



DATE: October 22, 2025

TO: Council Infrastructure & Airport Committee

FROM: Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Safe Streets Downtown (The Loop) Update

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council Infrastructure & Airport Committee (CIAC) receives an update for the Safe Streets Downtown Project, provide feedback on proposed options to be studied further, and confirm process to select preferred option in 2026.

SUMMARY

The Safe Streets Downtown Plan (Project), a federal grant-funded planning project, has the goal of improving traffic safety on the Loop in Downtown Hayward. The Project started in February 2025. Project activities included existing policy and plans research, collection of traffic safety and operational data, hosting focus groups, tabling at City events, performing a road safety audit, and maintaining a project website.

The project team has identified four options as candidates for further study and outreach. These options are: (1) Baseline Project, (2) Reconnecting the Grid, (3) Current Alignment with Place Focus, (4) Current Alignment with Movement Focus for Foothill Boulevard. Options 2 and 3 were generated by the community and stakeholders through the design charrette event held on September 17, 2025.

Once feedback is received of the proposed options from the Council Infrastructure and Airport Committee in October 2026, the project team will perform analysis on each option and gather public feedback from future community outreach activities scheduled to start in December 2026. After all analysis and Phase 2 Outreach is completed, the project team will present the findings to the Council Infrastructure Airport Committee or City Council for selection of the preferred design.

After a preferred design is selected, the project team will engage in Phase 3 outreach activities and develop conceptual plans and cost estimates to be adopted by Council in Q2 2026. Safe Streets Downtown is intended to be a long-term, multi-year project. Future phases of the project will need substantial funding to complete.

FISCAL IMPACT

This Project has no impact on the General Fund. It is fully funded by Safe Streets & Roads for All federal grant funds. At this point, no funding has been secured for future design and construction of any selected option.

BACKGROUND

Alameda County, like many other counties in the San Francisco Bay Area, experienced high population growth in the second half of the 20th century. Driven by post-World War II suburbanization and demographic shifts, the City of Hayward population increased nearly ten-fold. Due to this increased growth and congestion in the region, a decades long initiative was started by Caltrans in 1961 to create a bypass freeway that would run parallel to Mission Boulevard and I-880. This bypass freeway was proposed to run through the City of Hayward and parts unincorporated Alameda County. This proposal generated community backlash, and in 1971, a lawsuit was filed in federal court on behalf of residents that would be displaced by the freeway construction. After many years of legal difficulties, Caltrans abandoned plans for the bypass in 2003.

Without the freeway bypass project, solutions were sought to increase roadway capacity for handling the increased local and regional traffic demands. Through these efforts, the Route 238 Corridor Improvement Project was created. Using funds from sold properties purchased with the intent of building the bypass, along with other local and regional funding, the City completed the first phase of the Route 238 Corridor Improvement Project in 2014. The Route 238 Corridor Improvement Project Phase 1 featured large capital infrastructure changes, including changes in traffic circulation, lane directions, road alignments, and implementation of a one-way loop street system in Downtown Hayward. Comprised of segments from A Street, Mission Boulevard, and Foothill Boulevard, this one-way loop street system had the purpose of alleviating regional congestion by funneling traffic through Downtown Hayward. The one-way loop street system became known and is commonly referred to as *The Loop* by the community.

Almost immediately after the Loop was completed and opened to the public, the community expressed disdain for the project. The project brought in a large volume of regional traffic through Downtown Hayward, making it difficult to access shops and amenities by local residents and visitors.

On June 6, 2023, City Council adopted the City's Strategic Roadmap for Fiscal Years 2024 to 2025+, which outlined Council's highest priorities for the near and medium-term future, along with specific projects and actions to achieve those priorities. The Strategic Roadmap consisted of six core priorities. Each core priority contained a list of projects. Within the Invest in Infrastructure strategic roadmap priority, *Project N8: Evaluate the alternatives to the Downtown Loop*, directed Public Works staff to initiate the evaluation of potential alternatives for the Loop. Although the Loop achieved its purpose in rerouting traffic to accommodate regional traffic demands, unintended negative impacts to transportation safety and the economic vitality of Downtown were also noticed.

On July 7, 2023, Staff applied for a U.S. Department of Transportation Safe Streets for All grant to develop a Speed Management Plan and a High Injury Network Safety Plan. Linking the grant application to the City's existing Local Road Safety Plan and Vision Zero policy, staff proposed a comprehensive safety evaluation and development of conceptual plans to improve traffic safety for many of the City's main arterials. On October 27, 2023, the City was awarded \$3,252,000 in funding with a requirement of \$813,000 in City matching funds. Of the \$4,065,000 total in grant and matching funds, only a portion of the funds would be used for the Downtown area of the High Injury Network Plan.

On October 18, 2024, Staff published a request for proposals for the first set of corridors to be studied for the High Injury Network Plan. After a review of the proposals received, staff recommended Fehr & Peers to be the City's consultant to prepare the Downtown Area portion of the High Injury Network Safety Plan. City Council approved to execute a contract with Fehr & Peers for a not-to-exceed amount of \$950,000 on January 21, 2025. The contract was executed on February 20, 2025.

DISCUSSION

Project Activities

Project activities began in February 2025. The project team researched existing City policies and plans. Traffic safety and volume data was gathered for various locations in the project area. To establish consistency with other safety projects, the Project was renamed to Safe Streets Downtown.

