

City of Santa Barbara Transportation and Circulation Committee

Staff Report

DATE: April 25, 2024

TO: Transportation and Circulation Committee

FROM: Michelle Bedard, Project Planner

SUBJECT: Cliff Drive Vision Zero Project Update

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Transportation and Circulation Committee receive an update and provide comments on the Cliff Drive Vision Zero Project.

BACKGROUND:

Cliff Drive, formerly known as State Route 225, is a wide, high speed urban highway through the Mesa Neighborhood. It is a very long roadway lacking safe cycling facilities and adequate pedestrian crossings. The City's 2016 Bicycle Master Plan identified the community need for a separated cycling facility along Cliff Drive for all ages and abilities. The 2006 Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) identified Cliff Drive as especially challenging for pedestrians due to roadway and traffic characteristics. While the PMP is a good guiding policy document, it did not identify specific projects on Cliff Drive due to Caltrans ownership. Frustrated by traffic conditions, community members lobbied Caltrans to relinquish the street to local control to address safety issues caused by high traffic speeds.

In 2014, Caltrans relinquished a portion of State Route 225 (including Cliff Drive) to the City of Santa Barbara (City), giving the City local control of the roadway. In 2018, due to the corridor's frequency of severe and fatal collisions, City Council (Council) designated Cliff Drive a high priority corridor under the Council adopted Vision Zero Strategy. Over the last several years, the City conducted the Cliff Drive Vision Zero Planning Effort to study traffic patterns, speeds and volumes, identify safety concerns, and develop potential solutions along this corridor. During this Planning effort, the City engaged in over eight years of community and stakeholder engagement along the Cliff Drive corridor, and as a result a community supported concept plan was developed. This concept plan addresses the community safety and mobility needs to transform the street from a highway design into a neighborhood serving street benefiting residents with enhanced mobility and improved safety for all road users. In 2022, Council supported the concept plan and directed staff to apply for grant funding.

In December 2022, with 6.8 million in City matching funds, the City was awarded \$27.2 million in grant funding from the State's Active Transportation Program (ATP), for survey, final design, and construction of the Cliff Drive Vision Zero Project (Project) along Cliff Drive

from Arroyo Burro County Park to Castillo Street (Attachment). This grant includes infrastructure funding towards school and community education on how to use the Project's new facilities.

In March 2023, the state allocated grant monies for the design phase, allowing the City to hire a new Project Engineer, Project Planner, and a consultant engineering firm to assist with survey, design, environmental and technical studies, construction drawings, and continued community engagement.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Project addresses the community's safety and mobility needs to provide safe connections to elementary schools, Santa Barbara City College (SBCC), parks, neighborhood services, and retail businesses by removing traffic lanes and adding a new three-mile separated bike path for all ages and abilities on Cliff Drive from Arroyo Burro County Park to Castillo Street. In addition, the Project will close the final gap in the 30-mile long Coastal Bike Route from the University of California Santa Barbara to Ventura County. The Project also includes the following pedestrian infrastructure enhancements:

- Eleven new crosswalks, safety enhancements to four existing crosswalks, and three new traffic signals along Cliff Drive.
- Safety features at crossings include curb extensions, median refuge islands, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, safety lighting, and high visibility crosswalk markings.
- A new crosswalk at Cliff Drive and Salida Del Sol for improved coastal access and safe walking route to Washington Elementary School.
- A wider sidewalk on Flora Vista Drive between Cliff Drive and Red Rose Way and curb extensions at the Flora Vista Drive/Red Rose Way intersection to improve safety for students walking or biking to Monroe Elementary School.
- A wider sidewalk on Loma Alta Drive to improve connectivity between McKinley Elementary School and the new bike path on Cliff Drive.

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2027.

DISCUSSION:

In November 2023, staff held virtual and in-person bilingual community engagement meetings to review the Project scope of the recently awarded grant. Staff requested community feedback and considerations on the overall project before the formal design phase begins. During the meetings, staff asked the community:

- 1. Should there be landscape design districts adjacent to open space/parks, residential, business/neighborhood services, and SBCC/schools?
- 2. Is there support for street trees on the north side of Cliff Drive (opposite side of the path)?
- 3. Does the community support circulation and parking configuration changes to the Cliff Drive frontage road (east of Meigs Road)?

4. Is the concept connection from the Project to the Waterfront's Beachway along Castillo Street between Montecito Street and Shoreline Drive supported?

Below are highlights from the most recent community engagement meetings:

- Overall Project Scope/Purpose. The community reaffirmed its support for the
 overall project to transform Cliff Drive from a highway design into a neighborhoodfriendly street, including support of design elements to enhance existing and
 proposed crossings, new protected bike paths, new street lighting, and traffic
 signals.
- Street trees. Most of the meeting participants are favorable to planting trees along the north side of the street as a supplement to the trees planted in the new parkway. Planting street trees on both sides of Cliff Drive can provide traffic calming effects, visual aesthetics, and shade for pedestrians and cyclists. The new parkway would be adjacent to the path located on the south side of the street. There were concerns about trees blocking views, potential conflicts/hazards to cyclists, and limited visibility at driveways. As part of the consultant's scope of work, there will be visual simulations created for future community meetings on the Project's design.
- On-street parking. The Project aims to minimize the loss of on-street parking, while preserving the safety for all road users. There were requests to retain on-street parking, wherever feasible, but particularly near the Methodist Church at 1435 Cliff Drive. Staff is working with the Methodist Church and the consultant to explore opportunities to add parking pockets at some locations along Cliff Drive near Santa Cruz Boulevard.
- Extending the one-way path section. The Project includes a two-way path along the south side of Cliff Drive with two one-way segments on both the north and south sides of Cliff Drive from Salida Del Sol to Camino Calma. After obtaining feedback from recent community engagement meetings, staff are evaluating extending the one-way path configuration beyond Camino Calma (business area) west to Mesa Lane (neighborhood area). This extension can provide added benefit for the City's Safe Routes to School Program, serving additional students from Monroe Elementary School on the north side of Cliff Drive.
- Alterations to Loma Alta. There are no plans to make circulation changes to Loma Alta Street, however, some community members requested potential alterations to Loma Alta Street to provide traffic calming effects with speed humps and for staff to study safe cycling options. Suggestions include closing the street to vehicles to propose a protected two-way bike path or provide a one-way vehicle travel lane with a protected two-way bike path. A future thorough study of circulation, emergency responders, and evacuation impacts would be necessary.

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There was no specific feedback regarding the topics of landscape design districts, the Cliff Drive/Meigs Road frontage, or the project connection to the beachway (along Castillo Street between Montecito Street and Shoreline Drive) at the recent community engagement meetings. Staff will continue to seek community input on these items at upcoming community engagement meetings.

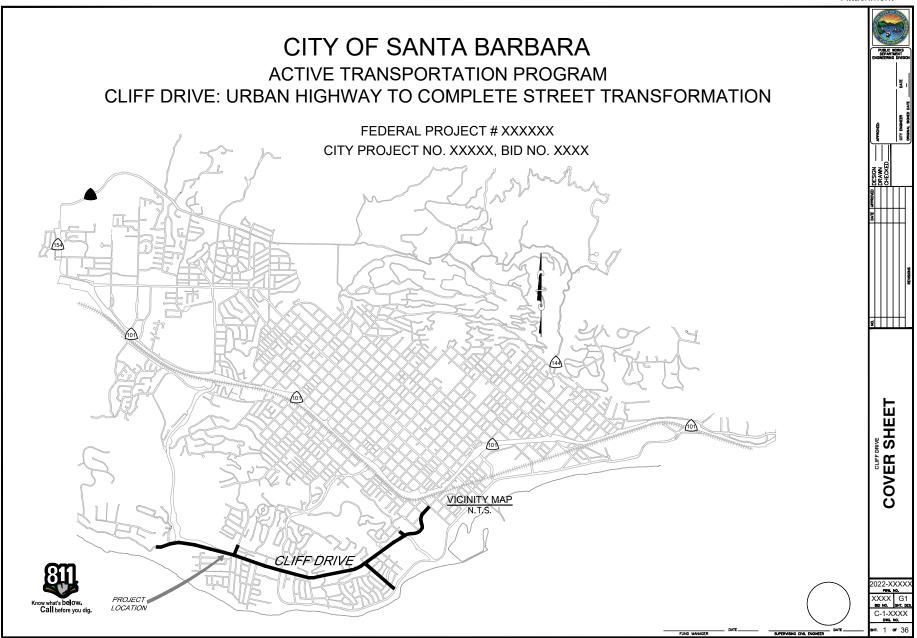
In addition to the community meetings, staff also met with SBCC and Metropolitan Transit District (MTD) staff to review the Project scope and coordinate items necessary for the design phase. SBCC is in the process of redesigning the entrance of East Campus and both projects must be closely coordinated. MTD is an important stakeholder for the bus stops adjacent to SBCC as well as along the entire Cliff Drive corridor. In March 2024, staff provided a Project update to the SBCC Board of Trustees and discussed coordination efforts related to SBCC's East Campus frontage. The Board of Trustees expressed an interest in including a prominent feature to identify the campus (wayfinding), energy efficient lighting, native landscaping pallet, and study designs to accommodate proper drainage.

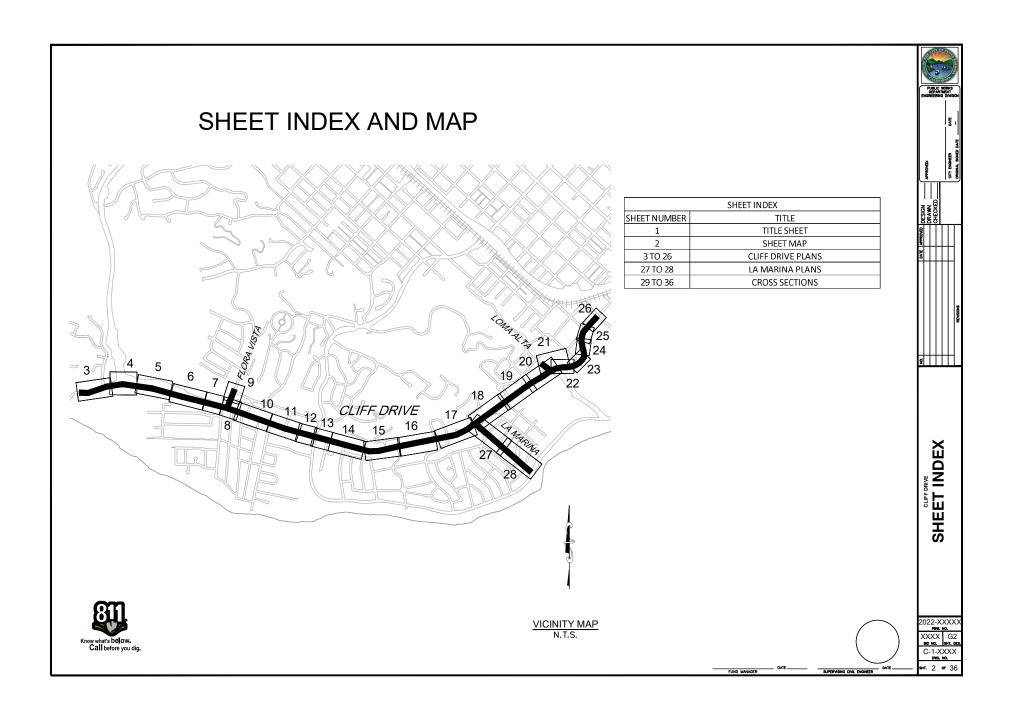
In April 2024, staff met with businesses along the frontage road (Cliff Drive and Meigs Road) to discuss the potential for alterations to the frontage road located within the public right-of-way. Staff is evaluating the option to reconfigure the frontage road into a one-way vehicle travel with new angled parking on one side. For this option, vehicles would take access from westbound Cliff Drive and exit at the Cliff Drive/Meigs Road intersection. For efficient vehicle circulation, this change would necessitate a right-turn only exit onto Meigs Road. The businesses expressed favorable opinions of the proposed changes within the frontage road and the overall project.

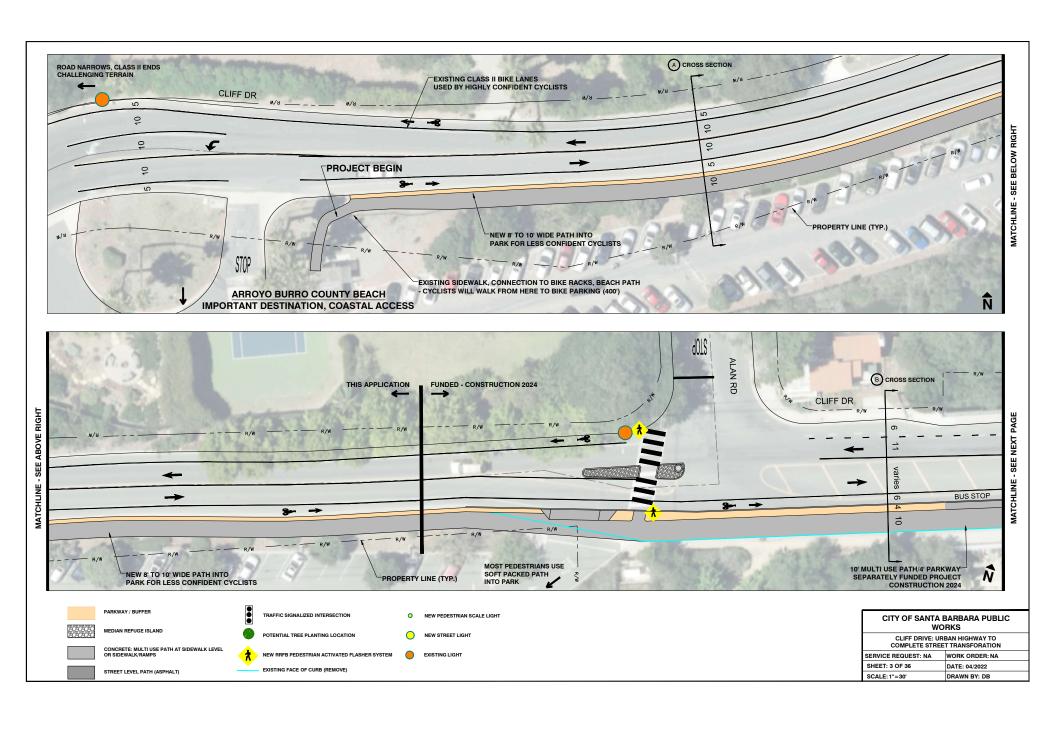
NEXT STEPS:

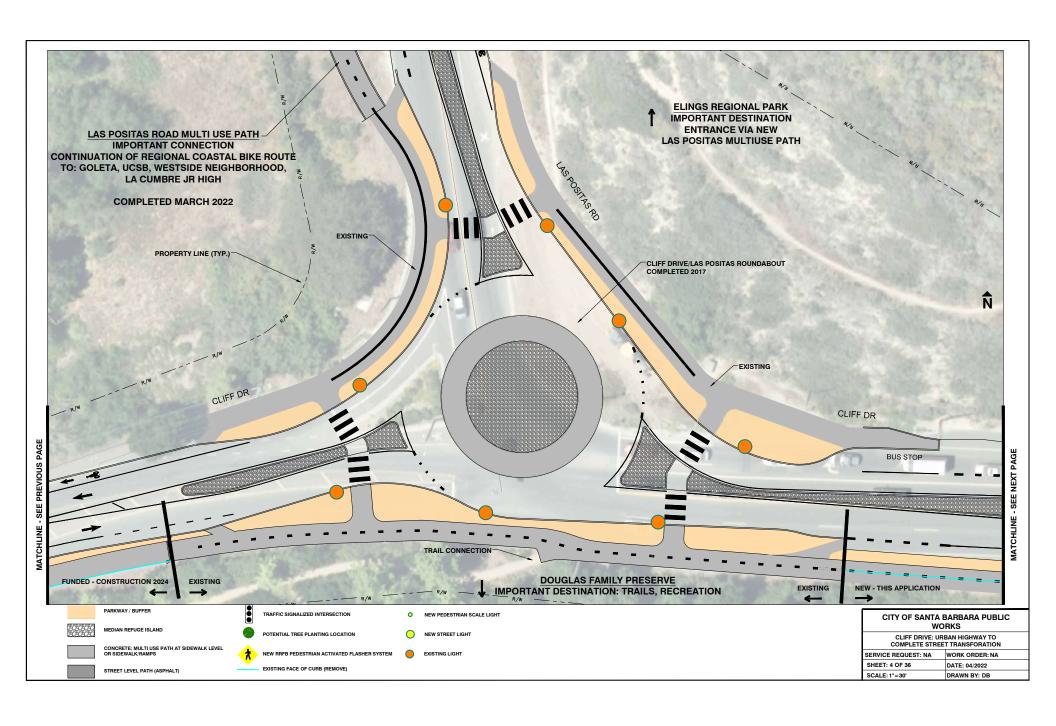
The topographical/utility survey was recently completed, which is the first step in the design process. The consultant design team are preparing environmental and technical studies and developing preliminary design plans. Staff will continue to hold community and stakeholder engagement meetings throughout the design phase.

