



STAFF REPORT

City Council

Meeting Date:

10/13/2026

Staff Report Number:

26-172-CC

City Council Initiated Item: Request by City Councilmember Schmidt for a future agenda topic

Recommendation

Provide direction to staff on the request by City Councilmember Schmidt (Attachment A) for a future agenda topic.

Background

On Oct. 5, City Councilmember Schmidt submitted a City Councilmember Request Form.

Analysis

Pursuant to City Council Procedures Manual (Attachment B), as an agenda item under "City Council initiated items," the City Council may discuss the item including the elements listed in the attached form, and ask staff questions regarding preliminary scope, analysis, resource requirements and overall prioritization of future City Council agenda items based on the citywide work plan.

After discussion, with a motion and second, the City Council may provide direction to the city manager for next steps, including actions such as:

- Preparation of a formal staff report with a determined level of staff resources and timing for City Council consideration, or
- Advisory body preparation of a formal staff report with a determined level of staff support, or
- Consideration at the City Council's annual priority and goal setting process.

If the request does not receive majority City Council support, the item is not considered further.

Impact on City Resources

Determined by City Council direction.

Environmental Review

This action is not a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Sections 15378 and 15061(b)(3) as it will not result in any direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

Public Notice

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72

hours prior to the meeting.

Attachments

- A. City Councilmember Request Form
- B. Hyperlink – City Council Procedures Manual: www.menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-managers-office/documents/city-council-procedures-manual.pdf

Report prepared by:
Justin I. C. Murphy, City Manager

City Councilmember Agenda Item Request Form



Submitted on	5 October 2026, 7:38PM
Receipt number	10
Related form version	6

Name

City Councilmember's full name (first and last)	Jeff Schmidt
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Agenda topic

In 50 word or less, please provide the agenda topic	Adding a buffer and bollards to the recently approved Coleman Avenue bike lane
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Current City Council goal

Goals for fiscal year 2025-26	Safe routes
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Expectations for prioritization/urgency

High -added within next two available City Council meeting agendas

Additional information

The attached presentation, "Paint Isn't Protection," is a request to work with the city team and pilot flexible posts for Coleman Avenue's Safe Route to School. It was prepared by informed members of our community who came together to combine their views and ideas into a practical and achievable plan, including:

- * Complete Streets Commission Ad Hoc Sub Committee (building on the Commission's unanimous Aug. 27 recommendation)
- * Safe Routes to School representatives from MPCSD
- * Parents from Laurel Elementary, Hillview Middle School, and M-A High School
- * Coleman bike bus families and Coleman Avenue residents
- * Bike Menlo Park

Optional upload

PAINT ISN'T PROTECTION

Piloting flexible posts for Coleman Avenue's Safe Route to School

Request to add a Council discussion item | Council packet, October 2026

Prepared together by

- Complete Streets Commission ad hoc Sub Committee, building on the Commission's unanimous Aug. 27 recommendation
- Safe Routes to School representatives from MPCSD
- Parents from Laurel Elementary, Hillview Middle School, and M-A High School
- Coleman bike bus families and Coleman Avenue residents
- Bike Menlo Park



Young riders on Coleman heading toward a car parked in the bike lane, school bus ahead. Nov. 12, 2025, 7:59 a.m. Photo: Ross Silverstein

Council’s Coleman pilot worked

Adopted as permanent, 4-0, on September 15, 2026. Thank you to Council and staff!

+21%

more people biking

536 to 648 riders at the two counted intersections

22% → 86%

rate Coleman safe for biking

Users rating it neutral to excellent, before vs. after

79%

support making it permanent

150 survey respondents, May 2026



Coleman Ave. at Santa Monica Ave. after the pilot. City staff presentation, Sept. 15, 2026

Source: Staff Report 26-151-CC, Coleman Avenue Pilot, Attachments E and F (Sept. 15, 2026).

