

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES

APRIL 26, 2006

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
Pattianne Parker
Robb Ratto
Michael Krueger
Robert McFarland
Eric Schatmeier (arrived at 8:05 p.m.)

Absent:

Jeff Knoth

Staff Present:

Barry Bergman, Program Specialist II, Public Works

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chair Knox White noted that a quorum of members who attended the March meeting was not present, and recommended postponing approval of the February and March minutes until the May meeting.

Commissioner Parker noted that the references in the March minutes to “March minutes” should be changed to “February minutes”.

3. **AGENDA CHANGES** – None

4. **COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Schatmeier commended *Commissioner Ratto* and the Park Street Business Association on the bus shelters located on Park Street. He also commended the West Alameda Business Association for the shelters on Webster Street.

Chair Knox White mentioned that A/C Transit should be reporting to the Commission in May regarding the bunching of buses on the 51 line. He also noted that the EIR for Alameda Landing would be on the May agenda.

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Brian Strand spoke regarding Alameda Municipal Code subsection 8-7.8, which prohibits the parking vehicles in the same place on the street for more than 72 hours. He noted that he had received a warning on his vehicle, which was parked in front of his house. Mr. Strand stated that he is a public transportation user, and uses his car only about once a week. He assumed that the purpose is probably to prevent people from leaving non-operating vehicles on the street, but asked if there is another justification. Mr. Strand said he spoke with the Alameda Police Department, and he was told that vehicles are generally cited if they appear to be abandoned or if they receive a neighbor complaint.

Chair Knox White stated that the issue is one which borders on the jurisdiction of the Transportation Commission and the Planning Board. He suggested that Public Works staff look at this and then let him know what their findings are. He suggested that if Mr. Strand is still not satisfied, he may want to contact the City Council.

6A. DRAFT POLICIES FOR PEDESTRIAN PLAN

Chair Knox White suggested reviewing the supplemental goals one by one.

Chair Knox White suggested that the final pedestrian plan document include the circulation plan policies relevant to the Pedestrian Plan as well as any pedestrian-specific policies. He said that if the supplemental policies do not fit under any already-approved ones, the Commission may want to go back and amend the original list.

Chair Knox White suggested that the Commission come up with the general ideas regarding the policies, and the subcommittee can work out the detailed language.

Commissioner Ratto suggested adding language to indicate that projects need to be prioritized, since the City has limited resources.

Commissioner Krueger mentioned that at the Task Force meetings the public had brought up that we need some criteria for priorities.

Staff Bergman said that most of the discussion at the Task Force meeting was focused on projects. He noted that the handout included the policies previously approved by the Commission for the Circulation Plan, and that the ones that are most relevant to the Pedestrian Plan have been underlined. He reviewed the supplemental policies and noted that some are similar to the previously approved ones.

Commissioner Krueger noted that Task Force suggested investigating locations where it might be feasible to provide pedestrians more of a priority when crossing at signalized intersections, perhaps criteria could be developed to determine where this would work. This would enable the pedestrian signal to change without waiting until the next cycle. The Task Force noted need to balance pedestrian needs against those for traffic flow.

Chair Knox White stated regarding the use of soundwalls, he noted that there are locations at Bayport where there are no breaks in the walls to enable pedestrians to cut through.

Commissioner Krueger said that we would need to observe how people actually walk, and make the appropriate pedestrian connections.

Staff Bergman explained that at Bayport there are locations where there are no connections because they were designed for use as alleys, not as streets.

Chair Knox White asked if there are some places that have been identified where there are cul de sacs that the City could develop at some time. He noted that city of Kirkland, WA has a program whereby at the end of cul de sacs when a house goes up for sale, the voter gives the city the opportunity to buy a three or four-foot strip along the property line. This enables them to construct a pedestrian pathway once all of the adjacent houses have been sold.

Staff Bergman suggested that the Commission could rephrase a policy to ensure that alleys would be included in the policy.

Chair Knox White expressed a concern about B-4.2. He suggested that a policy be included to indicate that the Pedestrian Master Plan will be implemented.

Commissioner Krueger stated that it is important to look at the layout of an entire site as to where sidewalks are to go and the crossings of the streets. Agrees that C-2.2 and C-2.3 are related but don't know if they completely cover it.

Chair Knox White said that they all follow under C-2.4.

Commissioner Krueger said that there should be a set of design guidelines to apply when someone is building a shopping center or a redevelopment.

Commissioner Ratto said that each shopping center and development is different and it's not possible to have one set of standards.

Commissioner Krueger responded that his intent is not to be overly specific, but to ensure that the spirit of a pedestrian-friendly project is carried over through project implementation, such as ensuring that there are sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Chair Knox White suggested changing adding encouragement to the policy regarding educating residents on walking safely.

