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Design Solution for Medians on East End Found

By Cathy Tyson



Jill Watase and Valerie Watase Photo Cathy Tyson

After receiving some blowback from concerned business owners on the east end of town, city leaders thought perhaps more input should be gathered on a potential project to add landscaped street medians to Mt. Diablo Boulevard from First Street to Brown Avenue.

Balancing the desire to beautify the streetscape, not make it difficult for customers to come in and out of driveways on both sides of the street, and ensure pedestrian safety is clearly a challenge.

Last month city council members, along with Engineering Services Manager Tony Coe, collaborated with business people and residents gathering input, both positive and negative as the large group strolled down the boulevard.

The current situation, lots of asphalt with a two-way center turn lane dividing the road, is functional but not as attractive as the lush trees and shrubbery on the west end of town. The two senior residential buildings currently under construction are a reminder that crosswalk upgrades are a good idea. Currently pedestrians need to make a run for it to cross five lanes of fast moving traffic.

Large tables with maps were spread out at the Lafayette Community Center to clarify specific options and recommendations from neighbors and business people to ensure a workable solution to the median issue.

The roundabout concept at the intersection of Golden Gate Way and Mt. Diablo originally suggested, but later rejected last fall, went over like a lead balloon; this meeting of the minds proved a constructive exercise to bring in stakeholders and come up with a workable solution.

At the end of the meeting, seven plans were presented, discussed and voted on. Jill Watase of Lafayette

Physical Therapy, located in the Corporate Terraces development, worked on her own time with like minded-business representatives, forming the East End Coalition to make changes to the city's plan that wouldn't hinder the flow of traffic as much. Their plan received the most votes from members of the public as well as the city council. "I was really surprised how everyone worked together," she said, "and very impressed that the city council would allow this kind of meeting," explaining the unusual method of soliciting friendly feedback.

The new plan will be presented at the next city council meeting May 28. The additional hot topic of paying for landscape maintenance will also be discussed at that time.

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