

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES

September 27, 2006

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

Jeff Knoth

Michael Krueger (arrived 7:40 p.m.)

Robert McFarland

Robb Ratto

Eric Schatmeier

Staff Present:

Obaid Khan, Supervising Civil Engineer

Barry Bergman, Program Specialist II

Doug Garrison, Supervising Planner, Dept. of Planning and Building

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Ratto moved approval of the June 28, 2006 minutes. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0. *Commissioner McFarland* moved approval of the August 30, 2006 minutes. *Commissioner Knoth* seconded. Motion passed, 5-0 (Abstained: Ratto)

3. **AGENDA CHANGES**

Chair Knox White moved to move Item 7B to the beginning of the meeting to accommodate AC Transit staff in attendance.

4. **COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

Multimodal Circulation Plan is moving forward. Will be presented to go to an EIR draft guidelines to the council October 17th but a request for funding an EIR to update the transportation element of the General Plan, which will be the guiding principles of the TMP.

Pedestrian Plan will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Chair Knox White noted that AC Transit has formed a task force to look at the bunching of buses on the 51 line, and thanked AC Transit for their work on this issue.

7B. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING AC TRANSIT'S PROPOSED TRANSIT STREETS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF ALAMEDA.

Staff Bergman mentioned that this Agreement would largely formalize what already exists, since representatives from the City and AC Transit currently meet through the Interagency Liaison Committee (ILC).

Chair Knox White mentioned Item 3 that it was a good job explaining what the city will provide to AC Transit. He suggested that the City and the Transportation Commission be sent the agendas or meeting packets from AC Transit's Planning and Operations Subcommittees and Boards as to the items.

Chair Knox White noted that the City Council asked the TC to make a recommendation to them if the Agreement meets the needs of the City.

Commissioner Ratto moved to recommend to the City Council that they adopt the Transit Streets Cooperative Agreement. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

7A. REVIEW AND COMMENT ON DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) FOR THE ALAMEDA TOWNE CENTER REDEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION PROJECT

Staff Garrison of the Planning Department said that he was at the meeting to receive comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Alameda Towne Center expansion project. He noted that the EIR will be brought back to the Planning Board in October, and that the Planning Board expressed an interest in hearing the Transportation Commission's comments.

Commissioner Krueger asked if the Planning Board will have a second public meeting to take comments on the project.

Staff Garrison answered that there would be second meeting. The public will have until October 12th to submit their comments on the EIR. The Environmental Consultant and Planning Staff will prepare the final EIR, which includes responses to those comments. Another meeting may be scheduled at the Planning Board to discuss broader project issues. If the Planning Board would like another workshop, that may be scheduled, otherwise they will schedule a hearing.

Chair Knox White asked why was not the gas station included in this EIR.

Staff Garrison said that the property is not owned by the shopping center. Safeway decided to submit a separate application for the gas station rather than be included in the Towne Centre EIR. However, the gas station traffic was included under the baseline, which is other projects that were reasonably foreseeable.

Chair Knox White asked why the intersections of Park Street/Encinal Avenue and Park Street/San Jose Avenue were not analyzed in this study along with bridges and tubes.

Staff Garrison said that the scope of the analysis was determined by the engineering staff in the Public Works Department and based on their understanding of city traffic and existing conditions along with anticipated traffic conditions.

Chair Knox White asked if traffic from existing Target stores in the area was used to estimate the trip generation.

Staff Garrison responded that the analysis used the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) trip generation numbers for shopping centers.

Chair Knox White asked if it is known how this compares to large general merchandise stores..

Staff Garrison said no.

Public Comment

Jon Spangler expressed concern about the lack of some traffic data in the EIR, such as the impact on Park Street intersections and trip generation comparisons to other Target stores. He stated that there were no mitigations in the DEIR to address bicycle and pedestrian safety, such as new facilities to help pedestrians crossing the parking lot. He recommended that the project pay for its full impact on the community, and that it pay for a transportation demand management (TDM) study and mitigations. He suggested that there might be a better location in Alameda for a Target.

Tim Erway stated that the EIR included faulty traffic numbers based on a 2003 study. He stated that there is only a limited number of main streets and some narrow neighborhood streets providing access to the area, and he predicted that the project will create significant congestion as a result. He stated that the mitigations do not appear to be sufficient, even if the majority of the traffic is generated on-island.

