



TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

City Council Chambers
1000 San Pablo Avenue
May 26, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Vice Chair McCroskey.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Chomsky, Javandel*, McCroskey, Reeves, Del Rosario*
Absent: None
Staff Present: Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Transportation Planner
Jocelyn Walker, Capital Improvement Program Engineer
Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

*Arrived after Roll Call

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Minutes for the Regular Meeting of April 28, 2016

Commissioner Chomsky requested the following amendments:

To the fifth bullet from the bottom of Page 2: *Verified that rapid bus included everything that enhanced buses included.*

To the middle of Page 8; *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 Chomsky/Reeves: Moved to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2016 meeting, as amended

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

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

5. PRESENTATION

A. Police Report

There was no Police Report.

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

A. Speed and Volume Survey of the 900 Block of Taylor Street

Chavez explained that staff had received a request to conduct a speed and volume survey on this block. Staff conducted two surveys; one in March and the other in April of 2016. According to the pneumatic tube readings and based on the revised Albany Traffic Calming Policy of 2014, this block qualifies for soft treatments. The results of the survey had been attached to the staff report and the block had been notified. She recommended approval of the implementation of a white edge line along the parking lane, installation of 25 mph pavement markings and signage on the 900 block of Taylor Street. Staff would continue monitoring the block after installation of soft treatments.

The Commission requested the following clarifications:

- Asked about T-markings and how many spaces on the block between driveways were more than two cars in length. Chavez did not recommend the T-markings unless absolutely necessary (McCroskey).
- Verified with Chavez there were no plans to repave the road. (Reeves)
- Questioned whether there were other tools beyond white stripes or T-markings to use, such as diagonal lines that might offer a narrowing appearance, to which Chavez stated the street was not as wide as others although other markings might be considered, and while street art had been considered and there was a pilot project on Dartmouth, there had been no recommendations for Taylor Street. (Chomsky)

Chavez explained that No Truck signs had been installed, as for the request to install No Left Turn signs during peak hours from eastbound Buchanan to northbound Taylor, a traffic analysis would be required.

The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by John Cottiger, Kathy Chalk, Timothy Green, and Hobby Green

- Years ago there had been a crosswalk on the west side of Buchanan and Taylor, although it had been removed because it was reportedly too dangerous; thanked the Commission for installation of the No Truck sign on Taylor Street; supported the No Left Turn sign; asked if the City notified Google of the installation of signs so that Google could change its App; expressed hope what had been proposed would slow down traffic; noted there was little police enforcement on the street; thanked the City for the second traffic survey which had helped; and asked if Slow signs could be painted on the pavement at either end of the street.

Bond noted with respect to Slow signs that people who commuted routinely in an area did not pay attention to signs; striping and narrowing had appeared to work in the past.

- The traffic on Taylor was a constant safety concern, not just the congestion coming off Buchanan during peak hours but the speed of traffic off of Solano and coming down Taylor making backing out of driveways very dangerous.
- The traffic on Taylor had become unbearable; supported a speed hump at the lower end of the hill but did not know what could be done at the top of the hill; emphasized

the safety issue with respect to the speed of traffic; and supported a No Left Turn sign and anything that could be done to slow down traffic.

- Asked if a 15 mph sign could be placed at the top of the hill to slow down traffic.

Chavez reported that the only streets with 15 mph speed according to the Municipal Code were Washington and Solano, but would recommend to the City Council that the speed limit on Taylor be lowered given the hill; in order to do that a traffic engineering study would have to be done. She described other more expensive options possible such as bulb-outs at the intersection, barriers, or one-way in/one-way out streets that would have to be supported by the neighborhood.

The Commission made the following comments:

- Questioned whether Google would actually accept changes for directions and inquired whether car directions were separate from commercial truck directions; questioned whether lowering the speed limit to 15 mph would actually work; suggested the real issue was vehicle speeds near the intersections and suggested the most effective method would be to slow traffic at the turn onto the street. Recommended starting with the proposed treatments and then considering bulb-outs and treatments at the intersections to make people more deliberate in their turns; did not support a No Left Turn restriction during peak hours given the existing dedicated lane for left turns. (Chomsky)

Chavez stated the City could start out with striped bulb-outs.

