

Appendices

- Appendix A: Community Engagement Meeting Summaries
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Pioneer Road Complete Streets Plan

City of Los Banos

December 11, 2020

Appendix A

Community Engagement Meeting Summaries

This appendix presents summaries of the following community and stakeholder meetings, workshops, and open house events:

- Stakeholder Meeting – Agencies and Organization (November 7, 2019)
- Stakeholder Meeting – Pioneer Road Area Property Owners (November 7, 2019)
- Community Workshop #1 (November 12, 2019)
- Community Workshop #2 (February 4, 2020) and Online Survey (February 11 – March 1, 2020)
- Community Open House (July 28, 2020) and Virtual Workshop #3 (August 6, 2020)

Workshop and Open House summaries address both the Pioneer Road Complete Streets Plan and the Pacheco Boulevard Complete Streets Plan, as these interrelated and concurrent plans were combined into a coordinated community engagement effort.



STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS SUMMARY PIONEER ROAD AREA PROPERTY OWNERS

November 7th, 2019
Los Banos Community Center

Overview

Two separate meetings took place:

- Agencies and Organizations
- Pioneer Road Area Property Owners

Each meeting began with a welcome from PlaceWorks (project consultant) followed by self-introductions, during which attendees shared their names and relationship to the project (e.g., agency name, resident, business owner, etc.). Los Banos City staff were also in attendance. Introductions were followed by a brief overview of the project and project timeline presented by PlaceWorks.

A series of questions helped guide the discussion. The meeting is summarized on the following pages, with key points organized by the guiding questions.

AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Date and Time of Meeting:	Thursday November 7, 2019 – 11am-12pm
Project Team / City Staff Present:	PlaceWorks City of Los Banos Public Works Department City of Los Banos Community and Economic Development Department
Stakeholders Present:	Caltrans District 10 Cultiva La Salud Los Banos Unified School District Grassland Water District Merced County Department of Public Works Merced County Farm Bureau Merced County Association of Governments Merced College Central California Irrigation District Central California Irrigation District Anderson Homes Stonefield Home Benchmark Engineering España's Restaurant Agricultural property/business owners

Discussion:

1. *What agency or organization do you represent? (See above attendee list)*
 - A question was asked regarding the timing of Pacheco Boulevard improvements. City staff responded that the type and timing of Pacheco Boulevard improvements will depend on several factors, including a potential reduction of traffic as a result of the proposed widening of Pioneer Road. Future funding for improvements along Pacheco Boulevard will depend on the scope and size of the projects. No funding has been obtained.
2. *Are there any projects or planning efforts we should be aware of and/or coordinate with within the project area that will provide opportunities or constraints for the Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road Complete Streets project?*
 - Merced College – Los Banos Campus is completing a solar project but sees no conflict.

- The upcoming installation of a shared-use path from Merced College Los Banos Campus and Badger Flat Road along the north side of Pacheco Boulevard will not adversely affect the Complete Streets project. The project is 100% funded (Measure V).
 - Central California Irrigation District (CCID) noted that irrigation facilities are owned by users, and water rights are difficult to transfer. Property owners apply for project funding, and there are currently no current funding applications in the study areas
 - CCID reported that the crossing of ditches, wells and the canal will require coordination with them and property owners regarding water rights and underground piping agreements. CCID will work with and advise property owners on issues related to potential construction.
 - CCID reported no current projects related to irrigation facilities affecting Pacheco Boulevard or Pioneer Road.
 - Grassland Water District noted its concerns over potential habitat encroachment and disturbance.
3. *What types of street and streetscape improvements would you like to see along Pacheco Boulevard (e.g., street configuration, intersection treatments, widened sidewalks, street trees and other landscaping, bikeways, gateway improvements)?*
- Merced College – Los Banos Campus is supportive of the shared-use path planned for the north side of SR-152 between the College and Badger Flat Road.
 - Businesses are concerned over medians that restrict left turns. They restrict access to businesses, resulting in motorists making U-turns to visit businesses on the opposite side of the street.
 - City staff also noted that existing right-of-ways do not provide sufficient room for U-turns from a center lane.
 - Traffic signal timing would be a huge benefit. However, City staff noted that there are limitations to its effectiveness along Pacheco Boulevard given the number of signals, existing traffic and roadway characteristics.
 - Attendees supported improving streetscape character by extending the public realm beyond the public right of way, using frontages for landscaping, wider sidewalks, etc. through coordination with property and business owners.
 - School zones must plan for people walking and bicycling. It is recommended that the project team have a Spanish language meeting with Cultiva la Salud to discuss this and other topics.
 - W I St and Pacheco Boulevard is a dangerous skewed intersection that could benefit from safety improvements, including changes to signalization. City staff noted that that roadway geometry at this location makes it difficult to make improvements, including to signalization.
 - In response to a question about bike facilities along Pacheco Boulevard, City staff noted that within the existing right-of-way facilities along Pacheco Boulevard are not very feasible. Rather, the Complete Streets Plan should look at alternate parallel routes and improving crossings at intersections.
4. *Would you generally support changes to the roadway network (e.g., parallel route on Pioneer Road) if it would reduce traffic on Pacheco Boulevard?*
- Attendees showed general support for reduction of traffic on Pacheco Boulevard.
 - In discussion about a parallel route on Pioneer Road, there was concern over the accommodation of agricultural vehicles as well as large trucks. Design alternatives should take this into account.

PIONEER ROAD AREA PROPERTY OWNERS

Time of Meeting: Thursday November 7, 2019 – 4:00pm-5:00pm

Project Team / City Staff Present: PlaceWorks
City of Los Banos Public Works Department
City of Los Banos Community and Economic Development Department

Stakeholders Present: Pioneer Area Property Owners (21 participants)

Discussion:

1. *Please describe your property use (e.g., house, agricultural land, vacant)?*

- Attendees described property uses that included agricultural uses, residences, and rental properties.
- Some attendees own property outside of City limits and expressed concern that they lack representation in this planning effort.

2. *What are some advantages and disadvantages of a potential road widening of Pioneer Road (and Ward Road)?*

- Most attendees expressed concern over the widening of Pioneer Road. Primary concerns include:
 - Property takings that may affect existing businesses and farm operations.
 - Effect on properties and inhabitants in locations where houses are near the roadway.
 - Environmental effects from increased traffic, such as noise and air pollution.
 - Stakeholders are already facing effects of traffic congestion at certain times of the day on Pioneer Road. This includes increased use of Pioneer Road as an alternative to Pacheco Boulevard, especially during peak travel hours and school drop-off/pick-up times.
 - Adequate compensation for land to increase additional right-of-way.
 - Los Banos Creek has issues related to trash dumping and homeless encampments.
 - Power lines on the south side would need to be relocated.
 - Additional new development in the area will further increase traffic along Pioneer Road.
 - Adverse effect of a north-south route near the creek on existing needed access for heavy farm equipment.

3. *How do you envision Pioneer Road in the future? What will its role be, and what will it look like (e.g., size, landscaping, medians, intersections, bike/pedestrian infrastructure)*
- Improvements could be made at several intersections along Pioneer Road, including:
 - Center Avenue – safety improvements to existing intersection, which is currently a four-way stop.
 - Ortigalita Road – addition of a four-way stop or signal. Currently there are stop signs in both directions along Ortigalita but no controls along Pioneer Road. This location has a lot of congestion at certain times of the day, especially during school drop-off and pick-up times.
 - Mercey Springs Road – addition of a three-way stop or signal. Currently there are no controls along Mercey Springs. Traffic queues form along Pioneer Road because of motorists turning left to head north to Pacheco Boulevard.
 - An attendee inquired whether a route could go from Pacheco Blvd. near the College but east of the creek rather than west.
 - Attendees inquired whether Volta Road to the west would be a better option for connecting Pioneer Road with SR-152, rather than going through the creek area.
 - Short-term improvements should be made to improve Pioneer road conditions (e.g., pavement).



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Workshop #1: Challenges and Opportunities

Date/Time of Meeting:	Tuesday, November 12, 2019, 6:30-8:00 pm
Location:	Los Banos Community Center
Project Team Present:	PlaceWorks City of Los Banos Public Works Department City of Los Banos Community and Economic Development Department

Overview

The first community workshop for the Los Banos SR-152/Pacheco Boulevard Specific Plan and the Pioneer Road Specific Plan (Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road Complete Streets) was attended by approximately 50 community members, many of whom were property owners along Pioneer Road and Pacheco Boulevard.

The meeting began with a PowerPoint presented by PlaceWorks that included project goals, an anticipated timeline, a preliminary description of existing conditions along each corridor, and a brief explanation of the small-group exercise conducted at tables following the presentation. Following the presentation, there was a short question and answer discussion. Questions centered around the planning process and the need for the project. Some participants are concerned about planning for Pioneer Road.

After the presentation and short discussion, attendees participated in exercises in groups of 5-8 people. Each table included a facilitator from the project team. Each group discussed challenges and opportunities for Pacheco Boulevard followed by challenges and opportunities for Pioneer Road. Participants used a large table map with an aerial view of Los Banos and both the Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road Study Areas depicted as dashed lines. First, participants and facilitators were prompted to write notes and draw on the maps to indicate challenges for each study area, including corridor-wide and location-specific challenges. Participants then indicated opportunities by marking up the maps and using stickers depicting the following street improvements:

- Traffic roundabout
- More traffic enforcement
- Bike lane
- More lighting
- Landscaping
- Bus stop/line
- Improved intersection
- Enhanced crosswalk
- Wide sidewalks
- Gateway/Directional Signage
- Pedestrian overcrossing
- Roadway median

After approximately fifty minutes of time devoted to the small group exercise, one person from each table reported back to the entire workshop, highlighting the main discussion points and referring to their group's map. The following sections summarize broad themes resulting from this exercise, organized by challenges and opportunities for each Study Area. Some comments were not specific to either corridor and are noted below the Study Area-specific comments. Images of table map exercise results are attached to this summary.

Pacheco Boulevard: Challenges

- **Safety.** Safety, especially pedestrian safety, is a major challenge on Pacheco Boulevard. Vehicles often make illegal and/or unsafe left turning movements. Pedestrians often cross at night where there are no marked crossings, with little or no street lighting.
- **Sidewalk Gaps.** Pacheco Boulevard also has a disconnected sidewalk network along its length, either narrowing significantly or disappearing completely in some locations.
- **Limited Room to Accommodate Streetscape Improvements.** There are few opportunities to expand sidewalk widths and roadside landscaping without extending into private property. However, pushing back development off the street would allow for landscaping and wider sidewalks, as currently seen in some locations along West Pacheco Boulevard.
- **Limited Right-Of-Way for Bicycle Facilities.** Pacheco Boulevard is a necessary through-fare for automobiles. Given this necessity, and the lack of space for widening, accommodating bicycles is particularly challenging.
- **Caltrans Jurisdiction.** There is some concern about CalTrans jurisdiction along Pacheco, which limits the City's flexibility to propose changes.

- **Pedestrian Crossings.** Some participants view the pedestrian overcrossing at Pacheco and 7th as a redundant use of resources because most of the time, pedestrians (most of which are schoolchildren) use the signaled at-grade crossing beneath the overpass to avoid having to walk up and down the ramp.
- **Traffic Congestion.** General agreement is that traffic on Pacheco is getting worse during peak hours.
- **Travel Speeds.** Traffic speeds are often too high, especially during off-peak hours. Many participants expressed that a lack of traffic enforcement on Pacheco Boulevard contributes to the high speeds.
- **Ingress and Egress.** Ingress and egress for shopping centers and businesses along Pacheco Boulevard can be dangerous and slows traffic down significantly.

Pacheco Boulevard: Opportunities

- **Traffic Enforcement.** Increase traffic enforcement along Pacheco Boulevard, either with increased highway patrol presence or speed cameras at intersections.
- **Adjacent Bike Facilities.** Focus bike improvements for north-south crossings along Pacheco, and a parallel route either north or south of Pacheco, but not along Pacheco itself, at least in the central section.
- **Traffic Signal Synchronization.** Synchronize traffic signals to smooth and calm the flow of traffic.
- **Intersection Safety Improvements.** Implement intersection improvements that increase pedestrian safety, particularly at the intersections with Badger Flat Road, Center Avenue, and Mercey Springs Road.
- **Improved Parks.** Revitalize parks along Pacheco, like Pacheco Park.
- **Landscaping.** Increase landscaping along Pacheco Boulevard, utilizing consistent aesthetic standards that contribute to a unique identity.
- **Additional/Improved Signage.** Increase both gateway signage, like the gateway sign in Wolfsen Park at Pacheco and West I Street, and wayfinding signage, like the wayfinding sign just west of Wolfsen park at the entrance to the Main Canal multi-use path.
- **Address Concerns About Medians.** Address concerns about the use of center medians. Many participants felt that roadway medians were not the best use of the limited right-of-way on Pacheco Boulevard, and that center turn lanes were preferred, at least in the central section where businesses have separate driveways.



Pioneer Road: Challenges

- **Poor Pavement Quality.** The paving on Pioneer Road is worn due to frequent use by heavy vehicles and would need repaving to accommodate increased traffic.
- **Increased Regional Truck Traffic.** Participants were concerned about diverting regional truck traffic (18-wheelers) onto Pioneer Road from Pacheco Boulevard.
- **Lack of Speed Enforcement.** Currently, there are just two speed limit signs along Pioneer Road in the Plan Area, and little traffic enforcement. Participants expressed that speeding is an issue on Pioneer Road.
- **Slow-Moving Vehicles.** Traffic along Pioneer Road includes slow-moving trucks (carrying cement or agricultural products), and slow heavy equipment like pickers, forklifts, and tractors.
- **Property Takings as a Result of Widening.** Many participants, specifically property owners along Pioneer, were concerned about the prospect of property takings to widen the right-of-way, especially if their property values were to decrease as a result of the project.
- **Changing the Character of Pioneer Road** Many participants expressed concern that improvements along Pioneer to accommodate more traffic will change the character of the rural-type road. Concerns included additional traffic congestion, potential loss of property values for roadway-adjacent properties, and noise.
- **Concerns about Decision-making.** Some participants were concerned that the property owners along Pioneer Road in unincorporated Merced County will be subject to decisions made by the City of Los Banos. (Note: the County will be a participant, along with the City and other regional agencies in this planning process).

Pioneer Road: Opportunities

- **Intersection Improvements.** Some wanted the following three intersections along Pioneer Road prioritized for signalization:
 - Ortigalita Road
 - Center Avenue
 - Mercey Springs Road
- **New Lighting.** Some wanted additional roadway lighting on Pioneer, particularly at the intersections listed above, at Cresthills Park (where there is a bus stop), and at the canal multi-use path used frequently by Los Banos High School students and path users who park at the path entrance on Pioneer Road.
- **Traffic Enforcement.** Increase traffic enforcement along Pioneer Road, either with increased police presence or with speed cameras at intersections.

- **Center turn lanes.** Some wanted center turn lanes on Pioneer to access properties without doing U-turns.
- **Sound Walls.** Include sound walls if Pioneer Road improvements are to increase traffic capacity.
- **Enhanced Streetscape Amenities.** Add wide sidewalks and landscaping along Pioneer Road, especially in areas with existing pedestrian traffic, like the entrance to the multi-use path and residential neighborhoods.
- **Use a Phased Approach.** Use Ward Road and the unimproved area between Mercey Springs Road and Ward Road (where Pioneer could be extended to connect with Ward) to implement a phased approach to street improvements. See how improvements are used and received by the public before implementing Pioneer improvements more widely.
- **Use Volta Road as a North-South Connector.** Consider using Volta Road as the western north-south connection between Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road, instead of taking private property south of Merced Community College.
- **Consider the Feasibility of Roundabouts.** Consider roundabouts as a potential intersection option. Any roundabout would need to be designed for accommodating large, heavy farm vehicles and trucks.



General Comments

- **Support for a scaled-down north bypass.** In response to the issue of funding, some participants expressed that they would support a more scaled-down version of the north bypass that was more likely to get funded and did not feel that we needed an alternative route south of Pacheco Boulevard at all.
- **Safety and Crime on Existing or New Bike Paths.** Some participants expressed that there have been issues with crime and trash dumping along recently built bike paths and are concerned that these issues may increase if the City adds more trails and bike paths.
- **New Development without Adequate Traffic Mitigation.** Some participants felt that the City adds more housing without adequately evaluating the traffic impacts of additional housing or mitigating potential traffic impacts.



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP AND ONLINE SURVEY SUMMARY

Workshop #2 and Online Survey: Draft Concepts

Date/Time of Meeting:	Tuesday, February 4, 2020, 6:30-8:00 pm
Dates of Online Survey:	February 11, 2020 through March 1, 2020
Workshop Location:	Los Banos Community Center
Project Team at Workshop:	PlaceWorks City of Los Banos Public Works Department City of Los Banos Community and Economic Development Department

Overview - Community “Open House” Workshop and Online Survey

The second community workshop for the Los Banos SR-152/Pacheco Boulevard Specific Plan and the Pioneer Road Specific Plan (Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road Complete Streets) was attended by approximately 50 community members, many of whom were property owners along Pioneer Road and Pacheco Boulevard. The workshop provided participants with an opportunity to learn about and provide feedback on the draft concepts for both Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road.

The “open-house” event began with a short presentation by PlaceWorks summarizing the previous workshop and introducing the workshop activity. Following a question and answer discussion, workshop participants walked to various stations around the room, marking their answers to questions corresponding to each station in a workbook survey. (The workbook is included at the end of this document.) Each workshop station was staffed by either City staff or PlaceWorks staff to discuss the concepts presented at each station, record feedback, and help assist participants to fill out the workbook survey.

For Pacheco Boulevard draft concepts, each station presented a range of potential improvements for achieving a specific goal for Pacheco Boulevard identified by community members in the first workshop, including improving safety for pedestrians, improving street aesthetics through design features, and improving traffic flow for drivers. Participants were asked to rate their support for each potential improvement on a scale from five to one (5=strongly support, 4=support, 3=neutral or don’t know, 2=oppose, 1=strongly oppose). The following stations comprised the ‘Pacheco Boulevard’ section of the workshop:

- Traffic Flow and Safety
- Streetscape and Urban Design
- Pedestrian Improvements
- Bicycle Routes (N-S and E-W)

The other side of the room was devoted to potential improvements on Pioneer Road and Ward Road, as well as potential connections between Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road. One station presented various design concepts for Pioneer Road and Ward Road, like landscaping, sound wall design, and roundabouts. All other Pioneer Road stations depicted route alternatives for connecting Pacheco Boulevard with Pioneer Road, and participants were asked to mark down in their workbooks which potential route they preferred.

The following list more succinctly describes the content of each workshop station:

- Aesthetics and other Features—Pioneer Road
- Pacheco-Pioneer Connection A: Volta Road
- Pacheco-Pioneer Connection B: College Connection (four options)
- Pacheco-Pioneer Connection C: Ortigalita Road

The Workshop #2 packet was also adapted into an online survey that was available online from February 11 through March 1. The survey had 126 respondents. Much like the workshop exercise, online survey respondents were asked to rate their support for various improvements. The online survey questions were identical to those included in the Open House workbook survey, so the results of both surveys could be combined into a single summary.

Survey Results from the Community “Open House” Workshop and Online Survey

Pacheco Boulevard – Traffic Flow and Safety Improvements

Results are based on average scores and the number of respondents who indicated “support” or “strongly support”. Participants in the workshop and the online survey were, overall, supportive of the following improvements for traffic flow and safety on Pacheco Boulevard:

- Streamlining school pick-up and drop-off procedures for Elementary schools adjacent to Pacheco Boulevard.
- Adding additional street lighting along Pacheco Boulevard
- Relocating existing and prohibiting new visual barriers at intersections (e.g., signs, landscaping, fences) which reduce the ability of drivers to see other drivers, pedestrians or people on bikes (and vice versa).

- Consolidating driveways along to reduce turning movements which slow traffic and create safety conflict areas.

By comparison, both workshop participants and survey respondents were, overall, *not* supportive of the following safety and/or traffic flow interventions on Pacheco:

- Adding center medians to reduce left-turning motions from Pacheco.
- Converting some two-way streets in the central area crossing Pacheco to one-way streets
- Replacing signalized stop-and-wait intersections with roundabouts

Pacheco Boulevard – Streetscape and Urban Design Improvements

Workshop and survey respondents ranked several potential streetscape and urban design enhancements in order of preference. In terms of aesthetic features along Pacheco Boulevard, the top three priorities were, in order:

- Enhancing the existing parks on Pacheco Boulevard
- Adding landscaping and trees along the sides
- Adding landscaping to existing roadway medians

Pacheco Boulevard – Pedestrian Improvements

In terms of pedestrian improvements, the highest priority among participants was enhancing existing crosswalks and completing sidewalks along Pacheco. By comparison, respondents and workshop participants were generally *not* highly supportive of adding new signalized mid-block crossings along Pacheco Boulevard.

Pacheco Boulevard – Bicycle Improvements

In terms of potential east-west bike routes along or parallel to Pacheco Blvd., workshop participants and survey respondents preferred Option 1: the ‘Zig-Zag’ route, followed by Option 3: the ‘South Parallel’ Route. Adding a bike lane to Pacheco Boulevard itself was the least popular option among both online survey respondents and workshop participants.



Option 1: "Zig-Zag" Route

A route from Merced College to Downtown, utilizing the upcoming shared use path from the College and roadways north of Pacheco.

Option 2: Pacheco Boulevard

On-street bicycle lanes along SR-152/Pacheco Boulevard in the roadway, which could require reconfiguration of the roadway and shoulders to accommodate bicycles.

Option 3: Southside Parallel Route

A new bicycle route through the streets south of Pacheco Blvd, including Adams Avenue.

For potential north-south bike routes that would cross Pacheco Blvd., both workshop participants and online survey respondents preferred Option 1: Los Banos Creek Trail as the number one priority. Results varied between workshop participants and online survey respondents in terms of ranking the other two north-south bike route options: workshop participants preferred Option 3: the Rail Trail as a second priority and Option 2: the Canal/West I Street route as the third priority, while online survey respondents preferred Option 2 as the second priority and Option 3 as the third priority.



Option 1: Los Banos Creek Trail

A route from Merced College to Downtown, utilizing the upcoming shared use path from the College and roadways north of Pacheco.



Option 2: Canal/West I St

On-street bicycle lanes along SR-152/Pacheco Boulevard in the roadway, which could require reconfiguration of the roadway and shoulders to accommodate bicycles.



Option 3: Rail Trail

A new bicycle route through the streets south of Pacheco Blvd, including Adams Avenue.

Pioneer Road – Alternatives for Roadway Enhancements and New Connections

Finally, in terms of roadway connections between Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road, both workshop participants and online survey respondents preferred Alternative A: Volta Road to Ward Road as a top choice. Multiple survey respondents commented that, while perhaps the most expensive, the Volta Road option was preferred as a long-term investment because it has the most opportunity to spread traffic over a larger area while lessening congestion issues on Ortigalita and Badger Flat Road.

During the workshop, staffmembers at each station also recorded participant questions and comments on on a large flip-chart. In the online survey, respondents were able to submit comments for each concept presented. The following sections summarize broad themes resulting from the workshop flip-chart notes, organized by station, although some comments were not specific to the station at which they were recorded.



Workshop Flip-Chart Notes and Online Survey Notes (combined)

- **Traffic Flow and Safety—Pacheco Boulevard**
 - Pacheco Blvd. is probably more than 30% pass-through traffic. Local drivers use Pioneer Rd. to avoid traffic on Pacheco already, it's good to consider improving Pioneer to make it an alternative route.
 - Lower speeds on Pacheco Blvd.
 - Support for having specific drop-off/pick-up routes for schools on Pacheco
 - One-way streets can hinder response times for public agencies (PD, FD, Ambulance)
 - Study traffic accidents for left-hand turns—to what extent do left-turns actually cause safety and traffic issues? Raised medians to reduce left-turn movements may increase traffic.
 - There are obstacles to removing visual barriers like commercial signs. We want Pacheco to remain business-friendly
 - Where would roundabouts on Pacheco Boulevard go?
 - Drive-way reduction may increase traffic congestion rather than decrease it.

- **Streetscape and Urban Design—Pacheco Boulevard**
 - For landowners on Pacheco, new landscaping means new requirements and new work for them to do out of their own pocket.
- **Pedestrian Improvements—Pacheco Boulevard**
 - Provide Beveled mirrors at blind spot intersections and crosswalks
 - Pedestrian islands are ‘trash-catchers’
- **Bicycle Routes (N-S and E-W)—Pacheco Boulevard**
 - Regarding a left turn off Pacheco Blvd. on to Center Ave: provide “keep clear” signage and striping
- **Aesthetics and other Features—Pioneer Road**
 - Would appreciate a soundwall, but not if they block views
 - Soundwalls attract graffiti
 - Do not bother with landscaping on Pioneer Road
 - Make Pioneer Rd. a truck route
 - If Pioneer is turned into an alternative route—will it actually be used?
- **Connection Between Pioneer and Pacheco/SR-152**
 - Support for the Volta Road alternative, plus a bike path to the college on the west side of Los Banos Creek.
 - Do not develop on the West side of Los Banos Creek. Keep it as a Greenbelt.
 - How many controlled intersections would be on Pioneer between points 2 and 13 (referencing workshop board presenting all connection alternatives between Pacheco Blvd. and Pioneer Rd.)
 - Regarding Connection 6b (East of Los Banos Creek from the College to Pioneer): Instead of having a T-intersection at Ward Road and Pioneer Road, make it a smooth curve so traffic does not have to stop in order to turn onto Ward Rd. from Pioneer Rd.
 - Regarding the Ortigalita Road Connection (Option C): If this is chosen as the preferred connection, ensure that the intersection (of Pioneer and Ortigalita) is wide enough to accommodate trucks and farm equipment

Online and Workshop Survey Question: Alternatives for Pioneer-Pacheco/SR-152 Connections



Please indicate which alternatives you would most like to see analyzed further as a potential future route.

