



City of Sebastopol Planning Department

Date: January 20, 2026
To: Climate Action Committee (CAC)
From: Tori Henkel, Permit Technician
Subject: Discussion on the 'Reimagining the Core' Downtown Sustainable Transportation Grant Proposed Alternatives and their Potential Impacts on the Environment

Summary

The agenda item today is a discussion about the environmental context and potential impacts surrounding the four alternatives being brought to the Planning Commission for the 'Reimagining the Core' Downtown Sustainable Transportation Grant project.

Background

The Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant program is intended to encourage communities to plan for climate-related projects that includes zero emissions vehicles planning, sea level rise studies, evacuation studies, heat resiliency studies, sustainable transit studies, vision zero and safety studies, vehicle miles traveled (VMT)/greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction studies, complete streets, and managed lanes.

This project fell under the Sustainable Community Grant, which encourages communities to support the state goals identified in the Regional Transportation Plan's (RTP) Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS), and to ultimately achieve the State's GHG reduction target of 40 and 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and 2050, respectively.

The grant's objectives for this project include:

- Enhancing Multimodal Safety, Accessibility, and Comfort
- Encouraging Mode Shift and Support Greenhouse Gas Reductions Goals
- Mitigating Negative Impacts of Regional Through Traffic
- Engaging Downtown Business Community for Revitalization

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Committee review the four proposed alternatives and discuss the potential environmental impacts of each.

Attachments

Reimaging the Core Preferred Alternatives Package

EXISTING CONDITIONS

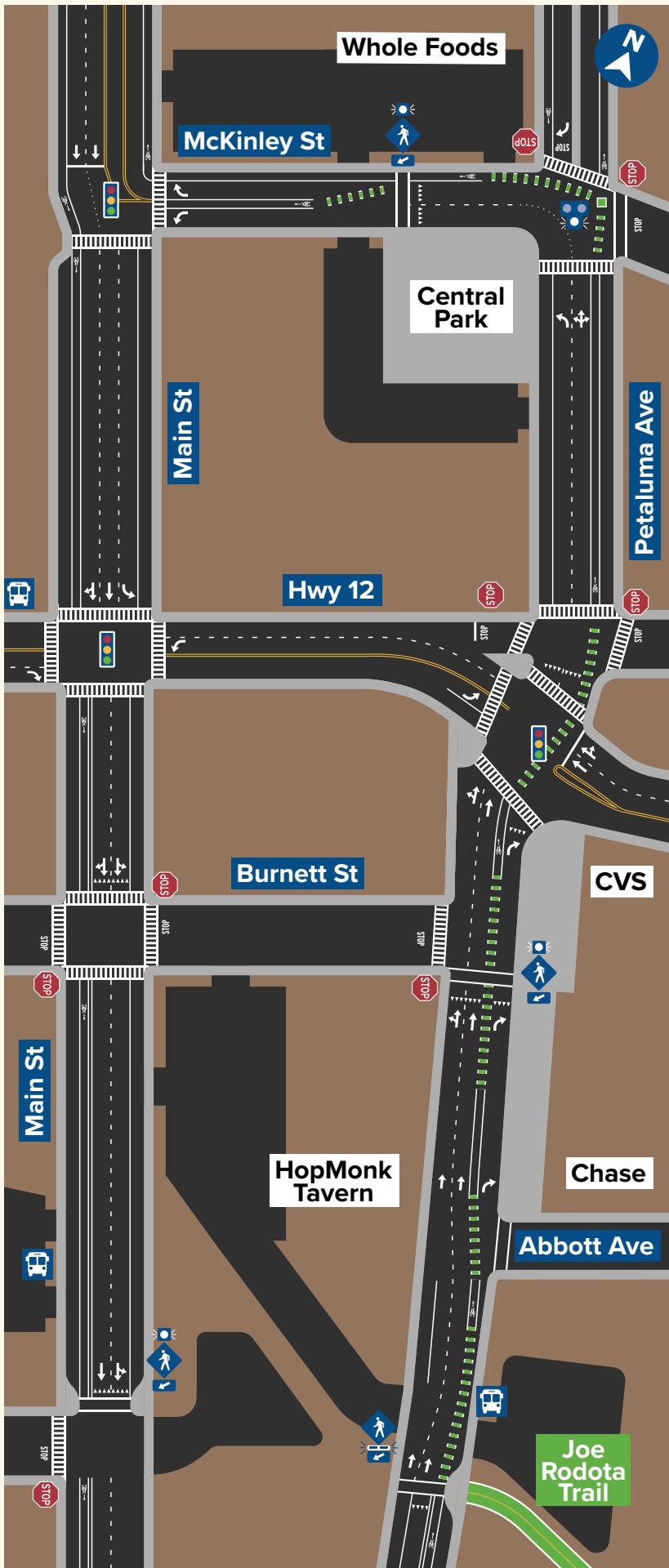
A VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

Sebastopol is embarking on an exciting journey to reimagine our downtown! The Reimagining the Core project is all about transforming the heart of our city, where State Routes 116 and 12 meet, into a place that feels safer, more welcoming, and easier to navigate whether you are walking, biking, driving, or taking transit.

