

6. CIRCULATION

Introduction

This chapter of the Specific Plan describes the program of transportation improvements that both supports and encourages new development within the Crow Canyon Specific Plan area. The area enjoys good access and visibility from the freeway and arterials — I-680, Crow Canyon Road and San Ramon Valley Boulevard — but internal streets are inadequate for the planned development and the overall network needs beautification like that at the San Ramon Valley Boulevard gateway on the Danville town limits. To mitigate traffic impacts and serve the needs of the transit-dependent, the Specific Plan also calls for improvements to transit service, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and transportation demand management programs. The following objectives and related policies describe the program of transportation improvements that will contribute to the emergence of the Crow Canyon Specific Plan area as a vital mixed-use community of the City.

Transit Improvements

OBJECTIVE 1: Provide for the transportation needs of the transit-dependent, and reduce the impacts of vehicular circulation on traffic, parking, air pollution and noise (Figure 6-1).

Policy 1.1: Provide for expanded shuttle service.

The County Connection and the Bishop Ranch shuttle currently link San Ramon’s major employment centers (e.g., Bishop Ranch) with regional transit facilities (e.g., Dublin BART station,

Pleasanton ACE station, Walnut Creek BART station), but current transit service to and within the Plan area is limited. As the Crow Canyon Specific Plan area develops, there will be increasing need for transit service of all types to ease congestion and serve people who are transit-dependent. The City should work with the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority and major employers to provide shuttle service between the Plan area and major employers and transit nodes.

Policy 1.2: Improve transit service in the Crow Canyon Specific Plan area.

The Crow Canyon Specific Plan area is planned to include significant numbers of affordable housing units. Studies have shown that lower income households own fewer cars and have a resulting need for transit and alternative transportation modes. The City and developers should work with the Central Contra Costa Transit Authority to explore additional routes and more frequent service as the Plan area develops. As routes and bus stops are located, streetscape improvements should incorporate bus turnouts and shelters.

Vehicular Circulation

Although, the Plan recognizes that automobiles will continue to be the dominant transportation mode in the Plan area, it calls for streets to be designed not only to mitigate future impacts, but to enhance and structure the public environment. Streets are the “connective tissue” of our modern communities. In addition to their role as movement corridors, they should also be seen as public

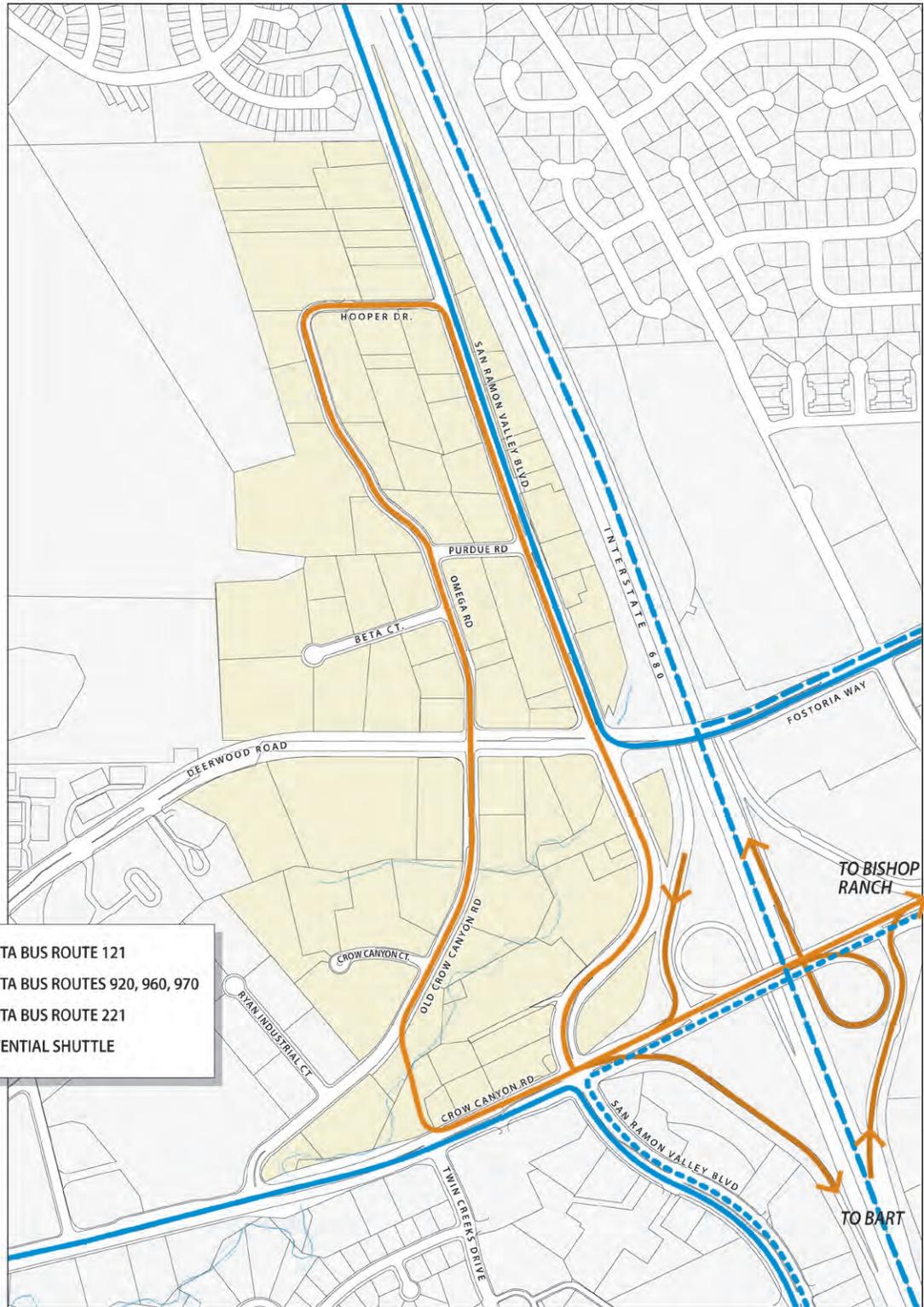


FIGURE 6-1
TRANSIT

spaces that provide a strong sense of place and orientation and contribute to the social life of a community. Streets within the Plan area should be designed as pedestrian-friendly urban places that promote activity throughout the day and evening, and as places that promote social interaction and a strong sense of community.

OBJECTIVE 2: Provide a system of vehicular circulation within and around the Crow Canyon Specific Plan area that strengthens the existing roadway network and balances the need for through movement with livability and pedestrian orientation (Figure 6-2).

The program of roadway improvements recommended by the Crow Canyon Specific Plan maintains and reinforces the existing pattern of streets by adding links and widening narrow rights-of-way. The streets inside the Plan area are viewed not only as facilities within which to move traffic, but as critical components of the area's pedestrian system and key elements in establishing the livability and identity of the area. Traffic improvements have been carefully balanced to ensure that vehicular through movement is not provided at the expense of livability and a pedestrian-friendly environment, and that the pedestrian orientation of the district is maintained.

Policy 2.1: Extend Twin Creeks Drive northward across Crow Canyon Road and San Ramon Creek to Old Crow Canyon Road as a two-lane collector street to enhance local vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

The General Plan calls for the Twin Creeks Drive extension to relieve the southernmost stretch of Old Crow Canyon Road and its intersection with Crow Canyon Boulevard, and to provide a direct link between the Plan area and the Twin Creeks

area to the south. As the extension crosses San Ramon Creek about 25 feet above the stream, care will need to be taken in the design and construction of the bridge in order to avoid negative impacts on the flood plain and riparian corridor.

Policy 2.2: Enhance Old Crow Canyon Road, Omega Road and Hooper Drive as a single two-lane collector street with generous provision for sidewalks, landscaping and other pedestrian amenities (Figure 6-3).

Policy 2.3: Establish plan lines that require dedication of additional right-of-way as necessary.

Old Crow Canyon Road, Omega Road and Hooper Drive are the spine of the Village Center and need to complement the pedestrian-oriented development with adequate but safe circulation, on-street parking and broad sidewalks. Portions of these streets are narrow and have substandard or no sidewalks. Together, these two policies are necessary to provide a continuous, high-grade internal circulation route that satisfies the complementary objectives of efficient circulation and a comfortable and safe pedestrian experience.

The City shall undertake civil and traffic engineering studies to fix the alignment and right-of-way of Old Crow Canyon Road, Omega Road and Hooper Drive as a consistent 70-foot right-of-way. Property owners shall dedicate the necessary right-of-way fronting their property as a condition of new development.

Policy 2.4: Provide for the extension of Purdue Road into the Northwest Specific Plan area.

The Purdue Road extension will be an important link providing access to the Northwest Specific Plan area. It will also benefit the Crow Canyon

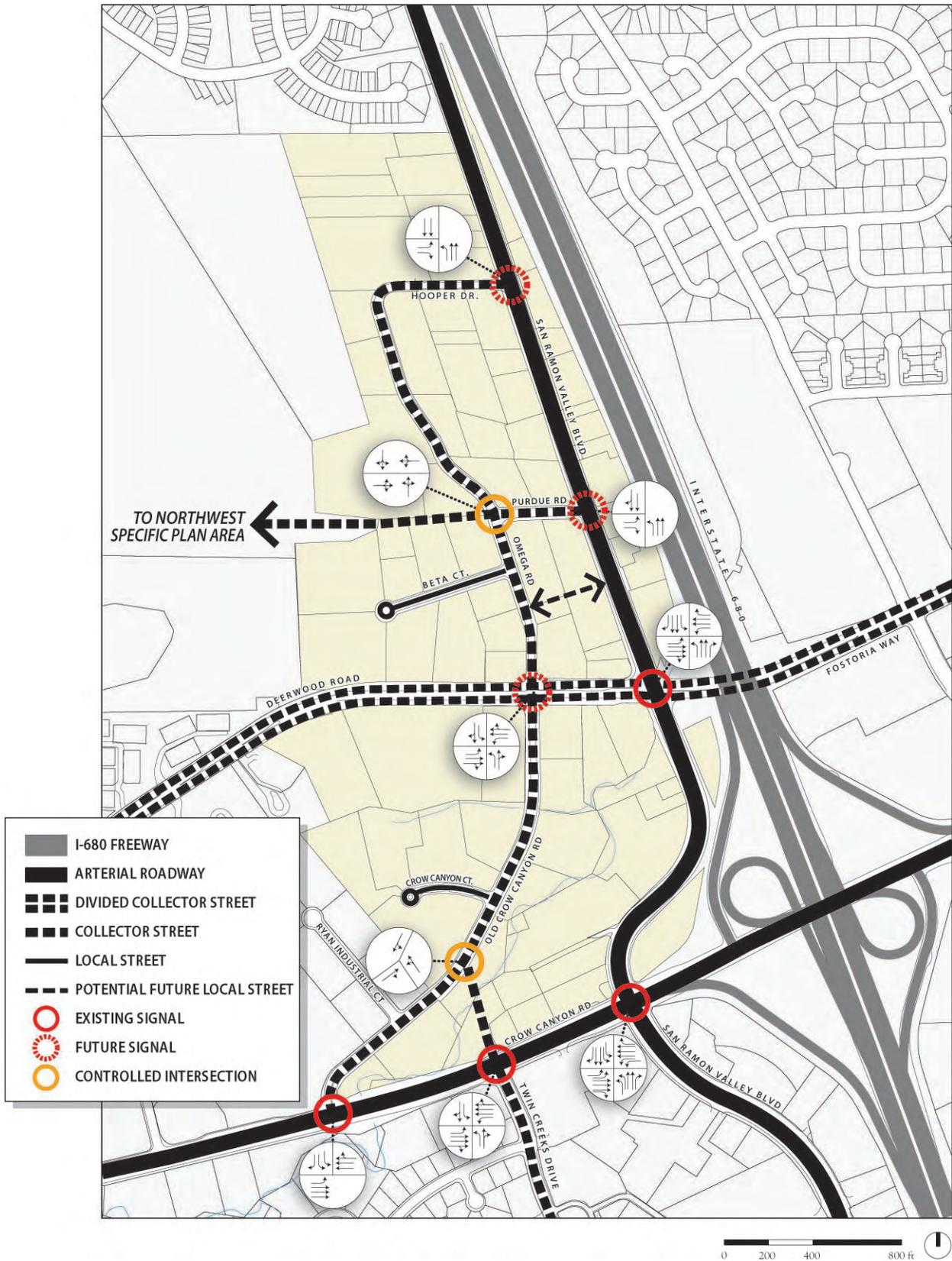


FIGURE 6-2
ROADWAYS

Specific Plan area by bringing numerous Northwest residents to the Village Center to bolster demand for retail and other services. Plans for the Northwest Specific Plan area show a two-land road in a 68-foot right-of-way with parking and Class II bike lanes on both sides. It will be the responsibility of the Northwest Specific Plan to design the extension and acquire and develop required right-of-way.