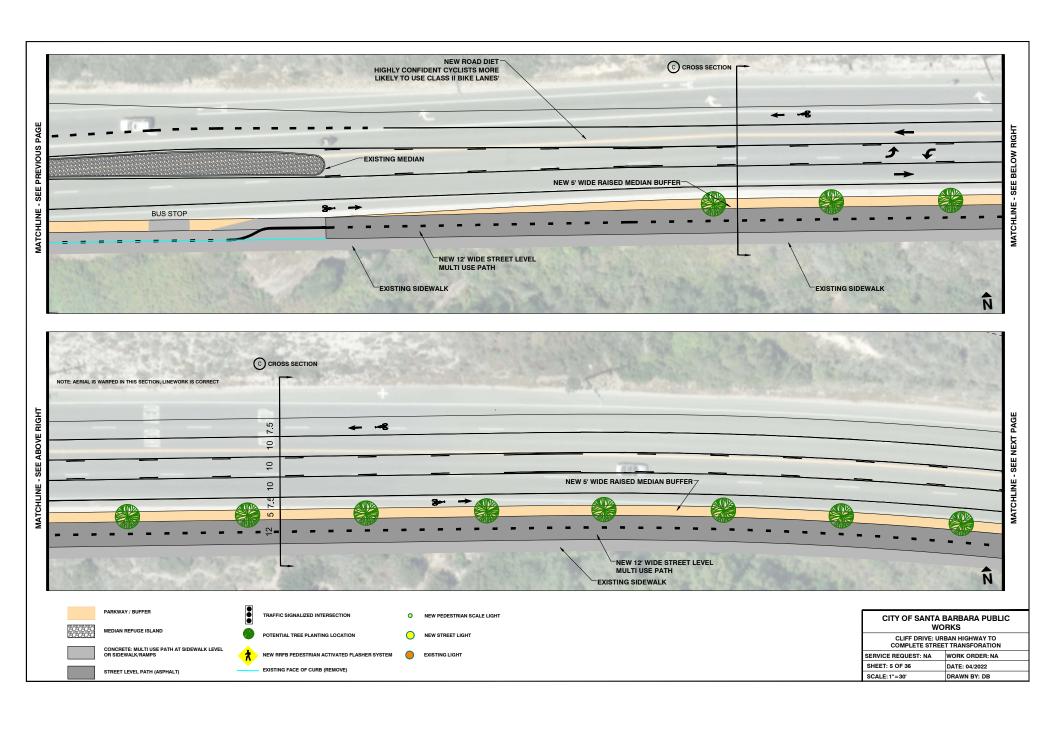
ATTACHMENT: Concept Plans

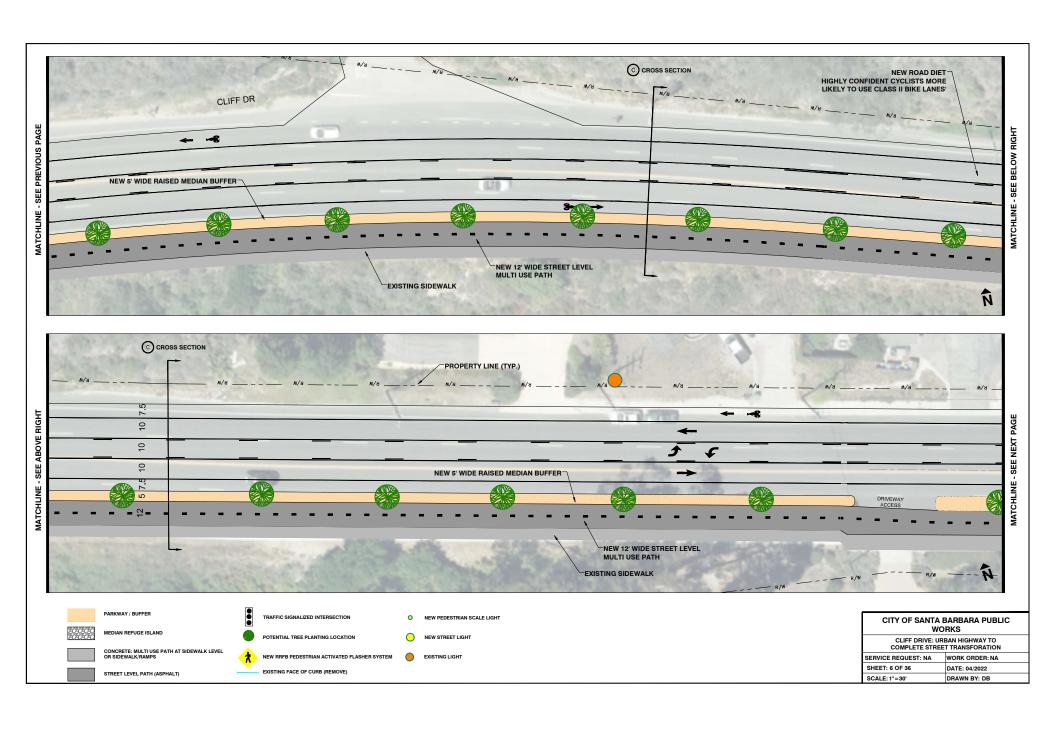


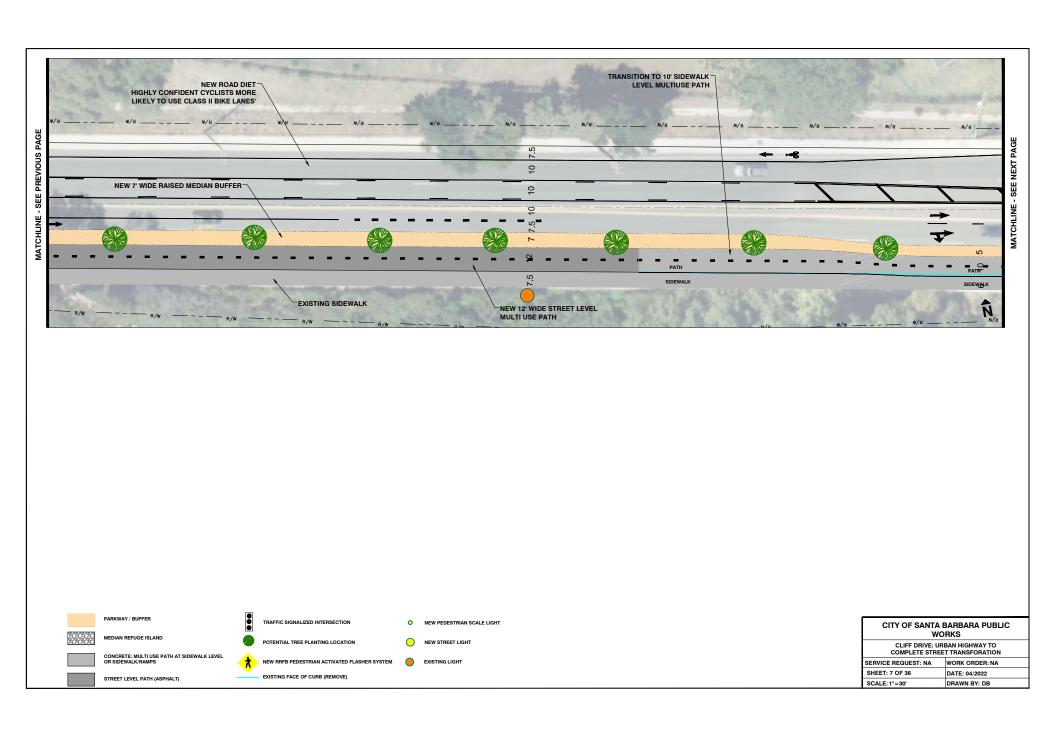


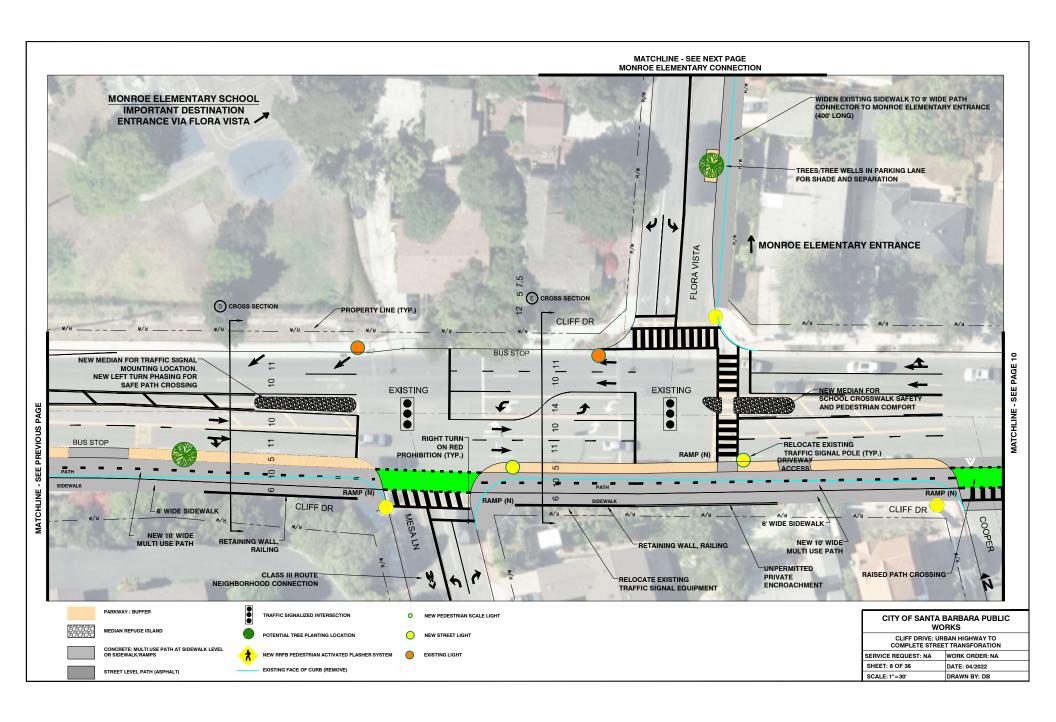


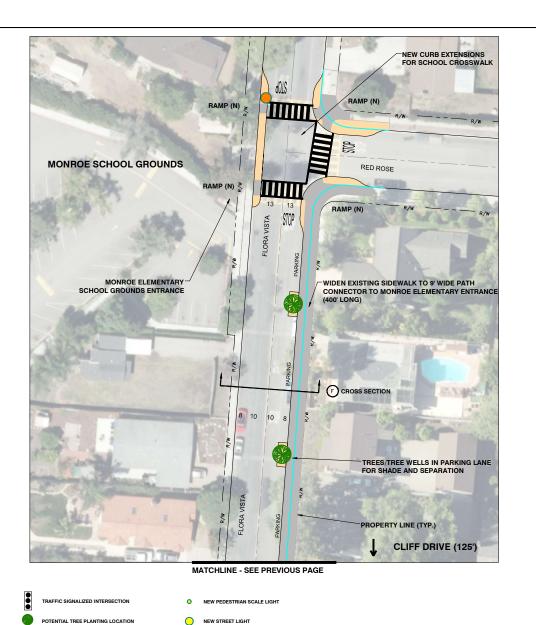












PARKWAY / BUFFER

MEDIAN REFUGE ISLAND

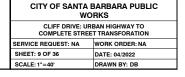
STREET LEVEL PATH (ASPHALT)

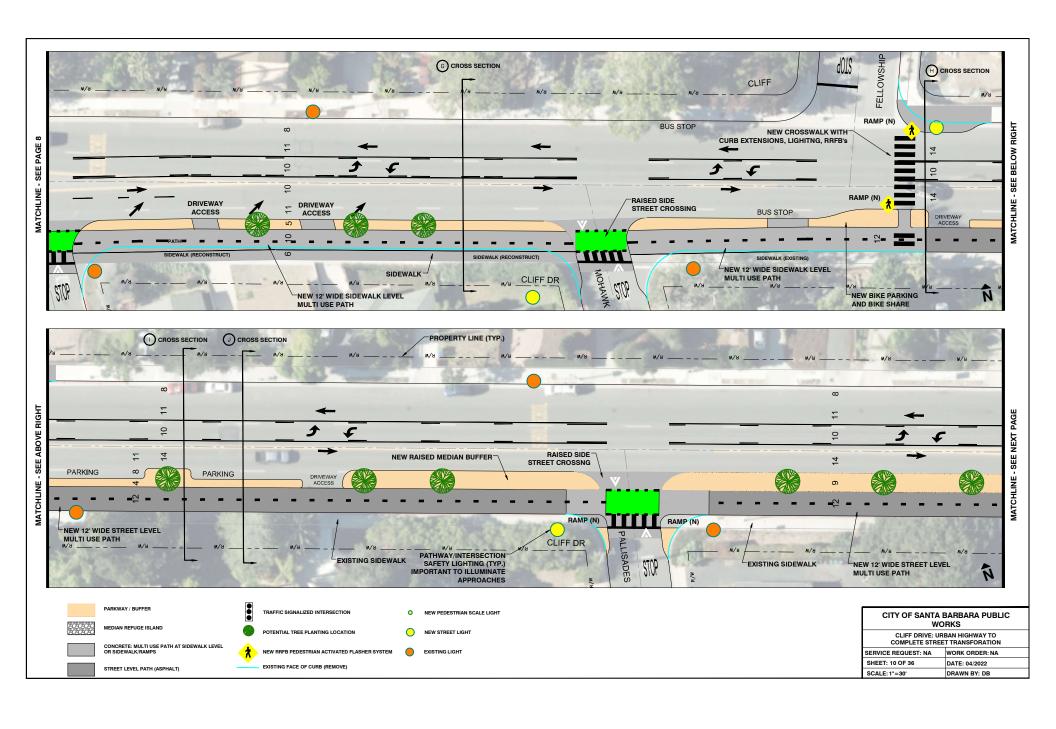
CONCRETE: MULTI USE PATH AT SIDEWALK LEVEL OR SIDEWALK/RAMPS

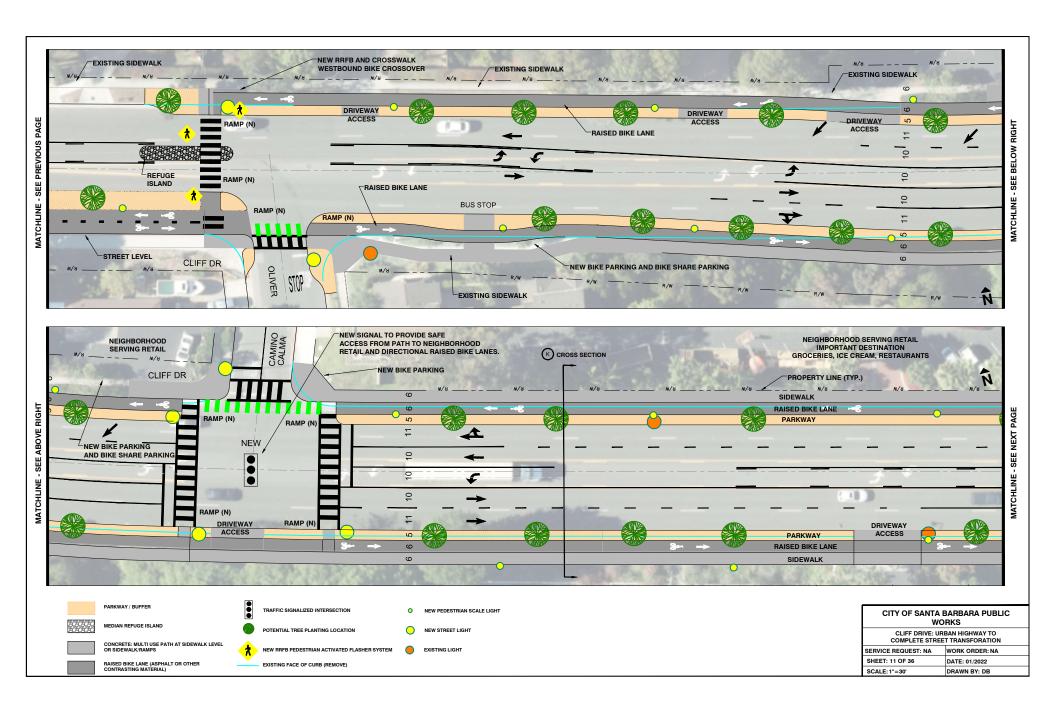
NEW RRFB PEDESTRIAN ACTIVATED FLASHER SYSTEM

EXISTING FACE OF CURB (REMOVE)

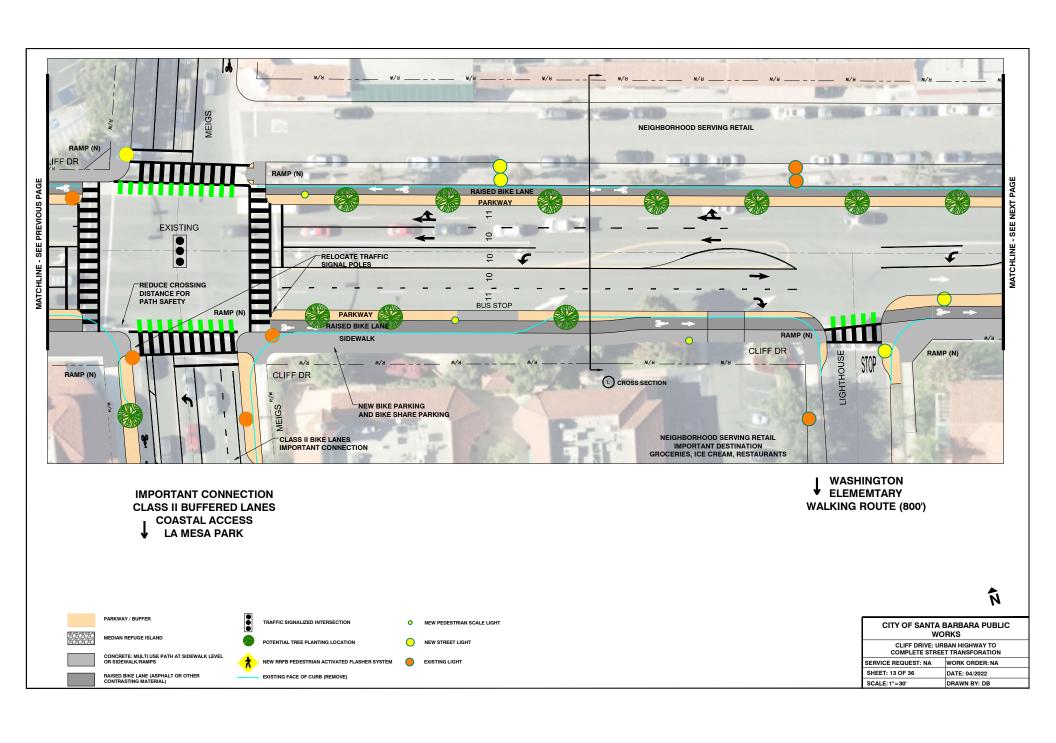
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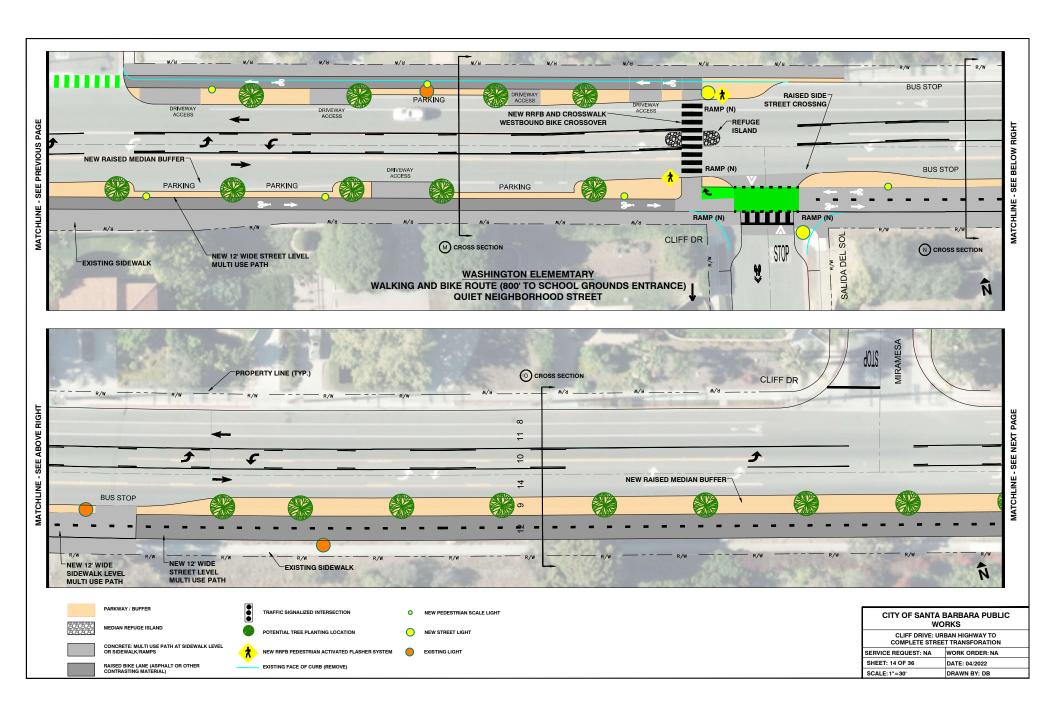