Since our original Downtown Plan was created back in 1990, a lot has changed. We have seen more traffic, more trucks passing through, and longer commutes becoming part of daily life. In 2013, community members brought in experts from the American Institute of Architects to share ideas for improvement, and now, thanks to a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Grant awarded in 2022, we are taking the next step forward.

We aim to create a vibrant Main Street that reflects Sebastopol's unique character and community values, creates inviting public spaces where people want to linger, prioritizes safe and comfortable travel for those walking and biking, and supports thriving local businesses, while balancing the needs of local access and regional traffic circulation.

This project is about listening to what our community needs and creating a vision that works for everyone. We have heard that downtown Sebastopol should be a place where it is comfortable and safe to walk to your favorite coffee shop or restaurant, bike to meet friends, or stroll with your family. At the same time, we are committed to supporting California's climate goals by making it easier for people to choose alternatives to driving alone. By reducing regional through-traffic impacts and working closely with our local businesses, we are building a downtown that is vibrant, accessible, and ready for the future.



Key

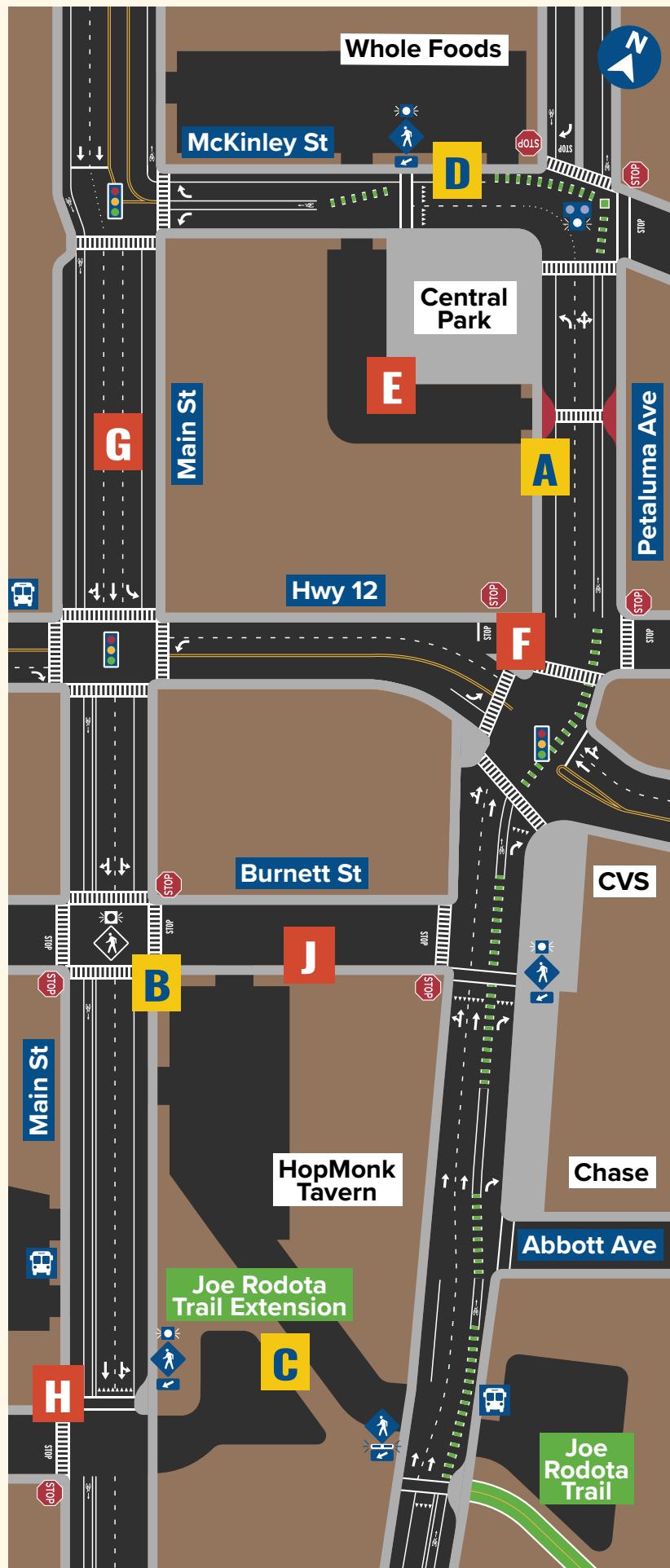
-  Stop Sign
-  Signal
-  Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon (RRFB)
-  Pedestrian-Activated Flashing Beacon
-  Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB)

Not to scale and for illustrative purposes only.
Additional engineering analysis and coordination will be required to determine final design.

