

Central El Camino Real Multimodal Plan



Cities of San Mateo, Belmont, San Carlos, and Redwood City



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Frequently Used Terms

El Camino	Refers to El Camino Real, State Route 82
Central Cities	Refers to San Mateo, Belmont, San Carlos, and Redwood City (always listed in this order)
Central El Camino Plan	Refers to Central El Camino Real Multimodal Plan

1

Introduction

Grand Boulevard Initiative

The [Grand Boulevard Initiative \(GBI\)](#) is a long-standing, multi-agency partnership led by SamTrans.

Click to learn more about GBI!

GBI seeks to transform El Camino Real (State Route 82) into a cohesive, multimodal “Grand Boulevard” that better serves the communities of San Mateo County. Established in 2006, GBI brings together cities, countywide and regional agencies, Caltrans, and community stakeholders to align transportation, land use, and placemaking strategies along the 25-mile corridor. GBI was relaunched in 2025 backed by funding from Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and local matches. The recent shifts in state and regional policies towards safe, sustainable, and equitable mobility have created a strong alignment between the goals of GBI and cross-jurisdictional priorities, introducing an opportunity to advance the implementation of the Grand Boulevard Vision.

At its core, GBI envisions El Camino Real as a safe, vibrant, and accessible corridor where people of all ages and abilities can travel comfortably, supporting a balance of walking, bicycling, transit, and vehicle travel while enhancing economic vitality and community identity.



Countywide Corridor Vision

GBI reflects the need for a coordinated, corridor-wide approach to planning and implementation. While individual cities have advanced local corridor plans over the past two decades, El Camino Real functions as a continuous state highway crossing multiple jurisdictions. As such, consistent design, policy alignment, and implementation strategies are critical to achieving meaningful improvements. As shown in **Figure 1.1**, the [GBI Action Plan](#) establishes this unified framework and is the first step in the Caltrans Project Review process, a countywide Project Initiation Document (PID) led in partnership between Caltrans, SamTrans, San Mateo County Transportation Authority, and local jurisdictions.

The GBI Action Plan establishes a clear policy framework centered on three core themes: safety, mobility, and implementation. These themes are shown in **Figure 1.2** and supported by specific actions, including prioritizing vulnerable roadway users, advancing corridor-wide bicycle and transit improvements, enhancing walkability, and establishing a coordinated Caltrans project development process.

Figure 1.1. Coordinated GBI Approach

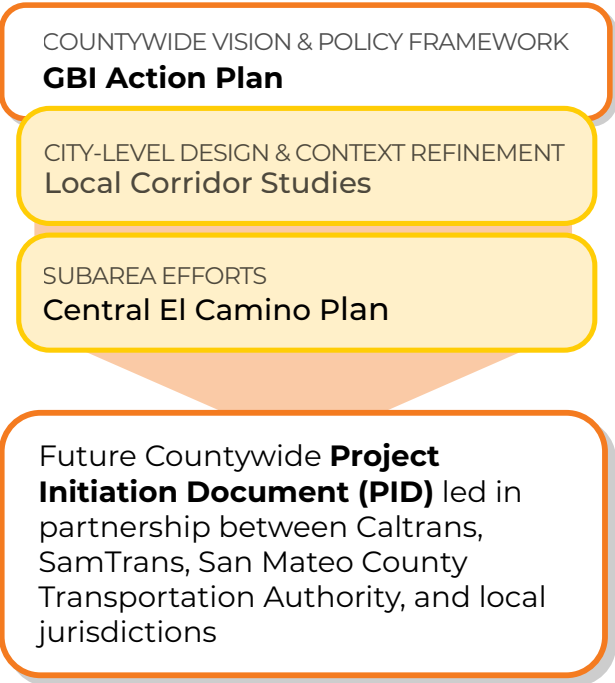


Figure 1.2. Policy Framework Themes



The need for GBI is driven by several interrelated challenges and opportunities along El Camino Real.

Collectively, these motivators underscore the importance of a coordinated, countywide effort to redesign El Camino Real as a multimodal corridor that balances mobility, safety, and community goals.



SAFETY DISPARITIES

El Camino Real sees a disproportionate share of severe and fatal collisions, especially involving pedestrians and cyclists. Although El Camino Real represents a small share of roadway mileage, it accounts for far more serious injuries than other county streets.



GROWTH PRESSURES

The corridor is a focal point for future housing and job growth, with tens of thousands of new residents and employees expected within a half-mile of El Camino Real over the next decade. This growth will demand a shift toward more space-efficient travel modes.



ALIGNMENT WITH REGIONAL GOALS

The GBI vision supports broader regional and state policies, including greenhouse gas reduction, transit-first principles, equity priorities, and Complete Streets requirements (such as Caltrans DP-36¹, DP-37², and DP-40³).



NEED FOR A CONSISTENT MULTIMODAL FRAMEWORK

Existing roadway design remains largely auto-oriented and inconsistent across jurisdictions, creating barriers for walking, biking, and transit. A unified design framework is needed to provide a seamless user experience across the corridor.

Narrow and obstructed sidewalks along El Camino Real limit accessible pedestrian space and create an uncomfortable walking environment.

El Camino Real and Belmont Avenue (San Carlos)



1. Caltrans Director's Policy 36, Road Safety. February 15, 2022. https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/safety-programs/documents/policy/dp_36-allly.pdf

2. Caltrans Director's Policy 37, Complete Streets. December 7, 2021. <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/esta/documents/complete-streets/dp-37-complete-streets-allly.pdf>

3. Caltrans Director's Policy 40, Transit. February 6, 2026. <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/transportation-planning/documents/division-transportation-planning/transit-planning/dp-40-transit-policy-signed-v2-allly.pdf>

Central El Camino Real Multimodal Plan

The Central El Camino Real Multimodal Plan (referred to as Central El Camino Plan) is a subarea planning effort within the broader GBI framework, focused on advancing a corridor vision and developing design alternatives for key segments of El Camino Real.

Led by SamTrans in partnership with local jurisdictions, this effort serves as a pre-Project Initiation Document (PID) study that bridges city-led planning and the Caltrans project development process.

Plan Partnerships

This effort is led by SamTrans in coordination with the other partner agencies listed in **Figure 1.4**. Funding for this effort was provided by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), with a local match from SamTrans, and local funds from Redwood City. MTC prioritized the Central El Camino Plan under their Transit Performance Initiative.

Purpose and Role within GBI

The Central El Camino Plan functions as a visioning and alternatives development effort that translates the countywide GBI framework into corridor-specific design concepts. The plan study area includes El Camino Real between Peninsula Avenue and Brewster Avenue in the cities of San Mateo, Belmont, San Carlos, and part of Redwood City, as shown in **Figure 1.5**.

Key purposes include:

- Establishing a shared, multimodal vision for the Central corridor segment
- Defining cross-section concepts and modal priorities consistent with GBI and Caltrans guidance
- Developing and refining design alternatives for further study
- Informing the countywide Caltrans PID with multiple alternatives to evaluate and advance complete street improvements into environmental clearance and design

Project Goals and Outcomes

The Central El Camino Plan is focused on improving El Camino Real for people walking, biking, and taking transit by:

- Creating a cohesive multimodal corridor with continuous, connected facilities
- Advancing meaningful transit priority treatments, such as transit-only lanes where appropriate
- Establishing low-stress bicycle facilities that connect to the surrounding network
- Enhancing walkability, safety, and access to destinations and transit

The primary outcome of the project is the development of feasible corridor design alternatives that:

- Reflect community priorities and technical constraints
- Align with Caltrans policy (e.g., DIB 94 modal priority guidance⁴) and build upon previous planning efforts (refer to Chapter 2 for more details)
- Can be advanced into the countywide PID for formal evaluation

This effort represents an early phase in the Caltrans project development process, laying the groundwork for subsequent analysis during PID and Project Approval & Environmental Document (PA&ED) phases.

4. Caltrans Design Informational Bulletin 94, January 16, 2024. <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/dib-94-010224-a11y.pdf>

Figure 1.5. Central El Camino Plan Study Area

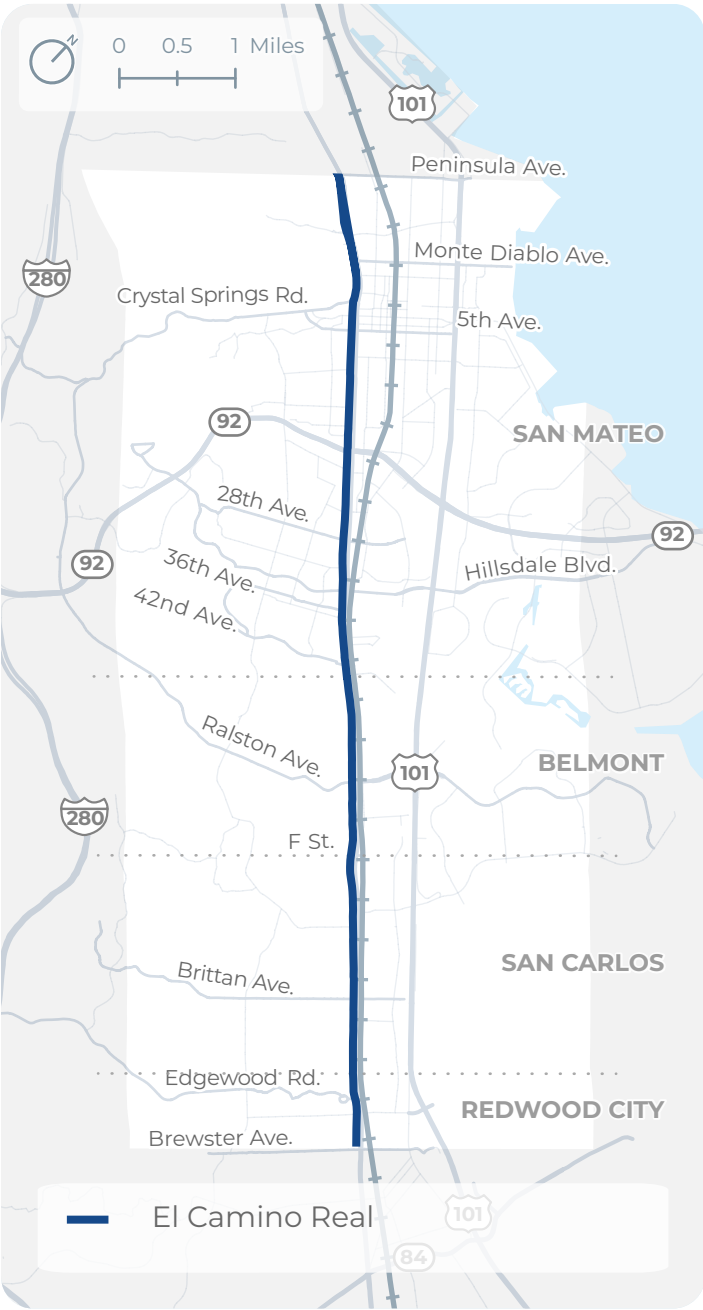


Figure 1.4. Plan Partners



Project Process

The Central El Camino Plan used a multi-step process to develop and refine corridor alternatives, integrating technical analysis, interagency coordination, and community engagement to ensure that proposed designs respond to both existing conditions and future needs. Given the corridor’s evolution from a regional highway to a multimodal urban spine, and the resulting mismatch between its current function and auto-oriented design, the study placed particular emphasis on addressing safety, accessibility, transit performance, and placemaking challenges. The alternatives development process was designed to translate these needs into feasible, policy-aligned design concepts that can advance into the Caltrans project development process for further evaluation and future selection of preferred alternatives.

Governance and Coordination

Development of the design alternatives was guided by a coordinated governance structure involving the Project Team, which included SamTrans and participating cities (San Mateo, Belmont, San Carlos, and Redwood City), and Caltrans as the owner and operator of the corridor. Ongoing collaboration with city staff ensured that alternatives responded to local priorities, land use context, and existing planning efforts. In addition, coordination with Caltrans established alignment with current state policies and design guidance, including Complete Streets principles (DP-37 and SB-960⁵), safety-focused design standards (DB-36), and transit-supportive directives (DP-40). Engagement with city leadership, including city managers and elected officials, provided strategic direction and helped balance corridor-wide objectives with local considerations. This coordinated approach ensured consistency across the multi-jurisdictional corridor while recognizing variations in segment conditions and community priorities. It also positioned the resulting alternatives to be feasible within the Caltrans project development framework.



Multimodal connections to transit are key to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Caltrain Station at El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue (Belmont)

5. California Senate Bill 960, September 27, 2024. Planning, Complete Streets Facilities, Transit Priority Facilities. https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202320240SB960

Community Engagement

Community engagement was a key part of the alternatives development process, occurring in two phases between 2025 and 2026. Phase 1 focused on understanding corridor conditions and key issues. Through more than a dozen activities (pop-ups, walk audits, workshops, and a multilingual map-based survey), the team collected over 800 location-specific comments and engaged more than 500 community members. This validated known challenges, such as safety concerns, uncomfortable walking conditions, and unreliable transit, while capturing new perspectives from corridor users.

Phase 2 focused on reviewing draft alternatives with the public. Community members evaluated cross-section concepts and preferred design approaches. More than 700 survey responses and over 1,000 total interactions gave feedback on tradeoffs between transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle improvements. Engagement showed strong support for safer crossings, wider sidewalks, continuous bicycle facilities, and more reliable transit, while documenting concerns about parking and vehicle capacity. This process ensured community priorities informed the refinement of alternatives.

More information about community engagement can be found in **Appendix A**. The City of San Mateo self-funded additional engagement with businesses along El Camino Real and a detailed parking study. Results can be found in **Appendix E**.



Technical Development of Design Alternatives

The technical development of design alternatives built upon the combined inputs of existing conditions analysis, agency coordination, and community feedback. Initial concepts were developed as a set of cross sections organized around modal priority: transit-focused, pedestrian-focused, and bicycle-focused alternatives. These concepts were tailored to the eight distinct segments of the corridor, reflecting variations in roadway width, land use context, and existing conditions.

The alternatives were designed to address key corridor challenges, including high collision rates, limited pedestrian space, lack of bicycle infrastructure, slow and unreliable transit speeds, and future housing and job growth needs. They also incorporated guidance from Caltrans Design Information Bulletins (DIB 94 and DIB 89-02), as well as standards from the Highway Design Manual and California MUTCD, ensuring consistency with state requirements for Complete Streets and separated bikeways.

Each alternative aligns with Caltrans, C/CAG, County, and Local plans and recommendations, and were evaluated using a multi-criteria framework that includes the following:

- Alignment with Caltrans Policy
- Alignment with Local Policy
- Effect on People Walking
- Effect on People Biking
- Effect on People Riding Transit
- Effect on People Driving and Parking
- Effect on the Environment
- Addressing Community Input

This evaluation and subsequent community feedback informed a refined set of three corridor-wide alternatives for advancement. The City of San Mateo retained one additional alternative that maintains existing cross section with spot improvements. These alternatives represent different approaches to balancing transit efficiency, pedestrian and bicycle comfort, and roadway operations, and will be further analyzed during the Caltrans project development process to assess feasibility, safety outcomes, and implementation considerations.

Next Steps

SamTrans will lead the Caltrans project development process that will involve further analysis, design, engagement, and evaluation of potential changes, including the identification of a preferred design alternative estimated to occur in 2027 to 2028. Depending on funding, construction could begin on some segments in the early 2030s. In parallel, incremental improvements to El Camino Real will continue to be pursued by Caltrans, SamTrans, SMCTA, and cities. More details on Next Steps can be found in [Chapter 5](#).



The Grand Boulevard Initiative will track progress toward advancing project designs, facilitating public engagement, and advancing key performance indicators. For more information and updates on the Grand Boulevard Initiative, please visit: samtrans.com/gbi.

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Planning Context

El Camino Real of the Past and Present

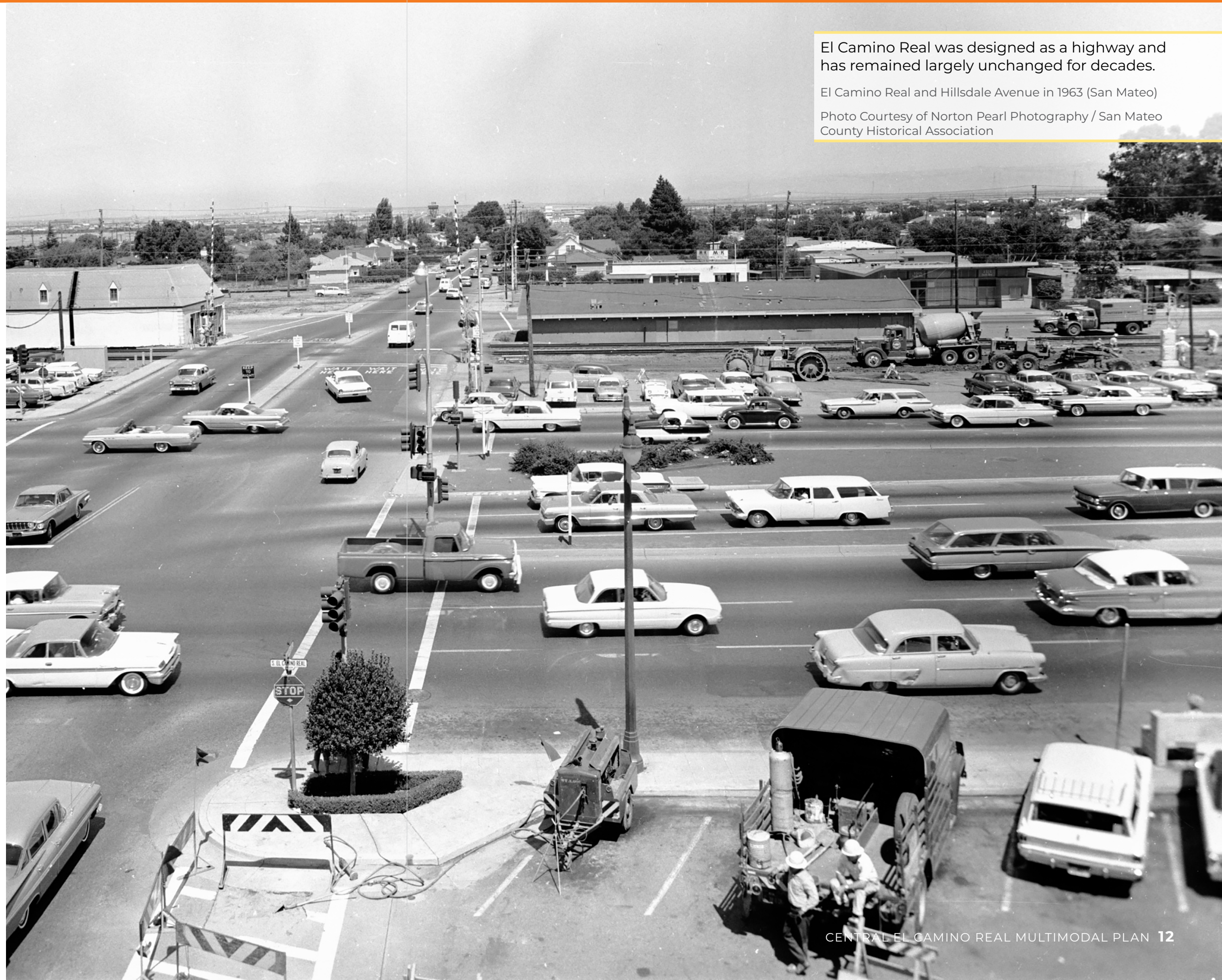
El Camino Real, owned and operated by Caltrans, is a regionally important corridor.

Stretching north into San Francisco and south into Santa Clara County, the corridor has evolved over centuries, from Indigenous travel routes connecting Ramaytush Ohlone communities, to the Spanish mission road system, and ultimately into a paved state highway. The later construction of US-101 and Interstate 280 shifted El Camino Real away from its historic role as the Peninsula's primary regional highway.

El Camino Real was designed as a highway and has remained largely unchanged for decades.

El Camino Real and Hillsdale Avenue in 1963 (San Mateo)

Photo Courtesy of Norton Pearl Photography / San Mateo County Historical Association



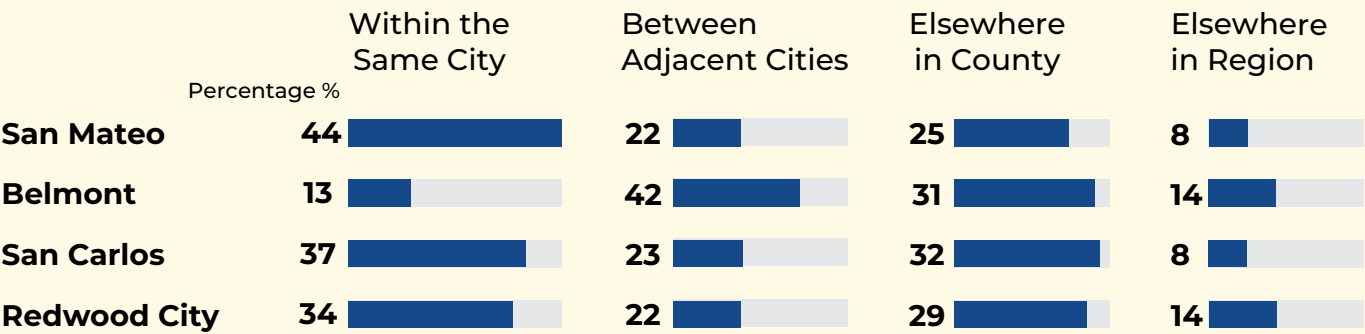
As regional vehicle traffic moved to the freeway network, El Camino Real shifted its purpose from a regional highway oriented towards moving cars to a more locally focused street serving commercial hubs and downtowns. Within the Central Cities, the corridor functions as a continuous urban spine connecting neighborhoods, businesses, schools, civic destinations, and transit hubs across San Mateo, Belmont, San Carlos, and Redwood City. The full Central El Camino Real Needs Assessment is included in **Appendix D**.

Today, El Camino Real serves many roles simultaneously. The study corridor spans approximately eight and a half miles in the study area and contains eight segments with varying width, land use, and urban character.

Much of the roadway remains designed to prioritize vehicle throughput, generally consisting of four to six travel lanes with limited pedestrian space and minimal bicycle infrastructure. Refer to Chapter 4 for more details on existing cross-sectional elements for each segment of the study corridor.

People traveling on El Camino Real tend to use the street to access destinations within the same city or in an adjacent city, as shown in **Figure 2.1**. This demonstrates the street’s role as a local connector and underscores the opportunity to shift trips to travel by bicycle, walking, and transit for shorter trips. Some trips travel elsewhere in the county, and only a small portion of trips (under 15 percent) use El Camino Real to travel outside of the county.

Figure 2.1. Trip Origin and Destination on El Camino Real by City



Trip Origin and Destination on El Camino Real show that trips are most often within the same city or between adjacent cities. Replica, 2024.

Today, El Camino Real in San Mateo has six travel lanes and narrow sidewalks.

El Camino Real north of 24th Avenue (San Mateo)



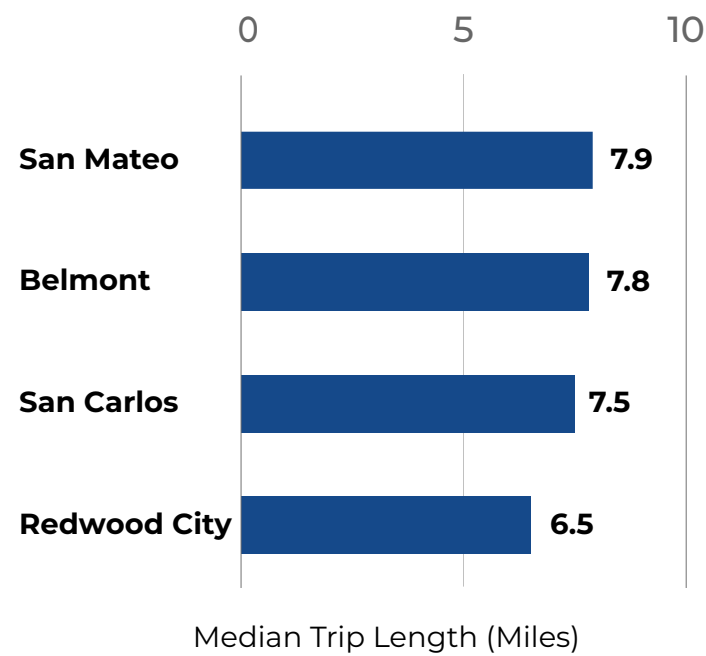
At the same time, the corridor functions as one of the county's most important transit and commercial corridors. SamTrans' bus Route ECR operates along the full length of the study area and is one of the highest-ridership bus routes in San Mateo County. Much of the corridor runs parallel to Caltrain, with several stations located directly adjacent to El Camino Real or within a quarter mile. The surrounding land use context ranges from low-density residential neighborhoods to higher-density mixed-use and commercial districts, notably bisecting or directly connecting the historic downtown cores of the Central Cities.

The average trip length in the Central Cities ranges from six to eight miles, as shown in **Figure 2.2**, which is typically served by transit or vehicle. The largest share of trips on El Camino Real are made by car, around 88 percent, followed by transit, hovering around 9 percent of trips, with the breakdown by city shown in **Figure 2.3**. Very few trips today are made by walking and bicycling, due to the lack of safe and accessible infrastructure for these modes. Existing sidewalks are uncomfortable and stressful due to lack of shade and proximity to high volume, high speed vehicle traffic.

State law,⁶ regional planning, and local planning efforts increasingly identify El Camino Real as a focus area for future housing and mixed-use growth. Priority Development Areas located throughout the corridor are expected to accommodate additional residents, jobs, and commercial activity in transit-accessible locations. As growth continues, El Camino Real is expected to function not only as a transportation corridor, but also as an urban boulevard and public space that supports placemaking and safe and convenient travel for people using all modes. This aligns with Caltrans' own policy direction, which now requires that transportation projects on the state highway system deliver safe, comfortable, and connected facilities for people walking, biking, and riding transit, as part of a broader commitment to eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries and fostering thriving, socially vibrant communities.^{7,8,9}

While the role of El Camino Real has evolved significantly over time, much of the corridor's physical design still reflects an auto-oriented highway intended primarily to move vehicles efficiently through the Peninsula. This mismatch between the corridor's current function and its historic design creates many of the transportation and public realm challenges that exist today.

Figure 2.2. Average Trip Length in the Central Cities



Trip lengths in the Central Cities ranges from six to eight miles. Source: Replica, Spring 2024.

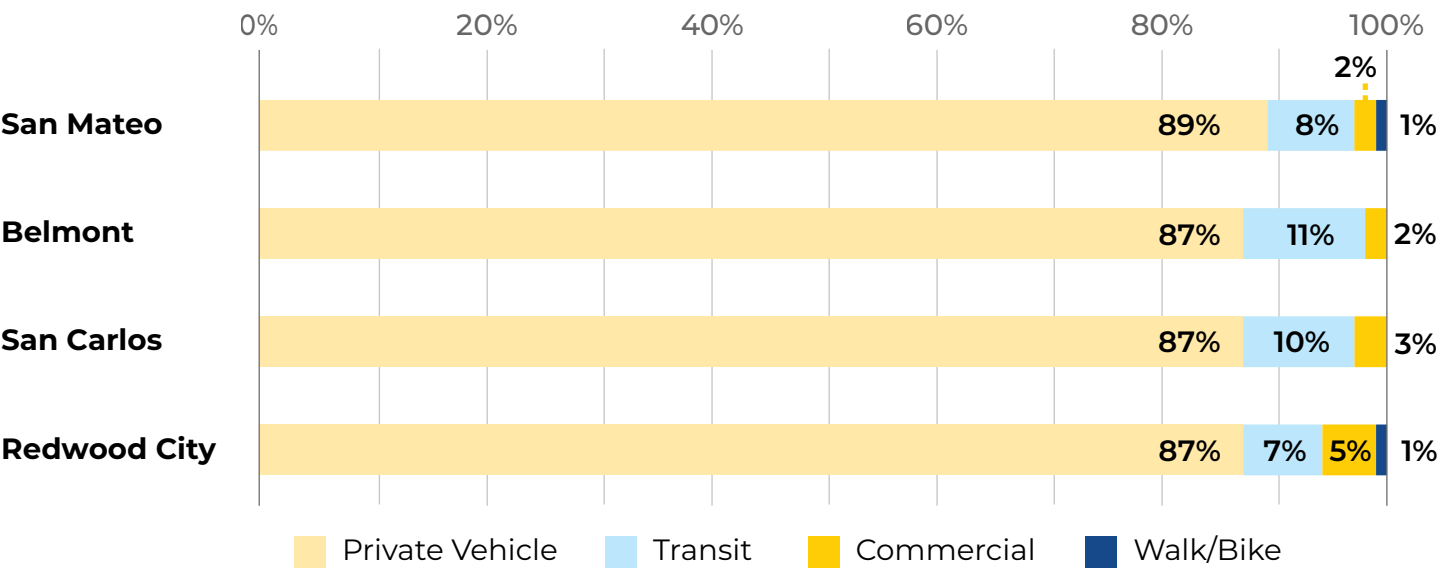
6. Senate Bill 79 (SB 79), 2025: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202520260SB79

7. Caltrans Director's Policy (DP-36), 2022: https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/safety-programs/documents/policy/dp_36-a1ly.pdf

8. Caltrans Director's Policy (DP-37), 2021: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/esta/documents/complete-streets/dp-37-complete-streets-a1ly.pdf>

9. Caltrans Director's Policy (DP-40), 2026: <https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/dib-94-010224-a1ly.pdf>

Figure 2.3. Mode Share on El Camino Real by City



The share of person trips demonstrates that travel by private vehicle (including carpool) is the most dominate mode today. Source: Replica, 2024.



The vehicle-heavy mode share is influenced by design that prioritizes cars over other modes of travel.

El Camino Real and SR 92 (San Mateo)

Understanding the Challenges

El Camino Real as it exists today is falling short of meeting the needs of the Region.

The existing design of El Camino Real reflects transportation priorities of the mid-20th century, when the corridor primarily functioned as a regional highway focused on automobile movement. Today, however, the corridor serves a fundamentally different role: a multimodal urban corridor that must safely accommodate transit riders, pedestrians, bicyclists, local businesses, and growing residential communities.

As travel patterns, land uses, and transportation priorities continue to evolve, the corridor increasingly falls short of local and regional goals related to safety, accessibility, sustainability, transit performance, and placemaking. Understanding the existing challenges along El Camino Real is critical to identifying corridor improvements that better align the roadway with its current and future role.

CHALLENGES ALONG EL CAMINO REAL



Safety

In Central County alone, more than five people are killed or suffer life-altering injuries on El Camino Real each year.



Pedestrian Experience

Sidewalks along El Camino Real are typically less than six feet wide and utility poles, signal infrastructure, and other obstructions further limit accessible pedestrian space, particularly for people using mobility devices.



Transit Reliability

Route ECR currently experiences slow operating speeds and unreliable service throughout much of the study area, with evening peak-period travel speeds often falling below 15 miles per hour.



Bicycle Accessibility

There are no existing bicycle facilities along El Camino Real in Central County, except a one block stretch near Belmont Station.

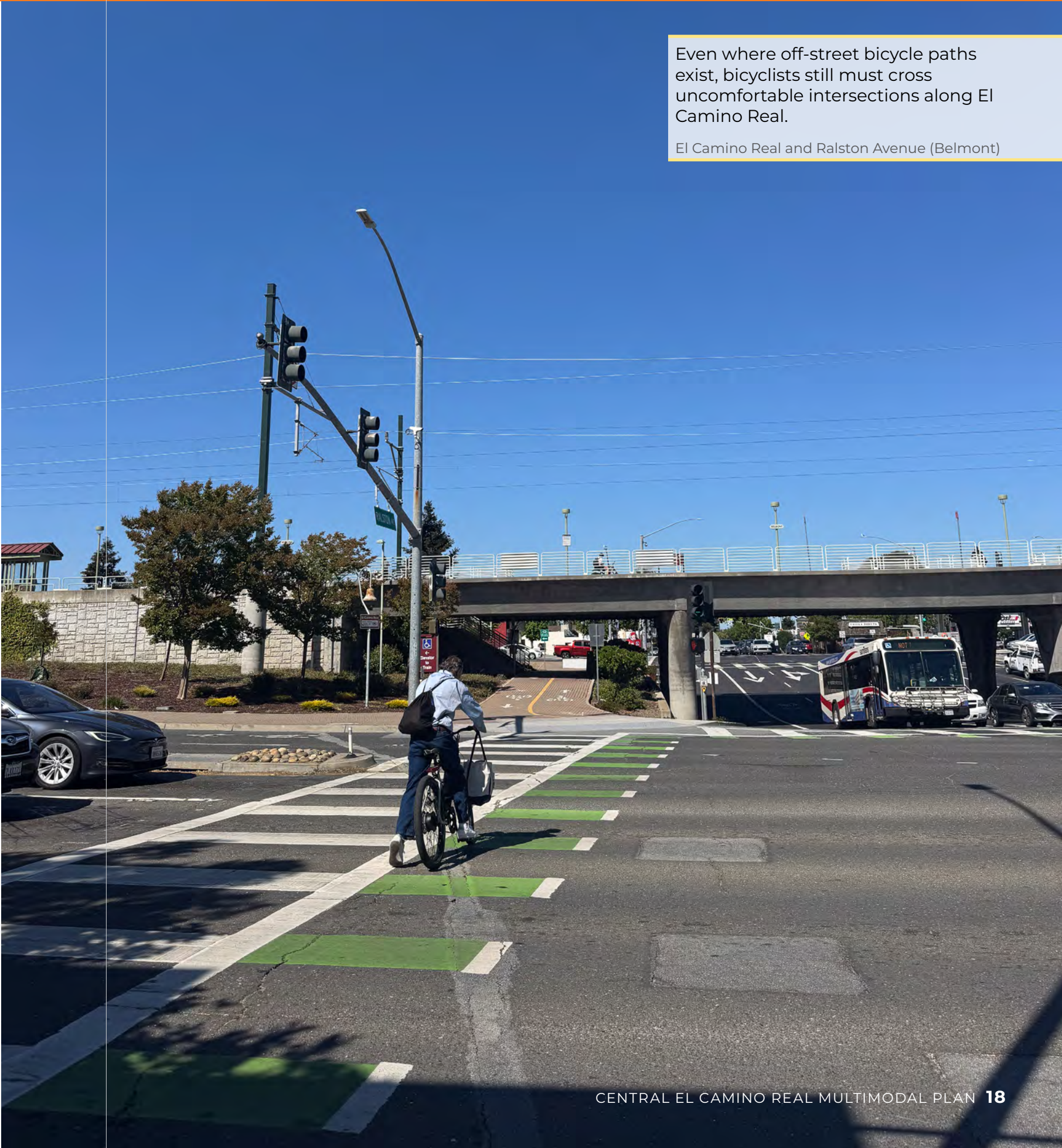


Future Growth

The corridor's current auto-oriented layout is not compatible with plans for higher density development in the area.

Even where off-street bicycle paths exist, bicyclists still must cross uncomfortable intersections along El Camino Real.

