



CITY OF SAN MATEO

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Agenda Report

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TO: City Council
FROM: Alex Khojikian, City Manager
PREPARED BY: Public Works Department
MEETING DATE: February 3, 2025

SUBJECT:
North Central Bike Lanes Project — Direction

RECOMMENDATION:
Provide direction on addressing community impacts of the North Central Bike Lanes project.

BACKGROUND:
North Central Bike Lanes Project

The City receives federal funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and allocates the funds based on community priorities. A portion of the funds are available for infrastructure improvements, including paving, bicycle, and pedestrian projects. In Fiscal Year 2020-21, \$900,000 in CDBG funding, along with \$1,000,000 in local funding, was allocated to the North Central neighborhood for 2.3 miles of pavement rehabilitation, installation of curb ramps, proposed Class II bicycle lanes and bicycle boulevards, traffic striping, roadway signage, and traffic signal video detection equipment in the North Central neighborhood.

The bicycle improvements proposed in the project (the North Central Bike Lanes Project, or Project) were identified in the adopted 2020 Bicycle Master Plan (Plan) and included the Humboldt Street bicycle lanes (2nd highest priority project in the Plan) and the Poplar Avenue/Delaware Street/Indian Avenue bicycle lanes and bicycle boulevard (4th highest priority project). The Project included approximately 1.3 miles of Class II bicycle lanes on Humboldt Street between 5th Avenue and Peninsula Avenue and required the removal of approximately 170 parking spaces. Also included was a section on Poplar Avenue from El Camino Real to Humboldt Street that included 0.50 miles of Class II bike lanes and 0.25 miles of a bicycle boulevard and required the removal of approximately 40 parking spaces.

In October 2021, Council approved construction on some of the work, including sidewalk ramps, but not the bicycle infrastructure due to the impacts on the North Central neighborhood from the parking removal. Council directed staff to collect new parking information, evaluate potential additional parking supply options to mitigate the impacts, and to conduct additional community outreach. Staff was directed to return to the City's Sustainability and Infrastructure Commission (Commission) and Council in February 2022 with findings from these efforts for comment and direction on the implementation of the bicycle improvements proposed in the Project. At that meeting, Council voted 3-2 to proceed with installing the bike lanes and construction was completed in July 2022. The Agenda Report from the February 2022 meeting is attached for reference regarding parking supply data, community input, and feedback from the Commission.

North Central Complete Streets Plan

On March 20, 2023, while receiving an update on the Citywide Complete Streets Plan, Council directed staff to create a separate plan focused on North Central, titled the North Central Complete Streets Plan (NCCSP), that would evaluate mobility, parking availability, circulation, and safety needs. Council's direction to create the NCCSP was in response to the community impacts caused by parking removal to accommodate the Project. Staff contracted with Fehr and Peers to

develop the NCCSP with the goal of creating a community-driven plan to determine how to best allocate right-of-way in North Central for all modes of transportation while improving transportation safety. After more than a year of outreach and engagement with the community that included community workshops, pop-ups, focused Lived Experience Group workshops, focus groups to Spanish communities, and individual meetings with community champions a draft priority list was created that consisted of fourteen (14) projects/programs that can be summarized in four categories: speed calming, circulation improvements, mobility/parking improvements, and other infrastructure improvements such as streetlighting and pavement resurfacing. During the development of the NCCSP, the community continued to echo the need for parking in North Central and frustrations with the bike lanes installation.

The NCCSP is currently on hold for multiple reasons, including the need for Council direction on the Humboldt Bike Lanes as part of this agenda item, Council's recent action to cancel the Peninsula Interchange Project that requires other approaches to address the circulation and safety needs that were the drivers for that project, the need to understand circulation impacts of one or more potential rail crossing closures on the western edge of the North Central neighborhood as the City pursues creation of a Train Horn Quiet Zone, and the need to plan for bi-jurisdictional improvements for vehicle circulation and bicycle/pedestrian safety on Peninsula Avenue. All these issues have an impact on the North Central community but were not part of the NCCSP scope or direct topics of discussion during the outreach and engagement efforts. Additional funding will be necessary to update the NCCSP in light of these changes.

Post-Installation Public Feedback

Concurrent with approval of the Project, Council directed staff to explore options to help ease the impacts of the parking reduction brought up during the outreach phase. Following outreach conducted in Summer 2022, staff created the King Center Overnight Parking program, added a free driveway red tipping and blue curb (disabled parking) program for North Central residents, and opened an option for homeowners to legally park in front of their own driveway without citation. Even with these programs in place, community members consistently voice ongoing concerns regarding lack of parking, proximity of parking relative to their homes, vehicles speeding, and low bicycle usage following the installation of the bike lanes on Humboldt Street.

Staff has explored the option of overnight or weekend parking at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) lot at 425 N. Amphlett Boulevard, the San Mateo County Superior Court at 800 N. Humboldt Street, and other government agency parking lots in North Central, but heard feedback from the community that these may not offer wide benefits to those on Humboldt Street due to the distance many residents would need to walk to access this parking. In addition, staff determined that the interagency parking leasing agreements could be resource-intensive, costly, and may not offer practical hours of operation for residents.

In the summer of 2024, in response to ongoing community concerns and City Council interest at the June 17, 2024 City Council meeting related to the Project, staff began investigating additional ways to address community concerns. In October 2024, staff met with the smaller North Central Lived Experience Group that was part of the North Central Complete Streets Plan to discuss the bike lanes on Humboldt Street and potential alternatives to the existing conditions that might help alleviate impacts.

On December 4th, 2024, staff hosted a larger community workshop where 110+ residents attended in person to provide input on the bike lanes on Humboldt Street, post installation. Staff wanted to know 1) how have the Humboldt Street bike lanes impacted community members, 2) what improvements would make Humboldt Street safer for walking, biking, or driving and 3) what are community thoughts on a bicycle boulevard (where bicycles and vehicles share the same travel lane, as opposed to having dedicated vehicle/bike lanes) alternative on Humboldt Street to lower speeds, accommodate cyclists, and restore parking. Staff provided a high-level presentation, but the bulk of the workshop focused on breakout groups with 13 individual tables with a staff or outreach consultant facilitator. Spanish-only tables were provided, as well as childcare services and dinner for attendees. Facilitators encouraged attendees to answer each of the three questions on the form/survey provided so staff would know whether the response is from a resident living on Humboldt Street, within

the greater North Central neighborhood, or within another neighborhood or jurisdiction. All feedback gathered during the breakout session was reported out table by table at the end of the meeting to ensure all attendees heard the range of input.

Out of the 110 attendees that signed in at the meeting, 66 attendees filled out the form/survey. Staff received hundreds of data points and bundled the feedback into three groups 1) residents living on Humboldt Street, 2) North Central residents (not living on Humboldt Street) and 3) residents from other neighborhoods. Below is a summary of how the 66 attendees responded to the three questions.

1. **How have the Humboldt Street bike lanes impacted you?** 76 percent of residents living on Humboldt Street reported a negative impact from the bike lanes, with an overwhelmingly large percentage stating the reduction of parking being the issue. 41 percent of North Central residents (not living on Humboldt Street) said the bike lanes were positive and glad to see bike infrastructure being provided in the community. 69 percent of residents from other neighborhoods/jurisdictions reported a positive impact from the bike lanes, citing safer and increased bike infrastructure. There were also community bicyclists that did not feel the Humboldt Street bike lanes provide good connectivity and they often use other routes to go North-South.
2. **What improvements would make you feel safer walking, biking, or driving on Humboldt Street?** The responses were consistent throughout all three groups in that speed calming measures and lighting improvements are their top two requests in making the North Central neighborhood feel safer.
3. **What are your thoughts on a bicycle boulevard alternative to lower speeds, accommodate cyclists, and restore parking on Humboldt Street?** All three groups were inconsistent on their opinion on a bicycle boulevard alternative on Humboldt Street. 33 percent of residents from Humboldt Street had a negative opinion on the alternative, 19 percent were positive, and 48 percent were either mixed or declined to provide a response. The same inconsistency applied for the North Central residents not living on Humboldt Street and residents from other communities. Qualitatively, all three groups had concerns of whether speed calming devices would be effective in slowing speeds on Humboldt Street. Another concern is if speed calming devices are effective on Humboldt Street, vehicles might choose to traverse smaller, more narrow parallel side streets to go faster.