Policy 2.5: Mitigate the traffic impacts of new development by assessing impact fees for signalization and lane reconfiguration.

As described in the Crow Canyon Specific Plan Environmental Impact Report, new development will have significant impacts on intersections in and near the Plan area. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program of the EIR identifies signal and lane improvements at specific intersections and assigns responsibility for the cost to the new development. As new projects are processed and approved, they will be assessed impact fees, and the City will undertake the required improvements.

Parking

Adequate parking is essential to the success of both commercial and residential land uses, but improperly handled, it can have a negative impact on the pedestrian-friendly environment that the Specific Plan promotes. Studies have shown that car ownership and use are less in higher-density, mixed-use areas because many trips can be made by foot or bicycle. Combined with parking management, such as shared parking, mixed-use development can reduce the amount of land devoted to parking with environmental and aesthetic benefits.

OBJECTIVE 3: Provide adequate parking for new land uses.

San Ramon has some of the highest parking requirements in the Bay Area, and there is some evidence that more parking is provided than required, particularly where alternative transportation modes are available. Parking can be one of the most expensive components of development, particularly in higher density areas where parking is incorporated into a building or constructed below grade. Excessive parking also can interrupt the continuity of the pedestrian experience—essential for a successful pedestrian-oriented business district—by requiring blank walls in structures or wide gaps between buildings.

Policy 3.1: Reduce parking standards for affordable and multi-family housing, in keeping with actual demand.

The Specific Plan reduces parking standards for low- and very-low-income, multi-family housing units. Studies have shown that lower-income households have lower car ownership and use and have less need for parking. The parking and loading requirements of the San Ramon Zoning Ordinance shall apply in the Crow Canyon Specific Plan area, with the exceptions noted in the Land Use and Urban Design chapter.

Policy 3.2: Encourage the creation of shared public parking facilities within the Village Center area to support commercial uses along Old Crow Canyon Road.

A portion of San Ramon's parking requirements for residential land uses are intended to serve visitors. As visitor parking demand tends to peak when shops and businesses are closed, the Specific



Omega Road looking north.

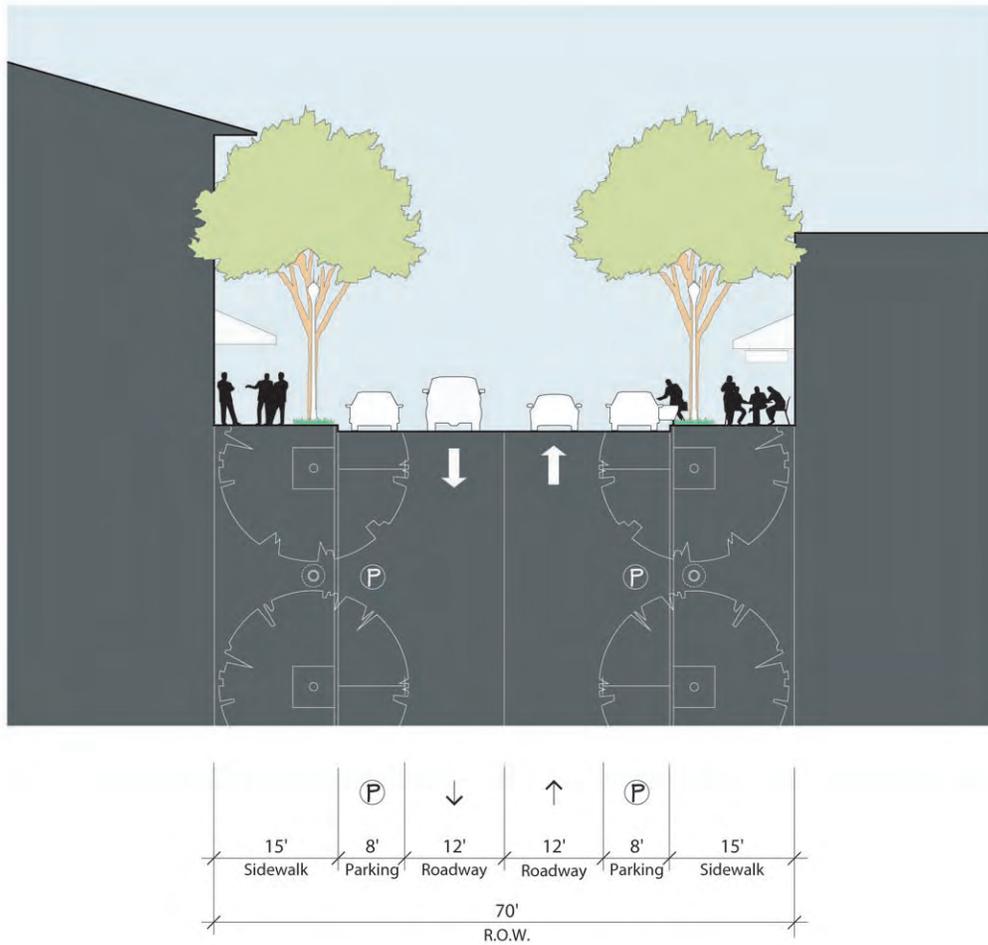


FIGURE 6-3
STREET CROSS-SECTION: OLD CROW CANYON AND OMEGA ROADS



San Ramon Valley Boulevard looking south.

