

Commission on Disability Issues

October 29, 2012

Action

Pedestrian Push Button Upgrades Proposed for Blind or Visually-Impaired Individuals

Background

The [General Plan's 2009 Transportation Element](#) policies recommend accessible pedestrian signals, which are pedestrian push buttons upgraded to have audible and tactile/vibrational features, and pedestrian countdown signals at all the signalized intersections in the City of Alameda. This recommendation is based on the Transportation Element guiding policy 4.1.1.f. The [City's 2009 Pedestrian Plan](#) lists the signalized intersections that are in need of upgraded pedestrian push buttons under a project category titled "Street Crossings." In September 2011, Public Works staff submitted a grant application for federal monies under the [New Freedom Program](#), which is administered by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), to install pedestrian push button upgrades at nine intersections.

In Summer 2011, MTC solicited projects in the San Francisco Bay Area's large urbanized areas for the Federal Transit Administration's New Freedom Program (49 USC Section 5317). The New Freedom Program provides grants for new capital and operating projects aimed at reducing, beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, transportation barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. The available funding is \$3.7 million for the Bay Area's large urbanized areas. Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, local government authorities, and public transportation operators. A local agency must contribute at least 20 percent of the total project cost.

In November 2011, MTC informed the Public Works staff that the City of Alameda will receive federal funding in the amount of \$150,900 from the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Freedom Program (Section 5317). This funding will be the federal share of the total project costs, which equal \$188,625. The local share is \$37,725.

Discussion

Public Works staff is recommending that pedestrian push buttons at nine signalized intersections be modified to make it easier and safer for blind or visually-impaired individuals to cross the street. These intersections, listed in Table 1 and shown in Exhibit 1, are located adjacent to an AC Transit bus stop or an Alameda Paratransit Shuttle stop. The pedestrian push buttons are proposed to have the following features (Figure 1):

- Raised tactile arrow that points into the direction of the crosswalk;



Figure1: Webster St. at Stargell Ave.

- Locator tone - **with a lower night volume** - to help direct pedestrians to the push button;
- Once the button is pushed, the pedestrian will hear the word “Wait”;
- During the pedestrian walk signal phase, which is only activated by pushing the pedestrian button:
 - The arrow push button will vibrate; and
 - An audible sound, either a chirp or a cuckoo - **with a lower night volume** - will play.

Table 1: Pedestrian Push Button Upgrades – Proposed Locations

Intersection Name	AC Transit Lines	Alameda Paratransit Shuttle Stops
High Street/Otis Drive	21, 314, OX, W	Krusi Park
Lincoln Avenue/Willow Street (Santa Clara Avenue/Willow Street)	(O, 314, 51A, 851)	Lincoln/Chestnut
Broadway/Encinal Avenue	O, OX	Broadway/Crist
Broadway/Otis Drive	21, 314, W	Otis/Broadway
Grand Street/Otis Drive	20, W	
High Street/Santa Clara Avenue	O, W	High/Santa Clara
Oak Street/Central Avenue (Oak Street/Santa Clara Avenue)	(O, 314, 51A)	Alameda Main Library
Island Drive/Robert Davey Junior	21	Park & Ride Lot
Robert Davey Junior/Packet Landing Road	21, OX	

Note: The intersection names in parentheses show the actual location of the closest bus stop when it differs from the location of the proposed pedestrian push button upgrades.

These intersections were selected because they are identified in the City of Alameda’s Pedestrian Plan (2009) as priority locations for blind or visually-impaired individuals. These locations also are in close proximity to an AC Transit bus stop or an Alameda Paratransit Shuttle stop. Since blind or visually-impaired individuals are unable to drive and are transit dependent, intersections near AC Transit bus stops or Paratransit Shuttle stops were selected to provide these individuals with accessible transportation to and from their homes, jobs, shopping and other activities. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 10.4 percent of the population in the City of Alameda was disabled and 13.5 percent was 65 years and over. These groups will most benefit from pedestrian push button upgrades. Not only does this project give more independence to individuals with vision disabilities, it also helps make the local bus systems a more viable alternative, which in turn reduces congestion and vehicular emissions.

Outreach

Public Works staff notified the residents, tenants and property owners within 300 feet of all nine intersections that are proposed to have pedestrian push button upgrades (Exhibit 2). Public Works staff also will discuss this proposed project at the Transportation Commission on November 28, 2012.

