



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Public Works



Date: March 27, 2017
Board Meeting Date: April 11, 2017
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: James C. Porter, Director of Public Works

Subject: Middlefield Road Improvement Project Recommendations
[County Project No. OD420, Project File No. E4931000]

RECOMMENDATION:

Measure K: Adopt a resolution accepting the following four design element recommendations of the North Fair Oaks Community Council for the Middlefield Road Improvement Project between Pacific and Fifth Avenues: buffered bike lanes, 35-foot tree spacing, bulb-outs at all intersections, and 12-foot sidewalks widths.

BACKGROUND:

On November 5, 2002, your Board approved Phase II of the Middlefield Road Underground Utility District, which included Middlefield Road from Fifth Avenue to MacArthur Avenue. Phase I of the Middlefield Road Underground Utility District from the Atherton Town Limit to Fifth Avenue was completed in 2002. Placing overhead utility lines underground was identified as a high priority and supported by the North Fair Oaks Community Council before the Underground Districts were formed.

In November of 2011, your Board adopted the North Fair Oaks Community Plan (Plan). A major component of that Plan is the improvement of Middlefield Road between Pacific and Fifth Avenues to create a more attractive street with improved pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

On July 9, 2013 your Board approved funding (\$12.5M) for the North Fair Oaks Middlefield Road Improvement Project (Project) in the North Fair Oaks area from Pacific Avenue to Fifth Avenue.

To incorporate input from the community on the Project and the elements to be considered, a robust community outreach process was conducted. The process included community meetings, surveys, notices, door-to-door outreach, and other methods to inform the community of the Project, elements to be considered, and

decisions to be made. All materials were available in both Spanish and English and meetings included concurrent translation services.

On August 21, 2014, the North Fair Oaks Community Council (Council) held a study session focused on the improvement options. At that session, the Council reviewed the community comments, considered the relevant sections of the North Fair Oaks Community Plan, asked questions of the traffic engineers and planners, and listened to comments from law enforcement. After considering all this information, the Council unanimously approved recommendations and next steps for the Project at their regular monthly meeting on August 28, 2014. The Council approved recommending that your Board direct staff to develop a preliminary design for the Project that includes three traffic lanes (one travel lane in each direction with a center left turn lane), parallel parking, bike lanes, and wider sidewalks.

On October 21, 2014, the Council presented your Board with recommendations regarding the improvements of Middlefield Road between Pacific and Fifth Avenues, and requested that the County proceed with the next steps for the Project. The Council's recommendations were accepted by your Board and included improving Middlefield Road with: three traffic lanes, parallel parking, bike lanes, and sidewalks wide enough to accommodate street amenities such as benches and other seating, landscaping, street and pedestrian lighting, trash and recycling receptacles, street art and public spaces. Additionally, the Council recommended that reports or studies be prepared related to traffic signals and traffic management for the Project area, a parking solutions report, and a local business sustainability plan.

Subsequently, the Department proceeded with a Request for Proposals (RFP) process and contracted with a consultant to provide services required for the Project, including the traffic signal and traffic management study(ies). A parking solutions report was also undertaken by the Department. The County's Real Property Division is responsible for developing the business sustainability plan.

The County's Project design team convened a steering committee consisting of a representative cross-section of the entire North Fair Oaks (NFO) community, including the business sector along Middlefield Road, to participate in the design process and provide recommendations on specific design elements. Five steering committee meetings and two community workshops were held between September 2015 and November 2016.

The steering committee was asked to provide direction on the following four key design elements: bike lane location, tree spacing, bulb-out locations, and sidewalk width. At the conclusion of the final steering committee meeting #5, the steering committee provided clear direction on one design element, which was a buffered bike lane to be located between the travel lane and the on-street parallel parking. The steering committee was unable to reach a consensus on the other three design elements.

DISCUSSION:

In order to obtain additional input and reach a larger number of residents and community members regarding the three design elements, the County hired Godbe Research to survey the NFO community. A total of 3,971 surveys in English and Spanish were mailed to the community of NFO in February 2017. There were 599 surveys returned and based on the survey results compiled by Godbe Research the survey respondents supported the following three design elements as shown by the favorable response percentages:

- 35-foot tree spacing on each block – 67.3%
- bulb-outs at all intersections – 47.7%
- 12-foot wide sidewalks – 38.2%*

*Note: 93.4% of survey respondents preferred the 12-foot wide sidewalk, 13-foot wide sidewalk, or liked both of these two sidewalk options.

Based on the survey results, the County Manager's Office and Department presented recommendations to the Council at their March 23, 2017 meeting, which included: buffered bike lanes, 35-foot tree spacing, bulb-outs at all intersections, and 12-foot wide sidewalks. The Council reviewed the recommendations, asked questions of County staff, and heard public comments on the topics. After considering all of the information, the Council adopted the recommendations as proposed by the Department for the improvements of Middlefield Road. In addition to the Department recommendations, the Council included in their motion that the County install green colored bike lanes as part of the Project and form a task force to consider issues of community preservation, gentrification, displacement and merchant protections.

The Project will consider all modes of transportation, including improving bicycle and pedestrian access. The Department has not included green colored bike lane treatment in the recommendation as specific buffered bike lane treatment will be evaluated during the design process, which will include considering green colored buffered bike lanes. Bike lane treatment options and decisions will be made based on specific site conditions with an emphasis on protecting bicyclists and informing drivers of the potential bicyclist presence in accordance with State and Federal design standards.

The Department recommendation does not include formation of the task force to address the issues of concern expressed by the Council as this is beyond the scope of the Project. However, the Council's recommendation relative to this effort has been conveyed to your Board in this report.

The Department recommends the following design elements:

- buffered bike lanes
- 35-foot tree spacing on each block**
- bulb-outs at all intersections
- 12-foot wide sidewalks

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**Note: the Project will strive to meet the 35-foot tree spacing on each block; however, the actual spacing will vary depending upon specific site conditions (i.e. storefront awnings and signage, streetlights, driveways, traffic signals, utility vaults, etc.).

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

Approval of this action will contribute to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Livable Community by constructing a more attractive street with improvements to pedestrian and bicycle amenities along Middlefield Road for the public in the North Fair Oaks area to help support a more livable community.

FISCAL IMPACT:

A total of \$12.5 million in **Measure K** funds were appropriated in the FY 2013-2015 adopted budget for the Middlefield Road Improvement Project. Funds for staff and the consultant needed to develop the design and the requested reports will come from the **Measure K** allocation for this Project.

There is no impact to the General Fund.