

# Transportation Commission

March 25, 2015

Item 4B

Action

## Joint Meeting Minutes of the Transportation Commission and Planning Board

Wednesday, February 25, 2015

*Commissioner Michele Bellows* called the Joint Planning Board and Transportation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

### **1. Roll Call**

Roll was called and the following was recorded:

#### Transportation Commission Members Present:

Michele Bellows (Chair)

Eric Schatmeier (Vice Chair)

Jesus Vargas

Christopher Miley

Thomas G. Bertken

Michael Hans

Gregory Morgado

#### Planning Board Members Present:

Mike Henneberry (President)

Dania Alvarez

David Burton

Lorre Zuppan

John Knox White

Stanley Tang

#### Staff Present:

Alex Nguyen, Assistant City Manager

Jennifer Ott, Chief Operations Officer for Alameda Point

Andrew Thomas, City Planner

Virendra Patel, Transportation Engineer

Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator

Lev Kushner, Alameda Point

## **2. Agenda Changes**

*None.*

## **3. Announcements / Public Comments**

*None.*

## **4. Provide Feedback on Recommended Approach to Citywide Transportation Delivery Strategy**

*Jennifer Ott*, Chief Operations Officer for Alameda Point, presented the report.

*Nate Conable*, Principal at Fehr Peers, presented the transportation trends of the City.

*Boardmember Knox White* stated that well over a decade, the City worked with BART to identify a BART stop. He wanted to know if *Jennifer Ott* included BART in the discussions because Alamedans comprise 50 percent of Fruitvale BART ridership.

*Jennifer Ott* replied the omission was not purposeful because her team focused on current transportation services. However, she felt that BART should be added to the stakeholder list.

*Lorre Zuppan* asked staff if discussions with the City of Oakland also should be conducted.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* said the overriding goals presented were the Estuary Crossing and decreasing Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) trips. He wanted to know if staff went through a process of reviewing a number of possible goals and boiling them down. He felt the other goal that staff should review would be for Alameda to become a multi-destination with multiple transit service options city.

*Jennifer Ott* said staff listened to the collective experiences resonating from the community meetings and from discussions at City Council meetings.

*Boardmember Burton* stated that *Jennifer Ott* talked about having one goal with two deliverables, but he needed clarification.

*Jennifer Ott* replied staff identified the deficiencies, and would review the citywide approach to Transit Demand Management (TDM) and would update the transit plan. She explained that they would hire a consultant team to prepare the citywide TDM and transit plan documents. Staff also could focus on increasing transit for the rest of Alameda by increasing transit usage by say 1 percent, but the main concerns were focused on congestion at the crossings.

*Commissioner Bellows* opened the floor to public comments.

*Tony Kuttner*, President of Greater Alameda Business Association, was concerned for the business community and the City's community as a whole. He would like to see a free local shuttle that serves the businesses and residents similar to the city of Emeryville's Emery Go Round shuttle. He stressed that a free, reliable transit system could be funded from a variety of funding sources, and he emphasized the goal of the plan was focusing on the Estuary crossings and reducing SOV trips because the transit plan should serve businesses and residents within the City.

*Kurt Petersen*, Alameda resident, has been in sales for 35 years before retiring and he told the Board and Commission they are getting a hard sale. He believed the idea of the plan was great and needed, but he was concerned about the outcome of Site A and the several developments in the pipeline. He urged the Board and Commission to take some time and analyze the results. He also felt ongoing community input was not taken into consideration.

*Jim Strehlow*, Alameda resident, explained that a plan to force people to mostly ride public transit would not work and this plan is for a transportation czar for the City. When he reviewed the statistics, he did not see how that would fit into the real world because people do not fit into statistics. If parking is not available then residents will place their vehicles in the surrounding neighborhoods. He also mentioned that recently an accident in the Webster Tube created havoc for people trying to get into the City. So, the impending month long closure of the High Street Bridge will be an experiment to see how hard it will be for residents to get off the island.

*Linda Morris*, AC Transit Senior Transportation Planner, stated that the presentation was appreciated and she looked forward to working with the City. She said the plan was timely because AC Transit is preparing a Comprehensive Transportation Analysis (COA) and is going out to the community to elicit feedback. She will present the results at the Transportation Commission. She explained that one thing to focus on was the timeline because AC Transit created a short, medium and long range plan and in terms of the short range there will be service online starting March 15 and weekend service to the Faction Brewery. In terms of the short and medium timeline, she said there will be a public hearing in the summer of this year and the AC Transit Board will approve and implement a plan in late fall with some service increases for Alameda. Regarding the discussion of shuttles in Alameda, she said the job landscape of the City is less dense than the city of Emeryville. Staff could work with developers to create an AC Transit Easypass for residents to use the bus network.

