

Chapter 13 – Circulation

This chapter presents circulation concepts for autos, bicycles, pedestrians and transit in the Downtown. This chapter is organized as follows:

- 13 Circulation
 - 13.1 Introduction
 - 13.2 Context
 - 13.3 Traffic Circulation Network
 - 13.4 Pedestrians
 - 13.5 Bicycles
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13.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents overall concepts for vehicular and non-vehicular circulation for the Downtown. The plans for auto, transit, bicycle and pedestrian circulation are based on the circulation goals and policies set forth in Chapter 2, Goals and Policies.

The overall circulation plan is based on providing convenient access *to* Downtown for all transportation modes and encouraging circulation *within* Downtown on foot wherever possible. This multi-modal approach recognizes the importance not only of auto circulation, but also of good transit, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation to a successful Downtown environment. The plan therefore focuses on achieving a balanced use of roadway space in the Downtown, so that people can drive into Downtown and find convenient parking, take transit into Downtown, bicycle into and around Downtown, and walk around Downtown, all in a comfortable and safe environment.

13.2 CONTEXT

The current Downtown street system is primarily a grid of two-way streets, with the exception of the Alhambra/Berrellesa and Marina Vista/Escobar one-way couplets and a few additional one-way segments of four blocks or less in length. The principal through streets are Alhambra/Berrellesa, Marina Vista/Escobar, and Court/Pine/Pacheco, due largely to the fact that these are the only routes to and from Downtown with straightforward connections to the regional highway system. These three Gateway Corridors are designated as arterials in the Transportation Element of the Martinez General Plan. The primary circulation system is complemented by a comprehensive grid system of local streets.

There are no signalized intersections in the study area. Traffic volumes are low enough that even in peak hours, all intersections in the Downtown study area function at a high Level of Service (LOS A or B) with stop sign controls.

Grid systems work particularly well in Downtowns due to their inherent simplicity, ease of understanding, and ability to directly serve the diverse land uses typically found in

Downtowns. However, the fact that a number of the Downtown streets are discontinuous where interrupted by Alhambra Creek or County facilities, as well as the several short one-way segments created to provide diagonal parking, tend to make the system somewhat confusing to visitors.

Nevertheless, the street system generally functions very well for the current Downtown land uses. Downtown intersections provide a good level of service and there are few if any traffic circulation problems with respect to either traffic volumes or traffic congestion.

Enhancements to the pedestrian environment could help encourage the desired “park once and walk” environment. Traffic calming measures may be appropriate in certain areas, including pedestrian crossings of the Gateway Corridors and some new local streets.

13.3 TRAFFIC CIRCULATION NETWORK

In order to provide for the efficient access of vehicular traffic within the Downtown, as well as efficient circulation within Downtown, the traffic circulation network identified in Figure 13-1 is proposed. This identifies Multi-Modal/Gateway Corridors, Local Streets, and Pedestrian-Priority Streets. This classification is supplemental to and does not replace the roadway categories described in the City’s General Plan Transportation Element, which remain as specified in that document. The Specific Plan categorization is a functional one, which is intended to describe how various streets are expected to operate with respect to traffic and pedestrian flow in the Downtown.

13.3.1 Multi-Modal Streets and Gateway Corridors

Multi-Modal Streets are those expected to be the principal streets making up the Gateway Corridors that auto and truck traffic, transit vehicles, and bicycles will use to access and travel through Downtown. Their design must balance the needs of all modes of travel, including a section of the Bay Trail and Bay Ridge Trail on Marina Vista. These streets will thus carry the heaviest traffic volumes and will generally have the widest pavement widths, but will also need pedestrian and bike friendly improvements. The Gateway Corridors and Multi-Modal Streets identified in the Plan are:

Alhambra Gateway Corridor

- Alhambra Avenue
- Berrellesa Street

Marina Vista Gateway Corridor

- Marina Vista Avenue (east of Berrellesa)
- Escobar Street (east of Berrellesa)

Pacheco Gateway Corridor

- Court Street (north of Mellus Street)
- Pine Street (between Mellus and Jones Streets)
- Pacheco (between Jones Street and Shell Avenue)

