



**TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES**

**CITY OF ALBANY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
1000 SAN PABLO AVENUE  
CITY OF ALBANY  
JUNE 28, 2007**

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**1. Call to Order**

The meeting began 7:00 p.m. by Richard Treat, Chair.

**2. Roll Call**

Members present: Richard Treat, Ray Anderson, David Madson, Lubov Mazur

Absent: Marsha Atkinson

Staff: Aleida Andrino-Chavez, Chief Mike McQuiston, Lt. Daniel Adams, and Ann Chaney.

**3. Consent Calendar**

Treat asked for a motion to approve the May 24 minutes. Madson made the motion and Mazur seconded the approval of the minutes as written. Vote was 4-0.

**4. Public Comment**

Brooks Weitzman, 900 block Madison Street, representing his block asked that speed treatments be installed on his block because of the increase in traffic volume. There are 27 children on his street, and staff has agreed to a speed trailer study. He said he would like the issue to be placed on a future agenda.

**5. Public Meeting**

**5.1 Request to install a Disabled Parking Space in front of 1127 Talbot Avenue**

Marian Myers submitted an application to designate the curb adjacent to her house as "Disabled Parking." The property at 1127 Talbot does not have a driveway and there is high demand for parking along the block. Ms. Myers' caregiver usually parks far away from her home when they return from shopping trips and doctor appointments. Ms. Myers is 94 years old and uses a walker.

Chavez said that she had received comments supporting the request in general, but with some "time limit" restrictions (e.g., 9:00 am to 5:00 pm) given the high parking demand.

Chavez said that implementing “limited hours” for a blue curb would be difficult to enforce.

At this time the Commission opened the discussion to the public.

Wilson Hight, 1131 Talbot, stated that the applicant is 94 years old and that this is the main reason for the request for a blue curb parking for her caretaker.

Mr. Rice, a neighbor who lives next door to the applicant, supports blue curb request.

Anderson moved that blue curb be approved

Madson suggested that if this is policy, why not just place on Consent Agenda?  
Anderson said there are situations where the Commission has denied requests and that it is important for neighbors to have a place to protest, if they do not agree with the request.

Applicant said that she preferred that the space be located at the south end of the segment between her neighbors’ driveways.

Vote: 4-0 (1 absent)

## **5-2 Request to install a disabled parking space in front of 1501 Washington Avenue**

Chavez explained that she had received a request from St. Alban’s Church at 1501 Washington Avenue to convert one curb parking space to Disabled Parking only. Their request stated that they only needed it on Sundays and on event days. Chavez explained to them that the City does not have a temporary Blue Curb Designation policy and the request should be permanent. The church is currently upgrading its facilities to make them accessible to people with disabilities, and providing an accessible parking space close to their wheelchair ramp is part of these upgrades. Chaney added that demand for parking in the area is typically low.

Madson moved that the blue curb for St. Alban’s Church be approved. Lubov seconded  
The vote was 4-0 (1 absent).

## **6. Discussion and Possible Action on Matters Related to the Following Items:**

### **6.1 Review of Pedestrian-Vehicle fatal accident at Marin Avenue and Talbot Avenue, and other recent accidents**

Chaney provided background on the Marin Avenue Reconfiguration project, basically stating that to address the many problems that Marin Avenue had at the time, such as excessive speeding and difficulty crossing for pedestrians along this arterial, the Traffic Management Plan ranked the implementation of Marin Avenue Traffic Calming measures as the highest City wide priority. She explained that what was done on Marin Avenue was called “Road Diet,” which decreased the number of lanes from 4 to three, with two travel lanes and one turning lane in the middle section of the street.

Chief McQuiston stated that it was the Council’s direction to staff to address this issue at the Traffic and Safety Commission.

He reported that there had been three noteworthy accidents on Marin Avenue in Albany during the month of June and that there was also a fatal accident in Berkeley on Solano Avenue during June. Three of these four accidents involved drivers under the influence of alcohol, two of which had resulted in pedestrian fatalities of senior citizens. Chief McQuiston stated that the first accident occurred shortly after midnight on Saturday morning June 2. In this case Albany Police arrested a drunk driver after colliding with a vehicle parked at the curb line near Marin at Ordway. The second collision occurred at about 10:50 PM on the evening of Sunday June 3. This was the Berkeley fatality on Solano near Fresno. The driver in that case was arrested by the Berkeley Police. He did not have any details on this latter accident because it is still under investigation and it is not within Albany's jurisdiction. At approximately 8:40 PM on Wednesday June 6, Albany's pedestrian fatality occurred at the intersection of Marin and Talbot. Because this accident is also still under investigation, Albany Police are only able to share limited information. At this time the Police Chief reported that the driver was arrested on felony charges of driving under the influence of alcohol and gross vehicular manslaughter. The fourth accident referenced by the Chief occurred on the afternoon of Friday June 22 at approximately 1:25 PM at the intersection of Marin and Ramona. Both drivers were transported to the hospital with injuries, however DUI was not a factor in this accident.

