



Palo Alto Pedestrian and
Bicycle Advisory Committee

Tuesday, March 3, 2020

6:15 P.M.

**EL PALO ALTO WEST ROOM
MITCHELL PARK COMMUNITY CENTER**

3700 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto, CA

Members Present: Ken Joye (Chair), Art Liberman (Vice Chair), Bill Courington, Cedric de la Beaujardiere, Kathy Durham, Penny Ellson, Paul Goldstein, Owen Longstreth, Robert Neff, Eric Nordman, Rob Robinson, Steve Rock, Jane Rothstein, Richard Swent, Alan Wachtel

Members Absent: Ann Crichton, David Hirsch, Bill Zaumen

Staff Present: Sylvia Star-Lack, Joanna Chan

Guest: Nicole Zoeller Boelens, Arnout Boelens, Ken Kershner

1. CALL TO ORDER at 6:15 p.m.

2. AGENDA CHANGES

None

3. APPROVAL OF ACTION MINUTES

MOTION

Motion by Chair Joye, seconded by Mr. Nordman, to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2020 meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Joye announced he and John Cordes of Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition are planning an infrastructure ride, tentatively scheduled for April 11 at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Robinson volunteered to serve as a host. In reply to Mr. Goldstein's question, Chair Joye informed the ride would focus on facilities and programs, but he would provide additional information at a later time and is open to suggestions.

1 **5. STAFF UPDATES:**

2 **a. Safe Routes to School**

3 Ms. Chan reported the site assessment at Palo Verde is complete. Staff hosted a family
4 engagement fair on February 22 and a table at the screening of *Motherload* on Sunday.

5 **b. Bike and Scooter Share Pilot Program**

6 Ms. Chan advised that the Council approved a revised Bike and Scooter Share Pilot Program the
7 prior day. Staff is working with the City Attorney's Office to finalize guidelines for City
8 Manager's approval. Staff anticipates a three-week application period. The pilot program
9 deployment could begin in June.

10 Vice Chair Liberman noted according to the webpage, a person under 18 years of age is not
11 required to wear a helmet while operating a motorized scooter. The webpage should be updated,
12 and the guidelines should contain a requirement for people under the age of 18 to wear a helmet.

13 Mr. Nordman did not believe the trip data would be useful without identifiable beginning and
14 ending points for each trip, such as street names or coordinates.

15 **c. Hanover/Page Mill Project Status**

16 Ms. Chan related that the project has been delayed because of the legal issue with Measure B.
17 The County recently began designing the intersection. Staff has contacted the County to
18 determine if the County would like to present the project to PABAC or if staff may present the
19 project to PABAC.

20 Mr. Neff advised that an island in the middle of Page Mill Road has been shifted to create space
21 for a left turn-lane. Ms. Chan agreed to look into the work.

22 Mr. Goldstein indicated the sensors on Hanover appear to have been restored. Mr. Swent
23 explained that the sensors are required to detect any legal traffic.

24 **d. Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons**

25 Ms. Chan reported all beacons along El Camino should be active. The timing of each beacon is
26 tied to the timing of the closest traffic signal in an effort to coordinate traffic flow along El
27 Camino. Caltrans has not provided the exact timing for each beacon.

28 In answer to Mr. Goldstein's question about the educational handout, Mr. Swent explained that a
29 motorist should stop when the beacon is solid red, even if a pedestrian is not in the crosswalk.
30 Mr. Goldstein suggested removing "for pedestrian" in item 2 of the handout. He interpreted
31 "stop for pedestrian" as allowing a motorist to proceed if a pedestrian is not present in the
32 crosswalk.

33 In response to Mr. Swent's inquiry, Mr. Neff indicated the crosswalks have pedestrian count-
34 down timers. Mr. Swent asked if the signal changed to flashing red when the timer reached zero,
35 to which no one responded.

1 Mr. Neff felt pedestrians would ignore the beacons when El Camino traffic is light. A wait of
2 80-90 seconds for pedestrians would be normal during times of heavy traffic. He suggested staff
3 approach Caltrans with hours of the day when the beacons' timing could favor pedestrians and
4 ask Caltrans if they have studied pedestrian compliance with beacons.

5 Mr. de la Beaujardiere expressed concern that, until motorists become familiar with the beacons,
6 they could interpret no signal as the beacon not functioning. Motorists would more readily
7 interpret a green signal as go. Perhaps for the first month, the beacon could rest on flashing
8 yellow.

9 Ms. Ellson expressed concern that students may not have the patience to wait for the beacon to
10 stop traffic.

11 Vice Chair Liberman questioned whether the beacons comply with ADA requirements for
12 visually impaired people. Ms. Chan advised that Caltrans has not answered the question.

13 **e. Bol Park Path Project Status**

14 Ms. Chan related that the Public Works Department will probably lead the project. Staff is
15 exploring funding sources and will obtain cost estimates.

16 In answer to Chair Joye's question, Ms. Chan indicated staff has not developed a plan for the
17 project.

18 In reply to Mr. Goldstein's queries, Ms. Star-Lack reported the project could include widening
19 the path, treating bridge surfaces to increase smoothness, and lighting. Staff originally
20 anticipated funding the project with monies from the Stanford University General Use Permit
21 (GUP).

22 In response to Vice Chair Liberman's inquiry, Ms. Star-Lack did not know if the project would
23 include the section of the path between Matadero and Hanover. The lower Bol Park Path is not
24 located on City property, but it should be upgraded as well. Vice Chair Liberman noted that
25 section of the path is heavily used and has some sharp corners.

26 Mr. de la Beaujardiere shared the origins of the project and indicated a survey of community
27 opinions was conducted at some point. He supported separation of bikes and pedestrians on the
28 path. Neighbors' preference for a pastoral feel should be considered in any design.

29 Mr. Neff remarked that the trail at Cooley Landing is a good example of improvements needed
30 for the Bol Park Path.

31 **6. STANDING ITEMS:**
32 **a. VTA BPAC Update**

33 Mr. Neff advised that the VTA BPAC did not meet in February. VTA staff has requested
34 feedback regarding an update of the County's bike map.

1 In response to Vice Chair Liberman's question, Mr. Neff explained that Google no longer crowd-
2 sources data for maps. Determining the appropriate Google personnel to discuss additions or
3 changes to maps is difficult. Mr. Swent noted the VTA has color-coded routes on the map to
4 reflect the level of experience required. The VTA map contains more information than a Google
5 map.

6 **7. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

7 **a. Neighborhood Traffic Safety Bicycle Boulevard Phase 1 Report**

8 In answer to Mr. Robinson's question, Ms. Ellson indicated the Council approved installation of
9 two-way stop signs at the Ross/East Meadow traffic circle.

10 Ms. Chan reported Phase 1 of the project included nine segments, but only five were
11 implemented. Feedback received during the February 24 Council meeting addressed reducing
12 stress levels of bikeways, the effectiveness of the Bryant Street bike boulevard, the use of
13 diverters, additional landscaping, proceeding with the Bike Plan, more community engagement,
14 and confusion related to two-way stops in roundabouts. The Council approved Items 1-7 of the
15 staff recommendation as written. The Council directed the Planning and Transportation
16 Commission (PTC) to review the East Meadow roundabout after installation of the stop signs,
17 staff to consider the full range of options for bicycle infrastructure, and the Parks and Recreation
18 Commission to review landscaping in roundabouts.

19 Mr. Swent noted many people refer to bulb-outs when they mean chokers.

20 In reply to Mr. Arthur's inquiries, Ms. Star-Lack advised that some of the feedback suggested the
21 Ross Road bike boulevard should be more like the Bryant Street bike boulevard. Diverters
22 include street closures. Ms. Durham clarified that comments recommended that Council allow
23 staff to consider and use diverters.

24 In response to Mr. Nordman's query, Ms. Chan explained that one bike accident occurred prior to
25 the improvements and three after the improvements.

26 PABAC members discussed their interpretations of language directing installation of stop signs
27 and PTC review regarding the East Meadow traffic circle. Mr. Wachtel advised that he foresees
28 liability issues and operational problems with the stop signs. He wondered about the rationale
29 for reassigning the stop signs on Louis. Ms. Durham noted the rationale for installing the stop
30 signs was the number of collisions, and the collisions were caused by motorists not yielding. She
31 expressed concern about the stop signs creating dangerous situations. Mr. Rock believed the
32 concern should be safety rather than liability. If yield signs are removed, there will be
33 uncontrolled intersections, which are dangerous. Mr. Rock suggested that PABAC should
34 strongly recommend stop signs not to be installed until traffic flow is understood. He recalled
35 road closures for bicycle boulevards were originally suggested by the community. The table of
36 collisions is misleading. Mr. Robinson did not believe any of the changes should be made until
37 PABAC and the PTC reviewed the as-built environment and the language of the motion. Mr.
38 Swent explained the reasons yield signs are needed on Ross Road. He concurred with the use of
39 temporary improvements prior to construction of permanent improvements. When designing the
40 project, the consultant did not listen to community input. Mr. Goldstein remarked that PABAC,

1 the PTC, and the City/School Traffic Safety Committee should be used more effectively. Ms.
2 Ellson suggested staff explore yield signs with alternative designs before installing the stop
3 signs.

4 Mr. Nordman noted a positive outcome of the project is increased bicycle and pedestrian traffic.

5 Mr. de la Beaujardiere was pleased with the Council's reaffirmation of the importance of
6 bicycling and reinstatement of the use of diverters. Perhaps staff could grind down the pavement
7 lip in one of the roundabouts because it is dangerous for bicyclists. In updating the Bike Plan,
8 PABAC may want to review bicycle facilities on Amarillo and Moreno.

9 In reply to Vice Chair Liberman's query, Ms. Star-Lack indicated the Council directed staff to
10 proceed with the modifications, not a trial program.

11 Ms. Star-Lack requested PABAC members submit written comments to staff. She clarified that
12 the City's consultant wrote the staff report and recommendations.

13 **MOTION**

14 Motion by Mr. Robinson, seconded by Mr. de la Beaujardiere, to express PABAC's belief that
15 the bike boulevard evaluation staff report would have been significantly improved with input
16 from PABAC, the City/School Traffic Safety Committee, and the Planning and Transportation
17 Commission. PABAC urges staff to use advisory bodies available to them in the future before
18 proceeding with staff reports to the Council.

19 Ms. Durham wanted a clear statement in the motion indicating PABAC has concerns that
20 converting a traffic circle into a two-way stop also has liability. Mr. Wachtel added that the
21 issue is not that PABAC was not consulted, but that the recommendation is contrary to the
22 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). PABAC's concern is the way in which
23 the decision regarding the two-way stop was made.

24 Mr. Wachtel believed PABAC's concerns are not only process but also substantive features of
25 the Council's adopted motion, particularly the stop signs at Ross and Meadow.

26 **AMENDED MOTION**

27 Motion by Mr. Robinson, seconded by Mr. de la Beaujardiere to advise staff of PABAC's belief
28 that the bike boulevard evaluation staff report would have been significantly improved with input
29 from PABAC, the City/School Traffic Safety Committee, and the Planning and Transportation
30 Commission. In particular, PABAC is concerned that some of the recommendations in the staff
31 report do not conform to MUTCD standards and could cause operational, safety, and liability
32 issues. One example is the two-way stop proposed at Ross Road and East Meadow. PABAC
33 urges staff to use advisory bodies available to them in the future before proceeding with staff
34 reports to the Council.

1 **SUBSTITUTE MOTION**

2 Motion by Mr. Rock, seconded by Mr. de la Beaujardiere to advise staff of PABAC's belief that
3 the bike boulevard evaluation staff report would have been significantly improved with input
4 from PABAC, the City/School Traffic Safety Committee, and the Planning and Transportation
5 Commission. In particular, PABAC is concerned that some of the recommendations in the staff
6 report do not conform to mandatory MUTCD standards and could be dangerous. One example is
7 the two-way stop proposed at Ross Road and East Meadow. PABAC urges staff to use advisory
8 bodies available to them in the future before proceeding with staff reports to the Council.

9 **Substitute motion failed.**

10 **Amended motion passed.**

11 Chair Joye requested staff to notify PABAC members if the project is presented to the PTC prior
12 to PABAC's next meeting.

13 In answer to Mr. Robinson's question, Ms. Star-Lack advised that staff does not usually share
14 PABAC's motion with the Council because PABAC is advisory to staff.

15 **MOTION**

16 Motion by Mr. Swent, seconded by Mr. Goldstein, to direct the Chair to send a letter to the
17 Council informing the Council of PABAC's motion regarding the Neighborhood Traffic Safety
18 Bicycle Boulevard Report. Motion passed.

19 Ms. Chan reported that staff, at the Council's direction will install the stated devices by June
20 2020, hopefully, and subsequently present items to the PTC and PABAC for review. Ms. Star-
21 Lack added that staff will determine whether the PABAC review can occur prior to the PTC
22 review.

23 **b. Neighborhood Traffic Safety Bicycle Boulevard Phase 2 Plans**

24 Mr. Nordman expressed confusion as to the purpose of the community engagement. Phase 2 has
25 many issues that are likely to raise some of the concerns raised in the Ross Road improvements.
26 He suggested modification of Phase 2 plans to address those concerns and then presentation of
27 the modified plans for community engagement. Raised intersections and bulb-outs at low-traffic
28 intersections could be removed. Example of issues are the cement ovals, widening the gutter
29 path on Park Road, forcing bicyclists to take the lane, and placing the "bump" signs.

30 Mr. Neff believed Phase 2 plans should be discarded because they follow the same philosophy
31 that raised concerns about Ross Road improvements.

32 Chair Joye requested PABAC members to review the Phase 2 plans and prepare comments for
33 the next meeting.

34 **8. ADJOURNMENT** at 8:02 p.m.
35