



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department of Public Works

DATE: July 8, 2009
BOARD MEETING DATE: July 14, 2009
SPECIAL NOTICE/HEARING: None
VOTE REQUIRED: Majority

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
FROM: James Porter, Director of Public Works
SUBJECT: Removal of the Crosswalk and Prohibiting Pedestrian Crossings on Santa Cruz Avenue at Palo Alto Way, Menlo Park Area

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing the removal of the crosswalk and prohibiting pedestrian crossings on Santa Cruz Avenue at Palo Alto Way, Menlo Park area.

BACKGROUND:

In March 2006, the Board awarded a contract for the installation of pedestrian countdown signals at County-maintained intersections, including Santa Cruz Avenue at Alameda de las Pulgas and Campo Bello.

In July 2008, the Board awarded a contract for the installation of the Sidewalk Improvement Project on Santa Cruz Avenue between Alameda de las Pulgas and Sand Hill Road

DISCUSSION:

In 2004, a pedestrian was fatally injured while crossing (east to west) in the subject crosswalk by a vehicle traveling southbound at approximately 28-34 mph.

The posted speed limit on Santa Cruz Avenue at Palo Alto Way is 35 miles per hour. The subject crosswalk extends across five traffic lanes (two through lanes in each direction and a shared turning lane in the center) and a parking area on the east side. There is no pedestrian island at this location.

At the time, the Department of Public Works reviewed the subject non-signalized mid-block crosswalk to determine alternatives to improve pedestrian traffic safety.

Alternatives that were considered included crosswalk paddles, in-pavement lighted crosswalks, concrete islands, and traffic signals. However, staff investigations found that site conditions did not support a crosswalk at this location and staff recommended to the Board that the crosswalk be removed.

In 2007, after hearing public testimony regarding the removal of the crosswalk, the Board directed the Director of Public Works to make improvements to address issues brought out by the citizens objecting to the removal of the crosswalk.

Improvement projects included the installation of pedestrian countdown signals at Santa Cruz Avenue at Alameda de las Pulgas and Campo Bello, and the installation of the Sidewalk Improvement Project on Santa Cruz Avenue between Alameda de las Pulgas and Sand Hill Road to facilitate pedestrian access to these signalized intersections.

In 2009, after the completion of these two improvement projects, the Department of Public Works reviewed the conditions in the vicinity of the crosswalk (Attachment C). Due to the low volume of vehicular traffic on Palo Alto Way, the existing mid-block crosswalk does not meet the necessary warrants for a new traffic signal under the current California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Therefore, staff recommended that the existing crosswalk be removed and the location of the bus stop be relocated to accommodate pedestrians using transit.

The California Vehicle Code (CVC) defines “crosswalk” as any intersection of roadways that meet at approximately right angles, and any portion of a roadway indicated for pedestrian crossing by lines or other markings on the road surface. Santa Cruz Avenue at Palo Alto Way currently meets both definitions of “crosswalk.”

Section 21100(d) of the CVC provides that local authorities may, by resolution, regulate traffic by means of official traffic control devices. Section 21106(b) of the CVC allows for the installation of signs prohibiting pedestrian crossing at indicated crosswalks

Section 21950.5 of the CVC provides that an existing marked crosswalk may not be removed unless notice and opportunity to be heard is provided to the public not less than 30 days prior to the scheduled date of removal. In addition to any other public notice requirements, the notice of proposed removal shall be posted at the crosswalk identified for removal. The public notice is required to include information that the public may provide input relating to the scheduled removal, and to advise the public of the form and method of providing input. Notices were sent to property owners within an 800-foot radius of the crosswalk, and were posted at the crosswalk on June 4, 2009. Examples of the public notice, letter to the property owners, and a summary of their responses is shown in Attachment A.

The Federal Highway Administration Guidelines recommend “marked crosswalks should not be installed in close proximity to traffic signals since pedestrians should be encouraged to cross at the signal”. The intersection of Santa Cruz Avenue and Sand Hill Road is approximately 600 feet to the south of the subject crosswalk. The intersection of Santa Cruz Avenue and Campo Bello Way is approximately 700 feet to the north.

Signalized crosswalks exist at both of these locations. A map of this area is provided in Attachment B. We believe these signal-controlled intersections are within reasonable distances from the intersection of Palo Alto Way to allow pedestrians and non-motorized wheelchairs to safely cross into the University Park neighborhood.

We have been in discussion with SamTrans and they have agreed to begin the process for relocating their current bus stop at Palo Alto Way northerly to the intersection of Santa Cruz Avenue and Campo Bello. Relocation of the bus stop is recommended to encourage pedestrians, particularly living east of Alameda de las Pulgas, to cross Alameda de las Pulgas at the signalized intersection at Campo Bello and Santa Cruz Avenue.

A resolution has been approved as to form by County Counsel.

Adoption of this recommendation contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Healthy Community by removing the existing crosswalk and preventing pedestrians from crossing Santa Cruz Avenue at this uncontrolled intersection to assist us in maintaining the safe and orderly movement of pedestrians and traffic on public rights of ways.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost of removing the existing crosswalk and installing prohibitive signs is estimated at \$5,000. This cost will be financed with Road Funds.

There is no impact to the General Fund.

Attachments: Attachment A – Posted Notice, Letter to Property Owners, Summary of Responses from Property Owners

Attachment B – Map

Attachment C – Data Collection Results