



Highway 17 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing Project (BPOC)

CIP No. 818-0803



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Project Background and Goals**

**1. How was the need for the project determined? Why is this project important?**

The need and importance of the Highway 17 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing Project (Project) was originally identified in the Town’s 2017 *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP)* and further evaluated in the [2020 BPMP Update](#) and the [2020 Feasibility Study](#) developed for this Project. These plans are the result of collaboration with the Los Gatos community to identify improvements and policies needed to increase the safety for pedestrians and bicycles throughout Town. The resulting BPMP specifically identified a new bicycle and pedestrian bridge across Highway 17 to connect East and West Los Gatos as a high priority project for the Town. The latest update to the Town’s BPMP was completed in 2020 and also selected the Highway 17 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing as a high priority bicycle and pedestrian project. The need for the project was further evaluated and supported in the [2020 Feasibility Study](#) for the project. For more information on the [Town’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, Master Plan Update](#), and the [2020 Feasibility Study](#), please click on the imbedded links or visit the Highway 17 BPOC project page at [www.LosGatosCA.gov/Hwy17BPOC](http://www.LosGatosCA.gov/Hwy17BPOC).

**2. Why is the Town focusing on this project when there are other areas that need help?**

This Project was identified as a high priority project in the Town’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and Town staff has successfully secured significant grant funds to complete the design of this Project. For these reasons, the Town is eager to move forward with project development as an important improvement for the community. The Town is working on several other priority projects, under the Connect Los Gatos program.

**3. I have heard this project is included in the Connect Los Gatos plan. What is Connect Los Gatos?**

Connect Los Gatos is a program that aims to promote bicycle and pedestrian connectivity and improve the multimodal network throughout the Town, making it safer and easier for all to bike and walk in Los Gatos. For more information on this program, please visit [www.LosGatosCA.gov/ConnectLG](http://www.LosGatosCA.gov/ConnectLG).

**4. Why was a separate Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing (BPOC) structure at Blossom Hill Road determined to be the preferred location for improving bicycle and pedestrian safety across Highway 17?**

The preferred alternative was determined based on the alternative analysis provided in the [2020 Feasibility Study](#), which includes a detailed analysis of the alignment evaluation process. Highlights of the analysis include:

- *Community Feedback*
- *Caltrans Coordination*
- *Travel Demand and Patterns: the existing bicycle and pedestrian volumes were used to understand the current travel patterns and user demographics. The volume data was collected in March 2020 before the Shelter-in-Place order took into effect. The future demand and travel patterns were analyzed as well*
- *User Experience*
- *Potential Environmental Impacts*
- *Right of Way constraints, geotechnical considerations, trees, and visual impacts*
- *Cost: construction and maintenance*



**5. Why not put the BPOC on the north side of BHR?**

The [2020 Feasibility Study](#) determined that an alignment on the north side of Blossom Hill Road is less desirable for many reasons including significant utility conflicts, insufficient public right of way, property access and grading impacts, incompatibility with existing travel patterns, and impacts to park facilities. These additional impacts resulted in the north side of Blossom Hill Road not being recommended as the preferred location for the BPOC.

**6. Why not add additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities onto the current Caltrans Blossom Hill Road bridge over Highway 17?**

The [2020 Feasibility Study](#) determined that widening the existing Blossom Hill Road Overcrossing to add additional pedestrian and bicycle facilities is not feasible due to several existing nonstandard design features of the current bridge structure, including the existing bridge's nonstandard vertical clearance above Highway 17. Given the nonstandard design features of the existing bridge, Caltrans would require a total bridge replacement to meet today's standard vertical clearance requirements and other current design standards.

**7. Why not reconstruct the existing Caltrans Blossom Hill Road bridge over Highway 17 to meet current design standards and include bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the new structure?**

Reconstructing the existing Blossom Hill Road Overcrossing would increase project costs significantly, extend the project delivery schedule, and create far greater impacts than the proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Reconstruction of the Blossom Hill Overcrossing would be a Caltrans project and would have to compete with other regional highway improvement projects for prioritization and funding. Town staff had several correspondences with Caltrans regarding the potential of a bridge reconstruction at this location. Caltrans has not identified the reconstruction of the Blossom Hill Road Overcrossing as a priority project and the project is not included in the Highway Bridge Program Ten Year Plan. Furthermore, Caltrans indicated that since most of the bridge assets are rating "good" and there is no target for Goods Movement (Clearance) at this time, no project would be forthcoming in the near future, for a minimum of ten to twenty years.

