



City of
OAKLAND
California

Community Feedback:

OAK311

Dial 311 or 510-615-5566

OAK311@oaklandca.gov

311.oaklandca.gov

Free app for Apple and Android

Media Contact:

Sean Maher

Public Information Officer

smaher@oaklandca.gov

(510) 238-6358 desk

(510) 473-2610 cell

News from: **City of Oakland**
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 4, 2020

Slow Streets: Essential Places Expands to New East Oakland, West Oakland Locations
Four additional intersections in East and West Oakland will receive installations to create safer access to COVID-19 essential services, including grocery stores and food distribution sites

Oakland, CA – The City of Oakland announced today an additional four intersections to receive Slow Streets: Essential Places installations on Friday, June 5. The Essential Places effort was launched on May 22 and installs a mix of permanent and temporary traffic safety improvements to enable safer access for residents to the essential services in their neighborhood – including grocery stores, food distribution sites in public facilities, and COVID-19 test sites – intended to immediately reduce the risk of traffic crashes. In addition to traffic safety improvements, the program creates COVID-19 services public information hub using multi-lingual signs containing information about testing and health resources, housing and other services.

The four new Slow Streets: Essential Places treatments include:

- **San Pablo Ave & Myrtle St:** Intersection safety improvements at a crossing to Community Foods. Safety improvements will include cones for a bulb-out (for wider turns at corners), permanent two-sided pedestrian crossing signage in the median, and coning off a lane on San Pablo Avenue at the crosswalk using cones and signage. Closing a lane in this way has proven safety benefits to reducing collision threads; provides a visual signal to drivers to slow down; and addresses the excessive street capacity that encourages speeding.
- **Three Eastmont Mall Area Intersections (73rd Ave & Garfield Ave; Bancroft & Church St; Bancroft & 73rd Ave):** Improvements include deactivation of the pedestrian push buttons to reduce exposure to high touch surfaces, and ensure pedestrians who don't push the button have sufficient time to cross intersections. The Eastmont Mall provides critical essential services including food distribution at the Library and a grocery store.

The Essential Places initiative is an evolution of Slow Streets driven by community feedback and advocacy, especially from East Oakland residents and community groups. While the Oakland Slow Streets program overall continues to receive overwhelming support among community survey respondents, those responding to surveys are more likely to be white, have

high incomes and live in North Oakland. City staff are continuing dedicated efforts to engage directly with East Oakland community groups to adapt the program in response to the input those groups have provided.

Since the Oakland Slow Streets launch in early April, more than 20 miles of “soft closures” were installed to support physical activity, physical distancing, and traffic safety in response to COVID-19. The City is expanding the program and shifting its emphasis to the Safe Streets: Essential Places program, which promotes traffic safety and community awareness at COVID-19 testing sites, food distribution sites, and grocery stores located on major streets.

To provide additional input, community members may still complete the Oakland Slow Streets Program Feedback Form at <https://tinyurl.com/oaklandslowstreets>

Real-time results from this survey are at: <https://tinyurl.com/oaklandslowstreetssurveyresult>

What about Future Slow Streets Installations?

The City of Oakland may implement additional Slow Streets soft closures during Summer 2020, but those plans are limited as OakDOT shifts focus to traffic safety at Essential Places and planning for the future of existing Slow Streets. Reflecting this shift in focus, the interactive map on the Slow Streets web page will be locked to additional input at 5pm on Monday, June 8. Any potential installation of new Slow Streets would be the result of extensive community engagement in low income communities and communities of color. This equity-driven approach will focus on the gaps in the existing Slow Streets network in communities with limited access to parks and open space – including East Oakland, Chinatown, and other vulnerable neighborhoods and communities.

Oakland Slow Streets is intended to promote physical distancing of at least 6 feet by creating new low-traffic, low speed streets to allow residents to safely pass one another. Social gatherings on these streets are prohibited. The Alameda County Public Health Department recommends that residents wear face masks while in public. All users over 12 years old should wear or carry face masks and use them when within 6 feet of others, even when walking, jogging and bicycling. The City of Oakland will continue to monitor CDC guidance on outdoor recreation, transportation, and physical distancing, and will adjust this program as needed.

To provide general feedback about how this program can best serve your neighborhood, please contact OAK311 by dialing 311 or 510-615-5566, e-mailing OAK311@oaklandca.gov, going online to 311.oaklandca.gov, or using the free OAK311 mobile app for Apple and Android devices. You can also post on social media using the #OaklandSlowStreets hashtag.

For additional program information and the interactive location map,
please visit: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/oakland-slow-streets>

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