Design Guidelines Introduction

Rarely does a city have the potential to provide its citizens with an open space that encompasses recreational spaces and a transportation corridor, active and passive uses, and the opportunity to celebrate, educate and integrate the entire community. El Cerrito has the good fortune to have the Ohlone Greenway, which due to the fact that it runs from North city limit to the South city limit, is literally in every neighborhood’s backyard, providing the people of El Cerrito with a distinctive amenity that everyone can be proud of. Community groups might be organized to name each segment of the Greenway, further identifying portions of the site as distinct parts of the whole.

The Design Guidelines strive to adhere to a set of standards that, through numerous public workshops, community input and internal city meetings, have been identified as crucial elements to integrate into the overall Master Plan Concept as the city moves forward into the next phases of developing the site to its full potential:

- **Create a Unique “El Cerrito” Experience**
  - Create memorable spaces
  - Celebrate historical and cultural aspects of the community
  - Take advantage of unique site ambiance and features
  - Incorporate local materials and resources

- **Increase Use of the Greenway**
  - Provide activity areas to attract users
  - Strengthen relationships to adjacent uses
  - Buffer incompatible uses from each other, make sure that primary and secondary uses do not conflict
  - Provide support amenities (drinking fountains, trash receptacles, restrooms, etc.)

- **Support a Healthy Community**
  - Create areas for recreation and exercise
  - Nurture opportunities for community interaction, education and learning
  - Insure a safe, inviting, attractive space to encourage walking, jogging, biking, skating, etc.

- **Create a Comfortable Place for a Diversity of Users**
  - Improve security (signage, lighting, visibility)
  - Provide a variety of passive and active areas
  - Provide both sunny, open areas and shady, wind protected areas
  - Implement universal design concepts

- **Integrate Sustainable Concepts**
  - Minimize maintenance
  - Facilitate future use of solar power, integrated water management, and other alternative and renewable resources
  - Thoughtfully site activities to take advantage of sun and wind corridors
  - Implement sustainable landscape and planting design practices

Art and history can be combined in many ways to bring interest and purpose to a site. Exploration is another type of journey that can be taken on the site if the right kinds of environmental encouragement are supplied.
Trail Orientation

The Ohlone Greenway, which is located beneath the aerial trackway of BART’s “R” line, is the only existing designated Class I bicycle and pedestrian facility in El Cerrito, used by a high percentage of the population of the city for both recreational and utilitarian trips. (City of El Cerrito Circulation Plan for Bicyclists and Pedestrians, see Bibliography, Sec. G pg. 83) Its uniqueness in this respect and the fact that it extends through the entire city make it a critical transportation corridor for many people in a wide range of user groups, from cyclists to pedestrians, wheelchair users and other physically challenged community members, skaters, walkers, joggers, and just about everyone else. Due to many factors, the number of users of the Greenway is expected to increase in the future. The existing trail does not meet Caltrans guidelines for a highly-used Class I multi-use trail.

Public Workshops were held to determine the needs of the community for an updated trail alignment standard and a list of criteria was developed in order to move forward with the trail alignment design quickly enough to incorporate it into the BART seismic improvements to the elevated structure, which is scheduled to break ground in 2009 and will take two to four years to complete. The list of criteria is as follows:

- Consolidate Pedestrian and Bicycle trails into a single primary multi-use trail where possible; ideal configuration is a 14'-0" asphaltic concrete paved path with a 2'-0" decomposed granite shoulder on each side.
- The trail alignment may be narrowed or otherwise adjusted to accommodate special environmental considerations, such as mature trees, grading or drainage issues, etc.
- Keep the trail as straight as possible. Slow bicycle traffic at intersections with streets with a slight bend ("wiggle" configuration) as opposed to an extreme bend ("kinked" configuration) or straight alignment.
- Where there is not enough room for a single consolidated trail, the split trail will be two equal multi-use trails.
- Minimize demarcations on trail, generally favoring a single stripe in the middle separating traffic directionally as opposed to separating types of user groups from each other.
- Align trail a minimum of 8'-0" away from BART aerial trackway supports if at all possible for visibility and safety, with a smaller distance allowable if required by site conditions.
- It is of utmost importance to maintain the park-like “green” character of the Greenway. Paving must be offset with well-maintained landscape improvements.

An additional secondary pathway system may be developed to provide a more park-like experience in certain locations, or in areas where an off-trail amenity will require access. The primary trail shall be designed with Universal Design principles in mind and must be accessible to all users. Any newly constructed secondary paths shall also be designed with these principles in mind and must be accessible to all users if they provide access to an off-trail amenity.
The Typical Condition configuration applies to approximately 80% of the length of the trail. The few portions of the trail which do not fall into the Typical or Alternative Conditions are designed on a case by case basis unique to the specific site condition.

- A single, multi-use trail on the east side of the BART aerial trackway support columns provides the main access and pathway through the site. Total width is 14'-0” of asphalt (A.C.) paving with a 2'-0” shoulder of decomposed granite (D.G.) at each side to reduce degradation of the paving edges and to give walkers and joggers a softer surface to travel upon.

- A stripe down the middle of the paved trail indicates direction of travel to users but does not attempt to separate different types of users from each other.

- Signage along the path provides guidance as to trail etiquette and lets people know that this trail is appropriate for all users to enjoy.

- Locating this path as far away from the BART columns as the site conditions will allow for an increased sense of safety to users as well as an opportunity to keep the planted portions of the site close to the path, maximizing the “green” experience of the trail.

**Photo Simulation of Proposed Trail Configuration**

Existing typical condition just south of Lincoln Avenue
The Alternative Condition configuration applies to most of the remaining length of the trail, and is the preferred way to compensate for areas where the width of the site narrows to the extent that a single trail of at least 14' total width cannot be aligned to one side or the other of the columns without the distance between trail and BART columns becoming uncomfortably close.

