



TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

City Hall - Council Chambers
1000 San Pablo Avenue
September 24, 2015—7:00 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Chomsky.
2. **ROLL CALL. Members present:**, Del Rosario, Javandel, McCroskey, Reeves, Chair Chomsky. Staff present: Bond, Chen, and Chavez.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.** Minutes of the June meeting were approved with a change for item 6-D as Chair Chomsky recused from this discussion.
***Motion Javandel/Reeves:** Moved to approve the June minutes with the requested change. Vote in favor: Chomsky, Del Rosario, Javandel, McCroskey, Reeves. Opposed: None. Abstained: None.*

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Rhoda Bennett said that Caltrans removed the weeds underneath the freeway and it looks fantastic. McCroskey reported that September was Safe Rail Month in California. Some deaths have occurred in Albany and its vicinity along the railroad tracks, most recently in Richmond and he asked everybody to call the Union Pacific Railroad (UPR) Hot Line about maintaining the fence in Albany. The protective fence has several holes and needs repair. On a brighter note, it is Albany Local Week and several activities are planned for this week. He encouraged all to attend these activities.

Del Rosario asked if the Commission could send the letter to UPR on behalf of the City of Albany. Staff agreed.

5 PRESENTATION

5-A Police Report:

Bond provided the Police Report. He said he was in conversations with Chief McQuiston on how to improve the report. In August, there were 20 Collisions. 18 non-injury, 7 hit/runs, 1 bike/vehicle collision. No accidents near schools or pedestrian-involved collisions were reported. The PD issued 93 moving citations and 8 DUI arrests. McCroskey said that there was an injury accident reported in The Journal on August 24th at San Pablo and Garfield at 9:40 pm. Javandel said that he had checked with the Albany Police Department about any requirements for cyclists to put the foot down when coming to a complete stop and he found out that the Vehicle Code does not require this. It only requires coming to a complete stop.

Christine Carducci of the 800 block of Santa Fe Avenue asked why the Police Report is no longer in the newspaper. Bond said the Community Engagement Specialist retired.

6. Discussion and Action Related to the Following Items

6-A Blue Curb Request at 907 Buchanan Street

Chavez provided the report. Parking occupancy is about 60% on this block and there is no grade. The public notification was included with the Agenda packet. She said the property has a driveway and garage but the driveway is very narrow and the garage is in the back. The disabled person cannot open the door when on the driveway. No Written public comment had been received and no public comment was received at the meeting.

***Motion Del Rosario/McCroskey:** Moved to approve the request to designate a parking stall as accessible parking adjacent to 907 Buchanan Street. Vote in favor: Chomsky, Del Rosario, Javandel, McCroskey, Reeves. Opposed: None. Abstained: None.*

Bond asked to discuss Item B later as one of the Consultants for the project had not arrived yet.

C. Golden Gate Transit Express Bus Service Plan.

Chavez provided a summary of the request and introduced David Davenport who presented the plan to start a new express bus service between San Rafael and Albany, Berkeley, and Emeryville in December 2015. Route 580 would operate on weekdays with five trips in each direction. Trips would be spaced 30 minutes apart. Buses will pick up in the morning from 6:47 to 8:47 am and drop off in the evening from 4:05 to 6:11 pm. Two stops were proposed in Albany at existing AC Transit stops: Westbound Buchanan at the nearside of the intersection with Jackson Street and southbound San Pablo on the far side of the intersection at Marin Avenue. Golden Gate Transit is asking for a 23' extension of the red curb at the westbound side of the east leg of the Buchanan/Jackson intersection. The existing red zone is only 30' long and it does not meet conventional bus stop design standards.

The Commission asked for clarifications:

- How about stopping at Arco and Monroe? These stops are more centrally located.
- Where would the bus stop in San Rafael? San Quentin, Anderson Drive and Golden Gate headquarters.
- Would we be losing one parking space on Buchanan? Yes.

Discussion was open to public comment. The following people spoke: Lauren Gradia and Rhoda Bennett.

- Preference for stops that are closer together and across the street from each other, such as Buchanan and Jackson adjacent to Ocean View Elementary. Mr. Davenport said Golden Gate Transit would be willing to accommodate this.

The Commission had the following comments:

- The tree branches need to be trimmed in order to get visibility of the bike symbol at the stop.
- Can we add bike racks? Golden Gate has one extra bike rack that can be installed at the bus stop. The color is brown and it could be installed in the eastbound direction at Buchanan and Jackson.
- Once the service is in place, the bus company will consider requests for additional stops
- Do we have concerns for commute parking?
- How about marketing? Golden Gate is currently working on an extensive outreach effort to get people informed, including how to get to the bus stops.
- Would you be using 44' coaches? A number of the buses used on the new route would be coming from San Francisco and they would be MCIs. They can accommodate 6 bikes.

