

Approved Minutes

Transportation Commission Special Meeting

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

Time: 6:30 p.m.

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

1. Roll Call

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

Absent: None.

2. Agenda Changes - none

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

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4672973&GUID=F417595E-294D-4A7A-81A9-930246FOCDD5&Options=&Search=&FullText=1>

4. Announcements / Public Comments - none

5. Consent Calendar – none

6. Regular Agenda Items

6A. Recommendation to Review and Provide Input on City Staff's Draft Support Letter for the Oakland Alameda Access Project (OAAP) and to Provide Comments on the Project's Draft Environmental Document

Chair Soules recused herself from this item, and Vice Chair Nachtigall led this item.

Andrew Thomas, Planning, Building and Transportation Director, gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4672974&GUID=E00CAC43-48BD-4066-8468-E7ED82F902BF&Options=&Search=>

Staff Thomas also introduced:

- Rodney Pimentel of HNTB
- Susan Chang of Alameda County Transportation Commission

Speakers on #6A

Gary Knecht: He stated that it is Jack London *District* and not Jack London *Square*, which is concerned with connection to Chinatown. He does not want more frontage roads, and will tolerate them. The horseshoe does create a frontage road of concern. Getting to Alameda will not be improved with this

project, unless one is coming from San Leandro. If coming from San Francisco, this problem has not been solved from Broadway by this project.

Paul Ashby: He encouraged the City of Alameda to support inclusion of the Webster Tube walkway for bicyclists. He has concerns about traffic off the island, for bicyclists and for pedestrians. This \$100 million project is not yet funded and he is concerned about how to fund the \$200 million bike/pedestrian bridge and when it could be funded. Pedestrian improvements will be valuable. Bicycling is difficult in the tubes, and the Webster Tube bike improvements are not satisfactory; however, a four-foot wide path (in Webster Tube) would be better than the three-foot wide path (in Posey Tube).

Sugiarto Loni, representing Oakland Chinatown Chamber. He stated that Chinatown receives the brunt of the traffic problem. He was involved in the previous Broadway-Jackson Study; however, Alameda was opposed so the study was delayed for ten years, is his understanding. The OAAP project is a good project for the Chinatown community. The project would open up the Chinatown community making it better for pedestrians. He thinks the horseshoe will work, and he does not want to lose time with a \$200 million bike/pedestrian bridge, especially with the planned development of Alameda Point. He hopes that Alameda will support OAAP and not derail it.

Serena Chen: She has lived in Alameda for 23 years, and also lived in Oakland and helped build the social communities in Oakland. The freeway cut off Chinatown, and this project is a serious social justice issue. Institutional decisions destroyed the Oakland Chinatown area. She does not want to hold up the opportunity to bring Chinatown together and reduce pollution from Alamedans who drive. She wants to move forward, and she also supports the bike/pedestrian bridge.

John Han: He was born in Alameda, and he lives and works in Alameda. The progress of this project is necessary. Alameda will grow yet there is no other ingress or egress. The collisions continue in Oakland. Oakland Chinatown has been disproportionately impacted by the current design, and it is systemic injustice to keep it here. It appears that Alameda City leaders and bike advocates are holding this project hostage and the optics are horrible.

Doris Gee: She is an active community member in both Alameda and Oakland Chinatown. She appreciates the changes to be built with this project. She has tried to cross 7th and Harrison in Oakland with her family, and motorists would not stop for them. The project will create more tourist opportunities and an Alameda-only exit out of Alameda.

Lena Tam: Former Councilmember and she does not want to delay this project. She uses this route to commute to Oakland and support the OAAP because it reduces the crash rate between motorists and pedestrians. She is worried about the long-term sustainability of Oakland Chinatown. She witnessed a pedestrian being hit on Webster Street who later died. She appreciates the time everyone has spent reviewing the plan.

Denyse Trepanier: The existing path through the tube is filthy and dangerous. It does not meet Caltrans safety standards for a path. The Webster Street walkway also would be substandard. She agrees with most of the speakers tonight that the OAAP has nice improvements for Oakland. Only one percent would use this new Webster Street path and monies should be redirected to the bike/pedestrian bridge. The voters wanted a multimodal solution, and this project is not it.