Mark Irons agreed with the other two speakers on the traffic problem that the project will create, especially on Park Street.

Closed Public Comment

Commissioner Krueger said that buses appear to have a problem entering the center at the new entrance on Park Street. He asked if AC Transit provided input in the design and if they feel that transit operations will still work with more intensive use and the parking garage along the bus route.

Sean Diest Lorgion from AC Transit said that at the meeting with the Park Street entrance they were not there when it was designed. The final plan was that the bus stop would be re-located farther back. It's a temporary location where it is right now. It will move further back towards Safeway to the crosswalks. Private vehicles have had to stop and back up to let the buses in. Have asked staff to put a stop bar at the location to keep the traffic farther back.

Commissioner Krueger wanted to know if A/C Transit could consider a way to allow transit access to be more efficient, since the current route has conflicts with vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Adding Target and the parking garage will increase the intensity of its use.

Sean Diest Lorgion from A/C Transit said he would be interested in working with City staff and the developers on this.

Staff Khan responded that he had talked with AC Transit and the developer. Shifting the center line is being considered to help the buses navigate the turn.

Chair Knox White had questioned *Mr. Erway* to clarify his comment about the 2003 transportation study on his concerns that the existing numbers are not correct.

Mr Erway said that there was no way to know if the existing numbers on the graph was correct. He compared the 2003 map along with the 2025 projected map. The projected numbers came up less than the 2003 numbers. It does not seem correct.

Staff Garrison said that he would not expect traffic volumes to decrease over time, but that it is possible that the level of service could improve as a result of the mitigations. He said that actual traffic counts were done in 2005, and the numbers were lower than numbers from 2002. This was attributed to construction at the shopping center or a number of vacant retail stores. He also noted that the ITE trip generation numbers have been updated, based on real-world data, and the factors are now lower than what they had been. As a result, the 2003 traffic numbers almost certainly overestimated the traffic volumes.

Staff Khan agreed with *Staff Garrison*. He noted that the 2025 map was a draft and was not intended to be posted on the web site. The map is being updated and should be finished in a couple of weeks.

Commissioner Krueger noted that South Shore is more accessible to non-motor vehicle modes than many other shopping centers, and asked if this was accounted for in the trip generation rates.

Staff Khan said that the 7th Edition of the ITE trip generation book takes into account some of the other factors that weren't in the 6th Edition. It does provide information on shopping centers that are in urban areas on transit and pedestrian access. This was used for the Towne Centre project, which was classified as an urban shopping center.

Staff Garrison stated that the baseline traffic was measured on the street in 2005. If the numbers were lower than the 2002 numbers, the 2002 numbers were used.

Chair Knox White asked if the EIR assumes any mitigations that were required by the Mitigated Negative Declaration in 2003 that have not been implemented yet.

Staff Garrison stated that the signal was actually installed after the traffic counts were done, so the existing traffic should be better than what was projected in the traffic study. In the 2003 mitigation the driveway next to the new Walgreens was supposed to make it a right turn only. This one has been implemented since last month. This mitigation was not assumed in the baseline.

Chair Knox White said that under the pedestrian and bike circulation, everything in the EIR was previously approved, so there are no new bike or pedestrian amenities. The EIR reads as if these accommodations are part of the new plan, but there should be mitigations over and above this. He noted that the EIR does not look at project impacts on bicyclists and pedestrians off-site. He asked about the proposed addition of stop signs, except where it would cause traffic to back up.

Staff Garrison said that for vehicles entering from Otis, stop signs may result in queuing onto Otis. If an east-west sidewalk is added, this may have to be reconsidered.

Chair Knox White said that we're trying to create centers on the Island. Creating more parking is not the way. There's tremendously over parking this project, this amount may only be needed 3-4 days per year. The minimum here is 4.0 spaces per 1,000 sq. ft., the same as the maximums at Alameda Landing.

Staff Garrison said it would be useful for the Planning Board if there was some consensus from the TC about parking. He noted that addition of new sidewalks may required tradeoffs, such as reducing the amount of parking.

Staff Garrison responded that the parking study that was done was a combination 2002 count compared to ITE's, which at the time was a little over 4 spaces per 1,000. This was applied to the additional floor area, and added 20% based on the improved selection of retailers.

Chair Knox White asked if the traffic distribution is based on actual counts.

Staff Khan said that distribution is based upon existing traffic patterns and future land use changes and it is determined by how the traffic is going from one place of origin to destination. Most of the time it goes down to a judgment call.