13.3.2 Pedestrian-Priority Streets

Pedestrian-Priority Streets are the primary Downtown retail streets. The pedestrian scale and character of these streets are important elements of the historic small-town feel of the Downtown. On these streets, pedestrian comfort and safety should take precedence over all other considerations. These streets will generally have the widest sidewalk widths, with few if any curb cuts or other interruptions of the pedestrian realm. On-street parking is encouraged to provide a buffer between the sidewalk and moving cars. Traffic volumes will be moderate, and traffic speeds will be deliberately kept low with narrow pavement widths, pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, and well-marked crosswalks. Two-way traffic is encouraged on Pedestrian-Priority Streets in order to maximize retail visibility. Pedestrian-Priority Streets should have the highest priority for streetscape improvements such as lighting, street trees, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements. Pedestrian Priority Streets may have transit service. The Pedestrian Priority Streets identified in the Plan are:

- Main Street (east of Berrellesa)
- Ferry Street (north of Green Street)
- Las Juntas (north of Ward)
- Estudillo (north of Main)
- Castro (north of Ward)

13.3.3 Local Streets

Other streets within the Downtown area are important for circulation of local traffic to specific land uses and buildings. These streets, which essentially complete the circulation grid, are not expected to carry heavy traffic volumes. Local streets will provide for both connections within and between neighborhoods and thus knit neighborhoods and Districts together, rather than forming barriers between them. Gated entryways into new developments or neighborhoods will not be allowed. Within the Downtown Core and the Civic District, special attention should be given to streetscaping on Local Streets where they intersect the Pedestrian-Priority Streets. These blocks should have the second-highest priority for streetscape improvements, following the Pedestrian-Priority Streets.

The conversion of Local Streets to one-way traffic in order to provide additional on-street parking, as has been done on Castro, Estudillo and the 900 block of Main Street, should be weighed carefully against the resulting loss of clarity and legibility in the Downtown street system. Figure 13-2 shows the existing one-way street system. (Planned street improvements for the new County Clerk/Recorder building include the conversion of Marina Vista to two-way operation between Alhambra Avenue and Castro Street.) To the extent that additional parking supply in the form of a new parking structure reduces the

pressure for on-street parking and in coordination with streetscape enhancements, Local Streets should be converted to two-way traffic with parallel parking wherever possible. Curb bulb-outs should be used at corners and appropriate mid-block locations to increase the sidewalk area available for outdoor seating.

In the Downtown Core, Ward and Green Streets serve an important role as east-west connectors across Alhambra Creek. Of particular concern is Ward Street east of Court Street, an important connection between the Downtown Core, the Civic District, and the Grandview District. Because of the interruption of the street grid for County facilities, auto traffic from several blocks is concentrated on Ward Street, resulting in higher traffic volumes, speeds and accident rates than most other Downtown streets. Traffic calming measures such as curb bulb-outs could help to reduce speeding in such areas.

13.3.4 Recommended Street Improvements

The following street improvements are recommended. These will generally enhance the current grid, improve local traffic circulation within the Downtown, and help make the street system more understandable to visitors.

General

- Do not allow additional street closures. The current Downtown street grid system is essential to the future success of Downtown and should be maintained and enhanced where possible.
- Consider returning one-way Local Streets to two-way operation. This may require construction of a parking structure to replace the diagonal parking that would be removed.

Marina Vista Gateway Corridor

- Consider converting Marina Vista/Escobar to a full one-way pair west of Court Street. This would be undertaken in coordination with repaving, streetscape and parking projects.
- Consider removing one travel lane on Marina Vista between Court, Ferry and Berrellesa to add a Class II (striped) bikeway.
- Consider adding a stop sign for traffic on Marina Vista at Court Street.
- Add stop signs for traffic on Berrellesa at Escobar Street to enhance pedestrian crossings of the Alhambra/Berrellesa couplet where it intersects regional trail corridors.
- Add enhanced pedestrian crossings of Marina Vista at Castro/Intermodal entrance, and Estudillo, possibly at Alhambra, Berrellesa and Las Juntas.

