



## TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

City Council Chambers  
1000 San Pablo Avenue  
April 28, 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\*, Reeves, Del Rosario  
Absent: None  
Staff Present: Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Transportation Planner  
Wen Chen, Senior Engineer  
Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

\*Arrived after Roll Call

### 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Minutes for the Regular Meetings of February 25 and March 24, 2016

Motion Javandel/Chomsky: Moved to approve the minutes of the February 25 and March 24, 2016 meetings, as submitted.

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

### 4. PUBLIC COMMENT by Harry Chomsky

Speaking on behalf of Albany Strollers & Rollers (AS&R), reported that May is Bike Month and announced a series of events in Albany for Bike to School Day on May 11; Bike to Work Day on May 12; a Bike Away from Work Party for adults in Berkeley on May 12; the Albany Police Activities League Bike Rodeo on May 14; and Bike About Town Ride, and a Bike-in Movie at the Albany Community Center on May 20.

### 5. PRESENTATION

#### A. Police Report

Bond presented the police report.

#### The Commission made the following comments:

Commissioner Chomsky thanked staff for the format of the report as well as the terminology changes that had been requested.

Commissioner Reeves asked staff to keep building on the same report to generate month-to-month comparisons.

Bond stated that past history in the same format would be pursued.

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

**A. AC Transit Major Corridors Study**

Chavez explained that AC Transit is conducting a Major Corridors Study to identify infrastructure investments that will improve transit reliability and on-time performance in its transit system. The Study is being coordinated with the Alameda County Transportation Commission Transit Plan. One of AC Transit's Major Corridors is San Pablo Avenue.

**Mika Miyasato**, AC Transit, presented the long-range plan for the AC Transit Major Corridors Study to 2040; spoke to bus stop relocation and the attempt to tack on that work at the time of Complete Street improvements; and explained the intent with enhanced bus stops to make sure that the bus stop was on the far side, if possible, and that the bus stop spacing was appropriate for the type of corridor;

**The Commission had the following questions and comments:**

- Questioned the cost figures in that the cost to provide enhanced bus and rapid bus appeared to be the same; Miyasato advised that costs were rounded to millions and there were differences; enhanced bus was slightly cheaper; the differences were primarily operational and all door boarding. (Chomsky)
- Verified that rapid bus included everything that enhanced buses included; all signal improvements plus branded buses, specially branded shelters, and more frequent buses for what would be offered on Telegraph and San Pablo Avenues. (Reeves)
- Verified that vehicle costs had been included in capital costs for those vehicles required over and above what was currently provided; there were three routes on San Pablo Avenue but by combining the three routes into two there would be minimal increase in vehicle requirements for the corridor even considering five-minute frequency service during the peak hour. (Del Rosario)
- Acknowledged the need for upgrades and explained that the San Pablo Avenue Corridor would be the subject of a number of upgrades that would benefit Albany; affirmed, when asked, that the policy would be to relocate bus stops to the far side of intersections. (Del Rosario)
- Asked if there was an opportunity to look at specific case studies to build a database about the effect of relocating bus stops on the host business. This information could be shared with businesses to alleviate their concerns. (Javandel)
- Verified that within the Bay Area there were currently quite a few short bus only lanes. (Chomsky)

**There were no PUBLIC COMMENTS.**

## **B. Washington Avenue Pedestrian Safety Improvements at Intersections East of San Pablo Avenue**

Chavez reported that City staff had received numerous complaints in regard to a lack of adequate visibility along Washington Avenue and pedestrian safety concerns. City staff explored options to improve visibility and pedestrian safety; some options might affect street parking at the intersections.

### **The Commission requested the following clarifications:**

- Asked about a four-way stop at Washington and Cornell; Chavez noted that had been requested although if there were consecutive stop signs there would be a tendency to ignore one of them; suggested stop signs might be swapped from the intersection further east, or install crosswalks with yield lines; there was no desire to have stop signs at every intersection. (Chomsky)

### **The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by David Ong, Doug Ryan, and Sasha Keller:**

- The City's proposal would place a 20-foot red zone in front of his home eliminating his off-street parking and creating bigger problems with the loss of off-street parking; recommended a stop sign eastbound and westbound on Washington to slow down traffic and improve parking.
- Concerns were expressed with off-street parking; noted that business on Solano Avenue was being pushed to residential which impacted the parking everywhere; questioned why the explicit crosswalk at Cornell and Washington was not also being provided at Stannage, and stated that had impacted the parking as well.
- Given the heavy pedestrian and bike traffic in the area, red curbs were encouraged and more crosswalks should be implemented, particularly on Cornell; it is difficult to cross at this intersection and while people were being encouraged to walk and bicycle more it was currently unsafe to do so; encouraged the implementation of the City's proposed measures.