- Recommended pylons or flexible bollards. (McCroskey)
- Asked if the crosswalk at Buchanan and Pierce had slowed down traffic; supported soft treatments that did not move the problem to other streets; supported the lines; and commented that the turn observation was interesting. (Reeves)
- Suggested necking down the entrances to the street temporarily with pylons and markings to see if that helped slow cars at the entrance to the street; suggested a treatment that broke up the space and perceptually encourage people to lower their speed; was interested in the T-markings as an alternative to the straight lines; and suggested that broken interruption of space would change driver perception. (McCroskey)
- Recommended marking the limits of the parking spaces and not the spaces themselves; sought some method to make it uncomfortable for drivers to be in residential areas that were not constructed for fast congested traffic. (Reeves)
- Did not see the advantage of installing red curbs on Taylor. (Chomsky)
- Clarified that the red zones were not intended to help reduce traffic or the speed of cars on Taylor, but to improve the safety of pedestrians on Buchanan and Solano; and Chavez added that to be able to reduce the speed of the turns from Solano onto Taylor, potentially include pylons as part of that treatment. (Chomsky)
- Supported the staff recommendation. (Del Rosario)

- Noted the T-markings would reduce the parking capacity and the neighborhood would have to be willing to do that; asked if there was a standard treatment for L-markings at driveways; Chavez stated there was not. (Del Rosario)

While a motion was made by Commissioner Chomsky to approve the staff recommendation with modifications, along with a recommendation for two versions; one to identify the T-markings on the side of the street marking each parking space, and another with just L-markings of the beginning and end of each parking zone, he later withdrew the motion to allow staff to prepare diagrams of both versions to be presented to the Commission at its next meeting.

After discussion, the Commission decided it needed only a diagram of the L-markings, and a count of the number of parking spaces to be removed by the proposed pylons and red zones at both ends of the street.

B. Street Light Plan

At its January meeting, the Commission asked staff to provide information about the City's street lights. This is a preliminary review of existing information and examples of Street Light Master Plans prepared for other cities. Bond reported the item was for preliminary discussion only and no action was required.

There were no PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Commission requested the following clarifications, and made the following comments:

- Verified with Bond that the lights between Masonic and San Pablo had been upgraded and were brighter, better placed, and might be LED. (McCroskey)
- Asked if there were guidelines or rules for lighting in cities, to which Bond stated there were Dark Sky Initiatives where lighting levels were set as low as needed, with lights oriented to the streets below and not above; those standards had been included in the General Plan. (Reeves)
- Asked if a plan for citywide lighting would be focused primarily on business districts where people would be walking at night, or walking arterial routes as defined by a pedestrian map, or create a standard of illumination throughout the City; Bond referred to the Hawaiian Gardens Master Plan which had different illumination in different areas, suggesting that Albany might want to look at both and coordinate it with the Active Transportation Plan (ATP). (Chomsky)
- Noted that the City had set up three different zones for sidewalks; commercial, priority network, and lower priority residential areas which could be considered for street lights as well; Bond stated the City Council had directed the inclusion of residential and commercial in the street light program, although unlike the sidewalks the City was 100 percent responsible for street lights. (Chomsky)
- Suggested that street lighting could also be divided by primary function although it may fall into one of the sidewalk categories; suggested pedestrian safety was the most pressing potential hazard, potentially on Solano. (Javandel)
- As to how lighting worked given areas where there was no lighting at all, Bond explained there would be the construction of the pole itself and other factors. When

updating an intersection the lights would be added; how they would be provided elsewhere had yet to be determined. (Reeves)

Chavez referred to undergrounding and noted that one of the concerns was related to illuminating the crosswalks from Masonic to San Pablo. The first block from Masonic to Kains was well illuminated by San Pablo lights, but moving eastward there was less illumination. She explained that the City had used the latest standards for that design. She referred to new street lights on Pierce by the park in the angled parking area and explained that there were light poles intended for the street with lights on the other side of the street that illuminated the side path.

- Suggested the whole section of the Buchanan path could use lighting and had been wired for that for the future; understood that individual lights were not metered, and Chavez explained there was centralized metering. (McCroskey)
- Sought more information on solar infill lighting options. (McCroskey)
- With respect to solar, noted that the battery once charged could run the light for about eight days, suggested the light fixture itself and the battery could cost in the range of \$4,000; noted that with PG&E involvement, running the conduit and hooking up to the grid represented the major cost of street lights; the payback in terms of energy savings with solar would not be that long; non-LED lights saved a lot of energy. (Javandel)
- Suggested the topics of sidewalks, pedestrian safety, and lighting were closely tied; referred to the fact that Washington was so dark and the sidewalk was in such bad condition there was a serious safety concern; asked what treatment would go where, how big a scope was involved, and whether the City would just fix everything going forward. (Reeves)

Bond suggested that a college or high school intern could work on identifying the City's street lights and give us a rough assessment of illumination levels, and with that baseline of information it might be easy to determine what to do next and overlay it with the ATP and other plans. When asked, he suggested a potential study could cost in the range of \$40,000 to \$50,000 and prior to spending that kind of money a rough survey would be important.

