



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 6/20/2023

ITEM NO: 23

DATE: June 9, 2023
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Receive the Report on Potential Revisions and Community Input to the Shannon Road Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements Project (CIP No. 813-0218) and Provide Design Direction

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the report on potential revisions and community input to the Shannon Road Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements Project (CIP No. 813-0218) and provide design direction.

BACKGROUND:

The Shannon Road Pedestrian and Bikeway Improvements Project would provide pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements on Shannon Road between Los Gatos Boulevard and Cherry Blossom Lane. This segment of Shannon Road is a two-lane neighborhood collector street with high volumes of bicycle and pedestrian traffic when schools are in session. The street is a popular route for students attending Blossom Hill Elementary, Louise Van Meter Elementary, and Raymond J. Fisher Middle schools. There are intermittent sections of sidewalk on both sides of the roadway. Currently, on-street parking is not allowed on Shannon Road between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., except on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.

At the April 18, 2023 Town Council meeting, staff presented the final design of the pedestrian and bicycle improvement project and received feedback from the Council and the community. As a result of the discussion, staff was asked to do the following:

- Revise the design to minimize large asphalt buffers, remove parking spaces, and add trees wherever possible;

PREPARED BY: Gary Heap
Town Engineer

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, Finance Director, and Parks and Public Works Director

BACKGROUND (continued):

- Organize a community meeting with the opportunity to visit the site with the revised plans; and
- Prioritize returning this item to Council in a timely manner to maintain the grant funding.

DISCUSSION:

On June 1, staff conducted a community meeting at the Congregation Shir Hadash at 20 Cherry Blossom Lane (Attachment 1 contains the meeting minutes). At the community meeting, staff provided a brief presentation and introduced two new project design options (Attachment 2 contains the slide deck from the meeting). The first option (2023-A) did not include on-street parking and the second option (2023-B) provided limited parking. Other than that, the two options were similar in their design and included:

- Two 10-foot wide travel lanes
- Two six-foot wide on-street Class II Bicycle Lanes
- Two three-foot wide buffers between the travel lane and the bicycle lane
- A six-foot wide sidewalk on each side of the street
- A four-and-a-half-foot wide planter strip with trees on each side (west of Magneson Loop only)

The detailed plans for each option can be found on the Town's Connect Los Gatos – Shannon Pedestrian and Bikeway Improvement Project web page under the section titled Project Updates: <https://www.losgatosca.gov/2687/Shannon-Pedestrian-and-Bikeway-Improvements>

Following the staff presentation, community members were separated into breakout groups facilitated by staff. At the end of the break-out sessions, each group reported out their thoughts and preferences between the two design options. As participants entered the community meeting, they were provided a survey to gauge their preferences on the design options and to provide comments (Attachment 3 – Survey and Results).

Following the meeting, staff received numerous emails from residents providing additional comments. These are presented in Attachment 5.

The community feedback did not yield any single consensus on design concepts. Input focused on:

1. Asphalt buffers of three feet are inconsistent with the current aesthetic of Shannon Road.

DISCUSSION (continued):

2. Residents bordering the project want parking, whereas users of the road who do not live adjacent to the project feel parking is a more urban aesthetic.
3. Trees are important to the rural feel of the road.
4. Option 1 (as presented at the community meeting on September 29, 2021) is strongly preferred.

With that input, staff reevaluated the project and developed a modified design that attempts to meet the needs of residents and community members while exercising sound engineering judgement. A new plan, Modified Option 1, provides parking on the south side of Shannon Road along the entire corridor. Given the short time between the community meeting and the Council meeting, staff prepared typical proposed cross sections of the Modified Option 1 in Attachment 4 and did not develop a detailed plan.

Modified Option 1 includes planter strips on the north side of the street west of Magneson Loop, and on both sides of the street east of Magneson Loop. Table 1 compares the original Option 1, the two options from the community meeting, and the new Modified Option 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Design Alternatives for Shannon Road Bike/Pedestrian Project

Design Element	Original Option 1	2023-A	2023-B	Modified Option 1
Vehicle Lane Width	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet	10 feet
Sidewalk Width	5 feet	5 feet	5 feet	5 feet
Bike Lane Width	6 feet	6 feet	6 feet	5 feet
Painted Bike Buffer Width	None	3 feet	3 feet	1.5 feet
Planter Strip Width	4.5 feet ¹	3.5 – 5 feet	3.5 feet	3 – 4 feet ^{2,3}
Parking	Yes ⁴	No	Yes ⁵	Yes ⁴
Buffer Between Back of Walk and Property Line	None	None	None	6 inches

1. Along South Side Only
2. West of Magneson Loop – 3-foot Planter Strip on North Side Only
3. East of Magneson Loop – 4-foot Planter Strip on Both Sides
4. South Side Only
5. Intermittent 2-Stall Parking Bays on North and South Side

Modified Option 1 reduces the bike buffer from three feet on each side to 18-inches. Bike buffers are considered fundamental to cyclist safety as they provide extra distance between a vehicle and cyclists. With 10-foot wide vehicle lanes proposed, staff felt that eliminating the buffers entirely would be inconsistent with good design practice.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS:

Staff has designed a Modified Option 1 in an effort to meet the requests of the Shannon Road residents and other community members while still meeting the Town Council direction provided at the April 18, 2023 meeting. Modified Option 1 provides bike lanes and sidewalks, maximizes the placement of trees, and reduces the bicycle lane buffer to minimum standards. Staff recommends completing design of the Shannon Road Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvement Project using Modified Option 1.

