

## Project Overview

The City of Davis and UC Davis are working on a joint planning and conceptual design effort to address a 3-mile stretch of Russell Boulevard from B Street to the western City limit. The purpose of the project is to develop a comprehensive vision, including guidelines for improvements to multimodal transportation facilities, stormwater infrastructure, and community landscape spaces.

Serving as a vital east-west arterial in the City of Davis and a primary western gateway to both the City and University, Russell Boulevard plays a critical role in the community's multimodal transportation network.

The purpose of the Russell Boulevard Corridor Plan ("Reimagine Russell") is to determine a comprehensive and community-based vision for the corridor. This vision will be supported by best practices in street design, landscape and gateway guidelines, and conceptual plans and community input. Ultimately, the Plan will identify ways the City and University can address safety concerns and provide enhanced connections for the 8,000 bicyclists, 20,000 vehicles, and 13,000 transit riders that travel along the boulevard on a typical weekday. This Project is a long-range transportation planning effort to develop a vision framework plan that will accommodate future community and campus growth and address demand for travel on the corridor.



Image 1: View of Russell Boulevard

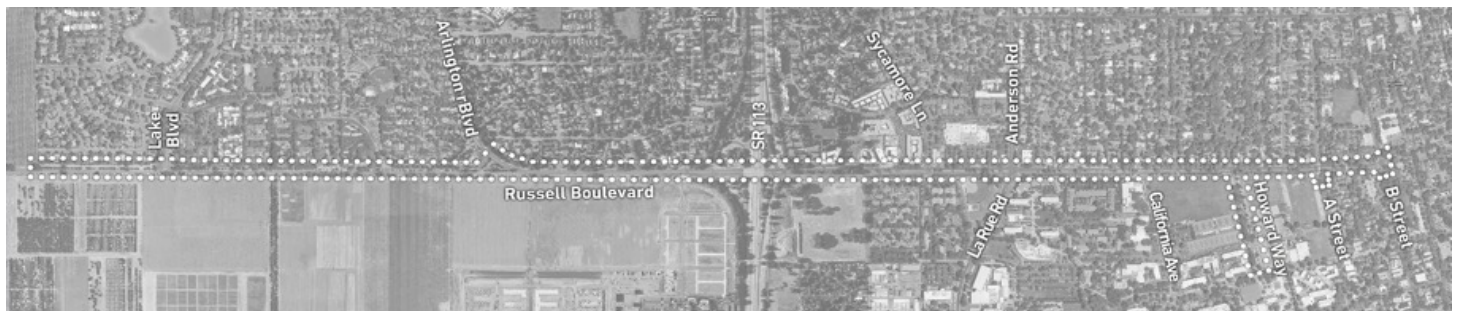


Image 2: Russell Boulevard Project Study Area

## Workshop Overview

The first Reimagine Russell Boulevard community workshop was held on Wednesday, April 28, 2021. The goal of the workshop was to provide a general project introduction and learn from the workshop participants about their experiences, concerns, and aspirations for Russell Boulevard. City of Davis staff, UC Davis staff, and project team members provided a general project overview, summary of existing conditions analysis work completed to date, and facilitated small group discussions to learn from community members. Community members had the opportunity to discuss their experiences traveling along Russell Boulevard, their vision of how Russell Boulevard might be improved while maintaining the unique characteristics of the surrounding community, and how multimodal transportation, placemaking, and green infrastructure concepts apply to the corridor. After the presentation and small group activity, the workshop concluded with project next steps and highlighted the online map-based survey as an additional opportunity for community members to provide input.

To view the presentation slides and a recording of the workshop, please visit the project website ([www.reimaginerussell.com](http://www.reimaginerussell.com)).

## Workshop Format

The workshop was designed to provide participants with a sound foundation of the project scope and existing conditions of the project study area and to solicit community feedback to inform the conceptual design process. Due to the current pandemic and necessary safety precautions, the workshop was held via Zoom. Roughly 170 participants attended and participated in the workshop.

