



DRAFT

CITY OF SAN CARLOS DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN PLAN PROJECT

www.sancarlosdowntownplan.com

Downtown Advisory Committee (DTAC)
Meeting #10 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM
June 03, 2025



DTAC Meeting Agenda

1. Meeting Call to Order

2. Pledge of Allegiance

**“I pledge allegiance
to the flag of the
United States of
America, and to the
republic for which it
stands, one nation
under God,
indivisible, with
liberty and justice
for all.”**



3. DTAC Roll Call

Member	Representing Category	Member	Representing Category
Allie Board	Downtown Business Operator	Madison Blanton	Special Needs
Donna Lera	Downtown Business Operator	Zuri Kadiwar	Youth Advisory Council Member
Allison Chang	Downtown Business Operator	Dylan Karmin	Youth Advisory Council Member
Tom Davids	Downtown Property Owner	Sreecharan Chandrasekaran	At Large
Anthony Kamm	Economic Development Advisory Commission Member	Monette Meredith	At Large
Jean Dehner	Older Adults	Joaquin Pedrin	At Large
Robert Bollier	Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission Member	James Bertram Cecile Lee Tracy Masaro Elizabeth Minn	Alternate DTAC Members
Amy Buckmaster	San Mateo County Chamber of Commerce Representative		

4. Discussion Items

a. Overview –

1. Downtown Specific Plan
Vision and Guiding Principles
2. DTSP Process Update
3. Policies and Standards



Downtown Vision

"Downtown is the heart of San Carlos that provides a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, safe, charming, futuristic, and accessible destination for the community and strongly expresses its unique culture and heritage. It is a place for celebration and gathering that offers diverse and authentic experiences through a draw of food, retail, services, art and music in a visually attractive environment for the growing community. Downtown is an inclusive place with easy access for all, opportunities for housing and businesses of all types, and inviting spaces for all users. Downtown San Carlos is a sustainable district, with landscape that supports ecological and community health & well-being."

Downtown Guiding Principles





Specific Plan TOC



Policy Area Discussion

Goals and Policies Framework

Policy Areas:

- Land Use and Urban Design
- Prosperity & Economic Development
- Mobility & Transportation
- Parking & TDM
- Public Realm
- Public Art
- Sustainability & Resiliency
- Infrastructure

Goals and Policies Framework

Policy Areas:

- Land Use and Urban Design
- Prosperity & Economic Development
- Mobility & Transportation
- Parking & TDM
- Public Realm
- Public Art
- Sustainability & Resiliency
- Infrastructure

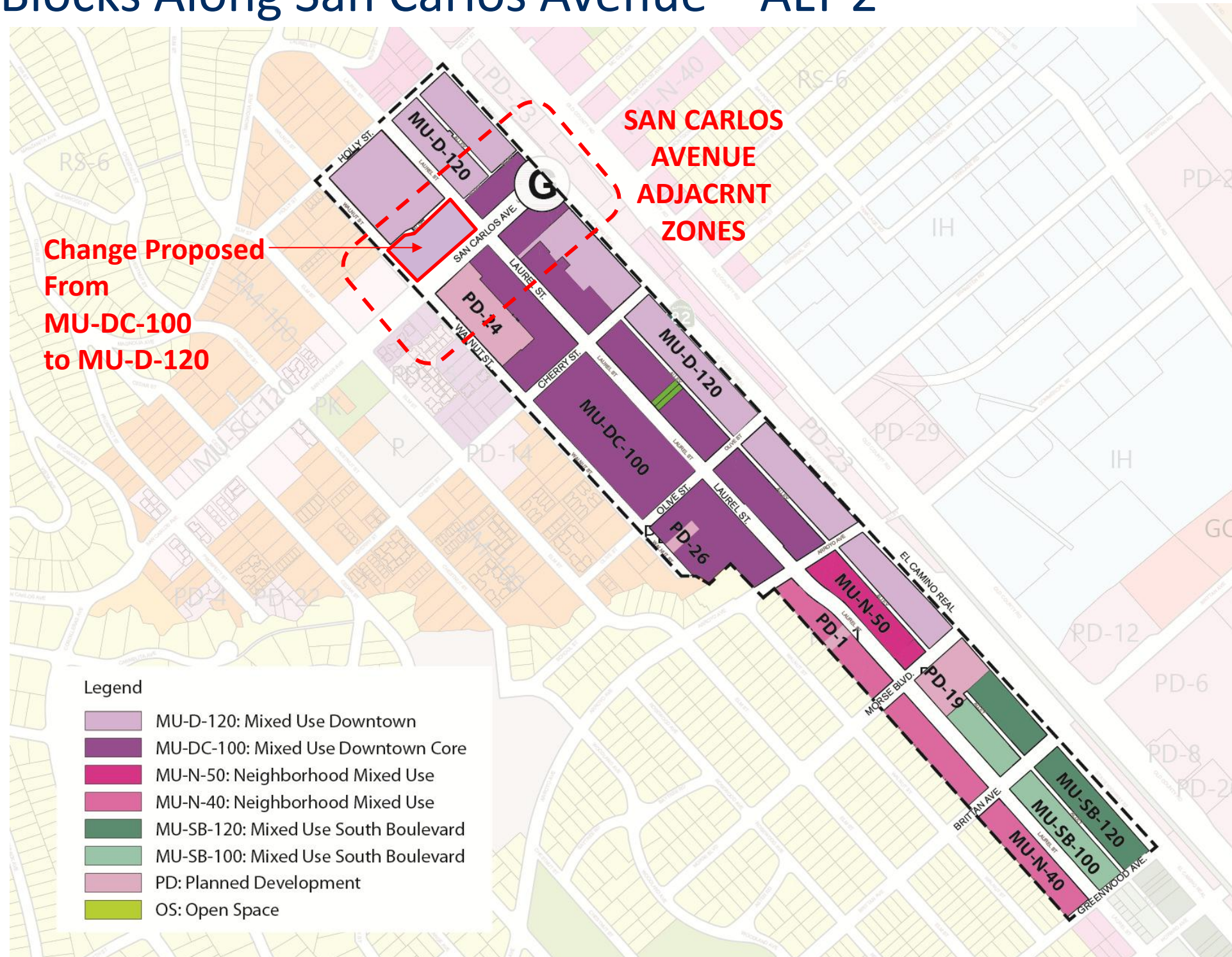
**This presentation will
discuss the key policies as
highlighted**

Land Use and Urban Design

Goal: The Downtown Specific Plan aims to create a vital social place for the community, while strengthening a distinctive character and identity for San Carlos, rooted in its culture, history, and context. This identity will be defined by thoughtful land use, the physical form of the built environment and the overall experience of the downtown area.

Re-zoning Recommendations

Blocks Along San Carlos Avenue – ALT 2

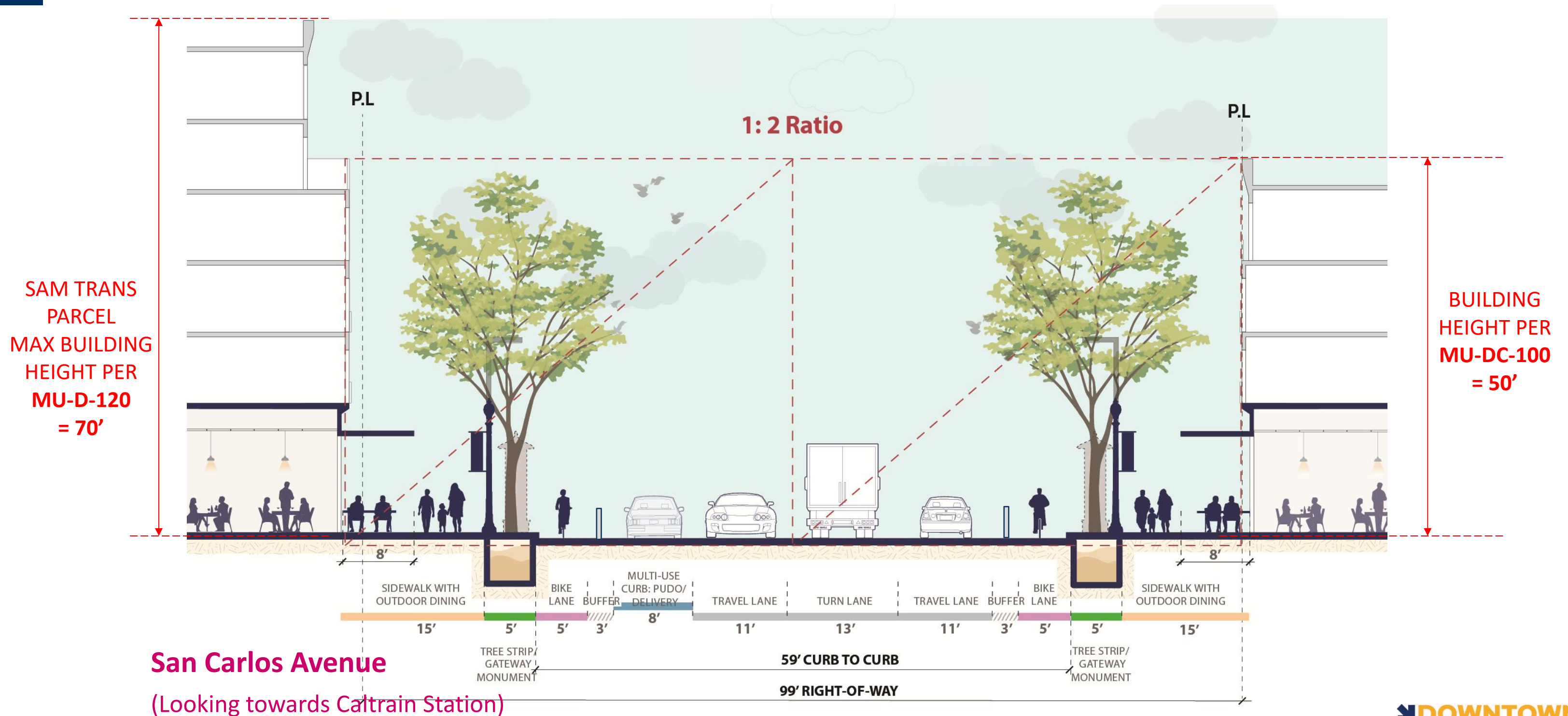


Policies + Standards

- Consider Rezoning MU-DC-100 designated block (SamTrans) on San Carlos Avenue to MU-D-120 to allow more residential density.
- Consider stepback standards for Laurel Street and San Carlos Avenue to be applied to this parcel's interfaces with respective streets.

