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SFCTA Agenda Item 10 - Prop K Exchange Funds: Southbound I-280 Ocean Ave Off-Ramp Realignment Project

2 messages

'Christopher Pederson' via Clerk <clerk@sfcta.org>

Sun, Jun 6, 2021 at 2:41 PM

Reply-To: Christopher Pederson <chpederson@yahoo.com>

To: Supervisor Rafael Mandelman <MandelmanStaff@sfgov.org>, "Peskin, Aaron (BOS)" <Aaron.Peskin@sfgov.org>, chanstaff@sfgov.org, Gordon.Mar@sfgov.org, dean.preston@sfgov.org, Matt.Haney@sfgov.org, "MelgarStaff (BOS)" <MelgarStaff@sfgov.org>, Hillary Ronen <Hillary.Ronen@sfgov.org>, Shamann Walton <Shamann.Walton@sfgov.org>, Ahsha.Safai@sfgov.org

Cc: Transportation Authority <clerk@sfcta.org>, Janice Li <janice@sfbike.org>

Dear Chair Mandelman and Commissioners:

Where the southbound I-280 exit lane merges onto Ocean Avenue is the site of a vehicular manslaughter waiting to happen. Pedestrians may at least ask for permission to cross the exit lane by pushing the recently installed beg buttons for flashing yellow lights. Bicyclists pedaling uphill on westbound Ocean Avenue - usually into a headwind - are left to fend for themselves as they navigate among vehicles exiting the interstate in freeway driving mode.

The proposal to reconstruct the exit lane and install traffic signals at a new intersection is a stereotypical San Francisco transportation project. It's advertised as doing something good for pedestrians and bicyclists, has taken years of outreach and planning, will cost millions of dollars, and has an uncertain date for completion. All the while, the risk of somebody - or somebodies - dying there mounts.

At a community meeting I asked about installing a stop sign there, at least as an interim measure. The response was that Caltrans rules prohibit installing stop signs on highway exit ramps. An SFCTA employee later provided me with a copy of the Caltrans directive that purportedly bans stop signs, but that directive does no such thing. It instead addresses the safety hazards that creating "free right turns" can create, i.e., the very situation that currently exists. I received no response to my follow-up question about whether Caltrans had considered and rejected the possibility of installing a stop sign.

The proposed new intersection may be an acceptable long-term solution if coupled with bicycle lane improvements that are currently under consideration, but SFCTA staff will not even hazard a guess at when that process will be complete. Installing a new traffic signal on Ocean Avenue, however, also has the potential to create even more delays and unpredictability for the KT-Ingleside/Third Street (currently serving Districts 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10), the 29-Sunset (serving Districts 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, and 11), and the 49-Van Ness (serving Districts 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 11).

To address the current safety hazards and potential future transit delays and unreliability, the Board should:

1. direct staff to give serious and expedited consideration to installing a stop sign at the end of the exit ramp from southbound I-280 onto Ocean Avenue, and
2. condition the funding for this project on the inclusion of transit-priority signals that avoid delays to transit under real-world conditions.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Christopher Pederson
District 7 resident
