

Lower Park Blvd Community Meeting – January 31, 2018

Response to Comments

City of Oakland, Department of Transportation (OakDOT)
Safe Streets Division, Bicycle & Pedestrian Program
April 18, 2018

On January 31, 2018, OakDOT staff presented the proposed improvements on Lower Park Blvd from E 18th St to MacArthur Blvd, E 18th St from Lakeshore Ave to Park Blvd, and 3rd Ave from Park Blvd to E 18th St. At the meeting, members of the public submitted 83 comments through comment cards and through “sticky” notes that participants placed on large format concept plans. The comment cards and sticky notes are available on the project web site at <https://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/park-boulevard-corridor-study>. This document provides an overview of the comments and, for comments suggesting design changes, how those suggestions were resolved.

Crosswalks (12 comments)

These comments provided suggestions on crosswalks at particular locations. The overall design process began with the existing crosswalk locations and then added or relocated crosswalks to include crosswalks at all bus stops; to relocate or install new crosswalks where ADA-compliant curb ramps are feasible; to take advantage of opportunities to install pedestrian safety islands; to provide frequent and convenient crossing opportunities; and to locate crosswalks at intersections. The comments in this category were comment numbers 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 24, 32, 38, 44, 47, and 57.

Relocating Curbs and Realigning Intersections (9 comments)

These comments were appreciative of the proposed work to make intersections smaller and more rectilinear and generally asked for more extensive treatments or treatments at additional locations. The overall intent of the proposed improvements and the comments is to reduce the speeds of turning motorists and shorten pedestrian crossing distances. The proposed project is including as many of these treatments as can be accommodated within the current scope and budget. Within these constraints, particular locations may be infeasible due to private driveways or drainage (requiring new storm drain inlets or the relocation of existing storm drain inlets). See “Project Scope of Work” below. The comments in this category were comment numbers 1, 14, 33, 35, 37, 39, 45, 50, and 51.

Bus Stops & Bus Boarding Islands (6 comments)

These comments were almost entirely requests for bus boarding islands. Such islands appear feasible in locations where there are not driveways. The boarding islands would create tangible benefits for AC Transit operations by reducing bus travel times and would reduce bus-bike conflicts. The inclusion of islands would require bicyclists to weave around them, which may be undesirable in the downhill direction with bicyclists traveling at higher speeds. Shifting the bike lanes behind the boarding islands would likely require the elimination of some on-street parking. Motorists would need to wait behind buses stopped at the boarding islands. Overall, bus boarding islands would be a meaningful addition to the project and these suggestions will be pursued if additional scope and budget becomes available. The comments in this category were comment numbers 7, 17, 30, 31, 78, and 79.

Bicycle Facilities (11 comments)

These comments noted the importance of continuous bikeways, and there were multiple suggestions for a more ambitious design on 3rd Ave. Commenters suggested either two-way bicyclist access on 3rd Ave or, specifically, a two-way separated bike lane on 3rd Ave. This concept would allow bicyclists to bypass the busy intersection at Park Blvd/E 18th St and to avoid the busy block of Park Blvd between E 18th St and E 19th St. The concept may require traffic signal modifications at E 18th St/3rd Ave and at Park Blvd/Newton Ave to transition bicyclists from one-way bike lanes to the two-way separated bike lane. It may also require removal of on-street parking along the frontage of the F. M. Smith Recreation Center. This concept will be noted as a possible improvement if additional scope and budget comes available. The comments in this category were comment numbers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 52, 54, 59, and 75.

Traffic Signals & Flashing Lights (11 comments)

A number of comments involved traffic signals or various devices with flashing lights. See “Project Scope of Work” below for why these improvements are not included. Traffic signal timing could be evaluated and adjusted after the project is implemented to optimize the traffic signals with respect to the new roadway configuration. The comments in this category were comment numbers 29, 40, 43, 48, 49, 53, 63, 65, 66, 67, and 73.

