

Minutes
Transportation Commission Meeting
Wednesday, September 22, 2021

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=811336&GUID=3E8F230B-9CBC-47B0-8633-082B444CD1D6&Options=info|&Search=.](https://alameda.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=811336&GUID=3E8F230B-9CBC-47B0-8633-082B444CD1D6&Options=info|&Search=)

1. Roll Call

Present: Chair Soules, Vice Chair Yuen and Commissioners Kohlstrand*, Weitze*, Rentschler.

Absent: Commissioner Michael Hans and Alysha Nachtigall.

*Kohlstrand and Weitze arrived after the initial roll call.

2. Agenda Changes

Chair Samantha Soules said they would delay item 5 until they had a quorum.

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

[https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5137019&GUID=B567D985-136F-4FC9-B85D-073F5DCFEFDC&FullText=1.](https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5137019&GUID=B567D985-136F-4FC9-B85D-073F5DCFEFDC&FullText=1)

4. Announcements / Public Comments

Chair Soules thanked Vice Chair Tina Yuen for stepping into the role of Vice Chair. She then expressed her deepest condolences to the family of the man who was killed recently in a traffic fatality on Fernside. She discussed the important work that staff was doing with the Vision Zero Plan.

Hannah Green expressed her safety concerns about crossing the street on Buena Vista with her children near Chapin Street. She asked that crosswalks be painted at the intersection of Chapin,

Wood, 9th, and Buena Vista. She added that it was hard to cross there and that cars drove by without stopping and at high speeds.

Jill Staten discussed the slow street on Versailles and thought that this street was not well chosen for the program. She explained the many issues with the traffic that she had noted and that drivers would become frustrated.

5. Consent Calendar

5A. Draft Minutes Transportation Commission Meeting from Wednesday, July 28, 2021 (Action Item)

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5137020&GUID=EE3E1FEB-85D0-43AF-985C-5744F51CD6B4&FullText=1>.

Gail Payne, a Senior Transportation Coordinator, corrected that Commissioner Hans had been present at the meeting.

Commissioner Rebecca Kohlstrand made a motion to approve the minutes with the correction and Chair Soules seconded the motion. A vote was taken by a raise of hands and the motion passed 4-0, Vice-Chair Yuen abstained since she had been absent at the meeting.

6. Regular Agenda Items

6A. Discuss Link21: New Regional Rail/Transbay Rail Crossing Project Update (Discussion Item)

Staff Member Payne introduced Nicole Franklin with BART and Alex Evans of HNTB who gave the presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5137021&GUID=8186601E-EB9D-4ED2-8402-B67366E4B6C5&FullText=1>.

Commissioner Clarifying Questions for #6A

Commissioner Kohlstrand wanted more information on the vehicle types that would be used. She wanted to know how the technology would link together and what would need to be electrified.

Mr. Evans explained about the new generation electric vehicles they were working on and how Caltrans would adopt that technology. He explained what was being electrified and what systems could use both diesel and electricity.

Commissioner Weitze wanted to know how this project would be different from the High-Speed Rail project that California had been developing, which in his opinion had been a disaster. He wanted to know what lessons they had learned from that project. He also wanted to know how much faster this would be if they just focused on one thing and then worried about the connections.

Mr. Evans said they had learned a lot from that situation. He explained how and why this project was different. He saw their analysis as using existing highly functional systems and making improvements to these existing systems. He then explained what their findings had discovered, to serve the megaregion this project would likely start in the inner Bay Area but it would still serve the larger area.

Vice Chair Yuen wanted to know more about potential impacts to the City of Alameda, such as potential service stops. She also wanted to know what information they should be gathering about potential stops and the best way to share that information.

Mr. Evans said they would rely on the involvement of city staff and this commission to know where they thought service stops should be. Then they could match that up with their findings.

Staff Member Payne discussed the work and research staff had done to best locate and decide on potential service stops. She discussed other ways they could gather information and was open to other suggestions.

Ms. Franklin discussed the community engagement that BART had done to better understand service needs and aspirations. She would alert staff about their next survey and would share those findings.

Chair Soules brought up the RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Allocation) and the changing population that would be happening and wanted to make sure those demographic changes were captured.

Mr. Evans discussed how the Transbay Crossing was the centerpiece of this project and how this project would enable so much more. It was not just a way to get to and from San Francisco and he further discussed how this would serve different needs.

Chair Soules appreciated the big bold vision and was happy to see the outer communities considered. She wanted to know what assurances they had that once they had the Transbay

Crossing that the rest of the project would not fizzle. What planning and forethought had been given to funding and future support.

Mr. Evans wasn't sure if there was a great answer other than planning for the years ahead and raising expectations, which they were doing. He discussed the other agencies that were involved and believed this was a Golden Age in rail improvement. Each improvement would inspire people and groups to want the next one.

