



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: MARCH 17, 2020
DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
FROM: DAVID JACOBS, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
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TITLE: REMOVAL OF UNCONTROLLED CROSSWALKS

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

A motion approving a Resolution for the removal of the uncontrolled marked crosswalks at the intersections of East Rossi Street at Bridge Street; East Rossi Street at Tom O Wong Way; Blanco Road at Padre Drive; and the six crosswalks along Davis Road and the Westridge Driveways.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended City Council approve a Resolution for the removal of the uncontrolled marked crosswalks at the intersections of East Rossi Street at Bridge Street; East Rossi Street at Tom O Wong Way; Blanco Road at Padre Drive; and the six crosswalks along Davis Road and the Westridge Driveways.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City is preparing for roadway resurfacing projects planned for Fall 2020. City staff is developing the striping plans for the roads to be resurfaced to ensure the replacement striping installed meets existing design and safety standards. After evaluating, staff has determined that several uncontrolled marked crosswalks do not meet City policies and standards. Staff is recommending that crosswalk markings be removed at each location. Removing the markings does not prohibit pedestrians from crossing. In fact, the intersection will remain a legal unmarked crosswalk.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Salinas adopted Crosswalk Policy Guidelines (Attachment 1) to prescribe a formal and transparent process for consideration of marked crosswalks. It provides information to be used when making decisions about where standard crosswalk should be marked; where crosswalks with special treatments such as high-visibility crosswalks, flashing beacons and other special features should be employed; and where crosswalks will not be marked due to safety concerns resulting from volume, speed, or sight distance issues.

East Rossi Street (at Bridge Street and at Tom O Wong Way)

The City will be resurfacing East Rossi Street this year. City staff is developing the striping plans for this roadway to ensure everything meets existing design and safety standards. After evaluating three uncontrolled marked crosswalks staff is recommending that crosswalk markings be removed. Removing the markings does not prohibit pedestrians from crossing. In fact, the intersection will remain a legal unmarked crosswalk.

The City's crosswalk policy and the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices both prescribe a process for determining when to mark a crosswalk. A crosswalk must have sufficient crossing demand, 20 pedestrians crossing at the location per hour in any two hours, not necessarily consecutive. The crosswalk must be at least 300 feet away from the nearest appropriately marked crosswalk or protected crosswalk. The crosswalk should also provide adequate sight lines so that drivers can feasibly stop in time. If all conditions are met and a marked crosswalk is determined to be appropriate, engineering judgement shall also be applied to determine if other treatments are necessary.

All of the uncontrolled crosswalks on East Rossi Street fail to meet these criteria. Two of the crosswalks are less than 300 feet from the nearest intersection and therefore should be removed. The third crosswalk is approximately 300 feet from the intersection and fails to meet the crossing demand criteria. Furthermore, the area north of Rossi Street includes a PG&E substation with restricted access and a commercial area at the corner of Main Street and Rossi. The commercial area can be safely and conveniently accessed from the controlled intersection at Main Street and Rossi Street. Lastly, the Traffic and Transportation Commission supported the East Rossi Safe Streets Pilot Project, which proposes safety enhancements including the removal of these marked crosswalks, buffered bike lanes, and improvements at the controlled crosswalks.

These intersections will remain legal crossings per the California Vehicle Code without the crosswalk markings, however if pedestrians wish to cross in a marked crosswalk, the intersection at the controlled crosswalks at Main Street or Sherwood Street which are approximately 300 feet or less from the three crossings.

Blanco Road at Padre Drive

The City planned to resurface Blanco Road in 2020, however after an assessment of the roadway it was determined that the pavement needs additional repair work before it can be resurfaced. The work has been postponed to 2021. Prior to the roadway assessment, city staff began reviewing the striping plans for the project to ensure everything meets existing design standards. After evaluating the marked crosswalk at Blanco Road and Padre Drive staff is recommending that crosswalk markings be removed. Removing the markings does not prohibit pedestrians from crossing what will be a legal unmarked crosswalk.

