



**TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

**EDITH STONE ROOM—RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
1249 MARIN AVENUE
Sept 25, 2008**

1 Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Lubov Mazur, Chair.

2 Roll Call

Members present: Ray Anderson, Lubov Mazur and Marsha Atkinson.

Absent: Nancy Peterson, Commissioner Madson said he would be arriving late

3 Consent

Mazur corrected the minutes. Minutes were approved with the corrections.

4 Public Comment

Ms. Bennett resident of Cornell Avenue asked about paid parking. However, Mazur directed her to make a comment to Council because the Commission had already taken action on it.

Ken McCroskey representing the Marin Elementary School PTA said that he is interested in pursuing a mid block crossing on Santa Fe Avenue and that he would like to know what the process is to do this. Chavez clarified that this idea was suggested at the walking audit last year. It was not included in the grant application because it needed public process. Mazur suggested notifying interested parties and putting the issue on the agenda for a future meeting.

Chavez mentioned that the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) is trying to lobby congress to increase bicycle and pedestrian funding. She informed the Commission that a support resolution will go to City Council in October.

Preston Jordan said that the Albany Strollers and Rollers would be bringing back the issue of the ex-officio member to the Traffic and Safety Commission. Because of the number of grants that are available that are overseen by the East Bay Bicycle Coalition, it only makes sense to have a bicycle advisory body and he thought that an ex-officio member could serve as the advisory body. In addition, he mentioned that the Albany Bicycle Master Plan calls for the formation of standing Bicycle Advisory Committee. He asked that this be considered again by the Traffic and Safety Commission. Mazur asked to put this on the agenda for next month.

Ray Anderson said that the AC Transit buses traveling south stick out at the bus stop in front of Subway at the intersection of Solano and San Pablo Ave. He said that there is enough room to extend the bus stop adjacent to 904-902. He suggested writing a letter to AC Transit, but Chaney said that the issue had to be discussed first. The other concern he had was that AC Transit is using the accordion buses on the 52 line, buses are sticking out at the stop on Buchanan and Polk. The Commission asked to put this item on the next month's agenda.

5 Discussions and Possible Action on matters related to the following items:

5-1 Item placed later on the agenda for discussion when Commissioner Madson arrived.

5-3 Preliminary discussion regarding the concept to install bulb-outs on Buchanan at Jackson

Chavez said that the City is now in the process to design and install a new signal for the Buchanan/Jackson intersection thanks to a Safe Routes to School grant. She said that last year, as part of the walking audit, parents talked about the need to have a bulb out at that intersection so children would have a shorter distance to cross when traveling to and from school. She said that the bulb outs require public process. The consultant had suggested implementation everything at once instead of by piecemeal, which could be more expensive. Chavez asked the Commission's authorization to start the public process.

Mazur asked if these bulb outs would cause problems with vehicles turning right. Chavez said that the consultant would design the bulb outs in a way that do not cause major problems to the vehicles. However, she said that the bulb outs would slow down vehicles turning right from Jackson onto Buchanan. Mazur asked if bicycles would have a conflict. Chavez said that the consultant would have to take into consideration bicycle traffic, but she believed that on the southbound side of Buchanan, the bulb-out would be in addition to the 15 feet wide path.

Anderson commented that during bell times, vehicles yield to pedestrians. Mazur opened the discussion to the public.

Jordan said that he was glad that the Commission was addressing this issue. He asked Commissioner Anderson to clarify his comment. Anderson said that he is concerned that the bulb out would cause more traffic back ups and deviations to neighboring streets, but that he would like to have the professional opinion of the consultant engineer.

Mazur asked if the new signal would have two protected left turns. Chavez said that the consultant is suggesting protected left turns on four directions.

Nick Pilch said the he supports the idea of the bulb outs, particularly because Jackson is the point where there is a controlled crosswalk and is the point where the children are converging to go to and from the school. He believes that if traffic diversion is a consequence of this project, the safety of the children comes first.

Mazur said that she would like to put this item in the next month's agenda and invite the stakeholders to the meeting.

Commissioner Madson arrived at 7:20 pm

5-1 Review status of Measure F funding with the goal of providing a recommendation to City Council regarding expenditures of remaining Measure F funds

Chaney said that Council had directed staff to seek the Traffic and Safety Commission input regarding decisions on how to spend the available Measure F dollars. She proceeded to provide the background on Measure F. She showed the list of the ranked projects on the back of the Traffic Management Plan. She said that nearly half of those projects were complete. Now the task before the Commission was to revisit this list, re-evaluate and re-prioritize the projects if need be. She also presented a list of projects for which Measure F had been allocated.

Mazur asked why some projects used so little Measure F and Chaney responded that it was with the help of grants that Measure F dollars had stretched so far. She mentioned that before Measure F was passed, staff could not apply to grants because the City did not have matching funds. Thanks to Measure F, the City of Albany had been able to apply and obtain grants.

