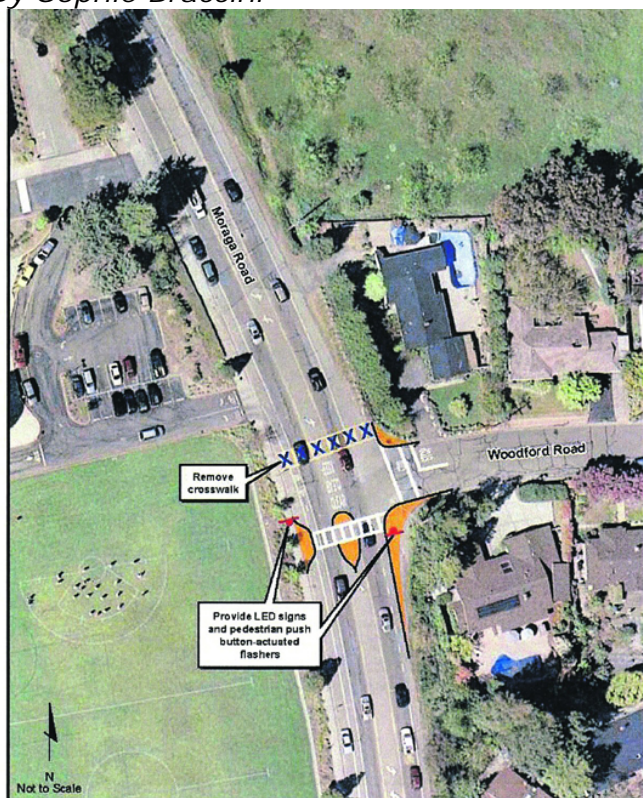


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Improving Pedestrian Safety at Dangerous Moraga Crosswalks

By Sophie Braccini



Proposed crosswalk Graphic provided

There are two crossings along Moraga Road where, according to some pedestrians, you take your life in your hands when you cross the road. One is at Corliss and serves as a transition between a sidewalk and a pedestrian trail; the other is at Woodford, across from Campolindo High School (Campo) that is most heavily used by students coming and going from school when traffic is at its peak.

There's never been an accident reported at the Woodford crossing, but according to Moraga Chief of Police Robert Priebe there have been some close calls.

Town Manager Jill Keimach and her team have been conducting community workshops to inform residents and gather feedback. On March 15 she presented a final version of a plan to improve pedestrian safety before the Town Council makes its final decision on the evening of March 28.

About 20 residents showed up at the community workshop held on March 15 at the Hacienda de las Flores. It was not the first time the Town reached out to residents regarding pedestrian crossing improvements, but as proposals from Town transportation consultants Fehr and Peers changed, further discussion seemed like a good idea.

The main issue at Corliss is a hill that impedes the view for north-bound traffic. The major improvements there will consist of an overhead flashing beacon above the crosswalk and an advanced warning signal placed at the top of the crest, both activated by pedestrians before crossing.

Most of the residents who came to the meeting were interested in the Woodford crossing. This is where students going to Campo, either coming from the Woodford neighborhood, the bus stop, or from their own cars parked

on the street, have to cross to reach their destination. As the students try to traverse, a long line of cars winds its way toward the student drop-off area, while others attempt quick post-drop-off exits from the school's driveway.

"The traffic engineers have proposed two solutions," said Keimach, "One that would leave the crosswalk where it is and just make it more visible, and a second that would move the crosswalk south, before Woodford if you're driving toward Lafayette." She indicated that this second option was thought by Fehr and Peers to maximize pedestrian security and would be the one recommended by staff for the Council's approval.

"I'd like to make a comment," said Omid Boozarpour, a Campo sophomore and the only high school student present at the meeting, "I live on Woodford and cross there many times a day. I'd rather not cross at this second location, there is no sidewalk along the south side of Woodford and visibility is very limited. People making a right turn there will not see pedestrians; it's dangerous."

"We are adding a corner curb extension at the southeast corner of that street to tighten the turning radius and slow traffic," responded Keimach.

As the discussion progressed, the public succeeded in having a proposed raised median island on Moraga Road removed from the plan, as residents felt it would create more problems for morning traffic. Other safety features include pedestrian-activated LED flashing signs.

The March 28 meeting of the Town Council will include a public comment period during which people can share their thoughts with the Council before the final decision is made.

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