

APPROVED MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
CITY OF ALAMEDA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2020

Chair Soules convened the meeting at 7:00pm.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Soules, Commissioners Kohlstrand, Nachtigall, Johnson, Yuen, Weitze

Absent: Commissioner Hans

2. AGENDA CHANGES

None.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

3-A Transportation Commission Meeting: Wed, March 25 at 7 p.m.

3-B Grand Opening Celebration of the Cross Alameda Trail (Main Street to Jean Sweeney Park) – Sat, Feb. 29, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Webster Street Plaza by Ralph Appezzato Pkwy.
Event Listing: <https://www.alamedaca.gov/Shortcut-Content/Events-Activities/Grand-Opening-Celebration-Cross-Alameda-Trail>

3-C Traffic Safety Town Hall: Thurs, March 5 at 6 p.m., Love Elementary, Multi-Purpose Room

3-D Spring into Bike Fair: Sat, March 21 at City Hall parking lot on Oak Street between Santa Clara Avenue and Lincoln Avenue

3-E Bike Festival: Sun, May 3, 12 noon to 3 p.m., Bay Farm School

3-F Bike to Work and School Day: Thurs, May 14

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Public Comment:

Maria Gallo spoke about her ongoing efforts to address traffic calming along Fernside Blvd. She asked that the traffic engineers answer the question about which configuration of Fernside (west or east of High Street) is safer.

Jim Strehlow renewed his question from the January meeting about crossing the solid lines of the bike lane on Broadway at Clement. He said he disagrees with the position of the previous speaker regarding the Fernside corridor. He said the no right on red sign added on High Street would divert traffic through the Marina-Windsor neighborhood.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

None

5. NEW BUSINESS

5-A 2020-7745

Endorse The City Council's Adoption of a Resolution Establishing Policies on Street Width, Lane Width, Crosswalks And Bulb-Outs to Promote Safe, Livable Streets and Environmentally Sustainable Transportation Choices; and, Give Direction to Staff on Tools For Improving Safety At Intersections.

Brian McGuire, Transportation Planner, gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at: <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4337173&GUID=77514CDC-901E-48B2-A86E-047864BE44D5&FullText=1>.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the example “ladder” crosswalk would be the standard for all crosswalks going forward.

Staff Member McGuire said the criteria for what types of crosswalks would be used in which places was being developed internally and as part of the ongoing planning processes, but were not part of the resolution before the Commission tonight.

Commissioner Weitze asked what the drivers say contributed to the child-involved collisions.

Lisa Foster, Transportation Planner, said we have the police reports with the primary collision factors for each collision. She added that the interactive web map for the Active Transportation Plan included a prompt for drivers to add comments about problem areas that created safety issues.

Staff Member McGuire added that there are often a number of factors that go into any collision. He said the resolution is focused on enacting national standards based on data driven conclusions.

Andrew Thomas, Planning, Building and Transportation Director said city staff are trying to address these issues from three angles: engineering (the focus of tonight's resolution), education, and enforcement.

Chair Soules opened the public comment.

Susie Hufstader expressed strong support for the resolution. She said there have been many fatalities in the region lately and Alameda is one of the only cities that is responding with the appropriate sense of urgency. She said we need to make it physically impossible to drive at high speeds.

Christy Cannon said she is most concerned about hitting someone when making right turns and that the bulb outs near Lake Merritt have really been helpful in making things safer.

Pat Potter, President of Bike Walk Alameda, expressed support from the resolution and liked how it prioritized safety.

Jim Strehlow said we need to drill down on the causes of collisions not just rely on statistics. He said narrow lanes would just bring vehicles closer together and create safety problems. He suggested adding more loading zones for delivery vehicles.

Chair Soules closed the public comment.

Commissioner Kohlstrand said she supports much of what is in the resolution. She said we are being asked to endorse a lot of high level policies without the data to back that up. She said some of the language is vague, such as where to place crosswalks. She said the standards are not tied to what type of street is being discussed.

Staff Member McGuire said the most prescriptive elements in the resolution such as lane widths are not reacting to the specifics of local collisions but relying on national level data and best practices. He added that staff is continuing to develop detailed standards for their toolkit while striking a balance between having policy makers weigh in on detailed standards versus policy level language.

Commissioner Kohlstrand said it is hard to make some of these policy recommendations without all the available data and avoid simply being a rubber stamp on the way to City Council.

Staff Member Thomas explained that the discussion the Transportation Commission is having is reflective of the internal challenges staff has had in balancing the desire for thoughtful decision making and the Council and community's desire to act quickly.

Rochelle Wheeler, Senior Transportation Coordinator, explained how the original desire for these standards came from the 2019 paving contract and wanting to have standards in place to take advantage of that opportunity to redesign our streets.

