

Approved Minutes
Transportation Commission Meeting
Wednesday, July 22, 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=760089&GUID=A99C9591-DCEB-46B5-8E9E-A8C47FDCE07E&Options=info|&Search=>

1. Roll Call

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

Absent: None.

2. Agenda Changes

None.

3. Staff Communications are as shown in the web link here:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4593184&GUID=DB9DC6E5-62EE-41E5-A423-1EDDF584B964>.

Commissioner Kohlstrand wanted clarification that the O line was going to be eliminated.

Gail Payne, Senior Transportation Coordinator, said yes that was correct as a temporary COVID measure that AC Transit is considering.

4. Announcements / Public Comments

A recorded message - Jim Strehlow from the Fernside Homeowners Association wanted to thank Public Works for removing an unwanted sign on southbound High St.

5. Consent Calendar

5A. Draft Minutes Transportation Commission Meeting from Wednesday, May 27, 2020 (Action Item)

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4593101&GUID=9299F04F-AE62-4707-AA00-96A00687406B&FullText=1>.

Commissioner Kohlstrand clarified her comments on page 5 second paragraph, her concern was that retaining parking along Park St was going to contribute to congestion on the street.

Commissioner Kohlstrand moved to approve the minutes as corrected and Vice-Chair Nachtigall seconded. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 7-0.

6. Regular Agenda Items

6A. Elect Chair and Vice-Chair of the Transportation Commission

Commissioner Weitze made a motion to reelect Samantha Soules as Chair and Alysha Nachtigall as Vice-Chair and Commissioner Kohlstrand seconded both motions. A roll call vote was taken and both motions passed 7-0.

6B. Discuss the New Transbay Rail Crossing - BART to Alameda

Chair Soules recused herself from this agenda item.

Staff Member Payne introduced this item and introduced Sadie Graham from BART and Camille Tsao from Capitol Corridor who gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4593186&GUID=692D3207-694B-41C6-B7C4-18C42E061513&FullText=1>.

Commissioner Clarifying Questions for #6B

Commissioner Kohlstrand asked if Capitol Corridor would be using the same criteria as BART for their system expansion and if the employment consideration was going to factor in the density for the potential around future stations.

Ms. Graham said she saw this program as more infill in terms of growth than exurban growth. She acknowledged the importance of the balance of employment and housing and that is something they will need to take into consideration.

Ms. Tao said that the Capitol Corridor team would do more work on policy for station development.

Commissioner Weitze wanted to know if they would be using data that had already been collected for the best places to put a station and other useful information that was already available. Would they be integrating that data into their reports?

Ms. Tao said that her team had already been reviewing existing reports and studies. She explained in further detail the information they had already gathered and the data her team would be collecting.

Commissioner Johnson asked how BART and Regional Rail would share tracks.

Ms. Tao discussed the options but said it came down to what would be most beneficial.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the crossings would be under or above the water.

Ms. Graham said that is information they just don't have right now. They are focusing now on what best serves the needs of the network and the region. It could be a BART crossing or a standard gauge crossing or even both.

Staff Member Payne asked if they had already determined if the plan was to have both BART and Regional Rail.

Ms. Graham said that had not been decided, both plans or a combination of the two would be considered.

Public Comments for #6B.

There were no public speakers.

Commissioner Comments and Discussions for #6B

Commissioner Weitze wanted to know if this commission had any role in picking future stations in Alameda.

Ms. Graham said that was to be determined, they would want to build relationships with the cities they are coming to but there were many technical elements that needed to be considered.

Commissioner Kohlstrand wanted to know how they planned to analyze and assess the data to see the need for a station in Alameda. Also, how can they get the information about what a station in Alameda would generate in terms of ridership?

Ms. Tao said they had not developed that methodology yet but once they have their teams on board early next year that is what they will be working on.

Ms. Graham added that the teams would specifically be helping them build their ridership models. They also would be using market analysis as well.

Commissioner Kohlstrand hoped there would be opportunities for the commission to be a part of those discussions and add their input.

Commissioner Weitze wanted to know if there was anything that could be done to speed up the timeline by 5 years since some Alameda residents might be shocked or concerned by the 2040 timeframe.