Michael Sullivan: He bikes through the tubes on a daily basis. It would be unfortunate to spend monies on another path in Webster Tube. It is not a multimodal project. He strongly supports investing in the bike/pedestrian bridge.

Ed Manasse, Deputy Director of Planning with the City of Oakland. He has been working with the Alameda CTC project staff and consultants. He appreciates the comments heard tonight, and the City of Oakland will be drafting a letter of support for this project. He also supports the bike/pedestrian bridge project, which will be positive for both cities.

Jim Strehlow: He is a bicyclist and motorist. The 2009 Estuary Crossing Study stated that the number one priority would be the water taxi program, and he wants to know the status of this project. The OAAP project is multimodal. The bike/pedestrian bridge is too far north for his needs so he would not use it. Sixth Street is six lanes, and will become a traffic jam. He supports this project.

Cyndy Johnson: She is with Bike Walk Alameda, and highlighted the portion of their submitted letter about the bike/pedestrian bridge. The project path does not meet best practice standards. The bike/pedestrian bridge should have been included in this project, and could accommodate up to 13 percent of the estuary trips. Alameda CTC should identify funds for the bike/pedestrian bridge. This bridge has been ten years in the making.

Commissioner Comments and Discussion for #6A

Commissioner Kohlstrand: She stated that this project is a long time in coming, and it is an important project, particularly for the City of Oakland. It seems to be a reasonable solution, and we should support the project as recommended by City staff. She has used the bus more than the car in this corridor, and is concerned that no transit improvements are listed as part of the project. She would like to have transit priority on both sides of the tube, and would like to hear why it was not included in the project. She would rather see the Webster Street path improvements than shift the monies to a bike/pedestrian bridge, which is worth looking at along with water taxis in the longer term. She would like clarification from the video about the Jackson Street ramp. In general, she supports the OAAP project, and feels it is time to alleviate the traffic congestion in Oakland Chinatown.

Rodney Pimentel clarified that the bus times will improve along with motorists. The left lane in the Webster Tube will be reserved only for Oakland traffic including buses to Oakland. Regarding the four-foot wide path, Caltrans did approve the design exception and wants to open it up for one-way travel for bicyclists and pedestrians. It is considered an incremental solution with the long-term solution as the bike/pedestrian bridge. As for the Jackson Street ramp, motorists could take it from I-580 and I-980.

Commissioner Kohlstrand: She would like the project to consider HOV lanes on Fifth Street in Oakland, and to include transit in the mix so it needs to give transit vehicles priority.

Commissioner Yuen: She supports the project, and appreciates the comments about the current impacts to Oakland Chinatown. It is important for Chinatown to fully use the community assets, like Garden Park. She would like clarification that the support of this project does not preclude the bike/pedestrian bridge. She would like to see the incremental progress for bicyclists that this project brings. She would use the bike/pedestrian bridge but she does not want to delay this project.

Commissioner Weitze: He supports the bike/pedestrian bridge, though he recommends that it be designed as a bike/pedestrian/transit bridge, since transit will help individuals who do not bike or walk. He is disappointed that the conversation is focused on a one-foot wider bike path, and instead would like to see a path protected from traffic and air pollution. He would like other path options, and not to have a path that exposes people to the air in the Tube. He is hesitant to support the project as is. It is not multimodal. The bike/pedestrian bridge is the long-term solution.

Vice Chair Nachtigall: She supports the project, and the current experience is dangerous for pedestrians. She is concerned about the potential for delay, and the bike/pedestrian bridge should not preclude this project. It is not the most multimodal solution but incremental improvements are needed and this project has been in the works for a long time.

Commissioner Kohlstrand: She requests that it needs to be clear what the Commissioners are being asked to do for any agenda item. She is open to adding language to enhance pedestrian and transit access as a motion.

Vice Chair Nachtigall: She asked for clarification on if it an action item.

Staff Thomas: Staff would like to pass comments to the City Council. Can be either consensus-based or an action.

Commissioner Weitze: It is not a multimodal project so it does not feel like Alameda should give up on the Webster Tube path improvements.

