Plan to Improve Traffic Safety and Circulation in El Monte

A Report to the City of El Monte

February 2007

Prepared by

Local Government Commission
Glatting Jackson Kercher Anglin, Inc.
Livable Streets, Inc.
Community Partners LLC
QUATRO Design Group

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Background

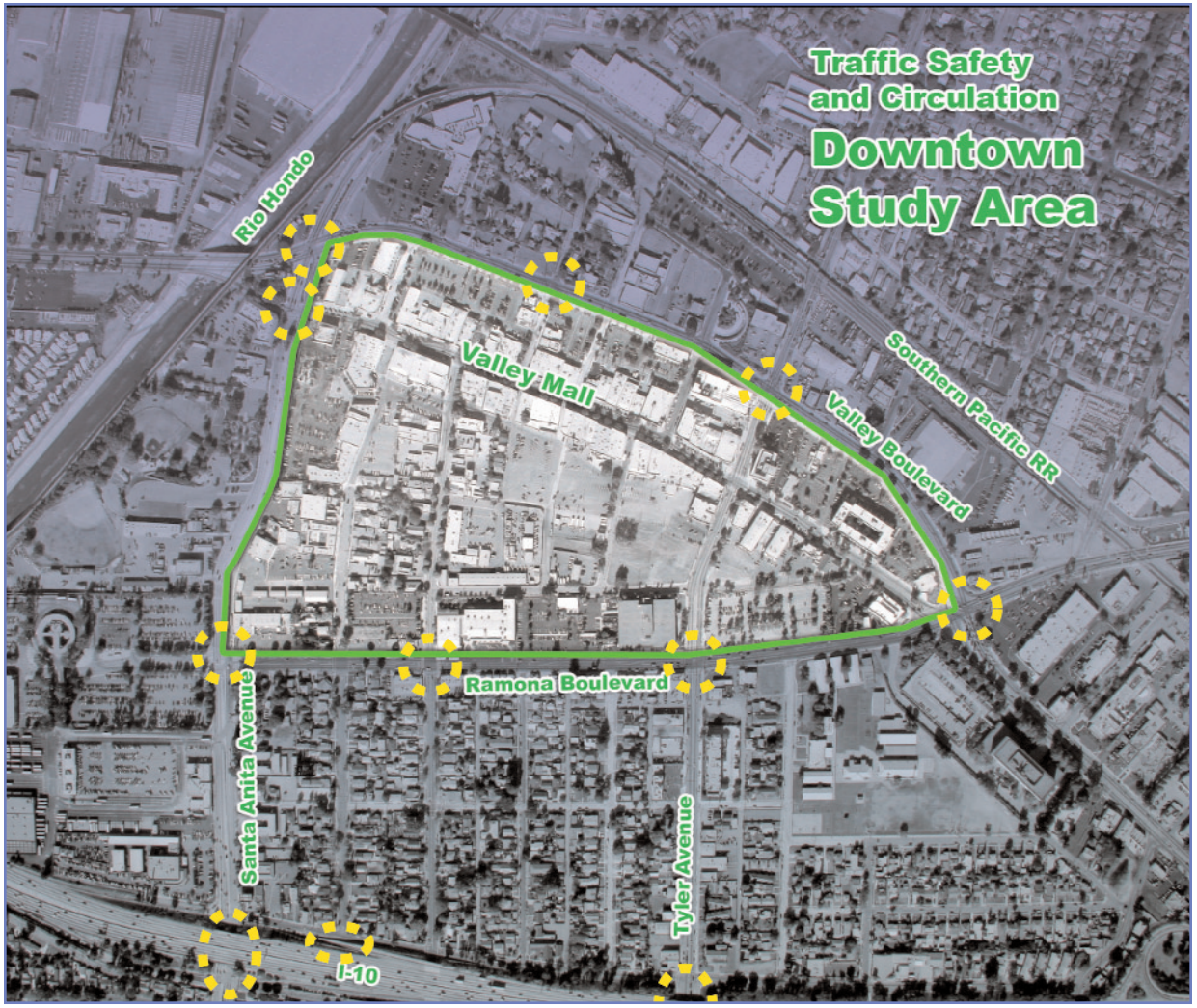
Project Description and Goals

This report describes the process and results of a charrette conducted from August 3-8, 2006, to develop a vision and plans to improve traffic safety and circulation in El Monte.

El Monte is a 117-year-old city in the eastern part of Los Angeles County that is home to over 115,000 people. El Monte is fragmented by several transportation corridors. The I-10 freeway bisects the northern and southern parts of the city. The Union Pacific railroad line runs northwest to southeast, intersecting seven major streets.

Heavy traffic along Valley Blvd., Peck Rd., Santa Anita Ave., Tyler Ave. and Garvey Ave. also inhibit travel between neighborhoods, restrict residential development and undermine economic activity along these corridors.

The study focused on the downtown area (right) and on selected sites outside the downtown area where connectivity, safety and mobility concerns were cited.



The highlighted areas illustrate areas of emphasis in the study.

Project Goals

- ✔ Improve traffic flow
- ✔ Improve pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity
- ✔ Improve transportation system safety
- ✔ Stimulate economic development
- ✔ Support infill and mixed-use development

Community Plans

While El Monte is essentially "built out" and does not have any large parcels for new development, the city's population continues to grow at a rapid pace. Between 1990 and 2000, El Monte's population grew by over 9 percent. Accommodating continued growth will require creative re-use of land as well as careful planning for higher density development, ideally along major transportation networks. The challenge will be to improve livability as the demand on services increases.

The City is developing a General Plan Update that will incorporate smart growth concepts to meet the challenge of improving livability while accommodating increased population. Work on the General Plan began in November 2005, and is expected to be completed by early 2007. The vision for the update is based on six themes:

1. El Monte will be a friendly and welcoming city that provides a safe environment, values family, diversity and community, and one that cherishes, preserves and builds on its rich history and culture.

2. El Monte will have a balance of safe and stable neighborhoods, quality parks and recreational facilities, thriving business and job opportunities, shopping and entertainment venues, and excellent schools.

3. El Monte will be a city where people can easily circulate, safely access community facilities and services by a range of convenient transportation choices, and efficiently connect residents, business and visitors to the region.

4. El Monte is committed to restoring and preserving its rivers and open spaces, providing adequate parks, promoting connections with the natural environment, and fostering healthy lifestyles.

5. El Monte supports a prosperous local economy that fosters a broad range of business, an entrepreneurial spirit, ample employment opportunities, a competitive and trained workforce, and an excellent standard of living.

6. El Monte will grow in a sustainable way, preserving and enhancing neighborhoods while fostering revitalization and quality development in downtown and along commercial corridors.

During El Monte's initial General Plan Update workshop, residents cited the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers, proximity to Los Angeles, Metrolink, the El Monte Busway, Longo Toyota, the Aquatic Center, high-quality community services and a rich cultural heritage as key community assets. Participants also identified opportunities for improvements such as enhanced pedestrian amenities, revitalized commercial corridors, bicycle and pedestrian access to parks, beautification through landscaped streetscapes, more neighborhood parks and increased civic participation.

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The General Plan will include a Circulation Element that describes existing transportation system characteristics and strategies for the system to complement future growth patterns.

Data from the Draft Existing Conditions Report of the Circulation Element was used in the preparation of this study.

The results of this planning process will be integrated into the Circulation Element and General Plan Update.

The Metro Bicycle Transportation Strategic Plan, a countywide plan to improve bicycle

The advisory group met in June to discuss outreach and community involvement.

Transit representatives explained the obstacles some people face when trying to access transit.

Chamber of Commerce members provided insights into El Monte's economic climate.

facilities, includes an assessment and recommendations for improvements at the El Monte bike-transit hub. Recommendations include:

- ➢ Add bike route signs and pavement markings on many streets (see report for complete listing).
- ➢ Open locked gate between the River Path and transit center, and add signs.
- ➢ Open access gates to Rio Hondo River Path at Fletcher Park.
- ➢ Provide bicycle sensitive loop detectors and bicycle detection marking on pavement at selected sites.
- ➢ Add vandal-proof lighting on the Rio Hondo River Path at I-10 and Fletcher Park Driveway undercrossings.

The Charrette Process

In June, the consultant team conducted a preliminary review of the existing conditions in El Monte. They met with the advisory committee, reviewed project goals, and finalized plans for the public involvement and conceptual design process.

A design charrette was conducted from August 3-8. City staff, community leaders and residents participated in a series of events designed to identify concerns, priorities and potential solutions. The events began with a series of focus group meetings with transit providers, the Chamber of Commerce, City staff, emergency services, community leaders, schools, advocates and other key participants.

Priorities

- ✔ Pedestrian-engaging land uses (mixed use, outdoor cafes)
- ✔ Landscaping (parkways, medians)
- ✔ Attractive design elements (aesthetics, beauty)
- ✔ Traffic calming, traffic management
- ✔ Building placement, mix of uses
- ✔ Code enforcement
- ✔ Places of interest
- ✔ Appropriate pedestrian design (crossings, intersections, quality walkways)
- ✔ Public art
- ✔ Street lightning, safe routes to school, street furniture

A community workshop was held at the Community Center from 6-8 p.m. on Thursday, August 3. The process began with participants sharing their concerns and priorities, and then voting on which priorities were more important. A presentation covering concerns, priorities and potential solutions followed.

On Saturday, August 5, citizens, staff and community leaders joined the consultant team on a field review of selected sites. The group observed traffic and pedestrian patterns in the field, discussed concerns, and considered some ideas for resolving problems.

After the field review, participants viewed a presentation illustrating concepts for addressing traffic safety and circulation issues. Three groups of residents then gathered at tables to develop suggestions for improvements and present their results to the entire audience.

Some community concerns were beyond the scope of this study area, but most input is reflected in a plan for improvements that was developed over the next three days.

On Tuesday, August 8, the consultants presented the slides illustrating key points in the plan at a closing workshop. Audience comments made during that meeting were integrated into the written report. Detailed minutes from public processes are included in Appendix A.

Participants helped create a list of concerns, then used sticky dots to vote for their top priorities.

Participants discuss concerns during the field review in a walk around the study area.

Groups worked together to identify priorities and potential solutions.

Each group then presented its ideas.

Existing Conditions

The I-10 San Bernardino Freeway runs east-west through El Monte and provides the principal regional access. It has six interchanges for surface arterial roads. The Union Pacific Railroad tracks through town have grade separated crossings at Tyler Ave. and Cogswell Rd. One additional undercrossing is under construction at Ramona Blvd.

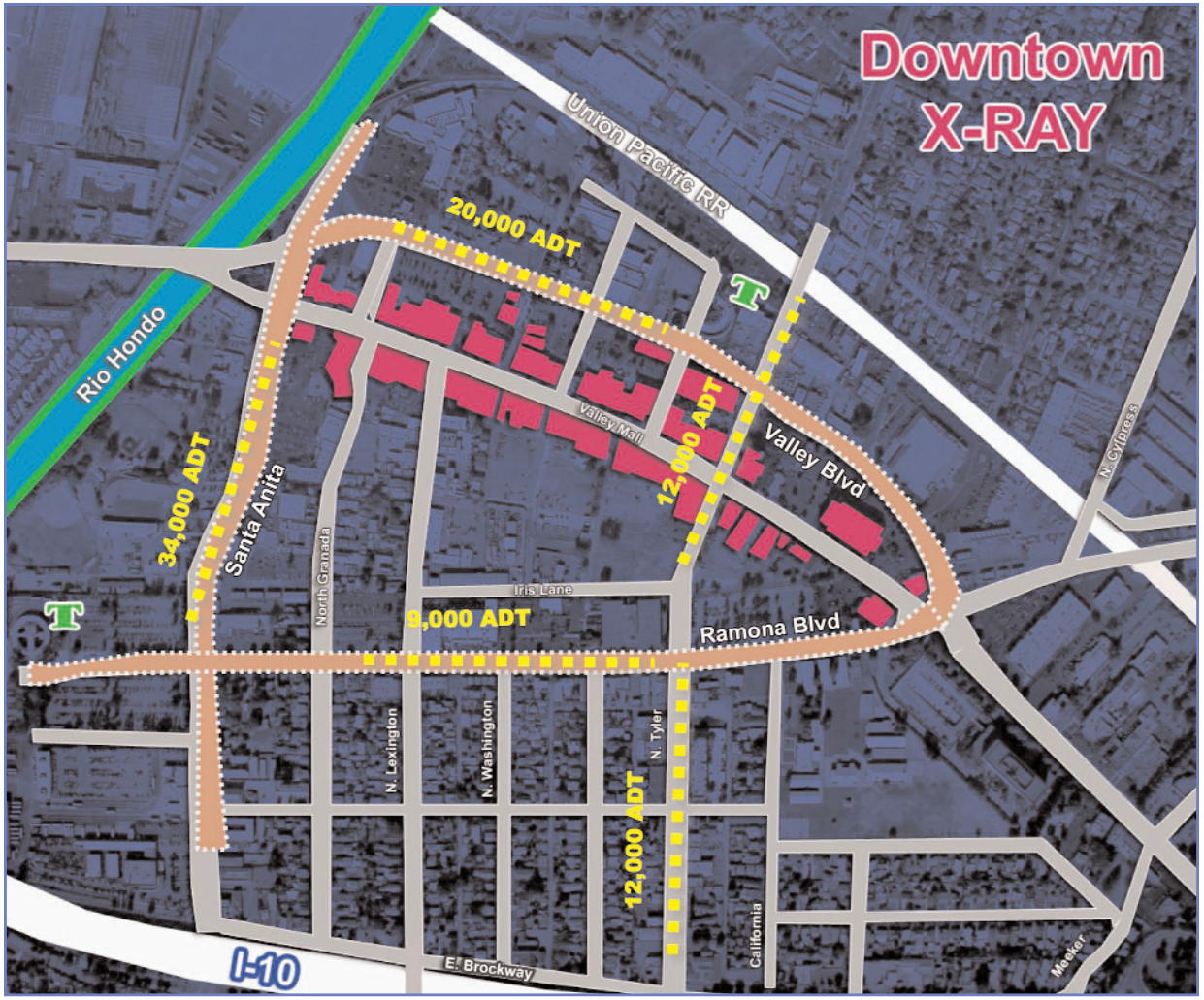
Workshop participants reported that the trains often block access across tracks when they stop in El Monte. Vehicles are delayed and children crawl through the stopped trains to get to school.

Many El Monte streets are wide with very little landscaping. Wide, stark streets contribute to high vehicle speeds and make pedestrian crossings difficult. Large parking lots separate sidewalks from businesses on some parcels. Few midblock crossings are available for pedestrians, and few uncontrolled crosswalks are marked. Lighting is car-oriented and inadequate in underpasses.

Most sidewalks lack a buffer area between sidewalks and the travel lanes. Curb ramps for wheelchair accessibility are in place at many locations, but people in wheelchairs were observed in the street, next to the sidewalk. Sidewalks are narrow in some locations, and sometimes obstructed by signs or other street furniture.

Most bicyclists were observed using sidewalks instead of streets. They often travel facing oncoming traffic, a common cause of vehicle/bicycle crashes. Workshop participants told of seeing bicyclists abruptly entering traffic lanes to avoid pedestrians on the sidewalk. One witnessed a near-miss when the bicyclist failed to yield to an oncoming vehicle.

Many transit stops have been upgraded to include shelter, benches, trash containers, and route information. The stops were attractive, clean and well maintained. El Monte has a beautiful new aquatic center, a community center, and regional and neighborhood parks. Pedestrian crossings to some parks are challenging.



The El Monte Downtown X-Ray charts traffic circulation around the downtown.

Workshop participants perceive access to the downtown, or Valley Mall area, as difficult. They report heavy congestion and difficulty finding gaps in traffic. Vehicle counts on key corridors near the downtown area are shown in the Downtown X-Ray (El Monte Circulation Element, Draft Conditions Report, March 14, 2006).

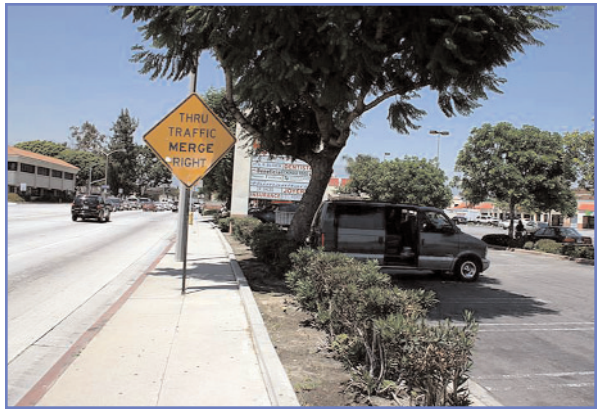
The City of El Monte Draft Circulation Element provides additional details on the traffic volume and congestion. The draft report shows that much of the downtown area enjoys light traffic volumes with a high level of service. Congestion occurs primarily at intersections during peak hours, and is more prevalent in areas away from the downtown core.

Valley Mall is the primary street through the area considered to be El Monte's downtown. The street is lined with store fronts containing retail shops and commercial businesses. There are few residential neighborhoods near the downtown area. Large parking lots were lightly used on a Saturday when the consultant team visited.

El Monte is in the San Gabriel Valley's transit hub, but pedestrian connections between the hub and the downtown area are poor.

Participants in the focus groups and public workshop identified several issues:

- ➢ Congestion at intersections.
- ➢ Hard to drive to Valley Mall area.
- ➢ Difficult for bicyclists and pedestrians. to cross streets.
- ➢ Missing and narrow sidewalks.
- ➢ Some sidewalks blocked by cars, post office boxes and vegetation.
- ➢ Poor accessibility for people with disabilities.
- ➢ No lighting at transit stops, crosswalks and undercrossings.
- ➢ Lack of connectivity.
- ➢ Trains blocking crossings.
- ➢ Neighborhood speeding and cut-through traffic.
- ➢ Speed hump overuse – damage and delay to emergency vehicles.
- ➢ High speeds on some major streets.



Recommended Improvements

This section begins with general recommendations for principles to create a more livable, prosperous downtown area.

Some concerns expressed by workshop participants were not addressed because they were outside the area that the steering committee defined for the study's focus. However, the principles used in the focus area can be applied throughout the city. More principles for walkable communities can be found in Appendix B.

Recommendations for specific streets and intersections follow the general recommendations. The final section addresses land use and revitalization of the downtown area.

All geometric and traffic operation recommendations require additional engineering studies to confirm their impact on traffic level of service, utilities and right-of-way.

General Recommendations

Pedestrian Crossings

Recommendations:

- ➢ Use high-visibility crosswalk markings.
- ➢ Design for separate curb ramps on each corner.
- ➢ Reduce pedestrian exposure to traffic with shorter crossings, medians, channelized islands and tight corner radii.
- ➢ Provide narrow travel lanes.
- ➢ Enhance crosswalks with medians and bulbouts (curb extensions) where feasible.

Usually people choose the shortest, most direct route to a destination. Whether driving, walking or bicycling, people prefer to take the shortest, safe, convenient route. Walkers and bicyclists are especially vulnerable to vehicles, so they spend as little time as possible in the roadway or crossing it. When marked crosswalks are excessively long, inconvenient or require long waits, pedestrians often seek a different crossing point.

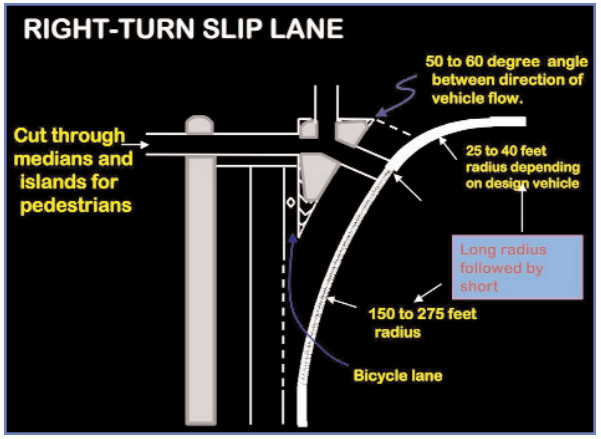
Traffic engineers can improve the safety and comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists without restricting vehicle capacity or level of service (LOS). Reducing travel lanes to minimum width, adding medians, channelized islands, extending curbs and providing conveniently located crosswalks encourages pedestrians to cross at selected sites.

At intersections, curb extensions, medians and enhanced markings enhance pedestrian safety and comfort. A curb ramp is needed on each corner. The final section addresses land use and revitalization of the downtown area.

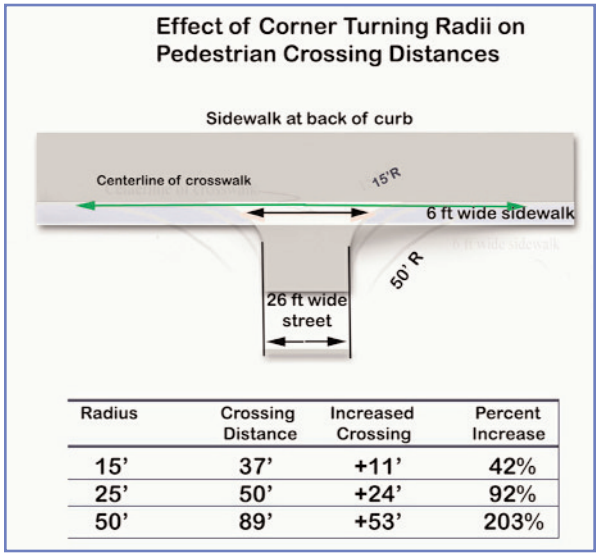
Roundabout intersections should be considered for most new or rebuilt intersections with volumes under 40,000 ADT. Roundabouts are safer for all users, especially for pedestrians, since crossings are short and vehicle speeds are slow. Traffic signals should be timed to ensure pedestrians of all abilities have time to cross safely. Countdown timers, which display the time remaining in the pedestrian crossing interval, and audible pedestrian call buttons also enhance signalized crossings.

Compact, well-designed intersections benefit all roadway users. Less time is needed for pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles to cross the intersection, turning speeds are reduced, and pedestrians have less exposure to moving traffic. These diagrams above illustrate some of the principles applied to El Monte intersections in the site-specific section of this report.

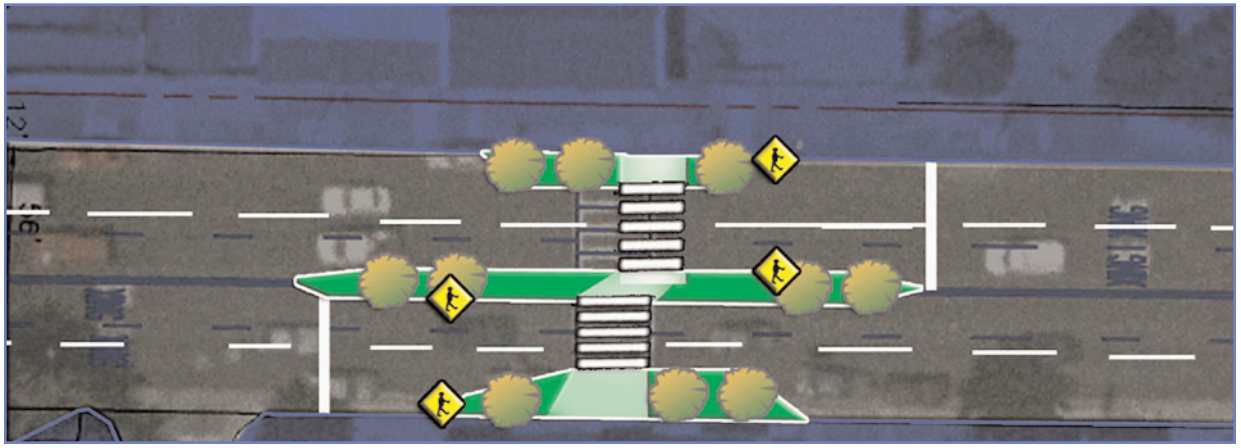
To keep intersections compact and reduce crossing distance for pedestrians, efforts should be made to use the smallest curb radius. The diagram to the right shows how crossing distance increases with larger curb radius. On streets with bicycle lanes the curb radius can be kept even smaller because the bike lane allows increases in the effective turning radius for motor vehicles.



At intersections with a high volume of right turns, slip lanes can be used. However, the right-turn slip lane should be designed as shown above to slow vehicle speeds, improve angle of view for motorists and increase yield rate to pedestrians.



Radius	Crossing Distance	Increased Crossing	Percent Increase
15'	37'	+11'	42%
25'	50'	+24'	92%
50'	89'	+53'	203%



Crossing Islands: Median islands (or refuges) separate crossings into two stages. These islands can use staggered crosswalk placements, angled to the right, to help pedestrians on the median watch for gaps in oncoming traffic before crossing the rest of the road. Islands should be 8 feet or wider. Landscaping and groundcover increase visibility to drivers. On streets with on-street parking, curb extensions are used to ensure parked cars do not block visibility between drivers and pedestrians.

Midblock crossings are useful tools that can enhance safety, convenience, and efficiency when properly designed and placed. Curb extensions and medians add safety and comfort at mid-block crossings. (See Appendix B for more details.)

The crosswalk between the park and Civic Center on Tyler Ave. is a candidate for improvement. The before-and-after images (left) show how the crosswalk looks now, and how the recommended changes improve the crossing. Other potential locations for enhanced midblock crossings include parks, schools, and other popular destinations for bicyclists and walkers.

Median islands, or refuges, separate crossings into two stages (left diagram). These islands can use staggered crosswalk placements, angled to the right, to help pedestrians on the median watch for gaps in oncoming traffic before crossing the rest of the road.

Islands should be 8 feet or wider. Landscaping and groundcover increase visibility to drivers. On streets with on-street parking, curb extensions are used to ensure parked cars do not block visibility between drivers and pedestrians.

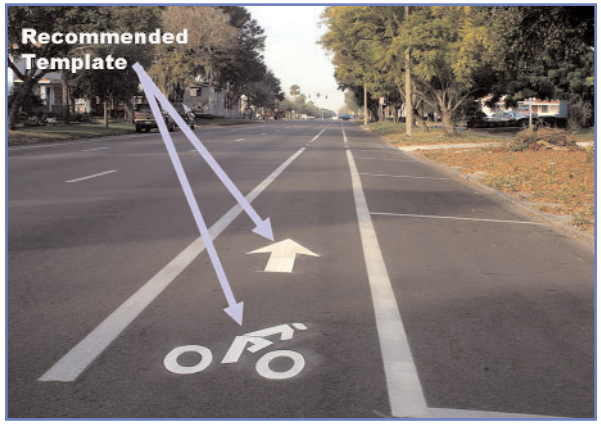
Bikeways

Recommendations:

- ➢ Provide bike lanes on all streets where adequate width is available.
- ➢ Develop a master plan for bikeways that includes the on-street system and shared-use trails.

Bicyclists riding on sidewalks are twice as likely to be involved in a vehicle-bike crash as those riding on a designated bikeway. This is due to the conflicts at intersections and driveways, where motorists may not be expecting a bicyclist. Riding facing the oncoming traffic, whether on a sidewalk or in the street, also increases the likelihood of a conflict.

On-street bike lanes provide a designated area for bicyclists, widen the buffer between moving traffic and pedestrians, provide room for motorists to pull out of the travel path of emergency vehicles, and provide many other benefits. For a list of 22 benefits of bicycle lanes: www.walkable.org/download/shoulder.doc



This bicyclist may not be noticed by a motorist seeking a gap in oncoming traffic to turn left into the parking lot.

A master plan for bikeways in El Monte will help ensure that the trails and on-street bike lanes create an efficient network that serves all types of bicyclists.

Many bicyclists prefer to ride in the street and follow the same rules followed by motorists because they are not delayed by waiting at pedestrian crossing areas. Others prefer to use sidewalks or off-road shared use trails because they are uncomfortable on the street. Both types of facilities are important.

The City should incorporate recommendations from the El Monte Bike-Transit Hub Report into the bikeways master plan.

Nearby Arcadia offers a good example of tree wells in the parking lane.

Road Diets

Road diets are recommended for streets in El Monte where the number and width of lanes is greater than needed. A road "diet" means eliminating unnecessary travel lanes of a roadway. For example, when conditions permit, four-lane roads can convert to 2-lane roads. A road diet can also mean removing unnecessary width from travel lanes. Twelve-foot lanes are common on freeways, but most arterial streets can safely use lanes as narrow as ten feet. The space gained from reducing the number and width of lanes can be used to provide on-street parking, bike lanes, raised medians and even wider sidewalks. The parking area can include tree wells, which help beautify the street.

"As more arterial and collector lane widths are increased up to 12 feet or more, traffic fatalities and injuries increase." (Noland, 2002)

The provision of on-street parking allows curb extensions to be provided for pedestrians, reducing their exposure to moving traffic and making crossings safer. Medians and turn pockets help control vehicle turn movements and improve safety.

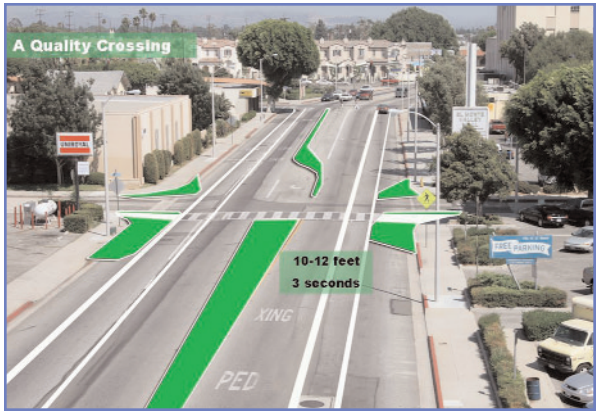
Road diets help slow traffic, maintain or improve vehicle level of service (LOS), and improve safety. They also greatly enhance walking and biking safety and comfort.

Narrower roads can have faster signal cycles, which reduces delay and shortens queues. Wider roads require longer traffic signal cycles, as shown in recent research. Longer cycles increase congestion, pollution, fuel consumption and delay. ("Effectiveness of Additional Lanes at Signalized Intersections," Institute for Transportation Engineers (ITE) Journal, January 2003.)

"In addition to decreasing marginal capacity, larger intersections function less efficiently. One measure of the loss of efficiency is the increased vehicular delay." (Khan & Mucsi, 2003)

In El Monte, all the streets around Valley Mall offer road diet opportunities. For example, Ramona Blvd. (between Santa Anita Ave. and Tyler Ave.) has five lanes. Since only 9,060 vehicles use this section daily, an engineering study could show that narrowing the road would not lower vehicle level of service (LOS)

Reducing lane widths to 10 feet can provide space for bike lanes and medians. Note the improved pedestrian crossing.



The existing four lanes on Valley Blvd. are re-marked in this photo simulation to illustrate how a road diet could result in improved crossings, bike lanes, a raised median and on-street parking.

or capacity. A road diet here would make walking and biking safer, more comfortable and appealing. Two lanes could handle the same traffic as currently use the four lane road. Two or three lanes could handle traffic now using other downtown four- and five-lane streets. Traffic on Santa Anita Ave. requires only four lanes instead of the six in use today.

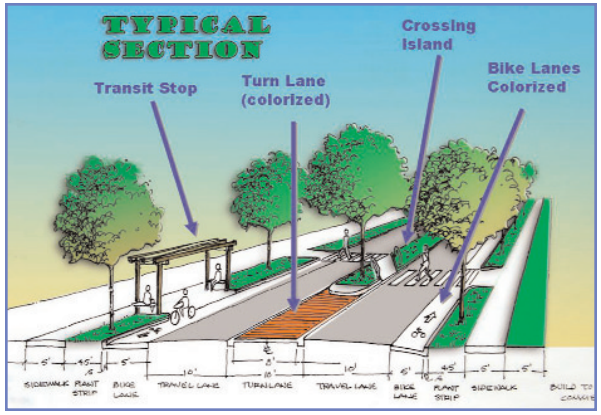
Roundabouts

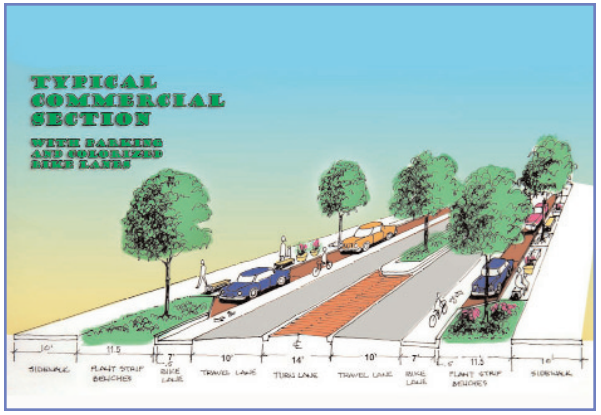
This report recommends five roundabouts:

- North Lexington Ave. and Ramona Blvd.
- North Tyler Ave. and Valley Blvd.
- Valley Mall, Ramona Blvd., Valley Blvd.
- Santa Anita Ave. and Valley Blvd.
- Santa Anita Ave. and Ramona Blvd.

Roundabouts are unsignalized intersections in which traffic circulates in one direction around a raised center island. Roundabouts save lives. They can reduce fatalities up to 90%. Roundabouts have 76% fewer injury crashes and 30-40% fewer pedestrian crashes.

Roundabouts are safer because they have 75% fewer conflict points than four-way intersections and slower design vehicle speeds (<25 mph). Drivers have more reaction time for other cars and pedestrians, leading to increased safety for older and novice drivers, reductions in severe crashes, and keeping pedestrians safer. ("Roundabouts: An Informational Guide," U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, FHWA-RD-00-067, June 2000.)





Cross sections of streets visually demonstrate how travel lanes and sidewalks share the right-of-way. Sample street sections can help visualize existing and potential uses of the right-of-way. Changing land use, development or population may mean wide streets are no longer appropriate. Sections allow easy and direct comparison of alternative treatments. They require little explanation or interpretation.

Roundabouts accommodate irregular and skewed intersections and offer aesthetic appeal. Pavement markings and raised islands direct traffic into a one-way counterclockwise flow. They have unique features that distinguish them from traffic circles. The first is yield-at-entry, meaning traffic entering the circle yields to traffic already in the circle. Roundabouts have unique geometric curvature. The design radius of the circular road and the angles of entry constrain vehicle speeds while often increasing traffic capacity. Design speeds are typically 15-20 mph.

Vehicles in the roundabout drive counter-clockwise and have the right-of-way over entering traffic. Drivers of cars, pickups, vans, SUVs and motorcycles slow down as they approach the intersection, yielding to any pedestrians in the crosswalk. The yielding driver looks left, waiting if necessary for a gap in the traffic flow to merge into the roundabout. Once inside the roundabout, drivers signal and turn right at their exit.

The circular roundabout roadway can be one or two lanes. Larger, two lane roundabouts operate the same as smaller ones and offer similar benefits. Drivers traveling farther around the circle can select the inner lane to avoid slower vehicles and merging traffic.

Pedestrians cross at designated crosswalks. They cross one direction of traffic, wait in the refuge island to be sure a driver is going to yield, then complete their crossing. Experienced bicyclists can proceed through the roundabout in a traffic lane, following the same rules as other vehicles. Bicyclists may also use sidewalks and crosswalks, but they may be required to dismount.

How do big trucks, fire engines and buses get through roundabouts? The largest trucks (fire trucks, double and triple trailers, where legal) drive up onto the truck apron in the middle to make the tightest turns. The truck apron surrounding the center of the roundabout uses contrasting paving and slopes slightly up toward the middle. Normal vehicles stay off the truck apron.

Roundabouts offer high capacity with less delay. They can increase capacity by 30-50%, though specific project levels of service (LOS) require detailed engineering studies.

Dual-lane gateway roundabout in Coral Gables, FL.

Pedestrian crosswalk at a La Jolla, CA, single-lane roundabout.

As shown, large trucks can easily drive through roundabouts.

Roundabouts save time, reduce pollution, save fuel, reduce the need for storage lanes, and improve traffic flow at intersections with frequent left turns.

Roundabouts save money since no signal equipment means no installation and maintenance.

Besides maintenance, signals also consume considerable power. Annual signal costs can be $5,000 or higher. Finally, the service life of a roundabout is 25 years (vs. the 10-year service life of signal equipment).

Lighting

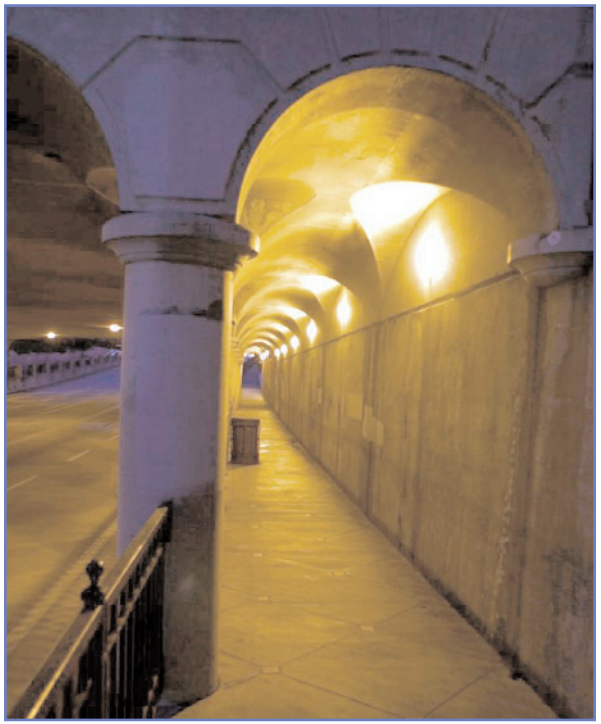
Existing lighting in El Monte is car-oriented. Emphasis on pedestrian-scale lighting is needed to create a sense of security and to enhance pedestrian safety while crossing streets. Priority areas for improved lighting include underpasses, transit stops and crosswalks.

Railroad Crossings

The City of El Monte needs to develop a partnership with Union Pacific to address crossing problems where trains stop and block tracks. Photos illustrating the types of problems that are prevalent might be useful to explain the severity of the problem.

Potential solutions could include negotiating when and where the trains stop to ensure the gates are down only when necessary and that stopped trains do not prevent children from walking to and from school.

Pedestrian-scaled lighting and street furniture improve safety and comfort for pedestrians.



This photo illustrates how lighting can be added to underpasses to improve safety and security for pedestrians.

Site-Specific Recommendations

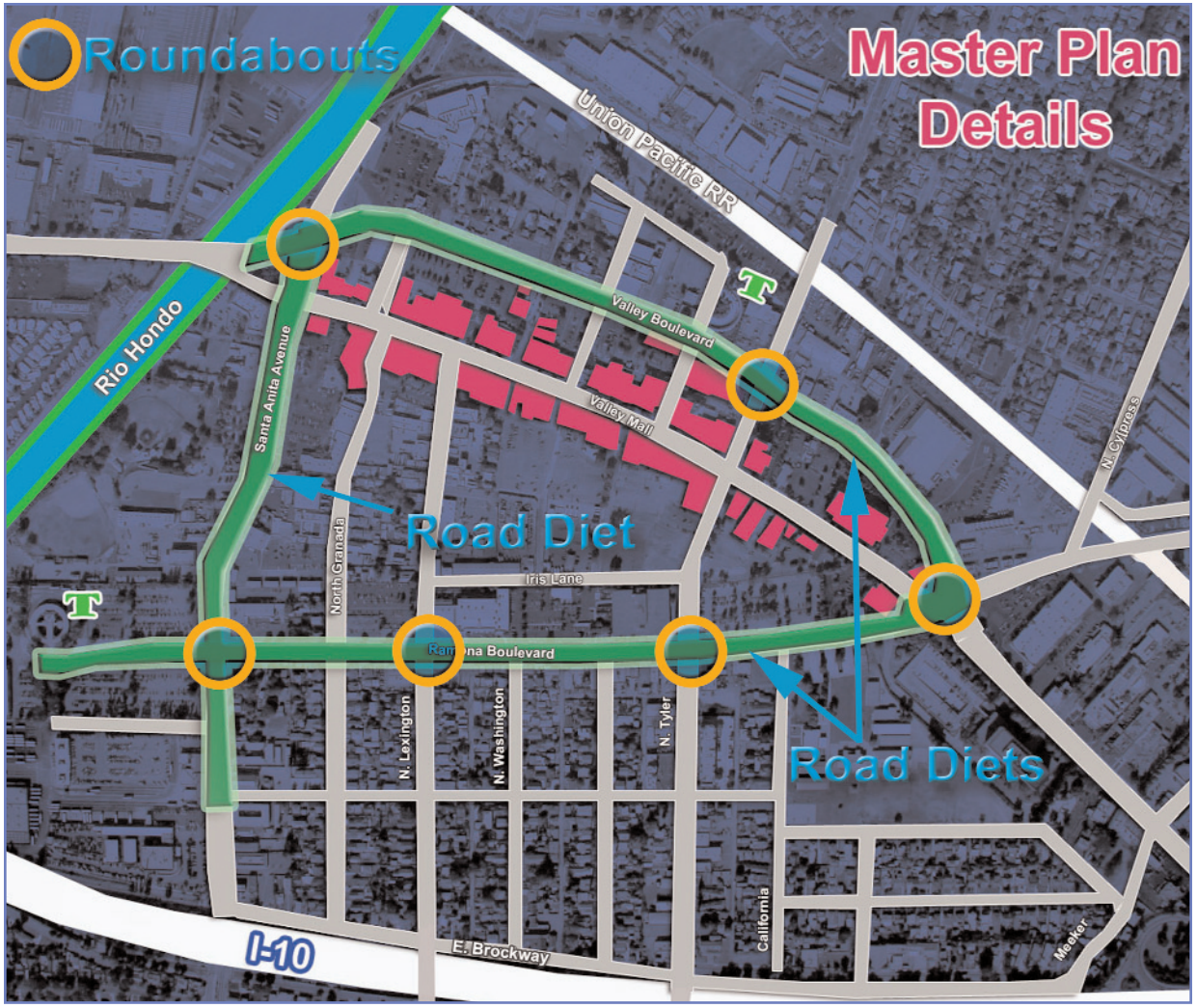
Santa Anita Avenue

1.0 Santa Anita Avenue

Santa Anita Ave. carries 27,000-28,000 vehicles a day. The segment in the downtown area between Valley Blvd. and Ramona Blvd. operates with a Level of Service C, or good operation, at all times of the day. A road diet is recommended to reduce the number of lanes to four through lanes, as shown in the section.

1.1 Santa Anita Avenue and I-10 – Westbound Exit Ramp

Workshop participants reported conflicts and congestion issues at this ramp. The ramp merges with Brockway Ave., a one-way surface street. Brockway Ave. motorists have difficulty finding a gap in traffic during peak travel times. Drivers exiting the freeway weave through traffic to access the right turn, left turn and through lanes creating chaotic conditions.



Map of recommendations suggested in this report, including road diets and roundabout locations.

Participants reported conflicts at this Santa Anita Ave. off-ramp during busy times of day.

An engineering study to determine the feasibility of separating conflicts with a median as shown in the top-right illustration is recommended. Sight distance and the volume of traffic exiting will be determining factors.

Workshop participants also recommended:

- ➢ Add pedestrian guard rails at Santa Anita Ave. and I-10
- ➢ Art work at I-10 and Lexington and Tyler
- ➢ Improve wayfinding: Add sign to 605 on Ramona Blvd. near Santa Anita Ave.

1.2 El Monte Transit Center

The entry to the Transit Center from Santa Anita Ave. is overly wide due to the large turning radii. Wide entries allow high-speed turns and increase the distance a pedestrian must cross while exposed to traffic.

