



**TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

**EDITH STONE ROOM—RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
1249 MARIN AVENUE
December 18, 2008**

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm

2. Roll Call

Members present: David Madson, Ray Anderson, Lubov Mazur, Nancy Peterson, and Marsha Atkinson.

Staff Present: Chaney, Lt. Geissberger, Chavez.

3. Consent

There were a couple of corrections. Minutes were approved with the corrections. Vote was three Ayes and two abstentions.

4. Public Comment

Preston Jordan encouraged the Commission to pursue the extension of the Cleveland off-ramp. This idea was included in the 2002 Traffic Management Plan. He said that with the new federal administration, there was an opportunity to implement capital-intensive projects. He also mentioned that the City needed a Master Plan for Buchanan Street. In addition, he said that there were rumors that railroad operations between Richmond and Oakland would increase. This would be a \$ 75 million project and he suggested exploring the possibility of obtaining some funds by way of mitigation, for example implementing a sound wall. Ray Anderson suggested placing this item on next month's agenda.

Mazur said that approximately two years ago the Commission discussed extending the Cleveland off-ramp to Buchanan/580. She said that it would be an excellent opportunity to add a bike path to this idea.

The Commission asked to place this issue and the Buchanan Master Plan in next month's agenda.

5. Discussion and Possible action on matters related to the following items:

5-1 Discussion of traffic and safety problems around elementary schools in Albany

Chaney directed the Commission to look at the list of projects that had been implemented at each elementary school. Mazur opened the discussion to the public.

David Salvator, parent of two children attending Marin Elementary conducted a presentation on potential solutions to improve safety around Marin Elementary School. The following were his recommendations:

- Add a pedestrian-only cycle to the signal at Marin and Santa Fe Avenues.
- Increase traffic enforcement
- Encourage people to volunteer as "spotters" to patrol the intersection, record car descriptions and license plate numbers of violators to forward to the APD.

- Install bright yellow signs that read: Entering School Zone-Speed limit 20 mph.
- Declare/rezone Marin/Santa Fe a School Zone.

Salvator said that he recognizes these changes would have an impact on traffic during peak hours, but safety should take precedence over traffic flow considerations. He also offered his assistance with grant writing should funds are needed to implement safety projects around the school. He said that the next steps are:

- Create an action plan to implement immediate low-cost recommendations
- Develop an action plan to fund and implement longer-term, more costly recommendations
- Set date for next follow up meeting to check on progress being made

Laura Casdia, Principal at Marin School urged the commission to pursue safety measures around Marin Elementary School because there is significant speeding and unsafe driving.

Mazur said that the City should explore the implementation of a pedestrian-only cycle (scramble) for the signal.

Chaney said that two years ago, the City applied to two Safe Routes to School grants for the implementation of new signals at Marin and Santa Fe and at Buchanan and Jackson. The City only obtained the Buchanan and Jackson grant.

Chavez reported that as part of the new presidential administration's stimulus package, the City had included the Marin/Santa Fe intersection signal as a potential project. She said that if successful, the City could incorporate different features to the new signal, such as the pedestrian only phase and a protected left turn (although not warranted by volume, a protected left turn could be implemented to improve pedestrian safety).

Another issue raised was that crossing guards at Solano and Talbot stop traffic every time a child approaches the crosswalk instead of waiting for more children to queue at the corner and stop traffic for the whole group.

Ken McCroskey reported that a crossing guard was forced out of the crosswalk by a driver who was turning left at the intersection of Marin and Santa Fe. He said that the scramble or all pedestrian-phase for the signal was a good idea for that intersection. He also asked if it was possible to reduce the radii of the corners at the intersection of Marin and Santa Fe to prevent drivers from making the right turn at high speeds.

Chaney said that part of the problem is the geometry of the intersection.

McCroskey said that parents at Marin Elementary are fully prepared to assist the City with educational component activities, or to distribute educational materials.

Mazur asked about the Street Smarts program in San Jose. Chavez said that she and Chaney had a conversation about implementing this program using the SR2S grant funds. Chavez said she would contact the City of San Jose in the near future.

Salvatore asked for a copy of the Marin Elementary Grant proposal for the SR2S program.

5-2 Call boxes and lighting on bicycle paths

Mazur said that she would like to know the different types of call boxes available and their cost. She suggested asking BART whether the agency should support call boxes in their right of way. Chavez said she would contact the City of El Cerrito to find out why they have not installed the call boxes proposed in the Safe Routes to Transit grant they obtained two years ago.

Amy Smolens said that call boxes were recommended in the Albany Bicycle Master Plan. Jordan asked to consider lighting when requesting funds for Class I bike facilities.

Chavez said that the Pierce Street grant included illumination for the phase II segment, The 500 block of Pierce has already street illumination in place.

5-3 Vehicular “Way Finding” sign locations suggested by Albany staff

Chaney provided background about available funds to implement signage around Eastshore Highway.

Mazur suggested continuing this issue in a future agenda, including a map and a code for signs located on the map.

Jordan suggested implementing way finding signage along the alternate bicycle path and also adopting the purple signs the City of Berkeley has implemented to indicate bicycle boulevards.

Mazur said that this item would be continued.

5-4 BART Retrofit project detour plans

Chaney presented the proposed detour maps that BART submitted to the City. She said that they proposed a rolling approach rather than total demolition. In this fashion, users would always get access to the Ohlone Greenway.

Jordan said that blocking off the east side parking along Masonic Avenue in the areas where the rolling retrofit is taking place would provide interim bicycle access. Another suggestion was to provide a parallel alternative route for bicycle commuters heading north of Brighton when the segment between Fairmont Avenue and Brighton St. is closed for construction. For instance, having bicyclists take Brighton then Ashbury and Fairmont is a good alternative route to access the BART station while retrofit work is going on. He encouraged the Commission to keep in mind these recommendations when work on this project begins.

