

**CITY OF ALBANY  
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA  
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: 9/6/11

Reviewed by: BP

**SUBJECT:** Draft Albany Active Transportation Plan

**FROM:** Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Transportation Planner

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Approve Traffic and Safety Commission recommendation to adopt the Draft Albany Active Transportation Plan (ATP) as a project description to conduct environmental work.

**BACKGROUND**

In 2009, with funds from a \$130,000 Measure B grant, the City started developing its first Pedestrian Master Plan and updating its Bicycle Master Plan. To oversee the plan development process, staff assembled a technical advisory committee (TAC) formed by a representative of the Traffic and Safety Commission, a representative of the Albany Rollers & Strollers, a representative of the disabled community, a member of Friends of Five Creeks, staff from the Orientation Center for the Blind, and City staff. Fehr and Peers was the transportation consultant selected to work on developing the plans that were later compiled in a single document called Albany Active Transportation Plan. The name indicates that the plan would consider all forms of active transportation including scooters, wheelchairs, and other forms of active transportation vehicles in addition to the traditional walking and bicycling modes.

The consultant and staff held several public meetings to gather information about concerns and barriers to walking and bicycling within the City. From these meetings, the planning team developed 27 bicycle and pedestrian project proposals that aim at closing existing bicycle and pedestrian gaps within the City and removing existing barriers to the advancement of active transportation. The Traffic and Safety Commission (T&S) held three regular meetings and one study session in order to review the draft document. In addition, between December 2010 and March, 2011, the draft Plan was introduced to different City Commissions/Committees, stakeholders, and other local organizations.

These groups are the following:

- Albany Board of Education
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- University of California
- UC Village
- Rotary Club
- Solano Merchants Association

- Neighboring Cities and the Park District
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Sustainability Committee
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Arts Committee
- Albany Fire Department

Some projects of the draft ATP involve striping and signage to denote a “Share the Road” or Class III Bicycle facility. Others include changes to the physical layout of the street and will require more public and technical process as well as funding to build them. Residents of areas located adjacent to these projects were notified about the discussion at least ten days before the Traffic and Safety Commission meeting and a public announcement was published in the newspaper for each of these meetings. The draft plan was also available on line, at the Community Development front desk and at the Albany Library.

The proposed projects were fine tuned during this process and the Traffic and Safety Commission recognized that some proposals would require further analysis before their implementation. Likewise, other projects require interagency coordination. Project proposals requiring further analysis and public process include:

- Projects 6 and 10: Adams and Kains Bicycle Boulevard concept
- Project 19: Key Route Boulevard,
- Solano Avenue Streetscape Greening and Pedestrian Safety Project

Those requiring coordination with other agencies are:

- Project 12: San Pablo Avenue Streetscape and Pedestrian Safety Project
- Project 16: Segments of the Cerrito Creek Path project
- Project 20: Polk Street/UC Village Connection
- Project 24: University Village/Eastshore Crossing

In addition to the 27 projects, the plan includes goals and objectives that lead to making Albany a city where active modes of transportation are easily accessible. The plan also includes design guidelines for pedestrian and bicycle facilities and a list of support programs for advancing active transportation in the City. These are valuable components of the plan as they can be easily referred to when implementing projects beyond those listed in the draft ATP.

## **DISCUSSION**

The next step in the development of the ATP is to conduct a policy level environmental review on the project proposals included in the plan. For this purpose, the Council will have to approve this draft plan as project description for environmental review. Depending on the number of comments and requested changes that result from this meeting, another meeting may be necessary to process the changes and approve the Plan. Most of the projects listed in the plan are stripe and signage and they may be subjected to a categorical exemption or negative declaration evaluation according to CEQA

(California Environmental Quality Act) guidelines. The current CEQA scope of work covers the evaluation of projects under a mitigated negative declaration; however, those projects that involve significant changes to the street, such as the implementation of a new traffic signal may require further environmental review that will not be covered by the contracted environmental work. It will be stated in the environmental document that additional analysis will be required for those projects before their implementation.

The public process that resulted in the plan before Council consideration at this meeting took longer than anticipated and delayed the project's timetable considerably. However, the Traffic and Safety Commission felt this level of public involvement was required in order to make sure the projects described in the plans were responding to the actual needs of the community. As a result, the plan has the following schedule:

- Environmental Work begins: October or November 2011 (8 weeks required to conduct work).
- Draft Environmental document release: January, 2012 or February, 2012.
- 30 –day comment period ends: March, 2012 ( approximately)
- Council approval of final plan and environmental document: June 2012.

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

The ATP includes projects that advance active transportation and have a strong potential to shift the transportation mode for Albany residents from the private automobile to walking and bicycling and other forms of active transportation. The Albany ATP addresses many aspects of the CAP. Its implementation is estimated to result in about 15% of the emissions reductions from transportation sources.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

No financial impact is associated with this request. Funding for preparation of the environmental analysis is included in the original scope of work. However if further environmental review for a specific project is needed, a budget allocation will be needed.

Attachments: A hard copy of the Albany ATP was already provided to Council Members and is available on-line at the project's website:

<http://albanypedbikeplan.fehrandpeers.net/>

Copies are also available for review at the Albany Library and the Community Development Department at Albany City Hall.