



**TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**City Hall - Council Chambers
1000 San Pablo Avenue
October 22, 2015—7:00 PM**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chair Chomsky.
2. **ROLL CALL. Members present:** Chomsky, Del Rosario, McCroskey, and Reeves. Javandel was absent and excused. Staff present: Bond, Chen, and Chavez.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** Minutes of July 23 2015 were approved with no changes. Minutes of September 25, 2015 were not approved as they were submitted too late for the Commission members to read. Motion Reeves/McCroskey: Moved to approve the July 23, 2015 minutes. Vote in favor: Chomsky, Del Rosario, McCroskey, Reeves. Vote opposing: None, Abstained: None.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT.

Public comment was received from Debora Josch, Diana Hayton, Sasha Keller, Irene Jacobson, Eleanor Moses. Comments were the following:

- The intersection of Washington and Cornell is dangerous: Cars park in the area that would be considered crosswalks. Vehicle traffic speeds up through the area.
- Install a four-way stop system. If this is not possible, add red curbs with crosswalks in all four directions.
- Drivers have to inch out into the intersection to be able to cross. The situation is exacerbated by the location of the Post Office on one end and Trader Joe's at the other, so there is a lot of through traffic on Cornell.
- Does the City have information on the number of accidents that happen in that intersection?
- Is it possible to have a "no walking" or "do not walk" signal at the Solano/San Pablo intersection? This is the eastbound left turn onto northbound San Pablo.
- There needs to be an evaluation of what is creating the traffic problems in north Albany.
- Echo what the neighbors at Washington and Cornell. The neighbors at Portland and Cornell would like to see red curbs as well. Speeding in that area is also a problem.

Chavez said that she would like to start with the red curbs and that the notification could take place in December and implementation in January 2016. With respect to the intersection of Solano and San Pablo, Bond said that it was a Caltrans roadway and that the City is working with Caltrans in implementing the Complete Streets recommendations. One of them was eliminating the split phase and reducing the signal cycle at that intersection.

5 PRESENTATION

5-1 Police Report

Bond provided the Police Report. For the month of September, there were 13 accidents. 10 non-injury and 3 injury accidents. Four (4) hit and run events, one (1) accident on Marin, three (3) within a school area, one (1) auto/pedestrian accident, and one (1) auto/bicycle accident. There were 135 moving citations and no DUIs. Chomsky said he would like to know more details about each accident. Bond said that he was taken a look at three months of data from the SWITRS (Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System). Reeves said she was interested in learning about accident trends citywide.

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

A Proposed Locations for Placement of Speed Humps on the 400 blocks of Evelyn, Talbot, Cornell, and Kains

Bond provided background and said that the idea was to implement the speed humps, monitor their effects on traffic in the neighborhood, and try to do as much as budget allows. The most detailed features are the mini-circles that need to be engineered due to the potential conflicts with storm drains. The Commission had the following clarifications:

Is \$300,000 enough to cover all the planned improvements? Right now, this is a ballpark figure, but until we have the actual design, we do not really know if the assigned budget is enough. It is certainly more than enough for the implementation of the speed humps.

Is this drawing different from what we saw last time? It is the same. The symbol for the circles is different.

Discussion was open to the public. John Dugger, Irena Jacobson, Dana Huang, Cathy Madison, Eleanor Moses, Michael H., Jean Petersaken

-The problem is traffic volume, not speed.

-There would be trucks for repair, Waste Management and UPS trucks . Allow trucks to serve the buildings. -We are the only street that trucks are not allowed.

-In support for the idea of the circles.

-Speed humps are unnecessary. The problem is backups, congestion.

-Speed humps increase noise, carbon monoxide and I oppose them. They create a health hazard for our family.

-There are two problems in our neighborhood: Speed and volume.

-Speed humps will infuriate the already aggressive drivers, but we need the speed humps.

-Has the location of the speed humps been determined? Yes. The map shows the addresses where the speed humps will be located.

-Do you have a timeline for implementing the work? Is there an opportunity for the neighbors to be involved? --It is important to monitor pedestrian patterns before and after the project.

-Brighton has a visibility problem.

-The Cornell Street is too narrow for two-way street. One-way street is the solution

-The intersection of Washington at Cornell is dangerous. It used to be a four-way stop until the City moved it one block down. Whatever it takes to slow traffic down is needed this neighborhood.

-Can we ask El Cerrito to discourage traffic going to and from the Plaza through our neighborhood streets? The City cannot control the design product of a private developer in a different jurisdiction.

The Commission had the following questions:

-Can you clarify the No Trucks signs are intended for commercial trucks to and from the Plaza? Staff responded that this assertion was true.

-What is the timeline? Bond said that a construction implementation schedule had not been developed, but the expectation is to have as much as we can before the residential complex opens.

-The speed humps will slow down vehicles and may increase congestion. In a way, it is good because the City would be setting the tone for how drivers should be driving in the neighborhood.

-What the City is trying to do is discourage traffic from going to that area.

-These are tools we currently have and we would like to explore other measures and the Commission would do that if it can. There will be follow up meetings during and after the process.

Motion McCroskey/Reeves: Moved to approve the location of speed humps as noted on the 400 blocks of Kains, Cornell, Talbot, and Evelyn. An amended motion was stated to add: that the location of the speed hump on 417 Evelyn be south of the driveway.

Vote in favor: Chomsky, Del Rosario, McCroskey, Reeves. Vote opposing: None, Abstained: None.

B. Sidewalk Improvement Program

Bond introduced Gopal Nair, Project Manager of the Sidewalk Program. Nair said that the Public Works Department conducted a sidewalk assessment in the summer of 2015 with the primary goal of identifying locations with significant damage to determine what was causing immediate risks to Pedestrians. The assessment found that the main cause of sidewalk uplifts was the roots of trees planted in the public right of way. The assessment found

252 locations that needed repair, which represent 2,810 linear feet of sidewalk repairs and 105 linear feet of curb and gutter damage. The total area for repair is 14,050 sq. ft. 80% of this area damage is due to tree roots.

Staff ranked the area of damage from 1 to 3 with 1 being the higher risk to pedestrians and 3 representing potential damage. In addition to this ranking, the locations were evaluated in relation to the proximity to schools and if within the skeleton map of the ATP.

Staff had to prioritize the locations to be repaired based on the \$150,000 available funds for the FY15-16, which is enough to cover 40 locations.

Next steps: Public Works will develop the design in-house and estimates that a request for bids would take place in the spring of 2016.

The Commission had the following clarifications:

- Why Cornell was not included as a priority location? Because in the original map, Cornell Elementary and the Children Center did not show in the parcels. The map has been updated.
 - If the 50% reimbursement is not available, how is the City going to be able to obtain a steady stream of funding for the sidewalk program on an annual basis.
 - Do we have any estimate for how many trees would go the removal process? Chavez said that she has done through the process about two times in the six years she managed the reimbursement program. Most of the repairs involved root pruning.
 - Sidewalks are old. What is the standard of cross section for the new sidewalks? Compaction and cement. rebar for driveways.
 - What is considered significant? Rank 1 was 4" uprooting, the rest of them were 3"-4" and 2"-3" for future threat.
 - When staff assigns ranks, is this based on standard or is it subjective? It is subjective. The City does not have anything in writing. But the ranking staff used tried to use a sense of urgency.
 - Is it possible to make the raw data accessible to the public? Staff said that they were still working on the Excel spreadsheet and GIS layers.
 - When there is a home improvement project, does the City require the property owner to fix the sidewalk?
 - One of the pictures shown on Washington Avenue is not shown on the map.
 - The maps are not comprehensive. Do you have an idea of when these maps would be developed and shared with the public? Chavez said that the discussion could continue in the next meeting.
- If the program costs \$150,000 per year, could you cover the main problems in the next five years? Yes
- Would the program become cheaper in future years if the City takes care of the worst problems now? Yes and no because infrastructure ages and needs repairs. Also, the locations where trees are located or replaced may look good today, but 10-15 years from now, the tree has grown and the sidewalk may be damaged again. The same happens with root pruning, which provides a 2-3 year relief.
 - But the proposed funding has traditionally been used as seed money to fund important programs or as match for grant applications. There is concerns that the City would not have funds in the future to fund those programs. You can repair twice as many streets if you only repair one side at every location and designate that as the preferred route. Staff said that around schools and where the ATP recommended the walking routes, they included both sides.

Discussion was open to the public. The following people spoke: Preston Jordan, AS&R.

- Congratulations to staff for getting the survey done.
- Current funds allocated to the Sidewalk program will be needed in the future for grant matching
- The program would be underfunded in about 3 years as \$150,000 only covers one third of the problem locations. A steady source of funds for the sidewalk program would be needed. Staff estimated a range between \$100,000 and \$500,000, which is a wide range, but we need to determine what goes in the estimate.
- Look for 2016 to develop a property tax for sidewalk repairs. It is important to determine exactly how much funding would be needed to maintain the program on an annual basis.
- AS&R would like to have a measure comparable to the measure that funds the existing pavement program

-One location that would be great to include is the sidewalk adjacent to Ocean View School near the Buchanan/Jackson intersection. The gravel needs to be removed there as it is a hazard in a place with heavy pedestrian traffic.

-You could remove the sidewalk repairs from Thousand Oaks to Marin on Santa Fe. Santa Fe is a walk to school route. 90-95% of the pedestrians travel on the east side of the street. You can argue that it does not make too much sense to repair the west side of the street. You can shift the funds to repair the sidewalk along Marin Avenue between the Community Center and Marin Elementary. This route is not shown on the map, but this is an important area that is widely used by pedestrians.

-The SR2S task force could help get information on what routes are the most used for the route to school.

The Commission had the following comments:

Could staff address the range of cost between \$100,000 and \$500,000? Chen said that the lower range fixes the bare minimum, and the highest range allows for repairing more locations and for sustained maintenance.

-(Public comment) Use rank-choice voting by which multiple options are presented to voters: Platinum level, Gold level and Silver level. Voters decide what level of funding for the sidewalk program they would support.

