

COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Department Liaison:
San Mateo County
Department of Public Works
555 County Center, 5th Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063
www.smcgov.org/publicworks

October 17, 2024

Supervisor Ray Mueller
Hall of Justice
400 County Center
Redwood City, CA 94063

RE: Draft SMC BPAC Recommendation for the Coleman and Ringwood Avenues Transportation Study

Dear Supervisor Mueller,

The San Mateo County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee urges the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors to fund and expedite the One- Way Pilot Program on Coleman Avenue in Menlo Oaks.

Coleman Avenue in Unincorporated Menlo Oaks and the City of Menlo Park, is a 0.7 mile corridor with a road designed for motor vehicles, causing numerous collisions and near misses for walkers, cyclists, and others who use active transportation. Coleman Avenue is currently used as a main two-way thoroughfare for walkers, bikers, and drivers traveling to and from Menlo-Atherton High School, Laurel Elementary (Lower and Upper), Encinal Elementary, and Hillview Middle School. On the Unincorporated part of Coleman, there are no sidewalks or designated bike lanes. Walkers, bikers, and drivers share the same road. The shoulders can be blocked with bins on garbage days. The shoulders flood when it rains. There are blind turns at the intersections. On any given school day during commute hours, the conditions are unsafe; pedestrians and bikers, including young children, and drivers, including teenagers, all compete for the same space. Children have been hit by cars or frightened by near misses. Consequently, parents decide they need to drive their children to school, further increasing traffic congestion.

This problem has been debated by the community and elected officials for over 20 years, with no agreement as to a solution. Finally, following a study funded by the Board of Supervisors and overseen by the County's Sustainability Department, the majority of the community that has participated in the process supports moving forward with the One Way Pilot Program. The proposed pilot would turn Coleman Avenue into a one-way street in the County's portion in the "westbound" direction (that is from the border between Menlo Park to Ringwood Avenue). The westbound option was chosen as it provides the best service to motorists heading to Ringwood in the morning when traffic demand is greatest due to the deadline of getting to school on time. The afternoon commute is more dispersed over time leading to less congestion since many of the students are engaged in after-school activities. The one-way option is to be implemented as a pilot

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Elaine Salinger, *Chair*
John Langbein, *Vice Chair*
Michael Barnes
Susan Doherty
Fred Zyda

Cristina Aquino (Alternate)
Mark Lee (Alternate)

An Advisory Committee to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

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to gauge whether it lowers congestion on Coleman Avenue and to evaluate its impact on the rest of the community. While support for this solution is not unanimous, strong support for the pilot was recently demonstrated at the September 17, 2024 BPAC meeting when parents, Coleman Avenue residents, school employees, and community leaders advocated for the One Way Coleman Ave Pilot Program.

The extra space obtained by reducing the two vehicle lanes to a single, one-way lane would be used to accommodate bikers, walkers, and other forms of active transportation. Any reconfiguration needs to be coordinated with Menlo Park so that travel across the border between the two jurisdictions is relatively seamless.

You have received a letter in support of the One Way Coleman Ave Pilot Program from all of the school superintendents and principals in the area.

With your help funding and approving this project, we can solve this problem that's been putting children at risk, and that has discouraged young people and families from biking and walking to school. Coleman Avenue is a narrow road that clearly needs improvement. Transforming Coleman Avenue has the potential to significantly increase active transportation in the area, alleviating traffic congestion.

We also encourage both County Staff and the Board of Supervisors to work with the City of Menlo Park to improve Coleman Ave in the City's section so that those using active transportation can safely travel the City's section, too.

For further information regarding the benefits of cycling to school:

<https://sfstandard.com/opinion/2024/09/11/the-case-against-driving-city-kids-to-school/>

Sincerely,

Elaine Salinger, Chair
County of San Mateo Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

cc: Ann Stillman, Carolyn Bloede

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