

**TRAFFIC REPORT**  
**Prepared by Local Residents**  
**AREA SURROUNDING MERRILL GARDENS, ROCKRIDGE, OAKLAND**  
June, 2018

**OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND:**

The 2015 traffic study conducted for The Ridge (Safeway shopping center at Broadway & 51st Street/Pleasant Valley) acknowledged that the intersections of 51st & Broadway (see attached Key Map, Intersection G) and 51st & Desmond (Intersection B) would go to “Level of Service (LOS) F”, the worst traffic condition that an intersection can be rated.

During the approval process for the shopping center, community representatives met with City officials and the consultant traffic engineer (subsequently also hired to do the traffic study for the Merrill Gardens project) to discuss the absence of any study of potential neighborhood cut-through traffic caused by the shopping center expansion. That led to Safeway committing \$500,000 to an additional study - and potential mitigations - scheduled to follow completion of both phases of Ridge redevelopment. Since development of Phase II of The Ridge is on hold, the second traffic study has not been performed.

Meanwhile, the Merrill Gardens (MG) senior housing development (127 units + commercial space) was permitted to convert the end of Coronado Avenue between Broadway and Hemphill from one-way to two-way traffic up to the west end of the MG properties/Hemphill Alley expressly to provide access to their loading dock and passenger drop off location.

This west side of Intersection A is also the location of the vehicle entry to and exit from Wendy’s drive-through, directly across from the MG entrance.

As discussed in meetings with the City and the traffic engineering consultant hired by the developers for both the shopping center and MG - and with SRM (the developer for MG) - there was to be no through-access from Coronado to the shopping center. This, it turns out, is not the case, since Coronado Avenue now spills traffic directly across Broadway toward the new back road into The Ridge. Traffic exiting Coronado is now controlled by a new traffic light (installed 10/25/16) that came about from the Ridge development.

**PROBLEMS: Hazards and Abuses**

Since the opening of both The Ridge, Phase I and MG, nearby streets and intersections have become flooded with serious problems (backed up, speeding or wrong-way traffic) and are now extremely confusing and dangerous. It is an even greater point of concern with the senior residents from MG using these streets for exercise and outings. Many are sight, hearing, and mobility-impaired, and some have memory loss.

Most of the traffic problems which have arisen following opening of The Ridge and MG are due to lack of coherent and effective signage to re-direct the significantly increased traffic coming from or to MG and the Ridge and/or mitigations promised by The Ridge and MG not having been delivered as agreed upon.

Others issues that arose quickly following MG's opening stem from poor design and configuration of the MG loading dock and refuse collection system, resulting in trucks using this congested east end of Coronado instead of the loading dock. Further, MG has been using the street (including adjacent property) for staging garbage pickups that occur three times weekly. Finally, truckers find Desmond Street (Intersection B) more convenient than Intersection A for access to MG, a problem clearly foreseen by neighbors during the planning process.

Note: SRM's traffic study implied that additional traffic from the residence would not change the intersection rating at Broadway & Coronado, but their numbers did not factor in the effects of changing the end of Coronado into a two-way street - in conjunction with the addition of the signal at Broadway & Coronado. Also, omitted was the traffic and parking data generated by home health aides who regularly visit MG residents. MG parking fees and arcane access systems actively discourage usage of their parking structure by residents and visitors, spilling additional traffic onto neighboring streets, circling to find parking.

