


Agenda Report Reviewed by:  
City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL  
CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA ITEM

**Meeting Date:** July 20, 2021

**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers

**From:** Joe Gaffney, City Engineer  
Kevin S. Kilgore, Chief of Police

**Subject:** Vehicular Travel Modifications: Palm Ave. between Petaluma Ave. and S. Main St.

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends the Sebastopol City Council approve requested improvements/modifications as detailed below in the staff report and approval of budget request.

**Funding:** Currently Budgeted: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_ N/A  
Net General Fund Cost:  
Budget Amendment Request \$8,000 (est)

Account Code 124-41-03-4210 | \$0 Costs authorized in City Approved Budget **AK** (verified by Administrative Services Department)

**INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE:**

This item requests City Council approval of recommendations for improvements/modifications to Palm Ave. between Petaluma Ave. and S. Main St and approval of budget request.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Sebastopol Police Department and City Hall have received several complaints of traffic collisions and near-miss traffic collisions between vehicles turning northbound on Petaluma Ave. from eastbound Palm Ave. The section of Palm Ave. that is being referred to in this report is between Petaluma Ave. and S. Main St. Additionally, a crosswalk extends across Petaluma Ave., north of Palm Ave. Because of how northbound Petaluma Ave. intersects with Palm Ave., it is very difficult for Palm Ave. drivers to see northbound Petaluma Ave. vehicles. As a result, drivers preparing to turn their vehicles northbound onto Petaluma Ave. from eastbound Palm Ave. do so in a very quick manner because of the fear of northbound Petaluma Ave. vehicles that cannot be easily seen. When turning in such a quick manner, drivers typically continue to look south at the northbound Petaluma Ave. traffic lanes in an effort to avoid a traffic collision, and they fail to look for pedestrians in the crosswalk that crosses Petaluma Ave., just north of Palm Ave.

**DISCUSSION:**

In an effort to mitigate actual and near-miss traffic collisions between vehicles and between vehicles and pedestrian, it is recommended that Palm Ave., between Petaluma Ave. and S. Main St. be changed from two-way vehicular travel lanes to a one-way vehicular travel lane for vehicles to travel westbound only on Palm Ave., between Petaluma Ave. and S. Main St.

On the aforementioned specific section of Palm Ave., there is one residential driveway and one commercial driveway, and both will remain accessible. Additionally, vehicles traveling south on S. Main St. can access northbound Petaluma Ave. by driving south of Palm Ave. and making the eastbound (left) turn just south of the Sun

Dragon solar array. By making the eastbound (left) turn south of the Solar Dragon solar array, vehicle drivers can clearly see northbound Petaluma Ave. vehicular travel, thus creating a much safer route of travel for drivers and pedestrians.

The conversion to one-way operation would obviously eliminate eastbound vehicle movements and the potential for conflicts with pedestrians at the Petaluma Avenue intersection. This change would present only a minor inconvenience to drivers utilizing the eastbound direction or accessing driveways on Palm Avenue since the next connection between South Main Street and Petaluma Avenue is located approximately 300 feet to the south. This connection to Petaluma Avenue would operate more efficiently than the current Palm Avenue connection as there is better sight distance to the south available to drivers at this location.

The conversion of Palm Avenue to one-way traffic flow would require the following changes to signing and striping:

- Removal of southbound right-turn pavement arrows on South Main Street
- Removal of eastbound pavement arrows and stop legend on Palm Avenue
- Addition of one-way westbound pavement arrows on Palm Avenue
- Removal of the centerline stripe on Palm Avenue.
- Shifting the westbound pavement arrows, stop bar and Stop legend in the westbound direction approaching South Main Street.
- Addition of one-way signs on Palm Avenue
- Addition of No Left-Turn signs on South Main Street.

Because some of these signing and striping changes would be required on South Main Street (State Route 116), the City Public Works Department would need to obtain a Caltrans encroachment permit.

Given the safety benefits and minor inconvenience to drivers, it is recommended that these changes be completed on Palm Avenue.

**COUNCIL GOALS:**

This project reflects the Council Goals and General Plan Actions:

Policy CIR 1-10: Consider all transportation improvements as opportunities to improve safety, access, and mobility for all roadway users.

Action CIR 1k: Ensure regular monitoring of traffic accidents, traffic levels of service, and intersection capacity to update base data and respond to safety problems and changing conditions. Prioritize locations with high collision rates for safety improvements.

Action CIR 1r: Coordinate with Caltrans to implement traffic calming, vehicle safety, and bicycle/pedestrian network improvements throughout Sebastopol.

Action CIR 2p: Support and implement policies and recommendations related to transportation from Health Action's Action Plan Sonoma. These include:

- Implement and strengthen policies and programs to enhance transportation safety.

Work to improve traffic circulation

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:**

The project is categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to Section 15301(c), which exempts minor alterations to existing highways and streets that do not increase capacity or expand the use, and . The Project would not expand the existing right-of-way or asphalt pavement, and the change to a one-way street will have negligible impacts on traffic, while providing for increased safety. A Notice of Exemption will be filed if the Council approves this project.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, staff anticipates receiving public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report. Such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the agenda item.

**PUBLIC NOTICE:**

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The City of Sebastopol consulted Traffic Engineer Steve Weinberger, W-Trans, who reviewed the intersection and provided the recommendations as discussed above. A copy of his letter is attached. Signage can be accommodated within the Public Works Department's Budget; however, the striping changes will require hiring a striping contractor. This work is estimated to cost \$8,000. An amendment to the Public Works Street Contracted Services account, 124-4103-4210, in the amount of \$8,000 is requested.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the Sebastopol City Council approve the recommendations for improvements/modifications to Palm Ave. between Petaluma Ave. and S. Main St. and budget amendment of \$8000.

**Attachments:**

Letter from Steve Weinberger, Senior Principal W-Trans, outlining required work  
Drawing of proposed changes on Palm Ave., between Petaluma Ave. and S. Main St.



June 24, 2021

Mr. Kevin Kilgore  
 Chief of Police  
 City of Sebastopol  
 6850 Laguna Park Way  
 Sebastopol, CA 95472

## **Palm Avenue - Consideration of One-Way Traffic Flow**

Dear Chief Kilgore;

As discussed, this is summary of the traffic issues and consideration for one-way traffic flow on Palm Avenue between South Main Street and Petaluma Avenue in the City of Sebastopol.

I understand from our conversation that there have been multiple incidence of collisions and/or conflicts between eastbound Palm Avenue vehicles approaching Petaluma Avenue and pedestrians crossing Petaluma Avenue on the north leg of the intersection at the crosswalk. Based on my observations, it appears common that eastbound motorists are generally looking to the south along Petaluma Avenue to determine a gap in traffic, so are therefore not aware of pedestrian attempting to cross in the crosswalk to their left on the north leg of the intersection.

As a mitigation for this issue, we discussed a conversion of the Palm Avenue traffic flow from two-way circulation to one-way in the westbound direction only between Petaluma Avenue and South Main Street. The conversation to one-way operation would obviously eliminate eastbound vehicle movements and the potential for conflicts with pedestrians at the Petaluma Avenue intersection.

This change would present only a minor inconvenience to drivers utilizing the eastbound direction or accessing driveways on Palm Avenue since the next connection between South Main Street and Petaluma Avenue is located approximately 300 feet to the south. This connection to Petaluma Avenue would operate more efficiently than the current Palm Avenue connection as there is better sight distance to the south available to drivers at this location.

The conversion of Palm Avenue to one-way traffic flow would require the following changes to signing and striping:

- Removal of southbound shared through/left-turn pavement arrows on South Main Street and replace with through arrow only.
- Removal of eastbound pavement arrows and stop legend on Palm Avenue
- Addition of one-way westbound pavement arrows on Palm Avenue
- Removal of the centerline stripe on Palm Avenue.
- Shifting the westbound pavement arrows, stop bar and Stop legend in the westbound direction approaching South Main Street.
- Addition of one-way signs on Palm Avenue
- Addition of No Left-Turn signs on South Main Street.
- Addition of Do Not Enter signage on the west end of Palm Avenue.

Because some of these signing and striping changes would be required on South Main Street (State Route 116), the City Public Works Department would need to coordinate with Caltrans to gain approval for these modifications.

Mr. Kevin Kilgore

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Given the safety benefits and minor inconvenience to drivers, we recommend that these changes be completed on Palm Avenue

If you have any questions, please give me a call.

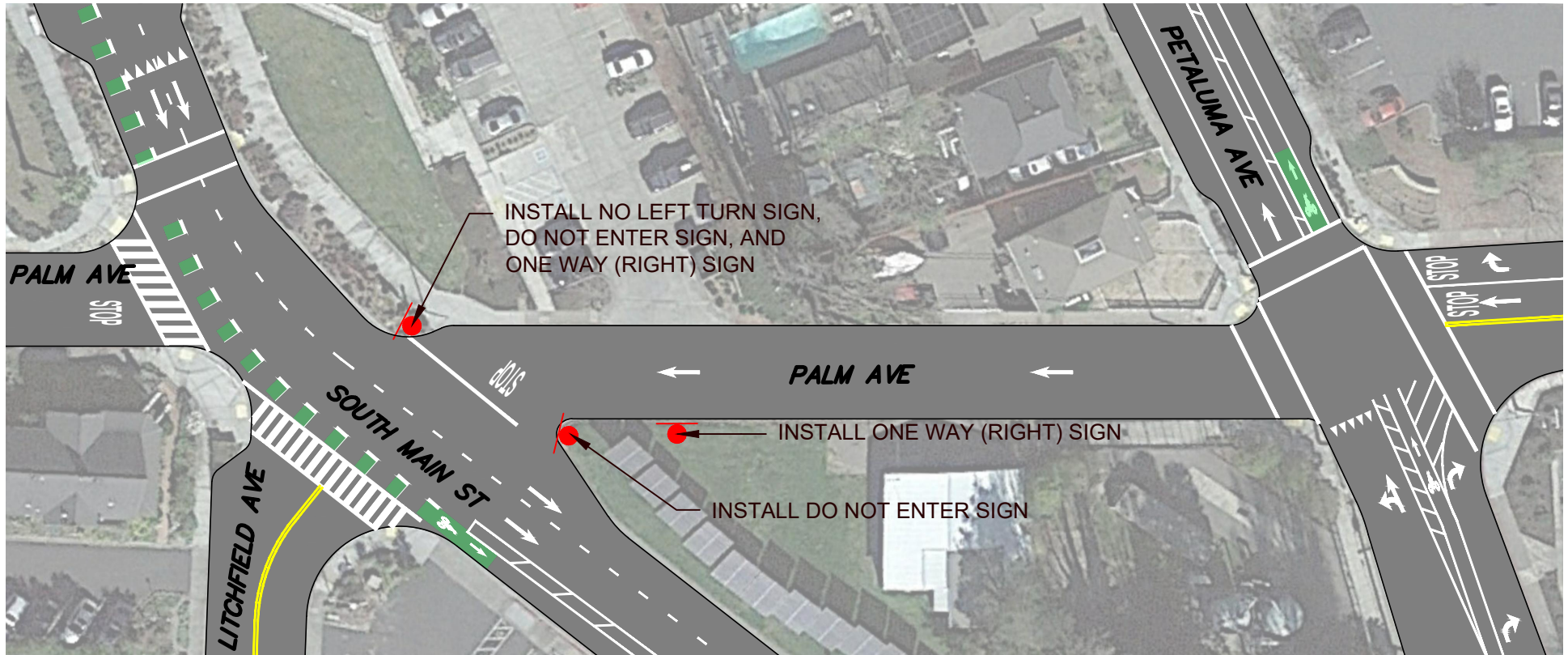
Sincerely,



Steve Weinberger, PE, PTOE  
Senior Principal

SJW/sjw/SEB903.PalmAve.L1

Copy to: Dante Del Prete, City of Sebastopol



PRELIMINARY  
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

