

Heart of Norwalk Vision Plan

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Image Attributions

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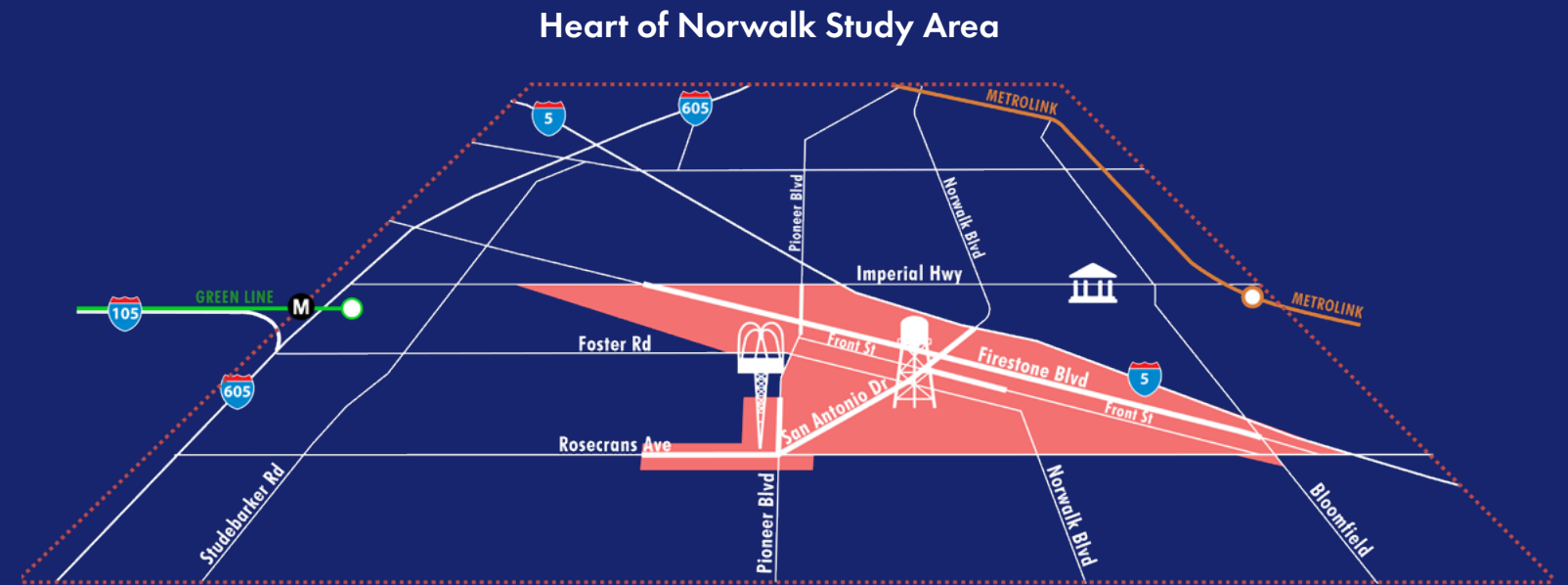
1 | Purpose and Background

Project Goals and Background

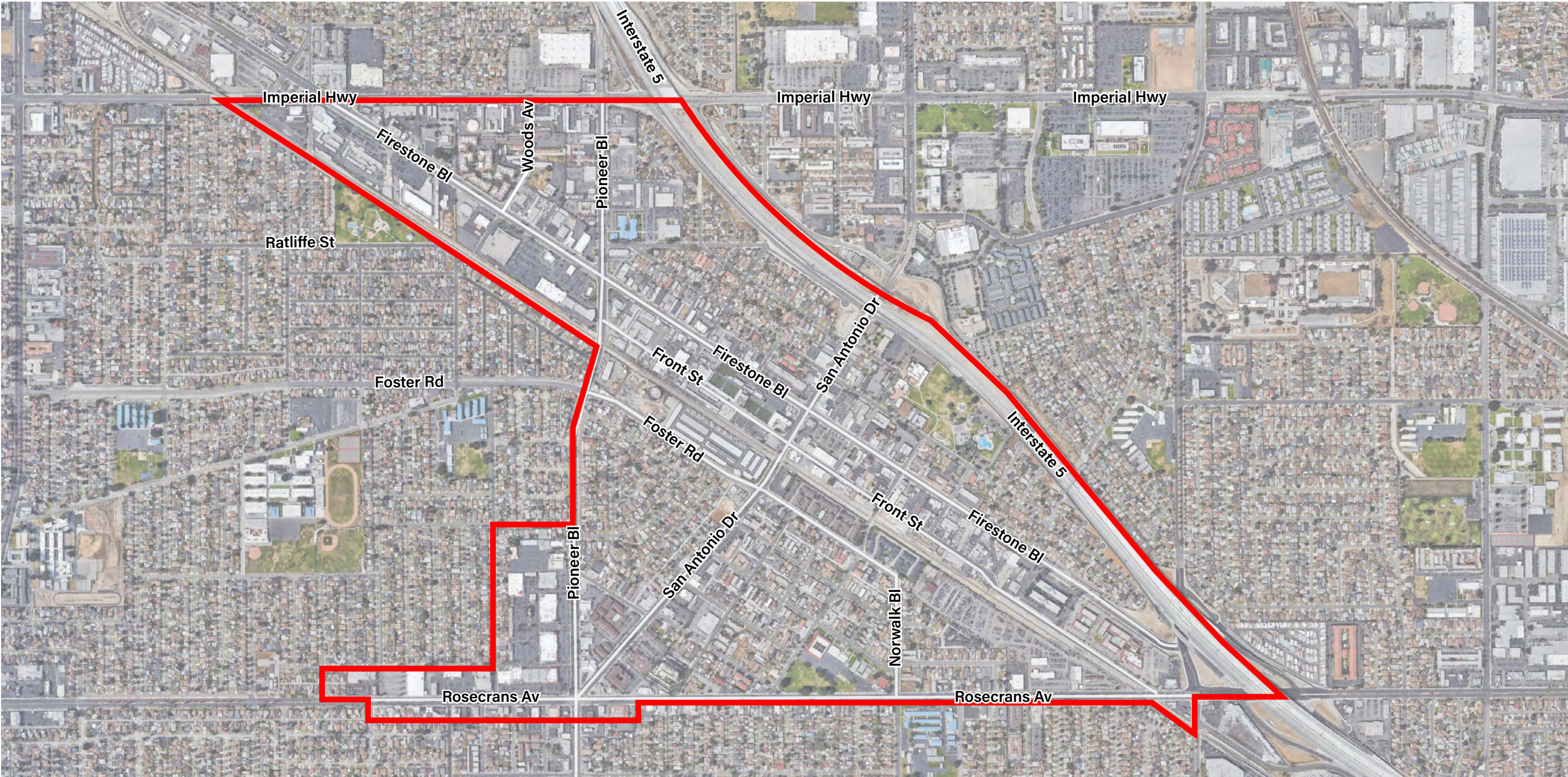
San Antonio Village and the Firestone Corridor encompass the oldest sections of the City of Norwalk. This area is where the City began, and it remains its very heart. Today it lies midway between the Metrolink train station and the Metro Green Line rail terminus, but enjoys no strong linkage to either. Many of the land uses and structures have become worn and underutilized as the City expanded and newer developments captured the market. The major corridors through the area are zoned for commercial use, yet they provide few markets, stores, restaurants and entertainment venues for local residents, forcing them to drive to other cities. Overall, the area lacks a coherent and positive sense of place.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in interest in the San Antonio Village/Firestone Corridor by residential developers. Its commercial corridors offer some of the few opportunities within the City to meet the need expressed by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) for new dwelling units to address the regional housing shortage. With limited opportunities for such new investment, City leaders decided that rather than reacting to development on an ad-hoc, site by site basis, development should be directed in a manner that would benefit the entire community and begin to establish a fresh new identity for the area. Therefore, with the support of SCAG, the City initiated a study to create an overall Vision for the Heart of Norwalk.

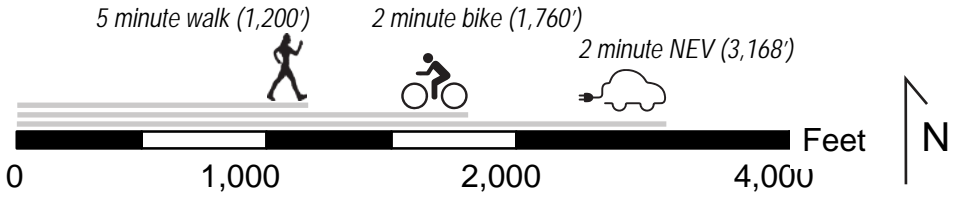
The purpose of the Vision Plan is to articulate a clear, consensus-driven direction for San Antonio Village/Firestone Corridor --- to create a vision for an attractive, active and unique place that will not only benefit local residents and businesses, but also establish a unique positive identity for the entire City of Norwalk. This Vision will guide the City as it moves forward to prepare the Specific Plans, development regulations and public improvement projects necessary to transition the vision from dream into reality.



Purpose and Background | 1



 Heart of Norwalk Study Area



1 | Purpose and Background

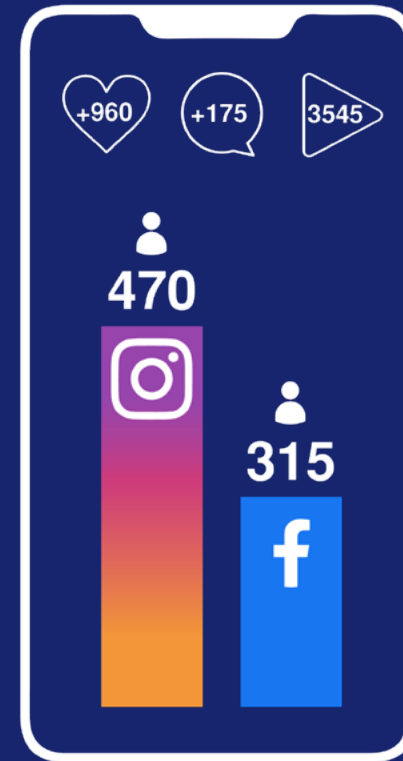
Outreach

The City of Norwalk and consultant team conducted a public outreach campaign between December 2020 and March 2021 to understand the community's values, knowledge and ideas for the future of the Heart of Norwalk. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the outreach campaign engaged approximately 5,300 residents and disseminated information to every household in the City through digital and print means.

City and consultant team staff collaborated to create four informational videos in English and Spanish to educate the community about the history and issues facing the Heart of Norwalk and ask for their input through community workshops and surveys. Four online events were held in February and March 2021 – two community workshops in English, one in Spanish, and one focus group meeting with members of the Norwalk Parks and Recreation Department's Teen Alliance Program. Each event involved an educational/background portion with the project's informational videos, poll versions of the survey questions, and breakout group design charrettes, in which the participants collaborated to create a plan for the Heart of Norwalk.

Survey results and workshop discussion revealed that a broad mix of uses including commercial, multifamily residential and mixed-use is desired along the Heart of Norwalk's commercial streets. The most common theme that emerged from discussion about land uses was the desire for high-quality local commercial options and places to enjoy together and spend time in public. Our results found that the majority of respondents favor integrating apartments and condominiums together with commercial uses in order to provide additional housing options, particularly for young professionals who grew up in Norwalk and desire to stay in the community. At a minimum, they accept having higher-density residential and mixed uses as an appropriate trade-off to be able to get the kind of commercial amenities that are desired.

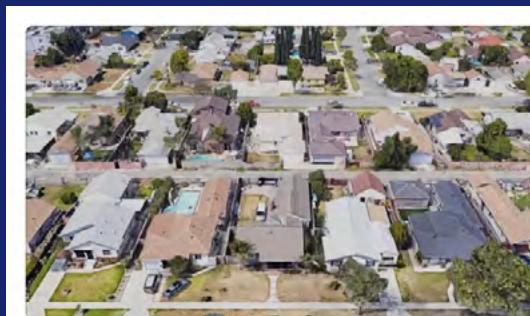
Social Media Engagement



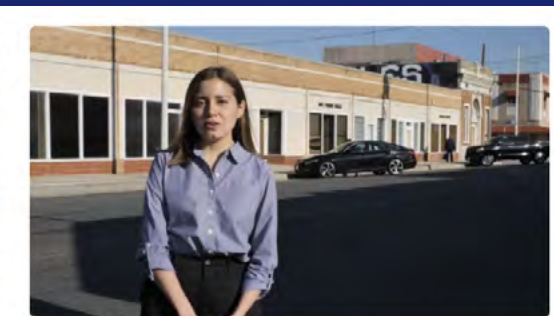
Workshop Attendance



Survey Responses



Corazón de Norwalk - Sección 2



Corazón de Norwalk - Sección 1



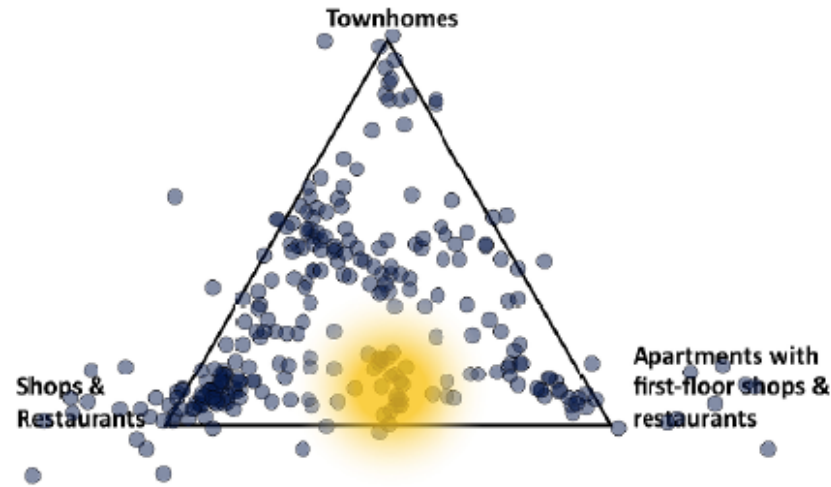
Heart of Norwalk - Section 3



Heart of Norwalk - Section 2

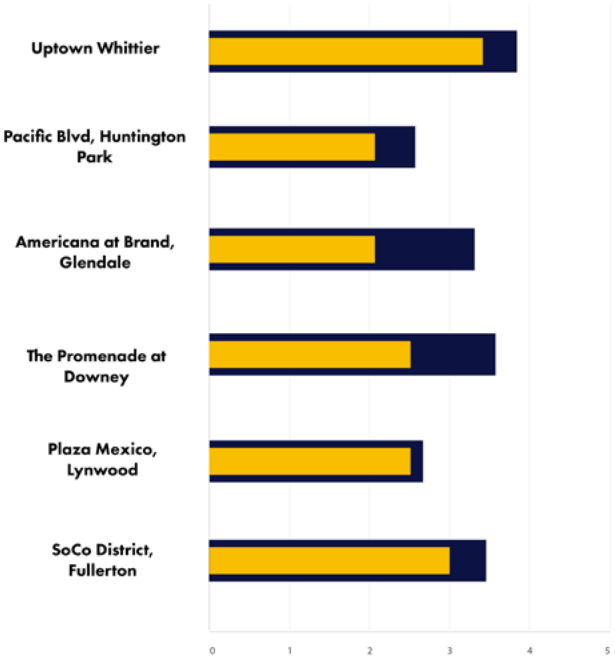
Purpose and Background | 1

If you could change what's in the commercial areas of the Heart of Norwalk, what would you put there? Place a dot within the large triangle to indicate your preferred mix.



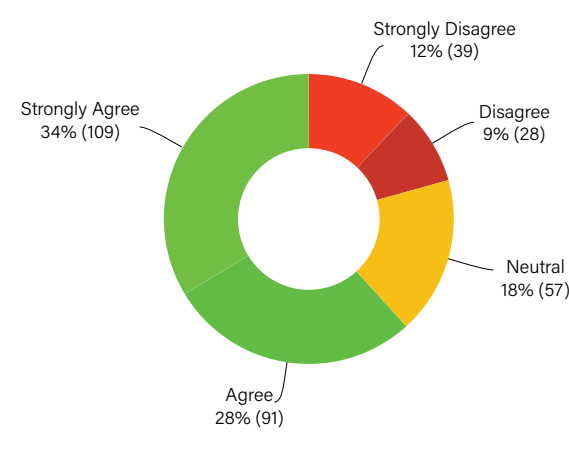
Results from survey (blue) & Community Workshop (yellow)

Rate the examples below for the future of the Heart of Norwalk. 5 being most appropriate and 1 being least appropriate.

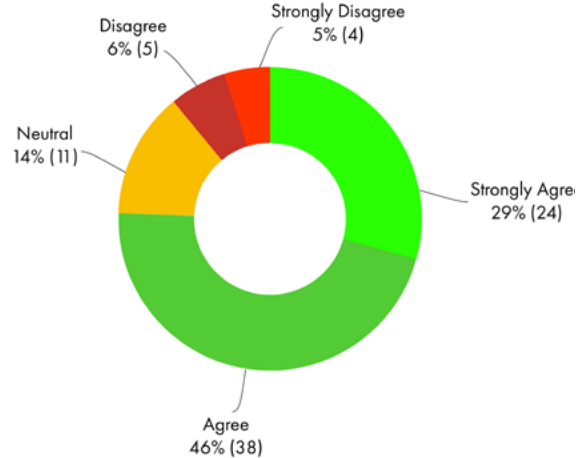


Results from survey (blue) & Community Workshops (yellow)

Do you agree with the following statement? "Streets in the Heart of Norwalk should be designed for safe and comfortable walking and biking, even if it requires removing a lane or slowing driving speeds."



Results from Survey



Results from Workshops

The majority of survey respondents and workshop participants expressed a desire to prioritize walking, biking and public space over traffic movement in the Heart of Norwalk. The streets most recommended for such improvements were Front Street, San Antonio Drive and Pioneer Boulevard, although there was some interest in Firestone Boulevard as well.

As they envision the heart of their community, residents refer to Uptown Whittier and Fullerton's SoCo District. They want to have an authentic center of their city, with local and national businesses, a variety of urban residential uses, places to walk and spend time, nightlife and spaces that can encourage and celebrate local culture, such as performing arts spaces.

