



**City of Oakland, Bicyclist & Pedestrian Advisory Commission  
Minutes from the October 17 Meeting  
City Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Sergeant Daniel Sakai Hearing Room (A.K.A. Hearing Room 4)**

Meeting agenda at [www.oaklandca.gov/boards-commissions/bicyclist-and-pedestrian-advisory-commission/meetings](http://www.oaklandca.gov/boards-commissions/bicyclist-and-pedestrian-advisory-commission/meetings)

Meeting called to order at 6:04 PM by BPAC Chair Gardner.

**Item 1. Roll Call, Determination of Quorum, Introductions, and Acknowledgement of Recent Bicyclist and Pedestrian Fatal Traffic Crashes**

At roll call, quorum was established with seven Commissioners present (X).

Commissioners	Present
Priyanka Altman	X
Alex Frank	
Grey Gardner (Chair)	X
Jimmy Jessup	X
Phoenix Mangrum	
David Ralston (Vice-Chair)	X
Patricia Schader	X
Nick Whipps	X
Dianne Yee	X

Introductions were made.

1. Oakland Department of Transportation (OakDOT) Staff: Jason Patton, Noel Pond-Danchik, Yvonne Chan, Sarah Fine, Jamie Parks, Megan Weir, Rachel Strangeway
2. Other attendees: Kevin Dalley (BPAC Policy and Legislative Committee), George Spies (Traffic Violence Rapid Response), Anwar Baroudi (Mayor’s Commission on People with Disabilities), Robert Prinz (Bike East Bay), Kathryn Vo (AC Transit), Maria Henderson (AC Transit), Bryan Culbertson, Drew Martin, Fernando Rodriguez Perez, Kirsten Flagg

Chair Gardner led the commission in an acknowledgement of recent fatal and other high-profile traffic crashes in Oakland involving bicyclists and pedestrians; for more information visit:

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/topics/traffic-fatality-tracking>.

Summary of Discussion:

- On October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, a bicyclist riding down Skyline Blvd hit a pothole resulting in a concussion

Speakers other than Commissioners: none

**Item 2. Open Forum / Public Comment / Announcements**

A list of announcements and attachments were included in the meeting’s agenda packet. There is a liaison to Open Forum who follows up with members of the public and tracks Open Forum comments at [docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1v0nDQC83kYuR8rW\\_ofuDLSTOy0LdRg9otR63Yp0u5Qw/html](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1v0nDQC83kYuR8rW_ofuDLSTOy0LdRg9otR63Yp0u5Qw/html)

- The California State Fire Code is up for review and comments are due by midnight, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Kevin Dalley wrote a letter that asks to include traffic safety (which includes narrower street widths) as a consideration in addition to emergency response times in their review. A copy of the letter is available at [docs.google.com/document/d/1WdNUPU7RdUVdqs5WvGA91bFfpBoIID8Tfa3KuFVCRpo/](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WdNUPU7RdUVdqs5WvGA91bFfpBoIID8Tfa3KuFVCRpo/) and attached to these minutes.
- Transport Oakland is hosting Candidate Forums at the West Oakland Melrose Branch Library on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> in advance of the upcoming elections. They will be hosting local political candidates with platforms centering safer transportation.
- OakDOT submitted a fourth grant application to Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)'s Safe Routes to Bay Trail Bay Trail Gap Closure Grant for \$5 million for construction for phases 3 and 4 of the Brooklyn Basin/Bay Trail bike lanes. The project would be on the currently undeveloped west parcel of Brooklyn Basin and constructed by the developer. A map and the MTC Complete Streets Checklist was provided as a handout at the meeting.
- Between 2011 and 2020, a Bike East Bay volunteer would review potholes submitted to 311/SeeClickFix with keywords related to bicycling and prioritize 10 potholes every month. OakDOT would in turn prioritize patching those potholes. In 2020, that volunteer stopped, but Bike East Bay recently started submitting lists again this September or October. For more info, or to become the next volunteer, reach out to Robert Prinz.

Speakers other than Commissioners: Kevin Dalley, Anwar Baroudi, Jamie Parks, Robert Prinz

### Item 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The draft meeting minutes from the September 2024 BPAC special meeting were considered for adoption. Commissioners shared positive sentiments about meeting in Deep East Oakland and specifically at the 81<sup>st</sup> Ave Library. They thanked the Oakland Public Library for sharing about the bike programming at the library and thanked OakDOT staff and meeting attendees for attending.

