



Item No. 26 Town of Atherton

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – REGULAR AGENDA

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER**

**FROM: MICHAEL KASHIWAGI
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR**

DATE: OCTOBER 19, 2016

**SUBJECT: DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION REGARDING A
POTENTIAL REQUEST TO CALTRANS TO REMOVE THE
EXISTING MARKED CROSSWALK AT THE INTERSECTION OF
STOCKBRIDGE AVE AND EL CAMINO REAL**

RECOMMENDATION

Provide direction to staff regarding a potential request to Caltrans to remove the existing marked crosswalk at the intersection of Stockbridge Avenue and El Camino Real.

BACKGROUND

Stockbridge Avenue at El Camino Real (ECR) is a T-intersection with residential land uses on the west side and dental/medical office and residential land uses on the east side of ECR. Due to the dental/medical land uses on the east side, this intersection has a good potential for pedestrian activity. Until recently, the Stockbridge/ECR intersection was one of 5 locations with marked crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections within the Town of Atherton. As a result of numerous discussions with Caltrans over the past 3 years, a number of improvements and transportation planning initiatives have been identified as described below.

Construction of Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon at Almendral Avenue

In February 2015, City Council directed staff to improve this intersection with a traffic control device. Accordingly, a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon was designed for this intersection. In November 2015, City Council awarded the contract for construction of the Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon. Construction was completed and the signal was activated on August 17, 2016.

Construction of Hybrid Pedestrian Beacons at Alejandra Avenue and Isabella Avenue

The construction of Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons at Alejandra Avenue and Isabella Avenue is included in the SR 82 Crosswalk Safety Project. This is a state funded project designed and managed by Caltrans District 4. Construction bids for this project has been received and awarded.

Preliminary underground utility work for these 2 signals is scheduled to begin the week of October 5th. The Town has not received a complete construction schedule from Caltrans but it is hoped that the 2 Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons will be operational by the Spring of 2017.

Selby Lane/ECR Intersection

Since April 2015, the Town of Atherton, Caltrans, and San Mateo County have been engaged in discussions looking at a number of alternatives to improve the safety and operations of the Selby/ECR intersection. The purpose was to identify alternatives which all three agencies could support. This meant identifying alternatives which were sensitive and respectful of neighborhood traffic concerns as well as alternatives which preserved the operational capacity and operations of the El Camino Real Corridor.

Through this process a number of alternatives were identified. In February 2016, a Community Workshop was held at Selby Elementary School to share these alternatives to solicit community feedback and input. The meeting was broadly advertised to residents living on Selby Lane as well as adjacent Redwood City and San Mateo County residents. Based upon sign-in sheet information, there was a good representation of Town of Atherton, Redwood City, and San Mateo County residents attending the workshop.

After the presentation of concepts and response to questions, the attendees were asked to show their support or non-support of the alternatives through the placement of colored dots. Through this process, two alternatives emerged as the preferred options. These were the traffic signal alternative and a non-signalized alternative which would eliminate all existing turn movements except the northbound ECR left turn into Selby Lane.

In April 2016, City Council authorized additional engineering analysis required by Caltrans to assess the potential operational impacts to El Camino Real of the 2 preferred alternatives. The technical analysis has been completed and meetings are being scheduled with Caltrans to review. After this task is completed, a follow-up Community Workshop will be scheduled to determine if there is community consensus of a preferred project.

El Camino Real Complete Streets Plan

In May 2016, City Council approved a consultant services contract to prepare a Complete Streets Plan for the portion of El Camino Real within the Town of Atherton. The main deliverable of the Complete Streets Plan will serve as the framework for how the Town and Caltrans move forward with future planning and implementation of improvements on the ECR Corridor along with potential funding.

One of the focus areas of this plan will be to identify alternatives to improve the safety and accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing El Camino Real. This will include an evaluation of current marked crosswalk locations as well as recommendations for changes or additions. The Plan will also include analyses to identify and evaluate viable options to enhance safety, improve mobility and accessibility throughout the corridor.

The Plan will be developed in phases. The first phase will include a thoughtful public engagement effort to develop alternatives that will address varied stakeholder interests within the ECR corridor. Key agency stakeholders will be Caltrans and the Menlo Fire District, as well as adjacent agencies such as Menlo Park, the County, and Redwood City.

Once a short-list of viable alternatives have been identified, staff will report back to the City Council to seek authorization for the second phase of the study that will include detailed traffic operation analysis and the identification of a preferred project. A preliminary cost estimate for the preferred project will also be prepared.

DISCUSSION

At the September City Council meeting, City Council requested an item be placed on the October Council agenda to discuss the potential removal of the existing marked crosswalk at Stockbridge Avenue and El Camino Real. Since El Camino Real is a State Highway, any modifications to existing traffic controls are under the jurisdictional control and authority of Caltrans.

Marked Crosswalks

Per the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), marked crosswalks serve several purposes:

1. Crosswalk markings provide guidance for pedestrians who are crossing roadways. In other words, marked crosswalks are intended to direct pedestrians to the best places to cross the street, and
2. Crosswalk markings also serve to alert drivers of a pedestrian crossing point which help create reasonable expectations for motorists with regard to locations where pedestrians may cross the roadway and the predictability of pedestrian actions and movement

A marked crosswalk is a traffic control device. The installation or removal of any traffic control devices should not be done indiscriminately and should only be done after performing an appropriate engineering study. In the case of marked crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections, relevant data to collect and review would include number of pedestrians crossing, the age of pedestrians using the crossing, adjacent land use, street classification, traffic volumes, posted speed limits, distance to nearest crosswalk, roadway visibility and sight distance, vicinity of schools, etc.

Removal of Marked Crosswalks

If the City Council wished to pursue the removal of the existing crosswalk at Stockbridge Avenue, staff would contact the appropriate staff at Caltrans with the request. Caltrans would then presumably initiate some sort of engineering review as described above. If Caltrans supports the removal of the crosswalk, the removal must follow requirements outlined in California Vehicle Code Section 21950.5 which states:

An existing marked crosswalk may not be removed unless notice and opportunity to be heard is provided to the public not less than 30 days prior to the scheduled date of removal. In addition to any other public notice requirements, the notice of proposed removal shall be posted at the crosswalk identified for removal.

POLICY FOCUS

City Council discussion related to the potential removal of the marked crosswalk at the intersection of Stockbridge Avenue and El Camino Real is consistent with previous discussions and actions to improve the safety, accessibility and mobility of pedestrians and bicyclists along and across El Camino Real. Important considerations are the process and timing of the above projects.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no identified fiscal impact associated with this item at this time.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in print and electronically. Information about the project is also disseminated via the Town's electronic News Flash and Atherton Online. There are approximately 1,200 subscribers to the Town's electronic News Flash publications. Subscribers include residents as well as stakeholders – to include, but be not limited to, media outlets, school districts, Menlo Park Fire District, service providers (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.