



CITY OF ALBANY CITY COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Agenda Date: November 6, 2023
Reviewed by: NA

SUBJECT: Preparation of a New Active Transportation Plan for the City

REPORT BY: Justin Fried, Transportation and Sustainability Manager
Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

SUMMARY

The item provides the City Council an opportunity to receive public comment and discuss and provide direction to staff on key elements related to preparation of a new active transportation plan (ATP) for the City.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Council provide guidance on the preparation of a new Active Transportation Plan for the City.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

The scope of work associated with the preparation of the Active Transportation Plan will include review for compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Act.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the ATP is to encourage biking and walking through investment in public infrastructure that increases safety and improves priority routes. The ATP should serve as the foundational plan for active transportation investment in city roadways. Ideally, an effective plan resolves the high-level policy issues, linking together separate projects and policies, allowing the design phase of individual projects to focus on technical aspects of a project. Additionally, in order to qualify for Measure B, Measure BB, and Vehicle Registration Fee Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety funds, cities are required to have an adopted Local Pedestrian Master Plan and Local Bicycle Master Plan and update them every five years.

In 2012, the City of Albany adopted an Active Transportation Plan (ATP) that serves as the planning framework for bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the City. The plan was amended in 2014 and again in 2019 ([link to the current Active Transportation Plan](#)). It is common that long range plans have a useful lifespan of 10 to 15 years. Not only are projects and programs implemented, but priorities, best practices, and design standards evolve

significantly. As an example, the current ATP does not include Class IV Bikeways (cycletracks). The structure of the current plan is as follows:

1. Introduction – Vision, Process
2. Other Plans – city, neighbors, county, region, state, federal
3. Existing Conditions – travel behavior, facilities, need, collision analysis
4. Goals, Policies, Actions – safety, accessibility, connectivity, public health, other
5. Network and Projects – Sidewalk and Pathways Network, Bicycle Network, Project List
6. Project Information Sheets
7. Support Programs – education, enforcement
8. Implementation – funding, prioritization, cost estimate

Appendices

- A. BTA-Required Bicycle Plan Elements
- B. Accommodating a Range of Participants
- C. Walking and Bicycling Survey Results
- D. Estimating Active Transportation Activity
- E. Project Prioritization
- F. Design Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities
- G. Crosswalk Guidelines
- H. Design Guidelines for Bicycle Facilities
- I. Bicycle Parking Guidelines

One key element of the plan is the four main network maps:

- Priority Sidewalk & Pathway Network,
- Skeleton Sidewalk & pathway network,
- Proposed Fast Bikeways, and
- Proposed Slow Bikeways.

The prioritized project list and project information sheets have also informed the development and delivery of active transportation improvements over the last 10 years. Projects that were identified in the current ATP that have been delivered or are underway include:

- In-Street Bike Lanes, Bike Boulevards, Bike Routes, wayfinding;
- Buchanan Bikeway;
- Marin Bike Lane Gap Closure;
- Kains/Adams pilot;
- Bay Trail connection;
- Ohlone Greenway Crossing Improvements at Marin and Solano;
- Cleveland segment of Pierce Street Path Segment 2;
- Codornices Creek Connection 8th to 10th and 10th to San Pablo;
- Marin Avenue – reduced corner curb radii in conjunction with paving project; and
- San Pablo Avenue crossing improvements.

Solano Avenue Complete Streets Study

The Solano Avenue Complete Streets and Corridor Revitalization Study was accepted by the City Council on September 3, 2019. During the review of the draft study, a one-way eastbound bicycle facility on Solano Avenue was proposed and recommended by the Traffic & Safety Commission. The Council action accepting the study included directing the then Traffic & Safety Commission (now Transportation Commission) to evaluate and report back to Council regarding bicycle safety improvements for Solano Avenue as part of an update to the ATP and any further development of the concepts in the study.

