

Transportation Commission

November 19, 2014

Item 4B

Action

Transportation Commission Minutes Wednesday, September 24, 2014

Commissioner Jesus Vargas called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

Roll was called and the following was recorded:

Members Present:

Jesus Vargas (Chair)

Christopher Miley (Vice Chair)

Michele Bellows

Eric Schatmeier

Thomas G. Bertken

Michael Hans

Members Absent:

Gregory Morgado

Staff Present:

Alex Nguyen, Assistant City Manager

Virendra Patel, Transportation Engineer

Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator

2. Agenda Changes

Commissioner Vargas removed Item 5A. Review Northern Waterfront Development from the agenda and the item will be discussed at the next meeting.

3. Announcements / Public Comments

Commissioner Vargas welcomed *Commissioner Hans* to the Transportation Commission.

Commissioner Hans gave an introduction about his work as the principal of Lincoln Middle School and that he currently sits as the Alameda Unified School District representative for the Transportation Commission and resides in Bay Farm.

Commissioner Schatmeier said there are flyers in the hallway, which were produced by AC Transit, announcing a community meeting on Tuesday, October 14 at 5:30 p.m. at the Main

Library. The transit agency created Plan ACT, which will study adjusting schedules and plan routes, and they want the public to assist. He also mentioned that Line 51 was important to Alameda residents and the public process benefited residents during the recession when cutbacks were prevalent.

Commissioner Vargas noted that transportation technology was advancing in California and the state recently approved beta testing for driverless vehicles.

4. Consent Calendar

4A. Meeting Minutes – July 30, 2014

The minutes will be carried over to the next Transportation Commission meeting.

5. New Business

5B. Approve Cross Alameda Trail Design Concept

Staff Payne presented the staff report.

Commissioner Vargas opened the floor to public comments.

Jerry Serventi, resident of the West End, frequently used the proposed trail area to walk his dog. He felt the trail would benefit the community because the trail could be used by a number of people with different comfort levels. He felt transit on the corridor also would benefit the City and the next step would be to develop nodes at Webster Street, West Campus Drive, Fifth Street, Third Street and Main Street. He applauded staff for conducting extensive outreach, and he urged staff to keep the community engaged in the early parts of the design process such as at 25 percent design.

Lisa Helina-Prior, mother of two children who attend Nea Community Learning Center and Alameda Community Learning Center, said 50 to 60 cars were parked on the site every school day and there were no other parking options for the faculty of 900 students from K-12th grades. She explained that families have no place to drop off their children, so they use Third Street as a drop off point in the morning. Additionally, she explained that the school made allowances by staggering student's class start times, but the travel time between Central Avenue and the Appezato Parkway takes 20 minutes due to traffic volumes. Furthermore, she stated that *Patty Wilczek*, Executive Director of Community Learning Center Schools, submitted a letter back in July asking staff how students would be able to cross the pathway given the high traffic volume. Furthermore, she felt that there was limited access for emergency vehicles on the side of the facility and the project would put students' safety at risk. Also, she pointed out that the Boys and Girls Club shared the parking area with the school, which further limits parking.

Jon Spangler, Alameda resident and a League of American Cycling Instructor, said when he was a Commissioner with the City's Transportation Commission from 2002-2004 he was a coauthor of the Cross Alameda Trail vision plan. He explained that the project was in the pipeline well

before his term as Commissioner. He felt the previous Alameda Unified School District's (AUSD) superintendent did not take into account how the City's upcoming transportation projects would impact the District. He presented an option of including a drop off zone in the transit right of way, so pedestrian access would be possible off of Third Street. He explained that removing benches from the project was brought up on the community blogs and that should not occur because benches are needed every 1,000 feet to make sure the trail is fully compliant under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Moreover, he was excited to see the project underway because the trail would connect west Alameda and Alameda Point to the Fruitvale BART Station.

Jim Strehlow, Alameda Resident, said he was in favor of the design. There are details of the plan that need to be worked out. One example has to do with not being able to make right turns on Webster Street, which are needed. Additionally, he said staff should review the details because restricting right turns would prevent people from accessing major sites on Buena Vista Avenue or Webster Street.

Bara Waters, representative of Community Learning Center Schools, felt the project would create a major traffic issue and the facility's access needs should be taken into account in terms of emergency access. She is in favor of the concept.

Commissioner Vargas asked *Staff Payne* about the access to the school and whether it was appropriate to ask the landowner to present access needs to the City.

Staff Payne replied that the City was working with Alameda Unified School District (the landowner) on access, egress and student drop off and pick up issues. Also, she said Alameda Public Works improved the school's drop off and pick up area on Third Street.

Lucy Gigli, President of Bike Walk Alameda, said the City has been planning the project for decades and she was happy they found funding. She believed the cross section was a great way to separate pedestrians and bicyclists. She thought the trail was squished under the southern boundary, especially with the trees near the Esperanza site within proximity to the donut shop. She does not want to cut a bunch of trees down, but there may be some wiggle room for the bus lane. She also was concerned with the intersections and how they cross the streets. She stated that along Main Street where the path goes on one side and jogs way over to the crossing was not the way bicyclists move and the City should accommodate that mentality. She wanted staff to address the school's concerns and watch traffic patterns; however, the city has a policy to create more open space rather than parking on the proposed open space. She acknowledged that the ultimate purpose of the trail would allow kids to walk and bicycle to school safely.

Donna Eyestone, board member of Bike Walk Alameda, reaffirmed *Ms. Gigli* statements. She also exclaimed that getting people walking and biking in a separated space was important. This opportunity would open up the west end of the island to bicycling and walking.