- A “couplet” type trail provides two equally accessible pathways through the site, one on each side of the BART columns with the idea that user traffic will travel to the right side. Total width of each trail would be 8'-0" of asphalt paving with a 2'-0" shoulder of decomposed granite at the outside to reduce degradation of the paving edges and to give walkers and joggers a softer surface to travel upon in each direction.

- This trail condition will not be striped, as the pathway is technically “one way” and signage along the path provides guidance as to trail etiquette as well as directional travel, as well as letting users know that this trail is multi-use and appropriate for all.

- The width of the trail in these alternative areas is constricted by the nature of the condition. The minimum distance of 8'-0" may not be possible; however, as much distance as is available will be maintained, and the landscape design will strive to preserve the “green” experience as much as it can given the limitations, while still providing clear visibility of the surroundings for safety.
**Security Guidelines**

The Ohlone Greenway currently has both real and perceived issues regarding security for users. The isolation of mid-block areas, lack of visibility from the street, and proximity of the existing trails to the elevated BART railway support columns make the site difficult for police to patrol and monitor. Additionally, the existing planting is dense and enhances the perception of unsafe conditions for users. Future conditions along the Greenway will:

- **Increase Visibility Along the Trail**
  - A single multi-use trail will be entirely visible from street crossings
  - Visual obstructions along the trail will be removed
  - Landscape plantings will be low to the ground, or pruned high
  - Potential hiding places will be minimized or eliminated
  - The new trail alignment will maintain a distance between the BART columns and the path (minimum 8’-0” typical distance)

- **Increase “Eyes on the Greenway”**
  - Added amenities will attract user groups to increase usage, making the path feel safer
  - Activity nodes will be created
  - Connections to future development will be provided, ensuring that it does not “turn its back on the Greenway”

- **Improve Lighting**
  - A single, well lit pathway will avoid glare and dark spots (see Lighting Guidelines, Sec. D pg. 38)

- **Install Security Devices, Call Boxes, and Signage at Selected Locations**
  - Surveillance cameras will facilitate improved emergency response
  - Blue Phone call boxes in key locations will provide additional feeling of safety for Greenway users
  - Warning-type signage will let potential perpetrators of crime know the Greenway is not a “no-man’s-land”

- **Design Site Using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Practices (CPTED)** (see Bibliography Sec. G pg. 83)
  - Natural Surveillance — “See and be seen”
  - Natural Access Control — Clearly differentiate between public and private space, control the flow of people
  - Territorial Reinforcement — Create a “sphere of influence” to develop a sense of proprietorship
  - Maintenance — Well maintained public spaces make for safer places. (see Maintenance Guidelines, Sec. D pg. 28)

**Potential Locations for Security Devices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mid-block areas are isolated and suffer from a lack of visibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Overgrown shrubs and a pair of narrow pathways make visibility from the street crossings difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>BART columns directly adjacent to the paths in some places provide potential hiding places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Plenty of visibility and landscape kept low and high reduces the potential for security issues along this Greenway trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Increasing usage along the trail through more activity nodes, a wider trail with fewer visual obstructions, or a shared community interest and sense of pride and proprietorship in the site makes for a more usable, pleasant space for all.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Existing Conditions**

**Proposed Security Elements**

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**LEGEND**

- CALL BOX UNIT
- SURVEILLANCE CAMERA
Safety Guidelines

Quite separate from issues of security are issues of safety for trail users. Areas needing improvements are as follows: navigation at intersections where the trail and streets or pedestrian and non-motorized vehicles meet are difficult to navigate, lighting for night time or early morning use, narrow width and alignment for easy passing, and the condition of the pavement. While the pavement condition and alignment of the Ohlone Greenway trail will be improved by the restoration completed during BART’s seismic retrofit, there are a number of Guidelines related to safety that will be adhered to as the development of other areas is considered:

- Clear navigational cues at crossings, including improved visibility, clear signage/demarcations, lighting, and pavement alignment to accommodate ease of passing
- Increased lighting for safe early morning and night time navigation of the primary trail, especially important for commuters
- Regular maintenance of trail to provide smooth, level surface for walking and other activities

Accessibility Guidelines

Universal Design is the concept that designed environments should be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. It has evolved from the principles of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, which dictates that designed spaces must be accessible to all people, including those whose mobility is limited in some way. As sites along the Greenway are developed or improved, those with limited access issues will be brought up to compliance with ADA accessibility requirements, including but not limited to:

- Grading of paved areas to discourage flooding and promote ease of travel
- Accessibility to all amenity areas, such as playgrounds and plazas
- Conditions at crossings will be improved with truncated domes and lighted crosswalk indicators
- Widths and grading of primary trails shall comply with ADA requirements.
- Adequate landscape clearances will be maintained to avoid interference with trail users.

Additionally, the path will be brought up to ADA accessibility requirements to make navigation and travel easier for those with mobility limitations, and the City of El Cerrito will seek to incorporate Universal Design principles where possible when proceeding with development of specific sites along the Ohlone Greenway.

Existing Conditions

Intersections where trails come together are potential locations for user conflict. Existing worn pavement. Edges without decomposed granite shoulders are less than optimal, especially to visually- or mobility-impaired trail users. Grading issues on secondary trails are difficult to navigate for those with impaired mobility. Existing trails are too narrow for comfortable passing.