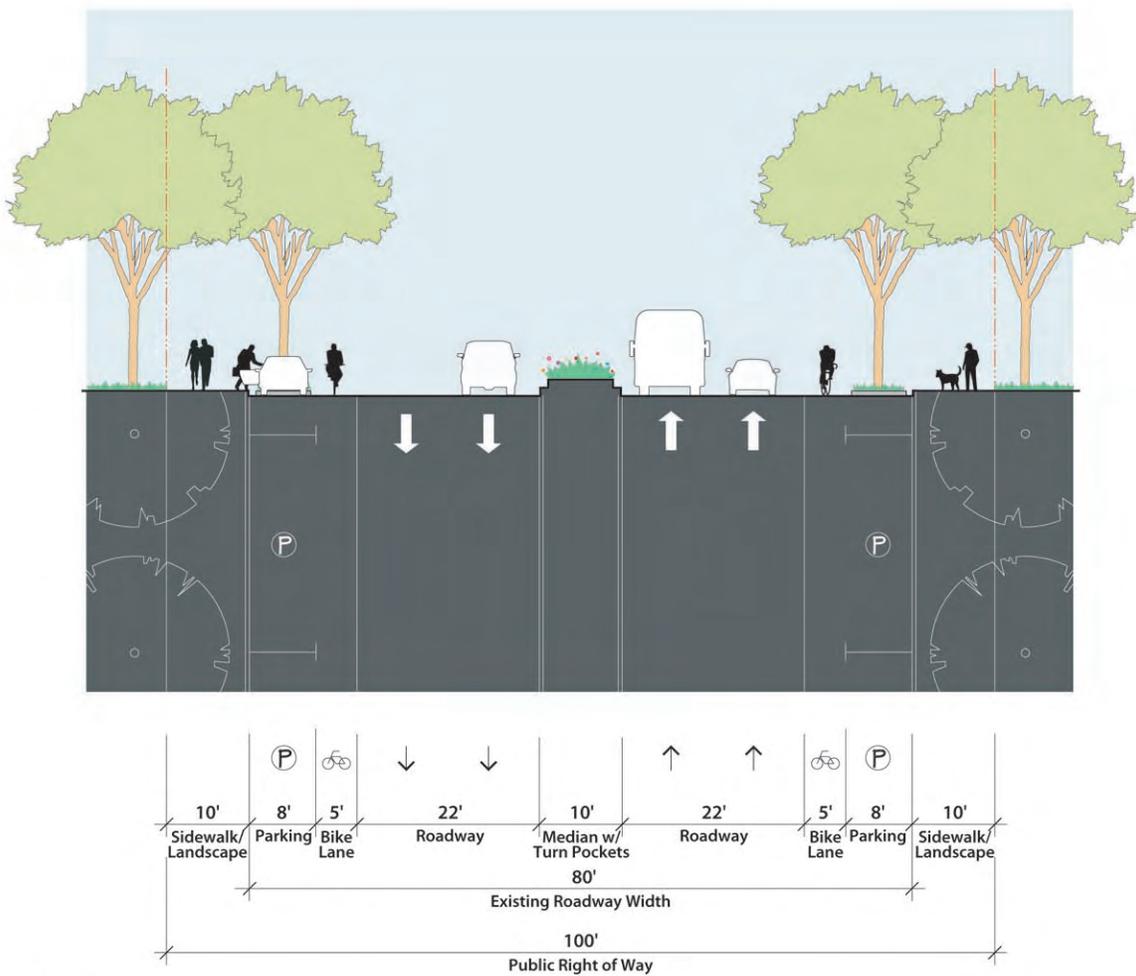


FIGURE 6-4
STREET CROSS-SECTION: SAN RAMON VALLEY BOULEVARD

Plan allows mixed-use projects to use a portion of their commercial parking for residential visitors.

Policy 3.3: Design parking facilities to be compatible with the pedestrian scale and character of the area.

Parking lots and structures can break up the continuity of the pedestrian experience and can create barriers between the sidewalk and buildings. Policies for the various zoning districts require parking lots to be set back and limit their frontage along public streets; policies also require that parking structures be encapsulated or screened with pedestrian-oriented uses, such as shops and building lobbies. Where functional reasons require lots and structures to front sidewalks, they should be set back and screened with landscaping.

Policy 3.4: Maximize on-street parking, particularly in the Village Center, by limiting the number, placement and width of curb-cuts. Incorporate on-street parking into street beautification projects.

On-street parking provides an important supply of convenient parking, and it improves the pedestrian experience by buffering traffic from the sidewalk. Wide and closely spaced curb cuts can reduce the supply of on-street parking and can interrupt the flow and safety of pedestrian traffic. Driveways also break the continuity of commercial frontage, an important consideration in pedestrian-oriented business districts like the Village Center along Old Crow Canyon and Omega Roads. Policies in the Land Use and Urban Design chapter of the Specific Plan restrict curb-cuts and driveways in the Village Center and elsewhere where continuity of the pedestrian experience is critical.

Roadway Design and Pedestrian Circulation

Roadways and sidewalks — together called “streetscape” — are the dominant public space in the Crow Canyon Specific Plan area. More than the buildings and their site improvements, the condition and appearance of roadways and sidewalks sets the image of the district: whether it is attractive or unattractive, green or bare, well maintained or neglected. Also, wide, attractive and well-maintained sidewalks are critical to the success of pedestrian-oriented business districts and are essential components of a pedestrian circulation system.

OBJECTIVE 4: Improve roads and sidewalks to provide efficient, safe and attractive circulation in the Crow Canyon Specific Plan Area.

San Ramon has already undertaken streetscape beautification improvements on San Ramon Valley Boulevard at the Danville town limits and in conjunction with construction of Deerwood Road. The Specific Plan calls for additional improvements to beautify the district.

Policy 4.1: Undertake streetscape and landscape improvements along arterial and collector streets to beautify both the pedestrian and visual environment.

The public improvement program of the Specific Plan calls for a Façade and Landscape Improvement Program which targets streetscape beautification improvements throughout the Plan area and provides loans for commercial façade rehabilitation and upgrades. On Old Crow Canyon Road, Omega Road and Hooper Drive, beautification is coupled with street dedication and widening improvements.

Policy 4.2: Provide adequate and attractive sidewalks for pedestrians and business-related activities.

Sidewalks should be provided along both sides of all roads within the Specific Plan area, including 15-foot-wide walkways along Old Crow Canyon and Omega Roads within the Village Center. In the Village Center, outdoor seating and merchandise displays may encroach up to five feet into the sidewalk area; any additional space should be accommodated in setback areas. (See Figure 6-3).

Policy 4.3: Incorporate tree wells into the parking lane of Old Crow Canyon Road (in South of the Creek area) and San Ramon Valley Boulevard to create a staggered double-row of street trees and to visually narrow the streets while maintaining adequate lane capacity, on-street parking and sidewalk widths.

A double row of street trees can dramatically enhance the appearance of a street, but sidewalks are often not wide enough to accommodate them. To avoid widening streets and sidewalks, the Specific Plan recommends that the second row of trees be provided in the parking lanes of at least two streets. While a few on-street parking spaces are lost, placing trees nearer the center of the street visually narrows the street space and makes it



Streetscape with wide attractive sidewalks.

possible for mature trees to form a canopy shading the street.

