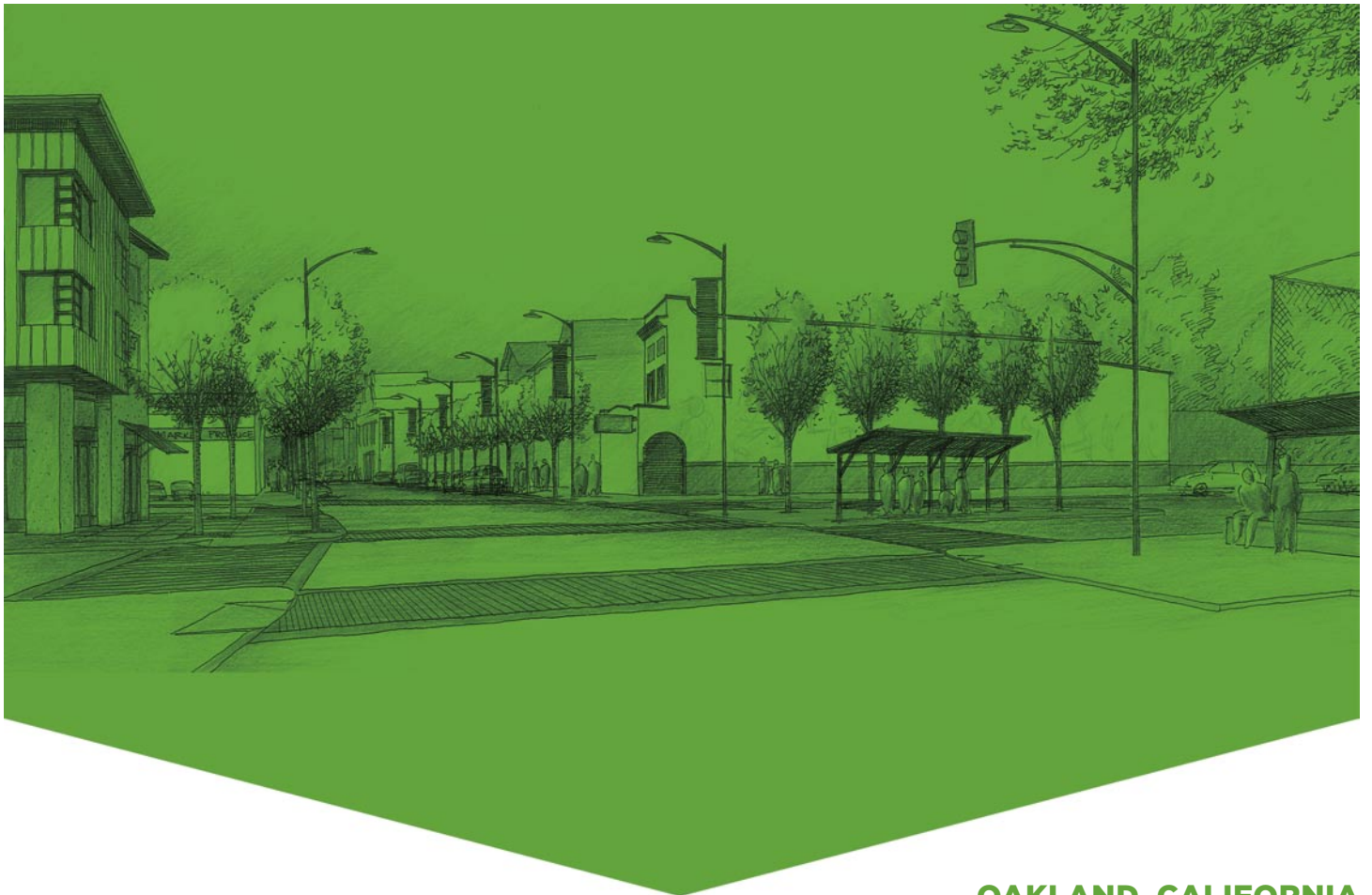


23RD AVE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

*To the members of the 23rd Avenue
community, whose ideas and dreams
made this plan possible.*



vision

“ We envision a community known
for its **arts and culture**, that has
safe and beautiful streets,
open space for the many children and families in the area
and a **lively central district** along 23rd Avenue
with stores and organizations that serve the
people who live here.”

- *Community Vision Statement 2003*

23RD AVE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

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Prepared by Urban Ecology, on behalf of the 23rd Avenue Work Group.

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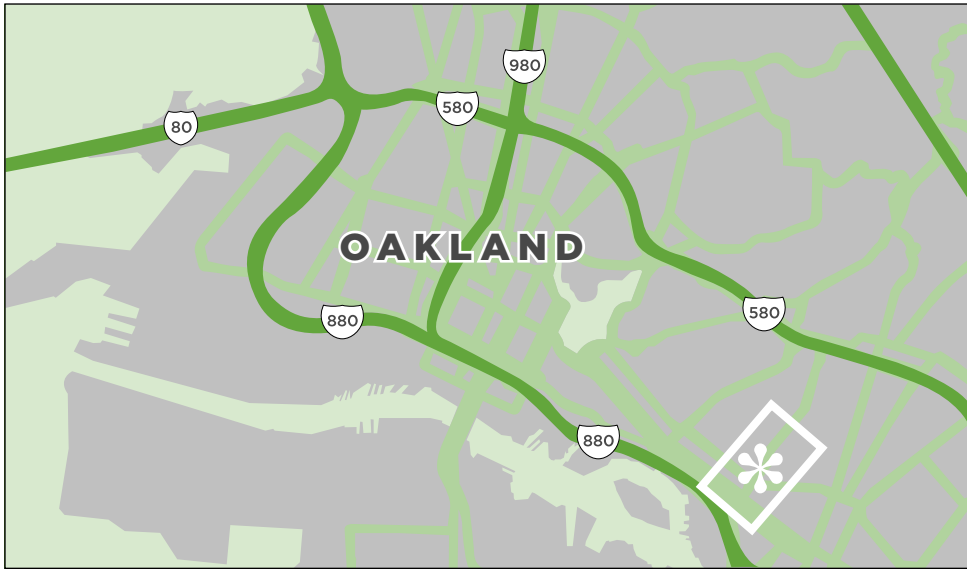
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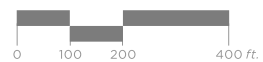


The 23rd Avenue neighborhood in context

THE 23RD AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD



 Action Plan Study Area





executive summary

Residents, merchants and neighborhood-serving organizations of the 23rd Avenue neighborhood share a common dream for 23rd Avenue's future, despite coming from remarkably diverse backgrounds. They believe in 23rd Avenue's potential to become a safe and bustling neighborhood center, alive with opportunities for shopping, arts, learning and cultural exchange. The 23rd Avenue Community Action Plan is a road map to achieving that vision.

23rd Avenue Today

Oakland's 23rd Avenue neighborhood is one of the most diverse communities in the country. Wedged between Fruitvale and Eastlake, in the “lower” half of the San Antonio District, 23rd Avenue is home to immigrants from around the world. Upwards of 35 languages are spoken locally. A network of innovative nonprofits and community artists provide residents with after-school programming, job and literacy training, cultural performances, counseling on home ownership opportunities and vehicles for community and merchant organizing.

But to many who have never spent time in the neighborhood, 23rd Avenue is more a boundary than a neighborhood center. Visually, little distinguishes the neighborhood as you travel along International or Foothill Boulevards. Twenty-third Avenue's challenges are more visible than its assets. As with many older urban communities, vacant storefronts are common. Once a thriving hub of activity with streetcars and a mill that operated six days a week, 23rd Avenue slipped into decline in the 1940s and has struggled since to regain its identity and street life.

Despite retaining physical elements of a neighborhood commercial district—historic character, small storefronts, sidewalks and metered parking—the district is not a destination for neighborhood residents. Safety is an urgent concern. Residents feel threatened by criminal activity, and speeding traffic on auto-dominated streets. Traffic accidents involving children are the highest in the city. With drug dealing and prostitution finding refuge in and around the business district, many avoid the district altogether, further allowing it to be put to criminal uses. Residents—many of whom do not own cars—must travel long distances to find fresh and affordable groceries, and meet other daily needs.

A Bold Vision for Change

Residents and merchants have a new vision for 23rd Avenue. They imagine a central district with new stores, sit-down restaurants, and opportunities for cultural celebration. They envision well-lit streets, with trees and greenery, and public art that inspire pride in the community's diversity and heritage. They imagine a place of beauty, where people can feel comfortable walking with their families and meet their daily needs in safety.

This Action Plan is a blueprint for achieving a community-driven vision for 23rd Avenue. It lays out a comprehensive plan for transforming 23rd Avenue's historic commercial core and surrounding neighborhood into a vibrant, active and safe neighborhood center.

More than 250 residents and merchants collaborated to articulate this plan through large community workshops and focus groups facilitated by Urban Ecology in 2002 and 2003. Workshops were conducted in six languages to ensure active participation from a diversity of stakeholders. Six community organizations with extensive ties to the neighborhood sponsored the planning process, and helped ensure that it was broadly



Fig.1 A vision of 23rd Avenue, looking N.E. from International Boulevard

inclusive. These were: the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, the East Bay Asian Youth Center, EastSide Arts Alliance, Lao Family Community Development, San Antonio Community Development Corporation and the Youth Employment Partnership.

Working closely with Urban Ecology, residents and merchants created a detailed plan for overcoming key neighborhood challenges—especially street crime, pedestrian hazards and vacant storefronts—by capitalizing on 23rd Avenue’s cultural diversity, artistic creativity, regional transit service, cluster of educational institutions and other neighborhood assets.

A Comprehensive Plan with Five Strategies

The 23rd Avenue Community Action Plan offers a series of design, policy, and development recommendations to greater harness 23rd Avenue’s potential. The recommendations of the plan are organized under five strategies for bringing the community’s vision to life. These strategies represent an integrated approach to making 23rd Avenue safer and more vital. They are mutually reinforcing, and meant to be implemented simultaneously.

The Five Strategies

1 **safe streets**

Transform 23rd Avenue, Foothill and International Boulevards into welcoming, beautiful and safe places to walk.

Increased foot traffic in and around the 23rd Avenue Business District is crucial for deterring crime. A more appealing and comfortable walking environment with fewer traffic threats will draw more residents and visitors to 23rd Avenue's sidewalks. New trees and pedestrian street lighting will play an important role in making 23rd Avenue safer and more appealing. High-visibility crosswalks and mosaic curb-bulbouts will make hostile intersections safer to cross. Decorative banners, trash cans, benches and public art will bring new life, color and distinctiveness to the district. A new arts plaza will double as a bold entryway to 23rd Avenue, and a means for narrowing the dangerous intersection at Foothill Boulevard / 23rd Avenue. A narrower Foothill Boulevard, with bulbouts of its own, will calm traffic running past Garfield Elementary, and protect Garfield students, bus patrons and pedestrians of all ages from speeding cars.

2 **arts and learning**

Energize the 23rd Avenue district with centers for arts, learning and community gathering.

New arts and educational centers will help bring the district alive with positive activities, day and night, deterring street crime, and offering local opportunities for learning and cultural exploration. A new community cultural center, with performance space and classrooms, will offer a stable, central space for arts and cultural programming, and draw people to after-school programs and evening events. New educational programming will help fill other 23rd Avenue storefronts.

3

beneficial development

Encourage well-designed, affordable mixed-use development.

Residents of the 23rd Avenue neighborhood want to facilitate new development that strengthens the community—development that is affordable to a diversity of residents, makes 23rd Avenue more active, incorporates safety-enhancing design, encourages pedestrian activity and enhances existing cultural resources. Zoning changes that promote mixed-use development will help accomplish this goal. Urban Ecology’s Design Guidelines for 23rd Avenue will encourage developers to choose design features that invite pedestrians, emphasize what is special about 23rd Avenue and make criminal activity more difficult. Active collaboration with affordable housing developers will increase the stock of affordable housing, and provide safeguards against displacement.

4

thriving businesses

Nurture the growth of neighborhood-serving businesses.

Stronger neighborhood businesses will add more reasons to go to 23rd Avenue, and help make it a bustling center. A Business Improvement District will provide private funding for keeping 23rd Avenue clean, secure and well-marketed. Changes to the city’s Façade Improvement Program will make it more responsive to the needs of local businesses. As existing retail gets stronger, new businesses—like a restaurant, hardware store, apparel outlet, school supply store, laundromat and grocery—will fill empty storefronts, create a livelier streetscape, and provide more opportunities for residents and local employees to shop or eat locally.

5

accessible services

Improve access to city services and green spaces.

New and revamped public services can play a major role in sparking 23rd Avenue neighborhood revitalization. A new library branch and affordable legal services on 23rd Avenue will provide high-demand services while adding life to the street. City investment in a community policing partnership that builds trust with 23rd Avenue community organizations will create the potential for creative solutions to ongoing safety problems. Follow-up attention to Garfield Park will bring more healthy activities that meet the needs of nearby children and families.



Fig.2 A vision of 23rd Avenue, looking S.W. from Foothill Boulevard

Momentum is Building

Exciting gains are already being made to realize this vision:

- The 23rd Avenue planning process has helped persuade the new Central City East Redevelopment Area to set aside \$650,000 between 2005 and 2009 to implement pieces of the Action Plan's streetscape recommendations.
- Interest and funding for the community cultural center is growing—the EastSide Arts Alliance and Affordable Housing Associates are moving forward to renovate an historic building at 23rd Avenue / International into a cultural center with 16 units of affordable housing.
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation has made a substantial, 10-year commitment to the 23rd Avenue neighborhood.
- The Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Foundation has made a similar long-term investment.

Most importantly, the 23rd Avenue community is blessed with five community organizations poised to implement the various pieces of the 23rd Avenue Community Action Plan. These organizations work together as the nucleus of the 23rd Avenue Workgroup—part of the larger Lower San Antonio Collaborative sponsored by Annie E. Casey's Making Connections Initiative. They are ready to partner with public agencies and private developers to create a sense of place on 23rd Avenue—with stores, services, organizations, and housing that serve the local community. Scores of residents and merchants are energized and committed to joining them, as demonstrated at the Town Hall held in November 2004. Working together, they can harness 23rd Avenue's potential, and deliver changes urgently needed for 23rd Avenue's diverse stakeholders.

THE 23RD AVENUE WORKGROUP

The 23rd Avenue Workgroup partnered with Urban Ecology to shape the recommendations of this plan, and is poised to lead implementation. Its members are described below.



The East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) is a nonprofit housing developer, and has been a leader in merchant organizing and neighborhood revitalization in the nearby Eastlake business district.



The East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC) runs youth and parent organizing programs and an initiative aimed at turning neighborhood schools into multi-use facilities.



EastSide Arts Alliance (ESAA) is a collective of local artists of color who live and work in the San Antonio/Fruitvale districts of Oakland. ESAA runs youth arts programs, presents town hall forums and cultural events and sponsors the annual Malcolm X JazzArts Festival in San Antonio Park.



Lao Family Community Development (Lao Family) provides services to primarily Southeast Asian immigrant and refugee populations and is working to reduce language barriers to services and job placement.



The San Antonio Community Development Corporation (SACDC) partners to build affordable housing, runs a small business assistance program, and conducts merchant organizing in the Lower San Antonio.

introduction

- ① Why An Action Plan for 23rd Avenue?
- ② Community Voices and Priorities
- ③ Neighborhood Background



INTRODUCTION
23rd Ave Neighborhood



A Vision of 23rd Avenue's Future

1

Why An Action Plan for 23rd Avenue?

The 23rd Avenue Community Action Plan fills a crucial void in Oakland neighborhood planning by offering an integrated set of strategies for restoring safety and economic vitality to the historic 23rd Avenue commercial district.



Residents consider traffic calming alternatives in workshop #2.

Answering A Call

While a host of studies, plans and reports have focused on Lower San Antonio over the past 15 years, none has presented a comprehensive strategy for 23rd Avenue.

The 1997 plan *Make it Happen*, which mapped out a community-driven vision for the broader Lower San Antonio community, identified 23rd Avenue revitalization as one of its six community priorities. In addition to short term recommendations, such as creating a 23rd Avenue merchants association and attending to distressed properties, *Make it Happen* called for a holistic revitalization strategy for 23rd Avenue involving key stakeholders, residents and community leaders.

The 23rd Avenue Community Action Plan answers this call for a comprehensive strategy.

Building on the insights of a handful of recent studies that focused on narrower aspects of 23rd Avenue revitalization (see *Resources*, p.106), the Action Plan takes the next step by presenting a cohesive set of planning, development and design solutions to neighborhood challenges.

Detailed Steps for Neighborhood Transformation

The intent of the 23rd Avenue Community Action Plan is to lift up a consensus vision for 23rd Avenue and illustrate ways to bring it to life. It is a tool for guiding future public and private investment. It explains which issues and areas of the neighborhood are a priority and why.

Local organizations can use the 23rd Avenue Action Plan to raise funds for priority projects. Local city council members, planning staff and Public Works officials can use the plan to advocate the delivery of city and state resources to the neighborhood. Oakland's Planning and Zoning Division can use the plan as the basis for developing a neighborhood specific area plan.

Ultimately, the 23rd Community Avenue Action Plan is meant to coordinate neighborhood revitalization efforts, so that independent advocacy efforts work together synergistically, and advance a shared, cohesive vision for neighborhood transformation.



Participants in the first community workshop discuss neighborhood challenges.

2

Community Voices and Priorities

This Action Plan is the product of a yearlong community planning process that began in October 2002. Through a series of workshops and focus groups facilitated by Urban Ecology, more than 250 residents, merchants and other community members defined the priorities, and shaped the strategies, forming the basis of this plan.

Urban Ecology coordinated the community planning process at the request of six local organizations with strong relationships in the Lower San Antonio community: The East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, East Bay Asian Youth Center, EastSide Arts Alliance, Lao Family Community Development, San Antonio Community Development Corporation and Youth Employment Partnership.

What Is Community Planning? Community planning creates a common vision for change and a framework for growth. It is a collaborative process that involves all the stakeholders in a community, including city agencies and elected officials. Community planning helps residents understand, and participate in, local land use decisions. This kind of participation is particularly important in low-income areas and in communities of color. Historically, these places are often bypassed by city planning and investment, or chosen as sites for environmentally harmful land uses unwanted in wealthier neighborhoods. Community planning can help neighborhoods come together to define priorities, create a vision for growth, and guide and attract development to meet the needs of the community.

Overall Themes

Four themes emerged from the workshops and focus groups to form the basis of the 23rd Avenue Community Action Plan:

- Lower San Antonio's cultural diversity is its greatest asset—use it to drive the revitalization of the business district;
- New housing and stores will help bring life into the neighborhood—find ways to encourage development;
- We need solutions to the issues on our streets—slow traffic, fix sidewalks, fund art projects and make the streets safe; and
- We want more public services—a library, or a post office. And clean up the streets!

The Process

The 23rd Avenue community planning process began as a conversation about safety—the number one concern of most residents and merchants in Lower San Antonio. Although safety was still a driving concern by the end of the planning process, the conversation had broadened to look at multiple goals involving neighborhood revitalization. The community planning process unfolded in five stages:

INITIAL FOCUS GROUPS (Oct. 2002)

Urban Ecology began with a series of in-depth focus groups with community members to explore what makes the 23rd Avenue district dangerous. Focus groups were held with 23rd Avenue merchants, recent Asian and Hispanic immigrants, and local youth counselors. After mapping out safe and unsafe areas in the 23rd Avenue district, participants explored two sets of solutions:

- programmatic solutions, including after-school programming and making community policing more accountable; and
- physical solutions, including new lighting and better street design to promote visibility and increase positive activity on the streets.

A shared understanding emerged that neither approach is sufficient on its own for delivering the long-term safety people want. Increasing community safety is complex. Police cannot arrest their way out of the problem. Nor is it necessarily desirable or practical to completely sequester kids in after-school programs. Participants agreed lasting safety requires a more comprehensive, multi-levelled approach.



Residents fill Garfield Elementary at the first community workshop.

FIRST COMMUNITY-WIDE WORKSHOP (Nov. 2002)

In November, this conversation was broadened through a community-wide workshop organized with the help of the Garfield Elementary Parent Action Coalition (part of EBAYC). Approximately 200 community members attended, many of them Garfield parents. To accommodate everyone who participated, the workshop was conducted in six languages: Spanish, English, Mien, Cambodian, Chinese and Vietnamese. Participants worked in small groups and used maps to discuss the neighborhood's challenges and strengths in detail. Two types of safety concerns surfaced: concerns about crime, and about speeding traffic and poor pedestrian conditions. Community members were also concerned about a lack of open space and poorly maintained streets around 23rd Avenue. Almost all of the small groups agreed diversity of cultures in the neighborhood is a major community asset and that it should be considered a local neighborhood resource. When asked to envision an improved, safer 23rd Avenue, community members talked about a business district with stores serving local residents, with beautiful streets safe for walking, affordable housing, and local branches of public and private community services, including: legal aid, a new library, a community center, recreation programs for children and adult education classes.

The 23rd Avenue community planning process began as a conversation about safety—the number one concern of most residents and merchants in Lower San Antonio.

FOLLOW-UP FOCUS GROUP (Feb. 2003)

In February, Urban Ecology held a focus group with neighborhood youth to incorporate their thoughts and perspective into the vision for 23rd Avenue.

SECOND COMMUNITY-WIDE WORKSHOP (Mar. 2003)

Urban Ecology summarized community comments into a vision and initial set of goals for the 23rd Avenue business district, and presented these at a second community-wide workshop in March 2003. Residents discussed and affirmed them. These goals were:

- Bring New Activity to the 23rd Avenue Business District
- Encourage Development that Benefits the Community
- Create Safe and Beautiful Streets
- Improve Public Services

Community members then discussed the kinds of development and land uses they wanted to encourage along 23rd Avenue, prioritized specific streets and intersections for both traffic calming and street beautification, and discussed alternative traffic calming methods.

Four specific priorities emerged: a community/recreation center, public art projects on the streets, traffic calming, and new stores/services.



Participants locate neighborhood problems and assets in workshop #1.

FOLLOW-UP FOCUS GROUPS AND MERCHANT SURVEY (May - August, 2003)

In April and May 2003, Urban Ecology facilitated focus groups with an area Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council and Head Start parents. Urban Ecology solicited reactions to the community goals, as well as to the specific projects, stores and policies that emerged from the second community-wide workshop.

In June 2003, Urban Ecology met with the Garfield Parent Action Committee to present alternative street designs for improving the perimeter of Garfield Elementary. Based on responses from the Parent Action Committee and the Garfield Principal, Urban Ecology refined the street designs.

Also in June, Urban Ecology met individually with key members of the 23rd Avenue Merchant's Association. With the help of San Antonio CDC, Urban Ecology then conducted a survey of local merchants on business needs and priorities in relation to the 23rd Avenue Community Action Plan.

Table 1 Summary of Community Input

| DATES | EVENT | FOCUS | STAKEHOLDER GROUP |
|--------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 10/02 | Initial Focus Group | Safety Analysis | 23 rd Avenue Merchant's Association |
| 10/02 | Initial Focus Group | Safety Analysis | Lao Family, Civic Participation Class |
| 10/02 | Initial Focus Group | Safety Analysis | Youth Counselors, YEP |
| 11/02 | Community Workshop | Goals and Vision | Community-wide |
| 2/03 | Focus Group | Underrepresented Group | Youth, EastSide Arts Alliance |
| 3/03 | Community Workshop 2 | Priorities & Strategies | Community-wide |
| 5/03 | Focus Group | Underrepresented Group | Head Start Parents |
| 5/03 | Focus Group | Underrepresented Group | Neighborhood Community Policing Council |
| 6/03 | Design Workshop | Safe Streets | Garfield Parents |
| 6/03 | 1:1 Interviews | Underrepresented Group | 23 rd Avenue Merchants |
| 8/03 | Merchant Survey | Underrepresented Group | 23 rd Avenue Merchants |



Top Residents identify safety concerns in workshop #1.

Above A workshop facilitator explains traffic calming tools to a breakout group at workshop #2.

Neighborhood Background

The recommendations in this plan were informed by an analysis of the history and current conditions of the 23rd Avenue neighborhood. This section gives an overview of the neighborhood and its challenges, as well as opportunities that lie ahead.

Study Area and Context

23rd Avenue lies on the eastern edge of Oakland’s San Antonio District, east of Lake Merritt, just five blocks west of Fruitvale, in the flatlands half of the district. To the north, I-580 separates 23rd Avenue (and the rest of the “Lower” San Antonio) from the Oakland hills. To the south, I-880 forms a barrier between the neighborhood and the waterfront, cutting residents off from the Oakland Estuary.

Two major arterial streets cut across the neighborhood—International Boulevard and Foothill Boulevard. Historically, the two-block stretch of 23rd Avenue between International and Foothill was the commercial center of the surrounding community. The Action Plan focuses on 23rd Avenue’s historic core and the neighborhood immediately surrounding it: from East 12th Street to East 20th Street and 21st Avenue to 25th Avenue.

Once thriving, 23rd Avenue still has the makings of a neighborhood commercial district—historic character, small storefronts, sidewalks and metered parking—but very little commerce now takes place along the street. The lack of business or pedestrian activity, coupled with a high concentration of crime, means that 23rd Avenue is not a destination, even for nearby residents. The area is commonly thought of as Fruitvale or Eastlake rather than its own distinct place. (see *Fig.3*)

23rd Avenue still has the makings of a neighborhood commercial district – historic character, small storefronts, sidewalks and metered parking—but very little commerce takes place along the street.

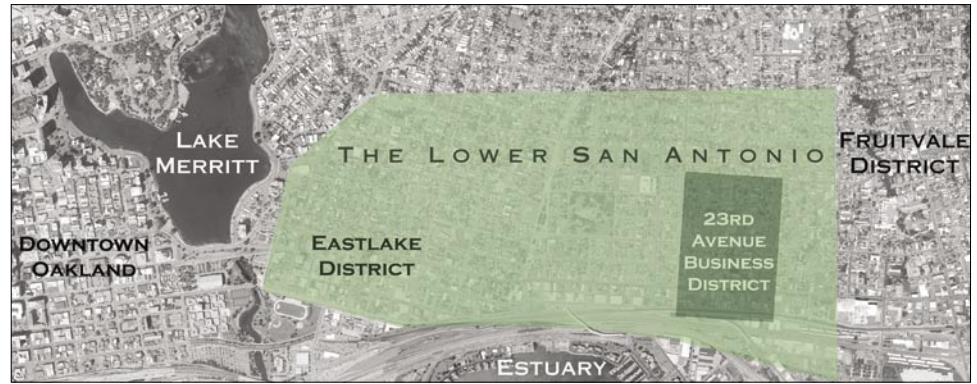


Fig.3 Neighborhood Context

Demographics

The 23rd Avenue neighborhood is low-income, but culturally rich. Like the broader Lower San Antonio community, it has been home to growing numbers of immigrant communities since the 1970s, making it one of the most diverse neighborhoods in the country. Large numbers of Mexican, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Filipino immigrants reside in the neighborhood.

Although the community is highly integrated, African American households are most common in the upper half of the neighborhood toward the hills. Greater numbers of Asian households live west of 23rd Avenue, while a larger percentage of Latinos live east of 23rd Avenue toward Fruitvale.

Table 2 23rd Avenue's Diversity

| | 23 RD AVENUE* | LOWER SAN ANTONIO | OAKLAND |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| HISPANIC ORIGIN | 34% | 35% | 22% |
| ASIAN | 33% | 31% | 15% |
| BLACK | 19% | 19% | 35% |
| WHITE | 8% | 10% | 23% |
| TWO OR MORE RACES | 4% | 3% | 5% |
| PACIFIC ISLANDER | 1% | 1% | 4% |
| AMERICAN INDIAN | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| OTHER | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% | 100% |

* using study area boundaries

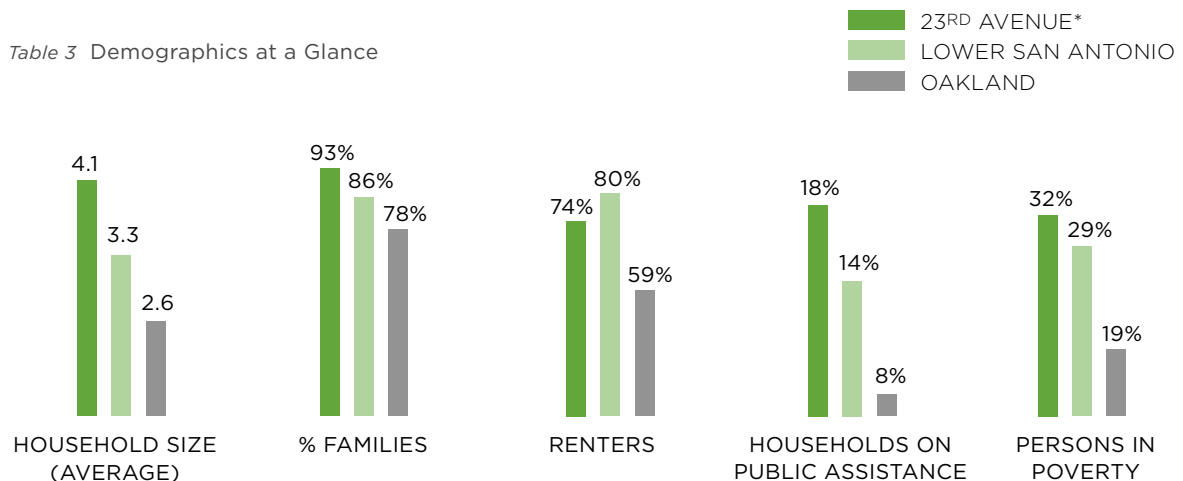
Cultural diversity is an asset, but also a challenge. With more than 35 languages spoken in the neighborhood, organizing around local issues is difficult. Language barriers are also a central challenge for residents seeking to obtain community or city services.

According to the 2000 Census, approximately 3,300 people (800 households) live within a 1/2 mile radius of the intersection of 23rd and International Boulevard. A total of 4,297 people (1,038 households) lived in the larger study area for this plan.

Political Boundaries

Twenty-third Avenue is often referenced in city plans as a boundary rather than a distinct area in itself, creating challenges for city agencies and programs offering resources for neighborhood improvement. The east side of 23rd Avenue is grouped with Fruitvale, in Council District Five. The west side of 23rd Avenue sits in Council District Two, which includes Chinatown and most of the Lower San Antonio, including Eastlake. Twenty-third Avenue is also the dividing line for Service Delivery System districts and police beats. These divisions of responsibilities make comprehensive solutions challenging for 23rd Avenue. It has also led to 23rd Avenue being overlooked. For example, the city of Oakland recently published a series of new marketing materials on its neighborhood commercial districts, and while there is one for Eastlake and one for Fruitvale, a 23rd Avenue page does not exist. (see Fig.4)

Table 3 Demographics at a Glance



* using study area boundaries

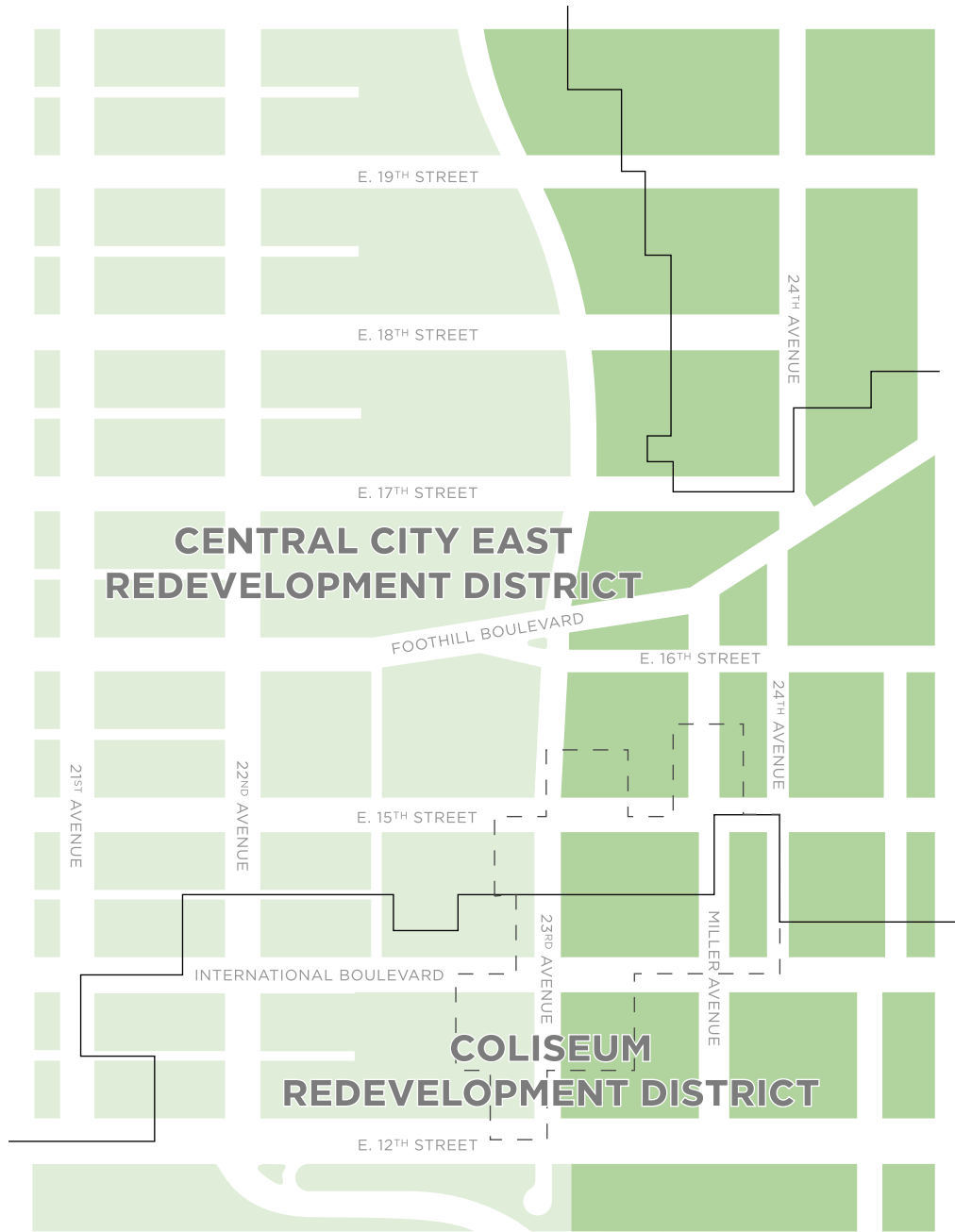


Fig.4 Political Boundaries

- Council District 2 / Service Delivery District 4
- Council District 5 / Service Delivery District 5
- Historic Preservation District
- Redevelopment District Boundary Lines



The mural adorning Lao Family's building at Foothill and 23rd Avenue

Community Assets

The Lower San Antonio neighborhood is home to a strong network of community service organizations. Two of these organizations are located on 23rd Avenue: the Youth Employment Partnership (YEP), which operates the largest youth job-training program in Oakland; and Lao Family Community Development which provides services to the local immigrant community. Both organizations generate substantial foot traffic in the neighborhood. Two other groups have long-standing offices on East 15th Street: San Antonio Community Development Corporation (SACDC) and Volunteers of America. The East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC) is located on East 12th Street, and runs a parent-organizing program at Garfield School, located at Foothill Boulevard and 23rd Avenue. Neighborhood artists work together through the EastSide Arts Alliance to provide cultural programming and classes at 25th Avenue and International Boulevard.

There are two major public schools in the study area, both on 22nd Avenue: Garfield Elementary and Life Academy, a technical high school. Two new schools opened in the YEP building at 23rd Avenue and International Boulevard this year: the YEP Charter School and Alameda County Office of Education's school for pregnant and parenting teens.

Adjacent to Garfield School is Garfield Park, a city-owned property that functions primarily as a schoolyard for Garfield students. In order to keep the park secure for school use, the park is lined with a 16-foot chain link fence. As a result, the park is not regularly accessible for community members. At the base of 23rd Avenue, on East 12th Street, is a small, grassy park that is currently underused. (see Fig.5)

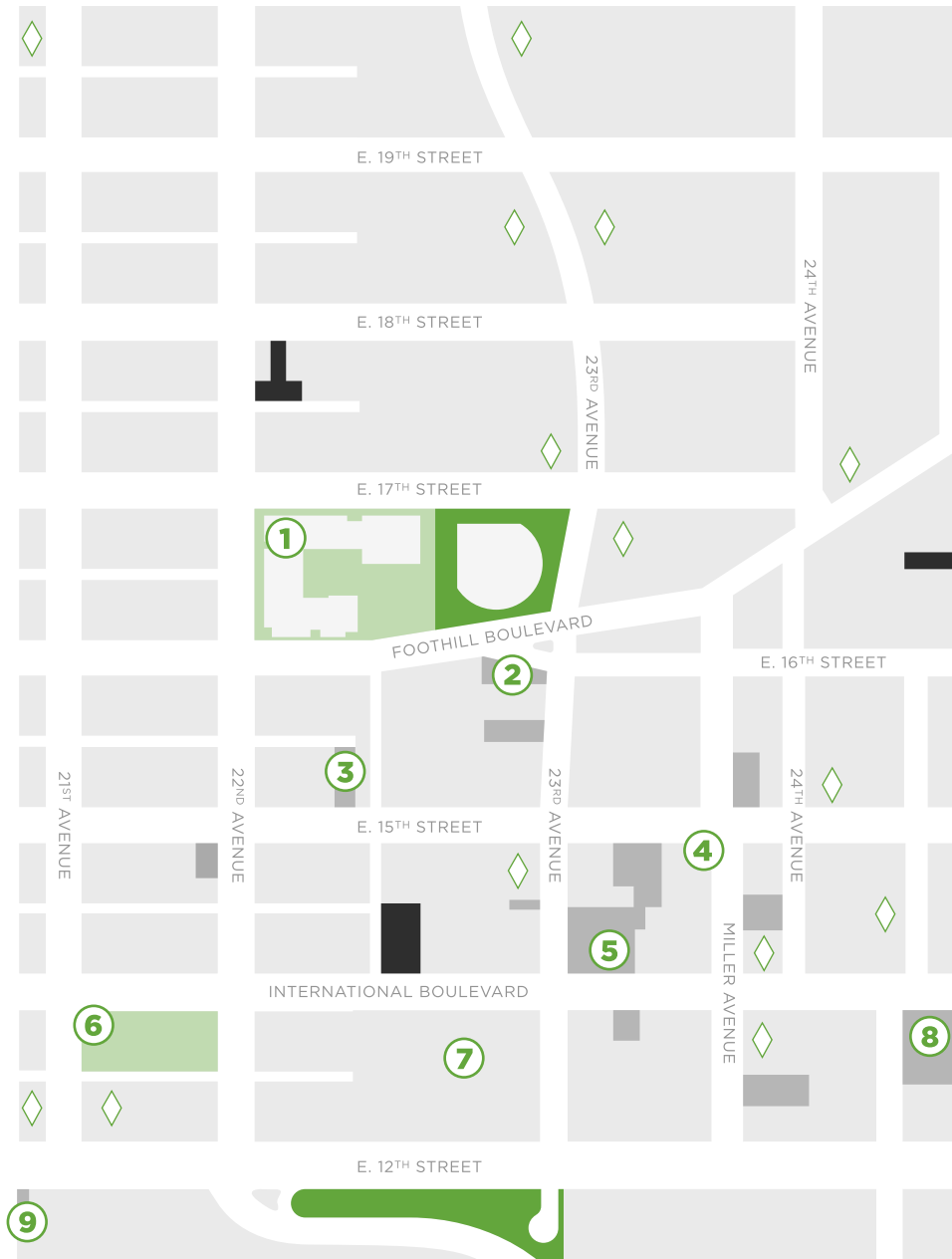


Fig.5 Community Resources



- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools Open Spaces Churches Community Service / Nonprofit Child Care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Garfield Elementary 2. LAO Family CDC 3. San Antonio CDC 4. Miller Library 5. YEP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Life Academy High School 7. Cultural Center (2006) 8. Hismen-Hin Nu & EastSide Arts Alliance 9. East Bay Asian Youth Center |
|---|--|---|

Neighborhood History

The modern 23rd Avenue district began as a place of invention that literally laid the groundwork for Oakland's growth starting in the 1870s. Industry came to the area to take advantage of a wayside on the Transcontinental Railroad and abundant vacant land. Factories started along the lower stretches of 23rd Avenue.

The first factories built the city's sewer pipes, which were in high demand as the city expanded. Between 1874 and 1884, three terra-cotta pottery companies started on or near 23rd Avenue. One of those was James Miller's Oakland Art Pottery and Terra Cotta Company. Miller Avenue continues to bear his name. Miller also produced the first terra-cotta architectural ornaments to appear in California, beginning a legacy of innovation in the district.

Around this time, a school was organized for the children, named in memory of President James A. Garfield, whose then recent assassination had shocked the nation. Neighbors organized the 23rd Avenue Bank.

In 1884, California Cotton Mills Company chose 23rd Avenue as the site for the most technologically advanced textile plant of the era. It would become simply known as the "Mill." Shipments of cotton arrived at the wharf built into the Brooklyn Basin. Much of the neighborhood's first cottage housing was built for the more than 500 workers who operated the mill.

The outbreak of World War I brought a land rush to the shores of the estuary. Ship builders flocked to the waterfront to get to work equipping the war effort. Writers referred to Oakland as California's Glasgow—the great European shipbuilding capital in Scotland.



A streetcar crosses 23rd Avenue on East 14th Street (now International Boulevard).

In 1918, Andrew Carnegie supplied funds for a new branch library on Miller Avenue that would serve as a hub in the community until it closed in 1975. By the 1920s, 23rd Avenue was a bustling strip, extending 30 blocks northward from the heavy industries that lined the estuary.

Growth throughout the city went unabated until the Great Depression, which devastated much of East Oakland's industrial economy. The pipes that brought the first factories to 23rd Avenue sat unsold and unwanted, and instead became homes for hundreds of unemployed men who organized a community they called "Pipe City" with its own mayor and security force.

World War II ended the financial crisis but brought a housing crisis to the East Bay. Oakland responded by filling empty lots with multi-unit apartment buildings and large subsidized projects to house the large influx of workers. Many were African-Americans from the south who arrived to fill war production jobs at the Kaiser shipyards and canneries.

Peace after the war ended the city's industrialization. The shipyards closed, leaving workers unemployed. Manufacturing diminished, pipe factories closed and other East Oakland plants, such as General Motors in Eastmont, moved their facilities outside the city. Growing suburbs to the south lured away many of the city's residents.

Meanwhile, the late 1940s construction of the Nimitz Freeway (now 880) cut a huge swath through 23rd Avenue and

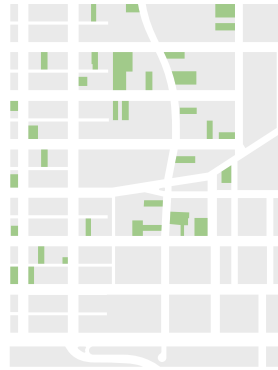
many other parts of Oakland, severing 23rd Avenue's connection to its waterfront. The Nimitz Freeway also stripped East 14th Street (now International Boulevard) of cross-town traffic, severely disadvantaging International Boulevard's commerce. With the construction of MacArthur Freeway, also in the late 1940s, San Antonio residents were isolated from wealthier neighborhoods in the hills.

Prosperity declined throughout the city's older neighborhoods as factory jobs disappeared and the 23rd Avenue district was no exception. But as employment continued to decline through the 1980s, immigration remained constant. Immigrants came increasingly from Asia and Latin America to join the descendants of the early settlers who arrived fleeing Europe.

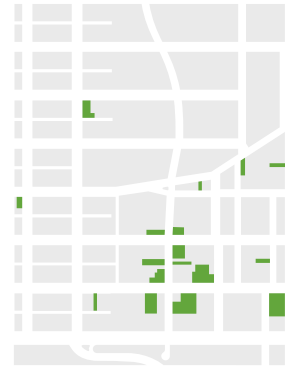
The late 1940s construction of the Nimitz Freeway (now 880) cut a huge swath through 23rd Avenue and many other parts of Oakland, severing 23rd Avenue's connection to its waterfront and severely disadvantaging International Boulevard's commerce.



RESIDENTIAL
SINGLE FAMILY & DUPLEX



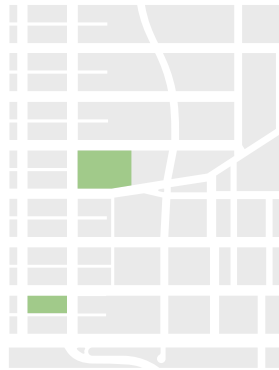
RESIDENTIAL
MULTI-FAMILY APARTMENTS



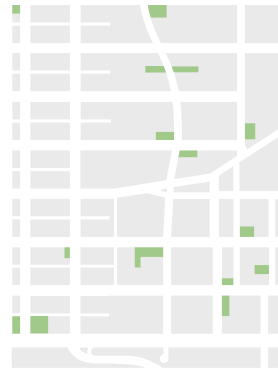
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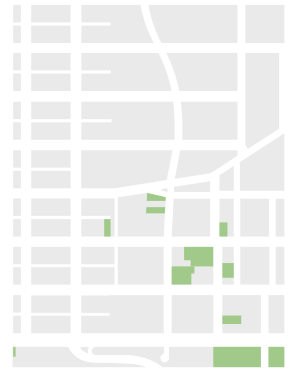
OPEN SPACE



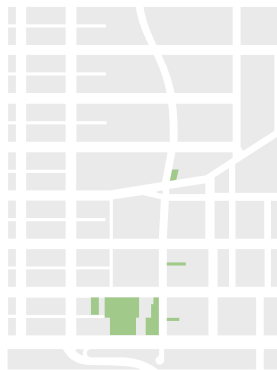
SCHOOLS



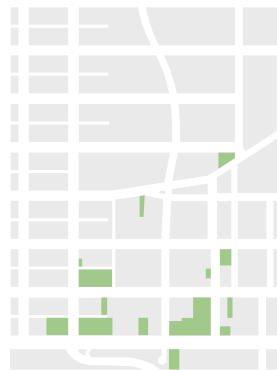
CHURCHES



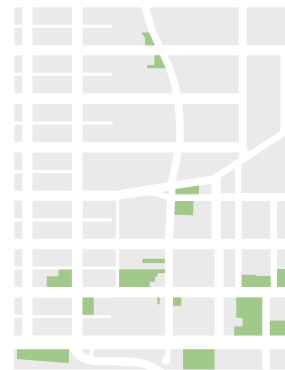
COMMUNITY SERVICE



INDUSTRIAL
INDUSTRY & WAREHOUSING



INDUSTRIAL
AUTO USES



COMMERCIAL

Fig.6 Existing Land Use



The historic Garcia building marks the corner of 23rd Avenue and International.

Neighborhood Character and Land Use Patterns

COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

The 23rd Avenue commercial district has a distinctive period character, with most of its prominent buildings built between 1889 and 1931. Many of these buildings have been remodeled, but their initial character is still visible. The district has dominant street walls (where buildings are built right next to the sidewalk), with few setbacks on 23rd Avenue or International Boulevard. A handful of residential properties, with modest front and side setbacks, disrupt this pattern in the block of 23rd Avenue between East 15th Street and Foothill Boulevard. Many commercial properties have residential apartments on upper floors, and the historic detailing is typically more apparent on these upper floors than in the retail storefronts, which have undergone a greater number of modern renovations. Major business district landmarks include the red and blue 23rd Billiards marquee, the Mount Calvary Church on the corner of 23rd and East 15th, the historic Miller Library and, more recently, the yellow Lao Family building on 23rd and Foothill Boulevard, easily recognizable with its brightly painted mural.

As of 2003, 40% of storefronts along 23rd Avenue and International Boulevard were vacant or used for informal housing. Of the active businesses, six businesses had no windows onto the street or had boarded-up windows.

While 23rd Avenue has a more traditional mixed-use commercial character, International Boulevard is dominated by auto uses, vacant lots and under used industrial properties.

RESIDENTIAL AREA

The residential areas of the Lower San Antonio neighborhood have a more suburban character; nearly every lot has both front and side setbacks. Forty percent of the housing units were built before 1940, making this area one of the oldest neighborhoods in Oakland. Single-family homes are integrated with multi-family buildings. Houses are predominantly of the Mission Revival or Victorian architectural styles, while apartment buildings also include examples of Art Deco influence.

Lower San Antonio is the only neighborhood in Oakland with a comprehensive network of alleys. The alleys that open onto International Boulevard provide truck and auto access to the community. While the alleys add character, increase circulation and free up available street parking, they also provide cover for crime and unsafe activity.

Forty percent of the housing units were built before 1940, making this area one of the oldest neighborhoods in Oakland.



Upper-story historic detailing on International Blvd.



*Top Mt. Calvary Church at 23rd Avenue and East 15th Street
Above Multi-family housing built in the 1930s*

Crime and Safety

The prevalence of crime in the 23rd Avenue business district presents a significant challenge for the neighborhood. Community members report that drug activity and prostitution are common in the lower half of the neighborhood, close to International Boulevard. Generally, the perception is that drug transactions and gang activity happen along East 15th, while prostitution is prevalent along International Boulevard. In community workshops and focus groups, community members regularly made connections between liquor sales, loitering, and unsafe conditions on neighborhood streets. Certainly not all groups of young men socializing on 23rd Avenue are involved in criminal activity. Nonetheless, it is difficult for many community members to determine which clusters of activity represent unsafe situations.

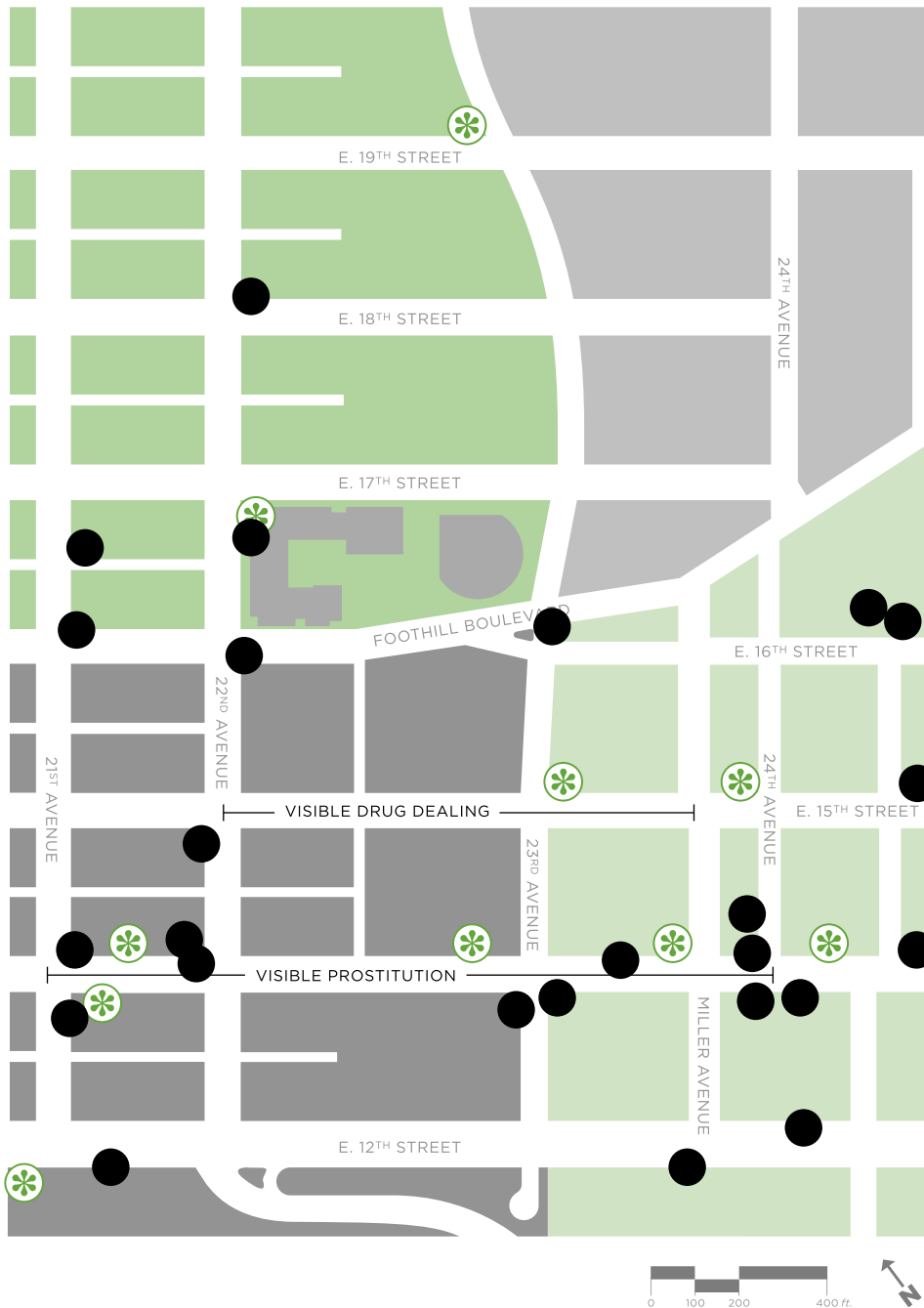








Fig.7 Crime and Police Beats

-  Activity Centers
-  Reported Armed Robberies
(Sept. '02 - Sept. '03)

Police Beats

| | |
|---|---|
|  18x |  20x |
|  19x |  21x |

The City's Stated Vision for 23rd Avenue

Land use in Oakland is determined by the city's General Plan—a master plan for how the city should grow and zone land.

The General Plan's Land Use and Transportation Element envisions 23rd Avenue becoming a "Neighborhood Center Mixed-use" district and calls for better code enforcement, increased police presence and façade improvements. This section of the General Plan also calls for increased investment and reuse of under-utilized properties in the San Antonio District generally. The Land Use and Transportation Element designates Foothill Boulevard, International Boulevard and 23rd Avenue as "Transit Streets" that should be prioritized for street and pedestrian improvements.

The General Plan's Open Space, Conservation and Recreation (OSCAR) Element recommends four acres of open space per 1,000 residents to supply adequate space for play and relaxation. Currently, Lower San Antonio has 0.78 acres per 1,000 residents, one-fifth of the city's standard. OSCAR specifically recommends increasing activities in Garfield Park as a way to shift the park's orientation to serve a broader segment of the community.

The General Plan's Historic Preservation Element identifies Lower San Antonio as an historic district subject to additional regulations, and eligible for additional incentives.

Two other planning documents incorporated into the General Plan affect the 23rd Avenue area: the Pedestrian Master Plan and the Oakland Bicycle Plan. The Pedestrian Master Plan calls out the high rates of accidents on both International and Foothill Boulevards and identifies a need for more pedestrian-oriented street improvement projects citywide. According to the Pedestrian Master Plan, Garfield School had more child-pedestrian vehicle collisions between 1996-2000 than any other school in Oakland. The Bicycle Master Plan designates Foothill Boulevard as a Key Bikeway Corridor, making it a top priority for funding in the creation of a citywide bicycle network.

In summary, the community vision that emerged from the 23rd Avenue planning process is consistent with the city's vision, as articulated in the General Plan: 23rd Avenue should be a thriving center of community and commerce, with pedestrian-oriented streets, housing and transportation choices, and access to open space.

Circulation: Traffic, Transit and Pedestrian Activity

The primary streets for accessing the 23rd Avenue neighborhood are International Boulevard, Foothill Boulevard and 23rd Avenue. Both International and Foothill Boulevards are heavy-flow streets that connect East Oakland's flatland neighborhoods to downtown Oakland and neighboring San Leandro. Circulation between the Lower San Antonio neighborhood and the Oakland hills occurs primarily via 23rd Avenue.

International and Foothill Boulevard are among the city's most dangerous streets for pedestrians, ranking first and fourth respectively in vehicle/pedestrian collisions per mile (Source: *City of Oakland Pedestrian Master Plan, 2002*). Road width is a contributing factor—International Boulevard has four lanes of fast moving traffic through most of the city; Foothill suddenly increases to four lanes between 14th and 23rd Avenue (for most of the rest of the city, it has only two).

Residential streets and intersections in the study area are typically two lanes, with parking on both sides of the street. Stop signs and crosswalks are painted irregularly, and community members cite problems at almost every intersection along 22nd Avenue



International Boulevard as it approaches 23rd Avenue.

and 23rd Avenue. Problems include light timing, speeding and dangerous crossings. The East 15th Street and 23rd Avenue intersection is particularly dangerous due to fast moving traffic and low visibility.