El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue (Belmont)



Concentration of Severe Collisions

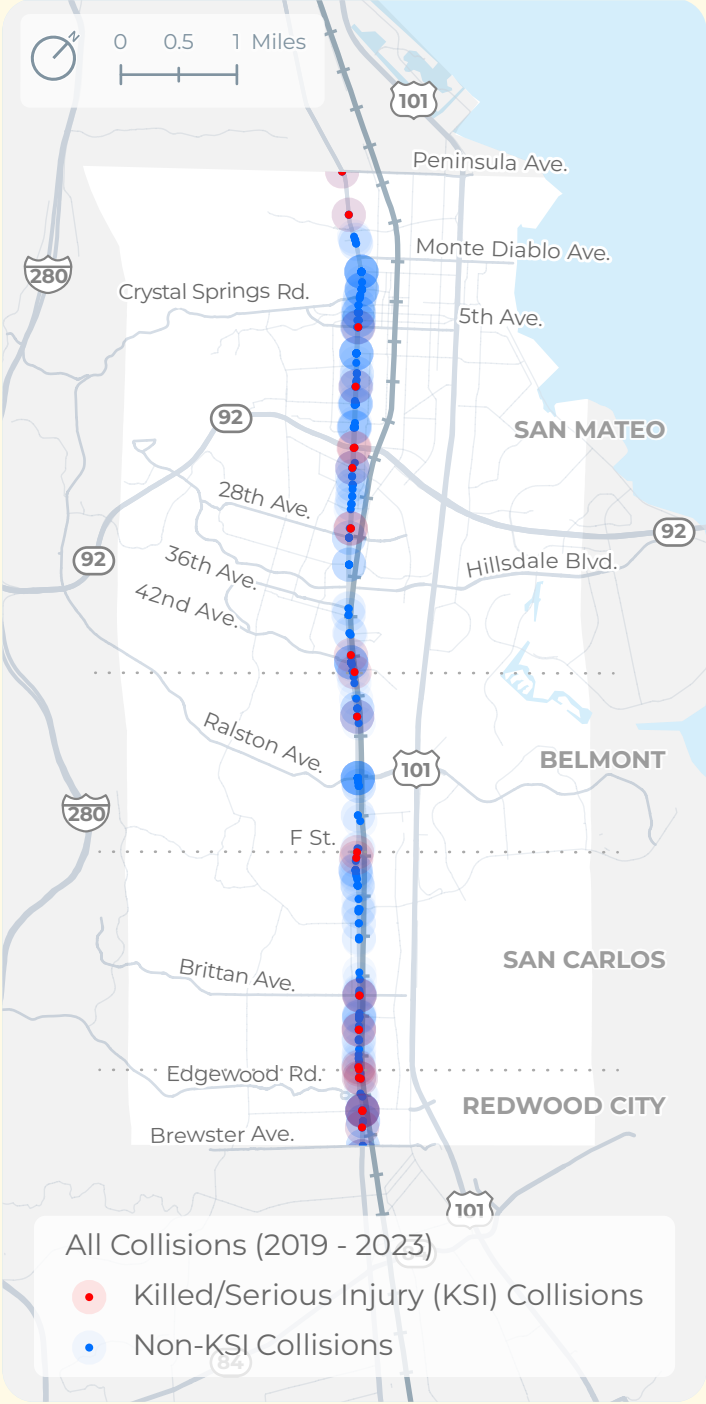
El Camino Real has one of the highest concentrations of serious injury and fatal collisions in San Mateo County. Despite accounting for only a small percentage of the county’s roadway network, the corridor experiences a disproportionately high number of fatal and severe injury collisions, mapped in **Figure 2.4**. In Central County alone, more than five people are killed or suffer life-altering injuries on El Camino Real each year.

Collision data from 2019 to 2023 in **Figure 2.5** shows that people walking and biking are disproportionately involved in injury collisions along El Camino Real compared to people traveling in vehicles. Severe injury and fatal crashes, shown in **Figure 2.6**, are also more likely to occur at intersections where long crossing distances, high turning volumes, and complex vehicle movements create challenging conditions for all modes.

Unsafe speeds and failure to obey traffic signals are among the most common factors contributing to injury collisions along the corridor. Rear-end, broadside, and vehicle-pedestrian collisions are the most common crash types. Redesigning the street with improvements that reduce vehicle speeds, reduce conflict points, and separate modes with comfortable facilities are critical to improving safety outcomes along El Camino Real.

In San Mateo, 144 collisions resulted in injury between 2019 and 2023, including 11 fatal or severe injury collisions. The highest concentration of collisions occurred in downtown San Mateo and near the State Route 92 interchange. Belmont experienced 36 injury collisions, including two severe injury collisions, while San Carlos and Redwood City experienced 94 injury collisions, including 13 fatal or severe injury crashes. Collision concentrations in these communities are particularly high south of Arroyo Avenue.

Figure 2.4. Collisions Along El Camino Real



Collisions were concentrated in downtown San Mateo, near the State Route 92 interchange, and in San Carlos and Redwood City south of Arroyo Avenue. Source: TIMS, 2023.

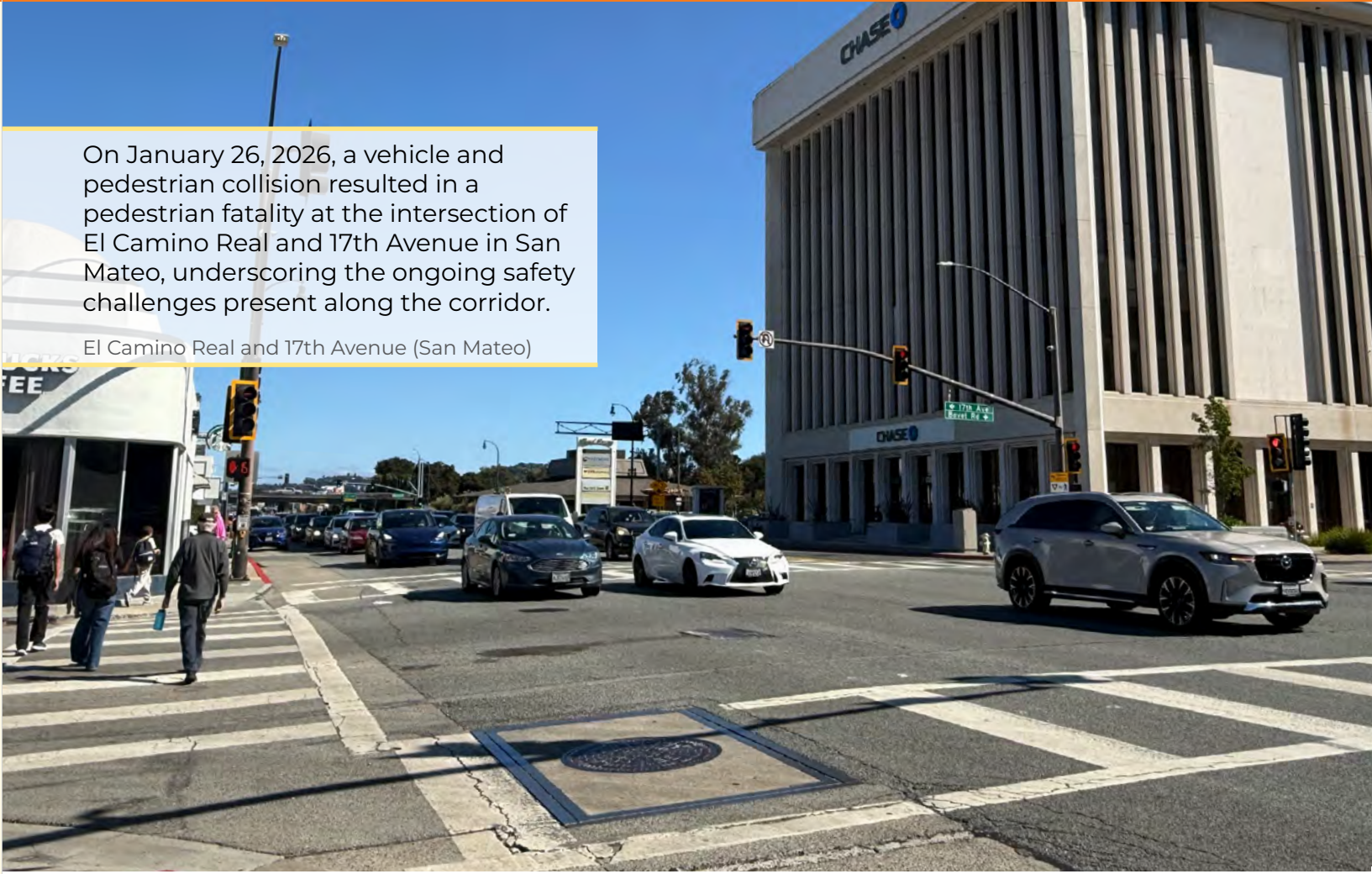
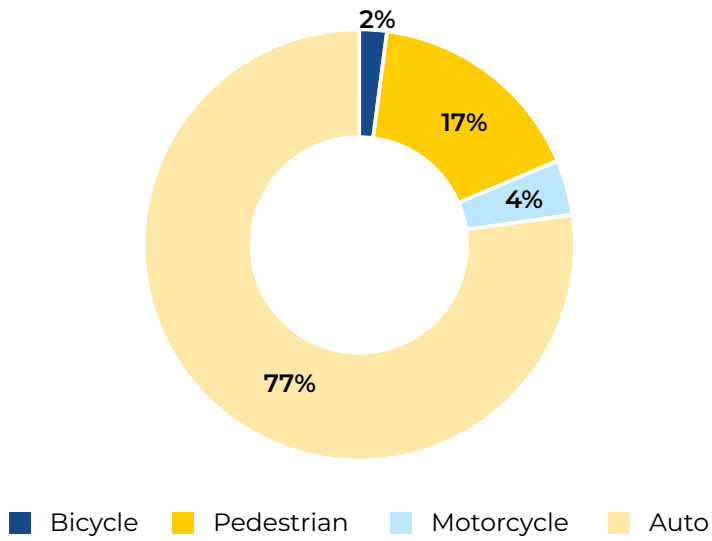
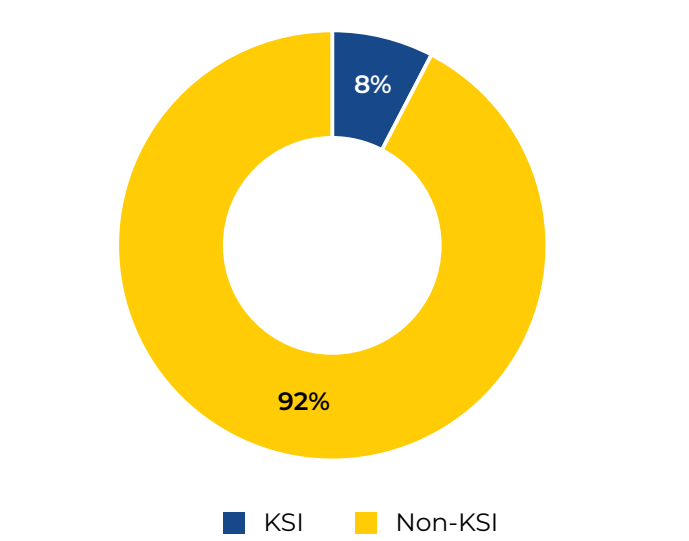


Figure 2.5. Injury Collisions by Mode



Bicycles and pedestrians account for 19% of injury collisions despite comprising 2% of all trips on El Camino. Source: TIMS, 2019-2023.

Figure 2.6. Killed/Serious Injury (KSI) Crashes



More than 80% of KSI collisions occurred at intersections. Source: TIMS, 2019-2023.

Uncomfortable Pedestrian Environment

Many segments of El Camino Real provide an uncomfortable, inaccessible, and uninviting environment for people walking. Sidewalks are typically less than six feet wide and utility poles, signal infrastructure, curb cuts, and other obstructions further limit accessible pedestrian space, particularly for people using mobility devices. Large portions of the corridor lack street trees, landscaping, or shade infrastructure, creating uncomfortable walking conditions during warm weather and reinforcing the corridor’s highway-oriented character.

Many side-street intersections are stop-controlled and do not have pedestrian crossings, making it harder for people to access businesses, housing, transit stops, and Caltrain stations. At signalized intersections, long crossing distances, auto-oriented signal timing, and reduced visibility for pedestrians create additional barriers to walking.

Although El Camino Real serves many commercial districts, transit stops, and downtown destinations, the poor quality

of the pedestrian environment often discourages walking and limits the corridor’s potential to function as an active and vibrant public space. This characteristic separates communities, making it harder to access one side from the other.

Outreach to community members gathered input on concerns and opportunities for El Camino Real.

Many community members had the same key concern for the corridor:

“Sidewalks are too narrow... and this is a scary crosswalk!”

Others also commented on the need to shorten crossing distances and improve visibility for people walking.

“Cars need to be able to see pedestrians, and pedestrians need to have adequate time to cross.”

Quotes reflect responses to the Phase 1 and 2 online surveys.

Long crossing distances increase exposure for people walking.

El Camino Real and Chestnut Street
(Redwood City)

Streetlights, telephone poles, and other utility conflicts block pedestrian through zones.

El Camino Real and 4th Avenue (San Mateo)

Lack of Bicycle Facilities and Connections

There are no existing bicycle facilities along El Camino Real in Central County, except a one block stretch adjacent to the Belmont Caltrain Station. Bicycles are required to ride in mixed traffic flow with vehicles lanes, but with four to six vehicle lanes and posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour, bicycles cannot safely or comfortably share the street. Bicyclists have been observed using the sidewalks along El Camino Real, which are narrow and have frequent utility poles that reduce the usable space and create conflicts with people walking. The bicycle network on parallel city streets is fragmented or often nonexistent, leaving people who want to access the businesses, housing, and transit connection on El Camino Real via bike limited in their options.

Crossing El Camino Real on a bike can be equally challenging. The existing crossings are long with a high volume of conflicting vehicle movements and lack features that separate bicycles in time in space such as protected intersections and bicycle signals. El Camino Real is a barrier for bicyclists both on the corridor itself and for east/west travel.



People biking along El Camino Real must ride next to high volume, high speed vehicle traffic.

El Camino Real and State Route 92 (San Mateo)



Route ECR provides bus service along El Camino Real.

El Camino Real and 5th Avenue (San Mateo)

Deteriorating Bus Speed and Reliability

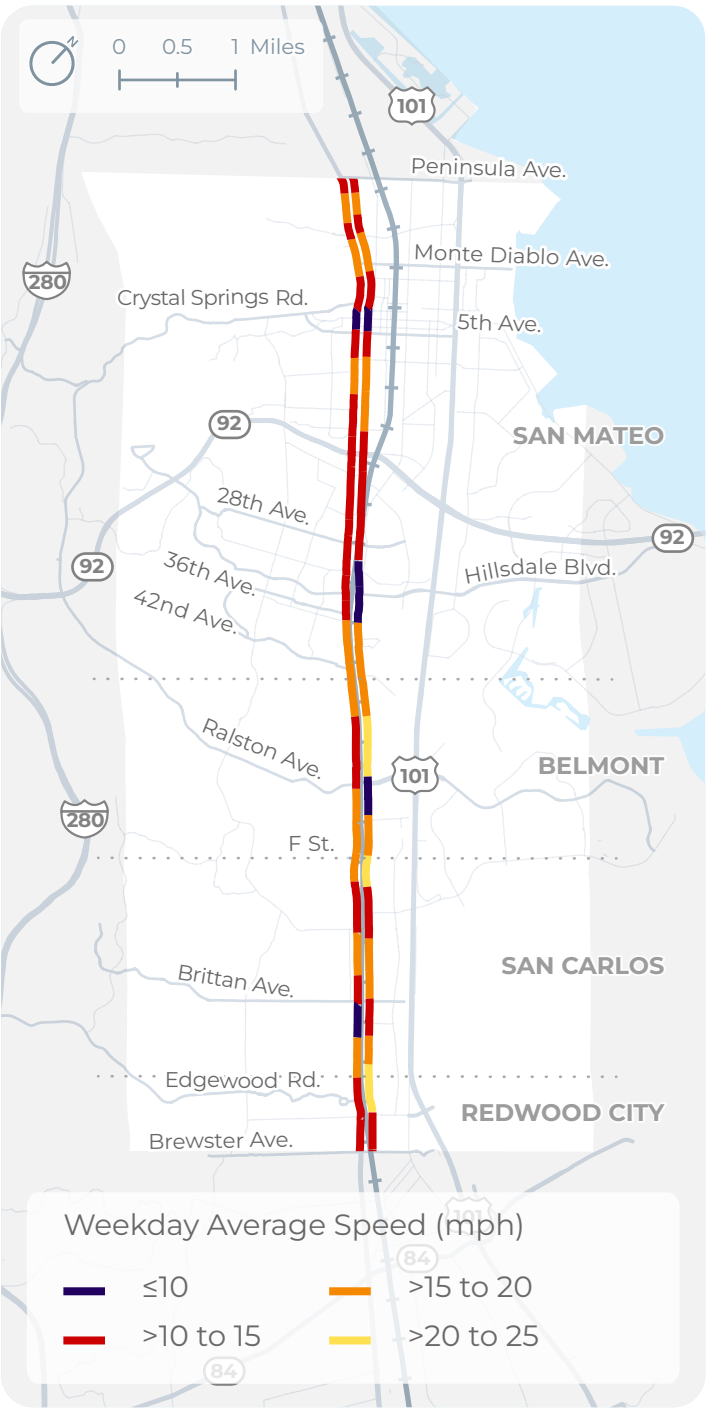
El Camino Real is one of the most important transit corridors in San Mateo County and serves as the backbone of the SamTrans network through Route ECR. Despite strong ridership and frequent service, transit operations along the corridor face ongoing challenges related to speed, reliability, and rider experience. The average weekday bus speed is shown in **Figure 2.7**.

Transit performance is constrained by roadway congestion, near-side stops, limited transit priority measures, and signal timing that prioritizes vehicle throughput over bus operations. Existing curbside bus stop configurations often require buses to merge back into traffic after stopping, further contributing to delay and unreliable travel times.

As a result, Route ECR currently experiences slow operating speeds throughout much of the study area, with evening peak-period travel speeds often falling below 15 miles per hour. The El Camino Real Bus Speed and Reliability Study (2022) estimated that transit lanes would improve peak hour travel times by 10 minutes northbound and 12 minutes southbound along Route ECR.¹⁰ If vehicle congestion worsens with increased demand, bus speed and reliability would continue to deteriorate. Improving transit speed and reliability will be essential to accommodating future growth while reducing dependence on private vehicle travel.

10. Samtrans, El Camino Real Bus Speed and Reliability Study, 2022: <https://www.samtrans.com/media/25336/download?inlinepdf>

Figure 2.7. Bus Speeds on El Camino Real (6AM to 7PM)



Average weekday bus speeds are largely lower than 15 miles per hour in the Central Cities. Source: El Camino Real Bus Speed and Reliability Study (2022).

A Street That Can’t Absorb Expected Growth

El Camino Real is expected to accommodate substantial housing and mixed-use growth over the coming decades as shown in **Figures 2.8 and 2.9**. Throughout the study area, many parcels along the corridor are designated as Priority Development Areas intended to support transit-oriented housing, employment, and commercial activity.

As more people live, work, shop, and travel along the corridor, the current roadway configuration becomes increasingly incompatible with the surrounding land use context. A corridor designed primarily to

maximize vehicle throughput at the expense of other modes is not an efficient, safe, or effective way to move large numbers of people within a dense, mixed-use urban environment.

Accommodating future growth will require a corridor that safely and efficiently moves significantly more people, not simply more vehicles. Achieving this shift will require greater emphasis on walkability, safer crossings, high-quality transit service, bicycle connectivity, and a more comfortable public realm that supports short local trips and multimodal travel throughout Central County.

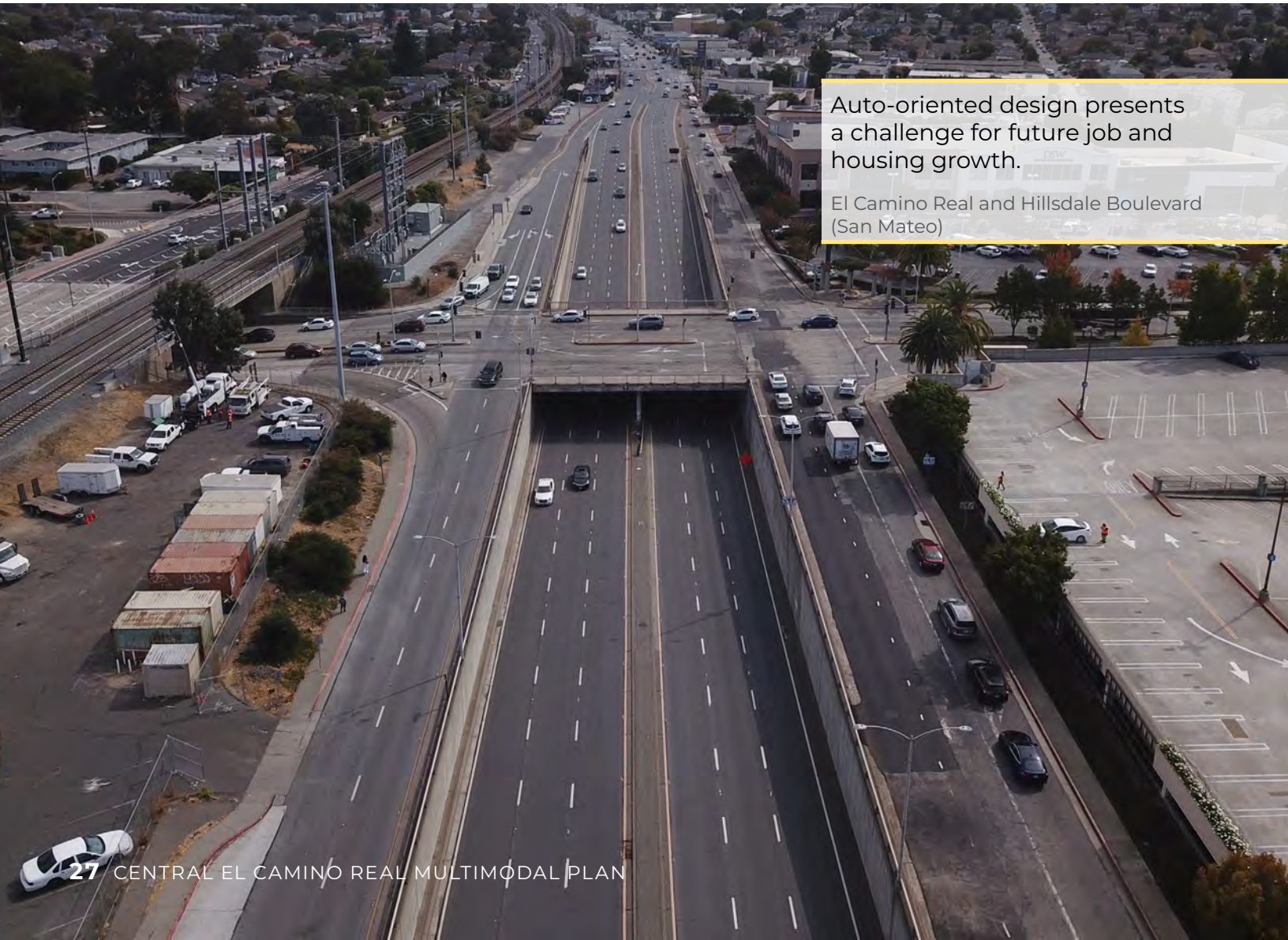
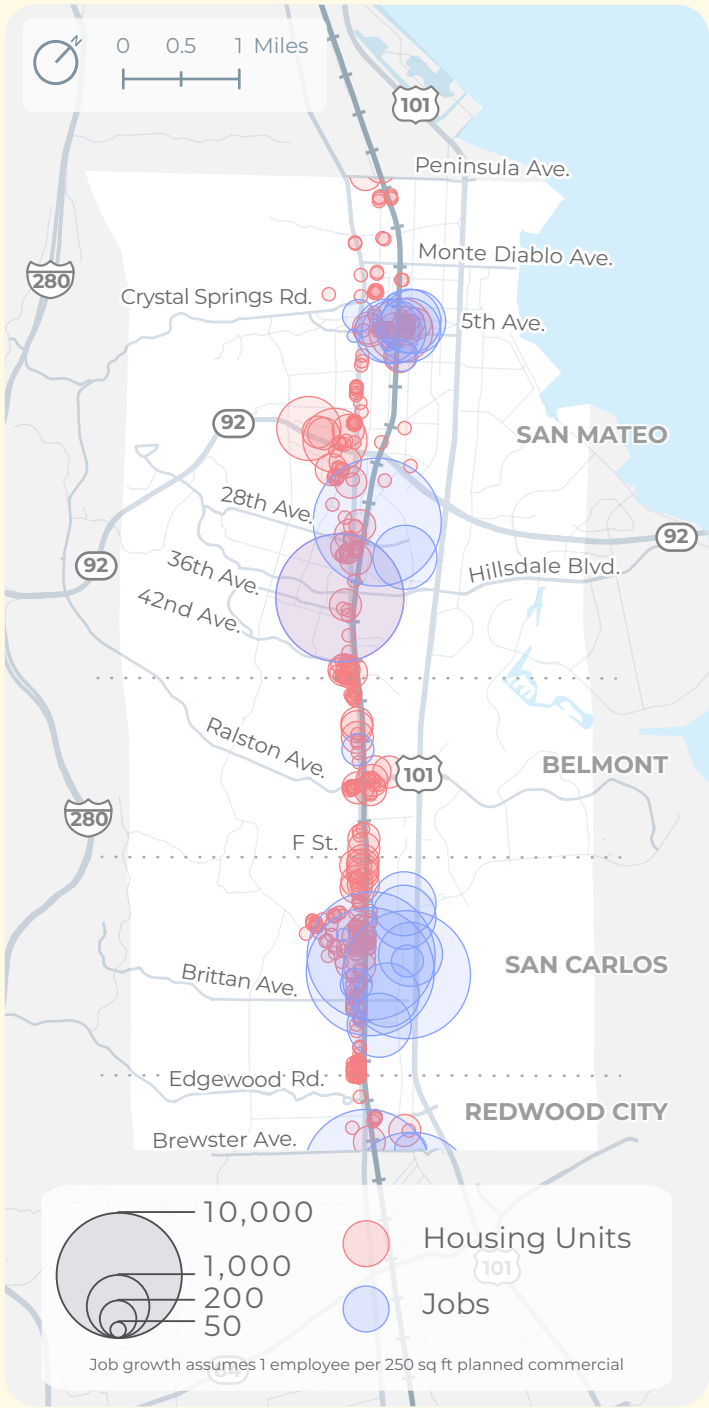
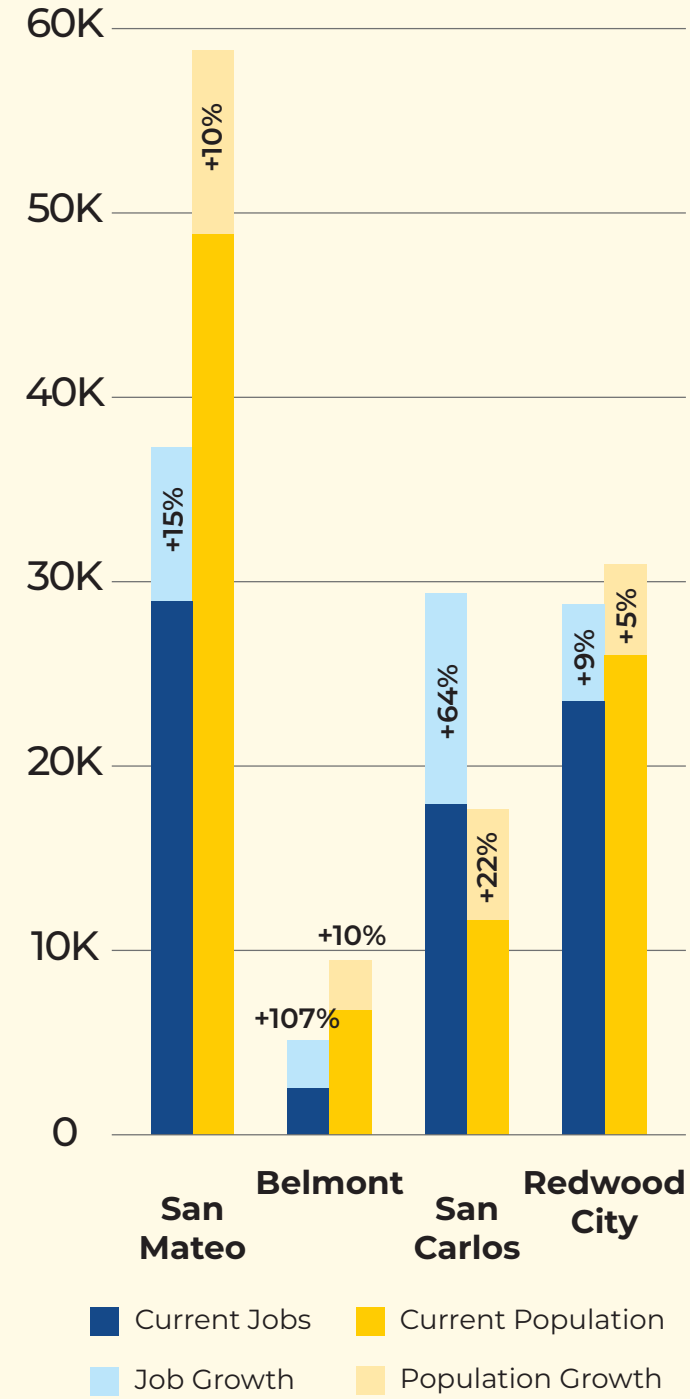


Figure 2.8. Anticipated Housing Units and Jobs along El Camino Real



The Central Cities are expected to accommodate substantial housing and mixed-use growth along El Camino Real in the coming decades. Source: Fehr & Peers, based on a review of individual city Housing Elements and development pipelines in Fall 2024.

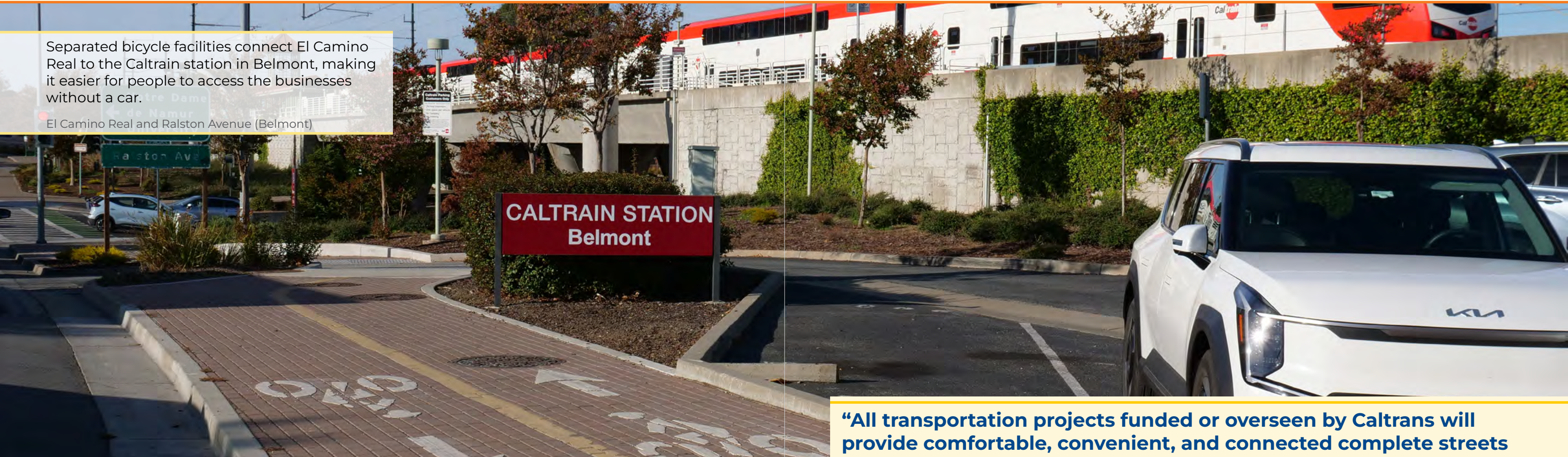
Figure 2.9. Anticipated Job and Population Growth within a Half Mile of El Camino Real



To calculate job growth, Fehr & Peers estimated a new job for every 250 SF of commercial/office development. To calculate population growth, Fehr & Peers estimated two new residents for every projected housing unit. Source: Fehr & Peers, based on a review of individual city Housing Elements and development pipelines in Fall 2024.

Separated bicycle facilities connect El Camino Real to the Caltrain station in Belmont, making it easier for people to access the businesses without a car.

El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue (Belmont)



“All transportation projects funded or overseen by Caltrans will provide comfortable, convenient, and connected complete streets facilities for people walking, biking, and taking transit.”

- Caltrans Director’s Policy 37, Complete Streets

Policies and Previous Planning Efforts Influencing El Camino Real’s Future

Recent statewide policies have reshaped how Caltrans approaches projects on El Camino Real and other state highways.

Through DP-36, DP-37, and DP-40, Caltrans has committed to reducing fatal and serious injury crashes, creating Complete Streets that serve people of all ages and abilities, and improving transit travel times and reliability. These policies recognize that state highways in urban areas often function as community streets and should support walking, biking, and transit in addition to driving. The Central El Camino Plan reflects this direction by exploring ways to improve safety, to provide comfortable

pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and to support faster and more reliable transit service.

Regional and corridor-wide plans reinforce the need for a multimodal El Camino Real. Caltrans District 4’s Bike Plan, Pedestrian Plan, and Bay Area Transit Plan all identify El Camino Real as an important connection between homes, jobs, schools, community centers, and regional transit. The SamTrans Bus Speed and Reliability Study identifies Route ECR as a priority corridor for transit improvements and recommends strategies to reduce delay and improve reliability. These efforts shape the Plan’s focus on creating safer and more connected travel options while improving transit performance along the study area.

The Central Cities share a common vision for El Camino Real. Key priorities include improving safety through safer crossings and lower vehicle speeds, creating a more comfortable walking environment with wider sidewalks and additional street trees, expanding bicycle connectivity through continuous low-stress facilities, and improving transit speed and reliability along the Route ECR corridor. These shared priorities reflect a coordinated effort to make El Camino Real a multimodal corridor that better serves existing and future needs.

