

WINTON VALERO GAS STATION

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9 March 2011

HONORABLE MICHAEL SWEENEY
Mayor, City of Hayward
777 B Street, Hayward Ca 94541

Dear Mayor Sweeney,

We are the owners, employees and customers of the Valero gas station, and residents living around the corner of West Winton Avenue and Hesperian Boulevard collectively organizing ourselves as the 'People Power' vs. Winton Mouth Widening. The City intends to appropriate a portion of the Valero lot to accommodate an additional lane to widen the mouth of West Winton Avenue by 400 ft. on the north side.

We oppose the widening for the following reasons:

I. It is a band-aid to a cancer. The cost does not justify the minimal impact of the additional lane to the over-all congestion on Winton Avenue. The existing two lanes, one exclusive for left turn and another for right turn, are hardly used because they are usually blocked, and therefore cannot be accessed by vehicles.

The choke point begins on the corner of Wright Dr. that stretches up to the corner of Stonewall Avenue. Once vehicles, a lot of them are those 53-footer container vans, pile up on the corner of Wright Dr., this additional lane would be hard to access, just like the two existing ones. Besides, the KEEP CLEAR painted sign on the corner of Wright Dr. will cut entry into the new lane even if Winton Avenue is widened beginning on the frontage of O.D. Signs building.

Unless westbound Winton Avenue is widened from the I-880 South ramp, the 400 ft. widening to a one-mile stretch of traffic congestion is by no means a solution.

Even Mr. Robert Bauman, director of Public Works of the City of Hayward, admitted that this widening project is, and I quote, an "imperfect solution" during the February 17, 2011 public hearing on the I-880/SR 92 Reliever Route Project Phase 1 at the Ochoa Middle School on Depot Road.

In this time of budgetary crisis, when we are closing down schools and sacrificing other crucial social and public services, why waste taxpayers' money on an "imperfect solution". Besides, with business in the industrial area so dismal with the stretch of Winton Avenue and its outlying streets teeming with vacant spaces, the traffic study

that was used to justify this project no longer reflects the true traffic situation in this corner. And who knows when the elusive economic recovery will come, but the current flow of traffic in this corner is much better than before. As they say, if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

IMPROVED TRAFFIC SIGNAL MANAGEMENT:

I practically live on this corner. I'm in this corner 7 days a week overseeing the management of our business, and based on my observation, and those of commuters and Hayward residents who patronize our gas station, this is what we suggest as a possible solution:

a. The utilization of two existing lanes of the four-lane road is not optimized because of the traffic signal management. Vehicles on the two center lanes going through are stuck to a point where the lanes exclusively allotted for those turning left and right are blocked, and cannot be accessed, rendering them clear of traffic most of the time.

b. The timing of the traffic lights on West Winton on the Valero side goes this way: The southbound left turn in the direction of Chabot College goes simultaneously with the northbound left turn in the direction of A. Street from the Toys R' Us corner.

The cars on the two center through lanes from the Valero side are stopped and so are those on northbound exclusive right turn lane as they have to wait for those cars making left from the Toys R' Us side. With the northbound left turn kept on for so long, the traffic on the two through lanes stretches up to Stonewall Avenue and thereby blocking cars trying to occupy the southbound left turn lane and the northbound right turn lane. While the northbound left-turning lanes continue going, the southbound left turn lane is suddenly stopped to let the eastbound through lanes towards I-880 pass, while still keeping the westbound through lanes towards Cabot Blvd. stuck.

c. This creates a bottleneck on Wright Dr. up to Stonewall Avenue, denying access to the existing dedicated left and right turn lanes. Once the flow of traffic is choked on Wright Dr. or from the opening of the widened West Winton mouth, the additional lane won't be accessed, anyway.

1. Instead of an additional lane, why not let traffic on all four lanes let go at the same time. Instead of dedicating two south-bound left turn lanes, why not keep one exclusive left-turn lane, an additional shared left/through lane and restrip the exclusive right turn into a shared through/right turn lane, then all let go at the same time to relieve congestion that stretches up to the I-880 South ramp.

