

Chapter 14 – Streetscape Improvements

This chapter presents streetscape design concepts for key streets and gateways in the Downtown Specific Plan area. This chapter is organized as follows:

- 14 Streetscape Improvements
 - 14.1 Streetscape Treatments
 - 14.2 Public Signage for Wayfinding and District Identity
 - 14.3 Gateway Corridor Improvement Projects

14.1 STREETScape TREATMENTS

The Downtown area should be landscaped with a palette of street trees and groundscaping keyed to each of the differing street types, to help establish the hierarchy of streets and provide a cohesive theme for the area.

14.1.1 General Streetscape Treatment Standards

a) Size

The largest trees should be located on the Multi-Modal and Pedestrian-Priority Streets.

b) Spacing

Street trees should be planted on both sides of streets and spaced no more than 30 feet apart.

c) Species

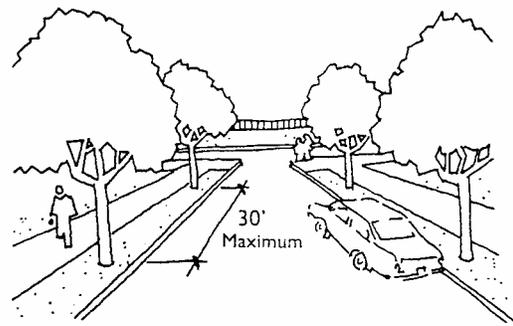
Each type of street should have one species of street tree for the sidewalk planting area, with an additional street tree type for any in-street parking space trees.

d) Plant Materials

In the Downtown Core, sidewalks are likely to be hardscape, with generous tree grates around street trees. In Residential Districts, a common palette of groundscaping such as turf and low plants is recommended for the tree-lawn area between paving and roadway. A judicious selection of plants includes consideration of site-specific conditions such as shade, wind, moisture, and soils.

e) Street Lights

Streets must be lit with light standards (fixtures and poles) with a consistent and high quality appearance throughout the area. All lighting should be down-directed to minimize glare and preserve the view of the night sky. Light bollards are also encouraged in areas with high pedestrian activity levels. The height of light standards should correspond to the activities they illuminate:

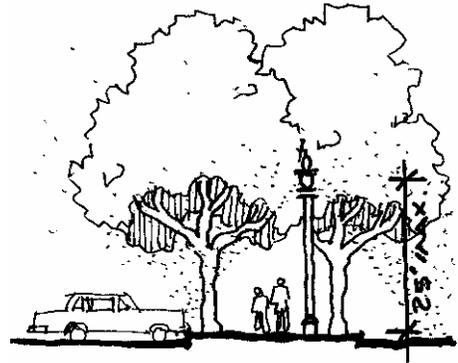


Street trees shall be spaced no more than 30 feet apart on center.

1. **Along Pedestrian-Priority Streets.** Light standards in environments where pedestrians are the primary focus (e.g. Pedestrian-Priority Streets, most Local Streets and any off-street pedestrian walkways) should be lower in height to create an environment that is more human in scale. These poles should be not more than 25 feet high and spaced approximately 150 to 145 feet apart.

2. **Along Multi-Modal Streets.** Light standards along Multi-Modal Streets must relate to both vehicles and pedestrians at the edge of street, and poles should not be more than 40 feet high; 20 feet in the Downtown Core.

3. **Placement.** To the extent feasible, pairs of light standards should be placed symmetrically along opposite sides of the street.



Lighting along pedestrian paths shall be focused on the pathway and not exceed 25 feet in height

f) **Undergrounding of Utilities**

The City should continue to underground utilities within the Downtown Core. Many areas are done, but there are areas along Marina Vista, Ward and Green Streets that remain. It is important to underground utilities for the following reasons:

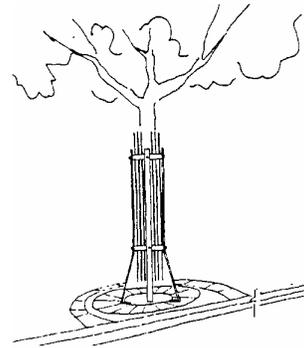
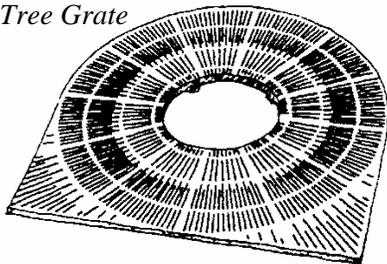
1. **Providing space for pedestrians.** The poles and guy wires for overhead utilities take up precious space on the City's sidewalks, which can be better used for pedestrians, and for handicap access.
2. **Providing pedestrian scale lights.** As noted above, standard streetlights are not pedestrian-friendly.
3. **Removing clutter.** Overhead utilities physically clutter the sidewalks, as noted above, and add visual clutter above.
4. **Sense of Place.** Decorative pedestrian-scale streetlights help to establish a sense of place. In the Downtown Core, lights should match those already in place on Main, Escobar and Ferry Streets. A different theme would be appropriate in the Downtown Shoreline residential area.

14.1.2 Street Paving & Furnishings

Paving, plants and site furnishings reinforce the character of the Downtown. These features should be consistent with the following recommendations, whether in streets, in parks or plazas, or as on-site landscaping.

1. **Paving.** Brick pavers should be used for all sidewalks in the Downtown Core. Special pavers are recommended in parks, plazas, and in crosswalks on Pedestrian-Priority Streets. Pavers should be durable and of brick, stone, or other

- materials appropriate to the traditional style of the Downtown. Interlocking pavers or stamped, colored concrete should be used to avoid uneven edges. Paver patterns should be simple to ensure quality and consistency.
2. **Tree Grates.** Tree grates should occur along sidewalks and in plazas where a continuous walking surface is needed. Tree openings should be expandable.
 3. **Tree Guards.** Tree guards should extend vertically from tree gates to protect trees in highly active areas. To relate to other site furnishings, tree guard bars should be narrow and vertical, and should be attached to the tree grate. Welds should not be visible. Tree guards should be about four feet in height with openings varying in diameter according to tree species.

Tree Grate*Tree Guard*

14.1.3 Pedestrian-Priority Street Treatments

a) Kiosks

Kiosks serve as information booths and/or shelter for small vendors. Kiosk design should be consistent with the architectural style of surrounding buildings. Kiosks should not exceed 25 square feet and must be sited to maintain a clear pedestrian path at least 5 feet in width.

b) Newspaper Racks

Newspaper racks should occur around major pedestrian gathering areas. The design should consolidate all vending boxes into one rack. Rack construction should use masonry elements or metal that compliments other site furnishings in the area, or the architecture of adjacent buildings. The rack should be attractive on all sides and properly anchored.

c) Bicycle Racks

Bicycle racks should be selected that are durable and visually subdued. Based on their performance, “loop”, “ribbon” or “inverted-U” type racks are recommended, and should be sized according to the bicycle parking requirements in Chapter 12. A durable powder-coat painted finish is recommended, in a color consistent with other Downtown street furniture.

d) Trash Receptacles

Throughout the Downtown, trash receptacles should be provided. Receptacles should have vertical metal bars and be painted a consistent color such as a deep forest green to match other recommended features. To avoid overflow, receptacles should be sized to be at least a 30 gallon capacity, especially in commercial areas, and should be properly

anchored. Multiple coats of a powder-coating or comparable finish are recommended for durability.

e) Planters

Planters should be simple in form. Round and square types are recommended. Material should consist of cast stone or precast concrete. Planters should be at least three feet in diameter. Where planters are called for, group various sizes in clusters to enrich streetscapes and plazas.

14.1.3 Traffic Calming Features

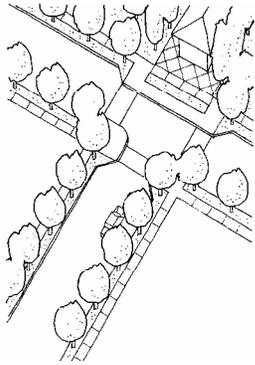
The design of an interconnected street network within residential neighborhoods should include provisions which discourage fast, through traffic on Pedestrian-Priority and Local Streets. Traffic measures that restrict traffic at the expense of the overall interconnectedness and coherence of the area should be avoided.

“Bulb-outs,” textured crosswalks and raised intersections are traffic calming measures that may be used even on Gateway Corridors and multimodal streets where it is important to establish pedestrian connections.

While consideration must always be given to specific demands and conditions (e.g. traffic volume, proximity to Multi-Modal Streets, turning movements, special vehicle needs, and intersection spacing), recommended traffic management measures include:

Appropriate Street Widths

Each street’s design should be based on its anticipated role within the project and surrounding neighborhoods. Street widths should be 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 should be wider than existing Downtown streets.



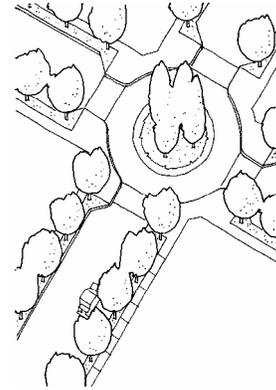
“T” Intersections.
“T” intersections can create dramatic vistas toward the Shoreline.

“T” Intersections

Road alignments may be offset at least 150 feet, forcing turning movements. If carefully sited, “T” intersections can also create prominent vistas to parks and civic features.

Traffic Circles

To slow and divert traffic, small traffic circles may be placed at the center of intersections. These islands may be landscaped, but foliage should be pruned to avoid obstructing drivers’ views. Fountains or sculptures may also be used. Traffic circles function most efficiently when they are used without stop signs.



Traffic Circles. *Small circular islands can be placed at intersections to slow traffic.*

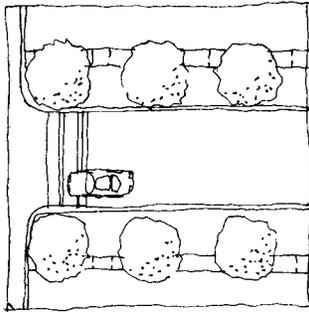
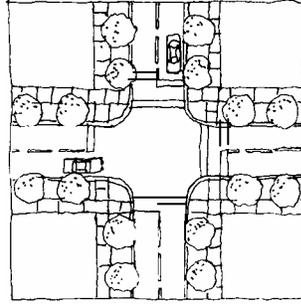
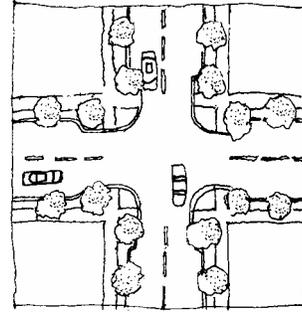
“Bulb-outs,” Textured Crosswalks and Raised Intersections

These features can be used singly or in combination. Bulb-outs slow traffic and reduce pedestrian crossing distances by narrowing the curb-to-curb dimension of the street, either at an intersection or mid-block. They are typically created by eliminating the parking area next to the intersection in cases where turn lanes are not needed. Crosswalks can be textured by means of special pavers or other treatment, alerting drivers that the area being traversed has a special identity for pedestrians. Raised intersections raise the entire intersection a few inches to make drivers aware of pedestrian crossings.

Inappropriate Measures

Traffic calming measures that are not recommended for the Specific Plan area include the following:

1. **Speed Bumps.** Speed bumps traverse travel lanes with raised strips that are typically 3-4 inches high. The need for speed bumps is symptomatic of road designs that fail to slow traffic. While speed bumps may offer an appropriate method for slowing traffic within certain pre-existing conditions, other methods for slowing traffic should be employed on new streets.
2. **Street Closure and Forced Turn.** Using barriers and diverters works against the creation of an interconnected street network and is not recommended.

*Textured Crosswalk**Raised/Texture Intersection**Bulb-Outs*

Traffic Calming Measures. A combination of techniques may be used in areas of heavy pedestrian or bicycle traffic to effectively “tame” traffic.

14.2 PUBLIC SIGNAGE FOR WAYFINDING AND DISTRICT IDENTITY

Downtown Martinez currently has several varieties of public signage dating from different eras and in various states of repair. Recent banner signs on streetlamps coexist with wooden street signs from the early 1980s. The City should consider developing a comprehensive wayfinding strategy, given the new uses contemplated in the Downtown, the circulation concept discussed in Chapter 13 of this Plan, and the regional and local trail segments located Downtown. Such a strategy should develop a coordinated design palette for several different types of signage:

- a) Signage to direct auto traffic from Multi-Modal Streets to parking opportunities and to the Intermodal Station.
- b) Signage for bicycle routes.
- c) Signage for regional trails (the San Francisco Bay Trail and Bay Area Ridge Trail/Juan Bautista de Anza Trail)
- d) Signage for the proposed “creek walk” along Alhambra Creek
- e) Street map kiosks to help orient visitors.
- f) Transit signage, including transit stop locations and information.
- g) Historical markers and plaques.



Map kiosks can help pedestrians locate nearby destinations and encourage walking within the Downtown.

Many routes, such as Escobar Street, serve multiple functions, making coherent signage all the more critical. On these routes, signs for bicycle routes and trails should be grouped onto a single pole for a more coherent streetscape.

14.3 GATEWAY CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The City should improve Gateway Corridors as they reach the downtown so that they have consistent streetscaping of brick sidewalks, street trees and decorative street lights to match those existing in Downtown, plus bicycle lanes. These improvements will help identify the mixed use downtown area, and give a sense of place and arrival. Where there are overhead utilities, they should be undergrounded to provide more sidewalk space for pedestrians and handicap access, as well as reducing visual clutter.

Gateway Corridors to Downtown should also be identified by gateway monuments and entry features. There are existing gateway monuments at Alhambra and Bertola Streets, where Alhambra Avenue splits into the Alhambra/Berrellesa couplet, and at Marina Vista Avenue where it merges with Escobar Street. These “gore points” where two streets converge into one are natural locations for gateway monuments. An additional opportunity for a Downtown Gateway entry feature would be at Pine and Mellus Streets, where Pacheco Boulevard transitions into Court Street, since many visitors to the County complex arrive this way.

