



SCAN ME!

Highway 17 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing Project (BPOC)

TLG 19-818-0803



FAQ's from COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Are all proposed bridge concepts the same height (above Highway 17) as the current bridge, or are they raised to a higher elevation than the current bridge?
Caltrans standards require the minimum vertical clearance for a bicycle/pedestrian bridge over a freeway to be 18'6" to the underside, or soffit, and for a roadway bridge over a freeway to be 16'6" to the soffit. The existing Blossom Hill Overcrossing has a sub-standard vertical clearance of 15'-5". The proposed bicycle/pedestrian bridge options will be designed to meet current standards and will therefore be higher than the current bridge in order to the minimum required vertical clearance.
2. Are the yearly/long term maintenance costs of the 3 bridge options the same or statistically different?
It is anticipated that yearly/long term maintenance costs between the options presented will be similar, however, concrete bridges generally require somewhat less long-term maintenance. Long-term maintenance considerations for steel bridges include painting every few years and periodic inspections of key structural connections of the steel members. Depending on various factors such as the type of structure, type of steel members, type of structural connections and the selected paint system, specific long-term maintenance costs will vary. Ultimately, it is anticipated these costs may contribute to a somewhat higher long-term maintenance cost for a steel bridge option when compared to a concrete option.
3. Are there color options for the steel?
Yes. Potential color options will be presented in a future public workshop for input if a steel bridge type is chosen.
4. Between the concrete bridge and the steel flat truss bridge, a trade off is that the concrete one is less expensive and the steel flat truss one involves less shut down of the highway. These aspects both seem as critical of an issue as whether the bridge enhances the character of Los Gatos. How much of a cost difference and how many days of shut down are involved with each?
With respect to shut down hours of Highway 17, the concrete bridge will be constructed similar to other concrete bridges over highways, with falsework erected over the travel lanes to maintain traffic flow during construction. The steel truss bridge can be erected over Highway 17 during low peak hours.

As the design proceeds, specific traffic impact details, such as the need for lane closures of Highway 17 or traffic detours, will be coordinated with Caltrans. The project team will strive to minimize impacts to highway travel as well as to the surrounding communities. Project construction costs associated with the identified traffic impacts of the various bridge types can then be further quantified and used along with

other considerations, such as the enhancement of the character of Los Gatos, to evaluate the various bridge proposals.

5. Most of the renderings don't show much impact to the landscapes on either side of 17. Is this accurate or will cut slopes and retaining wall structures require tree removal, especially on the east side? Can you address if there will be a difference in this impact between the options please?

Potential impacts to landscapes, tree removals, and hillsides will likely be more significant on the east side of Highway 17 given the existing terrain and narrow roadway cross-section. The Project intends to build the pathway improvements as close to the existing roadways as possible in order to minimize these potential impacts, however there will be tree removals and slope work required for all bridge options. As the design progresses, the project team will be able to better quantify the impacts to the slopes, landscaping, and retaining walls along the east and west sides associated with the various bridge options and will present this to the community as the design progresses.

The 2020 Feasibility Study also provides information about the conceptual improvements and their potential impact east and west of the proposed bridge crossing.

6. Many of us are concerned about the elevation and distance the pathway will cut into the back hill behind our homes that backup against Blossom Hill Road. Are there dimensions available for the pathways connecting to the new bridge structure?
A Project goal is to build the pathway within the existing roadway envelope where the existing sidewalk is currently located and within the existing public right of way. The Project is still in the very early planning stages so specific dimensions are not currently available, but will be provided in Phase 2 when preliminary engineering details are developed, and will be shared with the community at that time.
7. What is the measurement between the pedestrian bridge walking surface and the top of the bridge walls/fences: currently and in the proposed bridges? One day I saw a middle schooler lifting up a big rock to lob over the current chain link fence to toss down into highway traffic so want to see that fencing pretty high to reduce this kind of temptation for pranksters that might frequent this travel route but not yet be mature enough to realize the consequences.
Caltrans Standards require a minimum fence height of 8 feet over freeways to reduce the risk of objects being dropped or thrown upon vehicles. The proposed bridge will provide fencing that meets the 8-foot minimum height requirement and the project team will continue to look for other options that might be useful to help deter this type of activity.

8. We are fortunate to not have a lot of graffiti in Los Gatos, but a bridge right next to the middle school and within walking distance of the high school might be too big of a target for some students to resist. Are any of these bridges harder for someone to deface than the others?