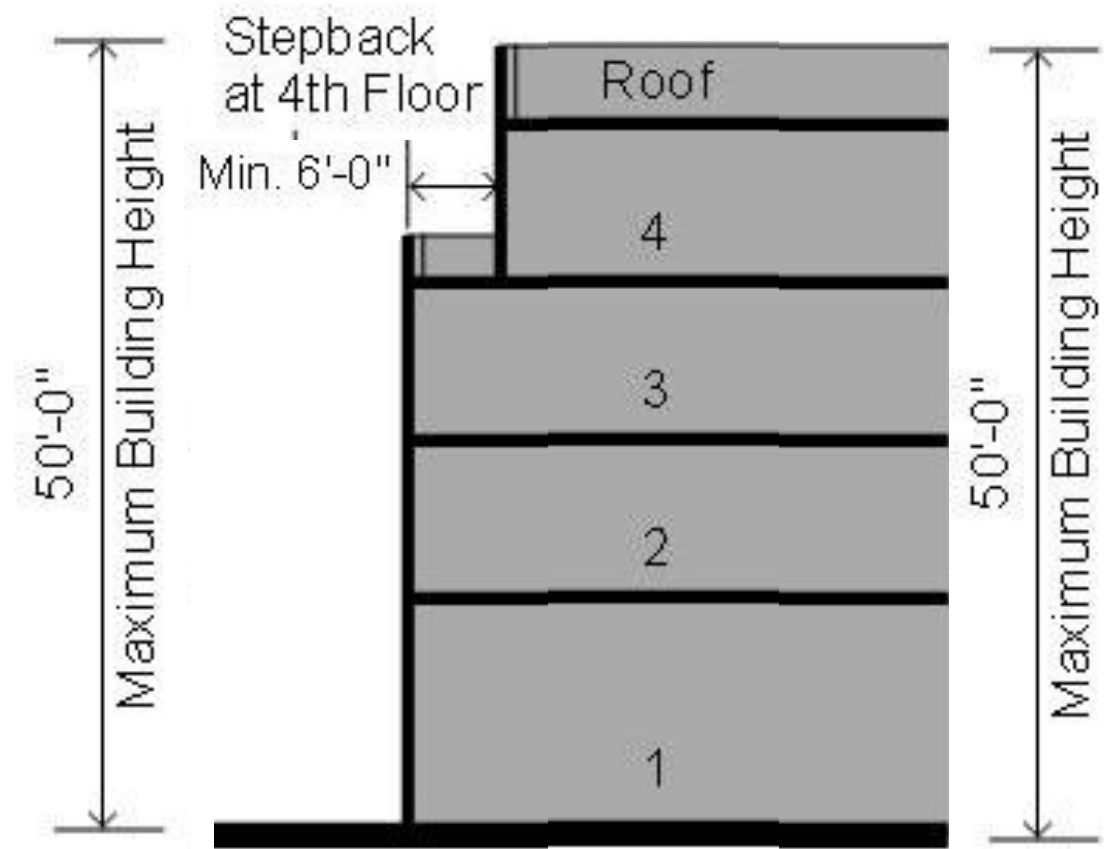
Re-zoning Recommendations

Blocks Along San Carlos Avenue ALT 2



Re-zoning Recommendations

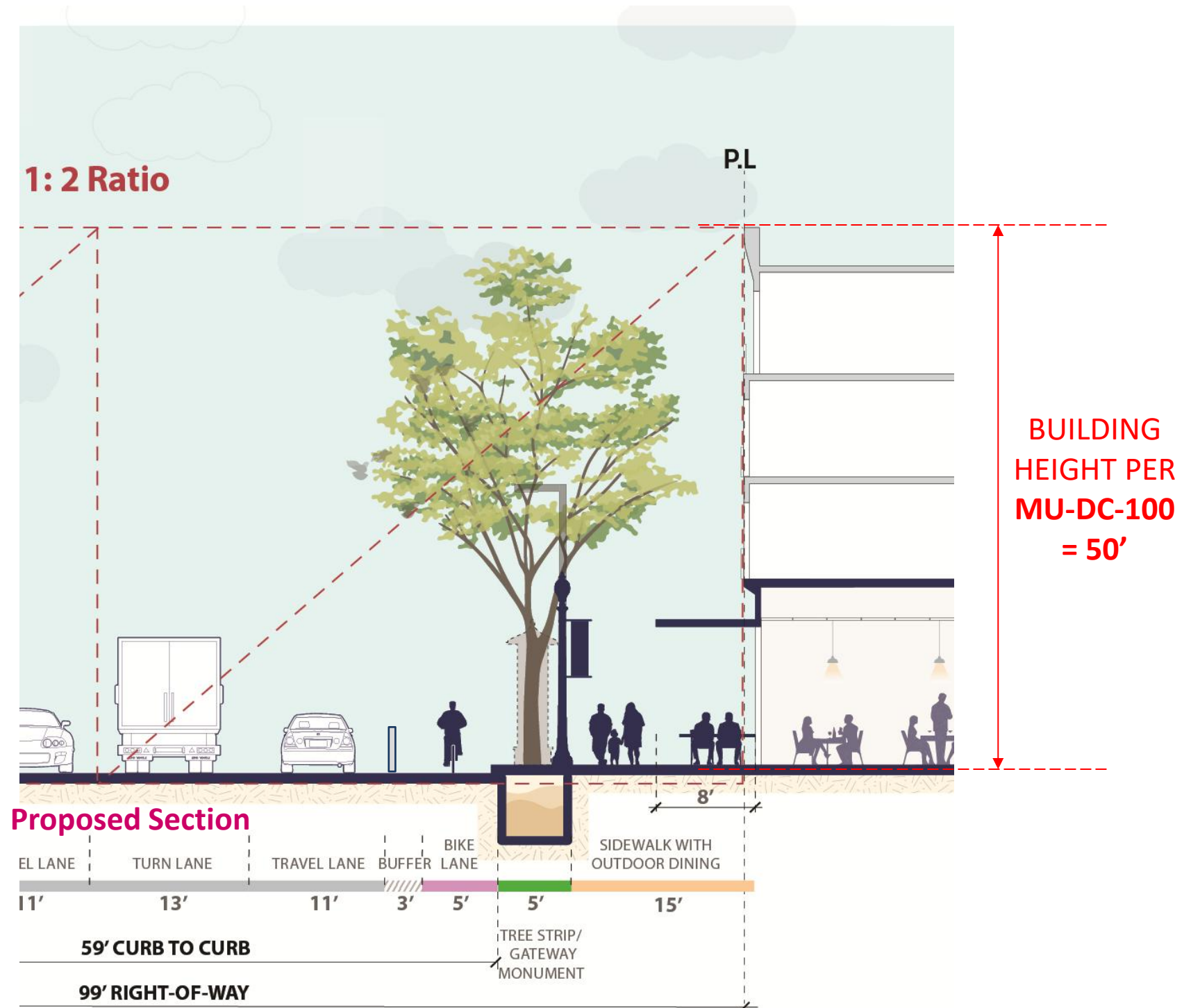
Blocks Along San Carlos Avenue ALT 2



Section Per Zoning Code

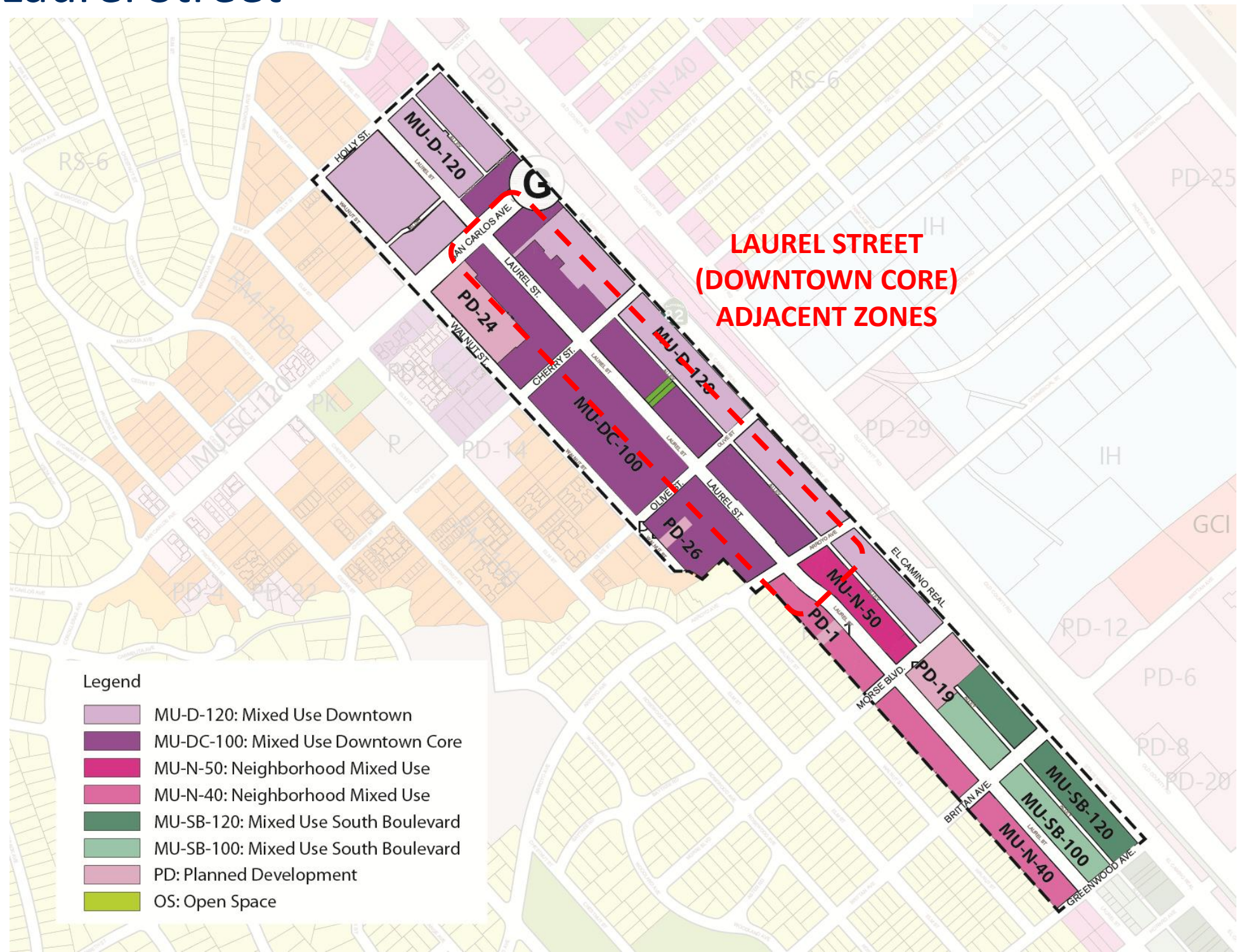
San Carlos Avenue

(Looking towards Caltrain Station)



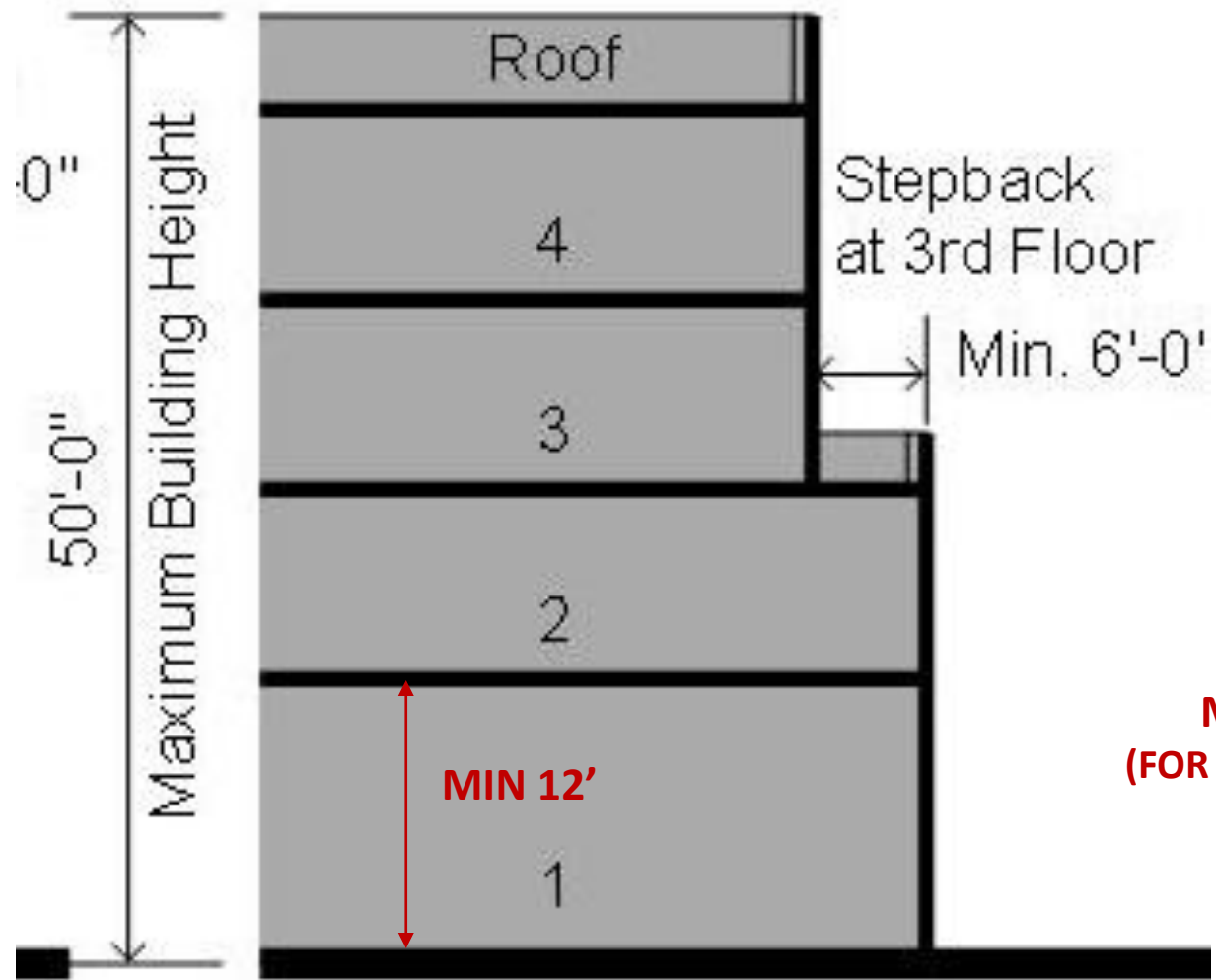
Ground Floor and Public Space Interface - Laurel Street

Policies + Standards

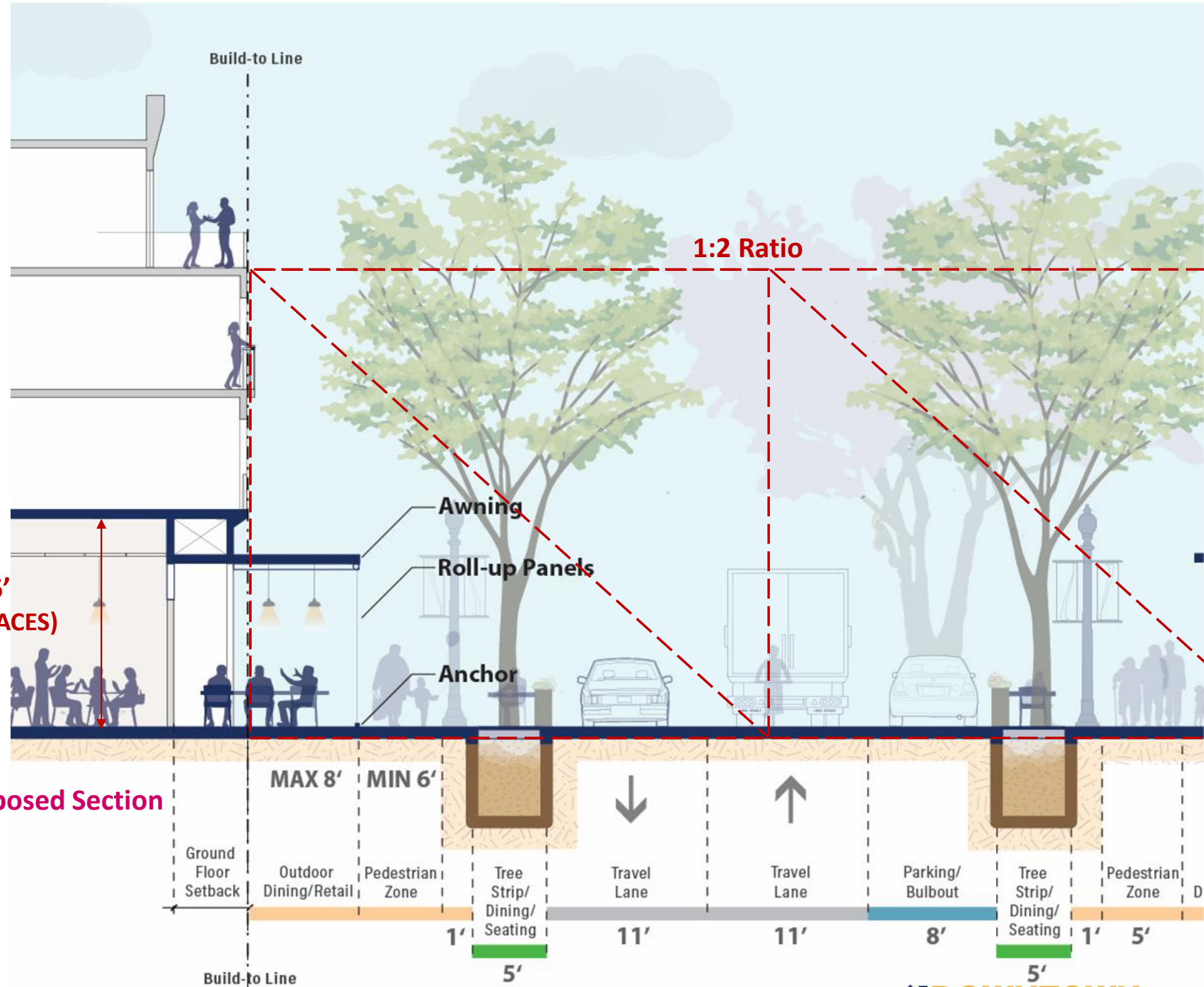


Land Use and Urban Design Framework

Policies + Standards



Section Per Zoning Code



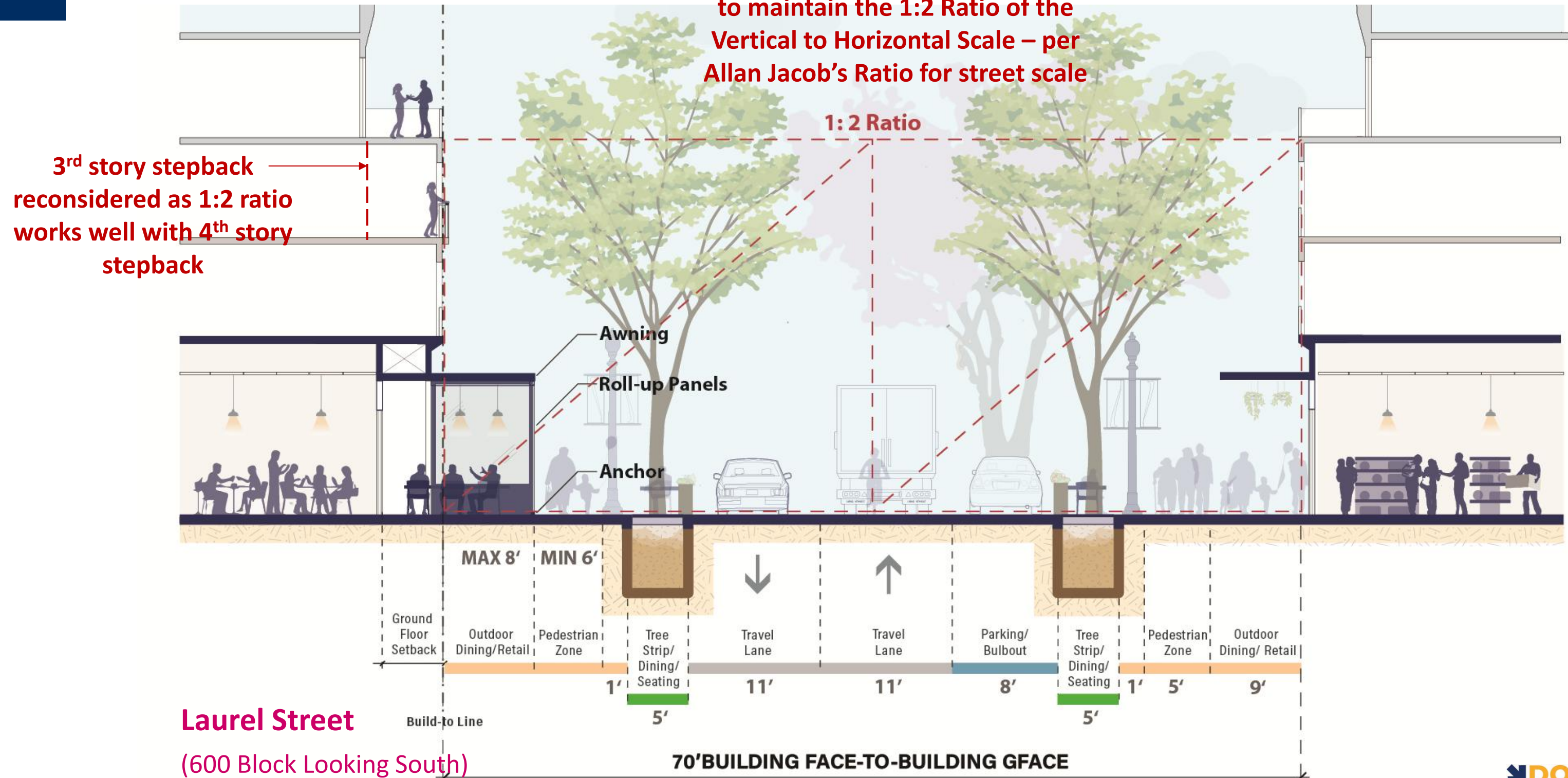
Proposed Section

Laurel Street (Downtown Core)
(Looking towards Caltrain Station)

