



TRANSPORTATION and INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

Thursday, January 18th, 2024, 7:00 pm

North Berkeley Senior Center
1901 Hearst Avenue
Berkeley, CA, 94709

A. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1. Call to order

7:02 pm: Chair Parolek called the meeting to order.

2. Roll call

7:03 pm:

Commissioners Present: Noelani Fixler, Barnali Ghosh, Adrian Leung, Liza Lutzker, Bryce Nesbitt, Karen Parolek, Rick Raffanti, Kim Walton, Ray Yep

Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Hamid Mostowfi, Ron Nevels, Noah Budnick

3. Public comment on items not on the agenda

7:04 pm: No comments.

4. Approval of minutes from November 16th, 2023

7:05 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Raffanti / Fixler) to approve the minutes.

7:07 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Fixler, Ghosh, Leung, Nesbitt, Parolek, Raffanti, Walton, Yep

Noes: None

Abstain: Lutzker

Absent: None

Recused: None

7:05 pm Motion passed 8-0-1-0-0

5. Approval and Order of Agenda

7:06 pm: No changes suggested.

6. Update on administration and staff

7:06 pm: Co-Secretaries Mostowfi and Nevels provided updates and answered Commissioners' questions on the following topics: staffing updates, MLK Vision Zero Quick Build project, 10th Street traffic calming, 4-way stop sign at Oxford and Virginia, sewer contracts, sidewalk contracts, FY 2023 paving completion, FY2024 paving planning, Wildcat Canyon storm drain improvements, People's Park construction, Berkeley High School parking permits, I-80/Gilman bicycle and pedestrian bridge construction progress.

7. Announcements

7:31 pm: Commissioner Lutzker announced that the UC Berkeley SafeTREC program hosted a webinar and launched a toolkit on how cities can lower their speed limits under AB43. Commissioner Nesbitt announced that the 2024 building code update will apply to all buildings permitted after January 1, 2026.

B. DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS

1. Informational Briefing on the Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project

7:33 pm: Public Works staff provided a briefing on the status of developing and process of implementing safety improvements along the Ohlone Greenway between Virginia Gardens and Santa Fe Avenue.

7:43 pm: Commissioners asked clarifying questions on the following topics: intersection improvements, connections to Albany, determining the right-of-way between people biking and walking on the greenway and drivers at cross streets and lead arsenate contamination.

7:53 pm: Three public comments.

8:02 pm: Commissioners made comments and asked questions, and Public Works staff responded on the following topics: community outreach, intersection improvements, pavement markings, coordinating with other City departments, tree planting and horticulture, lighting improvements, benefits for pedestrians, emergency call boxes, construction timing, stormwater management and pathway safety.

8:33 pm: Commissioners took a short break.

2. Chair and Vice Chair nominations

8:40 pm: Commissioners discussed nominating new people to serve as Chair and Vice Chair. Commissioner Parolek has reached the two-year limit for serving as chair.

8:41 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Ghosh / Parolek) to nominate Commissioner Fixler to be chair.

8:42 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Nesbitt / Raffanti) to nominate Commissioner Nesbitt to be chair.

8:43 pm: Vote on both actions:

Ayes: Fixler, Ghosh, Leung, Lutzker, Nesbitt, Parolek, Raffanti, Walton, Yep

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Recused: None

8:43 pm Motion passed 9-0-0-0-0

8:44 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Ghosh / Walton) to nominate Commissioner Parolek to be vice chair.

8:44 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Fixler, Ghosh, Leung, Lutzker, Nesbitt, Parolek, Raffanti, Walton, Yep

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Recused: None

8:43 pm Motion passed 9-0-0-0-0

3. 2024 Commission meeting schedule

8:45 pm: Commissioners discussed their meeting schedule for calendar year 2024.

8:55 pm: One public comment.

8:56 pm: Commissioner continued discussing their meeting schedule.

Transportation and Infrastructure Commission
Thursday, January 18th, 2024

8:58 pm: Commissioner Walton mentioned a 6:30 pm meeting start time and then left the meeting.

9:02 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Nesbitt / Raffanti) to start the meetings at 6:15 pm and notice each agenda item to indicate that it will be taken up “no earlier than” a specific time.

9:06 pm Action: A substitute motion was Moved / Seconded (Ghosh / Parolek) to meet on the third Thursdays of February, March, April, May, June, August, September, October and November and to start the meetings at 6:15 pm.

