



# STUDY SESSION: Progress Report and Status of the Downtown Specific Plan Project



City Council  
April 24, 2023



# Tonight's Program

1. Meeting Purpose
2. Overview: Downtown Specific Plan Project
3. Community Outreach & Engagement
4. Current Items for Consideration
5. Response from the Community, Planning & Transportation Commission
6. Next Steps
7. City Council Discussion and Direction for Staff

# Meeting Purpose

To provide staff feedback, guidance, and direction on three fundamental components of the downtown area.

These foundational concepts include:

- 1) Laurel Street Closure, 700 Block
- 2) Content and programming for public gathering spaces, including:
  - Harrington Park
  - New public plaza, 600 Block of Laurel Street
- 3) Improvements to Alleys

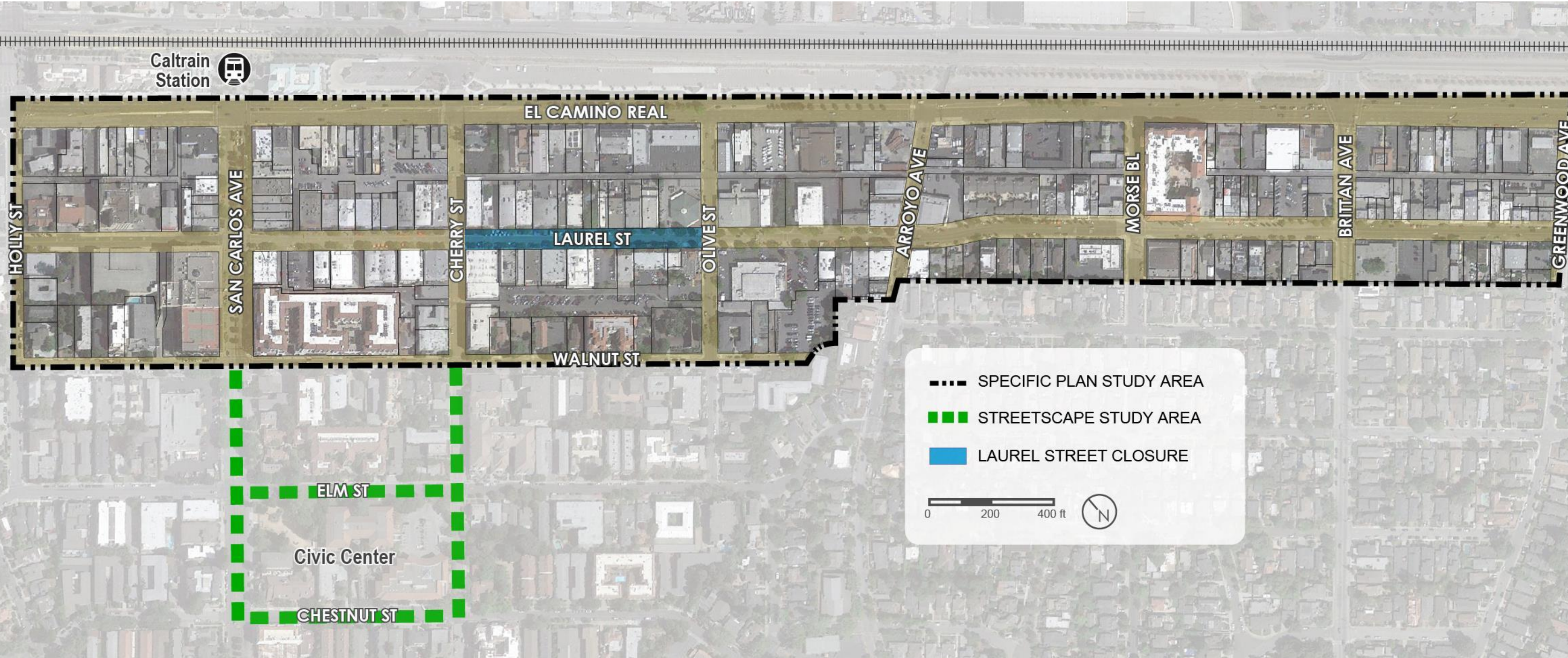
# Overview of the Downtown Specific Plan Project

# What will the Plan address?

## Key items include:


Parking; Land Use; Urban Design and the Public Realm; Infrastructure; Street Closure; Formula Business Ordinance; Building Height; Building Façades, Shopfronts and overall Architecture; Community Events; Maintenance; Emergency Access; Traffic and Circulation: Walking, Biking, and all-inclusive Accessibility; Outdoor Dining; Parklets and Plazas; Funding, Phasing, and Implementation; Businesses; Chamber of Commerce; Private Development; Downtown BID; and Civic Engagement.

# Specific Plan Area

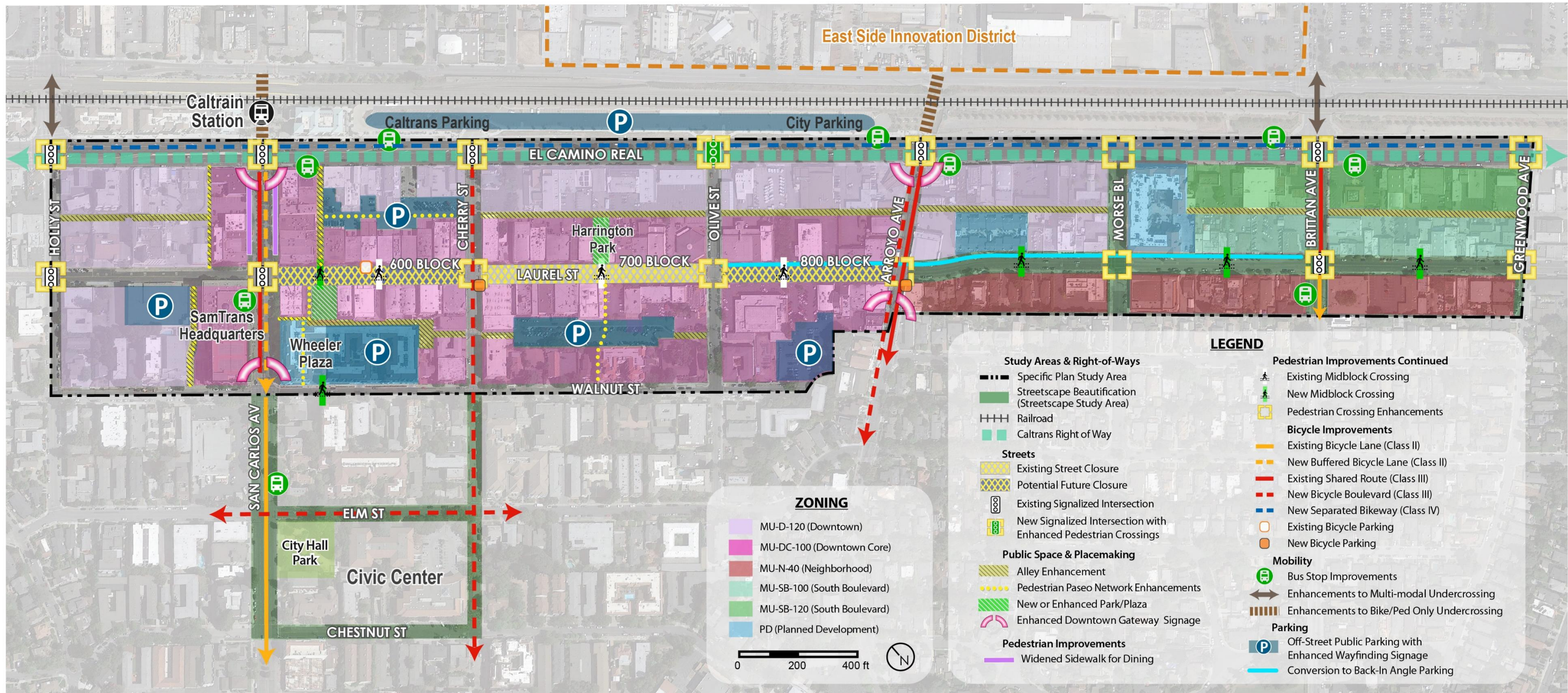


- SPECIFIC PLAN STUDY AREA
- STREETScape STUDY AREA
- LAUREL STREET CLOSURE

0 200 400 ft











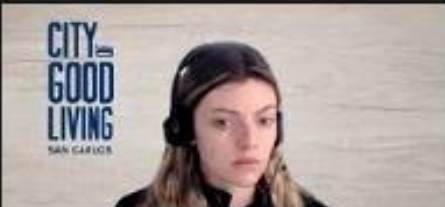











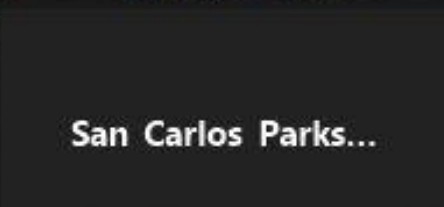




# A Range of Options to Consider



# Multi-disciplinary Team

A grid of 25 video conference thumbnails arranged in 5 rows and 5 columns. Each thumbnail shows a person or a logo. The names and titles of the participants are listed below each thumbnail. The logos include 'CITY GOOD LIVING SAN CARLOS' and 'rrm'.