Bicycle Circulation

OBJECTIVE 5: Maintain and expand a system of bikeways and trails as an alternative transportation mode and recreation opportunity.

The General Plan states: “Bicycling and walking are key elements of San Ramon’s circulation system. The City has an extensive network of bike-ways, sidewalks, and trails that enhance neighborhood accessibility and help to reduce reliance on the private automobile.... It is the City’s goal to provide and maintain a safe and comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian system that connects all parts of the City.”

The General Plan includes three policies that are directly relevant to the Crow Canyon Specific Plan area:

5.6-1-1: Establish a network of on- and off-roadway bicycle routes to encourage their use for commute, recreational, and other trips. Improve and expand bicycle routes for commuters in San Ramon. The design of bike routes shall consider the safety of cyclists.

5.6-1-2: Develop bicycle routes that provide access to schools and parks.

5.6-1-3: Emphasize the Iron Horse Trail as a major north-south route for non-motorized transportation.

The Iron Horse Trail follows the former Southern Pacific right-of-way. The East Bay Regional Park District plans a Class I bike route linking Martinez with the Alameda/Santa Clara County line along

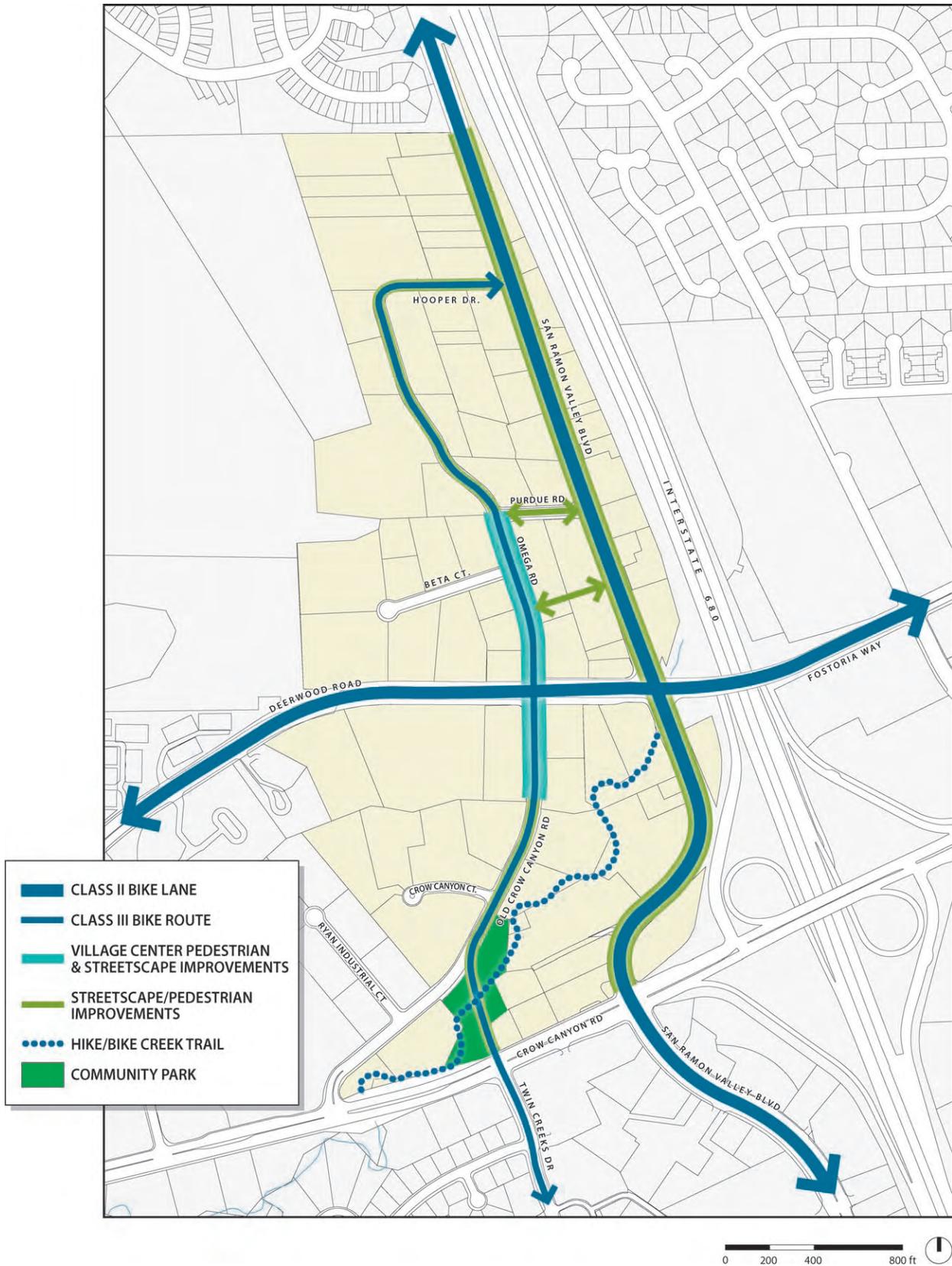


FIGURE 6-5
BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

the trail. From the Crow Canyon Specific Plan area, it is about one-half mile to the Iron Horse Trail via Fostoria Way or Crow Canyon Road.

Policy 5.1: Maintain the system of Class II bikeways along San Ramon Valley Boulevard, Fostoria Way and Deerwood Road.

A Class II bikeway is a separate, marked lane for bicycles alongside vehicular traffic, typically between the outside travel lane and the parking lane or curb. The streetscape beautification improvements of San Ramon Valley Boulevard, Fostoria Way and Deerwood Road should incorporate the necessary lane width, lane markings and signage to maintain the existing bikeways along these routes. (See Figure 6-5.)

Policy 5.2: Establish a Class III bikeway linking Twin Creeks Drive to San Ramon Valley Boulevard via the Twin Creeks Drive extension, Old Crow Canyon Road, Omega Road and Hooper Drive.

Class III bikeways are routes in mixed traffic along designated streets, which have relatively low traffic volumes. They are sometimes identified by pavement markings but more often by signs. Improvement and beautification projects should incorporate the necessary signage on the Twin Creeks Drive extension, Old Crow Canyon Road, Omega Road and Hooper Drive. (See Figure 6-5.)

Policy 5.3: Design the creek trail system with joint-use hiking and bicycle trails.

