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Bayside Drive changes weighed

Newport Beach officials are brainstorming ways to reduce speeding, keep pedestrians, cyclists safe on roadway.

BY HANNAH FRY

In an effort to improve safety and reduce speeding, city officials are considering a series of modifications to Bayside Drive in Newport Beach.

Early proposals presented to residents over the past several weeks provide a look at how drivers could one day navigate Bayside, from Marine Avenue to East Coast Highway, if the roadway was reduced from four lanes to two and buffered bike lanes were added.

A roundabout at Harbor Island Road and landscaped medians in the center of the roadway are also being considered, say residents

See *Bayside*, page A6

BAYSIDE

Continued from page A1

who've viewed the preliminary proposals.

Since the street is due to be repaved, city staff began wondering about other improvements that could be done at the same time, said Public Works Director Dave Webb.

In addition to vehicular traffic, Bayside is commonly used by bicyclists and pedestrians on both sides of the road, despite having a sidewalk on only one side.

"It's a very highly used

street in many ways, so we're looking at changing the mobility of it," Webb said.

"It has some accident history because it's a very big, wide open, racing type of street."

Two pedestrians and nine bicyclists were hit on the stretch of Bayside between Marine Avenue and East Coast Highway between 2010 and 2014, according to figures compiled by UC Berkeley Transportation Injury Mapping System.

Safety improvements to Bayside Drive were listed as a high priority on Newport's

bicycle master plan, which was completed in 2014.

Councilman Ed Selich said he has witnessed drivers losing control and speeding into front yards, sometimes smashing into vehicles parked in driveways.

Webb presented an overview of initial plans for the modification during a Tuesday study session. They were part of a list of city-wide capital improvements projects to which the City Council allocates funds on an annual basis.

Some projects remain on the list for several years, while others are more

quickly completed. It is unclear when specific plans for Bayside Drive modifications could go before the council.

In the meantime, city staff has been reaching out to nearby homeowner associations to get feedback.

Renee West, who lives on Bayside Drive, said the roundabout would be too large, the medians a hassle for homeowners.

"We don't want any changes on Bayside Drive," she said. "Just surface it and leave it alone."

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