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MEMORANDUM

DATE August 5, 2009

TO Alisa Shen
City of Oakland

FROM John Hykes

RE **Harrison/Oakland CTP Community Workshop #3 Summary**



The third Community Workshop for the Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue Community Transportation Plan was held on Thursday July 23, 2009 to review and discuss the draft conceptual design. Approximately 34 community members attended the meeting. John Hykes, DC&E Project Manager, gave a visual presentation of the draft conceptual design developed for Harrison Street and Oakland Avenue. This was followed by a traffic analysis of that design by Kamala Parks of Dowling Associates. After the presentation, meeting participants broke up into small groups to discuss conceptual design and then returned to a larger group discussion of the issues identified by each of the groups. After the workshop, the presentations were posted on the City's website.

In summary, the majority of the community members in attendance supported the conceptual design, and confirmed that the design is headed in the right direction. The majority of participants at the meeting supported the design concept to reduce the number of travel lanes from three to two on both Harrison Street and Oakland Avenue.

There was consensus regarding the value of improvements to pedestrian access at the intersection of Harrison, Bay Place, 24th and 27th streets. There was some concern that a plaza at 24th Street might attract undesirable activity, but others thought the plaza could be a positive amenity for the area. There was no consensus regarding how to deal with the existing slip lane from Harrison Street to 27th Street – some felt the slip lane should be removed and other felt that a modified design was preferable.

Community members supported re-configuring the intersection near Fairmount Avenue and Orange Street, but many community members felt that a traffic signal should be added to the design.

There was significant concern regarding the design proposal to close eastbound Santa Clara; community members were concerned that traffic might be diverted to surrounding neighborhood streets.

Many community members supported the idea of converting the portions of Harrison Street and Oakland Avenue north of I-580 to two-way traffic. There was concern regarding possible diversion of traffic from Grand Avenue to southbound Oakland Avenue and additional traffic on Monte Vista Avenue.

Many participants agreed that conceptual design improvements to Bayo Vista would result in much-needed improvements. However, there was concern regarding relocation of buses onto Monte Vista Avenue, which allowed the improvements on Bayo Vista.

Although not included in the conceptual design, some community members have expressed interest in pursuing a separate study to examine the closure of select on-off ramps in the study area. Some community members present at this meeting were opposed to the idea of closing on-off ramps, stating that easy highway access is part of the appeal of the neighborhood.

The following is a brief synopsis of the small group discussions:

A. Table #1

◆ **Harrison Street/24th Street/27th Street/Bay Place Intersection**

- A representative from West Lake School advocated strongly for the removal of the slip lane to better facilitate student crossings and safety.
- One group member felt strongly that the slip lane should remain because of traffic congestion that already occurs at this intersection. The group expressed concern regarding the effect of slip lane removal on queuing.
[note: the traffic analysis suggests that removal of the slip lane will not have a negative effect on congestion at this intersection]
- The group was supportive of the partial closure of 24th Street, and was concerned with how to prevent people from using the slip lane in the wrong direction.

◆ **Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue/Fairmount Avenue/Orange Street Intersection**

- The group was supportive of the proposed intersection improvements.
- The group agreed that they would like the design to include a new signal at the Fairmount Intersection.

◆ **Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue Couplet South of I-580**

- The group was unanimously supportive of the narrowing of the street to a consistent two lanes, the widening of the sidewalks, and the inclusion of bike lanes along Harrison Street and Oakland Avenue.
- The group felt the closure of Santa Clara would have adverse effects on the traffic in the surrounding neighborhood, especially Fairmount Avenue, Richmond Avenue and Moss Avenue. There was consensus that the

proposal needed further study regarding the impact of closing Santa Clara on other neighborhood streets.

- One group member expressed concern about speeding on Santa Clara by people exiting the freeway, and felt more traffic calming measures are needed on this section of Santa Clara.
- Members of the group suggested improving the intersection of Santa Clara, Kempton Way and Fairmount which is outside of the study area but directly impacted by the draft preferred plan improvements.

◆ **Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue Couplet North of I-580**

- The group expressed concern with the amount of southbound traffic that the two-way conversion would put onto Oakland Avenue and on the intersection of Oakland Avenue and Santa Clara.
- The pedestrian crosswalks which are adjacent to steep hills in this area cause concern and the group suggested making these crosswalks more visible.

B. Table #2

◆ **Harrison Street/24th Street/27th Street/Bay Place Intersection**

- Participants were worried that the plaza created as a result of partial closure of 24th Street might increase crime on 24th Street.
- The group suggested the idea of leaving 24th Street open and providing angled parking along the street.
- The group felt that removing the slip lane from Harrison Street to 27th street was an acceptable approach to increasing pedestrian safety, since even though crossing distance would be greater, the wait for pedestrians would be shorter. They did not think there would be any negative traffic impacts.

◆ **Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue/Fairmount Avenue/Orange Street Intersection**

- The group suggested a traffic circle at the Fairmount and Orange Intersection. The group discussion revealed that the design team had considered this approach, but that the necessary physical dimensions of the traffic circle was infeasible at this location.
- The group also suggested that the design could include a traffic signal at this location.

