



TRANSPORTATION and INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 21st, 2025, 6:15 pm

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

A. PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

1. Call to order

6:16 pm: Chair Zaro called the meeting to order.

2. Roll call

6:17 pm:

Commissioners Present: Naveen Gattu, Arsh Singh Hothi, Adrian Leung, Liza Lutzker, Julia Moss Holly Scheider (arrived at 6:23 pm), Kim Walton, and Ren Zaro

Staff Present:

Wahid Amiri, Mark Helmbrecht, Ron Nevels, Eric Anderson, Dani Dynes, Noah Budnick, Elaina Hargraves, Christopher Kidd (consultant), Christina Erikson, Chief David Sprague, Sara Lana

3. Public comment on items not on the agenda

6:18 pm: Three public comments.

4. Approval of minutes from the June 12, 2025 meeting

6:22 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Gattu / Walton) to approve the minutes from the June 12, 2025 commission meeting.

6:23 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Gattu, Hothi, Leung, Lutzker, Moss, Scheider, Walton, Zaro

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Excused: None

Recused: None

6:23 pm: Motion passed 8-0-0-0-0-0

5. Approval and Order of Agenda

6:24 pm Action: Chair Zaro proposed moving discussion/action item B1 to the next Commission meeting agenda. It was Moved / Seconded (Zaro / Lutzker) to accept this proposal and approve the agenda.

6:24 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Gattu, Hothi, Leung, Lutzker, Moss, Scheider, Walton, Zaro

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Excused: None

Recused: None

6:25 pm: Motion passed 8-0-0-0-0-0

6:25 pm: Thirteen members of the public present

6. Update on administration and staff

6:25 pm: Deputy Director Wahid Amiri introduced Mark Helmbrecht, the new Transportation Manager; Mark comes with over 30 years of Bay Area transportation experience having worked for the City of Alameda, Presidio Trust and the City of Vallejo; he's finishing up his 7th week in the role and is getting to know staff. The Deputy Director and Transportation Manager are working diligently to fill the other vacant Transportation Divisions positions, including Supervising Transportation Engineer.

Engineering Manager Ron Nevels provided an update on division hiring efforts. There is a Citywide hiring freeze in place, however the division is working on getting City Manager approval to hire an Associate Civil Engineering in the Construction, Permitting, Land Development work unit; there are seven vacancies in total, including the Junior Public Works Engineer, Engineering Inspector positions and two upcoming retirements, including the Engineering Manager.

Commissioner Lutzker asked a follow-up question on updates on vacancies in the Transportation Division. Deputy Director Amiri provided the following updates: the Transportation Division has a nine-percent vacancy rate including three interns; there is a current hiring freeze but the division is in the process of getting the approval to hire staff for the Vision Zero Associate Planner and two crossing guard positions.

Commissioner Lutzker asked a follow-up question on updates on the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Southside Complete Streets. Deputy Amiri informed the Commission that staff are working on it.

7. Announcements

6:32 pm: Commissioner Lutzker disclosed a Berkeley resident was killed riding their bike on 52nd and Shattuck in Oakland yesterday. The Commission, staff and community members paused for a moment of silence.

Commissioner Zaro announced the BayPass went into effect for students a few days ago; Cal students receive free transit at 27 Bay Area transit agencies.

Commissioner Walton announced the new syncing transit schedule in effect which will improve the efficiency of transit connections.

Commissioner Lutzker shared commuters can now pay for BART with their credit card.

6:35 pm: Fourteen members of the public present

B. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

1. Informational presentation on Proposed Measure T1 Phase 2 Changes

6:35 pm: Parks, Recreation and Waterfront staff presented on projects to be added, have their phases changed, renamed, removed or that have additional funding allocated under Phase 2 of Measure T1.

6:47 pm: Commissioners asked clarifying questions on the following topics: what phase are the new projects in; what will be put in place at the Santa Fe Railroad right-of-way; is there a plan for at-grade crossings along the Santa Fe right-of-way; how much T1 funding goes to street and road projects; does Measure T1's contribution affect Measure FF's matching requirement; is the tree removal on Acton Street related to the Santa Fe right-of-way?

6:52 pm: One public comment.

6:54 pm: Commissioners commented on the following: Measure FF is prescriptive, when Public Works loses T1 funding, it relinquishes some decision-making power on what projects it can do and how quickly; the commission emphasized exercising caution to ensure paving money is not reduced and advised conferring with the City Attorney's Office.

Commissioners asked additional clarifying questions on the University and San Pablo restroom initiative that was presented to the commission and was met with public opposition. The commission inquired into what level of opposition caused it to be rejected; asked if other restroom locations will be considered; inquired into the process for public outreach for public restrooms; stressed the importance of better outreach; encouraged collecting data from the Telegraph-Channing restroom as a pilot; emphasized the value of gathering data from the staff at the Telegraph Business Improvement District (BID), who monitor and maintain restrooms in their area, and share it with other business districts.

7:10 pm: Fifteen members of the public present

2. Bike Plan Update Presentation

7:11 pm: Public Works staff and consultants presented the working draft of the Bike Plan updates. The Bike Plan is for everyone who wants to bike or roll in Berkeley, including skateboarding, scooting and other personal wheeled mobility devices. The current Berkeley Bicycle Plan was adopted in 2017. Once the Berkeley Bike Plan update has been completed, it will include project recommendations that will help Berkeley: 1) address locations currently making it challenging to bicycle or roll; 2) build upon its "low-

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stress” network of bicycling and rolling routes; and 3) make bicycling and rolling safer and more comfortable for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, ages and abilities. Public comment on the draft concludes on September 26. Staff plan to update the plan and present it to the City Council in December 2025 or January 2026.

7:44 pm: Sixteen members of the public present

7:44 pm: Commissioners asked clarifying questions on the Bike Plan update presentation on the following: visiting school sites during drop off hours; parental involvement; the contributing factors to grant competitiveness; the design elements required in grants; how a plan relates to what will actually be implemented; the process determining Claremont not being a Tier 1 project and updating data for reprioritization in the future; political influence on making Hopkins Street a priority; outreach in priority equity communities; differing methods of pop ups, events, and the vital need for follow up afterwards; factor that determine whether or not to do a Complete Streets Study and accompanying timelines; criteria for prioritizing paving (equity and street conditions) and not repaving Hopkins without making improvements; the possibility of a quick build for Hopkins; importance of considering adjacent streets when doing a Complete Streets study; defining something as a “Key Project.”

8:09 pm: Sixteen members of the public present

8:09 pm: Eleven public comments.

8:30 pm: Fifteen members of the public present

8:30 pm: Commissioners commented on the following topics: the importance of bicycle wayfinding to enable people to bike to and through Berkeley; breaking up the Bike Plan’s “years” into phases; clarified the Bike Plan is not a zero-sum game – all users are the same with coexisting benefits, e.g. protected bike lanes are good for emergency response, protected bike lanes benefit pedestrians, especially senior pedestrians, and businesses; expressed concerns about studies proposed in the Bike Plan; improvements are not happening fast enough; not using cape seal on streets that are part of the low stress network; the need to include maintenance of the developed bikeways; not relying on the MUTCD for stop sign warrants, and utilizing engineering judgement, NACTO, ITE and other clear standards; the need for more details on implementing Bike Boulevard crossings; the need to move forward with implementing traffic calming on approved Bike Boulevards (i.e. there’s no need to study and do exhaustive community engagement to install speed cushions and traffic circles); setting a the maximum distance between speed tables, not a minimum; imposing a 20 mph speed limit on Bike Boulevards; focusing on the time of day with high traffic volumes; the necessity for diverters to be included in projects with pedestrian hybrid beacons; removing the Fire Standard of Cover Study and Evacuation Study from the Bike Plan update, as they have not been approved by City Council; moving forward with implementing the Bike Plan in lieu of waiting for evacuation sensitivity study.

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8:42 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Scheider / Hothi) to extend the meeting to 9:00 pm.

8:42 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Gattu, Hothi, Leung, Lutzker, Moss, Scheider, Walton, Zaro

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Excused: None

Recused: None

8:42 pm: Motion passed 8-0-0-0-0

8:44 pm: Commissioners asked additional clarifying questions on the following: can diverters be improved; is efficacy being monitored; how does the Evacuation Sensitivity Study affect Complete Streets projects; how granular is the modeling – can it model the difference between 4-inch high and 6-inch high diverters?; do federal grants require environmental studies; what does it mean to evaluate reducing road capacity; are road diets part of Complete Streets studies?

Commissioners made the following suggestions and comments: Berkeley needs a robust Bike Boulevard network with strong traffic calming measures; the need to add bicycle infrastructure around school drop-off zones by collaborating with Safe Routes to School champions; avoiding pitting emergency response against bike infrastructure, as bike infrastructure improves emergency response; emergency response studies can significantly delay Bike Plan implementation; the City should adopt a simple process for implementing Bike Boulevards that include a 20 mph speed limit, additional diverters, speed tables and a reduction of vehicles driving along it.

8:58 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Walton / Hothi) to extend the meeting to 9:15 pm.