Land Use and Urban Design Framework

Policies + Standards

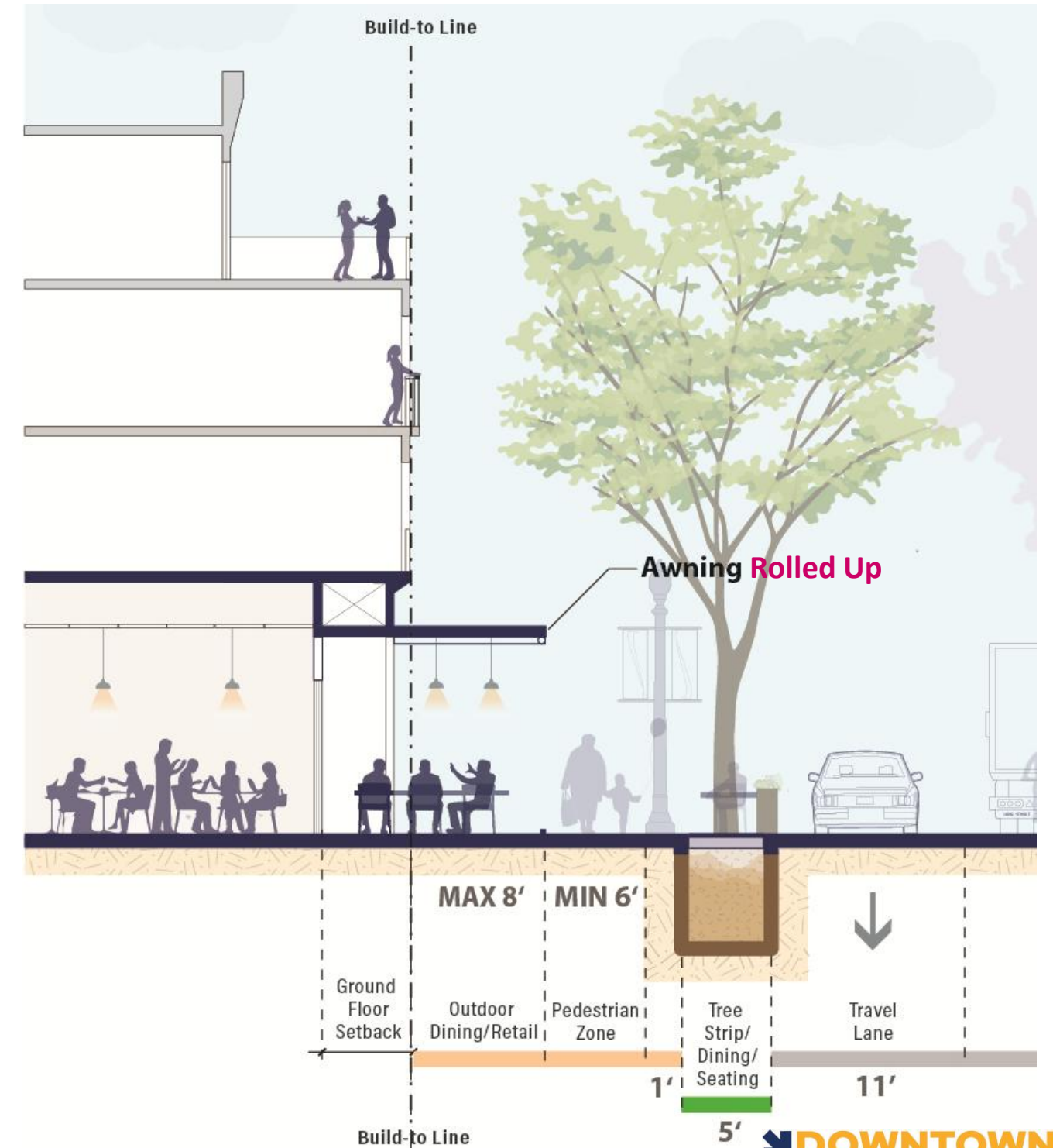
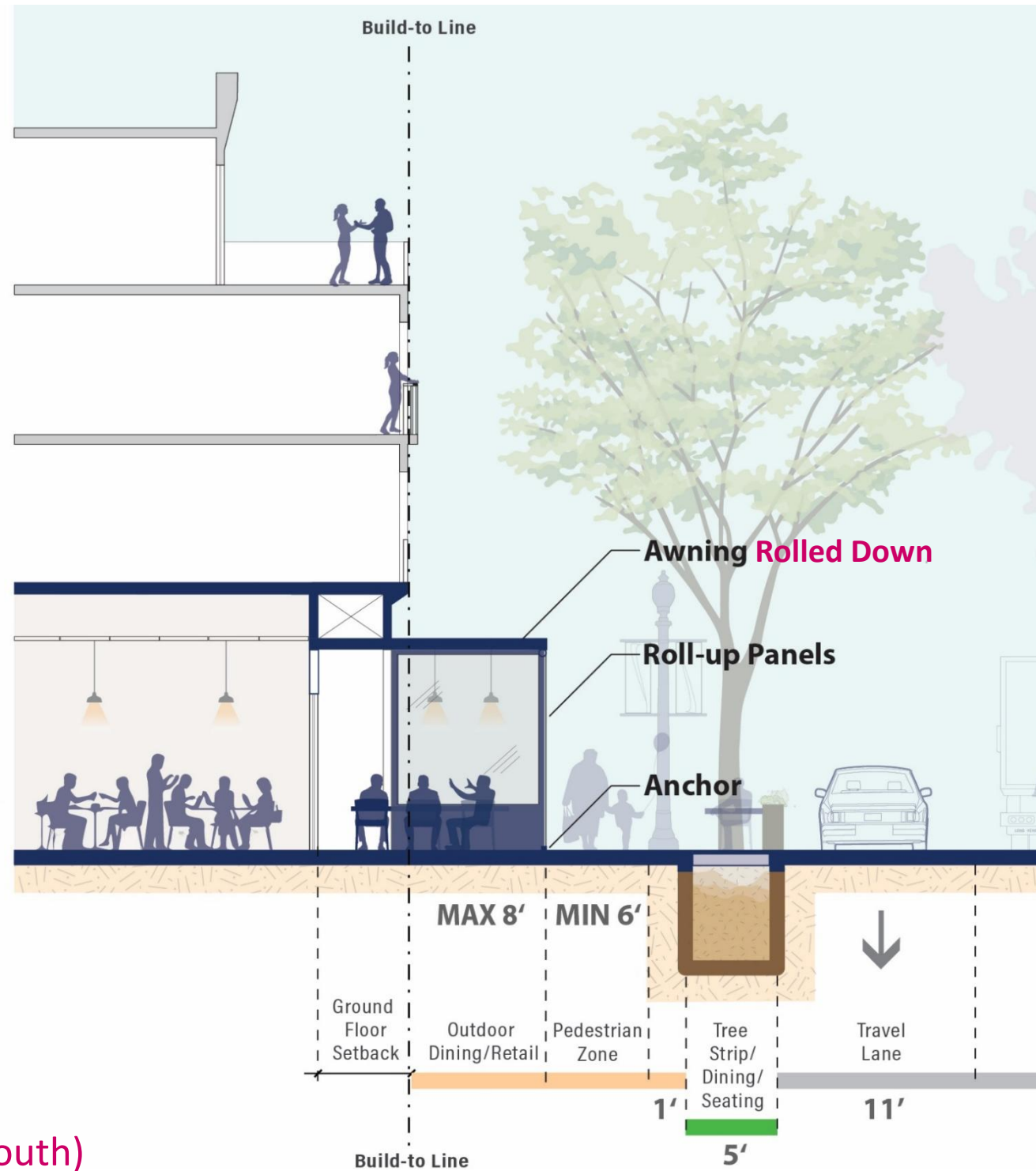
Stepback considered in Specific Plan
to maintain the 1:2 Ratio of the
Vertical to Horizontal Scale – per
Allan Jacob's Ratio for street scale



Laurel Street

(600 Block Looking South)

Land Use and Urban Design Framework – Awnings



Laurel Street
(600 Block Looking South)

Land Use and Urban Design Framework – Awnings (Examples)



Land Use and Urban Design Framework – Awnings (Examples)



Ground Floor and Public Space Interface

Policies + Standards

Table 4.1 included below highlights the land use regulations for the districts within the Downtown Specific Plan Area.

Use Classifications	MU-DC-100	MU-D-120	MU-SB-100	MU-SB-120	MU-N-40	MU-N-50	Additional Regulations
Commercial Uses							
Animal Care, Sales and Services							
Grooming and Pet Stores	-	P	P	P	<u>P(5)</u>	<u>P(5)</u>	
Veterinary Services	-	<u>C(5)</u>	<u>C(5)</u>	<u>C(5)</u>	<u>C(5)</u>	<u>C(5)</u>	
Artists' Studios	M	P	P	P	<u>P(5)</u>	<u>P(5)</u>	
Automobile/Vehicle Sales and Services							
Automobile Rentals	-	-	<u>C(6)</u>	<u>C(6)</u>	-	-	See Section 18.23.050 , Automobile/vehicle sales and services, and Section 18.23.260 , Formula business uses
Automobile/Vehicle Sales and Leasing	<u>P(6,7)</u>	<u>P(6,7)</u>	<u>P(6,7)</u>	<u>P(6,7)</u>	-	-	
Automobile/Vehicle Washing	-	-	<u>C(6)</u>	<u>C(6)</u>	-	-	
Service Station	-	-	<u>C(6)</u>	<u>C(6)</u>	-	-	
Banks and Financial Institutions	<u>P(8)</u>	P	P	P	<u>M(9)</u>	<u>M(9)</u>	See Section 18.23.260 , Formula business uses
Business Services	-	<u>P(9)</u>	<u>P(9)</u>	<u>P(9)</u>	<u>P(9)</u>	<u>P(9)</u>	
Commercial Entertainment and Recreation							

Not a use that will actively contribute to the Laurel street experience in Downtown Core.

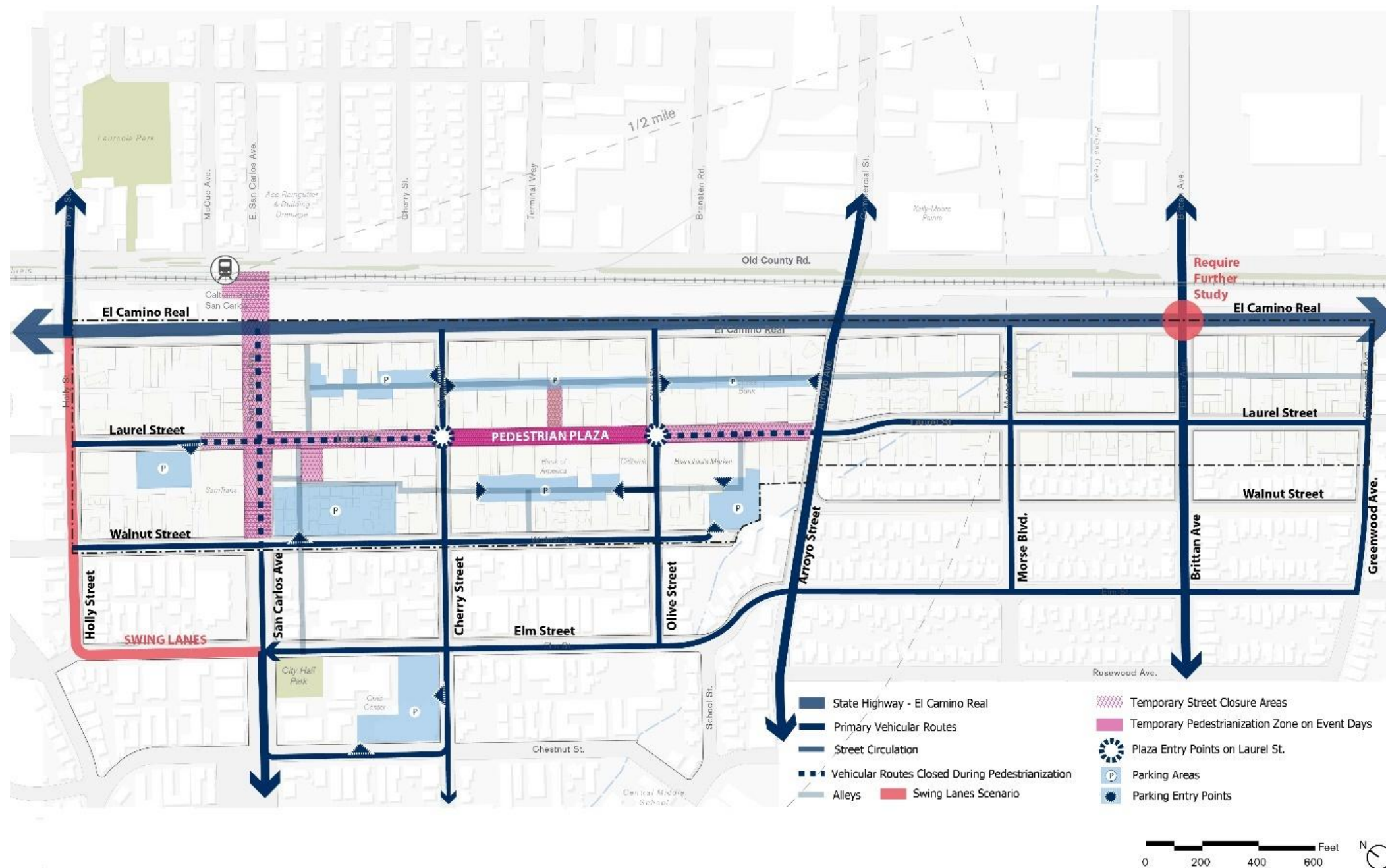
Consider not permitting or require conditional use permit.

Mobility and Transportation

Goal: The Downtown Specific Plan sets forth a comprehensive framework for a multimodal transportation network that prioritizes active transportation, safety, accessibility, and connectivity, while fostering a pedestrian-friendly, vibrant, and equitable downtown that serves the needs of all residents, workers, and visitors in alignment with the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan.

Mobility/Transportation Framework

Balanced Network



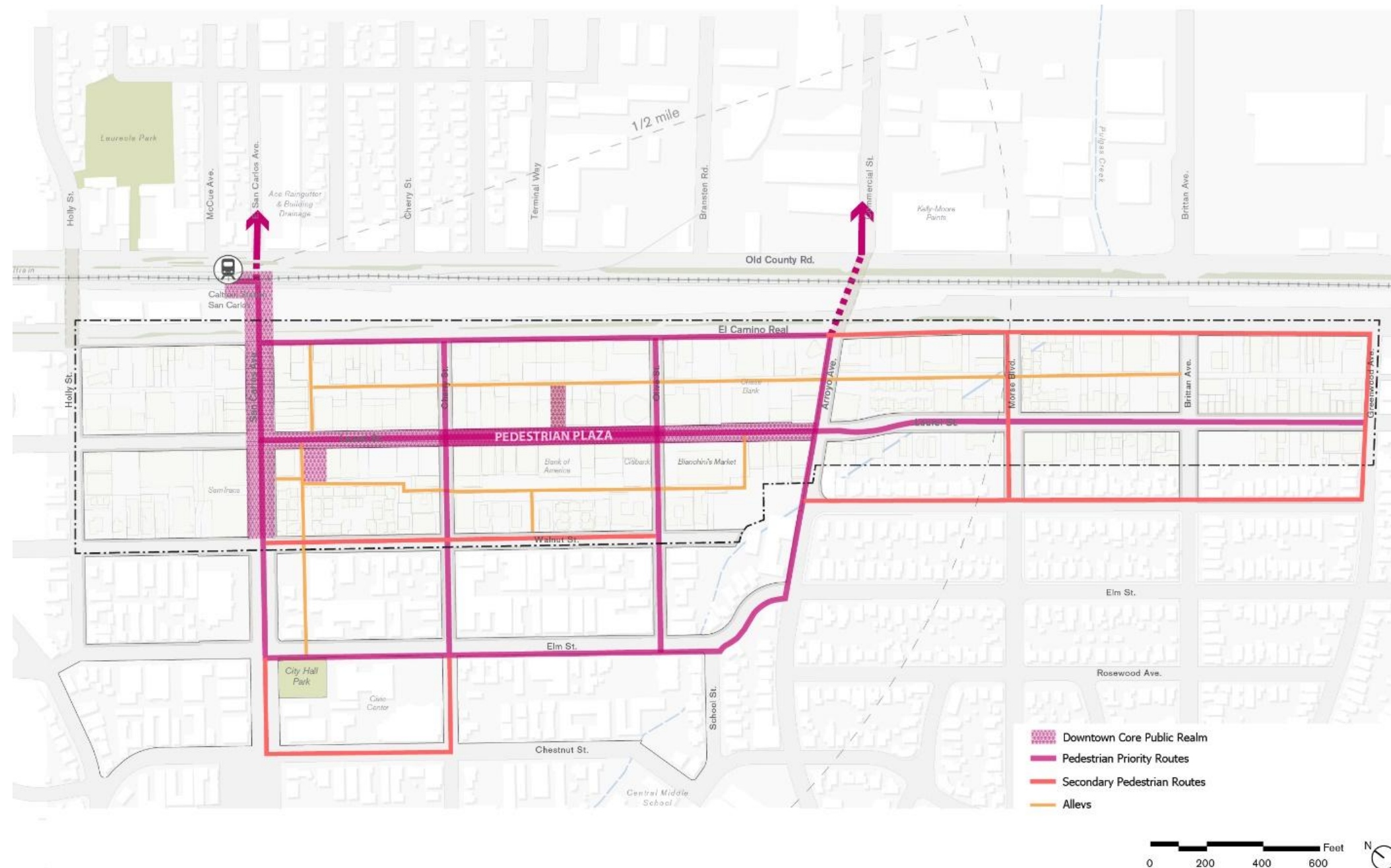
Policies + Standards

M14. Evaluate long-term vehicular traffic modifications, including Holly Street swing lanes, emerging transportation technologies, and congestion mitigation strategies to further support the goal and policies for a vibrant and safe pedestrian-oriented downtown.

M15. Collaborate with SamTrans, Caltrans, and the Grand Boulevard Initiative to plan and implement coordinated improvements along El Camino Real that enhance safety, mobility, and streetscape quality, consistent with the Downtown Streetscape Master Plan.

Mobility/Transportation Framework

Pedestrian Experience



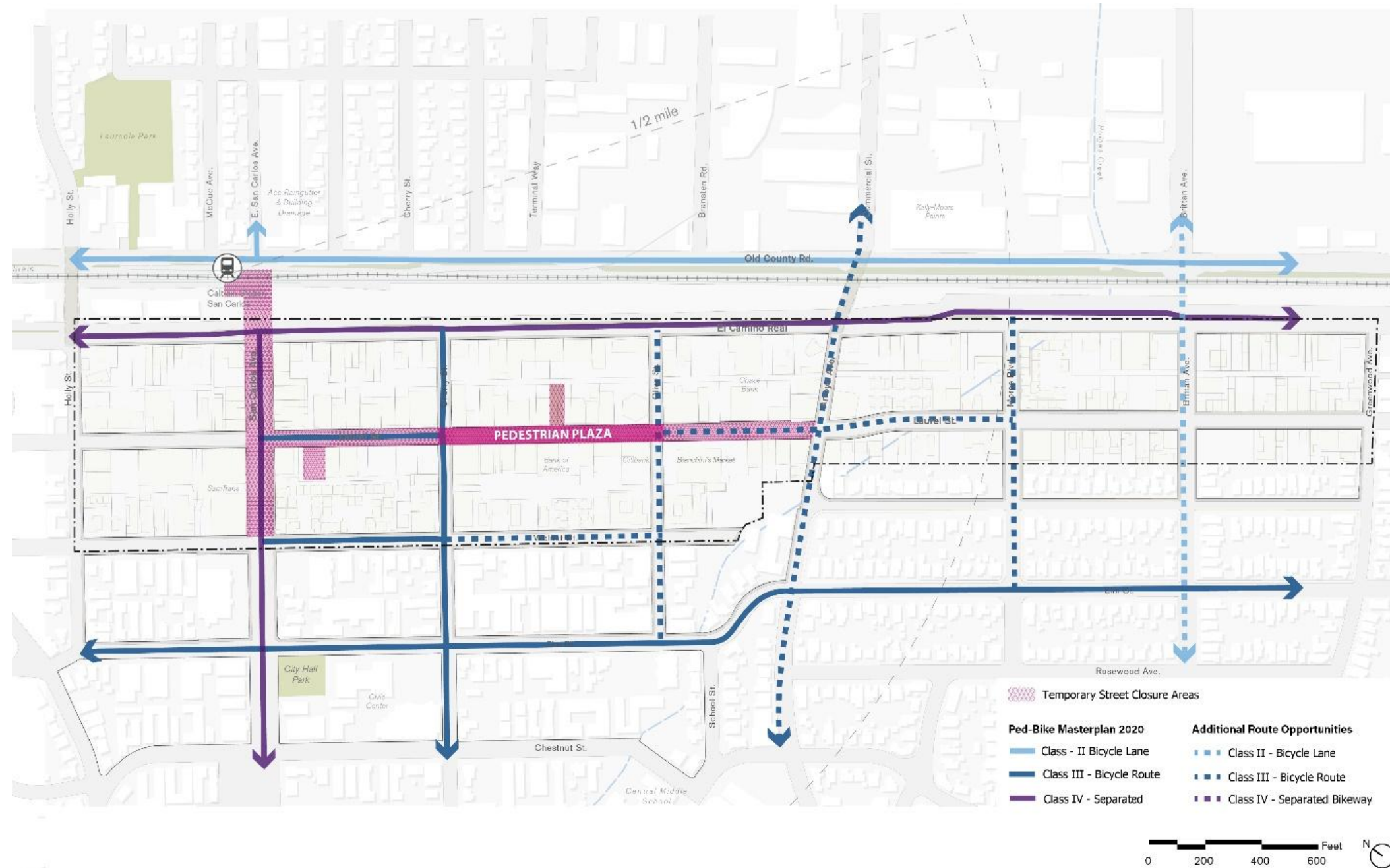
M1. Prioritize development of the 700 block of Laurel Street as a pedestrian-only plaza supporting vitality, vibrancy and equity for all users.

