



CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM

Meeting Date: January 21, 2020
To: Honorable Mayor and Honorable City Councilmembers
From: Henry Mikus, Engineering Manager
Subject: Approval of Caltrans Request to Eliminate Three Crosswalks and Build a New Crosswalk Along SR 116/Petaluma Avenue
Recommendation: Adopt a Resolution Approving Caltrans Request to Eliminate Three Crosswalks and Build a New Crosswalk Along SR 116/Petaluma Avenue
Funding: Currently Budgeted: _____ Yes _____ No X N/A
Net General Fund Cost: None, All costs shall be paid for by Caltrans
Account Code/Costs authorized in City Approved Budget N/A_____ (verified by Administrative Services Department)

INTRODUCTION: This item is to request the City Council approve and adopt a Resolution approving Caltrans’ request to eliminate three crosswalks along SR 116/Petaluma Avenue and build a new crosswalk that would include a pedestrian activated lighted warning system across Petaluma Avenue at the Weeks Way entrance to the Downtown Plaza.

BACKGROUND: Caltrans has had a pending project mainly concerned with ADA and other pedestrian upgrades along SR 116 through the “downtown core” of Sebastopol; the project recently was bid and is due for implementation during the 2020 construction season. Because of the direct effect of some of Caltrans’ proposed work on residents and businesses, the City has had ongoing dialogue with Caltrans about several facets of the project. The City has also learned Caltrans has some additional planned projects to upgrade intersections/crosswalks, which include McKinley Street/Petaluma Avenue where a “HAWK” pedestrian warning system is proposed to be installed at the existing crosswalk. As reference, the “HAWK” type crosswalk warning system was installed at the Nelson Way/Gold Ridge/Bodega Avenue intersection adjacent to Burbank Heights.

Some of the City dialogue with Caltrans has been about crosswalks, particularly the unprotected one across the west end of Depot Street at Petaluma Avenue. Both Caltrans and City staff acknowledged concerns about Depot Street so the discussion has recently focused on this location. Several proposals have been discussed and analyzed. The hope was to find some way to improve the situation as part of Caltrans’ upcoming project in our downtown core.

DISCUSSION: The latest proposal from Caltrans involves eliminating three crosswalks: across SR12/Sebastopol Road at SR116/Petaluma Avenue, across Depot Street at SR116/Petaluma Avenue, and

across SR116/Petaluma Avenue at McKinley Street. In addition, Caltrans proposes to put a new crosswalk at the Weeks Way entry to the Downtown Plaza across Petaluma Avenue.

Eliminating the SR12/Sebastopol Road at SR116/Petaluma Avenue crosswalk actually is unrelated to any Depot Street concerns. Part of the Caltrans downtown project is a reconfiguration of that intersection to eliminate the small traffic island between the northbound Petaluma Avenue lanes and the right turn lane east onto Sebastopol Avenue in order to make the whole crossing across Petaluma Avenue signal light protected; the short leg from the island to the east curb is currently not protected by the signals. Removing the island takes away the south terminus of east crosswalk across Sebastopol Road.

The Depot Street crosswalk is unprotected by any warning system as it is not wired in to the nearby Sebastopol Avenue/Petaluma Avenue signals. The Depot Street crosswalk is but 70 feet from Sebastopol Avenue, which results in at least two adverse conditions. First, drivers turning right from Sebastopol Avenue are looking left to assess oncoming traffic at the same time an un-signalized crosswalk is directly nearby to the right, so in the opposite direction. Thus, drivers that turn are accelerating but not looking at an approaching un-signalized crosswalk. Similarly, northbound drivers on Petaluma Avenue are accelerating from a green light at the same time they might suddenly need to stop for a pedestrian at Depot Street. These two circumstances are greatly made worse because several nearby businesses attract families and children who use that crosswalk.

Discussions with Caltrans about eliminating the Depot Street crosswalk also covered finding a nearby location for a replacement crosswalk that would be much safer and still be close enough to effectively serve the same foot traffic. When it was learned that the soon-to-be-built Hotel on the east side of Petaluma Avenue was designed with a main entrance directly across from the Downtown Plaza entry it looked like a great spot had been identified.