Ms. Graham said there were many factors that could speed up development such as private/public partnership. Parts of the Environmental Review Process could hold up development. She said having political champions who raise awareness and funding would be beneficial.

Ms. Tao added there were many projects in the works and not enough funding to go around. Getting everyone to support a master plan and support the same projects could have the potential to speed up development.

Commissioner Yuen agreed that if there was any way to prioritize this project to speed up development that would be great. She hoped Ms. Graham and Ms. Tao would come back to keep the conversation going.

Staff Member Payne wanted to add her support and offered whatever Alameda could do to champion this project.

Vice-Chair Nachtigall was excited by this project and understood this would be a long-term project. She was pleased by all the positive feedback.

Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcroft wanted to say how much she enjoyed the presentation, what a well-run meeting this was, and that she was a huge proponent of this project.

Vice-Chair Nachtigall welcomed Chair Soules back to the meeting.

6C. Alameda Active Transportation Plan Draft Recommendations

Rochelle Wheeler, Senior Transportation Coordinator, introduced this item and gave a presentation. Attachments and staff report can be found at

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4593220&GUID=83995912-734B-4C48-802B-D5C127AB4F27&FullText=1>.

Staff Member Wheeler also introduced Megan Wooley-Ousdahl, Project Manager with Toole Design, and Jessica Zdeb, Portland Office Director with Toole Design, who also presented parts of the presentation.

Chair Soules thanked the staff for their excellent presentation.

Public Comments for #6C

Recorded comment – Jim Strehlow addressed that it was wrong to summarize that 80% of the residents in Alameda wanted more biking and walking unless there were over 70,000 results in the survey. He found the percentages presented to be wrong, offensive, and misleading to the public. He urged that Lincoln Avenue should be for trucks since there were already other streets designated for bikes. He wanted no bicycle enhancements on Lincoln Avenue and said that bicyclists already use Lincoln Avenue as it is at their own risk.

Commissioner clarifying questions and comments #6C (Goals and Visions)

Commissioner Weitze asked if intra-island car trips and getting off-the-island car trips were included in the goals.

Staff Member Wheeler said that was not directly incorporated into the mode shift goal, it's seen as a subset of it. It could be made into an action item under the goal of increasing walking and biking trips off the island.

Commissioner Hans said that he would prefer separated bike lanes whenever possible. He also stressed that safe access to schools and shops should be the priority right now.

Commissioner Kohlstrand wanted to better understand how this bicycle and pedestrian plan fits into the overall circulation plan for the city, and felt that it hadn't been given that context. She was in full support of making safe bicycle routes but believed the solutions needed to be multimodal. She also asked if there was an additional reference made to connecting with transit stops.

Staff Member Wheeler said that improving access to destinations including transit was included in the vision statement, although it's not explicit in the goals.

Commissioner Kohlstrand reiterated that the tendency was to look at each of the modes individually and when they are all put together it needed to make sense for everyone.

Staff Member Wheeler said that more analysis was needed. The main goal was increasing safety, she also reminded the Commission that at their next meeting they would be able to review the revised General Plan, which would look at the big picture.

Commissioner Johnson also wanted to look at all the modes together, not just the bicycle mode, and to strongly endorse the liberal use of bike boulevards. It is best to separate out the modes of transportation keeping the cars on the busier streets and putting the bikes on the slower neighborhood streets.

Chair Soules agreed and that their job was to look at projects comprehensively, in a balanced way for all and not look at mode to mode solutions.

Vice-Chair Nachtigall said she appreciated that safety had become a primary goal. She added that the online map and survey showing where pedestrians and cyclists were nearly hit really did support a strong safety goal.

Ms. Wooley-Ousdahl said along with the bicycle network they have recommendations for the pedestrian facilities. She also added that not every bicycle facility would require them to take away an auto lane.

Ms. Zdeb discussed how bike boulevards worked as a shorter-term implementation opportunity since they generally had fewer political barriers. As for diverters, it was something they had in their "toolkit" but as of now, where they would go is not determined.

Vice-Chair Nachtigall asked if the overlays for truck and transit routes were current or had been changed.

Staff Member Wheeler said what they were using now for truck routes was what was in the General Plan. She was not aware of any discussion on changing those and what was in the General Plan were the official truck routes.

