



TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

City Council Chambers
1000 San Pablo Avenue
March 24, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Chair Del Rosario.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Chomsky, Javandel, McCroskey, Del Rosario
Absent: Reeves
Staff Present: Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Transportation Planner
Wen Chen, Senior Engineer
Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting on February 25, 2016 were not available and would be provided at the next meeting.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

- **Ector Mojica**, spoke to the speed of traffic in the 600 block of Adams Street and requested some traffic calming measures.
- **Katie Ponting**, a resident of the 700 block of Adams Street, agreed with the concern for the speed of traffic and requested traffic calming measures for the 700 block of Adams Street.
- **John Kartychak**, Taylor Street, stated as a result of the traffic light on Buchanan, traffic had significantly increased in the area and residents had submitted a petition to ask the City to consider a speed hump. He also requested that the 'No Trucks' sign on the corner, which had been knocked over many years ago, be replaced.
- **Dennis Foster**, supported the petition for a speed hump on Taylor Street; commented that Google maps referred traffic through Taylor Street; and requested that no improvements be made to patch the sewer replacement work until the speed hump had been installed, and if not installed, that no paving be done on that street because it seemed to slow down traffic.
- **Stephen Dunkle**, Taylor Street, who lived at the top of the hill agreed with the excessive speed of traffic but opposed a speed hump in the middle of the street and instead supported a No Left Turn during commute hours and speed humps at the top of the hill and at the bottom of the hill.
- **Jo Grissen**, a resident of the 700 block of Adams Street, reiterated the concerns with the speed of traffic in the 700 block and requested speed humps.

5. PRESENTATION

A. Police Report

Bond presented the police report.

Commissioner McCroskey requested that the report be modified to replace the nomenclature from “total accidents” to “collisions.”

Commissioner Chomsky asked that in the future the report include prior months to identify trends.

Given the number of speakers present to speak to items on the agenda, Chair Del Rosario reordered the agenda to consider the items in the following order: A, F, B, C, D, and E.

6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

A. Potential Safety Improvements at the Intersection of Peralta and Francis

Chavez presented the staff report explaining that at the last meeting, the Commission had recommended a phased approach for the implementation of the safety improvements on Peralta at Francis. She presented the phased approach to the Commission.

Commissioner Chomsky recused himself and left the dais and the Council Chambers.

The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Cara Eisenberg, Jesse Kupers, Jan Eiesland, and Charles Hampton:

- A red zone would be placed in front of her home and she requested better options than creating red zones in front of residential homes; noted there had previously been a red zone in front of 1066 Peralta which is where it should remain; and reported that a large jade plant and four trees at the corner of Peralta and Francis blocked sight distance. (Cara Eisenberg)
- Expressed concern with safety on Peralta; suggested the 120 feet of red zone would create a burden for the residents and a significant loss of parking; suggested a crosswalk should be installed along with a stop sign, with a speed hump at the intersection; and noted his driveway was on Terrace Path, which was a pedestrian walkway and which would be impacted by the red zones. (Jesse Kupers)
- Expressed concern for the speed of traffic on Peralta; supported the bulb out given the concern with respect to visibility; supported another speed hump farther down Peralta where the speed of traffic was also a concern; sought more information on the conceptual enhancement included in the documents; and requested that hearing notices be sent to residents, not only to property owners. (Jan Eiesland)
- Agreed with the concerns expressed but emphasized that the speed issue was paramount; supported a speed hump on either side of the intersection, to be installed now; and questioned whether the yield lines would be well interpreted by drivers as a reason to slow down. (Charles Hampton)

The Commission made the following comments:

- Warrants had not allowed the installation of a stop sign; a crosswalk could not be installed without a curb ramp but suggested that advance yield lines could be considered in Phase 1 instead of Phase 3; did not see the need to red curb beyond the

first driveway on Peralta Street; suggested the bulb out would eliminate the need for the longer red curb; recommended the installation of the signs and yield lines now, with the rest of the striping to be done with the paving project; noted that the Posen intersection could be considered in the future, and liked that the bike lane would accommodate the shifting of the centerline which would narrow the lanes and visually slow drivers down. (Javandel)

