



# CITY OF SAN MATEO

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## Agenda Report

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**TO:** Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission

**FROM:** Azalea Mitch

**PREPARED BY:** Public Works Department

**MEETING DATE:** February 9, 2022

**SUBJECT:**

Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan – Update and Project Prioritization Metrics

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Sustainability and Infrastructure Commission, acting as the City of San Mateo's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, receive an informational update on the Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan and provide feedback on the project prioritization metrics.

**BACKGROUND:**

The City was awarded approximately \$75,000 from the Fiscal Year 2019-20 Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3 grant program to fund the Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan (Plan), and provided matching City funds to fully fund the effort. The Plan intends to assess the full pedestrian path of travel within a one half-mile radius of the City's three Caltrain stations and other high-quality transit stops to create safe, comfortable walking routes to transit for all ages and abilities. The City entered into an agreement with Fehr & Peers on April 6, 2021 to assist with developing the Plan.

Staff and the consultant team presented the draft Community Engagement Plan at the August 2021 Sustainability and Infrastructure Commission meeting. A summary of the outcomes of that community outreach effort and the existing conditions review will be presented by staff at this meeting, as well as recommended metrics for prioritizing projects that will be proposed as part of the Plan.

**Community Outreach Findings**

An extensive community outreach strategy was developed to engage with a diverse audience about the Plan. The following outlines key engagement methods used and brief highlights from each. Attachment 1 provides a comprehensive summary of the outreach effort, including findings from the feedback received.

Pop-Up Events

On October 6 and 7, 2021, City staff and the consultant held six pop-up events to increase participation and reach those with lesser access or interest in online engagement tools. The pop-up locations were spread geographically across the study area to interact with transit users from each Caltrain station and to engage with various community groups, including seniors, youth, and the Latinx community.

- The Peninsula Regent (senior living facility)
- The Nueva School
- Hillsdale Caltrain Station
- Mi Rancho Supermarket (Spanish speaker available for translation and interpretation)
- S. B Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

- Downtown San Mateo Caltrain Station

Paper surveys in English and Spanish and large poster boards with the study area were provided for gathering in-person feedback. Approximately 75 community members provided in-person feedback and 90 comments were collected at the pop-up events.

In summary, a number of people provided positive feedback about S. B Street. More specifically, they admire the car-free environment and would like wider sidewalks, string lights spanning the width of the street, and more attractive parklet seating to make the street more aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian friendly. Participants also requested more frequent crossing times at 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Delaware Street, improved station access specifically on the northeast side of the Downtown San Mateo Caltrain Station, and fixing uneven pavement in various locations around Downtown San Mateo.

#### Focus Groups

Three focus groups meetings were conducted with the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition (San Mateo local team), San Mateo County Paratransit Coordinating Council, and San Mateo County Latino Collaborative. These community groups were strategically selected to achieve the goal of the Community Engagement Plan to reach and engage with the Latinx community, vulnerable users, and people who have not previously participated in planning processes. To maximize participation, focus groups were planned during the group's existing meeting time. Each meeting began with a short presentation followed by a facilitated group discussion about concerns and potential improvements for improving the walk to transit. All meetings were conducted using Zoom due to current health orders.

In general, the groups identified specific intersections and corridors that they felt are unsafe for pedestrians, including El Camino Real and crosswalks on Delaware Street. Other comments mentioned wider sidewalks in Downtown San Mateo for increased comfort, longer crossing times at signaled intersections, and physical buffers on the sidewalk, such as landscaping or trees, to separate vehicular traffic and pedestrians. They also noted that lighting at the Hayward Park Caltrain Station could be improved.

#### Online Survey and Interactive Mapping

In addition to the pop-up events for in-person feedback and the focus groups, the project team developed an online survey and interactive map that was open for public input from September 20 to October 31, 2021. Both activities were provided in English and Spanish and asked the user questions related to walking to transit, such as where there are pedestrian issues within the study area and what pedestrian improvements are most valued for safety. There were 48 responses to the survey and 237 comments on the online interactive map.

Feedback from the online engagement tools showed that people enjoy having South B Street closed to vehicles. The most popular comment noted that adding a crosswalk on the north side of the 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue and El Camino Real intersection would help improve access to the station and reduce conflict between pedestrians and bicyclists. Another top comment mentioned improving access and safety crossing the tracks at the Hayward Park Caltrain Station. Findings from the online survey showed that improved lighting and crosswalks and more frequent crossings would have the greatest positive impact for pedestrians. Of the 48 responses received from the survey, 77% answered that they walk daily, weekly or occasionally in San Mateo.

#### Sidewalk Decals

City staff and the consultant team placed ten sidewalk decals near the City's three Caltrain stations and SamTrans bus stops within the study area. The decals had a QR code and weblink directing to the project webpage on the City's website where the user could participate in the online survey and interactive mapping activity. There were 64 QR code scans over the course of 4.5 weeks. During the pop-up events, the sidewalk decals were a helpful in collecting feedback from passersby who were interested in the project but didn't have time provide input at the pop-up table.

#### **Existing Conditions Review**

Data from various sources was reviewed to analyze existing conditions and identify areas of concern within the study area. The data was translated into maps and overlaid on top of one another to highlight patterns and trends. As shown in the

below table, the data reviewed is organized into three main categories: land use and demographics, existing transportation facilities, and planned improvements. Maps and visuals summarizing the existing conditions review is included as Attachment 2.

Category	Data Reviewed
Land Use and Demographics	Land Uses
	Senior Centers and Landmarks (Schools, Libraries, etc)
	CalEnviroScreen
Existing Transportation Facilities	Roadway Typology
	Locations of Signalized Intersections
	Level of Traffic Stress
	Pedestrian Collisions (Locations and Severity)
	Locations of Missing Sidewalks
Planned Improvements	Development Projects (Upcoming and Under Review)
	Planned Pedestrian Improvements from City of San Mateo Pedestrian Master Plan (2012)

Findings from the existing conditions review helped inform the recommended prioritization metrics explained in the following section. For example, land use, roadway typology and landmarks data were analyzed together to understand where transit users’ origins and destinations and the routes they may have taken to access transit. This information lead to the metric, ‘Streets Providing Access to Stations.’ Other data, including missing sidewalks and planned pedestrian improvements, will be used to identify recommended improvements for priority projects.

### Project Prioritization

The purpose of the Plan is to improve walking routes to transit and a secondary goal is to improve pedestrian conditions overall within the study area. To ensure proposed improvements are aligned with the focus of the Plan, prioritization is necessary to ensure projects are located on critical streets that pedestrians use to access transit. Staff recommend using the following metrics and associated weights to identify priority locations within the study area.

The proposed prioritization metrics were developed based on the goals of the Plan, community feedback, and findings from the existing conditions review. To identify priority locations within the study area, the metrics are placed on a map with the data weighted accordingly. Associated weights were assigned based on the goals of the Plan. Locations where the data visually overlap highlight where pedestrian improvements are most needed within the study area. Site-specific improvements, such as improved lighting or curb extensions, will be identified for these priority locations and included as a project in the Plan. Areas located outside priority locations, but within the study area, identified as needing improvement from outreach or the existing conditions review will be recorded in the Plan.

Using the recommended prioritization metrics, the majority of projects will be located along station access streets. These are areas located within a quarter mile from a Caltrain station that every or most people accessing transit are going to use. Projects in the Plan will focus on those areas that will be most utilized by transit users.

Staff are requesting feedback from the Commission on the recommended prioritization metrics that will be used to prioritize locations of projects in the Plan.

Metric	Description	Prioritization Weight
Streets Providing Access to Stations	Streets identified as main walking connections to the Caltrain stations	High (Station Access) Low (Connector Streets)
Pedestrian Collisions	Reported pedestrian collisions within the study area	Medium
Community Outreach Feedback	Pedestrian issues identified through community outreach	Medium

Vulnerable Communities (CalEnviroScreen)	Uses environmental, health, and socioeconomic information to measure community vulnerability to pollution at the census tract level	Low
Schools	Areas within 1 block of schools	Low
Senior Housing	Areas within 1 block of senior housing	Low
Development Projects	Upcoming development projects within the study area that are under review or under construction	Low

When providing feedback on the prioritization metrics, staff requests Commission consider these specific questions.

1. Do the prioritization metrics provide prioritization based on the Plan's goals of creating safe, comfortable walking routes to transit for all ages and abilities?
2. Are there any additional metrics or changes to the proposed metrics or weights that you would suggest?
3. Are there any intersections or corridors that you feel should have been on the priority locations map based on the prioritization metrics used? (Priority locations will be shown during the presentation.)

### **Next Steps**

Following this meeting, staff and Commission's feedback will be incorporated to develop a list of priority locations. Staff and the consultant will develop projects for priority locations using a toolbox of pedestrian improvements. Attachment 3 summarizes potential pedestrian improvements that may be used. Once improvements are identified, development of planning-level cost estimates for each project and a list of potential funding sources for implementation will follow.

### **BUDGET IMPACT:**

There are sufficient funds in the Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Study Project for this work (46m003). The City's total budget for the project is approximately \$143,000.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

This update is not a project subject to CEQA, because it is an organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5).)

### **NOTICE PROVIDED**

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Att 1 - Community Engagement Summary Report

Att 2 – Existing Conditions Review Slide Deck

Att 3 – Potential Pedestrian Improvements

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