City of Oakland, Bicyclist & Pedestrian Advisory Commission
Final Minutes from the June 18, 2015 meeting
City Hall, 2nd Floor, Sgt Daniel Sakai Hearing Room (aka Hearing Room 4)

Meeting agenda at http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/pwa/documents/agenda/oak050724.pdf

Meeting called to order at 6:05pm by BPAC Chair, Christopher Kidd.

Item 1. Roll Call/Determination of Quorum/Introductions
At roll call, Commissioners Chan, Hwang, Kidd, Prinz, Tabata, Villalobos, and Wheeler were present (quorum established). Commissioner McWilliams was excused. Commissioner Taylor was absent.

Item 2. Approval of meeting minutes

→ A motion to ***adopt the Bicyclist & Pedestrian Advisory Commission meeting minutes from May 21, 2015*** was made (Tabata), seconded (Wheeler), and passed unanimously. (Adopted minutes online at www.oaklandbikes.info/BPAC.)

Item 3. Open Forum / Public Comment

- No speakers.

Item 4. AC Transit's Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA)
Steven Newhouse, a planner with AC Transit, gave an overview of their Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) following the handout on pages 32-28 of the agenda packet (www2.oaklandnet.com/OAK050724). A primary goal of the COA is to improve efficiency and optimize expenditure of new Measure BB funding. The proposal is to make the biggest investments in routes that with 20-30 minute headways, improving them to 15 minute headways. There will be another public hearing in November. If approved, the first changes to be implemented in March 2016. Steven gave some examples of the changes to particular lines.

Summary of comments/discussion:

- The specific proposals will soon be available online, replacing an older version.
- AC Transit is seeking grant funding to address Transbay service, which is not in this version of COA. The need for improvements to the Dumbarton Express was noted. The labor associated with Transbay service is expensive.
- Most lines don't reach the threshold for boarding/alighting to justify all-door boarding service. AC Transit is hoping to reduce cash fare boardings and promote use of the Clipper card.
- AC Transit is trying to use the existing bus fleet, rather than purchasing more/different buses for particular lines.
- The COA doesn't include plans to improve ped/bike access to bus stops that will now be spaced further apart from each other. The analysis indicated that such amenities are 10% of people's decision on whether to ride, whereas reliability and frequency are the highest rated criteria.
- There is no specific plan to install bike parking at bus stops where the stops are further apart.
- Density is the main criteria for the highest frequency service.
- The fare structure hasn't yet been evaluated for changes based on overall change to routing philosophy.

To submit comments and get more project details, see http://www.actransit.org/coa/.
Public speakers on this item: Eric Fischer, Brian Toy

Item 5. Pedestrian Safety Guidance for Signalized Intersections
Meghan Mitman and Teresa Peterson from Fehr & Peers (transportation consulting firm) provided an overview of Oakland's newly developed guidance on accommodating pedestrians at signalized intersections. AC Transit's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project lent this effort momentum, as BRT requires a lot of signal modifications. Nationwide research on best practices revealed that no City had a written policy on this topic. According to research by Fehr & Peers, this guidance is the first of its kind in the nation.

A set of flow charts will guide decision making based on site-specific circumstances and pre-established thresholds for pedestrian volumes, motor vehicle delay, and other factors, and will help highlight trade-offs . Regarding pedestrian push buttons (especially in downtown), the policy will result in "recall" at some locations, e.g. pre-set signal timing that is not actuated by the presence of pedestrians or vehicles. The push buttons will remain to comply with ADA.

At locations with very low pedestrian volumes, actuated signals will remain. There is an allowance for adjacent signals: if a particular intersection doesn't meet a threshold but the next one does, the City may configure them the same.

The next step is to test the policy.

Summary of comments/discussion:

- People were quite pleased that there is a now policy.
- The work included looking at signal timing and pedestrian countdown timing; countdown is the new de facto standard. No maximum time to wait standards were established.
- Regarding signal changes associated with the Line 51 project , it was suggested that information signs be installed when timing has changed.
- Transit volumes are included as a threshold, but not bike volumes.
- The policy doesn't include bike signal heads (though the City is getting ready to install the first as part of the projects funded by the Caldecott 4th Bore settlement-funded projects).
- The policy didn't look at pedestrian detection technologies, and research indicated that no other cities had yet implemented projects with such technologies.
- Consistency of experience is important; for example, after the countdown is complete sometimes there is an additional red phase while the light is still green—but sometimes it goes straight to red.
- The City should look at late-night pedestrian wait times and complicated multi-leg intersections.
- What about signalized slip turn lanes? Signalization/signal timing may not be the right way to fix geometric problems.
- What is the timeframe for upgrades? The current City budget requests more resources for signal upgrades, timing, etc., but Council is considering redirecting funds to paving.
- Eric Fischer asked about the process for nominating streets to be fixed, and noted that many streets are not compliant with the policy, including projects currently in construction. The Line 51 project, for example, is worsening conditions for pedestrians. Transportation Services Manager Wladimir Wlassowsky stated that the Line 51 project was meant to optimize transit, which outweighs other modes along transit corridors. Yet, transit corridors are the places that are the most challenging for pedestrians.
- Wladimir encouraged people to report any signal timing problems to Public Works Call Center [email: opwcallcenter@oaklandnet.com; phone (510) 615-5566; online

http://gismaps.oaklandnet.com/srwebsite/ServiceType.aspx; mobile http://www.seeclickfix.com/oakland].

- The policy memo will be attached to the minutes.

Public speakers on this item: Tony Dang, Eric Fischer, others (who did not self-identify)

Item 6. Grand Avenue Road Diet Project

Grand Ave was recently repaved from El Embarcadero to the Piedmont city limit. The bike plan called for sharrows in this area, but, after hearing some complaints, the Transportation Services Division, agreed to explore other designs. In addition to this presentation, there is a community meeting to be held (Wednesday July 28, rescheduled from July 22).

Aaron Elias, from Kittelson & Associates, explained the proposal (see attachment), for the segment from Elwood to Jean. The goal is to reduce collision rates. Improve bike facilities, and improve the pedestrian environment and crossings Three options were considered, each involving a 4- to 3-lane road diet: (1) back in angle parking + bike lane; (2) front in angle parking + bike lane; and (3) curbside parking protected bikeway with front in angle parking. The analysis showed that all options would result in safety improvements. After weighing pros and cons of each, Option #2 was selected. Cons included parking loss, cost, and project delay. The project is scheduled for construction in September.

Summary of comments/discussion:

- A change to parallel parking wasn't studied..
- Other pedestrian-oriented changes (e.g. restoring the prohibited crossing leg @ Mandana, adding mid-block refuges, flashing beacons, colored curb extensions) aren't included. Painted median refuges are included. This is a striping-only project.

    → A motion to ***extend the meeting time by 20 minutes*** was made, seconded, and passed with one abstention.

- The 3' space behind the parking is included instead of a travel lane side striped buffer to keep bikes further away from parked cars.
- Commissioners Prinz and Wheeler questioned whether the improvement was going to serve anyone new, and favored the other two designs. Kittelson staff asked Commissioners to consider whether it would be worth the delay, and also noted that having back in diagonal parking on part of Grand Ave, and front in on another part would be confusing.
- Commissioner Hwang suggests that business community is very much in support of projects that would benefit local businesses. WOBO can help to do outreach. Better to get the project right the first time.
- There was discussion on delivery loading/unloading.
- The City has met with the City of Piedmont, in part to help design the striping transition along the border.

For the future, this project would help determine any changes for Grand Ave to the west that might be included in the bicycle master plan (BMP) update. Jason Patton noted that the BMP update will include a gap analysis that would include this section. Of the gaps, the BMP will establish implementation prioritization.

→ A motion to ***extend the meeting time by 20 minutes*** was made, seconded, and passed with one abstention.

Public speakers on this item: Carol Levine, Tony Dang,

Item 7. Proposed Department of Transportation
Christopher Kidd explained that the City Council president's budget allocated funding to paving and away from the Department of Transportation (DOT) proposed by the Mayor. He prepared a statement (see attached) and asked for Commission approval to present it to the Council prior to their next meeting.

→ Commissioner Chan made a motion to ***empower Christopher Kidd and one or two other Commissioners to revise the draft and submit it.*** *Commissioner* Hwang suggests that the letter be used with reference to the BPAC's mission, and seconded the motion. All in favor, motion passes.

Commissioner Chan volunteered to help draft the statement.

Item 8. Recruitment for Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities
Jennifer Stanley announced the recruitment for the Mayor's Commission on Persons with Disabilities. The application is available at tinyurl.com/ohkruv9.

Item 9. Suggestions for Meeting Topics, Announcements

- Commissioner Kidd: Google bike vision plan now available.
- Commissioner Chan: requests a presentation on the City's crosswalk policy
- Commissioner Wheeler: Bay Area Bike Share is taking suggestions for station locations.
- Commissioner Prinz: Thanks for buffered bike lanes on various streets.
- Commissioner Tabata: Community meeting for Fruitvale project July 9 ACTC review.
- Commissioner Hwang: WOBO is sponsoring an art mural bike ride July 19th, meet at Alice and 14th Sts, 10 am.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Attachments

- Oakland Pedestrian Signal Timing Policy
- Grand Ave road diet
- BPAC DOT draft statement

Minutes recorded by Jennifer Stanley, City of Oakland Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities Coordinator, emailed to meeting attendees for review on June 23, 2015, with comments requested by 5pm, Monday June 29, to jstanley@oaklandnet.com. Revised minutes were emailed to attendees. Minutes were adopted unanimously at the July 16, 2015 meeting.

FEHR PEERS

MEMORANDUM

Date: June 11, 2015

To: Wlad Wlassowsky, City of Oakland

From: Rob Rees, Teresa Peterson and Meghan Mitman, Fehr & Peers

Subject: Draft Pedestrian Safety Guidance for Signalized Intersections

WC13-3074

The City of Oakland guided the development of this policy to address pedestrian safety at signalized intersections and to ensure pedestrian accessible facilities in terms of signal timing and phasing. Policy implementation will set the expectation for pedestrian safety as a key element to decision making for signalized intersection operations citywide. The policy also recognizes the variety of transportation modes utilizing signalized intersections, such that the policy will benefit pedestrians while minimizing adverse effects to other travel modes i.e., bike, autos, transit, and goods movement.

The remainder of this memorandum presents draft engineering considerations and installation guidance for the physical and timing elements of pedestrian crossing treatments at signalized intersections in the City of Oakland.

The guidance features a two-step process for implementing elements to improve pedestrian crossing visibility and safety at signalized intersections. In addition to issue-specific treatments, such as protected turns or leading pedestrian intervals, the guidance also includes general considerations for all signalized intersections.

Based on research from various cities and input from City staff, the guidance addresses treatment types appropriate at various signalized intersections throughout the City and under various conditions. The guidance includes several flow charts which use inputs available from a field survey, such as feasibility of turn pockets, pedestrian activity, and turn volumes, to provide a candidate pedestrian treatment appropriate to a given context. These flow charts are meant to supplement (not replace) engineering judgment.

STEP ONE: UNIVERSAL CONSIDERATIONS

The NACTO *Urban Street Design Guide* includes the following Signalization Principles:

- Shorten cycle lengths
- Prioritize multimodal travel
- Minimize number of signal phases
- Set slow progression speeds
- Adjust timing for off-peak
- Consider fixed time signals

These principles are encompassed in the below considerations, and recommended for new and significantly upgraded signalized intersection projects.

