



## City Council Staff Report

**From: City Manager**

**Report Type: ACTION ITEMS**

**Lead Department: Transportation**

**Meeting Date: April 1, 2024**

Report #:2403-2745

### **TITLE**

Discussion of Caltrans' Repaving Project of El Camino Real, Including Replacing Existing Parking with Bicycle Lanes, and Potential Approval of a Resolution to Support this Project; CEQA status – categorically exempt.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends Council receive a presentation by Caltrans at their request to support their repaving project of El Camino Real, including repurposing parking spaces for bicycle lanes and to consider adopting a resolution in support of the project. Council could also follow other paths forward related to this project as described in the Executive Summary and in detail on pages 12 and 13 of this report.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report provides background and context for the attached Caltrans proposal (Attachment A) to eliminate parking lanes and replace them with bicycle lanes on El Camino Real throughout Palo Alto. As proposed, the replacement of parking with bike lanes would occur during the upcoming repaving project to be done in Palo Alto. Caltrans staff seek community feedback on the proposed bicycle lanes, and Caltrans has asked Council to consider supporting the parking removal necessary to install the bicycle lanes.

Alternative paths forward for the Council to consider in this discussion include:

- A. Defer action related to bike lanes until Caltrans provides a Safe System Approach Design that is DIB-94 compliant.
- B. Adopt a phased approach that implements the Caltrans proposed bicycle lanes now and acknowledges additional analysis is needed to both incorporate a Safe System Approach

to the design yet establishes bike facilities that take into account future housing development on El Camino Real.

- C. Defer action pending a Caltrans feasibility analysis on travel lane reductions to support parking protected bike lanes.
- D. Align decision of bicycle facilities on ECR with the update of the BPTP to complete in late 2025.

While Caltrans staff have consistently expressed a desire to collaborate with the City on improving safety on El Camino Real, to date, Caltrans has not stated if it will implement the proposed bicycle lanes without a Council vote of support.

If Council supports removal of parking spaces from El Camino for Bicycle Lanes, staff will return to Council as needed to update existing City parking regulations affected by the change, including amending the Evergreen Park-Mayfield Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) district program.

## **BACKGROUND**

El Camino Real is a state highway maintained by Caltrans. To meet the requirements of its Capital Preventive Maintenance (CAPM) program, Caltrans is repaving El Camino Real (State Route 82) in Mountain View, Los Altos, and Palo Alto to improve ride quality, comply with current ADA standards, and improve safety, access, and mobility of pedestrians and bicyclists. The project will repair pavement and upgrade existing non-standard ADA curb ramps and add complete street elements.<sup>1</sup>

According to Caltrans correspondence with the City<sup>2</sup>, the 2020 Bicyclist Safety Improvement Monitoring Program Report found a cluster of collisions (13 of 33, or 40%) where cyclists were riding on the sidewalk against traffic or riding against traffic. Caltrans proposes bike lanes in place of existing on-street parking to reduce or eliminate the risk of riding on the sidewalk and against traffic. Caltrans requests feedback on the proposal and has asked that the City Council consider supporting Caltrans' removal of parking on El Camino Real to accommodate proposed bike lanes.

Prior planning by the City for El Camino Real includes a 2017 grant-funded project that targeted collision hot spots in Palo Alto and Redwood City. In November 2018, two resulting concept plans for bicycle facilities were presented to the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) and generated an inconclusive discussion.<sup>3</sup> At the time, the City had a separate pedestrian-focused One Bay Area Grant (Cycle 2) to prepare design plans and construct improvements on El Camino Real between Stanford and Lambert Avenues, but the City returned the grant in

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<sup>1</sup> Caltrans project website: [SR-82-Pavement Rehabilitation and ADA Improvements](#)

<sup>2</sup> See City website: [City Issues Letter to Caltrans SR82 El Camino Real Bikeway Project](#)

<sup>3</sup> [PTC Staff Report, November 14, 2018](#)

December of 2020 after the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) was unable to re-scope it to include bicycle facilities.

Caltrans staff notified City staff in early-2019 about the upcoming repaving project that was then scheduled to begin in 2020. Caltrans staff noted that the City could add complete street elements such as bicycle lanes to the Caltrans plans if the City funded the community engagement, design, environmental clearance, and construction of those elements before the scheduled construction date, which was within 9-12 months of notification. As the City had not already initiated a project, and due to the size and complexity of the project, 9-12-month notice was insufficient time to conduct a community conversation, and to design, gain necessary approvals, fund, and environmentally clear a bike facility proposal. City staff worked with Caltrans to include pedestrian and bicycle improvements consistent with the existing Caltrans project scope.

In early 2023, Caltrans shared initial ideas for proposed bike lanes with City staff, and by mid-2023, the first draft of the plans had been reviewed by the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PABAC) and a limited number of stakeholders granted access by Caltrans, such as the Valley Transportation Authority. The second iteration of the draft bike lane plan is the subject of this report and is posted to the City's website.<sup>4</sup>

Caltrans formally notified the City of their proposed State Route 82 El Camino Real Bikeway Project in a letter dated November 3, 2023, and since then staff has sought additional details to fully understand the reasoning and implications for the community.

On November 17, 2023, the City sent an official communication to Caltrans in response to the proposed addition of new bikeways along SR 82. The City asked several questions about the proposed project and requested additional information in an effort to ensure that the Palo Alto community and businesses potentially impacted by Caltrans' plan are given an opportunity to fully understand the details, timeline, and opportunities for input. Caltrans responded on January 11, 2024, with answers to the City's questions.<sup>5</sup> This correspondence with Caltrans can be found at the City's website referenced above. Since learning of this project, the City has consistently asked for specific data supporting Caltrans design decisions and a project schedule with sufficient information to understand when and where the community can anticipate impacts from construction. While Caltrans has now included summary-level collision data in its presentations and the attached proposal, the schedule that has been received came long after the initial request and does not provide adequate information. While one three-week construction schedule was provided, it was submitted to the City *after* the start of the three-weeks, disallowing the City to use it as a means of advance notification to the community.

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<sup>4</sup> [Draft Caltrans Bicycle Lane Plan, dated January 22, 2024](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Caltrans Response Letter, dated January 11, 2024](#)

## ANALYSIS

Caltrans provided the attached report, “Proposed Bikeway Implementation in Palo Alto on State Route 82 (El Camino Real),” in Attachment A to substantiate their bicycle lane proposal. The report discusses the safety data that motivated the proposal along with the policies and prior planning that support the inclusion of the bike lane. Design considerations are also noted, such as limited right-of-way, the need for parking removal, conflict zones at intersections and driveways, and transit stops. The report also includes a listing of the outreach meetings held in Palo Alto that were attended by Caltrans staff.

Staff continue to seek clarity from Caltrans regarding several aspects of the bike lanes proposal which are detailed in this section, including the safety of the proposed bicycle facility design and the effects of parking reductions on businesses and RV dwellers. In addition, staff note below the planning context of the El Camino Real corridor, specifically the Housing Element and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan.

### Safety Considerations

As noted in correspondence with the City, the bike lane proposal is a response to Caltrans policies to reduce risk to vulnerable road users on State Route 82. Caltrans has adopted both a Safe System Approach and a Vision Zero goal in roadway safety planning across California to eliminate traffic deaths and severe injuries.<sup>6</sup> This approach identifies traffic safety as the highest priority for the design and operation of the transportation system and views traffic fatalities and severe injuries as unacceptable and preventable through joint action. The Safe System Approach is the foundation for the National Safety Strategy released by the US Department of Transportation in 2022.<sup>7</sup>

To bring the Safe System Approach into statewide roadway design, Caltrans issued Design Information Bulletin – 94 (DIB-94), effective on January 16, 2024, which provides Caltrans staff guidelines on how to select and incorporate transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities to match their urban context.<sup>8</sup> This bulletin alters Caltrans design guidance to “minimize the transfer of kinetic energy through the adoption of design elements that minimize crash speeds and impact angles.”<sup>9</sup> City staff have noted that the bicycle lanes included in the Caltrans draft plans for El Camino Real do not consistently align with the design guidance provided in DIB-94. City staff

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<sup>6</sup> <https://dot.ca.gov/news-releases/news-release-2022-009>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.transportation.gov/nrss/usdot-national-roadway-safety-strategy>

<sup>8</sup> [Design Information Bulletin – 94 Complete Streets: Contextual Design Guidance](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Design Information Bulletin – 94 Complete Streets: Contextual Design Guidance](#), p. 17

have requested clarification of whether DIB-94 applies to the repaving project given that the recent bike lane draft plans were dated after January 16, 2024.

In their written response to PTC Commissioner George Lu, Caltrans stated that DIB-94 was applied to the bicycle lane proposal.<sup>10</sup> Despite this claim, the City engaged Fehr & Peers, a consultant with Safe Systems expertise, to conduct a comprehensive review of the plan in alignment with Caltrans' Design Information Bulletin-94 (DIB-94) and the Safe System Approach (Attachment B), which notes several areas in which the plans do not reduce risk to bike lane users, particularly for cyclists who shift from sidewalk riding to on-street riding where they may come into conflict with buses merging into the bike lane to access bus stops. The City sent Caltrans a letter<sup>11</sup> along with the consultant memorandum (Attachment B) on March 14, 2024. The memorandum identifies that the proposed design fails to mitigate high-speed risks for vulnerable users along the corridor by maintaining the current number of wide vehicle lanes, removing on-street parking, and not addressing high-speed turns at intersections. This oversight results in unmitigated high-speed vehicle conflict points for pedestrians. The design also features conventional and intermittent bicycle lanes without protected intersection treatments, creating high-stress conditions for cyclists and potentially introducing new conflicts with buses, discouraging a shift to more sustainable transportation modes. Caltrans has noted that a lack of funding or right-of-way limits the extent to which additional safety considerations can be included in their current proposal. The City's letter requested that Caltrans:

- a) Assess the applicability of DIB-94 to the current bike lane proposal and explore modifications to align with its principles.
- b) Provide detailed feedback on the memo's review and consider integrating the suggested improvements into the repaving project.
- c) Inform us about the feasibility and timeline for proposing a plan that fully complies with DIB-94 and addresses the identified issues.

The City is currently developing its own Safe Streets for All Safety Action Plan to incorporate the Safe System Approach into the City's policies and practices.<sup>12</sup> As part of this work, El Camino Real has been identified as part of the City's High Injury Network. Representing 4% of the City's streets, this roadway network concentrates 63% of injury collisions involving any modes of travel between 2018 and 2022. A recent PTC staff report (February 28) shared the Safety Action Plan collision data analysis and High Injury Network.<sup>13</sup> A way to improve safety for all road users is to include bicycle lanes, especially separated and protected bicycle lanes, to streets.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> [Caltrans Response to Commissioner Lu, March 11, 2024](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Letter to Caltrans, dated March 14, 2024](#)

<sup>12</sup> [PTC Staff Report, October 11, 2023](#)

<sup>13</sup> [PTC Staff Report, February 28, 2024](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Cycling Lanes Reduce Fatalities for All Road Users, Study Shows](#), ScienceDaily.com, Accessed February 27, 2024

### Parking Impacts & Considerations

A diverse variety of community members use parking availability along El Camino Real segments, at day, evening, and overnight hours. Several segments are included in Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) programs to ensure daytime parking is available for business customers, employees of businesses, visitors, and residents. RPP programs ensure turnover and short-term parking availability for business interests and residents during restricted hours (weekday working hours). Longer parking sessions are available overnight and weekends. Parking segments in these programs are from Park Blvd. to Page Mill Rd. Other segments, from Page Mill Rd. to San Antonio Rd., provide business-interested and residential parking less restrictively. It is unclear whether alternative parking is available, either off-site or only in adjacent residential areas for current usage. Caltrans recently provided estimates of total parking spaces currently available along El Camino Real in the City of Palo Alto. These provided Office of Transportation staff an opportunity to conduct parking occupancy counts of these segments on Saturday, February 24, 2024, 1pm - 2pm, and Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 4am – 5am, to provide a sample of current usage at evening and overnight hours. See Table 1 for this sampling of occupancy usage rates along these segments of El Camino Real.

**Table 1: El Camino Real Parking Occupancy Counts, February 24, 2024 (1-2pm) & February 28, 2024 (4-5am)**

SF Creek to San Antonio Rd. (southbound & eastbound)	2/24/2024	Saturday			2/28/2024	Wednesday	
SF Creek to San Antonio Rd.	Total	1p - 2p	%	RVs	4a-5a	%	RVs
PAMF Drive to Galvez St. / Embarcadero Rd.	26	18	69%	8	12	46%	4
Galvez St. / Embarcadero Rd. to Churchill Ave.	71	60	85%	10	39	55%	13
Churchill Ave. to Serra St. / Park Blvd.	29	21	72%	3	6	21%	2
Serra St./ Park Blvd. to Stanford	32	3	9%	1	8	25%	2
Stanford to Oxford	4	2	50%	0	1	25%	0
Oxford to College	4	2	50%	0	2	50%	0
College to California	Temporary No Parking - Construction Signage						
California to Page Mill	18	18	100%	0	12	67%	0
Page Mill to Portage	No Parking						
Portage to Hansen	No Parking						
Hansen to Matadero	13	11	85%	4	11	85%	6
Matadero to Kendall	8	7	88%	2	7	88%	5
Kendall to Barron	3	2	67%	0	0	0%	0
Barron to Curtiner	4	2	50%	0	0	0%	0
Curtiner to Military	6	2	33%	0	0	0%	0
Military to Ventura	4	4	100%	0	0	0%	0
Ventura to Los Robles	14	10	71%	0	11	79%	0
Los Robles to Vista	12	8	67%	2	10	83%	1
Vista to Maybell	21	5	24%	0	10	48%	0
Maybell to Arastadero	10	4	40%	0	0	0%	0
Arastadero to Dinah's Court	18	14	78%	0	1	6%	0
Dinah's Ct. to Los Altos Ave.	10	2	20%	0	0	0%	0
Los Altos Ave. to San Antonio Rd.	24	1	4%	0	1	4%	0
San Antonio Rd. to Stanford Ave. (northbound and westbound)							
San Antonio back to Stanford							
San Antonio Road to Del Medio	COMV	6		0	4		0
Del Medio to Cesano	16	9	56%	0	2	13%	0
Cesano to Monroe	No parking						
Monroe to Dinah's Ct.	9	0	0%	0	0	0%	0
Dinah's Court to Deodar	15	2	13%	0	3	20%	0
Deodar to Charleston	No parking						
Charleston to El Camino Way	10	1	10%	0	1	10%	0
El Camino Way to El Camino Way	37	25	68%	0	1	3%	0
El Camino Way to Ventura Way	11	1	9%	0	1	9%	0
Ventura Way to Curtner	7	3	43%	0	0	0%	0
Curtner to Wilton	7	2	29%	0	0	0%	0
Wilton to Madero	6	1	17%	0	3	50%	0
Matadero to Margarita	No parking						
Margarita to Fernando	7	2	29%	0	1	14%	0
Frenando to Portage	No parking - Construction						
Portage to Acacia	No parking - Construction						
Acacia to Page Mill	No parking - Construction						
Page Mill to Sheridan	No parking - Construction						
Sheridan to Grant	9	0	0%	0	0	0%	0
Grant to Sherman	11	3	27%	0	0	0%	0
Sherman to California Ave.	No parking - Construction				0		
California Ave. to Cambridge	10	4	40%	0	0	0%	0
Cambridge to College	9	3	33%	0	0	0%	0
College to Oxford	12	3	25%	0	No parking - Construction		0
Oxford to Stanford	9	8	89%	0	2	22%	0
Stanford to Park	No parking - Construction						
Park to SF Creek	No parking						

The Caltrans El Camino Real Project will result in, at minimum, temporary and potentially long-term displacement of vehicles that park along this State Highway. It is staff's understanding that, later this year, Caltrans will remove all parking along the entire El Camino corridor in Palo Alto for the duration of the multi-year construction project. This will have impacts on people that visit the area, as well as those who live on or near El Camino Real, including vehicle dwellers. Staff believe that scheduling the work and parking impacts in phases along El Camino Real would be a less disruptive approach in Palo Alto. City staff is in contact with community partners to identify ways to help vehicle dwellers who will be impacted by this project. Though Caltrans is responsible for showing that outreach has been done, resources offered, and notifications are given to the vehicle dwellers as part of the vehicle removal process, Caltrans has requested that the City and County conduct the outreach as they state that they do not have the ability at Caltrans to conduct this outreach. The City and County remain in discussions with Caltrans about this. While the City and County are actively seeking to identify ways to help vehicle dwellers, Caltrans is ultimately responsible.

The City is working with Caltrans to improve communication. Staff requested the detailed project schedule from Caltrans which would provide the whole community as much advance notice as feasible for segments where work will begin that triggers "no parking" signage along the corridor beyond the brief six week schedule they have shared. Staff is hopeful to receive a longer-term detailed project schedule from Caltrans.

### **Analysis of Parking Accessibility for Businesses on El Camino Real**

This section addresses parking accessibility for select businesses located on El Camino Real. The analysis identifies businesses that lack both on-site and convenient off-site parking options. This condition poses potential difficulties for these establishments, particularly in attracting and retaining customers due to the challenge of parking accessibility.

### **Businesses Without On-Site or Adjacent Off-Site Parking**

A subset of businesses along El Camino Real faces significant parking accessibility challenges. These businesses do not have on-site parking facilities, nor do they have access to readily

available off-site parking without the necessity of crossing El Camino Real, which may not be feasible for all patrons. The affected properties are as follows:

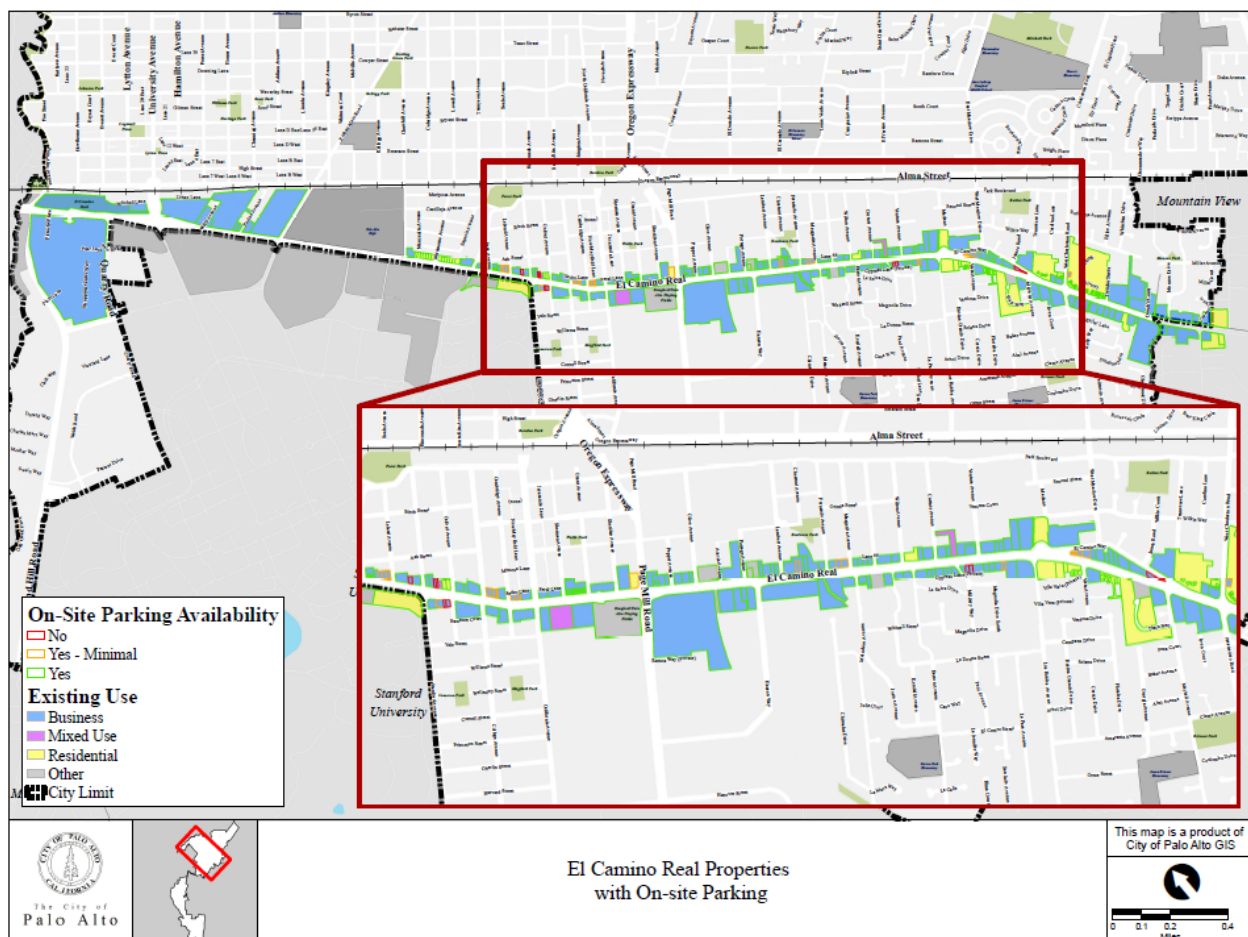
- **Properties Lacking On-Site Parking and Immediate Off-Site Parking Solutions:**

- Parcel 137-11-082: Located at 3878 El Camino Real, housing Barron Park Market and a Post Office branch.
- Parcel 137-11-081: Situated at 3876 El Camino Real, the site of a local Florist shop.