This study builds upon previous and ongoing planning and design efforts, including adopted plans, programs, projects, and developments that together form the set of **baseline improvements** included in every alternative. Building on this foundation, this study identifies a suite of **streetscape enhancements** and **safety enhancements** that will fulfill the goal to further improve access, safety, and mobility for people walking and biking in and around downtown.

There are four alternative designs for implementing these enhancements. While all four alternatives share common objectives, they differ primarily in how traffic circulation is organized, where protected bicycle facilities are accommodated, and the degree to which additional pedestrian space can be created to help realize the community's vision for a more walkable, connected, and vibrant Sebastopol.

However, all four alternatives share the baseline improvements and a number of streetscape and safety features in common. These features and their placement within each alternative are shown on this map, and are illustrated in more detail within each alternative on subsequent pages.



BASELINE IMPROVEMENTS

These are improvements already planned for and committed to in previous planning studies, approved developments, and current infrastructure design projects, and include several spot improvements for improved pedestrian and bicycle access, safety, and mobility:

A

The Piazza Hotel project proposes a new mid-block crosswalk between the proposed hotel and Central Park.

B

The City is currently designing a new flashing pedestrian beacon for the intersection of Main and Burnett Streets.

C

The Sebastopol Active Transportation Plan (ATP), adopted in January 2025, calls for an extension of the Joe Rodota Trail to connect the existing trailhead to Willow Street, as well as other bike blvd treatments along Willow and High Streets.

D

The City's ATP also calls for improved pedestrian connections along McKinley Street to connect Main Street to the Barlow, and other locations of interest.

SAFETY AND STREETSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS SHARED BY ALL FOUR ALTERNATIVES

These specific safety and streetscape enhancements are shared by all four alternatives:

E

Central Park improvements, which are documented in the next pages.

F

Remove the slip lane at the intersection of Petaluma and Sebastopol Avenues to create a permanent parklet.

G

Install midblock crossing on Main Street with treatments to provide safe crossing to slow down traffic and create pedestrian friendly blocks.

H

Improve connections Joe Rodota Trail to Ives Park via curb extensions, improvement crossing treatments.

J

Establish Burnett Street as a Bike Blvd by prioritizing bikes, slowing down cars, and supporting additional east west bike connections.

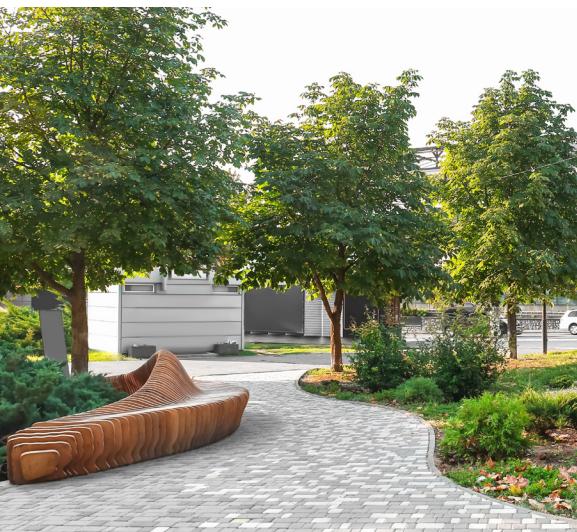
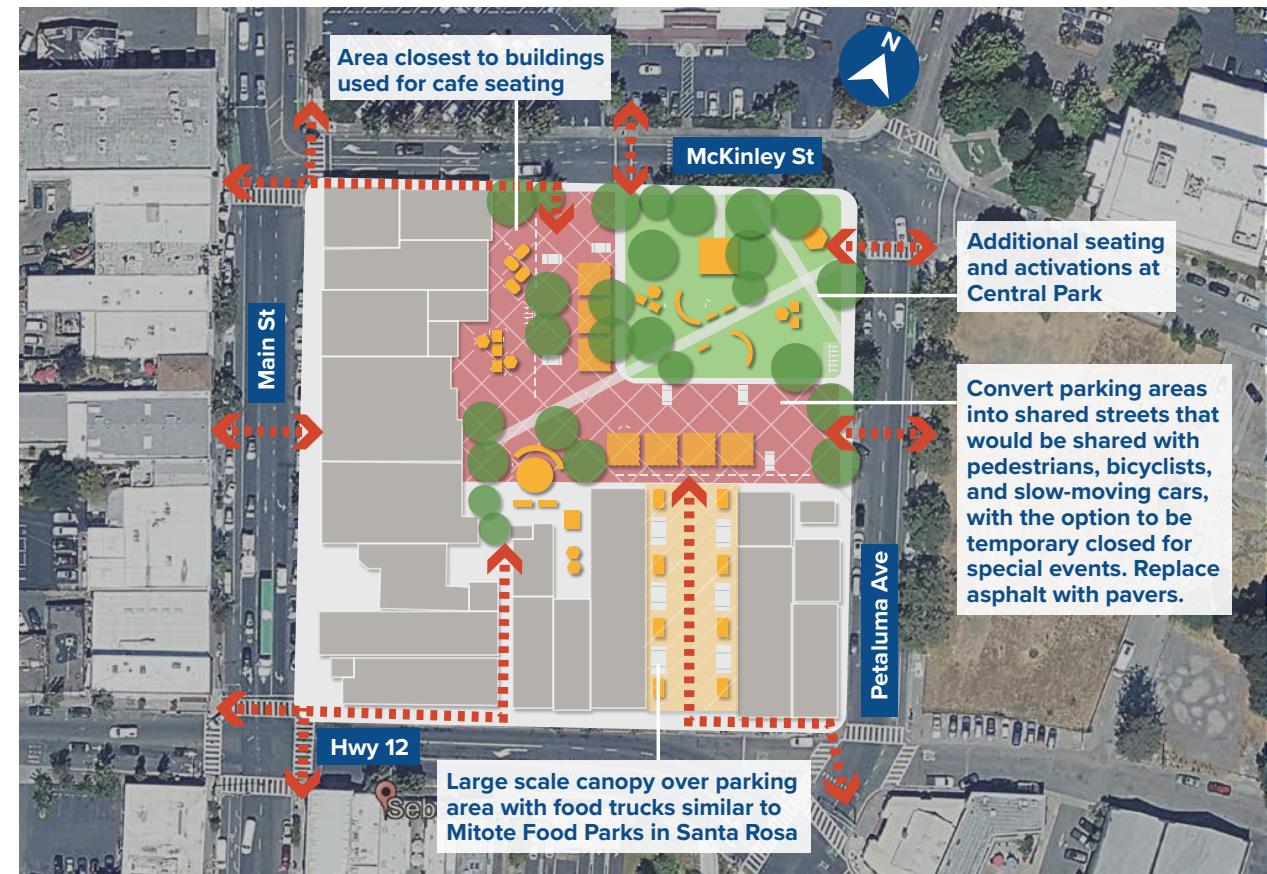
STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT: CENTRAL PARK

