



MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION COMMITTEE (TCC)

David Gebhard Public Meeting Room
630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara, CA
Thursday, January 26, 2012, 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Chair France called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM

ROLL CALL:

TCC MEMBERS

Hillary Blackerby
Mark Bradley
Keith Coffman-Grey
Edward France
Susan Horne
David Pritchett
David Tabor

Attendance

Present
Excused
Present
Present
Present
Excused
Present

CITY STAFF PRESENT :

Browning Allen, Transportation Manager
Robert J. Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner
Derrick Bailey, Supervising Transportation Engineer
Kim Thaler-Strange, Administrative Specialist
Pat Kelly, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer
Christine F. Andersen, Public Works Director
Sarah Grant, Mobility Coordinator

LIAISONS PRESENT

Cathy Murillo, Council Liaison
Deborah Schwartz, Planning Commission Liaison

OTHERS PRESENT

Sherrie Fisher, General Manager, MTD
Steve Maas, Manager of Strategic Planning
& Compliance, MTD
Carlos Cerecedo, Interpreter
Patricia Salcedo, Interpreter
Levi Sachs
Rick Goodfriend,
Ana Rico (for Sra. Romero), Eva Inbar
Leslie Simon
Rose Aldana
Naomi Greene
Sharon Byrne.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Chair France introduced Carlos Cerecedo, who was providing translation services for this meeting. He also reminded speakers to mark the items on the Request to Speak form, and if there were comments unrelated to items 3 and 4, to please speak during public comment.

Rick Goodfriend spoke during public comment about safety issues. The drainage ditches at Junipero, Garden and Laguna Streets needs to be fixed; there should be a three-way stop at Bath and Arrellaga; and it is difficult for a disabled person to cross Junipero and Garden because there is only one ramp for wheelchairs.

Mr. France asked Mr. Allen the best way to contact the City with concerns. Mr. Allen gave the Transportation Division's main phone number (805) 564-5385

CONSENT CALENDAR:

2. **Approval of Minutes from the October 13, 2011 meetings where a TCC quorum was present.**

Committee Member Tabor requested that the following be added to the minutes on page 4, "the majority felt the potential benefit was outweighed by public safety concerns. Chair France indicated that the Voluntario item (Item 5) was too condensed, and requested that future meeting minutes provide more specific details.

Motion: Approve the Minutes from the October 13, 2011 meeting.

Motion made to approve the minutes by Mr. Coffman-Grey, seconded by Ms. Blackerby

Ayes: 5 Noes: Abstain: Absent: 2

REPORTS

3. **Review of the September, October, November and December MTD Monthly Reports, the First and Second Quarter 2012 Reports, and a presentation on the Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2011**

Sherrie Fisher, General Manager of MTD gave the presentation of the Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Report, and was available to answer questions about the other reports. Ms. Fisher indicated that she wanted to hear comments about MTD services, and about Milpas Street.

Her report discussed the history of MTD's Electric Vehicle Fleet, starting with the "Shopper Hopper" in the 70's. Currently, over 500,000 people ride the shuttles, and sometimes there is an overflow. This is supported with an ongoing agreement with the City. The Downtown Waterfront Shuttle is supported by the City. There are two portions to the Waterfront Shuttle – State Street and the Waterfront, providing service for 526,000 passengers, utilizing over 15,000 revenue hours. City subsidies allow for the \$0.25 fare. The Carrillo Commuter Lot Shuttle is another service offered by MTD. This shuttle serves 12,100 passengers and utilizes 1125 service hours. She also discussed the Crosstown Shuttle.

She also discussed statistics for MTD as a whole. She expressed interest in Routes 1 and 2 as they relate to Milpas. MTD is negotiating to borrow an articulated bus, which will hold more 50% more passengers (both seat, to help with the large ridership on the 15X which covers Isla Vista. At least 4 extra busses are currently needed to accommodate this ridership. Need to know if it isn't working. She also pointed out that MTD welcomes comments.

Committee Members commented on the high volumes of riders going out to Isla Vista, and about the red points on the graph, which illustrate the City-subsidized lines.

Chair France introduced Councilmember Murillo and acknowledged those in the audience before introducing Item 4.

