



City of Santa Barbara Transportation and Circulation Committee

Staff Report

DATE: February 26, 2015
TO: Transportation and Circulation Committee
FROM: Derrick Bailey, Supervising Transportation Engineer
SUBJECT: Potential Cliff Drive Grant Funded Traffic Safety Project

Recommendation:

That the Transportation and Circulation Committee receive a report on the results of a public outreach effort regarding a potential grant funded traffic safety project on Cliff Drive.

Background

During the State Route 225 relinquishment process, members of the public shared their desire for certain roadway changes to be made to improve traffic safety. Those changes include adding bicycle lanes, improved pedestrian crossing locations, improved lighting, and a center left turn lane. In addition to comments received from the public, Santa Barbara City College (SBCC) has expressed a desire for improved traffic safety along its Cliff Drive frontage.

Staff is anticipating a call for projects in the spring of 2015 from Caltrans for Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) grants. This grant opportunity will be very specific and must address safety issues associated with past collisions.

On November 5, 2014, a public meeting was held at Monroe Elementary School that included a presentation of the features of the potential project. The project presented to the public included adding bike lanes and a center left turn lane to Cliff Drive west of Meigs Road, a traffic signal at the SBCC West Campus Driveway, and adding bike lanes between the SBCC West Campus Driveway and Loma Alta Drive. At the meeting, the public was asked for their opinion of the potential project. The presentation from the public meeting was posted on the city web site (virtual public meeting) along with an online survey to give those unable to attend the meeting an opportunity to comment.

Since the project was presented to the public in November 2014, the City has learned that the SBCC West Campus Driveway traffic signal will not be eligible for this grant opportunity.

Potential Project Features

Staff believes that a successful application can be made to address some of the safety concerns raised by the public during the relinquishment process, including:

- Restriping Cliff Drive to provide bicycle lanes and a continuous center turn lane between Las Positas Road and Lighthouse Road; and,
- Restriping Cliff Drive to provide bicycle lanes between Weldon Road and Loma Alta Road (adjacent to SBCC west campus).

The public raised concerns about the lack of pedestrian crossing opportunities along Cliff Drive. Staff is analyzing the best way to obtain funding to improve pedestrian crossing conditions along Cliff Drive. It is unlikely that this project will include any enhanced pedestrian crossings.

The elements of the project are illustrated in Figure 1, attached. HSIP is a competitive grant process, and there are no guarantees the City will be awarded this grant. However, based on past grant cycles, staff feels this application would be well received.

Providing bike lanes on Cliff Drive, west of Meigs Road, will affect the number of traffic lanes. Cliff Drive is a principal arterial street, and maintaining mobility on the City's principal arterials is important for the movement of people and goods. These striping modifications can be made and still maintain the City's minimum standards for level of service. However, this project will not be as straightforward as the restriping between Meigs Road and Weldon Road, and the public needs to understand and approve of the traffic benefits and tradeoffs.

Tradeoffs

The most noticeable tradeoff will be at the intersection of Cliff Drive with Mesa Lane/Flora Vista. This is an offset intersection, and because this is an offset intersection, there are currently side by side left turn lanes to provide left turn access to the adjacent neighborhoods (see Figure 2). Each of the existing left turn lanes provide three vehicle lengths of storage. Because of the amount of space the side-by-side left turn lanes take up, there is no room for bike lanes along the side of the road. The concept presented to the public reconfigures the left turn lanes into back-to-back left turn lanes. The back-to-back left turn lanes will provide two vehicle lengths of storage. About 10% of the time during peak hours, traffic will spill back into the through traffic lane. This tradeoff was described to the public.

Another tradeoff presented to the public is the lane configuration of eastbound Cliff Drive at Meigs Road (see Figure 3). One option is (from the curb) bike lane, through/right traffic lane, through traffic lane, left turn lane. Another option is (from the curb) right turn lane, bike lane, through traffic lane, left turn lane. Changing the lane configuration to an exclusive right turn lane (option #2) would reduce right turn delay, and eliminate the merge condition east of the intersection. It would result in longer queues for the eastbound through lane, but have no effect on overall intersection delay.

Public Feedback

The City received 43 comment forms, including 31 from the public meeting, and 12 from the online comment form. A press release was done to let the public know of the public meeting, and of the online project page. The press release was picked up by KEYT Channel 3 evening news, the Santa Barbara News Press, Edhat, Noozhawk, and several local radio stations. The tables below summarize the feedback received.

