RAPID IMPLEMENTATION SCHOOL SAFETY PLANS

The Meher Schools

April 26, 2022

LAFAYETTE

TOOLE DESIGN

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Information contained in this document is for planning purposes and should not be used for final design of any project. All results, recommendations, concept drawings, cost opinions, and commentary contained herein are based on limited data and information and on existing conditions that are subject to change and have not been field-verified. Further analysis and engineering design are necessary prior to implementing any of the recommendations contained herein.

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THE MEHER SCHOOLS
RAPID IMPLEMENTATION SCHOOL SAFETY PLAN

Introduction and Background Context

Toole Design was contracted by the City of Lafayette to study school safety issues and develop implementation plans to improve safety for students and caregivers walking, bicycling, and driving to and from the City's seven schools. In response to a heightened level of community concern about school-related traffic safety, this Rapid Implementation Safety Plan addresses these concerns by consolidating recommendations from past studies and public comments, adding new recommendations since these studies were completed, and prioritizing recommended projects so the most important safety improvements can be installed as soon as possible.

This report includes:

- A summary of relevant data and previous Safe Routes to School planning efforts
- A summary of the school site visits conducted with City of Lafayette staff, Transportation & Circulation Commissioners, Lafayette School District staff and community members
- Recommendations for short, mid- and longer-term improvements to address safety and access

Data and Document Review Summary

Previously, the City of Lafayette completed two Safe Routes to School plans, including the 2013 Safe Routes to School Summary Report[1] and the 2020 Berkeley SafeTREC City of Lafayette Complete Streets Safety Assessment[2]. The City has also received public comments that identify safety issues and, in some cases, provide recommendations for safety improvements. Relevant points from each of these sources are summarized here to help inform the list of project recommendations.

2013 Safe Routes to School Summary Report

The 2013 Safe Routes to School Summary Report focused on Lafayette Elementary School and Springhill Elementary School and does not include specific recommendations for the Meher Schools.

2020 Berkeley SafeTREC City of Lafayette Complete Streets Safety Assessment

The 2020 Berkeley SafeTREC City of Lafayette Complete Streets Safety Assessment provides recommendations to improve walking and bicycling in the City of Lafayette. While the report was focused on Lafayette Elementary School, Stanley Middle School, Springhill Elementary School, Acalanes High School, and Burton Valley Elementary School the assessment also includes the following citywide recommendations to improve walking and bicycling that are relevant to every school in Lafayette:

- Advance limit lines (STOP bars) installed 4 feet in advance of the crosswalk
- Corner curb extensions (hardscape)
- Interim curb extensions (using paint and flexible delineators)

[1] Available on the City of Lafayette website at: https://www.lovelafayette.org/home/showpublisheddocument/6437/637475310411830000
[2] Available on the City of Lafayette website at: https://www.lovelafayette.org/home/showpublisheddocument/6474/637516032395500000

- Crosswalk markings
- Leading pedestrian interval
- Center islands on side streets (hardscape)
- Left-side warning signs (in addition to existing right-side warning signs for pedestrian and/or bicyclist crossings)
- Left-side signs on medians (in addition to existing right-side warning signs where feasible)
- Upstream sightlines (restrict parking within 20 feet of crosswalks – potentially installing curb extensions or bike corrals in these locations)
- Yield lines on multi-lane approaches in advance of crosswalks
- Directional curb ramps (rather than diagonal curb ramps)
- Pedestrian push-button accessibility
- Double yellow centerline 50 feet in advance of crosswalk
- Bicycle and motorcyclist detection on all actuated approaches to traffic signals
- Left-aligned shared-lane markings (i.e., “sharrows”) in right-turn lanes where width is insufficient to provide a full-width through bike lane
- Bicycle wayfinding signs

Summary of Public Comments

A total of five (5) public comments from one (1) individual were received about the Meher Schools area. These comments included the following topics:

- Improving the intersection of Condit Road and Pleasant Hill Road to make it safer for children to cross the street
- Adding a four-way stop at the Sunset Loop and Meek Place intersection
- Adding a speed hump on Leland Drive
- Improving the bike lane on Condit Road/Leland Drive
- Adding walkways/sidewalks where there are currently none

These comments were considered along with the recommendations from the 2020 SafeTREC assessment to create a new refined list of recommendations included in Table 1-4 of this plan.

