



MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Brian Pedrotti, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Halcyon Complete Streets Plan Update

DATE: March 14, 2023

SUMMARY OF ACTION:

The purpose of this update is to provide the City Council an opportunity to review and provide comments on the draft Halcyon Complete Streets Plan.

IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:

The Halcyon Road Complete Streets Plan was originally funded with \$150,000 of State Highway Account – Sustainable Communities Grant Funding, with a \$19,434 local match funding. An additional \$82,066 in funding was needed to complete updates to the plan due to changing traffic patterns associated with US 101 closures and evaluations of alternatives for the intersection of Fair Oaks and Halcyon Road, as well as environmental review. The total amount spent for this work is \$229,597. Funding for the construction phase includes awards of \$250,000 in Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds, \$100,000 in Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) funds, \$750,000 in Community Betterment grant funding through the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), and \$8.1 million in Active Transportation Program (ATP) funding.

RECOMMENDATION:

Review the draft Halcyon Complete Streets Plan, receive public comment, and direct staff to solicit comment from stakeholders and community groups and schedule the item for Planning Commission and City Council hearings.

BACKGROUND:

Introduction

The City of Arroyo Grande has initiated a project to produce a "Complete Streets Plan" for Halcyon Road, a major urban arterial that provides access within the City connecting US 101 and State Route 1. The purpose of the Plan is to develop an improved transportation corridor that provides for safe mobility and accessibility for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit vehicles, trucks, and motorists. Presently, the Halcyon Road corridor does not provide necessary bicycle accommodations and lacks

Item 12.c.

adequate pedestrian accommodations. Unsignalized crossings and intersections with poor visibility, lack of sidewalk connectivity, the absence of bike lanes, unclear or poorly marked lane markings, and high vehicle speeds present challenges to overall corridor safety.

The Plan proposes multimodal transportation enhancements so that all travel modes are accommodated to promote safe and convenient walking and bicycling for residents and visitors alike. This Complete Streets Plan provides a framework within which to further develop specific designs. This document is intended to guide future improvements along the corridor as funds become available.

History of the Plan

The plan for a complete street for the Halcyon corridor started in 2013 when the City identified improvements that were needed and hired Omni-Means to prepare a technical memorandum for a Halcyon Road Corridor Study. This was followed in 2015 with the South Halcyon Corridor Study that identified needed improvements, including sidewalks and landscaping. In 2016, the City received a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning Grant Program that led to the creation of an initial draft Plan. The need for these improvements was reaffirmed in subsequent studies, such as the Circulation Element Update, the Local Road Safety Plan, and the Systemic Safety Analysis Report.

ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

The Halcyon Road corridor is a direct regional connector with a both local and through traffic. The Halcyon Road corridor provides access to some very significant resources within the City of Arroyo Grande and the adjacent unincorporated areas, including the South County's only hospital, the Arroyo Grande Community Hospital, Harloe Elementary School, and by extension, Arroyo Grande High School located on Fair Oaks Avenue near US 101. In addition, there are numerous commercial, industrial, and residential uses along the corridor. Halcyon Road is also a key facility for transporting agricultural products and farm workers between US 101 and SR 1, serving regional traffic between the Nipomo Mesa and destinations north. Since the closure of the median crossings such as El Camino Road on US 101 south of the City in 2019, Halcyon Road has experienced a significant uptick in traffic from rural Arroyo Grande and Nipomo residents heading north to connect with US 101.

Within the boundaries of the City, the Halcyon Road corridor runs generally north and south between El Camino Real and The Pike and is approximately 1.7 miles long. The character of Halcyon Road changes as it passes through three (3) distinct sections described in more detail below, from a primarily urban area at the north end, past a hospital and an elementary school, and finally through a residential neighborhood area, to the City limits.

Project Goals

Recognizing the unique and diverse character and needs of the Halcyon Road corridor, the draft Plan includes the following specific project goals:

- **Enhance Safety for All Modes of Travel** - Identify circulation improvements that enhance safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles to travel along and across Halcyon Road.
- **Improve Multimodal Connectivity** - For all age groups, improve multimodal connectivity by closing gaps to complete continuous walkways and bicycle facilities between residences, Harloe Elementary School, Arroyo Grande Community Hospital, parks, and retail destinations.
- **Provide Adequate Roadway Capacity for Diverse Travel Needs** - Adequate capacity on Halcyon Road needs to be provided for both local and inter-regional travel with intersection controls that promote both safe and efficient travel.
- **Promote Economic Vitality and Visual Character** - Plan Halcyon Road in a way that promotes multimodal travel options, local visual character, vibrant civic space, social interaction, and public health that fosters the local economy and creates a place one wants to be.
- **Recognize and Address the Urban and Rural Interface** - Embrace the diverse urban and rural communities Halcyon Road serves by recognizing the interface with a notable gateway between the two areas this road serves.
- **Recognize Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Air Quality Benefits** - Metrics of the Plan need to include environmental benefits including, but not limited to, reduced use of motor vehicles, reduced traffic congestion and reduced greenhouse gases.
- **Engage the Community** – Community involvement is essential so that the findings and recommendations in the Plan are drawn from public consensus and reflect the desires of the community.