Pacheco Gateway Corridor

- Add stop signs for traffic on Court Street at the intersection of Court and Green Streets.
- Construct bridge* for pedestrians, bicycles and emergency vehicles to connect Court Street over Marina Vista and the railroad tracks to North Court Street. Consider constructing this bridge* to handle vehicular traffic as well. (* or undercrossing)

Alhambra Gateway Corridor

- Extend bicycle lanes on Alhambra from Escobar north to Buckley, and beyond if Alhambra is extended to the north.
- Extend bicycle lanes on Berrellesa from Escobar north, across the railroad tracks to the Regional Shoreline Grangers Wharf staging area.

See Section 13.5 of this Chapter for recommended pedestrian improvements and Chapter 14 for recommended streetscape improvements.

13.3.5 Guidelines for New Local Streets

Any new streets created to serve development shall be designed as Local Streets. Such streets shall have pavement widths narrow enough to slow traffic, while accommodating demonstrated traffic demand and providing adequate emergency vehicle access. New streets should not be wider than needed to accommodate demonstrated traffic demand and should in no case be wider than existing Downtown streets. Any new streets should have sidewalks and pedestrian-scale street lighting. An example of such a section for a new Local Street is shown in Figure 13-3.

Topographic and open space constraints make it likely that many new streets will essentially serve only to access new development, with little or no through traffic possible. However, a few additional connections are desirable to facilitate emergency vehicle access and prevent traffic backups.

Note: not adopted; reserved for potential future action and/or change

Prior to the City rezoning any of the North Shoreline District, an emergency access plan shall be prepared and approved by the City and the Fire District, and adequate emergency access provided prior to occupancy of any new residential units. Prior to approval by the City, the potential environmental impacts of the emergency access plan shall be reviewed pursuant to CEQA. The plan shall provide for a 3 to 5 minute emergency response (as specified in the February 3, 2005 Fire District letter in the Final EIR) to all areas to be rezoned. Said plan shall provide for secondary access or other means to ensure the stated response times. An appropriate funding mechanism shall be adopted to fairly apportion the costs of any access improvements among all benefiting properties, both private and public.

