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CITY OF ALBANY- MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE  
**FROM:** ALEIDA ANDRINO-CHAVEZ, TRANSPORTATION PLANNER  
**SUBJECT:** TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS  
**DATE:** 02/13/09  
**cc:** Ann Chaney, Community Development Director

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The City is currently working on several projects that aim at encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and biking, as well as improving the pedestrian environment. The following is a list and short description of each project:

**Buchanan Bicycle and Pedestrian Path:** In 2007, the City obtained a grant from the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) in the amount of \$266,000 (with a local match of \$34,000 from Measure F and Transportation Development Act funds), for the development of 35% Plans, specifications, and engineering (PS&E), traffic analysis, and environmental work for this project. The project consist of exploring the possibility of extending the Class II bicycle lanes along Marin Avenue from Cornell Avenue to San Pablo Avenue and to continue on the north side of Marin, west of San Pablo as a Class II in the westbound direction through the Buchanan merge and along the north side of Buchanan Street to connect with the Buchanan Bridge over crossing.

On the south side of Marin, from the intersection of San Pablo and Marin Avenues, the system will be a Class I path along the University of California property (Gill Tract), Ocean View Elementary, Ocean View Park, and USDA. The consultant (DMJM Harris) and City staff are currently reviewing the preliminary design alternatives for this path, which involves a crossing to the north side of Buchanan either at Taylor, Pierce, or under the over crossing. Staff will coordinate a meeting with the stakeholders for this project and The Traffic and Safety Commission will review the design alternatives at their March Meeting (The Traffic and Safety Commission meets the fourth Wednesday of each month).

Preliminary cost estimates for this project, depending on the alternative selected range from \$1.7 to \$1.9 million. The City will seek a combination of funding sources, such as grants from different programs for this project, as it is not likely that it would be funded by a sole source.

**Traffic Signal at the intersection of Buchanan Street and Jackson Street and Pedestrian Improvements—Safe Routes to School State Program**

Through the State Safe Routes to School program (SR2S), the City obtained a grant in the amount of \$293,760 (\$59,174 match from local sources) for the implementation of a new traffic signal with protected left turn arrows at the intersection of Buchanan St. and Jackson St adjacent to Ocean View Elementary School. The new signal with video

detection and left turn arrows will protect pedestrians on the crosswalk as they do not have to compete with turning vehicles during the green phase of the signal. The consultant (DMJM Harris) is evaluating if a four way protected left turn could be implemented at the intersection.

The grant also includes the installation of two solar speed feedback signs on Buchanan, crosswalk striping along the route to Ocean View School on Solano Avenue and Buchanan St., and construction of ADA ramps on Solano Avenue at Madison St.

The grant also includes an educational component, which is currently taking place at the three elementary schools. This component is being implemented with the assistance of TransForm, the non-profit organization that administers the Safe Routes to School Program in Alameda County. Thanks to this program, Marin Elementary has established five walking bus routes, Cornell Elementary has one route and Ocean View Elementary is working on establishing some routes from Pierce Street and from the University Village. In addition, the third Wednesday of each month, it is designated as the Albany Walk and Roll to School Day, which encourages and celebrates children who arrive to school walking, bicycling or on scooters. There are other features to the educational component, such as bicycle rodeos, puppet shows, academic curriculum, etc. Some of these features are taking place at the elementary schools in Albany.

### **Ohlone Greenway widening**

With the BART retrofit project, there is an opportunity to enhance the Ohlone Greenway. The City in coordination with the City of El Cerrito contracted with Gates and Associates for the development of a plan for the Greenway that would enhance its features and would give the City a character as an environmentally friendly and community oriented place. The project entails widening of the existing 9-foot path to 14 feet with two feet of decomposed granite along either side in order to accommodate joggers and pedestrians. The site will also be used as a pilot project for native tree planting.

BART is paying the City for the use of City property during the retrofit project and these funds would help offset the cost of the path widening. The City may add a small amount of local funds or other grant sources to close the funding gap between the BART payment and the cost of the project.

### **Submitted Grant Applications**

#### **ACTIA grants**

The City recently submitted two grant applications to ACTIA: One grant application in the amount of \$130,000 is for the development of the City's first Pedestrian master Plan and for the update of the Albany Bicycle Master Plan. The other application in the amount of \$575,000 for the construction of a Class I bicycle and pedestrian path along the west side of Pierce Street, adjacent to the I-80 sound wall. This path is part of the Cerrito Creek Bay Trail Connector, which is intended to link the Ohlone Greenway to the Bay Trail and to provide a bicycle commuting option between the residential areas of El

Cerrito, Richmond, Albany and the employment centers in Berkeley and Emeryville via the Bay Trail.

If these grants are successful, the City can start incurring expenses in late summer, early fall 2009.

#### **Safe Routes to School- State program**

The City will resubmit a SR2S grant application to Caltrans for the implementation of a traffic signal with video detection at the intersection of Marin Avenue and Santa Fe Avenue. The new signal could be equipped with additional pedestrian safety features, but this will depend on further traffic engineering analysis. The grant also includes reconfiguring the southwest curb at the intersection of Marin Ave. and Santa Fe Ave., widening of the sidewalk adjacent to Marin Elementary School along the west side of Curtis Street, and installation of two solar speed feedback signs on Marin Avenue on both approaches to the school. In addition, the grant includes an educational component in order to continue the Safe Routes to School efforts already started by the SR2S grant that was awarded to Ocean View School.

#### ***Other Trip Reduction Programs***

##### **Eco-Pass or Transit Passes**

In 2008 the City looked at the possibility of implementing an Eco Pass or transit pass program, similar to the ones in place in Silicon Valley and in the City of Berkeley. There are several models for these transit pass programs in which the passes could be 100% subsidized, or partially subsidized, depending on the model adopted. Staff started conversations with the largest employers in the City (USDA, Albany Unified School District, City) about this concept and they seemed interested. The City conducted a survey in January 2008 to see whether City employees would be interested in using an Eco-Pass or a transit pass. The results of the survey showed that employees would be interested in a pass that included several transit agencies instead of only AC Transit, since they live outside the AC Transit service area. The city is to share the survey with USDA and the school district.

##### **City Car Share**

Another trip reduction program the City is interested in is on boosting membership to car sharing programs in Albany. In this fashion, people can use a car only when it is needed. University Village is a designated Point of Delivery (POD) for one vehicle from City CarShare. However, membership has to increase in order to add another vehicle.

##### **I-80 Interactive Corridor Management (ICM)**

The City is participating in the I-80 ICM aimed at relieving congestion on I-80 by making use of interactive technology to monitor speeds on the freeway, implementation of ramp metering and arterial management. This is a multi agency effort that is being coordinated by the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency.