

Summer 2023

# El Cerrito / Richmond Annex BART to Bay Training

Follow-up Technical Assistance  
Community Pedestrian Bicycle  
Safety Training



Berkeley SafeTREC

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# Introduction

The Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Training Program ([CPBST](#)) is a statewide project of California Walks ([Cal Walks](#)) and UC Berkeley Safe Transportation Research and Education Center ([SafeTREC](#)) that uses the Safe System Approach to engage residents and safety advocates in the development of a community-driven action plan to improve walking and biking safety in their communities and to strengthen collaboration with local officials and agency staff. The program also provides follow-up technical assistance to past CPBST sites to support the implementation of the action plans and recommendations outlined in their initial CPBST Summary and Recommendations Report.

In August of 2022, Cal Walks and SafeTREC (Project Team) hosted a CPBST with residents and representatives of the City of El Cerrito, the City of Richmond, West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee, El Cerrito Trail Trekkers, and others. The focus of the CPBST workshop was to:

1. Improve walking and biking safety between El Cerrito and the Richmond Annex area;
2. Encourage more people to walk, bike, and use public transportation; and
3. Create a shared community vision with neighbors.

The 2022 CPBST highlighted safety concerns on Central Avenue, the primary route between the El Cerrito Plaza Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Station and the San Francisco Bay Trail (Bay Trail), and identified community walking and biking safety infrastructure needs and improvements to provide a safe, comfortable alternative path. After the workshop, the Planning Committee focused its efforts on formalizing an alternative route from the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station to the Bay Trail, which became the main focus of this follow-up technical assistance training. With the aid of local city planners, the training aimed to identify key projects to implement in the near term that can improve the safety of those walking and biking along the proposed BART to Bay Trail while also encouraging more neighbors to use the route.

This report summarizes the discussions and outcomes of the technical assistance training. For more information on the CPBST, you can access the full [El Cerrito and Richmond Annex CPBST Summary and Recommendation Report](#).

# Background

The Planning Committee formalized a route between the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station and the Bay Trail that specifically avoids most of Central Avenue, given its lack of safety infrastructure for those walking and biking. The route was crafted based on alternative routes taken by the Planning Committee and input from community members and organizations.

[El Cerrito Rollers and Strollers](#) invited community members to join a bike ride on April 16, 2023 to collect ideas on an ideal route and identify challenges those walking and biking face navigating between BART and the Bay Trail. SafeTREC and Cal Walks were invited by the host organization, El Cerrito Rollers and Strollers, to join the ride and assess the route to identify infrastructure improvements and listen to participants' concerns. During the bike ride, participants described their concerns about the elevation of particular streets, difficult intersections for them to navigate on foot or bike, and corridors where they see those driving speed well above the posted speed limit on a regular basis.

Proposed bike and pedestrian improvements on Central Avenue are outlined in the [El Cerrito Active Transportation Plan](#), which was adopted in 2016 but the plan did not include specific timelines for each project included. Central Avenue improvements are currently in the design phase for key intersections near I-580, but the project will not break ground until 2025 at the earliest. Other projects on the corridor do not have dedicated timelines, which concerns community members that safety improvements are too far away. Because of this, the Planning Committee found it imperative to gather and discuss near-term improvements with community members to address their safety concerns in a timely manner.

One of the nine proposed projects in the El Cerrito Active Transportation Plan includes the BART to Bay Trail Access Improvements at Central Avenue, Carlson Boulevard, and Cerrito Creek Connections. During the workshop, many participants expressed excitement in El Cerrito's investment in the BART to Bay Trail project. In addition, the Plan reinforces the value of infrastructure changes that will make the BART to Bay Trail accessible for community members of all ages and abilities. The Planning Committee will continue to strengthen relationships with City planners and other stakeholders to implement the projects below and determine other near-term projects and programmatic work that will provide safe, comfortable access between the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station and the Bay Trail.



Participants at workshop reflect during Visioning Activity

Participants are introduced to the Visioning Activity, and are asked to imagine their ideal route between El Cerrito Plaza and the Bay Trail



Workshop participants review a map of the focus area and envision their ideal route



Facilitator Kristen Leckie writes down responses to the Visioning Activity, which include a Elevated Skyway, New Sacramento Avenue Bridge, and is car free



# **BART to Bay Trail Training**

The training on May 24th, 2023, convened 18 local stakeholders, including participants from El Cerrito Strollers and Rollers, Richmond Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, BART Bicycle Advisory Task Force, El Cerrito Trail Trekkers, Rich City Rides, and Richmond and El Cerrito residents. The training aimed to identify near-term projects and programmatic work that could formalize a safe, comfortable route for those walking and biking between the El Cerrito Plaza BART Station and the Bay Trail.

## **Asset Mapping**

Workshop participants were asked to identify community assets they frequent daily and hope to visit safely by bike or by foot between El Cerrito BART Station and the Bay Trail. This portion of the workshop identified points of interest along the proposed route and started the conversation around potential infrastructure improvements to make them more accessible. The maps created a visual guide for where the ideal route could be established. Participants split into small groups and identified assets that fell into the following four categories:

1. Health: Facilities and spaces where one's physical, emotional, and mental well-being is prioritized;
2. Education: Places where people come together to learn;
3. Arts: Places to create and experience art; and
4. Recreation: Places where people play and enjoy the outdoors and green spaces.



*Participants identify community assets*



*After participants identified community assets in small groups, they then shared out their responses*





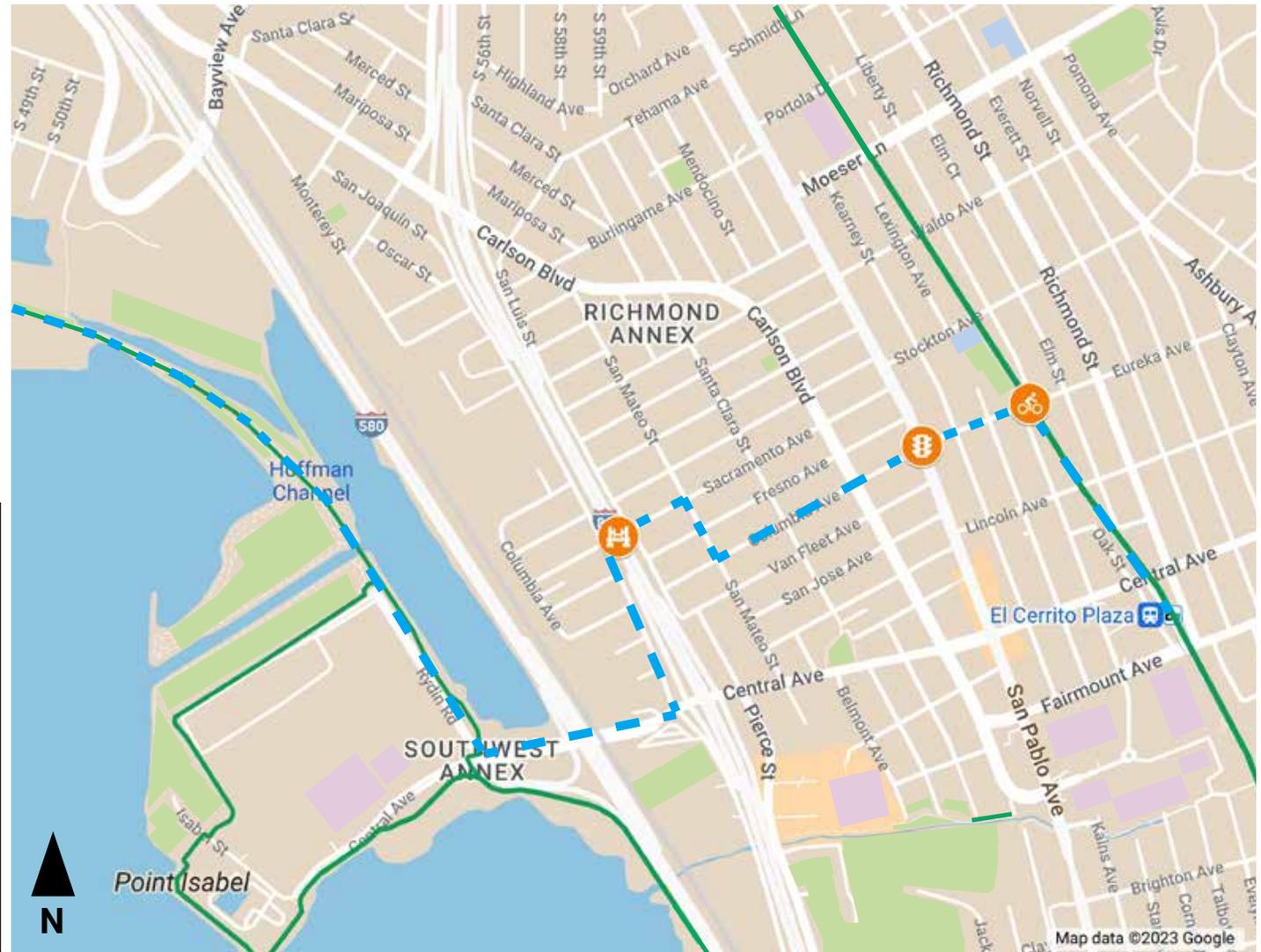
*Participants discuss community assets and identify sites as either Health, Education, Arts, or Recreation sites*



# El Cerrito BART to Bay Trail

**Legend**

- Green Space
- Retail Centers
- Community Facilities
- Bike Path
- BART to Bay Bike Route
- HAWK HAWK Signalized Crossing
- P Pedestrian Bridge over I-80
- B Connection to Ohlone Greenway



Map of El Cerrito/Richmond Annex to Bay Trail Focus Area

# Project Recommendations

During the workshop training, attendees proposed the following potential projects to address their safety concerns:

## Central Avenue Protected Bike Lane Project

Central Avenue is a key corridor along the BART to Bay Trail, but as it exists it feels unsafe and uncomfortable for many people walking and biking. This project creates a two-way protected bike lane (Class IV bike lane) on Central Avenue, between San Joaquin Street and Rydin Road, where fast-moving vehicle traffic crosses over Interstate 80. The project would protect those biking over the freeway and, in turn, create a safer and more comfortable pedestrian path to the BART to Bay Trail. This particular segment of Central Avenue is in the Richmond Annex neighborhood and within the jurisdiction of Caltrans, meaning both parties must be included in the planning process.

Workshop participants recommend the following [quick-build projects](#) and more substantial, long-term infrastructure improvements:

- Regular street sweeping of the bike lanes;
- Re-striping and maintaining the bike lanes;
- Installing soft-hit posts to protect those biking from vehicle traffic; and
- Implementing more substantial infrastructure elements like [K-rail barriers](#) or create a sidewalk-level [multi-use path](#) as a more formalized project in the medium to long-term.

# Sacramento Avenue Pedestrian Bridge Improvements Project

The Sacramento Avenue pedestrian bridge is a key connector for the proposed BART to Bay Trail, but the entrance on either side is challenging for many to navigate, especially children and people with disabilities. Overgrown vegetation and debris often blocks the walkways as well, adding another level of difficulty. Participants recommend installing accessible ramps and widening the turns of the pedestrian bridge onramp so that people with cargo bikes or assisted mobility devices can comfortably navigate the ramp. To eliminate tripping hazards for those walking, the team recommends regularly scheduled maintenance of the ramp.



*Participants listen to Janet Byron of El Cerrito Rollers and Strollers share concerns on the Sacramento Avenue/San Luis Street intersection*



*Proposed BART to Bay Trail route requires improvements along Sacramento Avenue and San Luis Street where there is currently only a single yellow crosswalk and a stop bar*



*BART to Bay Trail ride: El Cerrito Sustainable Transportation Manager Jarrett Mullen discusses upcoming projects with BART to Bay Trail ride participants*



*BART to Bay Trail ride: April 16, 2023 Participants bike on Columbia Avenue of the proposed BART to Bay Trail*

## **San Luis Street/Sacramento Avenue Intersection**

A major concern on this intersection is speed and lack of adherence to traffic signs. According to workshop attendees, drivers are known to make rolling stops or disregard stop signs along San Luis Street. At the San Luis Street/Sacramento Avenue intersection, the pedestrian bridge directs people into a single crosswalk with standard markings on the north side and bicyclists do not have a bike lane. People riding eastward onto Sacramento Avenue must use the yellow crosswalk and then cross along San Luis Street to ride in the correct direction; pedestrians walking along San Luis Street only have a sidewalk on the east side of the street.