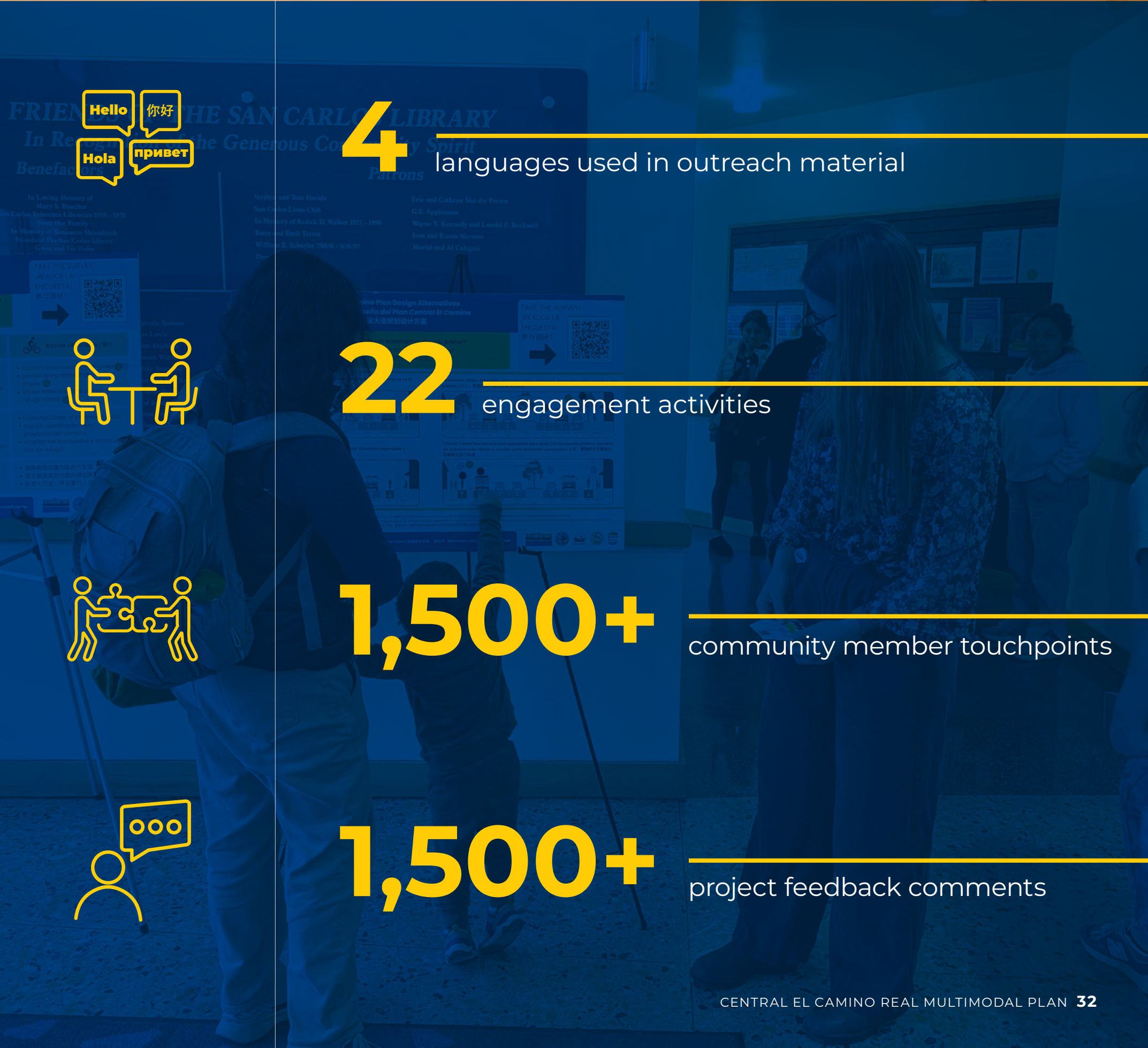
Local planning efforts in Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City, and San Mateo informed the vision for El Camino Real. The Belmont Village Specific Plan, San Carlos Downtown

Specific Plan and Streetscape Master Plan, and Redwood City’s El Camino Real Corridor Plan call for cross-section changes to integrate street trees and a more welcoming public realm. The City of San Mateo’s Transit Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan, Local Road Safety Plan, and Bicycle Master Plan identify spot improvements for El Camino Real. Community feedback from these efforts emphasized making El Camino Real easier and more comfortable to walk, bike, and access by transit. The Central El Camino Plan builds on these local priorities while creating a coordinated vision across city boundaries, supporting the broader goals of the Grand Boulevard Initiative.

3

Community Engagement

The Central El Camino Plan conducted two phases of community engagement between 2025 and 2026. Engagement activities gathered input from corridor users, residents, businesses, advocacy organizations, and historically underrepresented communities to help shape the Plan's understanding of existing conditions and needs and shape the future corridor. Refer to **Appendix A** for detailed summaries of engagement activities.





“It’s essential to have **protected bike lanes** and **dedicated bus lanes.**”

(Belmont)

Phase 1 Engagement Pop-up Event at Caltrain Station

(San Carlos)

“Stretches of El Camino Real going north from San Carlos Station...**need additional crosswalks.**”

(San Carlos)



Phase 1 Engagement Walk Audit

(San Carlos)

Phase 1: Listening to Understand the Corridor

Phase 1 engagement was performed to understand existing corridor conditions, identify transportation and safety concerns, and build awareness of the planning process.

Activities occurred between May and August 2025 and the engagement process sought to confirm issues previously identified in local planning efforts while collecting new input from corridor users and communities not previously engaged. Key questions focused on how people travel along El Camino Real, where safety concerns exist, and what types of improvements community members would like to see along the corridor.

Outreach materials and surveys were provided in multiple languages, including English,

Spanish, simplified Chinese, and Russian, to improve accessibility and broaden participation.

The Phase 1 engagement program included a wide range of outreach:

- **12 engagement events** (3 pop-up events, 3 virtual listening sessions, 3 walk audits, 3 meetings with community-based organizations)
- **An online map-based survey**
- **5 presentations** to community groups and advisory bodies
- More than **500 interactions** with community members
- Over **800 location-specific comments** related to walking, biking, transit, driving, and safety conditions

Quotes reflect responses to the Phase 1 online survey.

“A bus only lane would **benefit all who rely on SamTrans** to get to work or appointments on time.”

(Redwood City)

“Sidewalks [are] too narrow in front of businesses.”

(San Mateo)



Phase 1 Engagement Fourth of July Pop-up Event at Central Park

(San Mateo)

Phase 2: Discussing Alternatives with the Community

The Plan conducted Phase 2 engagement to gather feedback on draft corridor alternatives and improvement concepts developed through the technical analysis and Phase 1 input.

In Phase 2, which occurred between January and March 2026, community members chose their preferred street design for El Camino Real in each city and shared what improvements they most want to see.

Engagement materials were again provided in English, Spanish, and simplified Chinese to support broad participation.

Phase 2 engagement included the following outreach activities:

- **8 engagement events** (3 pop-up events, 3 virtual listening sessions, an in-person Spanish-language community-based organization meeting, and a virtual workshop)
- **An online survey**
- **Business outreach efforts**
- **9 presentations** to community groups and advisory bodies
- More than **1,000 interactions** with community members
- Over **700 survey responses** related to safety improvements on El Camino Real and transportation preferences



Quotes reflect responses to the Phase 2 online survey.



Phase 3: Communicating the Path Forward

The Plan conducted Phase 3 engagement in Summer 2026 to share back what was heard through Phases 1 and 2 and demonstrate how community input has informed the refinement of corridor alternatives and recommended improvements.

Building on feedback gathered from residents, businesses, community-based organizations, and historically underrepresented communities, Phase 3 focused on communicating the key themes and priorities identified throughout the engagement process and explaining how they are reflected in the final alternatives advancing into the Caltrans review process. Engagement activities provided community members and decision-makers, including City Councils, with an opportunity to understand the recommended path forward and how public input helped shape the Plan's outcomes.



Phase 1 Pop-up event in Belmont
(Belmont)

4

Vision for Central El Camino Real

Access points should be designed for easy transitions between modes.
(Belmont)



How the Vision Developed

The El Camino Real alternatives were developed through a year-long process which included evaluating existing conditions, consulting with City Staff from each of the four cities, reaching out to the community, and engaging with city leadership including city managers and councils.

The initial development of alternatives created three cross sections for each segment, organized around modal priority: transit priority, pedestrian priority, and bicycle priority. These alternatives originated from the universe of cross section options developed by the GBI Action Plan. The project team then adapted them to city-specific contexts, making sure they reflect previous planning efforts from Caltrans, San Mateo, Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City, SamTrans, and other agencies. They also seek to address critical existing challenges along the corridor, as informed by the existing conditions analysis, feedback from agency stakeholders, and community input on needs and priorities. The designs also strive to align with Caltrans standards and guidance.

The project team evaluated the initial cross sections based on several key metrics. The full evaluation matrix is included in **Appendix C**:

- Alignment with Caltrans Policy
- Alignment with Local Policy
- Effect on People Walking
- Effect on People Biking
- Effect on People Riding Transit
- Effect on People Driving and Parking
- Effect of the Environment
- Addressing Community Input

The second phase of community engagement sought feedback on each cross section. Both the evaluation and community feedback informed the refinement of alternatives into current recommendations.



Phase 1 Engagement Pop-up at the San Carlos Caltrain Station
(San Carlos)

What We Heard From Community Members

Across the Central Cities, Phase 2 feedback reflected a strong desire for a safer, more comfortable, and more connected El Camino Real that better serves people walking, biking, and riding transit. Community members consistently expressed support for pedestrian safety improvements, protected bicycle facilities, and transit-priority treatments. Respondents also emphasized the importance of creating a corridor that is easier to navigate, more welcoming for users of all ages and abilities, and better connected to surrounding neighborhoods, destinations, and regional transit services. While opinions varied regarding the extent to which vehicle travel lanes should be reallocated, a common theme across all cities was the desire to balance different travel needs while creating a safer and more multimodal corridor.

San Mateo

Phase 2 feedback in San Mateo highlighted a similar level of support across all alternatives. Many respondents supported continuous wider sidewalks, protected bicycle lanes, and dedicated bus facilities that would encourage more people to travel without driving and improve connections to local destinations. Participants highlighted safety concerns in the downtown area, particularly at busy intersections. Respondents also identified the Hillsdale area as an important location for improving transit operations and connectivity. Some respondents expressed concern about reducing vehicle capacity and the potential for increased congestion, reflecting the desire for a corridor that better balances all modes while providing safe and continuous connections for people walking, biking, and riding transit. Additional outreach was funded by the City of San Mateo. The results are in **Appendix E**.

“Traffic is at capacity now, cannot remove any lanes...”

“Speed bus service with dedicated lane. Also increase distance between stops by 50% to reduce stops and increase bus speed; faster busses are more usable.”

“I would love to have continuous separated bike lanes -- currently the speed [on El Camino Real] makes it dangerous without separation.”

“Wider sidewalk for sure because the shops are really struggling when the outside is so unpleasant when cars are zooming by.”

Quotes reflect responses to the Phase 2 online survey.

Belmont

In Belmont, Phase 2 feedback indicated strong support for improving bicycle conditions along El Camino Real. Respondents frequently identified protected bicycle lanes as a priority, often citing concerns about safety and comfort when riding alongside vehicle traffic. Many participants expressed interest in using bicycles more often for local trips if safer facilities were provided, viewing bicycle improvements as an important step toward reducing reliance on driving. Feedback also reflected support for improved transit service and a more comfortable pedestrian environment.

“Pedestrian and bicycle safety is paramount as road speeds increase. **Let’s make [El Camino Real] a safe and welcoming space for foot and bike travel** that is well connected, [especially] to our mass transit options (i.e., Caltrain).”

“...I would like to ride a bike more and use more buses. I want to drive less as I get older. But I am afraid to ride on El Camino.”

“I’d prefer **bikes and busses and wider sidewalks**. Happy to give up car lanes and parking for that.”



Despite recent improvements, there are still many changes that would make El Camino Real feel safer for people outside of cars.
El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue (Belmont)

San Carlos

Phase 2 feedback in San Carlos reflected a desire for a well-balanced corridor that improves multimodal travel while maintaining functionality for all users. Respondents frequently supported both bicycle and transit improvements, often viewing them as complementary investments that would strengthen connections to Caltrain and other regional destinations. Safety and comfort for bicyclists were recurring themes, alongside support for faster and more reliable bus service.

Opinions regarding pedestrian enhancements were more mixed, with some respondents prioritizing bicycle and transit improvements.

“The only way to use El Camino on the bike is via a **separated bike lane**.”

“I think the single best thing that could happen to [El Camino Real] for San Mateo County is a **dedicated bus lane**.”

“**Bikes and buses both - all up and down the peninsula would be great**. Combined with Caltrain you can get almost anywhere.”

Quotes reflect responses to the Phase 2 online survey.

Redwood City

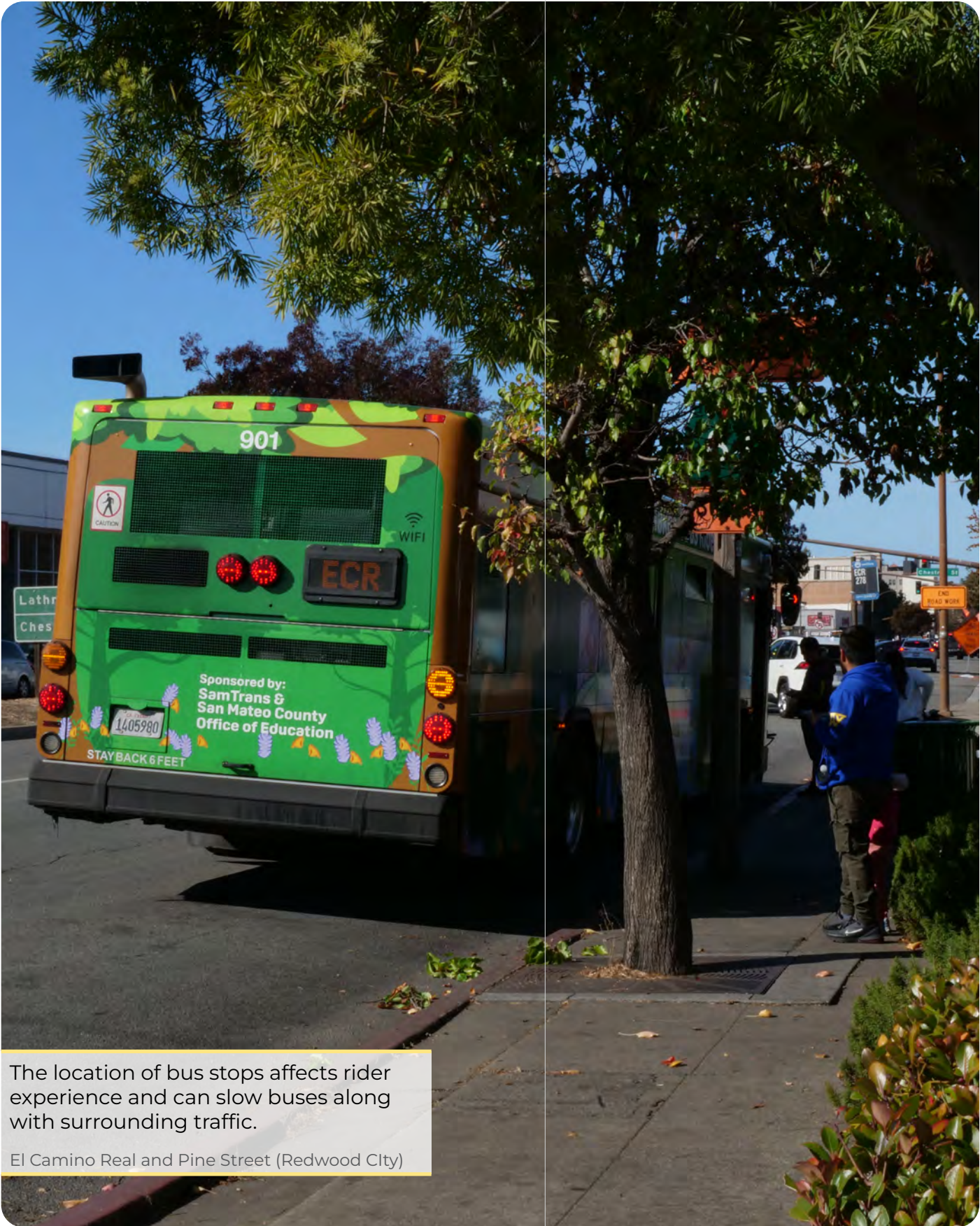
Phase 2 feedback in Redwood City emphasized creating a safer and more attractive multimodal corridor through improvements for walking, biking, and transit. Respondents frequently supported protected bicycle lanes, dedicated bus lanes, and wider or more comfortable pedestrian spaces, often linking these improvements to increased safety and quality of life. Many participants expressed interest in reducing reliance on driving by providing more viable transportation alternatives, while others noted concerns about maintaining vehicle mobility and parking access.

“I would like **wider sidewalks to encourage walking** in the community.”

“**Protected bike lanes and dedicated bus lanes** would be great.”

“Having **dedicated transit only lanes** will greatly improve the speed and reliability of bus service along [El Camino Real] - I am a frequent rider of the ECR bus and **it frequently gets delayed by non-bus traffic.**”

Quotes reflect responses to the Phase 2 online survey.



The location of bus stops affects rider experience and can slow buses along with surrounding traffic.
El Camino Real and Pine Street (Redwood City)

Design Considerations

The designs were developed based on Caltrans standards in Design Information Bulletin 94 Complete Streets: Contextual Design Guidance (DIB 94) and Design Information Bulletin 89-02: Class IV Bikeway Design Guidance (DIB 89-02). DIB 94 provides guidance for the width of different Complete Streets elements based upon the context of the street. DIB 94 is the primary resource for determining the preferred widths of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle facilities along El Camino Real and supersedes the design standards in the Highway Design Manual (HDM). DIB 89-02 provides guidance for the design of Class IV Separate Bikeways, both for the basic cross sections and for conflict locations at intersections, driveways, and loading areas.

Additional design standards align with standards from the California HDM and California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD). The full design considerations document can be found in **Appendix C**.

Reference to Previous Planning Efforts

The following design alternatives and targeted spot improvements also pull from previous countywide and local planning efforts. The following plans were referenced:

- **SamTrans:** SamTrans Bus Speed and Reliability Study (2022);
- **San Mateo:** Complete Streets Master Plan (ongoing, draft), Local Roadway Safety Plan (2024), Transit Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan (2022), Bicycle Master Plan (2020);
- **Belmont:** Belmont Village Specific Plan (2017), Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2016);
- **San Carlos:** Downtown Streetscape Master Plan (2025), Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan;
- **Redwood City:** El Camino Real Corridor Plan (2017), RWC Walk Bike Thrive (2022), RWC Moves (2018).

Alternatives

Three design alternatives for El Camino Real will advance into the Caltrans project development process.

El Camino is currently four to six vehicle lanes, with parking along most of the corridor. There are no existing bicycle facilities along the corridor, and sidewalk space is typically narrow, without street trees or other shade.

Through the alternatives development process, the project team used community feedback and evaluation results to narrow the range of cross section options and combine similar cross sections into three design alternatives.

These three design alternatives for El Camino will advance into the Caltrans project development process. The following cut sheets describe the proposed alternatives, shown through representative cross sections for each of the eight distinct segments along the corridor. The cross sections within each alternative work together as a complete corridor-wide concept and are not intended to be mixed-and-matched with cross sections from other alternatives. The exact widths of the design elements and detailed considerations will be determined during further study in future phases of the process.

These alternatives will be carried forward into the Caltrans review process at which point we will evaluate critical feasibility consideration including, but not limited to, traffic operations, safety outcomes, right-of-way constraints, and parking impacts.

Alternative 1 prioritizes transit speed with dedicated bus lanes and includes dedicated bicycle facilities in Belmont, San Carlos, and Redwood City. Sidewalk improvements and street trees are proposed where widths allow.

\$23.5M
per mile 20%
of GBI cost

Alternative 2 prioritizes pedestrian and bicycle comfort, including wider sidewalks, street trees, and dedicated bicycle facilities in Belmont, San Carlos, and Redwood City.

\$22.1M
per mile 19%
of GBI cost

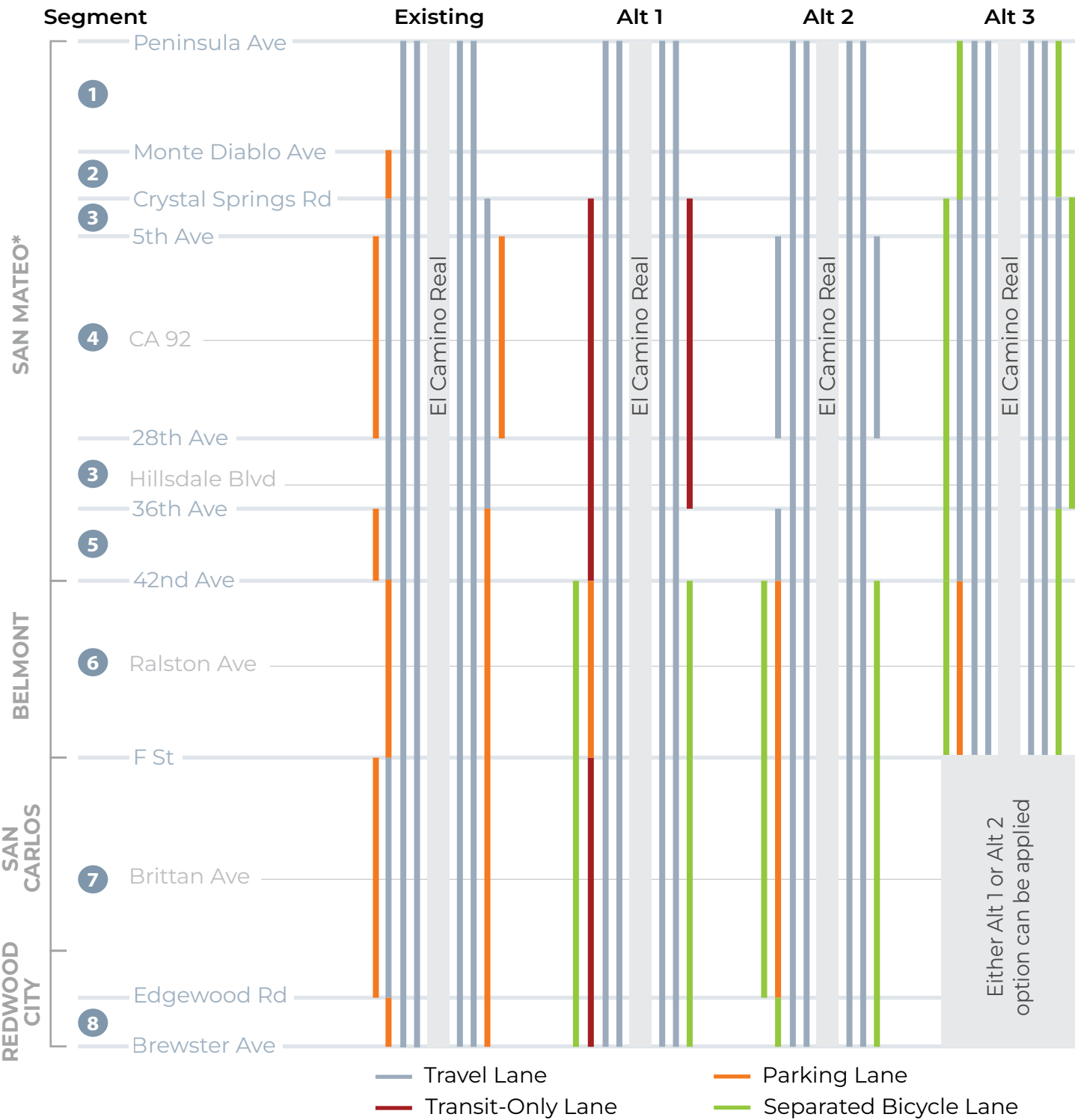
Alternative 3 only shows a variation for the San Mateo segments, which includes maintaining travel lanes and separated bicycle facilities. Belmont, San Carlos, and Redwood City may advance either Alternative 1 or 2 along with San Mateo's alternative 3.

\$23.4M
per mile 20%
of GBI cost

*For segments within the City of San Mateo, there is one additional alternative which is the existing cross section plus only the spot improvements. This alternative is referred to as Alternative 4 for Segments 1 through 5 on the following pages. See spot improvements starting on page 73.

Corridor Overview

Click on the segment number you want to navigate to.



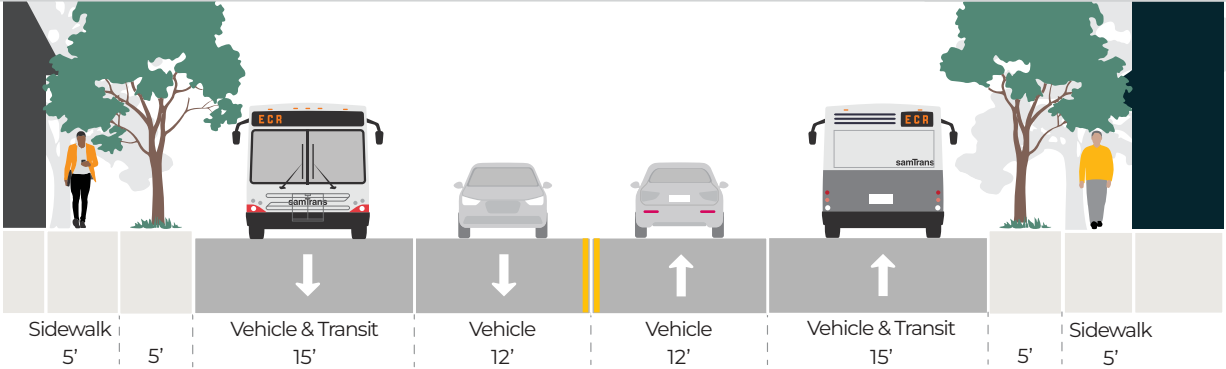
Click to view corridor-wide improvements: BIKE CONNECTIVITY SPOT IMPROVEMENTS

SEGMENT 1

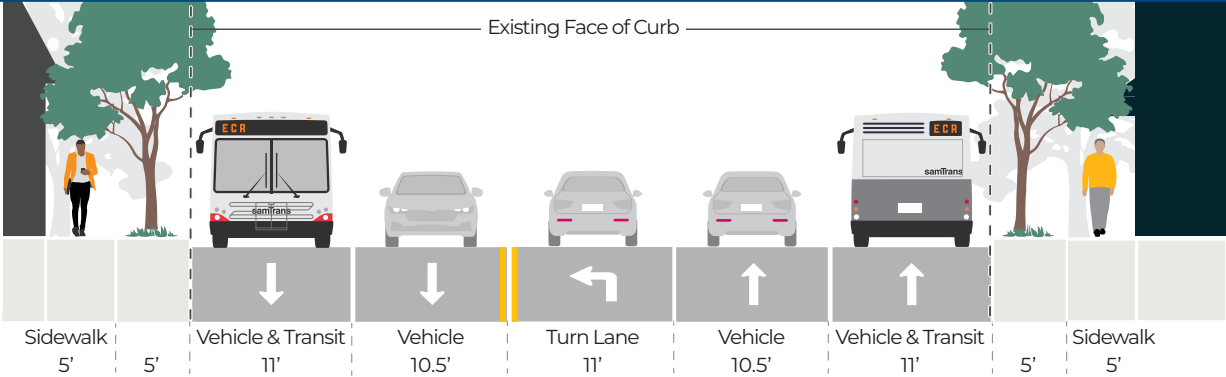
Peninsula Ave to Monte Diablo Ave

Segment 1 of El Camino has 74 feet of right-of-way with two vehicle lanes in each direction. This segment accommodates sidewalks and landscaping with trees on both sides, but does not include left turn pockets or on-street parking. Sidewalks on this segment do not meet minimum widths provided in Caltrans design standards. The main land uses adjacent to this segment are medium-density residential areas.

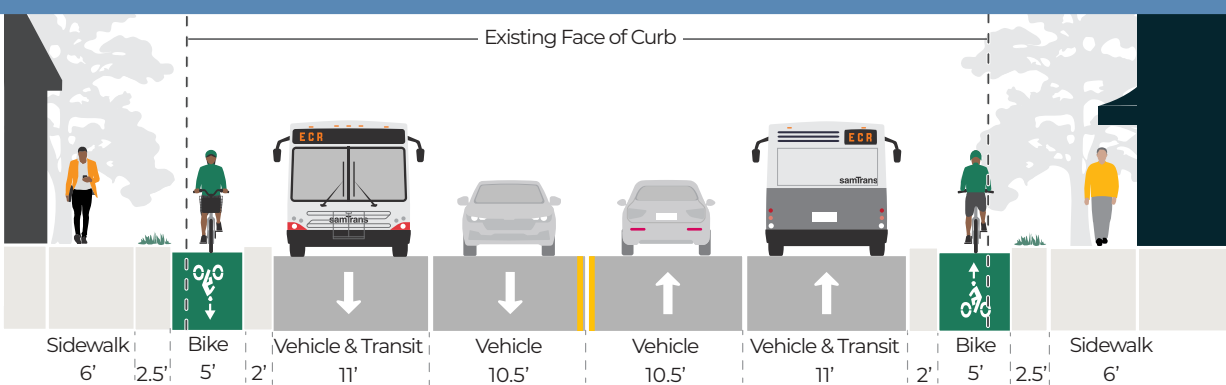
Existing Cross Section & Alternative 4 (Looking North) 74'



Alternative 1 & 2 Cross Section



Alternative 3 Cross Section

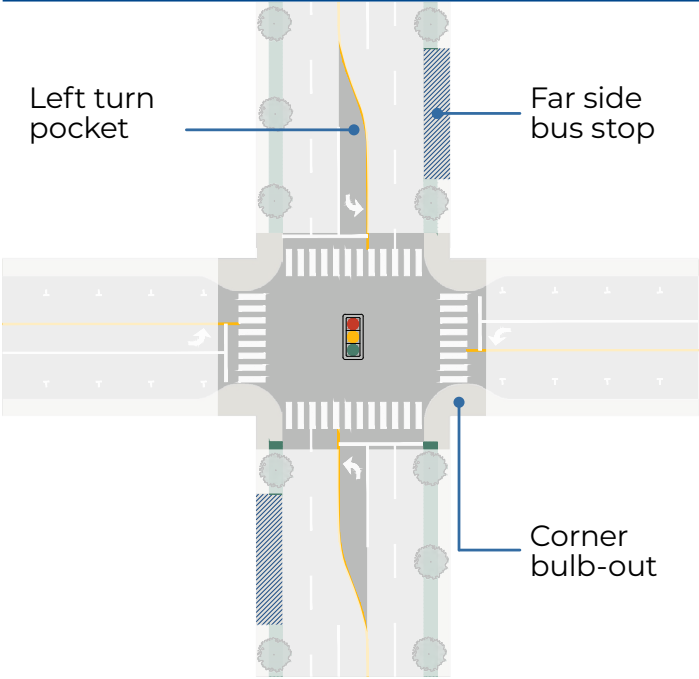


Sidewalk widths for these alternatives do not consistently meet the minimum standards per Caltrans DIB 94 (8 feet) and would therefore require seeking a design exception from Caltrans and leveraging setback requirements for future developments for expanded sidewalk space.

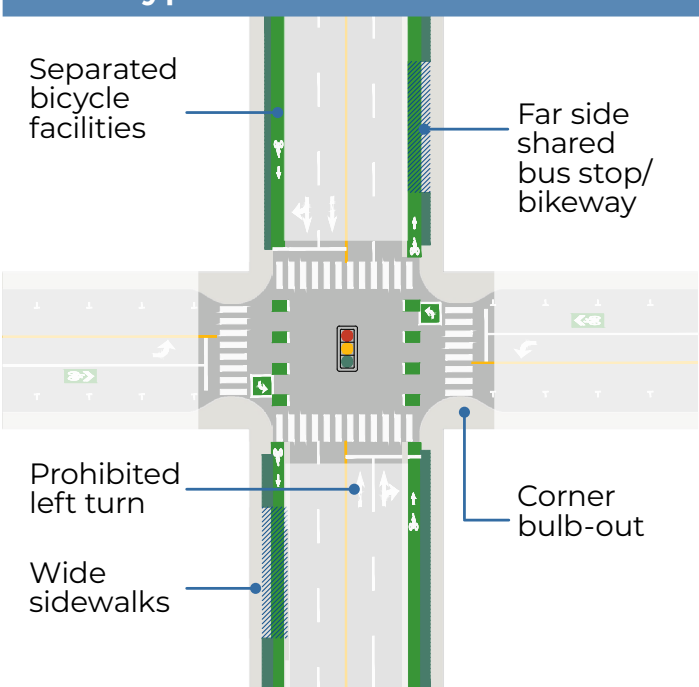
Proposed Key Changes

Alternatives 1 and 2 prioritize transit reliability by adding left turn pockets which improves circulation, improves safety, and reduces delay. Alternative 3 prioritizes safety and comfort for people walking and biking by adding separated bicycle facilities and widening sidewalks on both sides; left turns would be prohibited to improve safety at intersections.

Alt 1 & 2 Typical Intersection

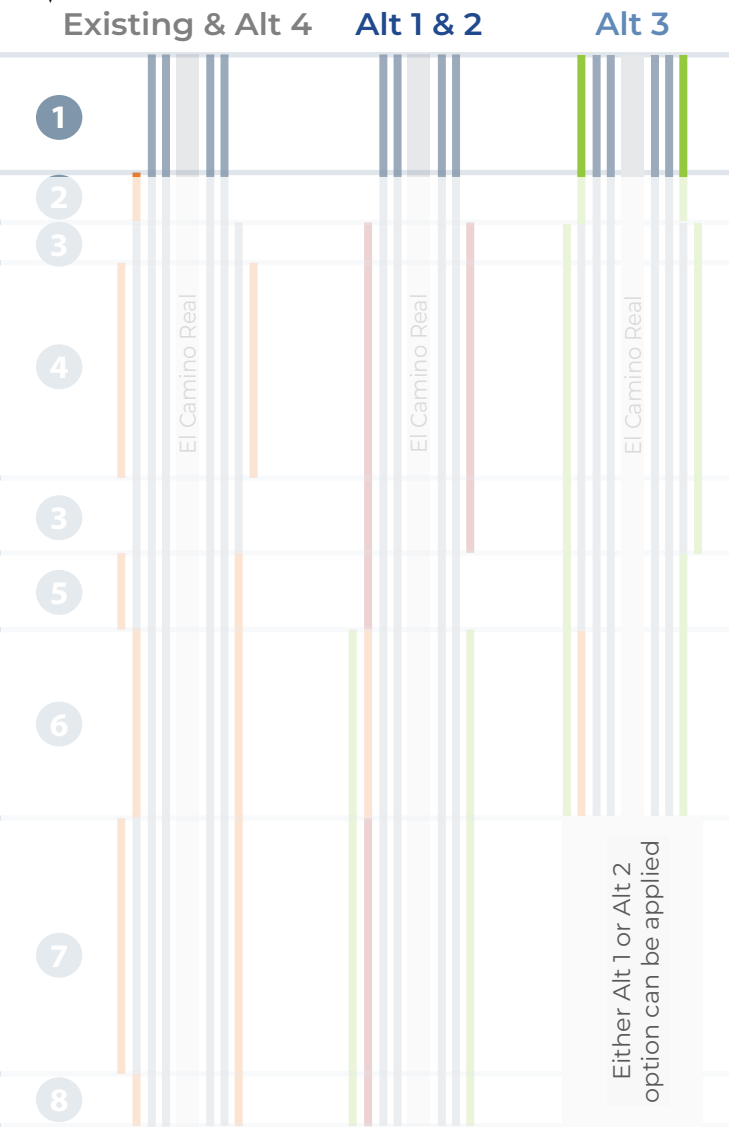


Alt 3 Typical Intersection



Corridor Map

Click on the map to jump to each segment.



