

Complete Streets Commission



REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Date: 12/11/2024
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Location: [Zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join) – ID# 845 2506 8381 and
City Council Chambers
751 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

Members of the public can listen to the meeting and participate using the following methods.

How to participate in the meeting

- Access the meeting, in-person, at City Council Chambers
- Access the meeting real-time online at:
[Zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join) – Meeting ID 845 2506 8381
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(669) 900-6833
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Regular Session

A. Call To Order

B. Roll Call

C. Reports and Announcements

Under “Reports and Announcements,” staff and Commissioners may communicate general information of interest regarding matters within the jurisdiction of the Commission. No Commission discussion or action can occur on any of the presented items.

D. Public Comment

Under “Public Comment,” the public may address the Commission on any subject not listed on the agenda. Each speaker may address the Commission once under public comment for a limit of three minutes. You are not required to provide your name or City of residence, but it is helpful. The Commission cannot act on items not listed on the agenda and, therefore, the Commission cannot respond to non-agenda issues brought up under public comment other than to provide general information.

E. Regular Business

- E1. Accept the Complete Streets Commission minutes for November 13, 2024 ([Attachment](#))
- E2. Provide feedback on Middle Avenue and El Camino Real intersection signal and conceptual geometric improvements ([Staff Report #24-012-CC](#))

F. Informational Items

- F1. Update on major project status
- F2. Tentative Complete Streets Commission agenda ([Attachment](#))

G. Committee/Subcommittee Reports

H. Adjournment

At every Regular Meeting of the Commission, in addition to the Public Comment period where the public shall have the right to address the Commission on any matters of public interest not listed on the agenda, members of the public have the right to directly address the Commission on any item listed on the agenda at a time designated by the Chair, either before or during the Commission's consideration of the item.

At every Special Meeting of the Commission, members of the public have the right to directly address the Commission on any item listed on the agenda at a time designated by the Chair, either before or during consideration of the item. For appeal hearings, appellant and applicant shall each have 10 minutes for presentations.

If you challenge any of the items listed on this agenda in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City of Menlo Park at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Any writing that is distributed to a majority of the Commission by any person in connection with an agenda item is a public record (subject to any exemption under the Public Records Act) and is available by request by emailing the city clerk at jaherren@menlopark.gov. Persons with disabilities, who require auxiliary aids or services in attending or participating in Commission meetings, may call the City Clerk's Office at 650-330-6620.

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REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – DRAFT



Date: 11/13/2024
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Location: Teleconference and
City Council Chambers
751 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025

Regular Session

A. Call To Order

Chair Cole called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Present: Altman, Bailey, Cole, Ierokomos, King
Absent: Cebrian, Rascoff
Staff: Senior Transportation Engineer Kevin Chen, Senior Transportation Engineer Kristiann Choy

C. Reports and Announcements

The Commission received reports on City Council actions since the Oct. 9 Complete Streets Commission meeting.

D. Public Comment

None.

E. Regular Business

E1. Accept the Complete Streets Commission minutes for October 9, 2024 (Attachment)

ACTION: Motion and second (Cole/ Altman), to accept the Complete Streets Commission minutes for October 9, 2024, passed 5-0-2 (Cebrian and Rascoff absent).

E2. Receive an update on the San Mateo County US 101 Crossing Improvement Plan – Active 101 (Presentation)

Staff Chen and San Mateo County Transportation Authority staff Charlise Chang and Peter Skinner made the presentation.

The Commission discussed the outreach process, evaluation metrics, project prioritization process, incorporation between active 101 projects and connecting local projects, other actionable requests such as street cleaning and extending the survey deadline, funding sources and overall project schedule.

E3. Provide feedback and recommend that the City Council accept the Comprehensive Shuttle Study

Report (Staff Report #24-011-CSC)

Staff Choy and Nelson/Nygaard consultant Marvin Ranaldson made the presentation (Attachment).

The Commission discussed benefits of local shuttle services, service costs per rider, major differences between the three plan options, service awareness and outreach process, bus stop amenities, wheel chair and disability accommodations, services from nearby public agencies and private companies and next steps.

ACTION: Motion and second (Cole/ Altman), to accept the Comprehensive Shuttle Study report with more focus on the following items:

- Concerns for wheelchair access users of the Shoppers Shuttle if it were replaced by Transportation Network Company (TNC) service,
- Potential ridership increase with the recommended changes,
- Additional marketing to increase awareness of the shuttle,
- Additional information about ridership and costs per passenger to identify how costs per passenger could be reduced, and
- Other ways to fund the commuter shuttle, passed 5-0-2 (Cebrian and Rascoff absent).

F. Informational Items

F1. Update on major project status

The Commission received updates on ongoing grant status, Nealon Park parking construction, San Mateo County-led Alpine Road Corridor project and upcoming citywide activities/events.

F2. Tentative Complete Streets Commission agenda (Attachment)

G. Committee/Subcommittee Reports

None.

H. Adjournment

Chair Cole adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Kevin Chen, Senior Transportation Engineer



STAFF REPORT

Complete Streets Commission

Meeting Date: 12/11/2024
Staff Report Number: 24-012-CSC

Regular Business: Provide feedback on Middle Avenue and El Camino Real intersection signal and conceptual geometric improvements

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Complete Streets Commission provide feedback on the Middle Avenue and El Camino Real (State Route 82) intersection signal and conceptual geometric improvements.

Policy Issues

This Project is consistent with policies and programs stated in the General Plan Circulation Element (e.g., CIRC-1.7, CIRC-1.8, CIRC-2.7, etc.) These policies seek to maintain a safe, efficient, attractive, user-friendly circulation system that promotes a healthy, safe and active community and quality of life throughout Menlo Park.

This Project is also identified as one of the top priority safety projects in the City's Vision Zero Action Plan (i.e., SIG12). The Plan affirms the City's goal to eliminate all traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2040.

Background

In 2021, the City Council directed staff to initiate the Middle Avenue complete streets project, which included the following key elements:

- Propose traffic calming measures and new bike lane infrastructure along the corridor
- Develop signal and conceptual geometric improvements for the intersection of Middle Avenue and El Camino real. The intersection is owned by the State's Department of Transportation – Caltrans, and any modifications will require Caltrans' approval.

Middle Avenue, a 25 miles per hour (mph) two-lane roadway (i.e., one lane in each direction), is an important part of the Menlo Park transportation network, fronting Safeway Plaza, Nealon and Lyle Parks, senior centers, preschool, church and other community amenities. The corridor is used by people walking, bicycling, and driving for both local and through trips. Children on bicycles use Middle Avenue as a route to Hillview Middle School and Oak Knoll Elementary School. Others use it to access the bicycle bridge at the south end of San Mateo Drive to reach Stanford University or other nearby amenities.

The Middle Avenue complete streets project provides a connection to the future pedestrian and bicycle separated rail crossing near the Middle Plaza at 500 El Camino Real, connecting Alma Street near Burgess Park to the intersection at El Camino Real.

After several rounds of public engagement events and meetings, the City Council approved several traffic calming measures in October 2022 and permanently removed on-street parking on both sides to retain the

pilot buffered bike lanes on May 7. A hyperlink to the City Council staff report is included as Attachment A.

Additionally, staff implemented two pilot projects as a result of community feedback and direction from the City Council:

- Nealon Park frontage parking: reconfigured the parallel parking spaces to back-in angle parking spaces and continue to monitor parking demand and safety.
- Blake Street: Closed vehicular access to/ from Middle Avenue and continue to monitor local circulation to College Avenue.

Middle Avenue and El Camino Real

While Caltrans has ownership of the intersection, the City Council recognized its importance as a key connector and included intersection safety evaluation as part of the Middle Avenue complete streets project.

El Camino Real has a signed speed of 35 mph while carrying 6 lanes (i.e., 3 lanes in each direction) through Middle Avenue. El Camino Real is an important north-south regional corridor for the City. The corridor and its signals are owned and operated by Caltrans.

Based on community feedback and field observations, the evaluations would include:

- Intersection signal:
 - Remove conflict between vehicles turning left onto El Camino Real and oncoming traffic/ pedestrians/ bicyclists crossing El Camino Real,
 - Implement no right turn on red (RTOR) from Middle Avenue,
- Intersection geometric – develop conceptual designs to enhance pedestrian and bicycle safety

Analysis

Middle Avenue and El Camino Real – signal improvements

To properly conduct this evaluation while Middle Plaza is not yet fully occupied, staff extracted the projected Middle Plaza volumes from its 2016 environmental impact study and added to an intersection count that was conducted in late 2023 (Attachment B). Similar to other similar studies, this evaluation focused on the morning and evening commute hours.

Currently, the Middle Avenue left turn signal phase at El Camino Real is called a “permissive” left turn phase. A permissive left turn phase means vehicles wanting to make a left turn onto El Camino Real must yield to: 1) oncoming traffic from the opposite direction of Middle Avenue, and 2) pedestrians/ bicyclists that are crossing El Camino Real. RTOR is allowed on Middle Avenue.

The El Camino Real left turn signal phase at Middle Avenue is called a “protected” left turn phase. A protected left turn phase means vehicles wanting to make a left turn onto Middle Avenue or Middle Plaza has the right of way and can turn without any conflict. RTOR is allowed on El Camino Real.

Table 1 summarizes the existing conditions and the four alternatives that were evaluated. All alternatives will require Caltrans approval.

In general:

- Most alternatives, except alternative 1, will extend the vehicle queue lengths on El Camino Real.
- Alternatives with a “no RTOR” operation (i.e., Alts 1, 2 and 3) will extend the vehicle right turn queue lengths on Middle Avenue.

Table 1: Evaluation alternatives on Middle Avenue at El Camino Real			
Alternatives	Lane configuration ¹	Signal phasing ²	Key takeaway (compared to existing conditions)
Existing	LT + R	Permissive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Con: left turning vehicles from Middle Ave. conflict with oncoming traffic/ pedestrians/ bicyclists crossing ECR.
Alt 1 – Existing with no RTOR	LT + R	Permissive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro: most likely to be approved by Caltrans due to minimal impact to ECR. Con: left turning vehicles from Middle Ave. conflict with oncoming traffic/ pedestrians/ bicyclists crossing ECR. Con: right turn queue on Middle Ave. will worsen.
Alt 2 – Protected left with no RTOR	L + TR	Protected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro: resolve left turning vehicles from Middle Ave. conflict with oncoming traffic/ pedestrians/ bicyclists crossing ECR. Con: right turn queue on Middle Ave. will worsen. Con: ECR queue will worsen due to reduced green time.
Alt 2A – Protected left with RTOR	L + TR	Protected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro: resolve left turning vehicles from Middle Ave. conflict with oncoming traffic/ pedestrians/ bicyclists crossing ECR. Con: ECR queue will worsen due to reduced green time.
Alt 3 – Dedicated bike signal phase with no RTOR	L + TR	Protected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro: resolve left turning vehicles from Middle Ave. conflict with oncoming traffic/ pedestrians/ bicyclists crossing ECR. Pro: dedicated bike phase crossing El Camino Real Con: require more signal time and impact signal coordination. Con: least likely to be approved by Caltrans due to significant impact to ECR. Con: right turn queue on Middle Ave. will worsen.
<p>Notes: RTOR = right turn on red</p> <p>1. LT = shared left & through lane, L = left turn only lane, TR = shared through & right lane, R = right turn only lane.</p> <p>2. Permissive = left turning vehicles need to yield to oncoming traffic and crossing pedestrian/bicyclists. Protected = left turning vehicles have no conflict and does not to yield.</p>			

A transportation technical analysis software (i.e., Synchro/SimTraffic) was used to evaluate the morning and evening commute hour periods. Table 2 summarize the key vehicle queueing results.

In general:

- All Alternatives will have vehicle demands that exceed the existing turn lane storage capacities.
- Alternative 2A would remove the conflict between vehicles turning left from Middle Avenue onto El Camino Real and oncoming traffic/ pedestrians/ bicyclists crossing El Camino Real without significantly extending the vehicle queue lengths.
- Alternative 3 would remove the conflict and provide a dedicated bicycle signal phase on Middle Avenue but also significantly extend the vehicle queue lengths, particularly on El Camino Real.

Table 2: Middle Avenue and El Camino Real Alternative evaluation results ¹						
Approach	Lane storage (ft ²)	Existing (ft)	Alt 1 – Ex. w/ no RTOR (ft)	Alt 2 – Prot. Left w/ no RTOR (ft)	Alt 2A – Prot. Left w/ RTOR (ft)	Alt 3 – Dedicated bike phase w/ no RTOR (ft)
Eastbound Middle Ave.						
EBL	150 turn lane & 980 to Blake St.	390 (420)	+1,110 (+310)	+880 (+180)	+330 (+0)	+1,110 (+0)
EBT				+30 (+90)	+50 (+20)	+0 (+50)
EBR		340 (290)	+30 (+110)			
Westbound Middle Ave.						
WBL	80 turn lane & 250 to garage entrance	100 (190)	+0 (+0)	-20 (-80)	-30 (-60)	-20 (-70)
WBT				+60 (+110)	+40 (+90)	+50 (+95)
WBR		40 (70)	+0 (+30)			
Northbound ECR						
NBL	280 turn lane & 1070 to Cambridge Ave.	260 (410)	+10 (+0)	+110 (+0)	+60 (+0)	+160 (+0)
NBT		330 (710)	+0 (+100)	+80 (+500)	+0 (+530)	+600 (+660)
Southbound ECR						
SBL	220 turn lane & 830 to Roble Ave.	130 (170)	+30 (+10)	+120 (+10)	+90 (+0)	+70 (+0)
SBT		450 (510)	+0 (+0)	+20 (+20)	+70 (+0)	+0 (+0)
Notes: ## (##) = morning (evening) commute hour						
1. Results represent the 95 percentile queue length.						
2. Generally a vehicle is assumed to be 22' to 25' in length.						

Middle Avenue and El Camino Real – geometric

To provide additional pedestrian and bicycle improvements, staff explored many of the current industry design standards, including: dedicated bike lanes through the intersection (can be implemented with or without a dedicated bike phase), a protected corner design where pedestrian and bicyclists will have a dedicated area while waiting to cross the intersection. Attachment C is a conceptual design that could achieve these desired improvements.

However, these intersection corner improvements will likely require relocation of several large underground and above-ground utilities such as, but not limited to, storm drain lines/ pipes, signal equipment and street lights.

Furthermore, given the existing public right of way has already been fully utilized for the recently installed improvements, any additional corner improvements will likely require the establishment of public access easements on private property, or even an acquisition of the necessary property, which could be a lengthy and expensive process.

All of these design constraints will significantly impact the cost, schedule and the feasibility of implementing these geometric recommendations.

As a result, the signal improvements and geometric improvements would likely continue on separate project paths.

Commission feedback

Staff is soliciting commission feedback on the following intersection improvements:

- Intersection signal – which alternative should be pursued for further analysis?
- Intersection geometry – is there consensus to move forward with refining the design of the protected intersection or do the constraints (utility relocation, ROW acquisition) exceed the threshold to move forward with further design?

Next steps

Staff will incorporate Commission feedback, if any, into these findings and provide a final recommendation to the City Council. The recommendation will include a general outline of the required steps to obtain Caltrans approval for the recommended signal improvements.

Staff will continue to explore potential opportunities to design and construct the final recommended geometric improvements.

Impact on City Resources

Resources expended thus far for the evaluations were provided through the Middle Avenue complete streets project budget of \$1.4 million, which consist of San Mateo County Transportation Authority Measure W Pedestrian and Bicycle Program Fund (\$1.2 million) and the City's Transportation Impact Fees (\$0.2 million).

Additional budget will need to be secure for the engineering design and construction of these signal and geometric improvements.

Environmental Review

The project is statutorily exempt as identified by Public Resource Code Section 21080.25 which defines the California Environmental Quality Act as not applicable to "pedestrian and bicycle facilities that improve safety, access or mobility, including new facilities, within the public right-of-way." A Notice of Exemption was filed Feb. 27, 2023 for the Project.

Public Notice

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Additional public outreach was achieved by sharing meeting information on the project website and sending email to the project interest list.

Attachments

- A. Hyperlink – May 7, 2024 City Council staff report:
<https://menlopark.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/agendas-and-minutes/city-council/2024->

[meetings/agendas/20240507/n1-20240507-cc-no-parking-middle-ave.pdf](#)

- B. Morning and evening commute hour intersection volumes
- C. Conceptual geometric design

Report prepared by:
Kevin Chen, Senior Transportation Engineer

Report reviewed by:
Kristiann Choy, Senior Transportation Engineer

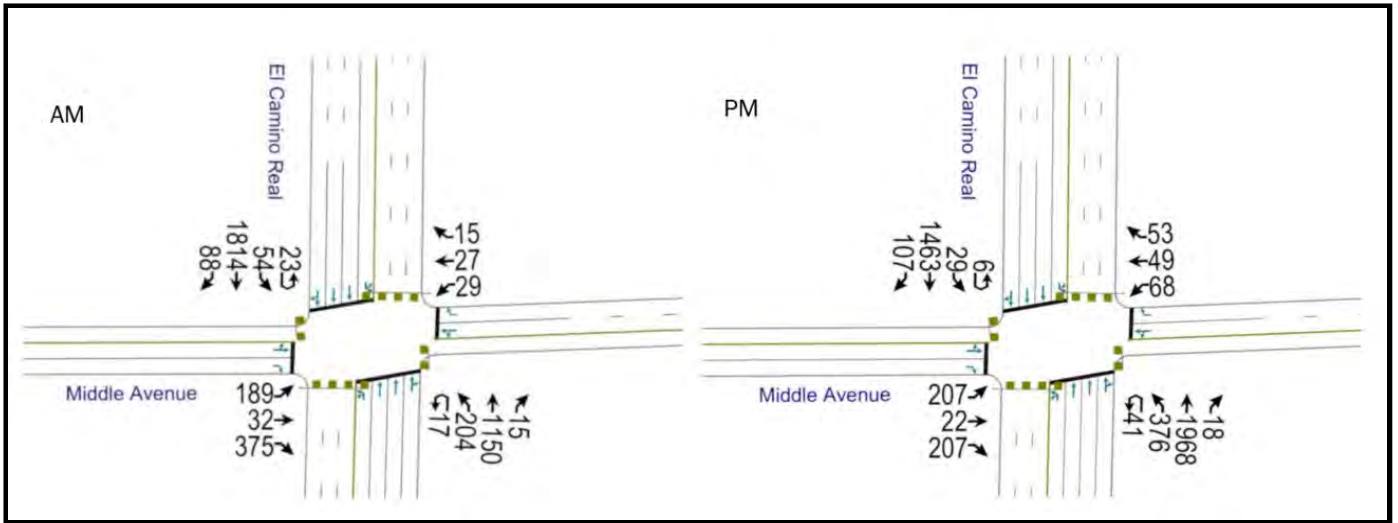


Figure 1: Morning and evening commute hour traffic volumes for evaluation (i.e., existing conditions plus projected Middle Plaza project volumes)

