



Appendix E: Santa Clara Street Implementation

Preliminary Project Evaluation and Development Framework

October 2022

Background

The Downtown Transportation Plan proposes reenvisioning Santa Clara Street through Downtown as a Big Move. This preliminary project evaluation and development framework describes how this Big Move should be further developed and advanced.

Existing Setting

Santa Clara Street is Downtown San José's main thoroughfare, running east-west through Downtown. It is truly a multimodal street. Numerous high-frequency bus transit routes run along Santa Clara Street. It is a popular biking corridor, and it has wide sidewalks that carry some of the highest pedestrian volumes in Downtown. A number of major destinations, comprising a variety of land uses, are located along Santa Clara Street – including City Hall, San Pedro Square, and the SAP Center. East of SR-87, Santa Clara Street is designated as a Vision Zero Safety Corridor due to a high number of collisions.

However, based on community surveys conducted for the DTP, Santa Clara Street is also seen as the worst street in Downtown. Community members expressed broad dissatisfaction with the current look, feel and function of Santa Clara Street. Downtown residents and workers would like it to be an attractive street with vibrant commercial and pedestrian activity – a place where they would like to spend time.

Project Description and Extents

The DTP envisions Santa Clara Street as San José's premier "Grand Boulevard," a street that must prioritize high-quality transit. Faster, more-reliable and frequent bus service is envisioned at street level, and BART will provide high-capacity transit underneath the street in a decade or so. As a Grand Boulevard, it would generally prioritize transit over other types of travel.

Santa Clara Street should be more than a street for transit. It is also Downtown's best opportunity for commercial revitalization. With significant updates to the function and feel of the street, it can be a signature place that welcomes people who are shopping, going to work, eating at restaurants, or simply enjoying the city on foot.

The DTP recommends initiating a future comprehensive study of the corridor. Potential opportunities to remake Santa Clara Street may include:

- Creating dedicated lanes for transit and other public service vehicles
- Significantly widening sidewalks
- Expanding outdoor space

A redesign of Santa Clara Street would consider its full length between Stockton Avenue west of Downtown to 34th Street east of Downtown (several blocks past where Santa Clara Street's name changes to Alum Rock Boulevard). Because different segments of the corridor vary in terms of available right-of-way, land use and travel patterns, the corridor should be divided into multiple "reaches" in order to better design a street that meets each neighborhood's needs.

Recommended reaches, along with their key characteristics, from west to east, include:

- **Stockton Avenue to Almaden Boulevard:** 4-lane thoroughfare with bike lanes and no on-street parking; crossings of the Caltrain/Amtrak/ACE rail tracks, the Guadalupe River and SR-87; moderate-high transit frequencies; future Diridon BART station between Cahill and Montgomery Streets
- **Almaden Boulevard to 10th Street:** 4-lane thoroughfare with on-street parking but no bike lanes; highest transit frequencies along the corridor; high pedestrian volumes; crossings of light rail tracks at 1st and 2nd Streets; future Downtown BART station access between Market and 2nd Streets
- **10th Street to 16th Street:** 4-lane thoroughfare with slightly narrower right-of-way; some on-street parking but no bike lanes; moderate-high transit frequencies; crossing of Coyote Creek east of 17th Street.
- **16th Street to 34th Street:** 4-lane thoroughfare with varied right-of-way, typically including on-street parking but no bike lanes; moderate-high transit frequencies; future 28th Street/Little Portugal BART station one block north of Santa Clara Street at 28th Street; crossing of US-101 east of 28th Street; street name changes to Alum Rock Boulevard east of US-101 through Little Portugal

Scenario Development Process

During development of the DTP, several scenarios for redesigning Santa Clara Street were identified. Santa Clara Street scenarios were designed to address community feedback and help meet Downtown San Jose's transportation goals. Options include:

- **Option A: Dedicated Lanes for Bikes and Transit:** Option A would include dedicated lanes for both transit vehicles and bikes. Transit lanes would function as public service lanes and be open to other public service uses, such as emergency vehicle travel, deemed appropriate by the City. Bike lanes would be adjacent to the transit lane and be fully or partially raised above street level to provide a buffer between bikes and buses. Sidewalks would be widened slightly over their current configuration. Finally, a narrow median with landscaping or small street trees would provide space for pedestrian refuge islands to be installed at intersections. Vehicle left turn movements would be restricted at some locations. For most blocks, no vehicle parking would be available on the street.

