



TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION – MINUTES

Virtual Meeting

1000 San Pablo Avenue, Albany, CA

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 2020, 7:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: Javandel, Jordan, McCroskey, del Rosario, Paulsen
Absent: None
Staff Present: Jeff Bond, Community Development Director
Justin Fried, Transportation Planner
Mark Hurley, Public Works Director
Robert Gonzales, CIP Manager
Anne Hsu, City Clerk

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. PRESENTATION

3-1. Monthly Police Data on Collisions and Citations

Fried reported no pedestrian or bicycle collisions in February and March and 11 and 4 vehicle collisions in February and March respectively with one injury collision in each month. The Police Department issued 47 moving citations in February and 16 in March and made 4 DUI arrests in February and 0 in March.

The Commission made the following comments:

- Interest in learning whether citations or collisions were due to speeding and whether speeding played a larger role in the data than in previous months.

3-2. Shared Mobility Data

Fried advised that GIG memberships decreased from 338 in February to 257 in March. Trip starts and stops decreased from the 730s in February to 502 and 527 in March. The number of vehicles in GIG's fleet increased from 440 vehicles in February to 508 in March. An average of seven vehicles per day was located in Albany.

The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Amy Smolens:

- A question about changes in GIG services in response to the pandemic.

Fried related that GIG has increased the cleaning of vehicles in response to the pandemic and requested some leniency in moving vehicles as staff has been reassigned to cleaning vehicles.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4-1. Traffic and Safety Commission (Prior to Name Change) Meeting Minutes of February 27, 2020.



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Recommendation: That the Traffic and Safety Commission approve the meeting minutes for the special meeting of February 27, 2020.

Commissioner Jordan clarified Commission comments for Item 5-4 as the funding for water bottle filling stations could be repurposed for other capital projects if the purchase and installation of water bottle filling stations have been completed. The Commission did not oppose allocating funding for water bottle filling stations.

McCroskey/del Rosario: Moved to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2020 meeting as amended.

Ayes: Javandel, Jordan, McCroskey, del Rosario, Paulsen

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

5. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

5-1. Plans for Washington Avenue Pavement Project – Staff will present plans for the reconstruction of Washington Avenue between San Pablo Avenue and Pomona Avenue

Recommendation: Recommend that the City Council approve designs for the Washington Avenue Pavement Project

Gonzales reported triple-four crosswalks, stop bars, and a bioretention area were included and wedges in curb ramps, bulb-outs on the west side of Masonic, and accommodation for an unpermitted encroachment at Stannage Avenue were eliminated from the plans after Commissioners reviewed them in March. High-friction truncated dome mats and Case C/Case E hybrid ramps at the intersections of Washington with Talbot, Evelyn, and Key Route will be incorporated into the design through drawings or specifications. The consultant has advised that the recommendation to align columns of domes with the direction of travel is not consistent with standards from the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) or Caltrans. An existing manhole limits the placement of a directional ramp at the southeast corner of San Pablo, and Caltrans would have to approve any modification. At Key Route, undersized, curving sidewalks can be replaced with straight, standard-width sidewalks through a sidewalk project instead of this pavement project. Removal of tall vegetation will be presented to the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Commission. With respect to reducing the crossing distance at the Ohlone Greenway and Key Route, the Fire Department prefers striping rather than a concrete bulb-out because a bulb-out will make the turn difficult for apparatus. Staff proposes striping and bot dots at Key Route because the turning radius makes a bulb-out problematic. Pomona is flat and has poor drainage, and more concrete at the southwest corner could exacerbate poor drainage. With respect to stop signs at Key Route, staff can conduct a traffic analysis and present it to the Commission in a separate item.

The Commission requested the following clarifications:

- Plantings or vertical hardscape can be installed to prevent people from crossing the bioretention area.



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- Restriping will be one of the final components of the project.
- Mats installed over the past two years have met the 2015 Caltrans specification. This project references a revised 2018 Caltrans standard.

The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Amy Smolens:

- Questions about the expected timeframe for repaving Washington and the possibility of painting curbs red to remove sightline obstructions where the Ohlone Greenway meets Washington.