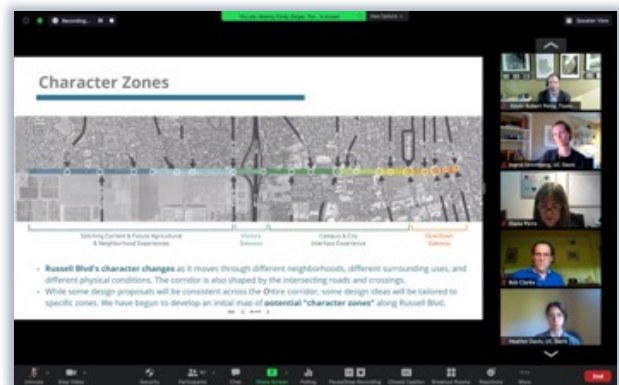


Image 3: Screenshot of the Virtual Workshop presentation and some participants

The workshop was organized into three sections:

1. Project introduction and a summary of existing conditions;
2. An interactive small group activity to gather feedback from participants on existing conditions and personal experiences on the corridor, as well as

- aspirations for what they want Russell Boulevard to be in the future; and,
- Project next steps including additional detail on the project schedule, the next community workshop, and instructions on how to access the online survey.

Project staff facilitated the small group activity using maps and taking notes within MIRO, a digital collaboration tool. This allowed participants to see comments from other participants in their group, respond to what they heard during the presentation, and add new information to the conversation. There were 10 small groups comprised of 10-20 participants that were moderated by a group facilitator and note taker. Facilitators asked five questions during the 45-minute small group activity. The questions were:

Discussion Question	Input Category
What did we miss or what would you like to add?	Existing Conditions Inventory
What do you like and wish to see preserved?	Conceptual Design process
What do you dislike and wish to see changed?	Conceptual Design process
What is missing and you wish to see created?	Conceptual Design process
What are your hopes and dreams for Russell Boulevard in 10 years?	Community Vision Statement

Table 1: Small Group Activity Discussion Questions

## Summary of Key Themes



Image 4: Screenshot of a MIRO Existing Conditions Board

The following provides a summary of key themes that emerged during the workshop.



### ***What did we miss or what would you like to add?***

When asked about existing conditions and any additional detail, participants added a number of comments that fell into a few general categories: crossings/conflict considerations, experiential qualities, greater network considerations, and human behavior.

#### **Crossings / conflict considerations**

- There are a lot of crossings that feel unsafe, especially west of SR-113.
- Bicycle/pedestrian crash data does not seem to reflect recent crashes.
- Some bicyclists use the sidewalk on the north side to avoid crossing to the shared use path which can be challenging for pedestrians.
- The shared use path can be difficult for pedestrians when there are a lot of bicyclists present.

#### **Experiential qualities**

- The viewshed to the west and toward the agricultural fields is a wonderful asset.
- The intramural fields and track are wonderful assets – you can see “campus life” happening and the green space provides a sense of “relief” from the built up areas.
- Tree roots and tree fruit impact user experience of the trail on the south side and the sidewalks on the north side.

#### **Greater network considerations**

- Russell Boulevard is part of a greater street network and changes to the corridor may have impacts on other streets.
- Connections / transitions to other sidewalks and bikeways are generally good but could be improved.

#### **Driver, bicyclist, and pedestrian behavior**

- Fast driving is very common west of SR-113.
- Pedestrians and bicyclists at different speeds can create safety concerns on the trail.
- Pedestrian and bicyclist behavior can be unpredictable throughout the corridor.

### ***What do you like and wish to see preserved?***

Many community members expressed that Russell Boulevard is an important community asset and beautiful boulevard. Its tree canopy, shared use path, transit operations, and transition from an urban to a rural setting make it a well-used and loved corridor. Many

respondents agreed that these aspects of the corridor should be preserved, and in some cases enhanced. Some additional corridor characteristics that participants wanted to see preserved were:

- Viewsheds that allow users to enjoy the sunset and agricultural nature of the campus and west of the City limits.
- Retain the off-street trail to the south and consider ways to make it safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Crossings where you can make eye contact with other users really help and should be maintained (e.g. LaRue Road, College Avenue).
- Celebrate elements that contribute to Davis' and UC Davis' identity (e.g., the pennyfarthing bike and other art elements, banners).
- Watching campus life happen on the fields is an asset for the community.