The issue is relative with respect to damage done to the structure. In terms of available exposed area, or continuous surface area, to deface with graffiti the concrete bridge offers the most. The steel structure, while having more structural members throughout the length of the bridge, offers smaller areas for graffiti. With either bridge types, there are graffiti counter measures that can be taken and specified during the preparation of the construction documents such as anti-graffiti coating for concrete bridges or specialized paint for steel structures that makes the bridges as graffiti resistant as possible and make the clean-up easier to handle. The project team will include these considerations during the design process.

9. Does the type of bridge impact the grade of path coming from Fisher? What is the impact to retaining wall where the new path is that was widen recently?

The concrete bridge option will likely sit slightly higher than the steel options because it requires a thicker bridge deck, which will result in a slightly increased grade to cross Highway 17. The Project does not intend to impact the existing retaining walls located adjacent to the Serra Ct community and EB Blossom

Hill Road right-turn lanes, however these details will be developed in more detail during the Phase 2 design process and shared with the community at that time.

10. I am wondering what we can do to slow down west-bound kids on bikes before they rush into the West Roberts Road intersection. For drivers turning right from West Roberts Road onto Blossom Hill Road, that's kind of blind corner and I've seen drivers startled by bikers crossing Roberts Road there.
The Project will evaluate the existing conditions closely at this intersection and determine what measures can be taken to enhance safety during the preliminary and final design phases of the Project as the engineering details are developed. Potential measures may include installing a protected corner with raised elements to create separation and refuge and separation for bicyclists and pedestrians from right-turning vehicles, or restricting right-turning movements during particular signal phases.
11. Once you are off the Bridge, will the pathway narrow from 16'-20' width as you walk away?
A Project goal is to provide a continuous width along the entire segment between Roberts Road West and East. The exact width will be determined in Phase 2 of the Project when engineering details are developed.
12. Why will there be bike and pedestrian on the current bridge in addition to the second structure?
Existing facilities along the south side of the current Blossom Hill Road overcrossing would be replaced with the new structure. The Project only intends to provide a pedestrian sidewalk and a dedicated bicycle lane along the north side of the existing overcrossing. This will provide the option of accommodating existing travel patterns along the northern side of Blossom Hill Road.
13. How are bicyclists traveling west on the north side of the road supposed to get to the south side?
Access from the north to the south side (and vice versa) will be provided at each adjacent intersection crosswalk located at Roberts Road West and East. Preliminary proposals are considering the striping of a green bike lane parallel to and in front of the pedestrian crosswalks to provide an area for the bicyclists who wish to cross Blossom Hill Road to use the BPOC.
14. Will the columns required for the concrete box girder bridge interfere with future light rail lines in the median of Highway 17?
Currently there are no plans for light rail transit in the median area of Highway 17. The existing right of way would not be sufficient to accommodate the installation of a light rail system, and any such project would require years of advanced planning and potential property acquisitions. It should also be noted that the existing Blossom Hill Road vehicular structure over Highway 17 includes an existing concrete column in the median area of Highway 17.
15. Please identify the process the Town used for selecting the design consultant for this project.
The Town released a Request for Proposals to provide Professional Engineering Services for the Highway 17 Bicycle and Pedestrian Overcrossing Project in December of 2020. Two proposals were received and thoroughly evaluated, resulting in the firm of BKF being determined the highest qualified firm to provide the required services. The process used by the Town followed the requirements for the consultant selection process for federally funded projects as contained in the Caltrans Local Assistance Procedures Manual. Further information regarding the required consultant selection process can be found at <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/local-assistance/documents/lapm/ch10.pdf>
16. How will constructed for this project be funded?
As design progresses, staff will continue to look for funding opportunities for the project construction. The intent is to fund the majority of the project through grant programs. Securing funding could take more than a year, and in some cases, projects of this magnitude may take many years to fund. Many of the current grant fund programs require the local agency to provide a local match of anywhere from 10-

30% of the total construction costs. Local match funds may need to be allocated by the Town, however in many cases, this match can be made through the use of other grant funds. The Town staff strives to maximize the use of grant funds for projects of this magnitude especially where the benefits of the project extend beyond the Town boundaries. As this is a significant project in cost and scope, it is likely that many different funding sources would be required. Having a project fully designed/shovel ready often times allows the project to be more competitive in the grant application process.