### **The Commission made the following comments:**

- While crosswalks were not necessary with a stop sign it might not be a bad idea to reinforce the presence of the pedestrian right-of-way; liked having the crosswalks marked; the need for yield lines in advance of crosswalks where there were not stop signs at Cornell were debatable, and the need for the sign to supplement marking diminished over time; had been a member of the Commission when stop signs had been installed between Masonic and San Pablo as part of a pattern of stops, and had heard lots of complaints of noise and air pollution given that cars started and stopped all day. Acknowledged the tough choice with respect to red curbing but stated that safety trumped parking. (Javandel)
- Agreed but wanted to know about marking the red curb on the approach and asked about the benefit of the reasoning for the approach and the preservation of line of sight, and Javandel clarified that area of concern. (Reeves)

- Presented a photograph of the area taken this date to clarify the concern; the picture showed a large vehicle parked up against where the crosswalk would be making a pedestrian invisible to oncoming traffic until the pedestrian literally stepped into the traffic lane. (Chomsky)
- Referred to the letter from a resident and the complaint of overweight delivery trucks using Washington and expressed concern that while Solano was the heavy truck route, there could be no U-turn on Solano, which was a problem; the letter had also complained about trucks entering from Solano and San Pablo, which was difficult to address; the letter had asked for a four-way stop at Kains. He agreed there could not be stop signs at every block. (McCroskey)

Motion Chomsky/Javandel: Moved to recommend a 20-foot red zone on each approach and a five- to seven-foot red zone on each departure side as a general rule, with the shorter section to apply if there was a viable parking space remaining.

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

- With respect to Cornell and Washington, liked the diagram although if there was a concern for sign clutter the Yield to Pedestrians sign could be optional; stated the numbers provided by staff for bicycle and pedestrian traffic counts did not meet the traffic volume warrant for an all-way stop. (Javandel)
- Agreed the yield sign was not needed initially but could be added later. (Chomsky)

Motion Javandel/Chomsky: Moved to install crosswalks and yield lines and the crosswalk signs at Cornell and Washington, but not the advance Yield to Pedestrians sign.

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

Chavez took this opportunity to introduce Jocelyn Walker, Capital Improvement Program Manager, and a new member of the Public Works Department.

**C. Prepare Recommendation to the City Council on Revisions to the City’s Sidewalk Repair Policy**

Bond stated as requested by the City Council, the Traffic and Safety Commission had discussed the proposed City Sidewalk Repair Program at its March meeting, and had provided recommendations on financing options for placement on the November 2016 ballot. Staff had revised the Draft Sidewalk Policy and financing options per the Commission’s feedback. A report back to the City Council was tentatively planned for May 16, 2016. He highlighted the key elements of the revised program that the City would fully fund the repair of sidewalks in front of residential parcels based on prioritization areas that had evolved over time; commercial property owners continued to be responsible for sidewalks in front of their property; there would be an allowance for an interim solution for areas with anticipated Capital Improvement Projects (CIP); applicants for planned large remodel projects would have to repair the sidewalk as part of the project. He summarized the elements of the parcel tax itself.

**The Commission requested the following clarifications:**

- Asked who would provide the oversight; Bond explained that the policy had been written to be effective with or without parcel tax approval of the voters; if a parcel tax was approved, the Traffic and Safety Commission could provide oversight. (McCroskey)
- As to the amount of money to be raised for the tax to accommodate the urgent needs for sidewalk improvements, Bond stated that calculation had not been completed; the need was far greater than what would be raised by a Sidewalk Parcel Tax; verified that one cent per square foot would correlate to the amount of sidewalk for which a homeowner was responsible; multifamily would pay less on a unit basis; no revenue projections had yet been calculated. (Del Rosario)
- With respect to the potential for degradation of funds as a result of inflation over ten years, Bond stated in real terms that could reduce purchasing power by approximately 25 percent. (Chomsky)
- Asked when the Council would make a decision, Bond stated that a final decision to place a tax on the ballot would probably occur at a July meeting to allow the drafting of a precise measure. (Del Rosario)

**The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Preston Jordan**

- Representing AS&R, suggested that a point of sale for repair of sewer laterals and for sidewalk repair were not the same given that the sewer lateral repair requirement was primarily on private property and not public property; opposed a property owner's repair of public property; suggested there were other point of sale items that the City could consider such as mandatory building efficiency upgrades. With respect to remodels, a property owner should only be required to repair the sidewalk if the property owner damaged the sidewalk. It would be useful to include a provision for secondary uses of the money if significant repairs were not needed, such as trimming vegetation, urban forestry, and curb ramps, or that the City Council have the discretion not to collect the whole tax. Inflation adjustment should be included to help the program be successful; rebates should be allowed given that two other Albany taxes had not only exemption provisions but rebate provisions; there should not be blanket senior exemptions but a one-time means tested senior exemption.

