

Stroll to Aptos Village

On the morning of August 3rd, 2024, Aptos residents walked from their homes to the Aptos Village Green to demonstrate the importance of pedestrian safety and learn how to advocate for it.

We asked neighbors to note their route and hazards along the way. Upon arrival, people were given colored dots to apply to the maps and charts showing where they started, their mode of travel, and the hazardous locations encountered reaching the village.

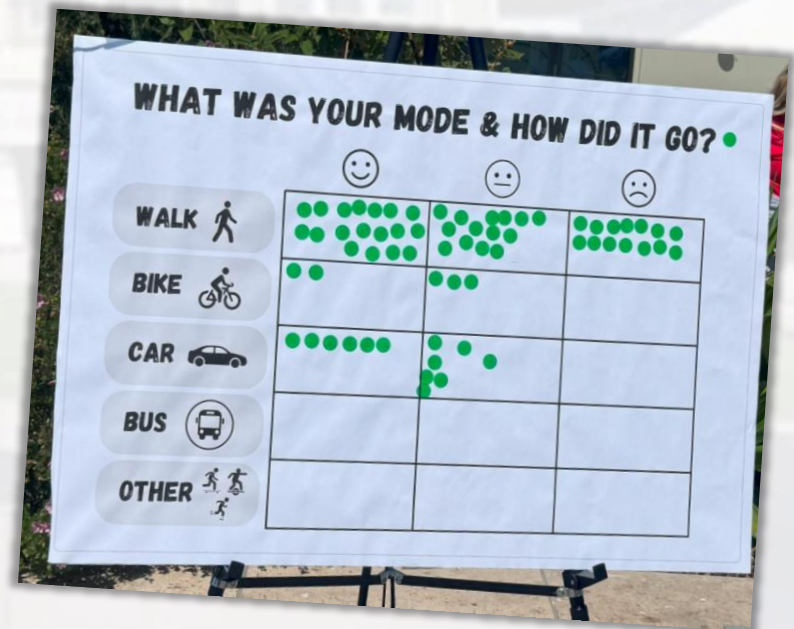
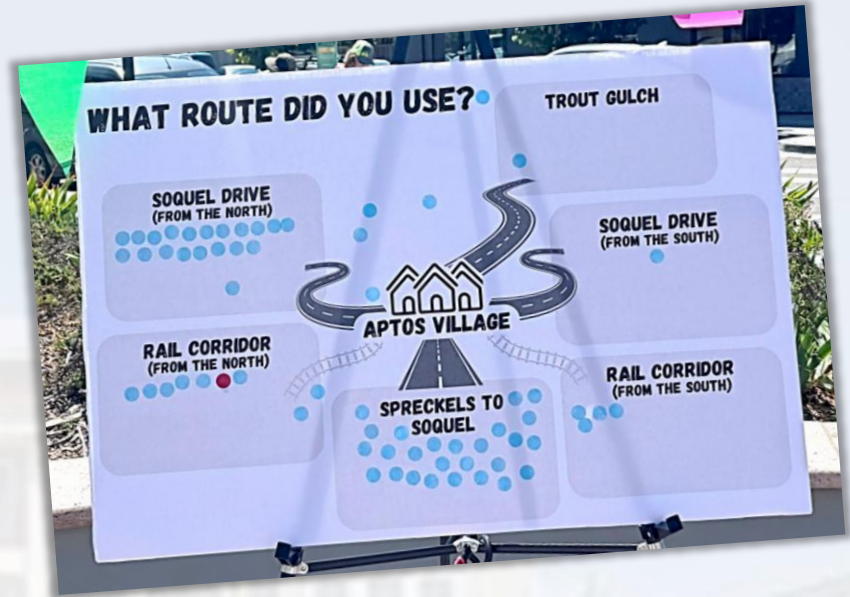


We were fortunate to be joined this year by local agencies available to speak with participants and share their efforts to support pedestrian safety.

We gave participants business cards with reporting instructions to audit their return trip and report pedestrian, bike and road hazards to appropriate agencies.



We surveyed participants and, while most came from Seacliff, other Aptos neighborhoods were also represented. Most walked along local roads and some on the rail corridor but did not enjoy the experience.

