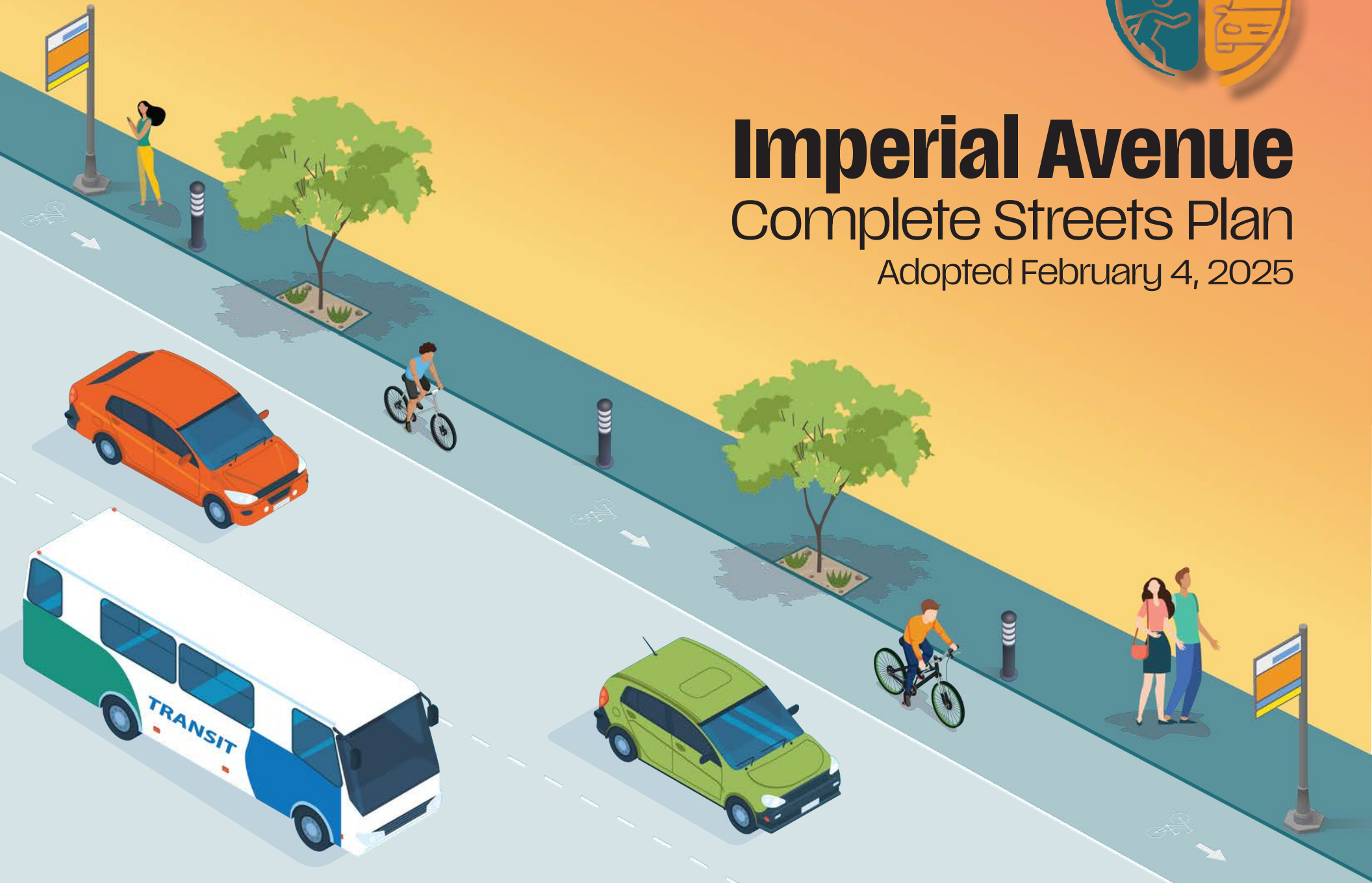




Imperial Avenue Complete Streets Plan

Adopted February 4, 2025



The Plan was funded in FY 2022-23
Sustainable Transportation Planning
Grant Program under the grant category
Sustainable Communities Competitive.



Thank you to all who participated and supported
the development of the City of El Centro Imperial
Avenue Complete Streets Plan and a special thank
you to Susan Chasang on behalf of the Sister
Evelyn Mourey Center and volunteers.



Acknowledgements

City of El Centro

Andrea Montañó, Project Manager

Angel Hernandez, Community Development Director

Felix De Leon Jr., Principal Engineer

Abraham Campos, City Engineer/Public Works Director

KTUA

Joe Punsalan, Principal

Jacob Leon, Senior Associate

Morgen Ruby, Senior Planner

Isabel Pérez, Planner and Designer

Katherine Padilla & Associates, Inc. (KPA)

Katherine Padilla Otanez, Principal

Jessica Padilla Bowen, Senior Associate

Xavier Sibaja, Project Manager

Michael Baker

Ryan Zellers, Senior Transportation Planner

Jacob Swim, Senior Transportation Planner

Caltrans

Virginia Mendoza, Associate Transportation Planner

Omar Flores, Regional Grant Coordinator/Associate Transportation Planner

Alexander Araiza, Grant Manager/Associate Transportation Planner

Jacob Burkholder, Associate Transportation Planner

City Council

Tomás Oliva

Sonia Carter

Sylvia Marroquin

Claudia Camarena

John ‘Marty’ Ellett

Planning Commission

Jorge Perez

Ashley Bertussi

Sergio Lopez

Aaron Popejoy

Andy Alvarez

Ramiro Urias

Jeffrey Chan

Project Advisory Committee

Ashley Bertussi

John Beltran

Lourdes Cienfuegos

Gustavo Gomez

Carlos Juarez

Sylvia Marroquin

Susana Simo

Natalie Torres



Table of Contents



Introduction	2
1.1 Study Area	3
1.2 What are Complete Streets?.....	5
1.3 Purpose and Vision	9



Existing Conditions.....	12
2.1 Existing Conditions	13
2.2 Community Demographics	17
2.3 Land Use	19
2.4 Walk Audit	23
2.5 Transportation Characteristics	25



Public Engagement	32
3.1 Outreach Strategy Overview.....	33
3.2 Surveys	35
3.3 Community Workshops	39
3.4 Project Advisory Committee (PAC).....	42
3.5 Pop-Up Events	44
3.6 Public Engagement Overarching Themes	47



Recommendations	50
4.1 Complete Streets Toolkit	51
4.2 Goals, Objectives, and Actions	64
4.3 Imperial Avenue Preferred Concept.	69



Implementation.....	86
5.1 Implementation	87
5.2 Potential Funding Sources	87



Appendix.....	102
A.1 Caltrans Comments for City to Consider	103
A.2 Safety Assessment Memo.....	104
A.3 Survey #1 Results.....	115
A.4 Survey #2 Results (English & Spanish)	132
A.5 Imperial Avenue Preferred Concept	157
A.6 Planning-Level Cost Estimates.....	161

Figures

Figure 1-1: City of El Centro Map.....	3
Figure 1-2: Study Area Segments.....	4
Figure 2-1: El Centro Citywide General Plan Land Use Map	20
Figure 2-2: Land Use and Community Destinations/Attractions.....	21
Figure 2-3: Bus Stops on Imperial Avenue	25
Figure 2-4: Missing Sidewalks on Imperial Avenue.....	27
Figure 2-5: Existing Bicycle Facilities.....	28
Figure 2-6: Proposed Bicycle Facilities from 2021 General Plan.....	29
Figure 2-7: Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Automobile Collisions.....	30
Figure 4-1: Segment A Preferred Concept.....	72
Figure 4-2: Segment A Preferred Concept Sections	73
Figure 4-3: Segment B Preferred Concept	76
Figure 4-4: Segment B Preferred Concept Sections	77
Figure 4-5: Segment C Preferred Concept (1 of 2).....	80
Figure 4-6: Segment C Preferred Concept (2 of 2)	81
Figure 4-7: Segment B Preferred Concept Sections.....	82

Tables

Table 1-1: Study Area Segment Extents.....	4
Table 2-1: Commute to Work Travel Modes.....	26
Table 5-1: Federal Funding Matrix.....	88
Table 5-2: State Funding Matrix.....	94





Introduction

1.1 Study Area

Located in Southern California, El Centro is the largest city in Imperial County. It is located just over 100 miles east of San Diego and 20 miles north of the Mexican city of Mexicali, the closest border crossing, and 30 miles south of the Salton Sea. El Centro is conveniently located near rail lines and Interstate 8 (I-8) providing an east-to-west connection to neighboring cities while State Route 111 (SR 111) provides a north-to-south connection.

This Complete Streets Plan (CSP) focuses on a portion of Imperial Avenue, which is prioritized as a major highway and it is the backbone of El Centro's transportation network as it bisects El Centro and creates a primary north-to-south connection. Imperial Avenue serves as a primary commercial corridor while also connecting the community to public facilities, places of cultural significance, employment opportunities, and medical care. It is important to note the significance of El Centro's core urban and metropolitan area within the Southern California Border Region as it is a major resource to El Centro and neighboring communities. The study area is highlighted in **Figure 1-1**.

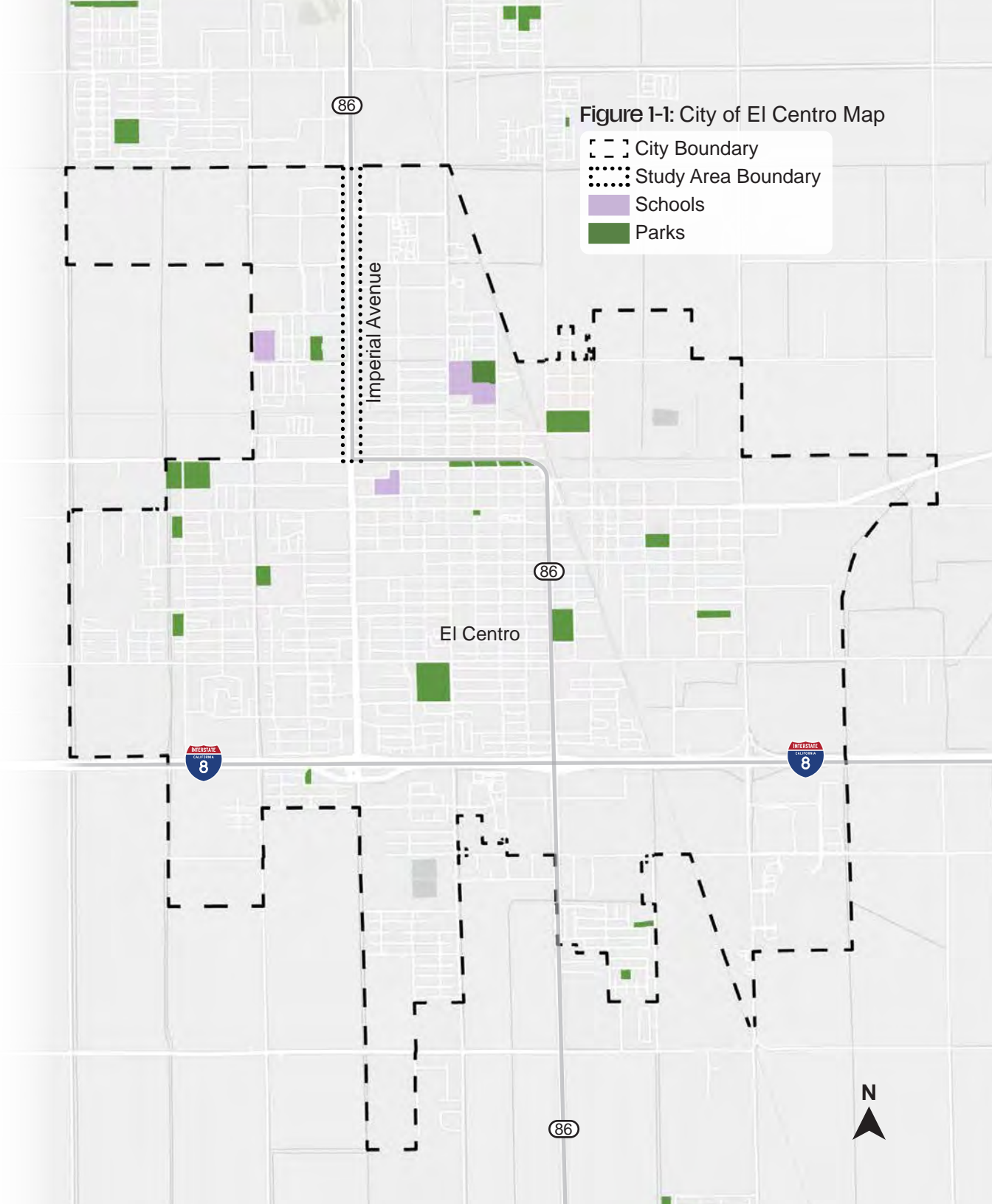


Figure 1-2: Study Area Segments



The study area consists of a 1.5 mile stretch of Imperial Avenue, or State Route 86 (SR 86) from Treshill Road to Adams Avenue.

The study area for the CSP was broken down into three segments which are shown in **Figure 1-2** and described in **Table 1-1**. Each segment has unique roadway conditions:

- Segment A has existing sidewalks, bus shelters, raised narrow medians, wide travel lanes, and a railroad crossing.
- Segment B is characterized by a frontage road on the west side, a mixture of raised and earthen medians, and a lack of sidewalks.
- Segment C is characterized by wide earthen medians, a lack of sidewalks, and undeveloped shoulders with an earthen drainage channel on the east side and a channelized flood control system on the west side.

Table 1-1: Study Area Segment Extents

SEGMENT	FROM	TO
A	Adams Avenue	Scott Avenue
B	Scott Avenue	Lincoln Avenue
C	Lincoln Avenue	Treshill Road

Study Area Future Relinquishment

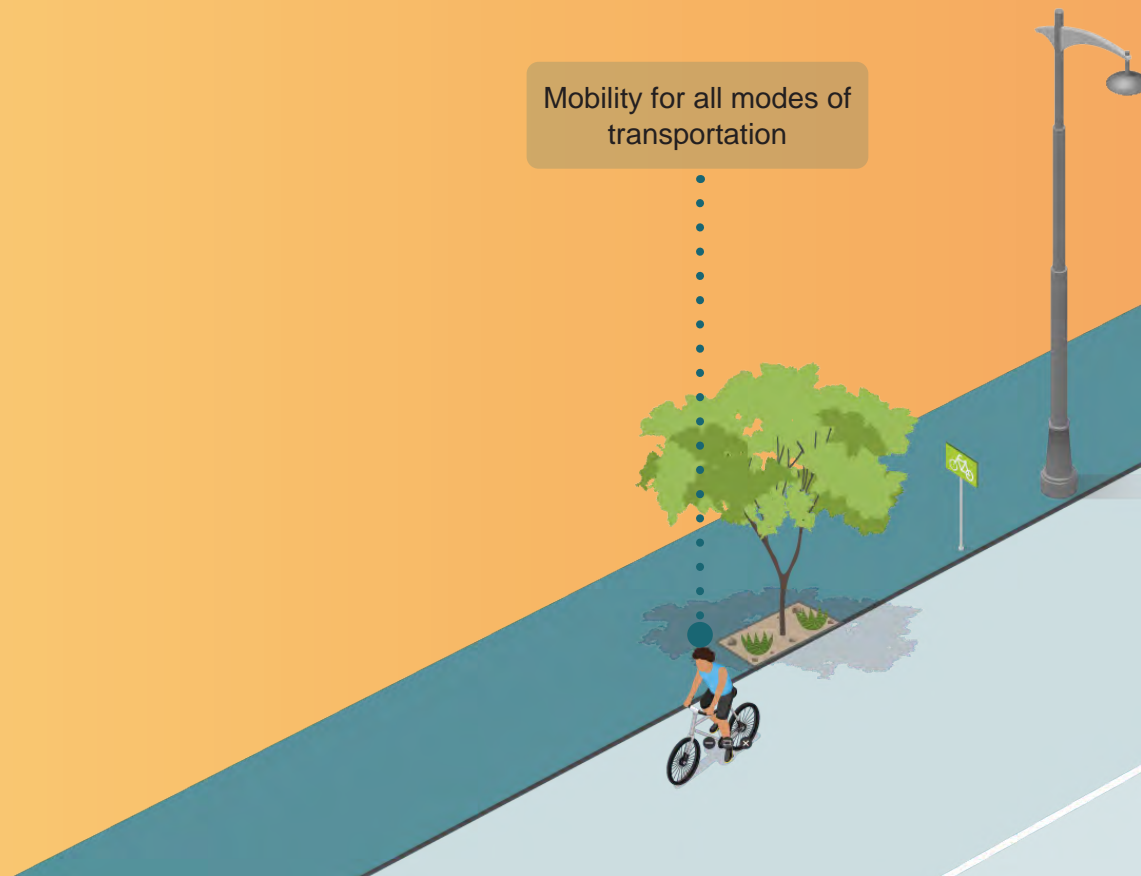
This CSP acknowledges that Caltrans has ownership of the study area at the time of its development. Implementation of the CSP is recommended once the study area is relinquished to El Centro. While El Centro anticipates gaining control of the study area in the future, Caltrans reviewed and provided guidance — included in **Appendix A.1**.

1.2 What are Complete Streets?

Complete Streets are planned, designed, and constructed to be safer, to improve access, and to strengthen community connections for all users and all modes of transportation.¹ Complete Streets prioritize space for all pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motor vehicle drivers of all ages and abilities within the public right-of-way. Complete Streets may also include components that increase comfort and attractiveness for roadway users through the addition of urban greening, public art, and gathering spaces.²

Special emphasis is placed on underserved and underinvested areas which are low-income and vulnerable communities facing often outdated street treatments. Complete Streets can be achieved through investment into traffic calming treatments, amenities for all road users, and maintenance to achieve a safe, comfortable, and welcoming street environment.

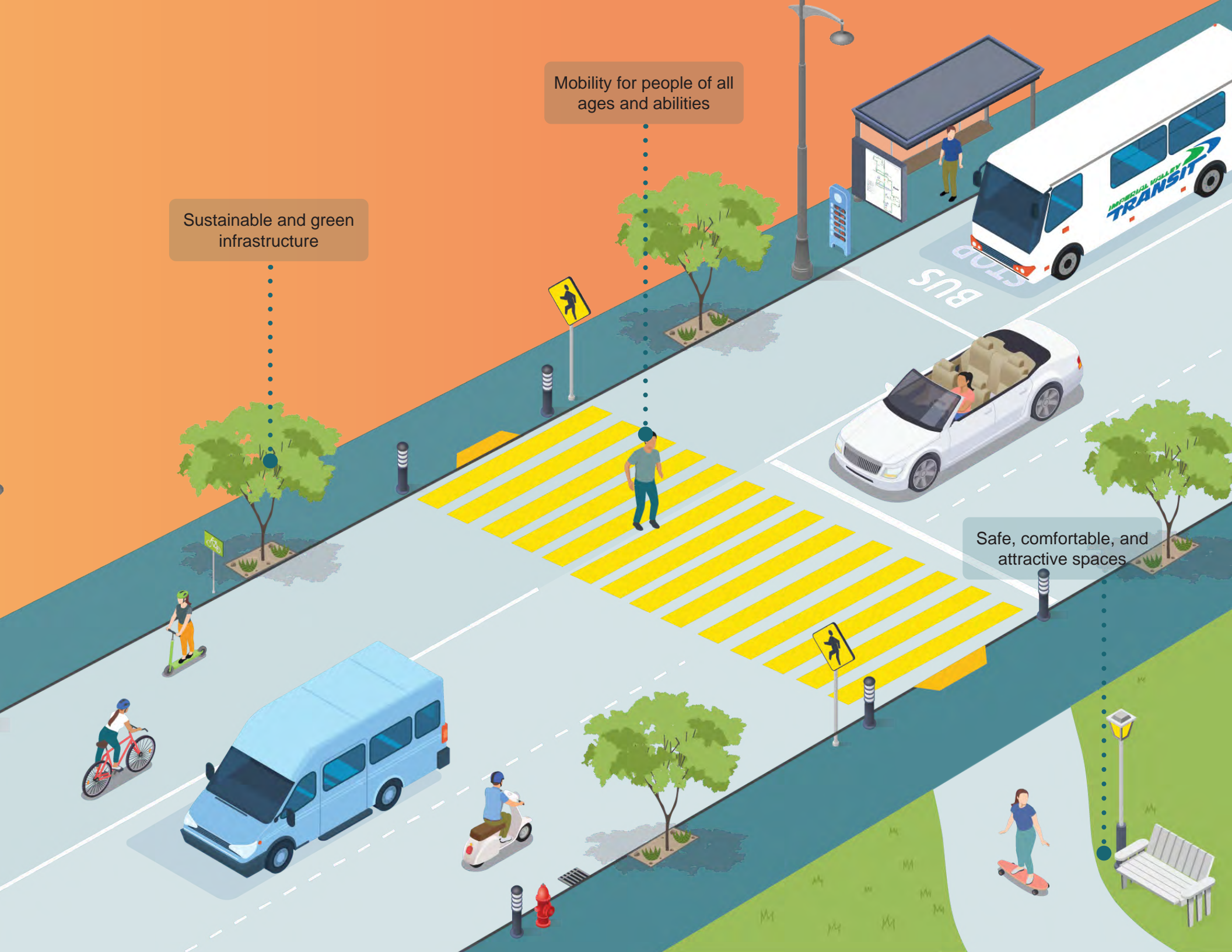
The Imperial Avenue CSP aligns efforts with the Caltrans Design Information Bulletin Number 94 (DIB-94): Complete Streets Contextual Design Guidance.³ The DIB-94 identifies and provides Complete Streets design guidance, best practices, and standards for the development of Complete Streets on the state-controlled road network — along with supporting policies and procedures.



Sustainable and green infrastructure

Mobility for people of all ages and abilities

Safe, comfortable, and attractive spaces



1.2.1 Complete Streets Benefits

Creating Complete Streets has numerous benefits for pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Benefits are not exclusive to transportation users and can be experienced by adjacent homes, businesses, and key destinations.



Safety



Equitable Access



Environmental



Health and Wellness



Economic Prosperity



Safety

A key benefit of planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining Complete Streets is the enhancement of safety for all roadway users. This CSP is the first step in planning for and designing Complete Streets that include traffic calming measures such as high-visibility sidewalks, bicycle lanes, pedestrian signals, among other measures. Construction and maintenance of Complete Streets help encourage good driver behavior and awareness while simultaneously increasing compliance with traffic regulations to aid in the reduction of pedestrian and vehicular collisions.^{4, 5}



Equitable Access

The U.S. transportation network and infrastructure has been historically built with motor vehicles at the forefront and it has led to the present day grid network seen today in most cities. Highways have often divided neighborhoods physically, limiting access and connectivity. Complete Streets is an approach that can help close the gaps formerly created and result in increased safety, more accessible, and healthier transportation networks for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, identity, or income level.⁶ Additionally, a Complete Street makes streets and the public realm more attractive and aids in increased equitable access for people who may not own a motor vehicle making transportation more affordable without the need for maintenance, gas costs, and other associated costs.



Environmental

The U.S. is one of the largest contributors of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) through the use of on-road transportation.^{7,8} Increasing non-vehicular modes of transportation like walking, bicycling, and public transit, can help decrease the use and dependency on motor vehicles.⁹ Complete Streets also incorporates urban greening elements, such as trees, that provide shade for pedestrians and mitigate air pollution to make positive impacts towards reaching state greenhouse gas emission and reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) goals.¹⁰



Health and Wellness

El Centro is a predominantly LatinX/Hispanic community and like many others, it lacks gathering spaces — such as along Imperial Avenue — for physical activity which often leads to increased health issues.¹¹ Over half of neighborhoods surrounding Imperial Avenue are classified as disadvantaged communities, according to SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities data and they are often under-invested areas.¹² This CSP strives to create a more comfortable and welcoming street environment for increased use by people walking and bicycling.



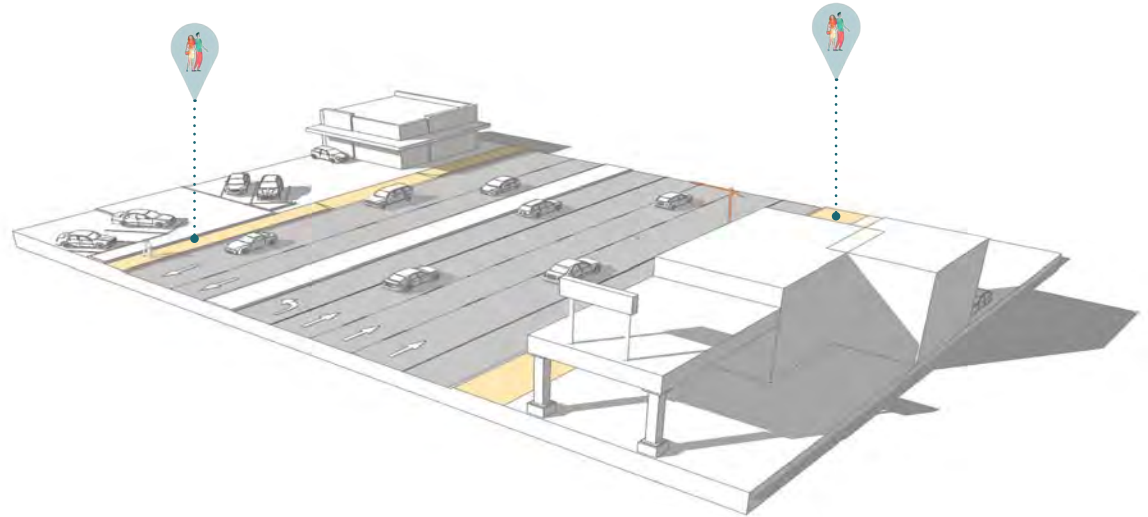
Economic Prosperity

A Complete Street encourages a more active lifestyle for pedestrians and bicyclists while creating a street environment that promotes safer driving. However, when improvements are made, it's important to acknowledge the potential for displacement and gentrification. Thoughtful planning ensures that existing residents and businesses are protected and able to benefit from a Complete Street. Complete Streets are an opportunity to increase foot traffic for businesses along the corridor and result in economic growth. Elements and measures to achieve Complete Streets are often of low cost but can yield impactful results by decreasing pedestrian and vehicular collisions and activate the street environment for safer access to businesses and facilities along the corridor.¹³

