

# Transportation Commission Minutes

Wednesday, January 25, 2011

*Commissioner Kathy Moehring* called the Transportation Commission to order at 7:01 p.m.

## 1. Roll Call

Roll was called and the following was recorded:

Members Present:

Kathy Moehring (Chair)

Jesus Vargas

Thomas G. Bertken

Christopher Miley

Michele Bellows

Staff Present:

Obaid Khan, Supervising Civil Engineer

Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator

Adrienne Heim, Administrative Assistant

## 2. Minutes

*Commissioner Vargas* moved approval of the minutes for the December 14, 2011 meeting if “tree” in 4B were to be made plural. *Commissioner Bertken* seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

## 3. Oral Communications – Non-Agendized Items / Public Comments

*Commissioner Vargas* commented on Tom Remas, Bay Area Civil Engineer, who passed away recently. He called for a moment of silence.

*Commissioner Moehring* welcomed two new commissioners, Michele Bellows and Christopher Miley.

*Jim Strehlow*, Alameda resident and local employee, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Alameda Sun* at the end of 2011 regarding the I-880 project along 23rd and 29th Avenue bridges. He had not heard of project updates. Apparently, others saw problems concerning the bridges, especially construction, and most issues have been resolved. The website, I-880 corridor.com at Caltrans, shows the status of the projects including the 23rd and 29th Avenue bridge status. Citizens should know what is happening with the status and how it affects them.

*Commissioner Moehring* stated that she took the I-880 project issue to staff and staff took the issue to Alameda City Council.

*Staff Khan* responded that the project is funded by Regional Measure 2, and has other funding sources, totaling \$100 million. Caltrans addresses some concerns regarding traffic that goes through residential areas to and from the freeway. The project raises 29<sup>th</sup> Avenue northbound off ramp, and creates better connections into Alameda by creating dual left turns and a signal. Staff's main concern was directed towards the 23rd Avenue interchange. Northbound drivers will be able to enter I-880 by driving on a combined on-ramp with a signal near the ramp. Staff negotiated the final design and brought their recommendations to the City Council, Alameda Transportation Commission and Alameda Planning Board. Staff and Caltrans addressed signal impacts at Clement and Park Streets intersection. Staff recommended that Alameda CTC provide or help find funding to create bus queue jump lanes on Park Street, which will allow transit priority from Buena Vista to the bridge, and will link the signals between Oakland and Alameda to the bridge. The queue build up may increase on Park Street, but only for a short period. Also, staff is working with Caltrans to fund signal priorities off the on-ramp at 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. All issues that were raised with the City Council have been looked at and been negotiated to minimize any impacts. If the Transportation Commissioners would like the Alameda CTC to come present about construction impacts, that would be good.

*Commissioner Moehring* stated that she would love to have the Alameda CTC present and to include the presentation on the next agenda. Also, she requested to have this item on a semi-regular basis to keep the TC and public up to date.

*Staff Khan* – There are two lanes coming into Alameda on 23rd and 29th Avenues. Therefore, it would be a great opportunity to have regular construction updates from the Alameda CTC and staff will add this to the March agenda.

## **4. New Business**

### **4A. TSM/TDM Recommended Strategies**

*Staff Khan* summarized the staff report.

*Cliff Chambers*, consultant from Mobility Planners, provided further details on key findings and recommendations from the staff report.

*Commissioner Vargas* asked what cities have Transportation Management Associations (TMA), how the TMA director would work with city staff, and what are the fiscal impacts of supporting implementation. Commissioner Vargas also mentioned that staff's presentation and document listing the components and subsequent strategies make sense.

*Cliff Chambers* responded that TMAs are like Baskin Robbins, meaning they have many flavors.

Some are based on a citywide level; most are developed at a very large development, like Bishop Ranch in San Ramon, and the TMA in San Francisco's downtown. There are different levels of funding so it is difficult to pinpoint an exact funding source. It makes sense to develop a TMA with individual employers like Harbor Bay Landing and Alameda Point since the City does not have adequate staff resources.

