



North Fair Oaks Community Council
San Mateo County Coordinated
Departmental Response



Date: March 17, 2017
NFOCC Meeting Date: March 23, 2017
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Members, North Fair Oaks Community Council
From: James C. Porter, Director of Public Works
Subject: North Fair Oaks Middlefield Road Improvement Project Recommendation

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the recommendations from County of San Mateo Department of Public Works (Department) for the North Fair Oaks Middlefield Road Improvement Project between Pacific and 5th Avenues: 35-foot tree spacing, bulb-outs at all intersections, and 12-foot sidewalk width.

BACKGROUND:

On November 5, 2002, the County of San Mateo Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved Phase II of the Middlefield Road Underground Utility District, which includes 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, the BOS adopted the North Fair Oaks Community Plan (Plan). A major component of that Plan is the redesign of Middlefield Road between Pacific and Fifth Avenues to create a more attractive street with improved pedestrian and bicycle amenities.

On July 9, 2013 the BOS 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 redesign project and 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 re-design 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 recommended that the BOS 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 the BOS with recommendations regarding the redesign 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 included redesigning Middlefield Road to include: 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 road redesign, including the traffic signal and traffic management study(ies). A parking solutions report was also undertaken by the Department, which should be completed in late March 2017. The County's Real Property Department is responsible 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 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 overwhelmingly 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.

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

**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 (ie. storefront awnings and signage, streetlights, driveways, traffic signals, utility vaults, etc.).

Approval of this recommendation is a key step in a multi-disciplinary design process. The Department intends to present these recommendations to the BOS on April 25, 2017 for their approval and to direct staff to proceed with the next steps on this Project.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None