Chair Soules said she was bothered by the transit mode connection not really having a tangible piece in this work. Her concerns with the goals were that it seemed there was a missing piece on the importance of people getting to transit points. She believed it was worth monitoring the routes that they had to choose and hold themselves to a high level of accountability. She liked the link between goals and objectives - this was going to be important.

Commissioner Yuen suggested creating a goal percentage for mode shift and for safety. She added that one of the objectives or actions should be to create a set of performance measures in regards to the goals to see how well they were achieving these goals. She also agreed with finding a balance between different modes of transportation.

Commissioner Kohlstrand agreed there needed to be measures of effectiveness. She said that these issues had been brought up in the past and she was concerned that they would be forgotten at the point of implementation. She also stressed that the items they invest in needed to be the most cost-effective.

Staff Member Wheeler said that performance measures and metrics would be the next steps in the plan, and also making goals more specific. The goal, for now, was figuring out the recommendations, then they would look at prioritization criteria that would include cost-effectiveness and mode shift potential. She added that at the September meeting they would be evaluating the 10-year capital improvement project list that would focus on criteria and prioritizing projects for the next 10 years.

Chair Soules added that benchmarking was a really important step in this process. Her concern with asking what people wanted was that they would not be able to meet those expectations. She wanted to see a mix of different ways to get people to shift modes and she thought the framework of what could be done and measured was there. She also wanted to recognize the work done by the staff, setting goals and benchmarks was difficult. She challenged everyone to define the goals. She said she would rather have a goal set and missed but make progress, than have nothing to target.

Commissioner clarifying questions and comments #6C (Proposed Bike Network)

Chair Soules addressed the concerns over mixed mode streets and how to make sure there was parity between the modes. She thought an overlay of a transit line for the map in a PDF was helpful. She did have some concerns for AC Transit and other areas.

Commissioner Weitze asked if the land to the east of Constitution Way was city land.

Staff Member Wheeler said that most of that land was still owned by Union Pacific (UP) and that some of it further north was owned by the City.

Commissioner Weitze clarified that the way it was shown on the proposed Bike Network map is that it would be a potential bike path toward the estuary. However, since it was not owned by the city that would be a long time in the future.

Staff Member Wheeler said that was correct but that the sidewalk was owned by the city. They could potentially widen the sidewalk.

Commissioner Weitze asked if the city had been talking to Union Pacific about the land.

Staff Member Wheeler said the city had not prioritized that area given the other UP land (in Jean Sweeney Park and adjacent to Tilden Way) that they were interested in.

Commissioner Kohlstrand wanted to know if they as Commissioners would have an opportunity to give input and if they could do that through the staff.

Staff Member Wheeler said yes as individuals they could do that.

Chair Soules pointed out that they could review the online maps and that through August they could leave online comments. She encouraged everyone to take a look at the maps and leave comments.

Commissioner Weitze brought up the interest in the continuation of a bike lane on Pacific Avenue, to be able to bike to the new Ferry Terminal. He said that it wasn't a safe area as it is now. He wanted to know if there was any work planned due to the public's interest.

Staff Member Wheeler said that her understanding was that the short-term plan was to use Oriskany to connect out to the future Seaplane Lagoon Ferry Terminal. She added that due to conflicting land uses and a dead-end street there were no plans to focus on Pacific Avenue.

Chair Soules wanted clarification on where the Commissioners could send any other comments.

Staff Member Wheeler explained all the online tools they could use from the online Bikeways Map to all the surveys that were available under each element. She also provided the project email: activealameda@alamedaca.gov.

Commissioner clarifying questions and comments #6C (Park, Webster and Lincoln Streets)

Chair Soules wanted to know how the Commission felt about the reconfiguration that Park Street and Webster Street had undergone already. She wanted to know more about how businesses felt and if the public was still going out and enjoying these areas.

Commissioner Weitze wanted to know if the protected bike lanes would preclude parklets because that was how it was drawn. If the parklets prove to be a success, it would be something to consider.

Staff Member Wheeler believed that was a downside of the separated bike lanes. She said that they could do a combination of two but that wasn't ideal. She explained that all of the concept plans would also make a lot of pedestrian improvements and further explained where those would be. She said there were many iterations of what they could do and that with expanded sidewalk space they could have room for sidewalk dining.