Shorten the crossing distance on both Santa Anita and the Transit Center entry by extending the curb on the north corner and adding a channelized island on the southern corner. The tighter radius on the north corner will reduce entry speeds, but still accommodate buses. The "after" illustration demonstrates how pedestrians will have far less exposure to vehicles.

Before and after conceptual changes at the El Monte Transit Center entry.

1.3 and 1.4 Santa Anita Avenue at Valley Mall and Valley Boulevard

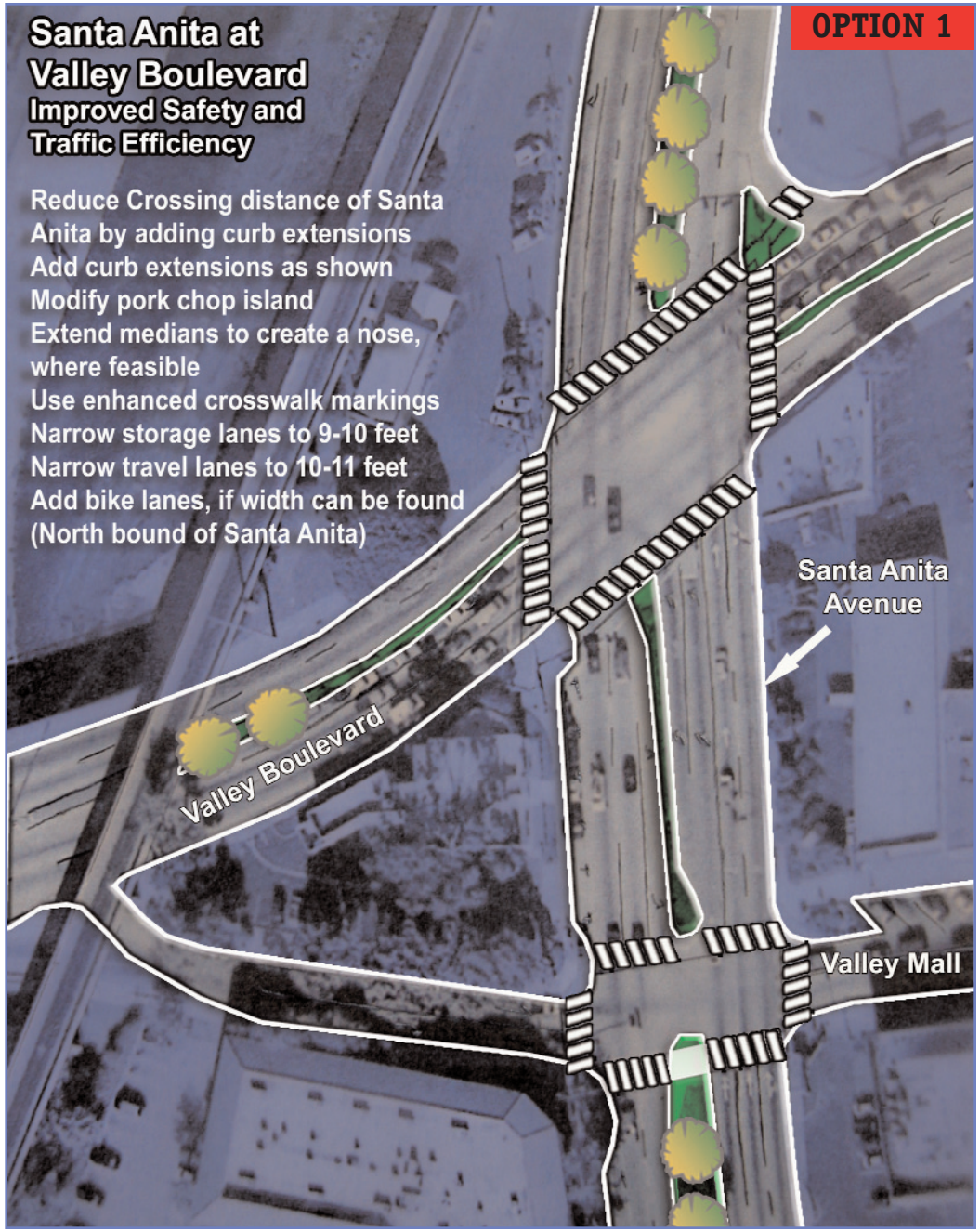
These two signalized intersections are closely spaced. Closely spaced intersections can reduce the efficiency of the signal system. Valley Mall westbound terminates at Santa Anita Ave., but all other crossing and turning movements are permitted at both locations. The crosswalk at Santa Anita Ave. and Valley Mall is marked only on the north side of the intersection. The intersection with Valley Blvd. is skewed, which contributes to long pedestrian crossing distances and signal cycles.

Two alternatives were developed to address issues at this site.

OPTION 1

1. Add curb extensions on the west side of Santa Anita between the two intersections to reduce pedestrian crossing distances.

Traffic leaving Valley Mall enters onto Santa Anita Ave.



Intersection of Santa Anita Ave. and Valley Blvd. (looking west from Valley Blvd.)

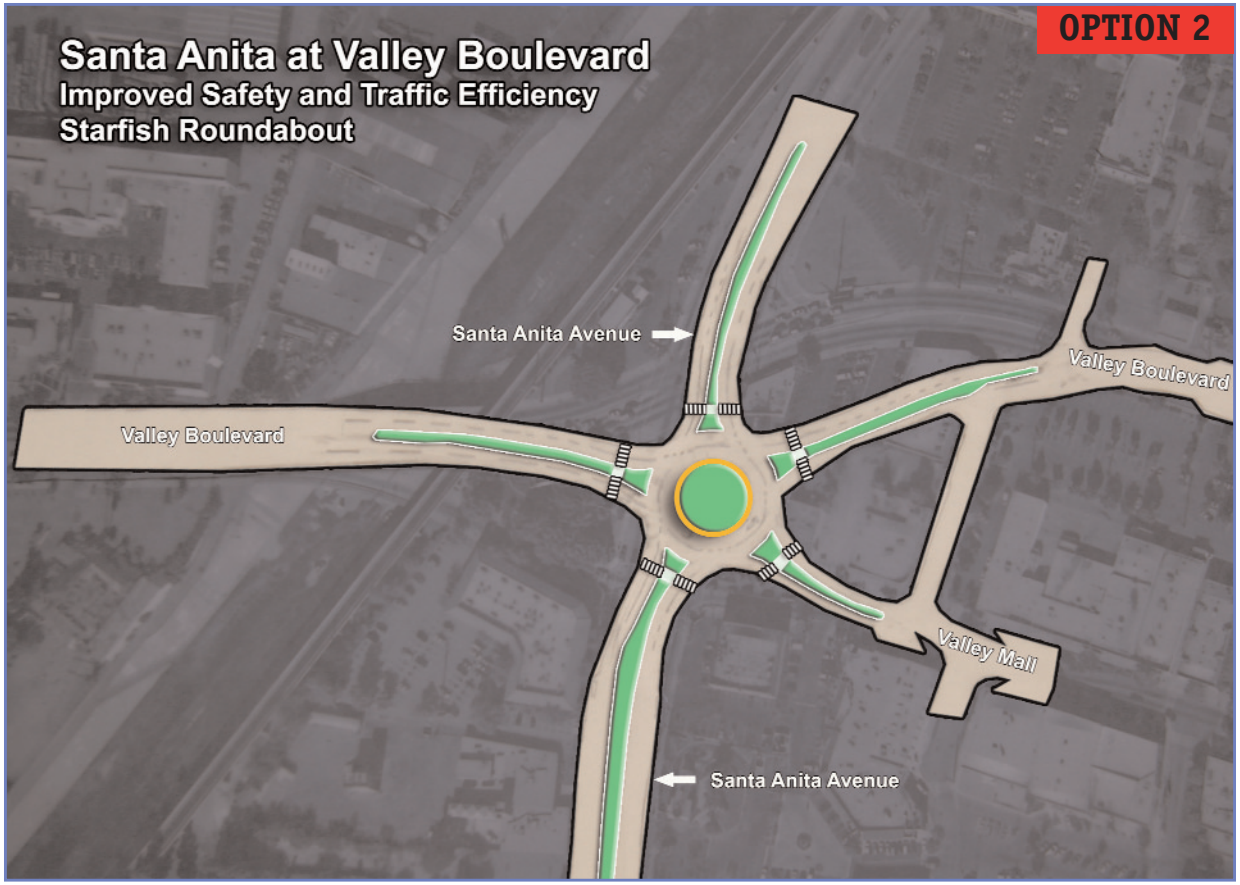
The area between the curb extensions could be considered for a bus pull-out area.

2. Raised, landscaped medians in the vicinity of the two intersections will help reduce pedestrian exposure at Valley Mall and enhance the appearance of the area. Add a median nose where feasible.

3. Increase the size of the channelized slip lane on the northeast corner of Valley to slow right-turning traffic. This will encourage motorists to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk.

4. All crosswalks should be marked with high visibility markings.

5. Reducing storage lanes to 9-10 feet and travel lanes to 10-11 feet may provide adequate space for the raised median as well as bike lanes on both sides of Santa Anita Ave.



OPTION 2

A roundabout, located slightly southwest of the existing Santa Anita Ave. and Valley Blvd. intersection, would serve traffic on Valley Mall, Valley Blvd. and Santa Anita Ave. The roundabout is ideally located to serve as a gateway to the downtown area. Reconfiguring the intersection would require right-of-way acquisition, but would also abandon some of the existing roadway.

Four of the five approaches are dual lane. The approach from Valley Mall is a single lane. Exits are dual lane except on Valley Blvd. and Valley Mall, where they are envisioned as single lane.

The roundabout in the Option 2 diagram is conceptual. If the community wishes to go forward with the concept, engineering studies will be required to determine the exact design and size needed to provide an adequate level of service for all users.

2.0 Valley Boulevard (from Santa Anita Avenue to Ramona Boulevard)

This section of Valley Blvd. is in the heart of the downtown area where business and community leaders envision economic development and revitalization.

On an average day, up to 20,000 vehicles travel on Valley Blvd. between Santa Anita Ave. and Ramona Blvd. This is 8,000 to 10,000 fewer vehicles than on other segments of the street where motorists access I-10 on the east and Santa Anita Ave. on the west.

This section of roadway operates at a LOS A, which indicates conditions that allow drivers to move freely without being restricted by other vehicles and make easy turning movements. This level of service (LOS) may also contribute to high speeds and discourage drivers from yielding to pedestrians.

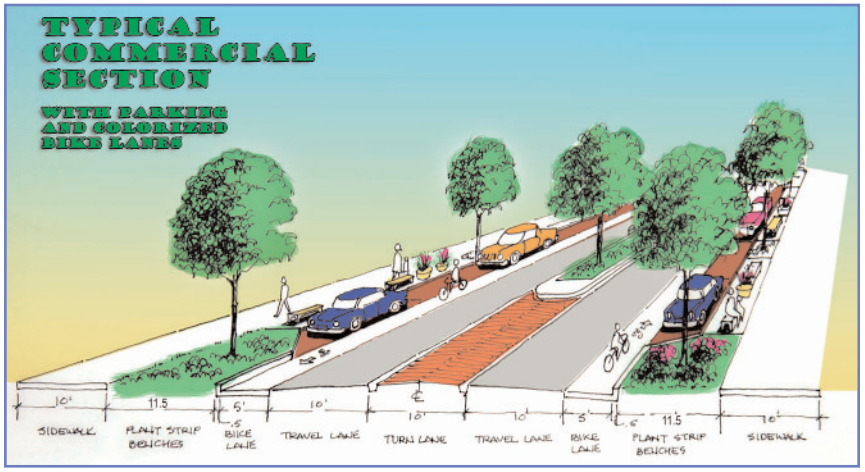
A road diet is recommended on Valley Blvd. between Ramona Blvd. and Santa Anita Ave.

In the diet, the number of lanes is reduced to two through lanes and a raised median with added turning areas at intervals. On-street parking and bulbouts at crosswalks are provided. Although the overall width on Valley Boulevard prevents provision of the 11-foot planter strip shown in the drawing, landscaping features can be added in bulbouts and the raised median.

An engineering study is needed to determine if the lane reductions can occur before the roundabout at the Santa Anita Ave. and Valley Blvd. intersection is complete.

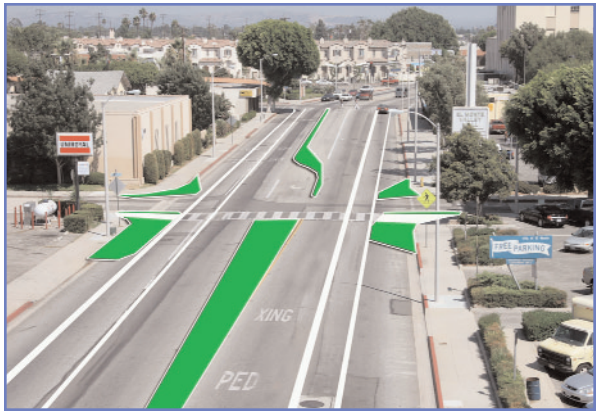
Several groups of pedestrians were observed crossing Valley Blvd. at this T-intersection. Intersections are crosswalks, even if they are not marked. This site should be evaluated for a crosswalk with improvements such as bulbouts and a median island.

Valley Blvd. near Santa Anita Ave.



The paved area on Valley Blvd. can be reconfigured to provide on-street parking, bike lanes, one through lane of traffic, turn pockets and bulb outs at key locations. Space may be too limited to provide the 11-foot plant strip illustrated here.

This existing crosswalk on Valley Blvd. can be improved by adding a refuge area in the center and placing stop bars 30 feet back from the crosswalk. Restriping the road with narrow travel lanes would allow space for bike lanes.



When the number of lanes is reduced and parking is added to Valley Blvd., bulbouts and a left-left pocket can be added at the crosswalk.

Immediate steps should be taken to improve pedestrian crossings on Valley Blvd. even before the road diet is implemented. The photos above illustrate how existing crosswalks can be upgraded prior to reducing the number of through lanes. The width of the four lanes is reduced to 10 feet, a raised median with a pedestrian cut through is installed between travel lanes, stop bars are marked 30 feet in advance of the crosswalk, and bike lanes are provided on both sides of the street.

2.1 Valley Boulevard at Tyler Avenue

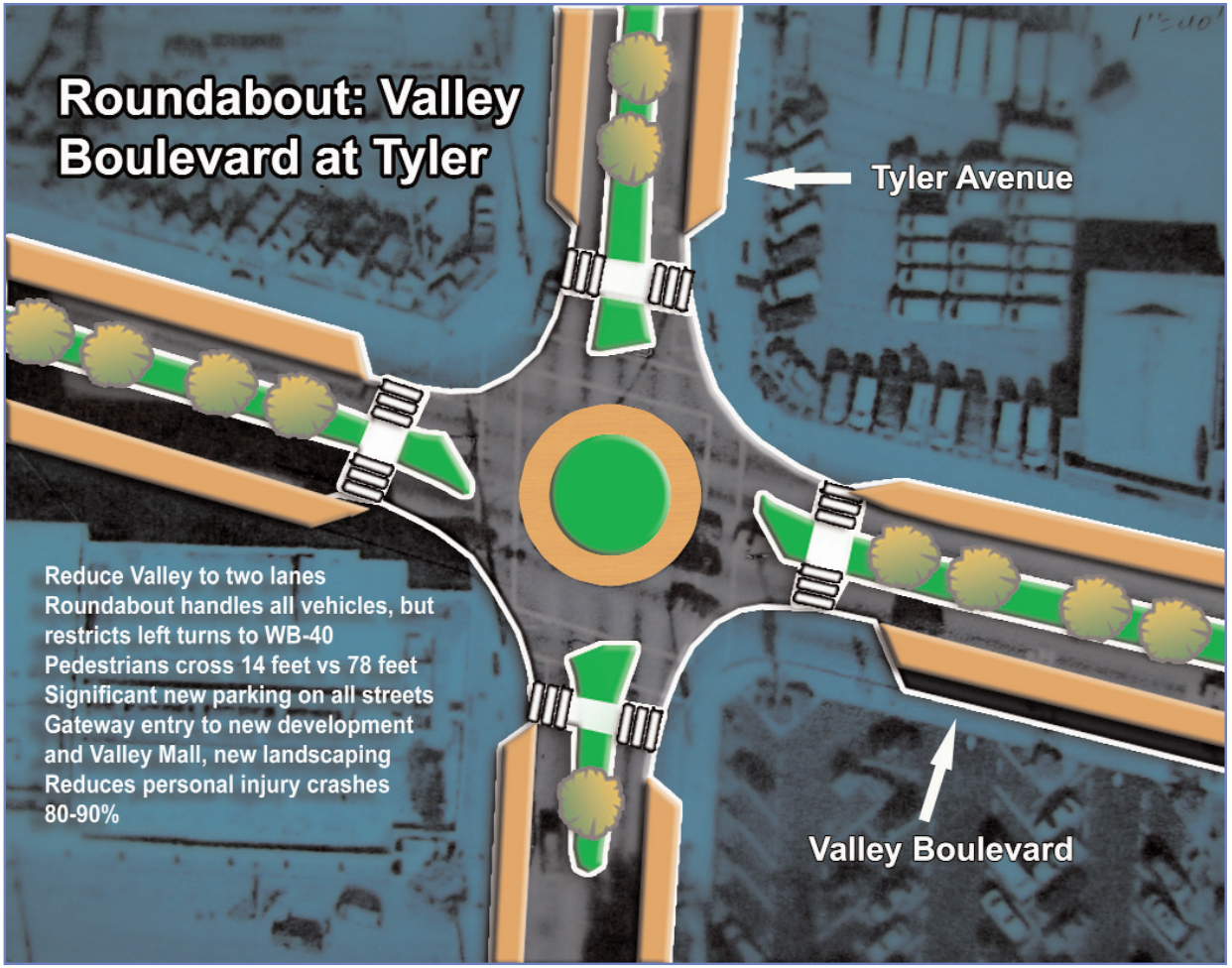
Tyler Ave. is a four-lane street that carries 10,000-12,200 vehicles per day and operates at LOS A. A road diet is recommended on Tyler Ave. The roadway section is the same as that recommended for Valley Blvd. on page 19. The intersection of Tyler Ave. and Valley Blvd. is an ideal location for an early implementation project to create a signature entrance to the downtown and Valley Mall.

A roundabout is recommended to replace the signal at this intersection. A roundabout here will facilitate the smooth flow of traffic at speeds appropriate for the adjacent land use.

Tyler Ave. and Valley Blvd.

A single-lane roundabout is adequate for the vehicle volumes on these streets. Pedestrians will cross one 14-foot lane of traffic, wait in the median for an opportunity to cross, then finish their crossing. The total 28 feet of exposure to traffic is 50 feet less than they cross now.

Left-turn movements for some trucks may be limited at this location, but they can reach their destinations using other nearby network streets.



Valley Blvd. at Ramona Blvd.

3.0 Ramona Boulevard

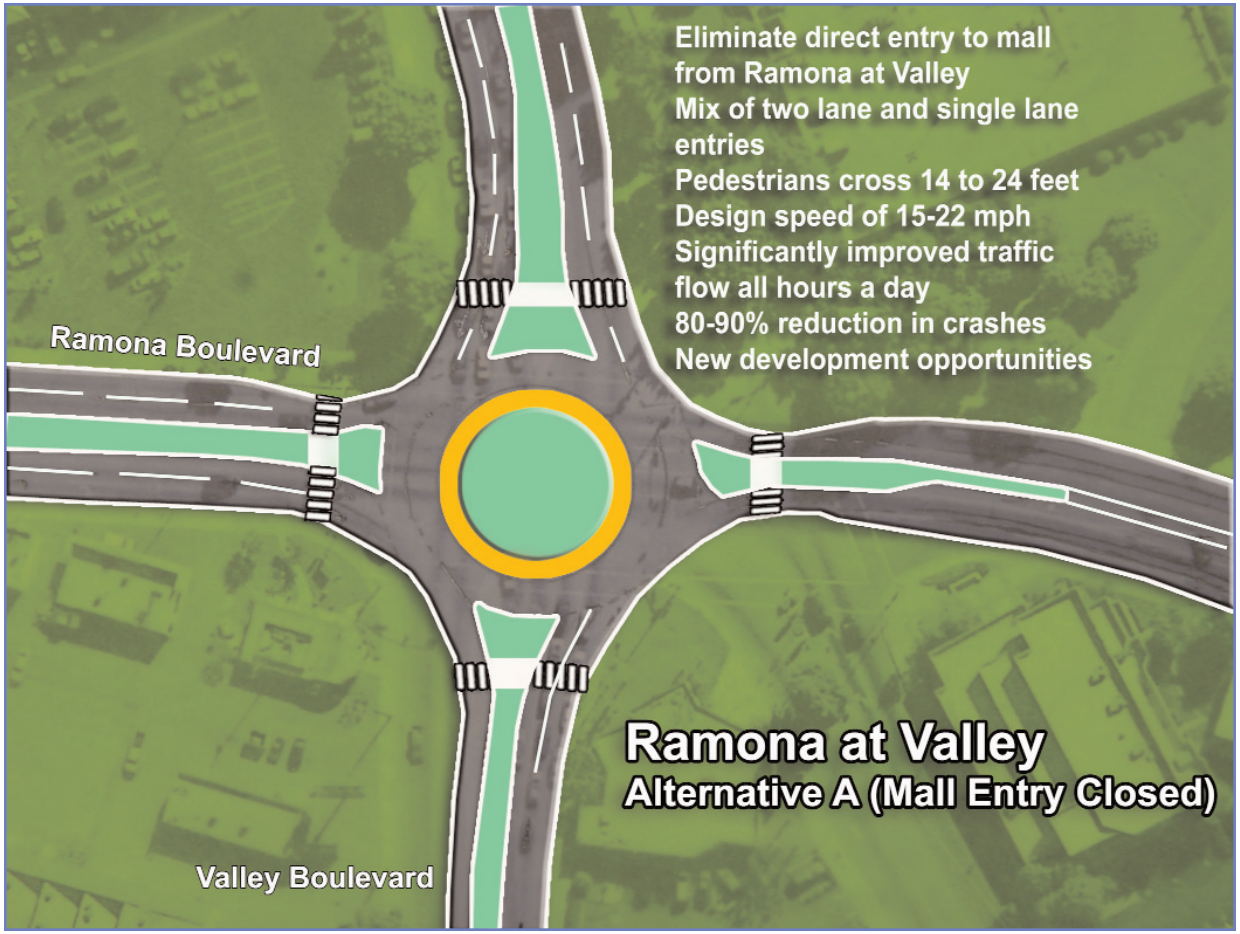
Ramona Blvd. between Santa Anita Ave. and Valley Blvd. carries less than 10,000 vehicles per day. A road diet is recommended on this street to bring down speeds, improve access to the downtown area, and make pedestrian crossings easier.