Copies of each public comment email are included in Appendix B: Public Comments.

Citywide Recommendations

Through review of these reports and public comments, some recommendations were categorized as citywide recommendations. These include:

- Increase Lafayette Police Department enforcement of traffic laws including no parking, no stopping, and no u-turns
- Develop Safe Routes to School example maps for each school showing optimal walking and biking paths
- Continue the crossing guard cost-sharing program
- Promote use of Street Story for reporting unsafe conditions or events
- Initiate additional school bus service
- Consider adopting a 15 MPH school zone speed limit

School Walk Audit Summary

Toole Design facilitated a walk audit and stakeholder meeting with City of Lafayette staff, Transportation & Circulation Commissioners, Lafayette school District staff, and community members on January 26, 2022.

Participants expressed concerns, showed the project team where issues occur, and provided ideas for solutions. Recommendations from these walk audits are included in Table 1-4, and the full notes from the walk audits are included in Appendix A: The Meher Schools Site Visit Notes and Comments

Project Recommendations

A final list of recommendations was compiled using ideas from 2020 Berkeley SafeTREC City of Lafayette Complete Streets Safety Assessment, public comments received via email, and 2022 walk audits. Recommendations are listed in Tables 1-4.

These recommendations are organized by short, mid, and longer-term improvements. Timelines for each project type are:

- Short-term: 0-6 months
- Mid-term: 6-12 months
- Longer-term: 1-3 years

Projects are also organized by medium or high-priority. The level of priority was assigned based on an assessment of expected safety benefits and support expressed by community members. All ideas and suggestions provided to the team were considered. Some of these project ideas were not recommended due to transportation design best practices, construction infeasibility, cost, or other project recommendations that better met the project safety goals.

Opinion of Probable Cost for Projects

A planning-level opinion of probable cost is included for each project in the recommendations table. However, there are not yet engineering drawings for these projects, so opinions of probable cost were developed by identifying major pay items and establishing rough quantities to determine a rough order of magnitude cost. Additional pay items have been assigned approximate lump sum prices based on a percentage of the anticipated construction cost. Planning-level cost opinions include a 30% contingency to cover items that are undefined or are typically unknown early in the planning phase of a project. Unit costs are based on 2021 dollars and were assigned based on historical cost data from Caltrans Contract Cost Data. Cost opinions do not include mobilization, traffic control, erosion and sediment control; design; unanticipated easement and right-of-way acquisition fees; permitting, inspection, or construction management; engineering, surveying, geotechnical investigation, environmental documentation, special site remediation, escalation, or the cost for ongoing maintenance. A cost range has been assigned to certain general categories such as utility relocations; however, these costs can vary widely depending on the exact details and nature of the work. The overall cost opinions are intended to be general and used only for planning purposes. Toole Design Group, LLC makes no guarantees or warranties regarding the cost estimate herein. Construction costs will vary based on the ultimate project scope, actual site conditions and constraints, schedule, and economic conditions at the time of construction.

Table 1. Short-term Projects on Leland Drive and Condit Road

ID	Implementation Timeline	Priority	Location	Draft Recommendation(s)	Source	Cost Estimate
ME1	Short-term	High	Meek Pl and Leland Dr/Condit Rd intersection	Refresh all of the crosswalks, stop bars, and "STOP" markings	Walk audit	$3,600
ME2	Short-term	Medium	Meek Pl and Sunset Loop 2-way stop	Evaluate feasibility of a 4-way stop (study is short-term timeline)	Walk audit	$1,600
ME3	Short-term	High	Northside curve of Condit Dr across from Hidden Oaks Dr	Add vertical delineators to create a protected walkway/bikeway around the curve on the north side of the street	Walk audit	$2,500
ME4	Short-term	Medium	School front parking lot and one-way driveway	Add pavement markings to distinguish exit-only driveway on west side	Walk audit	$1,000
					TOTAL	**$8,700**