Proposed Elements

Adequate lighting will allow for more use of the trail and fewer conflicts. A new wider trail will provide room for everyone. A decomposed granite shoulder bordered with edging will prevent crumbling trail edges. Truncated domes will be installed at street intersections. Wide, smooth paving surfaces are easier to travel upon. Accessible sandboxes accommodate all users.
Maintenance Guidelines

Maintenance concerns are among the most important issues on the Ohlone Greenway. There is a theory put forth by the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) guidelines that maintenance is evidence of ownership of a site. When a public site is not well maintained, it encourages further destructive actions. The more quickly an instance of vandalism or graffiti is fixed, the less likely another instance of such behavior will happen again. While abatement of vandalism, as well as other ongoing maintenance requirements such as trash removal, landscape maintenance, and maintenance of site amenities do cost the city some money annually, the value that is returned by a site that is well-used and well loved by the community is priceless. There are a number of guidelines that, when implemented, will increase the usability of the Greenway and correspondingly, its value to the community:

- Accommodate trash and recycling on the site
  - Trash and recycling containers will be placed consistently and emptied regularly
  - Creek channels will be cleaned regularly

- Use low maintenance planting palette
  - Plantings shall be chosen to reduce pruning and other maintenance as well as water usage
  - Appropriate planting will reduce weed growth

- Maintenance of site amenities
  - Replace old, broken or outdated equipment such as play structures, riparian/creek observation decks and bridges, and site furnishings
  - Prompt repair of these amenities when an act of vandalism occurs will reduce repeat occurrences

- Provide for community involvement in maintaining the site
  - Organize community work days to pick up trash
  - “You Clean It” stations will provide users with gloves, trash bags and other cleaning supplies
  - More dog waste baggie receptacles will be provided along the trail
  - Territorial Reinforcement – Create a “sphere of influence” to develop a sense of proprietorship

- Reduce opportunities for graffiti
  - Art on BART support columns (upon approval from BART) and murals on walls increase aesthetic appeal, which has been shown to discourage graffiti in public places
  - Shrub plantings or use of “Green Screen” products to screen walls and fences will limit access for vandals and taggers
  - New site furnishings and signage shall be chosen with durability and resistance to vandalism in mind

Existing Conditions

Replacing broken or obsolete amenities will help reduce vandalism, and increase the opportunity for more positive active uses.

Graffiti is a common occurrence along the Greenway that could be deterred.

More appropriate planting choices will minimize weeds and invasive plant species, as well as making trash cleanup easier.

Proposed Maintenance Elements

This “You Clean It” station is used by the City of Oakland to assist community members in keeping their public spaces free of litter. Similar stations could be located along the Ohlone Greenway.

Opportunities for artistic expression are numerous on the Greenway site; not only is public art beautiful, it also indicates a sense of pride of place that lessens the possibilities for graffiti and vandalism.

The integration of drought tolerant and native plants into the landscape will not only cut down on pruning and weeding maintenance issues, they will also minimize the need for fertilizer and pesticide application, and require less watering.
Signage Guidelines

The Ohlone Greenway supports a wide range of uses within its limits, ranging from a travel corridor to a place for reflection; from a corridor connecting “here” to “there” to an opportunity to stop and appreciate one’s surroundings, in both active and passive ways. These varied uses instill the need for clear, functional signage that fulfills several tasks:

- **Directional/Wayfinding**
  - Directs users to adjacent locations
  - Indicates distances to various local amenities

- **Geographical/Identity**
  - Street-type signs at intersections of multi-use trail with streets or crossing pedestrian paths

- **Recreational**
  - Distance markers set near or into the path for joggers, cyclists, walkers, etc.

- **Safety**
  - Warning signs indicating upcoming traffic conflict areas between user groups
  - “Rules of the Road” signs detailing appropriate behavior on multi-use trail

- **Interpretive**
  - Educational, historical, habitat or other interpretive signage relevant to the site, specifically or generally

Proposed Examples of Signage

![Interpretive Signage Examples](Image)

Infrastructure

Underlying all of the functions, guidelines and issues of this Master Plan is the absolutely crucial need for infrastructure to support the various requirements that a site of this importance demands. This behind-the-scenes framework must be considered when the design of each individual site is designed, and care must be taken to realize that while the Ohlone Greenway may be improved gradually, the components of a strong and long-lasting infrastructure must be considered as a whole. One category of infrastructure is site-specific amenities:

- **Toilet/Restroom facilities**
  - There are a variety of restroom facility options available to consider for the sites where such a facility has been recommended. In addition to budgetary considerations, one main criteria should be whether running water is desired or whether a chemical or compost type of facility is more appropriate. Maintenance is also an issue and may in fact decide whether such facilities are even feasible to include on the Greenway at all.

- **Water Fountains**
  - Water fountains are highly desirable at regular intervals along a path which is used for recreational and exercise purposes. An effort should be made to provide water lines to support such an amenity, which would benefit not only trail users of the human persuasion but dogs whose owners bring them to sites along the Greenway, such as potential Dog Park sites, as well.

- **Par Course facilities**
  - The current Par Course along the Ohlone Greenway is obsolete and in poor condition. Many, if not all, of the installations will be removed during the BART seismic project, and will not be replaced at that time. Input from the community should be undertaken to determine whether such an amenity is desirable to trail users, and if the feedback shows that it is, research will be conducted to decide what kind of exercise equipment would be most useful to all users of the trail. Any equipment installed will be safe and durable, as well as being maintainable to a high extent.

Perhaps more integral to the overall structure of the Greenway and its various sites is the overall internal infrastructure, that which trail users never even see:

- **Irrigation**
  - Although plantings will primarily be drought tolerant, an efficient irrigation system is still required to establish a healthy landscape and to provide water to more active use areas, such as turf. The City has designed a backbone irrigation system which may be installed as a part of the BART Earthquake Safety Program Greenway restoration program to irrigate replacement plantings and added on to as future plantings or special areas are developed.

- **Electrical Connections**
  - Electrical supply is needed to support additional lighting as well as for proposed security elements such as cameras and phones and future desired technological components such as electronic informational kiosks, wayfinding stations and wireless Internet connections which were all brought up at community meetings. Existing electrical connections can provide supply power for the overhead pathway lighting system currently in place and the existing irrigation system controllers located in the pedestal cabinets along the Greenway. Additional power requirements would require upgrades to the electrical service points by PG&E.
Planting Guidelines Introduction

As a result of many community workshops and meetings with El Cerrito staff, a list of landscape goals was created for the Ohlone Greenway. The goals provide a guideline for future planting schemes for the Ohlone Greenway. The intent is to provide users with a sense of ownership, safety, and pride in the Greenway.

- **Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas**
  - Protect and enhance existing creek watersheds, animal habitats, significant trees and native plants
- **Celebrate special character areas**
  - Urban Forest Demonstration Garden, Wildflower Area, Itaya Plaza
  - Create a local identity by providing historical ties to the Greenway
- **Use plants that provide variety, seasonal interest and habitat**
  - Seasonal color, foliage color and form, and flowering plants
  - Indigenous plants that provide habitat for local wildlife
- **Maintain visibility for safety**
  - Keep plantings low, especially near paths or limb trees up high, and screen with tall plantings appropriately to avoid creating unsafe edges and/or spaces
- **Minimize maintenance requirements**
  - Choose plants that are well adapted to El Cerrito’s climate and soils, so as to be able to minimize pruning and use of synthetic fertilizers and inorganic pest control
  - Reduce manicured turf areas
- **Reduce water usage**
  - Design with drought tolerance in mind
  - Provide on-site stormwater management such as bioswales
  - Design an efficient irrigation system

Additionally, a selection of appropriate plant species was organized into four planting palettes (see Sec. D pg. 32-33) to support the landscape goals and offer a way to provide a cohesive look to the Greenway while also celebrating variety on the site. These palettes would be keyed to appropriate existing or proposed areas on the site:

- **Meadow**
- **Oak Woodland**
- **Riparian / Swale**
- **Cultural**

Existing Conditions

- Restore or create riparian areas where possible.
- Protect and enhance existing frog habitat.
- Culturally significant areas need enhancement with shrub and perennial plantings and more educational signage.
- Undeveloped areas have the potential to be improved upon, creating a much greater benefit to the community.
- Isolated areas create opportunities for dumping and homeless camps.
- Protect existing native plantings and reduce maintenance requirements by planting native species adapted to El Cerrito climate and soil.
- Turf requires unnecessary high water use for areas which are not used. Therefore turf should not be used as an ornamental groundcover, but is acceptable where it supports public use.
- Underutilized existing sites have the potential to be improved upon, creating a much greater benefit to the community.
- Culturally significant areas need enhancement with shrub and perennial plantings and more educational signage.
- Turf requires unnecessary high water use for areas which are not used. Therefore turf should not be used as an ornamental groundcover, but is acceptable where it supports public use.
- Protect existing native plantings and reduce maintenance requirements by planting native species adapted to El Cerrito climate and soil.
- Turf should not be used as an ornamental groundcover, but is acceptable where it supports public use.
**Protect Environmental Areas**

The Ohlone Greenway offers a variety of ecological oases for new and existing wildlife. From the Pacific Chorus Frog habitat to the California Native Wildlife or Wildflower gardens to the Oak Woodland, areas like these will be protected and enhanced along the trail. These areas will not only provide much needed habitat for Bay Area wildlife, but also offer interpretive opportunities for current and potential Ohlone Trail users.

**Celebrate Special Areas**

On the Ohlone Greenway there exist many special areas that call for celebration. New plantings and minor renovations to hardscape elements will open these areas to the public and increase the possibilities for recreation, education, and relaxation. One example is the Itaya Plaza. This area currently is sparsely planted and features an outdated hardscape space. Incorporating improved planting and designing a more user friendly hardscape would enliven this special area.

**Minimize Maintenance**

Public space can be difficult to maintain, and the Ohlone Greenway is no different. Maintenance visits will be more productive and costs reduced by planting Mediterranean climate native plants, mulching heavily with bark chips, and fertilizing with leaf litter and/or lawn clippings already present on the site. Small turf strips will transform into grassy meadows, native plants will attract beneficial insects, and creative plantings will help reduce graffiti opportunities.

**Provide Variety and Interest**

One of the most popular times of year on the United States East Coast is fall due to the spectacular array of leaf colors. Much more subtle but no less compelling are the seasonal changes here in California. Through inventive planting palettes, the Ohlone Greenway can easily be enhanced by providing trail users with a diverse and colorful variety of tree and shrub foliage colors, plant forms, fall color, and prolific, seasonal blossoms.

**Reduce Water Usage**

Many people are feeling the effects of the California drought. Just look up at the East Bay Hills and one can see our dry, brown grasslands dominating the landscape. Now more than ever public landscapes need to set an example for beautiful, drought-tolerant home gardening. The Ohlone Greenway can lead the way! Large turf areas will be reduced or replaced with Mediterranean climate natives and an efficient irrigation system installed. In addition, bioswales will be installed to reduce surface run-off to the Bay.
Meadow

The meadow landscape will provide habitat for insects and birds while preserving visibility and defensibility for trail users. By designing with California native grasses and perennials, the meadow landscape will reduce the need for maintenance: little to no mowing of turf areas, little to no water use, and less weed management through the reduced need for pesticides and fertilizers.

Example Plant List for Meadow Palette:

- Carex pansa
- Cistus hybridus
- Erigeron glaucus
- Eschscholzia californica
- Festuca glauca
- Helictotrichon sempervirens
- Lupinus spp.
- Mimulus spp.
- Pennisetum spp.
- Penstemon heterophylla
- Salvia spp.
- Santolina spp.

- California Meadow Sedge
- Rockrose
- Seaside Daisy
- California Poppy
- Blue Fescue
- Oat Grass
- Lupine
- Sticky Monkey Flower
- Fountain Grass
- Beardtongue
- Sage
- Lavender Cotton

Oak Woodland

To evoke a feeling of the East Bay, oak woodlands will be created at various points throughout the Greenway. Not only do the woodlands represent the historic Bay Area landscape, they will provide interpretive and cultural opportunities for residents to learn about everything from Native American uses of acorns to the natural life cycle of an oak. Oak woodlands are very drought tolerant and will reduce water usage and maintenance needs.

Example Plant List for Oak Woodland Palette:

- Arbutus spp.
- Arctostaphylos spp.
- Baccharis pilularis
- Ceanothus californica
- Ceanothus spp.
- Cercis occidentalis
- Garrya elliptica
- Heteromeles arbutifolia
- Ribes spp.
- Quercus spp.
- Strawberry Tree, Madrone
- Manzanita
- Dwarf Coyote Brush
- Bush Anemone
- Wild Lilac
- Western Redbud
- Silktassel
- Toyon
- Gooseberry, Currant
- Oak, various native species
Riparian / Swale

Warm winters, cool summers. Thanks to the marine influence of the San Francisco Bay we are blessed with a mild climate, few botanical allergens, and a diverse population of people, plants, and animals. The riparian and swale areas within the Greenway present an opportunity for us to continue to respect the local watershed and clean site irrigation and storm water before it drains to the Bay. By collecting storm water in bioswales, infrastructure costs are reduced while creating habitat for frogs, beneficial insects, and birds. Due to the uniqueness of the riparian and swale habitat, plants tend to have varied seasonal interest which will provide interpretive and educational opportunities year-round.

Example Plant List for Riparian/Swale Palette:

- Acer macrophyllum
- Alnus rhombifolia
- Calycanthus occidentalis
- Carex spp.
- Chondropetalum tectorum
- Cornus stolonifera
- Heuchera spp.
- Isolepis cernua
- Polystichum munitum
- Populus fremontii
- Umbellularia californica
- Woodwardia fimbriata

Cultural

The cultural landscape palette celebrates the uniqueness of El Cerrito: its local talent, residents, and geography. For example, the local artist and horticulturalist Harland Hand (1922-1998) “painted with plants”, using his flair for color and texture combined with a vast knowledge of climate-appropriate planting to create landscapes rich with evocative beauty. Using a selection of aesthetic yet appropriate plant species, local gathering spots along the Ohlone Greenway will come to life with flowering trees, shrubs, and perennials. Picnic and seating areas, an informal amphitheater, strolling areas and active use areas will be designed to serve the community in a variety of ways, providing many examples of the ways that the appeal of dramatic design can intersect with environmentally mindful landscape practices.

Example Plant List for Cultural Palette:

- Acer rubrum
- Carpinus betulus
- Dinetes vegeta
- Echinacea purpurea
- Euryops pectinatus
- Fraxinus angustifolia
- Hemerocallis hybrids
- Lantana spp.
- Lavandula spp.
- Liriope muscari
- Magnolia x soulangeana
- Malus spp
- Phormium hybrids
- Quercus rubra
- Rosa ‘Meidiland’
- Sophora japonica

Harland Hand Memorial Garden, photo courtesy of Ted Kipping

Planting Guidelines - Palette
Typical Street / Trail Crossing Treatments

- Pole lights, Typ.
- Small specimen trees as element to help define space, Typ.
- "Street sign" at crossing of trail and street, Typ.
- Truncated domes at curb cut ramp
- BART track column
- "Rules of the road" signage for trail safety
- Motion-activated controllers for crosswalk flashers
- New consolidated multi-use trail
- A.C. paving w/ 2" DG shoulders
- No mow meadow grass
- Bulb out at crossing to calm traffic, for safety
- Low planting in bulbout planting areas to provide color and texture

[Diagram showing typical street and trail crossing treatments]

Pole lights at Baxter Creek Interpretive Area
Western redbud trees, an example of a small specimen tree
Motion activated controllers for crosswalk flashers
Crossing street sign at street / trail crossings
Typical Trail / Trail Crossing Treatments

- **EXISTING LARGE LANDSCAPE TREES, TYP**
- **SMALL SPECIMEN TREES AS ELEMENT TO HELP DEFINE SPACE, TYP**
- **ALTERNATE CONFIGURATION OF MULTI-USE TRAIL — 2 "COUPLETS" A.C. PAVED PATHS W/ 2’ D.G. SHOULDERS**
- **TYPICAL GREENWAY LANDSCAPING CONDITION**
- **BART TRACK COLUMN**
- **"RULES OF THE ROAD" NAVIGATIONAL, AND WARNING SIGNAGE, FOR TRAIL SAFETY**
- **LANDSCAPING IN ADJACENT PRIVATE PROPERTY, TYP**

**INTERSECTING TRAIL CONNECTING GREENWAY TO ADJACENT STREETS AND USE SITES (RETAIL, RESIDENTIAL, ETC.)**

**"STREET SIGNS" AT INTERSECTION OF MULTIPLE PEDESTRIAN TRAILS**

- **"RULES OF THE ROAD", NAVIGATIONAL, AND WARNING SIGNAGE, FOR TRAIL SAFETY**
- **SPECIAL PLANTING AREA AT INTERSECTION TO DEFINE SPACE, TYP**
- **LIGHTED BOLLARD, TYP**

- **VINES AND LOW SHRUBS PLANTED ALONG FENCE AT SITE PERIMETER TO DEFINE SPACE AND SCREEN ADJACENT PROPERTY.**

Small landscape trees, such as ‘Swan Hill’ olives, define vertical space and give special character to “important” zones, like pedestrian crossings, along the Greenway.

