



Joint Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee & City of Cotati Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

5:30 PM, Monday, August 22, 2016
Rohnert Park City Hall, 130 Avram Avenue
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Rohnert Park Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee Members Present: Tim Hensel (Chair), Terry Gault (Vice Chair), Stephen Gold, Katie Musick

Cotati Planning Commissioners Present: Ben Ford (Chair), Steven Onines (Vice Chair), Neil Hancock, Lisa Moore

Staff Present: Eydie Tacata, Management Analyst, City of Rohnert Park; Vicki Parker, Community Development Director; City of Cotati; Jon-Paul Harries, Associate Planner, City of Cotati

Public Participants: Jerry Griffin, Rohnert Park Parks and Recreation Commission Liaison; Vin Hoagland, Sonoma County Bicycle & Pedestrian Commission, 3rd District; Jenny Blaker; Michael Knappman.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Cotati Planning Commission Chair Ben Ford, acting as chair of the joint meeting of the Rohnert Park Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and Cotati Planning Commission, called the meeting to order.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments for items not on the agenda.

3. STUDY SESSION OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK, ADJACENT / INTERCONNECTED FACILITIES

Commerce Boulevard & Southwest Boulevard intersection and vicinity

BPAC Member Gold commented that the area has a lot of issues. He asked if there were plans from the City of Cotati to replace or widen the vehicular bridge over the Laguna de Santa Rosa Channel ("Laguna Channel"). There were general comments about the bridge being narrow, as well as the pedestrian walkway on the bridge and the sidewalks. Cotati and Rohnert Park staff said there were no known plans for replacement or widening of the bridge.

There was brief discussion on the rapid rectangular flashing beacon at the crosswalk south of the vehicular bridge, with differing experiences of the signal working or not.

Commissioner Hancock commented that he found the bike path along the Laguna Channel to be easy and safe, but traveling on Commerce Boulevard north from Cotati and going around the corner is of concern. He agreed that the narrow bridge is an issue. He said that if he is on his bicycle and must use the bridge, he uses the sidewalk instead of sharing the road.

BPAC Member Musick commented that there is active bicycle and pedestrian usage of Commerce Boulevard Bike Path going southbound, and a lot of interaction at Commerce and Southwest. BPAC Member Gold said that the issue with that intersection is communication: How do we lead bicyclists, pedestrians and cars to where they need to be in the intersection, so that others know where they are going and what their movements are going to be?

Mr. Jerry Griffin asked if green lanes would work in the intersection, adding that in Rohnert Park they seem effective in placing bicyclists and making them visible. He asked whether the intersection is being considered for a roundabout, and if it is possible to combine roundabout and green painted lanes.

Commissioner Onines asked if this area was a hotspot for injuries or collisions. Staff did not know about this area being particularly prone to collisions but offered to look into it. Ms. Tacata confirmed that this area was among several being studied for traffic flow improvements. This location had also been identified in other studies in years past for a potential roundabout.

Chair Ford noted the Class II bike lane gaps on southbound Commerce Boulevard, and that if there were to be continuous Class II lanes, the vehicular bridge would have to be widened. There was additional discussion about the vehicular bridge, difficulties with the existing width and substandard sidewalks. Mr. Vin Hoagland suggested that instead of widening the existing vehicular bridge, a second bridge could be built to the west of the existing bridge.

Ms. Jenny Blaker noted that the area is challenging for bicyclists travelling west on Southwest Boulevard and needing to turn onto southbound Commerce Boulevard to go towards Cotati.

Myrtle Avenue and vicinity

BPAC Member Gold asked if the Sonoma County Water Agency owns or maintains the paths in the area of the Laguna Channel and south of Myrtle Avenue. BPAC Member Musick also mentioned the informal paths along the south part of Rohnert Park in "L Section" neighborhood. BPAC Chair Hensel commented that while the path behind long the Laguna Channel can be accessed from Myrtle Avenue, the creek crossing itself is overgrown with brambles. He wondered also whether the southern paths and to Lydia Commons Community Gardens were ADA accessible.

There was discussion about cars travelling too fast on Myrtle. Commissioner Moore agreed, and she added that it is dangerous at night when visibility is low.