C. Draft Letter to Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) Concerning the Proposed Roundabouts at the I-80/Gilman Interchange

Chavez explained that in April staff had presented a report on the proposed design for the I-80/Gilman Interchange and on the opportunities and challenges this project could present to Albany and surrounding communities. The letter is intended to represent the City's formal comments on this project. She asked the Commission for feedback on the draft letter.

There were no PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Commission requested the following clarifications, and made the following comments:

- Given AC Transit's desire to serve Target, the proposed AC Transit loop potentially on Line 18 could provide that opportunity. (Del Rosario)

- Requested the first sentence under Paragraph A. be modified to read: *The recently approved Albany 2015 General Plan includes an action to pursue a grade-separated crossing of UPRR tracks and I-80 at Codornices Creek for active transportation users to better connect Albany to its Waterfront.* (Chomsky)
- To the fifth sentence under A. *Linking the Bay Trail and Ohlone Greenway through a low-volume off-street corridor is a superior cyclist experience and would minimize cyclist volume in the project area.* (McCroskey) (Chomsky)
- Corrected the spelling of the name of Alameda County Transportation Commission Executive Director Art Dao. (Javandel)
- Would abstain from a vote due to a potential conflict of interest; suggested a grade-separated crossing to get past the railroad to get to Target and eventually past the freeway to get to the Waterfront was great but was not convinced it would be part of the project; wanted to make sure the project did not preclude the ability to do that; suggested a mirror image to the north was appealing although it would not be practical. (Javandel)
- Noted that Albany Strollers & Rollers (AS&R) had commented that from a regional planning perspective it was not a good use of funds to build the overpass structure proposed in the plan because it would not serve a useful purpose. (Chomsky)

Chavez asked if bicycle access, as proposed, was a requirement of the project or whether that access could be shifted to another area, to which Commissioner Javandel stated from a Complete Streets philosophy there was an attempt to provide for all modes of transportation in the project area. He suggested the big challenge of building an overpass was the ADA-compliance ramp length needed to get up high enough to cross the freeway.

- Commented that cycling on Gilman was not currently a comfortable experience, and without removing the possibility of pedestrians and cyclists at grade, suggested that an elevated path on pylons on the western side, much like the BART tracks, would be possible and noted that the freeway was fairly low at the proposed overcrossing. Recommended that the letter specifically call out the proposed Codornices connection from the Codornices Trail directly to the Bay Trail and touch down on the west side of the freeway at the Bay Trail; suggested it was important that all road crossings in the interchange be eliminated for those who choose to use such an overcrossing, although he did not recommend the elimination of all crosswalks or cycling through the interchange; a choice to avoid the interchange completely would be valuable and should be communicated by the letter. (McCroskey)
- Suggested the letter needed to be more direct in proposing the new overcrossing in a far northern location at the Codornices area; with identified support for the crossing in the plan and the northern crossing proposed by the letter, or for just the northern crossing proposed by the letter. (Chomsky)

Chavez explained the original intention of the letter was to state the City's needs and provide ideas and let the engineers determine how to connect the ideas.

- Recommended a change to the letter to indicate the proposed overcrossing represented a superior alternative and a better use of funds than the overcrossing currently shown in the project. (Chomsky)

- Referred to the third and fourth sentences under Paragraph B. *The alternative of using Second Street and Harrison Street to bypass the I-80/Gilman area is not an acceptable gateway to these properties. Therefore, it is critical to keep the northbound vehicle access open on Eastshore Highway from Gilman Street.* Suggested the statement was too strongly worded and noted that the alternative had been considered and the consequence was that there had been so much traffic on the roundabout that more of it had to be expanded to two lanes instead of one, and the overall safety of the overall interchange would be compromised. He highlighted the ideas that had been discussed at the meeting. (Chomsky)

Bond advised that the letter would come from the City Council and not from the Traffic and Safety Commission. While not within the scope of the Commission, he explained that the proposal was significant from an economic development perspective and the Commission's focus should be to discuss ways to make it work.

