



**TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

**EDITH STONE ROOM—RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
1249 MARIN AVENUE
March 26, 2009**

1. Call to Order

Meeting started at 7:03 by Ray Anderson, Chair

2. Roll call

Members present: Lubov Mazur, Ray Anderson, and Marsha Atkinson. David Madson said he was not going to be able to attend the meeting.

Staff present: Ann Chaney and Aleida Andrino-Chavez. Lt. Geissberger was on duty in Oakland due to the funeral of four fallen officers.

3. Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved with no corrections.

4. Public Comment – There were no public comments

5 Discussion and Possible Action on matters Related to the Following Items:

5-1 Review draft Buchanan Bicycle/Pedestrian Path design alternatives and traffic signal at Buchanan and Jackson

Chavez provided an overview of the project. Key points were:

- Extending the bicycle lanes from Cornell to San Pablo. This can be done by either removing the trees or removing the parking. The option that removes the trees includes bulb-outs where some of the trees could be replaced as a mitigation measure.
- The segment between San Pablo and the Buchanan/Marin merge continues the westbound bicycle lane on the north side of the street and implements a bicycle path along the south side of Buchanan. This project adds an exclusive right turn in the southbound direction at the intersection of Marin and San Pablo. Travel lanes on this segment were reduced from 12 to 11 feet.
- The path alignment continues on the south side, but it impacts parking and some trees along Ocean View School and Ocean View Park.
- A traffic signal is necessary at Pierce St. or at Taylor in order to provide a crossing for the path to the north side of the Buchanan. According to traffic studies, a traffic signal was warranted at Pierce, but not a Taylor. This is due to the significant number of right turns at the Pierce/Buchanan intersection.
- The project also reconfigures USDA's driveway. If the Pierce St. alternative is selected, the City would have to build a fence along USDA's property following Homeland Security standards.
- The Pierce or Taylor alternative also closes the Buchanan spur leading to Cleveland Ave. Traffic counts on this segment are low. Closing this extension would make it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. Traffic traveling westbound on Buchanan to Cleveland would

have to make a right turn on Pierce St. then turn left on Washington St. to access Cleveland.

- The last segment of the project aligns the path adjacent to the USDA west entrance. There are two alternatives for this segment: One that brings the path on the east side of the street, and the other along the west side of the street. Of the two alternatives, the path on the west side is preferable because the path grade is less than that of the other side.

Mazur said that trucks accessing Cleveland could take the freeway and exit on Central Avenue to access Cleveland, keeping them only on commercial streets.

Preston Jordan said that he remembers somebody suggesting relocating USDA's driveway to align with Pierce St. Chavez said that this would require a wider road and USDA does not want anything closer to their building.

Sol Strand asked if the left turn eastbound Buchanan into Fillmore St. could be eliminated to shift the lanes so there is more space on Buchanan for parking or for the flow lanes. This left turn is not needed anymore if there is going to be a signal at Pierce St. Chaney said that staff would ask the consultant about this.

Mazur asked if the City had permission from USDA to encroach into its property to build the Pierce St. alternative. Chaney said that USDA had always supported the Taylor or the Pierce Street option.

Chavez continued explaining the Safe Routes to School proposal at Jackson and Buchanan. The main issue with this project is that it required eliminating parking on one side of the north leg of the intersection, which would impact parking for private residences on Jackson St.

Anderson asked the public if they had additional comments.

Amy Smolens asked if all the options considered the entrance to the Buchanan overcrossing. Chaney said that bollards could be used, but because there is the option of closing the Buchanan Spur, it would be safer for bicyclists.

Jordan said he was very pleased with the alternatives and that AS&R favored the Pierce St. alternative on the condition that the Buchanan Spur is closed to traffic, as proposed. He also said that Mathew Ridgway, a member of the AS&R and principal of a transportation-consulting firm, suggested reopening the east crosswalk at Buchanan and Jackson. Jordan suggested moving the bus stop located underneath the overpass to a place adjacent to the USDA lawn area on Buchanan, which would better serve USDA employees.

Chaney said the purpose of this presentation was to introduce the project to the Commission before it is presented to the community.

5-2 Traffic Calming request on the 1000 block of Santa Fe

Chavez reintroduced the results of the speed survey on the 1000 block of Santa Fe and said that these warranted the implementation of traffic calming measures. The Commission had to make a decision whether or not traffic calming would be implemented on the street.

Anderson opened the discussion to the public.

Ken McCroskey, parent at Marin Elementary and member of the school Traffic and Safety Sub-Committee, said the Marin Community is working with block residents in obtaining the required signatures for the implementation of traffic calming measures, not only along the 1000 block of Santa Fe, but also on the 900 block. He said that the Albany Police Department had only one officer available for all the schools in the City and he did not go around Marin Elementary very often. He said that there were many instances where the presence of an officer could help change parents driving behavior.

Michael Wallace, resident of Hillside Ave., said he did not like speed humps and asked if the City had considered the additional they impose on drivers in terms of additional gas and brake usage. He asked how did the volume on Santa Fe compared with the rest of the streets in Albany. Mazur said that Marin Avenue carried approximately 20,000 vehicles per day, San Pablo and Buchanan carried between 30,000 to 35,000 vehicles per day. Mazur said that all the speed humps in Albany are intended to maintain 25 mph, not less. The Berkeley speed treatments are intended for 15 mph.

Jordan said that Marin Elementary should have a voice in deciding on the traffic calming issue.

Mazur said that Marin Elementary is not considered a residential use on the block.