Road Diet (14 comments)

These comments addressed the benefits, tradeoffs, and anxieties of converting Lower Park Blvd from a four-lane roadway to a two-lane roadway with bike lanes plus turn pockets and pedestrian safety islands at select locations. As explained in the community meeting’s presentation, the concerns regarding pedestrian safety and speeding are directly related to the four-lane roadway and the current traffic volumes. Namely, the road only needs two lanes to accommodate current traffic volumes. The four-lane configuration facilitates speeding and makes it challenging for pedestrians to find safe gaps in traffic. The roadway is not wide enough to accommodate one travel lane per direction, continuous bike lanes, and a continuous two-way center turn lane. Thus, individual locations were evaluated to determine the locations of left turn pockets and pedestrian safety islands. In most locations, the addition of a left turn lane or a pedestrian safety island requires the narrowing of the bike lanes and the elimination of the bike lane buffers. With regards to emergency access, one lane per direction creates a more orderly situation for motorists who must pull over to allow emergency vehicles to pass. The bike lanes are sufficiently wide for motorists who have pulled over to clear the travel lanes. The pedestrian safety islands do create some restriction on motor vehicle access. However, the proposed islands are regarded as a net positive in improving safety, preventing crashes, and thereby reducing the number of emergency responses. Overall, and within the constraints of the available right-of-way, the project is designed for a transit-oriented and walkable neighborhood that is within easy bicycling distance of downtown, Lake Merritt, and BART. The presentation for the 1/31 community meeting is available on the project website. The comments in this category were comment numbers 16, 34, 36, 41, 42, 46, 55, 59, 61, 62, 72, 74, 81, and 82.

Intersection of Park Blvd, 5th Ave, and Ivy Dr (10 comments)

There were a number of specific suggestions on how to improve this complicated and confusing intersection. The underlying issue is that motorists have too many options for streets to turn from and to. As follow-up to these suggestions, staff will collect traffic counts to understand which of these traffic

movements are the least used. The likely outcome will be the elimination of the movements that are the least common, if it is physically possible to close those movements by building new curb lines. The comments in this category were comment numbers 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 58, and 83.

Project Scope of Work (7 comments)

Comments included requests for immediate changes, paving the roadway, and street trees. The project will likely be delivered as part of a multi-street, citywide roadway resurfacing project. These projects do not include electrical work (like traffic signals) or landscaping. Park Blvd from E 18th St to MacArthur Blvd will be repaved. Street trees in the pedestrian safety islands may be possible if they do not reduce visibility and there is a partnership with local volunteers to care for the trees. This suggestion will be explored in greater detail. Interim changes can be requested through the City's Call Center, but those requests would be evaluated and prioritized independently of the Lower Park Blvd project. The project cannot address suggestions outside of the project's limits (e.g., on MacArthur Blvd). The comments in this category were comment numbers 2, 9, 18, 64, 60, 68, and 71.

Other (5 comments)

These comments are each on a separate topic. They were received on comment cards and were responded to individually in the question and answer portion of the community meeting. The comments in this category were comment numbers 69, 70, 76, 77, and 80.

