

Oakland BPAC 9/20/12

Attendees:

Ann Killebrew, Carol Levine, Chris Hwang, Chris Kidd, Dave Campbell, Jason Patton, Jennifer Stanley, Liza Pratt, Midori Tabata, Robert Prinz, Ryan Chan, Tom Willging, Ade Oluwasogo, Wladimir Wlassowsky, Dan Tischler

Minutes:

A motion was made to approve minutes from both the July and August BPAC meetings. That motion was approved.

Shattuck Avenue at 52nd Street

Wladimir Wlassowsky and Ade Oluwasogo from Public Works gave a presentation on a re-striping project for the intersection of Shattuck Avenue at 52nd Street.

A new striping plan had been applied for southbound traffic on Shattuck Avenue, creating a left/through travel lane and a right/through travel lane. On the southern side of the intersection, these two travel lanes merged back to one lane.

This striping plan has created conflicts with bicyclists, not only with southbound drivers turning right at the intersection, but also with southbound drivers past the intersection where the two lanes merge.

Public Works proposes a new striping plan that would make the right lane on Shattuck Avenue a Right-Turn-Only lane, with a bike lane between that lane and the left/through lane. The merge on the southern side of the intersection would be removed. This would place bicyclists to the left of right-turning drivers and remove the conflict in the merge area.

The bike lane would exist only for the southbound approach to the intersection. When Shattuck Avenue is repaved and striped with bike lanes in 2013, it would connect to this small bike lane piece.

Comments:

Dave Campbell expressed a desire to return the intersection to its original configuration, with one lane of travel in each direction and no dedicated turning lanes. This would resolve the "pinch point" experienced by northbound bicyclists when they cross the intersection.

Dave asked for the Right-of-Way for the street, which was given as 46 feet. The dedicated right-turn lane is 12 feet, the bike lane is 5 feet, the through/left lane is 11 feet, and the northbound travel lane & parking lane are a combined 18 feet.

Dave asked that either the original configuration be brought back or parking removed to resolve the "pinch point" issue for northbound bicyclists. Staff noted that removing street parking on the north side of the intersection would be controversial with the residents of the adjacent apartment buildings.

Dave asked that the City, in the future, be mindful of similar "pinch points" being created when a left-turn pocket is added to an intersection that has insufficient road width to accommodate both bicyclists and drivers side-by-side.

The attendees were generally positive about removing the merge on the southern side of the intersection, and asked for staff to study shifting the street's center line to create more room for a northbound travel lane that could accommodate both bicyclists and drivers.

Attendees asked about how the future bike lanes would transition into the planned bike lane, left of the dedicated right-turn lane. Attendees asked that the merging area for drivers moving over to the right-turn lane be highlighted with dashed lines, green paints, or other features. Staff responded that they preferred not to provide dashed striping when a bike lane moves diagonally across a roadway to position left of a right-turn lane, reasoning that bicyclists would be less likely to shoulder-check for overtaking traffic behind them if dashed lines were provided. Staff prefers dashed lines only when the bike lane keeps its position and right-turn pocket opens to the right of the straight bike lane.

Staff was open to providing yield signage where the bike lane merged, and expressed a willingness to examine the appropriateness of green-backed sharrows.

Attendees asked staff whether it might be better to remove the bike lane from the proposed draft altogether to mitigate the “pinch point” for northbound bicyclists. Staff responded that the right-turn movements from southbound drivers presented the largest safety challenge, and thus wanted to retain the bike lanes. Staff also believed a pinch would take place for northbound bicyclists regardless of whether the southbound bike lane existed or not.

Attendees asked staff to reduce the width of the right-turn lane in order to increase the size of the bike lane. Staff responded that they had already reduced the turn lane to 12 feet – from the city standard of 14 feet.

Bike Master Plan Reaffirmation

Staff provided information on the reaffirmation of the city's bicycle master plan, which goes to City Council in December

A Bicycle Master Plan must be either created, or reaffirmed, every 5 years in order for a city to maintain eligibility for the Caltrans Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA). Oakland adopted a Bicycle Master Plan in 2007, and needs to reaffirm the plan before the end of the year to retain BTA eligibility. Staff had planned to bring the Bicycle Master Plan to City Council earlier this year for reaffirmation, but instead decided to prepare a report to accompany the reaffirmation, outlining staff's priorities for future bike plan implementation.

Staff feels that it is appropriate to reaffirm the existing bike plan rather than create a new one because it allows staff to take advantage of on-street opportunities rather than re-draft a new plan.

Staff is asking for comments on this report before the end of the month in order for those comments to be fully incorporated before submittal to City Council.

The staff report is meant to outline 5 goals/priorities for the future.

1. Maintain BTA eligibility
2. Put road diet projects in front of City Council as priority projects (road diets, by city ordinance, require City Council approval to move forward). This also includes adjusting the priorities of the bike plan, which values gap closure. As the bike network is filled out, different potential projects gain importance in their ability to close gaps to newly installed facilities.
3. Identify publicly, and communicate to council, the barriers that currently exist to the successful implementation of the bike plan.
4. Prepare the City for its next Bicycle Friendly Communities application – staff wants the City to aim for Silver certification (Oakland currently is Bronze).

