

Issue 7: Crosswalk at Alameda & Sharon Rd

Overview:

The intersection at Sharon Rd and Alameda is a major school crossing for children at the 2 nearby schools. Many accidents occur at and near this intersection and parents have reported many near misses of cars almost hitting their children. Multiple serious issues as noted on the right.

Status Update: **Partly Implemented:**
 Red Light Delay, Lower Speed Limit
New Solution Option 7.5 added:
 Substantially reduced crosswalk width

- All 4 Curbs corners are full height — not ADA compliant
- Road narrows to single lane
- No stop limit line at crosswalk and cars often enter it ✓
- No turn lane, approaching cars swerve around stopped cars
- Traffic light does not provide an 'all red' delay for safe pedestrian ✓



Sidewalks virtually non-existent - pathways unsafe, poorly defined

- No sidewalks and limited pathways
- No stop limit lines to move stopped traffic away from crosswalks and create safe zone with visibility
- High accident rate - near misses
- Major road configuration changes
- No left turn lane
- No bike lane guidance
- Speed limit is raised just for this crosswalk and the next 4 blocks

Positives of Solution:

- Traffic Red delay provides more time for cars to clear intersection and safer start time for pedestrians
- Pedestrians and motorists have better visibility of crosswalk with stop limit signs
- ADA compliance for this high use school segment helps all
- Lower speed provides better reaction time and safer use

Considerations:

- High use by school children
- Major crosswalk connecting neighborhoods

Impact:

ADA compliant curb corners would need to be constructed - temporarily making the curb unavailable.

Alternatives:

If Issue #1, Alameda Road Diet is implemented, this intersection would be much safer

Scope - Cost:

Varies by solution options from low cost to shared City/County efforts

There is an abrupt change in the roadway right before this crosswalk where southbound Alameda changes from single lanes with Center turns to a higher speed limit, with two lanes each direction and no Center turn lanes and no bike lanes; and, looking from a northbound direction the two northbound lanes, starting at this crosswalk at Sharon Rd, are merged to one lane. A situation that creates unusual and unexpected traffic behaviors as drivers must react to the changes while at the same time avoiding cars stopped to turn left from the inside lanes and pedestrians and cyclists crossing the road. No surprise here, but cars running the light is one of the resulting issues and the many near misses reported further underscore the need for better solutions.

In the following section, several proposed solutions have been documented and each can be separately implemented. The recent addition of crosswalk 'ladder' striping is much appreciated as that painting improves the visibility and awareness to drivers.

Status Update: **Option 7.1 Implemented**
Installed Aug 2017

Proposed Solution Options:

There are several solution options that can be employed to correct the many problems at this crosswalk. Some are simple low cost solutions to improve safety, others may require cooperation between County and Menlo Park city.

Proposed Solution Option 7.1: All red traffic light delay

An all red traffic delay is where the traffic light delays turning green when the opposing traffic light turns red. This delay allows all traffic to stop and remain stopped while the pedestrian light is then turned active a few seconds later, providing the intersection to clear and reduce the chances of red light running when pedestrians are in walk.

An alternative is to have the pedestrian crossing active with all traffic remaining stopped at a four way red. Since this is a major children crossing, this would insure that children and parents would not have moving traffic during their crossing, as all right turns and cross traffic would remain stopped. Impact is that traffic flow might be impacted, especially that flow involving right turns.

Proposed Solution Option 7.2: Stop Limit Line before Crosswalk

Stop limit lines are used throughout the county to provide a safety zone before the crosswalk to allow much better visibility for pedestrians and motorists to see one another. Even 20 feet makes a huge difference in safety and the implementation is a painted stripe before the crosswalk and sometimes accompanied by a "Stop Here" sign.

This is a low cost, easy to do solution for creating a much safer safety zone for the crosswalk.

Proposed Solution Option 7.3: ADA Compliant Corner Curbs

The 4 curbs in this intersection are full height and are an undue obstacle for parents with strollers, people with walkers, and persons with disabilities.

Solution is to make each curb ADA compliant, doing one at a time to insure least impact of crosswalk use.

Additional action is needed to address the 4 traffic light poles, fire hydrant and other obstacles in the middle of the sidewalk paths that force pedestrians into street.

There is a major issue with the City and County Planning Departments and Public Works having allowed these conditions to exist in the first place. Their procedures and guidance need to be reviewed.

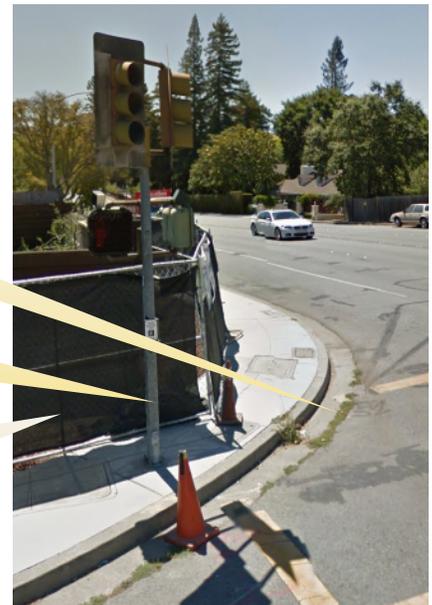
Example: The County/City allowed recent construction of the subdivided corner property to install a non-ADA compliant corner walkway and why DPW placed the traffic control in the middle of the walkway.

Curbs are not cut for ADA access

Traffic lights are smack in the middle of walkway

This is a new sidewalk section associated with recent construction, but ADA errors were allowed

Fire hydrants, traffic lights, traffic signs, all block the middle of walkway. Raised and uneven in-pavement boxes create a very unsafe and difficult walkway.



Proposed Solution Option 7.4: Lower Speed Limit from 35 mph

As identified in [Safety Issue #1](#), just north - right before this Sharon/Alameda crosswalk the speed limit is raised to 35 mph. If the speed is to be increased for that short section of Alameda, it should be raised AFTER the crosswalk, not before so that motorists know to maintain a safer speed for the intersection

Additionally, there is a major lane change that occurs right at this intersection and having a higher speed going into this major lane reconfiguration does not make reasonable or safety sense.

Status Update: **Option Implemented**
Option 7.4 - resolution approved for new speed limit - Oct 2107



Proposed Solution Option 7.5: Shorten Crosswalk widths

This solution proposal provides for crosswalk width reduction of about 19' and provides added visibility and reduces speed of turning traffic to greatly improve pedestrian safety. It assumes that the road configuration is changed (As identified in [Safety Issue #1](#)) to accommodate slower traffic, reduced traffic lanes, adding dedicated bike and left turn lanes.

The bulbous extensions not only reduce the crosswalk width, but provide more visibility between pedestrians and on coming traffic for greater awareness. This design reduces the current wide sweeping corners to be more pedestrian friendly and force cars to make right turns at a much slower speed.