



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

File #: 15-0719, Version: 1

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT

Adopt a Resolution Recommending Approval of the Official Plan Lines of Mathilda Avenue between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue; Refer to City Council for Approval and Introduction of Ordinance to Adopt Plan Lines

BACKGROUND

The Sunnyvale Municipal Code (SMC) authorizes the adoption of “Official Plan Lines” to implement the City’s circulation plan (SMC Chapter 19.06). Official Plan Lines are “the boundaries and limits of a planned right-of-way, including the future-right-of way of an existing street as it is proposed to be widened and including all lands necessary for the building, widening or maintenance of any road, street, highway, or any other type of public way, which planned right-of-way is based on the general plan.” (SMC §19.12.160(3).) The development of Official Plan Lines is one of the City’s key actions to implement the transportation network. The City designates future build-out of roadway segments by delineating planned right-of-way, which in turn 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.

Chapter 19.06 describes the process for Official Plan Line adoption: the Planning Commission is required to adopt a resolution recommending approval of official plan lines for designated areas, and the City Council then reviews and approves the Planning Commission resolution, and amends the municipal code to reference the Official Plan Line. (SCM §19.06.050).

The City currently has adopted Official Plan Lines for 58 roadway segments including “Mathilda Avenue: ‘Official Plan Lines for that Portion of State Route No. 114 Within the City Limits of Sunnyvale (known as Mathilda Avenue 1), El Camino Real (U.S.101) to the Most Northerly City Limits.” (SMC §19.06.050.) The proposed Mathilda Avenue Plan Line project would amend the portion of the existing Mathilda Avenue Plan Lines between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue. The remaining portion of the existing Mathilda Avenue Official Plan Line would remain the same.

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 “Mathilda Avenue Plan Line Project”). 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.

The existing Plan Line for this segment of Mathilda Avenue is 120 feet wide. It serves as the westerly border of the Sunnyvale Downtown Specific Plan Area. The Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) was adopted in 2003, and recently updated in 2013 to remove a planned carriage road on Mathilda

Avenue, and to 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 DSP 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 DSP 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.

Staff recommends that Planning Commission adopt the Resolution to Approve the Official Plan Lines for Mathilda Avenue between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue, and recommend the matter to City Council for approval of the resolution and amendment of the zoning code to include the revised Official Plan Lines.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission considered this item on Thursday, July 16, 2015 (15-0246). Commissioners voted unanimously to recommend 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 (Attachment 1).

City Council is scheduled to consider this item on September 15, 2015.

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.

General Plan, Chapter 3, Policy LT-5.9 - Appropriate accommodations for motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians shall be determined for city streets to increase the use of bicycles for transportation and to enhance the safety and efficiency of the overall street network for bicyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles.

General Plan, Chapter 3, Policy LT-5.14 - Historical precedence for street space dedicated for parking shall be a lesser consideration than providing street space for transportation uses when determining the appropriate future use of street space.

General Plan, Chapter 3, Policy LT-5.18 - The City Council shall make the final decision on roadway space reconfiguration when reconfiguration will result in changes to existing accommodations.

General Plan, Chapter 3, Policy LT-5.19 - Public input on roadway space reconfiguration shall be encouraged and presented independently of technical engineering and planning analyses.

Downtown Specific Plan, Goal C - Promote a balanced street system that serves all users well regardless of their mode of travel.

Downtown Specific Plan, Goal E - Improve street character.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A draft and final Program Environmental Impact Report ("Program EIR") was prepared in 2003 when the DSP was adopted by the City Council, and changes amending the streetscape and design standards of the DSP were analyzed in an Addendum to the Program EIR, adopted by the City Council on October 22, 2013 when it modified the DSP to eliminate the frontage road requirement on a portion of Mathilda Avenue (Resolution No. 617-13). The proposed Official Plan Lines are consistent with the project analyzed in the Addendum; no further review is required.

DISCUSSION

Mathilda Avenue between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue has been identified in both the DSP 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.

The existing Plan Line width for Mathilda Avenue is 120 feet. Based on the updates to the City's standards regarding sidewalks and bike lanes, this is no longer sufficient to support the City's vision for this area. The proposed Plan Line width varies between 132.5 feet to 142.5 feet, (Attachment 2) depending upon whether there are single or dual left turn pockets at the intersections.

Existing Conditions:

Currently, Mathilda Avenue in the project area 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 its 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 Lines: 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 3 and 4.

Within the Plan Lines, 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 planning for 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 5 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 renovations 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 help 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 (Attachment 6) and an Ordinance by the City Council to modify the Mathilda Plan Line in Municipal Code Section 19.06.050 (Attachment 7). Once approved, it will be submitted to City Clerk for filing in the office of the County recorder.

Board and Commission Review

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission considered this item on Thursday, July 16, 2016 (15-0246). Commissioners voted unanimously to recommend Alternative 1 with minor text changes to the staff report. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission discussed their support of the project and had specific discussion with respect to the following:

Lane widths for vehicles making left turns. Staff responded that there the median island was held as-is in width due to not wanting to lose the mature landscaping within the median island, and this caused some deviations in the widths of the left turn pockets at the intersections.

The Commissioners also wanted clarification on the bicycle lane and buffer widths. Staff responded that for most of the Plan Line bicycle lane widths were conceptually designed at 6 feet with a 3 foot buffer zone, however, at the southbound right turn lane at Mathilda/El Camino Real, the bike lane was reduced to 5 feet in width without a buffer zone.

Staff further clarified to the Commissioners that the Plan Line document to be considered by City Council would only set the outside right-of-way (property lines), and that concept designs for vehicular and bicycle lanes were provided for information only.

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 Planning 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.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Find that the environmental impacts of the project were considered in the Addendum to the DSP Program EIR adopted on October 22, 2013 (Resolution No. 617-13) for amendments to the DSP; Adopt a Resolution Recommending Approval of the Official Plan Lines of Mathilda Avenue between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue; and Recommend that City Council Approve the Resolution and Introduce an Ordinance to Amend SMC Section 19.06.050 to incorporate the revised Official Plan Lines, and direct that the Plan Line map be filed with the County Recorder's Office.
2. Do not approve the Resolution to Recommend Adoption of the Official Plan Lines of Mathilda

Avenue between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue, and provide direction to staff for next steps.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend to City Council alternative 1: Find that the environmental impacts of the project were considered in the Addendum to the DSP Program EIR adopted on October 22, 2013 (Resolution No. 617-13) for amendments to the DSP; Adopt a Resolution Recommending Approval of the Official Plan Lines of Mathilda Avenue between El Camino Real and Washington Avenue; and Recommend that City Council Approve the Resolution and Introduce an Ordinance to Amend SMC Section 19.06.050 to incorporate the revised Official Plan Lines, and direct that the Plan Line map be filed with the County Recorder's Office.

Adoption of 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
Reviewed by: Kent Steffens, Assistant City Manager
Approved by: Deanna J. Santana, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft BPAC Minutes of July 16, 2015
2. Mathilda Avenue Plan Line
3. Mathilda Avenue Plan Line - Conceptual Layout and Cross Sections
4. Mathilda Avenue Plan Line - Typical Section Enlargement
5. Mathilda Avenue Plan Line - Right of Way
6. Draft Resolution
7. Draft Ordinance

ENDNOTES

1. In the 1960's designated State Route 114 included Mathilda Avenue and contemplated a connector to 280. That designation was later changed and no longer includes Mathilda Avenue. State Route 114 is now a connector road between Highway 84 and U.S. 101, commonly known as "Willow Road" in Menlo Park)