Chair Knox White expressed concern that Target may have a different trip generation pattern than a shopping center.

Chair Knox White recommended reducing the number of vehicle lanes and adding bike lanes to Otis, Park, and Shoreline, to mitigate the impacts of traffic on bicycle circulation. He also recommended mitigating the impacts of the increased vehicle traffic on pedestrians by widening the existing sidewalk along the west side of Park Street, much of which is three feet wide, and adding an east-west sidewalk along the inside Burger King and banks.

Staff Garrison noted that an issue raised in the EIR was traffic trying to exit onto Shoreline to make a left turn. There are a couple of options. One is to put in that left turn lane and the other to make it an all way stop.

Chair Knox White stated that the main pedestrian path is along Whitehall Street, adjacent to the proposed Target. He recommended that the sidewalks be extra wide, and commented that currently pedestrians are required to cross many driveways.

Chair Knox White applied the seven TC-approved guidelines for reviewing EIRs to this project:

1. Not widening roadways in response to new development. That mitigation needs to come from somewhere else than pumping more traffic through the city.
2. Widening of intersections. – not an issue for this project
3. Speed limits should be 25 mph. – not an issue for this project.
4. The effects of bike, pedestrian and transit environment outside of the project site itself has not been analyzed in a meaningful way.
5. EIRs would not proposed mitigation significantly degrade the pedestrian and bike environment – he stated that the three proposed mitigations don't.
6. New stop signs do not qualify as TDM. He suggested Trader Joes needs a stoplight because it there are major pedestrian bicycling issue getting into the center from Otis from that intersection.
7. This would require additional analysis.

Commissioner Knoth expressed concern that Whitehall Place is the major entry to the parking garage to Target, and must accommodate a bus route, vehicle traffic, a bike lane and the main pedestrian path. He also stated that there is a ten-foot bike path connects here as well. He asked if a 15-foot bicycle and pedestrian path could be installed at the Office Max driveway to divert people off Whitehall.

Staff Garrison responded that this could be looked at, but there are feasibility concerns due to proximity to Office Max and the required realignment of the existing traffic signal. Also, there are neighboring properties with different owners that could impact this.

Commissioner Knoth said that the parking lots at Safeway and Trader Joes are difficult to walk through. He asked if more frequent walkways through the parking lot could be added, although this may require a reduction in parking.

Commissioner Krueger suggested improving the pedestrian and access at the expense of slightly reducing parking or creating more spaces in a parking structure. He recommended some type of sidewalk on both sides of all internal roadways. He asked if raised sidewalks could be used instead of speed bumps to enhance pedestrian access and slow traffic, as in the Wind River parking lot.

Chair Knox White suggested that the TC provide guidance to the Planning Board and possibly ask staff to put together some suggested methodologies regarding reducing the amount of

parking required. He noted that some of the TC's recommendations will have to come at the expense of the parking supply.

Mr. Garrison they can proceed with that general guidance taking a look at some of these enhancements to see what the parking number comes up to at that point. He said that the Planning Board has discretion regarding parking ratios, and that some recommendations could be included in the analysis to determine the impact on parking. One option may be to reduce parking, require them to monitor parking usage, and possibly require the addition of a second deck on the parking structure in the future. This would have to be discussed with the architects.

The project architect said that there are some leases that stipulate the availability of four spaces per 1000 square feet. However, Target has a large area for storage/stockroom space, and it may be possible not to count this space as part of the square footage. He suggested that it may be possible to do some other things to improve the floor plan/site plan/parking plan. He said that a second parking deck would be very expensive and should be avoided.

Commissioner Krueger moved that the TC recommends that the use of a lower parking ratio should be investigated in order to allow for the addition of more pedestrian, bicycle and transit mitigations such as the addition of sidewalks, bus stops, bike lanes etc. *Commissioner Knoth* seconded. Motion was approved, 5-1 (Ratto).

Staff Khan expressed concern that by recommending the removal of travel lanes that this could result in a policy conflict with the City's standard of Level of Service D at the intersections.

Chair Knox White responded that they are only asking that these options be investigated. Once staff has conducted its analysis, staff can reach its own conclusions about whether these ideas make sense.

