



## Item No. 17 Town of Atherton

### **CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT – REGULAR AGENDA**

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
GEORGE RODERICKS, CITY MANAGER**

**FROM: MICHAEL KASHIWAGI  
COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR**

**DATE: JULY 15, 2015**

**SUBJECT: UPDATE OF EL CAMINO REAL PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE  
SAFETY CONCERNS**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

This report is for information only.

#### **BACKGROUND**

El Camino Real is a major north-south transportation corridor (SR 82), serving the San Francisco Bay Area Peninsula that is owned and maintained by Caltrans. Within Atherton, El Camino Real (ECR) is a six lane arterial roadway with a pavement width that varies from 80-85 feet. The highway has raised medians with left-turn pockets and posted speed limits of 35 MPH. Approximately 30,000 vehicles travel per day on the 1.6 mile segment of ECR in Atherton.

There is one traffic signal on ECR within Atherton and five marked crosswalks on ECR within Atherton. Initiatives to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety along the El Camino Real corridor within the Town of Atherton have been an area of high priority and focus by the City Council over the past several years.

Over the past 10 years, the Police Department has completed 294 collision reports on ECR. Of the 294 reports, 6 have involved pedestrians and 20 have involved bicycles. Of the 26 collisions that involved pedestrians or bicycles, 6 occurred within marked and uncontrolled crosswalks. Overall there were 120 injury collisions and 4 fatal collisions. This information is summarized in Attachment A.

The Town has worked collaboratively and met with Caltrans on a number of occasions to jointly develop and implement improvements to address pedestrian and safety concerns on ECR. The following actions/improvements have been taken or completed within the last two years, or are currently underway:

- Installed enhanced signing and striping at the marked crosswalks
- Trimmed trees and removed vegetation in the medians to improve visibility
- Invested in the preparation and submittal of three separate grant applications seeking funds to help improve safety
- Discussion with Caltrans regarding the potential reduction of travel lanes from six to four lanes
- Developed two separate projects to install a total of three new Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons
- Is in the process of developing improvement alternatives to improve safety at the Selby Lane intersection
- Aggressive enforcement of traffic violations
- Participated in the Saturation Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP), conducting Pedestrian Enforcement Details at marked crosswalks
- Included an El Camino Real Complete Street Planning Study in the FY 2016/17 Capital Improvement Program

In February of 2015, staff presented a report to Council considering alternatives to address El Camino Real bicycle/pedestrian safety concerns. Council provided direction to collaborate with the Menlo Atherton Fire District to install a traffic control device at Almendral Avenue, to reach out to the Community to seek feedback on improving the Selby Lane intersection and to place the lane reduction concept on hold.

## **DISCUSSION**

This section includes a summary and status update of some the action items noted above.

### Enhanced Signing/Striping and Trimmed Vegetation

Staff worked with Caltrans to install new signs and striping and to remove lower vegetation and shrubs within the landscape medians at the five marked and uncontrolled crosswalk locations (Selby Lane, Stockbridge Avenue, Almendral Avenue, Isabella Avenue, and Alejandra Avenue). The Town will continue to maintain and remove vegetation as needed. Caltrans will continue to refresh the signing and striping as needed.

### Grant Funding Applications

The Town has submitted the following grant applications since 2013 for potential ECR Improvement projects:

1. In April of 2013, the Town partnered with the Local Government Commission to apply for a Caltrans Community-Based Transportation Planning Grant to fund engineering, operational analysis and community outreach/involvement associated with the concept of reducing the number of travel lanes on El Camino Real.
2. In September of 2014, the Town submitted an application for an Active Transportation grant for a Complete Streets project on El Camino Real between Selby Lane and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The improvement was identified as a potential project during development of

the Pedestrian Bicycle Master Plan to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists by installing Class I Bike Path and a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon, among other improvements.

3. In October of 2014, the Town submitted an application for a Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant to Caltrans for Complete Streets and Connectivity Plan along the El Camino Real Corridor. The project included developing a Complete Streets and Connectivity Plan along the ECR Corridor. The Plan was to help improve the Corridor by focusing on the safety and mobility of a multi-modal transportation system and included engaging and partnering with Caltrans, local communities, residents and stakeholders in an intensive participatory planning process.

The Town was not awarded any of the above grants.