BPAC Member Gold asked if there was continuous public right-of-way available for the path system here, and if the Water Agency would be interested in trail signage to show connections. He also asked which city has jurisdiction for a path crossing on south of the connector path on Myrtle Avenue between Hahn Way and Liman Way. Staff replied that it would be in Rohnert Park's jurisdiction.

Commissioner Hancock asked Cotati staff if the paths on both sides of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Channel show on the Cotati Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan map.

There was discussion about the development of the path system in this area. Commission Moore gave a background on the development of the path along the Laguna Channel, north of Myrtle Avenue, and the compromise that the community and City of Cotati reached on a path treatment that preserved the area's quiet feel. Commissioner Moore noted that users of the paths enjoy the soft natural surfaces, and that if further development of the paths was considered, materials other than asphalt should be considered.

BPAC Member Gold asked if the path was decomposed granite, and if it is considered accessible. Ms. Parker said that the path is designated Class I, and as such, was required to be an "all weather" surface. The decomposed granite requires more maintenance, but it fulfills the community's desire for a natural, permeable surface. She pointed out the City of Cotati's recent path installation at Faletti Ranch, a local historical landmark preserved by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District. The path is made of an asphalt material that is not permeable but looks like decomposed granite.

Mr. Michael Knappman spoke to a need for a formal crosswalk on Myrtle Avenue, to go from the connector path on the north side to the paths that start south across the street. He explained that he volunteers at University Elementary at La Fiesta as a specialist on the Laguna de Santa Rosa. He walks groups of students from La Fiesta along this section of the Laguna de Santa Rosa to the headwaters and to the Lydia Commons Community Garden. Mr. Knappman commented that car traffic on Myrtle Avenue moves fast. Striping and signage could help with the visibility and safety of that crossing.

Ms. Blaker added that the trails along the Laguna de Santa Rosa are shown in a publication and trail map of the Laguna de Santa Rosa. She mentioned that in the past there was discussion on the potential for daylighting of creek south of Myrtle Avenue. Ms. Blaker agreed with the previous comments of using permeable, natural paving material as much as possible, and for wayfinding and signage along paths, for example, directing to user to the Community Garden.

There was discussion about the paths in Ladybug Park. Chair Ford commented that the large grassy swale at the back of the park seems problematic for path connectedness. Ms. Blaker mentioned that the grass area in the vicinity of the swale is always wet.

There was additional discussion about path permeability. Chair Ford mentioned that he is not as concerned about achieving permeability on these particular paths as they so narrow that there would be very little recharge or additional slowing of runoff achieved. BPAC Member Gold commented that the softer materials likely address aesthetics more than actual permeability.

Ms. Blaker asked about the progress on a SMART crossing to Sonoma Mountain Village, whether this crossing was still on the Bike/Ped Master Plans. There was discussion about SMART not installing this crossing because of the Public Utilities Commission limit of crossings on the SMART operational line. The crossing is still shown on the Bike/Ped Master Plans at this time.

Commissioner Hancock asked whether the Lancaster Drive traffic calming techniques might work on Myrtle. There was discussion about visual narrowing created by fog lines on Lancaster Drive and the potential for Class II bike lanes on Myrtle to do the same.

Paths west of Highway 101

BPAC Member Gold asked whether the Cotati Bike/Ped Master Plan has the path on Laguna Channel on the south or north side of the Channel. Planning Commission Chair Ford answered that he believes it is the south side of the Laguna Channel. There was discussion about the path system in this area and eventual connection to regional trail system to Sebastopol.

Mr. Harries reported on and shared photos of his field visit of the paths south of Copeland Creek and accessed through Helman Lane. There was discussion about these Water Agency service roads as paths and need for bridges to connect across existing waterways in order for the paths to connect and continue to Stony Point Road and beyond.

Commissioner Hancock commented on the street narrowing on northbound Redwood Drive in the area of the Copeland Creek vehicular bridge and the disappearance of the Class II lanes. There was general agreement about this. There was also discussion about whether a Class II bike lane would fit on the vehicular bridge, the potential for a bike/ped bridge on the west side of the vehicular bridge, and signage to indicate sharing the road if needed. Commissioner Moore commented on being judicious about the usage of signs, as too many adds to visual clutter; people stop paying attention to the signs, essentially reducing or negating their effectiveness as safety or warning devices.

