

MINUTES

MOBILITY COMMISSION

Wednesday, December 20, 2023, 7:00 pm
In Person Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Commissioner Spencer

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Mark Spencer, Chair
Flavio Poehlmann, Vice Chair
Nisar Ahmed
Monique Chapman
Tejinder Dhani
Daniel Karpelevitch
Jain Shikha
Erin Vaca

Members Absent:

Tejinder Dhani
Ken Wu

Staff Present:

Hans Larsen, Public Works Director
Noe Veloso, Assistant City Engineer
Eric Hu, Principal Transportation Engineer
Aleksandr Zabyshny, Senior Transportation Engineer
Lilian Ayala, Senior Transportation Engineer
Eliza Villaluz, Senior Office Specialist

SCHEDULED ITEMS

- 1. Welcome, Call to Order and Roll Call** - Commissioner Mark Spencer
- 2. Welcome New Commissioner** – Daniel Karpelevitch, Bicycling Representative
- 3. Approval of Minutes for September 20, 2023, meeting**
Approved by Mobility Commission; Commissioner Shikha abstained because she did not attend September 20, 2023 meeting. Commissioner Karpelevitch abstained as he was not yet appointed as a Mobility Commissioner for the September 20, 2023 meeting.

4. Public Comment

Sharon Scharff appealed to the Mobility Commission to restore Rancho Arroyo Parkway and reverse the improvements that have been implemented on this roadway.

Steve Skala requested that the Mobility Commission agendaize at a future meeting the State Route 262 Cross Connector Project and analysis of alternatives that would address various issues.

Kendra Toy advocated for accessible aisles in parking lots and accessible paths from transit in new commercial development projects.

5. Active Transportation Plan:

Susie Hufstader of Fehr & Peers gave an overview/presentation of the Active Transportation Plan (ATP). Susie reviewed the draft vision and goals for the ATP, summarized the community outreach events and activities, described feedback from the community that identified opportunities for enhancement, and outlined next steps to build off the regional network to identify the local network and project list.

Mobility Commissioners provided the following comments:

- Understanding if areas where no comments were received were due to a lack of infrastructure
- Understanding mobility challenges and barriers as part of the ATP bikeway/pedestrian infrastructure design
- Assistance for seniors or disabled that may not be able to financially afford to repair sidewalk deficiencies – sidewalk repair ordinance could be a hindrance to repairs
- Address e-bikes speeds and comfort level for other users
- Education and outreach for proper laws and regulations

- Consistency with the Climate Ready Fremont Plan in terms of Transportation Demand Management ordinance implementation and enforcement
- Continuous measure of success of ATP goals and project implementation and having a baseline data of bike/pedestrian users on various corridors

Public Comments:

Steve Skala: Goals from the Mobility Action Plan and Climate Ready Fremont need to be prioritized; infrastructure needs to be widened for various mobility-challenged users; e-bikes are becoming common/ubiquitous so infrastructure needs to accept and accommodate users.

Roger Marshal (Senior Commissioner): Seniors are having difficulty with various intersection improvements; Kudos for new sidewalk improvements at Lake Elizabeth and Harvey Park but Lowry Park needs attention.

Andreas (Bike Fremont): Mission statement need to be revised to be pedestrian focused and ensuring that everyone feels safe to walk and bike.

6. AC Transit Realign

Diann Castleberry and Crystal Wang gave a presentation on the AC Transit Realign project goals and guiding principles, project schedule, and service scenarios overview, public engagement and feedback received to date, and next steps.

Mobility Commissioners provided the following comments:

- Principles should include “move as many people as possible” or “remove as many cars as possible”
- Union City is provided transit service but does not pay into the system, which subsidizes transit trips to Union City
- Understanding what microtransit looks like the Warm Springs area – more details such as wait times and capacity
- Synchronizing transfers if eliminating or shortening route and ensuring riders are not having to pay twice with transfers
- Ensure that school service is synced with bell times on short day
- Unconstrained plan needs to be visionary with more robust service or improvements
- Ensure coordination between ATP and bus stop locations
- Outreach to businesses and employers seems to be lacking
- Understanding transit environment considering remote work options and fiscal cliff that transit agencies are facing

Public Comments:

Steve Skala: Policy surrounding e-scooters and e-bikes on buses; Realign Project should complement ATP; loss of Route 239 would affect Irvington High School; understand how fares affect active transportation users.

7. Staff Updates

Eric Hu presented information on the latest Engineering and Traffic Surveys to establish speed limits citywide. The surveys resulted in the recommendation to lower speed limits on 22 segments.