Residential Permit Parking Program (RPPP)

Several attendees requested feedback on the creation of an RPPP on or near Humboldt Street to help alleviate the parking issue in the community. This would require a change to the City's existing RPPP policy to implement, and there is the potential for undesirable negative impacts to some households. A summary of staff's findings is below:

- **Policy Limitations:** The City's current policy allows RPPP in areas within residential neighborhoods where on-street parking is impacted by parked cars from non-residents, or parking generators such as a school, business, commercial district or commercial use. According to the current policy, all of Humboldt Street would not be eligible for an RPPP. If an RPPP is desired, the current policy must be amended, or a North Central neighborhood-specific permit parking program would need to be developed.
- **Limited On-Street Supply:** From the feedback gathered from the community pre- and post-Project, staff estimates there are on average 2-3+ vehicles per household. Some community members in North Central currently use on-street facilities to park commercial business vehicles, which would not be permitted under the current RPPP policy. For the program to be effective, a per-house limit on issued permits would need to be determined. This could potentially have negative consequences for dense households and members of the community relying on on-street parking to satisfy their needs.
- **Capital, Maintenance, and Upkeep:** If an RPPP is established in North Central around Humboldt Street, it would be the City's largest RPPP area and require a large initial capital investment to establish signage throughout the community. On-going costs will include permit issuance, permit renewal, enforcement, and sign maintenance.

If Council is interested in developing an RPPP for North Central, staff recommends further engagement with the community on how such a program could be structured to provide community-desired benefit.

Bike Lane Usage

Staff collected bicycle usage data on a weekday during peak hours (7:00AM – 9:00AM and 4:00PM – 6:00PM) to get a sense of the bicycle usage on Humboldt Street. Data were collected using a video-based system that automatically detects bicyclists entering an intersection that is then confirmed by a human operator. Staff chose eight (8) intersections on Humboldt Street to study, including Peninsula Avenue, Poplar Avenue, Indian Avenue, Monte Diablo Avenue, Tilton Avenue, 3rd Avenue, 4th Avenue, and 5th Avenue. During the hours of collection, Peninsula Avenue had the lowest number of bicyclists enter the intersection at nine (9) trips and Tilton Avenue saw the most with 65 trips entering the intersection. Overall, there were a total of 212 trips entering the eight intersections. Out of the 212 trips, approximately 84 percent of the trips (179 trips) were either coming from Humboldt Street or turning onto Humboldt Street. The remaining 16 percent (33 trips) were crossing Humboldt.

Collision Data

Staff compiled collision data from the City’s internal police records on Humboldt Street for the same eight (8) intersections where staff collected bicycle usage (Peninsula Avenue, Poplar Avenue, Indian Avenue, Monte Diablo Avenue, Tilton Avenue, 3rd Avenue, 4th Avenue, and 5th Avenue) from 2017 – October 2024. The data show a total of 348 incidents, with 238 (68.4 percent) being vehicle-to-vehicle incidents, 11 (3.2 percent) involving pedestrians, 1 (0.3 percent) involving a bicyclist, and 98 (28.2 percent) being property damage-related. 5th Avenue saw the lowest number of incidents, with a total of eight (8), whereas East Poplar saw the highest number of incidents, with a total of 83. Of the eight (8) intersections studied, the only intersection with a bicycle incident was 4th Avenue, which occurred in 2019, prior to the installation of the bike lanes. Staff have approximately 7 years of total internal collision data, 5 of those years were prior to the bike lane installation and only 2 years post installation. There isn’t sufficient post-installation data to make accurate comparisons to pre-installation data. Staff will present more insights into the collision data during the presentation.

Potential Alternatives

Staff explored a range of potential alternatives to address community concerns about safety and the loss of parking on Humboldt Street for Council consideration, as described below.

Alternative #1 - Keep As-Is: This alternative retains the Class II bike lanes on Humboldt Street and does not restore any parking. This option maintains existing bike infrastructure, which allows for consistent North-South bike travel from 5th Avenue to Peninsula Avenue on Humboldt Street. This option does not address the comments from the community about the need to increase parking supply.

Alternative #2 - Bicycle Boulevard on Humboldt Street: This alternative entails removal of the existing Class II bike lanes on Humboldt Street and replacing with a bike boulevard with level 2 and 3 traffic calming devices. This alternative restores the approximately 170 parking spaces on Humboldt Street from Peninsula Avenue to 5th Avenue which were lost after the bike lanes were installed. Removal of the bike lanes and restoration of parking requires grinding of existing center lane lines and bike lanes, pavement restoration, and restriping and signing parking stalls.