Table 1: On Cliff Drive at Mesa Lane and Flora Vista, the only feasible design option to install bike lanes is to change the left turn lanes from side-by-side to back-to-back. The back-to-back left turn lanes will cause occasional spillback into the through lane. Do you feel this is a reasonable tradeoff?

	Meeting	Online	Total
Yes	25	8	33 (77%)
No	1	2	3 (7%)
Did Not Answer	5	2	7 (16%)

Table 2: Thinking about the section of Cliff Drive between Mesa Lane and Meigs Road, do you prefer one lane in each direction (with on-street parking), or two lanes in each direction (no on-street parking)?

	Meeting	Online	Total
One lane each direction with parking	24	5	29 (67%)
Two lanes each direction no parking	4	5	9 (21%)
Did not answer	3	2	5 (12%)

Table 3: Thinking about the Cliff Drive and Meigs Road intersection, one option is to keep the existing lane configuration, and just add bike lanes along the curb. Another option is to convert the eastbound curb lane to a dedicated right turn lane. Which do you prefer?

	Meeting	Online	Total
Existing lane configuration/bike lane along curb	25	8	33 (77%)
Dedicated right turn lane	26	4	10 (23%)
Did not answer	0	0	0

Table 4: No funding has currently been identified for pedestrian crossings. But in the future, when funding is identified, what should be the first locations?

Location	Meeting*	Online*	Total*
Weldon	0	6	6
Oceano/Barranca	4	8	8 (6 th tie)
La Marina	8	7	15 (4 th)
San Rafael	4	0	4 (8 th)
Santa Cruz	15	4	19 (3 rd)
Salida Del Sol	1	2	3 (9 th)
Camino Calma	32	0	32 (2 nd)
Oliver	33	7	40 (1 st)
Mohawk	10	0	10 (5 th)
Palisades	2	0	2 (10 th)
Santa Fe	8	0	8 (6 th tie)

* The public was asked to rank their top three priorities. Three points were given for the first place ranking, two points for second place, and one point for third place.

Next Steps

Given the favorable response from the public, the City intends to apply for a Highway Safety Improvement Program grant this spring. Assuming a successful application, the project should be constructed in 2017. Design details, such as the lane designation at Meigs Road and near Santa Barbara City College, will be worked out during design.

In the future, the City will seek grant funding opportunities to enhance pedestrian crossing locations. Based on feedback received at the public meeting, the priority locations should be either Oliver or Camino Calma, and at Santa Cruz.

DVB/mj

Figure 1: Potential Cliff Drive Safety Grant Project Elements
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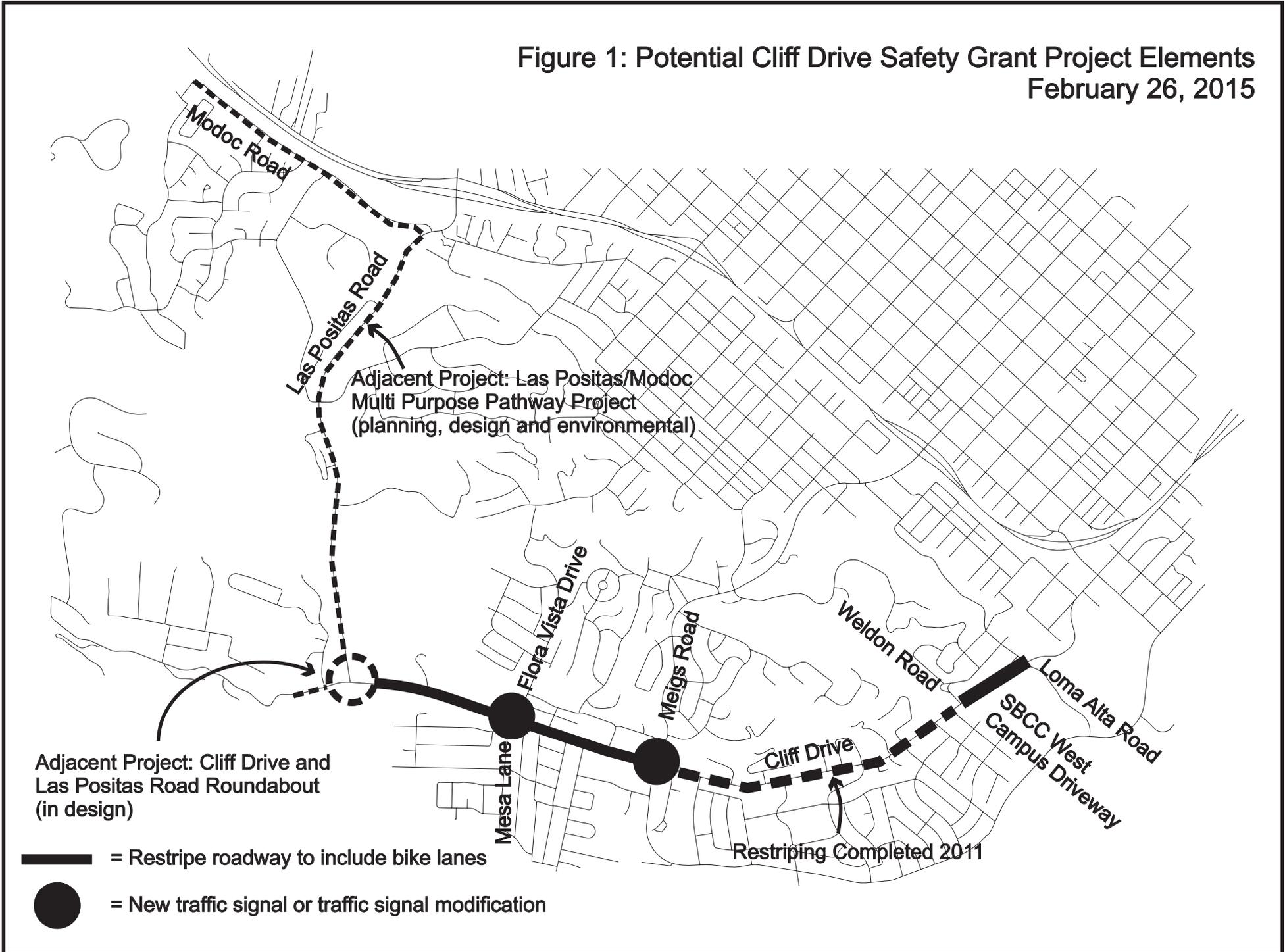


