



CITY COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY MINUTES

Regular Meeting
Tuesday, May 28, 2002
7:30 p.m.
Menlo Park Council Chamber
801 Laurel Street, Menlo Park

ROLL CALL – Mayor Schmidt called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Kinney and Councilmembers Borak , Collacchi and Jellins were present. Staff present included City Manager Boesch, Assistant City Manager Seymour, City Attorney McClure, City Clerk Ramos and other department heads.

A. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS - None

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS, APPOINTMENTS AND REPORTS

1. Arts Commission (one vacancy) open until filled and the Housing Commission (one vacancy) with an application deadline of July 2, 2002 – Mayor Schmidt announced the vacancy.
2. Councilmember Reports: Schmidt, Kinney, Borak, Collacchi, Jellins.

Councilmember Kinney reported that the San Francisquito Creek reconnaissance study for the Army Corps of Engineers was approved by Congress and included in next year's budget.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Councilmember Jellins said that there was some misunderstanding from the public about the public comment process and provided clarification.

Bill Joyce, Menlo Park, commented about safety issues on Santa Cruz Avenue and urged the Council to remove the barriers.

Bart Spencer, Fire District, expressed concerns about the impediments on Santa Cruz Avenue and said that the current configuration inhibits the Fire Department to respond to emergencies in a timely manner. He stated for the record that the Fire District does not support the project and asked that the obstacles be removed.

D. CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Approval of audited bills for period 47 ending May 17, 2002.
2. Acceptance of work for the Officer Jack W. Lyle Memorial Park Project.

M/S Kinney/Schmidt to approve the consent calendar item 1 and 2 as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

E. PUBLIC HEARING - None

F. REGULAR BUSINESS

1. Reconsideration of the Santa Cruz Avenue traffic calming measures.

Kent Steffens, Public Works Director, presented the staff report with an overhead presentation depicting several modifications to the intersections on Santa Cruz Avenue and proposed next steps as listed below. He noted that additional presentation materials are on file with the agenda packet from the City Clerk's office. He responded to questions regarding lane widths, parking, the process of removal of certain elements and review of other elements, the criteria used by staff for its recommendations, sidewalks, turn pockets, and traffic striping.

Recommended modifications:

- Johnson Street – remove curb extensions, median islands, and the crosswalk on the west side
- Fremont Street – remove all curb extensions, median islands, and the crosswalk
- Arbor Road – remove curb extensions, median islands, and the crosswalk in between northbound and southbound Arbor Road
- Windsor Street – remove all curb extensions, median islands, and the crosswalk on the east side, remove curb extensions on the west side
- San Mateo Drive – remove curb extensions, reconfigure median islands to provide 10 foot wide through lanes
- May Brown Way – remove all curb extensions
- Hermosa Way – remove all curb extensions, median islands, and the crosswalks
- Rosefield Way – remove all curb extensions, median islands, and the crosswalk on the west side, remove all curb extensions on the east side
- Cotton Street – remove all curb extensions, median islands, and the crosswalk on the west side, remove all curb extensions on the east side
- Hobart Street – remove all curb extensions, median islands, and the crosswalk on the west side, remove all curb extensions on the east side
- Hillview Drive – remove all curb extensions
- Olive Street – no changes
- Elder Avenue – remove all median islands, remove west crosswalk, provide high visibility signage at east crosswalk
- Lemon – remove median islands and crosswalk on east side, reduce the size of the median islands at North Lemon

Recommended next steps:

- Proceed with work to remove or modify curb extensions and median islands
- Complete a detailed layout for all signage, no parking areas, and striping based on the approved redesign and return to Council for final approval
- Complete construction of redesigned features
- Monitor the project for approximately six months and make other adjustments as needed.

Councilmember Jellins asked the Fire Department to provide comments about the proposed modifications.

