

Approved Minutes
Transportation Commission Meeting
Wednesday, May 25, 2022

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Pursuant to Assembly Bill 361 codified at Government Code Section 54953, Transportation Commissioners can attend the meeting via teleconference. The City allows public participation via Zoom.

Legistar Link:

[https://alameda.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=898692&GUID=1212DFFA-F7DE-42D3-8FCE-CB683E4FA595&Options=info|&Search=.](https://alameda.legistar.com/MeetingDetail.aspx?ID=898692&GUID=1212DFFA-F7DE-42D3-8FCE-CB683E4FA595&Options=info|&Search=)

1. Roll Call

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

Absent: Commissioners Randy Rentschler and Alysha Nachtigall

2. Agenda Changes

None.

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

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5654502&GUID=53982B1B-C7CB-4BA4-A445-ACC1582F7D7E&FullText=1>

4. Announcements / Public Comments

Denise Trepanier discussed pedestrian safety and the importance of helping drivers maintain the 25mph. She discussed traffic calming that encouraged and made drivers slow down.

Jim Strehlow complained about the bike path on Clement Drive being blocked by construction vehicles. He also complained about pedestrians and he wanted to know the status of the Water Taxi program.

John Spangler agreed with Denise Trepanier on her comments and discussed the need for more police presence in order to address speeding. He also addressed Mr. Strehlow's comments about

Clement, they should wait until construction was completed before testing that bike line. He also thanked Gail Payne for her recent open house workshop at the Library.

Jay Garfinkle thanked Gail Payne and the staff for their hard work. He was concerned that too much pressure was being put on changing infrastructure and not teaching safety. He agreed that more enforcement was needed to address speeding and safety. He wanted clarification on parking on Park St.

Alex Spehr discussed pedestrian safety and the horror stories she had heard.

Bonnie Wehmann gave her support to the Vision Zero Plan and discussed the safety classes she personally gave. She said the roundabout at Grand made biking so much easier and safer. She discussed how awful, mean and dangerous drivers were to cyclists, even to kids.

Zac Bowling also spoke in favor of the Vision Zero Plan. He discussed W Oriskany Ave at Alameda Point that had been closed since the pandemic but now due to traffic issues he hoped that it could be reopen.

Brendan Macaulay also discussed the problems with W Oriskany Ave. He also felt that there was too much effort to push bikes on the street. No one is riding bikes and it makes delivery trucks jobs more difficult. He wanted someone to stand up against the bike lobbyists.

Tamara Centeno invited the commissioners to come and watch the school drop offs and pickups to see how horrible the traffic was outside of schools.

Michael Wu gave his support to the Vision Zero Plan and its changes. He said he was an active biker and recommended how traffic lights be made safer for cyclists and better for cars.

Heather Dooley also gave her support to the Vision Zero Plan and said how dependent her family was on protected bike paths and lanes. She also agreed with Speaker Trepanier on how to incentives motorists to slow down and be more aware.

Emil Palacios was supportive of bicycle safety and discussed his personal experience of dealing with accidents. He encouraged more classes for children to be more comfortable biking.

5. Consent Calendar

5A. Approve Meeting Minutes – March 23, 2022 (Action Item)

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5654503&GUID=3FEB55EF-61EC-47EE-ACBD-2C16CD1C4647&FullText=1>.

5B. Accept Status Report on Transportation (Action Item)

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5654504&GUID=D7BDBCD7-D82B-4B82-9846-7082E22C29AC&FullText=1>.

5C. Accept Updated Equity Priority Analysis Approach (Action Item)

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5654505&GUID=415B0912-79B3-4179-8A42-16FA652DCB1F&FullText=1>.

Commissioner Rebecca Kohlstrand made a motion to approval all items in the Consent Calendar

Vice Chair Yuen asked to pull item 5C.

Chair Samantha Soules opened public comment.

Jim Strehlow discussed the Signalized Intersection Access Policy and how convoluted the process was. He wanted the policy read in full for clarity and it should not have been a consent item. He had many concerns.

