

Middlefield Road Redesign Community Meeting
Thursday, July 24th 2014, 7pm-9pm, Fair Oaks Community Center

Notes from Small Group Discussions

QUESTIONS

#1) What is your reaction to the data presented in the traffic analysis?

- *Do you understand the information?*
- *Do you have specific questions?*

#2) What are your thoughts about which lane configuration would best meet the needs and identified priorities of this community and promote the vision in the North Fair Oaks Community Plan?

#3) Do you have any other comment/thought you want the NFOCC to consider as it decides on a recommendation?

OVERALL INPUT – reports from small groups to large group

Group 1: John Bejarano (facilitator) and Bryan Munks (recorder)

- Concern that the projected growth is not valid
- Suspicion that there is an agenda- concern that chains will replace Mom and Pop stores (Starbucks vs. local)
- Need more time to decide
- Balance!

Group 2: Lisa Aozasa (facilitator) and Annika Galliani (recorder)

- Strong consideration to side street residents
- Data seems incomplete
- Group was split, some are not interested in wide sidewalks but others want more of a destination that 3 lanes would create

Group 3: Bryan Albini (facilitator) and Herbert Castillo (recorder)

- 3 lane option provides more balance
- Value the outreach efforts and feel very engaged
- Parking strategies need to work for all

Group 4: Elaine El bizri (facilitator) and Andrew McCormack (recorder)

- Data is incomplete
- Concerned about impact on side streets
- What are the goals? The group is split on 3 vs. 4 lanes

Group 5: Peggy Jensen (facilitator) and Ellie Dallman (recorder)

- Concerned about increase in traffic that will come with high density development throughout the area
- Desire for left turn signal at 5th Avenue in all directions
- Would like to see bike lanes separated from the roadway, maybe combined with the sidewalk
- Concerned about emergency access with 3 lane option
- Concerned about delivery trucks

“X” following a statement indicates support from other group members

Group 1: John Bejarano (facilitator) and Bryan Munks (recorder)

Question #1:

- Unrealistic about 5% rise XXX
- New developments = more people
- Bikes will be traveling fast
- Parallel parking takes longer to park
- 3 lanes - more safe X
- Bike lane being more predominant / # of bikers
- Will there be condos? XXX
- Center lane will be chaotic
- Need 2 bike lanes
- What happens on other parts of Middlefield
 - What happens to bike lane
- Make transition at 4th or 3rd XX

Question #2:

- Not sure about the vision XX
- Beautification of Middlefield
- Not a downtown but a commercial area, balance between cars and neighborhood destination
- People that don't have cars bike
- Beautification will attract new businesses
- Conspiracy to get rid of small businesses and get big businesses X
- Keep area affordable for small businesses
- Needs to balance between neighborhood destination and commercial district & thoroughfare XX

Question #3:

- Need extensive meeting for good feedback
- Online study was too broad, more concise
- Better utilities for town
- Nice to attract more businesses like Starbucks
- A lot of local traffic
- Center lane would make turning a lot safer
- Giving priority to cars is not the best solution
- Biking is fact but very scary, especially people crossing and cars turning left
- What about curbs that separate bike lane and road
- Disagree with notion of bringing big corporations
 - Ex. - McDonalds will raise the rent

Group 2: Lisa Aozasa (facilitator) and Annika Gallani (recorder)

Question #1:

- I wasn't surprised there would be more traffic with 3 lanes
- I have a vision that NFO will be an urban gathering & like 3 lanes XXX
- I don't trust the analysis or numbers. How's is it not going to affect traffic. Why can't we keep 4 lanes? XX
- Cross time is alarming
- It feels like 4 lanes is too much, so many close calls for pedestrians
- 3 lanes can cause traffic for pedestrian
- More data for the schools
- "Sunday streets" – shut down one side for recreation
- Question about extending 8th over the tracks. How would it affect wait time?
- 3 lanes -> property value goes up
- Wide sidewalks & lots of trees

Question #2:

- 3 lanes – 4 votes
- 4 lanes – 6 votes
- Undecided – 2 votes

Question #3:

- Impact for the people on the side streets
- Think about the neighborhoods west of Middlefield
- Parallel, 4 lanes, big bike lanes, small sidewalks
- On Dumbarton we want the railroad tracks fixed XXX

Group 3: Bryan Albini (facilitator) and Herbert Castillo (recorder)

Question #1:

- Disagree with “no right or wrong” decision
- Safety is a gap in the presentation (Bike Advocacy Groups)
- Bad news scenario rarely occurs
- Median strip?
- Parking strategies
- In America, roads are for cars (not pedestrians or bikers). In Europe, roads are equally for pedestrians, bicyclists and cars (pre-auto built environment- multi modal). Americans are only for autos (post-auto dominant development)
- Other cities as case studies (Redwood City)
- 4 lane 5th-9th underground utilities
 - Traffic is too fast
- Diagonal parking required for 4 lanes

Question #2:

- 3 lane is supported by community plan
- 4 lane increased some uncertainty with right and left turns

Question #3:

- Outreach has been very thoughtful and comprehensive
- How will parking be addressed and when?
- Parking accessibility/time limits
- Business access to customers (from 3 to 4)
- Need more lighting for pedestrians
- 4 lanes help the businesses
- 3 lanes will create too much traffic
- Businesses park in the Avenues

Group 4: Elaine El bizri (facilitator) and Andrew McCormack (recorder)

Question #1:

- 3 Lane – slows traffic, safer
- 3 Lane - Not good for parallel parking
- Great presentation (clear): Safety - Backing onto Middlefield X
- Traffic Study extension → South More data for residential side streets XX
- Sidewalk seating
- 4 lane – better flow → Deliveries/Garbage XX
- 2 year old information. Reestablish data X
 - Encompass greater community growth
- How is traffic redistributed → purpose of Middlefield XXX
 - Destination? What are the goals?
- Native vegetation – small, little water needed
- Parking – impact on neighborhood streets
- Cut- through street concerns
- Lack of pedestrian and bicycle data- volume

Question #2)

- 3 lanes – 6 votes
- 4 lanes – 6 votes
 - Not enough information to decide

Question #3)

- Already avoid Middlefield -> too congested
- Purpose – goals for Middlefield X
- Slower traffic = More business opportunity

Group 5: Peggy Jensen (facilitator) and Ellie Dallman (recorder)

- New high density buildings in this area → 5% increase is not an adequate increase
- Pedestrian traffic is heavy now and would increase with wider sidewalks (same for bikers)
- Bike lanes between traffic/door zone is scary!
 - What about bike lanes between sidewalk and parked cars, or consolidating bike lanes with pedestrians X X
- Parking in business area is a concern- what will the impact be on the busses?
- County should purchase underutilized lots/land for off street parking
- Side street traffic is already an issue- what will happen after the project is done?
- Should take Sherriff's recommendation to keep 4 lanes
- Middlefield Road is already congested now!
- Turning on 5th Avenue- need turn signals at 5th Avenue X X
- Need designated area for right turns on 5th and Middlefield
- Center with 3 lane configuration will assist turning onto Middlefield
- Need more ways to get to El Camino from Middlefield
- Earthquake issue- Middlefield was a nightmare during the quake of '89- by compressing another thoroughfare artery, it will become even worse
- Cars don't respect crosswalk- maybe install cameras to help enforce
- Is the public aware of all the development that is happening?? Like Facebook and all the apartments in Redwood City?
- Turn signals at Costco are very dangerous X
- There are no back alleys for business on Middlefield Road so how will they receive deliveries with 3 lanes?
- More lanes is not necessarily better- need to realize that times are changing and we need to make streets safer for pedestrians so people will leave their vehicles behind