M2. Prioritize the pedestrian experience and corresponding street character for all streets within the downtown core: 1100 and 1200 San Carlos Avenue, 600 – 700 – 800 blocks of Laurel Street, and the 1100 and 1200 blocks of Cherry St., Olive St., and the 1100 and 1200 blocks of Arroyo Avenue.

M3. Prioritize pedestrian infrastructure by implementing wider sidewalks, safe and accessible crossings, and streetscape enhancements—particularly along key corridors such as San Carlos Avenue, El Camino Real, Arroyo Avenue, and Laurel Street.

Mobility/Transportation Framework

Biking Experience

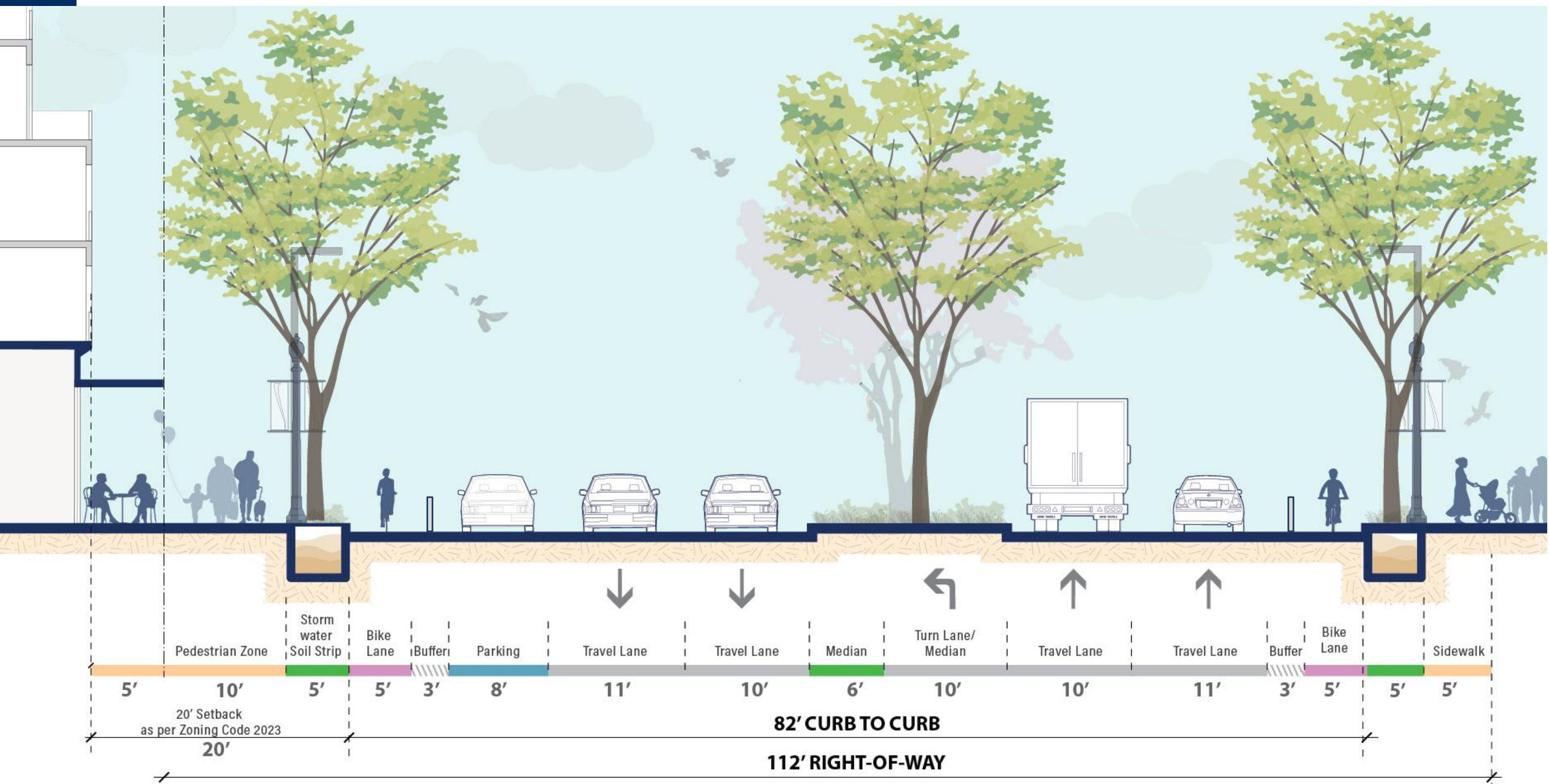


Policies + Standards

M4. Actively pursue public transit connectivity by improving first- and last-mile connections to Caltrain and bus services through implementation of active transportation infrastructure.

M6. Develop a bicycle hub on the 700 block entrance points that includes secure bicycle stand, and supportive amenities to encourage active transportation and support 700 block as wheel-free zone.

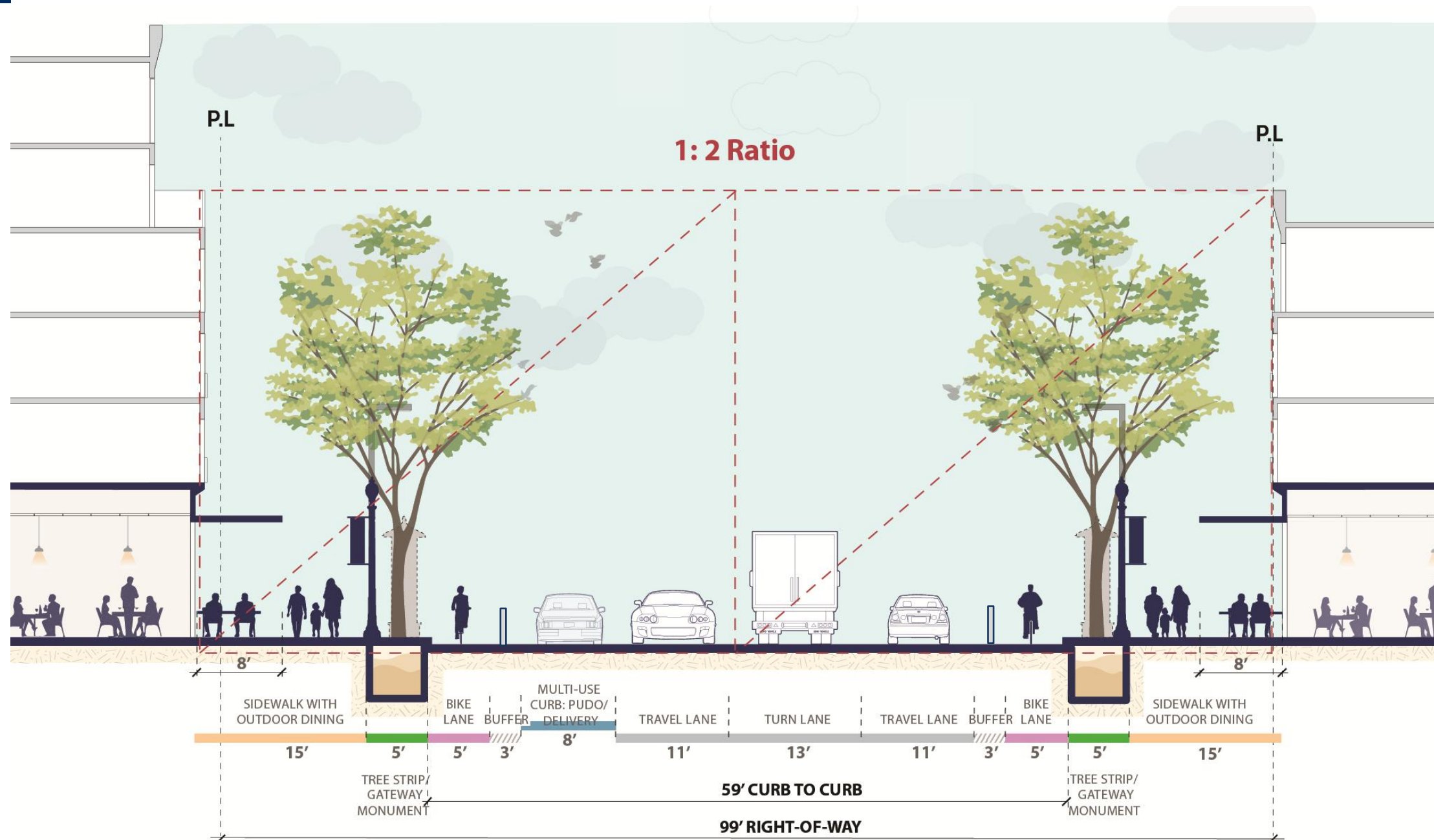
Mobility/Transportation Framework



El Camino Real
(Looking North)

M5. Promote safe and visible biking infrastructure by incorporating protected bike lanes with vertical buffers, green striping for high visibility, and ample bike parking along primary corridors including San Carlos Avenue, El Camino Real, Brittan Avenue, Arroyo Avenue, and Laurel Street.

Mobility/Transportation Framework

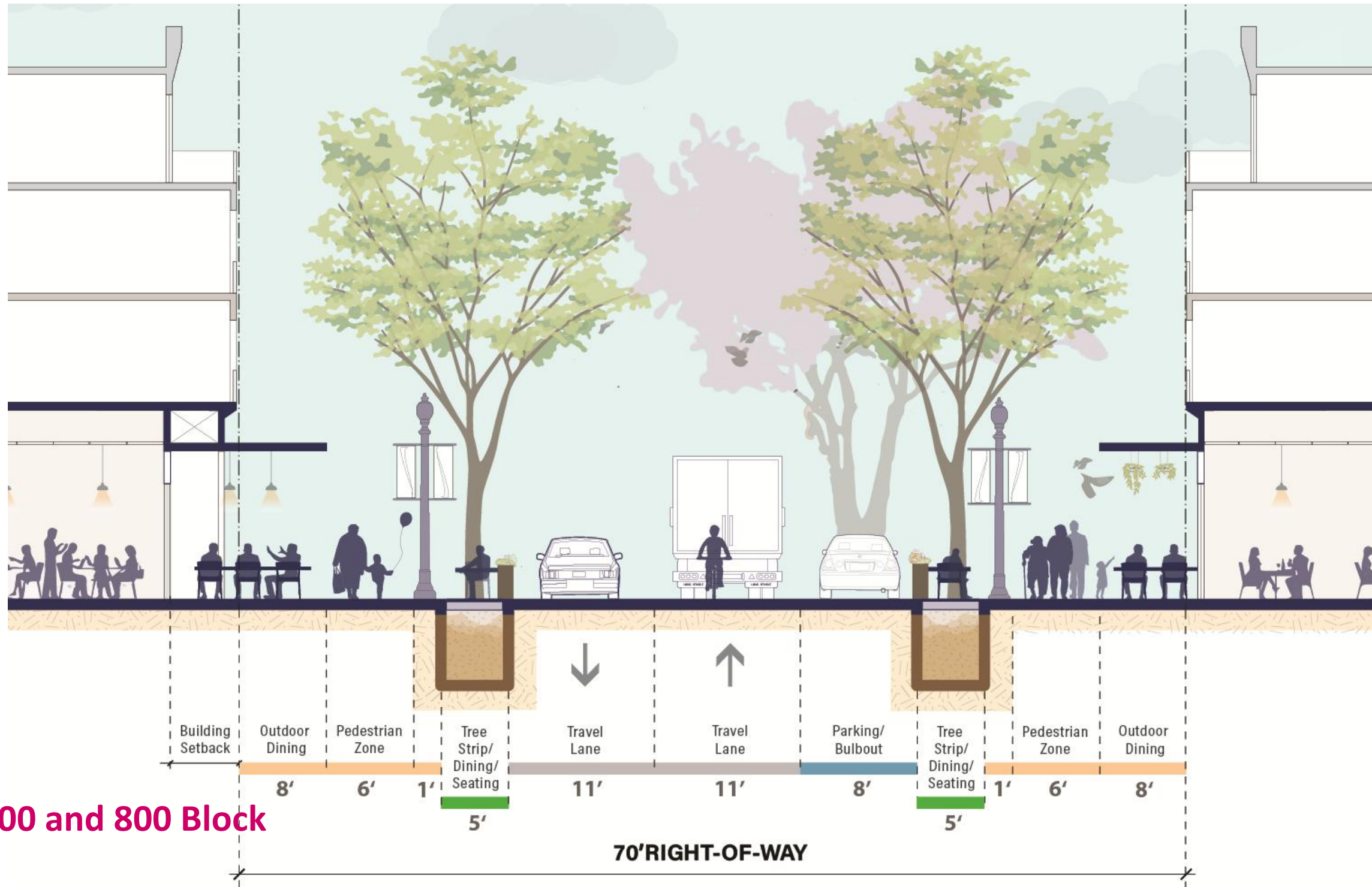


San Carlos Avenue-1100, 1200 Block
(Looking towards Caltrain Station)

M5. Promote safe and visible biking infrastructure by incorporating protected bike lanes with vertical buffers, green striping for high visibility, and ample bike parking along primary corridors including San Carlos Avenue, El Camino Real, Brittan Avenue, Arroyo Avenue, and Laurel Street.

- Future studies will be necessary to guide
- the network level changes
 - the broader transformation of San Carlos Avenue Westward beyond the 1100 and 1200 blocks.

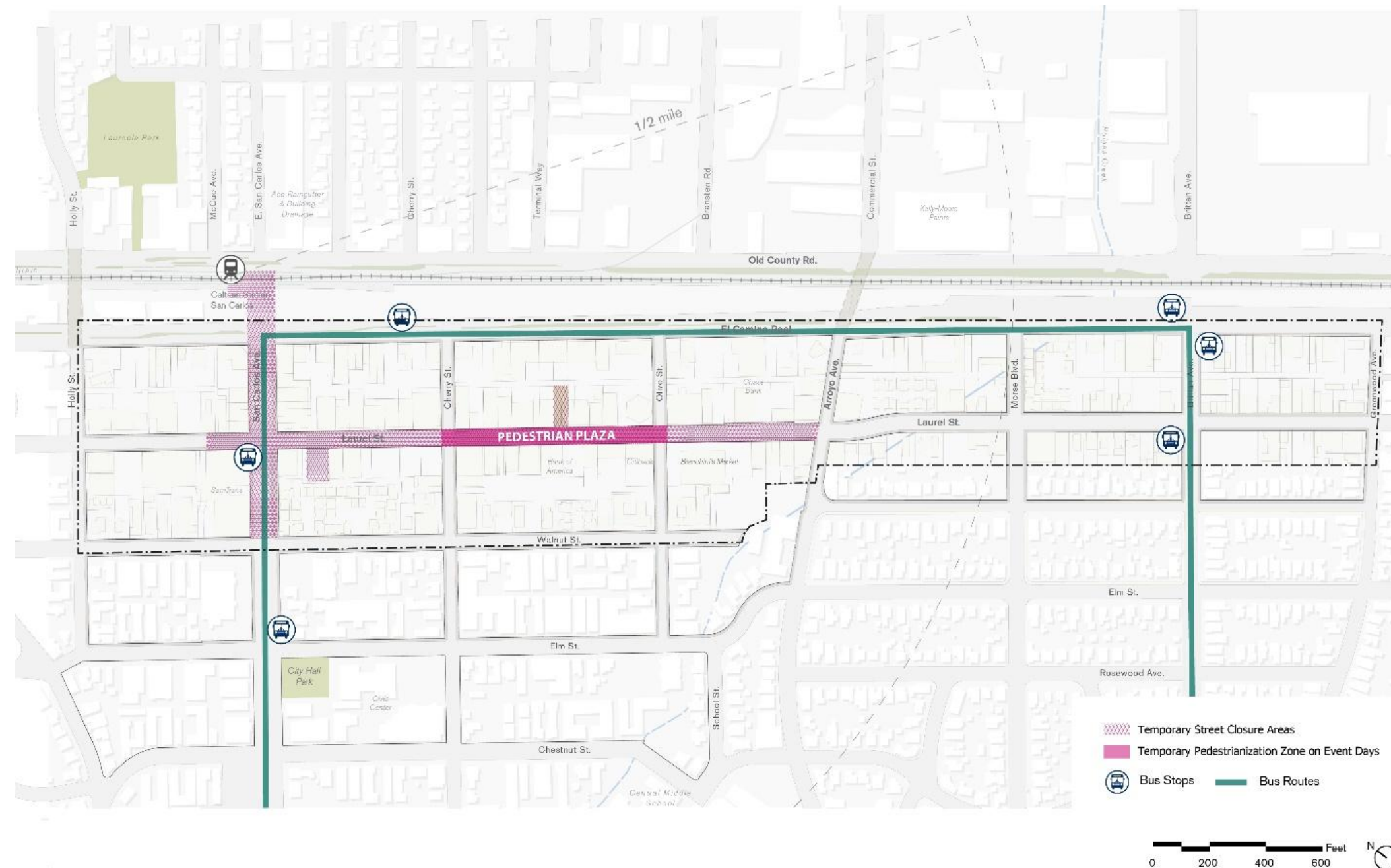
Mobility/Transportation Framework



Laurel Street 600 and 800 Block
(Looking South)