4. Milpas Street:

This item concerns pedestrian safety in the Milpas Street Corridor. Mr. Pat Kelly, City Engineer, and Mr. Derrick Bailey, Supervising Traffic Engineer were introduced. City staff listened to community concerns at previous community meetings and is reporting back with some solutions. After this meeting, staff will go to the NAC, and then come back in March for a joint meeting of the TCC and NAC, at which time recommendations will be made for staff to take to Council.

Mr. Bailey presented a report illustrating various options for pedestrian crossings at the intersections of Milpas and Ortega Streets and Milpas and Yanonali Streets. This report follows a series of neighborhood meetings that followed a fatal crash that took place in October, 2011.

During those meetings, the community also identified the intersection of Milpas and Yanonali Streets as another location that presents challenges and dangers to pedestrians.

An engineering analysis of these two intersections was done, revealing that overall safety and efficiency would not be improved with the installation of a traffic signal. It was decided that alternatives should focus on non-signalized solutions. The list of feasible alternatives for Milpas and Ortega Streets include: 1) Removal of marked crosswalks; 2) Median refuge island with pedestrian activated flashing lights; and 3) Neighborhood Transition Striping. The alternatives for Milpas and Yanonali Streets include: 1) Removal of marked crosswalks; and 2) a Median refuge island, possibly supplemented with pedestrian-activated flashing lights.

Mr. Bailey pointed out that staff is still soliciting feedback from the community and the TCC, and indicated that these options would be presented to the NAC on February 8, 2012, and then presented at a joint TCC and NAC meeting to seek a recommendation for Council. The NAC Meeting is scheduled for February 8 at the Franklin Community Center. The joint TCC/NAC meeting is scheduled for March 22, 6:00 p.m., at 630 Garden Street, in the Gebhard Room.

Public Comments were made by: Levi Sachs, Mr. Goodfriend, Ana Rico (for Sra. Romero), Eva Inbar, Leslie Simon, Rose Aldana, Naomi Greene, and Sharon Byrne.

Levi Sachs said that there was a sign in the center of Cabrillo Boulevard at one time which helped with pedestrian crossings. They later took the sign away, for reasons unknown. Cars don't stop even when people are at the corner trying to cross. Pedestrians have the right away, per state law. The blinking signs are the best way to go. The parking on Milpas Street is the biggest hazard, as well as busses taking up one and a half lanes when they are stopped. He believes there should be no parking or parking on one side of the street.

Mr. Goodfriend pointed out that there is a light on every block of State Street; it is a cruising street. The Transportation Dept. has the mindset of efficiency over safety. There is always a negative when talking with staff. Safety needs to come first. Staff needs to find viable ways to make things safe. He used De La Vina and Cabrillo Streets as examples. He would like to see the City spend the money for a light on each block of Milpas Street. He also mentioned making Milpas a two-lane street.

Ana Rico (for Sra. Romero) Sra. Romero wants to thank everyone for what is being done. She will keep things in mind, and process what she heard. Ms. Rico then commented that the Milpas and Yanonali Streets intersection is very dangerous; she is afraid to cross there. People use that intersection because of the bus stop. Salinas and Cacique is another dangerous intersection. She was almost hit while walking her children to school, when one car stopped and the other car sped up. She pointed out that a lot of children walk to Cleveland School. At Milpas and Yanonali there are no ramps for wheelchairs.

Eva Inbar said that COAST has been working intensively on the Eastside Walks program. She is uncomfortable with relocating bus stops; it would only move the problem around, and while it might remove pedestrian generators, it does not make the intersection safer. In fact, it would make it worse, and potentially lessens the chance of getting pedestrian features added at that intersection. Alternative 1, removing a crosswalk, is not a viable solution either as it goes against City policies. Alternative 2, the median refuge, is a good idea to explore, especially combined with the flashing beacons. Those in combination could be a fairly safe solution. She would like to hear more about enforcement, which is an important part of any traffic safety solutions for Milpas Street. The road diet is an interesting option, but it needs more study. She looks forward to hearing more about that.

Leslie Simone lives on Ortega Street and has seen many almost-accidents, partly because people are turning left from Ortega to beat the light. There is a lot of pedestrian activity there because of several shops including Super Rico and Alpha Thrift, the bus stop, and the junior high. She feels that a light would be best, but the flashing lights and one crosswalk seem to be the next best alternative. She asked if the median refuge would eliminate the ability to turn left on Ortega. Mr. Bailey said no. She added that very few people turn left on Ortega; they actually go to Cota Street when they want to turn left.

Mr. Bailey showed a visual of the intersection and explained why moving the crosswalk back a bit would send it through the median. It would not work at Yanonali Street, as the median would have to stick out into the intersection, making it harder for drivers to turn, or pull away from the street parking. At Ortega Street, there would be no impact to the ability to turn left.

Rose Aldana is following up on a petition she gave to Council on November 20, 2011, requesting traffic and pedestrian lights at Ortega and Yanonali Streets. She submitted 514 signatures from the neighborhood residents. The residents in the area prefer walking to their destinations to avoid driving. The petition was put together out of concern for the many deaths that have occurred at these intersections, including one up on the intersection Bond and Milpas Streets. The traffic needs to slow down. Moving bus stops is not a good thing. A beacon in the middle of the street would be a good thing to identify pedestrians needing to cross although; it would be frightening to be on an island in the middle of the street. Beacons and pedestrian lighting would make sense so all corners on Milpas at all intersections from the freeway to Canon Perdido Street have lights so everyone is safer.

Naomi Greene is a resident of Alisos Street. She thinks that Alisos Street is affected by Milpas Street traffic. The one and two way stops have not stopped many accidents. Cars are coming fast, and there are hills and visibility is limited. She asked that other streets be looked at as well, since Alisos Street will eventually be opened through to the beach, and there will be more traffic. She urged staff to think more about people on the streets and less about traffic. She would like to see more encouragement to walk and ride the bus. She expressed appreciation for the busses, and suggested possibly having a tram similar to the one on State Street. She would like the same consideration given to Milpas as is given to State Street.

Sharon Byrne said that the neighborhood is disappointed that there won't be traffic lights. It was believed that they would be the ultimate safety precaution. Pedestrian lights are a good, short term solution, though. Milpas Street is a heavily traffic street. There are four supermarkets, a lot of construction and garden industries, and a lot of restaurants. There is a larger residential surrounding area, and a lot of pedestrians and cyclist. She described the street is pedestrian hostile, with narrow sidewalks that only fit one person. The MCA would like City to think long-term - this is an old Los Angeles 1950's style street with heavy traffic volume. They would like to see the space created by the elimination of parking lane used to widen sidewalks, and put in bike lanes – the businesses would be happy with this. They want a long-term strategy that embraces all uses of the street.

The Committee thanked everyone who attended – staff, the Police Department, the liaisons, and the community. They were appreciative that people took time to come out and comment and stand up for their neighborhoods.

Mr. Tabor pointed out that Milpas Street is a lively and dynamic, mixed-use, busy street. As such, there are challenges. There are no other streets in the City to compare Milpas Street to. With 10 foot lanes and 7 foot parking lanes, it is difficult to get out of a car; there are a lot of side swipe accidents. He is pleased to see staff and the public looking at solutions for these issues. He said that if there is regularity, in the midst of all the busyness, it seems more normal; the regularity takes away some of the busyness. This gives a glimmer of an argument for a signal at Yanonali and Ortega Streets - if drivers know that there is a signal, they will know how to proceed in an orderly way. He does understand the arguments against it.

The flashing lights get attention, even on a busy street with the signs and the lights and the parked cars on the side, it would be a noticeable feature. Commuters would pay attention to a beacon in the middle of the road. He would like to explore the idea of changing the road configuration from 4 lanes down to 2 lanes down to Cota Street - the traffic volume there would work. He appreciates the comments about De La Guerra Street not becoming a two-trip intersection. It could bring traffic around Anapamu Street in a one-lane configuration down Milpas Street down to Cota Street where the junior high is, making it easier for the kids going to school. He agrees that moving the bus stops would make people walk more, and would not help to encourage bus use and walk. Shifting might be okay, but combining them is not.

