



**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF:**

November 18, 2025

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To: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Toni Bertolero, Public Works Engineer
Subject: Letter to Caltrans for Improvements on State Highways in Sebastopol

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council approve the Letter to Caltrans for Improvements on SR 116 and SR 12 and authorize the Mayor to sign the letter on behalf of the City Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Public Works Director Toni Bertolero received a request from Steven Pierce, a member of the City’s Climate Action Committee Transportation Working Group (“Climate Action Working Group”), to review a list of potential bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements along SR 116 and SR 12 within the City limits.

Following receipt of the request, a meeting was held with the City’s Traffic Safety Group (TSG), City staff, and the City’s traffic consultant, W-Trans, to evaluate the proposed improvements. The TSG reviewed and generally supported the recommendations, with a few minor modifications as described in the Staff Analysis below.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

The Climate Action Working Group requested that the City submit a letter to Caltrans identifying several “quick build” improvements intended to enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety along SR 116 and SR 12. The TSG convened on October 30, 2025, to review the list of requested items.

The proposed improvements include the following:

- Installation of bicycle detection sensors at several signalized intersections.
- Adjustments to signal operations and motorist guidance at McKinley Street and Petaluma Avenue.
- Improved visibility at the SR 12 and Barnes Avenue crossing near Napa Auto Parts.

The letter to Caltrans requests improvements at these specific locations:

1. Bicycle Detection Sensors – Install bike sensors at four intersections:
 - o SR 12 at Morris Street
 - o SR 116 (Petaluma Avenue) at Mill Station Road
 - o SR 116 at Hurlbut Avenue
 - o SR 116 at High School Road
2. McKinley Street and Petaluma Avenue Intersection – Install an informational sign providing simple instructions for motorists explaining what to do during each phase of the pedestrian signal (flashing yellow, solid yellow, flashing red, solid red).
3. SR 12 and Barnes Avenue – Improve visibility of the blinking yellow pedestrian crossing lights by relocating the “Signal Lights Ahead” warning sign that currently obstructs one of the blinking lights.



The draft letter to Caltrans is attached. At the time of report preparation, staff was coordinating with Caltrans to confirm the appropriate recipient(s) for the final letter, which will be addressed accordingly once contact information is verified.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

The Climate Action Working Group identified these improvements as “quick build” projects, meaning they could be implemented rapidly and at relatively low cost.

1. Bicycle Detection Sensors: Although not technically a “quick build” project, as installation would require design and video detection technology estimated at approximately \$50,000 per intersection, the TSG determined that these improvements would significantly enhance safety and should be included in the City’s letter to Caltrans.
2. McKinley Street and Petaluma Avenue Signal Timing and Signage: Concerns were raised regarding traffic congestion at this intersection. City staff previously coordinated with Caltrans regarding potential signal timing adjustments; however, Caltrans advised that existing timing parameters have already been optimized. Field observations by the TSG suggest that confusion among motorists during the various signal phases (flashing yellow, solid yellow, flashing red, solid red) may be contributing to delays. To address this, the TSG recommends that Caltrans install an informational sign to clarify signal operations for drivers.
3. SR 12 and Barnes Avenue Crosswalk Visibility: Improved pedestrian safety at this location can be achieved by relocating the “Signal Lights Ahead” warning sign to prevent it from obstructing the view of the blinking pedestrian crossing lights. This is a simple and low-cost improvement consistent with the “quick build” concept.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS/PRIORITIES/AND ORGENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:

This agenda item represents the City Council goals/priorities as follows:

- Goal 2 – Public Safety. Strengthen the public’s safety and improve the quality of life.

This agenda item represents the City Council General Plan Consistency:

- Circulation CIR 2 – Maintain and expand a safe and efficient pedestrian, bicycle and transit network that connects neighborhoods with key destinations to encourage travel by non-automotive modes while also improving public health.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact pertaining to this agenda item as the request is for Caltrans to make the improvements on State Highways.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

This item has been noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting date.