Twenty-second Avenue is an atypical residential street. It doubles as a wide arterial for vehicle traffic exiting I-880. Drivers coming off the freeway tend to speed for three blocks up to Foothill Boulevard, the southeast corner of Garfield Elementary. Most drivers continue to speed through the residential blocks, creating dangerous situations for Garfield parents, students and staff.

Both International and Foothill Boulevards offer regional bus service. Community members report regular and frequent bus service on International Boulevard via the 82L line. The 62L line on 23rd Avenue is less reliable. AC Transit also operates two lines along Foothill Boulevard—40 and 43. Buses traveling on International and Foothill

Garfield Elementary had more child-pedestrian vehicle collisions between 1996 - 2000 than any other school in Oakland.



Foothill Boulevard on the Southwestern edge of Garfield Elementary



Fig.8 Local Bus Service

have the first and second most patrons in the AC Transit system, but bus stops along these routes are unsheltered, lack adequate seating and provide no bus route or schedule information. (Fig.8: Local Bus Service)

Pedestrian activity around 23rd Avenue is limited. It is primarily concentrated near the two schools on 22nd Avenue—Garfield Elementary and Life Academy—and the major nonprofit organizations along 23rd Avenue—Lao Family and YEP. Mi Ranchito, the corner market, is a modest hub of activity, sometimes hosting young entrepreneurs who set up shop on the sidewalks. Between Mi Ranchito and YEP, there are only a few stores with enough patrons to contribute to pedestrian activity. Four stores on the west side of 23rd Avenue—the Medina Market, Al’s Barbershop, 23rd Billiards and the Ha Jin General Store—draw a handful of loyal customers. On the east side of 23rd Avenue, at East 15th Street, A & J Liquors also draws a regular set of customers.

It is uncommon to see bicycling in the neighborhood, even on slower residential streets. (Fig.9: Traffic and Pedestrian Safety)

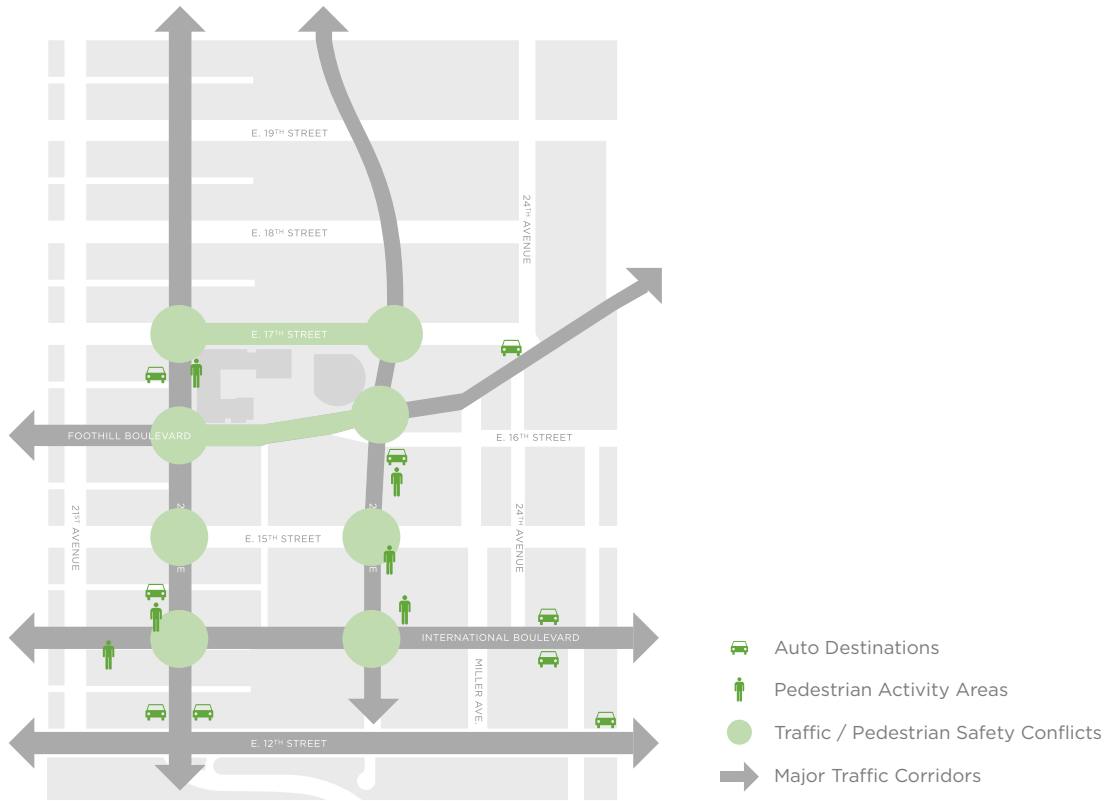


Fig.9 Traffic and Pedestrian Safety

Redevelopment Opportunities

Most of the 23rd Avenue corridor falls within the boundaries of Oakland’s Central City East (CCE) Redevelopment Area. Inclusion in a redevelopment area represents a substantial opportunity for the neighborhood to receive funding and resources for neighborhood revitalization. One way this happens is through “tax increment financing.” The city’s Redevelopment Agency is able to hold onto the growth in property tax revenues (the “tax increment”) collected from properties in the CCE Redevelopment Area, and reinvest this revenue in Redevelopment Area neighborhoods. This can be used to finance a range of projects designed to address “blight,” from façade improvements to streetscape overhauls to grocery stores to new affordable housing.

The CCE Redevelopment Area is managed by the city’s Redevelopment Agency and guided by a Project Area Committee (PAC), with 24 members representing each of four sub-areas. Continued representation on this PAC by 23rd Avenue stakeholders is crucial if 23rd Avenue is to benefit from Redevelopment Area resources. (see Fig.4: *Political Boundaries*)

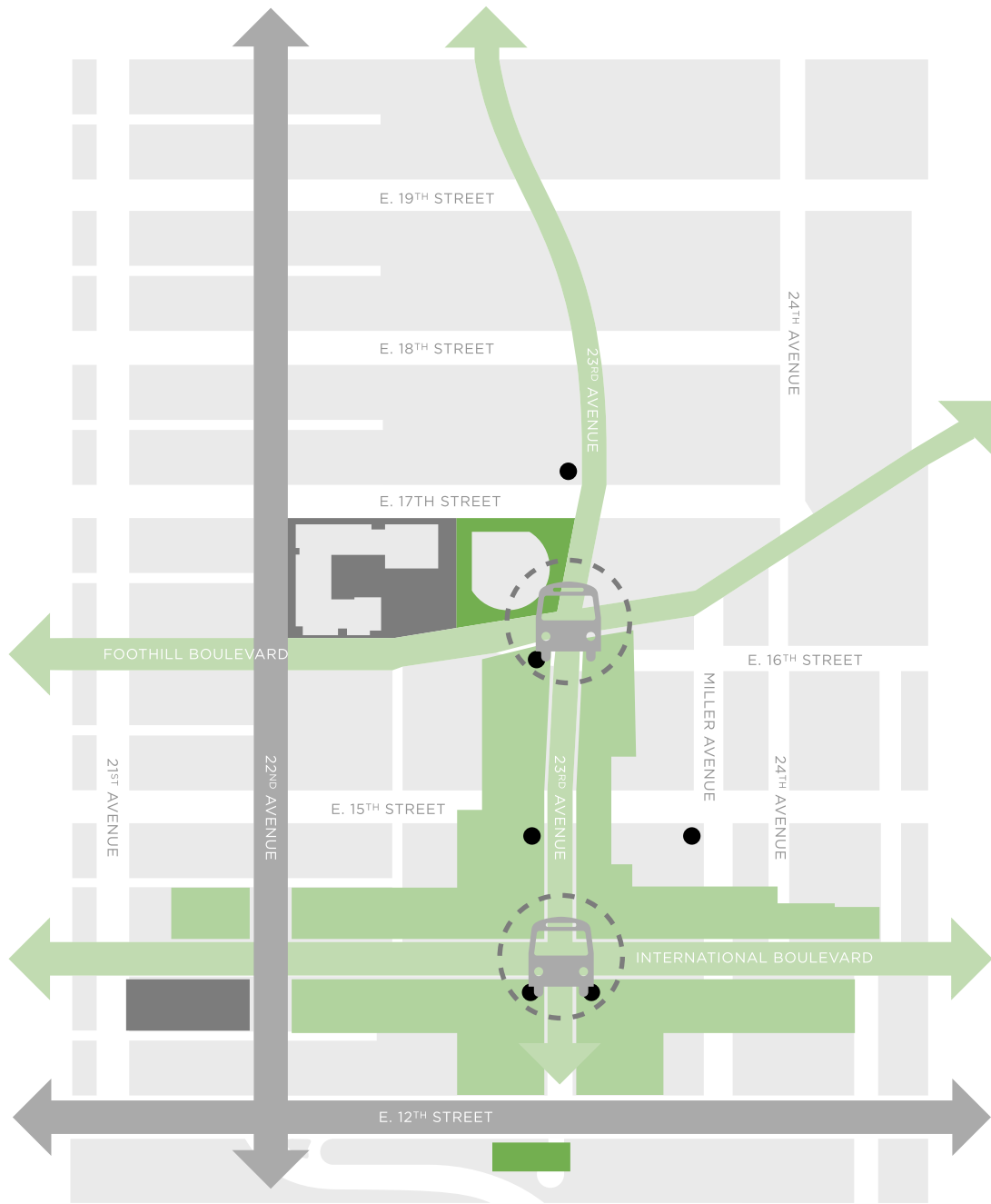


Fig.10 Summary Map

- Neighborhood Landmarks
- ➔ Transit Routes
- ➔ Major Traffic Corridors
- 🚌 Transit Hubs
- Open Space
- Retail Corridor
- Schools

CHALLENGE

OPPORTUNITY

IDENTITY

Lacking visual markers at the entrance to the business district, 23rd Avenue tends to get lost between Fruitvale and Eastlake.

23rd Avenue has unique and significant historical and cultural character that should be developed. Building on the concentration of capable nonprofits and local artists in the area will distinguish 23rd Avenue from other Oakland neighborhoods and could be a driver for business district revitalization.

POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

The designation of 23rd Avenue as a boundary between council districts means local leaders must work through two sets of city staff to find comprehensive solutions to neighborhood challenges.

If 23rd Avenue can position itself as an important part of both districts, neighborhood leaders could harness the political will and resources of two city council districts, two community-policing districts and two redevelopment areas, resulting in substantial investment in the neighborhood.

LAND USE

Uneven commercial land use patterns along 23rd Avenue and the concentration of auto uses along International Boulevard limit pedestrian activity and are not appropriate to a neighborhood business district.

The guiding document for Oakland’s development over the next decade—the Oakland General Plan—envision 23rd Avenue as a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, neighborhood business district, consistent with the community’s vision. Neighborhood leaders can use the General Plan to substantiate requests that the city invest in the community’s vision.

SAFETY

Community safety issues take two forms: (1) frequent criminal activity that presents a substantial challenge to attracting businesses, and (2) streets dominated by fast moving automobiles. Together, they are barriers to creating a healthy pedestrian environment, a working business district and a safe neighborhood.

The 23rd Avenue Workgroup is an unusual collaboration of neighborhood community organizations. By coordinating activities, it can address safety problems on the multiple levels necessary for success. As a narrow and historic commercial corridor served by two major transit lines, 23rd Avenue has latent potential to achieve the level of busyness needed to deter crime. Redevelopment can help make this possible by investing in pedestrian safety improvements.

Table 4 Summary of Opportunities and Challenges



23RD AVE
COMMUNITY
ACTION PLAN

the five strategies

safe streets

Make 23rd Avenue, Foothill and International Boulevards Walkable, Beautiful and Safer for Pedestrians.

- ① Create a safe, artistic and distinctive streetscape on 23rd Avenue.
- ② Eliminate key pedestrian hazards around Garfield Elementary.
- ③ Calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety where Foothill Boulevard approaches 23rd Avenue.
- ④ Improve the pedestrian environment on International Boulevard.
- ⑤ Improve building code enforcement and public maintenance of streets and sidewalks.



Many residents feel unsafe in and around the 23rd Avenue business district. Safety threats take two forms—criminal activity, and speeding traffic on auto-dominated streets. Unsafe or unfriendly streets and sidewalks are a barrier to walking or shopping in the 23rd Avenue business district, a physical threat to Garfield Elementary students, a danger to local employees and worshippers, and an impediment to overall neighborhood revitalization. Families, students, neighborhood businesses and local institutions all suffer as a result. Community members have a different vision—they imagine a 23rd Avenue area that draws in visitors, shoppers and foot traffic, rather than discouraging them. They want to see streets and sidewalks that make criminal activity difficult, not easy. They imagine a 23rd Avenue streetscape that helps pedestrians feel safer, inspires pride and celebrates Lower San Antonio’s diversity and heritage.

1

Create a Safe, Artistic and Distinctive Streetscape on 23rd Avenue.

Fast moving traffic, dangerous crossings and an absence of street amenities discourage pedestrians on 23rd Avenue.

A coordinated series of street improvements, with a unifying design theme, can improve pedestrian safety while: showcasing the community's unique diversity, raising the visibility of 23rd Avenue as a distinct neighborhood center and making it a more appealing environment for families, shoppers and other visitors.



Benches can showcase public art while offering pedestrian amenities.

Tips on Timing The order of streetscape improvements is important. Local merchants point out that without an increase in safety and maintenance, prostitutes and drug dealers will use benches and bus shelters more than pedestrians, shoppers or transit riders. For this reason, certain street furniture, such as benches, should be installed only after more positive activities have been brought to the street and have begun to discourage criminal activity (see Strategy 2, arts & learning).

project 1a Install decorative curb “bulbouts” and high-visibility crosswalks where 23rd Avenue intersects East 15th Street and International Boulevard.

Curb “bulbouts” slow traffic and reduce the distance pedestrians must walk to cross intersections, thereby aiding pedestrian safety. They can also provide a venue on 23rd Avenue for public art like tiled mosaics. Combined with high-visibility crosswalks, artistic bulbouts also signal to passing traffic that they have arrived in a special district.

East 15th Street would be the first priority for curb bulbouts, especially if stop signs are not placed on all four corners.

project 1b Create an Art / Transit Plaza at the intersection of Foothill Boulevard, East 16th Street and 23rd Avenue.

This intersection is perhaps the most dangerous to pedestrians of any in the 23rd Avenue business district. Pedestrians crossing the intersection on the west side of 23rd Avenue have to cross two streets in one traffic cycle (a total of six lanes!), while looking out for traffic from four directions. The pedestrian signal is too short to cross the full intersection, stranding pedestrians on a tiny island in the middle of the intersection. From here, students and other pedestrians typically cross the remainder of the intersection without waiting for the light to turn green, putting them at new peril. Bus riders also have to use this tiny island to board and alight buses traveling down Foothill.

Turning the small stretch of East 16th Street just south of this island into a neighborhood plaza will (1) improve pedestrian and bus rider safety, (2) provide space for a bus shelter and (3) create a community space that can showcase public art and mark the entrance to the 23rd Avenue business district.

If it becomes prohibitively difficult to close this stretch of East 16th Street, the existing island could be widened and the remaining section of East 16th reduced to a one-way street heading east. (*Figure 2: A Vision of 23rd Avenue, Looking Southwest, depicts this alternative.*) Space for public art would be more limited under this scenario.

project 1c Plant street trees along 23rd Avenue, Foothill Boulevard, East 15th and East 16th Streets.

Trees add beauty to a street. The right trees also add shade, a crucial pedestrian amenity. They also make streets seem narrower, which makes people drive more slowly. Finally, they help neighborhoods stand out.

project 1d Install pedestrian lighting on both sides of 23rd Avenue.

On 23rd Avenue, existing street lights are about 30-feet tall and shine on the road, rather than the sidewalks. Lower light poles, focused on the sidewalk, would go a long way to making sidewalks a safer place at night. A priority intersection for pedestrian lighting is East 15th Street / 23rd Avenue. This intersection is well known by community members as a hotspot for drug dealing and loitering.

project 1e Place decorated planters, banners, trash cans, benches and other public art along 23rd Avenue.

New planters, trash cans, benches and other street furniture can both contribute to the use of streets as an outdoor social space and express local identity through participatory art. These can be coordinated with street banners and other forms of public art to give the 23rd Avenue streetscape a unified visual identity.

Local artists, operating through the EastSide Arts Alliance, are ready to partner with the city to create this kind of streetscape. In 2000, collaboration among four EastSide Arts Alliance members resulted in a series of street banners, placed throughout Lower San Antonio, to celebrate the diversity of local cultures. A funded program for 23rd Avenue could more formally tap their strengths, heighten community pride, showcase the many cultures of the neighborhood, and develop the distinctive character of the 23rd Avenue business district.