Commissioner Ratto said that he believes that it's not the government's role to try and promote people to walk. He indicated that he supports promoting safety, but that he feels that promotion is beyond the role of the City.

Commissioner Schatmeier also questioned whether it is appropriate to promote walking, which is mostly a public health issue.

Commissioner Krueger responded that encouragement to walk could have significant impacts on traffic congestion, especially near schools. *Commissioner Schatmeier* agreed that this would be beneficial. *Commissioner Krueger* recommended that encouraging children to walk to school should be added.

Commissioner Parker asked about the fourth bullet, “Establish an annual program to install curb ramps at crosswalks throughout the city.” She stated that this sounds more like a capital improvement program, not an annual program.

Chair Knox White said that based on what Barbara Hawkins had said, even though the curb ramps are a capital project, since it would be included in the budget every year, it would be listed as an annual program.

Regarding the policy supporting use of rubber sidewalks, *Chair Knox White* asked if the Commission should be dictating the types of materials to be used in sidewalks, or if that should be left up to Public Works.

Commissioner Ratto stated that the issue is not necessarily barriers, but the type of trees that are planted. He noted that this is more of an issue for locations where new trees would be planted, as opposed to replacing existing ones.

Commissioner Krueger suggested noting that the trees should be “non-invasive”.

Commissioner McFarland asked if the property owner is responsible for the condition of the sidewalk across their property.

Commissioner Ratto responded that the property owner is responsible unless a City tree has damaged the sidewalk.

The Commission agreed to accept the draft Pedestrian Plan policies along with the Commission comments, and to have the Pedestrian Plan subcommittee incorporate this information for the May meeting.

7A. BUS SHELTER SURVEY RESULTS & MAINTENANCE COSTS

Staff Bergman summarized the results of the bus shelter survey. He noted that 308 individuals responded to the survey. Since respondents could submit information on more than one shelter location, a total of 812 surveys were collected. The shelters were clustered based on their characteristics, so that the 22 shelters surveyed were consolidated into 7 groups. He noted that even after grouping the shelters together, some shelter types had relatively few responses, with the total ranging from 16 up to 315. He cautioned the Commission to keep this in mind when interpreting the data.

Staff Bergman noted that appearance for all types was generally rated favorably, with the percentage of respondents who approved of the shelter designs was over 60 percent for all types.

Chair Knox White stated that glass and canopy (no metal walls) – somewhat higher

Commissioner Krueger noted that bus visibility received a lower score for shelter type #6. He noted that he personally has difficulty seeing the bus from this shelter.

Suggested that the negative score for the shelter at Santa Clara Avenue and Willow Street (#6) may have to do with maintenance, and that the metal walls make it look less appealing. He suggested that the shelter at Stanton Street, which is the same design but with glass walls, is more attractive.

Commissioner Krueger noted that respondents gave higher favorability ratings to shelters for protection from rain and wind for the shelter that have walls, as opposed to the canopy shelters.

Commissioner Parker asked what was included in the maintenance program.

Staff Bergman said that the contract called for trash removal in and around the shelters as well as graffiti removal, and these are done on a weekly basis. The replacement of panels were as needed, and this is considerably more expensive.

Commissioner Parker asked what is the standard to look like after the maintenance is completed. It does not seem to be clean enough.

Commissioner Ratto stated that dirt accumulates quickly. He stated that from what he has seen of the City-maintained shelters, they are clean immediately after the contractors have done their work, but that a daily cleaning is really required. He stated that his staff cleans the Park Street shelters every day, but he recognizes that the City does not have the resources to do this.

Commissioner Schatmeier asked if there is a difference on the maintenance of the shelters as to those jurisdictions who participate in the shelter advertising program.

Commissioner Krueger asked how quickly graffiti is removed once a call is put in, and how the City's maintenance program compared to the advertising program.

Staff Bergman said he would check into that.

Public Comment

Susan Decker said that some of the shelters have not been maintained to a high standard and presented some pictures of the ones at Santa Clara Avenue/Walnut Street and Santa

Clara Avenue/Willow Street. She also noted that the shelter at High Street and Encinal Avenue is missing a bench.

Close Public Comment

Commissioner Krueger moved to reaffirm the Commission's previous recommended bus shelter guidelines based on the survey, and to add an additional guideline: When space allows, full walls should be used instead of half walls on the sides. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded. Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

Commissioner Krueger moved that the Commission recommend the following minimum standards for shelter maintenance: 1) 48-hour response time after initial report for removal of graffiti and repair of damage; 2) post a phone number for reporting graffiti and damage on every shelter; 3) identify problem shelters for accelerated maintenance schedule; 4) ensure there is a trash receptacle at each shelter. *Commissioner Parker* seconded. Motion approved unanimously, 6-0.

8. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS – None

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

G:\pubworks\LT\TRANSPORTATION\COMMITTEES\TC\2006\0506\tc min 42606-FINAL.doc