Table 2. Mid-term Projects on Leland Drive and Condit Road

ID	Implementation Timeline	Priority	Location	Draft Recommendation(s)	Source	Cost Estimate
ME5	Mid-term	High	North of the northern school crosswalk	Install Speed Humps	Walk audit	$6,300
ME6	Mid-term	Medium	School front parking area and one-way driveway	Consider trimming trees on the west side for increased visibility	Walk audit	$6,000
					TOTAL	**$12,300**

Table 3. Longer-term Projects on Leland Drive and Condit Road

ID	Implementation Timeline	Priority	Location	Draft Recommendation(s)	Source	Cost Estimate
ME7	Longer-term	Medium	Pleasant Hill Rd and Condit Dr intersection	Add a crossing on the north leg of the intersection for people walking and bicycling. Will require new curb ramps and pedestrian-actuated push button assemblies.	Walk audit	$37,200
ME8	Longer-term	Medium	Meek Pl and Leland Dr crosswalk	Convert the existing school crosswalk across Leland Drive to a raised crosswalk	Walk audit	$78,600
					TOTAL	**$115,800**

Table 4. Short-Term Projects – Other Locations

ID	Implementation Timeline	Priority	Location	Draft Recommendation(s)	Source	Cost Estimate
ME9	Short-term	Medium	Condit Dr from Pleasant Hill Rd to Leland Dr/Meek Pl	Refresh the lane lines	Walk audit	$11,000
					TOTAL	**$11,000**

Table 5 below shows a summary of the recommended project costs by project area and implementation timeline.

Table 5. Summary of Recommended Project Costs

	Short-Term	Mid-Term	Longer-Term
Leland Drive / Condit Road	$8,700	$12,300	$115,800
Other Locations	$11,000		
TOTAL	**$19,700**	**$12,300**	**$115,800**

Project Recommendations Map

The map below shows the recommendations color-coded by priority from the tables above.

Next Steps

Lafayette community members are eager to see Safe Routes to School projects constructed. To meet these expectations, a proposed step-by-step project development process is provided below.

Step 1: Review and Approval
The prioritized recommendations in Table 1 will be reviewed by the Transportation & Circulation Commission and City Council to confirm the overall direction in the recommendations and consider funding needs.

Step 2: Funding and Implementation Plan
Once the reports have been reviewed and approved, City staff will develop a funding plan and timeline for implementation.

Step 3: Design and Construction
City staff will develop design plans for the highest priority projects. Simpler project solutions that do not require civil construction (e.g., signing, striping, flexible delineators and minor traffic signal equipment or traffic signal operational changes) will be advanced rapidly through existing City construction contractor procurement processes. In some cases, additional data collection and traffic analysis may be required to support these efforts.

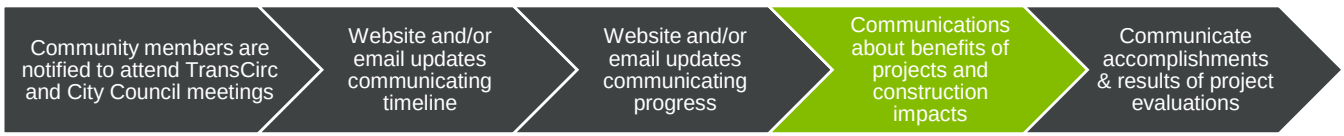
For projects that require civil construction (e.g., major reconstruction/re-construction of sidewalks, new curb and gutter, or other major roadway reconstruction designs) the design and construction process will likely include topographic survey and potentially evaluation of right-of-way which will lengthen the project development timeline and target construction date.

