



City of Santa Barbara Transportation & Circulation Committee *Staff Report*

DATE: October 13, 2011
TO: Transportation and Circulation Committee (TCC)
FROM: Browning Allen, Transportation Manager
SUBJECT: SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL MODOC AND PORTESUELLO INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Transportation and Circulation Committee (TCC):

- A. Recommends that the Safe Routes to School Modoc and Portesuello Intersection Improvements Project (Project) is consistent with the Circulation Element of the General Plan; and

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The intersection of Modoc Road at Portesuello Avenue (intersection) was specifically identified as a concept project in the city's Pedestrian Master Plan – Safe Routes to School Chapter for intersection safety improvements for school children accessing La Cumbre Junior High School (LCJH). Currently listed in the City's Capital Improvement Program, this project will standardize the intersection to a 90 degree angle for better overall function and visibility, as well as reducing the crossing distance along Portesuello from 105 feet to 44 feet. The Project includes safety improvements such as relocating the access ramp and crosswalk on Modoc from the eastern side of Portesuello to the western side, reducing the curb radii, and installing new pedestrian lighting over the crosswalks. The design will meet access needs of pedestrians, as well as large vehicles (MTD buses, school buses, and emergency vehicles). The Project received a grant from the California Safe Routes to School Program and is going to City Council for award of contract in spring of 2012 for construction during the summer of 2012. See Attachment A for proposed design.

FUNDING GRANT BACKGROUND:

California was the first state to legislate a Safe Routes to School (SR2S) Program in 1999 with the enactment of AB1475. In 2007, AB57 was passed, extending the program indefinitely. The California SR2S Program should not be confused with the Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program authorized under SAFETEA-LU.

The SR2S Program funds projects that enhance safety around schools and encourage more students to walk or bike to school. Eligible project types include pedestrian facilities, traffic calming, traffic control devices, and bicycle facilities.

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In July 2010, the State of California solicited applications for the ninth cycle SR2S. The City put together a successful application, securing funding for improvements at the intersection.

DISCUSSION:

The Project provides pedestrian safety improvements for access to two schools: La Cumbre Junior High School (LCJH) and the Santa Barbara Community Academy (SBCA), which was relocated to the LCJH property in 2008. The intersection was first identified as a safety concern by LCJH in 2001, and through both PTA meetings and a student survey conducted in Fall 2006, LCJH continued to show interest in improvements being made. The intersection was further identified as a safety concern by SBCA in 2009 as hazard assessments were conducted by the Coalition for Sustainable Transportation SR2S Coordinator with the school's principal and parents, as well as the City's Public Works and Police Department staff. For snapshots of the intersection existing conditions see Attachments B.

Since 2007, the City has sought funds for making improvements to the intersection. The City applied once for Federal SRTS funding and this was the second application submitted for State SR2S funding. With this project, the potential for high speed turns from Modoc Road onto Portesuello Avenue will be reduced and intersection sight distance will be improved by standardizing the intersection to a 90 degree angle, which also reduces the pedestrian crossing distance. These hardscape improvements will increase the safety of the intersection for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

The design is sensitive to the use of the intersection by large vehicles, including buses and emergency response vehicles. The proposed standard configuration may reduce northbound right turning capacity during peak times and meets City standards for large turning vehicles. The plans have been reviewed by City Police and Fire Departments, as well as Santa Barbara School District staff, Santa Barbara Transportation, and MTD.

The LCJH campus serves as a site for after school classes and adult education in the evening hours, after the sun has set. Likewise, in the winter months, the sun sets before children are released from after school programs at both LCJH and SBCA. Lighting for this project will be directed at both crosswalks to increase the visibility of pedestrians walking in the evening hours to and from the schools, as well as walkers, joggers, and transit users crossing this intersection.

Data collected from the schools shows that 476 students attend LCJH and about 279 students attend SBCA. On Walk to School Day in 2009, 34% and 25% of their students walked to school, respectively.

The particular safety concern of the long pedestrian exposure along Portesuello, and the corresponding feelings of being unsafe when crossing the intersection were identified by students, parents, and school leadership. By reducing this distance, the City is responding directly to student and school staff concerns, and therefore reducing the perceived risk of walking across this intersection, which provides direct access to the school.