2. My other observation is that the KEEP CLEAR space on Odom is hardly used, and compounds the bottleneck; denying access to the exclusive left and right turn lanes. There are more cars turning right exiting our gas station than vehicles going in and out of Odom

St., only because it's scary to time your way out to cross going left onto I-880 North with oncoming traffic from west of Winton Avenue. Why not install a traffic signal instead, like the one on the corner of Hayward Blvd. and Tribune St., timed to turn on only when there are accessing vehicles, than laying it wasted vacant.

As residents, we abhor any widening for our own safety, and the degradation of our quality of life. This project was designed to accommodate commute traffic and would not benefit Hayward residents.

The City of Hayward General Plan recognizes this when it states: *“Although street widenings are intended to reduce congestion, such improvements can attract more traffic as a result of the increased capacity. Also, in built-up urbanized areas, widenings frequently have taken right-of-way used for pedestrians and street trees, leaving inadequate building setbacks. Wider streets generally discourage pedestrian crossings. Alternatives to street widening, such as limitations on parking and turning and on driveway curb cuts, need to be evaluated as ways of increasing the capacity of arterials.”*

II. It is an abandonment of the City of Hayward's General Plan in improving transportation movements. The plan calls for a direct access to the Southland Mall to relieve traffic congestion on Winton Avenue since oncoming shoppers are pushed forward up to Hesperian Blvd. to get to the mall, especially during the holiday shopping season.

And I quote: *Access to Southland Mall is important to maintain its attractiveness and continued viability as a regional shopping center. In particular, full access from I-880 must be ensured as part of any proposed transportation improvements. In addition, improvements in traffic flow along the freeway ramps and adjacent arterials are needed to enhance accessibility and minimize the impacts of conflicting turning movements.*

Why waste taxpayers' money on an “imperfect solution” when the cost could be optimized if the city will only follow its General Plan (i.e. build a direct access to the Southland Mall)? In a memorandum dated November 2, 2009 to Bimla Rhinehart, executive director of the California Transportation Commission, the City of Hayward recognized that the implementation of the SR 238 Hayward Bypass Local Alternative Transportation Improvement Program (LATIP), of which the direct access to the Southland Mall is a major component, points out to the easing up of traffic on West Winton Avenue: *“Even though extensive growth has occurred in 2025, the effect of the proposed network has improved conditions by diverting traffic away from former congested locations (e.g.: Foothill/Mission & Jackson Street improves from F to D and Hesperian & Winton Avenue improves from E to C).”*

III. The widening will destroy our livelihood, and the way of life of thousands of commuters and residents relying on our cheap and reliable services.

The widening will eliminate the gasoline dispenser on the Winton Avenue side. With setbacks required by the City, the second gasoline dispenser on the same side would have to be eliminated too. Technically, there are only three functional pumps on this lot. Of the two other dispensers on the Hesperian Blvd. side, only one works because one is always obstructed when the other pump is in use. This will then leave us with one functional pump. Even if we operate with just one pump, accessibility to our lot would be severely restricted with the widening, therefore, discouraging customers.

This gas station, with its convenience store and auto repair shop, was built in the 1960s and has served the community well. It serves a purpose, and destroying an institution for a 400-foot-length of an "imperfect solution" to a traffic problem perpetuates a stereotype of a city hall indifferent to the sentiments of its residents. We are the second-generation owners of this gas station, and our children are already involved in its operations, and, God willing, will soon take over ownership of this business, and hopefully, the succeeding generations after them. Our relatives and employees who started working here from the time this station was bought in the 1980s already have their children working here too. This has been a destination for thousands of commuters and Hayward residents alike, simply because we always offer the cheapest gasoline prices in the vicinity.

Even if we owe the banks about \$1 million, we are just happy to take what can keep our simple lifestyle so we can share the rest to our employees and in keeping our street prices cheaper than everybody else.