Central Park sits right in the heart of downtown Sebastopol and serves as our community's living room - a place where neighbors gather for concerts, festivals, farmers markets, and simply enjoying a beautiful day outdoors. This green space connects directly to our downtown shops and restaurants, making it a natural hub for both locals and visitors.

As we reimagine downtown mobility, there are opportunities to make Central Park even more accessible and inviting. The parking area can be converted to a shared street that could be programmed with expanded seating, lounging areas, dining,

and food truck accommodations to bring more activity to the area.

Adjacent improvements could include safer, more visible crosswalks and pedestrian pathways leading to the park, better bike parking facilities, enhanced lighting for evening events, and upgraded park amenities that encourage people to linger longer. Creating seamless, comfortable connections between the park and surrounding businesses would help Central Park truly anchor our downtown as a destination where people want to spend time, not just pass through.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT: JOE RODOTA TRAIL

The Joe Rodota Trail is an 8.5-mile paved pathway that connects Sebastopol to Santa Rosa, following what was once the Northwestern Pacific Railroad corridor. This beloved trail has become one of our region's most important car-free routes, used daily by commuters, recreational cyclists, families out for a walk, and runners enjoying the scenery. For many residents, it is the safest and most pleasant way to travel between the two cities without getting in a car. To maximize the trail's potential as a true alternative transportation route, improvements could focus on better connections between the trail and downtown Sebastopol, making it easier and more intuitive to transition from the trail to Main Street businesses.

This might include:

- clearer wayfinding signage
- increased landscaping for shade and ecological benefits
- dedicated bike lanes connecting the trail to downtown destinations
- improved trail surface maintenance
- better lighting in key areas
- additional access points that reduce barriers for people entering or leaving the trail

By strengthening these connections, the Joe Rodota Trail could play a large role in reducing vehicle trips and supporting our vision of a more walkable, bikeable community.



Existing terminus of the Joe Rodota Trail, looking west



SAFETY IMPROVEMENT: SEPARATED PROTECTED BIKEWAYS

A Class IV bikeway (separated bikeway) is a bike lane that includes a physical separation between the separated bikeway and the throughvehicular traffic. The separation may include, but is not limited to grade separation, flexible

posts, barriers, curb, or on-street parking. Caltrans provides design standards and guidelines, such as Design Information Bulletins (DIB) 89 and 94, for Class IV bikeways.

One-Way Lanes

One-way separated bike lanes are located on either side of the street alongside the direction of vehicle travel. One-way protected bike lanes can connect to shared lanes, standard bike lanes, or protected intersections. In areas where cars merge across the bike lane, drivers must yield to people biking. Green paint, dashed lane markings, and signs help make this clearer.



Two-Way Lanes

Two-way separated bike lanes have both directions of bike travel located on either side of the street. Two-way protected bike lanes also use physical barriers. Because bikes travel in both directions, intersections and driveways require extra care. Improving sight lines, slowing turning vehicles, and using clear markings all help increase safety.



SAFETY IMPROVEMENT: CURB EXTENSIONS AND BULBOUTS

Curb extensions narrow the roadway visually and physically, making crossings shorter and safer for people walking. They also create space for things like benches, street trees, plants, and other street amenities. Curb extensions can be used on many types of streets—downtown, neighborhood, or residential.

“Curb extension” is a general term that can include a number of specific designs incorporated in planned improvements in Downtown Sebastopol.



Curb extension at intersection



Midblock curb extension

Photo credits: Richard Drdul

EVERY ALTERNATIVE IMPROVES SAFETY AND COMFORT FOR PEOPLE WALKING AND BIKING IN AND AROUND DOWNTOWN

The alternatives are presented in greater detail in the following pages. All four include a common set of safety and streetscape improvements recommended regardless of which option is ultimately selected. In addition to the specific common features explored previously such as improvements to Central Park, each alternative also has shared design features intended to slow vehicle speeds, address known safety issues at intersections, and create a more comfortable walking and biking experience throughout downtown. These shared improvements include continuous, separated, protected bike facilities; lane width reductions to slow vehicle speeds; curb extensions and bulbouts at intersections to reduce crossing distance, increase space for people walking and biking, and improve sightlines; and traffic signal phasing and timing changes to promote low speed traffic, bike and pedestrian safety access and circulation. Each alternative also provides opportunities for streetscape improvements such as street trees and seating.



HOW DO THE ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS DIFFER?

While many improvements and safety features are consistent across all alternative concepts, they are different in the directionality of the traffic lanes and the location of the proposed protected bikeways.

Alternative 1: Fine Tune Today

Maintains the existing one-way traffic pattern (Main St SB, Petaluma Ave NB) with Class IV protected bike lanes in the same direction as traffic on each street. This option fine-tunes current operations while keeping familiar vehicle and bike flows.

Alternative 2: Test the Two Way

Converts Main St to two-way traffic while Petaluma Ave remains one-way. Petaluma Ave features Class IV protected bike lanes in both directions, improving bike connectivity while testing two-way traffic for vehicles on Main St.

Alternative 3: Walkable One Way

Keeps one-way traffic on both streets (Main St SB, Petaluma Ave NB) but provides two-way Class IV protected bike lanes on Petaluma Ave, prioritizing safe and convenient bike travel along this corridor.

Alternative 4: Totally Two Way

Converts both streets to two-way traffic and includes Class IV protected bike lanes in both directions on Main St, creating a fully two-way network for vehicles and a high-quality, two-way bike corridor for enhanced connectivity.

ALT 1: FINE-TUNE TODAY

Enhances Central Park and formalizes the Joe Rodota Trail extension to Main Street as part of its streetscape improvements. It maintains the existing one-way circulation pattern downtown while reducing the number of travel lanes in each direction. Safety is improved through fully protected bicycle facilities and other targeted measures, including shorter turn pockets. Traffic operations and overall flow are refined through optimized signal timing and adjustments designed to minimize motorist delay.

Safety and Comfort

4 apples **2.5** / 4

Access and Mobility

4 apples **2.5** / 4

Downtown Vitality & Sense of Place

4 apples **2** / 4

Feasibility & Cost

4 apples **2** / 4

Community Support

4 apples **2** / 4

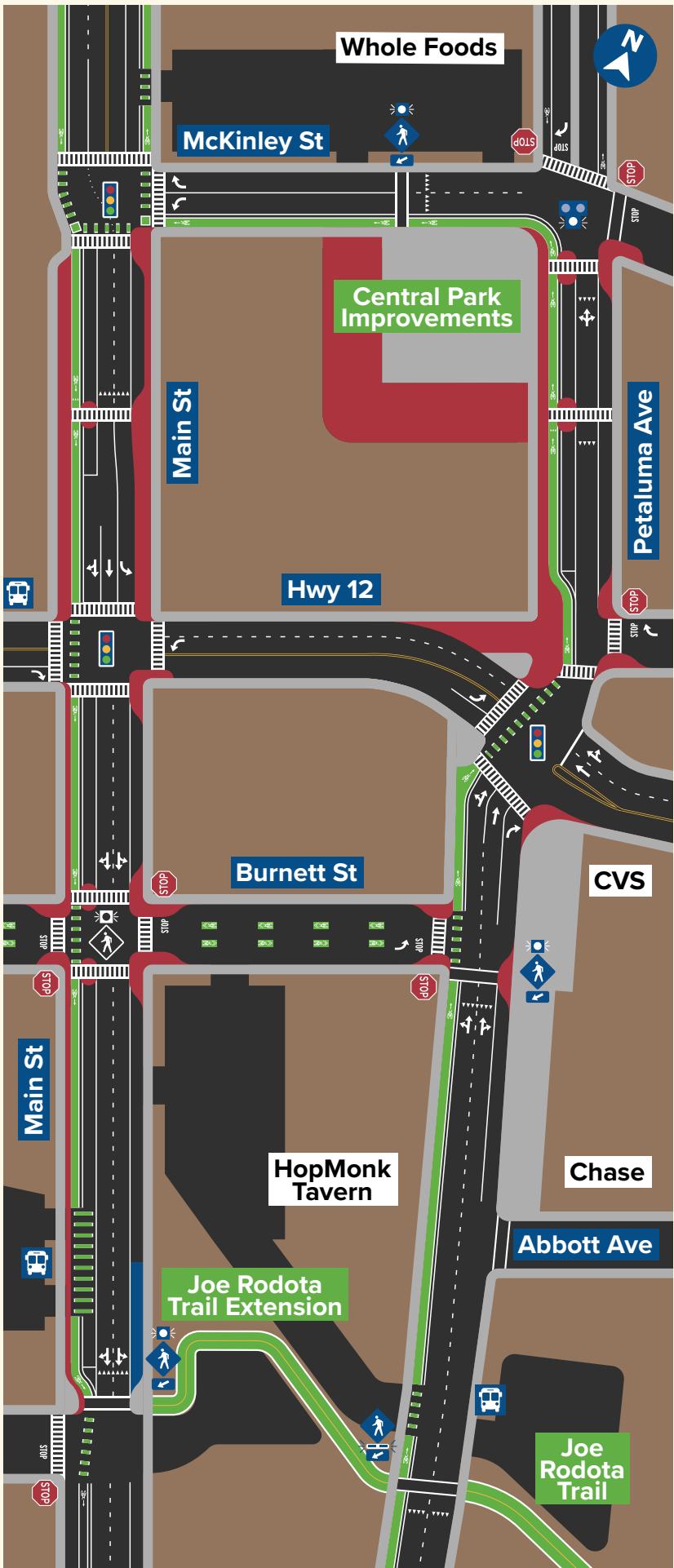
**TOTAL
11**

Key

- New Pedestrian Spaces
- Separated Bike Lanes

- STOP Stop Sign
- Signal
- Bus Stop
- Bike Station
- Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon (RRFB)
- Pedestrian-Activated Flashing Beacon
- (proposed)

*Not to scale and for illustrative purposes only.
Additional engineering analysis and coordination
will be required to determine final design.*



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS POSSIBLE WITH ALTERNATIVE 1



planters as bike lane delineators



vegetated sidewalk extension



sidewalk extension with seating



small vegetated bulbout



large bulbout



distinctive public art



parallel seating



parklet seating



bulbout seating



small dining parklet



ALT 2: TEST THE TWO-WAY

Enhances Central Park and formalizes the Joe Rodota Trail extension to Main Street as part of its streetscape improvements. It converts Main Street to two-way circulation with turn pockets provided only where turns are permitted, and the design is envisioned to function with minimal changes should the City choose to revert to the existing one-way couplet in the future. Safety is improved through fully protected bicycle facilities and other targeted measures, including shorter turn pockets. Traffic operations and overall flow are refined through signal timing optimized to the extent feasible to support efficient traffic movement.

Safety and Comfort

3 / 4

Access and Mobility

3.5 / 4

Downtown Vitality & Sense of Place

2.5 / 4

Feasibility & Cost

2 / 4

Community Support

3 / 4

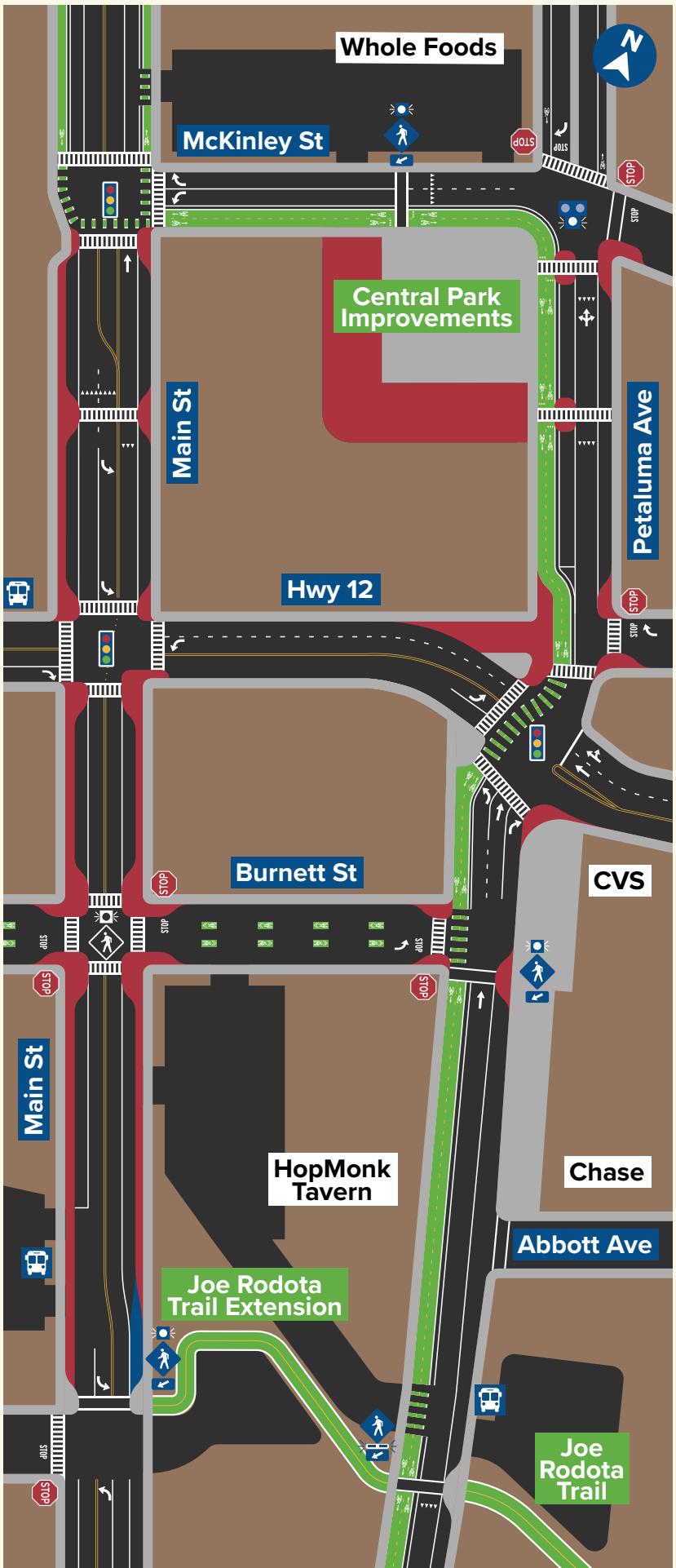
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Key

