



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Brian Pedrotti, Community Development Director

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of Approval of the Halcyon Road Complete Streets Plan and Adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration

**DATE:** July 25, 2023

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### **SUMMARY OF ACTION:**

Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration in accordance with the applicable provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq, and approve the Halcyon Road Complete Streets Plan. Provide direction to staff to proceed with completion of design and engineering work for the Plan, including Alternative 2 identified for the Halcyon/Fair Oaks intersection.

### **IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:**

The Halcyon Road Complete Streets Plan (“the 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 the closure of at-grade crossings on US Highway 101 and evaluations of alternatives for the intersection of Fair Oaks Avenue and South Halcyon Road, as well as environmental review. The total amount spent to date for this work is \$251,500. 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:**

1) Adopt a Resolution adopting the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration in accordance with the applicable provisions of the California Environmental, Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.; 2) Approve the Halcyon Road Complete Streets Plan; and 3) Direct staff to complete design and engineering for construction of the Plan, including Alternative 2 identified for the Halcyon/Fair Oaks intersection.

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#### **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 Highway 101 ("US 101") and State Route 1 ("SR1"). 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 adequate pedestrian accommodations for safe multimodal transportation. Challenges to overall safety in the corridor include: 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.

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 current draft Plan has been prepared by GHD, the City's hired transportation consultant. The Plan for a complete street for the Halcyon corridor started in 2013 when the City identified improvements that were needed and hired GHD (formerly 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. A number of initial community meetings were held on the draft plan in 2017. In March 2023, the draft Plan was presented to the City Council for initial review and feedback on the proposed alternatives at the intersection of Fair Oaks Avenue, as well as direction regarding additional public outreach. Based on this direction, a second round of community meetings were held in April 2023. The proposed plan was considered by the Planning Commission on June 20, 2023 and recommended for approval to the City Council.

#### **ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:**

##### Project Setting

The Halcyon Road corridor is a direct regional connector with both local and pass-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, the Arroyo Grande

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Police Department, 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 at-grade crossings such as El Campo 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 1.2 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

- **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 gas emissions.
- **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.

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#### 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** improvements generally include:

- One travel lane in each direction;
- Class II buffered bike lanes; and
- All on-street parking removed except for those in front of the Arroyo Grande Police Station.

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

- A three-lane section with two travel lanes (one in each direction), 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.

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- The third typical cross-section is between Dodson Way and Fair Oaks Boulevard and also proposes 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** improvements generally include:

- Three lanes, with two travel lanes (one in each direction) 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

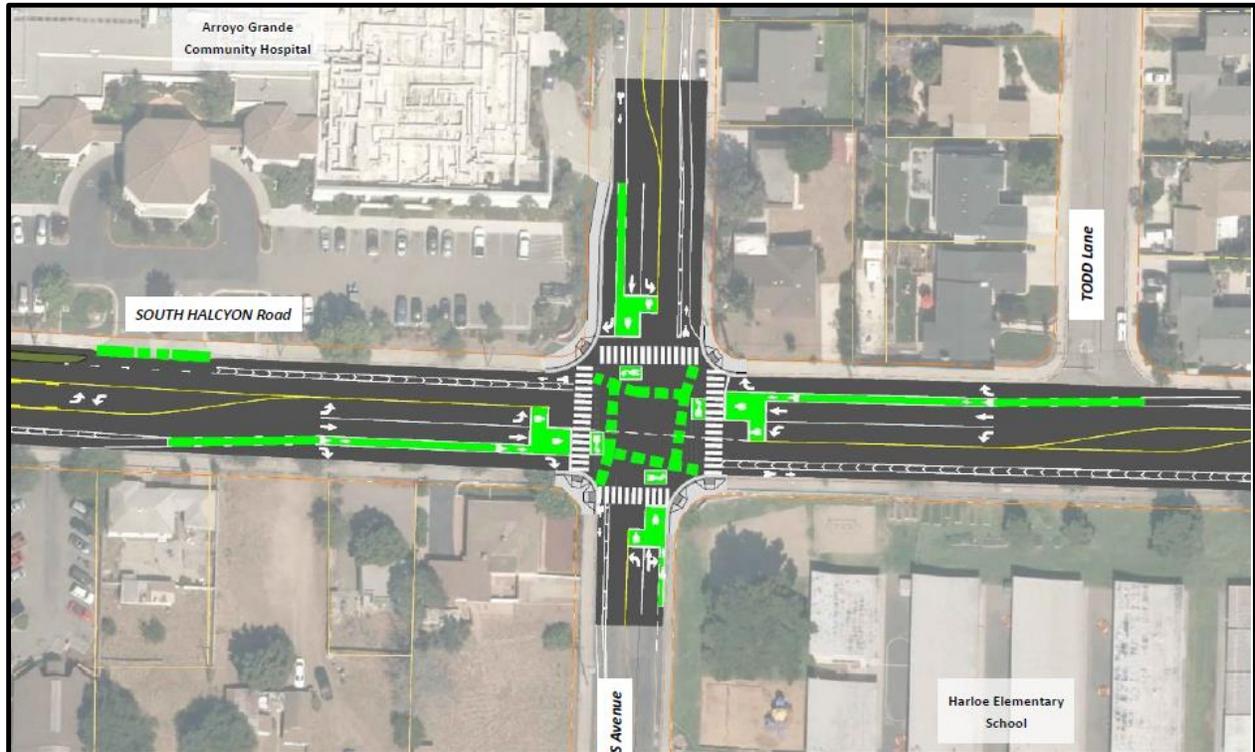
#### Fair Oaks Intersection Alternatives

