

City of Albany Complete Streets Program
Wednesday, December 12, 2012
Ocean View Elementary School – 7:00pm

We ask ourselves “what can we do?” to improve the heavy reliance on automobiles and the inappropriate infrastructure in our towns that makes pedestrian crossing extremely difficult. The City of Albany has partnered with Nelson Nygaard Consulting Associates, Wallace Robert and Todd (WRT), the Local Government Commission, and Caltrans to improve the streetscape of San Pablo Avenue and Buchanan Street to become complete streets. Albany received funding from a Caltrans grant to improve these two streets to transform to incorporate pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular transportation methods.

Focus group meetings were held with representatives from the community, including school employees, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, individuals with disabilities, public agencies, city staff, business owners, and emergency responders. On Thursday, December 6, an opening public meeting was held for people to discuss their visions for Albany. The consultants recorded these ideas and they are now incorporated into the plan for complete streets.

Many visions were recorded and included:

- Big street trees
- Safe connection from the city to the bay trail for bikes and walkers in harmony with cars
- Small town
- Friendly people
- Equal access for pedestrian and bicycle transportation

The focus groups ranked their values for the City of Albany (in order):

1. Community, neighborhood, friendly (30 votes)
2. Children-friendly, family, schools, education (24 votes)
3. Walkable, accessible (19 votes)
4. Small town, scale, village-feel (19 votes)
5. Bay, trees, wildlife, parks, waterfront (15 votes)

The focus groups also identified priorities for future development (in order):

1. Trees (23 votes)
1. Connections to Regional Bicycle Trails (23 votes)
3. Traffic calming on Buchanan Street (21 votes)
3. Cafes and outdoor places (21 votes)
5. Safe mid-block crossings (20 votes)
5. Gateways/sense of arrival and spirit (20 votes)
8. Safe pedestrian crossings (18 votes)
8. Reduce bicycle/pedestrian/car conflicts (18 votes)
11. Landscaped median on San Pablo Avenue (17 votes)
12. Safe clear sidewalks (15 votes)

There was a walking tour of San Pablo Avenue and Buchanan Street on Saturday, December 8, where members of the community and the design team discussed findings that were implemented into the plan.

The design team consists of:

- John Gibbs, WRT
- Michael Moule, Nelson Nygaard
- Josh Meyer, Local Government Commission
- Yeon Tae Kim, WRT
- Mike Alba, Nelson Nygaard

Help from Dan Burton, Complete Streets expert

During the charrettes on December 6 and 8, the design team came up with characters and values they felt identified with Albany:

- El Cerrito Creek should become a gateway
- Solano Avenue is an area of focus
- Buchanan Street should become a gateway
- Cordonices Creek should become a gateway

Between the walking tour on December 8, the design team had three full days to complete their plans. On December 12, they presented their proposals to roughly 60 community staff and residents. All photos have been prepared by the design team.

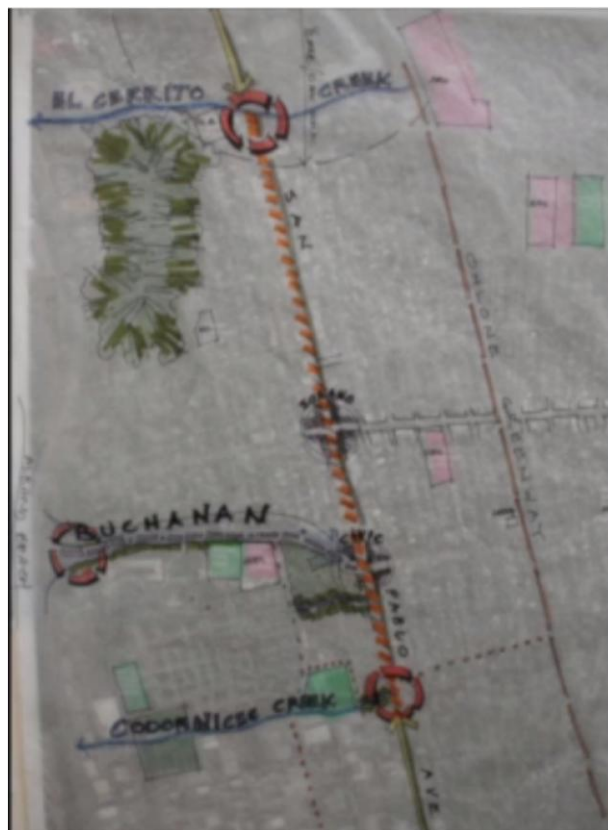


Photo 1: The three gateways (El Cerrito Creek, Buchanan Street, and Cordonices Creek) are identified



