



TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION – MINUTES

Virtual Meeting
Albany, CA

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2020, 7:00 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: Javandel (arrived at 7:38 p.m.), Jordan, McCroskey, del Rosario, Paulsen

Absent:

Staff Present: Jeff Bond, Community Development Director
Justin Fried, Senior Planner
Anne Hsu, City Clerk

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

3. PRESENTATION

3-1. Monthly Police Data on Collisions and Citations

Fried reported zero pedestrian collisions, zero bicycle collisions, and two vehicle collisions with no injuries during May. The Police Department issued two moving citations and made no DUI arrests. A member of the community indicated via email a collision occurred at Portland and Key Route but was not reported to the Police Department.

3-2. Shared Mobility Data

Fried advised that the number of active GIG members in May totaled 159, trip starts totaled 370, and vehicles in service totaled 506.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4-1. Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes of May 21, 2020.

Commissioner Jordan requested Commission comments under Item 5-1 include the Commission's concern about ensuring retaining curbs are located outside the width of sidewalks.

Recommendation: That the Transportation Commission approve the meeting minutes for the virtual special meeting of May 21, 2020.

Jordan/McCroskey: Moved to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2020 meeting as amended.

Ayes: Jordan, McCroskey, del Rosario, Paulsen

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Javandel



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

- 5-1. **Proposed Striping Plan and Signal Changes for Solano Avenue between San Pablo Avenue and Kains Avenue in conjunction with Relocation of Bus Stop and In Lane Bus Boarding** – Staff and consultants will present plans for striping, signage, and curb designations for Solano Avenue between San Pablo Avenue and Kains Avenue proposed for installation in conjunction with relocation of the bus stop from the southeast corner of Solano Avenue and San Pablo Avenue to the southwest corner of Solano Avenue and Kains Avenue as part of a proposed bus stop parklet. The presentation will also include potential changes to traffic signal phasing at the Solano and San Pablo intersection.

Recommendation: Provide comments to staff.

Fried indicated this item follows discussions regarding relocation of the bus stop on San Pablo Avenue and an encroachment permit for a bus stop parklet with in-lane boarding on Solano Avenue. The City and the applicant have secured funding for the parklet, and the applicant's architect has submitted more detailed plans for the parklet. With the new plans, staff asked Parisi Transportation Consulting to review issues identified in earlier discussions of the bus stop, including potential changes to signal phasing at Solano and San Pablo, curb designations, and other potential treatments in the roadway.

Patrick Golier, Parisi Transportation Consulting, advised that the parklet renderings illustrate the layout and dimensions of the proposed bus bulb and parklet, which includes seating. The bulb would result in buses stopping in the travel lane to pick up and drop off passengers. In addition to the removal of four parking spaces, the bus parklet would result in the realignment of about 122 linear feet of centerline striping. Because of this, the width of the travel lanes on Solano Avenue would change from 16 feet to 13 feet in the eastbound direction and from 22 feet to 24 feet in the westbound direction. The narrowing of the eastbound lane is recommended in order to eliminate any ambiguity that motorists are not to pass a stopped bus. A no-parking triangle would start 16 feet in advance of the bus bulb and provide a tapered area for vehicles to enter and exit the adjacent parallel parking stall. Bicycle parking has been proposed for the triangular area. The rendering provides details for optional physical deterrents in the centerline to prevent drivers from passing a stopped bus. Existing signal phasing has southbound San Pablo leading, followed by northbound thru traffic, northbound left-turn traffic, eastbound traffic, and westbound traffic. With the bus bulb, the 18 and G bus lines will typically make a northbound right turn onto eastbound Solano with the northbound San Pablo signal phase. Under the existing signal phasing, a stopped bus would result in queuing from the eastbound signal phase. Swapping the westbound traffic phase with the eastbound traffic phase is recommended. Existing traffic volumes at the intersection were used to test queue lengths on eastbound Solano Avenue under existing and recommended signal phasing plans. Under existing signal phasing, the queue of vehicles behind a stopped bus would regularly exceed the available space and result in queuing through the San Pablo intersection. Under recommended signal phasing, the estimated queue could be accommodated behind a stopped bus in the best and worst-case scenarios. A 40-foot off-peak loading zone on westbound Solano Avenue at the approach to San Pablo Avenue would allow 15-minute loading and unloading activity on weekdays, except for the hours of 6 am to 10 am and 4 pm to 7 pm, but would be available at all times on weekends. The loading zone would not result in the removal of any on-street parking but would replace 40 feet of an existing 60-foot



