



**TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES**

**CITY OF ALBANY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1000 SAN PABLO AVENUE
CITY OF ALBANY
JANUARY 24, 2008**

1. Call to Order

Richard Treat, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Members present: Ray Anderson, Richard Treat, David Madson, Lubov Mazur would be arriving late.

Members absent: Marsha Atkinson, excused

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

3. Consent Calendar

Minutes were approved; Madson noted that the agenda had the wrong year.

4. Public Comment

Sol Strand said that it appears that the City is not taking any action on Pierce St. It was noted that this would be discussed under Reports.

Chavez read an email from Naomi Puro with the following suggestions for Marin Avenue:

- Revise 25 mph speed limit to 30 mph
- Add signage
- Add 5 seconds to north/south traffic signals for pedestrians

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

5-1 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Treat moved this item to later in the meeting

5-2 Traffic Calming Policy

Chavez summarized a report from Bill Burton of DMJM Harris regarding his recommendations on a future Traffic Calming policy. Treat opened the discussion to the public.

Sherry Reiman, stated that according to her experience as a driver and a cyclist, she does not find that speed humps are very effective in slowing down traffic.

Treat suggested that the criteria regarding the volume of vehicles per day be lowered rather than being removed altogether.

Chaney suggested discussing any change to this policy at the public meeting with the consultant present. Following more discussion, Treat agreed with the consultant recommendation to just remove this criterion. Anderson moved to have the item on the March agenda for discussion. Treat seconded. The Commission was unanimous.

Lubov Mazur arrived at 7:25 p.m.

5-3 Speed treatments on Masonic Avenue

The purpose of this discussion is to decide on where the next location would be for the temporary speed hump placement, as the City will be installing permanent speed humps where the temporary ones currently exist. According to the project list generated by the Transportation Management Plan, Masonic is the next area where the next speed treatments should be located.

Chavez presented a summary of all the speed surveys that have been taken along the different blocks of Masonic Avenue. Treat said that according to the data presented, speed treatments are not warranted under the existing criteria.

Mazur said that there might be a change in the results once the traffic calming project at the Plaza is implemented. She suggested waiting until those changes take place and see how they affect speeds on Masonic Avenue.

In response to several questions, Lt. Adams said the data collected from the speed trailer is done when the display is turned off, thereby not influencing driver behavior. He also said he did not know whether bicycles are detected by the speed trailer.

Anderson/Mazur moved/seconded that this item be postponed until it is decided what type of traffic calming measures might be implemented near El Cerrito Plaza.

5-4 Discuss 2008 Priorities/Work Plan

A draft list of priorities was discussed, including whether or not the Commission would like to adopt a Purpose Statement. The following were included in the list:

- 1 Adoption of a Mission Statement
- 2 Traffic Calming Policy
- 3 Evaluating whether the Commission would like to implement the second phase of the Marin Avenue Reconfiguration
- 4 Installation of Traffic Calming measures south of El Cerrito Plaza
- 5 Implementation of the San Pablo Avenue medians
- 6 Measure F available funds and implementation of the project list generated by the Traffic Management Plan
- 7 Implementation of the projects included in the TMP project list
- 8 Pedestrian Plan
- 9 Pierce Street Restriping and Bicycle path

Treat opened the item for discussion.

Sol Strand commented that a traffic signal is needed at Pierce and Buchanan because a significant amount of traffic traveling on Cleveland Ave. take Solano Ave. in order to avoid congestion at the Buchanan merge. Treat asked the Commission if the members would like to add comments or establish a deadline for this discussion.

Madson suggested that the mission statement be moved to the bottom of the list because it would require a lot of time. Mazur said that the Traffic Calming Policy would require a workshop meeting. Treat emphasized that the new policy will be for new projects above and beyond the TMP project list. Madson suggested that items number 3, 6, and 7 be moved together.

Chavez talked about funding opportunities for the second phase of Marin Avenue in the future. She said that the project is included in the County Wide Transportation Plan 2007 update at \$200,000 level and that funding will be available in 2010.

Council approved a design for the Ohlone Greenway (item would be discussed later in the meeting) that includes a bulbout on the south side of Marin and Masonic, which may provide an idea of the how bulbouts will affect Marin Avenue.

Mazur suggested putting this item on a future agenda, consolidating items 3, 6, and 7, placing the mission statement at the bottom, and basing a decision on what priorities to set when more is known about Measure F funding.

5-1 Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Anderson nominated Mazur as Chair. The vote in favor was 4-0-1. Treat nominated Madson as Vice-Chair. The vote in favor was 4-0-1.

6-0 Reports

6-1 Police Reports

Lt. Adams reported that since November 29, 2007 to January 24, 2008 there had been 20 collision reports, 6 injury collisions, 14 non-injury collisions, and that of the non-injury collisions, 3 were hit and run collisions with property damage.