Although the proposed 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 because of the presence of Harloe Elementary School and the Arroyo Grande Hospital on diagonal corners of the intersection. The proposed 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 through design and engineering work to complete the 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 to acquire significant right-of-way on at least three corners of the intersection. Therefore, the proposed 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, which is a technique in transportation planning whereby the number of travel lanes and/or effective width of the road is reduced in order to achieve systemic improvements. The concept provides enhanced bicycle and pedestrian facilities while 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 when compared to Alternative 2) and a Level of Service (LOS) of C/D.

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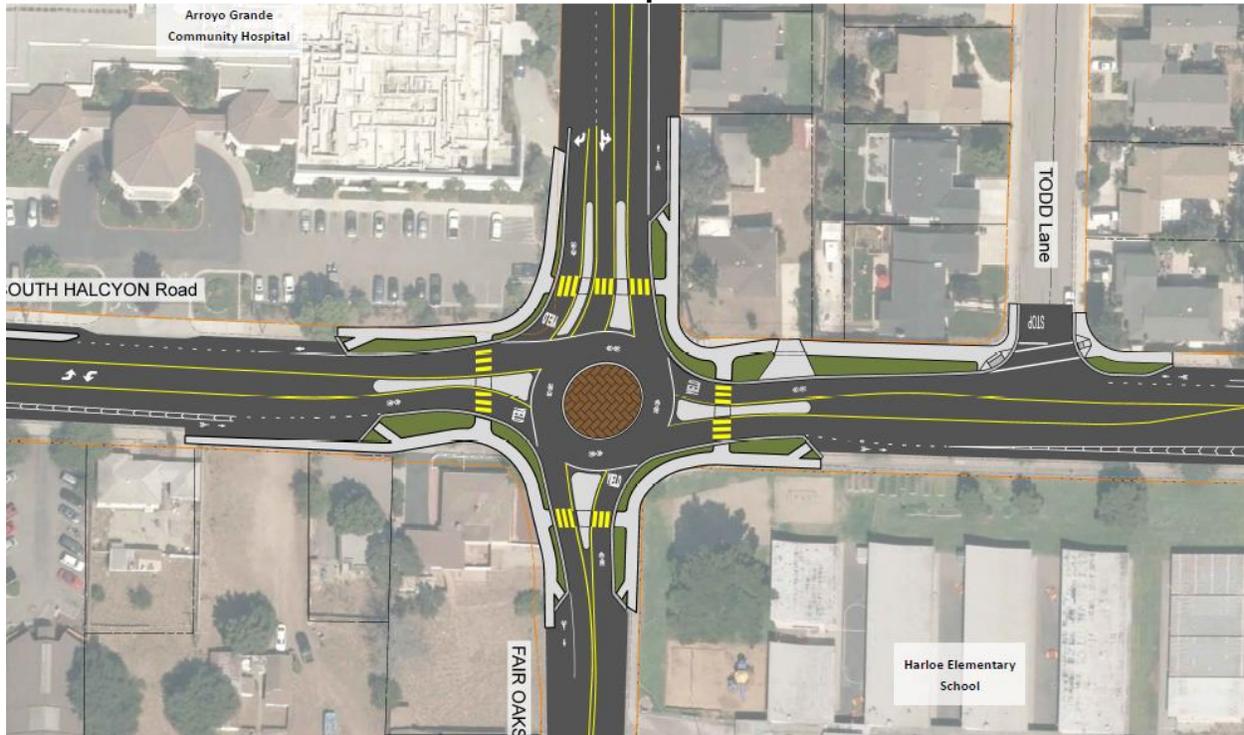
**Alternative 1 – Traffic Signal Upgrade with Road Diet**