Gonzales explained that staff will incorporate feedback from this discussion into the design and anticipates awarding a contract at the first Council meeting in July. Repaving could occur in August and September. Fried advised that staff will follow the City policy regarding implementation of a red curb.

The Commission made the following comments:

- The ramp at Masonic should align with travel along the Ohlone Greenway path, and the edge of the ramp should match the edge of the path as projected to the curb. The configuration at Portland would work at this location.
- If there is a full apron of domes, the domes in the travel direction would align with the travel direction. If the intersection is perpendicular, the wrap can continue all the way around, and the domes will align. If the intersection is not perpendicular, the domes on either side could be laid out in the right travel direction with an intermediate splice between the two.
- A power chair could probably traverse a manhole cover, but a manual chair may not. A larger apron would allow people to choose their travel path.
- The truncated domes at Key Route should be yellow.
- Narrowing Washington at the Ohlone Greenway is still worthwhile even if it does not reduce crossing distance at the intersection. A fire apparatus can make the turn and navigate a reduced width east of the intersection. One parking space is located at the northeast corner of the intersection. If a large vehicle occupies the space, it obstructs sightlines between the Ohlone Greenway and westbound motorists on Washington. The curb line could move in and increase concrete or landscape area.
- A suggestion to locate the bioretention area in the street in accordance with the Active Transportation Plan (ATP). The canopy of the existing tree located east of the fence line is under-represented in the drawing such that the proposed bioretention area could damage or kill the tree. This would narrow the roadway and improve sightlines for westbound motorists.
- The corners at Pomona and Key Route should be like other corners in Albany that have radii of 10 feet.
- A suggestion to reduce turning radii and add more pedestrian space to the two corners at the eastern end of the Key Route/ Washington intersection because they are high-demand sidewalk areas.
- Almost none of the retaining curbs for planters between the sidewalk and street are radiused, which is a City standard. The plans do not specify the radius.
- The backside retaining curb of the southwest ramp at Masonic is within the sidewalk width, but others have been moved out of the sidewalk width.
- A suggestion to utilize mats with a much higher friction coefficient.
- City standards indicate the color of sidewalk repairs should match the existing sidewalk.



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Fried recommended the Transportation Commission consider changes to stop control at intersections along Key Route as a group rather than only the intersection at Washington. A project to resurface Key Route is part of the two-year repaving project.

Javandel/Jordan: Moved to recommend the City Council approve designs for the Washington Avenue Pavement Project with the modifications suggested during the meeting.

Ayes: Javandel, Jordan, McCroskey, del Rosario, Paulsen

Noes: None

Recusal: None

Absent: None

5-2. Strategies for Improving Physical Distancing on Publicly-Owned Right-of-Way –

Staff will present information on recent efforts in other jurisdictions to improve pedestrian space related to COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and provide an opportunity for discussion in relation to Albany

Recommendation: Provide comments to staff

Fried reported some jurisdictions have implemented various strategies to increase the space available to pedestrians and/or to improve compliance with physical distancing requirements. Strategies include limiting access to areas where crowding occurs, closing or limiting access to streets to provide additional pedestrian space, and restricting and repurposing parking for non-motorized uses. The Bulb and the Ohlone Greenway are open and appear to be heavily used. Usage does not seem to be heavy enough to prevent compliance with physical distancing requirements. Staff will continue to monitor activity.

The Commission requested the following clarifications:

- The City of Berkeley has not implemented any street closures.
- If the City closes on-street parking, staff notifies residents to move parked vehicles.
- Public notice may be eliminated if there is an immediate emergency. Under the current provisions, notice should be provided to the public.
- Staff has discussed automatic recall for pedestrian signals and some signals are on automatic recall already. Others are under Caltrans jurisdiction.
- Some cities have expressed concern about the liability associated with promoting walking in streets that still permit vehicle access.

