



City of Santa Barbara Transportation & Circulation Committee *Staff Report*

DATE: October 24, 2019

TO: Transportation and Circulation Committee (TCC) Members

FROM: Jessica W. Grant, Supervising Transportation Planner

SUBJECT: Cliff Drive Vision Zero and Active Transportation Corridor Planning Effort

RECOMMENDATION

That the Transportation and Circulation Committee hear a presentation from staff regarding the Cliff Drive Vision Zero and Active Transportation Corridor Planning Effort.

BACKGROUND

Prior to December 2013, Cliff Drive was part of Caltrans' State Route 225, which was a seven mile urban route, looping south from Highway 101 in Santa Barbara. The route followed Las Positas Road, south from Highway 101, to Elings Park, along Cliff Drive, east from Arroyo Burro Beach to Montecito Street, where it then looped back to Highway 101 along Castillo Street.

In 2011, the community requested a road diet along SR 225 between Meigs Road and Loma Alta Drive to reduce excess vehicle speed and collisions, improve driveway access for residents, shorten pedestrian crossings, and add bike lanes. In August 2011, Caltrans applied a road diet to this section of SR 225 after a pavement maintenance project.

In December 2013, the SR 225 was relinquished from Caltrans to the City of Santa Barbara with a small section of SR 225 remaining: Castillo Street between Montecito Street and Highway 101. This relinquishment opened the door for many future City capital projects. In spring 2017, a roundabout at the intersection of Las Positas Road and Cliff Drive was constructed. This project significantly improved the level of service of the intersection. A 2.6-mile-long multiuse path along Las Positas Road, from the Las Positas Road/Cliff Drive intersection, to the intersection of Las Positas and Modoc Roads, and then heading north along Modoc Road, to the Modoc Road/Calle De Los Amigos intersection (last major intersection in the City limits in the Hidden Valley neighborhood) will be under construction in 2020. The Las Positas Road/Modoc Road Multiuse Path is a major regional and local connector for area schools, Elings Park, and Arroyo Burro Beach.

While the above capital projects are major improvements to vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle circulation along the Las Positas Road corridor, resident-desired safety and mobility improvements to Cliff Drive have not been addressed. Calls for improvements have been

echoed by many area residents and Mesa neighborhood organizations during these capital planning efforts and are reflected in the Council adopted Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan (most recent version is 2020-2024), the Bicycle Master Plan (2016), where the community requested a cycle track or Class 4 bike lane along Cliff Drive, and Vision Zero Strategy (2018), where Council prioritized Cliff Drive as one of the 23 high priority corridors in the City needing increased safety, health, and equitable mobility for all.

Given the public feedback to date, the City intends to apply for grant funding in 2020 for pedestrian and bicycle enhancements along Cliff Drive. The City hired a traffic engineering consultant to study the challenging intersections along Cliff Drive at Mesa Lane/Flora Vista, Santa Barbara City College (SBCC) West Campus Drive, and Loma Alta/SBCC East Campus Driveway before the enhancements are finalized. The purpose of the study was to identify configurations and traffic control compatible with the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure enhancements. At the June 27, 2019 TCC meeting, the Committee received a presentation from staff on the Cliff Drive Vision Zero and Active Transportation Corridor Planning Effort. During that presentation, staff discussed the purpose of the planning effort and the potential scope of work, including the pathway configuration, crosswalk locations, and challenging intersections along the Cliff Drive corridor. Staff also outlined planning public outreach efforts planned for summer/fall 2019 to keep the community informed on the planning effort and to receive feedback on the proposed infrastructure approaches.