Chair Soules clarified that item 5C was completely different than the one Speaker Strehlow had mentioned.

Gail Payne, Senior Transportation Coordinator, clarified that this was entirely different. This was a report, item 5C, to better understand the city and see what areas were in the most need and vulnerable. She gave a brief presentation.

Chair Soules made a motion to approve Consent Items 5 A & B and Commissioner Scott Weitze seconded the motion. A vote was taken by a raise of hands and the motion passed 5-0.

Vice-Chair Yuen asked about the staff report for 5C and asked for clarification on how they would use those findings.

Staff Member Payne would get her that information.

Vice-Chair Yuen made a motion to approve item 5C and Commissioner Kohlstrand seconded the motion. A vote was taken by a raise of hands and the motion passed 5-0.

6. Regular Agenda Items

6A. Recommend City Council Approval of the Grand Street Improvement Project Concept (Robert Vance, City Engineer and NCE/Fehr & Peers staff) (Action Item)

Robert Vance, Public Works Senior Engineer, introduced this item and gave a presentation. The staff report and attachments can be found at:

<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5654506&GUID=A7D30FCF-07A6-4BED-AE91-F1A26BB82C62&FullText=1>.

Andrew Thomas, Director Planning Building & Transportation, discussed how this worked with the values in the new General Plan.

Ryan Shafer and Sara Dowling, consultants with NCE, also presented. Then Nate Lavine, a traffic consultant with Fehr & Peers, presented.

Commissioner Clarifying Questions for #6A

Commissioner Kohlstrand wanted to know the number of accidents in this area over the last 10 years.

Lisa Foster, Senior Transportation Coordinator, said there was a total of 91 collisions in the high injury corridor. She didn't have information on this particular stretch of Grand.

Commissioner Weitze asked about on-street parking for perpendicular streets and wanted to make sure if that would remain. He also asked about the percentage of who has their own driveway at Grand.

Staff Member Vance said that yes on-street parking would remain for perpendicular streets to Grand and he was unsure but about 95% of homes on Grand have a driveway.

Public Comments for #6A

John Brennan, Bike Walk Alameda, did not support the current proposed plan. He did not believe that separated bike lanes between Otis and Encinal was feasible. He pointed out places that needed more attention and gave suggestions for better safety.

Savanna Cheer gave her support for the protected bike lanes on Grand. She pushed for safety to be considered over any expressed inconveniences.

Joyce Mercado fully supported the proposed bike lanes for Grand. She discussed Climate Change and how this would help people feel more comfortable to get out of their cars and on bikes.

Janine Shafer wanted them to rethink the Grand St plan, there needed to be more 4 way stops. She also wanted them to address the intersection of Otis and Grand. She also felt that if they took away the parking spaces on Grand it would cause problems.

Cyndy Johnson, Bike Walk Alameda, gave her full support for the proposed protected bike lanes between Otis and Encinal. She saw this as giant step forward and great for traffic calming.

Betsy Mathieson discussed how people drove too fast on Grand and her experiences as a cyclist. She supported proceeding with staff's recommendations.

Zac Bowling gave strong support for any infrastructure improvement and the protected bike lanes. He also asked that the commission keep equity in mind for these improvements.

Carol Gottstein discussed how she was hit by a car in SF and agreed that the traffic on Grand was bad but did not support the proposed bike lanes. She thought that Grand would be better served with 4 way stops and speed bumps. She didn't think that the Vision Zero safety measures made anyone safer.

James Johnston asked that the commission move forward with this plan. He saw this as being safer for everyone, especially children. This plan still leaves many options for motorists.

John Spangler discussed the work he had done for pickups and drop offs for schools and how crazy things were. He asked about raising crosswalks and if there was an alternative design that had been looked at.

Don Porteous and Christy Cannon discussed their experiences as cyclists. Christy supported this plan and the need for more North/South lanes.