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red zone used to facilitate vehicles turning right onto northbound San Pablo. Consolidating the westbound right-turn lane with a thru-lane would lengthen the westbound vehicle queue. The average queue for the morning and afternoon off-peak periods would increase from 150 feet to 200 feet, which is approximately equal to the block length today. The 95th percentile queue of the consolidated lane is forecasted to be slightly worse than existing conditions in the morning off-peak period by approximately one car length. The 95th percentile queue in the afternoon off-peak period is not expected to increase. The model shows that the average queue would typically not exceed the length of the block, and the 95th percentile queue would typically not exceed the current afternoon off-peak period 95th percentile queue condition.

The Commission requested the following clarifications:

- The calculations for signal phasing allowed 20 seconds for the bus to occupy the bus stop.
- The traffic count used for the modeling was the most recent available, probably the count conducted in 2018.
- The recommended signal phasing causes no impact to San Pablo.
- If the loading zone goes forward, staff can communicate with the business on the corner that previously expressed interest in the loading zone.
- Changing the signal phasing will have to be submitted to Caltrans. Because the impacts are minimal, a request could be submitted to Caltrans with Commission approval of the project.
- The bus stop in the westbound direction of Solano does not have a bus bulb; therefore vehicles may pass a bus occupying the bus stop. The westbound lane is 22 feet wide, which is sufficient space for a vehicle to pass a bus.
- Staff will provide information regarding the signal phase in the San Pablo direction being adaptive or fixed.
- A business owner requested staff consider a loading zone.

The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Harry Chomsky and Jeremiah:

- The thru phasing is different because of the time needed for vehicles to turn left. Swapping the eastbound and westbound signal phases will benefit the project, but a previous discussion of Complete Streets included a recommendation to eliminate the split phase in favor of a single east-west phase with some time dedicated to left turns.
- A request to consider the time needed for elderly pedestrians to cross this intersection.

The Commission made the following comments:

- Additional outreach and public notice regarding the project would be useful.
- Changing the signal phasing for San Pablo to account for relocating the bus stop appears not to have been considered.
- The layout of the parklet seating is different in the current design.
- The drawings seem to show the loss of five parking spaces rather than four.
- A suggestion to convert two parallel parking spaces to angle parking on the north side of Solano.
- Delineators at the existing bus parklet have been destroyed. Median curbing or some other type of hardscape may be preferable to delineators.
- A suggestion for the signal phasing on Solano to be similar to the phasing on San Pablo because it would provide more thru time on Solano.



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- Bus drivers can share their observations of vehicles passing buses occupying the bus stop in the westbound direction.
- Buses can travel on 11-foot-wide lanes with no problems. The 13-foot lane width could be reduced to increase the size of the parklet or to increase the width of the westbound lane.
- The delineators at the other parklet could not be placed for maximum effectiveness and may not have been replaced after an event. The delineators could be effective or at least signal a change.
- Converting parking spaces by the loading zone to angle parking could make it more difficult for buses to pull away from the bus stop or cause drivers to stop further back from parked cars and block the crosswalk.
- The centerline should be 13 feet from the bulb-out curb, and the parklet may need to extend a bit further toward the street so that the lane in front of the parklet is not 14 feet wide.
- Rubber curbing at the centerline could prevent eastbound motorists from crossing the centerline to access the angle parking on the north side of Solano.
- Support for implementing a loading zone and for bollards along the centerline extending to the crosswalk.
- Support for changing the signal phasing.
- The fire lane and moving into the right-turn lane may not allow sufficient space for additional parking on the north side of Solano. The split phase should remain until geometric changes are made, at which time the split phase could be re-evaluated.

