

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

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Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Date: April 19, 2001

Board Meeting Date: May 1, 2001

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Neil R. Cullen, Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Closure of Barney Avenue and Installation of a Pedestrian Actuated Mid-Block Signal on the Alameda de las Pulgas near the Las Lomas School - Atherton Area

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing:

1. the continued closure of Barney Avenue at its intersection with Camino Al Lago; and
2. the Director of Public Works to:
 - a. begin the design of a pedestrian actuated mid-block signal on the Alameda de las Pulgas between Mills Avenue and Camino Al Lago; and
 - b. apply to the State of California for a Safe Route to School grant to fund the mid-block pedestrian crossing.

Previous Board Action

1. Adopted a resolution in August 2000 authorizing the closure of Barney Avenue at Camino Al Lago and directed the Department of Public Works to evaluate the impact on pedestrian and property owner safety.
2. Directed the Department to work with the Las Lomas School District and the Town of Atherton to evaluate recommendations to improve the traffic and pedestrian circulation in and around Las Lomas School.

Key Facts

1. A proposed plan to improve the circulation and pedestrian safety has been developed with the cooperation of the School District, the Las Lomas School staff, and the Town of Atherton with input from the parents of children attending the school and residents on both Barney and Camino Al Lago.
2. We believe that the safety of pedestrians using Barney Avenue has been improved by the closure at its intersection with Camino Al Lago based on the comments from the property owners. No increase in the number of school children using Barney Avenue has been observed.

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Discussion

Improved Circulation at and near the Las Lomas School

The proposed plan to improve pedestrian safety and vehicle circulation that was developed with the cooperation of the various agencies, parents and residents consists of the following:

Changes to Las Lomas School Property by District:

- A new driveway from the front parking lot onto the Alameda de las Pulgas that would be the exit point for the parking lot;
- Allowing only school buses to enter the School's front parking lot from the entrance near the Alameda;
- Requiring parents that are delivering or picking up their children to exit from the drop-off/pickup area on Camino Al Lago via the front parking lot and the new exit point;
- Restriping the front parking lot to facilitate the movement of both buses and cars to the new exit point;

Changes on the Alameda within Atherton by Atherton

- Issuance of an encroachment permit by Atherton to allow the new driveway opening out of the School's parking lot;
- Restriping of the Alameda de las Pulgas from Camino Al Lago to Walsh Road to provide egress from the new driveway out of the School property.

Changes on the Alameda and Camino Al Lago in the Unincorporated Area by County

- Installation of a pedestrian activated traffic signal mid-block between Camino Al Lago and Mills Avenue to provide for the crossing of pedestrians at this location.
- Evaluation of a limited time parking zone opposite the School's front parking lot on Camino Al Lago to reduce congestion during the time when school is letting out and parents are picking up their children.

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The agencies collectively believe that this is a workable plan and that it meets the following objectives:

- Sight distance is improved for both the bus drivers and the motorists that are dropping off children at the school and who want to turn left to go south on the Alameda.
- Pedestrian/vehicle conflicts are reduced as motorists are not exiting onto Camino Al Lago where children are crossing to walk home if they live to the southwest of Camino Al Lago.
- Pedestrians will be able to cross the Alameda at all times with the aid of a signal and not just when the school crossing guard is on duty.
- Traffic on the Alameda de las Pulgas is not compromised by the addition of a traffic light at Camino Al Lago for the benefit of vehicles wanting to turn onto the Alameda; and parents are not encouraged to drive their children to the School by providing additional improvements for their convenience.
- The School still maintains oversight of children that are being picked up by parents and others as the pickup area continues to remain adjacent to the School office.

Attached is a schematic indicating the proposed revisions to improve traffic.

Concurrently the School is working with its architect to develop the necessary plans to move forward with its portion of the work and it is our understanding that the Town of Atherton has approved of the proposed driveway opening onto the Alameda.

The school is also providing the necessary information for us to apply for Safe Route to School Funds for the pedestrian signal and the application is due to the State by May 22, 2001. The signal is proposed to be located at approximately 3018 Alameda de las Pulgas between Camino Al Lago and Mills Avenue. It will require the installation of 'bulb-outs' in the sidewalk, as the right-of-way is limited in this section of the Alameda. The 'bulb-outs' would also allow the installing of ADA compliant access ramps to the proposed crosswalks.