*Staff Khan* stated there is a concern for funding a citywide TMA. Staff is looking at ways to gather revenues and the best approach is under the MX zone developments that require a master plan, and that would be the catalyst to start a TMA. For example, Alameda Landing may need to start a shuttle program. Since there is already a shuttle program running, including Alameda Landing could be a potential funding source. The Estuary Crossing Shuttle currently operates to Wind River and College of Alameda. Now the City needs to provide revenues to sustain staff time to provide the shuttle service.

*Commissioner Moehring* responded to Staff Kahn regarding targeting Webster and Park Streets, Harbor Bay Business Park and Harbor Bay Landing to partner and seek membership in a future TMA. She asked if staff contacted these groups to help expand the program or create a program that benefits everyone, understanding staff time.

*Staff Khan* stated this is a good idea, but the City cannot impose this plan upon any existing business. The key for us is to bring the employers together with a potential localized grouping (South Shore, Webster and Park Streets, and Harbor Landing). The main goal is to create a program to help employers encourage employees to use mass transit and other shared commute options.

*Cliff Chambers* – Staff pulled a meeting together to see how Alameda businesses felt about such TDM strategies. Around 12 employers participated and gave input; however, staff needs time and resources to pull it together, and to create a catalyst.

*Commissioner Miley* asked whether carshare programs are part of the TDM strategy.

*Cliff Chambers* responded that carshare is one element that is explained in the document, and the City has carshare, but the carshare program is not fully utilized.

*Commissioner Vargas* stated having attended a meeting at the California Transportation Forum recently, he asked a question and the resulting answer was government should not add another layer or commission to transportation issues. Having said that, a TMA would create another layer. There should be an option where an organization resembles a public-private partnership. Therefore, staff should look into the TDM recommendations that benefit the City's goals, and once a big funding opportunity occurs, a separate institutional entity could take on this task.

*Cliff Chambers* stated that many TMAs are non-profits, such as the San Luis Obispo Ride-On Transportation. Many TMAs have elected officials on their private non-profit boards. Furthermore, many TMAs are private non-profits that are member based. One commonality is TMAs have a champion who supports trip reduction to enhance quality of life and improve the environment.

*Commissioner Bertken* asked about the staff report's findings regarding Alameda Point. The report mentioned transit availability is an important part of combating congestion, but in connection to Alameda Point the ferry service should be mentioned and service is important to future development. With regards to the report's findings, there is a similarity between Alameda Point and Treasure Island due to traffic congestion from drivers entering the tube heading towards Alameda Point and congestion when drivers exit the Bay Bridge towards Treasure Island. Therefore, that case should be looked into for similarities. Also, in regards to modeling the traffic congestion for Alameda Point, he questioned what staff used to obtain the congestion rates.

*Cliff Chambers* explained that his colleagues at Dowling Associates are working with the congestion modeling.

*Staff Khan* stated that the data was provided by the 2000 General Plan, under the Land Use Element and is still current. The Land Use Section includes household and employment data for Alameda Point.

*Commissioner Bertken* announced the new ferry service in May 2012 between South San Francisco and Alameda, and staff should include this information in their report.

*Jim Strehlow*, Alameda resident and local employee, stated that a TMA is wonderful idea, especially given his inside view of a national transit commuter program, where an employee could submit a voucher for an alternative travel subsidy of up to \$220. He mentioned the program to his employer and it created a struggle for his employer to take on the plan and read through the red tape. Therefore, having a TMA to facilitate the program would be great.

*Jon Spangler*, Alameda resident and a League of American Cycling Instructor, stated the TMA concept is great; however, he questioned whether it is possible to require businesses to join a TMA when they seek a business license in order for the City to legally gain momentum on a program. TSM/TDM depends on external funding through state and federal appropriations and they cut back the commuter benefits specifically for bicycle trips. Consequently, AC Transit cannot provide the initial service it once had due to lack of funds. Furthermore, transportation as it relates to land use policy needs to include land density and reform parking requirements.

*Commissioner Moehring* asked for any additional comments to the TSM/TDM Strategies. For this month's meeting, the commissioners are only required to provide comments.

*Staff Khan* – This plan needs to be completed, reviewed and approved in February so we can receive payment from Caltrans. Therefore, staff would like the commissioners to make the final recommendations in February.

*Commissioner Moehring* acknowledged the deadline.