**The Commission made the following comments:**

- The proposal seemed like a good match to what the Commission had recommended at the last meeting; was pleased to see the removal of the cost sharing provision which seems to dilute public funds; supported one cent per square foot and if an inflation adjustment might be supported it could be considered; stated the point of sale and remodel triggers did not seem to be an integral part of the program and could make homes less affordable although the requirements could be included as an independent element not connected to the use of the tax money. (Chomsky)
- Asked how a point of sale, and potentially energy upgrades, would work, to which Bond stated that the requirement would be in the municipal code, which would be shared with the Realtors Association. Every transaction through a Broker or title Company would use those checklists where a certificate would be required for a close of escrow. (McCroskey)

- Supported the remodel provision given that remodels often resulted in damage to a sidewalk, but did not feel as strongly with a point of sale requirement. (Javandel)
- Did not favor a point of sale requirement, noted sidewalks would be paid for directly by individuals or collectively through the City, and collectively the City could be more efficient so the actual cost was lower even if the proportional share for everyone came out the same; did not support a double payment system. (Javandel)
- Suggested the same reasoning would apply to a remodel requirement as well. (Chomsky)
- A check of sidewalks before and after remodels might be in order to clarify whether or not damage occurred as part of a remodel to verify property owner responsibility. (Javandel)
- Questioned situations where sidewalks were damaged by people parking on the sidewalk; suggested that sidewalks should be treated very much like roads given that they were a thoroughfare for people to move through the City in various ways, and maintaining them at a specified standard was important; supported the policy; questioned how much money would be generated given the statement that there was over \$500,000 of severe work that needed to be done. (Reeves)

**PUBLIC HEARING reopened to allow a comment from Preston Jordan:**

- To his knowledge, there had never been any data to justify a \$500,000 need; noted the City had identified 160 severe locations and approximately 60 would be repaired this year and in three years all would be repaired; suggested there were not 60 severely damaged locations occurring every year, and after three years the demand would be smaller and smaller.

Chen referred to the actual cost of sidewalk repair; this year there were 58 locations and \$156,000 had been allocated for repair; when moving forward, the proposed measure would generate \$180,000 to \$200,000 annually to repair those 58 locations. Construction is only a portion of the cost, sidewalks would continue to deteriorate; while it would not be worse than today it would not be better than today from an asset management point of view where more than \$500,000 would be required to keep the sidewalks in a good condition. Sidewalks were also damaged by trees; of the 58 locations more than 30 had been damaged by trees and the City's arborist opinion was to remove four trees and the rest would go through tree root pruning, which was not a permanent solution and the sidewalks could again be damaged in ten years.

- As to the administrative costs associated with the policy, Wen stated the other costs would be assessed, such as design, construction management, and program management. Those soft costs could represent 20 percent of the construction. (McCroskey)
- Noted the level of improvement to be achieved would have to be identified, the methodology to be used would have to be clarified; and recommended moving forward to see what would happen, which would be a good reason to have an expiration date fairly soon to see whether the program would be effective and whether something else would have to be done. (Chomsky)

- Suggested one cent per square foot would be a clean and easy thing for the public to understand, what the revenue would pay for or the amount needed could be identified. (Del Rosario)
- The proposal makes the City more of a caretaker of the sidewalks in a more strategic fashion and not just when there was an issue; supported a secondary use of the funds to address some of the issues affecting sidewalks. (Reeves)

Bond spoke to the use of the tax revenue on curb ramps. As recommended, the funds could be used to maintain the landscape strip, including curb, gutter, and curb ramps. With respect to including administrative costs, a provision might be included to limit the amount of money to staff time, generally 5 to 10 percent which may not cover the costs but which would address the electorate's concern for bureaucracy. In terms of revenue estimate, he suggested \$150,000 to \$200,000 annually could be generated by the policy as proposed.