 Megan Wooley-Ousdahl, A...	 Sajuti Haque	 Lisa	 Jami Williams, RRM Design...	 Abe Sheppard
 Roger Dale	 Diane Bathgate, RRM Desi...	 Debbie Jewell	 Scott Martin RRM	 Brian A. Hannegan, RRM D...
 Sara Cadona	 Brian Canepa, W-Trans	 Al Savay	 Aaron Akin	 Darren Choy (M)
 Adam Aronson	 Jesse Myers, Administriv...	 Sumi	 Grace Le	 Chris Valley, Building Official
 Steven Machida, Public Wo...	 lisa costa sanders	 San Carlos Parks & Recrea...	 Rebecca Auld	 Jeff Maltbie



# Summary Community Outreach & Engagement

# Community Outreach Methods

Email distribution list (sign-up on project website)	Downtown Specific Plan Project Website <sup>2</sup>	City Calendar of Events	City Council Newsletters	Announcements to City Commissions/ Committees
Social Media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook</li> <li>• Twitter</li> <li>• Next Door</li> <li>• LinkedIn</li> </ul>	Government Access TV Channel	Flyers ( <u>sent</u> to 9 targeted audiences/locations)	Newspaper Display Ads	Adult Community Center Newsletters
Chamber of Commerce	San Carlos School District Newsletters	ACC Digital Board Sign	Farmers Market	E-Notify
Spotlight Newsletters	City of Good Living Newsletters	Collaboration City of San Carlos' <u>Communications</u> Team	-	-

# Community Engagement Summary

1. Spotlight Newsletter (Aug. 2021)
2. City Council Member 1-on-1 Meetings (spring 2022)
3. Focus Group Meetings (August 2022)
4. 4 DTAC Meetings (June 2022 – January 2023)
5. Community Workshop #1 (August 31, 2022)
6. Community Workshop #2 (February 15, 2023)
7. Coffee and Comments Open House (March 4, 2023)
8. Two Online Surveys
  - (Interactive Mapping August 2022- Jan 2023)
  - Urban Design Concepts (March –April, 2023)



# Current Items for Consideration:

1. **Laurel Street Closure (700)**
2. **Public Gathering Spaces**
3. **Alleys**

## Laurel Street

# Laurel Street – 700 Block, 4 Options

## **1. Flexible Closure Option:**

Aesthetic improvements, Temporary in nature, but removable

## **2. Widened Sidewalk Option:**

Open to motorists, with widened sidewalks, two travel lanes, parallel parking

## **3. Plaza Option:**

Full Closure; designed as a public plaza, outdoor gathering space

## **4. Pre-2020 Option:**

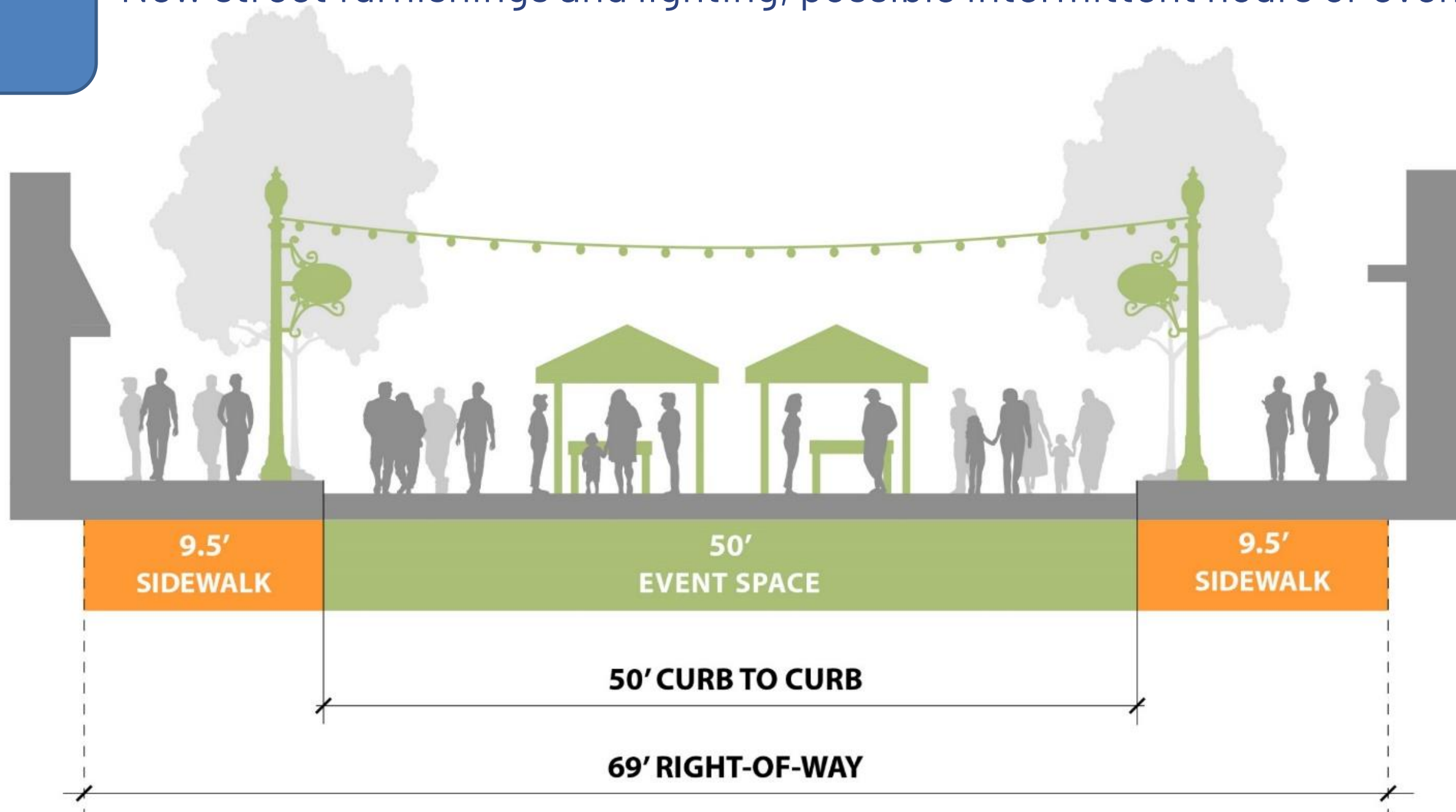
Eliminate Street Closure – open to cars as it was pre-pandemic

# 700 Block, Laurel St.: Flexible Closure Option

1

Temporary, with aesthetic improvements

New street furnishings and lighting, possible intermittent hours or events



# 700 Block, Laurel St.: Flexible Closure Option

1



Source: Al Savay



Source: Al Savay



1

## Advantages:

- Maximum Flexibility
- Allows a variety of businesses to activate space on a temporary basis
- Facilitates community-building
- Improves pedestrian access

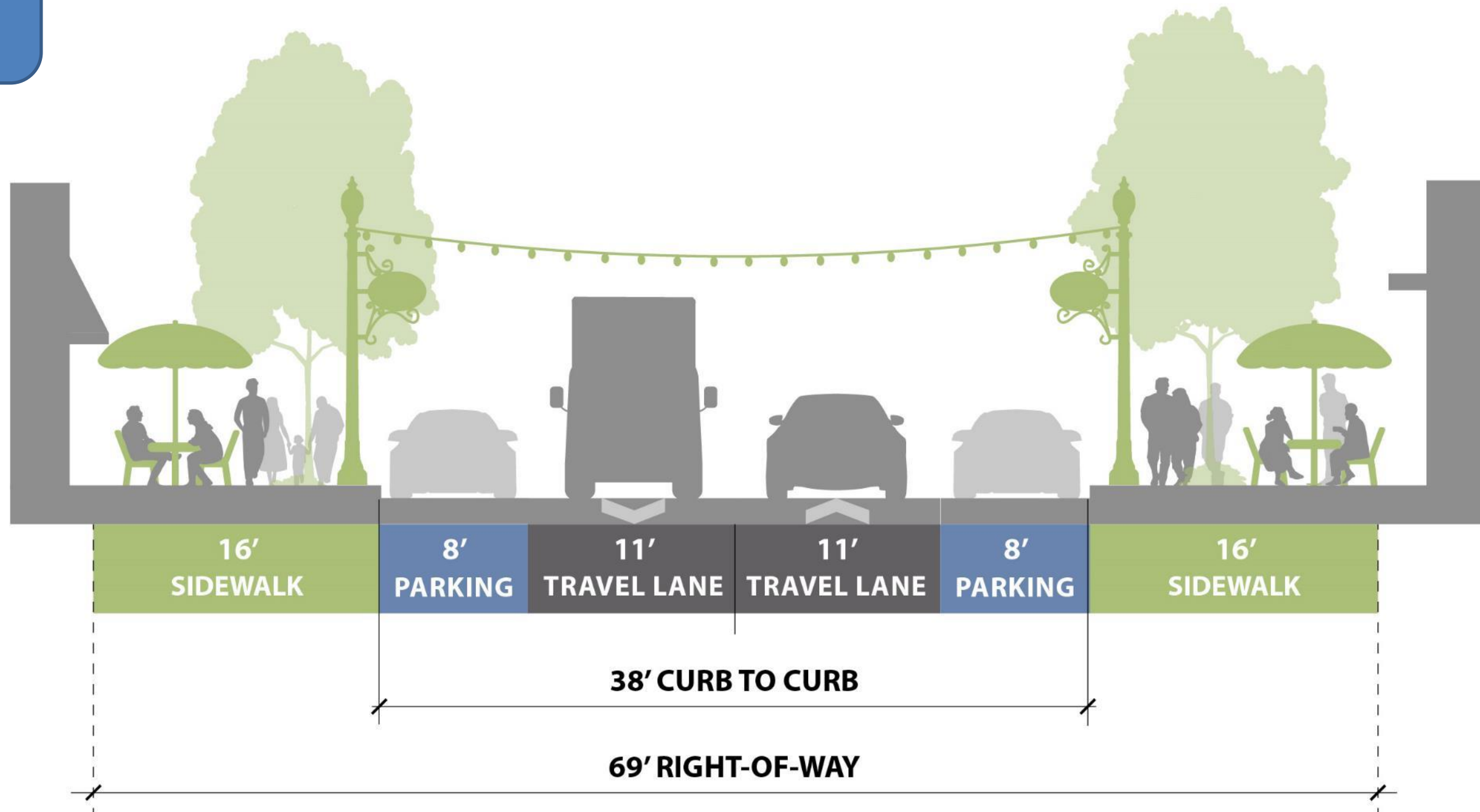
## Trade-Offs:

- Loss of 63 parking spaces
- Lacks full benefits of permanent street closure
- Intermittent traffic disruption - motorists must remember closure if hours are changed

# 700 Block, Laurel St.: Widened Sidewalk Option

2

Enhanced pedestrian environment, two travel lanes, retains some parking



# Laurel Street – 700 Block – Widened Sidewalk

2

Two travel lanes, retains some parking



Source: City of Ventura



## 2

### **Advantages:**

- Expanded sidewalks with street furniture and lighting
- Pedestrians are retail adjacent
- Additional room for sidewalk dining
- Maintains vehicle access and adjacent parking

### **Trade-Offs:**

- Loss of large community space
- Loss of 20 parking spaces

# 700 Block, Laurel St.: Plaza Option

3

Full closure, space is converted into a Plaza



# 700 Block, Laurel St.: Plaza Option

3



Source: Al Savay



Source: Al Savay

## 3

### Advantages:

- Dedicated community space
- Downtown plaza becomes a destination
- More space for retail, dining, and public space
- No limits on amenities, lighting, and special paving

### Trade-Offs:

- Loss of 63 parking spaces
- Delivery required from alley
- No vehicle visibility
- Minor traffic disruption
- Potential emergency access delays

# 700 Block, Laurel St.: Pre-2020 Option

4

Eliminate Street Closure  
Open to cars as it was pre-2020





## 4

### Advantages:

- No loss of parking
- No new impact on how motorists navigate the Downtown
- No user confusion

### Trade-Offs:

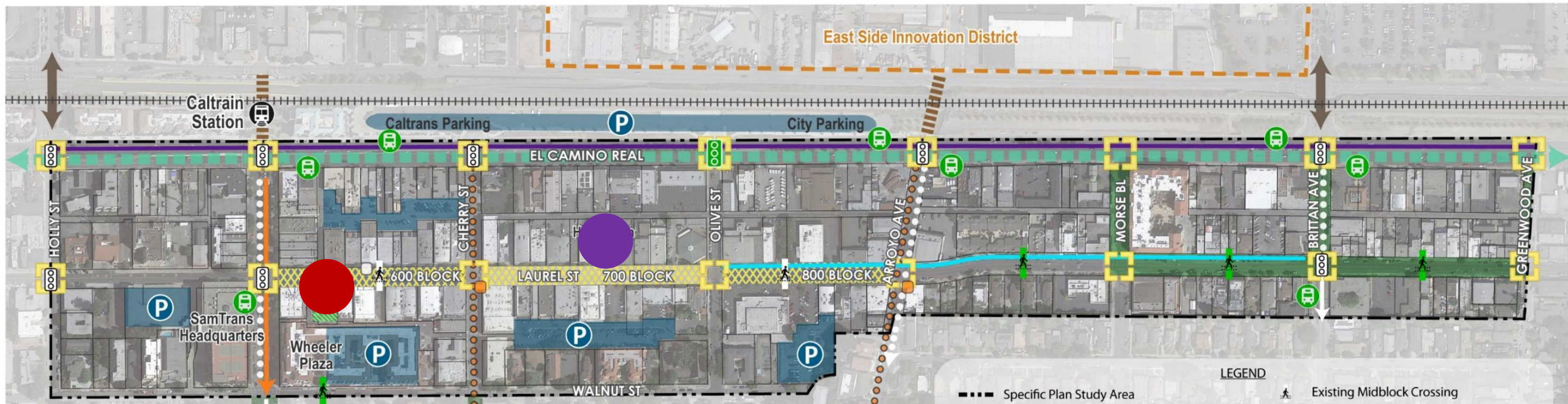
- Lose a community asset
- Lose outdoor dining opportunity
- Lose flexibility of using space

# Public Gathering Spaces

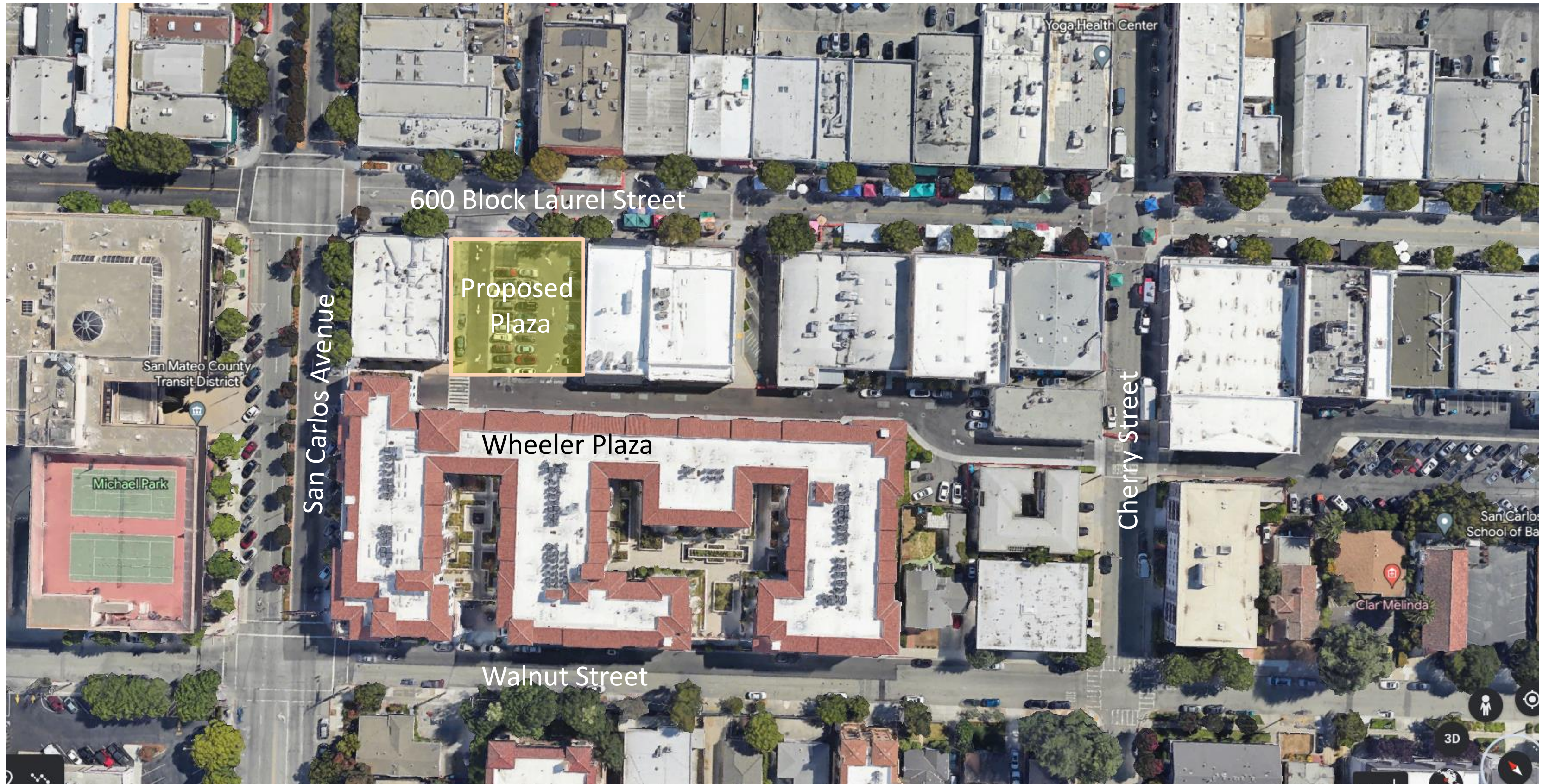
# Possible Public Space Elements

- Fountain/ Water feature
- Movable furniture (tables, chairs, umbrellas)
- Lawn or landscaping
- Area where children can play
- Stage/music venue
- Open air with some shade covering
- Tree canopy
- Bistro lighting
- Public art

