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Submitted via:

<https://comment-tracker.esassoc.com/oaklandsportseir/index.html#/19/welcome>

March 30, 2021

Peterson Vollmann  
Planner IV, City of Oakland Bureau of Planning  
250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 2214  
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Comments on Oakland Waterfront Ballpark District Project

Dear Mr. Vollman:

Bike East Bay has reviewed the DEIR for the Oakland Waterfront Ballpark District Project and is generally supportive of the project and its goal of building a major league baseball ballpark in the downtown area, well-accessed by walking, bicycling and transit. The Coliseum location of the current stadium has never been easy to bicycle to and its sole BART station is far too small to handle large crowds. In addition, the current site never has never developed into a vibrant entertainment area, nor has it fostered a successful local game-day economy to support nearby residents. We feel the proposed new ballpark can do all these things.

#### **General Comments**

From a high level perspective, the transportation improvements of this Project are a net loss of bikeways to residents of Oakland as compared to the bikeways in approved plans and under development with separate projects. Our goal for the new ballpark is for there to be safe, low-stress bikeways to access the ballpark from all directions and our main concerns are the lack of such high quality bikeways in this plan. We like the proposed new bikeways on 7th Street and MLK Jr. Way south of 8th Street to the ballpark, which will connect West Oakland to the ballpark area. However, the proposed bikeways from Downtown Oakland to the ballpark and from Lake Merritt BART to the ballpark fall short of what a project of this magnitude and importance should achieve.

There are obviously many pedestrian improvements in this plan and we support all of them, including the many new sidewalks, wider sidewalks, pedestrian bridge and upgraded crosswalks and bulb outs. Similarly, the transit improvements are all good and we like the Transportation Hub on 2nd Street, but we have concerns about who will pay for the new transit services needed to get people to and from the ballpark. The DEIR leaves that to future discussions, but there needs to be a real plan to fund and ramp up transit services for game day crowds.

We also are fans of the smart parking management program and know this program will improve bicycle and pedestrian safety by more efficiently directing drivers to available parking spaces and reduce cars circling and looking a spot. We support expanding this program so that Athletics fans can purchase a parking ticket at the same time they purchase their game tickets.

Much of the success of the transportation plan for this project will depend on the Transportation Management Plan (TMP) and its ongoing implementation. Bike East Bay requests there be a seat on the operational oversight group of the TMP for someone representing the interests of people bicycling in the area. The TMP clearly prioritizes bicycling as a goal of the plan and for this reason should have representation from people who bicycle.

### **Comments related to bicycling**

This major project and its transportation plan should include high-quality, low stress separated bikeways from all directions and it lacks such bikeways from Downtown Oakland and from the Lake Merritt BART Station (and from points southeast). Buffered bike lanes on busy streets, and especially streets before and after ballgames, are not low-stress bikeways, and the door-zone white stripe on 2nd Street is no bikeway at all.

- From West Oakland: we support the new bike lanes on 7th Street in West Oakland, although we note that this project only commits to the buffered bike lane design for these bikeways, not the protected bike lanes called for in the Oakland Bicycle Plan. Thankfully Oakland has received a state grant to upgrade these bike lanes to needed protected bike lanes.
- From Downtown Oakland: there are three potential options here, according to the Oakland Bicycle Plan and Downtown Specific Plan: 1) Franklin St/Broadway, 2) Clay/Washington and 3) MLK Jr. Way. All three of these bikeways connect at their north end to a planned east-west bikeway on 14th Street. Whichever of these three potential bikeway connections is built to support ballpark access, the bike lanes should be separated and protected and connect to 14th Street, which obviously is the needed access point to and from 12th St/City Center BART Station. Fig 4.15-42 in the DEIR shows projected bike trip generation to the ballpark with TMP, and shows twice as many people bicycling from downtown to the ballpark as compared to from West Oakland. We agree with this projection and request that bikeways from Downtown Oakland be upgraded from the plan's buffered lanes to protected, the whole way.