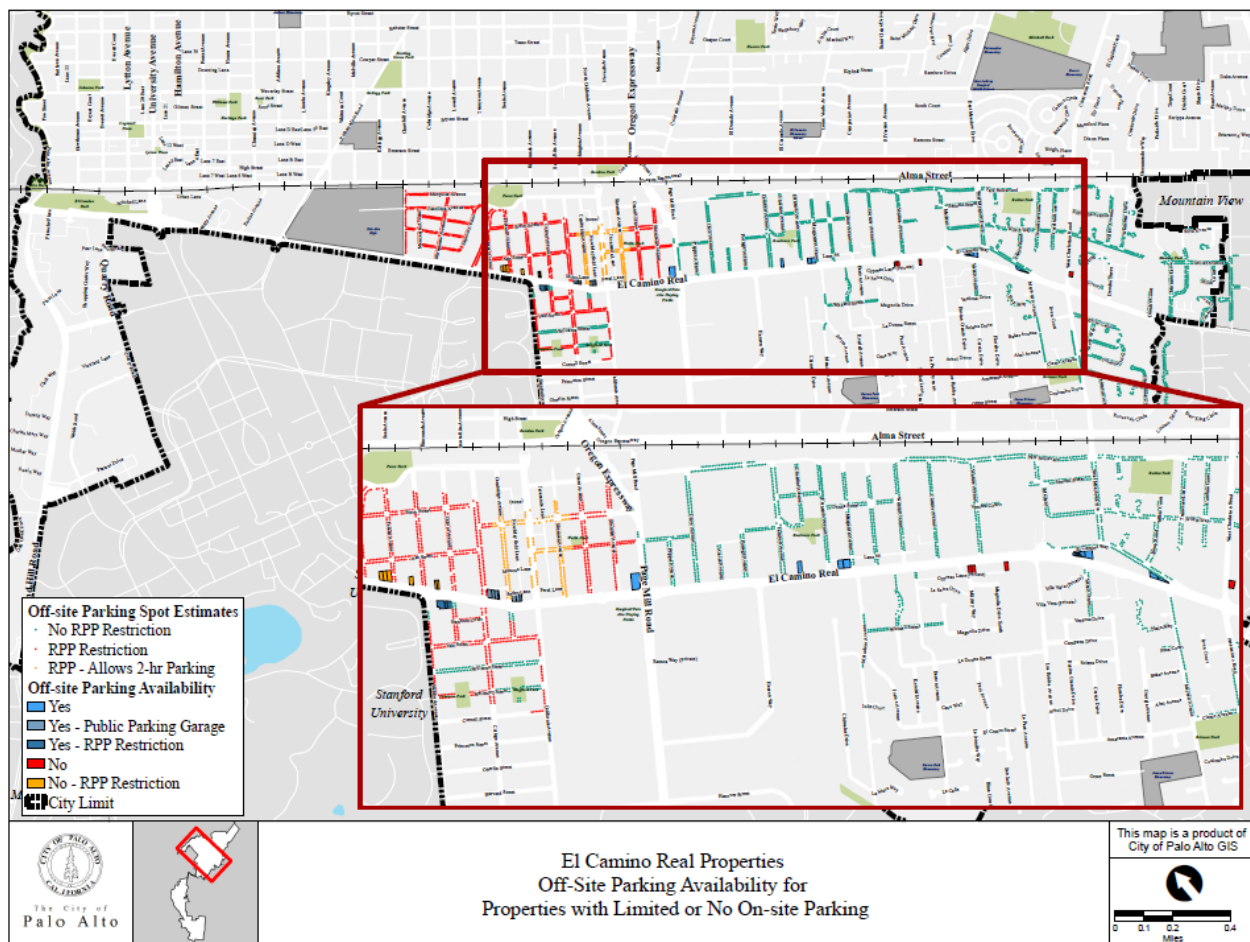
- **Properties Without On-Site Parking and Restricted Off-Site Parking due to Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Zones:**

- Parcel 124-30-016: Home to Cardinal Bike Shop, located at 1955 El Camino Real.
- Parcel 124-31-023: Occupied by Radhika Beauty Salon and Roy's Cleaners, found at 2033/2029 El Camino Real.
- Parcel 124-31-022: Stanford Coin Wash is located at 2045 El Camino Real.

**Exhibit 1: El Camino Real Properties with On-Site Parking**



## Exhibit 2: Exhibit 2: El Camino Real Properties with Limited or No On-Site Parking



At the end of January this year, there were 41 vehicles parked along El Camino Real in Palo Alto that appeared to have people dwelling in them. Caltrans has indicated that their approach is to notify the County “Continuum of Care” two weeks prior to noticing vehicles. There is no action anticipated by Caltrans after they notify the Continuum of Care until 72 hours before vehicles have to move. At that time, Caltrans workers place notices on vehicles indicating that they must move within 72 hours. At the 72-hour mark, California Highway Patrol steps in to enforce. In light of impacts to people living in vehicles along El Camino Real, as mentioned earlier, the City is working towards enhanced collaboration and communication between City, County, and strategic partners to:

1. Identify a way to give people more than 72-hours’ notice of displacement.

2. Identify places for people to relocate to when displaced.
3. Identify resources for people with inoperable vehicles.

Additionally, the City has asked Caltrans to survey its property in Palo Alto to see if there are any sites available for relocation.