9:08 pm: Vote on substitute motion:

Ayes: Fixler, Ghosh, Leung, Lutzker, Nesbitt, Parolek, Raffanti, Yep

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Walton

Recused: None

8:43 pm Motion passed 8-0-0-1-0

4. 2024 Commission work plan

9:09 pm: Commissioners discussed their work plan for the coming year and asked staff questions about the following topics: watershed management plan, bike plan update, Vision Zero Action Plan, paving plan update, North Berkeley BART TOD, Ashby BART TOD, ACTC San Pablo Avenue design and Vision 2050.

9:18 pm: No public comment.

9:19 pm: Commissioners commented and asked staff questions on the following topics: Public Works’ new Deputy Director for Engineering and Transportation, daylighting, the crisis in City management.

Transportation and Infrastructure Commission
Thursday, January 18th, 2024

9:26 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Ghosh / Lutzker) to extend the meeting to 9:40 pm.

9:26 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Fixler, Ghosh, Leung, Lutzker, Nesbitt, Parolek, Raffanti, Yep

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Walton

Recused: None

8:43 pm Motion passed 8-0-0-1-0

9:27 pm: Commissioners continued to comment and ask staff questions on the following topics: new legislation taking effect and developing communications.

C. INFORMATION ITEMS AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

9:39 pm: The Safe and Delightful Streets for All subcommittee and the BART liaison provided updates.

D. COMMUNICATIONS

E. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

9:40 pm: Commissioners discussed agenda items for future meetings.

F. ADJOURNMENT

9:41 pm: It was Moved / Seconded (Fixler / Ghosh) to close the meeting

9:41 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Fixler, Ghosh, Leung, Lutzker, Nesbitt, Parolek, Raffanti, Yep

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Walton

Recused: None

8:43 pm Motion passed 8-0-0-1-0

Transportation and Infrastructure Commission
Thursday, January 18th, 2024

The next meeting of the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission is scheduled for Thursday, February 15th, 2024 at 6:15 pm, at the North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Ave, Berkeley, CA 94709.

Administrative Procedures

From the City of Berkeley Commissioners' Manual, 2019 Edition, page 70 regarding minutes:

Although the Brown Act does not require minutes, except for closed sessions, the Commissioners' Manual does require minutes of commission meetings but not for subcommittee meetings. When required, minutes are limited to action minutes only. Minutes are unofficial until approved by the commission. The minutes are converted to PDF and posted on the City's website.

The secretary shall keep an accurate record of the commission's proceedings and transactions. The secretary shall provide action minutes similar to those provided to the Council by the City Clerk. Action minutes list the date, time, and place of the meetings; the staff in attendance; the commissioners present and absent; and a clear and concise description of final actions taken. Approved motions are indicated by "moved, seconded, and carried" and include a breakdown of the vote. The vote breakdown includes the commissioners voting yes, no, abstain, absent, recused, and reason for recusal. Reasons for making a motion, debate, content of public comments, and audience reaction are not to be included.

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1-18-2024

CLIFFORD FRED
BERKELEY CALIF.

To the City of Berkeley **TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

PLEASE NOTE MY OPPOSITION TO THE CITY'S FLAWED OHLONE GREENWAY SAFETY & MODERNIZATION PROJECT (aka The Ohlone Plan)

The City is pursuing wide, fast moving bicycle, e-bicycle, & electric scooter lanes along the Ohlone Right of Way from Virginia Street to the Albany line.

The Plan would remove mature trees & shrink Cedar Rose Park; but would not provide any separate pedestrian pathways, including at the Gilman, Hopkins, Rose & Cedar intersections.

Bicyclists & e-scooter riders do not & will not safely share the Ohlone Pathway with pedestrians. Bicycle-pedestrian collisions & near collisions occur daily.

Pedestrians, including people with disabilities & parents pushing strollers need their own safe pathway, as exists along the nearby West Street Path, and under the BART tracks in Albany.

An ADA compliant pathway should be of an easy to walk or roll on compacted material, not rocks or gravel.

RECKLESS BICYCLE, E-BICYCLE, & E-SCOOTER RIDERS POSE GREAT THREAT TO THE SAFETY OF SENIOR CITIZENS:

The growing problem of fast-moving reckless bicycle, e-bicycle and e-scooter users is posing a great threat to the safety of senior citizens.