Ms. Horne's main issue is pedestrian safety in the area. She saw what happened with Cliff Drive and lane reduction up on that street. A lane reduction on Milpas Street is a good idea that would serve so many purposes for all that are using it with every mode of transportation. She shared a story of a similar accident on San Andres where a pedestrian was paralyzed. She also likes the idea of combining the middle median and flashing lights, and not adding more clutter on the sides of the street. Didn't really hear much discussion about changing the MTD bus stops, but she was glad to hear comments on that.

Mr. France read comments that were submitted to him. Joel Schwimmer says that it's not just this part of Milpas Street that has safety concerns; it is the entire Milpas Corner. Mark Bradley says that while moving the MTD bus stops might be a good idea it is not significant compared to what we are trying to do. He has a conflict with moving the crosswalks; it might make people safer, but does not address the problem at hand. Also, he favors the median island and flashing beacons at both intersections even if it means moving parking spaces.

Mr. Aldana, Ms. Byrne, and Mr. Alvarado sent a letter to TCC and maybe to Council outlining three points: 1) Immediate steps such as targeted enforcement and utilizing the speed trailer, repainting the crosswalks for greater visibility, and a paddle sign reminding drivers that pedestrians have the right of way, per state law. Mr. France emphasized again that many people are unaware of that law, and they need to be made aware of it. There were also suggestions to create media campaign about pedestrian safety. 2) Suggested midterm steps include additional traffic signals at Ortega and Yanonali Streets, which they believe is the safest and least confusing and long term solution. Long-term solutions include forming a blue ribbon committee consisting of City representative, stakeholders, neighbors and business owners in the community to create a comprehensive, long-term Milpas Revitalization Plan, to update and engineer the street to make it safer for all.

Ms. Blackerby expressed appreciation for those in attendance standing up for their community. She also appreciated the compassion of Mr. Bailey's presentation.

Ms. Blackerby understands the warrant situation, but also understands that while moving or eliminating bus stops and crosswalks may be an engineering solution, is not a real solution at all, and would shut down the neighborhood to pedestrians even more. She believes that the 12" lenses are crucial and pedestrian countdown timers should be at all signalized intersections. She asked about the speed limit in the corridor. Mr. Bailey replied that the speed limit is 30mph all the way down Milpas Street. A speed survey was done as part of the study of this street, and it was found that 96% of all drivers were going below 35mph. Only 4% were going over 35mph, which is statistically good. He indicated that people are not comfortable speeding down Milpas Street, especially around other traffic. Additionally, 2/3 of all drivers used the inside lane, which indicates that people are uncomfortable driving near parked cars and busses at the bus stop. There were several side swipe crashes, but for every reported side swipe, how many are going unreported?

In talking about how tightly crammed in Milpas Street is, it was shocking that the Fresh and Easy project was approved with no setback, which make walking on that section of sidewalk even tougher, and potentially frightening. There are other areas that would also be avoided by pedestrians. From a holistic perspective, hopefully that will never happen again. She likes the idea of the neighborhood transitional striping as it is working in other areas, such as the De La Vina corridor, where traffic flow is wonderful, and Cliff Drive has been improved by the lane reductions. The idea of having marked bike lanes is a good one; even better than sharrows, which are better than nothing.

Looking at the holistic perspective of the Milpas Street Corridor should have been done a long time ago. If at all possible, if the pedestrian push button is part of the project, it should be bilingual, and that any signage that goes up should also be bilingual. Staff should be looking to the whole of the east side.

Mr. Coffman-Grey asked Mr. Bailey about the diagrams shown in the presentation on both intersections, and the changes shown only on one side of the intersection. Mr. Bailey confirmed that any changes would be made on either one side of the street or the other. The challenge at

Ortega Street is that on the southeast corner, the curb bulbs into the road 4 or 5 feet or so. There isn't enough room to just put something in there; something would have to come out. Mr. Bailey suggested that the changes would be at the north side of the intersection. At Yanonali Street, it could go on either side.

