



**TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**City Council Chambers
1000 San Pablo Avenue
April 26, 2012 – 7:00 PM**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Chair McCroskey.
2. **ROLL CALL. Members present:** Knapp, Mazur, McCroskey, Miki, and Reeves. Staff present: Bond, Chavez, Geissberger.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES for March 22, 2012.** Minutes were approved with no changes. Vote was three (3) Ayes, two (2) abstentions (Miki, Reeves).

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Amy Smolens of the Albany Strollers and Rollers commented on the latest safety initiative to sell stickers with the legend “Check for Bikes.” Smolens said the AS&R members were selling these stickers at public events as a way to raise awareness of bikes on the road. She encouraged members of the Commission to visit the website www.Checkforbikes.org for more information.

5 PRESENTATION

5-1 Police Report

For the month of March: 10 collisions—Seven (7) non-injury and three (3) injury collisions; four (4) hit and runs, one (1) collision occurred on Marin Avenue, another near a school. One (1) was an auto/pedestrian collision, and two (2) were bicyclist/vehicle collisions. The APD issued approximately 145 moving citations and made 12 DUI arrests. The month of April was designated as the Distracted Driver Month. The APD participated in two campaign days and issued approximately 60 citations for talking on the phone and texting while driving.

Knapp asked for details on the bicycle accidents. Geissberger provided details about one of them only.

McCroskey asked about the overturned vehicle at the intersection of Marin and Santa Fe. Geissberger said that there was a possibility that the accident was caused by mechanical failure.

6.0 Discussion and possible action on matters related to the following items:

6-1 Welcome Susan Reeves to the Traffic and Safety Commission

The Commission welcomed new member Susan Reeves. Reeves has been an Albany resident for 20 years. Her daughter used to walk to Ocean View School and now walks to the Middle School. Reeves sometimes bikes to work in Berkeley, but stated that she does not feel safe on the streets.

6-2 Speed Hump request on the 900 block of Cerrito Street

Chavez introduced the item saying that the results of the second speed survey conducted on this street at the end of 2011 showed 85th percentiles to be close to the threshold of 30 mph. The recorded speed was 29.5 mph at the 85th percentile. She also said that this block presented a grade of approximately 8% and that according to current policy, speed humps were not recommended in areas

with grades higher than 8 percent. She alluded to the results of the 2007 survey and the fact that speeds had remained almost the same (30 mph vs. 29.5mph), but the volumes had increased by approximately 60 percent. Residents of the street attributed this increase to the installation of the new traffic signal at Buchanan and Jackson Streets. Chavez said she would like to conduct another survey to see if the effects of the traffic signal had stabilized. The other issue discussed at the meeting was funding. The four speed humps installed at Ordway and Carmel costs on average about \$8,000 per hump. Traffic Calming in the City's Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) accrues at \$5,000 per year, which results in less than needed for one speed hump.

The Commission had the following questions:

(Mazur) Has the Commission ever turned down any other requests that have the same statistics?

Chavez responded that she was not aware of that.

(Reeves) You mentioned the possibility of measuring speeds again to give us a new data point.

(Mazur) Do you know what the highest speed was?

Knapp: Why the cost is so high? Can it be lower? Bond said that the City would request three informal bids.

(Knapp) Why has the recommendation changed from one speed hump to two? Chavez explained that it depended on where the starting point for the hill was determined to be.

(Reeves): What is the significance of the Average Daily Traffic Volume of 3,000 vehicles? Chavez explained that it was industry standard, Usually, a street with a ADT of more than 3,000 would have a difficult time moving traffic at certain times of the day. Chavez mentioned the possibility of new funding for traffic calming projects through the new Vehicle Registration Fee.

(Mazur) How about allowing residents to participate in financing their own speed hump?

Discussion was open to the Public. The following people spoke: Kristen Schwartz, Tess Lengyel, Tanya Phillips, Diane Delaine, Sol Strand, Steve Schwartz, Dan Wilcox, Nick Lavrov, The following were the comments:

- Motorists speed on the hill
- Cannot afford to pay for the speed hump
- Volume of vehicles has increased since the installation of the Buchanan/Jackson traffic signal.
- Albany is a walkable City. Cerrito St. is very close to the business district on Solano Avenue.
- Cerrito St. is used as a shortcut between Buchanan St. and Solano Ave.
- Several sources of funding come to the City, including a brand new source, the Vehicle Registration Fee that could be used for traffic calming
- The investment of one speed hump would not be effective to solve the speeding problem on Cerrito Street. Perhaps, one speed hump associated with another measure, such as prohibiting the left turn from Buchanan to Cerrito
- Investments and the source of these investments between the east and the west side of San Pablo seem disproportionate
- Cerrito Street is scary.
- Vehicles have been struck on this block
- In some areas in Albany, 25 mph is too fast. It should be reduced to 15 mph.
- The City should look more broadly at traffic and speed in the City
- The humps that were installed on Pierce St. are hardly effective
- Drivers slowed down when they saw the hoses during the speed survey
- The gentle slope of the 900 block of Cerrito is very attractive to skateboarders
- Look at this problem comprehensibly
- Look at the training the crossing guards receive because they cause a lot of the congestion when crossing children.