#### Planning Context: Housing Element & Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Update

The City's new Housing Element<sup>15</sup> concentrates housing along El Camino Real, a state highway that is well-served by transit but lacks a bicycle facility. The presence of a bicycle facility on El Camino Real (or lack thereof) will influence the transportation choices of future residents of this corridor. Notably, the City's development review pipeline currently includes over 1,000 housing units proposed for El Camino Real.

The City's new Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan (BPTP) update will be complete in the fall of 2025.<sup>16</sup> This document will take the Housing Element into account to recommend an updated bicycle network for Palo Alto. Prior bicycle network plans have included bicycle facilities parallel to El Camino Real, and El Camino Real Bicycle Facilities were to be included along with VTA's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on El Camino Real. The BRT project would have dedicated two El Camino Real lanes to rapid buses in each direction, however the project was discontinued by VTA in early 2018 due to insufficient support by cities along the corridor. The current bike lane proposal accommodates bus stops within the bike lanes. Cyclists approaching a bus at a stop are expected to either wait behind the bus or merge into the vehicle lane to pass the bus on the left.

#### Potential Pathways Forward

The four pathways below describe possible Council direction relative to the Caltrans request to remove parking for the proposed bicycle lanes.

- A. Defer action related to bike lanes until Caltrans provides a Safe System Approach Design that is DIB-94 compliant.
  1. If Caltrans determines that DIB-94 applies to the repaving project, Council could vote to support re-purposing the parking lanes for bicycle facilities that more consistently align with the Safe System Approach/DIB-94.
  2. If DIB-94 does not apply to the repaving project, Council could vote to retain the parking until Caltrans or the City develops a more DIB-94-aligned project.

This approach results in no bicycle facilities on El Camino Real until DIB-94 compliant facilities can be designed and funded by either jurisdiction. Caltrans estimates that it would be at least four to five years before funding and design could potentially be obtained for a new project proposal for a bicycle facility on El Camino Real.

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<sup>15</sup> [Housing Element Update project website](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Update project website](#)

- B. Adopt a phased approach that implements the Caltrans proposed bicycle lanes now and acknowledges additional analysis is needed to both incorporate a Safe System Approach to the design and establish bike facilities that take into account future housing development on El Camino Real.

Council could vote to implement the bikeway proposal and request Caltrans to complete a feasibility analysis to support parking-protected bike lanes in the future and design bike facilities aligned with DIB-94. Council could also request a new design that includes improvements for pedestrians and transit, i.e. bus boarding islands and median refuge islands. Council could ask Caltrans to work with the City and VTA to design facilities aligned with DIB-94.

- C. Defer action pending a Caltrans feasibility analysis on travel lane reductions to support parking protected bike lanes.
  - 1. Council could vote to support to retain the parking on El Camino Real. Caltrans would then repave the state highway without a bike facility.
  - 2. Council could request Caltrans to complete a feasibility analysis for travel lane reductions to support parking-protected bike lanes and request design of facilities aligned with DIB-94. This approach results in no bicycle facilities on El Camino Real until travel lane reduction feasibility has been studied, at which time Council could re-evaluate. This option could also be contained in Option D below.

- D. Align decision of bicycle facilities on ECR with the update of the BPTP to complete in late 2025.

- 1. Council could vote to support to remove or retain the parking on El Camino Real. Caltrans would then repave the state highway with or without a bike facility.
  - 2. Depending on priority in BPTP Update, City staff could work to obtain grant funds to design and build a bike- and transit-friendly facility or enhance the facility that Caltrans has already installed on El Camino Real.

This approach assumes that the City would lead planning a bicycle facility based on the priority assigned to this project in the BPTP update. If the El Camino Real corridor is not listed as a high priority project in the BPTP Update, planning by City staff for a bicycle facility on the State Route would follow the development of higher-priority projects, pending City staff capacity and grant funding resources to lead a complex design and construction project.

Note that none of these alternatives are informed by unilateral actions that Caltrans may take if the Council does not vote to support the removal of parking. While Caltrans staff have consistently expressed a desire to collaborate with the City on improving safety on El Camino Real, to date, Caltrans has not stated if it will implement the proposed bicycle lanes without a

Council vote to support the removal of parking. Caltrans has established that a bicycle facility is needed on El Camino Real based on a safety analysis. Given the safety and Complete Street policies that now govern State transportation planning, it is unclear if Caltrans will re-pave El Camino Real without adding a bicycle facility, regardless of City support.