Fried indicated the consultant was asked to investigate the queuing issue rather than broader changes to signal phases.

Bond related that staff is working with the parklet designer to resolve issues with the parklet. If there are substantial changes to the parklet design, the Commission will review it.

5-2. Post-Project Analysis of Buchanan/Marin Phase III Project and Concepts for Phase IV Improvements at the Marin and San Pablo Intersection – Staff and consultants will present analysis of traffic impacts of the Buchanan/Marin Phase III Project and concept designs for improvements at the Marin and San Pablo Avenue Intersection (Phase IV).

Recommendation: Recommend a concept to City Council for inclusion in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Fried reported in April 2019 staff asked the consultant to look at Phase III project data and present concepts for Phase IV intersection improvements.

Mr. Golier advised that he focused on changes in vehicle queuing and delays on westbound Marin Avenue at the approach to San Pablo Avenue and preliminary engineering design and concepts for improved bicycle connections between the westbound Marin bike lane to the southwest corner of the Marin/San Pablo intersection. Concepts for the Marin/San Pablo intersection were analyzed for geometric layout, safety and comfort, and vehicle delay. Phase III was constructed in 2017. The analysis considers delays caused by the reduction of westbound Marin lanes from two to one between Stannage and Kains Avenue. The same company conducted traffic volume



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counts in December 2016 and April 2019 on weekdays when school was in session. The counts show fairly large decreases in traffic volumes for most movements at the intersection between the two time periods despite increases in some movements on San Pablo Avenue. Post-project volumes for all westbound movements decreased between 14% and 51%. Because today's traffic volumes are so low due to shelter-in-place orders, the traffic volumes have not been validated in the field. A traffic model estimated vehicle delay and queuing for the morning and afternoon peak hours and considered scenarios for (1) the conditions of December 2016, (2) pre-project traffic volumes with post-project lane configuration, and (3) the conditions of April 2019. For westbound Marin Avenue during morning and afternoon peak periods, the model estimated the post-project configuration would experience queue lengths approximately three times the pre-project condition in the morning peak period and about 70% longer during the afternoon peak period. A 95% queue of 1,250 feet, as shown in the morning peak period for scenario 2, would extend to about Evelyn Avenue. A 1,700-foot queue, as shown in the afternoon peak period, would extend to about Key Route Boulevard. For post-project volumes with post-project lane configurations, the estimated queues are shorter than the pre-project conditions and typically extend no further than Stannage Avenue. This suggests some vehicle traffic may have diverted from westbound Marin onto other corridors or shifted to another time of day. Traffic counts collected after Phase III are 25% lower than the pre-project condition. If traffic volumes remained the same as the pre-project conditions, under the post-project condition the average queues would get longer by 500-1,000 feet. The concepts are intended to improve the safety and comfort of cyclists traveling westbound on Marin Avenue and pedestrians using the south crosswalk across San Pablo. The concepts are all technically feasible, have tradeoffs that should be considered, and may be combined with changes in signal timing at the Marin/San Pablo intersection. The first concept is a two-stage left-turn bike box where cyclists would position themselves after crossing San Pablo with the westbound vehicle phase. Cyclists would wait in the box until the southbound signal phase turns green and then travel to the southwest corner with southbound vehicle traffic. A two-stage bike box provides clear guidance to cyclists about where they should wait while making a left-turn movement and provides cues to drivers about where they should expect to see cyclists. The concept is easy and inexpensive to implement and may attract a broader group of cyclists. A two-stage bike box would typically be installed on the outside of the crosswalk, in this case south of the crosswalk. That cannot be done at this intersection as a stopped cyclist would block westbound traffic. Cyclists would be required to pass through the north crosswalk to access the bike box, which may increase conflicts with pedestrians. A stopped cyclist would also restrict southbound vehicles making a right turn onto Marin Avenue, which could be addressed by implementing right-turn-on-red restrictions. Right-turn restrictions would not be expected to increase delay at this intersection. This concept is recommended. Variations of bulb-out treatments at the southwest corner are intended to reduce the corner curb radius for eastbound vehicles turning right onto southbound San Pablo. This would help reduce the speed of right-turning vehicles, shorten the crossing of San Pablo, and reduce the exposure of pedestrians and cyclists in the south crosswalk. Potential tradeoffs include the bus stop at the corner may need to be shifted slightly. The bulb-out and raised-island concepts can be constructed with or without the two-stage bike box. While signal modifications are not required to implement these concepts, they can be combined with a leading pedestrian cycle and right-turn-on-red restrictions for eastbound vehicles. This concept is recommended. A bike box across the westbound lanes of traffic on Marin Avenue would provide a bicycle queuing area for cyclists traveling westbound and turning left onto southbound San Pablo. The risk of this concept is cyclists attempting to cross vehicle lanes as the phase turns green, which is a significant safety risk that would outweigh any



