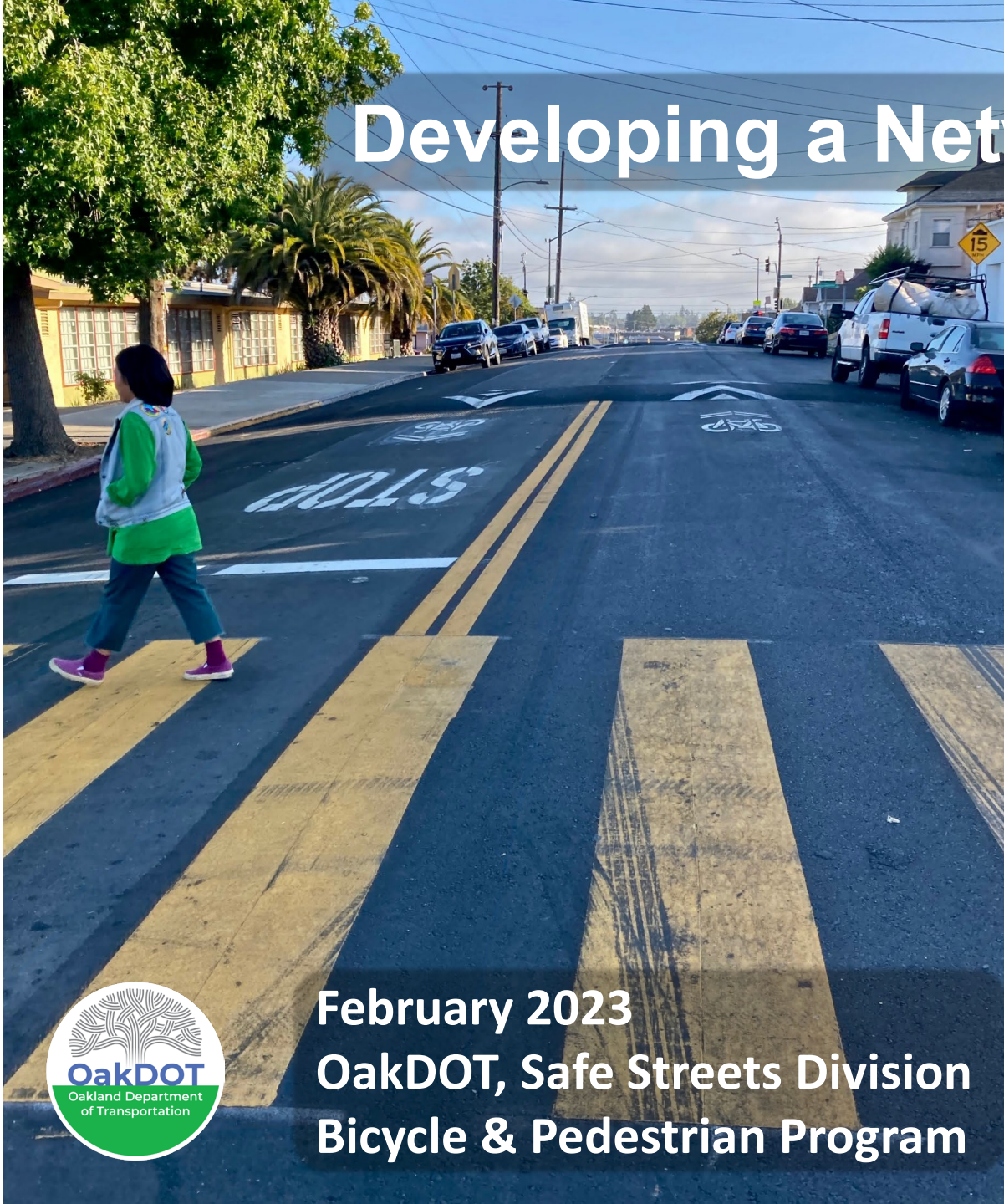


Developing a Network of Slow Streets



February 2023
OakDOT, Safe Streets Division
Bicycle & Pedestrian Program



Background



2007: Bike Plan first includes Bicycle Boulevards – 32 miles proposed.

2019: Bike Plan renames Bicycle Boulevards as Neighborhood Bike Routes (NBRs) – 75 miles proposed.

