



# City/School Liaison Committee Minutes



## City/School Liaison Committee Meeting Wednesday, October 22, 2008

8:15 AM to 9:30 AM  
City of Palo Alto Civic Center  
Council Conference Room  
250 Hamilton Ave  
Palo Alto

In Attendance:

### City of Palo Alto

Pat Burt, Council Member, Chair of Committee

Larry Klein, Mayor

Steve Emslie, Deputy City Manager

Gayle Likens, Transportation Manager for Planning

Kathy Durham, Coordinator Trans Sys Mgmt for Planning

Sgt. Steve Herrera, Police Sgt/Adv for Police POL Traffic Team

Katie Whitley, Administrative Assistant

### Palo Alto Unified School District

Camille Townsend, Board Member

Melissa Baten Caswell, Board Member

Bob Golton, District Co-Chief Business Officer

Pete Pearne, Palo Alto Unified School District

Kathy Durkin, Palo Alto Unified School District

Penny Ellson, PTA Elementary

Rich Swent, PTA

Handouts: **All handouts can be viewed in the City Manager's office at 250 Hamilton Ave**

Meeting convened at 8:15 a.m.

1. **Oral Communications:** None
2. **"Safe Routes to School"**

Chair Burt changed the order of the items on the agenda to discuss Enforcement, Engineering projects and then Education and Encouragement.

Enforcement:

Sgt. Herrera passed around a letter that was distributed to parents of Palo Alto Unified School attendees at the beginning of the year. The purpose of the letter was for parents to talk to their children about education on how to safe ride and to let the children know the Police would be watching and enforcing the laws.

Sgt. Herrera said complaints had been received regarding bike violations. He said the County offers a program for the juveniles not to go through the courts when they receive a citation. Instead after a citation is issued, the juvenile must complete a 2 hour course with their parents. The cost is about \$10 compared to the courts where it is about \$90 for the first violation. The school is run by Traffic Safe Communities Network. The Police Department sends the citation information to the school and the school then contacts the parents to arrange for the juvenile to attend the course. The school then notifies the Police department when the class is completed. If the juvenile does not complete the course, it will then be handled through the courts. The Palo Alto traffic team is going to start conducting the classes in Palo Alto.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked if there was a trend in a particular area or school.

Sgt. Herrera answered that near the high schools and middle schools there seemed to be a major increase in violations of running stop signs and not wearing helmets in the 4 bike corridors.

Chair Burt asked if there were physical design features at intersections that could be addressed and improved that would help kids not to do the wrong thing.

Sgt. Herrera said improvements could be made but there are no biking signs posted at the underpasses where many violations are made and citations are being given out.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked if the principals were involved and aware of the violations.

Sgt. Herrera said they were.

Chair Burt asked if TV's in the classroom were being used to get the safety message out. Ms. Ellson answered that some schools were using them.

Chair Burt asked if the Police Department were aware of the tools used by PAUSD to promote safety and Ms. Ellson said yes.

Engineering Projects: Ms. Likens said she wanted to update the Committee on the projects under this heading.

1. Charleston/Arastradero Corridor- the first phase of the trial is completed and was approved. The second phase is underway now. Ms. Likens said one of the issues

is that not enough cars are getting onto Gunn campus fast enough and traffic backs up onto Arastradero. The result was the development of a new circulation pattern. There were 2 lanes changed to go further into campus. The right lane continues to the back of campus for parking and single student drop off. The left lane goes to the administrative building which is the drop off point for only carpools and handicap loading and unloading. Ms. Likens said the major feature is all exiting traffic goes in front of the administrative building because of the 2 lanes now going in. There was an immediate transition phase where not everyone knew the new drop off points but so far administrators are pleased. Ms. Likens said last Wednesday there was a team evaluating the traffic on Arastradero and gathering information for the Traffic Adaptive Signal Timing project (smart signal systems).

Ms. Baten Caswell asked what had to happen to get the smart signals in place. Ms. Likens said it was a project that is being worked on now and within a month likely to see it up.

Chair Burt asked if the smart signals are modifiable. Ms. Likens replied they were and it was likely to see a 20% increase in traffic flow and reduction in the cue.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked who else in the area uses the smart signal system. Ms. Likens replied that Caltrans implemented a system on El Camino in Menlo Park but that is the only place in the immediate area.

Ms. Ellson said the smart signals are not just watching and working at one intersection but are communicating to all the other signals set up in that corridor.

Chair Burt said rather than discuss the Trader Joe's item, the Maybell/Donald item should be next.

2. Maybell/Donald Bike Blvd. Evaluation - Ms. Likens said that over a year ago the traffic calming features were implemented on Maybell/Donald as well as a new walkway on Maybell as part of the safe routes to school program. The bike boulevard improvements were 5 speed tables that were installed on Maybell and Donald. One on Donald and 4 on Maybell from El Camino all the way to Donald. It was supposed to be an 8 month trial but it has exceeded that time. There is a meeting this afternoon with the advisory committee to discuss how the trial has fared. Ms. Likens said that it is likely this will go back before the Planning Commission within the next couple of months.