#### Lane Reduction/Class I Bike Facility

The reduction of travel lanes from six to four on ECR would improve pedestrian safety by decreasing crossing distances and vehicles speeds. The reduction in travel lanes would also provide additional space within the Right of Way to provide other features such as bike lanes, sidewalks or wider medians. In October of 2014, the City Council approved issuance of an RFP for performing an operational analysis and study as required by Caltrans to help determine if reducing ECR from six to four lanes is operationally feasible. The Town received three proposals to perform the analysis.

In February, the City Council directed staff to suspend work regarding the performance of the operational analysis and study. The main concern identified was whether or not it was actually feasible to reduce the number of lanes, even if the analysis shows it would operationally work. With the growth and development currently being planned in surrounding communities, it did not seem intuitive that reducing the travel lanes on this major corridor would be an optimal long term solution. Other concerns identified include the length of time likely required before reduction could be implemented and the desire to keep six lanes from an emergency response point of view.

The Town currently has a Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan Implementation project underway, that includes evaluating the feasibility of installing two separate Class I bike facilities on El Camino Real (between Selby Lane and Fifth Avenue and between Atherton Avenue and Encinal Avenue) as identified as priority projects in the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan. The feasibility analysis is scheduled to be completed this Fall.

#### Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons at Isabella and Alejandra

Caltrans is currently designing a project that includes 17 Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons on ECR within San Mateo County. This project includes Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons at Isabella and Alejandra Avenues within Atherton. Caltrans plans to complete the design of this project in the Spring of 2016 and have construction begin in the Fall of 2016. It is not known if Caltrans' Contractor will start construction on the two Atherton locations, or start somewhere else on the

Peninsula. Given the size of Caltrans' project, it is likely that the beacons at Isabella and Alejandra Avenues would not be operational until 2017.

Due to the long lead time to deliver this project, staff met with Caltrans in January 2015 to discuss the feasibility of the Town taking over the design and construction phases to help expedite delivery of this project. Staff learned that because the two locations were already in a planned and programmed State project that was underway, there were a number of internal Caltrans processes that needed to be completed prior to the Town taking the lead. The process could have taken anywhere from 6 to 12 months to complete. Based on this information, it did not appear that there would be a significant, if any, time savings for the Town to take the lead on the project. Caltrans staff is continuing to work on this project and is aware of the Town's desire to expedite installation of the Hybrid Pedestrian Beacons.

#### Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon at Almendral

The Town is sponsoring and leading a separate project that will install a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon at Almendral Avenue. This signal will also include pre-emption capabilities for Menlo Fire to improve the safety and accessibility to El Camino Real for Fire Station 3.

The Council authorized issuance of an RFP for engineering design services of the new traffic control device in February 2015. A contract was executed and the Consultant was given Notice to Proceed on April 28, 2015. Installation of this Beacon requires the Town to obtain an encroachment permit from Caltrans as the device will be installed within the State's Right of Way.

Staff has met with Caltrans to discuss steps which can be taken to expedite the encroachment permit process. This included a meeting with key Caltrans review staff at the preliminary design stage to help Caltrans become familiar with our proposed project and to get initial review comments which will hopefully streamline the formal Caltrans review process. The Town's engineering consultant has been working diligently on a very aggressive design schedule. The 85% design plans have been completed and have been formally submitted for review by Caltrans.

We anticipate receiving comments from the various Caltrans Divisions, addressing those comments and re-submitting the Improvement plans to the State by the end of August. The Town is hopeful of receiving the encroachment permit to allow bidding of the project in the October/November 2015 timeframe.

The Town also recently met with Menlo Fire to review the 85% design plans and to ensure that the signal pre-emption equipment and design will be compatible with their needs. Staff is also discussing cost sharing and a funding agreement will be developed for review and approval by the City Council and Menlo Fire District Board.

#### Selby Lane

As part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Implementation project that is currently underway, the Town has been collaborating with San Mateo County and Caltrans to develop alternatives to improve the Selby Lane intersection's safety. Geometric alternatives being discussed and analyzed include realigning the left turn pockets and/or installing various median configurations to restrict some turning movements, thereby minimizing potential conflicts and improving safety. Once the Town, Caltrans and the County further develop and analyze the alternatives, staff plans to have a community meeting to seek feedback on the potential alternatives. We anticipate this community meeting occurring this Fall.

### Complete Streets Planning Study

In June of 2015, The Council approved the FY 15/16 through 19/20 Capital Improvement Program, which includes a \$300,000 El Camino Real Complete Streets Study. The study will focus on improving bicycle, pedestrian and vehicle safety along El Camino Real. This project was the subject of the various unsuccessful grant applications noted above is now being funded by the Town's special parcel tax. The project is slated to start during FY 15/16 and be completed in FY 16/17.