Workshop participants proposed specific ideas for public art projects:

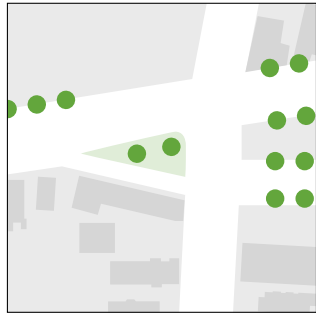
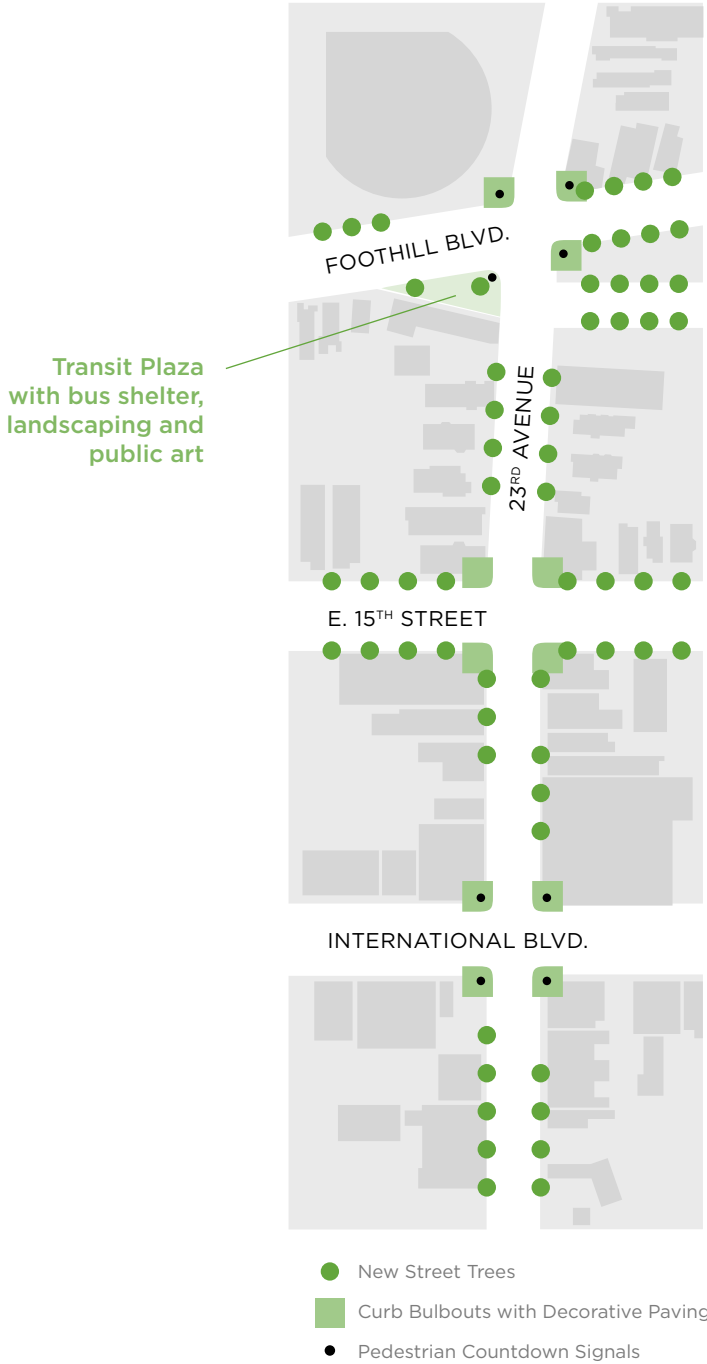
- murals
- sculptures
- altars
- mosaic tile on storefront facades
- matched entryway totems;
- consistent tree grate decoration



CASE STUDY > INTERSECTION REPAIR

In 1996 residents of the Sellwood neighborhood in Portland transformed one of their local intersections into a vibrant community-gathering place. Share-It Square, as the intersection is now known, began as an entirely grass-roots project that challenged conventional notions about local stewardship of streets and neighborhood public spaces. This individual square ultimately evolved into a citywide program—Intersection Repair—offering assistance to Portland neighborhoods who want to replace unsafe or unwelcoming intersections with successful, expressive community focal points. Intersection Repair projects utilize paint, paving materials and community artwork to narrow traffic lanes, create traffic circles, calm traffic and clearly delineate the pedestrian realm. The city now has an adopted ordinance in place that encourages Intersection Repair projects throughout Portland.

Source: City Repair: Intersection Repair, A Public Square in Every Neighborhood. www.cityrepair.org



ALTERNATE SOLUTION
A widened island at Foothill Boulevard and 23rd Avenue

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS INCLUDE:
Pedestrian Lighting along 23rd Avenue
Decorated planters, banners and other public art.

Fig.11 Proposed Streetscape Design for 23rd Avenue

2

Eliminate Key Pedestrian Hazards around Garfield Elementary.

Garfield Elementary School had more child-pedestrian vehicle collisions between 1996-2000 than any other school in Oakland. Community members identified a host of causes, including fast moving traffic, dangerous crossing conditions and an inadequate drop-off area in front of the school.

The following phased strategy for redesigning the Garfield Elementary perimeter will increase pedestrian safety at critical drop-off and pick-up times and calm fast moving traffic along 22nd Avenue.

Combined with our recommendations for calming Foothill Boulevard (discussed further below), these improvements can help create safer routes to school for both students and parents.

Tips on Timing In those projects where improvements happen to one intersection at a time, it would make sense to prioritize 22nd Avenue/Foothill Boulevard. Parents were particularly concerned about the dangers of this intersection: fast moving traffic exiting I-880 comes up 22nd Avenue (4 lanes) and turns right onto Foothill Boulevard without giving much attention to children crossing the street. The second priority intersection is 22nd Avenue/E. 17th Street.

project 2a Create a one-way loop around Garfield at school pick-up and drop-off times.

Garfield should create a temporary one-way loop around the school during peak school traffic hours. A police beat officer, crossing guard and orange cones would direct cars in a clockwise direction, so that kids are always dropped off and picked up on the school side of the street, instead of across the street. To make this happen, segments of 22nd Avenue and East 17th Street would temporarily convert to one-way, with the lanes on the far side of the school blocked off. (See *fig.12*)

project 2b Staff Garfield with adult crossing guards.

Paid or volunteer adult crossing guards are needed to reduce safety threats to students at the intersections of Foothill/22nd Avenue, East 17th/22nd Avenue, and East 17th/23rd Avenue. Foothill/22nd Avenue is the most dangerous, and would be the highest priority. Guards also will be necessary for managing the temporary one-way loop at drop-off and pick-up times.

Many parents in the 23rd Avenue neighborhood recently signed up to help Garfield Elementary as trained, volunteer crossing guards. However, a city policy now turns away volunteer guards who don't have a driver's license or other form of government-issued identification. The city needs to make it easier for identifiable adults to volunteer, or provide the resources for paid guards at no less than two perimeter intersections.

project 2c Update pedestrian signals with modern safety features, including a "pedestrian headstart," where Foothill intersects 22nd and 23rd Avenues.

Children need headstart signals at Foothill/22nd Avenue to reduce the danger of being hit by turning cars. A headstart signal would allow pedestrians to start crossing before parallel traffic gets a green light. Countdown signals, which show how many seconds are left to cross the street, would also help students cross Foothill/22nd Avenue and Foothill/23rd Avenue more safely. Finally, signals at both intersections should be longer, particularly at Foothill/23rd Avenue, to give students enough time to cross.

project 2d Paint high-visibility crosswalks at all four of the intersections that surround the school.

The intersections surrounding Garfield need more visible crosswalks to alert turning drivers to crossing pedestrians. Painting a “ladder” or “continental”-style crosswalk is recommended; these place a lot more white paint on the pavement, and have a track record of improving pedestrian safety across the country. Clear sidewalks also play a crucial role in “channeling” students to protected intersections.

project 2e Install a speed hump on East 17th Street.

A speed hump should be placed at Garfield’s exit on East 17th Street, between 22nd and 23rd Avenues, to address speeding. The city has adopted a temporary moratorium on speed humps, but an exception needs to be made for this street. Each of the parallel streets north of the school has speed humps, but the street closest to the school—East 17th—does not. As a result, speeding cars like to use East 17th Street, where a high concentration of children cross. As the temporary one-way loop reduces the number of children crossing East 17th, a speed hump is still necessary to cut down on weekend drag racing, an ongoing concern for community residents.

project 2f Expand the drop-off zone for parents along East 17th and 22nd Avenue.

Every school day, Garfield parents double park on 22nd Avenue as well as East 17th to drop off or pick up their kids. Many children exit the cars right into traffic. An expanded drop-off zone will reserve more space for cars to pull up to the sidewalk, outside the flow of traffic. This project should go hand in hand with transitioning to diagonal parking along East 17th and 22nd Avenue to make up for parking lost to an expanded drop-off area.

project 2g Convert to diagonal parking along East 17th and 22nd Avenue for teachers and visitors.









Conserving parking spaces is a priority for Garfield Elementary, because it is often the key to retaining high-quality teachers. Diagonal parking not only replaces parking spaces lost through expanding the drop-off zone, but also narrows 22nd Avenue and East 17th, forcing thru-traffic to slow down.

project 2h Place bulbouts at each of the intersections surrounding the school.

Creating sidewalk “bulbouts” at all the corners around Garfield reduces crossing distances and increases pedestrian safety at all school access points. The bulbouts also help slow traffic on each of the streets surrounding the school.



Fig.12 Plan for Improving Pedestrian Safety around Garfield Elementary

-  High Visibility Crosswalk
-  Temporary One Way Loop
-  Speed Hump
-  Curb Bulbouts
-  Crossing Guard
-  Pedestrian Signal Timing
-  Expanded Drop-off Zone
-  Diagonal Parking



CASE STUDY > CLEVELAND ELEMENTARY'S ONE-WAY LOOP

School leaders at Oakland's Cleveland Elementary were concerned about safety issues revolving around the drop-off and pick-up of students. Working with the local Oakland Police Beat Officer, the school changed the two-way street in front of the school entrance into a one-way street during peak school traffic hours. A crossing guard and orange cones in the street direct cars in a clockwise direction around the school, so that kids are always dropped off and picked up on the school side of the street, instead of across the street.

Contact: Sharon Casanares, Principal (510) 879-1080

3

Calm Traffic and Improve Pedestrian Safety Where Foothill Boulevard Approaches 23rd Avenue.

Community members identified Foothill Boulevard as a key location for street improvements. Between 14th and 23rd Avenues, Foothill is four lanes wide, while in most other parts of the city, Foothill is only two lanes wide. This broad expanse makes it easy to speed and is frequently home to reckless driving. This is a particular threat to Garfield Elementary students, who often cut across Foothill mid-block to get to and from school.

The projects below will calm traffic on Foothill, while contributing to the revitalization of 23rd Avenue.



Fig.13a Foothill Boulevard today

project 3a Narrow Foothill by restriping to one car lane and one bike lane in each direction (with space for a future center median).

Narrowing the space in which cars can travel on Foothill Boulevard will slow traffic around Garfield Elementary and improve pedestrian safety at the dangerous 5-way intersection of Foothill/23rd Avenue. This can be accomplished by restriping the street from four lanes to two between 14th and 23rd avenues, and using the extra space for bike lanes and a raised center median. Traffic engineers often refer to this as a “road diet.” Vehicle lanes should be kept 10 feet wide to have the desired effect of reducing vehicle speeds.

Adding bike lanes to this stretch of Foothill would also implement a high-priority project in Oakland’s Bicycle Master Plan. Foothill is a popular, though presently dangerous, northwest-southeast bike route. Bike lanes would allow more people to safely take advantage of this flat bikeway connecting Lower San Antonio to many other parts of the city.

The Department of Public Works has assessed the idea of restriping to two lanes plus bike lanes, and has determined it is feasible. Indeed, this is a common approach to calming Oakland streets that no longer need to be so wide.



Fig.13b A vision of Foothill Boulevard tomorrow

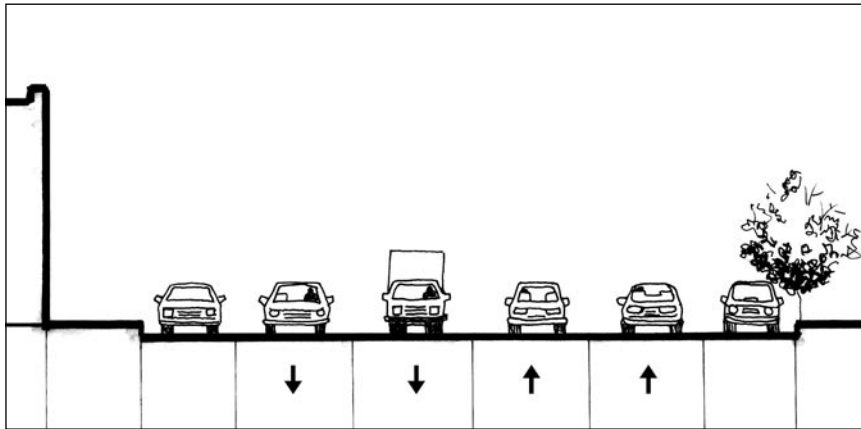


Fig.14a Current traffic pattern on Foothill from 14th Avenue to 23rd Avenue

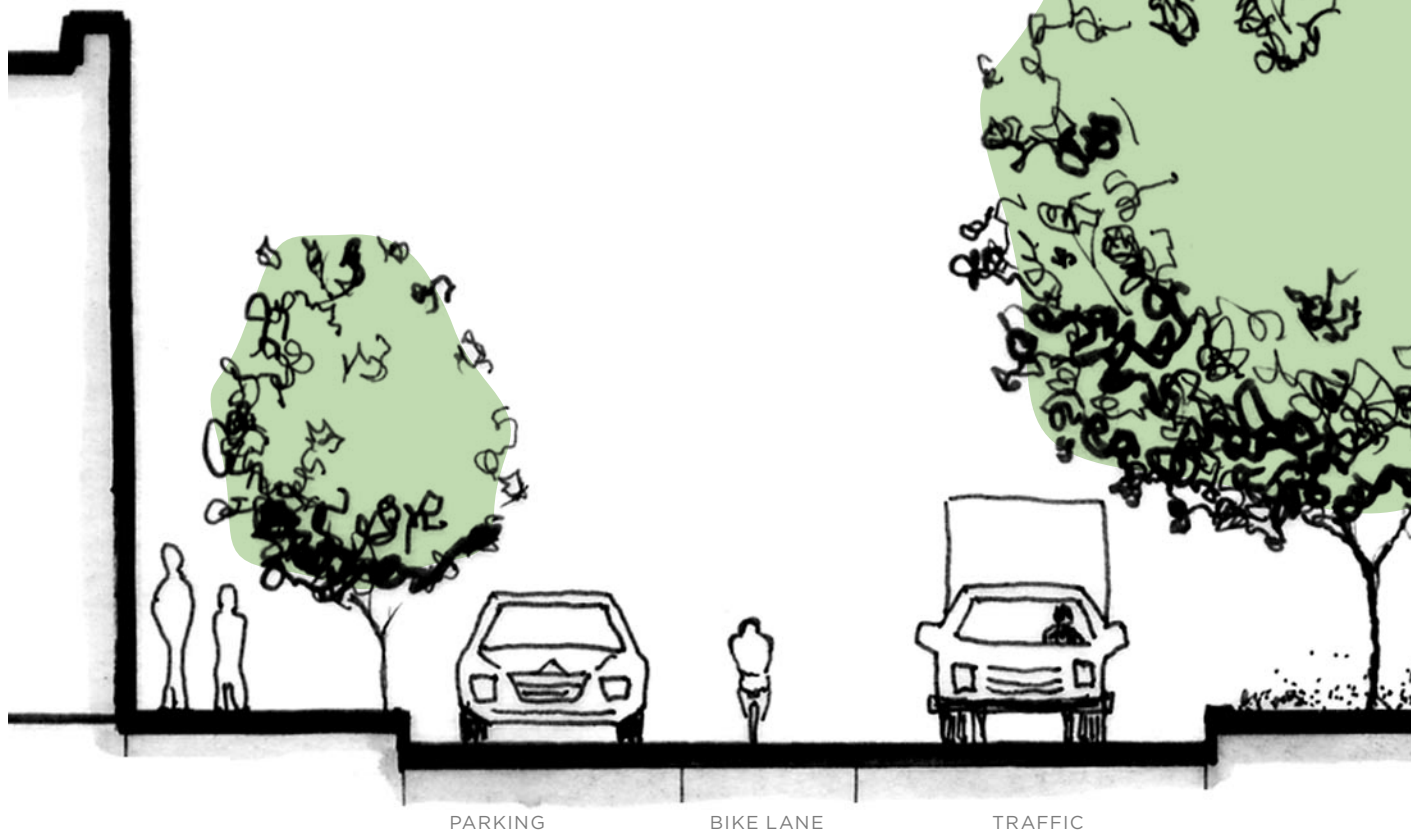


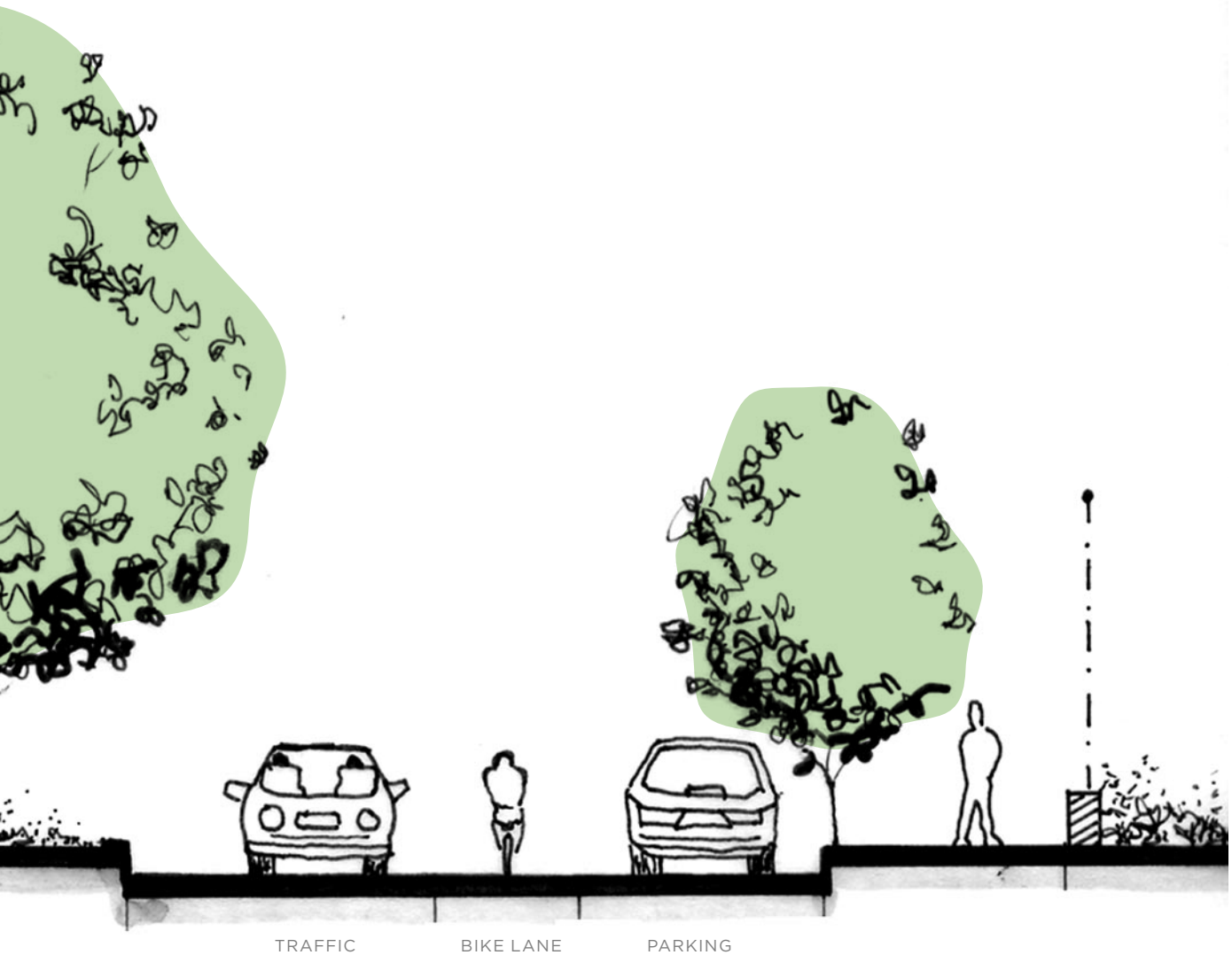
Fig.14b "Narrowing" Foothill to 1 car and bike lane in each direction

project 3b Plant additional trees along Foothill's sidewalks.

Sidewalk trees between 22nd and 23rd Avenues will create shade for pedestrians and make Foothill more aesthetically pleasing for walking.

project 3c Create a tree-lined center median.

Median trees break up the open expanse of the road, making it seem narrower, and more human scale. This is an important part of creating a welcoming environment for pedestrians. Trees in a mid-boulevard median will also narrow the line of vision for drivers, causing them to slow down. At the intersection of 22nd Ave./Foothill, the median should extend all the way to the crosswalk, rather than give way to a pocket left turn lane. Doing so allows the median to serve as a pedestrian refuge at the official point of pedestrian crossing. Not having a pocket left turn lane also helps calm traffic.





Improve the Pedestrian Environment on International Boulevard.

AC Transit is planning a new, state-of-the-art transit line along International Boulevard called Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). International would be one of the first corridors with BRT in the entire Bay Area. Buses will have dedicated lanes, mini bus stations every half mile where riders can wait in comfort and safety, and the technology to extend green lights in their favor.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) has tremendous potential to calm traffic on International Boulevard, while helping people travel more quickly to and from 23rd Avenue. Work to expedite BRT's arrival will have a big payoff for the 23rd Avenue business district, while making International a safer and more comfortable place to walk.

Tips on Timing Bus Rapid Transit would take two to four years to construct. Safety improvements and bus shelters are needed in the meantime, especially since International Boulevard is already Oakland's most heavily traveled bus corridor. The most strategic improvements would not make major changes to the street right-of-way, given that road projects will likely be removed by construction of the BRT.

project 4a Update pedestrian signals at the intersection of International and 23rd Avenue to include safety features like pedestrian countdown signals.

The 82 and 82L, which run up and down International, enjoy the highest ridership levels in Oakland. International Boulevard should be a safer place for bus patrons to cross and catch transit.

Pedestrian signals at 23rd Avenue/International should be modernized to include safety features like pedestrian countdowns (see sidebar “Pedestrian Signals on Stop Lights” p.59). Pedestrian signals here should also be longer.

project 4b Create safer crossings for students at Life Academy.

International Boulevard is home to the Life Academy—a new, small, autonomous school with 300 students, located between 21st and 22nd Avenues. Students frequently cross International for lunch or to catch a bus. Physical education classes also take students across International on a daily basis to reach either Garfield Park or San Antonio Park. Yet there is no traffic light or crosswalk at the entrance to the school, nor any warning lights or signs telling cars they are approaching a school zone.

A high-visibility crosswalk is needed at the corner of 21st and International, if not a new traffic light. This crosswalk should be combined with mid-boulevard signs alerting drivers to the school and crosswalk, signs and lights warning of double fines for speeding, and police stings for crosswalk violations by motorists.

project 4c Use Bus Rapid Transit to create a safer, narrower International Boulevard.

Funding for BRT was given a big boost by Regional Measure 2, which passed in 2004, but full BRT funding is not yet assured. Community support is needed to: secure the rest of necessary funding, help BRT pass the approvals process, ensure a station is located at 23rd Avenue, and guide new street designs so they are in line with the community’s vision for a safer and visually appealing boulevard.



*Top International Boulevard / 98th Avenue today
Above Proposed bus station and dedicated lanes*



PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS ON STOP LIGHTS

Updating stoplights and signals is a cost effective way to increase pedestrian safety at intersections. Standard pedestrian signals (with a walking person and red hand) tell you when to cross. New technologies provide pedestrians with more information and give them greater priority at intersections:

- Audible signals chirp or beep to let you know when to cross.
- Countdown signals show how many seconds you have left to cross.
- Extended timing signals allow more time to cross than a standard signal.
- Signals with a pedestrian head start allow you to begin walking for a few seconds before vehicles on the parallel road get a green light. This makes you more visible and reduces conflicts with turning vehicles.
- Pedestrian scrambles stop vehicles in all directions while you cross either diagonally or conventionally. This also reduces conflicts with turning vehicles, and is useful in intersections with high pedestrian volumes.
- A “hot” signal changes the light faster once you push the button. Signals can also be upgraded to detect pedestrians by video or other means, and change the light if someone is waiting to cross.



An Oakland countdown signal

Improve Building Code Enforcement and Public Maintenance of Streets and Sidewalks.

The success of the physical recommendations in this plan is dependent on more responsive public services. 23rd Avenue and surrounding streets are poorly maintained—broken sidewalks and litter are common and many building facades are in disrepair. This reinforces the message that no one really cares what happens in the district, and encourages criminal activity. The dilapidated appearance of the neighborhood also discourages would-be customers and potential employees by giving the impression the area is even less safe than it actually is.

Recent, large community clean ups organized by 23rd Avenue Neighbors showed the community is willing to do its part to keep local streets and sidewalks clean (100 participated in late 2003, and again in April 2004). The city needs to mirror these efforts.

project 5a Hold the city accountable for regular street cleaning and trash removal.

In 2002, the city of Oakland established a centralized system for all city services called the Service Delivery System (SDS), which presents a single point of access to city agencies. Because SDS areas are consistent with city council districts, 23rd Avenue is divided between two SDS areas. Although the concept behind SDS is a good one—streamlining city services—the program has not resulted in a substantive increase in maintenance for the 23rd Avenue area. It will be important to work with local city council members to ensure both SDS teams work together on the 23rd Avenue area, and are responsive to community needs for cleaner streets and sidewalks, and regular trash removal.

project 5b Hold the city accountable for improved code enforcement.

Private landlords have allowed the facades of several buildings in the 23rd Avenue neighborhood to deteriorate and fall apart. This drags down the commercial prospects and property values of everyone else in the neighborhood. It also communicates to criminals that this is a neighborhood that will not mind additional lawlessness. The residents and merchants who participated in the community planning workshops welcome a stepped-up effort by the city to enforce these laws. Greater code enforcement should be combined with changes to the city's Façade Improvement Program (see *Strategy 4, Action Step 2, p.87*), so that private building owners on 23rd Avenue have both the incentive and resources to contribute to a vital, energizing streetscape.

project 5c Continue community clean-up efforts.

Continued participation of residents, merchants and local groups in clean-up efforts can leverage additional public maintenance services. These efforts should be widely supported.



One of several teams gathers after a 23rd Avenue Community Clean Up held in 2003.

arts & learning

Bring the 23rd Avenue District
alive with centers for Arts,
Learning and Community
Exchange

- ① Create a Community Cultural Center.
- ② Help Garfield Elementary and Youth Employment Partnership Expand into Fuller Community Resources.
- ③ Cluster New Educational Programming on 23rd Avenue.

2

An essential ingredient for making 23rd Avenue safer will be to fill empty storefronts with tenants that generate foot traffic throughout the day.

An active 23rd Avenue will increase “eyes on the street”—people who watch out for each other—and establish healthier norms for street life. These are crucial for making 23rd Avenue less hospitable to street crime.

In the short term, it may be difficult to fill storefronts with new businesses. This plan therefore recommends building on local strengths—an emerging cluster of educational programming on 23rd Avenue, San Antonio’s amazing diversity, and the creativity of a growing population of organized, neighborhood artists—to expand arts and learning destinations and recreate a sense of place on 23rd Avenue.

Local, accessible opportunities for learning, job training, creative expression and community exchange will both serve the community well and bring District streets alive at multiple times of the day. Ultimately they will create the kind of foot traffic and expanded customer base that can entice new businesses, and help existing businesses thrive.

1

Create a Community Cultural Center.

Lower San Antonio can harness its cultural assets and local creativity to revitalize the 23rd Avenue district, but not without a permanent space for arts programming and culture-based activities.

A thriving population of homegrown neighborhood artists has emerged in Lower San Antonio, encouraging community participation in the arts through after-school programs, programming for young adults, street banners and murals, community exhibitions, and special events like the annual Malcolm X JazzArts Festival. The EastSide Arts Alliance (ESAA) draws these energies together in a collaborative that has begun to establish a visible presence in Lower San Antonio.

But despite ESAA's early successes, a significant impediment to its members' work is a lack of permanent space properly configured to accommodate studios, classrooms, and community performances/gatherings. Meanwhile, related businesses, like Ghetto Flowers, Tumi's Design and the Black Dot Café find it difficult to stay on 23rd Avenue due to the volatile rental market.

project 1a Secure funding to enable EastSide Arts Alliance to purchase space for a community cultural center in the 23rd Avenue neighborhood.

A community cultural center in the heart of the 23rd Avenue business district would provide a permanent, central home for ESAA's members and their array of after-school programming, adult classes, workshops, performances and community forums. It would also help established, local businesses, like the Black Dot, Ghetto Flowers Fashion and Beats Flows Videos share resources and thrive. It will provide a space for diverse Lower San Antonio ethnic groups to celebrate and pass on cultural traditions.

A community cultural center can also:

- bring 23rd Avenue alive at night by hosting events;
- provide a training ground through which local youth and adults can use artistic creativity and cultural celebration to re-energize the 23rd Avenue streetscape with public art;
- offer a stable home for other needed community services, such as a credit union, day care, or legal aid;
- create a space for cross-cultural learning, dialogue and cooperation among Lower San Antonio's diverse communities; and
- help catalyze businesses like arts supply stores that serve cultural center patrons.



A vision of the future community cultural center.

2

Help Garfield Elementary and Youth Employment Partnership Grow into Fuller Community Resources.



De'jon Banks hones construction skills at the Youth Employment Partnership.



Garfield Elementary School

project 2a Expand services and adult education at Garfield.

Located at the top of the 23rd Avenue District, Garfield Elementary has the potential to play a fuller role in community learning. But its schoolyard and buildings are often inaccessible after school hours, significantly limiting its service potential, and confining activity on 23rd Avenue to school pick-up and drop-off hours.

A multi-use school would announce itself as open to the community after hours, and provide ongoing learning opportunities for adults. It would also explore options for locating community services like a library or a health clinic on site.

project 2b Support program expansion at Youth Employment Partnership.

The Youth Employment Partnership (YEP), located at the heart of the 23rd Avenue corridor, is the largest youth job skills training program in Oakland. In addition to programs like Career Tryout, Future Workforce for In-School Youth, Future Workforce for Out-of-School Youth, Team Oakland, and YouthBuild, YEP has recently started two new charter schools in its building. This programming helps create a “buzz” in the 23rd Avenue Commercial District, while providing positive educational opportunities for local and citywide youth. The 23rd Avenue Workgroup should explore opportunities to partner with YEP to continue its expansion of services to citywide and neighborhood youth populations.



Cluster New Educational Programming on 23rd Avenue.

With the Youth Employment Partnership (YEP) and Garfield Elementary School already serving as anchors on 23rd Avenue, two new YEP charter schools on the way, and Leap Academy nearby, there is an opportunity to develop synergies by bringing additional educational programming to the district.

Located in close proximity, nonprofit and public educational services can enjoy greater visibility, and make a bigger impact on safety than they can in isolation. They can also strengthen each other's programming.

An after-school homework center or educational programming targeted at young adults, for example, would be a good addition to the avenue.

Additional Reasons to Cluster Educational Programming on 23rd Avenue

Feasibility A 2001 Bay Area Economics study found that a local market already exists for small, flexible nonprofit office space along both 23rd Avenue and International Boulevard.

Accessibility The 23rd Avenue business district is intersected by two major bus corridors, International Boulevard and Foothill Boulevard. Buses also run up 23rd Avenue. In the short and long-term, neighborhood services ought to be able to benefit from this high degree of accessibility.

project 3a Relocate scattered educational nonprofits, like the East Bay Asian Youth Center, to 23rd Avenue.

The East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC) is currently housed in a well used, but isolated building on East 12th Street—a high speed frontage road to I-880, underneath the BART tracks. If relocated to 23rd Avenue, EBAYC’s youth programming would be safer to walk to, closer to bus stops and a contributor to a thriving neighborhood center. This move, however, may require at least one-time financial assistance.



EBAYC’s current headquarters on East 12th Street.

beneficial development

Encourage Well-Designed, Affordable, Mixed-Use Development.

- ① Make changes to the City's zoning code and General Plan to enable greater mixed-use development.
- ② Use Urban Ecology's Design Guidelines for 23rd Avenue to shape the design of new development or storefront rehabilitation.
- ③ Facilitate affordable housing development to safeguard against displacement.
- ④ Rehabilitate Miller Library.

3

Residents of the 23rd Avenue neighborhood want to see new investment and new development in their community. But they are aware that not all new development will serve the community well. Their concerns fall into four categories:

Land use Residents would like fewer auto-oriented, and more pedestrian-oriented uses that put housing within close reach of essential destinations.

Design Many 23rd Avenue buildings break up the building edge with driveways, parking lots and setbacks that offer hiding places for crime. Residents would like to see new buildings incorporate safer design.

Displacement of existing residents Residents voiced concerns about gentrification throughout the 23rd Avenue planning process. While wanting revitalization, they also understand new public and private investments can raise rents to the point of displacing existing renters. Residents want to see new development that expands affordable ownership and rental housing options.

Cultural resources New development has a track record of sweeping away the old, often at the expense of historic, cultural resources which make a place special. Residents would like to see new development preserve or even enhance existing cultural resources.

The following action steps can facilitate development that will help the community realize its vision.

1

Make changes to the City’s zoning code and General Plan to enable greater mixed-use development.

Mixed-use development typically houses two kinds of activity in one building—stores or offices on the ground floor, and housing above. This mix of activities contributes to street life and community safety by generating activity at different times of the day—business owners and customers in the morning and afternoon, residents at night—extending the duration of street vigilance. Rehabilitating and developing buildings that serve multiple uses is a crucial part of increasing activity and revitalizing the 23rd Avenue business district.

project 1a Conform zoning in the 23rd Avenue business district to the city's General Plan.

The city of Oakland has taken a promising step in encouraging mixed-use development on 23rd Avenue; the city's guiding document for development over the next decade—the Oakland General Plan—envisions 23rd Avenue as a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented, neighborhood commercial district.

This means that half of the legal framework is in place to ensure future development is consistent with the community's vision for a mixed-use business district. The next step is to get local zoning in line with the General Plan.

The most powerful tool the city and the community can use to guide investment and improvements is the zoning code. Zoning is the set of laws that determines the specific land use (residential, business, open space, industrial), the intensity of use (for ex. high-density apartment or single family home) and the look of buildings (two stories high, set back three feet from the sidewalk, etc.). It is what gives the General Plan its teeth.

Presently, 23rd Avenue is divided into C-20, C-28 and C-60 zones between Foothill and East 12th Street. The C-20 and C-60 zones permit only commercial uses; housing is not allowed "as of right," but requires special approval. This makes it more complicated for developers of mixed-use projects to get permits.

Northeast of 23rd Avenue/International, south of East 16th Street, land is zoned R-36. This does not permit institutional or commercial uses "as of right." In fact, commercial uses are not even allowed "conditionally." Mixed use, then, is more complicated in this part of the business district as well.

In some parts of the city, discrepancies between zoning and the General Plan have caused developers to back away altogether from projects compliant with the General Plan. In lieu of the city creating a new type of zone to support neighborhood commercial mixed use, the city should:

- change the C-20 zone on 23rd Avenue to C-28, which better supports mixed use; and
- change the R-36 zone to a designation that makes mixed use easier, at least along East 15th Street between 23rd Avenue and Miller.

project 1b **Extend the General Plan’s Neighborhood Center Mixed-Use designation, and consistent zoning, into three additional parts of the 23rd Avenue neighborhood:**

1 23rd Avenue between International Boulevard and East 12th Street.

This change would allow the 23rd Avenue business district to maintain its identity across International Boulevard, a major regional thoroughfare. In the long term, industrial uses should be removed from the immediate area, and replaced with new mixed-use buildings that contribute more actively to the street. Additionally, neighborhood residents have identified the currently unmaintained landscaped area across from East 12th Street at the terminus of 23rd Avenue as a potential recreation area, although it is currently separated from the commercial district by industrial uses. More dense development along 23rd Avenue in this area would help make this park a viable terminus for the commercial district.

2 The intersection of 15th Street and Miller.

Neighborhood residents identify this intersection as particularly dangerous, largely due to inactive uses on corner lots. General Plan and zoning changes could provide incentives for more active development here. In particular, development on the under-utilized YEP parking lot could increase activity on this block and reduce opportunities for crime and loitering.

3 The northwest corner of East 15th Street and 23rd Avenue.

Currently, there are two apartment buildings on this corner. Rehab of these buildings, or new mixed-use buildings, would help increase visibility and “eyes” on East 15th Street. Currently the street is dominated by a long blank wall—the side of Mount Cavalry Church—on the south side of the street.



NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER MIXED-USE

According to the General Plan, areas classified as Neighborhood Center Mixed-Use are “typically characterized by smaller scale, pedestrian-oriented, continuous street frontage with a mix of retail housing, office, active open space, eating and drinking places, personal and business services and smaller scale educational, cultural or entertainment uses. Future development within this classification should be commercial or mixed-uses that are pedestrian-oriented and serve nearby neighborhoods, or urban residential with ground floor commercial.”

Source: Land Use and Transportation Element, City of Oakland General Plan

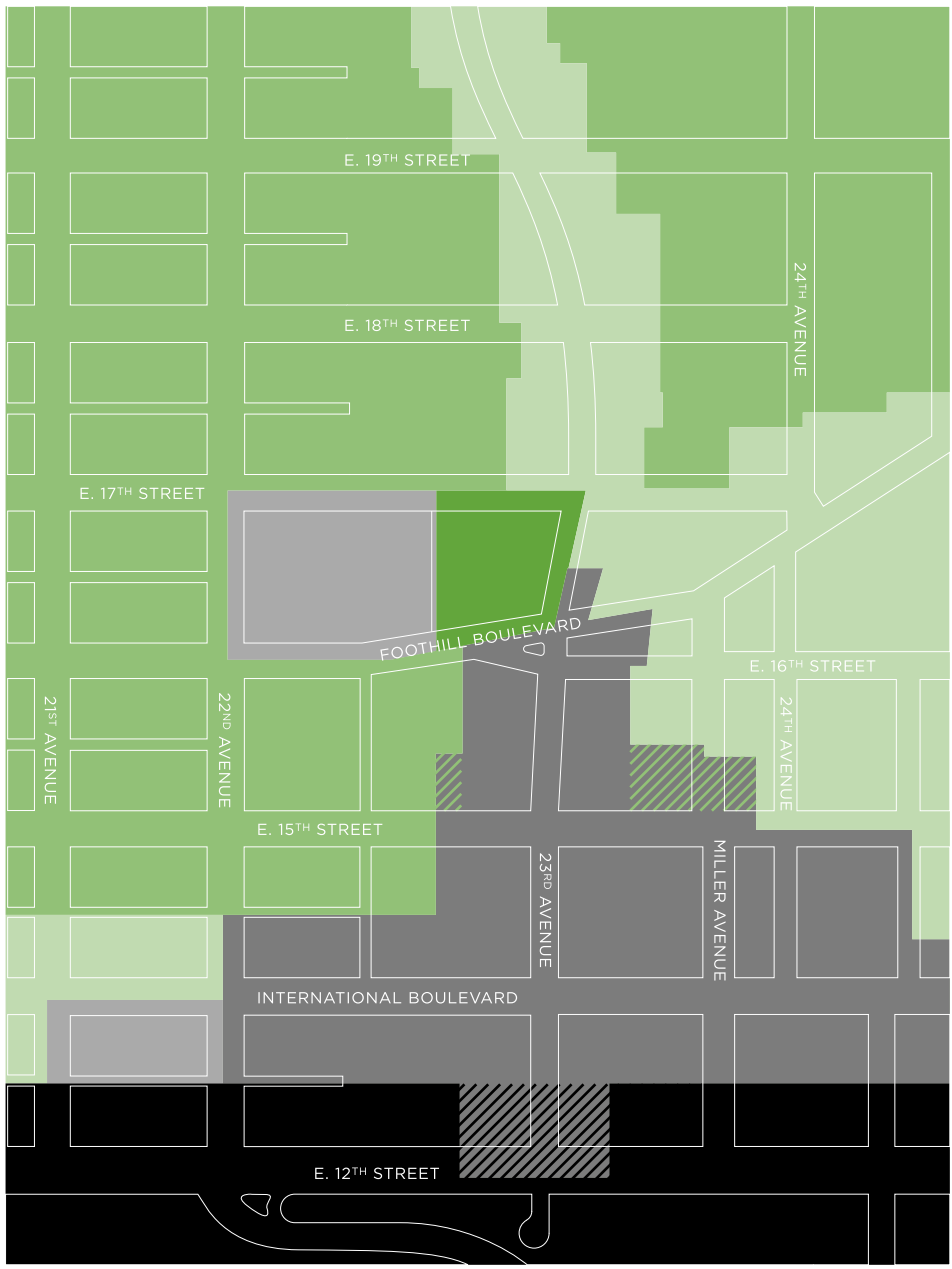


Fig.15 Proposed Land Use Concept

- Urban Open Space
- Mixed Residential
- Urban Residential
- General Industrial
- Neighborhood Mixed Use
- Institutional - Schools
- Proposed General Plan change from Mixed Residential to Neighborhood Mixed Use
- Proposed General Plan change from General Industrial to Neighborhood Mixed Use

2

Use Urban Ecology's *Design Guidelines for 23rd Avenue* to shape the design of new development and storefront rehabilitation.

The buildings in a commercial district, and the way they meet the street, are a large part of what makes that district a safe and attractive place to live, work and visit.

Based on input from residents and merchants, Urban Ecology has developed design guidelines to ensure new development and storefront rehabilitation enhance the safety, sense of place and pedestrian experience of the 23rd Avenue business district, while remaining consistent with the local character of the neighborhood.

What can design guidelines do?

As private developers, foundations and Oakland Redevelopment begin to fund new development and storefront rehabilitation in the 23rd Avenue neighborhood, design guidelines can help residents evaluate proposed projects. Design guidelines send a message to potential developers, property owners and the city that “this place is special, here’s why, and here’s how we want to protect that uniqueness.” They help residents identify the qualities of a place people would like to preserve or reinforce. They help residents identify what parts of a project contribute to the neighborhood and which do not.

What can't design guidelines do?

Design guidelines can't bring about immediate revitalization, since they depend on business or property owners to present a project that can be weighed against their criteria. On their own, design guidelines also can't restrict what a property owner can do, and they don't dictate a specific outcome. They are not meant as an additional burden for projects. But design guidelines can help property owners and new developers understand the values of the Lower San Antonio neighborhood, so they can undertake a project with less uncertainty about how it fits into the community vision.

project 2a Monitor local development proposals, and share Design Guidelines for 23rd Avenue with prospective developers.

New development projects, and proposals for modifying existing buildings, must receive permitting approval from the city's Planning and Zoning Division. Community groups can keep abreast of all projects presented to Planning and Zoning by getting on the city's "Interested Parties" list.

Sharing Design Guidelines for 23rd Avenue with prospective developers and property owners can help them understand the values of the Lower San Antonio neighborhood, and what it will take to get community support. When this is communicated early on in the development process, all parties benefit, and a community can have a real impact on final project design.

For information about the city of Oakland's Interested Parties list, contact: Sharon Jacks at the city of Oakland, (510) 238-2981.

project 2b Advocate for good design during city review of proposed projects.

City design review is required for all new commercial developments in the 23rd Avenue district, given how the district is currently zoned. Review happens soon after a property owner applies for a permit. Depending on project size, projects are reviewed either by city staff or an appointed Design Review Committee. Local residents and community organizations can input into either body's project evaluation. The most effective way to communicate with city planning staff, who typically review projects less than 25,000 square feet, is by submitting comments in writing. To be safe, these ought to be submitted within 10 days of permit application. Residents and community organizations can communicate about design with the Design Review Committee through open meetings called to review the project.

project 2c **Shape the city's criteria for judging design of local projects.**

The city Design Review Committee and the city planning staff must follow established design criteria to make determinations about whether a certain project meets design standards necessary for project approval. Both sets of guidelines are general and apply to most areas of the city. City council periodically amends these documents at the recommendation of the city's Planning Department.

The Design Criteria used by the Design Review Committee and city planning administrators should be amended to reflect the needs and character of specific communities. Urban Ecology's Design Guidelines for 23rd Avenue could be the basis for guidelines that speak to the needs and character of the 23rd Avenue district.

Follow-up Contact: Ed Manasse, Planning and Zoning Division, city of Oakland, (510) 238-7733.

project 2d **Support good development.**

Residents and local stakeholders can support and reward well-designed buildings by speaking with a unified voice at Planning Commission and city council meetings.



CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Good street, landscape and building designs are important pieces of reducing crime in Oakland neighborhoods. Simply put, the design of places can make it difficult or easy to get away with criminal activity.

This concept is increasingly known as “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” (CPTED). The strategy was recently adopted by the Oakland Police Department out of recognition that crime prevention has to be comprehensive and cannot solely rely on increased police presence.

There are six major principles of CPTED. The first three speak directly to building design. The rest find expression in other parts of the 23rd Avenue Action Plan.

1. *Natural Surveillance* keeping potential intruders easily observable by maximizing the visibility of people, parking areas and building entrances—an example is minimizing blank walls and allowing for multiple windows to look out on the street.
2. *Natural Access Control* designing building entrances, streets, sidewalks and structures to discourage access to private areas and steer people to public routes.
3. *Territorial Reinforcement* physical design that allows residents, merchants and others to better control the areas around their homes, businesses or offices. This principle has also been referred to as creating “defensible space.”
4. *Physical Maintenance* If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge—an appealing environment for criminal activity. Physical maintenance, therefore, is important in discouraging crime. This is often referred to as the “broken window theory.”
5. *Order Maintenance* disorderly behavior signals to passersby that lawlessness is tolerated, increasing fearful perceptions of an area and the retreat of those who would use space in orderly ways.
6. *Activity Support* activities that bring people to or through public spaces increase the number of eyes on the street, reinforcing Natural Surveillance.

3

Facilitate affordable housing development to safeguard against displacement.

Care needs to be taken to ensure development happens without pushing out the existing 23rd Avenue community. Existing residents, businesses and nonprofits ought to be able to enjoy the benefits of the revitalization they help create. But many local residents are vulnerable to changes in the rental market: nearly three-quarters of families in the 23rd Avenue neighborhood are renters. Few area housing units—rental or homeownership—are permanently affordable.

To ensure that future development does not force out today's renters, it is important to increase local ownership opportunities, while expanding the stock of permanently affordable rental housing, around 23rd Avenue.

Tips on Timing Expansion of local affordable housing options needs to happen now, before land values start to really heat up in the 23rd Avenue neighborhood, so that existing residents can capture the benefits of rising land values, or at least benefit from a newly vital neighborhood center.

project 3a Help affordable housing developers acquire and develop opportunity sites.

Oakland and the Bay Area are blessed with a strong community of nonprofit housing developers capable of building attractive, well-managed, affordable housing for low-income renters and homebuyers.

A recent study by Berkeley’s Institute for Urban and Regional Development (IURD) has helped local nonprofit developers find good sites in the 23rd Avenue neighborhood for expanding affordable housing options. But all too often, nonprofit developers in Lower San Antonio have been stymied by the difficulty of locating absentee landowners and negotiating the sale of land.

With a full-time real estate broker, the Lower San Antonio Collaborative could help local nonprofit developers undertake the time-intensive work of finding absentee landowners and structuring deals that will convince them to sell. The Collaborative could also play an ongoing role as a clearinghouse for new development opportunities, for instance by tracking vacancies and properties for sale.

project 3b Actively support affordable housing developments.

Affordable housing developments that do make it to completion will need the full support of the community to get past the Department of City Planning and city council, and gain necessary permits in a timely manner.



Affordable housing and mixed use development at Hismen Hin-Nu.



Rehabilitate Miller Library.

The Miller Library (one block northeast of 23rd Avenue) is an important part of 23rd Avenue’s unique history and helps set Lower San Antonio apart from other Oakland neighborhoods. Built in 1918, it was one of the four Carnegie libraries given to the city, and is a classic example of Spanish Colonial library architecture. It has become a city landmark and has been placed on the National Historic Register.

project 4a Explore the use of Historic Preservation Tax credits to renovate Miller Library.

Renovation of this unique cultural resource will re-establish an important neighborhood asset. A new tenant would also increase activities and improve safety along East 15th Street. Renovation, however, will be expensive and require the city's help. The city-owned library needs seismic reinforcement, repair to flood damage, asbestos removal and handicap accessibility improvements. Private developers can partially offset this cost by accessing historic preservation tax credits. But a partnership with the city will be necessary to draw a developer to this worthwhile but costly undertaking.



Miller Library today

thriving businesses

Nurture the Growth of Neighborhood-Serving Businesses.

- ① Strengthen the 23rd Avenue Merchants' Association.
- ② Make the city's Façade Improvement Program more responsive to the needs of local businesses.
- ③ Create a 23rd Avenue façade design theme.
- ④ Incubate locally-focused small businesses.

4

Community members consistently voiced a desire in workshops and focus groups for more neighborhood-serving stores and services in the 23rd Avenue business district. Popular ideas include: a sit-down restaurant, a hardware store, an apparel outlet, a school supply store, a laundromat and grocery. A recent study by Bay Area Economics (2001) found that sufficient local demand exists to support several of these businesses, assuming safety and negative perceptions of the area do not deter potential customers.

We have found that negative safety perceptions do affect 23rd Avenue. Accordingly, it may be difficult to attract many new businesses right now. But as other strategies outlined in this plan increase foot traffic, safety and beauty on 23rd Avenue, it will be possible to help existing businesses do better and incubate micro-enterprises. This, in turn, will contribute to a healthier district that can ultimately attract strong new businesses to tap local niches.

1

Strengthen the 23rd Avenue Merchants' Association.

The 23rd Avenue Merchants' and Property Owners' Association organizes and supports local businesses in the 23rd Avenue district. The Merchants' Association can broaden its support to businesses and expand membership through the following projects.

project 1a Link business owners with new resources, including technical assistance providers, loans and other incentives for property improvements.

One new resource is the Fruitvale/San Antonio Business Development Initiative. This one-stop assistance center is the combined effort of several citywide technical assistance providers. It offers coaching, legal services, accounting, web services and general technical assistance, all in one location. Urban Ecology can also help local businesses utilize Design Guidelines for 23rd Avenue to enhance storefront façades, win façade improvement grants, and coordinate thematically with other businesses.

project 1b Generate nighttime activities and community events to promote local stores and increase "eyes on the street."

project 1c Develop a Business Improvement District (BID).

A BID, which the Merchants' Association has already begun to explore, can create funding for the kind of cleaning, security and city service coordination that individual merchants cannot do as easily on their own, but which are fundamental to commercial district success.

project 1d Market the neighborhood.

This can be done through discount programs, retail specials and a business directory.

2

Make the city's Façade Improvement Program more responsive to the needs of local businesses.

The city of Oakland's Façade Improvement Program is not yet configured in a way that works for 23rd Avenue merchants.

project 2a Develop a proposal for revising the city's Façade Improvement Program.

To receive the city's \$10,000 improvement grant, businesses must put up \$20,000 of their own money (\$10,000 to match the city, and another \$10,000 to be reimbursed by the city at completion of the project). Grant recipients must also work exclusively with a city-approved architect and contractor. Local businesses find it difficult to invest \$20,000 up front. They would also prefer to work with contractors of their choosing, and fill out less paperwork. The cost of developing architectural drawings is still another barrier.

The 23rd Avenue Merchants' Association needs to propose policy changes that would address their needs while satisfying the city's need to ensure grant dollars actually go to façade improvements.



THE TENDERLOIN FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

To help restore the historic architectural character of the Tenderloin neighborhood in San Francisco, the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC) initiated a Façade Improvement Program that provides grants to property owners and merchants for improving their storefronts, lighting and signs. By enhancing the streetscape in the Tenderloin, the program contributes to a sense of safety, restores community pride and helps businesses attract new customers.

TNDC staff coordinate design assistance, help grant recipients select a suitable contractor, and oversee the construction work. Funding for the program comes through the Mayor's Office on Community Development and is distributed to recipients in the form of 2:1 matching grants for façade improvements and 1:1 matching grants for neon sign restoration.

Jerry Jai, Façade Improvement Manager, Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Cooperation. (415) 776.2151 x156

3

Create a 23rd Avenue Façade Design Theme.

A design theme incorporates a set of community-generated design ideas—like colored awnings—that form an overall style for façade improvements. This can help the district distinguish itself and draw in more visitors, businesses and customers.

project 3a Organize an inclusive charette.

A 23rd Avenue Façade design theme could be developed through a “charette”—an intense and collaborative design exercise. It should involve a majority of existing merchants, local building owners and representation from residents and community artists. The process should also utilize technical support from professional architects and urban designers, as well as city staff advice on urban design code. Urban Ecology’s Design Guidelines for 23rd Avenue (see p.98) can help with creating a façade design theme. Another key resource is Asian Neighborhood Design’s Storefront Design Handbook, which was developed in 1997 to help merchants throughout Lower San Antonio prioritize façade improvements. This charette should also provide opportunities for cultural and artistic representation in building design and decoration.

4

Incubate locally focused small businesses.

As the market improves for local retail, attention should turn to helping new, local businesses get off the ground.

project 4a Develop a local incubation program.

A business incubation program would help businesses start locally by offering such resources as low-rent shared space, technical assistance and low-interest loans.

Space for business incubation could be created in the community cultural center, or in a vacant storefront on 23rd Avenue.



SACDC staff organize a training with local merchants and others at the November 2004 Town Hall.

accessible services

Improve Access to City Services and Green Spaces

- ① Open a new library in the 23rd Avenue area.
- ② Bring affordable legal services to 23rd Avenue.
- ③ Build an innovative, respectful community policing partnership.
- ④ Increase activity in neighborhood parks.

5

The 23rd Avenue neighborhood has almost no public amenities. There is no local library or post office in the entire Lower San Antonio. There are no bus shelters. There is a small, local park (Garfield), but it does not have a playground or benches, and is enclosed by a 16-foot tall fence. This in a neighborhood that already has far less green space per person than the city recommends.

Meanwhile, crime continues to be a major problem in the 23rd Avenue neighborhood. The police department mostly responds by reacting to incidents, and invests limited resources in a proactive, problem-solving partnership with the 23rd Avenue community.

This limited city attention to the 23rd Avenue area lowers quality of life for its residents. On the other hand, new or improved public services could play a major role in sparking 23rd Avenue neighborhood revitalization.

1

Open a New Library in the 23rd Avenue Area.

The 23rd Avenue neighborhood (and the entire Lower San Antonio) has been without a library since 1975, when the historic Miller Library closed. Given the community’s high population density, the Oakland Public Library (OPL) has made the Lower San Antonio community a priority for a new branch. OPL had been in negotiations with the Oakland Unified School District to locate a new library branch at a new school near International and 23rd, but these plans fell through when the school district decided to build the school elsewhere.

project 1a Explore new options for a library near 23rd Avenue.

A new library remains a pressing need. A library is not only a crucial educational resource for the community, but also akin to a mini civic center—where tax forms, voting registration and other important civic information can be accessed.

One alternative would be to locate a branch library in a large, vacant storefront on 23rd Avenue. Besides meeting an important community need, a 23rd Avenue location for a new branch would help activate the corridor and increase pedestrian flow, making the district safer.

2

Bring Affordable Legal Services to 23rd Avenue.

Community residents expressed great interest in seeing a branch of Legal Aid locate on 23rd Avenue. Given 23rd Avenue's very large foreign-born population, there is strong demand for help negotiating U.S. immigration law. Many residents are also interested in better understanding their rights as renters facing substandard housing conditions or unfair evictions.

project 2a Recruit Legal Aid to come to 23rd Avenue.

Legal Aid would be a resource to help residents learn about Oakland's recently passed Just Cause Law, which protects renters from unfair evictions. Not all residents know about this law or have access to affordable legal representation to enforce it. A local branch of Legal Aid would also be a means for filling vacant storefronts and bringing 23rd Avenue more alive.

3

Build an innovative, respectful community policing partnership.

The current police system in Oakland is unable to address causes of crime. It remains incident-driven, with limited resources dedicated to proactive problem-solving.

Community policing holds the promise of bringing the community and police together in a trust-building, problem-solving partnership. But for community policing to succeed, it will require:

- 1 Greater willingness by the Oakland Police Department to make community policing a central priority, with additional resources; and
- 2 Attention to accountability and concerns about respect for local youth.

project 3a Ensure Measure Y funding is used to place at least one community policing officer in each city police beat.

In 2002, the Garfield Parent Action Committee run by EBAYC successfully advocated for a new walking officer in the 23rd Avenue area. Their effort grew out of a widely held view among local residents and merchants that Oakland police need to engage more fully in preventing crime in the Lower San Antonio area.

However, neither this officer nor the problem-solving police officer assigned to Lower San Antonio has been able to make the 23rd Avenue neighborhood a priority. Presently they have too many other responsibilities to meet local community residents more than once a month.

Meanwhile, local youth service providers regularly complain that responsible youth coming to and from their programs are harassed by police officers for hanging out in the neighborhood. This trend has eroded trust among local leaders and led some local organizations to withhold support from police-based strategies.

Measure Y, a ballot measure approved by voters in 2004, provides funding for 63 new community police officers. This money needs to fulfill its original intent—allowing community police officers to focus on single beats. This will allow officers the time to get to know the people and issues of the 23rd Avenue neighborhood, and work in a respectful partnership with the 23rd Avenue community to address them.

project 3b Ensure community police officers get the support and training they need to work effectively with the 23rd Avenue community.

Officers should be selected and trained so that they come to the neighborhood:

- well versed in the cultures and historic backgrounds of 23rd Avenue’s multiple populations;
- skilled in working with youth and young adults;
- possessing the listening skills needed to identify and understand the community’s priority safety problems;
- capable of developing creative solutions to these problems through a partnership with the community’s residents, merchants and other stakeholders;
- free to attend multiple meetings to reach the community “where they’re at”; and
- committed to staying in their beat for three or more years so that their relationship with the community has a chance to grow.