Marin Avenue Rehabilitation Project

At its May 27, 2021, meeting, the Transportation Commission recommended, in conjunction with the Marin Avenue Pavement project design, largely retaining the existing roadway width for potential future changes, that the city prepare a complete streets plan for the next phase of improvements for Marin Avenue.

Local Roadway Safety Plan

The Albany Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP) was recommended for adoption by the Transportation Commission on January 26, 2023, and adopted by Council on March 20, 2023. Transportation Commission discussion of the Local Roadway Safety Plan identified limits of the LRSP methodology using recent 5-year collision data for project prioritization and identified a desire to look at a longer time period of collision data and non-collision data when prioritizing safety and active transportation projects.

Transportation Commission Discussion

On December 1, 2022, the Transportation Commission discussed their priorities for an update to the ATP, and had the following key comments:

- Look at ways to simplify the document and make key elements easier to access on the website;
- The network maps are a key element;
- Focus on keeping viable pipeline of projects for construction funding;
- Prioritization of projects is an important element, including equity evaluation;
- Support inclusive designs for variety of users of the networks;
- Integration with other modes of transportation important; and
- Mix of opinion on project level detail.

Additional notes on the Transportation Commission discussion are provided in Attachment 2.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study session is to seek Council direction on the scope of work associated with the preparation of a new ATP. ATPs are almost always prepared with the support of

consultants with professional qualifications and experience with the preparation of ATPs in the region. A typical scope of work will include:

- Summary of the current context, plans, and existing conditions;
- Development of a goals and objectives for the future;
- Collection of data on trip volumes, collisions, barriers, etc.;
- Documentation of information gained from public engagement;
- Preparation of bicycle and pedestrian network diagrams specifying types of facilities or level of comfort and ability at different locations;
- Social justice and equity considerations; and
- Conceptual level of costs and prioritization

The next step in the preparation of an ATP will be the development and issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP). To ensure that the proposals received capture what the City is seeking, it is useful to provide the City's high priority expectations. It is desirable, however, to avoid providing too much methodological guidance, and instead encourage respondents to present their unique approach to the preparation of the plan.

Timeframe Considerations for Preparation of the ATP

The City does not have unlimited time to prepare the ATP. In December 2019, the City entered into a litigation settlement agreement that requires the completion of alterations to various City sidewalks. In particular, Solano Avenue is required to meet State and Federal accessibility requirements by 2029. To provide enough time for project design and construction, as well as time to secure funding, it is important to make a policy decision on the type of bicycle facility on Solano Avenue. As noted at the time of acceptance of the Solano Avenue Complete Streets Study, the ATP is the mechanism for making the policy decision. The decision on Solano Avenue will also have implications for the rest of the east-west cycling network.

Discussion Questions for Council Consideration

The following guiding questions will help effectively scope the next steps of this project:

- Data – What new data and analysis will be useful to the Council for the active transportation planning process? What information is important to set project priorities? Is there particular information that would help inform policy direction on the alternative concepts for Solano Avenue?
- Project Design & Cost Estimates – Staff would recommend not investing a significant amount of time into the design or cost estimating of particular future projects. Looking back on the existing ATP, many of the design elements were based on incomplete information and/or design guidelines that became dated by the time the project advanced. How far into project design does the Council desire the ATP to go?
- Background Information Briefs – Would the Council find it useful for the consultant and/or staff to periodically prepare memorandums detailing some of the external

technical constraints and considerations that impact City projects? For example: the role of State and Federal roadway design standards; accessibility requirements; interactions between roadway projects and other infrastructure; etc.

- Public Engagement - The ATP should take into account the knowledge and concerns of existing residents, businesses, and other interests. Are there particular formats or engagement mechanisms that the Council considers effective and informative?
- Are there other Council suggestions or comments on scope for the ATP?