Step 4: Project Evaluation
After projects have been constructed, City staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the design interventions. Potential evaluation metrics may include decreasing vehicle travel speeds; increasing driver yielding compliance; increasing the number of students and caregivers walking, bicycling, and rolling to school; and reducing crashes. The timeline for evaluating each metric may be different. Ideally City staff will collect before data for the evaluation measure at each location, however, if this is infeasible due to the rapid installation of interventions, after-only results can provide useful conclusions about the effectiveness of constructed projects.

Ongoing Communications
Regular and ongoing communication with Lafayette community members is critical to public support of these projects. As staff resources allow for, monthly or bi-monthly updates on the City's website or via email will help keep stakeholders informed of the process. A dashboard showing the City's progress could be an effective way to demonstrate ongoing efforts.

Project Development Process

Sample Communications/ Public Engagement Process



Appendix A: The Meher Schools Site Visit Notes and Comments

January 26, 2022

General Comments & Observations

- There are 188 students in elementary (K-5) and an additional 120 in preschool
- Dropoff is pretty orderly and calm compared to other schools observed
- Parents drop off on Leland Drive north of the school parking on both sides of the street. Parents park their cars up to the 1024 Leland Drive residence
    - Some of these vehicles on the west side of the street encroach into the travel lane
    - Many of the parents parking in those location are walking onto campus using the administrative staff parking lot driveway because it is more accessible than the stairs and/or their children's classes are closer to that entrance
- Parents are not allowed to park at the Sun Valley swimming pool head-in spaces, but they were all occupied by parents dropping off (9 spaces)
    - This can sometimes create a safety issue with parents backing out and children/parents walking behind the cars
- Many middle schooler students in the neighborhood bike from Meek Place to Condit Road to Pleasant Hill Road to access the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail connecting to Stanley Middle School.
    - The curves along Condit Road create visibility issues btween people driving and people walking/bicycling.
    - At the Pleasant Hill Road and Condit Drive intersection, students walking and bicycling westbound cross the street midblock so they can get to the crosswalk which is only provided on the south leg of the intersection.
    - Students bike in the striped shoulder but vehicles often track into this space, especially at the curve of Condit Drive on the northside (across from Hidden Oaks Drive).
- Resident requested adding a pedestrian lane or sidewalk on Kinney Drive from Sunset Loop to Boulevard Way. Resident presented an example of an asphalt berm separated walkway on Reliez Valley Road that he would like to see on Kinney Drive.

Nearer Term Participant Recommendations

- Add a speed hump north of the northern school crosswalk to slow down motorists coming down the hill.
- Refresh all crosswalks, stop bars, and "STOP" markings at the Meek Place and Leland Drive/Condit Road intersection.
- Evaluate feasibility of a 4-way stop at Meek Place and Sunset Loop (currently a 2-way stop)
    - Mike will submit a transportation action request for this resident
- Refresh the lane lines on Condit Drive from Pleasant Hill Road to Leland Drive/Meek Place
- Add vertical delineators at the curve of Condit Drive on the north side (across from Hidden Oaks Drive).

Longer-Term Participant Recommendations

- Evaluate feasibility of a two-way bike lane and intersection reconfiguration to provide a place for students walking and bicycling to navigate the Pleasant Hill Road and Condit Drive intersection more easily.
- Convert the existing school crosswalk at Meek Place and Leland Drive to a raised crosswalk

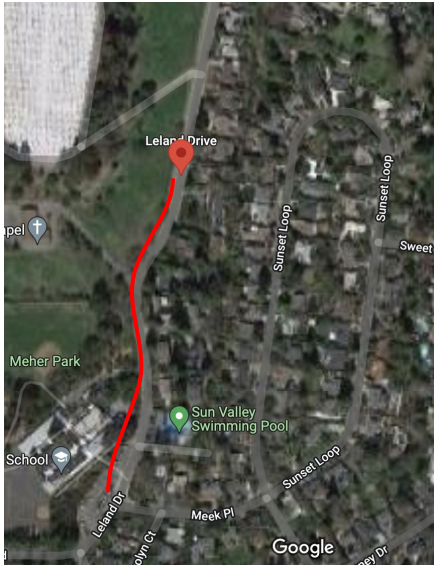
Appendix B: Public Comments

What we want to see:

Collaborate with neighbors on the Northside of Condit (Closest to Pleasant Hill Road)and use the Sidewalk Easement to create a safer path out/in of Condit Road/Pleasant Hill Road. Additionally move the crosswalk on Pleasant Hill to the North side and add a NO TURN on RED sign.