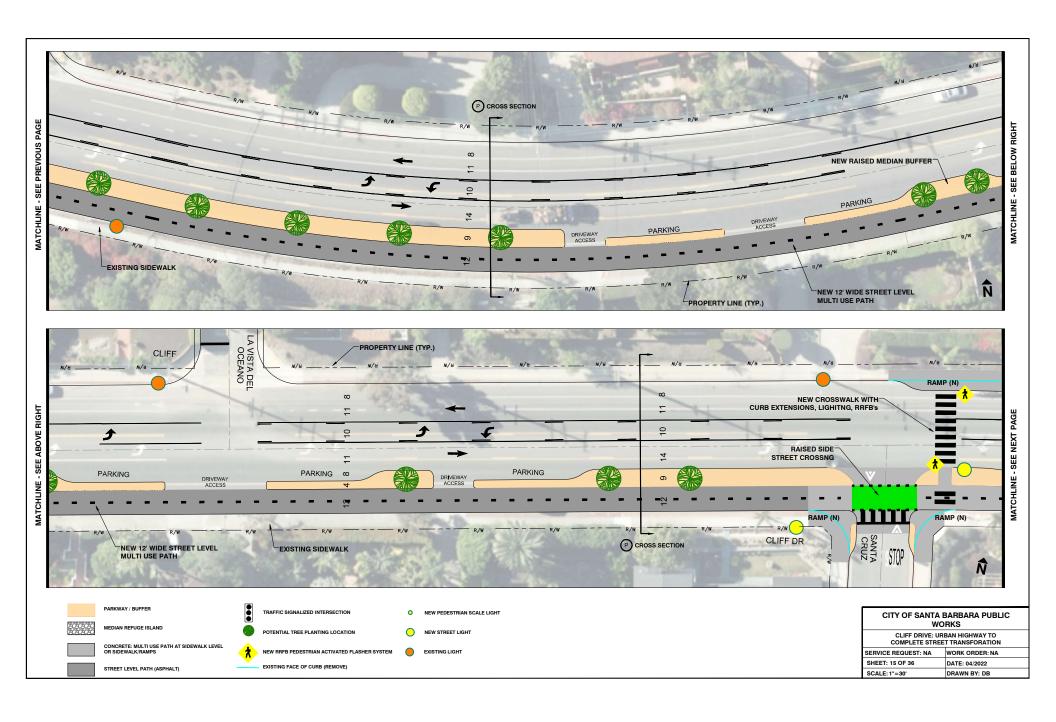


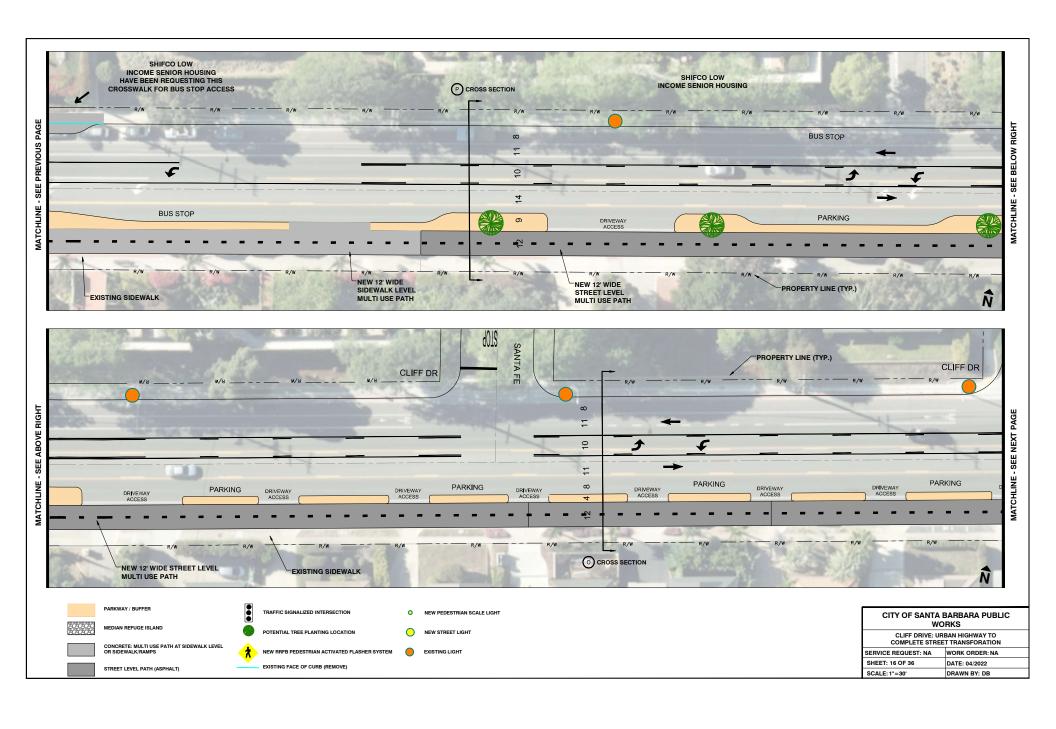


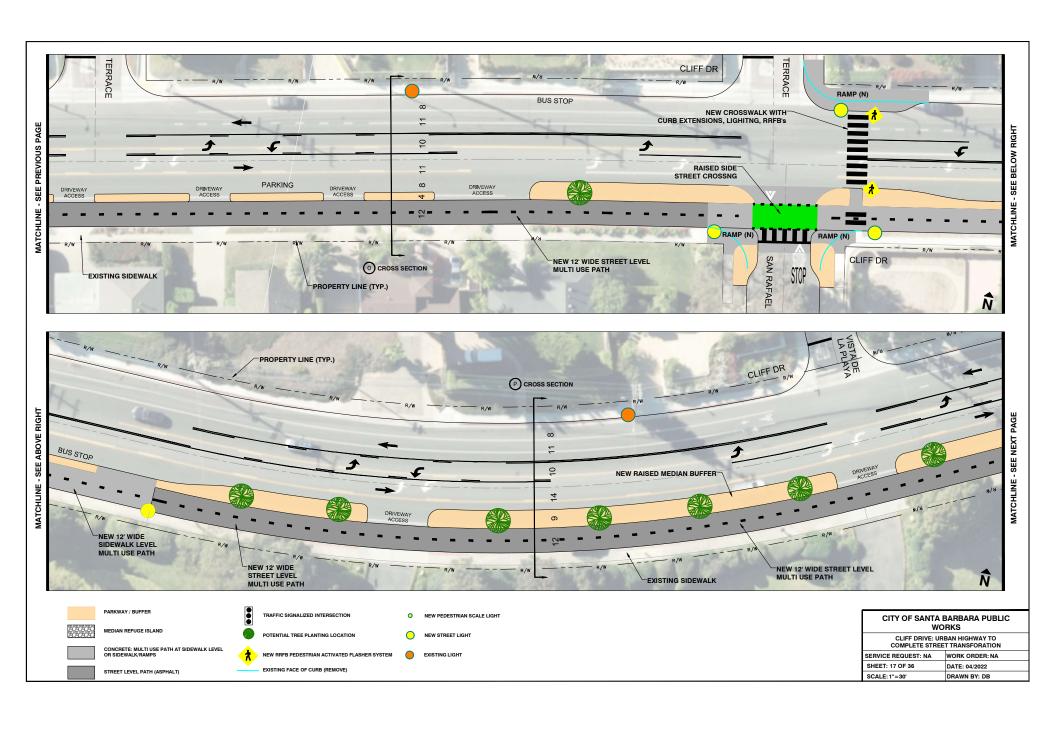


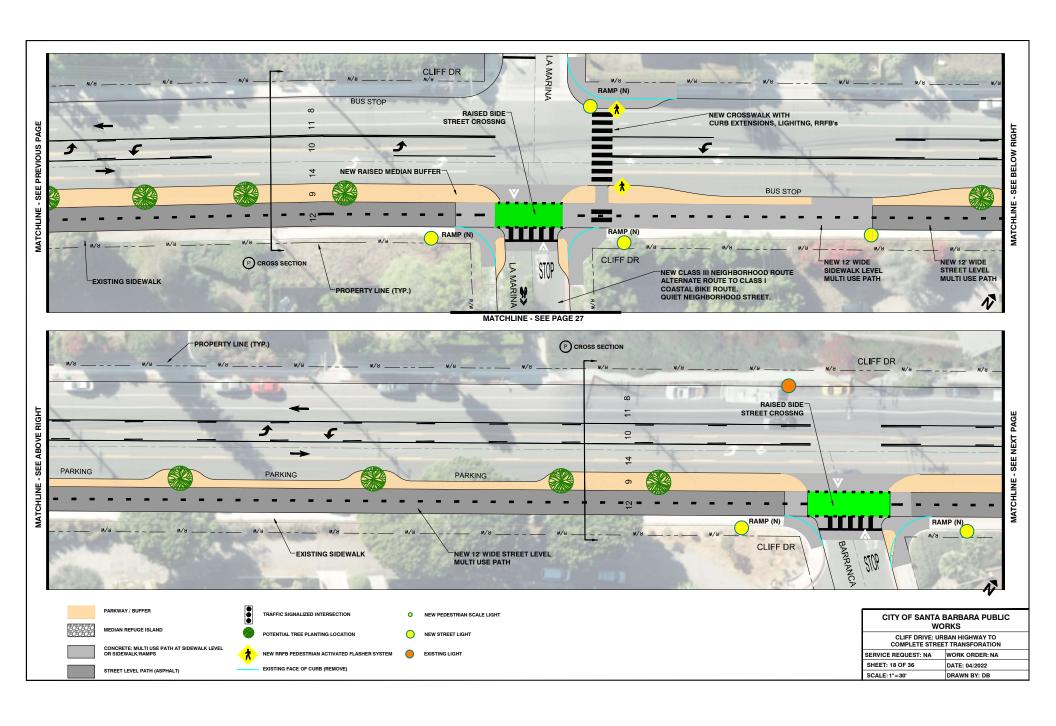


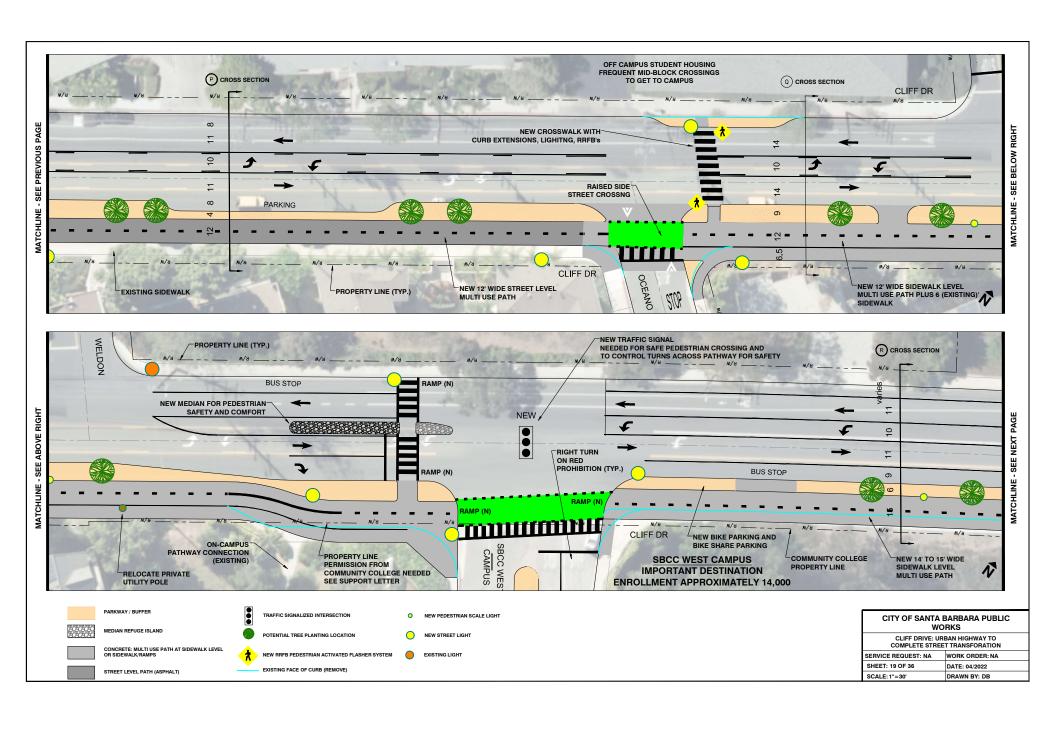


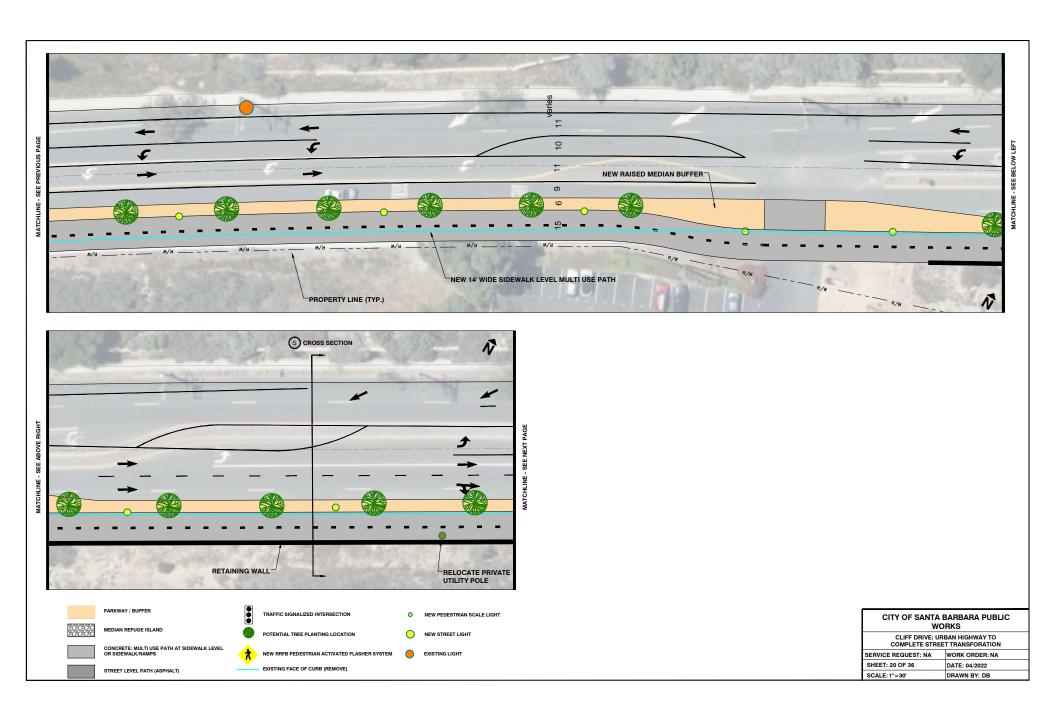


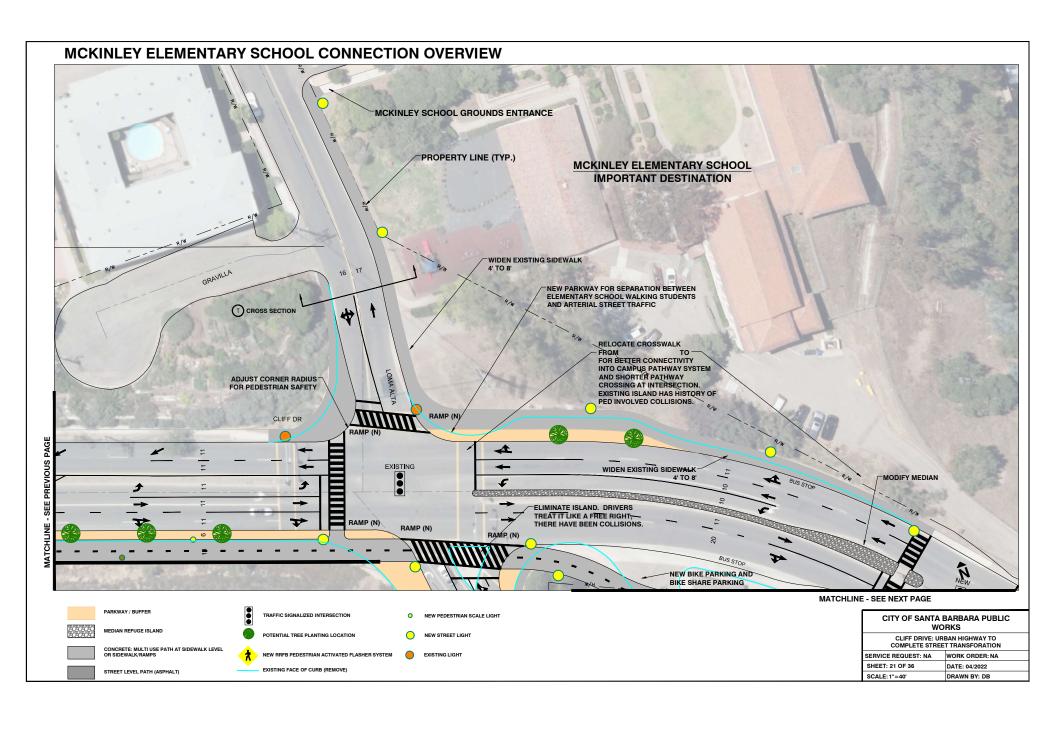


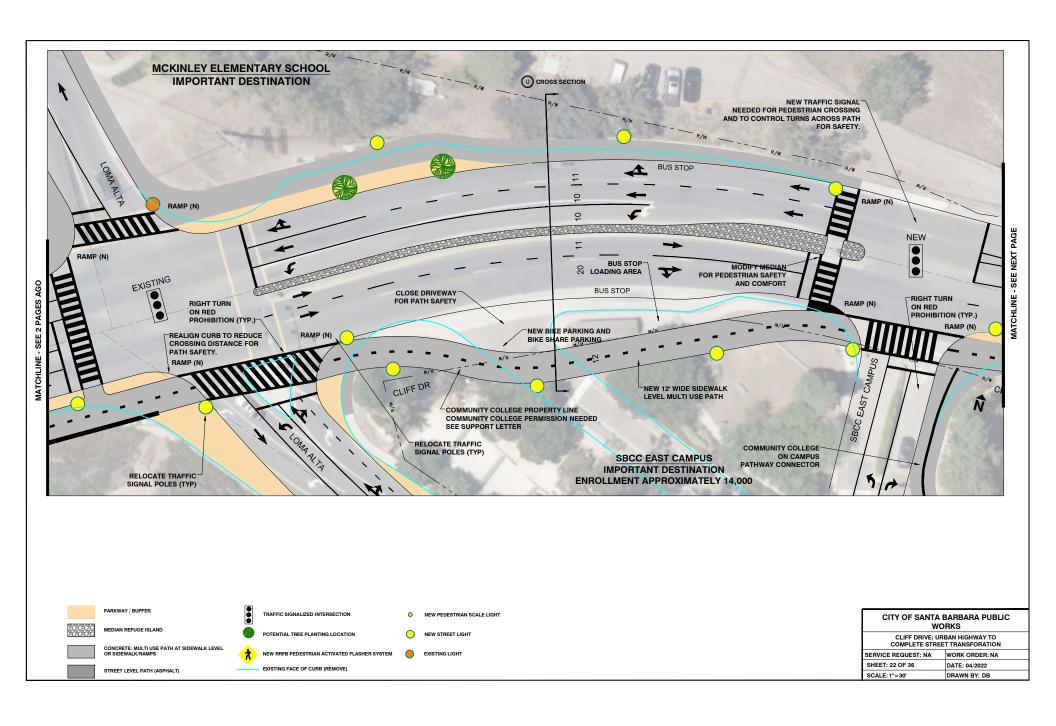


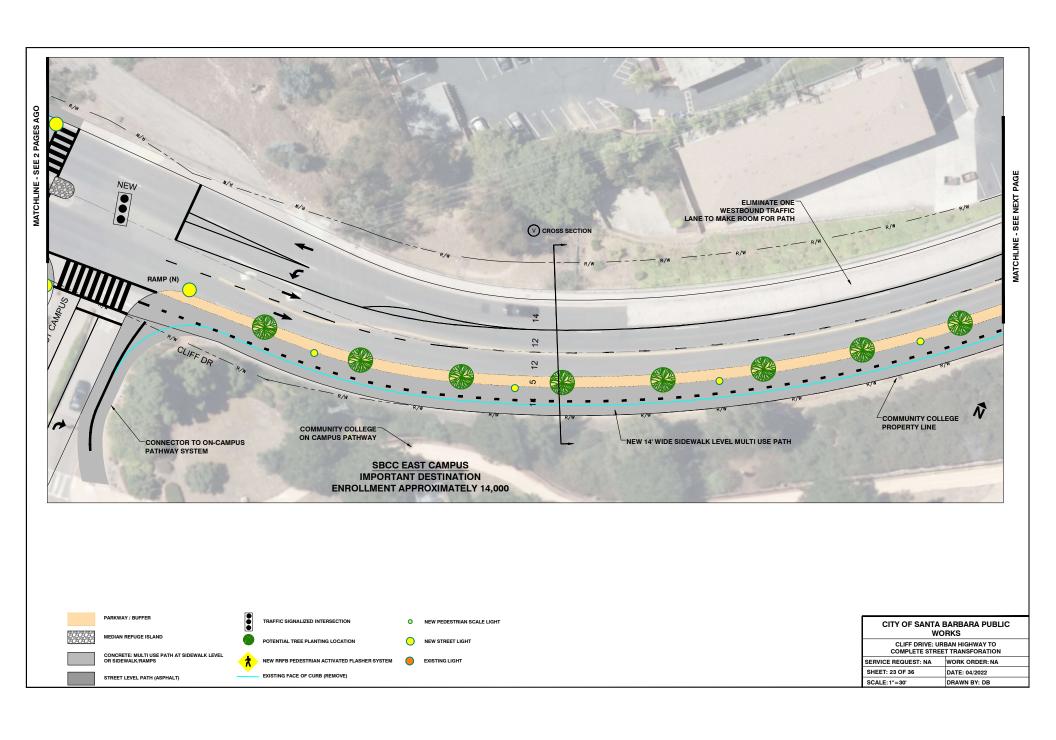


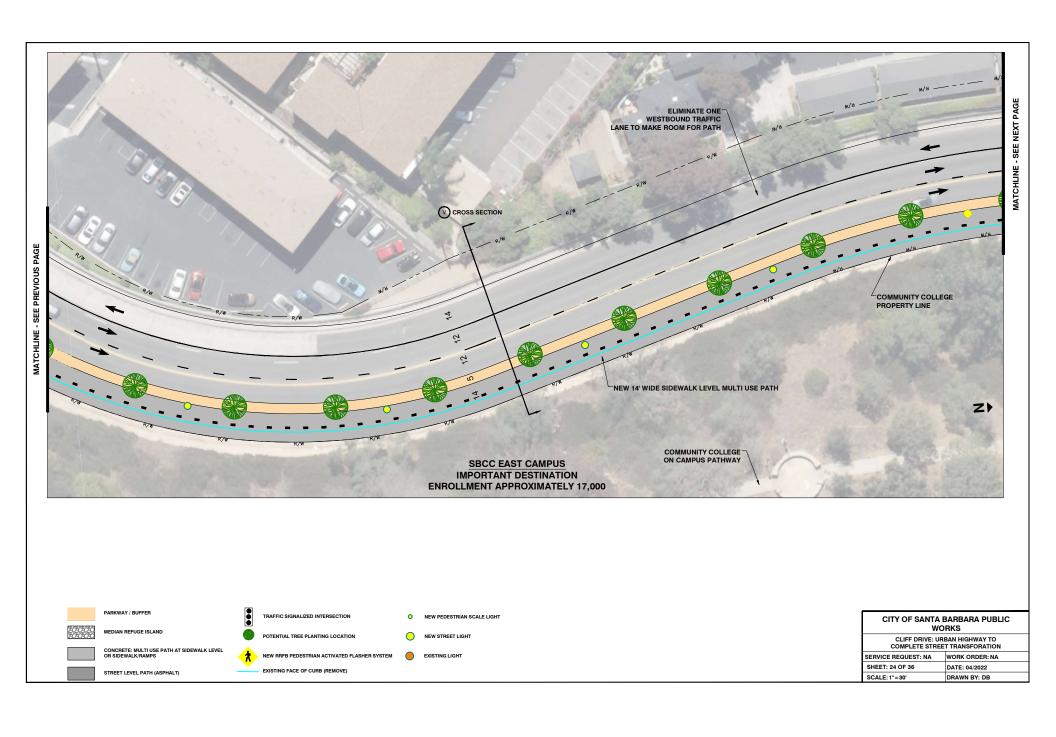


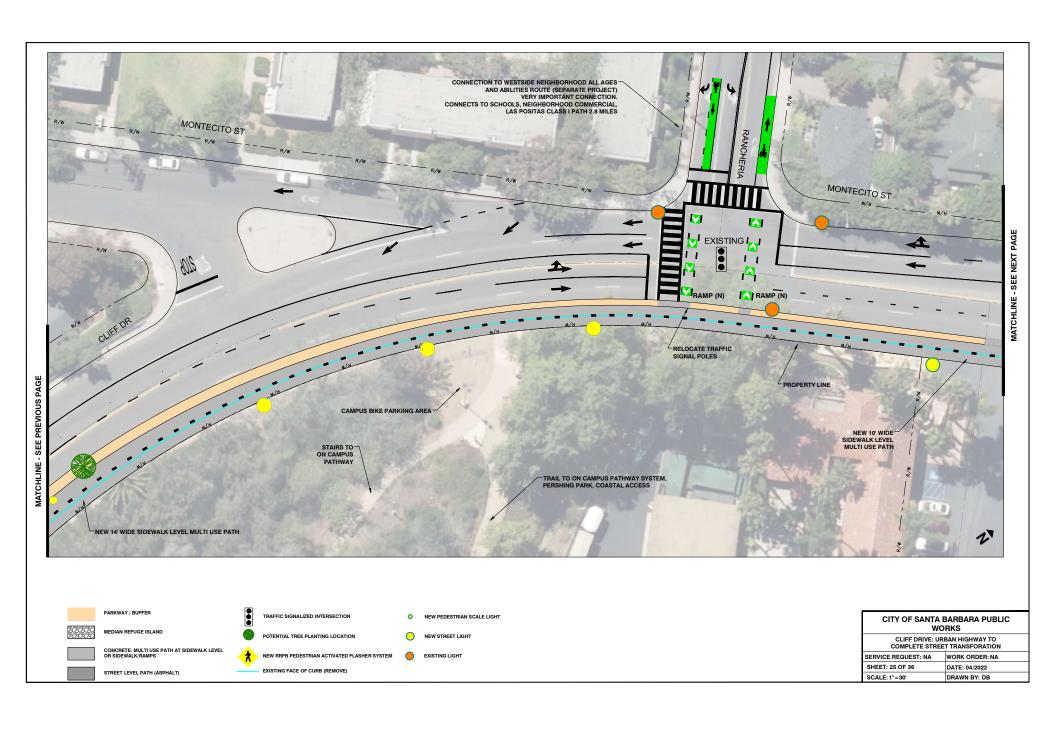


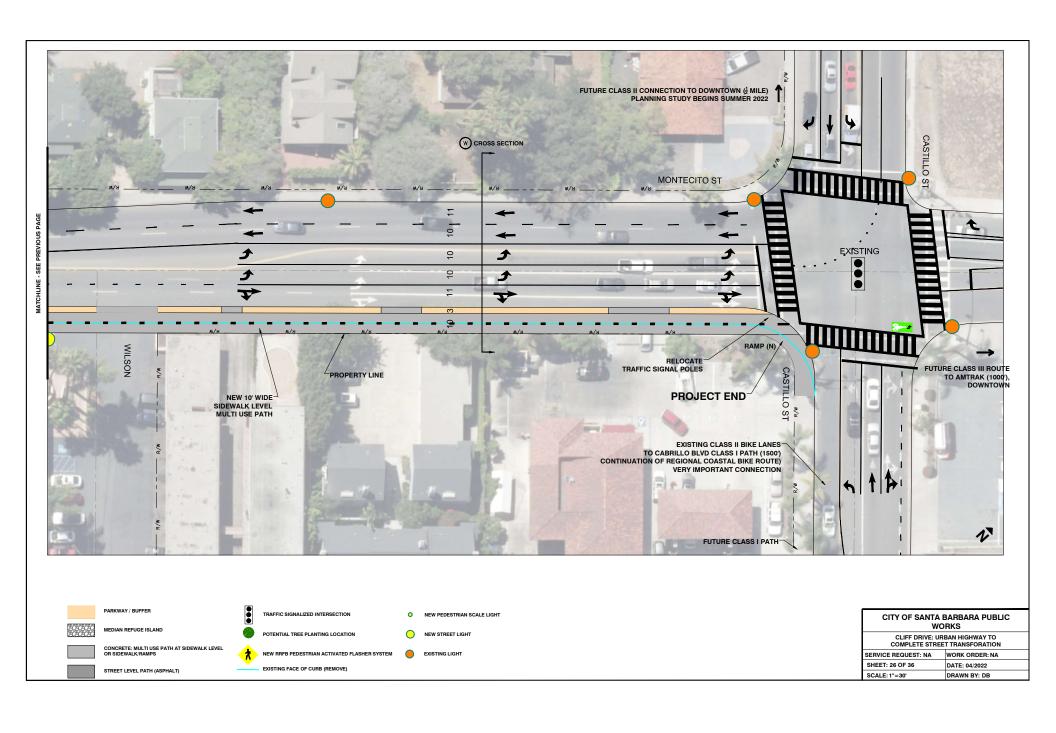


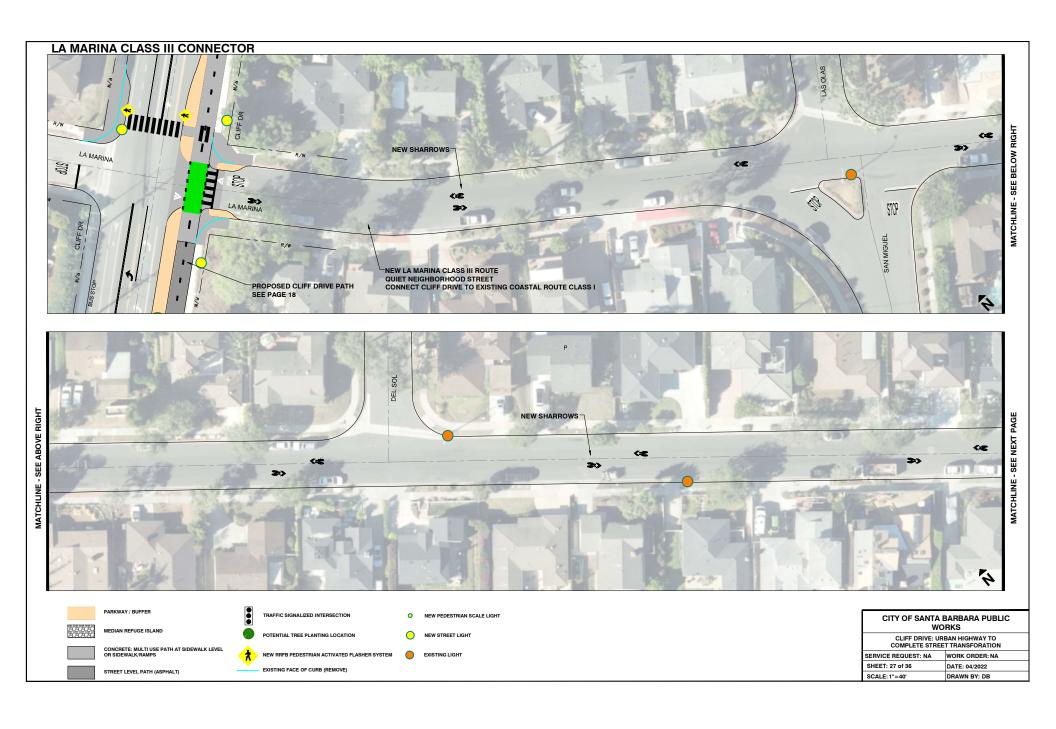


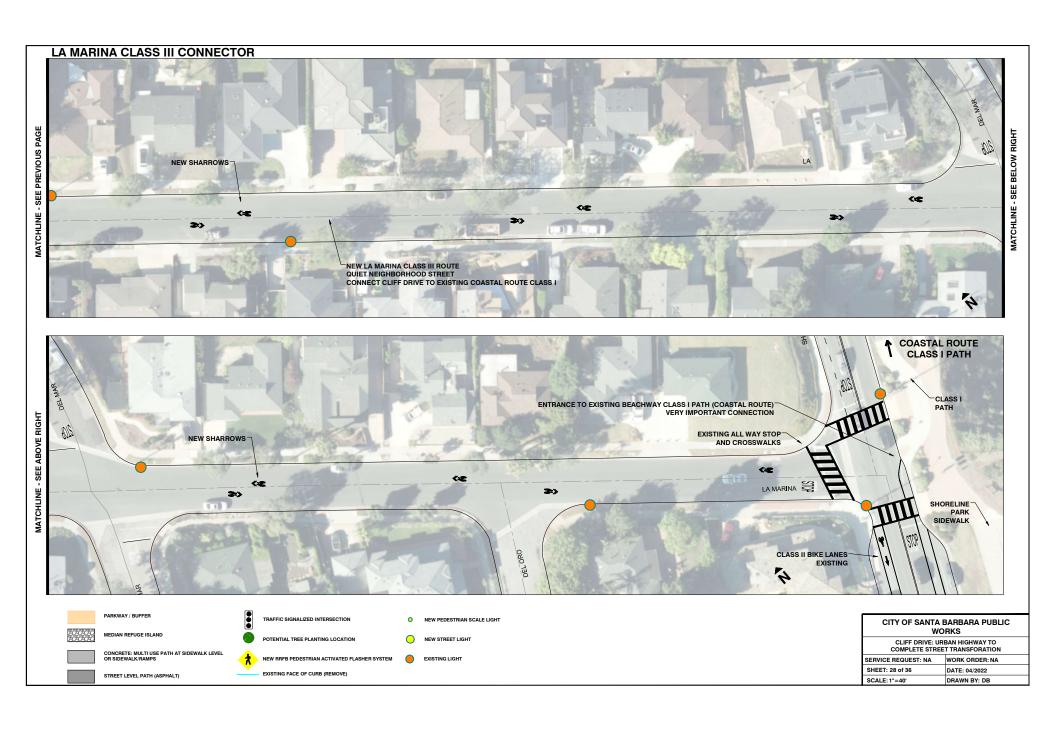


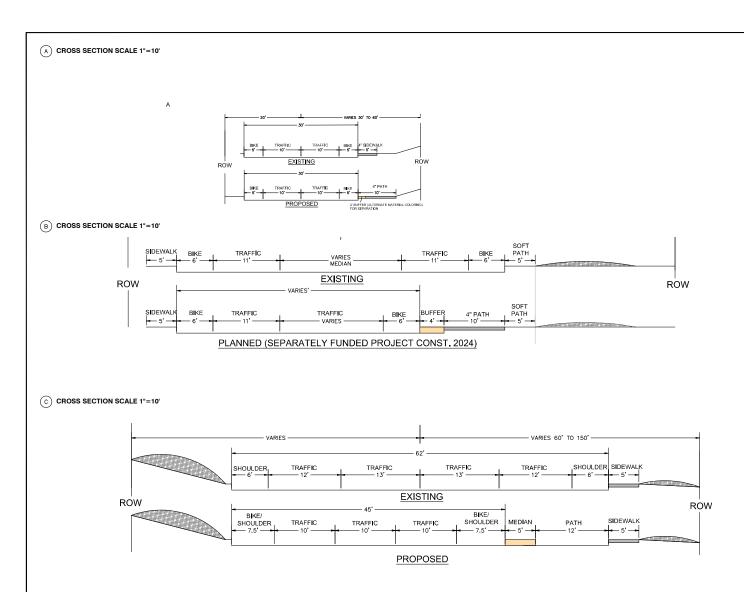




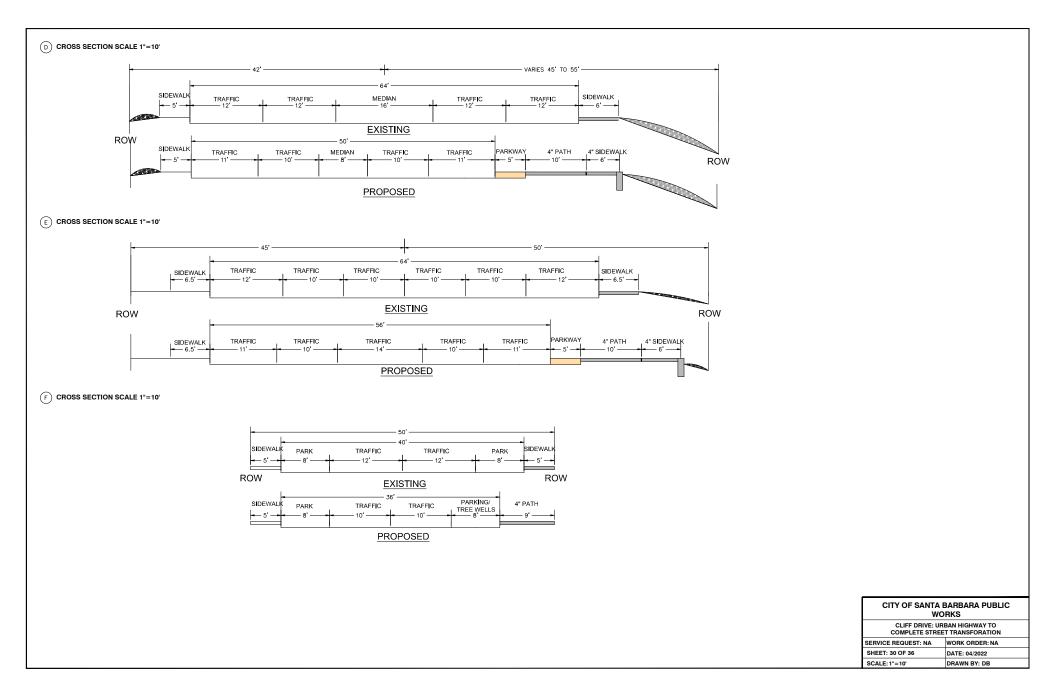


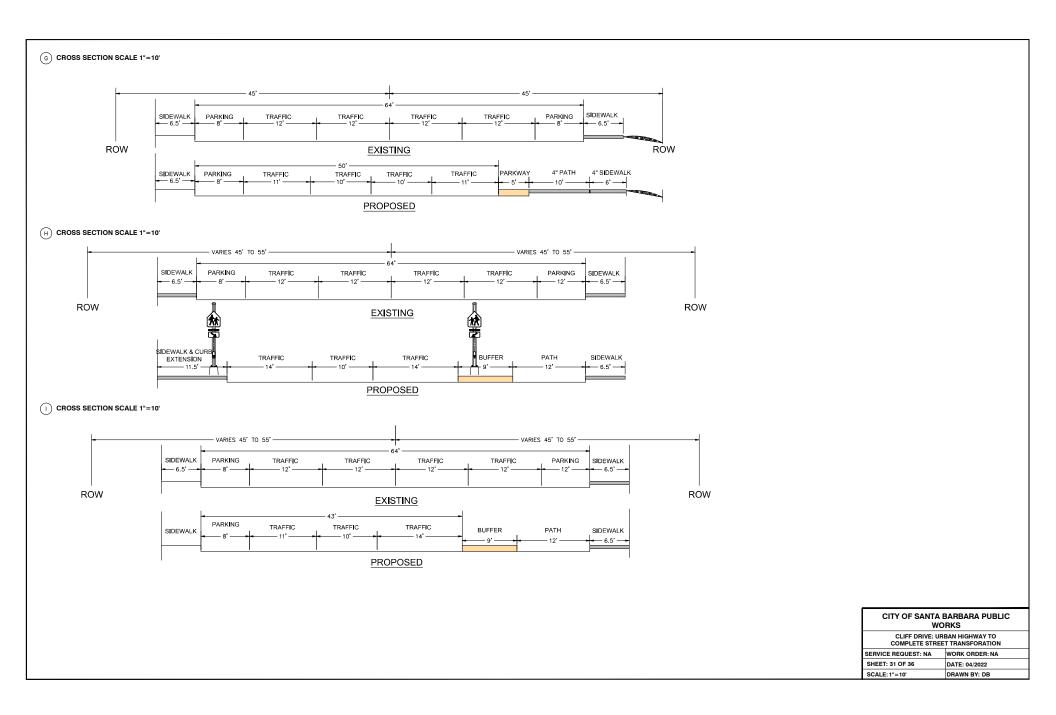


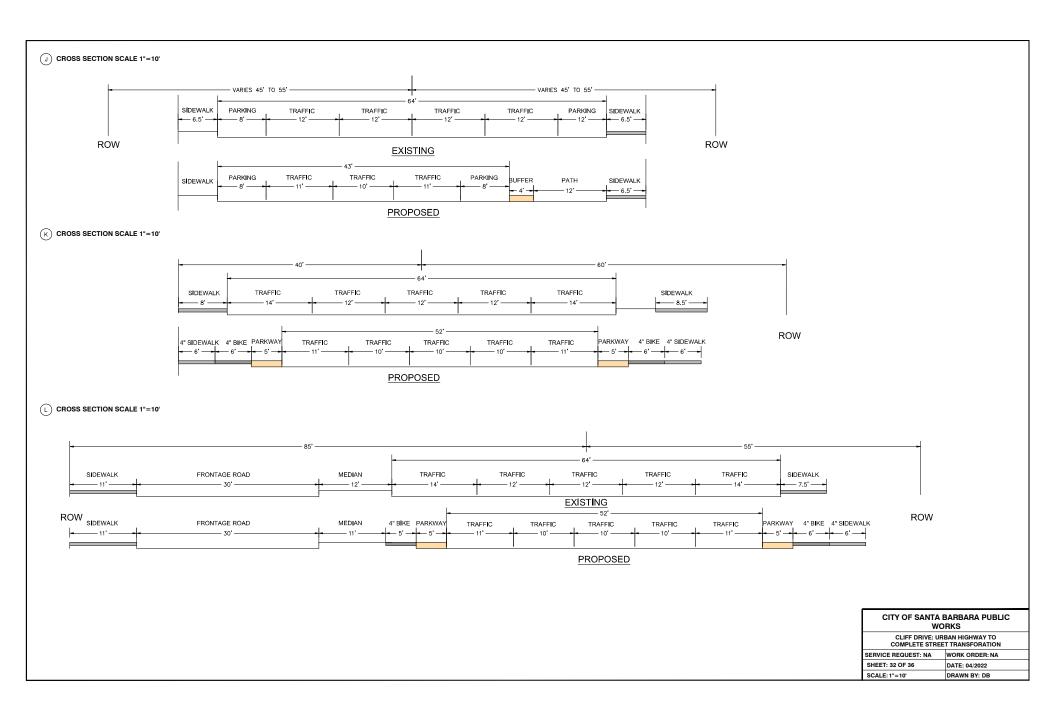


