

CITY OF MORGAN HILL: HALE AVENUE EXTENSION PROJECT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING

Summary of Community Meeting July 19, 2011

A Community Engagement Meeting was held concerning proposed extension of Hale Avenue in the City of Morgan Hill. The meeting was held on July 19, 2011, at the Community and Cultural Center, 17000 Monterey Road, Morgan Hill. The meeting started at 7:00 p.m. and concluded at 9:00 p.m.

This meeting was a follow-up to the November 4, 2010 and December 9, 2010 Community Engagement meetings concerning the same project (formerly known as the Santa Teresa Boulevard Improvement Project). These previous meetings were held pursuant to the City Council's request for community engagement with respect to *what* the project should look like and *when* it should be built. The meeting on July 19th was to engage the community and take input regarding design features of the proposed project.

Notice of the meeting was provided by various means; including a letter mailed by the City to approximately 800 addresses near the project alignment, a press release issued by City staff, a notice in the Morgan Hill Times on-line edition, the City website and Calendar of Events, and word of mouth. Most of the attendees had attended at least one previous meeting.

The following summary of the meeting was prepared by Eileen Goodwin, Apex Strategies, who moderated the meeting.

Meeting Summary:

The meeting started at 7:00 p.m. In addition to the personnel there to answer questions and present information, approximately thirty (30) members of the public attended.

Ms. Goodwin discussed the purpose of the meeting and introduced: Karl Bjarke, City of Morgan Hill, City Engineer. After Mr. Bjarke's presentation and overview, John Kenyon of Mark Thomas & Company presented various intersection design options and additional project features.

Ms. Goodwin solicited input and questions from the meeting attendees. The first part of the meeting included questions concerning the project; generally followed by questions concerning features of the project. The community members were asked for input concerning conceptual design issues with respect to the intersections along the extended road and cross-section options for the roadway and multi-modal trail. Mr. Bjarke and Mr. Kenyon provided responses to any questions raised. The meeting concluded at approximately 9:00 p.m.

Community Comments and Responses:

The following comments and questions were made at the Community Meeting:

	Comment/Question	Response/Answer
	Project Questions	
1	How was the Council decision made? How was the voting counted from the previous meetings?	The Council was given the written summaries of the two community meetings including the voting results from those meetings. They weighed that input when they voted to continue the project.
2	Will Hale be widened to the North?	No only within the project limits
3	Water District channel - Explain the main impact on right turn pocket in new section.	Answer provided using the visuals in the PowerPoint presentation.
4	Will the new section of Hale be that much wider?	It will conform to the widths and location of the existing intersection.
5	With respect to Hale and West Dunne Avenue, there are questions about the number of lanes.	Information clarified.
6	Would the Peak Avenue intersection with Dunne Avenue stay the same?	Yes it will remain a three-way stop controlled intersection
7	How far east of Peak Avenue is the new intersection going to be?	It will be close (approximately 350 feet).
8	How would the Spring Avenue / DeWitt Avenue intersection work?	Explanation provided utilizing visuals.
9	Are there similar designs of offset intersections somewhere that could be viewed?	Yes, offset intersections are common, but each location is different. The proposed offset for this location is related to the close proximity of both DeWitt and Spring Ave.
10	Does the City have the right-of-way for the project?	The City does not yet own the whole right-of-way.
11	The DeWitt turn looks "extreme."	Standard designs are being used.
12	Does the driveway serve the church at West Hills?	The West Hills Community Church is located south of Spring Avenue so the proposed driveway on the west side of Hale Ave under Options 1, 2 and 3 will not serve the church.
	Project Features	

