



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REFINED CONCEPTS – AUGUST 2020

(Scroll further down for general FAQs about the project.)

### Pacheco Boulevard Refined Concepts

- 1. Why are new raised medians proposed at several locations along Pacheco Boulevard? Will they restrict motorists in some locations from being able to make left turns or U-turns to access some businesses?**  
Locations for potential new raised medians have been chosen because of safety issues stemming from traffic crossing the roadway in close proximity to intersections. The Plan attempts to balance all factors including business access. The Draft Plan will contain more information and guidance.

- 2. How do the concepts increase pedestrian amenities such as parks and shade along and near Pacheco Boulevard?**  
The refined concept includes park improvements at West I Street, Pacheco Park, and H/I Street to improve aesthetics and add recreational space. These park concepts support park improvements and new recreational opportunities throughout the City, especially for those living in neighborhoods currently without easy access to parks. Note that the City is currently developing a Parks Master Plan with community input.

- 3. What enhancements are proposed at pedestrian crossings to make it safer for people to cross?**  
The refined concepts and Plan recommendation include safety features such as:
  - Advance stop bars to keep vehicles a safe distance in front of crosswalks to keep crosswalks clear and provide better visibility.
  - Pedestrian refuge islands in the center median to provide a protected area at the center of the street for people walking across the street.
  - Potential signalization of crossings in a couple key locations (e.g., busy locations, crossings near schools) so vehicle traffic stops for people crossing the street.

- 4. How will the Plan provide recommendations for making Pacheco Boulevard more attractive and adding special elements to encourage people driving through to stop at local businesses?**  
A key component of the Refined Concept are attractive gateways at both sides of Los Banos to welcome visitors with attractive park space and special signage. The Plan will also provide recommendations to enhance the appearance and vibrancy of Pacheco Boulevard, including additional landscaping, attractive signage, and activity along the street.

- 5. Won't new signalized pedestrian crossings increase traffic congestion and backups?**  
A key project goal is to provide safe and convenient pedestrian crossings at key locations, and to reduce distances between crossings along Pacheco Boulevard. For example, there are currently no pedestrian crossings between 7<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets – a distance of 2000 feet. People wanting to cross Pacheco Blvd near 9<sup>th</sup> Street (at Pacheco Park) must walk to either 7<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> to cross.

Traffic impacts must be considered when determining the feasibility of a signalized crossing. For future projects and potential implementation of Plan recommendations, traffic analysis will be done as needed when projects are being considered for implementation. Note that the Plan's final

recommendations are still to be determined based on feedback and fine-tuning of the Refined Concepts.

## **Pioneer Road Refined Concepts**

- 1. How will residents enter their properties if there is a raised center median preventing them to make left turns into their property?**  
The Refined Concept provides opportunities for residents and business owners to make U-turns at nearby locations. The U-turn locations would have turn lanes separate from through travel lanes, and most locations are at signalized intersections.
- 2. Why don't the Refined Concept diagrams show driveways to indicate how properties will be accessed?**  
The Refined Concept diagram does not have the level of detail to show driveways. In future phases, the City will work with property owners to ensure access at driveways.
- 3. Will the roadways be wide enough to allow trucks and other large vehicles to make U-turns?**  
Because this is a four-lane arterial design, most vehicles will be able to make U-turns wherever they are allowed, including at non-signalized intersections. Larger vehicles will need to proceed to the next signalized intersection to make a U-turn.
- 4. How will the intersection at 11<sup>th</sup> Street be made safe for the high amount of traffic turning into the residential neighborhood and traveling to/from Los Banos High School?**  
After community feedback about this location, the concept will be revised to include traffic signals at 11<sup>th</sup> Street. For motorists traveling eastbound on Pioneer Road, a dedicated left turn lane with a left turn signal phase will turn into 11<sup>th</sup> Street heading north, and motorists heading south on 11<sup>th</sup> Street would turn right or left onto Pioneer Road during a dedicated green signal phase.
- 5. How will the Plan's recommendations ensure the safety of people using the pedestrian/bicycle path on the north side of Pioneer Road?**  
Pedestrian/bicycle crossings would be enhanced with well-marked, high-visibility crosswalks alerting drivers.
- 6. How will increased noise and lighting impact birds and other sensitive species?**  
Approximately 1.25 miles east of the project area are wetlands and grasslands that are part of the Grasslands Ecological Area, an important habitat for migratory waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds. An environmental review to be completed in the next phase of the Pioneer Road project will determine potential environmental impacts and mitigation strategies, which could include lower lighting levels and other strategies.
- 7. When will the soundwalls be built?**  
Soundwalls will be paid for and provided by new development. The walls will be provided between Pioneer Road and new residential neighborhoods. The need for soundwalls at existing residential properties will be studied during environmental review in the next phase of the Pioneer Road project.
- 8. For connecting Pioneer Road with SR-152, does Volta Road – because it is an existing road – provide a better option than constructing a new road east of Los Banos Creek?**  
A connection to Volta Road will remain a future "phase 2" recommendation in the Plan. The near-term preferred option is east of Los Banos Creek, and is less costly for a few reasons. First, the proposed roadway is integrated into an already approved plan that includes a street at this location; therefore, some construction costs will likely be defrayed by coordination with the

development project. Also, an extension along Volta Road will require two additional miles of Pioneer Road widening as well as a widened bridge crossing the creek.

