



AGENDA SUMMARY EUREKA CITY COUNCIL

TITLE: Myrtle Avenue Bike Lanes

DEPARTMENT: Public Works

PREPARED BY: Jesse Willor, City Engineer

PRESENTED FOR: Action Information only Discussion

RECOMMENDATION

1. Receive report regarding the Myrtle Avenue Improvements Project and its relationship to the Complete Streets Policy; and
2. Consider a resolution of the City Council of the City of Eureka removing parking on Myrtle Avenue from West Avenue to Harrison Avenue to allow for buffered bike lanes.

FISCAL IMPACT

No Fiscal Impact Included in Budget Additional Appropriation

COUNCIL GOALS/STRATEGIC VISION

- Quality of Life
- Health and Safety

DISCUSSION

Myrtle Avenue is a principal arterial and one of the two highest traffic volume local streets in the City of Eureka. For some time, Myrtle Avenue has been identified for improvements including water main replacement and pavement maintenance. The Project is currently slated for construction in 2024. When improvements such as these are developed, opportunities to advance Complete Streets concepts are analyzed pursuant to the City's Complete Streets Policy.

Complete Streets is an approach to planning, designing and building streets that enables safe access for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. While funding may not be available to address every complete street element, staff attempts to address as much as possible with the dollars available. In this case, the City was able to position the project to receive State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding to include expanding the existing bike lanes into buffered bike lanes.

Buffered bike lanes are considered safer for cyclists, as they provide separation from the traveling motorists. The goal is to decrease the Level of Traffic Stress (LTS), which in turn will encourage increased use of the bike lanes on Myrtle. LTS is an approach to quantify the amount of discomfort that people feel when they bicycle close to traffic. The lower the LTS present on a given roadway, the more usage the bike lane will often see. Increased bike lane usage results in increased active transportation and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

New buffered bike lanes would help connect the Myrtle town area of the County of Humboldt to the proposed Bay to Zoo Trail (construction in 2025/2026) and the proposed buffered bike lanes of 6th and 7th Streets (construction in 2023/2024). The Bay to Zoo Trail will connect to the Humboldt Bay Trail South and Eureka Waterfront Trail once it is completed.

The existing bike lanes are underutilized, as they are narrow and there is a high LTS due to vehicular traffic volumes and speeds. Buffered bike lanes should provide a decrease in LTS and an increase in use of the facilities.

The existing roadway section generally consists of two vehicular travel lanes with a two-way left turn lane (TWLTL) in the middle, Class II bike lanes in each direction and parking on the south side/ east bound side of road. In order to allow for the additional roadway width for adding a buffer to the bike lanes, the vehicular travel lane widths will be formalized at 10 feet and the TWLTL reduced to 10 feet. While a four foot wide buffer can be provided within the existing roadway section from 6th Street to West Avenue, the presence of parking on one side between West and Harrison Avenues precludes the installation of a buffer without eliminating the parking lane.

A parking study was completed and will be presented by staff during the Council meeting. The study found that the parking in this area is underutilized with occupancy rates ranging from zero to 17 percent. Generally, this low level of utilization allows for consideration of other uses, such as the proposed use for buffered bike lanes. The Transportation Safety Commission (TSC) considered the elimination of parking on this segment of Myrtle Avenue at its November 14, 2023 meeting. Ultimately, the TSC recommended adoption of the attached resolution removing parking, with an additional request that staff present information about other public parking opportunities in the vicinity.

Staff will present information about the Complete Streets Policy, its relationship to the Myrtle Avenue Improvements Project, and the pros and cons of buffered bike lanes and parking removal or retention. Should Council elect to proceed with the parking removal between West and Harrison Avenues, a resolution formalizing that decision is attached for adoption.

REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:

City Attorney

City Clerk/Information Services

Community Services

Development Services

Finance

Fire

Personnel

Police

Public Works