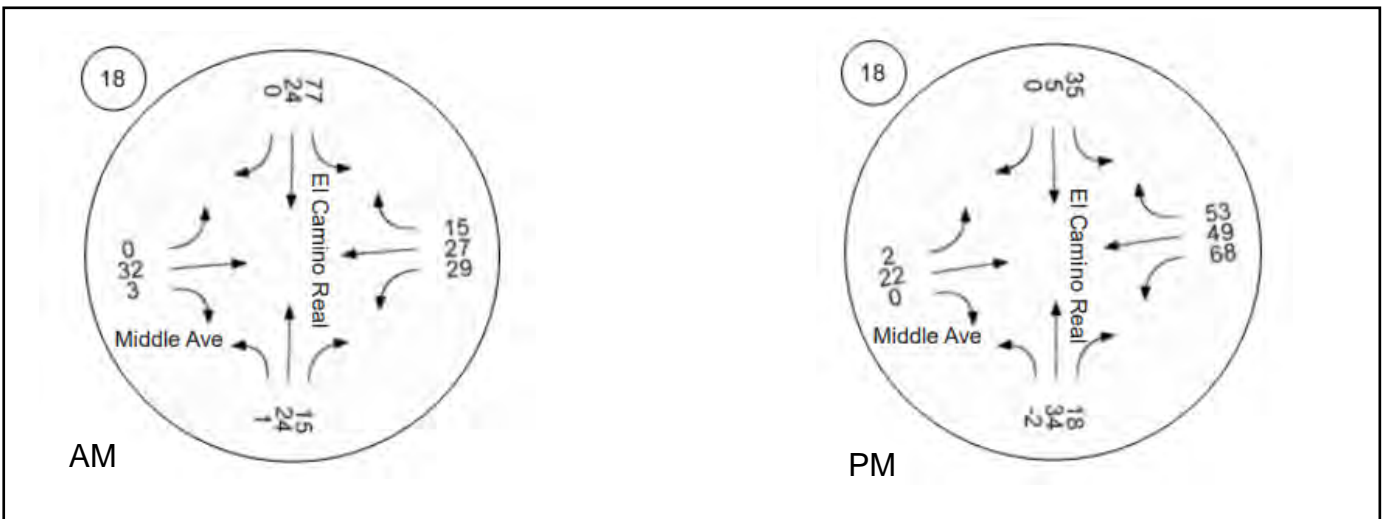


Figure 2: Projected Middle Plaza morning and evening commute hour traffic volumes (source: https://www.menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/13068/Ch33_Transportation-Traffic?bidId=)

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Figure 1: Existing conditions (Sept. 2024)

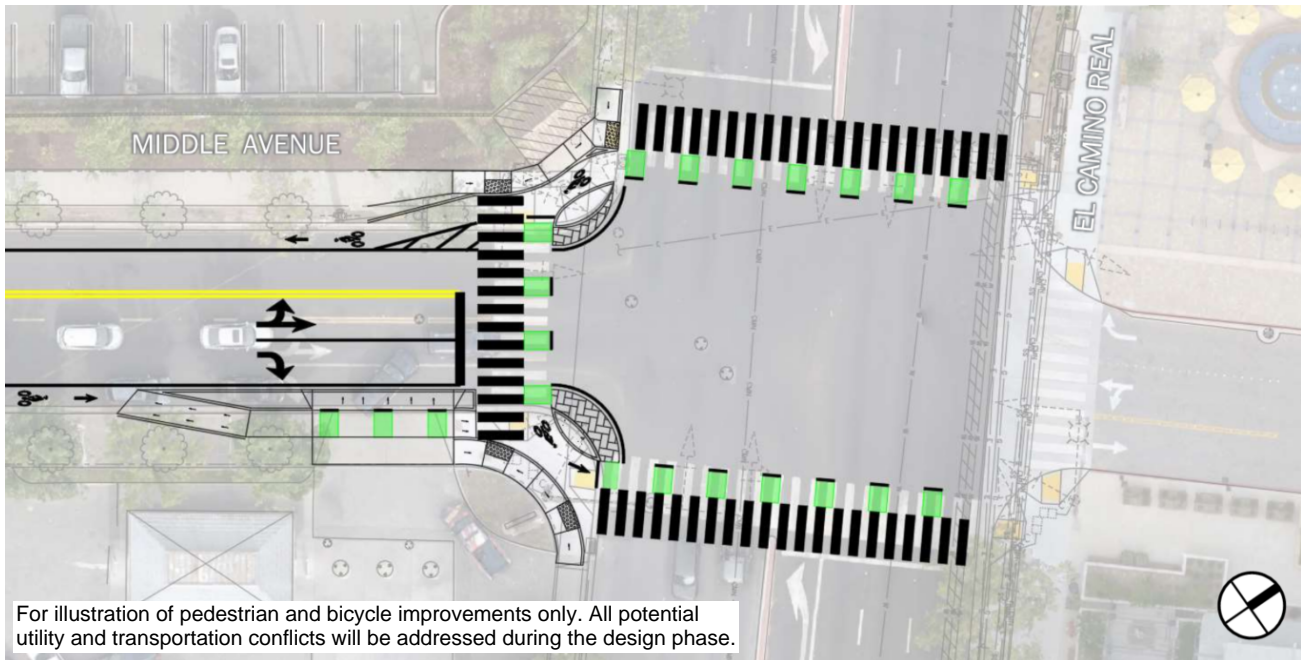


Figure 2: Conceptual geometric design - protected corners

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Tentative Complete Streets Commission agenda			
#	Title	Item type	Commission action
1	Vision Zero Action Plan strategies/program implementation	Regular	Recommendation
2	AB 413 Daylighting Implementation Plan	Regular	Recommendation
3	Middlefield Road safe streets project	Regular	Recommendation
4	Vision Zero Implementation Plan – slow street program	Regular	Recommendation
5	Grand Boulevard Initiative Presentation from SamTrans	Informational	No action

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