



Agenda Report

20-1369

Agenda Date: 2/25/2020

REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Action on a Resolution Adopting the Santa Clara Pedestrian Master Plan [Council Pillar: Deliver and Enhance High Quality Efficient Services and Infrastructure]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City has been working to develop its first Pedestrian Master Plan (Plan) which establishes a long-term vision for improving walking as an active transportation option in Santa Clara. With a strategy to improve and expand the existing public pedestrian network, the Plan establishes a foundational vision, goals, objectives, and policies to improve pedestrian mobility. The Plan recommends 382 projects to improve the pedestrian environment within the nine priority pedestrian zones that are being established.

These proposed projects have been prioritized based on criteria to guide the City as it improves this transportation mode for all ages and abilities. It is important to note that this is a master plan and does not guarantee funding or that all projects included in it will be constructed in accordance with the approved Plan. There is the potential that the City may not elect to move forward with some projects, or the City may modify projects that are shown in the Plan. The Plan was completed with significant community participation and feedback, most notably with the support of the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC).

BACKGROUND

In December 2017, the City of Santa Clara received a California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Sustainable Communities grant to prepare its first Pedestrian Master Plan (Attachment 1). On August 21, 2018, the City Council approved an agreement for design professional services with Alta Planning & Design (Alta) to assist the City with preparing the Plan. The City and Alta first developed a workplan strategy focused on the following five project phases: 1) Vision, Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Existing Conditions; 2) Outreach and Needs Assessment; 3) Recommendations; 4) Draft Plan Preparation; and, 5) Final Plan Preparation and Completion.

The Plan took approximately a year and a half to complete and was coordinated with the City's BPAC, Senior Advisory Commission, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Committee and the public. The Plan has been a regular agenda item on Santa Clara's BPAC Agenda, with the BPAC providing input and feedback on deliverables that were integrated into the Plan at four separate BPAC meetings. On October 28, 2019, the BPAC reviewed the final draft of the Plan and voted to recommend that City Council consider adoption.

This Plan integrates well with the recently adopted Santa Clara Bicycle Plan Update 2018 and is being coordinated with the ADA Transition Plan Project. Information within the Plan related to curb ramps and sidewalks will feed into the ADA Transition Plan and goals and policies from the Bicycle

Plan were also considered.

Adopting this Plan will allow the City to apply for grant funds such as the One Bay Area Grant program or the Active Transportation Program (ATP) administered through the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in order to be able to implement the Plan. Additionally, the Plan will promote and advance the City's Complete Streets Policy, which has a goal of creating and maintaining streets that provide safe, comfortable, and convenient travel along and across streets through a comprehensive integrated transportation network that serves all categories of users, including pedestrians.

DISCUSSION

The Plan is intended as a long-range planning document striving towards a more walkable Santa Clara and providing the community an alternative mode of travel other than the automobile. Building comfortable, safe, and active pedestrian spaces increases the communities' access to local destinations such as transit and schools, creates opportunities for physical activity, and builds a comprehensive pedestrian network for the community. The Plan is consistent with the City's General Plan, specifically Policy 5.1.1-P15 which states, "Prior to 2023, update the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to support the City's vision for improving walkability and pedestrian safety, including identification of potential funding opportunities for implementation."

The Plan is divided into six main chapters:

Chapter 1, *Santa Clara Today*, provides an inventory of present-day walking facilities and pedestrian programs in Santa Clara. In addition, locations with high pedestrian demand are counted and summarized.

Chapter 2, *Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Policies*, captures the vision, goals and policy framework for the plan.

Chapter 3, *Outreach*, describes the variety of outreach methods used to engage the community and solicit input on walking needs and barriers in Santa Clara.

Chapter 4, *Needs Analysis*, describes the process used to identify the locations with the greatest pedestrian needs throughout the City using the four components of walkability: pedestrian safety, pedestrian comfort, convenience, and walkable land uses. Nine priority pedestrian zones were identified within the City through this process.

Chapter 5, *Recommendations*, contains an overall list of pedestrian infrastructure improvements on existing City streets that are recommended within the nine priority pedestrian zones identified in the Plan. In addition, pedestrian-related programs are recommended to compliment the proposed infrastructure improvements.