→ A motion to adopt the Bicyclist & Pedestrian Advisory Commission September 2024 special meeting minutes was made (Ralston) and seconded (Yee). Commissioner Schader abstained. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Adopted minutes online at [www.oaklandbikes.info/BPAC](http://www.oaklandbikes.info/BPAC)

Speakers other than commissioners: Jason Patton

### Item 4. Committee Report Backs

Everyone is encouraged to attend committee meetings. A list of existing committees was provided in the agenda packet for this meeting. More information on committees at:

[www.oaklandca.gov/resources/bicyclist-and-pedestrian-advisory-commission-bpac-committees-and-liaisons](http://www.oaklandca.gov/resources/bicyclist-and-pedestrian-advisory-commission-bpac-committees-and-liaisons)

- Infrastructure Committee (Leads – Commissioner Dianne Yee and Robert Prinz): The committee last met on September 5, 2024. They discussed the Regional Measure 3 (RM3) Safe Routes to Transit & Bay Trail (SR2TBT) grant applications, the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) Countywide Comprehensive Investment Plan (CIP) status of ongoing CIP projects and application review, and the Caltrans Doolittle Paving Project. Notes at: [docs.google.com/document/d/1qqS46y3dWNeAxMVwU3HTwjunj-b0pwANtZix-CisiWA/](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qqS46y3dWNeAxMVwU3HTwjunj-b0pwANtZix-CisiWA/). Their

next meeting is planned for Thursday, November 7, 2024, from 3:30-5:30 PM at 250 Frank Ogawa Plaza in the Broadway Conference Room, Suite 4304. More info will be available at: [www.oaklandca.gov/meeting/november-2024-bicyclist-pedestrian-advisory-commission-bpac-infrastructure-committee-meeting](http://www.oaklandca.gov/meeting/november-2024-bicyclist-pedestrian-advisory-commission-bpac-infrastructure-committee-meeting)

- Policy and Legislative Committee (Leads – Commissioner Nick Whipps and Kevin Dalley): The committee last met on August 12, 2024. They discussed items on 311 Service Requests and fatality/injury related bicyclist or pedestrian related crash data. Their next meeting is planned for Tuesday, November 12, 2024, from 5:30-7:00 PM in City Hall Hearing Room 4. More info will be available at: [www.oaklandca.gov/meeting/november-2024-bicyclist-pedestrian-advisory-commission-bpac-policy-and-legislative-committee-meeting](http://www.oaklandca.gov/meeting/november-2024-bicyclist-pedestrian-advisory-commission-bpac-policy-and-legislative-committee-meeting)
- Ad Hoc 2024 Recruitment Committee: The committee will bring a recommendation for three-year BPAC commissioner terms beginning in January 2025 for the Mayor’s Office for review by the Commission later in this meeting.

Speakers other than Commissioners: none

### **Item 5. 2022 5-Year Paving Plan Update**

Sarah Fine ([sfine@oaklandca.gov](mailto:sfine@oaklandca.gov)), OakDOT Paving Program Manager, provided a status report on the adopted 2022 5-Year Paving Plan (5YP). Additional information about the 2022 5YP, including a map of streets and schedule, is available at: [www.oaklandca.gov/projects/20225yp](http://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/20225yp). A copy of the presentation was included in the agenda packet. OakDOT is paving drastically higher miles of streets especially local streets since the passing of Measure KK. 5% of paving funds are reserved for paving Neighborhood Bike Routes with particularly low-quality pavement in addition to the Neighborhood Bike Routes already on the paving plan. OakDOT paved 47 miles of streets in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, more than any other year because of full staffing and resolved contracting issues. When a street is paved, ADA compliant curb ramps and high visibility crosswalks are also installed, and the sidewalk is repaired along the length of the street.

#### Summary of Discussion:

- Adoption of the 2022 Five Year Paving Plan did not appropriate funding. It is unclear whether the paving funding will continue and whether the bonds allowed by the passing of Measure U will be issued. Questions regarding funding should be forwarded to the Finance Department.
- It’s great that the vacancies were filled.
- Paving projects have a faster timeline and lower budget than other major projects, limiting the ability to add additional safety treatments to the design.
- The Paving team is working on standardizing certain treatments like red curb daylighting to make pedestrians more visible on all streets being paved.
- The Paving team is working with the Bicyclist and Pedestrian team to institutionalize implementing some treatments recommended in the Neighborhood Bike Route Implementation Guide as part of paving projects. The guide ([https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/OaDOT\\_NBR\\_Guidance.pdf](https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/OaDOT_NBR_Guidance.pdf)) was reviewed by the BPAC Infrastructure Committee. This includes installing speed bumps and sharrows on Neighborhood Bike Routes. 50 miles of Neighborhood Bike Routes are on the Paving Plan. The Bike and Pedestrian Team has located at least one speed hump (as feasible) on each block of those 50 miles and are working on getting agreement with the Oakland Fire Department (OFD) and reaching out to adjacent residents in advance of installing those speed humps.