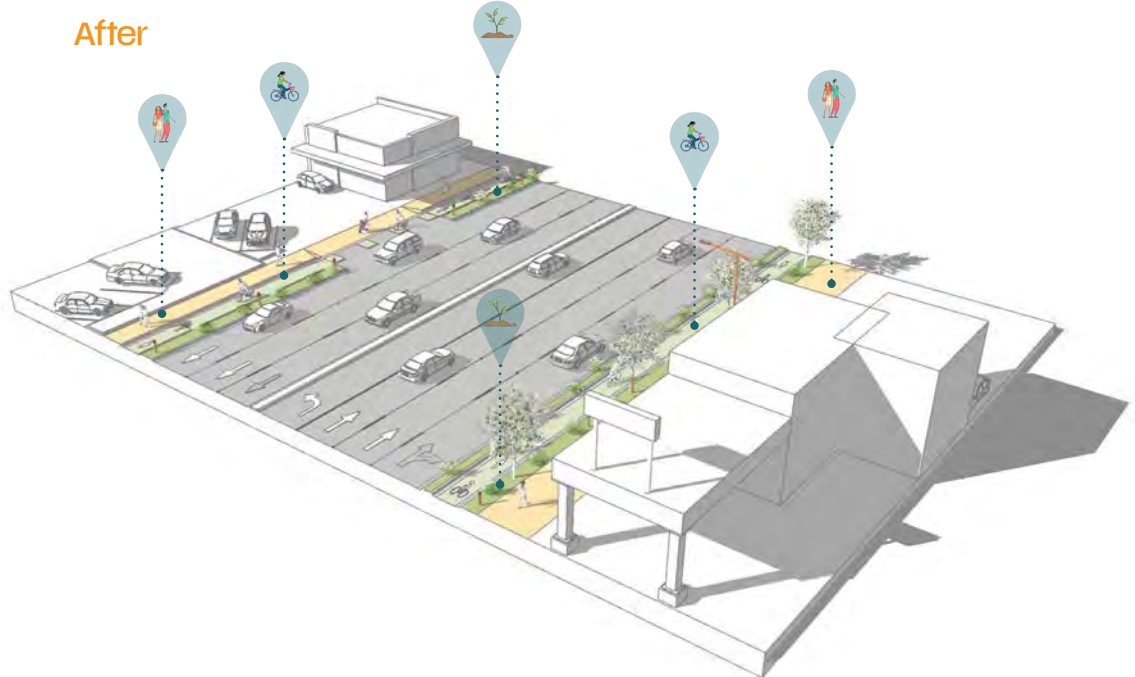
1.3 Purpose and Vision

The purpose of the CSP is to provide El Centro with a guide to enhance and transform the study area into a corridor that supports all modes of travel such as walking, bicycling, and taking public transit while maintaining vehicle throughput. The result will be a welcoming Complete Street for all Imperial Avenue users. The adoption of the CSP will assist El Centro to reclaim the autocentric corridor and encourage multimodal transportation that improves safety, access, and connectivity while preserving and strengthening the community character and rich history.

Before



After



Endnotes

- 1 [California Department of Transportation](#). (2021, December 7). Complete Streets. Caltrans. Retrieved February 6, 2024.
- 2 [Active Transportation Alliance](#). (n.d.). Complete Streets, Complete Networks. Retrieved June 26, 2024.
- 3 [Caltrans](#). (2024, January 16). Retrieved June 26, 2024.
- 4 [American Planning Association](#). (2015). The Benefits of Street Scale Features.
- 5 [Smart Growth America](#). (n.d.).
- 6 [U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration](#). (2022). Complete Streets in FHWA.
- 7 [California Air Resources Board](#). (April 24, 2024). California to Propose New Greenhouse Gas Reductions from Passenger Vehicles.
- 8 [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#). (July 8, 2024). Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions.
- 9 [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#). (n.d.). Environment.
- 10 [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (2024). The State of California's Draft Priority Climate Action Plan.
- 11 [Salud America](#). (May 14, 2019). The State of Latino Housing, Transportation, and Green Space: A Research Review.
- 12 [California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment](#). (2022). SB 535 Disadvantaged Communities.
- 13 [Smart Growth America](#). (2015). Safer Streets, Stronger Economies: Complete Streets Project outcomes from Across the Country.



Chevron

TECH

Grade	Price/Gal
Regular	55.98
Mid-Grade	59.98
Super	69.98
Electric	74.98

STOP

ktu



Existing Conditions

2.1 Existing Conditions

The section of Imperial Avenue between Adams Avenue and Treshill Road was constructed in the 1960s as SR 86, and therefore prioritized vehicle speed and throughput at the cost of convenience and safety of non-vehicular users. Existing conditions along this segment include lack of sidewalks, open drainage channels on both sides of the corridor, limited crossings, lack of bicycle facilities, and high driving speeds. Over the last 60 years, the area around Imperial Avenue has developed with a mix of land uses such as housing, commercial destinations, offices, and community facilities. An assessment of the barriers and opportunity areas to improve all modes of transportation is made possible through an extensive and comprehensive analysis of the existing conditions as outlined in this chapter.

2.1.1 Guiding Documents

A review of existing planning documents at the local and regional level was completed to ensure alignment between the proposed recommendations of this CSP and previous efforts. Previous planning studies provide guidance on past and current street developments as well as room for improvement for the future. The following are a list of the documents reviewed and analyzed.

- The Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan (ICTC) (2024)
- Imperial County Active Transportation Plan (2022)
- Caltrans District 11 Active Transportation Plan (2022)
- El Centro General Plan Update 2040 (2021)
- City of El Centro the Heart of the Valley Strategic Plan 2022-2027 (2021)
- The City of El Centro Active Transportation & Safe Routes to School Plan (2019)
- El Centro Vision 2050 Strategic Plan (2015)
- Drainage Master Plan (2009)





The Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan (2024)

The Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan addresses the future needs and growth of residents and commuters throughout Imperial County. High priority projects within the region were identified as opportunities for potential funding with support from community members who participated throughout the community outreach process. Prioritized transportation projects

include the widening of Imperial Avenue from four to six lanes, installation of Class I multi-use paths in both directions from northern city limits to Adams Avenue, and pedestrian improvements, such as pedestrian countdown timers, ADA curb ramps, continental high-visibility crosswalks, and pedestrian refuge islands.



The Imperial County Transportation Commission Regional Active Transportation Plan (2022)

The Imperial County Transportation Commission Regional Active Transportation Plan identifies the City of El Centro as being one of two regional priority projects that have the potential of connecting with surrounding cities to create safer and more accessible connections. Imperial Avenue falls within one of two priority projects identified within the prioritization process of the Plan with recommendation of a Class I bicycle lane.



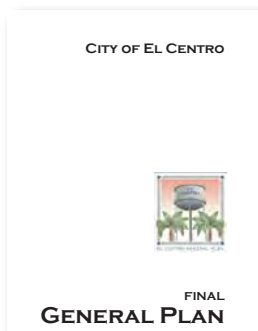
Caltrans District 11 Active Transportation Plan (2022)

The Caltrans District 11 Active Transportation Plan is a comprehensive document identifying gaps and barriers faced by pedestrians and bicyclists. High priority locations and segments for future planning, construction, and improvements were identified in an effort to create a walkable and bikeable community. The CSP is accompanied by an interactive online map which demonstrates location-based needs for people walking or bicycling along highways. Imperial Avenue prioritized as Tier 1, representing the highest intensity of need.



El Centro General Plan Update 2040 (2021)

El Centro General Plan is a comprehensive document that includes the City's incorporated areas and land within its sphere of influence. General Plans are required to include eight elements but for the purposes of the CSP the applicable chapters reviewed covers Land Use, Circulation, and Environmental Justice. Opportunity Area (OA-1) overlaps with one intersection of the CSP study area, at Imperial Avenue and Adams Avenue. Adams Avenue is to be planned as a four-lane arterial with Class IV cycle tracks on both sides per Policy OA-1.9 of the General Plan's Land Use element and shows high-visibility crosswalks and conflict striping at the Imperial Avenue intersection. The Circulation Element samples pedestrian and bicycle treatments to use within the opportunity areas and throughout the City. These treatments as well as relevant policies from the General Plan were applied to this CSP, as found in **Chapter 4**.



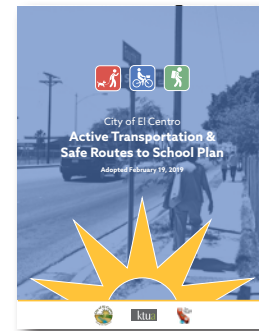
City of El Centro the Heart of the Valley Strategic Plan (2021)

The City of El Centro the Heart of the Valley Strategic Plan creates a roadmap for the planning period of 2022-2027 and it is meant to include goals and objectives of the Vision 2050 Plan which still serves as a guiding document for the City. The short planning period of this plan is meant to address the more immediate goals and actions for the pursuit of funding.



The City of El Centro Active Transportation & Safe Routes to School Plan (SRTS) (2019)

This plan presents recommendations and programs to promote more bicycling and walking throughout the City with the objective of improving non-motorized transportation, promoting public health, and promoting transportation equity. Identified recommendations for schools within proximity of the Imperial Avenue study area are Lincoln Elementary, McKinley Elementary School, Kennedy Middle School and Martin Luther King Elementary School. A recommendation applicable to Imperial Avenue identified for Lincoln Elementary school is the installation of buffered bicycle lanes, separated bikeways, and bicycle lanes along corridors such as Adams Avenue and Imperial Avenue. Additionally, the removal of the free-right turn located on the intersection of Imperial Avenue and Adams Avenue is proposed within this plan.



El Centro Vision 2050 Strategic Plan (2015)

The El Centro Vision 2050 Strategic Plan identifies goals and objectives to help guide the pursuit of creating a prosperous future for the City. Five vision elements within the document to help achieve the vision of the City of El Centro by 2050 are:

- Safety and Community Preservation
- Quality of Life Amenities
- Economic Development
- Development and Mobility
- Community Pride and Spirit

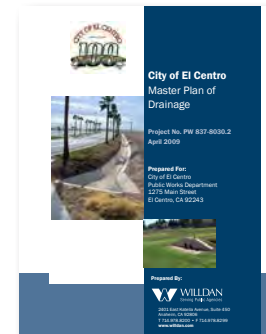
Relevant strategies to the Imperial Avenue study area include the improvement of thoroughfare by the incorporation of landscaping and lighting for pedestrians, the relocation of utilities for improved visual quality, and the enhancement of crossings for connectivity and safety.



City of El Centro Master Plan of Drainage (2009)

The City of El Centro Master Plan of Drainage outlines design criteria and identifies drainage deficiencies in addition to recommendations for drainage improvements. Imperial Avenue's existing drainage facilities are owned and operated by Caltrans and require careful consideration to provide a safe environment to prevent flooding during wet seasons. The existing drainage facilities flow into Imperial Irrigation District (IDD) Facilities which are owned and operated by the City of El Centro. A proposed solution is the upsizing of the existing system and the addition of catch basins. Imperial Avenue from Scott Avenue to the railroad track is identified as needing an upgrade to the existing storm drain and additional catch basins. The same upgrades were recommended west of Imperial Avenue along the Northgate Shopping Center and east of the corridor along the Town Center shopping Center. From Villa Avenue to Imperial Avenue to Scott Avenue flooding occurs along the street and this plan recommends that the existing storm drain is extended.

Upon future planned relinquishment of the Imperial Avenue drainage facilities from Caltrans to El Centro, the City will be responsible for any future studies, maintenance, and planned improvements.