- **New Plaza Opportunity, 600 Block Laurel St.** ●
- **Harrington Park** ●



# Location of Potential Future Public Plaza – 600 Block of Laurel Street



## Retail & Restaurant Development with a Small Plaza Space



Source: City of San Carlos



Source: Al Savay

# Ideas for New Plaza 600 Block Laurel

## Large Plaza Space



Source: Al Savay



Source: iStock

# Harrington Park Concepts

1. Park & Plaza
2. All Plaza
3. Music & Stage





# Harrington Park: Park & Plaza



1. Wood Beams and Lighting  
2. Nature Play Area  
3. Vines/Wall Screen  
4. Fountain

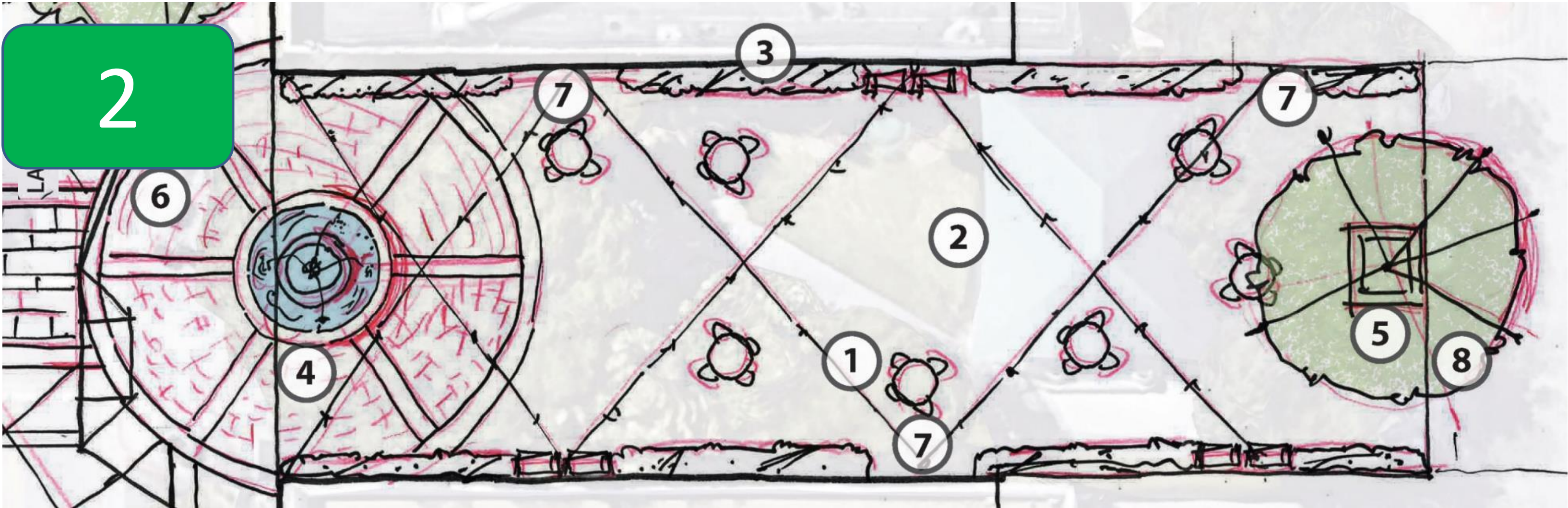
5. Tree/Planter/Seat Wall  
6. Memorial or Art Feature  
7. Memorial Wall  
8. Archway Entrance

9. Alley Access and Signage  
10. Tables and  
Chairs/Umbrellas

# Harrington Park: Park & Plaza



# Harrington Park: All Plaza



1. Bistro Lighting
2. Special Paving & Seating Area
3. Vines/Wall Screen
4. Fountain

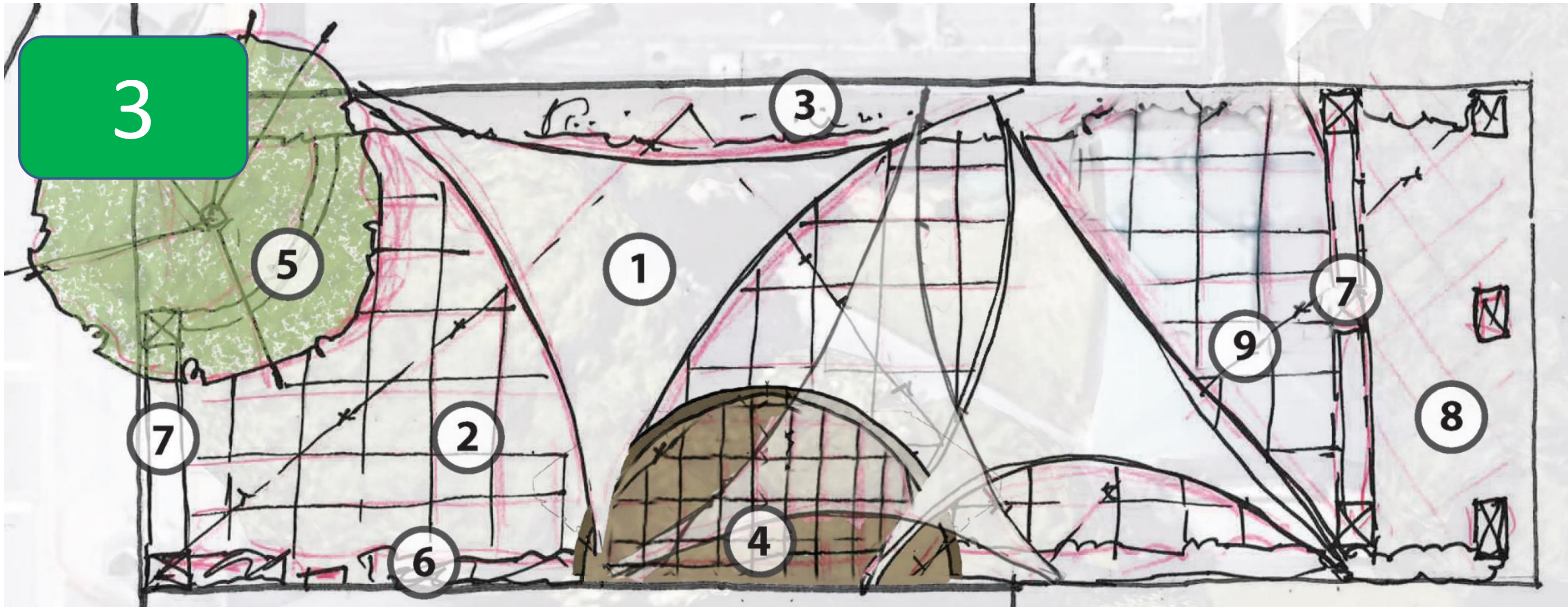
5. Tree/Planter/Seat Wall
6. Special Paving Into Laurel St.
7. Memorial Wall/ Art Wall
8. Alley Access and Wayfinding

