



**COMMUNITY DESIGN AND TRANSPORTATION (CDT)
BLOCK GRANT CAPITAL FUNDS APPLICATION**

SECTION ONE: PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Title	California Avenue -Transit Hub Corridor Enhancement
Project Description	The California Avenue-Transit Hub Corridor Enhancement project between El Camino Real and the California Avenue Caltrain Station includes the implementation of new community identity markers; bicycle-parking and community focused improvements at the California Ave - Caltrain Plaza; transit-stop focused improvements,, traffic calming improvements such as 4-to 2-traffic lane reduction & raised table crosswalks, enhanced roadway delineation and parking stations, high visibility pedestrian-activated flashing beacons, and bulb-out improvements throughout the corridor that also function as outdoor dining areas, and a new outdoor community stage.
Grant Funds Requested	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CMAQ \$ 1,100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> TE \$ _____ (Construction Phase Only)
Local Match (20% Min/phase)	\$300,000
Total Project Cost	\$1,600,000 (Design & Construction)
Member Agency	City of Palo Alto
Contact Person	Jaime O. Rodriguez, Chief Transportation official
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Other Project Partners	



SECTION ONE: PROJECT SUMMARY

1. *Issue statement that clearly identifies the purpose, need and expected outcome(s) of the project.*

The California Avenue-Transit Hub Corridor Enhancement project will transform California Avenue between El Camino Real and California Avenue Caltrain station into a community corridor with transit, bicycle and pedestrian focused transportation treatments; renovate the California Avenue Caltrain Plaza into a vibrant hub for bicycle-commuters and visitors; and provide best-practice pedestrian-scaled improvements throughout the corridor to spur on-going economic development activity and growth. The proposed project Plan Line Concept is provided in *Attachment 2 – California Avenue – Transit Hub Corridor Enhancement – Plan Line*.

2. *Include a map and/or photos showing the location of the project within 1/3 mile of a transit station, core and/or corridor; Current and proposed land uses.*

California Avenue – Regional Influence

California Avenue is identified by the VTA as a significant Transit Corridor and Station Area linking El Camino Real with the California Avenue Caltrain station. Located at west end of the project area at El Camino Real is the future Bus Rapid Transit station identified as part of the VTA's efforts to comply with the Grand Boulevard Initiative project. The VTA is currently completing the design phase of the Bus Rapid Transit project and the City of Palo Alto is an active participant in that process. A strong pedestrian and bicycle focused corridor along California Avenue as proposed through this project will provide the final link between the Bus Rapid Transit and the California Avenue Caltrain station. Within the same track right-of-way as the Caltrain facility is the future California High Speed Rail project.

The California Avenue Caltrain station serves the Stanford University Research Park, adjacent nationally-recognized high tech centers with companies such as Hewlett-Packard, Facebook, and Genencor, VMWare, and a transit-oriented conscious community adjacent to the station area with Palo Alto Central Condominiums serving as the first transit-oriented development in the region. The California Avenue Caltrain station boasts some of the highest bicycle activity in the County of Santa Clara with over 100 peak hour boarding; this is echoed with the high amount of bicycle activity on California Avenue throughout the day.

Palo Alto is participating in the VTA's Bike Share program that will continue to enhance activity at the California Avenue Caltrain station. In addition, the City is entering into discussions with adjacent high-tech centers to sponsor additional Bike Share pod stations to be located at private facilities to further expand the Bike Share program and specifically, to promote bicycle ridership to California Avenue.



California Av – Transit Hub Corridor Enhancements

Valley Transportation Authority – CDT Program

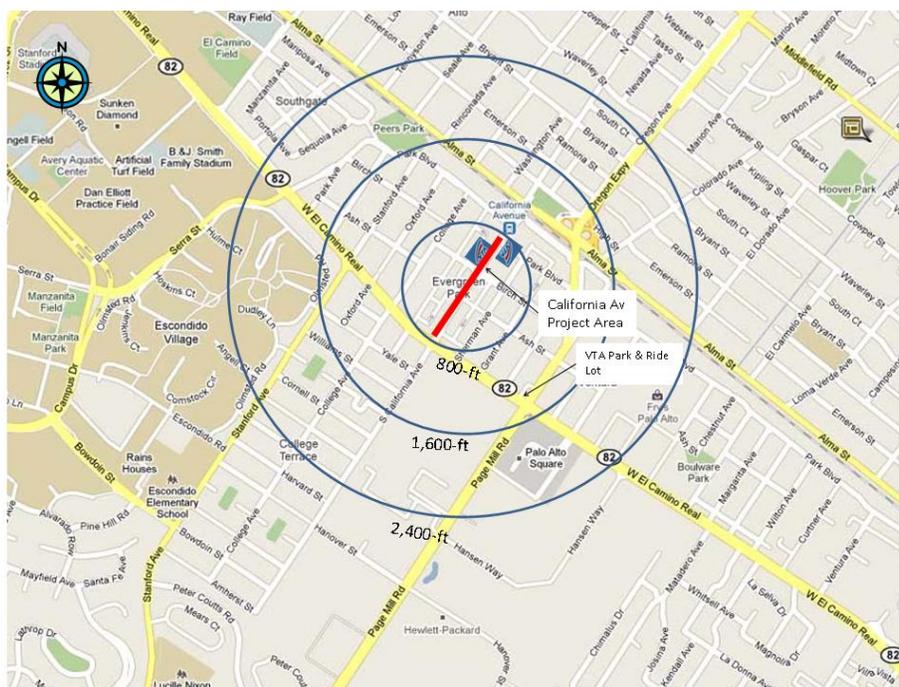
With the amount of regional transit activity in Palo Alto, this project provides a unique opportunity to transform California Avenue into a bicycle and pedestrian corridor with local and regional amenities that continue to promote transit use, support local growth and business, and provide a safer environment for commuters as transit activity in and around the region intensifies. This will be accomplished by deemphasizing vehicle transportation modes through a 4- to 2-vehicle lane reduction, redevelopment of the California Plaza into a bicycle and pedestrian hub, installation of decorative crosswalk speed tables with pedestrian-activated flashing beacon warning systems, and bulb-out treatments that will house unique California Avenue markers and landscape treatments.

Bisecting California Avenue along the project corridor are significant bicycle routes including El Camino Real, identified on the VTA and City bicycle plans, and Park Blvd, an existing Class 2 bike route that is also identified as a future Bike Boulevard on the Palo Alto Bicycle Transportation Plan.

California Avenue – Local Background

California Avenue is currently designated as “Regional/Community Commercial” under Palo Alto’s Comprehensive plan and provides Community focused land uses including dining, personal-service retail, grocery markets, and small office commercial. The project area is surrounded by single-family and multi-unit housing and commercial uses. The City’s Comprehensive Plan includes policies for expanded high-density residential uses on and along the corridor that will benefit from the proposed project by helping to create a unique residential district unlike any other in Palo Alto with distinctive community markers that will be located along El Camino Real and along California Avenue. The markers will provide identify for the community as well as serve to promote community activities and events for visitors, and provide historical information about the community and the city.

Figure 1 – Project Area Map





Provided in Attachment 3 is a more detailed *Project Area Map with Transit Overlay*. Attachment 4 includes a *Local Land Use and Development Activity Map* on and along California Avenue.

A Plan Line of the proposed *California Avenue - Transit Plaza project* is provided in Attachment 1 and highlights public transit connections & improvements, traffic calming treatments, and pedestrian-bicycle enhancements.

3. *Proposed project cost estimate and schedule*

The California Avenue -Transit Hub Corridor Enhancement project is estimated to cost approximately \$1.6M for design & construction. The city is proposing a local match of \$300,000 or 21% for the construction phase of the project.

The environmental and design stages of the project, estimated at \$200,000, will be covered one hundred percent by the City to help expedite the project readiness of the project as funding allocations for construction are processed by the VTA; this represent a total local match for the project of 31%.

To help expedite the project readiness, the City is only requesting funds for the construction stage of the project. The environmental and design stages will be funded 100% by the City as will the street resurfacing component of the project and therefore not included in the project estimates.

The requested *VTA - Project Schedule and Cost Estimate Form* is provided in *Attachment 5*. A more detailed project schedule by task is also provided in *Attachment 6– City of Palo Alto Project Schedule*.

4. *Any ancillary information and Letters of Support that will inform the evaluation process.*

Included in Attachment 10 are Letters of Support for the project from the following agencies or organizations:

- Palo Alto Bicycle Advisory Committee
- Palo Alto Housing Corporation



SECTION TWO: PROJECT NARRATIVE

(Use Section Two to respond to the Project Evaluation sections of CDT Program Goals, Project Context and Setting, Project Readiness, and Project Benefit)

1. CDT PROGRAM GOALS

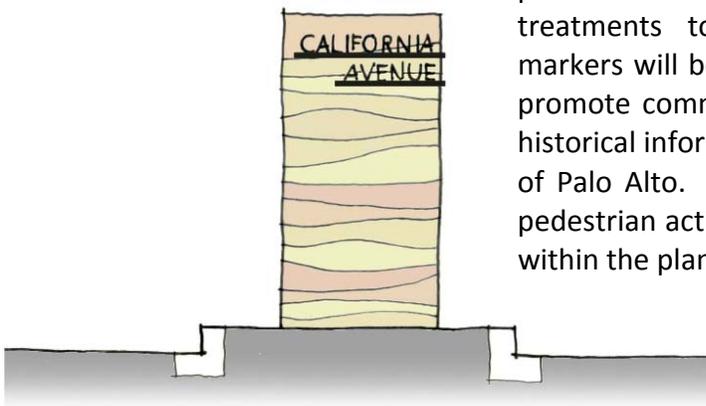
The proposed California Avenue Transit Plaza project is a great example of the City’s efforts to implement the Valley Transportation Authority’s (VTA) – Community Design & Transportation (CDT) policies – Manual of Best Practices. The project includes elements that touch on every aspect of the CDT Program and have been developed through an extensive community outreach process to ensure community support.

The California Avenue Transit Hub Corridor Enhancements project is an extension of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and consistent with the policy recommendations of our Bicycle Transportation Plan. Specific elements consistent with the goals of the CDT program include:

• *Place Making:*

Each of the elements in the proposed plan includes features that will help to make California Avenue a unique district within the City of Palo Alto, Santa Clara County and the Peninsula. On El Camino Real new identify markers, shown in concept as made of *Rammed Earth* structures, are proposed to bring attention to California Avenue and to distinguish the area. The structures serve as both identify markers and establish color patterns and palettes that are continued throughout the project area.

Within the right-of-way of California Avenue each section of the street will be distinctively separated from one another including marked Sharrow travel lanes to be shared between vehicles and bicyclists. Separating the travel lanes and parking lanes will be new 3-ft decorative bands that break up the street and continue the color palette of the identifying markers. To tie the street treatments to the pedestrian new pedestrian-scaled markers will be installed at selected new planter areas to promote community activities and events and to provide historical information about California Avenue and the City of Palo Alto. Large shade trees to encourage continued pedestrian activity along the corridor will also be provided within the planter areas.



Rammed earth entry sign - El Camino Real median



California Av – Transit Hub Corridor Enhancements

Valley Transportation Authority – CDT Program

- *Access by Proximity:*

Proposed Cal Av Plaza
Bicycle Rack w/Bike Map Kiosk



California Avenue is accessed by thousands of travelers on a daily basis as California Avenue is the only entry point to the Caltrain – California Avenue Station. This project will promote continued access to the station and include *Place Making* ties back to El Camino Real where the future Bus Rapid Transit station will serve as a hub for travelers back to Caltrain, enhanced bicycle-focused parking features at the redeveloped California Avenue Plaza will strengthen this tie.

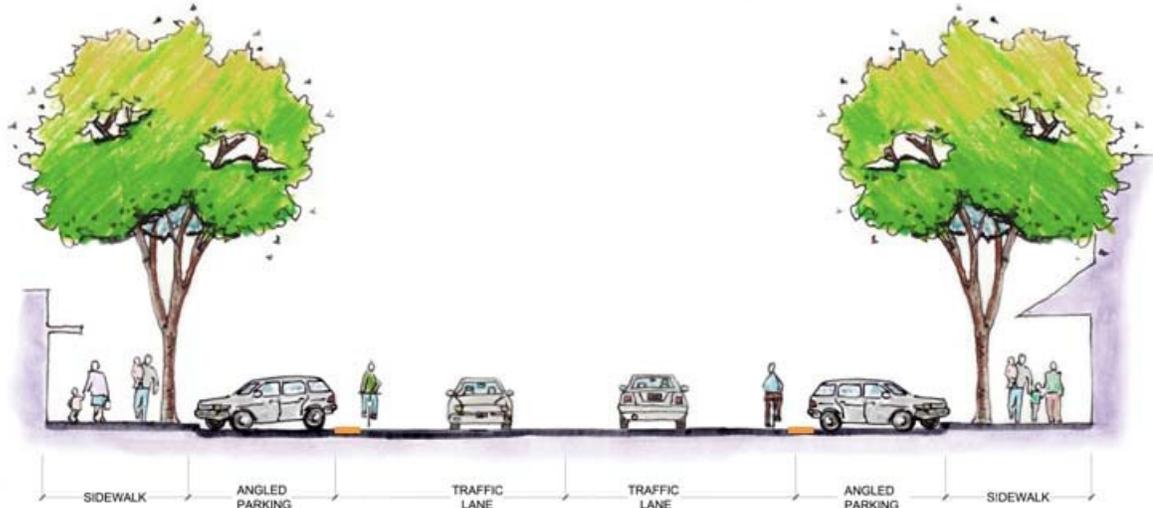
California Avenue is a regional core for transit activity as defined by the VTA and is serviced directly by both the VTA Line 89, Deer Creek Caltrain shuttle and the free Stanford Marguerite Shuttles that connect Caltrain commuters with the Stanford Research Center, the Stanford University Campus and adjacent business centers.

- *Interconnection:*

The California Avenue – Transit Plaza project will tie together adjacent land uses and public transit facilities in a cohesive street environment that encourages dwelling by travelers while promoting livability. The consistent use of elements from each end of the project including El Camino Real markers and planned California Avenue/Caltrain Plaza improvements will tie together the two major transit hubs through a series of improvements for each mode of travel in a consistent and unified manner.

- *Choice:*

There is a variety of existing housing along California Avenue including apartments, condos, and single-family homes all within two city blocks. A senior housing complex exists immediately adjacent to the site as well. Higher densities are envisioned on and along California Avenue due to adoption of a Pedestrian Transit Oriented Development (PTOD) zoning overlay in 2006.





The proposed project is consistent with the California Avenue PTOD by contributing to a street environment that encourages use of alternative modes of transportation.

2. PROJECT CONTEXT AND SETTING

Project Scope

The California Avenue – Transit Hub Corridor Enhancement project ties together the transit facilities on El Camino Real and the California Avenue Caltrain Station. The project includes the following elements:

- Identity Markers along El Camino Real and throughout California Avenue,
- Redevelopment of the California Avenue Caltrain Plaza that serves as an entrance to the Caltrain Station and undercrossing,
- A 4- to 2-lane vehicle lane reduction to promote a safer bicycle and pedestrian environment,
- Use of unique color palettes in both the street surface and above-ground structures to promote the development of a Sense of Place within the community,
- Traffic Calming treatments including bulb-out to reduce crosswalk lengths at select intersections to promote mobility choice,
- Raised table crosswalks made of colored concrete with decorative scoring treatments and supplemented by high-visibility pedestrian-activated flashing beacons to promote awareness of pedestrian activity,
- Pedestrian-level streetscape furniture throughout the street, and
- A more efficient use of public parking space to promote continued economic vitality.

Land Use Development

The Palo Alto Central development built in early 1980s at California Avenue and Park Blvd was the first transit-oriented development in Santa Clara County. The recently adopted California Avenue PTOD continues to promote mixed-use activity on and along California Avenue; over 400 residential units are planned or were recently built. This project will serve as a catalyst towards continued redevelopment by providing an environment that is conducive towards pedestrian and bicycle activities.

Table 1 highlights the private development projects immediately within the project area and their status. *Attachment 4* also demonstrates *Housing Density & Occupancy by Block Group and Locations of Proposed Housing Development Activity*.



Table 1: Residential & Mixed-Use Development in the Project Area

Item	Project Name	Status	No. of Units	Distance (ft)
1	Sunrise Senior Housing	Built	81	1000
2	195 Page Mill (Apts)	Planning	84	1400
3	2051 El Camino Real (Apts)	Built	2	1100
4	Stanford Mayfield (Condos)	Planning	70	200
5	Stanford Mayfield (SFH)	Planning	180	3000
7	2650 Birch St (Condos)	Planning	4	850
8	385 Sherman St (Condos)	Planning	3	400
9	420 Cambridge Av (townhomes)	Planning	4	400

Total Planned Residential Units: 428

Public Transportation Connectivity

The project area is located immediately adjacent to existing and future transit facilities of regional significance including the existing Caltrain – California Avenue Station, the existing El Camino Real Transit Routes, future El Camino Real Bus Rapid Transit Station, and local Stanford University Marguerite and VTA routes. These existing public transit uses provide direct transit access to some of the most influential and renowned private facilities in the world including Stanford University Research Park, Hewlett-Packard and Facebook to name just a few. Planned business expansion from companies such as Facebook, America Online, and Hewlett-Packard are anticipated in 2011 near California Avenue.

The funding of the California Avenue Trans Hub Corridor Enhancement project will help to sustain and promote growth of public transit activities by providing a comfortable and safe plaza for traveling between transit stations while at the same time helping to build a new identity for the California Avenue PTOD community. California Avenue provides the highest

Proposed Cal Av
Pedestrian Alley Enhancements



amount of bicycle boarding’s to a Caltrain station in the region with over 60 peak hour bike trips and another on-going 30 non-peak bike trips on a daily basis (Aug 2010 data). Weekend bicycle activity is even higher with regular Farmer’s Market activities on California Avenue between El Camino Real and Ash Street within the project area; an optional Community Stage near Ash Street will help to promote these types of continued activities and provide opportunities for longer-term street closure to sustain community and economic development activities.

Enhancements to alleys along the corridor will be provided to help enhance pedestrian connections to existing surface parking lots and to link and promote redevelopment to adjacent streets.



3. PROJECT READINESS

The City has developed the California Avenue Transit Hub Corridor Enhancement project through an on-going dialogue with the California Avenue business and residential communities. The project is ready to move forward into the environmental and design stages if the construction phase is funded by the VTA CDT program. Historical information regarding the City's public outreach process for the project is available at:

<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/depts/pwd/news/details.asp?NewsID=1394&TargetID=145>

The environmental stage is envisioned to be a relatively minor process with a focus on a transportation study to validate the proposed 4- to 2-lane reduction and provide recommendations for traffic improvements to adjacent streets. Traffic counts collected by the City do not show any significant impact with the lane reduction on California Avenue. Upon award of grand funding for the project, the City will complete all necessary CEQA and NEPA clearances to satisfy the requirements of the Caltrans Environmental Review process.

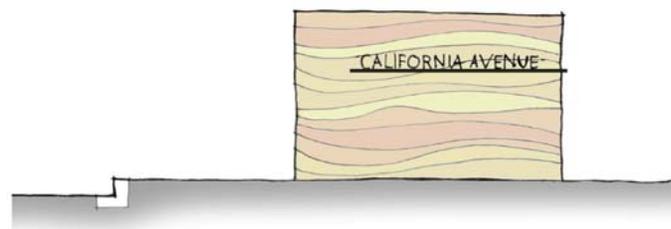
There are also no drainage or tree impacts to existing facilities and the project provides an increase in on-street parking availability. The project is entirely within the City right-of-way and no new permits or easements are needed.

To expedite the project, the City will fund both the environmental and design stages of the project so that when funding becomes available in February 2012 the City can immediately move forward with construction.

4. PROJECT BENEFIT

The City conducted an extensive community outreach process for the development of this project with merchants, property owners and local residents. The concept plans were developed with input from the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee and with the general public through citywide community meetings. Pending environmental review, the project is supported largely by the public.

Our project sponsor, Caltrain, identifies the benefits of the project through the continued promotion of the California Avenue Station and its ties to existing and regional transit facilities including Bus Rapid Transit, local community shuttles, and the California High Speed Rail connection.



Rammed earth entry sign - California Avenue median



The following is a partial list of most important benefits that the project will provide consistent with the CDT Program – Best Practice Principles and local planning documents:

- *Integrate Transit and Create a Multimodal Transportation System*

The project links existing public transit facilities along El Camino Real with the existing California Avenue Caltrain Station both visually and functionally through aesthetic and functional traffic calming treatments along California Avenue. These improvements will be extremely important as the VTAs Bus Rapid Transit project, promoted in the regional Grand Boulevard Initiative project vision.

Of the 34 train stations along the Peninsula, the California Avenue Caltrain station ranks 11th in ridership. Caltrain recently completed platform improvements at the station along with adding a pedestrian tunnel that allows passengers to safely access platforms on both sides of the tracks. This has allowed Caltrain to increase the number of train stops at the California Avenue station and for the bus line activity on California to increase as well, increasing inter-model transit opportunities.

Existing transit and shuttle facilities on California Avenue are maintained and enhanced by the addition of concrete bus pads, custom preformed thermoplastic markers with VTA and Stanford Marguerite logos, and shelter enhancements at Park Avenue.

- *Intensity Land use and Activities – Pedestrian Plaza*

Proposed within the project is the redevelopment of the California Avenue Plaza that provides direct access to the Caltrain station and a pedestrian and bicycle undercrossing connection to the east side of Alma Street.



The city views the redevelopment of the plaza as a significant community feature to that will both help to promote land use activities and promote continued use of public transit including Caltrain, VTA and the Stanford Marguerite shuttle.

The city has budgeted approximately \$300,000 in the project budget for the renovation of the plaza as part of this project. The City and Caltrain have been in discussion designed to seek cooperative service improvements such as the relocation of the 42 bike lockers that are owned and managed by Caltrain off of the existing plaza and onto



the Caltrain surface lot or the station platforms providing for unique opportunities to revitalize the plaza into a pedestrian and bicycle focused amenity for the community. The City plans to implement decorative bike lockers with canopy shelters and information kiosks to bring awareness and use of local and regional bicycle facilities.

The tunnel at the plaza connects North California Avenue to California Avenue serving over 2,000 pedestrians and bicyclists per day, including many school-aged children whom walk or bike to school. Angled parking along the plaza will be relocated creating opportunities to redistribute the existing bike racks and additional ones around a mature grove of trees complimented with game tables and seating areas that will help the plaza to become a vibrant pedestrian plaza and gateway feature for this end of California Avenue.