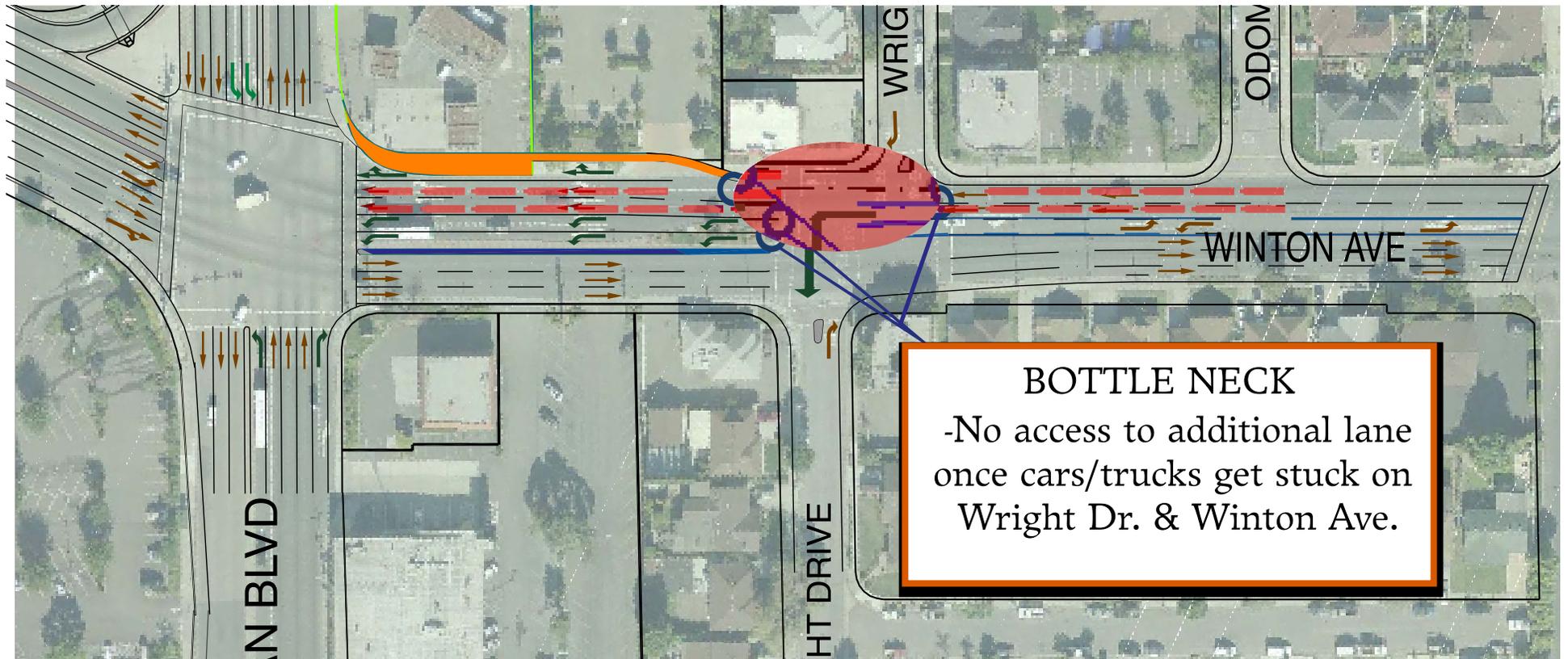
We believe that the taxpayers will be better served if the city will not implement this widening project, and we hope you will consider our opposition to this project.

Thank you very much.

