



City of Morgan Hill

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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT MEETING DATE: AUGUST 5, 2015

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APPROVED BY: City Manager

MONTEREY ROAD COMPLETE STREET PILOT PROJECT FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Adopt a resolution approving the permanent implementation of the single travel lane (in each direction) complete street project through Downtown.
2. Direct staff to explore the following complete street enhancements:
 - a) Reducing the width of the travel lane to reduce the driver field of view and reduce speeding
 - b) Studying signal timing at the intersection of Monterey Road and Main Avenue and potential conversion of the outside westbound travel lane to a shared through/right-turn lane and evaluate northbound and southbound left-turn movement operations
 - c) Adding advance yield bars, green pavement markings, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, decorated crosswalks, and other safety enhancements
 - d) Adding bicycle racks and bicycle corrals in Downtown, particularly along Monterey Road and Third Streets
 - e) Exploring other improvements to signal timing at key intersections to improve flow of traffic
 - f) Continuing to monitor business health through State Department of Revenue Quarterly Sales Tax Receipt Data
 - g) Widening and adding buffers along the existing bicycle lanes between Cochrane Road and Main Avenue and adding bicycle way-finding between Coyote Creek Trail and Downtown
3. Direct staff to develop design and safety standards to facilitate the voluntary use of parking spaces along Monterey Road as restaurant/retail expansion areas.
4. Direct staff to continue to pursue funding opportunities, including grants, for the construction of Hale Avenue.
5. Direct staff to continue to explore educational, way-finding signage and enforcement activities that reinforces using Butterfield Road as a truck route (as Monterey Road is not a designated truck route) and for commuting.
6. Direct staff to develop and implement a strategy to increase the STIP (State Transportation Improvement Program) priority of funding for the widening of Interstate 101.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES, GOALS & STRATEGIES:

Ongoing Priorities

Enhancing public safety
Supporting youth
Preserving and cultivating public trust

2015 Focus Areas

Stimulate Economic Development
Advance Downtown Revitalization

REPORT NARRATIVE:

BACKGROUND:

Downtown revitalization has been and continues to be one of Morgan Hill's key priorities. Many efforts have taken place in Morgan Hill to create a thriving Downtown for businesses, residents and visitors alike. The Council has approved numerous plans and strategies over the last 15 years that provide a vision for downtown as a special place -the community's living room- offering experiences unique in Morgan Hill, from shopping, dining, events, entertainment, parks, trails, public art, pedestrian and bicycle amenities, beautiful landscaping, public transit and public parking, and community spaces like the Community and Cultural Center. These plans include the General Plan, the Downtown Specific Plan, and the Downtown Placemaking Investment Strategy, among others.

The most recent guiding document is the May 21, 2014 Downtown Placemaking Investment Strategy which provides a framework for investing Redevelopment Agency bond proceeds to build public infrastructure and placemaking improvements that will create a welcoming, attractive, and accessible Downtown, enhance the framework to attract private development, and continue to improve the quality of life in Morgan Hill. The main goal of the Placemaking Strategy is to make the downtown **the most walkable, bike friendly, urban, family-oriented and transit oriented neighborhood in Morgan Hill as envisioned in the Downtown Specific Plan.**

With this in mind, one of the initiatives that was born from the Placemaking Symposium, Placemaking Strategy, and related community engagement efforts, was to find ways to slow down traffic and make the downtown a more vibrant and inviting destination to shop, dine, and gather. This resulted in the Complete Streets Pilot Project that was approved by Council on August 6, 2014.

The Complete Streets Pilot Project reduces the traffic lanes from two lanes in each direction to a single travel lane with a bicycle lane. The Pilot was implemented to determine if this configuration would slow traffic, improve safety, increase mobility, vibrancy and economic vitality.

The effort to slow the speed of traffic Downtown has been historically difficult in Morgan Hill as Monterey Road, the main artery in Downtown, was the main highway before Interstate 101 was built, and it continues to function as a major regional transportation arterial moving people north-south through South County. In addition, as housing in South County increases and traffic increases proportionately on Interstate 101, Monterey Road more frequently serves as an alternative to regional freeway travel. Conversely, over the last 15 years, the community and the Council have supported efforts that promote a vision of Downtown as a pedestrian-friendly destination and not a thoroughfare for commuters. To make this vision a reality, staff believes that it is necessary to reduce the number

of lanes through the downtown core and enhance our efforts to educate drivers (especially large trucks) to utilize Butterfield which has capacity to carry additional vehicles.

With that in mind, this report shares with the community and Council the results of the Complete Streets Pilot Project as well as provides a recommendation that intends help make decisions that will transform Downtown.

