

**CITY OF MERCED**  
**Development Services**

TO: Martin Luther King Jr. Way Ad-Hoc Advisory Committee  
FROM: Julie Sterling, Associate Planner  
DATE: July 19, 2011  
SUBJECT: Martin Luther King Jr. Way Revitalization Strategy – Objectives 1 and 4  
(Objective 4 Cont. from March 15 and May 17, 2011, Meeting)

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ACTION REQUIRED: Study, Discussion, and Feedback Requested

DISCUSSION

We will be reviewing two objectives to the Martin Luther King Jr. Way Revitalization Strategy. Since a significant part of the “Existing Conditions” part of the report involves transportation and safe crossings, we will be discussing both Objectives #1 and #4 at the meeting. The objectives are listed below:

**1. Improve Transportation Options for Travelers (vehicles, bikes, pedestrians, transit)**

One of the key action items that will likely result from the study will be the inclusion of multi-modal choices for travelers of the corridor. Presently, the corridor does not have a complete sidewalk system, nor does it contain appropriate bicycle facilities. This is highly unfortunate as the socio-economic realities of the neighborhood necessitate residents to use non-auto sources of transportation. The lack of improvements and the economic conditions of the communities force many residents to walk or ride bicycles on the shoulder of the state highway. In addition, sites will be identified for possible future intra-city bus stops. This study will result in a complete strategy that prioritizes needed improvements and includes a funding plan for the eventual construction of these facilities.

It might be beneficial for the Committee to refer to Chapter 6 of the “Draft” Strategy as it relates to the existing transportation conditions of the area, roadway constraints and opportunities, and Caltrans policies and goals.

**4. Identify Opportunities to Design and Install Improvements that Provide Safe Crossing Sites**

In its present condition, the corridor presents a significant safety hazard for cross-highway automobiles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. It is unfortunately a common sight to see mothers pushing strollers and senior citizens walking along the shoulder of the

highway as traffic rushes by at 40+ miles per hour. This dangerous situation is further exacerbated by the lack of controlled pedestrian crossings. Throughout the day, an onlooker can see numerous pedestrians running across four lanes of highway traffic attempting to dodge high speed trucks in an effort to cross the highway. This study will identify these deficiencies and develop a strategy to address these present safety concerns.

The Committee should refer to Chapter 8 of the Revitalization Strategy to review the travel patterns, destinations, and the analysis of the data collection for pedestrians, bicyclists, and big rig trucks.

Discussion topics will include reviewing several scenarios for the future Martin Luther King Jr. Way corridor, understanding the process and costs involved, the potential for obstacles, and setting priorities for improvements and infrastructure. To assist in this task, staff has put together five maps to use as tools. Attachments A through E show five scenarios of improvements to Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Although they are small in scale, larger maps will be available at the meeting including one that we can mark up as we identify priorities. Some of the scenarios have dashed lines for bicycle lanes, street lights and street trees in a median, signalized intersections, pedestrian-activated cross-walks, and bus turn-outs. The Committee may come up with other scenarios as we discuss priorities.

Focusing on Transportation, various scenarios will be addressed that include:

- Business accessibility – Access along Martin Luther King Jr. Way is vital to the businesses along and in close proximity to the corridor. A median could limit the ability of customers to turn into these driveways. As such, should the future vision of Martin Luther King Jr. Way include a solid median, a median with breaks only at intersections and in front of the Merced County Fire Department, a limited median, or none at all?
- Multi-modal choices for travelers – A safe pedestrian-friendly roadway may include signalized intersections, pedestrian-activated crossings, bicycle lanes, bus turn-outs (and where should they be located), bulb-outs at side streets, wider sidewalks with no impediments blocking the path, park strips, lighting, etc.
- Truck traffic – In order to change or remove truck traffic along the corridor, it would need to be a staged event that would involve a time element, discussions between the City, Merced County, and Caltrans. Trucks need access to Hwy 99, however, if not by way of Martin Luther King Jr. Way/South Highway 59, what are the alternatives to create a new route? And, in the interim, is it feasible to deter truck traffic on Martin Luther King Jr. Way with narrower traffic lanes, a median, pedestrian-activated cross-walks, bicycle lanes on the state highway, or other traffic calming elements?

Attachments:

- A) Map #1
- B) Map #2
- C) Map #3
- D) Map #4
- E) Map #5
- F) Chapter 6 of the Martin Luther King Jr. Way Revitalization Strategy Background Report
- G) Chapter 8 of the Martin Luther King Jr. Way Revitalization Strategy Background Report

# Map Legend

## Maps #1-#5



Traffic Signal



Tree



Median



Street Light



Pedestrian Crossing Signal



Marked Pavement for Fire Department Crossing



Crosswalk



Bike Lane