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Hardware problems delay major intersection technology upgrade

By Nick Marnell

Signaling improvements to the major Lafayette intersection that everyone loves to hate have been pushed back indefinitely until the city receives and calibrates the proper hardware from an outside vendor.

In May, the city council reaffirmed support for the Downtown Congestion Reduction Plan strategy to test a second northbound right-turn lane at the intersection of Moraga Road and Mt. Diablo Boulevard, and also authorized signal technology upgrades at that intersection and the First Street - Mt. Diablo Boulevard intersection. The project was expected to be completed in early August.

But the city ran into problems with its hardware vendor, Western Pacific Signal of San Leandro. The company agreed to provide the project hardware to the city within two weeks under terms of a \$59,400 professional services agreement executed on July 9. Blaming complications with one of its suppliers, Western did not deliver the hardware until Aug. 24. The city tested the equipment and found that its installed computer chips were out of date.

The city sent a letter to Western Pacific demanding that the company correct the traffic signal controller and computer processing unit issues. Western offered to send new hardware to the city, but according to James Hinkamp, city transportation planner, no tangible product exchange or transaction has taken place since a Sept. 25 conversation with the company.

"While we are hopeful this accelerates the project implementation from this day forward, we cannot provide a specific timeline until we can calibrate the new equipment," Hinkamp said, because even when the order is finally delivered, the city will have to verify the specifications for system compatibility.

Until then, a right turn onto Mt. Diablo Boulevard from northbound Moraga Road can be navigated from only the far right hand lane.

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