COMPLETE STREETS PILOT PROJECT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Complete Streets Pilot Project Final report prepared by Alta Planning and Design provides measurable data to gauge if a lane reduction would:

- Improve livability and economic vitality
- Enhance pedestrian environment
- Safely accommodate bicyclists
- Reduce noise and air pollution
- Create an attractive, thriving and vibrant community gathering place
- Foster a safe and inviting experience for all
- Preserve mobility for those accessing businesses, schools, services, transit and other key destinations.

KEY FINDINGS

Seven major areas were measured during the evaluation of the project. These areas included various measurements for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, motor vehicles, safety, economic performance, public safety. The findings from Alta's report indicate the following key findings further detailed in their report (attached):

- ❖ Number of people walking increased by 6%
- ❖ 54% increase in diversity among people riding bicycles (age, gender, race, and ethnicity)
- ❖ 614% increase in the number of youth riding bicycles
- ❖ 48% decrease in people riding bicycles on sidewalks
- ❖ Noise levels declined to a more comfortable level, as sound energy levels decreased
- ❖ An increase in parking occupancy occurred, and parking turnover rates increased
- ❖ People riding bikes nearly tripled, from 74 to 214
- ❖ Transit ridership increased by 3%
- ❖ Impact to public transit was an average of 29 seconds per trip
- ❖ Travel time reliability increased slightly
- ❖ The speed of traffic remained the same at 27 miles per hour
- ❖ Emergency response experienced little change
- ❖ A slight increase in collisions occurred
- ❖ 20% of traffic diverted to Butterfield Blvd were semi-trucks, pick-up trucks, vans, and other loud and large vehicles.
- ❖ AM Peak Hour travel time improved

ECONOMIC VITALITY

One of the key elements of the pilot project was to test how the single lane affected or improved

economic vitality. One of the clearest ways to track economic vitality is to monitor business revenue through the sales tax collected by the State Department of Revenue. This is clearly the most scientific way to truly track business performance. However, sales tax data is reported on a quarterly basis and there is generally a five month lag before staff receives the data for the quarter in question. In order to obtain for immediate feedback from the business community, staff worked collaboratively with the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Association to develop a “Business Vitality Survey” to collect voluntary business sales tax data from the downtown businesses. Additionally, “Exit Surveys” were performed by the City and by the Chamber of Commerce. Ultimately, there are four independent data points that all intend to shed some light on the business impact of the pilot project. Below is a summary of the findings of the data collected.

Sales Tax Data (information collected by the State Department of Revenue)

According to the sales tax data for the Downtown Core, sales tax decreased from \$65,229 in 1Q2014 to \$62,187 in 1Q2015 or approximately 4.7%. On an annualized basis, Downtown Core sales tax for the 1Q2015 year-end decreased by approximately 9.5% or \$29,000 compared to 1Q2014 year-end. The decrease is mainly attributable to a 29.5% or \$27,000 decrease in transportation sector driven by lower gas prices, partially offset by a 1.1% or \$2,000 increase in food products. The three largest sectors that contribute up to 99% of the sales tax in the Downtown Core area are food (65%) transportation (23%) and general retail (11%). The Downtown Core area generates approximately 4% of City’s total sales tax.

The Downtown General area, a larger area than the Downtown Core, showed an overall 0.6% or \$1,000 increase in total sales tax in 1Q2015 compared to 1Q2014. On an annualized basis, the area sales tax decreased by approximately 0.6% or \$4,000. Food was up by 3.4% and Transportation down by 6.5%. Similar to Downtown Core area, food, transportation and general retail contribute up to 99% of the total sales tax generated in Downtown General area. The area generates approximately 10% of City’s total sales tax. Second quarter data will be available in October.

Business Vitality Survey

The Business Vitality Survey was completed in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Association. The Business Vitality Survey shows sales tax data reported by the participating businesses. Data was collected from six restaurant and retail businesses only. Of these six businesses, two showed a decrease of 9% and 48.1%, while the other four showed increases of 7.7%, 8.6%, 11% and 24.4% respectively.

Exit Surveys

The City performed two “Exit Surveys,” to obtain feedback from the downtown businesses and the community. The Business Exit Survey received only five responses. The low response could be due to the fact that the Chamber of Commerce was performing a similar yet separate survey at the same time. The City’s survey showed that people felt that value of customers and/or foot traffic remained comparable. Only 40% were in favor of the permanent lane reduction. The Community Exit Survey received approximately 1,400 responses and showed that only 32.1% of the respondents were in favor of permanent lane reduction. However, the survey also showed that 57% of the respondents drive their car through the Downtown.

The Chamber of Commerce’s “Exit Survey”

The Chamber of Commerce collected 44 responses on their Exit Survey. Their survey showed that 53% of the respondents experience either “no change, slightly more, or much more” in terms of

sales; however, 55% experience slightly less or much less foot traffic.

Lastly, in order to shed more light on the business reactions, Alta conducted interviews with business owners that were both in support and against the pilot project. The in-person interviews are detailed in page 25 of Alta's report.

VIBRANCY

Business performance is a key element of economic vitality. Additionally, vibrancy of a district is also important. The pilot project tested how welcoming, inviting, exciting and stimulating the district become with the single lane and bike lane configuration. The results showed that there was an increase in foot traffic by 6% and that there was a significant decrease in sound energy levels. Finally, there was a 16% increase in occupied parking spaces and a higher turnover rate during the weekday evening peak period, which suggests more people visiting the downtown.

SAFETY

Little changed occurred to the safety factors tested during the pilot project. The Complete Street pilot attempted to address safety concerns without limiting emergency vehicle accessibility. Little to no change to the four safety-related performance measures took place over the five-month pilot period (speed, emergency response, traffic collisions, and traffic concerns). Vehicles speeds remained consistent throughout the pilot project in great part due to the removal of the speed bumps. Additionally, other causes may have affected speed were having fewer impediments, such as parked cars pulling directly into the travel lane or cars turning right blocking an intersection.

It's important to note that speed bumps do reduce speeding through the streets immediately adjacent to the speed bumps, however, staff finds that cars speed up after the speed bump to make up for lost time and the noise and fumes generated by the speed bumps do not promote/support the outdoor dining experience the City would like to enhance. Therefore, the recommendation includes reducing the width of the travel lane which can make the driver slow down. As noted, staff also recommends evaluating a number of other enhancements that may slow down traffic such as adding decorated crosswalks, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, advanced yield bars for uncontrolled intersections, and green pavement markings.

PILOT PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURE RESULTS

The Alta report offers a Complete Streets Scorecard to evaluate each performance measure. It weighs each performance measure in terms of importance based upon community rate of importance, and calculates a score for each measure. The weight given to each of the 15 performance measures was created by an initial community survey that suggested that elements like emergency response times should weigh higher than parking occupancy, or that motor vehicle speed is more important than bicycle counts, for example. According to Alta, a successful growth in the project would be if it increased to 275 points; pre-determined as the score needed to suggest a significant improvement. Morgan Hill's pre-test scorecard was 241 prior to pilot, 271 at mid-point and 289 at the end of the pilot.

As detailed in the Alta report, the pilot project accomplished the majority of its intended goals and

was a success, based upon the weighted measure. They recommend permanent implementation of a single lane configuration with the following enhancements:

- a) Continue to monitor business health through State Department of Revenue Quarterly Sales Tax Receipt Data
- b) Study signal timing at the intersection of Monterey Road and Main Avenue and potential conversion of the outside westbound travel lane to a shared through/right-turn lane
- c) Add advance yield bars, and green pavement markings, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, decorated crosswalks, and other safety enhancements
- d) Widen and add buffers along the existing bicycle lanes between Cochrane Road and Main Avenue and add bicycle way-finding between Coyote Creek Trail and Downtown
- e) Add bicycle racks and bicycle corrals in Downtown, particularly along Monterey Road and Third Streets
- f) Reduce the width of the travel lane to reduce the driver field of view and reduce speeding
- g) Explore other improvements to signal timing at key intersections to improve flow of traffic
- h) Remove a northbound travel lane under the railroad bridge to allow for the installation of the buffered bicycle lane (currently not part of staff's recommendation)

Staff Recommendation Rationale

While the majority of the feedback received does not show support for the lane reduction project and the economic results varied, staff recommends approving the permanent implementation of the single travel lane (in each direction) complete street project through Downtown for the following reasons:

- 1) The single lane configuration advances the long-held vision of making downtown the most walkable, bike friendly, urban, family-oriented and transit oriented neighborhood in Morgan Hill.
- 2) The single lane configuration implements key objectives of the General Plan, Downtown Specific Plan, the Placemaking Investment Strategy and many other Downtown guiding and planning documents.
- 3) The single lane configuration with bicycle lanes is part of and complements the City's other placemaking investments that provide for more parking, new parks and trails, public plaza, public art, and streetscape and infrastructure improvements in the Downtown.
- 4) Creation of bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly spaces support Morgan Hill's vision for a healthy community.
- 5) The bike lanes have created a friendlier, diverse, and more inviting environment for children and families.
- 6) Butterfield was built as a commuter route and driving patterns have begun to shift as demonstrated by a 5 percent increase in vehicle count during the pilot project.
- 7) Downtown is emerging as a dining destination being recognized regionally and the single lane configuration will continue to nurture the outdoor dining experience.
- 8) Downtown is a business district that serves the entire city, but it is also a neighborhood with a growing residential base.

- 9) Downtown is an amenity to larger employers and having a fun, attractive and thriving downtown is one of the elements that the young creative minds consider for when making employment choices.

In addition to the reasons stated above, there are number of other factors that suggest that the single lane configuration will be positive for Downtown Morgan Hill and the community as a whole.

- The future of Morgan Hill is being planned for its current residents and the growing and changing demographic of younger families with children that choose to live in or near downtown who seek to have a safe, walkable, and friendly Downtown.
- The majority of the developers that are currently seeking to invest and develop in Downtown are in favor of a single lane, slowing down traffic and creating a friendly outdoor dining experience.
- The County and the Public Health Department are working to advance complete streets throughout the County, which would allow for multi-modal transportation and complete streets. In 2012, the County adopted a Complete Streets resolution, which commits to safe, equitable transportation for all users. A section of the County's newly created General Plan Health Element (expected to be approved in August 2015) is devoted to transportation policies, including complete streets. Finally, the Public Health Department is working to get more people walking, biking, and using transit for safety, health, equity, and the environment, including climate change. With the Center for Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention leading this effort, the department works to promote active transportation through a number of initiatives, including providing funds to cities to implement strategies and environmental improvements to increase walking, biking and use of transit; Safe Routes to School Program; organize events and trainings for cities and community organizations such as the "2015 Let's Get Moving, Silicon Valley Transportation Choices and Healthy Communities Summit" and the "How to Create Safer and Healthier Streets".
- Staff has noticed other added benefits to the pilot project which acted as a catalyst to surface and engage many different groups and/or interests in and around Downtown, and enjoyed the constructive support and criticism of new influences. The pilot project has embraced and encouraged the community to think differently about the use of public spaces downtown and inspired creativity for program the Bike Valet, Bike Hub Park, Bike to School Program, and Indie Market.
- The Scorecard shows the test pilot was a success when taking into consideration all performance measures.

Staff recognizes that the City's complete street pilot project has created great debate in the community and is recommending the one lane configuration because it believes that Downtown should become a more pedestrian friendly, multi-modal neighborhood that advances the community's vision rather than continuing to serve as a commuter roadway for South County.

HISTORY

On August 6, 2014 the Council directed the preparation of an implementation plan to temporarily narrow Monterey Road through the Downtown on a trial basis, and to engage Alta Planning + Design to facilitate the development of an implementation plan for Council consideration. From August through October, the City and Alta Planning + Design met with a Complete Streets Stakeholders group on a weekly basis to prepare for the project. The stakeholders group was comprised of downtown business owners, community residents, representatives of the Morgan Hill Unified School District, VTA, and public safety officials.

Based on an evaluation matrix prepared by the Complete Street stakeholders group, feedback from the Creative Placemaking Symposium, meetings with agency representatives, business owners and downtown-area residents, two alternatives were selected for the October 24-25 weekend demonstration: An expanded pedestrian space and a buffered bike lane. At its October 1, 2014 meeting, the City Council received a status report and directed staff to proceed with the weekend demonstration event.

The weekend demonstration was designed as a logistical test of the two alternatives. It also provided an opportunity to gather business and community input. Input was gathered on the street during the trial and through an online survey. At the conclusion of the weekend demonstration it was decided that the best alternative for a pilot project would be the buffered bike lane alternative. Results from the surveys indicated that the downtown businesses and the community were split evenly for, and against, a 6 month pilot project moving forward.

At the November 19, 2014 City Council meeting Council directed staff to proceed with the Monterey Road Complete Street 6 Month Pilot project, implementing a buffered bike lane in both directions from Main Avenue to Dunne Avenue beginning in February. Additionally, Council authorized the City Manager to execute a Service Agreement for Design Professionals with Alta Planning + Design for a not-to-exceed fee of \$75,000 to develop plans for the 6 month pilot program and monitor the performance of the trial.

On May 20, 2015 the City Council accepted a midpoint "check-in" report on the Monterey Road Complete Street Six (6) Month Pilot which provided all data collected to date. Council directed staff to continue with the data collection. Additionally, Council requested that additional data collection be performed to ensure that sufficient information would be available for consideration in September.

In response to the Council recommendation for additional data collection during the second half of the Pilot, staff returned to Council on June 3, 2015 with a recommendation to amend the contract with Alta Planning + Design to allow for four (4) additional data collection periods, bringing the total data collection periods during the second half of the Pilot to five (5). Total overall data collection periods for the entire pilot would increase to seven (7) from the originally planned for three (3). This was approved by Council.

At the end of June 2015, City staff received the first tentative construction schedule/plan from the contractor for the Monterey Road Streetscape construction project. This schedule/plan required one traffic lane for the construction zone from July 13 through October 21. After careful consideration, it was determined that it would make most sense to end the Pilot early and stop further data collection as the impact of construction would add too many variables to compare to previously collected data.

Three data collection periods did occur in the second half of the Pilot prior to the ending of the project and the start of construction on Monterey Road. Alta Planning + Design also conducted in-person/phone interviews with many of the downtown business owners on July 16 and 18.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Involve

Significant community outreach and engagement has been ongoing in relation to this project.

- January - April 2014 Downtown Projects Outreach
- August - October 2014 Weekly Complete Street Stakeholder meetings
- September 15, 2014 Downtown Residents Meeting
- September 19, 2014 Placemaking Symposium
- August 2014 - Present Biweekly Project Updates eblasts, posted to Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor and on City website
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- October 24/25, 2014 Weekend Demonstration and Surveys (Business & Community)
- January 15, 2015 Downtown Association Marketing Meeting
- January 15, 2015 Stakeholder meeting
- January 2015 Pre-pilot Community Survey
- February 3, 2015 Complete Street Project Q&A for City employees
- February 3, 2015 Complete Street Project Q&A for Community
- February 2015 - Present Dedicated project website page
- February 2015 - Present Significant dialogue with community through email, website, and social media
- April 2015 Mid-point Community & Business Surveys
- July 6, 2015 Notification to stakeholders and community that pilot would end early due to Monterey Road Streetscape construction impacts
- July 7 - 19, 2015 Final Community & Business Surveys
- July 16 & 17, 2015 In person/phone interviews with downtown businesses

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS:

Alternative City Council actions include:

1. Exploring other configurations to the single travel lane with a bike lane.
2. Exploring a 4-lane configuration with pedestrian safety features, such as:
 - a. adding advance yield lines
 - b. adding rectangular rapid flashing beacons at un-signalized intersections
 - c. reinstalling speed bumps at non-outdoor dining locations,
 - d. adding bicycle parking
 - e. adding stencil greenback bicycle “sharrows” to the outside travel lanes
3. Returning to 4-lane configuration with speed bumps.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL AND COMMISSION ACTIONS:

On August 6, 2014 the Council

- Directed staff to prepare an implementation and communication plan for a complete street demonstration project
- Authorized the City Manager to enter into a consulting services agreement with Alta Planning + Design to assist staff in the preparing the plan

On October 1, 2014 the Council

- Received a status report on the planning efforts for the event
- Directed staff to proceed with the October 24/25 Weekend Demonstration Project.

On November 19, 2014 the Council

- Accepted the final report on the October 24/25 Complete Street Weekend Demonstration
- Directed staff to proceed with a Monterey Road Complete Street Six Month Pilot Program, implementing a buffered bike lane on Monterey Road from Main Avenue to Dunne Avenue
- Adopted a resolution approving the City Manager's execution of a Service Agreement for Design Professionals with Alta Planning + Design for a not-to-exceed fee of \$75,000 to develop plans for the six month pilot program and monitor the performance of the trial.

On May 20, 2015

- Accepted Midpoint Check-in Report
- Directed staff to continue with the Monterey Road Complete Street 6 Month Pilot program data collection

June 3, 2015

- Approved the City Manager's execution of a first amendment to Service Agreement for Design Professionals with Alta Planning + Design for an additional \$65,000.

FISCAL AND RESOURCE IMPACT:

The cost of the Alta Contract and existing pilot program improvements was \$140,000. It is estimated that making the one lane configuration permanent would cost \$40,000, while returning to the previous four lane configuration would cost \$25,000. Neither of these estimates includes the other pedestrian and traffic calming enhancements staff recommends to evaluate.

CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act):

Categorical Exemption

Exempt (CEQA Guidelines section 15304 - Minor alterations to land not involving the removal of mature trees and having no permanent effects on the environment).

LINKS/ATTACHMENTS:

- Resolution
- Monterey Road Complete Street Performance Monitoring Report
- Business Vitality Survey
- City Business Exit Survey
- City Resident Exit Survey
- Comment letters