1. Install Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) technology
2. Consider these pedestrian access modifications:

Pedestrian Access Modification	Description	Applicable for which Projects?
Pedestrian countdowns	Device displays a countdown of the seconds remaining for a pedestrian crossing interval during the flash/don't walk stage	Major signal modifications
Minimum walk time based on crosswalk length	Adequate flashing don't walk time based on a speed of 3.5 feet per second	Signal retiming
Rest in walk along major streets	For coordinated corridors, rest in walk for pedestrians walking along the major street	Signal retiming
Directional ADA ramps	Directional curb ramps are installed two per corner and guide pedestrians into the crosswalk	Major signal modifications and repaving
Sidewalk, crosswalk, and intersection lighting	Check lighting condition for intersection	Signal modifications
Hot response walk time trigger extension	Extend actuation window of pedestrian phase to the beginning of the green phase when timing allows	Signal modifications considering nearby intersections and progression

3. Assess the application of these treatments
    i. Providing median refuges
    ii. Tightening turn radius
    iii. Extending curbs
    iv. Narrowing or reducing number of lanes
    v. Removing street parking near the intersection ("daylighting" the intersection)
    vi. Restricting left or right turns due to sight distance limitations

After the above strategies have been assessed, remaining pedestrian/vehicle conflicts may be managed using the flow charts described in Step Two and attached to this memorandum.

STEP TWO: ISSUE-SPECIFIC FLOW CHARTS

The four issue-specific flow charts (attached) follow a multi-step process to determine a treatment "match" for the signalized intersection characteristics.

CHART A:
Actuated Signals Pedestrian Option Flow Chart
Use this flow chart whenever traffic signal actuation is used at the study intersection.

CHART B:
Left-Turns on Two-Way Streets Pedestrian Options Flow Chart
Use this flow chart for new and retrofit signal installations, and where a conflict between pedestrians and left turning vehicles is observed/ apparent from collision data.

CHART C:
Right Turns on Two-Way Streets or Left Turns on One-Way Streets Pedestrian Options Flow Chart
Use this flow chart for new and retrofit signal installations, and where a conflict between pedestrians and right turning vehicles (or left turning on one-way streets) is observed/ apparent from collision data.

CHART D:
Pedestrian Scramble Flow Chart
Use this flow chart to supplement Chart B and Chart C as directed.

Intersection type and pedestrian conflict characteristics form the basis for completing Charts A, B, and C, and the applicable charts are then completed using existing and/or proposed intersection characteristics such as lane configurations, location along transit priority corridor, pedestrian and vehicle volumes, and signal phasing.

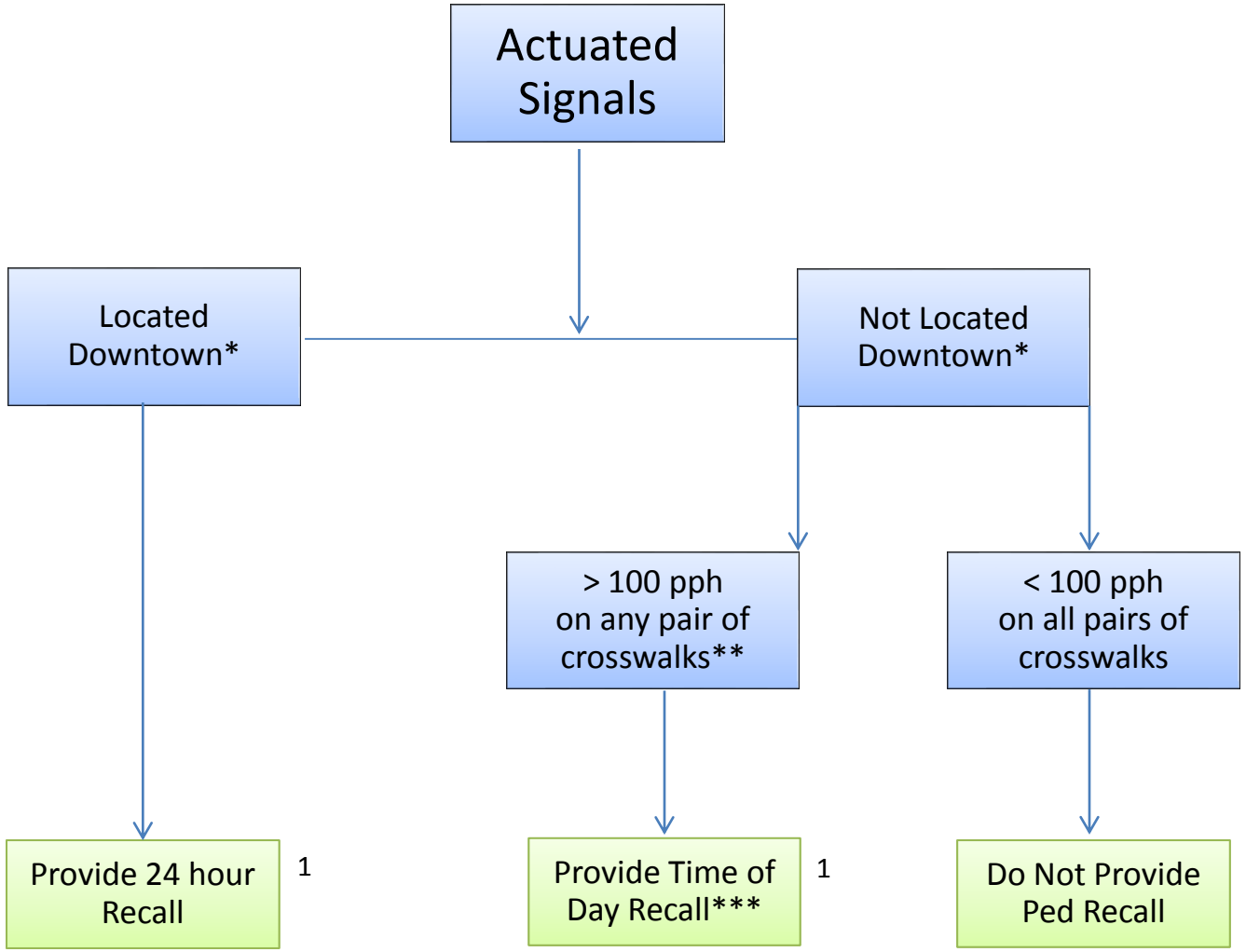
The first step of the left or right turn conflict flow charts is to determine if the pedestrian to vehicle conflict volume levels meet minimum pedestrian scramble considerations, which could lead to completion of the pedestrian scramble test (Chart D) or continuation on the original flow chart (Chart B or Chart C). If the scramble flow chart is completed and passed (*with operations analysis performed*), a pedestrian scramble phase is the recommended treatment. If the scramble flow chart is not completed, the inputs listed above will lead to identification of various pedestrian treatments as resolution to the specified conflicts.