The Commission discussed the issue.

Traffic and Safety – Minutes

April 26, 2012

- Mazur asked if by closing the left turn on Buchanan the level of service at the intersection of Jackson and Buchanan would be affected. Chavez said that a traffic study would be necessary.
- Miki asked if the Complete Streets consultants could look into this problem.
- Mazur asked what the grade of Sonoma Street was. Chavez said that the Sonoma humps were installed before the policy was developed. She was to find out what the grade on this street is and then ask Fehr and Peers, the designer of the speed hump policy to consider application of the speed humps on the hilly segment of Cerrito Street. She said that with any policy, there is professional engineering judgment.
- Reeves asked what the difference was between the speed humps being proposed and those of Pierce Street. Chavez said that the Pierce Street ones were raised crosswalks and had flat tops that made them feel less abrupt. In addition, the topography of the area made it difficult to get a uniform height. Pierce Street is a bus route and the only reason AC Transit approved these undulations was because of the flat top.
- Miki said he was concerned about the piecemeal approach to traffic calming and that solving the problem on one street may push traffic on another street.
- Knapp added that the City needed a comprehensive traffic calming plan west of San Pablo Avenue including the Albany Hill area. He was in favor of seeing two humps on this street, but we need to consult the designer. He liked the idea of lowering speed limits on residential areas, but it may be a challenge given state law. He was in favor of prohibiting left turn from Buchanan onto Cerrito Street during certain hours.
- McCroskey asked if there were other streets on the waiting list for speed humps. Chavez said that the only one was Masonic, but this Commission decided to wait to see what would happen in El Cerrito.
- Mazur asked if all the recommendations in the Traffic Management Plan got implemented. Chavez said that almost all of them were implemented and that the Masonic humps were next on the list.
- Knapp asked if there were any provisions to allow residents to pay for their traffic calming. Even as a gift to the City. Chavez said that the only provision in the current traffic calming plan was that if after implementation residents decided that they did not like the traffic calming, it would be removed at their expense. Bond said that the City had a gift fund. He suggested that for the meeting the issue would be divided into two parts, first, decide if they would recommend one or two speed humps and the other was to direct staff to develop language to allow for the self financing of traffic calming.
- Reeves asked if there had been evidence that speed humps worked and if there have been evidence that implementation of speed humps diverted traffic to other streets. Chavez said that traffic had not been diverted because the speed humps were designed to maintain a 25 mph speed.
- McCroskey said that he would like to explore the problems on the Albany Hill as well as explore the prohibition of the left turn from Buchanan Street and the possibility of tuning the signal timing at Buchanan and Jackson.
- Mazur said that in the past, this Commission had discussed which of the three was most effective: Education, Enforcement, or Engineering and it seemed that Engineering is the most effective. McCroskey said that implementing the three E's together, had been found to be most effective.

Motion Knapp/Miki: Approve the request for traffic calming on the 900 block of Cerrito Street and direct staff to obtain engineering recommendation for the placement and design of speed humps and any other effective methods for traffic calming, including reducing traffic on Cerrito Street.

Mazur asked to amend the motion and mention to reduce traffic speeds because the Commission would get into trouble if it recommended reducing the amount of traffic as it would be diverted to other streets.

Miki said that the issue was speed, not traffic volumes.

Knapp/Miki Amended Motion: Approve the request for traffic calming on the 900 block of Cerrito Street and direct staff to obtain engineering recommendation for the placement and design of speed humps and any other effective methods for traffic calming, including location of one or two speed humps and reducing traffic speeds on Cerrito Street. Vote was unanimous.

Miki stated the following for the record: **We, the Traffic and Safety Commission feel that the data presented is close to meeting the traffic calming criteria, and that taken into consideration the 2007 survey, and listening to the residents of the block, The Traffic and Safety Commission decided to approve the petition.**

Second Issue: Self Funding.

- Miki: There is nothing that prevents citizens from giving a gift to the City to finance a project.
- Mazur: We need to have another meeting to discuss this.
- Heather Heafleigh called the attention that the petition included a question to residents if they would be willing to pay for the implementation of a speed hump.
- McCroskey: Do we have to draft a resolution? Bond said that it was not necessary, but he was going to do some research.

The Commission asked staff to draft language for a gift policy for traffic calming implementation based upon the following conditions:

- The location should qualify under the established traffic calming policy.
- If the location is not next on the list for implementation, funding provided by residents should cover the total cost of the project. No public funding should be used to cover the costs of projects that are not next on the list.
- The policy should be strictly voluntary. Also, refer to provisions in some city codes where home owners can attach a cost like this to their mortgages and amortize in five or ten years in order to spread out costs.
- Add language that private funding is not intended to replace public funding.

Staff was tasked with writing draft language for a gift policy.

- 6-3** Update on Planning Applications (Miki asked to talk about Safeway first or last because he had to recuse from discussion.)

