

## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Temporary Bulbouts on First Avenue

Q: What is the Avenues Circulation Action Group?

A: The Circulation Action Group is one of four neighborhood-based work groups that have been formed to implement recommendations in the Avenues Neighborhood Improvement Plan. The action group focuses on implementing recommendations and projects in the plan related to vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian circulation. Fourteen people are currently on the roster for the Circulation Action Group.

The primary purpose of the action groups is to involve the neighborhood more directly in the implementation of the neighborhood plan. The priority setting process and formation of action groups was publicized City and neighborhood wide (CN&R advertising and e-mail). After attending the kick-off meeting for each action group, people chose which action group(s) they wished to join.

Q: How Can I participate in the Circulation Action Group?

A: Send an e-mail to Shawn Tillman at [stillman@ci.chico.ca.us](mailto:stillman@ci.chico.ca.us) requesting to be added to the roster for the Avenues Circulation Action Group. You will be notified of the next meeting date, time and agenda.

Q: How did this project come to be?

A: This project stems from the work of the neighborhood and Walkable Communities consultant Dan Burden, as part of the neighborhood planning process, to integrate pedestrian-oriented improvements throughout the Avenues neighborhood. Among the recommended pedestrian improvements in the Avenues Neighborhood Improvement Plan is to consider bulb-outs at all intersections along First Avenue between Mangrove and Warner. Bulbouts have the potential to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists and to help reduce traffic speeds. Bulbouts also have the potential to cause traffic to seek alternate routes. Aware of both positive and negative impacts, the Circulation Action Group asked the City to consider installing them on a temporary basis to monitor the actual effects.

While concerned about potential negative impacts, the City felt the temporary installation would result in meaningful data and provide real-life experience for whether bulbouts might work in this location.

Q: How were people notified this was happening?

A: A neighborhood project update newsletter announcing the installation was sent in November 2009 to over 650 residences within the area. Consistent with standard practice, notification of the February 2009

Internal Affairs Committee meeting was mailed to all the parcels immediately adjacent to the affected intersections. The Circulation Action Group has met eight times to discuss this project since it was formed in the summer of 2008.

Q: What are the objectives of the project?

A: The objective of the project is to develop data and anecdotal observations to determine how intersection bulbing on First Avenue addresses three neighborhood priorities: calming traffic; reducing crossing time for pedestrians; and improving safety for pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists.

Q: How long is the experiment period going to last?

A: Staff estimates a period of 3 to 6 months from the installation in mid-December will produce adequate data to permit meaningful before and after analysis.

Q: What data and information is being collected?

A: Traffic counts on 1<sup>st</sup>, Sacramento, Palm, Spruce, Laburnum, Oleander, Magnolia; a speed survey on First Avenue; opinions from individual pedestrians and cyclists crossing First Avenue about perceived safety; community-wide comments regarding the installation.

Q: The recommendation was made to limit left turns on Oleander from 6AM to 6PM on weekdays. Was this adopted?

A: It was an oversight that the 6AM to 6PM limit was not included on the signage. This will be corrected.

Q: Are other intersections between Mangrove and Esplanade being considered for bulbing?

A: Not at this time. Oleander and Magnolia were selected for the temporary installation to test the viability of bulbouts in general on First Avenue.

Q: Is a policy of no left turns at any of the intersections between Mangrove and Esplanade a consideration?

A: It is not a separate action or policy. The left turn limitation is a necessary consequence of narrowing the roadway at the intersection given the existing physical constraints and traffic volumes. Narrowing other intersections on First Avenue would likely result in prohibiting left turns as well.

Q: How are speed limits on First Avenue set?

A: Roadway speeds are set by an Engineering Speed Survey per Federal and State guidelines. Vehicle speeds along the roadway are collected by

radar and the signed speed limit is based on the speed at which 85% of the surveyed vehicles are traveling. Variables that may also be considered include nearby schools, available adjacent sidewalks, parks, or other contributing factors.

Q: If reduced speed is a concern, it appears that during peak hours, speeds are reduced because of the tie ups at Esplanade in the morning and Mangrove in the afternoon. If the speed is much slower (what was this slower average speed?) why would other measures be needed?

A: Good observation. Staff notes the same thing.

Q: How will improved safety be measured? What is the criteria for determining that bulbing improves safety?

A: There are few objective or empirical measures of safety other than accident data. While anecdotal, people's perception of safety is a relevant consideration. Simple field surveys of pedestrians and cyclists who are using the intersection will be conducted to gauge safety perceptions, as will comments received during the test period.

Q: Does the city consider the measures used at Laburnum and 1st to have been successful? If so, how was this determined?

A: While no significant changes in usage patterns have been observed since the installation of this pedestrian refuge, neighborhood feedback tends to be positive.

Q: The Internal Affairs report indicates the Circulation Action Group requested the temporary bulbing installed. Was any evidence presented that documented a safety concern raised by the action group?

A: There was no statistical information presented. Perceptions and experiences of neighborhood stakeholders that were expressed throughout the neighborhood planning and priority setting process form the underlying basis for the request.

Q: Was BCAG/B-Line notified in advance of the installation of the temporary bulbing and when it would be done?

A: While B-Line staff was not present at any action group meetings discussing the changes, they were notified in verbal communications that the proposal was being considered by the IAC and again at the time the improvements were set to be installed.

Q: What methods will be used to determine the amount of traffic that was diverted to the adjacent residential streets?

A: Automatic traffic counters (rubber tubes) are used to measure before and after conditions.

Q: Where can we find information about traffic flow into the adjacent residential streets before the temporary bulbout was installed?

A: The baseline traffic counts will be compiled and presented together with the traffic counts taken after the university and schools are back in session as part of the evaluation of the experiment.

Q: Is the rerouting of B-Line Route #4 considered a diversion of traffic into the neighborhood?

A: Yes.

Q: Were safety figures ever presented as part of the discussion? For example, how many pedestrian fatalities or injuries have occurred along 1st Ave.? How many car and bike accidents?

A: Safety figures have been previously provided both verbally and written. One place these were provided was within the February 10th IA report. Per the accident records held by the City as well as staff's historical knowledge there has never been a fatality of any nature at the intersection of Oleander and East 1st Avenues. Injury accidents have occurred at this intersection however records show that the majority of these accidents have occurred through illegal maneuvers and driver behavior. There has been one bicycle versus vehicle accident in the past three years in which the bicyclist was at fault.