Motion Javandel/Reeves: *Moved to approve extension of 23' of red curb at the westbound direction bus stop at the east leg of the intersection of Buchanan and Jackson with the addition of a bike lane marking 15' east from the stop bar. Vote in favor: Chomsky, Del Rosario, Javandel, McCroskey, Reeves. Opposed: None. Abstained: None.*

B. Parking Management Study-Existing Conditions Report.

Bond provided the overview of the project, which is funded by the Alameda County Transportation Commission and introduced David Early of Place Works a member of the consultant team for the project. Mr. Early presented the project schedule and said that there would be two meetings in the future, one meeting with the Albany business community and the other with Albany residents. He said that the night before, he held a meeting with the Planning and Zoning Commission and that there would be another meeting with them, plus the Council presentation meeting. He reported on the 500 interviews of the intercept survey that took place in May 2015, with the following results: 55% of respondents had driven to the project area; 45% walked, bike, took transit; 55% who drove parked on Solano or San Pablo; 35% parked adjacent to the residential areas; 10% parked in private lots (or would not say where they parked); 55% parked within one block of destination; 57% of interviewees were fine with the time restrictions; 59% were satisfied with the parking availability; and over half of the drivers would not want to pay for parking.

In terms of parking occupancy, it seemed that Albany does not have a parking problem as occupancy is on average at 60 percent. When occupancy reaches 85 percent, parking is considered to have high demand.

The Commission had the following clarification questions:

- Can you clarify which parts of the outreach have you done? At this time, no outreach has been conducted yet. Last night, the Planning and Zoning Commission had a presentation, plus this one tonight. We have another meeting with the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Council final presentation.
- Did you collect information about businesses in your survey? About 20 percent of those interviewed were local business employees.
- Would this data be available in the next report? Would you disaggregate the number of employees? Probably yes. The same question was asked last night.

Discussion was open to the public: The following people spoke: Rhoda Bennett and Rachel Coen. Comments were:

- Who is paying for this study? How much is this contract for? Alameda County Transportation Commission is paying for it and the contract is about \$100,000.
- Some streets were closed for street sweeping. Do you know which streets? We will send an email to staff, but those streets were close in the morning only.
- Have you considered safety zones? Loading zones? No.
- How are you going to notify residents? The City would be responsible for notifying.
- Where is the MTC Value Price Parking Study and how does it relate to this? The MTC study is a larger, regional study and includes other jurisdictions, in addition to Albany.
- How could you assume that the parking environment in Albany is accurate just with these two days of data collection? The results of the two days are very similar to those conducted for the MTC study and there is no reason to believe that the parking conditions are different as data was collected when no special events were taken place. Politically, it seems that it is better to do one thing at the time. If the City would like to explore paid parking, the consultants would be helping with that; perhaps a pilot project near Berkeley where people is already familiar with it would be a possibility. It is important to emphasize that pricing is not done to collect revenue, but to better manage parking availability.
- The idea of implementing one thing at the time is good. However, with future changes to Measure D, more people would be parking on the streets and demand for parking would increase.
- Employee parking is intricate. A lot of employees sleep in their cars. In Berkeley, they did a study in the business district and they found that a considerable number of parking spaces adjacent to businesses were taken by their own employees.
- It would be good to encourage employees to take transit.
- If we were to venture into residential permit parking, how this would be done? It is usually done by zones that include between 10-20 blocks. An annual fee is imposed on those included in the zone. It is usually \$50/year.
- Permits do not usually cover the cost of operating the system. Enforcement happens during the day and residents have a difficult time finding parking at night. The system also impacts air quality as there is a lot of cold starts. However, it may provide incentive for people to shift modes of transportation.
- Do you have data from different sources: Employers, customers? More analysis would be needed.
- Parking meters are the last resort, after other methods are tried. Mr. Early said he would look at data to see if some things can be cross-referenced.
- Albany businesses are not strong and businesses close because of the parking meters.

The Commission thanked the Consultant and said it looked forward to receiving subsequent reports on the study.

D Traffic Calming Proposal for the 800 Block of Santa Fe at the Intersection of Washington.

McCroskey recused from this discussion. Chavez provided the background saying that this work was added to the ATP Striping and Signage contract due to concerns from residents about speeding and pedestrian safety on this block. The speed survey did not show consistent speeding, but the 85th percentile did show in the higher end. A

proposal to stripe an edge line, pedestrian bulb outs and a mini circle was suggested. She introduced Ryan McClain of Fehr and Peers to present the proposal.

The Commission asked clarifications questions

- Where did you put the speed meters? They were located at mid block.
- Where drivers running the stop? This information is not known.
- What is the cost estimate? About \$250,000 with the roundabout

The discussion was open to the public.

The following people spoke: Leonard Audo, Elisa Audo-Berlin, Christine Carducci, Preston Jordan.

