



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 21, 2020

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

FROM: DAVID JACOBS P.E., L.S., PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

THRU: RODGER A. OLDS P.E., CITY ENGINEER

BY: EDA HERRERA P.E., SENIOR CIVIL ENGINEER

TITLE: INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND
MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM FOR
THE EAST LAUREL DRIVE PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS
PROJECT, CIP 9220

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

It is recommended that City Council approve a resolution:

1. Affirming the CEQA findings; and
2. Adopting the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvements Project, CIP 9220; and
3. Approving the project and required permits authorizing pedestrian, vehicle, and trail improvements.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve a resolution to affirm the CEQA findings; approve the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvements Project, CIP 9220; and approve the project and required permits authorizing pedestrian, vehicle and trail improvements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvement Project (the project) has been proposed by the City of Salinas to enhance pedestrian safety and increase connectivity, mobility, and access for transit users and pedestrians. The project is proposed to provide new sidewalk facilities, a trail system and boardwalk for pedestrians and bicyclists, trail lighting and new street lighting.

An Initial Study was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts associated with the project. The Initial Study identified certain potential impacts that needed to be mitigated as part of the project

development. A MMRP was developed to document the required mitigation and help ensure that the necessary impacts are executed.

The project as proposed will incorporate items into the plans and specifications outlined in the MMRP to mitigate potential impacts to Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, and Noise.

Staff received comment letters from the Salinas Union High School District, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, and the Monterey County Resource Management Agency. Responses to the comments were prepared and are provided as Exhibit D in the attached resolution. The commenters are supportive of the project and did not identify any issues regarding the adequacy of the IS/MND.

Council Action is now required to Affirm the CEQA findings and approve the IS/MND and MMRP.

BACKGROUND:

On November 20, 2019, the Planning Commission held a Public Hearing for subject project and approved a resolution to recommend that the Salinas City Council adopt the IS/MND and MMRP and approve the remaining agreements and actions necessary to complete this project.

There are no pedestrian sidewalks on East Laurel Dr. between Constitution Blvd. and North Sanborn Rd., on Constitution Blvd. between East Laurel Dr. and the project limits, and street lighting on East Laurel Drive is limited.

The East Laurel Drive Pedestrian Improvement Project (the project) has been proposed by the City of Salinas to enhance pedestrian safety and increase connectivity, mobility, and access for transit users and pedestrians. The City-initiated project would allow for pedestrian, vehicular, and trail improvements along East Laurel Dr. (between Constitution Blvd. and North Sanborn Rd.) and northeast of East Laurel Drive for the trail and trail lighting improvements. Additional pedestrian improvements would occur on Constitution Blvd., between East Laurel Dr. to approximately 375 feet south of Manchester Circle.

The City-initiated project will provide new sidewalk facilities, a trail system and boardwalk for pedestrians and bicyclists, trail lighting and new street lighting to promote urban sustainability. The rehabilitation of an existing trail is proposed from the entrance to the Monterey County East Laurel Facility (facility yards), along East Laurel Dr., to the northern trail at the Natividad Creek Detention Basin. Lighting improvements would be provided on two existing trails, one trail near the parking lot of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park extending approximately 800 feet north and another trail around the inland side Natividad Creek Detention Basin to approximately 95 feet west of Garner Avenue at Gee Street.

The goals of the project are consistent with the City of Salinas General Plan, specifically, Policy COS-6.4 to support alternative modes of transportation such as walking, biking and public transit, and to develop bike-friendly and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods to reduce emissions associated with automobile use. Additionally, the identified CIP project #9220 and 9924, are desired mobility improvement projects of the City's adopted Capital Improvement Program: FY 2019/20.

East Laurel Dr. is classified as a “Major Arterial” in the City of Salinas General Plan Circulation Element. There are existing bike lanes in both directions on East Laurel Dr. between St. Edwards Dr. and Constitution Blvd. Within the project limits on northbound East Laurel Dr., there is a 5-foot-wide bike lane with 3-foot-wide buffer striping. Within the project limits on southbound East Laurel Dr., there is a 6-foot-wide bike lane. The on-street bike lane improvements were completed in June 2019. There are new 6-foot-wide bike lanes with new 3-foot-wide bike buffers in both travel directions on Constitution Blvd.

There is one existing pedestrian trail on the east side of East Laurel Dr. that starts at the parking lot of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park and extends to Constitution Blvd. near Independence Blvd. The other pedestrian trail also extends to the southeast, crossing the road into the Monterey County East Laurel Facility Yard, and continuing parallel to East Laurel Dr. until it reaches Natividad Creek Detention Basin, where it curves around the eastern edge of the basin, terminating at a residential neighborhood at Garner Ave.

The proposed improvements are summarized below and illustrated on Exhibit A.

East Laurel Dr. from North Sanborn Rd. to St. Edwards Dr. Construct new curbs and gutters and an approximate 5.5-foot-wide sidewalk starting at the existing sidewalk and curb approximately 330 feet north of the intersection of North Sanborn Rd. at East Laurel Dr. and extending to approximately 40 feet south of East Laurel Dr. at St. Edwards Dr. Install street lighting on either side of East Laurel Dr. and at the existing raised median.

East Laurel Dr. from St. Edwards Dr. to Ranch View Ln. A 6-foot-wide boardwalk would start adjacent to the bike lane at St. Edwards Dr. and extend north along East Laurel Dr., stopping near the gated City access road where it turns into a 6-foot-wide sidewalk. The sidewalk would terminate and tie into the existing trail at the north end of the Natividad Creek Detention Basin. New curbs and gutters would be constructed along the proposed boardwalk. The boardwalk would cross over several utilities including two storm drain outlets and through power poles. Existing shrubs and vegetation would be cleared. Curb and gutter improvements would be installed from St. Edwards Dr. to Ranch View Ln.

New street lights would be installed:

- At the intersection of East Laurel Dr. at Ranch View Ln.
- On either side of East Laurel Dr., approximately 140 and 250 feet east of Ranch View Ln.
- Within the existing raised median on East Laurel Dr.
- On southbound East Laurel Dr., stopping at the end of the left-turn pocket near the gated trail access.
- Within raised median between St. Edwards Dr. and the Natividad Creek Detention Basin (ten light standards). Installation of two street lights would remove bushes and landscape trees.

Trail rehabilitation would occur east of the entrance to the Monterey County East Laurel Facility, along East Laurel Dr. to the northern trail at the Natividad Creek Detention Basin. Low-profile

(bollard) pedestrian lighting would be provided on the trail around the inland side of the Natividad Creek Detention Basin to approximately 95 feet west of Garner Avenue at Gee Street.

East Laurel Dr. from Ranch View Ln. to Constitution Blvd. Sidewalk and curb and gutter improvements would begin at East Laurel Dr. at Ranch View Ln. and extend north until they connect with existing facilities at the northbound right-turn lane to Constitution Blvd. from East Laurel Dr. A handrail would be provided along the sidewalk from the bus stop at Veterans Way to where Gabilan Creek crosses East Laurel Dr. The improvements cross over two storm drain outlets.

Pedestrian bollard lighting would be installed west of the entrance to the Monterey County East Laurel Facility near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park parking lot. The trail lighting extends approximately 800 feet north from the parking lot. Bollard lights would be spaced out approximately 100 feet from each other, on alternating sides of the trail. Power to the new trail lights would be obtained from the existing PG&E power pole near Ranch View Ln. Street Lights would be installed in the raised median between Ranch View Ln. and Constitution Blvd. Four landscape trees or bushes would be removed from the median. Street lights would also be installed on both sides of East Laurel Dr. approximately 125 feet west of Ranch View Ln.

East Laurel Dr. at Constitution Blvd. Light standards would be installed at the intersection of East Laurel Dr. at Constitution Blvd. and along northbound East Laurel Dr. approximately 100 feet west of the street lights at the intersection. Minor traffic signal modifications are proposed.

Constitution Blvd. from East Laurel Dr. to the Project Terminus. An approximately 3-foot-wide landscaping buffer and an approximately 4-foot-wide sidewalk would be constructed on northbound Constitution Blvd. The improvements continue to the project boundary approximately 375 feet south of Constitution at Manchester Circle. The proposed sidewalk would follow the existing dirt path and meander around several utilities, including street lamps and storm drains. Two landscape trees on Constitution Blvd. would be removed. No lighting improvements are necessary. Improvements on Constitution Blvd. could be implemented in a subsequent phase of development based on availability project funding.

The City of Salinas General Plan requires a 100-foot setback between development and creeks (measured from top-of bank or outer edge of the riparian woodland, whichever is greater). Most of the project is within the City's 100-foot creek setback area(s): Gabilan Creek, Natividad Creek Detention Basin, drainage swale near Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park, and intermittent creek along Constitution Boulevard. Trail lighting would be set back 30 feet from the creeks. Encroachments into the creek setback may be considered pursuant to the General Plan COS-17 Implementation Program. Development activities may be considered for certain areas within the City if the encroachment would not have a significant adverse impact on the riparian and wetland resources because mitigation measures would achieve a comparable or better level of mitigation than the 100-foot setback, or the property is adjacent to a reclamation ditch and no riparian or wetland resources are identified outside the ditch. Mitigation in the IS/MND would protect existing riparian woodland from inadvertent impacts during sidewalk construction; impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

The following provides an overview of the land uses proximate to the project site and the corresponding zoning designations.

Direction	East Laurel Drive	Constitution Boulevard	Zoning
North/East	Natividad Medical Center, Monterey County Parks Department facilities, Natividad Detention Basin, residential uses, 5 ft bike lane with 3 ft buffer	Natividad Medical Center, open fields, Monterey County Jail, Residential uses	Public/Semipublic, Parks, Open Space, Residential Medium Density
South/West	Agricultural land, open fields, Natividad Creek, 6 ft bike lane	Open fields, Constitution Soccer Complex	Residential Low Density, Agriculture, Commercial Retail, Residential High Density

The project would disturb approximately 2.12 acres and require approximately 375 cubic yards of cut and approximately 1,403 cubic yards of fill. Construction is anticipated to take approximately six months. Construction parking and staging would be accommodated within project limits and at least one through travel lane in each direction on East Laurel Dr. and Constitution Blvd. would be operational. No roadways would be completely closed during construction.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

The environmental impacts of the project have been analyzed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Public Resources Code [PRC] § 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, §15000 et seq.).

An Initial Study was prepared to evaluate the potential impacts associated with the project. See the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) in Exhibit B. Based on the environmental analysis, the project would have no impact or a less than significant impact on the following environmental issues: Aesthetics, Agriculture and Forestry Resources, Air Quality, Energy, Greenhouse Gases, Hydrology and Water Quality, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, Transportation, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfires. The project's impacts on the following environmental issues would be less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation: Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Tribal Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, and Noise. Based upon review of the Initial Study, the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment because the Standard Conditions of Approval and Mitigation Measures outlined in the proposed Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) have been included in the project; see Exhibit B of Resolution.

On August 20, 2019, a Notice of Intent (NOI), Exhibit A of resolution to adopt the IS/MND was published. The NOI was published in the Monterey Herald newspaper on August 20, 2019. The NOI was mailed to property owners and occupants within a 300-foot radius of the project site. The

NOI was also sent to responsible agencies and interested parties and posted at the County Clerk's Office on August 20, 2019. The IS/MND was posted on the City's website and was available at the City of Salinas Public Works Department, City Clerk's office and at the John Steinbeck and Cesar Chavez libraries.

Agency Review

The IS/MND public review period started on August 20, 2019 and ended on September 9, 2019. Staff received three comment letters from the Salinas Union High School District, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, and the Monterey County Resource Management Agency.

- Virginia Boyce, Director of General Services – Salinas Union High School District. No comments on the CEQA documentation. The author requested that vehicular and pedestrian access remained available within the project area during construction. This issue is resolved, as no roadways would be completely closed during construction and a minimum of one travel lane in each direction would be operational.
- Debra L. Hale, Executive Director – Transportation Agency for Monterey County. No comments on the CEQA documentation. The author requested that 6-foot-width bike lanes be included in the restriping plan along East Laurel Drive within the project area. This issue is resolved, as the City completed on-street bike lane improvements in June 2019.
- Raul Martinez, Assistant Engineer – Monterey County Resource Management Agency. No comments on CEQA documentation. The author requests confirmation that all construction will occur within the City Right-of-Way (ROW) and that the City will maintain all facilities, including drainage, sidewalk, curb and gutter, and lighting after construction. These issues are resolved, as the City will continue necessary maintenance operations within the right-of-way. The County also requested that Veteran Way remain open to vehicular traffic during project construction. This issue is resolved, as no roadways would be completely closed during construction.

Responses to the comments were prepared and are provided as Exhibit D in the attached resolution. The commenters noted their support of the project and did not identify any issues regarding the adequacy of the IS/MND.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

This item relates to the Council's Strategic Goal of "Excellent Infrastructure," and enhances "Quality of Life." by enhancing pedestrian safety and increasing connectivity, mobility, and access for transit users and pedestrians.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

As of January 13, 2020, the budget for CIP 9220, East Laurel Drive Sidewalk Improvements project, is as follows:

Funding Source	Appropriations	Year to Date Expenditures	Year to Date Encumbrances	Available Budget
2510-Measure X Transportation Safety	\$100,000	-0-	-0-	\$100,000
5202-Special Const. Assist-Bonds	\$4,463,776	\$47,743	\$26,959	\$4,389,074
Total	\$4,563,776	\$47,743	\$26,959	\$4,489,074

Expenditures to date include costs related to project coordination, the environmental and design phases, and costs related to utility relocation for the traffic signal installation project at the intersection of St. Edwards and East Laurel Drive. An additional \$961,000 in Regional Surface Transportation Program grant funds is expected to be appropriated once the project is ready for construction.

ATTACHMENTS:

Exhibit “1” – Project Map and Concept Resolution with Exhibits

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