**9. Who will maintain landscaping proposed for the center median and north-side landscape strip?**

The City will be responsible for landscaping. The Plan will prioritize low maintenance and drought-tolerant plantings. Detailed maintenance cost estimates will be included in the Plan.

**10. What are the proposed speed limits, and how will speeding be deterred? Currently, drivers travel at high speeds along Mercey Springs Road and Pioneer Road.**

Proposed speed limits are not set yet. They are likely to be similar to other four-lane arterial streets, in the range of 40 to 50 miles per hour. Mercey Springs Road is a state highway, so Caltrans will review all designs to ensure they meet Caltrans standards for safety. Changes to Mercey Springs Road in the approach to the intersection with the widened Pioneer Road may be required.

## GENERAL FAQs – DECEMBER 2019

**1. What is a Complete Streets Plan?**

A Complete Streets Plan studies and evaluates a range of potential transportation improvements on a defined street. The phrase “complete streets” refers to the idea that streets should be accessible and convenient to use for all users, whether they drive, bike, walk, take transit or use a mobility device like a wheelchair.

**2. What will the Pacheco and Pioneer Complete Streets Plans be used for?**

Once the plans are complete (a separate plan for SR-152/Pacheco Boulevard and one for Pioneer Road), they will provide guidance for future proposed changes or improvements that are consistent with the plans’ goals and vision. The plans will also aid in applying for funding to implement the plans’ recommended improvements.

**3. Why is the City doing Complete Streets Plans for Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road?**

The population of Los Banos is growing and there is an increase in regional trips through the city, so traffic is building up on SR-152 / Pacheco Boulevard. At the same time, there is a need to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists safely. There is also an opportunity to consider aesthetic improvements on Pacheco Boulevard to make it more welcoming.

For Pioneer Road, there is growing congestion there as well, and it has been shown as a four-lane arterial in the City’s Transportation Element for many years. Recently, the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG) Measure V Westside Projects Committee has recommended funding for the City’s Pioneer Road Widening project that could serve as a local alternative route parallel to SR 152 / Pacheco Boulevard.

The Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road Complete Streets Plans are both an interim measure to potentially relieve traffic congestion on Pacheco Boulevard by studying Pioneer Road as an alternate route, as well as a general improvement plan for both Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road to make these streets safer and more attractive for all modes of travel in the future.

**4. What is happening with the planned SR-152 Bypass project?**

Currently, the SR-152 Bypass project, which runs to the north of the City of Los Banos, is on hold due to permitting and funding issues. It is not anticipated to be developed until 2040 or later. If implemented, the Pioneer Road widening will help provide congestion relief from SR-152 in the

interim, while simultaneously providing long-term improvements to both Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road for all modes of traffic, which will continue to be beneficial even if/when the Bypass is completed and operational. In short, this project is meant to supplement a future SR-152 Bypass, rather than replace the Bypass project.

**5. What is the schedule for the Plan?**

The Plan will take approximately a year and a half to complete. The Project Team is currently in the process of developing a preliminary set of proposed concept alternatives for the Study Area that will be further refined through community workshops and stakeholder engagement before one of the alternatives is chosen as the 'preferred alternative.' This alternative will then be further refined through another round of public engagement before being presented as the final plan to the City Council. A schedule for the project is available on the home page of this website.

**6. What do the yellow dotted lines on the Study Area Map indicate?**

These lines show the project area that is being studied in the Plan. They do not indicate the location or size of any potential improvements (including road widenings). The dashed lines are wide enough to include properties on either side of the roadways only to indicate that owners of these properties will be involved in the Plan process.

**7. How will property owners along Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road be involved in the project?**

Part of the development of the Plan includes specific targeted meetings and events for stakeholders in the Study Area, in addition to events and opportunities for the larger community. Project stakeholders include property and business owners in the Study Area as well as agency officials such as Merced County, Caltrans, irrigation districts, and school district officials.

**8. How will the community at large be involved in the project?**

The Project Team will hold four community workshops throughout the duration of the project. The first occurred in November and was a visioning workshop in which participants were asked to share challenges and opportunities on Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road. The second community workshop will occur on February 4, 2020. Project staff will present a set of preliminary design concepts for Pacheco Boulevard and Pioneer Road, and participants will be asked to provide feedback on the concept alternatives for further refinement.

After project staff further refines the set of concept alternatives, a third community workshop in April 2020 will give participants a chance to provide feedback on the refined set of concept alternatives before a preferred alternative is chosen for the draft plan. In early Fall 2020, project staff will present the draft plan and solicit feedback. The Plan will be further refined based on community feedback and presented to City Council in November of 2020.

A schedule for the project is available on the home page of this website.

**9. What is the proposed start/completion date for the improvement projects?**

Many more steps are required prior to the implementation of the proposed improvements, including assembling specifications, funding and permits. For Pioneer Road, the Measure V funding anticipates construction may begin 2025.

**10. Where can I find documents and more information relating to the Plan?**

Lots of information can be found on this website, including project documents, project schedule, and upcoming events.

Follow us on Facebook to receive notices about upcoming workshops and other opportunities: [facebook.com/losbanoscompletestreets](https://facebook.com/losbanoscompletestreets)