Flow Chart A that is completed for all actuated signals recommends different signal timing pedestrian recall treatments based on the signal's location. For example, the location defined as downtown is bound by: M.L.K. Jr Way to the west, Oak Street to the east, 22nd Street to the north and 7th Street along the southern boundary. Excluded from the downtown for purposes of this policy are: Broadway, San Pablo Avenue and Telegraph Avenue north of William Street.

Attachments:

Figure 1 – Actuated Signals Flow Chart A
Figure 2 – Left Turns Flow Chart B
Figure 3 – Right Turns Flow Chart C
Figure 4 – Pedestrian Scramble Flow Chart D

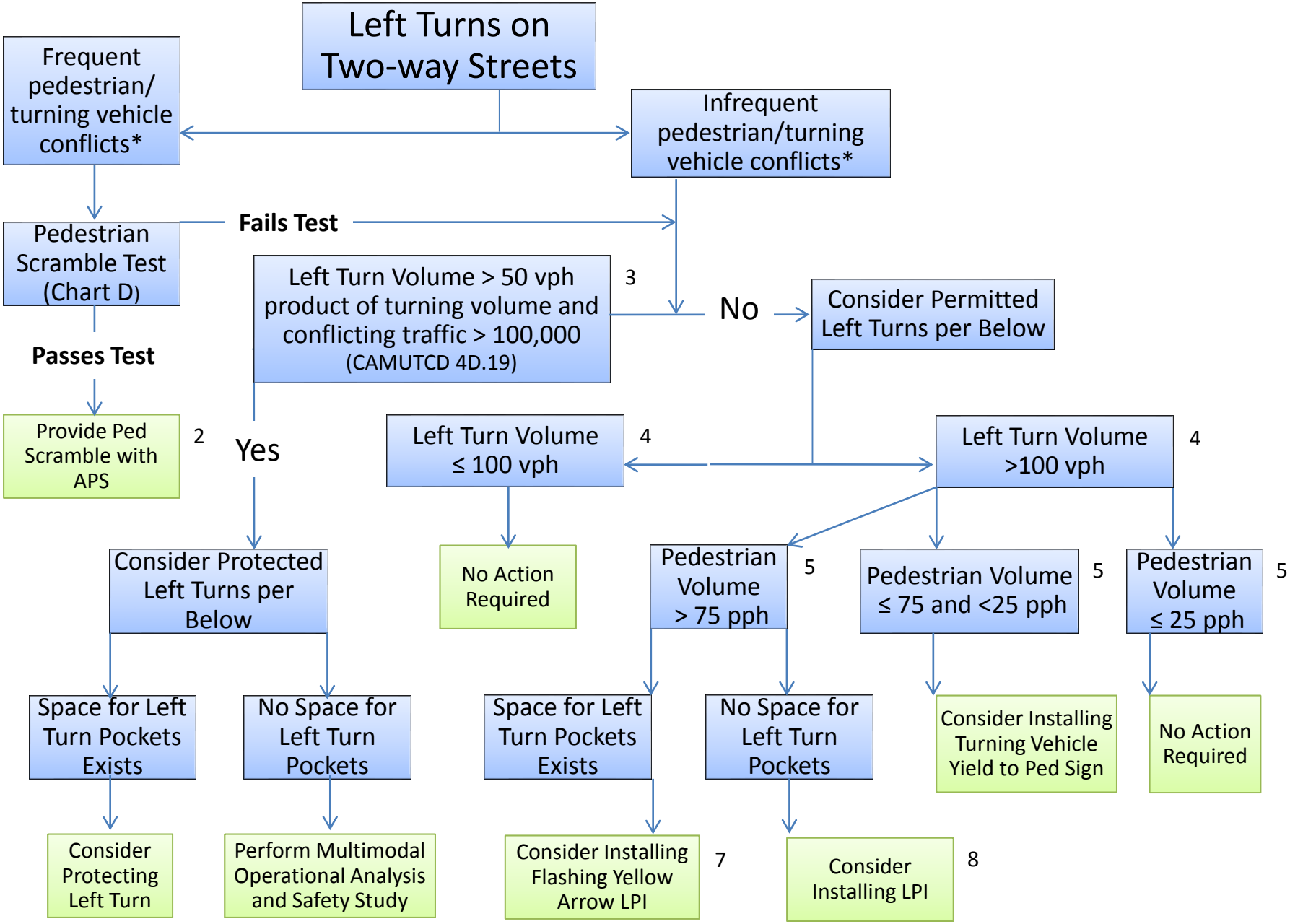
Attachment A Flow Chart Footnotes



* Downtown includes area bound by MLK Jr. Way, Oak Street, 22nd Street, and 7th Street; excluding Broadway, San Pablo Avenue and Telegraph Avenue north of William Street

