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## Timing is everything for Pleasant Hill Road corridor traffic signals

By Pippa Fisher



Traffic on Pleasant Hill Road. Photo Pippa Fisher

Traffic should continue to ease a bit on the southern section of a heavily traveled thoroughfare in Lafayette during commute hours.

Local lawmakers gave the go-ahead to continue the revised traffic signal timing on Pleasant Hill Road by a unanimous 4-0 vote, with Lafayette City Council Member Ivor Samson absent at the city council meeting on March 13.

The council heard from City Engineer Tony Coe, who presented the results of the recent analysis by TJKM Consultants, which reviewed the signal timing plans that have been in place over the past three months as a temporary trial.

The Pleasant Hill Road corridor - the area running from the north at the Lafayette border as far as the 680 intersection to the south - has long been a problem for motorists during the morning commute hours.

The city heard concerns and answered questions from residents last year at a packed outreach meeting at Acalanes High School. A major concern was the traffic on Reliez Valley Road and the difficulty turning onto Pleasant Hill Road at peak times.

The revised signals from the side streets, which run the green light now for the maximum allowed time regardless of traffic, has the effect of "metering" the traffic further up Pleasant Hill Road, which in turn allows better management of traffic further south. It also eases access onto Pleasant Hill Road for drivers turning right from Reliez Valley Road.

Coe said that they have studied the diversion rate - those cars choosing to use Reliez Valley Road from Withers Avenue further north in order to cut through - and have found an insignificant increase of 4 percent. However the study recommends continued monitoring of the situation.

The council had questions for Coe, particularly regarding how to discourage drivers from using Reliez Valley Road as an alternative route and raised the possibility of engaging with the traffic navigation app Waze to ensure out of town traffic traveling through is not being automatically recommended to use this route.

The four members of council present voted to adopt the staff recommendation and asked for quarterly reports from staff.

The council passed a second motion to have the city staff come back with an outline of additional measures that could be implemented if necessary to divert traffic from Reliez Valley Road, to look further into Waze, to study the implications of extending the right hand turn lane towards Deer Hill Road and to look at the left turn onto Stanley Boulevard.

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