Staff also hopes to update their priority projects and bundle together potential road-diet projects for study and SEIR purposes. The key road-diet projects identified by the City are:

1. 14th Street – Brush to Oak
2. East 12th Street - 40th Ave to 44th Ave
3. Foothill Boulevard - 14th Ave to 23rd Ave
4. West MacArthur Boulevard – Telegraph Ave to MLK Jr Blvd
5. Park Boulevard – E 18th Street to Excelsior Ave
6. Telegraph Avenue – Aileen to 20th St

Staff is hoping to reaffirm the bike plan until at least 2015-2016, when they would begin the process of developing a new bike plan – staff mentioned that some “ACTC issues” would determine when a new bike plan process was undertaken.

Staff said that they would adjust their planning for priority projects depending upon the signing or veto of AB 2245 – a bill that would provide CEQA exemption to bike lane projects. Staff said that, if AB

2245 passes, traffic studies for bike lanes would not be required to look at 30 year traffic volume projections, though they might look at them for reference purposes.

Staff listed certain existing barriers to bike plan implementation:

1. CEQA/LOS forecasting requirements
2. Pavement quality on designated bikeways
3. Limitations of providing adequate bike parking on the sidewalk and conflicts with removing car parking for on-street bicycle parking
4. Creating a city-led procedure for introducing and implementing traffic calming on bicycle boulevards – traffic calming is currently complaint-driven.
5. Increasing education and enforcement elements in creating a more bike-friendly city

Staff wants to enlist the public's help in a campaign for a Silver Bicycle Friendly City designation. Attendees suggested getting bike shops and bike clubs involved in getting the word out. There was enthusiasm for a BPAC work session on creating a strong campaign.

Pavement Report

Midori and Carol gave a synopsis of their notes from a Public Works meeting on pavement quality and repair (document attached).

The City has \$6 million each year to spend on pavement repair, the average yearly need is \$28 million, meaning the City is falling further behind each year. The City is on an 85 year pavement schedule to replace pavement on each street; cities typically should have a 30 year repavement cycle. 80% of the paving funds goes to upkeep of existing streets, 20% goes to whole-sale reconstruction. City Council can direct where and when streets get repaved.

The City has a 1200 pothole backlog, and asks citizens to use the SeeClickFix app to report potholes, as it gives them a specific GPS location for the pothole.

The City is experimenting with "spot repairs", major repavings, and paving only travel lanes while leaving parking lanes in their current condition.

14th Street Plans

Staff asked for attendee direction on which configurations to study for bike infrastructure on 14th Street. The project extends from West Oakland to Lake Merritt, through downtown. The extents are from Brush in the west to Oak in the east. The segment is approximately one mile long. The facility would connect to existing bike lanes on 14th Street in West Oakland. 14th Street has a highly variable width in this segment, with street parking permitted for most of its length. A 54 foot right-of-way is the predominant width, mostly in the eastern half of the segment. AC Transit is considering consolidation of lines that would move all bus traffic off of 14th Street.

6 options were presented to attendees, 2 keeping the current configuration, 2 with a 4-to-3 road diet, and 2 with a 4-to-2 road diet. The options included sharrows, green-lane sharrows, bike lanes, and buffered bike lanes.

1-A – 4 lanes of travel with sharrows

2-A – 4 lanes of travel with green-lane sharrows

1-B – 2 wide lanes of travel, a center turn lane, and sharrows

2-B – 2 narrow lanes of travel, a center turn lane, and narrow bike lanes

3-A – 2 wide lanes of travel and wide bike lanes

3-B 2 wide lanes of travel and buffered bike lanes

The City bike plan calls for option 2-A on 14th Street, but that is a model that staff now prefers not to use, considering them an ineffective facility. Attendees were least enamored of 2-A and 2-B.

Staff were reticent to support 3-A or 3-B, as they are considered to be very politically difficult to achieve. Staff voiced their preference for option 1-B.

Staff and some attendees were concerned about the conflicts a 4-to-2 road diet would create for left-turning vehicles, especially since many cross streets are one-way. Some attendees worried about conflicts created between bicyclists and turning drivers in such a 4-to-2 configuration. Other attendees were very supportive of a 4-to-2 conversion, and wanted staff to study the possibility of inserting left-turn pockets by removing street parking in select locations. Some attendees characterized this approach as a "2-3 hybrid".

Staff noted that removing parking would also require the replacement of the extraordinarily wide gutter pans on 14th Street, which would add considerable cost to the project.

Attendees considered 14th Street to be one of the most important bikeway connections in the City, and asked that all options be looked at for robust bicycle infrastructure.

Carol asked for staff to look at implementing STOP signs at all intersections on 14th Street to allow easier turning movements by vehicles in a 4-to-2 road diet.

Staff expressed concerns about dedicating time to a roadway configuration that may not gain approval if they can dedicate time to other projects with a higher chance of success.

Staff said they would be willing to conduct initial traffic studies on the current-day impacts of a 4-to-2 road diet.

Staff asked that more feedback be provided on preferred alignments for study.

Attachments

Shattuck Ave/52nd St draft striping plan

Bicycle Master Plan draft staff report excerpt

PWA Streets Fact Sheet