2020: OakDOT responds to Covid-19 by launching Slow Streets, using temporary barricades to close 21 miles of streets to through traffic. Slow Streets are meant to provide neighborhoods with outdoor space for socially distanced activities during shelter-in-place.

2021: OakDOT's Bicycle & Pedestrian Program publishes the *NBR Implementation Guide*, collaborating with BPAC's Infrastructure Committee, to promote efficiency and consistency in NBR implementation.

2022: OakDOT removes the temporary Slow Streets, citing the end of shelter-in-place and the unsustainability of temporary materials. OakDOT proposes permanent Slow Streets.



Slow Streets Definition & Name



Slow Streets are for **pedestrians, bicyclists, and micro-mobility users** with **limited local access for motor vehicles**. Slow Streets provide **public spaces for residents** in Oakland's neighborhoods. Slow Streets are **slow in practice** and in name. Slow Streets form a **network for human-powered movement and play**.

Why “Slow Streets” as a name? Covid-19 sparked people’s imaginations for neighborhood streets that prioritize people.

- More inclusive than Bicycle Boulevards
- More intuitive than NBRs
- More urban than Neighborhood Greenways

“Slow Streets” simply says what it means.

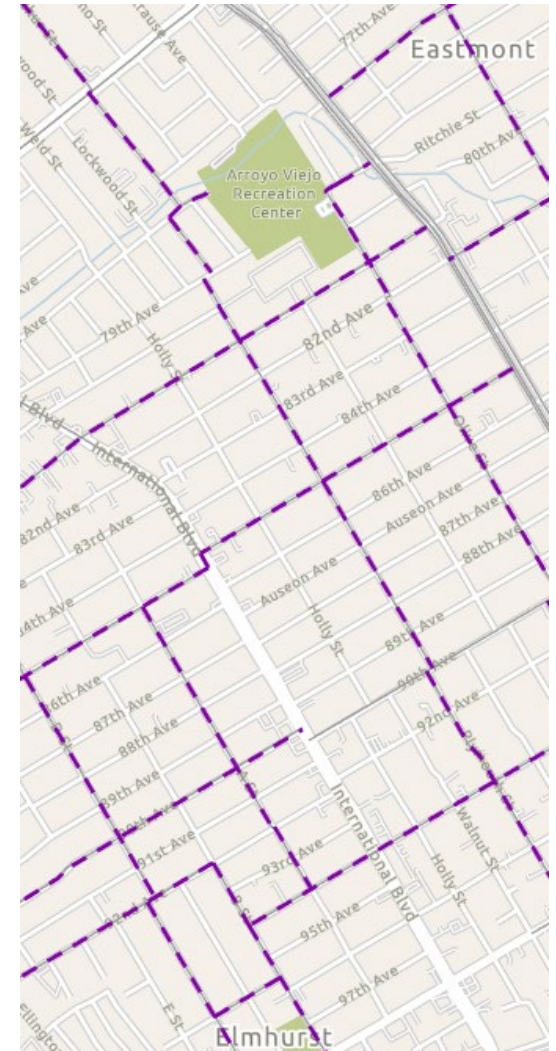


Slow Streets Network



OakDOT proposes a Slow Streets Network based on the 75 miles of NBRs in the 2019 Bicycle Plan. ([draft map](#))

- 1) Some proposed NBRs are on streets not suitable to be Slow Streets. These streets will be proposed for other bikeway types and they will remain part of the Bikeway Network. These streets will not be part of the Slow Streets Network.
- 2) Additional streets should be added to the Slow Streets Network to create Slow Streets connections between more neighborhoods.
- 3) All of the Slow Streets Network will be part of the Bikeway Network.
- 4) Bicycle & Pedestrian Program staff will itemize and explain each proposed change for transparency and discussion. ([example table](#))



Why would a proposed NBR not be included in the Slow Streets Network?



Some proposed NBRs function as through streets for motor vehicles. For these streets, can the through function be eliminated to create a Slow Street with limited local motor vehicle access? Recommendations will consider the following:

- **Truck routes:** Is the street a designated through route for trucks, for example, connecting industrial lands and highways?
- **Bus routes:** Is the street used by AC Transit as a through street?
- **Emergency routes:** Is the street used as a through street by the Fire Dept when traveling from fire stations to incidents?
- **Street Network:** Does the street provide a through connection in an area with limited street connectivity?

