



Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project
Project Information Sheet
December 8, 2023

The following information is intended to address frequently asked questions about the City of Berkeley's Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project. Additional information may be added to the project website to address further questions, at: <https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/capital-projects/ohlone-greenway-safety-improvements-project>



Project Overview

The purpose of the Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project is to construct operational and safety improvements to a ½-mile long portion of the Ohlone Greenway shared-use pedestrian and bicycle pathway, from the **Virginia Gardens** crossing at the southernmost Project limit, to the **Santa Fe Avenue** crossing at the northernmost limit. The Project goals are to: upgrade the pathway as a low-stress pedestrian and bicycle path; better accommodate the needs of all users; and improve safety, especially at roadway intersections and during non-daylight hours.

Upgrades will focus on the following:

- Improving safety of pathway/roadway intersections, including more clear sightlines, at seven intersections – Virginia Gardens, Cedar Street, Rose Street, Hopkins Street, Peralta Avenue, Gilman Street, and Santa Fe Avenue.
- Widening the pathway to a minimum of 12 feet where feasible to better separate users of different speeds (e.g., pedestrians and bikes).
- Improved connection at pathway gap on Peralta Avenue, including wayfinding (signage) and traffic calming features.
- Enhanced pathway lighting to improve safety and security of pathway users at intersection approaches, benches, and other locations where potential security issues exist.
- Landscaping work to trim back and/or remove vegetation to increase effectiveness of lighting and to improve visibility and security.

The Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project covers the following areas, from south to north:

- Virginia Gardens intersection.
- Pathway between Virginia Gardens and Cedar St.
- Cedar St. intersection.
- Pathway through Cedar Rose Park.
- Rose St. intersection.
- Pathway between Rose St. and Hopkins St.
- Hopkins St. intersection.
- Bikeway on Peralta St., between Hopkins St. and pathway connection approximately 200 feet north of Hopkins St.
- Peralta St. crosswalk at pathway connection
- Pathway between Peralta St. and Gilman St., excluding the portion of pathway from 200 feet south of Gilman St. to Gilman St.
- Gilman St./Curtis St. intersection.
- Santa Fe Ave. intersection.

Two portions of the Ohlone Greenway are specifically excluded from the project scope to reduce project costs and because the pavement is in relatively good condition:

- Pathway from 200 feet south of Gilman St. to 100 feet south of Gilman St.
- Pathway from 100 feet north of Gilman St. to 100 feet south of Santa Fe Ave.

These areas may be incorporated into the project if sufficient funding is available.

The Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project would implement the 2017 Berkeley Bicycle Plan Tier 1 priority recommendations for pathway and intersection improvements to the Ohlone Greenway, as this pathway receives relatively high volumes of pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The project corridor also intersects and includes crossing safety improvements at two local High-Injury Street segments, Cedar and Rose Streets, as identified in the 2020 Berkeley Vision Zero Action Plan. The proposed pathway improvements are also included in the 2016 Berkeley Strategic Transportation (BeST) Plan, which designates the Project as a priority and a “signature project”, as the BeST Plan seeks to increase mobility, user safety, access to commercial districts and opportunity areas, choices for mode of transportation, and environmental sustainability/resiliency.

The Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project addresses operational and safety issues to create a more seamless low-stress connection for people accessing the North Berkeley BART Station using alternative modes of transportation, including cycling and walking. Increasing cycling and walking and improving connections to transit support Goal 5: Accelerate Implementation of the City's Bicycle & Pedestrian Plans in the City's Climate Action Plan because they reduce vehicle miles traveled in the community and in the region.

The Ohlone Greenway is a vital regional transportation route that runs through four cities and spans two counties: Alameda and Contra Costa. The Ohlone Greenway connects directly to BART stations and Alameda-Contra Costa Transit (AC Transit) hubs, current and planned housing developments, parks, retail, and employment centers. Specifically, the Ohlone Greenway offers an off-street connection between the North Berkeley and El Cerrito Plaza stations, both of which are planned to be developed with thousands of new mixed-income homes, retail, and community-serving facilities.

Budget and Funding

The Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project is funded in large part by an Alameda County Transportation Commission grant, which allocated \$1.271 million for preliminary engineering, environmental clearance, detailed and final design, and construction using Alameda County Vehicle Registration Fee funds. As the project concepts were being developed through an iterative process, taking into account input from numerous stakeholders, it became clear that the project funding would be insufficient to cover construction costs.

To address the project funding shortfall, City staff are planning to submit an application for Safe Routes to BART grant funding in mid-December 2023, which could potentially award up to \$3 million for work during the construction phase.

Other funding for the project, which has a total estimated cost of \$5.1 million, comes from Alameda County Measure BB Bike and Pedestrian discretionary funds.