Chapter 6, *Implementation*, presents a prioritized list of individual infrastructure improvements, including evaluation criteria. This section also discusses potential funding sources which could be used to implement the plan.

Highlights from each Chapter of the Plan include:

Santa Clara Today

Existing Pedestrian Network: The Plan presents information about the existing network of pedestrian infrastructure within Santa Clara. It provides an inventory of the number of sidewalks and curb ramps currently in the City, as well as enhanced pedestrian crossing infrastructure such as Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB). The Plan notes that 73 percent of City streets have sidewalks on both sides and that 47 percent of City intersections have curb ramps. Currently, there are ten Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons also known as a High-Intensity Activated Crosswalk (HAWK) beacon and six RRFB's installed within the City. These pedestrian crossing devices can only be installed after the City completes a Traffic Engineering Study and when traffic warrants are met.

Walking Trips: Based on 2018 census survey information, walking to work as a transportation mode share was 3.7 percent. However, there are areas within Santa Clara that have higher walking mode share such as adjacent to Santa Clara University and the Caltrain station. In 2018, the walking mode share near the university averaged approximately 22 percent.

Current Programs: There are several current programs within the City that support walking as a transportation option. These programs focus on the "six E's" approach of Engineering improvements, Education, Encouragement, Equity, Enforcement and Evaluation. Some examples of these programs are: Safe Routes to School and School Crossing Guards. In addition, supporting an active and engaged BPAC within the City's governmental structure provides important community feedback and encourages walking advocacy, which aides in the City's efforts to improve walking.

Pedestrian Counts: Pedestrian counts were conducted in June 2019 at 11 locations throughout the City where a high pedestrian demand was anticipated. The counts varied from 296 to 1,853 pedestrians a day at locations such as the intersection of El Camino Real and Railroad Avenue and at the San Tomas Aquino Creek Trail (Agnew Road crossing).

Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The Plan establishes the City's vision, goals, objectives, and policies as it relates to walking as a viable transportation alternative in the City of Santa Clara. Presented below are the highlights of each.

- Vision: The vision statement included within the Plan states, "*Make Santa Clara a walkable community that provides a comprehensive network of safe, convenient, and comfortable pedestrian routes for people of all ages and abilities.*"
- Goals: To realize this vision, the Santa Clara pedestrian environment will be characterized by meeting the following five goals:
 - Safe: Design pedestrian environments that are accessible and reduce the risk of pedestrian-involved collisions.
 - Comfortable: Identify pedestrian improvements that create an easy-to-navigate and comfortable pedestrian environment.
 - Convenient: Coordinate future land use efforts that will provide more mobility options for people in Santa Clara to include walking for their utilitarian trips.
 - Active: Develop lively and unique pedestrian spaces that sustain healthy communities and generate economic activity.

- Implementable: Identify, develop, and maintain a complete and convenient pedestrian network.
- **Objectives and Policies:** The Plan establishes objectives and policies that support the goals listed above. For each goal, one or more objectives are listed with accompanying policies to support the success of each objective. Overall, there are 13 objectives supported by 46 proposed policies. The 13 objectives are listed below, and the supporting policies can be found in Chapter 2 of the Plan.
 - Reduce the risk of pedestrian-involved collisions
 - Improve accessibility of the pedestrian environment for people with disabilities
 - Create pedestrian-friendly crossings
 - Provide and maintain amenities along sidewalks, subject to funding, that provide opportunities for shade, rest, and visual interest to create an enjoyable and attractive walking environment
 - Provide pedestrian-scale lighting to promote attractive, distinctive, and safe pedestrian environments
 - Promote the benefits of increased walking
 - Implement vehicular traffic calming to increase pedestrian comfort
 - Integrate walkability concepts into comprehensive planning processes
 - Integrate the outcomes of the Santa Clara Community Placemaking process with other City processes
 - Develop and foster ground-floor land uses that benefit the pedestrian experience
 - Create opportunities to integrate public health outcomes into pedestrian projects, such as walking campaigns for larger events
 - Obtain funding for all high priority project recommendations from the Plan by 2027
 - Conduct ongoing planning and evaluation for pedestrian facilities

Establishing vision, goals, objectives, and policies for the Plan provided the framework by which the remaining contents of the Plan were developed.