# Harrington Park: All Plaza

2



# Harrington Park: Music & Stage



1. Shade sails

2. Special Paving & Seating Area

3. Vines/Wall Screen

4. Stage

5. Tree/Planter/Seat Wall

6. Memorial Wall

7. Archway Entrance

8. Alley Access & Signage

9. Bistro Lighting

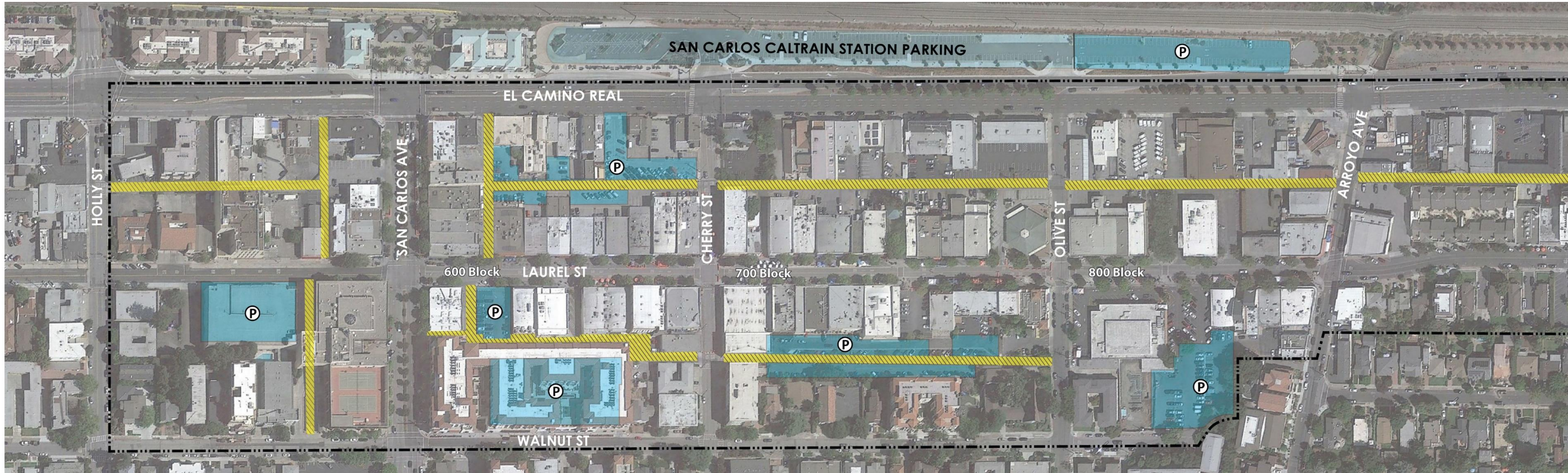
# Harrington Park: Music & Stage

3



## Alley Improvements

# Alley Network





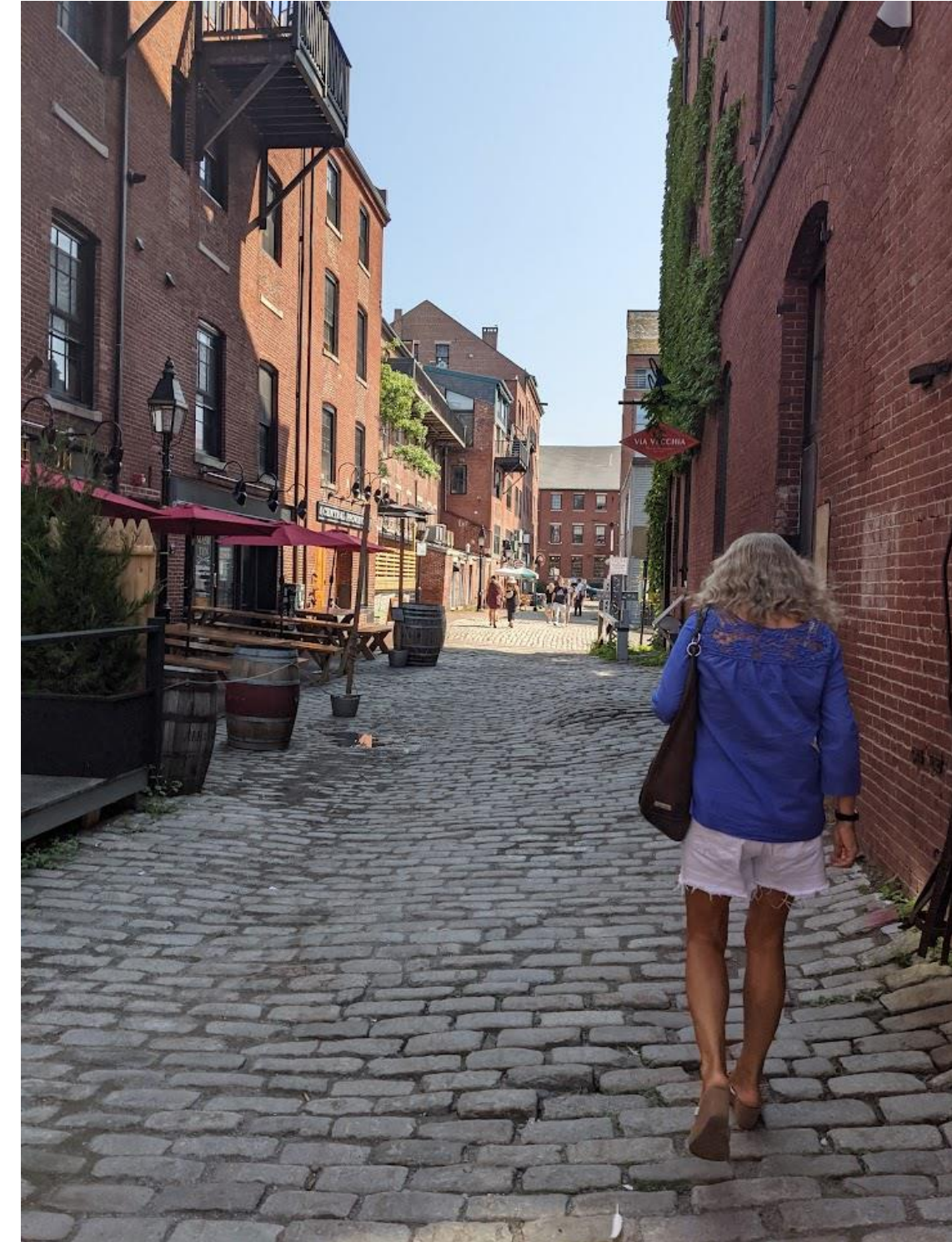
# Today's Alleys

- Lack of signage
- Lack of lighting and can feel unsafe
- Individual trash receptacles clutter
- No clear pedestrian path of travel
- Service / delivery congestion
- Private / public parking confusion
- Lack/minimal handicap accessible (ADA) parking
- Lack of bike parking and connectivity



# Proposed Enhancements

- Wayfinding
- Dedicated pedestrian paths of travel
- Dedicated delivery areas
- Dedicated trash receptacle areas
- Clearly denoted public parking
- Clearly marked ADA parking
- Bike parking and connectivity
- Pedestrian Scale / Street Lighting
- Alley Art / Mural Program