With the addition of the new crosswalk, Caltrans concluded the existing McKinley Street crosswalk a short distance north was superfluous. Part of their decision in this regard was their plan to pay for the new crosswalk with the funds planned for adding a HAWK crosswalk system at McKinley Street.

Eliminating the Depot Street Crosswalk is a huge safety enhancement. Eliminating the Sebastopol Avenue crosswalk at Petaluma Avenue is a circumstance of geometry and fixing a nearby unsafe condition. Staff easily can recommend agreement with Caltrans regarding these two crosswalks. However, staff is not enamored of the proposed change at McKinley Street, as the Downtown Plaza walkways coupled with the theater across the street funnel foot traffic that way. But, given that removing the McKinley Street crosswalk enables Caltrans to pay for the work, including making the new crosswalk warning light system protected is a big positive. Additionally, if Caltrans pays then the crosswalk and the liability remain their responsibility.

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council Adopt a Resolution approving Caltrans request to eliminate three crosswalks and build a new crosswalk Along SR 116/Petaluma Ave at the specific locations listed above.

Attachment(s):

- Resolution
- Location map

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
ACKNOWLEDGING SUPPORT FOR CALTRANS REQUEST TO ELIMINATE
THREE CROSSWALKS AND REPLACE THEM WITH A NEW CROSSWALK
ALONG SR 116/PETALUMA AVENUE WITHIN THE CITY OF SEBASTOPOL

WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol has responsibility for the Public Health and Safety of its citizens and visitors within its City borders; and

WHEREAS, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is responsible for the health and safety of travelers on its highways and related infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, State Route 116 (SR116) traverses the City of Sebastopol; and

WHEREAS, Caltrans owns the right-of-way for SR116 as it traverses the City; and

WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol and Caltrans, by virtue of the location of SR116 within the City coupled with Caltrans' owning SR116, share these responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, Caltrans has proposed the following changes to crosswalks along SR116 within Sebastopol, specifically along west/north bound Petaluma Avenue:

1. Eliminate three extant crosswalks:
 - a. Across SR12 Sebastopol Road at SR116 Petaluma Avenue; postmile marker 009.290 on SR12 and postmile marker R026.820 on SR116
 - b. Across Depot Street at SR116 Petaluma Avenue; postmile marker R026.810 on SR116
 - c. Across SR116 Petaluma Avenue at McKinley Street; postmile marker R026.730 on SR116
2. Replace the three removed crosswalks with a new crosswalk on SR116 Petaluma Avenue at Weeks Way which is the entrance to La Plaza Park; postmile marker R026.770 on SR116.

WHEREAS, the new crosswalk at Weeks Way will include a pedestrian activated lighted crosswalk warning system; and

WHEREAS, the Depot Street and McKinley Street crosswalks to be eliminated do not include a pedestrian activated lighted crosswalk warning system; and

WHEREAS, because of its layout and location, the Depot Street crosswalk has long been a safety concern and under consideration for removal; and

WHEREAS, eliminating three crosswalks and replacing them with a single new crosswalk that will incorporate lighted warning systems is a significant improvement to pedestrian safety, and

WHEREAS, Caltrans has asked for approval from the City for the crosswalks removal and replacement;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Sebastopol does hereby find that the Caltrans proposal, to eliminate three extant crosswalks on SR 116 Petaluma Avenue and replace them with a new crosswalk that will employ a pedestrian activated lighted warning system, will enhance pedestrian and vehicular safety, and concurs with the Caltrans proposal.

IN COUNCIL DULY PASSED THIS 21st day of January 2020.

Vote:

Ayes:

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent:

APPROVED: _____
Mayor Patrick Slayter

ATTEST: _____
Mary Gourley, Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC

APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____
Larry McLaughlin, City Attorney



X - REMOVE CROSSWALK