- Explained that he had asked about lighting at the last meeting and after visiting the site reported there seemed to be a streetlight right above the intersection; suggested the elimination of the jade plant; did not think the telephone pole was a huge obstruction; supported a shorter red zone; liked the idea of painting yield lines in an earlier phase before the crosswalk was installed; and acknowledged the traffic problems throughout the City, the fact the City was addressing them on a piecemeal basis, and urged some consideration of ways to address those traffic issues in a more systemic way. (McCroskey)
- Supported yield lines in an initial phase to mitigate the speed of traffic; suggested the length of the red curb was a function of the speed of the vehicles and the visibility of the intersection; and clarified with Chavez that for the crosswalk between 20 and 50 feet was required between the crosswalk and the yield line with no parking. Recommended that staff consider revising the length of the red zone based upon the fact that a speed hump would eventually be installed. (Del Rosario)

Chen reported that the pavement project was ongoing and several speed humps would be added to the project; this one could be added to the list of speed humps which were expected to be installed in April or May.

Chavez explained that the grade was close to the 8 percent grade where a speed hump was not recommended pursuant to the City's guidelines.

By consensus, the Commission agreed with the recommendation to install yield lines and signs as part of the first phase, do the rest of the striping with the paving project, and hold the flashing beacons as a second step or in Phase 3. It was determined that after the striping of the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) and the installation of yield bars, the signage, and the speed hump, speeds could be measured south of Francis between Francis and Posen to determine if the speeds had decreased before installing a second speed hump downhill of the intersection.

Commissioner Chomsky rejoined the Commission at this time.

The next item was taken out of agenda order.

F. Update on UC Village Mixed Use Development Project: San Pablo Avenue Improvements and AC Transit Bus Stop Relocations.

Bond presented the staff report dated March 24, 2016, and the review of the key multimodal transportation improvements related to the UC Village Mixed Use Project.

The Commission requested the following clarifications:

- Asked about the transition from Dartmouth both to the path and to the street eastbound from a bicyclist's point of view, reported by Bond that the traffic light at Monroe and San Pablo would be completely updated and there would be a HAWK signal and a pedestrian push-button activated light at Dartmouth to get on the cycle track north and south. (McCroskey)

- With respect to the phasing of the signal at Monroe and San Pablo and how that would affect the bike path crossing, Chavez advised that was a full phase for bicyclists when everything would be stopped and there would be right turn separation onto Monroe. (McCroskey)
- Asked about the bike parking relative to the intersection, to which Bond identified the bike parking areas in a variety of locations throughout the site, with some lockers close to the intersection of Monroe and San Pablo, and a series of e-racks along the section of retail shops. Chavez also clarified that the perpendicular parking along Monroe was sufficiently wide; and that the extension of the cycle track to Marin could benefit from a partnership with Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville with respect to Complete Streets plans along San Pablo Avenue. (Del Rosario)
- Requested a clarification of the activation of the HAWK signal, to which Chavez explained that the signal could be synchronized or operate independently. She supported a synchronization approach. (Chomsky)

The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Preston Jordan and Michael Eshleman:

- Requested an activation button low on the pole for bicyclists as well as the usual pedestrian button; recommended a button on the north side of Dartmouth and at Monroe to activate the walk signal with separate buttons and duration phases for bicyclists and pedestrians; concerned about optimizing the modes and getting the greatest capacity of the intersection; recommended the parkway be designed as a green street; supported a bus bulb south of Monroe; and supported moving the existing curbs into Tenth where the bus layovers were located. (Preston Jordan)
- Expressed a concern that the plan might jeopardize the ability for AC Transit to provide transit service on Line 52 and jeopardize the ability to have a stop to service the area; requested that the comments provided by AC Transit since 2013 be considered to provide positive improvements for all parties involved; noted that there was a current stop at Marin at San Pablo and the last stop prior was at Buchanan, and when that bus stop was moved back there would be two bus stops within 50 feet of each other which would mean the potential elimination of the stop at the intersection of Marin and San Pablo. AC Transit's preference would be to continue to have a far side stop at Monroe; and noted there would be ways to do that, but suggested it might compromise some elements of the cycle track. Offered details of AC Transit's concerns for Line 11 and Line 52 which had layover space needed to accommodate six different buses, and the facility designed west of Tenth along Monroe could accommodate some of them but not all; explained a lot of space was required to turn in and out of the cut-ins eliminating some of the usable space along the area west of Tenth. (Michael Eshleman, AC Transit)

Chavez asked Mr. Eshleman to mark up the plans so that AC Transit's concerns could be considered.

