

City of Arcata Transportation Safety Committee
Annual Report to Council

Presented at the Oct. 1, 2014 City Council Meeting

Committee Members

Sue Cashman
John Bergenske
Stan Elcock
Shelley Mitchell (term ending)
Melanie Williams, Chair
Josh Wolf
Two vacancies

Staff Liaisons:

R. Charles (Doby) Class, Public Works Director
Netra Khatri, Public Works Deputy Director
Lt. Ryan Peterson, Arcata Police Department

*Representatives from Arcata Fire, Police Department and Transportation forces were frequently present at TSC meetings.

The Transportation Safety Committee (TSC) was recreated by the City Council by adoption of Ordinance No. 1292 effective 6/18/99. The powers and duties of this committee are to review all transportation safety matters and make recommendations to the Council, commissions, or City staff as appropriate.

During the past year the TSC held ten regular meetings on the third Tuesday of each month. This would equate to approximately 172 hours of volunteered time and at least 146 hours of City staff time.

The work of the TSC throughout the last year was focused on three main tasks: receiving and responding to the transportation safety concerns of residents presented either through written or oral communication, review of projects to be undertaken by the City and efforts to assist the City in the implementation of the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.

Description of main tasks

- Arcata Bicycle Boulevard (ABB) Project

The TSC has advised and worked closely with City staff to develop a project that will successfully utilize and implement Caltrans Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA) grant funding – approximately \$173,000.00 – while it is available. Moving towards the construction phase of the

project, the Public Works Department has developed a full set of plans and specifications, has entered the bidding process and intends to recommend an award of bid to the Council at the October 1, 2014 regular meeting.

The TSC has prioritized outreach to residents and business owners in Arcata, including door-to-door canvassing of businesses and residents on 10th & "I" Streets, and mailings to those affected. Additionally, the Public Works Department hosted two public meetings on April 10 and 24 of 2014. The first meeting was geared towards business owners along the project route and the later was geared towards residents along the project area and the public. Several comments were received during those meetings and most of the comments are incorporated in the current plans. Topics of public discussion included: safety concerns, business impacts, multiple alignment options for boulevard route; signage options; placement of bike racks. Final design of the project reflects input from the public and Council as well as the results of traffic counts conducted by Public Works.

The City of Arcata website has been utilized throughout the ABB planning process. City staff have worked with TSC members to develop educational/reference materials for display on the site including responses to a list of Frequently Asked Questions and schematics of the project.

Committee members will continue, beyond the construction phase of the project, to study the effectiveness of the design in terms of connectivity, safety, non-motorized vehicle usage and other long-term goals of the TSC reflected in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP).

- Fickle Hill Road Improvements Project

Guided by public safety concerns, presented through both written and oral comments as well as collision data, the TSC has helped City staff to design measures to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety on Fickle Hill Road. Installation of guardrails, radar feedback signs, striping and other safety features is now complete. The signs are to be operational in the near future pending work by PG&E. Initial responses from residents and roadway users have been positive.

- Walk Friendly Communities

The TSC is working with Council to complete an application for Arcata's recognition as a Walk Friendly City in December of 2014. The designation celebrates and encourages communities that have prioritized pedestrian safety and access through a variety of plans, policies and developments. According to the WFC website: "Walk Friendly Communities is sponsored by FedEx and the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway

Administration. The program is maintained by the UNC Highway Safety Research Center's Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, with support from a variety of national partners."

Review of City Projects

- Foster Avenue Extension

The project was reviewed and approved by TSC in April of 2014. The bidding process for construction will begin in December of the same year, and construction is expected to begin in April of 2015.

- Bike Rodeo

A favorite yearly event sponsored by the Recreation Division, City staff, TSC members and community volunteers helped with this year's rodeo. Free helmets and bicycle registration were provided by the City. AFD also provided a truck and staff and conducted safety education for children and their families.

The City's new bicycle-parking tent and bike racks were utilized.

- Bike to Work Day – Wednesday, May 7, 2014

City sponsorship of this annual event again included providing use of the Plaza for a noon rally and City staff and TSC member participation in events at both the Energizer Station at the Co-op before work and on the Plaza at noon.

- City of Arcata Proclamations were received for May 2014 Bike Month (April 16) & International Walk to School Day (October 1). Awards to schools with the highest levels of participation on Walk to School Day were presented, with Coastal Grove Charter School receiving the award for most participation.

Public Written and Oral Communication

- Members of the public have frequently contacted the TSC, either in person at meetings or through mail, e-mail and phone calls, in regard to potential safety concerns. Topics include: speeding, requests for crosswalks, speed-humps and signage, sight visibility and safety near schools.

Implementation of Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (PBMP)

- Audit of the PBMP will be added as a standing agenda item for future all TSC meetings in order to continually and systematically monitor progress toward completing the projects and attaining the goals established therein.

TSC Recommendations to Council for upcoming year

- TSC supports APD request for designated Traffic Safety Officer, as funding allows.
- Committee members would like to thank the City Council for their continued support, and advocates for ongoing yearly study sessions between Council and the TSC.

TSC seeks Council direction for the upcoming year

- Upcoming Phase III of the Samoa Gateway Project/roundabouts at Highway 101.