

Middle Avenue Pedestrian & Bicycle Rail Crossing Study

Summary of Community Meeting #2

May 13, 2019



AECOM

alta
PLANNING + DESIGN

MIDDLE AVENUE PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE RAIL CROSSING STUDY

Summary of Community Meeting #2

Monday, May 13, 2019

The City of Menlo Park hosted a community meeting on Monday, May 13, 2019, from 6:30-8:15 p.m. to discuss the three (3) concepts for the proposed grade-separated rail crossing project for bicycle and pedestrian access at Middle Avenue. The meeting was held in the Arrillaga Family Recreation Center Elm Room, 700 Alma St in Menlo Park. Approximately twenty-five (25) community members attended the meeting.

Representing the City at the meeting were Nikki Nagaya, Assistant Public Works Director; Kristiann Choy, Senior Transportation Engineer; Angela Obeso, Senior Transportation Engineer; Marlon Aumentado, Transportation Engineer; and Morad Fakhrai, Senior Project Manager. The speaking members of the project team were Peter DeStefano, AECOM Project Manager and Angela Obeso, Senior Transportation Engineer.

This was the second meeting with the community regarding this project with this project team. There have also been previous city-sponsored studies regarding grade separating the railroad to create a bicycle/pedestrian crossing in the vicinity of Middle Avenue. The purpose of this second community meeting was to get input from the community on their preferred crossing concept and to have the community weigh in on various other elements such as the Alma Street/Burgess Park connections and the ramp and stair layouts.

The following summary of the meeting was prepared by Joyce Lin (AECOM) and Millette Litzinger (AECOM), who documented the meeting.

Meeting Summary: The meeting began at 6:30 p.m. with a thirty (30) minute open house where community members were asked to place flags on a map showing where they lived (See Photo 1) as well as writing comments and suggestions directly on the exhibit boards (See Photos 2-8).

Photo 1 - Where do you live?

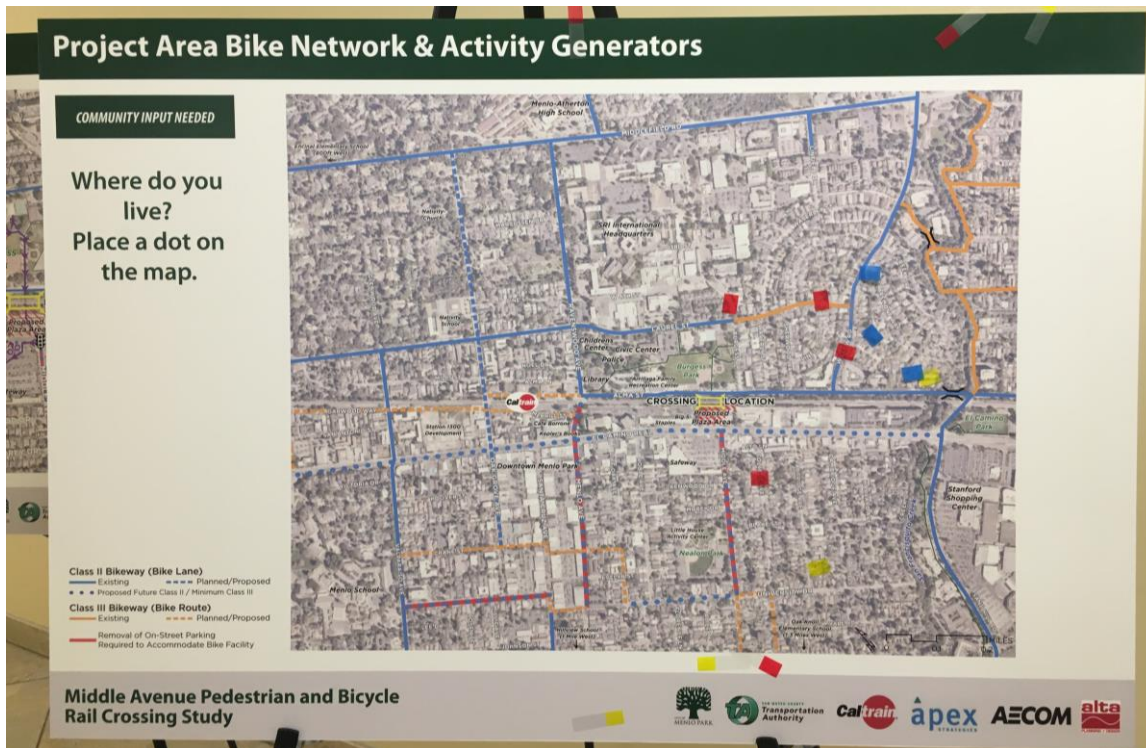
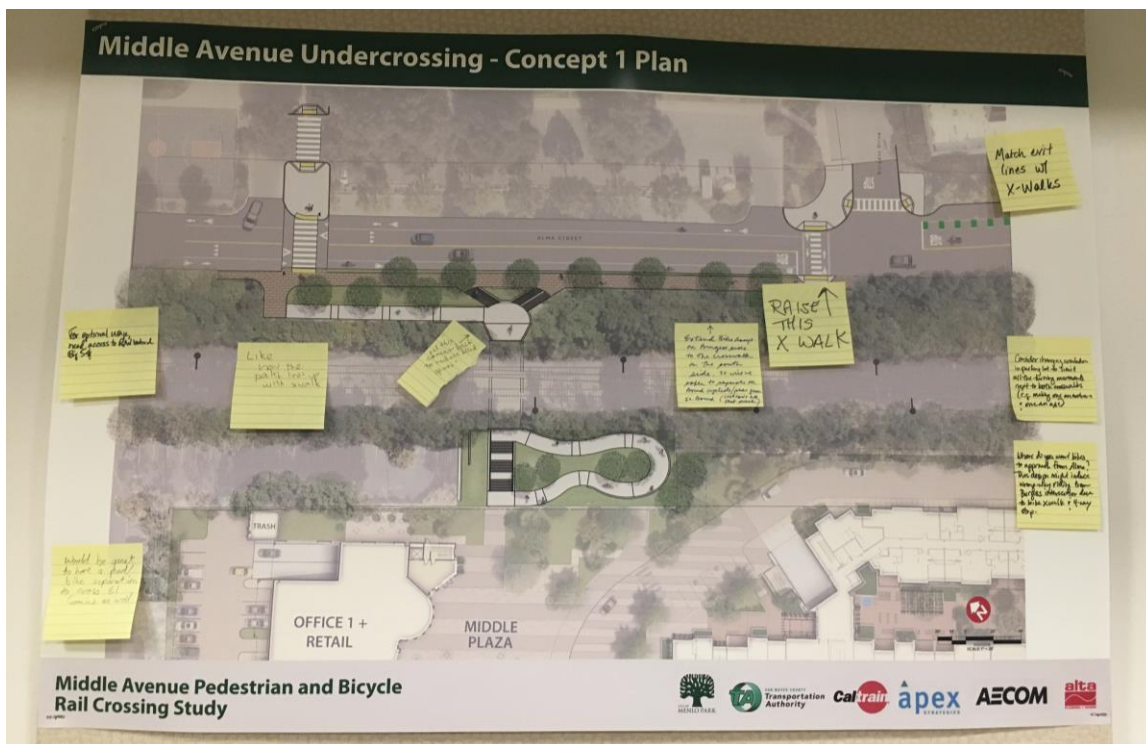


Photo 2 - Concept 1 Plan



Note: All comments are typed and itemized at the end of the meeting summary

Photo 3 – Concept 1 Elevations

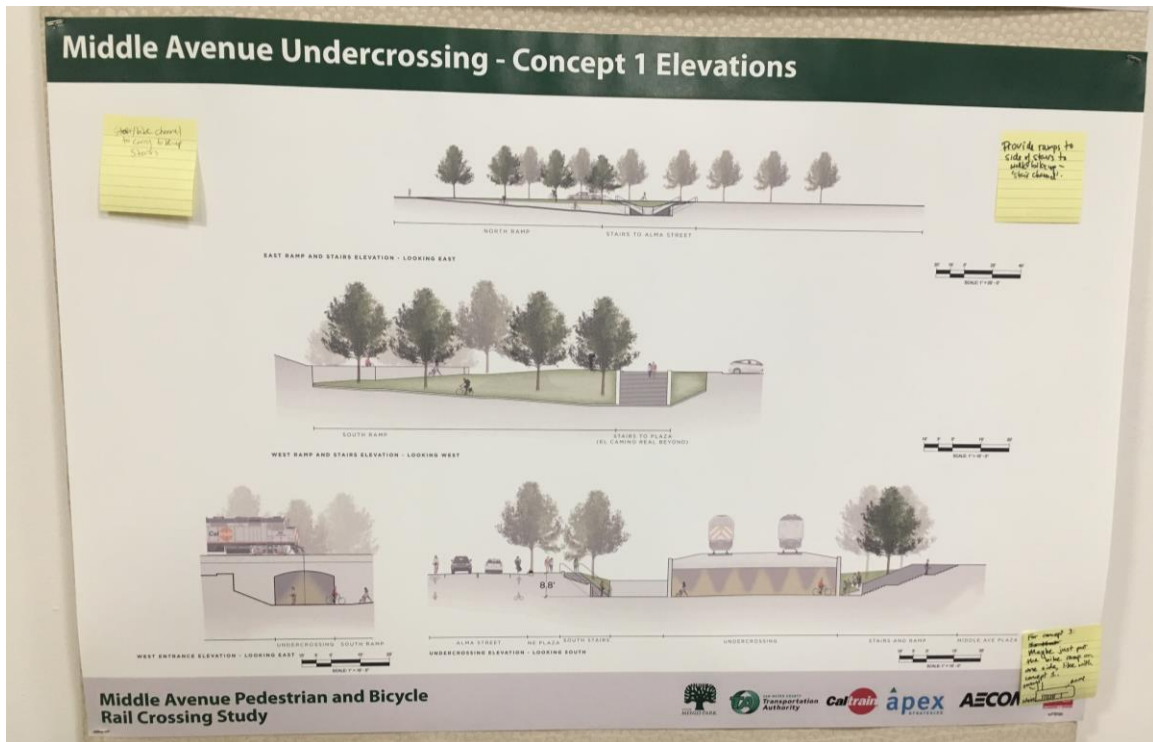


Photo 4 – Concept 1 3D Renderings

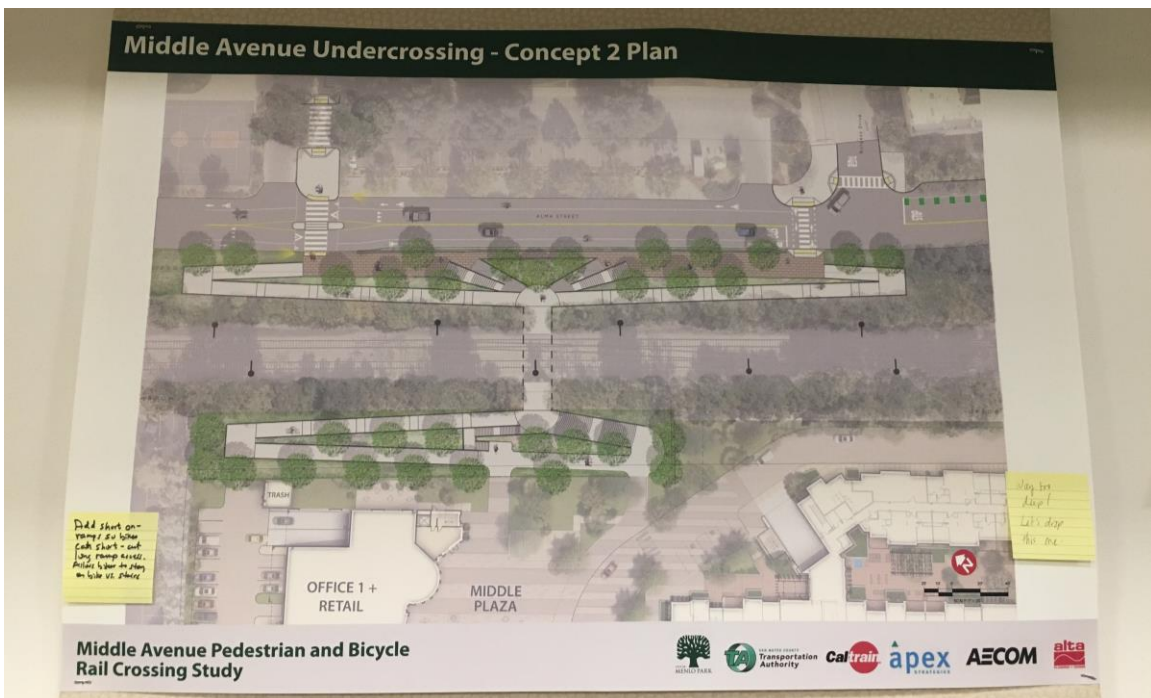


Note: All comments are typed and itemized at the end of the meeting summary

Photo 5 – Concept 1 3D Renderings



Photo 6 – Concept 2 Plan



Note: All comments are typed and itemized at the end of the meeting summary

Photo 7 – Concept 2 Elevations

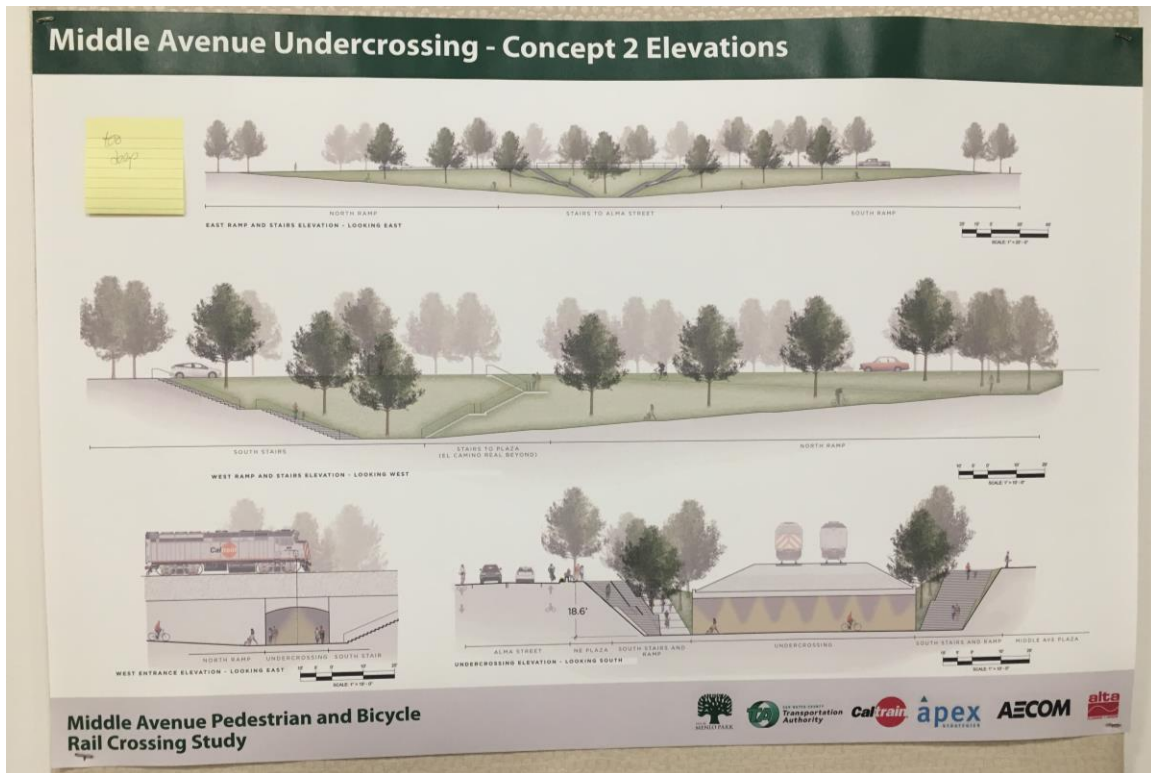


Photo 8 – Concept 3 3D Renderings



Note: All comments are typed and itemized at the end of the meeting summary

Approximately twenty-five (25) members of the public attended the meeting. When asked about the meeting notification methods, four people indicated they saw large posters/flyers about the meeting. A majority of those in attendance said an email blast was how they found out about the meeting. The Chamber email blast was mentioned by one attendee as well. Two people mentioned they heard about the meeting via word-of-mouth and five people indicated they saw information on Nextdoor. Five people indicated that they attended the first community meeting.

To start the presentation, the City's Senior Transportation Engineer, Angela Obeso, reviewed the history of the project, the goals for the evening and a summary of the first community meeting from May 4, 2017. Then the AECOM Project Manager, Peter DeStefano, discussed the design constraints and considerations for each of the three concepts developed as well as the different ramp and stair layout options. The presentation showed 3D renderings of each of the three concepts for the proposed undercrossing. Towards the end, Angela gave a summary of the cost estimate and the breakdown of the costs as well as next steps for the project. A question and answer period followed the presentation.

The comments and responses offered during the meeting are captured in Table 1 below in the order they were given. A copy of the exhibit boards is included at the end of this summary. The comments and feedback received during the open house session are recorded in Table 2 below in the order of the exhibits.

The meeting format also included thirty (30) minutes of time after the presentation for attendees to give additional input regarding preferences.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Table 1 - Summary of Comments and Questions

Comment / Question	Response
1. What is your current funding plan and what is available?	The current scope included the environmental document and 30% design which was paid for by a grant. The rest comes from the City and the Stanford development is contributing a portion of the funding as well. The City is continuing to look into other funding options for construction.
2. Our concern is about elementary school kids, which of these options is best equipped for them?	To get a better idea of what option works best for kids, we want feedback on how they will use the facility and concerns you may have on these concepts.
3. Concept 1 seems like there is less real estate involved, but I'm concerned about the blind spots. Don't you think curves will help slow down cyclists/skateboarders?	This is something we can look into.
4. How wide are the ramps? Are they passable? Can we incorporate bollards?	Ramps are 10' wide and bollards can be collision hazards so are not recommended to be incorporated.
5. Concept 1 seems simple but what's best practice for descending ramps? And kids traveling in groups/packs? What is the best design for that?	Ramps should at least 10' wide and there's flexibility to go wider, especially through the 180-degree turn. There's the possibility to put striping down the center or indicate designated areas for pedestrians and bicyclists to help avoid collisions.
6. For Concept 2 or 3, can we have one ramp designated for pedestrians and one ramp designated for bicyclists?	This is an item we will look into during the design phase but would increase costs to construct two separate ramps instead of one shared ramp.

<p>7. Alma St is subjected to high speeds right now, are the crosswalks elevated and/or can we elevate them?</p>	<p>The north crosswalks on all three concepts are raised, and the south crosswalks on all three concepts are at-grade. The double inset triangle markings shown on the exhibit boards indicate that the road surface will ramp-up to meet the crossing level.</p>
<p>8. For Concept 1 and 3, the crossover tracks are not a real impact to us and Concept 1 seems more favorable. Why can't we just go that route?</p>	<p>It may not be an impact to residents, but it is a big impact to Caltrain and they have concerns about impacts to their customers and operations.</p>
<p>9. If we're between Concept 1 and 3, do the construction impact differences disrupt Caltrain's service for transit riders?</p>	<p>In terms of impact (downtime) to Caltrain's service, there is not a significant difference between Concepts 1 and 3. The current plan is to place the tunnel (for either concept) over a 4-day weekend. The initial impetus for locating the tunnel further north (Concept 3) was to avoid relocation of the Caltrain's crossover (diagonal) track, which comes at a significant cost.</p>
<p>10. What impacts will the Ravenswood grade separation project and a potential tunnel project have on Middle Avenue? What would happen if we follow the timetable?</p>	<p>The Ravenswood grade separation project is currently moving forward with the hybrid alternative (Alt C). The Middle Ave project takes the track profile/layout of Alt C into account and can thus, accommodate that project. If the tunnel or fully elevated alternative become a reality, the benefit of moving forward is that we would have this facility in-place, which could potentially be used during construction of any alternative.</p>
<p>11. Please make the ramps as wide as you can, not deep, with lots of visibility. We</p>	<p>That is something we can look into. When initially looking at this</p>

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<p>want less vegetation and as far as costs go, is the value engineering for Concept 1 due to reducing the ramps?</p>	<p>project we estimated about \$10M and Stanford was to contribute up to \$5M. But with cost estimates being much higher than we anticipated, we were going through a process of looking for ways to reduce cost so that's why we eliminated one set of ramps for Concept 1. We still have a lot of work to do to secure more funding.</p>
<p>12. There's likely to be impacts to utilities, will there be any cost savings to the Ravenswood grade separation project or this project? Are we impacting the same utility lines?</p>	<p>A cost savings will not be discovered in this regard because the two projects do not share any of the same utility relocations.</p>
<p>13. Just wanted to point out that on Concept 3, kids will not use the crosswalks since they do not connect with the end of both ramps on the Alma St side.</p>	<p>If we move forward with Concept 3, we will look into ways to better align the crosswalks with the top of the ramps.</p>
<p>14. Stanford would benefit from this project greatly and they have an endowment of \$24 billion. Unfortunately, their parameters are so isolated from this project. Where can they contribute their money, the beginning or end? Stanford didn't volunteer to donate any of their land so this is why we're confined to such little space.</p>	<p>The purpose of this project is to connect multiple communities together and get the most public benefit, not just Stanford's. It's a City project, not a Stanford project. Stanford is allowing public access through their development. We are working with Stanford to integrate elements that work for all users.</p>
<p>15. When is the opening date for the Middle Ave undercrossing if it also coincides with the opening date of the Middle Plaza?</p>	<p>Projected opening date is 2022.</p>
<p>16. Why is the ceiling height of the undercrossing 10' tall?</p>	<p>Other undercrossings in the corridor are about 10' tall or less so that's just a height that we chose that would fit well. We don't want it to be too tall otherwise the ramps and stairs would get longer.</p>

<p>17. The El Camino development and Middle Ave project need to work together to come up with a solution.</p>	<p>We are working closely with them on a solution.</p>
<p>18. Concept 1 curvy paths are unsafe because kids will hit each other on their bikes. I'm also concerned with security in the undercrossing, what are the plans for security? We want lighting and cameras.</p>	<p>The 10' height of the undercrossing will help give it a bigger feel. We are still in the conceptual phase of this project, so we will consider security measures during final design such as adequate lighting.</p>
<p>19. In general, I focus on design features that will make the tunnel convenient and attractive, because I believe that it has the potential to become a vital link in a well-connected Menlo Park community. The preferred design should be highly visible from both the Middle Plaza side and the Burgess Field side. The tunnel should be as short, wide, and tall as possible. Approaches to the tunnel should include more than a single ramp on each end (reducing conflicts between users), as well as a set of stairs. The Alma St ramps should emerge at the crosswalks (and those crosswalks should be super safe). The overall impact for users should be welcoming, easy to use, and safe.</p> <p>Concept 1 is the clear best starting place, though I think the effort to make it as low-cost as possible is misguided – bear in mind that it will be used for at least 50 years and the better we make it, the better this important link between Burgess and Middle will be used. Suggested improvements: include a second ramp on each side of the tracks. More land may be needed in order to design the site properly, but I believe it is more important that the project be successful than that it be done more</p>	<p>Comments noted and will be taken into consideration as project design moves forward.</p>

<p>cheaply. We are, after all, going to live with this for 50 years or so.</p> <p>Concept 2 demonstrates the many drawbacks of a deep tunnel, so I hope we will be able to execute a tunnel with the trench construction method.</p> <p>Concept 3 suffers from poor placement from a user perspective – the obvious best place for the visible entrance is at the back of Middle Plaza, not tucked off to the side (which will also aggravate security concerns). I understand the Caltrain preference to avoid disrupting the cross-over tracking, but I think the risk they are concerned about is minor compared to permanently siting the tunnel at a suboptimal location because that would undercut the entire purpose of the effort.</p>	
<p>20. If we eliminate stairs so everyone uses ramps, is there a way to have the ramps feed the underpass without sharp turns?</p> <p>I favor Option 1 as presented, with the minor change that ramps need to be designed for visibility, no blind spots where people on wheels might not see walkers.</p> <p>Think some more about how the ramp enters the underpass. Again, the right angle turn seems to be a blind spot.</p> <p>Get better outreach to the parents of the school kids who we anticipate using the underpass. They are in the best position to critique the twists and turns.</p>	

Table 2 - Summary of Comments and Feedback on Exhibit Boards

Exhibit Board	Comment/Feedback
Concept 1 Plan (Photo 2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Match exit lines with crosswalks 2) Raise this crosswalk 3) Consider changing circulation in parking lot to limit all the turning movements next to both crosswalks (e.g. making one an entrance and the other an exit) 4) Where do you want bikes to approach from Alma? This design might induce wrong-way riding from Burgess intersection due to bike crosswalk and 4-way stop 5) Add an external bike ramp on Burgess side to the crosswalk on the south side, it will be safer to separate northbound cyclists/pedestrians from southbound side (cost can't be that much) 6) Pull this ramp corner back to reduce blind spots 7) Like how the path lines up with the crosswalk on the left side 8) For optimal usage, need access to R/W behind Big 5? 9) Would be great to have a ped/bike separation to cross El Camino as well
Concept 1 Elevations (Photo 3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10) Need stair/bike channel to carry bike up the stairs 11) Provide ramps to side of stairs

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	<p>to walk bike up – stair channel</p> <p>12) For concept 3, maybe just put the bike ramp on one side, like with concept 1</p>
Concept 1 – 3D Renderings (Photo 4)	<p>13) Need access point on Middle Plaza</p> <p>14) This merge is a collision area, it needs something</p>
Concept 1 – 3D Renderings (Photo 5)	<p>15) Please do not wait for grade separation 10+ years</p>
Concept 2 Plan (Photo 6)	<p>16) Way too deep! Let's drop this one</p> <p>17) Add short on-ramps so bikes can shortcut long ramp access. Allows bicyclists to stay on bike vs stairs</p>
Concept 2 Elevations (Photo 7)	<p>18) Too deep</p>
Concept 3 – 3D Renderings (Photo 8)	<p>19) Lower the wall and remove blind corner</p>

Attachments:

- A. Flyer
- B. Poster
- C. Email Notice
- D. Sign-In Sheets
- E. Photos
- F. Exhibit Boards

The PowerPoint Presentation is not included as an attachment to this summary, but can be downloaded from here:

<https://www.menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/21614/Middle-Ave-Community-Mtg-No-2-Presentation>

Meeting Summary by AECOM.

ATTACHMENT A

FLYER

MIDDLE AVENUE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CROSSING COMMUNITY MEETING



Enhancing the **quality** of life

Monday, May 13, 2019
6:30–8:30 pm
Arrillaga Recreation Center
Elm Room
700 Alma St.



PARTICIPATE

- Hear updates on project
- Review proposed designs
- Provide feedback on ramp and stair options
- Examine connections to Alma Street and Burgess Park

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- menlopark.org/middle
- 650-330-6770
- transportation@menlopark.org

City of Menlo Park
701 Laurel St.
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650-330-6780
menlopark.org/publicworks

ATTACHMENT B

POSTER



MIDDLE AVE. PED/BIKE RAIL CROSSING STUDY MEETING

PARTICIPATE

- Hear updates on project
- Review proposed designs
- Provide feedback on ramp and stair options
- Examine connections to Alma Street and Burgess Park

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- menlopark.org/middle
- 650-330-6770
- transportation@menlopark.org

Monday, May 13, 2019
6:30–8:00 pm
Arrillaga Family Recreation
Center, Elm room
700 Alma St.

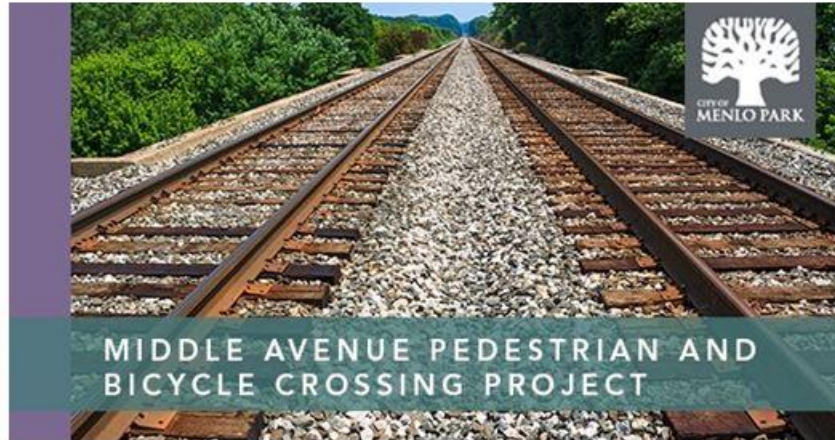
City of Menlo Park
701 Laurel St.
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650-330-6770
menlopark.org/publicworks

Enhancing the
quality of life



ATTACHMENT C

EMAIL NOTICE




Monday, May 13, 2019, at 6:30 p.m., the City will host the second community meeting for the [Middle Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Rail Crossing](#) in the Elm Room at the [Arrillaga Family Recreation Center](#), 700 Alma Street. At this meeting, community members will be able to get an update on the project, review current crossing design options, provide their feedback, and voice their preferences on a variety of aspects including ramp and stair layouts.

The goal of the project is to provide a grade separated pedestrian and bicycle rail crossing through the Caltrain railway to provide a new crossing opportunity across the tracks. This phase of the project will include engineering, public outreach, and design services to complete environmental documentation and preliminary design plans for a selected crossing option.

To learn more, visit menlopark.org/middlecrossing or subscribe to the [Public Works project updates](#) notification list.

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ATTACHMENT D

SIGN-IN SHEETS



Community Meeting #2
Middle Avenue Pedestrian & Bicycle Rail Crossing Study
 May 13, 2019
Sign-In Sheet

	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
1	Katie Behrozi ^{Complete} Sts. Comm			
2	Drew			
3	John C. Ruckers			
4	Ike Griffin			
5	D. HIRSHMAN			
6	Bill KIRK			
7	Hoisee Nash			
8	ROBERT CRONIN			
9	Steve Kagan			
10	Ann Piederich			



Community Meeting #2
Middle Avenue Pedestrian & Bicycle Rail Crossing Study
 May 13, 2019
Sign-In Sheet

Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
11 ^{CS} Jonathan Weiss			
12 Frank [unclear]			
13 Matthew Bettler			
14 Carol Keyrose			
15 Jen Wolosin			
16 John Raduany			
17 Brooke Cetter			
18 Jacqui Cabrera			
19 Remy Malan			
20 Andrew Barnes			



Community Meeting #2
Middle Avenue Pedestrian & Bicycle Rail Crossing Study
 May 13, 2019
Sign-In Sheet

	Name and Affiliation (If Applicable)	Address	City, Zip	E-mail
21	Jeremiah Dorais			
22	STEVE SCHMIDT			
23	Alva Leun			
24	Kate Bradshaw			
25	David Geraghty			

ATTACHMENT E

PHOTOS



ATTACHMENT F

EXHIBIT BOARDS

Project Area Bike Network & Activity Generators

COMMUNITY INPUT NEEDED

Where do you live?
Place a dot on the map.

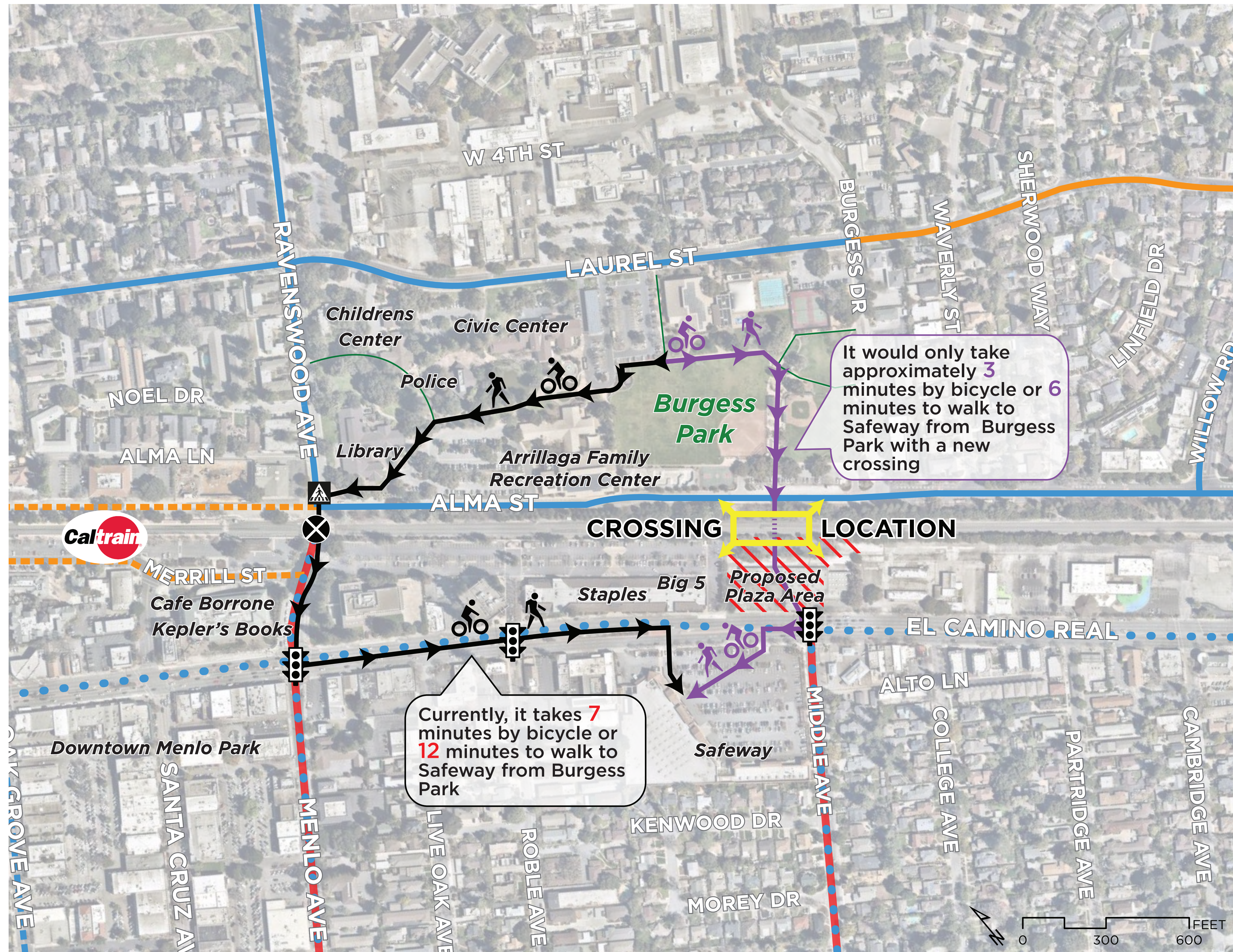


- Class II Bikeway (Bike Lane)**
 - Existing (Solid Blue Line)
 - Planned/Proposed (Dashed Blue Line)
 - Proposed Future Class II / Minimum Class III (Dotted Blue Line)
- Class III Bikeway (Bike Route)**
 - Existing (Solid Orange Line)
 - Planned/Proposed (Dashed Orange Line)
- Removal of On-Street Parking Required to Accommodate Bike Facility (Red Line)

Middle Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Rail Crossing Study



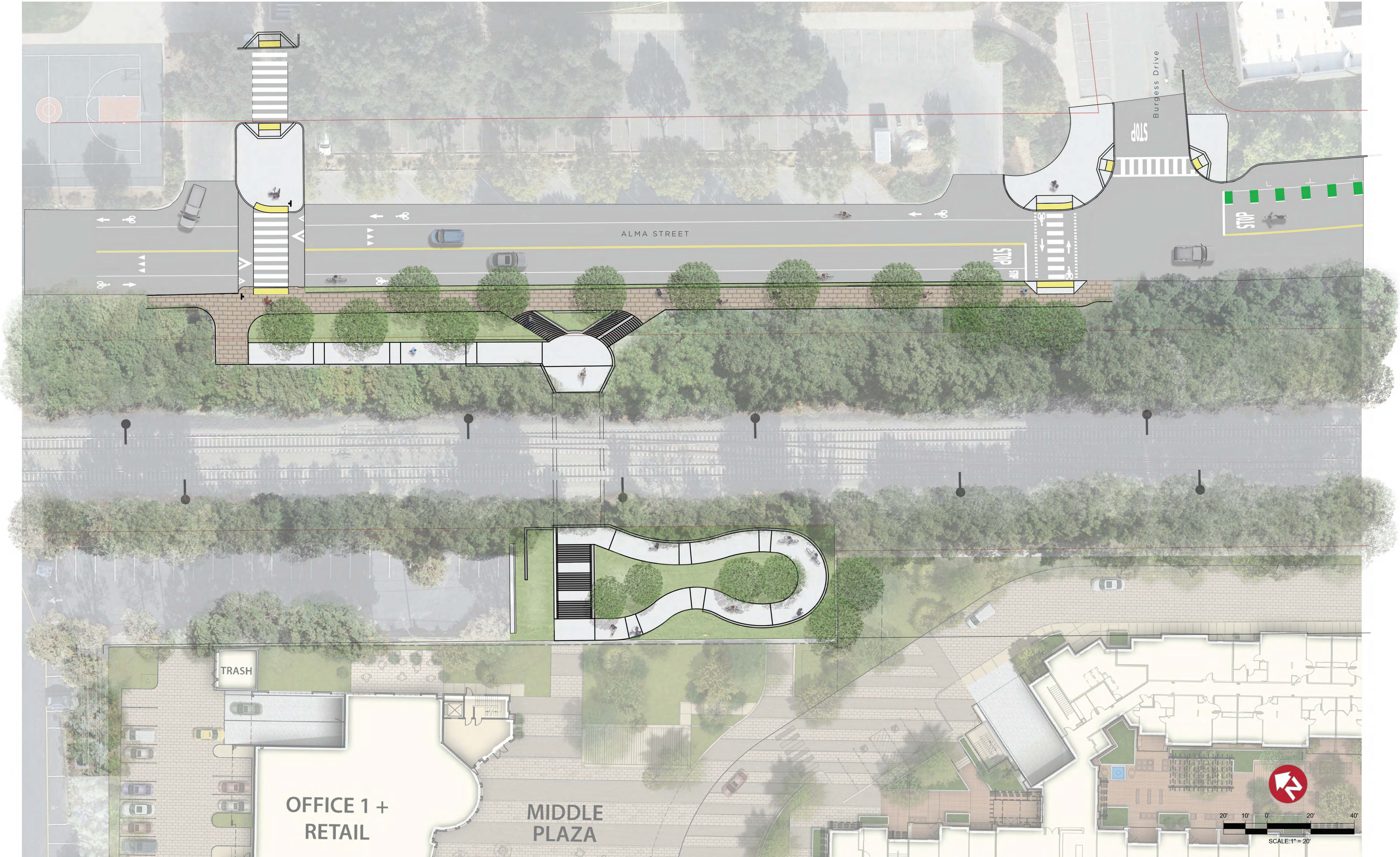
Travel Time



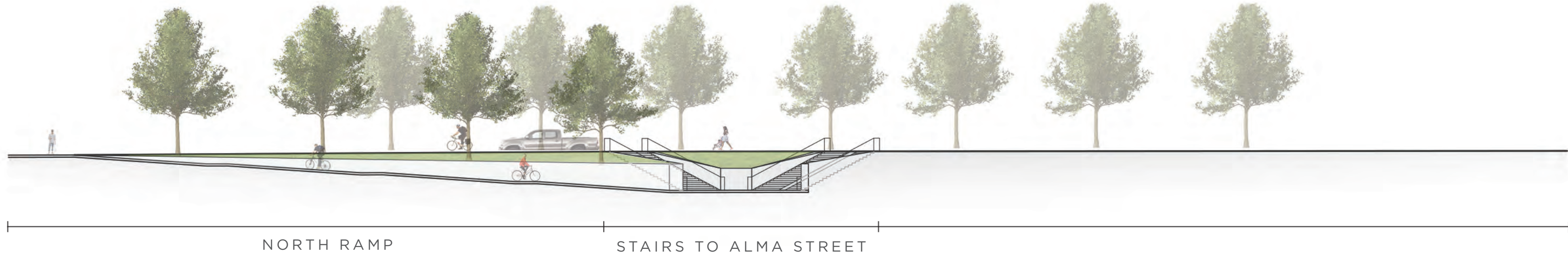
- Class II Bikeway (Bike Lane)**
 Existing (solid blue line) Planned/Proposed (dashed blue line)
 Proposed Future Class II / Minimum Class III (dotted blue line)
- Class III Bikeway (Bike Route)**
 Existing (solid orange line) Planned/Proposed (dashed orange line)
- Red line: Removal of On-Street Parking Required to Accommodate Bike Facility

Middle Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Rail Crossing Study

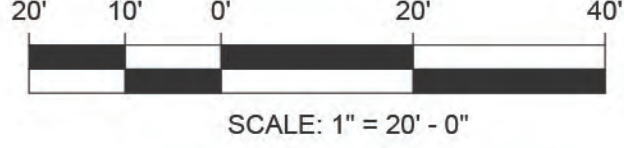
Middle Avenue Undercrossing - Concept 1 Plan



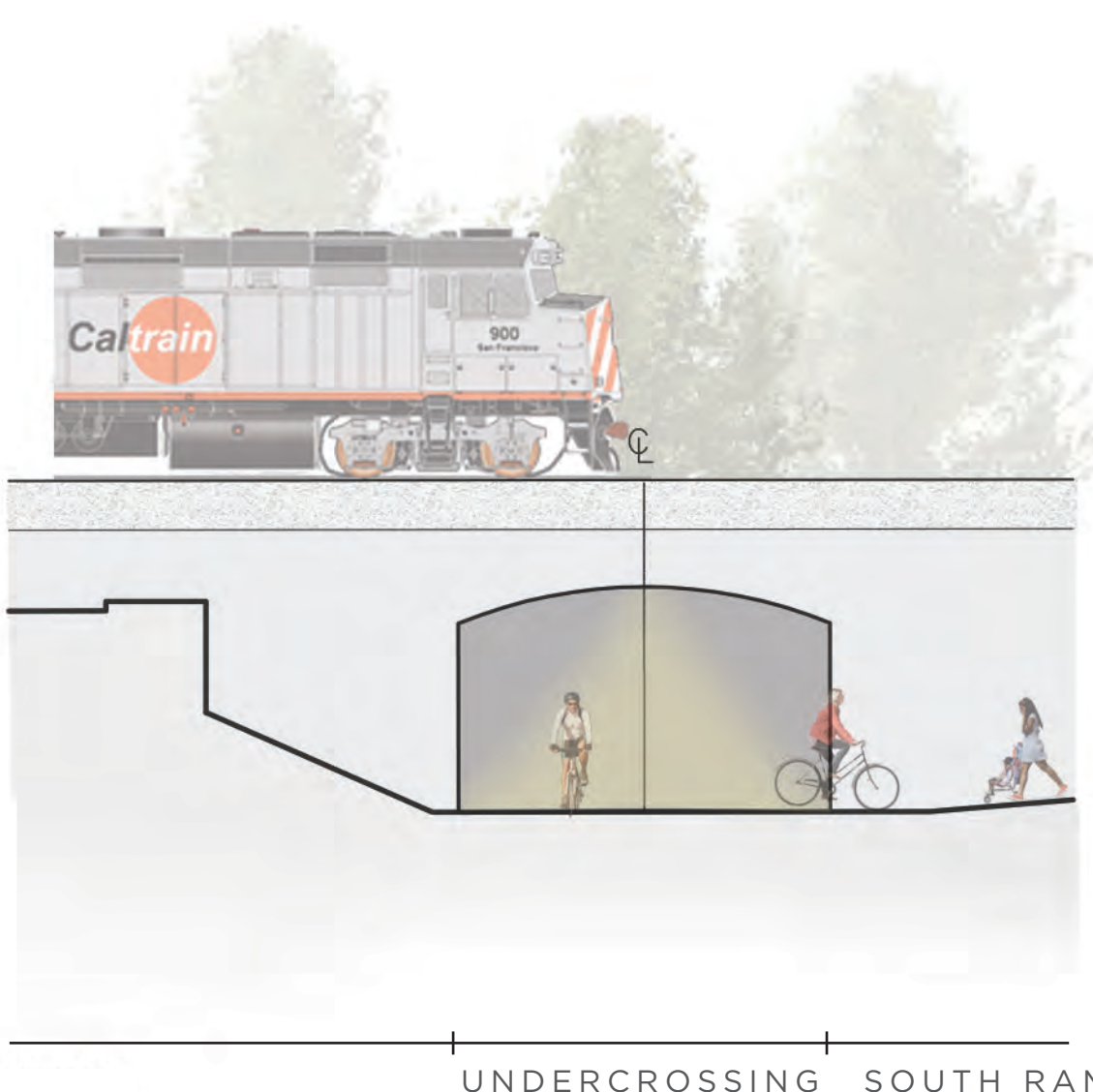
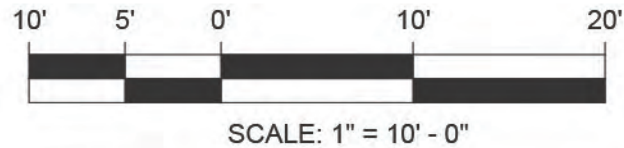
Middle Avenue Undercrossing - Concept 1 Elevations



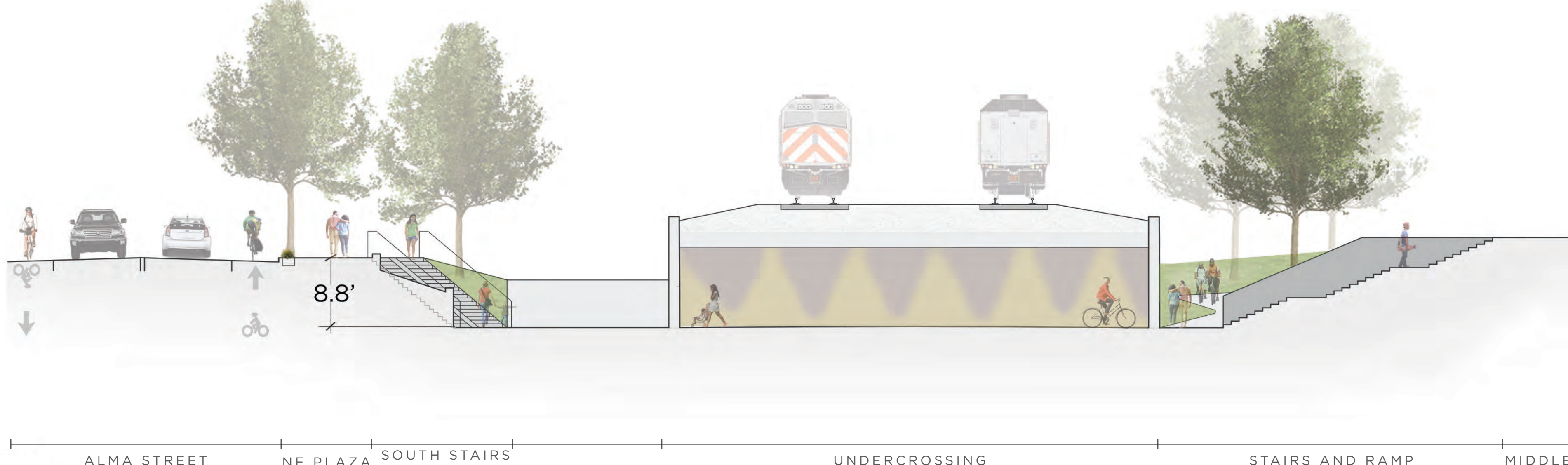
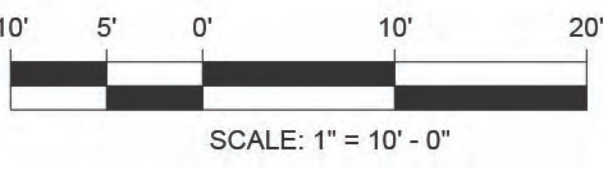
EAST RAMP AND STAIRS ELEVATION - LOOKING EAST



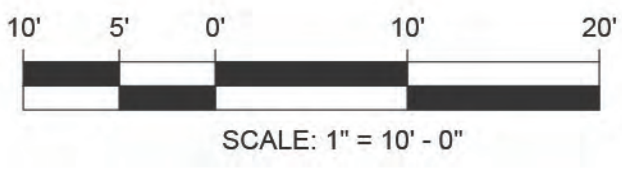
WEST RAMP AND STAIRS ELEVATION - LOOKING WEST



WEST ENTRANCE ELEVATION - LOOKING EAST

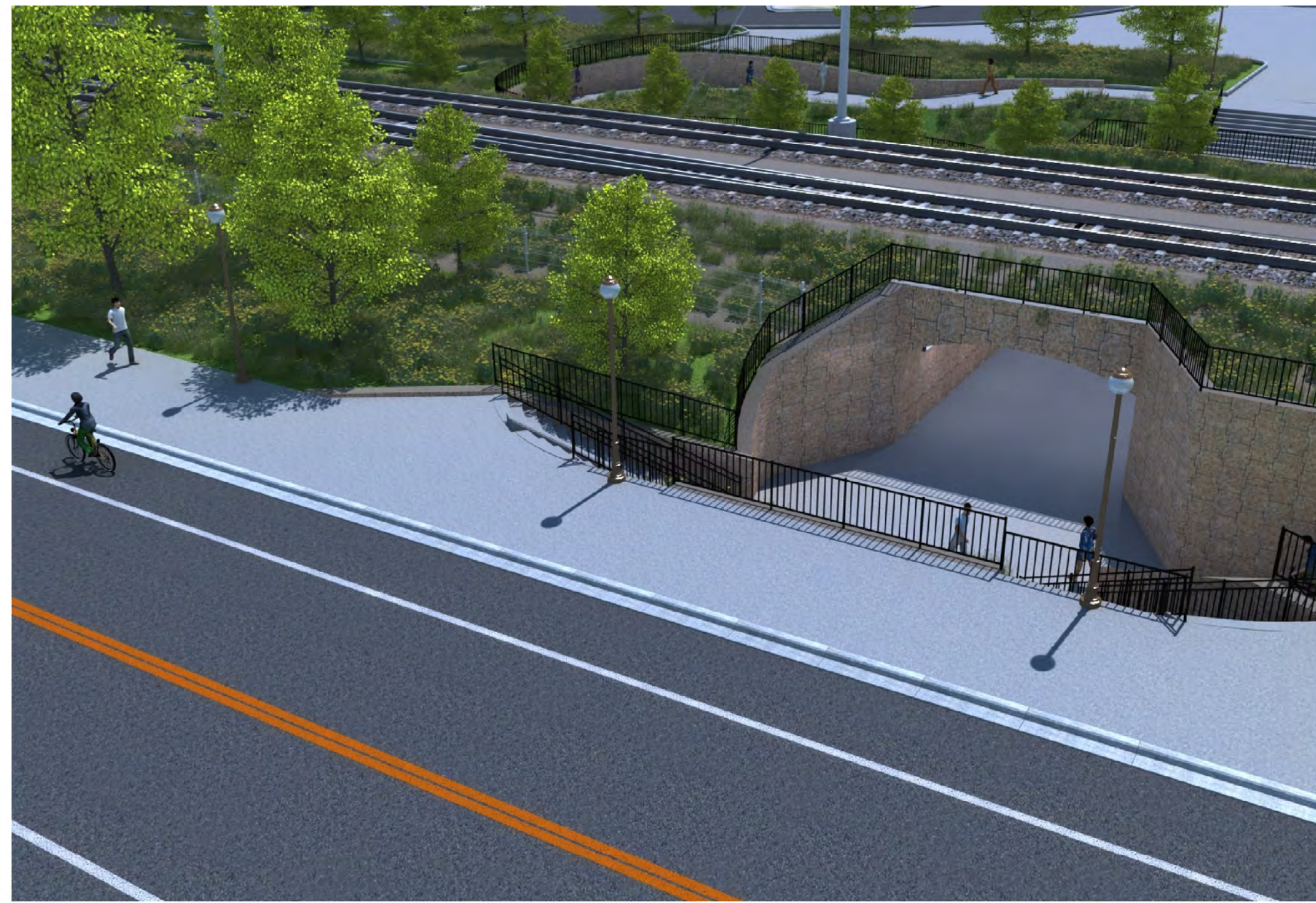


UNDERCROSSING ELEVATION - LOOKING SOUTH





Alma Street - Looking Southwest



Alma Street - Looking Southwest



Alma Street - Looking Northwest



Alma Street - Looking East



Alma Street - Looking Northeast

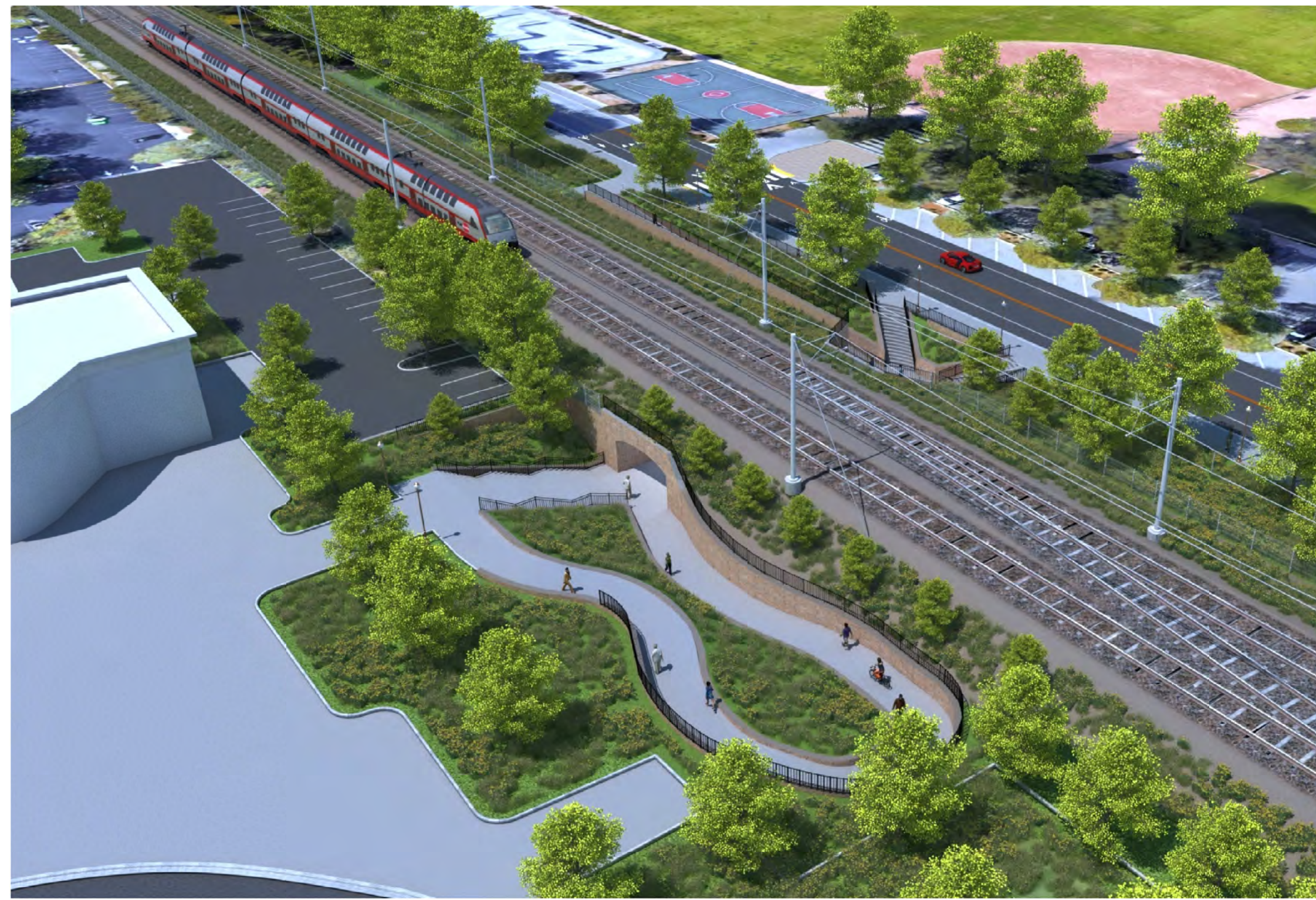


Alma Street - Looking Northwest

PRELIMINARY
FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

**Middle Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Rail Crossing Study
Concept 1 - 3D Renderings**





Middle Plaza - Looking Northeast



Middle Plaza - Looking Southeast



Middle Plaza - Looking East



Middle Plaza - Looking Southeast



Middle Plaza - Looking South



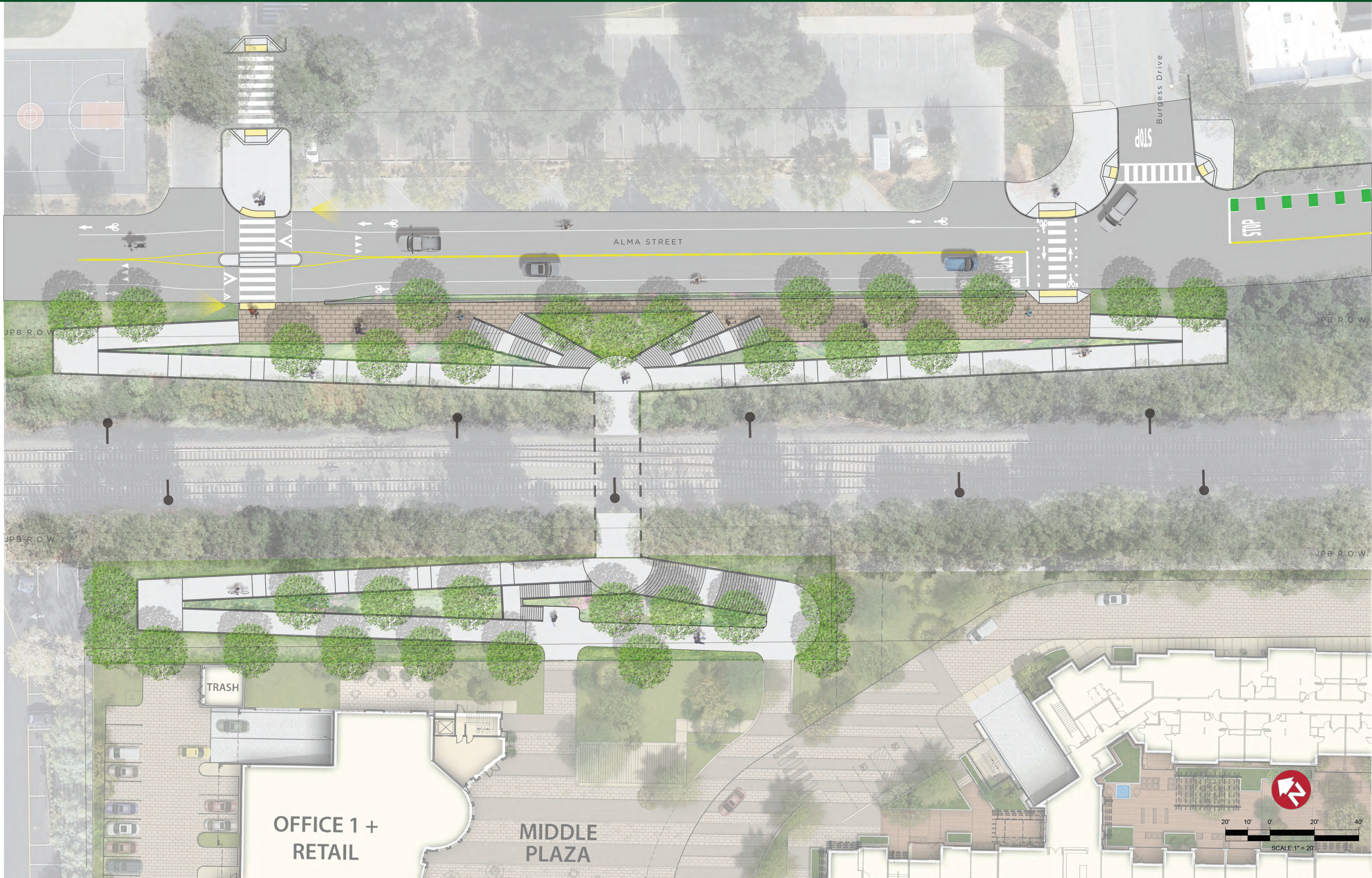
Middle Plaza - Looking Northeast

PRELIMINARY
FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

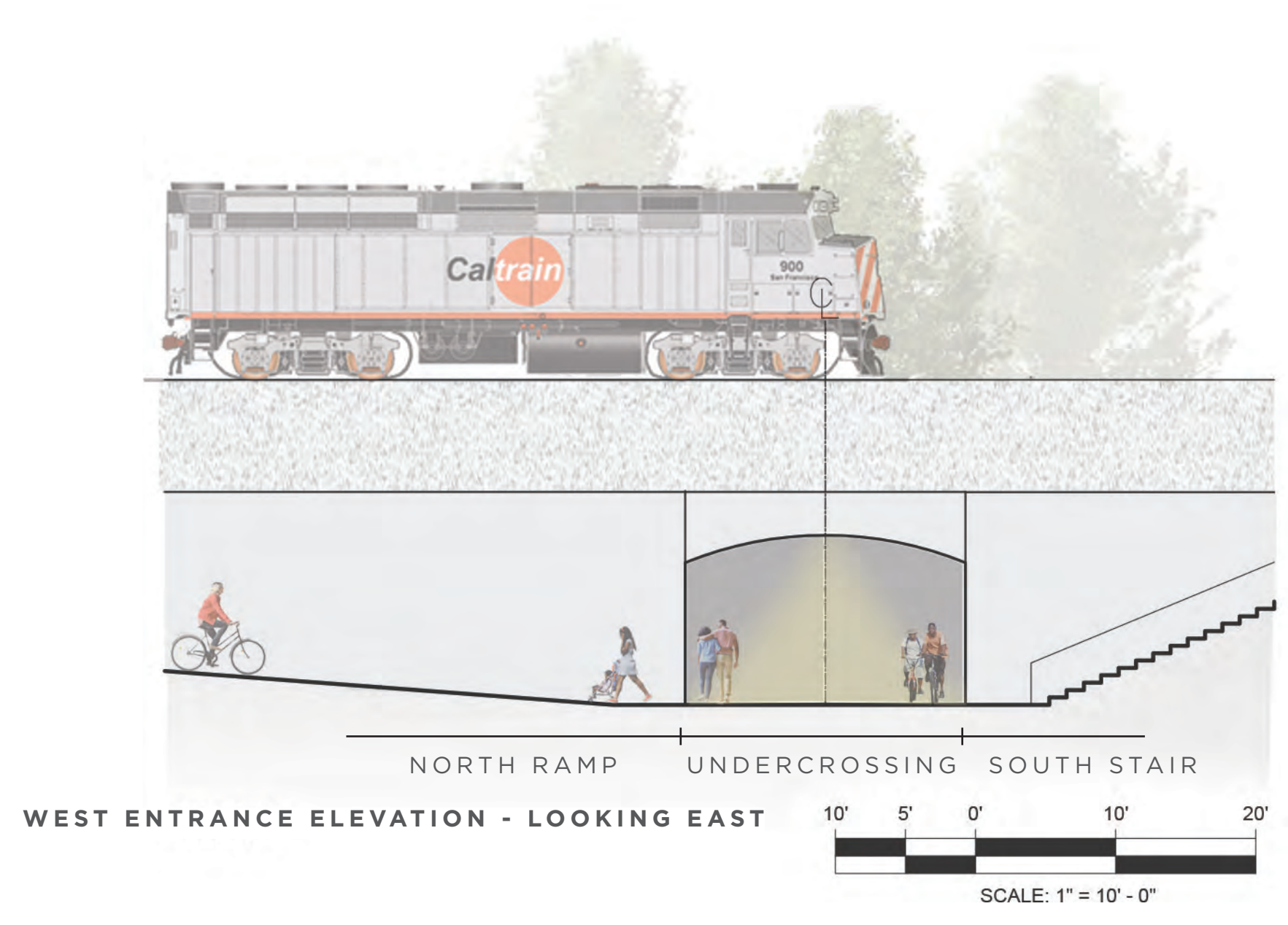
**Middle Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Rail Crossing Study
Concept 1 - 3D Renderings**

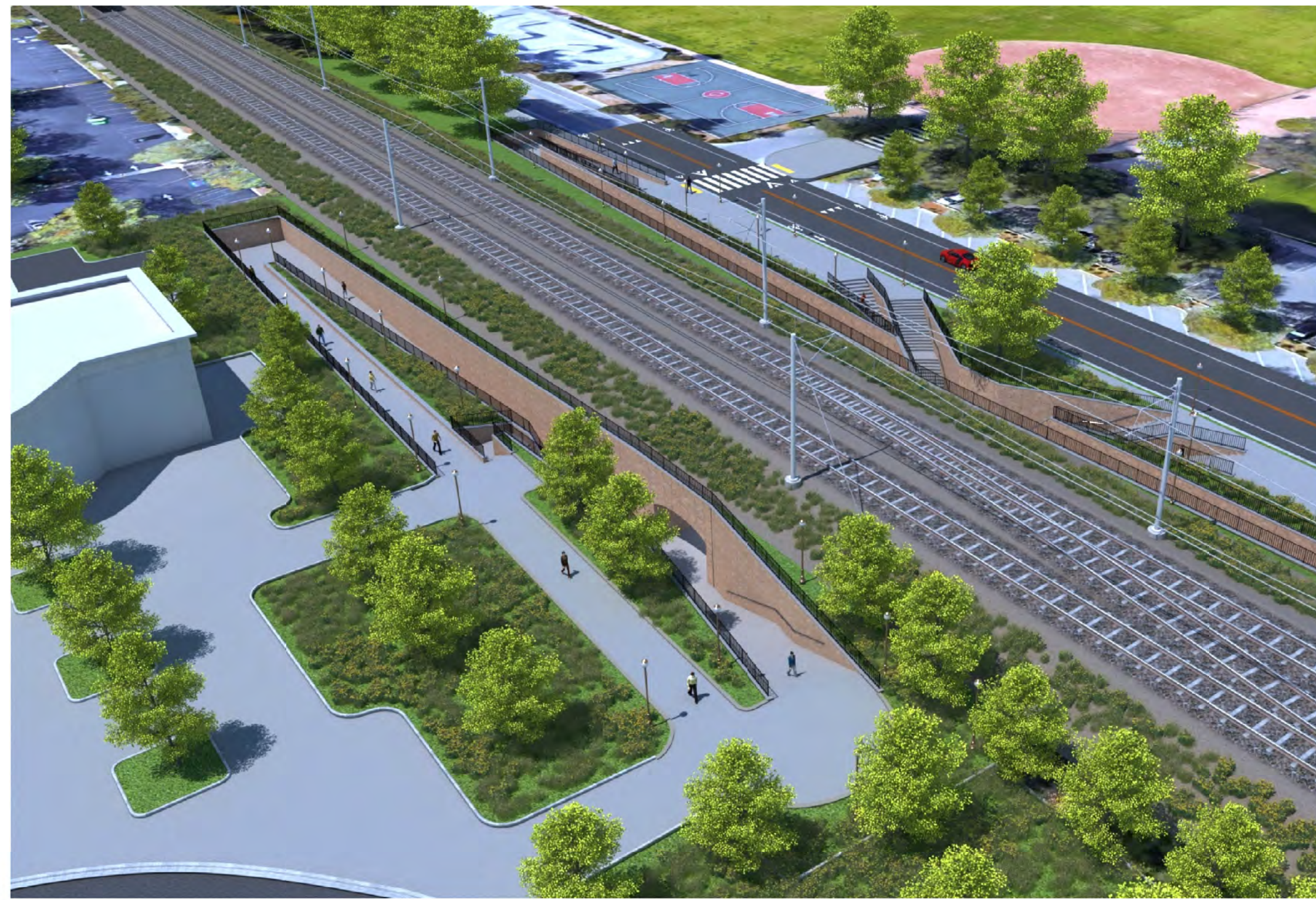


Middle Avenue Undercrossing - Concept 2 Plan



Middle Avenue Undercrossing - Concept 2 Elevations





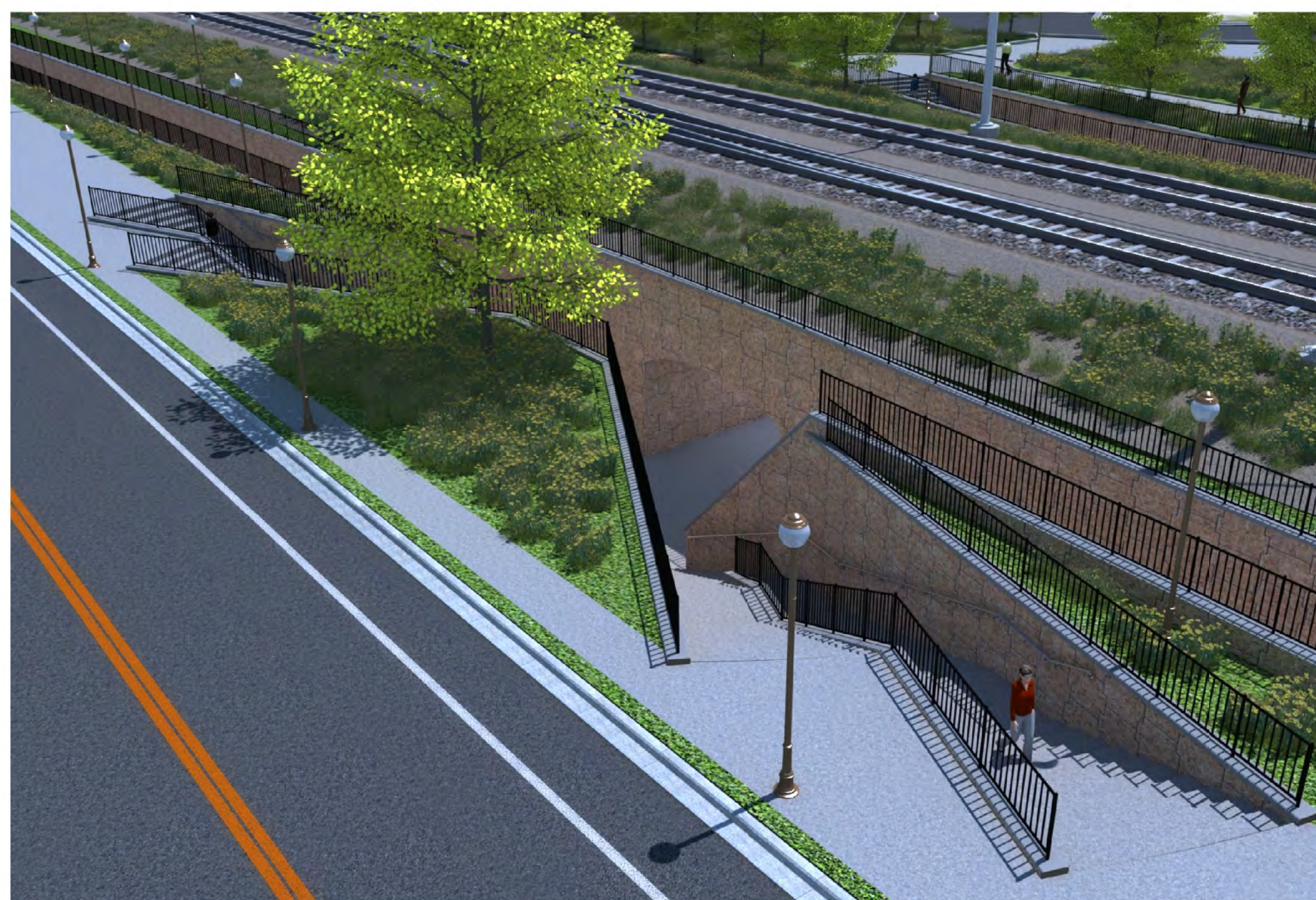
Middle Plaza - Looking Northeast



Middle Plaza - Looking Southeast



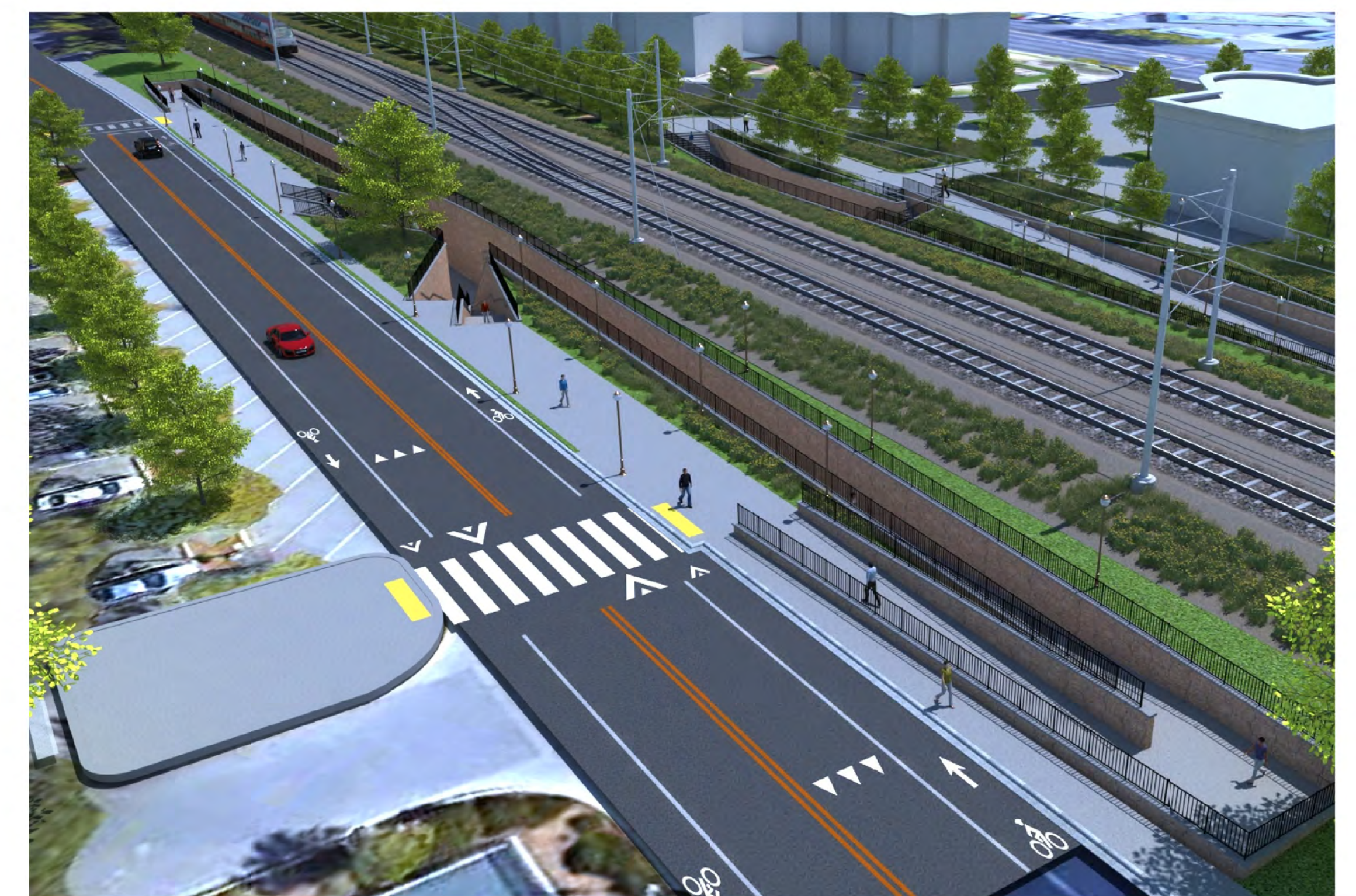
Middle Plaza - Looking North



Alma Street - Looking Southwest



Alma Street - Looking Northwest



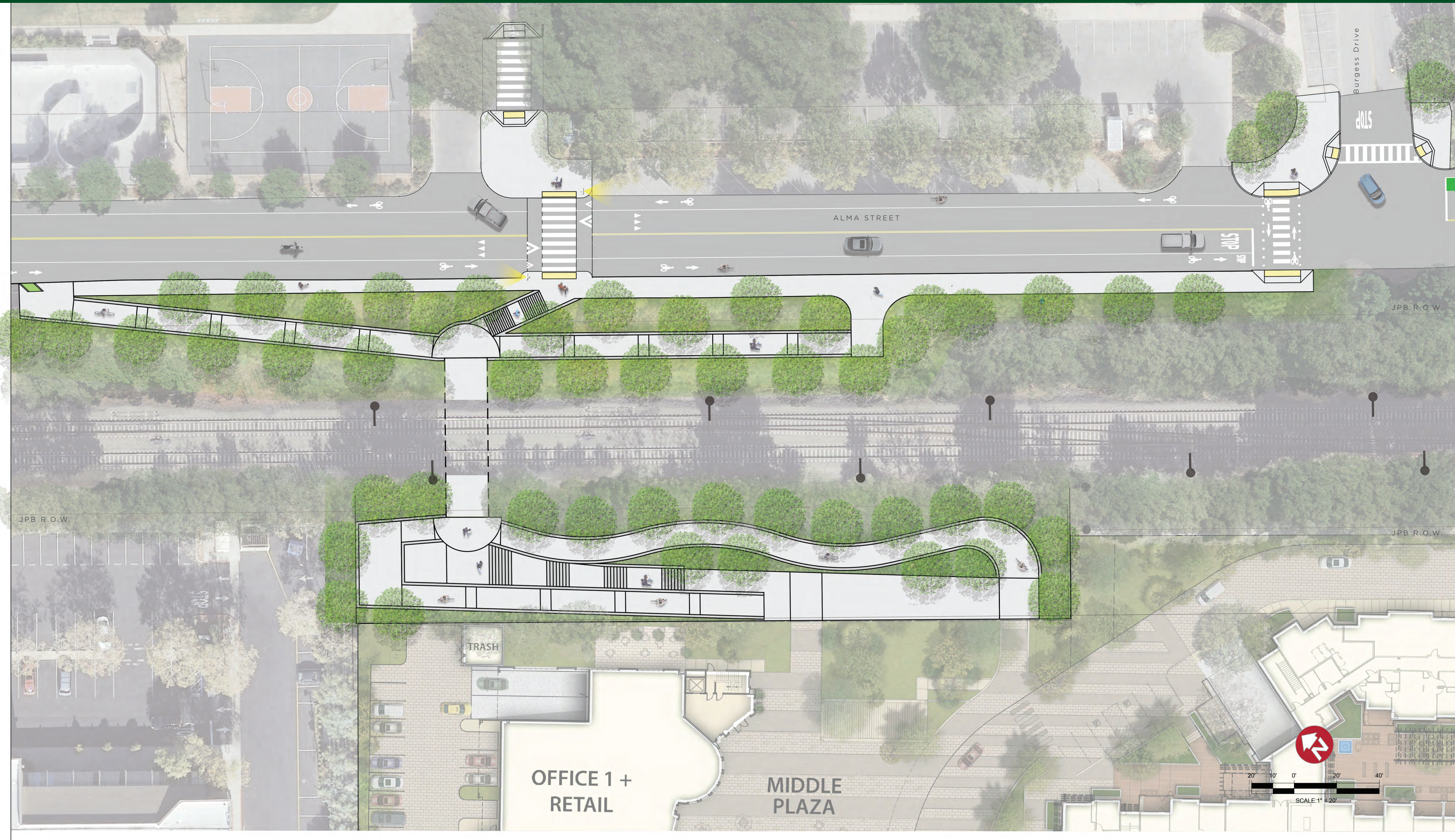
Alma Street - Looking Southwest

PRELIMINARY
FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

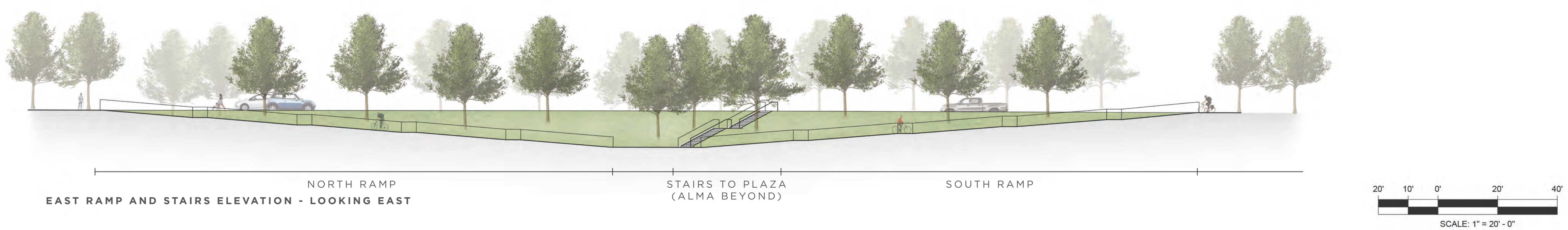
**Middle Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Rail Crossing Study
Concept 2 - 3D Renderings**



Middle Avenue Undercrossing - Concept 3 Plan

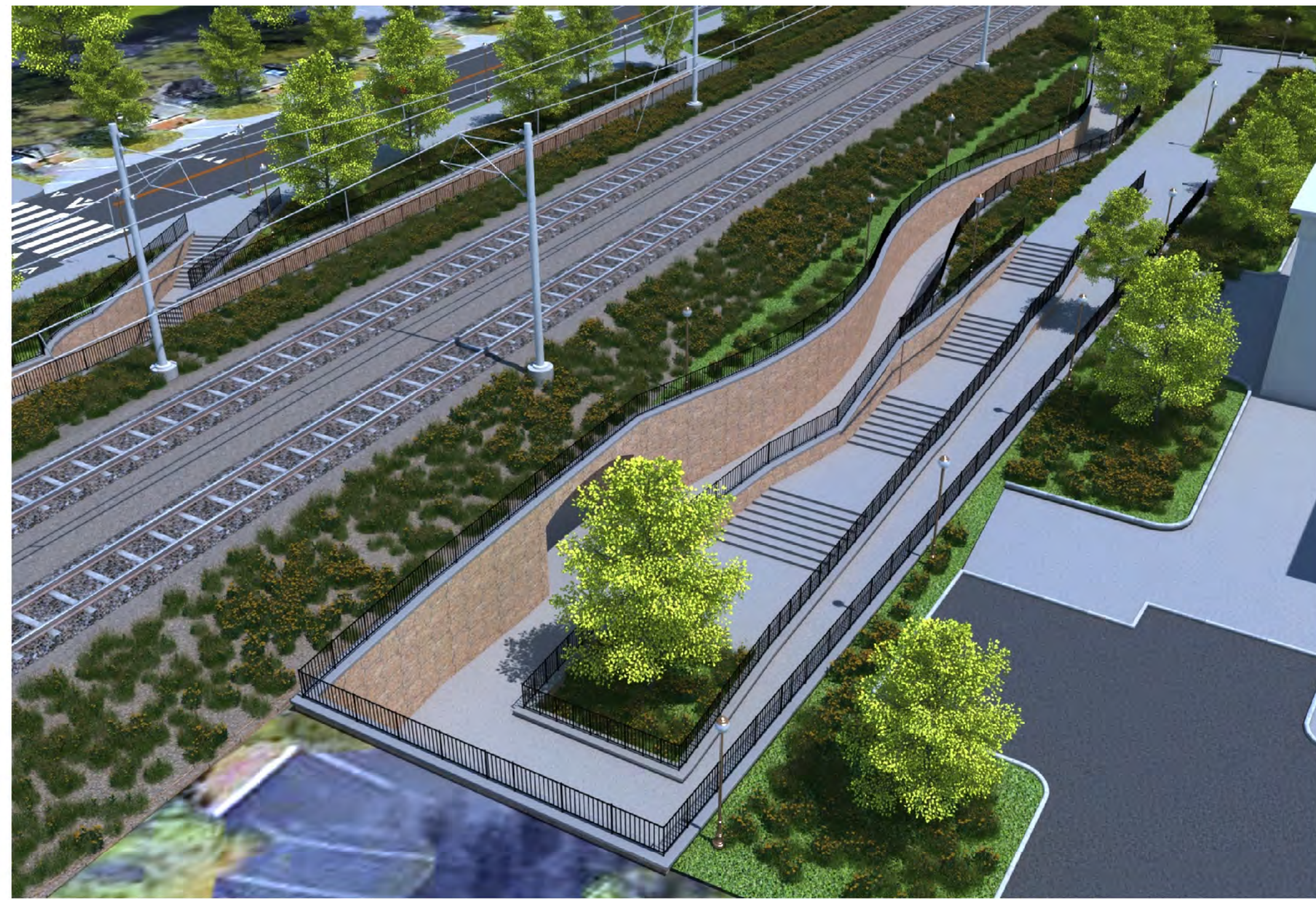


Middle Avenue Undercrossing - Concept 3 Elevations





Middle Plaza - Looking Northeast



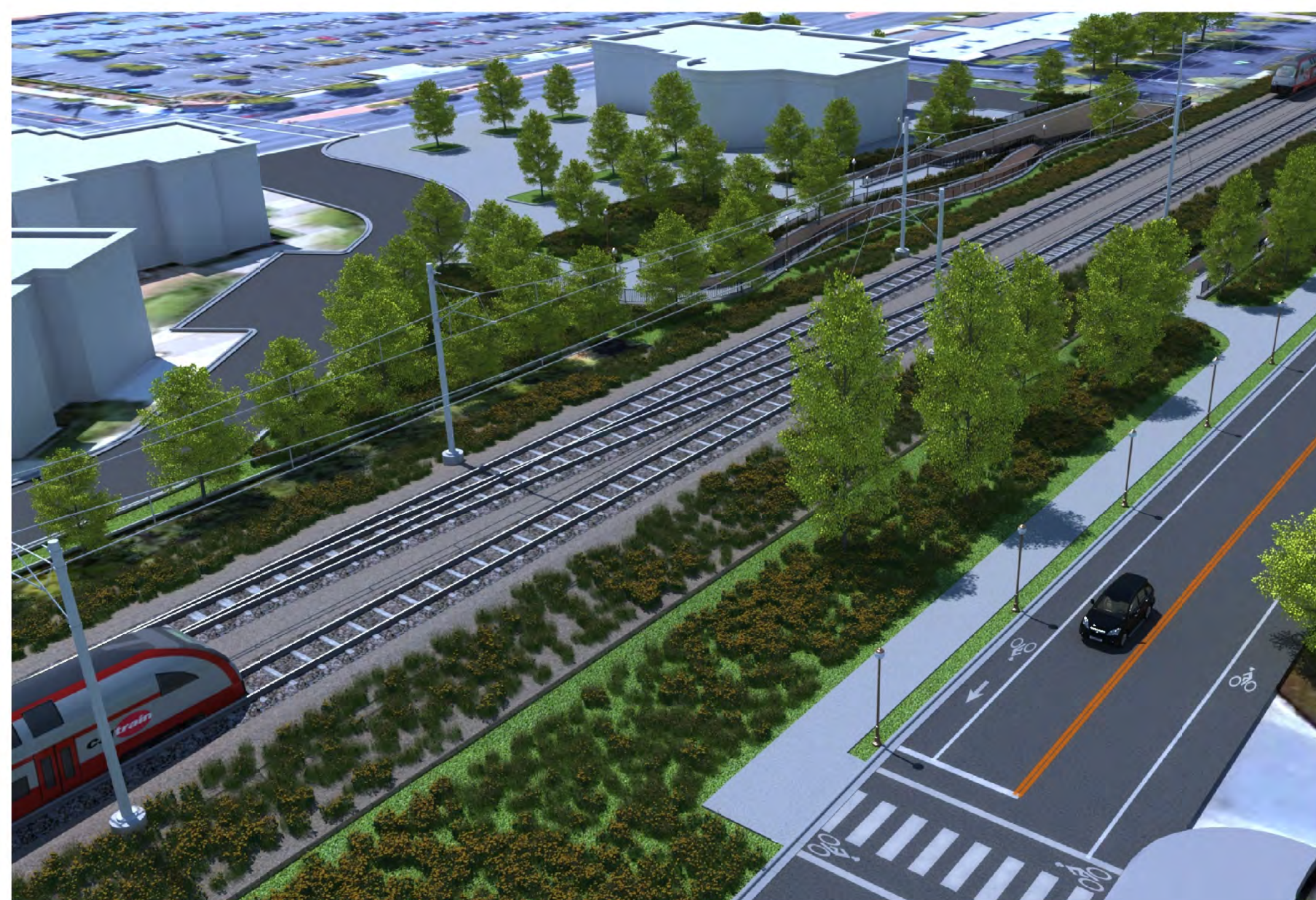
Middle Plaza - Looking Southeast



Middle Plaza - Looking Northeast



Alma Street - Looking Northwest



Alma Street - Looking Northwest



Alma Street - Looking Southwest

PRELIMINARY
FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

**Middle Avenue Pedestrian and Bicycle Rail Crossing Study
Concept 3 - 3D Renderings**

