

# PANIL Notes

Volume 35 Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League - PO Box 20375, Oakland 94620

Jan 2010

JAN 13 PANIL MEETING

## Proposed Rezoning Changes May Increase Height and Density

Unlike homogenized suburbs, our neighborhood provides a variety of housing types to accommodate people with a range of incomes and lifestyles. But when the historic building pattern of a neighborhood is radically disrupted, impacts can be intense and unwelcome.

Zoning codes regulate what development is allowed on a property, from number of units to height of buildings or setbacks from the property line to types of activities.

Oakland is undergoing a long-awaited update of all of its zoning codes; even areas that are designated for little change may have the rules about heights or other factors altered. If you love your neighborhood as you will want to be at the January 13 PANIL meeting to hear the staff from the city's Zoning Update project describe the changes proposed for the PANIL neighborhood and to give your feedback. The slide presentation will be illustrated with photos of Oakland buildings, including many from our neighborhood, so technical knowledge of city planning is not needed. See photo on page 3.

YEAR-LONG PUBLIC PROCESS

## Traffic Plan for Harrison and Oakland Avenue Corridors

Nearly 6,000 cars per day use Harrison Street, and over 8,000 cars per day use Oakland Avenue in the PANIL neighborhood between 580 and the Piedmont border by Plymouth Church. For a number of years, neighbors living in the area have been concerned about speeding traffic and related vehicle and pedestrian safety.

On December 3, Community Workshop #4 was held at Westlake Middle School for the Harrison/Oakland Community Transportation Plan (Plan). The Plan was created by City of Oakland Strategic Planning staff and Dowling Associates, consultants, with public input at four community workshops held in January, April, July and December of this year. Improvements are proposed for the corridors from the Piedmont border to Grand Avenue.

"As a member of the Community Steering Committee I attended some of the preliminary meetings and the Dec 3 workshop," says Patricia Maurice. "City and consultant staff did a superb job; the Plan is a comprehensive approach to making the Oakland/Harrison corridor

Continued on page 2

**PANIL Monthly Meeting: Wed., Jan 13 — 7:30 p.m.**

**Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council — 7:30 pm**  
Sandra Saunders-West, our Neighborhood Services Coordinator

**General Meeting — 8:00 pm**

**Zoning Update: *Very Tall Buildings Coming Next Door to You?***

**See the Details in a Slide Presentation by  
the Staff of Oakland's Zoning Update Project  
and  
Give Your Feedback**

**Piedmont Gardens, 110 41st Street — 11th Floor Sky Room**

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## Traffic Plan (continued from page 1)

more livable and pedestrian/bike friendly, and the public process was expertly handled: substantive discussion of transportation issues along the corridor was encouraged, input and guidance from the City and their consultants was respectful and extremely professional. The staff worked hard at getting input from everyone and listened to what people said. My initial skepticism gave way to great enthusiasm for the project."

### Key Recommendations

The following key recommendations emerged after extensive study and public input:

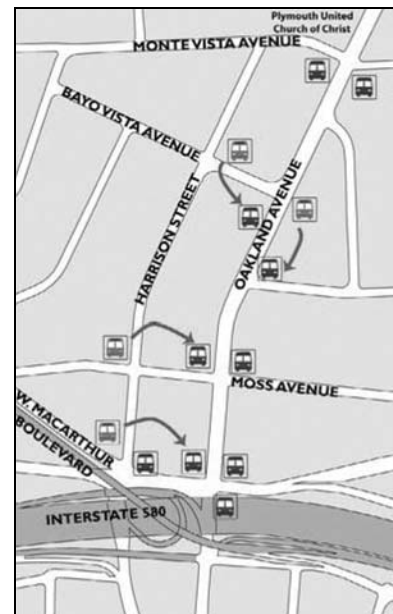
- Harrison and Oakland Avenues should both become two-way south of Bayo Vista, with speed limits changed to a consistent 25 mph all the way downtown.
- Improve safety and aesthetics at the 580 underpass; consider lighting and public art.
- Redesign and relocate various AC Transit bus stops, including at Moss and Bayo Vista. New bus shelters at various locations including Monte Vista. New bus bulb-outs\* at various stops including Moss, Bayo Vista and Monte Vista.
- Pedestrian bulb-outs would be added to other locations on Harrison and Oakland Avenues. Bulb-outs" are sidewalk extensions into the parking lane, either to narrow the street at intersections for greater pedestrian safety, or to create a wider bus stop and facilitate bus merging.
- Various changes to the confusing 5-way intersection at Harrison and 27th/24th Streets would improve pedestrian and vehicle safety, add diagonal parking along 24th St. and create a large pedestrian plaza with landscape features. This area is slated to be part of the Upper Broadway Retail District, now also in the planning stages.