3.1 Ramona Boulevard at Valley Boulevard

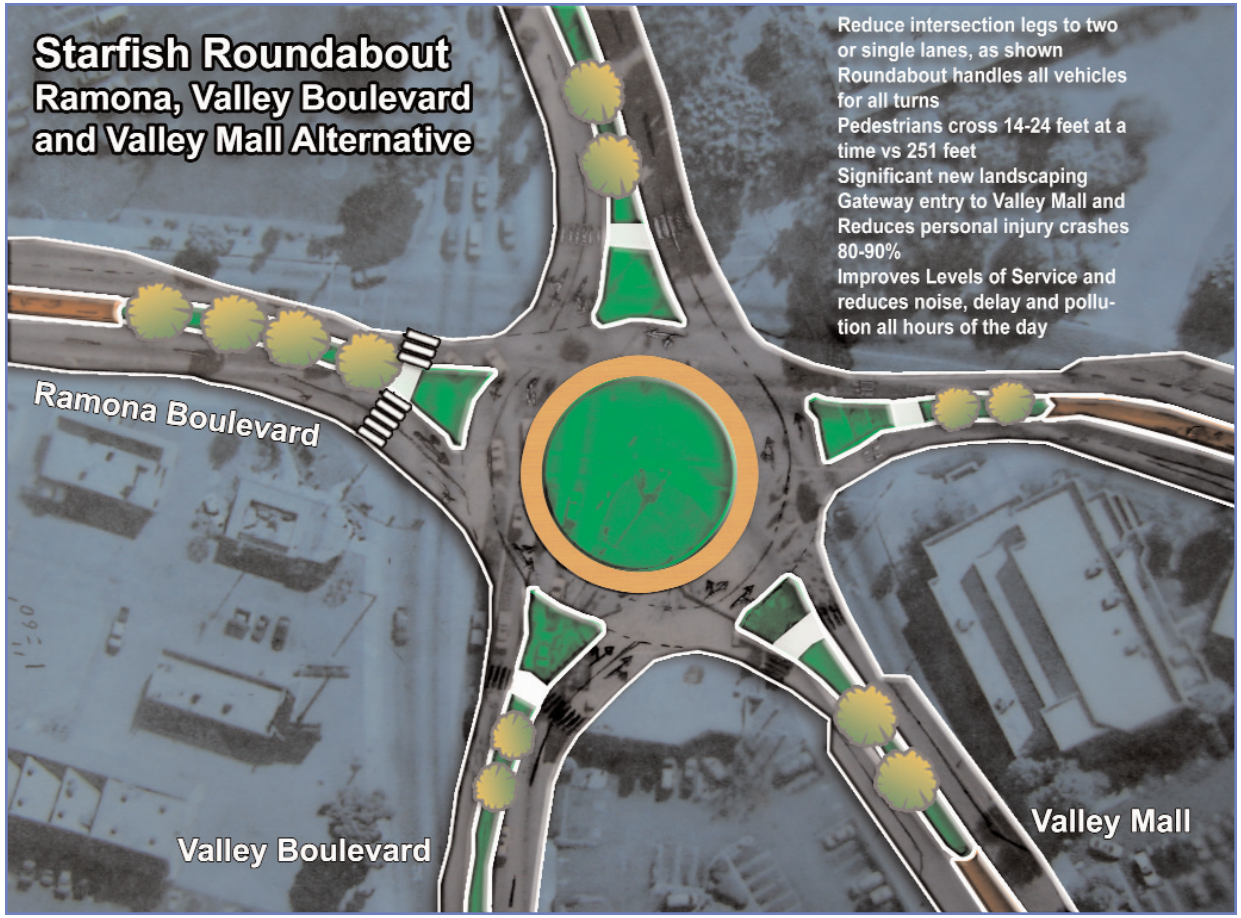
There are three alternatives for improving this intersection.

OPTION 1: Four-leg roundabout

A roundabout is recommended under both options for this intersection. A roundabout would improve traffic flow and create a gateway entry. This option features a four-



Option 1: This conceptual layout illustrates how a four-legged roundabout would fit into this intersection if Valley Mall is terminated.



Option 2: This conceptual layout retains access to Valley Mall, creating a five-legged roundabout.

legged intersection, with Valley Mall closed at Tyler Ave. The closure of the east end of Valley Mall is an option designed to provide a large parcel of land for redevelopment.

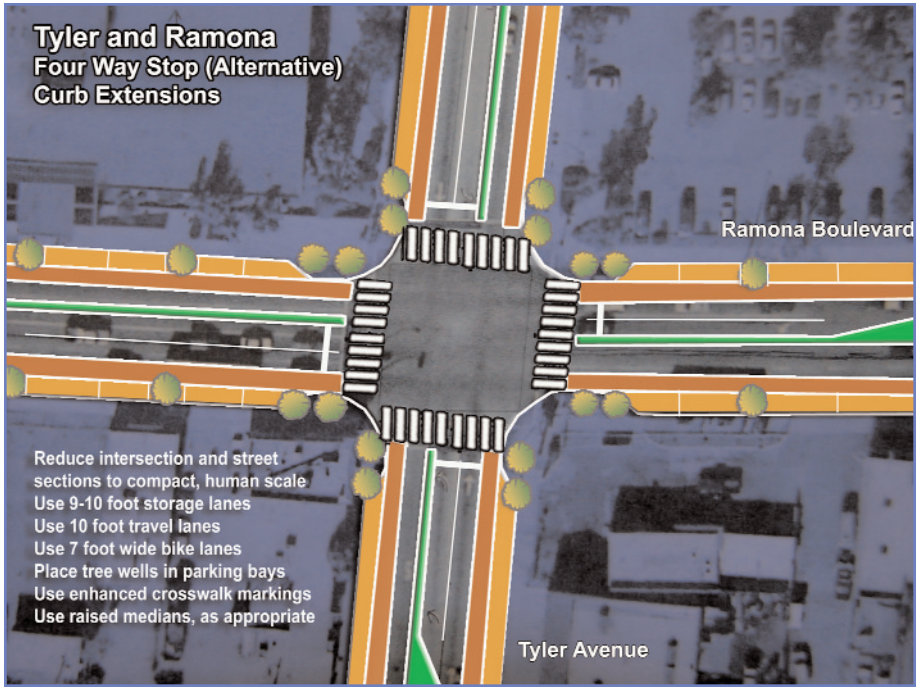
The conceptual roundabout is a mix of single-lane and dual-lane entries designed for speeds of 15-22 mph. It reduces pedestrian crossings to 14-24 feet at each crossing point. The roundabout will reduce vehicle delay, congestion, emissions, noise and crashes at this location.

OPTION 2: Starfish Roundabout

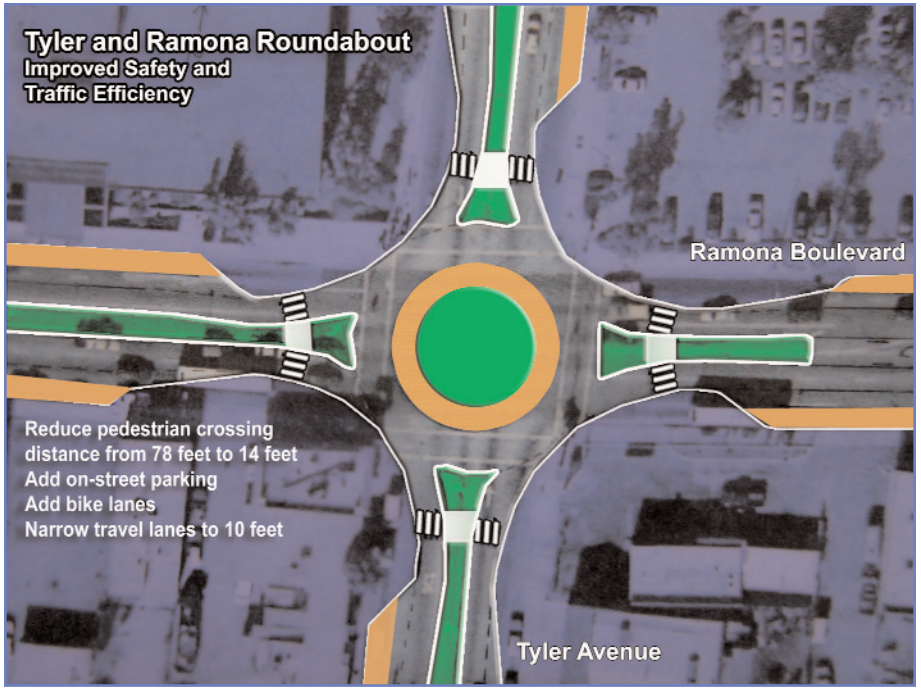
This option features the "starfish" roundabout, or five-legged intersection. The fifth leg provides full access to Valley Mall. This alternative reduces all legs to single lane entries and accommodates all design vehicles. Either option simplifies traffic management at this location.

OPTION 3: Intersection Improvements

A third alternative is to modify the existing intersection following the principles applied to the intersection of Santa Anita Ave. and Valley Blvd. Modifications could include tightening radii, adding bulbouts, raised medians, reducing the number of lanes and lane widths, and adding or modifying channelized islands. The result is a compact intersection that is safer for motorists and easier for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross.



Option 1: A four-way stop for Ramona Blvd. and Tyler Ave. interstection.



Option 2: A roundabout for Ramona Blvd. and Tyler Ave. interstection.

3.2 Ramona Boulevard and Tyler Avenue

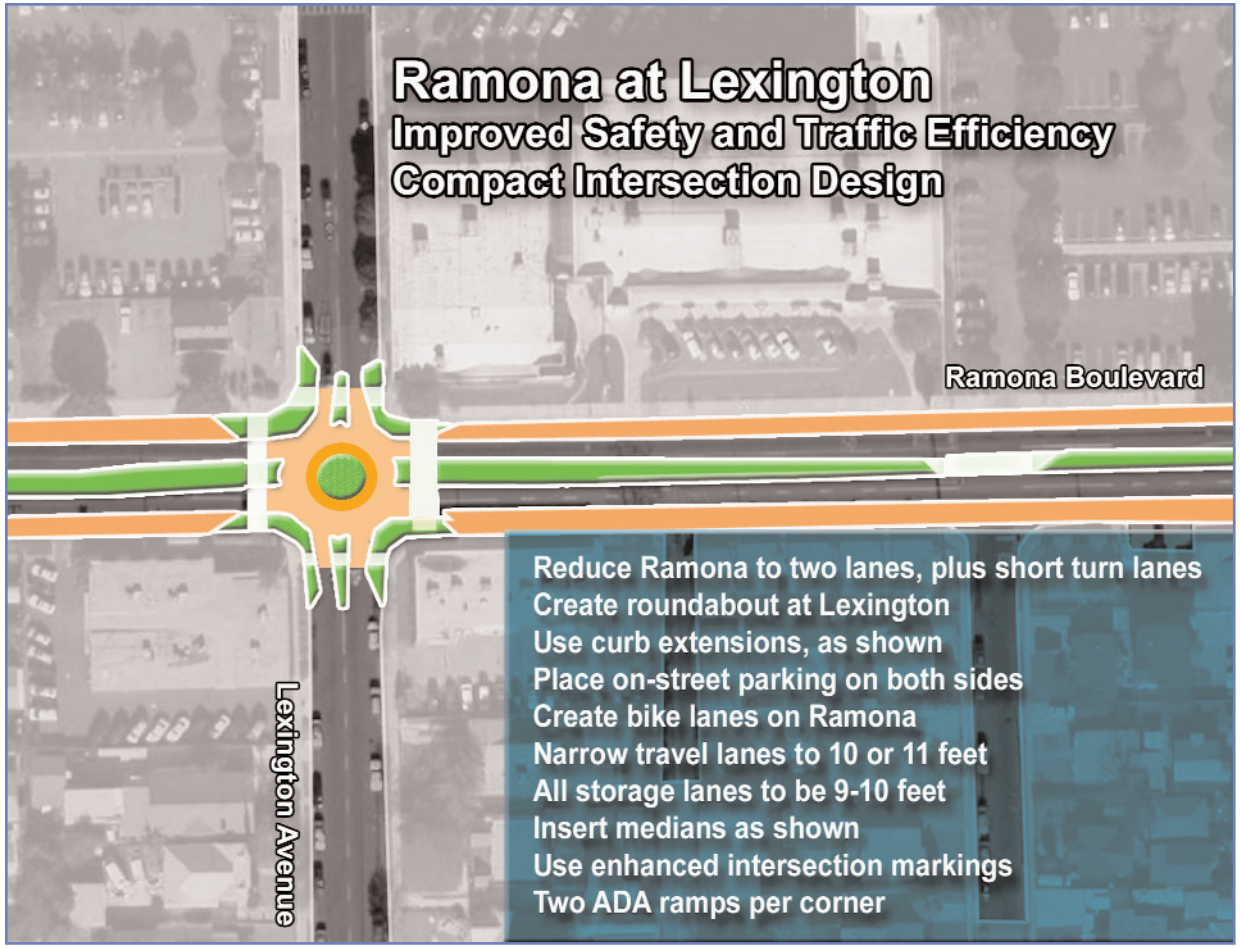
Improvements at this intersection will improve access to the downtown core for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. A road diet on both Ramona Blvd. and Tyler Ave., as explained earlier, will provide additional space for the improvements and landscaping. Two alternatives are offered.

OPTION 1: Four-Way Stop

A stop-controlled intersection here would include curb extensions, one through lane in each direction, one left-turn pocket in each direction, raised medians, bike lanes and highly visible crosswalks.

OPTION 2: Roundabout

A single-lane roundabout at this intersection would reduce pedestrian crossing distances from 78 feet to about 28 feet. The round-about would have ample capacity to serve the two incoming streets, maintain smooth flow of traffic, and improve access into and out of the downtown area.



3.3 Ramona Boulevard and Lexington Avenue

This intersection illustrates how the improvement strategies presented for previous sites can be applied to locations throughout El Monte. Two alternatives are offered.

OPTION 1: Intersection Improvements

Use space gained from the road diet on Ramona Blvd. to add curb extensions, one through lane in each direction, one left-turn pocket in each direction, raised medians, bike lanes and highly visible crosswalks.

OPTION 2: Roundabout

A single-lane roundabout at this intersection would reduce pedestrian crossing distances from 78 feet to about 28 feet. The roundabout would have ample capacity to serve the two incoming streets, maintain smooth flow of traffic, and improve access into and out of the downtown area.

3.4 Ramona Boulevard at Santa Anita Avenue

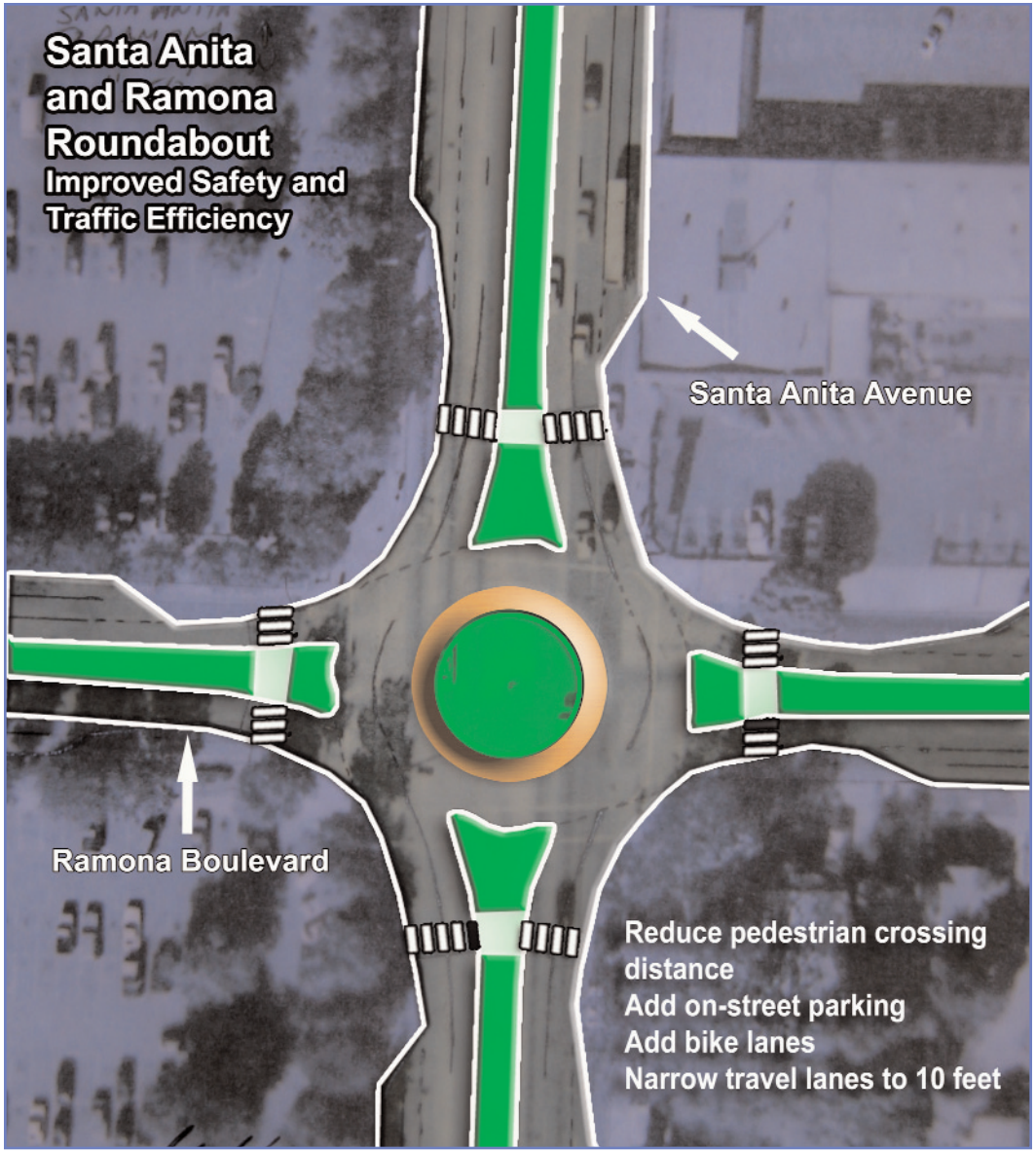
Two alternatives for this intersection based on the assumption road diets on both Ramona Blvd. and Santa Anita Ave. will be done concurrently. The road diets will provide the space needed for other improvements and decrease pedestrian exposure to traffic. Following the diets, Santa Anita Ave. would be four through lanes, and Ramona Blvd. would be two through lanes.

OPTION 1: Intersection Improvements

Curb extensions are added to three of the corners of the intersection. On the northwest corner, a channelized island is provided on Ramona Blvd. to serve as a refuge area for pedestrians waiting for the signal.

OPTION 2: Roundabout

A roundabout at this location would have dual lanes on Santa Anita Ave. and single lanes on Ramona Blvd.



A possible roundabout at Santa Anita Ave. and Ramona Blvd.

The single-lane roundabout in Gainesville, FL, at the left, is similar in design to the roundabout recommended at Ramona Blvd. and Tyler Ave.

Valley Mall

4.0 Downtown

El Monte's downtown is currently focused primarily on Valley Mall. This study focused on the potential to begin with the foundation provided by Valley Mall and expand to a more vibrant and diverse downtown area.

Valley Mall is the primary street through the downtown area. It parallels Valley Blvd., which serves as a bypass for through traffic. Valley Mall is a two-lane street lined with retail shops and other commercial buildings. The street has on-street angled parking, curb extensions and landscaping.

Most of the street is walkable, with buildings adjacent to the sidewalk, low speeds, and frequent opportunities for pedestrians to cross. There are many shoppers on the sidewalks and crossing the street.

Many workshop participants suggested closing this street to vehicular traffic. This may be an option in the future, but full closure is not recommended at this time. The retail and commercial business on the street is not robust enough to support a pedestrian-only environment.

Partial closure at the southeast end of the street may be advisable if the land use development pattern changes. That option will be depicted in greater detail in the following pages.

The consultant team recommends changing the name of the street to Main Street to distinguish it from Valley Blvd. and provide a more apt description of the environment.

On-street parking could be increased by reducing the width of parking bays.

Modifications to the roadway system surrounding the downtown area and sprucing up Valley Mall are first steps toward creating an attractive, exciting downtown that is easily accessed by transit, private vehicle, bicycle or afoot.

When road diets and intersection improvements are completed, streets on the outside perimeter of the downtown area will have more landscaping and parking. Traffic will flow smoothly, but at speeds that are comfortable for those not in vehicles. Pedestrians and bicyclists will feel comfortable, and crossing streets will be much easier.

