



**TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
City Council Chambers
1000 San Pablo Avenue
September 27, 2012 – 7:00 PM**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Meeting was called to order at 7:08 pm by Chair McCroskey.
2. **ROLL CALL. Members present:** Knapp, Mazur, McCroskey, Reeves, and Miki. Staff present: Sergeant O'Connor, Leptien, Chavez. Bond arrived later at 8:24 pm.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES for July, 26, 2012.** Minutes were approved with changes. Vote was unanimous.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Virginia March said that the bus stop in front of 555 Pierce poses safety concerns because it blocks traffic and drivers zip around the bus crossing the yellow line. There are also some vehicles parked permanently there and police officers have ticketed the vehicles. She asked to put this item in a future agenda.

Amy Smolens announced that at the last Bike About Town day, there were about 65 people in attendance and that the Police Department escorted riders. She said that the following Sunday, there would be a free family bicycle safety workshop for parents and children and taught by the East Bay Bicycle Coalition. She said that AS&R is selling rear lights and for each light sold, they get one free light for kids. At the Solano Stroll, the AS&R provided free valet parking thanks to sponsor Bua Luang Thai Cuisine, an Albany restaurant.

Dennis Meyer said the new speed humps installed on Santa Fe were very noisy and that he thought they would have the flat top. Miki said that he had observed the same and that the northernmost speed hump was more pronounced.

A resident of the 500 block of Pierce asked to convert the 3 on –street angled parking stalls on the west side of the south end of the 500 block of Pierce into a bus stop because it is dangerous how the bus stops traffic and the vehicles veer around the bus and over the yellow line.

Mazur showed a video about speed cameras and a way to reward people who entered a lottery using the money collected from speeding fines.

Knapp said that he was disappointed in groups that drove the Whole Foods development out of the City and encouraged people to be mindful of who they vote for in the upcoming elections.

Preston Jordan said that the AS&R sued regarding the Whole Foods project. The bicycle requirements were laid out in the EIR and at the last minute, staff requested the inclusion of language that seems to debilitate the bicycle requirements. AS&R request to extend the comment period was denied by the City. Nevertheless, there were indications that the lawsuit could be settled soon.

Miki said that he did not agree particularly with the actions the AS&R took, however, he agreed with the intent. The changes that happened in the last three minutes, makes it possible for Whole Foods or any other development that comes to Albany to walk out of the commitments made in the EIR.

5 PRESENTATION

5-1 Police Report

For the month of August: 16 collisions; six (6) non-injury and six (6) minor injury collisions. One (1) auto-pedestrian at San Pablo and Garfield, two (2) Auto/bicycle, one at Clay and Adams, the other at Solano and Peralta. Eleven DUI arrests.

McCroskey asked about a bicyclist who was sent to the hospital after the accident. Sgt. O'Connor said the cyclist did not have lights and the environment was dark. It occurred in September.

Knapp asked if anybody had been cited. Sgt. O'Connor said that the driver was elderly and had issues. He was referred to the DMV for evaluation.

Mazur asked about the location of the drunk drivers' arrest. O'Connor said he would bring the information in the future.

McCroskey handed the meeting to the Vice-Chair and recused himself from the discussion of Item 6-1.

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

6-1 Traffic Calming petition on the 800 block of Santa Fe Avenue.

Chavez introduced the item. She referred to the speed surveys of 2007 and 2012 which indicated an 85th percentile of 29.3 mph, slightly lower than the threshold. The traffic volume differed perhaps due to the timing of the surveys as one took place during the school year, versus the other one taking place in the summer. Chavez said that the street was classified as a minor collector and that the Traffic Management Plan had recommended speed treatments for use on minor arterials or bus routes. Chavez noted that speed humps are not the only traffic calming solution available. Santa Fe Avenue is no longer a bus route and the Albany Active Transportation Plan recommended it as a Class III bike facility with signage and sharrows. Another solution would be to eliminate the red curb on the northwest side of the intersection to allow for parking there. A more costly solution would be to have bulb outs at the four corners of the intersection. Safeway's proposal environmental process will be also analyzing the traffic impacts on this intersection and there may be suggestion for mitigation measures. She also noted that Santa Fe is a route to Marin Elementary School. She reminded the Commission that although the policy is in place, the commission may direct staff to conduct an engineering study and this would override the policy.