From 1999-2008, there were five collisions reported in the SWITRS database at this intersection. While none of them involved school aged children, three of them involved bicyclists and caused

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severe injury. It is unknown if the proposed improvements would have prevented these accidents, however, the intersection in its current non-standard configuration is clearly automobile dominated and perceived as unsafe by students, parents, and administrators at both schools.

The Project is consistent with the Circulation Element of the General Plan (Element) that was approved by City Council in October 1997. The Element represents a major planning effort that lasted over five years with extensive community involvement. The comprehensive goal and vision statement of the Element states that "Santa Barbara should be a City in which alternative forms of transportation and mobility are so available and so attractive that use of an automobile is a choice, not a necessity."

Chapter 5 of the Element is devoted to walking. The overall goal of that chapter is to "increase walking and other paths of travel" throughout the City. The first policy is dedicated to increasing access and walking opportunities, explaining that "the City shall create an integrated pedestrian system within and between City neighborhoods, schools, recreational areas, commercial area and places of interest." Strategies for implementing this policy include identifying existing barriers of walking to school and eliminating them over time. The fifth policy state that "the City shall create and foster a pedestrian friendly environment through physical and cultural improvements and amenities." Strategies to achieve this include identifying areas where additional lighting is appropriate and improving sidewalk conditions to increase ease of use for all pedestrians, including those with strollers, wheelchairs, and other walking assistance devices. The sixth policy articulates that "the City shall make street crossings easier and more accessible to pedestrians." This policy is to be implemented by several strategies, including "widen[ing] sidewalks and add[ing] medians and other means at intersection[s] to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians, where appropriate (CE 5.6.2)." The Project is also specifically identified in the City of Santa Barbara's Pedestrian Master Plan's Safe Routes to School chapter on page 171. See Attachment C.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The Project is listed in the Fiscal Year 2012 Streets Capital Improvements Program (Six Year Capital Report). The Six Year CIP identifies funded and unfunded capital projects that address the City's infrastructure and major equipment needs. The Public Works Department's budget was adopted by Council subsequent to Transportation and Circulation Committee and Planning Commission input at public meetings held on October 28, 2010 and December 16, 2009 respectively.

The Project is listed in the Council-approved 2012 Fiscal Year Program budget; the current estimated Project cost is currently estimated at \$290,000. \$218,275 (75%) of this will be funded by the State SR2S grant that the City received for this Project, with the City's local match of approximately \$71,775 will fund the balance of the project. The funds allocated in the CIP budget will be used as the City's match.

SG/kts

Attachments: A) Striping Sheet. B) Project Location. C) Intersection Realignment.

cc:



60%
DRAFT

APPROVED: _____
DESIGN MR _____
DRAWN MR _____
CHECKED BD _____

CITY ENGINEER _____
ORIGINAL SIGNED DATE _____
DATE _____

ENGINEERING DIVISION
PUBLIC WORKS

| NO. | DATE | APPROVED |
|-----|------|----------|
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| | | |
| | | |