- All local streets being paved should get speed bumps rather than speed bumps needing to be approved by resident petitions which is an inequitable process. Currently, speed bumps are not automatically installed because they require staff time for staff to get approval from OFD and to reach out to every adjacent resident in case of ADA or other reasonable concerns.
- Centerline hardening should be standardized as part of paving projects.
- Design for paving of local streets is reviewed internally at OakDOT, including by the Bicyclist and Pedestrian and Traffic Engineering teams, who may add certain additional traffic safety treatments including striping. They cannot typically recommend treatments that would affect the grade of the street.
- Design for paving of major streets can be expanded beyond just repaving to include additional safety treatments if the Paving team partners with other teams in OakDOT or receives additional grant funding. One example of this is the concrete protected intersections recently installed on West Grand Ave.
- Pothole filling is a temporary patch to potholes whereas paving addresses the underlying street quality issues that create potholes. Pothole filling is done by OakDOT's Great Streets Maintenance Division, not the Paving team.
- Slurry seals are preventative maintenance treatments which are cheaper than full repaving. They seal over the pavement for streets in relatively good condition (i.e. paved in the past five or ten years) but they are less intensive than full paving because they do not mill and remove any pavement.
- The Paving Program has removed many railroad tracks including on West Grand Ave, Union St, and Poplar St.
- The best way to let the City know about pavement issues whether that be potholes or low-quality street pavement is to report them to 311.
- There should be an additional 311 category for degraded streets.
- New pavement can allow drivers to drive faster which is why it's important to also improve bicyclist and pedestrian safety as part of paving.
- 7 miles of new bikeways and 5 miles of improved bikeways were constructed in FY 2024.
- OakDOT has funding for 19 miles of paving in FY25 from already allocated sources.
- Messaging about paving in Oakland should balance rebuilding trust from Oaklanders who care about maintaining Oakland's streets and providing info on installing safety treatments for those who care about traffic safety.
- Part of paving is rebuilding trust in providing an essential piece of infrastructure for the many Oaklanders that care more about pavement quality.
- The BPAC Policy and Legislative Committee is looking at potholes reported to 311. Despite the higher cost, smaller patch paving rather than pothole should be done for streets in degraded conditions. but many of them are bad streets.
- Pavement Condition data is being collected citywide to determine the condition of pavement overall rather than relying on outdated data or 311 reports of potholes.
- Some Senate Bill (SB) 1 Gas Tax money goes to paving. A new asphalt machine is going to be bought which was funded by this source.
- Paving a street costs about \$1 million to \$1.2 million per mile.
- More information about the negative impact of not issuing Measure U Bonds including which streets won't be paved or will be delayed should be made available to the public. If there will be project delays, community members need to be made aware. The future additional costs of needing to do additional paving due to letting streets degrade and potential additional lawsuits due to bad street or sidewalk quality should be examined.

- Asphalt takes the least design effort to spend the most money while other treatments take more design and planning effort. This is why it's important to both staff up and standardize design efforts.
- The cost of striping is very cheap compared to the cost of asphalt. The cost of installing concrete safety features is expensive, but still cheaper than installing temporary plastic bollards, replacing them, and eventually upgrading them to concrete.
- A more cost-efficient way to install protected bike lanes than constructing them with concrete along the length of the corridor is to install concrete at only the intersections and use plastic wheel stops along the middle of the street.
- If funding for construction is stalled due to Measure U issues, the fully staffed Paving team will continue to plan and design paving projects to be ready for construction once funding is ready.
- There is a Sidewalks and Curb Ramps team at OakDOT which responds to ADA and other complaints regarding sidewalks and curb ramps and fixes additional sidewalks and curb ramps not on the Paving Plan.
- The Infrastructure Committee should have the opportunity to provide input for all local streets being paved, not just neighborhood bikeways.
- Vehicle speeds should be evaluated before and after all major projects including those implemented by paving.

Speakers other than Commissioners: Kevin Dalley, Robert Prinz, Jamie Parks, George Spies, Anwar Baroudi, Jason Patton, Bryan Culbertson

#### **Item 6. BusAID Grant Application for AC Transit International Blvd BRT Phase 2 Project**

AC Transit staff shared an update on the Quick Build: International Blvd Delineation Project ([www.actransit.org/quick-builds/international-qb](http://www.actransit.org/quick-builds/international-qb)). They also shared an overview of their application for \$3.9 M for the project to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Bus Accelerated Infrastructure Delivery (BusAID) Grant and requested review of the MTC Complete Streets Checklist and a Statement of Exception from the BPAC. A copy of the presentation, Checklist, and Statement of Exception was included in the agenda packet.

Dangerous driving behavior on International Blvd has been a persistent issue along the corridor for many decades, including unauthorized use of the bus lane, illegal u-turns, illegal left-turns, and queue jumping, combined with a lack of traffic enforcement on the corridor. To address the issues, the initial quick build project added additional delineation treatments including vertical delineators between the bus and vehicle lanes, bus only lane and speed limit signage, and improved transit lane striping. At this point, seventy-two of the ninety-two blocks have now received some kind of treatment. With the award of the BusAID grant, Phase 2 of the project will add additional traffic safety improvements with the treatments that prove to be beneficial to the corridor during Phase 1. The project will begin design after the assessment period which is happening between now and early 2025.

