



**CITY OF ALBANY  
TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

**City Hall - Council Chambers  
1000 San Pablo Avenue, Albany, CA 94706  
Thursday, June 22, 2017 7:00 PM**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Commissioner Chomsky.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Present: Chomsky, del Rosario, McCroskey  
Absent: Javandel, Reeves  
Staff Present: Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Transportation Planner  
Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Minutes for May 25, 2017**

*Motion del Rosario/McCroskey:* Moved to approve the minutes of the May 25, 2017 meeting, as submitted.

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

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Adam Gratz:**

- A request for data from the traffic study of the 1000 block of Kains.

Chavez reported that the study did not find consistent speeding. She agreed to forward traffic data to Mr. Gratz.

**5. PRESENTATION**

**5-1. Police Report**

Bond presented a report of the collisions per month for bicycles and pedestrians, total collisions per month, injury accidents, citations written, and DUI arrests.

**The Commission requested the following clarifications:**

- The number of citations appear to be decreasing. The Police Department may not have received grants for targeted enforcement or has to prioritize other issues over writing citations.
- Other factors affecting the number of citations written. Staffing is a challenge for the Police Department; however, patrol staffing is maintained at the standard level. The more likely reason is an increase in the number of calls for service.

**The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Adam Gratz:**

- The data for the total number of collisions may have been incorrect in the last police report presented, which could skew the current data.

Bond advised that the data had been corrected for this report.

**The Commission made the following comments:**

- The decrease in the number of citations written could be a concern if other indicators are increasing, but that does not appear to be the case.
- The trend for the number of citations written is concerning.
- A request to place the police report data on the City's website.

Bond will discuss the issue with the Police Department and report to the Commission.

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

**6-1. Report on Proposed Grant Application for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations** - City staff is planning to seek City Council authorization to prepare a grant application to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District for the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.

Claire Griffing and Fanny Yang presented information regarding a grant for installing Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in public lots. Albany experienced a 34% increase in the number of electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid vehicles in one year. Staff believes electric vehicle ownership will continue to increase. The Climate Action Plan requires the City to incentivize electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles through development of charging infrastructure and preferential parking spaces. Staff is focusing first on infrastructure. Public charging stations will enable people to charge their electric vehicles regardless of whether they own a home. That's important because 50% of Albany residents are renters, and many homeowners do not have adequate garage space for charging electric vehicles. The City will apply for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (Air District) Charge! Grant, which will fund purchasing, installing, and operating up to seven charging stations. The grant covers up to 75% of the total cost of each station. The minimum project cost to qualify for the grant is \$10,000. Staff identified five proposed locations for chargers. Four will be located on City-owned lots and one on a private lot. The City can set user fees and policies for charging stations located on municipal property. Staff will seek Council approval on July 17, 2017 to submit the grant application; the deadline to submit the application is in late July. If the City is awarded the grant, charging stations will have to be installed within nine months of the award. The City may apply again in 2018 for Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Park and Ride Lot and other locations.

**The Commission requested the following clarifications:**

- Explain the incentive for renters. People will purchase electric vehicles if they have a place to charge them at a fair rate.
- Would the owner of the private lot set the rate and time limit and receive 90% of the revenue? The City can negotiate the terms of an agreement with the private owner.
- Grant funds can be used to purchase charging stations and operate them for three years.
- Source of the vendor's profit? The vendor will receive 10% of fees generated by charging stations. If use of charging stations is free, staff assumes the City would pay the vendor. Staff will inquire if the vendor requires a minimum fee.
- Who is responsible for paying the electric bill for charging stations? The City will be responsible for paying the electric bill; however, charging station fees will be set so that they cover costs.
- What is the amount of the grant application? The grant requests \$147,000 for all five proposed locations, and \$63,000 for the publicly owned lots only.
- What is the possibility of upgrading Level 2 charging stations to Level 3 stations in the future? An upgrade of stations will depend on the power available at the location. The Public Works Center parking lot and the UC Village lot will support Level 3 charging stations.

**The following PUBLIC COMMENT was offered by Adam Gratz and Clare You:**

- Encouragement for staff to compare prices of charging stations among vendors and to install signage indicating that spaces are reserved for active charging only; fast chargers are considerably more expensive, but they offer a significantly reduced charge time.
- Support for installation of charging stations. Who is responsible for maintenance of charging stations?

Griffing explained that the grant would pay operating and maintenance costs over the first three years. After that, the fees would cover operating and maintenance costs.

