DATE: May 27, 2025

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Hayward Boulevard Feasibility Study: Proposed Restriping and Safety Improvements recommended by the Hayward Boulevard Feasibility Study, Project No. 05217

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council reviews and comments on the proposed restriping of Hayward Boulevard as part of the City's 2025 repaving program that would remove one lane in each direction, with capacity retained in select areas and implement other safety improvements.

SUMMARY

In response to feedback from the public and City Council direction to address speeding and safety issues along Hayward Boulevard, in 2019 the City launched the Hayward Boulevard Feasibility Study[1]. The street has various horizontal and vertical curves, limited space outside of the public right-of-way, steep grades at various locations along the corridor, deteriorated sidewalks and missing sidewalk connections.

After conducting outreach during 2020 and 2021, the project was put on hold in late 2021 due to a staffing shortage and the need for continued evaluation of improvements. During the last public meeting in 2021, several residents raised concerns about the impact of protected bike lanes and reduced road capacity on potential emergency evacuation needs. In Summer 2024, staff resumed the project, with a focus on short term improvements that could be made as part of repaving of a portion of the street that is planned for 2025.

The project team developed a short-term striping plan and smaller scale improvements focused primarily on safer crossings of the road (Attachment II). These improvements would involve restriping the road to add bicycle lanes and adding new crosswalks, flashing beacons, and associated curb ramps in select locations along the corridor. To address safety, the street would be reduced to one lane in each direction, with the resulting space used to install bicycle lanes. Consistent with feedback from public meetings about

[1] https://www.hayward-ca.gov/your-government/departments/transportation-division/hayward-boulevard-feasibility-study

evacuation concerns, the bicycle lanes would be buffered in the downhill direction so that the space to be used for evacuation during a fire or other emergency, if needed. In the uphill (eastbound) direction, the lanes would be protected. Staff have coordinated with the Hayward Fire Department leadership, who support the proposed restriping.

Staff are recommending to City Council to advance the project with some modifications in design to address community member concerns about congestion and other issues.

BACKGROUND

Over the years, staff has received numerous Access Hayward requests and emails from residents concerning the Hayward Boulevard corridor. The Hayward Boulevard Feasibility Study was created to address community concerns that include, but are not limited to, speeding, safety, and connectivity. Hayward Boulevard is an arterial with a mix of land uses with significant geometric challenges. It is designed to carry much higher volumes of traffic than use the street. It has extreme horizontal and vertical curves, limited space outside of the public right-of-way, steep grades at various locations along the corridor, missing sidewalk connections, and few marked pedestrian crossings.

Based on the community concerns and the unique geometric challenges, the Hayward Boulevard Feasibility Study identified, evaluated and designed feasible traffic calming and safety improvements. Traffic calming is a term used to describe a full range of methods to slow cars traveling through neighborhoods, making the street work for all users.

Over the years, City Council has taken several actions to develop policy that ensures the City builds streets that are safe and convenient for all modes of travel, regardless of age or ability. The Mobility Element in the Hayward 2040 General Plan and the Complete Streets Policy adopted in 2013 establish a priority to accommodate all road users, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. The Vision Zero policy, adopted in 2023, establishes safety as the primary factor for designing City streets.

In January 2021, the team presented three alternatives to the CIAC that included a variety of traffic calming, sidewalk, and crossing improvements.[2] Each of these alternatives had construction costs exceeding $20 million due to inclusion of physical medians, new roundabouts, and significant sidewalk segments. Some of the improvements, especially new sidewalk improvements, would have required extensive grading and possible retaining walls.

In April 2021, staff presented two options at a public meeting that varied the type of bicycle facility and whether or not a lane reduction would be included. During that meeting, participants raised concerns about potential evacuation impacts. Further action was not taken in 2021 and the project was put on hold due to the departure of key staff.