The following **PUBLIC COMMENTS** were offered by Letitia Berlin, Richard B., Dan Johnson, Amy Smolens, Clay Larson:

- Support for closing streets or educating runners and pedestrians about the etiquette of meeting and passing one another.
- Opposition to closing streets and installing barricades because voluntary compliance with physical distancing is working fine.
- Residents have been observed sitting in the street with cones surrounding them.
- Opposition to closing streets; support for opening streets to non-motorists; support for the suggestion regarding Masonic; motorists appear to be driving faster on east/west streets;



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closing Washington or Portland to thru traffic would be appropriate; and a suggestion to create a walking lane on a major street.

- Support for obtaining data; no changes are needed at the Ohlone Greenway because it is not crowded.

The Commission made the following comments:

- A suggestion for pedestrians to utilize the right sidewalk along streets to create directionality and remove conflict. People should use the left sidewalk because they will face oncoming traffic if they step into the street.
- Trails at the Bulb could be directional.
- A suggestion to block the eastern Masonic parking strip so that people traveling north use the Ohlone Greenway, and people traveling south use the parking lane. The speed limit on Masonic could be reduced to 15 miles per hour.
- A suggestion to close the parking lane around the block containing the high school and Memorial Park.
- Closure of parking lanes could be implemented in phases but would be effective around the clock. A suggestion to involve residents in maintaining the cones/barricades to increase their effectiveness.
- If people wear masks while outdoors, they will not need as much additional space. Experts recommend 25 feet of following distance for runners and bicyclists. Wearing a mask does not replace physical distancing.
- Most traffic on Albany streets is probably local residents; therefore, closing streets would not be effective.
- The use of parking lanes is more rational than closing streets.
- Concerns about the City having a sufficient number of cones and about the visibility of cones at night.
- The Commission needs data to consider closing streets to thru traffic.
- More space is needed along the Ohlone Greenway.
- Support for implementing changes at the Ohlone Greenway and the Bulb with appropriate notice as Phase 1.
- The City's e-news could notify the public to use the left sidewalk along streets. Staff could prepare messaging for bicyclists to ride in the street.
- Concern about the City's liability for creating walking lanes on streets.
- Walking on the right sidewalk is consistent with driving on the right.
- Creating a walking lane around the block containing the high school should be a later phase.

McCroskey/Jordan: Moved to recommend the City Council consider implementing changes in three phases: first, directionality of trails at the Bulb and sidewalks throughout the City; second, utilizing the eastern parking strip on Masonic for non-motorists; and third, utilizing the parking strip around the high school and Memorial Park block for non-motorists.

Ayes: Javandel, Jordan, McCroskey, del Rosario, Paulsen
Noes: None
Recusal: None
Absent: None



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The Commission made the following additional comments:

- Prioritize constantly recalled walk periods for pedestrian signals at the Ohlone Greenway.
- A recommendation not to change signals on San Pablo because of bus routes.

Jordan/Javandel: Moved to direct staff to consider public messages instructing bicyclists to utilize the street rather than sidewalks.

Ayes: Javandel, Jordan, McCroskey, del Rosario, Paulsen

Noes: None

Recusal: None

Absent: None

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

6-1. New Commission Name, Purpose, Duties and Responsibilities, and Structure

Fried reported Municipal Code amendments regarding the Commission have taken effect. The Council added a provision emphasizing equity and accessibility in Commission decisions. The May Transportation Commission meeting may be moved up a week so that information can be prepared for the June Council meeting.

Commissioner McCroskey noted bike repairs are considered essential services, but consumers should contact shops to ensure they are open. The Safe Routes to School Program and Bike East Bay are offering free online trainings. Albany Strollers and Rollers' latest newsletter contains tips and tricks for biking in the pandemic and information about bike shops and training programs.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioners requested items for pedestrian signals, continued discussion of strategies for improving physical distancing on publicly owned rights-of-way, the financial impacts of the pandemic on capital projects, and a gasoline distributor tax.

- 8. NEXT MEETING** – Thursday, May 28, 2020, 7:00 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 1000 San Pablo Avenue or virtual meeting pursuant to state and county COVID-19 guidance.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.