Finally, it is apparent from discussion that both Front Street and Norwalk Town Square/Five Points could lay claim to being the 'center' of the Heart of Norwalk. There is a strong desire for Front Street to be a focal area for local business and nightlife, preserving older buildings and the historic feel of the street, and possibly catering more to the younger population of Norwalk. Norwalk Town Square and the surrounding Five Points area is seen as a place that should have strong shopping, entertainment (live and/or filmed) and parking.

1 | Purpose and Background



Economic Analysis

The project team conducted developer interviews, a market study, pro forma analysis and evaluation of the potential benefits of transit in order to shed light on the opportunities and constraints that exist around real estate development in the Heart of Norwalk.

Norwalk is a community with older, relatively affordable housing stock. Newer homes for sale and rental units are rare due to scarce vacant land and inadequate zoning; however, they do command a premium when built. While retail lease rates are fairly similar to those in surrounding communities, data show that the City loses a fair amount of retail sales to surrounding communities in apparel, home furnishings and appliances, restaurants and bars, and specialty stores, which include video game and computer sales. These trends do indicate that mixed-use development along the major corridors could be successful and help address the retail leakage that the City currently faces. Pro forma analysis bears out this finding, by indicating the relatively strong feasibility of mixed-use projects if permitted by zoning.

In interviews, the business and development communities applauded the positive working relationship they have with City staff. However, the City's outdated plans, zoning map and development standards limit staff's ability to give clear direction to them on how any new types of development would be received. As a result, projects that are proposed reflect the status quo of auto-oriented commercial and limited residential townhome development. They do see significant potential, however, for new types of development in the Heart of Norwalk if permitted by zoning. They note the recent and nearby example of Artesia, which relaxed zoning restrictions near its forthcoming Metro station and is seeing significant development interest as a result. They also believe that higher end retail, restaurants and entertainment can be attracted to the City through a combination of zoning incentives and upgrades of public streets and open spaces, as has been seen in Downey.

Purpose and Background | 1

| Development Type Options | RETAIL | RESIDENTIAL | MIXED-USE: FOR-SALE 3 STORY | RESIDENTIAL MARKET RATE RENTAL 4 & 5 STORY | MIXED-USE: MARKET RATE RENTAL 4 & 5 STORY | MIXED-USE: AFFORDABLE UNSUBSIDIZED | |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| General Feasibility Evaluation |  Some types of retail are being built in the community |  Proven feasibility from recent development activity |  Marginally Feasible |  Feasible |  Feasible |  Feasible with Major Changes in Development Standards Only | |
| Notes | High-quality options are difficult to attract without public investment | | Requires modest reduction in parking | Similar to Metropointe and Solterra Requires modest reduction in parking | Requires modest reduction in parking | Target young professionals Small units Very low parking, needs good public transit accessibility | |
| Pro Forma Analysis Assumptions & Results | | | Density: 30 du/ac Unit Size: 2-3 BR Parking: 1.5 spaces/unit, tuck-under Common Amenities: Moderate Sales Prices: \$535,000-575,000 Land Residual: \$48/SF | | | Density: 60 du/ac Unit Size: Studio - 3 BR Parking: 1-2 spaces/unit, podium Common Amenities: High Rents: \$1,500-2,600/mo Land Residual: \$69/SF | Density: 100 du/ac, 3 stories Unit Size: Studio - 1 BR, small size Parking: 0.5 spaces/unit, surface Common Amenities: Low Rents: \$1,000-\$1,200/mo Land Residual: \$46/SF |

-  Feasible
-  Marginally/Conditionally Feasible
-  Infeasible

2 | Urban Design Framework

Districts

The **Front Street Historic District** (Ch. 3) is a revitalized historic mixed-use district with a strong emphasis on nightlife and entertainment.

Norwalk Town Square (Ch. 4) is a center and gathering space for the whole Norwalk community with a variety of shopping, open space, housing, and entertainment activities.

The **Transit-Oriented Residential District** (Ch. 5) is a potential location for additional housing and a future public transit hub.

Corridors and Connections

Front Street Promenade (Ch. 6) provides an active pedestrian environment with abundant spaces for being outdoors in public among entertainment uses.

San Antonio Drive (Ch. 7) will be an iconic walking, biking and driving connection between Norwalk Town Square, Front Street and the Civic Center.

Firestone Corridor (Ch. 8) will be a green urban boulevard that supports new residential and commercial development.

Norwalk Railway Path (Ch. 9) will be a recreational trail for jogging and cycling.

Land Use Examples



Active Retail with Residential: Medium Density



Active Retail with Residential: High Density



Commercial



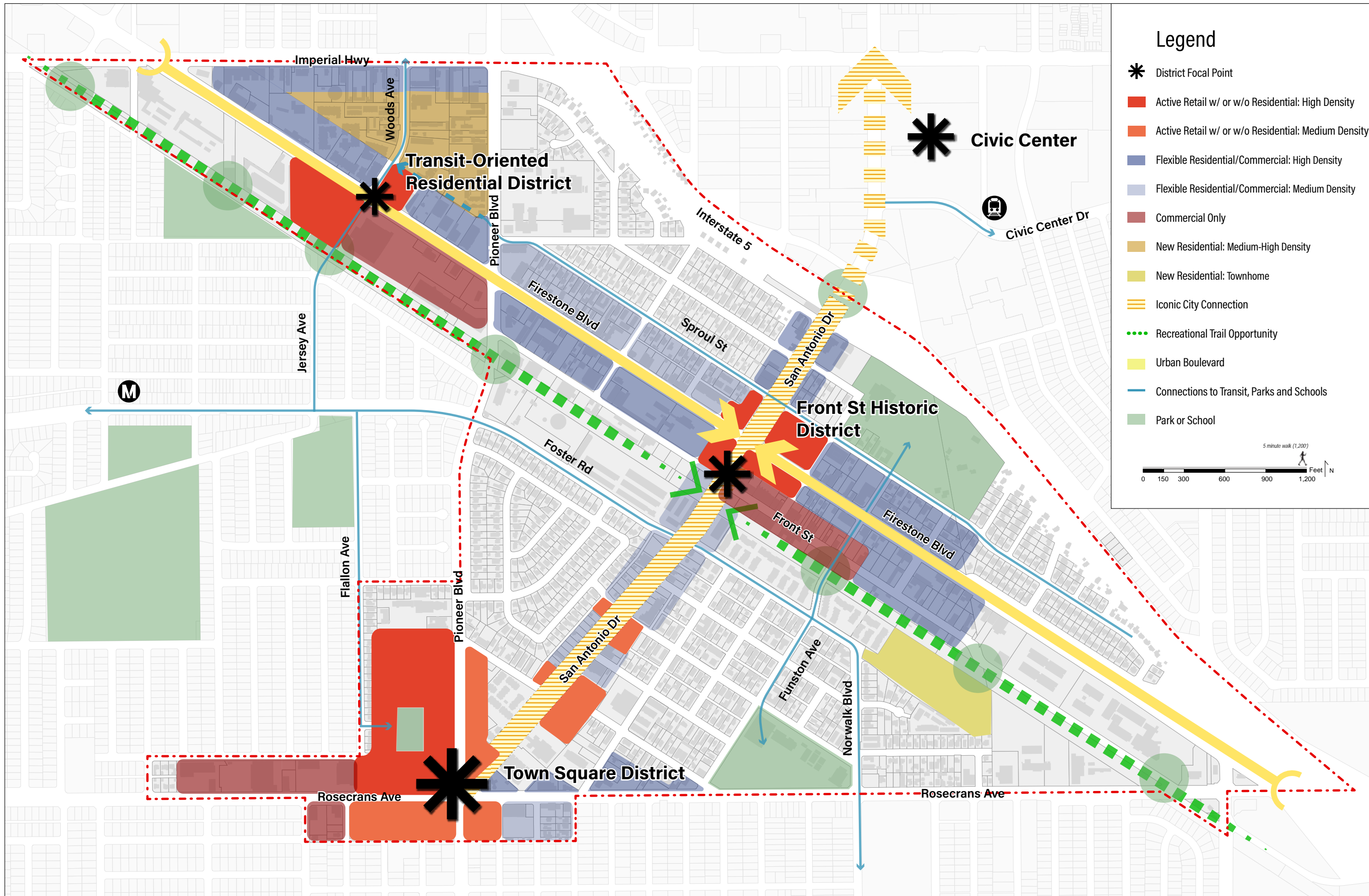
Residential: Townhome



Residential: Medium Density

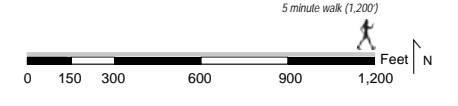


Residential: Medium-High Density



Legend

- District Focal Point
- Active Retail w/ or w/o Residential: High Density
- Active Retail w/ or w/o Residential: Medium Density
- Flexible Residential/Commercial: High Density
- Flexible Residential/Commercial: Medium Density
- Commercial Only
- New Residential: Medium-High Density
- New Residential: Townhome
- Iconic City Connection
- Recreational Trail Opportunity
- Urban Boulevard
- Connections to Transit, Parks and Schools
- Park or School

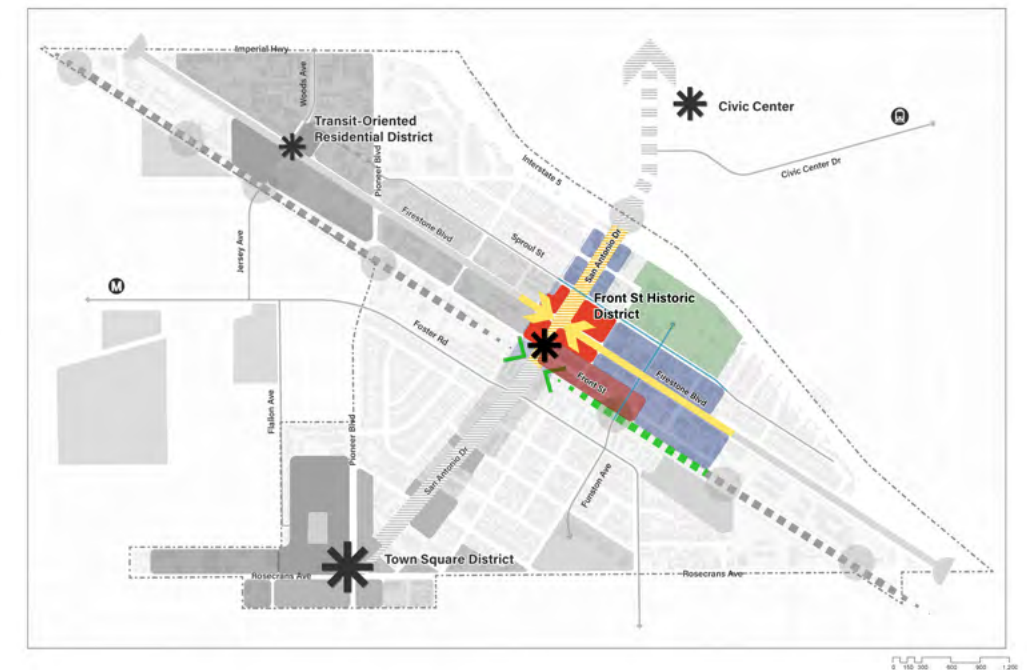
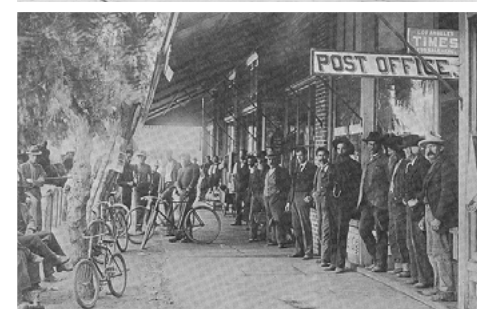


3 | Front Street Historic District

Front Street was once the lively main street of the young City of Norwalk. This 2+ block area, between the historic rail depot on the east and San Antonio Drive on the west, was once bustling with pedestrians and lined with retail shops and restaurants.

It is difficult to imagine that today. Many buildings are vacant, and those that are occupied are of low-intensity, low-rent uses. The retail buildings on the north side of the street have been reoriented toward Firestone Blvd. in an attempt to create a modern strip center. The City acquired land for a surface parking lot to support the center. But the age of the buildings, multiple ownerships, and lack of a key tenant caused the center to fail in competition with new retail centers which were developed and managed by a single entity. A key parcel on the block, the vacant bank building on the corner of San Antonio and Firestone, is now for sale. Because current zoning does not permit mixed use, it could become a gasoline service station or fast food establishment. This would not realize the full market potential of this key site, and could have a negative impact upon the revitalization of the remainder of the block.

The people of Norwalk highly value Front Street as the historic center of their community. Residents who participated in the visioning workshops overwhelmingly pointed to it as one of two potential focal points for revitalization into activity centers for City residents and visitors, alike. They imagined Front Street restored as a pedestrian-friendly gathering place, with storefronts on both sides of the street providing retail, restaurant and entertainment offerings. The new center might attract families and older adults in the afternoon and early evening for casual dining, and young adults in the later hours for entertainment. The area is sufficiently isolated from family residential neighborhoods to allow it to remain active into the late night hours.



Front Street Historic District | 3



The plan for the Front Street Historic District shows the existing one- and two-story buildings restored along the Front Street Promenade, with new compatibly designed structures added where needed to produce a continuous active façade. The vacant bank property at the San Antonio/Firestone intersection is redeveloped as a multi-story mixed use building. Market studies show that this property might well house a convenience-style retail establishment on the ground floor and small residential units with attainable rents on upper floors, catering mainly to young professionals. The City property could remain as a surface parking lot to serve the Front Street uses, or might eventually be converted to a parking structure and/or an additional multi-story mixed use building. A pedestrian paseo is shown cutting through the middle of the block to connect Firestone Blvd. uses and parking with the Front Street Promenade.

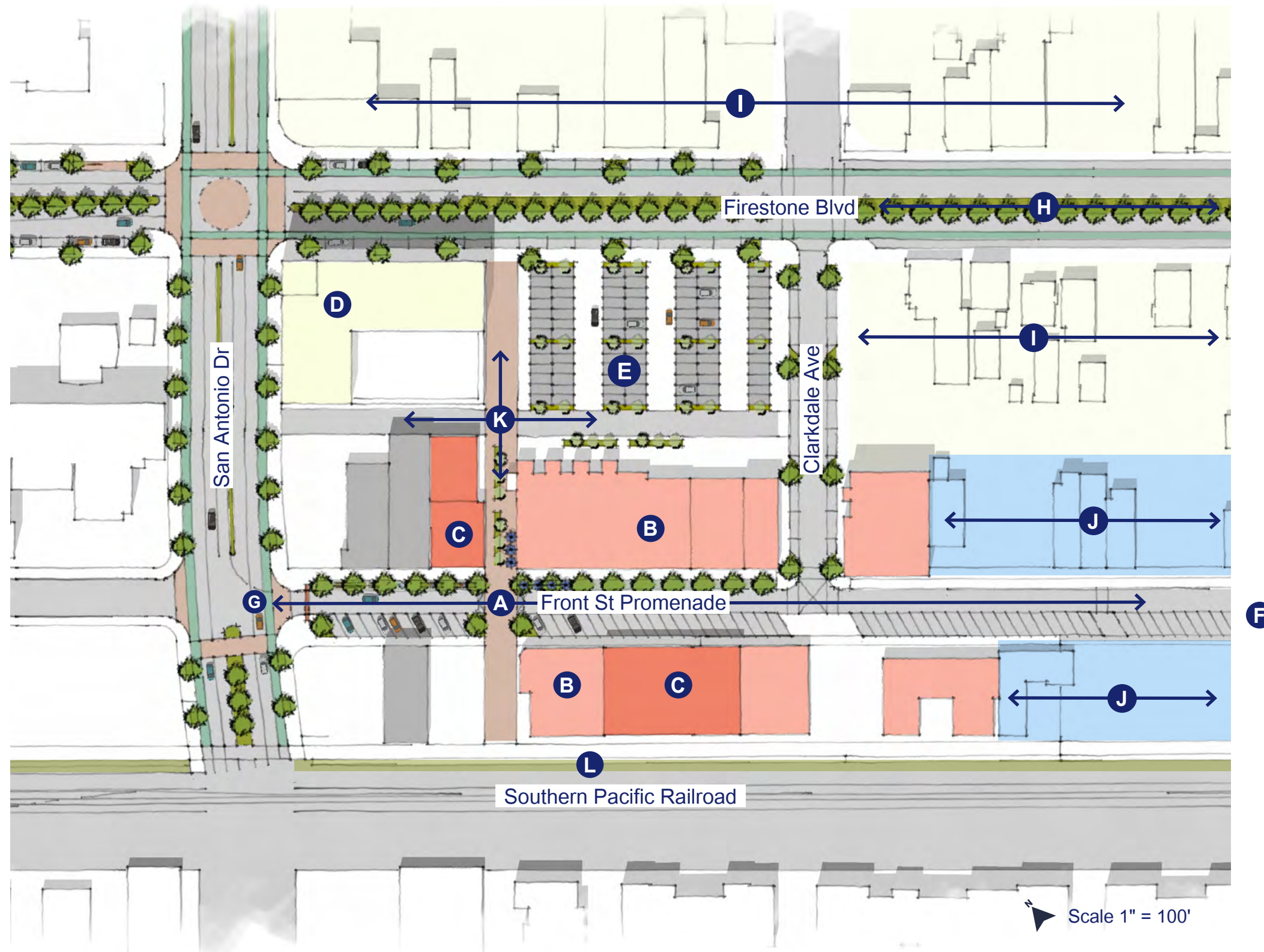


The properties in the Front Street Historic District will most likely remain under multiple separate ownerships. This might prove an advantage for entrepreneurial start-up businesses, and also allow for established businesses to open a Front Street branch. Multiple ownerships will also require more detailed oversight and control by the City, with detailed land use regulations and design standards established through a Specific Plan. Prompt action is recommended to direct proper development of the property at the San Antonio and Firestone intersection, either through discussions and negotiations with the existing or possible new owner, or through public acquisition and directed redevelopment. Although the first phase of development should be focused on the block between San Antonio Drive and Clarkdale Avenue, the district should ultimately grow, driven by success, to extend eastward to include the property where the rail depot was originally developed in 1879.