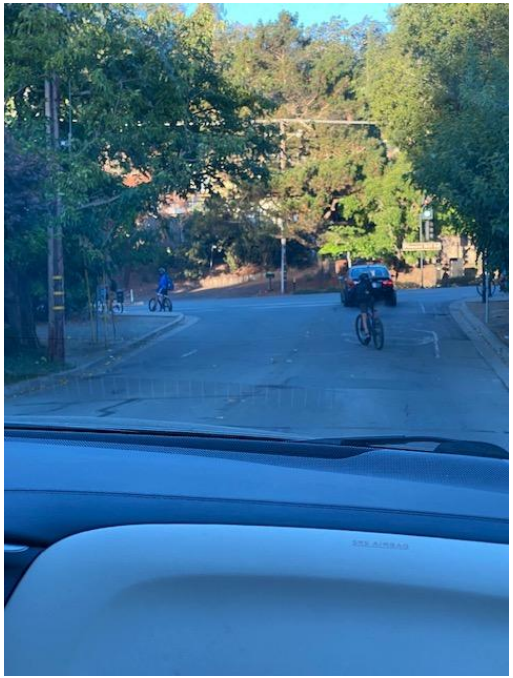
A four way stop sign on Sunset Loop and Sunset Loop.

Speed Bump on Leland Drive:



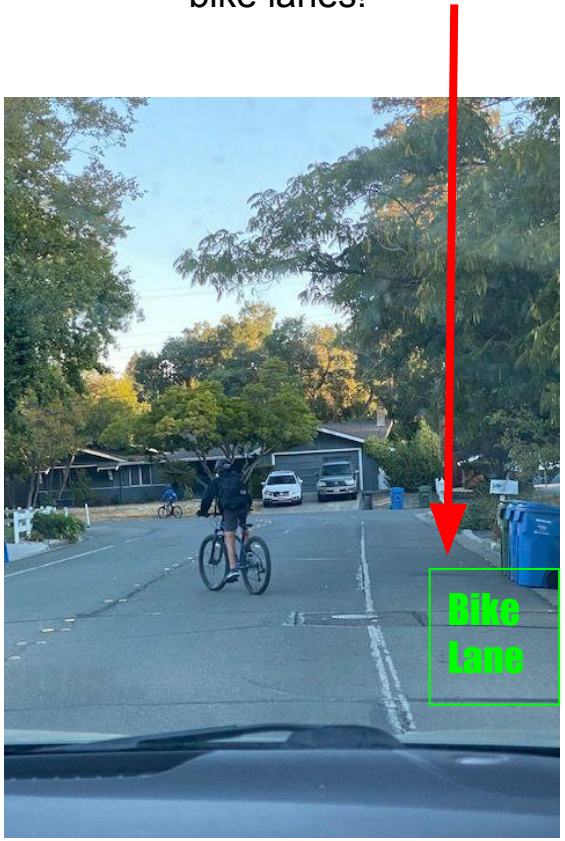
Everyday occurrence on the Condit and Pleasant Hill Road intersection: kids cross Condit Road, cars turn left onto Condit Road and additional cars turn right on to Condit Road from Pleasant Hill Road.
No Pedestrian/Bike lane means, cars drive onto the middle of the road to oncoming traffic.

Pleasant Hill / Condit EXTREMELY DANGEROUS!



Kids and adults make the same move here- No designated Bike lane and no direction- straight into posible oncoming traffic (turning right into Condit from South Pleasant Hill Road).