[2] https://hayward.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4762286&GUID=B885B56E-216B-4330-AF3F-7625E042924A&Options=&Search=

In 2024, the City identified the need to repave Hayward Boulevard within 2 to 3 years. The Transportation Division, with several staff positions filled, was able to restart the project, taking into consideration two key changes:

- Project extents. The initial iteration of the Hayward Boulevard Feasibility Study identified multiple improvement options for the corridor, from Campus Drive to Fairview Avenue. For the current work, staff are focused on the portion between Carlos Bee Boulevard and Farm Hill Road, which is the extent proposed to be repaved in 2025.
- Funding: In 2021, staff were targeting funding from a competitive grant from the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) to advance this project. In reviewing the project in 2024, staff identified that the proposed project did not align well with the criteria used for Alameda CTC grants or other regional, State or Federal grants. As such, a more scaled or phased project would likely be needed.

To address these constraints, staff developed an approach to the potential implementation of the project that included three phases:

1. Short-term improvements through repaving. Repaving projects provide an opportunity to reconfigure streets to enhance safety for all users. Repaving generally does not include significant civil improvements (e.g., a new median), but can reconfigure lanes, lane widths, crosswalks, available bicycle facilities, and similar improvements.
2. Short-term civil improvements. Staff sought to prioritize the most critical safety and multimodal connectivity improvements identified by the project. This includes several short sidewalk segments and new or enhanced pedestrian crossings with flashing beacons.
3. Long-term improvements. The third phase would be to implement the preferred alternative over time. Given the likely funding challenges for the full, this may include select improvements that could be implemented over time.

DISCUSSION

On February 26, 2025, staff presented an update on the project to the Council Infrastructure and Airport Committee (CIAC) that identified proposed implementation actions for the first two phases of work identified above.[3] Phase 1 (restriping) would be implemented in 2025 as part of street repaving and includes the following elements:

- Reduce through travel lanes to one in each direction, consistent with the preferred alternative identified in 2021. As noted, the project is not expected to increase congestion, with trips adding at most a few seconds to total travel time.
- Add turn lane pockets and a center turn lane where appropriate.
- Add a protected bicycle lane (Class IV) in the uphill (east) direction. In this direction, bicyclists generally travel much slower speed than vehicles, and separation will help ensure safer travel

[3] https://hayward.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7147991&GUID=2277365D-A9AB-4E44-B11D-38FBCB14715E&Options=&Search=

- Add a buffered bicycle lane (Class II) in the downhill (west) direction. In this direction, bicyclists can travel closer to the speed of vehicles making separators less necessary. Some bicyclists would be negatively impacted by separators that narrow the available space. Further, a buffered lane would be available to vehicles if evacuation was necessary, addressing the most significant comment received during outreach.
- Add speed markings on the downhill direction between Parkside Dr and Spencer Ln. These markings get closer together as the vehicle travels downhill, creating the perception of increased speed. They have been shown to have a modest reduction of speeding.
- Upgrade existing crosswalks to high visibility.

Phase 2 would be implemented within the next 2 to 3 years, with design beginning in the current year. The elements of Phase 2 include the following elements:

- Close the sidewalk gap on the north side of Hayward Boulevard near Civic Avenue. This short segment of sidewalk creates the most significant gap for people attempting to walk from various residential areas to a crossing of Hayward Boulevard.
- Add new crosswalks and flashing beacons between University Ct and Parkside Drive (the end near California State University East Bay, [CSUEB]), Spencer Lane (near College Heights Park), and Farm Hill Drive. These are all locations with regular pedestrian crossings that enable the existing sidewalks to connect residents to many destinations on and off Hayward Boulevard.

A total of 26 individuals spoke at the CIAC meeting and provided a variety of feedback on the project. Key concerns and issues raised during the meeting included:

- Most participants were not supportive of lane reductions on Hayward Boulevard, but a small number supported the project for its speed reduction and multimodal benefits.
- Many participants raised concerns about emergency evacuation without the second downhill lane.
- Several participants argued that the project will increase congestion.
- Many participants agreed that speeding on Hayward Blvd is a concern, consistent with available data.
- Several participants agreed that safer pedestrian crossings are needed at multiple locations, though a few questioned if these were needed.