Commissioner Bertken stated that the Commission has the opportunity, according to the schedule, to look at the actual design in January and most of the items would be reconsidered when reviewing the final design.

Commissioner Schatmeier said the separation of bicycles and pedestrians was a great approach. However, he was concerned with pedestrians and bicyclists not staying within their designated spaces because just separating the modes would not control people from deviating such as what happens on the Bay Farm Island paths. Thus, it has to be done correctly.

Commissioner Hans asked staff why a jogging path was needed rather than having just one big pedestrian path.

Staff Payne replied part of the issue was that joggers like to jog on softer surfaces. She clarified with the Commission that emergency vehicles would be able to travel on the proposed bikeway because it would be wide enough at 12 feet.

Commissioner Bertken asked how this project would impact the safety vehicles or access to the school.

Staff Payne replied that the school driveway parallel to the southern part of the trail is on school property based on preliminary information from the record survey. Therefore, emergency access could occur on their property.

Commissioner Miley said he agreed with *Commissioner Bertken's* comments and he believed that receiving the design concept in the early stages while engaging the community and hearing their comments were important. He shared some concerns that the jogging path was against the fence, but he understood the staff's budgeting issues.

Commissioner Vargas asked staff if the landscaping would be implemented or would that be phased later.

Staff Payne replied that there is funding for a bioswale and to plant 65 trees without irrigation. She explained that there are different options to keep the trees watered for the first few years such as tree bags and polymers. In the future, she said that staff may be directed to provide more landscaping, but that does not pertain to this project.

Commissioner Vargas explained to staff that public engagement must be maintained with the communities, schools and Boys and Girls Club. He also asked staff if reports were provided to Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) on accomplishments and milestones.

Staff Payne replied that there are progress reports provided to ACTC.

<p><i>Commissioner Miley</i> moved staff recommendations with two notes commending the staff with public engagement and asking staff to review all public and the Commission's comments to resolve conflicts. <i>Commissioner Schatmeier</i> seconded the motion. The motion was approved 6-0.</p>
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5C. Review Citywide Pedestrian Safety Program

Staff Payne presented the report.

Commissioner Schatmeier said he was glad to see the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) events. He explained that when he worked in Marin County, he administered the SRTS program, which was funded by a countywide sales tax of 11 percent. He felt switching travel behaviors from driving to walking or biking to school was not a pipedream because a great conversion occurred in Marin County and he would like Alameda to keep up the good work.

Commissioner Miley stated that on Bay Farm he would see a number of students ride their bicycles even though the path was not ideally designed. He made staff aware of pedestrian issues on Mecartney Road, especially during the evening hours at Belmont Way and Verdemar Drive.

5D. Review Quarterly Report on Activities Related to Transportation Policies and Plans

Staff Payne and *Staff Patel* presented the report.

Commissioner Miley asked *Staff Patel* if it was possible to get the city of Oakland and Caltrans to create two left turn lanes on High Street.

Staff Patel replied that Caltrans controlled the intersection and he would contact his connections at Caltrans to request the left turn lanes at High Street.

Commissioner Miley asked staff to include the Jackson/ Broadway project as a future agenda item and have ACTC present information about the project's outreach process.

Staff Patel replied that the project contains two parts: 1. downtown circulation for downtown Oakland including Chinatown, Atlantic Avenue, and Constitution Way; 2. reviewing the Broadway/Jackson scope of work, where the consultant would be hired and public outreach would begin.

Commissioner Bellows stated that from her understanding, the city of Oakland was conducting the circulation portion and ACTC was conducting the Broadway/Jackson section.

Commissioner Vargas replied once ACTC finalizes their consultants the Commission would engage with them.

6. Staff Communications

6A. Potential Future Meeting Agenda Items

- Next meeting Wednesday, November 19, 2014
- Item 4A. Approve Meeting Minutes – July 30, 2014
- Item 5A. Review Northern Waterfront Development
- Car2Go carsharing program

- Ferry terminal access
- I-880/Broadway/Jackson project
- AC Transit to present Alameda Service Plan
- BART shuttle services

7. *Announcements/ Public Comments*****

Staff Payne provided a summary about the Transportation Commission's Ferry Access Improvement subcommittee, which consists of *Commissioner Bellows*, *Commissioner Bertken*, and *Commissioner Schatmeier*. She also explained that they met with the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), Lucy Gigli of Bike Walk Alameda, AC Transit representatives, Doug Biggs of Alameda Point Collaborative and Amy Wooldridge, Alameda Recreation and Parks Department Director. They will reconvene in November when they have more details.

Commissioner Schatmeier replied that there was great consensus on the goals that were to be achieved. Moreover, he felt that they recognized ridership increases, associated issues with increased ridership and parking as main issues.

Jon Spangler stated that the back route into the Frank Otis Elementary School Campus near Court Street contains an old sign with no reflectors on the diamond yellow sign. Thus, motorists drive rapidly down the street to drop students off on time. He also said if one were to make another right turn there was a big drop off zone and that corner needed work. Additionally, he stated that there was a fence around the facility that did little to protect parked bikes. Ultimately, he would like Public Works to look at the street and the adjoining intersection to see if safety could be improved.

Jim Strehlow stated that the intersection of Fernside Boulevard and Versailles Avenue contained a pedestrian blinking light across Fernside Boulevard, which was working wonderfully. He saw people obeying the traffic control and he thanked the City for the newly tarred roadway along Buena Vista Avenue near the Edison Elementary School.

8. *Adjournment*****

8:30 pm