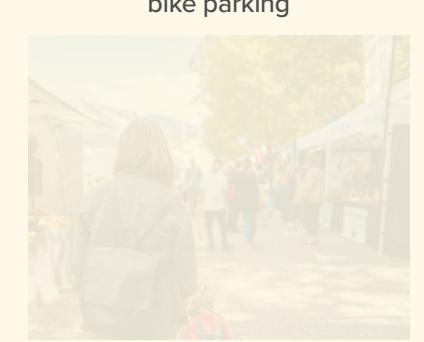
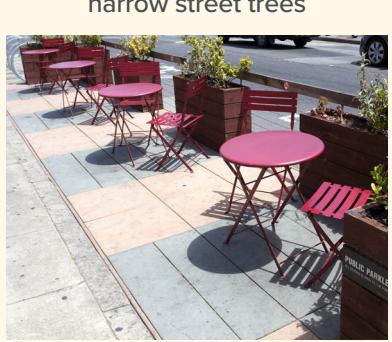
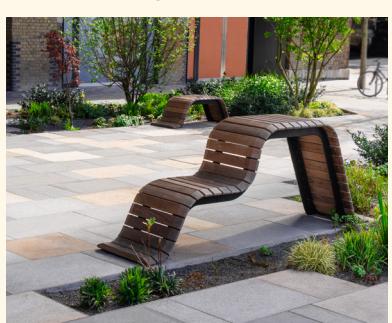
■ New Pedestrian Spaces
■ Separated Bike Lanes



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STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS POSSIBLE WITH ALTERNATIVE 2



ALT 3: WALKABLE ONE-WAY

Enhances Central Park and formalizes the Joe Rodota Trail extension to Main Street as part of its streetscape improvements. It maintains the existing one-way circulation pattern downtown while reducing the number of travel lanes in each direction. Safety is improved through fully protected bicycle facilities shifted entirely to Petaluma Avenue, maximizing opportunities for wider sidewalks and more robust streetscape amenities in the core of downtown. Traffic operations and overall flow are refined through optimized signal timing and adjustments designed to minimize motorist delay.

Safety and Comfort

3.5 / 4

Access and Mobility

3.5 / 4

Downtown Vitality & Sense of Place

3 / 4

Feasibility & Cost

1.5 / 4

Community Support

3 / 4

**TOTAL
14.5**

Key

- New Pedestrian Spaces
- Separated Bike Lanes



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STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS POSSIBLE WITH ALTERNATIVE 3



planters as bike lane delineators



vegetated sidewalk extension



sidewalk extension with seating



small vegetated bulbout



large bulbout



parallel seating



parklet seating



bulbout seating



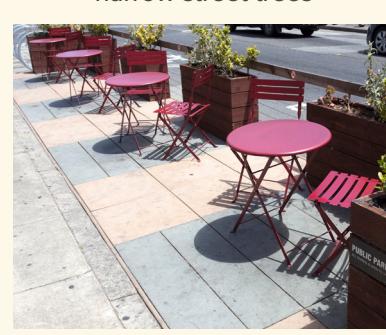
narrow street trees



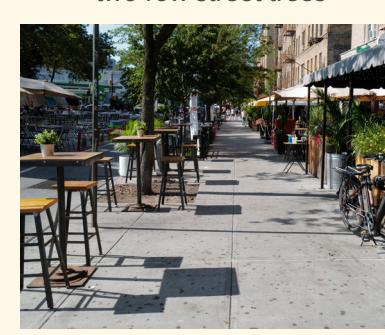
two-row street trees



bike parking



small dining parklet



full dining parklet



large outdoor event

ALT 4: TOTALLY TWO-WAY

Enhances Central Park and formalizes the Joe Rodota Trail extension to Main Street as part of its streetscape improvements. It converts both Main Street and Petaluma Avenue to two-way circulation with turn pockets provided only where turns are permitted. Safety is improved through fully protected bicycle facilities consolidated on Main Street along with other targeted measures, including shorter turn pockets. Traffic operations and overall flow are refined through signal timing optimized to the extent feasible to support efficient traffic movement.