- Travel Lane
- Parking Lane
- Transit-Only Lane
- Separated Bicycle Lane

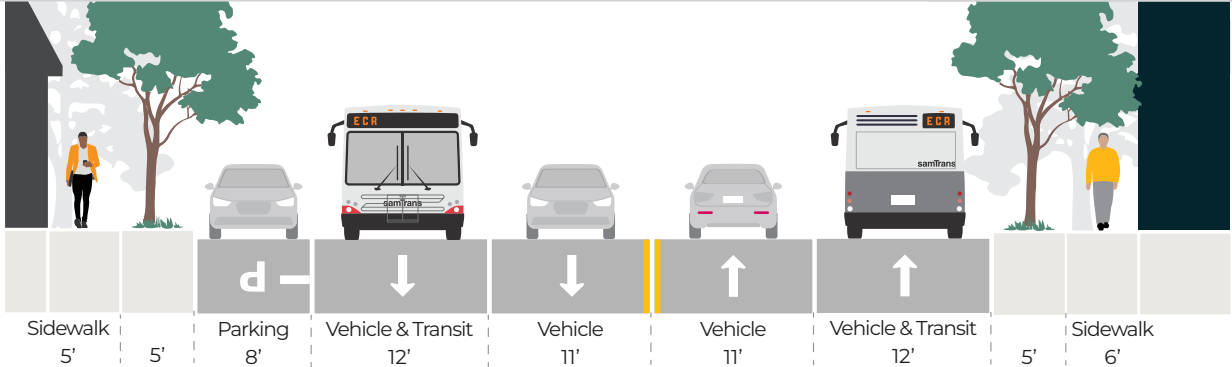
SEGMENT 1 SPOT IMPROVEMENTS

SEGMENT 2

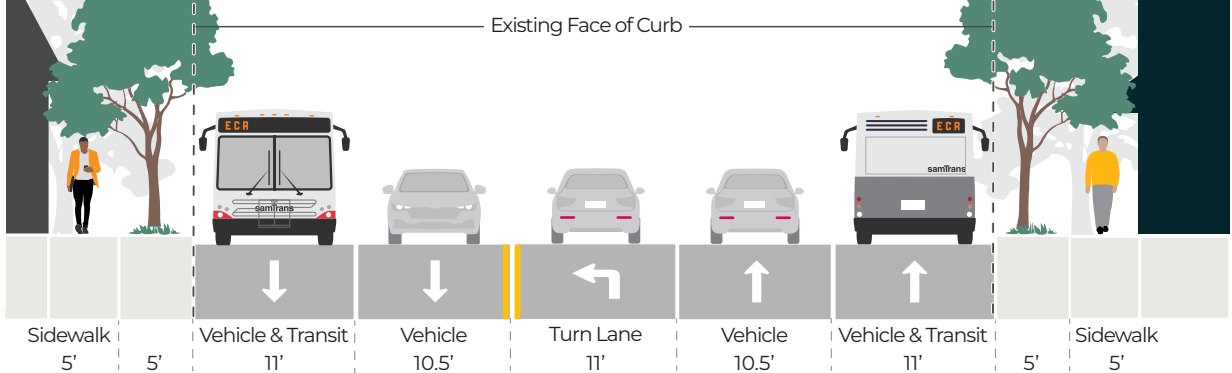
Monte Diablo Ave to Crystal Springs Rd

Segment 2 of El Camino has 74 feet of right-of-way with two vehicle lanes in each direction. This segment accommodates on-street parking on the west side and sidewalks and landscaping with trees on both sides, but does not include left turn pockets. Sidewalks on this segment do not meet minimum widths in Caltrans design standards. The main land uses adjacent to this segment are medium-density residential areas.

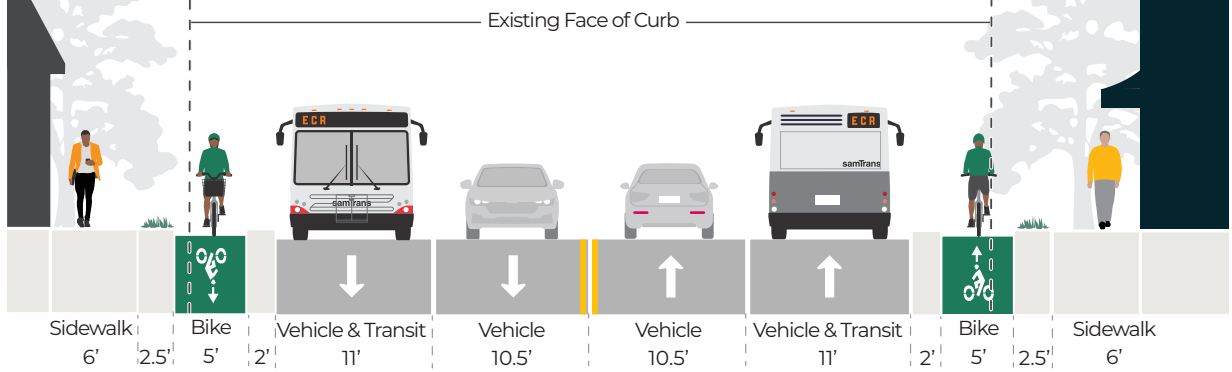
Existing Cross Section & Alternative 4 (Looking North) 74'



Alternative 1 & 2 Cross Section



Alternative 3 Cross Section

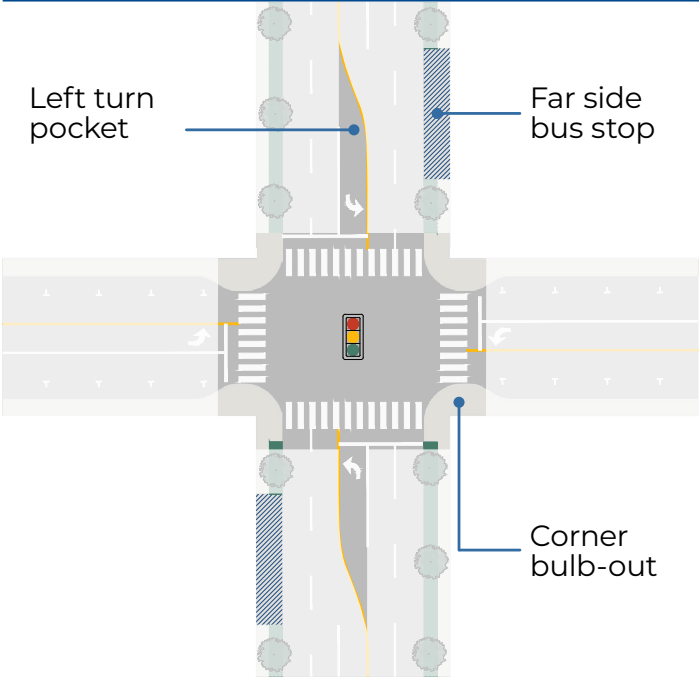


Sidewalk widths for these alternatives do not consistently meet the minimum standards per Caltrans DIB 94 (8 feet) and would therefore require seeking a design exception from Caltrans and leveraging setback requirements for future developments for expanded sidewalk space.

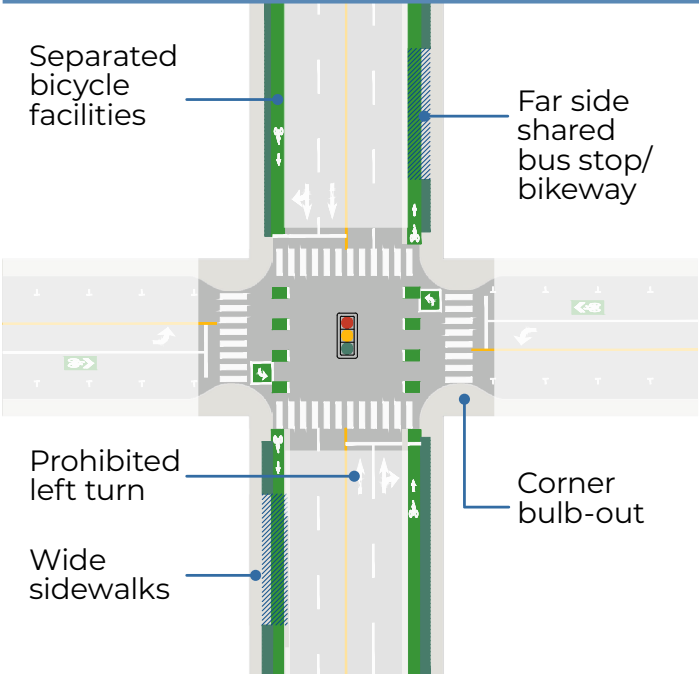
Proposed Key Changes

All alternatives proposed for this segment are the same as those for Segment 1. The only difference in key changes for all alternatives is removing the on-street parking on the west side.

Alt 1 & 2 Typical Intersection

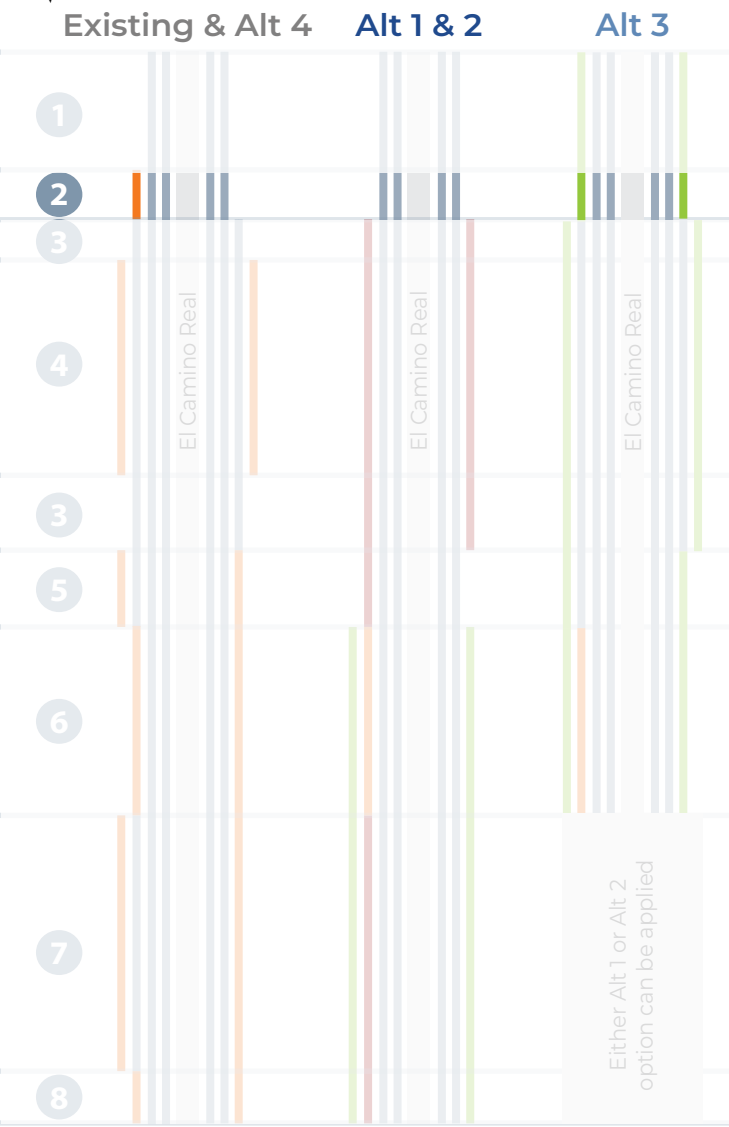


Alt 3 Typical Intersection



Corridor Map

Click on the map to jump to each segment.

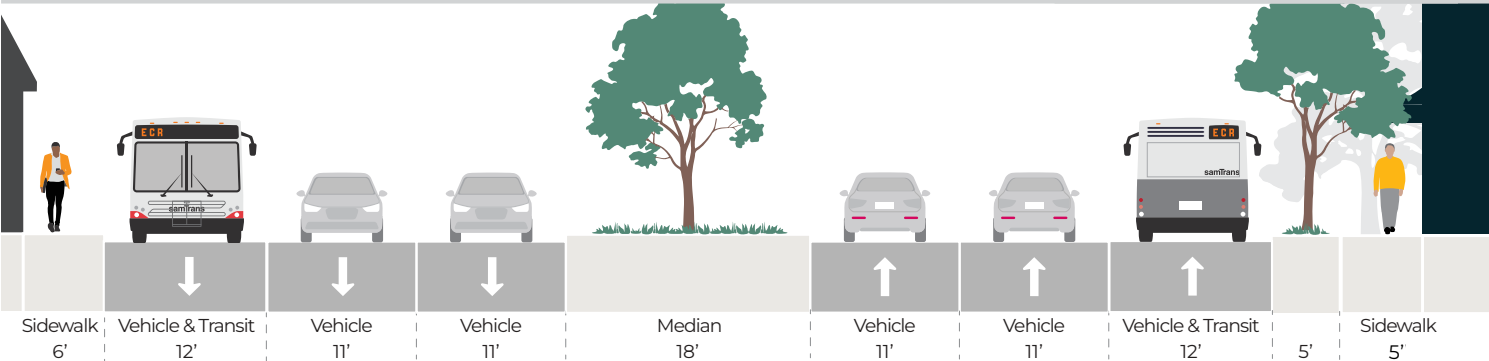


SEGMENT 3

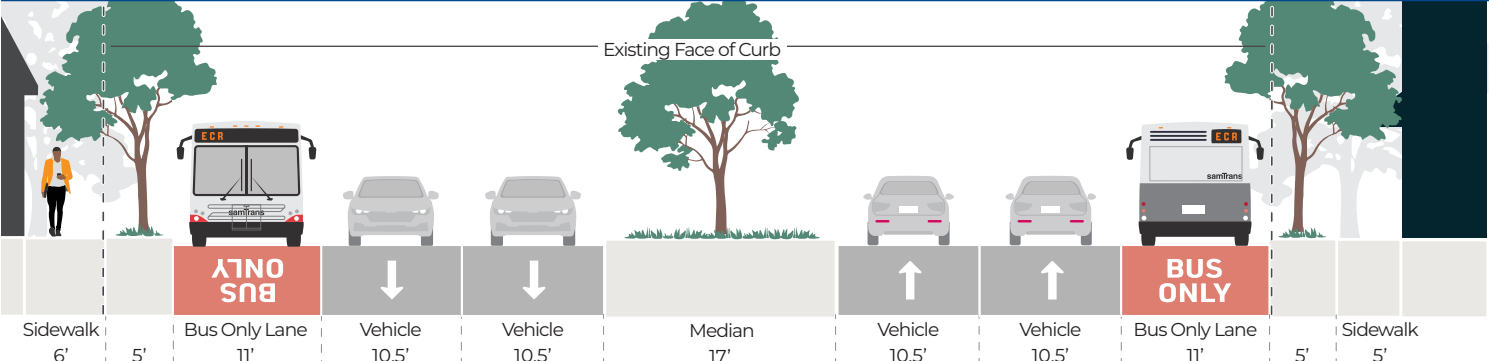
Crystal Springs Rd to 5th Ave / 28th Ave to 36th Ave

Segment 3 of El Camino has 102 feet of right-of-way with three vehicle lanes in each direction. This segment accommodates a raised concrete median with left-turn pockets at intersections, sidewalks on both sides, and landscaping with trees on the east side, but no on-street parking. Sidewalks do not meet minimum Caltrans width standards. The main adjacent land uses are the downtown core and Hillsdale commercial areas.

Existing Cross Section & Alternative 4 (Looking North) 102'

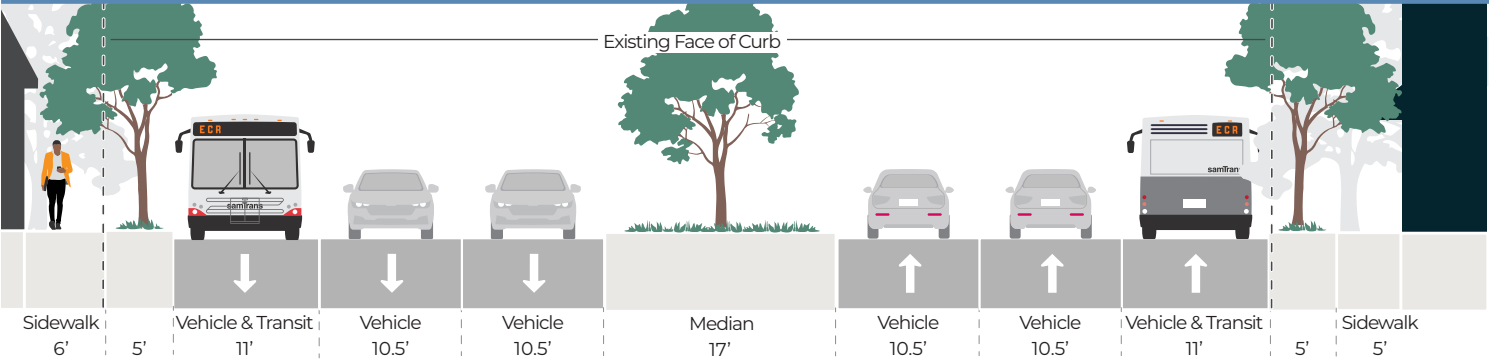


Alternative 1 Cross Section



At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets. Parking feasible if sidewalks/median narrowed (trees removed). Or, separated bikeways feasible if sidewalks and median narrowed (trees removed).

Alternative 2 Cross Section

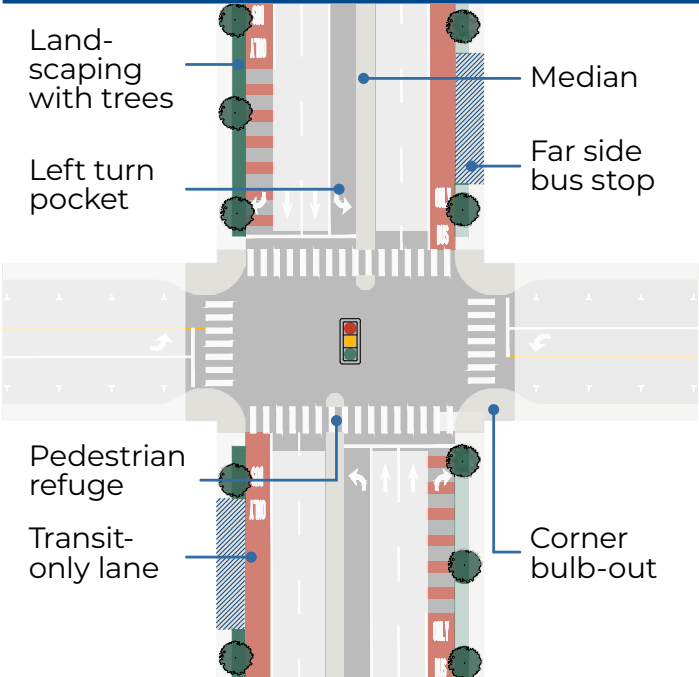


At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets. Parking feasible on one side if sidewalks/median narrowed (trees removed).

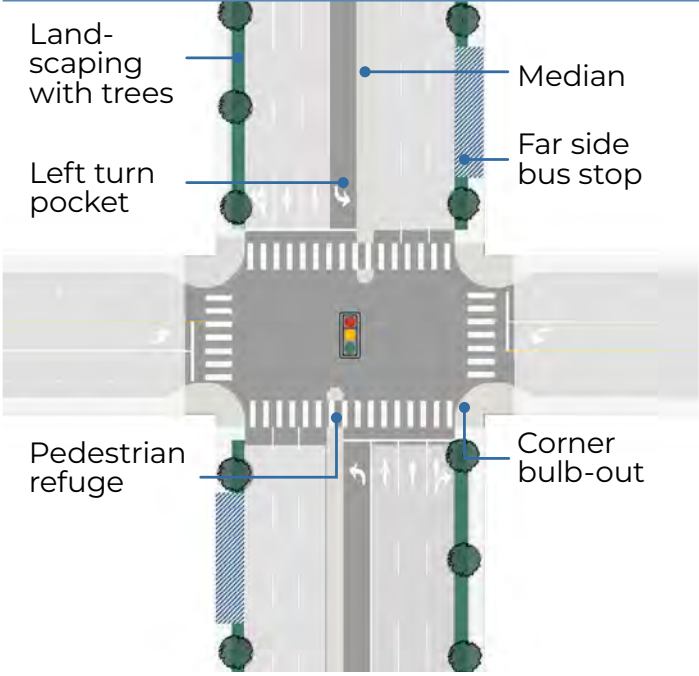
Proposed Key Changes

Alternative 1 prioritizes transit reliability by converting one vehicle lane to a transit-only lane in each direction. Alternative 2 widens sidewalks, enhancing comfort for people walking. Both alternatives provide a pedestrian refuge, narrow lanes and left turn pockets, provide landscaping with trees on the west side, relocate bus stops to the far side, and improve safety for all modes. Parking is feasible if sidewalks or the median is narrowed, requiring tree removal. Future design phases may consider reducing the median width to allocate space to other priorities, such as wider sidewalks.

Alt 1 Typical Intersection

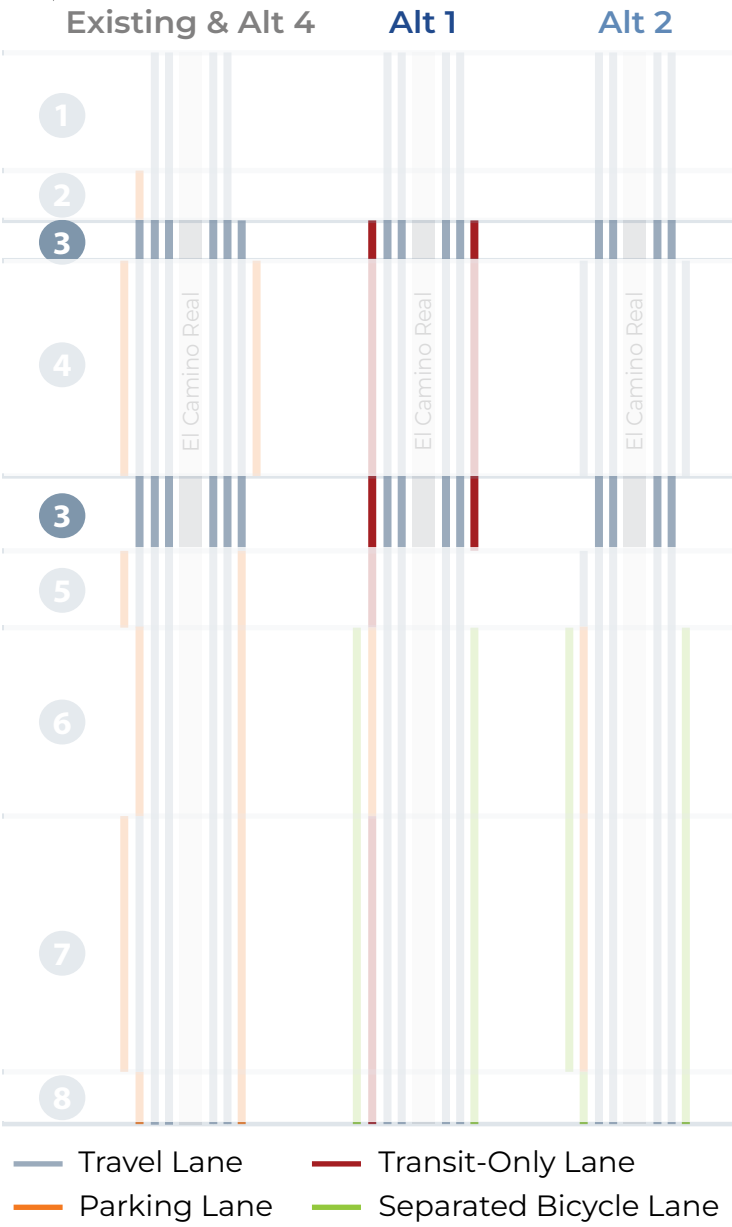


Alt 2 Typical Intersection



Corridor Map

Click on the map to jump to each segment.

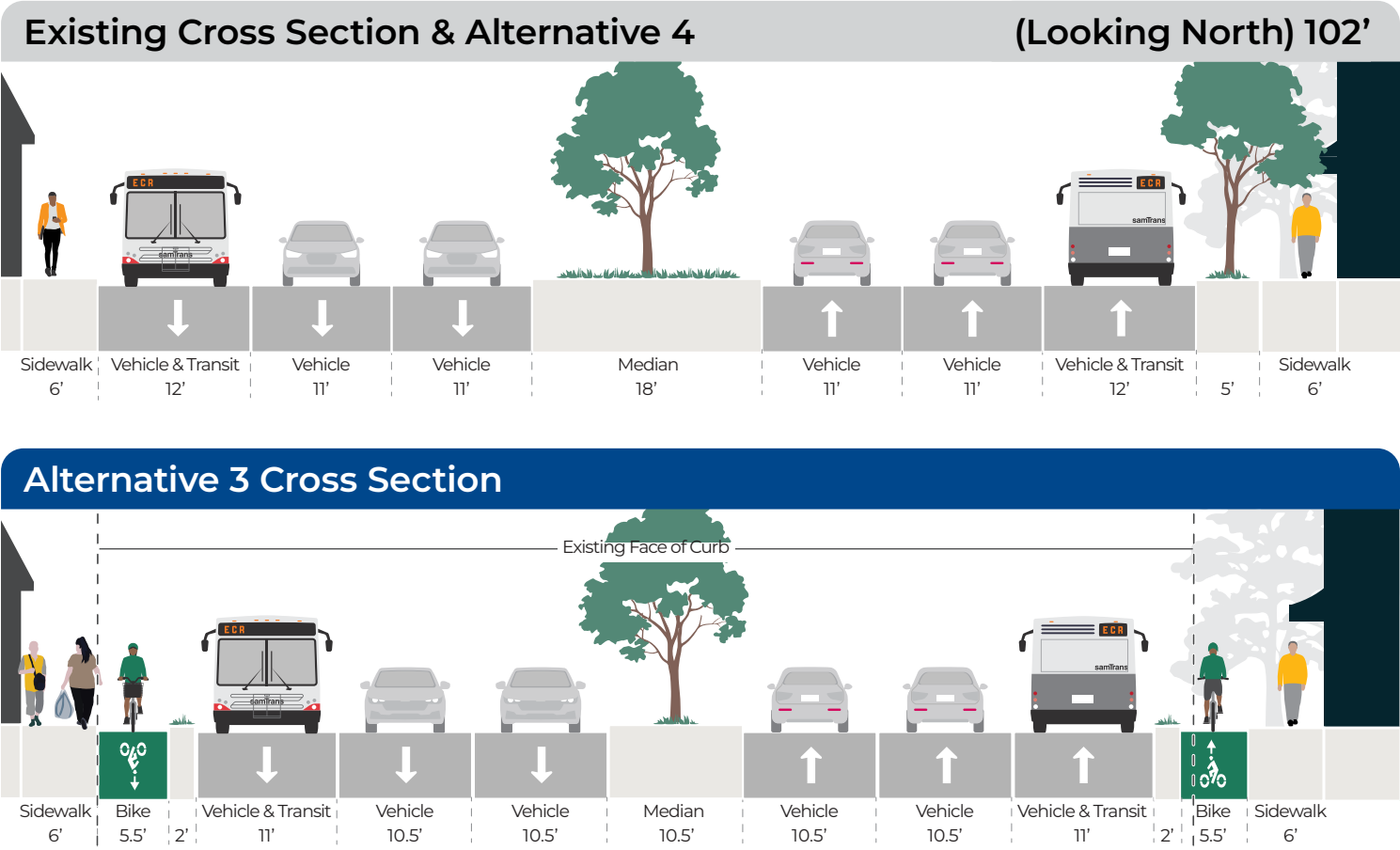


SEGMENT 3 SPOT IMPROVEMENTS

SEGMENT 3

Crystal Springs Rd to 5th Ave / 28th Ave to 36th Ave

Segment 3 of El Camino has 102 feet of right-of-way with three vehicle lanes in each direction. This segment accommodates a raised concrete median with left-turn pockets at intersections, sidewalks on both sides, and landscaping with trees on the east side, but no on-street parking. Sidewalks do not meet minimum Caltrans width standards. The main adjacent land uses are the downtown core and Hillsdale commercial areas.

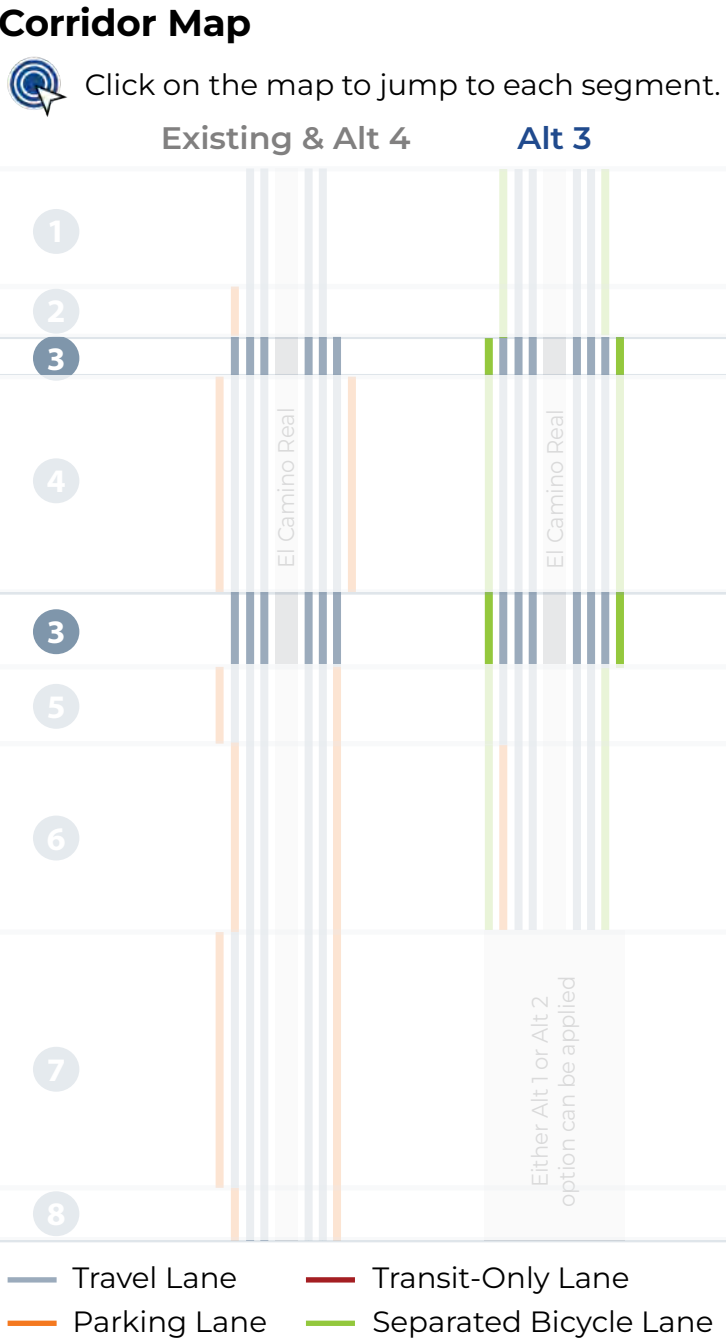
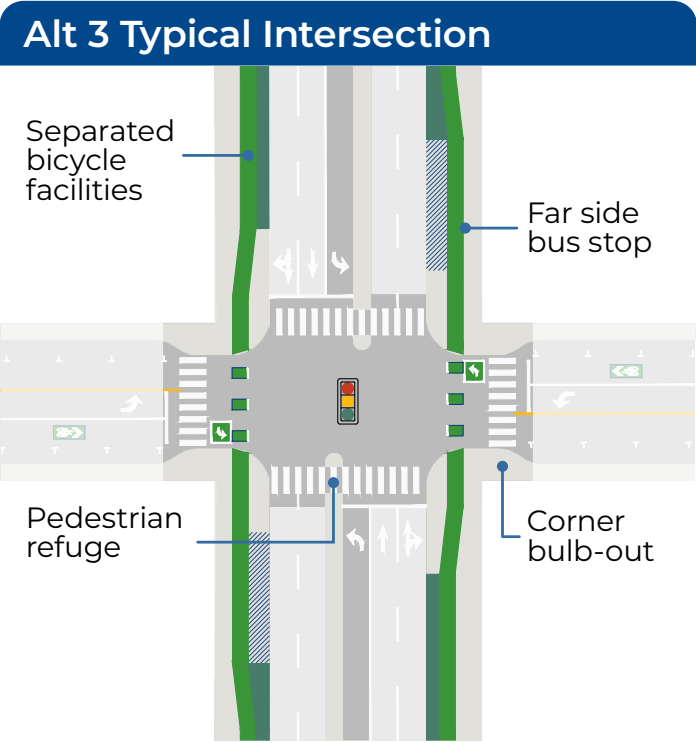


At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets.

Sidewalk widths for Alternative 3 do not consistently meet the minimum standards per Caltrans DIB 94 (8 feet) and would therefore require seeking a design exception from Caltrans and leveraging setback requirements for future developments for expanded sidewalk space.

Proposed Key Changes

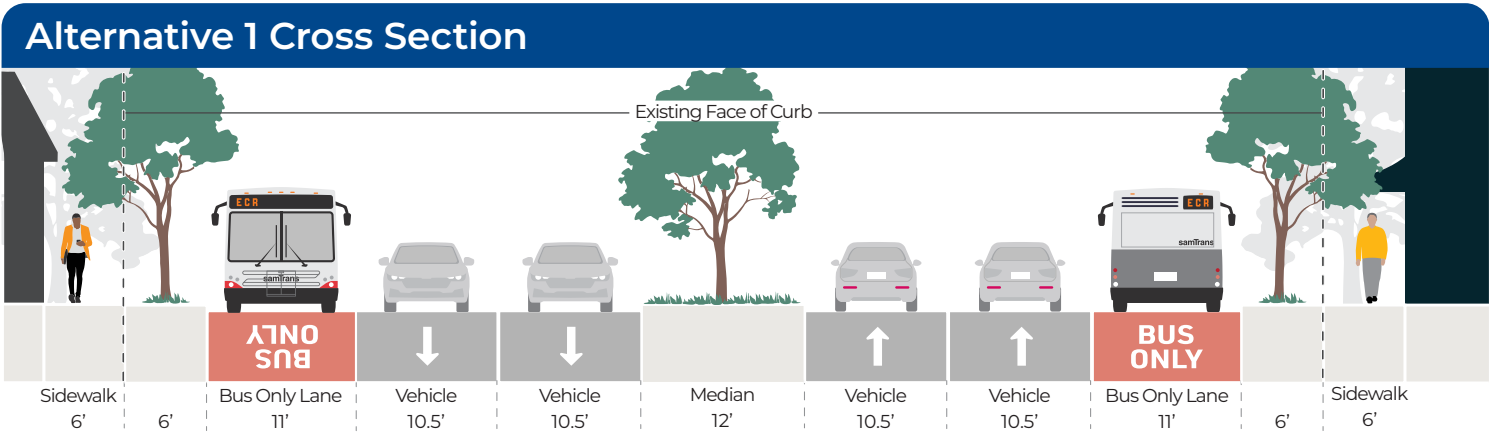
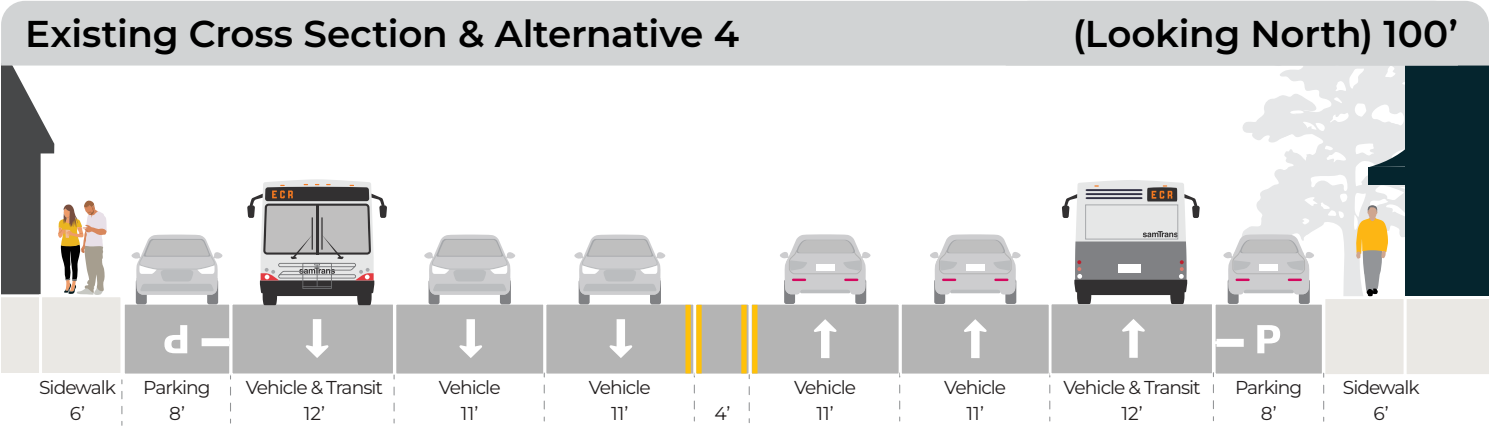
Alternative 3 adds separated bicycle facilities which improves safety for all road users and enhances comfort for people biking. It also narrows left turn pockets, widens sidewalks on both sides, and relocates bus stops to the far side.



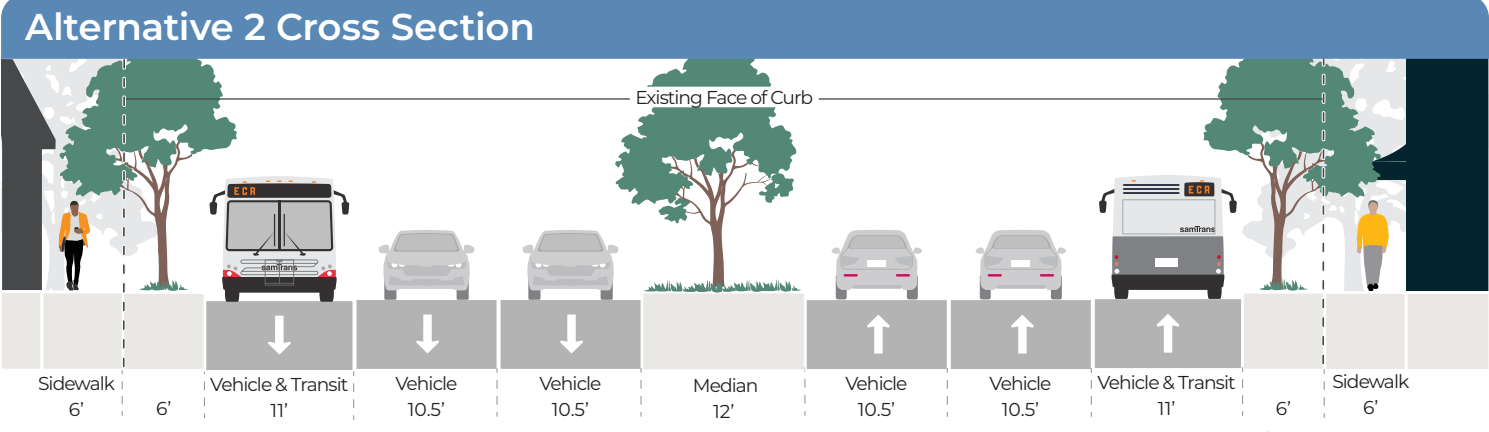
SEGMENT 4

5th Ave to 28th Ave

Segment 4 of El Camino has 100 feet of right-of-way with three vehicle lanes in each direction. This segment accommodates left turn pockets and on-street parking and sidewalks on both sides, but does not include any landscaping. Sidewalks on this segment do not meet minimum widths in Caltrans design standards. The main land uses adjacent to this segment are low-density commercial areas.



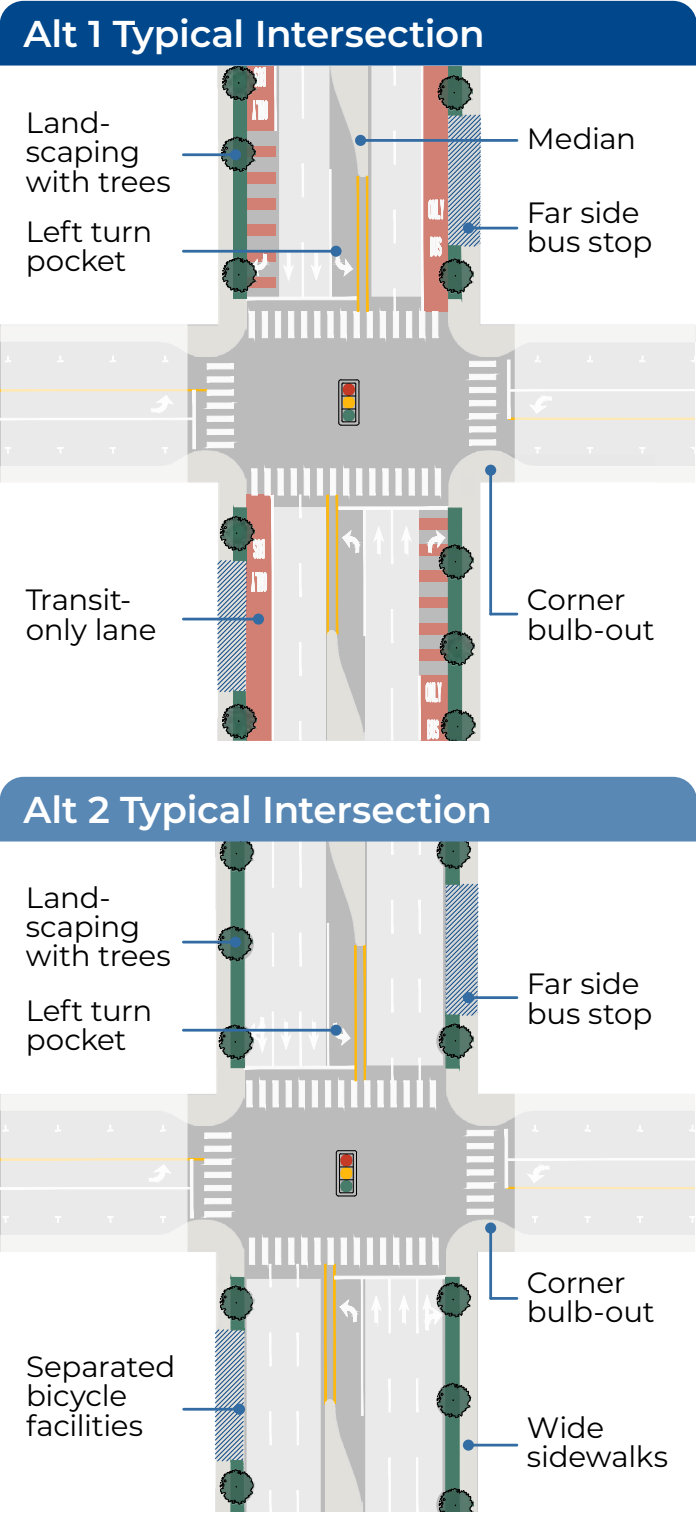
At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets. Parking feasible if sidewalks/median narrowed (trees removed). Or, separated bikeways feasible if sidewalks and median narrowed (trees removed).



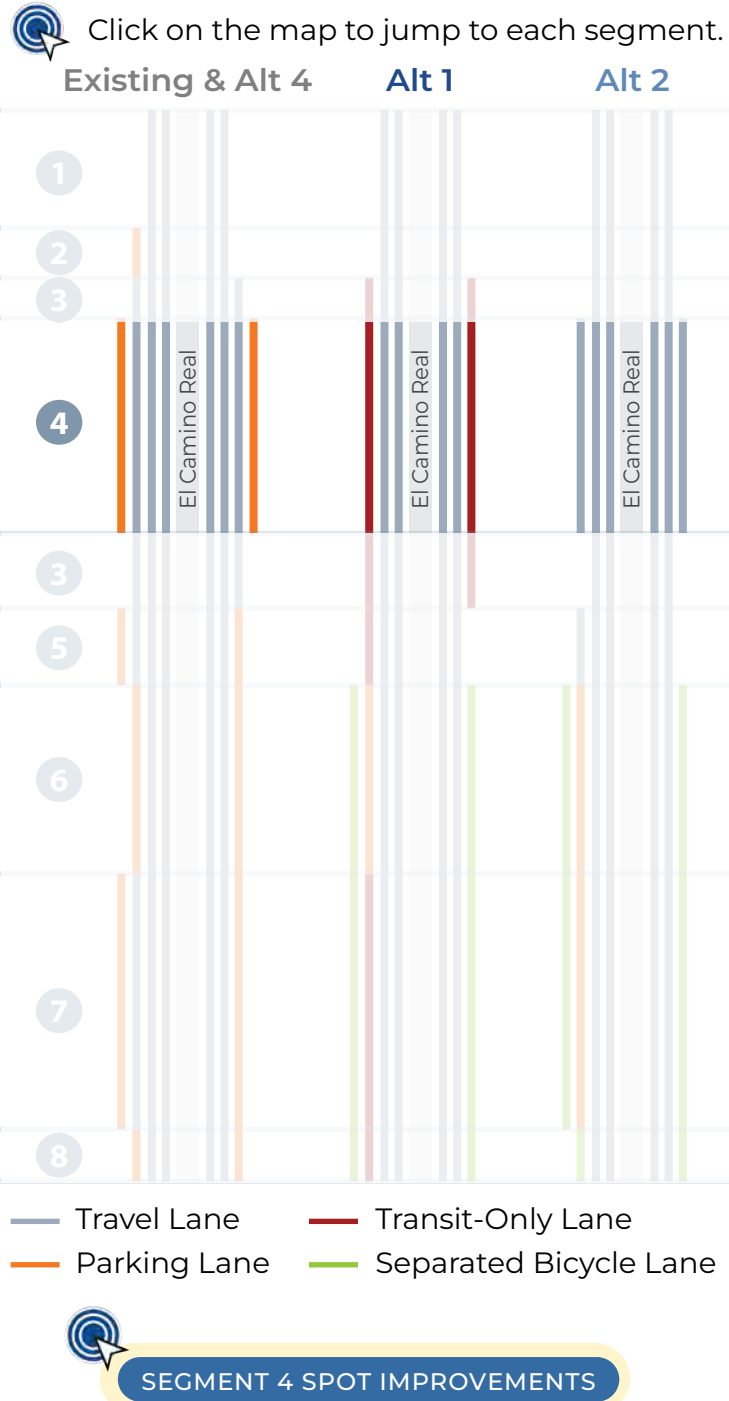
At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets. Parking feasible on one side if sidewalks/median narrowed (trees removed).

Proposed Key Changes

Alternative 1 prioritizes transit reliability by converting one vehicle lane to a transit-only lane in each direction. This configuration improves safety for all road users. Alternative 2 narrows travel lanes. Both alternatives allow for alternating street trees and parking depending on demand, provide a planted median, and relocate bus stops to the far side. Parking is feasible if sidewalks or the median is narrowed, requiring tree removal. Future detailed design may consider reducing the width of the median to allocate to other right-of-way priorities, such as wider sidewalks.



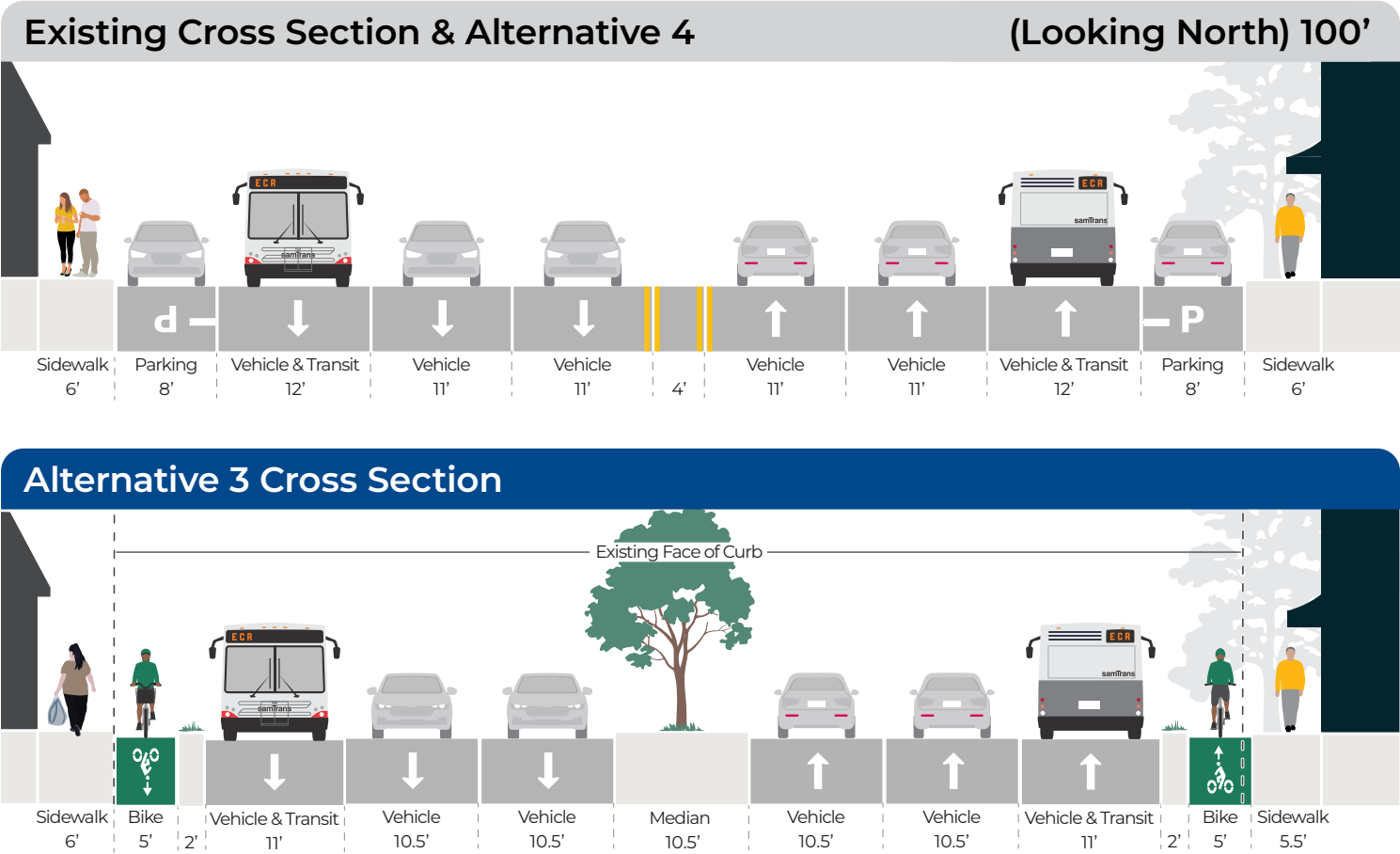
Corridor Map



SEGMENT 4

5th Ave to 28th Ave

Segment 4 of El Camino has 100 feet of right-of-way with three vehicle lanes in each direction. This segment accommodates left turn pockets and on-street parking and sidewalks on both sides, but does not include any landscaping. Sidewalks on this segment do not meet desired widths. The main land uses adjacent to this segment are low-density commercial areas.

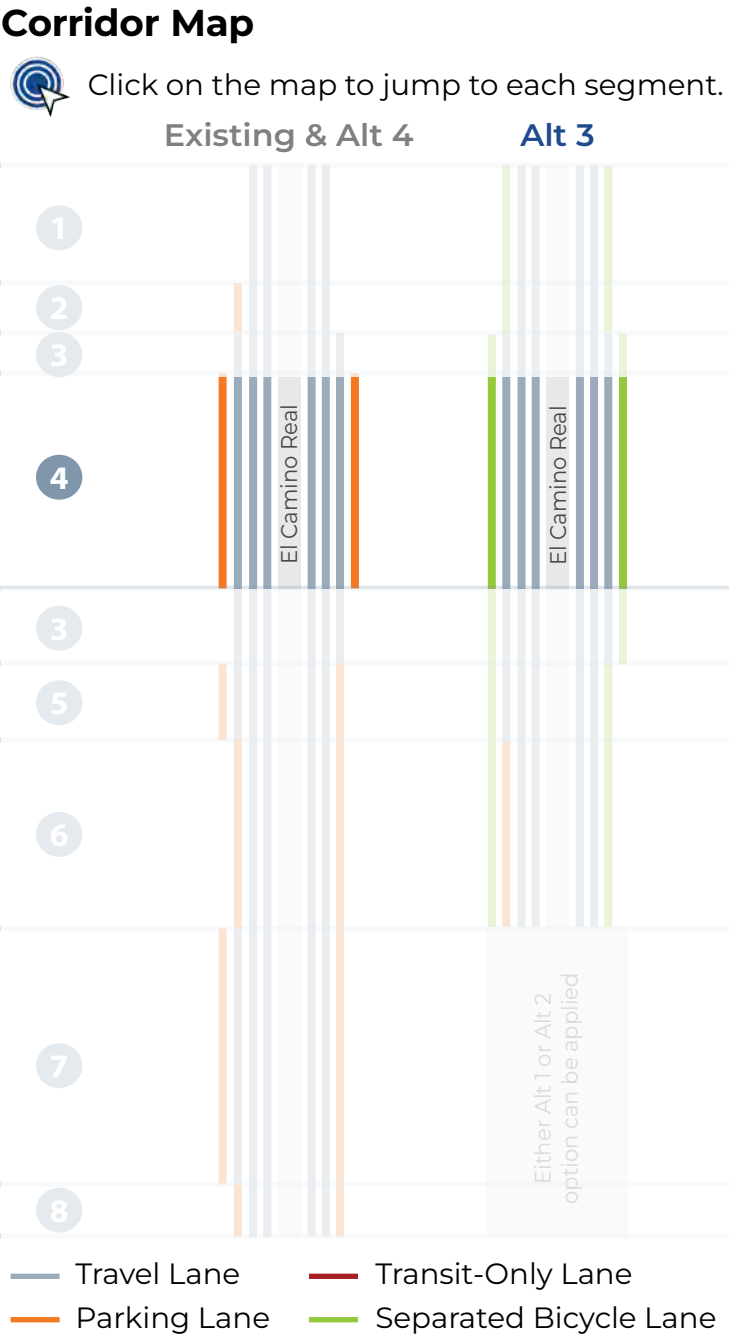
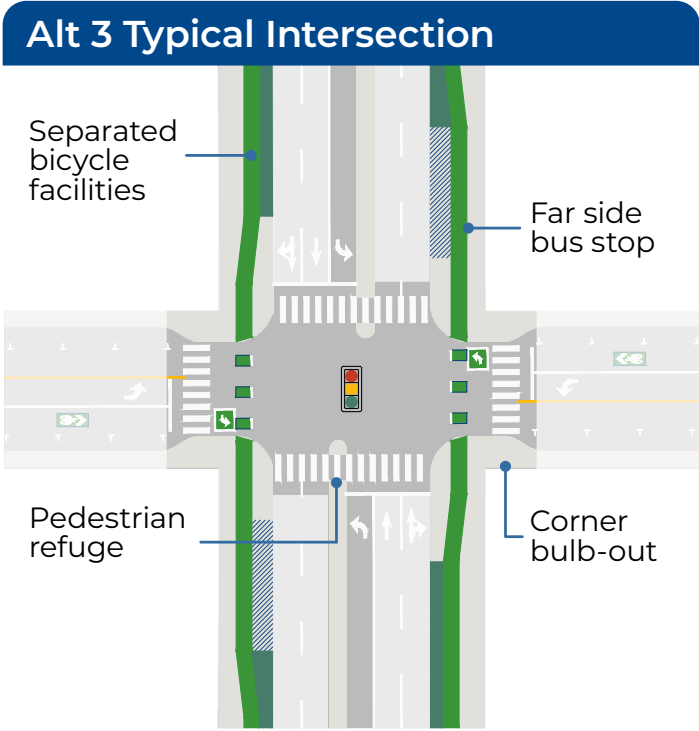


At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets.

Sidewalk widths for Alternative 3 do not consistently meet the minimum standards per Caltrans DIB 94 (8 feet) and would therefore require seeking a design exception from Caltrans and leveraging setback requirements for future developments for expanded sidewalk space.

Proposed Key Changes

Alternative 3 adds separated bicycle facilities which improves safety for all road users and enhances comfort for people biking. It also narrows left turn pockets, widens sidewalks on both sides, and relocates bus stops to the far side.

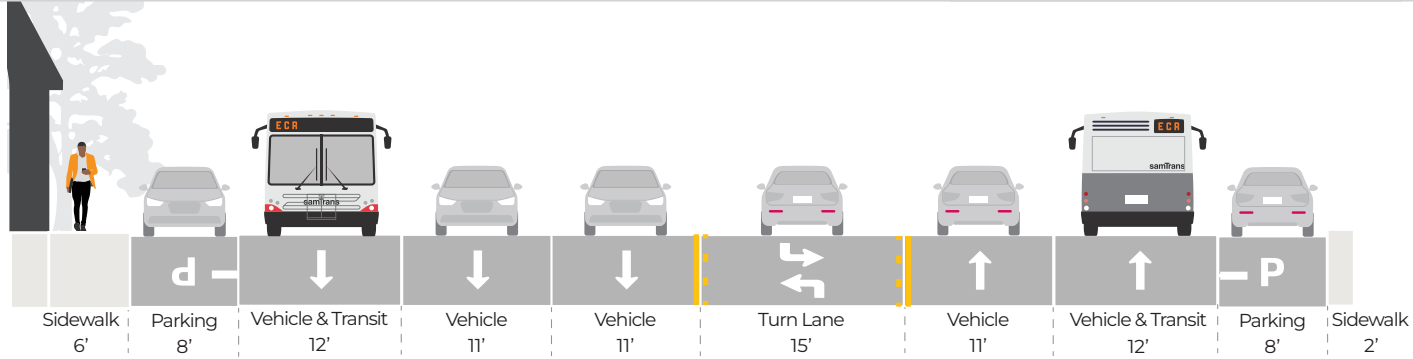


SEGMENT 5

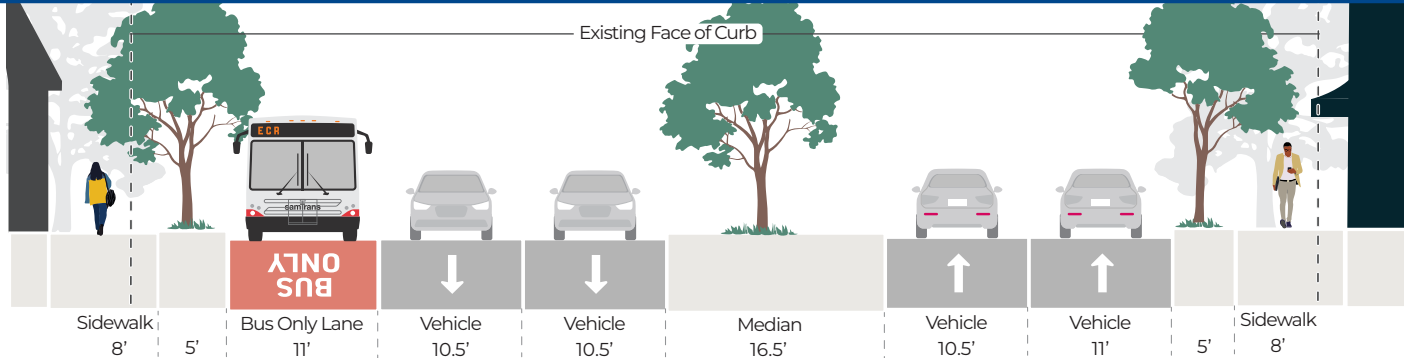
36th Ave to 42nd Ave

Segment 5 of El Camino has 96 feet of right-of-way with three southbound vehicle lanes and two northbound vehicle lanes. This segment accommodates a center left turn lane and on-street parking on both sides, but does not include any landscaping. This segment has only sidewalks on the west side that do not meet desired widths. The main land uses adjacent to this segment are low-density commercial areas, with greater land use intensity on the west side.

Existing Cross Section & Alternative 4 (Looking North) 96'

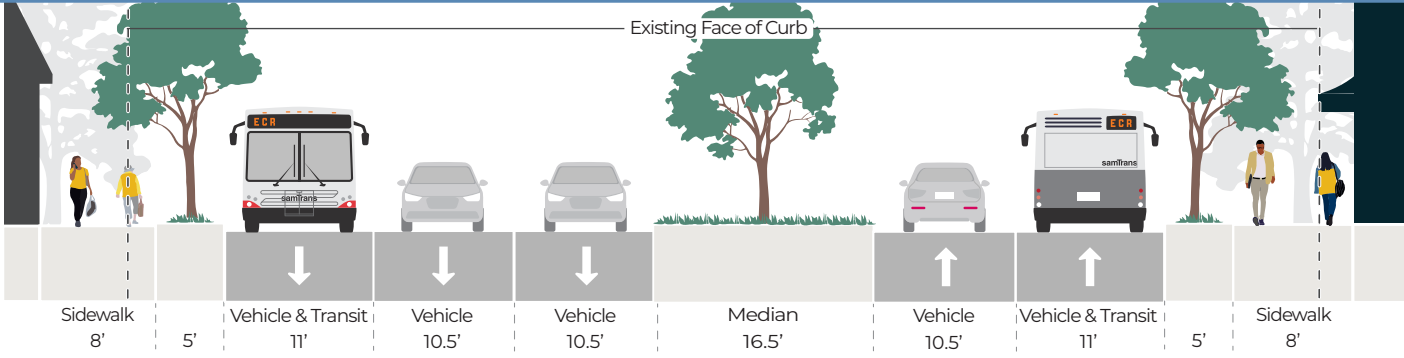


Alternative 1 Cross Section



At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets. Parking feasible if sidewalks/median narrowed (trees removed). Or, separated bikeways feasible if sidewalks and median narrowed (trees removed).

Alternative 2 Cross Section

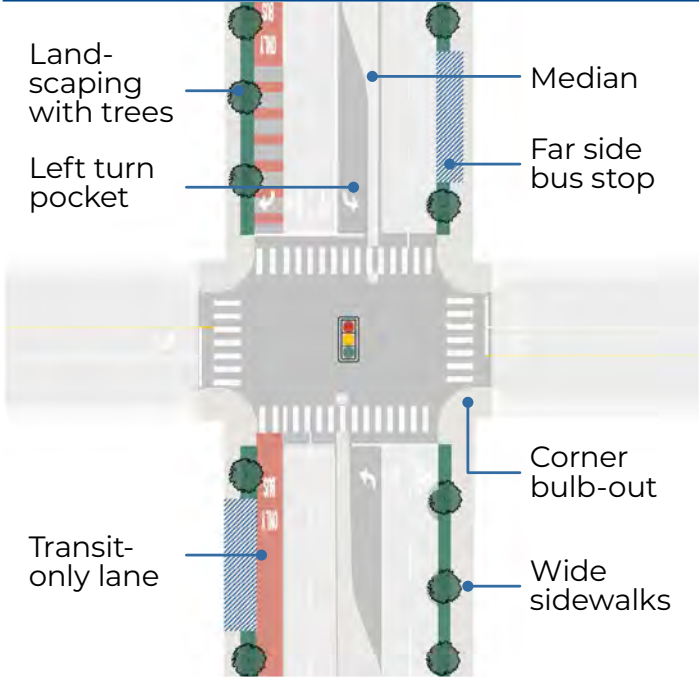


At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets. Parking feasible on one side if sidewalks/median narrowed (trees removed).

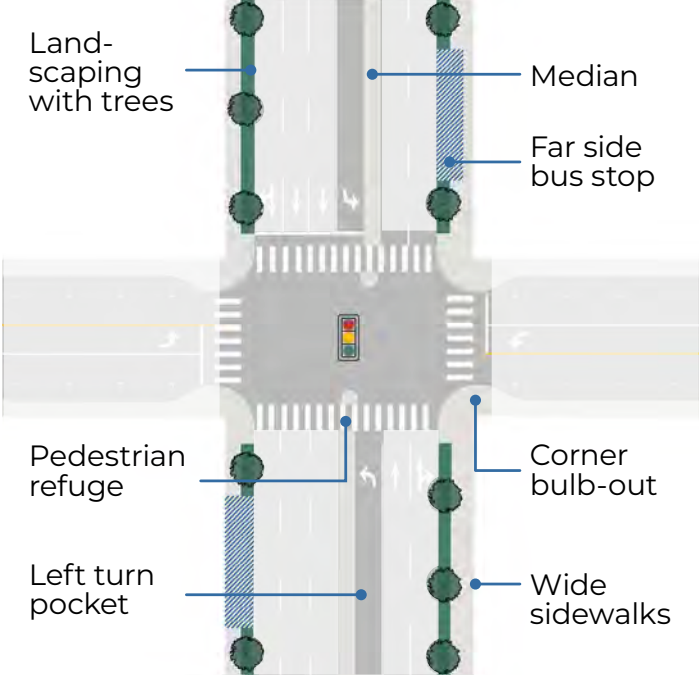
Proposed Key Changes

Alternative 1 converts one southbound vehicle lane to a transit-only lane. The conversion only applies to the southbound direction to maintain two vehicle lanes in each direction. It also widens sidewalks on the east side. Alternative 2 widens sidewalks on both sides. Both alternatives remove on-street parking on both sides, provide a planted median, pedestrian refuge, and landscaping with trees, and relocate bus stops to the far side. Both alternatives improve safety for all modes and enhances comfort for people walking.

Alt 1 Typical Intersection

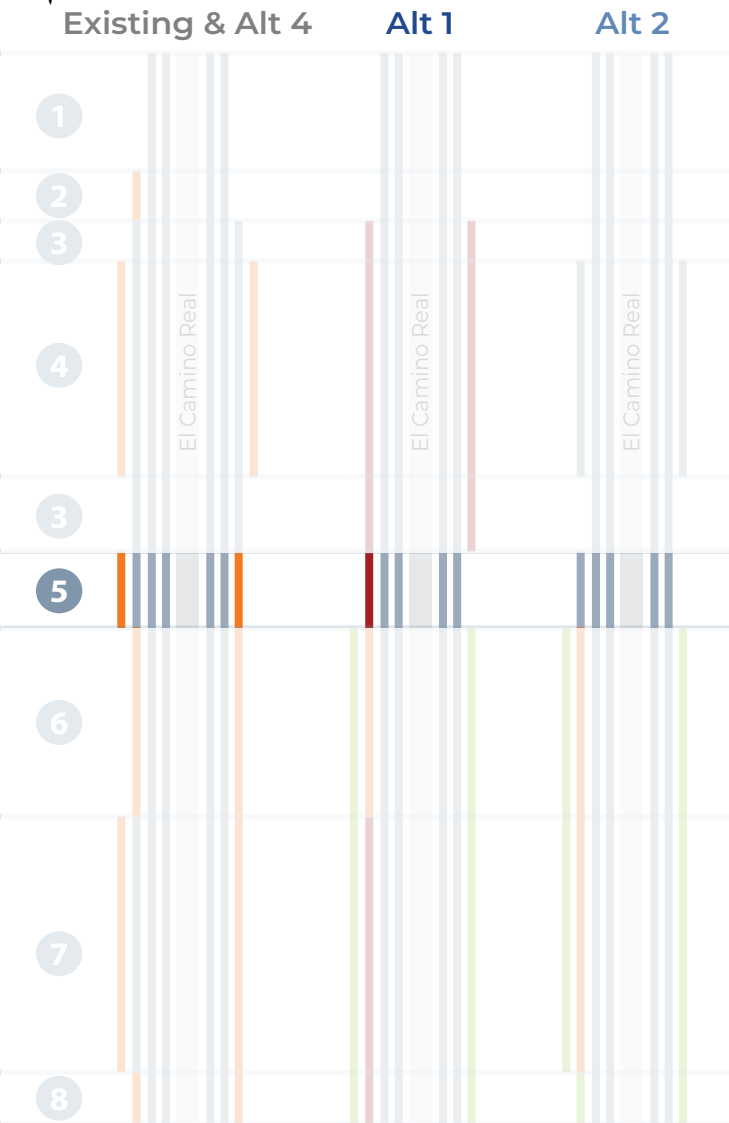


Alt 2 Typical Intersection



Corridor Map

Click on the map to jump to each segment.



Travel Lane
Parking Lane
Transit-Only Lane
Separated Bicycle Lane

SEGMENT 5 SPOT IMPROVEMENTS

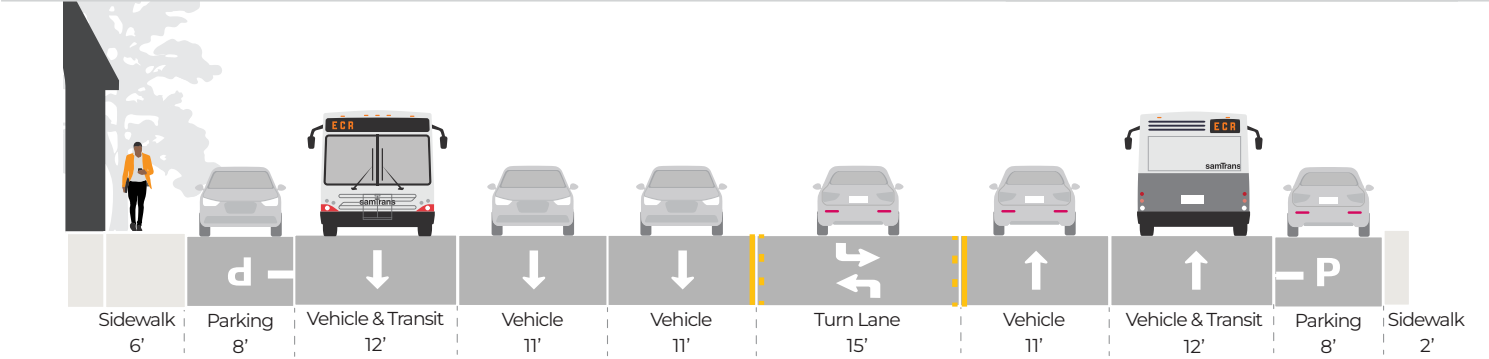
SEGMENT 5

36th Ave to 42nd Ave

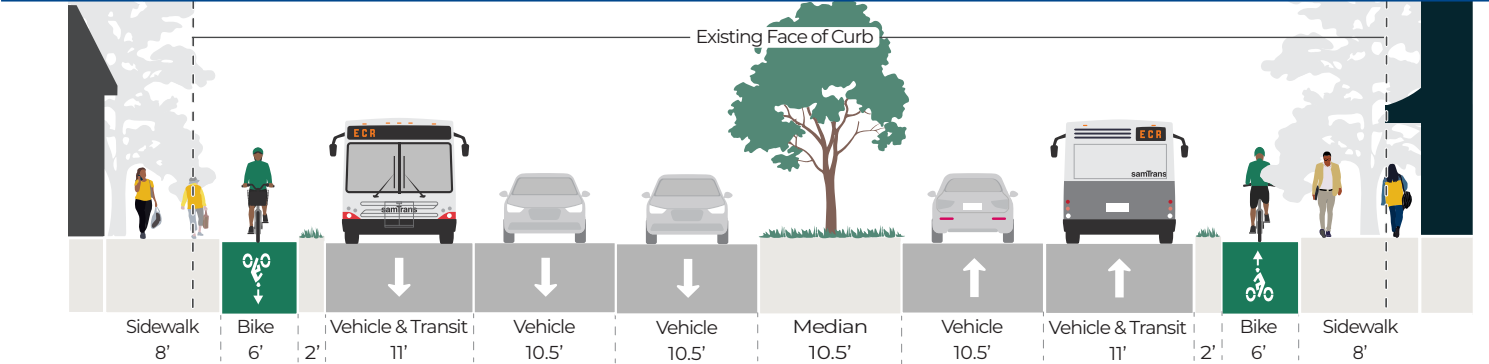
Segment 5 of El Camino has 96 feet of right-of-way with three southbound vehicle lanes and two northbound vehicle lanes. This segment accommodates a center left turn lane and on-street parking on both sides, but does not include any landscaping. This segment has only sidewalks on the west side that do not meet desired widths. The main land uses adjacent to this segment are low-density commercial areas, with greater land use intensity on the west side.