Paint still asks every driver to be perfect



“People make mistakes, and the road system should be adapted to anticipate and accommodate human mistakes.”

Menlo Park Vision Zero Action Plan (2024), adopted by Council

The school district asked for protection

Superintendent Kristen Gracia’s letter to Council asked it to “protect the bike lane.”

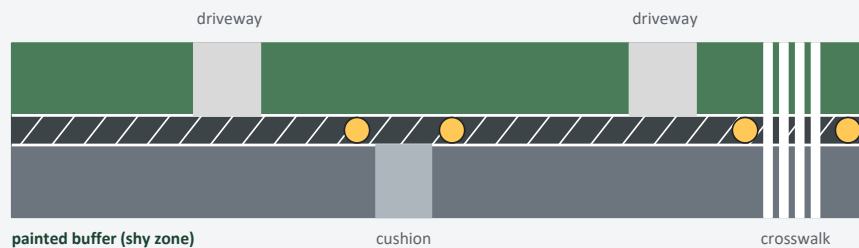
Vehicles parked in the bike lane are a close to daily occurrence, forcing young children into the lane with vehicles.

Photos: Ross Silverstein. Sources: Vision Zero Action Plan p. 7; Superintendent letter as read into the record at the Sept. 15, 2026 Council meeting.

Two options to pilot flexible posts on Coleman

Option A: at conflict points

CSC's unanimous Aug. 27 recommendation



Addresses

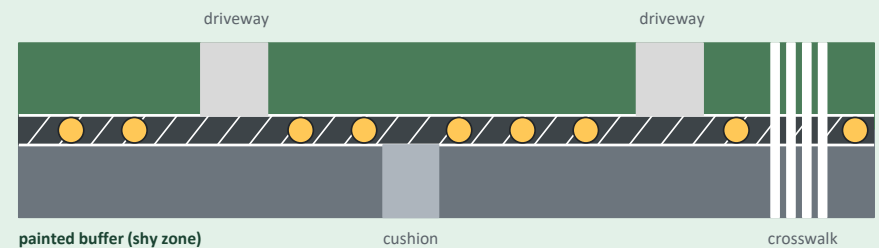
- Drivers swerving around cushions into the lane
- Lets cushions end at the stripe, so riders have a flat, smooth ride
- Fewest posts, least sweeping change, least expense

Trade-offs for staff to evaluate

- Allows for midblock illegal vehicle parking in the bike lane
- Awareness only at a few points

Option B: spaced along the lane

Posts at intervals, gaps at driveways



Addresses

- Drivers parking midblock or drifting into the lane
- Delineates the full length as belonging to bikers, the “awareness posts” raised on Sept. 15

Trade-offs for staff to evaluate

- Fit in a roughly 6 ft lane
- Sweeping along the full length; spacing (NACTO typical 10 to 40 ft)

Coalition preference: Option B, with Option A as the minimum. *Schematics are illustrative and not to scale.*

5

Vertical elements change driver behavior; paint does much less



Riders rate flexible posts very highly

Flexible posts “got very high ratings even though they provide little actual physical protection.” 96% of riders said protected lanes made biking safer.

Portland State University TREC, Lessons from the Green Lanes (2014)



Posts slow turning drivers twice as much as paint

Delineator-protected lanes cut turning drivers’ maximum speeds 28%, compared with 14% for a painted lane.

