

From: [Ron Snow](#)
To: [Vanessa Castro](#)
Cc: [DPW_SantaCruzAlameda](#)
Subject: SMCBPAC - Santa Cruz/Alameda Corridor design - serious safety issues - Please require review
Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2023 1:56:29 PM

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 SMC BPAC,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the road design for the Santa Cruz / Alameda corridor. There are several locations on this corridor that the County design fails safety goals. An example is at the intersection of Santa Cruz and Alameda de las Pulgas: The "Y". This has a road design that historically causes problems for everyone: Residents, cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists. The new County plan has not effectively altered the design from its original expressway look and feel. As a result, the new design has many of the same issues. Additionally, the new design, implements design patterns that add additional serious safety issues and increases accident risks.

The issues may be due to the original design, almost 3 decades ago, that had a design goal of establishing an expressway based corridor. That design focus was solely motorist centric. As a result residential safety and access was not considered. Nor was pedestrian safety addressed and resulted in angled crosswalks with visibility issues and that were excessively long. Cyclists were forced into a high speed traffic flow that was chaotic and with many drivers distracted by the confusing skewed intersection.

By keeping this original design footprint for the new project, County's plan fails in most of the same ways as the current intersection does. It is very motorist centric, ignoring safety of pedestrians, residents, and doing a poor job on creating safe bike routes.

In some cases, the new plan worsens safety and introduces additional risks.

Consider if any of the outcomes of this new plan make reasonable sense?

- To remove the equivalent of 3 lanes from the intersection width (via road diet), yet have a new design that is even wider! Why keep the same excessive width? County PW had told Board of Supervisors it would be narrower, so why wasn't that done?
- To base a new residential area intersection with 25 mph speed limits on to a design that was created for an expressway with upward speeds of 45+ mph. Why not a simpler, slower, smaller intersection? One inline with traffic volume but with residential ambience and calmer traffic.
- To reduce Alameda to a 2 lane road with a center turn lane, and yet retain a crosswalk that requires pedestrians to walk over 9 lane widths to cross it. The crosswalk is 250% longer than is required by the new Alameda road diet.

- Why keep a skewed - angled intersection approach when traffic engineering studies for this intersection recommend fixing it to have recommended 90° angles? Highly recommended by FHWA, DOT, and Vision Zero and other urban traffic safety organizations to create safer and calmer intersections and reduce risks to pedestrians.
- Why impeded emergency response, block access to residential driveways, and create cycling paths that are significantly less safe than alternatives?
- This list could go on. It doesn't make sense to ignore community input and spend millions of dollars to double down on a proven to be poor and dangerous design that has so many safety issues. It doesn't make sense to have a design that makes it more dangerous for residents and pedestrians.
- What is the goal of removing parking and moving traffic flow against the curb, reducing sight lines for residents to exit their driveways? Parking provides a safety buffer for pedestrians and residents, so why remove it when this stretch of Santa Cruz has a long history of accidents crossing the sidewalk and crashing into properties? Why put cyclists at extreme risk?
- Why add 4 lanes on Alameda where the road diet reduces it to 3 lanes? Why put obstructing medians in the middle of traffic lanes where such obstacles can't be seen by motorists until just seconds before the motorist is upon them?
- Why ignore the crest of hill issues, with glare, blinding sunlight, blinding headlights at night and during rain, and line of sight issues for all users? Does it make sense to make crosswalks longer, add confusing road elements, cause motorists to swerve towards cyclists and pedestrians at the last second, all on a hill that hides these conditions from motorists?

Please review information and discussion of just some of the SantaCruz/Alameda Project problems:

[Safer4Us.com/y](https://safer4us.com/y) — pertaining to the “Y” intersection of Santa Cruz/Alameda and numerous safety issues

[Safer4Us.com/woonerf](https://safer4us.com/woonerf) — An opportunity to employ an advanced safety element for pedestrians, cyclists, and residents

[Safer4Us.com/alameda-liberty-park](https://safer4us.com/alameda-liberty-park) — Serious safety design issues creating a high risk hazard on the crest of the hill

[Safer4Us.com/visibility-liberty-park](https://safer4us.com/visibility-liberty-park) — Discussion and examples of visibility problems at location of strange road design

I believe that the newest 90% design needs to be reevaluated to address these issues. Several of us would like to suggest changes that will make key locations on Alameda, Santa Cruz Ave, and the Y intersection substantially safer and eliminate the elements that expose cyclists, pedestrians, and residents to high risk.