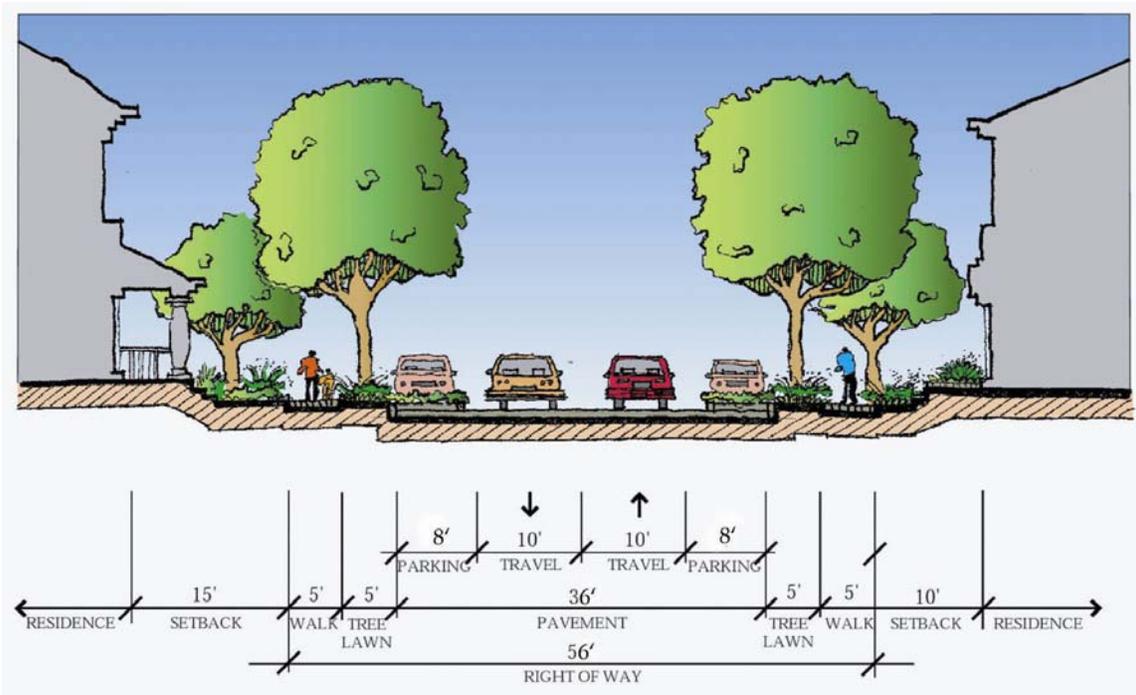


Figure 13-3. Example of a Section for New Local Streets

A bridge over Alhambra Creek and/or a bridge over (or an underpass under) the railroad tracks between Court and North Court would enhance access to the Martinez Regional Shoreline, the City Waterfront Park, and the City Marina property. These bridges could be vehicle bridges or pedestrian bridges built to also carry emergency vehicles. Prior to approval by the City, the potential environmental impacts of these bridges shall be reviewed pursuant to CEQA.

If the Arana property in the Grandview District (Opportunity Site 31) is developed, a new emergency access through the property and along the city-owned former right-of-way should connect Lafayette Street to Lang Street, in order to provide more than one route for emergency vehicle access and permit efficient use of the site. Traffic calming measures would be appropriate on such streets; see Chapter 14 for a discussion of this and other streetscape issues.

13.4 PEDESTRIANS

A comfortable, safe, and enjoyable walking environment is essential to a successful Downtown. While many streets have wide sidewalks and pedestrian circulation is well provided for (e.g. Main Street), there are other areas where pedestrian facilities are less coherent. These include the lack of a good connection across the railroad tracks to the Regional Shoreline entrance at Granger's Wharf, gaps in the planned "creek walk" along Alhambra Creek, and difficult pedestrian crossings at two-way stop controlled intersections along Marina Vista and the Alhambra/Berrellesa couplet. To this end, the Specific Plan includes the following recommendations for pedestrian circulation:

- Stripe crosswalks at all Downtown intersections. Consider using distinctive paving for crosswalks on Pedestrian-Priority Streets, and where such streets cross Gateway Corridor streets.
- Enhance streetscapes with elements such as street furniture, lighting, and brick pavers on routes connecting the Civic District, the Downtown Core, and the Intermodal Station. These include Ferry Street, Main Street, Estudillo Street and Castro Street.
- Require sidewalks and pedestrian-scale street lighting on new streets created as part of development projects.
- Add curb bulb-outs at intersections of streets with on-street parking to reduce pedestrian crossing distances and provide additional opportunities for outdoor seating. This would be done in coordination with sidewalk reconstruction projects.
- Underground the utilities in the few downtown areas where they still exist, to provide more sidewalk space for pedestrians and handicap access.

13.5 BICYCLES

The City's Bikeway Plan, part of the General Plan Transportation Element, notes that "[t]he bicycle, although often regarded as a vehicle for recreational purposes, can be an important means of transportation. Inexpensive, energy-conserving, and non-polluting, the bicycle can serve as an alternative to the automobile and can contribute to alleviating traffic congestion."

The Bikeway Plan calls for continuous striped (Class II) bike lanes on the Gateway Corridor Streets that lead into and out of Downtown: Alhambra/Berrellesa, Marina Vista/Escobar, and Court/Pine/Pacheco. West of Berrellesa, a signed (Class III) bike route along Marina Vista and Talbart would connect to Carquinez Scenic Drive, a route that is also a dedicated segment of the Bay Trail and the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The existing and planned bikeway network is shown in Figure 13-3.

It is the intent of the Specific Plan to facilitate bicycle access to Downtown and links between Downtown and the regional trail systems by implementing appropriate bikeways along these routes. Striped bike lanes on Court Street may not be feasible until a parking structure is in place, since they could only be created by removing parking on one side of the street.

Currently, Class II bike lanes exist in the study area only on Alhambra and Berrellesa (from Marina Vista to Henrietta) and on Escobar and Marina Vista east of Pine Street.