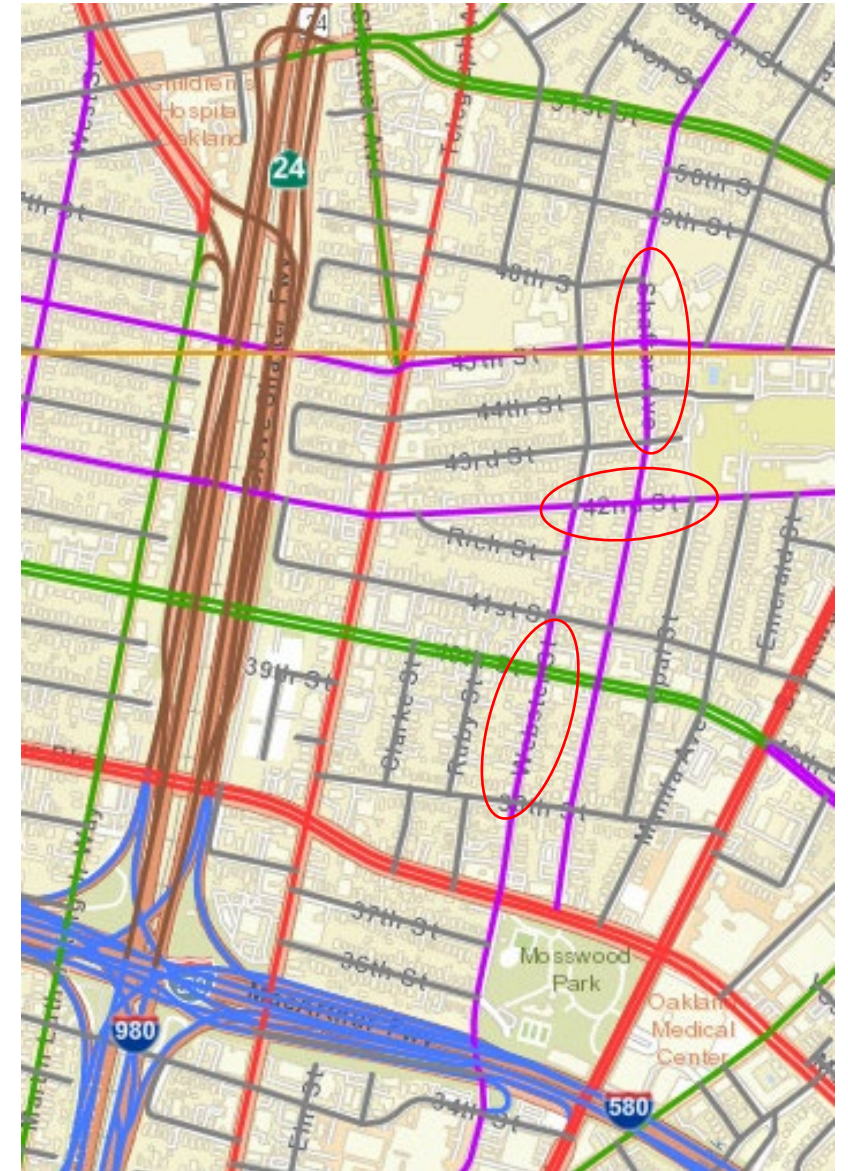
Sorting Out Through Streets and Slow Streets



All public streets in the United States are classified as “local streets”, “collector streets”, or “arterial streets” by the Federal Highway Administration. Collectors and arterials are intended for through traffic, whereas local streets are not.

This example map shows collector streets in purple. But Webster St, Shafter Ave, and 42nd St are also Neighborhood Bike Routes (circled in red).

A Slow Street should be a local street – not a through street for motor vehicles. (A Slow Street will provide vehicular access to parcels along the street.) Staff will evaluate which collector streets should become Slow Streets and which should remain through streets.

