

City of Arts & Innovation

# Transportation Board

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**TO: TRANSPORTATION BOARD** **DATE: APRIL 2, 2025**

**FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT** **WARDS: ALL**

**SUBJECT: CURB EXTENSIONS – PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ENHANCEMENT PILOT PROJECTS**

## **ISSUE:**

Preliminary consideration of pedestrian safety enhancement pilot projects at fourteen locations citywide to install curb extensions using semi-permanent materials.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Transportation Board recommend that the City Council approve pedestrian safety enhancement pilot projects at fourteen locations citywide to install curb extensions using semi-permanent materials alongside the FY 25/26 Pavement Management Program.

## **BACKGROUND:**

### **What are semi-permanent materials?**

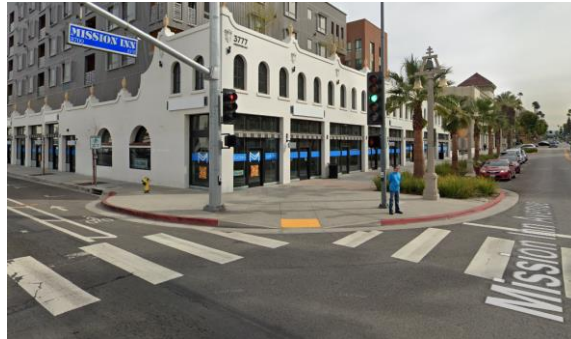
The Public Works Department routinely utilizes semi-permanent materials to pilot enhancements on City roadways. Semi-permanent installations can include rubber curb, glue-down channelizers, signage, and striping. These materials can be easily removed if a pilot project is terminated, they can be left in place and maintained, or they can be replaced with more permanent features if deemed appropriate. If future enhancements are desired, having implemented a successful pilot can boost the chances of receiving grant funding.



**Figure 1: Rubber Curb and signage installed to modify circulation at Sycamore Canyon at El Cerrito**

### What is a curb extension?

A pedestrian curb extension is a widened sidewalk installed at an intersection or midblock location. In the case of a curb extension, the sidewalk is not widened by expanding into an adjacent property but rather by “extending” the edge of the curb towards the centerline of the roadway and into the parking lane. A picture of an existing curb extension at the intersection of Market Street and Mission Inn Avenue is shown below for reference:

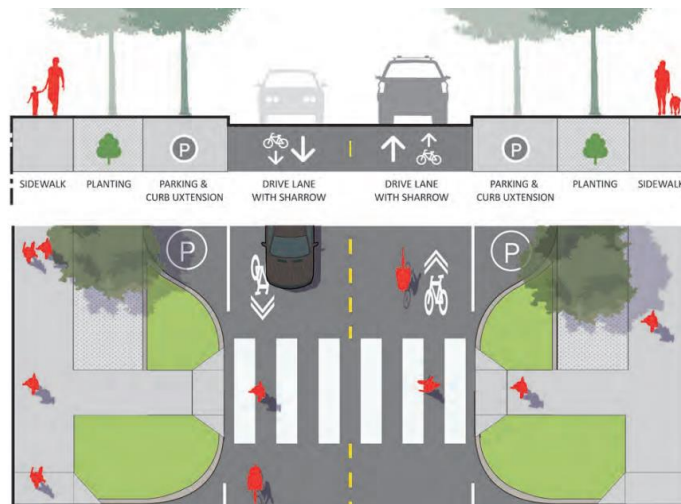


**Figure 2: Curb Extension in Downtown Riverside**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) identifies curb extensions as a tool to help manage motorists’ speeds and enhance roadway user safety. According to the FHWA, “curb extensions reduce the width of the roadway by extending the curb into the parking lane. This shortens pedestrian crossing distances and reduces the time needed to cross the street. Drivers are encouraged to slow down when approaching intersections and mid-block crossings, making turns, and traveling through intersections.” The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) further observes that curb extensions, “increase the overall visibility of pedestrians.”