Comment ID Number	Comment Summary (See Original Scans Available on Project Web-Page for Complete Comment)	Recommendations That have Merit, But are Outside of Current Project Scope	Changes That City Staff Will Implement In Design Revision	Recommendations That Were Considered but Rejected	Comments that Do not Request a Design Change	Written Response
1	Close slip turn from E 18th St onto Lakeshore Ave	1				While closing this slip turn may be a good idea, it would require a level of design and analysis that is outside of the current project scope.
2	Rebuild Central Car Barn				1	No design request.
3	Better transition for cyclist turn off of 3rd Ave onto E 18th St (bike box, 2-stage Left?)		1			A bike box is feasible and will be added to the design.
4	Good shortcut!				1	No design request.
5	Make 3rd Ave two-way between E 18th St and E 19th St to take pressure off of E 18th St/Park Blvd			1		Making 3rd Ave two-way for cars would preclude the addition of a bike lane on 3rd Ave, thus directing cyclists headed down Park Blvd towards Lake Merritt to use the shared lane on E 18th St. It would also require a level of design and analysis that is outside of the project scope.
6, 10, 11, 56, 57, 75	Install a two-way cycle track on 3rd Ave from E 18th St to Park Blvd.	6				This may require signal modifications at E 18th St/3rd Ave and Park Blvd/Newton Ave intersections to transition bicyclists from one-way bike lanes to the two-way separated bike lane. It may also require the removal of 7 metered parking spaces in front of FM Smith Park or a small portion of parking protected two-way cycle track (which would have ramifications on the Park Blvd cross-section along this block). The signal modifications are outside the current project scope, but if additional scope and budget becomes available, this improvement will be considered.
7	Praise for bus stop consolidation at E 18th St & Park Blvd				1	No design request.
8	Praise for bike boxes				1	No design request.
9	Early Action: Watch for Pedestrians signs at Park Blvd & E 19th St	1				An early action to install yield lines & signs could be carried out by a city work order, but this request should be routed to OakDOT's Traffic Safety Group through the standard channels (i.e. See Click Fix) and prioritized against the complete list of requests citywide.
12, 13, 14	Make crossing of 3rd Ave align with through travel on Park Blvd	3				Relocating the crosswalk at 3rd Ave to align it with pedestrian through travel on Park Blvd would significantly increase the length of the pedestrian crossing because of the acute angle of the intersection. A large corner extension would be required to create a short pedestrian crossing and calm right turns onto 3rd Ave, but it would not change the fact that pedestrians walking down Park Blvd would have to look behind them for a gap in traffic before stepping into the intersection. The proposed design provides the shortest possible crossing distance, prevents pedestrians headed downhill from having to look behind them for a gap in traffic, calms right turns onto 3rd Ave, and provides a space for motorists to yield to crossing pedestrians after making the turn.
15, 57	Add crosswalk across Park at E 20th St			2		There is a signal controlled crossing with curb extensions at Newton Ave, 120 feet away from this location. Because of the close proximity to a safer crossing, the project will not install an uncontrolled crosswalk at East 20th Street.
16	Use dashed yellow line for pseudo left-turn pocket at Newton Ave. (Detail 41?)		1			This comment will be addressed in the striping design revision.
17, 30, 31, 78, 79	Install Bus Boarding Islands	5				Installing bus boarding islands is worthy of consideration but would require more funding and a level of civil design that is outside of the current project scope. The addition of bus boarding islands to the project will be investigated further if additional scope and budget becomes available.
18, 68	Add Street trees or plantings in pedestrian safety islands	2				The installation of street trees would require the selection and design of plantings, as well as a maintenance plan. These efforts are outside of the current project scope. The City's Adopt a Spot Program is an option worth exploring for planted areas at specific locations.
19, 20, 24	Add a crosswalk between Van Dyke & 21st (most likely candidates would be Portland Ave or Haddon Rd).		3			Additional design work will be undertaken to address this comment.
21, 22, 58	Close off connection of Park Blvd to 5th Ave/Ivy Dr altogether			3		Something less drastic will achieve the goal of improved safety while still allowing a connection between Park Blvd and 5th Ave (both of which are arterial streets). That said, the project will study a reconfiguration to this intersection and gather turning movement counts to determine which movements can be eliminated.
23	Allow some way for cyclists to make a left off of Ivy or E 22nd onto Park Blvd.		1			Additional design work will be undertaken to address this comment.
25	Prohibit turns off of Park Blvd onto 5th Ave in favor of E 22nd St			1		5th Avenue is the more logical connection to Park Blvd and it is an arterial whereas E 22nd St is a local street. The redesign of the 5th Ave/Ivy Dr intersection will calm turns off of Park onto 5th Ave and reduce pedestrian crossing distances.

