



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

AGENDA

Tuesday, June 25, 2024, 5:30 p.m.

This meeting includes in-person and virtual participation.

Santiam Room, City Hall

333 Broadalbin Street SW

Or join the meeting here:

<https://council.albanyoregon.gov/groups/tac/zoom>

You can use your microphone or dial in using your phone. Phone: 1 (253) 215-8782 (Long distance charges may apply)

Meeting ID: 825 1857 5813; Passcode: 053593

Please help us get Albany's work done.

Be respectful and refer to the rules of conduct posted by the main door to the Chambers and on the website.

1. Call to order
2. Roll call
3. Approval of May 28, 2024, minutes
4. Scheduled Business
 - a. Upcoming City of Albany Street Projects (15-minutes)
5. Business from the Commission
6. Business from the Public

Persons wanting to provide comments may:

- 1- *Email written comments to Andrew Monaco, Andrew.Monaco@albanyoregon.gov, including your name, before **noon on day of meeting**.*
 - 2- *To comment virtually during the meeting, register with your name by emailing Andrew Monaco, Andrew.Monaco@albanyoregon.gov before **noon on day of meeting**. The chair will call upon those who have registered to speak.*
 - 3- *Appear in person at the meeting and register to speak using the sign-up sheet on the table.*
7. Next Meeting Date: July 23, 2024
 8. Adjournment

This meeting is accessible to the public via video connection. The location for in-person attendance is accessible to people with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please notify city staff at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting at Andrew.Monaco@albanyoregon.gov or 541-917-7656.

Testimony provided at the meeting is part of the public record. Meetings are recorded, capturing both in-person and virtual participation, and are posted on the City website.



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

MINUTES

May 28, 2024

5:30 p.m.

Santiam Room, City Hall/Virtual

Approved: DRAFT

Call to Order

5:30 p.m.

Chair Nolan Streitberger called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present: Chair Nolan Streitberger, Chuck Kratch, Frankie McCullough, Nichole Case, Alex Rice, and Lacy Ramirez

Members absent: Mark Siddall

Staff present: Engineering Associate I Andrew Monaco, Operations Manager Kristin Preston, Transit Programs Supervisor Candy Bliss, and Public Works Clerk III Anita Dodd

Others present: Robert Cook, Carole Estherchild, Billy McGregor (AAMPO), and Daniel Koenig

Approval of March 26, 2024, Minutes

5:31 p.m.

Chuck Kratch made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Frankie McCullough seconded the motion, and the motion passed the commission 6-0.

Business from Commission

5:32 p.m.

None.

Business from the Public

5:34 p.m.

Robert Cook and Carole Estherchild attended the meeting to share ideas of how to potentially improve traffic flow on 1st Avenue.

Scheduled Business

5:48 p.m.

Transit Programs Supervisor Candy Bliss and Operations Manager Kristin Preston presented the different transit routes in the city of Albany and shared the strategy behind why the routes were created this way and how they are funded. The commissioners responded with questions and ideas that could possibly improve the transit system for the future.

Next Meeting Date

The next scheduled meeting is June 25, 2024.

Adjournment

Seeing no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Anita Dodd
Clerk III

Andrew Monaco
Engineering Associate I

**Documents discussed at the meeting that are not in the agenda packet are archived in the record. The documents are available by emailing cityclerk@albanyoregon.gov.*

Thu 2/29/2024 12:09 AM

Hello, Andrew,

My name is Daniel Koenig. I am a citizen in North Albany.

I spoke up briefly at the last Transportation Commission meeting in the hopes of sparking some more conversation about investments in our public transit systems here in Albany. I think that started some good discussion, and I would like to see that continue.

Ultimately, I think the commission wants to see ridership numbers go up on our bus lines--both so that poor folks in our community can access transportation easier, and so that we can minimize congestion and both air and noise pollution in our city. However, it's tough to justify pouring funding into initiatives like increasing our bus count or shortening our bus lanes when the ridership isn't there.

