



STUDY SESSION

Agenda Item # 6

AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: December 11, 2018

Subject: Carmel Terrace Update and Discussion

Prepared by: Aruna Bodduna, Transportation Services Manager

Reviewed by: Chris Lamm, Interim Public Works Director

Approved by: Chris Jordan, City Manager

Attachment(s):

None

Initiated by:

City Council

Previous Council Consideration:

January 4, 2011; February 14, 2012; May 22, 2012; January 8, 2013; June 9, 2015

Fiscal Impact:

To be determined depending on Council direction

Environmental Review:

To be determined depending on Council direction

Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:

- Should City continue or make permanent “No Stopping” and/or permit parking restrictions on Carmel Terraces/Altamead Drive?
- Should City consider additional bicycle safety improvements on Carmel Terrace/Altamead Drive?

Summary:

- A one-year pilot project was established in 2009 restricting stopping and parking on Carmel Terrace/Altamead Drive
- Signage from the pilot project remains, however is not enforced
- A comprehensive traffic study was prepared in 2011 identifying projects to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in the area
- CIP project TS-01050 Carmel Sidewalk Gap Closure was funded in FY 2018/19 to improve pedestrian safety on Carmel Terrace



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Staff Recommendation:

Receive update and provide direction to staff



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Purpose

Carmel Terrace Update and Discussion.

Background

Traffic safety, congestion and flow in the greater Blach School neighborhood have been a concern for stakeholders dating back to 2001. The first traffic calming strategy meeting occurred in August of 2002 and focused on reducing cut-through traffic on Eastwood Drive. Ultimately in 2005, the Eastwood Drive Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan (NTMP) was implemented limiting right turning movements from Miramonte Avenue between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on school days.

In May of 2007, a second NTMP process began involving Carmel Terrace and Altamead Drive as a result of neighborhood concerns related to student safety, increased traffic volumes and drop offs at the rear of Blach School. The NTMP expanded to include Miramonte Avenue between Portland and Covington Road, and Portland Avenue between Grant Road and Miramonte Avenue. This plan was presented to the Traffic Commission on July 21, 2009 and was not supported because of lack of agreement between residents and staff. At the November 10, 2009 Council meeting, Council acknowledged support of the neighborhood and authorized staff to suspend the Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan project process for Carmel Terrace for one year and implement an experimental No Drop-off Zone on Carmel Terrace and Altamead Drive. This one-year pilot included:

- Installation of “No Stopping” signs near the back of Blach Middle School with a 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. limit and a second sign stating, “Residential Permit Excepted”.
- Administration of a residential parking permit program by the Carmel Terrace – Altamead Drive Neighborhood Association (CANA) for a one-year trial period.
- No continuing commitment of enforcement of the signage by Los Altos PD during the initial one-year period.
- Determination at the end of the one-year period as to whether the signage will remain in place or be removed.

This trial program caused numerous citizens to voice their concerns to staff and Council. Consequently, Council directed staff to conduct a comprehensive traffic study for the greater Blach School area. The one-year trial program was extended by Council until they received the final report. On January 4, 2011, the final traffic study prepared by Fehr & Peers, Transportation Consultants, was presented to the Council. The purpose of this study was to evaluate traffic patterns and identify physical improvements to improve students’ safety walking/biking to/from school and improve vehicular circulation for the greater Blach Intermediate School (Blach) neighborhood.

The study recommended projects to improve safety and categorized them into three tiers. The first level of improvements, those that have the largest impact to students’ safety and circulation, are recommended as part of Tier 1. The second level of improvements are recommended Tier 2 and third



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level as Tier 3. Three projects from Tier 1, one project from Tier 2 and one project from Tier 3 were originally programmed into the Capital Improvement Plan: Miramonte Avenue/Covington Road Intersection Improvements (Tier 1); Covington Road Class I Pathway (Tier 1); Carmel Terrace Class I Pathway (Tier 1); Miramonte Avenue Path project (Tier 2) and Miramonte Avenue/Berry Avenue intersection improvements (Tier 3). The status of these projects is described below.

