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## Making Moraga Pedestrian and Bike Friendly

*By Sophie Braccini*

The new committee appointed to recommend revisions to the Moraga Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan met for the first time July 21. Consultant Niko Letunic, who will lead the process, was introduced to the group and presented a summary of the current conditions for non-drivers in Moraga. This fall, intensive public outreach will be conducted so residents can contribute ideas and express concerns in the process. The Moraga Town Council is anticipated to make a final decision in less than a year on a 10-year plan that will aim to make Moraga more pedestrian and bike friendly. "The town was mostly laid out in the '60s and '70s with a very car-centric view of transportation," said Planning Director Ellen Clark, who led the July 21 discussion. Bike enthusiast Lance Larson, a resident-committee member, suggested that this plan could be an opportunity to change Moraga into a bicycle-friendly town. "It will make (Moraga) a very desirable place for families to move," he said.

In order to get there, however, much will need to be done.

In addition to Letunic, members of the committee, four residents, a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board, discussed what they thought was needed.

Bill Carman of Parks and Recreation said he had been working on the interconnectivity of the trails in town. "Everyone in town lives less than 1,000 feet away from a trail," he said, "but the accesses are often blocked either by construction or fences." Andy Scheck, a resident-committee member, asked that requirements for pedestrian and bicycle circulation be included when new developments are approved. Scheck also noted that the street lighting was often adequate in Moraga, but that there were a few dark spots that could be discouraging to pedestrians. Rebecca Goodman, a resident-committee member, noted that schools could play their part in allowing bicycle safety training, and Larson added that the high schools lacked ways to secure bikes onsite.

Letunic said other elements of the plan could include programs and activities that promote using different modes of transportation. He said very few residents walk or bike to work in Moraga, which has heavy bike passage-through especially on weekends, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is inconsistent, since there are many sidewalks and bikeway gaps. He showed a map of the 11 accidents that took place over the last five years, resulting in either pedestrians or bicyclists being injured, mostly along Moraga Road, St. Mary's Road and Canyon.

Letunic emphasized the importance of getting as many people as possible to provide feedback about what they see as problem areas. In September, residents will be able to access an interactive map that will be available on the town website to pinpoint areas and spots that they believe need improvements. Letunic will also conduct an online survey that month and a public workshop in the fall, and BikeEastBay, a local nonprofit that supports the Moraga project, will organize a group bike ride to brainstorm a bikeway network. After residents' opinions are analyzed, a plan will be established that will take cost and funding sources into consideration.

The Moraga Road portion located between Donald and Corliss is not included in this study. The stretch has been proposed for a traffic lane reduction: three driving and one turning lane, and the council asked for a larger outreach on this precise topic. A mail-in survey to all residents is scheduled to go out in the fall, with a decision on Moraga Road profile before the end of the year.

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