The Intermodal Station is, of course, another important gateway to Downtown Martinez. Signage should direct pedestrians exiting the station east to Ferry Street, where the old train station, the entrance to the waterfront parks, and the historic buildings lining Ferry Street create a strong mental image of Downtown Martinez as the intersection of station, waterfront and historic Downtown. The historic train display and September 11 memorial in this area already contribute to the civic focus; additional plantings, coordinated signage or special paving could help reinforce the sense of arrival at this location. A gateway treatment here at the heart of Downtown should incorporate a map kiosk to help visitors plan their expeditions to the many Downtown attractions.

Marina Vista Corridor

Following is a description of the project elements needed in the Downtown portion of this corridor. These improvements are critical to help integrate this area, which this Plan redesignates from service commercial to mixed use residential, into the expanded Downtown Core. In the past, Marina Vista functioned more as an industrial truck access route and barrier that separated this area from the downtown.

1. Add a small overlook park around the Marina Vista entry monument. (It currently consists only of a sign.) Add benches for pedestrians, and perhaps some pull off parking spaces. Removal of the non-native eucalyptus trees would open up the view over downtown Martinez and the waterfront park.
2. Add consistent streetscaping on Marina Vista: brick sidewalks, street trees and decorative streetlights. This new streetscape should begin at the bottom of the hill and extend past the Intermodal entrance to Berrellesa.

3. Extend the bicycle lane from Pine Street west to the Intermodal entrance, and then on to Berrellesa, where it would tie into the existing Berrellesa bicycle lane. This will also act as traffic calming, by eliminating the ability of cars to pass slower traffic. This will also make it easier for pedestrians to cross Marina Vista.
4. Add enhanced pedestrian crossings of Marina Vista to the area around the Intermodal, at Estudillo, Castro and Alhambra/Berrellesa.
5. Underground the overhead utilities that still exist between Ferry and Berrellesa.
6. Provide improvements that relate to the Bay Trail and Ridge Trail, such as the overlook park mentioned above, and ultimately a pedestrian bridge crossing the railroad tracks, connecting Court Street and North Court Street.
7. The Pedestrian Priority streets of Castro and Estudillo that provide pedestrian access to the downtown from the Intermodal Station should be improved with the same consistent streetscape as other downtown streets: brick sidewalks with street trees and decorative streetlights. Overhead utilities should be undergrounded as stated above.

The Marina Vista Gateway corridor begins at I-680, runs through the Shell refinery, and enters Downtown at the Marina Vista-Escobar “Y”. The City rebuilt Marina Vista through the refinery with landscape medians and bicycle lanes in the mid 1990’s; some landscaping should be provided on the north side to screen the railroad tracks.

The portion of this corridor near I-680 will be rebuilt by Caltrans and the City at the completion of the Benicia Bridge project, currently set for 2010. This portion will have medians, bicycle lanes and a pedestrian path. These improvements will connect with the new pedestrian bicycle lane that Caltrans will provide on the Benicia Bridge as part of the Bay Trail. The improvements will also ultimately extend to the east on Waterfront Road to connect to the Iron Horse Trail and Point Edith.

Alhambra Corridor

Following is a description of project elements needed for the downtown portion of this corridor:

1. Add an entry feature near Green and Alhambra.
2. Extend the bike lane on Alhambra from Escobar to Buckley, and beyond if Alhambra is extended along the Creek.
3. Extend the bike lane on Berrellesa from Escobar across the railroad tracks to the Grangers Wharf staging area.
4. Provide consistent streetscaping: brick sidewalks, street trees, decorative sidewalks, from Green to Buckley, and beyond if Alhambra is extended.

The Alhambra Gateway Corridor begins at Highway 4, and runs for several miles before reaching the Downtown. The City beautified this section and added bicycle lanes in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s.

Pacheco Corridor

Following is a description of project elements needed for the downtown portion of this corridor:

1. Add an entry feature at Mellus and Court, or at Pine/Jones/Pacheco.
2. Provide consistent streetscaping: brick sidewalks, street trees, decorative sidewalks, from Mellus to Marina Vista.
3. Extend bicycle lanes from Jones Street to Marina Vista.
4. Construct a pedestrian-bike-emergency vehicle bridge over the railroad and Marina Vista to connect Court and North Court. Possibly construct this bridge as a regular vehicle bridge, or as an undercrossing.

The Pacheco Gateway Corridor begins at I-680, but is in the County for several miles. The City portion begins near Shell Avenue. The City constructed bicycle lanes, undergrounded the utilities and installed street trees for the portion between Potter and Jones in the late 1990's.