

Downtown Berkeley Public Improvements Project

Berkeley, CA



This streetscape project enhanced the area around the Downtown core, improving the look and feel of a high-activity environment on a limited budget.

BEFORE

- The City identified 11 downtown blocks in need of improvement, centered on Shattuck and University Avenues that connect the downtown Berkeley BART station to shops, cinemas, workplaces, hotels, residences, and the western edge of the UC Berkeley campus.
- Safety and image concerns were obstacles to successful transit use, retail, entertainment, institutional and residential activity.



Lack of trees on side medians and orange-colored cobrahead lighting on Shattuck Avenue provided poor ambience and dim lighting at sidewalks.

ASSIGNMENT

- Design streetscape improvements to improve image and comfort in accordance with a 1994 concept plan under significant budgetary constraints.
- Facilitate a public workshop process with stakeholders including business owners and residents.
- Solve problem of inadequate lighting which had contributed to widespread public perceptions of unsafe, uncomfortable and dirty streets.

OUTCOMES

Project Construction Documents completed 1999

Construction completed 2000

- The project's community workshops helped build consensus on the design of street lighting, street trees and sidewalks.
- The streetscape design introduces pedestrian-height streetlight poles with high-quality white lighting, pedestrian "bulb-outs" at key crosswalks, and planting of new sidewalk and median trees, the latter in part to fulfill the "grand boulevard" potential of Shattuck Avenue's multiple medians.

CLIENT: City of Berkeley

IN COLLABORATION WITH: John Northmore Roberts, Mark Thomas & Co., Inc., MTH Engineers, Inc., ISC Group, Sierra Engineering Group

FTB: When this project was completed the firm name was Freedman Tung & Bottomley (FTB).



New pedestrian-height white street lighting, open canopy trees, and street furniture enhanced day and night pedestrian comfort, personal safety perception, and downtown image for transit users, shoppers, and residents.



Eight new ornate twin-head streetlight poles mark the Shattuck and University Avenue intersection at the crossroads of Downtown Berkeley. FTB found and specified the original manufacturer for these historic lights that once lined San Pablo Boulevard in Berkeley in the early years of the 20th Century.