The complete plan is available online at [www.oaklandnet.com/strategicplanning](http://www.oaklandnet.com/strategicplanning); scroll down to Planning Studies Underway and click on "Harrison Street/Oakland Avenue Corridor Community Based Transportation Plan."

The project manager for the city, Alisa Shen can be contacted at [ashen@oaklandnet.com](mailto:ashen@oaklandnet.com).

### Funding/Implementation

Funding will be challenging because the Plan Area is neither a redevelopment area nor is it in proximity to a BART station or transit hub. While no immediate funding has been identified, having a community-based plan is a critical first step to becoming eligible for various funding sources. And the Plan does provide a comprehensive list of potential funding sources, set priorities and suggest phasing of improvements.



Bus stop relocations are part of the improvements recommended to make the Oakland/Harrison corridor more livable and pedestrian/bike friendly. Graphic from the Public Review Draft Plan, 11/23/09.

## Pedestrian Signal Alterations Coming at Kaiser

Complaints to Kaiser have been heard. At the December 17 neighborhood meeting with Kaiser about ongoing construction impacts, it was announced that there will be further alterations to pedestrian crossings at the Phase One garage on Broadway at 38th Street as a result of complaints. Kaiser's traffic consultants noted that the configuration meets codes, but everyone agrees there's a problem. Pedestrians on the sidewalk are not noticing or obeying signals to wait while cars turn into the garage, and conversely, cars are not noticing pedestrians.

Because a big part of the problem seems to stem from a pedestrian "wait" signal placed mid-block, unconventional modifications are being considered. Many neighbors agreed that a "Wait for 'Walk'" sign needed to be placed in the sidewalk for pedestrians looking at their feet. Additional signage and changes to signal locations are also being discussed with the city's traffic engineers. The sidewalk concrete may be stained to an asphalt color at the garage entrance, to provide an additional visual warning of an unexpected "intersection."

### Other problems

Several neighbors complained that heavy trucks were driving or parking inappropriately on residential streets. Furthermore, they said, when informed of the route rules by neighbors, several drivers responded rudely. Doug Espland of Overaa Construction urged neighbors to document date, time, trucking company name, and license number, with photo if possible. Information should be sent to Kaiser's Judy DeVries at Judy.DeVries@kp.org. (Call her at 510-752-2004.)

Espland assured neighbors that several companies had already lost contracts with Overaa for such behavior.

Problems with the constricted intersection at Piedmont and MacArthur were discussed, but no conclusion reached.

### How Many Parking Spaces?

**Correction:** Kaiser's new garage on Broadway at I-580 will have 1,216 parking spaces, which is fewer than was reported in the December issue of PANIL Notes.

## Proposed Rezoning Changes May Allow Mismatches of Scale



Zoning codes set the rules for height, density and uses on a property. These Montgomery Street buildings predate Oakland's current zoning codes, but new proposals may again allow mismatches of scale and density. See details in the article on page 1.

## Calendar

For more neighborhood events go to [www.panil.org/calendar](http://www.panil.org/calendar).

### PANIL Meeting

2nd Wednesday of the month  
7:30 to 9 p.m.  
Piedmont Gardens  
110 41st Street  
11th Floor Sky Room

### PANIL Steering Committee meets monthly

For the time, date and place of the meeting, email [contact@panil.org](mailto:contact@panil.org)

### Glen Echo Creek Work Day

2nd Saturday of the month  
Monte Vista Avenue, 9:30 a.m.  
654-1930

### Mt. View Cemetery Tour

Docent led tour  
2nd and 4th Saturdays  
10 a.m., FREE

### Oakland Heritage Alliance

Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m.

**Ray Raineri: North Oakland History in Photos**  
**Memories of North Oakland's Italian neighborhood, featuring Idora Park**

Chapel of the Chimes  
4499 Piedmont Avenue,

7pm (meeting), 7:30pm (lecture)  
\$10 members/\$15 non members.  
You may join at the event.

### Piedmont Avenue Branch Library

160 41st Street, 597-5011

#### Storytimes

Toddlers  
Wednesday, 10:15 a.m.  
Pre school  
Wednesday, 11 a.m.