The Commission made the following comments:

- Verified with Mr. Eshleman that a usable bus bulb could be created if Caltrans could be asked for a rider to use the four-foot shoulder at the bus layover site to create more space, with a caution that the stop be as close back to Monroe as possible to avoid being too close to the HAWK signal. (Javandel)

- The location of the bus stop and the particulars of bus boarding were noted, and while having the bus stop next to the senior center was supported because employees would likely use it, it was not expected that residents would use it given limited mobility issues.

Additional comments from the public:

- Mr. Eshleman clarified how a curb could be created mid-block on the north side of Monroe between Tenth and Jackson to bring the western portion of the layover space up and potentially accommodate two 60-foot and one 40-foot bus; noted the desire to keep the bus stop at Marin and San Pablo; and supported layover locations of sufficient size on Monroe between Tenth and San Pablo for Route 52 to potentially accommodate multiple buses on break. Bond urged keeping in mind that parking would be another consideration with respect to UC Village discussions. (Del Rosario)
- Mr. Jordan stated that Albany Strollers & Rollers (AS&R) supported the bus bulb south of Monroe; did not know if the cycle track needed to be lifted all of 80 feet and would prefer a shorter track; preferred not to shave back the bulb out at Tenth and Monroe; and suggested moving the existing curbs closer into Tenth where the bus layovers were located to keep that crossing short and narrow.

Additional comments from the Commission:

- Supported the Dartmouth HAWK signal; the bike push button on the northeast corner to allow a cross at the HAWK crossing; the idea of having separate push buttons for bikes and pedestrians to trigger different durations on the HAWK; suggested the coordination between the HAWK and the signal at Monroe would be good but might require adding an interconnect; and suggested considering a bollard in the median of the San Pablo crosswalk to dissuade vehicular left turns onto Dartmouth. (Javandel)
- Liked the idea of a bicyclist button on the northeast corner of Dartmouth being able to activate the signal and cross; questioned how to distinguish pedestrian from bicycle buttons and staff noted that could potentially be through the use of signs; suggested the interconnect and synchronization would be a more practical way to address traffic flow; and asked about the bio-swale idea that Mr. Jordan had raised. (Chomsky)
- Agreed with the suggestion of running the northbound San Pablo green light at Monroe concurrent with the bike phase so that would be Phase 2 of the northbound through movement, and Phase 3 of the bike and pedestrian only. (Javandel)
- Spoke to the idea of raising the bike path through the bus area which would be a signal for bicyclists to slow down, to be aimed towards the doors, and acknowledged the suggestion for a rail along the bus bulb. (McCroskey/Del Rosario)

Bond noted that a raised area would have to be carefully considered to avoid creating drainage concerns. He clarified that construction was underway and the design had been approved by Caltrans. He added that City staff was working almost daily with the University and the developer on the design and placement of bus stops.

B. Prepare recommendation to the City Council on revisions to the City's Sidewalk Repair Policy

Bond presented the staff report dated March 24, 2016, and reported that at the March 7, 2016 City Council meeting, the Traffic and Safety Commission had been directed to review the City's

sidewalk repair program and provide recommendations on financing options including a potential tax measure dedicated to sidewalk repair to be placed on the November 2016 ballot. A report back to the City Council was tentatively planned for May or June 2016. He recommended that the Commission discuss policy and financing options and continue the item to the April 28, 2016 Commission meeting.