3 | Front Street Historic District

District Design Framework

- A** Active, pedestrian-priority streetscape with ample space for walking, meeting people and outdoor dining, that can be closed to cars during events.
- B** Revitalized historic commercial buildings oriented to Front Street.
- C** New Entertainment-use such as food hall, brewery, or nightclub.
- D** Mixed-use building oriented toward young professionals, with small units and attainable rents.
- E** Public parking lot, able to be developed into a public parking structure or additional mixed-use building in the future.
- F** Historic railway depot opportunity site for public parking (short term) or major destination development.
- G** Overhead gateway sign and district marker.
- H** Boulevard treatment, streetscape softening and focus crosswalks on Firestone Boulevard.
- I** Residential and mixed-use opportunity zones.
- J** Commercial and live-work opportunity zones.
- K** Alley with walkways and mid-block passthrough.
- L** Recreational greenway on existing rail corridor.



District Vision



Illustration is conceptual in nature only.

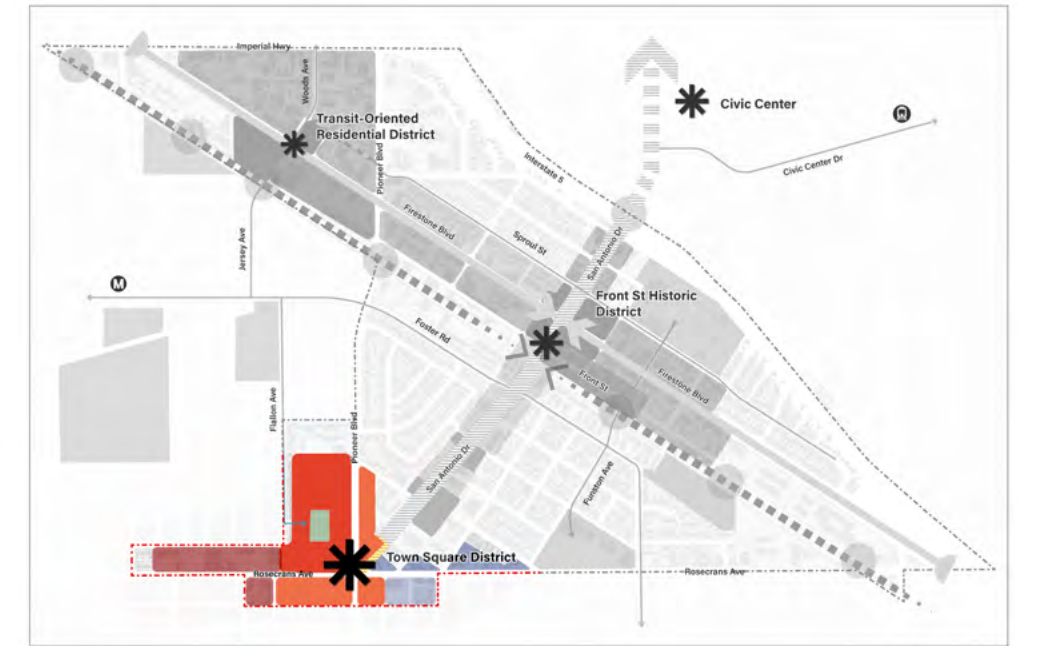
4 | Town Square District

Norwalk Town Square was developed in 1951, and quickly became one of the most popular retail malls in the Gateway Cities Area. The hugely successful commercial attraction, with its historic sign designed by noted architect Stiles O. Clements, established a unique positive identity for the entire City. It is no wonder that practically all of the residents who participated in the visioning workshops identified Town Square as one of two major focal points to be revitalized in the Heart of Norwalk.

Like most other commercial uses in the San Antonio/Firestone area, Town Square is at a crossroads, as new malls in other neighborhoods and in other municipalities have captured much of the local market. Its nearly 250,000 sq. ft. of retail space has no major prime tenant, and there are few eating establishments or entertainment venues to provide the diverse multi-purpose shopping experience now sought by customers. But it remains the largest single property within the study area, and it is located at a highly visible and accessible site at the Five Points Intersection.

The residents of Norwalk see the opportunity to recreate the historic prominence of Norwalk Town Square. Residents envision it not only as a place to shop, but also as a gathering place for the community with, as the name implies, a town square of sufficient size to hold major public events, including concerts. The property manager has considered adding residential units at the site, and Norwalk residents seem generally supportive of such a mixed use proposal.

The ultimate vision for the Town Square District shows a reimagined shopping center surrounding a large public plaza. The plaza, or Town Square, has a mixed surface of grass and hardscape, punctuated by tall trees, decorative landscaping, a raised performance stage, and possibly water features. The commercial space includes a prime tenant and a mix of other retail stores, restaurants and entertainment venues. The 8-screen movie theater is retained. The commercial structures on the east side are moved out to the Pioneer Blvd. sidewalk, with



Town Square District | 4



office and personal services dominating along Pioneer; stores and restaurants occupy the public plaza side of these structures. The structures on the west side of the public plaza, perhaps the first phase of the redevelopment of the property, contain retail uses on the ground floor with two levels of residential apartments above. Structured parking is provided at both the north and south ends of the project, connected by an interior private road. The historic sign becomes the focal point of a major Gateway Plaza which welcomes guests entering on foot from the Five Points area.

The plan also calls for simplifying the Five Points Intersection and making it more pedestrian friendly. Southbound traffic on San Antonio Drive is diverted over to Pioneer Blvd. north of the intersection, allowing the triangle of property between Pioneer and San Antonio to be developed as a small Gateway Park. The ability to expand the park out to the present centerline of San Antonio allows the tip of the park to extend all the way to Rosecrans Avenue, thereby providing a more direct and calm pedestrian crossing of San Antonio and of Pioneer. A more detailed view of the roadway modification is presented in Chapter 7.



Redevelopment of Norwalk Town Square to the scale suggested by this plan will depend on many factors, including the establishment of a close partnership between the property owner and City. In addition to providing Specific Plan regulations which permit residential development, the City may explore a development agreement which offers incentives for development and maintenance of a large public plaza. While such conditions are still being put into place, smaller steps can be taken to implement aspects of this long-term vision, including the introduction of housing on the property and the beginnings of the interior plaza.

4 | Town Square District

District Design Framework

- A** New Town Square open space for passive enjoyment and family-oriented and commercial events, such as concerts
- B** Gateway plaza featuring Norwalk Town Square sign
- C** Redesigned pedestrian-oriented shopping center with major and minor stores
- D** Structured commercial parking at ends of shopping center
- E** Existing movie theater
- F** Mixed-use buildings with podium parking and ground floor retail as potential first phase of redevelopment
- G** Internal, buffer driveway
- H** Active retail/service uses along sidewalks with large shade trees
- I** Mixed-use development opportunity areas
- J** New gateway park connecting San Antonio Drive to Town Square and highlighting views to Town Square sign
- K** Reduced size, more pedestrian friendly Five Points intersection
- L** Southbound San Antonio Drive realigned to Pioneer Boulevard



District Vision

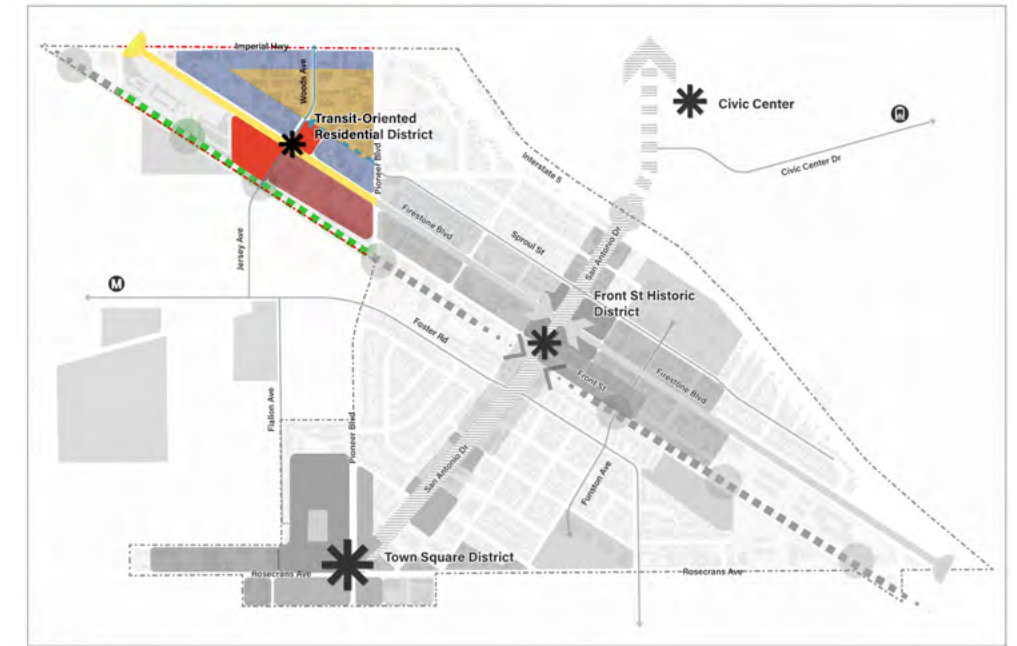


Illustration is conceptual in nature only.

5 | Transit-Oriented Residential District

The Transit-Oriented Residential District includes the large triangle of property bounded by Imperial Highway, Pioneer Blvd., and Firestone Blvd., and the corresponding properties on the south side of Firestone Blvd. back to the railroad right-of-way. This area enjoys good bus transit access via Imperial Highway to both the Metrolink train station and the Metro C Line (Green) terminus, and an earlier study of potential Green Line extension routes proposed a station within this area. This transit accessibility and the area's distance and separation from low-density family neighborhoods make it well suited to multi-family housing at a scale similar to that of MetroPointe Apartments, located at the northwest corner of Woods Avenue and Firestone Blvd. within the study area.

The majority of this area could support multi-story apartment and condominium development, with the possible exception of Imperial Highway (due to its high traffic volumes). Occasional local-serving ground floor retail uses could face Firestone Blvd, with a node at the corner of Firestone and Woods Avenue centered around easy transit access and a high-visibility intersection. A Specific Plan can better define the ultimate development potential of the area, and design standards can ensure the high quality of development. Key sites in the area that might demand City attention and guidance in the near future include the carwash site adjacent to MetroPointe and the 98-cent Store and adjacent sites on the south side of Firestone Blvd.



Transit Oriented Development Examples



El Monte BRT Station

The El Monte Transit Station was completed in 2012, but it was not until 2017 that the City adopted its Gateway Specific Plan enabling transit-oriented development around the station. One project, a 132-unit affordable housing project, has been completed, but additional entitled projects include a 175-room hotel with 250,000 square feet of retail and office space. The completion of the Transit Station has also led to higher lease rates and proposed development in the nearby Main Street area.

Foothill Gold Line

A 2016 report by the Maxima Group Found that existing and underway TOD projects along the Metro Gold Line had generated:

- \$6.7 billion in development
- 12,500 new housing units
- 3.6 million sf of commercial/institutional space
- \$50 million in annual revenues to LA County



North Hollywood

Almost thirty years of transit-oriented development have transformed the once nondescript NoHo Arts District into a desirable cultural district. The next phase of development in the area will be a massive public-private partnership: built on Metro-owned property and with the developer paying for many of the public infrastructure improvements, which include a new station portal and transfer area and two acres of open space.



Public transit is important in the Heart of Norwalk for many reasons, including providing affordable mobility options for the 41% of Norwalk households which have incomes below \$35,000, and decreasing emissions and congestion from vehicular traffic. The economic analysis performed for this project also revealed the importance of public transit for the viability and affordability of future development in the Heart of Norwalk because good public transit options allow households to reduce their level of car ownership and therefore the amount of parking that needs to be provided by a development.

The primary factor in being able to reduce car ownership is the ability and convenience of accessing jobs and daily errands without a vehicle, although targeting younger demographics in new housing can also help. For this reason, the greatest development potentials would be realized with the extension of the Metro C Line (Green) through the Heart of Norwalk, with a stop in the Transit-Oriented Residential District. If the Green Line is extended through Norwalk, locating a stop within a few hundred feet of the intersection of Firestone Boulevard and Woods Avenue would yield the greatest access and development potential. An alternative location for a stop could be further east on the Firestone Corridor near the intersection of San Antonio Drive, where it could serve the Front Street Historic District directly.

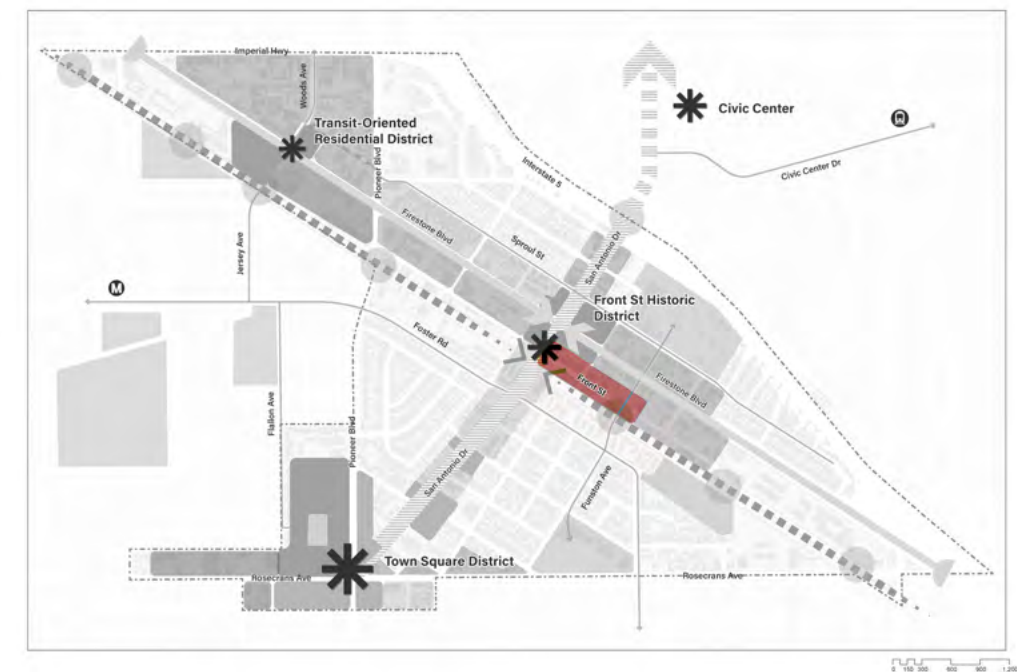
Certain transit benefits would be realized with smaller interventions, such as expansion of bus service in the area. Community members expressed a desire for stronger bus connections to be made between Metrolink, the Civic Center, Front Street, Town Square and the Green Line. There would be a heightened need to establish bus service along the Firestone Corridor to serve new residential and mixed uses.

6 | Front Street Promenade

As described in Chapter 3, the community vision for Front Street is to restore it as a pedestrian-friendly gathering place, with storefronts on both sides of the street providing retail, restaurant and entertainment offerings. Activity is imagined from the late morning or afternoon hours until the late evening, including nightlife.

The key design objective for the streetscape is to create more comfortable space in the streetscape for people in order to activate the street and successfully “turn” the focal point of the area from the parking lot on Firestone Boulevard to Front Street. The proposed Front Street Promenade would convert the street to one way eastbound. This conversion provides for convenient diagonal parking on the south side of the street and a continuous row of street trees on the north side, with opportunities for extending outdoor dining areas beyond the present curb into the street area. For special events, the street could be closed off entirely to automotive traffic. This can all be accomplished while maintaining the present curb lines and drainage, thereby minimizing costly right-of-way reconstruction.

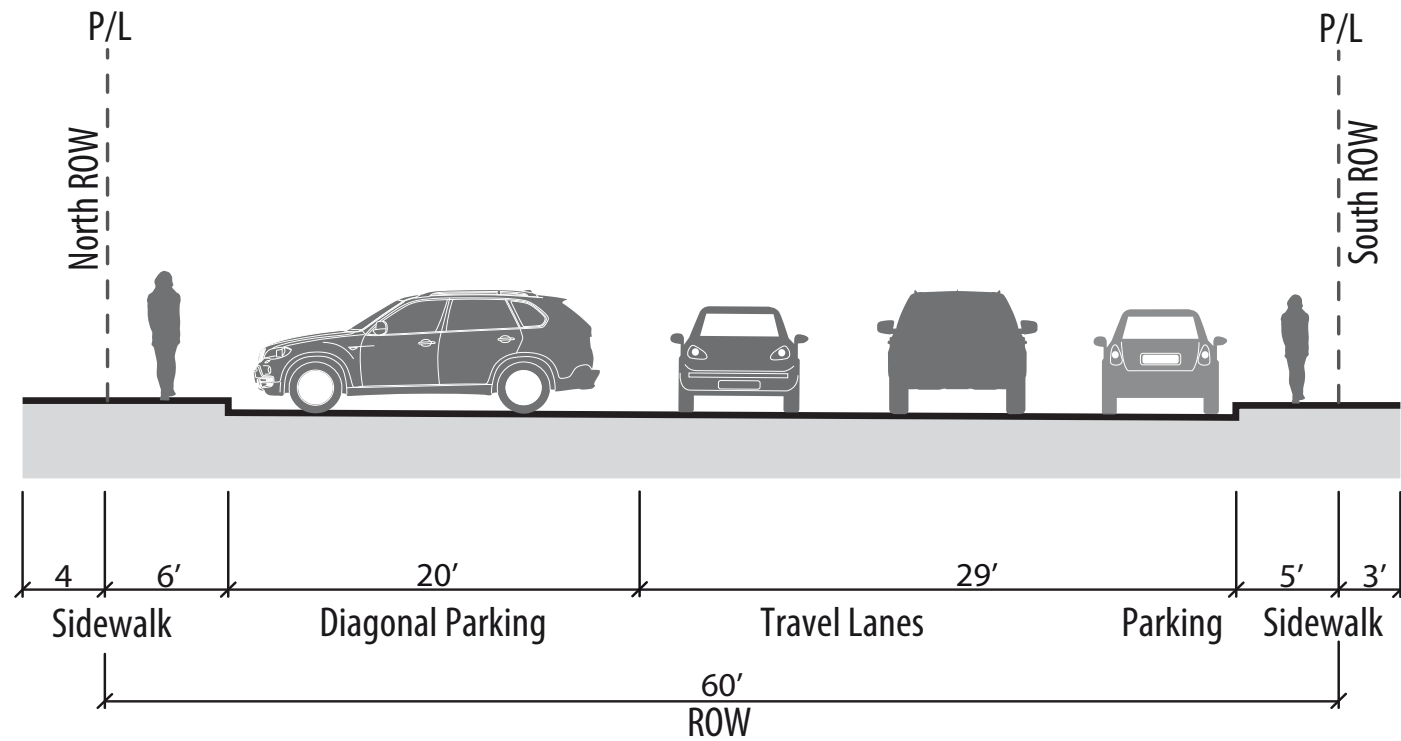
An alternative alignment, provided in the Appendix, retains two-way auto traffic on narrow travel lanes, with parallel parking, rows of street trees, and opportunities for extended outdoor dining areas on both sides of the street.