Lighted bollards at intersections between pedestrian trails improve visibility and safety, during the day as well as after dark.

The use of various types of signage at crossing sites will help users navigate and promote safety.
Active Use Area Guidelines

The Ohlone Greenway provides a great deal of public open space to the City of El Cerrito. Identified within this Master Plan are numerous active use nodes which will be developed to enhance the useability of the site. Though this document proposes conceptual possibilities for individual sites in the Public Improvements Section E, the final design will be decided upon at the time the site is developed, and while it may not incorporate all the elements of the conceptual designs contained in this Master Plan, certain guidelines will drive the design, such as:

• Appropriate scale to the surroundings
  - Sit larger scale use areas, such as open turf or meadow areas for group activities, where there is space available.
  - Locate smaller use nodes such as bocce or horseshoe courts or par course/exercise equipment in more modestly sized areas

• Provide activities for all user groups
  - Seniors, adults, teenagers, and children are all entitled to use activity areas that fulfill discrete needs for each group

• Awareness of multiple functions on the site
  - Active use areas may not conflict with the Greenway’s use as a transit corridor
  - Active use nodes may require buffering from areas with more passive or quieter uses

• Sensitivity to surrounding areas
  - Adjacent residential areas or community centers will be considered when siting active use areas so that potential noise, lighting, and other sensory features do not negatively impact them

Passive Use Area Guidelines

One of the ways the Greenway is most valuable to the City of El Cerrito is as a transportation corridor. Compatible with this function is the opportunity for passive use that does not interfere with the multi-use trail. Seating areas, shaded areas, secondary strolling paths, and locations for low-intensity activities such as chess, educational gathering areas or picnicking are important to include in a site that, among its many other functions, provides the residents and workers within El Cerrito with the ability to identify and connect with the environment outside their doors and walls. These passive areas should be designed to be:

• Safe
• Accessible
• Durable
• Attractive
• Functional

Passive Use Areas - Character Images

Active Use Areas - Character Images
Community Building Area Guidelines

Due to its central location and the current and future high density development areas located nearby, the Ohlone Greenway has the potential to be a powerful community building center. A wide variety of group activity areas could be situated within the site, including but not limited to:

- **Dog Parks**
  - Locate to serve high-density multi-family areas, but do not site too close to residential
  - Use Guidelines for successful off-leash dog parks when implementing specific sites (see Bibliography Sec. G, pg. 83 for reference to one such relevant Guideline). Design each dog park at an appropriate scale to the specific location

- **Community Art sites**
  - Identify and implement appropriate ephemeral and permanent locations for community art projects. Work with the City of El Cerrito Arts & Culture Commission to promote art opportunities on the Ohlone Greenway

- **Community Gardens**
  - Encourage community groups to come together and “take ownership” of suggested sites along the Greenway appropriate for Community Garden use
  - Provide special planting areas along the Greenway where groups can gather and enjoy the environment, such as Rose Gardens or Sensory Gardens

- **Group Gathering areas**
  - Provide open space area where larger recreational or entertainment oriented groups can form
  - Promote possibility of Greenway as community meeting point in crisis/emergency situations

The existing play area sites along the Ohlone Greenway have historically been well used and should be enhanced to provide the local residents, many of whom have children, safe places for play that are consistent with current standards and requirements. With the high density zones in nearby areas growing rapidly, additional sites have been identified in the Master Plan for the site. Whether a new site or an existing site is being designed, the following Guidelines should be considered and incorporated into any potential play area:

- **Safety**
  - Equipment must comply with current safety, accessibility, and Universal Design standards
  - Play areas should be age-appropriate, consistent with the needs of the specific location

- **Integration with overall Design Vision**
  - Materials will be durable and forward-thinking, sustainable materials will be considered
  - Discourage “traditional” play equipment that does not blend into the natural design vision of the site. Where possible opt for alternative structures and activities that fulfill multiple functions, such as sculptural, recycling, or educational uses
  - Fitting play areas into the natural topography of the site is highly desirable

- **Appropriateness of location**
  - Play areas will be located close to high-density or multi-family neighborhoods
  - Encourage multi-generational interaction by locating play areas near Senior Center and retirement residences

Play Area Guidelines

Play Areas - Character Images

- Topographically appropriate play area
- Boat structure inspires imaginative play
- Semi-traditional design uses natural colors
- Swings using durable, recycled materials
- Accessible sandbox accommodates all users
- Sculpted rock provides multiple functions

Special Activity Areas
Lighting Guidelines

Improved lighting along the Ohlone Greenway is of the most critical importance. Increased maintenance, safety, and security are all issues that every user group without exception has expressed a desire to experience along the Ohlone corridor; these factors will all be affected positively by implementing a well-designed lighting plan. A more subtle but equally valuable benefit of the addition of lighting elements to the Greenway corridor is the aesthetic appeal of a group of elements that bring the overall site into unity. Another opportunity that should be taken advantage of is to incorporate environmentally responsible and more energy-conscious fixtures into the future design, utilizing solar technology and other types of “green” lighting as it becomes available and affordable enough to be practical.

Although there is existing lighting, it does not fulfill the requirements of a cohesive lighting design because it does not place light where it can be used. The existing unfocused lighting elements cause a light “splash” island effect in a sea of darkness, making night travel through the site even more difficult. Random and occasional freestanding elements do not match each other and are not properly located. This document recommends that a complete lighting plan be designed by a qualified source, taking the new trail design as well as current and future photometric needs into account. The lighting requirements of the site can be satisfied by a combination of the following elements:

• “Box”-type lighting
  - Mount to elevated BART trackway in place of existing fixtures, adjusting spacing if necessary to provide appropriate footcandles to the primary pathway.