Outreach

Community engagement was a major component of developing the Plan and a variety of outreach opportunities were used to seek input from stakeholders. The process also included coordination and feedback from City of Santa Clara Committees/Commissions such BPAC, Senior Advisory Commission, Americans with Disabilities Act Committee, Youth Commission, and Parks and Recreation Commission. The following outreach methods were implemented over the course of the process:

- Social media posts (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Nextdoor, Channel 15)
- City Manager Bi-Weekly Blogs
- Community workshops (3)
- Pop-up events (4)
- City walking tours (3)
- Safe Routes to School walking audits (2)
- Online interactive survey and mapping tool
- City website

By reaching out to stakeholders, the City was able to obtain valuable community input that supported the development of the Plan's Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Policies related to walking in the City. Additionally, the community identified walking needs as well as barriers to walking in Santa Clara and provided feedback on the draft project and program recommendations included within the Plan.

Needs Analysis

While there are various locations that need pedestrian improvements throughout the City, the needs analysis process focused on identifying the locations with the greatest need. The analysis looked at four components of walkability throughout the City: pedestrian safety, pedestrian comfort, convenience, and walkable land uses. A summary of each component of walkability is presented below:

Pedestrian Safety: Between 2014 and 2018, there were 160 pedestrian-involved collisions in Santa Clara, with ten pedestrian fatalities. However, the number of pedestrian-involved collisions has been declining every year since 2012. The number of pedestrian-involved collisions increases during evening rush hour (5 p.m.) and 58 percent of them occur within a street intersection. Over three quarters of all pedestrian crashes took place south of the Caltrain line. Many of the intersections with multiple pedestrian crashes are located along El Camino Real. Other noteworthy corridors associated with pedestrian collisions are Monroe Street, Lafayette Street, and Kiely Boulevard.

Pedestrian Comfort: Pedestrian comfort relates to how pleasant of a walking experience a person has along their walking route. Factors taken into consideration are the presence of curb ramps and sidewalks, barriers encountered along the route such as poor lighting, challenging crossings, uneven or obstructed sidewalks, speed of traffic, and type of roadway. Areas identified as having low comfort for pedestrians include the El Camino Real corridor, Kiely Boulevard corridor, areas near Homestead Road and Los Padres Boulevard east of Central Park, and residential areas south of Montague Expressway and east of Lafayette Street.

Convenient Access: The Plan analyzed walking access to key neighborhood-serving destinations such as neighborhood shopping centers, schools, parks, libraries, and transit centers. A five-minute walk is considered a reasonable distance for people to reach their destination before they consider other travel modes. Areas within the City that are important for promoting walking-length trips to neighborhood-serving destinations include:

- *Montague Neighborhood:* This neighborhood provides access to a high density of parks, schools, and the Northside Branch Library.
- *El Camino Real:* El Camino Real, especially between Kiely Boulevard and Scott Boulevard, has a high number of public-identified walking destinations.
- *Downtown Santa Clara:* The area surrounding Santa Clara University has the highest access to community-serving destinations and transit in the city.
- *Saratoga Creek:* Residential areas on either side of Saratoga Creek can use walking routes to access parks and schools in the area.
- *Central Park:* The neighborhoods surrounding Central Park can access Central Park, Central Park Library, and nearby schools.

Walkable Land Uses: A mix of different land uses can be found within Santa Clara, but not every area is suited to become a denser walkable area with a mix of residential, retail, and services. Some areas

within the city where walking is currently supported or could be further enhanced include the following:

- *Downtown Santa Clara*: The shorter street blocks in this area surrounding the University creates a connected and permeable pedestrian environment. Pedestrian permeability refers to creating an environment with shorter, more direct, and connected pedestrian access to destinations.
- *Central Santa Clara*: Block lengths increase slightly west of the downtown area, but the mix of high density residential and commercial uses allows people to access daily goods and services by foot.
- *West El Camino Real*: If approved, the El Camino Real Specific Plan will likely identify the intensification of land uses along this roadway. Additionally, this specific plan will focus on how to increase pedestrian permeability and walkability for the neighborhoods within walking distance to this corridor.
- *Lawrence Station Area*: The anticipated transit-oriented development around the station focuses on providing a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- *Tasman East/Related Santa Clara*: The area within and surrounding the Tasman East Specific Plan will have a pedestrian focus that supports proposed retail uses in addition to surrounding transit such as the Lick Mill Station.
- *City North*: The Patrick Henry Specific Plan effort will provide a focus on the pedestrian environment surrounding Mission College and along Great America Parkway.

After considering the four components of walkability discussed above, the needs analysis identified nine priority pedestrian zones needing the most improvement to pedestrian safety and comfort and having the most potential to become denser walkable nodes close to community destinations. The nine zones are listed below and shown in Attachment 2:

- Rivermark Lickmill Area
- Downtown/University Area
- Central Santa Clara Area
- Central Park/Kiely Boulevard
- Saratoga Creek Area
- El Camino Real West
- El Camino Real Central
- El Camino Real East
- Scott/Monroe Area.

The project recommendations for this Plan are centered around these nine zones. While the Plan prioritizes investment in these zones, the City will continue to invest opportunistically and respond to needs outside of these zones as well.

Recommendations

Based on the needs and opportunities identified through the evaluation of existing conditions, community input, and data-driven analysis, a recommended pedestrian network is proposed with the Plan. The recommendations are either classified as “Citywide” or “Spot/Targeted” improvements. The recommendations for these two sections of the Plan are presented below:

Citywide Recommendations: These types of recommendations describe larger Citywide initiatives that should be pursued throughout Santa Clara. The following are the five recommended Citywide initiatives included with the Plan:

- 1) *Vision Zero*: Adopt a Vision Zero Policy by 2024. Vision Zero is a framework that evaluates roadway design, speeds, behaviors, technology, and policies and sets an action plan to achieve the shared goal of zero fatalities and severe injuries.
This is also a Citywide Recommendation within the City's recently adopted Bicycle Plan Update 2018 as this would benefit both bicyclists and pedestrians.
- 2) *Safe Routes to School*: Develop a City Safe Routes to School Plan that creates a vision and outlines infrastructure and programmatic recommendations. Safe Routes to School promotes walking and bicycling to school in a safe and supportive environment through education and encouragement activities.
The City currently has a Safe Routes to School Program and the program helps to identify infrastructure needs around schools within the City. However, a Safe Routes to School Plan can compile all the infrastructure projects identified through our Safe Routes to School Program and prioritize them and provide cost estimates for each of the projects.
- 3) *Placemaking and Land Use Planning*: Follow Santa Clara's Community Placemaking Process when developing Specific Plans and updating the General Plan. This process is managed by the Community Development Department and allows the community to have a larger role in the design and development of their public spaces.
- 4) *Wayfinding*: Develop a wayfinding plan for priority pedestrian zones. Well-crafted wayfinding systems encourage people walking to go that extra mile, explore new areas, and foster a sense of place.
- 5) *Lighting*: Review the potential for updating street light guidelines and light level goals that meet or exceed current American National Standard Institute (ANSI)/Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) recommended best practices for roadway lighting.

These initiatives would require additional resources to implement and would be dependent on outside funding (i.e. grant opportunities).

Targeted Improvements (also referred to as "Spot Improvements" in the Plan): In addition to Citywide recommendations, the Plan provides recommendations for targeted improvements where there are specific walking challenges identified through the Plan development process. These improvements are referred to as "Spot Improvements" and can be classified as crossing improvements, signal improvements, or transit stop improvements. A pedestrian recommendation "toolbox" was developed, which discusses what type of improvements should be considered under each classification. For example, in relation to crossing improvements, a curb ramp can be recommended at a spot location. For signal improvements, a pedestrian countdown signal can be recommended, while a transit waiting area improvement can be recommended under transit stop improvements. Each specific location will require an engineering study and staff may elect to not utilize the "toolbox" if the specific situation warrants an alternate improvement. Attachment 3 provides the different types of infrastructure improvements contained within the pedestrian "toolbox".

The Plan recommends 112 spot improvements located at intersections within the nine pedestrian priority zones. It should be noted that improvements recommended at the intersections can be a combination of crossing, signal, and/or transit stop improvements. For example, at the intersection of Lick Mill Boulevard and Tasman Drive within the Rivermark Lickmill Area pedestrian priority zone,

both signal and transit stop improvements are recommended. Attachment 4 provides the location and the recommendation for each of the spot improvements within each of the nine pedestrian priority zones. The legend for each map within Attachment 4 identifies what type of improvement is recommended at each spot location. A more detailed explanation of what type of improvement is recommended at each of the 112 spot improvements can be found in Attachment 5.

Besides spot improvements at intersections, the Plan also recommends installing sidewalk and curb ramps where they are missing within the pedestrian priority zones to close gaps and complete the pedestrian network. The locations of where these types of facilities should be installed are also shown in Attachment 4.

In summary, the Plan recommends a total of 382 projects (112 spot improvements, 243 curb ramp improvements, and 27 sidewalk improvements) with an estimated construction cost of approximately \$194 million in 2019 dollars.

Implementation

Priority Projects: To assist the City in evaluating and prioritizing projects that generate the greatest value at the lowest cost, the Plan establishes the following six evaluation criteria: 1) safety/collision reduction, 2) pedestrian comfort, 3) destination accessibility, 4) community identified need, 5) consistency with other plans, and 6) feasibility. A more detailed description of each criteria is included on page 79 of the Plan. Based on scoring, projects were ranked as either high priority, medium priority, or lower priority. When evaluated against the six criteria, 79 of the total 382 recommended projects in the Plan were considered high priority projects. Of the 79 high priority projects, 38 are curb ramp projects, 10 are sidewalk corridor projects and 31 are spot improvements. The 79 high priority projects would result in improvements with an estimated construction cost of approximately \$60 million in 2019 dollars. The Plan recommends a goal that funding for all the high priority projects be obtained by 2027. Attachment 6 provides an overall summary of the high priority projects.

It is important to note that this is a Master Plan and does not guarantee funding or guarantee all projects included in it will be constructed in accordance with the approved Plan. There is the potential that the City may not elect to move forward with some projects, or the City may modify projects that are shown in the Plan. In addition, projects would also need further study and analysis before implementation as discussed in the Plan.

Funding Recommendations: The Plan identifies several funding strategies to support completion of the proposed pedestrian network expansion. While most of the strategies involve receiving grants from other local, state, or federal agencies, the Plan does identify private development opportunities as an additional means to support build out of the Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The adoption of the Plan is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Section 15262 of the California Public Resource Code. This is a planning document and future environmental action will be considered for each project contained within the Plan.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no immediate fiscal impact resulting from adoption of the Plan. However, by adopting this Plan, the City will increase its eligibility for grant funds to implement pedestrian projects within the City. It is important to note that there will be a future cost associated with implementing each of the

proposed improvements contained within the Plan. The Plan recommends a total of 382 projects (112 spot improvements, 243 curb ramp improvements, and 27 sidewalk improvements) with an estimated construction cost of approximately \$194 million in 2019 dollars. There is currently no dedicated funding source to implement the Plan; However, staff will explore potential grant sources to help budget some initial projects.

COORDINATION

The Plan has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, the City's BPAC, the City's Senior Advisory Commission, and the City's Americans with Disabilities Act Committee.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall Council Chambers. A complete agenda packet is available on the City's website and in the City Clerk's Office at least 72 hours prior to a Regular Meeting and 24 hours prior to a Special Meeting. A hard copy of any agenda report may be requested by contacting the City Clerk's Office at 408-615-2220, email clerk@santaclaraca.gov <<mailto:clerk@santaclaraca.gov>> or at the public information desk at any City of Santa Clara public library.

On October 28, 2019, the City's BPAC reviewed the Plan and recommended that City Council adopt the Plan.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Adopt a resolution adopting the Santa Clara Pedestrian Master Plan.
2. Do not adopt a resolution adopting the Santa Clara Pedestrian Master Plan and direct staff to revise the Plan based on City Council direction.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Adopt a resolution adopting the Santa Clara Pedestrian Master Plan.

Reviewed by: Craig Mobeck, Director of Public Works

Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Santa Clara Pedestrian Master Plan
2. Pedestrian Priority Zones
3. Pedestrian "Toolbox"
4. Maps of all project recommendations
5. Detailed spot location project recommendations
6. High priority projects
7. Resolution