**Alternative 2 – Compact Roundabout.** This concept replaces the existing traffic signal at the intersection with a modern compact roundabout with single entry and exit lanes from all directions, except for the westbound Fair Oaks 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 at crossings 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 when compared to Alternative 1 and a Level of Service (LOS) of B/C. This concept would also have limited right-of-way needed but could require some particularly at the northeast corner (Arroyo Grande Community Hospital).

Both alternatives resulted in similar environmental impacts that include necessary mitigation to lessen these impacts to a level of insignificance, including those associated with the short-term construction phase such as dust, emissions, and hazardous materials; potential impacts to cultural resources; and stormwater impacts.

**Alternative 2 – Compact Roundabout**



Cost Estimates vs. Approved Active Transportation Program (ATP) Funding

As part of the submitted application for the successful ATP funding, staff included a detailed project estimate and total project costs (see Attachment 5). While it is difficult to forecast construction costs until the project is bid for design and ultimately bid for construction in the upcoming years, several factors should be noted. First, the ATP grant application was submitted in 2022, and therefore already includes some built-in cost escalation that resulted from the recent inflation increases. Second, the grant application included a larger roundabout than the compact roundabout that is included in the revised plan, which could result in some lower costs. Third, the grant included 25% in contingency funding, which could provide some flexibility in addressing cost increases.

As noted above, the cost estimate submitted with the grant application included a roundabout which would be fully funded with the approved grant amount. The cost estimate for the upgraded traffic signal is approximately \$2 million less than the roundabout, and so that alternative would also be fully funded.

One option that was supported by both the community and stakeholders (see Community Outreach below) but not factored into the original cost estimate was the addition of protected Class IV bikeways with concrete islands separating the bikeways from vehicular traffic. The original cost estimate included Class II buffered bikeways, which includes a painted separation only with no physical concrete barrier. If approved and as directed by

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the City Council, staff could include both bikeway options in the scope of work for design and construction.

#### Community Outreach

During the initial planning stages in 2016 and 2017, various types of outreach and opportunities for community input were provided, including social media, printed media, pop-up workshops, community charrettes, and stakeholder meetings. A Stakeholder Advisory Group was formed to discuss the corridor and provide input on key areas of concern and potential improvements, as well as a website and online survey. Staff also met with and received additional input from residents who expressed concerns about vehicle speeds and turning movements on the Halcyon Road corridor, including a residential group identified as the Halcyon Neighborhood Group.

Following the City Council update on the draft plan on March 14, 2023, staff conducted additional outreach in the form of two public meetings. On April 26, 2023, staff and the consultant conducted a community meeting at Harloe Elementary in the multi-purpose room. Staff sent over 1,500 mailers to the owners and residents surrounding Halcyon Road, and included a flyer on the City's social media outlets and through the school district's Peachjar/ParentSquare parent messaging site to publicize the meeting.

The community meeting was well attended with about 30 people, with significant input and discussion. Three primary focus areas were highlighted in the meeting. For the first main focus area, left turns on to South Halcyon from Farroll Avenue, GHD prepared both a restricted left-turn and an open left-turn scenario. GHD's original analysis showed that the number of left turns on to South Halcyon from Farroll Avenue was approximately 120 during the peak hour, and they determined that if left turns from Farroll Avenue were restricted, this number of vehicles would not be significant if spread to several other routes. However, with the understanding that there were likely neighborhood concerns with restricting left turns, GHD prepared an open left-turn scenario that they were comfortable with from an engineering and safety perspective and presented that at the meeting. This open left-turn option received overwhelming support from the attendees.