Community organizations in the 23rd Avenue neighborhood can play a useful role in providing some of this training.



POLICE AS PARTNERS IN NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

In Seattle’s Chinatown, a local community/police collaborative worked with local business owners to stop the sale of malt liquor and fortified wine—which was contributing to the problem of chronic public drunkenness in the neighborhood—by negotiating joint agreements such as voluntary halting of liquor sales in exchange for positive publicity and other types of business assistance.

Rather than simply closing local convenience stores—depriving community residents of convenient local shopping and risking long-term storefront vacancy—this approach helps grow neighborhood businesses.

For more innovative models of community policing, see “Community-Centered Policing: A force for change.” PolicyLink (2001)

4

Increase Activity in Neighborhood Parks.

Oakland's recreational plan (OSCAR) recommends four acres of open space per 1,000 residents to supply adequate space for play and relaxation. Currently, Lower San Antonio has only 0.78 acres per 1,000 residents, one-fifth of the city's standard. Given this shortage, the 23rd Avenue neighborhood deserves better use of its existing open spaces.

Currently there are two open spaces that could function as neighborhood parks: the ballfield adjoining Garfield Elementary, and the unmaintained landscaped area at the base of 23rd Avenue. Located at either end of the central business district, these green spaces have significant potential. If improved, they could provide more after-school options for local youth, support active lifestyles in the community, and contribute to 23rd Avenue revitalization.

project 4a Increase activity at Garfield Park.

Few organized activities presently take place at Garfield Park. The reasons are complex, but it certainly doesn't help that a 16-foot fence has surrounded the park for many years. Parents and kids have resorted to cutting holes in the fence to get access on weekends. The school recently began leaving its gate open after hours, enabling indirect access to the field, but organized activities have been slow to respond.

Garfield Elementary and the Oakland Parks and Recreation Department need to work together to manage Garfield Park in a way that is friendlier to both spontaneous and organized activities.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recently made grant funding available to identify and overcome barriers to active living in Lower San Antonio. This is a prime opportunity to develop solutions to Garfield Park's limited programming and inaccessibility.

Part of the grant will pay for a community planning process to develop a more comprehensive renovation and redesign of Garfield Park. This redesign will need to examine the central challenge of Garfield Park: opening the park to the community while maintaining security and cleanliness for Garfield Elementary. A park redesign should also add furniture, a playground, new lighting and trees to turn the grass lot into neighborhood space that supports healthy activity.

project 4b Develop the landscaped areas at the base of 23rd Avenue into a real park.

Separated from the commercial district by industrial uses and the BART overpass, this green patch at the end of 23rd Avenue presently sees little use. However, as new, pedestrian-friendly development comes to this stretch of 23rd Avenue, there may be potential to make the green area a viable park that serves as a terminus for the commercial district.



Garfield Park, looking toward Foothill Boulevard

23RD AVE
COMMUNITY
ACTION PLAN

neighborhood design guidelines

- ① Guidelines for Storefront Rehabilitation
- ② Guidelines for New Development

The buildings in a commercial district, and the way they meet the street, are a large part of what makes that district a safe and attractive place to live, work and visit.

Urban Ecology has developed Design Guidelines to ensure new development and storefront rehabilitation enhance the safety, sense of place and pedestrian experience of the 23rd Avenue business district, while remaining consistent with the local character of the neighborhood.

1

Guidelines for Storefront Rehabilitation

COLOR AND MATERIALS



Select façade materials that are in concert with existing historic structures in the neighborhood, and that are easily maintained.

Most of the historic structures in the 23rd Avenue area have façades that are primarily stucco with wood trim. The addition of modern materials like metal should be carefully considered so that they will compliment the historic architecture of 23rd Avenue. Materials selection also impacts the durability of a building façade—materials that are easier to maintain will contribute to a sense of upkeep and community pride.



Select colors that will complement the neighborhood image.

While color scheme is an important contribution to the visual character of a building, colors do not need to exactly match a neighboring building's palette. In general, relate paint colors to the colors of natural materials used in the building. Lighter colored buildings will also reflect more light at night, and increase visibility and security.



Add outdoor building lighting.

Outdoor building lighting improves commercial visibility, and improves safety along the street by minimizing dark areas without clear sightlines. Light fixtures that cast light over a broad horizontal area will leave the fewest shadows. Light colored surfaces reflect light more efficiently than dark colored surfaces. Direct illumination, or spotlights, can dramatically highlight architectural details. Tubular neon also increases nighttime visibility, and adds visual interest to the neighborhood at night.



Add pedestrian-oriented signs.

Passing pedestrians can easily read signs that project from or hang off the front of the building, as well as signs that are placed in or painted on windowpanes. Include these types of signs in addition to typical auto-oriented signs on the front of a building.

SECURITY GRILLS



Security grills, if necessary, should completely recess when they are open.

Security grills contribute to a negative image about the safety and appeal of a neighborhood. If a business owner employs them, they should be designed so they can recess into pockets during business hours.

AWNINGS



Relate the color, shape, size, material and location of awnings to the overall building design.

Awnings can provide a pedestrian amenity as well as much needed protection from harsh sunlight and glare. When locating awnings, avoid covering window trim, or other architectural features.

DISPLAY WINDOWS



Retail storefronts should offer windows.

Sizeable windows encourage browsing, add visual interest to the pedestrian realm, and project a feeling of trust and openness in the neighborhood. They instill passing pedestrians with the feeling that people would see and help them if they were in danger. Use transparent, non-mirrored glass whenever possible.

HISTORIC DETAILS



Rehabilitation projects should preserve or restore historical architectural details.

Begin rehabilitation of an historic storefront by determining if the existing storefront is the original or a later alteration. Whatever can be identified from the original façade design should be kept or restored. Frequently, this includes openings for transom windows above the main display windows and decorative trim.

2

Guidelines for New Development

BUILDING HEIGHT, SCALE AND RHYTHM



New commercial or mixed-use buildings should be two to five stories in height, to coordinate with the predominant existing neighborhood scale.

Buildings with a street front of at least two stories in height will best suit the predominant scale of 23rd Avenue. Buildings as tall as five stories can also fit in well, especially with setbacks or recesses on upper floors.



The scale, rhythm and massing of new retail development should respect the historic patterns of commercial development in the area.

The ornamentation, details, windows, doors and bays of a building affect its perceived scale. A building that lacks details tends to appear larger and more massive, and emphasizes the bulk of the building. In buildings with wide storefronts, avoid the appearance of a large building mass by incorporating recesses, projections, or repeated bays across the façade.



New construction should not mimic the historic detailing of existing buildings along 23rd Avenue or International Boulevard.

Instead, new development should consider design, materials and detailing that reflects the rich architectural character of the area. More modern architectural styles can contribute to this diversity, but should be used with an eye to coordinating some common elements, like horizontal cornice lines or window rhythm.

CORNER BUILDINGS



Special design treatment and architectural detailing should mark the street intersections along 23rd Avenue and International Boulevard.

Since intersections form the main gateway into the 23rd Avenue community, the buildings located here have a special role in presenting the best face of the neighborhood. Wrap-around windows, turrets or prominent entryways help emphasize the prominent corner locations.

ROOFLINES



A new building should have a roofline that contributes to the architectural variety found in 23rd Avenue.

In designing the roof of a new building, consider the variety and visual interest provided by the existing roofs, cornices and parapets along 23rd Avenue. The neighborhood has quality examples of many roof styles, including front-gabled, side-gabled, hipped and flat. Such a diversity of historic roof styles contributes to a sense of place for the 23rd Avenue area and new development should fit in or contribute to this pattern.

UTILITY EQUIPMENT



Sensitively locate or screen mechanical equipment so that it does not dominate the building's appearance.

By locating air conditioners, fans and vents at the rear of the building, a new development will not detract from the visual experience for shoppers and pedestrians.

SETBACKS AND ENTRYWAYS



Entryways should be directly onto the street.

Maximizing the number of entries to buildings from the street activates the public domain and increases the sense of safety for passing pedestrians.



Avoid street level setbacks in new retail development.

A continuous streetwall defines the shape of the street as a social space, increases safety by eliminating hiding places, and eliminates space for trash to build up. The façades of new buildings should be located directly on the front property line, with infrequent exceptions for building entrances and walk-up retail windows.



Employ setbacks on upper stories with caution.

Setbacks on upper stories can allow for more dense mixed-use developments, since upper level units are not visible from the street, but they also detract from the sense of definition that is created by full height streetwalls.

ACTIVE EDGES



Avoid extensive blank walls at ground level.

A continuous strip of retail activity along a street increases convenience and safety for shoppers.

GROUND FLOOR



Architecturally differentiate the ground floor of the building from upper stories.

This differentiation can be achieved by using different materials, including large windows or an awning, or by making the ground floor taller than other floors. High-quality materials or treatments with interesting architectural or artistic detail are well located on the ground floor, where passing pedestrians will appreciate these urban details.

PARKING



All new parking should be located in the rear of buildings.

Property and business owners on 23rd Avenue should explore shared parking arrangements to accommodate future increases in parking demand. No new surface parking lots should front onto 23rd Avenue. Sidewalks and/or clearly delineated pedestrian pathways should be provided within surface parking lots. The paved area of any surface parking lot should be no more than necessary to efficiently accommodate the required number of parking spaces. Parking surfaces should be permeable wherever possible. Permeable surfaces and on site drainage will reduce the need for storm drainage infrastructure and allow storm water purification through the soil, reducing pollution of ground water.

resources

Tools for Implementing the Plan

- 1 Major Funding Sources for 23rd Avenue
- 2 Funding for Homeowners and Businesses
- 3 Nonprofit Resources
- 4 Additional Design Resources
- 5 Studies of Lower San Antonio / 23rd Avenue



Major Funding Sources for 23rd Avenue

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION (MTC)

MTC's Transit for Livable Communities (TLC) grants help communities throughout the Bay Area implement physical improvements that enhance pedestrian safety, calm traffic and facilitate bus movement. This grant program was behind many of the street improvements made to E. 12th Street and International Boulevard in Eastlake in 2004.

Evelyn Baker
(510) 464-7753 www.mtc.ca.gov/projects/livable_communities/tlc_grants.htm

CENTRAL CITY EAST REDEVELOPMENT AREA

23rd Avenue lies in the new Central City East Redevelopment Area, created in 2003. Redevelopment Areas pool a portion of the growth in property taxes generated by local properties and reinvest them locally to benefit the redevelopment area. A Project Area Committee (PAC) of local residents, merchants and community organizations guides how money is spent. These recommendations ultimately must be approved by city council. The following guidelines were in place for capital expenditure funding as of 2004.

Theresa Navarro
(510) 238-6250 www.business2oakland.com/main/redevelopment.htm

Central City East Redevelopment 2004 Allocation Plan—Capital Expenditures

| PROGRAM | PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES | ESTIMATED AVAILABLE REVENUES (2004 - 2009)* |
|--|--|---|
| Infrastructure Improvements / Community Facilities | 60% | \$7,725,830 |
| Façade Improvement | 10% | \$1,287,623 |
| Land Assembly and Relocation | 10% | \$1,287,623 |
| Public / Private Development | 8% | \$1,030,111 |
| Retail and Commercial Recruitment | 8% | \$1,303,111 |
| Historic Preservation | 4% | \$515,055 |
| Total Capital Expenditures | 100% | \$12,876,384 |

* Projected as of January 2004 (upward adjustments are expected in mid-2005)

CALTRANS, SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) runs the Safe Routes to School program. This program offers local governments up to \$500,000 per year for physical improvements (eg. curb bulbouts, crosswalks, pedestrian signals) that make it safer for kids to walk to school. It may be especially useful for making improvements to the area around Garfield Elementary. The city of Oakland must first apply in order for funds to become available to local projects.

(877) 472-3378 www.4saferoutes.org

CITY OF OAKLAND, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)

Oakland distributes about \$12 million per year in CDBG grants for housing, neighborhood services and economic development. The city's Community and Economic Development Agency (CEDA) administers this program.

(510) 238-6156 www.oaklandnet.com/government/hcd/cdbg/index.html

BAY AREA AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (BAAQMD)

Like MTC, BAAQMD funds physical street improvements to encourage alternatives to driving. They do this through their Transportation Fund for Clean Air. This fund was partly responsible for recent streetscape improvements to International Boulevard in Fruitvale.

(415) 749-5183 www.baaqmd.gov/pln/grants_and_incentives/tfca/index.asp

ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

The private Casey foundation has made a 10-year commitment to the Lower San Antonio community, and can make direct investments in local development. They call this "PRI," or program-related investment.

Deb Montesinos
(510) 763-4120 ext.214 www.aecf.org/initiatives/mc/sites/oakland.htm

CITY OF OAKLAND, CRAFT AND CULTURAL ARTS DEPARTMENT

In 1989, Oakland passed a public art ordinance that dedicated 1.5 percent of municipal capital improvement costs toward the commissioning of public art.

(510) 238-2103 www.oaklandculturalarts.org/main/publicart.htm

ALAMEDA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY (ACTIA)

Each year, the city of Oakland receives approximately \$7.5 million per year from ACTIA Measure B funds to maintain local street and roads. Oakland also receives approximately \$1 million per year for bicycle and pedestrian safety projects. The city's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) channels 90 percent of the city's bicycle/pedestrian funds to pedestrian safety projects.

Rochelle Wheeler
(510) 238-2103 www.actia.gov/measureb



Funding for Homeowners and Businesses

CITY OF OAKLAND, ONE STOP CAPITAL SHOP

Provides direct commercial business loans for expansion, attraction and retention, as well as training, resources and information.

(510) 238-3703 www.oakland1stop.org

OAKLAND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Oakland Business Development Corporation (OBDC) manages all business loans under \$100,000 for the city of Oakland. OBDC provides business assistance to entrepreneurs who may not qualify for traditional bank financing.

(510) 763-4297 www.obdc.com

CITY OF OAKLAND, CEDA, REPAIR AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

The city of Oakland offers a range of programs that provide grants and loans for rehabilitation and renovation of existing buildings. For a complete list, and criteria, contact the Community and Economic Development Agency (CEDA).

(510) 238-3501 www.oaklandnet.com/government/hcd/loangrants/rehab.html

CITY OF OAKLAND NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION PROGRAM, COMMERCIAL PROPERTY FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

This program offers matching grants (1:1) up to \$10,000 per building, to businesses and property owners, for approved exterior renovations. Free architectural services are provided.

(510) 238-3695 www.business2oakland.com/main/neighborhoodcommercialrevitalization.htm

CITY OF OAKLAND, BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Business owners within a specified geographical area agree to contribute annually to a fund targeted for improvements to the area. The participants form an advisory committee to determine priorities for how the funds should be spent.

(510) 238-6176 www.business2oakland.com/main/neighborhoodcommercialrevitalization.htm

CITY OF OAKLAND, CEDA, DEVELOPER PROGRAMS

The city of Oakland offers a range of grant and loan programs to encourage developers to work in Oakland. For a complete list and criteria, contact CEDA.

(510) 238-3501 www.oaklandnet.com/government/hcd/loangrants/developers.html



Nonprofit Resources

URBAN ECOLOGY

Urban Ecology provides urban design, policy reform and site development assistance to community organizations throughout the Bay Area working to create healthier, more vibrant, urban neighborhoods.

Robert Hickey
(510) 251-6333 www.urbanecology.org

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE COALITION (TALC)

TALC is an advocacy coalition working to bring Bus Rapid Transit to International Boulevard, in addition to advocating for environmentally sustainable and socially just transit and pedestrian projects throughout the Bay Area.

Amber Crabbe
(510) 740-3105 www.transcoalition.org

LOCAL INITIATIVE SUPPORT CORPORATION (LISC)

LISC's Commercial Corridor Improvement Program provides technical assistance and training on a range of small business topics: work plans, market analysis, visual merchandising, business development, business attraction, historic preservation, façade improvement and more.

(415) 397-7322 www.bayarealisc.org

UC BERKELEY, INSTITUTE FOR URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Over the past 15 years, IURD has convened leadership conferences, conducted analyses and evaluations, and provided other technical assistance on urban policy issues including neighborhood and economic development, environmental protection, community empowerment, and social change for communities in the East Bay.

(510) 643-7553 www-iurd.ced.berkeley.edu

UC BERKELEY DEPARTMENT OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Many graduate students in planning and urban design partner with community organizations on projects in order to complete a “Professional Report,” or PR, as an alternative to a master’s thesis. Students often undertake PR work for little to no cost.

(510) 643-9440 www.dcrp.ced.berkeley.edu

URBAN STRATEGIES COUNCIL

Urban Strategies Council is a community building support and advocacy organization based in Oakland. Its Information and Technology program provides mapping services, an online data warehouse, and training in how to access and use public data. A new Redevelopment Education and Advocacy Project helps Bay Area communities define and achieve equitable development.

Andy Nelson

(510) 463-2882 www.urbanstrategies.org



A woman competes at a breakdancing competition sponsored by EastSide Arts Alliance.

4

Additional Design Resources

WALKABLE STREETS TOOLKIT (2004)

Urban Ecology

(510) 251-6333 www.urbanecology.com

OAKLAND LIBRARY MASTER PLAN (2004)

Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc.

Kari Holmgren

(650) 871-0709 ext.224 [email kholmgren@g4arch.com](mailto:kholmgren@g4arch.com)

STREETSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR LSA (1997)

Asian Neighborhood Design

(415) 593-0423 www.andnet.org



Youth working with EastSide Arts Alliance paint a community mural.



Recent Studies of Lower San Antonio / 23rd Avenue

MAKE IT HAPPEN: OUR PLAN FOR LOWER SAN ANTONIO

EBALDC, SACDC, 1997

A DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIO FOR EAST 14TH STREET AND 23RD AVENUE:
AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND MIXED-USE PROPOSALS

Department of Architecture, UC Berkeley, 1998

THE CLINTON PARK PLAN

Urban Ecology, 1999

MARKET ANALYSIS FOR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN LOWER SAN ANTONIO

Bay Area Economics, 2001

LOWER SAN ANTONIO COMMUNITY CULTURAL CENTER FINAL REPORT

Bay Area Economics, 2002

AFFORDABLE HOUSING POTENTIAL IN THE LOWER SAN ANTONIO

Institute of Urban and Regional Development, UC Berkeley, 2003



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ABOUT URBAN ECOLOGY

Founded in 1975, Urban Ecology’s mission is to create neighborhoods that are thriving, healthy places to live. We specialize in participatory land use planning that creates a vision for change, and education and policy advocacy that turns a community’s vision into reality. While the San Francisco Bay Area has many nonprofits that advocate for neighborhood revitalization and regional sustainability, Urban Ecology is the only one that operates at both levels simultaneously. Based in downtown Oakland, Urban Ecology works in a range of communities throughout San Francisco and Alameda counties, with the majority of our clients in ethnically diverse, low-income neighborhoods. We promote communities that are environmentally healthy, economically fair and socially just. For more information about our planning projects and policy advocacy, tours and education events, see www.urbanecology.org.

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URBAN ECOLOGY