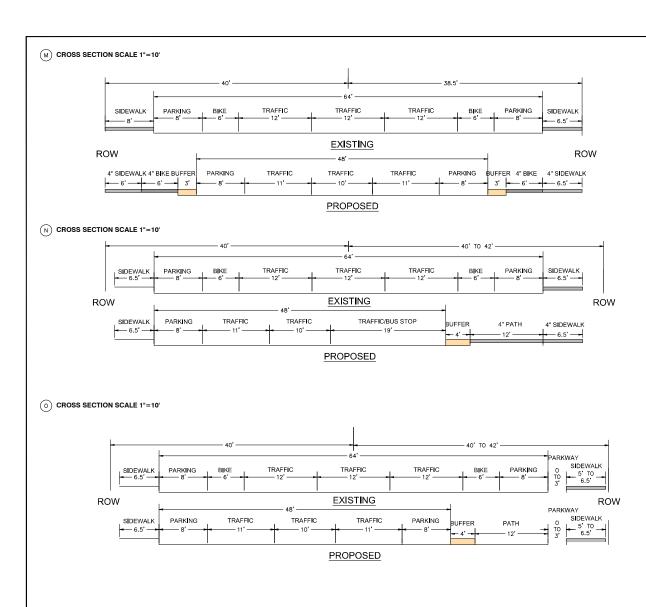


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	SHEET: 29 of 36	DATE: 04/2022
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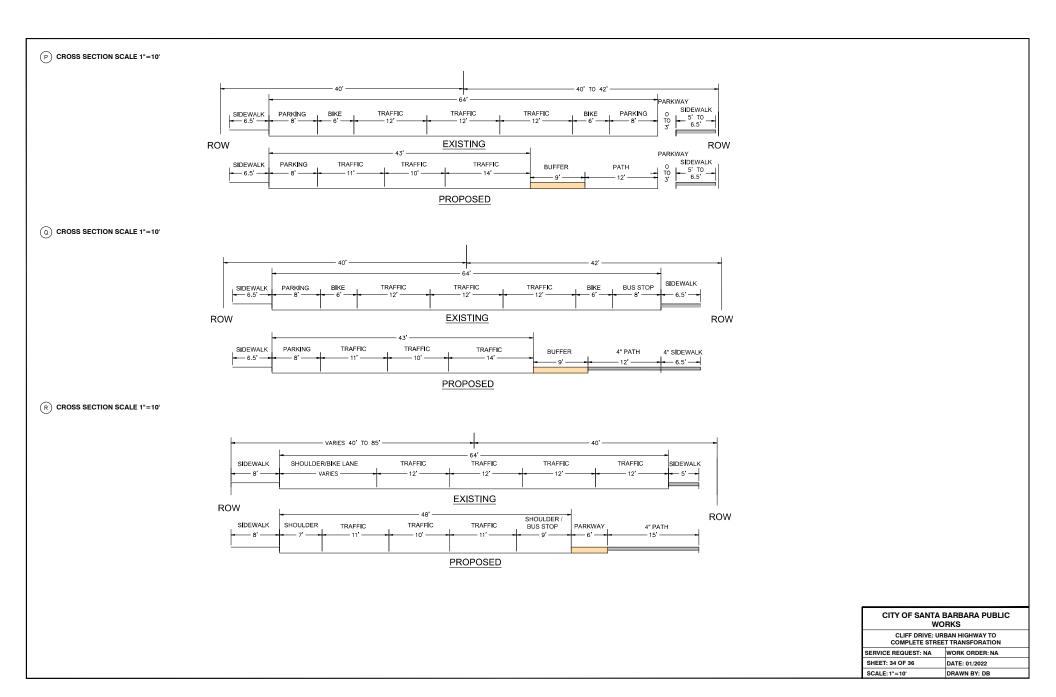


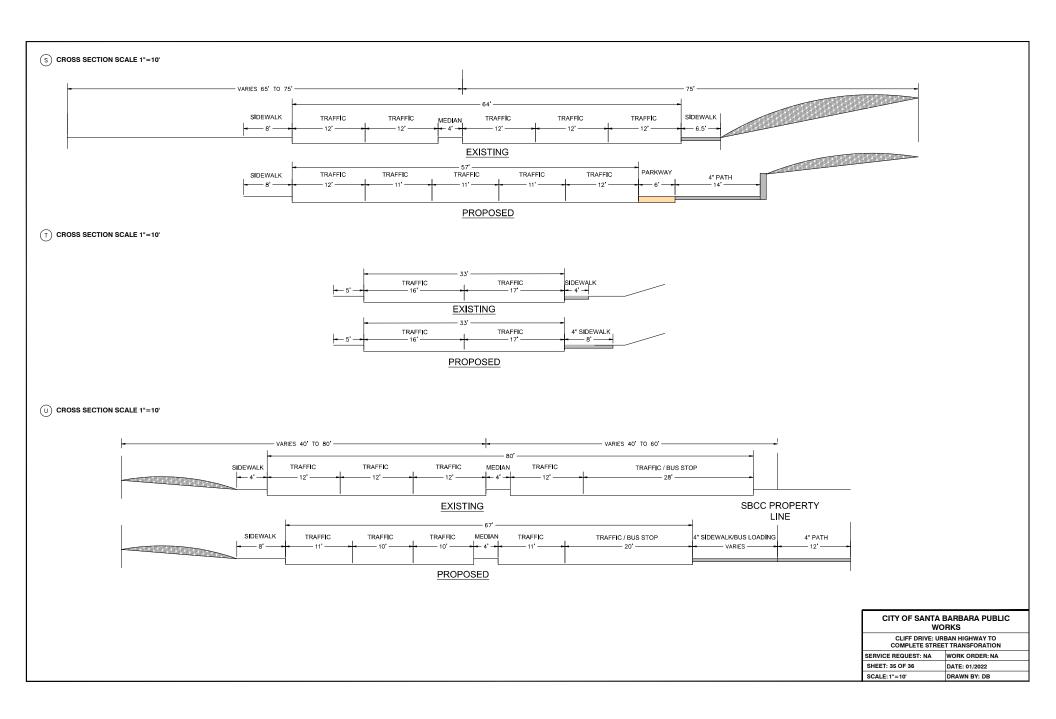


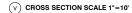


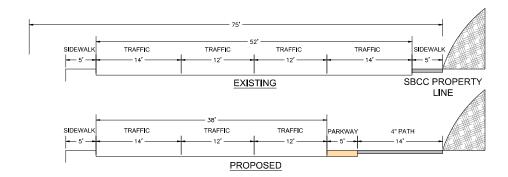


CITY OF SANTA BARBARA PUBLIC WORKS			
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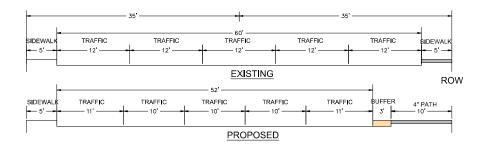








(W) CROSS SECTION SCALE 1"=10"



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA PUBLIC WORKS CLIFF DRIVE: URBAN HIGHWAY TO COMPLETE STREET TRANSFORATION SERVICE REQUEST: NA WORK ORDER: NA SHEET: 36 OF 36 DATE: 01/2022

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