Commissioner Weitze wanted to clarify that the determination of which side of the street on which to widen the sidewalk was ultimately the city's decision, but that businesses could petition to get their side expanded.

Staff Member Wheeler said that was correct, all the transportation options were the city's decisions with input from the community and that the City Council would make that decision.

Chair Soules said it ties into the concept of complete streets. They were looking at it through the lens of a particular mode and they need to think of it with the concept of a complete street. They need to make sure they have enough information and data that correlates to make an informed recommendation.

Commissioner Nachtigall addressed how they could learn from current events and get real-time data. So much of what they are doing now is where they want to possibly be in the future.

Chair Soules said that there are commuter and utilitarian trips vs. recreational trips that have different bodies of stakeholders. She was glad that in the planning stage they had not precluded

looking at more than one option because of what looked good. She also found the street typology interesting and a useful tool.

Commissioner clarifying questions and comments #6C (Pedestrian Infrastructure)

Commissioner Kohlstrand addressed the street typology map they had been given and gave some recommendations on places where it could be improved. She also made recommendations on how to make the bike/ped paths around the island a complete network and pointed out gaps she found. She addressed the pedestrian overlays and noted that the Northeast area of Alameda was lacking in these areas.

Staff Member Wheeler clarified the areas that Commissioner Kohlstrand had recommended. She said that the gaps that were mentioned were filled, and said that all the information hadn't made it to the pedestrian map.

Commissioner Kohlstrand asked Commissioner Hans to comment about the pathway through Lincoln Middle School that was often used in that the access was blocked by a locked gate.

Commissioner Hans explained on the map where it should be opened and where it got locked. He further explained on the map the area that was secured and that it was an agreement with BCDC (Bay Conservation and Development Commission) and the school district.

Chair Soules encouraged everyone to think about where commercial and industrial traffic would travel. Trucks bring in goods and services and for safety and other concerns they needed to accommodate commercial traffic.

She also addressed the public comment about data slicing and how information is skewed to the individuals who have the luxury and time to send in public comments and fill out the surveys. She wanted to make sure the City understood who was answering, this is why equity and outreach were so important. She also stressed that staff be mindful that they don't become myopic, that they need to look at comprehensive solutions and find the best ways to deliver them.

Staff Member Wheeler addressed the concern about data slicing, stating that from the beginning, with this project they had been trying to hear from the whole community. She spoke on the challenge of doing that but they had been reaching out to underrepresented groups such as those living at Alameda Point Collaborative, homeless individuals, high school students, and seniors. She spoke more on all of their outreach methods and what they were learning from their surveys.

Commissioner clarifying questions and comments #6C (Priorities)

Staff Member Wheeler said right now they are taking the opportunity to focus on high-level input from the community on priorities. She added that the goal now was checking in with the general public on it.

Ms. Wooley-Ousdahl said that was correct and that the next phase would be to prioritize the projects. They wanted to give people the opportunity to weigh in from the beginning.

Commissioner Weitze wanted to know about maintenance and the pedestrian infrastructure and if it would be considered in the context of slow streets that had been implemented and if it would be considered with current infrastructure or a separate category.

Staff Member Wheeler explained that maintenance with current infrastructure was just barricading on the slow streets. As of now, not much maintenance was needed.

Commissioner Weitze clarified his question. Is maintaining the current slow streets a concept within Alameda? Should we keep the streets as they are now and expand them?

Staff Member Wheeler said yes, they could see that as a program to potentially keep slow streets or to turn them into bike boulevards. It could be an evolution of the project.

Chair Soules encouraged everyone to tell friends and family about the surveys, and that there was an open house next Wednesday.

7. Announcements / Public Comments

Jim Strehlow wanted the maps to educate the public about the beautiful views of Alameda from Oakland with beautiful walking and biking paths that are public. He urged to keep bicycle enhancements on potential bike boulevards and side streets, not Lincoln Avenue, Webster Street, Central Avenue or Park Street, which are transit routes. He pleaded to make the plan a multi-modal plan.

8. Adjournment

Chair Soules adjourned the meeting at 9:31 p.m.