	Comment/Question	Response/Answer
13	Where will the storm water go? What about subterranean water?	There is an existing 60-inch storm drain pipe under the "proposed alignment" that may be used for roadway drainage. In addition to bio-swales, a retention basis may also be used to address water quality requirements. Subterranean water issues will be reviewed during design with respect to the proposed improvements.
14	A neighbor wants trees and soundwalls to protect their property.	Comments noted.
15	A community member had concerns about sidewalk placement, citing security and privacy issues.	Comments noted.
16	A neighbor was concerned that the divided roadway configuration would result in noise carrying to adjacent neighborhoods.	Comment noted.
17	There were questions by a community member on the earth berm, especially related to security.	Comments noted.
18	Would like to see these design plans over aerial photos with property lines shown.	Comment noted.
Hale and West Main Options		
19	Concern expressed regarding potential cost of project.	Comment noted.
20	Can a roundabout option be looked at? The speaker supports Option 1 over Option 2. Is the intersection large enough for a roundabout?	The roundabout option may be possible and will be looked at.
21	Does either option mitigate potential flooding?	No, but there is a separate design effort underway for a new 100-year storm structure a which is being managed by the Santa Clara Valley Water District..
22	A speaker likes the options because they want a right turn pocket.	Comment noted.
23	A speaker likes Option #2, but wonders about effect on the pedestrian walkway.	There will be curb ramps at all four corners.
24	A speaker stated that everyone would want right hand turn lanes.	Comment noted.
25	Why keep the median?	Earlier meeting input expressed a desire for landscaping in the median to soften the look of the road.

	Comment/Question	Response/Answer
26	A speaker does not like the possible roundabout, citing too many busses among other issues.	Comments noted.
27	A community member likes Option #1 because it seems to keep traffic slower and safer.	Comment noted.
28	Community requested opportunity to vote by show of hands. Hale/West Main Option #1 versus Hale/West Main Option #2	Eighteen (18) people preferred Option #1, twenty (20) people preferred Option #2 and fourteen (14) people preferred a roundabout if it was possible.
Hale and West Dunne Avenue Options		
29	Prefers the Option #2 because of the landscaping.	Comment noted.
30	With respect to roundabouts, why the "modern" term? Where is information on whether these work?	<p>Audience members suggested staff look into roundabouts recently constructed in the cities of Tracy, Modesto and Clovis. In addition staff will look at roundabouts in other California cities (ie Santa Cruz recently constructed a roundabout). Informational Design Guides for roundabouts are published by FHWA and CALTRANS.</p> <p>See links for roundabout information:</p> <p>http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/00067/index.cfm</p> <p>http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/dib/dib80-01.htm</p>
31	Is there more maintenance, such as landscaping costs, with a roundabout?	The exhibits for the various options all show landscaping; that can be substituted with hardscape if deemed appropriate. Roundabouts save on the electrical cost of traffic signals as they aren't constructed at roundabouts.
32	A speaker likes the opportunity for statue or public art in a roundabout.	Comment noted.
33	There a concern about bicyclists and pedestrians cutting through roundabouts.	Comment noted.
34	A speaker noted that there is the perception that roundabouts slow traffic and likes the traffic calming.	Comment noted.
35	Will there be pedestrian control for the crosswalks on the roundabout?	There could be. There are options, including pedestrian actuated push buttons where walkers can activate surface mounted warning lights.

	Comment/Question	Response/Answer
36	Speaker pointed out there is a roundabout in Morgan Hill within the Capriano Subdivision at Dougherty Ave/Coriander Ave.	Comment noted.
37	Community requested opportunity to vote by show of hands. Hale/West Dunne Option #1 versus Hale/West Dunne Option #2	Thirty-six (36) people preferred Option #1 and twenty-five (25) people preferred Option #2.
Hale and DeWitt/Spring Options		
38	A speaker voiced concern that property condemnations would be tied back to the votes taken at the meeting.	Comment Noted. Property owners in this area will be contacted at the appropriate time.
39	A speaker felt that the options were clever, but wondered what happened to the option where Hale Avenue came to a T intersection with DeWitt.	Having Hale Avenue tie into DeWitt Ave as a "Tee Intersection" was not considered since Hale Avenue is intended to be a through movement arterial roadway.
40	Is a roundabout feasible?	Yes, all designs shown in the PowerPoint were laid out according to design standards and are feasible.
41	A property owner across from Spring Avenue suggested that the option that requires the least amount of property to be acquired is the best. The stretch of roadway between DeWitt and Edmundson Avenue is dangerous, stating that it is irresponsible to do this work without fixing the dog-legged curve south of this project, suggesting that big support can be added to this project if that fix is done.	The area of concern is in County jurisdiction. The City staff and the County are coordinating to have that area addressed.
42	A property owner on DeWitt was hoping that DeWitt would become a cul de sac, which would stop cut-through traffic.	Comment noted.
43	Option #2 is poorly designed --- cars will fly through a blind curve. The speaker prefers Option #1 or Option #3.	Comment noted.
44	What will happen to existing power lines? Can it be undergrounded?	The utility relocation will depend on the design chosen.
45	Will there be noise differences between the options?	Noise issues will be studied in the EIR.
46	Who will make the final decision on the options?	Mr. Bjarke explained that staff will present a recommendation to Council based on several factors, including input from the community meetings.
47	A speaker stated that neighbors need access to local destinations, regardless of the design, and felt that Options #2 and #3 may be better.	Comment noted.
48	Short cut is questionable.	Comment noted.