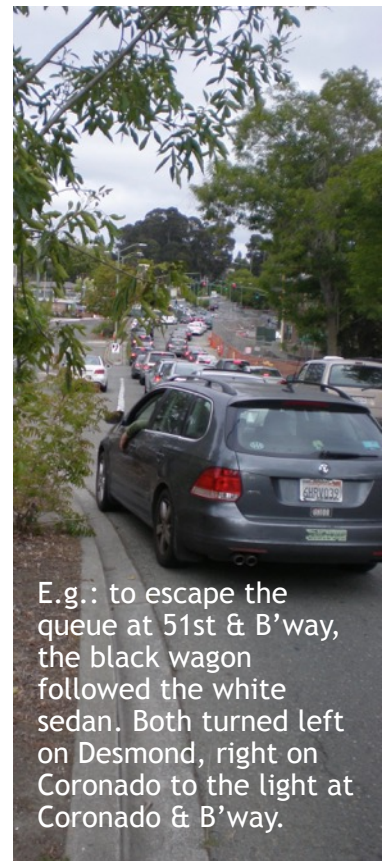
This level of increase in traffic volume and confusion will only worsen with the future traffic from Baxter on Broadway across the street from MG (126 units + commercial) and Nautilus (51st & Telegraph, 204 units + Whole Foods and other commercial) soon to be completed, plus whatever traffic would be generated by the eventual redevelopment of The Ridge, Phase II. Solutions must be sought, as the present conditions (congestion with accompanying air and noise pollution, speeding and wrong-way drivers, road rage) cannot continue without resulting in serious accidents.

## Specific Hazards

### Cut through traffic

The measurable cut-through traffic that neighbors predicted from congestion at 51/Broadway has materialized. Frustrated drivers turn north/left from 51st onto Desmond, speed through the STOP signs on Desmond and turn right onto Coronado to exit onto Broadway.

As a result of the exponential growth of congestion at Broadway & 51st St./Pleasant Valley (Intersection G) others cut through in the opposite direction: proceeding south on Broadway, they see the green "Coronado Avenue" street sign (with the arrow deceptively pointing right) and erroneously assume this to be another way to detour around the 51/Broadway back-up. There is no sign informing the southbound driver either on Broadway or just entering Coronado that Coronado is not a through street. The small barrier at Hemphill delineating the end of the two way section of Coronado is often obscured by traffic queues waiting at the long light. Hence, many vehicles continue west, in the wrong direction, over or past this barrier, often speeding down adjoining streets. Google Maps, WAZE, or other traffic apps may be contributing to this general increase in cut through traffic.



E.g.: to escape the queue at 51st & B'way, the black wagon followed the white sedan. Both turned left on Desmond, right on Coronado to the light at Coronado & B'way.

## INTERSECTION A (Coronado & Broadway)

### Wrong way drivers

The epidemic of wrong-way driving originates from the lack of clear signage and frustrated drivers, as described above. Over time, these drivers have only gotten bolder, faster, and more frequent, with well-documented near-misses to pedestrians (including children and pets) and other vehicles. In one recent 12 minute observation period, six wrong-way drivers were observed going down Coronado. The one-way drivers tend to accelerate to reduce the time they are illegally driving the wrong way. These illegal trips occur day and night. We suspect many of the wrong-way offenders are not making innocent mistakes but instead are knowingly breaking the traffic laws to avoid the Broadway/51<sup>st</sup> St. intersection.

### Traffic Barrier

Prior to construction, MG/SRM agreed to install “A traffic barrier, the design of which shall be subject to neighborhood review... partway across Coronado, with prominent signage to keep traffic in the two- way section from entering the rest of Coronado, which will remain one-way east- bound.”

There was no neighborhood review, and the resulting traffic barrier is inadequate in size, visibility and signage. Delivery trucks and cars often drive right over the barrier, and the small ONE WAY sign, placed well above automobile driver eye level, has been knocked over or bent at least four times by vehicles attempting to navigate this overly congested intersection.



Going west - the wrong-way - on the rest of this block of Coronado before Desmond - there is no STOP sign nor are there DO NOT ENTER / ONE WAY signs at Desmond & Coronado facing this oncoming traffic. (There are ONE WAY signs, but these are not visible face-on to drivers coming directly into Coronado from Desmond.) At this point, drivers turn right or left onto Desmond without stopping, or continue in the wrong direction onto Coronado, which narrows significantly and has a blind curve down a hill.



## Traffic light at Coronado & Broadway

As part of the ongoing development of The Ridge a new traffic light at Broadway and Coronado Avenue was installed (October 26, 2016.) The short timer on this light has proven another problem. The WALK signal allows only 20 seconds to cross Broadway, difficult for mobility-challenged seniors from MG, people with strollers, etc. And vehicles, because of the short green cycle, back up in the confusion of unloading trucks, wrong way drivers and Wendy's customers entering or exiting their drive-through. It can take as many as four light-cycles to make it out of Coronado Avenue onto Broadway.



