

Oakland Bicyclist and Pedestrian Advisory Commission
2018 Chair's Annual Report to the Public Works Committee of the Oakland City Council

January 29, 2019

Chair Kalb and members of the Public Works Committee:

The Bicyclist and Pedestrian Advisory Commission welcomes this opportunity to present our work in 2018 citing our successes as well as challenges and recommendations. We are an all-volunteer citizen commission and as such do not provide detailed policy analysis or alternatives for our recommendations. Nor do we expect that they be adopted "as-is," but instead hope that they will stimulate discussion among Councilmembers, their constituents, and City staff for action to help make Oakland safer for all modes of transport.

The BPAC was established by an ordinance of the City Council in 2014 with a nine-member commission. For part of 2018, we had a vacancy with the resignation of Commissioner Fred McWilliams (District 7). Although not required by ordinance, we represented every Council District in Oakland. The BPAC is charged with advising the City on bicyclist and pedestrian-specific plans, policies, projects, and programs, as well as the accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians in all plans, policies, projects, and programs. In addition, the BPAC reviews Transportation Development Act Article 3 funding allocations as required by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

The following report was approved at a regular meeting of the BPAC on December 20. More information about the BPAC is available at <https://www.oaklandca.gov/boards-commissions/bicyclist-and-pedestrian-advisory-commission>.

Thank you for your review of this report. We look forward to our continued working relationship on behalf of all of Oakland.

Respectfully,

Commissioner Midori Tabata (District 6), 2018 Chair
Commissioner Kenya Wheeler (District 3), 2018 Vice Chair
Commissioner Reginald K Burnette, Jr. (RB) (District 6)
Commissioner Andy Campbell (District 2)
Commissioner Chris Kidd (District 4)
Commissioner Jesse Jones (District 1)
Commissioner George Naylor (District 4)
Commissioner Mariana Parreiras (District 1)
Commissioner Rosa Villalobos (District 5)

Executive Summary

The Oakland BPAC completed our fourth full year of existence and fulfilled our duties under Council ordinance. The Open Forum committee continues to track comments and issues presented by members of the public. The Infrastructure committee is an important venue to review projects in detail beyond what is possible at our meetings. The newly chartered Legislation committee scored a win by persuading City Council to sponsor and pass a resolution to oppose Proposition 6, the repeal of SB1 the gas tax, on the November general election ballot. Acting on the frequent requests for more education and enforcement, the BPAC established a liaison role with the Police Commission. In June, we welcomed Mayor Libby Schaaf to our meeting.

Challenges and Recommendations

Staffing vacancies leading to stalled projects

Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) has been an entity for three years and much of the organizational ambiguity discussed in our 2017 report has been resolved. It has resulted in improved coordination and efficiency. The key issue remaining is a City-wide staffing shortage. Many positions in OakDOT are vacant. Some are key positions. The vacancy rate has decreased, but it is still over 20 percent for most categories. Many have acting managers, but Safe Streets is totally vacant. Many of the projects we are involved in or have interest in are stalled due to lack of staff. For instance, the Pedestrian Plan was completed and released with great fanfare and promise over a year ago. It sits on the bookshelf due to lack of staff. We have been interested in traffic signal timing and the implementation of automatic pedestrian walk signals for some time. However, there is no one available to address this. There is no manager and the team is understaffed. We feel we have spent time this year treading water, watching with frustration as critical projects wait. We welcomed the creation of Vision Zero and the hiring of a program manager for the project. That project is stalled and the hired program manager has been asked to handle other vacant responsibilities.

In 2017, we believed staffing shortages were a result of a new organization being created and implemented. We recommended greater efficiency in the hiring pipeline. However, in 2018, it seems the staffing issue is not just related to OakDOT and its creation, but a City-wide problem. It takes a minimum of ten months to hire a person, and once hired, have no guarantee that the person will remain with Oakland. We are continually losing people to neighboring jurisdictions, and agencies like SFMTA, BART, City of Berkeley. Pay equity may be an issue with anecdotal stories of a person receiving an automatic ten percent pay increase by moving to a lateral position to Berkeley.

In 2017, we saw and welcomed the creation of a “Rapid Response Team” within OakDOT to address fatal and severe crashes. This approach was used to quickly fix the Harrison Street pedestrian hazard where a pedestrian fatality occurred. Fatalities and injuries have not abated in 2018. We are aware of at least eight pedestrian/cyclist fatalities this year to date. Some areas have higher incidences of collisions and injuries. We have not aware of the “Rapid Response Team” working on any of them. The BPAC encourages that the “Rapid Response Team” to

address fatalities and severe crashes become the way OakDOT does its business. Although this action will be reactive to an incident, at least addresses critical infrastructure improvement needs and perhaps help prevent future incidents.

We recommend:

- Continue to engage with the City Administrator’s Office to reduce bottlenecks in hiring staff (unchanged from 2017).
- Develop a strategy and culture of project continuity and succession to reduce delays that happen when project managers and staff leave (unchanged from 2017).
- Prioritize projects based on department goals and objectives as well as mandates and assign staff to projects accordingly. If staff on a priority project leaves, ensure the project does not become dormant.
- Develop a policy and process to assess and address fatal and severe injuries due to infrastructure inadequacies in all parts of Oakland. Formalize a “Rapid Response Team,” including funding staff and materials for near-term improvements.
- Reinforce detour guidance and enforcement—ensure that all staff understand this as policy and enforce it uniformly. Oakland is experiencing tremendous construction and unless properly designed and implemented, detours can be a hazard to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Traffic signal policy continues to be an issue, especially signal timing and walk signal operations causing many pedestrians to take matters into their hands and making for unsafe conditions. Major Corridors-Signals section has been unstaffed this year.
- Street paving should be done completely and adequately, not leaving obstacles like abandoned rail tracks with no remediation.