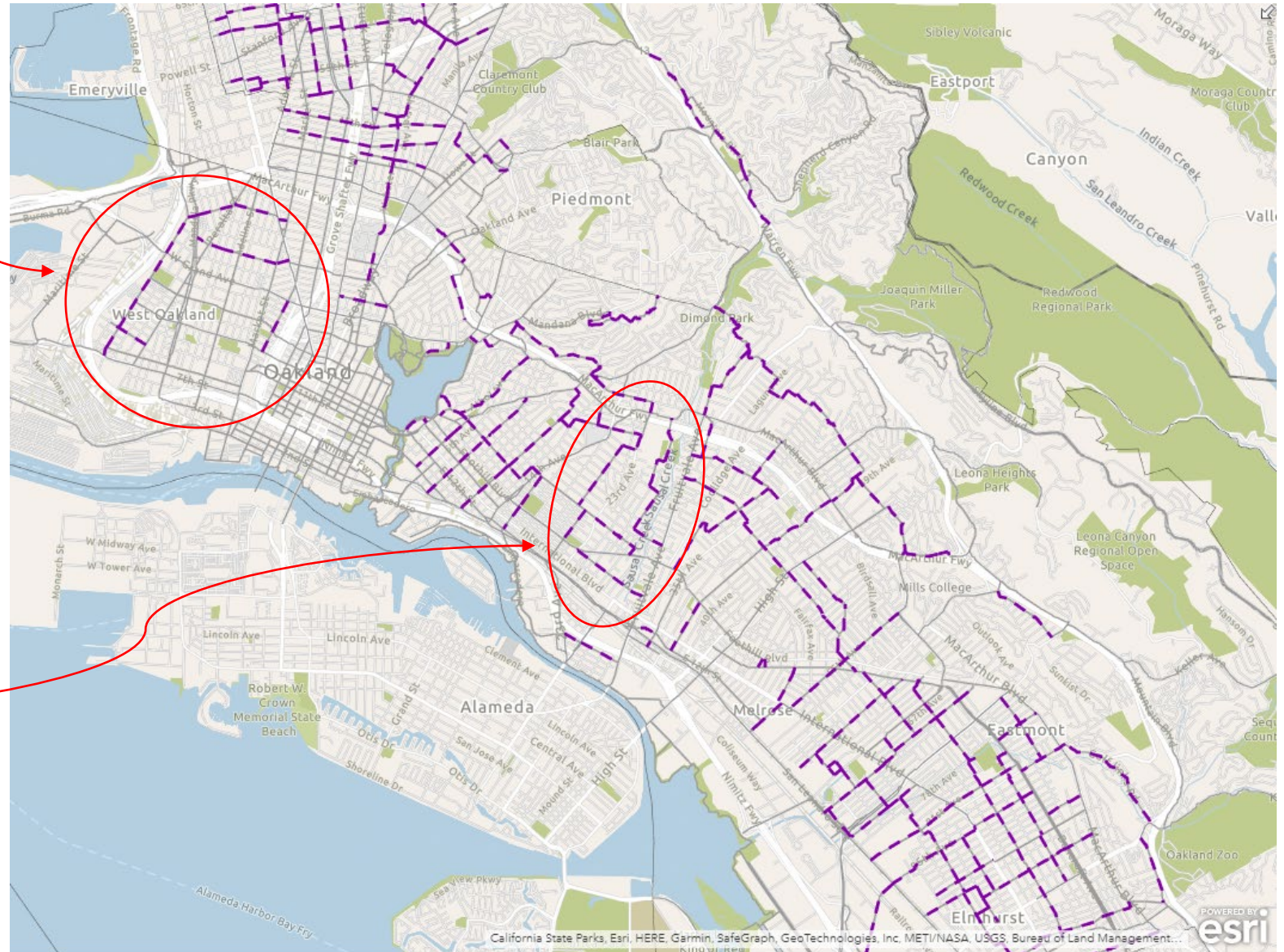


Why would streets be added to the Network?



Some neighborhoods, like West Oakland for example, have few proposed NBRs.

Other neighborhoods, like San Antonio and Fruitvale, have NBRs in each neighborhood, but the NBRs don't connect the two neighborhoods.