Continued Closure of Barney Avenue

Barney Avenue has been closed since August of last year while we evaluated the impacts on safety for pedestrians and the residents and while we worked with the School District to develop a plan to improve circulation in and around the School. Recent counts do not indicate that

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Barney is being used as a walkway to access the School, but the feed back from the adjacent property owners has been positive. We are recommending that Barney Avenue remain closed at Camino Al Lago due to the narrowness of the street and the limited right-of-way width available for any proposed widening of the street. We also believe that keeping Barney closed reduces pedestrian/vehicle conflicts on Camino Al Lago and will encourage parents to begin to walk their children to school once it becomes apparent that the road will remain closed. The drawback is that parents driving their children to and from the School must either turn left onto the Alameda or drive down Camino Al Lago through Atherton to Camino Por Los Arboles to return south.

Fiscal Impact

The estimated cost of installing the pedestrian signal is \$85,000. We are recommending that design work be financed with ½ Cent Transportation Funds and that we begin the design process at this time in order to have the signal in place as soon as possible. However, we do not believe that the signal will be installed by the beginning of the next school year, as there is a long lead time in ordering signal systems, and we cannot get reimbursed for expenditures made before we receive the necessary approvals from the State for the use of Safe Route to School Funds, based on state and federal regulations. There is no impact to the General Fund.

We have sent a copy of this staff report to the Las Lomitas School District, the School principal, the Town of Atherton and the parents and staff that have been involved in the previous discussion. We have also sent copies of this report to the property owners on Barney Avenue and the property owners near where the proposed signal will be installed.

A form of Resolution has been approved by County Counsel.



Neil R. Cullen
Director of Public Works

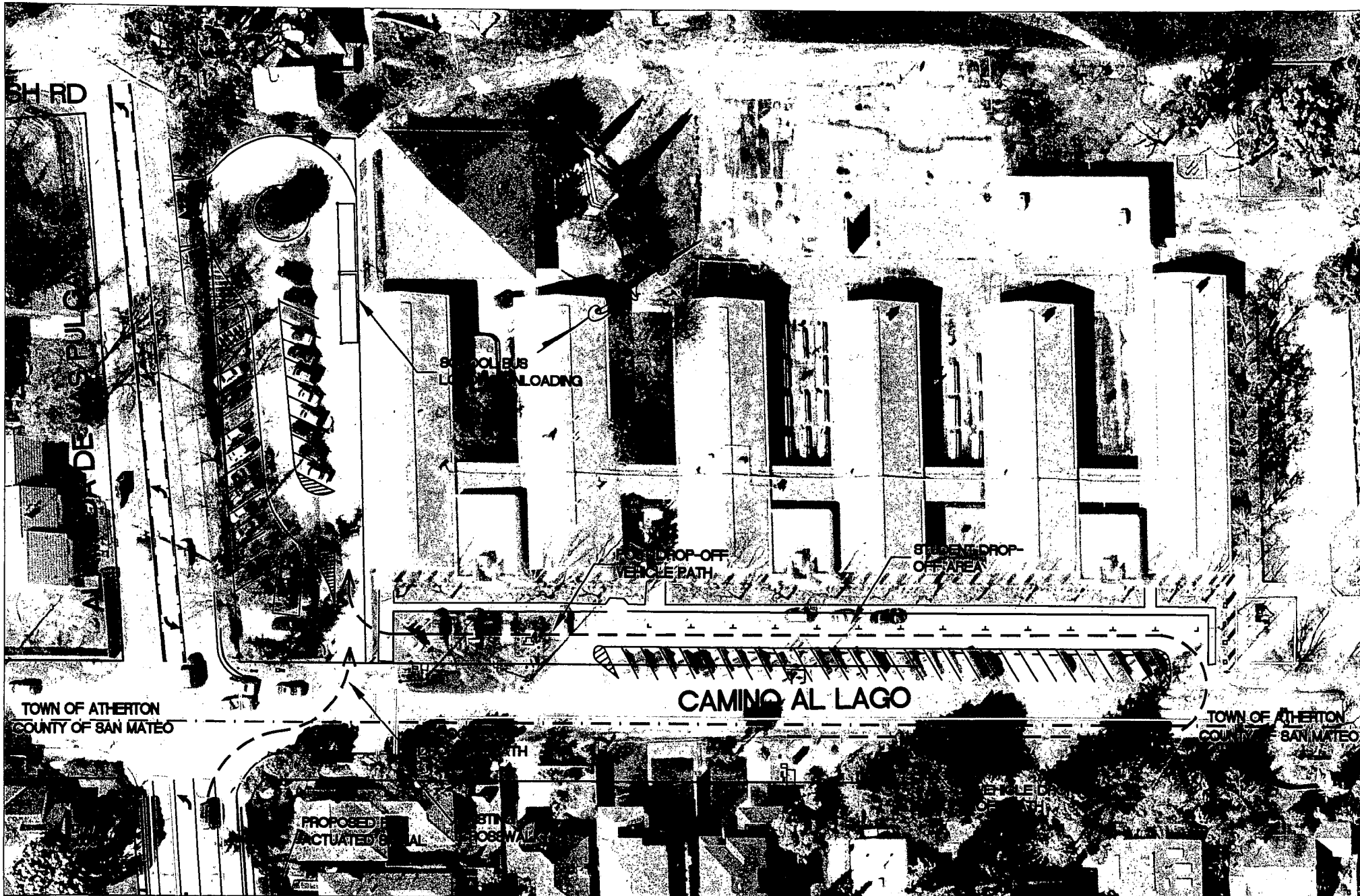
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Attachment: As stated

