.M.)
Robert McFarland (arrived at 7:50 P.M.)

Absent:

Michael Krueger

Staff Present:

Barbara Hawkins, City Engineer
Barry Bergman, Program Specialist II, Public Works
Ernest Sanchez, Ferry Manager

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Knox White noted that at the September meeting the motion for approval of the July minutes was made by *Commissioner Parker* and seconded by *Commissioner Ratto*. He also stated that above “staff communications” there was a decision to table the discussion of the proposed task force to address input into selected Oakland projects until the October meeting. With these changes, the minutes were approved unanimously.

3. **AGENDA CHANGES**

Chair Knox White indicated that Item 7A, City of Alameda Ferry Program: Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP), would be taken up once Staff Sanchez arrives.

4. **COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

The Multimodal Circulation Subcommittee will meet immediately after the Transportation Commission meeting with *Staff Hawkins* and *Staff Bergman* to discuss the comments on the draft proposal plan. On November 2, the Multimodal Circulation Task Force will meet in Room 391 starting at 7:30 p.m. The Subcommittee will then bring the draft plan to the next TC meeting on November 16th, incorporating feedback from the Task Force. The next two months the TC meetings will be held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month instead of the 4th due to the holidays. Since the December meeting is currently scheduled for December 21, which is close to the holidays, a change to December 14 will be considered at the November meeting, if there are

issues that need to be discussed at the December meeting. Otherwise, the December meeting may be cancelled.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS

None.

6. OLD BUSINESS

6A. I-880 Access Issues and Alameda/Oakland Coordination Activities

Chair Knox White recommended that instead of forming a task force, as was previously discussed that the TC agenda include a quarterly update on all the Oakland projects that affect the tubes or bridge access.

Staff Parker thought it was a good idea especially with the shortness of staff time and with the budget. She suggested having a quarterly update on all projects for the first six months, after which there would be a quarterly written and semi annual oral report.

Chair Knox White agreed.

Staff Hawkins responded that the recommendation will be brought to the City Manager, who will present it to the City Council.

<p><i>Commissioner Parker</i> moved to accept the recommendation and <i>Commissioner Knoth</i> seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously.</p>
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Commissioner Parker asked if the membership in the Chinatown committee was accurate.

Staff Hawkins said that a representative of the Alameda Planning Board as well as two representatives city at large should also be included.

Commissioner Parker asked that the description be modified to reflect that.

Commissioner Ratto asked why PSBA is not part of the process for the Park Street Triangle project.

Staff Hawkins said that Oakland was asking that Alameda take responsibility for notifying interested community members and will let us know when the meetings will be held.

Staff Bergman added that he had included Commissioner Ratto's name on the list to be notified about upcoming meetings for the project.

7B Transportation Systems Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM) Plan

Staff Bergman summarized the staff report. He noted that there are two activities associated with the TSM/TDM Plan that are currently beginning: 1) the employee sponsored transit pass, about which there have been discussions with AC Transit, which has developed some preliminary costs. The program is being looked at for City of Alameda employees, but could potentially include employees of the college and the Alameda Unified School District. 2) a study exploring the feasibility of shuttles. A demonstration on an electric bus was done earlier this year. Staff is proposing to bring a consultant in to do an evaluation on different types of technologies that are available for shuttles. Any proposed shuttle would involve connecting to the regional transportation system, such as especially BART and the ferries, but the proposed study would not include an analysis of routes. *Staff Bergman* passed out a general description as to what the consultant could do to help us get a handle on the pluses and minus of the different technologies and operations scenarios.

Commissioner Parker mentioned that there have been studies in the past by WABA and other organizations on this. She asked if these studies had been considered.

Staff Hawkins and *Staff Bergman* responded that they were not aware of any such studies.

Commissioner Parker recommended that staff to look into any work of this type that has already been completed.

Commissioner Parker asked for clarification regarding the cost of the transit pass.

Staff Bergman said that the number is a preliminary number depending if the schools and college would be participating. Was discussed at the Inter Agency Liaison Committee Councilmember Matarrese suggested that we do some kind of transit pass purchase as a pilot program to see what response we would get.

Commissioner Parker asked if the cost of the pass accounted for City costs to administer the pass program.

Staff Bergman stated that the cost is preliminary. It could change if the College of Alameda and the Alameda Unified School District decide to participate. He noted that at the October 12 Interagency Liaison Committee meeting, Councilmember Matarresse suggested that before entering into a program for all City staff we could try purchasing transit passes on a trial basis for staff to see what kind of response there would be.

Commissioner Parker mentioned that there are members of City boards, commissions and committees that might be interested in participating in the program and could help to boost the number of participants if that would help to bring the cost down.

Staff Bergman said that they were only looking at full time employees but this could be discussed with AC Transit to see how it would affect the analysis.

Chair Knox White asked if the purpose of the consultant work would be to look at the routes or the potential technologies for the shuttle.

Staff Bergman mentioned that identifying routes would come later. The council has expressed an interest in electric vehicles, so the intent of the analysis is to get a better understanding of the costs and benefits of utilizing this type of technology. Looking at the routes would be the next phase.

Chair Knox White suggested that the program should be developed first, and then various types of vehicles should be analyzed in terms of how they would help meet the objectives of that program.

Staff Hawkins said that the Council gave the direction to look at electric vehicles, but not at other types of vehicles. The intention of this work scope was to assess the advantages and disadvantages of electric vehicles and provide this information to the Transportation Commission. The Commission could then pass along its recommendations to the Council so that they could make an informed decision before making any commitments to buy or lease these vehicles.