As a 73 year old and long-time resident of Berkeley, I find that the growing recklessness of bicycle, e-bicycle, & e-scooter riders makes it more and more dangerous for me to simple take a walk or try to cross the street. This situation should not be tolerated.

THIS ILL-CONCEIVED PLAN MAKES THINGS WORSE!

Bicycle and e-scooter riders in Berkeley go too fast already. Wider pathways will encourage bicyclists & e-scooter riders to go even faster, putting pedestrians – including people with disabilities – at even greater risk of being banged into, knocked over, & seriously or fatally injured.

The willful lack of an ADA compliant pedestrian path invites bicycle-pedestrian accidents & exposes the City to lawsuits.

The developmentally disabled students who participate in the after school programs at the Ala-Costa Center in Cedar Rose Park will be especially vulnerable to being hit by bicycles & e-scooters.

The consultants did not even consider including a separate pedestrian pathway. Why not?

A city staffer recently said that people can just walk across the grass at Cedar Rose Park. This is ridiculous. The grassy field is very uneven and can be covered with dog waste. The field is often filled with aggressive unleashed dogs. And the field is fenced off for several months every year during the rainy season.

The Plan violates the Americans With Disabilities Act – ADA. The city's consultant acknowledged that no consideration was given to the ADA in the development of this plan.

WHY ARE RECKLESS BICYCLISTS AND E-SCOOTER RIDERS TOLERATED?

Bicyclists, e-bicyclists, & e-scooter riders are getting more and more reckless. They routinely run stop signs and stop lights, pass pedestrians on the right, and overtly knock into pedestrians. It's time to strictly enforce all traffic laws against bicyclists and e-scooter riders.

Electric scooters should NOT be on sidewalks nor in bicycle lanes. Electric scooter riders should be licensed and at least 18. It makes no sense to exempt them from the rules of the road.

For the above reasons, Paris France recently banned all electric scooter rentals.

LITTLE THOUGHT WAS PUT IN TO MAKING THE OHLONE GREENWAY STREET INTERSECTIONS SAFER

Separate, ADA compliant, pedestrian crosswalks are needed at Gilman/Curtis, Gilman/Hopkins, the Rose & Cedar street intersections with Cedar Rose Park and Virginia Street intersection.

These intersections are already very dangerous.

A transportation expert has stated that the Diablo Engineering Consultant's proposal for the Hopkins – Peralta intersection would be especially dangerous to pedestrians. Much greater thought needs to be given to this intersection since Hopkins Street is a critical City Evacuation Route.

There should be clear & separate pathways for pedestrians, including wheel chair users, versus bicyclists, e-scooter, and e-bicycle users at each of these intersections.

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE ANY PARKING ON PERALTA AVENUE

The Plan would remove 12 or more parking spaces on Peralta Avenue & more on Hopkins & Rose streets. The pickle ball players at the Hopkins-Peralta courts will quickly fill the remaining nearby parking spaces. People won't be able to park in front of their homes again. High speed bicycle lanes with concrete barriers will keep people from safely backing out of their driveways. People without driveways will be forced to park far away from their homes & will risk assault walking or rolling home after dark.

Removing street parking on Peralta Ave and on other nearby streets will result in more auto break-ins, more catalytic converter thefts, & more out right car thefts. Catalytic converters can cost thousands of dollars & many months of waiting to replace. Thieves are savvy. They will quickly recognize the loss of street parking on Peralta as an opportunity to break into cars on adjacent streets that belong to Peralta Avenue residents.

People on Peralta and nearby streets have healthcare workers who assist them at home. Home healthcare workers depend on easily accessible parking. With no place to park, many home health care workers will quit. People will lose their critical home healthcare. Their lives will be put in danger.

There would be no place for the delivery people who bring our food and packages to park. People with driveways would be forced to back out into high speed bicycle lanes. People without driveways would be trapped in their homes. Is this what the City of Berkeley wants?

The Hopkins – Peralta neighborhood recently had a dangerous car-jacking, and a separate August armed robbery with a reckless get-away driver smashing into cars and narrowly missing a pedestrian.

Our neighborhood is getting more dangerous. Don't make it even more dangerous by taking away our street parking.

