

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES

DECEMBER 14, 2005

Chair Knox White called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:30 p.m.

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

Members Present:

John Knox White
Pattianne Parker
Michael Krueger
Eric Schatmeier
Jeff Knoth

Absent:

Robb Ratto
Robert McFarland

Staff Present:

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

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Knox White moved to approve the minutes of the November meeting. All were in favor except for Commissioner Parker who abstained.

3. AGENDA CHANGES

None.

4. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS

Regarding the Pedestrian Transportation Master Plan update, there was a Task Force meeting on December 7th. Rebecca Kohlstrand from the Planning Board, Nancy Gormley from the Housing Authority, and two members of the public attended the meeting. They reviewed the feedback from the first public workshop and provided input regarding key pedestrian issues and policies.

Chair Knox White suggested that staff call Task Force members prior to meetings to remind them of the meeting time.

Staff Hawkins said that staff had called and that some members had either indicated they would be attending but did not show up or that they left messages and could not connect directly.

Chair Knox White suggested that it might be helpful to follow up with the staff person from each board and commission to make them aware that their representative did not make it to the meeting, and also to let them know how many more meetings there would be.

Chair Knox White noted that no progress has been made on the Circulation Plan since the consultant is not yet on board.

Commissioner Krueger requested an off agenda report on the status of the Bus Stop Accessibility Program at a future TC meeting.

Staff Hawkins said that she would be working on that. She noted that Public Works is short staffed so it will take some additional time. The main tasks are to check to see if the requests all went through the TTT and to review the status of the work orders.

Commissioner Krueger noted that he is interested in three issues: 1) Red curbing, 2) Paving for accessibility and 3) Parking restrictions.

6A. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) CALL FOR PROJECTS

Staff Hawkins stated that the CIP would be presented first in house to the Commissions and Boards who can provide input. There will then be three public meetings held in January/February or February/March. Staff will prepare cost estimates for the top-ranked projects. These will be presented to the public, and will then go back to the boards and commissions prior to being sent to the Council.

Chair Knox White said that this item was put on the agenda so that the Commissioners can make recommendations regarding projects that are either on the unfunded list or not on the list at all. Through the project evaluation process, some of these projects could potentially be added to the list of funded projects.

Chair Knox White asked for clarification about the carryover projects, such as the \$30,000 allocated for Bike and Pedestrian Operations.

Staff Hawkins said that when staff deals with all bicycle and pedestrian requests, this pays for the time to conduct analysis, collect data, and other related tasks.

Chair Knox White asked if all staff time is included in the CIP.

Staff Hawkins said that previously all projects have generally been included in the CIP, but that beginning this year the projects will be separated from annual costs. There will be two project lists, an annual projects list for these “work program” activities, and a capital projects list.

Chair Knox White asked if the “General Plan Update” project includes the Transportation Master Plan (TMP).

Staff Hawkins responded that the Planning Department generally has that money dedicated to consultant activities, so it is not likely that this funding would be available for the TMP.

Chair Knox White asked about the I-880 High Street improvements.

Staff Hawkins responded that the project includes reinforcing the bridge for seismic purposes and possibly adding an extra lane. She noted that the City would also like to continue to work with Oakland to improve circulation on local streets in that area. This is a Caltrans project and Alameda's contribution is participating in meetings and providing our perspective.

Chair Knox White noted that the list includes \$176,000 for in-pavement crosswalk lights. He asked if before and after studies could be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of these devices, as opposed to other treatments such as pedestrian paddles.

Staff Hawkins said that this project is for crosswalks near Lum, Chipman and Haight schools, and was funded by a Safe Routes to School grant. Therefore the only discretionary spending in the project is the \$18,000 in Measure B funds.

Commissioner Parker asked if the projects list is a wish list for grants.

Staff Hawkins said that in the header the sheet it says "carryover" or "funded". The carryover projects are supposed to be fully funded and grant submittals that were not funded should have been eliminated. She noted that the City had submitted a grant proposal for the audible/countdown signal heads. While the grant was awarded for the countdown devices, the audible signals were not funded. Therefore, while the entire budget amount is listed in the table, the only the countdown portion of it has been funded. *Staff Hawkins* stated that the proposed grant amounts are included, even if funding has not been secured, because the City needs to earmark then matching funds. If the City is not awarded the grants, the matching funds can be released for something else.

Commissioner Parker asked if any of these grants going to sunset if we haven't started the project.

Staff Hawkins said that the pole-mounted radar speed displays was one that was just about to sunset but the City received an extension. It was supposed to have been finished by December but instead it will be finished by March.

Commissioner Parker asked who ranked the projects.