Hans Larsen provided an update on the traffic safety program and reviewed the traffic fatalities for 2023. Fremont's Vision Zero Program was highlighted as a case study in FHWA's Safe System Approach for the Urban Core Information Report.

Mobility Commissioners provided the following comments:

- Recognized that most 2023 fatalities are occurring at night and noted reduction in unhoused individuals involved in fatalities
- Acknowledged legislation that allows consideration of additional factors in addition to 85th percentile speeds to setting speed limits with 35 MPH being the desirable target
- Consideration of 20 MPH speed limits in certain zones
- Consideration of bike run times for signal coordination

Public Comments:

Steve Skala: Noted improvement for pedestrian fatalities from previous years. Requests data regarding bicycle collisions at protected intersections.

Diane Shaw: Fremont has a second transit operator called Ride-on. AC Transit has an RFP for paratransit operators and may request to agendaize other transportation initiatives in the Fremont area for future meetings.

8. Adjournment – 10pm

Comments regarding Dec 20, 2023 Mobility Commission Agenda item 5 Active Transportation Plan
From Steve Skala, Commissioner, Environmental Sustainability Commission.

To: Mobility Commission and Staff

The ability of people in Fremont to engage in safe and effective active transit is critical to maintain the viability of Fremont as a city. All of Fremont's major planning documents, the General Plan, the Mobility Action Plan and Climate Ready Fremont all base the future of Fremont upon meeting mode shifting goals from single occupancy cars to other forms of transit and especially active transit. Note that in terms of climate, an electric bicycle or micromobility device emits at least 20 times less green house gas than an electric car and over 50 times less green house gas than a gasoline car. It is imperative that the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) now in development allows Fremont to reach mode shifting goals that significantly increase the proportion of trips made by active transit.

Critical to developing a successful Active Transportation Plan that results in significant mode shifting requires to look at the big picture. Key is that Fremont adopt a mantra of pedestrians and bicyclists first. In order for the ATP to enable goals of mode shifting via a pedestrian and bicyclist first strategy, the ATP should adopt a hierarchy of strategies, measures and actions similar to Climate Ready Fremont. Specific measures within the ATP should include:

- Completion of critical gaps in the bicycle network per the Bicycle Master Plan
- Encouragement for people to use active transit which should include both outreach from City departments for voluntary adoption of support for active transit such as installation of bicycle parking and update to our Transportation Demand Management ordinance and program.
- A clear path to retrofitting of City -owned infrastructure that does not comply with existing City plans as well as any proposals from the ATP.
- Development of a clear plan to improve city active transit facilities in a way that progressively and continually allows an increased number of people to feel comfortable enough to mode shift.
- Adopt advanced means to determine facility usage and track usage to identify trends and areas that require priority for improvements.
- Alignment with the Planning Department to train employees of the Planning Department to aggressively identify, plan and enforce code upgrades per the General Plan for any new projects and especially permits for significant changes to existing development. Please take note that nearly 90% of Fremont was built before the General Plan was updated and those developments simply do not currently allow an adequate use of active transit as

envisioned by any of the City plans adopted since 2010. Mode shifting will be highly limited unless we have a path to retrofit developments that predate the General Plan.

- Identification of barriers to pedestrian and bicycle transit not yet identified and development of plans to eliminate those barriers.
- Develop a strategy to seamlessly integrate active transit with traditional transit and especially for those that take bikes or micromobility devices onto trains or buses or use them for last mile connections.
- Out-of-the box and novel proposals for improving the walking and cycling experience within our City right-of-way, which is frequently constrained by past land use.
- Especially address the needs of seniors since the population in Fremont is aging including how seniors utilize facilities for bicycling.
- Determine rules and regulations regarding e-bikes because e-bikes use is rapidly growing and currently has a number of restrictions that will in some cases prevent the use of active transit.



We are Fremont, Union City and Newark residents passionate about improving bikeways in our area so that people will choose to bicycle to work, schools, and shopping.