Front Street Promenade | 6

Existing Conditions

- Buildings have placed main entrances on parking lot away from Front Street.
- Sidewalks are too narrow for outdoor dining or other public space activities.
- Higher quantity angled parking spaces are not accessible from an east-bound direction of travel limiting the ability to easily access parking from the main entrance to the district off San Antonio Drive.
- Wide pedestrian crossings result from overly wide vehicular roadway cross sections; no existing bulb-outs to shorten crossing distances.

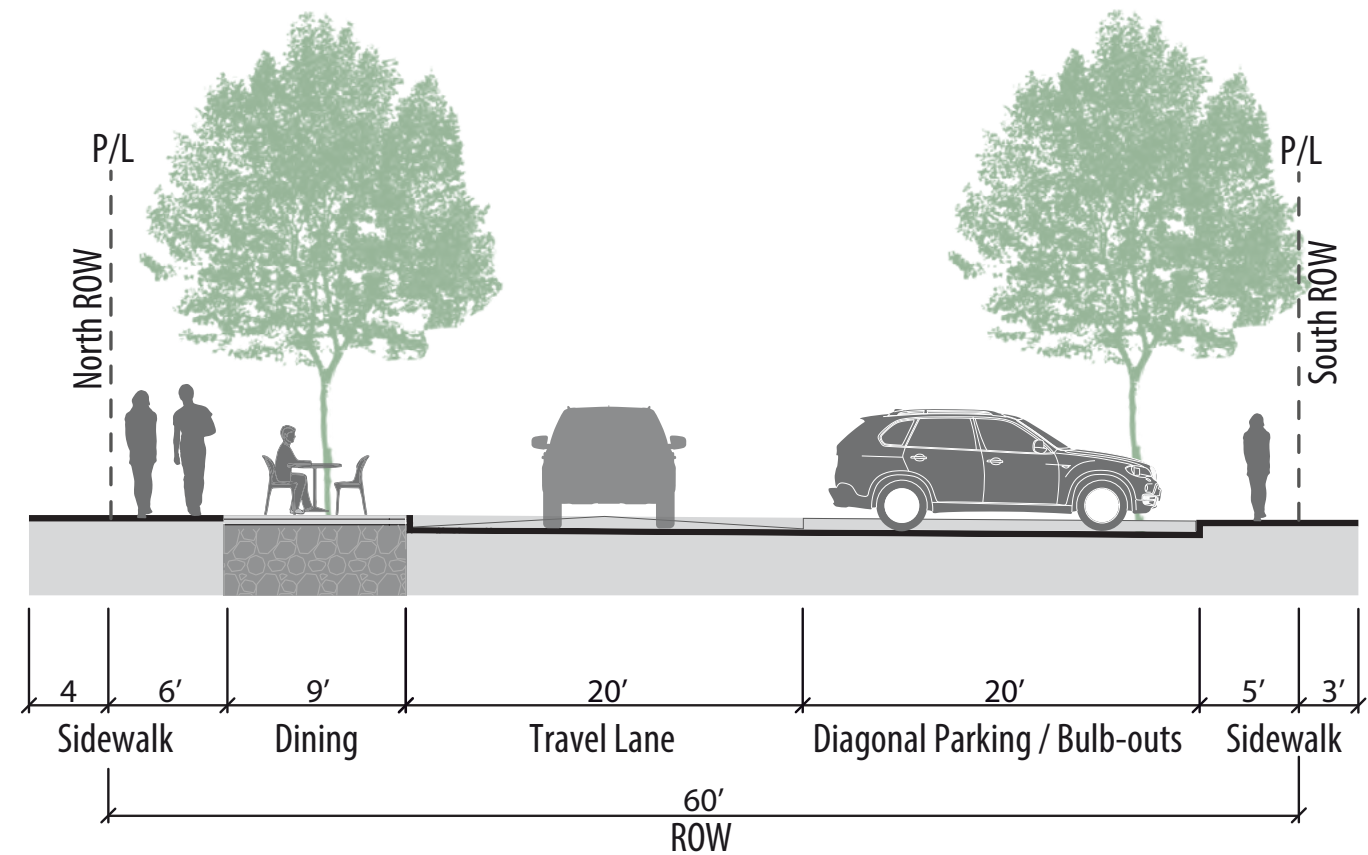


6 | Front Street Promenade

Proposed Conditions

- New district gateway feature.
- Mid-block passthrough supporting a more walkable district and providing additional opportunities for outdoor dining and placemaking with tabled roadway crossing to prioritize pedestrian right-of-way and provide traffic calming.
- Subterranean root trench will provide a continuous planting soil environment laterally below the streetscape surface to connect below ground spaces between trees as part of the overall root growth zone. Maximizing good quality planting soil volume in urban conditions will give new street trees the best opportunity to grow large and not be stunted in tight conditions.
- Streetscape surfaces over the root trench to be mostly hard paving to expand usable streetscape spaces with occasional softscape planters to provide needed urban greening.
- Porous paving or a grate system over root trenches will allow for needed oxygen to reach tree roots below and will provide a natural storm water infiltration point for streetscape drainage. Small, regular openings in the curbs will allow for the roadway drainage to also utilize the natural infiltration while alleviating load on existing drainage system.

A conceptual illustration of the proposed conditions is provided on page 23, and a conceptual plan is shown on pages 24-25.



Front Street Promenade | 6



Dammenbrink 5.20.21

Illustration is conceptual in nature only.

6 | Front Street Promenade



Scale 1" = 30'

- A** Shortened pedestrian crossings with enhanced visibility improvements to prioritize pedestrian right-of-way and safety.
- B** New curb extensions and bulb-out islands to expand usable pedestrian streetscape spaces and provide new landscape greening and tree planting opportunities.
- C** New street trees retrofit within existing sidewalks (minimal).
- D** Extended median curbing and enhanced median landscape to help narrow corridor, slow traffic, and provide district identity.
- E** New district gateway feature.
- F** Subterranean root trench feature located below sidewalk areas to promote maximum street tree growth and increase opportunities for natural drainage infiltration.
- G** Mid-block passthrough supporting a more walkable district and providing additional opportunities for outdoor dining and placemaking.
- H** Raised roadway crossing to prioritize pedestrian right-of-way and provide traffic calming.

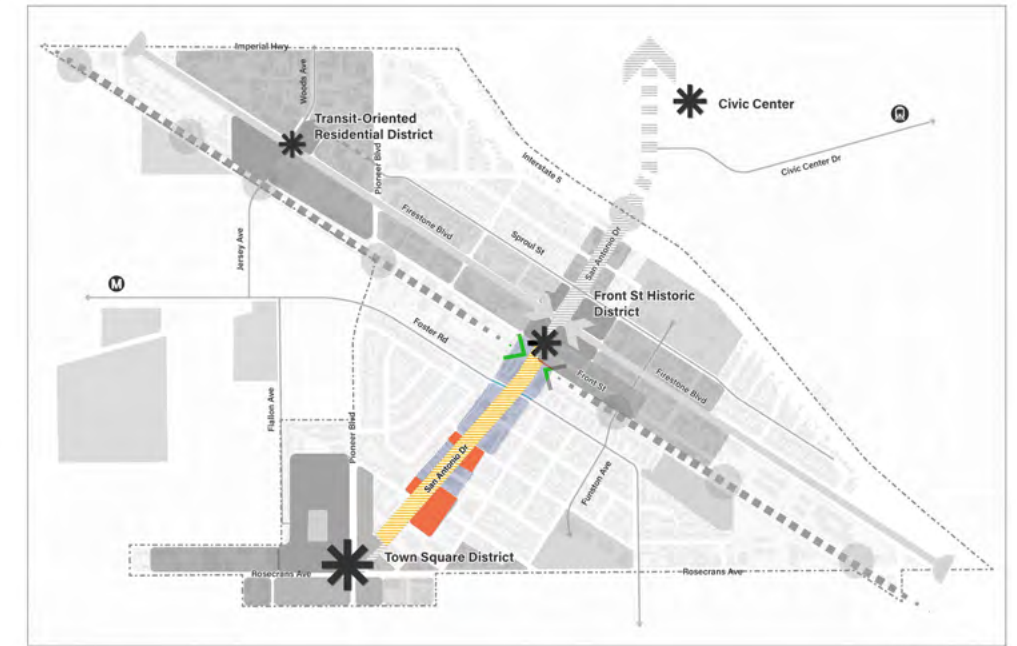
7 | San Antonio Corridor

San Antonio Drive links the three primary activity centers in and around the Heart of Norwalk: the proposed Front Street Historic District, the proposed Town Square District, and the existing Civic Center District. As a result, it is envisioned to become an Iconic City Connection. The connection will be established through visual links to monuments such as the Norwalk Town Square sign, City water tower, and steeple of First Baptist Church, a strengthened median, a comfortable and attractive bicycle connection, additional tree planting and signage.

Land uses and intensities along San Antonio Drive vary widely, from residential towers to single-family homes and small retail shops. There are two new residential developments along the corridor: a three-story townhome development with live/work frontage south of Olive, and the four-story Mercy Housing development southwest of Foster, which establish a pattern for future residential development along the corridor.

San Antonio Drive is envisioned to become the trunk of Norwalk's bikeway system. Other bikeways branch off from it all along its route, including the linkages to the Metrolink train station and the Metro Green Line terminus. A continuous route will be created from the Green Line along the Foster Road bikeway extended to San Antonio Drive, northeast on San Antonio to Civic Center Drive, and then east along Civic Center Drive to the Metrolink station.

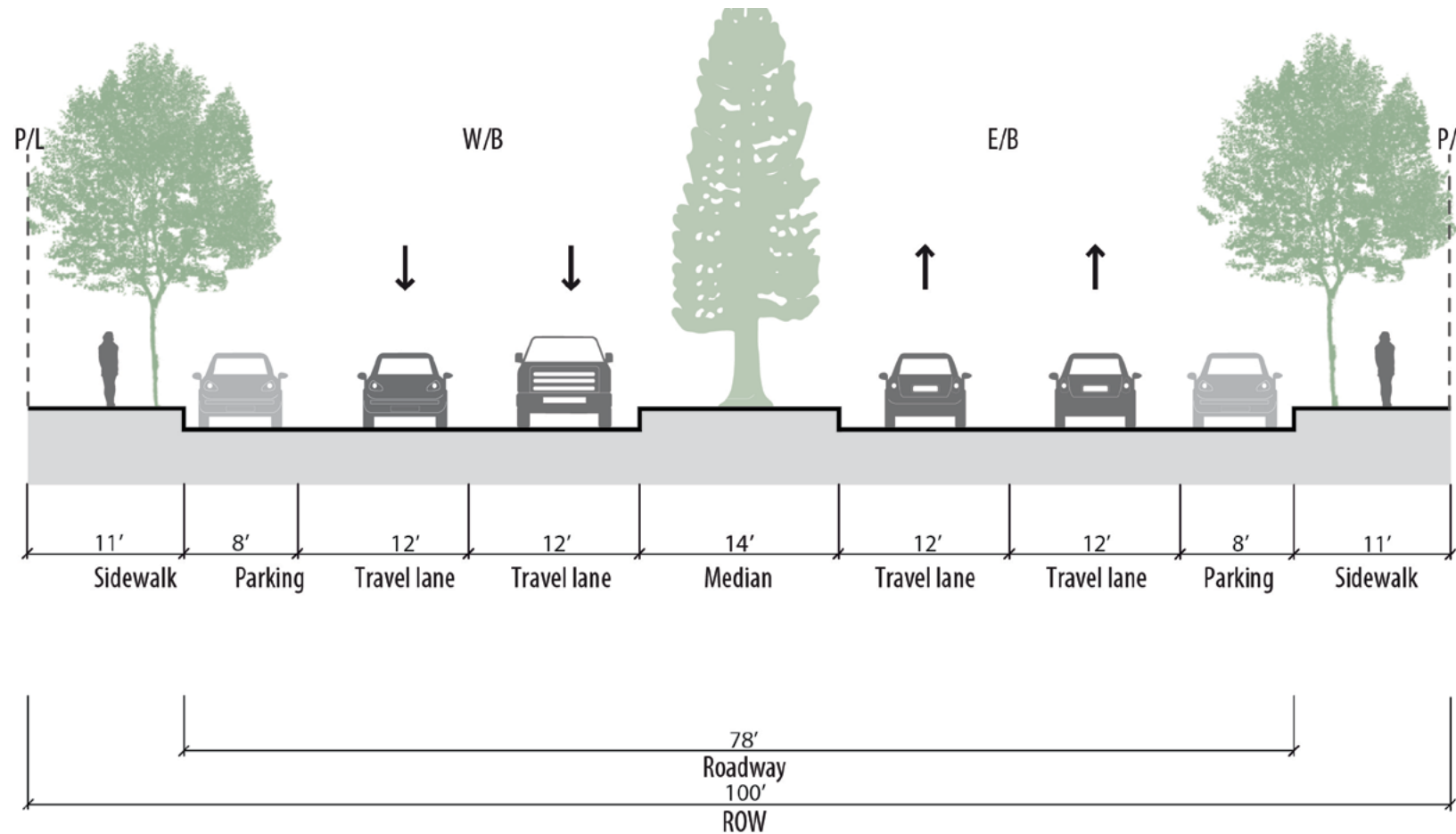
Southwest of Foster Road, where traffic volumes are lower, San Antonio Drive is narrowed to one through lane in each direction, with a buffered bike lane and a flexible curbside lane that can be used for parking, tree planting or parklets as circumstances dictate. Northeast of Foster Road, traffic lanes are retained and curbside parking removed to permit a continuous bicycle connection. An alternative method to create an iconic City Connection through a large trail located in the roadway median is presented in the appendix.



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Existing Conditions

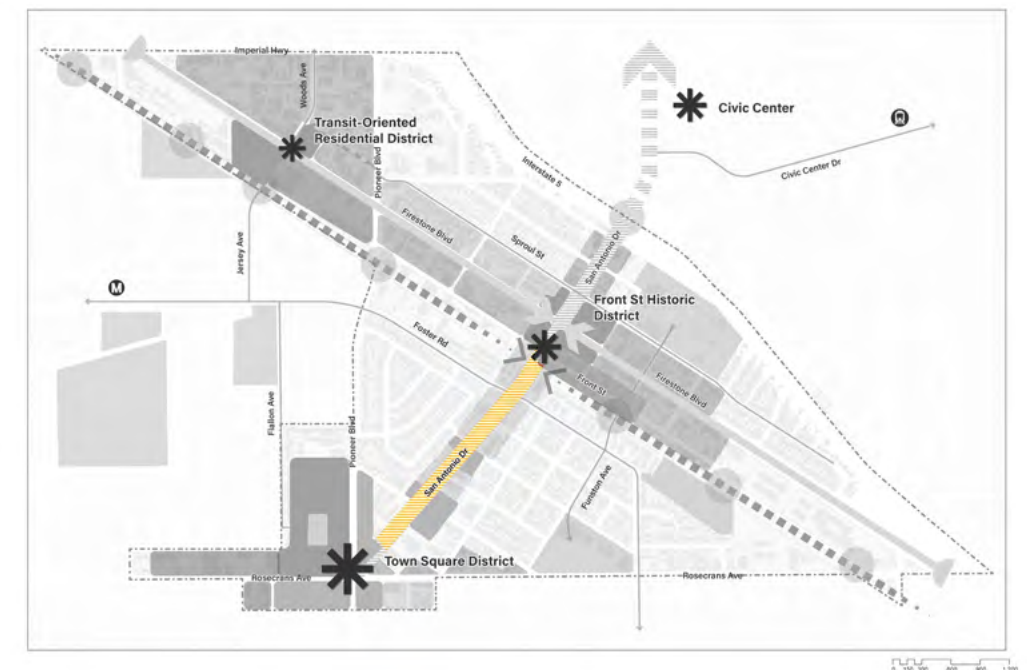
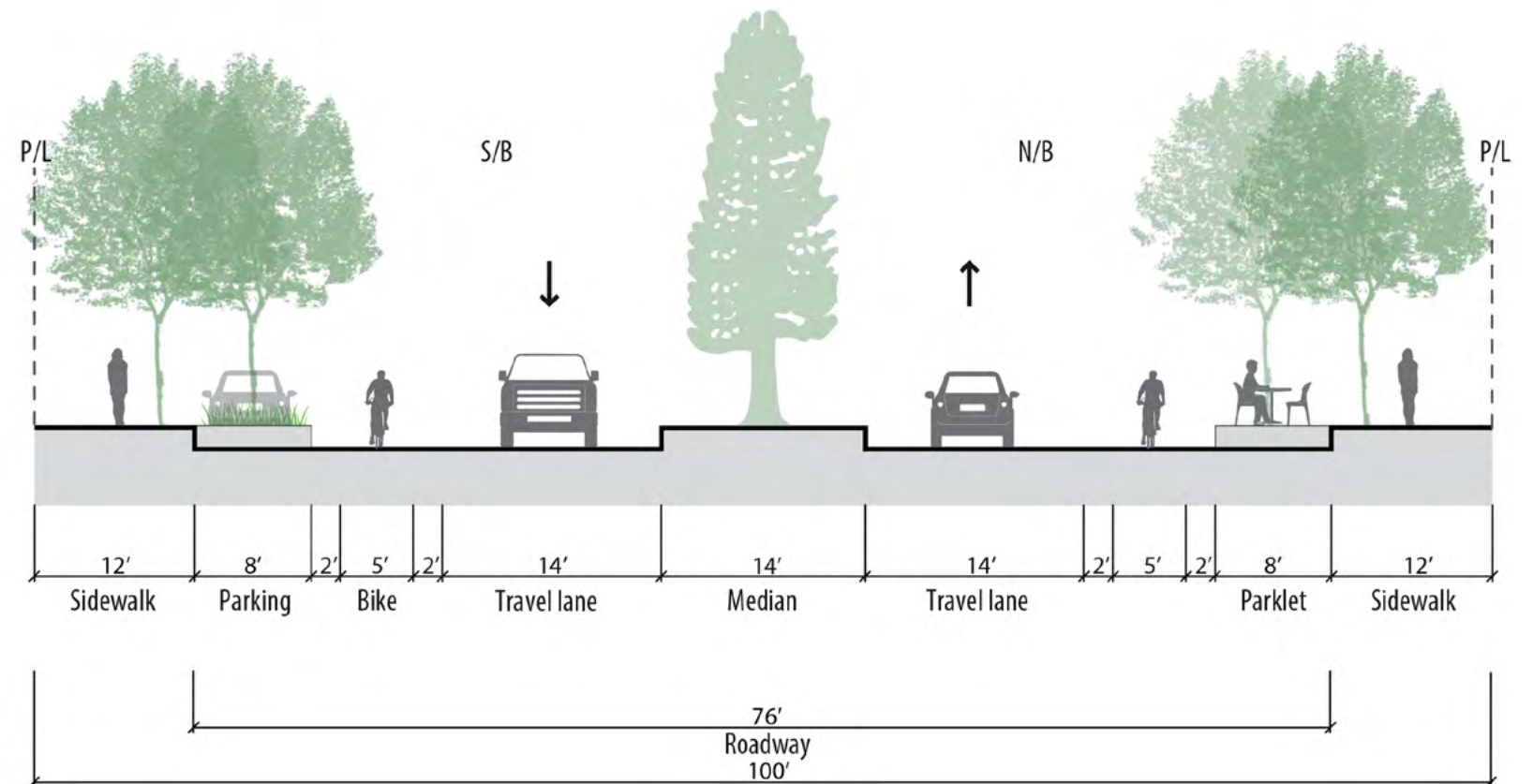
- Planted median and lightpoles with banners distinguish this street from other arterials in the City.
- Lack of pedestrian facilities and crossing locations.
- Average daily traffic south of Firestone Boulevard is under 15,000, which could be accommodated with one lane in each direction.
- Average daily traffic north of Firestone Boulevard is over 30,000, requiring two lanes in each direction.