Mobility/Transportation Framework

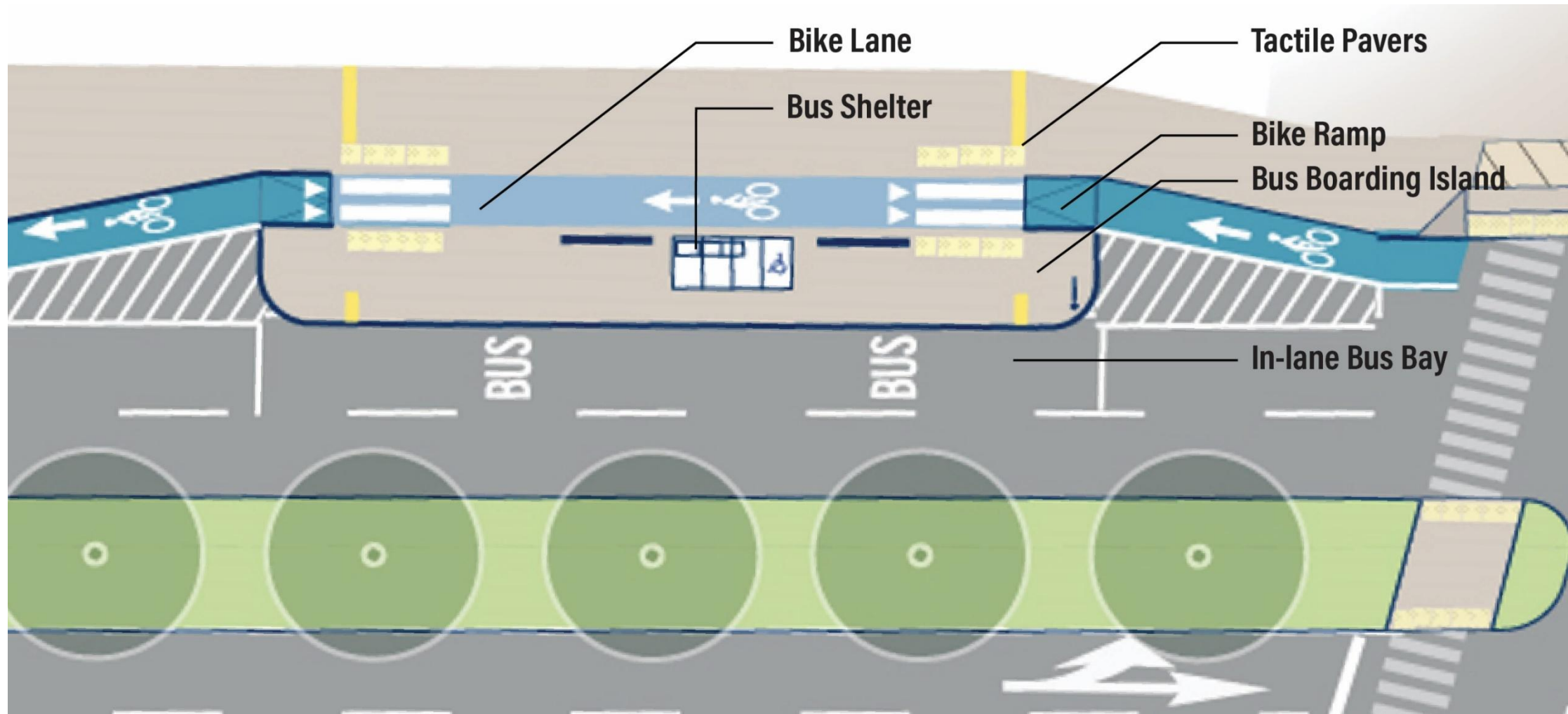
Transit Experience



Policies + Standards

M7. Design bus stops to safely interface with bike lanes by using features like boarding islands, curb extensions, and clear signage, as specified in the SamTrans Bus Stop Design Guidance, 2024.

Mobility/Transportation Framework



M7. Design bus stops to safely interface with bike lanes by using features like boarding islands, curb extensions, and clear signage, as specified in the SamTrans Bus Stop Design Guidance, 2024.

Transit Experience: Bus Boarding Island (Per SamTrans Bus Stop Design Guidance, 2024)

Public Realm

Goal: The Downtown Specific Plan creates high-quality, multi-functional public spaces and a well-connected street network that fosters social interaction, promotes health and well-being, and enhances downtown's vibrancy.

With an expanded tree canopy and sustainable landscaping, the downtown improves ecological resilience, air quality, and pedestrian comfort while addressing climate challenges such as urban heat island effects and stormwater management.

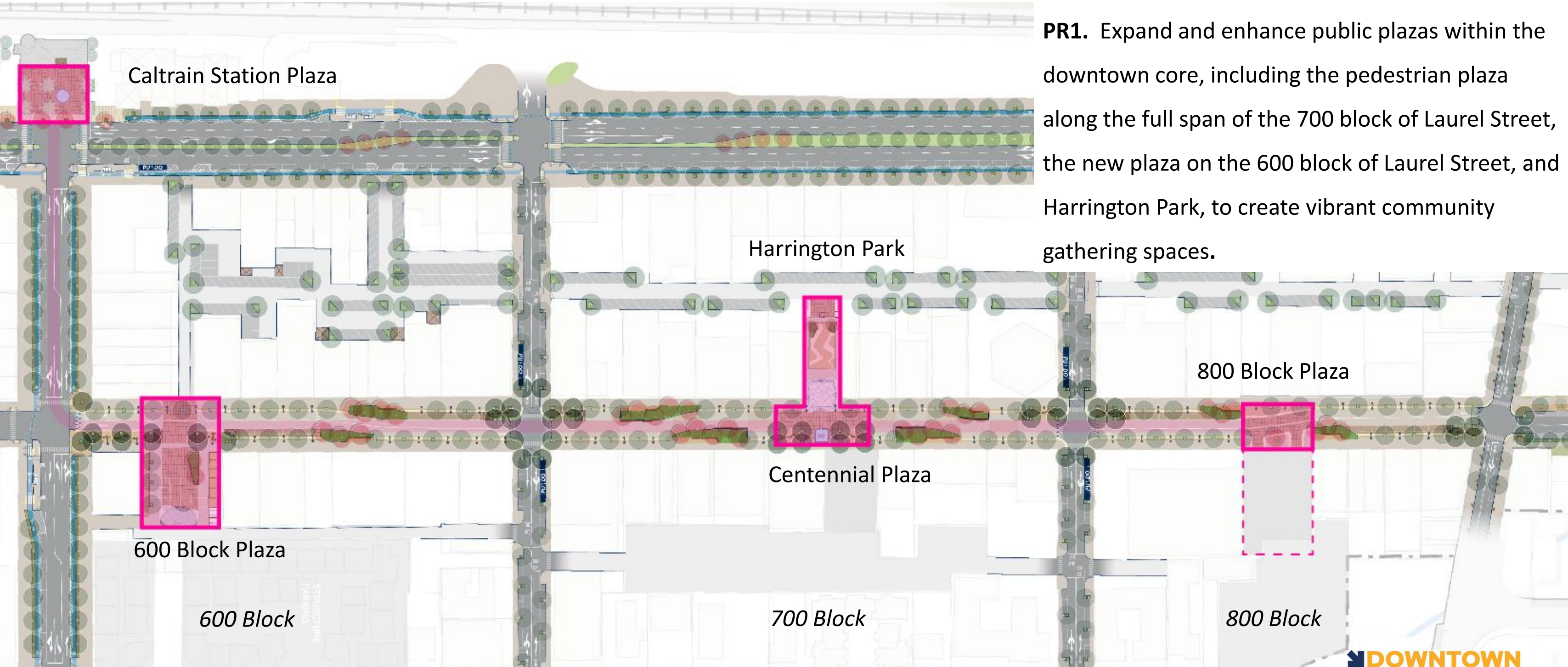
Public spaces are designed to be inclusive, ensuring equitable access for all users while contributing to a more sustainable and visually appealing downtown environment.

Public Realm Framework

Policies + Standards

Plazas/Open Space/ Parks

PR1. Expand and enhance public plazas within the downtown core, including the pedestrian plaza along the full span of the 700 block of Laurel Street, the new plaza on the 600 block of Laurel Street, and Harrington Park, to create vibrant community gathering spaces.



Public Realm Framework

600 Block Plaza - Programming

PR1. Expand and enhance public plazas within the downtown core, including the pedestrian plaza along the full span of the 700 block of Laurel Street, the new plaza on the 600 block of Laurel Street, and Harrington Park, to create vibrant community gathering spaces.

Standards:

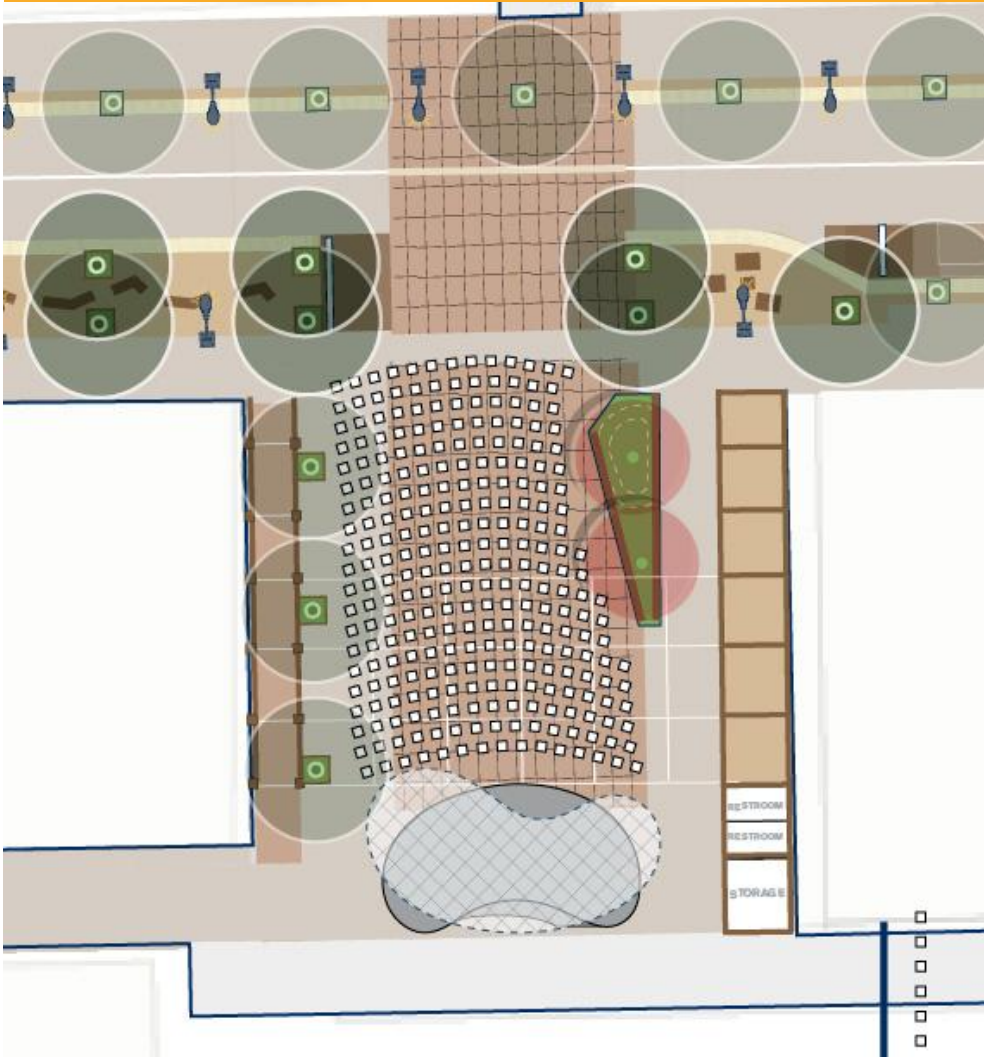
- For the 600 Block, the space currently occupied by overflow public parking will be redeveloped as a **multi-use public plaza**.
- This plaza will be **flexible** in its programmed uses and will have a performance pavilion and stage at the west end, a pop-up food vendor space along its southern edge and a large open space to accommodate a variety of **activities and seasonal programs**.

PR7. Provide spaces for pop-ups to encourage small local business start-ups and to provide affordable food and beverage options for the community. Spaces will include electrical outlets so that gas-powered generators can be prohibited. The City will have mechanisms for reviewing and approving pop-up businesses considering location, business type and design quality.

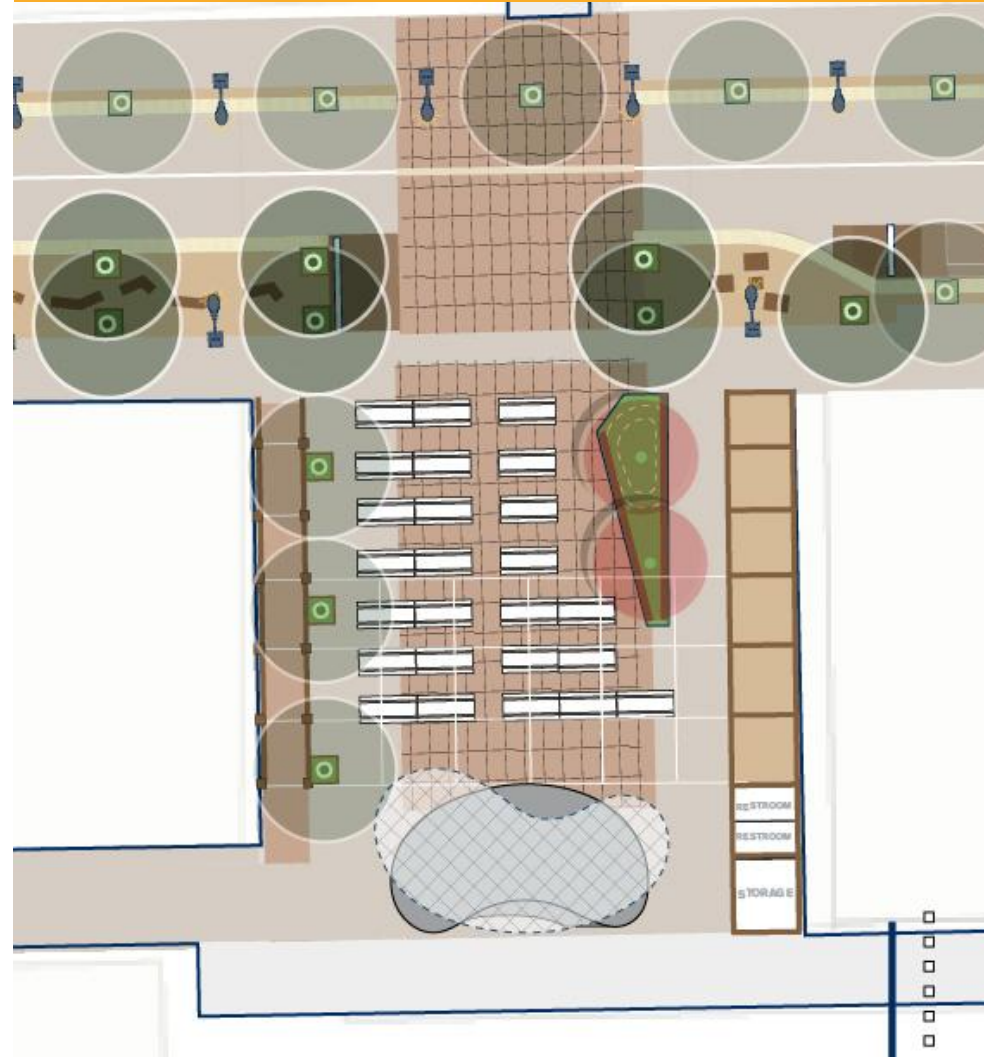
Public Realm Framework

600 Block Plaza - Programming

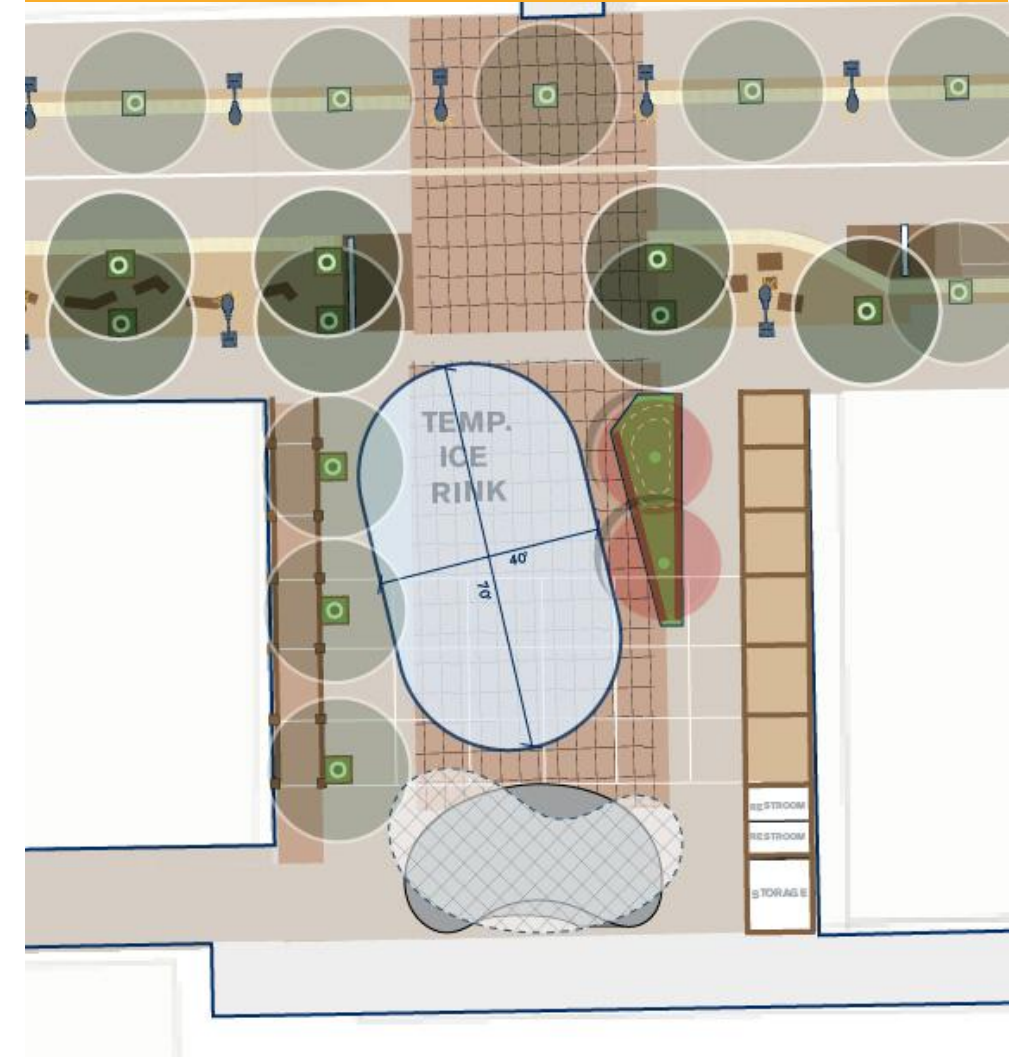
CONCERT SCENARIO



BEER GARDEN SCENARIO

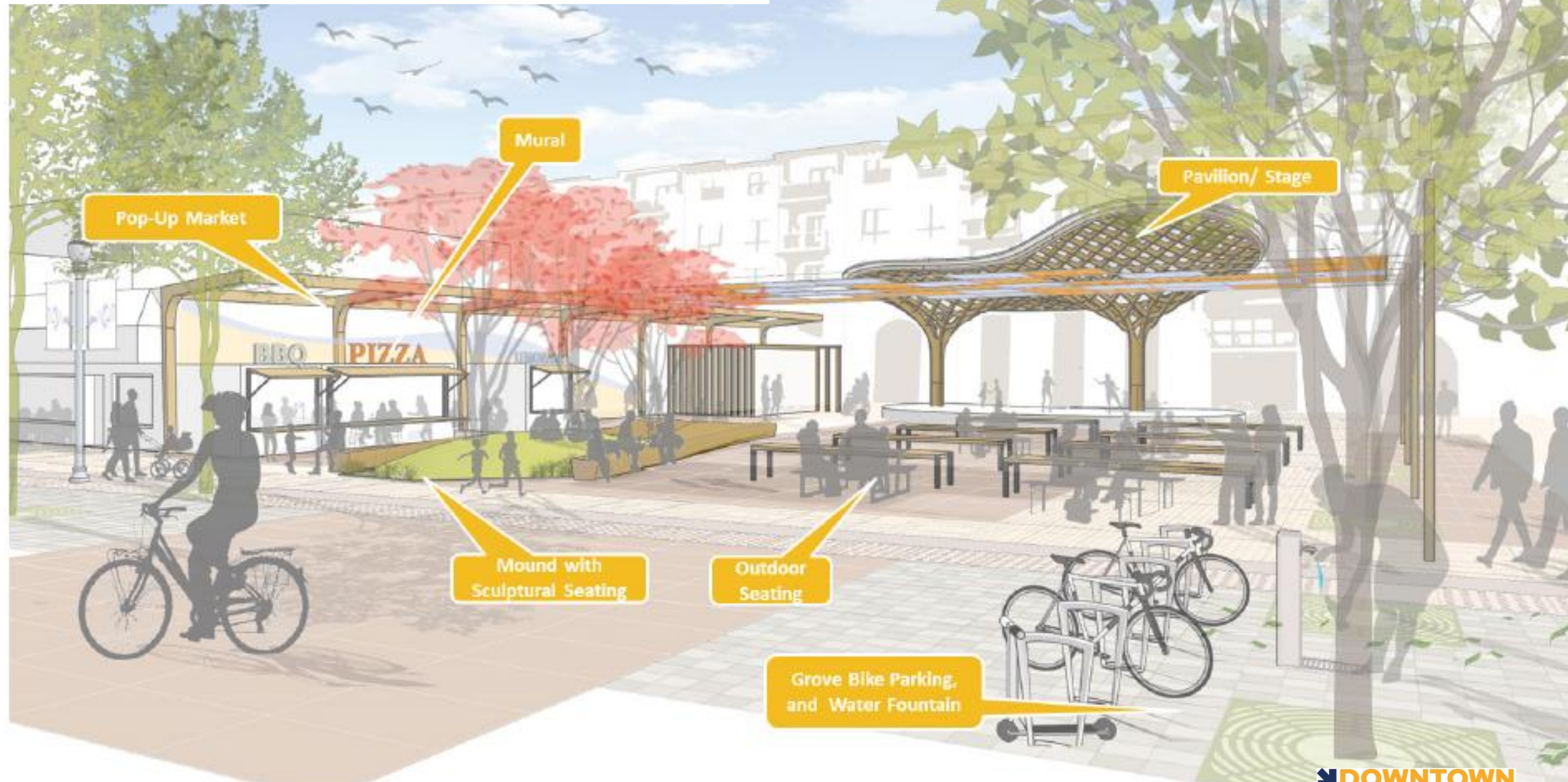


WINTER (ICE RINK) SCENARIO



Public Realm Framework

600 Block Plaza – Beer Garden Scenario



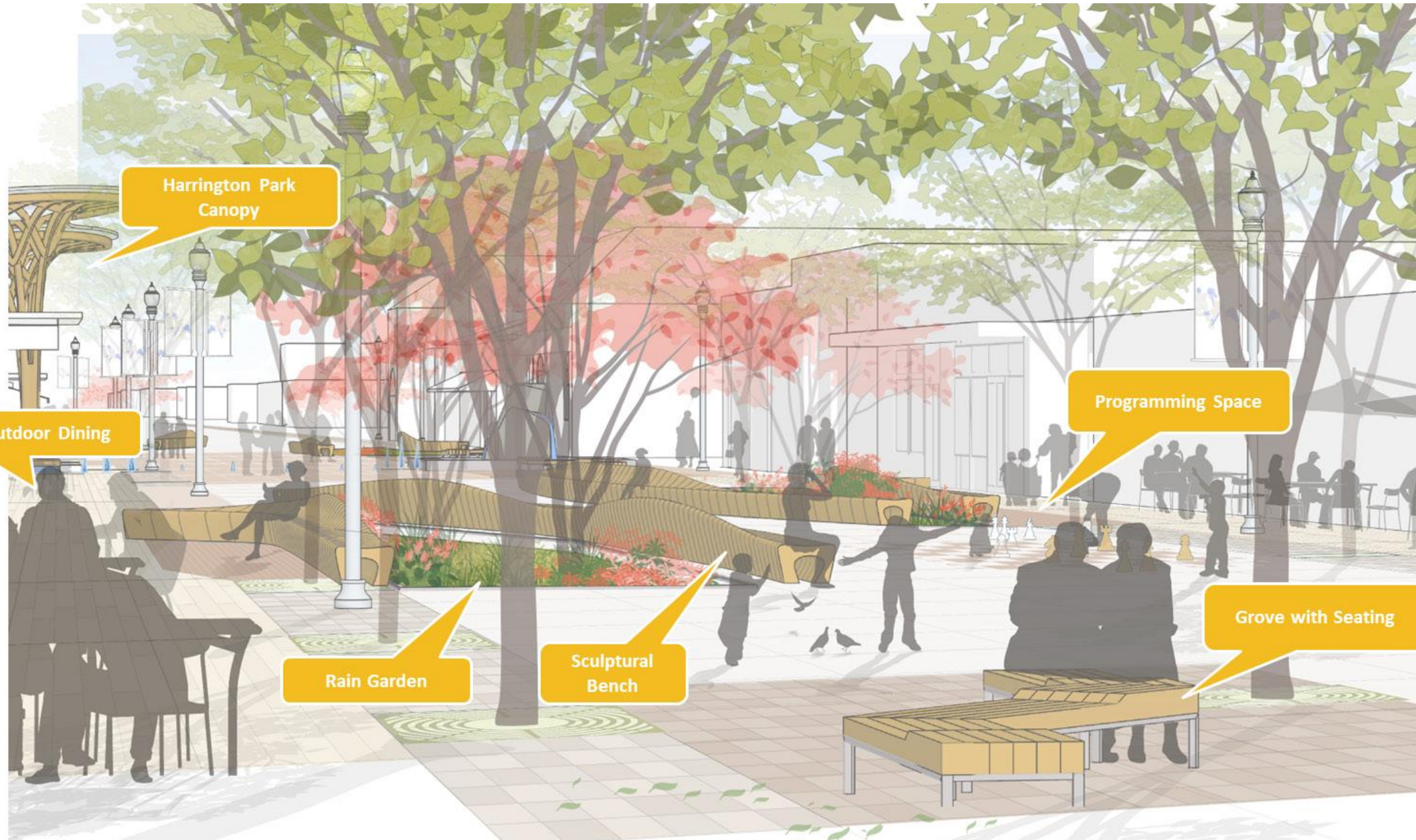
Public Realm Framework

600 Block Plaza – Concert Scenario



Public Realm Framework

700 Block Plaza

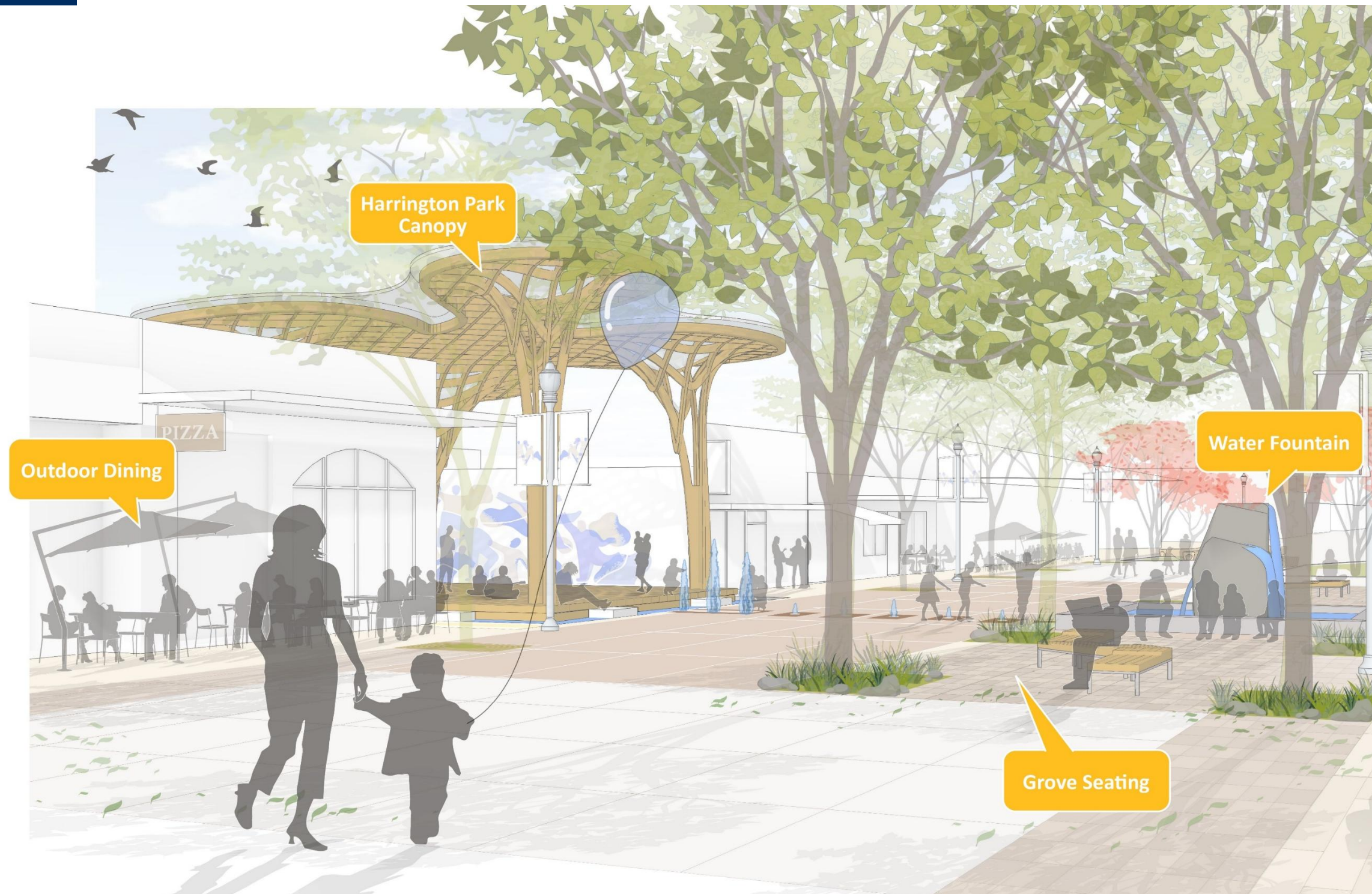


STANDARDS:

- For the 700 Block, the entire Laurel Street right-of-way will be redeveloped as a curbless, linear public plaza space which will accommodate a variety of activities including a wide pedestrian promenade, space for outdoor dining and retail displays, raingarden planting areas featuring groves of trees and additional space for special programming and public art.

Public Realm Framework

700 Block Plaza



STANDARDS:

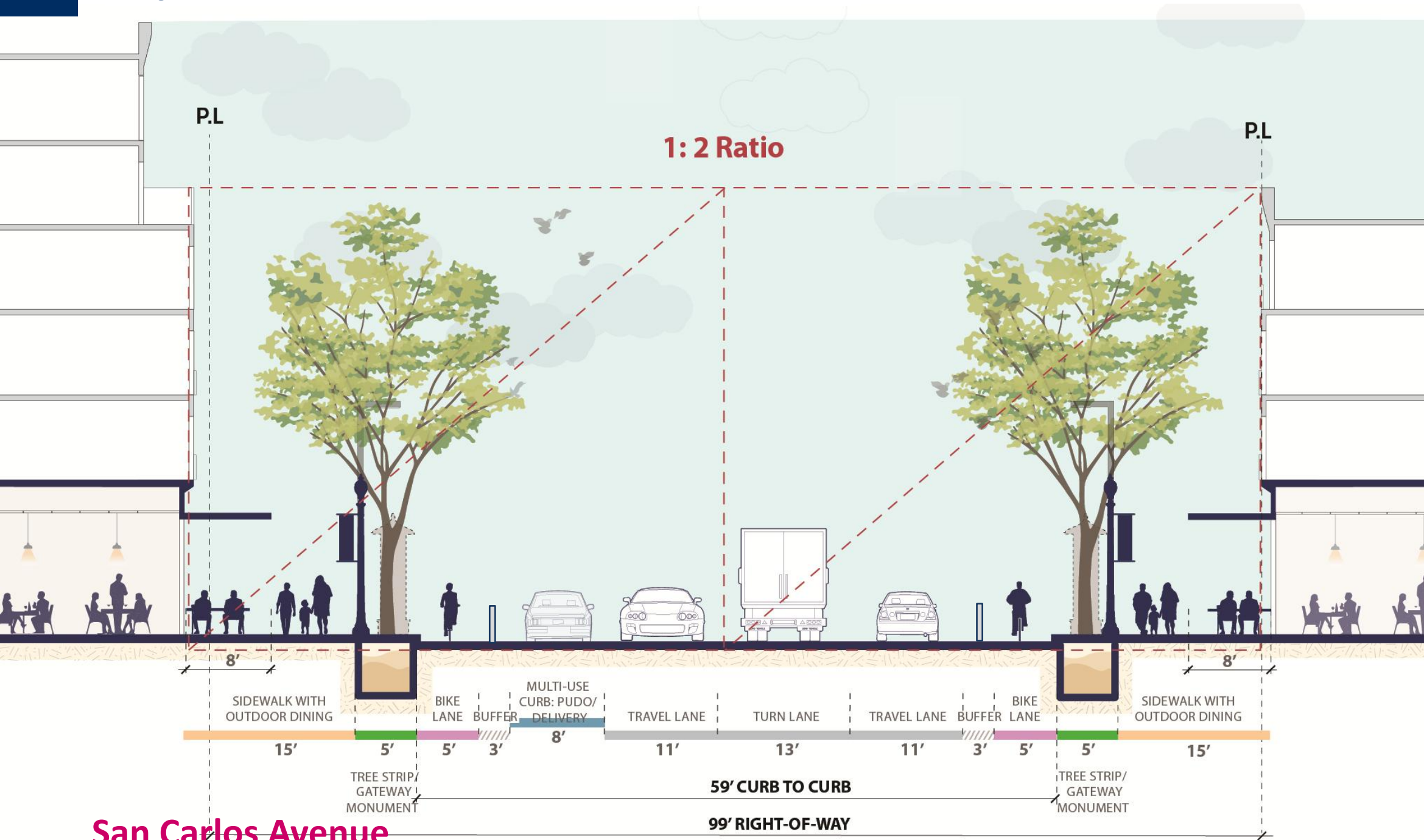
- In addition, the 700 Block will have a central plaza space with a performance pavilion and stage and a water feature. Extending eastward from this central plaza space will be a redeveloped Harrington Park featuring a multi-purpose plaza space, public restrooms, seating and a raingarden with a grove of trees. The donor bricks in the current Harrington Park will be retained and incorporated into the new plaza.

Public Realm Framework

Expanded Sidewalks

Policies + Standards

PR3. Widen sidewalks in downtown core- 600, 700 and 800 block of Laurel Street and 1100 and 1200 blocks of San Carlos Avenue to accommodate comfortable space for outdoor dining and retail displays and pedestrian circulation.