cc: Milt Mares, County Counsel
Brian C. Lee, Division Manager, Programming and Engineering Services



DESIGNED BY: RC
 CHECKED BY: JAL
 DRAWN BY: RC

LAS LOMITAS SCHOOL PARKING RECONFIGURATION
 CAMINO AL LAGO, WEST MENLO PARK
 VEHICLE & BUS DROP-OFF PATH

SCALE: N/A
 DATE: 04/18/2001
 FILE NO: 1/

NEIL R. CULLEN, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS
 SAN MATEO COUNTY

555 COUNTY CENTER, 5TH FLOOR
 REDWOOD CITY, CALIFORNIA 94063-1665

Resolution No. _____

Board of Supervisors, County of San Mateo, State of California

**Resolution Authorizing the Continued Closure of
Barney Avenue at Camino Al Lago, and Authorizing the Director of Public Works to
Begin the Design of a Pedestrian Traffic Signal on Alameda de las Pulgas between
Camino Al Lago and Mills Avenue and to Apply for State of California Safe Routes to
School Funds to Finance Said Signal – West Menlo Park Area**

RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California, that

WHEREAS, Section 942.5 et sec. of the State of Californian Streets and Highways Code authorizes Boards of Supervisors to close or restrict the use of a county road for the protection of the public; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Public Works has recommended that Barney Avenue should continue to be closed to vehicular traffic at Camino Al Lago; and

WHEREAS, the Director of Public Works has recommended the installation of a pedestrian actuated traffic signal on Alameda de las Pulgas between Camino Al Lago and Mills Avenue in order to provide for the safe crossing of pedestrians of the Alameda de las Pulgas; and

