



Agenda Item No. 16.

Staff Report

Date: June 16, 2022

To: Mayor Robbins and Council Members

From: Richard Simonitch, Public Works Director
Raffaello Pata, Chief of Police

Subject: Bicycle and pedestrian safety in Town of Ross and consideration of potential safety improvement action items

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Town Council receive a presentation on bicycle and pedestrian safety in the Town of Ross and provide direction to staff regarding the implementation of potential safety improvement action items.

Background and Discussion:

Numerous studies and research, in a variety of communities, have demonstrated the benefits of creating an environment where walking and bicycling is safe, comfortable, and convenient. These benefits include reducing emissions and energy use from motor vehicles, as well as reducing health-related mortality rates and health care costs. To support and encourage walking and bicycling in Ross, the Town adopted its Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP) in 2010 and updated it again in 2018. The BPMP in turn builds on and expands the goals, policies, and strategies of the Town of Ross General Plan. Both plans set goals for increasing walking and bicycling and identify actions the Town should take to achieve them.

As the Town continues to implement the BPMP programs and develop new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, the risk of accidents between bikes/pedestrians and automobile traffic potentially increases. Recent capital projects, including the Laurel Grove safe pathways (current) and Bolinas/Sir Francis Drake pedestrian safety improvements (2016-2017), as well as the recent bicycle path lane striping at the Post Office parking lot (2021) and Town Council approval of a planned new pedestrian pathway on Fernhill Road demonstrates Ross' commitment to improving bike and pedestrian safety in town. Other examples include the Town Council's recent decision to participate in the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) Safe Routes to School task force

for Ross School District, and the deployment of Ross Police officers for a physical presence at school start and end times.

Education and public outreach are also an essential part of the Town's efforts to improve bike and pedestrian safety in Town. Information and updates on local and regional safety programs such as the upcoming "Street Smarts" program provided by TAM and local jurisdictions can be made available to residents utilizing the Town-wide email system, as well as the Town's website and monthly newsletter. "Street Smarts" is a traffic safety program designed to make Marin's streets safer and friendlier and to reduce the number of traffic related accidents. The program's intent is to raise public awareness about attitudes and actions on the streets, to improve safety for school children walking and biking to school.

Effective traffic enforcement by the Ross Police Department is also essential. The purpose of traffic enforcement in the Town of Ross is to calm traffic, change unsafe behavior, and enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety. Proactive enforcement includes conspicuously monitoring traffic with a staffed, highly visible patrol units in areas of town that have historically been complaint areas or areas of higher collisions. The Town Police use education along with the issuance of citations as a tool for behavior modification.

Based on recent comments received from residents and observations from the Police Department and Public Works' staff, the following additional "locations of concern" have been identified along with suggested improvements and estimated costs to reduce the risk of accidents. The Town Council is asked to discuss each of these suggested improvements and to provide direction to staff on whether or not to implement them.

Sir Francis Drake Boulevard (west side only):

- a. 1 new regulatory "30MPH" speed sign and "30" painted lane marking just after bus stop (\$2,000)
- b. 1 new regulatory "S-turn" warning sign before bridge (\$750)
- c. Reflective markers installed on top of guardrail barriers on both ends of the bridge (\$750)
- d. In addition, a traffic study and speed survey could be prepared for the purpose of implementing traffic calming devices on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard including reduction of lane widths, rumble strips, speed limit reductions, etc. (\$75,000) Because of the need for in-depth scoping, if the Town Council wishes to pursue this study, staff would bring it back at a future date for consideration by Town Council.

Glenwood Avenue:

- a. "Caution – Pedestrians on Roadway" or similar signs at blind curves and select intervals (\$2,000)

Lagunitas-Dibblee Road (to Natalie Coffin Greene Park)

- a. "Caution – Pedestrians on Roadway" or similar signs at select intervals (\$1,000)

Shady Lane:

- a. Bicycle “sharrows” markings on roadway (similar to what was painted on Bolinas Avenue) (\$2,000)

Poplar Ave and Redwood Drive:

- a. Enforce and/or subsidize sidewalk gap closures. (\$0-\$35,000)

In order to maintain the rustic charm of Ross residential neighborhoods, staff recognizes the need to maintain a balance between responsible safety protocol and the proliferation of regulatory street signage. However, in order to be effective, the Town Engineer recommends that the non-regulatory signs are at least 18”X 24” with regulatory lettering.

Fiscal, resource and timeline impacts:

The installation of new signage and striping at the locations discussed is estimated to cost approximately \$10,000 and would be paid for out of the FY 2022-2023 Operating Fund. Larger capital expenditures for new pedestrian pathways, sidewalk gap closures and the traffic studies may be eligible for grant funding through the upcoming “One Bay Area Grant” (OBAG) grant cycle. Regardless of the funding source, these larger projects may need to be considered in the FY 2023-2024 budget discussions.

Alternative actions

The Town Council may suggest additional or alternative projects for discussion and direction to staff

Environmental review (if applicable)

New street signage and striping is categorically exempt from the requirement for the preparation of environmental documents under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 Class 1. However, modifications and improvements to the lane configuration of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard may require CEQA compliance beyond a categorical exemption.

Attachments

none