Two of the collisions involved pedestrians. One of them was at the intersection of Solano and Adams where a vehicle hit a pedestrian while crossing Solano Ave. at 8:30 am. The other one was at Buchanan and Taylor. The vehicle was traveling westbound on Buchanan and the pedestrian was crossing Buchanan at Taylor. Lt. Adams noted that there is no crosswalk at that intersection. There was some dispute as to whether the vehicle actually struck the pedestrian. There was one collision involving a bicyclist on December 14, 2007 at Buchanan and Cerrito. Two cyclists were traveling eastbound on Buchanan. As they crossed the intersection of Buchanan and Cerrito, a vehicle hit the rear end of one of the bicycles. There was no injury and medical attention was declined.

At Marin Avenue there was an injury collision between a motorcycle traveling on Marin and a vehicle crossing Marin at Cornell. It occurred at 6:00 pm when the vehicle coming across from the stop sign failed to yield to the motorcycle. There was another collision reported by Mr. Ray Anderson on December 15, 2007 on Marin and Masonic. A left turning vehicle failed to yield the right of way to oncoming traffic. A passenger in the turning vehicle complained of pain. Another intersection collision took place on Marin and San Pablo on December 16 at about 4:25 pm when a vehicle traveling on Marin Ave. ran a red light and broadsided another vehicle traveling on San Pablo Avenue.

In response to a request by the Commission, Lt. Adams gave information on the number of speeding violations cited. Once a validated speed survey is completed (which is in draft form) then Lidar and Radar tools can be used. Such a survey is done every 5 years, and Albany's 2002 survey has lapsed. Until the new survey is finalized, officers must track speeders by the pace of their cars.

Between November 29, 2007 and January 23, 2008, there were 33 citations issued for speed and 58 DUI arrests.

Last week there was a lock down at Albany High School while school was in session, involving a person who stole a vehicle and ran into the high school. The suspect was apprehended.

In response to a question from Anderson, Adams said that the School and Youth Resource Officer (SRO) is patrolling various schools and assists with traffic in the morning.

Lt. Adams also provided information on the fatality at Marin and Colusa when a 61 year old woman, walking on the east side of the intersection at 9:40 a.m. on December 31, was hit by a 79 year old man making a left turn onto eastbound Marin Ave. No drugs or alcohol were involved and the pedestrian was in the crosswalk. The driver was cited for failing to yield to a pedestrian, but the District Attorney will determine whether and how to charge the driver.

Lt. Adams said he would need to find out information on the accident mentioned by Anderson at Marin and Talbot last fall. Lt. Adams said that he did not know the details of the sentence.

In response to a question from Mazur, Lt. Adams mentioned that hands free cell phone law goes into effect on July 1.

Anderson complimented the Police for citing people for not wearing seatbelts. He also said that a couple of years ago the Police Department deployed a sting for pedestrians on Marin between Cornell and Talbot. Lt. Adams said that there is a high cost factor associated with it because of the amount of time and personnel needed.

Ed Fields recommended that the Police concentrate on Jackson and Buchanan in the morning because of his observed number of red light violations and speeding problems.

6-2 Ohlone Greenway

The City Council approved a concept design plan for the alignment of the Ohlone bicycle path for submittal to BART in anticipation of its seismic retrofit project. BART will tear up 20 sq ft around the columns to reinforce the structure opening the possibility to realign the Greenway. The Cities of El Cerrito and Albany are working with Gates and Associates to define a vision for the Greenway and to work on an alignment for the path. Chaney said that the City Council at its last meeting evaluated the plan that would be presented to BART and summarized the Council's action, which includes:

- Widening the existing path from 9' to 14' AC
- Installing 2' wide Decomposed Granite jogging path on either side of the path
- Retain the existing pedestrian path
- Installing a bulbout on the south side of the intersection of Marin and Masonic.

Jason Foster said the traffic lights at Solano and Masonic and Marin and Masonic are not pedestrian friendly because pedestrians often miss the green cross cycle. In a letter from Naomi Puro, she mentioned a problem with the traffic signals. The Commission noted that the City has applied for funding to improve the lights on Marin.

An email from Preston Jordan, on behalf of the Albany Strollers and Rollers, recommended:

- bike lanes on Masonic Avenue, which also serves as traffic calming;
- narrowing the streets crossing the Greenway;
- improving access to the Greenway at Garfield;
- installing a mid block access south of Dartmouth Avenue; and
- holding a joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding the Ohlone Greenway corridor

Sherri Reineman elaborated on Jordan's suggestion about the mid-block connection south of Dartmouth Avenue. She will take photos document the problem. Treat said that the Commission would have a discussion and possible action item about these issues at the next meeting.

Chaney said the timeline to submit the plans to BART is tight because of their timeframe. The current focus is on the path alignment only, and community input on other aspects will occur in the near future.

6-3 Pierce Street restriping status

Council recently held a closed session regarding on-going discussions with Caltrans about Pierce Street park. Based on those discussions, the Council favored pursuing a new appraisal with Caltrans. In addition, it is staff's understanding that Caltrans considered a bicycle path as a critical component of these discussions.

Treat opened the discussion to the public.

Sol Strand said there still remain critical issues regarding a bike path along Pierce Street such as safety, provisions for moving vans, cars that park on the sidewalk at the southern end of Pierce Street, the imposition on the citizens of the 500 block who, when petitioned, voted to oppose the path, and casual carpoolers.

Madson said action by the Council has already been taken on this item and the Commission should not be discussing whether or not a bike path would be implemented.

6-7 Traffic Calming near El Cerrito Plaza

The Commission moved to Item 6-7, Traffic Calming near El Cerrito Plaza, because a number of the public were present for this item.

Staff said a draft document would be released to the Commission and public in the next couple of weeks. In the meantime, staff summarized the speed and volume results from the study, excerpted from the Administrative Draft.

Michael Green, corner of Garfield and Kains, advocates leaving all the streets open, but is open to closing all streets including Kains in deference to his neighbors in the 400 blocks. He is concerned that all the traffic would be focused on the single street of Kains. He opposes turning the 500 block of Kains to 2-way. If three streets were closed and Kains is left open, there could be a traffic jam at San Pablo and Brighton.

Ed Fields, 600 block Kains, seconded Mr. Green's comments. His preference is that all the streets be left open. He advocated a strict truck restriction with better signage and enforcement. He wondered why the 400 block of Cornell was not made one-way.

Jason Foster, 400 block Talbot, said that the traffic volumes are high for a residential street. Blocks are short and people speed up to 25 mph and then put on the brakes at the stop sign.

Sol Strand said that if all the streets were closed people would leave shopping carts in the neighborhood. The City would have a new problem.

Lisa Scheinder, 500 Stannage, said there are about 2,000 students moving between the high school and middle school. She observed in a short span of time four cars did not stop at the sign at Stannage and Brighton. She noted that this residential area is next to a self subscribed regional shopping center in a jurisdiction that does not respond to Albany residents. Thus, the schools and the residential area of north Albany is vulnerable as a result of this lack of response.

Madson thought attorneys would likely decide some of these issues. Treat said that this is a future agenda item and the Commission will have the opportunity to discuss the issue.

Treat would like to know if there is the option of closing all the streets. Chaney said that the Kimley-Horn study looked at this option, but they concluded that by doing that the Level of Service (LOS) on San Pablo would deteriorate to unaccepted levels. The study recommended leaving Kains open in order to ameliorate this effect on the San Pablo Avenue LOS. The Council

then directed staff to look at traffic calming options before implementing the Kimley-Horn recommendation.

Anderson suggested that by adjusting San Pablo Avenue's signals the LOS could be improved regardless of the implementation of the street closure.

Chaney mentioned that Alameda County is working on enhancing freeway operations and that of the arterials feeding into the freeways. Usually, San Pablo Avenue absorbs the impacts when the freeway is heavily congested. Mazur believes other measures could be implemented to Kains in order to make it less attractive to drivers.

The Commission decided that the February meeting should focus on a discussion with the consultant to clearly understand the report's recommendation, however, no action would be taken at that meeting. A noticed public meeting would occur for the March meeting that would focus on receiving public input, and possibly making a recommendation to City Council.

6-4 Pedestrian Plan

Chavez explained that she is working on a walking audit for Cornell Elementary. Staff at the Transportation and Land Use Coalition (TALC) has met with PTA and parents at Ocean View and Marin to talk about Walk to School day and the Walking Bus Program. Chavez said that the Goal of the Pedestrian Plan is to develop a list of projects similar to that of the Transportation Management Plan.

6-5 Buchanan Bicycle path property

Chavez reported that DMJM-Harris was selected to prepare the 35% plan for the bicycle/pedestrian path for Buchanan. The City Council will take formal action on a contract award for this project at its February 19 meeting.

6-6 Report on Speed Surveys

Chavez reported that the 600 block of Curtis and 700 block of Jackson surveys were included in the packet. She distributed the survey for 800 block of Carmel. At the last meeting, the Commission requested that staff conduct a survey before removing the temporary speed humps. The survey was taken on 1/12/08 and the 85th Percentile was 21 mph. In May 2004, the City Council overrode the Traffic and Safety Commission and recommended installation of speed humps on Carmel. One of the complaints from Carmel residents related to concerns about the travel patterns of high school students who use Carmel to reach Solano Avenue during lunch and after school.

Motion: Mazur/Anderson moved and seconded that a speed survey be taken while the hump is still in place (was done 1/12/08 through 1/24/08, remove the hump and resurvey the street six weeks after; if it meets criteria, which is pending adoption, the speed hump will be replaced with a permanent one. Motion passed 4-0-1

7 Announcements/Communications

7-1 Conflict of interest forms - Chavez distributed conflict of interest forms

8 Future Agenda Items

8-1 Anderson asked that a status report be added to the next agenda regarding AC Transit shuttle. Reinemann suggested that the 52 L bus go up to Buchanan before going to Monroe St. and into UC Village. Treat said that the request should be sent to AC Transit.

9 **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m. Next meeting is February 28, 2008 at 7:00 pm.