Chief McQuiston reported that Albany police officers participate in regional DUI enforcement campaigns during select holiday periods and routinely make DUI arrests (about one every few days) as a result of proactive DUI enforcement efforts of our officers. Albany police arrested 154 persons for DUI during the 2006 calendar year.

Chaney reported on a conversation held recently with the traffic engineering consultant that worked with the City on the Marin Avenue traffic-calming project. Based on his understanding to date of the fatality at Talbot and Marin Avenues, he believed that no engineering design solution could have prevented this tragic accident.

Mazur asked if most DUI's arrests were made late in the evening. Chief McQuiston responded affirmatively. Chief McQuiston said he was proud that Albany makes more arrests per capita than most.

Treat said that it would be beneficial to publish this information in the newsletter in order to change the public's perception.

Madson asked if a case could be made about the fact that if the Police Department added more officers, there would be more DUI arrests and about how much it would cost to deploy more officers on the streets.

Chief McQuiston responded that the Police Department is planning on pursuing a grant from the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) in order to dedicate a police officer position solely for traffic law enforcement.

Madson asked how many of the DUI arrests were prosecuted.

Lt. Adams did not know, but said that because the report process had been streamlined, it is easier for the District Attorney to process the cases.

The discussion was open to the public. One individual encouraged the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) and statistical analysis in determining the probability of a “cluster” of accidents occurring again in the future. This speaker pointed out that, given the arrest statistics provided by the Police Chief, (approximately 3 DUI drivers arrested each week in Albany) it was statistically probable that a "cluster" of DUI related accidents, such as those that recently occurred, could happen again in a relatively small area on a single week.

The Commission believed that from a technical standpoint, the reconfiguration of Marin Avenue did not play a role in these accidents. A driver under the influence of alcohol is impaired and unable to drive responsibly. Chief McQuiston presented collision data on Marin Avenue before and after the reconfiguration. He said that unfortunately, data from SWITRS (State Wide Integrated Traffic Records System) lags behind two years and therefore, collision information for 2006 and 2007 comes from the police dispatch records database Albany police staff explained that collision data for those years (2006 & 2007) may differ from what is actually published by the CHP because they may purge certain information reported based on established criteria. However, the Albany Police Department assembled the data on hand to provide some level of comparison for the Commission, City Council and public.

Madson moved that the Traffic and Safety Commission recommend to the City Council not to revisit the Marin Avenue traffic-calming project. Mazur seconded. Vote was 4-0 (1 absent).

Madson moved that the Traffic and Safety Commission encourage the Police Department to pursue the OTS grant to staff a Traffic Enforcement Officer position. Anderson seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0 (1 absent).

Madson moved that the City Council consider a ballot measure to provide resources for Police Department for traffic safety enforcement. Motion failed for lack of support.

Chaney also reported that the Commission would be addressing the “Phase II” of the Marin Avenue improvements identified in the planning stages of the overall project.

## **6-2 Safe Routes to School**

Melanie Grubman, Education Director of the Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC), the agency that administers the Alameda County Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) presented the features of the program. She said the main goal of the SRTS Program is to get more people walking and biking to school in order to fight child obesity. TALC obtained two grants for this program, one from the Alameda County Measure J Discretionary Program and the other from the federal SRTS program. She said that the initial funding would cover two school districts in Berkeley and Oakland, and the unincorporated areas of Alameda County. However, some services are available to Albany if there is a wish to develop a SRTS program.

TALC first step is to organize a Task Force (e.g., police, PTA, schools, Public Works, Commission). Then, the organization works around the five E’s of the SRTS program: Encouragement, Education, Enforcement, Engineering, and Evaluation –

Marin County implemented a SRTS program and they have experienced a 13% decrease in single car driving to schools in the county each year.

#### Encouragement:

Grubman said that by implementing walking and bicycling days at the schools for example, walk and roll Wednesdays, children get enthusiastic about this idea. The key is to make it fun.

#### Education

In the area of education, TALC trains community leaders (sometimes offering stipends for different programs); provides toolkits and materials (posters, stickers, etc.); after school training for bicyclists (helmets, bike flight to train); bike rodeos; and, in class presentations.

#### Enforcement

TALC helps in the collaborative process through task forces; builds on existing programs (train police officers on curriculum); helps kids develop a better relationship with police.

#### Engineering

The program helps implement stop signs, safe crossings, and other physical improvements to enable children to walk or bike to school in a safer environment. Parents work with Alta Design to identify problems on the streets and the consulting firm develop plans that could be implemented depending on funding available. This option is now available for the selected school districts in Oakland and Berkeley, and the unincorporated areas of the County, but when the program expands in the future, it may be available to other school districts.

#### Evaluation

TALC works with the Alameda County Public Works Department in the evaluation of the program.

Grubman explained that it is the community that outlines what the SRTS program will be in a particular school district. For example, in Castro Valley, the task forces organized walking groups. TALC provides training and vests.

She said that this program is now more relevant because of the global warming problem that we are facing. That would be a good motivator for children: Try it because you care.

