

Frequently Asked Questions:

Ukiah Downtown Streetscape Improvement Project

What is the Downtown Streetscape Improvement Project?

The streetscape project is designed to improve the way State Street looks and functions in our downtown corridor and will include improvements to the traffic circulation, sidewalks, and pedestrian crossings. This project is the result of numerous community workshops, extensive studies by traffic engineers, and lots of input from stakeholders.

Where will it happen?

The project area includes: State Street between Henry and Mill Streets, and Standley and Perkins between State Street and School Streets.

When will it happen?

The pre-construction work (design, planning, public forums, etc.) occurred in 2019. The construction is scheduled to begin in the first part of 2020.



What does the project consist of?

- One of the most significant changes will be a “road diet.” Instead of State Street being four lanes—two in each direction—it will be three, one in each direction with a dedicated left turn lane where needed. By giving turning vehicles a separate lane, modifying the traffic signals, and adding pedestrian bulbouts, travel along State Street will be more efficient and much safer. Parallel parking will still line both sides of the street.
- Sidewalks along State Street will be widened to allow for better pedestrian access, improved handicap accessibility, and more outdoor dining and other street furniture.
- Bulbouts and enhanced crosswalks will make it easier and safer for pedestrians to get across State Street by lessening the distance and time required to cross and improving pedestrian visibility.

The former Highway 101: South State Street at Seminary Avenue; four traffic lanes plus two parking lanes. Projected improvements include lane reductions, and enhanced crosswalks for pedestrians.

Won't reducing the number of travel lanes slow traffic down?

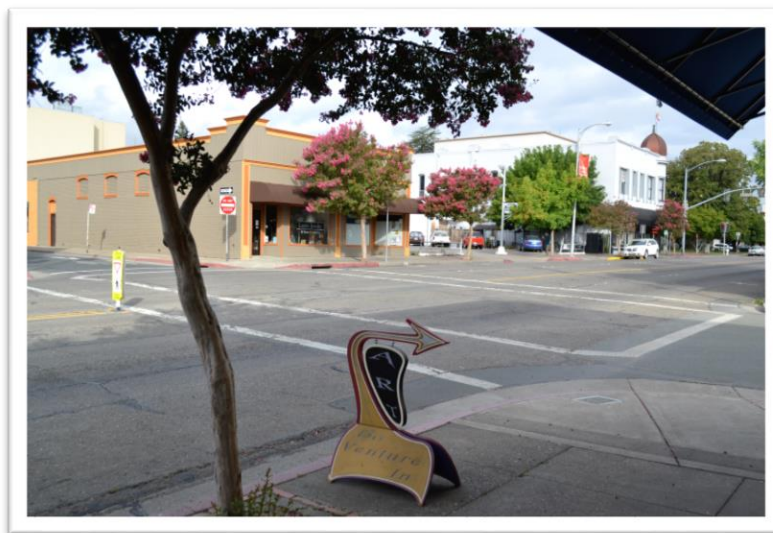
It may be counter-intuitive, but no. In fact, extensive studies of State Street traffic at peak times show that reducing the number of lanes and upgrading the traffic signals results in saving between one and three seconds at each major intersection.

How does this project make downtown safer?

Statewide, the average collision rate for four-lane roads (like State Street is currently) is more than double that for a three-lane facility. Rear-end collisions, unsafe lane changes, and pedestrian impacts are far less likely to occur when the left-turning vehicles are in dedicated turn lanes instead of obstructing traffic.

For pedestrians, the combination of the road “diet” and the bulbouts at intersections make crossing State Street dramatically safer. There is a shorter distance to cross, better visibility, and improved ramps at the corners.

For those concerned about safety in the case of a natural disaster or mass evacuation, it is important to note that there are no significant barriers along State Street that would prevent or restrict vehicular (including public safety) access. Additionally, Ukiah is built on a grid system that offers multiple north-south and east-west thoroughfares, allowing traffic to select alternate routes.



This busy, unsignalized intersection at South State Street and Church Street is frequently used during community events. Signs are placed in the center of the street to remind drivers to watch out for pedestrians. Bulb-outs and surface treatments will make this intersection significantly safer.

How will parking be impacted?

There will still be parallel (not diagonal) parking along both sides of State Street. The addition of bulbouts will result in the loss of a few parking spaces. Compared to the benefits, however, this is a small trade-off.

What are other benefits of the project?

- More efficient traffic signals result in less idling at intersections, thereby helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fuel consumption.
- The combination of increased safety, efficiency, and user comfort has been found to have a positive impact on businesses located along corridors where road diets have been implemented. There is generally an increase in property values and a decrease in vacancies along these corridors.
- Part of the reconstruction of State Street will include replacement and upgrades of the water and sewer utilities—an important investment in our infrastructure.
- New pavement = smooth pavement.

Where can I get more information?

More information, including images and detailed traffic study data, can be found on the City of Ukiah’s project page at www.ukiahstreetscape.com.