### **DISCUSSION:**

The City’s Complete Streets Ordinance section 7.3 ‘Development Standards’ ([www.riversideca.gov/pact](http://www.riversideca.gov/pact)) encourages installation of curb extensions. Curb Extensions are referenced in other City planning documents, such as the Downtown Specific Plan, but have seen minimal adoption across the City.



**Figure 3: Sample curb extension as pictured in the Riverside Complete Streets Ordinance**

Curb extensions can be a valuable placemaking tool and are common design features in downtowns, main streets, lifestyle shopping centers, and near other areas of heavy pedestrian activity including parks, K-12 schools and universities. Curb extensions enhance the walkability of a corridor by reducing motorist speeds, reducing crossing distances, and improving visibility of pedestrians. Installing curb extensions may encourage residents and visitors to explore more local businesses, restaurants, or recreational destinations than they would otherwise have done in Riverside.

The Public Works Department is proposing to install curb extensions using semi-permanent materials at fourteen locations citywide as part of the Fiscal Year 25/26 paving program. By coupling these installations with the City’s paving program, the Public Works Department can include the curb extensions in larger paving contracts and take advantage of economies of scale.



**Figure 4: Sample temporary curb extension. Image provided by Caltrans to KRCTV.com**

A preliminary listing of pilot locations is listed below. Individual intersections will be confirmed through the design process, so that adequate consideration can be given to spacing, bicycle lanes, nearby bus stops, etc. Locations are based on recommendations in the Riverside PACT, recent safe routes to school studies, ongoing neighborhood feedback & requests for traffic calming, and in alignment with several key placemaking efforts across the City.

| Council Ward | Proposed Location(s): Two Per Ward               |
|--------------|--|
| Ward 1       | University Avenue in the Arts & Culture District |
| Ward 2       | Near Sycamore Highlands Park                     |
| Ward 3       | Key Intersections: Midtown                       |
| Ward 4       | Near Orange Terrace Park & Community Ctr.        |
| Ward 5       | Key Intersections: Arlington Business District   |
| Ward 6       | Near La Sierra High & Orrenmaa Elementary        |
| Ward 7       | Near Terrace and Valley View Elementary Schools  |

If approved, the curb extensions can be expected to be installed in late 2025 or calendar year 2026 as part of the annual pavement management program. The duration of individual pilot locations would be based on community feedback, the observed durability & appropriateness of the treatments and materials, and measures of effectiveness related to traffic safety. Pilot improvements may ultimately be converted to concrete curbs and sidewalks, left in place and maintained with semi-permanent materials, or removed entirely.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The Infrastructure, Mobility, and Connectivity strategic priority aims to ensure safe, reliable infrastructure that benefits the community and facilitates connection between people, places, and information. This project aligns with the goals below:

6.1 – Provide, expand and ensure equitable access to sustainable modes of transportation that connect people to opportunities such as employment, education, healthcare, and community amenities.

6.2 – Maintain, protect, and improve assets and infrastructure within the City’s built environment to ensure and enhance reliability, resiliency, sustainability, and facilitate connectivity.

Furthermore, this project aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads:

1. Community Trust – The proposed curb extension areas of consideration are aligned with ongoing community engagement and citywide planning documents.
2. Equity –The proposed pilot projects aim to enhance roadway safety for all users, including motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.
3. Fiscal Responsibility – Pilot programs using semi-permanent materials are a cost-effective means to assess new design treatments at intersections. Often, these materials can be left in place for extended periods while maintaining their effectiveness.
4. Innovation – Curb extensions are a relatively new design treatment in Riverside, and the pilot may spark requests for additional locations throughout the City.
5. Sustainability & Resiliency – The construction materials specified for the proposed projects meet or exceed industry standards, many of which can be reused for future pilot projects.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

A conservative estimate of sign fabrication and installation, curb and channelizer materials, striping and installation to implement the pilot project is estimated to be \$252,000 for all fourteen intersections. Dependent on findings, the projects may remain in place for years to come with only occasional maintenance needs.

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Certified as to

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Attachments:

1. FHWA Speed Management Street Design Document
2. Presentation