8:58 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Gattu, Hothi, Leung, Lutzker, Moss, Scheider, Walton, Zaro

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Excused: None

Recused: None

8:58 pm: Motion passed 8-0-0-0-0

8:58 pm: Commissioner Zaro encouraged the commissioners to send feedback to staff; reemphasized that the bike infrastructure, pedestrian safety, accessibility and equity are not opposing goals and that accessibility should be highlighted in the Bike Plan; in the interest of equity, urged consideration of proximity to schools, senior centers, and disability centers (such as the Ed Roberts Campus); supported revisiting data collected; advised against pitting emergency response and bikes against each other; identified cars having the power right now at the

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cost of bikes, emergency response and disability access; presented the option of adding trees and landscaping; mentioned working with disability activists on tactile, auditory and reflectivity improvements; highlighted pairing Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) with stronger infrastructure; emphasized need to reduce driver speeds where RRFBs are installed; encouraged staff to identify opportunities for mid-block curb cuts for disabled people who use protected bike lanes; stressed the need for bike-activated signals.

9:14 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Hothi / Gattu) to extend the meeting to 9:30 pm.

9:15 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Gattu, Hothi, Leung, Lutzker, Moss, Scheider, Walton, Zaro

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Excused: None

Recused: None

9:15 pm: Motion passed 8-0-0-0-0-0

9:15 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Lutzker / Moss) for the Bike Plan Update Temporary Ad Hoc Committee to work on a letter to City Council and staff and bring it to the next Commission meeting.

9:17 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Gattu, Hothi, Leung, Lutzker, Moss, Scheider, Walton, Zaro

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Excused: None

Recused: None

9:17 pm: Motion passed 8-0-0-0-0-0

9:17 pm: Eleven members of the public present

9:21 pm Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Hothi / Lutzker) for City staff and consultants to remediate language that speaks in absolutes, is prescriptive and pits City services against City transportation priorities.

9:21 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Gattu, Hothi, Leung, Lutzker, Moss, Scheider, Walton, Zaro

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Excused: None

Recused: None

9:22 pm: Motion passed 8-0-0-0-0-0

C. INFORMATION ITEMS AND SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Subcommittee reports & assignments

9:23 pm: Deputy Director Amiri provided a verbal report on street rehabilitation and asked the Commission to reappoint members to the Five Year Street Rehabilitation Plan Temporary Ad Hoc Committee. The Commission appointed Commissioners Walton, Hothi, and Gattu.

D. COMMUNICATIONS

9:24 pm: No communications.

E. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

9:25 pm: Staff to work with Commissioner Lutzker to schedule a brown bag lunch for City staff and interested commissioners for a presentation from Lutzker on the U.S. Safe System Academy June 2025 training sponsored by: Johns Hopkins University; Trafikverket, the Swedish Transport Administration; Institute of Transportation Engineers; FIA Foundation; and AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

F. ADJOURNMENT

9:26 pm: Action: It was Moved / Seconded (Hothi / Moss) to adjourn the meeting.

9:26 pm: Vote:

Ayes: Gattu, Hothi, Leung, Lutzker, Moss, Scheider, Walton, Zaro

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Excused: None

Recused: None

9:26 pm: Motion passed 8-0-0-0-0

The next meeting of the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission is scheduled for Thursday, September 18, 2025, 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

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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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Bike Plan Update – Public Comments

I'm Bruce Chamberlain and I have been a resident in District 4 for over 20 years. During that time, I've commuted and shopped mostly via bike and, when needed, drive my EV. My daughter who rode her bike to Malcolm X and Willard is currently a Senior @ BHS. I have used BART, MUNI, and bike my entire 35 years working in environmental and energy efficiency professions. During my 25 years as a bicyclist in Berkeley, I have relied and been thankful for the Bike Boulevard network. I feel safe riding on these calm streets away from busy main arteries.

So, I'm an advocate for a livable city and want safe streets for bikes, other personal mobility devices, and pedestrians.

I support and applaud the Draft Plan's emphasis on improving Bike Boulevards (great guide!), Parallel Routes to major arteries (e.g., San Pablo), and the Complete Streets Studies listed in Draft Plan.

From Draft Plan under **COMPLETE STREETS CORRIDOR STUDIES** (my underline):
“Major and collector streets with recommendations for separated bikeways (Class IV) require further study to evaluate their suitability and impacts on other transportation modes and emergency response traffic. These streets provide access to local businesses and sometimes offer the only direct path across neighborhoods or to nearby cities that parallel routes do not provide. They currently serve multiple transportation modes and emergency response traffic, and provide on-street parking, necessitating broader consideration beyond bicycle travel alone. These streets are labeled “Complete Streets Corridor Studies” within this plan update.”

One of the corridors in this category for study is Hopkins. It seems to me there is a parallel route on Rose that would be more appropriate for bike traffic. But this is why there will be a study on this and other corridors.

Lastly, I'd like to share my perspective and expectations for this Commission. As representatives of elected officials, I hope you are taking into consideration the needs, concerns, and solutions from the broader community. And not just the demands of special interest advocacy groups. Your responsibility is for the universal common good of Berkeley.

Thank you.