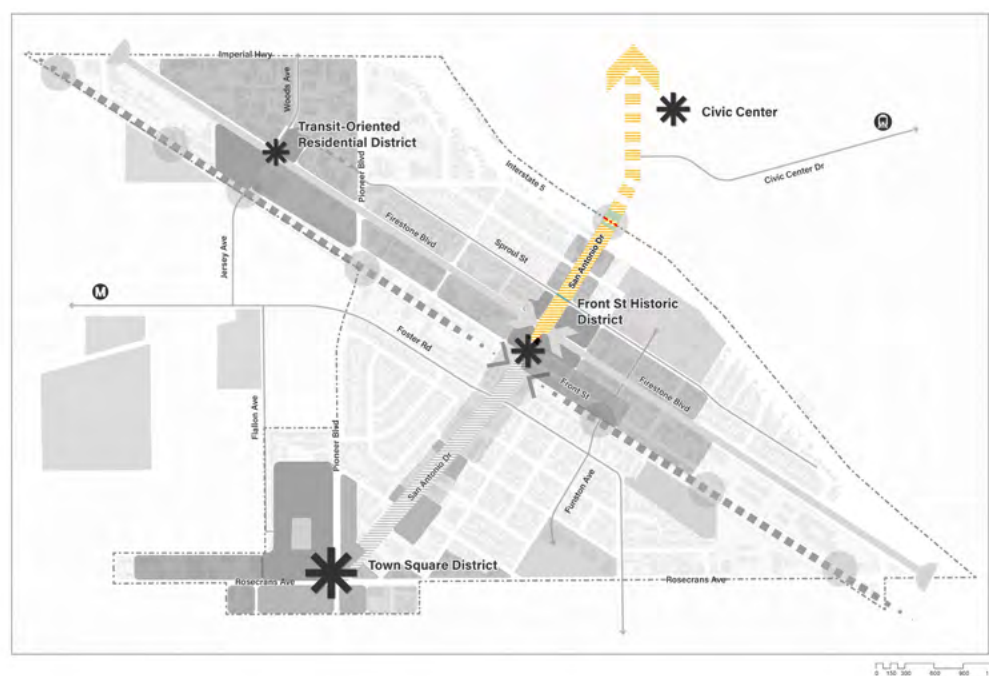
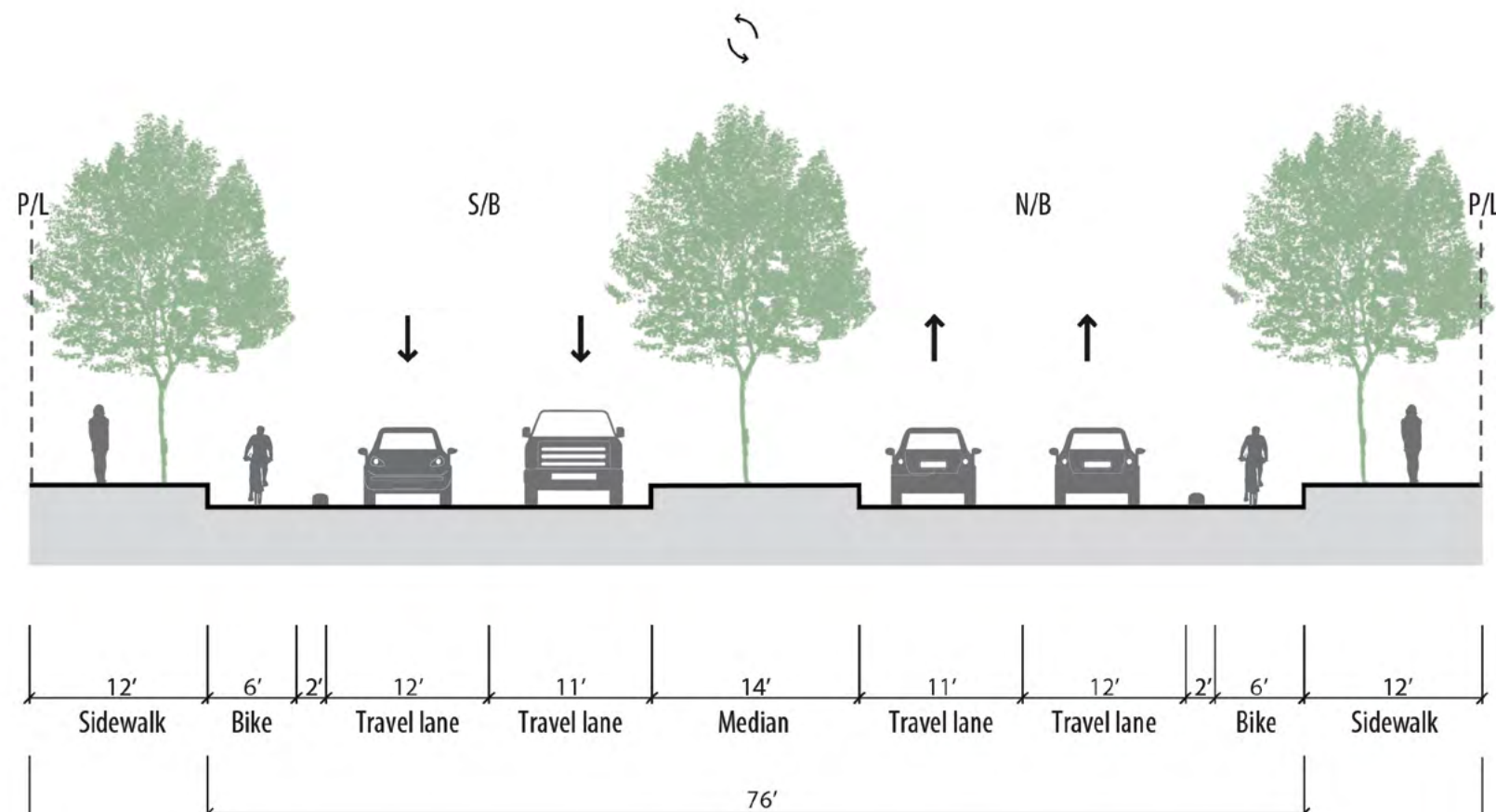


7 | San Antonio Corridor

Proposed Conditions Southwest of Foster Road

- Preservation of existing curb lines and drainage infrastructure.
- Exchanging one roadway lane with a double buffered bike lane.
- Parking lane can be a flexible space, used for on-street parking, curb extensions/tree planting/additional greening, or parklets as context and adjacent land use dictates.





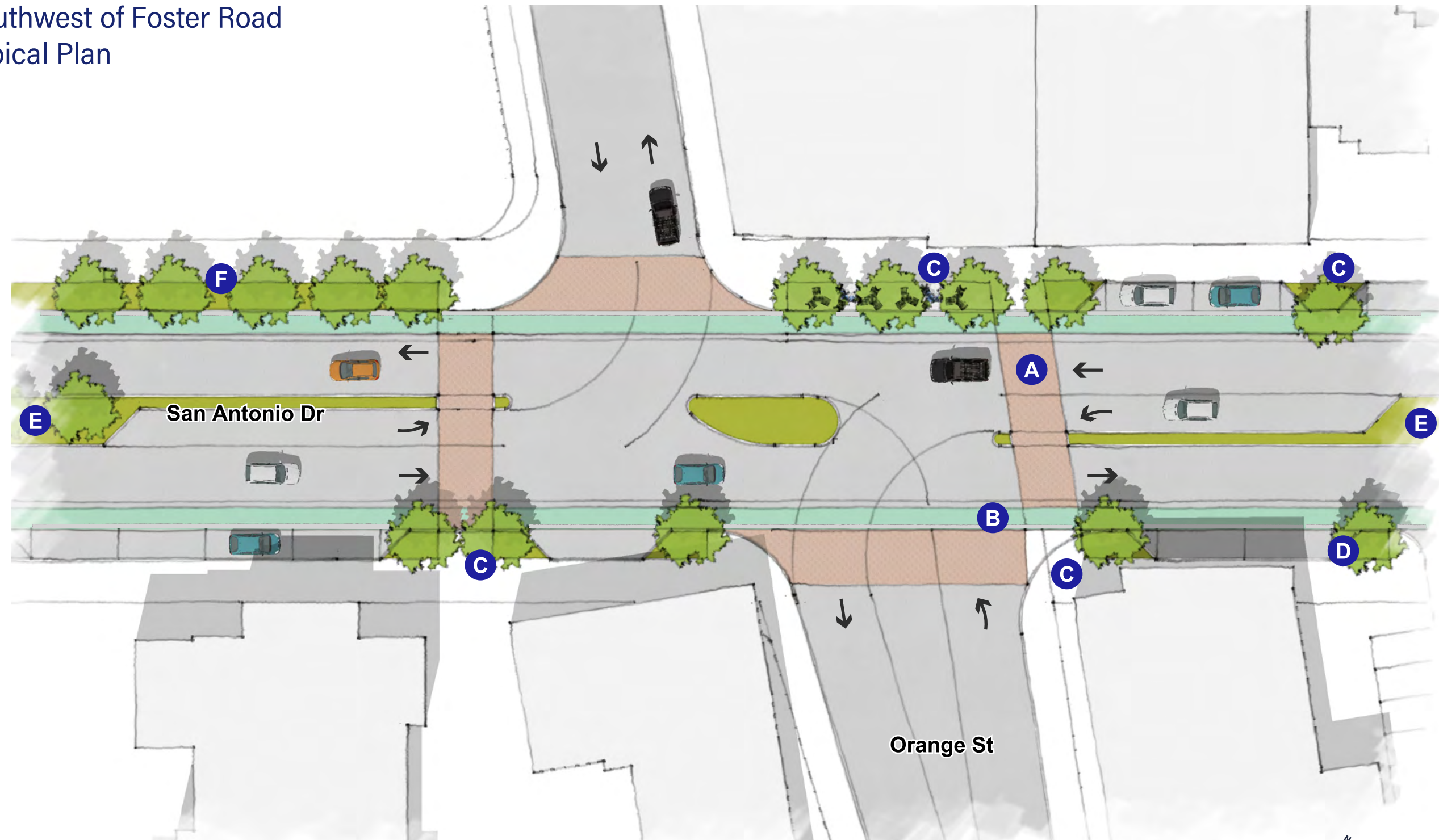
Source: Nathan McNeil

Proposed Conditions Northeast of Foster Road

- Two traffic lanes in each direction preserved due to higher volumes in this segment.
- Parking or third through lane exchanged for curbside protected bike lane (Class IV).
- Bike lane separation can take form of painted strip, planters and bollards.
- New street trees added within existing sidewalks at a modest spacing and with an understanding of the below ground utility and infrastructural challenges confronting existing condition retrofits.

7 | San Antonio Corridor

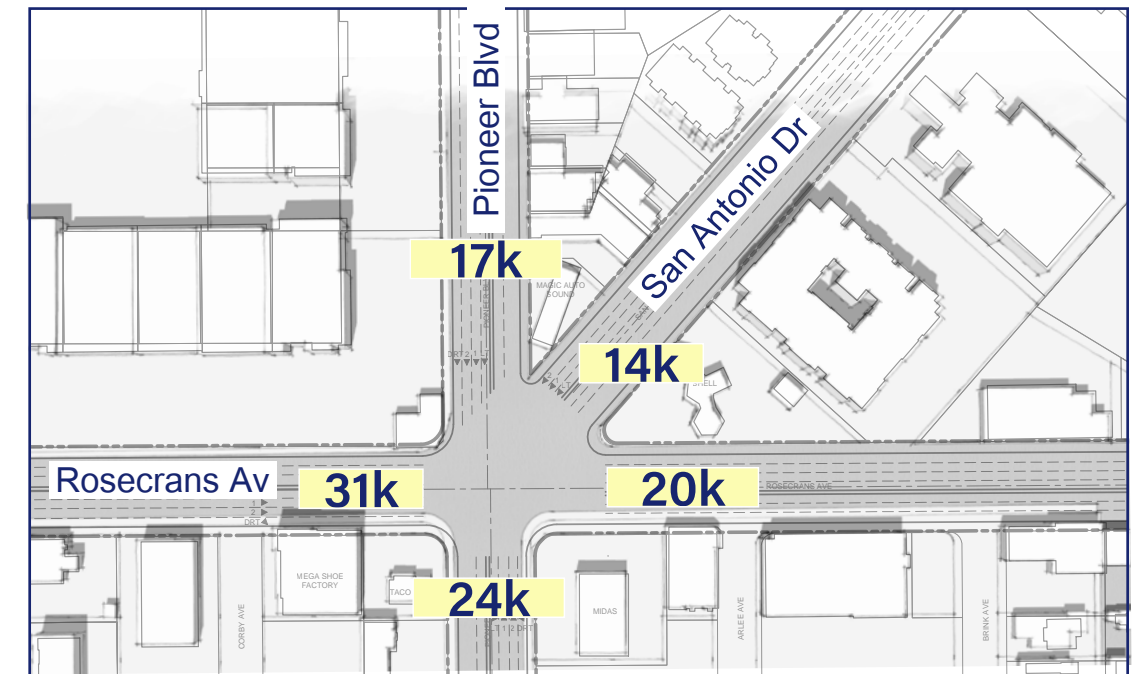
Southwest of Foster Road
Typical Plan



Scale 1" = 30'

- A** Shortened pedestrian crossings with enhanced visibility improvements to prioritize pedestrian right-of-way and safety.
- B** New dedicated double buffered bike lanes.
- C** New curb extensions and bulb-out islands to expand usable pedestrian streetscape spaces, provide new landscape greening and tree planting opportunities and protect on-street parking.
- D** New street trees retrofit within existing sidewalks (minimal).
- E** Extended median curbing and enhanced median landscape to help narrow corridor, slow traffic, and provide district identity.
- F** Replace street parking with new parkway tree planting and greening adjacent to multi-family residential and other land uses that have sufficient on-site parking.