Mr. Coffman-Grey also asked if they had explored the option of curb extensions where parked cars normally are so that pedestrians would be visible to drivers. Mr. Bailey indicated that it is an alternative, and staff looked at it when looking at various combinations. He suggested the striping transition with a curb extension and a median refuge. There would be room for all features. Mr. Bailey said that he would include that drawing when he came before the Committee again. He also added that there are concerns about curb extensions and their impact to traffic, and cars hitting them. A solution for this would be having them as part of a combination, which would make them visible and they would be outside of the bike lanes. Drivers would be guided past the extensions, and bike lanes would be next to them, possibly alleviating some of the objections to the curb extension. He also stressed the importance of encouraging walking to school, as there are a lot of schools around the Ortega intersection. Moving the bus stop would be counterproductive and discouraging to those who ride, as it would mean that pedestrians would have to walk farther.

He recognizes that at Yanonali Street, the striping would not work as there is too much activity. However, he likes the idea of the median island with flashing lights and no curb extensions there. He echoed other Committee members' thoughts that a whole Milpas Street Plan should be explored. Right now, it is important to move forward to fix these intersections.

Councilmember Murillo thanked Sra. Romero for attending and expressed her pleasure that we can actually do something on Milpas Street. She also recognized Christine Andersen, Public Works Director, Sherrie Fisher, General Manager, of MTD, and staff's commitment to making changes on Milpas. She acknowledged receipt of the petition that was submitted by Ms. Aldana, and the letters from the Milpas Association and COAST, and will make sure that Council gives an acknowledgement.

Mr. France directed the question of targeted enforcement to the Police Department. Sgt. Mike McGrew explained that due to staffing issues he has had only two officers on any given day, who would be put into a black-and-white in the case of emergency situations and 911 calls. However, there will now be 5 motor officers patrolling and doing specific enforcement. The officers are being assigned beats, one beat per officer. This does not mean that they will only be the only officer on those beats. If there is an issue all available officers will respond.

He also mentioned upcoming pedestrian stings, where undercover officers will step into the crosswalk. Motor officers will be waiting. These happen all around the city, and Milpas is being given high visibility and enforcement. The speed trailer is part of Traffic Engineering, and John Rousseau will respond quickly when needed. He encouraged the public and the committee to call him with any issues at (805) 897-3720. There will be follow up on these calls.

Mr. France asked Sgt. McGrew about the idea of a table board or information piece that could be used with a crosswalk sting or traffic trailer to remind people about the law. Sgt. McGrew said that messages can be put on the speed trailer.

He also informed everyone that people will be informed about stings ahead of time. He reminded folks to be careful when crossing the streets.

Mr. France stressed again how many comments were pertaining to the entirety of the Milpas

Corridor, and the frequent almost-accidents. The City is about proactively making itself great on an ongoing basis. Safety is critical and need for a lack of fear. He acknowledged that immediate steps are needed, but wondered what is on the drawing board for future and long-term planning.

Mr. Allen indicated that there is nothing in the near future in the CIP program for this neighborhood. Mr. Bailey can look at streets from a traffic engineering point, but there is no budget for a long-term plan.

Mr. France asked if traffic calming is on hold. Mr. Allen replied that there has been no money budgeted; there is a struggle to maintain the roadway. There is also no consensus amongst the elected officials.

Mr. France then mentioned that Upper State Street is being considered as a mirror for Milpas and asked how the State Street Study was paid for. He asked Ms. Anderson what the options were for funding.

The State Street Study was funded from the General Fund; but Council had to authorize the Community Development Department to put Plan SB on hold for the study.

Ms. Andersen, Public Works Director, indicated that we were fortunate to hold onto the level of service that we did. The focus for planning efforts has been channeled into Plan SB, which was the primary planning effort. There was a program that supported neighborhood traffic calming, but it was removed from the budget in 2009. The City is currently going through the second year of the 2-year budget cycle, and while staff does not anticipate significant changes to the level of service, but can say that the most recent revenue picture is stabilizing. We will need to hear what is missing and what we need to prioritize from the community as we go into the next budget cycle. At this time, there is no money in the budget.

The joint TCC and NAC meeting was confirmed.

Mr. France asked about the number of average daily trips in comparison to De La Vina Street and Cliff Drive, and if the median island would necessitate lane reductions or are they separate options? What would the safest option be? Would it be possible to reduce lanes on those blocks and not have traffic double stack through the light?