Budget Considerations/Fiscal Impacts

The federal New Freedom Program will fund 80 percent of the proposed project. The funding source for the local match is Alameda County Measure B, which is administered by the Alameda County Transportation Commission.

Recommendation

Public Works staff recommends that the Commission on Disability Issues review and take action on whether to proceed with the installation of pedestrian push button upgrades at the nine selected intersections.

Exhibits:

1. Pedestrian Plan Maps – Proposed Locations for the Pedestrian Push Button Upgrades
2. Notification to Adjacent Property/Business Owners, Employees and Residents

**Exhibit 1: Pedestrian Plan Maps –
Proposed Locations for the Pedestrian
Push Button Upgrades**

Figure 24: High-priority Pedestrian Projects (Main Island - East)

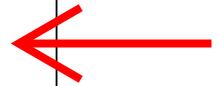
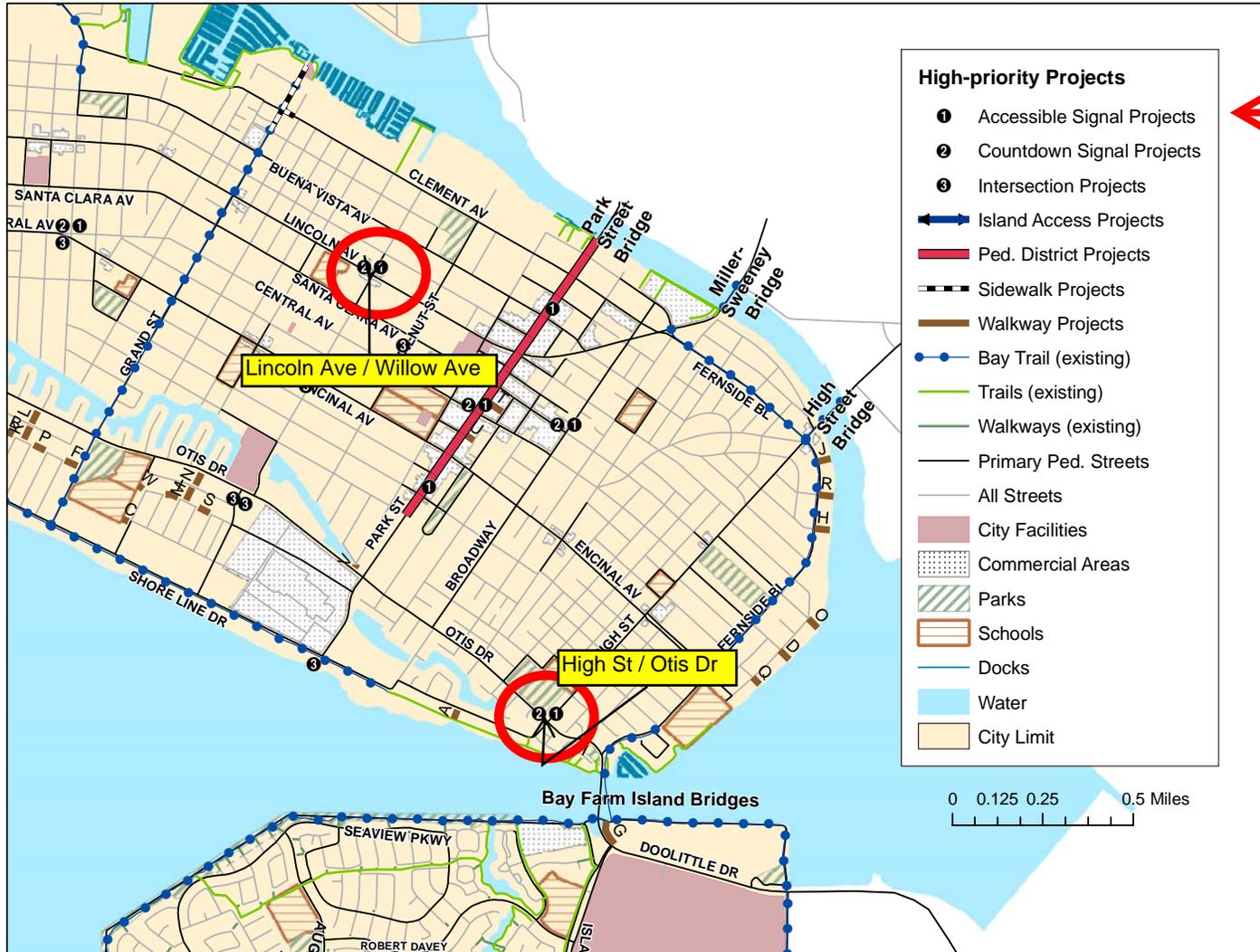