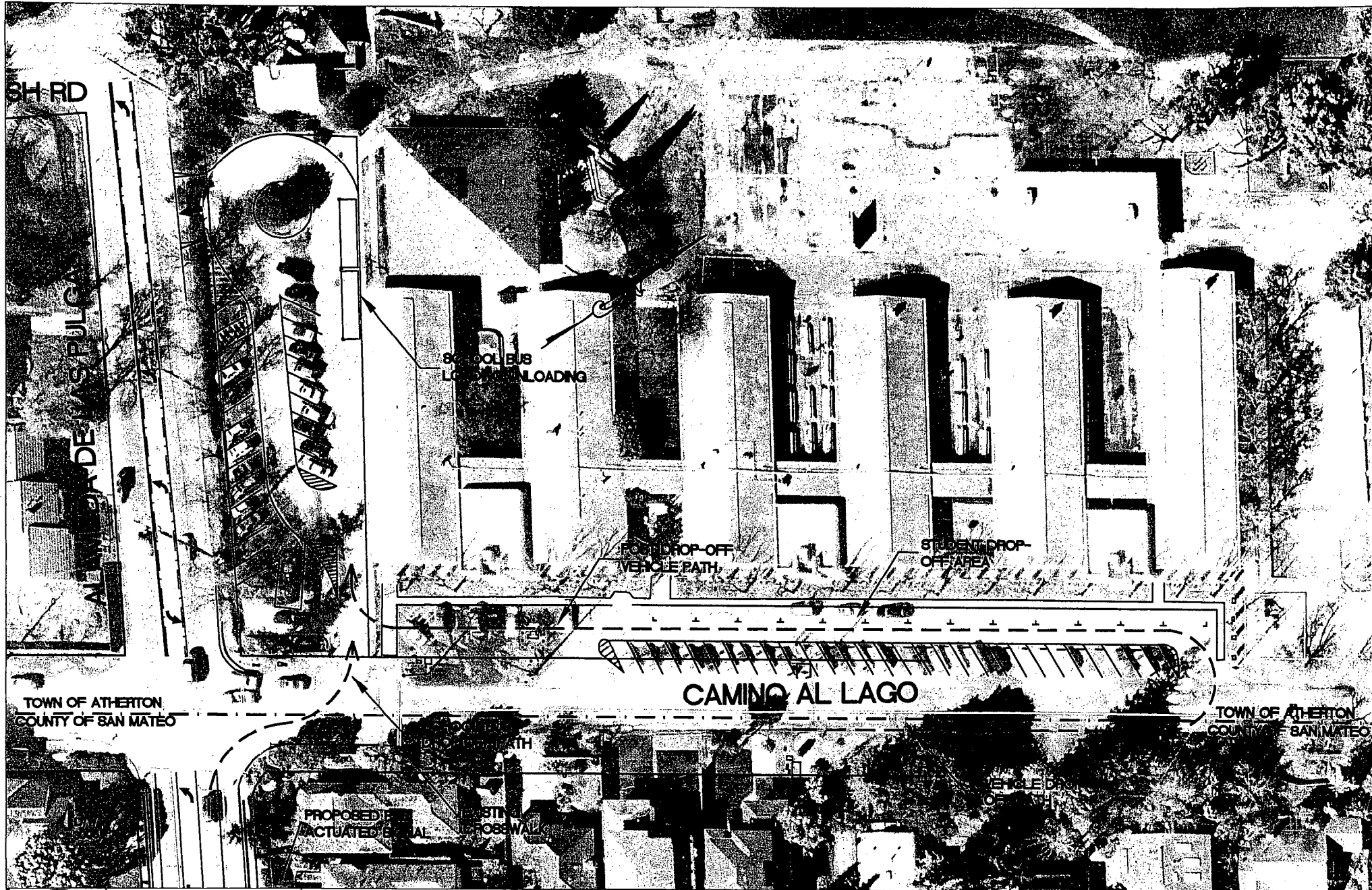
WHEREAS, the State of California is making available Safe Route to School funds on a competitive basis to be used by local agencies to encourage access to local schools for pedestrian and bicycles: and

WHEREAS, the Director of Public Works has recommended that the County apply for Safe Route to School funds to finance the construction of a pedestrian actuated signal on the Alameda de las Pulgas as described above; and

WHEREAS, this Board has reviewed and considered the recommendations of the Director of Public Works:

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY DETERMINED AND ORDERED that:

1. Barney Avenue shall continue to remain closed to vehicular traffic at its intersection with Camino Al Lago until such time as this Board determines that it should be reopened to vehicular traffic.
2. The Director of Public Works is hereby authorized:
 - a) to initiate the design of a pedestrian actuated traffic signal with appurtenant work thereto on the Alameda de las Pulgas between Camino Al Lago and Mills Avenue;
 - b) to apply for and sign, on behalf of the County, grant applications and other forms as may be required by the State of California as part of the Safe Route to School grant process; and
 - c) to finance the design of said signal from ½ Cent Transportation Funds that are received from the Transportation Authority by the County.



DESIGNED BY: RC
 CHECKED BY: JAL
 DRAWN BY: RC

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