



Connecting Lafayette: Downtown Pathways and Schools Safety Project Fact Sheet – May 2024

The purpose of this document is to provide information and assumptions specific to the Connecting Lafayette project.

What is the Project?

The Connecting Lafayette: Downtown Pathways and Schools Safety Project will enhance safety for people on foot, bicycles, and in vehicles by building a dedicated pathway connecting downtown, Lafayette Elementary School, Stanley Middle School, and the Lafayette-Moraga Trail. Additionally, the project is considering improvements to the school pick-up/drop-off area along St. Mary’s Road for Stanley Middle School.

The Project includes the following elements:

School Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and construct a multi-use pathway from Moraga Road to Topper Lane/ Lafayette-Moraga Trail
Topper Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and construct a pathway from School Street/ Lafayette-Moraga Trail to St. Mary’s Road
St. Mary’s Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and construct a sidewalk on the north side from Topper Lane to Birdhaven Court • Review of pick-up/drop-off activities to identify issues and solutions • Design an extension of the sidewalk along the north side from Acampo Drive to Topper Lane*

* At present time, funding is only available for the design of these components on St. Mary’s Road. Currently, the City does not have funding for construction of these components.

What is the History of the Project?

Over the past decade, the City conducted four studies focusing on traffic safety, access, and circulation within Lafayette to address issues and concerns raised by many in the community. The concept for the multi-use pathway emerged from a Rapid Implementation School Safety Plan conducted for Stanley Middle School and Lafayette Elementary School in 2022, a Complete Street Safety Assessment by Berkeley SafeTREC in 2020, and a Safe Routes to School Summary Report in 2013, which was initiated for Lafayette Elementary School and Springhill Elementary School. Additionally, separated walking and biking facilities on School Street and Topper Lane and the drop-off zone behind Stanley Middle School were recommended as part of the Downtown Congestion Reduction Plan in 2018.

Project Assumptions

- The pathway along School Street will be 10-feet wide with a landscape strip, where feasible. The pathways along Topper Lane and St. Mary’s Road will be 6-feet wide with landscaping.
- The proposed pathway width along Topper Lane has been reduced from 10-feet to 6-feet based on input from the community. It will be constructed to City standards and falls within the preferred range of pathway width indicated in recent communications from the community to the City.

- The pathways will be designed for people of all ages and abilities to ensure safety and comfort for all users.
- The project will be constructed within the public right of way. Residential property extents will not be reduced by the project. The City will be seeking an easement agreement with the Lafayette School District to continue the pathway on School Street along the frontage of Lafayette Elementary School.
- The project will not result in any changes to vehicular circulation.
- The project will not result in the loss of any existing legal on-street parking.
- Private improvements located in the public right of way along School Street and Topper Lane will be minimally impacted by the project. Any required changes or improvements will be paid for by the City. We do not anticipate the need to impact existing fencelines.
- The project would require the removal of much of the existing vegetation along the east side of Topper Lane. However, the project will include landscaping improvements to enhance the streetscape. The community will have opportunities to provide input on landscaping options during subsequent phases of design.
- The City will plant and maintain the landscaping installed as part of the project.
- Existing PG&E poles that conflict with the new pathways will be relocated to landscaped areas, at no cost to the City.

St. Mary's Road Pick-Up/Drop-Off

The City has conducted an extensive data collection effort along St. Mary's Road to better understand existing pick-up/drop-off patterns and the resulting issues that may be addressed through this project. *(Currently the City does not have funding for construction of any improvements along St. Mary's Road behind Stanley Middle School).*

St. Mary's Road Observations:

- Very short burst of congestion
- Existing curb space isn't used efficiently for pick-up and drop-off activity
- Congestion is caused, in part, by the frequent pedestrian crossings at Acampo Drive
- Pedestrian crossings help to create gaps in traffic that allow drivers to pull away from the curb
- Two-thirds of the parents who use St. Mary's Road for drop-off are coming from Burton Valley area (e.g., from St. Mary's Road), but far fewer are heading back to that area after dropping off their children. Thus, facilitating u-turns may not be an issue that needs to be resolved through this project.

Recommendations (as of May 2024):

Based on analysis of the collected data the City is proposing a phased approach to the design of improvements along St. Mary's Road:

- A formal drop-off/pick-up zone as initially envisioned may not address concerns with congestion and may not be a good investment given the anticipated high cost and other trade-offs such as tree removal.
- An expansion of the sidewalk with additional curb space along the north side of St. Mary's Road (Acampo to Topper) may help address some existing issues.
- A more formal drop-off zone may be considered once the potential expansion of Lamorinda School Bus Program service is determined, pending the shifting of school bell times that is being considered, and there is more certainty around how many more buses may serve Stanley Middle School.

What are the Funding Sources for the Project?

The City has secured two federal grants for the project. These grants will fund the design and construction of the multi-use pathways along School Street, Topper Lane, and the sidewalk along St. Mary's Road between Topper Lane and Birdhaven Court. Local funds will be used to contribute towards the pathways as well as fund the design of the drop-off zone along St. Mary's Road and the sidewalk extension between Acampo Drive and Topper Lane.

The two federal grants and total funding amounts include:

- Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending (\$3,100,000)
- One Bay Area Grant, Cycle 3 (\$750,000)
- City of Lafayette General Fund (\$775,000)

What is the Tentative Project Schedule?

The following represent the primary project phases with approximate timelines. Dates are subject to change.

- Initial Conceptual Design: September – December 2023
- Public Engagement and Stakeholder Meetings: October 2023 – June 2024
- Refined Conceptual Design: January - June 2024
- Transportation Commission and City Council Meetings: June – July 2024
- Preliminary Cost Estimate: September 2024
- Environmental Review: August 2024 – March 2025
- Detailed Design: July – December 2024
- Construction: Summer 2025 (estimated start date)

Please continue to monitor the project webpage for updated materials

(www.lovelafayette.org/connectinglafayette) and contact the Project Manager with any questions (Patrick Golier: pgolier@ci.lafayette.ca.us)