Photo 2: Existing cross section of San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley

- 8' parking (not necessarily marked)
- Two 12' travel lanes on both sides
- 10' varying center turn lane
- Small median section
- Cobra head lights (not aesthetically appealing)
- 6' parking concrete pad may cause difficulties in construction
- 74' curb to curb

Challenges and tradeoffs on San Pablo Avenue:

- Sidewalk widths of 13' are appropriate and are expensive to move curbs
- Caltrans and AC Transit require 11' minimum lanes to accommodate buses
- Left turn lanes have a capacity and safety benefit
- Trees: medians could provide opportunity for more trees
- Parking: no off-street public parking in Albany, which proposes an opportunity to create some
- Bike lanes: need at least 10' additional (5' on each side)
- In the 1.1 miles of San Pablo Avenue within Albany, there are 88 driveways that create a large challenge for construction and streetscape opportunities

The design team came up with two options for construction, both which are complete streets that would work excellently in Albany. The options are not listed in any order.

Option 1: wide medians, retain parking (protected by bulbouts), no bike lanes (green shared lane)

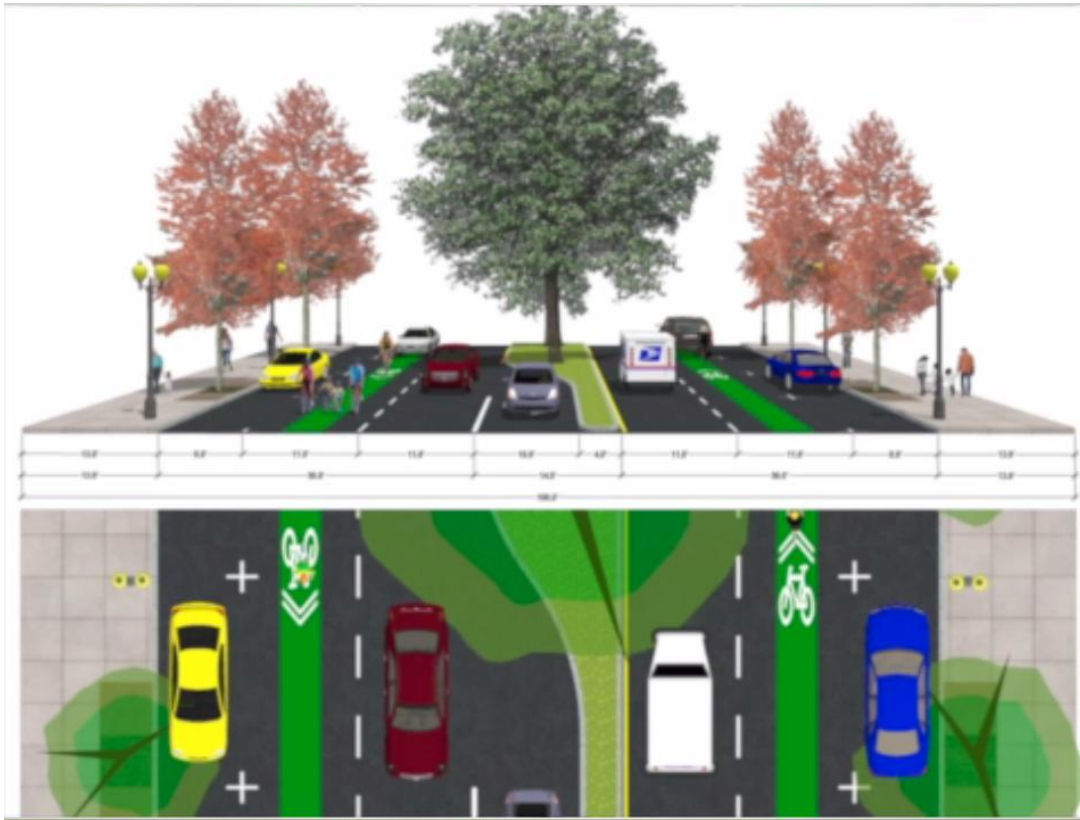


Photo 3: Option 1 cross section on San Pablo Avenue

- Two 11' lanes on each side
- Super-sharrow treatment (green lane and vehicular lane) which would require a demonstration before construction
- Curb extensions on corners where crosswalks exist
- Larger trees in 14' median
- Existing Liquid Ambers have proven to damage sidewalk. Design team proposes selecting species that work better in urban environment and reduce effects on sidewalks.
- Double-globe light fixture which is similar to Solano Avenue

San Pablo Avenue Median Study

- Fire department uses medians to access emergencies
- Medians reduce pedestrian crashes by 40 percent
- Allows for larger trees
- ½ to 2/3 of the street left without medians for left-turns in proposal with moderate median option

Option 2: bike lanes facilitated by removing left turns and/or removing parking on one side