Commissioner Kohlstrand made a motion to support the staff letter with two modifications:

- **Remove statement that the City would not oppose the removal of the proposed Webster Tube walkway if it could help fund the next phases of the Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge.**
- **Request that Caltrans and Alameda CTC enhance transit access to and from the Tubes both in Oakland and Alameda, which would improve multi-modal access of the project.**

Commissioner Yuen: She seconded the motion by Commissioner Kohlstrand.

The motion passed 6-0.

6B. General Plan Update (Andrew Thomas, Director of Planning, Building and Transportation Department)

Andrew Thomas, Planning, Building and Transportation Director, gave a presentation and introduced consultant Sheffield. The staff report and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4672975&GUID=66886312-9F0E-4C9E-9485-317F282E7D8E&Options=&Search=>

Chair Soules requested to take community comments and to set up a process for future commissioner comments as a sub-committee. She would like a high level of engagement. The General Plan sets a baseline for projects moving forward. It is an opportunity to have community members' voices heard.

There were no community comments on Item #6B at this time.

Commissioner Comments and Discussion for #6B

Commissioner Yuen: She had the following comments:

- It is a great start of this General Plan and she commends staff for all the hard work on it.
- The pandemic has changed city planning and how we are dealing with commercial and slow streets, and it impacts fiscal budget of the City. The General Plan needs to mention the pandemic.

Staff Thomas agreed about the pandemic and released this draft just as the pandemic began, and will add lessons from the pandemic in the second draft.

Commissioner Yuen continued her comments:

- The actions within policies should be enumerated.
- Some actions are specific and others are broad, and would like the actions to be as specific as possible to be able to check them off the list if completed.
- Some actions are global across several chapters such as complete streets, climate and mobility element, and would like to see if it is possible to see mapping by element and action.

Staff Thomas said that the update needs to be restated to better understand progress to inform budget decisions, and staff/consultants are working on cross indexing.

Vice Chair Nachtigall agreed about the need to include mention of the pandemic. It is well designed and pretty, and yet the photos and the design graphics need to better visually convey diversity to show Alameda's racial and ethnic diversity as well as diversity of businesses. The graphics need to match the text to show that all people are visually represented.

Staff Thomas expressed appreciation for this comment and said that he would fix it.

Commissioner Kohlstrand commended staff and consultants on the work done to date, and said that it is a good draft. She would like the survey results to be synthesized, and would like to understand what

Alamedans think of density and land use. She would like to see a special workshop meeting or sub-committee to capture all the different perspectives of the commissioner members. She would like more emphasis on transit in that a higher percentage of trips are on transit compared to bicycling and walking, especially getting on/off the island. She is unsure how to proceed with housing obligations until we know what happens with Measure Z.

Staff Thomas: He said that Measure Z will impact how the City can proceed with residential density. The City needs to meet the state's housing obligations.

Commissioner Kohlstrand: She stated that she would like to consider doing sketch planning with Measure A or with something more rational.

Chair Soules: She agreed, and would like to have more comments on the General Plan with a sub-committee process.

Commissioner Weitze: He would like measurable actions agreeing with Commissioner Yuen. He would like to set an actual goal for the percent of trips going on and off the island such as car-free to help with funding projects.

Chair Soules: She stated that the surveys need more quantification. For example, the survey responses are heavily skewed towards white. The report does mention the groups that are underrepresented, and it needs to report back on how the gap would be reduced. She would like to have more prioritization of projects as well as timing. It is important to have rigor in the objectives and metrics. Transit moves the most amount of people, and transit needs to come back strong. She would like to see another Planning Board and Transportation Commission joint meeting to better understand zoning and development agreement requirements and to ensure coordination.

Commissioner Yuen: She likes the idea of the joint meeting with the Planning Board, and supports the transit first idea, and would like to lift it up in the update. The survey results are lacking, and the charts are confusing. She would like an expert to look at it who knows qualitative research. There needs more outreach effort to harder to reach demographics such as the Active Transportation Plan's statistically significant survey as well as other opportunities, which is difficult during a pandemic. She agrees about the importance to set targets and to have performance measures and metrics. Micromobility could be better highlighted to provide greater access to transit. She is pleased to see more consideration of equity.