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benefits. This concept is not recommended. A bicycle-only signal phase would allow cyclists to travel directly from the northeast to the southwest corners during a bike-only signal phase. It would require a significant amount of hardware, signal timing and phasing changes, pavement markings, and importantly a 15-second bike-only signal phase. The Marin Avenue signal cycle would have to be reduced by 15 seconds to create the bike-only phase, which would cause a large increase in queuing and delay on Marin Avenue. This concept is not recommended. The recommended two-stage bike box concept can be implemented with modifications of traffic signal phasing and timing to provide an advanced interval for cyclists and pedestrians to cross San Pablo similar to the Marin/Santa Fe intersection. No-right-turn-on-red can be implemented to reinforce to drivers that turn movements are not permitted during that signal phase. The eastbound and westbound thru-traffic phases would be reduced by 5 seconds to create the pedestrian signal phase. The delay for westbound vehicles would increase from 49 and 54 seconds in the morning and afternoon peak periods to 61 and 65 seconds. The delay for eastbound vehicles would increase from 47 and 49 seconds in the morning and afternoon peak periods to 47 and 51 seconds. Level of service would also degrade from D to E for the westbound approach. The reallocation of signal time slightly worsens vehicle delay and queuing for the eastbound and westbound approaches. Queue lengths for the other turn movements would generally remain the same or increase by a more modest amount. He recommended further consideration of the two-stage bike box and/or a bulb-out or raised corner islands at the southwest corner potentially combined with a leading pedestrian and bicycle signal interval combined with appropriate right-turn-on-red restrictions.

The Commission requested the following clarifications:

- The width of the curb bulb-out in concept 2 would probably be 5-6 feet.
- Signage or striping would be installed to alert cyclists to cross the crosswalk to the bike box in concept 1.
- Caltrans will have to approve any changes. Caltrans is comfortable with a greater amount of cycling infrastructure, but approval is never certain.
- In concept 1, the cyclist could follow the bike path next to the crosswalk and do a hook into the bike box to cross Marin or travel diagonally through the crosswalk. The stop bars on southbound San Pablo may need to be moved back slightly.

The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Harry Chomsky:

- In January 2020, queuing of westbound cars was much worse than prior to the project because cars stopped at the light in front of the Shell station are spaced widely apart. The number of cars occupying the two-lane portion is less than the model suggests. He questioned whether driver behavior could be modified to address this problem. The presentation did not mention the situation for bikes traveling east in the street, and he suggested creating a dotted bike lane in the left-most portion of the right-turn lane. The bike box on westbound Marin is a desirable treatment in some situations, but here it would create a high risk situation. He asked why the treatment does not work at this intersection. The preferred treatment with a bike box in front of City Hall could work, but the turning radius is a problem. If bicyclists could cross north of the crosswalk earlier in the movement, further east, the turning radius could be reduced.