Staff Hawkins said that the departments rank them. However, she noted that sometimes a project with a lower ranking will proceed ahead of a higher priority one if grant funding becomes available.

Commissioner Parker requested that the list indicate what projects have been started, the percentage of completion, the estimated date of completion or estimated date of start if not started.

Staff Hawkins mentioned that there are sheets that include this information, it's just not printed in the report that was distributed.

Chair Knox White suggested that it would be helpful to indicate the funding status in the table, so it would be understood if the funding status is uncertain.

Staff Hawkins responded that this could be indicated in the Comments section.

Commissioner Parker asked if the phase of the project, e.g. design, could be indicated.

Staff Hawkins stated that the way the document is compiled is that the whole project is listed as a single record. This helps with the keeping track of overall project costs. She said that the phase of the project could also be indicated in the Comments section.

Commissioner Parker asked if a project falls off the carryover list if it would then be put on the unfunded list? And would it continue to be a priority?

Staff Hawkins said that the Council determines which projects are the priorities.

Commissioner Krueger asked if there are any other means by which operations are handled and do on going operations count under projects?

Staff Hawkins replied that the purpose of some operations is to give Council the understanding of what people are working on. Work program is an annual project such as sidewalks, tree trimming as to how much money has been put into it.

Commissioner Krueger asked if there is any discretion for removal of projects from the carryover/funded list or is everything on her subject to go forward no matter what.

Staff Hawkins said that was her understanding.

Chair Knox White asked about the pedestrian heads project with various locations for \$400,000 and wanted to know what that was (page 4).

Staff Hawkins stated that the Commission on Disability Issues had requested that all signals have countdowns and audible signals. Public Works then applies for grants to bring the City's costs down. The budget for this project indicates the cost for all signals in the City.

Commissioner Krueger said that this sounds like another project, 1-04-96.

Staff Hawkins acknowledged that it might have been put in twice. She's meeting with the departments to review the projects and determine where there is duplication.

Chair Knox White asked about the unfunded Tinker Extension project, and whether it is almost complete.

Staff Hawkins said the Tinker Extension is considered the portion from 5th to Webster Street, and should be called Tinker Intersection. This will be funded by state funds and developer funds.

Chair Knox White asked about the traffic signal at Fernside Boulevard and San Jose Avenue for \$400,000.

Staff Hawkins said that this was supported by the school district. The projects had to be included in the budget because the City was seeking grant funding, but it hadn't yet been approved by the school board at that time. The City did secure the funding but the school board voted against the project, so it will be taken off the list.

Commissioner Parker asked if we could apply the funds to another project.

Staff Hawkins said that it was from local streets and roads funds, but will be applied towards the bicycle and pedestrian access along with bus access.

Chair Knox White suggested that a potential project might be construction of roundabouts on Fernside Boulevard to help deal with the volume of traffic.

Staff Hawkins said that the TC could recommend such a project. She noted that the City is trying to work down on already requested traffic calming projects, and a petition has been submitted by residents of Fernside Boulevard, so this issue could be addressed. If it turns out that the capital portion is more than what we have budgeted, it can be brought before Council for more money.

Chair Knox White suggested adding several projects to the CIP list: purchasing and installing the remaining 18 bus shelters, the top ten priorities from the bike plan, safe routes to school and safe routes to transit improvements, and the bike lanes on Central Avenue between Walnut and Oak Streets.

Staff Hawkins said that some projects need some preliminary analysis so that the general feasibility could be determined and cost estimates can be developed. She said that the Cross Alameda Trail Feasibility Study is an example of this. Now that costs have been determined, it can be included in the CIP. *Staff Hawkins* suggested that the Commission request funding for feasibility studies so the projects would be moved forward.

Public Comment

Lucy Gigli said that she would like this budget cycle to include two projects from the bike plan's priority project list. Also, she wanted to ensure that funding is available for bike lanes on Central Avenue between Walnut Street and Oak Street, and if appropriate that should be included in this process.

Commissioner Krueger suggested recommending the inclusion of the Cross Alameda Trail, purchase and installation of the remaining 18 bus shelters, and bike lanes on Central Avenue between Walnut and Oak Streets.

Staff Hawkins said that those projects have been sufficiently developed to be submitted. She noted that the bike lanes are to be included as part of the library relocation, but it still needs to be in the budget. *Staff Hawkins* said a safe route to schools project is less defined, and that staff is collecting data now to identify locations for improvements. Staff is also working with Jon Spangler to get more volunteers to get data, which we then can substantiate where and what we need in improvements.