Starting on October 7, 2024, AC Transit buses began issuing automated citations to vehicles in bus only lanes or parked at bus stops. Prior to the start date, there was a 60-day warning period with no citations issued yet. During the 60-day warning period, just on International Blvd, 809 of such citations were reported by the bus cameras and the Alameda County Sheriff's Department issued 630 warning citations. AC Transit has begun using the automated citation cameras on 100 buses on all AC Transit's bus lines in Alameda County and soon in Contra Costa County.

#### Summary of Discussion:

- The locations of the delineators for the first phases of the project were installed based on where the highest number of fatal and severe crashes took place at the time of the design.
- There was a recent fatal pedestrian crash on International Blvd and 71<sup>st</sup> Ave where no delineators were installed.
- The City of Oakland will be installing speed cushions on the corridor with construction starting by the end of the year and will share updates.
- Construction of the BusAID project is expected to break ground beginning around Fall 2026. All AC Transit construction projects must go through normal contracting processes which takes a minimum of 180 days.
- This project is too late coming to this stage. Advocates were sounding the alarm bells before AC Transit and the City of Oakland were taking complaints seriously, losing critical time.
- The next phase of the project should be installed as soon as possible by reducing the study time even at the cost of more deliberate planning efforts, because of the unique situation of how dangerous the corridor is.
- The planning phase will decide which types of post are most effective and efficient. Even if the evaluation phase was completed today, AC Transit would still have to complete the normal contracting process of 180 days. The City of Oakland has a different contracting and construction process, subject to different regulations.
- Pedestrian wait times should be examined and signal timing should be changed because there are many pedestrians crossing the street at the center bus stops and many pedestrians do not wait for a pedestrian signal light to cross.
- The Alvarado-Niles Road Part-Time Transit Lanes Pilot Project in Union City which is also applying for the BusAID grant is removing bike lanes for the installation of the bus lane. The International Blvd BusAID project will not be removing bike lanes.

Speakers other than Commissioners: George Spies, Bryan Culbertson, Megan Weir, Kevin Dalley, Robert Prinz

#### **Item 7. BPAC Commissioner Recommendations**

The Recruitment Committee shared recommendations from its review of the nineteen applications of people seeking to be appointed to the BPAC for the 2025-2027 term. The commission strives for equity and geographic representation of Oakland's neighborhoods. Commissioners can serve up to six years (two terms). The Committee is recommending Nick Whipps (reappointment), Kirsten Flagg, Alexander Perry, and Fernando Rodriguez Perez (alternate). Recommendations are shared with the Mayor. Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council. A summary of the applicants and information from their applications was attached to this meeting's agenda.

#### Summary of Discussion:

- An alternate is selected in case a recommendation does not move forward or one of the other commissioners steps down.
- There were so many great applications. Commissioner Whipps plans to reach out to all the applicants to get involved and attend and participate in the meetings and the committees.

→ A motion **to adopt the recommendations** was made (Gardner) and seconded (Schader). Commissioner Whipps abstained. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Speakers other than Commissioners: Fernando Rodrigo Perez

**Item 8. Two-month agenda look-ahead, suggestions for meeting topics**

The three-month look-ahead was included in the meeting's agenda packet.

*Suggestions for Meeting Topics*

- City Budget Priorities

Meeting adjourned at 7:54 PM.

Attachments:

- Brooklyn Basin Bay Trail Bike Lane Map and Grant Application MTC Complete Streets Checklist
- Public Comment Letter by Kevin Dalley on California Fire Code California Code of Regulations

Minutes recorded by Noel Pond-Danchik, Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Transportation Planner, emailed to meeting attendees for review on October 23, 2024, with comments requested by November 6, 2024, to [npond-danchik@oaklandca.gov](mailto:npond-danchik@oaklandca.gov). Revised minutes will be attached to the October 2024 meeting agenda and considered for adoption at that meeting.