The Project is being designed by a professional engineering design consultant, procured under Alameda CTC's Local Business Contract Equity (LBCE) Program, which is intended to provide opportunities to small and local businesses to help accomplish Alameda CTC's purchasing objectives, under the oversight of a City of Berkeley project manager.

Project Phases

The development of the Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project will occur in the following phases:

- **Planning.** This includes data collection on existing conditions, development of conceptual design options, stakeholder outreach and coordination of input, establishment of final design concepts, and environmental clearance documentation. The final design concepts establish the overall alignment and geometry of the proposed work, which will be refined and finalized during the subsequent detailed design phase.

- **Detailed Design.** This includes developing detailed design documents – plans specifications, and cost estimate – in several iterations, which are reviewed by City staff, including but not limited to the Public Works Department; Berkeley Fire Department; and Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department, culminating in construction bid documents which include final design plans and specifications.
- **Construction.** This includes administering a public construction bid process, awarding a construction contract to the lowest responsible and responsive bidder by City Council resolution, and managing construction activities.

Project Schedule

As of December 2023, the schedule for the Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project is as follows:

- August 2022 – March 2023: Planning phase, including public survey and public meeting
- April 2023 – July 2023: Project on hold due to lack of staffing
- September 2023: Conclude Planning phase
- September 2023 – mid-2024: Detailed Design phase
- Late-2024 – Late-2025: Construction (assuming necessary additional funds are secured)

Procurement of Engineering Consultant

City staff initiated the planning and design process by procuring an engineering consultant via an open request for qualifications in January 2022. On April 26, 2022, Berkeley City Council authorized the City Manager to execute a contract with Diablo Engineering Group (Diablo).

Existing Conditions

Under the direction of the City’s project manager, Diablo performed a survey of existing conditions, including site topography, underground utilities and structures, an arborist’s report documenting existing trees along the pathway, and traffic data. City staff also initiated discussions with key operational stakeholders, including the City’s Parks Department, Fire Department, and Zero Waste Division (waste and recycling), as well as AC Transit (bus lines on Cedar St. and Gilman St.) and Berkeley Unified School District (school bus routes), to better understand their operational needs. City staff also had discussions with selected residents and members of community gardens on Peralta Ave. to obtain input that would inform the development of conceptual design options for a proposed bikeway on Peralta Ave.

Design Considerations

General

The project team, consisting of City staff and Diablo, developed conceptual design options, which took into account the following design considerations:

- Compliance with overall goals and objectives of applicable Citywide plans and grant funding requirements.

- Established design standards and state of practice, including accessibility requirements and criteria for a shared-use versus separated-use pathway.
- Existing site conditions.
- Input from City and public stakeholders from numerous discussions, meetings, and public outreach activities.
- Reported collisions and other safety-related issues.
- Access and maneuvering for emergency vehicles.
- Maintenance of ongoing operations, including access in/out of driveways, waste and recycling collection, transit (public bus) routes, and school bus routes.
- Maintenance of existing on-street parking spaces to the extent feasible.
- Preservation of trees, green space, and vegetation to the extent feasible.

In particular, the design team coordinated extensively with the Berkeley Fire Department (BFD); the City's disability/accessibility consultant; Parks, Recreation & Waterfront (PRW) Department; and Legal Department in developing the conceptual design options.

Further information on design considerations are included in the presentation for the February 22, 2023 public information meeting, which can be found on the project website.

Parks and Open Space

Planted areas along the Ohlone Greenway, including green space and trees in Cedar Rose Park and curbside trees, are managed by the PRW Department, whose mission includes maintaining trees and landscaping areas. In general, trees are to be preserved unless they pose an imminent danger or are in poor condition and conflict with proposed project elements. In addition, proposed work should not substantially increase impacts to existing nearby trees, including root systems. Coast Live Oak trees, in particular, are protected by City Ordinance No. 7,615-N.S., which declared a moratorium on removal of trees with a circumference of at least 18 inches, with exceptions for certain conditions.

For the Ohlone Greenway Safety Improvements Project, which proposes to widen the pathway where feasible, substantial efforts were made to develop conceptual options that minimized impacts to and removal of existing trees.

Because an approximately 200-foot long portion of the Ohlone Greenway through Cedar Rose Park is located over root systems of established nearby trees and is already considered closer than ideal to these trees, the pathway cannot be deepened or widened in this area. In addition, because green space and playgrounds in Cedar Rose Park are used for different recreational activities, the pathway cannot be routed through or adjacent to such areas of the park.

Any proposed tree removals are the result of a collaboration between the project arborist and City arborists in the PRW Department, in which existing trees were catalogued and evaluated on several criteria including overall health. The project arborist's report will be posted on the project website after the pathway geometry is finalized, likely in the first quarter of 2024.