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26, 28, 83	Construct Roundabout at Park Blvd/5th Ave/Ivy Dr			3		A roundabout would require a civil design effort that is outside of the project scope, may not fit in the location without acquisition of property, and is not necessarily warranted.
27	Change Yield to Stop on NB 5th Ave NS of Ivy Dr		1			This comment will be addressed in the redesign of the Park Blvd/5th Ave/Ivy Dr intersection.
29	Install flashing lights at all pedestrian crosswalks			1		Treatments that require electrical work are outside of the current project scope. The proposed project will make significant improvements to the safety and visibility of pedestrian crossings. Flashing beacons could be considered as a follow-up treatment to certain crossings, but should be prioritized against other locations, citywide.
32	Crosswalk at Cleveland St is too long	1				The proposed curb extension at the northeast corner of Park Blvd & Cleveland St will shorten the pedestrian crossing from 110' to 60', while calming right turns off of Park Blvd onto Cleveland St. While extending the northwest corner would shorten the crossing further, this was deemed out of scope and less critical, because turns off of Cleveland Street onto Park Blvd are stop controlled.
33	Corner extensions should be free of vertical obstructions (for sight distance).				1	No design change requested. Corner extensions will not obstruct sight-lines.
34	Add left turn pocket from EB Park onto McKinley Ave (pickup-drop-off traffic)		1			Adding a left turn pocket from Park Blvd onto McKinley Ave would preclude the proposed addition of a pedestrian safety island in the uncontrolled crosswalk at this location. That said, the island could be moved to a new crosswalk on the other side of McKinley Ave if the recommendations in comments 37 and 38 are feasible. The City will obtain traffic counts at this intersection to determine if the demand for a left turn pocket is high enough to make this revision.
35	Project neckdown into parking lane?			1		The proposed curb extensions for this project were designed as straight-line extensions of the existing curb lines, in order to reduce corner radii without interfering with existing drainage or adjacent driveways. Bulb-outs would require a level of civil design that is outside of the project scope.
37	Add corner extension to NE corner of Park Blvd/McKinley Ave	1				Due to drainage patterns and adjacent utilities, a curb extension at this location was deemed outside of the project scope, however, due to the further investigation required at this location in response to comment 34, the city will investigate the feasibility of adding this curb extension.
38	Mark crosswalk on E side of McKinley Ave (Requires curb ramp, sidewalk reconstruction, and moving DI, which is already recommended)		1			Additional design work will be undertaken to address this comment.
39	Move corner extension to east side of E 28th St			1		This is possible, but it does nothing to calm right turns off of Park Blvd. On eastbound Park Blvd, the near side of the intersection is made up of driveways (no parking) and the bus stop is moving to the far side of the intersection, so sight-lines have been addressed by the design. Furthermore, the existing crosswalk across Park Blvd on the east side of E 28th St is already skewed due to private driveways on the north side of Park Blvd. While extending the curb at the southeast corner of the intersection would make the intersection more rectilinear for automobiles, it may further skew the pedestrian crossing of Park Blvd.
40	Install flashing lights in crosswalk at E 28th St.			1		Treatments that require electrical work are outside of the current project scope and the proposed project will make significant improvements to the safety and visibility of pedestrian crossings. Flashing beacons could be considered as a follow-up treatment to certain crossings, but should be prioritized against other locations, citywide.
41	Widen the traffic lanes or striped median in order to protect cars from head-on collisions		1			City staff will revise the striping design to place an additional 1' in the striped centerline (reduce bike lanes from 5.5' to 5'). This will ease transitions between the standard cross-section and the ped-safety islands. The existing #1 lanes on Park Blvd are 10' wide, so they are already being widened. The road diet will calm traffic, and widening the lanes further at the expense of the bicycle facility is not recommended.
42	Downhill lefts for E33rd St and E 28th St	1				Traffic turning movement counts were taken during the AM and PM peak hours at Park Blvd & E 33rd St for the project feasibility study. The counts showed 4 cars making a left onto E 33rd in the PM peak hour (zero cars were observed making this left in the AM peak hour). Given the low volume of left turns, a left turn pocket was deemed unnecessary. Additional turning movement counts will be gathered at E 28th St to determine if a left turn pocket is beneficial at this location.
43	Move Traffic Signal from E 33rd to E 34th			1		Moving a traffic signal is outside of the project scope.