To mitigate these road hazards, participants recommend installing:

- A protected intersection to physically separate motor vehicles from pedestrians and bicyclists;
- High-visibility road markings;
- A second marked crosswalk across San Luis Street;
- Raised crosswalks to increase pedestrian visibility to motorists; and
- Speed humps or speed cushions along San Luis Street, between Van Fleet Avenue and Santa Cruz Avenue to reduce driver speeds and risks for pedestrians and bicyclists.

## **Sacramento Avenue/San Joaquin Street**

When those walking or biking navigate the Sacramento Avenue/San Joaquin Street intersection, they face similar obstacles due to the lack of crosswalks for westbound bicyclists and speeding vehicles.

Participants recommend installing:

- A protected intersection, similar to the proposed intersection on San Luis Street;
- High-visibility road markings to promote driver awareness of bicyclists and pedestrians; and
- Traffic calming measures such as raised crosswalks or speed humps along San Joaquin Street to encourage drivers to slow down.

## BART to Bay Trail Wayfinding Project

Adequate signage is vital to promote the BART to Bay Trail and ensure that all community members know of and use the route. In coordination with Caltrans, the Cities of El Cerrito and Richmond, and design consultants, participants recommend:

- Installing wayfinding signage along key intersections of the route;
- Coordinated branding between signage on the Ohlone Greenway and the proposed BART to Bay Trail, with the potential for community members to design the messaging and wayfinding signs;
- Coordinating road striping with signage to increase the visibility of people walking and biking; and
- Creating a safety messaging campaign in the form of lawn signs to promote the route and safety for those walking and biking along it.



*Ohlone Greenway Model Traffic Signage*



*Participants share-out proposed projects*



## **San Joaquin Street Protected Bike Lanes Project**

This project would provide a safe, comfortable connection between the Sacramento Avenue pedestrian bridge and Central Avenue, providing access to the Bay Trail and Point Isabel. Workshop participants proposed installing the following to increase the safety of those biking on San Joaquin Street:

- A protected bike lane (Class IV bike lane) in both directions on San Joaquin Street, from Sacramento Avenue to Central Avenue;
  - In the short term, use soft-hit posts and paint in conjunction with the protected bike lanes.
- Traffic calming along San Joaquin Street, like bulbouts, road rightsizing, and speed humps; and
- Signage indicating that people are walking and biking along San Joaquin Street.

## **Eureka Avenue/Columbia Avenue Intersection Improvement Project**

The Eureka Avenue/Columbia Avenue intersection is one of the few intersections along San Pablo Avenue that provides an east-west route for those walking and biking. Participants appreciate the new High-Intensity Activated crossWalk (HAWK) Beacon installed at this intersection but would like to see more improvements, including:

- Bulb-outs on all four corners of the intersection;
- Pedestrian refuge islands to help those who cannot cross the street in one light cycle;
- High-visibility crosswalks to improve visibility at night; and
- Bike sensors to activate the HAWK beacon.

# Conclusion

The workshop brought community members, local planning representatives and local organizations together to strengthen relationships and create actionable steps towards creating the BART to Bay Trail ride. During the workshop, the Planning Committee, in collaboration with local like-minded organizations such as Trail Trekkers and the El Cerrito Strollers and Rollers identified challenges along the proposed route and explored potential projects amongst each other and with experts to create a safe, comfortable route between BART and the Bay Trail. Overwhelmingly, the participants came out of the training with a commitment to work together to continue to improve pedestrian and bike safety in the community, even outside of the specific project. The Project Team remains committed to sharing their expertise and experiences to support the participants' efforts to improve walking and biking safety for all in their community.

# Thank you for your interest in the Community Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Training Program.

For more information, please visit:

<https://safetrec.berkeley.edu/programs/cpbst> or

<https://www.calwalks.org/cpbst>

For questions, please email:

[safetrec@berkeley.edu](mailto:safetrec@berkeley.edu) or [cpbst@calwalks.org](mailto:cpbst@calwalks.org)

This report was prepared in cooperation with the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). The opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of OTS.



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