

Designing La Avenida

Student Visions for Urban Repair, Culture, and Mobility for East Santa Clara and Alum Rock



The Study Area

Slide by Tito Garrett,
SJSU MUP student



© Earth*

800 ft



collage by Fernando Cruz-Esparza, SJSU MUP student

HISTORY & DEMOGRAPHICS

Background:

- Car Centric Neighborhood
- BART Station planned
- Not yet gentrified
- Initially Italianate and Romanesque Revival architecture, later replaced by Edwardian and Neoclassical commercial buildings after the 1906 earthquake

Land Uses:

- Santa Clara Street has mixed land use with storefronts on the first floor and housing on subsequent floors. Lots of small business shops and gas stations noted



Tapestry Profile

Portuguese Church 1 mile radius | Ring of 1 mile

11,642
Households

36.4 ↓
Median Age

8.1% lower than
United States.

\$94.4K ↑
Median HH Income

15.7% higher than
United States.

\$982.9K ↑
Median Home Value

165.2% higher than
United States.

10.4
Home Value to
Income Ratio

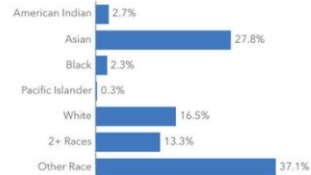
Median home value
divided by median
household income