Rutgers University, Journal of Urban Mobility (2024)



Lower-stress routes mean more kids biking to school

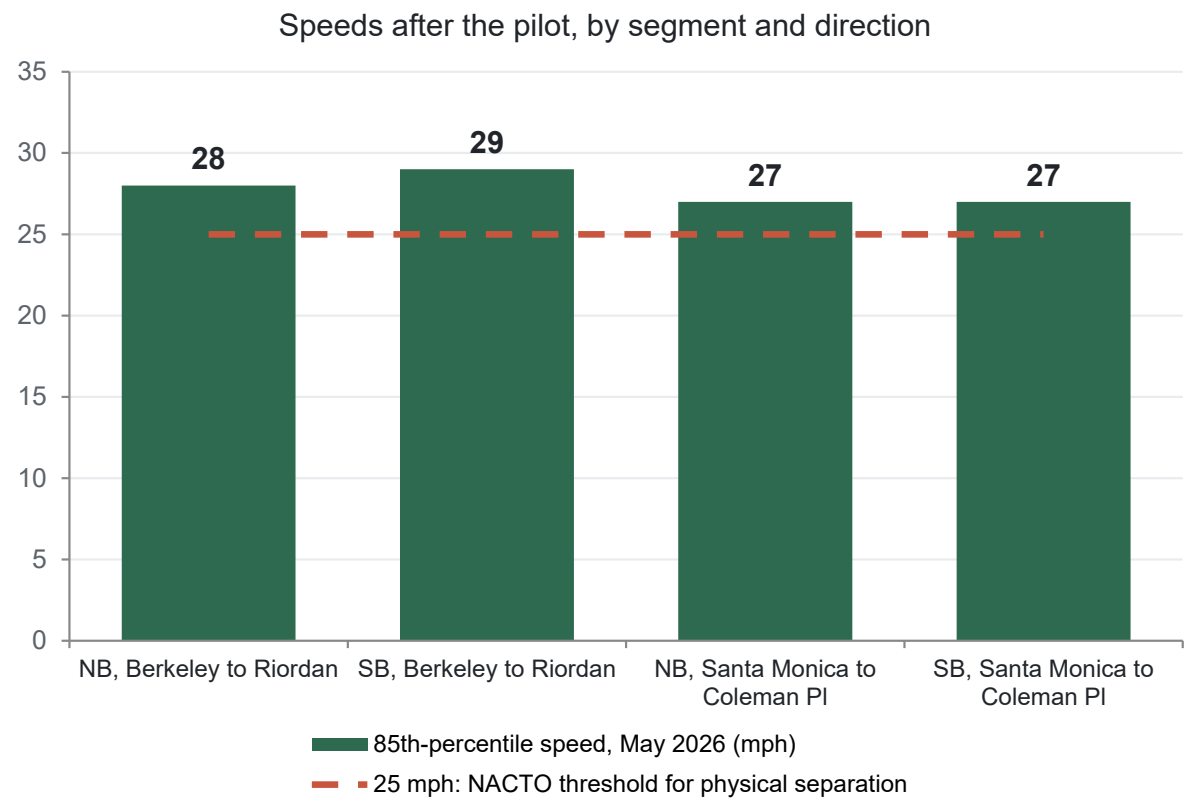
Schools with low-stress routes and short distances saw more students biking.

UC Davis, Journal of Transport & Health (2016)



Riders behind flexible posts on El Camino Real. Complete Streets Commission packet, Aug. 27, 2026, Att. D-1

Coleman’s measured speeds meet the national threshold for separation



Staff’s measurements

All four segments ran at 27 to 29 mph after the pilot. National All Ages and Abilities guidance calls for physical separation where drivers exceed 25 mph, because most people are uncomfortable riding next to faster traffic.



Riders forced into the car lane alongside moving traffic at 7:57 a.m., Sept. 23, 2025. Photo: Ross Silverstein

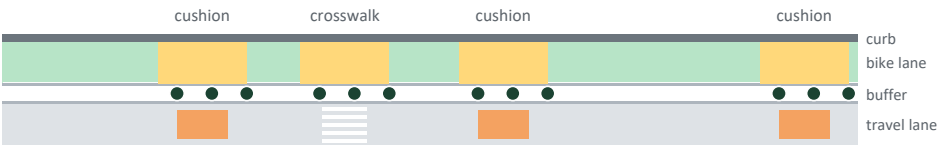
Sources: Staff Report 26-151-CC, Att. E, Table 2 (85th-percentile speeds); NACTO, Designing for All Ages & Abilities (2017).