The Commission requested the following clarifications:

- Referred to the priority sub program and priority areas and asked if it was an annual survey and what constituted an area, to which Bond advised that the Commission would weigh in on that annually. He recommended starting with the ATP to identify the priority routes and suggested the Commission might later consider other ways to categorize prioritization. He did not recommend setting all the priorities now. (McCroskey)
- Referred to the shared responsibility section and potential time limits and fairness, and Bond noted that the infrastructure would have to be constructed to enforce that and utilize liens to ensure the work would be done; the point of sale would trigger the shared responsibility. (McCroskey)
- Asked about the threshold for a \$100,000 renovation to make the changes and asked if there was a way to make that assessment a percentage of the renovation, to which Bond noted that the \$100,000 had come from EBMUD, most additions were in excess of \$100,000, it could be included in closing costs, and it could be different for the sidewalk, if desired. Bond recommended leaving some flexibility for the future to see how the policy functioned and depending on the economy, and added that once constructive notice had been made of a hazard the property owner would have to do something, and if that was not possible the City might have to intervene to avoid injury. The amount of the proposed tax could be discussed by the Commission and would be discussed by the Council. (Del Rosario)

Chen advised that the \$150,000 level of repair would not be sufficient to repair the 58 currently identified locations and several staff with different expertise would be required. When asked, he reported that a one-inch displacement was considered to be a tripping hazard, although Chavez stated in the past a quarter inch displacement required repair.

The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Preston Jordan

- Urged the Commission to remind the Council that a limited measure made the most sense at this time; referred to a graph from the Community Development Department with respect to data that had been collected over the last decade which showed approximately 33 repairs a year, and the value of those repairs; and suggested that with \$150,000 more repairs would be possible from the historic average and the sidewalks would be getting better continually over time. AS&R suggested identifying whole dollar values to make it easy to communicate to voters, to be scaled more to the size of the property; suggested an 8-year sunset; and include other uses for the money if there was money left over to do other things such as vegetation trimming, curb ramps, and urban forestry; and include a low-income exemption/rebate for renters with a one-time qualification for seniors and an annual renewal for non-seniors. Recommended keeping it simple to make it easy to administer, and if a property owner caused sidewalk damage that property owner would have to pay for the fix, otherwise the City would pay for the fix.

The Commission made the following comments:

- Given the current repair need, suggested the \$150,000 was appropriate and if there was a cost share approach would stretch the money for actual construction but would add a staff burden for the process, which was contrary to keeping it simple, and supported a simpler approach. (Javandel)
- Questioned the cost sharing and did not see any logic in the cost sharing approach; recommended establishment of a clear cut policy and expressed concern that a property owner could be required to pay the tax and still be required to repair the sidewalk. (Chomsky)

Chen explained that the cost sharing proposal had come from experience in an effort to encourage homeowners to repair the sidewalk; the City did not have an enforcement system.

Chavez noted that she had previously run the sidewalk program and had walked Albany, took note of the areas that had uplift, sent letters, and kept a record of locations in need of repair; as her responsibilities grew the enforcement became a problem in that the process was very time consuming.

Bond stated that a shared cost would stretch the dollar and if there was no repair there was joint liability and the City had received claims, paid claims, and at times there was litigation. He suggested that through the process staff would revisit the standards, determine what other communities were doing, and craft a good objective system.

Chen clarified that the sidewalk policy would not eliminate the city's liability and a homeowner's share of liability for a tripping hazard on a sidewalk.

Additional comments from the Commission:

- Sought a simple approach and noted that if the tax was a penny per square foot of property there would be something more than \$150,000, and something the public might be able to accept. He asked that the numbers be considered and that the City take on the full responsibility for most of the repairs, which would simplify the process. (Javandel)
- The proposed policy was too complex, and suggested making it clear that the city was ratcheting down the general level of problems over time and ultimately there would be a general improvement and some expectations for the future to then decide how to proceed in a more equitable way of dealing with the sidewalk issues. (McCroskey)
- Recommended the elimination of the sentence in the policy that “upon request of a property owner or upon receipt of a complaint of a hazardous situation the City will conduct an inspection...” and suggested the policy had not addressed what needed to be done when there was a complaint. (Chomsky)

Motion McCroskey/Javandel: Moved to extend the meeting to 10:30 P.M. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes:	Chomsky, Javandel, McCroskey, Del Rosario
Noes:	None
Abstain:	None
Absent:	Reeves

- By consensus, the Commission supported a limited tax.