The Specific Plan includes the following recommendations for improvements to bicycle circulation:

- Add a Class II (striped) bike lane on Marina Vista between Pine, Ferry, and Berrellesa Streets.
- Add a Class II (striped) bike lane on Alhambra and Berrellesa Streets between Susana and Henrietta Streets, and from Escobar north to Buckley and beyond, across the railroad tracks to the Grangers Wharf staging area.
- Where bicycle lanes are not provided, sign all Multi-Modal Streets as Class III bikeways.

Please see Chapter 12, Parking Standards, for bicycle parking standards.

13.6 TRANSIT

Transit will play an increasingly important role in the future development of Downtown. As development occurs, transit is ideally suited to moving additional people in and out of Downtown Martinez while minimizing impacts on the roadway system. The intent of the Specific Plan is to ensure that transit continues to perform as a viable alternative to the automobile, particularly for commute trips into and out of Downtown.

13.6.1 Train Service

The Martinez Intermodal Station is located on Marina Vista near the northwestern boundary of the project study area. Four Amtrak routes serve this station. These routes include:

- Capitol Corridor (service from San Jose to Sacramento, 24 trains daily)
- San Joaquins (service from San Francisco to Bakersfield, 10 trains)
- California Zephyr (service from Chicago to Emeryville, 2 trains)
- Coast Starlight (service from Seattle to Washington, 2 trains)

The Capital Corridor operates 24 trains per day with one to two hour headways during the day. The San Joaquin service is ten trains per day and the California Zephyr and Coast Starlight provide twice daily service. There are a total of 38 trains per day that stop at the Amtrak station.

The Capitol Corridor plans to expand to 32 trains per day by 2011. In addition, there is a plan to add commuter service to the inter-city train service of the Capitol Corridor.

The City should continue with its existing plan of providing additional parking for the Intermodal Station, either north of the tracks or south of the tracks. In addition, the City should improve access to the Intermodal Station by upgrading Marina Vista by providing a bike lane, enhanced pedestrian crossings and new streetscape. These improvements would support the change in land use proposed by this plan along Marina Vista from service commercial to the mixed residential/commercial land use of the Downtown Core.

The City should support the addition of commuter train service on the Capitol Corridor.

13.6.2 Bus Service

The Central Contra Costa Transit Authority or CCCTA (known as the County Connection) operates most of the bus service in the Downtown Martinez area, with five routes serving Downtown and a major transfer point at the Martinez Intermodal Station. County Connection routes connect Downtown Martinez with nearby BART stations and other destinations throughout Martinez, Pleasant Hill and Concord. These routes generally operate on headways ranging from 15 minutes to an hour. In addition to the Intermodal Station, bus stops are provided near the County Courthouse and at the western edge of the Main Street retail corridor.

In addition, weekday-only transit connections to Downtown Martinez from East and West Contra Costa County are provided by Tri-Delta Transit (one route with 60-90 minute headways) and WestCAT (one route with 30-60 minute headways).

The City should continue to work with the transit district to provide covered bus shelters in the downtown area.

