



Montclair Safety and Improvement Council (MSIC)

A Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC)

Public Meeting Minutes

Thursday September 4, 2014 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Montclair Presbyterian Church, 5701 Thornhill Drive, Oakland California

www.montclairsic.org

The meeting was chaired by Jill Broadhurst and was attended by approximately 40 people.

MSIC Steering Committee members attending:

Jill Broadhurst, Chair
Jim Clardy, Treasurer
Peggy Esposito
Doug Mosher
Sandra Pohutsky
Michael Tigges

Steering Committee members unable to attend:

Barry Klezmer
Nancy Havassy
Josh Shaw

WELCOME

Notes from the meeting of Montclair Safety and Improvement Council public meeting on Thursday September 4, 2014, held at Montclair Presbyterian Church from 7 pm to 9 pm.

The Montclair Safety and Improvement Council (MSIC) is the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) for Oakland Police Beat 13Z and focuses on crime prevention, safety and Montclair improvements for residents.

Pedestrian and traffic safety around all schools in the area of Moraga Avenue/Mountain Blvd was the main subject. The schools include Thornhill Elementary, Montclair Elementary and five nursery schools. There are frequent complaints about speeding and hazardous driving in these narrow roads which have insufficient or no sidewalks for children and other pedestrians.

MSIC chair Jill Broadhurst said that a walking audit of the Thornhill/Fernwood/Moraga area was conducted in 2013 by Nora Cody, Joe Wang, Montclair Elementary School Principal Nancy Bloom and Jill Broadhurst and that some safety improvements are in the works.

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Alameda County Program Director Nora Cody, a traffic calming specialist, was one of the auditors. She remarked on drivers at the intersections of Mountain/Thornhill, on their way to Highway 13, whipping around corners and running red lights. The bus stop at the corner, used extensively by students, was relocated to a slightly safer location on Mountain Blvd. Ms. Cody noted the lack of sidewalks at the intersections and the fact that some old asphalt sidewalks lacked drainage and were thus damaged.

Ms. Cody listed a few of the safety recommendations for Montclair Safe Routes to School, including restriping of roads and improved signage. Montclair was one of 32 proposals for grants from the State of California, Caltrans, and Active Transportation Program. Only 4 were approved; ours was not and is being resubmitted for consideration in October.

CITY OF OAKLAND TRAFFIC ENGINEERING

Joe Wang leads a group of eight traffic engineers. Each year his department receives between 1,300 and 1,500 citizens complaints regarding traffic safety. His department used to respond to 80% to 90% of safety requests but can no longer do it. A meeting attendee asked about "hot spots." A hot spot is an especially dangerous location at which several accidents have happened, or it may be a potentially dangerous spot for which numerous citizens complaints have been filed. His department must prioritize the sites according to safety and almost all resources are spent on hot spots. Category 2 requests are not being handled.

He reported that the City had no money between 2009 and 2013 to make any improvements in the streets but now some money is available. Mr. Wang was one of the Safe Routes to School auditors and has requested \$660,000 from the City of Oakland to make the school corridor in Montclair safer. Already accomplished: a crosswalk at Colton and Mountain at the foot of the Colton stairs.

Attendees discussed the importance of citizens reporting dangerous locations to City of Oakland Public Works Department. To do so, make specific reports, including addresses, to:

- Call [\(510\) 615-5566](tel:5106155566)
- Email opwcallcenter@oaklandnet.com
- Online at [Report a Problem](#)
- Mobile or web app at [SeeClickFix](#) (not for Windows users)

A high volume of reports on a dangerous situation is more likely to elicit a response. Do not assume that the city is aware of any problems.

Mr. Wang encouraged us to work with our neighbors on safety issues; residents are often the reckless drivers.

SAFETY REQUESTS FROM MEETING ATTENDEES

Residents living on Grisborne Avenue, which circles behind Montclair Presbyterian Church, requested that the speed limit on the narrow street be lowered to 15 mph because parents dropping their children off at Thornhill Elementary and other schools along Thornhill are speeding and rushing, especially in the mornings. They also requested speed bumps.

A general discussion of speed bumps ensued, with Mr. Wang announcing that Oakland will again permit speed bumps in certain circumstances. A speed bump costs \$6,000. No bumps are allowed on steep hills or fire truck routes. A bump can only be installed on a sustained flat portion of a road if 2/3 of the neighbors sign a petition requesting it. Some neighbors object to the noise created by traffic over a bump. There is a waiting list.

Pastor Ben Daniel, Montclair Presbyterian Church, noted that there are three preschools on Thornhill, in addition to Thornhill Elementary and nearby Montclair Elementary. He requested that better crosswalks be installed, that the school zone be extended to include the preschools and that the speed limit be enforced at 25 mph when school is in session. Pastor Daniel expressed his appreciation that Traffic Engineer Joe Wang came to the meeting to hear our remarks.