Chair Burt said the Maybell entrance to Terman is sensitive and asked if that would be addressed at all. Ms. Likens replied that as part of the Charleston/Arastradero Corridor trial that intersection would be looked at.

3. Trader Joe's Traffic Signal Improvements – Ms. Likens said there were 2 components and Trader Joe's would be at the back of the sight. As part of the

approval of the project the developer has agreed to pay for and hire a consultant to design a new traffic signal at Palo Alto High and Town and Country Shopping Center driveway. It will be a full signalized intersection. There will be a new driveway exiting the shopping center in front of Trader Joe's that will be signalized with a right turn out and enhancements will be made to the island and pedestrian crossing. All pedestrian traffic will remain where it is currently located. One issue that came up with signalizing the main driveway is it would be advisable to shift the existing Palo Alto High driveway to the east for better alignment with the Town and Country driveway at the signal.

Mayor Klein asked who would fund the driveway shift for Palo Alto High. Ms. Likens answered it would be part of the City's project.

Chair Burt asked if the developer's fee was a fixed amount or proportionate. Mr. Emslie answered fixed.

4. Bike Racks- Mr. Swent presented this item to the Committee. Mr. Swent said he and Ms. Ellson had been working on this item of a shortage of bike racks at schools. He said there are short term needs and a long term solution is needed. He presented the guidelines from the Association of Pedestrian Bike Professionals as to what type of bike rack would be best. The rack should support the bike in 2 places and allows for the use of a U lock. . The problem with the comb racks is the bikes get tangled, over crowded and broken which then becomes a safety issue for the child riding home.

Ms. Ellson said part of what is contributing to this is bikes are changing. Even if it is a cheaper model bike they have quick release wheels. So if only the front wheel is locked in the bike is still at risk.

Mr. Swent said the issue is the better bike racks are larger and take up more room than the comb racks. Mr. Swent and Ms. Ellson met with Mr. Golton and Mr. Pearne and assistant principals at various schools and approach it with the idea of starting from scratch.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked what other school districts in the area doing about this issue. Mr. Swent said the issue is being ignored.

Mr. Golton said he had Mr. Pearne contact the City of Davis school districts and other school districts in this area to see how they handle this issue. Mr. Pearne said Davis has about 30,000 bikes in their City including the University. He said the comb racks are cheap because of space but some of the smaller areas use the wave racks. Typically however, the schools use the comb racks because of space.

Mr. Golton said PAUSD has a couple of architects. DLM will be masterplanning the high schools and AEDIS will be working on the middle schools. What will be asked of the architects is to work on the bike rack issue as part of their contract.

Mr. Swent said that short term there needs to be a way to fit more bikes on campus's but long term it should be designed upfront instead of an afterthought.

Chair Burt said Caltrain said there are no placed bike racks. Instead, guard rails are used. He encouraged everyone to go look at the way the guard rails are used because it is very innovative.

Chair Burt said that on Monday past, the Youth Council had their joint meeting with City Council and the Palo Alto High representatives made a very strong case of inadequate bike racks on campus.

Ms. Likens wanted to show the Committee the numbers on a graph passed out of the increase of bikes over the last few years.

Ms. Ellson said this is a very good time to be working with the PAUSD for long term solutions. In the short term she said they would be working with Mr. Pearne on specific solutions.

Ms. Townsend said the parent racks are not easy to find and many people do not know where they are. Mr. Swent said it would be ideal to have staff bike parking spaces and visitor spaces.

Ms. Ellson said Mr. Swent did a study comparing the manufacturer's suggested capacity for bikes and actual usage. At the schools the number was much fewer than manufacture's suggestion because of the way the bikes were locked up for safety. The proposal was to move some of the toaster racks to the elementary schools because the smaller bikes fit better.

Chair Burt said the final item on the agenda was Education and that Ms. Durham would be presenting it.

Education: Ms. Durham said she just came from Walt Hayes Elementary where they were doing their 3<sup>rd</sup> grade on bike activities. She said it was a great example of the partnership between the City and PAUSD. Ms. Durham said the education now is so clearly evident in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade now compared to the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade when most adults were in school. The middle school and high school bike counts percentage has gone up to 1/3. The numbers are back to where they were in 1993. The education given in elementary schools is a contributing factor to those numbers rising.

Chair Burt asked if the performance levels could be turned competitive among the schools. Ms. Durham said no, that type of competition in elementary schools is not encouraged.

Chair Burt said he was discouraged to see that after the amount of time the volunteers put into all the bike programs and the money Council allotted to the programs that the schools were capped out in some locations because the gap of bike racks has not been filled.

Ms. Baten Caswell asked if this problem was just from this year. Mr. Swent said it has been a problem building but this year is really when it hit.

Mr. Pearne said he has been with PAUSD for 4 years and new bike cages have been added to almost all the schools.

Mr. Golton said any shortages would be addressed now and plan intelligently for the future.

Chair Burt said it sounded like the long term plan is being incorporated and the short term plan needs to be addressed.

Ms. Ellson said it is being worked on right now.

Chair Burt said to keep the Safe Routes to School program growing because it is an enormous success.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45