

**CITY OF OAKLAND**  
**AGENDA REPORT**

2007 MAR 20 PM 2:06

TO: Office of the City Administrator  
ATTN: Deborah Edgerly  
FROM: Public Works Agency  
DATE: March 20, 2007

**RE: Supplemental Report On A Resolution Authorizing Installation of Class II Bicycle Lanes On Lakeshore Avenue By Reducing Travel Lanes From Four (4) Through Lanes to Two (2) Through Lanes and Adding A Continuous Center-Turn Lane Between Harvard/Winsor Roads and Mandana Boulevard**

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### SUMMARY

At the March 6, 2007 City Council meeting, Councilmember Kernighan requested a supplemental report on the proposal to reduce travel lanes and install bike lanes on upper Lakeshore Avenue between Harvard/Winsor Roads and Mandana Boulevard. This request was made in response to public questions raised at the February 27th Public Works Committee meeting. This report lists each of the concerns and provides a response to each one. Specifically, the responses address the following key issues, grouped by major type of concern below:

- 1) Thoroughness and accuracy of the technical studies and environmental clearance (Concern #1)
- 2) Appropriate Measures to Address Speeding (Concerns #2, #3 and #4)
- 3) Concern over Congestion and Potential Traffic Diversion to Other Streets (Concerns #5, #6 and #7)
- 4) On-Street Parking Issues (Concern #8)
- 5) Improper Notification (Concern #9)

### KEY CONCERNS

Below is a list of the key issues raised by the speakers at the Public Works Committee with a response to each one.

- **Concern #1:** The San Francisco Superior Court contests similar action (projects) taken in San Francisco for a bike project(s).  
This concern may be considered in two parts, the first (A) being the comparison with San Francisco (SF), and the second (B) the thoroughness of Oakland's technical studies supporting the environmental clearance.

#### **Response to Concern #1:**

##### **A. Comparison with San Francisco**

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The comment reflects concerns that the project has not received adequate environmental clearance under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It suggests the Transportation Services Division (TSD) is in the same situation as the City of San Francisco, where a law suit is filed challenging the adoption of the entire bike plan.

The two situations are not comparable. San Francisco's plan is a document which sets forth a policy framework for bicycle planning. In contrast, Lakeshore is a project which implements Oakland's approved 1999 Bicycle Master Plan, for which a Mitigated Negative Declaration was certified and adopted. The City's adopted Bicycle Master Plan requires that technical studies be conducted to evaluate and address impacts related to removal of travel lanes or parking, prior to implementing a specific project, consistent with state CEQA Guidelines sections 15162 and 15164, in order to assure that a specific bike project will not have a significant environmental impact.

In the case of the Lakeshore bike lane project, TSD conducted a technical evaluation, including a review of the entire 5-block stretch (corridor) of the proposed project and hiring a professional transportation engineering firm, Dowling Associates, to determine any potential impacts at the Mandana Boulevard signalized intersection. Based on these studies, the City determined that the project is eligible for a Categorical Exemptions under CEQA Guidelines section 15301(c) and 15304(h). On a separate and independent basis, the City is also relying upon the previously adopted and certified Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Bicycle Master Plan because no further environmental review is required pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15162 and 15164. The resolution has been revised to clarify the CEQA findings.

#### **B. Thoroughness and Accuracy of the City's Technical Analysis**

The actual total Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on Lakeshore is 6,562 vehicles. Generally, a single lane can carry 800-900 vehicles per hour, as per the Highway Capacity Manual, a standard reference publication used in traffic engineering practice. On Lakeshore, the measured peak volume is 387 vehicles per hour in the northbound direction, which is significantly below capacity.

Because Lakeshore Avenue has two lanes in each direction, the street's existing capacity is more than adequate for the peak-hour demand. Existing traffic volumes can be accommodated with one travel lane per direction without creating significant delay or congestion (387 actual vehicles compared to a capacity of 800-900 vehicles). The addition of a two-way center turn lane will further improve the operation of the street under peak hour conditions, as cars can separately queue for a left turn without interfering with a travel lane.

Additional technical analysis was performed by Dowling Associates, a traffic engineering consulting firm, at the signalized intersection at Mandana Boulevard. Dowling's

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intersection analysis at Mandana showed the existing conditions to be at a Level of Service <sup>1</sup> D, during the morning commute, which is acceptable. With the proposed project -- one lane in each direction and center-turn lane --the Level of Service would continue to be D, with a minor (4-second) additional delay by the year 2025 due to the proposed lane reduction and assumed increase in traffic volumes. In this case, the threshold of significance for a significant impact under CEQA is degradation of an intersection from D to E. Therefore, there are no significant impact is identified. This is a conservative analysis since two travel lanes in each direction will be retained at this intersection, and no additional delay is anticipated.