• Pole-mounted pedestrian scale light fixtures
  - Use at Trail / Street intersections, as well as in locations where box lights would provide insufficient illumination, such as at use nodes or in places where the trail is located further than 15'-0" from the trackway.

• Lighted bollards
  - Effective as wayfinding devices at trail/trail intersections, bollard lighting can also be used at street crossings or in conjunction with signage along the trail.

• “Alternative” lighting sources
  - Use elements which combine light and other uses such as art, site furnishings or ground plane features, perhaps using low voltage lighting or solar power as an exciting way to add ambient light as focal points, gathering monuments, or neighborhood destinations to higher use areas on the Greenway.

Potential Locations for Lighting Elements

LEGEND

OLHOLNE GREENWAY MASTER PLAN — EL CERRITO, CALIFORNIA

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Site Furnishing Guidelines

Site furnishings along the Greenway should reflect the overall design vision, incorporating a natural feel within the context of an urban environment. An overall family of site furnishings should be used for the general condition, with the opportunity to use special or unique options at specific sites to accentuate a particular theme. All site furnishings should be durable and practical, first and foremost, with a timeless quality that will allow them to be in use for an extended period without appearing dated. The selection of elements has been, in part, drawn from the site furnishings of the adjacent sites of Baxter Creek Gateway Park and San Pablo Avenue, to lend a consistency to the site.

The possibilities for recycled or reclaimed materials should also be considered when choosing specific components of the site furnishings family. Below is a suite of proposed site furnishing images; the selection of specific elements should be finalized at the time of design, adhering at least in intent to these proposed elements.

Site Furnishing Character Concepts

Benches are dated in appearance, though widely used, and should be of a consistent and more attractive style. There are a number of trash can styles existing on site, including these steel drums. This bench comes in a recycled plastic and an ipe (sustainable tropical hardwood) version. Either is extremely durable as well as naturally good looking. This bicycle rack, this shape is easy to use and sculptural as well. Durable and casual, the trash receptacle used at Baxter Creek would also fit well with the design vision of the Greenway, provided that it accommodates recycling. The same water fountain used at Baxter Creek could be used to good effect along the Ohlone Greenway.

Seatpads and seatwalls should be simple in design, but should incorporate detail such as a chamfered edge or a reveal. Seatwalls can also incorporate anti-skateboard elements, shown, or incorporate pipe-rail edges to allow skateboard use if desired. An all metal version of the same bench is also available for certain applications. This bicycle rack is successfully used already at Baxter Creek Interpretive Area. A simple cast concrete bollard would fit well with other furnishings and would be more effective in limiting certain types of traffic where necessary.

Existing Site Furnishings

Existing bollards are difficult to see. Bollards should be avoided on the path right-of-way and any bollards that are implemented should be more substantial. Lighted bollards provide illumination at a pedestrian scale to provide additional indicators at conflict zones, such as trail to trail crossings. The same pole lighting fixture used at Baxter Creek should be continued along the Greenway where such fixtures are appropriate.

The possibilities for recycled or reclaimed materials should also be considered when choosing specific components of the site furnishings family. Below is a suite of proposed site furnishing images; the selection of specific elements should be finalized at the time of design, adhering at least in intent to these proposed elements.

Site Furnishings

OHLONE GREENWAY MASTER PLAN – EL CERRITO, CALIFORNIA
Art Opportunities Guidelines

In collecting data and community input for the Ohlone Greenway Master Plan, it is determined that one amenity that is extremely important to many El Cerrito residents was to expand the Greenway’s potential as a display area for public art. The generous amount of space, central location, and proximity to the civic center, community centers, and local schools make it a perfect location for many different types of artistic expression which might range from ephemeral art events, such as sidewalk chalk art, literary readings, or dance events, to permanent visual installations by school groups, community groups, and local artists.

Additionally, in 2005, the El Cerrito City Council adopted an Art in Public Places Ordinance, which establishes guidelines for the integration of public art into new private and public development and redevelopment projects. Qualifying projects will be required to devote a percentage of development costs toward the installation of public art. With so much future development happening adjacent to the Greenway, there is certainly an opportunity to enhance this important open space with the addition of art elements. The El Cerrito Arts and Culture Commission will be a valuable resource in determining appropriate cultural programs on the site. (See Bibliography, Sec. G pg. 83)

Although several locations have been specifically indicated within the conceptual design for art installations, any site would be appropriate provided that the installation fits spatially within the location and does not conflict with other uses of the Greenway.

Art Elements - Character Images

- Bicycle racks as functional art
- Murals on support columns
- Public performance
- A school project produced these tiles for an installation at a nearby park
- A live music performance at the Baxter Creek area.
- There is ample room along the Greenway for all kinds of expression
- A sculpture garden
- A school project produced these tiles for a public art project in El Cerrito.
- This tile mural, Viridian Suite, No. 4, was the first Art in Public Places Program Public Art Project in El Cerrito. It was installed in spring of 2008 at Montessori Family School.
- A live music performance at the Baxter Creek area.