Brendan Macaulay asked about the proposed zig zagging and thought it would cause confusion and accidents.

Ezra Denney thanked the city and was thrilled by this plan. Protected bike lanes were much safer, he further discussed his experience as a cyclist. He was disheartened by the amount of written

comments that had made references to their “high valued property” as if that made them more important.

Barry Parker discussed the difficulty of backing out on Dayton as it is now. He thought backing out into a bike lane was very dangerous.

Pat Potter believed that as a driver the protected bike lanes made her safer. She really appreciated the protected bike lane approach and she felt that the intersection at Otis and Grand was fine if you drove slowly.

Megan Nangle gave her support for the Grand St improvement. She saw this plan as in line with the General Plan and the Vision Zero Plan. She wanted this community to stop prioritizing vehicles.

Tim Beloney discussed multimodal transportation and that streets were made for moving people. He believed that safety should be a number one concern over being able to park outside your house or getting across town in a car quickly.

Karen Miller vehemently opposed the separated bike lanes and agreed with the Grand St homeowners. It was dangerous and would impede ambulances and fire trucks.

Matt Anderson supported the goal of increasing safety but had concerns with the proposed plan. He wanted the city to go back to the original plan.

Beth Foote was pro safety and discussed the change on Grand since the pandemic. She was against the second proposal but was in favor of more 4 way stops and roundabouts.

Lars Damerow discussed why his family wasn’t able to bike more and how difficult it was to back out of their driveway on Grand.

Jacy Gaige gave her support for the staff recommendation for protected bike lanes. She discussed how her family relies on quality bike lanes.

Calin Williams discussed how he was in a bike accident and believed that protected lanes would have prevented his accident.

Arup Roy-Burman, a trauma doctor, was not in support of Plan 2. He discussed how the cut in parking would affect his street.

Michael Wu gave his support for the protected bike lanes between Otis and Encinal. He also agreed that it should be extended to include the Cross Alameda trail. He was astounded by the amount of accidents. He also agreed that the zig zag design was odd.

Bob Orbeta talked about the emergency vehicles that had been racing down Grand Street just now during this meeting. He wanted to know who would take responsibility for any delay in emergency response. He wanted the city and the commission to have more discussions with citizens on Grand.

Denise Trepanier, President Bike Walk Alameda, addressed concerns about parking and backing out on Grand.

Jo Lawson believed that biking and walking was very important. She also shared her neighbors concerns about speeding on Grand St but she didn't think Plan 2 addressed the important issues. She gave suggestions on better ways to help cyclists.

Jim Strehlow believed that Alameda streets were bike able just the way they were, in 2019 they were fine. He also believed that pedestrians should do more to ensure their safety. He also discussed he concerns about emergency evacuations.

Eric Purins gave his support to the safest option. He discussed how he had stopped biking on Grand due to safety concerns.

Bill Chapin gave his support for the protected bike lanes. He discussed his own experiences as a cyclist and what he had noted on Grand.

Jim Fine was in strong support of safety measures but hoped they could find a balance that didn't eliminate parking on Grand. He discussed what he had noted while living on Encinal. He didn't support the plan to add curves to Grand St. He brought up concerns about trash collections and EV charging stations for Grand.

Drew Dara Abrams gave his strong support for the plan with protected bike lanes. He discussed his family's experiences of biking on Grand.

Bonnie Wehmann agreed there needed to be more North/South connectors. She encouraged a "if you build it they will come" philosophy, if you make it kids will use it. She discussed bike safety classed she taught and hoped this project passed.

Veronica Baum discussed her experiences of walking and biking to school. She wanted to see more of an effort to slow down traffic, from enforcing the 25mph and more 4 way stops.

Michael Williams supported the protected bike lanes. As a member of the Fire Department he had seen the horrors of bike/car collisions, he noted he had never seen a bike hit in a protected bike lane. He urged the commission to move forward with this project. He added that emergency vehicles would have no issues navigating the new design for Grand St.