Commissioner Parker expressed similar concerns to *Chair Knox White*, and suggested that the purpose of the vehicles should be identified before trying to select an appropriate vehicle type.

Chair Knox White recommended to hold off hiring a consultant until the needs and goals of the shuttle program are in place especially routing ridership capacity are known.

Commissioner Parker added that it is also important to consider how vehicles could be used by the City for purposes other than operating a shuttle service.

<p><i>Chair Knox White</i> moved that the Commission recommend that the City hold off on hiring a consultant to study shuttle vehicle technology until the needs and goals of the shuttle program, specifically routing and ridership capacity are known. <i>Commissioner Knoth</i> seconded the motion. Motion passed, 4-1 (Ratto).</p>
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7A. City of Alameda Ferry Program: Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP)

Staff Sanchez presented the staff report. He noted that that the plan assumes that the base level of operations would continue, that the Main Street ferry terminal would continue to remain the base of operations in Alameda, and that the City would continue to operate the service.

Public Comment Open

Bill Smith stated that CalStart did a study and a conference on Last Mile Served. He recommended the development of a bus rapid transit service on the north side of the island and an associated feeder system.

Public Comment Closed

Commissioner Parker noted that the Alameda/Oakland Ferry Service is currently running at 16% occupancy, and asked why the boats are so much larger than the demand.

Staff Sanchez acknowledged that the occupancy load is low, and that the reason is partially historical. The City was able to purchase the *Encinal* from Blue and Gold Fleet in 1997 at a very good price. The existing boat – the *Bay Breeze* – could carry only 250 people, so people were being left at the dock. Some runs have much higher capacity than others, especially on weekends during the summer along with certain holidays, so a decision was made to use the larger boats to accommodate these heavier used runs. The smaller boat was sent over to Harbor Bay to run that service. The Water Transit Authority just received bids today to build two 149 passenger boats, and these boats could be available to the City in two years.

Commissioner Schatmeier asked if there was any difference operating a big boat to a small boat with crew and operating cost.

Staff Sanchez said that the fuel consumption is the biggest cost. Fuel is \$2.55 a gallon for diesel now. The *Express 2* uses about 52 gallons per operational hour and the *Encinal* burns 65 gallons per operational hour. Staffing costs are about the same, although an additional deck hand is required if there are more than 200 passengers.

Chair Knox White asked if the document is primarily a financial document.

Staff Sanchez answered yes. The passenger goals come up in the discussion on maintaining the 40% farebox recovery ratio.

Chair Knox White said that he felt it would be helpful to have some information about the number of people who access the ferries via AC Transit. Also, the report says that passengers should pay their “fair share” which suggests that they are not currently doing so. He noted that a goal of the plan is to achieve a significant share of trips, but asked if that goal had been identified.

Staff Sanchez indicated that it has not.

Chair Knox White noted that the plan states that transit times for ferries should be comparable to other modes, and asked if this is door-to-door or for the transit trip. He said that if it is for the transit trip only, it would also be helpful to include information about door-to-door times.

Staff Sanchez responded that this was for the transit trip only.

Chair Knox White also noted that the Alameda Oakland Ferry has a significantly higher farebox recovery rate than other ferry services in the region.

Staff Sanchez noted that the farebox recovery rates for the Harbor Bay Ferry have increased from 32% to 49%.

Commissioner Schatmeier noted that the parking lot at the Harbor Bay Ferry seems nearly full, and asked if this is a constraint on future growth. He also stated that he has noticed a significant number of people commuting to Alameda, and asked if the City has looked into marketing this service for commuters into Alameda.

Staff Sanchez said that the parking limitations are not at a cap. Water transit authority has looked at the potential of providing shuttles, and they have funding from Measure 2 to finance shuttles. Reverse commute has been looked at, and a free ride was offered on the ferry for riders. The results of this promotion have not been determined.

Commissioner Parker asked if the Harbor Bay recovery was money generated or if it included complimentary trips.

Staff Sanchez said that it was calculated by actual revenue divided by actual operational cost.

Commissioner Parker referred to Page VII. She asked why the costs varied so significantly in the base operating plan from year to year.

Staff Sanchez said it may include capital costs, but that he would look at the numbers. He also noted that the City does not have money for new vessels or major facility changes, and noted that all vessels have been refurbished in the last 2 years. If fuel prices were to escalate, the City would have to determine how to raise fares or cut expenses.

Chair Knox White noted that it is assumed that there will be an annual increase of 3 ½ % in gas prices in the next 10 years. Is that low or is it a new industry standard?

Staff Sanchez said this is a standard number but if there are significant changes in gas prices the City may revisit the plan.

Commissioner Ratto moved to accept report as written with a copy of questions and comments attached to it. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved – 5.

8. Staff Communications

TMP Schedule

Staff Bergman passed out the revised TMP schedule. He noted that this includes the remaining part of the circulation plan, pedestrian plan and the TSM/TDM plan.

Staff Bergman reminded the Commission that Wednesday November 2 is the Task Multimodal Circulation Task Force Meeting, and the following Wednesday November 9th is the Public Workshop for the Pedestrian Plan.

Chair Knox White noted that Michael Kruger and Jeff Knoth are on the Pedestrian Plan Sub-Committee but there is one more space available if anyone is interested.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 P.M.

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