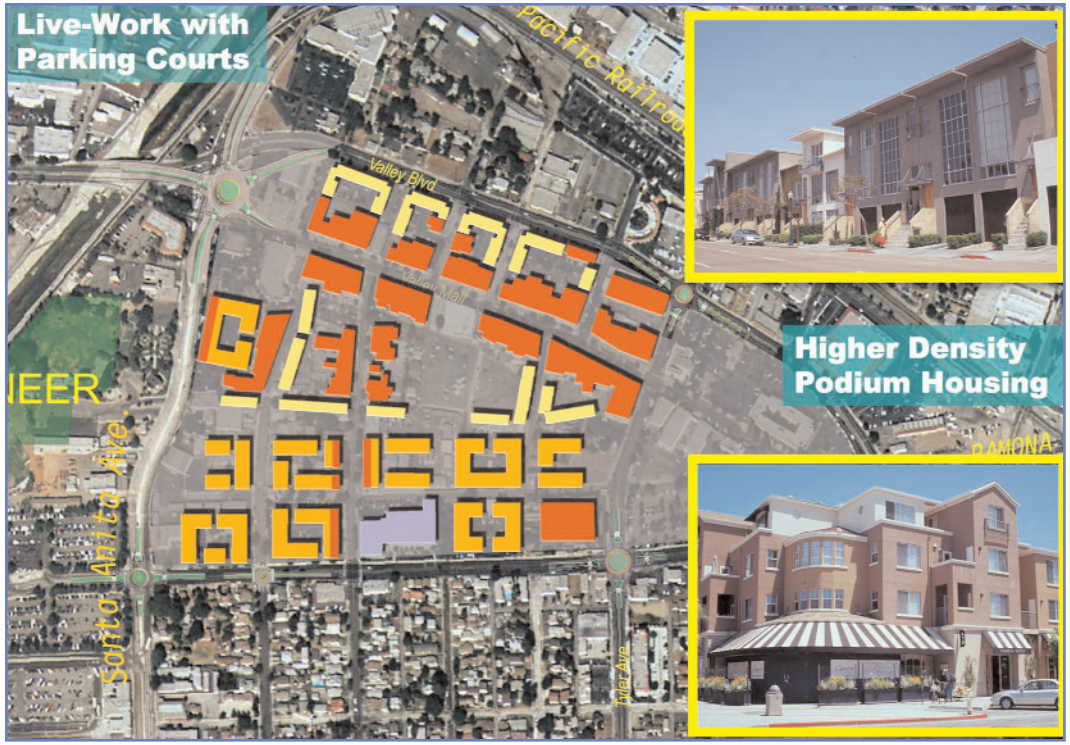
These changes help create a downtown that can support destinations that attract people who want to live, work, eat and shop in a downtown environment.

Downtown West Lafayette, Indiana

The following series of images (on pages 28-33) illustrate the concept for moving from current land use patterns to a pattern that includes a mix of uses. The increased density and diversification of the downtown area provides the basis for the economic success needed to attract and retain restaurants, shopping and services that residents would welcome.

Core Buildings

Previous sections dealt with the street system surrounding the downtown area (shown in gray). Roundabout alternatives discussed in the previous section are shown on this aerial map of the downtown core. Core buildings lining Valley Mall and in nearby areas are shown in orange. Lavender indicates a public building. These buildings have features that help create a good foundation for revitalization.



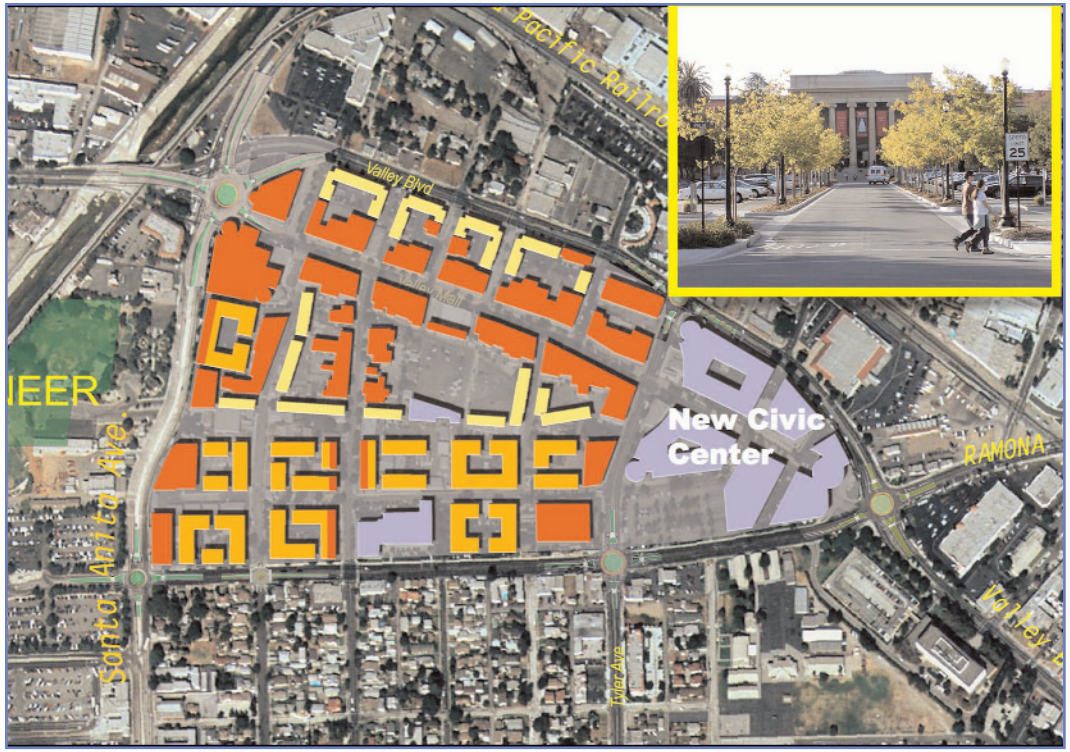
Mixed-Use Infill

The yellow areas on this map illustrate how many blocks in the downtown core could be transformed through row house, live-work type development with at-grade parking in the middle of the block. These are viable short-term infill projects.

The orange areas south of the downtown show blocks with the potential to be developed as higher-density podium housing. The provision of housing in the downtown area provides people to watch over public space and provide a population base to help support businesses.

Social Anchor

In this map, medium-sized retail is envisioned near Tyler Ave. and Ramona Blvd. Theaters and restaurants are envisioned near the roundabout gateway entrance at Santa Anita Ave. Other buildings would be offices.



Civic Anchor

A new civic center is shown in this illustration. Under this scenario, Tyler Ave. has become the primary street serving the area and Valley Mall (Main St.) ends at Tyler Ave.

Consolidate Parking

Parking is consolidated in two multi-level structures (A and B). The sites were selected to be convenient for the entire area and for diverse purposes. Construction costs can be minimized by providing two large structures, rather than several smaller ones.

Landscaping and Public Spaces

Connectivity and great public spaces are critical to downtown growth and success. The area shown as residential mews provides space where pedestrians and bicyclists dominate, while letting an occasional vehicle pass through at very slow speed.

5.0 Schools / East McGirk Avenue

The safety of students walking and bicycling to and from school was a concern for participants. Concerns included trains that block the school route and poor locations, such as the Alfred Madrid School. They were very concerned that budget shortfalls may lead to elimination of crossing guard programs.

Participants also reported the overuse of stop signs and speed humps, especially near schools. Motorists tend to ignore stop signs when they are overused, and speed humps hampered emergency services and public transit.

Although evaluation of each school site was beyond the scope of this study, some general recommendations and one set of site-specific modifications can be offered.

East McGirk Ave. Traffic Calming Plan

General Recommendations

Many intersections in El Monte are oversized and may create challenges for students at many schools. Overly wide roads increase risk because they take longer for students to cross, and also mean motorists have to wait longer while students cross the extra distance.

Engineering strategies applied in the downtown core should be applied where students need access to schools. These include curb extensions, pork chop islands, crossing islands and reduced turning radii on corners to make safer, more comfortable crossings for students. These strategies reduce crossing time and distance, make school crossing guards more visible, and force slower turns.

Intersection design speeds should be lower, to maintain slower speeds at all times. Driver awareness around schools is critical since children's behavior can be unpredictable. Parents and other drivers must pay close attention to each intersection, driveway and other risk, especially around schools.

Crosswalk Markings

Crosswalk markings within a quarter-mile of schools should be international, enhanced designs, such as those shown above. Enhanced markings have numerous benefits. Motorists can detect and respond to them in low light, fog and normal lighting conditions. Enhanced markings help guide pedestrians to the best places to cross. While Caltrans' standards call for yellow paint, other states use white paint because it is more visible.

Notice how the curb is extended to the edge of parked cars so that pedestrians are easily seen by drivers.

Enhanced markings in school zones can include wide bike lane stripes (8-inch width vs. 6-inch standard) and pigmented bike lanes with markings (roughly $30,000 per mile for tennis-court paint). Visually narrowing or tightening the roadway can have some moderating effect on speed, and increase visibility of recommended crossings.

Once tested in each community, these materials and concepts can work on other collector and arterial streets. They can also apply to other areas of special concern, such as Main Street, libraries, schools and recreation centers.

This speed table, or raised crosswalk, looks similar to the speed humps currently installed on McGirk Ave., but the top is flat with ramps. Drivers slow before reaching the speed table, which makes it an ideal local for a crosswalk.

Speed humps are an obstacle for transit vehicles and emergency repsonders.

There are many strategies for slowing traffic at schools. Enforcement is effective, but difficult to sustain. Traffic calming, which involves visual and geometric changes to the street, is also effective. Speed humps, such as those installed at Wright Elementary School on McGirk Ave., are a traffic calming treatment.

Speed Humps and Speed Tables

Speed humps use vertical deflection to encourage drivers to slow down. A closely spaced series of speed humps on East McGirk Ave. are problematic for emergency service providers and uncomfortable for transit passengers.

Other types of traffic calming treatments with less impact on transit and emergency providers are effective strategies for slowing traffic. The report recommends removal of the speed humps on McGirk Ave. and replacing them with a mini-circle at the intersection of North Cedar Ave., a raised speed table crosswalk and visual treatments to narrow the street.

A speed table is an elevated, flat street surface with ramps on both sides to create a grade change on both sides of the table. A steeper grade on the approach and departure ramps will produce slower speeds. The sloped ramp leading to the platform is less jarring for vehicle occupants than a speed hump and easier for emergency vehicles to traverse.

A change in surface color and/or texture on top of the speed table can increase its effectiveness. Speed tables are effective tools for providing high-visibility crosswalks, schools, trails and other mid-block crossing locations where slower speeds are desirable.

They can be combined with bulbouts to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and prevent drivers from avoiding the full impact of the treatment by driving with two tires in the gutter.

Mini-circles are used to slow traffic on both approach streets. Although not shown in this photo, crosswalks should be marked and curb ramps provided on all four corners.

Mini-Circles

Traffic calming mini-circles consist of a raised island located in the center of an unsignalized intersection. Drivers maneuver around the central island rather than proceeding straight. Seattle, WA, reports intersection crash reductions of 93% following installation of these treatments.

Traffic calming circles can be converted to small roundabouts by adding painted or concrete splitter islands and roundabout signing and markings. Traffic calming circles can replace two- and four-way stop controls on local streets.

Safe Routes to School Programs

Engineering is only one aspect of enhancing the school trip for students. Education, encouragement and enforcement are key components of a successful program.

The City of El Monte should become involved in Safe Routes to School programs and develop a systematic approach to improving student walking and bicycling routes. For more information about safe routes to school programs:

- ➢ www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoute2.htm
- ➢ www.dhs.ca.gov/routes2school

Implementation Strategies

El Monte can choose a number of strategies for implementing this report's recommendations and applying the principles to areas outside those emphasized in the study. One sound approach is to start with the easiest improvements, and work up to more complicated and costly investments.

Some recommendations, such as alerting Union Pacific to pedestrian crossing concerns, are low-cost administrative steps that can be initiated immediately. Other recommendations, such as using high-visibility markings or narrowing and removing lanes, require a change in current practice.

Once the concept is endorsed, existing programs can easily phase in general recommendations as part of on-going projects. For example, street maintenance projects provide an opportunity to use enhanced, high-contrast markings. Normal maintenance cycles for re-striping lane markings or resurfacing the street provide opportunities for implementing road diets and intersection improvements.

Adding medians and bulbouts at existing mid-block crosswalks are also candidates for early implementation. The crosswalk between the Community Center and Arceo Park on Tyler Ave. is one such location.

Participants identified other locations where pedestrians have difficulty accessing destinations. A prioritized list of improvements should be developed, beginning with schools and public parks.

Ramona Blvd. is a logical choice for the first road diet because the traffic volumes are low and can easily be handled in two lanes.

A single-lane roundabout at Tyler Ave. would help all users become accustomed to roundabouts before installing larger roundabouts at other intersections.

Sample Implementation Plan

A sample implementation plan for Ramona Blvd. offers a process that could be replicated for other report recommendations:

1. Inventory and assess sidewalks, pedestrian crossing needs, right-of-way, access, lighting and driveways. Determine compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) draft public rights-of-way requirements and access management principles. Prepare sections for the road diet.

2. Conduct an engineering study to select the final alternative for the intersection at Tyler Ave. and Ramona Blvd.

3. Phase I implementation: Grind out existing lane markings and restripe with a center two-way turn lane, bike lanes and on-street parking where sight distance triangles and space allow. Add enhanced visibility crosswalk markings at intersections.

4. Phase II implementation: Construct roundabout or curb extensions at Tyler Ave.

5. Phase III implementation: Provide new curbs as needed to increase sidewalk and buffer width; add curb extensions or roundabouts at remaining intersections; add tree wells between parking spaces; add raised medians with left-turn pockets at selected intersections. Install landscaping and lighting.

This incremental approach can be used as funding is available. If adequate funds are available, the new Ramona Blvd. section could be built as one large project.

Funding Opportunities

A number of funding sources could help implement this report's recommendations. They offer alternatives for street design, community facilities, and other infrastructure. Some sources for funding are:

- City road maintenance and construction funds
- Development fees
- Special districts
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- California Trade and Commerce Agency
- Proposition 12 Tree Planting Grant Program
- Volunteer initiatives and private donations
- State and federal transportation funds

City road maintenance and construction funds

El Monte can add striping, traffic calming, sidewalks, curbs and similar elements to other projects that already involve digging up or rebuilding street sections in the downtown area. For example, storm drain and sewer improvements, utility undergrounding projects, and routine street resurfacing are all possibilities.

The greater the extent of the reconstruction, the greater the opportunity for adding elements such as bulbouts, medians and roundabouts at a fraction of the cost of a stand-alone project. Also, communities avoid the disruption, noise and expense of repeatedly digging up a street and detouring traffic.

Such combination projects will require coordination between departments and capital improvement projects whose schedules and budgets are often separate.

Many cities have incorporated traffic calming into street reconstruction projects. In Venice, FL, for example, officials added $80,000 to a previously planned Main Street resurfacing project that provided for intersection bulbouts, mid-block bulbouts, median crossings, and crosswalks of colorful paver stones.

In Fort Pierce, FL, three blocks of new sidewalks together with a new roundabout were added to a long-planned sewer project. Sidewalks and roundabout built at the same time were added for only $15,000.

Seattle has added planted medians to several streets at reduced cost as part of sewer upgrade projects. County transportation sales tax measures can provide substantial funding for city street maintenance and rehabilitation.

Development fees

Some cities require developers to install or help pay for infrastructure improvements (streets, sidewalks, trails, landscaping, etc.) through individual development agreements. On a larger scale, El Monte could explore using development fees with a capital improvements program to help fund recommendations.

Special districts

Special districts can provide up-front and ongoing funding for projects benefiting the downtown area. For example, a Business Improvement District could be created to fund improvements, such as signage, landscaping, clean-up and marketing and promotion activities. Landscaping and lighting districts are sometimes established for streetscape improvements and maintenance.

Other types of facilities and infrastructure districts are sometimes created for parks, drainage and sewage. Special districts generally assess a charge levied upon parcels of real property within the district's boundaries to pay for "local improvements." So unlike redevelopment, to fund such a district it is necessary to charge an assessment or fee to property owners and/or merchants.

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

Under the State Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, cities and counties may seek funding for a broad range of activities ranging from establishment and operation of revolving loan funds and construction of infrastructure improvements to construction of new housing and community facilities.

Applicants may also seek funding for planning studies and writing grant applications relating to these activities. Funding programs under the CDBG Economic Development Allocation include the Economic Enterprise Fund for

small business loans, Over-the-Counter Grants for public infrastructure associated with private-sector job creation, and Planning and Technical Assistance Grants.

Applications under the Economic Development Allocation will require a job creation/retention component. Potential projects include street and traffic improvements, water system expansion and improvements, and sewer system expansion and improvements. For more information: www.hcd.ca.gov/ca

California Trade and Commerce Agency

The TCA administers a revolving fund program for local governments to finance infrastructure improvements, including city streets. This is a loan program for which the City can apply and receive funding from $250,000 to $10 million with terms of up to 30 years for a broad range of projects. For more information: commerce.ca.gov/state/ttca/ttca_homepage.jsp

Proposition 12 Tree Planting Grant Program

This California Department of Urban Forestry program provides over $1 million per year in grants to cities, counties, districts and non-profit organizations for planting and three years of maintenance of trees in urban public settings.

The maximum award is $25,000 for a "small population community" and $50,000 for "regular Proposition 12 applicants." For more information: www.ufei.org/files/grantinfo/Prop12Planting-Grants.html For other possible funding sources for downtown trees: www.californiareleaf.org/grants_guide.html

Volunteer initiatives and private donations

In addition to funding sources, programs can be created for volunteer initiatives such as "Adopt-a" programs where individuals or groups engage in beautification projects such as tree plantings. A program can also fund some projects, such as public art, by enlisting private donors to sponsor downtown enhance-ment activities. These programs can be administered by the City or by other community organizations.

State and federal transportation funds

There are a number of state and federal transportation programs that are flexible enough to help fund road and streetscape improvements in the downtown area. Funds from some programs can be applied for directly from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) or the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Agency.

But for most transportation funding, cities and the county prepare a list of projects and negotiate priorities based on available funds estimated by the California Transportation Commission (CTC). LACMTA submits these projects in the Regional Transportation Implementation Plan (RTIP) as part of the State Implementation Plan (STIP) for review and approval by the CTC.

Major state and federal transportation funding resources are outlined below. More information on these funding programs is available at Caltrans' Division of Local Assistance website: www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Funded at $8.3 billion over 1999-2005, this program represents the lion's share of California's state and federal transportation dollars. Three-quarters of the program's funds was earmarked for improvements determined by locally adopted priorities contained in Regional Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIP), submitted by regional transportation planning agencies from around the state.

STIP funds can be used for a wide variety of projects, including road rehabilitation, road capacity, intersections, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, public transit, passenger rail and other projects that enhance the region's transportation infrastructure.

The 2004 STIP was adopted by the California Transportation Commission, the body that ultimately programs projects by adopting the STIP, on August 5, 2004.

Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)

The RTIP is a program list of transportation projects that are to be funded with STIP funds. LACMTA updates the RTIP every two years for inclusion in the statewide program. The 2004 RTIP was approved by the California Transportation Commission in August 2004. The City should consider the RTIP process as an avenue for funding improvements.

Transportation Enhancement Activities

Federal Transportation Enhancement funds are for construction projects that are "over and above" normal types of transportation projects. These projects may include street trees and landscaping along roadways, pedestrian and bicycle access improvements and other scenic beautification. These are apportioned throughout the county.

Regional Surface Transportation Program

The Regional Surface Transportation Program was established by the State to use Federal Surface Transportation Program Funds for a wide variety of transportation projects. The State allows LACMTA to exchange these federal funds for state funds to maximize the ability of local public works departments to use the funds on a wide variety of projects. LACTMA distributes these funds to local jurisdictions. The funds are distributed on a fair share and competitive basis. Annual apportionments of the funds range from $3 to $4 million.

Hazard Elimination Safety Program (HES)

The Hazard Elimination Safety Program is a federal safety program that provides funds for safety improvements on all public roads and highways. These funds serve to eliminate or reduce the number and/or severity of traffic accidents at locations selected for improvement. Some of the street design elements recommended may be eligible for funding if the site selected is considered a high hazard location. Caltrans solicits applications for projects. Any local agency may apply for these safety funds.

Safe Routes to School

Caltrans administers state and federally funded programs to improve walking and bicycling conditions in and around schools. Projects for federal funding must fall under infrastructure (capital) or non-infrastructure (education and encouragement) categories.

A standardized statewide SRTS training program with promotional materials and school resources will be developed to help communities implement programs.

The program seeks to fund projects that incorporate engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement and evaluation components.

For more information: www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LocalPrograms/saferoute2.htm

Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA)

This state fund, administered by the Caltrans Bicycle Facilities Unit, can be used for to aid cyclists, including median crossings, bicycle/pedestrian signals and bike lanes. After 2005-06, annual BTA funding will be $5 million. To be eligible for BTA funds, a city or county must prepare and adopt a Bicycle Transportation Plan. Adoption of a plan establishes eligibility for five consecutive funding cycles.

Transportation Development Act (TDA)

TDA provides for two sources of funding: Local Transportation Funds (LTF) and State Transit Assistance (STA). The TDA funds a wide variety of transportation programs, including planning and program activities, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, community transit services, public transportation, and bus and rail projects.

Providing certain conditions are met, counties with a population under 500,000 (according to the 1970 U.S. Census) may also use the LTF for local streets and roads, construction and maintenance. The STA fund can only be used for transportation planning and mass transportation purposes. Annual apportionments of TDA funds average around $12 million and are distributed to transportation projects by LACMTA.

California State Parks Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The Recreational Trails Program provides funds annually for recreational trails and trails-related projects. The program provides funding for acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for recreational trails, development of trailside and trailhead facilities, and construction of trails.

The maximum amount of RTP funds allowed for each project is 88% of the total project cost. The applicant is responsible for obtaining a match amount that is at least 12% of the total project cost. The grant cycle ends in early October of each year. For more information: www.parks.ca.gov

Appendices

Appendix A: El Monte Focus Groups

A series of group meetings were facilitated by Dan Burden on Thursday and Friday. Groups of 2-14 people shared their concerns and ideas in a round-robin style meeting process. Their comments are recorded in detail here.

Focus Group on Transportation and Transit Service

Participants: Norma Mota, Deborah Morazu, Isabel Soltero, Bertha Tofoya, Gwyan Stevens

- For the store, the biggest issue is timing connections. More service needed for the disabled; not enough accessibility to transit.
- More accessibility needed for disabled; some locations are not serviced by local transit.
- Southland transit services El Monte transit and paratransit; operates El Monte Trolley system and Dial-a-ride systems. We need to be more ADA compliant. The El Monte system purpose was to get through local areas to schools and parks. Our routing is great but some homeowners don't want us to stop in front of their homes and residential streets are not ADA compliant. People don't want the trash, red cubs, and people who seek shelter on their porch. These are local streets.
- Our system began with big diesel trolleys and people wanted to ride them. Now we're a full-fledged transit system with bigger buses; people don't like them stopping in front of their homes. Now we have low-floor, clean-air gas buses, but as we look to rerouting to meet community needs we're finding people support the service, but not in front of their house.
- If we just install pole with a sign people don't care. It's when we put a bench and trash receptacles they object. We maintain those 7 days a week, dump trash and power wash the site. Residential areas not as heavily used as other stops. Some residents add their trash to receptacles, so trash sometimes overflows. We are putting in many bus shelters and pour concrete slabs where there is room. There aren't sidewalks in some areas; where there are sidewalks they are too narrow. I can't put a slab down to put a bench down. People are sitting on the curb to wait for transit.
- We've noticed basic ADA issues, like sidewalks with a fire hydrant in the middle.
- Iris Lane has four speed bumps. Lots are small, and people parked in driveways block sidewalks. The post office boxes also block sidewalks. We see people in motorized wheelchairs going over the bumps in the street because of the sidewalk obstacles, which is dangerous.
- We have used curb extensions at some bus stops and can provide photos. We don't always provide shade, except on Peck Rd., where small trees were put in. They won't be big enough for shade for three years. We are going to install 20 new shelters in around town this year and will do more annually.
- Intersections like Tyler Ave. and Baldwin Ave. are delayed by trains.
- Trains stop at Arden, blocking the crossing so school kids can't get to school; trains stop to wait for the next train to clear the tracks. No pedestrian accidental fatalities. Baldwin is also affected. There is a grade separated crossing being built at Ramona and Cypress. We have to drive buses through residential areas to access the bus center because Cypress is now a deadend.
- Developers are looking at Tyler to Santa Anita; making a multi level trolley center with parking incorporated into the structure. These are in the planning phases. Tyler and Ramona; east bound Ramona is a major drop off point with buses there all day both sides, but mostly east side of street. We are looking to add a transit hub with some proposed development, including wide sidewalks, drinking fountains, rest rooms, and maybe a decorative fountain. We would like any developer to have to mitigate transportation and provide mass transit amenities. They should be building the shelter, but that is not currently required in code.
- Transit isn't usually at the table during development meetings, but would like to be.
- We have a lot of overgrown trees that hit the buses. There are a lot of potholes in streets. There are lots of speed bumps in

town; one fatality near a Durfee school where a child in a crosswalk was hit by a the rear trailer of a turning dirt dump truck. In reaction, they put speed bumps on Maxim. There have been near misses near Lambert Park. Anywhere by the schools people were concerned about kids, but the bumps are ripping up the new low floor buses. They installed them on several streets but engineering has now said no more speed bumps. Not only do you slow down traffic but also emergency response times. This was stopped last year unless a City Councilmember approves one.

- When the police have an accident, instead of blocking just the part of road where the accident is, they block the whole road.
- The dips at intersections are too deep and scrap the back of the bus. In and out of Center St., we are spending $115,000 to raise the street. City Engineering is working with us, but transportation funds pay for the improvement. There is $3.5 million is El Monte's transportation funding from Los Angeles sales tax propositions; those are earmarked for transit. Some funds can be used for street work if it is a heavily used transit street. This year we allocated $450,000 for street work. The MTA administered the funds and applies strict guidelines for using the money. The City applies for projects but must have approval before starting any project. A maximum of 20% can be used for administration costs.
- We would like some sort of transportation run to Baldwin Ave.; the red trolley runs on Arden, and we are receiving requests for next one over, but there are no trip generators in the nearby industrial area. We are looking at having a system analysis done. Lots of people walk on Valley (west area). There is heavy transit in the southern part of town. Headways are 35 minutes on a loop; transit pulsates out of the station every 40 minutes. Under the freeway at Baldwin Ave. is a nightmare. Not enough service to county buildings. Delivery trucks also have difficulty there.
- We need to widen sidewalks; need code enforcement to get weeds cut back and make sure cars don't block sidewalks.
- The person to talk to about ADA is Mary Griffith. She knows all the places where there are obstructions. Others [people using wheelchairs] prefer riding on streets to riding where driveway tops are not level.
- Underpasses even in broad daylight are dark. Bus stops are located in underpasses on Tyler Ave. and Cogswell. We'll be putting benches and trash receptacles, there but it will still be dark.
- Fernando Le Desma High School (Valley); lot of traffic; kids take buses; can't put amenities there because sidewalk is narrow; school put fences up.
- No sidewalks on Ramona Blvd. near new townhouses.

Focus Group of Elected and Appointed Leaders and Community Leaders

Participants: Ralph Nunez, Art Ellis, Robert Elkin

- I'd like a plan that would allow people from entire area to easily travel to/from destinations, a plan with bicycle lanes and trails along the river. We are in the process of exploring and developing that. I see a community need for connections. The southeast and northwest sectors need support. Santa Barbara has some good models that could be applied here, especially trails and intersection access.
- Some of underpasses I've seen are dangerous when pedestrians and bicyclists try to share a pathway. The bicyclist tries to go around pedestrian and enters travel lanes; so a safe system for bikes/pedestrian is needed.
- Safer routes to and through schools are needed. I'm concerned about the railroad tracks on Tyler Ave. near transit and would like improvement there.
- Look at how freeway and railroad regional corridors help/hurt us. Several intersections like Santa Anita, Peck and Valley, Ramona and Peck are avoided by people because of traffic and don't shop downtown, which has an economic impact. There were three pedestrian deaths over last year, so safety a big issue.
- Trains coming from Long Beach sometimes stop and stall traffic. I saw kids climbing

between [the stopped] cars, which is incredibly dangerous. How do we use traffic circulation to improve economic development and improve safety?

- Study economic revitalization of downtown by using alternative transportation serving that area. Also explore how bikeway and pedestrian path projects can improve health in the community. Make this a healthier community.
- Because of accidents in the Asian/Latino community, we need timely information in schools or centers about not crossing illegally. This is supported by Officer Gee. Six hundred-five of our youngsters have an obesity problem. I want a campaign that talks to parents and students [so they know] that it is not necessary to drive kids to/from school.
- Concerned about the absence of sidewalks and the narrow sidewalks; we need some kind of ordinance that deals with how wide sidewalks can be; widen them whenever we can. Kids are walking on street on Arroyo. Need greater analysis as a city where we need to develop them and the widths. The junior high youngsters seem to want to walk four abreast.
- Want to look at bike lanes marked with iridescent material and proper signage so they stand out. Some stores have buses that pick people up and take them shopping.
- How can we encourage business sector to get involved so we can have fewer cars on road? Regarding employees, during smog periods, we gave awards for sharing rides; we need to get back to that somehow.
- How can we go back to some of education we used to do?
- Safety issues are a concern. We are dense with little open space, so people walk and ride bikes where there are vehicles. We have a freeway that divides the city and creates a barrier. The other issue is the railroad which creates an obstacle for people. There is a disconnected feeding; Pioneer Park access is difficult. Need a no-left-turn coming out of that park; it is dangerous for children to go there.
- Most people get to and from work via car; many people use our roads to commute. east/west routes supplement the freeway. Running those systems as best as possible is important. If the arterial system runs better we'll have less intrusion into neighborhoods by through traffic. Getting acceptance by public and business community is important, but a tough hurdle.
- There is a growing need for people to use scooters. ADA is an issue. I'll probably have one [scooter] within the next five years. I want to go north/south and east/west in a scooter and feel comfortable, plus share the sidewalks with other people. A week ago, a bicycle went around a pedestrian, a vehicle hit him and kept going; people just zipped around him. That is a really big deal; we have to share. We have a large senior citizen community. We are multi-cultural. The people who getting killed in the streets don't understand our language. I see a great need for signage. China and Vietnam have classy looking signs everywhere that reminds people not to cross the street. There people challenge traffic, but not the trains. We have to do more in high traffic areas and there is no signage to explain they can't cross on the red light.
- Lighting is an issue. There is no sufficient lighting in any crosswalks.
- Lower Azusa is out of control and needs to slow down. It is like a speedway and we have residential units going in on that street. It is going to be a gridlock with a lot of housing and not enough room to get into the gated area. There is a lot of single-family residential; four lanes, posted 35 mph, 45 mph 85th percentile.
- The railroad crossing at Arden Dr. is as dangerous as Tyler. A school is within 1/3-mile. My dream is to see a monorail system.
- A [real-time, electronic] message board to help people avoid stopped trains is available in other communities.
- Keeping the trains moving is also important for air pollution reasons.
- On Arden, there is a siding where a local train pulls on to let through train through. The train can pull off and not block the crossing, but he's so close the barriers are down. There have been some letters sent to the railroad (Union Pacific) regarding this issue. They shift the cost of any mitigation to the City. The railroad says it is

going to get worse as the number of trains increase.

- ➢ We need something there documenting the problem to show the problem. A video or photograph is better than a letter. Need schools, legislators, COG and the State to get involved to get some sort of dialogue going with Union Pacific.
- ➢ Santa Anita, Peck, Durfee, Baldwin, Arden Drive and Tyler still [railroad crossing] problems. What they dealt with was which streets have greatest traffic impact. Costs $30-$35 million to build an underpass.
- ➢ Regarding Arden, with the Baldwin underpass going in they might be able to move that siding west. Maybe we get to work on that in the design stage?
- ➢ Yes, but the first thing the railroad people will say is you pay for it.
- ➢ We are not the only city affected by this. There is strength in numbers; the cities could unite.
- ➢ We need better connections to the rivers; funds are earmarked for the portion of the river along Valley Blvd.; we need better connections to the rivers. The existing trail is engineered, not aesthetically pleasing. It was set up as Flood Control District access for their trucks.
- ➢ An additional problem off Durfee where we have an isolated school, one way in and one way out with a tremendous traffic problem there. Heard that some entity is looking into a bridge for the children to go over the freeway. The children walk through heavy industrial area to get to school. The City of El Monte, the School District and Industrial City have made improvements but it isn't good for kids.
- ➢ Capacity is a capacity issue because of low speeds; high speeds occur during off-peak time. Mostly a problem at the intersections.
- ➢ Our city is strategically located; we get a lot of outside traffic, especially if traffic backs up on the freeway.
- ➢ Traffic enforcement of trucks especially at the pit, some come into the city, which they shouldn't. Some have caused problems. I asked staff about licensing people who come into the city to do business and use some of that money for traffic mitigation. Arcadia and other cities require a sticker for businesses like gardeners and construction firms.
- ➢ In Washington, DC, running lanes have beautiful lighting. We need to see where we can add lighting to ensure safety of joggers and walkers.
- ➢ Creative use of downtown. We have discussed making that area walking only and use side streets, or using it like Third Street Promenade.
- ➢ Connectivity to parks, etc., encourage team to think big, provide two levels of recommendations with one level of what is feasible right now.
- ➢ On Cogswell, there are too many traffic signs and people ignore them.
- ➢ Need more security lighting, especially in neighborhood parks. More sidewalks at other parks in the city to keep people in their own neighborhoods [so they don't have to drive to other parks].
- ➢ Concerned about hot spots; wise to identify them even though they may not be taken care of at this point. Plan for this anyway.

City Staff Focus Group

Participants: Kevin Tcharkoutian, Eugene Moy

- ➢ I get a lot of complaints about speeding, traffic congestion on major arterials, major arterials being used as bypass to the 10 freeway. When there is a crash, some streets suffer. Motorists use parallel residential streets to bypass congested arterials. People want guardrails to block their streets off.
- ➢ People think speed humps will save their street. The speed humps shift the traffic to nearby streets. The fire department sent a memo because the humps are delaying response and damaging emergency equipment.
- ➢ The City has not tried other tools like roundabouts, curb extensions, or chicanes. Will you tell us what intersections need improvements?
- ➢ You cannot put roundabouts on Lower Azusa.
- ➢ Alfred Madrid School has some problems – traffic circulation and safety. We should move the school. A good location is McClearin Hall on 13th; it is an abandoned school facility.

- Streets like Garvey might be regional (through trips) because they go through. Valley has 40,000 ADT but has twists and turns and stops.
- There is a 12-foot minimum width. We don't want it too narrow. (One participant drives a van with mirrors that were hit by a passing truck.)
- Can you tell us which streets these tools will work on?
- Off-ramps to Flair Park on Baldwin you go under – to get back westbound you go to Temple City. A left turn is nearly impossible.

ROUNDABOUTS
A discussion about roundabouts, how they function, and where they might work followed.

- West-bound Santa Anita off ramp is LOS F; stop signs are required there because of Brockway frontage roads. Suggest contacting Doug Failing, Caltrans District Director, about any proposed changes there.
- Festival's retail project involves a good amount of traffic generation; mostly retails with a proposed housing component, but it may not work because it would displace the transit facility; at this time they are cutting the residential and focusing on retail. We're working toward a development agreement by late fall. We are going through the environmental review; the traffic study will be redone based on reduced study.
- Long term, I have to look at what helps Valley Mall tick; there is a perception of poor parking and poor access to it, so we may end up with a structure or two with retail and parking. We are guiding folks to higher density. Only a few people seem opposed to density; others don't care. We talk about positive congestion.
- Enlarging Valley and Santa Anita part of redevelopment plans; on the other hand, they can break that up into pieces.

Friday Focus Groups

Participants: Maria Valdez, Betty Sanchez, Frank Simpson

- Train problem most critical from 7-8 am and 2-3 pm. There is a crossing guard there, but she also gets stuck on one side or the other and cannot control the children on the other side.
- On Arden passing the railroad tracks, there is a place where vagrants have exposed themselves to children in the past. Police officers weren't able to catch him, but that prevents me from allowing her children to walk to school.
- Need bicycle lanes on streets so bicyclists don't have to ride on sidewalk. The sidewalks are narrow and many have poles (Arden).
- Walking days at schools they have to take their kids on the streets because the sidewalks are walkable or aren't there at all.
- On Santa Anita ave., we walk, Garvey, Mt. View, take the whole route. Bikes are on the street.
- Baldwin Ave. is like a freeway. Only when the police put the radar out do people slow down.
- I live in front Minute Park where motorists don't stop [for pedestrians]. Need pedestrian walkway at the park. The lights at the intersections don't help (Loftus).
- Where I live, there are no sidewalks and kids walk in the middle of the street. I live on Esto, and they are building a clinic there. More cars are using Esto to get to Baldwin Ave., so there is a lot of traffic on Valley Blvd. It is congested and people speed there.
- A lot of parents don't let their kids walk because of the train issue. We asked if they could put an overpass for the kids there.
- It is a 30-minute walk from their home to the school.
- Downtown is okay and cars don't speed so much on Lexington where they put a stop there. The stop sign wasn't visible before so they put an island in the middle.
- It is easy to get to Valley Mall. I walk. Transit is good. I like the trolleys. There are many routes and the prices are good. Bus drivers are very nice.
- Rivers and Mountains Conservancy is a state organization which includes El Monte. We promote the expansion of open space, preservation of habitat, rivers, and waterways. We don't get involved in inner city circulation. But to the extent we are interested in enhancing public access to parks and recreation areas, there is interest.

We do provide grants to cities, and El Monte has a couple. We are involved in the specific grant projects and in planning, such as the current transit plans. We are interested in commenting on that once plans are more articulate. At a staff level, we are actively involved in planning. El Monte has been proactive in its open space goals and we play an active role in that planning process. I am interested in making open space useful to people in active ways. I like to consider is the park and the journey to the park safe such that you can send your kids off to play in the park. That is a baseline park question that should be asked. You shouldn't have to drive there. If it is not possible to walk, is there another alternative or is there another alternative to provide open space accessible to your home? Our website explains what the organization does.

- We partner with Amigos de los Rios and are involved in their planning initiatives. We would provide comments on planning documents and give specific direction where we think there may be gaps in their planning. I participate in development of landscape guidelines, which plays into how the City's development is implemented. We are working on a guidelines document that includes a start-to-finish process, including community involvement through [implementation]. The document will guide planners and consultants with a road map of how to define community needs, how to respond to the needs, and how to implement projects.
- A community trail system in Walnut is an exemplary model. The City of Santa Anita has a trail system. In Norwalk south of the Park-and-Ride on Foster St., there is an LA County Prop A-funded project that took a connection between the residential community and river and redesigned it to be a useable trails system. It is a very good example of a small community point to point connection between an existing trail system and a community.
- Monrovia might be a good example, but it is a simpler design challenge from a traffic standpoint. It is user friendly.
- The urban design example combines commercial and public use of open space in a manner that is inviting to the public. You might have a restaurant or coffee shop open late hours. The fact that it is used round-the-clock provides security. Downtown LA might have some examples, but it is not the ideal example. The community doesn't feel they own that space.
- Approaches I've seen be successful include converting alleyways into public space.
- [There needs to be] some kind of municipal transit system that makes sense; it's got to connect to regional routes. It must be frequent enough that it is useful and must hit specific destinations in a way that makes sense. Frequent, inexpensive, and multiple routes in downtown LA encourage people to use transit.
- The existing system needs to define the routes better. There is a map at the bus stops but it only has a few destinations defined. Not many of these go to parks. A park should be one of the stops; you should be able to go there, have lunch, and catch a return bus in time to pick up your kids. Timetables must be clear.
- In terms of making things more pedestrian friendly, we need to look at sidewalk design and the use of municipal or private owner partnerships to create sidewalk adjacent benches, tree. You need shade. People like to just sit and watch. A tree, a bush and a bench can mean a lot. We must think of parks in a radical way, not as prescriptive space. How can we make the space greener? One of our goals is to make people aware of watershed, the importance of water quality and conservation. However small the opportunity for open space to bring in elements of interpretation of the watershed, the habitat, nature – something that speaks to people about where they are. Ideally, throughout the city people would see interpretive signs and wayfinding information that identify water areas. The importance of exercise could also be disseminated. Messages must be presented so that you are inspired to do that and understand why it is important. Talking to LA County public health folks would help a lot in communicating these exercise issues and design solutions.
- Where there is on street parking, the sight lines are really obstructed. The street design here dates back to a time before SUVs existed. There hasn't been any

changes in rules for parking and I think that is a very important pedestrian issue.

- Signal use, right on red, are important issues. The minutia is really important.
- Not comfortable with my kids walking on the industrial side of the street. Concerned about the trucks exiting driveways.
- Look at stormwater runoff in this study.
- Shifter – on that street we have to have a rowboat to get to school. But Baldwin to Gibson, the water is really bad.

Focus Group on Emergency Services/Safety

Participants: Ralph Nunez, Art Ellis, Robert Elkin

- I don't work in El Monte, but general issues are the same throughout the county. With the railroad, we know trains are going to go through and delay us. Our major issues with traffic are people [not] pulling over to the right and not obeying red lights. Our number one issue is speed bumps. They are very bad on the equipment. We like to see other ways of slowing people down.
- We would like to see a computerized system for setting lights to facilitate faster response time. We would like to have a fast route on which they could trigger the lights.
- One of the problems we have is that almost every signal is manual. If they had a better system, it would be more effective.

ROUNDABOUT VIDEO DISCUSSION

The group viewed a three-minute video about roundabouts and discussed how roundabouts would impact traffic in El Monte.

- We have a few planned developments where we are looking at breakaway gates instead of cul de sacs where we can stop neighborhood cut through traffic. Fire has good experience.
- In the Navy where we couldn't use fences, we used designs that small vehicles could not use for access, but large vehicles could.
- The 10 freeway goes through the city. I would like to see a coordinated effort between the City, County and Caltrans, so if we end up losing an overpass, there would be a way of having an opening on ramp at Durfee where emergency vehicles can go across the freeway to get from one side of the freeway to the other. The only place is now down by Rosemead. If the overpass failed there is no way to cross. On Santa Anita before the train tracks, if there was a way to make some sort of an opening.
- If something happens at Flair Park, it might be difficult to respond there because the congestion is so bad on intersections at either end.
- That is especially true in the PM when people are going home. It is a bad place to get out of or into because there is such limits to entrance/exit. There are 5,000 people there at any given time. The first station into that area would be the Rosemead Fire Department.

CUL-DE-SACS

There was a discussion about cul de sacs.

- Gates are a low-cost solution for security and cut through traffic. If there are other low cost tools, we can use we are open to that too.
- Are there more decorative treatments like speed bumps? Burden described speed pillows.
- What about parking near the intersections? Burden explained when we build curb extensions it guarantees your route in.
- Is there anywhere someone can go to get information on bicycle riding and rules? We need that.

Chamber of Commerce Focus Group

Participants: John Meeks, Juan O. Mindes, Connie Keenan, Jody Bush, Tom Millett, John Leung, Gabriela Baldorinos, Patricia Bejarno-Vera, Dante Hall, Paul Zykofsky, Diana Andrade, Margaret Bulat

- We often find walkability is a key to returning vitality to towns. Very important issues are economic development and connectivity. There is no sense of place. The talk is recreating a place where people can go and gather. We are a crossroad of the central valley but we don't have a place where people could meet. It is important for us to create a sense of place where we can come together. We need to combat the wrong image that is out there about El

Monte. We don't have a campaign or plan to get and tell people who we are and what we can do here. People don't discover the advantages of El Monte, like its transportation system. We have a foreign trade zone and incubator; we need to pursue enterprise zones and other programs that attract business. We need to balance our business; we have car dealerships but need to build that up. We have made progress but more can and should be done. Internally, we have this mentality this is our town and we'll make it better. We need better circulation downtown. It is the underpinning element that will hinder or help develop downtown.