Commissioner Parker moved that the following three projects be added to the capital improvement budget for 2007-08: Cross Alameda Trail, purchase and installation of 18 Bus Shelters to be bought and installed, and bike lanes on Central Avenue between Walnut Street and Oak Street. *Commissioner Krueger* seconded and was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Parker moved that the operations and annual maintenance queue be formalized and part II added to that. Feasibility studies for bike plan priority projects, safe routes to transit and schools, bus shelter maintenance and transportation Master Plan. *Commissioner Krueger* seconded and passed unanimously.

Chair Knox White indicated that he wanted to make sure that the TMP funding matches up with what the Council has already approved.

Commissioner Krueger asked if there are any rules about how gas tax funds are spent.

Staff Hawkins said that it has to be spent on transportation related items and in the past gas tax was always spent on the roads but in more recent years has been directed to transit purposes. For transit purposes it's generally allocated to AC Transit and the only other given to the city is the roads money, which is generally used for resurfacing. When the City does resurfacing, it tries to update striping and bike lanes.

Commissioner Krueger asked why \$67,000 of gas tax money is being spend on the Underground District Conversion project.

Staff Hawkins said some money is made available from the utilities to underground the overhead poles. People from the community presented to Council areas where they are willing to pay half of the bill and the City would like to have its allocation from the utility company to be put towards its share of the undergrounding.

Commissioner Krueger asked what does undergrounding utilities doing with transportation?

Staff Hawkins responded that she was not aware that the gas tax was to fund that.

Chair Knox White asked staff to check to see that this was correct.

Commissioner Krueger stated that some of the existing bus shelters do not have all the amenities. The shelter at Buena Vista Avenue and Paru Street does not have a bench, map and schedule. Most of the city shelters put in prior to the Park & Webster Renaissance Project and Bay Port do

not have map holders, although most have trash cans. He recommended bringing all bus shelters up to the new standards.

Staff Hawkins mentioned that we have been using the bus shelter funds to handle the existing shelters, and that it would be appropriate to use the current maintenance fund money for this purpose.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Staff Bergman mentioned that the workshop at the College of Alameda collected input and got some good information for the Trail Workshop and Paratransit. The Paratransit covers almost all of Alameda except for a few exceptions like Bay Farm Island. We have not been spending our annual Paratransit allocation. We have been looking for ways to expand the current program. One way is to open up an existing Taxi program to the disabled and anyone 75 years and over. Have to figure and structure that. Short term during Christmas Season had it available to seniors for shopping.

Chair Knox White asked when the consultant will be hired for the Circulation Plan.

Staff Hawkins responded that this should happen in January. She noted that staff is currently working on the request for qualifications (RFQ).

Chair Knox White requested the RFQ indicate that consultants need to have planning experience and that it would be two month process.

Staff Hawkins would like to see the RFQ go out in January and then everything done by June. The consultant would meet with the Task Force in February or March.

Staff Hawkins noted that following projects are scheduled to be presented to the TC in the coming months: Target EIR in January, Safeway gas station in February, and a request for a joint meeting in April with the TC and the Economic Development Commission to look at the new ProLogis environmental update.

Chair Knox White asked if there was any idea about a joint Council and TC meeting in January.

Staff Bergman has not heard anything more on it.

Chair Knox White said that when the negative declaration comes to the TC it would be helpful to the Commission and Planning Board to give a 15 minute discussion on the difference between an negative declaration and an environmental impact report (EIR) and what is to be expected from both.

Staff Hawkins said that we would ask Doug Garrison of the Planning Board to present it.

Commissioner Knoth asked if someone from the school district is involved in the safe routes to school initiative.

Staff Hawkins said that Jon Spangler has been working with the principals at Franklin and Otis schools along with a number of parents to get feedback.

Commissioner Knoth suggested that facilities at each school need to be surveyed to determine where there are cross walks and other facilities.

Staff Hawkins said that staff is using Otis and Franklin schools as a pilot program to determine what needs to be looked at for the other schools.

Commissioner Knoth said that lighted crosswalks are something that would be important at all schools. Currently some schools have them and some not.

Staff Hawkins said that in-pavement lights are also going to be installed at 8th Street and Taylor Avenue. Where in-pavement lights are installed depends on if they meet the warrants.

Chair Knox White mentioned that some schools have very vocal parents in getting thing done faster, and recommended finding a way to level the playing field.

Commissioner Knoth said that everyone should have at least a minimum level of facilities and that there will be some cases where traffic deems other things. He asked if there was a timeline for the study.

Staff Bergman stated that as far as part of the Pedestrian Plan staff would be collecting a lot of school data between now and the end of school year. Facilities have most of that already for locations such as; cross walks and signals along with crossing guards, and in pavement lights largely have not. Staff will also be looking at existing conditions and traffic patterns, such as conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

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