**Saturday Knitting Club**  
Every Saturday 3 to 4 p.m.

To place an item on PANIL's calendars, send e-mail to: [contact@panil.org](mailto:contact@panil.org)

## Mosswood Park – Our Local Green Space

By William Manley

Not in our official neighborhood PANIL boundaries, but right next door, is our closest “big” city park, Mosswood. Wedged between Interstate 580 and the busy thoroughfares of MacArthur Broadway and Webster, the 11-acre park provides a variety of recreational, cultural and entertainment opportunities.

I first came to the park in the late 70’s when I lived in San Francisco, and played for a co-ed recreational softball team. As I sat in the dugout waiting to bat I remember being impressed by the high quality basketball being played on the adjacent two courts. After I moved to Oakland in 1982, I remember coming to Mosswood for a picnic with my suburban mother and father only to witness a knife fight between some pre-adolescent youths. Fortunately someone intervened before any injuries, but the experience left us stunned.

Since then I’ve enjoyed many visits to Mosswood to relax, play tennis or throw a Frisbee. I’ve seen SF Mime Troop performances there, attended dance performances and multiple civic meetings. I see it as a precious community resource – with flaws – but still a resource we should patronize and support.

The name Mosswood comes from the former estate on which it is situated. When J. Mora Moss, an Oakland rancher, married Julia Wood in 1864, he gave his estate the name Mosswood. Over 100 years ago in 1907 the City purchased a portion of the original estate for this park. The old owner’s mansion still stands in the middle of the park in some disrepair, and is used by Parks and Rec administration.

I chose a sunny Sunday November afternoon to check on the park and its patrons. The first couple I approached by the play structures eyed me suspiciously until I explained my purpose. Jerry said they come to park about once a month. He said they enjoy all the open green space. He liked the mix of people, well-to-do and simple. One thing he couldn’t locate was a drinking fountain!

Kate, a young mother from Emeryville, brings her kids to the park frequently. The park is a consolation to the children whenever they come to the doctor’s. Her one complaint was the cleanliness. The sand area appeared dirty and she’s found broken glass in it. Kris, another mother with two toddlers, walks to Mosswood from her residence

on 41<sup>st</sup>. Her children love the swings. Like Kate, she felt the park lacked maintenance. She felt it was safe during the day, but was concerned about safety in the evening, with the dark paths and poor lighting.

On the basketball courts I met Erik, a 21-year old who was playing with his little brother. Living on Harrison, he treks to Mosswood because is the “best park in the area.” He says the basketball games were high quality, and the other players are “nice guys.” He comes twice a week and has been coming since he was 10, when he participated in the after school study and recreation programs. The courts have long been reputed as a place for some of the best pick-up basketball games in the country, and NBA stars like Brian Shaw, Gary Payton and Jason Kidd have all graced the asphalt here. There’s also a rumor that the movie “White Men Can’t Jump” was inspired from the scene here in the 70’s.

**The courts have long been home to some of the best pick up basketball games in the country.**

Erik told me that he used to enjoy (even if he didn’t fully understand) the Shakespeare plays that were performed regularly on Sundays in the amphitheater.

About two years ago a dog-run—segregated for large and small dogs—was added on a densely wooded slope between I-580 and the tennis courts. It appears to be heavily used. An added bonus is that you can watch tennis as your dog plays.

The tennis courts are popular, although they were vacant on the afternoon I visited. One problem is the ever-present freeway noise, which makes it difficult to hear the server announce the score. The courts are often littered with leaves, and green balls turn quickly gray from the worn out surfaces. Did I mention the problem with lights? Only about 2/3 of them work at any one time. Oh yes, and the restrooms – functional, but frequently locked. “Why the \*\*\*\* are the restrooms locked on weekends” someone had graffitied on the outside of the restroom door.

Some good news: both the tennis and basketball courts are slated for resurfacing by next spring, according to Park Director John Hill.

I asked the Director what he liked most in the park. The greenery, the aesthetics, he answered. What worries him most? Trying to keep all the users happy. The most successful and memorable events during his 5-year tenure: a “Faith Day” in which local churches teamed with Kaiser to offer health and social services; and the Carijama festival, which featured music and food from the Caribbean.

**The bad news and the good news**

**Mosswood Park** (continued from page 4)

On Wednesday evenings the lighted softball outfields host adult men’s soccer, played with small-sized portable goals. Last weekend – Eric told me – some guys were “playing a strange game with a flat bat and just one base.” “Cricket,” I suggested. “Yeah, that’s it,” his younger brother answered. Sign of the changing demographics.

Changing times and demographics can also be seen on the corner of Webster and Broadway where the former horseshoe pits have been turned into an area of raised flower beds. A community garden?

Sort of. With the help of Kaiser, a community garden was started over a year ago, but in the rash of budget cuts, Oakland’s community garden coordinator left, and the site floundered. In a controversial arrangement park management turned over a portion of the garden to a private for-profit gardening company, Kijiji. The company pays no rent, and the deal did not appear to follow due process. But because the owners are local, some feel this is a good example for entrepreneurship for the community, while others see it as an illegitimate giveaway, a scenario that comes up far too frequently in Oakland. Similarly, a private elementary school, Bridgemount Academy, got class space in the rec center, and apparently was doing so before there was official approval. The competition for use of the scarce open space and facilities is bound to heat up as the area becomes denser and more gentrified.

The growth of the Kaiser Complex adds another dynamic to evolution of the park. The draft EIR included a proposal to stuff 400 new parking spaces in the park. Fortunately that idea died. But one undeniable impact will be increased shadows from the towering structure across Broadway. On the positive side, Kaiser will make more portions of their new campus available as true public space. Kaiser has contributed in other ways: in August of this year 200 Kaiser employees took part in a park cleanup and beautification effort that included weeding, trimming, planting and painting. According to Director Hill, this is an annual effort that will continue into the future. He sees the Kaiser expansion as “a real boon” to the park.

If you’d like to get involved in ensuring the vitality of this gem, you can participate in the meetings of the Mosswood Park Advisory Council, which meets at the recreation center at 11:00 a.m. on the last Saturday of every month.

Or if you just want to recreate yourself, then put on your sneakers, come out and play some soccer, tennis, or throw a blanket on the grass and absorb the rays.

**Home and Studio at Terrace and Ridgeway** (continued from page 8)

door, where a tiny garden separated the studio from the house.

Classes were sometimes accompanied by live piano music, but often Miss Jorgensen used castanets. Her skill was such that students not only heard the basic beats from the familiar music, but their dance steps were cued by clicks mimicking the volume and rhythm of notes. Class size varied between 12 and 20 students in the little studio; many of the young dancers were neighborhood children.

Both buildings are remarkably intact, clearly under loving ownership.



In 1930, Miss Jorgensen had this dance studio built at 250 Ridgeway, in the back of her home.

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## 40th Street Bikeway

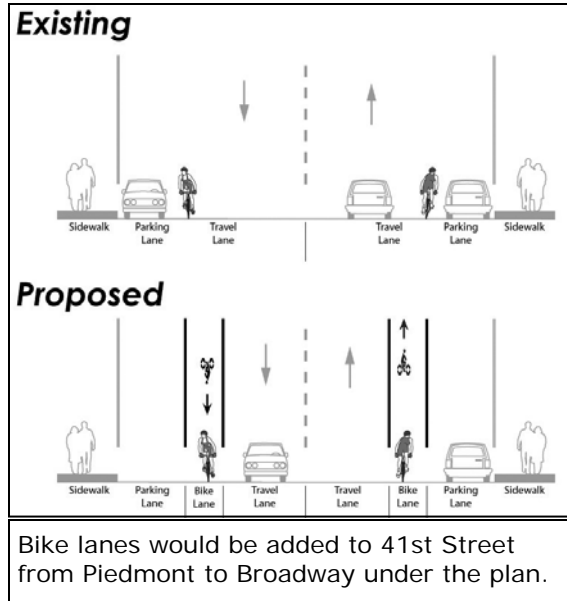
Jason Patton, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager for the City of Oakland, has sent a follow up report regarding the controversial 40th Street Bikeway discussed at the October PANIL meeting, at other community meetings, and reported in the last issue of PANIL Notes.



Median landscaping on 40th Street as seen from Ruby Street, looking east. Bike lanes on 40th Street to Emeryville would require removing some median landscaping.

“At those meetings,” he writes, “we heard that residents were concerned about how the bikeway could adversely affect the median plantings. We also heard that people value improved bicycle access in North Oakland.”

Since the community presentations, the City was awarded \$242,500 from the funding program called Safe Routes to Transit for bicycle access to MacArthur BART.



Alternate routes parallel to 40th Street have been considered and rejected, as none cross Adeline Street or San Pablo Avenue to connect with Emeryville's bicycle network. However, some alterations to the scope of the project have been made, including additional landscaping; others will be made this spring.

Draft materials will be available for community review by summer of 2010.

The full report from Patton is posted on PANIL's web site [www.panil.org](http://www.panil.org).