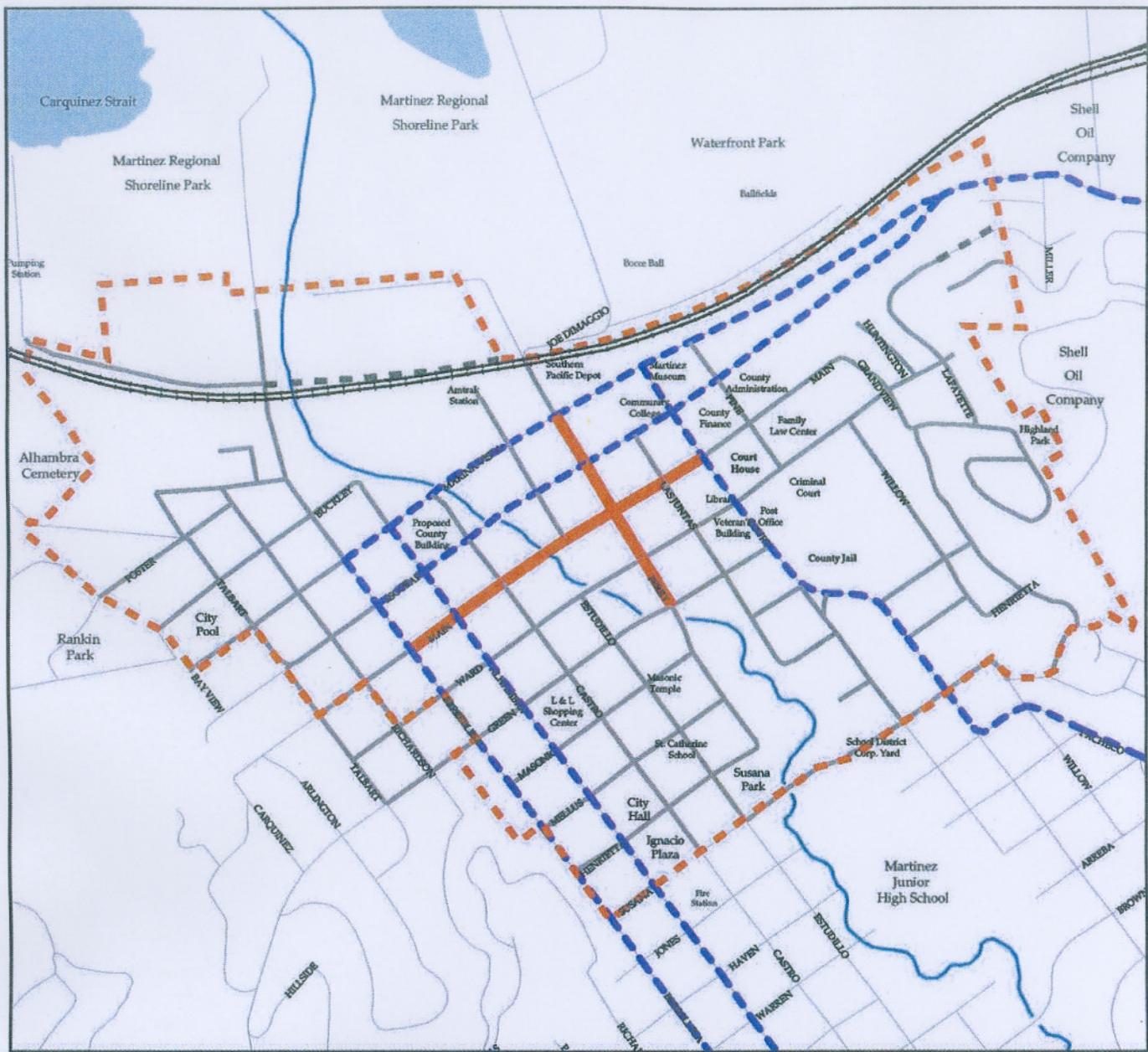
13.6.3 Proposed Ferry Service

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority (WTA) identified the City of Martinez as a potential location for a new ferry station as part of a ferry line from Antioch to the San Francisco Ferry Building. Approximately 30 round-trip ferry trips would be provided per day with 15-round trips on the weekend. The total trip time would be 80 minutes (Antioch to San Francisco) with the trip from Martinez to San Francisco requiring approximately 53 minutes. Initial ridership estimates for this line are 1,600 total riders per day with a total of 600 daily riders using the terminal in Martinez.

According to the WTA, construction of a Martinez ferry station, if funded, would occur in the year 2009 to 2011 timeframe, with service to begin in year 2012. The station site would be the old ferry slip near the public fishing pier. If ferry service were operated from the pier location, shuttle bus service to the Intermodal Station would be provided by extending CCCTA routes from the Intermodal Station. This shuttle service would also

facilitate transfers to other transit services (bus and commuter rail) at the Intermodal Station. The City recently completed a Ferry Plaza at the marina, which is designed with bus bays for the future ferry service.

The City should continue to support projected ferry service from Martinez to San Francisco, and continue to pursue construction of ferry facilities at the Martinez Marina.