Kids on Bikes need visual reminders- label bike lanes!



The Bike lane from the Meher school to the trail head on Pleasant Hill Road dramatically narrow making it not only confusing for bikers and walkers but extremely dangerous (sample on next slide)!

Is there supposed to be a sidewalk space or city-homeowner easement? The BIKE LANE/WALK WAY needs to extend here- with either a sidewalk or a walkway such as the ones created at Reliz Valley Road and Springhill Road. Additionally- a No Turn on Red on this light would create a safe passage for kids to cross from North to South towards Stanley.

Sunset Loop/Sunset Loop- need a four way stop!

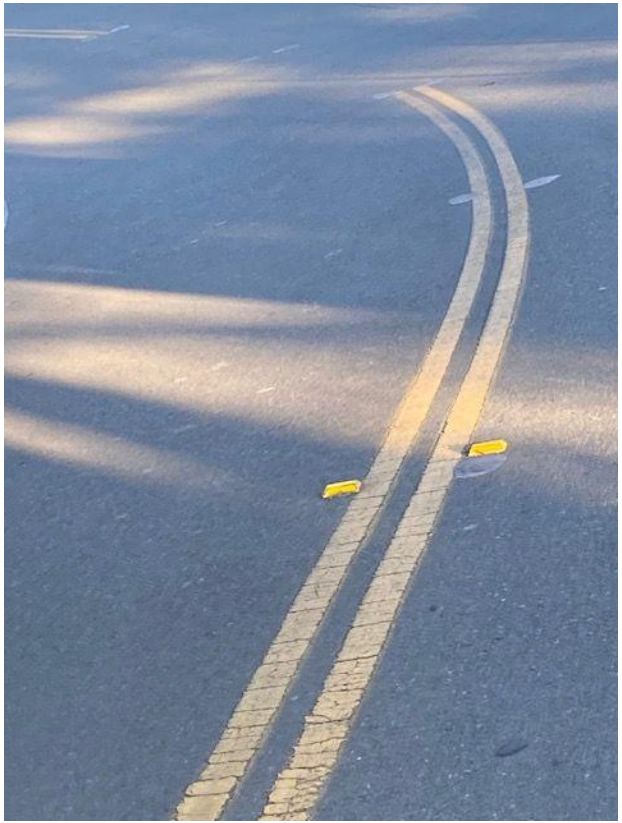
Blind corner and no stop!

Kids, elderly, people walking dogs- no sidewalks! More traffic (delivery drivers- waze freeway cheats, etc).