Commissioner Randy Rentschler wanted to know if there was any other city that had the same potential as Alameda to get another potential station.

Mr. Evans stated the reasons why Alameda was a good choice.

Public Comments for #6A

Jim Strehlow discussed how he liked the studies that showed the differences between East and West Bay. He then discussed his history of living and working in the Bay Area and how transportation and commuting around was difficult and that sometimes a personal vehicle was the best option.

Commissioner Comments and Discussions for #6A

Commissioner Kohlstrand discussed some of the limitations for high-speed rail in the area, the main one being no dedicated funding source. For this project, she believed everyone in Northern California needed to come together to identify how to get these things done. Also, they would need to work with the federal government for potential funding.

6B. Endorse the City Council's Adoption of a Resolution Establishing Signalized Intersection Equity Policy (Action Item)

Erin Smith, Public Works Director, introduced the item and gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5137022&GUID=61E66B31-15AE-49F5-A8F2-793575E7CCDE&FullText=1>.

Director Smith introduced Russ Thompson, Interim City Engineer, Robert Vance, Public Works Senior Engineer, and Ryan Dole, a Transportation Engineer with Kimley Horn who were available for questions and input.

Commissioner Clarifying Questions for #6B

Commissioner Rentschler wanted staff to be able to maximize use of available tools for optimizing signal timing. He also made note that despite the City's goal for mode shift, most people currently drive. He understood there was pressure on Public Works to reach the mode shift goals but he was opposed to creating needless wait time for drivers as a means to get there. He believed that actuated pedestrian signal use was most efficient. He discussed other ways they could improve the system as it was now.

Commissioner Kohlstrand generally agreed with the revisions that had been made. She then asked for a clarification on the wording in the redline resolution.

Director Smith clarified that the staff report and the presentation were correct, and that the intent is to use land use designation for community/commercial. She apologized for the mistake and noted that the resolution would be updated for Council's consideration.

Public Comments for #6B

Alexis Kreig strongly opposed prioritizing cars' convenience over allowing pedestrians to be able to cross when the light is green. She thought that since it was car emissions that were causing the climate crisis it was unconscionable to be prioritizing driver convenience over pedestrian safety and access.

Jim Strehlow highly commended the rewording of this resolution and thought it was very workable. He also endorsed Commissioner Rentschler's words as well and appreciated the work done by Russ Thompson.

Denyse Trepanier, Board President for Bike Walk Alameda, wanted to have a larger conversation about how they would want their intersections to behave since there were so many competing voices. She thought that they had already established in the Vision Zero plan that they would not prioritize driver convenience so she was surprised to see that as a priority in this policy. She was not opposed to this policy but believed it did not get to the conversation they should be having.

Commissioner Comments and Discussions for #6B

Commissioner Rentschler wanted to know if this was something that should be revisited. He did not want to create friction between modes and have people angry needlessly. He also wanted to know if this didn't work, what was the plan.

Director Smith explained how recall was already implemented on Park and Webster currently and that this policy would allow for the implementation of the time of day component, which is the functional change of this policy. They would only revisit it if they were directed to do so.

Commissioner Weitze first endorsed Bike Walk Alameda's statement and letter about signal improvements for bikes on Appezato Parkway; he thought that was way overdue. He explained his concerns with the "sometimes this and sometimes that" signals, especially in locations where they are teaching walking signals to children. He thought it should be, you push a button, and then it's safe to walk. He worried that having recall different at different times could be confusing and possibly dangerous. He was against the time of day recall.

Commissioner Kohlstrand agreed with Commissioner Weitze's observations and was also struggling with the time of day concept. She thought that having recall all the time along Park and Webster would be good. She also wanted to know why the intersection of Park and Otis was left off the pedestrian map, she pointed out what a busy pedestrian intersection that was. Other than that she was supportive of the staff recommendation.

Director Smith explained what decisions and criteria had gone into the pedestrian map.

**Commissioner Rentschler had to leave the meeting. He had originally made a motion to approve this resolution but since he had to leave Commissioner Kohlstrand made the motion instead.*

Chair Soules appreciated the red-line and she liked the time of day technology. She discussed how if the lights were not timed right, you would see drivers trying to "beat the light". She also believed this would allow balance for the different modes better. She also pointed out that the data would allow them to make adjustments to make this work better. She also agreed with and endorsed Commissioner Kohlstrand's clarification.

Vice Chair Yuen endorsed this policy and felt that she better understood it after the revisions. She agreed that the policy was nuanced, adaptive, and could balance everyone's needs. She discussed why some people were hesitant to support push buttons.

Commissioner Weitze stated that he would vote against this resolution strictly on the idea that he did not believe that an on/off again pedestrian recall was safer. He saw Vision Zero as important and believed this resolution was the opposite of that.