Given the excess capacity on Lakeshore Avenue, two travel lanes being retained at the Lakeshore/Mandana intersection, the addition of a center turn lane and the lack of other convenient through routes in the vicinity, it is not reasonable to expect that the project will cause any congestion or diversion to other streets in either the short or long term.

- **Concern #2:** Vehicles will speed whether Lakeshore is 4 lanes or 2 lanes.

**Response to Concern #2:** The new configuration will consist of both a through lane in each direction and a center left-turn lane to accommodate traffic in both directions. This type of project is known as a “road diet.” It has been used successfully in Oakland and throughout the country to calm traffic.

It should be noted that traffic speeds may vary along with variations in traffic volumes. Traffic volumes may change in response to weather conditions, school vacation schedules, time of day and many other factors. Vehicles may still speed when traffic volumes are lower, but road diets help control speeds. Other measures may be used in tandem with a road diet, where appropriate, for greater traffic calming impact.

- **Concern #3:** A stop sign is what is needed to control speeds.

**Response to Concern #3:** Stop signs are not warranted under the current conditions. Stop signs on a four-lane roadway may obstruct views by adjacent vehicles, especially trucks. They can also cause confusion about which vehicle has the right of way when numerous vehicles approach an intersection. Furthermore, unless there is a median, signs can only be placed on the right shoulder or sidewalk. Without compelling circumstances, which are not present here, the Public Works Agency would not recommend installing a stop sign on a four-lane road. Stop signs generate considerable delay, an issue about which many of the project opponents expressed concern.

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<sup>1</sup> Level of Service (LOS) concept qualitatively characterizes traffic conditions associated with varying levels of traffic. A LOS is a measure of congestion on a roadway, and can range from LOS A, which indicates free-flow condition, to LOS F, which indicates congested or overloaded conditions with extremely long delays. Level of Service D is considered by the City of Oakland to be acceptable.

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On a road with a single lane of traffic, the slowest driver sets the speed, which also creates a better pedestrian environment. The lane reduction/bike lane approach is proposed over alternative treatments as the most effective treatment with the least impact.

- **Concern #4:** The real issue should be pedestrian safety around Splash Pad Park specifically at the four signalized intersections. These are the highest accident locations in the City. Signals should be modified and more pedestrian friendly.

**Response to Concern #4:** The City has made many improvements to the Splash Pad Park area and especially the signalized intersections. Further improvements are under review.

- **Concern #5:** There are only two entrances into the City of Piedmont -- Grand Avenue and Lakeshore Avenue.

This concern is related to two concerns that were expressed at the community meeting and at PWA Committee: 1) that these major through streets will become congested; and 2) that drivers may divert to side streets.

**Response to Concern #5:** The existing traffic volume on Lakeshore is well below the level that would be considered congested for a two-lane or three-lane road (387 veh. /hr. currently vs. 900 veh. /hr.) The existing traffic volume indicates low usage of Lakeshore Avenue by City of Piedmont residents compared to the volumes on Grand Avenue and Mandana.

- **Concern #6:** Funneling from two lanes to one lane (northbound) before the daycare facility on Lakeshore will create traffic blocks from parents dropping off children.

**Response to Concern #6:** The daycare operation has two passenger loading zones in front of it, which will be maintained and not impacted by the lane reduction and bicycle lane addition. Further, the transition from two lanes to one lane takes place in advance of the passenger loading zones, and therefore is not expected to have any impact on the ability of drivers to access it. To the extent that there may be illegal double parking, this is really a parking enforcement issue and unrelated to the project. The project cannot, and should not, be designed around an illegal activity. Moreover, there should be adequate clearances for both bicyclists and motorists to avoid any illegally double-parked vehicles.

- **Concern #7:** Reducing the traffic lanes will cause congestion and may push traffic to side streets.

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**Response to Concern #7:** As indicated above, traffic volumes on Lakeshore are well below the capacity level for a single lane of travel under the worst case. See Response to Comments #1 and #5.

- **Concern #8:** Three garbage trucks travel this route every Thursday to collect trash. With a single lane, vehicles will be blocked. Vehicles that do not wait will be forced to pass in the turning lane, which is illegal. Those who do not want to pass will be late in the morning by 30 minutes. When garbage is collected there will be some vehicles that experience delay or will be slowed.

**Response to Concern #8:** Garbage collection is a low-frequency event (weekly) that may cause a minor delay for a few vehicles each week (based on traffic volumes), but this does not rise to a significant impact under CEQA. The above comment assumes that the garbage vehicles will always park in the travel lane or not accommodate vehicles to pass them. *Garbage trucks typically accommodate traffic by pulling to the curb side of the street when space is available during the pick up of trash receptacles or to allow vehicles to pass.* The encounters of through vehicles and the garbage vehicles are expected to be minimal, as the traffic volumes on Lakeshore are relatively low. The incidental delays potentially caused by garbage trucks are not reasonably expected to cause the 30-minute travel delay claimed by the person making the comment. Garbage trucks operate effectively on many City streets within more constricted conditions, including those with bicycle lanes.