*Commissioner Bertken* questioned the strategies regarding how vehicle trips are estimated for new development. He also asked about the parameters that go into the strategies such as the

minimum number of employees needed to begin the TDM program.

*Staff Kahn* – Staff would run a model using computer software to incorporate land use density, peak time trips, trip generation rates based on type of land use to estimate traffic generation and use TDM strategies to reduce the congestion.

*Commissioner Bertken* asked how staff determines what goes into the model.

*Staff Khan* explained that Institute Of Transportation Engineers trip generation rates are used in the model.

*Staff Bertken* responded so mitigation is based on environmental significance.

*Commissioner Moehring* agreed to the deadline again and acknowledged that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 22.

#### ***4B. Bicycle Facility Design Guidelines – Summary of Comments***

*Staff Khan* summarized the staff report with a power point presentation and stated that he would like to present the final draft to the TC in March for final recommendations.

*Commissioner Bertken* stated in the staff report, specifically in Appendix A and D, there is no case studies of where bicycle parking requirements and bicycle shower facilities are being implemented.

*Barry Bergman* stated that there are general examples of bicycle parking policies and they are included in the report. Specific Appendix D thresholds can be included in the revised report.

*Commissioner Vargas* asked if an extended time of input would be helpful.

*Staff Khan* stated middle of February is the deadline to make final recommendations.

*Staff Moehring* commented towards a financial burden upon employers to construct bicycle showers and lockers.

*Barry Bergman* stated in the report, regarding Appendix D, if there is only one shower provided, the shower must be marked as unisex and for persons of disabilities.

*Staff Moehring* asked about national safety guidelines that the City must follow for right turn lanes accommodating bicycles and automobiles.

*Staff Khan* – Staff has worked on such an issue for example if you were to ride on Fernside today and cross High Street going west you will see that staff did not have the space to create a bike lane, so they dropped a lane and included sharrows. The cities of Oakland and Berkeley have made similar treatments.

*Barry Bergman* stated that it is not advisable to have bicycle lanes to the right of the turning car lane.

*Commissioner Moehring* called for public comments or questions.

*Lucy Gigli*, President of BikeAlameda, started off by saying thank you to staff for being so diligent in answering questions and calls that have come to draft the guidelines. Since there are new commissioners, it is important to re-iterate the need to implement these guidelines to make Alameda's streets safer and help more cyclists riding on the streets. According to well documented research reports, cycling activity increases when the city accommodates all types of cycling skills and creates separate facilities such as cycle tracks (Fernside Street by Lincoln Middle School), Class I bike paths and buffered bike lanes. Again, she appreciates staff's efforts to get the best facilities for the City.

*Jon Spangler*, Alameda resident and a League of American Cycling Instructor, he has been a bicycle advocate since 1970. This month he took a bicycle tour on a Sunday afternoon in Oakland where he saw the bicycle lane within the right turn lane. Protection of the door zone is important, but it is not feasible to expand streets to accommodate cyclists without angering drivers. Regarding Figure 13, on page 24 of 46, if you were driving a car into that intersection you would not go straight through the intersection by driving through the right turn lane. Therefore, you should not ride your bike that way. I recommend in that intersection always take the thru traffic lane. Figure 11, page 22 of 46, should be the preferred design alternative. Mr. Spangler commends the City of Alameda on the positioning of sharrows on the road and the City should continue the tradition of positioning the point of arrow of sharrows safely outside of the door zone. Also, the City should include "Share the Road" signage for cyclists and drivers. Furthermore, the city should erect informational signs stating Alameda is a "Bike Friendly" city and educational signs for cyclists to "Stay out of the Door Zone." He would also like to see a reduced defacto parking strip for automobile parking from 8 to 7 feet ultimately creating a psychological road diet for drivers to park closer to the curb. Finally, he would like the City to include a bicycle buffer (see Figure 7) next to the door zone rather than to the left side of the cyclist.

*Jim Strehlow*, Alameda resident and local employee, would like to see signage appear once funding is available. Signage is good for people who are not familiar with the bicycle landscape, so lets prioritize this item.

*Commissioner Bellows* stated that the guidelines are incredibly comprehensive and public input was great.