To create a bike boulevard, level 2 and 3 traffic calming devices would need to be installed that include hardscape improvements to slow down vehicle speeds such as raised crosswalks, speed cushions, and curb extensions. This requires a significant capital investment to reduce vehicle speeds on Humboldt Street to levels safe enough for vehicles and bicycles to share the same travel lanes (e.g., 20 mph). A significant concern is whether enough speed calming measures can be implemented to bring speeds down sufficiently to make bicyclists feel safe. Since Humboldt Street is considered an arterial with the predominant mode being vehicles, a potential outcome of turning Humboldt Street into a bicycle boulevard is the

possibility for vehicles to choose parallel north-south streets as cut-through (i.e., Idaho Street and S. Grant Street) to avoid the speed calming measures. The benefit of this alternative is it restores parking on both sides of Humboldt Street while accommodating vehicles and bicycles on Humboldt Street as the most direct north-south option from Peninsula to 5th Avenue. Another benefit is it also addresses community concerns regarding speeding on Humboldt Street.

Below are high-level cost and implementation schedule estimates for this alternative.

- **Humboldt Street Bike Lane Removal and Parking Restoration (Design and Construction)**
 - Cost: ~\$850,000
 - Schedule: 6 months – 1 year
- **Humboldt Street Bike Boulevard (Design and Construction)**
 - Cost: ~\$2.2M
 - Schedule: 1 – 3 years+

Alternative #3 - Partial Removal of Bike Lanes, and Establishment of a Bike Boulevard on a Parallel Street: This alternative is broken down into a short-term plan and a long-term plan.

- **Humboldt Street Parking Restoration (2nd Avenue to Indian Avenue Only):** The short-term plan would be to restore parking on Humboldt Street from 2nd Avenue to Indian Avenue (approximately 100 parking spaces restored) and establish a north-south street parallel to Humboldt Street as a pilot bike boulevard between 2nd Avenue and Indian Avenue. Staff do not recommend removal of the bike lanes north of Indian Avenue or south of 2nd Avenue because there are no immediate solutions to maintain bike connectivity in these zones outside of Humboldt Street. In addition, north of Indian Avenue, the land uses on the west side of Humboldt Street (where parking is not provided) are significantly different, with San Mateo Foster City School District and San Mateo Union High School sites and the Woodlake Condominium complex, all of which have their own on-site parking facilities, making restoration of parking less of an issue in that segment. Again, removal of a portion of the existing facilities requires grinding of lane markings, pavement restoration, and new parking striping and signage.
 - Cost: ~\$620,000
 - Schedule: 6 months – 1 year
- **Pilot Parallel Bike Boulevard:** Fremont and Idaho Street are likely candidates for a parallel bike boulevard treatment. Fremont Street offers advantages in that it connects into a future class IV on 3rd Avenue, a bike boulevard on Monte Diablo, and an existing bike boulevard on Indian Avenue. It also has direct connection to three main neighborhood destinations, including Gateway Park, the Martin Luther King Jr Community Center, and College Park. However, Idaho Street is closer to Humboldt Street and offers a more direct north-south bike route, making it more accessible for less-experienced cyclists. Implementation of a bike boulevard on either street requires more community vetting. Staff recommends that a bike boulevard be piloted on Idaho Street in the short term but follow up with community outreach and vetting for bike boulevards on both streets to pick the best candidate for a permanent bike boulevard. Similar to creating a bike boulevard on Humboldt Street, a bike boulevard on a parallel route requires installation of speed calming measures, but to a much lesser degree due to the local roadway characteristic versus an arterial. These measures would likely be limited to periodic speed cushions, which would be temporary installations for the pilot phase (i.e., bolt-down speed cushions).
 - Pilot Idaho or Fremont Street Bike Boulevard (Design and Construction): \$150K - \$300K
 - Schedule: 6 months – 1 year
- **Long-Term Plan:** The long-term plan would require a connectivity study in the North Central neighborhood to reanalyze destinations within the community and see how to improve bike connectivity north of Indian Avenue and south of 2nd Avenue and further within the North Central neighborhood. A potential benefit of this alternative is it expands on the bicycle infrastructure in the community by leveraging multiple streets in both the north-south and east-west directions. Below are cost and implementation schedule estimates for this alternative. Staff recommends the analysis phase of the long-term plan be incorporated into completion of the NCCSP.
 - Qualitative Connectivity Study: ~\$60,000

- Permanent North Central Bike Boulevard: ~\$1M+
- Schedule: 1 - 3 years

Alternative #4 - Restore Parking with No Bike Infrastructure: This alternative restores the approximately 170 parking spaces on Humboldt Street from Peninsula Avenue to 5th Avenue which were lost after the bike lanes were installed and removes all bike lanes. The benefit of this alternative is it restores a significant portion of the parking supply removed by the Project. The downside is that it significantly reduces bicycle connectivity in North Central. Below are cost and implementation schedule estimates for this alternative. Again, removal of the bike lanes requires grinding, pavement restoration, and striping/signage.