*Eugenie Thomson*, Alameda resident, thanked the staff and Board and Commission for addressing the TDM plan. She pointed out that the City is looking towards the biggest growth plans in quite some time. Therefore, she urged the Board and the Commission to maintain the existing good quality of life and to recognize that goals need to be set for TDM and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) with all the upcoming growth.

*Trish Herrera Spencer* spoke as an Alameda citizen and thanked *Tony Kuttner* for raising the issue of how the shuttle could support local businesses. Traffic is a problem.

*Carol Gottstein*, Alameda resident, echoed *Jim Strehlow's* comments and restated that the plan

would create a transportation czar that is too behavior controlling. She urged the Commission and Board to see that the City must be inclusionary and not select residents based on their transportation choices.

*Commissioner Vargas* stated that in the future he would like to see the materials sent in enough time for everyone to read it. However, he felt that it was good to see different agencies such as AC Transit and BART collaborating and he wanted the city of Oakland to be included in the discussions. He noted that the VMT information will be required to report on to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and to the state of California.

*Commissioner Miley* explained that the City should look at this process as an opportunity since the passing of Measure BB. He also said the future street work around Broadway and Jackson Streets in Oakland should be included in the analysis. He asked *Jennifer Ott* why the Transportation Commission, Planning Board and City Council would participate in the contractor selection process because in his experience working with the County these bodies are not involved in that process.

*Jennifer Ott* explained that in the past staff have invited the president of the Planning Board to participate. However, she said she will confirm with the City Attorney's office before asking a member to join.

*Commissioner Miley* said he seconded *Boardmember Knox White's* comments about BART being a critical partner in this discussion. He felt the plan should include all the City's bridges including Bay Farm Island Bridge because island circulation is critically important. He also thanked staff for bringing the update to the Board and Commission, but he thought the timeline to get things accomplished was quite aggressive.

*Boardmember Burton* said that naming the plan according to its intent and its meaning to the community was vital. The goal should be to minimize net increases of SOV travel in and out of the City. He also recognized that congestion and mode shifts are an economic development issue where the City should provide incentives and opportunities to current residents to reduce VMT through job creation within the City and focusing on TDM strategies for all new developments. He said staff needed to coordinate with the existing plans and explain this effort to the public. In terms of the staff report, he said three items were left off or not fully explained: 1. on page 5 of the staff report the recommended approach to divert SOV trips was not mentioned and it should be; 2. the first major tasks should be to define the project and scope of work and 3. outline the community and stakeholder engagement process.

*Boardmember Tang* stated it was important to engage with people who do take public transportation to gather their feedback. Younger generations do not drive as frequently.

*Boardmember Zuppan* said the project's scope was too narrow when speaking about the estuary crossings. She urged staff to think bigger and analyze citywide traffic reductions.

*Boardmember Alvarez* said she feared staff was not engaging with the city of Oakland because of

the issues that we are facing with the accessibility to freeways when crossing the bridges and tunnels. She also felt excluded because she did not see a lot of work on Harbor Bay or Bay Farm Island. Overall, she would like to see the entire island especially the area that has limited transportation options reviewed. Furthermore, she questioned the ability to have a portable barrier on Park Street Bridge similar to Golden Gate Bridge or the old Caldecott Tunnel.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* stated that focusing on the estuaries crossings should not be the only goal in this effort because there are all kinds of transit needs.

*Commissioner Morgado* concurred with *Commissioner Schatmeier* stating that the City should update the plan to create more livable streets.

*Boardmember Knox White* stated that he agreed with everyone, but he felt they need multiple goals like no new net trips or setting a threshold for VMT. There are benefits to VMT, but there are also a lot of risks. He noted that livability is a goal by maintaining or reducing current traffic levels.

*Commissioner Vargas* stated that rather than focusing on the goals and the aggressive timeline of setting these goals, he believed the idea of measuring and monitoring the results is important.

*Boardmember Henneberry* said that intercity circulation should include traffic calming.