On May 20, 2025, the project team performed a Road Safety Audit (RSA). RSAs are a world-recognized best practice safety performance examination of existing conditions of the project area. It requires a field review with a multidisciplinary team made up of various stakeholders focused on documenting safety issues that would be relevant to the project. The project team and participants walked the Loop and other areas of interest and documented observations. Results of the RSA would be used to help inform areas of focus for outreach and details of the proposed options in the future.

Public Outreach

The Project's Phase 1 Outreach started in May 2025. The project team employed multiple methods to gather community and stakeholder feedback. A project website was created to allow participation through an electronic survey. Participants of the survey could also select locations on an interactive map to comment on. Throughout downtown, 33 sidewalk decals were installed on the sidewalk. The sidewalk decals contained a QR code linked to the project website. The project team worked with the City's Community & Media Relations Division to increase awareness of the project. By the time the survey closed in July, 397 survey responses and 181 map comments were collected.

A number of focus groups were held to get specific feedback from groups of interest. On May 14, 2025, business owners and the Chamber of Commerce were a part of a focus group. Other focus groups held were a City employee focus group, due to the City being the largest employer in Downtown Hayward and a senior citizen focus group with additional representation from Community Resources for Independent Living (CRIL).

Project team staff also attended and tabled at various downtown such as the Farmer's Market, Downtown Street Party, and the Hayward Public Library Community HUB opening ribbon cutting. An individual presentation was made to the Hayward Youth Commission to gather feedback from 24 Hayward Youth Commissioners.

There were four recurring themes commonly heard from outreach activities:

- Unsafe driving behavior
- Driving is confusing
- Biking and walking feels unsafe
- Need for economic and placemaking support

The final public outreach event for this phase of the project was the design charrette event. Held on September 17, 2025 at the Hayward Public Library, community members and interested stakeholders participated in a hands-on workshop that had participants redesigning the downtown area. Participants generally showed a preference for converting Loop streets to two-way operation and maintaining intersections as 90-degree with traffic signals. While there was some concern that regional cut-through traffic would oppose a redesign, there was also strong support for placemaking and pedestrian-oriented improvements geared towards Hayward residents, businesses, and visitors that would contribute to a more vibrant downtown. Participants also noted the importance of maintaining on-street parking, paired with improved enforcement and parking management to support business activity.

Attachment II contains a more detailed summary of the Phase 1 outreach activities.

Proposed Options to be Studied Further

The project team reviewed the ideas generated from the design charrette event and the results of the Phase 1 outreach. Below are four options proposed to be studied further:

Option 1: Baseline Project

A baseline, near-term option that includes minimal changes to the Loop outside of systemic intersection safety improvements. Limited placemaking can be provided through parklets and planters in the right-of-way.

Option 2: Reconnecting the Grid (Community Generated)

Removal of segments of Foothill Boulevard from the circulation network. This option also includes a strong reconfiguration of travel lanes on

Mission Boulevard, A Street, and the remaining segments of Foothill Boulevard.

Option 3: Current Alignment with Place Focus (Community Generated)

Maintain the current circulation network on the Loop and implement placemaking improvements on A Street, Mission Boulevard, and Foothill Boulevard. This option includes a strong reconfiguration of travel lanes for those streets.

Option 4: Current Alignment with Movement Focus for Foothill Boulevard

Maintains the current circulation network on the Loop and retains more capacity for Movement on Foothill Boulevard. This option includes reconfiguration of travel lanes on Mission Boulevard and A Street.

In addition to the proposed options, additional design details and permutations will also be considered for each option. Examples include the pedestrianization of non-loop streets and placemaking improvements through parklets and planters. Attachment III includes a more detailed description along with maps and lane configurations of the proposed options.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The Safe Streets Downtown Plan will develop a design concept for the Downtown Area, which when implemented, will help reduce the likelihood of serious injuries and fatalities. Vehicle crashes have a significant economic cost, both to those directly impacted and to other users of the transportation system. The increased safety and access to the downtown area, as well as potential placemaking enhancements, will also help support the local economy.

STRATEGIC ROADMAP

This agenda item supports the Strategic Priority of Invest in Infrastructure. Specifically, this item relates to the implementation of the following metrics/project:

Metric FM1:	Number of traffic calming projects installed
Metric FM2:	Number of miles of bike lanes added
Metric FM6:	Number of traffic collisions
Project FP3:	Evaluate safety enhancements for the Downtown Loop

SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES

This project includes safety improvements that would increase multimodal connectivity in Downtown Hayward's street network. Support of non-car modes of transportation will help reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

PUBLIC CONTACT

As indicated earlier, public outreach for this project was conducted through various outreach events from May 2025 to September 2025. This includes focus groups, tabling at City events, hosting a design charrette, and an electronic survey accessible through the project website. Please see Attachment II for a detailed summary of the outreach efforts.

NEXT STEPS

After receiving feedback on the selected options from the Council Infrastructure and Airport Committee, the project team will perform analysis for each option and gather public feedback during the Phase 2 Outreach, scheduled to start in early 2026. After all analysis and Phase 2 Outreach is completed, the project team will present to Council for selection of the preferred design.

Table 1. Safe Streets Downtown Timeline

	Expected Completion Date
Phase 1 Outreach	August 2025
Select Alternatives for Further Study	October 2025
Phase 2 Outreach	January 2026
Selection of Preferred Alternative	February 2026
Phase 3 Outreach	April 2026
Conceptual Plan & Cost Estimates	May 2026

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Approved by:



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