Chair Soules asked for clarification about why this policy is coming in the form of a resolution and the difference between policies and guiding principles, noting that much of the resolution reads more like guiding principles.

Staff Member Wheeler said it is definitely a mix of policy guidance and specific standards.

Staff Member Thomas explained how these standards would be applied when resurfacing streets or developing new projects.

Commissioner Kohlstrand asked if we have data to show that the bicycle lane on Central has many collisions. She asked if the physical barrier is necessary for safety and questioned whether two way separated bike lanes are appropriate in applications where there are numerous cross street and/or driveway conflicts.

Staff Member Thomas outlined some of the safety concerns along Central Avenue that lead to the staff recommendation for separated bike lanes.

Chair Soules mentioned that it was clear when she was on the Central Avenue site visit that some of the simpler safety measures that could be applied to the Central and Webster intersection had not been deployed. She said there is a balance between doing regular maintenance safety measures and the larger, transformative projects.

Staff Member Payne stated that Public Works is working with Caltrans to implement short-term visibility and other safety improvements along Central Avenue ahead of the larger safety project.

Staff Member McGuire said that the resolution preference for separated bikeways does not dictate two-way facilities and that there would be a number of new one-way separated facilities, especially at Alameda Point.

Commissioner Johnson said we are getting too granular and are looking into the minutiae and we should be focused on endorsing the high level national standards while preserving flexibility for specific cases.

Staff Member McGuire explained how staff would use the policy resolution to move beyond some high level discussions that often get renewed with each project and can slow down implementation.

Commissioner Yuen said it may be helpful to more clearly articulate how this policy interacts with other planning and policy documents. She appreciated the clearly defined hierarchy to protect vulnerable road users.

Commissioner Nachtigall said we are moving to a more agile approach, and that a bold approach is needed. She said agile is not perfect and it can be iterative.

Commissioner Johnson asked what was being done on the enforcement side of the equation.

Staff Member McGuire said APD had just completed a two week enforcement period where they wrote over 900 citations, triple their typical number. He said staffing challenges mean that is not sustainable at the moment, but their intention is to fill those vacancies and increase enforcement.

Staff Member Foster said that APD had applied for state funds to help increase their ability to conduct enforcement efforts.

Commissioner Weitze asked if endorsing the resolution would mean they are endorsing the use of bollards.

Staff Member McGuire said that the resolution endorses the idea that bollards are a cost-effective safety measure, but not cost-free and would set up a discussion about budget priorities if Council wants to move forward with expanded safety measures.

Commissioner Weitze said use of bollards would be controversial and giving aesthetic guidance is a granular issue that it seemed the Commission was trying to avoid getting bogged down with.

Commissioner Kohlstrand said she is in support of the overall goal and is just trying to figure out how we prioritize implementation.

Chair Soules said the policy seems far reaching and the lack of data or benchmarking make it difficult to know if you are making an informed decision. She said how and where we apply these best practices has a large impact and we need to prioritize how to implement this in the community.

Commissioner Nachtigall said she understands what it feels like to re-hash the same issues at every meeting and that if this helps move that forward while doing what Council has asked of staff, she supports the resolution.

Chair Soules asked what it would do if they recommended removing some of the specific items around lane widths and bollards and the like while endorsing the general principles.

Staff Member Thomas said the Commission could take any action they desire, including endorsing the resolution but saying they have an issue with some of the specifics because they do not seem thought through.

Commissioner Weitze said it seemed like the hierarchy was the main part of the resolution and most of the rest was very granular and not needed in the resolution.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to endorse the resolution and capture and transmit the feedback provided by commissioners to City Council.

Commissioner Kohlstrand suggested that Council's desire for some of these actions may mean that a motion supporting the resolution but capturing hesitation over some of the more specific items would be appropriate.

Commissioner Kohlstrand seconded the motion while offering an amendment to endorse the resolution's concepts with some reservation about some specifics with the assumption that they would be able to revisit them as part of the Vision Zero and Active Transportation Plans.

Chairs Soules asked for a friendly amendment to the motion that as we move forward and fine tune policies it is done with whatever data is available and we are doing some sort of benchmarking in order to hold ourselves accountable.

Commissioner Johnson accepted the amendments. The motion passed 6-0.

Staff Member McGuire briefly described the discussion questions raised in the staff report.

Commissioner Johnson said he feels strongly about marking all four legs of a crosswalk because it is a lot to ask for people to walk three legs of an intersection to cross the street. He also said the high visibility crosswalks are important because it prevented him from hitting someone at night who was dressed in dark clothing thanks to the contrast created.

Commissioner Nachtigall supported having all legs of a crosswalk marked.

Commissioner Weitze asked if crosswalks are ever removed.

Staff Member McGuire described factors that might lead to a decision not to mark all legs of an intersection but was unaware of whether there were any recent cases of removing a crosswalk.

