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Moraga Road to be Three Lanes Between Draegger and Corliss

By Sophie Braccini

The decision is in. Moraga Road between Draegger and Corliss will be transformed into a three-lane thoroughfare with the addition of a left turn lane, and bicycle and pedestrian pathways.

It took an additional year, several focus groups, and a townwide survey for the Moraga Town Council to circle back and bring closure to the extensive process that started in 2013.

The decision was a three to two vote. Vice mayor Dave Trotter and Council member Phil Arth opposed the decision based on the fact that the townwide survey indicates that a majority of Moraga residents prefer to keep a four-lane configuration. Mayor Mike Metcalf, as well as council members Teresa Onoda and Roger Wykle, sided with the three-lane option because of safety reasons, and because it had been the choice of all the task

Image provided

forces, committees and public workshops since 2013.

Charles Hester, director of business development for Godbe Research, presented the result of the survey to the council on April 13. The consultant said that 26 questions had been sent to 5,700 households and that 1,108 had been returned, an exceptional response rate, said the Godbe executive.

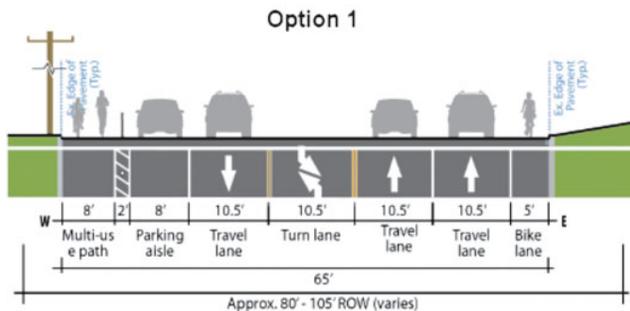
The survey results show that a large majority of residents, about 80 percent, consider it is important to balance the needs of drivers with pedestrians and bicyclists; 65 percent consider that the road segment between Corliss and Draegger is unsafe for bicyclists and pedestrians; and 60 percent consider the traffic between Corliss and Draegger is satisfactory.

Residents indicated at an 80 percent rate that the three-lane option would make pedestrians and bicyclists safer. However, when asked to choose what new street configuration they would prefer, it was the four-lane configuration that was voted first, followed by the three-lane design.

The three-lane option had been brought to the council in January, 2015. Trotter had said that making the decision to reduce the number of lanes from four to three required a town-wide outreach, such as a survey. He was supported by Wykle. Onoda favored the three lanes option while Arth preferred four lanes. Metcalf was absent at that meeting.

A year later, the survey results seemed to support Trotter and Arth's position. Wykle said that in his view the southbound portion of Moraga Road between Draegger and Corliss was reduced to one lane "de facto," since one is already used for left turns and a portion becomes a right turn-only as it approaches Corliss.

Onoda stressed the importance of having a dedicated left turn lane, for safety reasons and to secure access to a new entrance to the Hacienda de las Flores.



Metcalf said he based his decision on the previous process, where a lot of people spent time studying the topic, as compared to a survey that was confusing, according to comments he had heard.

Planning Director Ellen Clark, who has initiated and led the Moraga Livable Road project, noted that the new configuration would be only striped on the asphalt with no new construction, to allow the possibility to revert to a four-lane configuration if needed.

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