*Commissioner Bellows* stated that another goal should be to look at different transit options other than public transportation based on the type of trip. She felt people with cars should not be vilified and there should be an option to deal with peak periods trips on and off the island for all points of access including Doolittle Drive.

*Jennifer Ott* said she will speak with the City Council on March 10, and there were a lot of commonalities found in the comments between the Commission and Board.

## **5. Approve Cross Alameda Trail Preliminary Design for the Ralph Memorial Appezzato Parkway Section**

*Staff Payne* presented the report and introduced the project consultants *Eric Swanson* of BKF Engineers and *Sarah Sutton* of Placeworks Inc.

*Eric Swanson*, Civil Engineer, BKF Engineers presented.

*Sarah Sutton*, Principal Landscape Architect, Placeworks Inc. presented.

*Commissioner Bellows* asked *Sarah Sutton* to describe a rain garden.

*Sarah Sutton* replied that a rain garden can be described as a bioswale that is flat and captures the water.

*Commissioner Bellows* asked *Sarah Sutton* if the rain garden will be irrigated.

*Sarah Sutton* replied the project does not have funds for irrigation, so they chose low water needy plants.

*Commissioner Bellows* mentioned that in the presentation *Sarah Sutton* said the area was flat, so she wanted to know where the trees fit in the area.

*Sarah Sutton* explained that the placement varies because they do not want to place trees on the bottom in case of heavy rain activity in the future.

*Commissioner Bellows* asked staff if the federal funding could be used for the remediation.

*Staff Payne* replied yes and there was \$1.8 million for the project. Staff is not sure how much the remediation will cost.

*Commissioner Miley* wanted to know the total budget for the complete build out.

*Staff Payne* replied right now the cost estimate is for \$1.8 million and some elements can be added into the construction document for example the Webster Tower would be an added alternative.

*Boardmember Burton* said that there was not an attached resolution included in the staff report, so wanted clarification on the process.

*Staff Payne* replied that staff would be asking for approval on the preliminary design and there was no need to take it onward, but just to continue the work.

*Boardmember Knox White* asked staff if they would be able to approve how the plazas look exactly or conceptually.

*Staff Payne* replied the design was the ultimate vision.

*Boardmember Knox White* replied so if the whole \$1.8 million was adequate to completely build out then approving the design was the final review.

*Staff Payne* replied yes.

*Commissioner Miley* asked staff if she needed a separate action from the Board and the Commission.

*Staff Payne* replied one action since it is a joint meeting.

*Commissioner Hans* said that last time when they voted on this design the schools came to talk

about how they used the pathway for parking. When he passed by the area the other day he saw about 50-60 cars between the school and the Boys and Girls Club. He wanted to know if the design goes through where will the staff park.

*Staff Payne* replied they have met with Alameda Unified School District and the school management plans to look for parking offsite. She explained that the Housing Authority and Park and Recreation Departments have underutilized parking lots close to the school and near Hometown Donuts.

*Boardmember Tang* asked if there would be low lighting along the multiuse path or water fountains.

*Staff Payne* replied not at this phase for the lighting and no for the water fountains.

*Commissioner Bellows* opened the floor to public comments.

*Rion Cassidy*, Alameda resident, said he was an avid bicycle rider and wondered why there was not a bike lane on Appenzato Parkway. He was glad to see the project come to light, but he did not understand the need to construct a park there just to get a bike path built. He also called for responsible government by not overspending to get the site built and then not maintaining the site afterwards. Additionally, he questioned the 15 foot set back from the bike path to the street for a future bus only lane because that limits the amount of lighting on the path.

*Jim Strehlow* said he rode his bicycle from Bay Farm Island along Fernside Drive and the bike path when heading towards High Street was pleasant. Yet, when he rode his bicycle near Fifth Street, the middle bike lane caused him to have cars on his left and on his right, which was uncomfortable. So, he questioned the design on Fifth Street. Furthermore, he asked staff what to do about bus stops adjacent to the path and how can pedestrians access them especially with a cycle track in the way.

*Trish Herrera Spencer* said there was not much parking near Hometown Donuts, so she would like more specificity. Also, she was concerned about the bike path being set back because of visibility issues especially for females and children.

*Boardmember Knox White* stated that he was concerned about the Webster Street Plaza because the configuration focused everyone sitting at the wall and looking at the expanse of intersection concrete. He believed that turning the plaza to focus on places where people want to be was a better option.