Figure 27: Medium-priority Pedestrian Projects (Main Island - East)

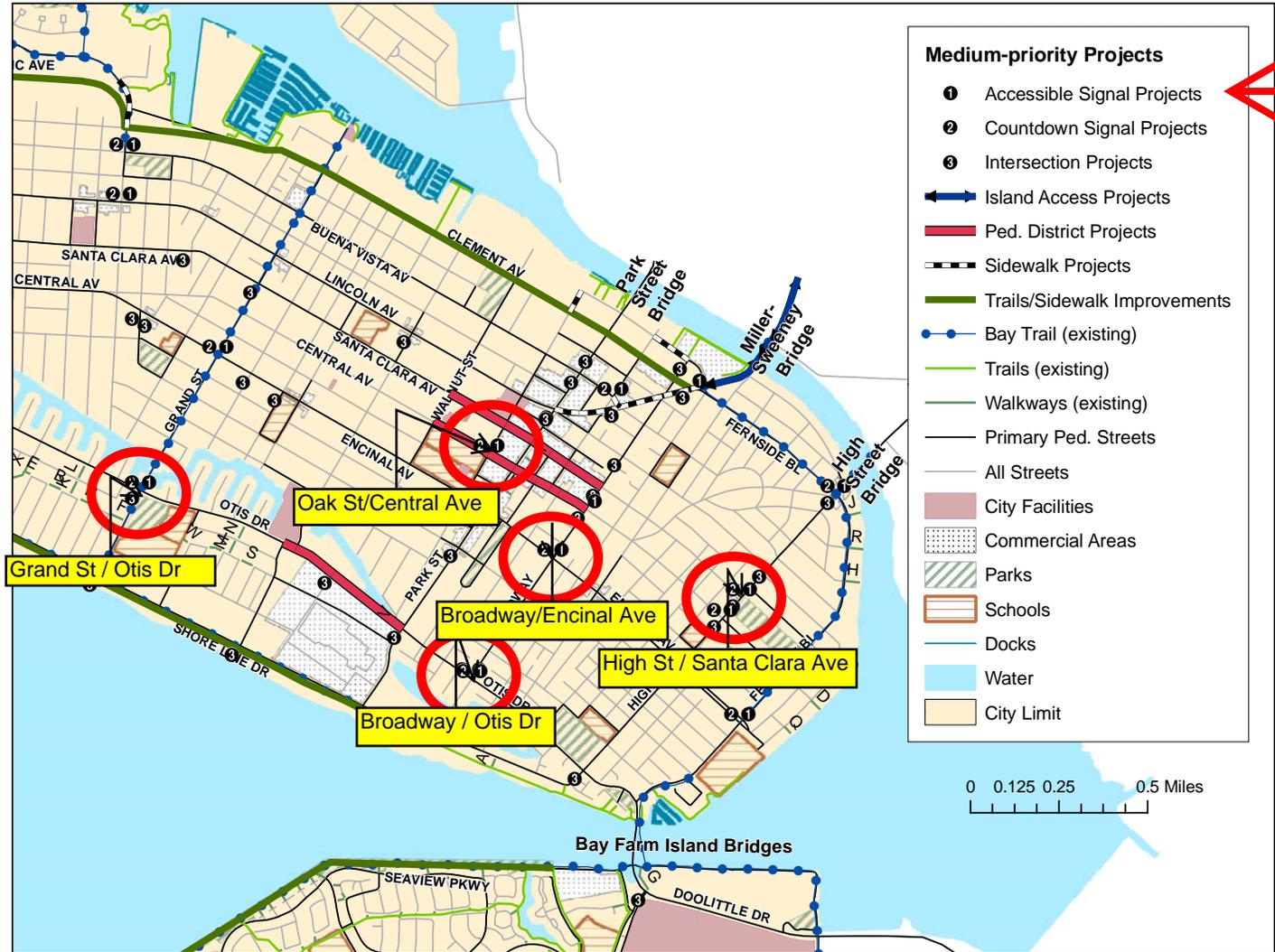


Figure 28: Medium-priority Pedestrian Projects (Bay Farm Island)