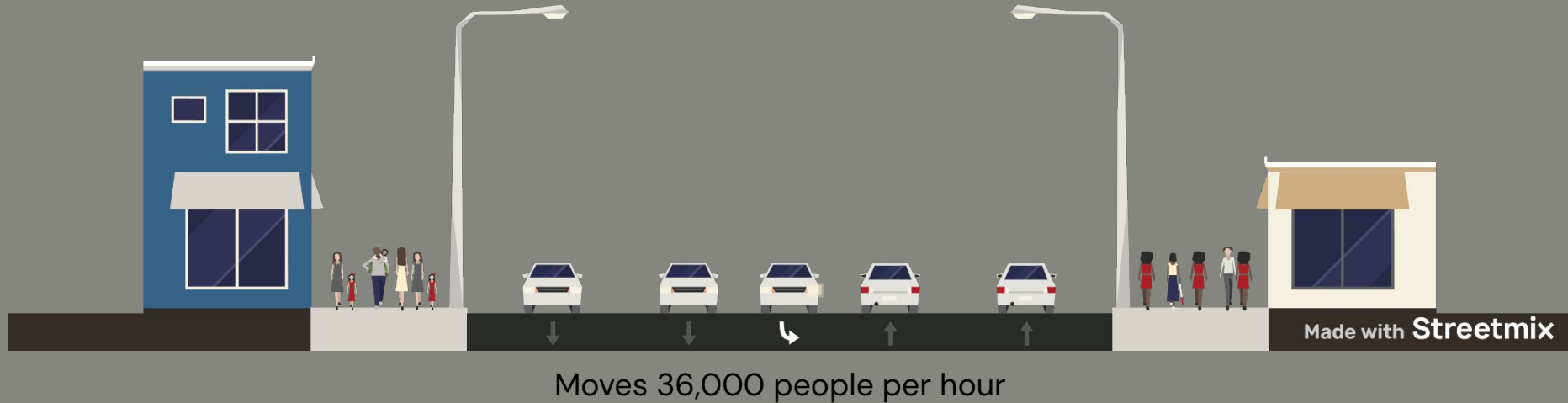
Diversity Index 86.7



Population by Race



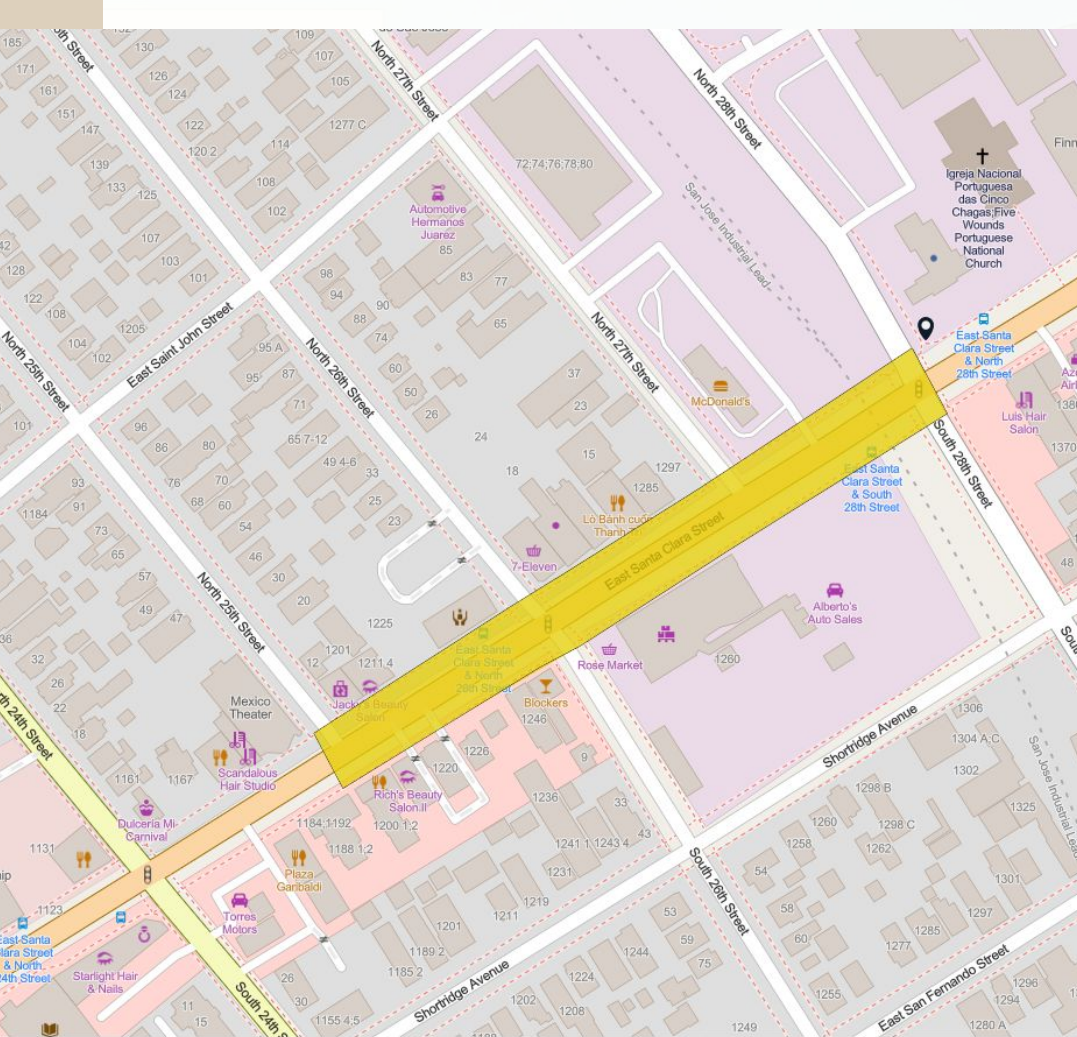
E. Santa Clara Street





Selection of student work from URBP 231 / 151 Fall 2025





Guiding Principles

- Human-scale street life (Jane Jacobs)
- Comfort + walkability (Jan Gehl)
- No displacement (Ellen Dunham-Jones & June Williamson)
- Preserve business parking (Dunham-Jones & Williamson)
- Safe multimodal design (NACTO)
- Celebrate multicultural identity (Christopher Reed)

Slide adapted from Jeremiah I. Aborode, MUP student

- Feature 2
- Feature 3





Design by Jeremiah I. Aborode, MUP student

Traffic Calming and Complete Streets



Street redesign renderings by MUP students Molly Mansfield (above) and Andrew Hernon (right)



Image by Fernando Cruz-Esparza, MUP student

A Corridor of Many Cultures





Renderings by
MUP student
Jaime Lopez

Programmed Pocket Park

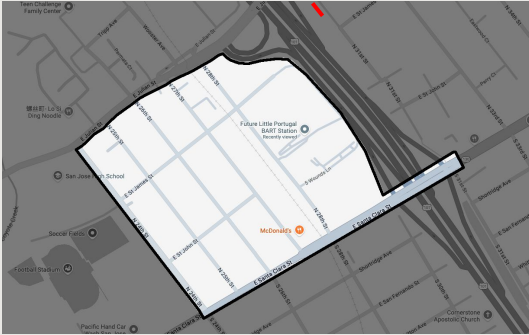
“Activating”
“Culinizing”
“Festivalizing and eventifying”
(Glover 2020)