- **Concern #9:** The notification of the project was improperly done. Many people were not informed.

**Response to Concern #9:** As noted in the March 6th report to City Council, there were several opportunities for public input on this project. In addition to the general community meeting on January 10, several meetings were held with the North Lake Traffic Calming Committee during 2006. In October 2006, TSD mailed a notice to 1,100 residents soliciting a response to the re-striping proposal. In October 2006, as well as January and February, the Council District 2 office sent several e-news articles on the project to over 2,400 e-news subscribers inside the district and beyond. The e-news article explained the proposal as well as the community input process, and solicited additional input from residents. *The Montclarion* also carried news articles on the project and community outreach on January 12, 19, and March 9, written by staff writer Quynh Tran. Guest commentaries by local residents appeared on January 19<sup>th</sup> and January 26<sup>th</sup>. Several letters to the editors were also published over a period of several weeks.

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Finally, the item was appropriately noticed in compliance with all legal requirements for the City Council's Public Works Committee and the full City Council, and was continued at the full City Council in order to provide specific response to some community concerns.

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff requests that the City Council accept this Supplemental Report and adopt the revised resolution approving the project.

Respectfully submitted,

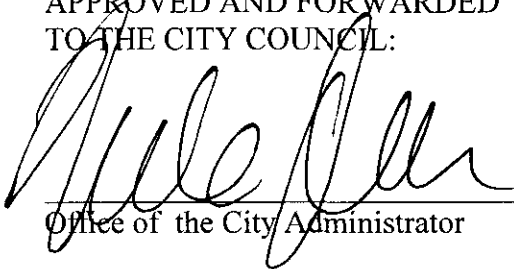


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Bicycle/Pedestrian Consultant

APPROVED AND FORWARDED  
TO THE CITY COUNCIL:

  
Office of the City Administrator

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

*Neeraj P. Wadhwa*  
City Attorney

2007 MAR 15 PM 2:06

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_ C.M.S.

Introduced by Councilmember \_\_\_\_\_

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING INSTALLATION OF CLASS II BICYCLE LANES ON LAKESHORE AVENUE BY REDUCING TRAVEL LANES FROM FOUR (4) THROUGH LANES TO TWO (2) THROUGH LANES AND ADDING A CONTINUOUS CENTER-TURN LANE BETWEEN HARVARD/WINSOR ROADS AND MANDANA BOULEVARD**

**WHEREAS**, installing bicycle lanes meets the goals of the City of Oakland's Bicycle Master Plan to provide safe and direct bicycles access to key areas and on key corridors in Oakland; and

**WHEREAS**, the Bicycle Master Plan recommends Class II bike lanes on Lakeshore Avenue as part of the City's bikeway network; and

**WHEREAS**, a current sewer replacement project provides the opportunity to install bike lanes on the section of Lakeshore between Harvard/Winsor and Mandana Boulevard; and

**WHEREAS**, the installation of bicycle lanes on Lakeshore Avenue between Harvard/Winsor Roads and Mandana Boulevard will require the reduction of travel lanes from four (4) through lanes to two (2) through lanes and a center turn lane, except at the signalized intersection at Mandana Boulevard, where the existing four-lane configuration will remain ("Project"); and

**WHEREAS**, City Council has directed staff to prepare reports for their approval when bicycle projects require the reduction of parking or travel lanes on a roadway; and

**WHEREAS**, the Project has been studied for feasibility and both short and long-term environmental impacts have been evaluated;

**WHEREAS**, the Project is designed to, and will, have less than significant impacts; and

**WHEREAS**, the City is relying on the previously certified and adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration for the 1999 Bicycle Master Plan and no further environmental review is required to be performed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because there are no new impacts or an increase in the severity of impacts, and thus the requirements

for further environmental review under CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 have not been met. As a separate and independent basis, the Project is categorically exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301(c) and/or 15404(h); now, therefore be it

**RESOLVED:** This resolution complies with CEQA for the reasons stated above; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the City Council authorizes the installation of Class II bicycle lanes on Lakeshore Avenue by reducing travel lanes from four (4) through lanes to two (2) through lanes and adding a continuous center-turn lane between Harvard/Winsor Roads and Mandana Boulevard, except at the signalized intersection at Mandana Boulevard, where the existing four-lane configuration will remain.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

**PASSED THE FOLLOWING VOTE:**

AYES – BROOKS, BRUNNER, CHANG, KERNIGHAN, NADEL, QUAN, REID, AND  
PRESIDENT DE LA FUENTE

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
LaTonda Simmons  
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council  
of the City of Oakland, California