What would have to change? Sweeping

Mayor Nash asked this on Sept. 15. Here is how each option gets swept.

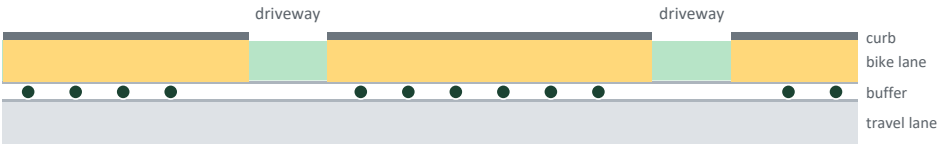
Option A

Posts at cushions and crosswalks. Contract sweeper covers most of the lane.



Option B

Posts along the lane, gaps at driveways. Bike-towed sweeper works behind them.



Contract sweeper, as today Bike-towed or hand sweep Flexible post Painted buffer (shy zone)



Sweeping is already uneven on Coleman

Staff's Sept. 15 slide noted parked cars on the south side are already "causing inconsistent street sweeping service."



A bike-towed sweeper fits behind the posts

About 3 ft wide and about \$4,500. Napa's bike coalition sweeps its protected bikeway with one under Caltrans' Adopt-a-Highway program (2024).



A shared regional sweeper

Mayor Nash suggested sharing a compact sweeper with neighboring cities; staff agreed to look into it.



A bike-towed sweeper with a battery-powered brush, run by a municipal crew. Napa County Bicycle Coalition bought one in 2024 for the W. Imola Ave. protected bikeway. Photo: Bike Lane Sweeper Co.

About \$4,500 | 3 ft wide | Bike-towed

Sources: Staff presentation, Sept. 15, 2026, slide 8; Staff Report 26-151-CC (CSC buffer recommendation, Aug. 27); CalBike (Aug. 2024); Bike Lane Sweeper Co., bikelanesweeper.com.

What would have to change? Durability, cost, and bins



Curb-and-post separators on the El Camino Real bikeway: posts on a low curb base. Detail from Complete Streets Commission packet, Aug. 27, 2026, Att. D-1



Better a bent post than a hurt student

The pilot would count hits and damage to flexible posts, so Menlo Park collects location-specific data



Choose posts built to take hits

Self-righting posts on a low curb base, similar to the system Caltrans chose for El Camino Real.



Low material cost

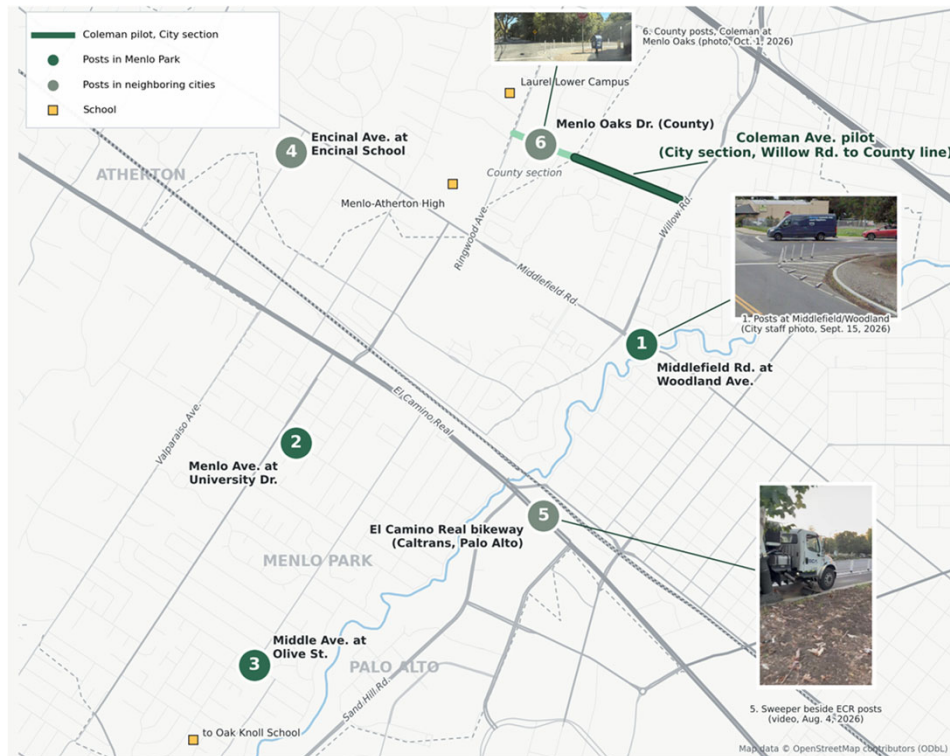
Flexible posts run roughly \$20 to \$25 each in materials. Staff would price installation with the cushion work.



