

Approved Minutes
Transportation Commission Meeting
Wednesday, September 23, 2020

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Due to Governor Executive Order N-29-20, Transportation Commissioners were able to attend the meeting via teleconference. The City allowed public participation via Zoom. City Hall was NOT open to the public during the meeting.

Legistar Link:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=760090&GUID=4152DF75-6717-443E-9689-38C92CB3CD4B&Options=info|&Search=>

1. Roll Call

Present: Chair Soules, and Commissioners Yuen, Kohlstrand, Hans, and Weitze.

Absent: Vice Chair Nachtigall and Commissioner Johnson.

2. Agenda Changes

None.

3. Staff Communications

3-A Electric Vehicle 101 Webinar: Wed, Sept 30 at 6:30 p.m. – sponsored by Alameda Municipal Power - <https://www.alamedamp.com/349/Electric-Vehicles>

3-B Central Avenue and Encinal Avenue Project Joint Virtual Open House, October 1-20, www.alamedaca.gov/Central

3-C Potential Future Meeting Agenda Items

1. Ten-Year Capital Improvement Program for Transportation Projects
2. Central Avenue Final Design Approval / Encinal Avenue Project Update
3. Traffic Signal Policy
4. Oakland Alameda Access Project Update
5. Active Transportation Plan Update

3-D Future Meeting Dates for 2020 – Meetings start at 6:30 p.m.

1. Wednesday, October 28 (special meeting)

2. Wednesday, November 18

3-E Alameda Active Transportation Plan: Latest info at www.ActiveAlameda.org

3-F Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools online resources, activities, and webinars during coronavirus pandemic: <http://www.alamedacountysr2s.org/covid-19>

3-G Alameda Slow Streets program web page: <http://www.slowstreetsalameda.org/>

3-H Alameda Commercial Streets program web page: www.alamedaca.gov/commercialstreets

3-I COVID 19 Get Around Safe Pledge: www.alamedaca.gov/AlamedaPledge

3-J Vision Zero Program: www.alamedaca.gov/VisionZero

3-K Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) 2020 Trainings: <https://www.alamedaca.gov/Departments/Fire-Department/Alameda-CERT>

3-L Emergency Alerts for Alameda – Subscribe at AC Alert web page: <https://www.acgov.org/emergencysite/>

3-M Regional Emergency Transportation Alerts – Subscribe: <https://511.org/alerts/emergencies/511Alert>

3-N Clipper Card (adults) – order online or at Walgreens or set up Autoload to add value automatically: <https://www.clippercard.com/ClipperWeb/getTranslink.do>

3-O Clipper Card Discounts for youth, seniors and people with disabilities - <https://www.clippercard.com/ClipperWeb/discounts/index.do>

3-P FasTrak or new toll tag for upcoming I-880 Express Lanes scheduled to open late summer 2020: online or at Walgreens (except not Park Street location) and then register online: <https://www.bayareafastrak.org/en/signup/signUp.shtml>

4. Announcements / Public Comments

None

5. Consent Calendar

Gail Payne, Senior Transportation Coordinator, said due to an administration change there would be a delay in minutes but they would be available at the next meeting for approval.

6. Regular Agenda Items

6-A 2020-8317 Status Report on Transportation and Recommendations for Commercial Streets and Slow Streets Programs. (Actions)

Staff Member Payne introduced this item and gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4643213&GUID=342A24A5-DA6E-4D3A-93BD-6D4800C0F781&FullText=1>.

Scott Wikstrom, City Engineer, also presented some of the new developments and the status of those developments.

Robert Vance, Senior Engineer, discussed resurfacing projects around the city and how they would be giving notice to residents.

Lisa Foster, Transportation Planner, discussed the status of Vision Zero Implementation.

Rochelle Wheeler, Senior Transportation Coordinator, gave an update on the status of the Active Transportation Plan and Alameda's Slow Streets.

Commissioner Clarifying Questions #6A. (Not related to the slow streets program)

Commissioner Weitze asked about a gap on a bike trail, the gap between Pacific and West Atlantic, and if there were any plans to close that gap.