She then explained that the remaining Measure F moneys allocated to transportation projects are approximately \$1.5 million. However, these funds may shrink because the Finance Department had not finalized its calculations. Chaney suggested that the Measure F funds that have been allocated to active projects be kept untouched. These projects are:

- The Buchanan Bicycle Path
- Stop signs, speed humps, red curbs
- Cerrito Creek/Pierce Street Bicycle Path
- Jackson/Buchanan traffic signal

The level of funding required from Measure F for these projects is about \$550,000, which leaves the available funding at a little over one million dollars. Chaney said that one important issue was to decide if the Commission wanted to pursue phase II of the Marin Avenue Reconfiguration. She said that the second phase include bulb outs. The cost of each bulb out is about \$20,000 each or \$40,000 per intersection. The Commission may decide to build the bulb outs at selected intersections. Currently, there is no funding for this project unless Measure F is allocated. Chaney also reminded Commissioners that grant funding is at the 80 or 90 percent level and that they had to keep in mind to set aside some funding for future grant matching. Chaney said that Measure F funds should focus on:

- Traffic calming
- Bicycle paths
- Grant matching.

Mazur opened the discussion to the public.

Jordan said that the Albany Strollers and Rollers (AS&R) had taken a look at the project list and had some suggestions. First of all, he said that the City of Albany does not have a Pedestrian Master Plan and the AS&R see this as a gap that could prevent future projects from being implemented. He urges the Commission to include this in their consideration.

He also said that the Albany Bicycle Master Plan states that it should be updated every five years. The current plan has not had an update since it was first adopted. The AS&R

took every project listed in the Bicycle Master Plan and re-prioritized it. He distributed the list at the meeting. Some of the updates listed are low cost, such as signage. He suggested inviting El Cerrito and Berkeley to the discussions of the Albany Bicycle Plan update.

Chaney suggested thinking about the controversial projects listed in the Traffic Management Plan. First of all signage and striping requests are affordable and relatively easy to implement. On the other hand, the Traffic Management Plan's proposal to convert Adams St. to two ways is a controversial issue that the Commission would have to address in the near future.

Sherie Reineman, said that it would be appropriate to allocate some funds to improve the existing pedestrian path on the Ohlone Greenway, so it is more attractive for pedestrians to use. A little bit of enforcement would also help in educating pedestrians to use the pedestrian path only.

Nick Pilch said that he encourages the City to pursue the second phase of the Marin Avenue Reconfiguration project. He also suggested pursuing the "active" projects listed in the Measure F Funding Status document that staff drafted. He is a strong supporter of setting aside some funds for grant matching money.

Chaney said that staff could prepare some recommendations for the Commissions review at the next meeting.

5-2 Buchanan Bicycle/Pedestrian Path

Chaney provided background on this issue.

Mazur said that she would like to see how would the path under the over-crossing look like because she feels it is a safer alternative.

Madson asked if in event USDA decided to extend the building they would reduce the buffer that presently exists between the public and their premises.

Chaney said that in fact they would reduce the buffer.

Michael Mejia said that it seems USDA made a distinction between the storage building and the front building. The front building seems less sensitive than the storage building.

Atkinson asked if it would cost more money to study the third option. Chaney said that in order to do it right, the City would have to come up with the money to do it.

Chavez said that the consultant would do the schematic under the same budget, but if an engineering drawing were required, it would have to be under a separate budget because the consultant would have to conduct another topographic survey.

Atkinson said that the third option would not serve pedestrians since they are not likely to walk under the over crossing and then up onto Buchanan. They need a crosswalk on Buchanan.

Chavez said that when staff and the consultant met with the stakeholders to discuss the idea of the third option, she had suggested that if the third option was the best one, it could be possible to include the signal at Taylor or Pierce in the project description and seek funding for it. Mazur opened the discussion to the public.

Sherrie Reineman said that she supports having a crossing at Taylor regardless of the inclusion of the third option in the study.

Barbara Wilson, resident of Buchanan St. mentioned that she had seen people walking on the bridge to go to Target. Mazur said that pedestrians could go under the bridge and come up at Petco. She said that there might be lack of signage directing pedestrians.

Ken McCroskey said that he and a group of interested citizens did their own walking audit the Saturday before the Traffic and Safety meeting. He said that he did not believe the USDA fence was very strong. He wondered what USDA had stored under the bridge, and what would happen in the event of an earthquake. He encouraged the Commission to pursue the study of the third option.

Michael Mejia said that it is important to keep the second phase of the Marin/Buchanan alive. He also said that all of the big corporations whose property is impacted by the Bay Trail are being reluctant to allow construction of the trail inside their campus. He encouraged the Commission to pursue the third option.

Preston Jordan clarified that AS&R is not pushing the third option because they want to eliminate the signal proposal. The AS&R is supporting this option because it has regional implications and bicycle organizations in the Bay Area are interested in it. He also said that the third option was not presented under the TY Lin study. The third option is the reason why DMJM Harris consultants were awarded the project. Another argument is that this property owner happens to be our government. As a property owner, USDA is not serving its community because it had not even provided a sidewalk along the south side of Buchanan. He also expressed that he had a problem understanding USDA's concern of pedestrian and bicycle circulation near its storage building when there is currently a bus stop adjacent to it. Jordan mentioned that he had spoken with Barbara Lee staff and they had asked about the City's position on this issue. Jordan presented a resolution he drafted for the Traffic and Safety Commission to adopt a position on this issue. In this way, the City would take an official position in order to invite USDA to come to the table in good faith and discuss the third option.