Bond advised that staff would draft something and return to the Commission.

B. Report on City Council Action on the Buchanan Bikeway Phase III, Utility Undergrounding, and Recycled Water Pipeline

Chavez presented the staff report dated March 24, 2016, and advised that the item was for information only. She confirmed that during the bicycle phase of the signal, the straight through traffic on Marin in both directions could continue. The only unexpected prohibition during that phase would be specific right turns from eastbound Marin to southbound San Pablo.

Commissioner McCroskey expressed his appreciation to Chavez' efforts in the project for the last piece of connecting the hills to the Bay in Albany.

C. Preliminary Discussion of Evaluation of City Streetlights. At the Commission's January meeting, the Commission asked staff to provide the Commission information on the City's street lights. This is a preliminary review of existing information and examples of streetlight master plans prepared in other cities.

Given the hour, the item was continued to the next meeting.

D. General Plan Update

Bond presented a General Plan Update, reported that the item would be taken to the City Council on April 18, and provided a highlighted version of the Addendum.

The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Preston Jordan

- Referred to maps in the General Plan regarding ATP and identified the request to show San Pablo as a rapid cycling route and the cycle track on San Pablo as a relaxed cycling route; since the sidewalk priority network map was shown in the General Plan there was a request to also include the ATP's skeleton network. There was also a goal in the General Plan that the City seek to make sidewalk maintenance at parity with the approach to road maintenance.

The Commission made the following comments:

- Supported the removal of the controversial maps from the General Plan if at all possible since they were in the ATP, and Bond stated that he would look at that. It was clarified that the reference to sidewalk maintenance to be at parity with the approach to road maintenance had been included in both the old and new versions of the General Plan. (Chomsky)

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATION

A. Complete Streets PS&E Request for Proposals

Chavez reported that the Complete Streets PS&E Request for Proposals was almost complete and asked for a volunteer to serve on the selection panel for a consultant. Chair Del Rosario volunteered to serve. Chair Chomsky said he was available to serve as well.

B. Report on North Albany Neighborhood Traffic Calming Project

Chavez reported that the location of 11 speed humps had been identified and would be implemented with the pavement project; and the topographical survey study had been prepared for the mini circles. She also reported that the presentation of the recommendations for the Parking Assessment Study would be discussed at the May 11 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, and members of the Traffic and Safety Commission were invited to attend.

Bond affirmed that the Council had discussed Measure D and had offered direction to draft ballot language to have voters consider an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to allow Councilmembers to allow future changes to Residential Parking Standards. The sidewalk measure would be taken to the City Council the second meeting in May.

Commissioner McCroskey reported that AS&R were partnering with the Albany Rotary Club and the Albany Community Foundation for a clean-up and beautification project on the Bay Trail north of Buchanan to the Richmond border on April 10 from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., primarily for graffiti abatement. In addition, May 12 would be Bike to Work Day and Bikes on Solano, AS&R and the City of Albany would co-sponsor the energizer station at the intersection of Masonic and Marin at the greenway. There would also be Bike to School Days.

Chair Del Rosario announced that MTC's Managed Lanes Implementation Plan was looking at converting HOV to express (HOT) lanes on I-80 and other freeway networks, and as a way to have more express bus service one of the ideas was to look at Park & Ride lots; three locations were being considered, one of which would be the Buchanan Underpass.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- A. Red Curbs at intersections north of Solano and east of San Pablo between San Pablo and Masonic – March 2016**
- B. Request for the installation of speed humps at the 1000 block of Key Route Boulevard**
- C. Review of Collision Data from the State Wide Integrated Traffic Records System Database (SWITRS)**
- D. Preliminary Discussion of evaluation of City Streetlights**
- E. Redesign of the Gilman I-80 Interchange in Berkeley.** Chavez noted there would be a public hearing on the conceptual design at the Parsons Brinckerhoff office in Oakland on April 27 and she would advise of the particulars by email.
- F. Speed Humps on the 600 and 700 block of Adams Street; and Replacement of No Trucks Sign.** Based on public comments at the beginning of the meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 P.M.