

Morton Heights Safe Routes Alternatives Public Meeting
6-8 p.m., Thursday, June 8, 2017
Left Hand Grange Hall, Old Town Niwot

Transportation staff present: Andrew Barth, Cammie Edson, Alex Hyde-Wright, Dave Webster

Meeting notes:

1. COST

- a. Many attendees questioned the potential cost of the sidewalk improvements and whether this would be considered a proper use of taxpayer funds.
- b. Residents think speeding and bad drivers are the main problems in Morton Heights and that the county could save a lot of money by focusing on speeding enforcement.
- c. Residents of Morton Road noted they don't see enough bike or foot traffic by school-aged kids to warrant building a sidewalk.
- d. Attendees didn't think sidewalks fit in with the semi-rural feel the neighborhood currently has

2. SAFE ROUTES IMPROVEMENTS QUESTIONED

- a. Attendees did not believe that a connected route from the high school's overflow parking lot across from Niwot Hills Estates via Paiute and Morton Road would ever be utilized by parents and students.
- b. Residents noted that kids of all ages walk through private properties daily to get to school. That's the way it's always been and residents do not mind.
- c. Residents of Morton Road stated that the neighborhood is mostly older citizens and very few school-aged children live on Morton Road, so not only would it not be beneficial, but it would be considered a waste of money.
- d. Most students are driven to school from long distances and meeting attendees did not believe the new sidewalk or connections would encourage many to ride
 - i. They requested figures on the number of children who commute to school and how they arrive most of the time.

3. TRAFFIC IMPACTS

- a. Some attendees noted that traffic congestion at Niwot Road and Walker are a problem during peak hours. With the elementary school's new traffic circulation plan, they believe a left turn arrow (onto Walker) for parents coming from the east will be necessary to avoid backups on Niwot Road.
- b. Attendees attested to left-turning drivers frequently running a red light at Walker and Niwot out of frustration in having to sit through another cycle.
- c. For parents exiting the school parking lot on Morton, a forced right turn heading east may create problems at Autobahn and Paiute, especially for motorists wanting to go west.
- d. Racing around the block to the east (via Commanche, Marathon and Walker) is another probable reaction.
 - i. Some suggested speed mitigation devices like humps be installed to slow traffic

- e. Many agreed that signals at Autobahn and Paiute should be considered by the county.

The assumption many made was that the school district did not attempt to study the effects on traffic, nor seek input from the county.

4. SPEEDING, ENFORCEMENT AND EXTENDED SCHOOL ZONE

- a. Attendees believe the school's new drop off and pick up configuration will increase speeding and bad driving by parents and drivers affected by the peak conditions.
- b. They requested the county do more to enforce speeding in the neighborhood.
- c. Extending the 20 mph school zone both directions on Niwot Road was also requested. (One Niwot Road resident stated that the biggest violators of speed are drivers not from the Niwot area.)
- d. A few residents agreed that speed mitigation on Morton Road (between Walker and Paiute) would be a good idea.

5. SNOW REMOVAL

- a. Morton Road residents expressed concern over who would be responsible for snow removal on the newly constructed Morton sidewalks. Staff mentioned that an agreement with Parks & Open Space was being discussed for snow removals on Morton Road.
- b. They noted that snow removal operations by plows often block driveways and older residents always need help clearing their driveways.

6. WHERE IS THE ST. VRAIN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT (SVVSD)?

- a. Attendees ultimately wanted to focus on what the school district's plan was for the school and why no one from SVVSD or Niwot Elementary school was present at the meeting. (The school principal was invited with late notice and could not attend. SVVSD representatives were invited but did not respond to the invitation.)
- b. Some Morton Road residents complained that they had no idea about the school's improvements and were upset no one notified them. Others (closer to the school) validated that SVVSD held a meeting at the elementary school to present their plans. For those who attended, many comments and opinions were given about the plans. No follow up meeting was held and the school district ended up holding to their original plan without addressing the issues brought up in the public meeting.
- c. Attendees requested the county schedule another public meeting and that representatives from SVVSD and Niwot Elementary be present.

7. DRAINAGE PROBLEMS

- a. Residents claim drainage is problematic along Morton Road and will need to be well thought out with any future improvements. Staff noted that a topographic survey would be done in the next couple of months.
- b. The school never maintains its drainage outlet structure and, often, during big storms or snow melt runoff, the structure will become clogged and drainage overtops Morton Road to the north. Able-bodied residents often provide their own assistance with shovels and tools to unclog the drainage grates.

- c. The cycle track pilot was criticized for not having a plan to deal with drainage from Morton Road.
- d. The future sidewalk cross sections were criticized for not having enough room to manage runoff (despite roadside ditches being shown).