REGIONS

MODOC AT PORTESUELLO

STRIPING SHEET

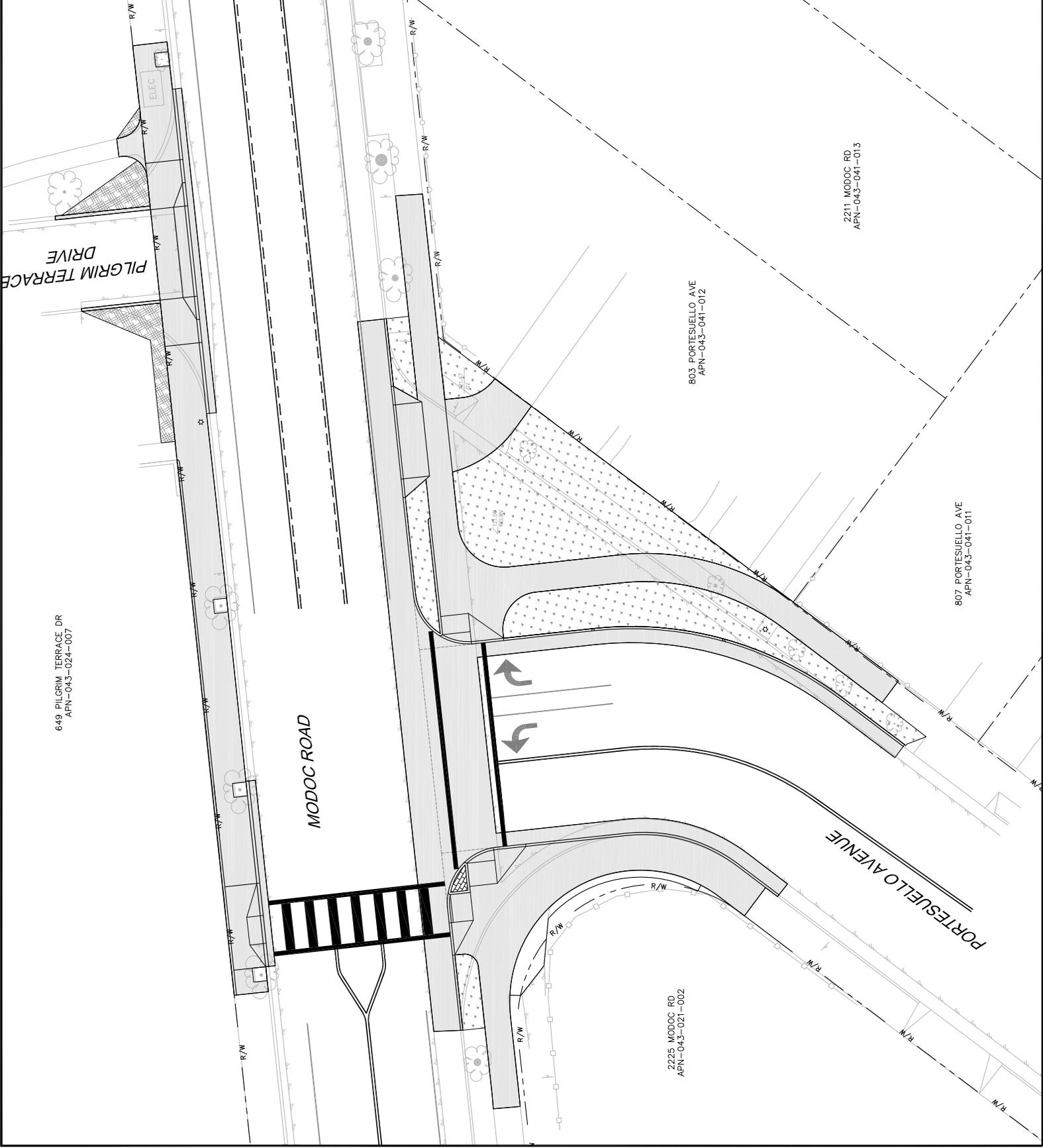
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL MODOC & PORTESUELLO INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

PNW NO. C1
3627
BID NO. SH1 DES
C-1-XXXX
DWG. NO.

SHT. 2 OF X

- ### STRIPING NOTES
- CONSTRUCT CONCRETE SIDEWALK PER CITY STANDARD DETAILS
 - CONSTRUCT CONCRETE ACCESS RAMP PER CITY STANDARD DETAILS
 - CONSTRUCT CONCRETE DRIVEWAY PER CITY STANDARD DETAILS
 - CONSTRUCT CONCRETE CURB & GUTTER PER CITY STANDARD DETAILS
 - CONSTRUCT CONCRETE GROSS GUTTER AND SPANDREL PER CITY STANDARD DETAILS
 - INSTALL ASPHALT CONCRETE CONFORM
 - THRU (1) NOT USED
 - MEET & MATCH EXISTING STRUCTURE
 - PRESERVE & PROTECT IN PLACE
 - RELOCATE
 - SAWCUT OR REMOVE TO JOINT
 - ADJUST BOX, FRAME, OR COVER TO GRADE
 - THRU (2) NOT USED

