



Project: Bart Downtown Pedestrian Interface

Entrant: City of San Leandro

Save California Streets 2016 Award Program

Category: Complete Streets and Multi-modal Mobility Projects



The **San Leandro BART-Downtown Pedestrian Interface** project transformed an uninspiring expanse of asphalt and concrete in front of the San Leandro Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station into a vibrant urban streetscape well prepared for future high-density transit-oriented development planned for the surrounding area.

Pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists all benefit from these improvements. The original seven vehicle lanes were reduced to five to create space for the installation of on-street parking, class 2 bike lanes, and wider pedestrian sidewalks. New accessible pedestrian ramps were installed along with bulbouts and ornamental crosswalks at street intersections. A high-quality aesthetic environment was also created with additional landscape medians, sidewalk planter islands, street trees, decorative street lights with pedestrian scale fixtures, and wayfaring signage.

The BART-Downtown Pedestrian Interface project is the first project to be implemented as part of the City's Downtown Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Strategy. This strategy, created with a grant award from the MTC and Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA), was unanimously approved by the San Leandro City Council on September 4, 2007. The TOD Strategy creates a long-term vision for how San Leandro can accommodate projected future growth while leveraging existing assets such as transit, the downtown core, surrounding neighborhoods and the San Leandro creek to create a vibrant and attractive downtown. The transformation of San Leandro Boulevard intended to achieve the following goals established by the City of San Leandro in its TOD Strategy:

- Increase transit ridership through improved multi-modal accessibility and safety and the creation of a high-quality environment.
- Enhance connections to downtown and the greater region.
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled by San Leandro residents.
- Promote pedestrian activity through improved station access and streetscape.

The above goals are a seamless fit with both the recommendations of 'Complete Streets' as well as the project design which focused on facilitating access to the BART station for all modes of transport and improving its connection to Downtown San Leandro.

As a seven-lane arterial, San Leandro Boulevard's existing configuration acted as a barrier to effective pedestrian circulation. The TOD Strategy envisioned reducing its width and transforming it into a pedestrian-friendly seam joining BART and downtown, providing an attractive gateway to San Leandro. The segment of San Leandro Boulevard from Davis Street to Thornton Street completed under this project is one of the most critical links in the City's TOD Strategy, as it is a barrier in the connectivity between downtown and transit. Implementing the recommendations of this strategy will achieve a downtown environment that is pedestrian-friendly with a mix of land uses and densities that promote transit ridership.

Sustainable principals were also incorporated within the design of this project. 'Bay-Friendly' certified landscaping was installed; this certification included requirements for drought-tolerant and native plantings, reduction of construction waste, reuse of construction materials, and a weather-based irrigation controller. Landfill waste was reduced on this project by the incorporation of recycled aggregate base rock under sidewalks, waste flyash as a cement alternative in concrete, and recycled aggregate paving in the bottom lift of paving. In addition, curbside recycle-only bins were installed at high pedestrian traffic areas, and are being used as a pilot program to test their suitability for use in exterior curbside locations.

A 'Complete Streets' multimodal, methodology was used for the project design with pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists all benefiting from the project:

- For pedestrians, new wider sidewalks with bulbouts, decorative crosswalks, and pedestrian signal countdown timers were installed to ease crossing San Leandro Boulevard.
- For bicyclists, class 2 bike lanes and traffic signal video detection cameras which respond to the presence of bikers were installed.
- For motorists, on-street parking and a new fiber loop connection for coordinated traffic signal timing were added.

All travelers through the project will benefit from the increased illumination of the street lighting, the directional aide provided by the wayfaring signage, and the appealing landscaping and architectural elements installed on this project.

The total project cost of \$6.6M was funded with \$4.61M in Federal funding provided by the Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC) Grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), \$638K from the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC) as Measure B and gas tax funds, and \$1.352M in City funds.

The San Leandro Boulevard streetscape serves as a model project for other urban thoroughfares in San Leandro. With these completed improvements, San Leandro Boulevard is an environment that contributes to increased BART ridership by emphasizing accessibility, safety, and a high quality experience for pedestrians, bicycles, public transit, and automobiles. In addition, this project demonstrates the potential benefits of the 'Complete Streets' design approach and how it can be an effective improvement to renovating other older thoroughfares in San Leandro.

Already two projects are under construction adjacent to the completed streetscape. These projects are the first major office and residential developments under the City's TOD strategy. The 'Marea Alta' is a non-profit low income housing project located on San Leandro Boulevard east of the BART station and will provide 115 units of affordable workforce/family housing and 85 units of senior affordable housing, underground BART parking, and a ground floor community childcare center. The 'San Leandro Tech Campus' is a new technology-focused office park located west of the BART Station that will include three six-story office buildings encompassing a total of 340,000 to 500,000 square feet.

The role of San Leandro Boulevard is expected to expand even more in the future, becoming a prime address for new transit-oriented mixed use development, serving as a pedestrian-oriented circulation corridor, and providing a positive image of San Leandro as a welcoming and attractive Bay Area destination.