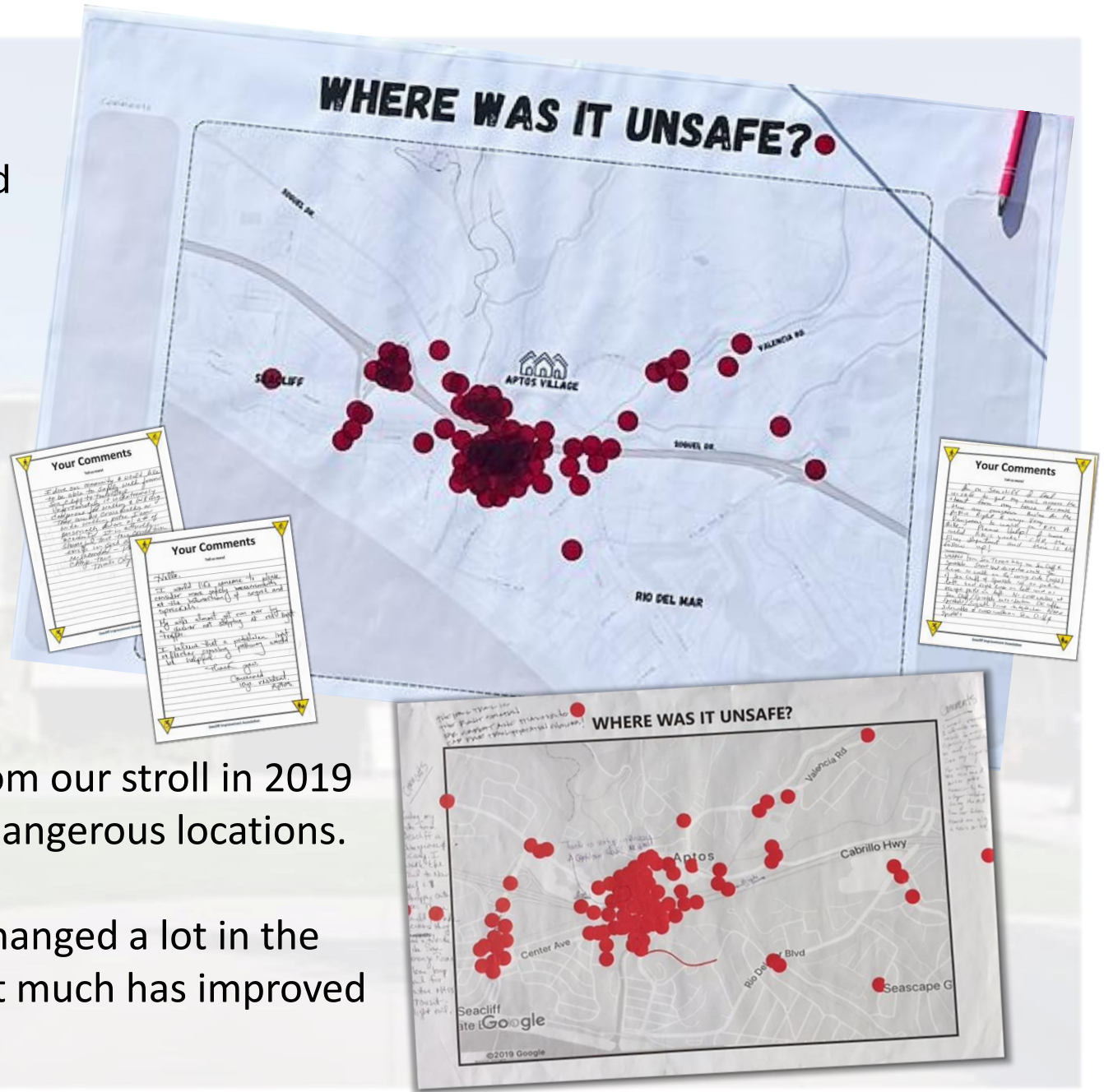


This map shows red dots placed on the most unsafe areas encountered.

Specific details were gathered on separate comment sheets.

The Unsafe map from our stroll in 2019 showed the same dangerous locations.

Aptos Village has changed a lot in the last 5 years, but not much has improved for pedestrians.



Most of the participant comments included Pedestrian Safety concerns:



- *Feeling unsafe while walking* along with the frustration of living so close to Aptos Village, but unable to reach it safely without a car.



- Hazardous routes: *Spreckels and Soquel Drives* including the Aptos Creek Bridge and along the road from Rio Del Mar and State Park Dive. Walking on the roadside without enough room isn't the safest place to walk.



- Requests for *improvements*: sidewalks, paint, signs, vegetation management, crosswalks with lighted stop signs, construction of the rail trail, and intersection improvements.

Post Stroll Participant Survey

Two months after the stroll, we surveyed participants who registered for a post stroll survey to learn more about their opinions of the event. Most participated in the stroll because of safety concerns and to support the community, and they learned more about safety issues, the need for improvements, and active transportation options. Participants appreciated visits with representatives from the attending local agencies and enjoyed their participation at the stroll.

Prior to the stroll, almost half the respondents knew how to report walking/cycling hazards. Most are now more likely to report them using the link/QR code on the business card distributed at the stroll. Participants did not think it was very safe to walk or cycle in Aptos but have not changed their behavior since the stroll even though almost half have been hit by or had a narrow escape with a vehicle.

Everyone said vehicle speeding impacted their choices to walk or cycle and they would walk more if there were:

- Lower speed limits for vehicles
- Sidewalks
- Separated Bike lanes
- Roundabouts
- Crosswalks and flashing crosswalks at busy locations
- Pathways away from streets so people can move about without walking next to roads

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Commuters face a very challenging drive as traffic backs up through the Aptos chokepoint on both sides of Highway 1. Those who opt to use Soquel Drive through Aptos Village add to the congestion of locals trying to reach village businesses. Each of us who chooses to take our car off the road wants drivers to appreciate this by respecting pedestrians and cyclists who use much less road space than a vehicle. Increased safety measures will help remind them to do so.

The Seacliff Improvement Association hosted the stroll with the support of the following Aptos Village merchants who generously donated prizes for participants:

Akira Sushi

Aptos BBQ

Aptos Vineyard

Beklina

Betty Burgers

Cantine

Hideout

Hopscotch Children's Clothes

Jet Set Bohemian

New Leaf Market

Norma Jean's Coffee

O'Neill Surf Shop

Penny Ice Creamery

Sante Arcangeli Family Wines

Sock Shop & Shoe Company

Warmth Company