**Contact Name** Yvonne Chan

**Email Address** ychan@oaklandca.gov

**City/Jurisdiction/Agency**  
(If your option is not listed, select "Other") Oakland

**County** Alameda

**Is your project seeking regional discretionary funds or an endorsement?** Regional discretionary funding

**Please include the name of the regional discretionary funding program that this project is seeking.** Regional Measure 3 (RM3) Safe Routes to Transit and Bay Trail Program

**Project Name/Title** Creating and Improving Active Access to the Bay Trail and Waterfront at Brooklyn Basin

**Project Area/ Location** City of Oakland

**Project Description (2000 character limit). You may also attach additional project documents, cross sections, plan views or other supporting materials.**

Today, there is limited public access from outlying Oakland to the shoreline and parks at the Brooklyn Basin parks and Bay Trail. This aspect of the project focuses on pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and the Bay trail which connects Oakland communities to the shoreline and waterfront areas. This connectivity is crucial for providing safe and convenient routes for people to walk, jog, or cycle to and from the bay. In addition, we have been asked by several community groups to go a step further to modify the bike lanes to Class I, which would separate cyclists from motor vehicle traffic using physical barriers such as curbs, bollards, and planters. This significantly reduces risk of collisions with cars and trucks. Finally, Communities immediately East of the Brooklyn Basin project are forced to use 5th Avenue exclusively to access the parks and Bay Trail. This 500' section of roadway has limited sidewalks and bike lanes, along with abandoned parking spaces and poor striping and signage. This project upgrades this section of roadway to a Class I bikeway as well.

**Please choose the project phase(s).** CON

**Do you think your project qualifies for a Statement of Exception?** No



**Topic: Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Planning**

**Does the project implement relevant plans, or other locally adopted recommendations?**

Yes

**Please provide details on plan recommendations affecting the project area, if any, with Plan adoption date. If the project is inconsistent with adopted plans, please provide explanation.**

Bay Trail Gap Closure Implementation Plan

**Does the project area contain segments of the regional Active Transportation (AT) Network? [See MTC's AT Network map here]**

Yes

**If yes, describe the how project adheres to the National Association of City Transportation Official's (NATCO's) "Designing for All Ages & Abilities Contextual Guidance for High-Comfort Bicycle Facilities" and/or the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board's "Accessibility Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities in the Public Right-of-Way."**

The project follows all of the design and guidance from the NACTO plan referenced above.

**Is the the project on a known High Injury Network (HIN) or has a local traffic safety analysis found a high incidence of bicyclist/pedestrian-involved crashes within the project area?**

Yes

**Please summarize the traffic safety conditions and describe the project's traffic safety measures. The Bay Area Vision Zero System may be a helpful resource.**

Current conditions expose cyclists and pedestrians attempting to access the Bay Trail and waterfront at Brooklyn Basin to motor vehicle traffic. This project will convert existing Class II lanes to Class I facilities, using physical barriers such as curbs, bollards, and planters to fully separate the cyclists (and walkers on the adjacent sidewalks) from the motor vehicle traffic on the roads. In addition, the project includes wayfinding signage and crossing signs at every intersection to further increase the safety of non-motorized users.

**Does the the project seek to improve conditions for people biking, walking and/or rolling? If the project includes a bikeway, was a Level of Traffic Stress (LTS), or similar user experience analysis conducted?**

Yes

**Describe how project seeks to provide low-stress transportation facilities or reduce a facility's LTS.**

Approximately 30 acres of new open spaces are planned along the bay front edges of Brooklyn Basin. In total, they are a diverse network of parks, promenades, and plazas along the Estuary shoreline linked by a pedestrian and bicycle trail system that connects to Jack London Square and Oakland's eastern waterfront. The open spaces include four new parks, an expanded Estuary Park, and a wide public promenade along the perimeter of Clinton Basin. This project includes improved connectivity and safety to the vast benefits of the newly developed Brooklyn Basin. Specifically, this project creates connectivity for the low-income neighbors and disadvantaged communities adjacent to the Bay. Finally, this project closes a gap along the Bay Trail, increasing broader connectivity throughout the East Bay.

**A. Are there existing public transit facilities (stop or station) in the project area?**

Yes

**If yes, list transit facilities (stop, station, or route) and all affected agencies.**

The project's location is along the Oakland San Francisco Bay, just Southwest of Jack London Square and Downtown. The site is approximately 1/2 mile from a light rail transit station, close proximity to both Oakland and Alameda Ferry stations and approximately 0.8 mile from the existing Oakland Amtrak at Jack London Square. The project is also within 0.5 mile of AC Transit routes 62 and 96.

**B. Have all potentially affected transit agencies had the opportunity to review this project? If yes, please save the email**

Yes

from transit operator(s)  
below.

**C: Is there a MTC  
Mobility Hub (map)  
within the project area?**

No

**If applicable, please  
describe the pedestrian  
focused improvements  
and cite the design  
standards used (links to  
standards are not  
needed).**

Current conditions expose cyclists and pedestrians attempting to access the Bay Trail and waterfront at Brooklyn Basin to motor vehicle traffic. This project will convert existing Class II lanes to Class I facilities, using physical barriers such as curbs, bollards, and planters to fully separate the cyclists (and walkers on the adjacent sidewalks) from the motor vehicle traffic on the roads. In addition, the project includes wayfinding signage and crossing signs at every intersection to further increase the safety of non-motorized users.