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment on this item. However, if staff receives public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report, such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of this item.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION:



That the City Council City Council approve the Letter to Caltrans for Improvements on SR 116 and SR 12 and authorize the Mayor to sign the letter on behalf of the City Council.

CITY COUNCIL OPTIONS:

1. Approve the letter to Caltrans, with specific changes to the letter as noted in the meeting.
2. Do not approve the letter to Caltrans and provide direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Letter to Caltrans

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval: Approval Date: 11/4/25

CEQA Determination (Community Development): Approval Date: 11/3/25

The action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Administrative Services (Financial) Approval Date: N/A

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: Yes No N/A

Account Code (f applicable) _____

City Attorney Approval: Approval Date: N/A

City Manager Approval: Approval Date: 11/4/25

City Council

Mayor Stephen Zollman
Vice Mayor Jill McLewis
Phill Carter
Neysa Hinton
Sandra Maurer

**City of Sebastopol**

**Interim City Manager/
Assistant City Manager/
City Clerk, MMC**

Mary Gourley
mgourley@cityofsebastopol.gov

November 18, 2025

Gezahegn Tizau, Regional Project Manager-Sonoma County
Caltrans District 4
1111 Grand Ave.
Oakland, CA 94612
gezahegn.tizau@dot.ca.gov

Re: Various Improvements on S.R. 116 and S.R. 12, Sebastopol, CA

Dear Gezahegn Tizau:

On behalf of the Sebastopol City Council, we respectfully request that Caltrans consider several improvements along State Routes 116 and 12 to enhance safety and accessibility for bicyclists and pedestrians within our community.

1. S.R. 116 and S.R. 12 at four intersections bike sensors. Install bike sensitive sensors, including video detection at four intersections on S.R. 116:
 - a. S.R. 116 and Mill Station Road
 - b. S.R. 116 and Hurlbut Avenue
 - c. S.R. 12 and Morris Street
 - d. S.R. 116 at High School Road.

The City has received numerous public complaints that existing sensors either do not detect bicycles or are not present at all. As a result, cyclists often must wait for a car to trigger the signal, dismount to use the pedestrian crossing, or—most concerning—cross unsafely on a red light. Installing video detection at these intersections would greatly improve safety and convenience for the cycling community.

2. S.R. 116 at McKinley Street HAWK pedestrian signal signage.

Install an informational sign for motorists explaining the four phases of the HAWK pedestrian signal (flashing yellow, solid yellow, solid red, flashing red). Public Works staff have discussed with Caltrans the ongoing traffic backups since the signal's installation. While timing adjustments have helped, backups persist—likely due to driver confusion about how to respond during each signal phase. A simple instructional sign could significantly reduce delays and improve safety.

3. Increase visibility of blinking yellow lights at the crosswalk near Barnes Avenue crossing at S.R. 12.

Relocate the "Signal Ahead" warning sign that currently obstructs one of the blinking yellow pedestrian crossing lights at this location. Moving the sign to a position that does not block the warning light would be a straightforward adjustment with meaningful safety benefits.

We appreciate Caltrans' attention to this request and look forward to hearing from you as to what improvements described in this letter can be made. Items 2 and 3 above are relatively easy fixes and it is our hope that your maintenance crew can be easily deployed to make these changes. As for item 1 above, we recognize that this one may take longer but also look forward to hearing if the video detect bike sensors can be included in your capital improvement plans.

Please contact Erik Billing, Public Works Supervisor, for any updates regarding this letter request at (707) 823-5331 or email at citypw@cityofsebastopol.gov and ebilling@cityofsebastopol.gov.

Sincerely,

Stephen Zollman, Mayor

cc: Vice Mayor McLewis
Councilmembers: Carter, Hinton, Maurer
Sergio Ruiz, Caltrans Chief, District Transit and Active Transportation
Joe Rouse, Caltrans Chief, District Highway Operations