



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: PUBLIC WORKS

File #: 20-825

Board Meeting Date: 10/20/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: James C. Porter, Department of Public Works
Subject: Santa Cruz Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas Improvements Study

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution approving the Santa Cruz Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas Improvements Project and supporting an application to the San Mateo Transportation Authority for pedestrian and bicycle program funding.

BACKGROUND:

The Santa Cruz Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas corridor from Sand Hill Road to Avy Avenue serves as a key connection between communities in unincorporated San Mateo County, the City of Palo Alto, Stanford University, and the City of Menlo Park. It also provides local access to the West Menlo Park area, including several schools. The corridor is currently auto-oriented and is also a main route for cyclists and buses. There are "Share the Road" pavement markings for bicyclists and autos, and SamTrans and school bus stops along the corridor. The community requested the Department to evaluate improvements to this corridor to enhance corridor safety and accessibility for multi-modal usage.

Funded primarily by **Measure K** funds, the Santa Cruz Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas Improvements Study identified and assessed potential improvement measures. These measures are consistent with goals and objectives identified through a robust community outreach effort led by a Task Force of community members and, fire and law enforcement officials, and Public Works staff.

Since 2017, the project, with continual support from Supervisor Horsley's Office, was guided by the community Task Force that engaged the community for input and feedback, which resulted in several recommendations. The County also retained a transportation engineering consultant, Kimley-Horn, to provide technical expertise and to analyze potential traffic impacts of various improvement recommendations. This study focused on a portion of Santa Cruz Avenue (between Sand Hill Road and Sharon Road) and Alameda de las Pulgas (between Santa Cruz Avenue and Avy Avenue), located in unincorporated San Mateo County and in the City of Menlo Park.

In August of 2017, the Department of Public works (Department) held its first community meeting where approximately 120 community members, including members of Santa Cruz/Alameda Safety for Everyone (SAFE), local law enforcement, and City of Menlo Park and County officials attended. The purpose of this meeting was to gather input from the community on corridor usage, challenges, and to prioritize the types of improvements that could be considered. The outcome of this meeting was the formation of the Task Force.

In September of 2018, an extensive survey of the local community was conducted and a total of 701 responses were collected. There was consensus by all respondent groups to the survey for improvements along the study corridor. This included: reduction of vehicle travel speeds, sidewalk improvements, and dedicated bike lanes. Considering the constrained roadway widths, respondents were willing to reduce the number of travel lanes in each direction to provide safety improvements.

Monthly Task Force meetings were held to develop alternatives for roadway improvements. Working with the community, the Task Force and project team developed four alternative designs and a pilot project to remove one lane from northbound Santa Cruz Avenue before the intersection.

Some of the safety improvements identified during the process were implemented by the Department. Improvements such as: reduced speed limit to 25 miles per hour, added radar speed feedback signs, added “Share the Road” bicycle pavement markings, extended keep clear pavement markings, added traffic delineators at Menlo Commons, updated high-visibility “ladder-style” crosswalks, modified signal timing at Sharon Road to give pedestrians a “head start,” reducing conflicts by modifying signals to create gaps for residents entering/exiting the roadway, and removed the free-right turn lane from northbound Santa Cruz Avenue at Alameda de las Pulgas.

DISCUSSION:

The Task Force presented its alternatives at a public meeting on January 30, 2020 and solicited the public’s preferences through an online survey. In general, the alternatives included: (1) keeping the status-quo, (2) minimal improvements without reducing vehicle lanes, (3) reducing one vehicle lane in each direction for dedicated bike lanes and sidewalk improvements, and (4) a hybrid approach of 2 and 3. The survey yielded a clear preference for the hybrid approach; therefore, the Task Force recommended the hybrid alternative that aligned with the community’s preference. Below is a summary of the preferred alternative:

Element #1 - Alameda de las Pulgas from Avy Avenue to Santa Cruz Avenue:

- Reduce one lane in each direction to allow dedicated bike lanes, sidewalks that meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, a two-way left turn lane

Element #2 - Santa Cruz Avenue from Sand Hill Road to Alameda de Las Pulgas:

- Reduce one lane from the southbound direction to allow dedicated bike lanes, sidewalks that meet current ADA standards

Element #3 - The “Y” Intersection of Alameda de las Pulgas and Santa Cruz Avenue

- Reduce intersection size to improve sightlines, reduce pedestrian crossing times.
- Retain no right-turn on red for northbound Santa Cruz Avenue towards Downtown Menlo Park.

The San Mateo County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee provided a Letter of Support for the Study (Attachment A), as well as Letter of Support from the Community Members of the Santa Cruz Avenue/Alameda de Las Pulgas Roadways Improvement Task Force (Attachment B). The Santa Cruz Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas Roadway Improvements Study is provided in Attachment C.

With the preferred alternative identified, additional funding will be required to advance the Study to the next phase. The total estimated cost to implement the project is between \$5,000,000 - 6,000,000. Staff seeks support from this Board to apply for grants to fund various phases of the project.

Staff has identified one grant opportunity from the San Mateo County Transportation Authority and is asking this Board to adopt a resolution in support of the project and the grant application. The grant would fund the development of Engineering, Environmental, and Permitting documents. Further funding would be required for Construction.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact for approving this study and supporting the grant application.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - Letter of Support from San Mateo County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Attachment B - Letter of Support from the Community Members of the Santa Cruz Avenue/Alameda de Las Pulgas Roadways Improvement Task Force

Attachment C - The Santa Cruz Avenue and Alameda de las Pulgas Roadway Improvements Study