Existing Cross Section & Alternative 4

(Looking North) 96'



Alternative 3 Cross Section

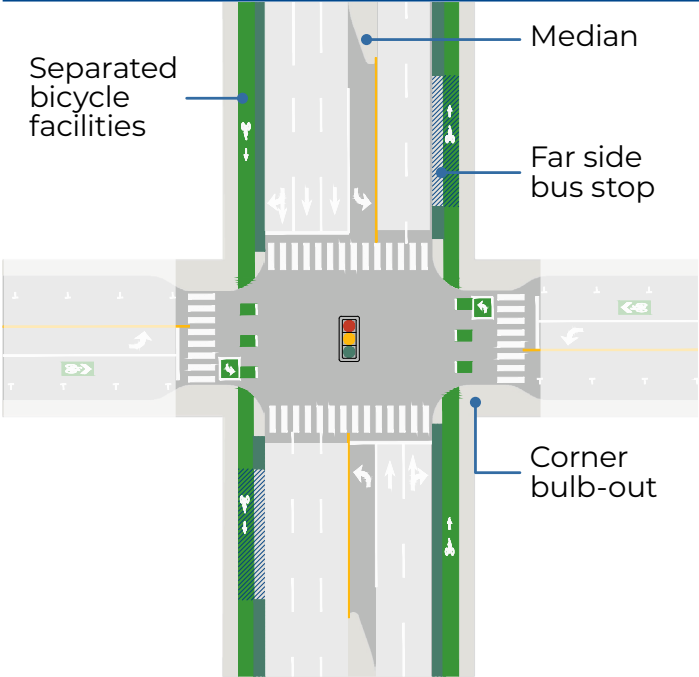


At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets.

Proposed Key Changes

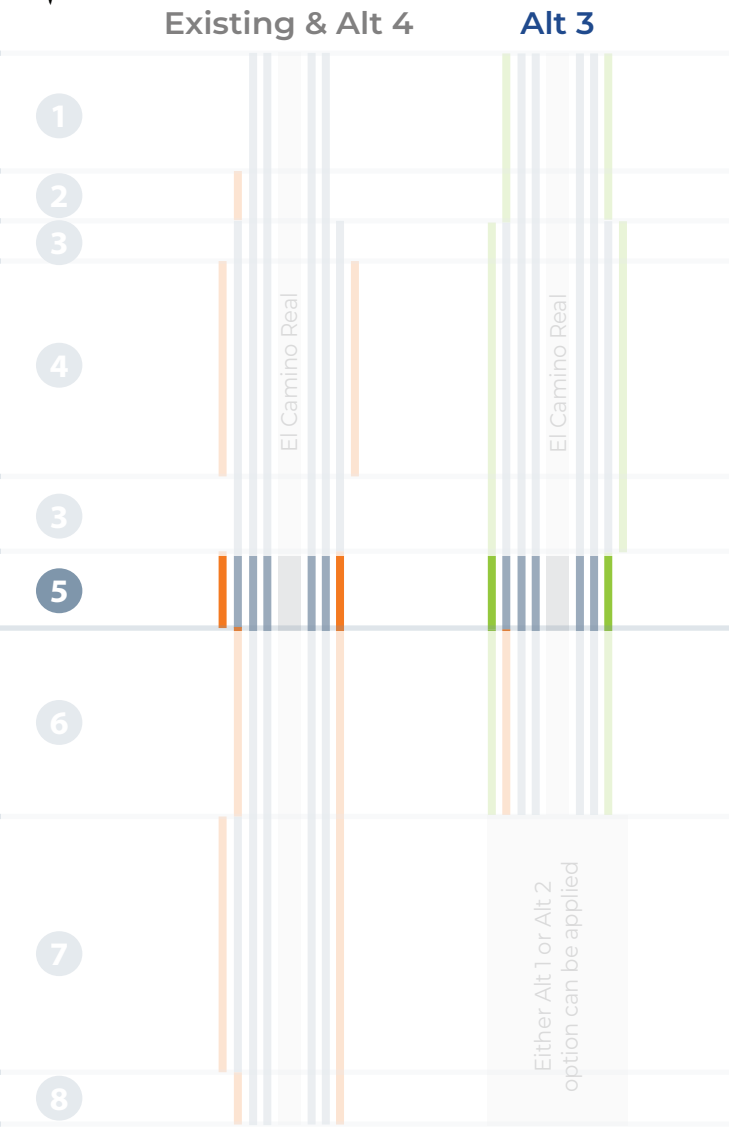
Alternative 3 removes on-street parking on both sides and provides separated bicycle facilities on both sides. It also widens sidewalks, provides a planted median, and provides landscaping on both sides. Bus stops are also relocated to the far side of the intersection. These changes improve safety for all modes and enhances comfort for people walking and biking.

Alt 3 Typical Intersection



Corridor Map

Click on the map to jump to each segment.



- Travel Lane
- Transit-Only Lane
- Parking Lane
- Separated Bicycle Lane

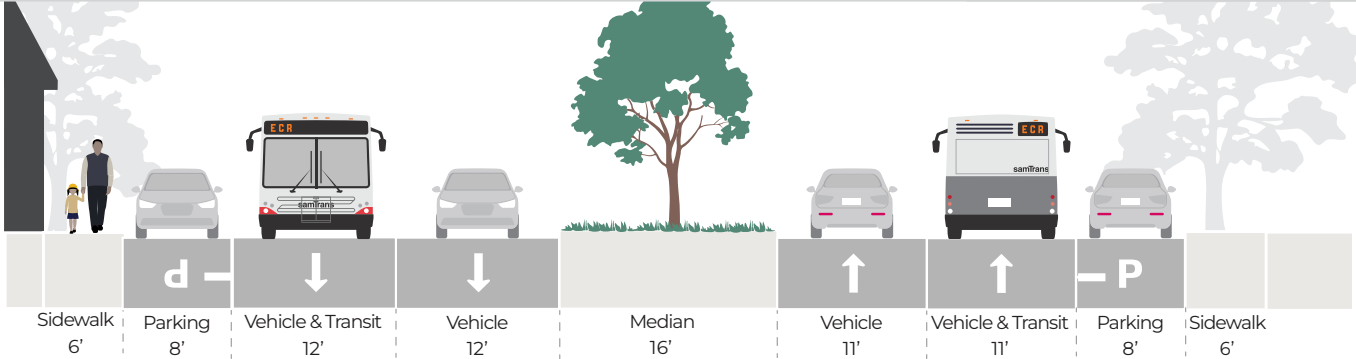
SEGMENT 6

42nd Ave to F St

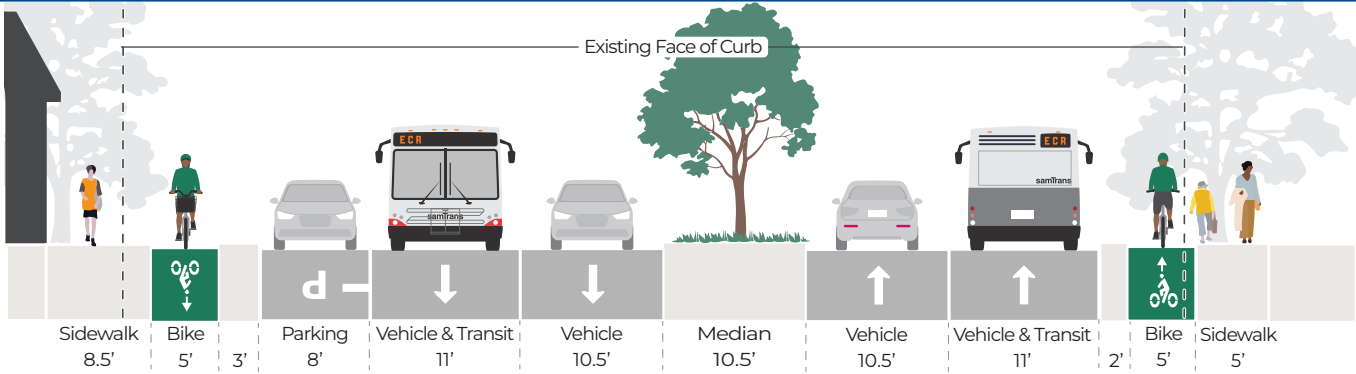
Segment 6 of El Camino has 90 feet of right-of-way with two vehicle lanes in each direction. This segment accommodates a wide planted median with left turn pockets and on-street parking and sidewalks on both sides. Sidewalks on this segment do not meet desired widths. The main land uses adjacent to this segment are low-density mixed-use and commercial areas, with higher land use intensity on the west side.

Existing Cross Section

(Looking North) 90'



Alternative 1, 2, & 3 Cross Section



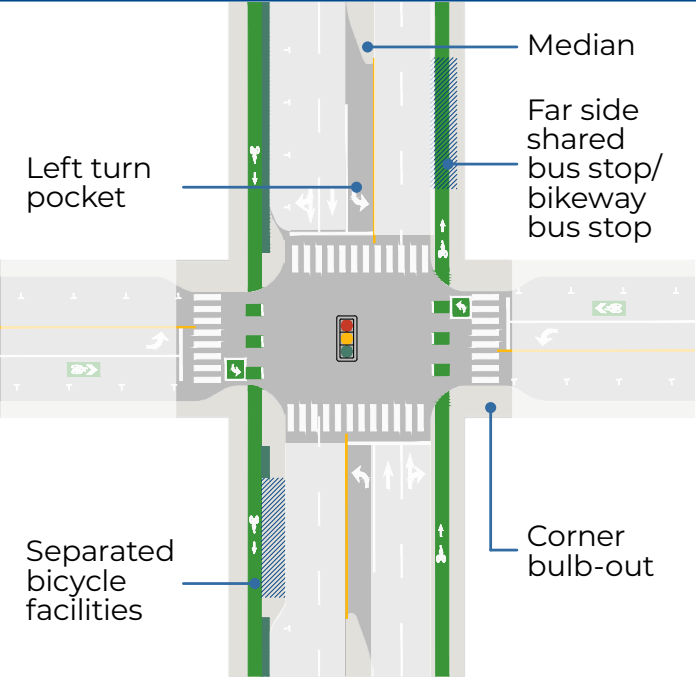
At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets.

Sidewalk widths for these alternatives do not consistently meet the minimum standards per Caltrans DIB 94 (8 feet) and would therefore require seeking an exception through Caltrans process.

Proposed Key Changes

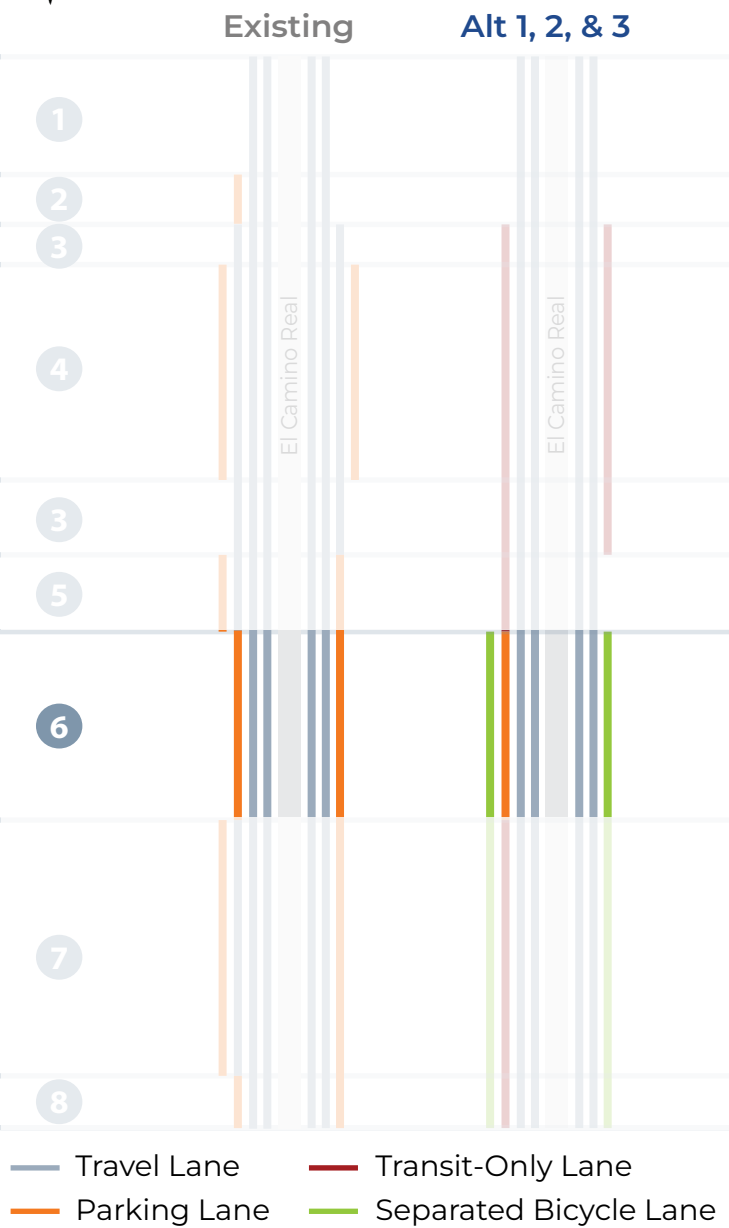
All alternatives prioritize safety and comfort for people biking by adding separated bicycle facilities on both sides. They also remove on-street parking on the east side, narrow the planted median, and relocate bus stops to the far side. All alternatives are the same as the bikeway aligns with all of the planning and policies in Belmont.

Alt 1, 2, & 3 Typical Intersection



Corridor Map

Click on the map to jump to each segment.



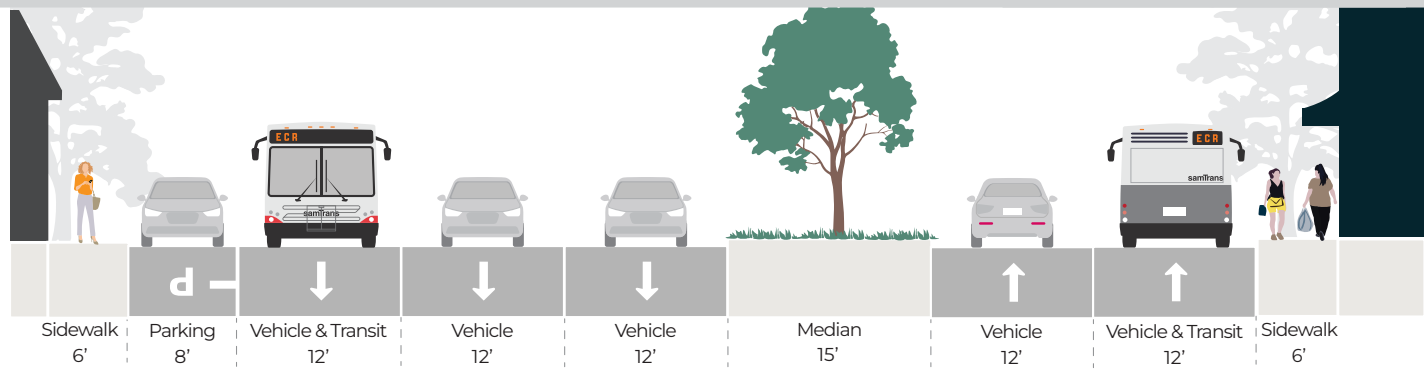
SEGMENT 7

F St to Edgewood Rd

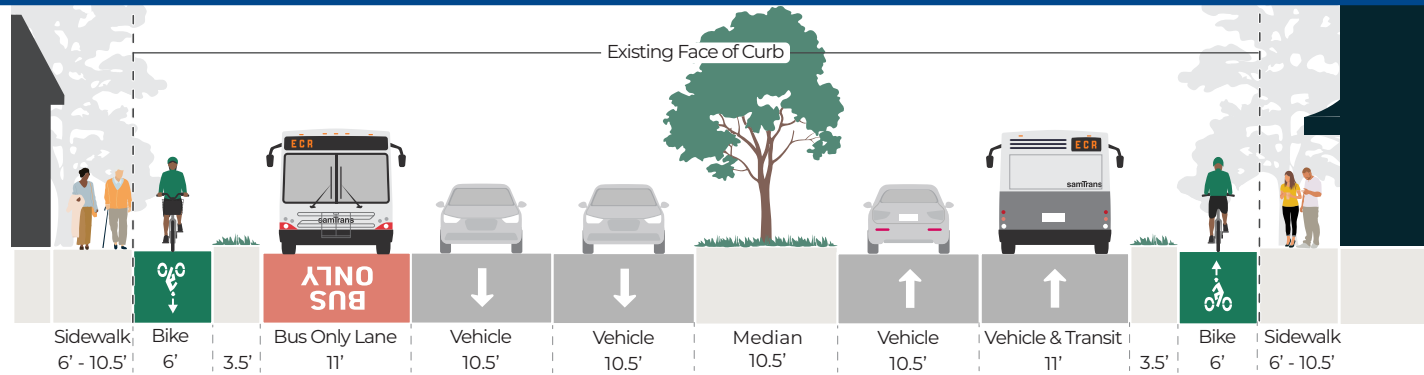
Segment 7 of El Camino has 95 feet of right-of-way with three southbound vehicle lanes and two northbound vehicle lanes. This segment has a planted median with left turn pockets. On the west side, it has on-street parking and sidewalks. On the east-side, these are intermittent. The main land uses adjacent to this segment are currently low-to-medium density commercial and mixed-use areas. However, much of San Carlos’ future housing will take place along the corridor.

Existing Cross Section

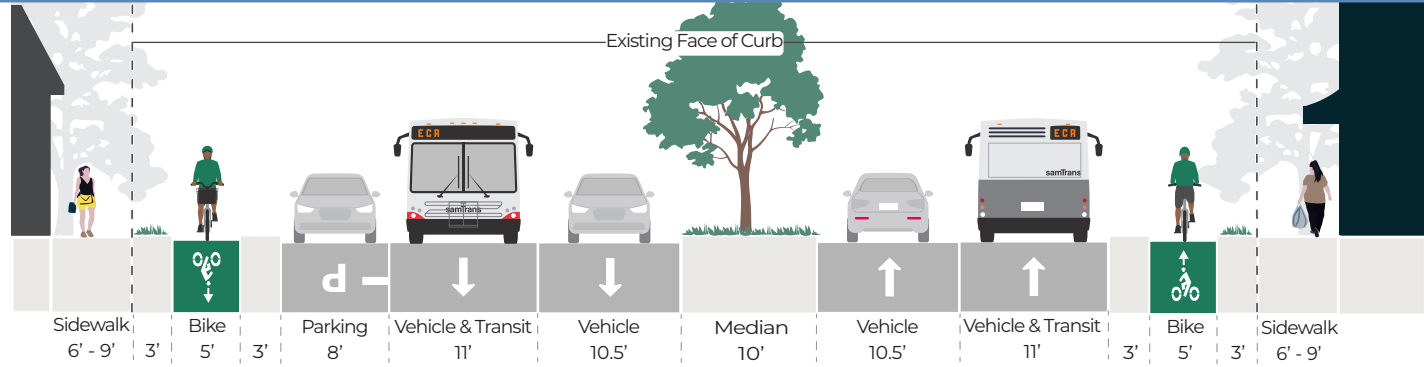
(Looking North) 95'



Alternative 1 Cross Section



Alternative 2 Cross Section

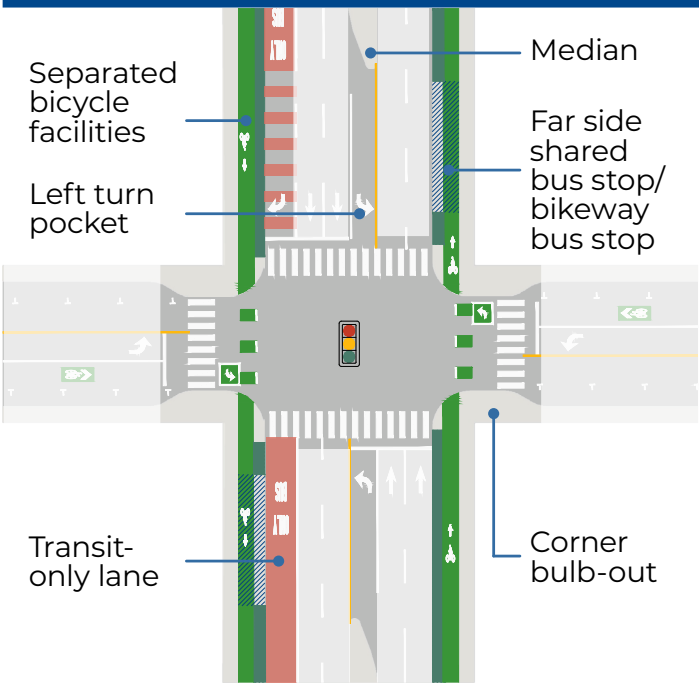


At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets. Sidewalk widths for Alternative 1 do not consistently meet the minimum standards per Caltrans DIB 94 (8 feet) and would therefore require seeking a design exception from Caltrans and leveraging setback requirements for future developments for expanded sidewalk space.

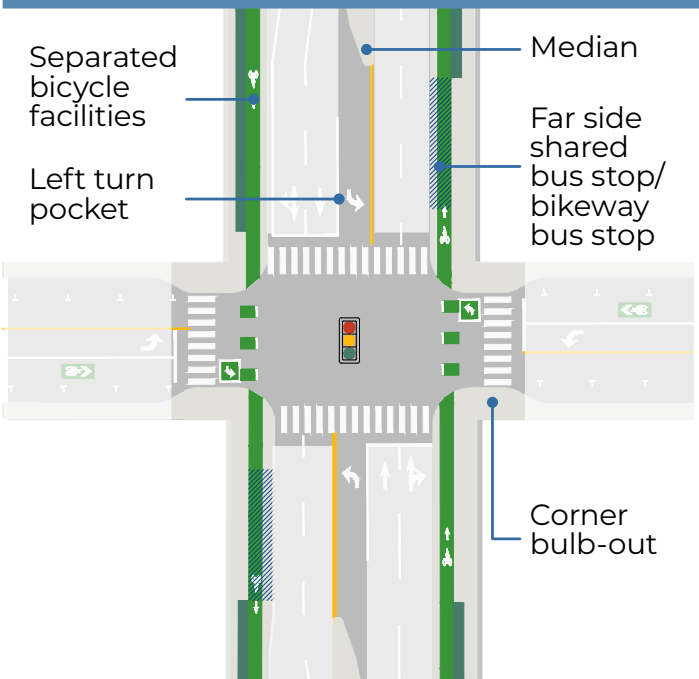
Proposed Key Changes

Alternatives 1 and 2 prioritize safety and comfort for people biking by providing separated bicycle facilities on both sides. Alternative 1 also prioritizes transit reliability by converting one southbound vehicle lane to a transit-only lane and removing on-street parking on the west side. The conversion only applies to the southbound direction to maintain two vehicle lanes in each direction. Alternative 2 removes one vehicle lane in the southbound direction. Both alternatives narrow the planted median and relocate bus stops to the far side. Both alternatives narrow the planted median and relocate bus stops to the far side.

Alt 1 Typical Intersection



Alt 2 Typical Intersection



Corridor Map

Click on the map to jump to each segment.



Travel Lane

Parking Lane

Transit-Only Lane

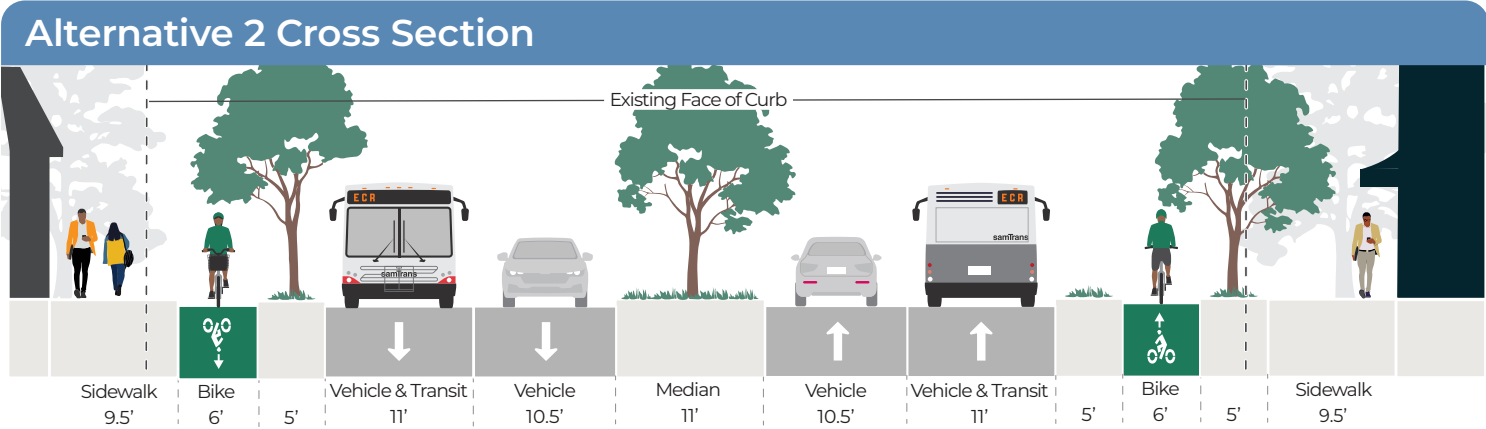
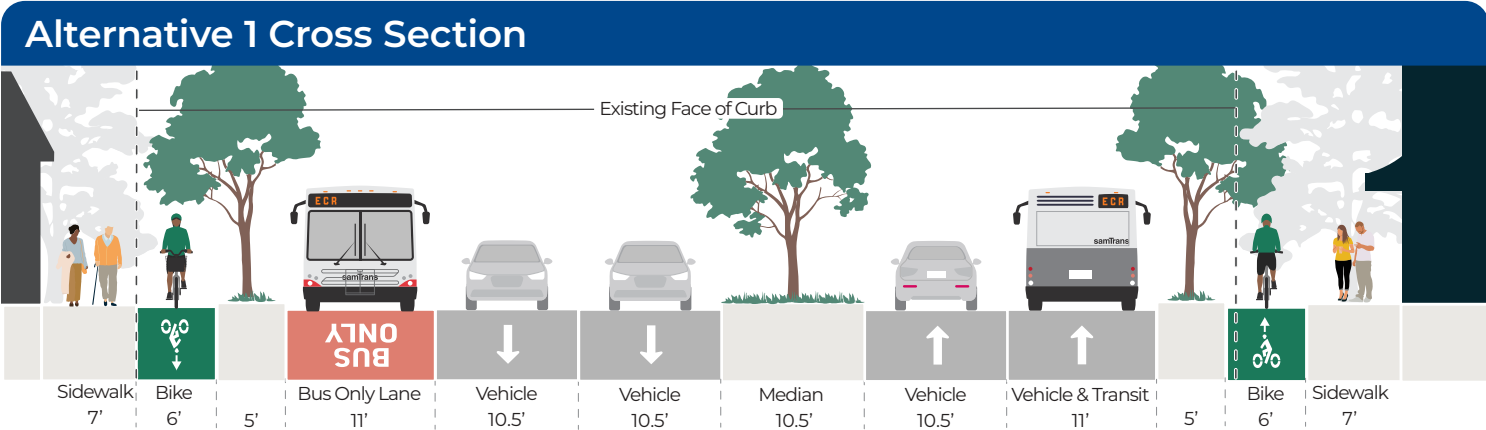
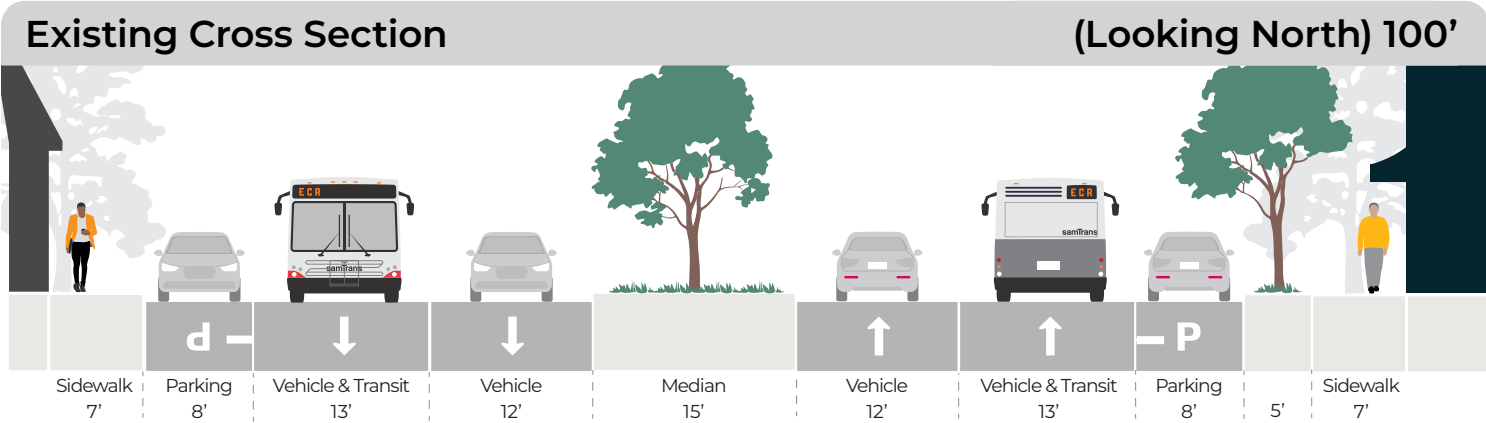
Separated Bicycle Lane

SEGMENT 7 SPOT IMPROVEMENTS

SEGMENT 8

Edgewood Rd to Brewster Ave

Segment 8 of El Camino has 100 feet of right-of-way with two vehicle lanes in each direction. This segment has a planted median with left turn pockets, on-street parking and sidewalks on both sides, and landscaping with trees on the east side. Per Redwood City zoning code, a 12-foot sidewalk is required and will be incorporated through developer setback requirements as adjacent properties are developed. The main land uses adjacent to this segment are low-density commercial areas.

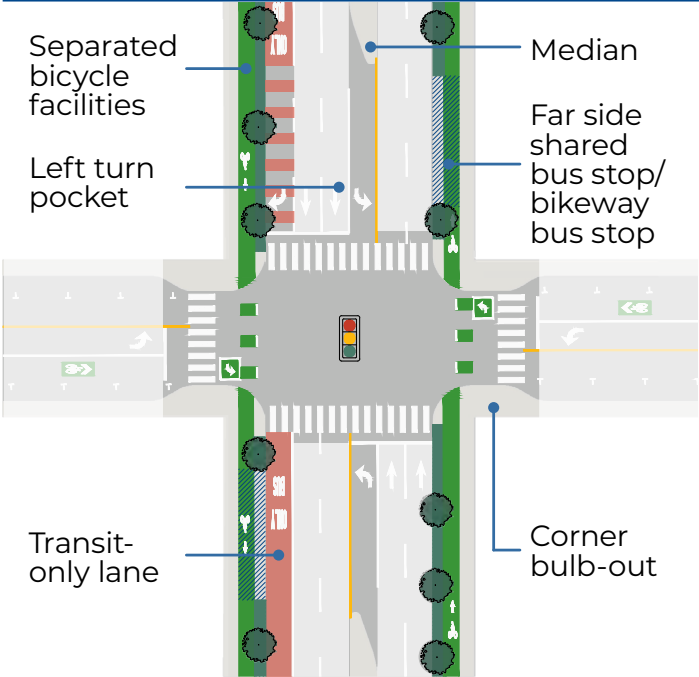


At intersections, the median would be used for left-turn pockets. Exact widths will be refined in future phases of design and will consider accommodating design vehicles.

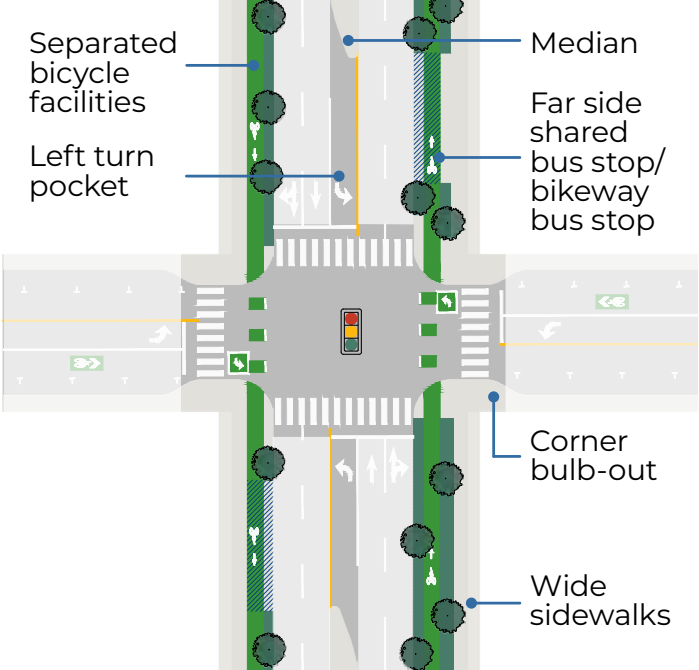
Proposed Key Changes

Alternatives 1 and 2 prioritize safety and comfort for people biking by removing on-street parking and providing separated bicycle facilities on both sides. Alternative 1 also prioritizes transit reliability by converting one southbound vehicle lane to a transit-only lane. The conversion only applies to the southbound direction to maintain two vehicle lanes in each direction. Alternative 2 widens sidewalks on both sides. Both alternatives narrow the planted median and relocate bus stops to the far side.