Existing Conditions/Context Zones

The draft plan includes three “Context Zones,” essentially dividing the corridor into three existing sections as follows:

- Context Zone 1: El Camino Real to East Grand Avenue
- Context Zone 2: East Grand Avenue to Fair Oaks Avenue
- Context Zone 3: Fair Oaks Avenue to The Pike

Each Context Zone has its own adjacent land uses and roadway characteristics. Context Zone 1 includes the Arroyo Grande Police Station and the Arroyo Grande Cemetery, and is characterized by its proximity to US 101. This zone lacks bikes lanes and continuous sidewalk infrastructure and has inconsistent lane configurations through intersections. Context Zone 2 includes the Arroyo Grande Hospital, commercial, office, and medical offices, and is characterized by speeding, lack of accessible curb ramps, and limited

visibility due to on-street parking. Context Zone 3 includes Harloe Elementary and primarily residential land uses, and is characterized by similar issues, including speeding during school hours.

Overall Concepts and Draft Plan Recommendations

Each Context Zone in the draft Plan includes recommended improvements that are tailored specifically to that section based on the existing conditions, parking, land use, and intersecting streets. Some of the terms in the draft Plan, although common in the language of transportation engineers and planners, may be unfamiliar with the general public; therefore, the draft Plan includes a definitions section for many of these terms.

Context Zone 1 generally includes:

- One travel lane in each direction;
- Class II buffered bike lanes; and
- Parking only in front of the Arroyo Grande police station.

Context Zone 2 includes a more complicated mix of land uses and sections and therefore includes three general roadway segments as follows:

- A three-lane section with two travel lanes, a center turn lane, and buffered Class II Bike Lanes with on-street parking southbound between Grand Avenue and Dodson Way. In this section, the southbound bike lane has a buffer area on both sides between the parking for the door zone and between the travel lane.
- A brief section south of Dodson Way has a three-lane segment with a bike lane northbound, and a Class IV parking-protected bike lane southbound. Four on-street parking spaces are provided southbound in front of the Arroyo Grande Optometry building at Dodson Way.
- The third typical cross-section is between Dodson Way and Fair Oaks Boulevard. Also proposed, a three-lane segment with two travel lanes, a center turn lane, and Class II Buffered Bike Lanes northbound and southbound where achievable.

Context Zone 3 generally includes:

- Three lanes, with two travel lanes and a center turn lane;
- Class II Buffered Bike lanes where achievable;
- On-street parking along Halcyon Road northbound between Cameron Court and 130' north of Sandalwood Avenue; and
- Restricted left turns out of Farroll Avenue due to the severe delays currently experienced by turning motorists, multiple turning conflicts, and safety concerns with vehicles and schoolchildren at this intersection.

Fair Oaks Intersection Alternatives

Although the draft Plan is for the entire Halcyon Street corridor from US 101 to The Pike, special attention has been directed toward the intersection at Fair Oaks Avenue. The draft Plan presents conceptual alternatives for the Fair Oaks intersection based on long-term

traffic projections. Each of the alternatives would need to be further refined for ultimate design of a preferred concept. Over the course of discussion with the consultant, alternatives for a modern roundabout with larger central island and diameter and traffic signal with additional lanes were considered but ultimately deemed infeasible due to impacts to adjacent properties. In particular, these alternatives required the need for significant right-of-way on at least three corners of the intersection. Therefore, the draft Plan includes two tailored alternatives for the intersection of Halcyon Road and Fair Oaks Avenue that recognize the unique land uses and generally stay within the footprint of the existing right-of-way; a traffic signal upgrade with road diet (Alternative 1) and a smaller, compact roundabout concept with mountable center island (Alternative 2).

Alternative 1 – Traffic Signal Upgrade with Road Diet. This concept results in a signalized intersection with the road diet while providing enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities and minimizing impacts to existing rights-of-way. The proposed improvements to the intersection include installing green-colored Class II Bike Lanes on all approaches and delineating the bike lane through the intersection with green paint markings. Where right turn lanes are proposed, the Bike Lane would be located to the left of the right turn lane. This type of improvement reduces the risk of collisions between right-turning vehicles and bicyclists. In summary of the traffic operations analysis (page 43 of the draft Plan), the signalized intersection concept is anticipated to have very good access and comfort for bicycles and pedestrians and minimal need for additional right-of-way, but would have longer vehicles queues and a Level of Service (LOS) of C/D.