Anderson said the Commission is not deciding anything that night. They are only allowing the process to continue, which is basically collecting the required signatures to move forward. Atkinson moved to ask Marin Elementary parents to collect the required signatures. Mazur seconded. Vote was 3-0. Chaney warned that it would be good, before asking for signatures, to have an idea of where the traffic calming would be located.

5-3 Hillside Avenue –turnaround at end of street and safety concern about curve

Chaney introduced Mr. Michael Wallace, resident of Hillside Avenue. Wallace explained the problem to the Commission and he said he had a two-part request. He said that a turnout is needed at the end of Hillside Avenue because Waste Management trucks and large construction trucks have a difficult time turning around and have caused great damage to private property. Large vehicles typically do not turnaround but back up all the way to Taft Street. Wallace asked if the City could acquire additional land either by purchasing or by exercising eminent domain, in order to build the turnaround. Another of his suggestions was to restrict access to large vehicles, but he thought that was not feasible.

The second part of his request was the curve, where it is difficult to see vehicles that are coming up or downhill. He suggested a couple of solutions last time he presented this issue to the Commission: One is to install a convex mirror. The other was to extend the red curb on the inside of the street, or add red curb on the outside of the curve.

Chaney said that installing a mirror requires a lot of maintenance. That is the reason cities do not use them. Usually private residences install them, but there is liability involved. Chaney said that if the City is going to do anything more than painting the red curb, staff would have to consult with a traffic engineer.

Mazur suggested asking the engineer what type of solutions are appropriated for this location.

Atkinson suggested installing signage indicating a 15 mph zone. Mazur suggested striping, such as divider line. Chaney said she was not sure if installing a divider line was the best solution, because people tend to be more cautious when there is not a line. Traffic volumes are not high on that street as well.

Atkinson wondered if having a cul-de-sac there would be an incentive for children to hang out there and access the hill.

Anderson opened the discussion to the public.

Harry Shrabackle, member of the Albany Lion's Club said he thought there was a line that goes on Solano Avenue at the top of the hill.

Anderson moved that the City consult with the engineer about the curve issue.

Chaney said that the City had never had luck in getting in contact with the owner of this parcel on Albany Hill. The City could ask the question, but she did not know the cost or how the City would pay for it. Mazur asked if the City could exercise eminent domain. Chaney said that typically what happened is that when the owner wants to develop a parcel of land, the City could impose as a condition of approval for the project that the developer or owner give the City land or build the turn around.

The Commission moved that staff ask the owner of the property at the end of Hillside Avenue about the possibility of donating land to build a turnaround.

5-4 Truck and Recreational Vehicle parking on Buchanan Street, Masonic Avenue and Key Route Boulevard

Anderson said that this item would not be discussed because Lt. Geissberger was not present. The item would be continued at the next meeting.

5-4 Buchanan Master Plan Proposed by Albany Strollers and Rollers

Chavez provided background on the issue. She said that many of the AS&R requests are addressed in the design alternatives for the Buchanan Path. She also said that whenever staff works on a project, all the project proposals for the location or its neighborhood were considered.

Anderson called Preston Jordan to present the resolution.

Jordan said that many of the elements that AS&R had lobbied for had been included in the Buchanan Path design. He said that he had attended a meeting of the Sustainability Committee where a presentation of the Climate Action Plan took place. A list of strategies was developed for the City to achieve its goal of reducing carbon emissions. Among these strategies, there was the recommendation to advance the concept of "Complete Streets" whenever there was an opportunity to redevelop an area. He passed around an update to the draft resolution that was included in the packet. He mentioned that the concept of Complete Streets is at the policy level now, but a few cities, such as Menlo Park had tried to integrate this concept into its design guidelines

Chaney complimented Preston for his work on this issue. However, she mentioned all the projects which City staff was involved that are related to improving the physical environment in Albany, but she was worried about funding the AS&R request.

Preston suggested contracting with DMJM Harris since they are doing the project for the bike path. He said that perhaps for an additional amount of money, such as \$50,000 to \$100,000 they could redesign the whole street. He said this was an excellent opportunity.

Chaney asked Preston if what he was asking was to amend the existing contract with DMJM Harris. In addition, the Committee should tell staff how the City would pay for the additional work and for the implementation of the plan. It might need an amendment to the CIP.

Jordan said that his understanding is that there are funds available from Measure F.

Strand said that his concern was when the City was envisioning the project for Pierce Street, the residents of the street did not know what was going on.

Mazur said that she recalled when Marin Ave. was being reconfigured; a woman came to the one of the Commission meetings and said that she did not know about these plans. The City and the Commission had had hearing after hearing and she did not know about this big project.

Atkinson said she was concerned about how people got notified about public meetings in the City.

Chavez said that when the Buchanan project started, the City notified all the residents that would have been impacted by the project. Only one resident did showed up.

The Commission moved to discuss this item at next month's meeting in order to have more time to read the resolution.

Reports

6-1 Police Reports - Police reports would be discussed next month.

6-2 Pierce Street Pavement Rehabilitation and Bicycle/Pedestrian Path

Chaney said that she hoped to have a neighborhood meeting by the end of April or first part of May. She said that staff would leave flyers with management at every condominium complex or mail them to everyone. Atkinson asked to notify management and ask them to let the residents know, particularly at Gateview.

7. Announcements and Communications

7-1 Traffic and Safety Commission member contact information – Information included.

8. Future agenda items

8-1 Vehicular and Pedestrian/Bicycle "Way-Finding"

8-2 Loading/Unloading request on the 600 block of Cleveland Avenue

9. Meeting Adjourned at 9:30 pm- Next meeting: April 23, 2009 at 7:00 pm