



Staff Report

PROPOSAL FOR A PILOT PROJECT IN BELMONT TO ADDRESS THE SAFETY OF SENIOR PEDESTRIANS IN THE RALSTON/ALAMEDA NEIGHBORHOOD.

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary and Discussion

At the February 1, 2006 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission, Rich Bortoli, the Belmont representative to the Senior Mobility Action Plan Steering Committee described the concept of a pilot project to address the safety of senior pedestrians in the Ralston/Alameda neighborhood. The Parks and Recreation Commissioners generally agreed with the need to improve senior mobility, but did not believe that this project was within the scope of the Parks and Recreation Commission and therefore took no action. Mr. Bortoli's report is attached.

Fiscal Impact

Fiscal impact is unknown at this time but would be developed and reported to the City Council before implementing the pilot project.

Public Contact

Agendized and discussed at the February 1, 2006 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

Recommendation

The Parks and Recreation Commission believed that this project was not in their scope and therefore took no action.

Alternatives

1. Take no action

Attachments

- A. Report from Rich Bortoli, Belmont Member of the Senior Mobility Committee

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment A

SENIOR MOBILITY ACTION PLAN FOR SAN MATEO COUNTY

February 3, 2006

To: Belmont City Council

From: Rich Bortoli
Belmont Senior Advisory Committee

The purpose of this memo is to solicit the interest of the Belmont City Council in participating in a pilot project to maintain and enrich the lifestyle of Belmont seniors by increasing their ability to remain mobile in their everyday life.

Background

In a letter dated April 27, 2005, from the San Mateo County Transit District to then mayor, Dave Warden, Belmont was asked to name a representative to serve on a steering committee that would guide the Senior Mobility Action Plan project.

Sam Trans was able to secure a grant from Caltrans to conduct this project.

The letter stated that the issues the steering committee would address would include the isolation of older people who have difficulty reaching services and activities, the strain of families as they deal with the limited mobility of seniors, and developing mobility systems that would ensure the security and safety of the County's seniors. According to projections, by 2025 the number of Americans aged 65 and older will increase almost 80 percent from 35 million to 62 million. Without changes, the current transportation systems will not be able to take care of the increased needs of this population.

The letter from SamTrams was passed on to Belmont Park & Recreation Department Staff (Cheri Handley) who brought it to a Senior Advisory Committee meeting. I am a member of that Committee as a liaison from the Park & Rec Commission. I volunteered to be a member of the steering committee and attended the first meeting on June 9, 2005. This meeting was attended by over 30 people, primarily from San Mateo county, who had an interest or who could provide some expertise in the issues before the committee (See the attachment for a list of the people involved in the steering committee.)

To get a feel for what the Belmont seniors were interested in regarding mobility issues, I met with the Belmont Senior Club. The consensus of the Senior Club seemed to be that they would like to see a transportation system similar to the now discontinued SCOOT system in San Carlos.

They liked the idea of door-to-door service in a smaller vehicle but would also like the ability to be able to go to other cities for services and activities. They

felt that one of the major drawbacks of the SCOOT system was that it was limited to San Carlos and, therefore, couldn't be used to get to a medical appointment in Redwood City.

Steering Committee Meetings

At a meeting in September, the committee members were asked to volunteer on any of seven working groups: 1. Community Transit Services, 2. Community-Based Transportation Services, 3. Encouraging use of transit, 4. Safe driving, 5. Use of taxicabs, 6. Information and referral, and 7. Walking and pedestrian safety.

I joined working groups 1, 2 and 7. I attended one or more meetings for each group. A summary of each of the strategies coming from each of the seven groups is in the Attachment to this memo.

Group 7 on Walking and Pedestrian safety led us to a discussion of the area of Ralston Avenue and the Alameda de las Pulgas in Belmont. The working group discussed the large number of seniors living in that neighborhood and the availability of services at the Carlmont Shopping Center. The working group also noted that transportation from that area to most other areas in San Mateo County was limited or non-existent, i.e. a medical appointment in Redwood City.

Interest of the Belmont City Council

The steering committee wants to know if the Belmont City Council is interested in exploring the feasibility of a pilot project in Belmont that would attempt to address the safety of senior pedestrians in the Ralson/Alameda neighborhood. An offshoot of this pilot could include assessing the transportation needs of the seniors in the neighborhood as well.

There would be a need for a certain amount of City staff time (which departments and how much time needs to be determined). I realize that City staff is not exactly sitting around waiting for something to do. However, grants are apparently available to defray some/all of the cost to the City. SamTrans staff would be available to assist in preparing requests for grants.

Some of the objectives of a pilot project would be to assess the ease and safety of walking in the neighborhood and the transportation needs of the seniors and how best to address those needs. This pilot would explore increasing the access of seniors to transportation along the El Camino corridor and more difficult issues such as door-to-door transportation services.

Attachment