**If applicable, please  
provide the class  
designation for  
bikeways included in  
the project and cite the  
design standards used.**

Current conditions expose cyclists and pedestrians attempting to access the Bay Trail and waterfront at Brooklyn Basin to motor vehicle traffic. This project will convert existing Class II lanes to Class I facilities, using physical barriers such as curbs, bollards, and planters to fully separate the cyclists (and walkers on the adjacent sidewalks) from the motor vehicle traffic on the roads. In addition, the project includes wayfinding signage and crossing signs at every intersection to further increase the safety of non-motorized users.

**Will the project improve  
active transportation in  
an Equity Priority  
Community (EPC)?**

Yes

**Please list census tracts  
that are designated as  
EPCs and affected by  
this project.**

406000

**Has a local (city is  
preferred and county is  
an option) Bicycle and  
Pedestrian Advisory  
Commission (BPAC)  
reviewed this Checklist?  
The Checklist will begin  
MTC review once the  
BPAC meeting has  
occurred.**

No

### **Compliance and Exemption**

**Please check below if  
Yes. If no, complete the  
Statement of Exception.  
If Yes, this Checklist is  
complete and the rest of**

Yes

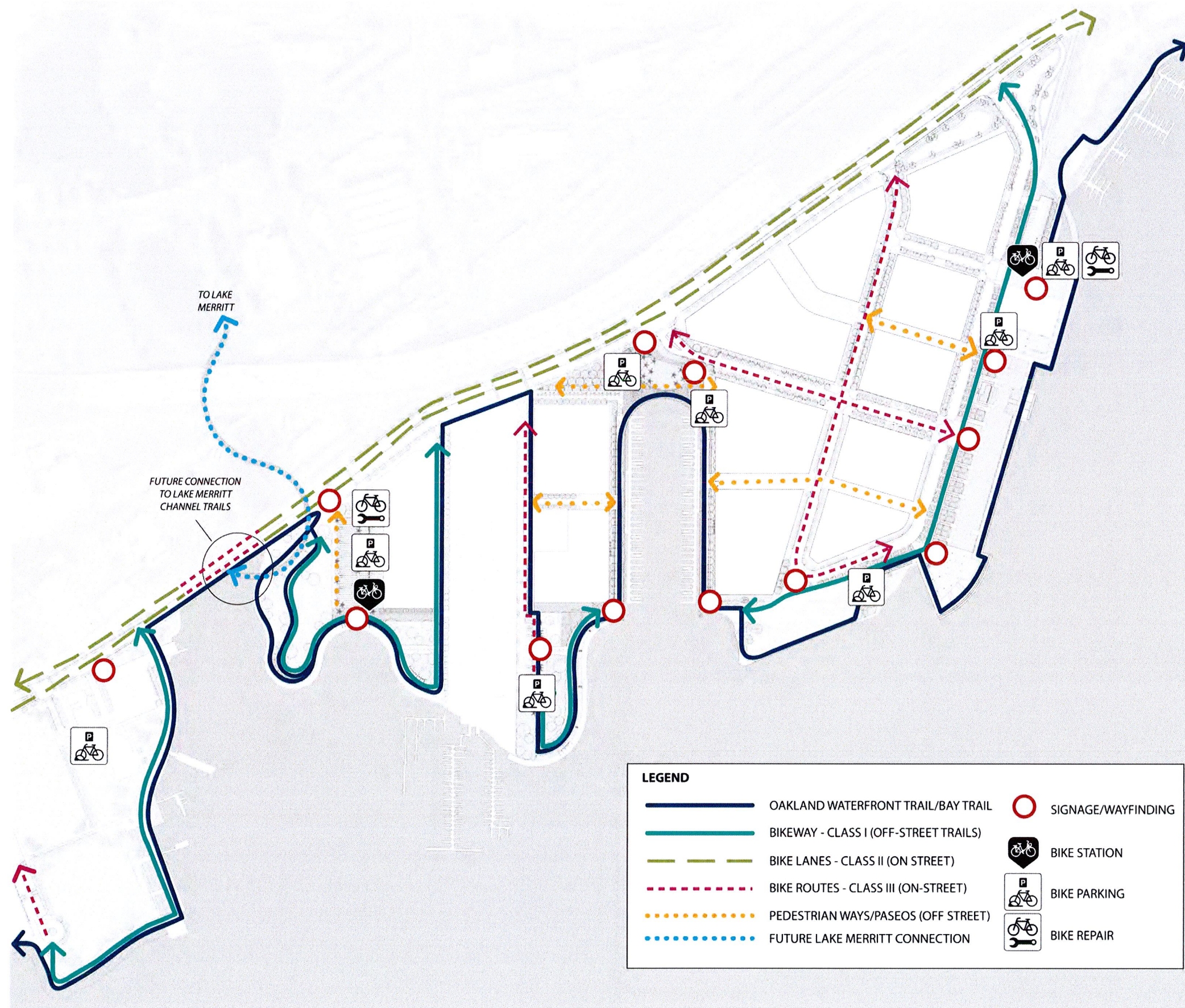
**the form can be skipped. If No, please fill out the Statement of Exception section.**

**Has a local (city or county) Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) reviewed this Checklist? No**  
**The CS Checklist will begin review once the BPAC meeting notes are included in this form.**

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These messages are not added in the [premium version](#).