Alternative 2 – Compact Roundabout. This concept would replace the existing traffic signal at the intersection with a modern compact roundabout with single entry and exit lanes, except for the westbound approach, which proposes a right turn lane and a shared thru/left lane. There would be a single circulating lane around the roundabout. Motorists at the roundabout would be required to yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and bicyclists. Based on the traffic operations analysis, the compact roundabout concept would also have very good access and comfort for bicycles and pedestrians with a higher safety rating, and would result in shorter vehicles queues and a Level of Service (LOS) of B/C. This concept would have slightly more right-of-way needed, particularly at the northeast corner (Arroyo Grande Community Hospital).

Community Outreach

During the initial planning stages in 2016 and 2017, various types of outreach and opportunities for community input were provided. These included social media, printed media, pop-up workshops, community charrettes, and stakeholder meetings. A pop-up outreach survey was conducted between August 12-14 at three community events, including the Arroyo Grande Summer Carnival at Elm Street Park, the Saturday Farmers' Market, and a Summer Concert at the Heritage Square Park. The four charrettes were held on September 14-15, 2016, and April 12-13, 2017. A Stakeholder Advisory Group of 33 members was formed to discuss the corridor and provide input on key areas of concern

and potential improvements. In addition, a project-specific website was created for posting information, and an online survey was posted to better understand key issues.

Following a significant hiatus since these public outreach efforts, staff has met with and received additional input from some residents with concerns about vehicle speeds and turning movements on the Halcyon Road corridor, and more recently engaged with a residential group, the Halcyon Neighborhood Group, to discuss the status of the Plan. Staff plan to re-engage the stakeholders and neighborhood groups if directed by the City Council. One primary focus of the public outreach will be to provide information about roundabouts, and specifically the concepts for the intersection of Halcyon and Fair Oaks, as the compact roundabout alternative for this intersection would be the first of its kind in the City of Arroyo Grande if implemented.

Funding

This project (the Halcyon Complete Streets Plan) is funded with \$150,000 of State Highway Account – Sustainable Communities Grant funding with a \$19,434 local match. An additional \$82,066 in funding was needed to complete updates to the plan due to changing traffic patterns associated with US 101 closures and evaluations of alternatives for the intersection of Fair Oaks and Halcyon Road, as well as environmental review. The total amount spent for this work is \$229,597.

Funding for the construction phase includes awards of \$250,000 in Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds, \$100,000 in Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) funds, \$750,000 in Community Betterment grant funding through SLOCOG, and \$8.1 million in Active Transportation Program (ATP) funding. The total estimated budget for this work is \$9.2 million.

Next Steps

Following this update, and if directed by City Council, staff will begin public outreach of the draft Plan, including stakeholder and neighborhood meetings. Staff will also complete and circulate the environmental document prepared for the Plan in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in April 2023, schedule the item for Planning Commission for review and recommendation, and schedule City Council hearings for approval of the Plan and certification of the environmental document after its required circulation period. The anticipated schedule is provided as Attachment 2.

ALTERNATIVES:

The following alternatives are provided for the Council's consideration:

1. Review the draft Halcyon Complete Streets Plan, receive public comment, and direct staff to solicit comment from stakeholders and community groups and schedule the item for Planning Commission and City Council hearings; or
2. Provide other direction to staff.

ADVANTAGES:

The primary objective and benefit of the Halcyon Complete Streets Plan is to provide for safe mobility and accessibility throughout the Halcyon Road corridor, connecting people, schools, the hospital, and businesses by enhancing the built environment for all modes of travel including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles, trucks, and motorists. The multimodal transportation enhancements can also help to reach the State’s greenhouse gas emission reduction goals. This Plan provides the framework and tools needed to further develop specific designs and provide a complete street along Halcyon Road, ultimately filling sidewalk gaps, installing buffered bike lanes, and implementing a road diet.

DISADVANTAGES:

Staff time and resources will need to be dedicated to public outreach, environmental review, and additional processing of the draft Plan. If improvements associated with the draft Plan are ultimately constructed, there will be some right-of-way needed from two property owners (Arroyo Grande Hospital and Harloe Elementary) and the impacts of construction on the adjacent businesses and residents.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

No environmental review is required for this project update. The Halcyon Complete Streets Plan is subject to CEQA, and a Mitigated Negative Declaration is being prepared for the project and will be appropriately circulated.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMENTS:

The Agenda was posted at City Hall and on the City’s website in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.

Attachments:

1. Draft Halcyon Complete Streets Plan and Appendices
2. Proposed Public Outreach and Hearing schedule