## Merrill Gardens delivery vehicles

During the planning and permitting process, the surrounding community was assured by both MG and SRM that delivery vehicles would not be using nearby streets for access. Only the eastern, two-way section of Coronado would be used; trucks would enter from Broadway (Intersection A), turning left onto MG property and proceed to the loading dock built for that purpose. In fact, changing Coronado to two-way in this section was expressly to accommodate this truck traffic and access to MG property.

In reality, instead of using Intersection A and the loading dock, delivery vehicles enter Desmond, formerly a quiet residential street, from 51st St. (Intersection B) turn right on Coronado (Intersection D) and double park illegally in the street at the MG entrance to unload. They regularly block driveways of the apartment building directly adjacent to MG and the homes of other nearby residents of Coronado.

Following a meeting with MG facilities manager (February 2018), this situation has somewhat improved. However, garbage/recycling and mail/package delivery vehicles and occasional semis - still double park, idling on the street to make deliveries to MG at all hours, six and sometimes seven days a week. (Photo at right was taken on a Saturday in May, months after the meeting with MG manager.)

In addition to congestion, this increases air and noise pollution for the surrounding neighbors.

These truck loading activities on the two-way portion of Coronado are in violation of the Conditions of Approval for MG (as specified in item #64 of the COA, attached), and need to be rectified.





### Wendy's

Both the entry to and exit from Wendy's drive-through are at this intersection, in the now-two-way area of Coronado. Some drivers exiting Wendy's are confused by poor signage (too far back from point of exit and above driver's eye level) or are frustrated by backed up traffic at the Broadway-Coronado light and turn right, going over or around the barrier in the wrong direction down Coronado Avenue. In addition to the many seniors/disabled who use this intersection, Wendy's also generates high pedestrian traffic from Oakland Tech students during lunch breaks.



### INTERSECTIONS B (51st & Desmond) and C (51st & Coronado)

Currently, eastbound traffic backs up from the light at 51st & Broadway (Intersection G) through Intersection B and as far as C at peak hours, making it impossible either to make a turn eastbound or westbound onto 51st from Desmond, or to turn left from 51st onto Desmond. Local residents become trapped, unable to turn into or out of their own streets. As noted in the traffic study for the shopping center, it was anticipated that this would get much worse after the center opened. It has done so, and with only half of the shopping center completed. Note: For eastbound traffic, the only way that the 5100 block of Coronado, a one-way street, can be accessed by car at all is from 51st St. at Desmond, due to the traffic island at Coronado. Coronado residents are unable to make the U turn needed to access their street if both directions of 51st St are backed up. At peak hours it can take local residents several changes of traffic light at Intersection G before they can make the simple left turn from Intersection B/51st at Desmond from to their homes.





## PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- **INTERSECTION A (Coronado at Broadway) to end of two-way section of Coronado**
- **OPTION 1: COMPLETELY CLOSE CORONADO AVE** at Hemphill/west boundary of Merrill Gardens (location of current barrier.) The entire 5200 block of Coronado would be two way on both sides of the barrier, allowing residents to the west of the barrier to enter and leave their homes via Desmond. Emergency vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles would have through access. Commercial and personal vehicles would not. (A nearby example of this is on 59th St. at Telegraph.) This is the solution preferred by a majority of local neighbors.

- **OPTION 2: TWO SUBSTANTIAL RAISED PLANTER BARRIERS** on Coronado Avenue west of Hemphill at the west boundary of MG property. These should extend from north and south sides of Coronado establishing the end of the two way portion of Coronado, but should leave one lane open for egress of eastbound traffic on Coronado. These barriers should be significantly larger than the existing barrier and should contain plantings that reach driver's eye level, creating a visual barrier to the view west down Coronado. Merrill Gardens would be responsible for maintaining plantings. Any vehicle entering this part of Coronado from Broadway would only be going to or from MG or Wendy's.