- I see the ElMonte bus station that isn't serving the community as well as it could because it is isolated. Any work that connects it better will spur economic activity. It is an asset no other city in this area has. For retail, you can draw from a larger trade area. Street crossings and a more friendly pedestrian environment will get more from this asset.
- There is a lot of good pedestrian qualities here the market is coming around to value more than it used to. Walkable neighborhoods already exist; there are many nice walkable streets in downtown. Some revitalization will provide what everybody seems to want in a downtown.
- People come into the community, buy their car, turn around and get back on the freeway.
- There are some politically sensitive things to talk to talk about. There is a small level of disposable income in then community since the 1960s. In the place to go in the 1950s and 1960s, it was the place to go. We had one of the first Sears.
- Core access into our downtown; one day I'll get it back to Main Street where it belongs. One day they decided the main traffic couldn't go on Valley so they put it on Monte Vista. It was renamed to give it the mall look of late 1960s and 1970s. It is too easy to go around it rather than to go through our downtown.
- Potentially El Monte is my interest; I live in South El Monte. There should be a good connection because there is little retail there. It is a good source to bring buyers in. I've spent a lot of money on the mall and want to keep it going. The city has many areas of potential that can be fused together to make the city what it was once, like bringing back a stadium built in the 1930s. The stadium was torn down because it was not seismically safe.
- We as a city need to be more homogeneous in our presentation to outside communities. We are predominantly Hispanic but we have a growing Asian population and white people. Why not present a mix of all cultures living here? El Monte should celebrate diversity.
- I came here and saw challenges 30 years ago – housing and traffic still have those. A lot of people want it to be like it was in 1950s and 1960s. We introduced new housing 3-4 years ago; people started saying they don't want that type of housing in our neighborhoods, so we started bringing housing downtown. We have challenges in traffic patterns in the city. Santa Anita Ave., Peck, (three others) we need to work on them to bring in retail.
- The builders are back because they see a change in the city; the time is right. We really have to come in with a good plan for downtown.
- Why not call the mall downtown? We have discussed it at board meetings for a couple of years. There isn't that much resistance. It has to do with general economics, like changing letterhead.
- In Glendora, they are proud of their Main street but I like the scale of downtown more. If we were to look at cross streets like Center they could make it more of a grid and possibly more vibrant. The scale is good but it needs to be enhanced.
- At Santa Anita Ave. and off ramp, every time I'm scared someone will run into me because of the stop sign.
- It may be wise to work with residents in that area and cul de sac that.
- Transportation is very important here. Metro an asset.
- From my company to Main Street is 1/2 mile, so if it was marketed properly visitors would walk there.
- Signage is important. Demographic hasn't changed much; still largely Hispanic. Put in kiosks with info, maps and usage of streets in different language. Use technology to upgrade intersections and lights.

On Valley near the Civic Center, there is a crosswalk where lights go on. Gives a perception of safety; need enforcement; diversity; accommodate people who are less informed about traffic.

- Vietnamese are the largest Asian population. They are not very vocal; they just pick up and leave.
- Came to the U.S. six years ago; friends don't see franchise stores in Valley Mall and don't see the area as a mall. Downtown has no place to dine. The only places are Denny's, Shakey's or tacos. It's hard to find what I like. I go to Rio Hondo College [via transit], which takes two hours from South El Monte. I take Route 270. I take the MTA, which is the only one that will take me. The bus is often late. You have to be at the station two hours before your class starts.
- There are a lot of green and shady parts of El Monte. You get into downtown and it seems like it is almost a wasteland with parking lots, empty lots, old buildings that are not maintained. Downtown ought to be an oasis. It should be physically attractive to come here. All of the gateways should be looked at first. Valley and Santa Anita; Tyler all the way up has enormous potential. The bones are a good framework for a great street. Don't neglect Tyler up by railroad tracks; push investment toward railroad tracks and tie into downtown. Intersections at Ramona where Valley Mall and Valley come together significant pedestrian improvements are needed. Moving pedestrian more efficiently might allow better traffic movement. ADA compliance and doing trees on Ramona, Santa Anita and Valley would frame downtown, which would prime the pump. People would begin to look at side streets.
- I take the bus. Sometimes it comes early, sometimes comes later; sometimes it is full, sometime empty. Street signs and crossing signs are not safe. People cross wherever they want and two people have been killed.
- Anything that would help make it easier for pedestrian. I love the downtown area but the normal congestion takes it longer than I anticipate. The traffic makes it difficult to get down there.
- How are you going to get traffic into downtown when you have car dealerships on both ends? Maybe we should put them all in one place.
- Valley Mall is the place where people want to go to be seen. If you have a low rider car you cruise the mall. Many go to the community center. People feel comfortable there. Concerts there very Wednesday.

WHAT MAKES EL MONTE A GREAT PLACE?

Burden asked what the single most important step should be to make El Monte a great place:

- Improve bus routes.
- Crosswalk safety, signs and bus routes.
- Franchises.
- Tear down the freeway!
- New equipment: signage, electronic infrastructure.
- Mapping area for economic development so you can say where residential, commercial, etc., are located.
- Go transit village!
- Convince elected officials and commissioners where our money should be
- Making it a more environmentally friendly place to visit with signage, greenage, places to sit.
- Helping developers who come in with an idea, so we don't see chain link fences empty for years and years.
- Transit village.
- Develop momentum and leadership on part of business owners, leaders, community.
- Develop a vision and an economic strategy and have the political courage to overcome politics and opposition from "not in my backyard" people. There's a lot of connectivity issues. There are hard issues that require courage, leadership, and vision. We can catch up. Twenty years ago, it [redevelopment] was a bad word. People think of eminent domain.
- Merchants would support building up and it is essential to bring up those issues.
- You have to have enough population to activate the pedestrian space.

Focus Groups on Schools

Participants: Tom Davis, Joel Kyne

- We have many children who walk to/from school. We transport 1,500 on buses out of the 10,000 who attend our schools. Our concern is that we have crossing guards and a recent news article said that might be eliminated. That is a vital part of the safety network and we don't want to lose that. We are always concerned about the safety of our students because so many do walk. The city is a highly trafficked area. A lot of parents take their kids so we are concerned about them too. We've talked about expanding that.
- There are many intersections throughout the city that create problems for traffic and the pedestrians.
- At Cogswell, there is a crossing guard to assist students so train crossings isn't a problem. We have a radio system on buses so we reroute them to avoid intersections when trains block intersections.
- At Tyler at the railroad tracks, there are problems.
- There is a plan to underpass Baldwin, then Tyler, but it is a question of funding.
- Ramona has impacted us because of the car backup traffic. You risk your life if you are at Peck and Valley at 4 p.m. We have 2,300 kids, with 100 kids that drive. Garvey is not a problem. You can only go under at Tyler, Meeker and Peck. The light at Shaker and Meeker really helped. Another problem in the summer when we do concert at the park is people cut through the community center and whip through the parking lot.
- So much traffic diverted south from the Ramona construction.
- Parent drop off – parents used to come into site but that created a mess for buses. We changed that but it still backs up traffic on Durfee and Garvey. Charles, our traffic control officer, does a terrific job of keeping the traffic off the site now.
- The problem is the streets weren't built for the amount of traffic in the city. Parent traffic at school sites creates a mess; the schools weren't built for the population the city has now. A lot of parents bring the kids the first week or so and then it settles down a little. I don't know if there is anything we can do to alleviate the problem of people who park in front of their homes.

  Burden explained that parked cars help slow traffic down.
- There is so much traffic people are forced to slow down.
- Speed humps not a problem for the school buses. Some parents complained about the speed humps slowing them down.
- Shuttling kids to school is a good idea but we don't have enough buses. We looked at staggering school times to get more kids on the bus but the teachers union would not allow that. Promoting students to walk is what we need to focus on.
- El Monte High School is in the middle of reconstruction. The entrance and drop off to the school will be conducive to dropping kids off. We are bound by Peck on one side and Tyler and surrounded by traffic. We still have a lot of parents that bring the kids to school and they'll drop them off anywhere. Crossing Garvey is busy but we've never had a problem. Our school resource officer patrols the front of our school. The presence of an officer and car helps. We are going to lose some parking during construction, so we will have a problem. We are surrounded by red curbs by the schools. We've talked about using the lot on the other side of Tyler. I think our kids won't be able to park so more will walk.
- Some schools charge for student parking. At the end of the school year, we didn't let any kids park inside and we had 5-6 burglaries within a few weeks. I have 90 teachers and won't even have that many spaces unless we park on our athletic fields and I already cut those in half to allow for new construction. We may build some temporary parking.
- Violence is one reason parents won't let their kids walk. Last year, we had volunteers called bus route monitors placed at certain areas throughout the walking route and some safe houses. We haven't done that throughout the district. It did knock down the traffic. The Madrid site is a major traffic problem but we have a problem getting parents not to bring their

kids to school. There are many kids in that area who walk into Madrid. Anyone north of Ramona rides a bus. South of Ramona, they walk to and from.

- Durfee and Exline are problem sites during peak hours mornings at 7:00; we've had buses sit there 20 minutes to get under freeway. That is the busiest area. The older kids walk through there to go to Mt. View. We transport from areas less than a 1/2 mile if the crossing is poor.
- Security is a big issue even at the high school. That is the number one concern. I suggest they group them together. We get fights all the time, mainly in the afternoon, especially at middle school level.
- There are assaults; a girl got raped in the underpass in South El Monte.
- The [pedestrian] underpass between Lexington and Meeker is very important. The location is hard to secure. On the south side it opens to the end of a street and the same on the other side. The kids don't like going through them but it saves some distance. Video surveillance there would give a sense of security.
- Tremendous parent involvement at CPAC meetings; may have 400-500 parents, but not much concern about transportation.
- Some kids use the tolley and taxis.
- Bus drivers complain about the way people drive in El Monte.
- Student was killed five years ago at Durfee where Bryon E. Thomas is, at the crosswalk.
- All of our kids have to cross major streets to get to school.
- Parent groups can be reached through school telephone systems.

Final Presentation

On August 8, 2006, a public meeting was held to showcase the potential solutions prepared by the consultant team. Following a slide presentation, the audience was invited to provide feedback on issues that had not yet been adequately addressed. The list below was developed from their input.

- Bikeways
- Bus at roundabouts
- What about the rest of the city?
- Connections to county trails
- Roundabout at View/Elliott?
- Safety, big trucks at roundabouts
- Explain value of shorter pedestrian crossing distance
- Crossing guards – needed at long crossings
- Garvey Avenue intersections
- Valley/Durfee – make safer for pedestrians
- Impacts of road diets and roundabouts on emergency services
- Impact of density on existing neighborhoods
- Lighting – crosswalks; orientation of lighting
- Level of Service at roundabouts

Appendix B: General Street and Walkability Concepts – Principles and Practices

Healthy Streets

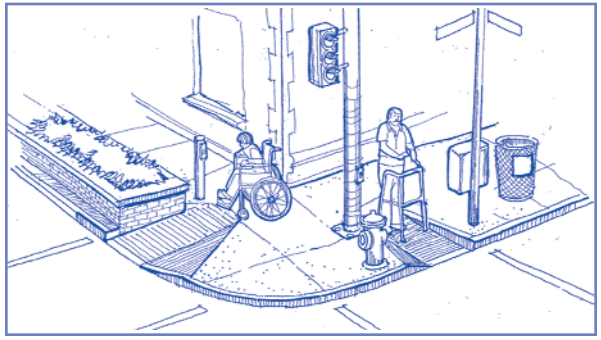
A healthy street is one that works for everyone using the street. It is of a size and scale that vehicular traffic can move efficiently and steadily, typically under 35 mph. It is attractive, a place where people enjoy traveling by car, by foot, transit and by bicycle.

How can streets be designed for everyone?

Healthy streets are designed to provide mobility and access for all people, whether inside a vehicle or using other modes of transportation. Street designs should meet the needs of all pedestrians, including those with visual impairments or mobility restrictions.

How fast is too fast?

Speeds over 30-35 mph do not serve the goals of creating more walkable and bicycle-friendly communities, nor do they increase capacity on urban streets.



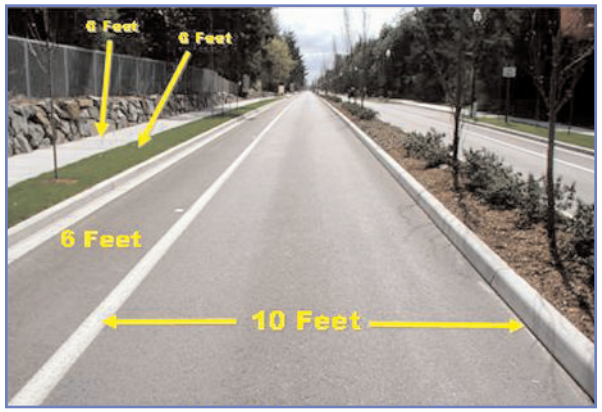
Many factors influence a driver's selection of travel speed. For example, the width and length of streets affect drivers' sense of what is an appropriate speed for the environment. The number of people visible, amount of landscaping, weather conditions, number of parked cars, and many other factors are quickly processed by drivers' minds to select travel speed. Drivers' temperament, trip purpose and time schedule are other considerations. The result is that many drivers do not adhere to posted speed limits, but drive according to comfort levels set for them by designers.

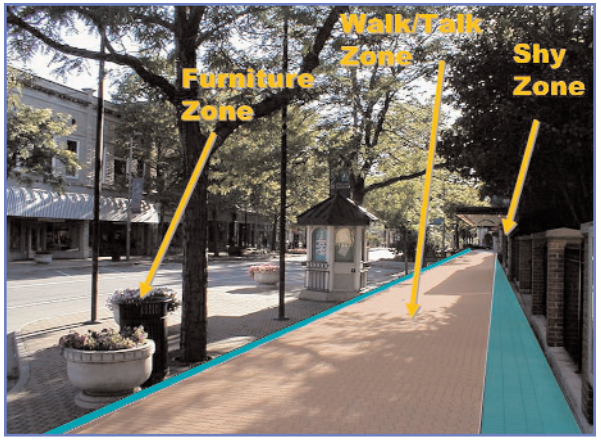
Barren, scary streets generally produce higher speeds.

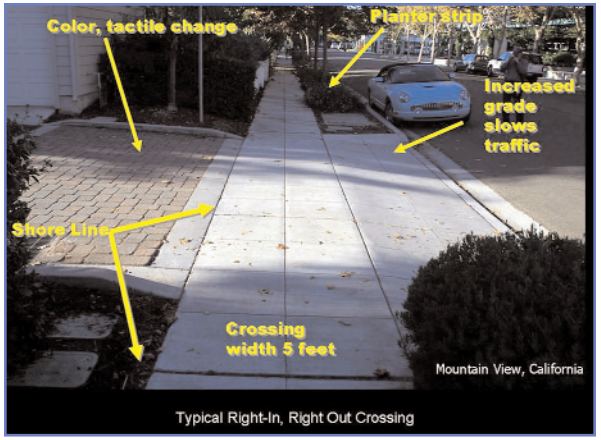
How much space do vehicles need?

The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) publishes the Policy on the Geometric Design of Streets and Highways (Green Book). This book provides guidelines for designing streets and highways of all sizes. Unfortunately, these guidelines are often weak on issues associated with village centers and main streets.

Our recommendation is for vehicle travel lanes throughout El Monte to be 10 feet wide, unless extra width is needed to accommodate buses, trucks and other larger vehicles. Where 6-foot bike lanes are provided, the effective operational width of a 10-foot wide travel lane is 16 feet, which facilitates turning movements for large vehicles.







How can bicyclists share streets?

By reducing vehicle lane width, space within the street can be provided to bicyclists. Designated on-street bike lanes are recommended on every collector and arterial street where there is adequate space, and where running speeds are 25 mph or higher.

Bike lanes have benefits in addition to providing space for bicyclists. They provide buffers between traffic and sidewalks, increase driver sight-distance, provide forgiveness for errant drivers, allow easier entry and exit from parking spaces, create temporary storage areas for cars while emergency responders go by and provide many other benefits.

How can walking routes be improved?

All streets in urban neighborhoods in El Monte should have sidewalks on both sides and be designed using the sidewalk zoning method (see middle photo above). In addition to providing a basic transportation route, sidewalks offer the opportunity to create safe, appealing public spaces that reflect community pride and invite people to walk. A furniture zone provides space for landscaping, hydrants, transit stops, bike racks and benches so that walkways remain unobstructed.

Walkways, including trails, links and passageways, are also key pedestrian facilities. Sidewalks and walkways should create a continuous, connected network similar to the street system provided for motorized traffic.

How do driveways impact pedestrians?

Driveways, like side streets, expose pedestrians to turning vehicles. Although drivers need access to properties, consolidating driveways and keeping them as small as possible makes the walkway more practical. Sloped driveways are problematic for people using wheelchairs or walkers.

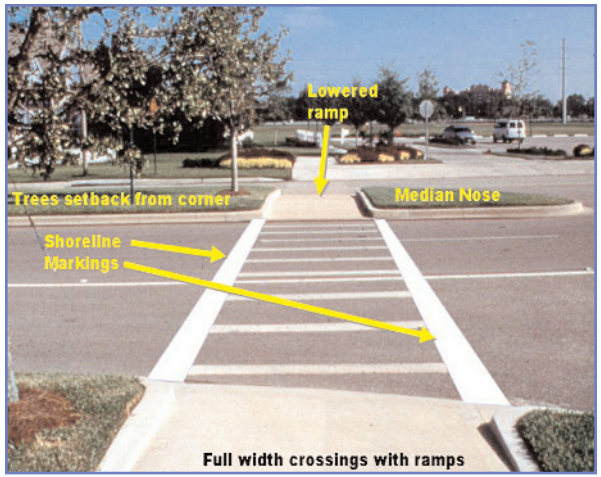
As shown in the photo above, driveways should not be built like intersections. The sidewalk should continue through and the change in slope should be placed outside of the pedestrian line of travel.

Medians and Turning Pockets

One method for reducing the frequency of turning movements that cross pedestrian travel routes is to provide raised medians.

Medians provide essential buffers between opposing lanes of traffic and can increase carrying capacity of individual lanes by 30%, by restricting crossover traffic and lane stoppages at turning points. Left-turn pockets are provided in the median at major turning points.

Medians also provide pedestrians with a place to wait for a crossing opportunity between travel lanes. They allow space for street beautification and gateway treatments and help eliminate aggressive behaviors such as inappropriate passing.



How important are trees?

Trees beautify areas, provide shade, and help cool spaces. Trees can be planted so as to create a sense of enclosure that contributes to slower traffic speeds. In a survey of one community, 74% of the public preferred to shop in establishments whose structures and parking lots are beautified with trees and other landscaping. (Center for Urban Horticulture)

How can parking needs be met?

On-street parking provides convenient auto access to streetside businesses. It also provides a buffer between pedestrians and moving traffic. On-street parking takes up only one-third of the space of off-street parking, adding to essential village density.

The provision of bulbouts ensures visibility between drivers and people waiting to cross streets who might otherwise be screened by parked cars.

Bike lanes need to be wide enough that opening car doors do not endanger passing bicyclists (generally 6 feet next to 7-foot parking bays).

Healthy Crossings

At all intersections, pedestrians need the shortest possible crossing distances, curb ramps to facilitate use of wheelchairs or canes, detectable warning strips for people with visual impairments, and adequate time to cross the street without conflicting with traffic. Medians can be used in large intersections to limit the amount of time pedestrians are exposed to traffic and allow them a refuge before completing their crossing.

Pedestrian signals

The intersection in El Monte should be evaluated to ensure that a minimum of 7 seconds is allowed for a pedestrian to cross the street or cross against the light. This segment of the signal phase – referred to as the walk interval – is the only time a pedestrian can begin the journey across the street.

In town and neighborhood centers, a pedestrian walk interval should be provided whether or not a pedestrian pushes a button. In some remote locations, and on some mid-block signalized crossings, pedestrians are required to push the button for activation, but it must respond to their call quickly. When push buttons do not respond quickly pedestrians often seek other places to cross the street.

In locations where push buttons are provided, the button should give tactile and audible information for people who have physical disabilities.

Crosswalk markings

Ladder style markings are recommended for all collectors and arterial roadways. The higher the speed and volume the more visible markings need to be. Marked crosswalks on major roadways should be 12 feet wide or wider. Proper widths allow pedestrians from opposing directions to enter, pass one another and get out of the street in the most efficient manner.

Curb extensions

Curb extensions, also referred to as bulbouts or bump-outs, narrow the street by extending the curb into the parking lane, shoulder area, or curb lane. They can be used at intersections or along streets where there is on-street parking. They help to slow down vehicles making right turns.

Should pedestrians always cross at intersections?

No. Pedestrians need crossing opportunities that are convenient to their destinations. Intersections may serve this purpose, but there are also times when a crossing between intersections works better. These are called mid-block crossings.

Mid-block crossing islands

Placing a raised island between travel lanes where mid-block crossings are used allows pedestrians to cross one-half of the street, then wait for an opportunity to complete

their journey. The crossing area in the island can be angled to encourage pedestrians to look at oncoming traffic before proceeding.

Pedestrian Linkages

Linkages are alleys, walkways, corridors and shared-use paths or trails that connect pedestrian facilities.

Why are linkages important?

Linkages increase pedestrian convenience by providing "short cuts" to destinations. Linkages often provide travel routes that are more appealing than walking next to traffic.