Alt 1 Typical Intersection

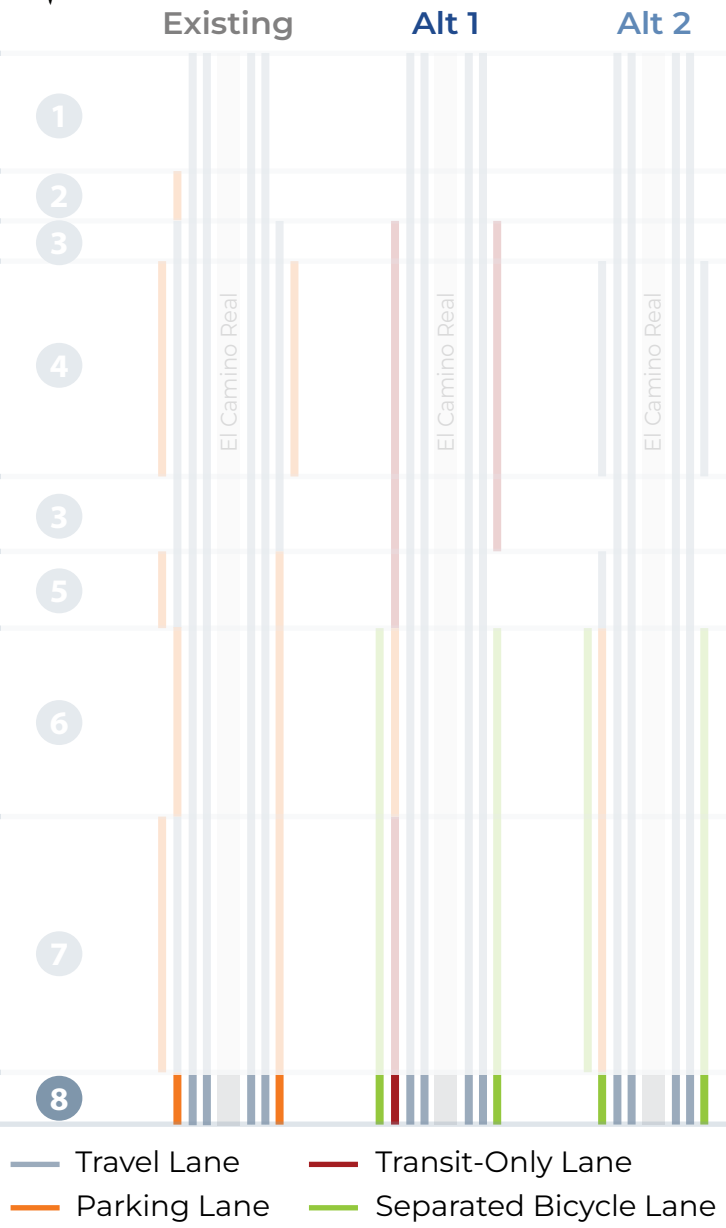


Alt 2 Typical Intersection



Corridor Map

Click on the map to jump to each segment.



SEGMENT 8 SPOT IMPROVEMENTS

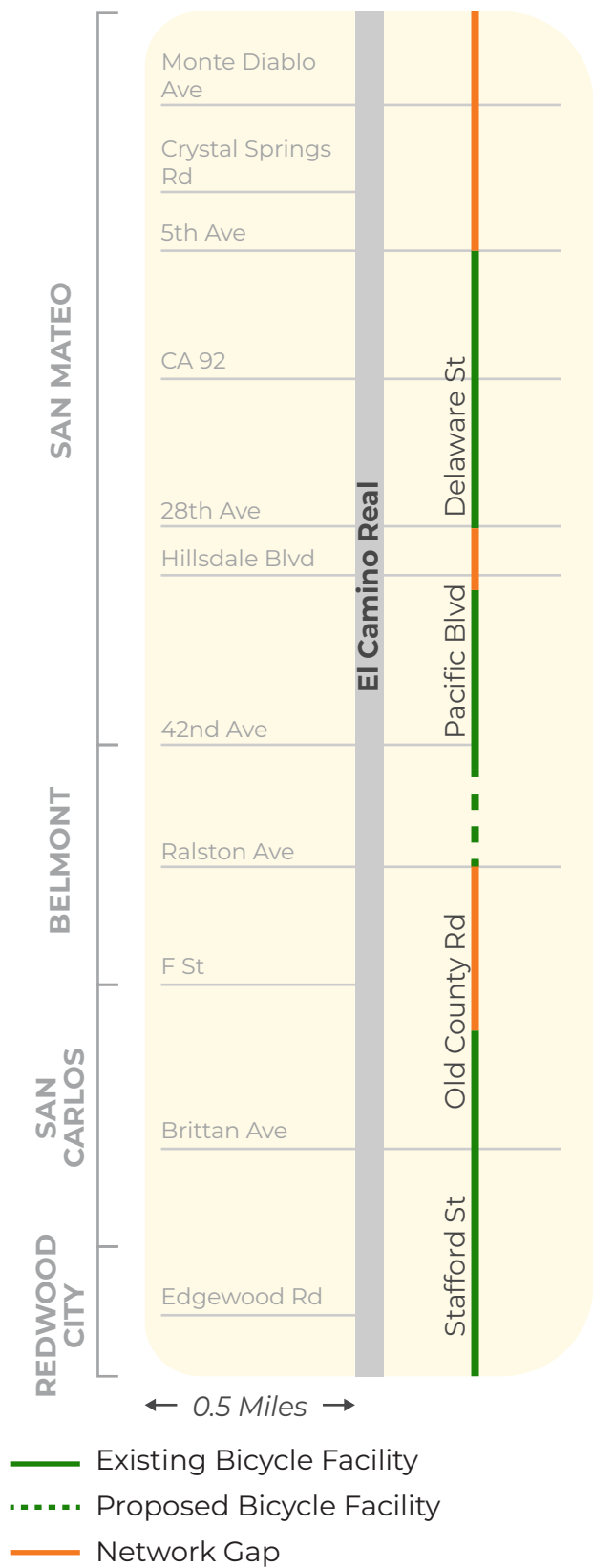
Bike Connectivity

Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 were developed with a focus on improving bicycle connectivity while balancing existing right-of-way constraints and multimodal needs. The alternatives are informed by the Caltrans District 4 Bike Plan, which identifies El Camino Real as a crucial corridor for prioritizing gap closure in the local and regional bicycle network, and recommends Class IV separated bikeways on segments of El Camino Real within the limits of the Central Cities.

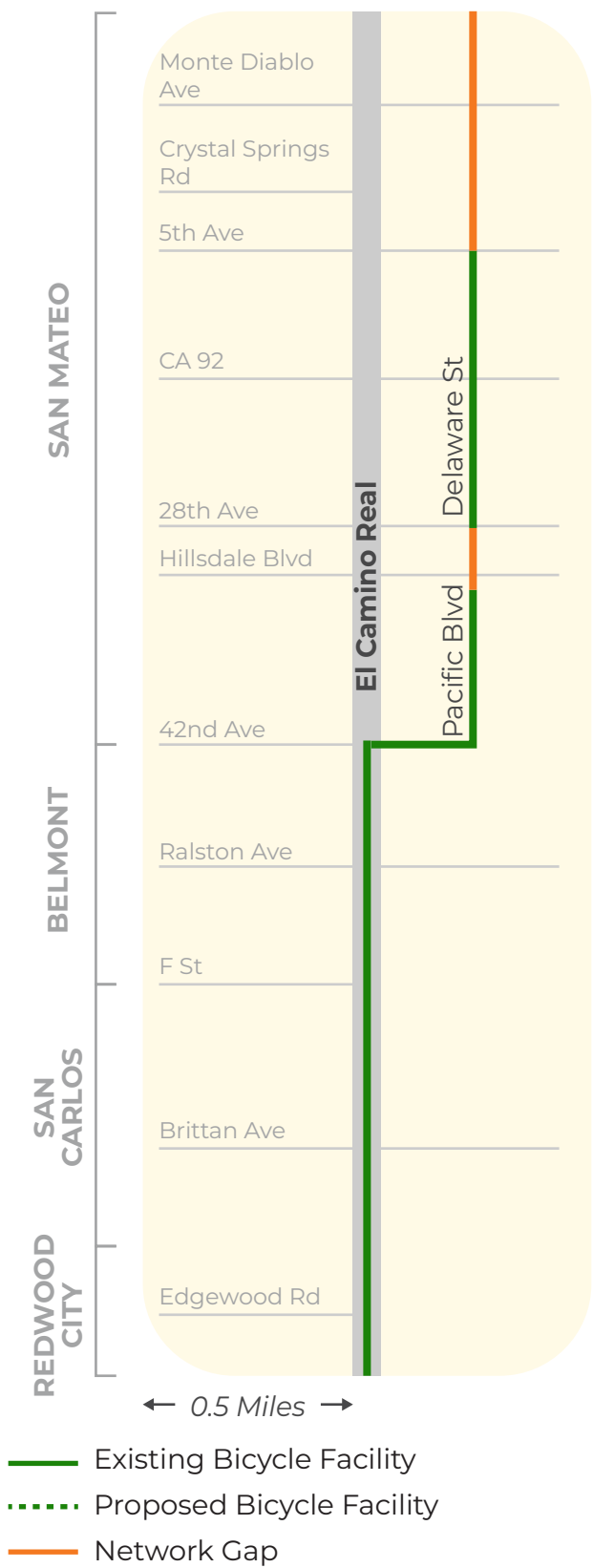
All alternatives provide low-stress connections to existing and proposed bicycle facilities parallel to and crossing El Camino Real, creating a complete network that provides a safe and comfortable experience for people of varying ages and abilities biking along the corridor.

The potential parallel low-stress bicycle routes are located within a half mile of El Camino Real. These routes will be further developed and refined in coordination with each City and Caltrans as part of the subsequent Caltrans project development process.

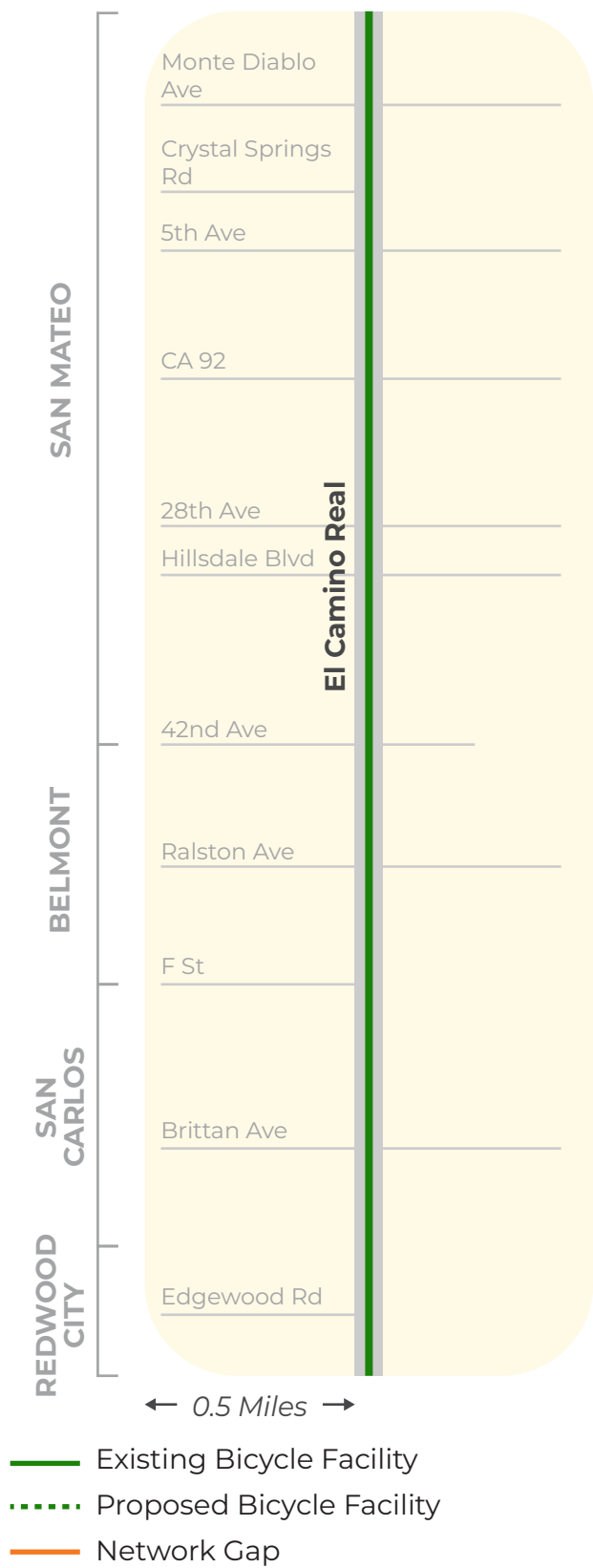
Existing and Alternative 4



Alternatives 1 and 2



Alternative 3



Spot Improvements + Placemaking Opportunities

The Central El Camino Plan identifies targeted spot improvements at critical intersections and complementary placemaking opportunities to enhance safety, accessibility, and the overall public realm experience for all corridor users.

Across all alternatives, these spot improvements target intersections where safety, operational,

and multimodal deficiencies are most pronounced. The Plan developed these improvements from previous planning efforts and an engineering-based assessment of existing conditions. Treatments vary based on site constraints, safety considerations, and traffic operations, but the Plan may apply several universal treatments at all identified intersections, along with additional treatments tailored to signalized intersections.

Universal Treatments



Mark all crosswalks with **high-visibility crosswalks**.



Shorten crossing distances with **median refuge islands** or **bulbouts**, where feasible on El Camino and side streets. This may include narrowing travel lanes on side streets.



Implement **intersection treatments** for existing bicycle facilities on cross streets.



Incorporate **in-lane bus stops** (e.g., via bus boarding islands), and follow SamTrans bus stop design guidelines for bus stop design.



Restrict left turns in/out of driveways and side streets from El Camino unless signalized or otherwise noted.



Lighting improvements corridor-wide.

Universal Treatments for Signalized Intersections



This icon indicates where the following universal signalized intersection treatments may be considered.

- Add **directional curb ramps** and **advance stop bars**.
- **Modify signals** to include protected lefts on El Camino, leading pedestrian intervals, pedestrian countdown and accessible pedestrian signals, ITS improvements, and signal equipment and visibility improvements.
- Consider **protected lefts or split phase for side streets**. Where side streets have permissive lefts, consider a left-turn yield-to-pedestrian sign or a flashing yellow arrow.
- Consider **shorter cycle lengths**. Lower walk speed to 2.8 feet per second near schools and senior centers. Alternatives with bicycle facilities on El Camino to include bike-related signal infrastructure.
- **Assess lane configurations** to look for opportunities to reduce lanes and turn pockets and tighten intersections. **Mark crosswalks** on all legs.
- Where parking exists on El Camino Real or intersecting streets, **apply red curb** on approach to the intersection in compliance with California Assembly Bill 413.

The Plan also considers ideas for future discussion to enhance the public realm and create a more welcoming, accessible corridor. Placemaking priorities and strategies guide these improvements to facilitate safety and comfort for people walking, biking, and taking transit today while catalyzing future investment—encouraging denser development, making multimodal travel more attractive, and improving quality of life along the corridor. The Plan identifies several

opportunity sites within the right-of-way for pilot activation projects. Site selection considered:

- City documents, including specific plans for downtown, streetscape plans, mobility plans
- Project team-identified transportation improvements and placemaking opportunities
- SamTrans equity priority studies
- Feedback from City staff

Placemaking Priorities



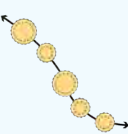
RECENTER PEDESTRIAN COMFORT

Fundamental streetscape improvements that bring back a sense of human scale to this busy thoroughfare.



REINFORCE CENTERS OF GRAVITY

Improving wayfinding experiences between El Camino Real and nearby destinations by building upon existing places where people want to be.



STRENGTHEN CONNECTIVITY

Highlight the distinct identities of the four cities while increasing the legibility of El Camino Real as a cohesive corridor.



SHAPE WHAT GROWS HERE

Public realm improvements can help set the stage for future partnership opportunities, land use decisions, and transit-oriented development.

Placemaking Strategies



MOVE + CONNECT

- Increase presence of benches, lighting, and wayfinding signage near bus stops and Caltrain platforms.
- Demonstrate first-class connections to existing and new bike networks.



STORYTELLING CANVAS

- Implement distinctive crosswalks and gateway signage at major intersections.
- Add decorative lighting near existing activity nodes.



LET'S GREEN

- Provide consistent tree canopy and understory planting along sidewalks.
- Provide understory planting alongside bike lanes and medians to provide buffers and traffic calming.

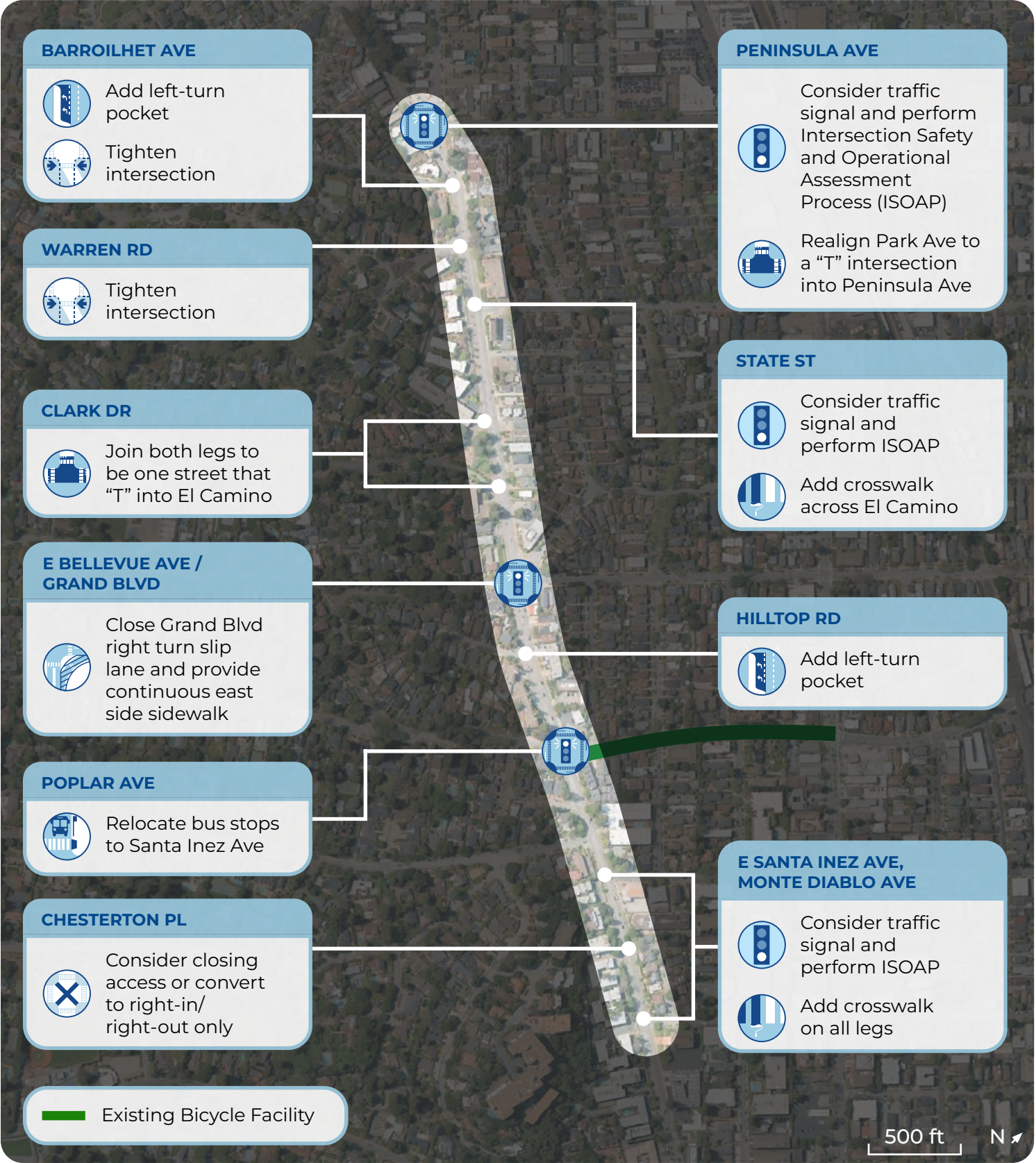


ACTIVATE!

- Partner with local organizations to promote temporary events/programs that support active programming.

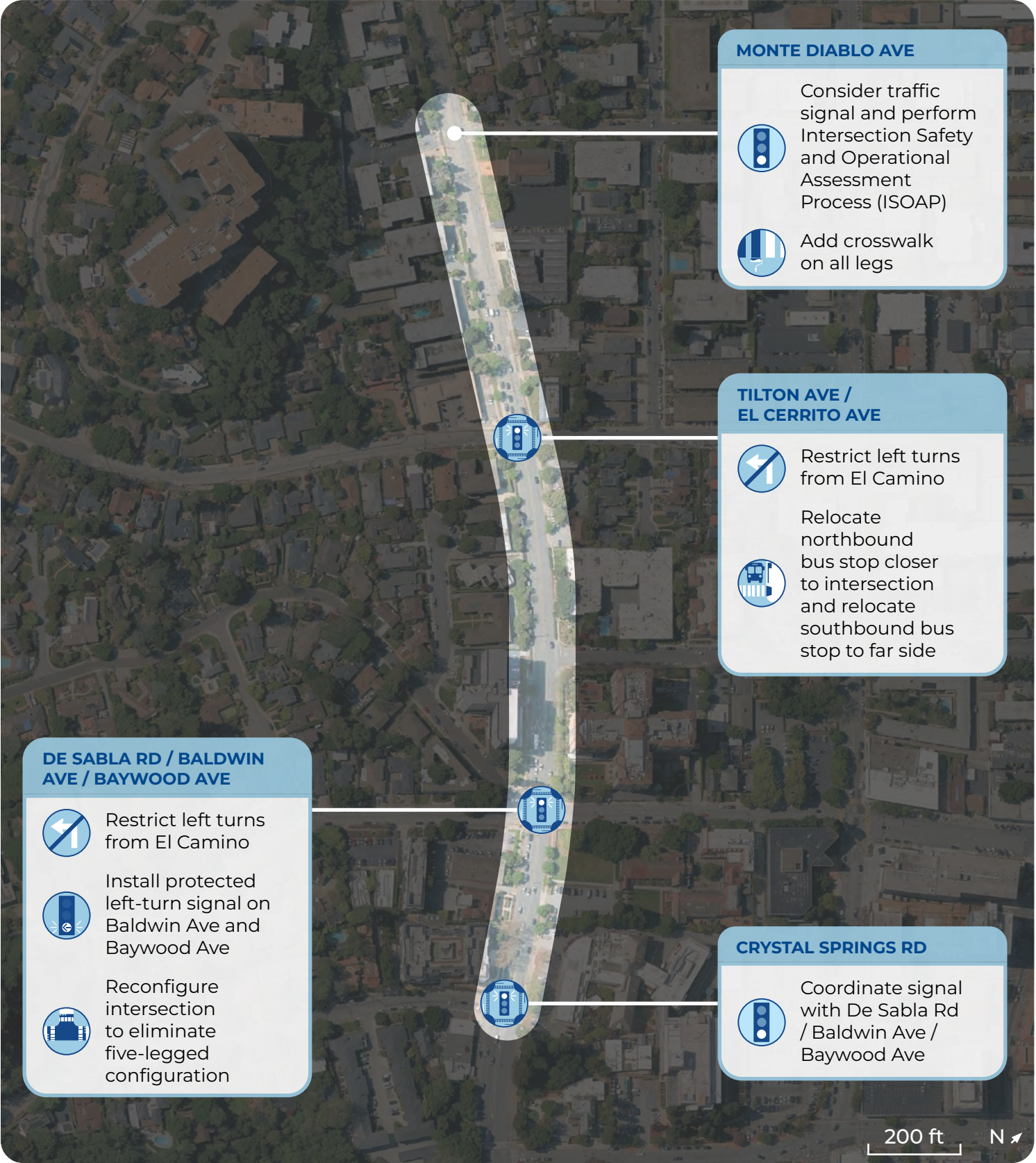
Segment 1: Peninsula Ave to Monte Diablo Ave

CITY OF
SAN MATEO



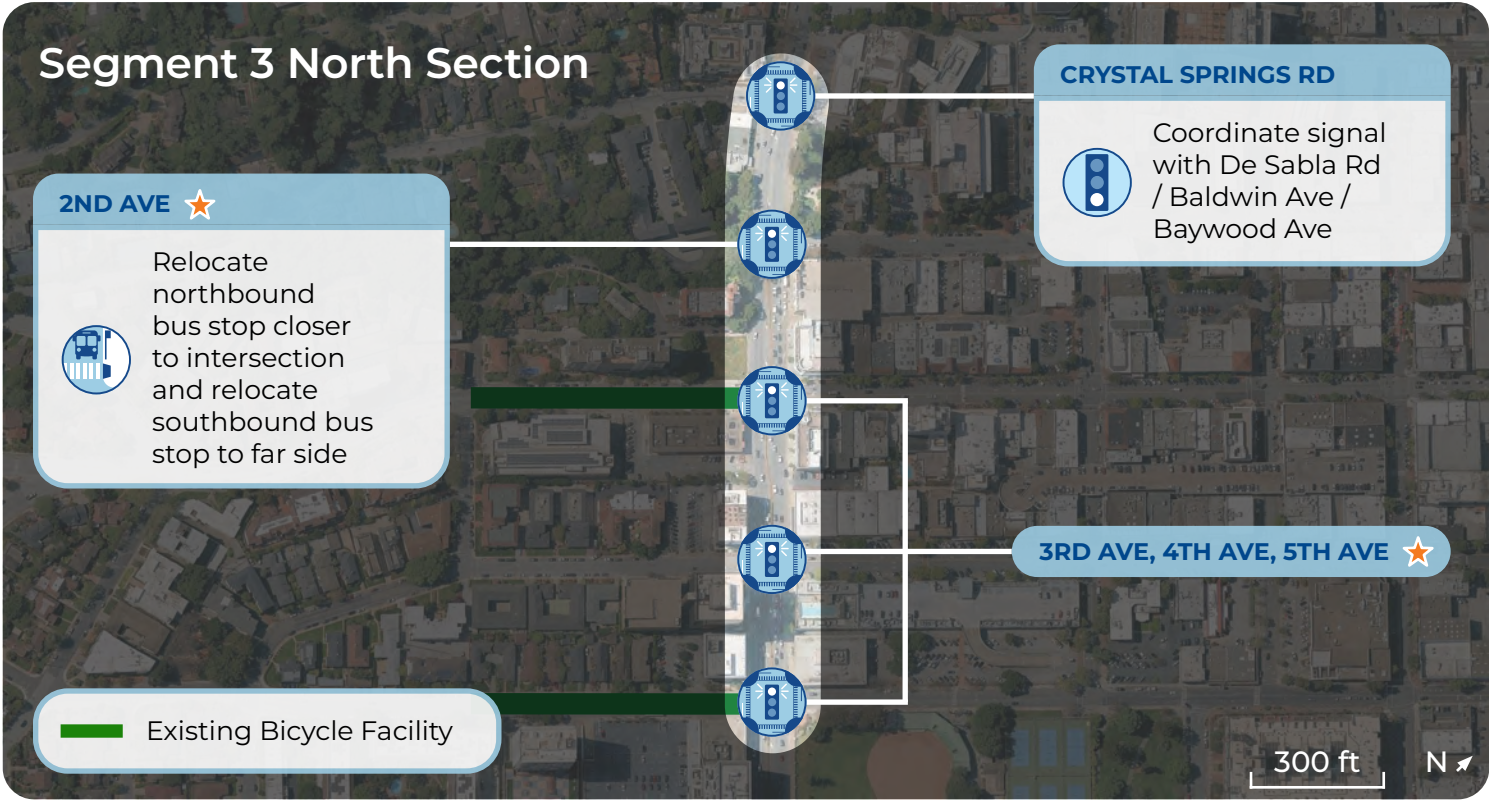
Segment 2: Monte Diablo Ave to Crystal Springs Rd

CITY OF
SAN MATEO



Segment 3: Crystal Springs Rd to 5th Ave

CITY OF
SAN MATEO



★

Multifaceted San Mateo

El Camino Real / Baldwin-5th Ave

‘Multifaceted San Mateo’ provides downtown gateways that increase vibrancy and access along El Camino Real to San Mateo’s destinations: Central Park (including Japanese Garden, recreational areas, and playground), Public Library, and the historic downtown walk.

At the key intersections of Baldwin, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Avenues, proposed interventions include various streetscape improvements such as increased crossing safety, intuitive wayfinding and signage, enhanced lighting, and public art opportunities—elements that work together to elevate the pedestrian and bike experience into the heart of downtown. Refer to **Appendix B** for more details.



KEY STRATEGIES

- STORYTELLING CANVAS

Interpretive art showcasing the creek
- ACTIVATE!

Crosswalks, curb extensions, and signage to Downtown
- LET'S GREEN

Consistent tree canopy along sidewalk and understory planting in the median



PRECEDENTS



Wayfinding signage highlighting downtown destinations, Adelaide, AUS



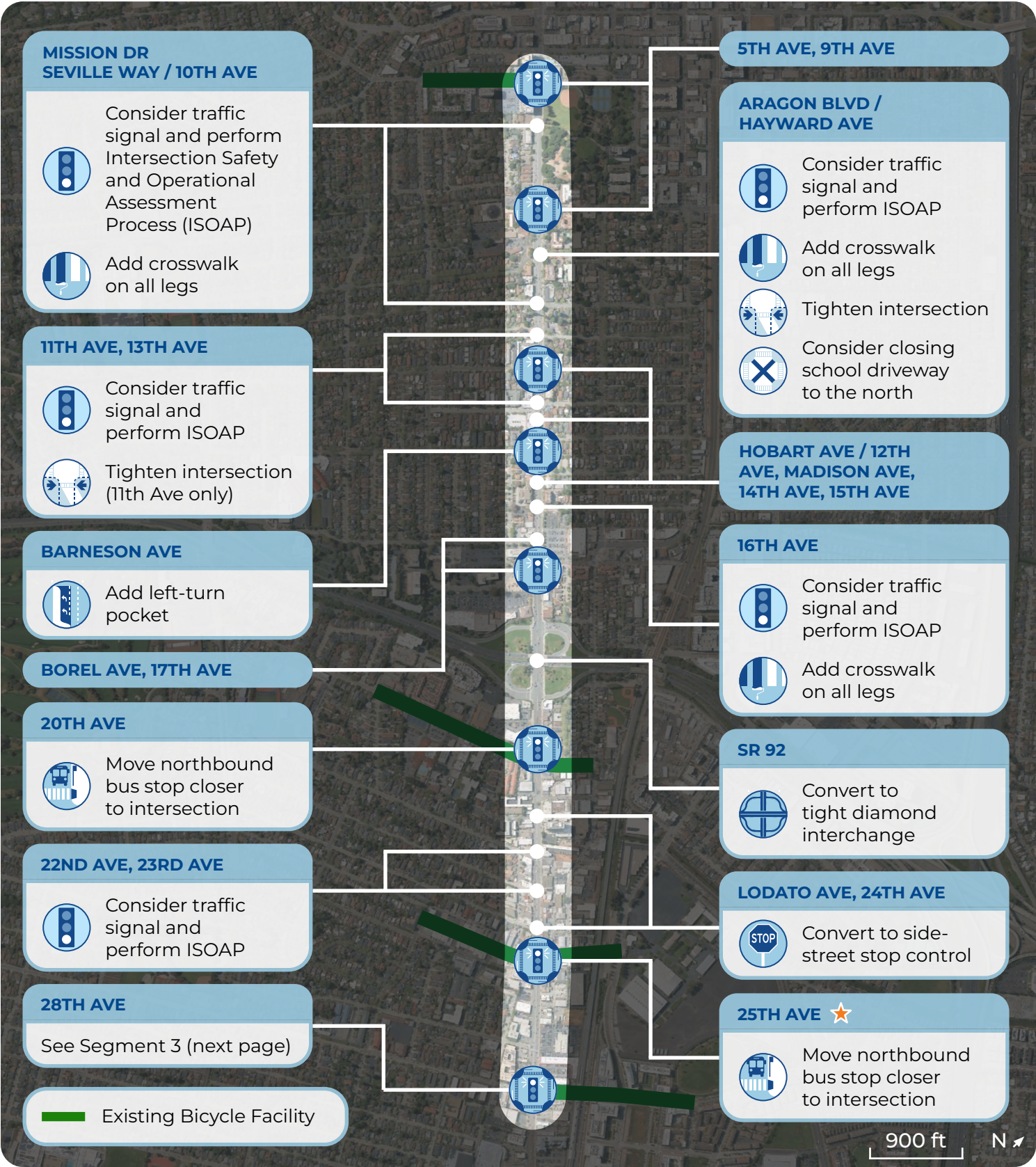
Integrating opportunities of storytelling through art, San José, CA
Credit: Baunfire



Elevated streetscape design to signify entry points to downtown, San José, CA

Segment 4: 5th Ave to 28th Ave

CITY OF
SAN MATEO



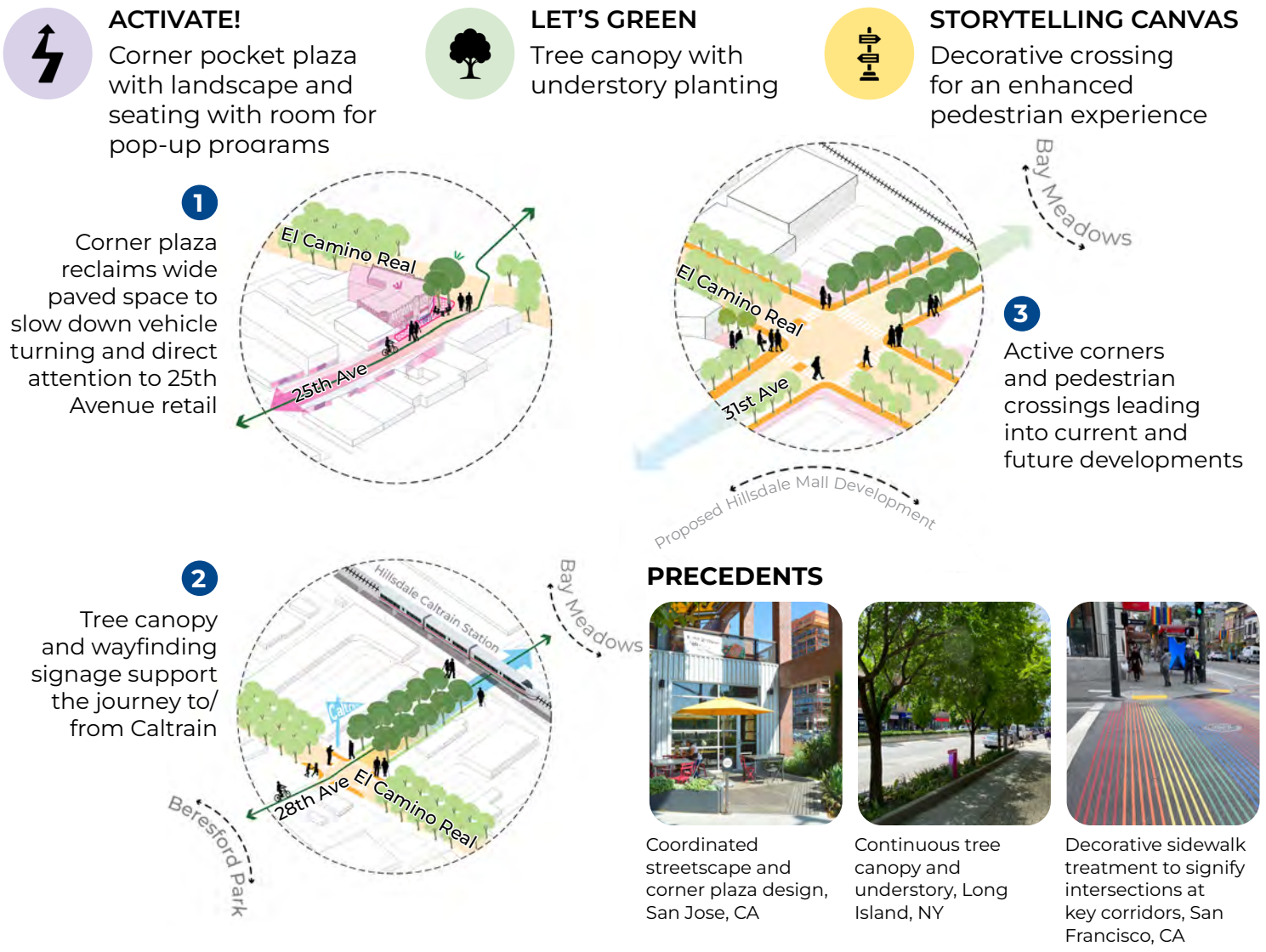
★ **San Mateo Spurs**
El Camino Real / 25th, 28th, and 31st Ave

‘San Mateo Spurs’ increase visibility and access along El Camino Real to some of San Mateo’s most active places: Hillsdale Caltrain Station, 25th Avenue retail, Hillsdale Mall, and Bay Meadows transit-oriented development.