Photo 4: Option 2 cross section on San Pablo Avenue

- Narrow-raised median (approximately 6')
- 10.5-11" vehicular lane and 5.5' bike lanes
- Median may decrease to 4' in order to increase vehicle lanes, but strollers and bicyclists need at least 6'
- Turn lane would come back where cars need to make a turn and parking on the left hand side would go away

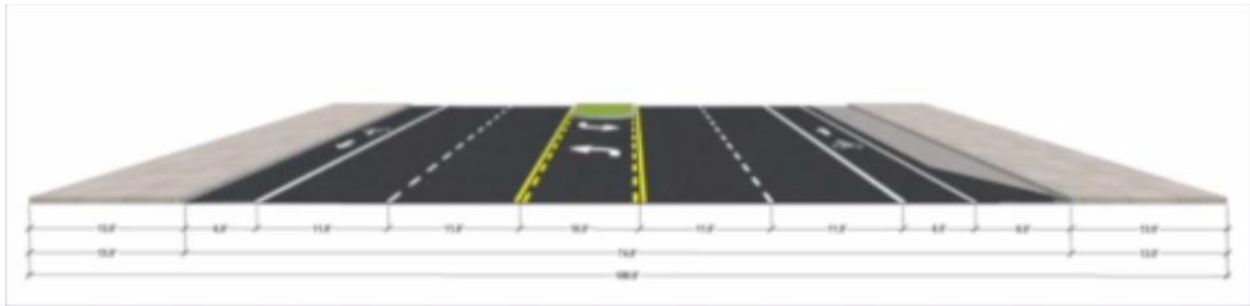


Photo 5: Option 2 on San Pablo Avenue with a left-turn lane

- Transition from median with bike lanes and parking on both sides to a street without a median and turn lanes with parking only one side
- Wider turn lane
- 120' taper length for 30mph zones
- The more often there are turn lanes, the less parking spaces



Photo 6: Cross section of Option 2 on San Pablo Avenue that shows the transition between a median and no median with left-turn lane



Photo 8: San Pablo Avenue and El Cerrito Creek gateway

- Moderate median usage
- Left turns onto Brighton Avenue
- U-turns on other streets and driveways
- Curb extensions on corners (at least 6' to protect parking)
- Bus bulbout at Carlson and Peet's Coffee to shelter the waiting area
- Signage, sculpture, and art potential



Photo 9: El Cerrito Creek gateway

- Decorative elements proposed on median and sidewalk

- Proposed bulbout
- Some signage that distinguishes El Cerrito Creek and Albany



Photo 10: Enhanced pedestrian crossing at Portland Avenue and San Pablo Avenue

- Median texturized to create visual-narrowing of the street
- Green super-sharrow technique
- Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon for pedestrian signage which improves yield rates for cars on streets similar to San Pablo Avenue
- Advanced yield lines that slows cars down before they reach crosswalks (see triangular shapes)
- Median is relatively small



Photo 11: Solano Avenue to Buchanan Avenue

- Wide median option
- Bus bulb outs: involves bulbing out the bus stop out to the parking lane for the bus to pull into (common in San Francisco) but has to be approved by Caltrans
- Mid-block crossing at west-end of photo, south of Solano Avenue. This crosswalk could be texturized for emergency vehicles to drive on.