- **Option B: Dedicated Lanes for Transit with Pedestrian Safety and Comfort**

Amenities: Option B would include dedicated lanes for transit vehicles. Like Option A, transit lanes would function as public service lanes and be open to emergency and other public service uses. Sidewalks would have the same width as their current configuration, though pedestrian curb extensions would be installed at intersections to improve pedestrian safety and reduce crossing distances. A median with landscaping and/or street trees would improve the overall design of the corridor. On-street vehicle parking would generally be maintained or converted to other curbside uses based on demand, such as loading/unloading zones or parklets. This option would be substantially lower in cost than other options. As a result, some or all elements could be implemented more rapidly as a “quick-build” design. Bicyclists would share vehicle lanes with drivers or use the parallel St. John or San Fernando primary bikeways.

- **Option C: Pedestrian Focused Main Drag:** Option C would include dedicated public service lanes for transit vehicles. Option C would also have much wider sidewalks – roughly double their current width. Wider sidewalks would support the goal of a pedestrian-focused main street with a variety of public life opportunities. These could include outdoor dining, public plazas, expanded parklets and other uses. Vehicle left turn movements would be restricted at most locations in order to maintain a wide pedestrian thoroughfare. Vehicle parking would generally be prohibited, though some blocks could have small loading/unloading or delivery zones.

Evaluation Framework

Each of the three scenarios described above would have unique advantages and challenges. A preliminary evaluation of these options is presented here to help inform future steps for Santa Clara Street. The evaluation is based on how well each option would address the DTP’s five overarching goals.

DTP Goal	Option A	Option B	Option C
<i>People-First</i>	++	+++	+++
<i>Place</i>	+++	++	+++
<i>Equity</i>	+++	+++	+++
<i>Economy</i>	++	+++	++
<i>Climate</i>	+++	++	++

Key: +: Good ++: Better +++: Best

Each of these options would require further study to better understand community needs and benefits, feasibility, and tradeoffs with overall cost. Additional design options may be developed and refined as part of future outreach and project development efforts.

Advancing the Project

The DTP process has generated interest and support for advancing the redesign of Santa Clara Street. There are several steps that the City of San Jose should undertake to further advance Santa Clara Street. Based on the Implementation Process for DTP improvements outlined in the DTP, the following steps will generally apply:

Implementation Process Step	Key Elements
<i>Planning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement and visioning strategy - Existing conditions inventory / needs assessment / equity - Establish baseline transportation conditions: traffic volumes, bus speed/delay, operations, safety, origin-destination patterns, parking/loading, etc - Focused public life study - Consider broad range of street design options
<i>Access to Funding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify funding for future phases, including design, environmental clearance and construction
<i>Preliminary Engineering</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing outreach and engagement - Quick build concepts - Feasibility assessment - Phasing options (temporary implementation, incremental approach, etc) - Additional studies: equity assessment, urban design and public art, transportation analysis
<i>Environmental</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing outreach and engagement - CEQA assessment
<i>Design Alternatives</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ongoing outreach and engagement - Select preferred alternative and complete final design - Finalize implementation schedule and project funding/financing
<i>Project Delivery</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outreach during construction - Project construction
<i>Performance Monitoring</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate project performance and progress towards meeting DTP and Citywide goals

Next Steps

As a next step to advance this Big Move, a dedicated study of Santa Clara Street would further refine and develop concept designs for the above three options and include extensive opportunities for further community involvement. Additional design options may also be developed and considered as part of this follow-up study. The follow up study should also identify areas for further data collection, research and outreach that will be important to undertake as this project advances.