Michael Sullivan gave his support for staff's recommendation of protected bike lanes. He discussed his experience as a cyclist. He acknowledge that this was going to be big change but it was worth it.

Joshua Hawn gave his support to the protected bike lanes option. He discussed his experiences as a cyclist and that he will often drive due to safety concerns. He was also in support of raised crosswalks. For the comment "this isn't Amsterdam" he said Amsterdam was very different 30-40 years ago and that city decided to make bike safety a concern.

Rebecca Wernis discussed her experiences as a cyclists and gave her support the protected bike lanes and any improved safety along Grand St.

Carmen Plaza de Jennings gave her support to a petition filed by John Brennan. She also supported safety options that diminish speeding. She thought the problem with the current bike lanes on Grand was that it hadn't been repainted in ages, protected bike lanes were not necessary.

Commissioner Comments and Discussions for #6A

Commissioner Weitze saw this as a slam dunk project for the protected bike lane. He believed this was needed for bike safety but he did somewhat sympathize with some of the speakers. He pointed out that there would still be plenty of parking, he added that he was not comfortable keeping parking spaces while sacrificing public infrastructure and safety. He wholeheartedly supported the staff's recommendation.

Commissioner Kohlstrand supported multimodal transportation and agreed that a North/South connector was needed and Grand provided that logical connection. She did have concerns though about the amount of investment that was going into bicycle infrastructure. Since there were limited funds for infrastructure she wanted to prioritize streets that would be the most beneficial for all. She was leaning towards approving this but wanted more attention on implementing and

prioritizing projects and addressing conflicting data. She wanted to see a broader approach to traffic calming.

Chair Soules discussed her concerns about the process and questioned if the information had been reviewed evenly. She didn't want to push the problems of the morning commute of this street to another street. She went into detail about equity within transportation and how people move around the island. She also wanted more information on how emergency vehicles would manage with these changes.

Commissioner Kohlstrand concurred with Chair Soules concerns.

Vice-Chair Yuen respectfully disagreed. She thought the city was very clear on infrastructure and where it needed to invest and what it needed to achieve. She thought the plan did balance a lot of different considerations. She thought it was a very multi-modal plan. She agreed with Commissioner Weitze that the public right of way should not be used for the storage of our private cars.

Chair Soules spoke again about equity and wanting to make sure that Alameda Streets worked for all.

Commissioner Weitze did not see this as an equity issue, they were not closing down the street to cars and there was still parking available.

Staff Member Foster provided information about collisions on Grand.

Staff Member Vance discussed next steps for the design and what other input they would consider and what time would allow.

Commissioner Weitze made a motion to recommend the City Council's approval of the staff's recommendation for the Grand Street Improvement Concept and it was seconded by Chair Soules. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 5-0.

6B. Discuss the Citywide Roundabout Analysis (Gail Payne, Senior Transportation Coordinator and Mike Alston, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.) (Discussion Item)

Staff Member Payne introduced this item. The staff report and attachments can be found at <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5654507&GUID=6C00F445-2AF5-43DA-8409-E23CAE6CABA5&FullText=1>.

Mike Alston, Kittelson & Associates, INC, also presented and discussed the findings.

Commissioner Clarifying Questions for #6B

Vice Chair Yuen asked for more clarification on the additional memos regarding the Encinal/Sherman/Central roundabout.

Staff Member Payne discussed that information and that the memos were about why the final design was chosen.

Vice Chair Yuen discussed the concerns about the “slip lane” design option and wanted details on how it would work.

Staff Payne explained that those decisions for the Central Ave Project had already been made and approved by both this commission and City Council. If they didn’t move forward they were in danger of losing federal funding.

Commissioner Kohlstrand wanted clarification on how these intersections were evaluated.

Staff Member Payne broke down each screening and what the analysis had shown. The General Plan goals also added to the criteria and rankings.

Mr. Alston also gave clarification and explanations on how intersections were evaluated.