Dec 19, 2023

To: Fremont Mobility Commission & Staff

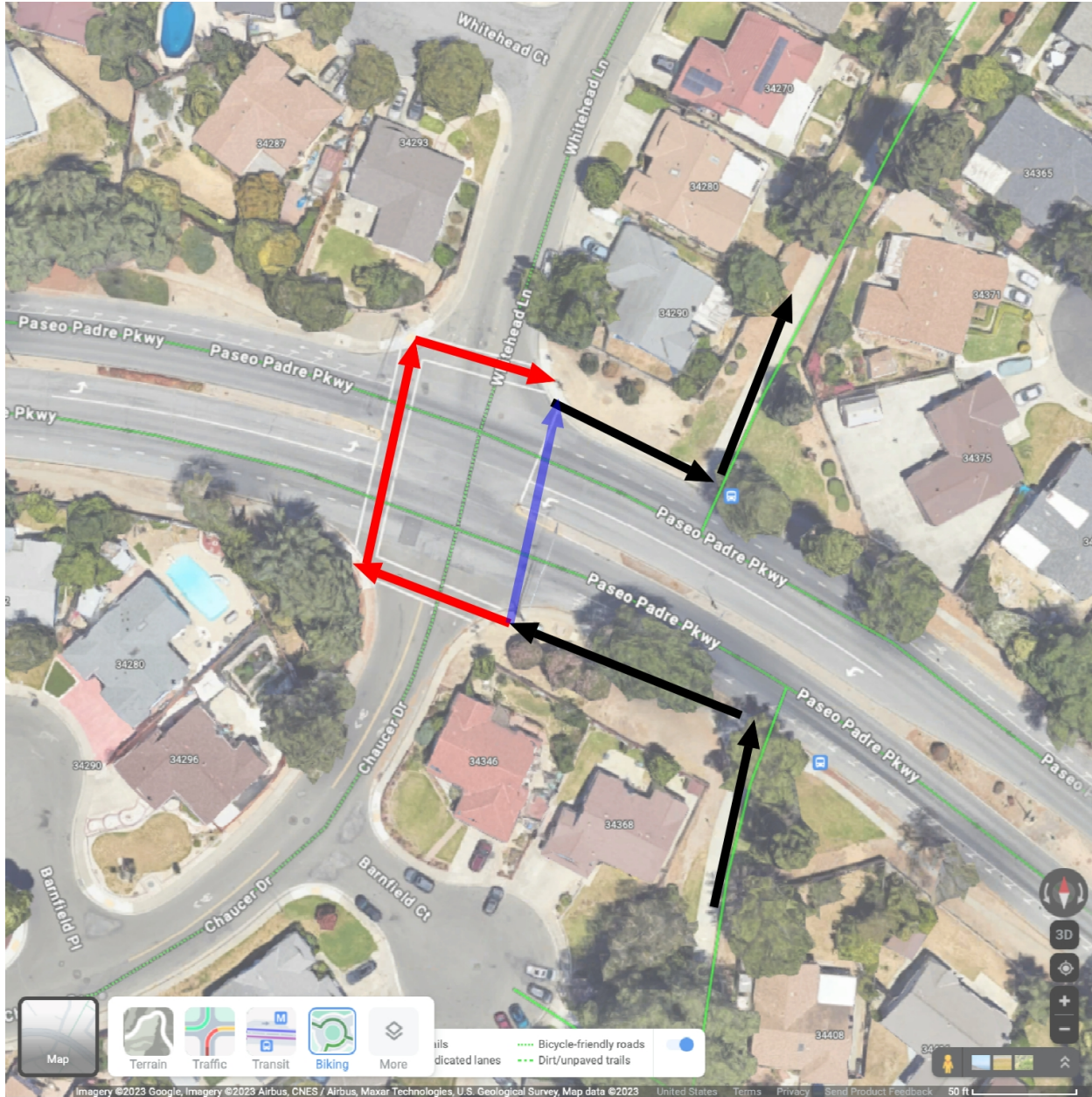
This year's COP28 conference made news with the inclusion of only 2 words: "Fossil fuels." A largely symbolic event in light of the challenge of global climate change. But monumental tasks frequently require a symbolic first step, and this one was welcome after 3 decades of accumulated moral debt.

The City of Fremont faces a similar monumental task as it strives to fulfill its goal of serving "as a national model of how an auto-oriented suburb can evolve into a sustainable, strategically urban, modern city."¹ And there are two words that would create a strong symbolic commitment to that goal, as well as others detailed in the City's Mobility Action Plan (MAP), Climate Action Plan (CAP), and Sustainability element of the General Plan (GP). The words are "Pedestrians first." Using these words as guiding principles in city policy, would go a long way in alleviating the moral debt that decades of car-centric development have inflicted on Fremont's citizens and neighbors. As such, the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) currently being developed should promote that principle across all levels of city government.

To understand why this is a useful approach, it is instructive to look at the many ways that "pedestrians last" has become the norm, so much that we don't even notice it anymore. One example is what we refer to as 3-legged intersections. These are ordinary intersections, where pedestrians are served by only 3 crosswalks instead of 4. This covers the majority of signalized intersections in Fremont. An unlucky pedestrian trying to cross such an intersection will have to activate 3 separate pedestrian signals to get across the road. A particularly egregious example is the intersection of Paseo Padre Parkway with Chaucer Drive. and Whitehead Lane shown below. This serves as the crossing point for the Northgate trail that connects a large residential neighborhood to the Alameda Creek Trail. Alas the trail is on the "wrong" side of the intersection. So rather than walking the short distance from the trail to the intersection and pushing the pedestrian button to get across on the eastern side (blue arrow), a person walking has to wait for 3 pedestrian signal cycles in turn to make the crossing (red arrows).