*Commissioner Miley* also appreciated the public process, and reserved comments until the item is brought back in March.

*Commissioner Moehring* would like to see more signage to educate the public to share the road and important for everyone to be more considerate. She also recommended that Mr. Spangler present a bicycle safety tip at each meeting going forward, such as bicyclists should share the

street with drivers and not ride on the sidewalk.

*Staff Khan* clarified one item within the presentation, when he said 6 inches versus 4 inches, he did not mean to reduce the bicycle lane width on the traffic side. He was thinking on the parking lane side. There is a requirement from Caltrans, which states that the bike lane stripe should be 6 inches. Also, including the T's at 7 feet instead of 8 feet is intriguing and he will look into it.

*Commissioner Moehring* liked the T's in the bike lane from the door zone.

*Commissioner Bertken* discussed his interest in the T's within the bicycle lane and how it encourages better parking.

*Staff Khan* will come back for a final recommendation from the TC in March.

#### **4C. Transportation Commission Bylaw Revisions**

*Staff Payne* summarized the staff report to revise the commission bylaws.

*Commissioner Bertken* stated regarding the minutes to break the one paragraph that presents three different concepts into three paragraphs.

*Commissioner Moehring* called for public comments or questions.

*Jon Spangler*, Alameda resident and a League of American Cycling Instructor, objected to removing the monthly meetings to every other month and to the quorum definition for the rules of order section C, subsection M. To abandon the initial rule and to not define the quorum is unacceptable. In Section A, under meeting minutes, Mr. Spangler mentioned that the TC is as important as the Planning Board and this body should make its case with the City Council to meet every month depending on staff and commissioners' workload.

*Commissioner Moehring* stated that for a long period Alameda TC would meet every month, but would cancel meetings because there was not enough on the agenda. It is stated in the bylaws that the TC must define the meeting periods. The TC can schedule special meetings when necessary and then publicize the meetings in a sufficient timeframe.

*Jim Strehlow*, Alameda resident and local employee, did not have an objection of when meetings occur, but there must be list of dates publicized so the public is aware of these meetings.

*Commissioner Bertken* stated the reason to meet every other month is due to staff time to prepare for each meeting and should be considered the most. If there are enough items then TC members should schedule a special meeting.

*Commissioner Vargas* responded by suggesting on a trial basis to conduct a meeting every other month depending on the workload, and when necessary to schedule a meeting earlier to finish by 11 p.m.

*Staff Khan* stated that all City body meetings have an end time of 11 p.m. and to create consistency the bylaws included that end time. Commissioners can direct staff to look over the bylaws and revise as necessary.

*Commissioner Bertken* asked to define the quorum.

*Commissioner Moehring* stated the quorum is self-descriptive, and means four.

*Commissioner Bertken* called upon the commissioners to approve the motion to have the Alameda TC meet bi-monthly based upon staff recommendations and considering staff time. Secondly, he called upon the commissioners and staff to publically advertise the exact meeting months on the City's website. Finally, he stated that the 11 p.m. end time should be set as is and if necessary, the meeting could be moved to an earlier start time.

*Commissioner Miley* moved approval of the bylaw revisions with the revised minutes paragraph broken into three sections and explicitly stating "odd months" for the meeting times. *Commissioner Bertken* seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

#### **4D. Alameda Paratransit Program Modification**

*Staff Payne* summarized the staff report.

*Commissioner Miley* asked about the total number of survey respondents.

*Staff Payne* replied that 584 surveys were sent out and 142 surveys were completed.

*Commissioner Miley* asked whether the \$2.50 travel voucher cost, would curtail the budget problems for the next fiscal year.

*Staff Payne* stated most likely not.

*Commissioner Miley* asked about Measure B reauthorization and increased funding to keep the rate flat.

*Staff Khan* stated 10 percent of service revenue comes out of Measure B for the paratransit program, but the reauthorized Measure B looks to double the revenue stream. If approved in November then staff would see increased funding. To clarify the first question, in the beginning (before the start of the shuttle service), the Alameda CTC stated that they would take the City of Alameda's Paratransit surplus away if the City did not use it. So, staff asked the City Council to approve the initiation of a city shuttle. The shuttle is very successful, but in three to four years, the service cannot be sustained financially without more funding or cuts to other services.