There's no reason to remove our vitally needed parking spaces. Safe bicycle lanes can & should be designed w/out taking away street parking.

The Diablo Engineering consultants should be told to design a safe alternative that does not remove any street parking.

One way to make Peralta Ave safer for all modes of travel would be to ban trucks from Peralta Ave now. 50 or more large trucks barrel down the 1300 block of Peralta every day, posing a danger to pedestrians, bicyclists, & people backing out of their driveways.

OHLONE PLAN WOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR CITY TO IMPLEMENT THE CONTROVERSIAL HOPKINS CORRIDOR PLAN

The controversial Hopkins Corridor Plan would have eliminated well over 200 parking spaces on Hopkins Street, greatly harming the small businesses around Hopkins & Monterey, and causing great harm to the hundreds of residents on & adjacent to Hopkins Street from Sutter to San Pablo Ave.

Although the Hopkins Corridor Plan has been delayed indefinitely – due to strong community opposition and to the opposition of the Fire Chief - as it would be incompatible with Hopkins' status as a critical evacuation route, the City Council has refused to kill the Plan. Instead it hired more consultants to figure out a way to approve the Hopkins Corridor Plan.

Approval of this Ohlone Plan would codify into city policy that high speed bicyclists, e-bicycles and e-scooter riders trump the safety of pedestrians and of neighborhood residents.

And it would codify that it's ok to remove critically needed neighborhood street parking to the sole benefit of high speed bicyclists and high-speed e-bicycles and e-scooters.

Thus, the approval and implementation of the Ohlone Plan would make it much easier for the Council to then approve the Hopkins Corridor Plan.

ALL WORK ON THE OHLONE PLAN SHOULD STOP UNTIL THE FIRE DEPT'S EVACUATION & RESPONSE TIME STUDY IS AVAILABLE AND HAS BEEN REVIEWED

The Berkeley Fire Department has contracted with a consultant to perform an Evacuation and Response Time Study, which is projected to be completed in the Fall of 2024.

The Fire Department's Standards of Coverage and Community Risk Assessment Study states that current response times are already too long, and that these problem will worsen s Berkeley's density further increases. The report states that survival decreases by 7-10% for every minute of delay getting a heart attack victim.

By not providing an ADA compliant separate pedestrian pathway for the entire length of the Ohlone Greenway, the Plan will result in more pedestrian – two wheeled vehicle collisions and thus the need for yet more 911 emergency calls to an already overburdened Fire Department.

THE WIDENING OF PATHWAY THROUGH CEDAR ROSE PARK FOR BICYCLES, E-BICYCLES & E-SCOOTERS WOULD VIOLATE MEASURE 'L'

Measure L is a parks and open space Citizens Initiative that was adopted by Berkeley voters in Nov. 1986 It states that no public park or public open space can be converted to any non-recreational use without been first submitted to a vote of the citizens at a general election.

The Bicycle, E-Bicycle and E-Scooter pathway through Cedar Rose Park is clearly for transportation – i.e. getting from one place to another. That's the whole point of the Ohlone Corridor Pathway – transportation.

It is NOT for recreation. Cedar Rose Park is NOT an off road vehicle park.

Widening the pathway through Cedar Rose Park – especially to make more room for 2 wheeled motorized vehicles, would be taking away land in a city park that is designated as recreational open space, and instead making it a transportation route.

Thus a vote of the people of Berkeley is needed before the existing pathway in Cedar Rose Park can be widened.

It is important to keep Measure 'L' in mind as the City pursues large scale development at the waterfront.

WHERE'S THE PUBLIC REVIEW?

The city is moving ahead with the Plan now, without public review. We need real public review, before any plan is approved. All we got was a short meeting in with a consultant , who would not take notes. We need more public meetings & a City Council public hearing before any plan is approved.

TO SUM UP:

The Ohlone Path Plan as currently proposed is deeply flawed.

The City and consultants should start over, with a plan that provides separate ADA pedestrian pathway for the entire length of the Plan, that does NOT remove any street parking, and that makes sure that pedestrians can cross safely and away from bicycles, e-bicycles and e-scooters at each intersection within the Ohlone Greenway.

internal

I therefor respectfully ask the City of Berkeley currently proposed.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMISSION oppose the Ohlone Plan as

Thank you,
Clifford Fred
Berkeley Calif.

Clifford Fred