There is an immediate need to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians along this corridor and the proposed improvements provide the most economical solution and timely delivery that meet the Project's purpose and need. Therefore, the alternative to wait for a total Caltrans reconstruction of the Blossom Hill Road Overcrossing was removed from further consideration.

**8. Will the construction of a separate BPOC conflict with a future reconstruction of the existing Caltrans vehicular bridge over Highway 17?**

The project intends to construct the proposed BPOC as far south from the existing Blossom Hill Road Overcrossing as possible so as not to hinder any future replacement of the existing structure.

**9. Will bicyclists and pedestrians still be allowed to use the existing Blossom Hill Road Overcrossing or will all bicyclists and pedestrians be required to use the new BPOC?**

Very preliminary concepts have been developed that would continue to accommodate pedestrians on the north side of Blossom Hill Road and would allow westbound bicyclists the option of staying on Blossom Hill Road and using the existing overcrossing structure or transitioning to the south side to use the new BPOC. In these initial concepts, it is not planned to have sidewalk or bicycle facilities on the south side of the existing Blossom Hill Road overcrossing. These accommodations would be replaced on the BPOC. These concepts will continue to be developed further as the project proceeds.

**10. How will Caltrans be involved in this project?**

Although the Town will be taking the lead on the project design and construction, Caltrans oversight is required since the BPOC structure will be crossing the State Highway System. This means all procedures must follow specified Caltrans project development requirements. Caltrans will be involved in the review and approval of the project at every step and Cooperative Agreements between the Town and Caltrans will need to be executed for each phase of the project. An encroachment permit will also be required from Caltrans before BPOC can move to construction



**11. If other measures were taken to reduce vehicular speeds on Blossom Hill Road, such as installing speed bumps, increasing policing, or reducing speed limits, would a new BPOC still be necessary?**

The reduction of vehicular speeds on Blossom Hill Road could provide some safety improvements for bicycles and pedestrians using the existing facility, however, the existing width of the Blossom Hill Road Overcrossing of Highway 17 does not provide adequate room for bicyclists and pedestrians. The existing narrow structure creates a gap in the bike lane network across Highway 17. In this location, bicycles must share the lane with vehicles. The Project intends to create more horizontal separation between bicyclists and vehicles to eliminate interactions between both users. Furthermore, the existing sidewalk is narrow and does not meet minimum design standards for pedestrians. Providing a bicycle and pedestrian facility that is totally separated from vehicles, and wide enough to accommodate existing and future demands, is anticipated to provide maximum safety improvements for bicycles and pedestrians crossing Highway 17.

**12. If traffic conditions at Roberts Road East and Blossom Hill Road were improved to better handle the school drop off and pick up related traffic, would a new BPOC still be necessary?**

Improving traffic conditions at Roberts Road East and Blossom Hill Road would not eliminate the need to improve the safety for bicycles and pedestrians crossing Highway 17. There is hope that the installation of a new BPOC will help remove some of the school related congestion at this intersection, as more students feel safer to bike or walk to school rather than be dropped off by vehicles. Moreover, improving traffic conditions may be possible by widening the existing roadway, which could create far greater impacts than the proposed bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

**Project Cost, Funding and Schedule**

**1. What is the project’s design budget and how is it funded?**

The Project’s design budget is approximately \$3,700,000. The 2016 Santa Clara County Measure B Program is providing \$2,755,000 in grant funding, and the remaining \$946,000 is being funded from the Town’s General Fund Appropriated Reserves.

**2. How much will the construction contract be for this project?**

Very preliminary construction contract estimates for the project ranges from \$17-\$20M. This is a very preliminary estimate that will continue to be updated as the project is developed.

**3. How will project construction be funded?**

Construction funding has not yet been identified. Town staff will continue to pursue various grant funding opportunities for the project construction. By moving forward with design at this time, and having a “shovel ready” project, it is anticipated the project will be in a better position to compete for future grant funds.

**4. What is the total cost of the project estimated to be at completion?**

It is estimated that the complete project will range in cost between \$25M to \$29M. The feasibility analysis accounts for \$235,000 of that total, while design costs are anticipated to be approximately \$3.7M. Construction is currently estimated between \$17M to \$20M and construction support services are anticipated to run in the range of \$4M-\$5M. These are very preliminary estimates that will continue to be updated as the project progresses.

