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Pedestrian safety one of top priorities discussed during Moraga council meeting

By Vera Kochan



Hazardous road conditions near Los Perales Elementary School Photo provided by Moraga Public Works Dept

A big part of the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program concerns traffic and safety issues within Moraga. One of the town council's goals for 2021 is to "continue to focus on traffic safety and explore opportunities for improvement, such as closing the sidewalk gap on Corliss Drive near Los Perales school" - a topic that has received much attention from concerned residents in the neighborhood for quite some time.

Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp's presentation during the town council's April 28 meeting outlined Moraga's traffic and safety areas that need improvement. Also present was Regional Principal-in-Charge Meghan Mitman of Fehr & Peers, a transportation planning and engineering firm.

On the list of safety projects is ADA accessibility. Staff wants to analyze all of the town's buildings, parks, pathways, curb ramps and sidewalks in order to determine any shortcomings in that realm. Also,

according to a town ordinance, property owners are responsible for maintaining landscapes and walkways in the public right-of-way. A biennial inspection would help to reinforce hazard-free zones.

Knapp's staff report also focused on cyclist improvement projects such as "striping bike lanes and buffer zones, adding bike lanes and signage where bike lane gaps exist, adding new paved shoulders with bike lanes, and adding separated bicycle facilities."

Traffic signal improvements would involve assessments to the aging equipment in order to create a replacement schedule or possibly install more technologically advanced equipment with signal timing synchronization, improved ADA compliance deficiencies, smart timing, and video vehicle detection.

High on the council members' list of discussion concerned pedestrian safety improvements. Knapp's report pointed out some inexpensive enhancements would include "maintaining existing or upgrading traffic signage and striping improvements for crosswalks. More expensive projects include traffic calming/curb ramp bulb-outs, advance warning systems, and new traffic signalized intersections."

While several intersections made the staff's list with regards to needing pedestrian improvements, council members gave particular focus to Canyon Road/Sanders Drive and Canyon Road/Country Club Drive in large part because of the proximity to the Moraga Shopping Center and student foot traffic to and from Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. However, the location most in need of pedestrian improvements, according to public comments and council members alike, is Corliss Drive near Los Perales Elementary School on Wakefield Drive, where many incidents by careless drivers have occurred.

Funding for transportation projects, which includes traffic safety, would come from Measure J along with additional grant programs.

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