- ### LEGEND
- WHITE STRIPING
 - YELLOW STRIPING
 - CURB PAINT LIMITS



PROPERTY LINES ARE APPROXIMATE

SCALE: 1"=10'

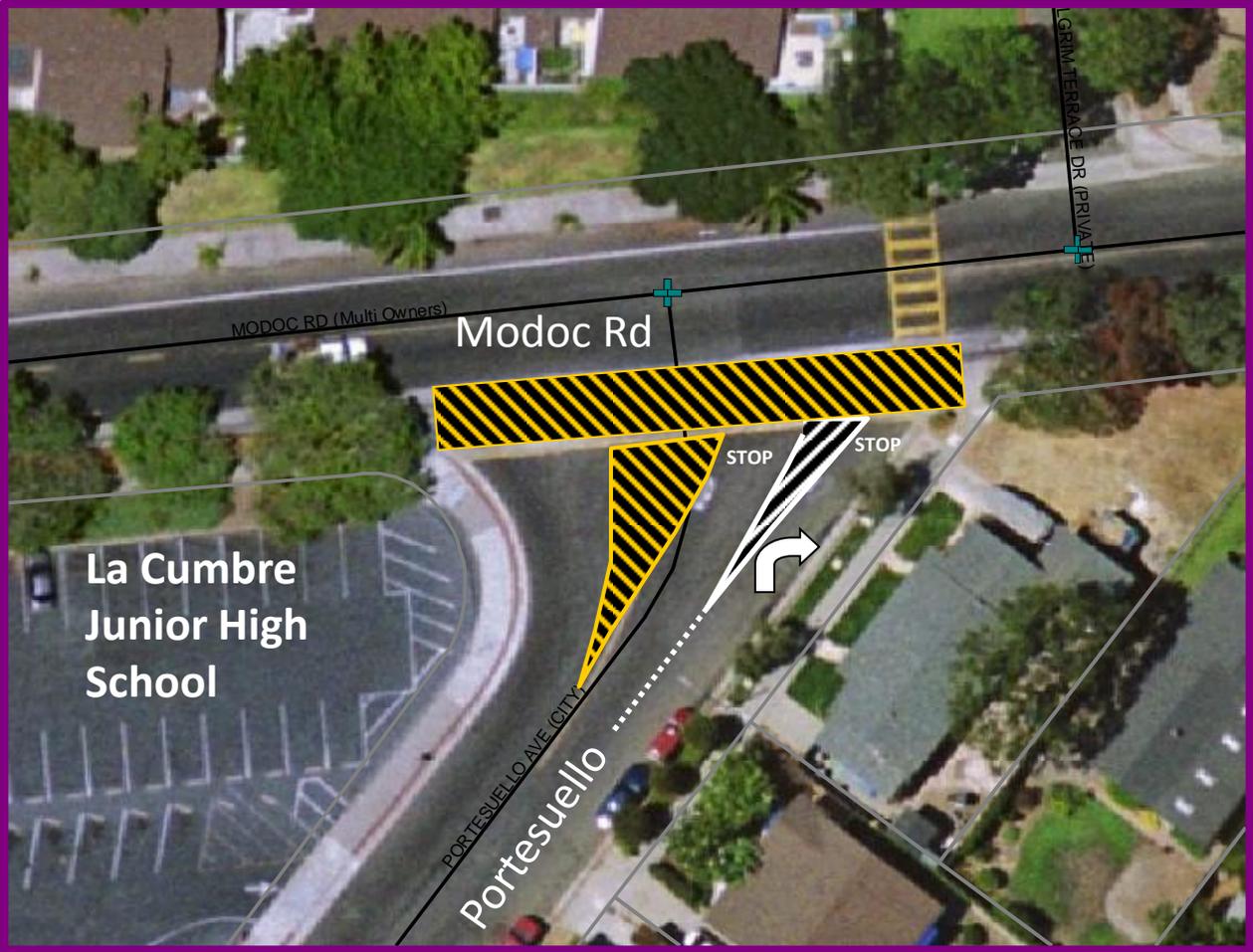
PROJECT ENGINEER _____ DATE _____

Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Project Location – Aerial View, 2004