A crosswalk generally serves two purposes: 1) to indicate to the pedestrian where the ideal place to cross is; and 2) to alert drivers that this location is where pedestrian may be expected to cross. Blanco Road is a high-speed multi-lane road, and it is not an ideal place to cross. When

crossing demand is low and drivers do not regularly see pedestrians crossing at a marked crosswalk location then the credibility of the crosswalk is reduced as drivers do not see a correlation between the markings and pedestrians. This not only makes this location slightly more dangerous it also diminishes the effectiveness of all other crosswalks throughout the City. Over-use of traffic control devices diminishes the effectiveness. This crosswalk fails to meet both fundamental reasons for marking a crosswalk.

Data suggests that removing crosswalk markings will reduce the likelihood of a pedestrian/vehicle collision. At speeds of 45mph, crosswalk markings do very little to alert drivers of potential pedestrian crossings without additional measures. However, studies have found that basic looking behavior and pedestrian attentiveness decrease while crossing in a marked crosswalk versus an unmarked crosswalk. A review of collision rates per crossing in marked versus unmarked crosswalks of similar types of streets find that pedestrians are more likely to be involved in a crash if the crosswalk was marked rather than unmarked.

The resurfacing project is budgeted and scoped only for resurfacing the roadway. Additional countermeasures to enhance a marked crosswalk is not included in the scope and budget. Furthermore, without sufficient crossing demand the crosswalk policy recommends the removal of the marked crosswalk. The intersection will remain a legal crossing per the California Vehicle Code without the crosswalk markings. Pedestrians wishing to cross in a marked crosswalk are able to walk to the intersection at South Main Street and Blanco Road, which is approximately 600 feet away and provides a controlled marked crosswalk.

Davis Road Crosswalks along Westridge Shopping Center Driveways

The City removed these crosswalks in 2017 as these were found inconsistent with the crosswalk policy. At the time however, staff did not bring the item to Traffic and Transportation Commission and City Council for approval. City maintenance crews painted over the existing markings as a method of removing the crosswalks. Recently, the black paint has begun to fade and the remnants of the previously removed crosswalks are beginning to surface. City staff has re-evaluated the crosswalks and have confirm that they are inconsistent with the City's crosswalk policy. Staff is therefore formally recommending their removal in accordance with the City Crosswalk policy.

Consistent with California Vehicle Code Policy, a 30-day notice has been posted at the crosswalks indicating the consideration for removal.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION:

The recommendation for the removal of the uncontrolled marked crosswalk at the intersections of East Rossi Street at Bridge Street; East Rossi Street at Tom O Wong Way; Blanco Road at Padre Drive; and the six crosswalks along Davis Road and the Westridge Driveways was presented to the Traffic and Transportation Commission at its February 2020 meeting. Public comment was received from one member of the public for the proposed crosswalks removal at Blanco Road and Padre Drive in support of staff's recommendation. No other public comments were received. The Traffic and Transportation Commission voted 4-1 to recommend to Council the removal of the marked crosswalk at Blanco Road and Padre Drive. The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to

recommend to City Council the removal of the marked crosswalks at the intersections of East Rossi Street at Bridge Street; East Rossi Street at Tom O Wong Way; and the six crosswalks along Davis Road and the Westridge Driveways

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The City of Salinas has determined that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per Section 15301, Class 1(c). The proposed improvements constitute a minor modification to an existing facility as defined by the CEQA Guidelines to improve public safety. All work will be completed within the existing public right-of-way. CEQA documents will be filled with the future roadway surface seal project, not specifically with this Council Resolution.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The removal of uncontrolled marked crosswalks at the intersections of East Rossi Street at Bridge Street; East Rossi Street at Tom O Wong Way; Blanco Road at Padre Drive; and the six crosswalks along Davis Road and the Westridge Driveways, meets City Council's Goals of Investment Strategies/Risk Management and Public Safety.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

Public Works staff works with the Legal Department on issues regarding crosswalks to ensure consistency with City policy. Public Works also coordinates with the Police Department when appropriate for traffic enforcement to support traffic devices.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

There is no cost to remove the marked crosswalks on E Rossi Street because it is planned with a resurfacing project. The removal of the all the other crosswalks is estimated to be approximately \$13,700. There is sufficient funding in CIP 9081: Striping and Signing Improvements on City Streets.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Resolution

Attachment 2: City of Salinas Crosswalk Policy Guidelines

Attachment 3: Crosswalk Studies