The creek trail system described in the Parks and Community Centers section requires a 10-foot-wide path, the minimum for a Class I bikeway. Ten feet is wide enough for two bicycles to pass or for bicycles and pedestrians to mix. (See Figure 6-5.)



Bicycle trail.

Policy 5.4: Provide bike parking facilities and bike racks within the Village Center as part of street beautification projects.

As bicycles are often vandalized or stolen, bicyclists need safe and secure parking within close viewing range of their destinations. Simple racks made of pipe work best with the U-shaped locks that bicyclists favor. Streetscape beautification projects, especially in the Village Center, should incorporate bike racks near shop and building entrances in such a way that parked bikes do not block pedestrian access or car doors.

Transportation Systems Management

OBJECTIVE 6: To reduce the need for costly street improvements, utilize Transportation Systems Management (TSM) and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) techniques.

Transportation Systems Management (TSM, also known as Transportation Demand Management or TDM) are methods for more efficiently using the existing transportation infrastructure such as increasing vehicle occupancy and shifting trips away from peak hours. They generally require on-

going management of facilities and programs, but the costs can be significantly less than constructing parking and roads improvements.

The City of San Ramon has adopted a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program, including a Commute Alternative Program targeted at businesses, residences and schools. Bishop Ranch is the largest and best known example in San Ramon. The Bishop Ranch Transportation Centre uses the regional rideshare agency's computerized carpooling program with the largest computerized vanpool and ride-sharing fleet in Northern California. Free programs include carpool, vanpool, transit and guaranteed ride-home programs. Bishop Ranch provides shuttles to BART stations in Walnut Creek and Dublin/Pleasanton.

Policy 6.1: To the extent feasible, require developers to incorporate Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs to reduce peak-hour traffic and on-site parking demand.

Because of its smaller scale, TDM in the Crow Canyon Specific Plan area will necessarily be more modest than Bishop Ranch's, but such measures as preferential parking for carpools and vanpools, transit passes, car-sharing, or lease provisions that limit each unit to one vehicle may be effectively implemented in larger mixed-use projects. Car-sharing has become increasingly popular in California cities, either organized by landlords and homeowners associations or run commercially by organizations such as City CarShare in several Bay Area cities or Flexcar in Los Angeles and San Diego.