Commissioner Kohlstrand said we cannot only rely on the numbers of pedestrians using a crosswalk to decide whether to provide a marked crosswalk or not.

Staff Member McGuire said that the “regular and frequent intervals” language would address the need for safe crossings on challenging corridors with low volumes of pedestrians.

Chair Soules said they use a forced spiral in system engineering to automatically revisit policies to implement best practices and lessons learned which could be useful for the issues staff is bringing up.

Commissioner Yuen said she wanted to add “Equity” and “Evaluation” to the Engineering, Education and Enforcement safety efforts. She said looking where high injury corridors meet places that have historically had underinvestment in active transportation should be where we prioritize actions.

5-B 2020-7747

Review of Alameda Point Parking Plan

Staff Member Thomas gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at: <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4337174&GUID=50F70940-70F5-47F1-BD97-2A89EAB2E0A1&FullText=1>.

Chair Soules opened the public comment.

Jim Strehlow said he is glad license plate readers will be used. He expressed concerns about how data would be stored. He asked if there are plans to track everyone that comes and goes from Alameda Point. He asked for the opportunity to provide input on an LPR policy before it goes to City Council.

Chair Soules closed the public comment.

Chair Soules asked if the LPR policy would be an ordinance or resolution.

Staff Member Thomas said staff is creating an LPR policy specifically for this parking use to take to Council as a resolution.

Chair Soules asked what drove the decision for how much space there would be for public parking at Alameda Point.

Staff Member Thomas said the land plan was intended to provide room to provide surface parking and then convert to structured parking if the demand warranted.

Chair Soules said she would like to know what the impact of constraining the availability of parking would be over time to organically limit the amount of congestion new development created.

Commissioner Weitze asked if any of the parking plan would affect Main Street or Pacific or other residential streets as having controlled parking.

Staff Member Thomas said Main Street would be the initial border and staff would have to monitor commuter behavior to see if they are parking in the neighborhoods to avoid paying for parking.

Commissioner Weitze asked if commercial tenants could lease their extra private parking to commuters.

Staff Member Thomas said that tenants could use their parking in that way unless there was something in their lease preventing it.

Commissioner Kohlstrand said charging for parking could make an expensive commute option more expensive for people who do not have other good options to get to the ferry.

Staff Member Thomas said that a \$5 parking fee would put the cost of a ferry trip well in-line with other transbay options.

Commissioner Weitze suggested we want to draw people towards the ferry in order to keep people away from the estuary crossings so the cost should incentivize that behavior.

Chair Soules said that a modern system can provide a lot of flexibility to manage the parking use of different areas for different users by analyzing usage data while preserving privacy.

Commissioner Nachtigall said we do not want to preclude people from using the ferry and cannot get mode shift if the other modes are not available.

Commissioner Yuen asked for the opportunity to review the data gathered and make recommendations based on it as the system moves forward.

Commissioner Weitze asked if we would be funneling parkers through the Appezato intersection or Pacific.

Staff Member Thomas said West Atlantic would be the primary route. He said we would be constantly routing people around construction zones as Alameda Point is developed.

No action was taken.

5-C 2020-7748

Review and Comment on 2019 General Plan and Housing Element Annual Report and General Plan Update Work in Progress. The review of the annual report and General Plan update draft elements are exempt actions under the California Environmental Quality Act

Staff Member Thomas gave a report. The staff report and attachments can be found at: <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4337245&GUID=76CC4132-A630-4DB1-900C-4AACC4DFECF9&FullText=1>.

Commissioner Kohlstrand said that in the future to accommodate required housing we would have to focus on our transit corridors in order to meet the need for housing while dealing with congestion and climate concerns.

Staff Member Thomas said that much of the focus for future housing would continue to be at Alameda Point and the Northern Waterfront, but also likely to include shopping centers.

Commissioner Yuen said it is amazing that we are even coming close to meeting our RHNA obligations. She said so much of the climate plan is dependent upon us thinking big and bold about transportation solutions.

Chair Soules suggested it may be useful to have another joint meeting of the Transportation Commission and Planning Board at a future date to discuss the housing and transportation issues together.

No action was taken.

6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

6-A Potential Future Meeting Agenda Items

1. Central Avenue Concept – Webster Street Area and Environmental Clearance
2. General Plan Updates
3. Active Transportation Plan Updates
4. Ten-year Capital Improvement Program
5. Transportation Commission Bylaw Changes

6-B Future Meeting Dates for 2020 – Meetings start at 7 p.m.

1. Wednesday, March 25
2. Wednesday, May 27
3. Wednesday, July 22
4. Wednesday, September 23
5. Wednesday, November 18

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Strehlow said his concerns about the parking management item is about forcing private businesses become parking enforcers which creates a new burden. He hoped that the City would help private owners address this problem created by the paid parking program.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Soules adjourned the meeting at 9:44 p.m.