- Against proposal. It would remove the stop sign that is already in place.
- Put “Slow Down” pavement markings
- Bulb-outs are dangerous for bicyclists.
- It would beautify the neighborhood
- The Colusa Circle is a nightmare
- It would obstruct visibility of pedestrians
- Dangerous for drivers
- It would be good for traffic calming in the neighborhood
- Removing the stop signs would encourage faster traffic speeds. Install signage and enforce!
- Losing parking spaces is bad for the community
- The bulb-outs are a good idea
- Install a speed hump closer to Solano Avenue
- Would people deviate to get to the crosswalks? Yes, pedestrians would have to slightly deviate
- Are there any studies that support that roundabouts decrease speeds? Yes, there are several studies supporting this.
- How about installing a speed feedback sign?
- Improve the intersection of Solano and Santa Fe.
- The paint or striping solution is a better one. Mark the speed limit on the pavement.
- Can you install Bott’s dots?

The Commission had the following comments:

Install pavement markings stating the speed limit and the edge line along the parking strip. The bulb-outs at the intersection of Santa Fe and Solano could be added as a project in the next CIP update.

McCroskey returned to the meeting.

E. Sidewalk and Traffic Calming Proposal for the East Side of Masonic across the Senior Center

Chavez provided background and presented the plans.

The Commission asked clarifications questions

- How tall is the retaining wall? It is about 1.5 feet tall
- Would it reduce green space? Just a little bit
- How wide is the sidewalk? About 4.5 feet wide.
- How much would construction be for this project? \$358,000 including construction management.

Public Comment: Preston Jordan spoke. Comments were the following:

- Some areas are 4.5 foot sidewalks and in some other areas are 5 feet wide. It is the preference of the AS&R to have five-foot sidewalks. The retaining wall would limit the space for pedestrians as well.
- Use neck down around the trees.

Bond said that the plans would be finalized and staff would go back to the Commission for a recommendation to Council to approve the plans. Construction is programmed for the 2016 fiscal year.

Motion Javandel/McCroskey: *Moved to continue to 10:30 pm. Vote in favor: Chomsky, Del Rosario, Javandel, McCroskey, Reeves. Opposed: None. Abstained: None.*

F. Update on the Standard Construction Details for Improvements in the City Right of Way.

Chen introduced the item. He said that this version was updated, including ADA requirements.

Public Comment: Preston Jordan spoke. Comments were the following:

- There are about 8 or 9 standard details included in this document, but none of these details matches what is on the streets, which is a modified Case C—modified ramp for going around the corner. In most cases in Albany, the sidewalk has to slope to conform to the street and as a result, a back curb has to be built. There is no standard detail for this type of curb ramp. If a standard is created, the issue of the back curb being in the right of way could be solved. This 90-degree corner creates a tripping hazard.
- The AS&R recommends five-foot wide sidewalks. Staff said that for standard it is recommended to keep it at 4 feet, but strive to implement five feet.
- The detectable warning is usually slippery when wet. Is there a friction coefficient standard to prevent this? No, there is no standard on this. Staff said that we needed to do more research on this.

The Commission had the following comments:

- Width of Sidewalks: Preferred width is 5 feet. If less than that, the width has to be approved by the City Engineer.
- Curb ramps: Add a note on page 9.10 stating that a 2' radius must be installed at corner ramps.
- Add a note on page 9.3 specifying that the retaining wall must be outside of the sidewalk.
- Draw the Modified Case C detail not to scale and non-dimensional. The detail must include the 2-foot radius for the back curb and the requirement that it must be in the back of the sidewalk.

Motion Javandel/McCroskey: *Moved to add to the City Standards a drawing of Modified Case C curb ramp, add a note about the five-foot width for sidewalks, unless otherwise approved by the City Engineer. Vote in favor: Chomsky, Del Rosario, Javandel, McCroskey, Reeves. Opposed: None. Abstained: None.*

G. EV Charging Stations. Discussion of this item was postponed for a future meeting.

7 Announcements and Communications

- Crosswalk at Posen and Ordway
- ATP modifications requested by AS&R would cost \$4,000.
- The CIP would go back to Council on Consent at the next meeting
- Parklet adjacent to Gordo's was a great success. Staff will conduct another event like this, probably at Valparaiso.
- RFP for a consultant to do a peer review for the Utility Undergrounding and Buchanan Bikeway Phase III.
- California Transportation Commission allocated the funds for design of the Complete Streets features for San Pablo and Buchanan. It is expected to be in the process in 2016.

8. Future agenda item

- Commissioner Javandel would not be available for the October 22 meeting.
- Add an agenda item for writing a letter to the UPR

9. Adjournment—Meeting was adjourned at 10:31 pm. Next meeting: October 22, 2015 at 7:00 pm