Commissioner Krueger moved to recommend as a mitigation for the project that the City look into installing three lanes with bi-directional turn lanes for the streets boarding the project – Otis, Park, and Shoreline. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded. Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Chair Knox White stated that the 15-foot bike/ped path connecting to the east side of the project is problematic, that bicyclists coming out of the center will have a difficult time making a left turn onto Park Street.

Architect expressed concerned that 15 feet is a pretty big expanse of sidewalk for what it is trying to do. Maybe there should be some flexibility to include landscaping. The Shoreline Trail is 8 ft wide.

Staff Bergman stated that a minimum is 8 feet and recommended is 10 feet for a multi use path, although wider facilities are recommended for high-use areas.

Commissioner Schatmeier moved that the City look for a mitigation for left-turning bicyclists heading onto Park Street. *Commissioner Krueger* seconded. Passed 4-2 (Ratto, Knoth).

Commissioner Knoth moved that bike lanes be considered for Park Street as a connector to the 15 foot bike/ped path going to the center as a mitigation for the impacts of the project. *Commissioner Krueger* seconded. Motion approved, 5-1 (Ratto).

Commissioner Krueger moved that as a mitigation for the increased intensity of the project, that the sidewalk on the west side of Park Street be widened to at least 5 feet. *Commissioner Knoth* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Commissioner Krueger moved that there be sidewalks on both sides of every road within the center, and that the intersections of the parking lot and locations where sidewalks cross multiple entries into the parking spaces be separated by raised crosswalks. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded. Motion failed, 4-2.

Commissioner Krueger moved that every internal roadway should have a continuous sidewalk on at least one side and there should be more sidewalks down the center of parking aisles for access for people getting out of their cars and walking to the center. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Staff Khan stated that this could be problematic, since Harsch may not own all of the property.

Chair Knox White responded that in the past Harsch has managed to find ways to construct sidewalk on their property, so he suggested that they be asked to include these improvements.

Commissioner Knoth moved that pedestrian safety mitigations be made on Whitehall Place because of the additional traffic traveling through this corridor and into the Target parking lot. *Commissioner Ratto* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Commissioner Ratto moved that there should be more fully detailed explanation regarding the trip generation numbers. *Commissioner Knoth* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Chair Knox White asked that this explanation be included in the EIR analysis.

Staff Khan stated that if assumptions were used that resulted in larger trip generation numbers, that this would raise the parking estimates.

Commissioner Ratto moved that the EIR look specifically at the impact of the project on the intersections of Park Street/Clinton, Park Street/San Jose and Park Street/Encinal. *Commissioner Krueger* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Commissioner Krueger made a motion that a mitigation be made relating to the impact of traffic generated by the project on transit service. *Commissioner Ratto* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Chair Knox White stated he felt that we did not have a TDM plan.

Mr. Spangler stated that when Wind River moved here the city Public Works and Planning Department staff sat down with Wind River saying that we can't require you to do these litigations but we think they would be a good idea. Suggest the mitigation worded as a gester of a sign of commitment to the community that Harsch Development and Target along with the development team offer a transportation management plan voluntarily to the city to account for their new square footage.

Commissioner Knoth moved that as part of our recommendation suggest as other developments in town have voluntarily offered up greater than requested TDM projects ala Wind River. Encourage the applicant to go above and beyond to accommodate mitigations for the other 650,000 square feet. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded. Motion passed, 5-1 (Ratto).

Commissioner Krueger moved that the committee take a 5 minute break and extend the meeting time to 11:15. *Commissioner Knoth* seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

7C. SELECTION OF TWO COMMISSIONERS FOR THE COMMITTEE REVIEWING BIG BOX RETAIL

Chair Knox White stated that Commissioners Ratto and McFarland have been selected to be on the committee reviewing big box retail.

7D. COMMENT ON THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OF THE ALAMEDA LANDING PROJECT WITH REGARDS TO THE RECENT TC-APPROVED 7 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES.

Chair John Knox White reported the results of his review of the project using the TC-approved guidelines:

- *Chair Knox White* spoke regarding Mitigation T/C 5-A, the Tinker Avenue Extension. He noted that currently it is a two-lane street that does not connect to Webster. He would consider the proposed 4-lane section adjacent to this to be a widening.
- *Staff Khan* noted that west of 5th, Tinker would only need to be increased to four lanes in conjunction with the development at Alameda Point.
- T/C 11A and 11C call for intersection widenings.
- Widening the Atlantic/Webster intersection would degrade the bicycle and pedestrian environment.
- *Staff Khan* noted that Tinker is proposed to have bike lanes from Main to 5th, and east of there to be an off-street path.
- T/C 20D – The discussion of signals at Mitchell/5th, Marina Village Parkway/Mariner Square Loop, and Tinker/5th should include references to bike loops.