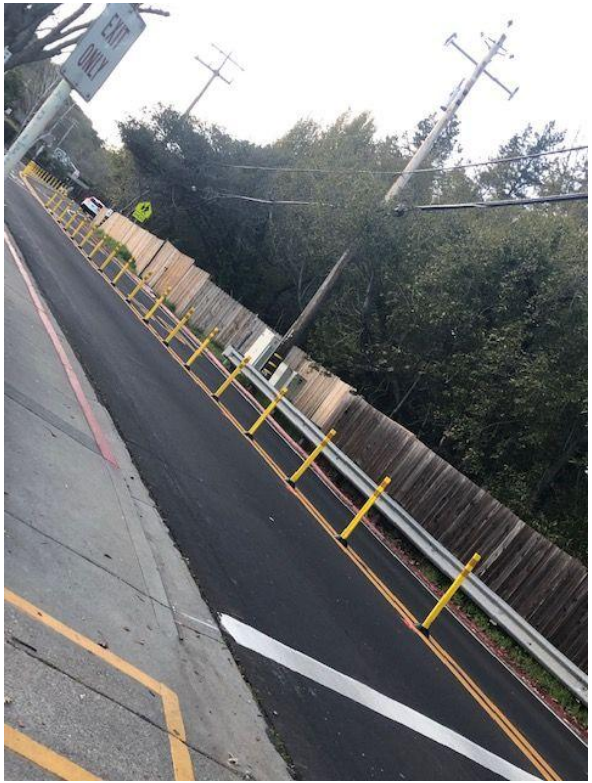
Reliz Valley Road

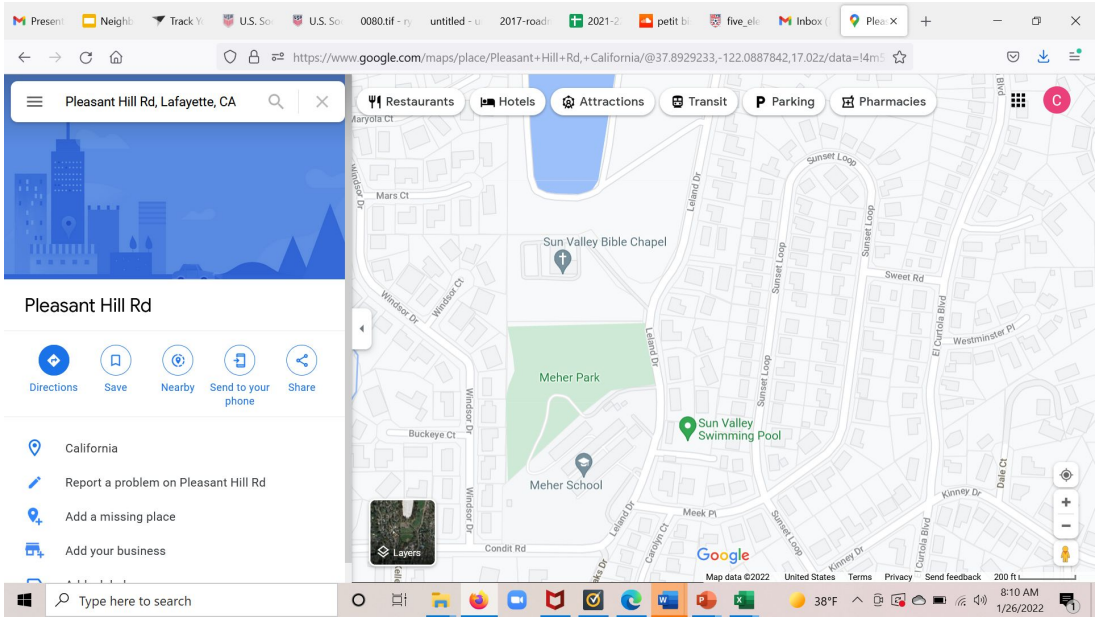
Meek and Sunset Loop

Yellow light reflectors getting knocked out (because cars are crossing the median) on Condit -curve off off Meher School.



Tall median dividers in front of Springhill Elementary. These are needed on median curve in front of Meher School.

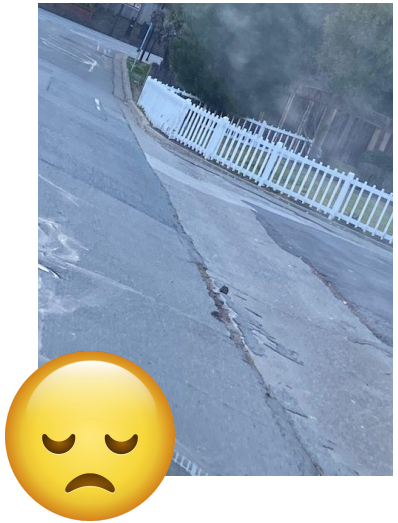




Leland Drive downhill spillway at Meher Park and into Meher School parking lot drivers regularly exceed 45 MPH. Uphill at Leland is in issue too as after parents drop off or pick up they will often speed out of the area (likely late for their next obligation in today's time-crunched cultural reality, or overly caffeinated, etc)

We look forward to the city's attention and much needed safety updates near the Meher School and the very dangerous Condit/Pleasant Hill intersection.

CONDIT ROAD



HAPPY VALLEY ROAD

RELIZ VALLEY ROAD