Saint Mary's High School Conditional Use Permit—Bond and Mariam Cong provided details about this proposal. The application consists on building a new facility for the band and choir, construction of a chapel (currently, they use the gymnasium), addition to the Brother's residence and the Administration building, and a new parking lot. This would not represent an increase in enrollment. The school has prepared a Traffic Management Plan in order to decrease the number of automobile trips to the school. The Conditional Use Permit will allow memorializing the traffic management practices, such as: Encouraging students to use public transit and bike or carpool to school. In addition, traffic during games and evening events would be better managed. The Chapel will not be used as a parish. Clarifications were asked about a shuttle service to BART, and if parking permits were going to be increased for students. Other questions by the Commission were about permeable surfaces and if shower facilities were going to be included in the proposal.

Toyota Boutique vehicle sales: Bond made a presentation about the details of the project. Mazur commented on the narrowness of the driveway. Miki asked if the driveways could be connected. Bond mentioned that CEQA was completed and not significant traffic impacts were found for this project. McCroskey asked if a pedestrian connection could be added. He also asked what had happened to the bus stop proposal. Bond said that this could be added as a condition of approval.

Chavez said that AC Transit was looking at the concept of a circulator to serve the commercial and residential areas within the City and North Berkeley and that we should wait for the results of the AC Transit Study. Knapp said he was pleased to see more commercial development in Albany.

University Village: Bond said that as part of the condition of approval there was a requirement to evaluate the implementation of a cycle track.

Farmers' Market: Bond reported that the farmers' market was approved by Planning and Zoning with minor refinements to the layout. He said that the set up time would be adjusted from 4 to 7 pm.

Safeway: bond reported on the new design for the Safeway Store. The new design, which includes a three story building, features a parking structure and a delivery truck circulation area below grade. The ground level is parking and the second level comprises the store. Around the store, there would be additional shops. Reeves asked how much parking was available. Bond said that the total parking capacity was 197 vehicles. McCroskey said that in the past Safeway was committed to sharing parking with the neighborhood. Bond said that they had committed to it. Mazur asked how many trucks would be delivering a day. Bond said that between three and four trucks a day. Mazur asked if there were bike racks. McCroskey showed where the bike racks were in the plans.

Amy Smolens requested underground bike parking, lockers, employee bike parking, long tail bike parking and increased bike parking capacity. The new plans completely disregard bike access. Chavez asked if the plan included showers. Bond said that showers were standard requirements now.

6-4 Report on Speed Survey on the 700 and 900 Blocks of Pierce Street

Chavez reported on the post-project monitoring speed survey on Pierce Street. She said that although speeds had decreased after the project, still the 700 block of Pierce Street showed speeding at 30 mph. The pre-project survey showed 33 mph. She said that staff had been evaluating traffic calming features to implement in order to further reduce speeds. McCroskey mentioned that the in pavement reflectors on his street act like a rumble and he was surprised to see the number of cars that go over the rumble. Chavez said that there was no specific funding for this project.

7. Announcements and Communications

7-1 Report from staff on recruitment of Assistant Planner for Safe Routes to School

Chavez reported that the City had hired Claire Griffing as the new Assistant Planner. Bond reported that the City had received 130 applications and that an interview panel had been assembled. Claire was incredible well prepared and she was one of the top candidates. The Commission will have an opportunity to work with Claire in the near future.

7-2 Arts and Green Festival on May 6 from 11 AM to 3 PM

McCroskey invited the Commission to attend this event. He said Carmel Avenue would be closed to hold some of the activities.

7-3 National Bike to School Day, Wednesday, May 9

Chavez said that for the first time Bike to School Day would be celebrated nationwide on May 9.

7-4 Bike to Work Day on Thursday, May 10

On Bike to Work Day, a bike tour led by Farid Javandel would take place starting at City Hall and stopping at the Waterfront, going through Solano Avenue.

7-5 Albany Police Activity League

McCroskey invited the public to attend this free event and get bicycles tuned up and get a free helmet.

8. Future Agenda Items.

- Parking Policy Joint meeting—Bond said that he was not sure when the next joint meeting would take place.

- 1000 Washington Avenue Permit Parking—Bond said that this item would be for discussion at next month's meeting.
- Comprehensive review of the Municipal Code—Bond said that this would be a summer project as well as the sidewalk maintenance program.
- El Cerrito Pace Program—McCroskey said that he would be able to give a complete report in July.
- Complete Streets—Chavez reported that staff had developed a scope of work and that recruitment of a consultant would happen in May.

McCroskey asked what had happened with the Washington Avenue parking issue around the hill. Chavez said that she had not heard from the University of CA.

Knapp would like to see how to approach a general plan for traffic calming throughout the City. Chavez said that the ATP addressed a lot of pedestrian issues in the plan. She said that a lot of the speeding complaints were not validated by the speed surveys.

Bond asked about travel schedules: Miki would be available in June. McCroskey would be coming in later for the May meeting.

11. Adjournment—Meeting was adjourned at 10:25 pm.