**5. Will the Town need to purchase any property to complete the project?**

The Project’s goal is to install the proposed improvements within the existing public right of way. The Town does not anticipate additional property acquisition based on conceptual studies completed in the [2020 Feasibility Study](#). Future phases of the project development process will confirm the project’s right of way needs.

**6. What are the anticipated project phases?**

This is a multi-phased project following the Caltrans project development manual. Four phases of the project have been identified. A first phase will consist of the actions and items necessary to formally and programmatically establish the project with Caltrans as well as the preparation of a Project Initiation Document (PID) which will include the parameters evaluated in the Town’s Feasibility Study. Also during this phase, the project team will be working within the community to raise overall project awareness, to review bridge type alternatives, and to solicit input on a preferred bridge type (concrete vs. steel). This community input will be folded into the Caltrans design process with the community bridge type preferences included in the final Project Initiation Document (PID).



The second design phase will include preliminary engineering and environmental review. Development of preliminary design features for the bridge and pathway and the required environmental reviews for the proposed improvements will be evaluated during this phase. The resulting documentation for this phase will be the Project Approval/Environmental Documentation (PA/ED).

The third design phase will be the preparation of the project's final design plans, specifications and estimates (PS&E) and fourth phase of the project will be the construction of the BPOC.

## 7. What is the anticipated schedule for the project?

Preliminary scheduling of the project as posted on the project page shows design completion in the Spring of 2024. Construction funding has yet to be secured, but it is anticipated that construction will take approximately 1.5 – 2 years to complete the BPOC. Project schedules will be updated as the project proceeds and will be posted to the project webpage.

## **Stakeholder and Community Engagement and Outreach**

### 1. Where can I find information on the outreach process for this project?

A **Hwy 17 BPOC Community Engagement Plan** has been developed and adopted by the Town Council for this project. The plan can be found by clicking on the embedded link above.

### 2. Will there be any community meetings to discuss the project?

Yes. The project intends to hold the first virtual community workshop in December 2021 to obtain input and feedback regarding the proposed structure type. Additional community workshops/meetings are anticipated to be scheduled for early next year to obtain input on additional project features and amenities. The schedule for these meetings will be posted on the project page.

### 3. When will specific designs for the BPOC and surrounding improvements be available for review?

During Phase I, the project team will be engaging the community and project stakeholders in workshops to discuss the options and preferences between a concrete and a steel bridge structure. Other preliminary design elements for the bridge and pathway will be developed during Phase 2 of the design process. Some very preliminary concepts, such as potential travel patterns, bridge width and height were included in the 2020 Feasibility Study. These concepts will continue to be developed further, with community and stakeholder input, during Phase 2 and Phase 3. Notifications for future community workshops to review design elements will be posted on the project page.

### 4. How can the community stay involved, and will project staff communicate with the residents and project stakeholders about the project elements as they are being designed?

The project team will use the project page on the Town's website ( [www.losgatosca.gov/Hwy17BPOC](http://www.losgatosca.gov/Hwy17BPOC) ) as the main way to communicate the progress of the project during design and notify the community of upcoming meetings and events. Regular project updates will be posted to the project page. The project team encourages interested individuals to sign up for the Notify Me services in order to receive a text or e-mail message each time an update is posted to the project page. Other social media outlets will be used as well, however the best method to stay up to date on the project will be through the project page on the Town's website.

### 5. Will the Town's Police Department be included in the review of the project?

The project will include coordination with the Town's Police Department. The Complete Streets and Transportation Commission includes staff representatives from the Town's Police Department allowing for coordination opportunities.

### 6. How is the Complete Streets and Transportation Commission involved in this project?

The Town's Complete Streets and Transportation Commission will play a key role in the development of the project. All project developments will be reviewed with the commission for their input and feedback. Their decisions and actions will help direct the project design. Community input and feedback received will be relayed to the CSTC on a regular basis so that the project may proceed in line with the community's best interest. The CSTC will make recommendations to the Town Council regarding the project. Interested community members are encouraged to participate in the CSTC meetings which are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month. The meeting agendas and instructions for participating can be found at <https://www.losgatosca.gov/AgendaCenter/Complete-Streets-and-Transportation-Comm-25>

