

July 18, 2011
Laney Bistro, Laney College Campus
900 Fallon Street, Oakland, CA 94607
5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

LAKE MERRITT STATION AREA PLAN
COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS GROUP (CSG) MEETING #9
Transportation

MEETING SUMMARY

Members of the Community Stakeholders Group (CSG) attended the meeting on July 18, 2011 at the Laney Bistro. The meeting included a presentation of transportation proposals and included some time for questions and feedback. CSG members will have until July 25th to provide additional comments for incorporation into the Emerging Plan.

Many of the proposals related to transportation were seen positively. Several of the street designs by Terry Bottomley were mentioned, as well as overall recommendations from Kimley Horn. However, the focus of the comments discussed what needs to be revised.

CSG DISCUSSION

Ed Manasse opened the meeting with an overview of the approach to the transportation proposals, noting that the end goal is a connected system and vibrant community. He also noted the importance of considering cost in prioritizing improvements.

Circulation Improvements

Peter Reinhofer of Kimley Horn presented an overview of existing conditions, feedback to date, and an overview of proposed improvements. Improvements outlined focus on pedestrian improvements and taking advantage of over capacity roadways for improvements to the public realm. The proposals are available for review in the meeting materials (available on the project website). CSG members offered several suggestions and comments to build on and enhance the proposals put forth. CSG comments included:

- Emphasis of the importance of *Revive Chinatown* and the need to incorporate the recommendations of that plan.
- Emphasis of the importance of improving the I-880 undercrossings, particularly with lighting and improving safety. Currently the I-880 undercrossings, especially at Madison, Jackson, and Oak – are lined with chain link fence – scary in itself, has affected value of land in area. Possible to fence off and put murals (Laney)? Would that add more security to area?
- Noted that right now the measure DD improvements don't connect to the Estuary – this is an opportunity to add connected Measure DD path to two parks at south end. Noted that this will be added to the map.
- Reiteration of the issue of conflict between through traffic and pedestrian traffic.
- Request to add Jack London District to the list of destinations in the feedback slide.
- Suggestion to consider 7th Street as a possible street for lane reduction and wider sidewalks, since right now the sidewalks are very narrow.

- Question as to whether there is talk of adding International Boulevard to the list of streets in coordination with Central City East plans.
- Discussion of one-way to two-way conversion:
 - Noted that when looking at issues in Chinatown found highway/tubes issue is a huge safety issue. The Revive Chinatown traffic study found one-way streets revolved people around and caused traffic which is the reason for changing one-way to two-way. Emphasize that there are other reasons to convert. Concerned because the scramble system is backing up traffic and people are more frustrated as they come through Chinatown.
 - Meetings to date have talked about two-way conversion – why is it not shown on 8th Street?
 - Noted that two-way conversion doesn't mean that it can't be a corridor.
- Question about how priorities were decided - there have been many meetings, getting feedback from people who use the area and also areas that want to increase commercial viability.
 - Noted that 8th and 9th are a major priority in order to connect Laney and BART and Chinatown and Broadway. These are places where people live and want to make walking places safe.
 - Some question as to why Oak Street is identified as a priority, since now it doesn't have as many people walking on it as 8th Street, but other members support that 14th and Oak streets are important.
- Pedestrian oriented street lighting is very important (noted also that the plan should be explicit that lighting is pedestrian – not auto – oriented) – various members identified lighting corridor priorities:
 - High priority streets for lighting include 8th Street, 9th Street, Alice Street around the Lincoln Rec area (lots of families and children)
 - Should be 8th, 9th, Underpasses (Oak, Madison, Jackson), Harrison, Webster
 - Recommend that add high priority for lighting design to undercrossings on Oak, Madison, and Jackson as priority – each could be dealt with differently – huge priority to deal with lighting; also Broadway.
- Gateway discussion:
 - Proposed gateway at Jackson and 9th – why? Not wide community support.
 - Suggested that rather than a gateway, the plan should look more at continuous markers.
 - Noted that 9th Street is a hard location to add a culturally specific gateway because adjacent to the Buddhist church; must be sensitive to other cultures; pan-Asian.
 - Noted that Seattle gateway has nice cobra-heads.
 - Laney would like a gateway.
- Suggestion to add cameras to certain streets to keep them safe.
- Additional information requested:
 - Request to add the lighting plan for measure DD proposed improvements.
 - Noted that for measure DD project not showing pedestrian paths – will be a network of paths; agreed that these will be added in future maps.
 - Request for a map of future traffic volumes (noted that currently this information is in excel).
 - Request for a more detailed breakdown of projected jobs (it was noted that this will be provided at a later date).

Streetscape Improvements

Terry Bottomley of Bottomley Design and Planning presented concepts for street designs for identified streets in the Planning Area. The proposals are available for review in the meeting materials (available on the project website). CSG members offered several suggestions and comments to build on and enhance the proposals put forth. CSG comments included:

- Comments on bike lanes:
 - Concern about bike lanes in Chinatown core.
 - Will an integrated plan for bicycles come out of this? Noted that the Plan will be integrated with the City of Oakland Bike Plan.
 - Noted that Chinatown community not involved in bike plan before adopted, learned about it when Revive Chinatown report prepared.
 - Regarding bike lanes on 8th and 9th: it seems to not be a good idea to have bike lanes in the Chinatown core based traffic in Chinatown.
 - Long term solution for tube in and out of Alameda and bike plan seem to be contradictory solutions
 - Not to be anti-bike, but need to re-consider whether 8th/9th are best options.
- Request for inclusion of remote parking and connecting remote parking (under freeway) with shuttles in the parking strategy. Added request to include shuttles into mix of connecting BART/Laney/Chintown
 - Important to look at shuttle service – the area is relatively transit rich but there are transit shortfalls. Can we connect Broadway shuttle to come through Chinatown to BART and Laney?
- Comments on double parking, loading, and congestion in the Chinatown core:
 - Noted that the issue of double parking and trucks needs to be further addressed, that there haven't been any clear solutions to date, and that it is a major factor for traffic circulation in Chinatown. The importance of deliveries for small businesses was emphasized.
 - Members expressed that no travel lanes should be removed within the Chinatown core (particularly on 8th Street), given the congestion, double parking, and truck unloading.
 - Noted that in addition to truck deliveries and double parking, a lot of traffic is circling for parking. A new parking management plan could be a solution to part of traffic in planning area. Also look at how to get people to park somewhere or take transit. Note that while parking is a source of revenue for the City, the City is trying to make parking policy based on transportation needs not revenue
 - Noted that double parking and truck loading is a cultural thing, and that double parking will continue at some level regardless of plan policies and regulations.
 - Question if it possible to have lanes wide enough to skirt around double parked cars?
 - Need to develop some more specific loading strategies
- Suggestion that the plan look more at shifting patterns/redirecting/changing traffic volumes rather than focusing on making improvements based on traffic capacity; as we begin to plan for area hope that it will be possible to rebalance traffic so that traffic from busy streets moves to other streets that have more capacity. For instance to consider pushing arteries to the margins so they don't go through Chinatown.
- Comments on one-way versus two-way streets:
 - Support converting 10th to two-way since it is already two-way at the eastern end.

- Noted that if Franklin Street was two way it would draw some traffic off Webster (part of Revive Chinatown).
- Noted that conversion of one-way streets to two way currently focused on less traveled streets whereas CSG expressed desire for bigger changes on high volume streets – for instance to look at conversion to two-way. The community wants to see change in traffic patterns – if convert to two-way how would it impact other streets?
 - Terry noted that streets recommended for conversion have less traffic, so would have less impact than other streets. In general, when there is a change in traffic flow on one street, it impacts other streets. We can model to guess where, but it can be hard to tell. Conversion will have to be studied - traffic will have to go elsewhere.
- Suggestion that if both 7th and 8th streets were converted to two-way it could keep people from making the turn to get into Chinatown and traffic from the Posey tube could turn on 7th rather than 8th.
- Focus on trying to divert traffic out of Chinatown
- Suggested to review revive Chinatown to see what streets to prioritize.
- Suggested to prioritize Franklin and Webster – if both two-way could shift traffic off of Franklin onto Webster.
- Noted that the transportation strategy needs to look at a larger area than study area since changes will affect a broader area, including neighboring areas such as Old Oakland, Jack London District, and East Lake.
- Comments specific to 7th Street (related to Laney College)
 - Revisit 7th and the fact that 7th street as an artery has detrimental impacts on Laney college and students
 - Nice to know specifics of Broadway/Jackson Interchange and if it could demote 7th Street to a collector or would still be arterial route (also would be nice to know why demotes from arterial to collector)
 - East 7th: Laney would like to get rid of 7th and look at alternative ways of redirecting traffic, for instance is there an amazing elevated viaduct that can be created?
 - If closing 7th is off the table, then want additional crosswalks. However, ideal locations modified from proposal. Doesn't need to be a crossing at the Channel. Like an additional crossing between existing crosswalk and street (before bend). Adding more crossings will slow traffic, which is something Laney also wants. Also possibly add crosswalk from district to athletic complex.
 - noted that there may be other need for the Channel crossing, as the fence is torn down at channel, and even the under-bridge paths wouldn't necessarily reduce need for a crossing there.
 - Bike lane issue is interesting – permanent bike lane throws dream of closing street out of window
 - Interesting idea to widen median – question as to whether that would prohibit semi-trucks. Staff answered that it would not, but that another programmatic effort could stop them from doing that.
- Comments on Fallon Street proposal:
 - Plan for converting Fallon into pedestrian plaza not necessarily compatible for transit services – buses don't want to share with pedestrian plaza
 - AC Transit suggests looking at putting bus lane instead on Oak between 8th and 10th and remove service from Fallon
- Priorities

- Request that costs include a number for just lighting improvements – Terry noted that it would be around \$10,000 – 18,000 per light.
- Transit improvements not on the list
 - Hardscape improvements for transit, such as bus-bulbs, etc.
 - 100s of people get ticketed every week because no kiss and ride
 - Bus bulbs should always be at far intersection so at far end of block
- Global question: be sure to consider two-way conversions etc. affects on surface transit, or even on nearby streets.
- General comment:
 - Can you design area based on best wish list or are you only going to look at the highest priority and not even address the lower priority improvements?
 - Staff: a variety of funding options will be explored as part of this Plan.
 - Need funding strategy for improvements
 - Once have a specific plan can apply as an MTC Priority Development Area for more grant opportunities; however, those grants mostly fund transportation-related improvements and if those decisions conflict with MTC/ACTA then they can deny funding to the City of Oakland
 - Rather than priorities on street by street – how about in order of street improvements?
 - When thinking about priorities consider how the priorities interact as a network. Also consider that street spaces are limited – right of way is fixed - so all improvements are tradeoffs within that space.