Recology carts

Option A: posts at a few locations leave current cart placement unchanged. With Option B: carts can sit in the gaps at driveways; staff would set spacing around collection day.

Menlo Park and its neighbors already use flexible posts



Map: OpenStreetMap data (ODbL). Pins placed at the street intersections; Coleman City section clipped at the Menlo Park city limit.

- 1 **Middlefield Rd. at Woodland Ave.**
Menlo Park; shown in staff's Sept. 15 presentation
- 2 **Menlo Ave. at University Dr.**
Menlo Park
- 3 **Middle Ave. at Olive St.**
Menlo Park; route to Oak Knoll School
- 4 **Encinal Ave. at Encinal School**
Atherton; posts at crosswalks
- 5 **El Camino Real bikeway**
Caltrans; shown at Stanford Shopping Center, Palo Alto (also Los Altos, Mountain View)
- 6 **Coleman Av. at Menlo Oaks Dr.**
San Mateo County: same street, County section

Sources: Staff presentation, Sept. 15, 2026; public comment, Sept. 15, 2026; Mountain View Voice (May 2025). [Verify each location with a site photo]

10

Why now: decide before the new speed cushions go in



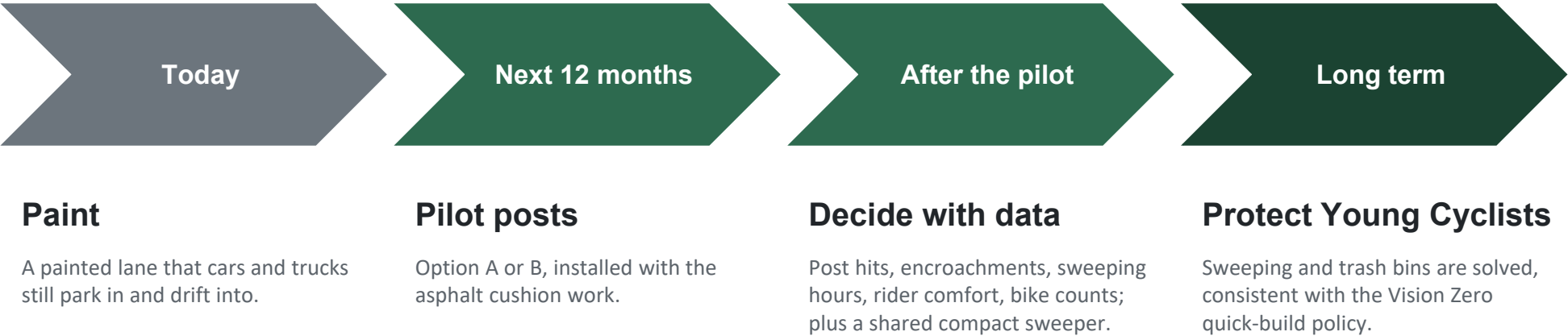
Sequencing saves money

Staff's standard runs the new asphalt cushions through the bike lane to the gutter. Many residents provided feedback about the discomfort of biking over speed humps. This was surprising as it was unprompted and not a question in the survey. Deciding on posts before that work lets the cushions end at the stripe from the start, instead of cutting back new asphalt later.