Staff Member Wikstrom said there was no short-term plan to correct that gap but in the long-term plan that would be a component in the master infrastructure plan for Alameda Point, Site B, but there was no time frame for that.

Commissioner Weitze wanted to know if there were any plans to update the light at the intersection at Appezato and West Atlantic to a modern light that could have traffic lights programmed based on ferry times.

Staff Member Wikstrom said yes and that was part of Site A Phase 2. Site A was having some challenges and they were not sure when Phase 2 would move forward. He discussed the Traffic Signal Policy and they were looking at how 2 Way cycle tracks function at major intersections.

Commissioner Yuen asked about the reductions in AC Transit services and wanted to know if these changes would be temporary or permanent. She was concerned for essential workers who rely on public transit. She also wanted to know more about the reduction in Transbay crossing and if there was any possibility for Federal Aid for transit.

Staff Member Payne said that since March AC Transit had reduced their services but when the SAH (Stay at Home) was lifted they increased their services. AC Transit was also putting out extra buses in some locations due to the limited capacity they were allowed to have on each bus. They were monitoring ridership in real-time. AC Transit was hoping to get some infusion of Federal Aid, they were looking at reducing their services next year. She discussed Alameda's plan to encourage and transfer people to the ferry since Alameda just got its 3rd ferry terminal and the Bus to BART plan to get into San Francisco.

Commissioner Kohlstrand was curious if the sidewalk work at Alameda Point was being paid for by the developer or the city and if it was the developer she wanted to know what areas the city would focus its investments on.

Staff Member Wikstrom said that most of the workaround Site A would be covered by the developer. He added that when Covid hit they focused most of their attention and funding on the residential and commercial slow streets and the restriping of Webster and Park. These had exhausted their funding and they would be going back to council in October to restore some funding.

Public Comments for #6A (not related to the slow streets program)

Jim Strehlow discussed how he already regularly rides his bike on Clement Ave as it is now. He believed that the plan outlined for Clement was very dangerous and put cyclists too close to vehicular traffic. He stated that he would continue to ride in the vehicular lane instead of the planned painted bike lane that would go against traffic.

Staff Member Payne explained how the SLMs or sharrows worked and that it was perfectly fine to share a lane.

Commissioner Comments #6A (not related to the slow streets program)

Commissioner Yuen wanted to discuss the work done for Police Reform and to highlight that work since she believed that it intersected with the work they were doing on the Transportation Commission. She said that a safe and functioning transportation system is dependent on traffic safety and they rely heavily on police officers to enforce that safety. She put forth to her fellow commissioners that for the Vision Zero Action Plan she wanted to see goals and policies that included equitable enforcement strategies that wouldn't disproportionately endanger black and brown folks. She also asked that this commission should be plugged into the city and what was going on and to even have someone from the Police Reform Committee come and talk with them on better ways they could be involved.

Chair Soules asked Staff Member Foster to discuss the goals and how they planned to include the equity component.

Staff Member Foster discussed that the core of Vision Zero was to create system change. It would create an environment that people would be set up for success. She also discussed how Vision Zero does have enforcement as an element but it has been deemphasized. Alameda would include enforcement but there would be caveats about equity.

Chair Soules asked the staff to consider Commissioner Yuen's comments in future updates and how that would be appreciated.

Commissioner Kohlstrand thanked staff and supported the comments made by Commissioner Yuen in regards to equity issues in enforcement. She then brought up the issues of traffic circles and how they hadn't been given much consideration in any of the plans. She discussed how helpful traffic circles could be for Alameda and wanted to see more comprehensive research about traffic circles.

Staff Member Wheeler said from the perspective of the Active Transportation Plan, traffic circles were a key treatment that the city could use for pedestrian safety and traffic calming. They would even consider temporary traffic circles in slow streets as part of the grant they had applied for. Traffic circles were very much on their radar of things to use.

Commissioner Kohlstrand gave some suggestions of places that would benefit from traffic circles.

Staff Member Payne clarified that traffic circles would be on minor streets and roundabouts would be taking the place of traffic signals. She discussed wherein Alameda roundabouts were being considered, such as Mecartney and Island Drive.

