



# Save California Streets – Award Application

## City of San Luis Obispo, 2022 Paving and Complete Streets Project

The City of San Luis Obispo is pleased to nominate its 2022 Resealing and Complete Streets Project, with particular emphasis on complete streets elements within the City's downtown core, for a Save California Streets Award, Complete Streets Projects category. Completion of this project has improved City of San Luis Obispo's streets and sidewalks, making them safer, more accessible and more sustainable for future use by enhancing safety, accessibility and neighborhood livability for all roadway users.

### Project Team

Lead Agency: City of San Luis Obispo

Contractor: R. Burke Corporation

Construction Management: Filippin Engineering

### Project Description

This high-priority transportation project included repairing and extending the life of pavement within the City's downtown core and local residential streets within the several neighborhoods. Larger roadway maintenance efforts, such as this project, provide excellent opportunities to incorporate planned safety and complete street improvements. The 2022 Resealing and Complete Streets Project (from here on noted as 2022 Project) implemented several complete street modifications in the downtown core that were envisioned in previously adopted City plans to improve downtown safety and mobility for all road users. These strategies include elements that improve pedestrian crossing safety, increase separation between bicyclists and motor vehicle traffic, and calm traffic and reduce speeds through the downtown. Finally, the project furthers the City's major city goal for sustainable transportation.

### Overall project summary:

- Resealed 4.8 million square feet of paved roads in San Luis Obispo
- Placed high-visibility crosswalks at 35 intersections
- Built 40 new accessible curb ramps for our sidewalks
- Installed more than 16,000 feet of new or improved bike lanes and bike paths, including buffered bike lanes and separated bike lanes
- Implemented a permanent "road diet" on two one-way streets that travel through the heart of downtown
- Accessible on-street parking stalls installed throughout the downtown core
- Poured more than 100,000 linear feet of paint to mark street and bike lanes
- Painted nearly 3,500 linear feet of curbs
- Added 33 speed humps, 4 large speed tables, 3 traffic circles, and more than 100 new traffic signs to improve safety and reduce vehicle speed

## **Complete Street Elements – Downtown Core**

The downtown core of San Luis Obispo concentrates on two parallel one-way streets, Higuera Street heading westbound and Marsh Street heading east. The 2022 Project implemented a permanent “road diet” on these streets, going from 3 vehicle lanes to 2. This lane reduction significantly increases the safety of crossing pedestrians and also provided additional roadway width for enhanced bicycle facilities on each street. A new half mile green buffered bike lane was added to Higuera Street, and on Marsh Street a half mile of class two bike lanes were re-installed as parking protected bicycle lanes. Narrow median islands were installed on Marsh Street between the parking lane and new separated bike lanes. These medians provide a buffer and refuge for people loading and unloading from their parked vehicle, as well as provide a place for beautification, as planter boxes were installed on the tops of the median throughout the corridor. New accessible on-street parking stalls were installed throughout the downtown core. Additionally, all crosswalks within the downtown core were restriped with high-visibility “ladder style markings” to improve visibility for crossing pedestrians.

## **Project Schedule and funding**

Construction for the project began July 2022 and completed early 2023. Final construction costs were approximately \$5.6M. The project was funded by State SB1 funding and local general funds including the City’s local revenue measure (sales tax).

## **Collaboration and Concurrence During Design**

Although most of the envisioned complete streets elements were included in previously adopted City plans, actual design of these elements required collaboration and concurrence from internal departments, stakeholders, businesses, community partners and the community members.

- **Community Outreach and Engagement:** Community meetings as well as public committee and Council meetings were held throughout the design phase of the project in order for the community to understand the project and for staff to receive input from the community throughout the design.
- **Curbside Management Collaboration:** The design team collaborated with delivery drivers and businesses, parking enforcement officers, trash collection services, and local and regional transit operations, to ensure that the final design would accommodate the busy curbside operations happening daily throughout the downtown.
- **Emergency Response:** The design team worked closely with emergency response teams to review the plans to ensure adequate access for emergency vehicles and equipment.
- **Downtown Business and Economic Recovery:** Any project within the public right of way within a downtown can be impactful to the community and businesses. Particularly, many downtown businesses were still trying to recover from impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on discussions with the downtown community, the following strategies were implemented to minimize potential disruption to downtown road users and businesses during construction:
  - a) The contractor was not permitted to start work within the downtown core until September 1st, avoiding the peak of the summer tourist season.

- b) Scheduling working hours outside of peak weekday business hours and maintaining two lanes of traffic on Marsh and Higuera Streets as much as possible.
- c) Advance noticing to adjacent businesses and residents prior to start of construction to provide project details, schedule and contact information for questions and project updates.
- d) The design and construction phasing supported the continuation of the downtown farmers market, a major downtown event every Thursday evening.

### **Construction in the Downtown**

The project location being the City's downtown core made it highly visible and impactful to the typical day-to-day of the downtown's customers, workforce, and residents. Construction within the downtown had specific requirements to reduce the impact to the downtown atmosphere and experience of those who visited. The contractor was required to comply with the City's construction standards restricting work within the downtown area between 11 AM and 1 PM. This accommodates busy sidewalks, sidewalk cafés, and parklets to function comfortably without the noise, dust and smells sometimes associated with construction.

Pedestrian access throughout the construction area was also a critical component to a successful project. Several work zones required temporary asphalt patching to be in place outside of working hours so that accessible pedestrian routes were provided. This requirement was critical to the scheduling of work within the downtown, as all sidewalks needed to be accessible and open every Thursday prior to the weekly farmers market which brings in thousands of pedestrians to the downtown core each week.

### **Community Outreach/Communications During Construction**

Communication during construction was critical in the success of this project, particularly with the downtown core being a part of the project area. Prior to construction, the City hired a consultant team to manage and oversee communications. The consultant team, working closely with City staff, developed and launched the "SLO in Motion" platformed to provide a cohesive message for public works projects within the City, including construction of the 2022 Project. Additionally, communications about the project's construction were sent out via press releases, media interviews, social media, door hangers, business cards, mailers, and email notifications. The communications team worked closely with Downtown SLO, a local business association, to further share communications about work and traffic control in the downtown.

### **Public Art/Beautification Elements**

The City of San Luis Obispo values public art, beautification and designing creative public spaces for the community to enjoy and take pride in. The 2022 Project incorporated both public art and beautification into the project by creatively utilizing the space along the tops of the new protected bike lane medians.

Bronze plaques were installed on the “noses” of the bikeway medians. The plaques display a custom graphic of a historic landmark of the downtown, the Fremont Theatre, and identifies the corridor as a bicycle network. The City plans to use similar plaques on future bikeway projects, to brand bicycle networks throughout the City.

Large planter boxes with a variety of plant palettes were also installed on the bikeway medians, at locations that retain access for passengers accessing their vehicles. The planter boxes provide beautification and greenery to the downtown and add to the comfort of separation for bicyclists.



## Photos



Application of green bike lane



Construction of new sidewalk panels



Temporary accessible path during construction



Construction of concrete bike lane median





Completed parking protected separated bike lane on Marsh Street with planter boxes



Green contra-flow bike lane on Monterey Street



Bronze plaque on bicycle median nose



Completed green buffered bike lane on Higuera Street