Bicycle Facilities

Providing good facilities for bicyclists helps all users of the street system, not only bicyclists. (For 22 benefits of bicycle lanes: www.walkable.org/download/shoulder.doc)

Bike lane markings

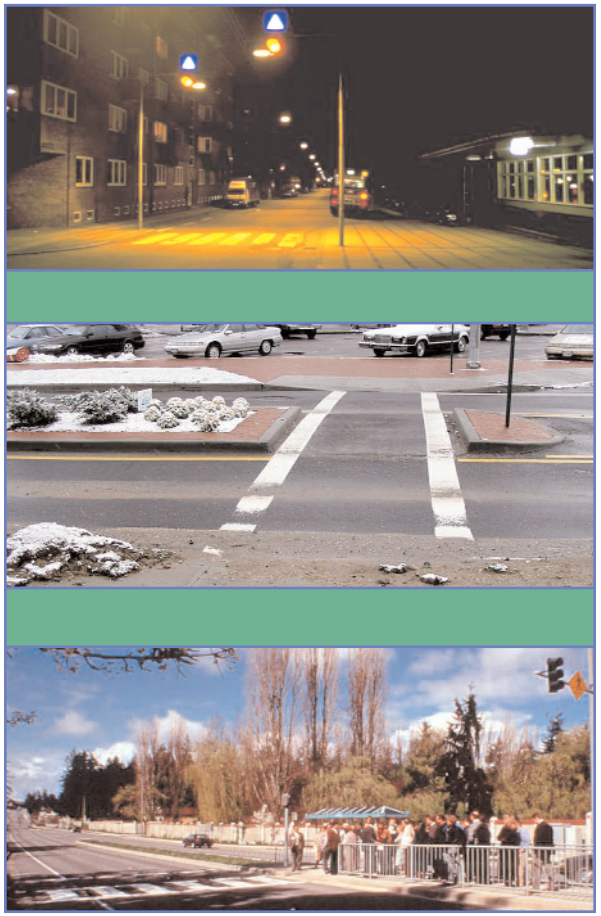
Bike lane markings should be highly visible. An 8-inch wide stripe is recommended. Details for markings through intersections and other locations are identified in Part Nine of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Bike parking

Bike parking should be provided on all destination blocks, all parking garages, and by employers of 10 or more employees. High security bike parking should be provided at all new parking garages, and retrofitted into existing garages.

Curb extensions come in a variety of designs…

Streetscapes without bulbouts (left) and with bulbouts (right)



High-emphasis markings

Properly marked and signed crossings, matched with appropriate speed geometric designs lead to higher levels of motorist courtesy toward pedestrians.

The crossing in Fargo, ND (top right), was built after putting the four-lane street on a road diet, reducing the number of lanes from four to three. Many cities choose to have lights flash only when pedestrians are present. In this way, motorist-yielding behavior can be very high, even on busy roadways.

Ladder-style crossings (three photos at left) help older adults and others with visual acuity issues establish a shoreline, aiding them in direct curb-to-curb travel. Ladder-style markings should be emphasized for crossings of all collectors and arterials. When not placed at signalized intersections these markings also require standard (MUTCD) pedestrian-crossing signs. Good lighting is essential.

Multi-lane roadways require more than just crosswalks.

Research conducted by the Federal Highway Administration found no increase in pedestrian crashes, nor severity of crashes, in marked crosswalks versus unmarked crossings on two-lane roads.

On multiple lane roadways, however, crossings with just markings and signs have increased crash levels. For this reason, a 2000 study recommends that crossings on multi-lane roadways, at mid-block and un-signalized intersection locations, have added features, such as yield lines placed back 40-60 feet (see photo below), crossing islands and in some cases, half-signals. (FHWA-RD-01-142, Safety Effects of Marked vs. Unmarked Crosswalks, May 2001, Charles Zegeer, et al.)

Multi-lane crossings work best with center median islands. This allows pedestrians to clear the street in under 8 seconds. If islands are thin and gaps are few, signals may be needed. The median in the bottom-left photo includes a fence that requires pedestrians to walk toward oncoming traffic before crossing the road.

Birmingham, MI, uses quality materials to screen parking lots and create attractive street furniture.

Trees and Street Furniture

Street furniture lights our way and provides navigational aid and information. It can also help create a sense of place. Street lamps need to be placed where light diffuses well onto walkways, between and often under trees.

Properly located street trees are not frills, fluff nor safety hazards. Instead, they are aids in traffic calming, a means of purifying air and a cooling mechanism.

El Monte should add urban street trees on all significant corridors. Trees should be set back four feet from travel lanes. Use of bike lanes creates more border width, allowing closer spacing. Minimum setback of all street furniture should be 18-24 inches. Trees are normally spaced 30-50 feet apart. In urban walkways, trees often require specially prepared tree wells.

Variety of designs

Street furniture can be unique to each site. El Monte should take unattractive features (trash bins, dumpsters, newspaper racks) and convert them into visual sources of pride.

Contests should be held to award prizes to businesses or residents that contribute the best new bench, light, sign or other street feature.

Alleys and passageways

Paseos, Connectivity, Links

Mobility and access in a community are not only about streets and roads. Many cities across the U.S. are learning to use paseos, trails and other connectors to improve access to schools, services and businesses for their residents.

Alleys into passageways

Parking to the rear of buildings needs to be easily accessed. If stores do not face into these spaces a careful dedication of landscape materials, lighting and other features will make these corridors comfortable for travel.

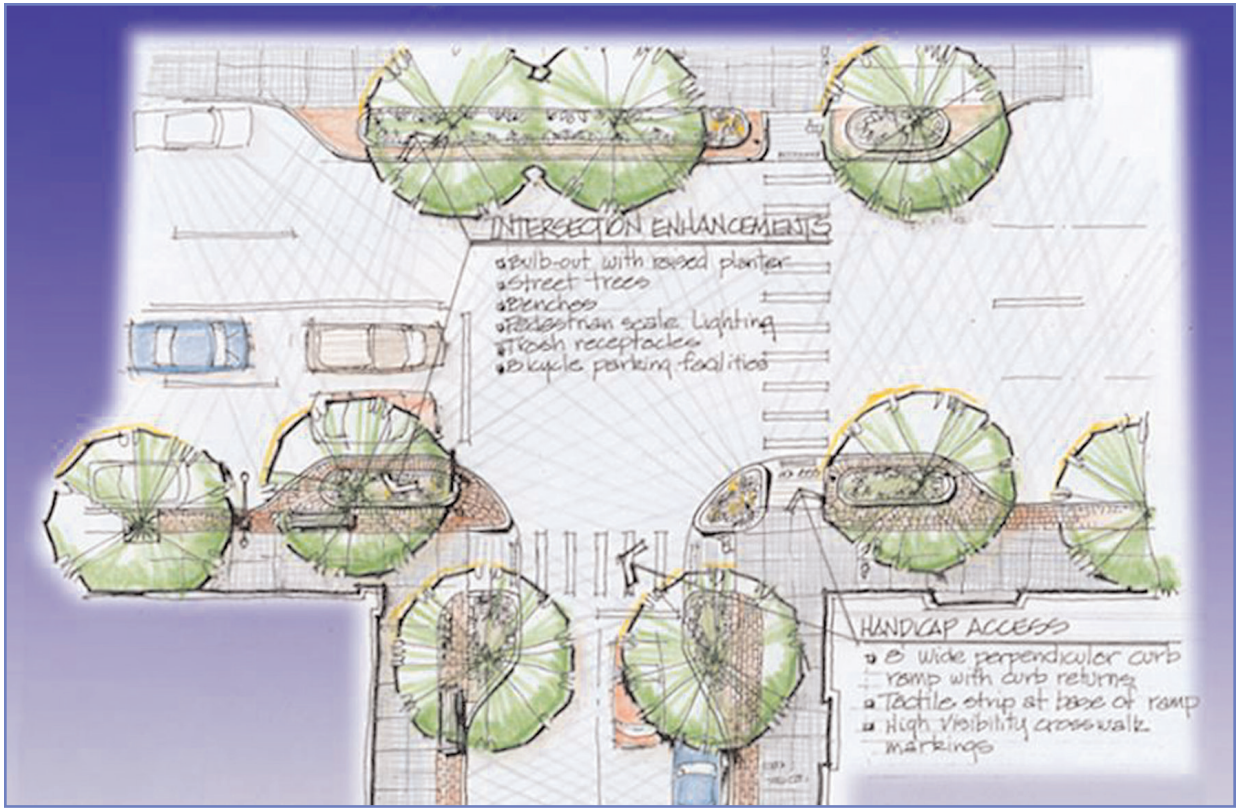
Eyes on connectors

Buildings should be constructed to provide supervision over converted alleys or new travel corridors. The historic retrofit (right top) and new shopping center (right bottom) show two ways of achieving high levels of comfort and safety when using these connectors.

New pedestrian links are needed

Like many communities, El Monte has many long blocks and other land areas where new links will need to be provided. Ideally, pedestrians are provided links between parallel blocks every 300-500 feet. The examples above feature ways to arrange these buildings and physical spaces.

These spaces need to have ample (but not too much) width, many eyes facing into the spaces, effective use of landscaping to increase safety, and other features that draw people to them many hours of the day and night.



An example set of ramps at a T-intersection (above)

Effective use of contrasting materials and flat walkway at top of drive (below)

ADA – Universal Design

When push buttons are used, they should have large buttons, an arrow helping orient people to the direction of travel and an indicator button acknowledging the call has been received.

Barrier free and easy guidance

People with visual and motor skill disabilities need well-constructed sidewalk and crossing systems with no barriers. Although easy to address in well thought out new construction, it is harder to do in older urban areas.

New national rules for public rights-of-way, currently under consideration by the Access Board, offer guidance on minimum design standards (online at www.accessboard.gov/indexes/accessindex.htm). In the interim, an excellent guide for accessible design is the Federal Highway Administration's "Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access."

Security through Design

Well-behaved buildings

In each of the four sets of images here, note which are friendlier to pedestrians. People learn to avoid those places that have poor building environments.

Well-behaved buildings provide: (1) many distinctive visual qualities, (2) many windows and doors facing the street, (3) proximity to the street, (4) landscaping as well as other features that add color, pride, custodianship and ownership to spaces.

Multi-family housing before and after. (simulation by Steve Price, Urban Advantage)

Top pair: Division Avenue and Fulton Street, Grand Rapids, MI. (photos: Ramon Trias)

Fences, Fencing, Walls

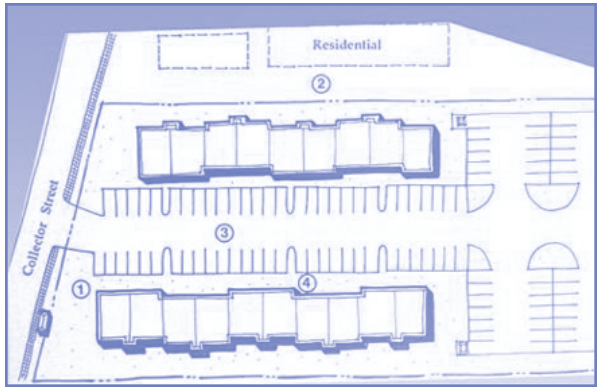
Walls or fences screening buildings from the street (top pair) create security problems for people walking along a street and property owners.

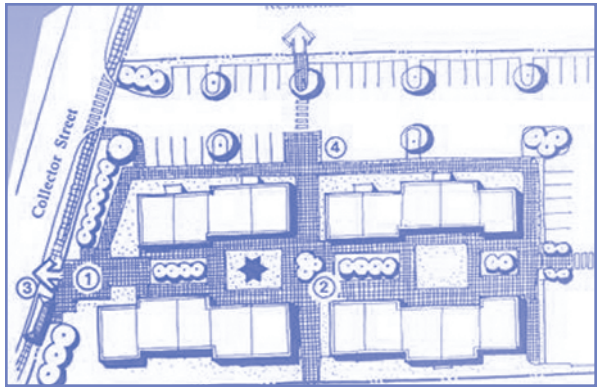
Transparent, low fencing (middle pair, bottom left) is attractive and allows people passing by to detect anything going wrong, as well as those inside to watch over the street.

An example of a limited, acceptable property fence (bottom right). Eyes are still on the street. This pattern would not work if two adjacent alley properties both had visual barriers.

Eyes on Space, Not Walls

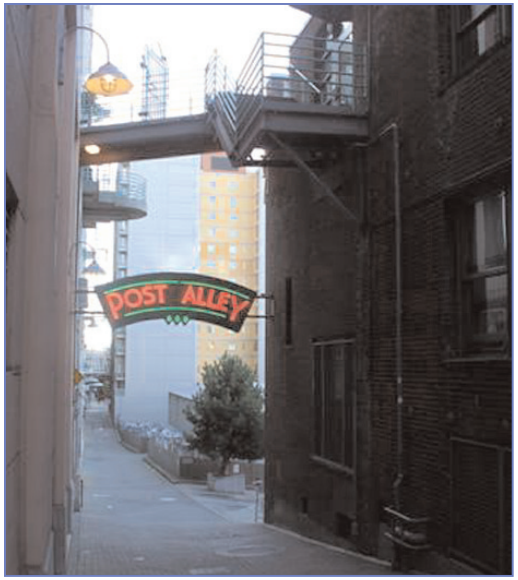
Law enforcement officers are quick to point out that tall fences do not make good neighbors. Despite lingering myths that walls and buffers add to security, they do not. Instead they simply make possible more illegal and hidden activity. El Monte's public and private lands should be built to allow maximum viewing of outdoor spaces.





The two plan views above show how design can improve safety. Both have the same amount of housing and parking but the plan on the right clearly defines private and public spaces and creates a central gathering place.

Multi-family housing units above have similar densities. The one on the left invites people to take part in activities in the central court. The one on the right discourages residents from interacting.



Alleys

A master plan needs to be developed to provide guidance on how to improve all alleys and alleyways. All alleys should be attractive and inviting, with significant movement and uses up and down them.

Alleys need to be clean, attractive and tidy. There should be no offensive odors or leakage from dumpsters.

Common dumpster storage areas should be created, minimizing the number and location of dumpsters.

Openings from alleys to streets (bottom left pair) should be clean and attractive.

Pedestrians should have dominant movement along streets, with minimal intrusion by entering and exiting vehicles.

Parking Issues and Opportunities

Off-street parking

Over time, well-planned cities are able to coordinate parking in central locations. Instead of requiring each business to have its own parking, the town or city should work with businesses to make available more on-street parking and establish municipal lots.

If activity levels are high enough, parking garages should be built and located where they do the least harm to downtown traffic patterns.

Off-street parking must be attractive, safe and friendly to pedestrian environments.

Many new large buildings fully incorporate parking needs in their structure and are encouraged to lease and market parking to the public and others.

Angled parking

Angled parking can add from 30-100% more parking to a street. There are many benefits of angled parking, including its effect on traffic calming. Seattle, WA, Arlington, VA, Washington, DC, and other cities are adding back-in angled parking to their streets to make it easier and safer to park and especially to exit.

Other benefits include greater safety for motorists and bicyclists as vehicles exit, easier loading of trunks and passengers (especially children), and less room taken up in the street.

Parking should be a planned resource.

Parking availability and location is a central element of a walkable community. Many communities are re-pricing their parking to reward those coming to town centers for events, shopping, business and short visits.

Meanwhile, longer-term parking for commute needs is priced at higher rates, making up the difference in garage income. This pricing concept is incorporated into efforts to provide improved, high performance transit service, downtown residential living and other strategies to improve the livability and performance of town centers.

Parking policies can help reduce auto dependence and increase incentives for those choosing to walk, ride bicycles or use transit.

Appendix C: Crosswalk Guidelines

Recommended guidelines for crosswalk installation

From FHWA, "Pedestrian Facilities Users Guide" (FHWA-RD-01-102):

Marked crosswalks serve two purposes: (1) they tell the pedestrian the best place to cross, and (2) they clarify that a legal crosswalk exists at a particular location.

Marked crosswalks are one tool to get pedestrians safely across the street. When considering marked crosswalks at uncontrolled locations, the question should not simply be: "Should I provide a marked crosswalk or not?" Instead, the question should be: "Is this an appropriate tool for getting pedestrians across the street?" Regardless of whether marked crosswalks are used, there remains the fundamental objective of getting pedestrians safely across the street.

In most cases, marked crosswalks are best used in combination with other treatments (e.g., curb extensions raised crossing islands, traffic signals, roadway narrowing, enhanced overhead lighting, traffic-calming measures, etc.). Think of marked crosswalks as one of a progression of design treatments. If one treatment does not adequately accomplish the task, then move on to the next one. The failure of one particular treatment is not a license to give up and do nothing. In all cases, the final design must address the goal of getting pedestrians across the road safely.

Marked pedestrian crosswalks may be used to delineate preferred pedestrian paths across roadways under the following conditions:

- At locations with stop signs or traffic signals. Vehicular traffic might block pedestrian traffic when stopping for a stop sign or red light; marking crosswalks may help to reduce this occurrence.
- At non-signalized street crossing locations in designated school zones. Use of adult crossing guards, school signs and markings, and/or traffic signals with pedestrian signals (when warranted) should be used in conjunction with the marked crosswalk, as needed.
- At non-signalized locations where engineering judgment dictates that the number of motor vehicle lanes, pedestrian exposure, average daily traffic (ADT), posted speed limit, and geometry of the location would make the use of specially designated crosswalks desirable for traffic/pedestrian safety and mobility. This must consider the conditions listed below.

Marked crosswalks alone are insufficient (i.e., without traffic-calming treatments, traffic signals and pedestrian signals when warranted, or other substantial crossing improvement) and should not be used under the following conditions:

- Where the speed limit exceeds 64.4 km/hr (40 mile/hr).
- On a roadway with four or more lanes without a raised median or crossing island that has (or will soon have) an ADT of 12,000 or greater.
- On a roadway with four or more lanes with a raised median or crossing island that has (or will soon have) an ADT of 15,000 or greater.

Street-crossing locations should be routinely reviewed to consider the following available options:

Option 1 – No special provisions needed.

Option 2 – Provide a marked crosswalk alone.

Option 3 – Install other crossing improvements (with or without a marked crosswalk) to reduce vehicle speeds, shorten crossing distances, increase the likelihood of motorists stopping and yielding, and/or other outcome.

The spacing of marked crosswalks should also be considered so that they are not placed too close together.

A more conservative use of crosswalks is generally preferred. Thus, it is recommended that in situations where marked crosswalks alone are acceptable that a higher priority be placed on their use at locations having a minimum of 20 pedestrian crossings per peak hour (or 15 or more elderly and/or child pedestrians per peak hour). In all cases, good engineering judgment must be applied.

Distance of marked crosswalks from signalized intersections

Marked crosswalks should not be installed in close proximity to traffic signals, since pedestrians should be encouraged to cross at the signal in most situations. The minimum distance from a signal for installing a marked crosswalk should be determined by local

traffic engineers based on pedestrian crossing demand, type of roadway, traffic volume and other factors.

The objective of adding a marked crosswalk is to channel pedestrians to safer crossing points. It should be understood, however, that pedestrian crossing behavior may be difficult to control merely by the addition of marked crosswalks. The new marked crosswalk should not unduly restrict platooned traffic, and should also be consistent with marked crosswalks at other unsignalized locations in the area.

Other treatments

In addition to installing marked crosswalks (or, in some cases, instead of installing marked crosswalks), there are other treatments that should be considered to provide safer and easier crossings for pedestrians at problem locations. Examples of these pedestrian improvements include:

- ➢ Providing raised medians (or raised crossing islands) on multi-lane roads.
- ➢ Installing traffic signals and pedestrian signals where warranted, and where serious pedestrian crossing problems exist.
- ➢ Reducing the exposure distance for pedestrians by:
  - Providing curb extensions.
  - Providing pedestrian islands.
  - Reducing four-lane undivided road sections to two through lanes with a left-turn bay (or a two-way left-turn lane), sidewalks, and bicycle lanes.
- ➢ When marked crosswalks are used on uncontrolled multi-lane roads, consideration should be given to installing advance stop lines as much as 9.1 m (30 ft) prior to the crosswalk (with a "Stop Here for Crosswalk" sign) in each direction to reduce the likelihood of a multiple-threat pedestrian collision.
- ➢ Bus stops should be located on the far side of uncontrolled marked crosswalks.
- ➢ Installing traffic-calming measures to slow vehicle speeds and/or reduce cut-through traffic. Such measures may include:
  - Raised crossings (raised crosswalks, raised intersections).
  - Street-narrowing measures (chicanes, slow points, "skinny street" designs).
  - Intersection designs (traffic mini-circles, diagonal diverters).
  - Others (see "ITE Traffic-Calming Guide" for more details) Some of these traffic-calming measures are better suited to local or neighborhood streets than to arterial streets.
- ➢ Providing adequate nighttime street lighting for pedestrians in areas with nighttime pedestrian activity where illumination is inadequate.
- ➢ Designing safer intersections and driveways for pedestrians (e.g., crossing islands, tighter turn radii), which take into consideration the needs of pedestrians.

These guidelines were developed in an FHWA report, "Safety Effects of Marked vs. Unmarked Crosswalks at Uncontrolled Locations" (FHWA-RD-01-142, May 2001. www.walkinginfo.org/rd/devices.htm).

In developing these proposed U.S. guidelines for marked crosswalks and other pedestrian measures, consideration was given not only to the research results in this study, but also to crosswalk guidelines and related pedestrian safety research in Australia, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, The Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. For more information about this research:

"Safety of Vulnerable Road Users, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)," August 1998.

Ekman, L., "Pedestrian Safety in Sweden," Report No. FHWA-RD-99-091, FHWA, Washington, DC, Dec. 1999.

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"Pedestrian Safety: Analyses and Safety Measures," Danish Road Directorate, Division of Traffic Safety and Environment, Copenhagen, June 1998.

Van Houten, R., "Canadian Research on Pedestrian Safety," Report No. FHWA-RD-99-090, FHWA, Washington, DC, Dec. 1999.

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