Please mark your first preference with “1” and second preference with “2” in the corresponding box below:

- ☐ **Alternative A** Volta Road to Ward Road
- ☐ **Alternative B, Option 1** Merced College Connection to Ward Road:
West of Los Banos Creek
- ☐ **Alternative B, Option 2** Merced College Connection to Ward Road:
East of Los Banos Creek
- ☐ **Alternative C** Ortigalita Road



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE AND WORKSHOP #3 SUMMARY

Refined Concepts for Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road Project Areas

Date/Time of Meetings: Open House - Tuesday, July 28, 2020, 3:00-6:00 pm
Virtual Workshop – Thursday, August 6, 2020, 6:00-7:30 pm

Location: Open House - Los Banos Community Center
Virtual Workshop – Online (Zoom)

Note: See “Frequently Asked Questions” (Appendix C) for further discussion about topics discussed during the Open House and Virtual Workshop.

Overview

The third round of community engagement for the Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road Complete Streets projects included two components: an in-person Open House, where attendees could view and discuss the Refined Concepts with project staff, and Community Workshop #3, held virtually using Zoom online meeting platform. Property owners along Pioneer Road and Pacheco Boulevard constituted a large portion of attendees at both events, although other Los Banos residents, representatives of local stakeholder organizations, and other community members also attended both events.

Community Open House

During the three-hour Community Open House, attendees visited five 'stations' each with an easel and a large foam-core board depicting refined concepts for Pacheco Boulevard/SR-152 and Pioneer Road (also including Ward Road and a potential connecting road between Pacheco Boulevard/SR-152 and Pioneer Road). This provided the opportunities for attendees to discuss the concepts, ask questions and provide feedback directly to City staff. Approximately 30 participants visited the Open House. Community feedback about the Refined Concepts is summarized below.



Virtual Workshop #3

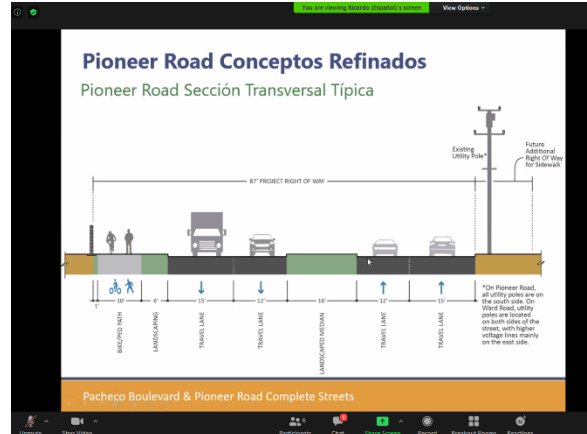
Virtual Workshop #3 was conducted in both English and Spanish, with approximately 40 participants. The workshop began with a poll asking attendees if they were:

- Los Banos Resident
- Business Owner/Employee
- Property Owner
- Member of a Community-Based Organization (CBO)
- Other

Poll results showed that most attendees were Los Banos residents and property owners, many were business owners or employees, and several were members of CBOs.



Screenshot of the English-language Zoom presentation



Screenshot of the Spanish-language Zoom presentation

PlaceWorks staff then presented a PowerPoint presentation detailing the refined concepts for Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road. During the presentation, workshop participants submitted questions via Zoom chat messaging to a designated PlaceWorks staff-member, labeled 'Project Questions? Ask Me!'. Project staff read through and answered the questions submitted by attendees at the conclusion of the presentation. The presentation slides and a recording of the project presentation are available on the project's website: www.losbanos2040.org/completestreets

During the remaining portion of Virtual Workshop #3, workshop participants broke into three groups. One group discussed the refined concepts for Pioneer Road (as well as Ward Road and a potential connecting road between Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road), one discussed the refined concepts for Pacheco Boulevard, and the third group discussed the refined concepts for both projects in Spanish. Participants had the option of spending half of the time in one group and half of the time in the other or staying in one group for the entire discussion duration (about 25

minutes). Each group had a facilitator from and a note-taker. Participants asked questions and gave feedback on the Refined Concepts. At the end of the discussion period, the PlaceWorks staff member who took notes gave a report back highlighting the feedback received from each group.

Community feedback from Virtual Workshop #3 and the Open House are summarized in the following sections of this memo.

Key Feedback: Pacheco Boulevard Refined Concepts

- Adding additional crossings on Pacheco may be counterproductive to the goal of improving congestion. Consider removing one or more of the proposed crossings between 7th and 11th Streets. Adding signalization (e.g., flashing beacon or HAWK signal) to the existing pedestrian crossing at Center Avenue may not be needed for several reasons:
 - Center Avenue is close to the signalized intersection with pedestrian crossings at 4th Street, so pedestrians can walk over to 4th Street to cross at a signalized crossing.
 - A new signalized crossing could result in backed-up traffic on Pacheco, potentially causing delays for emergency response vehicles turning left onto Center Avenue (Center is often used by emergency responders as an alternative north-south route to Mercey Springs Road.)
 - Adding a signalized pedestrian crossing could result in additional vehicle/pedestrian and vehicle/vehicle conflicts.
- More neighborhood parks and family recreational opportunities are needed, especially in disadvantaged communities and older neighborhoods.
- The proposed parklet and pedestrian improvements on I Street may prevent vehicles, especially large trucks, from making quick turns onto I Street. This could cause major backups on Pacheco Boulevard in both directions.
- Advance stop bars for vehicles should be located a safe distance before pedestrian crossings to keep crosswalks clear and provide better visibility of pedestrians.
- We would like to see interesting and visually attractive signage that contributes to the sense of place in Los Banos. It could encourage people driving through to stop and spend money at local businesses along Pacheco.

Key Feedback: Pioneer Road Concepts

- Multiple participants expressed concern regarding the cost of maintaining proposed landscaping. (Note: the final plan would prioritize low maintenance, drought-tolerant landscaping, and cost for maintenance would be estimated through a detailed study).
- The proposed bike/pedestrian path along Pioneer Road crosses 11th street, which may pose a challenge in terms of vehicle/vehicle and vehicle/pedestrian conflicts. Lots of motorists turn onto 11th Street to access Los Banos High school, many of whom are high school students and still learning how to drive. (Note: at the Pioneer/11th Street intersection, signalization may be needed and will be studied further).
- Access to private property along Pioneer Road is sometimes limited due to the center median preventing left turns onto driveways and some small crossing streets. Property owners would need to travel past their property to make a U-turn. Workshop participants provided feedback about specific locations for the project team to address.
- Trucks or larger farm vehicles may have difficulty making a U-turn if there is not enough room.
- There are concerns about how increased noise and lighting may impact birds and other sensitive species.
- Drivers regularly speed up to 70 mph on Mercey Springs Road and on Pioneer Road near the intersection with Mercey Springs Road. Speeds should be reduced on Mercey Springs Road approaching the intersection for vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Some community members expressed support for extending the Pioneer Road widening to Volta Road and using Volta Road to connect to SR-152, rather than develop the proposed connection east of Los Banos Creek. (Note: the Volta Road connection is included in the Refined Concept as a long-term future-phase improvement.)

Note: See “Frequently Asked Questions” (Appendix C) for further discussion about topics discussed during the Open House and Virtual Workshop.

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Appendix B

Frequently Asked Questions

The project team addressed community members' frequently asked questions by posting FAQs and responses to the project website. Postings took place in December 2019 following the first round of outreach, and in August 2020 following the third round of research.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – DECEMBER 2019

1. What is a Complete Streets Plan?

A Complete Streets Plan studies and evaluates a range of potential transportation improvements on a defined street. The phrase “complete streets” refers to the idea that streets should be accessible and convenient to use for all users, whether they drive, bike, walk, take transit or use a mobility device like a wheelchair.

2. What will the Pacheco and Pioneer Complete Streets Plans be used for?

Once the plans are complete (a separate plan for SR-152/Pacheco Boulevard and one for Pioneer Road), they will provide guidance for future proposed changes or improvements that are consistent with the plans’ goals and vision. The plans will also aid in applying for funding to implement the plans’ recommended improvements.

3. Why is the City doing Complete Streets Plans for Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road?

The population of Los Banos is growing and there is an increase in regional trips through the city, so traffic is building up on SR-152 / Pacheco Boulevard. At the same time, there is a need to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists safely. There is also an opportunity to consider aesthetic improvements on Pacheco Boulevard to make it more welcoming.

For Pioneer Road, there is growing congestion there as well, and it has been shown as a four-lane arterial in the City’s Transportation Element for many years. Recently, the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) Measure V Westside Projects Committee has recommended funding for the City’s Pioneer Road Widening project that could serve as a local alternative route parallel to SR 152 / Pacheco Boulevard.

The Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road Complete Streets Plans are both an interim measure to potentially relieve traffic congestion on Pacheco Boulevard by studying Pioneer Road as an alternate route, as well as a general improvement plan for both Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road to make these streets safer and more attractive for all modes of travel in the future.

4. What is happening with the planned SR-152 Bypass project?

Currently, the SR-152 Bypass project, which runs to the north of the City of Los Banos, is on hold due to permitting and funding issues. It is not anticipated to be developed until 2040 or later. If implemented, the Pioneer Road widening will help provide congestion relief from SR-152 in the interim, while simultaneously providing long-term improvements to both Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road for all modes of traffic, which will continue to be beneficial even if/when the Bypass is completed and operational. In short, this project is meant to supplement a future SR-152 Bypass, rather than replace the Bypass project.

5. What is the schedule for the Plan?

The Plan will take approximately a year and a half to complete. The Project Team is currently in the process of developing a preliminary set of proposed concept alternatives for the Study Area that will be further refined through community workshops and stakeholder engagement before one of the alternatives is chosen as the ‘preferred alternative.’ This alternative will then be further refined through another round of public engagement before being presented as the final plan to the City Council. A schedule for the project is available on the home page of this website.

6. What do the yellow dotted lines on the Study Area Map indicate?

These lines show the project area that is being studied in the Plan. They do not indicate the location or size of any potential improvements (including road widenings). The dashed lines are wide enough to include properties on either side of the roadways only to indicate that owners of these properties will be involved in the Plan process. As of December 2019, it is too early in the Plan to have any recommendations on the location and extent of any specific improvements in the Study Area, which would result from extensive technical analysis and community input.

7. How will property owners along Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road be involved in the project?

Part of the development of the Plan includes specific targeted meetings and events for stakeholders in the Study Area, in addition to events and opportunities for the larger community. Project stakeholders include property and business owners in the Study Area as well as agency officials such as Merced County, Caltrans, irrigation districts, and school district officials. The first meeting with project stakeholders occurred in November. The second round of stakeholder meetings will occur in Spring 2020. This second round of meetings will solicit feedback from project stakeholders on the refined set of concept alternatives once the community at large has had a chance to voice input on the first set of draft alternatives.

8. How will the community at large be involved in the project?

The Project Team will hold four community workshops throughout the duration of the project. The first occurred in November and was a visioning workshop in which participants were asked to share challenges and opportunities on Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road. The second community workshop will occur on February 4, 2020. Project staff will present a set of preliminary design concepts for Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road, and participants will be asked to provide feedback on the concept alternatives for further refinement.

After project staff further refines the set of concept alternatives, a third community workshop in April 2020 will give participants a chance to provide feedback on the refined set of concept alternatives before a preferred alternative is chosen for the draft plan. During the final community workshop in the summer of 2020, project staff will present the draft plan and solicit feedback. After this final workshop, the Plan will be further refined based on community feedback and presented to City Council in November of 2020.

In addition to the four community workshops, project staff will hold several ‘pop-up’ workshops at community events like festivals and markets throughout the project duration and will provide the opportunity to give feedback online through the project website.

A schedule for the project is available on the home page of this website.

9. What is the proposed start/completion date for the improvement projects?

Many more steps are required prior to the implementation of the proposed improvements, including assembling specifications, funding and permits. For Pioneer Road, the Measure V funding anticipates construction may begin 2025.

10. Where can I find documents and more information relating to the Plan?

Lots of information can be found on this website, including project documents, project schedule, and upcoming events.

Follow us on Facebook to receive notices about upcoming workshops and other opportunities: facebook.com/losbanoscompletestreets



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REFINED CONCEPTS – AUGUST 2020

Pioneer Road Refined Concepts

1. **How will residents enter their properties if there is a raised center median preventing them to make left turns into their property?**
The Refined Concept provides opportunities for residents and business owners to make U-turns at nearby locations. The U-turn locations would have turn lanes separate from through travel lanes, and most locations are at signalized intersections.
2. **Why don't the Refined Concept diagrams show driveways to indicate how properties will be accessed?**
The Refined Concept diagram does not have the level of detail to show driveways. In future phases, the City will work with property owners to ensure access at driveways.
3. **Will the roadways be wide enough to allow trucks and other large vehicles to make U-turns?**
Because this is a four-lane arterial design, most vehicles will be able to make U-turns wherever they are allowed, including at non-signalized intersections. Larger vehicles will need to proceed to the next signalized intersection to make a U-turn.
4. **How will the intersection at 11th Street be made safe for the high amount of traffic turning into the residential neighborhood and traveling to/from Los Banos High School?**
After community feedback about this location, the concept will be revised to include traffic signals at 11th Street. For motorists traveling eastbound on Pioneer Road, a dedicated left turn lane with a left turn signal phase will turn into 11th Street heading north, and and motorists heading south on 11th Street would turn right or left onto Pioneer Road during a dedicated green signal phase.
5. **How will the Plan's recommendations ensure the safety of people using the pedestrian/bicycle path on the north side of Pioneer Road?**
Pedestrian/bicycle crossings would be enhanced with well-marked, high-visibility crosswalks alerting drivers.
6. **How will increased noise and lighting impact birds and other sensitive species?**
Approximately 1.25 miles east of the project area are wetlands and grasslands that are part of the Grasslands Ecological Area, an important habitat for migratory waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds. An environmental review to be completed in the next phase of the Pioneer Road project It will determine potential environmental impacts and mitigation strategies, which could include lower lighting levels and other strategies.

7. When will the soundwalls be built?

Soundwalls will be paid for and provided by new development. The walls will be provided between Pioneer Road and new residential neighborhoods. The need for soundwalls at existing residential properties will be studied during environmental review in the next phase of the Pioneer Road project.

8. For connecting Pioneer Road with SR-152, does Volta Road – because it is an existing road – provide a better option than constructing a new road east of Los Banos Creek?

A connection to Volta Road will remain a future “phase 2” recommendation in the Plan.

The near-term preferred option is east of Los Banos Creek, and is less costly for a few reasons. First, the proposed roadway is integrated into an already approved plan that includes a street at this location; therefore, some construction costs will likely be defrayed by coordination with the development project. Also, an extension along Volta Road will require two additional miles of Pioneer Road widening as well as a widened bridge crossing the creek.

9. Who will maintain landscaping proposed for the center median and north-side landscape strip?

The City will be responsible for landscaping. The Plan will prioritize low maintenance and drought-tolerant plantings. Detailed maintenance cost estimates will be included in the Plan.

10. What are the proposed speed limits, and how will speeding be deterred? Currently, drivers travel at high speeds along Mercey Springs Road and Pioneer Road.

Proposed speed limits are not set yet. They are likely to be similar to other four-lane arterial streets, in the range of 40 to 50 miles per hour. Mercey Springs Road is a state highway, so Caltrans will review all designs to ensure they meet Caltrans standards for safety. Changes to Mercey Springs Road in the approach to the intersection with the widened Pioneer Road may be required.

