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Campolindo Traffic - Progress and Challenges

By Sophie Braccini

On May 5 Elaine Davis asked the Moraga Traffic and Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) for safety improvement measures at the intersection of Campolindo Drive and Moraga Road. Davis' request is a symptom of the problems created by the heavy traffic load that's generated each day by students and parents driving to and from Campolindo High School. The school is aware of the problem and plans to start a carpool program in the fall. It also sends regular safety reminders to parents and students. But adjacent locations are impacted as well, such as the Saint Mary's extension parking lot where staff is increasingly concerned with their safety, as drivers rush through to get to or from school faster.

"I am afraid to have my children cross at the Campolindo Drive-Moraga Road intersection, even when the light is red for cars," said Davis at the TSAC meeting.

"Cars coming from Campolindo Drive (where the high school parking lot is located) and making right turns on Moraga Road do not always respect the pedestrians' right of way." Since the police have never registered an incident caused by a student, the Committee didn't feel it should propose a modification of the intersection's signals; it recommended making the crosswalks more visible by adding stripes and signs alerting drivers to the crossing.

Two days after the TSAC presentation, Campolindo principal Carol Kitchens sent an email to the parent community. "Safety concerns have prompted me to remind everyone (that) turning vehicles must watch for and yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk before yielding to other turning vehicles," she wrote, "turning vehicles must not enter the crosswalk before pedestrians have fully crossed."

The school is willing to take further steps to reduce its impact and will start a carpooling program in the fall. "There's a problem with Campo rush hour traffic," says Council Member Mike Metcalf, who is the Town's representative on SWAT (Southwest Area Transportation Committee,) "There's a transportation demand management (TDM) program under Measure J that features rideshare incentives, and Miramonte started a trial program last year which appears to have been successful: kids signed up, cars were taken off the road."

"When Council Members Howard Harpham and Mike Metcalf contacted us about carpooling, we decided to go ahead and devised a carpool program with 511.org that will start in the fall," said Paul Mack, Campolindo Vice-Principal. Mack explained that 15 carpool spaces will be dedicated in the school parking lot for students who register to carpool on a regular basis. The number of spaces will be increased to 25 if needed. 511.org will provide incentives such as gift cards for carpooling students that will be raffled off regularly.

Diminishing the number of cars on the road is an objective that Thea Grigsby

completely agrees with. The Saint Mary's staff council representative is all too aware of the problems caused by the Campolindo commuters that rush by the campus' extension building that's located at the north-west corner of the intersection of Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard. For months now, drivers trying to avoid the red lights on Rheem and Moraga Road have been cutting through the campus parking lot at speeds that worry staff. "You should see the 'slow down' post that we put on the parking lot," says Grigsby, "it's all bit up because it's been hit so many times." She reports that there have been many close calls and is afraid that something bad is going to happen.

Grigsby tried to contact the high school and the parents' club, but didn't have any success. The Police Department that is already spread too thin can only do so much monitoring; the other tenants are not willing to add to the speed bumps already in place and won't let the college block the Moraga Road entrance to the parking lot with a chain. Bill Foley, the College's Chief of Security, has tried everything including cutting back the bushes to improve visibility, but safety problems are extremely high on the Rheem campus staff's list.

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