



CITY OF SAN MATEO

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Agenda Report

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TO: City Council

FROM: Drew Corbett, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Public Works Department

MEETING DATE: November 21, 2022

SUBJECT:
Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan – Adoption

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution to adopt the City of San Mateo Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan.

BACKGROUND:

The City was awarded a Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 3 grant from the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County in fiscal year 2019-20 for approximately \$75,000 to fund the Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan (Plan). The Plan will serve as a roadmap to enhance pedestrian safety and create comfortable walking routes to transit for all ages and abilities. The scope of the Plan includes the pedestrian path of travel within a half-mile radius of the City's three Caltrain stations and along El Camino Real to account for frequent SamTrans service along this corridor. Caltrain and SamTrans have created new visions for their service in San Mateo County. The Plan aims to complement these visions by making it easy to access transit for existing and future residents, employees, and visitors.

The City provided matching funds to fully fund the \$143,000 Plan. Staff and the consultant team began the development of the Plan in April 2021. Following a competitive process, the City entered into an agreement with Fehr & Peers to lead with developing the Plan.

At the June 20, 2022, City Council meeting, staff and the consultant team presented the findings from community outreach, existing conditions review, and project prioritization effort, and requested the Council's review of the proposed priority projects. Since that time, planning-level cost estimates have been developed for the proposed improvements as well as an implementation strategy that identifies potential funding sources and other opportunities to construct projects in the Plan.

Draft Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan

The full Draft Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan is available to view and download on the City's website: www.cityofsanmateo.org/TransitWalk. The Plan contains the following components:

- Community Engagement and Outreach
- Needs Assessment
- Priorities and Recommendations
- Implementation

Community Engagement and Outreach

A variety of tools, venues, and methods to maximize participation and achieve the goals from the Community Engagement Plan of informing, educating, and listening to all voices in the community. Outreach consisted of six pop-up events, three virtual focus meetings with local community groups, an online survey, an interactive online mapping activity, and sidewalk decals with a QR code to the project webpage. Overall, the team reached more than 500 community members and received over 375 comments at the pop-up events and through the online interactive mapping activity. This was the first City project to conduct outreach at the Mi Rancho Supermarket on North B Street and The Peninsula Regent senior living facility on Baldwin Avenue and El Camino Real.

Needs Assessment, Priorities, and Recommendations

The existing conditions were assessed with respect to pedestrian safety and comfort within the Downtown, Hayward Park, and Hillsdale study areas and on El Camino Real. In the Downtown study area, improving the crosswalks at Transit Center Way and adding wayfinding and placemaking around the station would create a more pedestrian-friendly environment and enhance the connection to the Downtown area. Within the Hayward Park and Hillsdale study areas, the assessment identified a need for upgrading station access streets to meet City standards and improving pedestrian access to station entrances to navigate around State Route 92 and the Caltrain tracks. Pedestrian infrastructure needs along El Camino Real were found to be consistent for the majority of the corridor in the City. Adding pedestrian facilities and amenities, such as safer crossings, clear walking paths, and pedestrian-scale street lighting, would greatly enhance the pedestrian experience on El Camino Real.

Project areas were identified through a prioritization process where metrics, including station access streets, community feedback, and pedestrian collision data were assigned a weight of high, medium, or low and overlaid on a map. Where the metrics overlapped the most became project areas in the Plan. Graphical displays or ‘cut sheets’ for each project area summarize the existing conditions, the proposed improvements, and highlight opportunities to incorporate improvements with upcoming City projects.

Implementation

Implementation strategies were identified that can be used to fund the construction of the improvements. The strategies include incorporating pedestrian improvements with upcoming City plans and projects as well as regional projects, utilizing local resources earmarked for transportation improvements, updating ordinances, considering new fees to fund and construct improvements, and applying for grant funding.

A near-term implementation action once this Plan is adopted could include conducting a fee study to evaluate the appropriate mechanism to fund these improvements, such as consideration of a new vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impact fee or other fees. The fee study would assess options for types of fees, include a legal analysis, and recommend options for consideration and potential adoption by the City Council. It’s also important to note that the projects in the Plan are recommended improvements that require further analysis, such as traffic counts, before an improvement can be installed. As a policy document, the Plan does not include standards or guidelines for general improvements in the public right-of-way, nor does it create objective standards with which proposed land use development projects must comply. With a funding mechanism, the projects would be evaluated further for implementation.

The following are policy considerations needed to move forward with the proposed implementation strategies in the Draft Plan:

- **Standards:** Limited public right-of-way, the City’s municipal code, and existing City ordinances limit the ability of development projects to fully upgrade their project frontage to meet City standards. Once adopted, the plan proposes the consideration of options that include updates to zoning ordinances, development of circulation change assessments, evaluation of private property setbacks, or a combination of strategies, to ensure pedestrian facilities can be upgraded to be fully compliant with City standards.
- **Funding:** New development projects within transit-oriented development (TOD) areas increase the demand and

use of pedestrian facilities leading to transit. Following Plan adoption, the Plan proposes that the City conduct a fee study to calculate and determine the appropriate mechanism to fund the construction of off-site improvements on paths leading to transit and evaluate a VMT impact fee option for projects outside the TOD area as an option to meet their mitigation requirements by funding projects that reduce VMT.

Sustainability and Infrastructure Commission Feedback

Staff presented the draft Plan to the Sustainability and Infrastructure Commission at the October 12, 2022 meeting. The proposed final draft Plan addresses Commission feedback and comments from that meeting summarized below.

- **Priority Projects** – Commissioners provided feedback on specific priority projects in the draft Plan.
 - **Hayward Park - El Camino Real:** Commissioners and feedback from public comment indicated an interest in adding a right turn on red restriction for vehicles turning onto 17th Avenue from El Camino Real. Staff added consideration of this improvement to the Hayward Park - El Camino Real project area and noted additional analysis and coordination with Caltrans is necessary for implementation.
 - **Hillsdale Boulevard:** Commissioners supported additional improvements to the crosswalks and lighting at the Hillsdale Boulevard and El Camino Real intersection. Staff revised the Hillsdale Boulevard project to include high-visibility crosswalks on the north and west legs, in addition to the east leg, and added lighting improvements. The Plan also includes an evaluation of removing the slip lane that currently allows free right turns; this will require additional analysis and design in the future.
- **Lighting** – Commissioners commented that the importance of lighting to ensure safety for those commuting during nighttime hours should be highlighted in the Plan. Upon review, additional text was added to Chapter 3: Needs Assessment to emphasize lighting as a contributing factor to pedestrian safety and comfort, particularly for those using transit in the early morning and late evening hours.

Next Steps

Once adopted, staff will begin implementing projects in the Plan through the strategies presented in the implementation chapter.

BUDGET IMPACT:

The development of City's Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan was funded by the Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Study Project (46M003). The adoption of the Plan does not have a budgetary impact.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Public Resources Code Sections 21080.20 and 21080.25 because all the proposed projects in the Plan are consistent with CEQA-exempt transportation projects as provided by SB 288. Individual projects in the Plan are not yet funded, and each project will require a separate CEQA analysis at the time of design and construction. Additionally, the Plan is not a project subject to CEQA because it can be seen with certainty that adoption of the Plan itself will not cause physical change in the environment. (Public Resources Code Section 21065.)

NOTICE PROVIDED

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

ATTACHMENTS

Att 1 – Proposed Resolution

Att 2 - Draft Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan

Att 3 – Environmental Document

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