Mr. Bailey said that median islands can go with either lane configuration. However, the space needs to be created to make it happen. Lanes would have to be bulbed around the median to keep the existing configuration. Everyone should be able to make it through the light in one cycle, on both options without lowering the level of service. It was also noted that the level of service did not include safety or ease of access, only motor vehicles, and that there would be no change in traffic flow at Yanonali Street.

Ms. Fisher answered questions about moving the bus stop. At the Milpas and Ortega Streets stop, there are 142 people who board per day and 28 who get off. There is another stop within a block or so of the intersection so the walking distance would increase only slightly. At Yanonali Street, there are 51 riders daily - 21 get on, 32 get off, so removing this stop would make for a longer walk to the bus stop. However, MTD is willing to move the stops if requested to do so. It is also possible that a bus stopped at the Yanonali Street stop might block the pedestrian flasher.

Ms. Murillo asked about a site visit. The Committee discussed the possibility and came to a consensus that it should be a noticed public meeting. Ms. Thaler-Strange was asked to poll the committee for a date and time. Mr. Bailey will attend, and MTD will provide a bus. The meeting will be publicly noticed per the Brown Act.

Ms. Schwarz, Planning Commission Liaison wanted to reference the Upper State Street Study, which allowed for staff to engage with the community and decisions makers so that the PC is not approving one-off projects. Fresh and Easy was a rare one-off project. There is a desire to not only look at short term tactical measures, but also look at long-term visioning and strategic planning for the Milpas Corridor.

Mr. France pointed out that more outreach to the business owners and community regarding the removal of traffic lanes and loss of parking is necessary.

Mr. Allen indicated that the primary purpose of this meeting is to introduce options that the City has come up with. Hopefully people are watching, and staff is receiving input from the community. Coming back to the committee in March will allow time for community outreach and feedback. After the February NAC meeting, staff will sit with different groups to get their input. Staff was reminded to bring the curb extension option back to the Committee, and encouraged to use curb extensions as part of good planning practices, now that there is a change in City leadership.

It was also suggested that the City get a hold of news agencies and ask them to make announcements at the end of their shows to look out for pedestrians; pedestrians have the right of way. It was again emphasized that education is crucial. Additionally, the Committee hopes that future planning efforts will include widening the sidewalk.

5. Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

Mr. France explained the tradition of changing Chair and Vice Chair. Ms. Horne, per rotation would be selected to be vice chair; Ms. Blackerby would be Chair. Ms. Horne was asked if she was ready to be Vice Chair. She declined.

Mr. Allen added that the Vice Chair usually goes to someone who has not served. He spoke to the tradition of how Chairs were alternated. Vice chair is at the pleasure of the Committee. It was clarified that Vice Chair does not have to become Chair.

Motion: Nominate Hillary Blackerby to be the new Chair

Motion made by Mr. Coffman-Grey, seconded by Mr. France

Ayes: 5 Noes: Abstain: Absent: 2

There was discussion about Committee Openings, which will be handled during the semi-annual recruitment. It was made known that the Vice Chair can resign at any time.

Motion: Nominate Keith Coffman-Grey for Vice Chair

Motion made by Ms. Blackerby, seconded by Mr. Tabor

Motion made to approve the minutes by Mr. Coffman-Grey, seconded by Ms. Blackerby

Ayes: 5 Noes: Abstain: Absent: 2

6. Meeting Schedule

There was an error on the schedule for August and December. Mr. Allen gave the history of the meeting schedule. The decision the Committee needs to make is to go back to the fourth Thursday of the month, or stay at the second Thursday.

There was discussion of off month meetings vs. on month meeting. The one in March is considered an off meeting, and April would be the scheduled meeting.

Motion: To go back to meeting on the fourth Thursday of the month

Motion made by Ms. Horn, seconded by Mr. Coffman-Grey

Ayes: 5 Noes: Abstain: Absent: 2

There was a request for the updated roster, which will be sent out following this meeting. The Committee was reminded about emailing each other.

There was concern about the committee being notified when items are going to council. The Committee will be notified in future when items that were present to the Committee will be going to Council.

Chair France Adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.