



DATE: August 26, 2015

AGENDA ITEM # 2

TO: Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Commission
FROM: Cedric Novenario, Staff Liaison
SUBJECT: Walk Friendly Community Application Feedback

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and discuss feedback from the Walk Friendly Community application

BACKGROUND

The City submitted an application to Walk Friendly Communities to receive recognition as a Walk Friendly Community. Walk Friendly Communities “is a national recognition program developed to encourage towns and cities across the U.S. to establish or recommit to a higher priority for supporting safer walking environments.”¹ According to walkfriendly.org, A Walk Friendly Community is a city or town that has shown a commitment to improving walkability and pedestrian safety through comprehensive programs, plans and policies.²

Unfortunately the City of Los Altos was not designated as a Walk Friendly Community. The next round of Walk Friendly Communities application is in December 2016.

DISCUSSION

The feedback provided is broken down into Primary Recommendations and detailed recommendations per section of the Walk Friendly Community application. For the purposes of this staff report, we will focus on the Primary Recommendations.

The Primary Recommendation section provided eight suggestions that Los Altos should focus on in the upcoming years:

1. Create a dedicated pedestrian plan
2. Construct new sidewalks
3. Have an Open Street event
4. Safety Campaigns and education programs

¹ <http://www.walkfriendly.org/>

² “Community Report Card and Feedback-Los Altos, California,” Walk Friendly Communities, May 4, 2015, 1

5. Staff training on pedestrian safety
6. Targeted police enforcement for pedestrian safety
7. Develop comprehensive evaluation tools, i.e. walkability checklists, walk audits, etc

Recommendations 1 and 4 are currently in progress. The City's pedestrian master plan is recommended for approval on the August 25, 2015 City Council meeting. At the time of Walk Friendly Communities application, the plan was not complete, which could have affected our overall score. The BPAC education subcommittee is currently developing education materials and plans on conducting outreach regarding bicycle education

Recommendations 2 and 7 will somewhat be addressed through the pedestrian master plan. The pedestrian master plan recommends considering the installation of a "walk way" within ¼ mile of Los Altos public schools (where the road geometry and resident synergy allows). The determination of the type of "walk way" facility will depend on the pedestrian use needed and resident feedback. The pedestrian master plan also recommends re-evaluation of the plan every couple of years to provide updates to the project list and/or policies. Perhaps the BPAC would like to help staff develop walkability or walk audits criteria that can be used to evaluate pedestrian related or complete streets related projects once they are complete.

In regards to Recommendation 6, Targeted Enforcement, the Los Altos Police Department Traffic Unit is now fully staffed at three officers. Staff can review the feedback received from Walk Friendly Communities to see how the Traffic Unit can help.

In regards to Recommendation 3, Open Street Event, Passarelle partners with the City to hold "Day on the Green" type events in downtown. However, it is unclear from the the feedback regarding frequency of these types of events needed.

Finally, Recommendation 5, Staff training on pedestrian safety, the VTA BPAC holds "brown bag lunch" trainings once a month for both bicycle and pedestrian safety topics. According to Chair Brinsfield, the VTA would not be opposed to holding these trainings at the local agency. The training could be offered to City staff whom are interested, and the BPAC as well.

Staff welcomes an open discussion regarding the feedback received from Walk Friendly Communities and discuss if there is a desire to re-apply later this year.

Attachment:

Community Report Card and Feedback