To: California Building Standards Commission <[cbssc@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:cbssc@dgs.ca.gov)>

Subject: Public Comment on California Fire Code California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 9, Amendments: Recommendations to Enhance Safety for Non-Car Users

Dear State Fire Marshal and CBSC Officials,

# Public Comment on California Fire Code California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 9

## Amendments: Recommendations to Enhance Safety for Non-Car Users

We are writing to provide detailed comments and recommendations on the current California Fire Code and its alignment with traffic safety, particularly focusing on the mobility and safety of non-car users—pedestrians, cyclists, and people using wheelchairs. The following recommendations address the specific deficiencies in the fire code and propose revisions that can significantly enhance safety while maintaining the primary purpose of providing fire apparatus access. As California's population continues to embrace more sustainable, active forms of transportation, it is crucial that the fire code evolves to ensure the safety of all road users, not just those in motor vehicles.

California's many fire departments are first responders for traffic injuries and fatalities. Designing safer streets will decrease the number of tragic traffic collisions to which fire departments now respond.

## Background: Fire Code and Its Impact on Traffic Safety

California Fire Code is based in part on the International Fire Code (IFC), with California amendments. Local jurisdictions have the ability to amend the California Fire Code.

There are two sections of the International fire code which specify requirements for Fire Apparatus Access Roads, which determine how roads are designed and used:

1. Section 503 of the International Fire Code
2. Appendix D, which specifies additional requirements for access roads

However, the state of California has only adopted minimal portions of section 503, in Title 19, section 3.05. California does not adopt Appendix D but leaves it as an optional appendix. Many local jurisdictions amend California's fire code on access roads. Many jurisdictions adopt Appendix D. Additionally, local jurisdictions interpret these sections. These local decisions have led to wider roads and the frequent denial of traffic calming measures, with serious consequences for non-car road users.

## Key Deficiencies

1. 20 feet width: California Title 19, section 3.05 (as well as CA unadopted International code Section 503.2.1) mandates an access road width of 20 feet, which often leads to wider streets. However, wider roads are associated with faster traffic and increased risk of severe injuries and fatalities for pedestrians, cyclists, and people using wheelchairs.
2. International Fire Code Section 503.2.2 (not adopted by the state of California, but often used by local jurisdictions) allows fire officials to modify access widths. However, this is often used to require wider, rather than narrower, streets. This authority could instead be leveraged to reduce street widths for the purpose of traffic calming and improving pedestrian safety.
3. International Fire Code Section 503.4.1 (not adopted by the state of California) prohibits traffic calming devices unless approved by fire officials. This is counterproductive because traffic injuries and fatalities are far more common than fire-related injuries, and the presence of traffic calming devices can reduce overall emergency response needs by preventing collisions in the first place.
4. International Fire Code Appendix D (optional in the state of California, but adopted by many local jurisdictions) sets requirements for roads to be 26 feet wide near fire hydrants and taller buildings. Wider roads increase the likelihood of speeding, which disproportionately affects vulnerable road users such as children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

## Recommendations: Aligning the Fire Code with Traffic Safety Goals

To address these deficiencies and enhance safety for non-car road users while still maintaining fire safety standards, we propose the following concrete revisions to the California Fire Code:

## Limit the Width of Fire Apparatus Access Roads to Promote Traffic Calming (CA Title 19, Section 3.05, International Section 503.2.1)

### Current Problem

The requirement of a minimum 20-foot width for fire apparatus access roads often results in excessively wide streets, leading to increased vehicle speeds and more dangerous conditions for non-car road users. These wide streets discourage walking and cycling and undermine traffic safety measures designed to protect vulnerable road users.

### Proposed Revision

Amend CA Title 19, Section 3.05, International Section 503.2.1 to specify that narrower streets can be permitted if they enhance public safety, including the safety of non-car users. For example, streets in residential areas or school zones should be allowed to have narrower widths (e.g., 14–16 feet), provided that fire apparatus access is not hindered. This narrower width would still allow fire apparatus to respond effectively while reducing traffic speeds, thereby improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Street width shall include mountable curbs, pliable pylons and other traffic calming devices.

