




Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

Memorandum

DATE: September 27, 2017

MEMO TO: MROSD Board of Directors

THROUGH: Stephen E. Abbors, General Manager 

FROM: Lisa Bankosh, Planner III

SUBJECT: Alma College Parking Area and Trail Crossing Project – Crosswalk Safety Review

Alma College Parking Area and Trail Crossing Project – Crosswalk Safety Review

On March 28, 2017, the Planning and Natural Resources Committee reviewed the schematic design for the Alma College Parking Area and Trail Crossing Project at Bear Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. The proposed design of the Phase I trail crossing locates the crosswalk north or to the right of the parking driveway entrance (as seen from a driver exiting the parking lot). Because the majority of traffic exiting the parking area would turn to the right (towards HWY 17 and Los Gatos), and therefore drive across the crosswalk, the Committee requested a second look at the crosswalk location.

To respond to this request, the project traffic consultant conducted a more thorough examination of current and anticipated traffic patterns relative to the crosswalk location. Hexagon Traffic Consultants confirmed that the crosswalk location north/to the right of the driveway is the preferred location, for the following reasons:

1. A driver making a left turn must look for gaps in vehicular traffic in two directions rather than just one, and may be less likely to notice a pedestrian in a crosswalk;
2. The crosswalk would need to be physically farther from the driver due to topography if it were on the left (south) of the driveway, making it more difficult to see a pedestrian approaching the crosswalk; and
3. Moving the crosswalk to the left of the driveway would require the construction of costly and substantial retaining walls as part of the Phase I improvements, which would need to be subsequently removed in 1-3 years when the Phase II undercrossing is constructed.

To further confirm the proposed design, staff contracted TJKM Traffic Engineering to perform a third party peer review. A field review was conducted on August 23, 2017 to verify sight distance and the at-grade crossing and driveway location. TJKM concluded that the proposed parking area and at-grade crossing location provide adequate access to the new trail on the west side of the preserve. The report provides a number of detailed comments regarding the type and location of pavement striping, and design of the solar powered Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon, but no changes were recommended on the location of the crossing.

Finally, Santa Clara County Roads and Airports reviewed the proposed crosswalk and driveway design as part of the encroachment permit process. The County also approved the design and current crossing location, requesting only minor changes in the striping specifications.

From the results of these three additional design reviews, staff concludes that the proposed crosswalk design provides a safe pedestrian access to the new trail, with ***no changes recommended to the crosswalk location*** relative to the driveway entrance. Moreover, careful attention has been given to provide added safety measures for this crossing. Safety measures include pavement striping, advance warning signs, and crosswalk signs with pedestrian-activated flashing beacons at the crossing locations.

The Board will consider final design approval for the parking area and crosswalk at their regular meeting of October 25, 2017.