What I would instead suggest the council consider, and what I am willing to speak on and provide further reading/research about, is what is called lane shrinkage. Functionally, we take lanes that already exist and are used for mixed car/bus traffic and designate them as being only for bus lanes. This effectively removes a travel lane from some of our roads.

On the surface, common logic would make this sound like an awful idea. If a lane is a pipe that allows a certain throughput of cars, having more pipes would obviously increase throughput. Thus, removing one of those pipes would decrease throughput and worsen congestion.

What this fails to acknowledge is the way traffic truly works. Traffic, as we have seen over and over again across not only our state, but the world as a whole, is elastic. Wherever there is supply, latent demand--demand that isn't currently being met for whatever reason--will be induced, or brought about, to consume whatever new supply exists.

As a result, when we introduce more lanes onto a road, we normally end up no better than where we started--or, as is often the case, in a worse spot than we were at the start. This worsening is caused not only by induced demand bringing more drivers onto the road, but the added complexity of merging introduced by creating more lanes. This is why highway expansions, like the 1.6 billion that Los Angeles invested to expand I-405 while bulldozing hundreds of homes, did nothing to address congestion.

All of this is to say that removing lanes, while on the surface something that would worsen congestion during rush hours, will actually end up lessening traffic. This is backed up by numerous studies, including one from 2002 that analyzed over 70 lane reductions and found that they, on average, **reduced** traffic by 41%.

https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/disappearing_traffic_cairns.pdf

This reduction is caused by a few things.

- 1) Some riders choose to use other routes rather than the simplest, most straightforward route. This spreads load around the city across more streets, lessening the throughput in any one lane.
- 2) Others avoid taking a trip altogether, or choose to delay it to a time with lower congestion.
- 3) Finally, and this is perhaps the most important one: some drivers choose alternate transport, where and when it is available.

Point 3 is what will bump our ridership numbers up. And once those numbers go up, we'll have the justification we need to invest more in our public transit. That will cause our ridership to go up more, and thus we enter into a positive feedback loop.

If we do nothing, nothing will change. Something needs to change somewhere if we ever want public transit to be viable in our community, and I believe a simple change of usage for existing infrastructure is a very cost-effective and fast way to take that step.

I urge the commission to consider making this change, even if it may not be a popular one at first.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Daniel Koenig - They/Them

Sorry I'm late. I'm afraid I got lost on the path of life.

On Thu, Feb 29, 2024 at 1:02 PM Monaco, Andrew <Andrew.Monaco@albanyoregon.gov> wrote:

Daniel,

Thank you for attending the meeting Tuesday evening and for taking the time to submit comments. We will make sure this email is presented to the Transportation Advisory Committee.

As a follow up question, do you happen to have lanes, routes or areas that you suggest making lane reductions on?

Thu 2/29/2024 5:26 PM

Hey, Andrew,

I am by no means a traffic engineer, so my thoughts here might be totally ludicrous or badly designed--but my immediate thoughts were to perform lane reductions/create bus lanes on the "main" Albany streets, which I believe are highlighted on a map shared at the recent February 27th meeting on page 4.

https://www.albanyoregon.gov/mnt/html/citycouncil/bcc/archive/2024/tac_20240227_agd.pdf

We could obviously only reduce streets that already have two lanes, but most of these main streets fit the bill.

The simplest and most effective location, in my eyes, would be along Ellsworth and Lyons Street--especially if we could coordinate with the state to extend those bus lanes/lane reductions further onto H-20 and onto 99E. For example, why do we have 4 lanes 99E? Navigating that section of street is a nightmare, and I've seen numerous near crash incidents there in my time here. That will always be the case until we reduce the number of lanes and, in so doing, simplify the traffic flow.

Another aspect of this worth considering is the removal of some or all parking along the main streets. Parking, just like traffic, is elastic--if more parking is made in a high demand area, more parking will be used. Without making massive, expansive parking lots ala Costco or Walmart (which I don't think we should do), I think trying to meet parking demand is a bit of a futile effort. Removing some of the parking downtown would give us more room to do things like creating dedicated turn lanes, or creating more space for pedestrians/cyclists. It would also discourage people from driving into downtown, pushing folks more towards alternative transport as well, and thereby lowering traffic.

