

The Ocala Avenue Project

The Ocala Avenue Bike and Pedestrian Improvements Project implements a variety of traffic safety, roadway configuration and infrastructure improvements along Ocala Avenue between Daytona Drive and Capitol Expressway. Ocala Avenue is a key corridor within the East San Jose area that serves a large residential neighborhood, Meyer Elementary School, Overfelt High School, Hank Lopez Community Center, and nearby parks. The project improves the connectivity for all users by providing a safer walking and biking corridor to and from key destinations, including Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) transit system.

Previous roadway conditions consisted of a very wide street with one lane in each direction and a median striped turning lane, standard Class II bike lanes, and missing sidewalk along the South side of the roadway. These overly wide and uncontrolled, open conditions as well as gaps in pedestrian infrastructure resulted in unsafe travel behaviors such as speeding, failure to yield, illegal turning movements, and walking on a dirt pathway (sometimes in the roadway itself).

Recognizing the need for improvements, City staff conducted a conceptual level analysis of traffic volumes, collision data and pedestrian/bicycle counts to develop a proposed solution. Data analysis was performed on the collision history using both the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (data provided through the University of California at Berkeley's Transportation Injury Mapping System) and the City of San Jose's traffic collision database (TAPS). The analysis showed that a high percentage of these collisions were directly linked to activities that could be prevented or minimized through the installation of selected roadway safety and pedestrian design countermeasures:

1. Install sidewalk/pathway (to avoid walking along roadway) – The installation of a new sidewalk gave pedestrians a safe place to walk alongside the road. One of the pedestrian-involved collisions inside the project limits was due to a pedestrian walking in the road, which could have been prevented had a sidewalk been present.
2. Install raised median – The installed median will help prevent unsafe mid-block left turns and U-turns, thereby minimizing potential points of vehicular conflict. The collision history within the project limits showed almost 50% of all collisions involved a turning movement. The installed median should help minimize the points of conflict within the project limits.
3. Install traffic signal – The installation of the traffic signal at Adrian Way (where none previously existed) will both minimize vehicular conflicts in the intersection and give pedestrians a safe way of crossing Ocala Avenue. The collision history at this location showed a fatality which involved a vehicle making a left-turn. Additionally, collision history included a pedestrian attempting to cross Ocala Avenue and several other collisions involving turning movements. A traffic signal will help minimize or eliminate these conflicting vehicle movements.

In addition to the countermeasures listed, as part of the City of San Jose's commitment to Complete Streets principles and providing safe multi-modal transportation options, the corridor has been

enhanced with street lighting for better nighttime visibility, a pedestrian safety crossing with flashing beacons to alert drivers of pedestrians crossing (including children crossing to Meyer Elementary School) at Daytona Drive, curb extension bulb outs to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians, trees in the median to beautify the street and to visually narrow down the roadway, and accessible curb ramps. The City's Department of Transportation also used this opportunity to resurface the street with the Pavement Maintenance Program, which allowed for the installation of new roadway markings for enhanced crosswalk, narrowed travel lane widths, and buffered bicycle facilities to complement the streetscape project.

Overall, these improvements will help minimize or alleviate the conditions that led to many collisions within the project limits. The combined improvements included within the Ocala Avenue Project addressed critical safety needs on a vital corridor within the City of San Jose as well as provide safe connections to regional transit.