Meetings and Attendance

The BPAC met monthly in 2018. In addition to city staff, commissioners, and consultants, the meeting were attended by an average of ten members of the public (ranging from 7 to 16). We thank the City staff for their contributions in supporting the Commission in 2018.

Selected Key Accomplishments

As an advisory commission, the BPAC acknowledges that City Staff are responsible for and deserve credit for the progress Oakland made on bicyclist and pedestrian issues in 2018. Nonetheless, we share in the pride of these accomplishments:

- BPAC review and endorsement of state Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3, Active Transportation Program (ATP) and federal Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) grants
- Provided input to Lake Merritt to Bay Trail connector
- Provided input to Telegraph Ave repair in Temescal district
- Provided input to San Pablo Multi Modal Corridor Plan

- Provided input to proposed E-bike/E-scooter ordinance and to the stand alone E-scooter ordinance
- Provided input to Estuary Park Plan
- Continuing work on the Bicycle Plan update (Let's Bike Oakland)
- Established Legislation Committee (now meeting monthly)
- Established Committee on Bicyclists/Pedestrian and Police relations
- Established formal liaison with: Commission on Persons with Disabilities, Affordable Housing and Infrastructure Bond Public Oversight Committee, and Police Department and Police Commission for enforcement issues
- Saw further expansion of bike share as well as program becoming more institutionalized
- Saw our desire for further information in 2017 come to life as the OakDOT Active Project Map

Future Outlook

Reviewing the 2017 report, the following is a repeat, but still needs to be said. Unfortunately, the delay in action is due to key staff vacancies.

- Filling the many vacancies in OakDOT quickly so that work can continue
- Implementation of the Pedestrian Master Plan (waiting for permanent staff to be hired)
- Rollout of Vision Zero (staffing issues?)
- A new add in 2018, establishing a working relationship with Police Department and Police Commission to ensure fair and equitable enforcement of laws and treatment of cyclists and pedestrians by OPD

Open Forum Committee Report

The committee continues to track and monitor issues raised by the public during Open Forum. See

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1v0nDQC83kYuR8rW_ofuDLSTOy0LdRg9otR63Yp0u5Qw/edit#gid=0

The committee reviews the public comments periodically to identify policy issues for discussion by the Commission.

In 2018, beyond the continuing request for traffic enforcement and education, we had many infrastructure related issues presented.

Issues presented:

- Legislation Committee—formed in June
- Leading pedestrian signals and light timing issue—waiting for position to be filled

- Education for cyclists/pedestrians/drivers—under consideration
- City position on State Proposition 6, repeal of SB1, Gas Tax—assigned to Legislation Committee, City Council passed resolution against Prop 6 in October as result of committee work
- Stop lines missing at crosswalk—fixed
- Telegraph Avenue parking protected bike lane—City Council to vote on proposal
- Fruitvale Avenue cyclist impediment due to pedestrian signage—solutions being formed through Infrastructure Committee
- Temporary safety measures at 20th St. BART improvements—under consideration

BPAC, in coordination with staff, recommended and achieved the following:

- Open Forum comments are tracked and posted online.
- BPAC promotes the use of SeeClickFix, 311 as a way to track items in the City
- Items referred to other committees, like Legislation and Infrastructure
- BPAC agendas continue to be shaped by Open Forum comment and requests

Infrastructure Committee Report

The committee is comprised of Commissioners and members of the public. The committee reports are available online at <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qqS46y3dWNeAxMVwU3HTwjunj-b0pwANtZix-CisiWA/edit?ts=5a30853e>. The committee structure allows us an opportunity for detailed review and discussion of key projects with City staff where we can develop solutions. It has become a popular venue for review of projects that we now meet bi-monthly. In 2018, the committee reviewed the following projects, providing detailed comments ranging from striping plans, signal, parking, and lane configuration issues:

- Franklin Elementary (Foothill Blvd and E 15th St)
- 2nd St (Brush St. to Jefferson St)
- 35th Ave (San Leandro St to Harper St)
- Clay St (Water St to 4th St)
- Mandana Blvd (Lakeshore Ave to Ashmount Ave)
- Market Street (18th St to W Grand Ave)
- W MacArthur Blvd (MLK Jr Way to Manila Ave)
- Fruitvale Ave pedestrian refuge conflicts
- 20th St protected bikeway design
- 2019 paving plan

Legislation Committee Report

The Legislation Committee was formed in June as a venue to study and recommend policy for the BPAC and has been meeting monthly. One of the first items undertaken was the City's position on State Proposition 6, the repeal of SB1, the gas tax. The committee recommended the City oppose the measure and worked with members of the Public Works Committee. Council Member Kaplan sponsored such a resolution, adopted by the City Council.

They are currently reviewing 15 mph speed limits in school zones.

Bicyclists / Pedestrian / Police Relations Committee Report

This newest committee of the BPAC was formed in September 2018 and has had one formal meeting since its formation. Forthcoming work for 2019 includes collaboration with the Police Commission to review current police stop data and identify ways to reduce inequities observed in the data.

The BPAC continues to work toward safe, accessible transportation for all of Oakland, by walking, cycling, e-Scooter, transit, or driving. We look forward to our work in 2019.