At three key intersections, proposed interventions include a corner pocket plaza, lush sidewalk tree canopy along the sidewalk and understory planting in curb extensions, and decorative crossings—elements that work together with transportation improvements to elevate the public realm experience to these important destinations. Refer to **Appendix B** for more details.



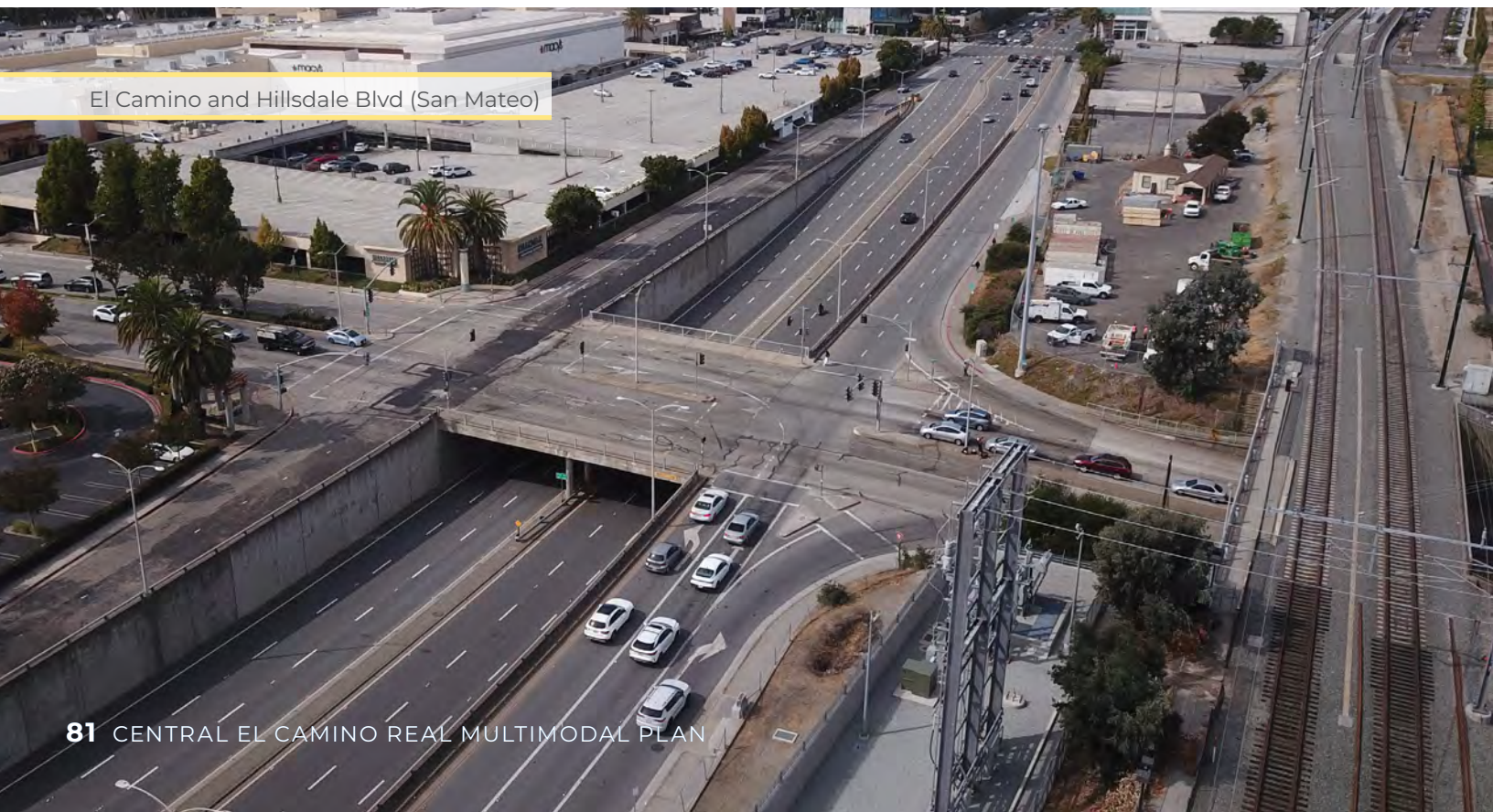
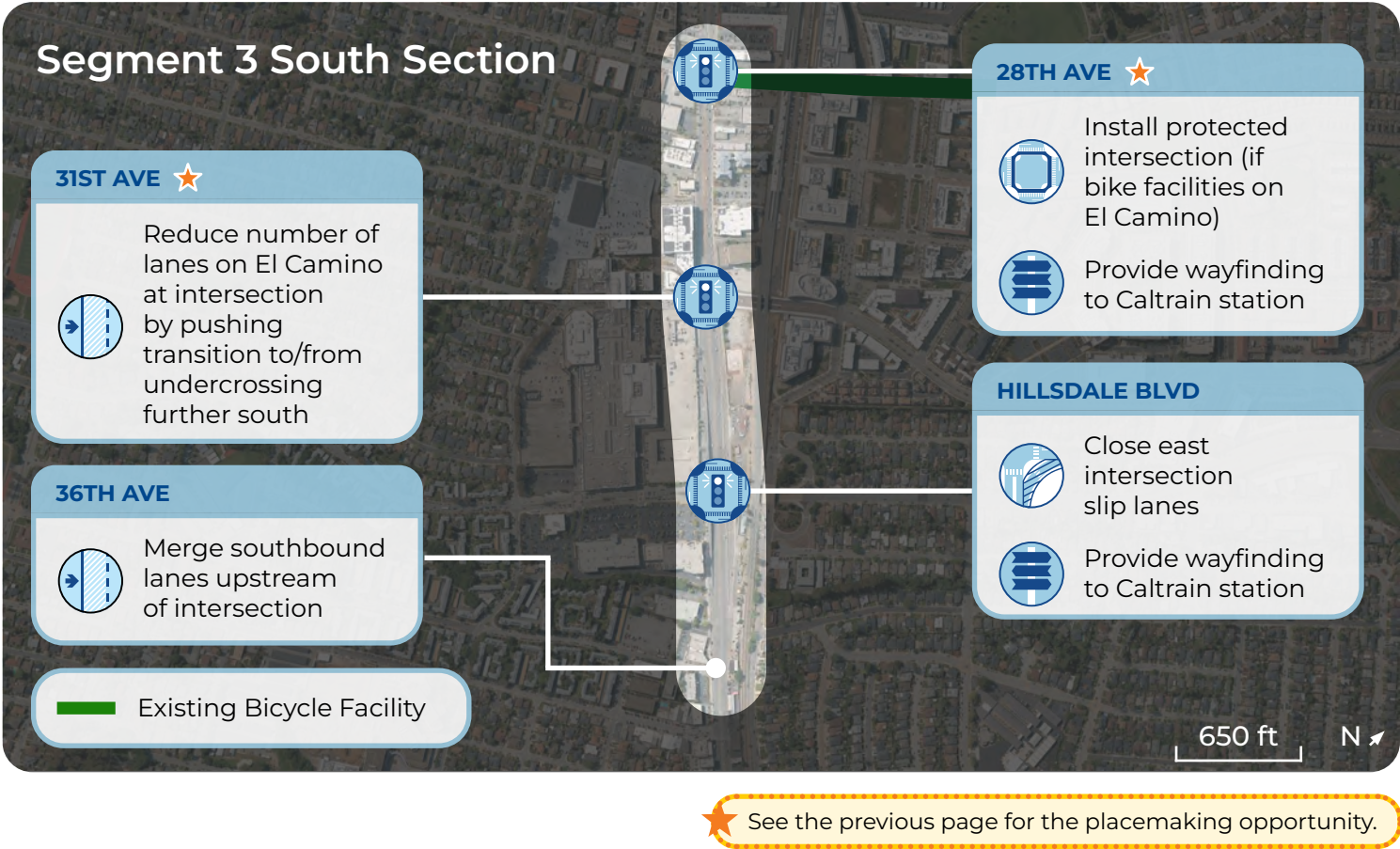
Key Strategies



Unless otherwise mentioned, image credit: SITELAB Urban Studio

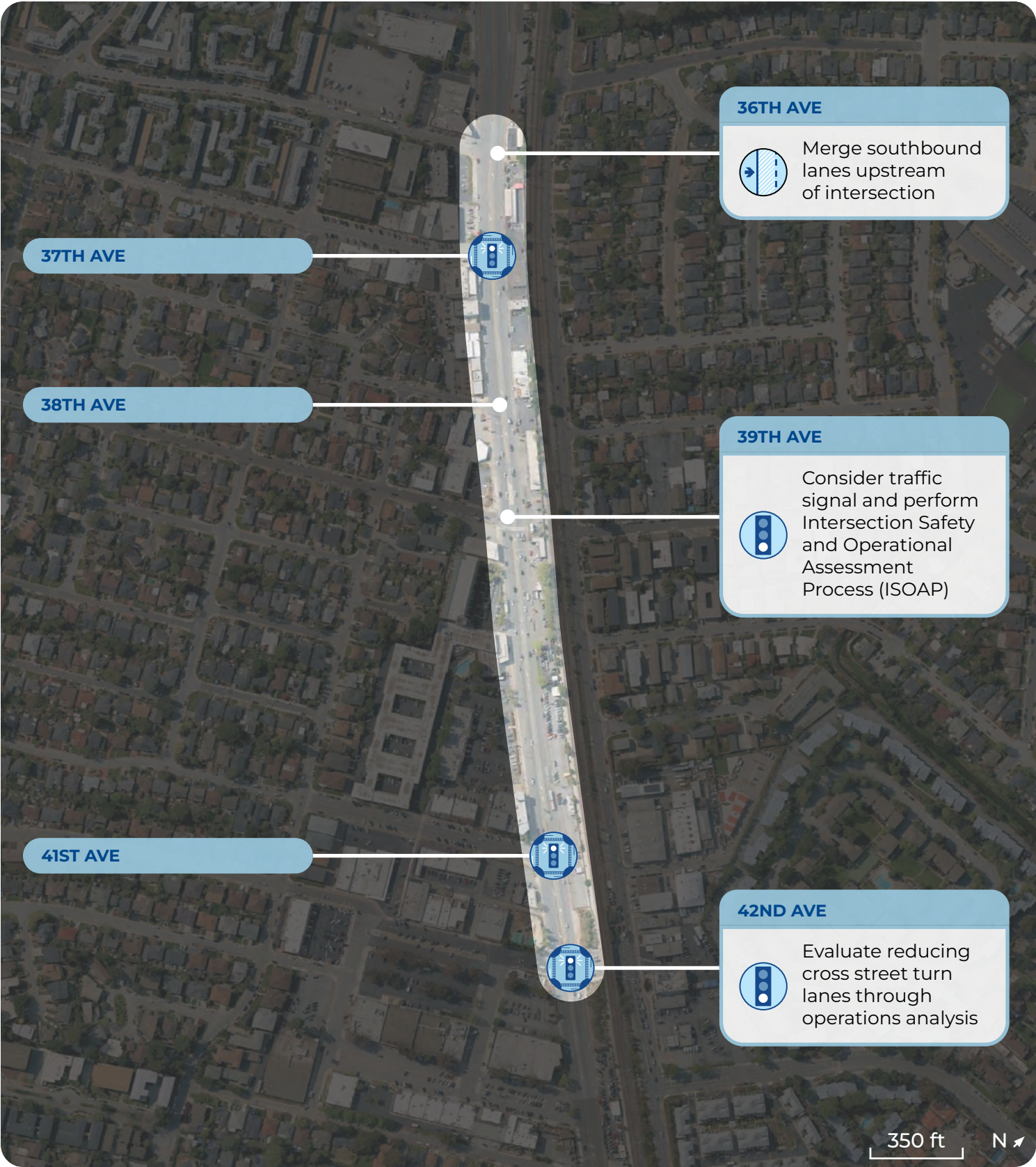
Segment 3: 28th Ave to 36th Ave

CITY OF
SAN MATEO



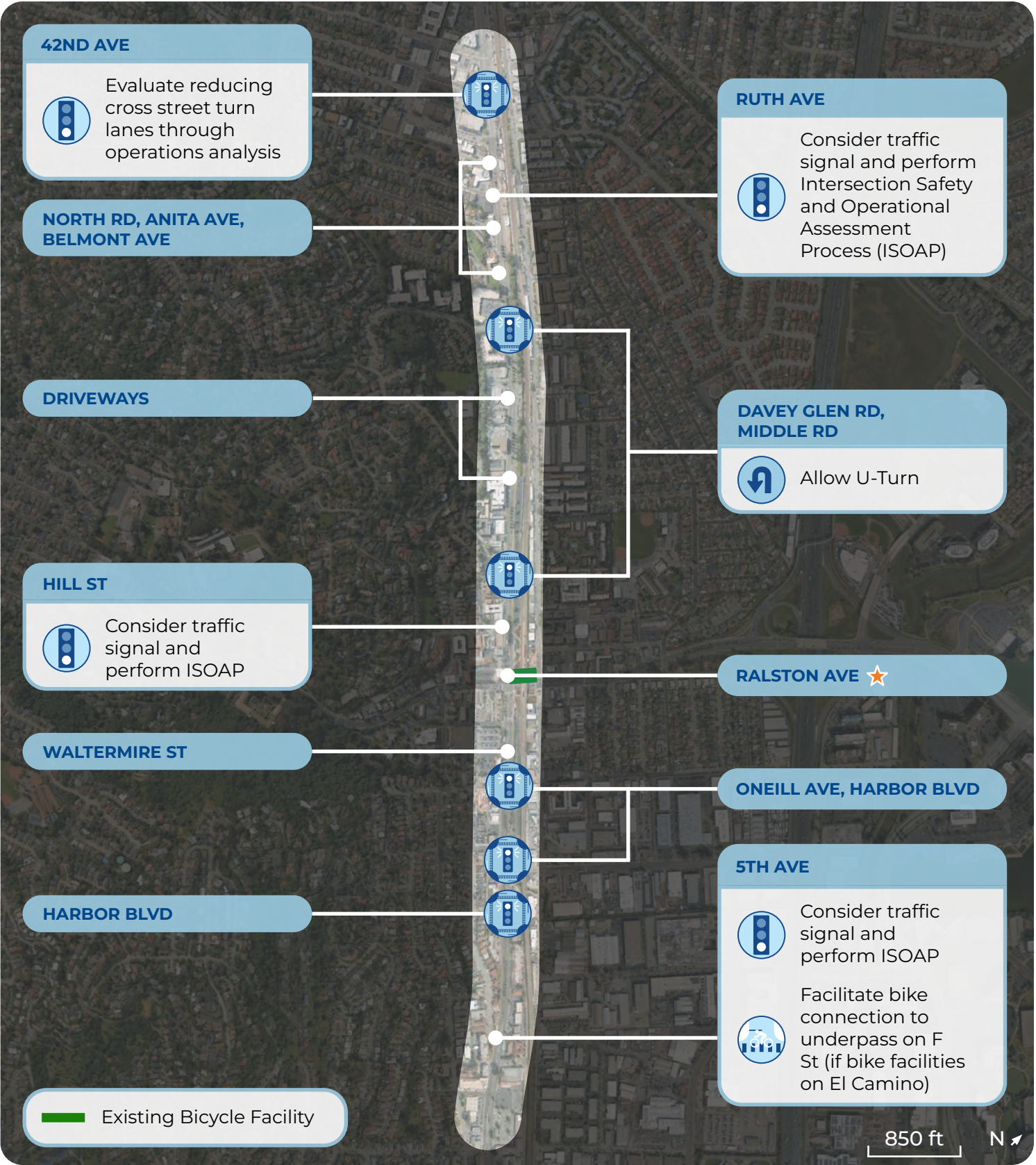
Segment 5: 36th Ave to 42nd Ave

CITY OF
SAN MATEO



Segment 6: 42nd Ave to F St

CITY OF
BELMONT



★ **Belmont Switch**
El Camino Real / Ralston Ave

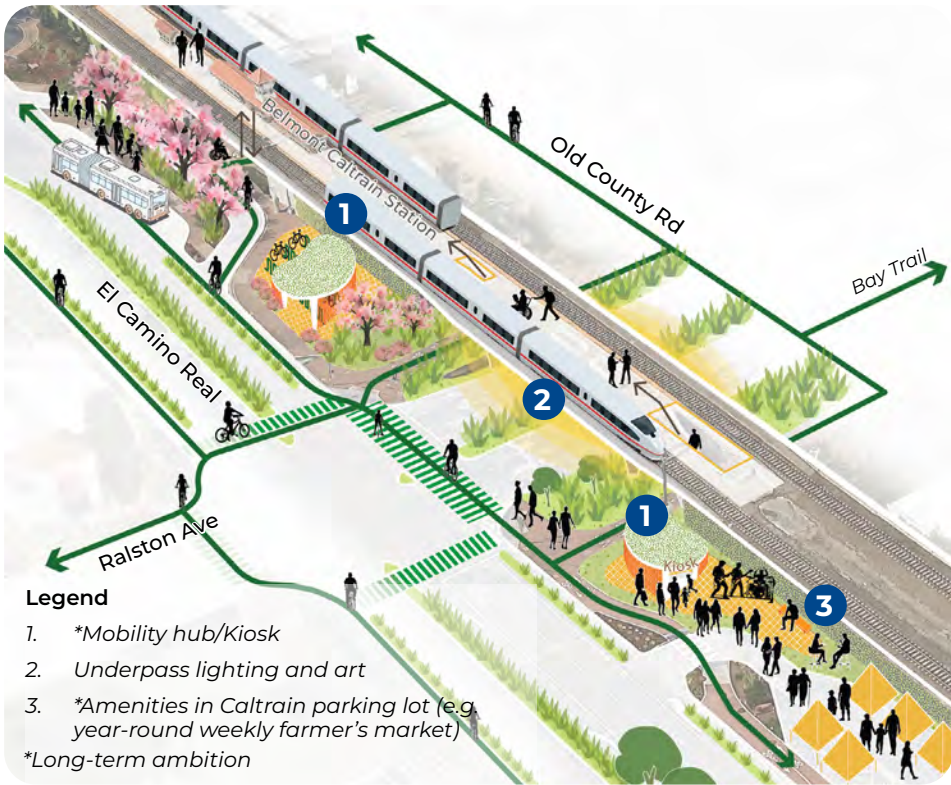
‘Belmont Switch’ optimizes multimodal connectivity at the crossroads of El Camino Real and Ralston Avenue, linking the city’s primary activity hubs: the Caltrain station, SamTrans ECR route, and the Belmont Village retail district.

Focused on transforming this transit node, proposed strategies introduce quick wins (continuous street tree canopy) and long-term ambitions (dedicated mobility hub and other amenities to support periodic programming on Caltrain parking lot). These design shifts work in tandem to soften the heavy infrastructure, creating a more human-scaled, inviting environment for commuters switching between trains, buses, bikes, cars, and foot travel. Refer to **Appendix B** for more details.



KEY STRATEGIES

- MOVE AND CONNECT**
Seamless multimodal Caltrain, dedicated bike, and SamTrans ECR route
- ACTIVATE!**
Support activation of Caltrain parking lot (e.g. year-round weekly farmer’s market)
- LET’S GREEN**
Understory planting along El Camino Real and Ralston Ave underpass



PRECEDENTS



Segment 7: F St to Edgewood Rd

CITIES OF
SAN CARLOS AND REDWOOD CITY



★ **San Carlos Front Porch**
El Camino Real / San Carlos Ave

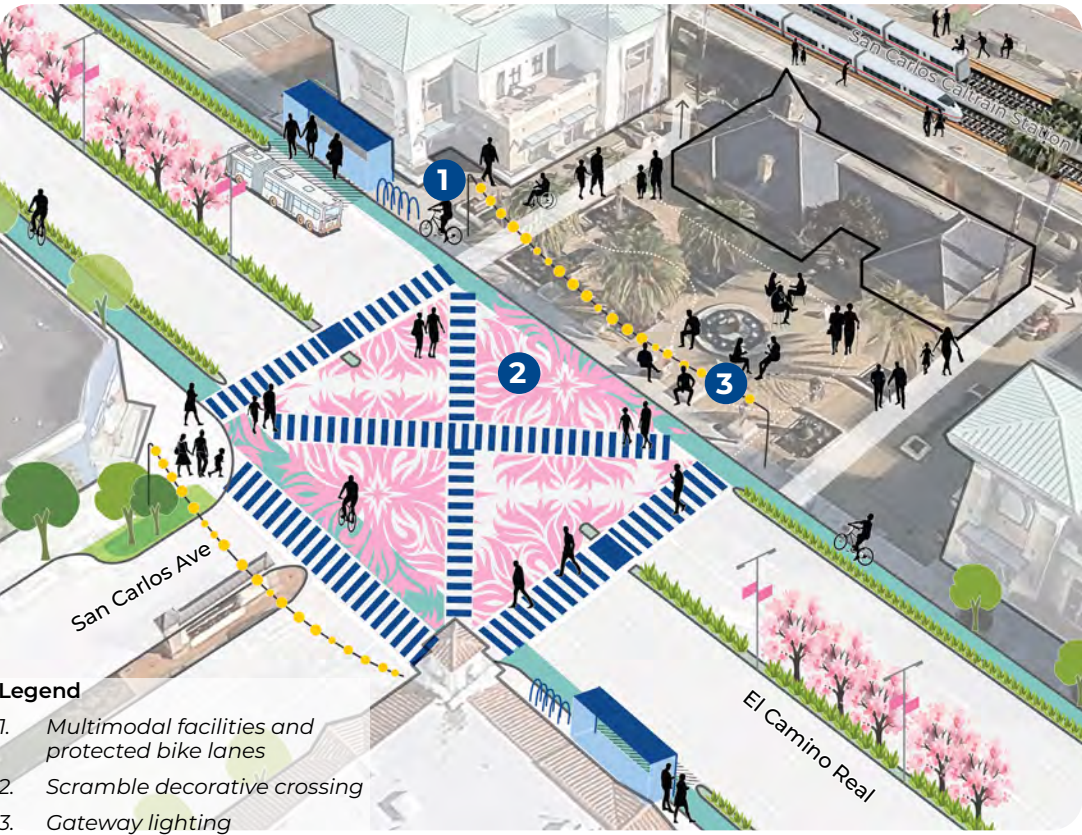
‘San Carlos Front Porch’ creates a welcoming connection across El Camino Real to the San Carlos Caltrain Station through a highly visible, decorative crosswalk, gateway lighting that frames this critical intersection, and understory planting that enlivens the median and provides a buffer alongside separated bike lanes.

Collectively, these elements support pedestrian and cyclist connections between nearby bus stops and the Caltrain Station. Refer to **Appendix B** for more details.



Key Strategies

- STORYTELLING CANVAS**
Decorative crossing and gateway lighting
- MOVE + CONNECT**
Diagonal crossing and bike infrastructure for Caltrain connection
- LET’S GREEN**
Understory planting in median and bike buffer



Unless otherwise mentioned, image credit: SITELAB Urban Studio

PRECEDENTS

- Streetscape design supportive of safe transition between modes, Seattle, WA
credit: Green Lane Project
- Decorative crossing connecting key destinations, San José, CA
- Lighting art upon entry into downtown, Santa Monica, CA

Segment 8: Edgewood Rd to Brewster Ave

REDWOOD CITY



★ Redwood City Portal

El Camino Real / Brewster Ave

‘Redwood City Portal,’ located at El Camino Real and Brewster Avenue, amplifies the sense of arrival to the city’s new Transit District and elevated Caltrain station.

Given the potential for new development with active ground floors on all corners of this intersection, proposed interventions focus on enhancing the sidewalk through generous, continuous tree canopy. Gateway signage and pedestrian lighting further highlight this important transit transfer point between SamTrans ECR and Caltrain. Refer to **Appendix B** for more details.

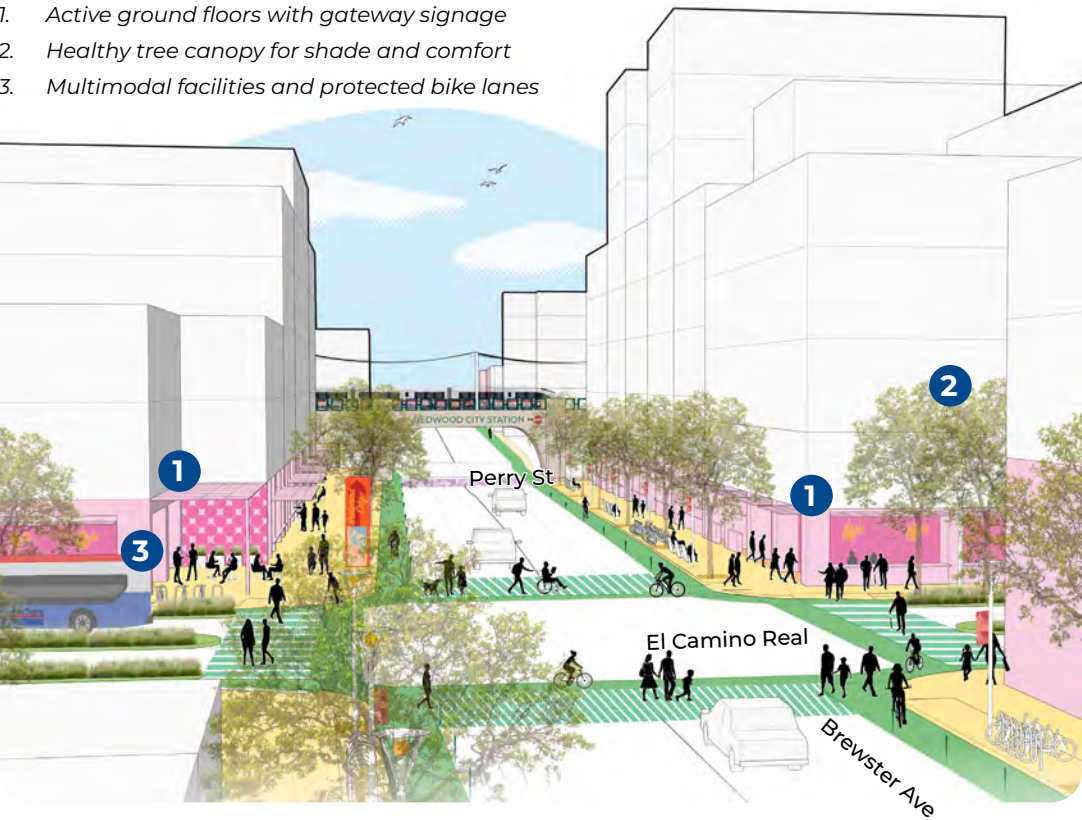


Key Strategies

- ACTIVATE!**
Active ground floor retail and gateway signage to the new Caltrain Station
- MOVE + CONNECT**
Seamless multimodal Caltrain, dedicated bike, and SamTrans ECR route
- LET'S GREEN**
Three rows of trees and bike buffers for shade and comfort

Legend

- 1. Active ground floors with gateway signage
- 2. Healthy tree canopy for shade and comfort
- 3. Multimodal facilities and protected bike lanes



Unless otherwise mentioned, image credit: SITELAB Urban Studio

PRECEDENTS



Active retail along street corners, Austin, TX



Active ground floor and vibrant streetscape furnishings with tree canopy, San Francisco, CA



Decorative art to enhance multimodal experiences, San Francisco, CA
credit: SFMTA

5

Next Steps

Caltrans Project Development Process

All of the design concepts listed in this Plan will be advanced into the Caltrans project development process. This process begins with the Project Initiation Document, which kicked off in 2026.

The vision for El Camino Real established by the Central El Camino Real Plan will serve as the foundation for designs that

will continue to be refined through the Caltrans project development process. The Grand Boulevard Initiative team will use the outcomes of the Central El Camino Real Plan to develop county-wide corridor alternatives. All the design concepts listed in this Plan will be advanced into the Caltrans project development process, illustrated in **Figure 5.1**. This process begins with the Project Initiation Document, which kicked off in 2026.

Following this study, SamTrans will continue to lead GBI, coordinating across the fifteen local jurisdictions along El Camino Real in San Mateo County. SamTrans and SMCTA will coordinate the countywide Caltrans project development process, including creating a comprehensive

strategy for implementation, phasing, and funding. Jointly, SamTrans and SMCTA will consider sponsoring the future phases of work, shown in **Figure 5.2**, to maintain momentum and reduce the burden for local jurisdictions in funding and implementing the project.

Throughout these future phases, GBI will remain a forum to facilitate collaboration between Caltrans, SamTrans, SMCTA, city staff, and other stakeholders. This ongoing collaboration will help resolve key questions such as roles and responsibilities during design and construction, development of low-stress parallel facilities for bicyclists where bike facilities are not provided on El Camino Real to ensure a countywide

backbone network, approaches to optimizing traffic operations, and developing standard maintenance agreements that agencies can use to advance transportation projects more easily in partnership with Caltrans.

Extensive community engagement will occur during Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED), which is slated to occur in 2027-2028, as the preferred alternative for each jurisdiction will be determined during this phase.

City councils and other key stakeholders will stay engaged through regular updates and will weigh in at major decision points to make sure the project balances local and regional goals.

Figure 5.1. Caltrans Project Development Process Timeline

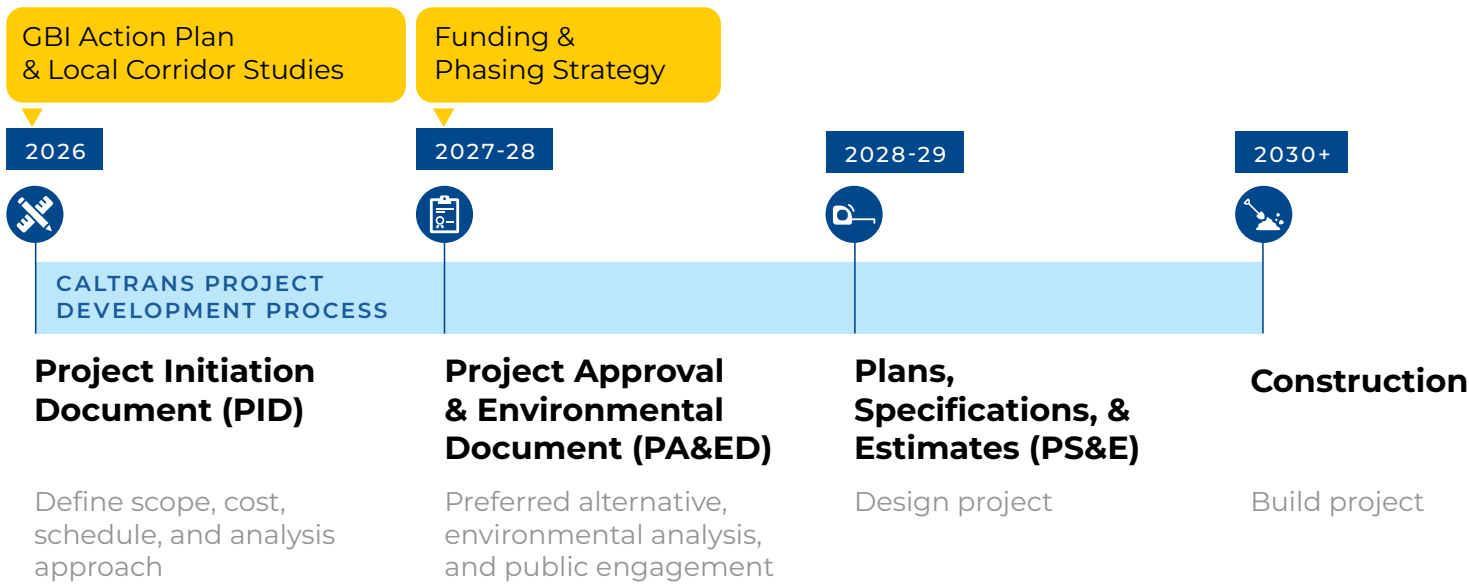


Figure 5.2. Caltrans Process Approach



Project Initiation Document (PID)

2026–2027, CURRENT PHASE

The PID is the first formal phase of the Caltrans project development process. It defines the scope of potential changes to be studied in later phases but does not settle on a final design. The main goals of this phase are to:

- Define the project’s purpose and need: identify the transportation problem to be solved (the need) and the goals for addressing it (the purpose).
- Define the study area, project scope, cost estimate, schedule, and known risks.
- Identify the project alternatives to be carried forward for detailed study.



Project Approval & Environmental Document (PA&ED)

2027–2028

Once the PID is approved, the alternatives move into detailed analysis and environmental review to select a preferred design alternative for each jurisdiction. Extensive community engagement will occur during Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED), which is slated to occur in 2027-2028, as the preferred alternative for each jurisdiction will be determined during this phase. This phase includes:

- Detailed analysis of how each alternative would affect traffic operations for all road users, and safety at intersections and along the corridor.
- Community and city council engagement to gather feedback on the alternatives and analysis results, and to gauge support for a preferred option.
- Environmental studies to assess potential impacts.
- Selection of a preferred design by Caltrans based on the analysis and community input.



Plans, Specifications, & Estimate (PS&E)

2028–2029

The preferred design then moves into detailed engineering. This phase is more technical, and includes developing:

- Preliminary layouts and roadway cross-sections, estimating quantities of materials needed, and coordinating with the teams responsible for structures, utilities, and property (right-of-way) needs.
- Detailed plans and construction specifications are combined into a complete set of construction documents.

Construction will follow this phase and is estimated to begin in 2030 or later.

Funding Sources

Beginning in late 2026, the SMCTA will partner with SamTrans and the broader GBI Task Force to develop an implementation, phasing and funding strategy that further analyzes opportunities to fund countywide El Camino Real improvements. As documented in the GBI Action Plan, funding from San Mateo County’s Measure A and Measure W, which is distributed by SMCTA, is anticipated to be the main funding source for improvements to El Camino Real. As a project of countywide significance, SMCTA may fund up to half of project costs. SMCTA’s Highway Call for Projects is expected to be the primary funding source, however the agency’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Program, Transportation Demand Management Program, and Regional Transit Connections Program are possible funding sources for smaller-scale, more focused projects. Other funding sources could include:

- Federal opportunities: 5307 Formula funds, Capital Infrastructure Grants (CIG) Small Starts Program, earmarks
- State opportunities: Local Partnership, Solutions for Congested Corridors, Active Transportation Programs (ATP)
- Regional opportunities: Regional Measure 3, ATP Regional Share, Bus Accelerated Infrastructure Delivery (BusAID)

For more information on these funding sources and applicability to the project, please see the [GBI Action Plan](#).

El Camino Real and Holly St (San Carlos)