Bart Spencer, Director, Menlo Park Fire District, clarified that the district does not have a blanket policy for traffic calming measures but would like to provide public safety in every way possible. He noted that Santa Cruz Avenue is a main corridor in responding to emergencies on the west side of the district and the barriers in the middle lane would impede the response time. He proposed to eliminate any barriers in the middle lane and noted that there are other options to explore. He asked that City staff meet with District staff to discuss other options. He responded to questions about response times.

Councilmember Jellins suggested staff meet with the Fire District to explore options.

Mayor Schmidt commended staff on its recommendations and noted the oversight in the design including the curb extensions that force users into the bike lane which is unsafe.

Megan Turner, Menlo Park, commented about safety for bicyclists and expressed support for staff's recommendations. She asked to put a division between the bike and traffic lane with rumble strips

Patrick Michaels, St. Raymond's Church, Menlo Park, expressed concern about retaining the median islands because it will inhibit the flow of traffic. He is upset that the traffic mess in front of the church has not been addressed. He said that the project is flawed and has to go back to the drawing board and a six-month test period is not a good idea.

Patrick Hoopes, Menlo Park, supports the plan for the reason that it poses an inconvenience, which might reduce commuters, noise and traffic.

Greg McMillan, Menlo Park, supported the progress made and in particular, the elimination of the curb extensions. He requested marking the road where traffic should turn left at either direction at the intersection of San Mateo and urged the Council to consider the comments of the Fire District and the Police Department.

James Clendenin, Menlo Park, expressed disappointment that the implementation of the project after a two-year period has turned out poorly. He commended staff for the modifications and suggested removing all the curb extensions on Arbor Drive. He noted that traffic has slowed down and pedestrians are able to cross the streets safer.

Lisa Anderson, Menlo Park, expressed support for the proposed changes and stressed the need to address traffic speed on Santa Cruz Avenue. She noted that this experience has proven the importance of involving and notifying the community. She recommended removing all of the curb extensions.

Stephen Fields, Menlo Park, suggested removing all median islands and noted that traffic coming from the side streets entering Santa Cruz Avenue has not been addressed. He observed that motorists do not stop at crosswalks and suggested installing a yield sign or other sign to stop traffic at the crosswalks.

Grant Malquist, Menlo Park, suggested removing all the curb extensions and cut the median islands in half and put signs up to alert motorists about pedestrian crossing.

Walter Kaye, Menlo Park, supported the proposed changes and suggested addressing the curb extensions where there is a median island because it constricts passage.

Libby Hagman, Menlo Park, submitted a piece of debris she picked up from Cotton and Santa Cruz Avenue. She presented a petition from 1051 residents imploring the removal of all the obstructions on Santa Cruz Avenue. She said that the Council's lack of action is unacceptable and urged action immediately. She urged the City to start over, prepare an EIR, and consult with SamTrans, the Fire District, and advocates for the disabled and special needs.

Sharon Delly, Menlo Park, did not speak.

Lillian Schulte, Menlo Park, opposes the curb extensions for safety reasons.

Al Filice, Menlo Park, commented about narrow lanes and safety. He stressed the importance of emergency response times.

Robert Cronin, Bicycle Commission, said that the curb extensions do not force bicyclists into the traffic lane because the bike lanes meet the minimum width requirements even in places where parking is allowed. He noted that the project has helped reduced speed on Santa Cruz Avenue and supports staff's recommendations. He is disappointed that the project did not help in making the street pedestrian-friendly.

Kay Real, Menlo Park, questioned the numerous crosswalks and said that it frustrates motorists. She indicated that there are many other ways to slow down traffic like stop signs, police patrol, bumps, traffic cameras and signs that remind motorists about the consequences of speeding. She suggested returning the third lane to improve traffic flow when motorists are turning into the side streets.

Milton Borg, Menlo Park, said that the obstructions and crosswalks are unsafe for pedestrians. He suggested that police presence in the area will slow down traffic.