	Comment/Question	Response/Answer
49	Community requested opportunity to vote by show of hands. Hale/DeWitt/Spring Option #1 versus Hale/ DeWitt/Spring Option #2 versus Roundabout	Zero (0) people preferred Option #1, four (4) people preferred Option #2, and twenty-four (24) people preferred a roundabout.
Project Features		
50	Soundwalls should be included, whether required or not. A berm is not preferred due to the "jump-over" potential. Likes bushes in front of the wall, like along Santa Teresa Boulevard in Gilroy.	Comments noted.
51	Can the soundwalls be done first to mitigate construction noise?	That can be looked in to.
52	Why is there only one soundwall in the graphics? Would like to have both sides with soundwalls to limit reflectivity and provide sound attenuation.	Existing homes line the east side of the alignment, that is why the soundwall was shown there on the graphics; could be considered on the west too.
53	How effective is a soundwall over the hill? There is a high need for trees in that area.	The need for soundwalls will be reviewed in the EIR. Comment regarding the trees is noted.
54	How wide is the bio-swale? Could foundations of the lighting be accommodated in the same location?	The bio-swale will be seven (7) to ten (10) feet wide and will accommodate lighting foundations
55	A speaker suggested vegetation next to the soundwalls, including vines to help prevent graffiti.	Comment noted.
56	A speaker noted there are elevation differences for different segments. Berm and wall are o.k. with the speaker and the combinations of the options are o.k.	Comments noted.
57	A speaker does not like the meandering path idea and wants the path to be next to the road as far away from homes as possible.	Comment noted.
58	With respect to the split roadway on the hill, a speaker expressed concern for deer and children and is not sure that this is the best solution. The speaker does not like the vertical wall and the treatments, stating they are not rural in feel.	Comments noted.
59	Put the lights in the middle, not the sides.	Comment noted.
60	A hill neighbor stated concern about children who cross the area where the roadway is proposed between West Main and West Dunne.	City doesn't want to encourage mid-block crossings; however may need to consider existing hillside pedestrian routes.

	Comment/Question	Response/Answer
61	What about funding and the schedule? Why do the project?	The project is planned for construction beginning in 2013. Mr. Bjarke told the audience that at the July 20 th Council Meeting, Council would consider a staff recommendation to remove construction funding for the project to help pay the RDA "ransom". Funding for design, environmental clearance and right-of-way would remain.
62	Should the project go forward? <i>(by the time this question was asked many of the attendees had left as it was after 9:00PM)</i>	The people still at the meeting discussed the RDA funding issue with Mr. Bjarke. They requested a project vote and wanted to vote on the necessity of the project as a whole. Sixteen (16) people voted to stop the project, one (1) voted to continue.

Meeting Summary prepared by Eileen Goodwin, Apex Strategies

APPENDIX 1

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Meeting Purpose
3. Recent Efforts
4. Conceptual Design Options
5. Community Feedback and Input
6. Next Steps and Adjourn

APPENDIX 1
PowerPoint® Presentation