Remediation for tree removals as part of this project will consist of replacement trees in Cedar Rose Park, to be located along the west edge of the green space, as specified by the PRW Department.

Emergency and Large Vehicle Access

Design considerations for emergency vehicles are heavily influenced by large vehicles in the Berkeley Fire Department. BFD was consulted during development of the conceptual design options and will continue to be involved in the project via reviews of detailed design documents. Primary design considerations for BFD vehicle access and maneuvering include the following:

- Minimum lane width of 10.5 feet.
- Maintain access and clear space around hydrants.
- Recognize Cedar St., Rose St., and Hopkins St. are designated emergency access routes.
- Maintain vehicle turn movements at intersections.
- Design raised buffers between vehicle lane and bicycle cycletrack to be mountable by emergency vehicles.

Other large vehicles that were considered in the development of conceptual design options include waste and recycling collection, AC Transit buses, and school buses. The project team consulted with the City's Zero Waste Division (ZWD), AC Transit, and Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) to better understand vehicle routes, sizes, and turning capabilities.

The design team analyzed turn movements for all of these large vehicles to ensure adequate maneuverability to operate as needed.

Driveway Access

The design team mapped locations of all driveways within the project area, including driveways at private residences, parking lots, and community gardens. Proposed project elements, such as roadway medians and buffers, will be sized and located in such a way to not impede access into and out of driveways. This process began in the planning stage and will continue during the detailed design phase.

Pathway Geometry and Operation

The portion of the Ohlone Greenway within the project area currently operates as a two-way **shared-use** pathway, meaning all users of the pathway share the same space and there are no separately-designated spaces for various users, such as pedestrians and bicyclists. The total width of the pathway varies with each segment's approximate width as shown in the table below.

Pathway Segment	Current Width
Virginia Gardens to Cedar St.	10'
Cedar Rose Park	8'
Rose St. to Hopkins St.	11'
Peralta St. to Gilman St.	10'
Gilman St. to Santa Fe Ave.*	12'

*Not currently in the project scope as per the description above in *Project Overview*.

The project-specific guidance in the 2017 Berkeley Bicycle Plan recommends a **shared-use** pathway with a minimum width of 12 feet where feasible. The design considerations described above, as well as other constraints such as mature trees in good condition, municipal stormwater requirements, property boundaries, fences, drainage structures, and public art all limit the potential width of the pathway. In particular, if the pathway is further widened, municipal stormwater requirements requiring treatment of stormwater for increases in impervious (i.e., paved) surfaces over an established threshold are particularly onerous and could result in the design and construction of large, costly underground storage basins for stormwater collection and dissipation into the subsurface soils, which would likely render the project infeasible from the standpoints of funding and grant schedule compliance.

The final design concepts resulted in the proposed pathway widths shown in the table below. The pathway widths are based on the edge-to-edge dimensions of the paved surfaces, inclusive of shoulders.

Pathway Segment	Current Width	Proposed Width
Virginia Gardens to Cedar St.	10'	14'
Cedar Rose Park	8'	8'
Rose St. to Hopkins St.	11'	12'
Peralta St. to Gilman St.	10'	12'
Gilman St. to Santa Fe Ave.*	12'	12'

The design team considered changing the operation of the pathway within the project area from a **shared-use** pathway to a **separated-use** pathway but found this change to be infeasible given the constraints described above.

To qualify as a two-way **separated-use** pathway, the pathway design would need to meet State standards (Highway Design Manual Topic 1003 – Bikeway Design Criteria & Topic 105.2 – Sidewalks and Walkways, updated July 1, 2020), which specify the following minimum widths:

- 8-foot width for bikes, 10-foot preferred for bikes
- 6-foot width for pedestrians
- 2-foot width for shoulder

In order to comply with these standards, a two-way **separated-use** pathway would need a minimum width of 16 feet. Because the proposed pathway widths for every segment disqualify its use as a **separated-use** pathway, it would need to meet the requirements of a **shared-use** pathway, which are described in the following design standards:

- Caltrans Highway Design Manual, Section 1003.1, Class I Bikeways (Bike Paths)
- American Associate of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, Chapter 5 - Design of Shared Use Paths
- Federal Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), Section R302.3.2, Shared Use Paths

These standards indicate a minimum width of a two-way **shared-use** pathway shall be 8 feet, with 10 feet preferred. All proposed segments of the pathway would meet the

preferred minimum width requirement except the segment through the grove of mature trees in Cedar Rose Park, which is about 200 feet long; this segment is constrained to the existing 8-foot width as described previously in *Parks and Open Space*. The design standards allow a pathway width of 8 feet over a short distance due to a physical constraint such as an environmental feature, bridge abutment, utility structure, fence, and such. The City considers several of the physical constraints described above (i.e., mature trees in good condition, preservation of park open space, and property boundaries) for the segment in Cedar Rose Park as qualifying this portion of the pathway for this allowance.

