



# Agenda Report

**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, September 13, 2022

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR MERRIAM  
PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES DIRECTOR DI RENZO  
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**THROUGH:** CITY MANAGER MENDEZ

**SUBJECT:** RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR CALTRANS PROJECT 05-1P110  
INTEGRATING COMPLETE STREETS INFRASTRUCTURE AND  
COMPONENTS ALONG STATE ROUTE 152 WITHIN THE CITY OF  
WATSONVILLE

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## **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Staff recommends City Council adopt a resolution of support for Caltrans Project 05-1P110 integrating Complete Streets infrastructure and components along State Route 152 within the City of Watsonville.

## **BACKGROUND:**

At the August 30, 2022 meeting, City Council participated in a study session to discuss Caltrans Project 05-1P110. In their project, Caltrans is proposing to include various Complete Streets infrastructure and components. During the study session, staff described the proposed improvements, discussed the potential impacts, and addressed questions by the Council. Input received from Council was used to finalize a resolution of support for the Caltrans project.

Upon receipt of the Resolution, Caltrans will begin developing a project scope, evaluating possible impacts, recommending needed mitigations and working with the City and community to ensure that the improvements address City concerns. The first step or phase in the process is to prepare a Project Initiation Document or PID which identifies the project scope. Caltrans needs this scope to proceed with subsequent phases. The Resolution supports Caltrans preparing a PID and will "get the ball rolling". Throughout the various project phases, there will be many opportunities for the City and the community to provide input.

As the proposed project and possible impacts are evaluated, City staff will determine if other improvements may be needed to mitigate these impacts and work toward implementing them. If studies show that the proposed complete streets improvements will impact existing traffic patterns, City staff will work with others, including Caltrans, to provide improvements to address these changes.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### Complete Streets

In December 2021, Caltrans adopted a Complete Streets Policy (Caltrans Director's Policy no. DP-37) for all new transportation projects it funds or oversees to ensure they include "Complete Street" features that provide safe and accessible options for people walking, biking and taking transit. This policy is intended to expand the availability of sustainable transportation options to help meet the state's climate, health and equity goals.

A Complete Street provides mobility for people of all ages and abilities, particularly those who are walking, biking, using assistive mobility devices, and riding transit. Complete Streets offer several benefits, including enhancing safety and creating more sustainable transportation options to decrease dependence on driving and improving public health by encouraging active transportation like walking and biking. As such, a Complete Street is an enhanced transportation facility that provides comfortable and convenient mobility, and improves accessibility and connectivity to destinations for all travelers, including pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

Complete Streets are especially attuned to the needs of people walking, using assistive mobility devices and maximize the existing right-of-way by prioritizing space efficient forms of mobility, such as walking and biking, while also facilitating goods movement in a manner with the least environmental and social impacts. Complete Streets shift the focus from vehicle movement as the primary goal to the movement of people and goods. The "all ages and abilities" concept strives to serve all users regardless of age, gender, race, or ability and inclusive of the mobility needs of children, older adults and people with disabilities by embodying best practices related to traffic calming, speed reduction, universal design, and roadway design to increase user safety and comfort as well as accessibility.

### Traffic Safety

Between 2013 and 2019, Watsonville had a high pedestrian collision rate. During these years, the California Office of Traffic Safety Crash Rankings rated the City 4<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> in the number of pedestrian collisions for cities with a population of 50,001 to 100,000.

The City has worked on improving mobility, accessibility and safety, given these high rates of pedestrian collisions. The City has developed and adopted several plans that embrace the concept of Complete Streets that were prepared in partnership with and partially funded by Caltrans. These include:

1. Downtown Watsonville Complete Streets Plan (completed in 2019)

2. Complete Streets to Schools Plan (2020)
3. Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan (drafted this year)

The City also adopted the 2020 Vision Zero Action Plan. Each Plan included public outreach, analysis of existing conditions and/or collision data and development of a list of project, programs and policies that would help reduce collisions.

The City has implemented Complete Streets recommendations as funding and resources come available. Recommended improvements installed to date include:

1. Upgraded bike lanes on Harkins Slough Road and Pennsylvania Drive
2. High-visibility crosswalks on Rodriguez Street and adjacent to many schools
3. Flashing beacons and in-ground lighting on Harkins Slough Road at Sunset Vista Drive

The City has also secured funding for installation of a pedestrian bridge at the Harkins Slough Road crossing of Highway 1 and various pedestrian and bicycle improvements at local schools and within the downtown area.

#### Main Street Re-Imagined

One of the main objectives of the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan is to create a vibrant, safe, and active downtown. To help implement this vision, the Specific Plan calls for a number of measures, including allowing outdoor dining and seating to encourage activity and provide additional opportunities for community gathering; creating a complete and safe downtown for all users with pedestrian, bicycle, and mobility-aid friendly focused design; and improving pedestrian safety and comfort throughout the downtown through streetscape improvements.

As part of a robust community outreach for the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan, community members expressed support for “re-imagining” Main Street (State Route 152), including improving downtown’s walkability with streetscape and public improvements such as installing wider sidewalks to allow more room for pedestrians, adding parklets to allow more space for outdoor dining, and reducing the number of lanes on Main Street to calm traffic and make it safer for pedestrians.

A key roadway improvement identified in the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan, which was also included in the Downtown Watsonville Complete Streets Plan, involves reducing the number of travel lanes for Main Street from four to three with a center running left turn lane (or landscaped median) and one travel lane in each direction. As shown in the Mobility & Transportation Chapter of the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan, another integral roadway improvement identified to support multimodal travel, increase safety, and improve access involves converting the segments of State Route 152 along East Lake Avenue and East Beach Street, which currently operate as one-way couplets, into two-way streets.