Photo 12: Dartmouth Avenue and Monroe Street

- Possibility of Senior Center
- 4' push back into UC Berkeley land due to curb extension and parking

- Wider median option
- Super-sharrow green lane treatment
- Possibility of HAWK pedestrian signal at Dartmouth Avenue, or use median without signal
- Creates a connection with Cordonices Creek and Dartmouth Avenue for bicyclists
- Takes away left-turn lane at Dartmouth Avenue. There is a spot for a U-turn 1-2 blocks South of the site on San Pablo Avenue.
- In Albany's Active Transportation Plan, Dartmouth Avenue is shown as a possible bicycle boulevard
- This is the only location the design team has removed a left-turn lane



Photo 13: Cordonices Creek gateway

- North bound on San Pablo Avenue toward Albany
- Civic monument in median that signifies Cordonices Creek
- Civic plaza located on left side of photo
- Photo demonstrates shared lane (bicycle and vehicle) and bicyclists coming out of Dartmouth Avenue
- Potential for a café from Senior Housing Project

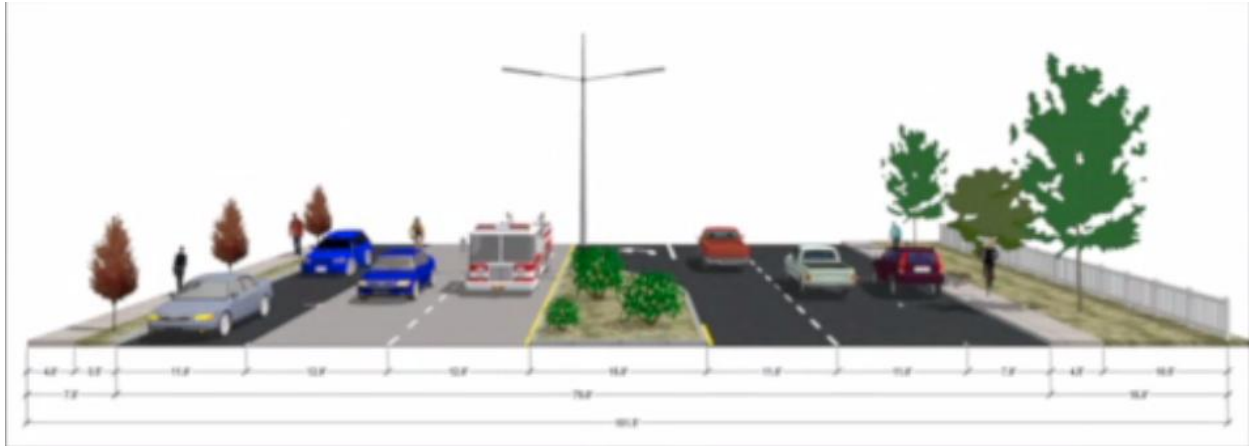


Photo 14: Existing cross-section of Buchanan Street

- 79' curb to curb (but varies)
- Narrow sidewalk with minimal planting
- Planting in median has grown tall and causes visual impairments for vehicles turning left



Photo 15: Proposed cross-section of Buchanan Street

- Proposed pedestrian crossing either hybrid beacon or HAWK at Polk Street
- Green super-sharrow technique
- Raised median at Polk Street
- Curb extensions at Polk Street



Photo 16: Proposed Buchanan corridor

- Gateway treatment at bridge off of Buchanan Exit on I-80
- Opportunity for plaza at Pierce Street
- Polk street pedestrian treatment (see previous photo)



Photo 17: Buchanan and Jackson Street

- Potential for a pocket park at Buchanan and Madison Street.
- Allows for increased parking spots



Photo 18: Buchanan gateway off of I-80

- Ties in elements from Gill Tract (e.g. Palm tree)
- Gives visitors a sense of Albany's identity



Photo 19: Pierce Street plaza

- Cleveland Street proposed to be blocked off to create a pedestrian-plaza

- Possible café location
- Has the potential to become an iconic area in Albany
- May have to change entrance to plaza so emergency vehicles may access Cleveland Street
- May include parklet idea