Safety and Comfort

3 / 4

Access and Mobility

3 / 4

Downtown Vitality & Sense of Place

2.5 / 4

Feasibility & Cost

1 / 4

Community Support

3 / 4

**TOTAL
12.5**

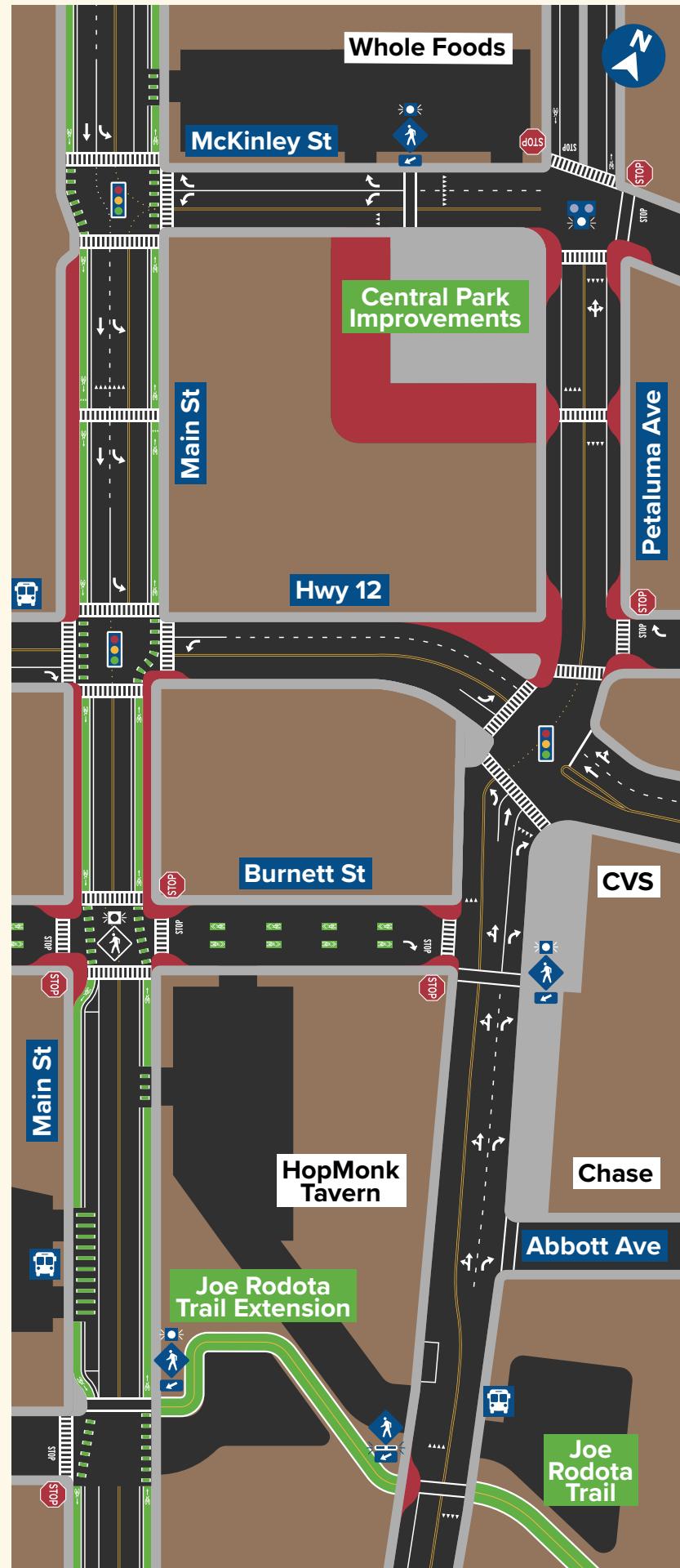
Key

- New Pedestrian Spaces
- Separated Bike Lanes

Stop Sign Signal Bus Stop Bike Station

Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon (RRFB) Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (PHB)

Pedestrian-Activated Flashing Beacon (proposed)



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STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS POSSIBLE WITH ALTERNATIVE 4



planters as bike lane delineators



vegetated sidewalk extension



sidewalk extension with seating



small vegetated bulbout



large bulbout



parallel seating



bulbout seating



distinctive public art



bike parking

pedestrian street fair