Slow Streets Implementation Guide

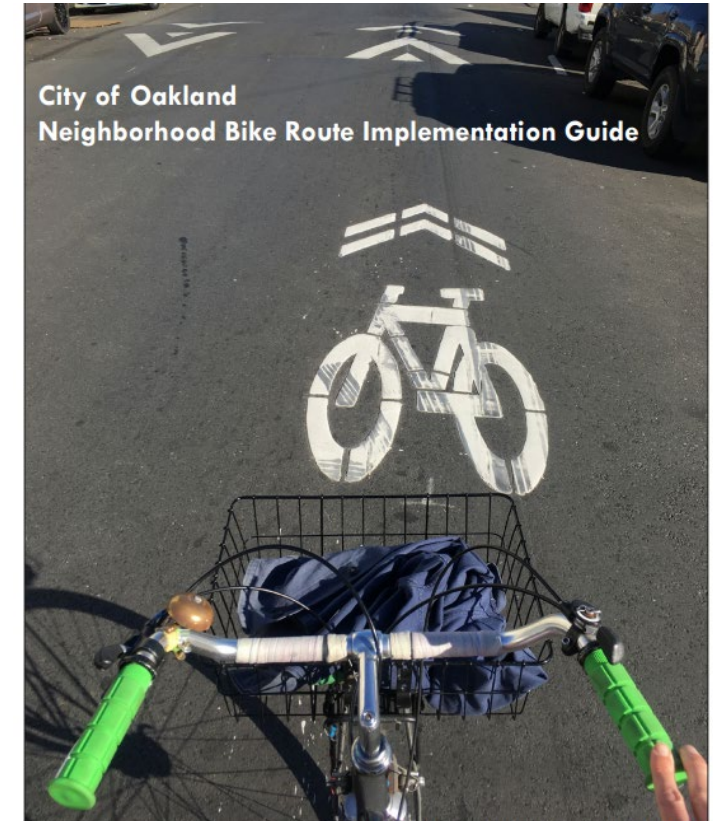


Building on the content in the NBR Implementation Guide:

- Set target volumes and speeds for motor vehicles.
- Install speed humps on all blocks (as feasible).
- Install traffic circles at key locations.
- Minimize locations where cross traffic does not stop.
- Improve the crossings of major streets.
- Apply stronger measures (e.g., diverters, closures) if target volumes and speeds are not met.

Proposed Additions and Revisions:

- Specify a 15-mph design speed to guide decision-making.
- Include signs to identify Slow Streets and communicate the design speed.
- Include pavement markings to identify Slow Streets and communicate the design speed.
- Stop using sharrows on each block. Continue to use sharrows at complex intersections.