Respectfully yours,

Oscar Mirasol Quiambao
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The proposed lane cannot be accessed

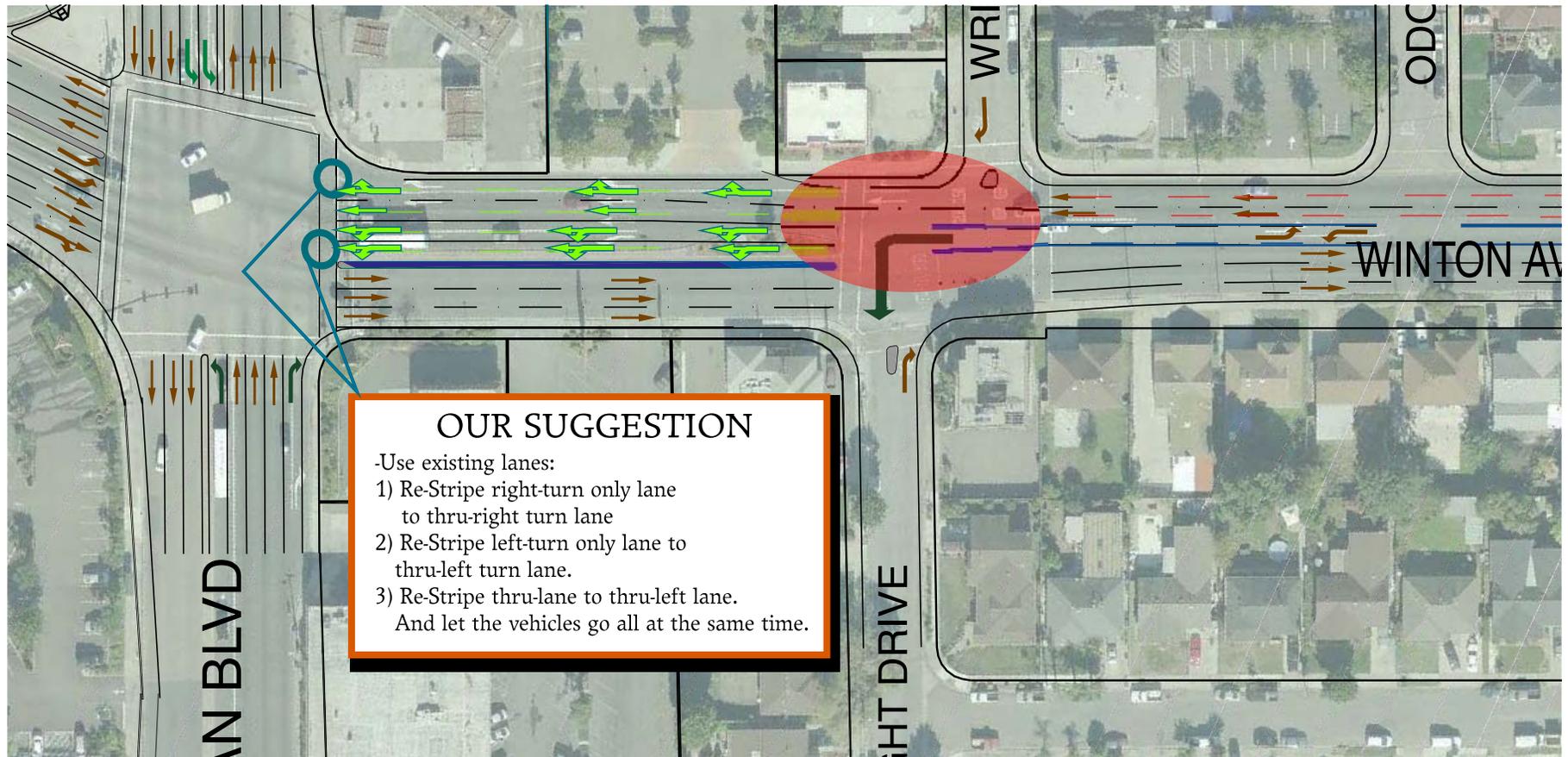




**Winton Ave/Hesperian Blvd
Intersection Improvements**

- *Additional westbound left turn lane on Winton Ave. to southbound Hesperian Blvd.*
- *Additional westbound through lane on Winton Avenue*

A Better Solution



Without Wasting Tax Payers Money
In This Time of Budgetary Crisis