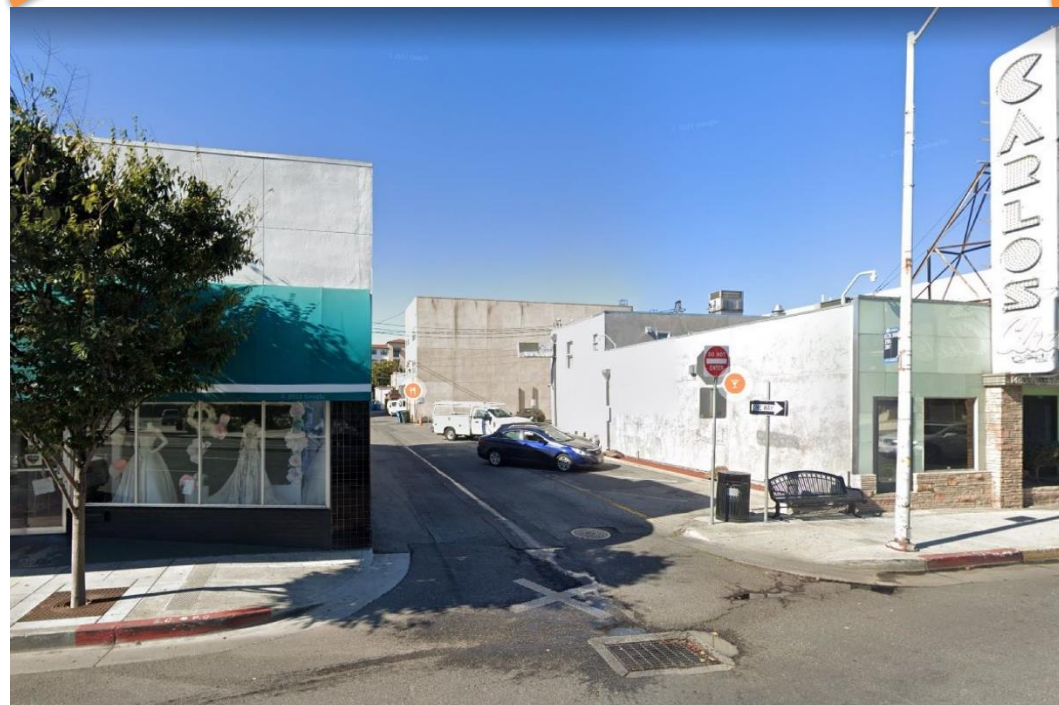
# Alley Enhancement: Gateways



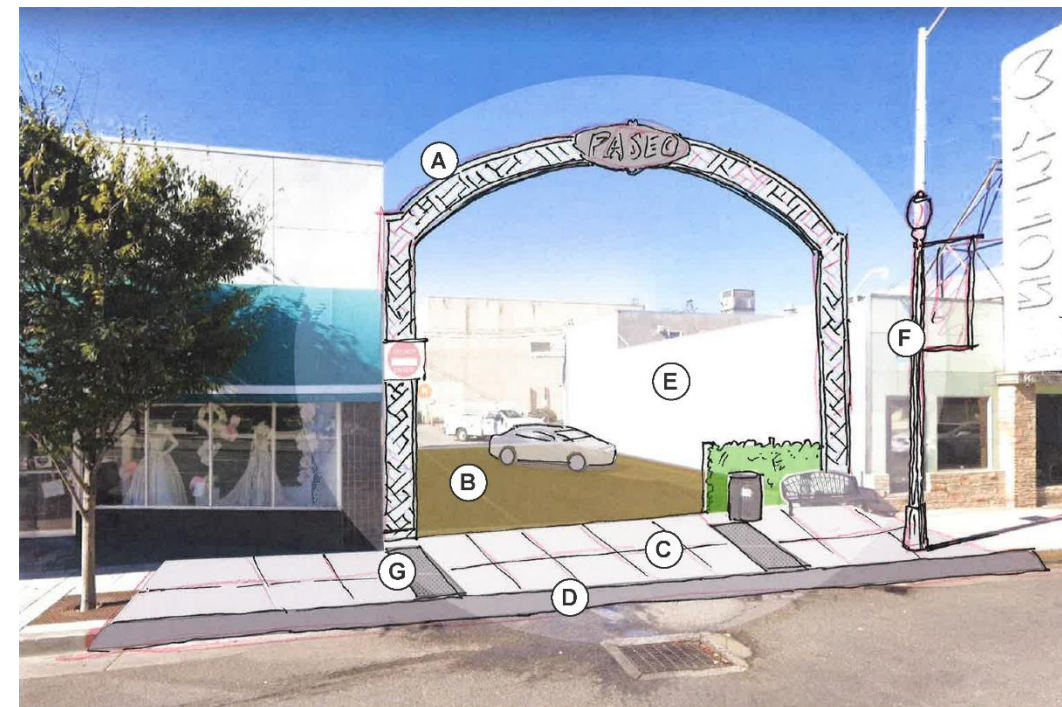
KEY MAP



Example gateway feature



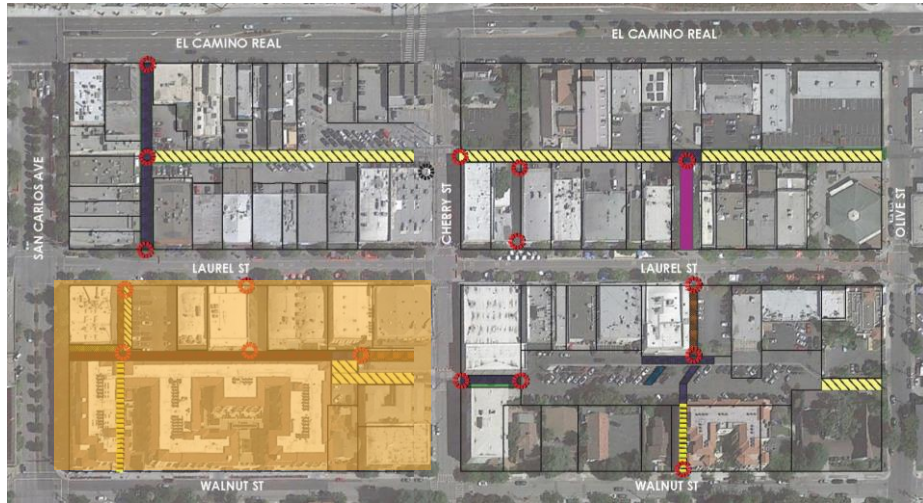
Existing: El Camino Real Alley from Laurel St.



Proposed: El Camino Real Alley from Laurel St.

- A. Gateway Feature
- B. Special Parking Lot Pavement
- C. Level Sidewalk Crossing
- D. Rolled Curb
- E. Mural Wall Opportunity
- F. Decorative Street Light
- G. Truncated Dome

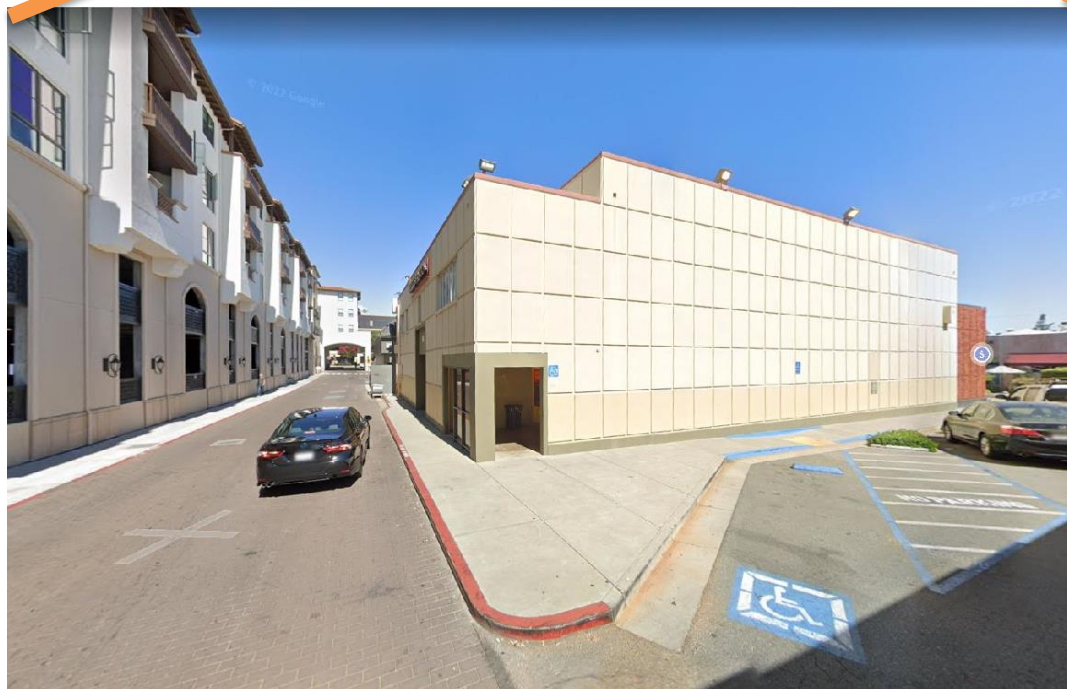
# Alley Enhancement: Crossings



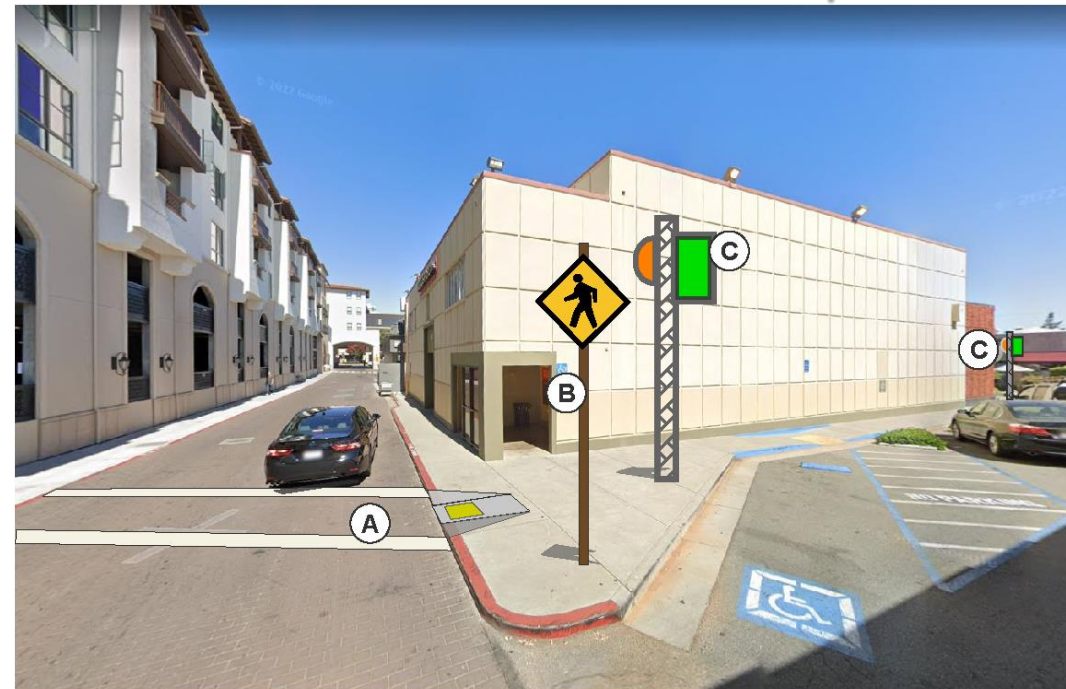
KEY MAP



Example decorative crosswalk



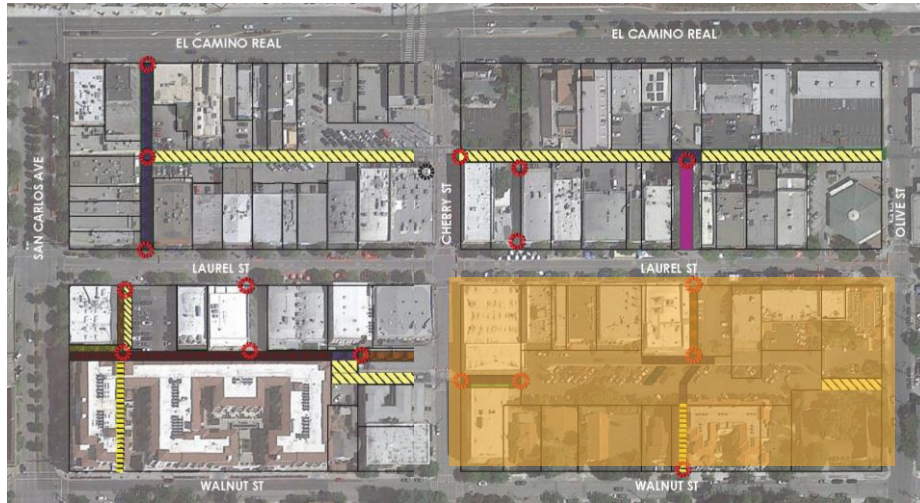
Existing: Public Parking between Walnut St. & Laurel St.



Proposed: Public Parking between Walnut St. & Laurel St.

- A. Crosswalk Striping and Ramp
- B. Pedestrian Crossing Sign
- C. Wayfinding Signage

# Alley Enhancement: Pedestrian Paths



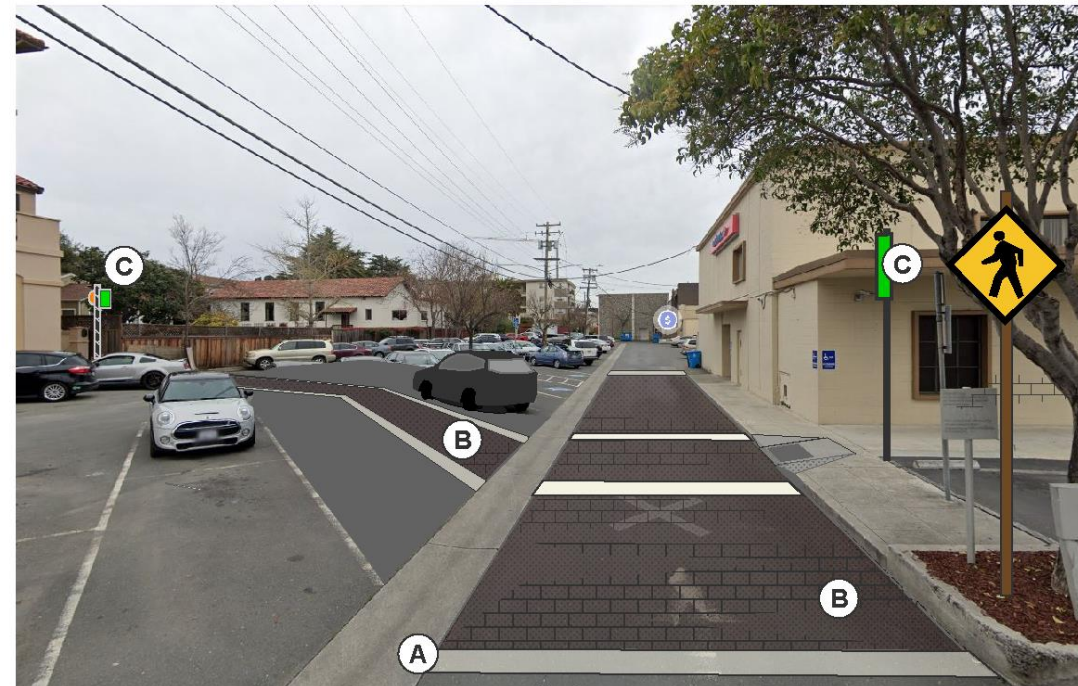
**KEY MAP**



**Example wayfinding**



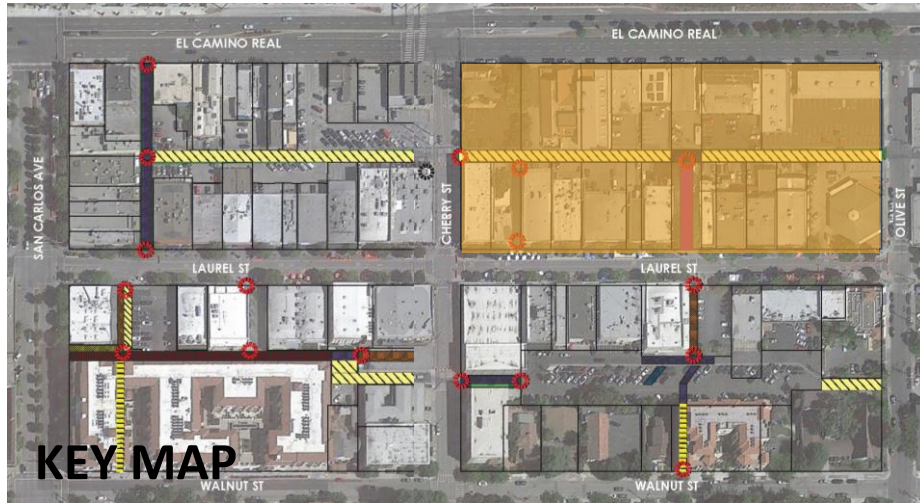
**Existing: Parking between B of A and US Banks**



**Proposed: Parking between B of A and US Banks**

- A. Flush Concrete Edge
- B. Special Parking Lot Pavement – Ped Route
- C. Wayfinding

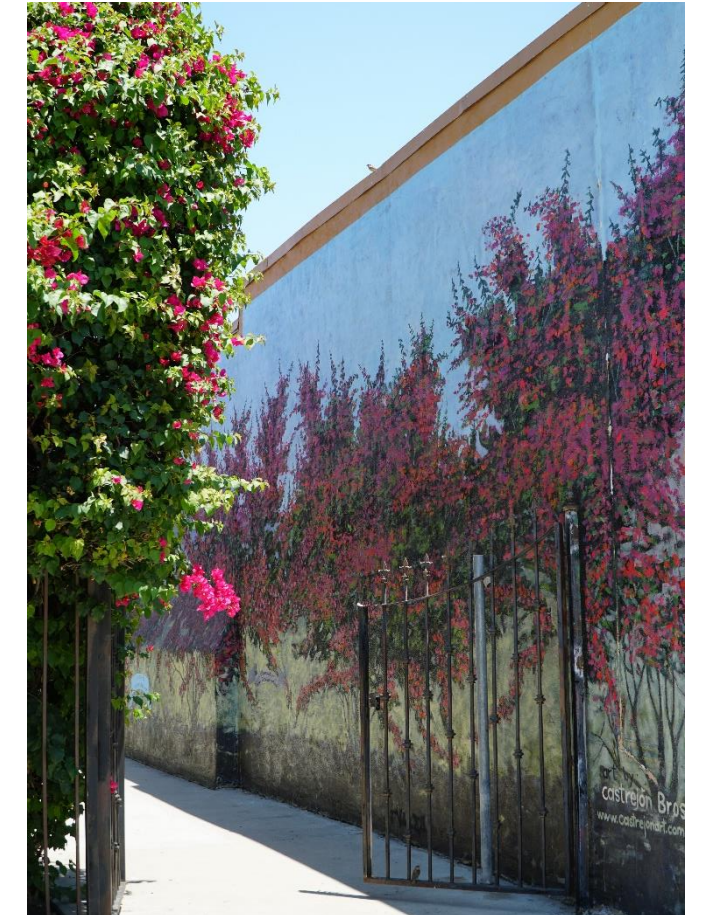
# Alley Enhancement: Murals, Decor



Existing: Alley near Cherry St. and Laurel St.



Proposed: Alley near Cherry St. and Laurel St.



Example alleyway mural

- A. Decorative Wayfinding Signage
- B. Special Paving
- C. Lighting
- D. Rolled Curb
- E. Mural Wall Opportunity

# Alleys: Examples

Source: RRM Design Group



Source: Google Maps



Source: Google Maps

# Response from Community



## Workshop #2

- Plaza:.....**64% of respondents**
- Widened Sidewalk:.....22% of respondents
- Flexible Closure:.....9% of respondents
- Pre-2020 Configuration:.....5% of respondents

## DTAC

- Plaza:.....**91% of respondents**
- Pre-2020 Configuration:.....9% of respondents

## Open House & Survey

- Full closure plaza option received the most votes.

# What people are saying....

## DTAC (Jan. 25, 2023):

- 92% would visit downtown if there was a permanent plaza
- They would like to see more street furnishings
- Music events, cultural and art exhibits
- Want to eat outside
- Priority for public spaces: events and programs
- Open air spaces with shade coverings

## Workshop (Feb. 15, 2023)

- “Gathering, Inviting, Walkable” – most important for the downtown vision
- People want to enjoy public spaces and the sense of community it brings
- Tree canopies; open air with shade coverings
- Bistro lighting, street trees
- Music events and cultural or art exhibits

**Tell us what you think!** Place a Dot!

**What would you like to see more of in downtown?**  
(Place a dot next to all options that apply)

	Activity Description	Place A Dot
1	Outdoor dining	
2	Street furnishings	
3	Plazas	
4	Public Art	
5	Wayfinding (signs w/direction, distance)	
6	Street trees	
7	Bicycle Parking	
8	Other	

**What types of programs or entertainment would you like to see downtown?** (Place a dot next to all options that apply)

	Activity Description	Place A Dot
1	Music events	
2	Kid friendly programs	
3	Theater/Performance pop up events	
4	Cultural or art exhibits	
5	Movies on the plaza/square	
6	Activities/yoga, tai chi, qi gong	
7	Chess, backgammon, game night	