San Antonio Drive at Five Points Intersection Realignment



Existing Conditions and Average Daily Trips

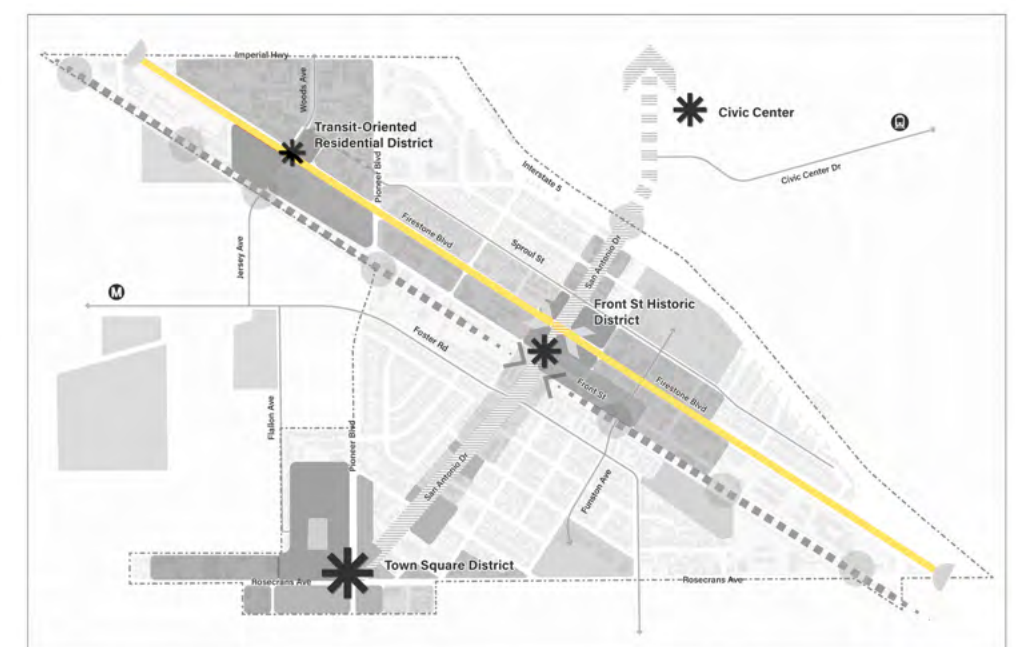


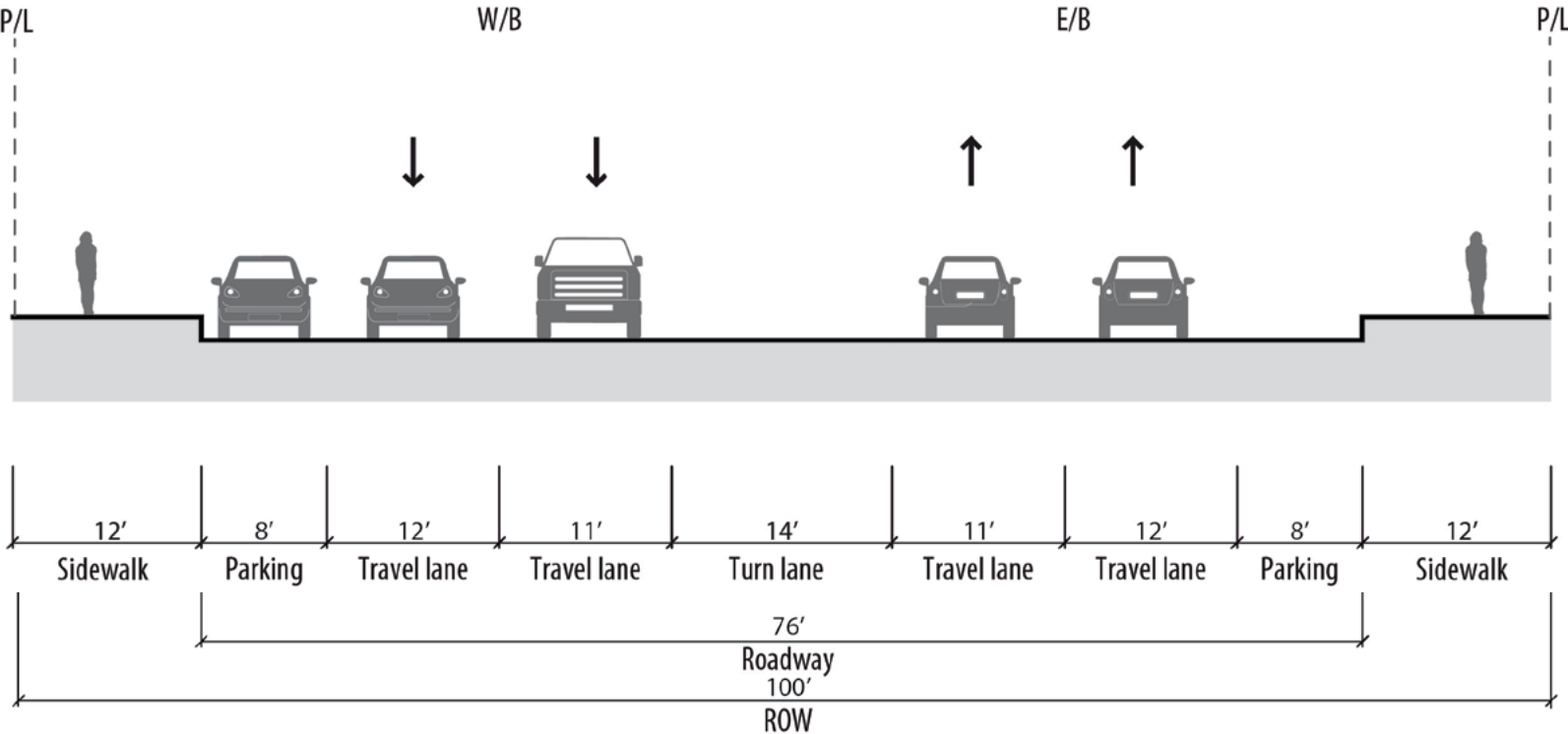
Proposed Realignment

8 | Firestone Corridor

The Firestone Corridor was identified by the community as a street in need of redevelopment. While there are successful uses along the street, such as the Toyota dealership and Northgate Market shopping center, the street also contains rundown motels and older, smaller commercial buildings which the community would like to see recycled. One significant site just northwest of San Antonio is the very large soccer complex. Land use regulation and design guidelines prepared in the next phase of planning could allow this site to accommodate a large number of dwelling units, a development which could present a strong new positive street presence while providing an attractive apartment or condominium living environment.

The Vision Plan recognizes that Firestone west of San Antonio must remain a major arterial and does not propose to reduce its capacity. Rather, it proposes that the physical environment of the corridor be improved significantly, transforming the street into an attractive boulevard, lined with very large shade trees along its edges, and graced with attractive trees and bushes in the median. This transformation should accelerate the revitalization and redevelopment of abutting properties through natural market forces. A flexible approach to rezoning, together with carefully crafted design standards, can support quality development which is compatible with adjacent uses and neighborhoods.





Existing Conditions

- Existing corridor designed primarily as a thoroughfare to move motorized traffic. Finding ways to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and slow traffic will be key to making the area more walkable.
- Central exchange lane is underutilized for long stretches of the corridor, creating a wide paved environment. There is a planted median in the very southeastern portion of the corridor.
- No existing street trees present on sidewalks.
- Daily traffic volumes in excess of 25,000 northwest of San Antonio Dr require two traffic lanes in each direction, while volumes east of San Antonio have decreased substantially (under 15,000) due to changes in ramp access to I-5.



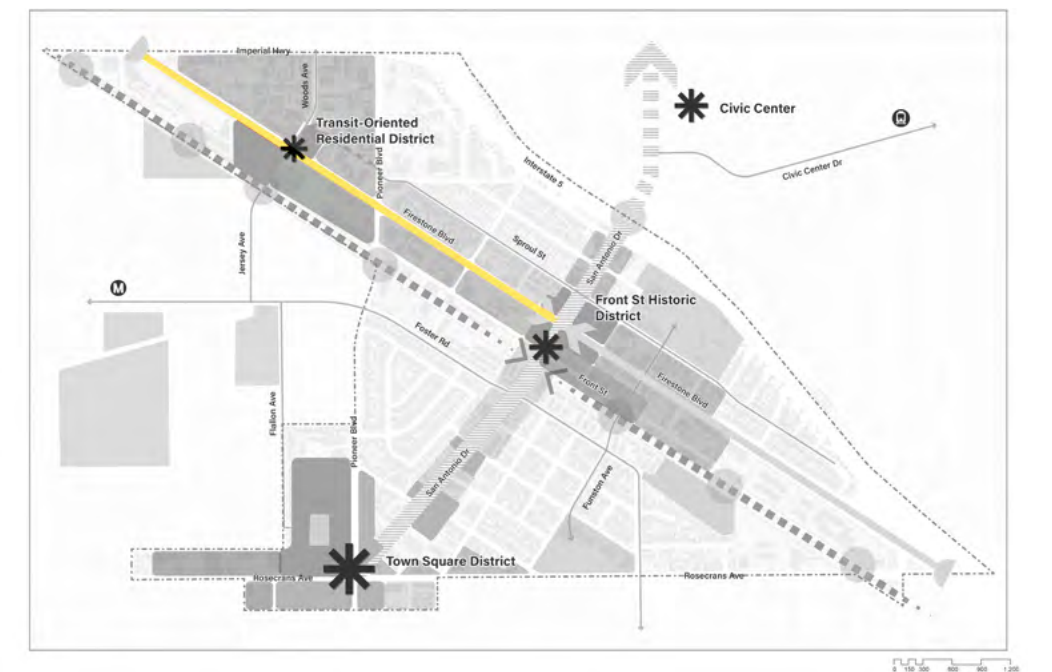
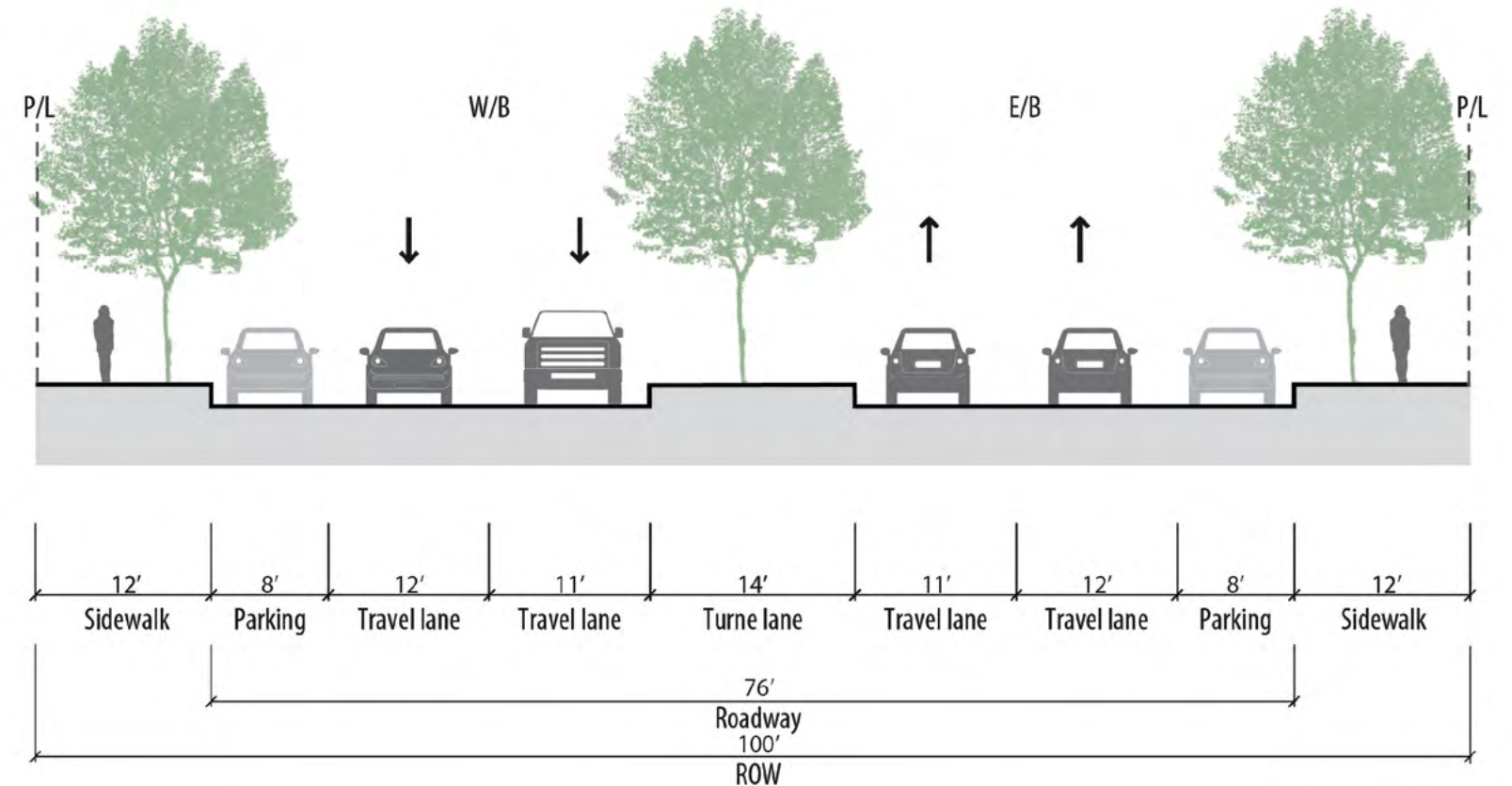
8 | Firestone Corridor

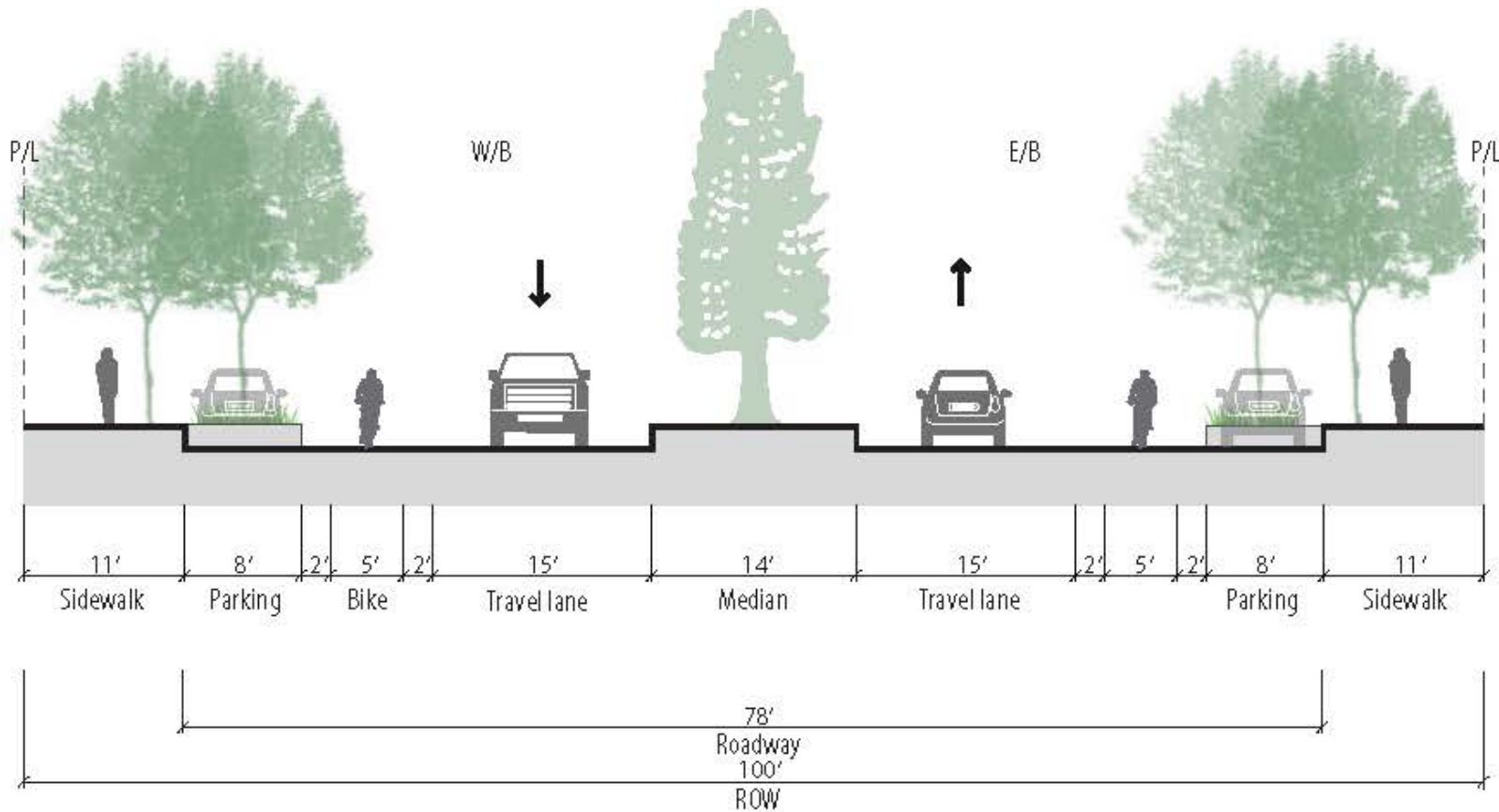
Proposed Conditions Northwest of San Antonio Dr

- Extend planted median length of street and convert existing at-grade exchange lane to a curbed median.
- Sidewalk trees added in parking lane and by cutting holes in existing sidewalk.
- Wide tree canopy desired to partially enclose roadway, calming traffic substantially.
- Add crossings mid-block and at unsignalized intersections using median as refuge.
- Two traffic lanes in each direction preserved due to higher volumes in this segment.



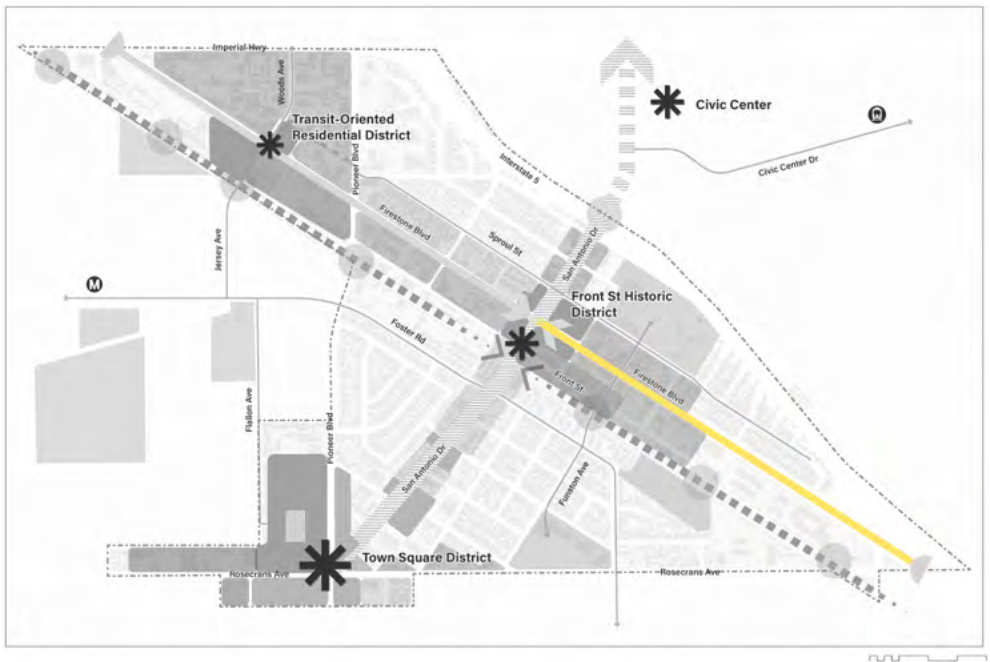
Trees help narrow the roadway corridor, help slow traffic, and provide a memorable boulevard driving experience.