The Commission discussed funding, residents' funding, alternative solutions and technical information, then open the discussion to the public. Chris Roche and another resident spoke requesting speed humps on the 800 block of Santa Fe Avenue and distributed written information on the neighborhood's request for traffic calming.

Commissioner Miki made three motions:

Motion Miki/Knapp: Direct staff to remove the red curb at the intersection with Solano Avenue. Vote was unanimous.

Motion Miki/Mazur: Direct staff to begin study for the possible implementation of speed humps along the 800 block of Santa Fe and find appropriate locations. Reeves asked to add “appropriate measures.” Miki said he would amend his motion to add speed humps first and then consider other measures as alternatives. Vote was unanimous.

Motion Miki/ Reeves: Ask City Council to place Santa Fe in the first third of the projects that would be implemented for signage and striping. Motion was withdrawn.

6-2 Pierce Street Park Maintenance Center and Shared Use Path

Reeves recused herself from this discussion. Bond introduced the consultants who are working on the project, The Planning Center at DCE. The consultant said that the goals of the project were to provide a passive use recreation park and a Maintenance Center for the City. The Consultant has been working with the Parks and Recreation Commission and a volunteer Working Group that was put together to help guide the planning process. Two alternatives were developed for the park and the team is now collecting feedback from the different commissions and committees before the presentation to Council.

After the presentation discussion was open to the public. The following people spoke: Jennifer Horton, Preston Jordan, Del Price, and Bob Uhrhammer. Comments related to the following: A parcourse would be more appropriate for linear parks like the Ohlone Greenway (striping proposal is not the best). The AS&R favors the path alignment along the edge of the park and a narrower cross section for the path. The path should be brought to the intersection of Cleveland and Washington. Try to avoid conflicts between the path and driveways. The park started off as a pocket park that Caltrans promised the community about 20 years ago and now it is the “everything park;” keep the open space and reduce parking; provide opportunities for those who have mobility limitations; eliminate the dog park concept. Remember that ¼ of the Albany population lives west of the hill and that there is no park in that area; provide for a passive neighborhood park that do not draw outsiders into it. The temporary bus stop north of Calhoun presents safety problems. The bus stop should be moved further north and make it part of the park. Consider solar panels for parking.

The Commission had the following comments: There is no need for public parking. The bicycle path should go all the way to Cleveland and have some kind of traffic control there. Restrict the public from using proposed staff parking at Calhoun Street because it would increase traffic in that area. Explore the opportunity to have staff parking on Cleveland. Retain open space and try not to include too many uses on this property. Provide adequate crosswalks along Pierce St. Consider including a drop off area at Calhoun to get into the park. Calhoun presents a fabulous opportunity to provide ADA access. Not in support of a bike path behind buildings and not in support of retaining walls. It seems that parking is driving the design and other options should be investigated. There are concerns about bicyclists safety in proposal B because of the sharp turns, 8% slopes, and retaining walls. Support including solar panels in the areas with covered parking. Support adding parking on Pierce Street for the park instead of including it inside the park.

6-3 Status on Implementation of Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Improvements on the Ohlone Greenway

1) Receive recommendation from design professionals on the striping of the Ohlone Greenway. Leptien introduced Ryan McKlein from Fehr and Peers. Ryan McKlein provided background about the project and discussed the different sources they had looked at to develop the design. BART designers proposed a dashed center line on the new 14 feet cross section of the Greenway, but the AS&R preferred having separated bicycles and pedestrians in a shared use trail. F&P reviewed various sources for

guidance available, such as The California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), Caltrans Highway Design Manual, American Association of State Highway Officials (ASSHO), the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Guide and the Dutch Crow Manual. He said that some guidelines advise using 8 feet minimum for the bicycle path and 5 feet for the pedestrian path. Based on this research, F&P recommended 9 feet for the path and 5 feet for the pedestrian section. They also recommended enhanced crosswalks by striping a bicycle lane of 8 feet and two-five feet of pedestrian striping on each side. This has been done in El Cerrito and Berkeley. In addition, about 25 feet before the intersection different stripe will be applied to alert cyclists of the intersection. Signage is also important to direct pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Commission members asked about usage of bicyclists versus pedestrian. Five feet seemed too narrow for pedestrians. Is there a possibility having a dashed yellow instead of eliminating the stripe? The sign should be modified to indicate actual side where pedestrians travel. The crosswalk striping could be confusing to users. How about using a stop bar before the crosswalk? Are you contemplating stop signs for bicyclists at the intersection? With this type of crosswalk, are cyclists still supposed to walk the bicycle?