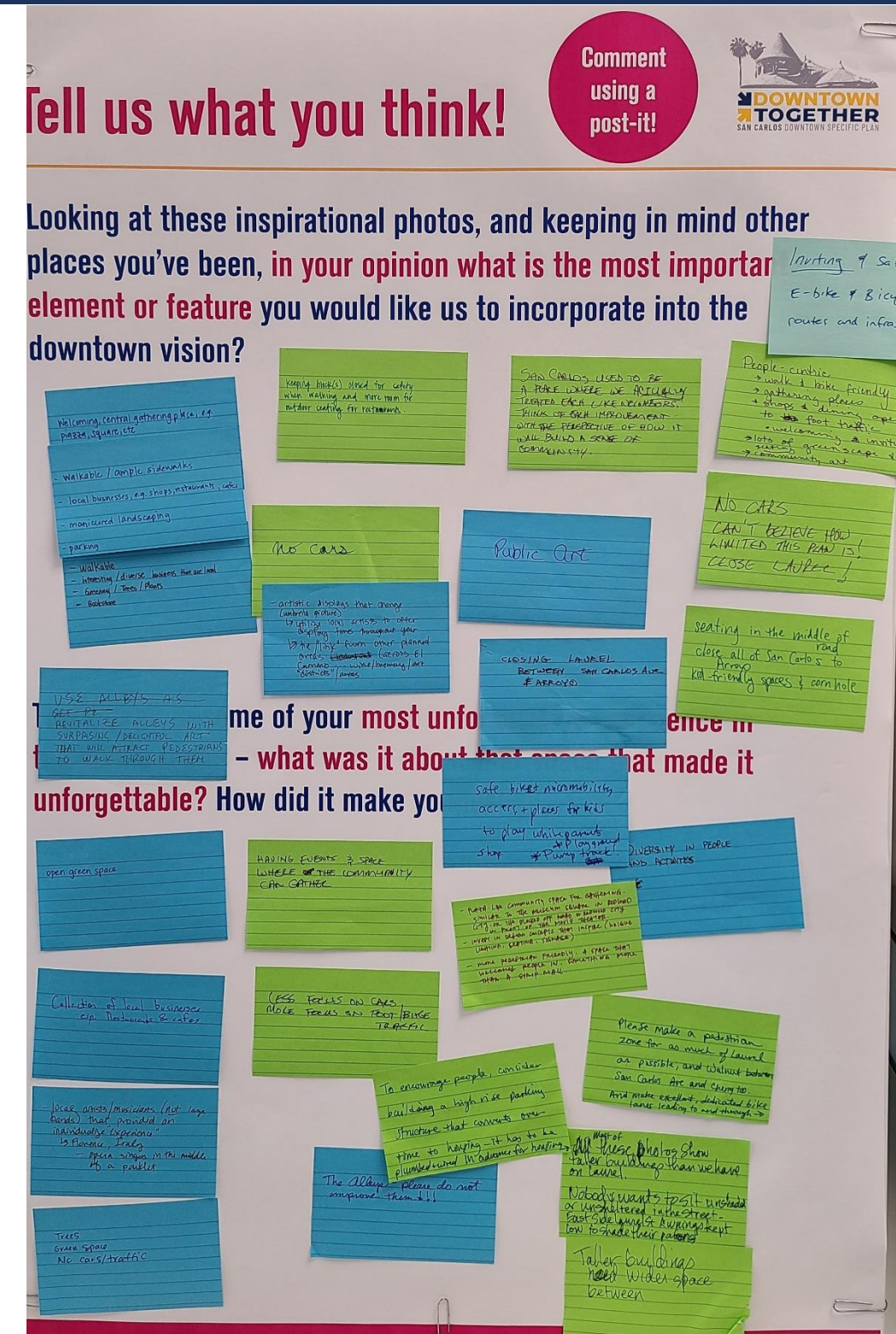
# What people are saying....

## Coffee and Comments (March 4, 2023):

- People want to enjoy public spaces and the sense of community it can bring
- Strong preference for open air spaces with shade coverings, tree canopies
- More outdoor dining, street trees, bistro lighting and public art
- Top activities desired: music, cultural & art exhibits, and movies on the plaza
- Would go downtown more often if there was a permanent plaza and more public gathering spaces

## Survey (March 1 – April)

- Highest priority for public spaces: want to be able to enjoy public space and the sense of community it brings
- Plaza option/full closure for 700 block of Laurel
- Trees and open air with shade coverings
- Moveable furniture, bistro lighting
- Top activities desired: Music and cultural events



# Response from Planning & Transportation Commission

## 700 Block, Laurel:

### Closure/full plaza option

- 3 Commissioners

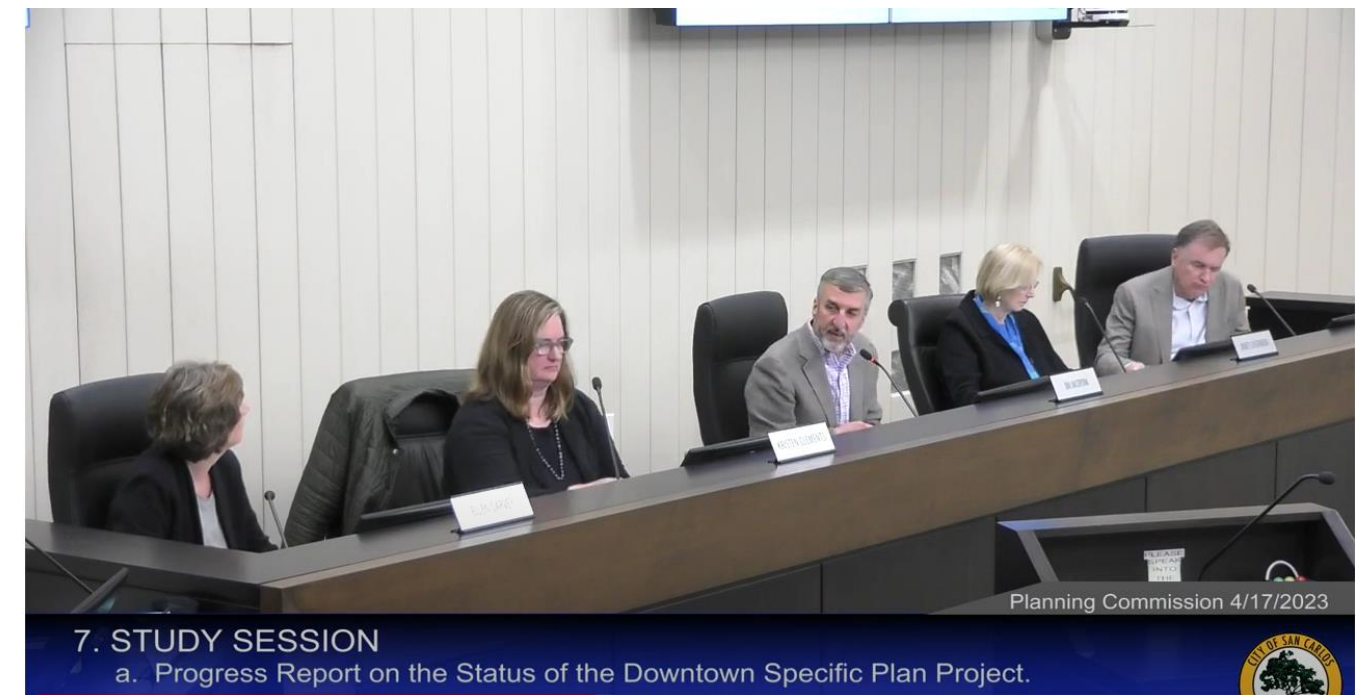
### Widened-Sidewalk

- 2 Commissioners

(1 said not opposed to full plaza)

## Public Gathering Spaces:

- Redesign Harrington Park
- New plaza, larger/open plaza, as beautiful gateway to/from Wheeler Plaza
- Design for music, stage, sunshades, trees, water features, lighting



## Alleys

*Crucial for success of Laurel closure*

- Tidy up, include awnings, signage, public art, archways, wayfinding, special paving
- Alleys will have to do “everything”
- Business access, truck deliveries, parking for motorists, bicyclists, safe pathways to Laurel Street/El Camino Real, ingress/egress for future housing
- Need a functional plan, set priorities for the alleys

# Next Steps

# Gateway Moment: 1100 San Carlos Avenue



# 600 and 800 Blocks, Laurel Street



600 Block, Laurel Street



800 Block, Laurel Street



# Next Phase

- Evolution of other blocks: 1100 – 1200 San Carlos Avenue; 600 and 800 Laurel Street
- Pedestrian Improvements
- Bicycle Facilities
- Proposed Mobility Improvements
- Placemaking and Beautification
- Alley Network and Public Parking
- Sustainable Practices & Resiliency

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE



# Questions for the City Council

- Should the 700 block be turned into a full plaza?
- Is there agreement on design elements for public spaces (i.e. Harrington Park and new plaza at 600 block of Laurel)?
- Is there agreement that alleys should be improved with new surface materials, lighting, gateway features, landscaping and murals?

- **Questions for Staff, Consultants?**
- **Public Comment**
- **Council Discussion**



**Thank you!**

[www.sancarlosdowntownplan.com](http://www.sancarlosdowntownplan.com)

# City Council

# Questions



# PUBLIC COMMENT

**\*\*CITY COUNCIL – April 24, 2023\*\***

If you would like to make a public comment on an item on **Agenda Item 11a, Downtown Specific Plan Design Concepts**, now is the time to speak :

1. Fill out a Request to Speak Form located in the back of the Council Chambers and submit to City Staff; or you may raise your hand when the PTC Chair calls for public comments
2. Join the Zoom meeting (<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88635467439>) Or call [1-669-900-9128](tel:1-669-900-9128) and enter the Meeting ID: [886 35467439](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88635467439)). Virtually raise your hand by clicking on the “Raise Hand” icon at the bottom of your screen. If joining by phone, press **\*9; \*6** to unmute when called upon.

Two Minute Timer:

In the interest of full disclosure,  
please note if you are a paid representative/advocate for any item you'll be commenting on.

# City Council

# Discussion