- Miramonte Avenue/Covington Road intersection improvements: The original improvements recommended for the intersection of Miramonte Avenue and Covington Road included building out the corners to improve pedestrian and bicycle refuge, adding a crosswalk across the north leg of the intersection and installing a traffic signal. A traffic signal at this location was warranted and would alleviate the traffic congestion. However, based on public feedback, at its May 22, 2012 meeting, City Council directed staff to proceed with the improvements at the intersection without a traffic signal. This item was reconsidered at the June 9, 2015 Council meeting to discuss the impact of Los Altos School District (LASD) Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND). The additional trips generated from the project would worsen the performance of the intersection and have a significant impact. Installation of the traffic signal would improve the intersection performance and reduce the project impact to less than significant. However, Council supported continuing with the previous plans for intersection improvements at Miramonte Avenue and Covington Road without a traffic signal.
- Covington Road Class I Pathway: The Covington Road Class I Pathway, Project CF-01005, was approved as part of the Fiscal Year 2013/14 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The original CIP project scope was to construct a Class I Pathway on the south side of Covington Road. Considering input from the Blach PTA and affected residents, Class II and Class III bicycle facility options were evaluated and presented to the community and Complete Streets Commission (CSC, then BPAC). After analyzing the options and considering the input from the residents, staff recommended establishing a restricted hours bike lane and installing improved sidewalks. While this option serves those that are traveling to school in a safer manner than a Class III bike route, the impacts to parking are minimized. On March 8, 2016, Council directed staff to move forward with improvements as recommended by staff and to examine aligning the restricted parking hours with the flow of traffic with the goal of minimizing impacts to parking. Construction of this project has been completed with a time restricted Class II bicycle lane. Parking in the bicycle lane is restricted for one hour in the eastbound direction in the morning and one hour in the westbound direction in the afternoon.
- Carmel Terrace Class I Pathway: Carmel Terrace Class I pathway from Portland Avenue to Altamead Drive was recommended to enhance the pedestrian and bicycle safety of students accessing Blach Intermediate School. In January 2011, Council directed that an alternative design be evaluated that provides bicycle-friendly street features in combination with a pedestrian walkway. A chronology of actions related to implementation of No Stopping/No



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Parking signs on Carmel Terrace and Altamead Drive was presented to the Council on October 25, 2011. It should be noted that when the “No Stopping” and permit parking signs were installed on a one-year trial period basis, Carmel Terrace – Altamead Neighborhood Association (CANA) would administer the neighborhood parking program and there would not be enforcement of the signage during the initial one-year period.

In 2016, staff presented three conceptual plans for Carmel Terrace Bicycle and Pedestrian improvements to the Blach PTA (March 2016) and at the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (May 25, 2016) in an attempt to solicit feedback from the Commission and residents, and to determine if a project could be developed. The three conceptual plans included Class I pathway/walkway, Class II (bike lanes) with sidewalk gap closure, and Class III (bike route) with sidewalk gap closure. A Class I pathway/walkway on the west side would require removal of parking on the west of Carmel Terrace. A Class II facility with bicycle lanes on both sides of the street would require parking removal/restriction to accommodate bike lanes like bicycle lanes on Covington Road between Miramonte Avenue and Eastwood Place. A Class III facility would not have any impacts to parking, and bicyclists would share the road/travel lanes with cars. Appropriate signage and pavement markings would be placed on the street to identify as a Class III facility.

The Blach PTA generally favored the Class I pathway/walkway option as that provided the most safety benefits. They did not support the Class III option. They further requested that any bicycle/pedestrian improvements be compatible should the existing pick up/drop off restriction be removed. The residents along Carmel Terrace were opposed to the removal of “No Stopping” signs and the implementation of the Class I pathway/walkway but were generally supportive of the Class III option that had least impacts to parking. Both the Class II and Class III options included extending the sidewalk on the west side of Carmel Terrace from its current location at 1240 Carmel Terrace to Portland Avenue.

Subsequently, Council adopted CIP project, Carmel Terrace Sidewalk Gap Closure (TS-01050), to address an approximate 550’ long sidewalk gap on the western portion of Carmel Terrace. The completion of this work will provide continuous sidewalk infrastructure (route to school) from the raised crosswalk facility at Portland Avenue/Carmel Terrace and the rear access to Blach Intermediate School. Staff is currently soliciting proposals for design of this project.

- **Miramonte Avenue Path Project:** This project was identified in the 2010 Blach Neighborhood Traffic Study as a Class I pathway, the current and previously adopted Los Altos Bicycle Transportation Plan, and the Pedestrian Master Plan (adopted 2015) and is currently listed as a Tier II project in the County Bicycle Expenditure Program. The goal of the Miramonte Avenue project was to provide and improve accessible walkways, add accessible curb ramps