Chair Knox White noted that the approved mitigations refer to a TDM plan, but it does not talk about the plan's goals, how it will be monitored, or who will produce the plan. He asks that the plan be brought to the TC before it goes to the City Council. He emphasized that goals need to be established up front.

Staff Khan stated that Planning is heading up this effort, and their staff can be requested to do a presentation.

Public Comment

Jon Spangler stated that the TDM plan should reflect the operation of a water-based cross-estuary shuttle.

Public Comment Closed

Chair Knox White stated that some TDM measures, such as flexible work weeks, cannot easily be monitored to estimate trip reductions.

Staff Khan noted that there are goals established in the TCMP.

Chair Knox White responded that there should be other goals beyond those relating to tube traffic. He supports the project's emphasis on TDM measures, but doesn't see why they are proposing the amount of parking they are, since trips are being reduced. Providing too much parking will undermine the TDM measures.

Staff Khan stated that City staff have been working to find ways to monitor the TDM plan, and have been looking at examples from other cities, but have not found a satisfactory methodology up to this point.

Chair Knox White suggested using two of the four proposed lanes on Tinker as bus-only lanes.

Staff Khan responded that queue jump lanes are being proposed on Tinker.

Chair Knox White made the following comments:

- While there are bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the project, getting to and from the project for these users will be difficult.
- The plan refers to minimizing traffic on minor residential streets, this may conflict with the TMP policies. The project streets should not function like those on Bay Farm Island.
- Plan proposes 24-hour streets, this is best achieved by vibrant neighborhoods and sidewalks
- 5th Street should be no more than three lanes
- parking ratios should be reconsidered

<i>Commissioner Krueger</i> moved the following:
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The following conflicts with the seven policy guidelines endorsed by the TC should be addressed: a) policy #1: proposed Tinker extension, b) policy #2: additional lanes proposed for the Atlantic and Webster intersection, c) policy #3: the Tinker extension should be designed to encourage 25 mph speed by drivers, d) policy #4: EIR does not address impacts of the project on bicycle and pedestrian environment outside of the project area, e) policy #5: EIR does not account for negative impacts on bicyclists and pedestrians, particularly regarding proposed Atlantic and Webster intersection improvements, f) policy #7: Level of Service worse than D should be acceptable at the Atlantic and Webster intersection.

Commissioner Knoth seconded. Motion was approved unanimously, 6-0.

Commissioner Ratto moved that the Commission wishes to highlight the extreme necessity for completing the extension as a way of making this project work. *Commissioner Knoth* seconded. Motion was approved unanimously, 6-0.

Commissioner Krueger moved that the conflict between the amount of parking being provided and the plans for an aggressive TDM be resolved. They are in conflict and we shouldn't do both because it's a waste of money; let's decide what we are really going to do. *Commissioner Ratto* seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously, 6-0.

Commissioner Krueger moved that the feasibility study of the bicycle and pedestrian connection to Oakland be included, and that any conflicts with the long-term transit plan for Alameda Point be resolved in a way that one doesn't preclude the other. *Commissioner Ratto* seconded. Motion was approved unanimously, 6-0.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Staff Bergman mentioned that the ethics test needed to be completed before the first of the year. Commissioners will be reimbursed for the cost of the test.

Staff Bergman commented on the W. End Shuttle Analysis. This is the work scope that the TC reviewed several months back. It's underway now and looking to wrap that up within the next month or so. At this point the consultants gave us some background information especially looking at alternative fuel vehicles and potential routing to key destinations. Staff Bergman said it would be on the next agenda for October.

Staff Bergman showed photos of pedestrian improvements completed at Alameda Towne Centre.

Staff Bergman announced that the City was awarded a grant from the Bicycle Transportation Account to construct a path on the east side of Fernside Boulevard connecting San Jose Avenue to the bike bridge. An additional 10 foot path adjacent to the existing 5 foot sidewalk. The grant is for just under \$600,000.

Staff Khan said that in October we will also have some information on street classification from the consultants and will have a presentation on that. He said that three meetings have been

scheduled with the consultant to come back here. By December have the street classification finalized. Will do October, November and December.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 PM.

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