The second main focus area was regarding protected bikeways. The proposed plan includes a painted Class II buffer between the bikeways and vehicle lanes in many areas. However, attendees were also more supportive of a more protected Class IV bikeway in the form of concrete curbs separating the bikeways from vehicular traffic.

The final main focus area was the Fair Oaks intersection with the option of a roundabout or an updated traffic signal. There was healthy discussion of the pros and cons of both, and there was generally more support for the roundabout by about a 2:1 margin. In order to ascertain support, staff had the attendees place different colored stickers representing their level of support for each option. Green stickers represented support for a particular design alternative, while yellow stickers represented community questions regarding the

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alternative, and red stickers represented concerns or dissatisfaction regarding the design alternative. The results of the sticker exercise are shown in the image below. The majority of attendees were in favor of the proposed roundabout (16 green, 8 red, 1 yellow) over the traffic signal at Fair Oaks Avenue.

The attendees of the community meeting also highlighted that there existed a natural pedestrian route from the Bennett Avenue neighborhood for children going west to attend Ocean View Elementary. The plan was revised to include a crosswalk at the intersection of Bennett Avenue to account for this pedestrian route.

Staff also convened the Stakeholder Advisory Group for a stakeholder meeting on April 27, 2023, also at Harloe Elementary School. Those attending included Rick Ellison from Bike SLO, Jim Dececco from Lucia Mar Unified School District and Safe Routes to School, Councilmember Jim Guthrie, Architectural Review Committee Chair Glenn Martin, and Marsha Lee, a local resident. Ken Dalebout from the Arroyo Grande Hospital was invited as a stakeholder, but attended the previous night's community meeting instead. Overall, the stakeholder group also generally endorsed an open left-turn concept at Farroll Avenue, protected bikeways, and the roundabout option at the Fair Oaks intersection.

#### Planning Commission

On June 20, 2023, the Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider the plan. At that hearing, the Commission recommended to the City Council adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approval of the Halcyon Road Complete Streets Plan, with support for Alternative 2 (compact roundabout) at the Fair Oaks intersection. Their motion also included support for prioritization of pedestrian and bicycle safety, as well as an emphasis on traffic calming measures.

#### Funding and Next Steps

The 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 \$251,500. 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.

If the City Council adopts the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approves the Halcyon Road Complete Streets Plan with Alternative 2 (Compact Roundabout), staff will begin the request for design proposals to ensure that the grant schedule is maintained.

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#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

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

1. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve the proposed plan with Alternative 2 – Compact Roundabout;
2. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve the proposed plan with Alternative 1 – Traffic Signal with Road Diet;
3. Do not adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and do not approve the proposed plan; or
4. Provide other direction to staff.

#### **ADVANTAGES:**

The primary objective and benefit of the Halcyon Road 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 to reduce speeds while also increasing the level of service of the road.

#### **DISADVANTAGES:**

Staff time and resources will need to be dedicated to the next steps, including requests for design proposals, right-of-way acquisition, and review of design. Upon construction of improvements associated with the proposed Plan, the acquisition of right-of-way will be needed from two property owners (Arroyo Grande Hospital and Harloe Elementary). Furthermore, construction activities may impact adjacent businesses and residents.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

The Community Development Department, after completion of the initial study, finds that there is substantial evidence that the project would not have a significant effect on the environment, and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report is not necessary. Therefore, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 210000 et seq., and CA Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.), has been prepared for this project and was published for public review on May 24, 2023. No comments were received during the 30-day review period.

#### **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. Additionally, the City provided a courtesy e-mail notice to interested parties who provided their contact information as part of the previous outreach efforts. Staff has conducted significant public outreach on this project, including

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workshops in 2017 and community/stakeholder meetings in April 2023. Staff sent over 1,500 mailers to the owners and residents surrounding Halcyon Road for the April 2023 meetings, and included a flyer on the City's social media outlets and through the school district's Peachjar/ParentSquare parent messaging site to publicize the meeting.

Attachments:

1. Proposed Resolution
2. Halcyon Road Complete Streets Plan
3. Appendices
4. Mitigated Negative Declaration
5. Cost Estimate – ATP Grant Application 2022