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at intersections, add bicycle facilities and enhance school crosswalks. Currently, pedestrians and bicyclists utilize the striped shoulders that offer little protection from conflicts with vehicles. On April 12, 2016, Council approved a contract with a design consultant to provide professional engineering design and construction support services for the Miramonte Avenue Path, Project CF-01006. As part of the project, three design concepts for bicycle and pedestrian improvements were prepared and presented at a Special Complete Streets Commission (then Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee) meeting on August 24, 2016. The design concepts included these alternatives: Class I Pathway, Class II (bike lanes) with an accessible walkway, and Class III (bike route) with an accessible walkway. The Class II bike lanes with an accessible walkway alternative was supported by the Commission. Design for the preferred alternative was then presented at the City Council meeting on January 22, 2018 and the CSC meeting on January 24, 2018. The impact to on-street parking had been identified since 2016. The estimated project cost for the entire Miramonte Path Project is \$3.7 million. The City had an opportunity to pursue a \$1 M federal grant for this project in mid-2017. Staff, along with the consultant team, identified project limits that could fit in with this grant amount, which was from Covington Road to Berry Avenue. The staff report for this project from the July 10, 2018 Study Session provides more information on the project background, outreach efforts, and criteria for selecting Phase 1 project limits for the grant application. Council acknowledged residents' concerns about loss of parking and issues with raised sidewalks that was perceived as not fitting with the rural character. Council directed staff to investigate re-design of the project and to determine if the grant funding could be retained with the change in scope. At November 13, 2018 City Council Meeting, staff reported that the proposed revisions suggested by the Council at the July 10, 2018 Study Session required re-design of the project and re-submittal for the Caltrans environmental review process with the new design. In doing so, the project would not meet the MTC's Regional Project Delivery Policy. Council directed staff to redesign the project and forgo \$1M federal grant funding.

- Miramonte Avenue/Berry Avenue intersection improvements: The improvements at this location included installation of high visibility crosswalk and pole mounted pedestrian actuated flashing beacons. Improvements at this location were included as part of a three-year list of capital improvement projects that will address school route safety. This project was combined with the Miramonte Avenue Path Project (discussed above). There was lot of concern and push back from the residents regarding the installation of flashing beacons. Based on the feedback from the residents and the Council, the project is now rescoped only to install the raised crosswalk without flashing beacons.

Traffic Safety is a City Council priority. The City will take steps to improve traffic/pedestrian and bicycle safety throughout the City with a specific focus on safe routes to schools. All the projects discussed above are in the vicinity of the schools with improvements identified to enhance safety for school children. While the original scope for these projects would provide superior elements to



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enhance safety, the projects were rescoped to fit in with the neighborhood concerns, that mainly centered around on-street parking impacts.

Discussion/Analysis

At various public forums, including school meetings, Council meetings and Commission meetings, there have been requests from the public and Blach School to re-evaluate the parking restrictions along Altamead Drive and Carmel Terrace. The residents along Carmel Terrace request to continue the “No Stopping” and permit parking signage because the lower traffic volume street provides safer access for students to access the back entrance. If the Council decides to establish a permanent residential parking permit program, the City will require additional staff resources and budget for maintenance of such a program.

Staff has developed the following options for Council consideration.

Options

- 1) Continue “No Stopping” restrictions, establish a permanent residential permit parking option, complete the sidewalk gap closure project and formalize the Class III option

Discussion: City does not have a residential parking permit program. If a permanent residential parking permit program is chosen, the City will require additional staff resources and budget for maintenance of such a program. As indicated previously, the current parking permit along Carmel Terrace/Altamead Drive is not maintained by the City

- 2) Continue “No Stopping” restrictions, remove permit parking, complete the sidewalk gap closure project, and provide Class II bicycle lanes

Discussion: The Class II option would provide dedicated bicycle lanes on both sides of the street. With this option, there would not be enough room to accommodate both parking and bicycle lanes. The impacts to loss of parking could be minimized by restricting the no-parking hours like Covington Road

- 3) Remove “No Stopping” restrictions, remove permit parking, complete the sidewalk gap closure project and formalize Class III option

Discussion: Appropriate signage and pavement markings will be placed on the street to identify as a Class III facility. This option will retain on-street parking. With the removal of no stopping restrictions, some school traffic from Covington Road would divert to Carmel Terrace/Altamead Drive, potentially reducing



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congestion along Covington Road. Removal of no stopping restrictions would increase traffic on Carmel Terrace/Altamead Drive. This will increase potential bicycle and vehicular conflicts as the bicyclists share the road with vehicular traffic

- 4) Remove “No Stopping” restrictions, remove permit parking, complete the sidewalk gap closure project, and provide Class II bicycle lanes

Discussion: With the removal of no stopping restrictions, some school traffic from Covington Road would divert to Carmel Terrace/Altamead Drive, potentially reducing congestion along Covington Road. Removal of “No Stopping” restrictions would increase traffic on Carmel Terrace/Altamead Drive, thereby increasing potential bicycle and vehicular conflicts. With the potential increase in traffic, a Class II option with dedicated bicycle lanes on both sides would enhance the safety compared to the Class III option. The impact to loss of parking could be minimized by restricting the no-parking hours. It should be noted that further investigation will require additional studies such as intersection level of service impacts and trip routing to and from school, especially with the potential changes to the school facilities

Recommendation

Receive update and provide direction to staff.