Mazur asked Jordan to bring a map with these suggestions to a future meeting.

5-5 Status of Ex-Officio member as proposed by Albany Strollers and Rollers

Mazur asked Smolens, Jordan, and the public to comment about what the Albany Master Plan recommended, afterwards she wanted to review the City Administrator letter and discuss the concerns with the Commission members.

Jordan said that the Master Plan recommended keeping the Bicycle Advisory Committee that was formed when the plan was being developed with the purpose of updating the plan on a regular basis. As a group, the Albany Strollers and Rollers thought it would be beneficial to have a representative from the bicycle and pedestrian community as an ex-officio member.

Sol Strand, resident of the 500 block of Pierce St. opposed the fact that one representative could serve both, bicyclists and pedestrians' interests. He said that he opposed the design for the bicycle path on Pierce Street because removing the parallel parking along the east side of Pierce Street was unsafe for pedestrians. Another example is the alternate path at the western end of the Buchanan Bridge overcrossing. It works for bicyclists, but not for pedestrians because it does not offer a direct connection to the Bay Trail.

Mazur asked Sol Strand to join the AS&R.

Atkinson suggested having two representatives as ex-officio members, one for bicyclists and another for pedestrians because some of their concerns are considerably different. Chaney explained that one of the reasons the City Administrator suggested having an appointed member representing these groups, was to address the different concerns. However, this may open the door for another advocacy group to claim the right to have a representative. The other suggestion is that in whatever the Commission considers at its meetings, keep in mind pedestrian and bicyclist issues.

Madson said that if the Commission deals with transportation issues, bicyclists and pedestrians are also means of transportation and it is fair to have someone representing them.

Atkinson asked what would the problem be with having two additional voting members. Mazur said that she liked the size of the existing Commission because it had accomplished many things in the past. However, having members appointed by the City Council and not having members at large prevents the vote from being skewed. Atkinson said that having two additional members would make it possible to have a quorum with more than three members in attendance.

Mazur said that when an important issue is discussed and they only have three members in attendance, the Commission usually continues discussion of the issue at the following meeting.

Atkinson said that continuing the issue was not necessarily the case when a member has conflict of interest on an item being discussed.

Anderson said that he recommends keeping the Commission with five members.

Mazur suggested forming an Advisory Board representing the bicycle, pedestrian and perhaps, the School District.

Chaney said that staff would be preparing a staff recommendation on this issue.

Smolens said that bicyclists and pedestrian issues would be more important in the near future since the Climate Action Plan addresses this need.

The Commission moved to continue this item pending on upcoming information from staff.

6. Reports

6-1 Police Reports

Lt. Geissberger said that during the month of November there had been 21 Collisions: 13 non-injury, and 8 injury. Seven were hit and runs, 2 occurred on Marin Avenue. One near a school area and another was a bicycle/vehicle collision. He reported that the Police Department had issued 214 moving citations as part of the Avoid Campaign, which provides funds for DUI enforcement from Thanksgiving Day through New Year's.

Anderson asked Lt. Geissberger if it would be possible to ask the cross guards at Solano and Talbot to wait for a group of children to queue at the intersection and cross the group, instead of stopping vehicles for each child.

Strand said that there was broken glass on Pierce St.

Another member of the public suggested asking the parking enforcement officers to come near the intersection so people can see them.

Chaney said that she had joined a walking school bus and that particular morning she saw a police officer crossing children because the crossing guard was sick.

Mazur asked if being a crossing guard was something that a parent volunteer could do.

Geissberger said that it was a position difficult to fill because the position is part time, without benefits and practically, it takes all day.

6-2 ACTIA Grants

Chavez reported that the City applied for two grants: One for the Albany Pedestrian Plan for \$130,000 and the other for the Pierce Street for a total of \$575,000 for Phase I, which is the path along the west side of the 500 block of Pierce St.

Mazur asked what the amount of the match was. Chaney said that a match was not required, but the grant would compete more favorably if it showed a match.

Chavez said that for the pedestrian plan, the match had been her time and for the Pierce Street, the match was all the work already done last year plus the cost of producing 35% design of the path.

Strand made the comment that he thought the issue would go back to the Gateview community before any grants would be sought.

Chaney said that the Council action was to go ahead with the proposal, but addressing the residents' concerns in the design. She said that she had had an informal conversation with the new manager at Gateview, but that staff would be preparing a formal report stating how the City is addressing these issues. The report would be sent to the residents of the three complexes on the 500 block of Pierce St.

6-3 Ohlone Greenway Seismic retrofit status

Chaney explained that the City owns about a third of the land that BART would be using. Since BART has to pay the City for the land they would be using, it is likely that the path

widening ends up not costing anything to the City. Chaney said that at the January meeting, she would be able to provide more information.

7. Announcements/Communications

7-1 Elections

Mazur reported that all of the members of the Commission had to be sworn in again. She urged the new commissioner to do the recommended ride-along with the Police Officers.

8. Future Agenda Items

8-1 Trucks parked on Buchanan Street.

Atkinson suggested adding another issue. The right turn lane on the west side of the Solano/San Pablo intersection is mostly taken by a 15 minute parking zone, which means it is ineffective as a right turn.

Chaney said that this issue was first raised when the AC Transit Rapid bus line was being discussed. It was requested by Subway and the issue was contentious.

9 Adjournment—meeting was adjourned at 9:24pm. Next meeting is January 22, 2009 at 7:00 pm.