



DATE: September 26, 2017

CATEGORY: New Business

DEPT.: Public Works

TITLE: **El Monte/Marich Pedestrian Improvements, Project 17-29 – Approve Plans and Specifications and Authorize Bidding**

RECOMMENDATION

1. Staff recommends Council select Alternative 2 for the El Monte Avenue/Marich Way pedestrian improvements.
2. Appropriate and transfer \$64,000 from the Construction/Conveyance Tax Fund to Project 17-29 if Alternative 1 is selected. If Alternative 2 is selected, no additional funds are requested.
3. Approve plans and specifications for El Monte/Marich Pedestrian Improvements, Project 17-29, and authorize staff to advertise the project for bids.
4. Authorize the City Manager to award the construction contract to the lowest responsible bidder if the low bid is within the project budget.

BACKGROUND

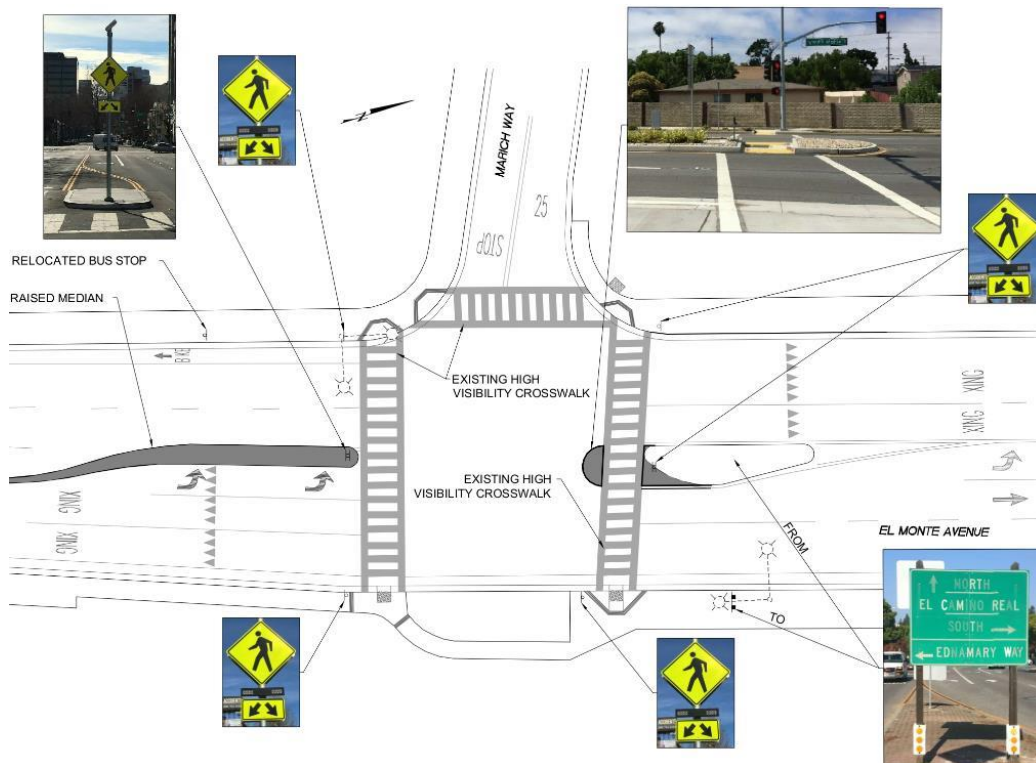
Following the October 22, 2015 fatal pedestrian collision at the intersection of El Monte Avenue and Marich Way, the City enhanced the crosswalk striping and installed additional street lighting, and Council funded a project for more extensive improvements. The recommended plans and specifications include pedestrian-activated lighted signage and median improvements. The plans can reflect either alternative that is selected and are ready for bidding. Staff seeks Council direction on which alternative to construct and approval of plans and specifications for that alternative to advertise for bids.

ANALYSIS

On January 25, 2017, staff met with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee (B/PAC) and presented two proposed design alternatives that were prepared by Kimley-Horn to enhance the intersection. The two alternatives are:

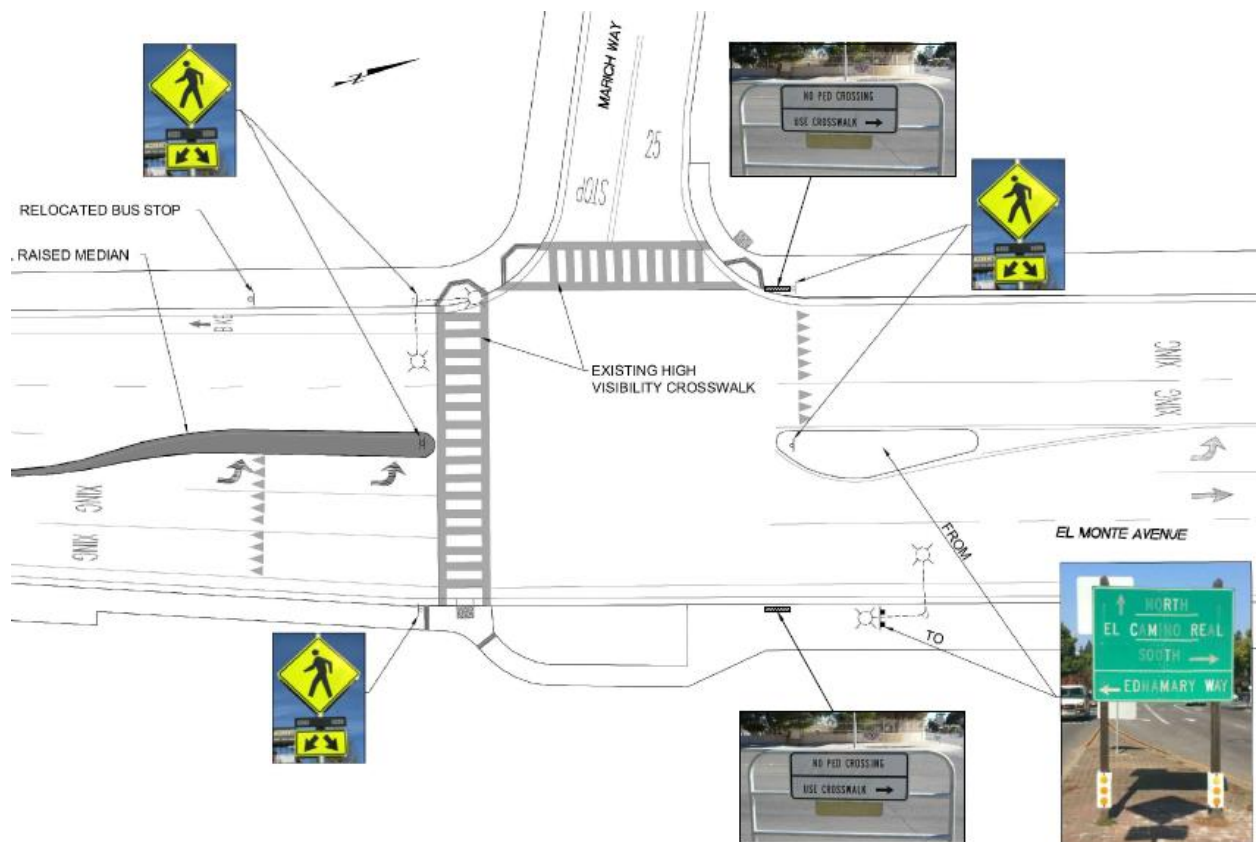
Alternative 1 – Installation of Post-Mounted Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB)

- Install pedestrian-activated RRFB sign panels for crossing El Monte Avenue at both existing crosswalks. These flashers will alert drivers that pedestrians are present.
- Install a 6' wide raised median to create a pedestrian refuge area on the south leg of the intersection. Restripe travel lanes on the northbound approach to create room for the raised median.
- Modify the existing median on the north leg of the intersection to create a median refuge area.
- Relocate existing signage that is currently in the north median. This will improve the visibility for both pedestrians crossing and drivers approaching the intersection.



Alternative 2 – Post-Mounted RRFB with Consolidated Crosswalk (Removal of North Crosswalk)

- Remove striped crosswalk on the north leg of El Monte Avenue to reduce the number of potential conflict areas between pedestrians and vehicles.
- Install pedestrian-activated RRFB sign panels at the intersection for crossing El Monte Avenue. These flashers will alert drivers that pedestrians are present.
- Install a 6' wide raised median to create a pedestrian refuge area on the south leg of the intersection. Restripe travel lanes on the northbound approach to create room for the raised median.
- Relocate existing signage that is currently in the north median. This will improve the visibility for both pedestrians crossing and drivers approaching the intersection.



The primary difference between the two alternatives is the removal of the northerly crosswalk in Alternative 2. Staff identified several advantages and disadvantages of removing the crosswalk.

Advantages

- Field observations showed that the eastbound left turn from Marich Way can be problematic because drivers are focused on northbound and southbound vehicles on El Monte Avenue while looking for a gap in traffic and may not see a pedestrian in the northern crosswalk. Of particular concern is the easterly leg of the crosswalk, where the left-turning driver is less likely to look if only focused on vehicles, as shown below. Removal of the northern crosswalk eliminates the conflict between the left-turning driver and pedestrian crossing. By removing the northerly crosswalk and directing pedestrians to the southerly crosswalk, fewer pedestrians will cross El Monte Avenue in the left-turn conflict area.

Driver Cone of Vision



- The view of pedestrians standing on the easterly curb at the northern crosswalk looking for northbound cars is partially obscured by several Heritage pine and redwood trees, as shown below. While the view of the crosswalk is not obscured, northbound through and eastbound left-turning drivers may not notice a pedestrian waiting to cross at the northern crosswalk. Removal of the northern crosswalk addresses this visibility issue. If Council selects Alternative 1, staff recommends that the four trees nearest the curb be removed to improve visibility. PG&E has requested removal of the three trees behind the four nearest the curb

due to the presence of an underlying gas transmission main. Staff is still working with PG&E on the possible removal of these and other trees.

View for Northbound Drivers Approaching Marich Way



**View for Pedestrians Looking Southbound from North Crosswalk
(East Side of Street)**



Aerial View of Intersection



- A single crosswalk would focus drivers' attention on one location instead of two for pedestrians crossing El Monte Avenue. This may increase the likelihood that a pedestrian will be seen by drivers.

Disadvantages

- Pedestrians walking from the north side of Marich Way must cross Marich Way to access the remaining, southerly crosswalk, decreasing convenience for some pedestrians depending on origin and destination.
- Some pedestrians may still cross at the location of the northerly crosswalk, even if the crosswalk is removed. Alternative 2 includes signage and barricades on both sides of El Monte Avenue to discourage crossing, but some pedestrians may take the shortest route regardless of whether there is a crosswalk.

B/PAC Recommendation

At the January 25, 2017 B/PAC meeting, staff requested that the B/PAC review the proposed alternatives and select a preferred alternative for implementation of the El Monte Avenue/Marich Way pedestrian improvements. There were ten public speakers; six commented in favor of Alternative 2, two in favor of Alternative 1, and two did not specify preference. After public comment and discussion, the B/PAC voted.

Of the five B/PAC members, one voted in favor of removing a crosswalk (either north or south) because it would lessen the number of locations to have to look for pedestrians and help drivers identify where the pedestrian is located.

The other four B/PAC members voted to keep both crosswalks (Alternative 1) and gave the following reasons:

- Pedestrians will jaywalk to get to the plaza without the northern crosswalk.
- Second crosswalk could be removed later if necessary.
- Pedestrians are more likely to use the northern crosswalk since it is closer to the walkway entrance into the plaza.
- Pedestrians are more likely to use northern crosswalk to walk between the two plazas.

Two of the four B/PAC members who voted in favor of keeping both crosswalks (Alternative 1) said they could go either way on the decision and could see the benefit of removing the north crosswalk. Three of the four members who voted in favor of keeping both crosswalks stated that removing the north crosswalk could be considered at a later time if appropriate.

Staff Recommendation

While acknowledging the B/PAC's recommendation and recognizing that some pedestrians may still cross at the northerly crosswalk, staff believes the design of the intersection that directs pedestrians to the southerly crosswalk is preferable. Staff therefore recommends Alternative 2.

If Council selects Alternative 1, staff recommends that the four trees nearest the curb be removed to improve visibility.

The estimated project cost for Alternative 1 is as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Construction | \$211,000 |
| Construction Contingency | 21,100 |
| Design | 36,500 |
| Project Management | 10,550 |
| City Inspection | 14,770 |
| City Administration @ 6.5% | <u>19,105</u> |
| TOTAL PROJECT COST | <u>\$314,000</u> (rounded) |

The estimated project cost for Alternative 2 is as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Construction | \$162,000 |
| Construction Contingency | 16,200 |
| Design | 36,500 |
| Project Management | 8,100 |
| City Inspection | 11,340 |
| City Administration @ 6.5% | <u>15,219</u> |
| TOTAL PROJECT COST | <u>\$250,000</u> (rounded) |

Plans and specifications for the project are complete and available for viewing in the Public Works Department.

If Council approves a preferred alternative and bids come in within budget, construction is expected to begin in December 2017 and be completed by March 2018.

FISCAL IMPACT

El Monte/Marich Pedestrian Improvements, Project 17-29, is funded with \$250,000 from the Construction/Conveyance Tax Fund. If Alternative 1 is selected, staff recommends appropriating an additional \$64,000 from the Construction/Conveyance Tax Fund. The available balance as of June 30, 2017 is greater than anticipated in the 5-year CIP and therefore, there are sufficient funds available for the appropriation. If Alternative 2 is selected, no additional funds are requested.

CONCLUSION

Staff has prepared two alternative designs for improvements at the intersection of El Monte Avenue and Marich Way and recommends approval of Alternative 2, which removes the northerly crosswalk across El Monte Avenue. The B/PAC preferred Alternative 1, which leaves the northerly crosswalk in place. Both alternatives include pedestrian-activated lights and other improvements. The plans are complete and staff seeks Council authorization to advertise the project for bids.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Select Alternative 1.
2. Do not approve plans and specifications and authorization to bid the project and place project on hold.
3. Provide other direction.

PUBLIC NOTICING

Agenda posting, e-mail notices to interested parties, and posting on social media.

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LL-SF/TS/7/CAM
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