

# Farm Hill Boulevard Pilot Street Improvement Project

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the pilot design?

The pilot will change the lane lines on the street, in this case from a street that has two travel lanes in each direction to a street that has one travel lane in each direction, along with a center-turn lane. Often, redesigned streets like this will have bicycle facilities such as bike lanes.

For more background on these types of projects, you can watch this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5llmD2IVpU>

### Why do this to Farm Hill Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue?

We are piloting a redesign of Farm Hill Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue to make the streets better for everyone who uses them – people driving, walking, and riding bicycles – by reducing vehicle speeds and reducing the number and severity of collisions.

In 2014, 8 of the 26 collisions along the corridor were caused by unsafe speed, including one that resulted in critical injuries. Narrowing the space for motor vehicles has been shown to reduce travel speeds, while not decreasing the capacity of the street.

In community meetings and via complaints from residents, there is a strong interest in wanting to improve access and safety for people crossing the street along the corridor – especially for children walking to Roy Cloud and for people going to Stulsaft Park. The General Plan also recommends bicycle lanes for the corridor.

### What factors did you consider?

- Volume – 13,000 vehicle trips on an average day (varies along the corridor)
- Speed – 85th percentile is 40 mph westbound and 43 mph eastbound (segment of Farm Hill Boulevard between Jefferson and McGarvey avenues)
- Collisions – speeding, unsafe turning, and unsafe lane changes were the primary collision factors in over 70% of the 26 collisions along the corridor in 2014
- SamTrans – 2 buses per hour from 6a to 6p and 1 per hour from 6p to 10p.
- Bicycle needs – corridor is identified for bicycle lanes in the General Plan and in the San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Pedestrian generators – multi-family housing, Roy Cloud School, Stulsaft Park Peninsula Covenant Church
- Traffic diversion – there are not many nearby, attractive alternative routes, but if cut-through traffic materializes, we can address it case-by-case
- Traffic controls – because the intersection with Emerald Hill is stop controlled, it would need to retain all four lanes of traffic to avoid a significant increase in delay. All other intersections are signalized or the side streets are stop controlled.

**Aren't there are too many cars on Farm Hill Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue for this to work?**

The current average daily traffic on Farm Hill Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue ranges from roughly 11,000 to 17,000 vehicles each day. National studies show that this level of traffic can be accommodated within the proposed 3-lane configuration.

**How does Redwood City know that reducing the number of lanes won't decrease the capacity of the street? That doesn't make sense.**

We agree it seems odd, but we have redesigned at least 5 streets over the past 15 years, without reducing capacity – Alameda de las Pulgas, Middlefield Road, Industrial Way, Hopkins Avenue and Brewster Avenue. The two-way, left-turn lane will allow left turning vehicles to make their turns without blocking the through traffic, which increases efficiency. This video also illustrates how regulating and restricting traffic can also increase capacity of a street - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8G7ViTTuwno>.

**What about safety?**

Redesigns like this have been shown to reduce rear-end collisions, side-swipe and angle collisions. These types of collisions are common for Farm Hill Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue.

**I ride a bicycle along Farm Hill Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue. How does this help me?**

Redesigning Farm Hill Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue will allow Redwood City to add bike lanes in both directions, from Lancaster Way to Woodleaf Avenue. Given the speed difference between cars and bicycles along this corridor, it is safest to have a separate facility (instead of sharing a lane as currently happens). Many people riding bicycles feel more comfortable riding in bike lanes and bike lanes also tell drivers where to expect people riding bikes.

**Will this make it easier to cross the street?**

Yes. Since people will only have to cross one travel lane in each direction, it opens up more possibilities for Redwood City to consider marking crosswalks across Farm Hill Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue. The center turn lane can also function like a refuge where people can wait for a gap in the next lane of traffic. Also, bringing speeds down to the posted speed limit will help pedestrians cross more comfortably.

**Will this redesign remove any on-street parking?**

There will be some parking changes along the corridor, but the net difference will add three parking spaces. The design proposes adding No Parking restrictions in the downhill direction from Eden Bower Lane to Lonesome Pine, but this space is rarely if ever used for parking and as such is not reflected in the net change in parking spaces.

**I'm worried about fire engines getting stuck in more traffic, will this make it harder for them to respond to emergencies?**

No. In emergency situations all traffic is required to pull to the side of the road to allow emergency vehicles to pass – with cars pulled into the bicycle lanes there is plenty of space for them to pass. In extreme situations they may choose to drive in the center turn lane which should be completely clear of vehicles.

**Why put bicycle facilities on Farm Hill Boulevard where it's so steep and no one rides?**

Commuter cyclists and cyclists that have a destination in the area that are comfortable riding in traffic will use Farm Hill Boulevard and Jefferson Avenue. Recreational riders and those less comfortable riding in traffic may choose different routes that are less busy – but there are few alternative routes for people to take, particularly if they live south of Farm Hill Boulevard. For example, a Woodside High School student living on Eden Bower Lane would ride down Farm Hill Boulevard and Jefferson in order to turn south on Alameda de las Pulgas to get to school.

**Did we consider the growth in Downtown when all the new projects are open?**

Yes. Even with the 3-lane design, we expect the streets to be able to handle planned growth and to operate at an acceptable level.

The [environmental impact report for the General Plan](#) lists the segment capacity for a 3-lane arterial at 2,090 vehicles per hour to maintain a level-of-service “D,” which is Redwood City’s standard. The maximum hourly volume we’ve measured along the corridor is 1,535 vehicles (occurs between 8 and 9 am on Jefferson Avenue, between Highland and Alameda de las Pulgas). The remaining capacity (555 vehicles in the morning peak hour) more than accommodates the anticipated growth on the streets estimated in the [Downtown Precise Plan environmental impact report](#).