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### REPORT TO COUNCIL

#### **SUBJECT**

Accept the Findings of the Poplar Avenue Sidewalk Study (DPW 21-04), Approval of Installation of a 6-foot Wide Sidewalk and 4-foot Wide Park Strip Along the East Side of Poplar Avenue Between El Camino Real and Peterson Middle School, and Approval of Installation of a Minimum 6-foot Wide Sidewalk on the North and South Sides of Bryant Way East of Poplar Avenue

#### **BACKGROUND**

Poplar Avenue between Peterson Middle School and El Camino Real is a two-lane local roadway. It is located within the Raynor Park neighborhood, which was previously annexed from the County of Santa Clara. At the time of the annexation in the 1970s, the residents of Raynor Park expressed a desire to retain the rural character of the neighborhood; therefore, there is currently no sidewalk on either side of the road for the majority of the segment except for locations where redevelopments occurred, and sidewalk was installed as part of those redevelopments.

Peterson Middle School is located at the southern terminus of Poplar Avenue. It is a neighborhood serving public school with approximately 900 students in Grades 6 to 8. Based on the 2018 Safe Routes to School Education Program Hand Tally survey performed at the school, approximately 22% of the students walk to school, and 16% of the students bike to school. There is a secured bicycle parking corral on the east side of Poplar Avenue at Rosalia Avenue.

In May 2019, as part of the development of the Active Transportation Plan (ATP), the project team conducted a School Walk Audit at Peterson Middle School during school dismissal with the school vice principal, school staff, parents, and city staff. The objective of the School Walk Audit was to understand the areas of concern for students walking and bicycling to school, and for the project team to identify infrastructure improvements in the school's vicinity to create a safer walking and bicycling environment for students.

Rosalia Avenue along the school frontage provides one-way vehicular access to the primary drop-off/pick-up area; therefore, all vehicles exiting the drop off/pick-up area would travel northbound along Poplar Avenue. See Attachment 1 for the Project Location Map. Since there is no existing sidewalk on the majority of Poplar Avenue, it was observed during the School Walk Audit that students would walk or bike in the vehicular lanes of Poplar Avenue.

In the ATP, the proposed improvements on Poplar Avenue include installing sharrows to allow a Class IIIB Bicycle Boulevard and conducting a study for filling in the sidewalk gap, which might consist of a pedestrian path with delineators or implementation of a permanent sidewalk and may necessitate a Parking Study for the potential removal of on-street parking.

Staff has worked with the Santa Clara Unified School District (SCUSD), Peterson Middle School

administration, Parent-Teacher Association, and Poplar residents/ property owners to propose quick-build improvements that would provide an interim walk/bike area on the east side of Poplar Avenue for students during school hours where there currently is no permanent sidewalk. The improvements would include installing a new double yellow centerline, shoulder stripes on both sides of Poplar Avenue and a yellow, high-visibility crosswalk crossing at Bryant Way on the east side. Staff had conducted outreach to determine neighborhood/property owner support to prohibit on-street parking on the east side of Poplar Avenue on school days from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. to provide a walking/biking area for students going to and departing from school. The City obtained grant-funding for quick build bicycle and pedestrian improvements in June 2021, and will begin construction of interim Poplar Avenue improvements in Summer/Fall 2023.

At the Study Issues Workshop on February 25, 2021, Council ranked the sidewalk study on Poplar Avenue between El Camino Real and Peterson Middle School (DPW 21-04) number two. Subsequently, at the May 20, 2021 City Council Budget Workshop, Council approved the recommended budget that included study issues that were above the line to include DPW 21-04. The key elements of the approved study included 1) a topographic land survey, 2) preparation of a conceptual design for a permanent sidewalk along the east side of Poplar Avenue from El Camino Real to Peterson Middle School using principles and practices described in the City's Vision Zero Plan and ATP, 3) preparation of a preliminary cost estimate for design and construction costs, and 4) coordination and outreach with SCUSD, Peterson Middle School, the surrounding neighborhood and the public.

## **EXISTING POLICY**

### **General Plan, Housing Element, Goal F**

*Policy F.3:* Continue a high quality of maintenance for public streets, rights of-way, and recreational areas, and provide safe and accessible pedestrian, bike, and transit linkages (accessibility) between jobs, residences, transportation hubs, and goods and services.

### **General Plan, Land Use and Transportation Element, Goal C**

*An Effective Multimodal Transportation System:* Offer the community a variety of transportation modes for local travel that are also integrated with the regional transportation system and land use pattern. Favor accommodation of alternative modes to the automobile as a means to enhance efficient transit use, bicycling, and walking and corresponding benefits to the environment, person throughput, and qualitative improvements to the transportation system environment.

**Resolution No. 793-16 Complete Streets Policy** (and Resolution No. 896-18 amending Resolution No. 793-16): The City wishes to improve its commitment to Complete Streets and desires that its streets form a comprehensive and integrated transportation network promoting safe, equitable, and convenient travel for all users while preserving flexibility, recognizing community context, and using the latest and best design guidelines and standards.

## **Vision Zero Plan**

- Reduce fatalities and serious injuries by 50 percent by 2029 and to continue improving traffic safety towards zero fatal and serious injury collisions in the ten years that follow.
- Call to action to make Sunnyvale's streets safer, especially for people biking and walking.

## **Active Transportation Plan**

- Sunnyvale is a Complete Streets Community where residents and commuters have a choice to bicycle and walk to meet their transportation needs on a connected, comfortable, convenient, safe and efficient network designed for all abilities and ages.
- Increase active transportation mode share to 10% by 2030 and continue to work toward increasing the active transportation mode share in the next 10 years.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This action is exempt under CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 as it is a minor public alteration in the condition of land, which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees.

## **DISCUSSION**

In June 2022, staff began working with Bellecci & Associates to study the closure of the sidewalk gap on the east side of Poplar Avenue between El Camino Real and Peterson Middle School. As part of the consultant's topographic survey study, it was determined that the public right-of-way along Poplar Avenue was 60-foot wide and allowed for the installation of a standard 10-foot sidewalk on the east side of Poplar Avenue, while maintaining space for an 11-foot wide through lane with sharrows, and an 8-foot wide parking lane for on-street parking in either direction. As a result, Transportation and Traffic staff determined that on-street parking can remain, and a Parking Study would not be required.

On October 18, 2022, City staff met with representatives from the SCUSD and Peterson Middle School to introduce the scope of the study, understand their concerns, and coordinate the study with the Laurelwood Master Plan, which includes potential developments at Peterson Middle School. At this meeting, SCUSD made staff aware of the sidewalk gaps on Bryant Way (directly east of Poplar Avenue) as it related to their school's master plan. A limited analysis of the Bryant Way sidewalk gaps was included within the overall study.

On November 22, 2022, an Outreach Letter was sent to each resident located along the proposed sidewalk routes. The letter notified residents of the study and provided opportunities to meet with staff in-person at their homes or schedule a call to ask questions and share their feedback. By December 15, 2022, staff had met with all five affected residents and their responses and concerns are noted under the "Community Feedback and Responses" section of the Poplar Avenue Sidewalk Study Technical Memorandum (Attachment 2).

In April 2023, Bellecci & Associates finalized their technical memorandum identifying two alternatives for the Poplar Avenue permanent sidewalk installation. Conceptual plans and typical sections of the alternatives are shown in Attachment 3. Additionally, a limited analysis of the Bryant Way sidewalk gap closure was also conducted, where the existing public right-of-way was confirmed, and preliminary design and construction costs were estimated.

Two alternatives were evaluated along the east side of Poplar Avenue. Poplar Concept A includes a standard residential sidewalk configuration which consists of a 6-foot wide sidewalk and 4-foot wide park strip. Poplar Concept B differs from the first alternative along the portion south of Bryant Way and includes an 8-foot wide sidewalk with no park strip to reduce impacts to existing trees and shrubs along the frontages of 1340 and 1350 Poplar Avenue.

The preliminary cost estimate to design and construct the sidewalks are as follows:

	Design Cost	Construction Cost	Total Project Cost
Poplar Concept A	\$125,000	\$675,000	\$800,000
Poplar Concept B	\$117,000	\$627,000	\$744,000
+ Bryant (North & South)	+\$35,000	+\$220,000	+\$255,000
+ Bryant (South)	+\$18,000	+\$108,000	+\$126,000

The sidewalk closure on the east side of Poplar Avenue would provide a critical pedestrian and bicycle linkage for students accessing Peterson Middle School. Although new sidewalk improvements along Bryant Way were not originally part of the scope of the study, preliminary costs to close these sidewalk gaps adjacent to Poplar Avenue have been prepared based on discussion and input from SCUSD staff. The estimated cost of this work is included as an option to further improve access for both students and residents.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The design and construction of this project is not funded. The total project costs are estimated at approximately \$1.055 million. Possible funding sources for this project may include Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds, dedicated sidewalk and streets funding, such as Measure B, General Fund and Green Stormwater Infrastructure. The City may also elect to pursue future grant possibilities or utilize Community Benefit contributions.

The City currently receives approximately \$140,000 each fiscal year for programming. In FY 2023/24, the accumulated TDA funds are anticipated to be \$336,620. Staff is bringing an item to the BPAC on May 18, 2023 (BPAC 23-0429) for recommendation to City Council for possible utilizing the TDA funding for design and the remainder to be used for a portion of construction of this project. The Council is scheduled to hear the item on June 20, 2023.

**PUBLIC CONTACT**

Public contact was made by posting the Council meeting agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board at City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Public Library and in the Department of Public Safety Lobby. In addition, the agenda and this report are available at the NOVA Workforce Services reception desk located on the first floor of City Hall at 456 W. Olive Avenue (during normal business hours) and on the City's website.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. Accept the findings of the Poplar Avenue Sidewalk Study (DPW 21-04), approval of installation a 6-foot wide sidewalk and 4-foot wide park strip along the east side of Poplar Avenue, between El Camino Real and Peterson Middle School, and approval of installation of a minimum 6-foot wide sidewalk on the north and south sides of Bryant Way east of Poplar Avenue.
2. Accept the findings of the Poplar Avenue Sidewalk Study (DPW 21-04), and approve the installation of Concept B. which differs from the Alternative 1 along the portion south of Bryant Way and includes an 8-foot wide sidewalk with no park strip to reduce impacts to existing trees

- and shrubs along the frontages of 1340 and 1350 Poplar Avenue.
3. Do not accept the findings of the Poplar Avenue Sidewalk Study (DPW 21-04).
  4. Provide other direction to staff as Council deems appropriate.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Alternative 1: Accept the findings of the Poplar Avenue Sidewalk Study (DPW 21-04), approval of installation of Concept A: 6-foot wide sidewalk and 4-foot wide park strip along the east side of Poplar Avenue, between El Camino Real and Peterson Middle School, and install a minimum 6-foot wide sidewalk on the north and south sides of Bryant Way east of Poplar Avenue.

Prepared by: Marlon Quiambao, Senior Engineer  
Reviewed by: Dennis Ng, Transportation and Traffic Manager  
Reviewed by: Jennifer Ng, Assistant Director of Public Works  
Reviewed by: Chip Taylor, Director of Public Works  
Reviewed by: Teri Silva, Assistant City Manager  
Approved by: Kent Steffens, City Manager

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Project Location Map
2. Poplar Avenue Sidewalk Study Technical Memorandum
3. Poplar Avenue Sidewalk Exhibits