- The reason given in the City's bike plan for proposing buffered bike lanes on MLK Jr. Way above 8th Street is the number of driveways along the street. However, most of these driveways are not utilized and are gated/fenced closed, and thus do not function as driveways. As such, they do not create sight line issues nor any need to remove parking for safety. There are many other streets in Oakland planned for protected bike lanes with similar driveways.
- For the Clay/Washington bikeway option, the DEIR does not even include a complete bikeway toward downtown due to 8th Street being one-way, but we assume this is an oversight or typo. Either way, existing and planned bikeways on Clay/Washington are not adequate for game day bike access, particularly the narrow door zone bike lanes on Washington Street. In addition, on game days, Washington Street is planned for significantly increased pedestrian activity and may even be closed off to cars, which is great. But as such, Washington Street should be an auxiliary bikeway to the ballpark, particularly for people bicycling to get something to eat or drink along Washington Street before or after a game. Finally, Oakland Police sometimes close off Washington Street due to safety concerns and as long as OPD has this authority, Washington Street cannot be a bikeway priority to the ballpark.
- For Franklin/Broadway, efforts were (are) underway to plan bikeways on Franklin, but this project's proposal to stripe bus only lanes on Broadway with no bike lanes precludes this as a planned bike option to the ballpark. We support the bus only lanes on Broadway but do not support removal of Broadway as a planned bikeway. Jack London District has been supportive of bike lanes on Broadway and there have been many discussions about improving Broadway for bicycling in the JLD area that this DEIR does not acknowledge. Either way, on any road where people are allowed to bicycle and there is a side-running bus only lane, such as Broadway, people are going to bicycle in the BRT lane and that is exactly where Bike East Bay is going to tell them to bicycle. Bicycling along the right side of the road is the most intuitive place to ride and it is the safest, from our perspective. For this reason, anytime Oakland plans a side-running BRT lane, they should include protected bike lanes or they should plan on bikes in the BRT lane. On Broadway in the JLD, there is room for both, BRT lanes and protected bike lanes as planned for as part of many planning efforts.
- From Lake Merritt BART and points from the southeast, 3rd Street is the best street for planned protected bike lanes because of its width and direct connectivity. Both the Oakland Bicycle Plan and the Downtown Specific Plan identify protected bike lanes on 3rd Street, as has the Oakland Alameda Access Project. In addition, we have met with the Athletics, from the start of this planning process, and they initially agreed and took it on to begin the discussion of 3rd Street as the planned high-quality east-west bikeway in the JLD to the ballpark. We know the bike plan defers to this project for any bikeway modifications, but it does so for game-day reasons, not for reasons unrelated to ballpark access. The two reasons we have heard to select 2nd Street over

3rd Street are the Produce Market and the Port of Oakland's over-sized truck route on 3rd Street. Neither of these reasons has to do with game-day access and both are illogical. 2nd Street has more produce market issues than 3rd Street and is planned for a transportation hub and a potential TNC zone, which will preclude bike access during increased activity. West of Market Street, this plan does recognize existing buffered bike lanes on 3rd Street where over-sized Port trucks use the street. The issues are the same east of Market Street as they are west of Market. We believe that design issues can be worked out with the Produce Market and the Port of Oakland to make 3rd Street the best option all the way to Oak Street, where planned protected bike lanes are in the works. Either way, it is not this DEIR's responsibility to redo approved bikeways for reasons unrelated to the EIR. In addition, we met with the Port of Oakland and OakDOT to have these discussions in 2019 about 3rd Street, given the concerns, and agreed then that we were going to actually take a look at truck turning issues on 3rd Street before making any decisions, but there has been no followup on that to date. Let's start that followup and in the meantime, 3rd Street is the preferred protected bikeway.

- We support the protected bike lanes on MLK Jr. Way south of 8th Street, but ask for a couple of improvements. One, the intersections of MLK Jr. Way and 7th Street (and 8th Street) need to be protected intersections given the increased bike traffic this intersection will attract with 7th/MLK Jr. Way being a primary bikeway access to the ballpark from West Oakland. Two, down at the project site, the two-way cycle track onto the property of the project needs to be much wider than proposed, particularly as the cycle track makes a turn to the west. We understand why the roadway was widened and the bikeway constrained at this turn due to fire truck and delivery truck access, but the design here should be first for a wide cycle track that is mountable by fire trucks, not a wide roadway for fire trucks that leaves minimal width for bicycling.