Project Location – Existing Condition – Striped Medians



Intersection of Portesuello and Modoc After 2007 Restriping (current condition)



Intersection of Portesuello and Modoc After 2007 Restriping (current condition)



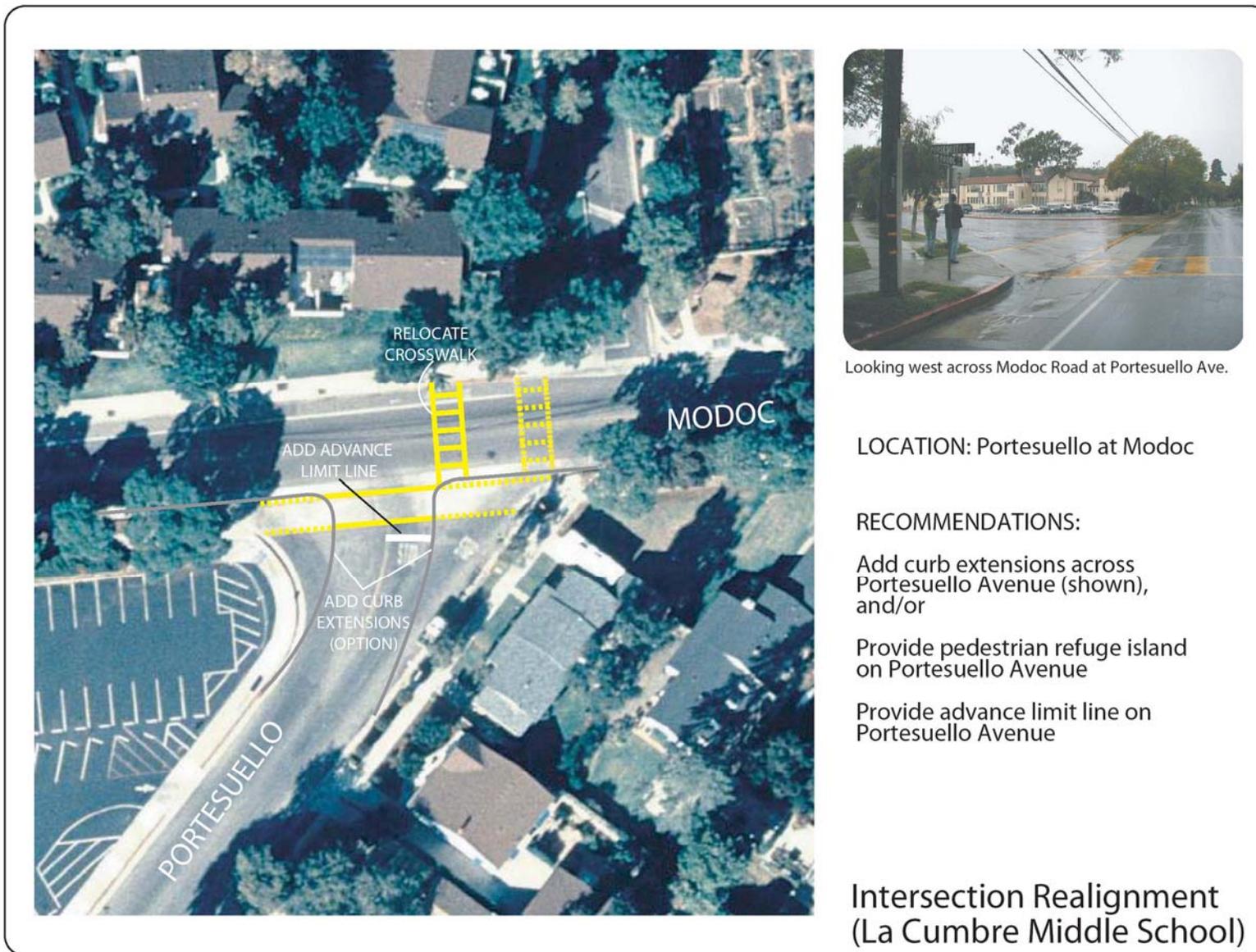


Figure VI-13. Sample Concept Plan for La Cumbre Middle School (Modoc Road & Portesuello Avenue)