- **SIGNAGE:**

For either of the above options, new NO OUTLET or NOT A THROUGH STREET signage should face traffic approaching Coronado on Broadway from both directions. This is in addition to signage directly facing traffic entering Coronado.

- In the case of OPTION 1: Clear DO NOT ENTER/DEAD END signs on Coronado at Desmond.
- In the case of OPTION 2:
- Each barrier should feature a large DO NOT ENTER- WRONG WAY sign, positioned at westbound auto driver's eye level.
- The current ONE WAY arrow sign should be moved from its present illegal position (on the two-way portion of Coronado) to further down Coronado in the one-way section between the barriers and Intersection D at Desmond.
- Reposition NO RIGHT TURN sign at Wendy's drive-through exit to driver's eye level, and a NO LEFT TURN sign at the exit to MG's drive-through.

- NO OUTLET or NOT A THROUGH STREET signage should face vehicles entering Coronado at Broadway.



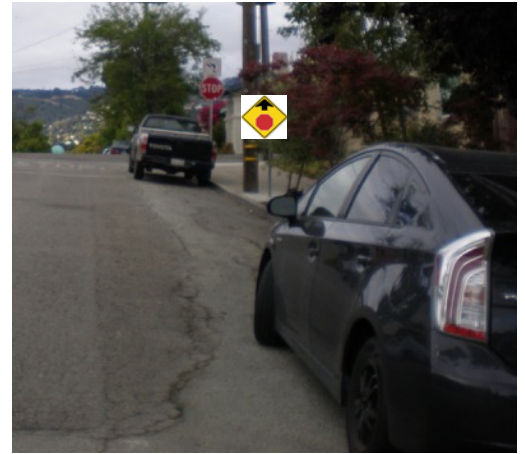
- **RED 'NO PARKING' CURB** at southwest corner of Coronado at Broadway in front of MG entrance covering the three car length of curb currently used for parking. See attached MG's truck delivery diagrams. Also note that the back out diagram for a 37' truck further supports a red zone on the curb in front of the MG entrance.
- **TRAFFIC LIGHT:** at Broadway at Coronado: Increase the pedestrian crossing time. Increase the timing of the green light for vehicles entering Broadway from Coronado.

### INTERSECTION D (Desmond & Coronado)

- Prominent **DO NOT ENTER** signs on both northwest and southwest corners of Desmond at Coronado should directly face any potential wrong-way drivers. (Current **ONE WAY** arrows at this corner are only visible to drivers on Desmond, not to oncoming drivers going wrong-way on Coronado.)

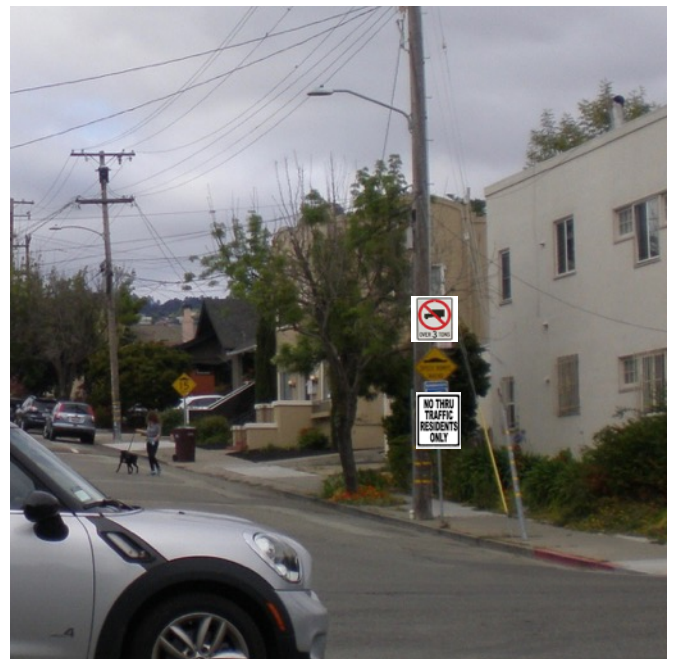


- STOP AHEAD warning signs should be installed to better alert drivers to obey 2 STOP signs (in both northbound and southbound directions) at Intersection D to deter current speeding through signs or Hollywood stops.