- Suggested the tax would allow the City the ability to think about sidewalk repair in a different way for an especially walkable city. (Reeves)
- Supported many of Mr. Jordan's comments such as the inclusion of trimming vegetation, urban forestry, and curb ramps in the use of the revenue generated, a low income exemption that allowed seniors a one-time determination, and with means testing for younger people of working age, and including rebates for renters who would be paying for the fee in their rental costs. (McCroskey)
- With respect to stewardship, recommended word changes to Attachment 2, the revised draft, with respect to purpose such as sidewalk throughput or passability as a measure of success for the process of repairing sidewalks in Albany; was interested in seeing the ongoing evaluation of the sidewalks in those terms to address the vegetation aspect. (McCroskey)
- Preferred something simple that voters could support; treat the proposal as a pilot sidewalk tax with a ten-year timeframe, 2.5 percent per year escalation, tied to inflation, although if that was too difficult give it a number to make it easy; include vegetation management as an eligible expenditure; one cent per square foot which would allow an accelerated process this year; and designating 25 percent maximum for overhead. (Javandel)
- With respect to curb ramps, asked if that would be an improvement as opposed to a repair and should it be clarified that the work with respect to curb ramps would be repairs, although Bond suggested that if repairing a sidewalk where there should be a curb ramp and there is none should also be possible as part of the repair project. (Javandel)
- Administrative costs and total revenue expected along with the program costs this year would be important to provide to the City Council. (Del Rosario)

*Motion Javandel/Chomsky:* Moved to recommend to the City Council to place on the ballot a pilot sidewalk tax including vegetation management at one cent per square foot with 25 percent maximum expenditures on overhead, with a 2.5 percent annual escalation for a ten-year measure, with a low-income exemption similar to the library tax and a one-time senior exemption, and with the Traffic and Safety Commission to serve as the oversight for the measure.

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

Absent: None

**PUBLIC HEARING reopened to allow a comment from Preston Jordan:**

- On the issue of including rent rebates, noted that current City forms allowed rent rebates for the low income for the two library property taxes, so there was currently a mechanism for a rebate.

Motion Javandel/Del Rosario: Moved to recommend to the City Council an amendment to the Purpose statement of the Sidewalk Repair Policy: "The purpose of the sidewalk repair policy is to improve continuous sidewalk passability in the public right of way by repairing sidewalk damage and removing vegetation obstruction."

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

- The Commission discussed the pros and cons of a point of permit requirement for a major construction repair clause and supported such a clause given that most projects at large involved heavy equipment which tended to damage the sidewalk.

Motion Javandel/McCroskey: Moved to recommend to the City Council a Sidewalk Repair Policy with no point of sale clause but with a point of permit for major construction repair clause.

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

- With respect to the Residential Program paragraph where the City Council would annually review criteria for the prioritization of projects, requested a change that "The Traffic and Safety Commission will annually propose criteria for the prioritization of projects to the City Council." (McCroskey)

Motion McCroskey/Javandel: Moved to recommend a modification to the Residential Program paragraph that "The Traffic and Safety Commission will annually propose criteria for the prioritization of projects to the City Council."

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

- Noted that the non-residential portion of the policy had not been discussed and suggested a mechanism many jurisdictions has used as a way of relieving commercial property owners of the cost of repairing their sidewalks through a paid parking program where all revenues net of administrative costs would be placed in a special fund used to improve local conditions in the neighborhood where the businesses were located. (Chomsky)



**D. Allocation of Transportation Development Act (TDA) – Title 3 Funds**

Chavez advised that the City of Albany would receive \$17,302 in TDA funds for Fiscal Year 2016/17. Staff proposed using those funds to partially fund the design of the Traffic Calming Plan and Pedestrian Improvements for Brighton Avenue (as part of the North Albany Traffic Calming Project). This project has been publicly reviewed by the Traffic and Safety Commission, which acts as the Albany Active Transportation Advisory Committee as required by the TDA-Title 3 Agreements.

**The Commission requested the following clarifications:**

- Asked if the funding source was a regular yearly allotment, to which Chavez affirmed that was the case and the amount varied; some years there was only \$11,000 and the funds were held over to accumulate sufficient funds to accommodate a project. (McCroskey)

Motion Javandel/Reeves: Moved to approve a recommendation to the City Council to use TDA-Title 3 funds for Fiscal Year 2016/17 for the design of pedestrian safety improvements on Brighton Avenue.

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

**E. Report on the 2015 Pavement Project Amendment**

Bond presented a report on the amendments to the project which included the installation of 11 speed humps in the North Albany neighborhood and pavement rehabilitation at the Marin-Masonic and Washington-Masonic intersections, with the speed humps to be installed in June.

