

Agenda Report Reviewed by:
 City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
 CITY COUNCIL
 AGENDA ITEM

Meeting Date: March 7, 2023
To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Mario Landeros, Interim City Engineer
 Ron Nelson, Police Chief
Subject: Palm Avenue Street Improvements CIP Project #0519-22.03
Recommendation: City Council receive presentation, provide direction to staff on the Palm Avenue Improvements
Funding: Currently Budgeted: Yes No N/A

Account Code/Costs authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable) AK (verified by Administrative Services Department) Bldg./Fac./Infr. Reserve Fund 103 and Pavement Reserve Fund 123

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE

This item is for City Council to receive a presentation, and provide direction to staff on the Palm Avenue Street Improvements CIP (Capital Improvement Program) Project #0519-22.03.

The purpose of bringing this project to Council is to reassess the need for the project. During the design process, the need for one-way traffic on Palm Avenue was re-evaluated by the City’s ad hoc traffic safety group. The group meets on an as-needed basis and generally consists of the City Engineer, the Police Chief, the Public Works Superintendent, and the City’s traffic consultant (W-Trans). It was also discovered, during the design process, that the cost for installing a new sidewalk and roadway improvements would be more costly due to right of way and utility issues and the condition of the road base on the north edge of Palm Avenue.

BACKGROUND

Collision data over a six-year period (2015-2020) was collected and evaluated for City roadways as part of another City project, 2022 Local Roads Safety Plan. While neither of the intersections of Palm Ave. / S. Main St. and Palm Ave. / Petaluma Ave. were identified as highest-ranking priority interests with suggested applied countermeasures, the data does show that during the study period (2015-2020) a total of 17 collisions were reported between these two intersections. Table 1 below lists the 17 collisions reports during the years 2015 to 2020 from Palm Ave / S. Main St. to Palm Ave. / Petaluma Ave.

Table 1 - Palm Avenue reported collisions years 2015 - 2020. Location: Palm Av / S Main St to Palm Av / Petaluma Av

Primary Road	Secondary Road	Location	Severity					Type							Year						Total			
			Fatal	Injury (Severe)	Injury (Other Visible)	Injury (Complaint of Pain)	Property Damage Only	Head-on	Sideswipe	Rear End	Broadside*	Hit Object	Overturned	Vehicle/ Pedestrian	Other/Not Listed*	Pedestrian	Bicycle*	2015	2016	2017		2018	2019	2020
Palm Ave	S Main St	City	0	0	3	1	2	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	6
Palm Ave	Petaluma Ave	City	0	0	3	1	5	0	3	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	2	2	2	1	9
Palm Ave Segment		City	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2

The Project, Palm Avenue Street Improvements, is CIP Project #0519-22.03 in the adopted Fiscal Year 2022-23 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The project is located on Palm Avenue from Petaluma Avenue to S. Main Street (see map on Attachment 1). The approved CIP project is for the modification of Palm Avenue to one-way (westbound) traffic, installation of sidewalk on the north side of Palm Avenue, street overlay and associated signage and pavement markings.

In July 2021 the Council received the report from the former City Engineer and former Police Chief (who is also the designated City Traffic Engineer) that in response to several complaints of traffic collisions and near-miss traffic collisions between vehicles turning northbound on Petaluma Avenue from eastbound Palm Avenue, the Police Chief and City Engineer recommended modifying Palm Avenue to one-way way (westbound) traffic. Staff's original recommendation was to add signage and pavement markings to turn the street to one-way traffic at an estimated cost of \$8,000. During the meeting, Council directed staff to include the installation of sidewalk on the north side of Palm Avenue to fill the sidewalk gap and resurface Palm Avenue. The approved Fiscal Year 2022-23 CIP budget for the construction was \$120,000.

DISCUSSION

The Traffic Safety Group (TSG) met and communicated during the past few months and the TSG's summary and recommendations are listed as follows:

- On the one-way couplet south of SR 12, there are only two crosswalks on SR116 which have conflicts from right or left-turning traffic: the south leg at Burnett Street/South Main Street and the north leg of Petaluma Avenue/Palm Avenue. (All other crosswalks of SR 116 only have conflicts from through traffic on SR 116).
- As should be noted, further CIP improvements are planned at the Burnett Street location. The SR 116 Corridor Safety Study did not identify the Burnett Street location for improvements since there was minimal collision experience and flashing beacons were already present.
- Pedestrian volumes are more significant and anticipated at the Burnett Street location compared to the Palm Avenue location.
- The conversion of Palm Avenue to one-way westbound only would benefit the Petaluma Avenue/Palm Avenue crosswalk by eliminating conflicts from left-turning traffic which is generally looking away from the pedestrians and towards the oncoming northbound traffic.
- Traffic which previously traveled eastbound on this block of Palm Avenue could easily reach its destination by using the southbound left-turn turn lane in close proximity to the south.
- The one-way conversion can easily be accomplished through the use of signing and striping only. However, the pavement condition, especially on the west end of the block may be difficult to remove existing striping without further deterioration of the pavement.
- The need for this change is debatable since the presence of turning vehicle/pedestrian conflicts at uncontrolled crosswalks is commonplace and one that the driver should be aware.
- The ancillary improvements to the northern sidewalk filling the 70-foot sidewalk gap would be beneficial but given the low volume of traffic and low volume of pedestrian activity, the decision to fill this sidewalk gap is debatable given the other pedestrian sidewalk needs in the City. It should be noted that the sidewalk installation is the responsibility of the property owner and the City installs sidewalks in conjunction with major projects and typically with grant funding.

- Just recently, approximately one year ago, Caltrans restriped SR 116 in this vicinity whereby the northbound highway transitioned from one lane into two lanes just before reaching Palm Ave intersection. With Caltrans’ restriping to one lane only and adding bike lanes, it is the Chief’s opinion that the previous conflict issue no longer exists and therefore changing Palm Ave into one-way (westbound) no longer appears to be warranted.

If Council directs staff to move forward with the project, staff will be presenting the revised (increased) budget request in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2023-24 CIP proposed budget. This added time will allow City staff to continue to work on the right of way constraints, utility constraints, and the requisite Caltrans encroachment permit (the permit is required by Caltrans on all intersecting side streets along state highways).

If Council chooses not to move forward with the project, the project will be removed from the proposed CIP budget. It is noted that Palm Avenue is in need of pavement resurfacing and if the work is not included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 CIP budget, the work will be conducted in accordance with the priority plan for all city streets in the City’s Pavement Management Program at a future date. Council will be presented with the 2023 Pavement Management Program report at a future Council meeting.

GOALS:

This action supports the following City Council Goals and General Plan Actions:

- Goal 2 - Maintain, Improve and Invest in the City’s Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Streets, Circulation, Parks, Storm Drains and Public Facilities).

PUBLIC COMMENT

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, if staff receives 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

A public notice was sent to property owners within 500 feet of the project area regarding today’s meeting regarding the discussion of the Palm Avenue Improvements project (see Attachment 1). 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

Council approved a CIP construction budget of \$120,000 in the Fiscal Year 2022-23 budget. If the Council moves forward with the project, staff will be requesting a construction budget of \$148,000 in the proposed Fiscal year 2023-24 CIP budget with funding sources shown in Table 2. The reserve funds shown in Table 2 are funded through the City’s General Fund.

Table 2 Palm Avenue Street Improvements CIP #0519-22.03

Funding Sources	FY 2023-24 proposed
103-Bldg/Infrastructure reserves	\$33,000.
123-Pavement reserve fund	\$115,000.
Total	\$148,000.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Project occurs within existing right of way and involves the repair and maintenance of an existing public facility involving negligible or no expansion of use therefore is exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15301(c).

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Sebastopol City Council, by minute order, provide direction to staff whether to move forward with the Palm Avenue Improvements project.

Attachment:

- 1 Public Notice

Engineering Department
714 Johnson Street
Sebastopol, California 95472
Phone: 707-236-1542
Email: mario.landeros@ghd.com



PUBLIC NOTICE

Palm Avenue Street Improvements Project
- S Main Street to Petaluma Way -
March 7, 2023

At its March 7, 2023 virtual meeting, the Sebastopol City Council will be considering for approval a project for public street improvements on **Palm Avenue** between S Main Street (State Route 116 South) and Petaluma Avenue (State Route 116 North). This project is being proposed for traffic safety purposes and will result in the **change from existing two-way traffic to one-way traffic, westbound only**. Additionally, other street improvements being considered include filling in the sidewalk gap on the north side of Palm Avenue with new ADA-compliant sidewalk, repairing deteriorated pavement surface, restriping and adding new signage.

You are invited to participate in the Council's March 7 virtual meeting. For more information on how to participate in virtual public meetings, please visit the City's website at: <https://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/City-Government/City-Council>



Thank you,

Mario Landeros
City Engineer