In any case, if parking spaces are removed from El Camino, staff will return to Council as needed to update existing City parking regulations affected by the change, including amending the Evergreen Park-Mayfield RPP district parking program to remove the portion on El Camino Real.

### **FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT**

As a Caltrans project, it is not anticipated that Caltrans will ask the City for any funding for the proposed bike lanes. The City is absorbing the cost of hosting the community engagement meetings that are in excess of the usual standing committee calendars.

### **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Caltrans requested City staff assistance in setting up community engagement meetings to gain public feedback on the proposed bike lane plans. The meeting schedule was publicized on the City's website and shared through City communication channels including City digital newsletters and via social media. A web form to gain community input continues to be available.<sup>17</sup>

A Community Meeting was held on February 29, 2024, at Palo Alto High School, where Caltrans shared the proposed bike lane plans and gained input from over 60 attendees. The meeting recording is available on the City's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/c/cityofpaloalto>.

A Joint PABAC and City/School Transportation Safety Committee meeting was held on March 7, 2024 at the Mitchell Park Community Center. The meeting recording is available on the City's YouTube channel linked above.

A joint meeting of the Human Relations Commission and the PTC was held on March 13, 2024, at City Hall. The meeting recording is available on the City's YouTube channel.

The commissioners' comments on the Caltrans proposal for installing bicycle facilities on El Camino Real expressed a blend of support for the initiative's goals and concerns over its execution and impacts. The commissioner comments focused on the following items:

- **Support for Enhancing Safety:** Commissioners showed strong support for improving safety for cyclists on El Camino Real, especially in light of past collisions, including fatalities. They viewed the addition of bike lanes as a positive step towards this goal.

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<sup>17</sup> Website Feedback Form; <https://us.openforms.com/Form/1328d991-d30a-4ca1-b9f7-9e364540e959>

- **Concerns Over Design and Safety:** While supportive of safety improvements, commissioners had concerns about the detailed design of the bike lanes, particularly at intersections and areas where bike lanes transition to shared lanes with sharrow markings. They emphasized the need for designs that ensure the safety and usability of the bike lanes for all cyclists.
- **Impact of Parking Removal:** There were significant concerns about the potential removal of parking spaces and its impact on local businesses and residents, including those living in vehicles. Commissioners inquired about outreach to affected groups and the search for alternative parking solutions.
- **Left-Turning Bicyclists:** The safe accommodation of left-turning bicyclists, especially across multiple lanes of traffic, was a point of concern. Commissioners were interested in design solutions such as two-stage left turns to improve safety.
- **Compliance with Design Guidelines:** Questions arose about the project's compliance with the latest Caltrans Complete Streets Design Information Bulletin (DIB. 94), especially concerning intersection treatments and the continuity of bike lanes.
- **Community Engagement and Feedback:** The need for thorough and inclusive community engagement was stressed. Commissioners expressed concern over whether sufficient efforts had been made to involve all stakeholders in the planning process.
- **Consideration of Broader Impacts and Alternatives:** Some commissioners called for a more comprehensive examination of alternatives and measures to improve safety and mobility along El Camino Real. They advocated for a broader conversation on balancing the needs of all road users.
- **Concerns Over Project Pace:** Commissioners were concerned about the rapid pace at which the project was moving forward, fearing it might limit comprehensive community input and thorough consideration of the project's implications.
- **Project Implementation and Process Concerns:** Beyond specific design and impact concerns, there was apprehension about the overall process, including the speed of implementation, adequacy of community outreach, and how well the project's design would address the identified safety issues and comply with recent guidelines.

Commissioners emphasized the importance of safety while calling for a more deliberate approach that includes extensive stakeholder involvement and careful consideration of the project's broader implications.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

As the lead agency, Caltrans is responsible for the environmental review of the El Camino Real Repaving Project. Caltrans has determined that this project meets the criteria for a Categorical Exemption (CE) under CEQA regulation 15301 (existing facilities) and a Categorical Exclusion (CE) under NEPA at 23 CFR 771.117(c). The City does not anticipate being a “responsible

agency” under CEQA for this project because it does not anticipate having discretionary approval authority for a portion of this project.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Proposed Bikeway Implementation in Palo Alto on State Route 82 (El Camino Real)

Attachment B: Review of El Camino Real Proposed Repaving Design by Fehr and Peers

Attachment C: Resolution of Support to of Caltrans’ Repaving Project, Including Removal of Parking from El Camino Real to Install Bicycle Lanes

**APPROVED BY:**

Philip Kamhi, Chief Transportation Official