I do think these would be unpopular choices on their head, but the aggravation they would cause is honestly part of the point. I imagine myself as a driver, sitting in the backed up traffic along H-20 and Ellsworth. I've been stuck at this red light for five, ten minutes. And then a bus goes past me, running at the normal speed limit, without needing to stop for cars. My response could be anger, which will certainly be some folks reaction--but I think for most, it will make them think "huh. Maybe I should just take the bus."

Thanks, and please let me know if you have any thoughts!

Daniel Koenig - He/Him/His

Sorry I'm late. I'm afraid I got lost on the path of life.

From: Daniel Koenig <djk19981998@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 28, 2024 7:22 PM
To: Irish, Ron <Ron.Irish@albanyoregon.gov>
Subject: Feedback on May 28th, 2024 Meeting

[**WARNING!** This email came from outside our organization. Do **NOT** click unknown attachments or links in email.]

Hi, Ron,

I wanted to provide some feedback after the May 28th, 2024 meeting.

First, it seems that the chat messages are not properly coming through. I sent multiple messages throughout the meeting, but I don't believe any were acknowledged. I would have brought this up at the end, but I did not want to make an already long meeting longer.

Second, is the direct email for the committee members something that the public has access to? I am specifically interested in reaching out to Alex Rice, as I think we align on a number of concerns and could potentially work together to design some solutions that could be presented to the commission.

Third, I wanted to voice my support for the concept of late night buses. They would bring business to bars in our area, which would build back a so called "third space", a space outside of the home where communities can forge connections. And it would do this while increasing our ridership numbers, funneling business to our local bars, and cutting down on incidences of drunk driving. While I know that our funding options for this are limited, I'm sure that we can make some sort of move into this area.

Fourth, I want to strongly oppose the reintroduction of fares on our bus system. Many compelling arguments were already pushed forward during the meeting, but one that I didn't hear mentioned is around poverty. Many of those who ride the bus are impoverished. If they weren't, they would likely chose to take a car. To us, 50 cents might not be much. But to someone who is struggling to put food on the table, 50 cents could be the difference between eating that day or not.

Last, I want to address comments that Nolan made during the meeting around forcing individuals to change their habits. I don't think anyone is in the business of *forcing* anyone to change. However, the reality is that humans operate on a system called dominant strategy. We do what is the most simple, even if that that thing might be bad for us in the long term. The Downs-Thomson paradox also

Our society, due to aggressive lobbying by the automotive industry, has been built to support car transit above all else. This has made all other modes of transportation some

combination of inefficient, inconvenient, or unsafe. Thus, people don't use them if they have another option. This means that it is mostly poor folks who can't afford a car who use alternative transit.

However, as the Downs-Thomson paradox posits, traffic isn't going to be solved by continuing to focus on cars. Adding more lanes does not help. More than likely, by adding another turn lane to 1st, we will simply induce demand, which will end up causing the same problem to appear, just in two distinct lanes rather than one.

The only way that we are going to "solve" traffic is by moving to more efficient modes of transportation, like buses, which move more people from point A to point B in less space.

To get there, we need to make taking the bus a more appealing option than driving. Otherwise, people will just continue to drive. This means that we need to introduce changes to our transit system that will make the bus *more efficient and convenient* than taking the car.

I noticed that my original comments were tabled for three meetings so that this presentation could be given. While the presentation was insightful, I fail to see how it had any relevance to the suggestion for creating a bus lane.

I would love to see some discussion around adding a dedicated bus lane at the next meeting. I would also appreciate it if the members of the commission could take some time to watch a video by Not Just Bikes. It provides a high level view of induced demand, latent demand, traffic evaporation, and more:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHZwOAlect4>

Thank you!

Daniel Koenig - They/Them/Theirs

Sorry I'm late. I'm afraid I got lost on the path of life.