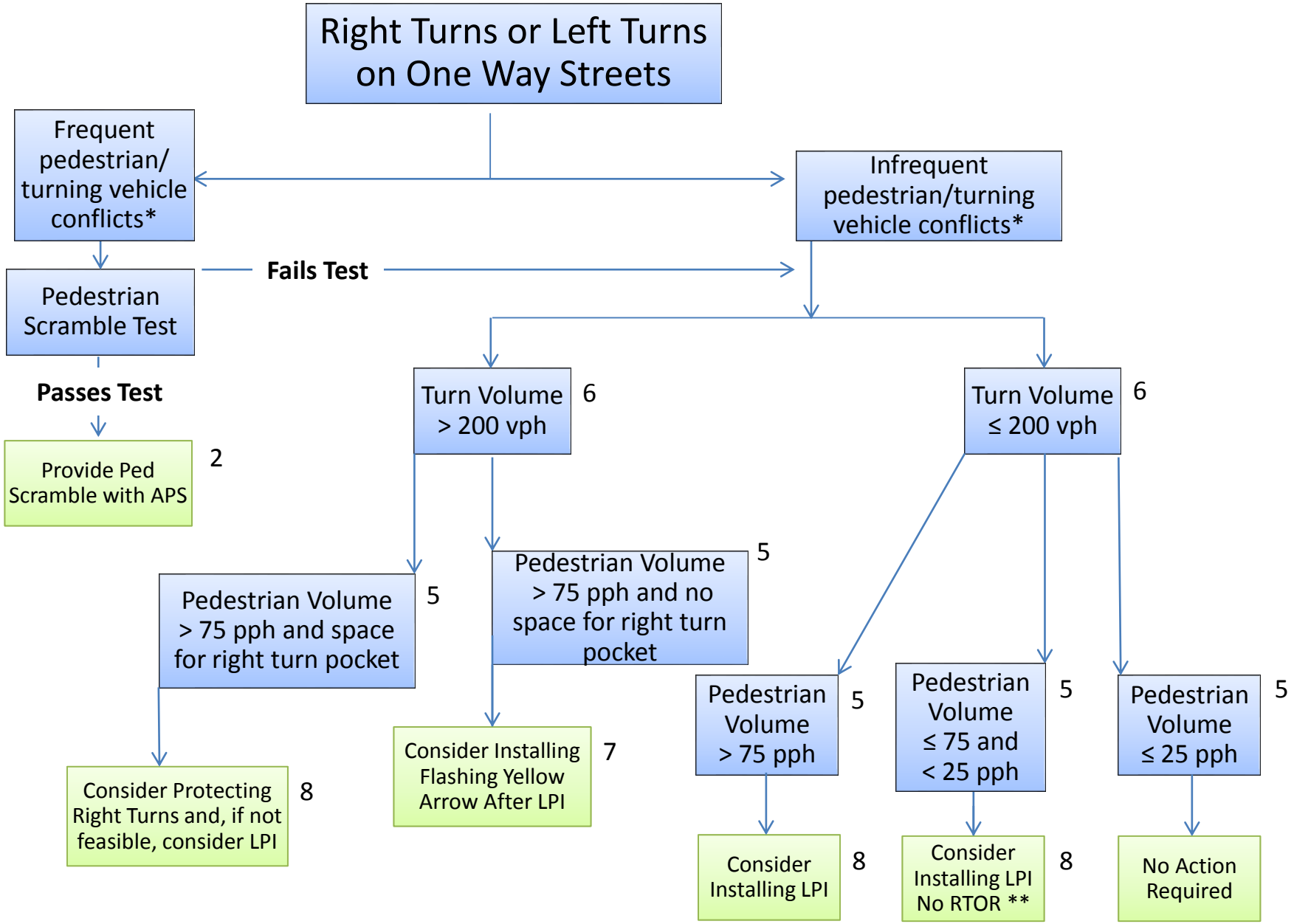
** Threshold for an anchor intersection for one hour on multiple days in a week. For neighborhood continuity, consider recall below this threshold for intersections within the same coordination group as the anchor or within the same land use context/linked destination.

*** Provide no more than two recall periods in one day, and ideally only one. Provide a time buffer for the peak period.



* Pedestrians > 300 and Vehicles > 100 in one hour for two or more conflicting movements and for two or more days per week (or adjacent to an existing scramble and at 75% of this threshold)

Figure 2



* Pedestrians > 300 and Vehicles > 100 in one hour for two or more conflicting movements and for two or more days per week (or adjacent to an existing scramble and at 75% of this threshold)

** Turn on Red to be prohibited for movement with high conflicting pedestrian volume

Figure 3

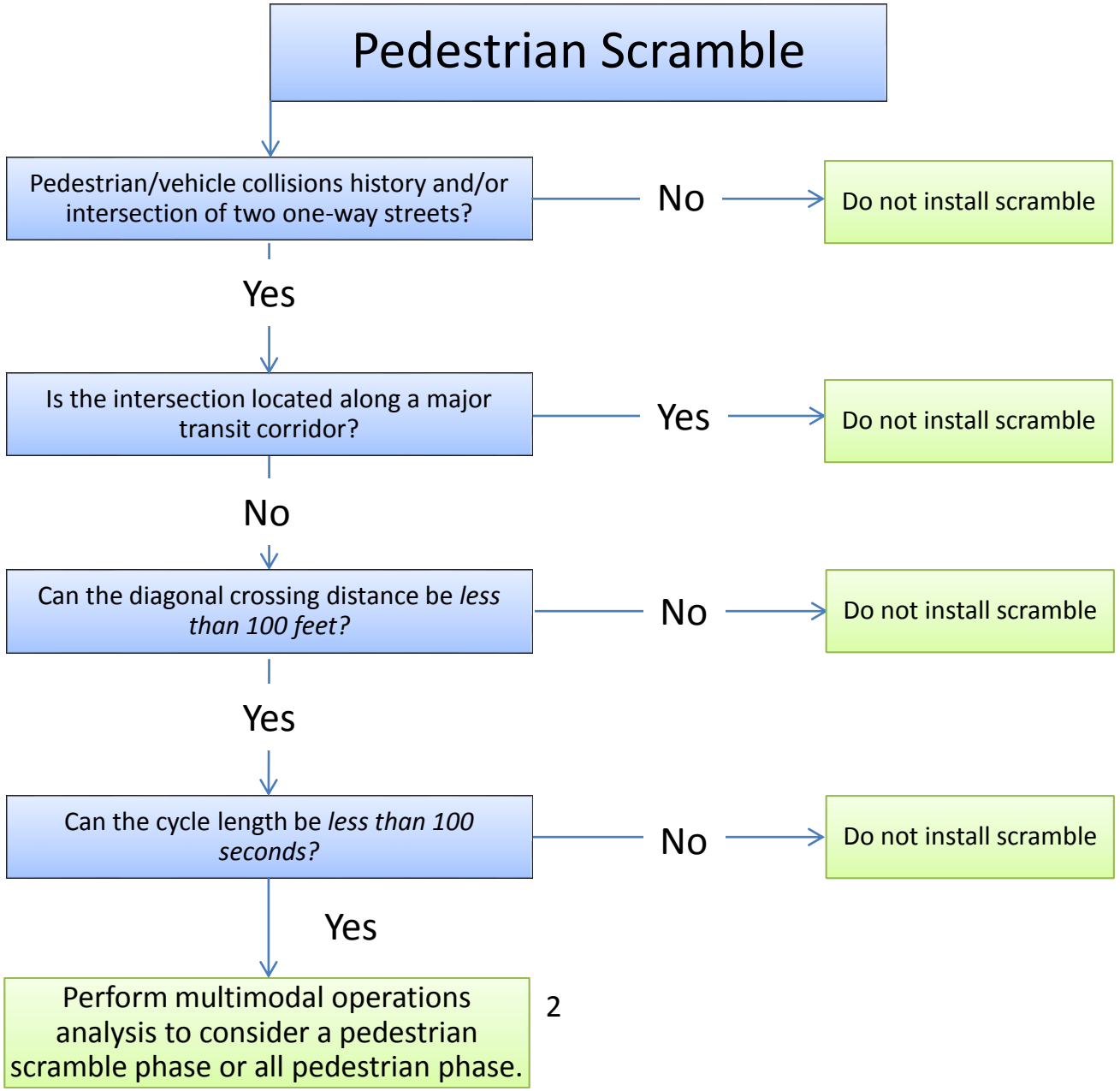

Pedestrian Scramble
Pedestrian/vehicle collisions history and/or intersection of two one-way streets?
No
Do not install scramble
Yes
Is the intersection located along a major transit corridor?
Yes
Do not install scramble
No
Can the diagonal crossing distance be *less than 100 feet?*
No
Do not install scramble
Yes
Can the cycle length be *less than 100 seconds?*
No
Do not install scramble
Yes
Perform multimodal operations analysis to consider a pedestrian scramble phase or all pedestrian phase.
2

Figure 4

Attachment A: Flow Chart Footnotes

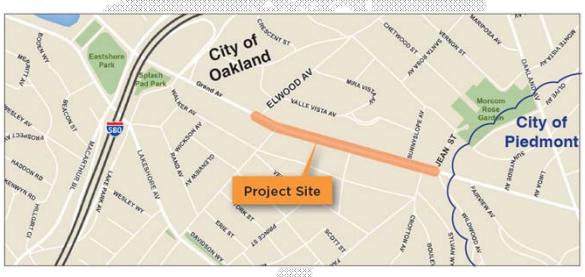
1. Time of Day Recall
    - One surveyed city does only 24 hour recall
    - Two surveyed cities run pedestrian recall only during the day or peak hours when pedestrian volumes are higher.
2. Pedestrian Scramble with Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)
    - In three cities surveyed, used at intersections with complex geometry or two one-way street intersections with high pedestrian volumes.
3. Turn volume for protected left
    - CA MUTCD section 4D.19
4. Left Turn Volume
    - AASHTO section 12.1.1
5. Pedestrian Volume
    - MUTCD section 4C.05 (pedestrian signalize intersection warrant) and 4F.01 (pedestrian hybrid beacon warrant)
6. Right Turn Volume
    - CA MUTCD section 4D.07
7. Flashing Arrow Leading Pedestrian Interval (LPI) with APS
    - Used by one city surveyed to provide a balance between the delay of a protected left and the safety benefits of a protected left. Requires a turn pocket.
8. LPI with APS
    - Six cities surveyed have implemented LPIs at specific intersections, usually dependent on complaints/requests, collision history, and/or high vehicle turning and pedestrian volumes.

CITY OF OAKLAND

Grand Avenue Road Diet
Jean St/Wildwood Ave to Elwood Ave

Bicyclist and Pedestrian Advisory Commission Meeting
Thursday, June 18, 2015
Oakland City Hall

Location Map



Project Purpose

- Reduce collision rates for all roadway users
- Reduce the number of travel lanes to better match roadway vehicle demand
- Improve bicycle facilities
- Improve the experience for people walking along and crossing Grand Avenue

Existing Cross Section

FRONT-IN ANGLED PARKING 15′	TRAVEL LANE W/ SHARROW 13′	TRAVEL LANE 12′	TRAVEL LANE 12′	TRAVEL LANE W/ SHARROW 13′	FRONT-IN ANGLED PARKING 15′

Challenges Posed by 4-lane Roads

People walking
- Double threat
- Several lanes to cross

People on bikes
- Shared lane with motorists
- Proximity to parked cars

People in vehicles
- Obstructions in lanes (e.g. parking)
- Lane changes to avoid obstructions