Figure 2: Cliff Drive at Mesa Lane/Flora Vista
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Existing: Side by Side Left Turn Lane



With Bike Lanes: Back to Back Left Turn Lanes

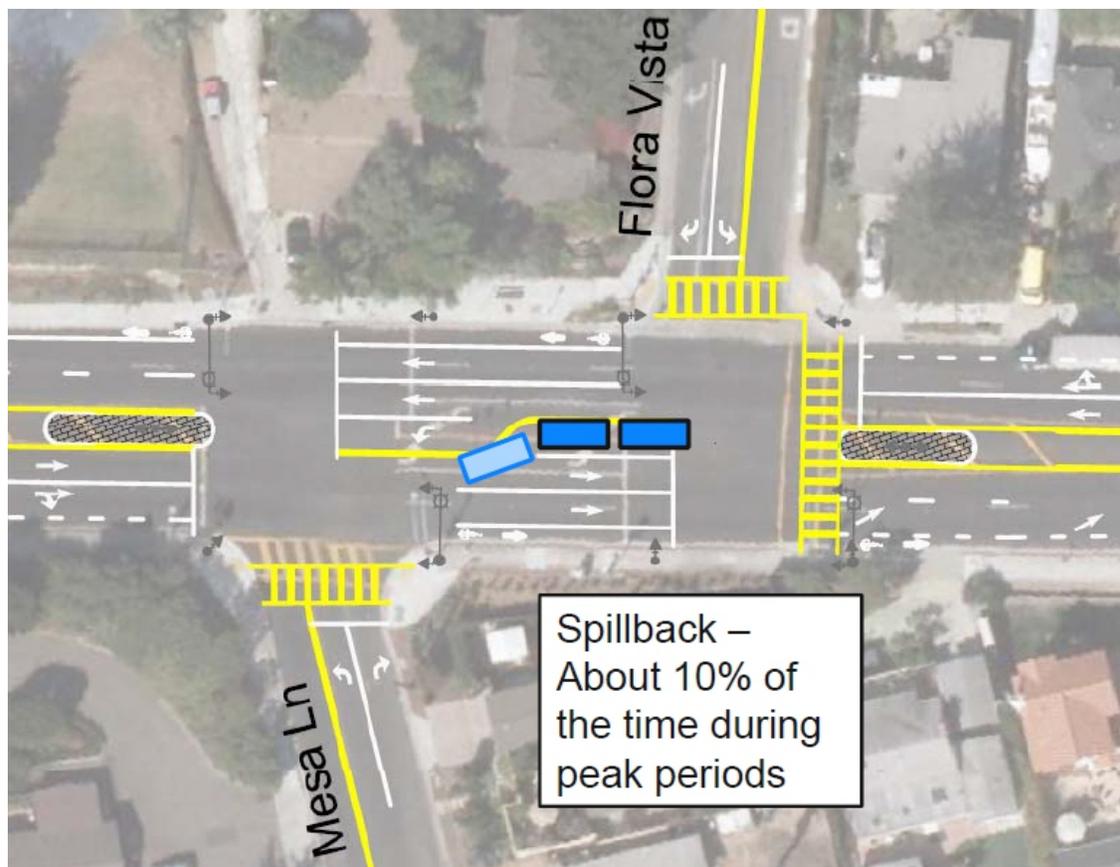
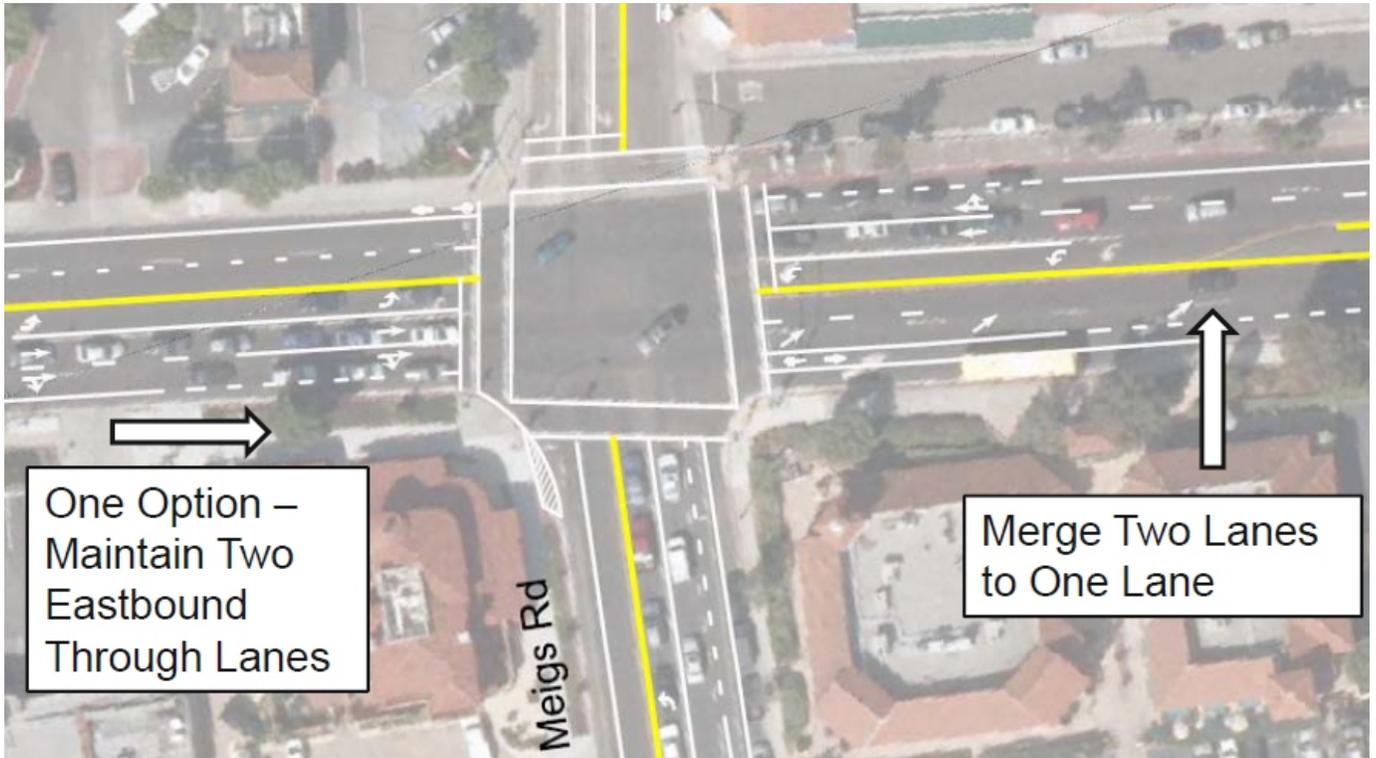


Figure 3: Cliff Drive at Meigs Road
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Option 1 (From Curb): Bike Lane,
Through/Right Traffic, Through Traffic, Left



Option 2 (From Curb): Dedicated Right Turn, Bike Lane,
Through Traffic, Left Turn Lane