Staff has worked to address the key concerns raised by the community related to evacuation and congestion. For evacuation, staff have attempted to alleviate this concern through a design that allows the downhill bicycle lanes to be buffered without any separators, allowing it to remain available during evacuation. Transportation staff have coordinated with leadership of Hayward Fire Department, who are supportive of the project.

Regarding congestion, the original study included a traffic operations study that conclusively demonstrates that the proposed automobile capacity reductions would not increase traffic congestion along Hayward Boulevard. Staff gathered new data on traffic volumes along the corridor for 2024 using data from Streetlight Insight, a big data platform that estimates traffic volumes based on probe data (e.g., cell phone location signals). These estimates show that volumes remain essentially unchanged in 2024 and that average and 85th percentile speeds continue to exceed the speed limit for this corridor, often by 15 or more miles per hour. Notably, the City's Speed Management Plan (in development) identifies Hayward Blvd as one of the streets with consistent excessive speeding. Attachment II includes the original traffic impact study and updated data on traffic volumes and speeds on Hayward Blvd.

As directed at the CIAC meeting, staff conducted additional outreach events on the corridor. On April 28, staff conducted pop up outreach at Cal State University (CSU) East Bay during the lunch hour in the Core Library building. The meeting included information about the proposed restriping plan and pedestrian crossing enhancements, information about comparable streets elsewhere in the East Bay that serve similar volumes with one lane in each direction, and a few options to address the capacity concerns raised at the CIAC meeting in February. Approximately ten students and staff stopped by to talk to staff about the project. Participants were generally supportive of measures to reduce speeds and create safer pedestrian crossings of Hayward Blvd. Several staff members also noted that a number of drivers seek to bypass Mission Blvd by traveling along Hayward Blvd and through the campus, creating safety issues along Loop Rd.

On the evening of May 8, staff conducted an open house for the community at CSU East Bay, again in the Core Library building. This meeting included the same material as shared at the April 28 meeting and included the following opportunities for input:

- One on one conversation with staff at the boards to discuss specific concerns
- A board where participants could identify which concerns they have based on the list of concerns raised at the CIAC meeting.
- A survey that captured participant support for potential capacity enhancements to address concerns about congestion and for potential pedestrian crossing locations
- A space to provide open-ended comments.

A total of 21 people participated in this meeting. Staff had numerous conversations and received comment cards from 15 individuals during the meeting. Key findings include:

- Nearly all participants expressed a strong preference to retain the road as four lanes (two in each direction). Only a handful of participants expressed explicit support for the reduction in lanes.
- Despite developing a design that allows the downhill lanes to continue to be used in emergency evacuation, many participants expressed continued concerns about this issue.
- Several participants did not trust the traffic analysis that indicated there would not be an increase in congestion with the lane reduction.

- A few participants were unconcerned about the speeds on Hayward Blvd and noted that there are relatively few collisions, serious injuries or fatalities on the street. From 2020 to 2024, there were 6 collisions on Hayward Blvd, including 1 fatality and 2 serious injuries. There was also a fatality earlier this year and staff have heard reports from residents of collisions into their property due to excessive speeds that may never have received a police report.
- Most participants were supportive of the pedestrian crossing enhancements identified at the meeting, especially when they learned that they would include flashing beacons and medians.

The materials at the public meeting included concepts to add capacity in select areas, including near Campus Dr, Spencer Ln, and east of Civic Ave. Participants generally did not engage with these more limited capacity additions, instead expressing a strong preference for keeping the entirety of the road as 4 lanes.

Staff have also received email correspondence. All of the comment cards and correspondence received are included in Attachment III.

Options and Recommendations

Given community concerns, staff evaluated other feasible options. In particular, staff explored if a four-lane road with bike lanes would be possible. However, due to limited width and the presence of concrete medians in several areas, this design is not feasible and could not be consistently implemented.