From: [Reese](#)
To: [Vanessa Castro](#)
Cc: [DPW_SantaCruzAlameda](#); SMCBPAC - Santa Cruz/Alameda Corridor design - serious safety
Subject: issues - Please require review Wednesday, February 15, 2023 4:38:19 PM
Date:

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.

To SMC BPAC,

I am writing to convey my deep disappointment and safety concerns with the proposed 90% design for the "Y" intersection of Santa Cruz and Alameda de las Pulgas. This intersection has a long history of being extremely dangerous and as is well documents through previous communications and meetings.

The temporary realignment, performed a couple of years ago, of reducing one lane continuing onto Alameda de Las Pulgas and a second lane continuing on Santa Cruz Avenue toward downtown Menlo Park has drastically reduced the number of vehicle accidents. All vehicles are now required to stop when the light turns red at the intersection when traveling onto Alameda de Las Pulgas or continuing on Santa Cruz Avenue. Previously, the third lane continuing on Santa Cruz Avenue remained green except when traffic entered the intersection from Campo Bello Lane. Will the new 90% design require traffic continuing on Santa Cruz to stop along with the lane continuing onto Alameda de Las Pulgas?

I live at 2101 Santa Cruz Avenue and as is stated below, how will I receive mail, trash, and recycling services.

Also, I fully support the the concerns listed below with the 90% design that were previously sent and received by your office .

Since the county 90% design for the "Y" intersection of Santa Cruz and Alameda de las Pulgas has so many safety issues, this email is focusing on highlighting a first pass of concerns and safety issues that affect **residents and pedestrians**. The design seems to have taken a major step backwards, from both a pedestrian safety perspective and from a consideration of safety for residents that live along that NE side of the intersection. While other community members are copied on this email, it is addressed to County Public Works.

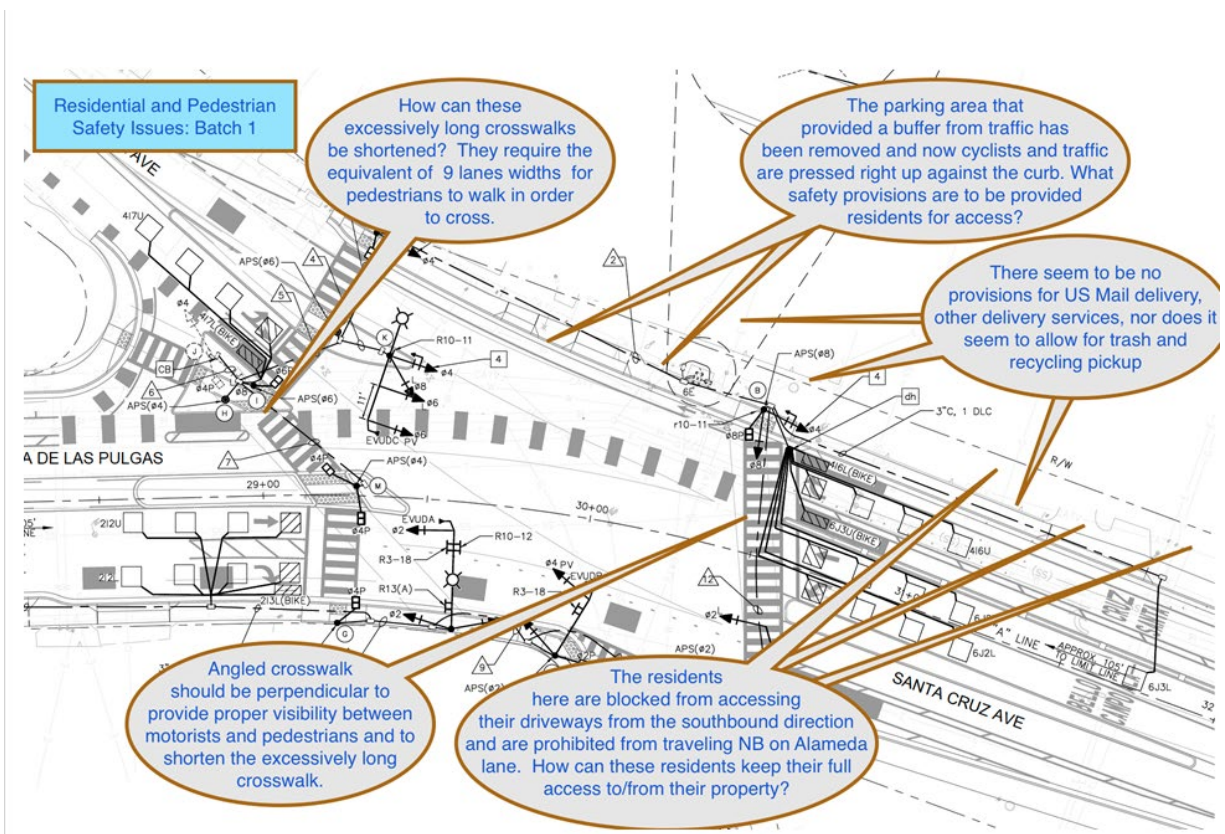
The County 90% design for the "Y" has moved the traffic and cycling paths up against the sidewalk/curb along NB Santa Cruz. We had, with the Y Safety Improvements of 2018, moved traffic away from the sidewalk by as much as 15' to provide a safety buffer. This allowed a much safer sidewalk for pedestrians and provided a safety buffer for residents to access and exit their property. It also effectively shortened that southern crosswalk. This new County plan discards all of those safety gains.

