



CITY OF ORLAND STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: January 2, 2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and Council

FROM: Paul W. Rabo, City Engineer

SUBJECT: **Caltrans Project OJ500 and Walker Streetscape Updates and Discussion**

BACKGROUND:

In the mid to late 2000s Caltrans completed work on the realignment of State Route 32 from Tehama Street to the Railroad. These improvements included curb, gutter, sidewalk, drainage, traffic signals, street lighting and ADA improvements. Landscaping elements included street trees, stamped concrete and Centennial Park. Overall, the project helped remove commercial and thru traffic from local streets and created the beginning of a gateway into the downtown area.

Since the completion of the Caltrans project, the City of Orland has been actively planning and seeking grant funds to design and construct improvements along the remainder of the State Route 32 (Newville and Walker Street) corridor. Proposed improvements include a traffic signal at Commerce Lane, adding pedestrian facilities to the I-5 overcrossing, improving I-5 on-ramp and off-ramp access, drainage, infill of curb, gutter, and sidewalks and improving safety and circulation at intersections such as 9th/Tehama Streets and Hambright Avenue.

In 2023, a traffic signal was installed at Commerce Lane, by a private developer, to satisfy the warrants presented in multiple traffic analysis that have been completed. Caltrans also required this project to widen the south bound off-ramp to accommodate a right and left turn lane. When the project is complete, pedestrians will be able to safely access the west side of the I-5 overcrossing. In recent years Caltrans has constructed pedestrian improvements that allowed access to the east side of the overcrossing. At this time, the overcrossing does not have sufficient width to allow the safe crossing of bicyclists and pedestrians.

Also in 2023, the City engaged the services of a traffic consultant to perform a traffic analysis of the Newville/Tehama/9th Street intersection (a.k.a. the "Dutch Bros. intersection"). Traffic counts have been performed, the City has reviewed an existing conditions report and has met with the consultant to provide feedback. Next, the consultant will review possible short-term and long-term solutions for the City and Caltrans to consider.

To address the overall improvement of the on- and off-ramps, the I-5 overcrossing and the Newville/Tehama/9th Street intersection, the City applied for a Federal Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MPDG). The City has recently found out the project was not approved for funding.

In 2016, the City hired a consultant to help prepare a complete streets concept on Walker Street between 2nd and 6th Streets. Work included analyzing the existing physical conditions and creating a plan to facilitate redevelopment, enhance streets with traffic calming methods, ADA improvements, landscape, lighting, street furniture, and other enhancements. In November of 2017 the City was presented a final draft of the Walker Street – Streetscape Master Plan (SMP). The City has applied for different state funds (i.e. RAISE and ATP) but has not been successful.

Caltrans is currently in the design phase of a Capital Maintenance Improvement project (OJ500) that will include the phased construction of curb, gutter sidewalk, ADA improvements, street resurfacing and striping along SR 32 from I-5 to the Sacramento River. Caltrans is not planning to improve ADA accessibility of the sidewalks in front of existing businesses; however, they will be focusing on improving the ADA accessibility at intersections. The construction of the OJ500 project is slated for 2025/2026.

In 2022, a private developer completed improvements on Hambright Avenue that provided a second point of access to residential development in the area. The SR 32 and Hambright Avenue intersection is slated to receive a traffic signal when warranted by future development. For the time being, Caltrans has required the intersection to operate as a “right in, right out” to prevent conflicting turning movements with traffic entering and exiting the nearby school. The City has had conversations with Caltrans about making this intersection a round-a-bout in the future.

ANALYSIS:

The City’s goal is to provide a safe multimodal route along the SR 32 corridor. One possibility is a project that uses Complete Street elements. The U.S. Department of Transportation describes a Complete Street as:

“...planning, designing, and operating roadways and rights of way with all users in mind to make the transportation network safer and more efficient. Complete Streets may address a wide range of elements, such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bus lanes, public transportation stops, crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, modified vehicle travel lanes, streetscape, and landscape treatments. Complete Streets reduce motor vehicle-related crashes and pedestrian risk, as well as bicyclist risk when well-designed bicycle-specific infrastructure is included. They can promote walking and bicycling by providing safer places to achieve physical activity through transportation.”

The SMP does not include bicycle facilities on Walker Street; however, it does implement them on 2nd Street. Bicycle lanes, paths or shared lanes are not encouraged on Walker Street because one of its primary uses is moving commercial and non-local traffic through the City. Adding bicycle facilities would lead to potentially unsafe interactions between bicycles and vehicles. These elements could be added to parallel streets including Tehama Street and Colusa Street. More favorable complete street elements that could be implemented on Walker Street include curb extensions, wider sidewalks and median islands.

The City has met with Caltrans over the phone and in the field to review the OJ500 project and how portions of the Walker Street SMP could be implemented at the same time. City staff has continually reinforced the notion that the City would like to work with Caltrans to complete elements of the SMP with the OJ500 project to avoid subsequent construction projects. City staff received a copy of the OJ500 improvement plans for review on 12-26-23. Based on conversations with Caltrans staff, the focus of the Caltrans OJ500 Phase 1 project is to update curb ramps (2nd to 5th Streets), resurface SR 32, install new striping and perform maintenance on existing facilities. Construction of improvements beyond this scope would occur in Phases 2 and 3 as Caltrans funding allowed. If the City were interested in constructing Phase 2 or 3 improvements sooner, it may require the City to consider using its own reserves to supplement the OJ500 project.

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide direction to staff on how to proceed with coordination efforts with Caltrans and the possible use of City reserves to supplement the OJ500 project.

FISCAL IMPACT OF RECOMMENDATION:

None.