## Encourage the Use of Smaller, More Maneuverable Fire Vehicles (CA Title 19, 3.05, International Section 503.2.4 and 503.2.7)

### Current Problem

International Fire Code Section 503.2.4 and 503.2.7 (not adopted by California) specifies turning radius and grade for streets dependent upon fire vehicles. Though these sections are not adopted by the state of California, many local jurisdictions use their guidance to design streets around fire vehicles. The fire code places the burden on street design to accommodate large fire vehicles, which results in wider streets, larger turning radii, and the elimination of traffic-calming devices. This is problematic because it does not incentivize fire departments to adopt more maneuverable and efficient vehicles.

### Proposed Revision

The California Fire Code should choose fire vehicles based upon safe streets which are in cities. Amend CA Title 24 to encourage fire departments to procure smaller, more maneuverable vehicles that are better suited to urban environments with narrow, traffic-calmed streets. This



shift in vehicle procurement could reduce the need for excessively wide streets and promote safer road designs that protect non-car users. This recommendation aligns with public safety goals, as smaller, more agile fire apparatus can respond more effectively in densely populated areas while reducing the negative impact of large vehicle requirements on road design.

## Permit the Installation of Traffic Calming Devices

### Current Problem

International Fire Code Section 503.4.1 prohibits traffic calming devices unless approved by the fire code official. Though this section is not adopted by the state of California, many local jurisdictions are guided by this section. Traffic calming devices such as speed bumps, raised crosswalks, and road narrowing are essential tools for reducing traffic speeds and improving pedestrian and cyclist safety. However, International Section Code 503.4.1 prohibits these devices unless specifically approved by fire officials, who may prioritize access for fire vehicles over the benefits of traffic calming.

### Proposed Revision

Revise CA Title 24, to explicitly permit traffic calming devices, with the condition that they do not excessively hinder emergency response times. This revision would shift the default position from prohibiting these devices to allowing them unless there is a compelling reason to prohibit them. Studies have shown that the modest delays caused by traffic calming devices (typically seconds) are outweighed by the reduction in traffic injuries and fatalities. Fire departments can still retain the authority to deny traffic calming measures on a case-by-case basis but should consider the broader public safety benefits of these interventions.

## Modify Appendix D to Reduce Street Widths and Increase Safety near Fire Hydrants and Tall Buildings

### Current Problem

Appendix D, Fire Apparatus Access Roads, is not adopted by the state of California. However, Appendix D is an optional appendix which is adopted by many local jurisdictions. Since Appendix D is widely adopted throughout California, the State Fire Marshal should make amendments to this optional appendix to increase safety. Local jurisdictions maintain the ability to remove the state's amendments to Appendix D. However, it is better to start with code which increases traffic safety.

Appendix D mandates a 26-foot width for streets near fire hydrants and taller buildings, which creates an excessively wide road environment. These wider roads lead to faster vehicle speeds and increased danger for non-car users.

## Proposed Revision

Amend Appendix D to reduce the required street width near fire hydrants and tall buildings. For example, rather than a blanket requirement of 26 feet, consider allowing streets to be 20 feet wide in areas with slower speed limits, traffic-calming measures, and alternative firefighting strategies such as the use of sprinklers and smaller, more maneuverable fire vehicles.

Additionally, fire departments should collaborate with urban planners to explore innovative designs that allow fire access while preserving pedestrian and cyclist safety. Street width near tall buildings may include the width of pedestrian areas which are designed to allow a ladder truck to be deployed.

Also amend CA Title 24 so that street width near tall buildings may include the width of pedestrian areas which are designed to allow a ladder truck to be deployed.

## Incorporate Complete Streets and Vision Zero Principles into the Fire Code

### Current Problem

The fire code currently focuses on vehicle access, often at the expense of pedestrian and cyclist safety. This imbalance contributes to street designs that prioritize cars over people, resulting in a higher risk of traffic-related injuries and fatalities.

### Proposed Revision

Incorporate language into the fire code that aligns with Complete Streets and Vision Zero principles. This could include directives for fire marshals and urban planners to work together to ensure that streets are designed for all users, not just motor vehicles. For example, fire apparatus access roads should be designed to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists, and people with disabilities while maintaining sufficient emergency vehicle access. The fire code should also encourage fire officials to prioritize the reduction of traffic injuries and fatalities as a core public safety objective, equal to the goal of fire prevention and response. Street width near tall buildings may include the width of pedestrian areas which are designed to allow a ladder truck to be deployed.

Street width shall include mountable curbs, pliable pylons and other traffic calming devices.

# Conclusion: Aligning Fire Safety with Comprehensive Public Safety Goals

The California Fire Code plays a crucial role in public safety, but its current provisions related to access roads often create unintended consequences for non-car users. By amending the code to limit street widths, allow traffic calming devices, and encourage the use of smaller fire vehicles, we can create safer streets for all Californians. These changes will not compromise fire safety but will instead support a broader vision of public safety that includes protection from traffic violence. We urge you to consider these revisions and to work with transportation and urban planning experts to ensure that our fire code serves the needs of all road users.

Sincerely,

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