### Police Enforcement Activities

Traffic safety is a top priority for the Atherton Police Department. To that end, the Department focuses on the three "E's" of traffic program management; 1) Education, 2) Engineering and 3) Enforcement. The Department has been aggressively enforcing traffic violations on El Camino Real to reduce or eliminate collisions.

During a collision investigation, officers attempt to determine the Primary Collision Factor (PCF). The PCF is that section of the California Vehicle Code that was violated and that was most likely the principal cause of the collision. The four most frequently found PCF's of the total number of collisions on El Camino Real are speed, stop signs, turning movements, and left or U turns. As speed is the number one PCF for traffic collisions on El Camino Real, the Department is conducting regular speed enforcement operations using both radar and LIDAR (Light Detection And Ranging) to detect speed violators. From January 1, 2015 through June 30, 2015, officers issued 705 traffic citations for excessive speed on El Camino Real. Attachment B includes detailed data on the number of citations and warnings (no fine, no points against driver's license, and insurance isn't affected) issued by the Department from January 1 to June 30, 2015.

The Department also participates with other law enforcement agencies in a county-wide grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). The grant provides funding for regular Saturation Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) operations. Officers recently conducted a pedestrian enforcement operation on ECR that resulted in the issuance of 35 citations to motorists who failed to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians within a marked crosswalk.

### **POLICY FOCUS**

The various projects outlined above that have already been completed, that are currently under development, or are being planned /considered are consistent with Council's previous direction and priorities regarding the focus and commitment to improve accessibility and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists along the El Camino Real Corridor.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no Fiscal Impact at this time.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with this agenda item being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting in print and electronically. Information about the project is also disseminated via the Town's electronic News Flash and Atherton Online. There are approximately 1,200 subscribers to the Town's electronic News Flash publications. Subscribers include residents as well as stakeholders – to include, but be not limited to, media outlets, school districts, Menlo Park Fire District, service provides (water, power, and sewer), and regional elected officials.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: El Camino Real Collision History

Attachment B: El Camino Real Traffic Citations and Warnings

Attachment A  
**El Camino Real Collision History**  
 January 1, 2005 to May 31, 2015

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Collisions</b>	<b>Collisions within a Marked / Uncontrolled Crosswalk**</b>	<b>Pedestrian Collisions</b>	<b>Bicycle Collisions</b>	<b>Injury Collisions</b>	<b>Fatal Collisions</b>
2005	24	0	0	0	12	0
2006	26	0	0	1	9	0
2007	28	0	0	2	9	0
2008	23	0	0	5	10	0
2009	29	1	1	3	15	0
2010	37	2	1	4	14	2
2011	31	0	0	0	10	0
2012	23	1	1	1	10	0
2013	32	0	0	1	14	1
2014	27	2	1	2	10	1
2015*	14	0	2	1	7	0
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>4</b>

Notes

\* 2015 covers January 1, 2015 to May 31, 2015.

\*\* Involving Pedestrians/Bicycles

Attachment B  
**El Camino Real Citation and Warning Data**  
 January 1, 2005 to June 30, 2015

**Total Citations and Warnings for January through June 2015**

	<b>Suspended</b>	<b>Speed</b>	<b>Pedestrian</b>	<b>Insurance</b>	<b>DUI</b>	<b>Bike</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Jan.		80		3		1	<b>84</b>
Feb.	1	46		3	2		<b>52</b>
March	2	193		10	1	7	<b>213</b>
April	1	187		14	2		<b>204</b>
May	3	221	1	5			<b>230</b>
June		220		15	1	1	<b>237</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1,020</b>

**Citations for January through June 2015**

	<b>Suspended</b>	<b>Speed</b>	<b>Pedestrian</b>	<b>Insurance</b>	<b>DUI</b>	<b>Bike</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Jan.		64		2			<b>66</b>
Feb.	1	30		3	2		<b>36</b>
March	2	146		6	1		<b>155</b>
April	1	136		13	2		<b>152</b>
May	3	171		4			<b>178</b>
June		158		11	1		<b>170</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>757</b>

**Warnings for January through June 2015**

	<b>Suspended</b>	<b>Speed</b>	<b>Pedestrian</b>	<b>Insurance</b>	<b>DUI</b>	<b>Bike</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Jan.		16		1		1	<b>18</b>
Feb.		16					<b>16</b>
March		47		4		7	<b>58</b>
April		51		1			<b>52</b>
May		50	1	1			<b>52</b>
June		62	4	4		1	<b>67</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>242</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>263</b>