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## Moraga Road second right-turn lane pilot program continues to end of year

By Pippa Fisher



Pedestrians now have to cross at three places with the closure of the crossing by the Plaza, as part of the traffic pilot program.

Photo Pippa Fisher

He explained that traffic had big seasonal variations but that it appeared overall throughput did increase as a result.

Engineering and Public Works Director Mike Moran said that feedback received on the pilot was largely negative, noting that children walking to and from the school as well as older individuals from senior housing on Moraga Boulevard all use the east side of Moraga Road and do not appreciate now having to make three crossings where it could be one. He noted that the throughput is less than optimal because the middle lane is shared with others going straight or turning left, so unless the driver is at the front of the lane, they could be stuck waiting anyway.

Moran also pointed out that closing the crosswalk goes against General Plan goals and Downtown Specific Plan Objectives of encouraging a pedestrian-oriented downtown. Because of this, staff recommended ending the pilot study and restoring the pre-study crossing.

However, the two members of the public who spoke at the meeting were both in favor of continuing the two right-hand turn lanes and keeping the crosswalk closed, citing the danger to pedestrians of crossing there.

"The trellis is in the way," said Lafayette resident Cheryl MacDonald. "If you can't make eye contact with the driver, they can't see you."

Lafayette resident Adele Connor, who has previously shared her vision for improving traffic on Moraga Road with city leaders, said that this pilot study jumped the gun and that in order for it to be successful it would have to be implemented in conjunction with several other measures further back along Moraga Road during shared commute hours.

The two-lane right-turn from Moraga Road onto Mt. Diablo Boulevard pilot program is set to continue through the end of the year. Such was the unanimous decision of the Transportation and Circulation Commission Oct. 7. The pilot's future will be reassessed at that time.

The city council approved the project in May 2018, but although slated to begin at the end of July 2018 and last 90 days, delays receiving necessary tracking system equipment and complications arising from that delay resulted in changes not being implemented until mid-November. A new controller was installed in mid-December. The project involved allowing a second right-hand turn from the center lane and of necessity closing the crosswalk to pedestrians with a barricade on the east side of the junction by the Plaza.

The commissioners heard a detailed report on the project from Transportation Planner Justin Horng.

All commissioners agreed to give the study more time and to allow for consistent traffic reporting through all months of the year, until the end of December when they will bring the issue back for further discussion.

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