DISCUSSION

CHALLENGING INTERSECTIONS

Since the June 27 meeting, the traffic engineering consultant has reached conclusions for the intersections study. The consultant has concluded that roundabouts are not feasible at the three locations. Specifically, there is not enough right of way available at the Mesa Lane/Flora Vista intersection, and the only possible configuration would be compact roundabouts. A roundabout at the SBCC West Campus Driveway would likely encroach on the creek habitat on the southeast corner of the driveway. A roundabout at the Loma Alta intersection would be cost prohibitive due to grades and likely retaining walls. The consultant recommended that the City focus on traffic signals for these three intersections. The concept that is being presented to the public includes traffic signals at these locations.

Illustrations of these three challenging locations are in the attachments.

VISION ZERO TRAFFIC SAFETY ANALYSIS

Cliff Drive is the second highest prioritized corridor in the Council's Vision Zero Strategy. That means that Cliff Drive has a pattern of collisions resulting in serious or fatal injuries, and this pattern is likely to repeat. The design of the project shall address the pattern of collisions, and not introduce new safety issues.

Collisions can happen anywhere along the Cliff Drive corridor, however, the highest frequency of collisions are in front of the shopping center west of Meigs Road, near the Mesa

Lane/Flora Vista intersection, and near SBCC. A heat map was developed that illustrates the concentration of collisions.

Two-way pathways present unique safety challenges due to left turning vehicles. To address these potential safety issues, the project includes the following engineering safety measures:

- A raised median on Cliff Drive between Meigs Road and Camino Calma to restrict left turn access. This feature should be considered with or without the project due to the history of collisions along this block.
- Raised crossings at stop sign controlled side streets to reduce vehicle speeds and improve stop sign compliance.
- Traffic signal phasing that minimizes vehicle/pathway conflicts.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over the summer, staff gave presentations and had discussions with community groups to identify the preferred configuration of the bike path, where crosswalks should be located, and to gauge overall community support for pursuing a grant to fund this major corridor project.

Since the TCC meeting on June 27, staff have met with the Coalition for Sustainable Transportation (COAST), the Our Mesa Neighborhood organization, the Santa Barbara Community College Board (SBCC) of Trustees, the Metropolitan Transit District (MTD), and the Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition. Based on feedback from these groups, there was overwhelming support for:

- Frequent crosswalks with enhanced safety features
- A two way pathway
- Pursuing an Active Transportation Grant to fund the project

Staff took this feedback and developed conceptual drawings of a two way pathway along the south side of Cliff Drive between Arroyo Burro County Park on the west, and Castillo Street on the east. In addition to the pathway and Vision Zero safety improvements, the project also proposes:

- Seven new crosswalks and three new traffic signals along Cliff Drive.
- A new crosswalk nearby at Shoreline Drive and Salida Del Sol for improved coastal access and safe walking route to Washington School.
- Improved safety for students that walk or bike to Monroe Elementary school by building a wider sidewalk on Flora Vista between Cliff Drive and Red Rose Way, curb extensions at the Flora Vista/Red Rose intersection, and sidewalk infill on Red Rose between Fellowship and Flora Vista.
- A wider sidewalk along Loma Alta to improve connectivity between McKinley Elementary and the new path on Cliff Drive.

Staff held a special meeting for business owners to discuss the potential median between Meigs and Camino Calma on October 8.

On October 17, staff is holding a community approach workshop at Monroe Elementary. At this meeting, the conceptual drawings will be presented to the public for comment. Since this staff report is posted on October 17, feedback from the workshop will be shared at the TCC Meeting.

NEXT STEPS

The next step is to go to Council to provide an update on the planning effort and receive final direction from Council on whether to pursue a grant application and whether there are City funds available for matching monies to make the grant application more competitive.

ATTACHMENTS

- Corridor Limits/Crosswalk and Traffic Signal Locations (1 sheet)
- Conceptual drawing set (16 sheets)
- Monroe Elementary Connection Options (1 sheet)
- Shoreline Drive/Salida Del Sol crosswalk option (1 sheet)
- Roundabout sketches (3 sheets)
- Raised crosswalk photos (1 sheet)
- Heat map of collisions and collision diagrams for high concentration areas (4 sheets)