- *Establish Streets as Places - Traffic Calming*

The project provides for a 4- to 2-vehicle travel lane reduction that is supplemented by visual separation of street uses including travel lanes and parking lanes through the use of 3-ft wide colored concrete or paver bands. This decorative band also serves to continue the promotion of a unique “sense of place” for the transit corridor through the continuation of color palettes used in the new markers.

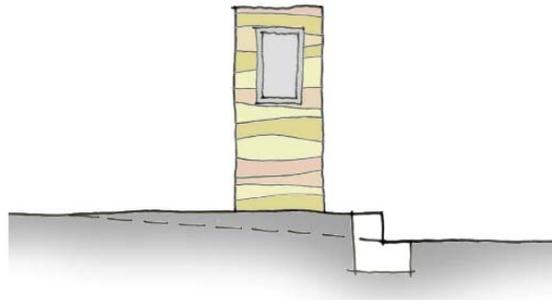
The project corridor has four existing mid-block crossing locations, three of those locations will be upgraded to raised crosswalk tables that will be constructed out of colored concrete that matches the paver band colors separating the vehicle travel lanes from the parking lanes. The raised crosswalk tables will include decorative score marks and patterns that will be developed through a community process as part of the on-going design of the project. The raised table crosswalks will also include pedestrian-activated flashing beacon warning systems for enhanced pedestrian awareness, visibility and safety.

- *Focus on Existing Areas and Design in Context*

The project will install Sharrow bicycle facilities to promote the continued sharing of travel lanes between vehicles and bicyclists. The Sharrow use with proposed angled parking along California Avenue was proposed by the City due to the significant amount of bicycle activity to and from the Caltrain Station. To further ensure bicycle safety for the corridor, the decorative 3-ft paver band that separates the vehicle travel lanes from the parking lanes and raised concrete crosswalk tables will help to reduced vehicle speeds and provide constant reminders to motorists as to the presence of bicycle activity in the roadway. A removal or conversion of angled parking to accommodate bicycle lanes facilities was not supported by the community or the City’s PABAC. PABAC is in support of the Sharrow with angled parking concept.



Pedestrian-scaled improvements include bulb-outs throughout the corridor that will help to reduce vehicle speeds, provide locations for the installation of unique elements for pedestrians such as the illuminated markers or large shade trees to provide a more comfortable environment for travelers between transit stations.



Rammed earth illuminated monument

Throughout the corridor there are also additional amenities that will be provided within the existing sidewalk zones including decorative park benches, trash/recycle receptacles, consolidating news racks and information kiosks.

- *Manage Parking*

This project provides for strategic place making elements while better managing and increasing parking availability, uses that would typically conflict with one another. The proposed project provides an additional 24 on-street parking spaces throughout the project area.

- *Public Art*

California Avenue has 14 distinctive pieces of public art including a fountain that is currently undergoing redevelopment through a separate project. The pieces are in good condition and will help to promote California Avenue as an attractive transit corridor. Where public art seating treatments can be expanded as part of the proposed street plan line.

- *Sustainability*

The City of Palo Alto is committed to sustainability and has adopted “green” policies and cost-benefit analysis to achieve environmental benefits. Accordingly, the City intends to include as many sustainable design features as possible in the project including drought-resistant landscaping, “smart” irrigation systems, benches made from recycle materials, and recycling containers.



SECTION THREE: ATTACHMENTS

<u>Attachment</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	CDT Grants Project Review Checklist
2	California Avenue Transit Hub Corridor Enhancements – Plan Line
3	Project Map with Transit Overlay
4	Local Land Use and Development Activity Map
5	VTA Project Schedule and Cost Estimate Form
6	City of Palo Alto Project Schedule
7	Photographs Depicting Existing Conditions
8	Illustrations of Proposed Street furniture
9	Illustrations of Park Blvd Plaza Improvements
10	Letters of Support