- A school project produced these tiles for an installation at a nearby park
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**Interpretive Element Guidelines**

The Ohlone Greenway site contains within its limits a multitude of natural and historical sites of significance. There is an untapped opportunity to use the Greenway to further the education of residents and visitors to the area through the use of Interpretive signage and elements:

- **Educational**
  - Provide educational information along primary and secondary trails for use of school groups

- **Historical/ Cultural**
  - Provide signage or other monumentation at sites along the Greenway of cultural or historical significance
  - Install memorial plaques, such as the one currently at Robert Itaya Plaza, at appropriate locations

- **Habitat/ Environmental**
  - Indicate areas where native habitats of plants or wildlife exist or have been rehabilitated, such as the Fluvius Innominatus area or the Pacific Chorus Frog habitat area
  - Provide signage or other informational monumentation at environmentally or sustainably relevant sites, such as Rain Garden areas

- **Art**
  - Incorporate artistic features into interpretive elements wherever feasible and appropriate. (See Art Opportunity guidelines Sec. E, pg. 40)

Interpretive elements will often be in the form of signage, although they could easily take many other forms, from monument type structures to plaques or tiles set into the ground plane, to the creative use of materials to delineate a space of significance within the site. All interpretive elements should be carefully considered and designed to enhance and enliven the overall experience of the Greenway.
Ecological Approach Guidelines

Integrating an ecological approach into a historic train corridor and highly used urban site such as the Ohlone Greenway offers a unique challenge and opportunity. While the site will always have an urban feel, that feel can be enhanced by the addition of a landscape that supports wildlife or provides other ecological functions. For example, the Greenway has numerous creek crossings and drainage swales which can be expanded and incorporated into habitat sites, as well as areas where community groups have worked to preserve habitats for local flora and fauna. These areas should be recognized as important community amenities, and built upon as the Greenway develops. Possible elements could include:

• Stormwater and drainage elements
  -Raingardens
  -Creek crossings and the creek environment at Fluvius Inominatus, between Portola and Schmidt
  -Existing drainage swales, which divert runoff to the storm sewer system, could be designed to retain some runoff on site
• Local Plant Habitats
  -Native plant habitat areas
  -Retaining existing healthy native trees and other plants on site where possible
• Encouraging native habitat for animal species
  -Existing Pacific Chorus Frog habitat
  -Planting designed to encourage local fauna such as butterflies, birds, and other animals

Effort should be taken to incorporate these elements into specific site designs as they are begun. While it may not be possible to duplicate a natural environment in such an urban location, it is possible to create an ecology that is moderately self-sustaining and requires less maintenance.

A retention basin is designed to store runoff on site; plants are selected that can take advantage of occasional saturation but survive with little water during the dry season.

The California Sister butterfly is one of many beneficial native insects whose main plant of sustenance, the Coast Live Oak, already grows along the Greenway.

A number of native grasses are beautiful, require little maintenance, and can be planted in a drainage swale.

The Ohlone Greenway at Eureka Avenue provides habitats for wildlife, such as hummingbirds and other birds, can be done with a thoughtful selection of native and drought-tolerant plant selections.

Native gardens can provide many benefits, even in a confined space.

Urban drainage swale planting with trees, grasses and flowering plants.

Swales can appear natural or designed like this one; all do the job of reducing the water that runs off a site into the storm drains, and the chemicals and environmental toxins that run off along with it.

Providing habitats for wildlife, such as hummingbirds and other birds, can be done with a thoughtful selection of native and drought-tolerant plant selections.

Swales can appear natural or designed like this one; all do the job of reducing the water that runs off a site into the storm drains, and the chemicals and environmental toxins that run off along with it.

Community naturalist Jim McKissick educates a group of young people near the existing Pacific Chorus Frog habitat on the Ohlone Greenway at Eureka Avenue.

Bulb-outs at trail and street intersections can intercept stormwater and reduce runoff.

 shown here is a rain garden that takes advantage of occasional water.

Swales can appear natural or designed like this one; all do the job of reducing the water that runs off a site into the storm drains, and the chemicals and environmental toxins that run off along with it.

Effort should be taken to incorporate these elements into specific site designs as they are begun. While it may not be possible to duplicate a natural environment in such an urban location, it is possible to create an ecology that is moderately self-sustaining and requires less maintenance.
Sustainability Guidelines

Sustainability is a term that sees much use, but is difficult to define. It has been expressed as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”[1]. Other contemporary terms such as “climate change” and “carbon footprint” illustrate the growing need for an evolution toward a sustainable approach, which encompasses social, economic, and environmental considerations. However it is defined, sustainable elements should be designed into the Ohlone Greenway as it is improved wherever possible. Though the possibilities are limited only by the creativity of the El Cerrito community, a selection of sustainably oriented elements could include:

- **Energy elements**
  - Solar or wind powered site elements incorporated into other uses, like sculpture or lighting fixtures and other proposed elements that require electricity
  - Play equipment that stores kinetic energy
  - Encouragement of non-motorized vehicle use by good maintenance and management of the trail

- **Water elements**
  - Efficient harvesting of rainwater from structures into cisterns to be used as irrigation water on the site
  - Minimal use of plants that require excessive irrigation, use of recycled water for irrigation
  - Use of low flow components in infrastructure elements, such as toilets, water fountains, etc. or compost toilets in place of flushing versions

- **Recycling/Reuse of materials**
  - Use of recycled products in site furnishings, like recycled plastic or composite wood benches
  - Encouragement of recycling activity on the site with adequate recycling receptacles adjacent to waste receptacles
  - Appropriate consideration, before existing elements are replaced, of whether elements can be recycled or reused

- **Food production/local produce**
  - Community garden areas; some may be acceptable for some food production
  - A selected plaza area could be designed to be appropriate for use as a Farmer’s Market location

[1] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Proposed Elements

- **Energy elements**
  - Solar sculpture can provide a physical presence during the day, but at night has the potential to light up its surroundings
  - Kinetic wind sculpture can be used to collect energy, which can be stored for future use

- **Water elements**
  - This rain garden planting area uses recycled water irrigation to augment the rainwater. Recycled water is already being used very effectively on many sites

- **Recycling/Reuse of materials**
  - Recycled materials can be used effectively in site furnishings, such as in this recycled plastic and recycled aluminum bench

- **Food production/local produce**
  - Community gardening has many socially sustainable benefits, as well as economic and environmental ones

Farmers’ markets support local food production and decrease the need for transport while making fresh, healthy food available to everyone.