This ridiculous arrangement would not pass muster in most industrialized countries and we should strive to eliminate such designs as quickly as possible. If drivers had to put up with this level of inconvenience, we would have achieved the mode shift goals in the MAP by now.

¹ Fremont General Plan Vision Statement (<https://www.fremont.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/813/637750630898070000>), page i-32



A “pedestrians first” approach would ensure that there is a signalized crosswalk at the eastern end of the intersection. Or to go one better, we would design enough traffic calming into Paseo Padre to make direct trail connection with a mid-block crossing feasible. Most importantly, we need to recognize that there are dozens of these 3-legged intersections across town, where people live and want to walk their neighborhoods. These are constant reminders, that pedestrians are 2nd-class citizens and we should find a way to fix these and other elements that disadvantage people on foot.

Beyond inconvenience, intersections are also extremely hazardous to pedestrians. The majority of pedestrian fatalities² in Fremont occur at intersections. While we have made great strides in

² averaging about 3 deaths per year



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bringing protected (“Dutch”) intersections to Fremont, it bears pointing out that we have the most primitive form of protected intersections. In particular, the Dutch nowadays rigorously separate pedestrians from vehicles with different traffic signal phases³ whereas we still make pedestrians dodge right-turning vehicle traffic when the walk signal turns green. Being at the heart of the most technologically advanced metro regions in the US (if not the world), one would think we can do at least as well as the Netherlands. And we probably can, once we recognize that walking should be just as safe and convenient as driving and muster the political will to make that a priority. Again, “pedestrian first” is not an expression of preference or privilege for people walking. It is an acknowledgement that we have accumulated decades of neglect that we now have to make up for.

Which brings us to the final aspect of a pedestrian-friendly, sustainable, strategically urban, modern city. Pedestrians need local transit to cover the distance beyond the first mile, especially in a city like Fremont where groceries and other daily needs are frequently not within walking distance. While Fremont is well served by regional transit (especially rail), it is sorely lacking in local service. The local transit network is too sparse in both space and time and the proposed AC Transit ReAlign does nothing to remedy this situation. The fallacy we have maintained for decades is that local transit service needs to be covered by fare revenue, whereas we are happy to subsidize single occupancy vehicles with free parking (and associated building codes)⁴ and road maintenance costs⁵ well in excess of gas tax and vehicle fee revenues.⁶ A “pedestrians first” strategy would recognize people walking as a net benefit in transitioning to a modern city and shift vehicle subsidies (at the local level this is mostly free parking) towards transit to enable more mode shift. This requires leadership and startup capital from the city. AC Transit can be a partner in implementing an effective local transit system, but we cannot expect them to effectively lead this transition.

Once we have functional local transit, we can also give up the fiction that we need multi-lane, high-speed arterials and collectors to move people around town. These roads are already slow-moving due to congestion at rush hour. But designing them for higher vehicle speeds ensures fatal crashes outside peak commute times. Such as the pedestrian fatality on Blacow Street & Royal Palm Drive in December 2022 when a driver ran a red light and struck a person in the crosswalk at high speed. This intersection could be redesigned to be less lethal, but only if we accept a design speed around 20 mph or lower⁷ instead of 40 mph. That is to say, if we design all

³ A very concise summary of how modern Dutch intersections are both safer and increase throughput of all travel modes is given in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knbVWXzL4-4>

⁴ Free parking in Fremont comes out to about \$69 million/year if you scale the \$100 billion/year estimate for the US from “The High Cost of Free Parking” (<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/2010/08/15/business/economy/15view.html>) to Fremont’s population.

⁵ <https://usafacts.org/topics/transportation-infrastructure/>

⁶ <https://frontiergroup.org/resources/who-pays-roads/>

⁷ During peak commute times the effective travel speeds are already below this and cyclists will frequently encounter the same cars stopped at traffic lights along arterial bike routes. Designing for this speed around the clock would vastly improve safety with no effect during rush hour and small effects outside.

roads for “pedestrians first”, with high-density transit moving at safe speeds prioritized over fast-moving cars.

The current ATP clearly cannot achieve the above listed objectives over its ~5 year life span. But we can start to set the foundation for future progress on the MAP, CAP and General Plan if we embrace two words across the city’s governing structure, from the leadership down: “Pedestrians first.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andreas V. Kadavanich', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Andreas V. Kadavanich
co-organizer, Bike Fremont