The owner of Thornhill Cleaners noted that parked cars obscure the view of oncoming traffic on Thornhill.

Mark Zinns, director of Oakland Montclair Recreation Department near Montclair Park reported drivers on Moraga Avenue going 50 and 60 miles per hour and making u turns on Moraga across the yellow line to get to a parking spot. Mr. Zinns said he grew up here and sees traffic safety getting worse and worse. He noted that free parking on Moraga Avenue is ending as parking meters are installed. He requested a "road diet" for Moraga, changing it from 4 lanes of traffic to 2 lanes, with a bike lane or angle street parking.

A general discussion revolved around the safety measures schools are undertaking. In some cases, the schools are doing so without coordination with the City of Oakland which may create unanticipated results. An attendee asked if the preschools were requesting traffic safety pledges from the parents.

It was noted that Thornhill parents drop off their children and then cut through the parking lot of St John's Episcopal Church, creating traffic problems. In response to a request to install a mirror to help solve this problem, Mr. Wang said that the City of Oakland is not allowed to use mirrors; they are not an approved traffic device.

In response to a request for a driver feedback speed sign (solar powered) which would show drivers their speed, Mr. Wang said that one light costs \$18,000. The results of test programs were poor, including broken signs.

An attendee asked that empty Oakland Police cars be parked at strategic locations.

Residents are encouraged to call Oakland Police non emergency 777-3333 to report reckless driving incidents and people parking in no parking zones. Reporting will permit Officer Jason Trode to follow up with an enforcement program. Again, we have to report problems; do not assume the city is aware of them.

An attendee noted that extensive broken pavement and unpaved sections on Thornhill wastes space which could become parking spots.

Mr. Wang said that repaving is not a Traffic Engineering issue. The City of Oakland maintains a list of road to be repaved - on a 65 year cycle. A separate list is kept of streets which are on the verge of breaking down. A breakdown requires new installation as opposed to repairs. The streets breaking down are on a five year waiting list.

OTHER REQUESTS FROM MEETING ATTENDEES

An attendee asked about who is responsible for cleaning the sidewalks in Montclair Village. She noted that they are particularly filthy. She was told that the merchants themselves are responsible for cleaning their sidewalks.

ANTIOCH COURT BRICK PROJECT

For several years volunteers have worked out a plan to improve the traffic safety and appearance of Antioch Court in Montclair Village, at the small triangle at Peets, Tutti Fruitti yogurt shop, etc.

<http://montclairvillage.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Antioch-Ct-Improvement-Plan-General-Presentation.pdf>

A major portion of the funding has been secured but additional money is being sought through the sale of personalized bricks which will be installed in Antioch Court. www.montclairbricks.com

4 x 8 Brick with up to 3 lines of personalized text: \$125

8 x 8 Brick with up to 6 lines of personalized text: \$225

8 x 8 Child Art Brick with up to 2 lines of personalized text: \$400

8 x 8 Custom Logo Brick with up to 2 lines of personalized text: \$400

It was noted that the bricks will have a flat surface so that dirt will not accumulate in the text over the years.

A kick off celebration was held in Antioch Court Sunday September 14, 2014.

MOUNTAIN BLVD RAILROAD MURAL

To pay homage to the old railroad in Montclair and to beautify a large cement wall in Montclair Village, a mural has been approved. Fundraising is underway with donations from individuals and being sought from grants. The total budget of \$60,000 includes site preparation and sealing of the wall, permit fee, scaffolding, special paint as well as improvement to the 'look out' spot at the top of the wall. Local Mural artist Andrew Johnstone has created a trompe l'oeil 3-dimensional design. Historians have been offering advice on which railroad car should be in the mural.

<http://montclairsic.org/rrmural.htm>

CLOSING REMARK

Montclair does not qualify for most city grants, which are awarded by zip code. It is up to the energy, talent and persistence of Montclair residents to make improvements. Whether it is working through your neighborhood group <http://montclairsic.org/mon.htm>, coming to MSIC quarterly meetings, becoming active with MSIC, making donations to the Railroad Mural and Antioch Court bricks, or just reporting problems to Oakland Police Department and Oakland Department of Public Works, your participation will make a better community.

There are two Yahoo! groups which all Montclair residents should subscribe to:

MSIC Alert is only for public safety issues; MSIC Discussion is for other matters of interest to Montclair residents. To subscribe, go to www.montclairsic.org and follow the detailed directions on the home page in the box "Responding to Crime." It is a Yahoo! group but it is not necessary to have a Yahoo! email account to participate.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The next meeting will be Monday, October 6, 2014, and will be a special meeting presenting Oakland mayoral candidates and issues for the November 4th mayoral election. The meeting will be held at the Montclair Presbyterian Church, 5701 Thornhill. Doors open at 6 pm, candidates speak at 6:45 pm Please car pool.