San Carlos Avenue

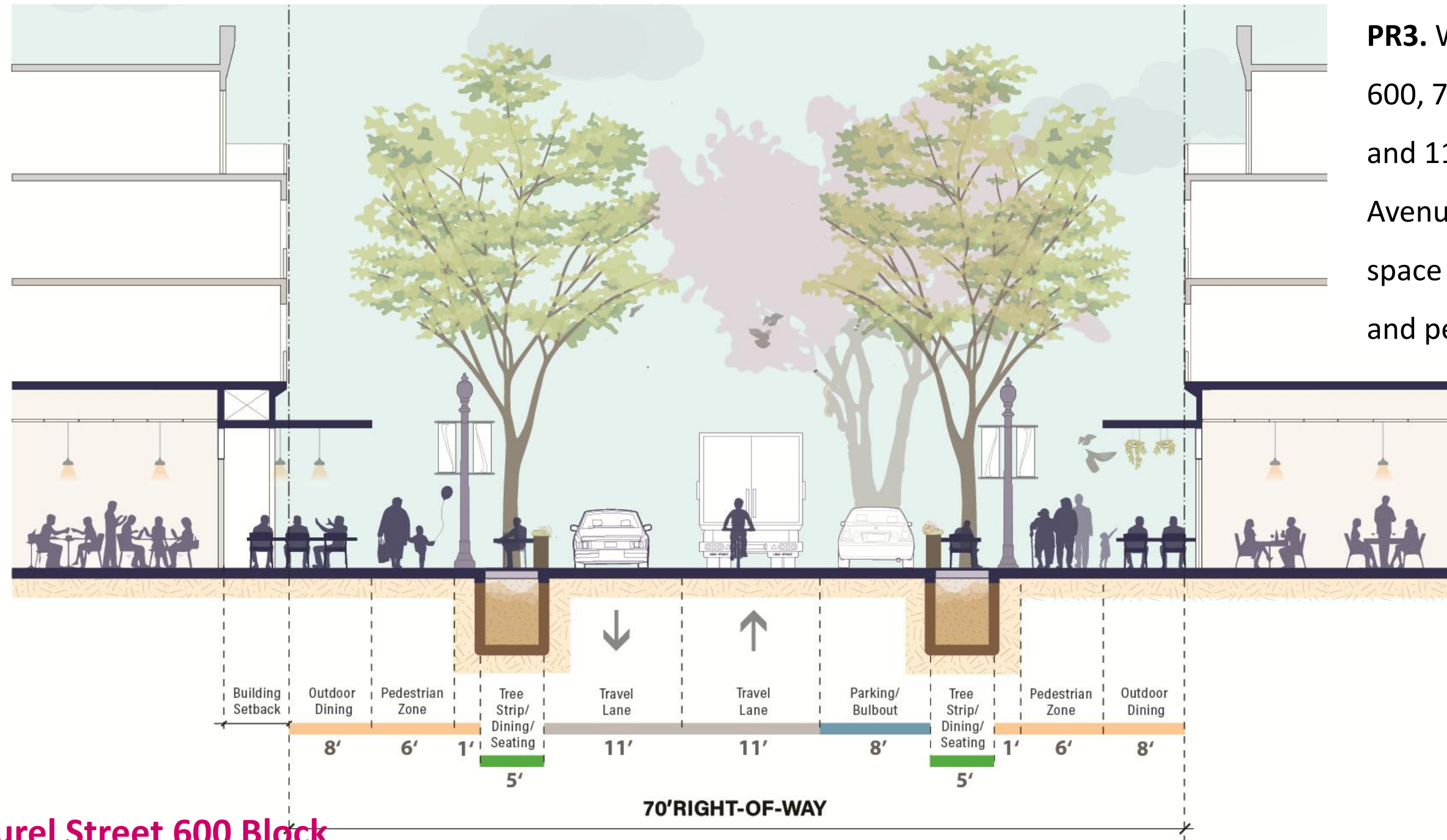
(Looking towards Caltrain Station)

Public Realm Framework

Expanded Sidewalks

Policies + Standards

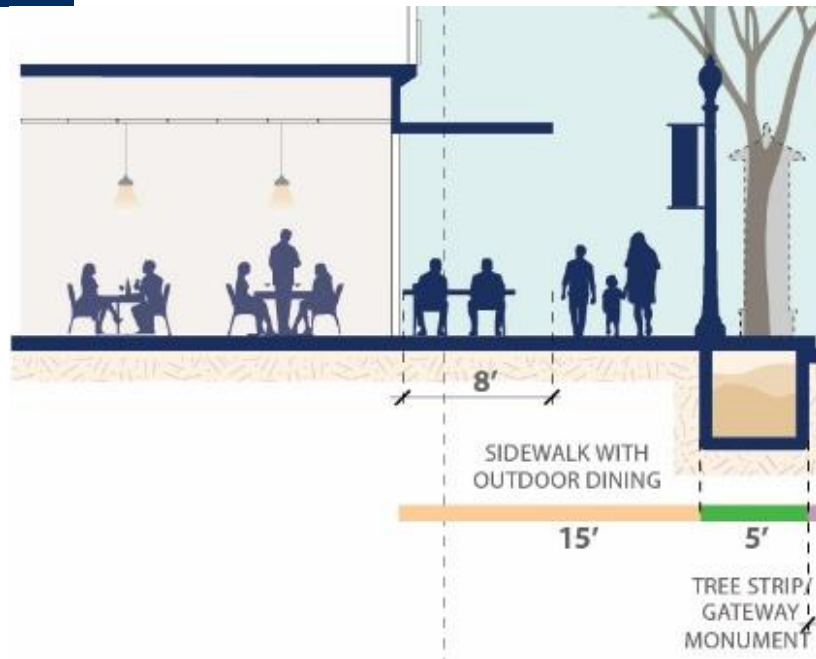
PR3. Widen sidewalks in downtown core- 600, 700 and 800 block of Laurel Street and 1100 and 1200 blocks of San Carlos Avenue to accommodate comfortable space for outdoor dining and retail displays and pedestrian circulation.



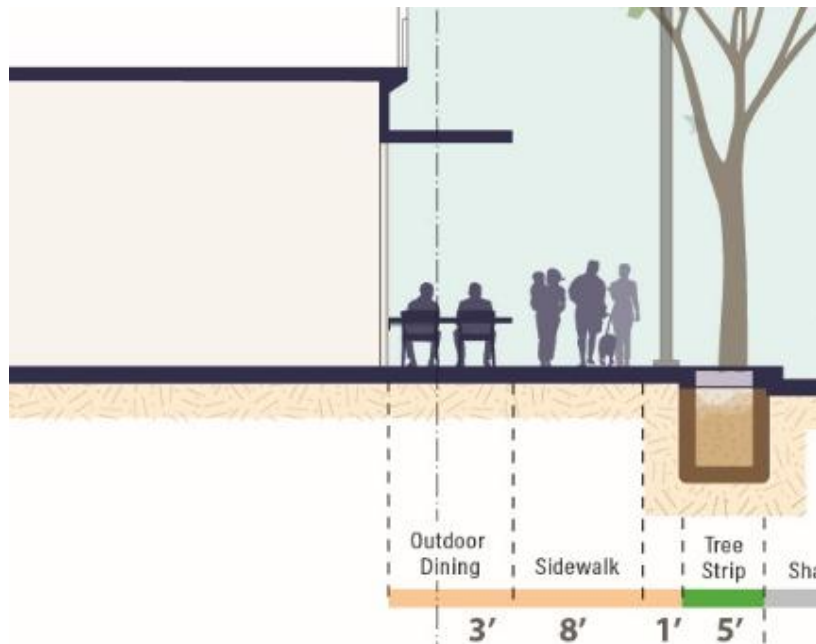
Laurel Street 600 Block
(Looking South)

Public Realm Framework

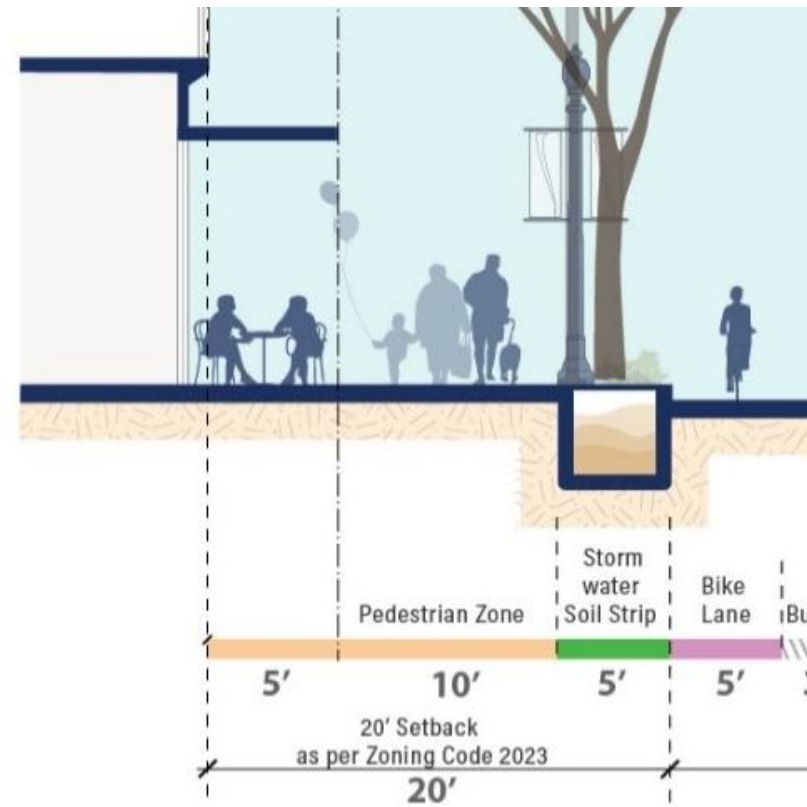
Outdoor Dining and Retail



San Carlos Ave



Arroyo Avenue



E I Camino Real

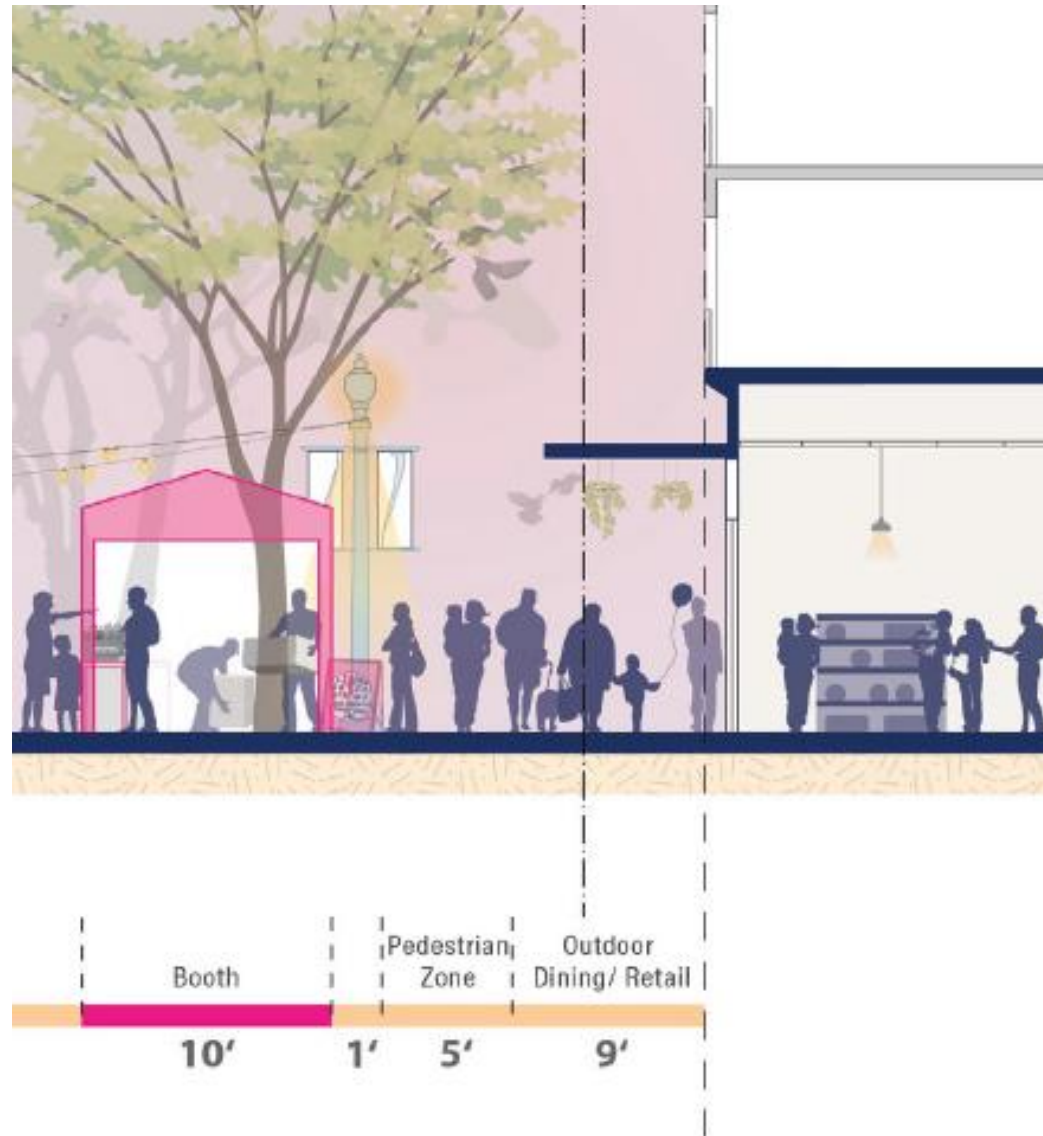
PR5. Establish high-quality design standards for outdoor dining and retail displays to ensure they are safe, attractive, and contribute to a vibrant and cohesive public realm..

STANDARDS:

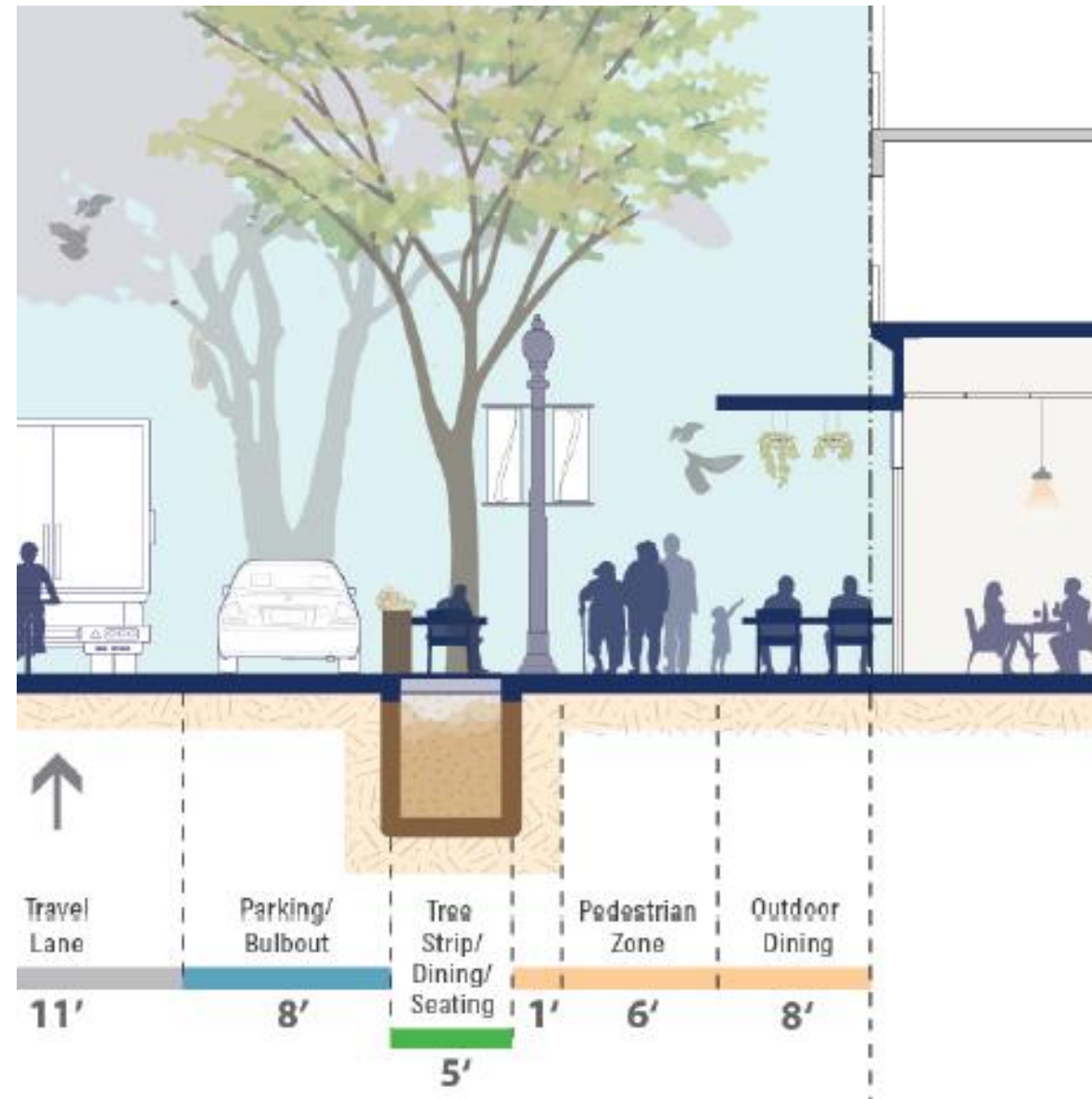
- The primary focus of sidewalk widening to accommodate outdoor dining and retail display space is in the downtown core area and in particular on the 1100 and 1200 Blocks of San Carlos Avenue and on the 600, 700 and 800 Blocks of Laurel Street.
- Although some widening is also proposed on the north frontage of Arroyo where some outdoor dining currently occurs and on the west frontage of El Camino Real where active ground floor uses are anticipated0.
- For the 700 Block of Laurel, additional width can be provided for dining as well as spill over space in the promenade itself.

