



## CITY COUNCIL Staff Report

**Meeting Date:** Sept. 21, 2021

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**From:** Scott Chadwick, City Manager

**Staff Contact:** Kristina Ray, Communication & Engagement Director  
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**Subject:** Public Engagement Plan for a South Carlsbad Boulevard Vision and Design of the South Carlsbad Boulevard Climate Adaptation Project

**Districts:** All

### Recommended Actions

1. Receive a report about public engagement in the creation of a vision for Carlsbad Boulevard south of Manzano Drive to La Costa Avenue as well as the design of a one-mile segment related to the South Carlsbad Boulevard Climate Adaptation Project
2. Provide direction to staff as desired.

### Executive Summary

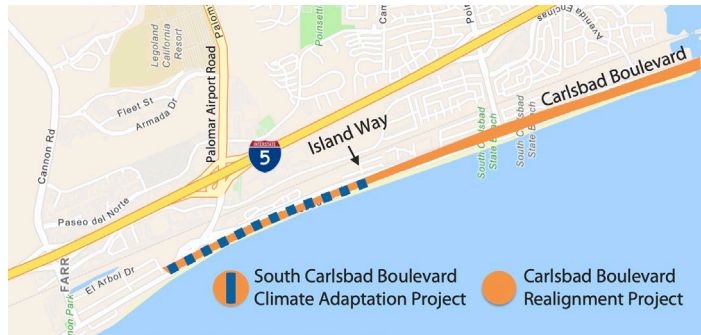
At its Sept. 14, 2021, meeting, the City Council asked staff to develop a public engagement plan that would do two things:

1. Involve the public in creating a vision and guiding principles for the future of south Carlsbad Boulevard by identifying the community's values, priorities, needs and concerns related to this space.
2. Engage the community in the design of a 1-mile project from Manzano Drive to Island Way that is being funded by a grant to study how to adapt public infrastructure to climate change. This includes:
  - Roadway design: In moving the southbound lanes to the east, farther away from the ocean, the design of the road would change. The eastward boundary of the alignment is fairly set, based on the location of the northbound lanes and the extent of the city's right-of-way, but the public input could influence the number of lanes, the types of intersection controls used, such as roundabouts or traffic signals, and the types and locations of bike lanes and walking paths.
  - Coastal uses: Moving the roadway to the east would free up coastal land for other uses, such as parking and parks spaces for gathering, recreation and expanded trails and bike paths. Public input could help prioritize and shape the design of this space.

## Discussion

### **Carlsbad Boulevard Realignment Project**

The Carlsbad Boulevard Realignment Project is included in the city's Capital Improvements Program (project No. 6031). The project involves conducting "a study of future roadway realignment alternatives, infrastructure needs, land uses, commercial land development options, public park and coastal access opportunities, and related long term coastal planning issues, constraints and processes."



From 2010 to 2013, city staff explored options to realign south Carlsbad Boulevard in conjunction with a land swap that would consolidate a patchwork of city-owned land and state-owned land into larger parcels, providing greater options for future uses. Given the complexities of the land swap, the City Council directed staff in 2013 to redefine the project to focus only on land owned and controlled by the city, and, in general, to focus coastal improvements on projects where the city owns or controls the land. As a result, the current project description includes only the city's right of way and city-owned land along the coast from Manzano Drive to La Costa Avenue.

City staff have moved forward with other coastal improvements since 2013, including the Terramar Area Coastal Improvements Project, which is in the permitting process. Staff have also begun to design improvements around the intersection of Tamarack Avenue and Carlsbad Boulevard. Because staff are focused on these other coastal improvements, the Carlsbad Boulevard Realignment project is not currently part of the city's current workplan.

### **South Carlsbad Boulevard Climate Adaptation Project**

On May 5, 2020, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2020-077, under which the city accepted a \$498,075 grant from the California Coastal Conservancy and entered into a research agreement with the University of California, Scripps Institution of Oceanography for the South Carlsbad Boulevard Climate Adaptation Project. The project is focused on relocating the southbound lanes of Carlsbad Boulevard from approximately Manzano Drive to 400 feet south of Island Way eastward to maximize the roadway's resiliency to coastal flooding and cliff erosion. Under the terms of the grant, this study, which includes a 15 to 30% conceptual design of the project area, must be completed by Feb. 28, 2023.

