



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
PLANNING COMMISSION
REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 10/09/2019

ITEM NO: 5

DATE: October 4, 2019
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Matt Morley, Parks and Public Works Director
SUBJECT: General Plan Amendment Application GP-19-001. Project Location: **Town Wide**. Applicant: Town of Los Gatos.
Consider proposed General Plan amendments to language specific to Highway 17 in Goal TRA-4 and supporting policies.

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide a recommendation to the Town Council on proposed General Plan amendments (Exhibit 3) to language specific to Highway 17 in Goal TRA-4 and supporting policies.

BACKGROUND:

Changing dynamics in job and population growth in the greater Bay Area have led to increased pressure on local streets and roads as freeways exceed capacity. This is especially evident in Los Gatos during commute hours and with summer weekend beach traffic. The configuration of Highway 17 approaching Los Gatos from the north and through the Town may exacerbate the impacts on the Town as drivers search for alternate routes that lead them to local streets.

In 2016, Measure B was passed by voters to allow for transportation improvements throughout the County funded through a sales tax increase. This measure included broad language specific to Los Gatos and Highway 17. The specific Measure B language reads:

Highway 17 Corridor Congestion Relief: Upgrade Highway 17/9 interchange to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, mobility, and roadway operations; deploy advanced transportation technology to reduce freeway cut thru traffic in Los Gatos, including traffic signal control system upgrades in Los Gatos, Traveler Information System, advanced ramp metering systems; support Multi-Modal Congestion Relief Solutions, including enhanced Highway 17

PREPARED BY: Matt Morley
Parks and Public Works Director

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Community Development Director, and Town Attorney

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BACKGROUND (continued):

Express Bus service, implementing local bus system improvements that reduce auto trips to schools, work, and commercial areas in Los Gatos; and develop park and ride lots to serve as transit hubs for express bus, shuttles, local bus system connections.

Through preliminary discussions with the Valley Transportation Agency (VTA), and Caltrans an opportunity exists to extend the scope of the Highway 9 interchange project to include efficiencies from Highway 85 through the Highway 9 onramp to southbound Highway 17.

In the interest of ensuring the potential for funding for the maximum scope of the project, on March 19, 2019 the Town Council, on a 3-2 vote, supported the design for a project at Highway 9 and Highway 17, including design options for efficiencies on Highway 17 and for additional travel lanes on Highway 17, and directed staff to process a 2020 General Plan amendment allowing for the project. Exhibit 1 is the Council Agenda Report for this item.

The early work associated with the project includes identifying the scope of work and preliminary design associated with the project, which may include stacking lanes, merge lanes, auxiliary lanes, exit lanes, and improved traffic flow through lane realignment and roadway widening. The Town will be engaged through a public outreach process and provide Town Council reports throughout the design and construction.

DISCUSSION:

The Town Council directed staff to process amendments to the existing 2020 General Plan in alignment with the potential project. Exhibit 2 provides the text of 2020 General Plan Goal TRA-4 and supporting policies and Exhibit 3 provides the recommended amendments. Staff recommends retaining the full language of the existing Goal TRA-4 in the interest of continuing to emphasize the importance of Highway 17 to the community. Modifications to the supporting policies would facilitate the project design.

Town procedure requires the General Plan Committee (GPC) to make a recommendation on all proposed General Plan amendments. Because the entire GPC sits on the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) and it is important for the entire GPAC to be involved with any changes to the existing General Plan to inform its work on the update, this item was presented to the GPAC on September 19, 2019. The GPAC recommendation is now proceeding to the Planning Commission as it conducts a public hearing on the amendments and makes its recommendation to the Town Council. The Town Council is tentatively scheduled to hold its public hearing on November 5, 2019.

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DISCUSSION (continued):

During the GPAC discussion on this item, three recommendations were provided. The recommendations from the GPAC refer to the text in Exhibit 3 and the recommendation for added text is reflected as and if appropriate support.

1. Modify the recommended changes to Policy TRA-4.1 to read: Improvements to Highway 17 should consider and if appropriate support efficiency improvements prior to adding capacity through increased travel lanes.
2. With respect to Policy TRA-4.3, the GPAC recommended removal of this policy in its entirety and renumbering subsequent policies to reflect the removal.
3. With respect to Policy TRA-4.5, the GPAC recommended not making the staff recommendation that would change the word “do” to “does,” while accepting the removal of the words “lanes or.”

CONCLUSION:

The Commission should review the proposed amendments and provide a recommendation to the Town Council.

COORDINATION:

This report has been coordinated with the Community Development Department.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact as a result of the recommended action.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

EXHIBITS:

1. March 19, 2019 Council Agenda Report
2. Current General Plan TRA-4 Goal and Policies
3. Proposed General Plan amendments to Goal TRA-4 and supporting policies