**Exhibit 2: Notification to Adjacent
Property/Business Owners, Employees
and Residents**



October 9, 2012

RE: Pedestrian Push Button Upgrades Proposed for Blind or Visually-Impaired Individuals

Dear Alameda Resident/Business/Property Owner:

The Public Works Department is recommending that pedestrian push buttons at nine signalized intersections be modified to make it easier and safer for blind or visually-impaired individuals to cross the street. These intersections, listed in Table 1, are located adjacent to an AC Transit bus stop or an Alameda Paratransit Shuttle stop. The pedestrian push buttons are proposed to have the following features (Figure 1):

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Broadway/Encinal Avenue	O, OX	Broadway/Crist
Broadway/Otis Drive	21, 314, W	Otis/Broadway
Grand Street/Otis Drive	20, W	
High Street/Santa Clara Avenue	O, W	High/Santa Clara
Oak Street/Central Avenue (Oak Street/Santa Clara Avenue)	(O, 314, 51A)	Alameda Main Library
Island Drive/Robert Davey Junior	21	Park & Ride Lot
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Note: The intersection names in parentheses show the actual location of the closest bus stop when it differs from the location of the proposed pedestrian push button upgrades.

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The Commission on Disability Issues is scheduled to review the proposed project on Monday, October 29, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. (2263 Santa Clara Avenue, City Council Chambers). The Public Works Department will be accepting written comments on this proposal until 5:00 p.m., Monday, November 5, 2012. Comments may be mailed, emailed or hand delivered to:

Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator
City of Alameda, Public Works Department
950 West Mall Square, Room 110
Alameda, California 94501
gpayne@ci.alameda.ca.us

All comments will be considered prior to making a final decision on this matter. Public Works staff will mail a separate notice informing property owners/occupants of its final determination. Please feel free to contact Gail Payne, Transportation Coordinator at (510) 747-7948 or gpayne@ci.alameda.ca.us, should you have any questions or require additional information. Furthermore, it is the policy of the City of Alameda to employ its best efforts to ensure that all programs, services, activities and benefits are implemented without discrimination and that there are provisions for non-English speaking residents (Exhibit 1).

Sincerely,

Matthew T. Naclerio
Public Works Director



Gail Payne
Transportation Coordinator

GP:jn

Exhibit:

1. Equal Opportunity Policies

cc: Linda Morris, AC Transit
Lucretia Akil, Commission on Disability Issues Secretary
Jackie Krause, Mastick Senior Center
Center for Independent Living

Exhibit 1: Equal Opportunity Policies

Provisions for Persons with Disabilities

If any person with an interest in participating in the meeting and is a person with a disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 who requires an accommodation to participate, that person must make a request for accommodation to Gail Payne, 510-747-7948 or email gpayne@ci.alameda.ca.us at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Such request shall include a description of the accommodation sought, along with a statement of the impairment that necessitates the accommodation. Any request for accommodation shall be reviewed and a response promptly provided to the requester. A copy of the City's 504 grievance procedure can be found online at <http://www.cityofalamedaca.gov/City-Hall/ADA-CDI-Accessibility> .



Provisions for Non-English Speaking Residents

The City of Alameda has a network of employees speaking some 45 languages who can act as interpreters for residents seeking information regarding this meeting. If notified five business days in advance, the City will arrange to have an interpreter available. Please contact the City via phone at (510) 747-7948 or via e-mail at gpayne@ci.alameda.ca.us.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The City of Alameda does not discriminate against any persons on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, sex or age, per Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Section 109. The City of Alameda under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes, ensures that no person shall, on grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity it administers. To file a complaint based on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age, please visit the following web page: <http://www.cityofalamedaca.gov/City-Hall/ADA-CDI-Accessibility> or via phone at 510-747-4762.

Know Your Rights under the City of Alameda's Sunshine Ordinance

Government's duty is to serve the public, reaching its decisions in full view of the public. Commissions, boards, councils and other agencies of the City of Alameda exist to conduct the community members' business. This ordinance assures that deliberations are conducted before the people and that City operations are open to the people's review. For more information on your rights under the Sunshine Ordinance or to report a violation of the ordinance, contact the Open Government Commission. The address is 2263 Santa Clara Avenue, Room 380, Alameda, CA, 94501; phone number is 510-747-4800; fax number is 510-865-4048, e-mail address is lweisige@ci.alameda.ca.us; and contact is Lara Weisiger, City Clerk.