Staff Member Wikstrom said that would be in 2022 and also added information about the difference between traffic circles and roundabouts. He said with the temporary barricades on the slow streets there is the question if it should become permanent and traffic circles are a great alternative.

Commissioner Kohlstrand asked about lane reduction on Pacific and wanted clarification on where on Pacific that would happen.

Staff Member Wikstrom clarified the lane reduction on Pacific Ave would be from Main to Fourth Street.

Commissioner Kohlstrand wanted to know more about the AC Transit reductions and when those hearings would take place. She had concerns about the elimination of the O Line and what effect that would have on citizens. She also requested that the staff make their recommendations as clear as possible. She wanted to see the recommended action from the staff at the beginning of the Staff Report. She wanted to know exactly what actions the commission was being asked to act on.

Staff Member Payne said that AC Transit would be having virtual public hearings that were separate from the Alameda Transportation Commission meetings and she would make sure all the commissioners and the community knew about those meetings.

Chair Soules thanked the staff for putting this together and agreed with Commissioner Yuen and Kohlstrand for their comments on equity. She discussed her thoughts on AC Transit reductions, she did not want to see these temporary events have a negative long-term effect. She also wanted to see continued progress on the Emergency Responses and to not let that be forgotten.

Staff Member Payne said they would have a progress report by the next meeting and between Covid and the fires the Emergency Response team really had been maxed out. They have had some opportunities to work on Tsunami and Earthquake preparedness.

Commissioner Clarifying Questions (Action Items)

Commissioner Kohlstrand asked if planters would be more aesthetically pleasing and safe rather than using the water-filled barrels to protect the parklets.

Staff Member Wikstrom said there had been internal conversations between the Engineering Department and the Attorney's Office to discuss risk management about having diners on an active

roadway. He said water-filled barriers are the best at protecting against a car and anything smaller wouldn't be as safe.

Commissioner Kohlstrand asked about encroachment permits and wanted to make sure she understood it correctly. District-wide encroachment permits cover Webster and Park St and anything outside of that would need a separate individual permit.

Staff Member Wheeler said that was correct.

Chair Soules asked as this program moves forward would there be metrics put in place to study if there was an increase in travel time delays.

Staff Member Wikstrom explained where AC Transit got the 10% travel time reduction number, from GPS transponders in their buses. They also have good reliable data pre-pandemic to look at the traffic impact. He also explained how he personally had been monitoring traffic on the island and that they were working on integrating and coordinating the signal timing on Park and Webster St.

Staff Member Wheeler added that having signal coordination is what would most improve AC Transit's travel time.

Chair Soules said she supported the slow streets program but she did see the importance of beta testing parklets and seeing the full impact. She asked about the effect on side streets, like Oak St, that was along Park and Webster St.

Staff Member Wikstrom said that they definitely needed to do more data collection. He said the main challenge was making sure they had good pre and post-data, which they don't really have on side streets. He said what they needed to bring forward as part of the Active Transportation Plan was to really see what was important to the community. When the pandemic is over what will Webster and Park St return to?

Staff Member Wheeler added that those questions were a part of their staff recommendations. She said that with everything still being new it would be next July that they would look at what effect all of these programs have had and that diversion was something they would need to look at.

Chair Soules gave her full support to waving the permit fees, with businesses being hit so hard by the pandemic she was in full support of anything that would help them.

Commissioner Yuen discussed the many uses and demands of the commercial streets and the safety people needed as they eat outside. She saw the slow traffic as a trade-off for business to be able to continue during the pandemic. She said the priority of the Commercial Street Program was to give businesses a fighting chance of survival and that means having slower traffic in these corridors. She threw out the idea that maybe parts of AC Transit routes would need to be removed during this time.

Commissioner Weitze said the trade-off was worth it and doing these experiments was worth it. He asked about parking lots on Webster that had been transformed to eating areas, crediting Sandy Russell from Fireside, and wanted to know if that was a city-driven or a private party project. He pushed for that being permanent and something that could set Webster apart.