### **Public engagement approach**

Because the climate adaptation project must be completed by the grant deadline, staff would need to engage the community in the design of the project area starting in fall 2021. To help ensure the design is considered in the context of the entire south Carlsbad Boulevard corridor, the City Council asked staff at its Sept. 14, 2021, meeting to include a visioning component to the outreach plan, involving a broad cross section of community interests.

### Stakeholders

Because so many people are affected by the design and function of Carlsbad's coastline, staff propose outreach that ensures the broadest possible participation in the creation of a coastal vision. Some of the specific groups and individuals that staff will seek to involve include:

- Site-affected interests, such as property owners, residents and business owners along this part of south Carlsbad Boulevard
- Carlsbad residents who enjoy going to the beach and coastline
- Visitor-serving businesses and organizations
- Other Carlsbad businesses with an interest in the coastline
- People who walk, drive or bike along this portion of Carlsbad Boulevard, or who would like to
- Other government agencies with an interest in Carlsbad Boulevard, including California State Parks, the State Lands Commission, California Department of Fish & Wildlife and the California Coastal Commission, San Diego Association of Governments, North County Transit District, the City of Encinitas, etc.
- Advocacy groups, including those interested in environmental, mobility, history and government finance issues, and those with access and functional needs
- Native American tribes with an interest in the project area
- Public safety interests
- Members of the city's boards and commissions
- Regional, state and federal officials

### Outreach activities

Staff recommend providing multiple ways for stakeholders to engage in the visioning process and the design of the 1-mile project area, including:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Small group meetings and/or focus groups
- Public workshops
- Online surveys
- Project area tours

### Timeline and work product

Staff recommend beginning the engagement plan in fall 2021 and concluding in mid-2022, with a phased approach:

**Phase 1** - Develop informational materials, maps and other visuals to help the public understand the project area and any known constraints.

**Phase 2** - Invite input on the public's values, needs and priorities related to south Carlsbad Boulevard, such as:

- What does the public like about Carlsbad's coastline today?
- What activities do the public enjoy most when visiting the coast?
- What activities would the public like to do if they were available?
- What kinds of experiences would the public like to have along the coast?
- What's missing today?
- What challenges, if any, does the public face in getting to the coastline? How can access be improved?
- Does this area feel safe? Why or why not?
- How can the city best balance the uses that generate revenue to fund public amenities with the space for people to enjoy those amenities?

**Phase 3** - Develop guiding principles on the southern segment of Carlsbad Boulevard area and design alternatives for the 1-mile project area, based on community input. Seek input on both.

**Phase 4** - Refine guiding principles for presentation to the City Council. Refine project alternatives for the 1-mile climate adaption study area only and present to the City Council.

### Fiscal Analysis

An outreach consultant will be needed for this public engagement effort at an estimated cost of \$115,000. There is sufficient funding for this expense in the approved Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget.

### Next steps

1. Once the guiding principles are finalized by the City Council, they can help inform the Carlsbad Boulevard Realignment Project as it is prioritized for implementation.
2. Once the alternatives for the 1-mile segment are approved by the City Council, staff will seek direction on next steps, which could include seeking funding for final design and construction.

### Environmental Evaluation

In accordance with California Public Resources Code Section 21065, this direction on public engagement does not constitute a "project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act in that it has no potential to cause either a direct physical change in the

environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. Additionally, the 1-mile area of study, in relation to other portions of the southern segment of Carlsbad Boulevard that may be involved in the public engagement: (1) is of substantial length and located between logical terminal points; (2) has independent utility; (3) is of a length that assures adequate opportunity for the consideration of alternatives; and (4) will fulfill important local needs by protecting this segment from hazards caused by sea level rise.

#### **Public Notification and Outreach**

This item was noticed in keeping with the state's Ralph M. Brown Act and it was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting date.

#### **Exhibits**

None.