Chair Soules: She wants to better assess if the projects can accommodate given the projected population and density on the west end such as Central Avenue.

Staff Thomas: He said that the City does not have the rigor for prioritizing how public funds are used. It ends up being a mix of politics, planning and cost/benefit analysis. We have multiple problems – a housing crisis and inadequate transportation.

Chair Soules: She stated that we do not want to quantify and study what is not helpful. We will have more traffic volumes so she is unsure if these projects will work for bicycling once Site A is developed.

Staff Thomas: He stated that it would be a worthwhile conversation, and could help guide the priorities. It is difficult to prioritize bicycling, walking, greenhouse gas reductions because these projects are trying to solve multiple problems.

Chair Soules: She said that having rigor costs money. We need to base the traffic numbers on an updated analysis to serve as a backdrop and for context on how to prioritize projects.

Staff Thomas: He would like to have a sub-committee with the specific policies in front of the group. We are unsure how the future will be for transportation and if the entire travel pattern will shift due to COVID and telecommuting in the future. For example, WETA is expecting midday boats to be more crowded.

Chair Soules: She agreed that it is difficult and we are trying to think long term, and she will follow up with the study team on how to follow up for more details on the sub-committee.

Commissioner Kohlstrand: She would like to have a viable transit system even if we have less congestion by making it more attractive.

Commissioner Weitze: He asked how does Alameda promote working from home. There is talk about incentives for local businesses such as financial incentives. Alameda should try to do it.

Chair Soules: She said that regionally, telecommuting is being mandated.

Public Comment for #6B

Christy Cannon: She said that she is on the Community Action for Sustainable Alameda, and she attends Planning Board meeting, and thinks it would be wonderful to have regular joint meetings with the Planning Board. It is tightly related, and is complicated. There are no easy ways to get people to talk about these issues. Making a City plan forces us to think 20 years ahead. She worked on promoting AC Transit bus line 19, and is excited to emphasize transit. It is a great conversation, and she appreciates the time taken by commissioners and staff.

6C. Public Works 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan Draft Recommendations

Scott Wikstrom, City Engineer and Robert Vance, Supervising Civil Engineer gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4672976&GUID=A2011A80-1F87-401F-9C00-73E3A5007B64&Options=&Search=>

Commissioner Comments and Discussion for #6C

Commissioner Kohlstrand: She asked for clarification on the numbers for the funded projects between \$56 million and \$39 million.

Staff Vance: The \$56 million is the maintenance and the \$39 million are the funded new infrastructure.

Commissioner Kohlstrand: She said that it is difficult to understand the funding and the process, and she requested more input earlier than next Spring such as briefings on how it is coming along would be helpful. The discussion on metrics is pertinent with limited funding, and is needed to have the most effective and efficient use of public funds.

Chair Soules: She asked Commissioner Kohlstrand if it is a topic to fold into the General Plan subcommittee study sessions.

Commissioner Kohlstrand: Yes, it would be helpful.

Chair Soules: She stated that Alameda has been extremely competitive with grants compared to the rest of the region. It is a commendable track record. These projects have done the greatest good with the least assets. We need to closely consider our regional partners, and how the projects impact the region. The projects need to state the benefits such as showing the mode split quantitatively, and staff needs to factor this analysis into the entire cost of the project. For equity, it is important to reduce barriers such as credit card issues, language issues, etc. She appreciates that lens in Alameda, and would like for staff to do this outreach to educate ourselves and transit users. Administratively, the commissioners will provide input to staff through the subcommittee. More voices and louder voices are great at this stage.

Public Comment for #6C - none

7. Announcements / Public Comments

Jim Strehlow: Before COVID, the Bay Area was seeing increased use for water shuttles. Water taxis were the 2009 solution, and he would like to know the status of the water shuttle program, especially the status of the Alameda Landing payment for it. It should have been a yearly commitment. The General Plan discussion needs to address the main problems similar to what the discussion stated.

8. Adjournment

Chair Soules adjourned the meeting at 10:30 p.m.