There was discussion about a crossing of an under- or overcrossing of Highway 101 at Copeland Creek, that there is ample evidence of the informal crossing being used now, suggesting a need for a crossing, and that what exists now is definitely not accessible. Ms. Tacata said that Measure M monies will be funding a feasibility study for a crossing of Highway 101 at this location or between the Rohnert Park city limit lines and vicinity to include Cotati.

East Cotati Avenue at SMART Railroad Crossing

Mr. Harries reported that SMART was not initially planning on a signalized crossing on East Cotati Avenue at the SMART railroad crossing because of the short distance between the crossing and the signal at East Cotati Avenue and Santero Way. There was discussion for the need to have a signal on the Multi Use Path (MUP) for its users, particularly bicyclists to safely cross the intersection. Mr. Harries said that they were working to convince SMART to put signals in.

Commissioner Hancock asked about the MUP construction at the location between the Windmill Farms retaining wall and Cotati SMART Station platform, where there appears to be only about 8' of clearance. Mr. Harries replied that Windmill Farms representatives expressed interest in access to the MUP and there would be continued discussion.

BPAC Member Gold noted that there are pavement issues all along East Cotati Avenue that affect the bike lanes, notably due to pine tree roots in the vicinity of the SMART Station and crossing.

There was discussion about deteriorated pavement conditions along East Cotati Avenue and general agreement about the need for repairs and consistent maintenance of Class II facilities along the entire length of East Cotati Avenue. BPAC Member Musick asked if there is coordination among the two jurisdictions' staff about pavement conditions and the continuity of bike facilities. Chair Ford noted that there would be challenges in coordinating the two cities' capital projects, assuming that each have their own schedules of capital projects with different funding. Staff agreed with this; Ms. Parker added that there would need to be additional study on how paving could be coordinated. BPAC Member Gold asked if it would be helpful for staff or the oversight bodies to designate a liaison to the other city to help with coordination.

Review Action Items

The action items for staff included:

- Rohnert Park staff will research accident data for the vicinity of the intersection of Southwest Boulevard and Commerce Boulevard
- Cotati staff will send information about Falletti Ranch path material to Rohnert Park staff

- Rohnert Park staff will look into on-street bicycle facility improvements for northbound Redwood Drive in vicinity of Copeland Creek bridge for upcoming pavement project, and potential for a bike/ped bridge west of the vehicular bridge over Copeland Creek

4. ITEMS FROM STAFF

From Rohnert Park, Ms. Tacata reported that she had no additional update on the SMART Multi-Use Path Construction. There was also no update on the status of the SMART Corridor proposal for the MTC Bike Share Program Grant, submitted by the Transportation Authority of Marin and Sonoma County Transportation Authority. The MTC committee evaluating the grant applications announced that the recommendations would be postponed to September. There was no further update regarding the Highway 101 Crossing Feasibility Study.

From Cotati, Ms. Parker and Mr. Harries provided updates on the progress of the seating wall at the Cotati gateway at the intersection of Old Redwood at Highway 116; street lighting and lighted crosswalk improvements at La Plaza and Page; and median improvements at Highway 116 at Highway 101. Chair Ford asked if green painted bike lanes were going to be installed in the weave area, and Commissioner Moore asked about green lanes on Old Redwood; staff reported that the project budget was under review as to whether this could happen.

BPAC Member Gold asked if the segment of Old Redwood in the vicinity of Cotati Creek was being repaved or left alone. Ms. Parker answered the paving would be up to bridge, and she said that all intersections would be having a textured pavement treatment. The texture would be different than what was used at Santero Way, which has caused many complaints about noise.

5. Adjournment

Chair Ford moved to adjourn the meeting. The group concurred and the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:42 PM



Eydie Tacata, Recording Secretary
Rohnert Park Bicycle Advisory Committee

Ben Ford, Chair
Cotati Planning Commission



Tim Hensel, Chair
Rohnert Park Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee