

# JANUARY 26, 2022 NORTH MCDOWELL VIRTUAL COMMUNITY WORKSHOP RECAP

On January 26, 2022, the City of Petaluma held a community-wide public workshop to discuss plans to reconstruct and repave North McDowell Blvd. between Old Redwood Highway and Sunrise Parkway. Our City team shared a presentation outlining the purpose of the project, ideas for improvement, and available funding, then opened the session up to the public to share their perspective.

We were pleased to have over 50 community members attend the meeting and share their concerns, ideas, and hopes for project. We will take this important feedback into consideration as we move forward with planning and design.

Thank you to all who took the time to engage in this crucial conversation with us. McDowell is one of the most traveled roadways in Petaluma and our goal is to make it the best it can be for all users.

Below are some of the main ideas we heard from Petalumans during the meeting. [CLICK HERE](#) to view a full recording.

## General

- Needs to be a shift to encourage changes in transportation modes, planning for future demand as the population becomes denser, changes in zoning, accommodations for smaller slower vehicles, and accommodations for electric vehicles.
- Canopy trees could help with traffic calming and environmental concerns.
- Support voiced for improvements that support access to the planned SMART station and multi-use path, including pedestrian and bike access from the station to destinations along McDowell and the SMART path.

## Vehicles

- Commentors agreed congestion is not an issue, but large trucks are causing problems. They noted truck traffic degrades the pavement, contributes to high noise levels, and causes uncomfortable vibrations for residents.
- Pavement improvements are a priority for the corridor.
- Many spoke in favor of traffic calming to reduce speed and increase safety. Some suggested reducing the speed limit while others were opposed to this idea.
- There were comments both for and against reducing McDowell from 4 to 3 lanes.
- Many mentioned making turns across N. McDowell can be difficult. Several voiced support for the addition of turning and entry lanes at various locations.
- Many noted the need to improve visibility for drivers by repainting lane markings and adjusting signage on the road.

## Bicycles

- Riding bicycles along the corridor feels unsafe and is unpleasant.

- Support for wider, protected bike lanes. Some suggested an off-road, multi-use path while others were against this idea. Noted that bicycle facilities should tie into a larger network, connecting to different areas of town. Commentors said more/better bike facilities could encourage bike commuters, reduce the number of vehicles on the road, and potentially benefit local businesses.
- The railroad crossing was noted as a site for bike improvement (filling gaps/improving sidewalk)

### **Pedestrian**

- Commentors noted they feel unsafe walking along the corridor due to narrow sidewalks, close proximity to traffic, and noise/air pollution.
- Several people mentioned pedestrian path of travel is difficult, particularly given the poles in the middle of the sidewalks.
- Many expressed support for adding crosswalks, potentially with HAWKS or median islands, at various locations like Lagunitas brewery, the Petaluma Health Center, and mobile home parks. It was also noted visibility needs to be improved at the existing Sunrise Parkway crosswalk and that many existing crosswalks have uneven pavement (tripping hazard).
- Support was expressed for filling sidewalk gaps, particularly to access the post office from the mobile home parks.
- Filling gaps and improving sidewalk around the railroad crossing was mentioned as an area of focus.

### **Transit**

- Bus stops should allow buses to better enter the flow of traffic when stopping for drop-offs/pick-ups. There was also a call for better shelters at transit stops.