**The Commission made the following comments:**

- The Public Works Center parking lot is not near residences and people are not likely to park there for any length of time. Apartments are located along San Pablo, but the charging station locations are along Marin-Buchanan, which does not appear to meet the goal of encouraging renters to purchase electric vehicles.
- Concern about recovering the cost of infrastructure if Level 2 charging stations are upgraded to Level 3 at a later time.
- If parking is restricted to two hours, a fast charger would be a waste because of the low turnover of cars in the spaces.
- Usage of the first charging stations will inform the choice of charging stations in the future.
- Support for proceeding with the grant application. Perhaps the locations and level of charging stations can be left open in the application so that discussion can continue after the application is submitted.
- A request for the Commission to receive periodic updates regarding progress of the charging stations.

Chavez noted charging with a fast charger reduces the capacity of the battery; therefore, a Level 2 charger may be preferable. The proposal offers a balance of Level 2 and Level 3 chargers.

*Motion McCroskey/del Rosario:* Moved to recommend that City Council approve submission of the grant application.

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

**6-2. Proposed Improvements to Washington Avenue between Pierce Street and Cerrito Street** - For several years the City has been evaluating strategies to improve safety and calm motor vehicle traffic on Washington. The Commission will consider making a recommendation to the City Council to revise the Washington Avenue Traffic Calming Project currently in the City's Capital Improvement Plan to prioritize safety and preservation of street parking.

Bond reported staff has been working for a number of years to resolve the tradeoffs among pedestrian safety, vehicle speeding, cut-through traffic, and public parking on Washington Avenue from Pierce Street to Cerrito Street. The Commission made a series of recommendations to the City Council in 2014. In addition, staff temporarily implemented some ideas. Approximately a year ago, staff conducted a walking audit in the neighborhood and received a wide variety of comments about different ideas. A group of neighbors organized and presented a proposal to implement parking turnouts as a means to preserve as much street parking as possible. Staff directed the City's consultant, Kittelson and Associates, to evaluate the proposal for fatal flaws. Staff continues to believe difficult tradeoffs and additional refinements will be needed. Overall, the proposal has some merit but does not directly address concerns regarding vehicle speeds and cut-through traffic. Staff wishes to proceed with some traffic calming measures at Catherine's Walk. Any major reconstruction of sidewalks or construction of bulb-outs or mini circles is a few years out, which leaves the question of interim measures to address vehicles parking on the sidewalk and pedestrian safety. Currently, the budget contains funding for a modest program. Anything involving major reconstruction would require additional funds, which means tradeoffs with other projects or delaying reconstruction until sufficient funds accumulate. Staff requests that the Commission consider amending the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), including a project for a raised crosswalk at Catherine's Walk, and actions to address parking on sidewalks. Current engineering design standards and accessibility laws compel staff to recommend enforcement of no parking on sidewalks.

**The Commission requested the following clarifications:**

- McCroskey understood from the report that turnouts are feasible; however, the report contains a high-level analysis only. The analysis ranked locations of turnouts, but the rankings are not quite accurate. The proposal is a viable contribution to the solution, but details need to be worked out.
- The approximate cost of the neighborhood's proposal. Kittelson and Associates has not calculated the cost. Approximately \$140,000 was budgeted for the original improvements. The neighborhood proposal is very expensive because it calls for modification of sidewalks and drainage and construction of retaining walls. Before preparing the next CIP budget, staff would like to obtain a cost estimate for a preferred solution.

- Whether CIP planning will implement all turnouts or turnouts ranked as medium only. Budgeting will include at least turnouts ranked as medium and some turnouts ranked as low. The next step is to ask the consultant to develop 35% plans with survey points. A 35% design will be the first step of the new CIP project.
- Possible reduction in speeds and traffic volume as a result of improvements? There will be incremental reductions in vehicle speeds and traffic volume with each improvement.
- Whether a raised crosswalk at Catherine's Walk would mean a revision to the CIP. The project would be easier to implement if it is a separate project. A raised sidewalk could be calendar year 2018 project.

**The following PUBLIC COMMENT was offered by Francis Chapman, Michael Gold, and Clare You:**

- Residents oppose red striping on one side of the street; recommendations for staff to focus on traffic volume and speeds, minimize impacts of parking changes, address the high rate of drunk drivers, experiment with more low-cost measures; support for bulb-outs and a mini roundabout to divert traffic at Gateview; possible opposition to implementation of cutouts.
- A suggestion to preserve legal but noncompliant parking; install a speed bump on Washington to reduce speed without negatively affecting parking; disagreement about the number of parking spaces.
- Support for Mr. Chapman's comments.