Public Comments for #6B

Zac Bowling discussed his concerns for the slip lane option, he was concerned about pedestrian walkability. However he did understand the importance of grant application deadlines. He was very excited for the roundabout projects and discussed the importance of public education on roundabouts.

Steven Jones was very happy with the roundabout at Island/Mecartney. He was very pleased with the choices staff had made.

John Brennen agreed with Speaker Bowling's comments about roundabouts and how newer designs are much better than older versions. He discussed ways to get people excited about roundabouts.

Jim Strehlow didn't see how changes in infrastructure would do anything about bad/impaired/distracted drivers. He thought that crashes would be made worse by roundabouts. For the Encinal/Sherman/Central project he thought that it was going back to council for discussion and the part about roundabouts had been added at the end with almost no public input.

Jay Garfinkle said he was not against roundabouts but thought that they were being put everywhere. He didn't think that grant funding was enough of a reason to implement them.

Commissioner Comments and Discussions for #6B

There was no further discussion on this item.

6C. Discuss the Existing Conditions and Initial Findings of the Lincoln Avenue/Marshall Way/Pacific Avenue Improvement Project (Information Item)

Staff Member Payne introduced this item, attachments can be found at <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5654508&GUID=4E12BA08-F421-4BFD-8B1F-397A8311BD12>. However the staff report was incorrect and was removed.

Bri Adams and David Parisi from Parisi Transportation Consulting also presented.

Commissioner Clarifying Questions for #6C

Commissioner Weitze asked about protected bike lanes on Central and wanted to make sure he understood what the plan was.

Staff Member Payne clarified that the majority of this bit would not be protected due to the driveways.

Public Comment for #6C

Zac Bowling was happy to see the proposal for Lincoln, which had a major issue with speeding. He also recommended that they shouldn't stop at St Charles and should go to Sherman and gave suggestions.

John Spangler discussed the history of Lincoln Ave and was thrilled to see it get this attention. He encouraged anything that would help speeding and pedestrian safety.

Jim Strehlow discussed his experiences as a cyclist and said if pedestrians and cyclists were getting injured on Lincoln they should use other streets. He thought that it was funny that protected bike did not protect cyclists in intersections. He again brought up his concerns about emergency evacuations.

Alex Spehr was pro commuter rail on Lincoln and discussed the importance of making bike lanes work for everyone, not just professional cyclists.

Commissioner Comments and Discussions for #6C

Commissioner Hans appreciated the focus that was being given west of Webster and the improvement of bus stops. He believed that staff was going down the right path and this plan of action was similar to other plans.

Commissioner Kohlstrand agreed with Speaker Strehlow's concerns about emergency evacuations and taking away the last East/West four lane street Alameda had. She agreed that traffic calming was needed though. She also wanted further discussions on what the long term transportation plan was for the island. She further discussed resources and the best use of those resources.

Commissioner Weitze echoed what Commissioner Kohlstrand about looking at other options. He discussed his concerns about making decisions now with all of the changes proposed for the West End.

Chair Soules discussed her concerns and what information and data she wanted to see. She felt that they were on the right track but wanted see other options.

Vice Chair Yuen agreed it was on the right track. She discussed which options she liked and how she saw them working.

7. Announcements / Public Comments

Staff Member Payne announced that the next meeting would be August 24th.

Commissioner Kohlstrand asked about live meetings and when they could be expected.

Staff Member Payne said that due to an uptick in covid cases they would still be doing virtual meetings.

Jim Strehlow appreciated having live meetings since he felt that he got cut off in virtual meetings. He wanted issues to be more openly addressed with the public.

Drew Dara Abrams appreciated the option to call in to meeting virtually and hoped that some sort of hybrid meeting would be allowed in the future.

John Spangler thanked the commission for their hard work.

Alex Spehr also loved the hybrid meeting due to it allowed her to participate without needing to find childcare.

8. Adjournment

Chair Soules adjourned the meeting at 11:18 p.m.