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

The scope of work associated with the preparation of the ATP will include review for compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Act.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Goal 1 of the City’s Climate Action Plan is “Decrease passenger vehicle miles traveled (VMT) through use of alternative modes.” Develop a new Active Transportation Plan (ATP). Under Goal 1, Action 1.1.1 calls for the development of a new ATP, and states:

Analyze gaps in the active transportation network and develop a new ATP that serves as the basis for prioritizing active transportation projects for all ages and abilities in the City. The Plan should emphasize multimodal transportation, access to transit, pedestrian safety, bike racks and lockers, beautification, green infrastructure, and a seamless regional bike network that favors low stress bike lanes where feasible. The Plan will ensure that transportation infrastructure is safe and accessible for all ages and abilities.

SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

The next ATP needs to be prepared with the expressed goal and specific projects and programs to improve access to safe and accessible bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the City. These social equity and inclusivity considerations should include recognition of different commute patterns to employment, schools, and shopping. These considerations also should take into account that many of the users of the transportation infrastructure are traveling through Albany from neighboring communities.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

Goal 3 of the City Council’s 2023-2025 Strategic Plan is “Promote streets that support safety and transportation mobility options. The first objective listed in the objectives of Goal 3 is to update the ATP.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The anticipated cost of preparation of the ATP is expected to be \$200,000 or more. Among the variables that contribute to cost increases are the level of data collection and analysis, scale and methodology of community engagement, and level of engineering analysis of potential projects. Although staff will seek grant funds if eligible, it is likely that a large amount of the cost of the ATP will come from City funds, much of which would be expended in the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

NEXT STEPS

Following Council feedback, staff will prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an update to the ATP.

Attachments

1. Minutes of the December 1, 2022 Transportation Commission Discussion



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MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2022, 7:31 P.M.

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: del Rosario, Graham, McCroskey, Peng
Absent: Javandel (arrived during Item 5-1)
Staff Present: Justin Fried, Transportation Planner
Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

The Albany Land Acknowledgement Statement was read as adopted by the City Council per City of Albany Minute Action, November 15, 2021.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Peggy McQuaid appreciated the commissioners' perseverance during the COVID-19 pandemic and thanked them for their service. The Transportation Commission is in the unique position to serve all community members using a variety of transportation modes.

Julie Winkelstein requested that the Commission determine what type of battery is used in the Veo scooters.

Carrie Schulman requested that the Commission consider a safe route for crossing San Pablo Avenue between Marin Avenue and Portland Avenue. Additionally, the block of Jackson Street in front of Ocean View becomes congested with vehicles during school pick-up and drop-off times, making it difficult for students to bike to school.

3. PRESENTATIONS

3-1. Monthly Police Data on Collisions and Citations

Fried presented data for October 2022.

The Commission made the following comments:

- Perhaps, the Commission could be more responsive if it had a better understanding of the incidents that occurred.
- A suggestion to include all data points related to the location.

The Commission requested the following clarifications:

- Staff can discuss providing more detailed incident information with the police department.

The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Amy Smolens:



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- An inquiry about the steadily declining moving citations and whether it is due to less moving citations or less enforcement.

Chair McCroskey indicated that warnings are more common at the conclusion of a traffic stop. Law-abiding citizens are not necessarily increasing, but police tactics are changing.

3-2. Shared Mobility Data

Fried presented data for 3Q July, August, and September.

The Commission requested the following clarifications:

- Staff will receive quarterly reports from Veo.

The Commission made the following comments:

- Trips have returned to pre-COVID levels, which is a positive development.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4-1. Transportation Commission Meeting Minutes of October 27, 2022

Recommendation: That the Transportation Commission approve the meeting minutes for the virtual meeting of October 27, 2022.

4-2. Rainbow Crosswalk Proposal for the Southern Crosswalk of Talbot Avenue at Solano Avenue – To provide opportunity for public comment regarding this location, this item presents a proposed design for rainbow crosswalk installation for the southern crossing of Talbot Avenue at the intersection with Solano Avenue.