*Commissioner Bellows* asked about the survey question regarding the \$3.00 and \$2.50 voucher fee.



*Staff Payne* stated both the Recreation and Park Commission and Commission on Disability Issues voted to increase the price up to \$3.00. Also, the survey response option was changed to \$2.50 because the premium travel voucher costs \$2.50 for a \$5.00 voucher.

*Commissioner Bellows* asked staff if the amount of revenue received from the voucher increase would offset financial burdens.

*Commissioner Vargas* commented on the fact that 7,000 residents are 70 years old, but only 60 out of 584 participants are currently active. He then questioned whether the program could sustain fiscally if more participants were to join the program.

*Staff Payne* responded that we pay operators the same amount every month so it is easy to budget. For the taxi program, if participation increases, the City would have to turn them away, which is our budgetary challenge. We hope that the program remains stable.

*Commissioner Bellows* asked staff to explain the difference between premium taxi service and MRTIP service and whether staff can re-direct services from MRTIP to premium taxi service.

*Staff Payne* responded that the Premium Taxi Service is a much broader service and you would have to pay more because it allows for a 50 percent subsidy of taxi rides whereas MRTIP allows the elderly and disabled to return home from medical appointments for free.

*Staff Payne and Khan* stated that staff limited the number of taxi vouchers and the distance taxis could travel to because they want to make slow changes to the service rather than eliminating it. Ultimately, staff does not want to drop the program so staff will review the budget and will report back next fiscal year on its progress.

*Commissioner Moehring* explained that the next agenda item would propose a price change for the Premium Taxi Service.

<p><i>Commissioner Bellows</i> moved to charge \$3.00 per MRTIP travel voucher. <i>Commissioner Vargas</i> seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.</p>
--

#### **4E. Draft Prioritized Transportation Project List**

*Staff Khan* summarized the staff report.

*Commissioner Bellows* stated there should be a banner across the top of the project list that states not sequentially prioritized, but ranked based upon upcoming grant applications. Also, staff should distinguish the ranking list between bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit projects.

*Commissioner Bertken* asked staff about their use of the ranking system and whether that would interfere with their current workload.

*Staff Khan* responded that the ranking of projects does not change current workload priorities, but helps define what grant applications staff should pursue.

*Commissioner Bertken* asked staff whether they have a rule of priority when conducting preliminary research within the list of projects.

*Staff Khan* gave an example of a feasibility study conducted by staff in 2008 for the Estuary Crossing; the next step is to create the project study report, which is the next level of planning. Many grants have short deadlines, such as one that came across his desk that was due in four days.

*Commissioner Vargas* stated there should be a cost estimated for the feasibility study and costs should be included within the list, especially when staff decides to apply for a grant.

*Staff Khan* – Regarding the cost issue, it is a good point. Staff purposely did not include costs because sometimes we can receive earmarks. This list is a general plan policy, but staff needs to work with the community to see where the work is needed. As you look at the different funding pots, the cost issue is where we crunch the numbers and find funding revenues. Other projects have specific requirements and grants have specific criteria to dispense funds.

*Commissioner Miley* explained that he is appreciative of the explanation of the ranking system, but would like a more detailed report. He also stated that projects that are not already funded could be leveraged by other projects being funded.

*Staff Khan* – The ranking is a great start and if staff revises it ten different ways at end of the day staff can be flexible to go after a grant where a project fits the grant requirement.

*Commissioner Miley* asked if staff adheres to a main objective when multiple projects are up for a grant at the same.

*Commissioner Bellows* stated that you could apply several projects for the same grant, which usually has evaluation criteria. She stated that Commissioner Miley's point is valid.

*Staff Khan* stated that considerable legwork must be done if staff decides to pursue a grant for a specific project to show that it is important.

*Commissioner Bertken* asked staff if the City Council or City Manager were looking for specific outcomes from the project ranking.

*Staff Khan* – They are not interested in what staff is working on, they are concerned with projects that should be pursued for grant funding. Leveraging funding would be important.

*Staff Khan* – Staff must submit the final project list to City Council in March.