Photo source: Kittelson & Associates

Project Scope

- Evaluate alternatives for:
  - Reducing vehicle travel lanes from 4 to 3
  - Adding bicycle lanes
  - Types of on-street parking
- Evaluate opportunities for pedestrian crossing safety improvement
- Reconfigure the roadway cross-section to better meet the needs of road users

Treatments Considered

- The following treatments were considered for the road diet on Grand Avenue
  - Traditional bicycle lanes with back-in angle parking
  - Traditional bicycle lanes with front-in angle parking
  - Separated bicycle lanes with front-in angle parking

Source: City of Burnaby

Source: Biking Cupertino

Source: NACTO

Back-In Angle Parking

Photo source: Payton Chung via flickr

Photo source: BikeWalkKC

Example in Philadelphia

Back-In Angle Parking: Benefits

- Improves visibility and field of vision when leaving parking space
- May decrease collisions between bicyclists and motorists
- Improves safety for motorists
- Access to rear storage in vehicles is away from moving vehicles

Source: Denver Post

Back-In Angle Parking: Drawbacks

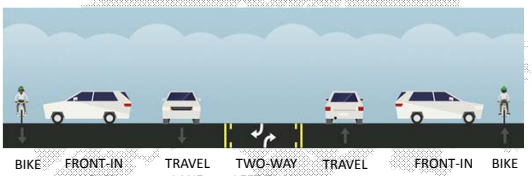
- Motorists are unfamiliar with maneuver
- Vehicles may overhang the sidewalk
- Vehicle exhaust expelled toward sidewalk
- Vehicles enter head-in from opposite side of street
- May result in loss of parking
- Inconsistent with the rest of Grand Avenue

Source: Topeka Bikeways

Source: Payton Chung via flickr

Source: New York Times

Separated Bike Lanes



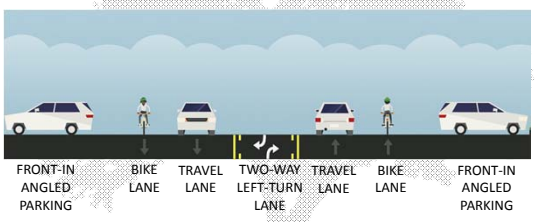
Separated Bike Lanes: Benefits

- Dedicates and protects space on street for bicyclists
- Reduces conflicts between motorists and bicyclists
- Reduces risk of motorists dooring bicyclists

Separated Bike Lanes: Drawbacks

- Street width constraint
  - Puts bicyclists in the gutter with drainage inlets
  - Overhanging vehicles may encroach into bike lanes
- May require removing parking spaces near intersections
- May require substantial redesign of street
  - To transition through existing curb extensions
  - To accommodate left-turning bicyclists at intersections
  - To manage conflict between motorists and bicyclists at intersections

Traditional Bike Lanes



Traditional Bike Lanes: Benefits

- Provides exclusive space in street for bicyclists
- Compared to existing conditions, bicyclists will be equally or more visible to motorists backing out of parking spaces
- Facilitates predictable behavior and movements between bicyclists and motorists
- Bicyclists can move into vehicle travel lanes as desired and needed
- Consistent with current striping on Grand Avenue

Traditional Bike Lanes: Drawbacks

- Does not protect bicyclists from moving or parked vehicles
- Bicyclists may not be as visible to motorists reversing out of front-in angle parking

Potential Safety Improvements

- Reduce risk of side-swipe collisions
  - 15 occurred between 2009 and 2013.
- Reduce risk of collisions involving pedestrians crossing Grand Ave.
  - 5 occurred between 2009 and 2013.
- Reduce bicycle collision rate
  - 6 occurred between 2009 and 2013.

Treatments Considered

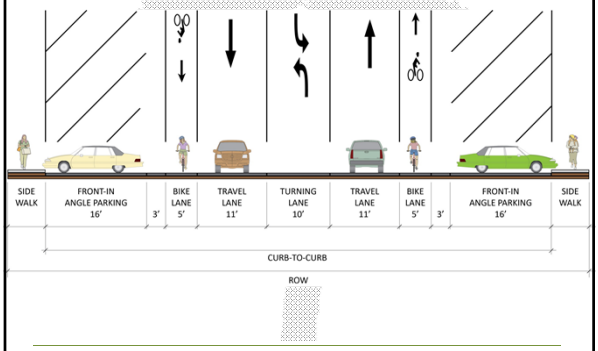
- The following treatments were considered for the road diet on Grand Avenue
  - Traditional bicycle lanes with back-in angle parking
  - Traditional bicycle lanes with front-in angle parking
  - Separated bicycle lanes with front-in angle parking


Source: City of Burnaby


Source: Biking Cupertino


Source: NACTO

Proposed Plan



Effects on Bicyclists

Mineta Transportation Institute Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress: Suitable for whom?

LTS 1: Everyone
LTS 2: All adults
LTS 3: Most adults
LTS 4: The "strong and fearless"

Factors that determine LTS

1. Number of vehicle lanes
2. Speed of motorists
3. Presence of parking
4. Bike lane presence/width
5. Separation between bike lane and motor vehicle lanes

Broadway

Effects on Bicyclists

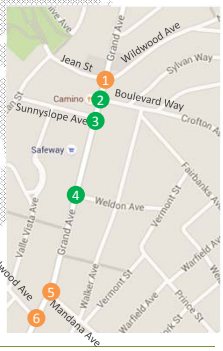
- Dedicated street space for bicyclists
- 3' clearance between bike lane and angled parking
- May modestly reduce vehicle speeds
- Bike lane obstruction by parking maneuvers
- Bicycle level of traffic stress (Mineta Transportation Institute)
  - Current conditions: Level 4
  - With road diet: Level 3

