



**CITY OF LOS ALTOS
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
March 8, 2016**

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Agenda Item # 4

SUBJECT: Receive an update on the status of the Covington Road Class I Pathway Project, and direct staff accordingly

BACKGROUND

In 2010/11, a traffic study was conducted by Fehr & Peers, Transportation Consultants, to review traffic safety and the flow of traffic for the greater Blach Intermediate School (Blach) neighborhood. The study focused on the safety of students traveling to and from Blach. Additional areas for review were: improvements at the intersection of Miramonte Avenue and Covington Road; no-turn restrictions on Eastwood Drive; and the trial-no stopping restrictions and permit parking program behind Blach at Carmel Terrace and Altamead Drive.

The study recommended projects to improve safety which were separated into three tiers (Attachment 1). Three projects from Tier 1 were originally programmed into the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): Miramonte Avenue/Covington Intersection Improvements (recently completed), Covington Class I Pathway and Carmel Terrace Class I Pathway (in conceptual design).

EXISTING POLICY

Bicycle Transportation Plan and Pedestrian Master Plan

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

None

DISCUSSION

Staff and the design consultant, Siegfried, developed a 15% conceptual design of the Covington Class I Pathway with project limits from the intersection of Miramonte Avenue and Covington Road to Eastwood Place. The path is currently proposed on the south side, which is on the same side as the school. The path is intended to accommodate two-way, non-motorized traffic (pedestrian and cyclist). Similar paths have been constructed on Homestead Road, Rosita Avenue and Berry Avenue. The conceptual design included a 12' wide pathway with a bioswale between the roadway and the path. Driveways along the path are designed to integrate with the pathway.

Implementation of the pathway necessitates removal of parking on the south side of Covington Road. Parking on the north side will remain. Parking in the early evening and morning hours on Covington Road was observed to be minimal.

PTA Outreach

The original conceptual design presented to the Blach PTA, extended the path from the intersection of Miramonte Avenue and Covington Road to the driveway entrance of Blach Intermediate School. The PTA expressed concern about the path extending all the way to the school. The PTA noted that during the afternoon student pick-up times, parents begin queueing in the parking lot. The queue extends along Covington Road to approximately Eastwood Place. Vehicles queue on Covington Road on the shoulder away from through traffic. Staff observed and confirmed the vehicle queue extends to Eastwood Place. In anticipation that this behavior will not change, the

conceptual design was modified to end the pathway at the southwest corner of Covington Road and Eastwood Place.

Aside from the issue regarding queuing vehicles, the PTA is also concerned about having only one facility on one side of the street. The concern revolves around spacing to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians on the path and perceived wrong-way bicycle riding for westbound Covington.

The PTA and parents have used the example of the Berry Avenue path not being wide enough to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. When pedestrians are walking side-by-side in groups, parents noted that the cyclists will often merge into vehicle traffic to avoid a collision with the pedestrians. In regards to wrong-way riding, it was noted that traveling westbound on the path along Covington Road is perceived as wrong-way riding, and is contradictory to what is being taught at the school during bike rodeos. It is important to note that a bicycle merging on to the road or two-way bicycle traffic on the path is legal.

Resident and Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) Outreach

Special BPAC meetings were held and were attended by affected residents in July and December of 2015. In July, staff provided a summary of the PTA concerns and potential parking and neighborhood impacts for the Class I pathway. Staff presented two alternatives for consideration that can accommodate cyclists and pedestrians, as well as advantages and disadvantages to both alternatives:

1. Add bike lanes on Covington Road in each direction and improve the existing sidewalk on Covington Road within the project limits.
 - a. Advantages
 - i. Pedestrian and bicycle modes are accommodated
 - ii. Less disruption to Covington residents' frontage
 - iii. Bicycle travel is consistent with vehicle travel (riding on the same side of road)
 - iv. Auto and bicycle travel is separated
 - b. Disadvantages
 - i. Removal of parking on both sides of the road
 - ii. No physical protection for bikes, as compared to a Class I Pathway
2. In lieu of bike lanes, use Shared Lane Markings (Sharrows) and improve the existing sidewalk on Covington Road within the project limits.
 - a. Advantages
 - i. Pedestrian and bicycle modes are accommodated
 - ii. Less disruption to Covington residents' frontage
 - iii. Bicycle travel is consistent with vehicle travel (riding on the same side of road)
 - iv. Parking remains on both sides
 - b. Disadvantages
 - i. No physical protection for bicycles, as compared to a Class I Pathway
 - ii. No separation of auto or bicycle travel
 - iii. Cyclists must share the lane with vehicles

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At the July meeting, members of the Blach PTA reiterated their concerns about the operation and effectiveness of a Class I pathway. Residents cited concerns about increased conflicts with cyclists exiting their driveways, increased traffic, changing characteristic of the street and loss of parking.

Based upon the concerns expressed by the residents and Blach PTA, BPAC requested staff investigate Alternative 1 further to determine if enough public right-of-way exists to accommodate both parking and a bike lane at all times. If parking and a bike lane could be accommodated, it was seen as the alternative that could appease all stakeholders involved, as well as enhance safety to students traveling to Blach and/or Mountain View High School.

Staff and the consultant reviewed the feasibility of maintaining on-street parking with bike lanes. The average minimum available paved width in this section of Covington Road is 26.5'. The suggested minimum width to accommodate bike lanes and on-street parking in one direction, as recommended by the State of California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) and confirmed by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) is 12' (5' bike lane, 7' parking area). Thus, the available width cannot accommodate the required bike lane and parking lane dimensions with vehicle travel lanes at all times.

December 2015 BPAC meeting

At the December 2015 meeting, the BPAC and impacted residents were informed that parking and bike lanes could not be accommodated at all times given the physical constraints of the road.

Staff presented an additional modification that can accommodate bike lanes while maintaining parking, with the establishment of a Restricted Hours Bike Lane. The City of Palo Alto has installed such restrictions on their bike lanes on Channing Avenue, Newell Road, North California Avenue, Loma Verde Avenue and Fabian Way. An additional description of this measure and an example of this signage are included in Attachment 4. Essentially, this measure restricts parking in the bike lane during designated hours. In the case of Covington Road (for illustrative purposes), parking can be restricted from 7:00AM to 9:00AM and from 3:00PM to 4:00PM to allow bicyclists unimpeded use of the bike lane when traveling to both Blach and/or Mountain View High School. There will be no parking restrictions outside of the designated hours. This modification to the bike lane and parking issue provides accommodation to the student cyclists at the peak travel times and minimizes a total loss of parking to affected residents.

Residents in attendance reiterated their concerns regarding the loss of parking, changing nature of the neighborhood and additional traffic and conflicts these improvements can bring. However, the loss of parking and the complication of having to move parked vehicles during restricted hours were the primary concerns. Covington Road is currently designated as a Class III Bike Route in the Bicycle Transportation Plan, but does not have signs posted. Considering public input, the BPAC recommended staff to instead consider improving the existing sidewalk and install bike route signs along the project area.

After analyzing the options, staff recommends establishing a Restricted Hours Bike Lane and installation of improved sidewalks because this option serves those that are traveling to school in a safer manner than a Class III bike route. The parking impact to residents could be minimized to

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one hour in the morning school commute and one hour in the afternoon school commute to address the residents' concerns.

Summary

Covington Road between Miramonte Avenue and Blach School currently operates as a Class III Bike Route with existing sidewalks on the south side. The original CIP project scope is to construct a Class I Pathway on the south side of Covington Road. Considering input from the Blach PTA and affected residents, the BPAC recommended improving the existing sidewalk and installing bike route signs along the project area. Improvement of existing sidewalks would include widening and physical separation from the roadway. Staff recommends establishing a Restricted Hours Bike Lane and installation of improved sidewalks.

Concept Plans for a Class I Pathway and Class II bike lanes are included as Attachments 2 and 3 respectively. A new Concept Plan for the alternative recommended by BPAC was not developed as these changes only include installing bike route signs and improving existing sidewalks.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Affected residents along Covington Road and Blach PTA representatives were notified of this meeting.