Public Realm Framework

Outdoor Dining and Retail



Laurel Street 700 Block
(Looking North)



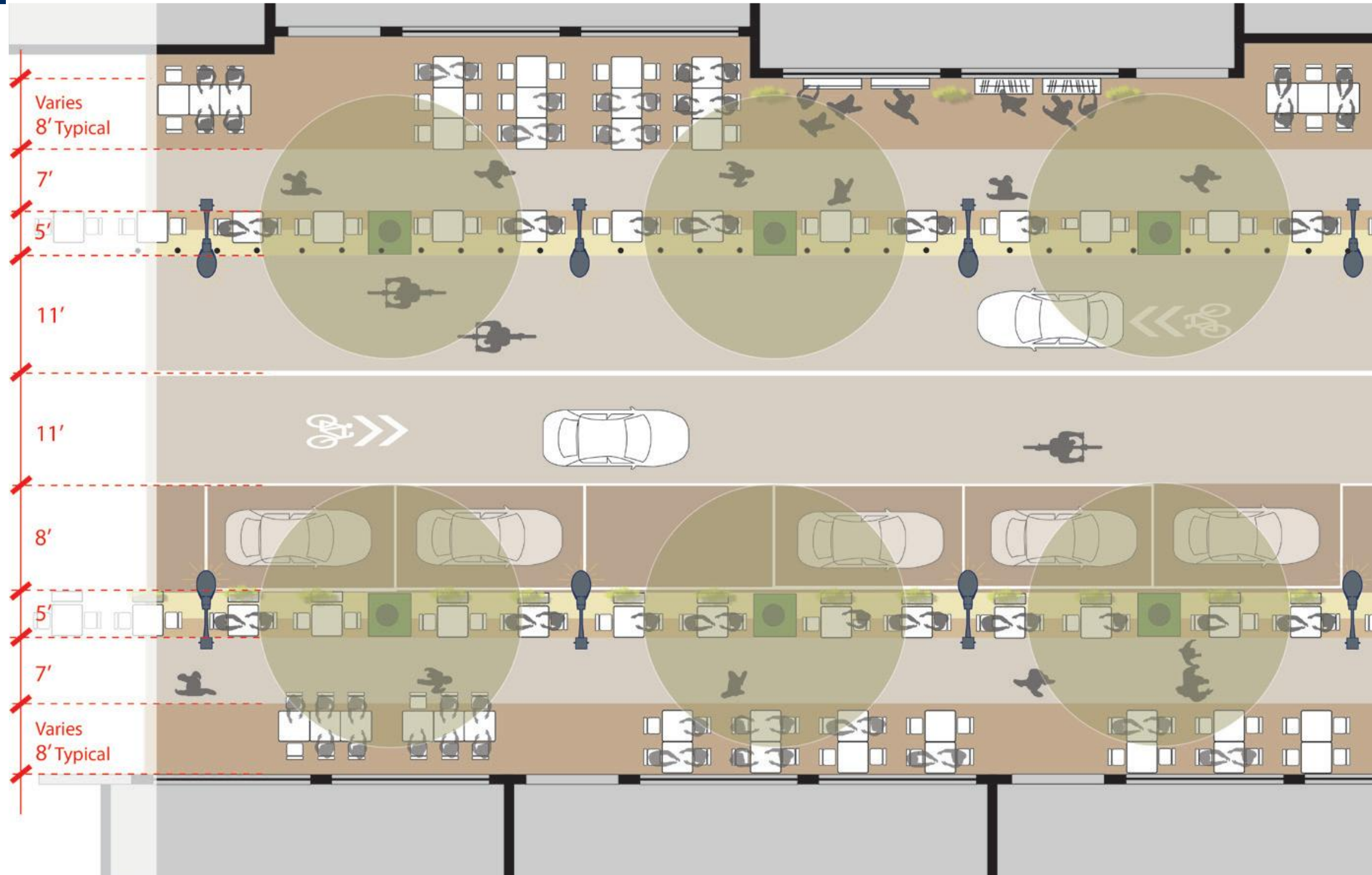
Laurel Street 600 and 800 Block
(Looking North)

STANDARDS:

- The space allocations for the 600 and 800 Blocks of Laurel have been carefully designed to accommodate ample outdoor dining and retail display space and also a “market day” condition which accommodates vendor tents, patron circulation and emergency access.

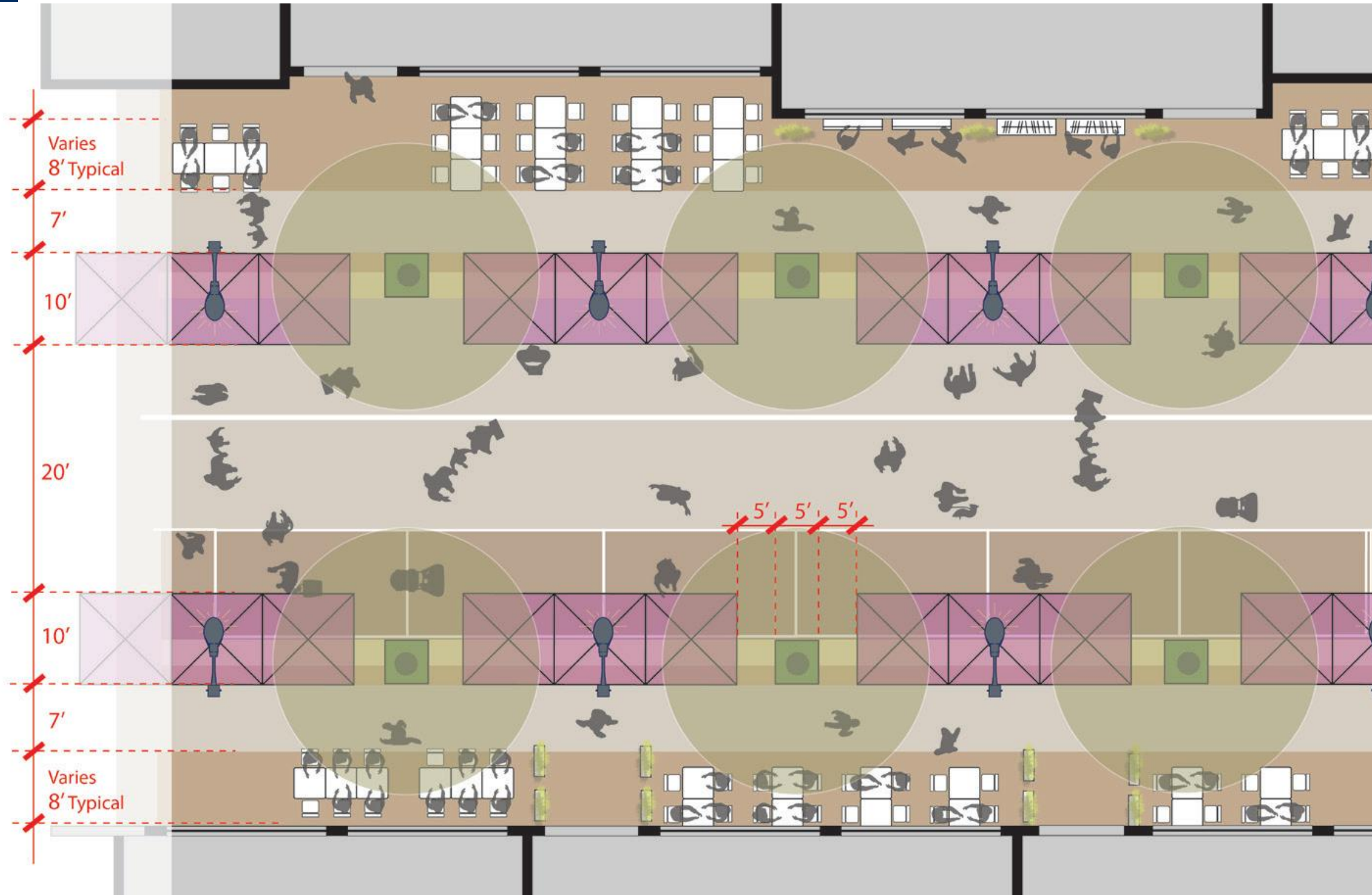
Public Realm Framework

Outdoor Dining and Retail



Public Realm Framework

Outdoor Dining and Retail – Market/ Event Days

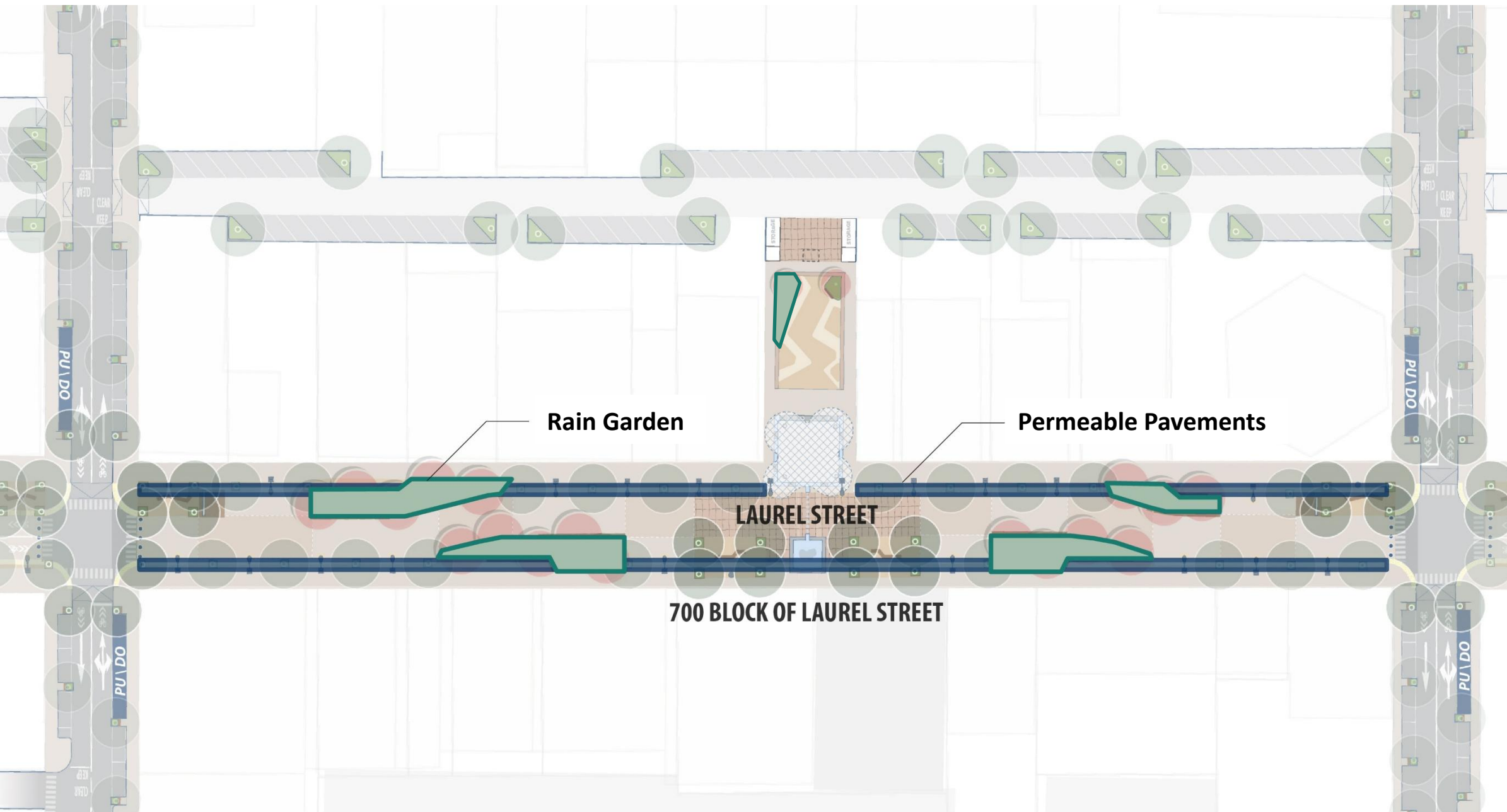


Sustainability and Resiliency

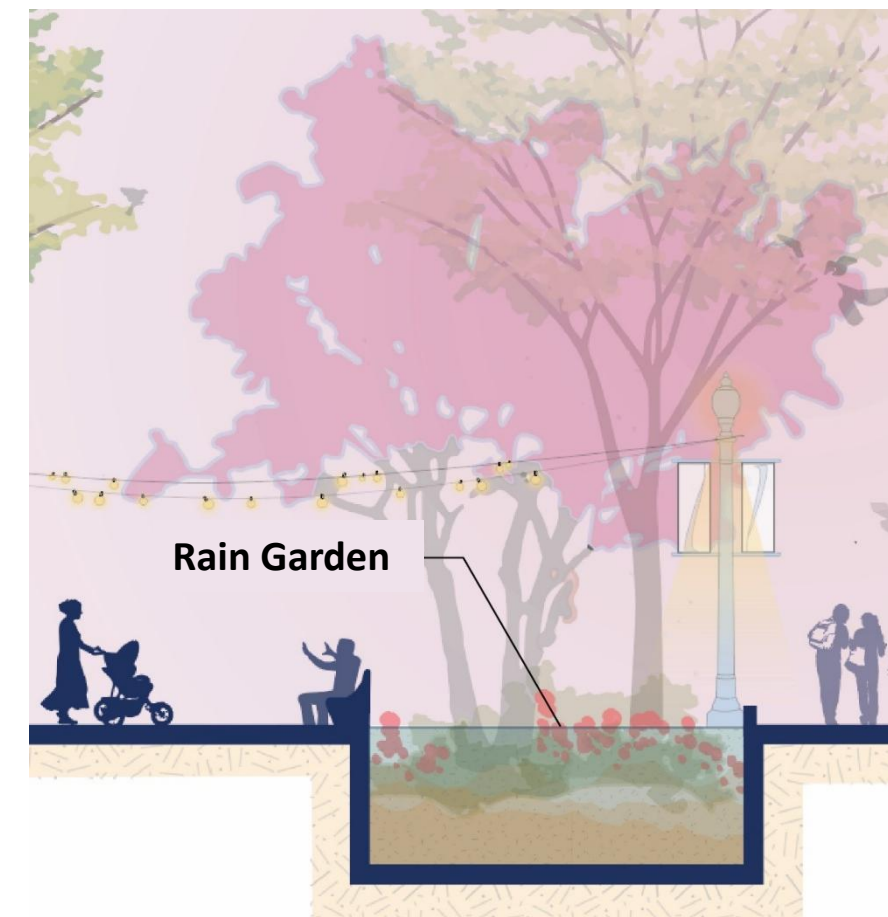
Goal: The Downtown Specific Plan aims to promote environmentally sustainable development and infrastructure that enhances downtown's long-term resilience to climate change and natural hazards, while fostering a vibrant and adaptable urban environment. This includes integrating resilient infrastructure and climate-responsive strategies to mitigate the impact of environmental challenges and ensure the sustainability of the downtown area for future generations

Sustainability & Resiliency Framework

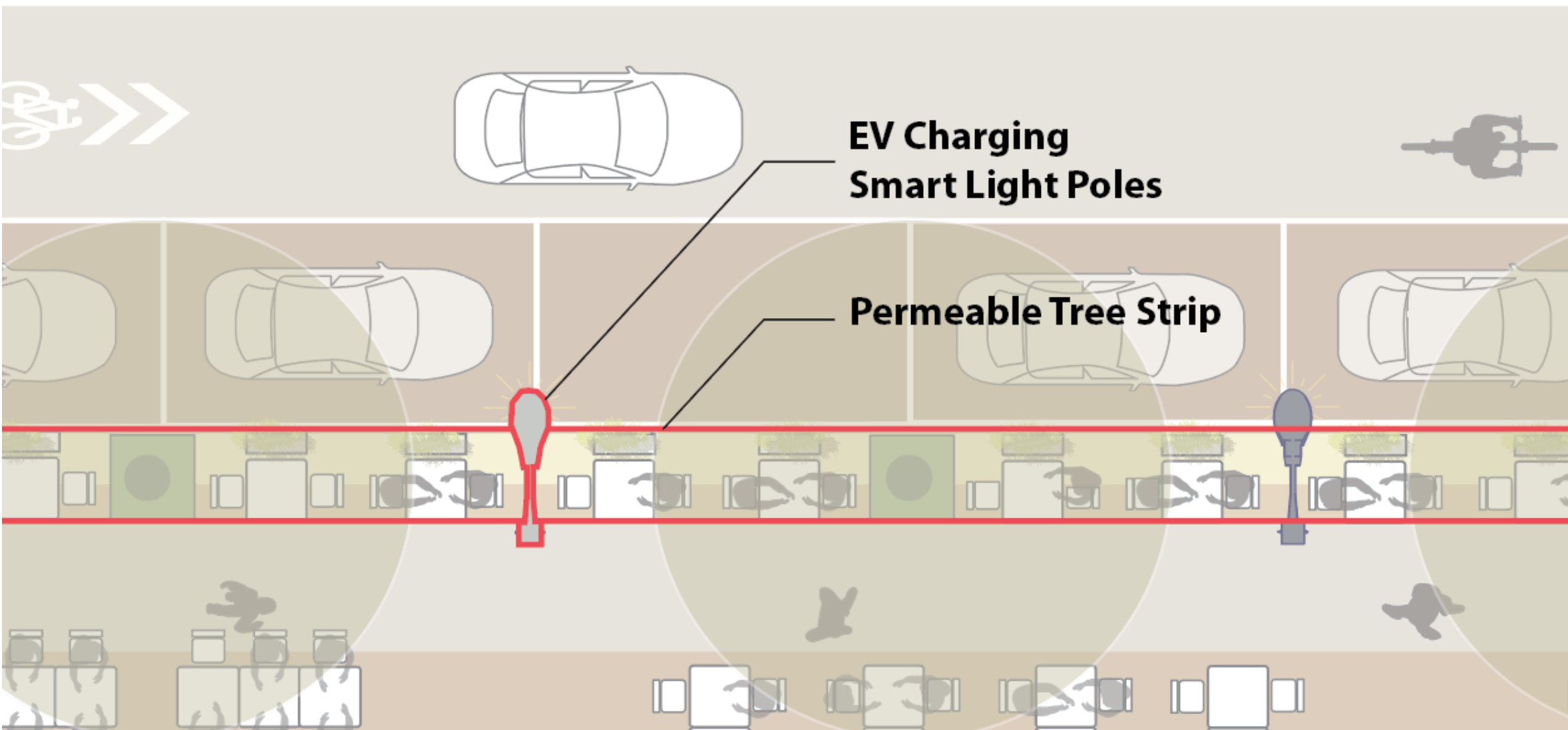
Plazas/Open Space/ Parks



SR1. Implement green infrastructure through rain gardens, permeable pavements, and green roofs, and low-impact development strategies to reduce runoff and improve water quality.



Sustainability & Resiliency Framework Green Infrastructure



SR2. Integrate electric vehicle (EV) charging facilities in both on-street and off-street parking spaces to promote sustainable mobility and support the adoption of clean energy transportation options throughout downtown.

Comments & Questions