

Published April 12th, 2023

## Community Meeting held to gather feedback for Corliss Drive Safe Routes to School Project

By Vera Kochan



Corliss Drive Safe Routes to School Project Photo Provided

In an effort to make the trip to school safer for students on their way to Los Perales Elementary, the town of Moraga engaged in community input with its first virtual meeting on March 28.

The event was presented by Public Works Senior Engineer Bret Swain who was joined by Sandis Traffic Engineer Lead/Project Manager Nate Levine and Fehr & Peers Senior Transportation Planner Susie Hufstader.

Approximately 20 attendees viewed the meeting, some of whom participated in the virtual survey involving developing a street design that promotes peace of mind for everyone traveling on the upper Corliss Drive/Sullivan Drive corridor, as well as creating a pleasant environment for the area's residents. Several alternative scenarios were discussed in this first phase of the project's Community Engagement Schedule.

Hufstader served as the moderator, and got the ball rolling by presenting a "Getting to know you" poll. Most participants replied that they traveled the corridor more than four times a day; lived on the corridor in question; and were a mix of students/parents/or not.

Current walking conditions in the neighborhood were discussed, noting that there is a crossing guard at the Corliss Drive/Wakefield Drive intersection during school drop-offs and pickups; however, there is a sidewalk gap along parts of the corridor forcing pedestrians to walk on the street.

The driving conditions are not optimal with drop-offs and pickups occurring on the street; and the left turn lane exiting the school on Wakefield Drive runs five to nine cars deep. In a 24-hour data collection period, 10-12% of vehicles drove over 25 mph in various areas of the corridor; school zone parking restrictions are basically not observed; and some parents park on the street and walk to the school to pick up their kids.

The corridor's roadway conditions offer a narrow 36-foot width with a 50-foot right-of-way between Warfield Drive and Arroyo Drive that includes two travel lanes and parking shoulders. Decorative and landscaped frontages (trees, mailboxes, walls/stairs, etc.) take the place of an actual sidewalk.

Four alternatives were presented by the team. Tier 1 - Raised Sidewalks (\$800,000 - \$1.2 million) is the costliest option and would involve the continuation of a raised sidewalk from Warfield Drive to Arroyo Drive; include a traditional 4 to 6-foot concrete sidewalk raised above street level; and existing features/conditions within the public right-of-way would need removal or modification.

Tier 2 - At-Grade Pedestrian Lane (\$200,000 - \$400,000) would install a curb in the roadway to provide a curb protected walking area; limit impacts to resident frontages with a curb opening at driveways; sidewalk width would vary from 4 to 6 feet and fit in the existing roadway; and would convert existing parking or travel lane to provide a 4 to 6-foot walking lane.

Tier 3 - At-Grade Pedestrian Lane - Paint and Plastic (\$75,000 - \$250,000) is similar to Tier 2, but uses striping, plastic cones/bumpers to provide separation. While less costly, it is less permanent and may not be appropriate for pedestrian uses; and it provides less protection than Tiers 1 and 2.

Tier 4 - Striping and Signing (\$25,000 - \$100,000) uses signs and striping to encourage slower speeds; is quick to install and can be adjusted; does not propose a change to any existing uses in the right-of-way; and does not provide physical protection or create spacing for walking or biking.

After presenting the options, attendees were asked to participate in another survey. A large number stated that they either walk, drive or bike along the Corliss Drive corridor. For those who walked, the main purpose was for exercise or travel to and from the school. Just over half stated that they felt safe and comfortable walking in the corridor; and a large number (67%), agreed with the team's assessment of current conditions. The biggest complaint was the amount of traffic followed by speeding, pedestrians straying into travel lanes, parked vehicles and failure to stop. The most important priorities for the corridor project,

according to the survey, is to improve pedestrian safety and comfort followed by lowering vehicle speeds; maintaining parking; maintaining landscape and frontage as is; and maintaining traffic flow.

Swain responded to a question about funding, "Right now we would probably have to fund a project out of municipal funds. Some grant funding opportunities, such as the Highway Safety Program, may not be available for major infrastructure and other ones, like Safe Routes to School, because a high percentage of the grant is reliant upon disadvantaged community points."

A question was asked about limiting drop-offs and pickups to one direction. "It's definitely something that's part of the conversation," responded Levine, "but we're not specifically able to tell the school to change what they're doing as part of this project."

Would it be possible to turn Corliss Drive into a one-way street? While the situation is being evaluated, Levine conceded that doing so would have a variety of impacts on the traffic.

In closing, Swain stated, "We do want to get as much feedback as we can. There is a specific scoping idea for this project that was developed in the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan), but we do want to hear what the residents have to say who live in that neighborhood, because this would impact you, as much as we want to hear from the school, the students, and the parents who attend the school, and additionally anyone who happens to walk in the area. We want to hear what everyone has to say about this and get a balanced feedback on this project."

It was noted that the website for the survey is still open for community feedback through April ([bit.ly/Corliss-SR2S](https://bit.ly/Corliss-SR2S)). The address is case sensitive.

Reach the reporter at: [vera@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:vera@lamorindaweekly.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA