



DATE: April 8, 2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council through City Manager

FROM: Bjorn Gripenburg – Project Manager, Public Works and Utilities (PW&U)
Ken Eichstaedt, PE, TE – Senior Traffic Engineer, PW&U
Gina Benedetti-Petnic, PE – Interim Director, PW&U

SUBJECT: Resolution Selecting Design Alternatives for the D Street Traffic Calming and 5th Street Neighborhood Greenway Pilot Projects

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council approve a Resolution selecting design alternatives for the D Street Traffic Calming and 5th Street Neighborhood Greenway Pilot Projects.

BACKGROUND

Policy Context: Active Transportation, Complete Streets, and Vision Zero Efforts

The City of Petaluma has increasingly emphasized active transportation, complete streets, and Vision Zero in recent years. Active transportation includes any form of personal, car-free transportation, whether by foot, wheelchair, or other assistive mobility devices, bike, scooter, skateboard, etc. Complete streets provide safe, accessible, and enjoyable travel for all road users, including those using active transportation. Complete streets implementation is required per Caltrans Director's Policy 37 and in the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) Resolution No. 4493. Vision Zero aims to eliminate all severe and fatal traffic collisions through engineering, education, and enforcement strategies. Each has been supported by policy shifts at the local, regional, state, and federal levels, generally stemming from recognitions that improving transportation options and reducing car dependency has numerous benefits, most notably by enabling people to reduce their transportation costs, meet their recommended daily activity levels, and reduce their carbon footprints.

On January 4, 2016, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2016-004 N.C.S., Resolution Adopting a Complete Streets Policy, outlining the City's commitment and approach to complete streets. The Policy states that "all transportation improvements will be planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to support safe and convenient access for all users and increase mobility for walking, bicycling, and transit use."

On May 16, 2022, the City Council adopted Resolution 2022-075 N.C.S., Resolution Approving a Request to Adopt the Sonoma County Vision Zero Action Plan and Commit to City-Level Actions to Reduce Traffic Fatalities to Zero by the Year 2030. The Vision Zero Action Plan identifies high-injury corridors and intersections and the leading causes of severe and fatal collisions throughout the County, along with recommended strategies to eliminate them.

On August 1, 2022, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2022-131 N.C.S., Approving a Local Road Safety Plan and Authorizing the Director of Public Works and Utilities, or Designee(s), to Implement this Plan. The Local Road Safety Plan created a framework to systematically identify traffic safety issues through collision data and community engagement and recommended strategies to address these issues.

In accordance with the policies and plans described above, staff approaches all street design efforts from a safety and accessibility lens, seeking opportunities to improve active transportation accommodations, slow traffic, and reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions.

D Street Traffic Calming & Active Transportation Improvements Pilot Project

The D Street Traffic Calming & Active Transportation Improvements Pilot Project (Petaluma Boulevard South to City Limits) aims to deliver and test safety improvements for all road users ahead of a roadway utility and reconstruction project tentatively scheduled for 2025/26.

This project was included in the Council-adopted FY22/23 and 23/24 Capital Improvement Programs and identified as a high-priority project for the following reasons:

- The corridor was identified as part of the County’s High-Injury Network through the Sonoma County Vision Zero Action Plan, and several intersections were identified as priorities in the City’s Local Road Safety Plan due to collision history.
- Speed surveys conducted in 2019 through 2020 indicate that there are speeding issues on the corridor, particularly south of 6th Street.
- The upcoming utility and road reconstruction project presents an opportunity to implement lasting design changes to the corridor; the City would like to evaluate and seek feedback on these potential design elements before considering whether to include or adjust them in the reconstruction project.

Corridor At-a-Glance: Petaluma Boulevard South to City Limits

- **Street Classification:** D Street is classified as an arterial roadway in the General Plan 2025. Arterials are the highest of four street classifications and are intended to carry the most significant traffic volume in the City’s street network. These are generally streets that offer the most essential level of convenience and connectivity for longer-distance travel through town.
- **Average Daily Traffic Volume:** D Street carries an average of around 9,000 vehicles per weekday on the busiest stretch, between 4th and 5th Streets. Traffic ranges from 6,500 to 7,500 vehicles per weekday between 6th Street and El Rose Drive/Sunnyslope Avenue and

around 3,500 vehicles between El Rose Drive/Sunnyslope Avenue and Windsor Drive/Pinnacle Drive.

- **Vehicle Speeds:** Speed surveys conducted in December 2019-January 2020 identified the most problematic area is between 6th Street and El Rose Drive/Sunnyslope Avenue, where top speeds exceeded the 30 MPH posted speed limit by 13 MPH, and the 85th percentile speed exceeded the posted speed limit by six MPH.
- **Freight Route Designation:** The D Street corridor is a designated truck route, as defined in Petaluma Municipal Code Chapter 11.52—Commercial Vehicles and Truck Routes.
- **Bike Route Designation:** D Street is classified as a Class II (on-street bike lane) bike route in the City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (adopted as part of General Plan 2025 through Resolution No. 2008-085 N.C.S.). While the stretch between 4th Street and Laurel Avenue is signed and marked as having bike lanes, these areas are shared with on-street parking and are two feet short in each direction of current minimum widths for a combined parking and bike lane. As a result, people biking in the parking area must merge into traffic whenever they encounter a parked car.
- **Collisions:** From 2017-2021, there were 63 reported collisions along the project corridor, 37 of which resulted in injuries and two of which resulted in severe injuries. Eight collisions involved pedestrians, seven of whom were crossing in a marked crosswalk. Most collisions occurred in intersections at the north end of the project corridor between 6th Street and Petaluma Blvd. South. The leading causes of collisions were automobile right-of-way (22%), unsafe speed (21%), traffic signals and signs (14%), and pedestrian right-of-way (11%).

First Round of Community Engagement

Staff hosted a virtual community workshop on October 18, 2022, to introduce the project and solicit feedback. The workshop was noticed through 1) postcards to roughly 5000 addresses in west Petaluma, including the entire D Street corridor and adjacent neighborhoods, 2) an advertisement in the *Argus-Courier*, and 3) the City’s Community Update e-newsletter, 4) posts to the City’s social media channels, and 5) emails to people who had signed up for updates on the project webpage. Seventy people attended the workshop.

At the meeting, attendees were encouraged to sign up for project updates. Following the meeting, subscribers were notified of an online survey from October 21 to November 10, 2022. The survey received 138 responses, roughly two-thirds of which said they lived on or near D Street. Survey results are summarized in **Attachment 3**.

Staff also presented to and sought feedback from the City’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee on November 2, 2022.

After distilling the first round of community engagement, staff identified the following community priorities, which then informed the initial design development:

- 1) Improve existing pedestrian crossings and add new ones, especially between 8th Street and El Rose Drive/Sunnyslope Avenue, a one-third-mile stretch without marked crosswalks.
- 2) Slow vehicle traffic throughout the corridor.

- 3) Improve traffic congestion.
- 4) Improve bike lanes.

Design Development and Second Community Workshop

Staff and consultants prepared a design to accomplish the goals described above. The proposed design included several traffic calming, pedestrian, and intersection safety enhancements and bike lanes in both directions between Petaluma Boulevard South and City Limits. In addition to upgrading all existing crosswalks, the proposal included new ones at Laurel Avenue/12th Street and 10th Street, among the most popular requests from the first round of engagement.

In order to provide bike lanes in both directions, on-street parking would need to be consolidated to one side of the street between 4th Street and Laurel Avenue. Staff performed three-weekday parking counts (morning, afternoon, and nighttime) and found that, on average, 14 percent of on-street parking was utilized between 4th Street and Laurel Avenue. Parking counts were used to identify which side of the street had higher parking utilization; the resulting proposed configuration included parking on the inbound side between 4th Street and 8th Street and the outbound side between 8th Street and Laurel Avenue. If all cars parked on both sides of the street were consolidated to one side, staff estimates that typical utilization would be 30-35 percent for the entire corridor and 45-55 percent for the busiest blocks between 4th and 6th Street. Parking counts are included in **Attachment 5**.

Additionally, staff proposed removing approximately four parking spaces on the inbound side of the street between the area just south of Michelle Lane and El Rose Drive/Sunnyslope Avenue in order to provide continuous bike accommodations through this stretch while maintaining three to four parking spaces on the outbound side of the street.

A second virtual workshop (noticed using the same methods as outlined above) was held on April 26, 2023, to share and collect feedback on the proposed design. Several attendees raised concerns about the parking consolidation and requested more opportunities to provide input on the design. In response, staff updated and re-opened the survey from May 8-27, receiving 261 responses. Survey results are summarized in **Attachment 4**. Support levels for the various parking and bike lane configurations are shown below in **Figure 1** and filtered by response groups.

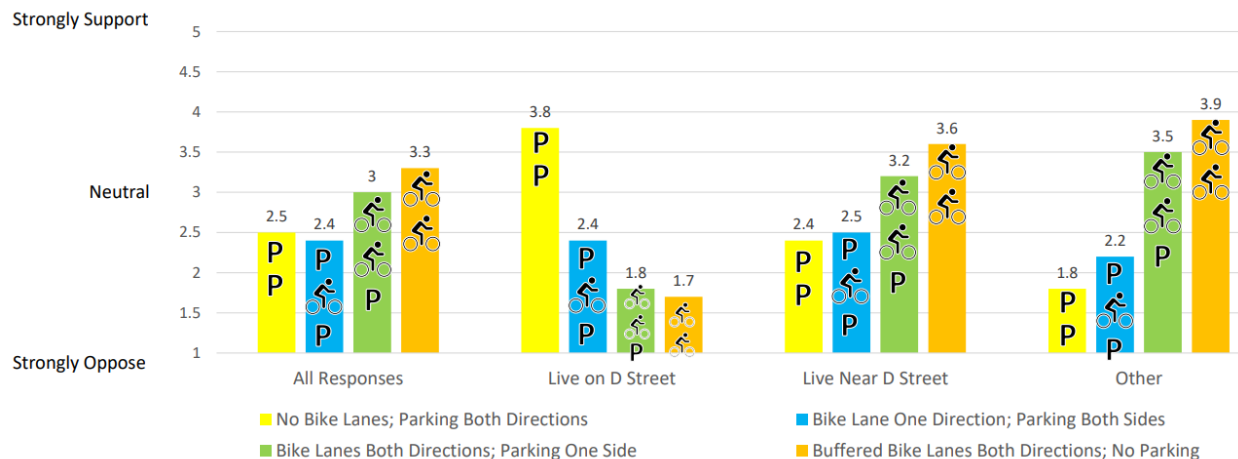


Figure 1: Survey #2 – Support levels for various bike lane/parking options, filtered by response groups.

Other pedestrian improvements and traffic calming elements have been well-received, including a new traffic diverter at the 5th Street intersection that would restrict left turns for drivers off D onto 5th Street and through and left turn movements off 5th onto D Street. Staff recommended the diverter in response to the high rate of collisions at the intersection and in support of safer crossings of D Street for the 5th Street Neighborhood Greenway.

5th Street Neighborhood Greenway Pilot Project

The 5th Street Neighborhood Greenway aims to take advantage of a flat, low-traffic residential street to create an alternate route to Petaluma Boulevard South and 6th Street, linking downtown with Petaluma’s southern neighborhoods for active transportation users of all ages and ability levels.

Three streets run from Western Avenue to Mt. View Avenue: Petaluma Boulevard South, Keller/5th Street, and Howard/6th Street. 5th Street has the lowest street classification, traffic volume, and vehicle speed, unlike 6th Street, which has no hills. However, due to 5th Street’s role as a local street not intended for through traffic, its intersections with arterial and collector streets, such as Mt. View Avenue, I Street, and D Street, currently prioritize throughput of vehicle traffic on the higher volume streets and therefore need improvements to facilitate safe and easy crossings for people walking and bicycling.

“Neighborhood greenways” (known in some communities as “bike boulevards”) are low-speed, low-traffic residential streets that are enhanced with crossing, traffic calming, and traffic diversion elements to discourage or prohibit non-local traffic and create a safe and inviting street for active transportation users. While they do not generally provide the most direct or convenient routes—as most non-residential destinations, such as schools, parks, shopping, and dining, are located along arterial and collector streets—they play an essential role in cities’ active transportation networks and with relatively few improvements needed compared to major street redesigns.

Community Engagement and Design Development

Staff hosted a virtual community workshop on November 9, 2022, to introduce the project and solicit feedback. The workshop was noticed through 1) postcards to roughly 2390 addresses along the 5th Street corridor and in adjacent neighborhoods, 2) the City's Community Update e-newsletter, 3) posts to the City's social media channels, and 4) emails to people who had signed up for updates on the project webpage. Fifty people attended the workshop.

At the meeting, attendees were encouraged to sign up for project updates. Following the meeting, subscribers were notified of an online survey from November 14 to December 20, 2022. The survey received 77 responses, roughly two-thirds of which said they lived on or near 5th Street. Survey results are summarized in **Attachment 6**.

Staff also presented to and sought feedback from the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee on January 4, 2023.

After distilling the first round of community engagement, staff identified the following community priorities:

- 1) Provide safe, easy crossings at major intersections.
- 2) Incorporate street trees, greenery, and public art where possible.
- 3) Slow traffic.
- 4) Improve pavement.

Overall, the project has been well received, with the primary concern raised thus far being the potential diversion of through-traffic from 5th Street onto 6th Street. However, given its classification as a local street, 5th Street is not intended for through-traffic, and local traffic will still be allowed along the entire corridor. The traffic diverter at 5th and D Street (described above) is the only proposed element that would change traffic circulation. Count data collected at the 5th and D Street intersection suggests impacts will be minor, with 80-90 vehicle trips diverted throughout the surrounding street grid in the morning and afternoon peak hours. Staff would continue to collect count data in the area to monitor impacts after the diverter is installed.

DISCUSSION

Staff will present **Attachment 2** and seek feedback on two design alternatives for D Street and the proposed design elements for the 5th Street Neighborhood Greenway.

The D Street pilot project alternatives are as follows:

- 1) **Option 1:** Continuous bike lanes on D Street between City Limits and Petaluma Boulevard South, with parallel on-street parking on the inbound side between 4th and 8th Street and outbound side between 8th Street and Laurel Avenue.
- 2) **Option 2:** No bike lanes between 4th Street and Laurel Avenue, with parallel on-street parking on both sides of the street along the same stretch.

All other proposed design elements are the same in both options. As noted above, the proposal also includes removal of approximately four parking spaces on the inbound side of the street between the area just south of Michelle Lane and El Rose Drive/Sunnyslope Avenue in order to provide continuous bike accommodations through this stretch while maintaining three to four parking spaces on the outbound side of the street.

The 5th Street Neighborhood Greenway proposes safety and traffic calming enhancements throughout the corridor, most notably including a traffic diverter at D Street, traffic circles at G and I Streets, and speed cushions between I Street and Mt. View Avenue.

The projects are recommended for implementation through the City's proposed On-Call Striping Contract, providing staff with greater flexibility to adjust the designs to match available and appropriate funding levels for both efforts.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

As outlined in the "Background" section above, both projects have involved extensive community engagement that have included the following:

- 1) Community meetings are noticed through postcards, emails to project subscribers, the City's Community Update e-newsletter, and social media channels. The first D Street community meeting was also noticed through an *Argus-Courier* advertisement.
- 2) Surveys noticed through emails to project subscribers, the City's Community Update e-newsletter, and social media channels.
- 3) Presentations to the City's Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee at the regular, publicly-noticed meetings.

This item appeared in the tentative City Council agenda for April 8, 2024, at its March 18, 2024, meeting, a publicly-noticed meeting. It was also noticed through postcards sent to all properties within over one-quarter mile of both project corridors, door hangers on all properties along and within one block of the project corridors, emails to project subscribers, the City's Community Update e-newsletter, and social media channels.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

This project supports the City Council's Safe Mobility and Connectivity / Safe Streets Goal, a top ten priority for fiscal years 2021-23, as well as the following Council Workplan items:

- #15: Identify funds and develop plans to improve Petaluma's streets and roads.
- #18: Establish and improve paths as useful transportation options and make walking and biking easy, fun, and safe.
- #20: Better integrate multi-modal transportation with street designs.
- #84: Enhance pavement management program to improve the safety and serviceability of our roads and to protect drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

- #85: Implement City Vision Zero plan with a focus on pedestrian and cyclist safety with improvements to uncontrolled crosswalks, curb ramps, sidewalks, and bicycle infrastructure.

CLIMATE ACTION/SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Both projects seek to improve safety and accessibility for people using active transportation, thereby reducing car dependency and the associated greenhouse gas emissions. Transportation is Petaluma's leading source of greenhouse gas emissions, at 66.6 percent.¹

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Both projects will be categorically exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to Article 19, Section 15301(c), of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (“CEQA Guidelines”) because the project consists of the repair, maintenance, and minor alteration of existing public facilities involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. Accordingly, there is negligible or no expansion of use beyond what currently exists, and there are no cumulative impacts, unusual circumstances, or other factors that would make the exemption inapplicable pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. The projects are also exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land) which explicitly includes as one of its listed examples, “The creation of bicycle lanes on existing rights-of-way”, and the projects will not remove trees.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

As noted above, staff recommends leveraging the City’s proposed On-Call Striping Contract to improve both corridors. This will provide staff with greater flexibility to adjust the designs to match available and appropriate funding levels for both efforts, which draw from the same funding sources used to deliver other street improvements, including those identified through the new Safe Streets Nomination Program and Safe Routes to Schools Task Force.

The adopted FY24 budget for D Street Improvements (Project #C16102251) and Traffic Calming & Neighborhood Greenways (Project #C16102146) were \$500,000 and \$200,000, respectively.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternatively, the City Council may direct staff to develop and implement different design alternatives. The feasibility and complexity of any requested revisions will determine the financial and timeline impacts.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution
2. Presentation
3. D Street Survey #1 Results

¹ Sonoma County Greenhouse Gas Inventory - 2020 Update, Regional Climate Protection Authority

4. D Street Survey #2 Results
5. D Street Parking Counts
6. 5th Street Survey Results