Effects on Pedestrians

- Two mid-block crosswalks:
  - 3612 Grand Ave (near Margenes Bridal)
    - Existing crossing delay: > 2 minutes (peak period)
    - Expected crossing delay: 25 seconds (peak period)
  - 3758 Grand Ave (near Safeway)
    - Existing crossing delay: > 2 minutes (peak period)
    - Expected crossing delay: 20 seconds (peak period)

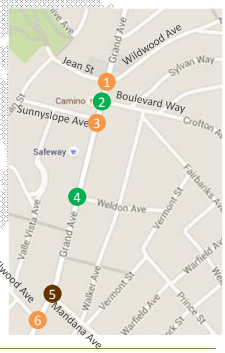
Effects on Motorists: Morning

- Up to 3 second reduction in average delay:
  - 2 - Boulevard Way
  - 3 - Sunnyslope Ave
  - 4 - Weldon Ave
- Up to 3 second increase in average delay:
  - 1 - Jean St/Wildwood Ave
  - 5 - Mandana Ave
  - 6 - Elwood Ave
- Travel time **increase** of 31 seconds going north
- Travel time **increase** of 10 seconds going south



Effects on Motorists: Afternoon

- Up to 5 second reduction in average delay:
  - 2 - Boulevard Way
  - 4 - Weldon Ave
- Up to 4 second increase in average delay:
  - 1 - Jean St/Wildwood Ave
  - 3 - Sunnyslope Ave
  - 6 - Elwood Ave
- 15 second increase in average delay:
  - 5 - Mandana Ave
- Travel time **increase** of 44 seconds going north
- Travel time **increase** of 2 seconds going south



Changes to the Proposed Budget

The Oakland Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) submitted a letter to the Oakland Public Works Committee on the budget proposed by Mayor Schaaf on June 3rd, supporting the Mayor's recommendation for a Department of Transportation (DOT).

Since the submission of that comment letter, the mayor's proposed budget has been amended and Council President McElhaney has released her own proposed budget. While funding for paving has been increased, other requests by the BPAC have been neglected and the budget for the DOT has been cut by nearly 50%. This reduction in funding will cripple the DOT at the critical moment it is being established.

We find it necessary to reiterate support for a fully-funded DOT.

Why a Department of Transportation?

The mission of a DOT is to provide safe, efficient, and socially-responsible transportation for all road users on Oakland's transportation network. A DOT is a crucial partner in shaping livable communities that meet the demands of a growing city and region in a responsible and equitable fashion for the benefit of all Oaklanders. A DOT leverages limited resources to provide the greatest possible benefit in transportation, safety, and economic & neighborhood vitality.

Why Not Public Works?

The Department of Public Works (OPW) is an essential and integral part of the City government, but their mission and approach is fundamentally different from that of a DOT. OPW's mission is centered around the construction and maintenance of the physical environment, with only secondary importance given to policy, planning, and management of transportation assets.

A true Department of Transportation, with full staffing, is essential for the following reasons:

Oakland Needs a True Project Pipeline

With no OPW staff dedicated to developing new transportation projects, Oakland is regularly leaving money on the table. Discretionary & grant funding is increasingly focused on Complete Streets projects that can show marked safety and mobility improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians. Not only does OPW not have an established project pipeline, lack of prioritization for existing projects has led to Oakland losing out on grant funding for otherwise competitive projects.

A DOT can engage in the type of long-range Complete Streets planning that creates a strong project pipeline and pays for itself many times over in captured discretionary funds.

Oakland Needs to Better Coordinate with Transit

The transit agencies serving Oakland residents (BART & AC Transit) do not have a clear point of contact within the City government or at OPW. This has led to delays and complications for essential investments in our community like International BRT, as well as an inability to address simple needs like the relocation of bus stops.

A DOT would be able to partner with transit agencies for long-range planning and designate specific staff to represent Oakland in interagency efforts.

Oakland Needs to Respond Better to Resident Needs

Residents in Oakland need to feel that the City is responsive to their needs for transportation, whether it is filling potholes, re-striping curbs, or placing new crosswalks. OPW does not currently have adequate staffing to meet resident requests. Project priority is given to request volume instead of more equitable practices.Progress is measured by the number of staff responses given and not by concrete outcomes that improve residents' lives.

DOTs commonly assign liaison staff to each council district, coordinating small improvements and responding to resident requests. These staff also coordinate on larger in-district plans and coordinate community support for grant funding applications. A DOT focused on equity could also devise a better protocol for response to residents.

Oakland Needs Transportation Leadership

None of the people holding leadership positions in OPW have formal training as transportation professionals. The state of transportation planning is experiencing a nation-wide renaissance, and Oakland risks losing out to other cities that are willing to be bold.

To attract a truly innovative transportation leader, Oakland needs to create a DOT director position that is empowered to lead the development and implementation of transportation investments.

How This Relates to the City Budget

The Oakland BPAC understands that the most recent budget proposals have sought to return additional Measure BB funding to the paving program, partially via cuts to the DOT budget of $750,000 over two years. The Oakland BPAC opposes those cuts for the following reasons:

A Symbolic Cut that will Hobble Future Success

A $750,000 budget cut to the Department of Transportation over two years will provide little additional resources for paving, but will significantly hurt the DOT's ability to plan, design, and develop complete streets projects that can and will win large amounts of discretionary funding.

Some Proposed Uses of Measure BB Funds are Not Allowed

One City budget proposal includes $600,000 funding allocated to a City employee transit pass program, violating ACTC guidelines for allowed expenditures of Measure BB funds. This proposed expenditure is nearly equal to the amount of the proposed cut for the DOT.

DOT Expenditure is a Small Bite of the Measure BB Pie

While a fully-funded Department of Transportation costs $2.25 million over two years, the amount of Measure BB funding used to backfill existing Public Works positions is over $6 million.

Especially with More Capital Funding, the City Needs More Staff

Even with a boosted capital fund for paving, it's unclear if the City can actually deliver on their projects, exemplified by more than $10 million in allocated, but backlogged, Measure B funding.