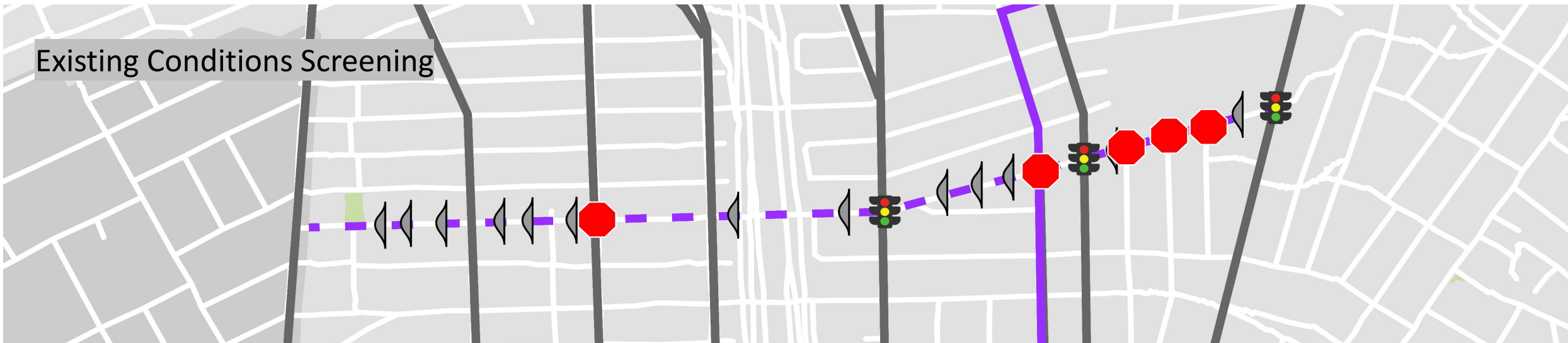


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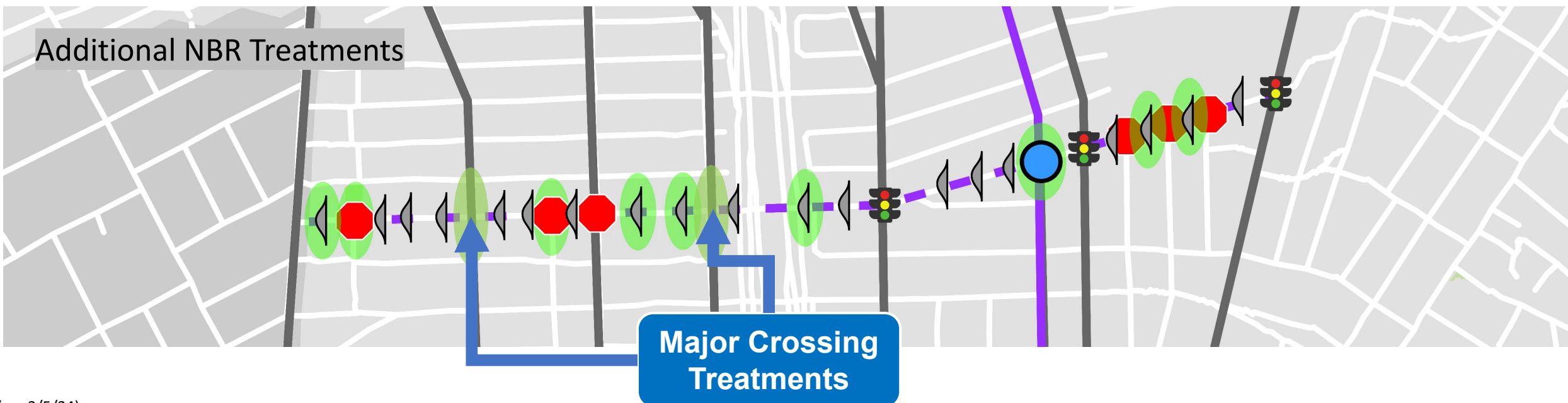
How does the NBR Implementation Guide apply?



Existing Conditions Screening



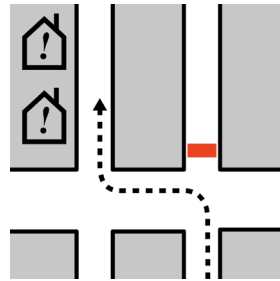
Additional NBR Treatments



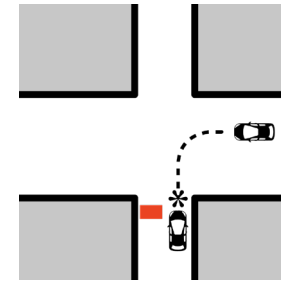
Will Slow Streets include barricades?

In cases where the volume of motor vehicles on a Slow Street remains above the targets, diverting traffic via physical access restrictions will be considered through additional study and outreach. Traffic diverted onto alternate routes may raise concerns with affected residents:

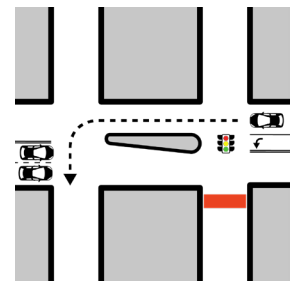
- Is significant traffic diverted onto other local streets?



- Does the design of the access control raise safety concerns about driver behavior?







- Are drivers diverted onto alternate routes with less suitable accommodations (i.e. for the completion of left turns)?



How could OakDOT identify Slow Streets?

Possible Standard Treatments



Guide Signs (green background, white message)	Warning Signs (yellow background, black message)	Regulatory Signs (white background, black message)	Pavement Markings (typically white)
			





Considerations

- Local jurisdictions are generally required to follow State and Federal standards.
- Standard signs & markings are significantly easier to obtain and replace, especially with projects by others (e.g., utility companies, developers, other agencies).
- The available standards generally do not communicate the purpose of Slow Streets.

How could OakDOT identify Slow Streets?

Possible Non-Standard Treatments






Guide Signs (green background, white message)	Warning Signs (yellow background, black message)	Regulatory Signs (white background, black message)	Pavement Markings (typically white)
			

Considerations

- Non-standard treatments may be feasible when responding to a local need, demonstrating engineering judgment, and taking a systematic approach.
- Non-standard warning and regulatory signs may create liability compared to non-standard guide signs and pavement markings.