- Noted that traffic from the freeway from the north had a fairly easy access to Target while elsewhere access was not so easy, and a reasonable ask would be to conduct an origin destination study to determine where the traffic to Target was coming from to know how the proposal would affect that situation. (Javandel)
- Recommended that Caltrans be asked to approve a traffic signal at Buchanan and Eastshore Highway, which would solve the exiting traffic flow. (Javandel)
- With respect to the third paragraph under B, sought clarification of that observation and the suggestion of moving the crosswalk to the east given a potential safety concern; noted that if there was a desire for a crossing at Fourth Street that should be clarified. After discussion that paragraph was replaced with *Consider additional crossings further east.* (Chomsky)
- Corrected the second sentence in Paragraph C, as follows: *EBMUD has plans to provide recycled wastewater from its Oakland facility to cities along I-80.* (Chomsky)
- Also with respect to C, clarified with Bond the intent of the language to fill the gaps in the recycled water transmission line. (Javandel)
- The crosswalks shown for the at-grade crossing system were shown in a way that made it technically illegal to ride a bicycle along that pathway but by designating the crosswalks differently could make them into a bike path. (Chomsky)
- Suggested the point of the letter was to make sure that the kinds of things under discussion were considered as part of environmental review; northbound traffic on the Eastshore Freeway and the possibility of a different alignment of the bike/ped overcrossing, which the letter had addressed. (McCroskey)

D. Report on Consultant Selection for the Development of PS&E for the San Pablo Avenue and Buchanan Street Pedestrian Improvements (Complete Streets)

Chavez reported that the City had received nine responses to the Request for Proposals for this project. Staff had interviewed five teams and requested the top-scored firm, BKF, provide a cost proposal for this project.

There were no PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Commission requested the following clarifications and made the following comments:

- As a member of the four-member panel, stated it was clear that BKF was the top candidate. (Del Rosario)
- Spoke to Kains and Adams and asked if there had been an analysis of those streets; Bond verified that neither street was part of the specific development. (McCroskey)
- On the discussion, Chavez noted there was a bicycle crossing at the offset intersection of Washington that had been included; although once starting a bicycle component suggested that the promise of Adams and Kains as alternatives in the project had to be considered. (Chomsky)

Bond clarified that the project had specifically been scoped intentionally not to incorporate every element of the Complete Streets study performed a few years ago, and while the bicycle lanes on Kains and Adams were important they were not part of this particular phase.

- For the signal at Taylor and Buchanan, verified that a pedestrian hybrid beacon would be included. (Javandel)

Chavez verified that once entering a contract the City would have a year to finalize the design.

E. Report on the Construction Bids Received for the Buchanan Bikeway Phase III, Marin Utility Undergrounding, and Water Recycled Pipeline

Bond reported that staff had been disappointed with the outcome of the bidding process for the project where the bids had come in much higher than anticipated; \$2.5 million had been estimated and the bids had come in at \$4.6 to \$5 million; Chavez was working with the utility companies, EBMUD and granting agencies to address the issue; it was hoped that more funds would be allocated by others; did not know why the bids were coming in higher although acknowledged that this was a very busy time of year.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATION

Bond reported that staff would be reporting back to the City Council on the Sidewalk Policy; Jocelyn Walker was now managing the sidewalks and the Sidewalk Policy would be submitted to the City Council on June 20.

A. Arts and Green Festival

B. Bike to Work Day

C. Bike Rodeo

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chavez stated that Washington Avenue Traffic Calming had not been included, there had been a walking audit and those attending would like to revisit the bulb-out design option; there would be a community meeting on June 5 to discuss the options and bring a unified approach to the June Traffic and Safety Commission meeting.

Bond stated that the 900 Block of Taylor Street would be returned at the next meeting.

Commissioner McCroskey recommended that the Sidewalk Design Guidelines be clarified to identify two curb cuts at a corner instead of one.

- A. Key Route Boulevard Speed and Volume Survey – Rescheduled due to technical problems and ongoing construction in the neighborhood (June 2016)**
- B. Portland Avenue Intersection Safety Improvements (June 2016)**
- C. Project Initiation San Pablo Avenue and Buchanan Street Pedestrian Improvements (June 2016)**
- D. Speed and Volume Survey on the 600 Block of Adams Street (June 2016)**

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 P.M.