Approve staff recommendation to implement the Hedding and Ocala Bike Lanes Projects, with the following amendments:

1. Utilize a green slurry seal for bike lanes on both westbound and eastbound lanes of Hedding St., throughout the distance of the project, to provide a visual differentiation from auto traffic lanes.
2. Utilize a full buffer for lanes in the Hedding Street corridor, with the exception of specific blocks where existing street parking will be maintained for residents and businesses:
   a. Westbound Hedding (on the north side), between 2nd Street and 8th Street
   b. Eastbound Hedding (on the south side), between 4th Street and 7th Street
3. Upon the completion of BART construction in 2017, return to council to evaluate the status of the existing primary bike facilities on Hedding Street, and consider improvements in consultation with the community.

BACKGROUND:

We are grateful for the good work of the Department of Transportation staff, for several reasons. The proposed action reflects an expansion of our primary bike network, after years of discussion and grant-solicitation, to alter streetscapes toward more pedestrian-friendly and bike-friendly designs. Their nimble, responsive efforts to exploit regional grant funding opportunities for road rehabilitation comes at a time when the City lacks the resources to resurface most of its streets, many of which sorely need maintenance.

The City of San José has long been a recognized leader in promoting bike transit because it is an environmentally sustainable and healthy way to commute to work, shopping and school. The staff’s proposed direction comports with the community’s and Council’s ambitions, as articulated in the City’s 2040 Envision General Plan, to retrofit a city once built only for cars, to a city built for people. The implementation of “road diets” to slow traffic, restore safe pedestrian and bike access, and
encourage mode share shift, serves many of our common environmental, economic, public health, and safety goals. Cities throughout the United States with far worse weather and more challenging topography than San Jose’s—including Portland, Minneapolis, and New York City—have demonstrated enormous improvements in bike usage, resulting in rates of bike commuting that exceed San Jose’s by a factor of six or eight. In other words, we know it’s clearly possible, if we have the will to do it.

Nonetheless, as we’re learning, retrofitting a 1950’s-era streetscape for more multimodal use isn’t easy, even when it involves something as inexpensive as moving lines of paint on a road. Residents with homes facing Hedding Street have strongly objected to the removal of street parking fronting their homes. Some observe that multi-family units lack adequate parking on-site to accommodate multiple vehicles, and they express concern about having seniors and parents with small kids having to hoof it from side streets, particularly when carrying groceries or other items. In light of a recent rash of auto burglaries in Hyde Park, some feel concerned about their inability to have their cars within eyesight of their homes. Feelings expressed at several community meetings have given us reason to take a breath, back up, and re-evaluate.

One suggestion offered at the conclusion of the meeting came from Jonathan Miller, the President of the nearby Hensley Historic Neighborhood, and an avid cyclist. He proposed the integration of street treatments that we’re already currently planning for San Fernando Street—involving the use of colored pavement in the bike lane to visually differentiate bike and auto traffic lanes—as a “middle ground” to retain parking while enhancing bike safety on Hedding Street. Using Hedding Street as an additional “testing ground” for these “green lanes” appears appropriate given its designation as a primary bike route and a key connector of east-west traffic to light rail, the Civic Center, the Guadalupe River Trail, and by 2017, the Berryessa BART station.

Fully buffered bike lanes on Ocala Avenue between Capitol Expressway and White Road will provide an important connection between the newly installed bike and pedestrian paths along the expressway that are part of the Capitol Expressway Light Rail project and the Ocala Middle School, and will contribute to safer biking near Lake Cunningham, Overfelt High School, Hillview Library and Adelante Elementary School. The project will also allow for continuous bike lanes on Ocala Avenue between Mt. Pleasant and King Roads.

The Bike Plan 2020 describes our City’s aspiration to make “bicycling an integral part of daily life in San José.” To better incorporate our bicycling infrastructure into the needs of surrounding neighborhoods and encourage safer and greener ways to commute, we should approve these projects.