



DATE: April 28, 2021

AGENDA ITEM # 3

TO: Complete Streets Commission

FROM: Jaime O. Rodriguez, Interim Staff Liaison to Complete Streets Commission

SUBJECT: Cuesta Drive Traffic Calming Project – Post Construction Update

ATTACHMENTS: Raw Count Traffic Data, April 2021.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive update on the Cuesta Drive Traffic Calming – Post Construction Update and Recommend Permanent Retention to the Los Altos City Council

INTRODUCTION

The Cuesta Drive traffic calming project was implemented in the Fall 2020 following an extensive one-year community outreach process. This report summarizes the post construction effectiveness of the traffic calming measures implemented with the project to help advise community and policy discussions regarding permanent retention of the Speed Tables installed along Cuesta Drive, Speed Humps installed along Arboleda Drive, and other various measures. The report also includes a discussion on possible intrusion and on-going monitoring of adjacent neighborhood streets.

BACKGROUND

The Cuesta Drive collector street traffic calming project was initially planned for a Raised Intersection at Cuesta Drive & Campbell Avenue and at Cuesta Drive & Campbell Avenue. Upon initiation of the design phase for the raised intersections, residents and policy officials expressed concerns regarding the effectiveness and character change of the neighborhood from the proposed raised intersection treatment. A new traffic calming planning phase was initiated in the Spring 2019 and the raised intersection design phase paused while the new planning phase moved through the community engagement process. Over the next 12-month period the City and its consultant design team (Alta Planning + Design) worked with residents to identify an alternative traffic calming program that included the installation of the following traffic calming elements; all installed in the Fall 2020.

Cuesta Drive:

- 5 Speed Tables (Street Length x 20' Wide)
- New All-way STOP at Cuesta Drive & S Clark Avenue
- New Pedestrian Pathway along the North Side of Cuesta Drive, between S Clark Avenue and Campbell Avenue

Arboleda Drive

- 7 Speed Humps (Street Length x 12' Width)
- New All-Way STOP at Arboleda Drive & Campbell Avenue

Additional Traffic Calming Elements:

- High visibility crosswalks and warning signage
- Painted Intersection Returns at Cuesta Drive & Arboleda Drive and Arboleda Drive & Springer Road

During the construction phase the Cuesta Drive speed tables were adjusted from a planned 3.5-inch height to the current field condition 4.25-inch height following community input regarding the 3.5-inch height not being sufficient to change driver behavior on the street. In addition, the contractor’s field crews were experimenting with construction methods to properly build the speed humps to better match the design elements of the project. City staff agreed with residents regarding the ineffectiveness of the speed tables at the designed 3.5-inch height and worked with the contractor to identify a better height through field experimentation. The 4.25-inch height was identified to achieve the designed 15-MPH drive speed discussed with the community during the planning phase. The City authorized modification of all 3.5-inch speed tables to 4.25-inch. No additional changes to the speed table height along Cuesta Drive have been made since their installation in the Summer 2020.

No height changes were made to the speed tables along Arboleda Drive during the construction phase as the standard 3.5-inch high speed humps achieved the designed 15-MPH driving speed over the humps.

The City informed the community that the post construction data collection phase would take place during March 2021 for presentation to the Complete Streets Commission. Due to wet weather and limited in-person student participation at Los Altos schools in March, data collection was postponed to April 2021.

DISCUSSION

Cuesta Drive

Table 1 below summarizes the Pre-Project 2019 versus Post-Project 2021 field conditions.

Table 1
Cuesta Drive Pre-Project vs Post-Project Traffic Conditions

Cuesta Drive @	Volume - ADT			Speed (85%) - MPH		
	2019	2021	% Change	2019	2021	% Change
Clark Ave (EB)	4619	1999	-57%	36.1	26.4	-27%
Clark Ave (WB)	4412	1943	-56%	35.1	28.0	-20%
Arboleda Dr (EB)	4747	1951	-59%	34.6	28.1	-19%
Arboleda Dr (WB)	4439	1891	-57%	34.2	24.9	-27%

The traffic volumes on Cuesta Drive show an average 60% reduction. This reduction is due to reduced traffic volumes in the region from COVID-19 impacts. However, the vehicle speed reduction is still demonstrative of the effectiveness of the speed table construction with an average 23 MPH driving speed between speed table locations. The driving speed at the speed hump locations is noted at 15 MPH based on field observations. This finding is consistent with planning goals for the project of aiming to achieve an average 25 MPH driving speed or lower for the Cuesta Drive based on a 15 MPH driving speed over speed table locations.

Arboleda Drive

Table 2 below summarizes the Pre-Project 2019 versus Post-Project 2021 field conditions.

Table 2
Arboleda Drive Pre-Project vs Post-Project Traffic Conditions

Arboleda Drive @	Volume - ADT			Speed (85%) - MPH		
	2019	2021	% Change	2019	2021	% Change
West of Campbell (EB)	265	115	-57%	31.4	23.4	-25%
West of Campbell (WB)	77	85	10%	27.5	21.6	-21%
East of Clark Ave (EB)	293	76	-74%	33.8	23.6	-30%
East of Clark Ave (WB)	223	82	-63%	30.6	23.2	-24%

Like Cuesta Drive, the reduction in vehicle volumes, as high as 74%, is likely due to COVID-19 regional traffic impacts. The vehicle speed reduction though is representative of the effectiveness of the speed humps installed, showing an average 25 MPH driving speed between speed hump locations. This finding is also consistent with planning goals for the project of an average 25 MPH driving speed for Arboleda Drive based on a 15 MPH driving speed over speed hump locations.

Community Feedback on Cuesta Drive and Arboleda Drive Traffic Calming Measures

During and immediately following the construction phase of the Cuesta Drive traffic calming project the City received multiple emails and phone calls expressing concerns regarding the installation of the traffic calming elements with specific concern regarding the height of the speed tables along Cuesta Drive and their impact to vehicles and motorists. The majority of these concerns were noted by individuals identifying themselves as residents from the City of Los Altos Hills who noted traveling down Cuesta Drive to access El Camino Hospital and other commercial services in the City of Mountain View.

Surrounding Neighborhood Traffic Impacts

During the planning phase of the Cuesta Drive traffic calming project, residents on streets adjacent to the project area expressed concerns regarding potential spillover on their streets due to the installation of traffic calming measures on Cuesta Drive and Arboleda Drive. Of specific concern were streets such as Paco Drive which connects Springer Road to S El Monte Avenue. Other streets of concern were Benvenue Avenue, San Luis Avenue, and Clark Avenue, which can serve as a mid-corridor alternative route adjacent to Cuesta Drive. Table 3 below summarizes the Pre-Project versus Post-Project traffic conditions on these streets.

Table 3
Surrounding Streets Pre-Project vs Post-Project Traffic Conditions

Surround Cuesta Dr Neighborhood Streets	Volume - ADT			Speed (85%) - MPH		
	2019	2021	% Change	2019	2021	% Change
San Luis Ave (EB) West of El Monte Ave	135	64	-53%	25	24	-4%
San Luis Ave (WB) West of El Monte Ave	124	60	-52%	28	24	-14%
Benvenue Ave (EB) West of Clark Ave	130	95	-27%	28	29	4%
Benvenue Ave (WB) West of Clark Ave	147	98	-33%	30	28	-7%
Paco Dr (EB) West of Clark Ave	87	85	-2%	29	23	-21%
Paco Dr (WB) West of Clark Ave	141	86	-39%	29	24	-17%
Paco Dr (EB) East of Clark Ave	181	173	-4%	31	31	0%
Paco Dr (WB) East of Clark Ave	262	153	-42%	33	29	-12%
Paco Dr (EB) East of Clark Ave	181	173	-4%	31	31	0%
Paco Dr (WB) East of Clark Ave	262	153	-42%	33	29	-12%
S Clark Ave (NB) San Luis to Benvenue	751	396	-47%	29	28	-3%
S Clark Ave (SB) San Luis to Benvenue	742	420	-43%	30	29	-3%
Campbell Av (NB) N of Rosita Ave	1007	442	-56%	31	27	-13%
Campbell Av (SB) N of Rosita Ave	1254	528	-58%	33	27	-18%

On all streets surrounding the Cuesta Drive traffic calming project area there is a substantial reduction in vehicle volumes, due likely to regional impacts from COVID-19. Vehicle speeds show a reduction on all streets except for Paco Drive eastbound with a consistent pre-project and post-project vehicle speeds at 31 MPH.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Even with reduced regional traffic impacts from COVID-19 the Cuesta Drive traffic calming projects demonstrates effectiveness in achieving its project goal of driving speeds of 15 MPH at

speed table locations (Cuesta Drive) and speed hump locations (Arboleda Drive) and average 25 MPH or lower speeds between traffic calming elements. The concerns expressed from residents outside of the project area regarding impacts to a larger community for the benefit of a few residents are common on traffic calming projects such as this. The intent of the project is to balance the regional and larger community impacts of traffic on streets that serve as connector streets between destination points.

City staff recommends that the Complete Streets Commission review the Pre-Project versus Post-Project Cuesta Drive traffic calming project data, offer the community substantial discussion opportunities, and forward a recommendation to the City Council of whether or not to retain the Cuesta Drive traffic calming project speed reduction elements.