



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 03/19/2019

ITEM NO: 7

DATE: MARCH 14, 2019
TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL
FROM: LAUREL PREVETTI, TOWN MANAGER
SUBJECT: SUPPORT THE 2016 MEASURE B PROJECT FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT HIGHWAY 9 AND HIGHWAY 17 INCLUDING DESIGN OPTIONS FOR EFFICIENCIES ON HIGHWAY 17 AND FOR ADDITIONAL TRAVEL LANES ON HIGHWAY 17 AND DIRECT STAFF TO PROCESS A GENERAL PLAN 2020 AMENDMENT ALLOWING FOR THE PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:

Support the 2016 Measure B project for improvements at Highway 9 and Highway 17 including design options for efficiencies on Highway 17 and for additional travel lanes on Highway 17 and direct staff to process a General Plan 2020 amendment allowing for the project.

BACKGROUND:

The Countywide 2016 Measure B sales tax measure includes investments in the regional transportation infrastructure across nine program areas. The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) manages the 2016 Measure B program and the VTA Board approves project prioritization and funding. The VTA intends to approve projects on a two-year budget cycle with a ten year look ahead at potential projects. For projects to get underway in that ten-year cycle, it is important that they are included in the two-year budgeting process. The Town has engaged actively to ensure local projects receive prioritization in the program.

One priority area of particular importance to Los Gatos is the Highway program. The program includes upgrades to the highway system with the number and anticipated costs of the identified projects exceeding the anticipated funding through the life of 2016 Measure B, making this a very competitive category.

PREPARED BY: MATT MORLEY
Parks and Public Works Director

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, Finance Director

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DISCUSSION:

Through the process to establish the structure of and projects included in the 2016 Measure B, the Town proposed upgrades to the interchange at Highway 9 and Highway 17 as its major project in the category. In reviewing the project with VTA, an opportunity exists to include two options for modifications to Highway 17 through Los Gatos. The first includes efficiency improvements such as adding auxiliary lanes and realigning existing lanes. Auxiliary lanes might include continuing the on-ramp from Lark Avenue south to the Highway 9 off-ramp, facilitating a smoother transition of traffic. The second is an expanded version that could include the addition of travel lanes on Highway 17. VTA is prepared to advance this project by budgeting 2016 Measure B funds to bring the project through preliminary design and environmental review. The allocation of 2016 Measure B funds would require at least a 10 percent contribution from non-2016 Measure B sources. Securing 2016 Measure B funds would be an important first step toward assessing Highway 17 solutions for addressing the cut-through of regional traffic through the Town.

The Transportation Element of the Town of Los Gatos 2020 General Plan Goal TRA-4 identifies several policies associated with Highway 17, including Policy TRA-4.1 – “Highway 17 should not be widened to provide additional travel lanes south of Lark Avenue.” VTA is aware of this policy and the current work to update the Town’s General Plan. Approval of the recommendation will signify the Council’s support to pursue and accept 2016 Measure B funds to start project development efforts for Highway 17 that could result in an improvement project that includes additional lanes on Highway 17 and to update the Town’s General Plan as part of its ongoing efforts to allow for such an outcome. The project design will remain within the existing Highway 17 right-of-way and any impacts to trees will be mitigated with equivalent replacement plantings. During the project development process, the town and its Council will have multiple opportunities to direct, review and provide input on the development of solutions to be part of the project. This should also align with the completion of the General Plan 2040.

The first phase of the project development process that would assess options could take up to two years to complete and would result in recommendations on project elements to take into future phases, such as environmental documentation and design. Support of the first phase should occur in good faith that a reasonable design will be supported by the Town for future construction.

CONCLUSION:

Supporting the initiation of a project development process for improvements on Highway 17, with the understanding that improved conditions on Highway 17 may lead to less congestion on local roadways and will lead to subsequent environmental documentation and design work on selected project elements with concurrence from the Town.

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COORDINATION:

This report has been coordinated with the VTA.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This agenda item does not financially obligate the Town; however, 2016 Measure B projects have a requirement for a minimum ten percent non-2016 Measure B match of funds. If approved, Town staff will work with VTA and others to identify matching funds, including Federal, State, or regional grant funds. The Town may also be asked to contribute matching funds for the project in the future.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

The recommended actions are not a project defined under CEQA and no further action is required.