

Pacific Grove Highway 68 Study

Public Draft
August 2016



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The Pacific Grove Highway 68 Study was developed jointly by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County, the City of Pacific Grove and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). It was funded by Caltrans through the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program.

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1 | Introduction

1 | Overview of the study

The Pacific Grove Highway 68 Study was launched in July 2015 to look at ways to improve two streets that are part of State Route 68 through Pacific Grove: Forest Avenue and Sunset Drive. The ultimate goal of the study is to create a more “complete” corridor—one that works better for different forms of transportation and for people of all ages and abilities. The study corridor encompassed Forest Avenue from the city limit to Sunset Drive; and Sunset Drive from Forest Avenue to Asilomar Avenue. In particular, the study explored ways to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, who are among the most vulnerable users of the transportation system and are not served adequately by the corridor.



The study was led by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), with the help of transportation planning consultants, but is a joint effort of TAMC and two other agencies: the City of Pacific Grove and District 5 of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), which serves the Central Coast counties. While the day-to-day work on the study was conducted by TAMC staff and consultants, the process was overseen by a multi-agency project team. The team consisted of representatives of the three partner agencies and of the

two main consulting firms on the project. The team met in person at several key points in the process and held bi-weekly conference calls to discuss the project status and plan upcoming activities.

This report documents the planning process for the project. More importantly, it proposes location-specific design concepts and includes other recommendations to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and, more generally, to enhance the appearance of the corridor. The recommendations were formulated to respond closely to the key needs, concerns and suggestions expressed by the community through the planning process.

2 | Planning process

The planning process for the Pacific Grove Highway 68 Study was meant to provide a comprehensive framework for addressing several key objectives:

- Determine the needs and concerns—particularly with regard to walking and biking—of corridor users and other stakeholders: residents, students, workers, merchants, visitors, and staff and appointed and elected officials at the three partner agencies.
- Respond to these needs and concerns by recommending a set of improvements—again, with a focus on walking and biking—that are effective, are affordable and have public support.
- Engage the local community so as to strengthen the constituency for the recommended investments and improvements.
- Create a plan that serves as an advocacy document for securing funds from federal, state, regional, local and private sources to implement the desired improvements.

The planning process lasted just over a year, from July 2015 through August 2016. The process consisted of the following five main tasks:

1. Inventorying **existing conditions and issues** relevant to non-motorized transportation in the corridor to establish the physical

and planning contexts for the project and to provide initial insights into the walking and bicycling experience in the corridor.

2. Conducting a **needs assessment process** to hear the concerns and needs of corridor stakeholders and the broader public, learn about the obstacles and challenges to walking and biking in the corridor, and solicit ideas and suggestions for improving conditions.
3. Developing draft **conceptual designs** to address the locations and issues of greatest community interest and need; obtaining public input on the draft designs; and revising the designs based on the input received.
4. Preparing a draft **plan document** that incorporates the work products from the previous tasks, lays out the recommendations for the corridor and describes considerations related to implementing the recommendations.
5. Finalizing the plan and guiding it through the **formal approval process** by the TAMC Board of Directors and the Pacific Grove City Council.

3 | Contents of the plan

The contents of this document generally follow the order of the tasks outlined above. In addition to this chapter (**Chapter 1, Introduction**), the document consists of four chapters and a number of appendices:

- **Chapter 2, Existing Conditions**, presents key findings and results from the existing conditions inventory. The inventory consisted of a walking field survey of the corridor, supplemented by a review of additional conditions and issues such as key destinations, the corridor's right-of-way and traffic characteristics, and traffic collisions involving pedestrians or cyclists, among others.
- **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**, describes the various opportunities that existed for the public to provide input on needs; summarizes the approximately 500 comments received through the various

channels for public input; and condenses the comments into a list of the community's key needs and concerns related to the corridor.

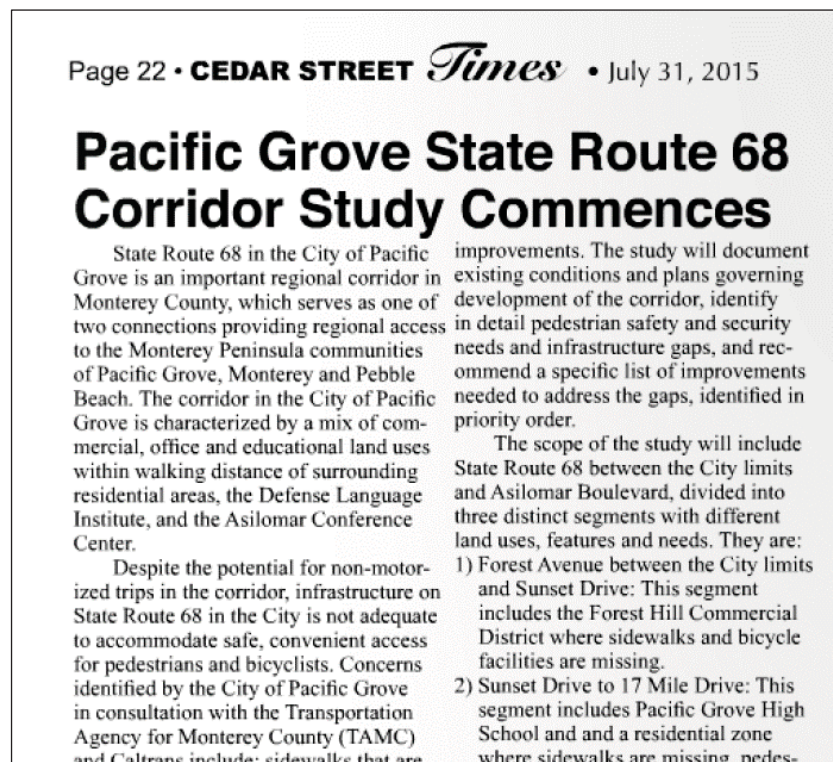
- **Chapter 4, Recommendations**, includes conceptual designs for addressing needs and concerns at key locations; an inventory of sidewalk gaps along the corridor; and a set of other, miscellaneous recommendations for improving conditions.
- **Chapter 5, Implementation**, presents cost estimates for the improvements shown as part of the conceptual designs; a list and discussion of the most promising ways to fund the proposed improvements; and a list of recommended next steps to advance implementation of the study.
- The **appendices (A to I)** contain mainly the comments received from the public on needs and on the draft conceptual designs, as well as participants' observations from the walking field survey and detailed technical information related to some of the project tasks.

4 | Public outreach

Meaningful public participation is essential for a planning effort to enjoy community buy-in and acceptance. This is especially true in a community as involved and engaged as Pacific Grove. With this in mind, the planning process for the Pacific Grove Highway 68 Study included extensive outreach to corridor users and other stakeholders.

The public outreach strategy for the study included community workshops; presentations to stakeholder groups; online surveys; corridor-wide postcard mailers to residents and property owners; updates and announcements to the project's email distribution list, on the project website (PGhwy68.org), on TAMC's and the City of Pacific Grove's websites, and through TAMC's MySidewalk account; and outreach to local media, among other activities. Public outreach occurred throughout the planning process, but special efforts were made during two project phases: (i) to obtain input on needs and concerns; and later, (ii) to obtain feedback on the draft conceptual

designs. Below is a summarized timeline of key outreach efforts carried out as part of the Pacific Grove Highway 68 Study.



July–August 2015: Preliminary outreach to the community to introduce the project and to begin to build an email list for purposes of sending out updates and announcements. Postcards were mailed to residents and property owners in the corridor, and presentations were given to the Pacific Grove City Council, Planning Commission and Traffic Safety Commission, and to TAMC’s Board of Directors and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee. Articles about the project appeared in the Carmel Pine Cone and Cedar Street Times.

September 9, 2015: A walking field survey of the corridor was conducted to assess physical conditions in person. The walk covered the stretch from Asilomar Avenue to Stuart Avenue; it was attended by

17 representatives of the partner agencies, consultants and key stakeholder groups and organizations. The survey is described in more detail in Chapter 2, Existing Conditions.

October–November 2015: Extensive outreach was conducted as part of the needs assessment process. The process is described in much greater detail in Chapter 3, Needs Assessment. Activities included:

- Online survey, which ran for a month, from October 21 through November 22, and received 221 responses.
- Interactive “pinnable” map on which people could post comments. It was open during the same period as the online survey, and received 58 comments.
- Lunch-time presentation on Thursday, November 19, at Pizza My Way (1157 Forest Avenue) aimed at corridor merchants and other key stakeholders but open to the broader public.
- Evening community workshop, also on November 19, at the First United Methodist Church (the Butterfly Church; 915 Sunset Drive).

April–May 2016: Extensive outreach was again conducted to obtain feedback from the public on the draft conceptual designs. Similar to outreach for the needs assessment, activities included an online survey (ran for just over three weeks and received 190 responses); a stakeholder breakfast presentation and an evening community workshop, both on April 19; and presentations to the Pacific Grove City Council, Traffic Safety Commission and Planning Commission, and to TAMC’s Board of Directors and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee.

August–October 2016: Outreach was conducted to announce the draft study report and to solicit comments on it. Presentations were again given to the Pacific Grove City Council, Traffic Safety Commission and Planning Commission, and to TAMC’s Board of Directors and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Advisory Committee.