*Staff Payne* replied she had the same reaction and she wanted the plaza to be flipped as well, but when she brought the idea up to the Webster Street Business Association Design Committee they did not like the idea. Ultimately, she said the committee would like a gateway that serves their area.

*Boardmember Knox White* asked staff if there was a way to remove the curb or the double

yellow line near Hometown Donuts at Appezzato and Main Street.

*Commissioner Miley* stated that as a jogger he really liked the meandering path and he liked the fact that pedestrians were buffered from the traffic. However, he was concerned about approving the design without knowing that the budget can create the full vision and that will leave open questions on the precise design. So, he asked staff if there were time constraints from the other funding sources.

*Staff Payne* replied there are no time constraints with the other funding sources except for the federal monies, which need to be expended by December. She explained there are few ways of handling the design based on the outcome of the funds. Firstly, the competitive grant that was received was for multiuse and jogging paths. If there are funding issues then staff will have to go with the original approach for the first phase, which would be to construct the multiuse path and later on construct a separate walking path. If the project is delayed due to environmental remediation then staff may have to scale back the separate path concept.

*Commissioner Miley* moved the item and asked staff to come back to the Commission and Board if the Board is interested with any changes, updates or delays. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 13-0.

## **6. Approve TIGER Grant Application: Naval Air Station Alameda Multimodal Regional Connections Project**

*Lev Kushner* presented the report and asked the Commission and Board for an endorsement of the concept.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* stated that the proposal had a circle with a “T” inside and labeled proposed transit center.

*Lev Kushner* replied the symbol represented the linkage of the bus rapid transit and ferry terminal.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* said there was a star located north side of the ferry terminal icon on another map and that interface was different so, he wanted a clear understanding of what the icons represent.

*Lev Kushner* said he will revise the maps since it was not clear.

*Boardmember Burton* asked *Lev Kushner* to describe the Central Avenue bike lane changes in detail and describe in detail the changes to the bus lanes on Stargell Avenue.

*Lev Kushner* said along Stargell Avenue there will be queue jump lanes at the two intersections of Main and Fifth Streets headed towards the Webster Tube.

*Jennifer Ott* replied there was an existing right of way that has enough room on the street to accommodate queue jump lanes.

*Boardmember Knox White* asked staff about the location of the queue jump lanes on Main Street and Stargell Avenue.

*Jennifer Ott* replied the maps presented are for their trip to Washington D.C. and they will be refined at a later time.

*Commissioner Miley* moved staff recommendations. *Commissioner Schatmeier* seconded the motion. The motion was approved 13-0.

## **7. *Presentation on Site A Development at Alameda Point, Including Initial Discussion of the Site A Transportation Demand Management Strategy***

*Jennifer Ott* presented the report.

*Joe Ernst*, Principal of SRM Ernst, presented.

*William Duncanson*, BAR Architects, presented.

*Phil Olmstead*, Nelson Nygaard Consulting Associates, presented.

*Commissioner Schatmeier* stated that the Clipper Card does a lot for people and he was glad to see it in the presentation as something to be explored.

*Commissioner Vargas* asked staff what was the underlying intent of the presentation and what should the Commission likely see in the future.

*Jennifer Ott* replied that they wanted additional feedback to incorporate in the plan and gain additional feedback. She said that they will return for the March 25 Transportation Commission meeting to explain more about the TDM strategy and gather more feedback.

*Boardmember Knox White* asked *Jennifer Ott* if there was an intent to meet the TDM goal since they plan to review the outcome every year.

*Jennifer Ott* said staff will meet with Nelson Nyggard about the results of reviewing the TDM every year.

*Boardmember Knox White* replied the plan does not specifically say what we are doing and he felt establishing goals and meeting them was important.

## **8.     *Announcements/Public Comments***

*Jim Strehlow*, said the Panama Pacific Exposition will have its 100 anniversary on Saturday, February 28 at the Palace of Fine Arts and the exposition incorporates a lot of Alameda history. He also felt that the Commission and Board did not answer his or other speakers' questions or take in feedback and that greatly concerns him.

*Staff Payne* said at a previous Commission meeting the Commissioners decided to create an ad hoc transit committee to better understand what the city's highest transit priorities are. So, members of the Planning Board can join and the procedure would be for the *President Hennebery* to nominate members.

*Trish Herrera Spencer* said that three speakers on the items presented received no discussion or input from the Board or Commission and she encouraged future acknowledgement and input.

## **9.     *Adjournment***

11:02 pm