The discussion was open to the public. The following people spoke: Zack Mensinger, Amy Smolens, Preston Jordan, and Peggy McQuaid.

Public Comments: Eliminate solid barriers, such as bollards because they represent a hazard for cyclists. 250 signatures of Ohlone Greenway users were collected in support of the three stripes in addition to emails and more signatures being collected. Comments from supporters of the three lanes were read. They referred to safety, user differentiation, usage in other areas, such as Grizzly Field in SF. A 90% compliance was found on an AS&R survey on the Bay Trail lane where bicyclists and pedestrians were traveling on the lanes that were assigned to them. If a crosswalk is continuation of a path, it is fine to ride your bicycle on the crosswalk. AS&R supports a dashed yellow line in the middle of the bike trail rather than nothing at all. Revisit the issue of the shoulder and make it continuous toward the intersection. Pay attention to barriers on the pathway, such as trashcans, etc. Clear the path and shoulders. During two two-hour counts on the Greenway in springtime in 2010, one was in the AM of a school day the AS&R found that 90B/90P and the Saturday one between 1-3 pm registered 100B/60P.

Motion Miki/Knapp: Approve the design recommendation with the following changes: Inclusion of a dashed yellow line to indicate the direction of the bike lanes; inclusion of stop signs at intersections without traffic signal; eliminate bollards at the intersection, inclusion of a solid white stripe to indicate the pedestrian path and extend this lane and the striped yellow lane as close to the intersection as feasible. Include high visibility crosswalks. Vote: Unanimous.

Miki asked staff to explore the cost of including additional signal activation for bicyclists at Solano and Marin, and to explore the cost of making all the curb cuts a minimum of 8 feet or wider than 4 feet.

2) Conversion of Masonic Avenue to one way. Leptien explained that after analysis conducted, staff was recommending against it because of existing traffic volume, need for environmental impacts, and possibility of increased speeding, emergency vehicle response time, and learning curve. Given the limited time we had due to the BART schedule, converting this segment of Masonic Ave. to one way is practically not feasible. In addition, staff investigated on leasing the lot south of the Albany Pre-School but the unevenness of the lot, does not make it a desirable location for senior parking. Discussion was open to the public. The following people spoke: Barbara Van Pelt, resident of Masonic, Paul O'Curry,

Preston Jordan, Amy Smolens, and Zion Lee.

Public Comment: Opposition to put up a fence on the east side of Masonic Avenue because seniors need to park close to the Senior Center. Also, the use of the fenced up area is lower than originally estimated. The BART schedule has taken longer than what is was noticed to the residents. A lot of seniors from outside Albany attend the Senior Center for the excellent programs it has. Seniors need their parking because they have mobility ailments. Implement disabled parking on the west side of Masonic, even a temporary Disabled curb while the BART project is taking place. Convert some on street parking on the west side of Masonic to disabled parking and go from there. The temporary disabled zone would not be 24/7, they could be implemented only when the Senior Center is open. AS&R did conduct a count using the replacement path and the usage is fairly high.

Motion Mazur/Reeves: Moved to continue the meeting until 11:00 pm. Vote was unanimous.

Motion Mazur/Reeves: Install a construction fence along the project area, but do not install the protected walkway fence between Solano and Washington and include signage for an alternative bike route. Miki amended the motion to include between Solano and Portland. Knapp added: Install the construction fence as far back as possible. Miki said he was hesitant about not having the enclosed fence system as people were already used to and for people who were not comfortable riding on the street. He also recommended that alternative routes be added. Vote was 3 Ayes, 2 Nays (Miki and McCroskey).

Bond said that the City would consult with Preston Jordan on potential alternative routes for bikes.

7 Announcements and Communications

October 14 is the beginning of Sunday Streets in Berkeley. Shattuck would be closed to traffic (only bicyclists and pedestrians allowed) from Rose to Haste Streets.

October 3 is the International Walk to School Day.

Miki said he may be missing the next meeting. Reeves said she may be missing it too, but asked if she could phone in.

Ask the Police Department to enforce the issue of vehicles passing buses at the southbound bus stop on Pierce St.

8. Future Agenda Items

Include a report on the inclusion of a third speed hump on Santa Fe Avenue in front of the school.

9. Adjournment—Meeting was adjourned at 11:32.