OXFORD FOR ALL

A COMPLETE STREETS VISION FOR OXFORD STREET IN DOWNTOWN BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

UC Berkeley Fall 2023 Transportation Planning Studio

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Executive Summary

Oxford Street is the western boundary of University of California, Berkeley campus and connects the university to downtown Berkeley and the BART station. Oxford for All is a vision developed by the UC Berkeley Department of City and Regional Planning Transportation Studio that envisions an Oxford Street that seeks to serve all users, regardless of ability or mode choice.

To better understand the planning context and needs of the corridor's residents, the project team conducted the following:

- Historical context research
- Academic literature review
- Review of relevant planning documents and plans
- Interviews with professional and academic subject matter experts
- Case studies of other urban university campuses
- Review of planned developments
- Pedestrian and cyclist counts
- Community outreach event
- Survey of businesses

This work revealed that Oxford Street does not serve all road users adequately. The street design prioritizes driving, with wide streets, narrow sidewalks, and poor facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. The lack of character means the street is a psychological boundary between Berkeley's downtown and campus.

Change is coming to the corridor. Both the city of Berkeley and the university are projected to grow in population, and Oxford Street will become home to several new housing and academic developments that will increase travel demand throughout the corridor. This is an opportunity to highlight the local histories and cultures through street design and public art. Importantly, community engagement is key to create a vision of Oxford for All, and there is great community desire to activate Oxford Street to make it so much more than it is today. While adjusting the street's median is costly, with some alterations, there are significant opportunities for safety, comfort, and multi-modality.

Oxford for All's short and long-term recommendations are listed in the tables below.

Short Term Recommendations

Collaborate with Berkeley communities to create an Oxford for All
Pilot long-term recommendations for a limited period of time with temporary materials
Pursue placemaking and placekeeping in existing public spaces

Implement leading pedestrian intervals and longer crossing times at all signalized intersections
Install traffic calming measures: bollard curb extensions, painted crossings
Conduct studies on the impact of removing travel or turn lane(s)
Improve and maintain landscaping in the public right-of-way

Long Term Recommendations

Collaborate with Berkeley communities to create an Oxford for All
Reallocate road space by eliminating travel lanes, turn lanes, and/or parking
Widen sidewalks to accommodate the many pedestrians on Oxford
Improve pedestrian amenities: pedestrian scale lighting, and signal lengthening and leading pedestrian intervals
Explore feasibility of a pedestrian scramble at Center and Oxford
Implement protected bicycle lanes connected to existing facilities
Install traffic calming measures: concrete curb extensions, speed tables, painted crossings
Implement bus stop amenities: benches, shelters, and wayfinding signage
Consider how transit uses the corridor and how to improve transit efficiency
Add and maintain street trees and landscaping throughout the corridor
Activate public spaces by collaborating with Berkeley communities
Maintain parking on the west side of Oxford Street and consider curb management best practices.

What is Oxford for All?

Figure 1: Oxford and Center, facing west. Source: Rachel Strangeway, 2023.

Oxford for All

In the center of Berkeley, Oxford Street runs between downtown and the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley). We have the opportunity to rethink how the corridor looks and feels. Oxford Street, with its narrow sidewalks and four travel lanes, largely ignores the needs of those outside a private car. As tasked by Walk Bike Berkeley and Berkeley City Councilmembers Robinson and Harrison, the project team is seeking to understand how Oxford Street can serve everyone.

Oxford for All is a Complete Streets project, an approach to road design that attempts to reclaim streets as a space for all users. This includes "pedestrians, bicyclists, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, users and operators of public transportation, emergency vehicles, seniors, children, youth, and families" (Berkeley Complete Streets Policy). According to the National Complete Streets Coalition, the Complete Streets approach also seeks to serve populations who have experienced systemic disinvestment, such as people of color, people with disabilities, and and people who cannot afford to or are not able to drive (Smart Growth America).

In 2012, the City of Berkeley adopted a Complete Streets policy. By adopting this policy, the City acknowledges the benefits of walking, biking, and public transportation for public health, general welfare, and environmental sustainability. Most recently in pursuit of Complete Streets, the City has invested in protected bike lanes and transit lanes on Bancroft Way, Fulton Street, and Dana Street as part of the Southside Complete Streets project (Gong, 2023). Oxford for All seeks to continue the City's Complete Streets work.

About the Project

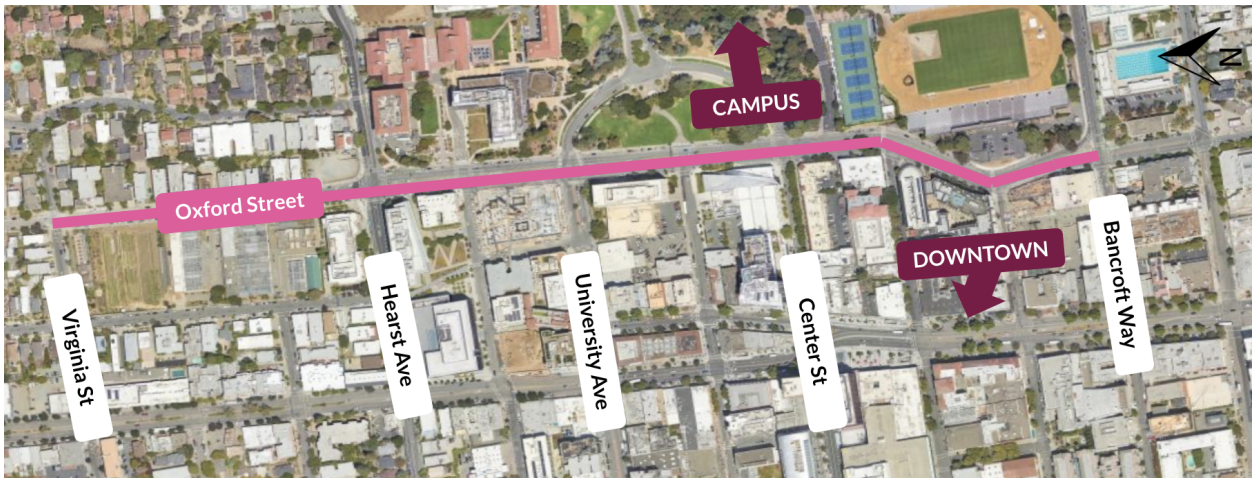


Figure 2. Study area in downtown Berkeley, California.

This study focuses on Oxford Street in Berkeley between Bancroft Avenue and Virginia Street (Figure 2). To the east is the main UC Berkeley campus, and to the west is downtown Berkeley. Given the interconnected nature of transportation, the project team approached this study with a broad lens by also analyzing the cross streets and Oxford Street's relationship with its adjacent neighborhoods.

The City of Berkeley is responsible for the redesign of Oxford Street. To proceed, the City will need to conduct traffic studies, reach out to the community, develop a final roadway design, and identify opportunities to fund construction. While Oxford Street is a public right-of-way, a significant portion of land adjacent to the corridor is owned by the University of California, and the university will play a critical role in making decisions for the roadway's design.

The task of redesigning Oxford Street is in its early stages. In 2021, the University of Berkeley published "Oxford St./Fulton St. Multimodal Mobility and Urban Design Study," authored by Sasaki and Fehr & Peers. This study's preferred option included a cycletrack on the east side of Oxford Street, and it maintained four lanes of through traffic and a turning lane. This design did not impact the median or the sidewalks. The study did not incorporate community engagement, which is a central component of Complete

Streets. Oxford for All is the second study of Oxford Street.

Project Approach

Based on feedback from the clients and the public, the project team identified the following questions that guided our work.

How can Oxford Street…

- **Serve all road users?** Based on Complete Streets principles, people should have options to move along the Oxford Street corridor.
- **Support disadvantaged groups?** People with disabilities, marginalized racial/ethnic groups, low-income populations, and older adults deserve to have a place on Oxford Street.
- **Reflect Berkeley's histories and cultures?** Being adjacent to downtown and the university, Oxford Street can be a venue for art and architecture that celebrates the diversity and unique qualities of Berkeley.
- **Be a place where people want to spend time?** Oxford Street can provide public spaces for current residents, future residents, and visitors to gather and create community.
- **Connect the university and downtown?** Oxford Street can stitch together these two land uses rather than serve as a divider.
- **Accommodate transportation demand from upcoming developments?** New housing and other projects are being planned for and constructed along the corridor, which will generate new transportation demand.
- **Support economic development?** Better street design can generate higher revenues by bringing in more customers and streamlining loading.

Literature Review

The Complete Streets movement began in earnest in 2003 (Peiser and Zehngebot) as a reaction to the car-centric planning that has dominated transportation investments since the Federal Highway Act of 1956. However, Donald Appleyard and Mark Lintell were making connections between car dependency and decreased quality of life as far back as 1972. They found that various aspects of livability, such as noise, stress, and pollution, were inversely correlated with traffic intensity (Appleyard and Lintell). The country's first Complete Streets legislation was passed in Oregon in 1971. Known as the "Bike Bill," it required all transportation projects to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists and transportation agencies to spend 1% of their funding on non-auto modes (Mapes). Implementing Complete Streets is not an easy task. Many neighborhoods in the United States have no concept of Complete Streets style design, and multimodalism can be conflictive as travelers learn to navigate a "shared space." It will be important to have excellent community outreach so all stakeholders recognize the benefits of Complete Streets.

Complete Streets policies seek to change the status quo that is used to determine how transportation funds will be invested. They seek to give all modes of transportation an equal piece of the pie, that is, road space; this multimodal coalition includes pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, those with physical disabilities, the elderly, and motorists (Jordan and Ivey). Universal and inclusive design philosophies feature prominently in the most comprehensive Complete Street guides. Universal design uses the ideals of accessible and barrier-free design to create an infrastructure system that includes all users regardless of age and ability (Audirac). The first federal policies that included aspects of universal design were the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Neighborhood design is critical. There is an association between neighborhood design characteristics and active transportation (Ferrer et al.). High densities of high-quality pedestrian amenities and traffic calming techniques are associated with high walking rates; these amenities include wide sidewalks and a dense amount of traffic signals or crosswalks (Singleton and Wang).

Complete Streets policies are often anticipated to have a myriad of societal benefits. They are expected to have positive safety, mobility, equity, environmental, livability, and economic impacts (Perk et al.). There is a strong case that Complete Streets policies and infrastructure increase the safety of non-auto travel modes. These policies often lead to what are known as road diets, strategies to mitigate automobile travel speeds, as increased speeds lead to higher fatality rates for pedestrians and cyclists (Gaarder). Cities that have enhanced their bicycle networks saw decreased rates of crashes, fatalities, and serious injuries per trip (Pucher and Buehler). There are also large

regional discrepancies, with nine of the ten most dangerous states for pedestrians concentrating in the South (Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2018 Benchmarking Report).

Numerous studies have shown the economic benefits of land use patterns that support Complete Streets. There has long been an unmet demand for walkable neighborhoods; providing for this demand could be crucial in our current housing crisis (Myers and Gearin). Enhanced non-auto infrastructure increases multi-family rental property value and is favored by retail services, who see it as an economic boon (Sohn et al.). Merchants often fear a loss of parking spots, but only a small portion of customers arrive by car in North America's dense urban areas, and most studies do not find that enhanced pedestrian infrastructure has a negative impact on commerce (Arancibia et al.) At the same time, some studies suggest that walkable neighborhoods can be more resilient during economic downturns, with some locales seeing property values in walkable neighborhoods decreasing at lower rates during the 2008 recession (Xu et al.).

University Case Studies

Many college campuses have implemented Complete Street design components that are relevant to Oxford Street. In selecting good case study examples, the project team prioritized larger schools that are adjacent to a city center and have high transit accessibility, which is similar to UC Berkeley. The design features the project team chose to assess were cycletracks, transit infrastructure, pedestrian facilities, and public spaces.

Cycletracks

Figure 3. Northwestern University at Sheridan Road and Chicago Ave.
Source: Google Street View, September 2022.

Figure 4. University of Oregon at East 13th Avenue and Alder Street.
Source: Google Street View, June 2021.

Northwestern University is a private university located in Evanston, Illinois with a student body of approximately 22,000 students. In 2017, the City of Evanston installed a two-way bike path that sweeps along the front edge of campus (Figure 3). Elements

included here are pedestrian crossing islands between the vehicle and bike lanes, which are connected to transit stops further down the road. This route also extends off the edge of campus into a commercial downtown for several blocks, facilitating cyclist movement throughout the area.

An alternative network design for a cycletrack exists near the University of Oregon, a public university in Eugene, Oregon with 23,000 students. Instead of running along the perimeter, a two-way bike path extends outward from the campus. The bike path connects directly to the center of campus on one end and a commercial area of Eugene on the other. This cycletrack also intersects with another perpendicular two way bike way that connects to more residential areas of the city (Figure 4). This example highlights the importance of considering destinations and connections to the existing bike network when proposing bike infrastructure improvements for Oxford.

Transit Infrastructure

Figure 5. University of Toronto, St. George Campus on Spadina Ave.
Source: Google Street View, September 2023.

Figure 6. University of Oregon on Kincaid Street. Source: Google Street View, June 2021.

The University of Toronto, St. George campus has an extremely high proximity to various forms of public transit, such as an underground metro, an at-grade light rail, and bus service. College St. running along the edge of the University of Toronto is a prime

example of transit-friendly road design. This is a truly multimodal corridor with a high volume of pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles all occupying right of way. Nearby, on Spadina Avenue, is an alternative example where light-rail right of way is provided in the center of the road with trees serving both as buffers and as streetscape elements (Figure 5).

The University of Oregon also provides an example of a bus station design, where multiple lines stop at diagonal terminals, which are located next to a bike share station and the major pedestrian thoroughfare for campus. These types of design elements may not fit into the space available along Oxford Street when trying to balance other user needs, but they provide examples of transit-friendly infrastructure that differ from the more standard bus priority lane that is used often throughout San Francisco and the East Bay.

Pedestrian Facilities

Figure 7. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on Franklin Street.
Source: Google Street View, November 2016.

Figure 8. University of Southern California at Jefferson Boulevard and Hoover Street.
Source: Google Maps, 2023.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a public university of 20,000 students, is a good example of a school with high pedestrian volume facilitated by wide sidewalks even on high vehicle volume roads. The sidewalks also include seating and planters which provide shade and additional space for rest, and are visually appealing due to consistent paving materials (Figure 7).

The University of Southern California, a private university in Los Angeles with a student body of 49,000 students, has diagonal crosswalks connecting the university to a large student housing area across Jefferson Boulevard (Figure 8). These crossings are often called pedestrian scrambles. These types of crosswalks help the large volume of students safely navigate the very wide roads that run adjacent to campus without conflict with vehicles. This combination of spacious pedestrian plazas connected by diagonal crosswalks may help to facilitate pedestrian movement into campus, particularly in areas along Oxford where more housing and office space are planned for construction.

Public Spaces and Placemaking


Figures 9, 10. Left: The University of Washington Quad. Source: Elaine Thompson/AP. Right: Franklin Street at UNC Chapel Hill. Source: Town of Chapel Hill, 2010

The University of Washington quad, located in the public university in Seattle, Washington of 49,000 students, is known for its geometric paths and distinctive cherry blossom tree borders (Figure 9). These features create a space that draws the eye and can be used for public events. This would be an excellent use of the West Crescent Lawn on Oxford Street due to its adjacency to transit and Downtown Berkeley.

Additionally, UNC Chapel Hill serves as an example of how comfortable pedestrian facilities combined with active commercial storefronts along Franklin Street create a lively pedestrian environment both during the day and at night (Figure 10). The west side of Oxford Street has significant potential for this type of active community space particularly as new development is completed.

Context and Existing Conditions

Historical Context

Berkeley occupies the land of the Huichin people, who are part of Chochenyo speaking Ohlone nation, the successors of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County (Land Acknowledgement, n.d.). The Huichin lived from the central Bay Area to Monterey Bay until the Spanish arrived in the 1770s (Wollenberg, 2008). The Spanish used much of Berkeley for ranchos for cattle grazing. By the 1820s, the majority of Huichin were killed by disease and violence from the colonizers.

The University of California, first located in Oakland, moved to its current location in Berkeley in 1873 (History & Discoveries, n.d.). Oxford Street has always served as the western boundary of the university. In the early 1900s, the city's population grew significantly following the growth of the University, the relocation of San Franciscans after the 1906 fire and earthquake, and the expansion of the Key System of streetcar lines. Four streetcar lines ran on Oxford Street (Figure 11) connecting to Telegraph Avenue and Grove Street, which is now Martin Luther King Jr. Way (Arvin, n.d.). To the west, Shattuck Avenue hosted a Southern Pacific rail line starting in the 1870s and other Key System routes in the early 1900s, both rail lines enabling easier transportation throughout the East Bay and to San Francisco (Wollenberg, 2008). A main transportation hub emerged at Shattuck Ave and Center Street with the introduction of the Southern Pacific spur line, making Center Street a primary route for people walking to campus.

Figure 11. Streetcar line on Oxford Street. Source: Library of Congress, 1906

In the southwest corner of the UC Berkeley campus, Edwards Stadium opened in 1932 (History & Discoveries, n.d.). The construction rerouted Oxford Street between Allston Way and Bancroft Way into a slight curve to connect to Fulton Street. The construction of the stadium also extended the southern boundary of the main university campus to Bancroft Way (University of California Berkeley, 2004). After WWII, Oxford Street was dominated by automotive related businesses, including gas stations, parking lots, used and new car sales, and repair shops (Figure 12) (Zarnowitz, 2015). Much of these buildings have been repurposed or reconstructed for commercial, residential, or institutional use.

Figure 12. University Garage at Oxford Street and Berkeley Way.
Source: Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association Archives, 1956

Relevant Planning Efforts

To better understand the planning landscape that would inform the development of the Oxford Street corridor, the project team conducted an extensive review of relevant planning documents at the scale of the campus, the city, and the wider region. Table 1 summarizes the plans that have informed the recommendations made later in this report.

Table 1: Planning Documents Reviewed

Plan Title	Organization	Year
Pedestrian Plan	City of Berkeley	2020
Bicycle Plan	City of Berkeley	2017
Vision Zero Action Plan	City of Berkeley	2022
Southside Complete Streets Project	City of Berkeley	2022
Streets and Open Space Improvement Plan	City of Berkeley	2013
Downtown Area Plan	City of Berkeley	2012
Countywide Transportation Plan	Alameda County	2020
Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan	Alameda County	2019
Campus Master Plan	UC Berkeley	2022
Mobility Study	UC Berkeley	
Oxford Multi-Modal Mobility and Urban Design Study	UC Berkeley	2021

The majority of these plans are long range planning efforts that helped the project team understand the City and the UC's desires and goals for the corridor. Other relevant projects conducted by the City include the Southside Complete Streets Project, which is implementing a curb-protected cycletrack on Bancroft, Fulton, and Dana. Additionally, the Berkeley community has discussed transforming Center Street between Shattuck and Oxford into a pedestrian plaza. While pedestrianizing Center Street is not a designed or funded project, the project team is in support. This report's recommendations build on these projects.

Particular attention was paid to the 2021 UC Berkeley Oxford Street Corridor Study ("2021 Corridor Study"), which is the most comprehensive planning and design effort undertaken for the Oxford Street corridor prior to Oxford for All. The 2021 Corridor Study presented several options for expanding active transportation facilities along Oxford, with the ultimate recommended scenario including a protected two-way cycletrack, removal of two left turn lanes along the corridor, the displacement of 51 parking spaces, and minimal pedestrian and placemaking improvements. A key takeaway of this study was the determination by the consultant team that the removal or modification of the center median that runs along the majority of the study area was not feasible due to cost. This determination limited the amount of space that the consultant team had to work with, as they did not consider lane reductions or other proposals to

reduce overall traffic volume and throughput. This resulted in an ultimate recommended scenario that proposed the new two-way cycletrack on the east side of the street accomplished by removing parking on that side, but did not include any sidewalk widening or pedestrian focused improvements beyond improved crosswalks.

The project team spent significant time conducting research to determine whether the central median was indeed the limiting factor that the 2021 Corridor Study made it out to be. After consulting with a professional subject matter expert familiar with the area and plan as well as the client team, the project team ultimately concluded that the Oxford for All project would not be limited by the presence of the median when making final recommendations. While modifications to the median require relocating utilities and regrading the street for draining, modifications to the median will ultimately create a better Oxford Street. Ignoring these possibilities for the infrastructure is a disservice to Berkeley's communities.

Planned Developments on Oxford Street

The existing land uses along Oxford Street are predominantly residential and mixed-use, with clusters of academic buildings, offices, and laboratories owned by UC Berkeley (Figure 13). Much of the corridor is changing rapidly as the city of Berkeley grows. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projects that the City as a whole will grow 15 percent by 2040, and downtown itself grew 23% between 2010 and 2020 (ABAG & MTC, 2018). Oxford Street will need to operate differently to accommodate increased demand for travel.

Figure 13. Map of existing land use on Oxford Street.
Source: City of Berkeley Open Data, County of Alameda Open Data, ESRI.

To better understand how future development will impact the corridor, the project team reviewed projects planned by the UC and property developers. Housing projects in the development pipeline include Anchor House, The Kittredge, and 2128 Oxford ("The Hub"), which are projected to total over 1400 new beds and units together.

Figures 14, 15, 16. Top left: Anchor House under construction. Source: Rachel Strangeway, 2023. Top right: The Kittredge under construction. Source: Rachel Strangeway, 2023. Bottom center: 2128 Oxford rendering. Source: Core Spaces, DLR Group, 2022.

Anchor House is a university-owned property with 772 new bedrooms for students with a planned opening by the 2024 school year (Figure 14). The developer will install streetscape improvements such as trees and landscaping as well as some sidewalk bulb outs along university avenue. The Kittredge, another residential site currently under construction, is a private development with 169 net new units all offered at rental rates greater than 120% the area median income. This project is planned to be completed by January 2024 (Figure 15). Lastly, the developers of 2128 Oxford propose to demolish the existing 2-story building at the corner of Center and Oxford and replace it with a 25 story

residential building made of 485 units, which will potentially also include a pedestrian plaza along Center Street (Figure 16) (Nelson, 2022). This project is still pending environmental impact review and city approval.

Figure 17, 18. Left: Proposed UC Berkeley residential development. Right: Proposed West Crescent Lawn design. Source (both): UC Berkeley Campus Master Plan, 2022.

Additional proposed developments on university-owned parcels are included in the 2022 UC Berkeley Campus Master Plan. All of these projects are in the pre-design phase, and in some cases funding and timeline have not been fully solidified, so in some of our placemaking proposals the project team envisioned alternative options for how these sites could be used to create a broader vision for the corridor. First, 2200 Bancroft, one of the next sites that UC Berkeley is prioritizing for the design phase, is proposed to include 1,200 beds and will take the place of a site that is currently used for office space and parking. The Oxford Tract, located on the corner of Oxford and Virginia Street and at the current site of the Oxford Tract Berkeley Student Farm, is estimated to include 2,000 beds, and would significantly increase the residential density of this block (Figure 17) . Lastly, the proposed new laboratory space and parking at the current site of University Hall would significantly increase travel demand in the area, and this demand would need to be factored into road design for both automobile and non-automobile travel.

Along the east side of Oxford, the Campus Master Plan proposes adding accessible pathways, stairways, and spaces for seating on the Crescent Lawn (Figure 18). The proposed plaza would create another community gathering space near to many new residential developments. At the site of the current surface parking lot in front of Edwards

Stadium, the UC has envisioned a performing arts center and administration building which would help to draw visitors to the west side of campus.

Overall, there will be substantial increases in resident, student, and visitor density along Oxford over both the short and long term. Planning for this growth while maintaining high levels of multimodal accessibility and healthy and sustainable community spaces will be a high priority in our vision for the Oxford corridor.

Pedestrian and Cyclist Counts

To better understand how people walk and bike on Oxford Street, the project team conducted a series of pedestrian and bicycle counts. The most recent set of comprehensive counts for the study area was in the 2021 Corridor Study, but these counts were performed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic which started in 2020. The project team elected to conduct updated counts to investigate if pedestrian or cyclist volumes had shifted considerably from those recorded during the pandemic.

Pedestrian and cyclist counts were performed at nine intersections (Table 2). Each intersection was observed twice during peak afternoon hours (4:30pm-6:00pm) throughout the months of October and November in 2023. For the purposes of this exercise, the project team elected to include people on bicycles, scooters, skateboards, and any other micromobility devices in the bicyclist category as they share bicyclist infrastructure Pedestrians included those on foot and those using mobility assistance devices like wheelchairs or canes.

For both sets of counts, users were counted a single time per intersection, regardless of whether they crossed multiple times in a single observation. For example, at the intersection of Center and Oxford, a pedestrian crossing north to south across Center and then west to east across Oxford to reach campus was counted as a single pedestrian in the counts. Users that entered an intersection and later entered the intersection again were counted as two separate counts. Count data from the two observed days are averaged in Table 2.

While conducting counts, the project team observed how pedestrians, bicyclists, scooterists, and skateboarders navigated Oxford Street. Bicyclists frequently traveled outside of bike lanes, and some traveled in a bike lane in the opposite direction of traffic. Many students did not pay close attention as they walked, and the project team witnessed several near misses. Many people with mobility devices use the corridor, so accessibility is essential. This observational data and count data were used to inform the final recommendations in this report. Additionally, this information can help create a geographical hierarchy of needs along the corridor and can be used to prioritize intersections for pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

Table 2: Average Pedestrian and Bicycle Intersection Counts, October/November 2023

Intersection	Date (2023)	Weather	Average Ped Count	Average Bicycle Count
Oxford/Center	10/12; 10/18	Sunny; sunny	1297	282
Oxford/University	10/17; 10/19	Sunny; sunny	792	266
Oxford/Hearst	10/12; 10/18	Partly cloudy; sunny	721	275
Oxford/Bancroft	10/17; 10/18	Sunny; sunny	687	263
Oxford/Berkeley Way	10/12; 11/07	Partly cloudy; sunny	746	203
Oxford/Kittredge	10/17; 11/02	Sunny; cloudy	491	178
Oxford/Virginia	10/18; 10/19	Sunny; sunny	185	96
Oxford/Allston	10/19; 10/25	Sunny; cloudy	711	209
Oxford/Addison	10/19; 10/26	Sunny; cloudy	582	144

The highest pedestrian volumes were observed at Oxford and Center, which serves as the primary entry point for the UC campus from downtown Berkeley (Figure 19). The intersections of Oxford with Addison, Allston, and Kittredge do not have a traffic signal, which can be uncomfortable or hazardous to people crossing. While these intersections had slightly lower volumes, they weren't significantly lower compared to the rest of the corridor. Unsignalized intersections can have higher frequencies of vehicle-pedestrian conflicts because movements aren't dictated by a traffic signal, but there was still high demand to cross at these locations.

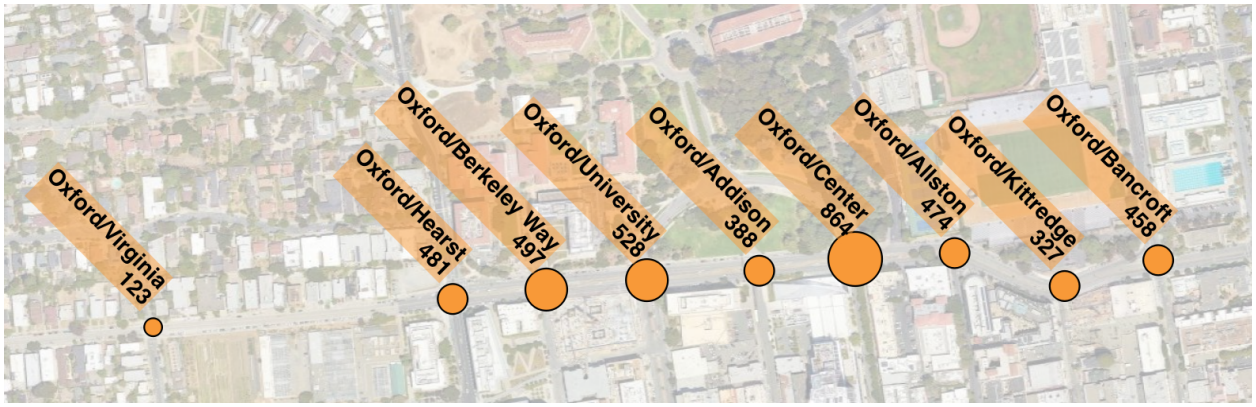


Figure 19. Pedestrian volumes. Source: Student performed counts, October/November 2023.

Center Street also had the highest volume of bicyclists and other micro-mobility users, but unlike pedestrians, there was comparable volume by intersection across the length of Oxford (Figure 20). Center, Hearst, University, and Bancroft had the highest observed volumes, likely because of east-west movements: these streets are some of the main entry/exit points for cyclists and scooterists with respect to campus.

Figure 20. Bicyclist volumes. Source: Student performed counts, October/November 2023.

Survey of Oxford Street Businesses

On December 6th, 2023, the project team surveyed businesses in Downtown Berkeley. The project team targeted businesses that would be most likely impacted by a Complete Streets transformation of Oxford Street. The project team identified all establishments along Oxford Street and businesses along the nine streets intersecting with Oxford in our study area. Businesses on Shattuck Avenue were excluded from the survey. The project team prioritized surveying retail businesses that likely rely on in-person business and general foot traffic.

Our survey's objective was to gauge the interest of businesses regarding the hypothetical transformation of the Oxford Street corridor into a street that accommodates more pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders. The project team also

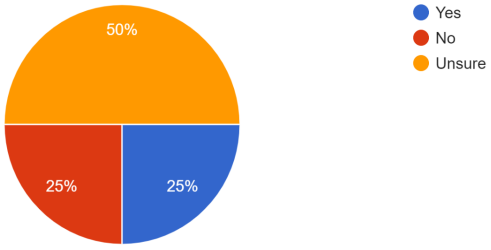
wanted to know whether Oxford Street was suitable for their businesses and if it compared favorably to Telegraph Avenue, a street in Berkeley with lots more fanfare and recognition. Our survey questions were:

1. How many years has this business been at this location?
2. Are you in an advantageous location for your business to thrive?
3. Would your business be better served if it were located near Telegraph Avenue?
4. Would you favor adding a protected bike lane along Oxford Street?
5. Would you be in favor of widening the sidewalks along Oxford Street?
6. Would you favor removing parking spaces or a driving lane along Oxford Street?
7. How do you think these alterations would positively or negatively affect your business?
8. What changes to the layout of Oxford Street would be supportive for your business?

The project team counted 82 possible business locations in our study area; 54 of them, or 65%, likely rely on customers arriving in person. The project team identified 15 businesses as unoccupied. The team went door-to-door, collecting responses via a QR code linked to a Google Form with the questions for the survey. Managers or owners were targeted to complete the survey. If they were absent, a QR code was left at the business for later completion. To date, four businesses have responded; the form will remain active for businesses that complete the survey after our work has concluded. The project team had a ten-minute conversation with one business owner who spoke passionately against reducing parking and travel lanes. They expressed that traffic in the area was already far too congested, and they believe that the bicycle infrastructure installed near their establishment was used very little. They believe that various complete street policies have reduced their revenue by 10%. Here are the survey results thus far:

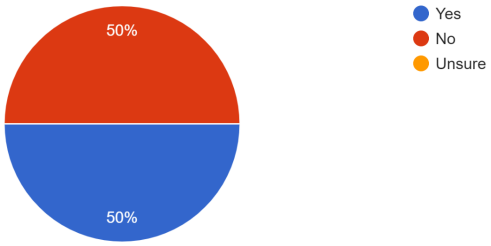
Would your business be better served if it were located near Telegraph Avenue?

4 responses



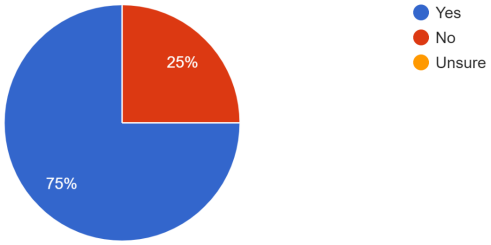
Would you favor adding a protected bike lane along Oxford Street?

4 responses



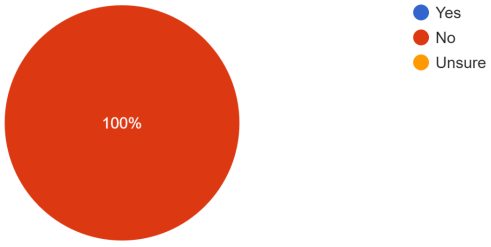
Would you be in favor of widening the sidewalks along Oxford Street?

4 responses



Would you favor removing parking spaces or a driving lane along Oxford Street?

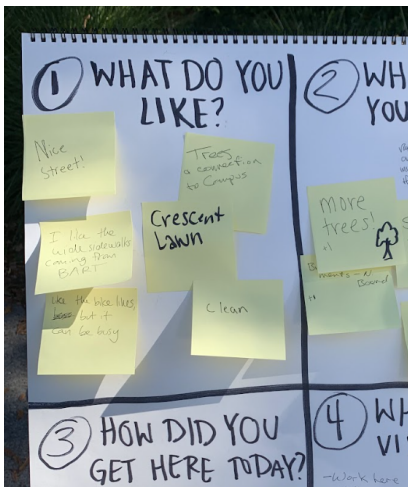
4 responses



Community Outreach Event

On October 4th, 2023, the project team conducted an outreach exercise on the southeast corner of Oxford and Center Street. This exercise sought to understand how people engage with Oxford Street's public spaces and to gather feedback on these users' concerns, desires, and suggestions for the street and wider connecting area. The project team held information conversations with members of the public and asked users to provide written comments on four questions:

1. What do you like about Oxford Street?
2. What would you improve?
3. How did you get here today?
4. Why do you visit Oxford Street?



Figures 21, 22, 23. Community outreach event

Over the course of two hours, the project team received more than 100 written comments from Berkeley community members. The response from the public was overall very supportive of any efforts to enhance the streetscape through a potential redesign effort down the line. Comments received leaned heavily towards areas for improvement, with most responses highlighting deficiencies in the corridor. Commonly occurring issues included the need for more trees, green spaces, and/or shade; additional or improved bike lanes; and wider sidewalks, improved maintenance conditions, and safer crossings for pedestrians. Beyond written comments, the curved section at Kittredge was frequently brought up as a particular example of the need for improved bicycle infrastructure or pedestrian facilities in conversations with the users due to high vehicle speeds along the curves.

Key destinations identified along the corridor that attracted users included the UC Berkeley Crescent Lawn, small businesses like East Bay Spice Company, and the Berkeley

Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive ("BAMPFA"). However, many respondents cited that they only used Oxford as a way to get to their ultimate destination (generally UC Berkeley or the Downtown Berkeley Bart), and did not consider Oxford as somewhere they would currently want to spend time. The community members engaged during this event identified the lack of distinct and comfortable spaces along Oxford that would encourage people to want to spend time there, and there was a strong desire from the community to see these spaces activated through programming and other placemaking efforts.

All written responses received during the outreach exercise have been scanned and can be found in Appendix E.

Figure 24. The project team at the community engagement event

Who Uses Oxford Street?

To understand how to improve Oxford Street, the project team analyzed the different population groups that use the corridor. These groups are on Oxford Street to travel, work, play, shop, and learn. Their needs are listed in the sections below. Note that this list is not comprehensive, and their needs often overlap.

Residents

According to our interviews and tabling activity, people across many age, race, ability, gender, and sexuality groups live on or near Oxford Street. Additionally, Oxford is on Ohlone land and it is our responsibility as planners to redress the injustices that Indigenous groups face, as well as the displacement of low income residents and residents of color within the City of Berkeley. Therefore, as new development occurs around Berkeley, it is imperative to address historical legacies of the land, prevent displacement of current residents, and provide a supply of affordable housing to future residents.

Addressing these goals on Oxford street could include creating public gathering spaces that provide senses of place and inclusivity to the community, and allow residents of all ages and abilities to safely and comfortably move and stay along the corridor. Residents also would need a variety of transportation options to facilitate movement to and from these spaces.

UC Berkeley Faculty, Staff, and Students

UC Berkeley is a common destination and employment center with more than 55,000 students, faculty, and staff. According to the UC Berkeley Long Range Development Plan, the university's population is projected to grow by 12,000 students, faculty, and staff (2021). The university is planning or building new student housing projects, laboratories, and office space along Oxford Street to accommodate this growth.

As a key route near campus, Oxford Street will need to support increasing travel demand. Importantly, this should include a variety of transportation modes, as students rely more on non-automotive transportation. This population needs reliable transit to access the rest of Berkeley and the Bay Area. Students, faculty, and staff need connections between campus and downtown that are intuitive, safe, and accessible. UC Berkeley affiliates also desire spaces to study, conduct meetings, and gather informally.

Berkeley High School and Berkeley City College Students

The city of Berkeley is more than just UC Berkeley. Another 10,000 young students, 3,000 from Berkeley High and 7,000 from Berkeley City College share the bustling Downtown Berkeley playground just two blocks away. Oxford Street would be an excellent location for young people to socialize in "third places." Third places are public and commercial sites that are neither home nor work (Oldenburg). These places are spaces for socializing, relaxing, and building community in an unassuming location, usually at a low price (Jeffres et al.). Third places have steadily declined across the United States, an unfortunate trajectory considering that living in neighborhoods with limited access to resources is associated with poorer physical and mental health (Finlay et al.). Adequate spaces to socialize and build community can also be a positive social determinant (Braveman et al.).

During our community engagement activity, many respondents and pedestrians in the area were Berkeley High School students who had just gotten out of school for the day. Many lounged in the West Crescent Lawn, meandered along the path into campus, or sought out shade near Strawberry Creek. A more connected and "placed" Oxford Street would be an excellent opportunity to enrich the lives of these young students and take advantage of the cultural amenities of UC Berkeley, especially as so much of our lives move to the virtual.

Visitors

Oxford Street also serves an important role to visitors to the UC campus and wider city of Berkeley. For any visitors arriving by BART, which is one block away from Oxford, the corridor acts as a main gateway to campus and facilitates access to other key destinations within the city like Telegraph Avenue. Yet the street currently serves to act more as a barrier that visitors will have to traverse. Improving directional signage along Oxford would help newcomers to the area navigate the roadways and transit systems, and increase connectivity to the rest of the city.

Additionally, the project team observed many visitors attempting to take photos of the University of California sign at the western entrance to campus and were presented with difficulties due to the current overgrowth. This area is not only awkward to access but also not ADA accessible, and does not stand out as a major landmark on campus. Exposing the sign and developing the area through placemaking efforts could activate the space and allow visitors to experience a "Berkeley moment."

Figure 25. Sketch of a reimagined plaza at the northeast corner of Oxford and Center. Source: Katie Heuser

Businesses

Many people we talked to in our community engagement activity told the project team that Oxford Street is just a road to their actual destination, and many others needed clarification on where exactly Oxford Street is, which implies a lack of identity for the corridor. Many participants expressed that they wanted more places to dine and relax along Oxford Street. Economically, the numbers for Downtown Berkeley are also bleaker compared to Telegraph Avenue, a street with an inarguable identity, with vacancy rates of 11.9% in Downtown Berkeley compared to 8.5% on Telegraph. The businesses along Oxford Street would benefit from more non-auto traffic for increased patronage opportunities, a task that can be completed with strategic placemaking and enhanced pedestrian amenities. The needs of retail and commercial establishments cannot be overlooked in a complete streets implementation; better curb management policies, as well as the maintenance of parking and loading zones for those arriving by car, will be key to helping businesses thrive on a remade Oxford Street.

Placemaking and Placekeeping

In addition to mobility, Oxford for All emphasizes creating public spaces where people can gather and rest. These spaces are most successful when they reflect the needs and cultures of local stakeholders. The concepts of placemaking and placekeeping have guided the vision for Oxford Street:

- **Placemaking** is a collaborative design approach that aims to embody community identities in an inviting public space.
- **Placekeeping** recognizes that some placemaking activities can lead to gentrification and real estate speculation. Placekeeping is a design approach that enables local people to care for their space, celebrate local assets, and keep community memories alive.

To facilitate collaboration in the next steps of Oxford For All, the project team has developed a toolkit for inclusive placemaking and placekeeping. The toolkit outlines steps for the City of Berkeley to gather the community, understand what groups value about the corridor, and co-create a vision for the future of Oxford Street. The also identifies spaces where placemaking and placekeeping should be pursued.

Figure 26. Front page of the Placemaking and Placekeeping Toolkit

Stakeholders

A wide range of people and groups will be impacted by changes to Oxford Street. To identify community needs and shared goals, it is essential to actively include these stakeholders in planning efforts.

Table 3. Oxford for All Stakeholders (Note: this list is not comprehensive)

Stakeholder Group		
City of Berkeley		
University of California Berkeley		
Property Developers		
Businesses		
Transportation Users	*Bus riders* *BART riders* *Cyclists* *Scooterists*	*Pedestrians* *Drivers/car riders* *Rideshare* *Carpool/vanpool*
Resident Groups	*Youth* *Seniors* *People with disabilities* *Low-income neighbors*	*Unhoused neighbors* *Workers* *Nearby property owners* *Nearby renters*
Transit Constituencies	*AC Transit* *BART* *Berkeley Parking & Transportation*	*Alameda CTC* *MTC*
Academic Groups	*UCB faculty, staff and students* *Berkeley High School*	*Berkeley Community College*
Arts and Culture	*BAMPFA*	*David Brower Center*
Advocacy Groups	*Walk Bike Berkeley* *Downtown Berkeley Association* *Berkeley Student Farms coalition* *Ed Roberts Campus*	*Cafe Ohlone* *Indigenous affiliated groups* *Telegraph for People* *Healthy Black Families*

How Can Oxford Street be Improved for All Users?

Opportunities for Redistributing Space

As mentioned previously, the 2021 UC Berkeley Oxford Street study considers two main spatial constraints in its proposals for the redesign of Oxford Street - maintaining current sidewalks widths and maintaining the width and placement of the median that runs down the center of the road. An explicit goal in our envisioning of Oxford Street was to prioritize pedestrian improvements, so in many of the proposals that follow, sidewalk widening is a key component.

However, changing the width and placement of the median does pose significant cost and infrastructure considerations for the city. Shifting the median could mean the removal of mature trees, and rerouting of key utility lines on the corridor, road regrading, and a quickly increasing overall cost of the project. As a result, while some of our proposals do include the need to shift the median, the project team also includes proposals which maintain median width and placement, in an effort to consider options that are most cost-effective for the city to implement.

While changing the space allocated to the sidewalks and the median is a costly consideration, road space allocated to primarily private vehicles is also key to consider in a envisioning of Oxford Street. Near Center Street, for example, approximately 60% of the road is dedicated to car-use alone, even though the intersection serves very high volumes of pedestrian traffic. The three lane-types that serve vehicle right-of-way along Oxford Street are vehicle through-lanes, vehicles turning lanes, and parking/loading lanes along curbs. In many of the proposals that follow, the project team reconsiders the prioritization of these types of lanes for a street like Oxford, which serves so many other modes of transportation.

In particular, vehicle turn lanes onto relatively low-volume roads for cars such as Center Street, Crescent Lawn, Allston Way, and Addison Street may not be necessary. Parking along the east-side of Oxford, which is the campus-side of the road that features the West Crescent Lawn and other campus buildings, is also less crucial than parking/loading zones in front of the businesses along the west-side of Oxford. And finally, vehicle through-lanes themselves may result in more costs than benefits for a corridor with such high volumes of pedestrians, cyclists, and scooterists, and are reconsidered in some of the proposals that follow.

Recommendations for Pedestrians

Pedestrians represent one of the largest user groups on Oxford street, yet are situated quite low in the hierarchy of who the street is designed for. The corridor has a high volume of pedestrians, many coming from the downtown Berkeley BART station via Center Street. With the planned new residential developments along the corridor likely to house a high percentage of UC Berkeley students these pedestrian numbers will only increase moving forward. Centering pedestrians in future design efforts will be key to creating an Oxford street that is truly representative of all who use it.

Comfortable Crossings

Crossings along the Oxford corridor present significant challenges for pedestrians; cars travel at high speeds and do not respect crosswalks, particularly as vehicles pick up speed along the Kittredge curves. The image series below depicts a typical crossing experience for a pedestrian at Allston Way. Cars habitually occupy crosswalks forcing pedestrians out into the wider flow of traffic, and vehicles speeding through the Kittredge curves cause multiple observed near misses between vehicles and pedestrians.

Figure 27.. Pedestrian/Vehicle Conflicts at Oxford Street and Allston Way

In addition to vehicle speeds and failures to yield, short pedestrian signal timings were observed to present difficulties for slower walkers including the elderly or those with mobility impairments and resulted in many rushed crossings that introduced potential conflict points between vulnerable road users and vehicles. Traffic calming measures including the exploration of lane reductions, curb extensions, and visual narrowing of the corridor through landscaping, combined with improved facilities like pedestrian-scale lighting, leading pedestrian intervals, pedestrian islands, and crossing aids for those with visual impairments would dramatically improve the crossing experience and overall safety of pedestrians across the corridor. These improvements should be prioritized at the intersections of Oxford and Kittredge and Oxford and Allston due to the increased speed of vehicles along this segment of the study area.

In envisioning an improved pedestrian crossing environment, the project team also began exploring the potential of a scramble crosswalk at the Oxford/Center intersection (Figure 28). In a scramble, traffic from all directions is stopped, and pedestrians are allowed to cross from all corners of the intersection - even diagonally. Pedestrian scrambles work well at locations like this with high crossing volumes, and would reduce conflicts caused by the frequently observed double crossings of pedestrians at the intersection. This proposal would also facilitate easier access to BART through a pedestrianized Center Street. This idea has been considered by the City in the past, and the project team believes that reopening that conversation would be tremendously beneficial to the overall vision for the corridor. Closing Center Street fully or even partially to vehicles would strengthen the connection between the UC campus, Oxford Street, and downtown Berkeley. A pedestrianized Center Street would also greatly benefit transit users traveling to and from the Downtown Berkeley BART Station who make up a large portion of those traversing Oxford.

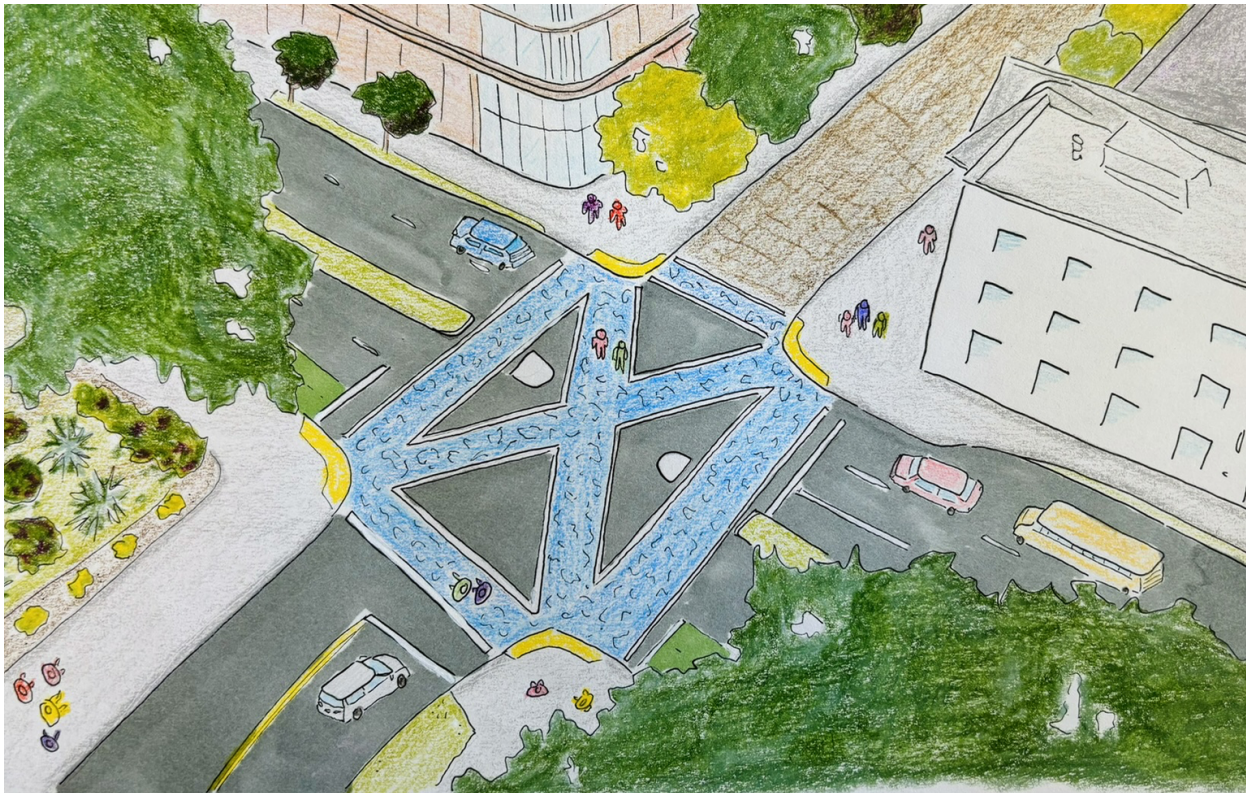


Figure 28. Sketch of a pedestrian scramble at Oxford and Center. Source: Katie Heuser.

Wider Sidewalks

Beyond crossing difficulties, the space allotted specifically to pedestrians along the Oxford Street corridor is not sufficient to support the current or future volume and needs of pedestrians. Sidewalks are the refuge of the pedestrian, and the current sidewalks along Oxford are not wide enough to adequately serve all users. While all sections of the sidewalk appear to comply with minimum ADA standards (with the exception of spaces where temporary obstacles like trash cans further constrict space) several key locations present navigational hazards for groups of pedestrians and individuals using mobility assistance devices like wheelchairs. In particular the block between Allston Way and Center Street quickly becomes crowded and difficult to navigate for less mobile users due to the narrow sidewalk widths and the presence of extensive street furniture serving the adjacent businesses. While this area is a rare example of placemaking and activated space along the corridor, the sidewalk widths need to be increased to fully realize the potential of the space while maintaining the ability to safely and comfortably allow users of all abilities to traverse this section of the corridor.

Widening of the sidewalks could be achieved through the removal of the center median, travel lanes, parking, or left turn lanes. The expansion of the existing sidewalks would serve to both improve the travel experience for users in the key section outlined

above, and to open up opportunities for placemaking efforts elsewhere along the corridor like additional landscaping, outdoor dining space, and room for groups to congregate to experience Oxford street without impeding the flow of traffic on the sidewalks.

Figure 29. Walking towards Virginia Street. Source: Rachel Strangeway, 2023.

Shady and Calming Landscaping

Another common refrain among pedestrians was that the Oxford Street corridor currently lacks greenery and landscaping in many key areas. The wide street combined with a barren central median encourages high vehicle speeds and poses a visual barrier to users not in vehicles. Additionally, the lack of street trees on the east side of the street was observed to drive foot traffic to the west side on hot days which was better shaded by landscaping and the presence of tall buildings. The stretch of Oxford between Hearst and Virginia was particularly exposed on both sides of the street, with the project team observing a noticeable increase in local temperatures as soon as one crossed north across Hearst, resulting in an uncomfortable and unpleasant walking experience. The addition of new street trees on sidewalks along the corridor and within the median if it is ultimately retained should be prioritized in any redesign efforts in order to increase sense of place, provide additional shade, and encourage lower vehicle speeds.

Recommendations for Cyclists and Scooterists

Cyclists, scooterists, and other micro mobility users are another group that are currently underserved by the Oxford Street corridor at the expense of cars. Based on our observations, many cyclists and scooterists traversed along sidewalks throughout the

entire corridor rather than the unprotected bike lanes that came uncomfortably close to high-speed traffic. This caused significant conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians.

In envisioning new bike infrastructure for the corridor, the project team initially consulted the previously referenced UC Berkeley study of Oxford St. Key to their preferred proposal was a two-way cycletrack along the east side of Oxford Street, which required the removal of parking, but no other changes to curb width or median location and width. The project team wanted to explore alternative proposals for the bike network on Oxford that included considerations of integration with the existing bike network, physically separated lanes, and some of the sidewalk widening changes discussed earlier. The team concluded that both one way bike lanes and a two way cycletrack were viable options depending on the ultimate configuration of the street, with pros and cons for each option.

Our first proposal shows two one-way bike lanes on either side of the street, separated from vehicle traffic by a curb buffer. This proposal also includes a widened western sidewalk, made possible by reducing the width of the underutilized eastern sidewalk in this section, the elimination of east-side parking in other areas, the removal of the left turn lane, and a shifted but still wide median. One key strength of this proposal is that it is more intuitive for cyclists to follow travel directions of cars, an issue the project team noticed when observing cyclist behavior on the two-way cycletrack currently on Bancroft, where it was often abandoned by cyclists altogether if they were making a right turn onto Oxford Street.

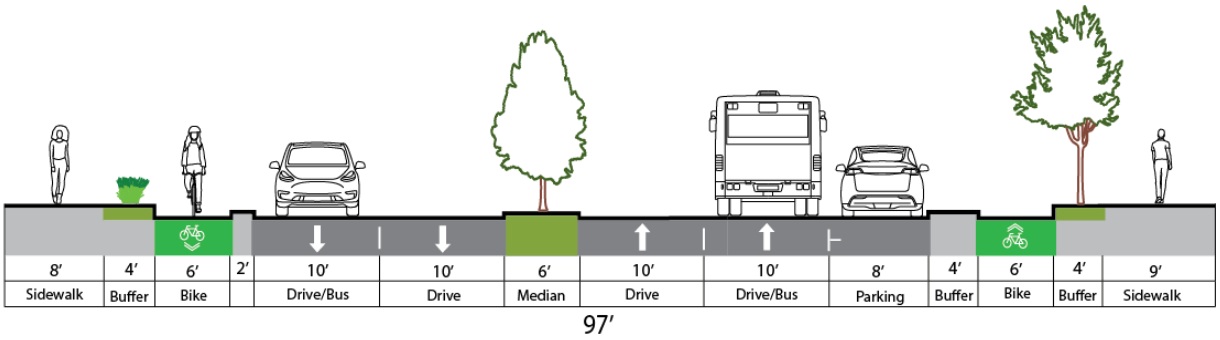


Figure 30. Proposal #1 - One-way Bicycle Lanes on East and West Sides of Oxford Street

Our second proposal, which includes a two-way cycletrack along the eastern campus-side of Oxford is much more similar to the UC Berkeley study, with the key difference being that it also includes widened sidewalks along the west side of Oxford. A strength of this proposal is that it could combine well with a transit priority lane – discussed later in this report – and it is more practical and space efficient, allowing for multiple riders to ride together and fill the lane space.

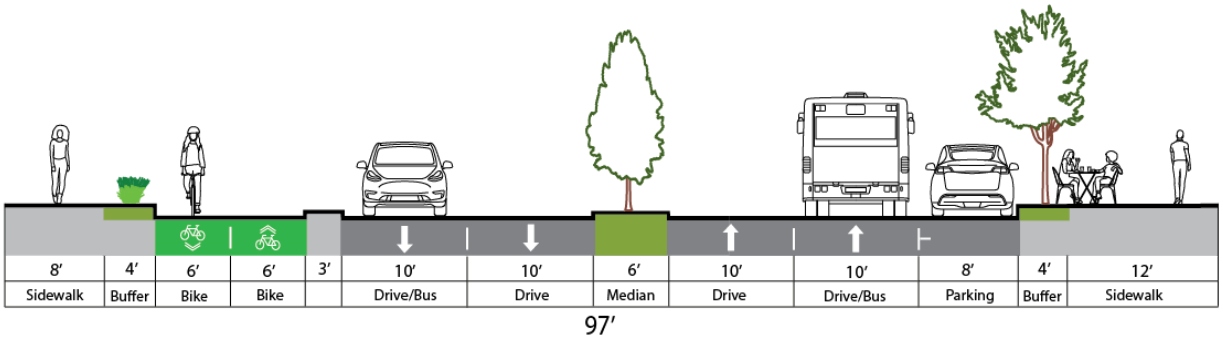
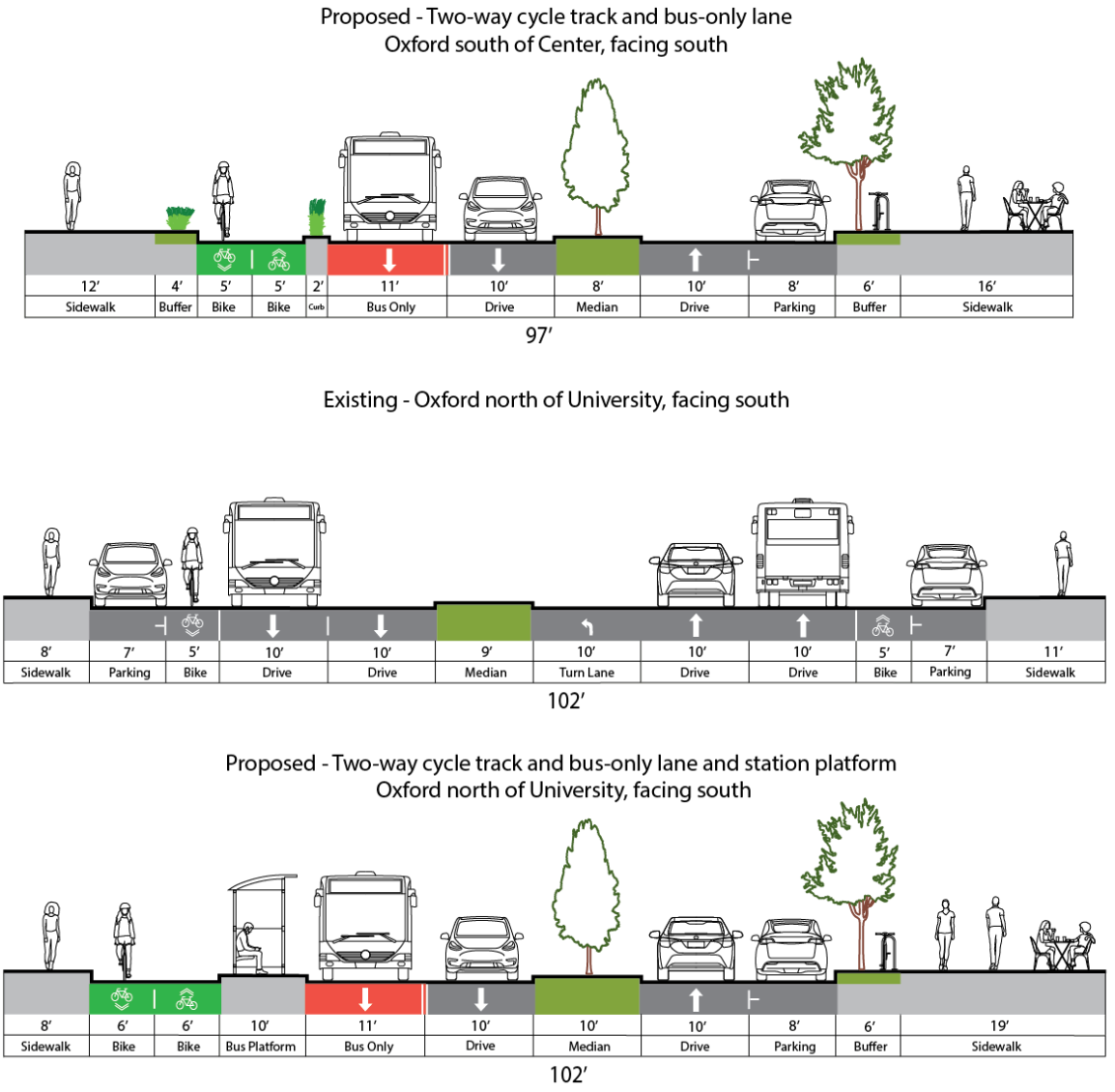


Figure 31. Proposal #2 - Two-way Cycletrack on East Side of Oxford Street

Recommendations for Transit Riders

Reliable and Efficient Service

Berkeley has many transit-dependent populations, including young people, older adults, and people with disabilities. Transit must be accessible and reliable on Oxford Street, since many people are not able to or cannot afford to drive. Additionally, if a trip by bus takes longer than other modes or if trip times are unreliable, people may choose another way to get around, and the benefits of public transportation are lost. On Oxford Street specifically, several public transportation services operate: BearTransit, paratransit, and AC Transit. Current AC transit routes include the 6, 52, 65, 67, 851, and F lines.



Figures 32, 33, 34, 35. Top: Existing section on Oxford south of Center, looking south. Second: Proposed section on Oxford south of Center, looking south. Third: Existing section on Oxford south of University, looking south. Fourth: Existing section on Oxford south of University, looking south. Source (all): Oxford for All Studio Team.

Oxford Street can better serve transit with dedicated facilities: our proposal for transit riders is a northbound transit priority lane and transit signal priority. Transit priority lanes, often denoted on the pavement with red paint, allow buses to move outside of vehicle traffic. A transit priority lane would serve the multiple routes that run north on Oxford, while maintaining the two-way cycle track and widened sidewalks. On sections without a bus stop, this requires the removal of on-street parking on the east-side of the street and the center turn lane, but the median can be maintained (Figures 32, 33). On

sections with a bus stop, the median must be adjusted in combination with the removal of the center turn lane to accommodate space for a bus platform (Figures 34, 35).

Figure 36. Sketch of Oxford and Kittredge, facing south. Source: Katie Heuser

Additionally, there is currently an ongoing AC Transit Realignment project, which is a planning process that is reevaluating the agency's transit routes and schedules. This realignment proposes several changes to operations on Oxford Street, including:

- Line 51 will travel north on Oxford and turn left on Addison
- Line 52 will make a loop around campus via Oxford, traveling northbound along the study area
- Line 6 will no longer travel on Oxford
- Lines F, 65, 67, and 851 remain unchanged

These proposed changes mean that transit service northbound on Oxford Street would increase, and therefore would still be supported by a northbound transit priority lane.

Alternatively, the City of Berkeley could consider whether Oxford Street may be less equipped to host transit services compared to parallel streets in the area. It may be valuable to consider shifting transit to adjacent corridors, such as Shattuck Avenue, and instead prioritize Oxford Street for other transportation modes. This evaluation would

need to happen in conjunction with traffic studies to understand the flow of travel throughout the Downtown Berkeley road network.

Accessible and Comfortable Stops

Several bus stops on the corridor simply have a single sign post indicating the routes that serve that stop, without benches, shade, or additional signage. At these stops, it can be uncomfortable to wait for long periods of time, especially for those with disabilities or low energy. Amenities such as benches, shelters, and lighting are essential to compel Berkeley residents to take transit. Electronic signs with wait times can also encourage visitors to ride buses.

Additionally, with the future realignment of bus lines such as the 51 and 52 onto Oxford Street, it may be necessary to evaluate where bus stops are currently located. Strategic station stops could benefit travelers along high volume corridors such as Center Street, and could also work well with the redesign of Oxford Street to site stops where there is the most room for a northbound bus station platform.

Recommendations for Drivers & Car Riders

Oxford for All includes people who use private and shared vehicles. This includes rideshare, carpool, and vanpool. Many people rely on driving, whether they commute from far distances or do not feel comfortable on public transportation. Some people with disabilities are most comfortable in their own car. However, Oxford for All recognizes that driving is just one of the many options for transportation in downtown Berkeley. A lot of cars on Oxford Street creates an unpleasant environment for other road users.

People should not feel that driving is the only safe and efficient way to travel in downtown Berkeley. Our recommendation is to redistribute space so all transportation modes have space. For drivers and car riders, this means less space for travel or parking. Given existing roadway volumes, reallocating some road space can still allow movement for vehicles, while creating a safer and more equitable Oxford Street.[1] Eliminating some turning movements, such as left turns onto Center Street, can also reduce opportunities for crashes. If Oxford for All is successful, people will be more compelled to use other ways to get around Berkeley, which will lessen the number of cars on the street and pollution in the air.

[1] Traffic analyses must be completed before the City of Berkeley can proceed with reallocating travel lanes for other uses. Eliminating travel lanes may influence traffic flow on adjacent roads, so it is important to conduct these analyses.

Figure 37. Oxford at Center. Source: Rachel Strangeway, 2023.

Safe Speeds

To improve safety for drivers and other road users on Oxford Street, vehicles must move at safe speeds. The speed limit is 25 mph, but drivers anecdotally speed around the curves near Kittredge Street. This area does not have signalized crossings, which creates a hazardous situation for pedestrians crossing the street. The 25 mph speed limit can be encouraged through visually narrowing the path of travel with street trees and other pedestrian-scale amenities. Slower speeds will ensure that when a crash happens, it is not fatal.

Considerate Curb Management

Curb management should be considerate of driver needs, including parking. The location of on-street parking should be considerate of need while recognizing that parking spots use a lot of space that could be used by people. On-street accessible parking spots should be a high priority. Parking spots should also be priced to encourage turnover, which increases the number of people that can visit the corridor. With the proposals above, much of the parking on the west side of Oxford Street can be maintained. The University is anticipating several new parking garages, such as at the site of University Hall. The project team recommends installing wayfinding signage to increase awareness of this parking and other nearby parking garages.

Summary of Recommendations

The following tables summarize the steps to achieve an Oxford for All. Table 4 presents short-term recommendations and table 5 presents long-term recommendations. To achieve this, it is key to involve the many stakeholders and communities who use or are excluded from using Oxford Street. To obtain funding, the City of Berkeley must conduct community engagement as a component of the corridor's redesign, but collaboration is also essential to ensure Oxford Street is culturally relevant, promotes social interaction, and fosters a sense of ownership.

Table 4. Summary of Short-term Recommendations

Short Term Recommendation	Notes
Collaborate with Berkeley communities to create an Oxford for All	*Build awareness and community support for changes on the corridor. Reference the list of stakeholders in Table 3*
Pilot long-term recommendations for a limited period of time with temporary materials.	*A temporary demonstration of protected bike lanes, a transit priority lane, and/or pedestrianized Center Street can improve public acceptance in preparation for long term changes.*
Pursue placemaking and placekeeping in existing public spaces	*Several locations throughout the corridor are ready for some Berkeley character. This could entail local art installations or cultural, retail, and/or informational pop-ups. Reference the Placemaking and Placekeeping Toolkit.* *Priority locations:* • *Plaza in front of Gather* • *Plaza in front of Warren Hall* • *Crescent Lawn*
Implement leading pedestrian intervals and longer crossing times at all signalized intersections	*Improving pedestrian signals can reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts and increase pedestrian comfort*

Install traffic calming measures: bollard curb extensions, painted crossings	*Priority locations for traffic calming:* • *Oxford/Fulton between Allston and Bancroft*
Conduct studies on the impact of removing travel or turn lane(s)	*Traffic studies must be conducted to determine the feasibility of long-term recommendations*
Improve and maintain landscaping in the public right-of-way	*Priority locations for landscaping:* • *Southwest corner of Oxford & Heart* • *Median*

Table 5. Summary of Long-term Recommendations

Long Term Recommendation	Notes
Collaborate with Berkeley communities to create an Oxford for All	*Reference the list of stakeholders in Table 3*
Reallocate road space by eliminating travel lanes, turn lanes, and/or parking	*Traffic studies must be conducted to determine the feasibility of this recommendation*
Widen sidewalks to accommodate the many pedestrians on Oxford	*Priority locations for sidewalk widening:* • *West side of Oxford, especially between Center and Allston* • *Along the Crescent Lawn*
Improve pedestrian amenities: pedestrian scale lighting, and signal lengthening and leading pedestrian intervals	*Priority locations for pedestrian improvements:* • *Oxford/Fulton between Allston and Bancroft*
Explore feasibility of a pedestrian scramble at Center and Oxford	*Many people cross at this intersection to access downtown, the BART station, the shops on Center, and the university*
Implement protected bicycle lanes connected to existing facilities	*Bicycle lanes may be one way or a two way cycletrack. Bicycle lanes should be protected*

	by concrete, bollards, planters, or other physical barriers.
Install traffic calming measures: concrete curb extensions, speed tables, painted crossings	*Priority locations for traffic calming:* • *Oxford/Fulton between Allston and Bancroft*
Implement bus stop amenities: benches, shelters, and wayfinding signage	*Priority locations for bus stop amenities:* • *Oxford & University (Stop ID: 56521)* • *Oxford & Hearst (Stop ID: 51173)*
Consider how transit uses the corridor and how to improve transit efficiency	*Investigate the feasibility of a northbound transit priority lane. Install transit priority signals. Alternatively, consider relocating transit operations to Shattuck to prioritize Oxford for other transportation modes.*
Add and maintain street trees and landscaping throughout the corridor	*Priority locations for street trees and landscaping:* • *In median, if retained* • *Oxford between Virginia and Hearst* • *Oxford/Fulton between Allston and Bancroft*
Activate public spaces by collaborating with Berkeley communities	*The Placemaking and Placekeeping Toolkit can facilitate collaboration.*
Maintain parking on the west side of Oxford Street and consider curb management best practices.	*Beyond parking, curb space can be used for loading/unloading, wider sidewalks, bike lanes, bike and scooter parking, parklets, food trucks, etc.*

Next Steps

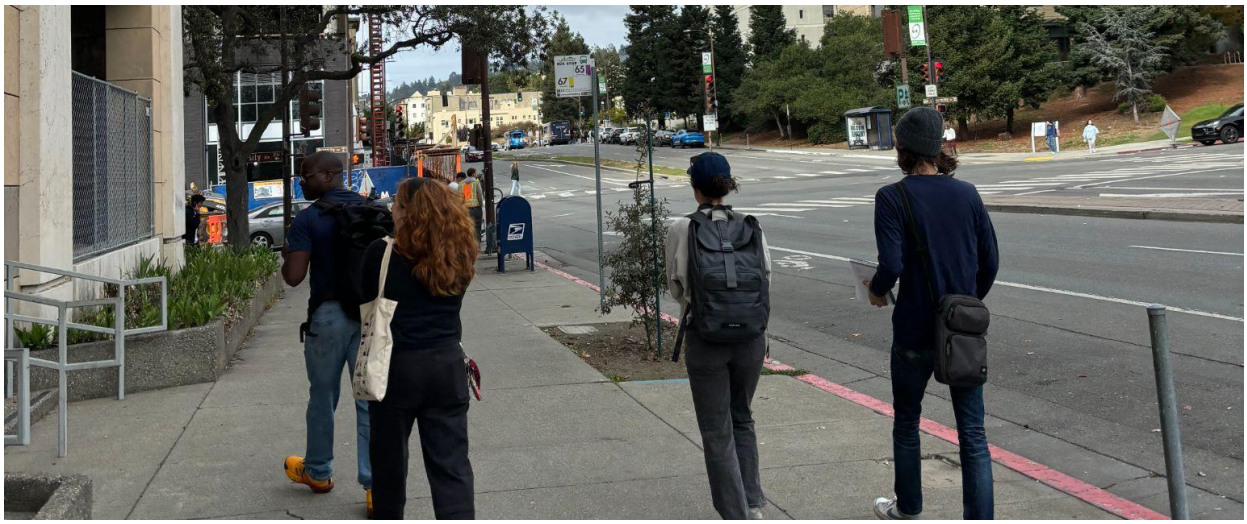


Figure 38. Part of the project and client teams walking near University Hall. Source: Katie Heuser, 2023.

What are the next steps for Oxford Street to achieve a corridor that is safe and comfortable for Berkeley's diverse populations? Oxford For All fits snugly into the city of Berkeley's *Vision 2050* and *Street Rehabilitation and Maintenance Policy* frameworks. Our recommendations call for improving safety along the corridor, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and building green infrastructure, all of which improve the quality of life for Berkeley residents, all critical hallmarks of *Vision 2050 and Street Rehabilitation and Maintenance Policy.* As Berkeley prepares its *Five Year Street Rehabilitation Plan*, the project team recommends our strategies, including placemaking, be strongly considered for implementation on Oxford Street.

A Complete Street project is very ambitious and will require careful planning and patience. Transformations will not happen overnight, and the project team does not anticipate our infrastructure recommendations being fully implemented quickly. In the long term, the City of Berkeley will need a coordinated plan that is appropriately integrated into Vision 2050 and receives consistent effort and updates from all relevant planning staff. Community engagement and forthright communication will be critical. It is crucial that all stakeholders remain informed throughout the process.

However, many aspects of our recommendations can be implemented relatively quickly. The city can initiate a community engagement campaign and place make in existing public spaces by allowing art pop-ups or pedestrianizing Center Street. Berkeley can also complete the requisite traffic impact analysis and pilot alternative street configurations like bike and transit lanes to introduce the public to complete street possibilities. The city of Berkeley will be responsible for leading the project (traffic studies,

community engagement, designs), but the Oxford for All movement can be championed by the community.

Despite Measure L, an infrastructure and affordable housing bond, failing last November, Berkeley residents have expressed favor for raising money for transportation investments through Measures B, BB, T1, and M recently. Political advocacy to get voters to support safe streets again will be vital to securing funding for infrastructure projects. Getting a bond measure similar to L on the ballot soon will be an opportunity to increase funding for transportation projects. The advocacy should be community-led and should highlight successful, safer street projects such as the cycletrack on Milvia.

If the City of Berkeley is truly committed to creating Complete Streets, we will work together to rethink how Oxford Street can serve us. Without considerate and equitable planning, cars will continue to dominate the space while people walking and rolling are forced to use the edges of the road. The university will be disconnected from downtown. From the plaza in front of Warren Hall to the Crescent Lawn, there are so many opportunities along Oxford Street to create spaces with activity and character. We can use art and landscape design to reflect the local histories and cultures. We can collaborate with communities to create spaces where all feel comfortable and safe.

Oxford for All is about the person that sold their bike because they didn't feel comfortable cycling in Berkeley and the Berkeley High student that needs somewhere to hang out after school. Oxford for All is about the small businesses that depend on foot traffic in the corridor and the person with a disability who can't stand for long periods of time. Through collaboration and strong vision, the future of Oxford Street can be a space for everyone.

Appendix A: References

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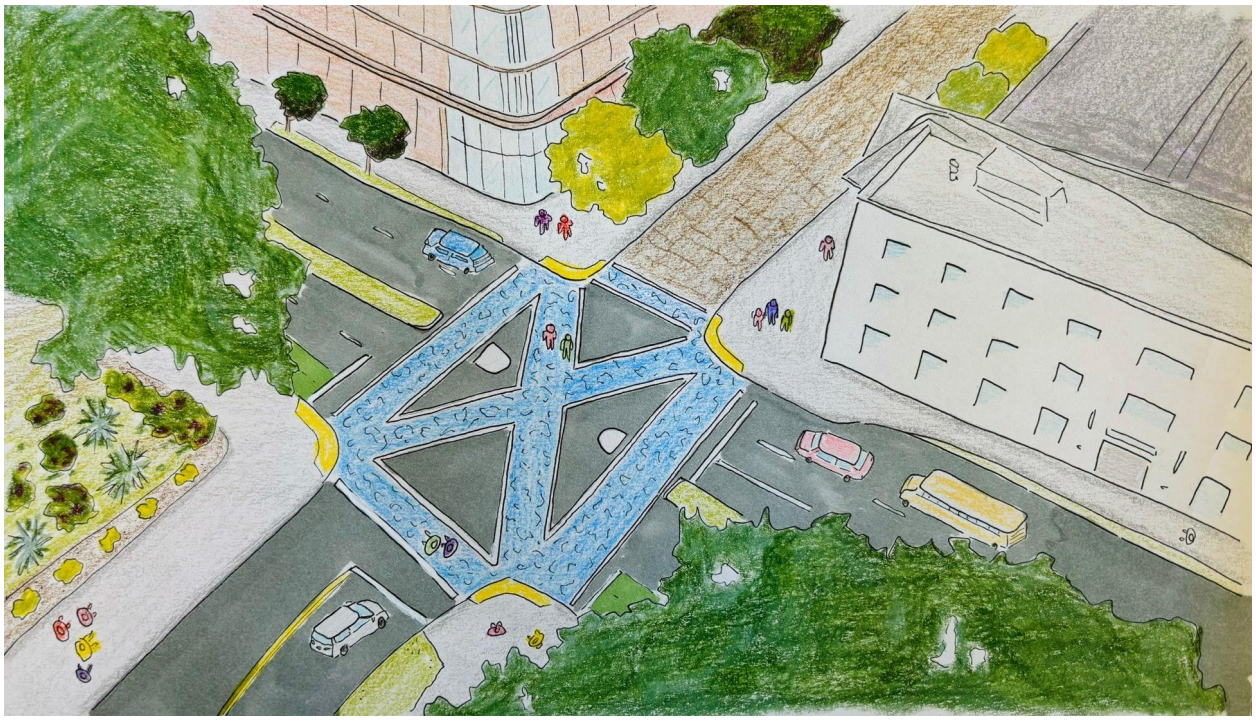
Appendix B: Sketches



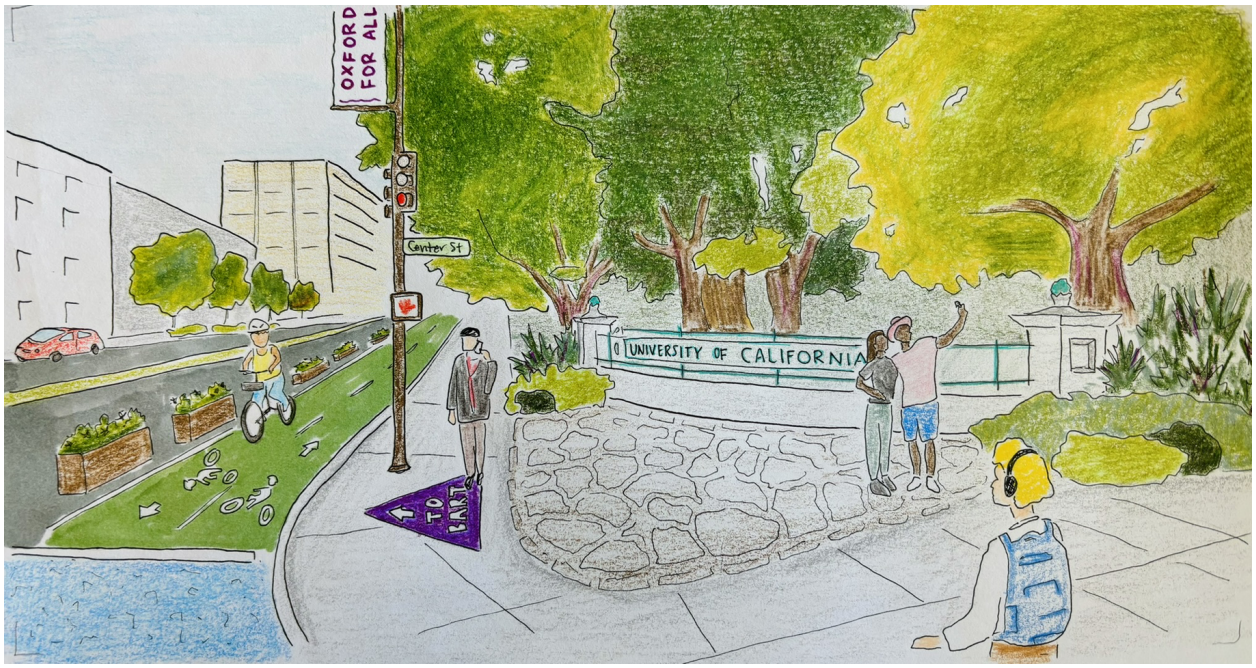
Pedestrian scramble, Oxford Street & Center Street
Katie Heuser

Placemaking at the museum, Oxford Street & Center Street
Katie Heuser

Placemaking at Warren Hall, Oxford Street & Hearst Avenue
Katie Heuser

Activation of the Crescent Lawn, Oxford Street & Addison Street
Katie Heuser

Transit priority lane, Oxford Street & Kittredge Street
Katie Heuser



Plaza in front of the University sign, Oxford Street & Center Street
Katie Heuser

Appendix C: Business Survey

Downtown Berkeley Business Climate Survey - Transforming the Oxford Street Corridor

This survey is being conducted to check the pulse of businesses about the hypothetical transformation of the Oxford Street corridor into a street that accommodates more pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders. This is a UC Berkeley study led by students for research purposes only.

Business Name and Address

_____

How many years has this business been at this location?

_____

Are you in an advantageous location for your business to thrive?

1. Yes
2. No

Would your business be better served if it were located near Telegraph Avenue?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

Would you favor adding a protected bike lane along Oxford Street?

4. Yes
5. No
6. Unsure

Would you be in favor of widening the sidewalks along Oxford Street?

7. Yes
8. No
9. Unsure

Would you favor removing parking spaces or a driving lane along Oxford Street?

10. Yes
11. No
12. Unsure

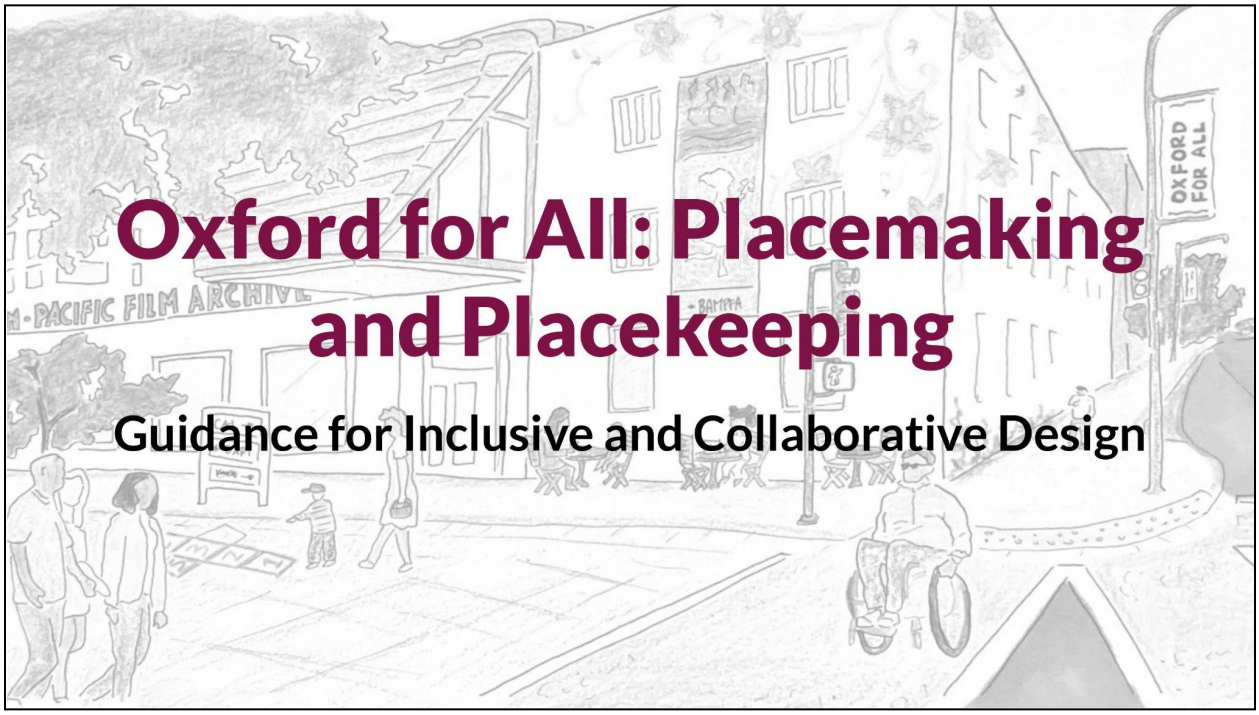
How do you think these alterations would positively or negatively affect your business?

_____

What changes to the layout of Oxford Street would be supportive for your business?

_____

Appendix D: Placemaking and Placekeeping Toolkit



Oxford for All: Placemaking and Placekeeping

Guidance for Inclusive and Collaborative Design

About the Toolkit

There are many opportunities to bring activity and character to the public spaces on Oxford Street. The Berkeley community should be closely involved so that these spaces reflect local need and cultures.

This toolkit can be used to facilitate collaborate and inclusivity to make Oxford Street a destination.

UC Berkeley Department of City and Regional Planning
Fall 2023 Transportation Planning Studio
Jerome Baker, Nathan Carlson, Katie Heuser, Rachel Strangeway

What is placemaking?

Placemaking is a collaborative process to shape the public realm. Successful **placemaking** allows a space to have identities that reflect people in the community. Placemaking emphasizes "observing, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work and play in a particular space" to understand their needs and visions.

Placemaking emphasizes people-focused spaces. There is an emphasis on creating lively and inviting spaces that people want to spend time in. Placemaking also celebrates spaces that serve multiple purposes - this means a diversity of people will be there throughout the day and night.

Efforts can be low-cost (like a giant game of Jenga or a bench), or they can be long-term with a greater financial investment.

What is placekeeping?

Some placemaking activities can lead to gentrification, real estate speculation, and racism. These disproportionately impact marginalized groups.

The process of **placekeeping** is a counter movement that enables local people to care for their space, celebrate local assets, and keep community memories alive.

Placekeeping also focuses on strengthening local identity, rather than using generalized approaches to attracting more people to an area.

Benefits for Oxford Street

Thousands of people travel on Oxford Street every day. However, most people use the corridor for transportation, and people do not maximize the public spaces along the corridor.

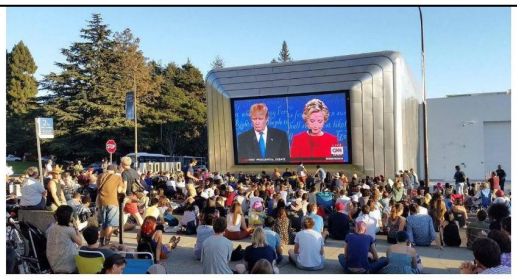
Placekeeping/placemaking strategies can transform Oxford Street into a deliberately inviting space. By providing a diversity of uses that cater to local need, Berkeley residents and visitors will be compelled to spend time on the corridor. This can lead to cross-community connections and more foot traffic to nearby stores and restaurants.

Placemaking/Placekeeping Elements

The following list are some ideas to activate Oxford Street and highlight Berkeley's identities in the built environment. However, the community should have input on what these look like in practice.

- Painted crosswalks
- Painted curb extensions
- Benches
- Chairs and tables
- Public art (murals, sculptures, and other mediums. Bonus points for ones you can touch or interact with.)
- Music (Live, or put out a piano-interactive)
- Games (Ping pong, jenga, chess, hopscotch, etc.)
- Street vendors
- Parklets
- Programming/activities (Yoga, crafts, outdoor movies etc.)

Existing Examples on Oxford



Outdoor movies at BAMPFA
Source: BAMPFA

Seating outside of Yali's Cafe
Source: Google Street View

Art at the David Brower Center
Source: Oxford for All team

Parklet near East Bay Spice Company
Source: Google Street View

Creating Multi-Purpose Places (from Project for Public Spaces)

1. Make it Local, from Amenities to Programming: Draw from local needs and resources
2. Get with the Program: Define what activities the space will support
3. Define Uses First, Design Second: Make sure that forms supports function
4. Variety is the Spice of Life: Cultivate a diverse and dense mix of uses
5. Triangulate Activities and Amenities: Think about the relationship between activities
6. Curate Commercial Uses That Invite People In: Ensure commercial spaces invite people but do not dominate a space
7. Become a Programmer or a Platform: Put some events on the calendar

Peinhardt, K. (2023, June 2). *Uses & Activities: How to Create Multi-Purpose Places.* Project for Public Spaces. https://www.pps.org/article/uses-activities

Placemaking/Placekeeping on Oxford Street

Define the vision - Use a community vision process to identify what the community wants to accomplish

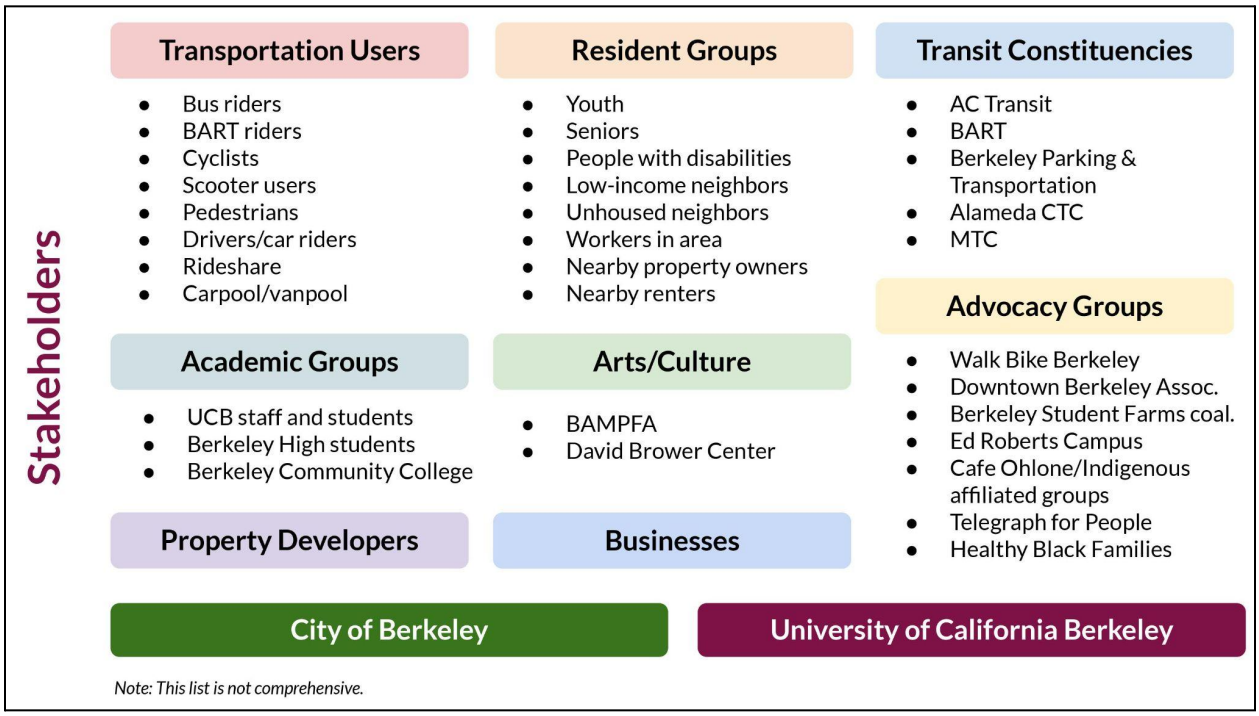
Consider who to involve - Reference the Stakeholder diagram on the next slide

Engage in dialogue to identify assets - Ask questions such as: What are your earliest memories? What does this place mean to you? What stories do you have?

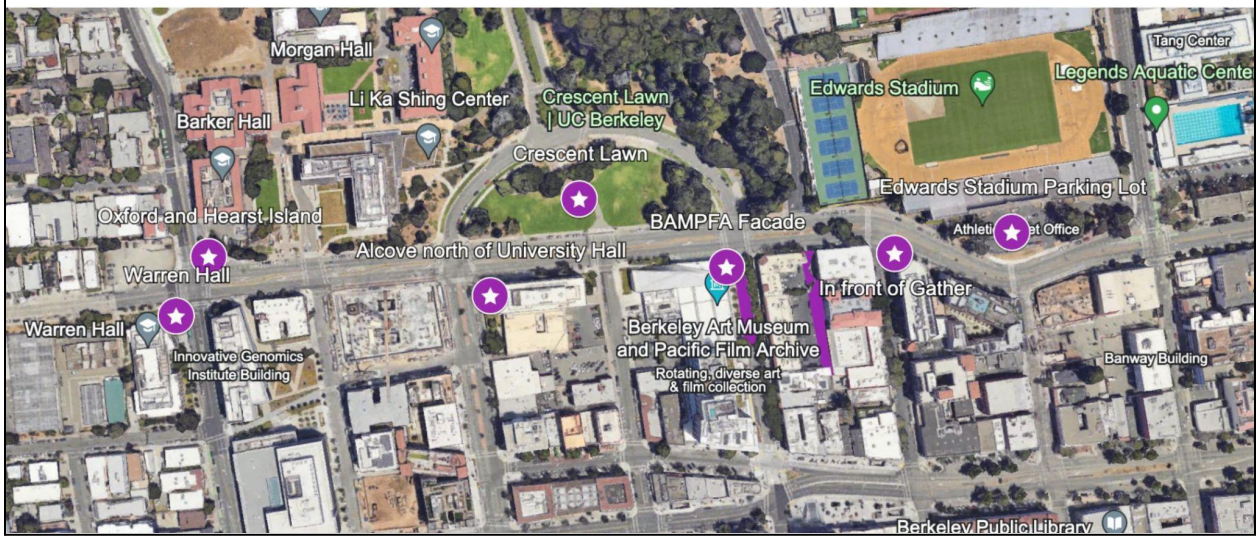
Consider long-term sustainability

Identify source of on-going funding

Train staff on inclusive and collaborative design



Opportunity Areas Map



Opportunity Areas

Hearst Ave & Oxford Street

In front of Warren Hall

Envisioning Oxford and Hearst, in front of Warren Hall
Illustration: Katie Heuser

Envisioning Warren Hall *at Oxford & Hearst*

Placemaking on the existing plaza

Benches

Planters

Sculptural art

Sidewalk murals for local art or history

Opportunity Areas

North of University Hall

Along BAMPFA

Envisioning Oxford and Center, in front of BAMPFA
Illustration: Katie Heuser

Envisioning Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive *at Oxford & Center*

Murals on walls, especially Indigenous art

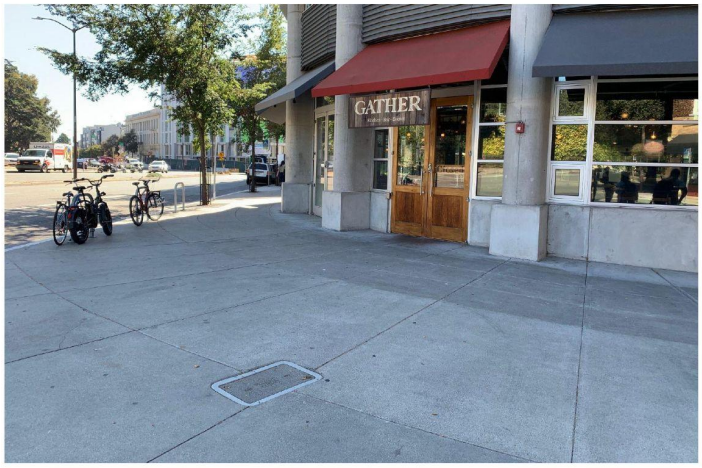
Pedestrianized Center Street

Pedestrian scramble at Center & Oxford

Wayfinding to campus and downtown destinations

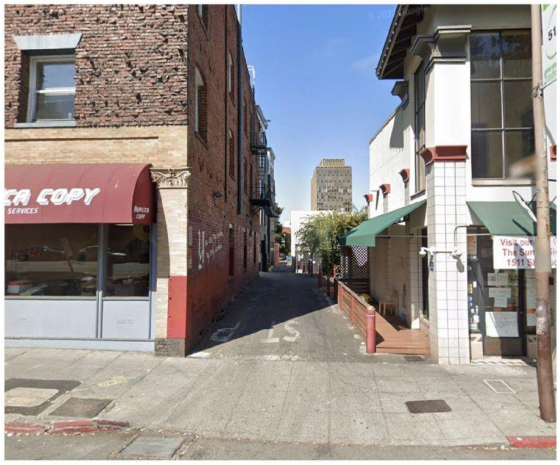
Tables and seating

Opportunity Areas

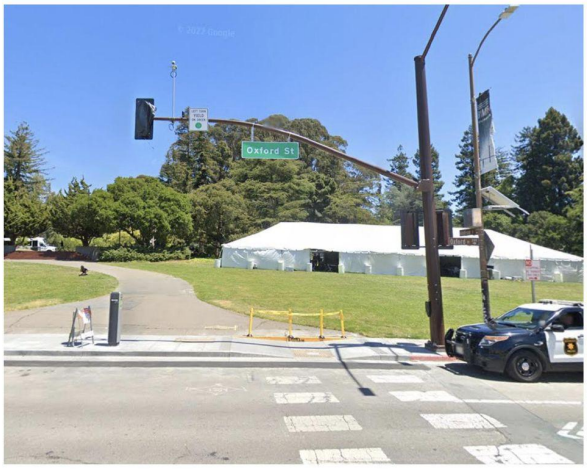


In front of Gather

Opportunity Areas



Oxford Lane



Crescent Lawn

Envisioning the Crescent Lawn, facing south
Illustration: Katie Heuser

Envisioning the Crescent Lawn *at Oxford & Addison*

Plaza near Oxford

Accessible path into campus

Benches

Programming for community events

Pedestrian-scale lighting

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Appendix E: Community Engagement Activity Responses

Table A1. Categories of community comments - What do you like about Oxford Street?

What do you like about Oxford Street?	Number of Comments
The West Crescent Lawn	4
Connection to BART/campus via Center Street	4
Destinations - BAMPFA outdoor movies, East Bay Spice Co., restaurants	3
Trees, greenery	3
Clean	2
Safe	1
New signalization on Addison	1
The bike lanes	1
Pretty, nice, generally positive	6

Table A2. Categories of community comments - What would you improve about Oxford Street?

What would you improve about Oxford Street?	Number of Comments
More trees, greenery, shade	9
More/better bike lanes	8
Less cars, pedestrianization, better sidewalks	7
Improved signal timing	3
No scooters on sidewalks	3
Bus lanes	2
More restaurants, outdoor dining	2
Better campus entrance	2

Better lighting	2
Paving Hearst and Virginia	1
More communal space	1
More benches/seating	1
More affordable housing	1
More art	1
Security	1
Oxford should be more like shattuck	1
Reduce construction impact	1
Oxford should be unique	1

Table A3. Categories of community comments - How did you get to Oxford Street today?

How did you get to Oxford Street today?	Number of Comments
Walk	4
Bike	4
BART	3
Scooter	2
Skateboard	1

Table A4. Categories of community comments - Why did you come to Oxford Street today?

Why did you come to Oxford Street today?	Number of Comments
The West Crescent Lawn	3
Class	2
Visiting local businesses	2
Catching BART	2

Taking bus line 6	1
I live on Oxford	1
Tennis	1