

Correspondence Received
Ahead of the
October 17th, 2024
San Mateo County Bicycle
and Pedestrian Advisory
Committee Meeting

September 26, 2024

Dear President Slocum, Vice President Canepa, Supervisor Corzo, Supervisor Mueller, Supervisor Pine and Mayor Taylor, Vice Mayor Combs, Council Member Doerr, Council Member Nash and Council Member Wolosin,

We, the below-signed superintendents and school leaders serving Menlo Park, Atherton, and East Palo Alto children, urge you to take action regarding Coleman Avenue in Menlo Park, California.

Elected officials and the community have tried and failed for more than two decades to improve safety on this 0.7 mile corridor that our students use daily. We believe this time can be different. With the current momentum, support from parents and Coleman Avenue residents (as evidenced at the [9/17 BPAC meeting](#)), and your leadership, we can improve this issue, that's been putting our children at risk, and that has discouraged our young people and families from biking and walking to school.

Coleman Avenue is currently a main two-way thoroughfare for walkers, bikers, and drivers traveling to Menlo-Atherton High School, Laurel Elementary (Lower and Upper), Encinal Elementary, and Hillview Middle School.

On the county part of Coleman, there are no official contiguous sidewalks or designated bike lanes. Walkers, bikers, and drivers share the same road. On any given school day during commute hours, the conditions are unsafe - pedestrians and cyclists (of all ages, beginning with young children) and drivers (including teenagers) all competing to find space, no matter the official direction of traffic flow. Our students deserve safer routes to and from school. Children of all income levels use Coleman Avenue to get to their education. Finding a safe solution for their travel will provide equitable access to education and improve overall health for users.

We are responsible for the safety of our students and we believe the smoothest and quickest way forward to increase the safety of Coleman Avenue, at this time, is to go with the one-way pilot (option #3 from the [Coleman/Ringwood Transportation Study, p. 10.](#)) as soon as possible.

The one-way pilot will:

- Be a compromise that residents and Coleman commuters can support.
- Give us new information about travel behaviors and whether more active users are drawn to the road when there are fewer safety hazards.
- Be relatively low-cost.

- Give us an opportunity to show collaborative leadership with each other, schools, and residents.
- Provide us with the opportunity to build something notably beautiful: a road where all users in all modes of transportation feel safe.

Some of the most invested elected leaders with the most institutional knowledge of Coleman will be leaving their seats in December (Slocum, Wolosin), and in the interests of not further delaying this project, we urge you to vote for and fund a one-way pilot before new electeds come on board.

We are on the precipice of real action -- please take action to fund this one-way pilot. Our children deserve a safer route to school and there is no reason to wait to make it happen.

Sincerely,

Kristen Gracia

Kristen Gracia
Menlo Park City School District Superintendent

Sharon Burns

Sharon Burns
Encinal Principal

Linda Creighton

Linda Creighton
Laurel Principal - lower campus

Alicia Henneghan

Alicia Henneghan
Laurel Principal - upper campus

Alicia Payton-Miyazaki

Alicia Payton-Miyazaki

Oak Knoll Principal

Danielle O'Brien

Danielle O'Brien
Hillview Middle School Principal

Crystal Leach

Crystal Leach
Sequoia Union High School District Superintendent

Karl Losekoot

Karl Losekoot
Menlo-Atherton High School Principal

Vanessa Castro

From: Ted Sapountzis
Sent: Wednesday, October 16, 2024 4:47 PM
To: Vanessa Castro
Subject: Public comments for SMCBPAC meeting on 10/17 (agenda item #11)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Vanessa,

I wanted to express my concerns with the proposed draft letter to the County Board of Supervisors.

During the last meeting, there was no consensus on the path forward, and when asked, a BPAC committee member stated that they would simply hand over the report to the County BOS and City Council with NO recommendation as a result. This is NOT present in the minutes. Instead, they only state that Ms. Carolyn Bloede, Sustainability Director, said: **"that for any of the pilot concepts to move forward, the plans would need to be refined, and data collection metrics would need to be established."**

The proposed letter now recommends the County adopt the one-way option. How did the Committee decide to invalidate a survey with 265 responses, during which 45% supported the Coleman closure option (with the one-way option coming in 3rd with 15%), based on comments from 23 of the 26 participants supporting the one-way option during the meeting itself? Does this really represent a fair community involvement?

If the County did decide to bypass the proper process, why not include changes to the city portion of Coleman itself, e.g., restricting parking, similar to how it is on the county portion? During the meeting, many community members voiced concerns about the lack of dedicated bike lanes and the dangers of cars pulling out of the high-density apartment buildings (again, this was NOT recorded in the minutes).

I understand the County has run out of funds for this project. If this is the issue, then I think the County needs to ask for further funds to properly assess all the options presented and engage the community in a transparent way.

Best regards,

Ted Sapountzis
Menlo Oaks resident

Vanessa Castro

From: Carolyn Ordonez
Sent: Thursday, October 17, 2024 8:25 AM
To: Vanessa Castro
Subject: Item #7

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Making Coleman Avenue one way or closed altogether is unacceptable for adjacent neighborhoods. Making one Avenue “safer” makes other streets less safe. Speed is a major issue. Traffic calming can be accomplished with speed bumps, stop signs and traffic enforcement. Speed limit signs need to be added midway down Coleman. There are only two speed limit signs. A speed limit sign at each end of Coleman only. If a driver enters Coleman at Menlo Oaks or Berkeley the driver is unaware of the speed limit.

Keep all kids and commuters safe in all areas!

Vanessa Castro

From: Haratani, Joan M.
Sent: Thursday, October 17, 2024 6:20 AM
To: Vanessa Castro
Cc: Haratani, Joan M.
Subject: October 17 Meeting

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

Dear Ms. Castro:

I am unable to attend tonight's meeting as I was given very little notice. I will be on an airplane and unable to attend. I would have changed my schedule had I been given more notice. Nonetheless, I would like to make a record of my deep concerns about the "cloak and dagger" nature of this proceeding as it relates to the resurrected one way street proposal on Coleman.

I was absolutely stunned to learn that about the proposed draft letter to the County Board of Supervisors for three reasons.

First, it was clear to me that this proposal was rejected at the last board meeting. I and other Coleman residents made clear that we opposed any changes period to Coleman.

Second, we were told at that same meeting that no further action would be taken. Any future potential action or changes would be recommended but only after extensive study, data analysis, and consensus building. For these and other reasons, a BPAC committee member stated that their next course of action was to report to the County BOS and City Council that they had arrived at no recommendation. Mind you, we reached this point after several meetings, surveys, discussions, etc. We neighbors have invested hundreds and hundreds of hours vetting this issue and were satisfied with this statement and commitment.

Third, point number two was a promise made to the community in a public setting. A promise must be taken seriously.

I would like to understand the reasons for this public betrayal. This situation is creating a lack of trust in my community in which my family is a multi decade and respected member.

Please put me and my family down as a strong no to this nonsense.

Thank you.

Joan

Joan M. Haratani

Vanessa Castro

From: Mary Gilles
Sent: Wednesday, October 16, 2024 10:02 AM
To: Vanessa Castro
Subject: Re: October 17, 2024 San Mateo County BPAC Meeting Draft Coleman and Ringwood Study Letter Notification

Dear Vanessa,

My husband and I own [REDACTED] which is located between Willow Road and Santa Monica Avenue. I have previously completed one or two of your surveys agreeing with the plan to keep parking off our side of the street to create safer bike lanes. I don't know where that stands within this latest plan to change Coleman Avenue.

I am quite surprised to see the 1-way street option as a final choice for the county end of Coleman. I had served on the Menlo Park Transportation Commission in the past and there are basics in traffic management. One of the tenets is that whenever you choke off cars from one street, they will flow to another – just as water would flow when you choke it off at a particular point. So, it is inevitable that car commuters who regularly use Coleman Avenue to get to Willow and then 101 in the mornings, will have to find an alternative route and that will likely push those cars to Middlefield Road and Bay Road where congestion is already significant.

Can you share if the trees that sit in the middle of the road on Coleman in the county areas were ever considered to be a hazard in designing a safer bike and pedestrian route? I have always felt those trees that sit in the middle of Coleman create a significant hazard to cyclists and pedestrians because cars have to drive around them and are aiming at people along the side of the road when doing so. Removal of those trees would enhance the safety of Coleman in those locations significantly. Can you let me know what is happening with the trees?

Thank you,
Mary Gilles