*Commissioner Bellows* replied that staff should bring back the list to Alameda TC with revisions.

*Staff Khan* read a comment made by email from Lucy Gigli, President of BikeAlameda, regarding project ranking and when paraphrased she stated there are many ranges of transit benefits per project type and each project may be regionally significant or important to economic development. Since the City now has so many plans, this kind of a list is critical so that everyone can agree on how all the places and projects should be prioritized to align our plan goals.

*Jon Spangler*, Alameda resident and a League of American Cycling Instructor, the precedent has always been in regards to categorizing projects based on opportunistic grant applications and staff should take advantage of the applications whenever they become available. One project in particular is the Estuary Crossing project. The list should show a project once with a subcategory of two action items within the projects to simplify the list. The City Council understands this is a laundry list, but the list should also show transit benefits, or combination of pedestrian, bicycle, and mass transit benefits, plus showing regional importance.

<i>Commissioner Miley</i> made the motion to approve the list; <i>Commissioner Bertken</i> seconds motion.
--

#### ***4F. Safe Routes to School Draft Project Submittal – Grand Street at Wood Middle School***

*Staff Payne* summarized the staff report.

*Commissioner Moehring* responded by asking whether staff spoke with residents surrounding the mid-block crossing.

*Staff Payne* – Outreach was conducted to residents within a 300 feet radius of the mid-block crossing, and there is an overall positive outlook to the project.

*Commissioner Bellows* commented on the fact that Grand Street is a confusing area and the plan is heading in the right direction. She also wanted to get a total cost estimate for the project.

*Staff Payne* – The total grant fund from Caltrans is a maximum of \$450K and the total project cost is a maximum of \$500K.

*Commissioner Bellows* explained that she would like to see additional landscaping for the area to look more attractive and to create a better pedestrian refuge area.

*Staff Payne* spoke with the Alameda Park and Recreation Department and adding four trees would be the biggest landscaping. Also, she talked to Wood Middle School vice principal to see if they would like additional landscaping adjacent to their property and the mid-block crossing.

*Commissioner Bellows* suggested landscaping within the median strip, similar to Lincoln Street near the nursery, and she asked about pedestrian lighting.

*Staff Payne* – Since the grant is a Safe Routes to School grant and most of the students are home

before nightfall, staff decided to not include lighting.

*Commissioner Miley* – Staff should solicit letters of support for the project to help with the grant application. Staff also should encourage solicitation from Senator Hancock and Alameda County Supervisor, Wilma Chan.

*Commissioner Bertken* – Getting rid of the left turn is a great idea, but removing the left turn may cause uproar from Wood School drivers.

*Staff Payne* – It is a good point. Staff conducted a survey of turning movements. Within the morning peak hour, the removal of the left turn would only affect about 5 or 6 drivers.

*Commissioner Bellows* stated that the school could arrange for parents to pick up their children further south on Grand Street near the staff parking lot.

*Staff Payne* – In terms of landscaping, Caltrans usually limits funding for landscape improvements up to ten percent of construction costs.

*Commissioner Vargas* – Several of Caltrans projects are advanced and funded when there are safety issues.

*Jon Spangler*, Alameda resident and a League of American Cycling Instructor, stated he was a safe routes to school volunteer at Franklin Elementary School. He suggested limiting or prohibiting cars from making left turns and prohibiting the faculty area from becoming an ad hoc drop off zone. He also asked if the crosswalk would be lit. There should be lighting at the crosswalk, the median crossing should be extended to control turns and implement a road diet for the entire length of Grand Street.

## **5. Staff Communications**

*Staff Payne* provided a summary of the Alameda CTC's update to the Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans.

*Staff Payne* discussed future meeting agenda items, which will include the TSM/TDM draft plan and the paratransit program discussion about premium taxi service costs.

*Staff Khan* called on commissioners to vote to call a special meeting in February.

<p><i>Commissioner Bellows</i> made the motion to schedule a special meeting for February. <i>Commissioner Vargas</i> seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.</p>
---

*Commissioner Miley* also called to have a presentation scheduled for the near future regarding I-880 updates.

*Staff Payne* stated she does have this down for the March meeting.

**6. Announcements**

*None*

**7. Adjournment**

10:46 PM