As we previously stated, this Project creates a net loss of bikeways to residents of Oakland as compared to the bikeways in approved plans and under development with separate projects. The plan proposes approved bikeways on 7th Street, MLK Jr Way and one block of Washington, but the project proposes to downgrade or eliminate other bikeways in approved plans and projects. There appears to be only two additional new bikeway improvements proposed by the project over and above bikeways in approved plans--a 3 block cycle track on Embarcadero and the bike-ped bridge at Jefferson Street over the RR tracks. The list of lost or downgraded bike lanes includes: Market Street from protected to buffered, Adeline Street eliminated south of 7th St, Broadway eliminated in JLD, 2nd Street at the Transportation Hub during game day, and 3rd Street not upgraded to protected bike lanes. This is a net loss of bike access from what Oakland residents have been expecting to date. Because of this net loss of expected bikeways, we don't support a limited set of bike improvements but rather have two additional asks of the Project: 1) require the pedestrian bridge over the RR tracks to be designed to potentially join with a planned bike-ped bridge over the Oakland Estuary, should the later bridge prove feasible after its current Project Initiation Document concludes in a

year, and 2) require A's to host and promote a Bike to the Ballpark Day, once a year, at a home date in May.

We support the planned 500-1,000 space bike/scooter parking at the ballpark and the cycle track along the interior roadway of the ballpark. The other interior roads should also have bike lanes at build out given the intense development planned.

Over and above what is planned for bike improvements, we know that flexibility and responsiveness will be needed and we support that. For these reasons, we request a seat on the operational oversight group of TMP and ask that this plan have a short list of priority bikeway improvements to be implemented post opening of the ballpark if needed should street conditions be different than forecast. Streets that should be on this short list are 3rd Street, Broadway, MLK Jr. Way and 14th Street. This is important because of the annual TMP surveys to be conducted. If from these attendee surveys, it is learned that more people are needed to bicycle to the ballpark to meet VMT reduction goals, and from the results of the survey we learn that improved bikeways are needed for more fans to bicycle to the ballpark, what exactly would happen next? There needs to be a Plan B for additional bikeway improvements to consider in order to meet VMT goals.

In Fig 4.15-1, Motor Vehicle Influence Area, why are there no intersections east of Broadway studied? In particular, bike travel on Oak Street, and 3rd Street will be impacted by ballpark traffic. Where are these impacts studied? They need to be studied since the DEIR states that the majority of traffic will be coming from these directions.

In Fig 4.15-3, Bicycle Influence Area, the extent of bicycle travel to and from the ballpark (including scooters) needs to extend to the three most adjacent BART Stations: West Oakland, 12th Street/City Center and Lake Merritt, as does Fig 4.15-4, the Pedestrian Influence Area.

Local Roadway Access needs to include Oak Street, 3rd Street and other nearby planned bikeways. There are major NB exits from 880 and SB entrances to 880 in this area and added traffic is going to affect active transportation modes to and from the ballpark. The Alameda County Congestion Management Program requires the Project to study impacts to all modes of travel, including bicycle trips.

#### **Other comments and concerns**

1. We do not support 8,900 new parking spaces at build out of both phases of the Project. 1 parking space/new residential unit is way too high. There is no need for such a large quantity of parking when there is a nearby transportation hub and three nearby BART stations, a ferry station and BRT. Oakland a few years ago lowered their off-street parking requirements in the downtown area. This Project should do better still.

2. We are concerned that there are no/insufficient underpass improvements of 880. More information and details to understand how existing underpasses will be improved for safety and to encourage more people to take BART to games and walk to the ballpark.
3. In analyzing Coliseum site traffic, for comparison VMT purposes, the analysis should use 2018 data, not 2017. The Athletics were 97-65 in 2018 and saw significant attendance increase over 2017 when the A's were 75-87 and in last place. We know with lower attendance a higher percentage of people drive because parking at the stadium becomes more convenient, and vice versa. A well-attended season at the Coliseum should be the baseline for VMT analysis of the new ballpark;
4. How will the queue cutter loop signals function on Market Street at 3rd Street? Will they affect bicycling on either Market Street or 3rd Street? How will the proposed left turn lane on Market Street at 3rd Street effect bicycle circulation? This is not clear in the DEIR.
5. Proposed pedestrian and bicycle access on Washington Street (and potentially other streets) needs to address Oakland Police Headquarters blocking off and closing streets at their discretion, as happened in 2020. We propose giving OakDOT all authority over street closure permits, not just review and input.

Thank you for considering our input and please let us know if you would like to discuss any of our ideas or concerns.

Sincerely,



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