◆ **Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue Couplet South of I-580**

- Several group members reiterated that they support the reduction of travel lanes from three to two lanes. Some members were surprised that reducing the number of lanes would improve the Level-of-Service (LOS) *[note: the improved LOS for auto traffic would be a result of improvements along the entire corridor, including signal retiming]*
- There was concern about the diversion of traffic onto other streets.
- The group strongly supported the pedestrian stair at Stanley Place.
- The group questioned the potential for angled parking along Harrison Street rather than wider sidewalks. The large group discussion revealed

that the design group considered this approach, but given the residential nature of the street and the many driveway curb cuts, angled parking would not yield any more parking spaces that the current number of parallel parking spaces.

◆ **Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue Couplet North of I-580**

- Some group members were concerned that closure of Stanley Place might create blight on the street.
- Participants were concerned that slowing traffic on Harrison/Oakland would cause traffic to divert onto other side streets off of Grand Avenue.
[note: the conceptual design would likely result in slower traveling speeds, closer to the existing speed limit, but overall travel time for users would be reduced due to improved level-of-service]
- Participants were concerned that the two-way conversion on Oakland Avenue might create a conflict between the buses turning right onto Monte Vista and the casual carpool waiting area.
- Participants worried that closure of Santa Clara might divert traffic and overload Moss Avenue and other adjacent streets.
- There was concern regarding the design proposal to relocate AC Transit bus routes onto Oakland Avenue and the resulting need for buses to change over several traffic lanes on busy Santa Clara in order to access Harrison Street southbound and I-580.

◆ **Overall**

- Community members expressed a desire for improved maintenance on the existing pedestrian stairs.
- Participants are concerned with the number of parking spaces and considered that any decrease in the amount of parking spaces is a negative impact, since many people park on the corridor, including people who work downtown (but don't live in the neighborhood). The group agreed that parking permits for residents would be helpful, but did not want to have to pay for this.

C. Table # 3

◆ **Harrison Street/24th Street/27th Street/Bay Place Intersection**

- One participant did not think closure of 24th Street or removal of the slip lane was necessary.

◆ **Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue/Fairmount Avenue/Orange Street Intersection**

- The group felt that the area on Harrison Street and Oakland Avenue between Hamilton Avenue and 29th Street deserves additional traffic calming measures. The group suggested that stop signs could be included on Harrison and Oakland at this location.
- A member of the group expressed concern over the striping associated with the parking and bike lanes on Oakland Avenue. They were concerned that the parking lane felt too narrow.

- The group discussed the potential to split the new widened sidewalks onto both sides of Harrison Street; referring to the history of the widening of the corridor and the equal removal of resident's front yards on both sides of the street. It was discussed that the reason for widening the sidewalk on one side of the street was to provide a pedestrian thoroughfare along Harrison and Oakland along the outside sidewalks of the couplet allowed for better pedestrian access and fewer crossings.
- A group member wanted to make sure that the 29th Street median island was preserved, because landscaping of the median was the result of a grassroots community effort.

◆ **Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue Couplet South of I-580**

- The group suggested placing trees at the back of the sidewalk as a way of metaphorically giving back the front yards to the residents on Harrison Street. It was discussed that the street trees adjacent to the parking strip help to visually narrow the travel lanes and helps to reduce speeding.
- The group felt that Stanley Place should not be closed, but supported the idea of an improved pedestrian crosswalk.
- Members of the group did not approve the closure of Santa Clara because of access concerns and diversion of traffic to other neighborhood streets.
- A group member suggested allowing MacArthur Street to include two-way traffic to avoid the complications of the closure of Santa Clara.

[note: the design team did not consider the conversion of this section of MacArthur because of traffic impacts to the intersection.]

◆ **Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue Couplet North of I-580**

- Members of the group felt there should be no buses on Monte Vista because it already has too much traffic. They felt that Bayo Vista would still be better suited for the AC Transit buses.
- The group felt that the two way conversion on both Harrison Street and Oakland is a great approach and support it.
- Members of the group felt that the changes at Bayo Vista were a great improvement.

[note: design improvements at Bayo Vista are not compatible with keeping buses on this street]

◆ **Overall**

- A member of the group felt that traffic calming could be achieved through signage alone and that all of the physical changes to widen sidewalks and incorporate bulbouts were not necessary and a waste of money. This member also felt that repairing potholes and road surfacing was more important than what they considered to be unnecessary and expensive traffic calming measures.
- Other group members disagreed and thought that signage would not be enough to stop people from speeding and increase safety for people walking or riding bicycles along Harrison Street and Oakland Avenue.

D. Table #4

◆ **Harrison Street/24th Street/27th Street/Bay Place Intersection**

- The group noted that it was hard to see pedestrian street lights on the conceptual design plan.
- Three members of the group voted to keep the slip lane onto 27th Street, since it would provide a shorter crossing distance for pedestrians once they got to the main intersection.
- The group recommended having crossing guards at West Lake Middle School to help improve safety for school kids at the intersection.
- The group supported the partial closure of 24th Street, but wanted to make sure businesses on the street were also supportive of this idea.

◆ **Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue/Fairmount Avenue/Orange Street Intersection**

- The group felt that the conceptual design would improve the intersection is improved, but would like to see more interventions, like a traffic signal or stop sign.
- The group suggested that there is the potential for angled parking on Orange Street.

◆ **Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue Couplet South of I-580**

- The group felt it was important to reduce the radius at the SE corner of Harrison/Santa Clara (for left turns).