**The Commission made the following comments:**

- Neighbors agreed to the objectives contained in the Kittelson report and agreed on the priority of the objectives.
- Improvements have to meet Code requirements.
- Continue to pursue certain items from the original program to help reduce cut-through traffic and speeding.
- A raised crosswalk is a good idea and won't be controversial.
- Retention of on-street parking will conflict with improving pedestrian access.
- Perhaps staff should pursue the cut-out concept in order to understand the magnitude of the cost.
- Interest in an analysis of the parking spaces gained or lost with each proposal.
- Support for a raised crosswalk at Catherine's Walk as soon as possible.
- A small number of noncontroversial improvements can be made soon.
- Support for exploring low-cost measures.
- Public comments did not include suggestions to improve sidewalk safety. If improvements don't create a path for pedestrians, then the Commission won't be satisfied that they are a long-term solution.
- Narrowing the street width should slow vehicle speed.
- A parking inventory would classify parking as compliant or noncompliant.

Chavez advised that the 2014 proposal included a bulb-out at Gateview that could possibly provide for one or two more parking spaces. Some driveways are very steep and cannot be used for parking. Staff could implement a pilot program to install "no sidewalk parking" signs on the south side of the street and to allow sidewalk parking on the north side, but she had concerns about ADA accessibility. A bulb-out and stop or yield sign will help slow traffic.

Bond clarified that parking surveys will be based on actual parking usage. The design of projects will involve engineering standards or written waivers of standards. Residents did not favor a bulb-out at Gateview because it could block access to driveways. Parking at a speed bump is allowed. He agreed to investigate texturing the roadway to slow traffic.

*Motion McCroskey/del Rosario:* Moved to recommend to the City Council (a) that the raised crosswalk at Catherine's Walk be implemented as soon as possible and evaluate the possibility of implementing a speed hump or humps between Polk and Cerrito; (b) direct staff to amend the Washington Avenue traffic calming proposal Capital Improvement Plan to fund 35% design of parking turnouts including projected costs, an evaluation and comparison of other, less expensive options including an inventory and comparison of parking space in each scenario; (c) and partner with the neighborhood to attempt to change behaviors in the short-term to allow walking on one-side sidewalk and delay red zone and curb parking enforcement.

Ayes: Chomsky, del Rosario, McCroskey  
 Noes: None  
 Abstain: None

Absent: Reeves, Javandel

**6-3. Review of Proposed Policy for Implementation of Restrictions on Street Parking Near Intersections –**

In recent years, the City has begun to establish restrictions on street parking near intersections to improve visibility and safety. In May, the Commission reviewed the first draft of a policy that establishes standards for scope of parking restrictions, criteria for prioritization of intersections, and public engagement procedures.

Bond reported that the Commission's comments from the prior meeting were incorporated.

**The Commission requested the following clarifications:**

- Application of the guidelines to intersections controlled by traffic signals. Signalized intersections will be considered individually. The title can be changed to street parking near unsignalized intersections.

*Motion McCroskey/del Rosario:* Moved to issue a recommendation to City Council to adopt the guidelines for restricting street parking near unsignalized intersections with a goal of improving safety in Albany.

Ayes: McCroskey, del Rosario, Chomsky

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Reeves, Javandel

**7. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATION**

**7-1. Brief Report on Kains-Adams Bicycle Facility Study Walking Audit on June 24, 2017 –** A detailed presentation of the findings and recommendations for next steps is tentatively scheduled for the September Traffic and Safety Commission meeting.

Bond indicated staff held a neighborhood meeting regarding the bike study the prior week, and a walking tour is scheduled for Saturday at 9:30 a.m. Commissioners may attend the meeting but should not talk among themselves. The consultant's scope of work included two community meetings, work over the summer, and a return to the Commission in the fall. Staff wants to hold another neighborhood meeting with some preliminary results in the late summer or early fall before presenting to the Commission. The consultant should provide recommendations in the fall.

**8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- 8-1. Solano Avenue Complete Street Planning Process**
- 8-2. Recommendation for Improvements to Masonic/Marin and Masonic/Solano Intersections**
- 8-3. North Albany Traffic Calming**
- 8-4. San Pablo Avenue and Buchanan Street Complete Street Project Update**
- 8-5. Sidewalk Program**
- 8-6. Pavement Program**

Bond reported the Solano Avenue planning process will be on the July agenda. The Masonic/Marin and Masonic/Solano intersections will be presented in July or September.

Commissioner del Rosario advised that the parklet at Hal's Office has been funded through Kickstarter.

Commissioner McCroskey noted asphalt was poured for the cycle track on San Pablo.

Bond added that sidewalks had been poured. The track had not been striped, and signals were not operational. The culvert/sidewalk at Codornices Creek would be constructed soon. On July 11, the public art sculpture located at the southeast corner of the senior housing project will be dedicated. The trail between San Pablo and 10th was paved the prior day. Caltrans wants to hold some type of event to showcase the cycle track.

**ADJOURNMENT – Next regular meeting: July 27, 2017 – City Council Chambers**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:51 P.M.

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