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS - Submitted via email

- 1) I attended the meeting last Thursday night. I just wanted to make sure that you got my suggestion to have 4-lanes to 4th Avenue and start the 3 lanes at 4th Avenue. This would hopefully decrease the wait times on 5th Avenue associated with 3 lanes ---- but still allow 3 lanes further up on Middlefield. I also wonder whether it isn't going to be confusing to keep changing the lane configuration on Middlefield. As it is, the lanes go from 2 to 4 to 2. Do we want it to go from 2 to 4 to 3 to 4 to 2? Will this be confusing to drivers?
- 2) As you know parking is extremely difficult on our streets and once I get a place I hate to leave because I never know how far away I will need to put the car. I am so excited to think we may get residential parking permits.
- 3)
 - The traffic study, especially the anticipated impact on cross traffic, is a worst case scenario when traffic volumes are at their peak during the afternoon rush hour. I have traveled Middlefield road many times during the PM rush (5 to 6PM), and other than the between Semi-circular and 5th Ave segment, I don't see the traffic volumes that would cause significant delays for cross traffic if a 3-lane configuration is adapted. Consequently, I hesitate to believe the accuracy of their model – has P.W. tried validating the prediction of the model for the four lane configuration by actually timing the wait-times at cross streets?
 - I really believe that the 3-lane configuration has potentially the best pay-back for the neighborhood because it provides space for other amenities including wider sidewalks and more appealing bike lanes.
 - By providing better opportunities for walking and cycling with the 3-lane option, Fair Oaks residents then have alternatives to get to shops and other activity centers along Middlefield without having to resort to the car. – This should lessen the demand for vehicles wishing to “cross Middlefield” (or making left turns).
 - P.W. needs to consider other metrics rather “level of service” which only measures or models motor vehicle traffic. Several comments were made at the July 17th meeting about other metrics, which although have not been vetted by the engineering community, are still worthwhile to pursue which can account for other modes and benefits.
 - I urge that the 3-lane configuration be installed and evaluated. Perhaps, the 3-lane configuration could be installed as a trial installation and if deemed unacceptable, then a 4-lane configuration could be installed. (If done “right” as a trial, then all it is “paint” to be removed and 4-lanes installed). If there are significant back-ups on cross streets, then traffic lights might need to be considered and installed at Dumbarton or 1st later in the project (There is already a light at Douglas which services the area N.E. of the tracks). The installation of a light was mentioned at the July 17th meeting but was dismissed by P.W. because the light might not meet minimal standards for justifying its installation. However, by providing a light at Dumbarton, those motorists who wish to “exit” at other streets would divert to Dumbarton as the light would provide a 'no-hassle' means to either accessing Middlefield or crossing – the volume of cross traffic at Dumbarton could increase which justifies the installation of the traffic light.
 - I believe that the 3-lane configuration is safer for pedestrians and easier for motorists to drive (less lane weaving avoiding turning motorists and better sight-lines for detecting cross traffic (including pedestrians.)

4) Are there more car crashes on four-lane roads than there are on three-lane roads? Are speed limits lower on three-lane roads nationwide and if so, does that help to make three-lane roads safer?

Do motorists automatically slow down on narrower roads, regardless of the posted speed limit? What are the speed limit options the redesign can consider? Answers to those questions will help me, and maybe others, understand the options.

I was surprised that the study session I attended was so narrowly focused on four vs. three lanes. I was also puzzled at what seemed to me to be a disconnect between the prediction that we need to get more vehicles on the road, which was the only data presented, and the vision as expressed by you. If I remember correctly, you said the community's vision is for that section of road to serve as an attractive downtown. I don't understand how those two goals can coexist.

I've lived in Redwood City, 22 years, shop in NFO for gas, upholstery, food – takeout and restaurants, Boys and Girls Club, Fair Oaks Community Center, Costco, Sigona's, Chavez etc. I also bike through NFO on my way to the childcare facility at the USGS in Menlo Park, where my wife is a teacher. I'm a former member of Redwood City's library commission and currently serve on its senior affairs commission. I was a participant in the San Mateo County Citizens Academy and I'm enormously pleased the County has committed to making the kinds of changes to Middlefield we've hoped for, for years. I'm grateful to you and your colleagues for your dedication to public service.