Elaine Knapp, Menlo Park, said that she was surprised to see the obstacles on the roadway without receiving prior notification. She questioned why other options like police enforcement and stop signs were not considered.

Pat White, Menlo Park, opposed the current configuration and stressed that every curb extension and every median is dangerous. He also commented that he would not want to repeat this experience for Middle Avenue and said that the community needs traffic to flow more freely and the downtown needs more parking.

Mary Jo McCarthy, Menlo Park, commented that the crosswalks have improved safety for pedestrians especially on Olive and Santa Cruz Avenue. She urged the Council to not dismiss the sidewalk issue for safety reasons.

James Schott, Menlo Park, commented that the focus should be on safety. He observed that traffic has slowed down and noted that the median islands are a place for motorists to stop and watch for pedestrians. He asked that everyone do their share to make Santa Cruz Avenue a safe street for all.

Horace Nash, Menlo Park, supported staff's recommendations. He said that street striping will help identify the measures and suggested leaving some room between the left hand stripe and the traffic lane and the island and suggested expediting the removal of the curb extensions.

Cammie Sparks, Menlo Park, suggested including BFI in the study process because of the size of their trucks. She also noted that the curb extensions cause difficulty for people who get dropped off at the curb or cars that have to pull in and out when dropping off or picking up passengers.

Dennis Maxwell, Menlo Park, suggested removing all of the obstacles completely and is surprised to see the project design turn out this way.

Ollie Brown, Menlo Park, did not speak.

Greg Druehl, Menlo Park, said that the new paving has reduced noise and supports sidewalks. He does not want Santa Cruz Avenue to become an expressway for commuters and suggested beautifying it and making it pedestrian and bicyclist friendly.

Edward Mroz, Menlo Park, commented about air pollution resulting from stop and go traffic. He suggested air pollution be considered when reviewing future projects because it can become a safety hazard.

Dolores Togneri-Chappell, Menlo Park, said she would like a stop sign or a stoplight at the intersection of San Mateo and Santa Cruz Avenue. She suggested removing the barriers because they are not the solution and that the City consider other options. She said that the money could have been spent on sidewalks and police enforcement.

Leslie Wambach, Menlo Park, expressed a general support of the project and noted the reduced traffic speed. She said it is hard to judge the project without its markings and striping. She said that it is important for pedestrians to have a safe and designated route in the short term and sidewalks are needed. She supports staff's recommendation.

Maya Seawald, Menlo Park, expressed concern about access, especially for emergency vehicles, and agreed with Al Filice regarding his recommendations about emergency vehicles.

Bronte Abraham, Menlo Park, questioned the accuracy of the message communicated to her by the traffic consultant that the study was to be a solution for pedestrians and a way to increase sidewalk access from San Mateo Drive to downtown. She commented about difficulty in making a left hand turn to Santa Cruz Avenue and dropping children off at Oak Knoll School because of the median. She asked that the median be removed.

Mark Louie, Menlo Park, commented about safety for pedestrians or bicyclists. He expressed some support for staff's recommendations, however, he would prefer to remove all of the curb extensions and the median islands because they are hazardous and they make it difficult to turn left from some of the side streets. He urged the Council to listen to the community.

David Roise, Menlo Park, Chair of the Bicycle Commission, supported the big picture of making the street safer for bicyclists and pedestrians. He stressed the need for sidewalks because it will make a big improvement. He thought that the problem might be that many motorists are used to driving fast on Santa Cruz Avenue and do not consider the other users. He urged the community to be better drivers and pay attention to make it a safe street.

Peter Hart, Menlo Park, did not speak.

Pamela Kelly, Menlo Park, suggested removing the impediments. She urged the Council to look at the entire Santa Cruz Avenue for the striping plan and provide a lane for pedestrians.

Roger Hagman, Menlo Park, opposed staff's recommendation and suggested removing all of the obstacles. He expressed disappointment to seeing no changes to the crosswalks at St. Raymond's Church, which are dangerous for the vision impaired, or persons with wheelchairs. He noted that the lanes are not wide enough for SamTrans buses. He asked the Council to listen to the Fire District's concerns.