Today's rubberized cushion runs across the Coleman bike lane. City staff presentation, Sept. 15, 2026

Where this leads



Each step is reversible and measured. Council decides the next step with Menlo Park’s own data, the same “pilot-then-decide” path that made Coleman and Middle Avenue permanent.

We ask Council to:

1

Add a discussion item

Place the Coleman flexible-post pilot on a Council agenda in October or November 2026.

2

Ask staff to return with a plan

Cost and design for a 12-month flexible-post pilot, evaluating Option A (cushions and crosswalks) and Option B (spaced along the lane), coordinated with the asphalt cushion installation, plus a short note on a shared compact sweeper. At minimum, a painted buffer, which the Commission also recommended.



City of Menlo Park rendering, Coleman Avenue Pilot Project, Mar. 12, 2025

Council's Sept. 15 decision stands. This follows up on the discussion three members started that night.

Who is asking

Complete Streets Commissioners
(unanimous recommendation of
Option A, Aug. 27, 2026)

Safe Routes to School parent
champions

Coleman bike bus families

CSC Coleman Ave Ad Hoc Sub
Committee

Bike Menlo Park

Parents from Laurel Elementary,
Hillview Middle School, and Menlo-
Atherton High School



Contact: Meredith Bergin Bailey, meredithbergin@gmail.com

Appendix A: Staff’s pilot data

85th-percentile speed (mph)

Location	2025	2026	Change
Berkeley to Riordan, NB	29	28	-1
Berkeley to Riordan, SB	27	29	+2
Santa Monica to Coleman Pl, NB	27	27	0
Santa Monica to Coleman Pl, SB	27	27	0

Bicyclists at intersections (peak periods)

Location	2025	2026	Change
Coleman & Willow (a.m.)	124	157	+27%
Coleman & Willow (p.m.)	93	116	+25%
Coleman & Santa Monica (a.m.)	202	252	+25%
Coleman & Santa Monica (p.m.)	117	123	+5%
Total	536	648	+20.9%

24-hour vehicle volumes fell 4% to 10% on every counted segment. Survey: 79% support permanence; 86% rate safety for biking neutral to excellent (22% before).

Source: Staff Report 26-151-CC, Attachment E, Tables 1, 2, 4; staff report pp. 3 to 4.

Appendix B: Sources

- City of Menlo Park, Staff Report 26-151-CC and staff presentation, Coleman Avenue Pilot (Sept. 15, 2026)
- City Council meeting video, Sept. 15, 2026, Item J2 (City of Menlo Park YouTube)
- City of Menlo Park, Vision Zero Action Plan (Jan. 2024), pp. 7, 54
- Monsere et al., Lessons from the Green Lanes: Evaluating Protected Bike Lanes in the U.S., Portland State University TREC/NITC (2014)
- Younes, Andrews, Noland et al., “The Traffic Calming Effect of Delineated Bicycle Lanes,” Journal of Urban Mobility 5 (2024)
- Fitch, Thigpen, Handy, “Traffic stress and bicycling to elementary and junior high school: Evidence from Davis, California,” Journal of Transport & Health 3(4) (2016)
- NACTO, Designing for All Ages & Abilities (2017); NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide, Separating Protected Bike Lanes
- Government Fleet, “San Francisco Rolls Out Dedicated Bike Lane Sweepers” (June 2018)
- Electrek, Ann Arbor electric mini street sweeper to enable protected bike lanes (March 2023)
- Mountain View Voice, “El Camino bike lanes are finally here” (May 2025)
- Tactical Urbanism Guide, Flexible Delineator Post (materials cost)