

Julia R. Bueren, Director **Deputy Directors** R. Mitch Avalon • Brian M. Balbas Stephen Kowalewski

# Memo

TO:

Cliff Glickman, District 4 Chief of Staff

Lia Bristol, District 4 Field Representative

DATE:

FROM:

Mary Halle, Associate Civil Engineer, Transportation Engineering Follow up information following February 27th Walnut Boulevard Community Workshop

We would like to thank the community members of South Walnut Creek for their involvement in the last two community workshops held January 24th and February 27th to discuss road safety and pedestrian/bike improvements for Walnut Boulevard. The community has been very responsive and engaged in the process of formulating a project scope for safety improvements in their neighborhood. We appreciate their feedback and have used this information to guide the proposed project. The following update is provided to distribute to the community as a status update.

### Funding:

As mentioned at the workshops, the project improvements will be funded in part through the Central County Area of Benefit program which receives funds through payment of traffic mitigation fees by developers. This funding is secure: however, we hope to stretch these local dollars further by competing for Safe Route to School (SR2S) funding through the state. The maximum award through SR2S is \$450,000. This would fund approximately 50% of the proposed pedestrian improvements on Walnut Boulevard and would allow project improvements to extend further than if grant funds are not awarded. The SR2S program is very competitive as schools and local agencies around the state are competing for funds. The community workshop, feedback forms, and all other forms of support from the community will make this project more competitive in the selection process.

#### **Preferred Alternative**

The community's feedback resulted in overwhelming support for construction of safety improvements in the area. This input has been primary in the overall decision to move forward with a project. The following design alternatives have been considered:

Option 1: includes bike lanes and a pedestrian path. The anticipated Area of Benefit funds combined with potential Safe Route to School Funds could finance improvements for this expanded project width from the school boundary to approximately Golden Hills Court (approximately 1,100 feet). Bike lanes are identified on both sides of the street and the pedestrian path is identified on the easterly side of the street.

C Glickman & L Bristol March 21, 2012 Page 2 of 2

> Option 2: a reduced project width to include a five foot wide pedestrian path on the easterly side of the road with signage for a bike route. This narrower improvement is less costly per foot so that anticipated funding would provide improvements from the school boundary to Clarkin Court (approximately 2,400 feet) where the pedestrian path would join the existing sidewalk.

The community feedback regarding options 1 and 2 has been fairly evenly distributed between both options. The Walnut Heights Elementary School PTA has voted to support Option 2. Given the feedback from the community and the PTA, it has been decided to move forward with preparation of the SR2S application for Option 2. Option 2 is more cost effective, minimizes the impact to the fronting property owners, and extends improvements the longest distance to provide a continuous path of travel. This option does not preclude any additional improvements in the future on the westerly side of Walnut Boulevard. The pedestrian path is proposed for the easterly side of the road as this is where the school is located and it also takes advantage of joining the existing sidewalk which begins at Clarkin Court and extends to the City limits.

#### **Additional Discussion**

The following items were discussed at the community workshop and staff provides the following additional information:

- The difference between a Class II bike lane and a Class III bike route is that a bike lane is a separated area designated only for bicycles; whereas the bike route offers signage and markings to increase awareness of drivers and bicyclists who share the road.
- The existing bus stops are currently located on the westerly side of Walnut Boulevard. As the
  project moves forward, staff will coordinate with the County Connection to determine if bus stops
  should be relocated to improve pedestrian accessibility to transit.
- Speed feedback signs will be considered as an additional element within the SR2S application as we understand that speeding is a concern in the area.
- Crosswalk locations will be evaluated by the County Traffic Engineer to determine the optimum location.

## **Next Steps and Contact Information**

Staff is currently preparing the SR2S grant application and continues to receive feedback forms or letters of support to attach to the application. The Board of Supervisors will be presented a request to authorize submittal of the SR2S application at the March 27<sup>th</sup> Board of Supervisors meeting at 9:00 am in Martinez at the Board Chambers. It will be heard as a consent item. If residents have questions or concerns about this project or the item before the Board, they may call Lia Bristol at (925) 521-7100 or Rene Urbina at (925) 313-2308 or e-mail at <a href="mailto:rurbi@pw.cccounty.us">rurbi@pw.cccounty.us</a>. If the Board authorizes the SR2S application, it will be submitted to Caltrans on March 30, 2012. Typically, grant awards are announced approximately 5-6 months following the submittal of the applications.