**INTERSECTIONS B & C (Desmond & 51st, Coronado & 51st)**

- To discourage cut-through traffic as well as delivery trucks:
  - NO THROUGH TRAFFIC - RESIDENTS ONLY signs and
  - NO TRUCKS OVER 3 TONS signs should be installed on Desmond (Intersection B) and Coronado (Intersection C) as one enters these streets going north from 51st St.
- “KEEP CLEAR” boxes should be painted on the asphalt of 51st St., on both eastbound and westbound sides at Intersections B and C.



**NEARBY INTERSECTIONS:**

- New STOP signs on Manila at Glendale and Desmond at Glendale



## SUMMARY AND REQUEST FOR ACTION

Traffic has increased significantly throughout the streets surrounding MG (Coronado, Desmond, 51st, Manila, Glendale and Hemphill) in both directions as frustrated drivers have found convenient ways to avoid the new traffic backups at the signal at Broadway & 51st Street, with wrong way drivers down Coronado posing the most danger. Any traffic official can witness these issues in the span of a single morning or afternoon. A full traffic study that counts cars and measures traffic may not even be necessary to address this, as the issue is not only vehicle numbers but the hazardous conditions presented by illegal maneuvers and speeding. Even anecdotally, Officer David Mac from Rockridge's Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) has observed that Intersection A has become a dangerous intersection.

In the Conditions of Approval for construction (relevant portions attached), Merrill Gardens/ SRM committed to a functional traffic barrier at the west boundary of MG property and outlet of Hemphill Alley to delineate the end of the two-way section of Coronado. Therefore, MG/SRM is financially responsible for replacement of the current small barrier with either complete closure of Coronado Avenue at Desmond, or two substantial barriers, driver's eye-level landscape plantings and signage, maintenance of such plantings, and cost for installation of all signage to redirect traffic and resolve congestion problems caused by making Coronado two way at Intersection A.

Furthermore, the Conditions of Approval prohibit loading activity for MG on the two-way portion of Coronado Avenue. This recurring problem must be rectified to the satisfaction of local residents. Note: Currently, SRM is on site at 51st St. and Broadway finishing the Baxter on Broadway development. It would behoove the City to act quickly on this project while SRM construction managers and personnel are available locally.

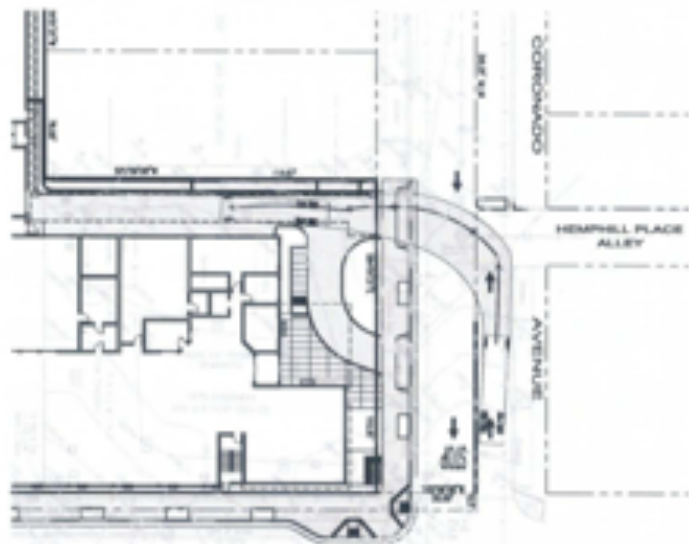
Considering the many near-misses and 'accidents waiting to happen' observed and documented by neighbors in the area surrounding MG, waiting for the completion of Phase II of the shopping center and completion of the major, second traffic study is not an option. Conditions continue to worsen daily. At a minimum we are asking for a meeting with City Planner Mike Rivera, and a follow up site visit to enforce previously agreed upon mitigations and to start the process of improving signage, barrier upgrade, and traffic re-direction as redress for some of the most egregious fallout from increased development and traffic. A representative from our group will be contacting Mr Rivera.

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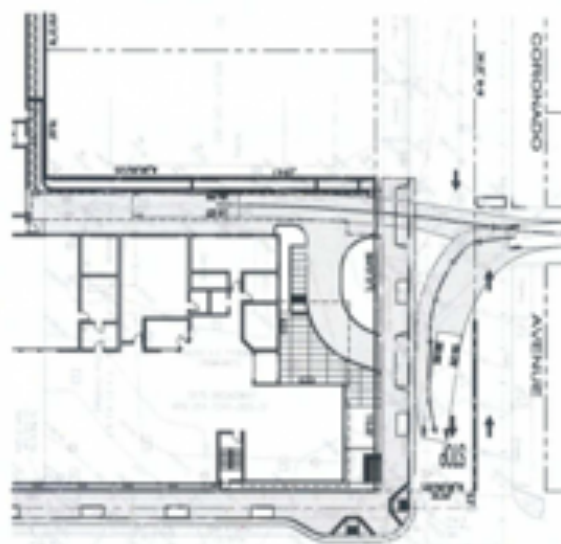
### Attachments:

- A.) Turn-around diagrams of Intersection A for MG trucks
- B.) Oakland City Planning Commission documents: Case File #DR 13-320& T1300078 relevant citations from the Planning Commission Staff Report dated 6/4/2014 (Conditions of Approval, Merrill Gardens Rockridge housing development.)
- C.) Key Map with relevant intersections

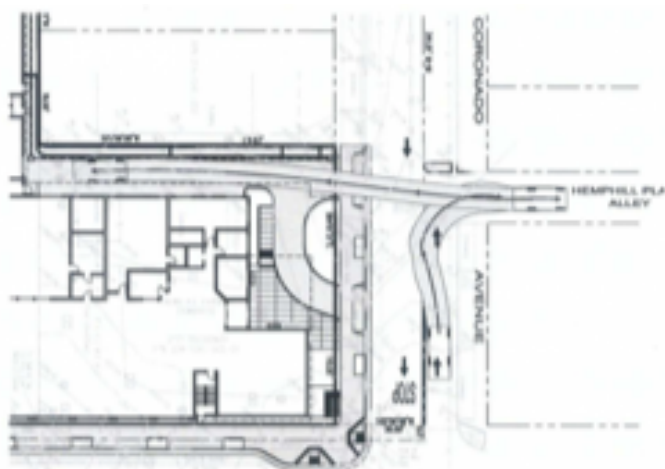
Attachment A: Turn-around diagrams of intersection A for trucks



TURN IN  
(SHOWN FOR 37' TRUCK)



BACK OUT  
(SHOWN FOR 37' TRUCK)



UPS TRUCK (21)

**Attachment B: Oakland City Planning Commission documents: Case File #DR 13-320& T1300078 relevant citations from the Planning Commission Staff Report dated 6/4/2014 (Conditions of Approval, Merrill Gardens Rockridge housing development.)**

WM company will provide curbside pick-up, rather than driving their trucks into the 116 foot long driveway to pick-up the trash/recyclables.

Furthermore, the applicant proposes street modifications in front of the property along Coronado Avenue. The first is to convert part of Coronado Avenue from a one-way eastbound to a two-way eastbound/westbound direction, between Broadway to Hemphill Place Alley only; and convert Hemphill Place Alley to a southbound direction only by installing "DO NOT ENTER" signs at the intersection with Coronado Avenue. The second is to build a curb and island planter (4'x11') at the northwest intersection of Coronado Avenue and Hemphill Place Alley. The planter will serve as a barrier to prevent all vehicles from traveling westbound into the existing one-way street. The planter will be set back 2 feet from the northerly sidewalk to create a bicycle travel path. (See attached Civil plans, sheets C01-C03)