-Areas with vegetation obstructing right of way are not included in the map presented. Staff sends a letter to alert the owner of the condition.

Has staff seen a situation that the property owner fixes the condition after sending the letter? Yes.

Have you considered alternative material to include in the sidewalk repair? Yes.

The Commission requested that staff bring an updated map and possibly, another map with priority sidewalk repair areas (tier 1 areas) primarily tied to route to schools. Also, bring more in-depth detail of spot locations for discussion.

The Commission members felt they were currently at a point where they would like to recommend to City Council the inclusion of a tax measure for sidewalk repairs. The Council already has information on tax revenue generation in Albany. It seemed the Commission is running out of time in the race for inclusion of a ballot measure in 2016. Bond said that the funding discussion could be included in the next agenda.

C. Storm Water Cross Drain Replacement Project

Chen introduced the concept of cross drains. He said the initial plan was to replace the cross drain at 8 locations.

The Commission had the following clarification questions:

Do the cross drains have a slope that make it uncomfortable to walk on? The slope is very minimal, about 0.25" per foot.

Is it possible to locate the cross drain so that only one part of crosswalk overlaps with the cross drain? Yes.

The discussion was open to the public. Preston Jordan spoke. Comments were:

-Supports project

-Be mindful of the finishing as it may be slippery when wet.

-There are other locations that would be done as part of the pavement project. These are Adams and Washington.

-One example of how these cross drains would look like in Albany is on Portland going to Berkeley.

Motion McCroskey/Del Rosario: Moved to approve location of the cross drains and request that design adds a traction element for vehicles to the design.

Vote in favor: Chomsky, Del Rosario, McCroskey, Reeves. Vote opposing: None, Abstained: None.

Motion Chomsky/McCroskey: Moved to extend the meeting until 10:30 pm.

Vote in favor: Chomsky, Del Rosario, McCroskey, Reeves. Vote opposing: None, Abstained: None.

D. Report on grant application to prepare a plan for complete streets improvement on City of Albany segment of Upper Solano Avenue.

Bond provided information on a grant application for a planning effort to conduct a complete streets conceptual design for Upper Solano Avenue. He said this was the initial step in order to get construction funding.

The Commission had the following comments:

-How would the planning work with the City of Berkeley, particularly east of Neilson where the roadway and the sidewalk belongs to Albany, but the properties are located in Berkeley.

-The bus stops on Solano are substandard and outdated—Buses stop at angles on Solano. One thing we are looking is to bring the bus stops up to standards by lengthening the curb space. AC Transit is in the process of optimizing the bus stop spacing and this will open the possibility of freeing some parking if the number of stops on Solano is reduced.

-is the intent to match the improvements that were done in lower Solano? Not necessarily. The urban design field has evolved in the last 15 years and we want to take advantage of it.

-Would you be looking at parallel parking on Solano? Chavez said the proposal includes testing concepts like back-in parking.

-Back in parking may be dangerous. Education is needed.

-What is upper Solano? Use a different term. Chavez said that in the grant application she refers to “east of Masonic”

E. Report on the Marin Utility Undergrounding and Buchanan Bikeway Phase III Project

Chavez reported that through a competitive process, the City was in the process of entering into a contract agreement with Zoon Engineering for Plan Peer Review and Construction Management for this project. She said she would go to Council with the request to enter into a contract agreement in November.

Public Comment: Preston Jordan spoke.

Is this review process something that has been done with other projects? No. The character of the project is very specialized as it includes undergrounding component and we do not have the specialization to review the plans in Albany.

F. Letter to Union Pacific Railroad Regarding the Fence along Railroad Tracks Right of Way.

McCroskey provided a summary of the letter he drafted. A reference of the taller fence in Berkeley must be provided in the letter.

There were some editorial and grammatical edits suggested. The tone of the letter must be changed as it looks as if a group of activists is sending the letter rather than a City Commission.

Chomsky offered to help with the language of the letter in the next few weeks.

Motion McCroskey/Reeves: Moved to endorse the letter, edit it and move it forward.

Vote in favor: Chomsky, Del Rosario, McCroskey, Reeves. Vote opposing: None, Abstained: None.

7. Announcements and Communications

McCroskey said that in relation to the item related to the parking study, the parking meters do not start exactly at the Berkeley City Limit and that the assumption that people park in Albany to conduct business in Berkeley may not be all true. He found that on Solano Avenue there are no meters for about two blocks within the Berkeley jurisdiction.

A. City Council approval of the CIP

B. November/December Special meeting. The next meeting of the T&S Commission will be December 17. Bond said there may be a conflict on the 17.

C. General Plan Update—The GP and its accompanying EIR will be released in November.

E. UC Village Mixed Use Project Update. The City is in the process of reviewing the applications and issuing a permit. Caltrans is also in the process of issuing an encroachment permit.

8. Future Agenda Items.

Add the following: Sidewalk funding consideration, Cornell-Brighton Traffic Circles
Pavement potholes, Installation of red curbs at intersections east of San Pablo. Include the Electric Vehicle
Charging Stations.

9. Adjournment—Meeting was adjourned at 10:30 PM. Next meeting to be determined due to the holidays.