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44	Scary Oakland High XING (early action?)	1				An early action to install yield lines & signs could be carried out by a city work order, but this request should be routed to OakDOT's Traffic Safety Group through the standard channels (i.e. See Click Fix) and prioritized against the complete list of requests citywide.
45	Normalize Int?		1			The design is being revised to move the transition from one to two eastbound travel lanes on Park Blvd to the east of E 34th St. This revision will reduce the number of lanes pedestrians will have to cross when using the crosswalk at E 34th St. It will also allow for geometric improvements to the striping design at the intersection.
46	Redesign striping to avoid "Bus Bike Only" markings on Park Blvd at MacArthur Blvd		1			Additional design work will be undertaken to address this comment.
47	Construct pedestrian bridge across Park Blvd at MacArthur Blvd			1		This is outside of the current project scope and would present an out of way trip for many pedestrians trying to cross the street.
48	Time signal to include leading pedestrian interval.	1				This recommendation will be discussed in additional detail with the traffic signal operations group.
49, 73	Add left turn filter arrow and protected left from SB Park Blvd onto EB MacArthur			2		Adding a protected left turn to this location would require the installation of additional signal equipment and is outside of the current project scope.
50	Great improvements near Oakland High.				1	No design request.
51	Thank you for fixing this for pedestrians.				1	No design request.
52	Add bike lane west on MacArthur and direct bike traffic to Athol. No bikes on Park. Two way center turn lane instead.			1		Installing a bike lane on this portion of Park Blvd is a priority in the City's Bicycle Master Plan. Left turn pockets were incorporated in the design where appropriate, based on a traffic analysis.
53	Add Leading bike phase on southbound Park Blvd at MacArthur Blvd			1		An exclusive bike phase would require bike signal heads which puts it out of the project scope.
54	Extend northbound bike lane from MacArthur Blvd to Excelsior.		1			The design will be revised to extend the eastbound bike lane to Excelsior Ave. This revision will require the city to obtain an encroachment permit design exception from Caltrans, approving 10' wide lanes under the I-580 overpass. It will also require a modest amount of parking removal.
55	Make middle lane an optional left turn to prevent backup at MacArthur	1				This would require a specific analysis of the signal operations to see if it is actually beneficial or not.
59	Continuous bike lanes for length of project		1			See response to comment 54.
60	Reconfigure lanes and calm traffic on MacArthur Blvd			1		Reconfiguring the lanes on MacArthur Blvd is outside of the project scope.
61	Question about diversion prevention				1	No design request.
62	Question about future traffic capacity				1	No design request.
63	Will crosswalks have buttons/lights for visibility at night.			1		Treatments that require electrical work are outside of the current project scope and the proposed project will make significant improvements to the safety and visibility of pedestrian crossings. Flashing beacons could be considered as a follow-up treatment to certain crossings, but should be prioritized against other locations, citywide.
64	Early action request to make XWALKS more visible	1				An early action to install yield lines & signs could be carried out by a city work order, but this request should be routed to OakDOT's Traffic Safety Group through the standard channels (i.e. See Click Fix) and prioritized against the complete list of requests citywide.
65	Will traffic light timing be adjusted by freeway to allow for similar volume and flow, given reduced volume due to lane narrowing?				1	The project will not change the northbound lane configuration on Park Blvd near I-580. In the southbound direction, traffic counts indicate that a high volume of motorists turn right off of Park Blvd onto MacArthur Blvd (49% of all southbound traffic in the AM peak hour and 21% in the PM peak hour) where the project converts a southbound lane to a right turn only lane. Thus, it is not expected that signal timing modifications will be required, but this could be reevaluated after the project is implemented to optimize the traffic signals with respect to the new conditions.
66	Question about study methodology.				1	No design request.

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67	How will traffic lights be timed?				1	No design request.
69	Comment about OHS's traffic safety grant				1	No design request.
70	Why is it difficult to repave and do concrete work in the same project?				1	No design request.
71	1. No parking loss. 2. Traffic enforcement. 3. Paving				1	No design request.
72	Request for right turn pockets.			1		Adding right turn pockets at new locations on Park Blvd is not warranted. The available right-of-way is better used for other purposes.
74	Remove "shoulders" to make room for TWTL			1		The shoulders referred to in the comment are actually on-street parking, which will not be removed as part of the project. However, left turn pockets were incorporated in the design where appropriate, based on a traffic analysis.
76	Poor outreach				1	No design request.
77	Public comment opportunity?				1	No design request.
80	General support for project				1	No design request.
81, 82	Opposition to project on grounds of emergency access				2	No design request.