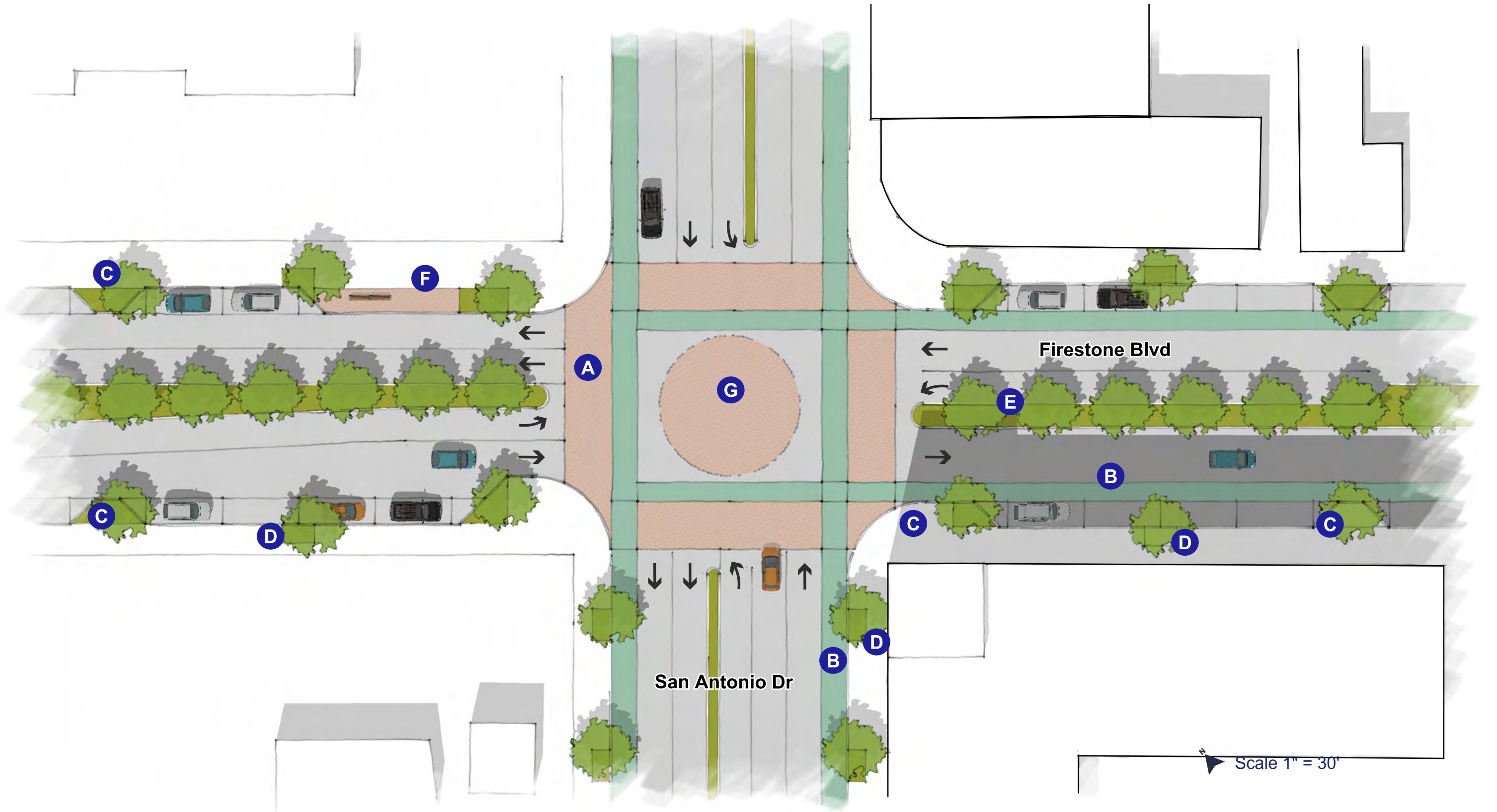


Proposed Conditions Southeast of San Antonio Dr

- Exchange one vehicular traffic lane in each direction with a new double buffered bike lane.
- Break up long rows of parallel parking with regular bulb-out islands and new street tree planting to help narrow the corridor, slow traffic speeds, and provide a boulevard experience.
- Parallel parking bulb-out islands to also provide needed mid-block crossings points for a more walkable district and will help shorten pedestrian crossing distances.
- Convert existing at-grade exchange lane to a curbed median and extend small segments of existing median to create a continuous boulevard experience. Expand existing central pine tree vocabulary along the median. Provide upgraded median landscape improvements at key nodes and intersections along the boulevard.
- New street trees added within existing sidewalks to supplement new bulb-out trees, with an understanding of the below ground utility and infrastructural challenges confronting existing condition retrofits.



8 | Firestone Corridor

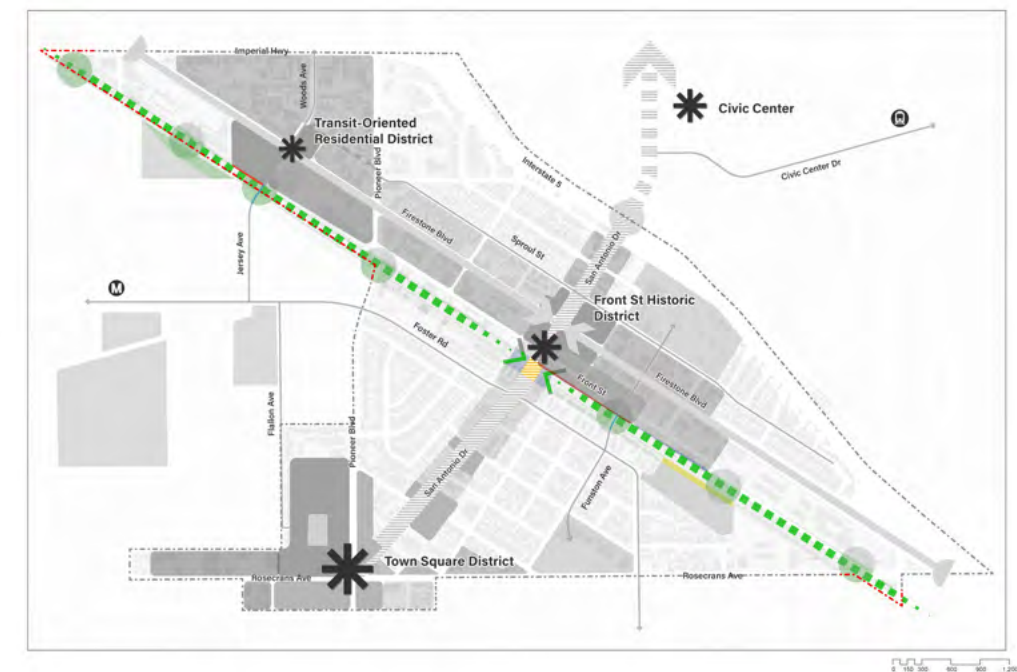


- A** Shortened pedestrian crossings with enhanced visibility improvements to prioritize pedestrian right-of-way and safety.
- B** New dedicated bike lanes.
- C** New curb extensions and bulb-out islands to expand usable pedestrian streetscape spaces and provide new landscape greening and tree planting opportunities.
- D** New street trees retrofit within existing sidewalks (minimal).
- E** Extended median curbing and enhanced median landscape to help narrow corridor, slow traffic, and provide district identity.
- F** Improved bus stop.
- G** District branding and placemaking opportunity.

9 | Norwalk Railway Path

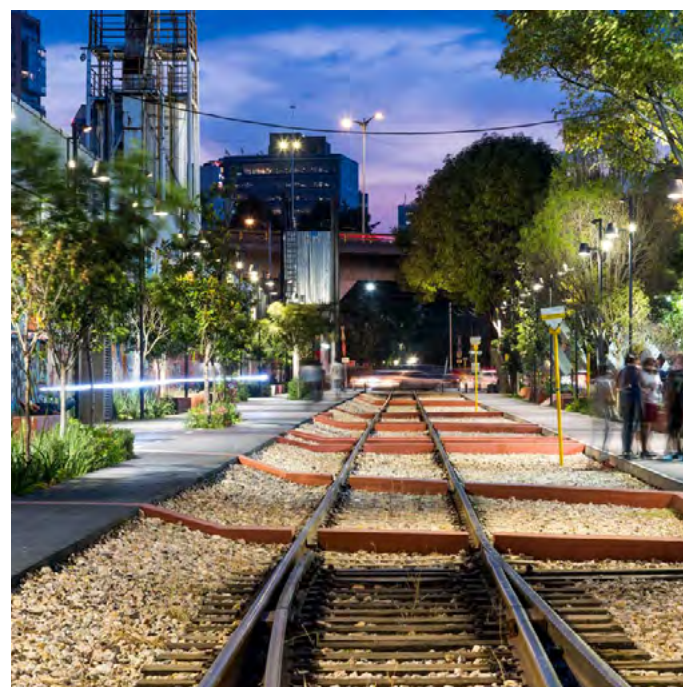
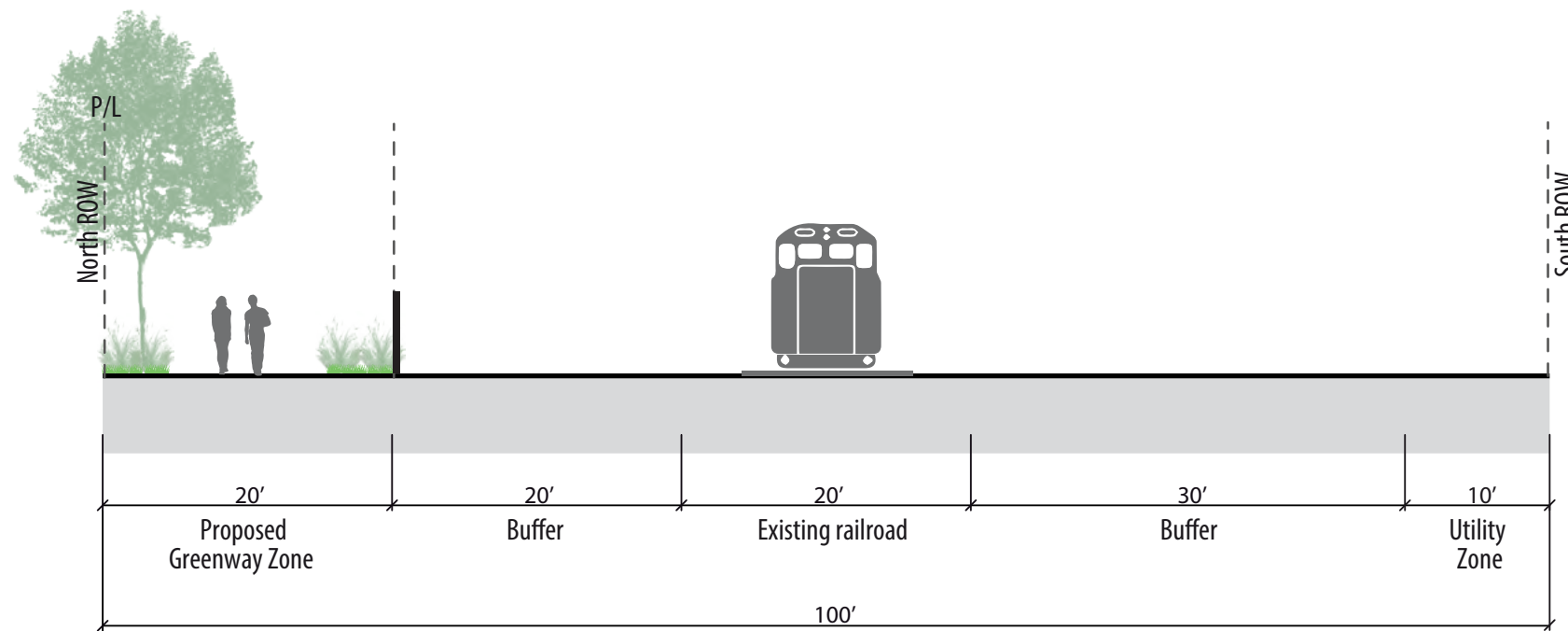
The Norwalk Railway Path is envisioned to be a pedestrian and bicycle path running in the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way, parallel to the tracks. It responds to Norwalk residents' great desire for spaces which encourage healthy living and provides a connection for joggers, cyclists and users of other "rolling" modes between the Transit-Oriented Residential District and the other key districts in the Heart of Norwalk located along San Antonio Drive. The Railway Path presents a much calmer, safer alternative to Firestone Boulevard for these modes of transportation.

With its varied industrial and residential abutting uses, the railway path can be designed as a historic element and complement to the Front Street Historic District, with special park gateway places at San Antonio Drive, the proposed mid-block passthrough and other key open space and street crossings. The path may be located on either the north or south side of the tracks (or both), but should be located as far as possible from the active rail line itself, with separating fencing. The City will need to negotiate with Southern Pacific to obtain an easement and rights to install the path along railroad right-of-way.



Proposed Greenway

- Transform an underutilized railroad corridor into a major east-west recreational greenway to connect the City's regional parks, open spaces, town centers, and beyond.
- Consider shade tree planting on the out-board side of the corridor, as possible, to provide shade and greening to the corridor.
- Consider a full range of placemaking improvements for greenways including planting, grading, lighting, signage and wayfinding, district branding, artwork, etc.
- Create expanded park gateway places at regular intervals along the rail greenway and at intersections to key open spaces and circulation crossings.



10 | Implementation

Formulation of the Vision Plan for the Heart of Norwalk was a collaborative effort of City staff, forward-looking residents and business representatives, and The Arroyo Group consultant team. It is clearly intended to raise the bar for imagining the kind of prosperous, livable and exciting place that Norwalk can become, while remaining within the reasonable limits of market forces and public fiscal capacity.

Preparation and adoption of a Vision Plan is only the first step in the revitalization of San Antonio Village and the Firestone Corridor as the new Heart of Norwalk. Following are recommended Immediate, Intermediate, and Ongoing Actions which the City of Norwalk should undertake to implement the plan:

Immediate Actions: (upon adoption of the Vision Plan)

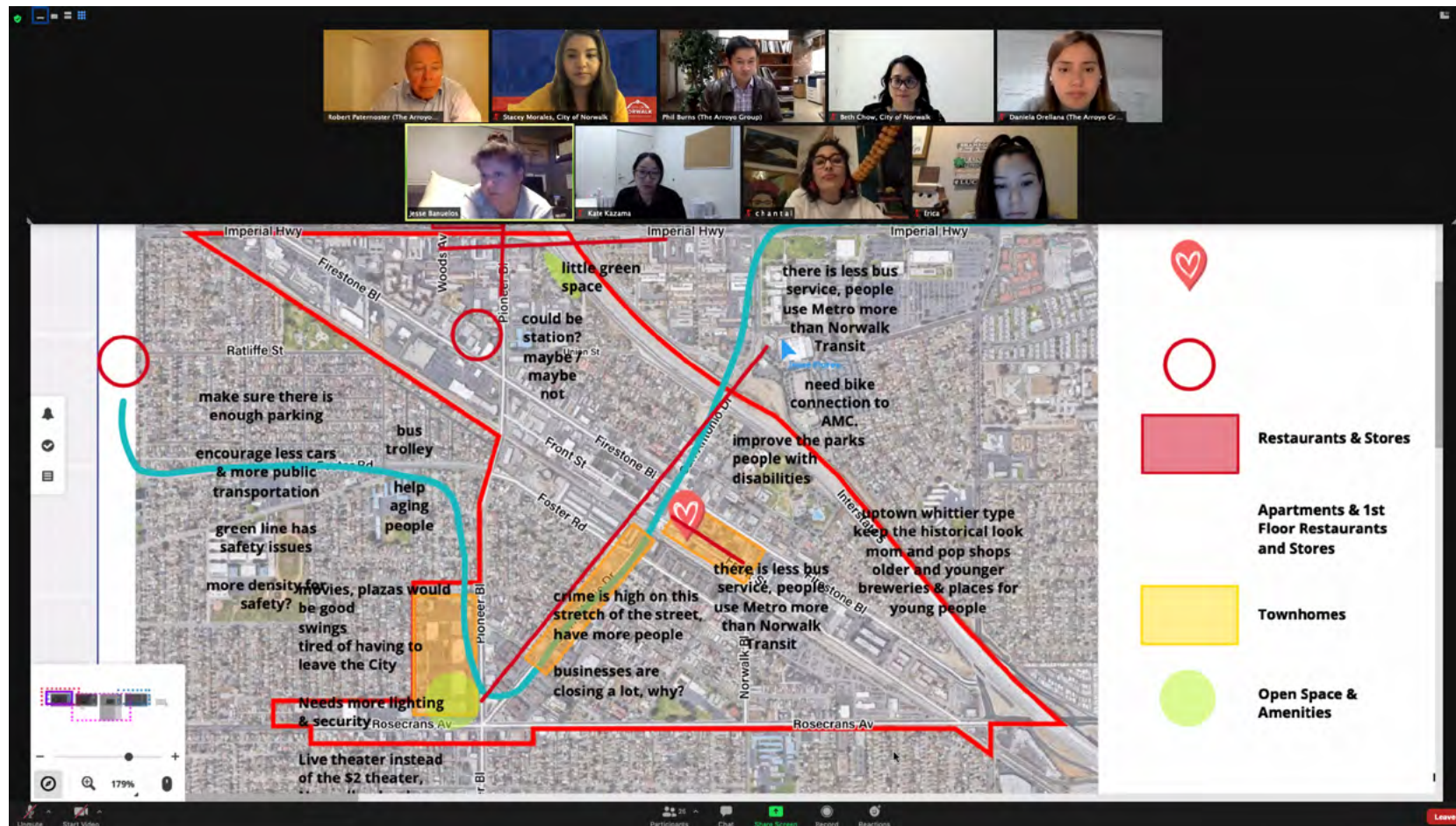
- Prepare and adopt the legal instruments necessary to implement the Vision Plan, including a Specific Plan or Plans, and related General Plan Amendments and Programmatic Environmental Impact Reports.
- Discuss the Vision Plan with key property owners/developers, urging them to consider the new opportunities that the Plan provides for reinvestment in the properties which they control. (e.g., Norwalk Town Square, vacant bank property on southeast corner of San Antonio and Firestone)
- Initiate engineering design studies and conduct demonstrations and events for recommended streetscape improvements on Front Street, San Antonio Drive, and Firestone Blvd.