- All-ages
- Multiple uses
- Community planned
- Still useful even when not ‘activated’

Adapted from
presentation by MUP
student Jessica Punzalan



N 28th Street



Images by MUP student
Manasi Aranake

Institutions as Anchors



'East San Jose Museum' proposal
by MUP student Lucas Rosen

Exterior plaza proposal for Mexican Heritage
Plaza by MUP student Joe Saperstein





101 Overpass



8'	4'	31'	2'	10'	10'	2'	31'	4'	8'
Bike lane		Sidewalk		Drive lane	No turn lane		Sidewalk		Bike lane

101 Overcrossing Current Condition



Narrow sidewalks next to fast traffic

Loud & harsh sensory environment

Low visibility & poor nighttime safety

Psychological barrier between downtown side & East SJ

Disconnects two halves of a single cultural corridor

Street design focuses on being thoroughfare — not people



101 Overcrossing Proposed Redesign



Widened sidewalks with buffers

Cultural tile motifs on railings

Pedestrian-scale lighting

Continuous protected bike lanes

Gateway signage: “Little Portugal /
Pequeña Portugal”

Noise-reducing materials & texture

Overcrossing becomes symbolic
bridge — not barrier



Ideas for rethinking the 101 overpass from MUP students Manasi Aranake (above) and Fernando Cruz-Esparza (left).

Cap the Freeway!

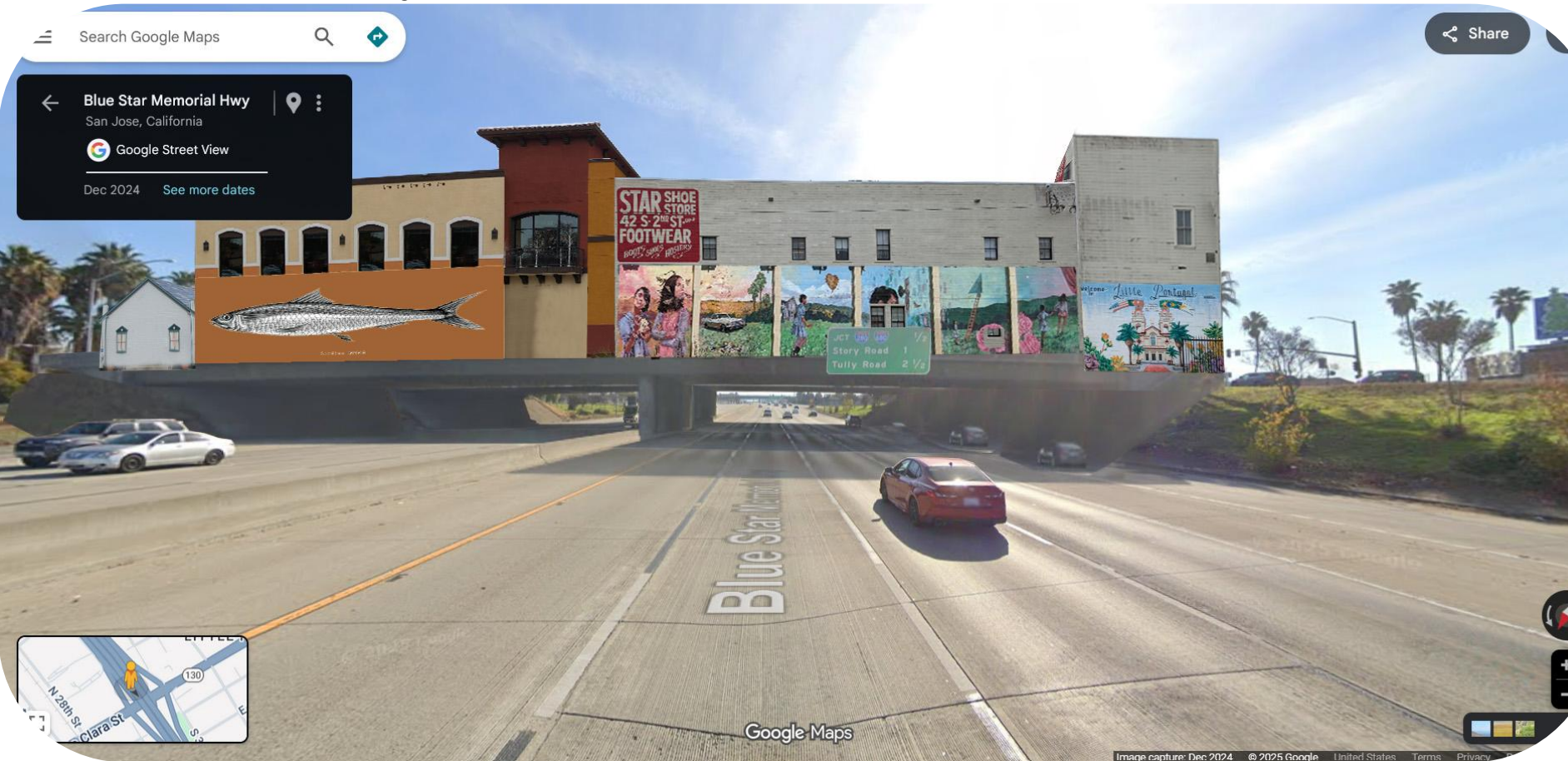
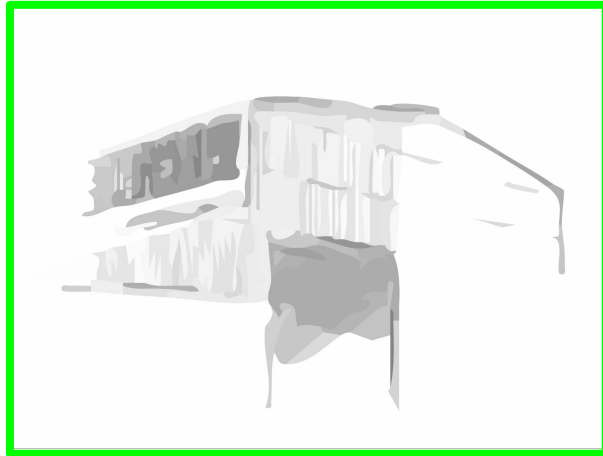