Posting of the meeting agenda serves as notice to the general public.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

None

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Categorically Exempt pursuant to CEQA Section 15301 (c)

RECOMMENDATION

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ALTERNATIVES

1. Change project scope to install Class III Bike Route signs and improved sidewalks
2. Change project scope to install Class III Bike Route signs, Sharrows and improved sidewalks
3. Do not proceed with the project

Prepared by: Cedric Novenario, Transportation Services Manager

Reviewed by: Susanna Chan, Public Works Director

Approved by: Marcia Somers, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Blach Intermediate School Tier 1 Priority Table
2. Covington Road Class I Example
3. Covington Road Class II Example
4. Restricted Hours Bike Lane Example – Palo Alto and Alta Planning and Design

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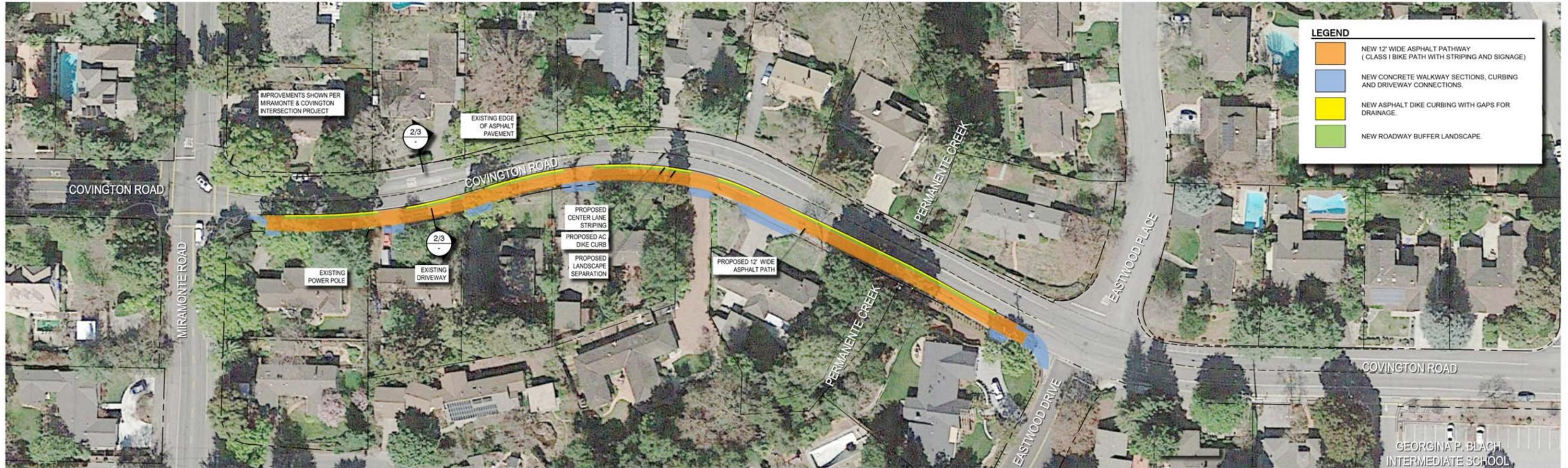
**TABLE 5
 TIER ONE IMPROVEMENTS SUMMARY**

LOCATION	RECOMMENDATION	CONCERN ADDRESSED	COST ESTIMATE
Covington Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Class I path on south side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separates bicycle and pedestrian traffic from vehicle traffic. Wrong way bicycle riding and scooting. 	\$276,000
Covington Road/ Miramonte Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install 2-phase traffic signal. Add crosswalk across north leg. Add advanced stop bars. Build out corners to improve pedestrian and bicycle storage areas. Rest signal in all-red during off-peak times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve traffic flow and reduce vehicular delay. Improve intersection right-of-way control and driver yielding. Batch pedestrian crossings. Resting in all-red reduces potential for speeding through the intersection on major street approaches. 	\$150,000 for signal \$1,500 for crosswalk striping \$2,200 for advanced stop bars \$20,000 for corner improvements
Altamead Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add shoulder stripe or bike lanes between Grant Road and Carmel Terrace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrow travel way for vehicular traffic, encouraging reduced speeds. Delineate area for bicycle travel. Provide connection to Blach, MVHS, and Miramonte School. 	\$18,900
Portland Avenue/ Buckingham Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocate stop bar on Buckingham Drive to behind pedestrian crossing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles currently travel through crossing area before stopping, creating a potential conflict with pedestrians 	\$400

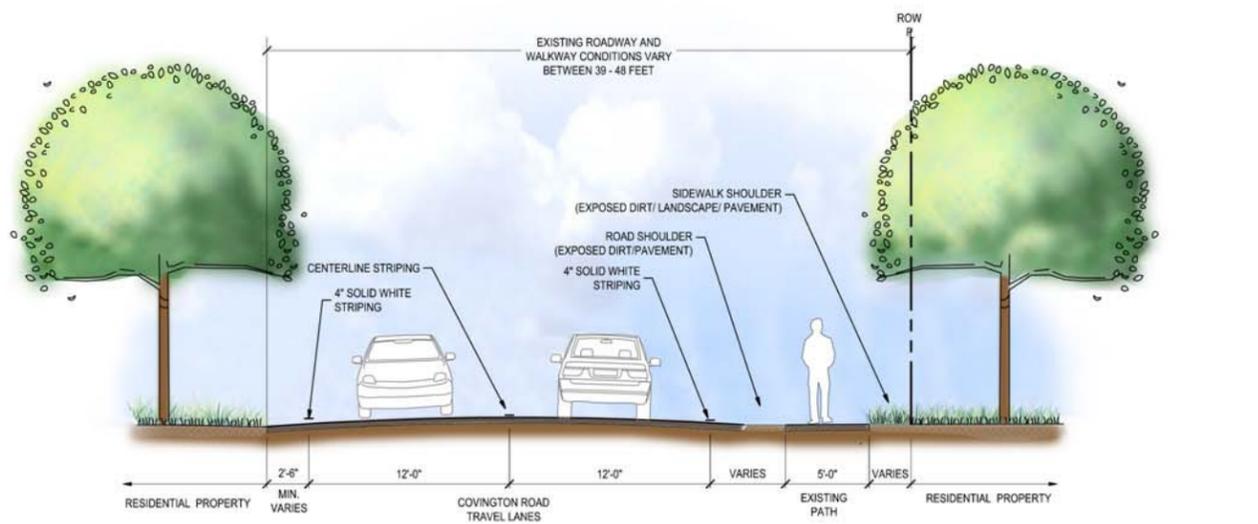
Source: Fehr & Peers, December 2010.
 Cost estimates include 40% markup for design, traffic control and mobilization, and contingencies.

Tier 2: Medium-Priority Improvements

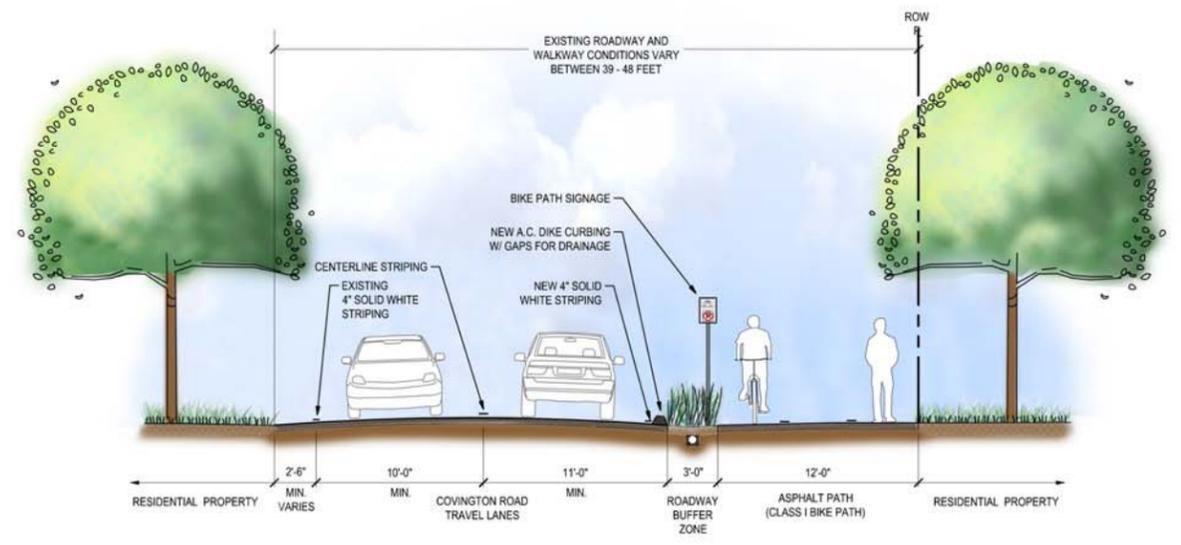
The second level of improvements, those that have a mid-range impact on student safety and circulation, are recommended as part of Tier 2. These infrastructure improvements address the next level of circulation issues and concerns, and complement the improvements identified in Tier 1. Before Tier 2 improvements are implemented, it is recommended that the City assess the efficacy of the Tier 1 improvements, and consider reprioritizing the Tier 2 and Tier 3 improvements. Tier 2 improvements are detailed below.



1 COVINGTON ROAD SITE LAYOUT
1"=8'-0"



2 TYPICAL ROADWAY SECTION (EXISTING)
1"=5'-0"



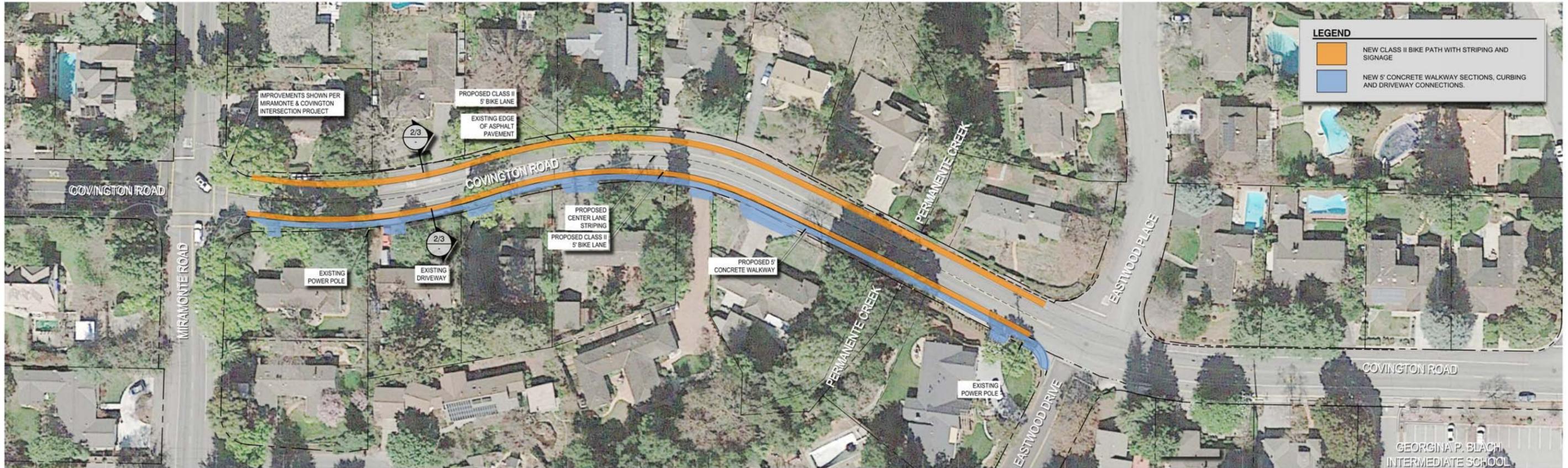
3 TYPICAL ROADWAY SECTION (PROPOSED)
1"=5'-0"

Covington Road Class I Parkway Project

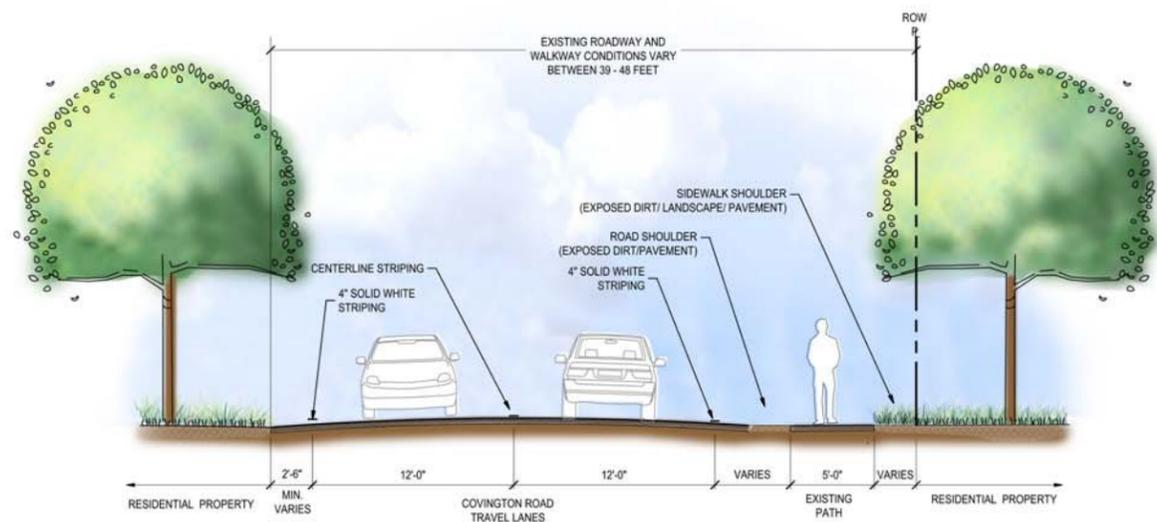
Los Altos, California

PATHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

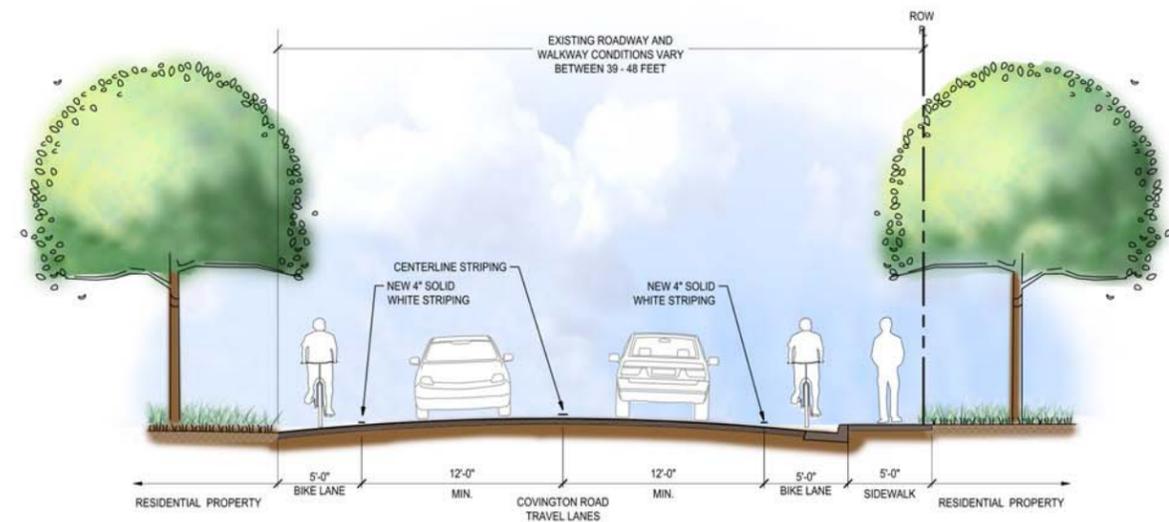




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3 TYPICAL ROADWAY SECTION (PROPOSED)
1"=5'-0"

Covington Road Class I Parkway Project

Los Altos, California

PATHWAY IMPROVEMENTS



Restricted Hours Bike Lane

Restricted Hours Bicycle Lanes

Description

California Vehicle Code permits automobile parking within a Class II bicycle lane unless otherwise signed. CAMUTD defines a Class II bicycle lane as permitting automobile parking. Restricted hours bike lanes restrict parking within bike lanes at designated hours. This design is different from floating bike lanes in that bicyclists lose the bike lane to parking during designated hours and must share the travel lane with motorists. Palo Alto has installed restricted hours bike lanes on several streets, including Channing Ave, Newell Rd, N California Ave, Loma Verde Ave, and Fabian Way.

Application

Existing streets with time-restricted bike lanes on (primarily) residential streets.

For 36-foot curb-to-curb roadways conditions, time-restricted lane should be five feet wide to allow for a 12-foot shared parking/bike lane on the opposite side and two 9.5-foot travel lanes.

Can be upgraded to full-time bike lanes where weekend bicycle connections are a high priority and/or where evening/weekend parking utilization rates are low.

Signage



Design References

- CAMUTD Section 9C.04
- City of Palo Alto 2003 Bicycle Transportation Plan

Photo



Palo Alto permits parking within the Loma Verde bike lane from 7 am to 7 pm on weekdays.

Materials Cost Estimate

Varies depending on existing conditions.