



DATE: November 30, 2016

AGENDA ITEM # 2

TO: Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Commission

FROM: Cedric Novenario, Staff Liaison

SUBJECT: Montclair Elementary School – School Route Improvements

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive information regarding identified infrastructure improvements and bicycle, pedestrian, and auto circulation observations related to Montclair Elementary School

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this staff report is to provide background on the development of school route improvements for Montclair Elementary School and current observations of pedestrian, cyclists, and motorists traveling to the school. Subsequent BPAC meetings will explore if any additional infrastructure improvements are needed to support school routes to Montclair Elementary. Any additional infrastructure improvements identified will be submitted for consideration when the City reviews the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) process in Spring 2017.

Efforts to identify school route related infrastructure improvements for all public schools (middle/junior high school and below) in Los Altos began with the Los Alto Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) in 2013. While the PMP is designed to address programmatic and infrastructure improvements City-wide, infrastructure improvements were recommended at each school. The recommended improvements were a collective and coordinated effort between the BPAC, city staff and the individual school representatives (Principal or PTA representative). Walk audits, school site “office-hours,” community meetings and numerous PMP draft review BPAC meetings were opportunities to provide input on the PMP and school route improvements.

On April 26, 2016, staff with the aid of BPAC identified and presented 17-school route improvement projects throughout Los Altos. These projects will be phased over three years and are included in the current five-year CIP starting in FY16/17. Two projects for the Montclair Elementary School Area were identified:

- Speed Feedback sign at Arboretum and Deodora
- Pedestrian improvements at Grant Road and Morton Avenue

DISCUSSION

Chapter 7 of the PMP highlights the project prioritization criteria and infrastructure improvements throughout Los Altos. These projects are grouped by high, medium, and low priority projects.

As shown in the above tables in Attachment 1, the majority of the projects that could benefit Montclair Elementary School are in the medium and low categories. In addition to these projects, sheet E-52 of Attachment 1 depicts additional school route improvements that were generated during “office hours” held at Montclair Elementary School.

In the Bicycle Transportation Plan, three improvements are identified in the Montclair Elementary School area: (See Attachment 1, Page 5-7)

- Class I Pathway on St. Joseph Avenue from Foothill Expressway to St. Matthew
- Class III Bike Route on St. Joseph Avenue from St. Matthew to Eva Avenue
- Class II Bike Lane on Eva Avenue from Granger Avenue to Highway 280

At the request of the BPAC, any of these projects could be recommended for consideration during the CIP review process starting in Spring 2017.

Observed Traffic Circulation

In early November 2016, staff observed the circulation patterns of pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists during the morning drop-off and afternoon pick up of Montclair Elementary School. The morning bell rings at 8:30 A.M. for all grades. For the afternoon release time, grades K-3 are released at 2:35 P.M., while grades 4-5 are released at 3:05 P.M. Early release days are on Tuesdays at 2:00 P.M. for all grades. St. Joseph Avenue serves as the primary access street to the school. A school speed zone is implemented on St. Joseph Avenue. For reference, Attachment 2 is an aerial of the Montclair Elementary School area.

Motorists Circulation

Students traveling by car pick up approximately 15-20 minutes prior to the morning bell schedule. Motorists access St. Joseph Avenue from Foothill Expressway, Grant Road, and from St. Joseph Avenue coming from the west. The majority of parents drop their children off via the student drop off operation at the school parking lot on St. Joseph Avenue. Once dropped off, their egress route loops back toward Foothill Expressway or Grant Road via proceeds back to St. Matthew Way, Stonehaven Avenue and St. Joseph Avenue. During this period, the vehicle congestion can span from Foothill Expressway to the school parking lot.

Some parents elect to park on adjacent streets near the school and have their children walk from there. These streets include Scott Lane, Knollwood Lane, Laver Court, and Kent Drive. The egress routes for these parents are to the west via St. Joseph/Granger and to the east via St. Joseph/Foothill/Grant.

From observation, the motorist circulation in the afternoon release time remains the same; however, it is not as impacted because approximately half the school is released half-hour from each other.



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Pedestrian Circulation

The majority of children and parents walking to school use the available sidewalks or shoulder/paths on S. Joseph Avenue, Granger Avenue, Eva Avenue Grant Road, and Stonehaven Drive. There are crosswalks at the intersection of Grant Road/Foothill Expressway, St. Joseph Avenue/St. Matthew Way, St. Matthew Way/Stonehaven Drive and Deodora Drive/St. Joseph Avenue. There are a total of four crossing guards in the area:

- Grant/Morton (paid by St. Simon)
- Foothill/Grant (paid by St. Simon)
- St. Joseph/St. Matthew (staffed by school)
- St. Matthew/Stonehaven (staffed by school)

Student pedestrians coming from east of St. Joseph Avenue via Deodora Drive have two options walk on the east side of St. Joseph Avenue and use the marked crosswalk and crossing guard at St. Matthew/Stonehaven, or use the crosswalk at Deodora/St. Joseph to get to the west of St. Joseph Avenue. From observations, the split appears to be 50-50 between the two choices.

Student pedestrians coming from north of Foothill Expressway cross with the crossing guard at Foothill Expressway and walk on the west side using the available sidewalk or shoulder. The crossing guard at St. Joseph/St. Matthew then aids the students onto the school property. This pathway is also consistent with student pedestrians coming from Granger Avenue.

Student pedestrians coming from the east via St. Joseph Avenue primarily are walking along asphalt shoulder all the way to the school.

Form observation, pedestrian routes going home is the same as the routes to school.

Cyclists Circulation

The cyclist circulation is very similar to the pedestrian circulation. However, it is apparent that cyclists coming from the east or north side of the school boundary choose to ride to school on the west side (same direction as traffic) of St Joseph Avenue and ride home on the east side (same direction as traffic) of St. Joseph Avenue. There are only a handful of cyclists who choose to ride against traffic. From observation, most cyclists are crossing Foothill Expressway to get to and to leave school. In the morning, cyclists use the crossing

guard; in the afternoon, cyclists share the road with motorists crossing Foothill Expressway. Most cyclists coming from the east from Deodora Drive will use the crosswalk at Deodora/St. Joseph to get to the west side and continue to ride to school. On the way home, those cyclists return toward Deodora Drive on the east side of St. Joseph Avenue.

Cycle circulation from Eva Drive and St. Joseph Avenue (west of the school) primarily ride in the same direction as traffic going to and coming from school.

Note, however, the primary routes to school via bicycle are currently Class III bike routes. Any striping that appears to be bike lanes are shoulder striping.

Attachments:

1. E-50 – E-53, Pedestrian Master Plan
2. Montclair Elementary School Aerial Map