Joyce Farrell, Menlo Park, requested that the City study the vehicle and pedestrian traffic at the corner of Santa Cruz Avenue and Olive Street. She suggested considering safety requirements in the redesign of this project regarding lane width requirements for fire trucks, a lane for pedestrians and sidewalks.

Becky Galvez, Menlo Park, questioned why some of the obstacles are being retained and commented on the importance of time for the emergency vehicles. She noted that the sidewalks are not depicted accurately on the maps and questioned the planting of trees on the islands, noting it would block the view and bring about irrigation problems. She suggested eliminating the red bike lanes for aesthetic reasons. She suggested a stoplight at Olive Street and Santa Cruz Avenue and Elder Avenue and Santa Cruz Avenue instead of Middle Avenue. She also commented that the money spent for the project could have been used for sidewalks.

Randy Feldman, Menlo Park, commented about the importance of the Fire District's recommendations and that they should be considered. He said that he has no problem living on a thoroughfare and that the City cannot legislate driving behavior. He suggested double striping the bike lane and removing all of the obstacles.

Irene Searles, Menlo Park, commented that the motorists have slowed down and agreed that the curb extensions have caused safety concerns. She said that staff's recommendations are reasonable and hopes that more attention will be placed on the other items of concern. Although she supports that emergency vehicles have to speed, she does not support making all roads a speedway. She supports focusing on the long term and the goals of traffic calming and suggested that the community can help make the road safer by paying attention to drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Fanny Allen, Menlo Park, observed that motorists are driving slower and with caution. She thought that staff's recommended changes are more radical than she expected. She would like to see some of the curb extensions and median islands retained and noted it is difficult to judge the project because it is not completed. She recalled from the meetings last year that there was a lot of support to make Santa Cruz Avenue safer.

Michael Tolstoy, Menlo Park, commented that he has to deal with similar safety issues as an official of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg, Russia. He commented about addressing the matter for the good of all people regardless of whether they are pedestrians, bicyclists or motorists.

Dee Skaar, Menlo Park, supports the overall general concept of the project and staff's recommendations. She said that she does not know if the end result will slow traffic down and cited Willow Road as an example of motorists driving over the speed limit in spite of the traffic calming measures in place.

Eleanor Rakonitz, Menlo Park, said that all motorists should slow down. She suggested removing all of the obstacles and lowering the speed to 25 mph.

Sue Levitz, Menlo Park, commended the traffic calming measures and noted that public education should be included in the plan. She said that pedestrians should not be forced to share their passageway with vehicles. She supports sidewalks and middle turn lanes especially for the many side streets.

Tom Maurano, Menlo Park, supports staff's recommendation for removal however he would like to see a follow up plan about the other concerns including traffic lane widths for the emergency and public vehicles.

Mayor Schmidt declared a recess and reconvened the meeting 10:45 p.m.

Questions and discussion ensued regarding the crosswalk at St. Raymond's Church, input from the Police and Fire Departments, and the diagonal crosswalks.

Councilmember Jellins suggested that whatever action Council takes should include a review by the Fire District.

Councilmember Kinney provided background information about the process that has evolved from the traffic and safety concerns on Santa Cruz Avenue. He summarized many of the concerns expressed and noted that there has been a significant increase in concerns and the public participation at this juncture compared to last year's meetings when the project was initially presented to Council. He commented about the success of the resurfacing project to reduce noise and stated his support for sidewalks. He described the complexity of Santa Cruz Avenue, the various objectives to address all of the concerns and insufficient resources. He requested that the Police continue to look into other enforcement options.