In the past, the City had received concerns from residents on Coronado Avenue about vehicles driving westbound into the one-way street. Presently, Coronado Avenue is a one-way eastbound street that begins from 51st Street & Coronado Avenue to Broadway. The proposal for a two-way street in front of the property only, and the installation of a curb and island planter on Coronado Avenue would be functional from a traffic point of view because it would provide vehicular access to and from Broadway to the senior housing, and also prevent all vehicles from driving westbound into the one-way street residential area. The City Transportation Division and the Fire Department have reviewed and supported the proposal, pending the submittal of construction plans for final review. Additional analysis to street modifications on Coronado Avenue is discussed in the technical report, prepared by the applicant's traffic consultants. This technical document is in the project file and available for public review at the City Planning Department.

**d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.**

**TRAFFIC-** The technical report studied five different key intersections in the vicinity of the project site: Coronado Ave/Desmond St, Coronado Ave/Broadway, 51st St/Pleasant Valley Ave/Broadway, 51st/Project Driveway and 51st St/Desmond St. The traffic analysis shows that the existing Levels of Service (LOS) at these intersections mostly operate at LOS D or better during weekday AM & PM peak hours, and Saturday Midday peak hours. The project is anticipated to generate approximately 773 daily vehicle trips, including 52 AM peak hour trips, 53 PM peak hour trips, and 79 Saturday peak hour trips. The Level of Service (LOS) for each of the five intersections studied would remain the same, except for the intersection of Coronado Avenue and Broadway where the LOS for the peak hour of Saturday Midday is anticipated to change from LOS D to LOS E. The potential impact to the intersection of the side-street stop controlled approach at the Coronado Avenue and Broadway, an unsignalized intersection, is considered less than significant under CEQA since the project does not meet the peak-hour signal warrant. Therefore the project will not result in an adverse traffic impact when compared to the existing condition. The traffic report also assessed cumulative conditions that included the approved Safeway Shopping Center project and also concluded there would be less than significant impacts.



## **SPECIFIC PROJECT CONDITIONS**

### **54. Improvements in the Right-of-Way**

*Prior to the issuance of a demolition, grading or building permit and/or final building inspection/Ongoing*

- a) Ensure that Project driveways on 51st Street and Coronado Avenue provide adequate sight distance of the pedestrians in both directions of the adjacent sidewalk and for vehicles on the adjacent streets.
- b) Ensure that trucks can enter and exit the loading area without conflicting with parked vehicles on Coronado Avenue.
- c) Ensure that the reconstruction of the northwest corner of the 51st Street/Pleasant Valley Avenue/Broadway provides continuous sidewalks along both Broadway and 51st Street and that directional curb ramps are provided at the intersection crosswalks.
- d) Identify location and amount of short-term and long-term bicycle parking, consistent with the City of Oakland Bicycle Parking Ordinance.
- e) Install a bulb-out at the southwest corner of the Coronado Avenue/Broadway intersection to increase pedestrian visibility and shorten pedestrian crossing time.
- f) Widen the existing median on the south approach of the intersection to provide a pedestrian refuge.

## ***CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL***

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**Oakland City Planning Commission**

**June 4, 2014**

Case File Number: DR13-320 & T1300078

Page 35

- g) If the planned Safeway Project is canceled or the Merrill Gardens Project is constructed first, signalize intersection to provide a protected signalized pedestrian crossing of Broadway.

**Oakland City Planning Commission**

**June 4, 2014**

Case File Number: DR13-320 & T1300078

Page 36

### **63. Senior Citizen Transportation/Shuttle Van**

*Prior to issuance of Building Permits*

The applicant shall submit to the Planning Services Division a shuttle van plan for review and approval with details of the shuttle operation including frequency, operator information, hours of operation and proposed route(s). The applicant shall implement the operations on the approved plans.

### **64. Delivery Restrictions**

*Ongoing*

The facility will include restrictions on vendors and other delivery vehicles that prohibits use of Coronado Avenue beyond the loading driveway (i.e. restricted on the one-way portion of Coronado). All deliveries and loading operations shall be scheduled between 7:00AM and 8:00PM (except for emergencies).