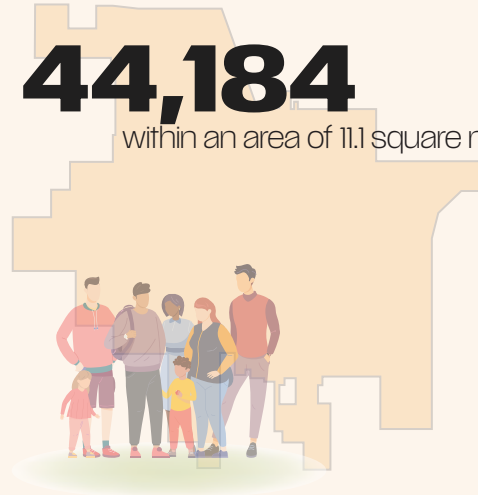


2.2 Community Demographics

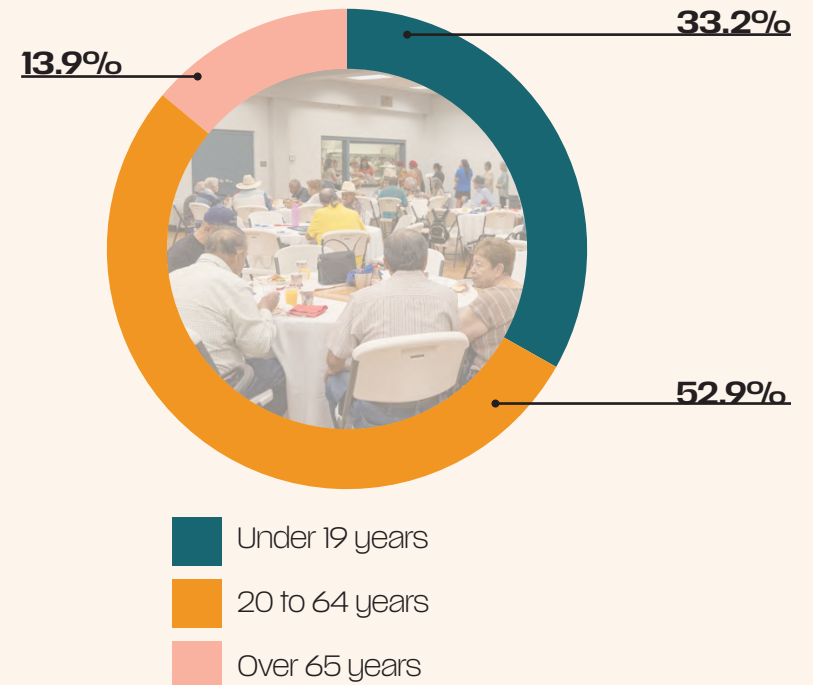
Total Population

44,184

within an area of 11.1 square miles



Population Age



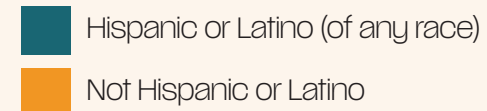
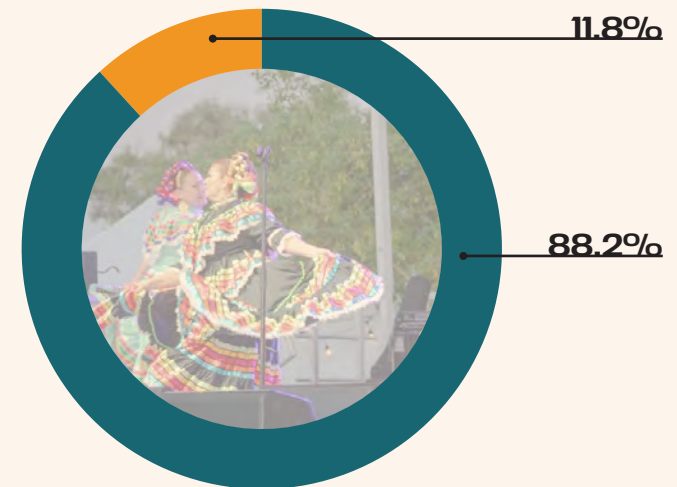
Occupation



Race



Ethnicity

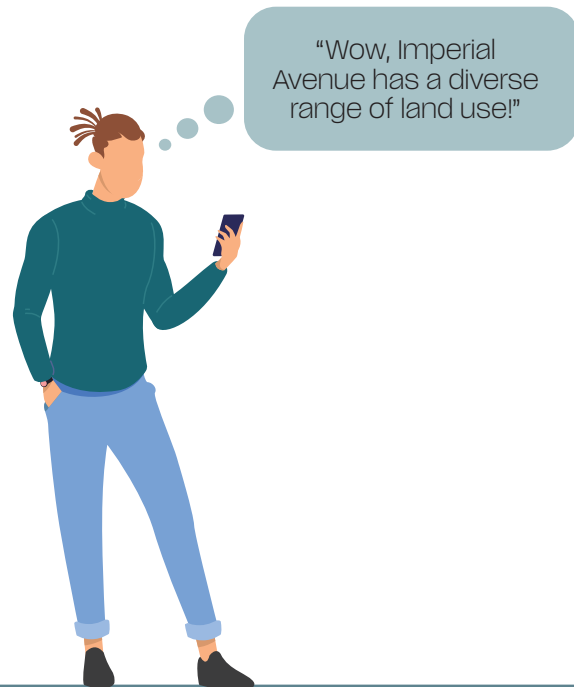


Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables DP05, S0101, S0801, S2405.

2.3 Land Use

El Centro prioritizes maintaining a balanced and diverse mix of land uses all of which are necessary for maintaining a healthy community. The City is comprised of mostly Low Density Residential land use but with a mix of General Commercial, General Industrial, Light Industrial, and Public Use, as shown in **Figure 2-1**.

Land use along Imperial Avenue consists of mainly General Commercial and Heavy Commercial use. Other uses facing the corridor are Low Density Residential Use, Mixed Use 1, Tourist Commercial Use, Neighborhood Commercial Use, and Public Use. Adjacent uses to Imperial Avenue include High-Medium Density Residential Use. A small portion at the intersection of Imperial Avenue and Adams Avenue also falls within the Adams Avenue Opportunity Area (OA-1).



Study Area Land Use Descriptions

Low Density Residential Use

Development in this category is characterized by single-family detached dwelling units, ADUs, and accessory buildings.

Mixed Use 1

Development in this category is characterized by multiple-family residential, live/work, and retail and service-oriented uses serving the needs of local neighborhoods; allowing mixed use, stand-alone residential, standalone commercial developments.

General Commercial

Development in this category is characterized by Retail, light service, and general business, as well as large-scale planned shopping districts serving the local and regional area; where appropriate, motel/hotel & public assembly uses.

Heavy Commercial Use

Development in this category is characterized by general commercial uses, business and consumer services, and light manufacturing.

Tourist Commercial Use

Development in this category is characterized by motels, resort hotels, related commercial and tourist oriented uses, retail and free-way oriented uses; multiple-family residential may be permitted.

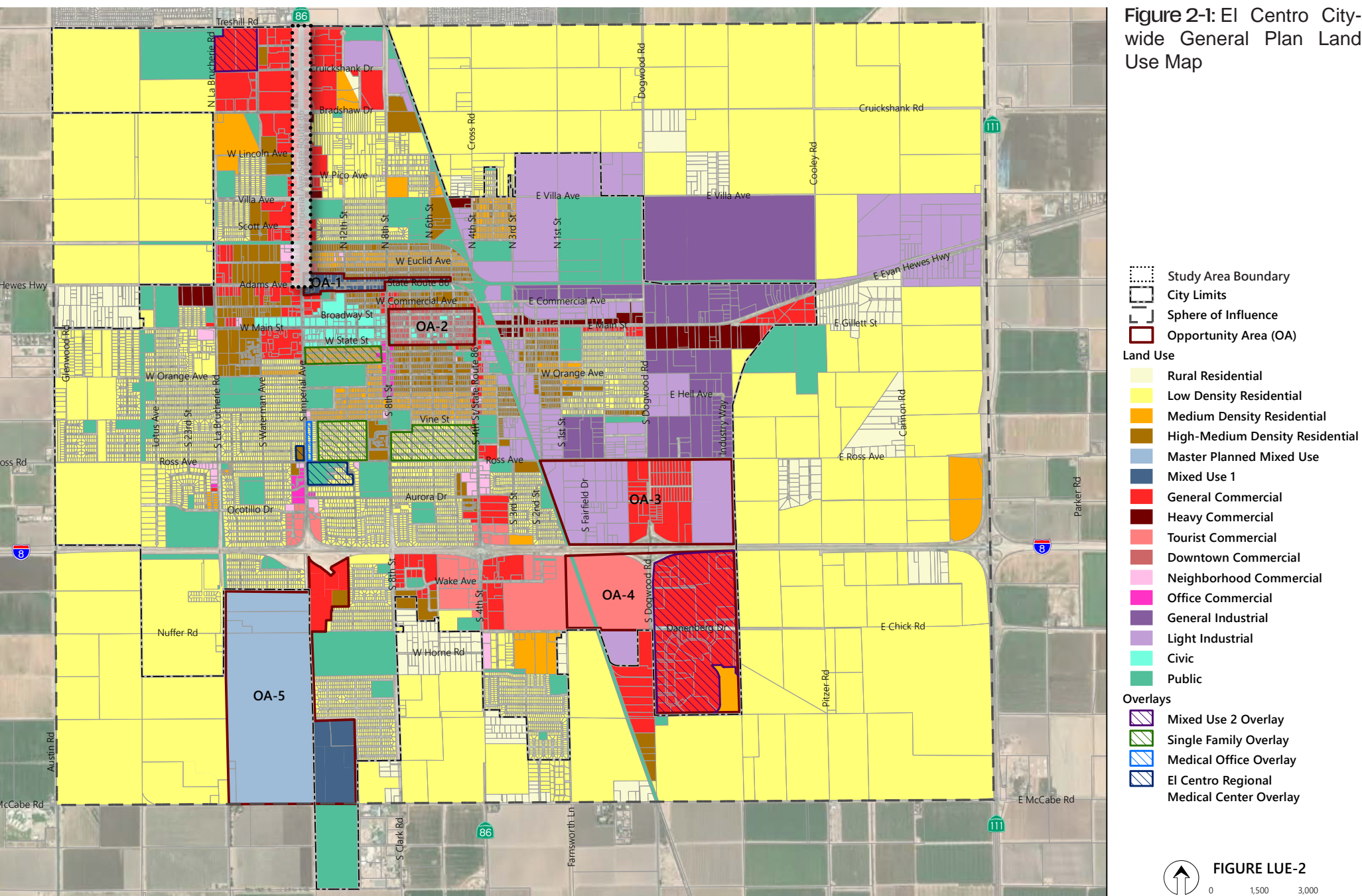
Neighborhood Commercial Use

Development in this category is characterized by retail and service-oriented uses serving the needs of local neighborhoods.

Public Use

Development in this category is characterized by parcels owned by the City of El Centro, Imperial Irrigation District, school districts, or El Centro Regional Medical Center containing police and fire departments, libraries, sewer facilities, flood control basins, parks and recreation facilities, cemeteries, museums, etc.

Figure 2-1: El Centro City-wide General Plan Land Use Map



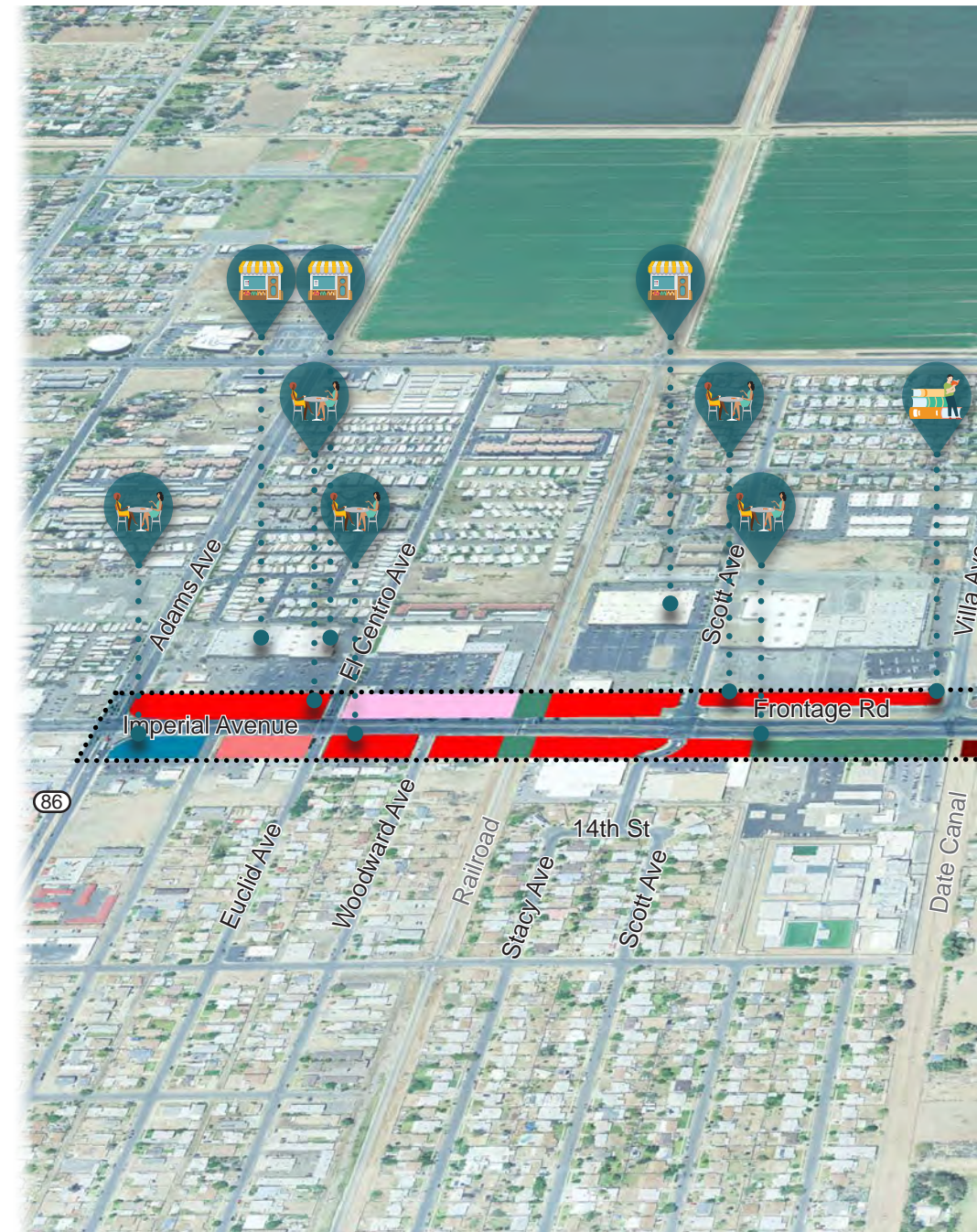
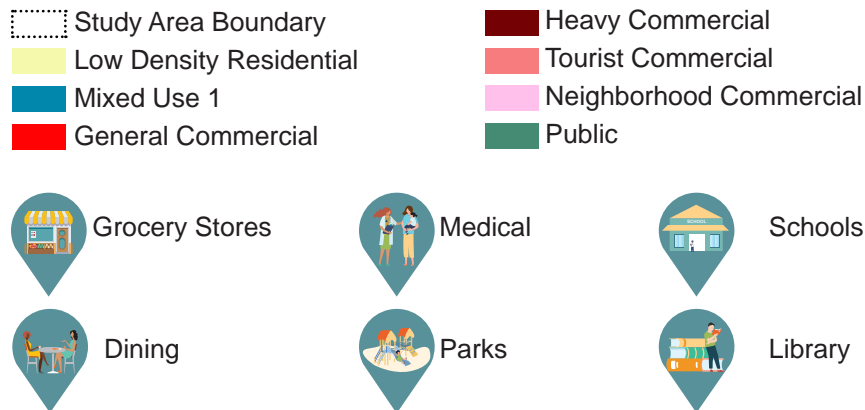
2.3.1 Community Destinations

Attractions

The portion of Imperial Avenue within the study area provides access to commercial areas, two parks, Carlos Aguilar Park and First Responders Park, grocery stores, vacant lots with planned commercial development, and residential areas ranging from mobile home parks to single family homes. The nearest schools are about a half-mile away from the corridor. Future developments on Imperial Avenue include an array of commercial uses ranging from cafes, eateries, medical centers and offices, and a gas station.

Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) along Imperial Avenue include the Valley Centerpoint Demolition near the northwest corner of Imperial Avenue and Scott Avenue. Because of the desert climate, residents have year-round extreme heat days which make for an uncomfortable walk, ride a bike, or wait for public transit to and from popular and everyday destinations. Understanding the most traveled areas, as shown in **Figure 2-2**, helps guide the recommendations of the CSP to make modes of transportation not only more safe, but also more comfortable and accessible to and from attractions.

Figure 2-2: Land Use and Community Destinations/Attractions





2.4 Walk Audit

Walk audits are an integral part of the CSP. They offered the opportunity for the Project Team to walk in the shoes of residents to better understand and assess the existing conditions, needs, and barriers.

Walk Audits (November 8, 2023)

During the initial walk audit on November 8, 2023, the Project Team and El Centro City staff walked along Imperial Avenue. They documented areas of interest on a site map, supported by photographs, and noted the following observations along the corridor:

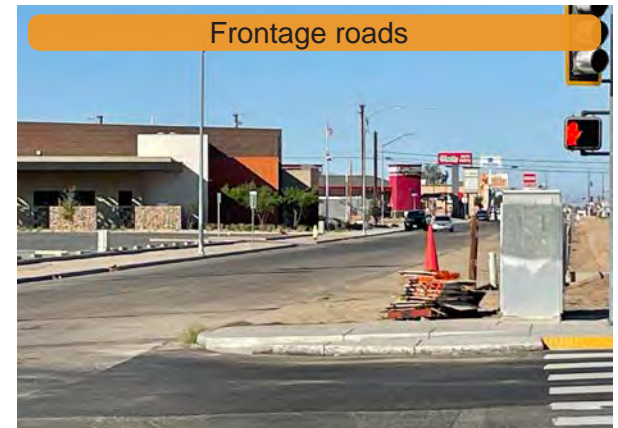
- Drainage constraints
- Changes in topography along different stretches of the corridor
- Missing curb ramps and truncated domes at some crossing points
- Missing sidewalks
- Lack of shelter
- Long distances for pedestrian crossings
- Speeding cars (varied posted 35 to 55 miles per hour speed limit along the segments)



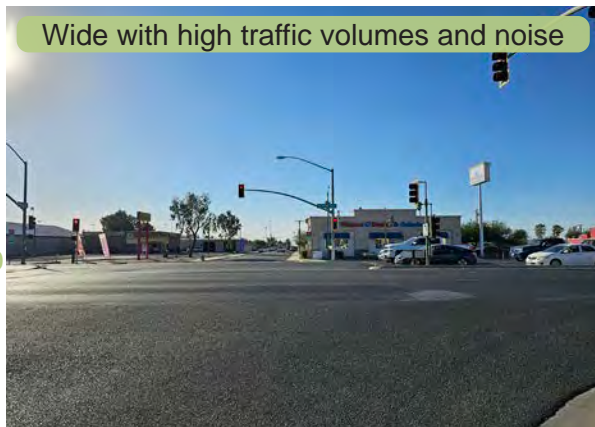
Segment A



Segment B



Segment C



2.5 Transportation Characteristics

2.5.1 Transit Routes and Stops

Public transportation for El Centro is available to residents through a fixed public bus service by Imperial Valley Transit (IVT), servicing Imperial County since 1989. Bus services provided by IVT include fixed routes, deviated fixed routes, and remote zone routes. Lines 2, 3, and the Green Line run along Imperial Avenue:

- 2N - El Centro to Niland
- 2S - Niland to El Centro
- 3E - El Centro to Holtville
- 3W - Holtville to El Centro
- Green Line

Some transit stops along the corridor have bus shelters with seating and others only display signage. Bus stops along and near the corridor are shown in **Figure 2-3**.



2.5.2 Commuting Mode Share

As a major north-south connection, Imperial Avenue is heavily used for daily commuting within the City and surrounding areas. **Table 2-1** depicts the estimated travel modes utilized by people 16 years and over who work in El Centro according to the U.S. Census 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (ACS).¹ The majority of people working travel alone by automobile followed by people carpooling and have an average travel time of 21.6 minutes to their destination. Active modes of transportation are below two percent, demonstrating the need for Complete Streets improvements such as sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and shade.

Bicycling Mode Share

Similar to the walking mode share, bicycling mode share measures the percentage of resident workers aged 16 years and over who commute to work by bicycle. Throughout El Centro, there is no reported bicycle use when commuting to work according to the ACS data. However, this does not mean there is no need or interest in commuting by bicycle within the city.

Public Transit Mode Share

Transit mode share measures the percentage of workers aged 16 years and over who commute to work by transit. This mode share reflects how well the mobility infrastructure, transit routes, and land-use patterns support travel to work by transit.

Walking Mode Share

The walking mode share measures the percentage of workers aged 16 years and over who commute to work by foot and it reflects how well infrastructure and land use patterns support travel to work by foot. In the city, walking mode share patterns are connected to the relative proximity of housing to employment centers.

Table 2-1: Commute to Work Travel Modes

TRAVEL MODE	ESTIMATE (%)
Car, truck, or van	91.8%
Drove alone	79.1%
Carpooled	12.7%
Workers per car, truck, or van	1.08%
Bicycle	0%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.4%
Walked	1.7%
Taxican, motorcycle, or other means	1.7%
Worked from home	4.4%



2.5.4 Sidewalk Network Evaluation

Complete Street improvements encourage pedestrians to walk more as they make streets more appealing to pedestrians due to increased safety and walkability. Identifying deficiencies in the pedestrian network is critical using data provided by El Centro. **Figure 2-4** shows missing sidewalks along large portions of Imperial Avenue on both sides of the corridor. Missing sidewalks are concentrated on the northern portion of Imperial Avenue. Frontage roads on the west side of the corridor have existing sidewalks and create access to commercial uses and public facilities. However, the lack of sidewalks on both sides of the corridor create a disconnection across destinations.



Figure 2-4: Missing Sidewalks on Imperial Avenue



2.5.3 Bicycle Facilities

In the development of this CSP, the existing and planned bicycle facilities were analyzed to align to the greatest extent possible recommendations with past and future planning efforts.

Existing Bicycle Facilities

Imperial Avenue existing bicycle facilities as shown in **Figure 2-5**, consist of Class III along the majority of the corridor. Intersecting bicycle facilities for east-to-west connections include Class II, Class III, and some Class I.

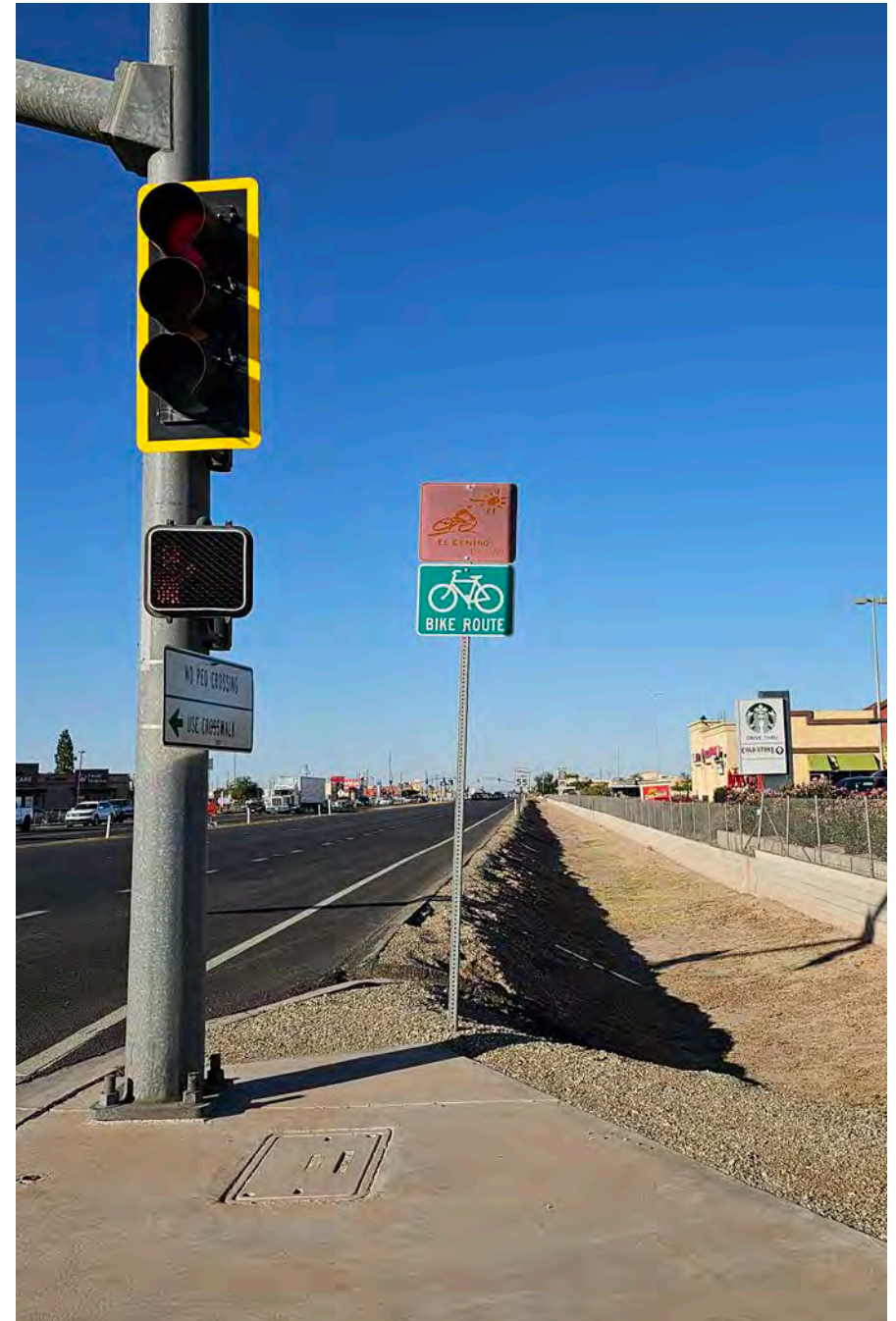
Planned Bicycle Facilities

According to El Centro's General Plan Circulation Element, **Figure 2-6**, shows the planned expansion of bicycle facilities along Imperial Avenue include upgrading from the existing Class III bike routes to Class IV cycle tracks with intersecting Class I, Class II, and Class III bike facilities. Additionally, the Project Team during walk audits and traffic counts recorded bicycle ridership, observing the need for facilities to protect existing and attract new riders.

Figure 2-5: Existing Bicycle Facilities



Figure 2-6: Proposed Bicycle Facilities from 2021 General Plan



Bicycle & Pedestrian Crash/Collisions Analysis

A comprehensive crash analysis was conducted using Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) data to track bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicle collisions along Imperial Avenue. **Figure 2-7** depicts six of the intersections with a high number of crashes, ranging by collision type - pedestrian, bicycle, or vehicle collision.

Traffic Count Analysis

Traffic counts were conducted on October 24, 2023 at AM and PM peak times for cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists to understand how people are currently using and moving through the study area. Despite the lack of pedestrian and bicycle amenities, users were recorded using these modes. Pedestrian and bicycle counts were higher in the southern portion of the corridor, Segment A, likely due to the presence of existing sidewalks for protection.

Refer to **Appendix A.2** for detailed Existing Lane Geometry and Existing AM/PM Hour Volume exhibits.

Figure 2-7: Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Automobile Collisions



Endnotes

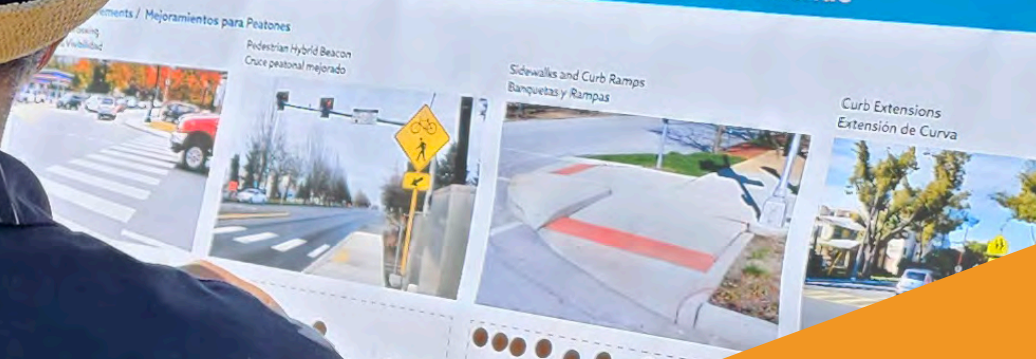
1 [United States Census Bureau](#). (2022). S0801 Commuting Characteristics.





EL CENTRO

Proposed Pedestrian And Other Improvements for Imperial Avenue
Mejoramientos Posibles de Peatones y Otros Tipos para Imperial Avenue



Public Engagement

3.1 Outreach Strategy Overview

Input from the public provided the CSP planning process with valuable information while strengthening trust and support of the project. Community members have firsthand experience with the strengths and areas needing improvement on Imperial Avenue and public outreach is a key component of project recommendations.

The outreach strategy consisted of the following events and all materials were provided in English and Spanish throughout the engagement process:

- A project website
- E-newsletters and social media posts
- Postcards to businesses on Imperial Avenue
- An online and paper survey for field interviews/intercept surveys along Imperial Avenue
- A Geographical Information System (GIS) based interactive online map survey
- Three (3) community workshops
- Four (4) project advisory committee (PAC) meetings
- Four (4) pop-up events

3.1.1 Project Branding

To engage, inform, and educate the public, project branding was established to provide digestible informative material for the community. El Centro does not have adopted design guidelines and it allowed for the development of a logo, color palette, typography, and infographics that were representative of Imperial Avenue.

3.1.2 Project Website

A project website was generated to be a bank of information as the CSP was developed with the inclusion of the project description, project timeline, project milestones, and public engagement opportunities such as the GIS-based interactive online mapping survey which allowed the public to drop icons representing a topic with a comment of any area of concern along Imperial Avenue.



3.1.3 Newsletters & Social Media

Bilingual e-newsletters were sent to the project database at key milestones. The database grew throughout the project due to participation in the survey and sign-ups at the various public engagement events. E-newsletters were sent to over 500 community members.

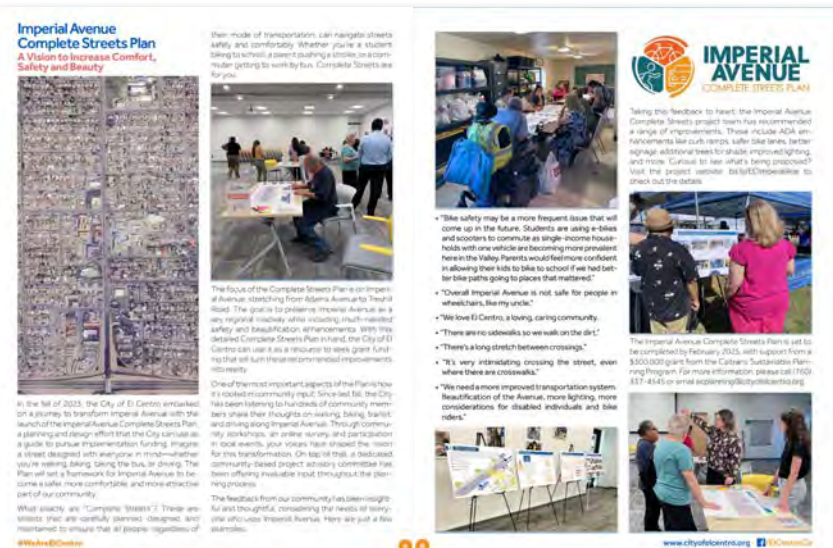
Articles were also used as a way to engage the community as articles were drafted by the Project Team and City Staff and were posted on El Centro's Community Newsletter for the Summer of 2023 and 2024.

Additionally, social media posts were made on the City's social media platforms throughout all stages of the CSP.



3.1.4 Postcards

A bilingual postcard was mailed to El Centro businesses along Imperial Avenue to inform business owners and operators of the CSP to obtain additional information through the project website prior to Workshop #3 held on November 14, 2024. El Centro staff provided a list of 169 active businesses, and the postcard were mailed to all on October 21, 2024, with an arrival date and in mailboxes by October 25, 2024.



3.2 Surveys

To better understand the challenges, barriers, and opportunities for Imperial Avenue, the Project Team developed a GIS-based interactive online mapping survey and conducted intercept surveys with a traditional community survey.

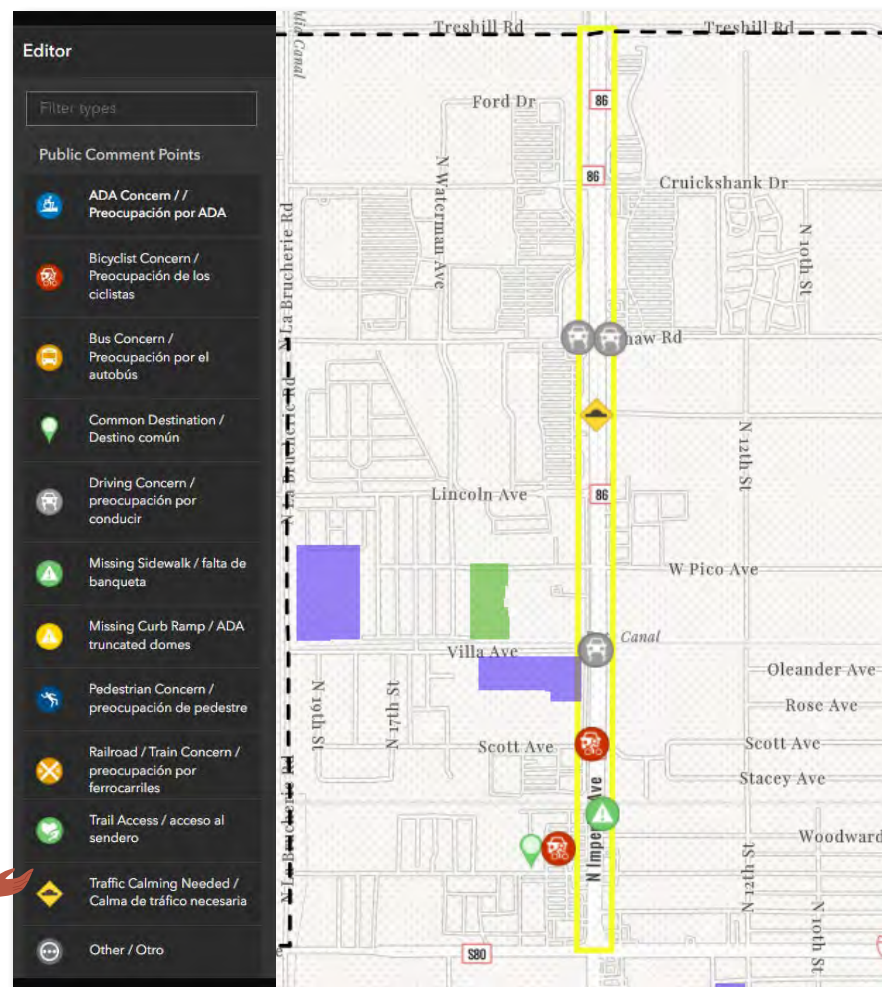
The traditional survey was made available online through a Quick Response (QR) Code and website link as well as a physical survey distributed during public engagement events. The survey material was made available from October of 2023 to January of 2024. The survey was promoted on the City's various social media platforms, at city events, and a large banner displayed at Carlos Aguilar Park. Opportunity drawings were also provided by the City to incentivize survey participation.

3.2.1 GIS Interactive Survey

A GIS interactive survey was posted at the start of the project along with the project website where a range of comment points/categories were available for participants to note areas of concern. The option to include any other concern or comment was also made available.

Concerns noted on the interactive survey included:

- Driving concerns on Bradshaw Avenue and Villa Avenue where intersecting with Imperial Avenue
- Traffic calming needed on El Dorado Avenue and Imperial Avenue intersection
- Bicycle concerns on Scott Avenue and Imperial Avenue intersection and parking lots
- Missing sidewalks approaching the railroad
- Grocery store (Vons) as a common destination



3.2.2 Intercept Surveys

Although most people have access to the technology required to complete the digital survey, it was important to ensure the survey was accessible to everyone, including those without the necessary technology or those who may experience discomfort with digital tools. For this reason, the Project Team also offered a physical survey option and conducted field interviews/intercept surveys.

Intercept Survey #1 (December 13, 2023)

On December 13, 2023, with permission from the El Centro School District, the Project Team visited McKinley Elementary and Kennedy Middle School during after-school pickup to conduct CSP surveys to parents and caregivers. Those waiting to pick-up their students were happy to participate in the survey, and Kennedy Principal Richard Sanchez offered extra credit to the students whose parents participated. Additionally, the Project Team visited the library as well as transit stops near Costco and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Overall, participants were enthusiastic about the project to improve the nearby neighborhood.

Intercept Surveys September 17 & 18, 2024

On September 17, 2024, the Project Team visited Lincoln Elementary and Martin Luther King Elementary Schools during after-school pick-up to speak with parents about the project, sharing information about the second survey from Workshop #2 about the draft concept recommendations. A station was set-up outside Cardenas, with permission from the store manager.

Additionally, to reach transit users, the team visited four transit stops along the corridor on September 18, one outside Costco, and three further south. The team also stopped at the library to speak with patrons about the project and encourage survey participation.

Over the two days, residents responded positively to the improvements, with many sharing stories of near collisions along Imperial Avenue. Some expressed concern about the addition of three stoplights from their perspective as drivers. Those who used the library were especially enthusiastic about a new traffic signal allowing easier pedestrian access to the library.



448 Total Surveys

3.2.3 Survey Results Key Findings and Takeaways

Key findings and takeaways from participants who completed the online and physical surveys at CSP events or during fieldwork have been summarized. The complete survey results can be found in the **Appendix A.3**.



Relationship of survey participants with El Centro

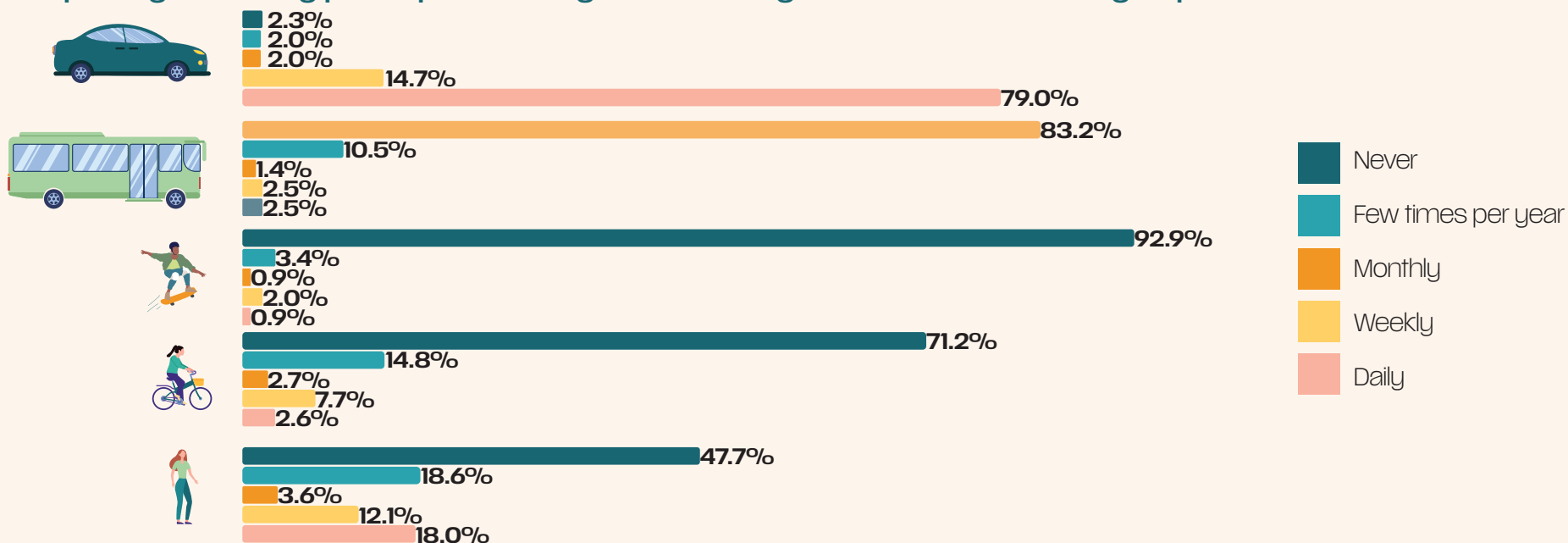
79.9%
Residents



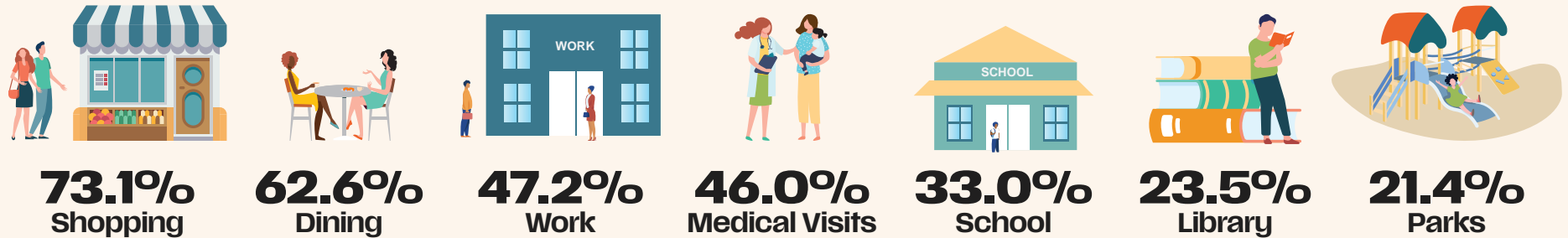
Most popular mode of travel on Imperial Avenue

94.1%
Driving

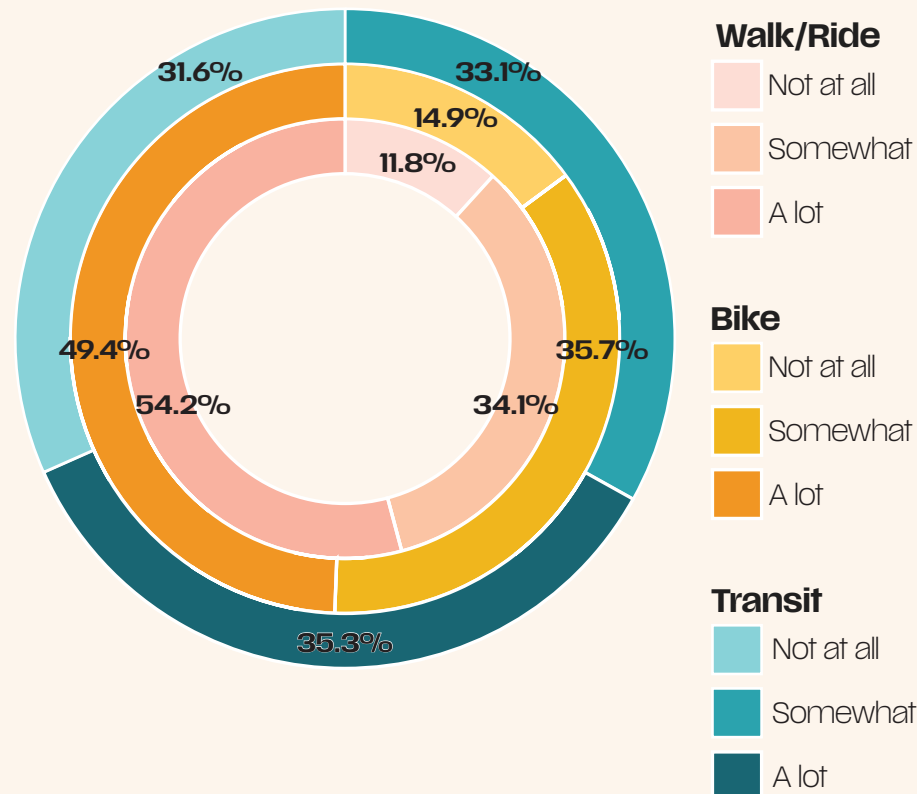
Frequency of survey participants using the following modes of travel along Imperial Avenue



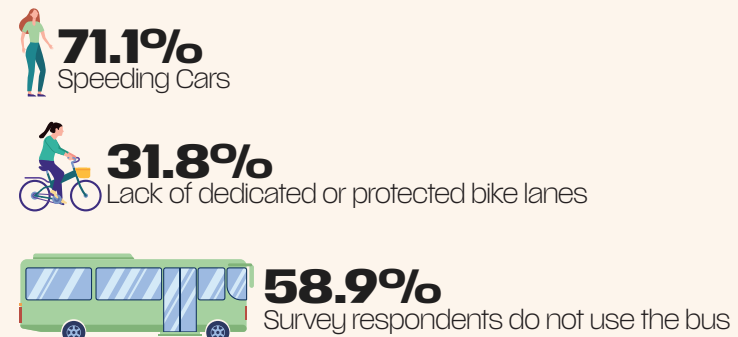
Major attractions/what draws survey participants to Imperial Avenue



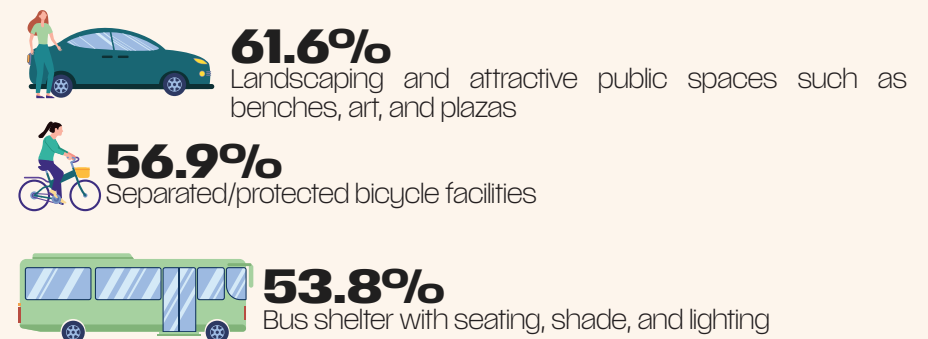
Concerned about enhancing safety for the following modes of travel



Top concerns about walking, bicycling, and the use of transit along Imperial Avenue



Top things that would make people walk/ride, bike, and use transit along Imperial Avenue



3.3 Community Workshops

Three interactive community workshops were conducted throughout various dates during the CSP planning process. All workshops were family-friendly events with bilingual staff available to facilitate participation and capture valuable feedback. The purpose of the community workshops was to identify what community members enjoy and would like to see improved on Imperial Avenue to help highlight priority areas in the advancement of the project vision of creating a vibrant corridor that connects all people to the City of El Centro.

Workshop #1 - City Library (November 8, 2023)

The team conducted the first community workshop on Wednesday, November 8 at the City Library located at the intersection of Villa Avenue and Imperial Avenue. A brief presentation was given by the Project Team and City Staff to introduce the CSP project. Later residents had the opportunity to review and comment on various exhibits provided which included input boards and maps to help gather comments. The feedback the team collected on existing concerns, opportunity areas, and overarching wishes for Imperial Avenue was used to develop design alternatives for residents to review at future community workshops.



Workshop #2 - City Library (August 8, 2024)

Similarly to the first workshop, the second workshop took place on Friday, August 8 at the City Library. The workshop was an open house style format where community members were encouraged to walk around and learn, comment, and participate in the various activities available.

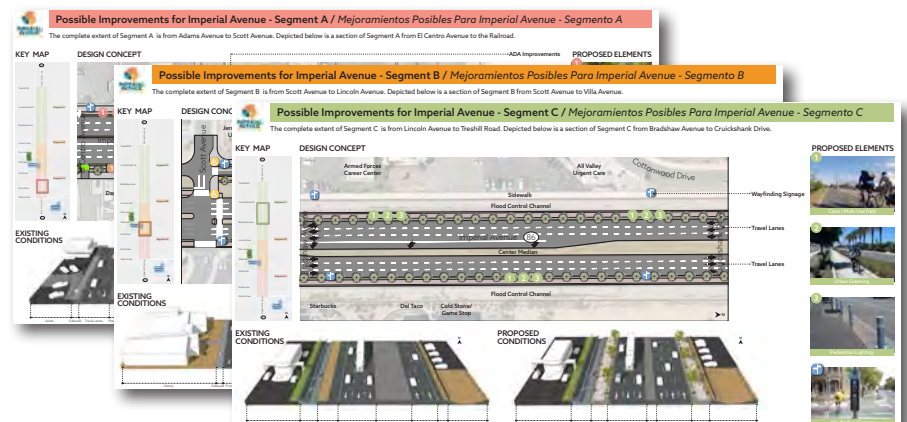
A complete streets remote control car course served as an interactive and educational activity that demonstrated traffic calming treatments to help guide pedestrians and bicyclists safely and comfortably as well as incentivize drivers to be more mindful of their surroundings to encourage safer driving. A display of boards provided a synopsis of the survey results which guided the draft recommendations that were the main focus of the workshop. The draft recommendations were shown to the public in a comprehensive but digestible format as the Imperial Avenue corridor was broken down into small portions of Segment A, B, and C. Existing and proposed three-dimensional sections of the corresponding segment accompanied the site plans and community members were asked to complete a report card for each of the segments to help gauge where further improvements were desired. Additionally, a board displaying the three locations for new proposed traffic signals was also provided for comments.

Overall, participants expressed satisfaction with the draft recommendations for all segments and previous comments made about the need for more shade, shelter, lighting, and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists still were primary areas of concern.

Draft Recommendation Survey

Following this workshop, a second survey was made available to the public for all whom were unable to attend to provide their feedback on the draft recommendations and a total of 71 surveys were completed. Overall, people were supportive of the presented recommendations for all segments and the new proposed traffic signal at the intersection of Imperial Avenue and Villa Avenue. Complete results can be found in **Appendix A.4**.

The image shows three overlapping draft recommendation report cards for Segment A, B, and C of Imperial Avenue. Each card contains a table with various categories of improvements and a section for comments. The cards are titled 'SEGMENT A REPORT CARD', 'SEGMENT B REPORT CARD', and 'SEGMENT C REPORT CARD'.



Workshop #3 - City Library (November 14, 2024)

The third and last workshop was an open house style event held on November, 14, 2024 at the City Library. The workshop began with a presentation that revisited each stage of the project from the existing conditions analysis and community engagement through preliminary concept design. After the presentation, the remainder of the workshop was treated as an open house, where participants assessed the draft concept design for the entire corridor, printed at nearly 20' in length and 14" in height. The enlarged printout, paired with a legend and photos of treatments, allowed community members to more easily understand the recommendations proposed. Attendees took their time reviewing the concept and shared their feedback in writing. Common themes involved increasing pedestrian and bicycle access to businesses, adding clear zones along frontage roads, and adding enhanced pedestrian amenities at the railroad crossing.



3.4 Project Advisory Committee (PAC)

A project advisory committee (PAC) was formed to be an advisory body and provide ongoing feedback throughout the project. Four PAC meetings were held throughout the planning process and all were held virtually to accommodate members' schedules. Representatives from stakeholder organizations, community representatives, and City Staff who experience Imperial Avenue on a regular basis participated. A summary of each meeting is described below.

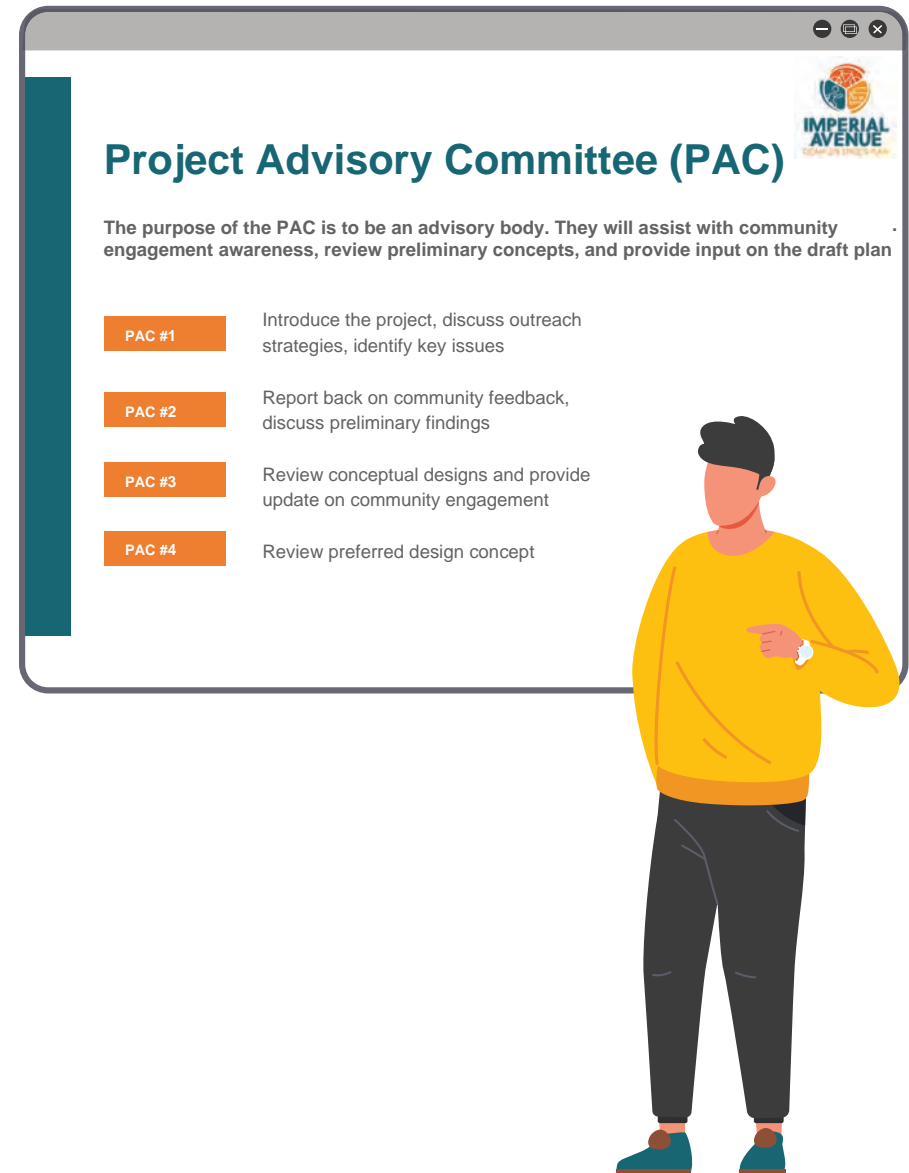
Participating organizations included:

- Caltrans
- El Centro Elementary School District
- Imperial County Transportation Commission
- Lotus Living
- Mayor
- Planning Commission

PAC Meeting #1 (October 19, 2023)

The first PAC meeting was held on October 19, 2023. Attendees were introduced to the project via a presentation and open discussion. A presentation shared an overview of community engagement, expectations for members, and project milestones. Members were asked to share their impressions of and experiences with Imperial Avenue. Their comments are summarized below.

- There are long crossing distances across Imperial Avenue, short crossing times, and far distances between crossings.
- Local commuters will use La Brucherie Road to avoid congestion.
- Pedestrians walk on the dirt and in the irrigation channels.
- Concerning driver behavior: running red lights, not yielding to pedestrians, and speeding.



PAC Meeting #2 (March 7, 2024)

The second PAC meeting was held on March 7, 2024. At this meeting, there was a project update that included findings from outreach efforts, highlights from the project survey results, and data findings from the existing conditions analysis. The project update was followed by an open discussion about the possibilities for the project, summarized below.

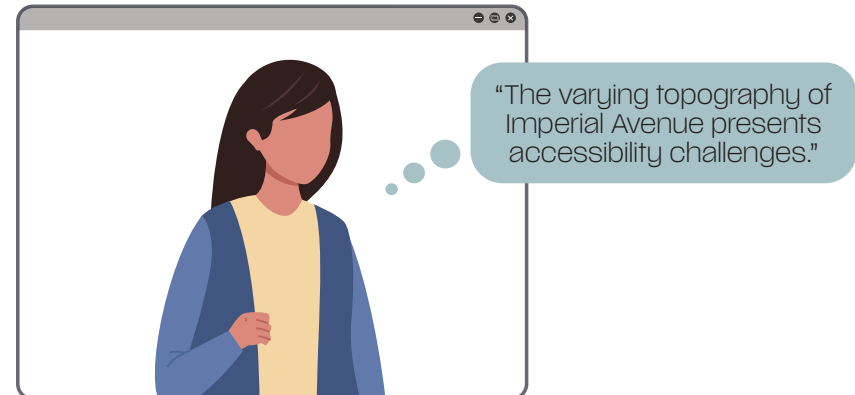
- First-last mile connections
- Increased bus frequency
- Additional pedestrian crossings
- ADA compliance
- Design considerations such as topography and ICTC's concurrent Comprehensive Operational Analysis

PAC Meeting #3 (August 22, 2024)

The third PAC meeting was held on August 22, 2024. The meeting consisted of a project update presentation summarizing community feedback and field observations and how they applied to the draft recommendations in the form of before-and-after 3D renderings. Attendees were able to see preliminary recommendations to digest treatments at each of the three segments. Additionally, three potential intersections were proposed to address the request for additional pedestrian crossings. Stakeholders were supportive of the draft recommendations and any questions they had were answered.

PAC #4 (December 4, 2024)

On December 4th, the final PAC meeting was held which provided and opportunity to summarize the project analysis and public outreach conducted and share how this informed the proposed recommendations. The Project Team shared how community and stakeholder feedback has been incorporated into the Plan and attendees shared their appreciation. The group discussed how this Plan will position the City for diverse funding sources and emphasized how it will have both a local and regional impact on residents, visitors, and frequenters.



3.5 Pop-Up Events

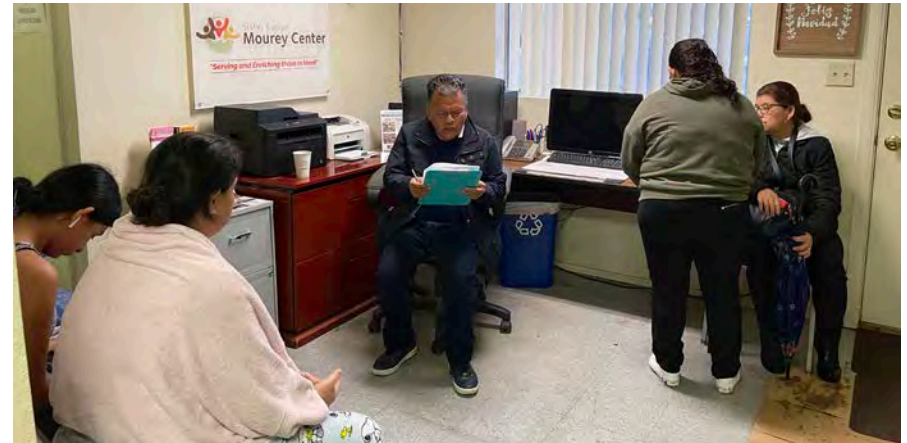
Pop-Up #1 - Sister Evelyn Mourey Center (January 22, 2024)

The first pop-up event was hosted at the Sister Evelyn Mourey Center on January 22, 2024, to talk with residents about their safety concerns along the corridor. Despite the inclement weather, nearly 40 people came out to share input. Some key takeaways were concerns about the nearby Imperial Avenue and Pico Avenue intersection crossing times being too short to safely cross. Residents shared that crossings generally feel unsafe along Imperial Avenue, especially for vulnerable populations such as seniors and people with mobility aids or disabilities.

Pop-Up #2 - Children's Fair (April 13, 2024)

On Saturday, April 13, a second pop-up was held during the Children's Fair, a family-friendly day with live music, games, animals, and food. To attract community members to participate, a booth was set up along with games and activities such as corn hole and a spin the prize wheel. The goal of the pop-up event was to inform the public about the results from the existing conditions analysis and capture feedback from residents to help guide the project team through the preliminary design phase.

Upon engaging with the public, some key takeaways were the barriers transit riders face, where people feel the most safe crossing Imperial Avenue on bicycles, and insight on the challenges of walking along Imperial Avenue.



Top 3 Desired Improvements by Mode



#1 Street trees

#2 Curb extensions

#3 Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHB), sidewalks, and curb ramps/speed displays



#1 Class I Multi-use Path

#2 Class IV Separated Bikeways

#3 Bike Parking



#1 Bus shelters with protection from weather

#2 Improved ADA access at bus stops

#3 More bike rack capacity on the front of buses

Pop-Up #3 - Sister Evelyn Mourey Center (August 9, 2024)

Pop-up three was hosted at the Sister Evelyn Mourey Center a day after Workshop #2 to continue gathering input on the draft recommendations for Segments A, B, and C. All material provided during the pop-up were the same as Workshop #2. Approximately 30 attendees shared suggestions for all three segments of the Imperial Avenue study area as well as three locations for new traffic signals. All attendees left with bags of food and other goodies as a thank you for participating.

Common themes were interest in drought tolerant street trees for shade, pedestrian-scale lighting, and increased crossing times for pedestrians.



Pop-Up #4 - Sister Evelyn Mourey Center (November 15, 2024)

A final pop-up was hosted at the Sister Evelyn Mourey Center a day after Workshop #3 where approximately 53 participants received a voucher for a free turkey as Thanksgiving Day approached. Due to space constraints, the corridor was shared similarly to Workshop #3 but at a smaller scale.

Participants expressed their overall satisfaction with the recommendations and gratitude for the proposed sidewalks and crosswalks as some of their concerns remained for sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and enhanced safety for people of all abilities. Participants emphasized the continued need for improved visibility for pedestrians, as well as level and continuous sidewalks to accommodate people with mobility aids.





“It's intimidating crossing the street, even when there are crosswalks.”

“A lo largo de Imperial Avenue faltan sombras en las paradas de camión.”



Participant Quotes



“There are long stretches between crossings.”



“Los automovilistas no respetan a los peatones.”

3.6 Public Engagement Overarching Themes

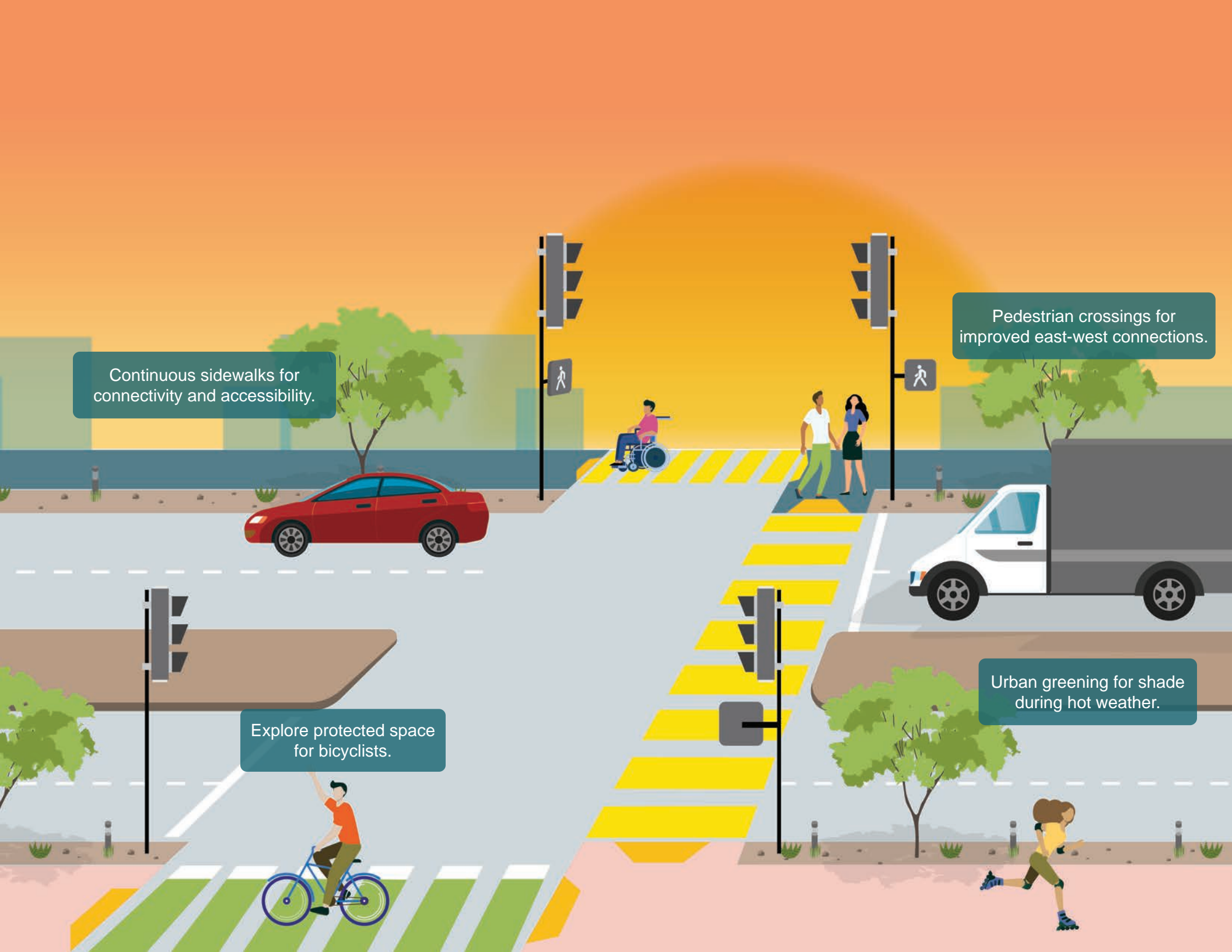
Community members shared a range of comments and concerns throughout the public engagement process. The following are some of the overarching themes and ideas desired that influenced the proposed design for Imperial Avenue.

Explore opportunities for pedestrian-scale lighting.

Coordinate opportunities for more bus stops and enhanced shelters with ICTC.

Maintain existing lanes for automobiles.





Continuous sidewalks for connectivity and accessibility.

The illustration depicts a city intersection during sunset. A red car is on the left, and a white delivery truck is on the right. A person in a wheelchair is crossing the street. A couple is walking across a crosswalk. A cyclist is on a green-painted bike lane, and a person is roller skating on a pink-painted path. Trees and traffic lights are also visible.

Pedestrian crossings for improved east-west connections.

Explore protected space for bicyclists.

Urban greening for shade during hot weather.