

Subject Line: Please Keep Our Streets Safe -- Item #7 on March 4, 2024 Agenda

March 2, 2024

Dear City Councilmembers

Thank you all for your recent support of measures to improve safety at the intersection at Middlefield and Ellsworth. As we are reminded far too often in our city, it's vital that cars, bicyclists, and pedestrians can easily see each other to avoid tragedy.

There are several ways you can further improve safety at the Middlefield and Ellsworth intersection:

- 1) Your motion of December 11 mandated "fencing that would allow visibility line of sight through 2 angles of the fence that allows adequate transparency of 3-foot fence." However, the February 5 staff report for the second reading of the Ellsworth ordinances included plans specifying a wrought iron fence with bars every four inches at the front and north side of 702 Ellsworth. After studying this, we believe such a fence would essentially block the vision of a driver on Ellsworth trying to enter Middlefield. That's because the driver will need to look through two sections of the fence with the front one being almost parallel to the driver's line of sight toward Middlefield. At that angle, the wrought iron fence becomes virtually opaque.

While the March 4 staff report no longer requires four inches of separation for the bars, it still specifies a wrought iron fence in the first exhibit in attachment B and nowhere requires true visibility. We therefore urge you to strengthen the ordinance language, as Ellsworth residents have recommended, to match your original December motion.
- 2) The February 5 staff report also substituted (without any explanation) a sight triangle for 702 Ellsworth smaller than what you approved in December 11. Please instead mandate a larger sight triangle to ensure an unobstructed view to Middlefield and the bridge over Matadero Creek, as residents are recommending.
- 3, 4, 5) Ellsworth residents are also calling for tactile indicators on the Middlefield sidewalk, red paint along the first 100 feet of curbs on Ellsworth to prevent parking on the narrow street, and having the PC allow all delivery vehicles serving the neighborhood to use the new delivery space to keep them from parking on Middlefield.

All five of these items will directly improve safety at the intersection and are low-cost. We therefore urge you to strengthen the ordinance language to match your original December motion, as Ellsworth residents have recommended.

Thank you,

Sheri Furman, PAN Co-Chair
On behalf of the PAN Executive Committee