LEGEND

-  Study Area
-  Alhambra Creek
-  Rail Road
-  Multi - Modal Street/Gateway Corridor
-  Pedestrian Priority Street
-  Local Street
-  Proposed Local Street Connection

Fig. 13-1 TRAFFIC CIRCULATION NETWORK

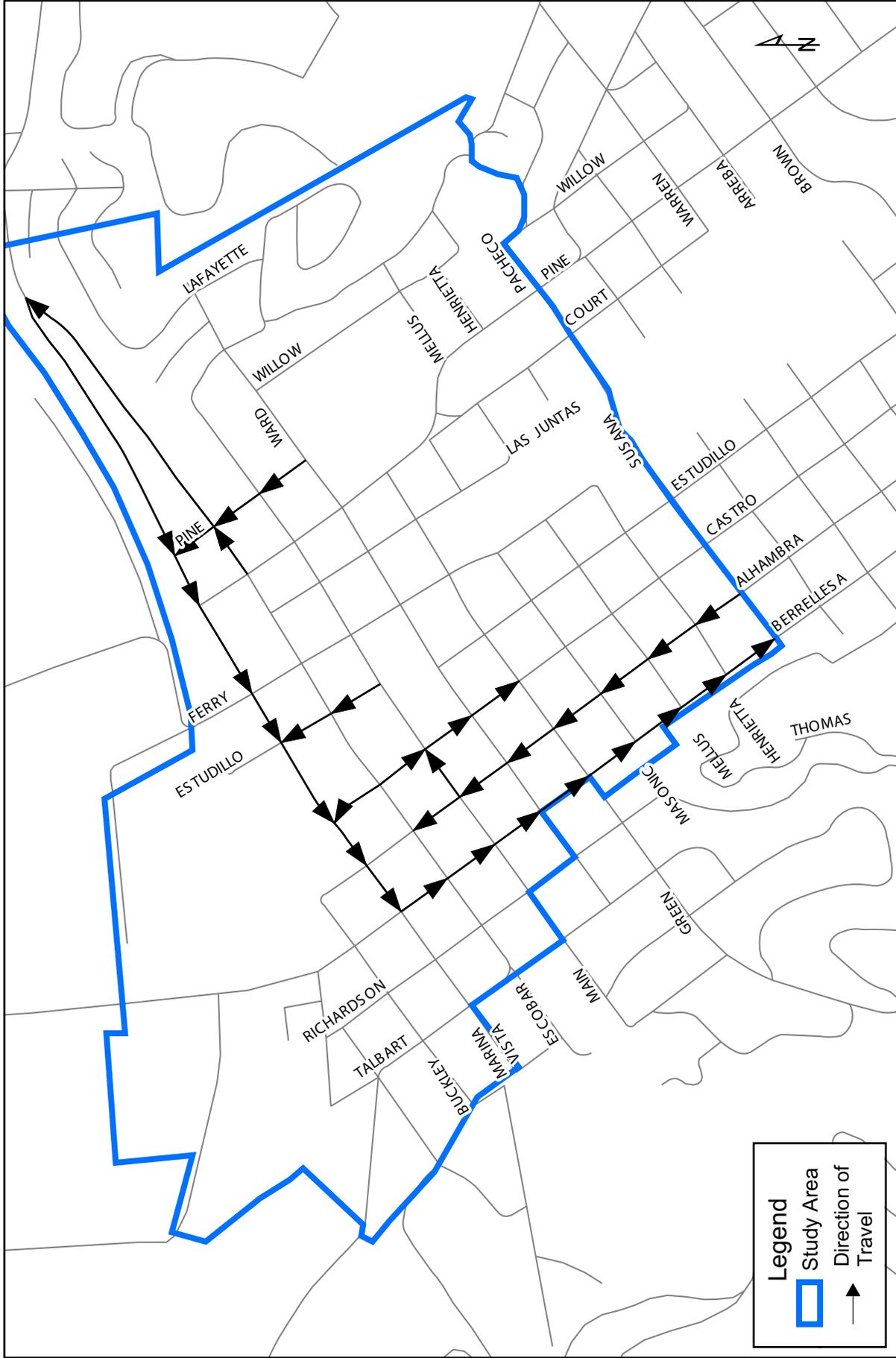
Downtown Martinez Specific Plan

Martinez, California



0 350 700 1050 Feet

Galthorpe Associates
 URBAN DESIGNERS
 PLANNERS
 ARCHITECTS
 Berkeley, California
 City of Martinez, California



One Way Streets
 Figure 13-2

