

REPORT TO BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Approval of the Mathilda Avenue Plan Line

BACKGROUND

The development of a Plan Line is one of the City's key actions to assure the implementation of the City's transportation network. A Plan line allows for the City to designate future build-out of roadway segments by delineating planned right-of-way. This allows the City to require land dedications and limit future building locations and other physical improvements as related to the planned right-of-way line. The process by which a plan line is developed is outlined within Sunnyvale Municipal Code section 19.06. This code section also provides a list of the 58 previously adopted roadway plan line segments including the current Mathilda Plan Line.

In mid-2014, the City was notified that it was the recipient of a Priority Development Area (PDA) Planning Program Grant to develop an updated plan line for Mathilda Avenue between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue. The PDA Planning Program is administered by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) which funds comprehensive planning in PDAs for land uses around public transit hubs and bus and rail corridors in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. Two of the key goals of this program are to: boost transit ridership and thereby reduce vehicle miles traveled by PDA residents, employees and visitors; and promote multimodal connections for residents, employees and visitors within the PDA.

This portion of Mathilda Avenue is the westerly border of the Sunnyvale Downtown Specific Plan Area. The specific plan area was developed in 2003, and recently updated in 2013 to remove a planned carriage road on Mathilda Avenue, and add bike lanes. Since then, the Mathilda Apartments project by Summerhill Homes was conditioned to make modifications to Mathilda Avenue to include a bike lane across its frontage. Both the Downtown Specific Plan and the Mathilda Apartments projects have made progress towards helping define the vision for Mathilda Avenue. The Mathilda Avenue Plan Line project analyzes Mathilda Avenue from a more comprehensive approach and lays out a plan for future build-out.

The Downtown Specific Plan identifies this corridor of Mathilda Avenue as needing a plan line for identification of roadway widths to implement traffic mitigation. In addition, the City's 2006 Bicycle Plan notes that widening is required to accommodate bicycle lanes on Mathilda Avenue specifically between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue.

EXISTING POLICY

Council Policy 1.2.3 - Bicycle Facilities on City Streets: The first paragraph of the policy statement says "It is the policy of the City to provide adequate bicycle facilities on arterial streets through the combined efforts of the City in street widening projects and private developments which have been required to participate in off-site improvements".

General Plan, Chapter 3, Policy LT-1.9 - Support flexible and appropriate alternative transportation modes and transportation system management measures that reduce reliance on the automobile and serve changing regional and City-wide land use and transportation needs.

General Plan, Chapter 3, Policy LT-5.5 - Support a variety of transportation modes.

- Subsection LT-5.5d - Maximize the provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Subsection LT-5.5 - Implement the City of Sunnyvale Bicycle Plan

General Plan, Chapter 3, Policy LT-5.8 - Provide a safe and comfortable system of pedestrian and bicycle pathways.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The bike lanes were analyzed as part of the Downtown EIR Addendum adopted on October 22, 2013.

DISCUSSION

Mathilda Avenue between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue has been identified in both the Downtown Specific Plan and the City's 2006 Bicycle Plan documents as a corridor in need of a plan for ultimate build-out. The intent of the Mathilda Avenue Plan Line project is to master plan the ultimate build-out for this section of roadway and lay out the geometry, number of lanes, lane widths, accessible ramp and crosswalk locations, and bike lanes. In addition, the plan line identifies future right of way required to complete the build-out.

Existing Conditions:

Currently, Mathilda Avenue in the study section provides three vehicular travel lanes in both the northbound and southbound directions. In the northbound direction, a fourth travel lane starts at Iowa Avenue, but terminates into a dedicated right turn lane at Washington Avenue. The roadway is divided, with a raised landscaped median island separating the through movements and defining the left turn pockets. Sidewalks are primarily 6' in width. On-street parking currently exists on the east side of Mathilda Avenue for the one-block segment of El Camino Real to Olive Avenue. Bicycle lanes do not exist along the corridor.

The Town Center project has widened the roadway and constructed wide sidewalks along their frontage. The Summerhill - Mathilda Apartments project has also provided dedication for roadway widening to accommodate bike lanes and will construct the wider sidewalk along its frontage. The Mathilda Villas project at 538 S Mathilda Avenue has similarly dedicated right of way for future street improvements.

Concept Design Considerations:

A number of considerations have been taken into account during the development of the plan line: 1) Safety for all modes of travel, 2) Protection of existing mature landscaping in the median island, and 3) Minimization of right of way needs and impacts to adjacent properties. Roadway layout and cross sections for Mathilda Avenue are shown in Attachments 1 and 2.

