



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Meeting: September 3, 2025

Subject

Options on Commission Oversight of Transportation Matters

Recommended Action

Provide input to staff on the preferred options for having transportation projects reviewed by commissions and provide direction to staff to take the necessary steps to implement the changes.

Background

The City of Cupertino currently relies on the Bicycle Pedestrian Commission (BPC), composed of five appointed commissioners, to review and provide input on transportation-related matters. Historically, the BPC has played an advisory role in reviewing both transportation policy documents and specific project construction plans. Their focus has primarily been on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, but their input has also extended to broader transportation issues. This has further been supported by the Cupertino Municipal Code (CMC) which states that the BPC shall "...review, monitor and suggest recommendations for City transportation matters including, but not limited to, bicycle and pedestrian traffic, parking, education and recreation within Cupertino." Transportation related projects do not impact land uses and have therefore not been historically presented to the Planning Commission, except as part of the Capital Improvement Program when requesting consideration for General Plan Conformance.

Recently, the City Council has expressed interest in involving the Planning Commission in the review of certain transportation-related matters, particularly those with wider impacts on city infrastructure, such projects that result in the loss of vehicle lanes. This interest has prompted a need to re-evaluate the current structure of commission review of transportation projects. Each approach listed below will require CMC modifications, and staff will return with revised ordinances as appropriate for Council consideration for adoption after receiving direction from City Council on its preferred option.

Reasons for Recommendation and Available Options

In response to Council's interest and direction, staff has identified four potential options for allocating the review process of transportation-related matters. Each option reflects a

different approach to commission roles, and each has implications for staff time, project design processes, and community engagement.

It is recommended that each transportation-related item be assigned to no more than a single commission for review and recommendation. Involving multiple commissions in reviewing the same item will create additional demands on staff resources, potentially requiring additional staffing. It may also lead to confusion or conflict if the commissions offer differing recommendations and could result in commissioners feeling disenfranchised if their input is ultimately disregarded by City Council.

Clear criteria to differentiate which commission will review which project types is necessary. It will also be necessary to assign the City Manager the authority to determine which commission will be presented with a given topic when it is unclear which commission would be the most appropriate.

Option 1 - Split responsibilities between Planning Commission and BPC

- Planning Commission reviews: Broader transportation related planning documents. These documents would include Vision and Master plans that provide long-term goals and establish defined project lists (ie. Stevens Creek Corridor Vision Study, Active Transportation Plan, etc.)
- BPC reviews: Transportation project conceptual and construction plans, and policy documents that directly relate to bicycle, pedestrian or other non-vehicular modes of transportation that have little to no impact on vehicular traffic.

Pros: Retains BPC's expertise and continuity on transportation construction projects and bicycle and pedestrian related policy documents.

Planning Commission engagement on long-term planning documents provides a broader planning lens.

Cons: May result in some overlap or confusion regarding boundaries of commission responsibilities as the line between Vision Studies and conceptual plans can blur.

Meeting the heightened internal preparation needs would require a measured increase in staffing resources.

Option 2 - Expanded role for Planning Commission with focus on major infrastructure changes

- Planning Commission reviews: Broader planning related documents, as well as preliminary conceptual plans and design plans for projects that propose to eliminate vehicle lanes or reconfigure intersections in a way that may have an impact on

vehicular travel. The Planning Commission, being a quasi-approval authority, would provide approval for projects and plans that do not require City Council approval.

- BPC reviews: Remaining design plans focused on multimodal elements (bicycle, pedestrian, transit) with little to no potential impact on vehicular travel.

Pros: Planning Commission input on potentially impactful projects supports broader citywide goals.

BPC continues role in multimodal-focused project reviews.

Cons: BPC may lose ability to advise on projects that affect bicycles and pedestrians if the project also has the potential to impact vehicular modes of transportation.

Meeting the heightened internal preparation needs would require a measured increase in staffing resources.

Option 3 - Continue with BPC oversight, rename to “Transportation and Mobility Commission”

- All transportation matters continue under current BPC purview, including projects relating primarily to vehicular travel even if not focused on bicycle or pedestrian travel.
- Rename commission to reflect broader transportation role and improve public understanding.

Pros: Maintains current structure with minimal disruption.

Clarifies commission’s scope and responsibilities.

Would not create a significant increase in staffing resources or costs.

Cons: May not address Council’s interest in broader Planning Commission engagement.

Option 4 - Transition all transportation matters to Planning Commission

- Planning Commission becomes “Planning and Transportation Commission.”
- BPC is disbanded, and all transportation-related matters are consolidated under a single commission.

Pros: Centralizes decision-making for land use and transportation.

Potentially improves coordination between planning and mobility efforts.

Cons: Loss of specialized bicycle and pedestrian advisory body, with corresponding potential impact to active transportation grant eligibility.

Risk of reducing focus on multimodal transportation issues.

Meeting the heightened internal preparation needs would require a measured increase in staffing resources.

Next Steps

Once the City Council provides direction, staff will take the necessary steps to implement the changes, including preparation of any necessary policy changes and/or ordinances for modification of the Cupertino Municipal Code. Staff will return to City Council with these final documents for approval.

Sustainability Impact

No sustainability impact.

Fiscal Impact

Each option is expected to have small to moderate impacts on staffing resources. However, changes in commission structure and review processes could influence the scope and timing of project design and consultant contracts. These impacts are estimated to range from \$5,000 to \$30,000 per transportation related project, depending on the size and complexity of future projects. Full cost implications will be better understood as specific projects are implemented under the new framework.

City Work Program (CWP) Item/Description

None

Council Goal:

N/A

California Environmental Quality Act

No California Environmental Quality Act impact.

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Approved for Submission by: Tina Kapoor, Interim City Manager

Attachments:

N/A