Intermediate Actions: (upon adoption of Specific Plan)

- Work with ownership and management of Norwalk Town Square to prepare a phased mixed use revitalization plan for the property, possibly using a development agreement to define the respective responsibilities of the developer and the City.
- Create a Front Street Development Association, composed of relevant property owners and businesses, to formulate and oversee implementation of a revitalization strategy for the historic area.



Implementation | 10



- Construct streetscape improvements along Front Street from San Antonio Drive to Clarkdale Avenue.
- Complete bike route link between Green Line and Metrolink stations.
- Initiate discussions with the Southern Pacific Railroad to explore the possibility of public development of a recreation corridor along a portion of the railroad right-of-way.

Ongoing Implementation Actions: (as resources and opportunities become available)

- Initiate engineering design study for improvement of the Five Points Intersection (diversion of southbound San Antonio to Pioneer, and establishment of Gateway Park), and identify necessary funding.
- Review and approve each development phase of Norwalk Town Square, leading to revitalization and redevelopment of the entire property.
- Construct recommended streetscape improvements along San Antonio Drive.
- Construct recommended streetscape improvements along Firestone Blvd., perhaps in separate phases for the portions west and east of San Antonio Drive.
- Construct streetscape improvements on Front Street east of Clarkdale as the success of the Promenade extends to the historic rail depot site.
- Implement recreation corridor along the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way to the extent permitted by the Railroad.

The path to ultimate revitalization may appear long, but the City of Norwalk has already taken the first important step with the formulation of the Vision. Successful implementation will depend upon the same partnership of City staff, residents and businesses/developers that was utilized to articulate the Vision. When successfully realized, the Vision Plan will establish a unique and positive identity for Norwalk among the Gateway Cities, and create for its residents and visitors an attractive, exciting and dynamic Heart of Norwalk.

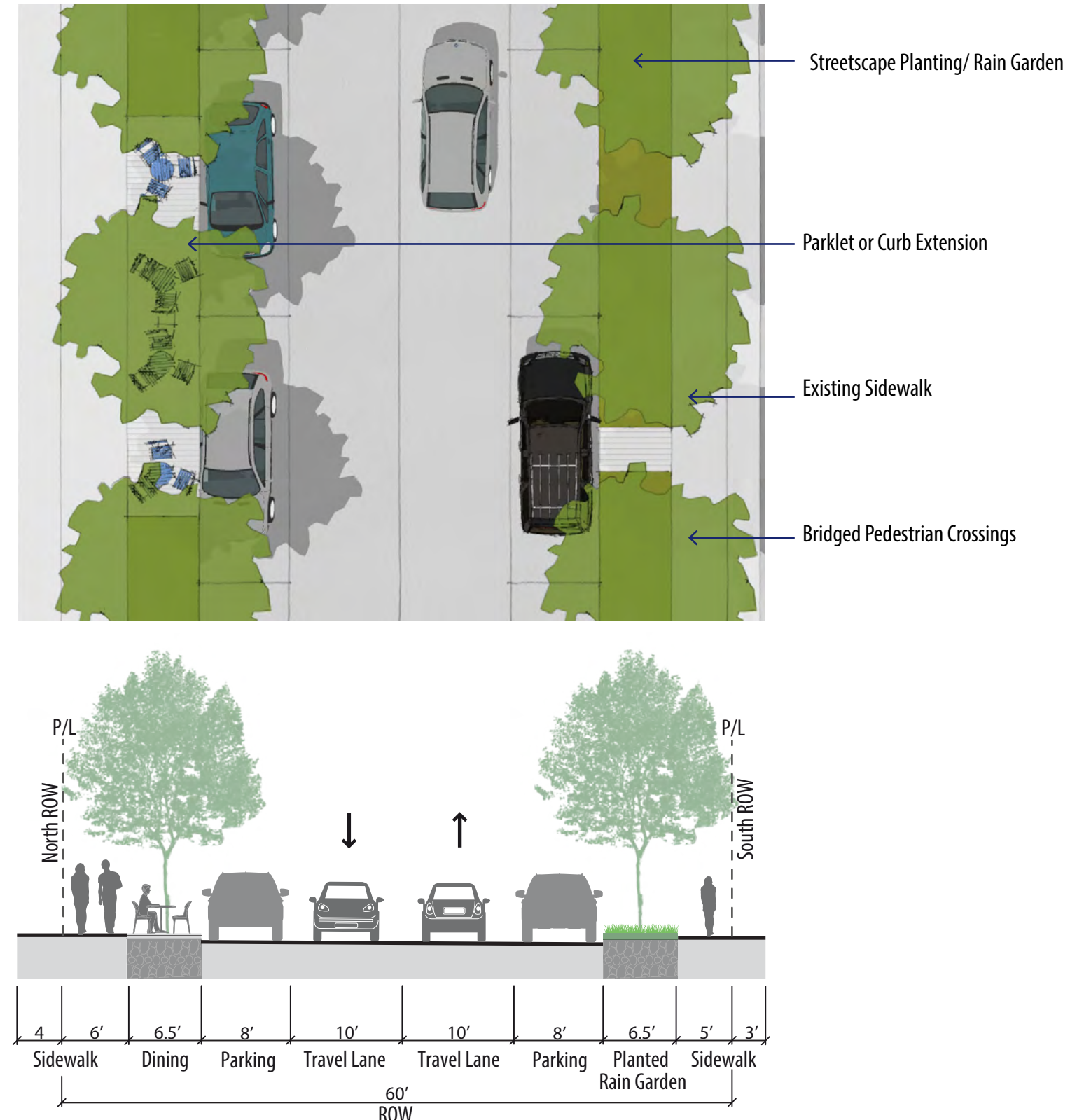


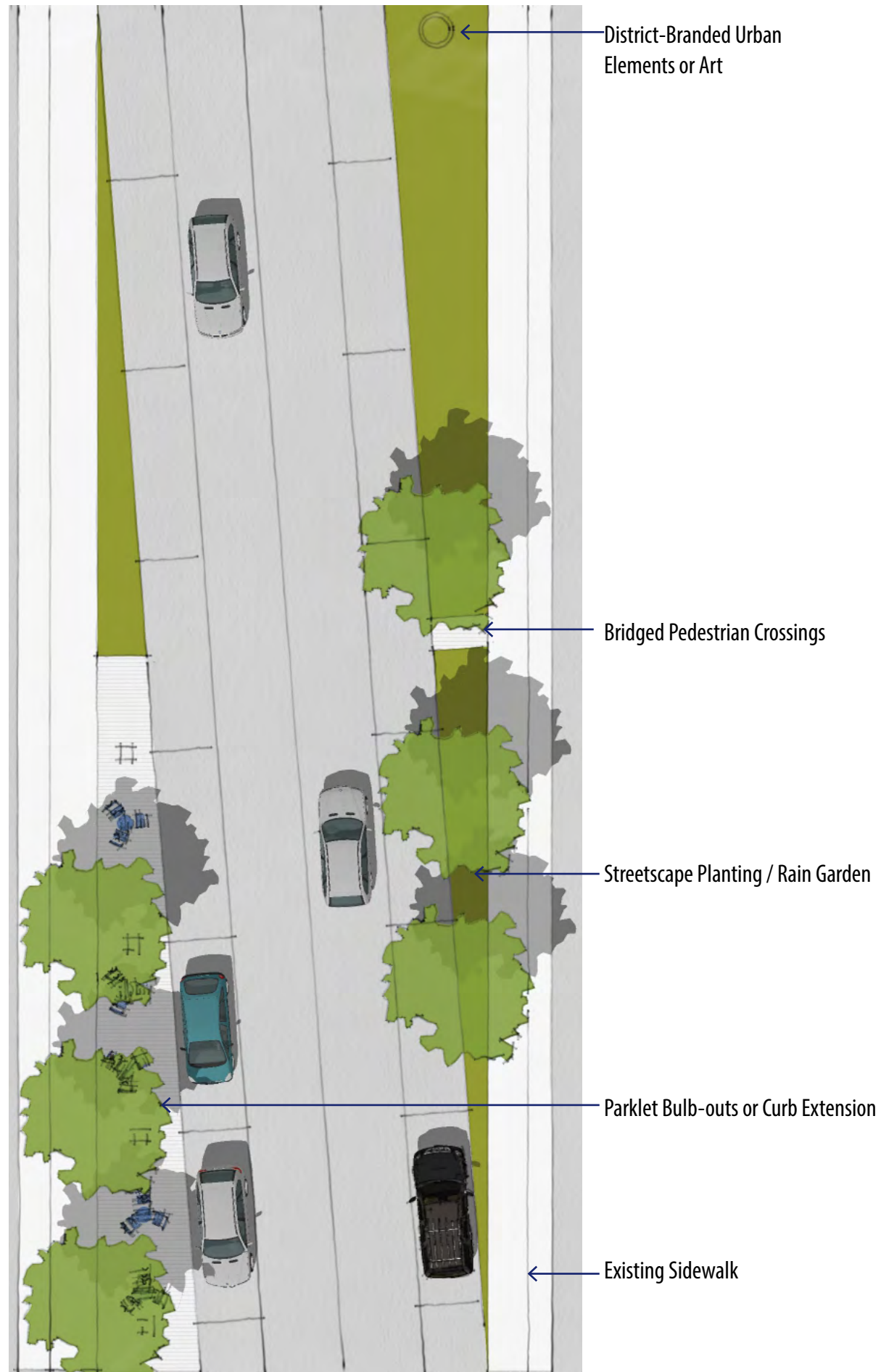
A | Appendix: Additional Design Options

Front Street Promenade

Two-way with Parallel Parking Option

- Opportunities for streetscape extensions and greening opportunities along both sides of the corridor including potential for new street trees and shading.
- Preservation of existing curb lines and drainage infrastructure.
- Shorter pedestrian crossing distances and opportunities to include corner and mid-block bulb-outs to further shorten crossing distances.
- Opportunities to include rain gardens and low impact development (LID) solutions within greening areas for more sustainable approaches to drainage and to ease the use and long-term maintenance on existing traditional piped systems.





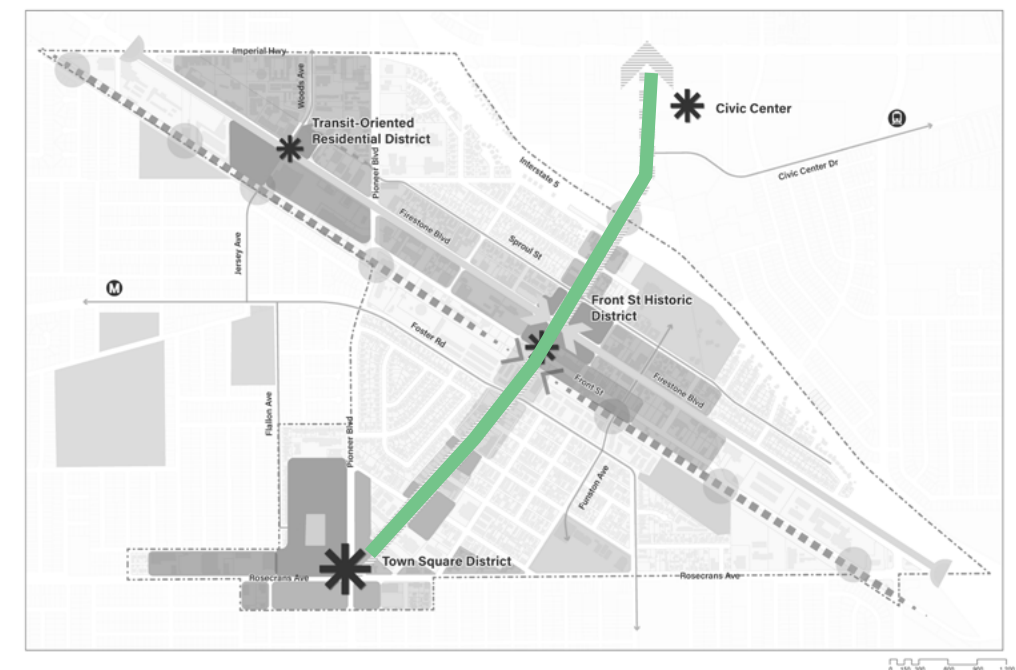
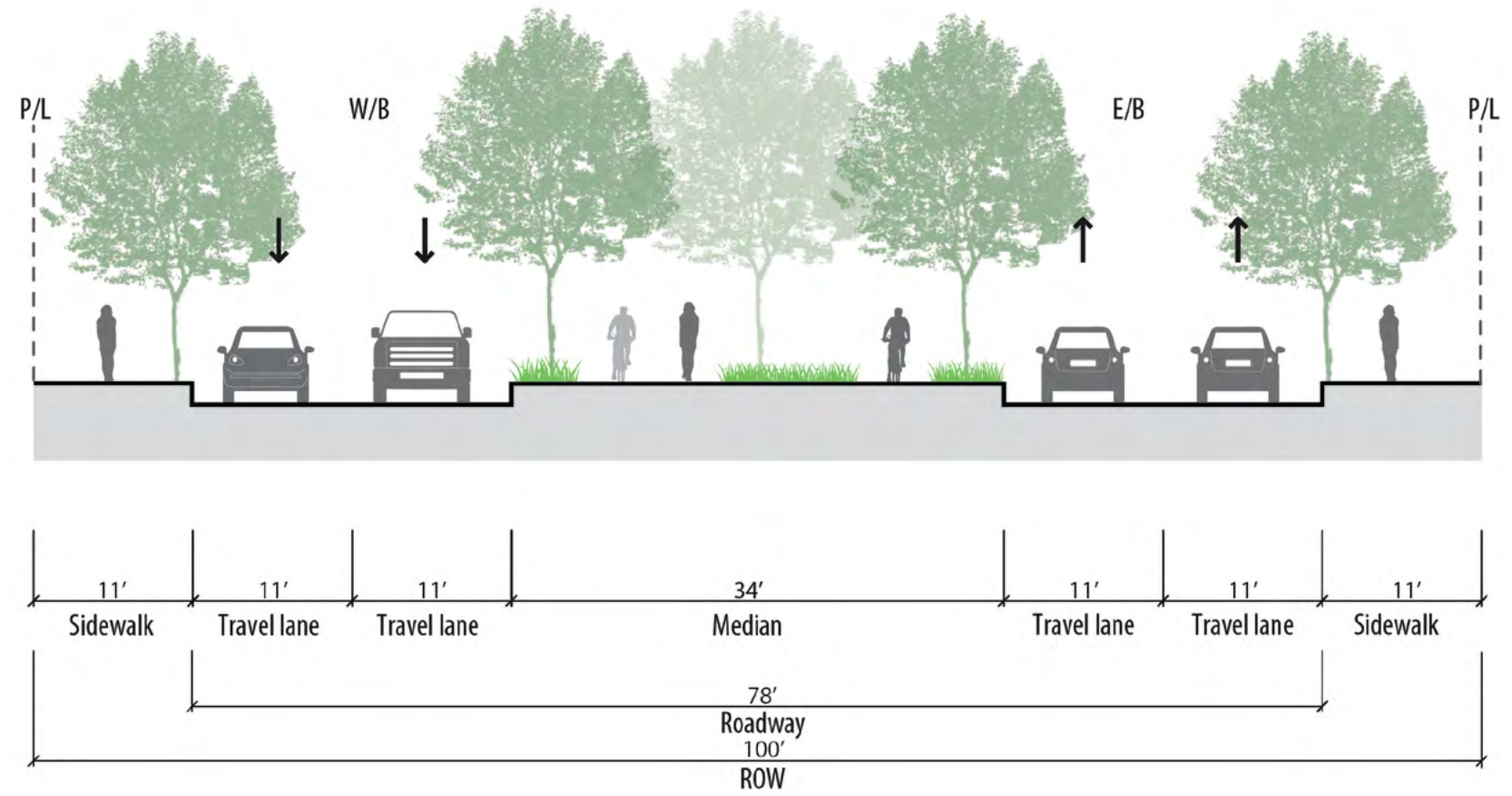
Alternating Pattern Option

- Preservation of existing curb lines and drainage infrastructure.
- Alternating angled road segments to help slow vehicular traffic speed.
- Alternating angled road segments to create pockets of new consolidated streetscape and urban greening places and a series of new focal points along the corridor to serve as urban design and placemaking points of interest for the district.



San Antonio Drive Recreational Trail Option

- Preservation of existing curb lines and drainage infrastructure.
- Exchange space currently used for parallel parking to widen the existing roadway median and create a linear greenway space that will accommodate new recreational uses such as walking, biking, and running.
- A San Antonio Drive greenway segment will provide important regional links including connections between the Front Street District and Town Square and to a Southern Pacific Railroad greenway and potential Civic Center path offering additional city-wide park and open space linkages.



San Antonio Drive at Five Points Intersection Roundabout Option

- Large roundabouts generally improve overall traffic flow while slowing the speed of vehicles.
- Major urban gateway feature in center of roundabout, could be relocated Town Square sign or other large element.
- Pedestrian crossings would likely need to be located some distance from the roundabout itself.
- Significant right-of-way acquisition required.