Within the plan line, vehicular through lane widths are minimized to eleven feet, which is the minimum width governed by the existing speeds and volumes along Mathilda Avenue. Left turn pockets widths are similarly reduced to the minimum width of ten feet. Bike lane widths follow the

City's minimum standards of six feet, and the three foot buffered area provides additional safety clearance between bicyclists and vehicles.

Intersection corners have been analyzed to straighten pedestrian paths of travel crossing the street and minimize crossing lengths when possible. The existing median island is kept largely in its current configuration, with slight modifications to facilitate pedestrian crosswalks at the intersections. A wider 13' sidewalk width with street trees is provided for pedestrian connectivity between downtown and commercial/retail uses at Mathilda/El Camino Real.

Bicycle Network:

Developing a plan line which includes bicycle lanes between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue completes the City's bicycle network along Mathilda Avenue. North of Washington Avenue, the roadways are identified on the current bicycle map as for advanced users (bicyclists share the roadway with vehicles), with dedicated bicycle lanes planned for installation via redevelopment projects and grant-funded capital improvement projects. South of El Camino Real to the City border limits at Homestead Road, dedicated bicycle lanes currently exist.

Right of Way Requirements:

The proposed buffered bike lanes and widened sidewalks will be accomplished through dedication of additional right of way when adjacent properties are redeveloped and via elimination of on-street parking for the one block between El Camino Real and Olive Avenue in the northbound direction of travel. Attachment 3 shows which properties have already dedicated right of way as part of their development projects and where right of way is still needed from other properties to implement the Mathilda Plan Line.

It is important to note that only major redevelopment applications for discretionary permits such as a change in use or change in zoning would trigger the requirement for right of way dedication and plan line frontage improvements. Minor redevelopment such as tenant or façade improvements for commercial buildings or a room addition to a single family home would not trigger the plan line implementation. The plan line lays out conceptual design and final design would be completed in the future by developers, likely when an aggregate of properties such as a full block redevelopment has occurred.

The Vision:

The proposed plan line envisions a modern roadway corridor that accounts for many modes of travel. The pedestrian way is made more comfortable through the use of wider 13' sidewalks that include a parkstrip or tree well.. Street trees are provided as a visual and physical buffer to soften the feel of the corridor and to provide shade to both bicyclists and pedestrians. Buffered bike lanes with possible green texturized treatment helps define a zone specifically for bicyclists travelling along the roadway corridor, and provide connectivity to an already existing bicycle network. However, green bike lanes would only be implemented if appropriate additional maintenance funds are identified.

The approval process will require a resolution from the Planning Commission and an Ordinance by the City Council to modify the Mathilda plan line in Municipal Code Section 19.06. Once approved, it will be submitted to City Clerk for filing in the office of the County recorder.

Planning Commission is scheduled to consider this item on August 10, 2015 and the City Council is scheduled to consider this item on September 15, 2015.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to the City associated with creating the plan line document. The MTC procured the services of Fehr and Peers Transportation Consultants to perform the plan line study. All invoices by Fehr and Peers are sent directly to MTC. City matching funds were not required for this grant.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made through posting of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board, on the City's website, and the availability of the agenda and report in the Office of the City Clerk.

A public outreach meeting was held on May 28, 2015 to introduce the plan line to the affected properties and adjacent neighborhoods. Invitation letters were sent to the properties directly adjacent to and affected by the plan line area; electronic notices were delivered to the Downtown Association, Washington Park and Downtown neighborhoods. Seven people attended the meeting: three people representing two properties adjacent to the plan line area, two bicyclists, and two citizens from the Washington Park neighborhood. The bicyclists expressed support for the project and the property owners were interested in determining the "triggers" for implementation of the plan line.

ALTERNATIVES

Recommend that Council:

1. Approve the Mathilda Avenue Plan Line document, direct staff to update Municipal Code Section 19.06.050 to reflect this plan line and file the plan line map with the County Recorder's Office.
2. Approve the Mathilda Avenue Plan Line document with modifications proposed by City Council.
3. Do not approve the Mathilda Avenue Plan Line document and provide direction to staff for next steps.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1: Recommend that Council Approve the Mathilda Plan Line, direct staff to update Municipal Code Section 19.06.050 to reflect this plan line and file the plan line map with the County Recorder's Office.

The Mathilda Plan Line will create a master plan for the segment of Mathilda Avenue between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue that identifies roadway widths to implement bike lanes and wide sidewalks with street trees, delineate right-of-way dedication requirements, and complete the vision for Mathilda Avenue.

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Reviewed by: Manuel Pineda, Director of Public Works
Approved by: Kent Steffens, Assistant City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Mathilda Avenue Plan Line - Layout and Cross Sections
2. Mathilda Avenue Plan Line - Typical Section Enlargement
3. Mathilda Avenue Plan Line - Right of Way