- **Humboldt Street Bike Lane Removal and Parking Restoration (Design and Construction)**
 - Cost: ~\$850,000
 - Schedule: 6 months – 1 year

Alternative #5 - Streetlighting Upgrades: This alternative includes upgrading existing cobrahead streetlight fixtures to a brighter fixture, similar to what is used on collector and arterial streets. This alternative will help address the comments from the community about the need to increase lighting levels but may have the negative effect of additional light spilling over onto residential property and/or into residents' homes. North Central roadways vary in classification from local to arterial, but in terms of width, they all resemble a local street to a low collector, so any upgrading of streetlights to the type of lighting used on collectors and arterials will result in spill-over light. Depending on Council's direction, initial streetlighting upgrades based on community feedback and the potential for a pilot bike boulevard include Humboldt Street from Peninsula to 5th Avenue, Fremont Street from 3rd Avenue to Indian Avenue, and Idaho Street from 3rd Avenue to Indian Avenue. Below are cost and implementation schedule estimates for this alternative. Costs include replacing existing lighting fixtures with higher intensity fixtures.

- **Streetlighting Cost**
 - Street #1 - Humboldt Street Streetlighting Upgrade: ~\$45,000
 - Street #2 - Fremont Street Streetlighting Upgrade: ~\$25,000
 - Street #3 - Idaho Street Streetlighting Upgrade: ~\$20,000
- **Schedule for All:**
 - 3 - 6 Months

Should the Council choose not to maintain the existing bike infrastructure on Humboldt, staff recommends the following alternatives for consideration:

1. Engage the community to further evaluate Alternative #3: Partial Removal of Bike Lanes, and Establishment of a Bike Boulevard on Parallel Street. This alternative would largely address the parking comments from the community as it restores approximately 60 percent (100 parking spaces) of the parking on Humboldt Street that was removed from the Humboldt Street Bike Lane project. It would also address the comments from the community of wanting to maintain some level of bike connectivity within the community, thereby giving assurance to the community about future investments in the community to further improve safety and bike connectivity. Staff's recommendation would be to pursue a pilot bike boulevard on Idaho Street or Fremont Street given their proximity to Humboldt Street. Alternative #3 would cost approximately \$900,000 to restore parking and include a pilot bike boulevard on a parallel street to Humboldt, staff recommends further vetting of a north-south bike boulevard with the North Central and cycling communities. The long-term plan would cost approximately \$1M to perform a connectivity study and establish additional bicycle routes in North Central. Prior to engaging with the community, conceptual level designs would be developed to better understand and communicate those alternatives to the community before coming back before the Council for consideration.
2. Proceed forward with Alternative #5: Streetlighting Upgrades, on Humboldt Street and Idaho Street or Fremont Street, depending on the final pilot bike boulevard street. This would address the second largest community

concern on what would make the residents feel safer when walking, biking or driving on Humboldt Street, improved street lighting. Alternative #5 would cost approximately \$70,000 to upgrade streetlighting on Humboldt Street and a future street with the pilot bike boulevard.

Next Steps:

Depending on Council’s direction, staff would need to come back at a future meeting to request Council’s appropriation of funds to engage the community and conduct conceptual design efforts to evaluate the preferred alternative. Following this vetting process, staff would return to Council to request for an appropriation to implement a selected alternative.

As noted above, additional funding will also be necessary for the NCCSP to address changed conditions, including any changes to the Humboldt Bike Lanes, the canceled Peninsula Interchange Project, circulation changes which may result from the Train Horn Quiet Zone, and the need to plan for bi-jurisdictional improvements for vehicle circulation and bicycle/pedestrian safety on Peninsula Avenue. This appropriation will also be requested at a future meeting.

BUDGET IMPACT:

An agenda item will be added to a future Council meeting to appropriate funds. Cost estimates above are high-level estimates and staff may develop more refined estimates for preferred alternatives prior to coming back to Council.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

This Council item in providing direction for the use of the street and bicycle facilities along Humboldt Street is exempt from CEQA review as an “existing facility,” because it consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.)

NOTICE PROVIDED

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

ATTACHMENTS

- Att 1 – February 22, 2022, North Central Bike Lanes Agenda Report
- Att 2 – Public Comment

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