Staff identified several possible options for the corridor:

1. Implement restriping of Hayward Blvd to a 2-lane road as identified in the draft concept plans, but with additional capacity in select locations to address community concerns raised during outreach.
2. Implement restriping as described in item 1 but convert both uphill and downhill bicycle lanes to buffered bike lanes (e.g., eliminate the use of flex posts) to allow the entirety of the space to be available for evacuation if needed.
3. Reduce the number of through lanes to 1 in each direction east of Civic Ave. This area has only 7,000 vehicles per day and some of the highest speeds on the corridor. If this option is pursued, the City would install shoulders instead of bike lanes given the lack of connectivity in the segment that remains four lanes
4. Restore the road to its current configuration.

Staff recommends pursuing option 2, which addresses the safety issues identified along Hayward Boulevard while retaining the full width of the road for evacuation needs. Staff also proposes to continue to design and implement the pedestrian crossing enhancements, which received broad support during outreach. Some of the pedestrian crossings or some elements of individual crossings may not be appropriate if the road remains 4 lanes. For example, flashing beacons tend to have somewhat reduce compliance on 4 lane roads

compared to 2 lane roads and can produce a 'double threat' where a vehicle has stopped in 1 lane, but the vehicle in the adjacent lane does not stop.

Attachment IV provides an overall project summary, the draft striping plans corresponding to option 1, and proposed locations and concept designs for the pedestrian enhancements. The plans include highlights of constraints along the street and some options to address capacity concerns.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Active transportation options like bicycling and walking foster economic health by creating dynamic, connected communities with a high quality of life that helps support small business development, decreases transportation and healthcare costs and increases property values, employment, and tourism. Providing alternate modes of travel reduces single lane occupancy vehicles, reduces congestion and costs related to automobile-oriented infrastructure maintenance and construction.

FISCAL IMPACT

This project does not impact the General Fund. The Hayward Boulevard Feasibility Study (Project 05217) was funded out of Fund 212 (Measure BB Local Transportation). The draft FY2026 includes $500,000 from Fund 212 to implement Project 05310 (Hayward Boulevard Safety Improvements), which is intended to be used to implement the proposed new pedestrian crossings.

STRATEGIC ROADMAP

This agenda item supports the Strategic Priority of Invest in Infrastructure. If City Council directs staff to move forward with Option 1, 2, or 3, this project relates to the implementation of the following projects:

Invest in Multimodal Transportation

Project N1: Continue to implement major corridor traffic calming initiatives.
Project N6: Continue to add approximate 10 miles of bike lanes annually, with a focus on protected bike lanes and intersections that have high traffic/incidents.

SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES

If City Council directs staff to move forward with Option 1, 2, or 3, this project would support mobility goals established as part of the City's 2040 General Plan, providing for a balanced multi-modal system of transportation facilities and services in Hayward. Otherwise, this project would not support the City's sustainability goals.

PUBLIC CONTACT

This project has included significant community outreach since its inception, including public meetings, multiple presentations to the Council Infrastructure Committee, and two community surveys. Notifications have been sent for multiple meetings to all residents that use Hayward Blvd for their daily travel, including residents of all of the streets that feed into Hayward Boulevard for access to areas to the west.

Staff also coordinated with CSUEB to ensure that students, faculty, and staff were aware of the project and notified of the opportunities to provide input.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will work with the City's consultant to finalize a striping plan to be implemented after Hayward Boulevard is repaved later this year. The City annual repaving program will commence in summer 2025 with all updated striping completed by fall. Additional notifications will be provided to residents of Hayward Boulevard and all streets with repaving projects once the schedule for that project has been prepared.

Prepared by: Hugh Louch, Deputy Public Works Director - Transportation

Recommended by: Alex Ameri, Director of Public Works

Approved by:

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Michael Lawson, Acting City Manager