During the detailed design phase of the project, pathway signage and pavement markings will be incorporated into the design. In general, signage and/or pavement markings will provide pathway user guidance such as a narrowing pathway, speed limits, and to share the pathway, among others.

The continued operation of the Ohlone Greenway within the project limits as a **shared-use** pathway is consistent with the operation of other **shared-use** pathways in the Berkeley area, including major portions of the West Street Pathway, Emeryville Greenway, Bay Trail, and many East Bay Regional Park District trails.

Pathway Accessibility

The final design concepts were developed in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and in accordance with the California Building Code and the PROWAG. The detailed design documents, including the final design documents, will also be prepared in accordance with these standards.

Electric Bicycles and Motorized Scooters

The use of electric bicycles, or e-bikes, is described in California Assembly Bill AB-1096, which defines the following types of e-bikes:

- Class 1, or “low-speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle” provides motor assistance up to 20 mph when rider is pedaling.
- Class 2, or “low-speed throttle-assisted electric bicycle” has a motor that may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle up to 20 mph.
- Class 3, or “speed pedal-assisted electric bicycle” provides motor assistance up to 28 mph when the rider is pedaling.

AB-1096 specifically prohibits the use of Class 3 e-bikes on bikeways. As such, Class 3 e-bikes are prohibited from use on the Ohlone Greenway, whereas Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes may be used on the Ohlone Greenway.

Regarding motorized scooters, the California Vehicle Code indicates that “no person shall operate a motorized scooter at a speed in excess of 15 miles per hour”. Motorized scooters may be used on the Ohlone Greenway.

All bicyclists and motorized scooter use on the Ohlone Greenway must comply with the provisions of California Vehicle Code.

Public Outreach

City staff and Diablo performed extensive public outreach activities at the beginning of the project, from November 2022 to September 2023. Outreach was performed to better understand existing conditions, provide operational and design considerations that guided the development of design concepts, and obtain public input to be taken into consideration in finalizing the design concepts.

Public outreach activities consisted of the following:

- Project website, which includes associated project documents:
- Hand-delivered letters to residences on Peralta Ave. and the Hopkins-Peralta apartments, dated November 2022, to initiate individual discussions about proposed two-way bikeway on Peralta.
- Emails and discussions with all community gardens along Peralta, from November 2022-January 2023.
- In-person events in Cedar Rose Park on February 2 and 4, 2023, which were advertised via signs posted in the nearby area. City staff and design consultants discussed the proposed concepts that would be depicted in the online survey.
- Online survey from February 8 – March 6, 2023, which was advertised via sidewalk stickers and signs in the nearby area and postcards to all residences within 300 feet of the project area. City staff received input and comments from over 500 participants.
- Online public meeting on February 22, 2023, which was advertised with sidewalk stickers and signs in the nearby area, postcards to all residences within 300 feet of the project area, and an email notification to Councilmember Kesarwani's office.
- Updated concepts for Rose St., Peralta Ave., and Gilman St. were prepared based on input from the public. These concepts were posted on the project website in August 2023 to request public comments and were advertised with postcards to all residences within 300 feet of these intersections and an email notification to Councilmember Kesarwani's office. City staff received dozens of comments in response.
- Presentation to Commission on Disability on September 13, 2023 to discuss design considerations in the continued use of the pathway as a shared use pathway.

Upcoming public meetings are anticipated to include the following:

- Planned presentation to the Transportation & Infrastructure Commission on January 18, 2024 to provide a project overview, including selected design concepts and initial design details.
- Planned City of Berkeley Council Meeting at the conclusion of the construction bid process to approve the final plans and specifications and award the construction contract to a contractor that is the lowest responsible and responsive bidder.

Final Conceptual Design

The design team established final conceptual design concepts at the conclusion of the public comment period for updated concepts in September 2023. The final concepts take into account the design considerations listed above and are intended to balance competing interests, such as preservation of green space and trees vs. pathway width. The final concepts are posted on the project website.

Detailed Design Phase

As of December 2023, the project is in the early portion of the detailed design phase. The design team is refining the pathway geometry, including medians, curb ramps, and crosswalk detailing; determining locations and types of signage and pavement markings; performing a lighting study to determine preferred locations for new pathway lighting; establishing preferred means for actuation of proposed rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs); and designing irrigation systems for green spaces and proposed tree planting areas. Coordination with particular stakeholders, including but not limited to the Public Works Department (including ZWD), BFD, PRW Department, the City's disability/accessibility consultant, Legal department, and BART will continue as necessary in order to further develop and finalize the design.