



City of Alameda

Staff Report

File Number:2020-7660

City Council

Agenda Date: 2/4/2020

File Type: Regular Agenda Item

Agenda Number: 6-B

Recommendation to Accept Update on Recently Installed and Ongoing Traffic Safety and Traffic Calming Activities. (Public Works 96013)

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Traffic safety and traffic calming in the City of Alameda (City) continue to be a priority. **The purpose of this update is to present recently completed, ongoing, and upcoming traffic safety improvements** (*other transportation planning efforts and larger scale transportation network improvement project updates will be presented to the City Council in March, with the Transportation Choices Plan Annual Report*). The meeting will also allow the City Council to consider and provide direction to staff regarding these efforts. In addition to the projects discussed in the report, in late 2019, the City initiated the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) and the City Council adopted a Vision Zero Policy. Simultaneously, staff instituted a Vision Zero Task Force, including City staff and Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) staff.

BACKGROUND

Based on the unusual uptick in the number of school aged children and other bicyclist and pedestrian collisions since the summer of 2019, staff responded by creating a response team, including membership from the Public Works Department; Police Department; Planning, Building, and Transportation Department; the City Manager's Office; and AUSD. The response team has actively engaged in assessing each incident to understand and document the situation. Most importantly, the team has developed a plan for: immediate response (late 2019 and early 2020); near-term (ongoing until August 2020 - prior to the start of the next school year); and long-term traffic safety measures related to school safety and Vision Zero implementation. Consistent with Vision Zero, the plan involves engineering, education, and enforcement.

DISCUSSION

An inter-departmental team has been developed to both initiate immediate and relatively near-term actions to improve traffic safety, as well as supporting the longer-term Vision Zero Action Plan to continuously improve traffic safety.

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Immediate Response

The response team has visited each location where a child has been involved in a collision near a school site since last fall to better understand the cause of each specific incident. When available, the site visits also included the school principal who provided background on typical circulation around school and the school's efforts to improve and manage student pick-up and drop-offs.

City staff used information gathered during these site visits to identify recommended traffic safety improvements at 25 locations, which improvements were installed in two phases starting in December 2019 and concluding in February 2020. A list of the intersections and modifications at each location is included in Exhibit 1.

Improvements consisted of refreshing and enhancing high-visibility crosswalks, the addition of stop bars to encourage vehicles to stop farther back from crosswalks, additional red curb at intersections to improve visibility (daylighting), and additional signage.

In November, the Police Department conducted targeted traffic enforcement in high conflict areas near schools and issued 400 citations during the month of November. Citations were given for impeding the flow of traffic (double parking), illegal turns, failure to yield, and speeding. Unfortunately this level of enhanced enforcement required significant overtime which is not a sustainable strategy with current police staffing and resources.

Near-Term Actions

Staff has developed a list of priority intersections for traffic safety and traffic calming improvements based on collision history, known high conflict areas, and recent public input. Each candidate intersection will be evaluated for potential improvements. Improvements may include rapid and relatively inexpensive modifications such as high-visibility crosswalks, painted bulb-outs, striping configuration changes, daylighting for improved visibility, pedestrian signal heads with countdown timers at all traffic signals in the City, lengthening pedestrian intervals and an all-red phase if possible, and potentially rectangular rapid flashing beacons at uncontrolled pedestrian crossings. The initial phases of installation are planned to occur this summer.

The Police Department has completed an Office of Traffic Safety (State of California) grant application to fund additional targeted enforcement at high conflict and school zone areas.

Additional Long-Term Traffic Safety Efforts

While near-term projects are in design and construction, staff will also be seeking other traffic safety improvement projects throughout the city. For example, several Safe Routes to School Assessments have been completed by the City and the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC). The

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City will continue to partner with ACTC to complete additional assessments to cover all elementary and middle schools in Alameda. With assessment plans completed, staff will seek funding opportunities and develop a city-wide school safety improvement project. Traffic safety around all schools in Alameda is a priority for the City and staff will continue to address all traffic safety concerns in our school zones in one or more comprehensive projects.

Many of the priority intersections will require expensive alterations to substantively improve traffic safety. Signal modifications such as the addition of a protected left turn movement require detailed traffic analysis, design, and funding. Geometric modifications to an intersection can also significantly improve safety but often require changes to the sidewalks, medians, islands, and drainage which are more complex and time consuming to design and expensive to construct. Street lighting improvements, especially at intersections will also be considered. Staff will evaluate and prioritize these priority intersections both independently and as part of a roadway corridor. Together with the Vision Zero Plan and Active Transportation Plan this information will be used to seek public support and funding for these comprehensive projects.

Maintenance is Traffic Safety

Regular maintenance of our existing transportation infrastructure is a major component of traffic safety. All components of our roadway network have finite lives and must be maintained or replaced to remain effective. Particularly important are signs, striping, street lighting, traffic signals, roadway pavement, and sidewalks. The recent passing of Measure BB in 2014, and SB-1 in 2017 has significantly increased the available funding and Public works staff have begun to aggressively invest in our existing infrastructure.

Recent accomplishments include the replacing faded stop signs, stop legends, crosswalk and centerline striping at 250 intersections within Alameda Point and west of Grand Street. Alameda Island east of Grand Street will see similar striping improvements in 2020. Three miles of streets were repaved with new striping in 2019 and ten miles of pavement treatments are planned for construction in 2020.

ALTERNATIVES

Recommended approach to near-, medium-, and longer-term traffic safety measures is being presented.

Provide staff different priorities or improvements.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Funds for the immediate short-term and planned near-term traffic safety and traffic calming improvements were budgeted in the Public Works Department account for the Capital Improvement

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Program (96013) - Traffic Calming, which is funded through Gas Tax and Transportation Development Impact Fees.

MUNICIPAL CODE/POLICY DOCUMENT CROSS REFERENCE

The completed and planned Traffic Safety and Traffic Calming plans and construction meets the Transportation Element of the City's General Plan

<https://www.alamedaca.gov/Departments/Planning-Building-and-Transportation/Planning-Division/General-Plan>

Circulation goal, Plan, develop and maintain a safe, barrier-free and efficient transportation system to provide the community with adequate present and future mobility.

Objective # 4.1.1: Provide for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and services; Objective # 4.1.3: Preserve mobility for emergency response vehicles and maintain emergency access to people and property, and Objective # 4.1.5: Consider the transportation needs of the community, including those with limited mobility options.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the completed and planned Traffic Safety and Traffic Calming plans and construction is Categorically Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(c) - Existing Facilities and 15304(c) - Minor Alterations to Land. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, this project is a Categorical Exclusion under 23 Code of Federal Regulations 771.117(c): activity (d)(2).

CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no climate impacts to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council requested to receive the update and provide any further direction to staff

CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDATION

Due to Traffic Safety and Traffic Calming being a high priority of the City Council, this report is intended to be an update of the City's progress and to report on strategies and actions that have occurred addressing short term, medium term and long term traffic safety measures.

Respectfully submitted,
Liam Garland, Public Works Director

By,
Donya Amiri, Principal Engineer/Traffic Engineer
Scott Wikstrom, City Engineer

Exhibit:

1. Traffic Safety Improvements

cc: Eric Levitt, City Manager

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