Commissioner Kohlstrand made a motion to approve/endorse the staff's recommendation with the amendment that the wording change to "community mixed-use/Commercial" to be consistent with the staff report. Chair Soules seconded the motion. A vote was taken by a raise of hands and the motion passed 3-1 with Commissioner Weitze voting against and Commissioner Rentschler being absent.

6C. Status Report on Transportation - September 2021 (Discussion Item)

Staff Member Payne gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at: <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5137023&GUID=F0B7864D-20DE-402B-AC24-FFFFC8AF4048>.

Rochelle Wheeler, Senior Transportation Coordinator, Lisa Foster, Transportation Planner, and Staff Member Vance also gave updates on projects.

Commissioner Clarifying Questions for #6C

Commissioner Kohlstrand asked about the repaving and repainting along Buena Vista and if it would include restriping near Maya Lin School. Would they be establishing crosswalks near that location? She also wanted to know the timeframe for that project.

Staff Member Vance said the project that just wrapped up was not a resurfacing project so they did not add crosswalks at that time. The next phase would include a designer who would evaluate accessible curb ramps, pavement markings, and that is when they would look at that intersection. This will take place sometime next year, in the fall and the winter.

Commissioner Kohlstrand asked staff to respond to the public comment who was concerned for that intersection and give them an update on the timing of that project.

Commissioner Weitze asked for a completion date for the evaluation (bike lane, road diet) of the Lincoln/Pacific corridor.

Staff Member Payne discussed how the project had been expanded and that a more comprehensive look had been planned for the corridor. It would now include a larger area and it needed more

outreach. Public outreach would start late this year or early next year and she then laid out the phases and what that entailed. This was a major effort and they would be applying for grant funding to complete and construct. She also explained what information they look for and gather during the evaluation.

Chair Soules asked with the investment in bike infrastructure, were they collecting data on bike counts. Had they been doing surveys, travel diaries, or counts in mode shift?

Staff Member Wheeler answered that they had done a statistically significant survey asking about mode choice. She did acknowledge that a travel diary would be the best survey and they could do those in the future. She also pointed out the bike counter on the Cross Alameda Trail but due to the pandemic, those numbers aren't a true reflection. She discussed other surveys and numbers they had been looking at for future comparisons.

Staff Member Payne added that working on better data collection with new technologies was something they would be working on as part of the Smart City Master Plan effort.

Chair Soules discussed how data collected intersected with their equity issues. She wanted to see if there was actual uptake in what they were offering as the transportation options to a larger population.

Staff Member Wheeler discussed how the statistically significant surveys would consider the population diversity. She also added that after projects were done they collected data as well.

Public Comments for #6C

Jill Staten discussed how important before and after data was, you needed to have good baseline data. She did not believe that survey data was good data, what really mattered was the observational data. She encouraged more observational data and fewer survey data.

Jim Strehlow wanted more clarification on where the work on Orion Street would take place. He also had concerns about safety on the new bike lane on Clement. He also wanted an update on when the Oakland/Alameda Access Project would begin. He also agreed with the previous speaker about having fewer survey data, he considered them hearsay and could be easily manipulated. He also pointed out that there was no chat window available for the meeting.

Staff Member Payne pointed out where the update for the Oakland/Alameda Access Project was located, page 23, and then discussed that project and timeline. She also clarified that the before and after data for Otis was based on quantitative analysis.

Chair Soules added that she would follow up with Staff Member Payne about Orion St.

Commissioner Comments and Discussions for #6C

Commissioner Weitze wanted to know what success for Line 78 would be. He felt that it was a difficult time to be starting a bus line during a pandemic, and he expressed concerned that people were hesitating to get on a bus right now.

Staff Member Payne answered that she had not seen any of the parameters on what was needed for that bus line to be successful. She added that there is a good faith effort to keep it beyond the first year.

Commissioner Weitze wanted to further discuss the Slow Streets map from the presentation. He discussed what he had observed about slow streets near where he lived, Woodstock, and felt that at the end of slow streets they did not create safe pedestrian behavior. He wanted to know if staff had looked at what happens when slow streets end and what people do.

Staff Member Wheeler said that was something that could be incorporated into their work. She added that a common response they had received on the survey was that people wanted a network of slow streets created. She discussed how that could address the issue of slow street endpoints.

7. Announcements / Public Comments

Commissioner Kohlstrand wanted to know if there was a date set up to initiate the sub-committee discussions on the technical report for the Mobility Element.

Staff Payne stated that was being delayed until next year until after the AC Transit Recovery Plan and the Active Transportation Plan approval. She explained what other input was needed since it all would build on each other.

Staff Member Payne pointed out that it was National Roundabout Week.

Chair Soules pointed out that it was Walk and Roll to school on 10/6 and reminded everyone that the Special Commission Meeting was 10/27.

8. Adjournment

Chair Soules adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.