Treat suggested that TALC meet with principals and the PTA chairs to inform them about the program in time for the Walking to School Day on October 3. Grubman said that TALC would be happy to do so. In addition, she said that she would like to recommend the kind of information that goes to the families the first week of school.

Mazur recommended writing a letter to Principals, PTA, and Police Department encouraging setting up a meeting with TALC.

Chaney said that staff could send the letter to the PTA, school principals, and to the Police Department encouraging participation in a meeting with TALC.

Grubman said the message is that we believe safer areas around school means less traffic and driving to school. TALC could help by organizing walkabouts, train teachers and parents.

Chavez said that Alameda County requires that a Pedestrian Plan be prepared by all jurisdictions by 2011. She is starting early because we want to do it in house. She is having a kick off meeting on July 24 at 7:00 pm.

Ying Tsu Loh, representing Cornell PTA, said that this is a great idea and that she can start informing the schools.

Mazur moved/Madson seconded the recommendation that a letter be sent to PTA, police, administrators, to participate in a meeting with TALC to encourage walking and biking to school. Anderson could not support this motion because this is the first time he had heard of this and needs more information before he can support it. Treat said that based on successful efforts in Marin County and faith in staff, he can support the program.

Vote: 3-1 (1 absent)

**6-3. Study Session on criteria and process regarding future traffic calming measures**

The Commission decided to postpone discussion of this item at next month's meeting

**6-4 Application of Public Art as traffic calming**

Chavez presented some examples of artwork used on pavement to slow down traffic. Some examples of artwork may be an alternative to a speed hump. Lt. Adams said that the material to be used in the artwork is important because it should be able to withstand constant vehicular traffic, and not create sliding conditions.

**6-5 Overnight parking on Commercial Streets.**

Chavez introduced the letter from Murray Bruce requesting the prohibition of overnight parking along Eastshore Highway. Chaney said the Waterfront area (Buchanan Street) is the only area being considered for prohibiting overnight parking.

Madson said that he did not see the correlation between prohibiting overnight parking and tenant parking.

Mazur suggested limiting daytime parking to deal with overnight camping. Lt. Adams said the Code prohibits sleeping in a vehicle overnight. It is usually referred to as "house cars." Albany has the 72-hour rule where officers can tag cars if not moved within 72 hours. Sometimes the vehicles just move down the street. Lt. Adams said that people can be cited for sleeping in the vehicle; Police do patrol each night, but it is not easy to discern which cars are occupied.

The Commission decided to postpone discussion of this item in order to hear from the person who raised the issue.

## **7. Reports**

### **7-1 Pierce Street Restriping Status**

Chaney summarized the outcome of the neighborhood meeting held on June 26 at the Gateview Club House. She said the between 40 to 50 persons were in attendance. In general, they stated that without Caltrans' commitment they felt that putting a Class I path on the street was premature. She said that the Council supports the implementation of a Class I path on Pierce Street, but it also directed staff to work with the community to resolve the safety issues raised by residents. The engineer suggested shaving a portion of Albany Hill to provide 6 additional spaces to the south. Residents still felt that there should not be a Class I bike path on the street without the commitment from Caltrans.

Sol Stand added that there is a sight line distance problem coming out of the parking garage. He said the street is so wide now that cars can swerve to avoid any collisions. The new reconfiguration narrows the street. He said that the complex has a large immigrant population and believes it is a cultural issue that they do not attend the meetings.

Chaney reported that the City Engineer had contacted Caltrans to set up a meeting regarding this issue. She also mentioned that a second meeting is planned with the condominiums.

The Commission suggested that the item continue to be placed in the Report section.

### **7-1 Marin Avenue modifications**

Chavez said the DMJM Harris (Korve Engineering) is working on the modifications authorized by Traffic & Safety Commission and City Council after the 1 year Monitoring study. She distributed a letter received from a resident on Santa Fe Avenue that provided additional suggestions for Marin Avenue. This included one suggestion about implementing a left turn at Santa Fe and Marin, but Chavez said it would not likely meet the required "warrants," although the intersection at Jackson and Buchanan does.

Mazur asked that Burton consider installing bot dots in the median.

### **7-3 Police Report**

Since May 24, there have been 22 collisions:

6 of those were injury collisions

16 non-injury collision

1 fatality caused by DUI

One on Marin at Carmel was a bicycle and vehicle collision where the driver cut off the bicyclist who was wearing a helmet, which saved the bicyclist from serious injury. The driver was at fault.

3 other collisions included ones discussed by Chief McQuiston earlier tonight

Miscellaneous:

- Moving truck sheared off a water hydrant
- Traffic Enforcement car was hit while patrolling (fault of driver)

- Parking Enforcement Officers are now following the street sweeper to issue tickets

## **8. Announcements/Communications**

Request to convert 900 block of Cornell and Talbot from two-way to one-way couplets. Moved by Mazur/Anderson seconded to place on next meeting's agenda.

## **9. Future Agenda Items**

None.

## **10. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m. There will be no meeting in the month of August. Next meeting will be on July 26, 2007.