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The Commission made the following comments:

- Signage about accessing the bike box in concept 1 should probably be located a couple of blocks before the intersection. Even an experienced cyclist may not see or understand the facility.
- Installing a bulb-out would move the bus stop slightly further down the curb. Moving the bus stop away from the crosswalk is a concern.
- Support for the bulb-out over the islands on the southwest corner. Wider curb ramps would be good for bicyclists.
- Support for the bike box at the northwest corner. The benefit of having the bike box behind the crosswalk on westbound Marin is unknown given the other options available to bicyclists.
- The traffic volumes also decreased on San Pablo.
- The presentation probably did not address eastbound cyclists traveling in the roadway because a few years ago, the Commission believed supporting eastbound cyclists on the Marin extension was a lower priority because the route was not highly traveled.
- Support for blank-out signs, but motorists will probably not be aware of the signs at the proposed locations.
- Some bicyclists will utilize a bike box. The question is whether the bike box is more attractive than using the crosswalks.
- A question about the percentage of cyclists traveling Marin to San Pablo who want to access the bike path and, therefore, whether accommodating the movement is worthwhile. A cyclist who reaches the intersection will probably be comfortable traveling in the bike lane. Some data about usage of the bike lane would be helpful.
- Any changes to signal phasing should be based on a synchro run using the before condition for traffic volumes.
- Little inclination to support implementation of a westbound leading pedestrian interval. An eastbound leading pedestrian interval involving right-turn blank-outs and/or installing a right-turn signal head to maintain westbound thru traffic may be possible.
- Concept 1 seems to be logical for inexperienced cyclists traveling across Marin, but they may prefer to utilize Dartmouth. Concept 1 would seem to have little utility.
- Concept 3 with the bulb-out seems to be the most logical choice if there is a mixing zone. Extending the bulb-out into a bus bulb-out would keep the bus closer to the crosswalk and create a wide mixing zone. More than 25 feet may be needed to get a bus flush with the curb.
- Support for the bike box and the bulb-out over the islands. Concept 3 is better than concept 2.
- Support for a bus bulb-out.

Javandel/del Rosario: Moved to recommend the City Council approve concept 1 with the bike box at the northwest corner; approve concept 3 with a bulb-out on the southwest corner; consider extending the bulb-out to a bus bulb-out; include the leading pedestrian interval for the south crosswalk in the eastbound direction with no-right-turn-on-red blank-out signs; consider optimizing the placement of blank-out signs relative to the direction of drivers' attention; and include the southbound no-right-turn-on-red sign.

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

Noes: None

Recusal: None



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Absent: None

- 5-3. Strategies for Improving Physical Distancing on Publicly Owned Right-of-Way –** Staff will provide an update on this item based upon City Council and Economic Development Committee discussions and additional information on uses of publicly-owned right-of-way to support commercial activity.

Recommendation: Recommend that City Council waive encroachment permit application fees for the temporary use of parking spaces in business districts and authorize staff to approve requests for temporary use of parking spaces in business districts for the duration of COVID-19 county health restrictions.

Fried advised that cities have been exploring changes to the use of streets in response to COVID-19. The Commission's earlier discussion focused on increasing space for active transportation. More recent work has pertained to dining and business activity. On April 23, 2020, the Transportation Commission recommended issuing guidance regarding walking direction for City sidewalks and trails and use of parking on Masonic and around Memorial Park and Albany High School. The Commission discussed but did not recommend full or partial street closures. On June 1, the City Council directed staff to discuss with the Economic Development Committee and the Transportation Commission the use of public rights-of-way for physical distancing with specific parameters. On June 4, the Economic Development Committee discussed the use of encroachment permits to increase outdoor dining capacity and recommended the City Council waive fees for encroachment permits and provide barriers. Staff has reviewed actions taken in peer cities and developed guidance for Solano Avenue. Staff has implemented a fee waiver and staff-level review and approval of encroachment permits for sidewalk cafés. Staff has not charged the \$146 application fee for an encroachment permit for use of parking spaces pending Council direction. Depending on the scale and impact of a proposed project, staff, the Transportation Commission, or the City Council may approve a project. In the last week, 11 encroachment permits have been issued.