Recommendations for identifying Slow Streets

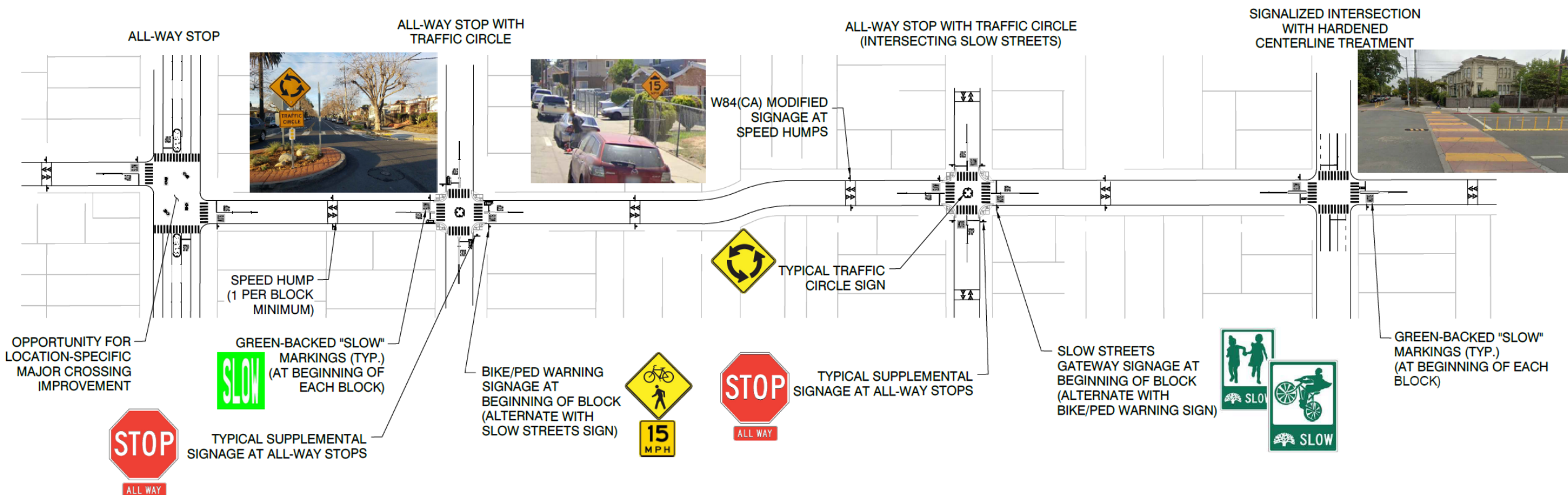


Guide Signs (green background, white message)	Warning Signs (yellow background, black message)	Regulatory Signs (white background, black message)	Pavement Markings (typically white)
		<p>NONE</p> <p>Lobby for State legislation allowing 15 mph speed limits on Slow Streets as is currently allowed for alleys.</p>	

Considerations

- The guide signs are customizable by neighborhood and complementary to street name signs and bike route signs.
- The warning signs call attention to people and communicate the 15-mph message.
- The California Vehicle Code does not allow 15 mph speed limits on local streets.
- The pavement marking reinforces the guide signs in message and color.

How do these design elements create a Slow Street?



How will the public be involved in Slow Streets?



Outreach strategies are being developed for three areas of work:

1. Updating the *NBR Implementation Guide* to be a *Slow Streets Implementation Guide*
Stakeholders include people involved in pandemic Slow Streets, residents along the 75 miles of NBRs (~12,400 parcels), and residents on nearby streets.
2. Slow Streets Improvements to be Implemented through Paving Coordination
Stakeholders include residents along the 50 miles of NBRs (~8,900 parcels) in the Five-Year Paving Plan and residents on nearby streets.
3. Slow Streets Improvements Implemented as CIP Projects
Projects funded by the Capital Improvement Program provide enough resources for street-specific community involvement; but comparatively few Slow Streets projects will be funded as CIP projects.

How will Slow Streets be implemented?



Bicycle & Pedestrian Program staff are evaluating all existing & proposed NBRs on the Five-Year Paving Plan for including the basic elements of Slow Streets in upcoming paving projects.



Where stronger measures (e.g., diverters, closures) are needed to meet target traffic volumes and speeds, staff will pursue additional resources through the CIP and grants to fund the studies and community outreach processes.



City of Oakland, Department of Transportation
Safe Streets Division, Bicycle & Pedestrian Program

Jason Patton, Senior Transportation Planner
David Pené, P.E., Assistant Engineer II
Pierre Gerard, Transportation Planner I
Jason Cook, P.E., Transportation Engineer
Noel Pond-Danchik, Transportation Planner II