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RE: Medians at Liberty Park - Reduced Safety - Increased Risk

Wednesday, August 6, 2025

Supervisor Ray Mueller,
Director Ann Stillman,
County Executive Mike Callagy

Hello Ray, Ann, and Mike,

Yesterday, I sent you a PDF detailing the safety, risk, and workability concerns that have arisen at the Palo Alto Way intersection due to the construction of the Santa Cruz/Alameda safety project. This document focuses on the critical issues pertaining to the similar issues on Alameda between Prospect and Liberty Park.

As previously mentioned, these concerns were raised on multiple occasions with BPAC and DPW, yet they appear to have been disregarded, resulting in compromised safety and heightened risks for residents, motorists, and cyclists. Furthermore, the current construction of the median raises questions about its workability as it doesn't seem to safely accommodate the required NB traffic and bike lanes.

Example 2: Median on Alameda between Prospect and Liberty Park

Between Prospect Street and Liberty Park Avenue, the county has constructed a wide and elongated hard offset median. From a high-level perspective, this median fails to provide enough width to safely accommodate the traffic and removes important safety elements for motorists exiting Prospect St. A major failure is the very placement and huge size of the median — It is important to note that these unresolved issues also pose significant liability risks to the County, especially with the well documented issues at this location.

Some of the main safety failures of this median design and placement are noted below, as well as a safety hazard with the curb on the south-west corner of Prospect St.

- In the northbound direction, the median does not provide sufficient roadway width to safely accommodate one northbound traffic lane, a 5' bike lane, and the required offset (also known as shy distance) for the median and bulb outs. It appears that the median placement may not provide the width necessary to comply with the 3' cycling law.
- The median is excessively long. There seems no valid safety reason for such an excessively long median; in fact, it creates safety risks for residents:
 - For instance, residents of Prospect St. are prohibited from using Alameda's center two-way turn lane and must wait for traffic on Alameda to clear in both directions before making a left

turn. This is even more challenging for long vehicles or those towing a trailer when exiting Prospect St.

- The residence on the west side of Alameda is blocked from using the center turn lane to exit or enter their driveway, necessitating a more hazardous U-Turn elsewhere or routing through a significantly longer path through neighborhood streets.
- While the northbound lane is overly narrow and lacks roadway width, the opposite is true for the southbound lane, which gives the impression of a super wide-open roadway capable of two traffic lanes. Our safety task force collaborated with DPW from 2017-2020 to ensure that traffic lanes would be 10' wide, primarily to provide motorists with a perspective of a narrower road and a more residential atmosphere, thereby achieving calmer and slower traffic. However, with such a wide roadway on the southbound side, motorists may not perceive a different road perspective—a super wide roadway.
- This median is 11' wide, wider than the 10' wide center 2-way turn lane that was agreed to. Due to required offsets to protect motorists from the high median curbs, the width of this median could/should be at least 3 feet narrower.
- The median's design and location, situated on the crest of a hill, ignores the visibility challenges that exist here on Alameda. Glare from the sun and headlights significantly impair a motorist's ability to see the median. Furthermore, its placement is unexpected, as most drivers do not anticipate a median to abruptly obstruct a substantial portion of their normal travel lane..

In summary, the construction of the median between Prospect and Liberty Park is un-workable in the northbound direction and the median being offset, especially on the crest of the hill, means motorists have a much higher risk of collision (in layman's terms, an order of magnitude more risk). There has already been reports of near accidents due to that offset.

I am requesting, on behalf of the community, that a meeting be immediately held with a senior member of the DPW Project team, a BPAC committee member, and members of the community (including representative resident of Prospect St and myself). The objective is to discuss the safety and risk factors posed by this median and to define a resolution that will correct the issues, restore a sane flow of traffic, and improve safety for all.

While this situation is critical and potentially embarrassing, it is so very important to get this right.

Sincerely,



Ronald G. Snow

cc: BPAC, John Langbein, interested community members

Attachments: Illustrated and annotated photos of the roadway and intersections.

Illustrations:

Hopefully these annotated photos provide some additional clarification and reference.