During the Task Force meetings, we asked for many improvements for the Y, including a perpendicular crosswalk on the southern portion crossing Santa Cruz. This was to shorten the crosswalk and correct the visibility problem that the angled sidewalk causes between motorists and pedestrians. In prior versions of the design plan the eastern side had a 7.5' bulb-out on that southern crosswalk to also address traffic - pedestrian separation. This new plan has also scratched that safety feature and created a dangerous situation for all.

Please address the concerns identified in this email and the graphic below:

- Why aren't the crosswalks lengths reduced to a minimum? These are 250% longer than the road diet at Alameda requires. They are excessively long even crossing Santa Cruz. Guidelines recommend 90° crosswalks for a variety of safety considerations. Why are these crosswalks angled, especially the southern crosswalk?

- Why are the safety of residents not being considered in this new design? This design takes a significant step backwards from a safety perspective by eliminating the buffer between traffic and the properties. Can that be restored and provide safety to/from residential properties?
- Why isn't a slower speed turn being implemented? The slip lane design was designed for 45-50 mph. Why can't this be a curve rated more appropriately for our 25 mph speed? (This would provide the safety buffer for residents and better separation for pedestrians.)
- Residents are being severely limited on access to and from their property. Currently residents have full access to exit and enter their properties from both the north or south directions. The County plan doesn't allow them to access their property from the north. Nor does it allow them to access southbound Santa Cruz, nor northbound Alameda. This seems overly restrictive and unnecessary. There is no mention on what the designer suggests for these residents to mitigate the restrictions of their property..
- Doesn't provide for US Mail or other package delivery trucks
- Doesn't provide for weekly trash and recycling pickups
- The blind corners at Campo Bello and the northern tip of the Y seem still to be an issue. Visibility issues seem to still exist.
- NB traffic should have a stop line that is perpendicular, even if the sidewalk is angled: Again, to safely mitigate the dangerous visibility issue between motorists and pedestrians.
- The design seems to preserve the encouragement of high speed, rather than provide an ambience of 25 mph residential speed.



The Illustration above is from the Y intersection's 90% county plan and identifies a few of the issues identified. This design was originally for an expressway type roadway. With decades of problems, accidents, motorists crashing into homes, confusion, an unacceptable level of accidents, and a high speed feel, we need to step away from that design. We should have a design that is representative of a residential roadway,. A design that feels like a 25 mph speed and through its design elements, delivers that 25 mph and no higher.

The design should be measured by its ability to improve residential safety and access. A design that shortens crosswalks to their minimum and keeps pedestrian safety as its highest priority. A design that produces the safest route for cyclists by reducing traffic conflict zones and maintaining safer buffers between motorists and cyclists. If the design fails to address these tenets, then it needs to be improved.

Please note, this email doesn't identify all the issues for pedestrians and residents at this Y intersection. There are other major concerns and safety failures that the design needs to address, especially for speed control, cyclist safety, and an effort to reduce the footprint size of this intersection both in length and width.

Reference material and safety details are available at Safer4Us.com and UnivPark.org/safe/y websites.

Sincerely,

Reese Zasio