M/S Kinney/Schmidt to:

- **Support staff's recommended changes as listed in the staff report as follows:**
 - **Curb extensions will be eliminated at 13 of 18 locations**
 - **Remaining curb extension "cut throughs" will be filled in**
 - **Crosswalk locations are reduced from 22 to 12**
 - **Center turn lane is being restored by removing median islands at ten locations**
 - **All through travel lanes will have a ten foot minimum width**
- **Study the remaining curb extensions at Arbor and Johnson**
- **Study median island at St. Raymond's Church**
- **Bring back a striping plan**
- **Identify parking restrictions along Santa Cruz Avenue**
- **Reevaluate the lane widths particularly those by the median islands**

Councilmember Borak concurred with the motion and expressed concern about the diagonal sidewalk at St. Raymond's Church.

Councilmember Kinney replied there is no design for the diagonal sidewalk at St. Raymond's for Council to base a determination at this time.

Mayor Schmidt commented that the public process and the public feedback have helped him evaluate and focus on the problem. He said that the design concept is good but without sidewalks traffic calming will not work. He observed that traffic has slowed on Santa Cruz Avenue because of the current visual constrictions. He cited a road configuration in the Stanford campus that is working with similar elements to the Santa Cruz Avenue configuration but with sidewalks. He acknowledged that the project would have to take a step back in order to create a safe environment, but without sidewalks some problems would continue to persist. He clarified that the current proposal will make the road safer for pedestrians but will also negate some of the speed reductions accomplished with this project. He is disappointed about the process and the project's shortcomings. He clarified his statement about the Fire District's position on traffic calming because of response times and noted that if the design were modified to accommodate the District's needs, there would be other disadvantages that would jeopardize traffic safety. He suggested involving them in the striping and lane review.

Questions and discussion ensued regarding the gap in sidewalks and scope and process for Phase 2 of the project.

Councilmember Collacchi said he could not support the motion because he believes that the measures are not wanted. He noted that the attempt to salvage the project has blurred the goals and he is unsure whether the direction of the project will serve any purpose or be as effective, or if the benefits are significant enough to move forward with the remaining measures. He felt that Council responded to the information that was presented to them in this process but that the information was not representative. At this point, he felt that it would be best to scrape the project until there is a consensus in the community and clear goals.

Councilmember Jellins concurred with Councilmember Collacchi. He referred to the petition that was submitted opposing the project and noted that the City's public outreach for this project was inadequate. He said that the project goals were laudable, a vision was in place and the design was approved with the expectation that it would create a safe road. However, the public participation piece was not considered after the design of the project prior to the approval of the contract and the project's implementation. He said he is further troubled about implementing the remainder of the design without obtaining support from the community. He said that he is uncomfortable in going to the next step. He would prefer scraping the project and returning it to staff to revisit the remaining elements in consultation with the Fire District and the Police Department. For these reasons, he could not support the motion.

Councilmember Collacchi said it would be good to have additional information about costs for sidewalks.

City Attorney McClure clarified that the sidewalk numbers would be included in the Phase 2 report when it comes back before the Council.

Motion passed 3-2 with Councilmembers Collacchi and Jellins dissenting.

2. Consideration of legislative items listed in the League of California Cities Bulletin(s), or items referred to in Written Communications or Information Items, including decisions to support or oppose any such legislative, communication or information item.

City Manager Boesch presented a request from C/CAG to appoint two representatives to serve on the 20/20 Peninsula Gateway Study. He recommended designating one of the Councilmembers to serve on the Policy Committee and Jamal Rahimi, Transportation Manager, to serve on the Technical Committee. He asked the Council to designate its representative tonight so this can be communicated to C/CAG this week and staff would bring it back for Council ratification next week.

There was consensus to select Mayor Schmidt to serve on the Policy Committee and Jamal Rahimi, Transportation Manager, to serve on the Technical Committee.

G. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS - None

H. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Status of Burgess Pool – Noted and filed.

I. PUBLIC COMMENT #2 - None

J. ADJOURNMENT – 11:40 p.m.

Susan A. Ramos, CMC, City Clerk
Approved by City Council on July 16, 2002