Staff recognizes that this recommendation proposes more change than was expected based on the Council direction of April 18, 2023. Based on the community input received both at the community meeting and in follow up emails, staff believes that a change in direction is needed if the project is to move forward. With \$940,100 in grant funding from the Valley Transportation Authority's Vehicle Emission Reductions Based at Schools (VERBS) program set to expire in January 2024 with no expectation that it can be extended, time is of the essence. If Modified Option 1 is approved by the Town Council, staff have the consultant revise the construction documents and complete this work by October 2023. Staff will then submit the plans to CalTrans for review in accordance with the grant requirements. CalTrans approval of the plans is required by January 31, 2024 to maintain the grant funding.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative 1 Proceed with Staff Recommendation. Staff is recommending Modified Option 1 to balance good engineering design with the community interests. Proceeding with this recommendation allows the project to move forward by developing construction documents in a timeframe that may meet the existing grant deadlines.

Alternative 2 Select a Different Design. The Town Council and community have been provided multiple design options since project inception in 2018, including the three new ideas presented in this report. Staff has presented a design that balances the community interests with good engineering design. Selecting a different design may result in a project that a) meets sound engineering design but is not supported by the community; or b) is supported by the community but presents a potential safety risk by ignoring certain design principles. Staff does not recommend this alternative.

Alternative 3 Cancel or Defer the Project. The Town Council has the choice to cancel or defer the project. The project was funded because it is a priority project under the Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and serves children that attend multiple schools in the project area. Cancelling the project would mean that safety of cyclists and pedestrians would not be improved and the goals of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan would not be met. Deferring the project would allow time for more public engagement, but given the amount of

ALTERNATIVES (continued):

engagement to date, it is not clear that consensus on a single design can be achieved. Cancelling or deferring the project would require relinquishing \$1,114,350 in grant funding from two sources. Cancelling funding awards is rarely looked upon favorably by granting agencies and could impact future grant opportunities for the Town. If the project were to move forward in the future, then additional Town capital funding will need to be identified.

COORDINATION:

This report has been coordinated with the Attorney's Office, the Finance Department, and the Town Manager's Office.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The current project funding and projected costs are shown below. If Council would like to proceed with Modified Option 1, Option 2023-A, or Option 2023-B, staff would need to develop updated construction costs. Depending on Council's action, staff will present the updated cost information when it is available.

Shannon Road Pedestrian and Bikeway Improvements		
CIP No. 813-0218		
	Budget	
GFAR	\$ 741,296	
Grants	\$ 1,114,350	
Utility Undergrounding	\$ 119,204	
Storm Basin	\$ 200,000	
Traffic Mitigation Funds	\$ 133,380	
Total Budget	\$ 2,308,230	
		Costs
Misc. Expenses		\$ 500
Temporary Staff Charges		\$ 35,000
Engineering Services		\$ 196,709
Construction Management Services (7.5%)		\$ 132,512
Construction		\$ 1,766,826
Construction Contingency (10%)		\$ 176,683
Total Costs		\$ 2,308,230
Available Balance		\$ -

SUBJECT: Shannon Road Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements Project (CIP No. 813-0218)
Public Outreach Overview and Design Direction

DATE: June 9, 2023

FISCAL IMPACT (continued):

Staff costs are tracked for all projects. Tracking of staff costs allows for accountability in the costs of projects, recovery of costs from grant funded projects, and identification of future staffing needs. This project utilizes a combination of full-time budgeted staff and temporary staff that support fluctuating workloads. The costs for temporary staff will be directly associated with this project while full-time staff are accounted for in the Department's operating budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is a project defined under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as being Categorically Exempt per Section 15301(c) Existing streets, sidewalks, trails and similar facilities and 15304(h) Creation of bicycle lanes on existing rights-of-way. A Notice of Exemption will be filed. Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the project is determined to be categorically excluded from a detailed environmental analysis.

Attachments:

1. Public Outreach Meeting Minutes June 1, 2023
2. Slide Deck from Community Meeting
3. Community Survey and Results
4. Cross-Section of New Modified Option 1
5. Public Comments Received between June 2, 2023, and 11:00 a.m. on June 15, 2023