The Commission requested the following clarifications:

- Staff has not provided barriers for use of sidewalks or parking spaces.
- Staff has authorized the use of two parking spaces per business.
- Most applications have sought the use of one or two spaces, with perhaps one application seeking the use of three spaces.
- Two parking spaces will accommodate three tables at appropriate spacing.
- Businesses along San Pablo have requested the use of sidewalks, and one business expressed interest in the use of parking spaces and requested staff pursue it with Caltrans.
- The businesses have provided the materials delineating sidewalk spaces.
- Staff is not requiring compliance with accessibility standards. Staff recommends restaurants offer seating both on the sidewalk and in parking spaces in order to accommodate individuals with disabilities.
- Public Works would have to purchase barriers in order to provide them to businesses.
- One property owner has expressed interest in utilizing onsite parking for dining, and staff is open to considering it.
- The intent of requiring the removal of the encroachments is to prevent the privatization of the roadway. The requirement is not being enforced.



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The Commission made the following comments:

- A suggestion for the number of parking spaces to be based on a business' frontage on Solano and the type of business.
- Support for eliminating the encroachment permit condition for businesses to remove the encroachments when closed. Perhaps encroachments should be removed if not used for a week.
- A suggestion to place a cone in the center of the entry to each parking space rather than every 10 feet.
- Perhaps the speed limit should be reduced.

Jordan/del Rosario: Moved to extend the meeting to 9:45 p.m.

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

Noes: None

Recusal: None

Absent: None

The Commission made the following additional comments:

- A suggestion to allow two spaces per business initially and subsequently allowing more spaces per business where possible, especially for restaurants.
- Perhaps the City could offer an option to make the encroachment permits permanent in order to foster parklets.
- Support for reducing the speed limit on Solano Avenue or a combination of a posted lower speed limit and the addition of stop signs at intersections.
- Support for allowing more parking spaces per business as many businesses remain closed.
- A preference for staff to determine the number of parking spaces per business.
- A suggestion to set the speed limit at the 85th percentile even if it is not in a multiple of five.
- Support for allowing the use of parking spaces.

Javandel/McCroskey: Moved to recommend the City Council waive the encroachment permit application fees for the temporary use of parking spaces in business districts; authorize staff to approve requests for temporary use of parking spaces in business districts for the duration of the COVID-19 County health restrictions; and provide staff with flexibility regarding the number of spaces allowed per parklet, the requirement to remove equipment when businesses are closed as discussed, and to post reduced speed advisory signs near parklets and consider measuring the 85th percentile speed for possible regulatory speed signs and specifically to do so once parklets are in place.

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

Noes: None

Recusal: None

Absent: None



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6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner McCroskey announced the Executive Director of the East Bay Regional Park District has indicated a virtual or in-person opening of the Bay Trail may be scheduled at some future date.

Fried noted the Commission will not meet in August. The City was not awarded a planning grant for the Active Transportation Plan update. Commissioners may view sample installations of Safety Step truncated domes at Ohlone Greenway and Brighton and at Garfield and Masonic. The sample product is not suitable for wet applications.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

At Commissioner Jordan's request, Fried indicated the HAWK signal times were shortened at Dartmouth and San Pablo. Caltrans Traffic Safety has so far denied the additional signage.

Commissioner Jordan requested an item regarding the process for updating the Active Transportation Plan.

Fried indicated upcoming agenda items include traffic calming for the 1000 block of Masonic.

8. NEXT MEETING – Thursday, July 23, 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 9:46 p.m.