Image 5: Screenshot of Miro Board showing Community Comments

**What do you dislike and wish to see changed?**

When asked what participants disliked, many comments were related to speed, safety, behavior, and vegetation health and maintenance. Some key themes and recommendations from participants are summarized below:

- Sidewalk improvements: The sidewalk on Russell Boulevard from Arthur Street to Eisenhower Street feels unsafe on the north side due to the size of the sidewalk, tree locations, and lack of street lighting. Additionally, narrow sidewalks create obstacles and bottlenecks for all modes due to the high number of bicyclists along the corridor, especially at Oak Avenue.
- Intersections are a challenge for all modes: Arlington and Russell Boulevard is particularly fast and has challenging crossings for all modes. Some thought that a different intersection configuration should be considered. A particular look at how best to handle all intersections and crossings, address signal timings, and make pedestrians and bicyclists very visible were all items that participants mentioned.
- Stormwater management: Throughout the corridor, there are spaces to address flooding and better manage large storm events. Participants mentioned Orchard Park and sidewalks flooding along the north side of Russell Boulevard near Oak Avenue as particular areas to consider.
- Shade and plants: Increase shade and colorful trees in the median on the west side of Russell Boulevard, with increased majestic trees, fruit bearing trees, and maintenance to promote tree health.



Image 6: Screenshot of Miro Board showing Community Comments

**What is missing, and what would you wish to see created?**

When asked what is missing and what participants would like to see created, the responses generally fell into categories of better mobility and safety. Many also felt that there should be opportunities to make Russell Boulevard a memorable experience for residents, students, and visitors alike. The following provides a sampling of the comments:

- Create a slower environment so pedestrians crossing feel safer, particularly at intersections west of SR-113 and California Avenue.
- Encourage a better tree canopy where needed, keep the trees that provide shade and incorporate new trees that can tolerate heat.
- Find ways to address flooding and deal with the stormwater on site, especially if this can become a “feature” of the boulevard.
- Multimodal connections could be improved at LaRue / Anderson / Russell Boulevard as the University Mall is redeveloped by integrating traffic calming into the project.
- Separate spaces for pedestrians, bicyclists, scooters, and skateboarders.
- Incorporate gateway elements, wayfinding, and places to gather to create a sense of place for Russell Boulevard.

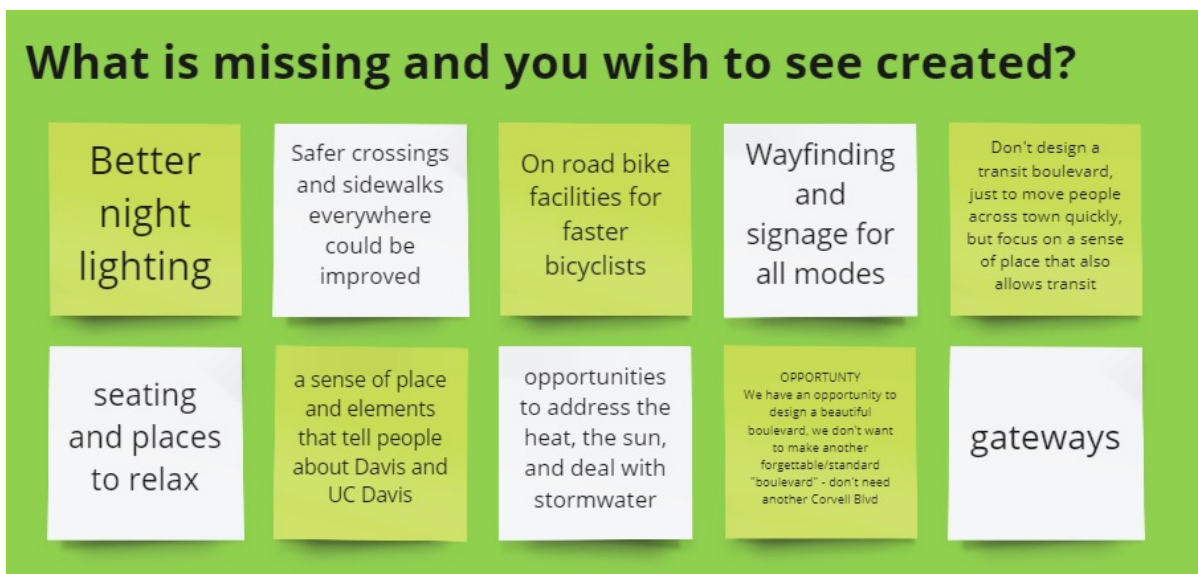


Image 7: Screenshot of Miro Board showing Community Comments

**What are your hopes and dreams for Russell Boulevard in 10 years?**

The small group activity concluded with an aspirational question asking participants to share what they would like the corridor to be in 10 years. Many participants shared that they saw Russell Boulevard as a great amenity for the City of Davis and UC Davis, and as a signature space that the community could be known for. Participants mentioned that the ability to reimagine Russell Boulevard is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make this corridor a place that people want to be. The following provides a snapshot of some of the things people mentioned when asked about what Russell Boulevard could be in 10 years:

- A place of innovation and demonstration that showcases some of what Davis is known for: agriculture and bicycling.
- A corridor that feels comfortable whether bicycling, walking, or driving.
- A place that encourages people to walk, which means better shade and things to look at.
- A boulevard that has healthy trees that will survive and thrive in the future.
- Welcoming gateways that tell people where they are in Davis, at UC Davis, and throughout the corridor.

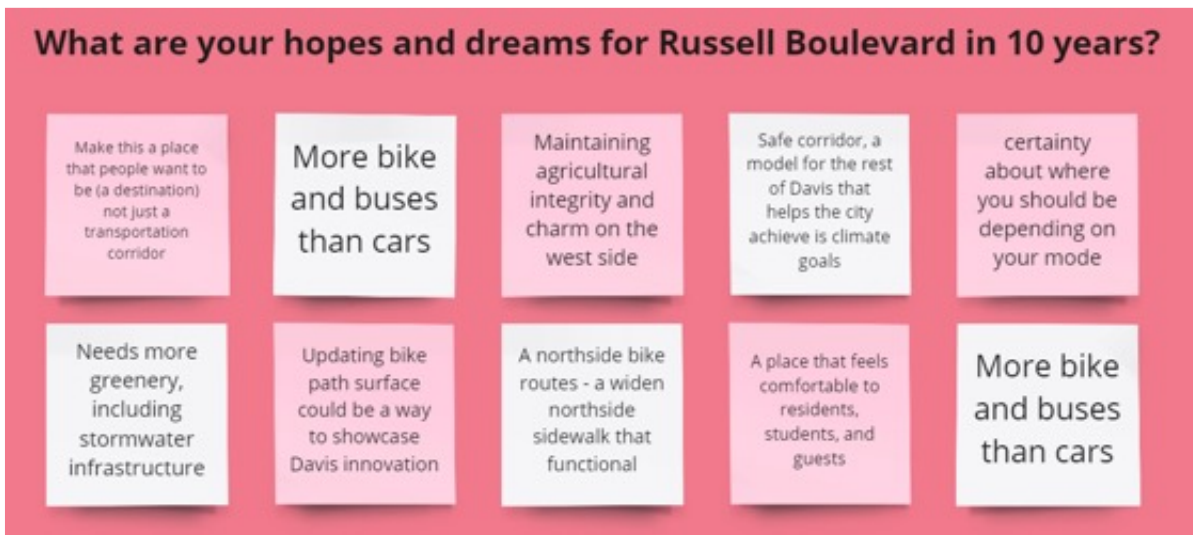


Image 8: Screenshot of Miro Board showing Community Comments



## Workshop Notification

Below is a summary of the efforts to build awareness about the City of Davis and UC Davis' Reimagine Russell Boulevard Project and notify Davis community members about the first workshop. 254 community members registered for the virtual community workshop on Wednesday, April 28th, 2021 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

Several publicity tactics were employed to raise awareness about the project and the first virtual workshop. This included a media release that was sent to more than twenty local news sources, including print, TV, radio and media outlets. Of those media outlets, Davis Enterprise, The Davis Vanguard, The Dirt Davis, and the Daily Democrat released articles about the Reimagine Russell Boulevard Community Workshop. Direct emails were sent to more than 1,200 community members who have participated in past Davis land-use or transportation-related projects. Social media strategies included a Facebook advertisement to Facebook users within a fifteen-mile radius of Davis, and Twitter messages were released from the City of Davis' Twitter account. In addition, UC Davis encouraged participation through The Aggie paper and by reaching out to key stakeholder organizations such as ASCUD, GSA, Student Affairs, and other University-based interest groups.



Image 9: Notification Material for Community Workshop

Beyond digital awareness techniques, approximately 42 H-stake signs (lawn signs) were placed around Davis at key activity centers, on the University campus, and along Russell Boulevard. The lawn signs included the project website and a QR code to encourage those who saw them to visit the project website and sign up for the virtual community workshop. Project messaging at bus stops and throughout the Unitrans bus fleet were also deployed to raise awareness on the effort.