Staff Member Wheeler said that was a private parking lot that had really been pushed by Sandy Russell and WABA (West Alameda Business Association). She said making it permanent was something that would need to be discussed further and yes it had been very popular and successful.

Commissioner Kohlstrand asked about the 8th and 9th streets that were included in the permanent slow street program. She felt that further study was needed since she didn't think both needed to be included.

Commissioner Kohlstrand made a motion for the Transportation Commission to recommend to the City Council to approve the 3 items recommended by the staff. To wave encroachment permit fees through October 31st, 2021, for the commercial street program - delay short-term temporary special event closures along Park St and to authorize the staff to apply for the Alameda CTC (County Transportation Commission) Covid-19 Rapid Response Program. Commissioner Hans seconded the motion and a roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0.

6-B 2020-8318 Alameda Active Transportation Plan Update: Community Survey Results (Information)

Staff Member Wheeler introduced this item and introduced Sara LaBatt, EMC Research, who gave the presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4643214&GUID=E4A5206B-46C3-4E32-87BB-F107BC666872&FullText=1>.

Commissioner Clarifying Questions and for #6B.

Chair Soules thought that it was great that this was all pre covid data since it created a baseline. She also commended the decision to incentivize the survey, she believed this was really the best way to get an actionable equity program. She was curious to know how e-bikes and new bike paths would affect mode shift and how they were reaching out to people who may not think they could afford an e-bike app.

Staff Member Wheeler said that they did ask questions about e-bikes and ownership of e-bikes. This was also part of the Climate Action Plan, so they did have data on that.

Ms. LaBatt added they learned through the survey that about 10% of people surveyed said that they have an e-bike or a scooter-share membership.

Chair Soules thanked Ms. LaBatt for her presentations and for breaking down the information in a very easy-to-understand way.

Commissioner Weitze wanted to know how many of the 32% of residents using active transport to get off the island and how many were West End Alameda residents.

Ms. LaBatt said that number did include West Enders getting off the island but did not know how much of the 32% was from them.

Public Comments for #6B.

Jim Strehlow referred to page 2 of the presentation. He found the presentation wording by Sara LaBatt to be wonderfully clarifying but the verbiage was not printed. He found certain parts of the presentation to be initially misleading since tens of thousands of residents were not part of the survey. He gave examples of better wording that would be more adequate. He also believed that certain surveys were accepted and others rejected based on their own undocumented bias.

Commissioner Comments and Discussions for #6B

Commissioner Kohlstrand found the amount of data to be very helpful as they move forward on the Active Transportation Plan. She wanted to know if there was going to be an opportunity to discuss the issues over cost and prioritization into the survey as it was presented to the public. She gave an example of her past work when people were excited about a project until the price for the project was announced, then people were no longer excited for said project. She also stressed the need to connect safety data with the survey results as well as looking at this through the lens of cost-effectiveness.

Staff Member Wheeler said that was the plan to use the survey to see what were the priorities and what would be the implementation plan be. Obviously, with implementation, they would need to know the costs and they would meld together cost and priorities.

Commissioner Weitze was surprised by the low amount of children who walk to school in groups and discussed ways to improve that. He also wanted to make it a priority to get bikes into commercial districts.

Ms. LaBatt wanted to answer Commissioner Weitze's earlier question. She said that it was 23% of West Enders use active transportation, 15% walk or use a mobility device on the sidewalk, 11% ride a bike, and 4% ride a bike to get off the island.

Chair Soules was curious how this worked with the Travel Demand survey that had been done earlier. She brought up that reliability is very important when it comes to using public transportation and how many high schoolers will drive their own cars to high school. She added that if anyone had additional thoughts they wanted to think more about they should email Staff Member Wheeler.

7. Announcements / Public Comments

Jim Strehlow was amazed that no one had mentioned that Bike to Wherever Day was tomorrow and cyclists could pick up goody bags at participating locations.

Chair Soules thanked Mr. Strehlow and said more information on Bike Wherever Day could be found on the city's website.

8. Adjournment

Chair Soules adjourned the meeting at 9:47 p.m.