### Volunteers Needed

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### PANIL NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT TO CONTINUE PUBLISHING

Your dues, and advertising, pay for printing this newsletter. Now, more than ever, with city-wide rezoning to impact our neighborhood, *PANIL Notes* is vital to keeping informed and shaping your future. Use PayPal at <http://www.panil.org> or turn to page 7 and send in the membership form with your donation. *PANIL Notes* needs 50 new or renewed supporters each month.



PIEDMONT AVE PHOTO GALLERY

Kaiser Phase 2 Parking Structure  
 Mat Foundation Placement  
 December 18 & 19, 2009  
 7,003 Cubic Yards



Our neighborhood is filled with interesting sights.

*We invite photographers to send photos taken on the Avenue or in the neighborhood to [contact@panil.org](mailto:contact@panil.org).*

At least a dozen cement trucks are visible on site, as long arms pump cement into the foundation for Kaiser's new parking garage on Broadway during an overnight marathon December 18 and 19. The 7,003 cubic yards of concrete will cure to its design strength in 28 days, but Doug Espland, of Overaa Construction, states that concrete never completely cures—Hoover Dam is still curing after 73 years.

Photo courtesy of C. Overaa and Co.

**COUNT ME IN!**

**PANIL membership is the best bargain in town!**

For as little as **\$15.00/year**  
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 on behalf of the  
 Piedmont Avenue neighborhood.

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Come to a PANIL meeting (2nd Wednesday evenings) and join there  
 or mail your check to PANIL, P.O. Box 20375, Oakland, CA 94620  
 or go to [www.panil.org](http://www.panil.org) and click on "Join PANIL"

**NEW: You can now join or renew your membership from the website by using PayPal.**

Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League

P.O. Box 20375

Oakland, CA 94620

www.panil.org



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## Home and Studio to Beloved Dance Teacher at Terrace and Ridgeway

by Valerie Winemiller

Last month in *PANIL Notes*, we looked back at Oakland's beloved Christmas Pageants, as choreographed and directed by Louise Jorgensen, and Oakland institution herself. Jorgensen was a resident of Terrace Street for most of her adult life, and taught from a dance studio she had built in her back yard. The studio address is 250 Ridgeway.

The building permit for the Craftsman-style cottage at 4212 Terrace Street was taken out August 15, 1906, just four months after the great San Francisco earthquake and fire, when Oakland's population boomed with refugees from the conflagration. Blanche and Leonore Chinn were listed as owners, Hopper & Saxton as builders. Cost of construction was \$2,000, a sum substantial enough to pay for a number of charming details on the one-story, five-room cottage.

Typical of the style, it is clad in unpainted shingles, with white trim. Under the hipped roof, exposed rafters support eaves on all four sides of the house. The entry is on the side of the house, from a porch with a shed roof supported by posts with brackets on a pedestal.

A square corner bay opens the front room to the south and west light, its decorative sashes divided into eight panes over one. An angled bay beyond the porch brings additional light into the south side. A dormer also has exposed rafters and a twelve-paned sash. A high center window with eight panes repeats the scale of the dormer sash; miraculously, its miniature decorative balustrade survives.

An earthquake refugee herself, Jorgensen grew up near Bushrod Park. She and her widowed mother moved into the cottage on Terrace Street in 1930. Like many dance teachers even now, Miss Jorgensen cobbled together a living teaching at multiple venues, including the Oakland YWCA and the city's Recreation Department.

By 1930, her mother suggested that she needed her own studio. A small peach orchard in the back yard was cleared and the building permit for the dance stu-



Miss Jorgensen, of Christmas Pageant fame, lived with her mother at **4212 Terrace Street**, a 1906 craftsman cottage. Miraculously, a miniature decorative balustrade survives on the small center window.

dio was issued on December 2, 1930 with Sophia Jorgensen listed as owner, and Ciscero & Mally as builders. The cost of construction for the one-story studio was \$2,400. Miss Jorgensen's sadly brief marriage was to the banker who arranged the construction loan. After his death, she returned to Terrace Street.

The studio building is simple, and blends well with the surrounding Craftsman cottages. It has clapboard siding and a low, peaked roof with a front gable and simple, enclosed eaves. Offcenter, a shallow projecting gable has the main entry door on its side under a bracketed overhang; to its right, French doors with glass panes open into the garage where Miss Jorgensen stored her car.

Inside, the studio was lined with natural wood paneling. There was a small storage area, a bathroom, and a seating area for the mothers waiting for their small dancers. Miss Jorgensen could draw a curtain across their alcove, if she felt the mothers' chatting was getting disruptive. Her commute home was out a back

Continued on page 5