Reducing travel lanes and slowing down traffic on Main Street in the downtown will discourage motorists from “driving through” the downtown to get to other destinations, and

help reserve the historic downtown core between Freedom and Riverside as a destination in itself, with slower vehicle speeds and a safer experience for pedestrians.

The Environmental Impact Report for the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan is currently underway, which includes a traffic analysis of the proposed lane reduction and East Lake/East Beach conversion.

#### Caltrans SHOPP Project Opportunity

Caltrans has been involved through the development and review of the various City Plans, as noted above. With the State's recent adoption of the Complete Streets Policy, they are now incorporating many of the complete streets recommendations into an upcoming State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) Project No. 05-1P110 on State Route 152 here in Watsonville.

The approximately 7.5-mile project follows State Route (SR) 152 from the intersection with SR 1 to approximately 2 miles east of the intersection with Holohan Rd/College Rd (See attached Vicinity Map). The construction budget is \$25M and installation is expected to begin in FY2031/32. Some of the improvements focus on maintaining and upgrading existing facilities and include the following:

1. Preserve Pavement. Rehabilitate or overlay the road surface for the full 7.5 miles.
2. Drainage. Rehabilitate Salsipuedes Creek Bridge which is a 15' diameter culvert, and replace culverts at SR152/Beach St and at Beach St/Carr St.
3. Signals. Replace/upgrade the traffic signal at Main St and Pennsylvania Dr.
4. Curb Ramps. Repair and/or upgrade approximately 97 curb ramps to ensure compliance with ADA requirements.
5. Guardrail. Remove and replace approximately 900 feet of guardrail.
6. Signage and striping. Replace existing signage, traffic striping and markings with new and more reflective materials.

Some of the improvements will be new and are Complete Streets Elements recommended in the Downtown Specific Plan. These are:

1. Bicycle Improvements. These include adding approximately 13,000 feet of Class IV Separated Bikeways in the Eastbound and Westbound directions from Green Valley Rd. to Freedom Blvd. The project also includes installing Bicycle Conflict Markings or green markings at approximately 7 intersections.
2. Pedestrian Improvements. These include Curb Extension and Bulb Outs on portions of Main St, East Lake Ave and East Beach St.
3. Road Diet. The project proposes a road diet on Main St. between Freedom Blvd and Beach St that reduces the number of travel lanes from four to three with one lane in each direction and a middle turn lane. While the Caltrans project only includes the portion of Main Street between Freedom Blvd and East Beach Street, City staff recommends that a separate City project extend the road diet to Riverside Drive. The project proposes to adjust the number of travel lanes, parking, bicycle and pedestrian improvements on the "couplet" portion of East Lake Avenue and East Beach Street. While conversion from one-way to two-way traffic on these streets is not proposed with

the Caltrans project, the improvements will be designed to allow for conversion at a future date.

### Schedule

Caltrans project schedule includes the following phases:

1. Project Initiation Document (PID). The State is starting this phase now. It involves defining the project scope, getting input from stakeholders and estimating the project cost and schedule.
2. Project Approval & Environmental Document (PA&ED). This phase is expected to begin in 2024. It involves conducting preliminary engineering activities and preparation of the project environmental documents in compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines.
3. Plans, Specifications & Estimate (PS&E). This phase is expected to begin in 2027. This is the detailed design and creates the construction documents that will be used for bidding and building the project.
4. Construction. With the construction documents complete, the project is put out to bid, the construction contract is awarded and the project is built. This is expected to begin in 2031.

### City Support

As a part of preparing the PID, the State has asked that the Watsonville City Council provide a resolution of support for the project before the end of October 2022 and that the resolution acknowledge that implementation of the proposed complete streets elements “will increase mobility, accessibility and safety for all users and may alter existing traffic patterns, increase vehicle congestion and impact travel behavior.”

Providing this resolution allows the City and Caltrans to agree on a project scope. With the scope defined, potential impacts can be assessed through traffic studies and environmental review and mitigations can be proposed and implemented. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) currently being prepared for the Downtown Specific Plan includes the improvements proposed by the Caltrans Project and will be completed early next year. The EIR includes a traffic study. Caltrans will also conduct an environmental analysis, including a traffic study, as part of their PID and PA&ED phases. Since these studies are being done early in the process, the City will have opportunity to identify and implement any improvements that may be needed to address changes in traffic patterns. The PID and PA&ED phases serve as milestones and provide opportunities for the City and Caltrans to review and assess the project prior to beginning final design.

The City and Caltrans have successfully worked together to develop the Downtown Watsonville Specific Plan and the proposed Caltrans Project. City staff anticipates continued collaboration with Caltrans to ensure the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit within and through the community.

### **Environmental Review:**

This resolution is not considered a project under the California Environmental Quality Act

(CEQA). The project itself and supporting CEQA documentation will be developed by Caltrans as part of their PID.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The resolution in support of the Caltrans SHOPP Project 05-1P110 is consistent with Strategic Plan Priorities:

- 1 - Housing
- 2 - Fiscal Health
- 3 - Infrastructure & Environment
- 4 - Economic Development
- 6 - Public Safety

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There will be no new financial impacts to the City as a result of the Resolution.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION:**

No reasonable alternatives are known at this time.

**ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):**

- 1 – Vicinity Map