**The Commission requested the following clarifications:**

- As to whether other speed humps in the City that needed adjustment would be tacked on to the speed humps for North Albany, Chavez noted there was a conceptual design for the Santa Fe Avenue speed humps although construction might have to be deferred to the next pavement project, and Bond clarified that the priority was to get the North Albany work finished before the construction of the residential project at El Cerrito Plaza was finished; Chavez added that they could talk to the contractor to see if they could fit it in since it's in the neighborhood. (Chomsky)

**The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Preston Jordan**

- Verified that the pavement at Masonic/Washington/Marin would be rehabilitated and offered AS&R's thanks given the current deteriorated condition of the pavement.

Motion Javandel/McCroskey: Moved to approve a recommendation to the City Council to amend the 2015 Pavement Report Project.

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

## 7. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATION

### A. Public Meeting on Proposed Design for the I-80/Gilman Interchange Project in Berkeley.

Chavez reported that Caltrans, in coordination with the Alameda County Transportation Commission and the City of Berkeley is in the process of conducting public outreach for the proposed system of roundabouts at the I-80/Gilman Interchange in Berkeley. The proposal affects bicycle and vehicle circulation in Albany by eliminating Gilman Street access to northbound Eastshore Highway. She had attended the Community meeting at the North Berkeley Senior Center on Wednesday, April 27 at 6:30 P.M. and highlighted what had occurred at the meeting.

#### The Commission made the following comments:

- There was a discussion that the bike/ped overpass proposed as part of the project would connect the sports fields on the west with the existing Bay Trail, with a point at the southeast corner of the project, which was not a valuable starting point or destination for any active transportation user because it was not well served and it connected to a point where there was no other active transportation infrastructure; moving farther north would allow it to become more useful although the overpass itself would be located farther north, and the terminus desired was at Codornices Creek. (Chomsky)
- Noted the suggestion that a future project could implement an under the railroad tracks passage for cars and a separate less deep passage for bikes and pedestrians which would enable a cycle track on the south side of Gilman between the frontage road and Fourth Street, allowing traffic to the low traffic bike designated streets in the area. With respect to the recycled water pipes, the instigation for that had to come from the wastewater district, which might need a separate letter. (McCroskey)
- Commented that Gilman was not a comfortable street for a bicyclist; showed on the map where the connections would be; stated the project was completely unfunded; it was a below water project that could take some time to develop. (McCroskey)
- There were funding sources available; would be funded through Measure BB and partially funded through the railroad; there was a question of timing and there was no guarantee; the bike/ped bridge could be funded through the Gilman Street Interchange; the bicycle causeway was not in a funding plan at this point; referenced the options and opportunities available and stated some were associated with the interchange and some were not. (Javandel)
- Suggested with the current configuration the traffic of families going to the ballfields could not be removed although with a better aligned project that might be done; Bond clarified the item was an information item that could be agendized for a more thorough discussion, or a recommendation for a more formal Council recommendation could be pursued. (McCroskey)
- Recommended the inclusion of a differently aligned bike/ped causeway in the analysis for the project. (McCroskey)

Motion McCroskey/Chomsky: Moved to extend the meeting to 10:15 P.M., as needed. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

- The Commission recommended that the item be agendaized for a more thorough discussion, and Bond clarified that each member of the Commission could become involved in the project as individuals; on the discussion of where the staff letter should be sent, Bond recommended that staff to staff discussions be pursued although the members of the Commission could individually send letters to whoever they wished.

**The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Preston Jordan**

- As a member of the ACTC Committee that had considered the project, it had been noted that having egress points to Eastshore Highway would require a two-lane roundabout, which offered the same level of safety as currently existed and a one-lane roundabout had been proposed in order to get a safety improvement.

Chavez highlighted the points that would be included in the staff letter.

**B. San Pablo and Buchanan Street Complete Streets Project**

Chavez reported that there had been nine responses to the Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the project.

Commissioner McCroskey reported that the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) had announced that they were letting out a contract for engineering work to complete the Bay Trail from Albany to Berkeley along the Golden Gate Fields property; apparently Golden Gate Fields had agreed to donate the land to settle the eminent domain lawsuit by the EBRPD since 2011.

**8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- A. Installation of speed humps at the 1000 block of Key Route Boulevard (May 2016)**
- B. Report on Speed and Volume Survey and Traffic Counts on the 900 Block of Taylor Street (May 2016)**
- C. Report on Speed and Volume Survey of the 600 Block of Adams Street (May 2016)**
- D. Street Light Plan (May 2016)**
- E. Report on Consultant selection for the San Pablo Avenue/Buchanan Street Complete Streets (May 2016)**
- F. Review of Collision Data from the State Wide Integrated Traffic Records System Database (SWITRS)**
- G. Letter Regarding Proposed Design for the I-80/Gilman Interchange Project in Berkeley**

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 P.M.