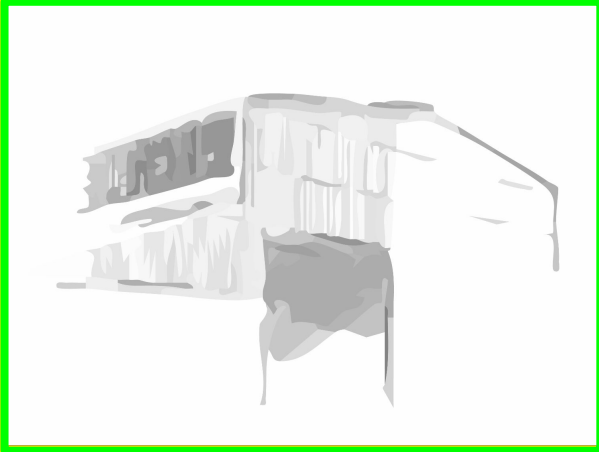
Image by Tito Garrett, MUP student.



28th Street - Little Portugal



REPURPOSE



Comparable Case Studies

Key Takeaways

Critical Mass

Developments in culturally rich, historically underserved communities.

Pedestrian streets lined by murals, small shops, and plazas



Fruitvale Transit Village

Transformed a proposed parking garage into a vibrant mixed-use village.

Affordable and market-rate housing, a pediatric clinic, a senior center, a public library branch, a head-start preschool, and retail spaces for local businesses

Wikimedia Commons. (n.d.). Fruitvale BART [Photograph].
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fruitvale_BART.jpg



Mission District BART plazas

Public spaces with markets and murals.

Preserved cultural character while upgrading infrastructure.

Bull, B. (2013, November 12). BART, plazas & homelessness: thinking long-term. Mission Local.
<https://missionlocal.org/2013/11/bart-plazas-homelessness-thinking-longer-term/>



MacArthur Park Metro station

Affordable housing and a plaza in a dense immigrant neighborhood.

Designed with and for the existing community.

Linton, J. (2023, April 20). Metro MacArthur Park Station pilot: So far, heavy on punitive measures. Streetsblog Los Angeles.
<https://la.streetsblog.org/2023/04/20/metro-macarthur-park-station-pilot-so-far-heavy-on-punitive-measures>



Selection of student work