Recommendation: Recommend that City Council approve the design for a rainbow crosswalk installation at Talbot Avenue and Solano Avenue.

Del Rosario/Peng: Moved to approve the consent calendar.

Ayes: del Rosario, Graham, McCroskey, Peng

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Javandel

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

5-1. Priorities for Update to the Active Transportation Plan – Staff will present approaches to an update to the Active Transportation Plan for discussion.



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Recommendation: Provide comments to staff.

Fried presented the staff report.

The Commission made the following comments:

- A suggestion to create a pamphlet to simplify the document; an interactive map should be created and included on Albany’s website to show the network; chapter six is really helpful, but the engineering drawings need to be improved to provide a better understanding; and a suggestion to include the new type of active transportation.
- Support for a more user-friendly approach; and the Oakland Bike Plan is very user friendly in the way that it is presented.
- Keeping some viable projects ready for funding for construction should be the focus; and a pragmatic project and results-based approach is useful.
- The prioritization table is the most useful, followed by the project plans; the Sidewalk Network in the ATP has been really useful and helped with development of the Sidewalk Repair Program; the length of the document is a stumbling block; and an entrance document or portal might be useful.

The Commission requested the following clarifications:

- Grants have been applied for without success. Staff expects to utilize the City’s operating revenues and no significant spending will occur until the next fiscal year.
- Appendix A calls out the specific elements required for Caltrans Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) funding.

The following PUBLIC COMMENTS were offered by Carrie Schulman, Julie Winkelstein, Bryan Marten Amy Smolens:

- Chapter six project information sheets with tiers is really helpful; a suggestion to explain the different tiers; and support for the Washington Avenue Bicycling Boulevard route.
- A request for more enforcement and awareness; and bicyclists do not stop at stop signs and rarely stop at red lights.
- It is critical that that the ATP include things that support networks similar to the bridge across the creek being implemented soon.
- Support for staff’s emphasis on the all-ages and abilities, including youth and seniors; e-bikes are important for seniors; children riding bicycles to school is challenging; active transportation access to school should be prioritized over motor vehicle access; and Commissioner Peng’s suggestion for an interactive map is good.

Chair McCroskey indicated that most of the ticket value goes to the county.



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The Commission made the following comments:

- Prioritization of projects is important; the engineering drawings are not helpful; support for ensuring inclusive designs for multiple ages; ensuring that infrastructure is put in place to support changes in land use is important; best practice is needed to ensure that great streets can be created for transit, pedestrians, and bikes all at once; and coordinating with students in terms of conducting outreach is important.
- Integration of the ATP with other modes of transportation is important; ensuring that the modes do not compete with each other is necessary; streets where transit operates should be carved out as places where complete street treatments are conducted; support for public comments stating that active transportation has evolved since the last time the plan was created; equity should be highlighted and utilized in terms of conducting analysis for projects; and a section regarding follow-up and measuring success would be helpful.
- Support for the idea of having concept level drawings; network maps are useful to help identify opportunities; and support for having the network identify modal priorities for key corridors.
- Support for the idea of study plans; the Climate Action Plan details specific goals, cycling classes, and refers to a goal of a continuous network of protected cycling paths; part of the ATP is to implement a City where a mode change can take place and the City's environmental goals dictate that it should; protected bikeways are necessary for encouraging the use of micromobility, e-bikes, and e-scooters; and targeting lower income areas will help the City become more competitive regarding grant funding.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

6-1. Marin Pavement Rehabilitation Project Phase 1 began November 7

Fried announced that Marin Pavement Rehabilitation Project Phase 1 began November 7, 2022 and will continue.

The Commission made the following comments:

- There have been some complaints regarding the placement of signage.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Fried announced that the Local Road Safety Plan draft plan will be posted for public review in advance of January's meeting and for discussion at the January meeting.

8. NEXT MEETING – Thursday, January 26, 2023, 7:00 p.m.



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9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.