Mazur said this was an example of citizens asking to thoroughly study all the options available for a proposal. Anderson said that he would like to have more time to read the resolution. He said he supported the traffic signal at Taylor or Pierce and the third option eliminates the signal on Buchanan. Chaney said that the third option eliminates the need for the signal, but it does not mean that a signal could not be installed in the future using City funds, but not likely bicycle grant funds.

Atkinson said that the Commission already made the decision on this issue. She does not think it is the Commission's jurisdiction to go back to the City Council and revisit the issue.

The Commission decided to continue discussions on the issue and to evaluate and vote on Jordan's resolution at the next month's meeting.

5-4 Review proposal to reduce speed limit on Cleveland Avenue from 35 mph to 25 mph

Chavez said that the consultant conducting the mandatory speed and volume survey for the Police Department recommended reducing the speed limit to 25 mph on Cleveland Avenue from the Contra Costa County line to a point 900 feet north of the northerly line of Washington Avenue. The reason is high accident rate in the area. She said that customers of the gym located adjacent to 548 Cleveland Avenue, usually jog on the street because there is no sidewalk and fast traffic poses a threat to the joggers. Chavez said that if approved, the Commission would have to recommend City Council to amend the Municipal Code.

Anderson moved that the speed limit along the length of Cleveland Avenue from the Contra Costa County line to a point 900 feet north of the northerly line of Washington Avenue be lowered from 35 mph to 25 mph. Proposed language and resolution expected at the October meeting. Atkinson seconded. Vote was unanimous.

6. Reports

6-1 Police Reports

Sgt. Willis reported that in August there had been 17 non-injury and 6 injury accidents with a total of 9 injured persons. A father and son were hit crossing San Pablo Avenue at Washington St. Mazur suggested some signs warning pedestrians to cross with extreme caution.

Sgt. Willis reported that there had not been accidents near schools. He also said that there had been 306 citations in the past month.

Anderson said that he was talking to the UC Village police officer about installing a double-double yellow line on Jackson St. in the segment adjacent to Ocean View School. This would prevent drivers from turning right or left at random places. Chaney said that she would like to see where the breaks would be. Sgt. Willis said he had the contact information for the UC Village police officer so staff can talk to him before putting the item on a future agenda.

6-2. Pierce Street Rehabilitation and bike path status

Chaney said that staff had met periodically with Caltrans staff and that a concept plan for the path was presented to them. However, Caltrans is still drafting their official response. Madson said he was curious to know what they actually said at these meetings and asked staff to document the meetings. Chaney said that she would write the minutes of the meetings.

6-3 Transit Improvements at the intersection of San Pablo and Solano Avenues

Chavez mentioned that the San Pablo Avenue Transit Improvements Project had been

finalized in Albany. The project installed an audible pedestrian signal at the intersection and it seems it is working very well. Anderson said that the beeping sound was very loud and that he had asked the workers to regulate it.

6-4 Pedestrian crossing on Buchanan at Taylor

Chavez said that at the last meeting, the Commission had directed staff to find out the technical justification for not installing a crosswalk at the uncontrolled intersection of Buchanan and Taylor. Chavez said that there were several studies showing that having a crosswalk at uncontrolled intersections suggests a false sense of safety for pedestrians. Several human factors come to play when analyzing the behavior of pedestrians and drivers at crosswalks. Basically, pedestrians are less careful when using a crosswalk. On the other hand, pedestrians wait for a gap in traffic when there is no crosswalk and are more careful to look and cross when they think it is safest. Drivers are more likely to yield to a pedestrian when there is a crosswalk. However, they are not aware of the law that gives pedestrians the right of way regardless of the presence of a crosswalk. Finally, the studies conclude that in a multilane arterial with high traffic volume, such as Buchanan, it is not advisable to install crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections because of the potential for the occurrence of multiple threats. This is when one vehicle yields to a pedestrian, but the vehicle on the other lane does not. She said that this is an issue that could be addressed by the consultants of the Buchanan Bike Path design project.

7 Announcement and Communications

- 7-1 Letter from Peter Garellick requesting bus stop length at 725 Pierce St.
- 7-2 Letter from Tim Adam regarding changing the 90 minute limited time parking to two hours on the east and west sides of Madison
- 7-3 Memorandum to City Council from Traffic and Safety Commission regarding the implementation of a paid parking program
- 7-4 Letter from Fern Tiger and Associates regarding a possible presentation on the comprehensive community process focused on the future of the Albany Waterfront

Anderson invited everyone to the upcoming dinner event and the triathlon on Sunday celebrating the 100 year anniversary of Albany.

8 Future Agenda Items

- 8-1 Measure F funding
- 8-2 Albany Strollers and Rollers ex-officio member
- 8-3 AC Transit buses obstructing traffic on Buchanan at Polk

9 Adjournment –The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 p.m. Next TBD